

Idrelle Games Patreon by Thomas Bell

(04/January/2023 - 14/April/2025)

[Episode 3 Sneak Peek #27](#)

[Jan 4, 2023](#)

For the first sneak peek of the year, we're migrating over to the Melchior branch. This is a little rough as I'm just getting back from a break and it'll take a few days before I'm back to my normal writing.

This preview assumes that the MC punched Sabien at the gala, is wearing a serithan, and slept with Melchior at the end of Episode 2.



You wake to the warmth of the sun.

Shielding your face with a hand, you crack your eyes open and squint at your surroundings. You fell asleep on a divan near the pool last night, wrapped in a fine, decorative shawl discarded haphazardly on the cushions. Now, sunlight cascades across the elegant mosaics, illuminating the lush plants and decorative arches in a soft, dewy glow. The pool sparkles, light dancing across its surface. The shadows have been chased away, fleeing in the face of a bright, cloudless morning.

You exhale a breath. Despite it being the height of the Velantian summer, the morning air is cold against your bare skin. You shiver, goosebumps trailing down your arms and legs, and you roll onto your side, pulling the blanket with you. Your clothing lies in a conspicuous pile several feet away, just out of reach. You could get up and retrieve it, but as you're alone, the temptation to lie here for just a little longer is too strong.

It's quiet in the courtyard, the lapping pool and your own breath the only sound in your ears. After the rowdiness of last night, you would have expected Melchior's troupe to make a little noise, but perhaps they are all sound asleep. Their revelry went far into the night.

As did your own.

A faint, satisfied smile tugs at your lips. Recalling the events of last night sends a pleasurable shiver running down your spine. The feel of his lips against yours, the way his hands explored your body...

How easily he found the right places, coaxing pleasure out of you as if this was not the first time, but the hundredth. Melchior was an intense and attentive lover, as focused on your desire as he was on his own. It was easy—so easy—to give in to him, consumed by the rush to let go and forget everything else, if only for a night. Or maybe it was simply the relief of letting someone else take charge for once. You've been faced with too many difficult decisions as of late. He took the weight of that away, exactly when you needed it most.

Your smile fades. Despite your grogginess, his absence is tangible.

Melchior Larkspur remains a mystery. Physical intimacy or not, you still have very little understanding of who he is. Not that you gave each other much time to talk. Afterwards, you remember drowsily nodding into his shoulders as he murmured his thanks in your ear and carried you to the divan. Then he laid you down, kissed you once, and vanished into the night.

1. Though there were no expectations between you, you can't help but feel disappointed. Why didn't he stay?

[CHOICE] 2. It isn't your business. Besides, you're not that self-centred. You don't need a lover to stay by your side all night to feel satisfied.

3. You'd expect no less. This was one night, a casual encounter between two consenting people. It was nice while it lasted, but you aren't likely to seek him out again.

Perhaps it's good that he left. He has his business, you have yours. But even still... you can't help but feel that you're connected now in a way you don't fully understand. You're drawn to him in a way you can't explain, as enthralled as you are mystified, and the desire to see him again burns deep within you. Those feelings aren't quenched so easily.

However, you're not a fool. With the mission to Diradan Tower looming ahead of you, you don't know what your future holds. You may have to leave Velantis soon after. It's very likely the pair of you will never cross paths again.

A door creaks open.

You react on instinct. Jerking up, you pull the shawl tight and shift to the edge of the divan, muscles tensed. You scan the courtyard for the intruder, your good hand/one hand curling into a fist. A moment later, the door snaps closed and a familiar face peers around a pillar.

Kit stands on uneasy feet, her curly black hair a dishevelled halo around her head and a sallow flush creeping across her cheeks, looking like she is in desperate need of a hangover remedy. Not to let herself be undone, she steadies herself against the pillar, smooths down her rumpled tunic, and marches across the courtyard on bare feet.

"Good," she says, making a face as she walks over cold tiles. "You're awake."

You exhale and let yourself relax, clutching the shawl about you. It leaves little to the imagination.

"What's wrong?"

She pushes loose coils over her shoulder. “Define *wrong* for me, please,” she says irritably, skidding to a halt by your pile of clothes. Her eyes flicker from them to you, and she presses her lips together, taking in the shawl. *Tsking* under her breath, she stoops and sweeps the serithan into her arms. “There’s a woman with a sword and a nasty temper in the suite. She says she’s looking for you. Sabriel’s stalling—do you need a way out? Just say the word and we can handle it.”

You frown. You haven’t fully escaped your grogginess. Nothing she said makes sense. “Woman? What woman?”

Kit sighs again and shoves your clothes into your hands. “Human, average height, black clothes, ashen hair,” she answers and politely turns her back. Stuffing her hands in her pockets, she saunters to the edge of the pool and dips a toe in. “Could probably kill with a look. Sabriel thinks she’s Lady Anaxas’ bodyguard.”

Shit.

You blink, clearing your head. She must mean Malsara. She was tasked with collecting you the morning of the mission and it looks like she’s found you.

“It’s fine,” you say, pulling on your clothes. “I’ll handle her.”

“Oh, so she was expected?” Kit laughs and sweeps her foot across the water, hissing at the cool temperature. She withdraws it quickly. “Could have mentioned it and saved us the scare. But I won’t pry into a Wayfarer’s affairs. I know when something is not my business.”

You adjust your serithan and fiddle with the clasps, grunting with annoyance at the finicky ties. They’re impossible to manage with only one hand.

Kit glances over her shoulder and presses her lips together. Sighing heavily, she approaches you with a businesslike haste. “Give it here,” she says, waving your hand out of the way. She hesitates as she touches you, flinching at her loss of magic, then carries on without comment. “It’s easier when you have someone to help.”

You wait, feeling her tug on the material as she does up the clasps. “You hardly seem fazed.”

“\$lilac_name, darling, I’m an actor. You certainly aren’t the first person I’ve helped into their clothes. I’ve seen it all.” She pauses at the last clasp, her fingers pressed tight against it. “I knew this would happen the moment he showed up with you on his arm.”

You swallow, restless, and force yourself to stand still as Kit fiddles with the final clasp at your shoulder. “What do you mean?”

“Melchior enjoys the company of others, in more ways than one. He is intrigued by people, regardless of their personal histories, associations, or social standings. Intimacy is how he shows that interest.” She

draws a breath and ties the clasp closed. “You should be aware of that. My advice? Don’t take it personally or you’ll get your heart broken. This is his way. Lyr understood it better than anyone.”

[Progress Report 2023.01.09.: Pushing Onwards](#)

[Jan 9, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

I hope you are having a great start to the year!

I have unfortunately been a little all over the place. December was very difficult because of the burn out; I’m not happy that progress has stalled, and though I am picking away at bits and pieces, what progress I do manage to get done is very slow. I’ve been sick twice in the past month, and I’m still recovering from my second cold. My time off wasn’t very relaxing, but I’m hoping to put that behind me, pivot, and come up with a new plan that will make this stage of development easier.

Alpha Updates

I’ve realized that not having new alpha content out is weighing on me more than I thought. While I would like to have the next update be complete (in that everyone can play it, regardless of their choices), I’m now re-evaluating. The issue with Episode 3 Part 1 is that it pays the consequences of so much player choice at the end of Episode 2. It’s not just where the MC ends up at the end of the episode, it’s also whether they got fired from the mission or not and the many varying ways their relationship with Aeran can land. Part 1 is the culmination of many different variables, and it has been very difficult to give each one the same weight while also allowing for roleplaying.

The material has branched enormously to account for this and I need to reel it back in a bit. When you play Episode 3, you may find that if you made certain decisions, there may be no way back from them. There are already a couple “this is it” actions in Episode 2 that do irreparable damage to the MC’s relationship with Aeran. There will be more in Episode 3. From a mechanical standpoint, this is to keep a level of control over branching. From a narrative standpoint, this is to keep the MC’s headspace consistent. While I strive to give as much flexibility as possible for roleplay, some options *have* to be closed off.

Moving forwards, it’s no longer feasible to finish all of Part 1 before an alpha update. I think a huge part of this hump I’m struggling to get over is related to blowing all of my deadlines and estimations. Having some kind of alpha content out is going to help with that. And so, the plan for January is to finish the Veyer branch. I can’t estimate how long this is going to take; the end of the branch is extremely tricky to

write and I've been struggling with it for over a month now. Once that is complete, I will code both the Aeran branch and the Veyer branch and release them on the alpha build.

This means that when the next update comes you may not have content to play as half of Part 1 will be under construction. I will go over the specific routes available and how to access them at a later point.

2023 Roadmap


I'm undecided whether I will do a 2023 Roadmap like I did last year. While I think it's nice to lay out my plans for the year, I did a very bad job at estimating how long things would take (or leave room for delays caused by illness and surgery) and I didn't meet any of my goals in the back half of the roadmap. I think I either need to reconfigure how I do roadmaps so I feel less pressure to meet specific deadlines, or set them aside until I learn how to estimate development time properly.

Bonus & Side Story Content

For Apprentice+ and Wayfarer+ patrons, there likely will not be any bonus content or short stories posted this month. My priorities are on finishing the Veyer branch, which is going to take all my time. I'm sorry for not delivering on these. I'm hoping that once Episode 3 Part 1 is finished and released in its entirety, I can take some time off from game development and draft bonus content/short stories in advance so there won't be gaps in the posting schedule.

Other News

If you haven't checked it out already, the [Wayfarer 2023 Pin-Up Calendar](#) launched on January 2! It is available until March 2. We've raised \$840 CAD since its launch, all of which will be donated to the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, a public foundation that supports LGBTQ+ communities and movements worldwide.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out. As always, thank you all so much for your support. 

[Episode 3 Sneak Peak #28](#)

[Jan 11, 2023](#)

I'm back working on the Veyer branch, sorting through some dialogue trees. This is probably one of the more emotionally charged results of a conversation the MC can have with Aeran late in the branch (out of... *many* possible ways this conversation can go). Some variables:

- MC unlocked Aeran's confession in Ep 1

- MC slept with Veyer

Aeran pales. He meets your eyes, hurt flickering across his face, and slowly nods. “Yeah,” he says hoarsely. “I guess I am. Thanks for being honest.”

Your jaw clenches, hollow anger simmering in the pit of your stomach. To your surprise, you feel no triumph, no satisfaction at parading the truth in front of him. Only the brutal awareness that your relationship is disintegrating before your very eyes and you don't know if there is anything you can do to stop it.

Or if you even want to.

He looks so pathetic, standing there in front of you, contending with the truth. It would be easier if he was angry. This feels wrong. You're his friend, the \$person he says he's in love with, and you fucked the one person he sees as completely reprehensible. He should be furious with you. Why isn't he furious with you?

“One of us has to be,” you finally. “And since it'll never be you, it might as well be me.”

“\$nickname, please, I—”

“Get your head out of your ass for once, Aeran. Not everything is about you.”

Cold silence settles between you. He steps back, staring at you as if he's looking at a stranger. “Do you remember what I said on the *Dareia*?” he asks.

You return his gaze, knowing all too well what he means. “You said a lot of things on that ship. Maybe you need to clarify.”

“\$nickname, please. Don't be like this—”

“Like what?” Coarse laughter bubbles across your lips. “You think I can forgive you so easily after what you pulled last night? I asked a single question and you blew up at me. Did you think we were never going to talk about it? That you could avoid it forever?”

“I—no—not like that—”

“No! Because you are never going to tell me about the Spire, are you?”

Aeran's hands fall stiffly to his sides, the muscles of his bare arms tensed. “I hope it was worth it, \$firstname,” he says. “You're on dangerous ground getting involved with Veyer Krellion. Even if you don't see it, they're using you, just as they use everyone around them. They've had a lifetime in the Imperial court to perfect it.”

“I don't see why you care.”

"That's it, isn't it? I don't. Not anymore. Good thing we were never together."

His words cut deep. You step into him, so close you're almost touching, and raise your chin. All you see is bitterness in his eyes. "Whose fault do you think that is?" you hiss. "You were too scared to."

He smiles hollowly and draws away, turning his back on you. You watch him go, cursing him quietly, resentment simmering deep within you. Movement rustles behind you and, a moment later, Veyer appears at your side. They draw to a halt, their lips pressed together tightly as Malsara, Nova, and Zenaida walk by, their shadows flittering in your peripheral vision. For once, their dark eyes hold no amusement, no cheeky delight.

"Dare I ask?" they say.

"No."

Veyer sighs and adjusts their coat, casting an eye across the grove. They linger on Zenaida and the Markal twins as they gather under a large tree, conversing urgently. "It seems we have a moment to spare. Would you walk with me?"

1. Accept. Judging from their tone, this must be important.

2. Decline. You're not in the mood for talking.

[Episode 3 Sneak Peek #29](#)

[Jan 18, 2023](#)

A successful persuasion check during a conversation with Aeran on the Veyer branch. Romance is flagged in this continuity.



1. [PERSUASION] [LIE] "Not really, no. I don't know how they found out, but they're here now. If this plan hinges on the skills of an illusionist, then I'll accept their help, whether you approve of it or not."

The lie is easy. Almost *too* easy. In another time or place, it would terrify you how it easy it is to do. But not here. Not now. No matter how guilty you feel for your actions, this is not the time or place to confront them.

Aeran stiffens as he listens to your words, his jaw clenched, and for a moment you're not sure if he buys the lie. His mouth twists and your heart leaps into your throat, pounding with panic at the oncoming retort—

He stops and closes his eyes, passing a weary hand across his face. "It's not that I don't approve," he says. "It's that I don't—I *can't* trust them. And you shouldn't either."

"Because they're—what—an imperial Guild mage?" you retort, crossing your arms. "That's not a good enough reason to throw away their help."

"Don't fall for their act, \$firstname. You're smarter than that—"

"And you're supposed to be a professional. You shouldn't let your personal feelings get in the way."

"Not without reason! *This* is what they're good at, don't you see? Reeling people in, using them. Telling them exactly what they want to hear, only to turn it on them for their own gain. They've had a lifetime at court to perfect it."

Discomfort gnaws away at you, a disturbed feeling you can't quite place. When you think back to your encounter with Veyer last night... They *were* conveniently placed in the gallery. And their conversation with you had unfolded so naturally, transforming them into exactly what you needed in that moment... Was it nothing more than a tryst between two consenting persons? Or did Veyer have ulterior motives in seeking you out?

You shrug and push the thought from your mind. "I don't want to talk about Veyer."

"And I don't want to argue with you, \$nickname."

"A little late for that, don't you think?"

He pales and looks away, raking a hand through his hair. The dappled light catches it, turning it a golden brown. "We're just a pair of fools, aren't we?" he says quietly. "I fucked up and I am sorry. I really am—"

"Aeran—"

He smiles faintly and takes a step back. "Unfortunately we have a damn Astrial to collect. But I promise, \$nickname... afterwards. We have a lot to talk about—if you'll let me."

[Episode 3 Sneak Peek #30](#)

[Jan 27, 2023](#)

Some day I will have something to preview that doesn't come from the Veyer branch, but today is not that day.

For continuity:

- MC still has high approval with Aeran
- MC slept with Veyer
- MC was fired from the Lethalis mission

"You seem to know where you're going," you remark, drawing up beside Aeran. Tall grasses and undergrowth rustles against your serithan. You're thankful for the shade; after the boat ride and the long climb, it's good to be out of the sun.

He stiffens. This familiar stance—the pair of you, pressing onwards to your destination side by side—feels alien. "Been here a while," he mutters. "Got a good look at the place. Didn't Zenaida tell you?"

"No," you reply sharply. "It seems our employer only sees fit to inform me of changes the moment before they happen."

He sighs. "Then maybe you should have asked."

Your jaw clenches, biting back the urge to snap at him. What do you say? What can you say? Is it better to pretend nothing happened at all? You're not sure if you can do that. Guilty though you feel, he's as much at fault, albeit in a different way. It's impossible to ignore the hurt he caused last night.

You carry on in silence, the awkwardness gnawing at the pit of your stomach. A dozen questions circle your mind, but you can't choose a place to start. The further you walk, the heavier your pack feels. Just thinking about it makes it easy to visualize the full coin pouch stuffed within. Malsara hand-delivered your payment to you, but what about Aeran? Did he receive his recompense?

"This is a lot of work," you say bluntly. "Did Zenaida pay you extra for this or did you volunteer to do it of your own accord?"

He pauses. "I've been paid, same as you," he replies stiffly.

So he has his three thousand crowns...

You wet your lower lip. Considering how much he hates mages and Velantis, it's a wonder he didn't take his payment and leave. A viable option, all things considered... Maybe you would have done it if you didn't have Malsara as a personal escort.

"Then why are you here? Why didn't you run?"

He rounds on you, a hurt look crossing his face. "Believe it or not, I do have some integrity. And besides... there's no way in hell I'm letting you do this alone."

You flush. "Because you don't trust I can get it done?"

"Because this is Guild territory—and they have enough Wayfarer blood on their hands."

A chill runs down your spine. You've heard such words from him before, even as recent as last night. Too weary to think about the implications, you distract yourself by adjusting your scabbard. You tug on the straps, sliding \$blade over until it sits comfortably against your hip.

"I scouted the perimeter this morning," Aeran continues. "There's a lakeside gate in the western wall that will put us at the base of the citadel. It's unwatched, and I've already dealt with the single surveillance orb in the area. It's our best point of entry."

[CHOICE] 1. "You should leave those things alone."

2. "Good. Glad to know you're on top of things."

3. Say nothing.

He catches your eye. "You think?" he grunts. "You were happy enough to attempt to take one out yourself—"

You grit your teeth. "Don't make this an argument—"

"I'm not."

"Aren't you?"

He grimaces and rakes a hand roughly through his hair, scratching the back of his neck. "Fine," he manages. "I'll be careful."

You exhale a long breath. Eager to let this go, you glance behind you in search of the others. Aeran's pace has put some distance between you and the party, giving you unanticipated privacy. Nova is in the lead, bickering with Veyer, while Malsara and Zenaida bring up the rear.

You don't know what to make of the dark-haired mage. Escaping Ruval Palace can't have been easy without help. She's a dustforger; her magic is of the sphere of transformation, capable of transmuting one thing into something else. Unless you're missing a major piece of the puzzle, Nova's appearance here is far too coincidental for your liking.

"Did you know about Nova?" you mutter under your breath.

His expression darkens. "Don't underestimate those three, alone or together. It's a mistake both Lethalis and Solarath have made."

You pause. There's so much you want to ask him, but the memory of last night gnaws away at the pit of your stomach. Now you're face to face, there's a hollowness you cannot shake, a raw wound in your relationship that cannot be healed—and you both know it. You're dancing around the subject as if everything is fine, when you know full well it is not.

1. **“What’s that supposed to mean?”**
2. **“When did she show up? How? Did you have something to do with getting her out of Ruval?”**
3. **“And what about the mistakes you’ve made?”**

[Progress Report 2023.01.30: Trees & Branches](#)

[Jan 30, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

This is going to be a rather brief progress report to round out January! First of all, I am sorry for the general radio silence. I have been sick with a general cold since after Christmas, which has greatly impacted my ability to write. I am very tired, but I am finally starting to get better. Development on Episode 3 is ongoing, but it is very slow. This has been an extremely rough patch and perhaps the most difficult part of the game to date.

I am still working on the Veyer branch and it is coming together slowly. I've been stuck in the same dialogue tree for about two months, but I have finally finished it and can move onto the next story beat. I'm hoping that now I've through the section that gave me writer's block, I'll be able to pick things up a bit. I have a few more story beats to get through on the PC fired from the Lethalis mission continuity (shorthand: Mission Off), which I am hoping to wrap up soon. I then need to jump over to the other continuity (shorthand: Mission On).

Even though I am working through my outline quite quickly, there is still a significant amount of content to get through due to branches and various continuity states. To try to illustrate this, I made the graphic above.

The Mission Off version of the Veyer branch is almost finished as I am currently in the "Veyer's Request" section. Once I finish the additional story beats, I need to back up and tackle the Mission On version, which covers much of the same information, but albeit in a different way due to different party configurations.

Accounting for continuities, previous player choices, and making allowances for roleplay are the main reasons why Episode 3 is taking so long. All of the choices made in Episode 2 are being threaded together, but it takes a while to account for everything and bottleneck them together in the same spot

without making the player feel like they are being railroaded. This is an extreme challenge in non-linear storytelling, but I am hoping that it will be worth it in the end.

As I mentioned in my last progress report, bonus content and side story content will be on hold until I can finish Episode 3 Part 1 in its entirety. This means there will likely be a few more months without these benefits. I am very sorry for that, but I am currently not able to work on additional content while I am working through this section of the game.

Other News

The Wayfarer Calendar has officially raised over \$1000 CAD! I am extremely thrilled and honoured that it has made such a big impact. The calendar is available until March 2 and all proceeds will be donated to the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out. As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕💕

[Episode 3 Sneak Peek #31](#)

[Feb 1, 2023](#)

I pasted the sneak peek from 2022 down below - T.B

From the Veyer continuity branch. This is similar to a conversation that happens in [this sneak peek](#), but the context has shifted.



Episode 3 Sneak Peek #21

Nov 16, 2022

Almost at the end of this branch now... *Almost.*

You cross your arms. The Guild of Mages was bad enough with its schism between Lethalis and Solarath, but Lethalis itself has its own fair share of infighting. At least Veyer has the self-awareness to label it as petty. "And the second reason?"

“Is far more serious, I’m afraid,” Veyer says grimly. “Malsara Markal is not part of the Order of Lethalis. She is an Erebian operative, assigned to protect Zenaida Anaxas at all costs. Now, thanks to her ties to her sister and Zenaida, many within Lethalis have turned a blind eye to her origins and consider her their own. Erebian operatives come in all forms—bodyguards, spies, consorts, assassins. But if there is one commonality between them all, it is this: they are staggeringly loyal and put the League above all. Not their friends. Not their lovers. Not their employers. The League.”

Your mouth runs dry. “What are you saying?” you ask hoarsely.

“I’m saying that we are placing all of our faith in Markal with no contingency plans. I question the decision to delegate the transportation of a powerful and highly dangerous artefact to an Erebian operative, and a planeswalker at that. It could fall into the League’s hands before any of us could act.”

A shiver rolls down your spine. You know as much about the League as anyone—which means almost nothing at all. Though you’ve been with her for a month, Malsara has never been forthright about her connections to them. She is so tightly associated with Zenaida that you never considered they would play into this at all.

“What stake does the Erebian League have in any of this?” you ask.

Veyer gives you a flat look. “Use your head, \$firstname. What benefit could the largest covert organization in the world get from claiming one of the most powerful Meissandic artefacts? Sell it, use it, barter it off for political gains. The staff is an augments tied to the sphere of illumination. Illusions may be of no concern to you, but I don’t want to think about what a contingent of spies and assassins could do with that power.”

“And you think it’s safer with you?”

“I can mask its appearance long enough to deliver it to Umbria and Oshiro. You will be paid for your efforts all the same.”

You look upwards, watching the tower, taking in the formidable walls and the broken citadel beyond. Magic pulses around it, so pungent you can almost taste the oily haze and the shimmering wards. You’re here because of Zenaida. She has placed her faith in you, just as she has placed her faith in Malsara.

- 1. Veyer has a point. There’s a flaw in this plan, one Lethalis never considered. The more you think about it, the more Malsara’s League connections concern you.**
- 2. It doesn’t matter to you who the Astral ends up with. There’s as good of a chance of it returning to Umbria with Malsara as it does with Veyer.**
- 3. They’re up to something and you’re not going to fall for it.**



Veyer flashes you a wan smile, devoid of their typical humour. “What I am about to say is dangerous,” they say. “Do you trust me?”

You catch their eye. Their words are genuine, of that you have no doubt, but it leaves you with more questions than answers. “Do you need to ask?” you say cautiously.

“For my own peace of mind, yes. But please do not take it as an affront, \$firstname. I approach you now not because of what happened between us last night, but rather because I find myself in a position where *you* are the only person whom I can trust.”

You pause, caught off-guard by the unexpected vulnerability. There’s a desperation in their voice that you have not seen before, an urgency so wildly out of character it flies in the face of everything you know about them. What do they want? What do they need? What game are they playing? Though you do not want to suspect them of ulterior motives, you’re not a fool. You can’t shake Aeran’s warning completely from your mind.

[CHOICE] 1. “I trust you.”

2. “I... Don’t put this on me. Please.”

3. “I’m sorry, Veyer. Whatever this is I don’t think I can be involved.”

Veyer smiles, relief washing over their expression. “Thank you, \$firstname,” they murmur. They observe you through thick lashes, their gaze lingering on your face, your mouth. From the way they’re looking at you, you have a feeling they want nothing more than to kiss you right now. “I am indebted to you.”

You smile. “I’ll hold you to that.”

“I would expect nothing less.”

With a cautious glance at the whispering trio, they draw up next to you and sink into a casual stance. “The terms of your assignment are to deliver once it is retrieved,” they continue. “But I would ask this of you instead: do not relinquish it. Not to Her Grace. And not to Malsara Markal.”

A breeze picks up, rustling the leaves above as it swirls through the grove. “Why?” you ask, throat dry. “There’s still the matter of removing it from the premises. Malsara is far better equipped for that than anyone else here.”

“Of course. A planeswalker’s reach is far greater than any other could hope for. However, I have reason to be cautious.”

“You already wrangled Zenaida into agreeing to let you deliver it to Oshiro yourself.”

They sigh irritably. “That was a jest, \$firstname. Do you really believe Her Grace will let me within ten feet of the thing once you return with it? You’ve heard from her yourself. Lethalis is fracturing and she—” Their eyes flick across the grove, lingering on Malsara and Nova. “—*all* of them—are a part of it. By

delivering the Astrial to her, you are placing one of the most powerful Meissandic artefacts in the world in the hands of the daughter of an Arathian politician. Do you not see the gravity of the situation?"

"Zenaida doesn't care for her mother," you point out. "What does the archon have to do with this?"

"This is not about the archon, this is about the *heir*," they counter. "Lest you forget, Zenaida is desperate to prove herself and strike out from under her mother's shadow. That staff is an augments tied to the sphere of illumination. Your mind may be safeguarded from illusions and emotional manipulation, but I do not question the havoc she could wreak in the name of House Anaxas should she get her hands on it."

"I thought she was more concerned about thwarting Solarath's plans than Arathian politics."

"This goes far beyond the Guild of Mages. Zenaida may act the self-righteous altruist, but do not forget that she has cleverly put herself in a position where she could enact great and terrible change—to Lethalis, to Velantis... and perhaps even to the Empire."

You pause. You haven't always trusted Zenaida, she trusts you. And she is the reason you are here; without her, you would never have escaped Rona alive. Retrieving the Astrial is her endeavour. To doubt her now, to the point of betraying her at the eleventh hour...

Part of you wishes they had never spoken.

"Is that not what you wanted?" you say. "You offered her your help earlier—or your compliance, at the very least. Was that a lie? Do you still support Umbria?"

"I do not care for Lethalis' fate, you can be certain of that," Veyer says flatly. "I have sacrificed much on their account with little in return. If a comeuppance is in their future, I will gladly take my leave and allow it to happen. I have been involved in their endeavours for near three decades, my priorities are not the same as they once were. Where they lie now is..."

"With yourself?" you offer under your breath.

They glance at you, a dark chuckle rumbling in the back of their throat. "It would be a great lie indeed if I said I was not driven by an unyielding sense of self-preservation," they reply. "The ultimate goal of my peers has perturbed me for many years now. Umbria may seek to destroy the Astrials utterly, but unbinding so much ancient concentrated force simply to keep it from Quirinus' clawing hands may prove more lethal than the alternative. You can see the devastation caused by the dissolution of the staff's wards. What do you think will happen when the Astrial *itself* is unbound and released?"

You look upwards, peering through the trees to the formidable walls and the broken citadel beyond. Magic pulses around it, so pungent you can almost taste the oily haze and the shimmering wards. A chill runs down your spine.

“Used or destroyed, it makes no difference. The Astrials are no mere relics of a bygone era, they are *weapons*. Weapons that no living person deserves to wield. They were buried long ago for a reason. They should have remained that way.”

“So what would you have me do?” you ask.

“Deliver the staff to me. My illusions are second to none. I can mask its appearance and replace it with a false Astrial in its place. By the time they unweave it and realize their mistake, I will have determined a third course of action. One that neither Umbria, Zenaida, nor even Sabien Quirinus himself will expect.”

You fall silent, the grim reality of their words weighing on you. Whether you like it or not, you been dragged further into the dangerous political landscape of mages and Arathians. At this point, who can you trust?

Umbria, Lethalis’ solemn leader, who rejected this mission on account of it being too reckless? Zenaida, who has placed the success of her plan solely on her faith in your skills? Veyer, the unknown third party in this plot, who would dare upend it all for their own purposes?

- 1. Veyer may have not told you everything, but at least they have been honest about their intentions. And their point stands: just as you cannot trust Lethalis, you cannot trust Zenaida. She crafted this grand scheme in the first place. It could very well be that she wants the Astrial for herself as part of a political ploy. The more you think about it, the more it concerns you.**
- 2. It doesn’t matter to you who the Astrial ends up with. Zenaida, Lethalis, Veyer themselves—it’s all the same to you.**
- 3. No. They’re up to something. You don’t know why they have chosen to sow distrust between you and Zenaida, but you’re not going to fall for it.**

[Episode 3 Sneak Peek #32](#)

[Feb 8, 2023](#)



“This is the fastest route to Diradan with the lowest probability of detection,” Malsara explains. The annoyance is clear in her voice, frustration at being tasked with shepherding you across an entire district. Being restricted to the mundane means must feel debilitating to a planeswalker. “Even so, it will

take some time. I suggest you use it to make whatever preparations you need. Once we arrive within the vicinity of Diradan Tower, you will have to act quickly.”

“And Kellis?” Veyer asks. They gaze pointedly at Malsara and run a hand over their chin, an index finger pressed to their upper lip. The emerald ring glints in the early morning light, gold and green. “It hasn’t escaped my noticed that he has failed to join us for this little sojourn. I would be overjoyed to be rid of his company, but I cannot imagine he would neglect his promises so brazenly. Odd sense of commitment, that one.”

You stiffen. Veyer isn’t blind—it was only a matter of time before the subject was raised. Perhaps you should be grateful that they have broached the topic in your stead.

“Kellis departed last night to scout Diradan in advance,” Malsara replies. “He—”

“Scouting?” you blurt. “Why?”

“It was his request, one Her Grace and Archsage Bellaris were happy to grant. There is much we do not know about the current state of Diradan Tower. Not only did the explosion cause cataclysmic damage to the tower grounds, there is the shroud to contend with. While the Guild has been observing changes to the shroud through surveillance orbs, a Wayfarer’s perspective can help us greatly. He should have a clear understanding of the premises and the dangers you may encounter by the time we arrive.”

Veyer chortles and raises their hands, threading their fingers together as they rest them against the back of their neck. “Wonderful. Kellis must be having a delightful morning.”

Malsara exhales a sharp breath. “It is not my place to say,” she says tepidly. “Though I would consider practicing the art of *holding my tongue*, if I were you. Your loathing for the man is well known—”

“Well known? It is only *known* because I warned Zenaida myself when she first proposed the idea of seeking a Wayfarer’s aid.”

“And Her Grace would be very vexed should it interfere with achieving our goal. She would like to remind you that you keep it to yourself. As she said herself—ten years is a long time to hold a grudge, even for an elf with your particular proclivities.”

Veyer’s expression hardens and they glance out over the water, their casual bearing evaporating. You watch them carefully, chewing your bottom lip, your mind racing. What happened in the Imperial capital ten years ago? You assumed their dislike of Aeran stemmed from general annoyance and his... well... Aeran-ness, but it must be more than that.

[Feb 15, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Happy February and Happy (belated) Valentine's Day! I hope you are all doing well. This is going to be a short progress report as not too much has changed since my last one. I have made a lot of progress on the Veyer branch since the end of January. The Mission Off branch is complete; I am currently about half-way through the Mission On branch. This is a little easier to put together than the former because I have the skeletons for most of the dialogue trees and story beats in other material, it's just a matter of editing and re-shaping them so they work within the context of this branch's continuity.

I have three major story beats to finish, and then the Veyer continuity stuff is complete. Once that is finished, my editor and I have a massive amount of content to go through (likely around 250k-300k words, these documents are extremely content dense). Some of it is proofread already, but there's a lot of ironing out to do before I can get to coding.

Once coding starts, it will likely take me more time than usual to get through all the material as I have to do all my patch edits first. The last public/alpha build patch was in October and I have a list several pages long of various lore edits, bugs fixes, and other changes that have accumulated over the past few months.

I will give a forewarning: when the next patch/update comes out, you **WILL** have to restart from the beginning. I've been avoiding making a change because I didn't want to wreck players' save files, but it's become very difficult to handle the continuity of Aeran and the MC's relationship without a specific flag. Since the game's beginning, the player's original choice of what to set Aeran's initial approval stat at was never flagged. I've now reached a point where the references are getting specific enough that I need to know what option the player chose, which means that the choice needs a flag. This is not something that can be inserted retroactively – players will have to replay from the beginning to ensure that choice is recorded in their playthrough's variables.

Playing on an old save file after this patch will throw up oddities in Aeran's dialogue and lock you out of options you should otherwise have. I am also going to be rebalance how his low romance/high approval system works and clean up some other background code things, so I cannot stress enough that a **full restart** is the only way to ensure that your playthrough is as smooth and bug-free as possible.

And finally, just as a reminder, bonus content and side story content is on hold until I finish Episode 3 Part 1 in its entirety. This means there will likely be a few more months without new entries for these benefits, but you can still access the backlog through the [bonus content](#) and [short story](#) tags if you haven't already! I am very sorry for that, but I am currently not able to work on additional content while I am working through this section of the game.

Other News

Patreon is rolling out a change to their Discord integration this month. Wayfarer Patron server access and roles are exclusively for active patrons. This means that when you de-pledge, the bot will remove your role and you will lose access to the server automatically. You may also temporarily lose access if your payments are invalid, so I would recommend checking them to make sure everything is fine there.

If you encounter issues as this change is rolled out, please don't hesitate to message me and I can help you troubleshoot.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[Episode 3 Part 1 - Sneak Peek #33](#)

[Feb 23, 2023](#)

Hi friends!

To make up for missing last week's sneak peek, I thought it would be fun to do a little demonstration of how player continuity shifts the path of a dialogue tree. These are four examples of the same conversation that have different results based on factors such as the player's previous choices, their approval/romance level, and other elements.

This is from the Veyer branch and requires a specific event to unlock.

- MC is not fired from the mission
- MC was trained by Varyn (for some small flavour text shifts)
- Rivals encompasses approval 59 and under, which results from either the neutral approval or low approval version of the Episode 2 fight. For context, the some of the dialogue only triggers with approval that is 39 and under. It also has an alt version for a very specific circumstance that I did not include here

Should go without saying, but this is very very very much not edited.



+60 AERAN ROMANCE + CONFESSION

"You seem to know where you're going," you remark as Veyer trails several feet behind, distracted by the wall and its barrier. Tall grasses and undergrowth rustles against your serithan. You're thankful for

the shade; after the boat ride and the long climb, it's good to be out of the sun.

Aeran stiffens. This familiar stance—the pair of you, pressing onwards to your destination side by side—feels alien. “Been here a while,” he mutters. “Got a good look at the place. Didn’t Malsara tell you? Or were you too distracted by Krellion to pay attention?”

The snide remark cuts deep. So he saw you. Of course he did. “It’s none of your business—”

“Isn’t it?” he hisses. “How can it not be? You remember what I said on the *Dareia*?”

Your stomach drops. The raw anguish from last night returns and your chest tightens painfully, your heart stuttering rapidly within. This morning you weren’t sure what to expect when you saw him again—but now you’re face to face, there’s a hollowness you cannot shake, a raw wound in relationship that deepens with every word, infecting you both like a virus.

You love him. You hate him. You don’t know what to make of him.

1. [ROMANCE ❤️] “Maybe you’re the one who should remember. If there was truth to any of it, you would never have treated me the way you did last night.”

[CHOICE] 2. [PERSUASION] [LIE] “I remember. It’s not my fault I don’t feel the same.”

3. “Don’t you dare bring that up now. Don’t you *dare*—”

[Persuasion Succeeded]

Your mouth twists, savouring the lie. You don’t know why you chose to say this—perhaps out of a desperation to deny the feelings you still have for him, or the need to hurt him as much as he has hurt you. Your actions have already done that plenty, but this will only drive the knife deeper.

To your surprise, he falls silent and closes his eyes, a weary look crossing his face. “Good,” he says, his voice raw and breaking. “It’s better this way.”

Your stomach drops. You expected him to fight, to shout—anything but this blind acceptance of defeat. “Aeran—”

“I’ve been trying to make something of this every day since Karth,” he continues. “But I see now how foolish it was all along. I can’t tell you how sorry I am for that. For all of this. I know how much I fucked up last night—gods, do I know it—and for what it’s worth, I am sorry. But I see now you’re exactly the kind of person I know I can never trust. Not now. Not in that way.”

He strides forwards, pushing onwards down the path without a backwards glance. You watch him go, traitorous tears panging in your eyes. There’s no triumph or satisfaction in your victory, only the brutal awareness that whatever remaining feelings you have for each other are now broken beyond repair.

You still love him. Of course you do. Feelings like that aren’t so easily killed—not by rage, not by anger, not even by sleeping with someone else. It would be easier if it was. But Veyer can’t save you from this.

Acknowledging it only leaves you numb.



+60 AERAN ROMANCE + NO CONFESSION

“You seem to know where you’re going,” you remark as Veyer trails several feet behind, distracted by the wall and its barrier. Tall grasses and undergrowth rustles against your serithan. You’re thankful for the shade; after the boat ride and the long climb, it’s good to be out of the sun.

Aeran stiffens. This familiar stance—the pair of you, pressing onwards to your destination side by side—feels alien. “Been here a while,” he mutters. “Got a good look at the place. Didn’t Malsara tell you? Or were you too distracted by Krellion to pay attention?”

The snide remark cuts deep. So he saw you. Of course he did. “We’re not discussing this—”

“Then I hope you know what you’re doing,” he hisses. “You may not believe it now, but Krellion is using you, just as they use everyone around them. They’ve had a lifetime in the Imperial court to perfect it.”

You grimace. After what Veyer asked you to do, there’s no denying that you *are* being used. “And what if they are? So is Umbria, so is Zenaida—hell, even Lethalis as a whole. At least they’re honest about their intentions. I can’t say the same for you.”

He flinches. “\$nickname—”

“Thanks for the warning. Don’t see how it’s any of your business—”

“Because you’re my friend. Because it’s *you*.”

The weight he gives the word is impossible to ignore. You know all too well what he means, though the feelings you have for each other remain unspoken. And now he’s left you nowhere to hide.

Damn him.

The raw anguish from last night returns and your chest tightens painfully, your heart stuttering rapidly within. This morning you weren’t sure what to expect when you saw him again—but now you’re face to face, there’s a hollowness you cannot shake, a raw wound in relationship that deepens with every word, infecting you both like a virus.

You love him. You hate him. You don’t know what to make of him.

1. [ROMANCE ❤️] “You don’t get to be in love with me. Not after what you did last night.”
- [CHOICE] 2. [PERSUASION] [LIE] “Get your head out of your ass. I’m *not* in love with you.”
3. “No. Don’t you dare do this, don’t you *dare*—”

[Persuasion Succeeded]

Your mouth twists, savouring the lie. You don't know why you chose to say this—perhaps out of a desperation to deny the feelings you still have for him, or the need to hurt him as much as he has hurt you. Your actions have already done that plenty, but this will only drive the knife deeper.

To your surprise, he falls silent and closes his eyes, a weary look crossing his face. “Good,” he says, his voice raw and breaking. “*Good.*”

Your stomach drops. You expected him to fight, to shout—anything but this blind acceptance of defeat. “Aeran—”

“I’ve been trying to make something of this every day since Karth,” he continues. “But I see now how foolish it was all along. I can’t tell you how sorry I am for that. For all of this. I know how much I fucked up last night—gods, do I know it—and for what it’s worth, I am sorry. But I see now you’re exactly the kind of person I know I can never trust. Not now. Not in that way.”

He strides forwards, pushing onwards down the path without a backwards glance. You watch him go, traitorous tears panging in your eyes. There’s no triumph or satisfaction in your victory, only the brutal awareness that whatever remaining feelings you have for each other are now broken beyond repair.

You still love him. Of course you do. Feelings like that aren’t so easily killed—not by rage, not by anger, not even by sleeping with someone else. It would be easier if it was. But Veyer can’t save you from this.

Acknowledging it only leaves you numb.



+60 AERAN FRIENDSHIP

“You seem to know where you’re going,” you remark as Veyer trails several feet behind, distracted by the wall and its barrier. Tall grasses and undergrowth rustles against your serithan. You’re thankful for the shade; after the boat ride and the long climb, it’s good to be out of the sun.

Aeran stiffens. This familiar stance—the pair of you, pressing onwards to your destination side by side—feels alien. “Been here a while,” he mutters. “Got a good look at the place. Didn’t Malsara tell you? Or were you too distracted by Krellion to pay attention?”

The snide remark cuts deep. So he saw you. Of course he did. “We’re not discussing this—”

“Then I hope you know what you’re doing. You may not believe it now, but Krellion is using you, just as they use everyone around them. They’ve had a lifetime in the Imperial court to perfect it.”

You grimace. After what Veyer asked you to do, there's no denying that you *are* being used. "And what if they are? So is Umbria, so is Zenaida—hell, even Lethalis as a whole. At least they're honest about their intentions. I can't say the same for you."

He flinches. "\$nickname—"

"Thanks for the warning. Don't see how it's any of your business—"

"Because you're my friend and despite everything, I still care about you. There's no way in hell I'm abandoning you to handle things alone. This is Guild territory. They have enough Wayfarer blood on their hands."

You grimace. "I don't know, are we? Friends? Because it seemed like two decades of friendship meant very little to you last night."

He snorts. "Could say the same for you, considering who you've chosen to spend your time with—"

"Don't start—"

"I waited for you, you know? I went back to that apartment and I *waited* for you. I know how much I fucked up last night—gods do I know it—and I was prepared to tell you everything—"

Anger flares in your chest. "Liar," you hiss. "You were never going to tell me about the Spire, are you?"

Aeran stiffens and his expression turns dark. Anger would be expected, anger would be easy—but this is beyond that. This is bitter resentment. "I was," he says. "Until you turned into exactly the kind of person I know I can never trust. You're a real piece of work, \$firstname. Guess you take after Brissa after all."

He storms ahead without a backward glance. You watch him go, but there is no triumph or satisfaction in your victory. Only the brutal awareness that whatever remaining feelings he may have had for you have disintegrated alongside the feeble tatters of your friendship.



RIVALS [Main Version]

"You seem to know where we're going," you remark coldly, falling in line beside him. Veyer trails several feet behind, distracted by the wall and its barrier.

Aeran scoffs and glares ahead, avoiding your gaze. The dappled sunlight warms his face, throwing his bruised cheek into sharp relief. "I've been here long enough to get a good look at the place. Did Markal not tell you? Or were you too busy amusing yourself with Krellion to pay attention?"

So he saw you. Of course he did. "It's none of your business."

He fixes you with a cold look. "No," he retorts under his breath, keen to keep your conversation private. "It really isn't. Fuck whoever you want, I don't care, but you should be careful with Veyer Krellion. They're not the person you think they are."

1. "Fuck off."

[CHOICE] 2. "Have you considered they're not the person *you* think they are?"

3. Walk on in silence.

Aeran's expression darkens. "Ignore my advice all you want," he says bitterly. "But don't be surprised when they stab you in the back. Whatever they've told you, their priorities will always lie with the emperor first and themselves second."

You grit your teeth, unsure what to make of his comment, and stride ahead. "Did Umbria pay you extra for this little scouting mission?" you say. It's too easy to feel the additional weight in your pack and imagine the heavy coin pouch stuffed within. "Or did you volunteer of your own accord?"

"I have my reasons for leaving Mahanin as soon as possible," he grunts. "Just so happens that my plans coincided with Umbria's."

"So you're taking additional orders from a Guild archsage? Thought you would have abandoned the mission altogether before letting it come to that—"

"You may be the last person I call a friend, \$firstname, but there's no way in hell I'm abandoning you to do this alone. This is Guild territory. They have enough Wayfarer blood on their hands."

A chill runs down your spine. You've heard such words from him before, even as recent as last night. "Right. Anything else?"

"I scouted the perimeter this morning. The lakeside gate is unwatched and I've already dealt with the single surveillance orb in the area. It's our best point of entry."

[CHOICE] 1. "Dealt with? You mean you shot it down. Just like you to go and give our position away."

2. "What do you want me to say? Congratulations for being on top of things?"

3. Say nothing.

Aeran bristles. "I took care of it so it *wouldn't* give our position away—"

"Yeah? Say that again when someone comes to investigate why their surveillance orbs aren't working —"

"You're one to talk. You were happy enough to take one out yourself."

You scowl. “Fuck off. Next time, *Aeran*, don’t mess with them.”

“I won’t if you won’t, *\$lastname1*.”

You stop. *\$lastname1*... It’s a name only he would know, one you have not heard in a very long time. Your family name, inherited from a backwater clan that never wanted you. “That’s not my name,” you snarl.

“Isn’t it?” he spits. “Not a lot of Wayfarers had the nerve to take on their mentors’ legacy. Are you sure you deserve Varyn’s?”

You stand, rooted to the spot as he storms down the path without a backwards glance. Fury courses through you, eating away at you like acid. No matter what form your relationship takes, one thing never changes: he always knows where to hurt you the most.

[Progress Report 2023.02.28: A Little Bit of Structural Shuffling](#)

[Feb 28, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Just a quick update to round out February. As I am still working on the same sections as I was last progress report, there isn’t much new to talk about in terms of the Veyer branch progress. I am closer to the end of it now than I was before, but there’s still several sections to finagle before I can finally start editing.

The more important update is that I am in the process of reconfiguring Wayfarer’s act structure. Up until this point, the game has been structured in three acts, like so:

- Prologue
- Act 1 – Episodes 1 – 8
- Act 2 – Episodes 9 – 12
- Act 3 – Episodes 13 – 5
- Epilogue

Though the game’s essential structure will remain the same (15 episodes), breaking it into new act breaks will give me a little more flexibility in terms of where major story beats fall, the significance they have, and to have that reflected in the game’s UI design (with elements like changing artwork, etc).

Episode 3's ending is a major transition period and it feels appropriate for that to be the end of an act. The stretch between Episodes 4 and 8 sees the introduction of the rest of the main cast and companions, with another major transition period at the end. With this in mind, the new structure would be like this:

- Prologue
- Act 1 – Episodes 1 – 3
- Act 2 – Episodes 4 – 8
- Act 3 – Episodes 9 – 12
- Act 4 – Episodes 13 – 15
- Epilogue

There is also the possibility that I may split the game into multiple entries along these act breaks. Because each episode is essentially a small game unto itself and takes a long period of time to develop, I am rethinking the viability of Wayfarer as a standalone game. There are pros and cons to splitting it into multiple entries – on one hand, having it become a *series* would communicate the scope of the story better than a single game. On the other hand, having multiple installments in a series means that I will then have to work with save states and world states.

Save states aren't too much of an issue (there's a way to export the player's data and upload it into a new SugarCube game), but world states are. There are too many continuity variables for it to be viable for the player to select what they want at the start. Not only are rapport, approval and romance levels important, but what the PC said in specific moments, what information they have accumulated, what's in their inventory, what choices they made in significant moments—it's not going to be possible to list every detail and flag it accordingly from a world state menu.

I don't think it's even viable to give a selection of established world states for new players to select from (kind of like what Dragon Age 2 did if you didn't have a save state from Dragon Age: Origins). There's too much to filter down into one to three options. Because the story is continuous, even if Wayfarer exists as four games instead of one, the only way to play it will be to play from Game 1.

There's a lot of think about. Regardless, I am not going to be making any decisions on this front until Episode 3 is finished, which will still be a while from now.

Other News

If you're interested in [Wayfarer's 2023 calendar](#), it is still available until March 2! The file will be taken down after that day, so there is limited time left to get a copy. As of today, we have raised \$1,124 CAD, which will be donated to charity.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[Mar 8, 2023](#)

This will be the last sneak peek for a while! The Veyer branch is complete, which means I am starting the editing process and will be headed into coding soon. This is from the end of one of the variations of Veyer's branch, where the MC has to make an important decision.

Some conditionals:

- Aeran's romance is flagged and has relatively high approval
- MC trained with Cenric
- MC does not feel guilty about their tryst with Veyer



Ashani strides to the grove's edge, coming to a halt beside Aeran. Their dark hair ripples around them like a cloak, moving with a will of its own against the breeze. He stiffens, caught between the desire to move out of the way and the need to hide his discomfort. There is something daunting about the melusine's presence—their calm approach, the ancient composure that comes from more years lived than you can comprehend. Their quiet, commanding authority has silenced any further bickering or conversation. With their arrival, there is nothing left to wait for.

You approach the edge, one hand resting on the hilt of your sword, Veyer lingering at your side. You raise your head, staring upwards at the tower, Aeran a dark shadow in your peripheral vision. His bow, Taraniel glows on his back, the silver-white Alassar reflecting the dappled sunlight. He tugs absently at the bracer on his forearm, the one piece of his original equipment he did not discard after departing Rona. The reddish-brown leather stands out against the black, its finely crafted design embossed with Artanisian motifs. You would recognize it anywhere. It was Varyn's gift to him upon his induction into the Order—from one remaining Wayfarer archer to the last.

Does he miss her as much as you miss Cenric? You know nothing of her whereabouts, of course, but at least he has the hope that she is somewhere out there. Aeran's relationship with Varyn has always been different from other Wayfarers. You didn't think much of it as an apprentice, but looking back on it now... There was something that bound them together in a way that went past master and apprentice. While you were chosen by Cenric, Aeran was entrusted to Varyn. There was never any question about who would train him.

Too much has happened in the past twenty-four hours, you can barely keep your head from spinning. How did it come to this? No matter how furious you are with him, you can't rid yourself of the deep ache coursing through you—mind, body, and soul.

Two years. Two years since the dusty outskirts of Karth, two years since he dragged himself through bloodstained salt and sand to enter your life once more. The joy and relief you felt back then... Not only that you finally, *finally* had confirmation of another survivor, but that it was him.

And now circumstances may force you to lose him forever.

1. He doesn't deserve your forgiveness. He never will.

2. You can't do this any longer. If you need to take the first step to make amends, then you will. You have no other choice.

1. He doesn't deserve your forgiveness. He never will.

The thought is savage, but you feel strangely tranquil now that you've made your peace. He is not the friend you thought he was. He is not the man you thought you loved. Perhaps a part of you will always love him, in a way, but that love has become rank and rancid, rotting away to reveal the sickly core within. Any compassion you may have had for him has eroded away, consumed by bitter loathing.

The only solution is a clean break.

The way forward is clear. Finish the job. Retrieve the Astral. This will be the last you see of Aeran Kellis.

Continue.

2. You can't do this any longer. If you need to take the first step to make amends, then you will. You have no other choice.

Your heart clenches as you come to your decision. You won't apologize for Veyer, but the truth of the matter is that they are not the cause of this mess, they are simply an addendum. You and Aeran have both made mistakes. And though you were ready to sink deeper into anger and loathing, now you find yourself exhausted. Seeing him here, confronting him...

You feel numb.

Perhaps you've been too harsh on him. He has treated you unfairly, yes, but whatever happened to him at the Spire has left him deeply scarred. You can't push him on it, you understand that now.

You can't lose him. Not like this. You love him. And while it could be that the time for the two of you has passed you by, you're not prepared to let him go.

Continue.

[Mar 13, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Happy March! I hope you are all having a good month. This will be a quick update to get some things in order.

Current development is on track for getting an update out near the end of the month/early April. All content for the Veyer branch is finally complete and Aeran's is edited. This week I am starting the editing process on Veyer's content and will likely have to revisit some of Aeran's content. Once that is finished, it can go off to my editor while I work on bug fixes and some background code overhauls in preparation for the patch.

Once edits are finished, I need to code the material and get it into the game. After that, it will be off to the playtester team for a few checks before it is released on the alpha.

As a reminder, the next update is a partial one and will *only* include playable content if you did specific routes at the end of Episode 2. This includes:

- Sleeping with Veyer
- Reconciling with Aeran (either the friendship or romance version)
- Breaking your romance or friendship with Aeran at the end of the reconciliation scene
- Aeran's low romance if you go back to the apartment early (meaning you must decline to go to Mel's party or decline Veyer; it doesn't matter whether you confront Aeran in his room or not, that variation is accounted for)

Once the update is out, I'll be able to turn my focus to the rest of Episode 3 Part 1 and start work on the Mel branch and the miscellaneous branch that acts as a catch-all for all other Ep 2's endings.

Other Updates

The Wayfarer 2023 Calendar was a huge success! All together we raised \$1094.54 USD, which has been donated to the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice. I am so honoured that the calendar was a huge hit, and I'm so thankful to everyone involved for their passion and excitement for this project.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕 I'm looking forward to getting the update out and to be starting the next leg of Wayfarer's development!

[Progress Report 2023.03.29: Coding Update](#)

[Mar 29, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Just a quick update to round out March. The editing and proofing process on the Aeran and Veyer branches is complete. I have also finished all of the updated required for the next patch, rebalanced Aeran's low romance, fixed a bunch of variable issues, excised additional coding that was clogging some stuff up in Episode 2, and fixed the backlog of reported bugs and typos.

I have started coding Episode 3. This is the largest amount of content I have attempted to edit and code in one go, so it is taking me longer than usual and I can't correctly estimate how long it will take (I typically work in smaller sections of 80k words, but these two branches together total around 350k). Once coding is finished, the update will need to be passed to the playtesters before it is ready for patrons. Due to the size of the update there will likely be many bugs and various issues and I would like to crack down on as many of those before I release it to you.

I am working a little slower than usual as I haven't properly coded anything since October and I am a little rusty on much of the documentation. I got a new computer in December and my cheat sheet documents got lost in the transfer, so I've had to rebuild that from scratch. The new Twine editor has also given me some trouble with its new UI and the omission of some necessary tools. After a bunch of experimenting, I've reverted to an earlier release. I am potentially looking into using Visual Studio Code with Twee extension to make the game instead, but there are things about the Twine editor that I vastly prefer, even if it's a little temperamental from time to time.

Because I am coding the next update, I will not have any sneak peeks to share until I start writing new material. Short stories and additional bonus content remain on hold, but if you are in a tier that has access to those benefits, there's a backlog of old content that can be found in their tags ([short stories here](#), [bonus content here](#)).

As a reminder, once the update is out, everyone will have to start their playthroughs over from the beginning. Loading old saves WILL result in errors.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[Progress Report 2023.04.15: Coding Update](#)

[Apr 15, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

This is a quick update on the status of Episode 3 Part 1. Aeran's branches are fully coded and I will be moving onto Veyer's branches on Monday. This was a lot of work (around 189k words of content to code!) and I'm at the halfway mark, which is a little behind schedule. It may take me another two weeks to get Veyer's content finished, and then I need at least a week to do an initial round of bug testing before I can release the update. This is going to push a potential release date to the very end of April, if not early May.

I have been sharing little bits of the process and the developing story map on the Patreon Discord server. If you're interested in that and haven't joined, feel free to join us!

I am hoping to get bonus content out this month. It will likely be a video about how I actually code the game and the different systems and shortcuts I use to make the process a little easier. I'm not sure when this will be released, but it will contain spoilers for the Veyer branch.

As mentioned in my last report, I will not have sneak peeks to share until I start writing new material. Short stories remain on hold, but if you are in a tier that has access to those benefits, there's a backlog of old content that can be found in the short story tag.

As a reminder, once the update is out, everyone will have to start their playthroughs over from the beginning. Loading in an old save will result in errors.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[Progress Report 2023.05.01: Where Are We At?](#)

[May 1, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Happy May! To start things off, I wanted to apologize for how long it's taking for this alpha update to come out. Estimations remain really hard to do, and, at the end of the day, there's +350k words of content to code which is a *lot* of content. I've made very good progress, but it's hard not to be frustrated at how slow things are going as I know how long you've been waiting. Episode 2 released on the alpha build in May last year. It wasn't my intention to take a whole year between episodes (and not even

complete ones at that – there's still the rest of Part 1 to go, and Parts 2 and 3 to complete). But I have been in varying stages of burnt out since September, and trying to strike that balance between progression and not burning myself out more is very difficult.

This is where the update currently stands:

- ✓ Fixed all reported bugs and rebalanced Aeran's approval and romance flags in preparation for the next public build patch (the patch hasn't been added to the game yet, so you WILL be required to replay when the update comes out)
- ✓ All of Aeran's Episode 3 Part 1 branches are coded and complete
- ✓ 1 / 2 of Veyer's Episode 3 Part 1 branches is coded

This is what I have left to do:

- ✗ Finish coding the second Veyer branch
- ✗ Test the new content and do some additional fixes
- ✗ Release the update for the playtesters
- ✗ Playtest the update
- ✗ Release the Episode 3 update on the alpha build
- ✗ Release the patch (bug fixes and approval rebalance) to the public build

I am not going to attempt to estimate when the update will be ready as estimations tend to add more pressure and make me more stressed about getting the update out on time. If you're interested in sporadic updates about how the coding process is going, I share those details in the #alpha-general channel of my Patreon's Discord server!

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[Progress Report 2023.05.12: An Update About the Update](#)

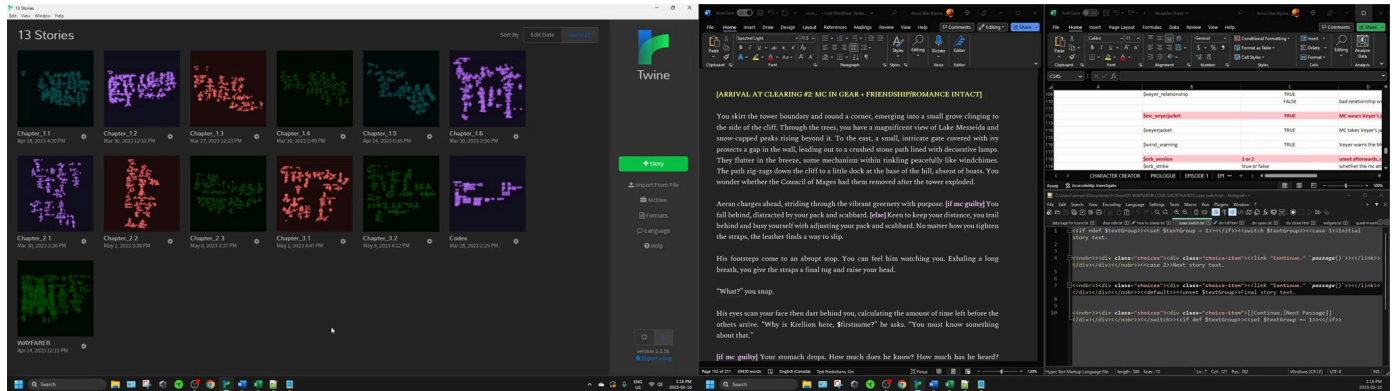
[May 12, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Good news! I finished coding all of the current Episode 3 content on Wednesday, which means I am inching closer towards an update. I am currently in the midst of polishing and bug fixing before the patch goes to the playtesters for testing. There are a lot of behind-the-scenes balances with approval, rapport, and other relationship flags that I need to sort out and make some hard decisions on since I was on the fence about how severe some approval changes need to be. I also need to do some general polishing and run the new files through the SugarCube validator to catch major errors. So, there is still a lot of work ahead!

At the moment, I can't say when the alpha update will happen but I am much closer to it now than I was before. Fingers crossed for the end of May, depending on how bug testing and polishing go.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💖



[Come Code With Me](#)

[May 16, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

This month's bonus content is a video on the behind-the-scenes processes of how coding a game like Wayfarer actually works. I recorded this last week when I was working on Veyer's branch, so the on-screen material does contain spoilers for the upcoming alpha release.

Because the resolution fits two monitors (3840 x 1080), this is best viewed in fullscreen. Also, I was having technical difficulties with both my microphone and my video editing software, so apologies in advance for the audio issues.

Enjoy! 💖

[Progress Report 2023.05.17: Alpha Release Date!](#)

[May 17, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

The alpha update is officially off for playtesting! If all goes well, the alpha build will be updated with Episode 3 Part 1 on **May 26 (next Friday)**. Just a few reminders about the update:

Only Aeran and Veyer's branches will be playable. This includes the following Episode 2 endings:

- Aeran's romance reconciliation
- Aeran's friendship reconciliation
- Breaking off your friendship or romance with Aeran in the apartment after the fight
- Aeran's low romance (if you did not attend Melchior's party)

What is **not** included:

- Any of Melchior's or Kit's endings
- Drunk route
- Miscellaneous endings if the MC returns to their apartment after going to Melchior's party

You must also start a NEW SAVE FILE with this update. Using old saves will break your continuity and result in gameplay errors.

The update will include approximately 373,000 words of new content. However, an average playthrough is around 21,000 words, which means there is a significant amount of variability and you will only see a fraction of the content on a single playthrough. Replays with different options and choices are encouraged!

Because the material is new and will still be in the process of being playtested, you may be required to restart saves from a certain point. It is highly recommended to make saves at transition points between episodes. Always backup your saves to your device using Save to Disk.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[Wayfarer Alpha Release Version 1.1.3. Patch 3.4.](#)

[May 26, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Episode 3 Part 1 has been released! This is a massive 370,000 words update that adds new exclusive content to the alpha build. Currently, there are 5 playable routes:

- Aeran's romance reconciliation
- Aeran's friendship reconciliation
- Breaking off your MC's friendship or romance with Aeran at the apartment
- Aeran's low romance (if you do not go to Melchior's party)
- Sleeping with Veyer
- All other routes (Melchior's endings, Kit's endings, drunk route, etc.) are **not** part of this update and will lead to an Under Construction page.

An average playthrough of the new content is around 21,000 words. This means that a single run will only show you about 5% of the available content.

Alpha Build Stats

Episodes Released: Prologue, Episode 1, Episode 2, Episode 3 Part 1

Average Word Count Per Playthrough: 177,000 words (approximate)

Average Playtime: 9.4 hours

Total Cumulative Word Count: 1,300,999 words (approximate)

Alpha Build Access

Link: <https://idrellegames.itch.io/wayfarer-alpha-build> **Password: * * 42xb8d6RBI1bf4LW

Due to ongoing issues surrounding leaks and pirated releases of IF games, this is a reminder that you are **NOT ALLOWED** to share the alpha build's password. This is highly disrespectful to my work. If you share it, you will be permanently blocked from my Patreon and banned from all Wayfarer's Discord servers and social media.

Saves & Your Playthroughs

You **MUST** restart your playthrough from the beginning of the game. Old saves will not work with the new build and they will result in continuity and approval errors.

As this build is a work in progress, it is highly recommended that you make multiple manual using Save to Disk and store them on your device rather than your browser. Always save when prompted. You may be required to restart from Episodes 1 or 2 as various bugs are fixed in Episode 3.

The Autosave occasionally loads incorrect metadata. It is always wiser to load a save made using Save to Disk.

Credits

If you are in the Apprentice tier and above, your benefits include being credited in the game credits. Going forwards, I am only crediting Patrons via their Patreon username. If you wish to be credited under a different name, you must contact me in order to make a change.

Bugs

Bugs must be reported through the Patreon Discord server. All reports must include a screenshot of the passage where the error occurred and the passage title (viewable in the UI header).

Patch Notes - June 30, 2023

- Adjusted Solarath approval range in Episode 2. It is now capped from 20 to 75. You do not need to restart your playthroughs for this fix as it will fix itself naturally when you encounter the next Solarath approval change.
- Fixed errors on some passage loads in Episode 3 and various other coding or closing tag issues.
- Fixed some issues with the inventory.
- Fixed errors with notifications not appearing or appearing as the wrong notification.
- Various continuity fixes on Veyer and Aeran's branches.
- Various grammar and typo fixes.

Patch Notes - June 5, 2023

- Fixed some broken code in Aeran's Episode 3 low romance branch in that prevented the player from progressing.
- If you encounter a bug that blocks you from continuing because of *cannot set properties of undefined (setting 'fate')*, there is an error in your save file's metadata. This is usually caused by loading a save from an older version of the game or a different build. The only way to correct the error is to begin a new playthrough. Please make sure you close the game and open it in a new window or tab to ensure you are playing on the most recent patch.
- Various small continuity fixes.
- Various fixes for repeat lines/passages.
- Various spelling, grammar, and display fixes.

Patch Notes - May 30, 2023

- Broken link with an Aeran romance option in Episode 1 is now fixed.
- Fixed broken continue links on Veyer's route if you remained in your gear. The scene should be able to progress now.
- Fixed accidental Aeran romance gain on friendship path if the MC kissed Veyer. **If you did this route, you will want to start your Episode 3 save over.**
- Fixed variable that controls whether the MC met Allegra in Episode 2. **You must restart your playthroughs from the save point between Episode 2 and Episode 3 for the change to take effect.**
- Various small continuity fixes.
- Various fixes for repeat lines/passages.

- Various spelling, grammar, and display fixes.

Patch Notes – May 26, 2023

Gameplay Fixes

- The player should no longer gain unintended romance points with Aeran when on the friendship path.
- Aeran's romance has been rebalanced and a variety of flags added for tracking continuity. This will primarily affect low (under 60) romance routes.
- Aeran's approval and romance ranges have been locked to a range of 5-95 instead of 0-100. The only time his romance will be recorded as 0 is if the MC either breaks off their romance or their relationship deteriorates enough to remove his romance flag.
- Veyer's impression points now are locked to a range, preventing them from going below 0.
- You can no longer access saves when the game menus are open. This is to prevent an error that caused players to be unable to close the Journal after loading a save made when the Journal was open.
- The alpha build now includes the passage title in the UI header. This is displayed for bug testing purposes.

Lore/Character

- Alassar is no longer capitalized
- Magic classifications are no longer capitalized (i.e. dustforger, brightwarden, not Dustforger or Brightwarden), but specialized jobs remain capitalized (Brightblade, Wayfarer, etc).

New Content

- Episode 3, Part 1 added to the alpha build. This includes Aeran's branch and Veyer's branch. Melchior's branch, drunk branch and the miscellaneous branches are in development.

Other

- Various spelling/grammar fixes.

[Bug Report, Hotfixes, Discord & Password Sharing](#)

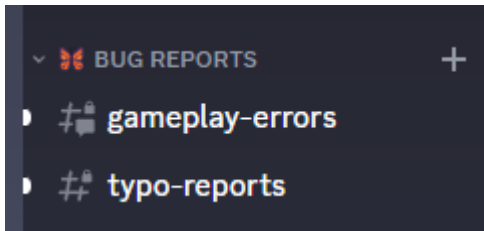
[May 29, 2023](#)

Hi all,

I hope you are all enjoying the alpha update! I wanted to go over a few things very quickly in regards to bugs and bug reporting.

Bug Reports

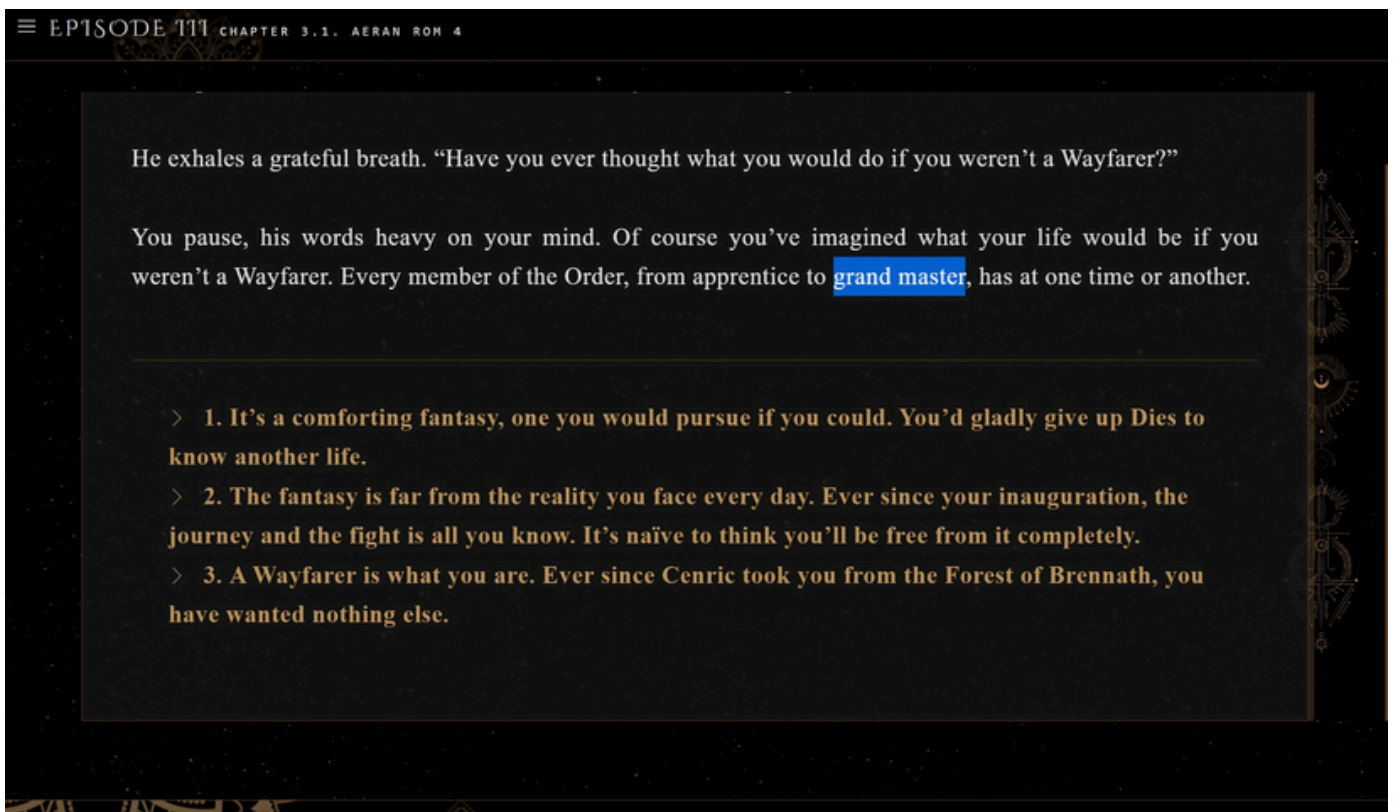
All bugs must be reported through Wayfarer's Patreon Discord server. The appropriate channels are located in the Bug Report category.



There are two channels:

- **#gameplay-errors** is for high and medium priority bugs related to coding issues, approval and continuity errors, etc.
- **#typo-reports** is for low priority spelling and grammar mistakes

All reports must be made with a screenshot that includes the error and the passage title (located in the top bar). It will look something like this:



I cannot accept bug reports through any other means. At the moment there is no way for you to file bug reports if you do not have a Discord account.

Please do not DM me bug reports through my Patreon messages. This makes it very difficult to log and file them properly.

Hotfixes

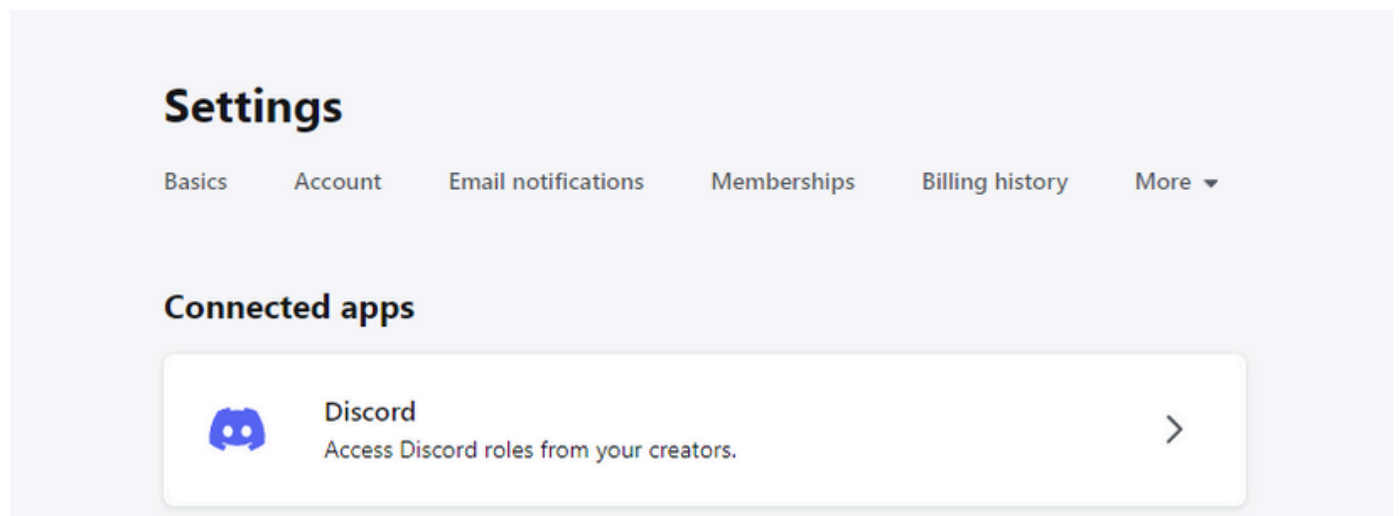
The Wayfarer alpha build is an alpha build. This means that there *will* be bugs, and sometimes they will be game-breaking. I will do my best to fix them as quickly as possible, but I am only one person and some bugs are too complicated to fix in a day. If you encounter a bug that prevents you from proceeding, load an earlier save and try different dialogue options for the time being.

If you keep the game running in a tab, ALWAYS refresh your tab or close the game and re-open it in a new one when a hotfix is released. This will ensure the game updates and you are playing on the newest patch.

To avoid playing on the wrong version, I highly recommend closing your tab or browser when you're done your playthrough session. This will help prevent update errors.

Connecting Your Discord and Patreon Accounts

To access Wayfarer's Patreon Discord server, your Discord and Patreon accounts must be connected. You can do so through your Settings:



Settings > More (dropdown menu on the far right) > Connected apps

Select Discord. Once selected, you should reach a page that looks like this and you will be able to connect your Discord account.

Settings

Basics Account Email notifications Memberships Billing history More ▼

< Apps

Discord Access



Discord

Connected to Idrelle#6762

Disconnect

Available servers

There are no servers available for you to join.

If you are already connected to access Discord benefits for a different Creator's Patreon, you may need to Disconnect and reconnect your account.

Once connected, the Patreon bot will automatically add you to the server and assign you roles depending on what tier level you pledged at. As Discord benefits are for active patrons only, the Patreon bot will remove your roles when your sub runs out and you will lose access to the server's channels.

As a last resort, I can manually add you to the server through invite links. However, I would prefer not to do this if at all possible. If you are having issues connecting your account, please troubleshoot as much as possible on your own before requesting an invite link.

Alpha Build Password

The alpha build's password will be updated frequently to ensure the build stays private and reduce the potential for password sharing. If you cannot access the build, always check the pinned post at the top of my Patreon for the current password.

The pinned post will always include patch notes for the most recent patch or hotfix. This will inform you about whether you need to restart saves from a certain point.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let me know!

[Progress Report 2023.06.05: Back to Writing](#)

[Jun 5, 2023](#)


Hi friends,

Just a quick update as we roll into June. I will be periodically updating the alpha build with patches and hotfixes as I process bug reports. Patch notes can be viewed either in the pinned post at the top of my Patreon (it's at the end of the post) or in the **#alpha-changelist** on the Patreon Discord server.

If all goes well and nothing major is broken, I will be starting Episode 3 Part 2 tomorrow. Part 2 encompasses the unfinished branches not included in Part 1—this includes Melchior and Kit's endings, drunk route, and the remaining miscellaneous endings. Melchior's branch already has some text written, so I will be focusing on this first.

Weekly sneak peeks will be returning once I have enough new content that merits sharing.

For patrons in the Apprentice tier and above, I am hoping to get a bonus content essay about IF development out this month. I'm not sure when, as working on Melchior's branch takes priority. For patrons in the Wayfarer tier and above, I am outlining a handful of short stories to work on over the summer. Fingers crossed that I will be able to return to creating those soon.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 

[Progress Report 2023.06.20.: Picking Away At Things](#)

[Jun 20, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

I hope you are all having a splendid June! I am working away at the next section of Episode 3, but it will be a while before I have anything to share from it. I have a couple of other Patreon pieces that I am working on as well for bonus content, so there are a number of things keeping me quite busy!

The playtester team has recently been expanded and I am tackling bug reports as they come in. Keep an eye out for a new patch sometime next week. As always, the patch notes will be available in the pinned post at the top of my Patreon as well as in the **#alpha-changelist** channel in the Patreon Discord server.

As we are coming up on the end of the month, just a quick reminder that the alpha build's password is changed on a month-to-month basis. If you have trouble accessing the build, always check the pinned post for the updated password.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[When Less Is More: Player Characters, Customization and Leaving Room for Headcanon](#)

[Jun 28, 2023](#)

There is no element more important to an RPG than the Player Character. As the player's avatar, they are the focal point of the whole experience. It is through them that the player gets to explore the world and the characters who inhabit it.

For most games, this means that the player is playing as a pre-established character—boot up the Witcher or Horizon series and you are walking in Geralt of Rivia or Aloy's shoes. By playing as them, you not only experience the world they inhabit, but you also have a hand in how their journeys unfold. Depending on the choices you make, you may see different angles of their characterization, but at the end of the day they are always the same character. Regardless of who is playing the game, they are always going to go through the character arc crafted for them by the game's writers.

But then, of course, there is the whole subgenre of RPGs where the player character is player *created*. While the overarching story may remain the same, one player's character will be vastly different from another's. The intention here is to give as many avenues for roleplay as possible. Because interactive fiction games are text-based and there is no visual avatar for the player, they can theoretically have more diverse and more in-depth options than any other type of RPG. It is quite simple to have a list of boxes for the player to check, determining everything from basic details to incredibly specific traits.

But what does customization look like in practice? What does that checklist do? How does the player's selection impact the game? How much flavour text is determined by the player's character creator choices? How many choices? How much does the game shift depending on what they've chosen? And how is that choice ultimately reflected in game?

When it comes to customization, you generally want to strive for those options actively *doing* something. Variety and customizability is a good thing, but it can be very easy to get carried away with it. You can have a long list of options, but if they only become a list of character traits on a character page and don't actually have any utility, that breadth of customization becomes hollow. To give your CC options substance, you need to have some basic definition.

Some of these differences are straightforward, such as elements that often do not have much of an impact on the PC's existence within the game's world—physical appearance (hair colour, eye colour, etc.), gender, presentation (clothing choices, tattoos, scars). Others are more complex—race/ancestry, origin, personality, morality, relationships.

With this in mind, one could assume that the more fleshed-out an option is in-game, the better the customization, and therefore the better the roleplay experience. However, there is a point where too much definition impedes roleplay rather than supports it.

Crafting a roleplayable player character is a bit like making a colouring book. You need to create the picture—give the broad strokes, some outlines, and some direction. There may even be the assumption that some colours should go in certain places. But once the book is in someone else's hands, it's their prerogative to do whatever they want with it. They can colour all their tree trunks purple. Make the grass red. Or the sea yellow. They can colour neatly inside the lines or out of it.

Colouring books are like player imagination. It is broad and infinite and you really don't know what someone is going to do with your creation. It is impossible to account for player imagination in text, but that doesn't mean you should limit its potential completely. This is where leaving room for headcanon comes in.

Headcanons are integral to roleplay. These are the ideas and concepts that the player creates for their character, fleshing them out beyond the boundaries of the text. But because headcanons specifically do not exist within the game itself, it is easy to dismiss them as less than the defined, concrete parts. But roleplay doesn't exist without some degree of headcanon. The player utilizing what exists in the text as a jumping off point to define their character for themselves is a very personal part of having a player-created character in the first place.

And I think there are times when giving room for the player to headcanon makes for a better player experience than outright defining it in the text.

Take family, for example. In *Wayfarer*, the PC can come from six different origins, all of which imply different types of relationships with their family. But how far this implication goes or how it is interpreted is up to the player. There is room for the player to imagine what they want, and this will be different for all players. Did they have a close relationship with their family? Were they distant? Was their family neutral to their lack of magic—or did they hate it? What was their family makeup like? Were they from a single-parent home? Did they have two mothers? Two fathers? Was their family unit large, encompassing grandparents and aunts and uncles and cousins? Did they have none of this?

Because there's so much potential for variety here, *Wayfarer* cannot define the MC's family for the player. To give it definition—these are your parents' names, here's your sibling, your cousins, and the type of relationships you have with them—takes away from the roleplay experience and moves it closer to the experience of playing a pre-determined character. However, if the game *did* define those elements, then they could be used concretely later in game (i.e. using the MC's family in a later subplot

and having them actually show up). But that would mean selecting specific iterations and applying them to all player characters, across the board.

There's a balance here. On one hand, there are the practicalities of customization. I, as the writer, can't see into the players' head, know what they are imagining, and then reference that in text. In order to reference something and actually use it in-game, it has to be concrete: your hair is black, your eyes are brown, your heritage is half-aeda, you have a scar on your knee from falling out of a tree.

But on the flip side, leaving room for headcanon gives the player more flexibility to personalize their character in a way that is meaningful to them. Your heritage is half-aeda, but which parent was aeda and which was human? What kind of relationship did you have? You got a scar from falling out of a tree, but what were you doing up there in the first place?

Now, of course, I could take the time to define that for the player, but ultimately there will be options that would be missed. Character traits and elements pile up quickly and it isn't possible to account for everything. Eventually, you will have to make a decision about what elements you want to define and which ones you do not. And the more you define, the closer you are to making a pre-established character rather than a player-created one.

Ultimately with player-created characters, you want to have choices that are vaguely specific—just enough definition to guide the player down the right path and to have a CC option feel like a substantial choice, but with enough room to allow the player to imagine things on their own terms. Headcanons are a part of roleplay, and creating an environment that can support them and not contradict them later down the line (within reason) is key to creating a solid, roleplayable character that feels unique to the player.

[Progress Report 2023.07.06.: More Writing & A Creator Q&A](#)

[Jul 6, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

I hope you're all having a great July! This will be another quick update since I don't have too much to discuss about development at this point. June was almost solely devoted to bug fixing. I released a new alpha patch on June 30th that corrects some errors; you can find the patch notes on the [pinned post here](#) and on the alpha build's itch.io page.

There will still be things to correct as the playtester team finds more errors, but I am going to set that aside for a little bit so I can focus on writing new content. I've returned to working on Melchior and Kit's

Episode 3 branch but haven't progressed too far yet. It's too soon to tell when the next round of content will be finished and I can code Episode 3 Part 2; it will likely take me the full summer to write.

In the meantime, I am hosting another Creator Q&A! It's been a while since I last did one of these (previous ones can be found [under this tag](#)).

You can submit questions to the [form here](#) or in the comments of this post. I'll keep the form open until July 27 and then record the Q&A for release at the end of the month.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[Episode 3 Part 2, Sneak Peek #1](#)

[Jul 8, 2023](#)

Sneak peeks are back! I am working on Melchior's Episode 3 paths. This is the starting section if the MC chooses to end their evening by drinking with him in the courtyard.



*You drank too much last night and will suffer for it this morning. Until the end of the day, you are **Hungover**. Perception and Persuasion skills are decreased by 2.*

You wake with a foggy mind and a stabbing pain in your head.

The morning sun's rays beat down upon you, the light uncomfortably bright even through your closed eyes. Groaning, you twist around and bury your face in your elbow. Your back aches, your body complaining at the slightest movement. The divan you fell asleep on sags beneath your weight and your feet dangle off the end. It is far from comfortable, but anything is better than sitting upright right now.

Your stomach churns. Birds chirp in the distance and the sound of lapping water pounds in your ears, each beat only adding to your headache. An unwanted breeze prickles your skin, sending shivers down your spine. Despite it being the height of the Velantian summer, you are freezing in your abberan. The damp silks twist around your body, clinging to your skin, and the fine—or previously fine—jacket does little to protect you from the cold. The whole thing reeks of alcohol.

“\$firstname.”

A voice floats somewhere above you. Groggy, you roll over in response, eyes squeezed tight against the blaring sun. A wave of nausea slams into you.

"\$firstname."

Oblivious to the voice, you clamp your mouth tight and force it down. Vomiting now would only make things worse.

The voice sighs heavily and a weight sinks into the divan beside you. "I'm going to have a word with Sabriel about that shit you drank, aren't I." The withering tone is impossible to ignore. "Come on. Up you get. I have something that will make it feel better—if you care to stomach it."

[CHOICE] 1. "...don't baby me, I'm not a child."

2. Get up.

3. Lie there and contemplate the consequences of your actions.

"Darling, considering the amount you drank last night, I'd be concerned if you were."

You slap a hand over your eyes. How can the sun be so bright?

"And if this is what you call babying, something is, quite frankly, wrong with you. I look after me and mine, which includes you now whether you like it or not."

You grunt.

"Besides, there's an angry woman with a sword in the foyer looking for you. I have the feeling she won't be pleased when she finds you out here with a hangover."

Your hand slips off your face and your crack your eyes open. Kit's face swims in front of you—she looks about as good as you feel. Her curly black hair is a dishevelled halo around her head and a sallow colour creeps into her cheeks. Dressed in someone else's shapeless tunic and mismatched robe, she cradles a mug in one hand, swilling its contents absently as she looks you up and down.

"Angry woman?" you croak.

She nods. "Human, black clothes, ashen hair. Could probably kill with a look. Sabriel thinks she's Lady Anaxas' bodyguard."

Malsara. Ugh. She must be here to collect you. Unfortunately you're not hungover enough to forget about the mission.

"Do you need a way out? Sabriel's stalling. Just say the word and we can handle it."

"I wish." You groan and push yourself up, the sudden rush of blood pounding in your head. "But it's best not to get in her way, trust me on that."

Kit gives you a strained smile and shoves the mug into your hands. "You'll want to drink all of that," she says pointedly.

You roll your eyes. "What did I say about babying me—"

"Just drink it. You'll thank me later."

You raise the mug, resting the lip against your mouth. The contents smell awful. "You do remember what I am, right? Some foul potion's magic isn't going to cure my hangover."

"Good thing I know a talented alchemist whose specialty lies somewhere beyond foul potions. Believe me when I say Felix Navorre knows his way around an ingenious tonic or two. And all completely magic free. Even us non-magiani know that not all afflictions are best cured by magic."

1. Drink it. Even if it doesn't work, at least you did what you could to get rid of this godsdamn headache. Besides, Kit might just grab the damn thing and shove it down your throat if you refuse.

2. Give it back. You don't need her damn cure. It won't work.

[Episode 3 Part 2 Sneak Peek #2](#)

[Jul 15, 2023](#)

A section from Melchior's friendship ending, with flavour text for an MC who did gain romance points with him but did not pursue his tryst scene.



A door creaks open.

Reacting on instinct, you rise to your feet and fall into a defensive stance. Your muscles tense, a hand curling into a fist. A moment later, the door snaps closed and a familiar face peers around a pillar.

Kit stands on uneasy feet, her curly black hair a dishevelled halo around her head and a sallow colour creeping across her cheeks. Dressed in someone else's shapeless tunic and mismatched robe, with old makeup smeared around her eyes, she looks like she is in desperate need of a hangover remedy. Not one to give in that easily, she steadies herself against the pillar, smooths down her rumpled clothes, holds her head high, and marches barefoot across the courtyard.

“Good,” she says, making a face as she picks her way across the cool tiles. “You’re awake.”

You exhale and let yourself relax. “What’s wrong?”

She tosses a curtain of unbound curls over her shoulder. “Define *wrong* for me, please,” she says irritably, resting her hands on her hips. “There’s a woman with a sword and a nasty temper in the suite. She says she’s looking for you. Sabriel’s stalling—do you need a way out? Just say the word and we can handle it.”

Your brows drawn together in confusion. “Woman? What woman?”

She grimaces and flaps her hands. “Human, black clothes, ashen hair,” she replies hurriedly. “Could probably kill with a look. Sabriel thinks she’s Lady Anaxas’ bodyguard.”

Shit.

You pass a hand across your face. She must mean Malsara. She was tasked with collecting you the morning of the mission. Looks like she’s found you.

“It’s fine,” you grunt, pushing past her. “I’ll handle her.”

She seizes your arm as you walk by, pulling you to a stop, and flinches as her magic seeps out of her. “So, she’s expected,” she remarks. “Could have mentioned it and saved us the scare. But I won’t pry into a Wayfarer’s affairs. Far too complicated and dangerous for little old me, I imagine.”

“What are you on about?”

“Oh, nothing. Only that I must admit I’m a little surprised. When he showed up with you on his arm last night, I expect the pair of you to—ah, shall we say... *go places*. If you take my meaning.”

Annoyance prickles in your chest. You would be a fool not to acknowledge that Melchior has an air about him that makes him deadly attractive. You would be even more of a fool not to acknowledge that you’re very close to falling for it. But you have your principles—there may have been a moment for it last night, but it wasn’t something you were keen to act upon. “That’s quite the assumption you’ve got there.”

“Not without reason, darling. Melchior has a history of these things. To put it plainly, he enjoys the company of others. He’s intrigued by people, regardless of their personal histories, associations, or social standings. Intimacy is how he shows that interest. I suspect all of us thought he would seduce you by night’s end. You certainly spent enough time out here alone.”

“No seduction, thanks. But maybe I did make a friend.”

“A friend?” She raises an eyebrow, a strange smile on her lips. “Frankly, that’s a relief. Melchior is a poor person to set your heart on. If it didn’t work for Lyr, it will work for no one.”

“You sound like you don’t approve of him.”

“You misunderstand me. I love Melchior dearly. I would put my life on the line for him if it came to that. But many misunderstand him and his intentions, through no fault of their own. Or his. Melchior moves at his own pace, in his own way, and the rest of us simply do our best to keep up.”

You pause, uncertain what to make of her words—or if there’s any point on fixating on them. You don’t know how you feel about Melchior. And considering you don’t plan to stay in Velantis for very long, it’s not like you’ll have time to figure it out.

[Progress Report 2023.07.18: Trying Something New](#)

[Jul 18, 2023](#)

Hi all,

I’m not entirely sure where to start this one. Writing has been very rough over the past couple of weeks. It’s not writer’s block, per se—I’m at a point in my career where I can typically work past writer’s block with persistence or by changing up my routine and schedule—but more how extremely drained the next stage of Episode 3 makes me.

I’ve been working on the episode’s opening since May of last year. Episode 3 Part 2 is supposed to be the other half of the Episode 2 endings, finishing off all of the variations that eventually lead the player to Diradan Tower. However, even though there are differences between the remaining routes (the various Melchior and Kit endings are going to be different than Aeran’s or Veyer’s, for example, because the MC is in a different location, with different people), I still have to hit the same story beats and divulge the same information as on the other branches.

Right now, I have no momentum. I get 500 words down, enough to cover maybe a single dialogue choice, and I run out of energy to continue. Even though there are differences, I am cycling through very similar content and I have no sense of forward progression. I feel like I am writing multiple drafts of the same thing, revisiting the same ideas over and over again. And while working in some kind of chronological order has been crucial for most of Wayfarer’s development and I am very hesitant to put unfinished routes on the backburner, I am considering that it may be time to do so.

I need to move onto the next section, even if it means leaving some of the starting routes unfinished and unplayable for the time being. I have very little joy in what I am writing right now; constructing Part 2 feels like a chore that needs to be done rather than something that I am invested in. I worry, too, that sneak peak content is going to get boring – even if I compose another 100k words, much of the content is going to be familiar if you’ve played the existing Episode 3 routes.

I've been struggling with bits and pieces of Part 2 since June and have very little to show for it. This isn't great in the grand scheme of things. Episode 3 was never supposed to take over a year to develop, but due to a lot of outside factors and how difficult this year has been for me emotionally and mentally, this is the situation I am in now. Word counts are arbitrary and should generally not be used as a marker of progression, but in this case – and on a project like this – they are. And it is very frustrating that I wrote over half a million words last year and this year, halfway through July, I've barely cracked 100k. It wasn't supposed to take three months to code Part 1, but it did.

The most difficult part of any long-term creative project is when you fall out of love with it. It hurts to not enjoy the thing you've devoted yourself to, and it can take a very long time to find reasons to love it again.


I am hoping that if I switch gears and jump ahead to the Diradan Tower events, I can get some semblance of momentum back. Action sequences unfold in a different way than other scenes. I desperately need a break from the dialogue loops and conversation cycles and repeating things I have already done, albeit in a different way because it's for a different continuity.

Episode 3 is the end of Act 1 and it has a lot riding on it, and the longer it takes, the more it feels like I hill I cannot climb. While it's possible switching tactics will not work out (and I am very, very hesitant to leave routes unfinished and come back to them later), I'm at a point now where I need to progress further into the episode, if only to feel like I am actually getting somewhere.

So, going forwards:

- I am going to spend this week revisiting my Episode 3 outlines and structuring out the tower sequence
- After outlining, my new written content will be focused on the events at the tower
- I'm going to see how far I get; if I run out of steam, I may go back to revisiting the unfinished Melchior/Kit and drunk/miscellaneous branches
- If this strategy works out, then all new sneak peeks will be Diradan Tower content
- I will likely continue working on Episode 3's later content and do Melchior/Kit and the drunk/miscellaneous branches at the very end. Which means that if you want to play Episode 3's content while it is in progress, you will be locked out of it unless you have a save file where you play either Aeran or Veyer's branches.

I don't really have much else to add other than I am crossing my fingers and hoping that I can spark something. Every project goes through a rough patch (or multiple rough patches); hopefully I can shake this one off soon.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 

Addendum – if you're interesting in participating in this month's Creator Q&A, check out [July 6th's progress report](#)! I will be closing the questions form on July 27.

[The Red Depths \[WIP Lore\]](#)

[Jul 29, 2023](#)

Deep below the Undercity lies a network called the Red Depths. Converted decades ago from dark, sprawling caverns to a majestic complex of brightly lit halls and walkways, it houses the most infamous and popular fighting pits in the Undercity. Its history is long and bloody, and inextricably tied to the criminal underworld.

Controlled by the Lavernai (the largest criminal organization in Velantis), the Red Depths entertain the masses in the form of competitive bouts. Though the fighters come from many walks of life—mercenaries, disgraced guards, exiled nobles, Undercity urchins—they all have one thing in common: personal debt to Titus Masarian, the Lavernai's leader. Some remain indebted to him their entire lives; others are eventually able to work off their debt and retire.

As with all fighting rings, the Red Depths are an illegal activity to which the Velantian government turns a blind eye.

The Fighters

There are thirty to forty fighters in Masarian's employ at any given time. Though the income they make is a pittance, most have achieved celebrity status on par with any actor, bard, or performer. Such celebrity can be used to trade in favours or to pay for food or drink at the local taverns. They are untouchable by Undercity society; threatening Masarian's fighters is considered the same as threatening Masarian himself and will draw the ire of the Lavernai.

Gambling plays a significant role in the fighting ring's structure. Fighters have known to throw fights depending on where bets are placed. If the request comes from Masarian himself, it cannot be refused.

Wealthy merchants or nobles from Velantis are known to pay a hefty sum to spend an evening with their favoured fighter. Due to tight control exerted over movement between the Undercity and Velantis and the ramifications of being caught, some wealthy patrons have personal (and illegal) portals that can transport them directly to private rooms in the caverns.

There has never been a magiani fighter in the history of the Red Depths.

The Bouts

Bouts occur six days a week, with afternoon and evening performances. There are many different rotations, including one on one fights, group fights, as well as battles with animals, monsters, or magical

contraptions.

Fights to the death are uncommon save in extreme circumstances. Masarian has invested much time and energy into training his warriors, and losing just one too soon could cause a loss of profit. A host of brightwardens are employed to heal any wounds suffered during the bouts; they have brought fighters back from the brink of death many times.

The Red Depths are the main source of entertainment in the Undercity outside of the gambling dens and leisure houses in the red-light district. Entrance costs a crown and both food and drink are free, conjured or crafted by the Lavernai's soulweavers and dustforgers. For the average Undercity resident, it is an easy place to get accessible good, water, and shelter, even if it means falling under the Lavernai's thumb.

Development Notes

Calla Tormond is currently one of Masarian's most prized fighters. The Red Depths will feature heavily in her introduction in Episode 4/Episode 5 (player choice dependent).

- Related reading: [The Undercity](#)

[Progress Report 2023.07.31: An Update](#)

[Jul 31, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Just a quick message for the end of July.

I've had some pretty serious family stuff happening this week. I am still struggling with Episode 3; I have most of my outlining done for the tower sequence, but I haven't written any content for it yet.

I have closed the Creator Q&A question form for now; thank you to everyone who submitted questions! Since I'm not capable of recording a podcast like I usually do for Q&As at this time, I'm postponing it until we're further into August.

As always, thank you all so much for your support. 💕

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peak #1](#)

[Aug 4, 2023](#)

Some brand new material from Part 3 to share! This is Aeran and the MC taking the most direct path to get into Diradan Tower.



Stone crunches beneath your feet as you march on in silence. Despite the breeze, the air feels oddly still as you approach the gate—almost as if it is holding its breath in anticipation. With the tension as tight as a bowstring, the only relief you have is the comfort of Aeran’s presence at your side.

The back of your neck prickles. Your hand strays to your side, thumbing the hilt of your sword, and slow your pace. You can’t shake the distinct feeling of being watched. Craning your neck, you chance a final look behind you at the grove. There has been little movement on the part of your companions, though judging from the tilt of their heads you are certain they are watching you like a hawk.

“You all right?” Aeran asks quietly.

You turn back. “Yeah.”

He smiles briefly. “Can’t imagine how bored out of their minds they must be. I wouldn’t want to stay put in one spot if I were them.”

“Not like they have much of a choice. Malsara would be shadowing us if it weren’t lethal.”

“Maybe she should have come with us. Wouldn’t put it past her to survive through sheer will alone.”

You catch his eye and the attempt at humour falls flat to you both. Aeran sighs, his shoulders sagging, and pulls ahead of you. Though you appreciate him trying to add some levity to the situation, the significance of what you are about to do is too great to ignore. As much as you would like to pretend this is just another mission, you know all too well that it is not.

Nervous, \$firstname? Good. I would be worried if you weren’t. Now accept it and put it to good use. No sense in worrying yourself to death before the action start. You’ll only strangle yourself. Can’t do your job if you’re suffocating, can you?

Sero’s voice comes to you unbidden. A memory from long ago, so far you can’t quite remember the circumstances. There is comfort in it, a reminder that even though you have lost them, they are still with you after all these years.

Pushing your unease aside, you quicken your pace to catch up with Aeran. He has arrived at the gate and is inspecting the intricate, wrought-iron bars. You exhale a breath and fold your arms, watching him

hunt through the abundant ivy for the lock. From here, you can see what awaits you on the other side: ruined gardens, statues defaced by falling debris, and broken stone and mortar hanging in the air like dust motes.

Aeran curses and pulls back, his hand and wrist scratched by the tendrils.

1. [STRENGTH] If you can remove the ivy, you should be able to get the gate off its hinges.

[CHOICE] 2. [AGILITY] Pick the lock with your dagger.

3. [LOCKPICKS] Pick the lock.

4. Inspect your surroundings and let Aeran deal with the gate.

“Here,” you say. “Let me do it.”

He shoots you a side-eyed glance. Rubbing the marks on his hand, he sighs and steps back, giving you space to work.

Withdrawing your dagger from your belt, you push the leaves and vines out of the way. The gate pulses with the throb of magic—not the wards erected to contain the disaster, but rather the simpler, familiar kind intended to keep unwanted visitors out of the premises. Shrugging it off, you reach through the bars and twist your hand around, pressing the tip of your dagger gently into the lock.

“Didn’t expect this from the Guild of Mages, to be honest,” you say, carefully rocking the blade up and down. Too much force and not enough precision and you’ll have to start over. “The greatest collective of minds and magical skill in Rhesainia and they’re still using mundane tools.”

“A last, half-hearted resort, more like—as is usually the case.”

A couple of shifts and twists and the lock clicks open with ease. Satisfied, you pull your hand back and sheathe your dagger.

“I’m starting to think we’ve chosen the wrong career path,” Aeran says as you yank the gate open. It swings forward on well-oiled hinges. Someone must have cared for it. Or perhaps it was the magic that did it.

You throw a look over your shoulder. “Hm?”

“Just saying that maybe we should have led a life of crime. Considering how easy it is to break and enter into high security establishments.”

“Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten what happened with the Viridian Lady already.”

“That was *one* instance—”

“Doesn’t speak well to our track record.”

He chuckles and shakes his head, his shoulder brushing against yours as he follows you through the gate.

[Bonus Content](#)

[Aug 11, 2023](#)

Hi folks,

I am planning the rest of this year's bonus content and I would like to get your opinion on the kind of bonus content you would like to see. Poll will be open for a week! 💖

Location lore

2

Magic system lore

4

History and/or culture lore

8

In-universe fables

7

Character and/or faction profiles

14

Bestiary entries

3

Writing tutorials and/or articles

4

Development/process articles

6

Coding tutorials

8

Something else (please let me know in the comments)

0

Poll ended Aug 19, 2023 · 56 votes total

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peak #2](#)

[Aug 11, 2023](#)

The flavour text of this passage uses the version for high romance or high friendship with Aeran.



Beyond the wall, the air is unnaturally still.

Gone is the lakeside breeze and the pleasant summer day. The sky turns to an acrid haze, casting a orange-yellow tint over everything. You inhale sharply, the scent of smoke and ash on your tongue, and hold your breath as you enter a garden. It is small, built to fill the space between two sprawling buildings. Where it once would have been a quiet place to read and relax, it is now all but ravaged. Flowerbeds sparkle with shards of glass from blasted-out windows. Stone benches are cracked in half, the broken pieces scattered across the path. A bronze statue decapitated by falling debris stands tall in a ring of shattered stone, its head nowhere in sight. A fountain pumps weakly in the central square, water trickling over the cracked rim and seeping into the ground. An oily substance oozes over everything, thick and viscous as it ripples off the surfaces.

Sweat rolls down your spine. You've witnessed something like this before, albeit in a very different time and a very different place. But it doesn't take much to vividly recall the wanton destruction of the Vestran Civil War and the ravaged cities it left behind.

Aeran slows to a stop beside you. "It's a lot to take in, isn't it," he says quietly.

You nod, your mouth too parched for a response. He watches you for a moment, concern in his eyes, and reaches for his flask, proffering it to you. You take it and gulp down mouthfuls of cool, fresh water as

you search for a place to sit down. You leans against the lip of the broken fountain and close your eyes, drinking slowly and deeply.

It is stifling here—the kind of sticky, humid heat that sears the way a fever would. You pause your furious drinking and rest Aeran’s flask against your lips, casting an eye at the burnt sky. You can spot the outline of the wards through the haze, a thin bubble encasing the complex and everything inside. They flicker in the orange-yellow light, sending sporadic cracks like lightning flashing across the dome.

You hadn’t expected this. For whatever reasons, you assumed the explosion’s aftermath would have dispersed by now, save for the shroud and whatever forces are keeping those shattered pieces afloat. There was no sign from outside the tower that the very air itself would still be alive with the aftershocks of destruction. Whatever forces are at play here are far beyond you.

Just another reminder that whatever the hell happened here is as much a mystery to the Guild as it is to everyone else.

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peak #3](#)

[Aug 25, 2023](#)



Further ahead you pass an arcade leading to the remains of a ruined library. Its arched windows are intact, but the grand doors are destroyed. Chunks of bronze sloughed off in rivulets to pool in the threshold, the scenes sculpted into their reliefs damaged beyond recognition.

Something sparks in the corner of your eye. You pivot, spine tingling, and search the arcade.

[CHOICE] 1. Investigate.

2. You don’t have time for this. Press on.

You take a step towards the library.

“\$name,” Aeran calls softly. The warning in his voice is clear.

You glance over your shoulder, squinting into the yellow-orange light. His brows are drawn together, a dark shadow passing across his face, the muscles of his arms tensed and ready to spring into action.

Though he is trying to hide it, his unease is palpable. He wants nothing more than to get in and out as quickly as possible, all other possibilities be damned.

The taste of ash lingers on your tongue. “Humour me, please, Aeran,” you say. “There’s something strange going on here.”

His teeth scrape his lower lip. “Do what you have to,” he replies. “Just... don’t take too long. We need to keep moving.”

“I know.”

You approach the library, stealing cautiously through the arcade’s arches. Aeran curses under his breath and follows, keeping his distance as he shadows you. You pause, putting your back to a pillar and crouching as you search the entrance. Though no living soul could have followed you through the barrier, you can’t shake the feeling someone else is here. It must be your ingrained habits, some instinctual part of your mind refusing to believe the truth you know.

You’re not used to this much silence. It sets your teeth on edge.

1. [PERCEPTION] Peer in through the doors and examine the inside of the library.

[CHOICE] 2. [PERCEPTION] Examine the windows.

3. [PERCEPTION] Scan the building for the light.

4. You’re done searching.

The library’s windows glitter in the orange-yellow light, the fractured stained glass clouded and dull. At first glance, you can’t see anything unusual about them, but upon closer inspection you find something odd. The outline of a humanoid shape is impressed upon the window—head, shoulders, even a hand with fingers spread wide, as if splayed against the surface.

Discomfort twists in your gut. You inspect a second window and find the same—vague impressions of people pressed into the glass. By the time you view the third window and discover more, you feel safe in the assumption that the rest will be the same.

You don’t know what you’re looking at. For all you know it could be nothing, a coincidence in how the explosion left its mark on the buildings. Sero would tell you not to get ahead of yourself, warning that an escalating imagination will only hamper your investigations. But they would also tell you that if your instincts are so certain of a possibility, you should listen to your gut.

And your gut tells you that these impressions were once people—echoes of Guild mages caught in their final seconds of life, their essence crystalized against these windows as they desperately tried to escape the oncoming deluge of magical energy.

You look away. The realization leaves you feeling sick to your stomach.

[Sep 10, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

I first wanted to apologize for the lack of regular updates. After a summer of trying to get Wayfarer back on track, development is still sitting much in the same place it was before. I have been trying a number of different strategies to kickstart things, but nothing has really clicked yet. It is stressful having development go stagnant—this time last year I definitely thought I would be finishing up Episode 4 and on my way to Episode 5 by this time this year. I am still writing, still struggling to get words onto the page and get the MC moving down their various paths. I had hoped that moving onto the tower sequence would help spark more writing than finishing the incomplete starting routes. And while it has definitely done that, I'm still moving very slowly through new content.

Moving forwards, I am going to go down to posting sneak peeks every 2 weeks instead of every week. I am not writing fast enough to justify showing new previews once a week as much of the content is going to start feeling repetitive because I'll be working on variations/sub-variations inside the different routes.

I am hoping to set aside a couple of weeks in October where I can work on creating a buffer for bonus content. I have a lot of plans about short stories and side content that I would like to create, but I have not had the time or energy to be able to put them together. Having a buffer is really important for a solo creator—if I create content in advance, then I will be able to stick to a monthly schedule. However, that does mean taking time away from writing the game. Related to that, I still have the questions submitted back in July for the Creator Q&A. I am going to save them for a later time; at the moment I don't have the time or the energy to do the Q&A the way I would like to, and I think it is maybe best to table it for now.

I would to finish Episode 3 by the end of the year, but at this point I'm not sure if that will be possible. It's a goal to strive for, but it may not be entirely realistic.

I did want to take some time to showcase what is going on behind-the-scenes here. There are some minor spoilers for what to expect in Part 3, so if you'd like to avoid that, now is the time to back out.

Part 3 can be divided into 2 parts: getting the MC and Aeran to the tower itself, then getting them into the Astrial's chamber. The journey there is not going to be a walk in the park as Diradan's environment is severely compromised. Depending on the path they select, there are many things to discover and investigate along the way.

Path A is the most direct route to the tower, but the MC will have to deal with a variety of events that could slow their progress. They can either walk right past them, or risk investigating them if they are

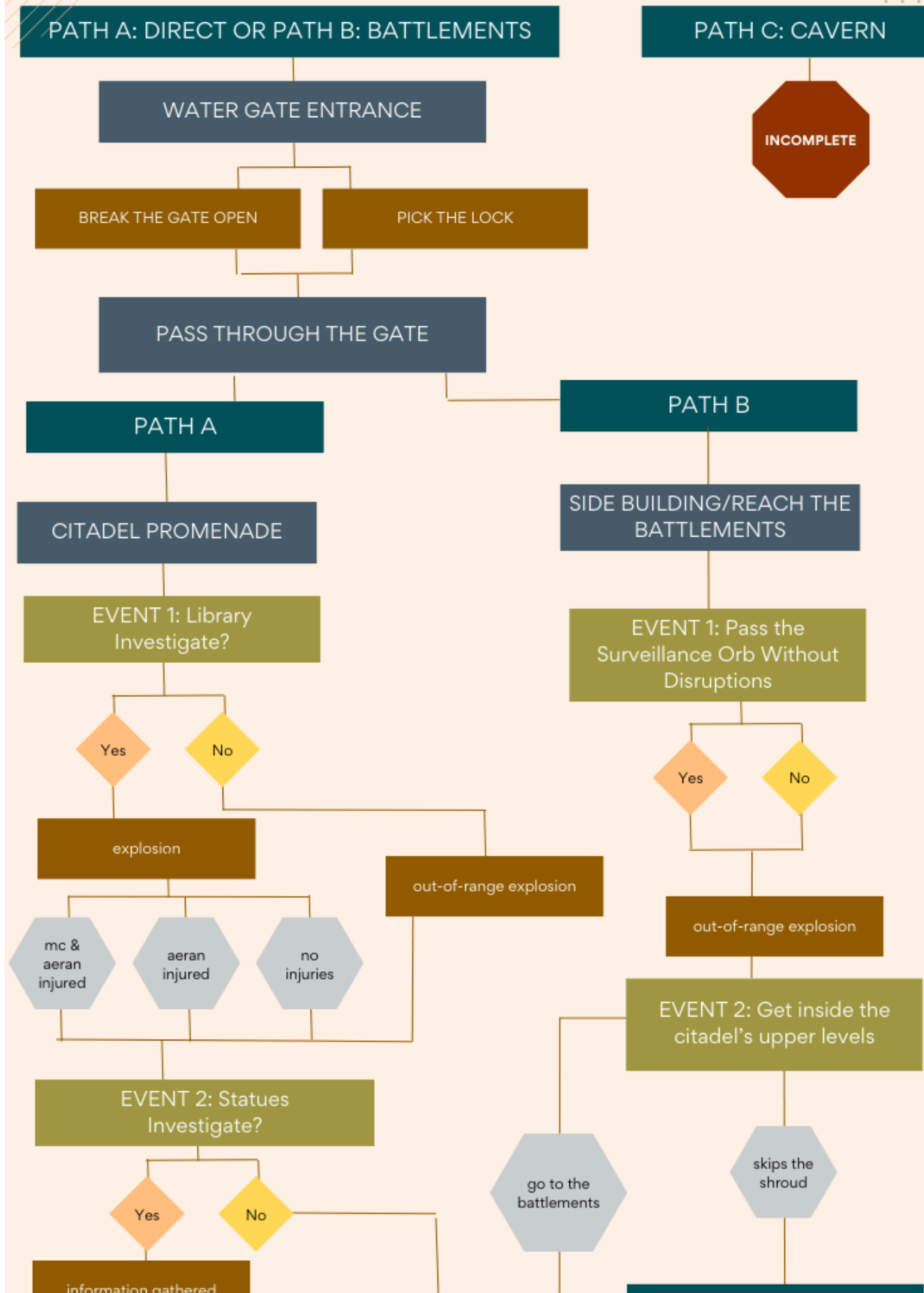
curious enough to try to figure out exactly what happened the day of the explosion. This is the path where they will also have to contend with the shroud early. There is risk of injury on this path, both for the MC and for Aeran, but taking those risks may let them walk away with information they would otherwise not get. The player can move from Path A onto Path B if their MC is aware of the path through the battlements.

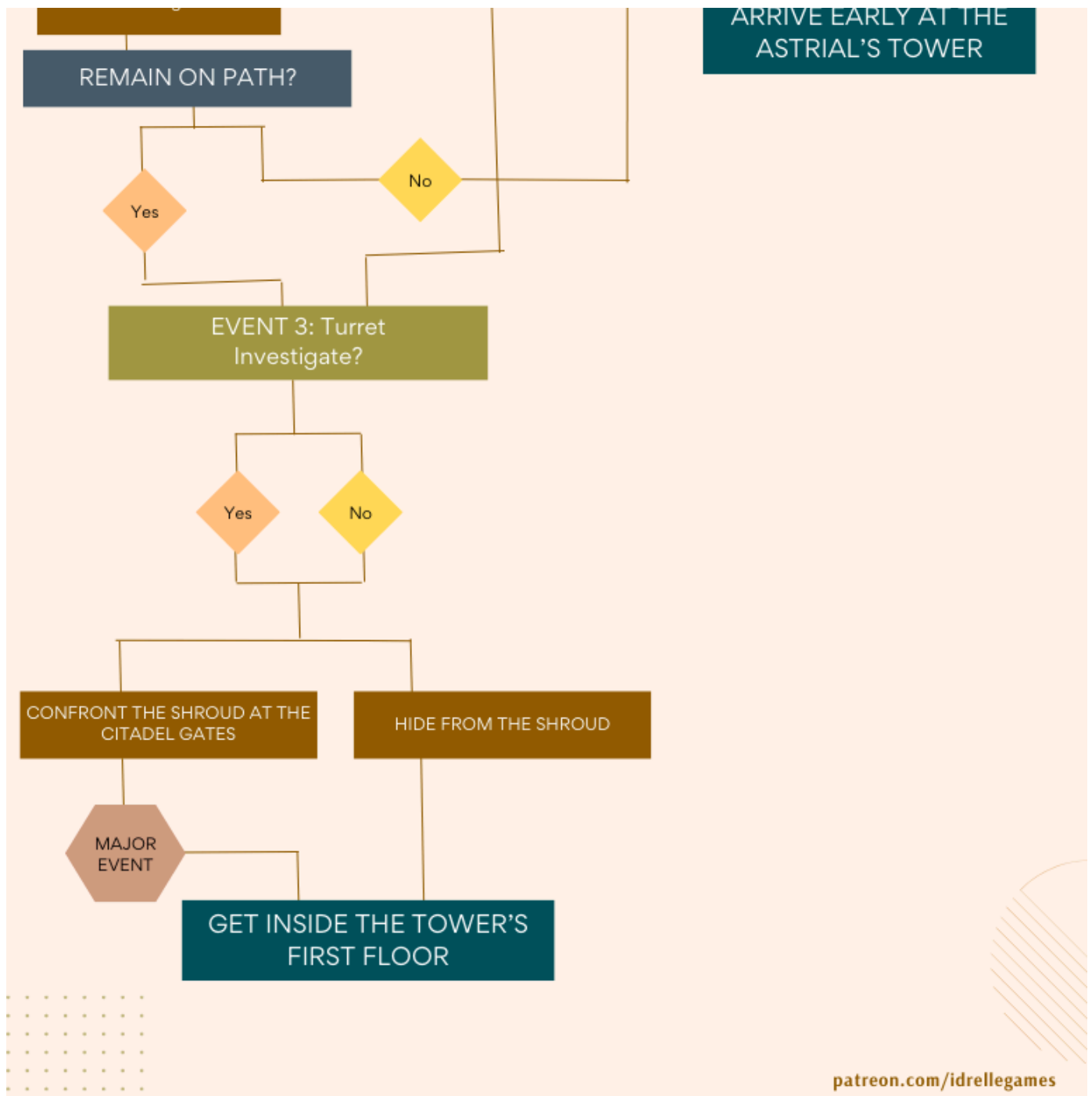
Path B is the path through the battlements. It is only available as an option if your MC did not get fired from the mission and they were privy to Quinn's demonstration. I had to make some adjustments to this path as Diradan's layout changed significantly between the writing of Episode 2 and Episode 3 (meaning I imagined one thing earlier and then another thing later and didn't cross-reference my own work - the next patch will have an update to Diradan's description in the Lethalis meeting scene!). This path is relatively safer for the MC than Path A, but has its own host of potential problems.

Path C takes the MC down the cliffs and then up through the cavern complex below the tower. This is the last path I will tackle, so I'm not going to say too much about it here.

EPISODE 3, PART 3A

DIRADAN TOWER ARRIVAL





Currently, Part 3 is sitting at around 20,000 words and I am wrapping up Event 1 on the Path A route. It is painful progression, but I am getting there bit by bit.

Thank you all so much for your support. I can't express how much it means to me, even with 2023 being a really rough patch in the game's development. 💕

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peak #4](#)

[Sep 11, 2023](#)

- \$name is the variable used now for what Aeran calls the MC. This is set to either their nickname, their first name or their surname depending on approval level and paths taken at the start of Episode 3
- The text here reflects a high approval friendship/romance route.



“\$name!”

Aeran’s voice is harsh, his warning all too clear. You have wasted enough time here, trying to make sense of something that does not matter in this moment. You pause, ignoring him, and scan the library one last time. There has to be something here, something you missed... Something that can help you make sense of this all.

Footsteps on the ground, crunching on broken flagstones. His voice on the wind, calling your name, demanding you to stop. A whine in the air, artificial and strange, its thrumming vibrations pressing against your ears, growing in intensity.

You raise your head, drawn once again to the conjured lights bobbing along the ceiling. The stuttering light intensifies, blinking once, twice. Then the whine snaps out of existence, leaving nothing but hollow silence.

The lights burst.

Blinding light sears your eyes as the shockwave hits you square in the chest, flinging you backwards.

You slam into Aeran, knocking both of you to the ground. You roll in a tangle of bruised limbs, numb to the pain. The roof above trembles and you hear the pitter-patter of a dozen loose stones hitting the

ground as they tumble off the edge.

Strong hands grab you and haul you to your feet. A coarse yell rips from your throat, your disoriented confusion mistaking Aeran for an enemy, and you thrash in his grip, elbowing him sharply in the side. He grunts, shouting your name, his movements little more than a blur in the shadows of your compromised sight. You blink, your eyes streaming, pain building across your forehead as your vision returns to normal. His grip is relentless as he pushes you forward, half-carrying, half-dragging you out of the arcade.

Golden light erupts.

It is everywhere at once, expanding outwards from the arcade in a radius, slicing clean through stone and mortar with no more resistance than a hot knife cutting through butter. For a brief moment, nothing appears to have changed—and then the archways and the roof come crashing down.

Aeran rams into you from behind, tackling you to the ground, and rolls on top of you. You see nothing but dirt and broken flagstones as the world around you crumbles. An ear-splitting *crunch* of metal scraping against metal pierces your ears, reverberating through your body. A vortex of wind and dust rolls past, tearing at you as it consumes you, needle-sharp pinpricks scraping your exposed skin. You can feel it in your ears, your nose, your mouth—the acrid taste of aged magic heavy on your tongue, burning and searing.

Slowly, the wind dies down. Your ears are still ringing.

You cough weakly, pain coursing through you, the pressure of Aeran's weight digging into your back. With a grunt, you push him off you and crack your eyes open, blinking through the dust and grit. It's a miracle you're still alive. The wreckage surrounds you, stone blocks crumbling around you. The library is in shambles, its magnificent dome gone—it looks as though it has been sheared off. The arcade no longer exists, its branching archways reduced to rubble. You are covered with a fine layer of sparkling dust, a network of angry red scratches laced across your arms. You inhale sharply—the scrapes ooze, stinging with the fervour of a thousand papercuts. You're bruised, numb, your body sore beyond belief. You're injured, and not in a way a simple medical kit can resolve. Not enough to stop you, but enough to prove a hindrance. You'll have to be careful from here on out. You're not sure how much more of a beating your body can take and you haven't reached the citadel yet.

"Are you all right?"

Aeran's voice floats somewhere above you. Groaning, push yourself up and find him next to you, sitting in the debris between two chunks of stone. His face is ashen and smudged with grey dust. A sharp bruise purples his chin and his pale skin shines bright with blood from a gash on his forehead. He cradles his arm awkwardly, his lips contorted with pain. He looks about as good as you feel.

You swallow hard. "Yeah," you say. Your mouth tastes like ash. "What about you? Are you hurt?"

"Nothing I can't manage."

“But your arm—”

He winces and drops his arm. “It won’t be a problem, trust me,” he says, getting to his feet and proffering a hand. “Let’s get out of here.”

You take it and let him pull you out of the wreckage. He’s lying—the blast has done something to his arm. This is far from the first time you have forced your way through aches and pains, but this feels more significant than that. Not that you should press him on it. He won’t like being fussed over.

You pat yourself down, brushing a layer of dust off your clothes. What a great start—you’re not even at the tower and you’re already injured. You’re beginning to regret investigating. No matter what secrets Diradan’s destruction holds, maybe this is a reminder you should keep your nose out of them. It’s a miracle you weren’t hurt more than you were.

“Any idea what caused this?” Aeran asks, clambering unsteadily over a pile of rubble.

You shrug, your knee bashing against stone as you scramble after him. “No idea.”

“Something in the library must have been destabilized by the initial blast. Best guess is that it was only a matter of time before this happened. The whole complex is compromised.”

Red light floods your vision. Aeran curses and drops to the ground. You crouch instinctively, hiding in the debris as best you can. A swarm of surveillance orbs descend on the site, their silver bands glinting in the harsh light. Their trails of light heighten to an intense red glow that consumes the wreckage as more and more join, drawn from their patrols by the disturbance.

Click. Click. Click.

Their mechanisms tick, spinning into a frenzy, the sound eerily similar to a hive of insects feasting upon dead prey.

You frown, recalling Quinn’s reconstruction and the glowing red dots. “I thought there was only supposed to be ten of these things,” you mutter. You could try counting—not that it would do much good. You can barely see them within all that glow.

“Looks like she was misinformed,” Aeran whispers. “Regardless, this can only work in our favour. We didn’t cause the library collapse. Surveying and relaying the damage will keep them busy and off our backs.”

You pause, watching the surveillance orbs float through the rubble. Though you’re doused in their scarlet glow, you know they can’t see you. They cannot dispatch your image to whoever is watching from the other side—you are no more than a ghost to them.

But a hundred eyes are watching Diradan Tower, waiting for any sign of disturbances or changes to the environment. The library’s destruction was too significant a change for Veyer’s illusions to mask. You

must not leave a mark or an impression. With that horde around, you don't know who is watching... or who will be smart enough to notice the signs of an invisible presence.

Anxiety twists in your gut—you're too close to them, too close for comfort. You can't get it out of your head.

"Let's get out of here," you say. Slowly, you pull yourself to your feet and slip through the debris as cautiously as you can, careful not to disturb it. The red glow saturates anything and everything, making it difficult to see. A couple of surveillance orbs float nearby, hanging lazily in the air as they scan the area. They twitch at the sound of your footfalls, but otherwise do not react.

Veyer's illusions better hold up, you think furiously.

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #5](#)

[Sep 25, 2023](#)

You exhale a breath and step away, the heat scalding your cheeks. You're not sure how much longer you can stay in the vicinity. But the longer you look at the statues, the more they leave you with an odd impression. There's a precision to the way their faces have been ruined. Almost as if it was done intentionally and out of malice.

Aeran moves stiffly at your side, adjusting the kerchief over his mouth. His brow is red and shines with sweat. "\$firstname," he says hoarsely. "Let's go—"

"Do you see it, Aeran? There's something strange about these statues—"

"They're Guild founders. Of course there's something strange about them—"

"That's not what I—what do you mean, these are the Guild's *founders*?"

He hesitates, tugging uncomfortably at the kerchief. "Every Guild academy has a tribute to their founders," he explains quickly. "Kostadin, an Arathian nobleman. Aklaia, his advisor, and Vyserion, his bodyguard. The first archsages. According to history, they were devotees of Metisara and formed the Guild during a time of war for likeminded individuals keen to test the extent of their capabilities."

"I didn't know that."

"You haven't spent enough time in Arathia." His tone is blunt. "The Imperial family claims to be descended from Kostadin. His deeds go beyond historical records—it's practically mythology at this

point.”

“...why do I get the feeling you would be arrested for saying as much if the wrong people overheard you in the street?”

He snorts. “Good thing there’s not much a street here, then. Look, the Guild may have expanded to other nations across Rhesainia, but there’s no untangling it from the Empire. Doesn’t matter how this spat between Solarath and Lethalis turns out. As far as I’m concerned, the Guild and the Empire are one and the same.”

He takes off without further comment, keen to get out of the excruciating heat and leave the statues behind. Giving them one last look, you wipe your brow and follow him. Your throat is painfully dry, your tongue sitting thick and heavy in your mouth. You could drink a whole river’s worth of water.

“Didn’t realize you knew so much about Guild history,” you say after a moment.

Aeran catches your eye, the lower half of his face still obscured by his kerchief. “It’s not like I’m interested,” he replies bluntly. “Can’t control what I’ve picked up over the years.”

[Progress Report 2023.09.28: Small Update](#)

[Sep 28, 2023](#)

Hi all,

Well, September is a month that has happened. Without going too much into it, a family member has had a very serious surgery and is in recovery and my thoughts are more with my family at this time than work.

There aren’t very many changes that I can update you on. I am working on Event 3 of Path A ([from the chart in the last progress report](#)) and it’s slow but steady work tying everything together. This content is currently around 26,000 words which is not a lot for me. The writing process continues to be painful and difficult, even though I’ve thrown all the strategies for writer’s block I know at it.

There will be no bonus content this month. I have drafts for possible articles started, but nothing finished.

I want to thank you all again for your continued support even though I don’t have much to share. It means a lot. 💖

[Oct 9, 2023](#)

The promenade stretches out before you, seemingly becoming longer with every step you take. Even with the statues behind you, the air remains hot and thick. You feel as though you are dragging yourself through mud. The buildings glisten with the variegated, oily sludge. The closer you get to the citadel, the more concentrated it becomes. Where once it was contained to walls and roofs, you now find puddles of the stuff oozing across the flagstones. A sunken garden has been invaded entirely, filling it to the brim and turning it into a hazy pool.

Even for someone with your history—the events you have witnessed, the devastation you have seen—what happened here is on a scale that is near incomprehensible.

“How many people died here, do you think?” you murmur, your voice hoarse.

“I don’t know,” he replies, his breath short and uneasy.

You pause, chewing your lower lip. You recall Quirinus meeting Zenaida on the docks yesterday morning, his indifferent tone as he broke the news to Zenaida. His clear attempt to manipulate you into sending a message to Umbria. Looking back to last night, Lethalis seemed more concerned about the Astrial and Diradan being inaccessible than mourning the untold deaths.

You’re missing something. Diradan must have counted a whole regiment of expert brightwardens among their numbers, but even the most talented couldn’t have held back what happened here. How did anyone survive this?

“It doesn’t add up—”

“It never does with mages—and I don’t care to speculate. It’s not our job to investigate what happened here.”

“Quirinus said—”

“I wouldn’t trust anything that comes out of that man’s mouth. Sabien doesn’t often lie, but he is a master of misdirection. You never know how he’s twisted the truth to suit his purposes.”

You frown. Something niggles in the back of your mind. “I’ve been wondering about that. Seems like you know him rather well.”

Aeran draws to a halt. “I don’t want to talk about this.”

[CHOICE] 1. [PERSUASION] “And I thought we were past this. Do you trust me or not?”

2. “I’m sorry. I won’t pry.”

3. Give up without an apology. After everything that happened last night, maybe he will take the hint.

Aeran turns and lets out a long sigh. He pulls down his kerchief, unmasking his face. “I do,” he says firmly, his gaze meeting yours. “Gods know I do. But this isn’t something I can explain easily or quickly —”

“Then try. Don’t shove me away. Not again.”

A muscle in his jaw twitches. He doesn’t like your tone, and—if you’re honest—maybe he’s right to be upset. You have the advantage here and you are using it to twist his arm. But if he truly trusts you, he could be able to speak freely.

“I know him very well, \$firstname, because I’ve been in a position where I had to work for him and his subordinates. Not a pleasant experience and not one I want to repeat—”

“You worked *for* him?” You blink. “When the hell did you do that?”

“I don’t know,” he grunts. “Half a decade or so ago. It’s been a long time. I never wanted to come here. I never wanted to take Zenaida’s offer. I knew the moment we stepped foot in the city, Sabien would find his way to us. I don’t care how this spat between Umbria and Sabien turns out, I don’t care whether Lethalis or Solarath levels the city in pursuit of their goals. I only want to be left in peace*.*”

The pain in his voice runs deep. There’s a wound here that hasn’t healed, the kind that is better left alone. You have enough of those to know when no amount of trust or love is enough to fix it. Inwardly, though, your mind is racing with questions. Aeran’s distaste for Quirinus was apparent from the moment you encountered him on the docks. You assumed it was because he hates the Guild and anything associated with it on principle. What if it’s the other way around? Is his hatred for the Guild born out of his hatred for Quirinus?

Just another reminder of how poorly you know him.

“I’m sorry,” you say quietly. “I didn’t mean to pry. But Aeran, you know you can tell me—”

“And I told you I don’t want to talk about this. Please, \$nickname. Can we move on?”

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #7](#)

[Oct 23, 2023](#)

This is a preview with low approval flavour text.

You are drawing near the citadel now.

The great gates loom at the top of the hill, glinting in the strange light. They are strangely intact for all the devastation around the tower. The landscape shifts as you approach the epicentre, the air humming with energy akin to a lightning storm. Floating debris speckles the sky—the remnants of a giant glass dome, a staircase sheared from its foundations, parts of a large mosaic broken into two pieces. The force that ripped through this area shattered everything in its path and froze them in the moment of their destruction.

You will have to go under it to reach your destination.

Aeran plows on ahead without question. This was the direction he wanted to take after all, and he must feel some sort of relief knowing how close you are to the Astral. But you pause, doubt clouding your mind. There's no telling how the suspended debris will react once two Wayfarers pass into its vicinity. You know how unstable the area has become. The debris could fall of its own volition, or your mere presence could unravel the magical bonds keeping it in place.

Quinn gave you an alternative route along the battlements. It would take time for you to backtrack and you would have to make your way past the horde of surveillance orbs, but perhaps that is the safer way.

- 1. You've come this far. You don't have time to waste with an alternative route.**
- 2. [PERSUASION] Convince Aeran to change routes. Now you've seen what the citadel is like first-hand, even he will have to admit that the way forward isn't safe. [PASS]**

"No," you say. "We're going back."

Aeran wheels around. "What the hell—"

"Look at what's around us! Not even the Grandmaster would want to risk walking through that mess—"

He snorts. "You have no idea what Sero would risk," he mutters.

Your gut twists with irritation, irked by his words. You don't know if you rather shout at him or punch him. "Do what you want," you snap. "I'm going back."

You turn your back on the impossible scene before you and stride away.

"\$firstname!"

You keep walking.

"\$nickname!"

The familiar use of that name for you brings you to a stop. You pause, your whole body shaking—whether it is from the sticky heat or your anger at him, you do not know. It's painful to hear him call you that. Far more painful than you want to admit.

A clatter of footsteps, a rush of air. He arrives beside you, a shadow in your peripheral vision, having sprinted to catch up with you.

"What are you doing?" you grunt. "You have your path, I'll take mine. Get going."

"If you think I'm leaving you here to wander by yourself, you're wrong."

Your jaw clenches. Strange that he conceded that easily—not that his actions make any sense to you. Shrugging, you push past him and take the lead, heading back the way you came.

[First Strike, Part 1 \(Ves Sithia & Ren Varadon Short Story\)](#)

[Nov 6, 2023](#)

The mark is an easy one. Or so they've been told.

Ves grunts and looks outwards, hazel eyes narrowed against the golden burn of the setting sun. Grimacing at the cramp in their leg, they flex their shoulders and unfurl their wings, using them to keep balance as they alleviate the pressure in the offending muscle. Bronze sings against bronze, the artificial feathers a far cry from the rustle of natural wings. Though alien to many, the sound is second nature to them. More than that, perhaps. They don't recall what it was like to fly without them. Or if they even did.

From their position on the rooftop Velantis unfolds before them, its tall buildings and proud domes glinting in the fading light. Beyond the terraced rows, the dark waters of Lake Naiadros slip into black nothingness. Pockets of light dance in the windows from flickering lanterns and bright conjured lights. Though the shadows are long, the streets are anything but empty. They brim with a cacophony of voices echoing in dissonant harmony, the thunder of footsteps against the cobblestones, the sour smell of sweat and perfume and oil after a hard day's work. The sheer presence of a thousand souls passing through on their evening business—to homes for much needed rest, to taverns for much needed drink, to markets for dinner, to the lyranæum for entertainment, to temples for succor.

So many people. So many lives. All blissfully unaware of the danger lurking above. If they would only just look up...

Ves knows better than that. No one thinks to look up. No one.

Hissing quietly under their breath, they stretch their arms above their head and slink back down into a calculated crouch. Uncle dislikes when circumstances forces their assignment to stall. Delays lead to complications, complications to compromises, and compromises which could jeopardize both their chapter and their client. And that is to say nothing of Ves themselves. Their skills are specific, called upon at the client's request when they require a certain handling of the situation. In some corners the city whispers with dread, rumours abounding about the gilded winged assassin who falls from the sky to smite their enemies and cull the weak. According to the tales they might as well be a god.

They snort at the thought. If only they could be. In reality, their movements are closely monitored far more than the others of their chapter. Where most Swiftmark assassins operate as nondescript faces fading into the streets, Ves is as memorable as they are talented. They make an impression—so much so that venturing outside the Swiftmark's safehouse for longer than planned risks putting the chapter in danger.

Their wings flick with impatience, boredom settling in. The evening is fresh and cool, and the open cloudless skies call to some primal part of them, begging them to take flight and ascend. They fight the impulse and stick to their perch, watching the bustling streets below. A child screams, tugging at their mother's hand as she scoops them up off the cobblestones and forces her way through the crowd. A group of burly thugs at a corner curse and shout at one another, fists already bared. A couple whisper together furtively, exchanging a flash of coin for a nondescript package. A person in a green cloak grips the hand of another as they are willingly lead into an alley, trembling with cautious excitement.

Ves blinks impassively. They have long since lost interest in such mundane events. Though Velantian districts are so different from each other they may as well be separate countries, some things remain the same. From the splendour of Oriath's palaces to the dregs of the Undercity, there is always a screaming child, a brawl in an alleyway, an underhanded deal, someone soliciting sex where they shouldn't.

Their mark isn't here. Demophen Amestris isn't someone who must be picked out of the crowd, hunted across the city and struck down. He is too important, too essential for that. He has walled himself in at his favourite estate but a short flight from here, surrounded by food and drink and musicians and actors and whatever else passes for entertainment in Ithyria. Drunk, high on frivolities, and surrounded by useless fawners... He will not stand a chance against their blades. He is living on borrowed time, dead the moment the client exchanged coin for his head.

Crowns for a crown...

They could take him themselves, but the League has their protocols and Uncle has his. Ves has always taken pride in their knowledge of procedure. Their execution is flawless when it goes right and calculated when it doesn't. One way or another, they always finish their work. A reckless agent is one thing, to be praised under the right circumstances. But an insubordinate one who cannot follow protocol is a danger to the League and must be excised.

Ves' wings rustle impatiently as they stretch. Though they are itching to take flight, they must wait. The target's death was assigned to them and one other.

Ren.

For all his personal quirks, it is not like him to be late. If he were anyone else, Ves may suspect the worst—death or desertion—but he is not anyone else. He may be exactly the kind of reckless that gives Uncle's superiors pause, but despite the countless times he has gone off course, the Swiftmarks have never had a more faithful agent. His loyalty is as unquestionable as Ves' own.

So why is he late?

Ves grits their teeth, unease clenched around their heart. Ren has been more withdrawn than usual. They have rarely seen him around the safehouse, though that has a reasonable excuse. His abilities allow him to bypass the twisting corridors and cramped rooms, easily moving from one desired location to the next. Nor have they spoken much in the past several weeks. Again, this has a reasonable excuse—Ren doesn't say much to anyone—but they have always been the exception. Well... them and Raven.

Not that Raven wants much involvement in their life these days. She made her choice. They would repay it in kind with steel and bronze if they could. If only Uncle would allow it. If only Ren could see the way her magic has sunk its claws into him. There is no bitterer an enemy than a former friend.

They aren't a blind fool. They love him, yes, but no manner of love will make them deny it. Something has happened, something beyond Raven. Something Ren is keeping from them. Idiot. There can be no secrets in the Erebian League, they both know that—

The tang of familiar magic settles on their tongue and an unnatural wind rushes in their ears. They know it well: the sound of displacement as air is pushed out of the way to make room for the portaling interloper.

Ves' eyes crack open. A cloud of dark violet mist clears, evaporating into the air to reveal a cloaked figure crouching next to them. Ren's hood is up, shadowing his pale face. His skin is pallid, almost as if he's been ill—his lips are dry and cracked, the bags beneath his eyes purpled and swollen.

"You're late," Ves grunts.

Ren says nothing for a moment. "Sorry."

"Why?"

The word is sharp, focused, precise—like the first cut of a dagger slicing through skin. The question is the least of it and asks more than itself. It is not simply why, but where and how and what. *Where were you? How did you take so long? What were you doing that was so important you risked shirking your assignment?*

Ren does not move a hair's breadth, his expression still in the face of scrutiny. League training. He was always the best of them. Unreadable, unknowable, unbreakable. He could carry the world's greatest secret to the grave and no one would know the difference. His outward standoffishness is a shield to protect both the League and him, nothing slips through.

Except in the dead spaces of their days, when it is the two of them alone...

A strange, deep ache tugs at their heart. That shield came apart for them alone once. Now they're uncertain if it ever will again. They dislike this feeling of doubting him. It sets their teeth on edge.

Ren's eyes—a dark liquid brown, so dark they are almost black—flick upwards, catching them in the fringes of his vision. "Raven," he answers. Short and to the point. No elaboration.

Ves' nostrils flare. It's the answer they expected—and far from the one they wanted to hear. "Why?"

"Does there need to be a reason?"

Something in their chest seizes at his response. Their wing flexes, metal grating against metal as the tip swings outwards, extending to its full length. Ren ducks intuitively and the wing passes over his head, bronze feathers shearing the air. He crouches, unruffled, eyes trained on the street below.

Ves clicks their tongue. "Not for me," they say finally, watching him intently for any changes in his expression. A hint, a tell—something that reveals what he's thinking. "But Uncle will want one."

"Then he'll get one."

He answers quickly, assuredly, with nothing in his tone to betray his inner thoughts. While a visit to Raven at this time of day is unusual, it is not out-of-character. And there are countless reasons why even someone with Ren's talents would be delayed leaving the Narrows...

The anger rises, bright and searing. Ren must be hiding something, why else would he be behaving so suspiciously? Perhaps he has even gone so far as to betray not only them, but the League itself—

Fool.

Ves inhales sharply and shoves their anger down, clearing their mind. They have no use for irrational rage, it will only make them a liability in the field. Is this their instincts talking? Or is it paranoia? Regardless of the answer, there are only two options ahead. Either they put their lingering doubts aside and choose to trust Ren—or they forgo him completely and bring him to heel, bringing him to Uncle's superiors and resigning him to punishment.

The thought puts a foul taste in their mouth. No matter how angry it makes them, no matter how long he holds this secret to his chest, they have to trust him. They have no interest in living in a world where they can't.

Ren stirs from his crouch and peers over the edge of the roof. The street has changed a dozen times since Ves last looked, the faces they memorized having long since disappeared on the tide of shifting foot traffic. The sun has sunk deeper towards its resting place, its burnt glare glinting in the gaps between the domes and the roofs. Ren squints as he stares into its glare, scouting the distance between this rooftop and the one across the street. Ves bends a wing reflexively, shading him from the light.

"The intel is correct?" he asks. "He hasn't left the estate?"

Ves raises their head, a gust of wind tugging at their loose hair. "No. You know these noble cunts. Why would they leave when everything they desire is within arm's reach?"

He says nothing, his expression impassive as he waits for them to continue with proper clarification.

They grimace and roll their eyes. "He hasn't left. We have eyes on the estate, you know that. Besides, even if he somehow left without our knowledge, he and his retinue would be forced down this thoroughfare. I'd have seen him had that been the case."

A pause. One that overstays its welcome a fraction too long. Either this is a perfectly natural moment, with those seconds lost to one wandering thought or another, or... this is the smallest hint of uncertainty and doubt. Which is it? If he would but talk to them—

"Good," Ren says abruptly, rising to his feet. "Let's go."

He disappears in a swirl of dark mist, blinking to the other side of the street in the space of a breath. Moving with the speed and grace of a natural athlete he sprints across the rooftops on light feet, not a single footstep misplaced. Ves smirks and spreads their wings. They push off the edge and launch themselves into the air with ease. With a few great flaps, they ride the currents and overtake him, soaring low above the tenements. Their shadow stretches out below them, shielding him from the setting sun.

Ves' heart throbs as they watch him run. These paces are familiar—him below, them above, swift as the wind as they home in on their prey, moving together as one. Uncle once called them two sides of the same coin. Though in recent years they have both taken to operating alone, Ves will never forget their origins. They have been paired together for more missions than they can count. Working with Ren is a rhythm, a harmony, one that is as natural to them as flight.

It has always been this way. Since before Uncle saved them.

They hum contentedly to themselves, the vibrations so gentle they are lost to the wind. Flying above Ren like this puts their mind at ease. He has never been one to express himself through words. Action, however, is another story. That he falls so effortlessly into their shared rhythms speaks volumes. They were wrong to doubt him. Of course they were. All these wary thoughts they've had speak only to their own paranoia. Here they were, so concerned about Raven's effect on Ren that they never stopped to consider their own distrust could very well be a fabrication of their own mind.

Or the work of a rival empathist.

A chill creeps across the back of their neck and runs down their spine. Their mind is steeled against invasion and their thoughts may be their own, but their emotions? Flighty bastards. They know all too well that emotions are illogical. Liabilities. They can't always trust what they're feeling and that's on a good day. On a bad one, where they could have been manipulated to feel things that are not their own without noticing—

An air current gusts below, catching them off-guard. They curse under their breath as they spiral on the updraft, shooting off in the wrong direction. Their wings jerk and they catch themselves, hanging awkwardly in the air for a breath. Ren is gone—he must have assumed they were behind him and moved on, portaling across. He's too fast, it's too easy to fall behind. Even for an aeda.

Damn idiot.

This is what happens when they let their mind wander.

Ves hovers mid-air. The wind whispers in their ears, bronze feathers vibrating with familiar harmonies. Their brow furrows and they squint past the sun's glare, searching the tenements below for the thing that does not belong. At first there is nothing but a repetitive cityscape stretching out to the horizon and labyrinthine roads crawling with faceless figures. Then they spot it, eyes drawn to it like a moth to a flame—the afterimage of a cloaked man, suspended in a swirl of fading mist at the crown of a distant dome.

They spread their wings, circling on the updraft until they are turned around, and speed towards the dome. The burnished building glints in the dying sun, standing proud amongst a sea of red stone. They land hard at the apex, their feet scraping across tile and dried bird shit, and drop into a crouch. Judging from the muck and odd assortment of knickknacks and worthless junk, a flock of fledgling harpies must have nested nearby. Bad news for the townspeople, good news for Ves. No one will think twice about a shadow roosting here. If the creatures are nearby, they won't bother them. Harpies never show much aggression towards aeda.

They hunker down, the swirl of mist fading around them, and tilt a wing to keep the sun out of their eyes. Now that they've found one afterimage, the next must be close by. Tracing Ren is like hunting an animal; where one might follow tracks in sand or mud, they are following tracks in the air. Their lip curls and they suppress a chuckle. He would hate the comparison. Then again, he did once try to compare his process of portaling to skipping a stone across water.

"Look, it's simple. I'm the stone."

"The... stone?"

Ren pauses, brow furrowed, and quickly stoops to pluck a pebble off the ground. It sinks into his palm, flat and round—deep red streaked with white. Lake Naiadros is calm today, its surface and shores finally clear of pleasure boaters and the like. Unsurprising. Winter came early to Velantis this year.

He grips the rock, holding it up to Ves' face. "You see this stone?" he says. "This is me. This reality is the water. The air is the spaces in-between. See what happens." He turns sharply, spinning, and hurls the pebble at the water. It bounces, ripples undulating outwards as it arcs out into the lake—once, twice, three times, more. "Every time I touch this reality, I push myself a little further through the spaces in-between until I reach my destination."

The pebble hits the water and sinks, disappearing beneath the glassy surface with a sad little plonk.

"Or until you can't do it anymore," Ves says bluntly.

Ren shrugs. "That, too. Sometimes. Uncle says I lack control. Finesse."

The last thing they want to do here is talk about Uncle. "What does it feel like? Crossing dimensions?"

He doesn't answer, his expression growing blank. For a moment, Ves wonders whether he is lost in thought, trying to drum up the right words—but then he stoops and picks up a second pebble, this one very much like the first. He holds it up to their face, lips twitching as he struggles to conceal a grin.

"You see this stone? This—"

With a flare of their wings, Ves propels themselves forwards and tackles him to the ground. He goes down easily, grinning as they kiss him, their twin laughter echoing across the lake's still waters. The stone lies forgotten in the sand. When they finally depart hours later, Ves quietly brushes off the debris and slips it into their pocket, unnoticed.

A memory to keep.

Ves tenses and pulls their wings tight. There's a tug behind them—pulling, pulling, pulling—as the faintest traces of reality bend. Wind hums in their ears, displaced air rushing over them. A familiar shiver prickles at the back of their neck, dark mist bursting into existence in their peripheral vision—

Ren appears at their side, hands on his knees as he squats beside them. "I lost you," he says.

"Got distracted," Ves grunts.

"Problem?"

"No. My fault. Distracted. Not thinking." Dangerous words for a Swiftmark. The assignment comes before all else. To admit otherwise... At best it declares an incompetency in the field. At worst it questions their commitment to the League. They would never risk to say this to anyone other than Ren, and even then it is a risk. If they were capable of lying to him they would have done so.

But they are not.

He pauses, running his tongue over his bottom lip. His most noticeable tell—he does it when he's thinking too much about what he needs to say. Sometimes Ves wishes he would just speak his mind,

regardless of how it comes out. They trust him, don't they? He could say anything and it wouldn't change their opinion of him. "Good view, this," he says finally. "The estate is in sight."

Ves nods, murmuring a wordless acknowledgement. Their destination is not far now—for them, at least, if they were travelling on foot it would be a different matter. It rises a storey above the tenements around it, making it exactly the kind of building they couldn't ignore even if they tried. From their bird's-eye view the others fade into each other, but this one? This one—with its white walls and burnished tiled roof—is begging to make itself a target. Much like the man inside.

It's not personal. It never is. Ves has never met Demophen Amestris; at most they've heard his name in passing while suspended above one market or another, waiting for their mark to appear. Some relative of Ithyria's councillor, judging by the surname. A noble with ties to the Meissandium. They don't care. They may loathe the Velantian nobility on principle, but their feelings have no merit here. Hate him or love him, they would kill him anyway.

As per protocol, the details they know of him are precise but limited. Appearance. Height. Build. Ancestry. As with all their targets, his face is permanently burned into their memory through the work of a talented reminiscist so there can be no mistakes. They know he favours his right leg to account for a weakness in his left ankle. He speaks with a slight lisp and a faint Nemainian accent, remnants of his upbringing in another city-state. In the event he masks himself with an illusion, his gait, posture and manner of speech will be enough to identify him. Lastly, he is a spiritbreaker—same as them—and a middling one at that. Should he draw on magic, they can counter him with ease.

Not that they intend to let him get that far.

As for why someone wants him dead... They aren't privy to that information, nor is it important to the task at hand. The client's reasoning is known only to Uncle and his superiors, and even then their business is their own. Demophen Amestris made himself a nuisance to a powerful enemy and they want him removed, it's no more complicated than that. The League itself is neutral in the matter.

In Ves' experience, the general populace does not understand the Erebian League—its people or its purpose. To them, their agents are something close to myths and legends. Either they are skilled bodyguards to be respected and feared, or they are ghoulish fiends stalking the shadows, driven by bloodlust. The reality is that they are neither.

They are a means to an end. Tools to solve problems. And in Velantis there is always one person or another at the heart of a problem.

They may have taken plenty of lives in their line of work, but no more than the general on a battlefield or a mercenary captain defending their men. Providing a service does not make them monstrous. Those who are afraid of the League have their fear misplaced. It is not the assassin in the night they should fear, but the neighbour who hired them.

Ren shifts beside them, boots scraping the brassy tiles. "The sun is almost down," he says quietly.

Ves raises their head, their eyes flicking to a horizon bleeding red. The scent of oncoming twilight sits heavily on their tongue. There is something distasteful about the Ithyrian air in the evening. The district wafts with the spices of the night markets and the stench of sweat from the auditoriums. Streets reek with alcohol served from the amphitheatres and taverns and leisure houses as assuredly as they resound with the roar of the masses seeking their nightly diversions. They wouldn't mind the stink if it stayed low on the streets, but even several storeys above they can taste the way it poisons the air.

"He has a family, you know."

They tense, their gaze still fixed on the setting sun. That can't have been Ren, can it? A voice from below. Or maybe they misheard. Or their imagination—

"A husband. His second spouse, Theren. His wife died five years ago. Unusual for a meissant to remarry, but House Amestris is Nemainian through and through. They don't care for Velantian traditions."

Their upper lip curls back into a snarl.

"Theren is a childhood friend. Nemainian. Tonight is a celebration of their first year of marriage. Demophen's children will be there."

They hiss and spin, wings flaring outwards as they round on him. "You can't tell me this—"

Ren blinks, his dark eyes blank, his pale face eerily composed. "Twins. A boy and a girl. Acamas and Ardea. Seven years old. They love their father very much. They have a villa on Naros where he stables a herd of winged horses. He's teaching them to fly."

"Stop—"

"His aunt will not be attending. Called to an important gala in Oriath. She sent her regards tonight by hiring a troupe of local minstrels. Councillor Amestris is infamous for her love of music and the arts. It seems that love extends to her nephew."

"Shut up—"

"He is a beloved figure in Ithyria. A man of the arts. A man of faith. Recently elected as the district's meissant. His investiture is three days from now."

Ves growls, muscles tensing and ready to go on the attack. They don't think, they don't question. It's instinct. Decades of training telling them to silence the threat to the mission and the client, lest the Swiftmarks—lest Uncle—pay the consequences.

But there is no threat when Ren is the one speaking.

Their hand stills, their thumb glancing across their dagger's leather-wrapped hilt. They clear their throat, and it does nothing to dislodge the dry lump forming there. "How do you know this?" they ask. "Who told you—"

"It doesn't matter how I know," he interrupts. "What matters is that I do. And now so do you."

"We can't know this. We *can't*. This is not the way it's done—"

"No. But it maybe it should be."

Their jaw clenches, teeth grinding painfully together. Their shoulders ache, the weight of their wings digging into their back. The metal bones and feathers are denser than natural wings, but they're all they have. They can ignore a little pain for the freedom of flight.

"I want you to listen, Ves," Ren continues. "This is the life we are to end. A man who loves his family. He has to die because House Amestris crossed someone's line. Knowing that—"

"Knowing what?" they spit. "There is *nothing* to know here. I will put it so far from my mind I may as well have forgotten it. You best do the same. For your sake and mine."

They kick off forcefully from the dome, a rush of wind whistling in their ears. Usually a strong ascent is all they need to clear their mind, but Ren's words refuse to leave them. What did he hope to accomplish from it? To cast doubt? Sow guilt? Unnecessary. They will carry their directives through to the end. Guilt belongs to the client who hired them, the one who wanted to make the death of Demophen Amestris a message. They have carried many messages in their line of work; they will not be held accountable for delivering them.

Even so he has said too much. Too many words, too much intel... The kind of knowledge best reserved for the League's spies, agents of another chapter tasked with documenting the lives and movements of their marks. Details to be auctioned off to the highest buyer.

Details. A Swiftmark's work is also rooted in details. Small or large, they are specific to the task at hand and always, *always* neutral. Neutrality is essential to the League. It is not their prerogative to make moral decisions about who lives and who dies.

Death comes to everyone, after all.

You fool. What are you doing? What the hell are you playing at?

The wind roars, tearing at their hair and chaffing their face, drawing sharp tears from their eyes. They blink, clearing their vision, and settle into a gentle soar as they glide towards the white-walled estate. They can feel the celebrations already—the high-pitched shriek of a pair of panduras singing on the air, the buoyant rhythms of a drum vibrating in their bones.

Ves flexes the muscles in their upper back, listening for the familiar whisper of metal joints as they draw their wings in and begin their descent. They can't remember what it was like to fly with wings of bones and muscle. Those memories are lost to time or magic; knowing what they've become, they prefer it that way. Whatever happened to them in their youth is better left buried. Unknown. That does nothing to ease the deep ache in their heart when they think on what they've lost, nor the erratic stinging pain in limbs they no longer have.

They imagine the sensation must be euphoric, to feel the wind thrusting through their feathers, carrying them to journey's end. They've seen the flight of their distant kin, painfully instinctual and beautiful in its primal nature. But nature has its faults. Its imperfections. Ves may not be able to feel their wings the way others do, but they are in tune with them. Hearing the mechanisms, feeling the subtle shifts as their weight is carried through the sky... It has honed their senses to a sharpened point, giving them an edge over any aeda with intact wings.

They did not ask for wings of metal, but they are happy they have them. They would never give back this miracle Uncle gifted them. Not for anything.

They land deftly on the dome of an anterior tower, the highest point of their target's lodgings. A ward seals the estate, its magic so subtle it is invisible to the unaided eye. Though they cannot see it, they can feel its vibrations on the wind, the tell-tale thrum beginning five feet below the dome.

Wards such as these are of little concern to League operatives. For a spiritbreaker with Ves' skills, any shield can be pierced with a precise enough blow. And they can do very little to keep a planeswalker like Ren out. The danger they pose come from the alarms they may trigger, but it is rare for a job to go unfinished by the time the guard arrives. It's been years since they made that kind of mistake.

Ves drops to a crouch, turning their attention to the hazy glow rising from the central courtyard below. In the dark recesses of its corners, the light undulates with the mists of twilight, attracting glimmering wisps. On the ground the courtyard would be nothing out of the ordinary for Velantian nobility, but from their vantage point they can how the clean lines of the water features flow into the cultivated flowerbeds and raised daises between them. There's a precise geometry to their placement, creating simplified emblems at the points of a hexagon.

An ode to the gods, baked into the floor of the very house he lives in. They would expect nothing else from a meissant.

And it is crawling with people.

The crowd is to be expected; they are ideal, necessary even, to make a point. Figures in vibrant colours squirm through the geometric lines, wriggling like ants, their laughter throbbing in discordant harmony to the bright music. The minstrels have staged themselves on the north-western balcony, a storey above the courtyard. A pair of dancers perform on a dais below, becoming blurs of movement and flashes of fine jewels. They play to an audience who seems to take no heed of their craft, enthralled as they are in their feasting and their drinking.

Funny how the festivities are infectious this high up. The air changed when they entered the perimeter, its currents now heavy with the scent of roasted meats and rich soups and fine wines. This is different from the thoroughfare. This odor is rank with wealth and luxury.

Their stomach churns at the scent.

Ves' eyes narrow. Demophen Amestris is striking even from this distance. Tall, dark skinned, black haired and bearded, his white and red clerics robes make him a beacon among his guests. Though they are too far too see his face, they know his features well—elven, gracious, composed with an innate sense of command from his noble upbringing. And yet there is kindness in his dark eyes. Good intentions behind the façade.

A shame. Perhaps he would have made a good meissant.

Now Velantis will never know.

Focus.

Two weeks ago they had the estate's schematics implanted in their mind. A necessary failsafe for the cost of a few unwanted memories. There are three entrances to the courtyard—a wide, sweeping set of archways on the eastern wall that lead into a vast sitting room; a pair of grand double-doors on the opposite side that open to a formal dining room; and a service entrance on the southern wall. The northern wall supports a line of floor-to-ceiling windows that could be smashed in an emergency.

Should complications arise and their mark escapes, there is nowhere he can flee that they cannot follow. If he is smart he will run for the service door. Tight windowless corridors make navigation difficult and flight impossible, slowing their pace. But they do not have much faith in a nobleman. He will run east, to the first exit that catches his eye.

Hair raises on the back of their neck. Dark violet mist coalesces on the lip of the dome, flowering over it like a waterfall. They follow it, inching across the dome, and come a halt. Spreading their wings wide, Ves holds themself aloft and leans outwards, gazing down. Below, they find Ren balanced on a thin decorative ledge above the tower's upper windows. He leans against the stone, arms folded, hood down, unbothered by his precarious position or how high he is above the ground. He can't be more than half a foot above the wards.

Ves closes their wings and drops into a crouch. "Almost time," they murmur. Dusk has well and truly fallen now, the final rays of the sun about to slip below the horizon. A beautiful, clear evening for a celebration. Shame it isn't raining. If he was driven indoors, perhaps he would have lived another night.

Ren says nothing.

They shrug. They are cloaked in darkness on this side of the tower, all but invisible to the people below. They have no sense of the assassins that wait in the shadows, no idea of the fate that awaits the man they've come to celebrate tonight. A swift and efficient count of the crowd tells them the twenty-some

guests expected are all in attendance, save one who has disappeared. Neither unusual nor worrisome; they are likely elsewhere in the house. Nineteen will do. Nineteen faces to remember this night.

The mark—Demophen—moves easily through the crowd, his hand holding that of a dwarven man. There is nothing remarkable about him. Dark like his companion, his head and chin shaved clean, dressed in a simple blue serithan. His soft, round physique all but shouts he is a non-combatant... And therefore not a threat. This must be the husband. Theren, Ren said his name was.

You shouldn't know that.

Ves bites their tongue. They liked it better when the target was nothing but just another noble crushed by the gears of Velantian politics, collateral damage to further someone else's game. Not faceless—they will never forget his face, the reminiscist's work will not allow it—but unremarkable. Irrelevant.

Not that they have doubts, of course. They are here to do a job.

A job that Ren now seems hesitant about.

They chew their lower lip in silence, brow furrowed. It's a troubling change of heart that makes little sense to them. They were tasked with this mark to take care of alone. Demophen is no fighter, no battlemage. He is a meissant, a man of religion surrounded by politicians and scholars and clerics, not escorted by soldiers. It is not the kind of job that requires two. But Ren convinced Uncle otherwise.

Why go to such trouble only to have doubts now?

Something is wrong. Something they can't put a finger on.

"Sun's down," Ren announces quietly, his voice echoing up from the darkness below them.

Ves tenses and peers over the lip of the dome, staring through the darkness at him. Judging from his demeanour he is the way he always is before an assignment. Calm. Detached. Focused. So why are they doubting him? Can they truly accuse him when they can't even put it into words?

His body is eerily still, barely moving as he balances on his ledge, standing where no one else would think to stand. "One question, Ves," he continues. "Do you know why we have to do this? Why we have to take this man's life?"

Don't do this, you fool. Don't go there. "Yes."

"Then tell me. Don't hide behind empty words—"

"A client wants this man dead."

"And Uncle wants us to kill him."

"Gold was traded for services rendered, it's no more complicated than that."

He pauses. "Is that what you think?"

His voice is dead. Empty.

What does he want them to say? Of course it's more complicated. Uncle plucked them beaten and half-starved from the Undercity streets and gave them a life worth living. One where they are protected. Sheltered. Loved. One where they can fly. He could ask anything of them and they would give it willingly.

Ves swallows the lump in their throat and turns away, leaving his question unanswered. The first stars have emerged, shining bright in the greying purple blush of twilight. They tilt their head back, eyes closed, feeling the tug of wind in their hair. The prayer to Nashira slips from their lips, quiet and voiceless. A ritual. Not for them, but for their target.

A promise made before the god themselves. That they will take no pleasure in his pain or death. That they will take it swiftly and offer him to Nashira's hands, who will guide him to the next life.

It is all they can offer him.

"Ves."

Ren's voice is barely audible above the wind, the distant roar of the city, the music swelling from the party below.

Ves does not look at him. "Keep to the shadows," they say. "The mark is mine."

They push off the tower and ascend into the sky. Up, up, up, higher and higher, the rush of flight singing in their veins. They draw a dagger from their waist, the weight of the cruel blade familiar in their hand, and arc above the estate. As the last vestiges of sundown glint off their wings, they turn in the air and dive for the courtyard.

[*Continued in Part 2*](#)

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #8](#)

[Nov 16, 2023](#)

This is the fail variation of a Strength check.

You grunt, placing one leg ahead and the other extended behind you, and *push*. Your palms scrape against wood, your feet slip against stone. Sweat drips down your forehead, stinging your eyes. Muscles strain, your arms aching, your mind empty save for one thought: *move the fucking door*.

The door groans, but it does not relent. The shroud billows, its dark essence careening towards you. Your heart leaps into your throat, panic rising in your gut. Every instinct you have is telling you to flee, but you cannot move. You *must* close the doors.

You curse, slamming your palms against the stubborn wood again and again, rubbing the skin raw. The shroud approaches, faster now, its dark tendrils reaching for the gap—

The portcullis slams down, metal crashing into stone. A series of clicks *clack* in your ears as the mechanisms snap into place and a yellow ward springs to life, humming with arcane power around the iron lattice. The shroud crashes into it a moment later, tendrils seeping across the shield. You pause, heart pounding in your chest, thanking whatever mage created the defenses in this tower—

The barrier blackens, thick veins spiralling through it. The magic stutters and fails, consumed by the shroud, and you watch in horror as it passes through both shield and portcullis, slowed but unimpeded. Its form is viscous now, its essence thickening, resembling ooze far more than clouds. It pushes through the gaps in the latticework like meat passing through a grinder, pooling on the ground piece by piece.

You yell and ram your shoulder into the doors in desperation. Pain radiates through your arm but they do not budge. The shroud dribbles through, faster and faster, and reconstitutes itself on the floor. It surges up, filling the threshold, blackening it with its essence and drowning out the light.

Fuck. So much for that.

Cursing, you draw \$blade, its silver-white edge catching what light remains in the encroaching darkness. You tread backwards as the shroud oozes through the gap in the doors, separating into thin, vine-like tendrils. Your heart pounds, your breath caught in your throat. Nothing in your training—from the Spire's countless bestiaries to its tomes on magic to \$master's own extensive experience—has prepared you for this.

How do you fight something you do not understand? How do you fight darkness itself? How do you stop it? This is not like Nalos' basilisk. There is no blood to spill or head to decapitate. Perhaps it is like a brightwarden's wards—hundreds of magical threads woven together to create a pulsing barrier, one that can be easily punched through.

What remaining light goes out, plunging the entrance hall into pitch black.

You inhale. Exhale. Nothing but the sound of your breath, nothing but the sound of something slithering across cold stone.

A gust of wind, a hiss in the dark, and flame roars to life, illuminating Aeran's face. He raises the makeshift torch and lunges across the hall, skidding to a stop at your side. The flames flicker, chasing

back the shadows, and you stare ahead in horror at the congealed, pulsing mass that now fills the gap from floor to ceiling. It moves like a spider emerging from a crack, long legs stretching out to spill across the doors. The tendrils ooze, splitting into vein-like patterns to cling to the door. Darkness erupts at the base and a dozen branches curl and twist across the floor, rupturing the stone.

Aeran hisses and steps forward, raising the torch high. You fall into a natural guard stance, blade angled, feet apart, prepared to lunge. The shroud it lurches across the hall towards you, drawn magnetically to the sound of your breath. Its tendrils enclose you in a circle, threads splitting and breaking away from its form, the strand fuzzing and misting as they rise into the air.

You pause, frozen with indecision. Where do you strike? *What* do you strike? You can envision yourself hacking away at the tendrils, but it can always divide and create more. Or you could abandon using alassar entirely and lower your blade, plunging your hand into the oozing darkness to see what happens.

Either way, you're trapped until this thing—beast, being or creation—is dealt with.

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #9](#)

[Nov 28, 2023](#)

Some flavour text has been removed; some markers are for high romance/approval with Aeran.

Darkness engulfs you. It sinks into your skin, your hair, your eyes. You inhale it and it coats your tongue, your throat, the inside of your lungs. It is beyond you, yet inside you, eating, scraping, clawing. The pressure should be suffocating, but you persevere, your body rejecting its essence even as it consumes you whole. Aeran's hand grips yours, the one constant on this path to obliteration—a light in the dark, a reminder of what is real and what is not.

The storm rages, bits of fractured stone and wood—the citadel's very floor ripped from beneath your feet—buffeted in the wind. A deep, booming groan resounds around you and you flinch, shadows moving in your peripheral vision. You turn, searching wildly, only to find nothing. Your heart hammers in your chest, a reminder of the life you cling to. How many mages has this thing killed? How much destruction does it seek to wreak? That you have made it this far without being ripped to shreds or dissolved to nothingness is the miracle of your very existence, the strength of a magianis flowing through your veins.

A haunting moan screeches and the shadow whispers in the corner of your eye. You raise \$blade, the starlight glow of its blade piercing through the dark, illuminating at last the rustling shadow spinning in and out of sight. Humanoid in shape, the shadows of its very being undulating and fraying, rippling away from its essence like mist rising from a river in the early hours of morning. Where the darkness that surrounds you is a torrent of black and grey and indigo, this being is a true void, absent of all shade and colour. Two spheres glow white within its mass, swaying restlessly. It turns, its shriek echoing in your ears, and curves in on itself and dives through the storm, round and round, expanding in size until it encompasses you completely.

White eyes bore down upon you from within a hollow, monstrous skull. You face it with no fear, only curiosity and confusion, and adjust the grip on your hilt. The magic here is terrible and oppressive, the density of its threads greater than anything you have felt before. All magic is formed of such invisible bonds. You can bend them and break them, unravel them with a touch or cut through them with alassar steel.

But the older the magic, the thicker the bond. Magic of this kind is not so easily diffused; you can erode the edges and fray the seams, but it will repair itself faster than you can destroy it. You need to find a pressure point. Destroy the core and all else will follow suit.

You glance at Aeran, adjusting your grip on your hilt. He stares at the creature ahead, jaw clenched tight, his dagger glowing at his side. The weight of his hand is dead in your grasp. As uncertain as you are, as afraid as you are, even you carry some curiosity about the being ahead of you. What is it, exactly? How did it come to be? What does it want? These are questions that will go unanswered unless you seek the answers yourself.

But there is no curiosity in Aeran's face. No horrified wonder, no sudden questioning. There is only one intention: to destroy it. Quickly, quietly, and without delay.

[Progress Report 2023.11.29: Try and Fail & Fail Again](#)

[Nov 29, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

I hope you all had a good November!

This is going to be a bit of a difficult progress report to write this time. I didn't do as many updates as I had planned coming out of October. Though I have stuck to my challenge of writing 100 words a day, I

have had many ups and downs with it over the course of the month. It's not really the kind of thing that I can write much about, other than "writing was done today!"

This year has been an immense struggle, both in terms of my physical and mental health. I am not doing well right now. Though I was hopeful I could turn things around in the back half of this year, despite my best efforts, I have not been able to.

Last week I was re-tagging some old posts that had fallen through the cracks and needed updating to correspond with their correct tiers. Looking back on 2021, I used to be able to publish 4 pieces a week and work on the game. That time is very much long gone and I am probably never going to be able to go back to working that way without burning myself out. The very blunt fact of the matter is that it is too much work for me to write the game and reliably create Patreon extras on the side. I have fallen off my promised benefits this year very badly and I keep trying to get them done and get them out, but I have no energy or interest in making them. My goal has always been to make my Patreon extras as high quality as I can make them—and with the way I am right now, it is just not possible to keep to those standards while maintaining forward progression on the game. I have no interest in creating off-the-cuff content that don't meet those standards.

So, I am going to pause bonus content and short stories again until June 2024 at the earliest. The second installment of [Yes' short story](#) is finished and will be released next month. The two pieces of bonus content that I hoped to release in November and December are cancelled.

If you are in a tier that receives the bonus content or short story benefits, you can find a backlog of old posts under their corresponding tags:

- [bonus content](#)
- [short stories](#)

Here are a few of my favourites from past posts:

- [Twine Guide: SugarCube Basics](#)
- [When Less Is More: Player Characters, Customization and Leaving Room for Headcanon](#)
- [Arathian Fashion: A Primer](#)
- [Thick Skin: 8 Things I Learned About Constructive Criticism and How to Handle It](#)
- [A Map of Wayfarer's World](#)
- [Character Agency & Creating Active Characters](#)
- [Blood Rites](#)
- [Scattered to the Winds](#)

There will be changes coming to my Patreon tiers in beginning in January. The details of these changes and what you can expect will be announced next month.

Thank you so much for the continued support. It means more than I can say. 💖

[Episode 3 Status Check](#)

[Dec 1, 2023](#)

Hello patrons!

As I'm progressing through Episode 3, I wanted to do a quick check in about the next update. The current route I am working on has hit around 40k words ([I am currently at the end of the flowchart from this progress report](#)). I am going to push through with it; once I have the MC and Aeran inside the tower, I am going to continue with the following events and wrap that up before going back to fill in the other routes.

As you may know from Episode 3's existing material, there are three routes to the top of Diradan Tower:

- Through the citadel grounds
- Through along the battlements (formerly the side door route, this has been updated in a patch)
- Through the underground levels

The route I am working on is the citadel grounds. My question is: would you prefer an update with the citadel grounds route when it is complete, or wait for the other two routes to be finished? With the former, an update could happen optimistically sometime in February 2024; with the latter it will be much later.

Please keep in mind that some of Episode 3's starting branches are going to remain unfinished until I get through the majority of the tower material. This means that any of Episode 3's content requires either an Aeran ending or a Veyer ending to be playable (this is outlined in the [alpha build access post](#)).

Thank you!

Update with the single tower route

31%

Update when all tower routes are finished

69%

Poll ended Dec 22, 2023 · 89 votes total

[Dec 6, 2023](#)

[Read Part 1 Here](#)

A scream of joy rips from Ves' throat.

It is a silent cry. No words, no sound, just the endless, gaping thrill that precedes the moment of death. The gale of freefall rushes over them, through them, swallowing them whole. It pulses in every part of their being, flesh and metal both, encasing them in its song. They are one with the wind and the air, their magic surging as they plummet to the earth. Their body hums with wisps of bronze light, brightening to a searing beacon, and they puncture the wards headfirst. Vibrations crack in their ears, kaleidoscopic lines fracturing outwards across the invisible barrier, the only sign of the break in the defenses.

Bright enough to be of notice. Bright enough to draw the attention of anyone looking up.

Not that it matters. It is already too late.

It is ten heartbeats to fall from the peak of their ascent to their mark's demise. They are as the wave crashes to shore, as the arrow is shot from the bow—unstoppable, inexorable, a force of nature. Once they have been released, it is a matter of seconds before they tumble from the sky and their mark's blood waters the ground.

The courtyard rises up to meet them. Stone and marble and glass and tile hurtle towards them in the space of breaths. The geometric patterns distort to blurs of colour, the milling guests becoming nothing more than moving smudges. Their eyes water, stinging from the ferocity of the wind, tears freezing on their cheeks. Only the mark remains clear—this tall, proud, laughing man, blind to the fate that will befall him in a matter of seconds.

For all the untold strengths the gods have granted us, we have our limits. Regardless of whether we are Eleneid, human, dwarven. Blood matters not. We are all the same fragile creatures. We bleed the same. Die the same. Hardy, but brittle. Strong, but delicate. Fierce, but frail.

Uncle's words. So long ago.

Time slows. Demophen rests a hand on his spouse's shoulder, turning away in the midst of speech, his attention drawn by sudden movement. Behind him, a young girl leaps over a stone bench, clutching a small toy to her chest. She stops, dark eyes wide as she spots the bladed shadow tumbling from the sky. A question on her lips, innocent and curious, devoid of any understanding of the fate that is about to befall her father.

The child. The daughter. Seven years old.

There are a thousand ways or more to take a life, Ves, but you need only one. One cut. Quick and simple. One cut, and life will drain. Not all wounds can be healed. Even the most talented of brightwardens cannot bring back the dead.

Time stills. Somewhere, deep in the recesses of their mind, a memory sparks. The pits of the Narrows, red rock closing in around them, blue skies aching out of reach. Phantoms in the air with dark wings and dark blades. They were about her age then, were they not?

Strike clean. Strike true. Life must be respected, even in death. To prolong undue suffering is the way of mercenaries and murderers. That is not what we are.

Time stops. The husband caught unawares, smile lines creasing with good-natured laughter. The child's mouth open, the winged horse about to fall from her hands. Demophen frozen mid-turn, the affection in his eyes fading as he follows his daughter's gaze.

He looks up.

Ves' wings snap wide, pulling them out of the dive at the last second. They slam feet-first into Demophen, striking him in the chest, and he crumples beneath their weight. He collapses on the tiles, drowning in a sea of red and white robes, too tangled in his own garments to resist. They land on top of him, their knee pressing into his chest, a dagger slashing for his throat. His eyes widen. The last flare of frightened life before it is severed. They know it well.

Their hand stops.

The child's shriek pierces their ears. She screams and she screams and she screams, the vibrations shattering them to the bone. They are frozen in place, pain spiking in deep within that intolerable place in their head. The dagger clatters to the tiles and they reel back, slamming their hands to sides of their face. Damp, sticky wetness lurches within the insides of their ears—

A wave of power hits them in the chest, throwing them clear across the courtyard. Their wings snap open, catching them at the last moment, and they land hard in a crouch half a foot from the southern wall, shadowed by the balcony a storey above. They grunt and raise their head, a curse snarling on their lips as they try to make sense of what has happened. Mere seconds have passed since they fell from the sky and now they are disarmed and their mark is alive. It has been a very long time since they have failed their first strike.

They inhale a ragged breath, hazel eyes scanning the scene before them. Guests scatter for the exits, spilling food and drink as they clamber over each other for the fastest way out. Some are frozen in place, mouths open, their terrified eyes on the sky as if waiting for a second assassin to fall from the heavens. A noble in red scoops the screaming child into their arms and catapults over the decorative foliage, running for the doors. The child clutches at her rescuer, tears streaming down her face, her dark eyes boring into their own as she is carried away.

Air whistles in their ear and Ves spins to the side instinctively, shielding themselves with a wing. A bolt glances off the bronze feathers and clatters to the ground.

Arbalists on the upper levels, levying their crossbows at the courtyard below. Not good. Ves may not be as vulnerable to arrows and bolts as other aeda, but the presence of any archer makes flight risky. They will have to deal with them. Where the fuck did they come from? There was no mention of additional guards in the reports—

Shit.

The minstrels, outed for the mercenaries they are. An unsurprising ploy—they should have suspected as much the moment they saw them on the balcony. Whoever hired them must be paranoid enough to plan for the worst or suspected the mark would be targeted tonight. Either way, this is a mess for the client. They have one job and one job only: kill Demophen Amestris.

Across the courtyard, the meissant lies crumpled on the tile, one hand clutching his heart, the other outstretched. Summoning such a concentrated blast of disruption magic must have winded him. He should never have gotten the chance.

Why the hell did they hesitate?

Above, a spiderweb of twisted scarlet lines crack across the invisible dome, plunging the courtyard into scarlet darkness. A gap in the network ripples visibly, marking the spot where they pierced through the wards. An alarum rings, the reverberations echoing through the estate. The source is deep within the house—they saw it on the plans—and far out of reach. It will be up to Ren to silence it before it alerts the city guard.

Five minutes at the most.

Ves grits their teeth. Their dagger glitters on the ground between them and their target, well within range of the arbalists. Demophen is struggling to his feet now, clutching at his husband. One dancer launches himself off the dais and rushes towards them, the glimmer of a brightwarden's ward expanding outwards in a small bubble. The other draws a throwing knife from her coiffed hair, turning swiftly towards Ves with a dangerous gleam in her eye.

This is no longer the clean job the client wanted. They have no choice now.

Make quick work of it.

A snarl buzzes in the back of their throat. They throw out a hand, bronze light emanating around their fingers, and pull on the nearby crossbow bolt. It snaps into their hand like metal snapping to a lodestone, the wood shaft burning their palm. Thumbing the tip, they shut their ears to the shouts and screams and surge ahead.

A shower of crossbow bolts fall from the sky like rain. They push off the ground and throw a powerful pulse upwards. The bolts strike it, slowing their trajectory to a stop. Then they rebound, shooting back the way they came. A distant, nauseating thud resounds in their ears as the bolts hit their targets, the screams of pain that follow an unimportant addition.

Ves vaults over the fountain and lands on the far side of the dancer, gripping the bolt like a dagger. She spins as they lash out, darting out of the way, their strike hits nothing but air. She smirks, dark eyes triumphant, and flicks her wrist. The throwing knife glints and disappears in the dim light, its edge so thin it may as well be invisible. But the vibrations of its passage are too familiar, too easy to discern.

A wing snaps out and down, catching the knife between the bronze feathers. They rip it free and fling it at the dancer's throat. It strikes true, plunging deep into the base of her throat. She drops to the floor with surprise in her eyes and a gurgle of blood on her lips.

There is too much momentum to stop now. Metal, blood, and wind. They are a force, they are a gale—unstoppable, relentless, unforgiving.

They leap over her fallen body, half-running, half-flying, and push outwards without a second thought. The screams of the remaining guests ring in their ears as they crash together and tumble over another like pebbles sliding down a slope.

The second dancer—the brightwarden memorable in their vivid serithan—glances over his shoulder, his shield half-formed. It's too easy to take advantage of his distraction. They throw the bolt, propelling it ahead with enough magical force to rival a crossbow. It sprouts between his eyes with a sickening crunch and he drops, his ward evaporating in the instance of his death.

Ves reaches the centre of the courtyard and their foot connects with their fallen dagger. They kick it into the air and pull it into their hand without a second thought, gripping the familiar hilt with ease. They push off the ground and ascend into the air, arcing across the courtyard like a bird of prey. The alarum blares in their ears, the red lights dancing in their peripheral vision. How much time has passed since it was triggered? Seconds? Minutes? Either way, Ren should have silenced it by now.

Where is he?

It doesn't matter. Let the alarm continue. Demophen will be dead and their business will be done here.

"Wait!"

The scream cuts through their thoughts. Ves pulls out of the dive and stills mid-air, bathed in red light. Their dagger lies heavily in their hand, its sharp edge lethal and bright. Air rushes over them as they hover, the mechanical joints of their great wings whirring with every flap. They know what they must look like to the cowering men below: myth and monster brought to life, come to dole out punishment. Not a judge, but an executioner.

It is the dwarf who has thrown himself on his hands and knees before them, protecting the exhausted Demophen. One more person in their way. One more person electing to die.

The chapter will be furious. Because Uncle will be furious. Because his superiors will be furious. This is sloppy, careless, the work of an amateur. And the Erebian League does not have time for amateurs.

"You know what I have come for," they call. "Stand aside."

The dwarf hesitates, fear in his eyes, but he is immovable. His hands shake, his shaved head shines with sweat, his mouth trembles, too terrified to call on whatever magic he has at his disposal. They can name more than one Swiftmark who would laugh at his desperation and call him pathetic.

Ves knows better. This is not an act of weakness, but one of love. True love, perhaps. Most would choose to run. It takes a special fool to stay.

"I cannot," he says. "I will not."

"You cannot stop this."

"I beg you, please. Leave us be—"

"No." The word vanishes on the wind. They cannot be reasoned with, they cannot be bought. There is nothing here but their blade, their mark, and their duty. Even so, if there are things they wish they could tell him. How heroism borne of love is futile. How he will orphan his children if he continues down this path. They have already suffered the loss of one parent, and they will suffer a second. They do not need to suffer a third. "Stand aside or you will fall as surely as he will."

There is mercy here. Take it, you fool. I will only offer it thrice.

"What do you want? Crowns? Favours? Guarantees? House Amestris makes a powerful friend."

"We are beyond the need of powerful friends. Stand aside."

The second offer.

Understanding crosses his face. "You're an agent of the League."

"I am."

A voice croaks behind him. Demophen stirs weakly, still crumpled on the floor. "Theren, please." His voice wheezes, his breath brittle. The hit to his chest must have injured his ribs. "Do as they say—"

The dwarf shakes his head, his fear bleeding to anger. "Then tell me," he shouts. "Who hired you? Who seeks his death? Our ruin?"

"I cannot say. Stand aside."

The third.

“A name, please. That is all I ask—”

It should not have come to this.

A shiver creeps across the nape of their neck. Familiar, like an embrace. The dark corners of the courtyard, now absent of wisps, coalesce in their vision. It is impossible to tell where the natural dark ends and the dark violet of his magic begins, if it is even there at all. Ren will appear only when he is needed. His is the realm of shadows and silence; theirs is of light and clamour.

Glinting metallic wings snap close and Ves plummets from the sky. Their blade descends. Theren Amestris sinks to his knees, hands pressed against the scarlet gap gored in his throat, and crumples face-first on the ground. Ves lands on blood-soaked tile and steps over his corpse, their gaze locked on their petrified mark.

To his credit, Demophen does not weep. He does not cry. With his final ounce of strength, he raises a hand and pushes a weakened wave of energy outwards. It rushes over Ves, its power barely palpable, faintly moving their loose hair. They blink, unbothered, and continue their steady walk onwards.

The end of a life is a strange thing to witness. The terror in the eyes, the pathetic final struggle, and—at last—acceptance of their fate. Though some of their chapter brethren delight in the final stages of the hunt, it puts a foul taste in Ves’ mouth. They despise when it comes to this.

Strike clean. Strike true. Those have ever been Uncle’s words. They failed him tonight. There is nothing clean or true about Demophen Amestris’ death.

The alarm blares. The red light glimmers. Demophen crawls away, scuttling across bloodied tile, one last attempt to escape. Unusual for a meissant to put up such resistance. The servants of the Meissandium are more amenable than most, understanding their fate and reaching for the Hexatheon in their final moments. But he slips and scrambles, dragging himself on hands and knees as far away as he can manage.

Futile.

By the time he reaches the fountain, his robes are smeared with blood and dirt. He grips the lip of the fountain and pulls himself up, standing shakily on his own two feet as he faces his doom. Abandoned by his guests, his family, with those who remain powerless to do anything by look on. What was to be a night of celebration has turned into a night of horror.

Ves’ blade is heavy in their hand, its edge dripping with unwanted blood.

“I know you,” he says. “I know who sent you.”

“Then you know more than I.”

“Ah. Of course. League sensibilities. Keeping their tools blind.”

The tip of their wing flicks impatiently. “I am not blind, *meissant*. I know what my actions have wrought.”

“Do you? And yet you continue with unquestioned devotion, freeing yourself of any guilt. Anyone else would have broken beneath the weight of their conscience.”

“Think what you will. I have no obligation to explain my *conscience* to you.”

Demophen steps back, his knees hitting the edge of the fountain. The terror he displayed earlier has vanished, replaced by cold defiance. “Abandon this farce, Ves Sithia,” he says. “Before you are lost forever.”

Ves snarls. To hear their name on the lips of a target is new. Unusual. He has made this personal, and that is a dangerous ground to walk.

They pause, the trickle of the courtyard fountain pulsing in their ears. The alarm continues to shriek, the web of red light refusing to fade. Where is Ren? How did he fail to disable the alarm? It has gone on for too long now; their five minute allowance has run its course and all they have to show for it is a handful of dead bystanders who were stupid enough to interfere and a mark who is decidedly *not* dead.

Ves has approached their life with conviction and certainty. It is unusual for them to be left in confusion, but tonight...

Tonight nothing makes sense. There is a horrible feeling deep in their gut that something is slipping away from them, but they cannot say what.

Mist coalesces in the corner of their eye. It lingers in the shadows, spilling across the tile. The hair raises on the back of their neck.

Finish it. Finish it and report to Uncle and maybe he can make sense of this mess.

Ves surges forwards. Their wings flare, carrying them as they push off the ground and propel through the air. Demophen waits, vulnerable and exposed, his dark eyes locked on them. He will not try to stop them. He has accepted the inevitability of his death, like all the others.

They raise their blade.

It glints, flashing in the red light.

It descends.

Dark violet mist bursts into existence, coalescing into a man. The remains of his portal clings to his dark clothes as he appears in front of Demophen, shielding him from the strike. Beneath his hood, a familiar pale face and dark eyes bore into Ves' own, simmering with cold hatred.

In the moment of recognition, their mind shrieks one word.

Stop.

Ves collides with Ren, their dagger slicing across his throat in a strike meant for someone else. They crash into the ground, Ren's limp form beneath them, his eyes glazed over. Their mind fuzzes, staring in confusion at the line of red on his pale skin shimmering like rubies. His breath is shallow, his chest hardly rising, but his eyes are as bright as ever.

His mouth moves, but they do not hear. It doesn't matter. They know the shape of their name on his lips intimately.

The dagger remains aloft, their fingers pressed so deeply into the hilt their nailbeds have turned white. Their hand is shaking. For the first time, the weapon does not feel like an extension of themselves. It is foreign. Alien. A sickness to be expunged. They would throw it away if they could—

He did this.

A moment of clarity. A moment of anger. This was no accident, this was on purpose.

Ves drops the blade and it clatters to the ground a foot from Ren's head. "Why?" they spit, grasping him by the front of his tunic and lifting him up. He flops uselessly, too weak to resist, too weak to hold himself upright.

A faint smile—no, a smirk—cracks his lips. Blood trickles across his throat, pulsing from the wound. He's lucky—in their confusion, they struck badly. A poor cut. A weak cut. His life remains in the balance. Should they be thankful for this? "For... me," he croaks.

They curse and their fingers brush the base of their throat. His blood is bright. Thick. How did he let them do this to him? "Explain."

"This... is over, Ves. Done."

"What the hell are you on about? What have you done?"

His dark eyes meet theirs, the smile only growing stronger. Proud. Satisfied. Fulfilled. His lips move, but no sound comes out. His mangled throat will not allow it. There will be no explanations.

The alarm shrieks in their ears, throbbing, throbbing, throbbing. But there is more, something behind it. A subtle change in the air, the distant rush of a dozen feet on tiled floor. They are out of time. The city guard is here.

Get out. Get out. Get OUT.

Anger burns in their veins. With a snarl, they shove Ren to the ground and kick off, shooting into the air. They rise quickly, steadily, the scarlet web searing their vision as they hurtle towards the gap in the

wards. They push through and out to the other side, wings furled wide as they vault through the air, up becoming down and down becoming up. They drop onto a nearby roof, winded and rattled, the impact sending pain spiralling through their legs and spine.

Below, Ren lies crumpled on the ground, their bloodied blade discarded at his side. Demophen Amestris remains collapsed by the fountain, still clinging to life. They should have killed him before taking flight, but it is too late now. Their mistake. Ren's mistake.

He got in the way.

It will not matter. The client will be furious, and so too will Uncle and the League. Someone will have to bear the punishment.

A deep ache pangs in muscle and bone that no longer exist. Ves' wings twitch, the metal mechanisms scraping against each other. They crouch and cling to the shadows, folding their wings tight against their body as they watch the scene unfold below.

The guard floods the courtyard, bursting out of every nook and cranny like insects shaken from their nest. They flood the perimeter, some rushing to the bodies of the dead, others to those who remain alive, and work with cold efficiency. Demophen is helped to his feet and ushered inside the estate. Ren lies unresponsive on the ground. Ves' lip curls upward as they watch them strap his hands in glowing chains. They know the kind—vile things that disrupt natural magic, preventing dampening or outright preventing its use. When he comes to, he will not be able to portal to safety.

Gods know where they will take him now. Gods know what they will do with him. Gods know what secrets he will reveal.

A League operative would rather die than be imprisoned.

Was that his intention? It couldn't be, could it? That would make him...

Their hands are shaking, their fingers sticky with blood. It coats their skin, lingering, absorbing into their flesh. Ren's blood—and not Demophen Amestris'. How did it come to this? A world where it was Ren they struck down, and not their mark?

He planned this. All of it. And you were too blind to see.

"Shut up," they hiss.

He betrayed you. He betrayed Uncle. He betrayed the League.

Ves snarls and kicks off the roof, ascending into a cloudless night sky. Twilight has come and gone, and a bright moon now rises above the city, casting its silver glow across the rooftops. A harsh breeze rips at their hair and tearing tears from their eyes, comforting in its familiarity. It may be a cold comfort, but it is the only comfort they have.

A wordless shriek rips from their throat and they give themselves to the wind.

[Progress Report 2023.12.11.: December Happenings](#)

[Dec 11, 2023](#)

Hi friends,

Happy December!

This month I am picking away at more of Episode 3. I am finishing up the first of the three tower routes (there are multiple variations within variations here, so it's a matter of scooping them all up, bottlenecking them, and sending them on their merry way—well... as merry as Aeran can be, that is). I'm hoping I can get that done within the next couple of weeks.

If you missed it, there is [an ongoing poll about the status of Episode 3](#). Please let me know your thoughts about whether you would prefer an alpha update when the current route is finished or if you would rather wait for all three to be done.

As I mentioned in the last progress report, I will be updating my Patreon tiers and benefits in January. I am still settling on what the new prices/benefits will be; keep an eye out for the announcement post with all the details sometime next week.

I am taking time off at the end of the month to visit my family, who I haven't seen in a year and a half. I am excited to go home; this year has been very challenging for us due to some serious health events and major surgeries, and it will be nice to be with them in person. I will be out of contact from December 24-January 2; if you have questions or need to reach me through Patreon DMs, I may not be able to respond during that time.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support! 💖

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #10](#)

[Dec 15, 2023](#)

“Wait.”

He hesitates. Before he can answer, you shoulder past him and approach the maw of darkness undulating before you. The white eyes waver, following your movements. For a moment, you catch a faint stir in the air—the wind dies, the gnawing hum fades, and you are cloaked in groaning silence.

“What are you?” you call and your voice evaporates into nothingness.

You hear nothing at first. Then a sound so faint you are certain you are imagining it—a choir of a hundred voices and pitches, intoning together in dissonant harmony. But it grows, the sound niggling at you like a whisper across the room you can’t quite hear, catching the hard edges of consonants just as the soft shape of its vowels are lost.

The air has become oppressively stale. Beneath the hollow mustiness, a foul stench brews. The smell of ancient decay. The smell of something rotten. The smell of something that has lived beyond its time.

The voices fade.

To your surprise, Aeran remains silent. You expected him to interject, to carry on despite your objection, but he has fallen still, the dagger all but falling from his grasp.

“Do you understand me?” you shout, a desperate edge to your voice. If this thing can speak, if it can communicate... that changes everything. You don’t know what the call is, or if it is even yours to make. Do you find a way to reach it? Or do you kill it now, while you still can? “What are you?”

The choir rebounds, louder than before. You focus, gaze locked on the wavering white eyes, and pick apart the sounds within the chorus. The words that are sung are not ones you can comprehend. Its language is beyond you—too old, too foreign, vibrating with impossible timbres beyond the physiology of any known ancestry.

Debris swirls around you as more and more of your surroundings are pulled from their foundations and sucked into the storm. You do not have long. Sooner or later, stone or wood or glass will be hurled in your direction. You have no doubt the blow will be lethal.

And yet your position on the promenade is safe for now. Is it giving you a chance? Or is it toying with you, delaying the inevitable?

- 1. Relinquish your sword. You may not understand its language, but perhaps you can find some common ground.**
- 2. You cannot understand it and there is no sign it can understand you. Kill it now—before it has the chance to strike.**

[Dec 19, 2023](#)

Hello all,

The upcoming changes to my Patreon tiers will go into effect on January 3, 2024. Whether you are a current subscriber or are considering pledging, please read this carefully so you know what to expect.

It has always been important to me to keep my membership prices accessible. However, I haven't made any changes since I started my Patreon in 2021 and I am feeling the effects of inflation. I am hoping that the new tiers will better reflect the work I can do on Patreon while supporting my livelihood and the game's development.

- **New tiers with different prices** will be published on January 3, 2024. If a tier is keeping its price, then its name will be changed along with its adjusted benefits.
- **Former tiers that are not being adjusted will be unpublished.** This means new patrons will not be able to pledge at these levels. You will keep your tier's benefits for the duration of the month. During this time, you should upgrade or downgrade your membership to one of the new tiers.
- On February 1, 2024, **former tiers that are not changing will be deleted.** If you have not changed your tier or cancelled your membership, your tier will appear as **No Tier**. You will continue to pay your pledged amount until you change your pledge or you cancel your membership. You will not receive any benefits. If your account is connected to the patron Discord server, you will lose access.

Please keep in mind that my Patreon charges once when you pledge and then subsequently on the first day of the month.

THE NEW TIERS

All prices are listed in CAD. I have included their rough equivalent in other major currencies, but they may be slightly different due to the exchange rate.

TIP JAR (\$5/month) [\$4 USD, £3 GBP, €3.40 EUR]

- My thanks and gratitude
- Biweekly progress reports
- *This tier will not include alpha build access or Discord access.*

This is the equivalent of the current Recruit tier. Benefits will be adjusted accordingly. If you are pledged at this tier, you will lose access to the patron Discord server and the alpha build on January 3.

RECRUIT (\$15/month) [\$11 USD, £9 GBP, €10.20 EUR]

- All of the previous tier's benefits

- Biweekly sneak peaks
- Alpha build access
- Discord access

This is the equivalent of the current Wayfarer tier. Benefits will be adjusted accordingly.

APPRENTICE (\$20/month) [\$15 USD, £11.50 GBP, €13.60 EUR]

- All of the previous tier's benefits
- Thank you in the game's credits
- One short story or bonus content piece per month
- Bonus content is on hold until June 2024, but you will have access to the backlog of patron exclusive posts

WAYFARER (\$40/month) [\$30 USD, £23 GBP, €27 EUR]

- All of the previous tier's benefits
- Create a minor character for the game

MASTER (\$100/month) [\$75 USD, £44 GBP, €68 EUR]

- All of the previous tier's benefits
- A one-time commission set in Wayfarer's world

This is the equivalent of the current Ambassador of the Order tier. Benefits will be adjusted accordingly.

GRANDMASTER (\$135/month) [\$100 USD, £79 GBP, €92 EUR]

- All of the previous tier's benefits
- Super Supporter status and thank you in the game's credits

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask. Happy Wayfaring!

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #11](#)

[Dec 29, 2023](#)

You instincts are screaming at you, but your mind is set.

Against your better judgement, you crouch and place \$blade at your feet. Aeran's eyes widen with fear and surprise. He stares, dumbfounded, too taken aback to interfere. Or perhaps he assumes you have some kind of mediocre plan and wants no involvement in it.

You straighten and step over your blade, walking determinedly towards the hollow skull. Steeling yourself, you stare into the black.

The black stares back.

The white eyes blink, dimming for the briefest of moments before their glow intensifies. The choir is an unearthly hum now, its discordant harmonies thrumming painfully within your skull. Though perhaps you are misunderstanding, you sense some desire to speak, some desperate need to communicate with the only living beings who can survive in its presence.

The sound of its essence vibrates through the recesses of your body. Your bones hum, your teeth clatter, your heart pounds. Even shielded from its magic as you are, its physical presence is impossible to comprehend. This being exudes a force upon its surroundings that could very well rip you to shreds.

But not yet. Not yet.

Continue.

[TIMED CHOICE]

To unlock the rest of the questions, the MC must ask each question in order without running out of time. However, there is a cost for asking each question.

1. **“What are you? *Who* are you?”**
2. **Question unknown.**
3. **Question unknown.**
4. **Question unknown.**
5. **No questions, you’re putting an end to this. Attack it.**

1. **“What are you? *Who* are you?”**

The chorus shifts and the pain lessens, the voices whispering about you like the gentlest breeze. You strain, trying to make sense of the syllables and vowels. If you can hear words, you cannot comprehend them. The language is too foreign, too nonsensical.

And yet it seems to understand you.

You cannot help but wonder how much more you would understand if you could embrace its magic. What illusions it could cast to explain its meaning, whether it could twist your mind’s perception to turn a lack of knowing into understanding. Unfortunate that the very thing that keeps you alive in its presence also prevents it from communicating with you.

More stone crumbles around you, hurled into the storm. You flinch, ducking as it passes overhead, far too close for comfort.

[Jan 3, 2024](#)

Hi all,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a good end to 2023 and a restful, relaxing holiday if you were celebrating. I've returned from my trip and I am ready to get back to work and get things started.

General Announcements & Patreon Tier Changes

Today the new Patreon tiers have gone into effect. January is going to be a bit weird because it is transitional and there are a lot of finicky things going on in the back end, but if you have any questions or concerns about your tier and your benefits, please do not hesitate to message me.

Of note:

- The former \$5 Recruit tier is now the Tip Jar. Due to its change in benefits, if you were pledged at this tier you will no longer be able to access the alpha build. However, if you were pledged to this tier **before January 3, 2024**, you are entitled to a month of access to Wayfarer's alpha build. If you would like to play the alpha build, please message me for January's password.
- The former Wayfarer tier is now the Recruit tier. Benefits have been changed and adjusted accordingly.
- The former **Apprentice, Master, Grandmaster of the Order, Archivist of the Order, and Ambassador of the Order** tiers are discontinued. They have been unpublished. If you are pledged at these tiers, you will be able to access your benefits for the duration of January. On February 1, your tier will be deleted. If you do not change your membership to one of the new ones or cancel it, your tier will show as **No Tier**. You will continue to be charged at the rate of your original pledge until you change it; however, as a **No Tier** you will not have access to any benefits.

The new tiers are published and available:



TIP JAR

\$5 CA / month

Join

Thank you for supporting Wayfarer!

Members of this tier receive access to bi-weekly progress reports.

Please note that patrons are charged when they sign up, and then subsequently on the 1st of the month.

- My thanks and gratitude
- Progress reports




RECRUIT

\$15 CA / month

Join

Members of this tier receive all the previous tier's benefits in addition to bi-weekly sneak peeks of in-progress material, exclusive alpha build access, name in the game credits, and access to the Patron-only Discord server.

Please note that patrons are charged when they sign up, and then subsequently on the 1st of the month.

- My thanks and gratitude
- Progress reports
- Alpha Build access
- Exclusive sneak peeks
- Your name in the game credits
- Discord access 




APPRENTICE

\$20 CA / month

Join

Members of this tier receive all the previous tier's benefits in addition to monthly bonus content. Bonus content includes behind-the-scenes extras, writing and coding tutorials, short stories and more.

Please note that patrons are charged when they sign up, and then subsequently on the 1st of the month. Additionally, bonus content is on hold until June 2024 but you will have access to the backlog of exclusive extras.

- My thanks and gratitude
- Progress reports
- Alpha Build access
- Exclusive sneak peeks
- Your name in the game credits
- One short story or bonus content piece per month
- Discord access 




WAYFARER

\$40 CA / month

Join

Members of this tier receive all the previous tier's benefits in addition to creating a minor character for the game who will appear in a later episode.

Please note that patrons are charged when they sign up, and then subsequently on the 1st of the month. Additionally, bonus content is on hold until June 2024 but you will have access to the backlog of exclusive extras.

- My thanks and gratitude
- Progress reports
- Alpha Build access
- Exclusive sneak peeks
- Your name in the game credits
- One short story or bonus content piece per month
- Create a minor character for the game
- Discord access 




MASTER

\$100 CA / month

Join

Members of this tier receive all the previous tier's benefits in addition to a one-time writing commission set in Wayfarer's world.

Please note that patrons are charged when they sign up, and then subsequently on the 1st of the month. Additionally, bonus content is on hold until June 2024 but you will have access to the backlog of exclusive extras.

- My thanks and gratitude
- Progress reports
- Alpha Build access
- Exclusive sneak peeks
- Your name in the game credits
- One short story or bonus content piece per month
- Create a minor character for the game
- One-time writing commission set in the Wayfarer world
- Discord access 




GRANDMASTER

\$135 CA / month

Join

Members of this tier receive all the previous tier's benefits in addition to my deepest thanks and Super Supporter status in the game's credits.

Please note that patrons are charged when they sign up, and then subsequently on the 1st of the month. Additionally, bonus content is on hold until June 2024 but you will have access to the backlog of exclusive extras.

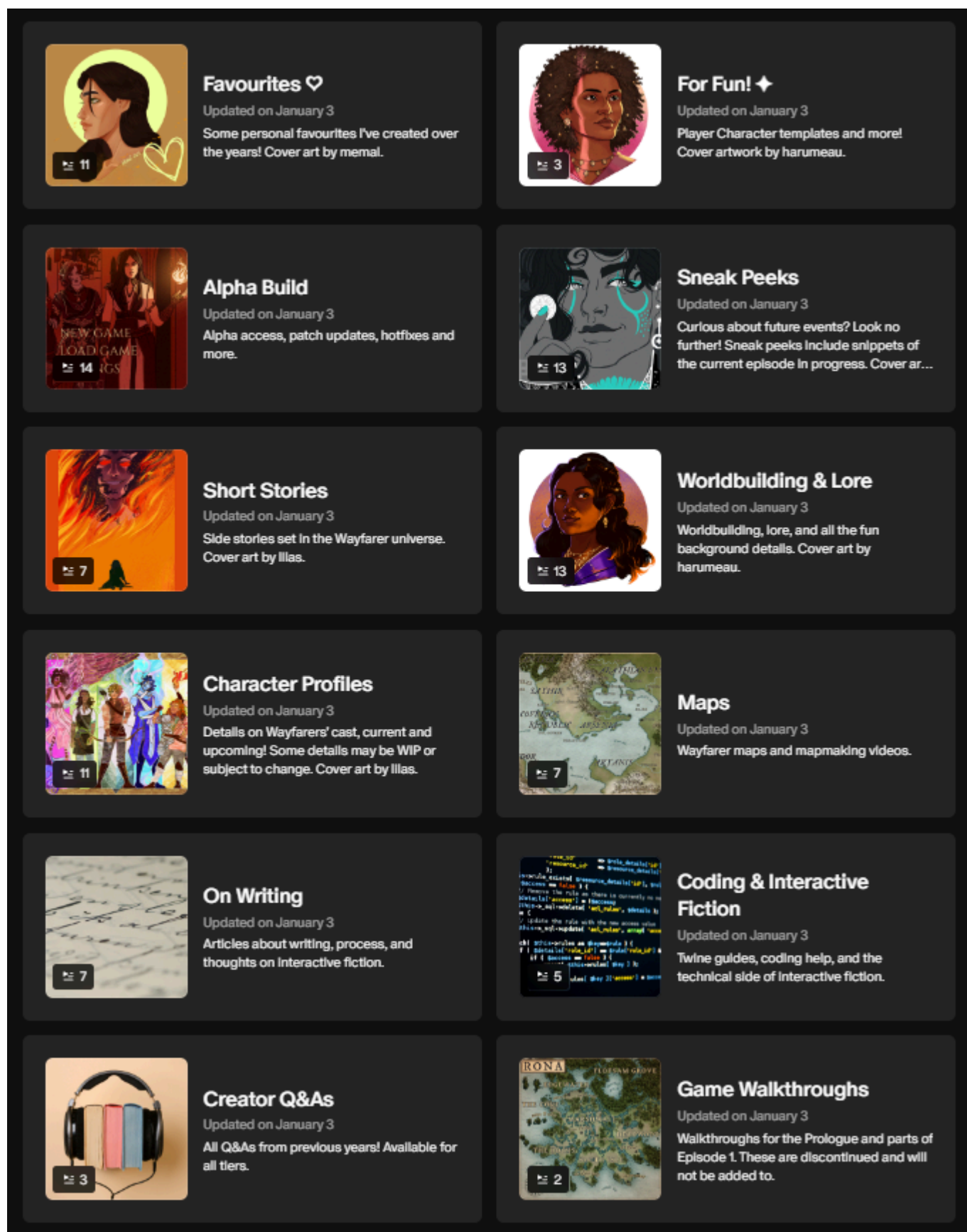
- My thanks and gratitude
- Progress reports
- Alpha Build access
- Exclusive sneak peeks
- Your name in the game credits
- One short story or bonus content piece per month
- Create a minor character for the game
- One-time writing commission set in the Wayfarer world
- Super Supporter
- Discord access 

2024 Roadmap

A roadmap for Wayfarer's 2024 development will be released on Friday. This will include the projected timeline for Episode 3's alpha completion, Episode 4's development, planned short stories and other Patreon exclusives, and the public release of Episode 3.

Collections

New to Patreon are Collections. I've put a few together on specific topics, from some of my personal favourite extras I've made over the years to all the short stories in one place to a collection for writing tutorials and twine tutorials. You can browse them through the [Collections tab](#).



Bonus Content

All bonus content is on hold until June 2024. This is to give me some breathing room while I focus on finishing Episode 3.

As always, thank you all so much for your continued support. I'm looking forward to this being a good year for Wayfarer, getting Episode 3 complete and moving onto the next part of the game. If all goes

according to plan, we should hopefully be hitting new highs and new lows with the story, and finally getting to meet more of the major companions!

Cheers,
Anna

WAYFARER

2024 ROADMAP



WINTER

January - March

- ◆ JANUARY: Episode 3 Part 3 - Complete Route 1
- ◆ FEBRUARY: Episode 3 Part 3 - Routes 2 & 3
- ◆ MARCH: Coding & Playtesting, Public Patch 2.7.,
Episode 3 Alpha Update



SPRING

April - June

- ◆ APRIL: Episode 3 Part 2 (Melchior & Misc Routes)
- ◆ MAY: Episode 3 Finale, Spring Playtester Applications Open
- ◆ JUNE: Coding & Playtesting, Bonus Content Returns to Patreon, **Episode 3 Alpha Complete**



SUMMER

July - September

- ♦ JULY: Two week break (game development paused), Episode 4 begins development
- ♦ AUGUST: Episode 4 Route A (Alexia)
- ♦ SEPTEMBER: Episode 4 Route B (Ren)

**Disclaimer: this is a projected schedule and may not be accurate*

FALL

October - December

- ♦ OCTOBER: Episode 4 Route C (Calla), Fall Playtester Applications Open
- ♦ NOVEMBER: Coding & Playtesting
- ♦ DECEMBER: **Episode 4 Alpha Complete, Episode 3 Public Launch**

**Disclaimer: this is a projected schedule and may not be accurate*

PATREON.COM/IDRELLEGAMES
IDRELLEGAMES.ITCH.IO/WAYFARER

[Wayfarer 2024 Roadmap](#)

[Jan 5, 2024](#)

It's the start of a new year and I'm excited to announce my plans for Wayfarer's development.

The primary focus for 2024 is finishing Episode 3 and starting Episode 4. My goal has always been to get the alpha build to the point where it is one episode ahead of the public build, and forcing my way through this period has been very difficult. Episode 3 has turned into a more challenging endeavour than I anticipated due to its sheer size and complexity. I did not intend to take over a year to finish it, but if I've learned anything from the creative process it's that it is unpredictable and things never go according to plan.

The 2024 roadmap is for an idealized scenario. I am hoping I have given myself enough wiggle room should things go off-course. With that in mind, the plan for the last 6 months of the year is an estimate and will likely change. Regardless, the goal remains the same: finish Episode 3, finish Episode 4, and release Episode 3 publicly.

Winter • January to March

This quarter will be focused on finishing the next stages of Episode 3. Episode 3 is divided into 4 parts:

- **Part 1:** the beginning of the episode, following the routes that occur if the player ends Episode 2 with Aeran or Veyer. This part is finished and was added to the alpha build in May 2023. It includes over 300,000 words of playable content.
- **Part 2:** the beginning of the episode, following the routes that occur if the player ends Episode 2 with Melchior, alone, or drunk. This part was skipped over and will be returned to at a later date.
- **Part 3:** the middle of the episode, split into three different routes that eventually bottleneck at a specific point. This part is currently in-progress, with Route 1 nearing completion.
- **Part 4:** the episode finale

January and February will be devoted to writing Episode 3 Part 3, which includes finishing Route 1 and completing Routes 2 and 3. In March, I will code that material and playtest it. Once it has been thoroughly playtested, it will be added to the alpha build (playable on my Patreon).

March will also see an update to the public build. Patch 2.7. will not add any new content, but it will patch reported bugs in Episodes 1 and 2 and update some quality of life issues.

Spring • April to June

This quarter will be focused on writing Episode 3 Part 2, the Episode 3 finale, and coding and playtesting all of the remaining material. Should all go according to plan, the Episode 3 alpha will be finished at the end of June. All routes will be playable for members of my Patreon.

The next round of playtester applications will open in May. Playtesters are volunteers who play the alpha build in search of bugs, continuity errors, and typos. They get first access to new content, and updates and patches before anyone else does. Because Wayfarer's gameplay includes hundreds of choices and many, many variations that build on each other, playing multiple times and checking different options is essential for testing to ensure each area of the game functions as intended.

In June bonus content (short stories, writing tutorials, worldbuilding and lore posts, etc) will return to my Patreon. It is currently on a break, but the backlog of extras and specials are available to members of the Apprentice tier.

Summer • July to September

If the Episode 3 alpha is finished on time, this quarter will start the development of Episode 4. Episode 4 is divided into three separate routes that have no-crossover and each feature a main companion. Alexia's (Route A) will be worked on in August and Ren's (Route B) will be worked on in September.

This is an estimated timeline and is subject to change.

Fall • October to December

The last quarter will see the end of Episode 4's development. This includes Calla's route (Route C) and additional coding and playtesting. A second round of playtester applications will open in October. If all goes well, December will see the release of the Episode 4 alpha on Patreon and Episode 3 will launch on the public build.

This is an estimated timeline and is subject to change.

[Progress Report 2024.01.04.: Roadmaps, A Trilogy & Writing Continues](#)

[Jan 5, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

A few updates.

2024 Roadmap

The 2024 Wayfarer Roadmap has been released; [you can read it here](#). This is an estimated schedule for the coming year; as always, development is difficult to predict. Finishing both Episode 3 and Episode 4 this year is an ambitious goal, and I am going to stick to it as much as I can. I don't expect everything

to go to plan, and I am planning on doing a six-month update in July to account for things reshuffling. It's hard to say how things are going to go until I'm in the middle of it.

Game Re-Structuring

I will be doing a formal post on this sometime this month or in February, but the next major change is that I am adjusting Wayfarer's outline and structure. The game has always been conceptualized as 3 acts and 15 episodes. While that story structure is still at its roots, it's very apparent now that this is far too much story to be contained to a single game.

So, I am breaking it into a trilogy.

I have had this idea for a while, but I have held off on doing anything about it because of technical issues. Because of the way the story builds on itself, I need to ensure that continuity (including small details like the player character's inventory!) is preserved across all three games. This means having some kind of save import and world state system. This is doable in Twine, but I haven't tested it yet.

This is tentatively the new structure for the Wayfarer trilogy:

Game 1: Title TBA

- Prologue
- Act 1: Episode 1, Episode 2, Episode 3
- Act 2: Episode 4, Episode 5
- Act 3: Episode 6, Episode 7
- Epilogue

Game 2: Title TBA

- Prologue
- Act 1: Episode 8, Episode 9
- Act 2: Episode 10
- Act 3: Episode 11
- Epilogue

Game 3: Title TBA

- Prologue
- Act 1: Episode 12
- Act 2: Episode 13, Episode 14
- Act 3: Episode 15
- Epilogue

With this change, I will be looking into getting new cover art that is more specific to the first game's events and brainstorming titles. I am also considering commissioning art for each act that will display

behind the episode summary when you start a new episode (currently it is a black background).

Game Updates

I am back to writing as of today. I left off in a pretty good place in December and closed out some variations I had been struggling with for a while. The next stage of Route 1 is pretty straightforward and I'm finally excited about continuing it.

As always, thank you for your continued support! 💖

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #12](#)

[Jan 12, 2024](#)

This sneak peek takes us to another Wayfarer flashback that can be triggered in Episode 3. For context, it uses the Child of the Fields origin and the MC was trained by Cenric. As this is a WIP written in third person, the player character is referred to with they/them pronouns (variables will be added later).



They aren't sure what brought them to Trost, but they are here now—reduced to peeking around the entrance to an alleyway, watching two people pummel each other into the cobblestones.

Cenric and Varyn had been insistent on this outing, sudden though it was. As for the reason, they may never know—or maybe they did know, maybe they were told, they simply did not pay close enough attention. Three hours or so before they were bundled into the cart they were busy picking clumps of burs and grass out of Aeran's hair. He had wandered off on his own into the woods again and was eager to avoid an argument with Varyn.

Help me hide the evidence, he had asked.

The child agreed easily enough, though privately they thought it was a moot point. Aeran's clothes were muddy and that was damning evidence enough. Not to mention that nothing escapes Varyn's keen eye.

The ride down the mountain was cold and soggy, as was to be expected. Autumn in the Frostmarks brought a perpetual mist that did not seem to go away until it turned to snow. By the time they arrived in town, both the child and Aeran were quite keen to never leave the Spire's comfort again.

Varyn promised a warm night in the local inn. Their business in town wouldn't begin until the following morning, so they had the evening to enjoy themselves. That was where they were headed when the sounds of a fight interrupted.

Cenric led the charge through the mist, leading them to the entrance to a tight alleyway and the scene playing out before them. A girl—a youth—grapples with a much larger elf. They scream and shout between punches, fingernails digging into arms, fingers scratching at eyes. There is no hint of magic about either of them.

The child's eyes shone with curiosity and horror, and they move to follow as if entranced. They do not have much experience with violence like this. The sloppy bouts between jealous youths at the annual festival barely count. A practice session gone rogue in the training grounds at their family's estate barely count. But the anniversary of becoming a Wayfarer apprentice is marked by a fannarl attack, and that certainly does. Not to mention the one-on-on duels they've seen the older Wayfarers engage in at the Spire.

But this is no training regimen. This is a real fight between two people intent on hurting each other.

And *that* they've never seen before.

Aeran seizes their arm and drags them out of the way, mouthing at them to be quiet and stay out of the way. Cenric and Varyn push forwards, hands not straying far from their weapons.

The child closes their eyes and turns their head. A scuffle, a shout, a curse—and Cenric's deep voice echoes through their ears.

"Get out. Leave. Won't tell you again."

The child opens their eyes.

The elf is gone, the sound of their retreating footsteps pattering away in the distance. The youth backs away, pressing her back to the wall as she wipes blood from her mouth. Her eyes dart from Cenric to Varyn and back again.

"Thanks," she says. Intense blue eyes glare from a freckled face, framed by choppy brown hair. The mop is short enough to reveal the slight slant of her ears; her features are more human than elven. And she's not really a youth, the child realizes now that they can see her properly in all this mist. Despite her small stature, she is several years their senior, just past the cusp of adulthood.

"Of course," Varyn says. "Do you customarily get into scraps in alleyways? Your skills would suggest so."

The young woman snorts. Her eyes are cold. "You, uh... you from the Spire?"

"Yes." Varyn's gaze is steadfast. "You are a magianis, are you not?"

"You bet your arse I am." She scowls, lazily inspecting her bloodied knuckles. Her fingers are horribly bruised, the angles sickening... Whatever she did, she hurt them terribly. "And what of it?"

Cenric steps towards her. "You're wounded, kid," he says gently. "Gotta hit open-fisted or you're more like to break your hand than your opponent's face."

"Don't matter to me." She eyes him. "Why does it matter so much to you? Here to recruit me? Gonna drag me back to that big scary castle up the hill whether I like it or not?"

"Call it friendly concern. Give me your hand—"

"Back off!" The young woman rips her hand out of his reach, backing down the street. She clasps her injured fingers to her chest, a snarl curling her upper lip. "I don't want your help! I don't *need* your help —"

"Oftentimes the help you do not want is exactly the kind you need most," Varyn says solemnly. "We have no interest in recruiting you to the Wayfarer Order, child. Even if we did, the Grandmaster would forbade it. But your current predicament is not one we can ignore. If you—"

The young woman throws back her head and a hoarse laugh bubbling up out of her. She presses her back against the wall, her whole body shaking. "My *predicament*? Funny, that. Hearing it from you. Your grand order with your grand designs, helping the common riffraff like me. You know my asshole of a father—whoever he is—was one of your lot. Why would you think I'd ever want *anything* to do with you?"

[Progress Report 2024.01.19: A Bit About the Flashback Scene...](#)

[Jan 19, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

This week I drafted the second flashback/dream to the MC's Wayfarer training. This a pretty straightforward scene that takes place a year into the MC's training. Their mentor and Varyn take them to Trost (the nearest town to the Spire) to deal with some business and they meet another magianis. There are three versions with different configurations depending on the MC's mentor—Cenric and Varyn (Cenric MCs), Sero and Varyn (Sero MCs), or Varyn alone (Varyn MCs). Aeran is always present.

As with the scene in Episode 1, this one can be unlocked if the MC loses consciousness during the course of the episode. Triggering the scene will unlock the second Wayfarer tenet. There are two points

where the flashback can occur (one on Route A of the tower sequence, one at the very end of Episode 3) so there are multiple opportunities to get it. If the player did not unlock the first flashback scene in Episode 1, then they will get that one instead of this one.

With the flashback scene complete, I've started work on the next section of Route A. The outline is finished and I am slowly but surely pushing the MC and Aeran towards the climax of the episode.

On the business side of things, there isn't too much going on this week.

I would like to just put out a reminder that if you are pledged to a **discontinued tier**, you should edit your pledge to an active tier or cancel your membership before January 31st. If you do not change your tier, your membership will be set to No Tier, you will continue to be charged your original pledge amount, and you will not have access to any benefits.

[Please see this post for more information.](#)

Thank you as always for your continued support! 💖

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #13](#)

[Jan 26, 2024](#)

A little bit of progress here... There are numerous variation checks in this section, so when you encounter it in-game it may be a little different.



You tread carefully across the cavernous hall, keen to avoid the gaping holes in the stonework, your footsteps echo hollowly with every step. Aeran's torch bobs ahead of you, lighting the way—a spark in the darkness. A wide staircase rises from the centre of the chamber, climbing to the first floor mezzanine. Light filters in from the windows above, cutting through the dark. This entrance hall is different from the Spire's—wide and open, with a mezzanine for each floor looking down on the ones below. Six, by your count. You have a long way to go.

There is little desire to talk after your flight to the tower. Though you are safe for now, the shroud is not likely to give up its hunt so easily. Diradan is broken, it could easily find its way inside on another floor. And once you retrieve the Astrial, you will have to escape with it. Regardless of how events play out, a confrontation with it is on your horizon. You will have to be prepared.

With a sigh, you set a foot on the first step. It creaks beneath your weight, sending a startling *crack* of wood against wood echoing through the empty hall. You freeze, jolted by the sound, your heart leaping into your throat.

Aeran glances sharply over his shoulder, his profile illuminated in flickering torchlight. His expression relaxes when he spots you and he nods, carrying on without comment. Cursing yourself for being so jumpy and trying not to take a fucking *step* as a bad omen, you scramble after him and start the long climb.

It's difficult not to hold your breath. The steps aren't steep, and yet your lungs refuse to move and your throat is strangled. Dread sits in the pit your stomach, roiling as if you've eaten something that disagreed with you—and perhaps it's not far from the truth. The whole of Diradan Tower disagrees with you and the citadel itself is no exception. Magic clings to the walls, pulsing and pounding, its essence interwoven with the very fabric of everything around you. You can sense it in the stone and mortar, the wood and finishings. It even dances in the air like dust motes, golden particles shimmering in the light. The remnants of centuries of mages studying here, their touch leaving hundreds of individual marks on these hallowed halls. Powerful magic, weak magic, everything in between.

You never imagined you would find yourself in the heart of the Guild of Mages. You have visited a random chapter or two in backwater villages more than once in your day, but to see the centre of the most prestigious training grounds in the world? The seat of the Council of Mages? As a Wayfarer, this is the one place you are not allowed. You should never have seen these halls. Something is very wrong with the world for you to be here.

But there's more to this sinking feeling in your belly than simply standing here in Diradan Tower. It's the knowledge that your journey is nearing its end. You've spent a month considering this moment and soon it will be over. Get in. Get out. Get paid. Simple. And yet you can't fully escape your growing trepidation. You can only make sense of your life when you have a clear goal, and clear goals only happen when you have a contract. Perhaps you're not quite ready to be done with this one as you thought.

Or maybe it's the fear that something is going to go terribly wrong.

The citadel groans as you reach the first mezzanine, leaving a tangible ache in the air. Stone scrapes against stone as if it is coming apart at the seams. The destructive forces that ran unchecked have blasted doors apart, burned the walls, left trails of ash in their wake... It's a miracle that the building is still standing. You can only conclude that centuries of compacted magic is responsible for holding the whole thing up. In a way, Diradan Tower is too stubborn to die.

You round the mezzanine, Aeran's torchlight bobbing ahead of you as he searches for the next set of stairs. Between its flickering warmth, the cool shafts of sunlight drifting in from above, and the glowing luminosity of the arcane seal running up and down the grand doors, there's a strange multitude of discordant light on this level. It plays against the walls, illuminating intricate reliefs and mosaics damaged beyond recognition. The remnants of arched doors lead to long, open corridors that disappear into the solitary dark.

Something flickers in your peripheral vision and you pause at one such entrance, brows drawn together.

For a moment you thought you saw figures in the hallway—not unlike the echoes you’ve seen elsewhere—but now you stare at a hollow emptiness. A strange sense of déjà vu washes over you. It’s easy—perhaps a little too easy—to imagine this place on an ordinary day, with hordes of students and teachers and researchers jostling each other as they go about their daily activities. The Spire was never busy, there were only a couple dozen Wayfarers living at the citadel when you began your training, but you can extrapolate.

A shiver rolls down your spine, and, once again, you find yourself retreading familiar ground. How many people died in this disaster? How many lost friends, lovers, apprentices, mentors? The Guild is displaced now, decentralized, shaken. Even those far from Arathia will feel its effects. This event will be central to their history now, reshaping it into two halves, the time before and the time after.

And that is something you know all too well.

1. Your opinion about the Guild has not changed. It never will.

2. Maybe after everything you’ve seen... your opinion has shifted. Loss is loss. Regardless of who it happens to.

[CHOICE] 3. Your mind is blank. You don’t know what to think anymore. It’s easier not to.

The Spire—your home—was taken from you. Brutally and ruthlessly and you are still left wondering how. The Guild is different. They know exactly how their destruction came about. You could argue that their hubris wrought it upon themselves.

But you can’t. You can’t bring yourself to even *think* about it. Poking the thought means acknowledging something you’d rather not face about yourself. It’s easier to simply move on.

You’re a mercenary. You’re not equipped for deep introspection. You hit things with your sword.

[Progress Report 2024.02.02.: February Goals & Progress](#)

[Feb 2, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

Happy February!

January was a very busy month. I spent most of it sick (I’m still sick, unfortunately), but Wayfarer development is progressing smoothly. In keeping with the Wayfarer Roadmap, I am nearing the end of

Episode 3 Part 3 Route 1. Because I am a little behind, right now I need to decide whether I am going to cut some events out of the path or not. There is already a lot that can happen to the player character on this route and while these other events have been part of the outline for a very long time, it may be better to shuffle them onto another route or remove them entirely as they are not fully necessary.

Additionally, Route 1 is sitting at 53,000 words right now and I would like to wrap it up without much additional fuss. This sequence puts it at around the same length as the Viridian Lady's villa mission in Episode 1 and the story needs to move on.

Next week I am doing my best to wrap this up and start tackling Route 2.

On the business side of things – the transition period between old tiers and new tiers is now over. If your tier is set to **No Tier**, it means that you pledged to a discontinued tier and did not change your membership.

If you are part of **No Tier**, you need to edit your pledge to an active tier or cancel your membership as soon as possible. **No Tier** members do not have access to any benefits, but they will continue to be charged on the first of the month for their original pledge's amount. This is how Patreon's systems work behind the scenes; there is no way for me to cancel or move your tier for you, you have to do that yourself.

[Please see this post for more information.](#)

Thank you as always for your continued support! 💖

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #14](#)

[Feb 9, 2024](#)

A continuation of the last sneak peek! This week has been a struggle in terms of writing, this section feels very stuck since there are threads/ideas that need to be dropped, but dropped in a specific way. Some of this may get lost or moved around in editing, but that's the nature of it.

For context: there are six floors for the player character to climb here and there is something different to be found on all of them. The MC can choose to rush through without observing/exploring (they'll gain a benefit for this, but lose out on potential discoveries); but if they slow down and take in their environments, there are things they may notice...

This preview assumes that the MC has low approval with Solarath and also trained with Varyn.



The stairs creak underfoot as you emerged out onto the second mezzanine. Oddly, it is untouched by devastation, its walls and floors strangely pristine. There's a polish to the wood, a sheen to the walls and plush furniture that doesn't seem quite natural. Specks of gold are suspended in the air, floating like dust motes. You can't be certain, but you suspect this may be the remnants of a ward. A powerful brightwarden may have stood their ground here, holding back the tide while others escaped.

Or at least that's how you imagine it.

Aeran's torch casts an orange glow across the walls as you pass. You glance sideways, lips pursed, taking them in. Majestic murals line the mezzanine, depicting portraits of imposing mages. Their features are sharp, their clothing and jewelry regal... they could be Imperial royalty if you didn't know any better. You can only assume that these are the faces of past archsages, leaders of the Council, preserved here for all time. The section you pass must be old, for the colours are faded and they are dressed in fashion that is well over several centuries old. They carry themselves with a different air—not scholars, not teachers, not politicians, but *warriors*. Eyes that sharp have seen events no bard or poet can accurately describe.

And they are following you.

You turn away.

You wonder whether Quirinus has been memorialized. You're tempted to walk the full circuit and find out, if only to put pen and dagger to his portrait and partake in some petty defacing. Unfortunate he already has a beard. A silly little mustache wouldn't be out of the question...

Focus, \$firstname.

Continue.

The third mezzanine returns you to wanton destruction. Nothing here has been preserved; between the blackened stone and the scorched floorboards, you're surprised the structure can even hold your weight. You proceed cautiously, feeling the wood bench and stretch underfoot, eyeing the charred footprints painted across it. There's a frantic, uneven pace to them—a dozen or so trampling over each other in their rush to evacuate. You follow the prints as you pass, your gaze falling upon the entrance to a narrow corridor lined with windows.

The glass is so blackened and warped that no light seeps through. A grand door waits at the end, its polished handle warped beyond recognition. Somehow, this hallway feels familiar. An echo of another corridor, another hall, in another citadel far, far away.

Your heart misses a beat. It's strange to see this here, this shadow of Varyn's office. You can picture it easily—a similar corridor, with similar windows. When you were younger, you enjoyed playing in the

hallway on sunny days. You liked the way the sunlight streamed in at all times of day, the way it was refracted by the stained glass. You can't remember exactly what was depicted there... suns and stars and a shimmering sky, you think, though you're certain you've made that up. You and Aeran would sprawl out on carelessly on the floor in a jumble of limbs, and spend hours soaking up the sun. Varyn would inevitably nudge her door open and feign mock surprise, chiding you gently to do your chores or go to the training grounds, but even she couldn't keep the fondness from her voice.

Those days are long gone.

[Progress Report 2024.02.16.: Wrapping Things Up \(For Real This Time\)](#)

[Feb 16, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

This week has been very busy as I wrap up Episode 3 Part 3 Route 1 (maybe I should make up short hands for theseahaha). The conclusion of the route is approaching fast, although I still have a few dialogue branches to close off.

I am two weeks behind schedule now, but I am working as fast as I can to get it complete. I have cut some planned events since Route 1 already has a lot going on (Investigations! Exploding libraries! Things falling apart! Crumbling ruins!), but there are some threads and hints that need to be dropped in the right way to foreshadow things for the future. These moments are always the trickiest to write when player choice and the continuity of previous actions are involved. Some threads (and red herrings) need to occur on every possible branch; others are context-dependent or approval based (sometimes it wouldn't make sense to drop them if Aeran fundamentally does not trust the player character).

It is a long weekend in Canada this week, and I'll be taking a couple days off for family events (a new baby nephew and some other family things are keeping me busy!). I'm hoping to get the rest of this finished as soon as possible. Route 2 has been plotted out well in advance; it is less complex than Route 1 and I'm optimistic it won't take me nearly as long to finish it as it is a little less involved. Route 3 is similar, although it has the most unique and specific events on it.

As another reminder: if your tier is set to **No Tier**, it means that you pledged to a discontinued tier and did not change your membership. If you are part of **No Tier**, you need to edit your pledge to an active tier or cancel your membership as soon as possible. **No Tier** members do not have access to any benefits, but they will continue to be charged on the first of the month for their original pledge's amount. This is how Patreon's systems work behind the scenes; there is no way for me to cancel or move your tier for you, you have to do that yourself.

[Please see this post for more information.](#)

Thank you as always for your continued support! 💖

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #15](#)

[Feb 23, 2024](#)

Hi folks,

Today's sneak peek contains **spoilers** for a major decision along Route 1. There are variations in how this event can go, but the MC's dialogue does mention one outcome explicitly.

SPOILERS AHEAD.



By the time you climb the stairs to the fourth mezzanine, your body is hurting. Your pace has slowed, your chest clenches, your breath comes in gasps. You grit your teeth, annoyed, and put a hand on the railing to pull yourself up. This ache punches through deep to your bones, every part of your body feeling battered and bruised. After a month aboard a ship without decent activity and regular training, the mission today is taking its toll.

All this walking in circles is making your head spin. Why did they not think to connect one set of stairs to the next set of stairs like *normal* people?

Grousing to yourself, you emerge on the landing with your shoulder sagging and your calves aching. Aeran is yards ahead, the torchlight bobbing from halfway down the walkway. The destruction on this floor is much the same as the one below; there's nothing new to take note of here. And yet he seems distracted, his fingertips brushing the edge of the mezzanine railing as he looks down at the broken stone so many floors below.

You follow his gaze as you approach, looking *down down down* into the abyss, and wonder if his thoughts have gone to the same place as yours. You may have killed the shroud, but that doesn't mean it is gone from your mind.

"Still thinking about it?" you ask, your voice echoing dully in the stale air.

Aeran flinches, his brows drawing together. "Yeah. Something like that."

You chew your lower lip. What was the shroud, really? This terrible being of storm and shadow, might and magic, released from its confines. That chorus of whispers in its strangled ancient tongue will be difficult to forget. Supposedly there is complex perception magic that can translate any language, known or unknown—not like you could make use of it. Irony, that.

“No point,” he says distractedly after a moment. “Waste of time.”

“I’m not so sure.” You arrive at his side and fold your hands, resting them on the railing. “We have some questions answered. It was clearly sentient. It had consciousness, gods know from how many millennia ago. Though I wonder how it came to be sealed within Diradan Tower in the first place.” You pause, swallowing the lump in your throat. “Umbria’s apprentice released it... and I destroyed it. It was never going to get its freedom.”

“You think that’s what it wanted?”

[Progress Report 2024.03.01: March Progress & Plans](#)

[Mar 1, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

Happy March!

This month I am rolling ahead with Episode 3 Part 3 Route 2! I should be starting this on Monday. I have a few more dialogue branches to finish up with the other route, but I am momentarily pausing it so I can get moving on other things. February was extremely bumpy due to unexpected personal and family reasons, so I am about a month behind my projected schedule from the roadmap.

I am hoping that March is going to be a little easier since I have less on my plate now. I am also re-instigating my writing challenge from last November, where I write at least 300 words every day. The goal is to do more and hit 50,000 words, which would help me get caught up as much as I can and get some of the lingering problem spots finished.

If I can get more finished, I am hoping I can roll out a few more sneak peeks as well in addition to the bi-weekly ones. Episode 3 is very large, very complicated, and the end of an act; there’s a lot going on and I am very excited for folks to play through the back half when it’s ready.

Additionally, I wanted to talk briefly about how my progress reports are going. Since there are only two per month at the moment, I’m struggling a bit to figure out what exactly it is folks would like updates on.

Right now, I am in the cycle of “I wrote things, work got done, thumbs up! 👍”, but they feel a bit bare to me. I can talk more about my writing and creation process, but it’s hard to write directly about the material I’m creating without going into in-depth spoilers. I’ve done progress charts in the past that give a visual for how the branches of a scene work, but these aren’t necessarily something I can do every time.

If you’d like to offer thoughts about things you want to see in my progress reports and updates, please let me know.

As always, thank you for your continued support! 💖

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #16](#)

[Mar 9, 2024](#)

Today's sneak peek contains major spoilers and background lore for a possible route in Episode 3. As always, there are variations in how this can go. The MC here has the Child of the Fields background and a high relationship with Aeran.



Up ahead, Aeran’s pace slows to a crawl, his boots scraping against the blackened floor. The wood here holds thankfully, though you can’t help but notice how a streak of scorch marks drag down the centre. Almost as if something burning was dragged through here. He treads to a stop several feet from the last staircase, his back to you. His head bows, his shoulders sag.

For all his determination to reach the final floor, something is stopping him. Something he can’t work through.

“I told you I’ve been to Sunderfell,” he says quietly, his voice raw.

You pause, folding your arms. His words are slow, cautious—as if he knows by speaking them there is no going back. “Yeah.”

“I didn’t tell you why or what we saw there.”

You nod silently, though you know he cannot see. He exhales a long sigh, bowing his head, and looks over his shoulder. His eyes—glowing in the torchlight—find yours.

"I was on contract a few years back," he begins. "Cohort of scholars from Nesactium had set out to investigate the fortress. Needed a magianis in their ranks, someone to bypass the magical corruption soaked into the land. A Wayfarer would do, and they paid well."

You pause. It's been years since you've returned to your homeland, but as you recall, Nesactium's academies were never noteworthy. Then again, you're not from the city, you're from the farmland. The academies were never noteworthy. Not compared to the likes of Arathia and Vestra—

Stop it, \$firstname. Seeding this shadow of doubt will not help. Besides, you dare not interrupt his story now—not when you know he is telling you this because he trusts you. To pelt him with nitpicky questions and demand more details before he is finished would only show that you *don't* trust him.

And you do. You have to. You made your choice.

"Can't blame you," you say. "There are a lot of things we do for money."

He chuckles—the sound short and hollow, dying quickly. His back remains to you, as if he can't bring himself to look you in the eye. You've never seen him so... *stuck*. Not wanting to move forwards, but unable to go back. He has started something by telling you this, and he can't take it back now.

It's a moment before he speaks again.

"Sunderfell isn't like Diradan," he says. "By all accounts, it's older. Bigger. The size of a city built into the side of the mountain. It's been derelict for a millennia. The land there is dead. Grey. I can't describe it, \$firstname, but if you saw it..." The words are a struggle. "Our... guild, if you can call them that, struggled at first. They sent me to scout while they established a camp and ran their tests. They had wards, you see. Ones that they hoped would protect them."

"And did they?"

"For a time, yes. New magic. Experimental. But it held." He pauses, still fighting with himself. You wonder how long he has held this tongue about this. If you are the first person he has told it to.

"Sunderfell is a labyrinth, \$firstname. That day we breached the perimeter and headed into the mountain, Corridors and corridors carved into the rock. I make it sound primitive, but it's anything but. In a restored state it would put even Mahanin Palace to shame.

"Those halls were... We were cocky. Headstrong. The guild concluded that while under the protection of their wards, there was nothing to be afraid of there. So we climbed, heading for the central tower where they suspected they would find the answers they sought. We didn't know what we would unearth."

You pause. "Something like the shroud?" you press.

He nods. "A... being, I suppose. There's no other word for it. It flooded the central chambers, clouding them. We couldn't see, couldn't breathe, couldn't feel anything. Lost in the dark. Some panicked and ran, never to be seen again. Others... they showed us exactly what happens if there are fault lines in

your ward. Ripped to shreds the moment their magic failed.” He swallows. “Some leapt off the tower. Whether they were driven mad or simply wanted to choose the manner of their death, I don’t know. But regardless, it was a massacre.”

“And you escaped?”

“I survived.”

[Progress Report 2024.03.16.: Next Steps, Bug Reports & Coding Plans](#)

[Mar 16, 2024](#)

Hi everyone!

I hope you have all been having a good month. There isn’t too much to update you on from the past two weeks.

- I did start work on Episode 3 Part 3 Route 2, but I am also still picking away at Episode 3 Part 3 Route 1. I am getting closer to the end now (I feel like I have been saying that for six months, but there are a lot of variations to close off). I have the low approval version to do and then it is finally complete.
- I am going to push ahead a little bit from where I planned to end here. There are some discoveries for the MC and Aeran to make; this section is the same scene across all routes and is a bottleneck leading into the finale of the episode.
- While I work on that, I am going to be going over bug reports from last year and working on updating the alpha build. A bug fixed version will go to the playtesters first before being released for patrons. I will also finally get the patron thank you list updated!
- Once the bugs are fixed, I will be coding Route 1 and adding it to the build. The 2024 roadmap had a update planned for the end of March, and I would like to try to meet that if I can. It won’t include all of the content I wanted in it and it may be a little late push into April so it can be properly playtested before released, but I don’t want to go too much longer without an update.

As mentioned in my last progress report, if you’d like to offer thoughts about the things you want to see in my progress reports and updates, topics you’d like me to talk more in-depth in, or anything else, please feel free to comment below!

As always, thank you for your continued support. 💖

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #17](#)

[Mar 25, 2024](#)

Like the last one, today's sneak peek contains spoilers! I decided to show a low approval Aeran section instead this time.



When you emerge onto the final floor, to your surprise you find it painfully bright. You raise a hand and shield your eyes, squinting against the glare. A row of arched, stained-glass windows line the gallery, light seeping through the cracks in blackened glass. It's virulent and orange, a reminder of the apocalyptic storm that waits outside—and that your safety here is never guaranteed.

The far side of the gallery is marked by an arch leading into a wide corridor. Guarded on either side by the remnants of bronze statues, this entryway oozes grandeur in a way only the Guild of Mages can achieve. There is something different about this floor compared to the ones below, as if the statues denote the beginning of a restricted area—as if those without permission may view what lies beyond, but never venture there.

"Must be the grand archway Quinn was talking about," you grunt.

Aeran catches your eye. "Yeah. That's west."

You grimace. "I know. I have my sense of direction, thanks."

He shrugs and lets it go, though from his expression you have a feeling he wants nothing more than to snap back at you. Together you round the perimeter of the gallery, the floorboards creaking and sagging underfoot. It's a miracle that they hold your weight.

You frown, your gaze focusing on the statues as you approach. The closer you get, the stranger they become. They are defaced, their arms blasted to pieces, the bottom of what you imagine must have been some type of robe liquified and pooling at their base. This isn't unusual compared to the other damaged statues you've seen, but here...

The remnants of overwhelming magic cling to the remains. You can sense it, like a low voice murmuring in your ears, too distant for your to make out the words but close enough for you to hear. Like the second floor so far below, a cloud of gold specks float in the air, suspending in flowing mist, their colours intermingled with green and orange. The specks are far more concentrated than before, shifting to and fro of their own accord. They hang around the statues' remains, flowing through the archway into the hallway beyond. Magical excess of some kind, little more than a memory of something greater than itself—like a footprint pressed into the sand.

Your eyes narrow and you stare down the hallway ahead. The glittering flecks grow stronger, clogging the way. It would be pretty if you didn't have a sinking suspicion about what they are.

Aeran turns away, uninterested in the hallway ahead. He turns around, his expression distracted, one hand idly toying with his quiver as he stares down six levels into the pit below you.

"Fuck," you say, watching the undulating cloud.

He flinches at the sound of your voice and glances over his shoulder. Rolling your eyes, you step past him and enter the cloud, holding out your hand in wonder as you watch how it reacts to you. The flecks sparkle and dance as they are repulsed by your presence, creating a wedge of empty space between you and them.

"Huh," you say, your mind spinning. "Maybe this is where it started... The epicentre..."

Aeran grimaces. "I don't think so."

"No?"

"No. This is... excess."

You bite your tongue. After what he told you about Sunderfell, maybe this is where you should defer to his expertise.

The pair of you fall silent as you examine the golden haze. The remnants of strong magic, frail and broken, a whisper of what they once were, too weak to do anything but flee from the touch of a magianis. Umbria's apprentice must have stood here on the day of the explosion, performing whatever ritual or task it took to break the wards.

This is all that is left—pieces with no purpose, something beyond your comprehension.

[Progress Report 2024.03.29.: Route 1 Complete & Some Thoughts](#)

[Mar 29, 2024](#)

Hi all!

I'm wrapping things up for March here. After a struggling with the Episode 3 Route 1 document for months (I believe I started work on it in July last year), it is finally done, coming in just shy of 70,000

words. I have started edits, and I'm hoping to smooth out some of the issues over the next week as I start coding.

If I'm honest, I'm not very happy with the quality of the writing. For something that took me so long to create, I think it is unfortunately some of Wayfarer's weakest writing. The last 8 months have been exceptionally difficult due to some personal life and family events, and this has become the most difficult stretch of the game's development to date.

I think something that isn't always discussed when it comes to long-term projects is that you always hit a phase where the honeymoon period is over, the initial spark that sustained the excitement for the thing you are making has gone out. This period is often the roughest, and it's the one that can kill a project.

Back when I was doing a lot of theatre, many of my playwriting peers gave up on their plays because they hit a section that they just could not complete, their heart was no longer in it, and the play went on the backburner and never got touched again. I saw also saw it in school, with my undergraduate students. I was TAing at the time, and my grad supervisor was teaching the course. Their final project for the semester was a one-act play (these usually are 40 minutes to an hour of stage time). I remember so many of them being excited for their ideas at the start of the semester, and by the end of it we had a number of them asking if they could submit unfinished work because they felt stuck and just could not get to an ending.

And I remember my grad supervisor being very adamant that no, they *could not* submit unfinished work for full marks. Their plays had to be complete in some form. A unpolished, but complete script has a future. An unfinished one with a couple of highly polished scenes—no matter how good they are—does not. And he followed this up with, "You will never learn anything more important from your writing than what you learn from finishing it."

Starting things is easy. Finishing them is harder.

I've been working on Wayfarer since 2020. I'm going on four years into this; this is unlike anything I've ever written before, and it's become both my job and basically my life's work. I keep thinking about what point I need to take a break and consider putting it on the backburner. But I also know the moment I put it on the backburner, it is going to die. It will not be complete. The scope is too large, the things I want to do with it, the things that make this game *a game* are not the kind of things that can easily be scaled back.

So I am not ready to quit. I can keep pressing onwards, even if it is difficult, even if it is slow, because I don't want to give up on it yet. But I also have to recognize that not everything is going to be perfect. There are sections that could be improved, sections that could be reworked and rewritten, but I also do not have the time or capacity to keep going over them again and again.

This is, in part, what separates IF writing (and game writing a whole) from novel writing or playwriting. In the latter, you have the ability to keep drafting, to keep going over your work, rewrite it from the ground up, tweak it until it is its best version of itself. But with game writing, you don't have time for that. There is so much more you have to cover, and it has to work alongside the game's mechanics, which are often

responsible for expanding the material far past what it would normally take to tell a story. I edit as much as I can, and I do revisit sections from existing parts of the game now and then to fix issues, remove sections, and revise lore, but I can't do full re-writes.

My fear with Episode 3 is that it is disappointing. I worry that the existing playable material isn't good or interesting or entertaining enough. I worry that when the next update does come out, it is going to feel very short (the amount you play on a single playthrough is always substantially less than the amount that is actually in the game), and because it will feel short, it will not have been worth it.

I worry about disappointing myself (I have already done that). I worry about disappointing you.

The last update was in May of last year and as much as I would like to keep going and save an update until I do have all three routes finished, I need to get something out. And this is the best I have.

While I am coding the next section, I will not have much to post in terms of sneak peeks and previews. The ones that I have already shared are about as much as I'd like to show without giving everything away. I'm going to brainstorm options of things to share in the meantime.

I don't have a concrete timeline yet for when the update will be ready. As I've mentioned before, once coding is finished, the playtesting team does need to go through it so the major bugs and issues are caught (basically—it needs to be playable; continuity issues can be resolved later). I can't put a date on it, but I will see where things are landing in a couple of weeks.

Thank you all so much for your support. Wayfarer would not be possible without you. 💖

[Episode 3 Part 3 Sneak Peek #18](#)

[Apr 8, 2024](#)

Hi all!

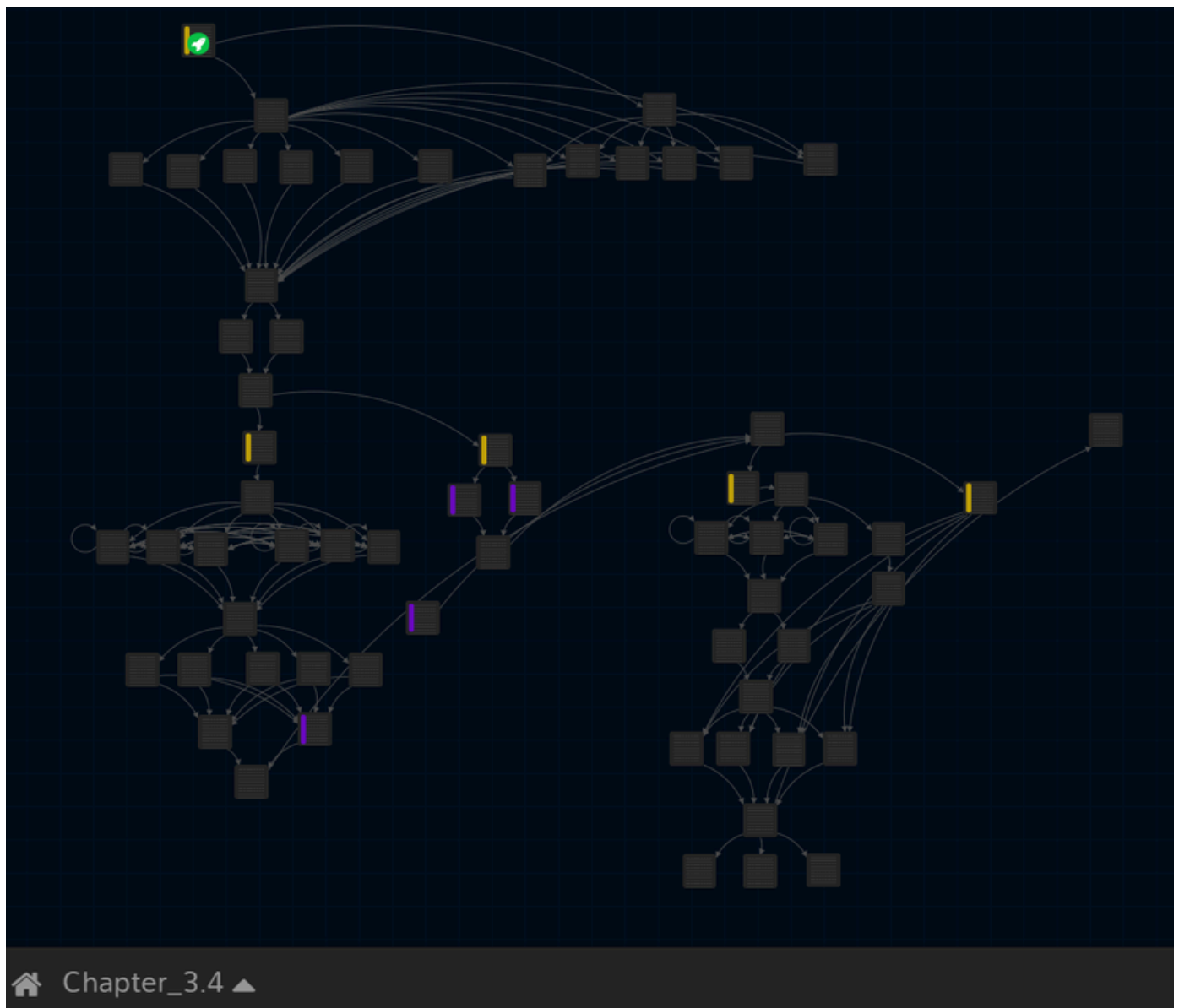
I'm sorry for missing last Friday's sneak peek. To be honest, I wasn't entirely sure what to share since without revealing even more spoilers for the next update. Coding is coming along, but it is a slow process since there are a lot of finicky things I have to re-learn. Last September was the last time I did any major work on the build; it's funny how easily skills start to slip when you don't use them. Thankfully, I have very extensive notes and a spreadsheet full of variables to keep track of, so whenever I get lost, Past Me has it covered!

In Route 1, there are several stages where the MC can choose to investigate some the bizarre phenomena that exists within Diradan thanks to the explosion. In this sequence, they choose to examine a library.

Cycling choices and checks are not new in Wayfarer; there are several times where dialogue or actions loop around and the player has to decide what they want to prioritize in case their checks fail. The library loop is most similar to the stamina check in Episode 1, when the MC and Aeran are climbing the cliff face outside the Viridian Lady's villa. Though the checks are spammable (you can keep clicking them even if you fail), there is a silent counter and once the counter hits its maximum, the MC falls off the cliff.

There's a similar mechanic here—there is a time limit in terms of how long the MC has to investigate, and how high that counter gets determines a specific outcome later.

This is the current visual map for Episode 3 Part 3:



Yellow bars represent passages with autosave; purple bars represent passages where an important thing that needs to be flagged happens. This doesn't serve any in-game purpose other than making the visual map easier for me to read when I need to go looking for something.

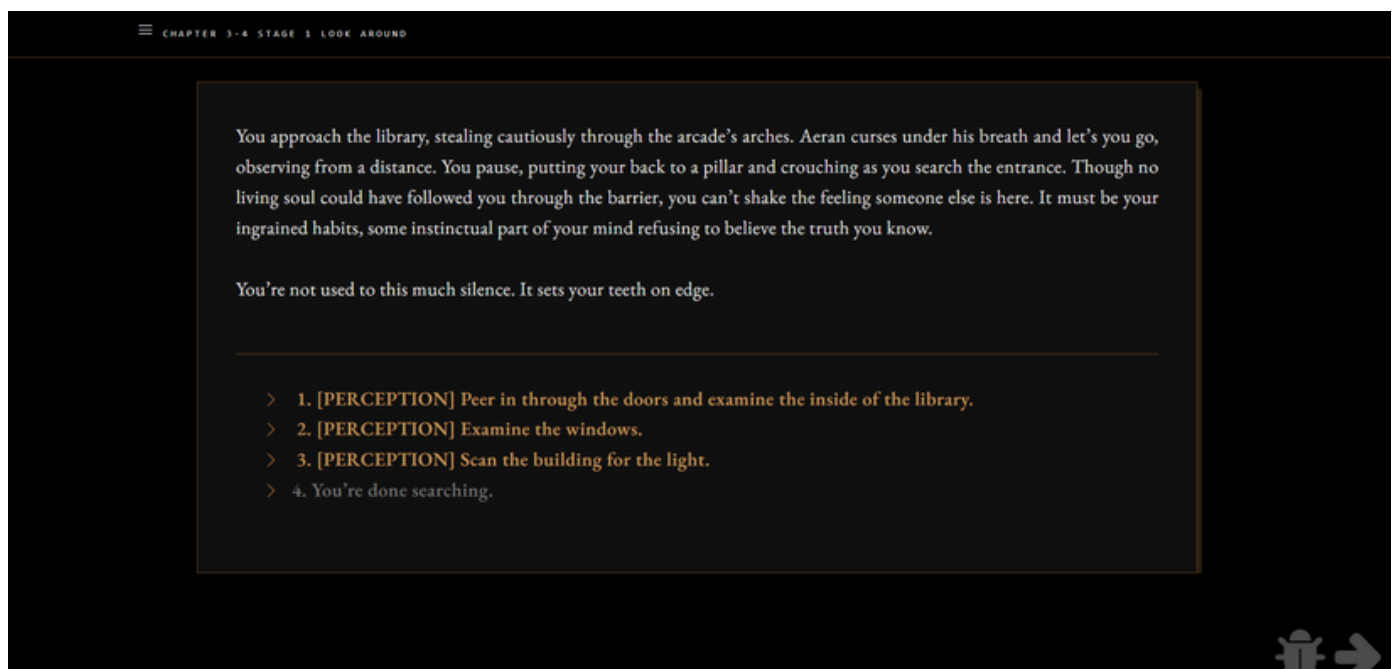
This is the code for the library check (I threw it into Notepad++ to get a little bit of syntax highlighting on it since the version of the Twine editor I use doesn't come with it; some day I am going to have to upload

SugarCube as a language to Notepad++ so I can actually see things properly):

```
1  <<set $library_check to {
2    "lights": false,
3    "footprints": false,
4    "windows": false,
5  }>>
6
7  You approach the library, stealing cautiously through the arcade's arches. Aeran curses under his breath and let's you go, observing from a distance. You pause, putting your back to a pillar and
8  crouching as you search the entrance. Though no living soul could have followed you through the barrier, you can't shake the feeling someone else is here. It must be your ingrained habits, some
9  instinctual part of your mind refusing to believe the truth you know.
10
11  You're not used to this much silence. It sets your teeth on edge.
12
13  <<cf settings.action>><<nobr>><div class="choices"><div class="choice-item">
14  <<cf hasVisited("CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 01 PASS")>><<cf hasVisited("CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 01 FAIL")>><<s>>1. [PERCEPTION] Examine the atrium again. You're sure you missed something.</s><<else>><<s>>
15  1. [PERCEPTION] Peer in through the doors and examine the inside of the library.</s><</if>>
16  <<else>>
17  <<cf $diradan_time >= 7>><<goto "CHAPTER 3-4 TIME RUNS OUT EXPLOSION">>
18  <<else>>
19  <<cf hasVisited("CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 01 FAIL")>><<cf random(1,20) + $perception >= 18>>[[1. [PERCEPTION] Examine the atrium again. You're sure you missed something.[CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP
20  01 PASS][diradan_time +1]]<<else>>[[1. [PERCEPTION] Examine the atrium again. You're sure you missed something.[CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 01 FAIL][diradan_time +1]]<</if>>
21  <<else>><<cf random(1,20) + $perception >= 18>>[[1. [PERCEPTION] Peer in through the doors and examine the inside of the library.[CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 01 PASS][diradan_time +1]]<<else>>[[1.
22  [PERCEPTION] Peer in through the doors and examine the inside of the library.[CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 01 FAIL][diradan_time +1]]<</if>>
23  <</if>><</if>><</if>></div>
24  <div class="choice-item">
25  <<cf hasVisited("CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 02 PASS")>><<cf hasVisited("CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 02 FAIL")>><<s>>2. [PERCEPTION] Examine the windows again. You're sure you missed something.</s><<else>><<s>>
26  2. [PERCEPTION] Examine the windows.</s><</if>>
27  <<else>>
28  <<cf $diradan_time >= 7>><<goto "CHAPTER 3-4 TIME RUNS OUT EXPLOSION">>
29  <<else>>
30  <<cf hasVisited("CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 02 FAIL")>><<cf random(1,20) + $perception >= 18>>[[2. [PERCEPTION] Examine the windows again. You're sure you missed something.[CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP
31  02 PASS][diradan_time +1]]<<else>>[[2. [PERCEPTION] Examine the windows again. You're sure you missed something.[CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 02 FAIL][diradan_time +1]]<</if>>
32  <<else>><<cf random(1,20) + $perception >= 18>>[[2. [PERCEPTION] Examine the windows again. You're sure you missed something.[CHAPTER 3-4 STAGE 1 PERCP 02 FAIL][diradan_time +1]]<</if>>
33  <</if>><</if>><</if>></div>
34  </div>
35  </div>
36  </div>
37  </div>
38  </div>
39  </div>
40  </div>
```

This whole passage ended up being 107 lines in total.

This is the passage in the game itself (in test mode):



[Progress Report 2023.04.15.: Alpha Update Coming Soon](#)

[Apr 15, 2024](#)

Hi all,


Sorry for the lack of a progress report on Friday! Last week was a bit of a blur since I had several long days coding the new Episode 3 material. The good news is that all of it finished; the playtester build was updated on Friday and the new material is currently being tested. I am giving it a couple of weeks so the team has time to go through everything, and I have time to deal with the game-breaking ones.

Additionally, I am attempting to finish up some more Episode 3 content and push the end of the route to a major scene I really want to include with this update. It's on the common route for all Episode 3 variations, so getting it done now will serve the game well. Because it's mostly linear, it should be a little easier to write than the moments that came before it since there will not be too much variation in choice due to plot reasons.

I am tentatively aiming to release the update for patrons **the weekend of April 27/28**. This is far later in the month than I would like, but the build needs time for playtesting. With this in mind, I would like to put out a reminder that the password to the alpha build does change on the first of the month. If you are de-pledging, you will not have access after April 30th.

The update will add around 80,000 words of content to the build (that's the cumulative total; I should know the average playthrough amount by the time I release the update).

If you have any questions, please comment below!

Thank you all so much for your support. 

[Wayfarer Release Version 1.1.3. Patch 3.6.](#)

[Apr 26, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

Episode 3 Part 3 Route 1 has been released! This is a 80,000 word update that adds new exclusive content to the alpha build. This update continues where the last update left off and allows the player to explore Diradan Tower.

Because this episode is in development, some routes are under construction. Therefore, to play this update you must have a save file that:

- Ends in one of Aeran's Episode 2 endings

- Ends in Veyer's Episode 2 endings
- (for details on how to trigger these, please see the last alpha update post [here](#))

An average playthrough for this update is pending.

ALPHA BUILD STATS

Episodes Released: Prologue, Episode 1, Episode 2, Episode 3 Part 1

Average Word Count Per Playthrough: 177,000 words (approximate)

Average Playtime: 10 hours

Total Cumulative Word Count: 1,380,999 words (approximate)

ALPHA BUILD ACCESS

Link: <https://idrellegames.itch.io/wayfarer-alpha-build>

Password (current for May 2024): l7j4Trt8u4HoQGr9G1

Reminder: the password changes on the first of the month!

Due to ongoing issues surrounding leaks and pirated releases of IF games, this is a reminder that you are NOT ALLOWED to share the alpha build's password. This is highly disrespectful to my work. If you share it, you will be permanently blocked from my Patreon and banned from all Wayfarer's Discord servers and social media.

SAVES & YOUR PLAYTHROUGHS

If your Episode 3 save file is from June 24, 2023 or before, you MUST restart your playthrough from the beginning of the game. Old saves will not work with the new build and they will result in display errors.

If your save is from after June 24, it will still work with the new update but you may run into continuity errors. These are not game-breaking, but they may be annoying. To ensure smooth continuity, you should load a save from the start of the Lethalis meeting in Episode 2.

As this build is a work in progress, it is highly recommended that you make multiple manual using Save to Disk and store them on your device rather than your browser. Always save when prompted. You may be required to restart from Episodes 1 or 2 as various bugs are fixed in Episode 3.

The Autosave occasionally loads incorrect metadata. It is always wiser to load a save made using Save to Disk.

CREDITS

The patron list has been updated in-game. If you do not see your name and you are part of a tier receives credit as a benefit, or if you would like to change the name you are credited under, please message me.

BUGS

Bugs must be reported through the Patreon Discord server. All reports must include a screenshot of the passage where the error occurred and the passage title (viewable in the UI header).

PATCH NOTES – APRIL 26, 2024

- Added Episode 3 Route 1 (~80,000 words cumulatively; average single playthrough word count is pending)
- Episode 3 Route 2 and Route 3 are *not available*. If you hit an “Under Construction” page, go back and make a different choice to continue.
- A re-design for the flashback sequences is pending; some formatting may be strange.
- Added more pronoun widgets to make grammar for they/them pronouns easier
- Various continuity fixes throughout Episodes 1-3
- Various spelling, grammar, and display fixes.

[Progress Report 2023.04.29: Alpha Update Out & Other News](#)

[Apr 29, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

A few updates before we head into May!

Alpha Build

An update to the alpha build was released last Friday for the Recruit tier and above. This update picks up where the last update left off and includes around 80,000 words of new content.

- The route is accessible only by playing either one of Aeran or Veyer’s endings in Episode 2 and then selecting citadel path (option #1) prior to heading into the tower.
- There is a new flashback sequence should your Wayfarer have the misfortune of getting knocked out
- New lore and a new major codex entry

If you are planning on upgrading your pledge to play the alpha build, I would recommend waiting until May 1 to change your pledge. Patreon charges on the first of the month; this way you will avoid getting charged back-to-back.

Writing Progress

I am hoping to another update finished in May to add some additional passages to the new content. I started working on this a couple weeks ago, but bug fixes and other polishing prevented me from finishing it. Once this extra content is done, I'll be back to working on Routes 2 and 3 to make the alternative paths playable.

Time Off

I am taking a week off for my mental health. It's been a while since I've had a dedicated period off, and I think I need this time to recoup from coding and editing before tackling the next section of the game.

Thank you all so much for your support. 💖

[Progress Report 2024.05.13: May Progress](#)

[May 13, 2024](#)

Hi all,

Happy May! I hope you are all having a good month.

Just a few quick updates from the past two weeks:

- If you missed it, an update to the alpha build was added on April 26th for the Recruit tier and above. You can read more info about it [on the announcement post here](#).
- Another alpha update this coming this month. This won't be a large amount of content, just a small, mostly linear section that serves as the bridge into the Episode 3 finale. Once this update is out, I'll be back to working on incomplete routes.
- I am hoping to finish this update by Friday (I have the MC and Aeran almost where I need them to be; since it is actually linear this time, I don't think it will take too long but historically I am bad at estimating). The update will also include a patch for any new Episode 3 issues.
- Sneak peeks for Recruit tier and up will be in a bit of a limbo phase until I get back to writing incomplete routes. I do not want to share sneak peeks for the section I am working on right now so it can remain a surprise!

If you have any questions, please comment below.

Thank you all so much for your support. 💖

[May 28, 2024](#)

Hi all,

I hope you have all had a fantastic month!

To close out May, I am releasing a small update to the alpha build. This is not exactly what I wanted to release this month (as per usually I am overestimating what I want to get done; feeling optimistic about the direction does not necessarily match up with what is actually possible). I am still working on finishing the additional material, but since it is the end of the month I wanted to release what I have.

The next update is extremely short—just one relatively linear scene with little variation in choice. The Playtesters are receiving this update at the same time, so it has not been thoroughly tested and you may encounter more continuity/grammar/spelling errors than usual.

This update is a bit of a test run of how I do updates. For pretty much all of Wayfarer's existence, I've been focused on updating slowly, but in mostly finished chunks so there is a lot to dig into. But this does mean that I typically miss my deadlines and it takes much longer for updates and patches to happen. I am always working on the game, but I worry that it doesn't necessarily *appear* that way because there are such long gaps between updates. It takes a lot of work and time to create a game like this; coding the Episode 3 update last year took about 2 and a half months of work alone because it was over 300,000 words.

When I have polled my patrons in the past, the results have always favoured fewer but larger updates. And I think that system does work and I have been happy with it, but I also dislike missing deadlines or feeling like I'm not progressing. I want to give this a try—it may end up being that I create more work for myself if I have to go back and edit things out, but on the other hand it could also mean that I feel like I am having forward progression. I also think that stopping to code sections every few weeks means that I don't forget *how* to code and spend time re-learning it. That was a struggle with the April update since it had been months since I had last coded and I had to re-learn many of my systems.

I can't say whether it will be feasible to have something new every month (as I have never tried this), but it is something I want to try, even if it means updates are piecemeal.

**If you have access to the alpha build or are considering upgrading your tier:

**A reminder that the password changes on the 1st of the month.

Other Updates

On a more serious note, I would like to reiterate my stance regarding pirated and modded versions of Wayfarer, as well as addressing some issues that have come up regarding AI:

Pirated & Leaked Copies of the Alpha Build

Distributing, re-uploading, and/or sharing Wayfarer's password, alpha build, and other Patreon-only files is expressly prohibited. Modding the game is not allowed as this is fundamentally against the spirit of the game, and risks breaking it and making it unplayable.

AI

No AI training. Using Wayfarer or any of my written work to "train" generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to generate text is expressly prohibited. I do not give my permission for any of Wayfarer's writing or characters to be used as a basis in the creation of interactive bots or custom scenarios.

If you have any questions, please comment below.

Thank you all so much for your support. 💖

[Wayfarer Release Version 1.1.3. Patch 3.7.](#)

[May 28, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

An update to Episode 3 Part 3 has been released. This update adds 11,800 words to the end of the existing material, and acts as the bridge between Route 1 and the finale. Another update that adds a coda to this should be coming in a couple of weeks.

As with the update last April, some routes are under construction. To play this update you must have a save file that:

- Ends in one of Aeran's Episode 2 endings
- Ends in Veyer's Episode 2 endings

Alpha Build Stats

- **Episodes Released:** Prologue, Episode 1, Episode 2, Episode 3 Part 1
- **Average Word Count Per Playthrough:** 182,900 words (approximate)

- **Average Playtime:** 10 hours
- **Total Cumulative Word Count:** 1,392,799 words (approximate)

Alpha Build Access

Link: <https://idrellegames.itch.io/wayfarer-alpha-build>

Password: sx3X8p2b17xQsT0L

Reminder: the password changes on the first of the month. The password has been updated for July 2024.

Distributing, re-uploading, and/or sharing Wayfarer's password, alpha build, and other Patreon-only files is expressly prohibited.

NO AI TRAINING. Using Wayfarer, its images, or any of my written work to train generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to generate text is expressly prohibited.

Patrons who are discovered to have leaked the alpha build or engaged in AI training will be permanently blocked from my Patreon and banned from all of Wayfarer's Discord servers and social media.

Saves & Your Playthroughs

No significant changes have been made to save file compatibility since the last update. As before:

- Saves from before June 24, 2023 must be restarted

As this build is a work in progress, it is highly recommended that you make multiple manual using Save to Disk and store them on your device rather than your browser. Always save when prompted. You may be required to restart from Episodes 1 or 2 as various bugs are fixed in Episode 3.

The Autosave occasionally loads incorrect metadata. It is always wiser to load a save made using Save to Disk.

Credits

The patron list has been updated in-game. If you do not see your name and you are part of a tier receives credit as a benefit, please message me. If you would like to change the name you are credited under, please message me.

Bugs

Bugs must be reported through the Patreon Discord server. All reports must include a screenshot of the passage where the error occurred and the passage title (viewable in the UI header).

Patch Notes – May 28, 2024

- Added a coda to Episode 3 Part 3 Route 1

- Episode 3 Route 2 and Route 3 are *not available*. If you hit an “Under Construction” page, go back and make a different choice to continue.
- Updated patron list in credits
- Updated disclaimer. **Wayfarer’s text and images may not be used to train AI technologies.**
- Updated the Story Log to reflect the new Act breakdown (the current version of Wayfarer is now the first game in a trilogy).
- Various spelling and grammar fixes.

[Progress Report 2024.06.13.: June Progress](#)

[Jun 13, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

I hope you are all having a good June! This month has been very busy as I’ve been prepping the next update. I’m not sure when it will be released, but I am hoping for sometime next weekend. I am slowly getting back my inspiration and energy, and for the first time in a really long time I am excited to work on this episode. That doesn’t necessarily mean that it is easy work or that it will happen quickly, but it does mean that things are happening!

In other news, the public build was patched on June 3rd (this update does not affect the alpha build at all). It has been a while since I patched the public build as updates almost always break old save files in some way, but it is good to get it out and some of the lingering bugs and typos fixed. More importantly, the news I released in January has been announced publicly—Wayfarer is being divided into a trilogy, with the first game ending with Episode 7. Titles of the individual games are TBA. If you missed it, you can read the [Patreon announcement here](#) or the [public one here](#).

Additionally, I am trying to finish up some admin this month. Tumblr has been my main platform for social media since I started this project (I have a hard time using Twitter and Instagram since I’m not personally fond of those platforms and I struggle to figure out what kind of material to post and share, especially on IG where everything is image-based and I don’t necessarily have images to share). I’ve been using my development blog as a landing page since 2020, but I think the time has come to move on from that.

While the desktop version does function like an independent website, it’s not really accessible to players who don’t have accounts, and anyone who solely uses it through the mobile app can’t access its pages. This has made doing updates a little difficult because every time I adjust the FAQ, I have to update it in

three places (itch, on tumblr desktop, then again on the separate post for mobile users), which turns it into a much larger task than it should be.

I'm not really in a place where I can figure out a customizable website and how many resources I want to maintaining it. I am thinking of maybe making a Carrd in the interim so Wayfarer has a more accessible landing page and also a permanent spot for a FAQ I can link to so it only has to be updated in one spot. I will still be keeping my tumblr blog active as I like the community there and it's my preferred space to interact with players and the fandom, but I think I do need something else in addition to it.

For Patrons in the Apprentice tier and up – bonus content is scheduled to come back in July. I am not entirely ready for it since Episode 3 isn't as far along as I had hoped it would be, but I do want to get back to writing pieces. I am not sure what it shape these will take; I think I will likely lean towards supplemental stories rather than writing advice and IF resources.

If you are in this tier and haven't checked out the bonus content backlog yet, you can find the [short stories here](#) and [general bonus content here](#)!

If you have any questions, please comment below.

Thank you all so much for your support! 💖

[Progress Report 2024.06.27: An Overview of What Has Been Done and What Needs to Get Done](#)

[Jun 27, 2024](#)

This Post Contains Spoilers for the Current Version of Episode 3

Hi all,

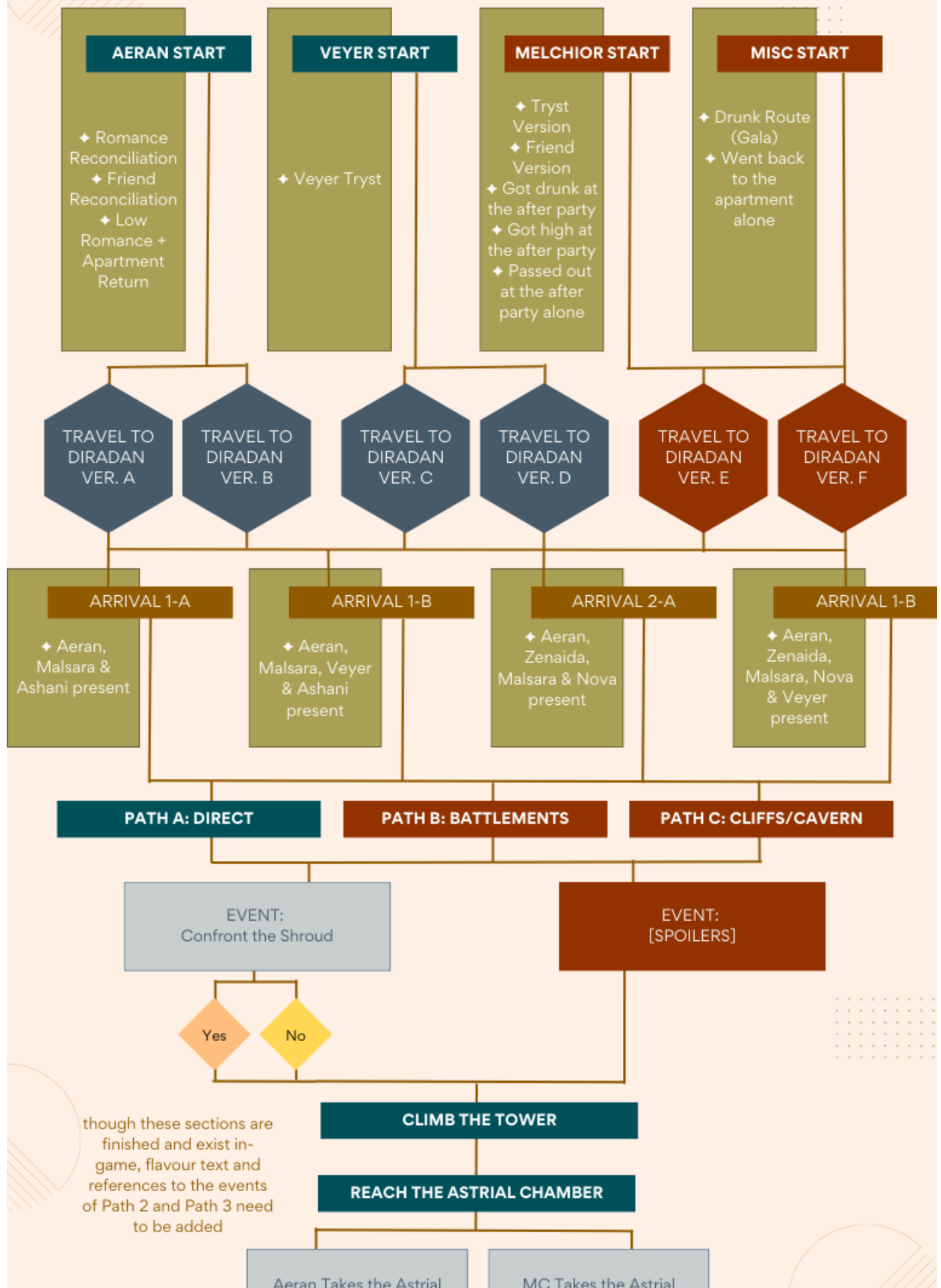
I hope you have all had a fantastic June! I do apologize for the silence this month; I have been trying my best to get this next update done, but as the current section is very complex in terms of cross-referencing previous events and continuity states, that means it is going slower than anticipated and I don't have much to share from it without spoiling the interesting events.

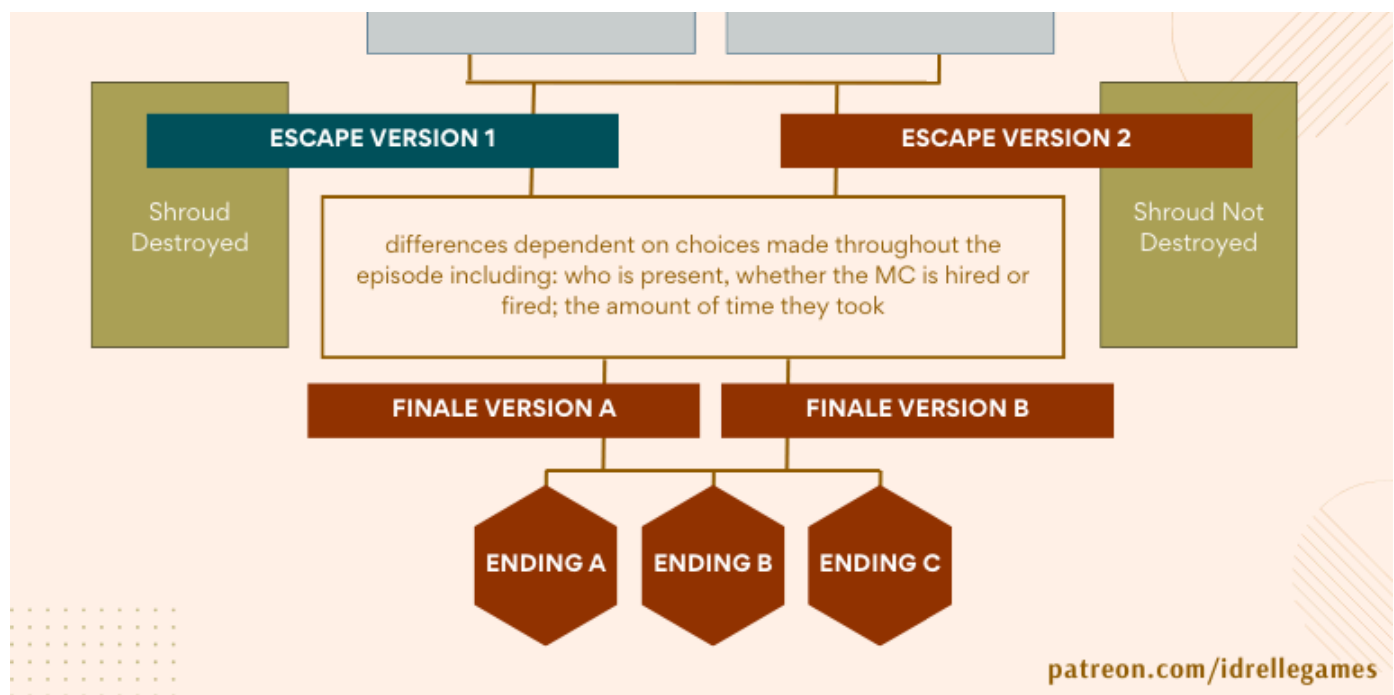
Game Updates

I wanted to give you a look at what is going on behind-the-scenes. This is a bit similar to [previous flow charts](#) I've shared, but this time the chart is an overview of the full scope of Episode 3. Anything in red hasn't been completed yet; sections in blues or browns have, but may have some additions pending.

EPISODE 3 2024.06.27

= incomplete sections
= variations within a section





The section I am currently working on is **Escape Version 1** and **Escape Version 2**. Version 1 is finished, but I need to finish Version 2 before I can update. It is too late in the month for me to speed through editing what I do have and code it; ideally, I would like to shift away from late month updates and have them earlier in the month (I am aiming for July 5th for the next small update).

I am saving the finales until the other red sections are finished. Though similar events occur in both of them, the consequences of the player character's actions are going to catch up to them here. Which ending you get will also determine which companion character you meet next (Ending A = Alexia, Ending B = Ren, Ending C = Calla).

I am very excited to get to the end of Episode 3. It's taken 2 years of consistent effort and work to get the episode to where it is now while navigating some serious setbacks due to my personal health and family emergencies. This episode is taking a long time because of how complex Episode 2 endings were; it's been a ripple effect of choice -> consequence that has made it grow way past what was on the original outline. I am cutting things out as much as I can, but to simplify what I do have would create even more work since I would have to scrap existing material and then write around the gap. Additionally, there is only so many choices I want to pull back on—this game is built on the concept of choice, and to take that away would turn this episode into a linear novel. The fact of the matter is that I can't write the same way I did when I developed Episodes 1 and 2—writing 60,000-80,000 words a month just isn't feasible anymore.

I am very ready to be done with Episode 3, but there is still a lot of work to do.

Other Updates

Patreon has made some changes to the platform and I am considering making two changes that will affect you:

- Making annual subscriptions available. I still need to go over the details of how these work, but I have been thinking about making these an option for a while now—the short version is that an

annual subscription will be at a discounted price for the tier you select. You can expect a post sometime in July before I implement them.

- Switching to a subscription model. Right now, the payment model my Patreon uses charges on the first of the month regardless of when you sign up. This has served me well and I know this is the model that many of my patrons prefer; however, I have reached a point where I think the new model will serve my work better in the long run. This model means you are charged on the date from when you signed up rather than on the first of the month (i.e. if you subbed on June 15 then your next charge would occur on July 15 rather than July 1).

I will not be making this change immediately as I need some time to think about it and go over the pros and cons. If you have any questions, concerns, or thoughts, please don't hesitate to let me know in the comments below!

Thank you all so much for your support. ❤️

[Wayfarer Release Version 1.1.3. Patch 3.8.1.](#)

[Jul 5, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

An update to Episode 3 has been released. This update adds approximately 22,000 words to the end of the existing material and completes both potential outcomes for the Astral Tower. As before, to play this update you must have a save file that:

- Ends in one of Aeran's Episode 2 endings
- Ends in Veyer's Episode 2 endings
- If you hit an "Under Construction" page, go back and make a different choice to continue.

Alpha Build Stats

- **Episodes Released:** Prologue | Episode 1 | Episode 2 | Episode 3 (includes: Part 1, Part 3 Route 1, Part 3 Tower Exploration)
- **Average Word Count Per Playthrough:** 193,900 words (approximate)
- **Average Playtime:** 11 hours
- **Total Cumulative Word Count:** 1,414,800 words (approximate)

Alpha Build Access

- **Link:** <https://idrellegames.itch.io/wayfarer-alpha-build>

- **Current Password:** 7hHSSDI3xX7WT31D
- **Last Patch Date:** July 18, 2024

The access password was last updated on January 24, 2025.

Distributing, re-uploading, and/or sharing Wayfarer's password, alpha build, and other Patreon-only files is expressly prohibited.

NO AI TRAINING. Using Wayfarer or any of my written work to "train" generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to generate text is expressly prohibited.

Patrons who are discovered to have leaked the alpha build or engaged in AI training will be permanently blocked from my Patreon and banned from all of Wayfarer's Discord servers and social media.

Saves & Your Playthroughs

- If your save file is from before June 24, 2023, you must restart from the beginning of the game.
- If you encounter the variable \$name not printing correctly, you restart from prior to the path selection after arriving at Diradan Tower
- Files saved on the final save prompt of the Patch 3.7. build (May 28, 2024) unfortunately will not load correctly due to passage re-naming.
- You will experience minor continuity errors if you continue a save made after the choice of who takes the Astrial.
- If you experience save and/or continuity errors, please restart from the beginning of Episode 3.

As this build is a work in progress, it is highly recommended that you make multiple manual using Save to Disk and store them on your device rather than your browser. Always save when prompted. You may be required to restart from Episodes 1 or 2 as various bugs are fixed in Episode 3.

The Autosave occasionally loads incorrect metadata. It is always wiser to load a save made using Save to Disk.

Credits

The patron list has been updated in-game. If you do not see your name and you are part of a tier receives credit as a benefit, please message me. If you would like to change the name you are credited under, please message me.

Bugs

Bugs must be reported through the Patreon Discord server. All reports must include a screenshot of the passage where the error occurred and the passage title (viewable in the UI header).

Patch Notes – July 18, 2024

- Changed Save to Disk/Load from Disk to **Download Save** and **Upload Save** for clarity. Some formatting issues occur with the save prompt box because "download save" is too long, but the errors are not consistent.
- There are now 8 browser save slots instead of 6
- Updated opening load screen and save warning
- Updated the patron acknowledgements list
- Fixed some continuity issues surrounding who took the Astrial
- Fixed some continuity issues surrounding the grappling hook
- Various small bugs, grammar/spelling mistakes, and other editorial type things

Patch Notes – July 5, 2024

- Added the two diverging routes that occur after Episode 3 Part 3's coda. This leads properly into the Episode 3 finale.
- Updated some Sentinel lore
- Fixed several outstanding bugs and errors
- Various typo/grammar/spelling fixes

[Subscription & Annual Memberships Now Available!](#)

[Jul 7, 2024](#)

Hi all!

I am now offering subscription and annual memberships on my Patreon.



Subscription memberships renew on the same date you signed up for that membership. For example, if you sign up on July 10, your next charge date will be on August 10. If your billing date falls on a day

that doesn't occur each month, you will be charged on the last day of the month (for example if you signed up on January 30, your membership will renew on February 28).

Existing Members

No changes will be made to your current billing cycle. Your membership renewal will remain on the first of the month. If you cancel your membership and sign up after your access has ended, you will be switched to subscription billing.

If you're uncertain when billing occurs, you can check all of your active Patreon subscriptions in your [Active Membership](#) tab.



Annual memberships let you support my Patreon on an annual basis rather than a monthly one. In addition to reducing transaction fees, you will be supporting Wayfarer in the long-term which helps with episode development.

You also get a **15% discount** when you sign up as an annual member!

Annual memberships auto-renew on the date of your sign-up (for example if you signed up on July 15, 2024, your membership will auto-renew on July 15, 2025).

Existing Members

The following steps will help you switch over your membership to annual.

- Log in, hover over your profile icon in the top right corner, and select Manage memberships
- From your [Active Memberships](#) tab, click Edit next to the membership you want to change
- Select the Annual option on the checkout page
- Click the Update button. You'll be charged upfront for the discounted price

Have questions?

- [Membership billing](#)
- [Annual memberships](#)

- Or feel free to leave a comment below or message me through Patreon.

Happy Wayfaring! ✨💖

[Progress Report 2024.07.15.: How Do You Want to Do This?](#)

[Jul 15, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

I hope everyone is having a great July. I just wanted to give a warm welcome to all the new patrons who have joined this month—I'm so happy to see you here and I hope you are enjoying the alpha build!

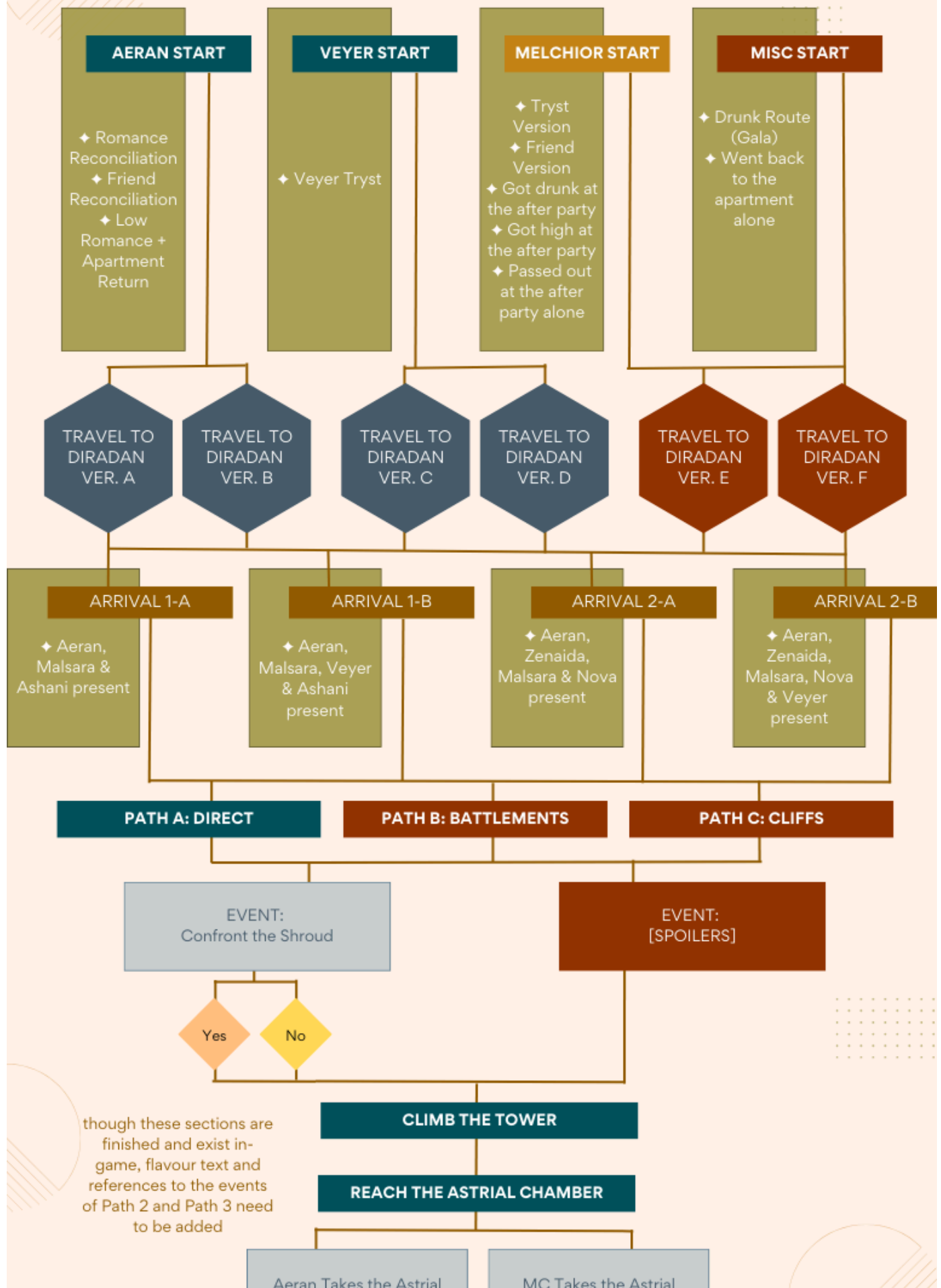
This month has already been very busy as I am trying to finish up Episode 3's remaining routes, plan and create bonus content, get another patch out for both the alpha build and the public build, and prep for a trip I am taking next week.

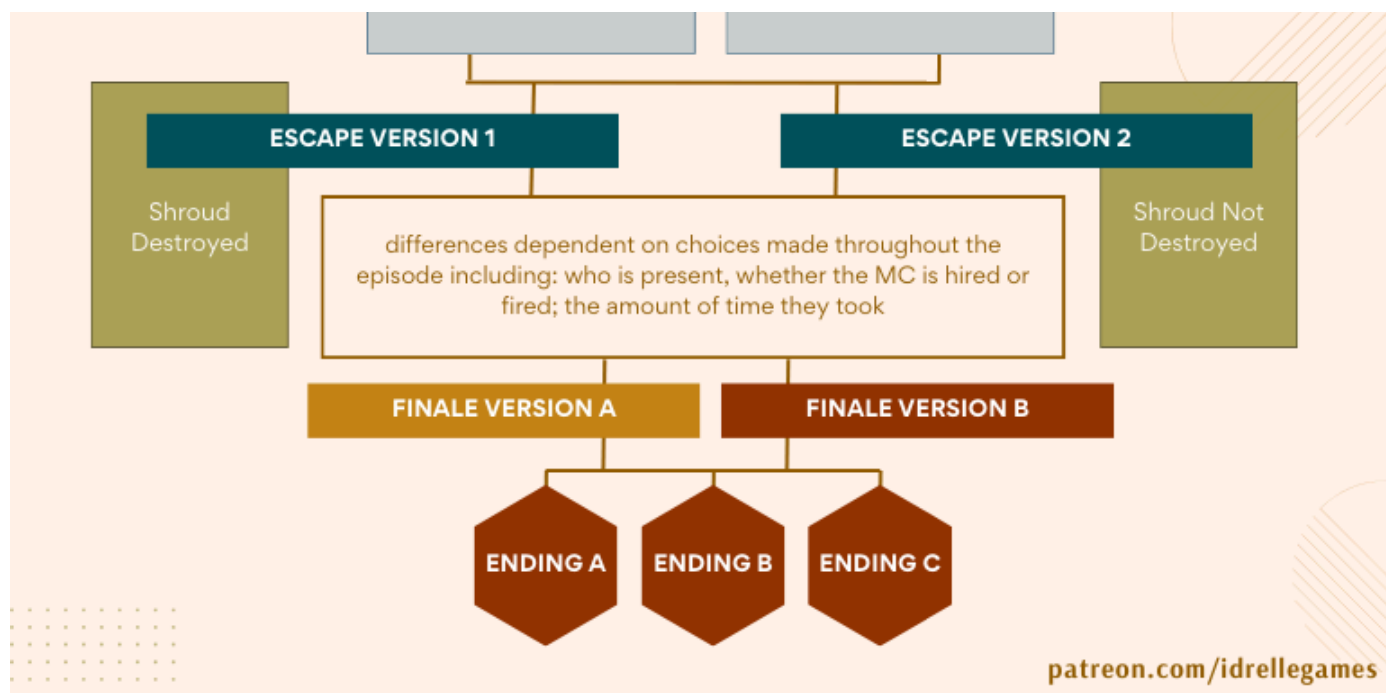
Where Are We With Episode 3?

I am finally approaching the end of the episode but there is still a lot of work to get done.

EPISODE 3 2024.07.15.

 = not yet written
 = started (unfinished)





The original plan was to back up and continue working on the Melchior starting branch, which is pretty complex in and of itself. Though I've labelled each starting route based on the character the MC ended their evening with, the starting point has just as much to do with the MC's physical location as it does with character relationships. This branch in particular has several different starting points that all need to be looped together; I made some progress on it last year before dropping it to the bulk of Episode 3's adventuring and I am looking forward to returning to it.

However, I think for now I am going to focus on the episode finale. There was quite a push leading up to the finale from the last update, and this is where my headspace currently is. I'm not sure how working on this section is going to affect updates moving forwards; I really don't want to release any information about the finale through sneak peeks or piece meal updates because it will lessen its impact overall. I had planned to release it when the rest of the routes were finished so everyone could play it together regardless of their starting point, and I would like to stick with this.

Unfortunately that means writing a lot of content in advance that I can't show or talk about until several months down the line, which isn't so great for updates. I am also weighing the benefit of cutting Path B and Path C from the game. I can't adjust the starting points due to how complex Episode 2's endings became, but I can cut Path B and Path C pretty easily and leave only one way to explore Diradan Tower. I will have to edit some of the conversations in Episode 2 and Episode 3 surrounding the choice of which path to take to cut out the relevant dialogue, but that is less work than writing two whole new paths.

Episode 3 has been in development for two years now and I really need it to be finished within the next 6 months. When I designed Episode 3 in 2022, the assumption was that I could stick to my regular output of 50,000 words a month. This is not sustainable, nor is it healthy for me to be required to write that much to keep the story moving forwards (I haven't been able to write 50k a month regularly since 2022). I can't change Episode 2's endings to make the start of Episode 3 easier, but I can cut additional paths—especially since Path A already has a significant amount of choice on it.

As much as I would like to merge Finale Version A and Finale Version B together, they are dependent on which characters are present, so neither of them can be cut.

Some Other Updates

- In case you missed it, subscription billing and annual memberships are now available! Please see [this post here](#) for more info if you're interested.
- I am working on new Patreon-only short stories. The goal is to get the first one out by the end of this month, but as finishing Episode 3 remains the priority, I can't say for sure when it will be ready. I'm going to stay tight-lipped about this one as I don't want to spoil it in advance, but it will be featuring one of the Wayfarer's future companions and give some insight into the commoner life of Velantis. If you haven't read the current short stories, you can find them in this collection [here](#)!
- I will be without regular internet from July 20 to August 3 as I am visiting my family and will not be online. If you have any questions or concerns and wish to DM me, I will take a while to get back to you.
- I want to get the alpha build and public build patches out before I leave, so expect an update sometime around Thursday. **This will not be a story content update**; the patch will address various bugs and other issues.

Thank you all so much for your support, it means a lot! 💖

[Progress Report 2024.08.09: Episode 3 Finale & Other News](#)

[Aug 9, 2024](#)

Hi all,

I hope you are all having a great August! I am back from holiday. The trip was very relaxing, and I got to see a lot of family I don't get to visit regularly. Having a reset was very good for me since I feel less burned out and ready and excited to work on Wayfarer. I did catch a cold on the plane ride back and I'm recovering from that, but otherwise I am feeling pretty positive and optimistic about Wayfarer and I'm really eager to dive back into things.

This week I have been progressing the Episode 3 finale. Coming back to branching dialogue and action after a break is never easy and it does take a few days to sink back into it (a lot of reading the previous work to refresh myself on the trajectory, double-checking routes and consequences, cross-referencing different outcomes—keeping on top of all the little details that make the game replayable). I've gotten about 8,000 words done this week and need to clean up the branch I'm currently on and merge it with another branch before continuing.

Because the game isn't where I hoped it would be when I did the 2024 roadmap in January, I am going to be revisiting it this month and releasing an updated version this month. Episode 3 was originally estimated to be finished this summer and Episode 4 in progress. You can expect an update sometime next week with the new plan.

I am going to start releasing sneak peeks again for the Recruit tier and up. These will be posted every other week on Fridays, starting on August 16. **Because I am drafting the end of Episode 3, sneak peaks will contain major spoilers.** Depending on your spoiler stance or if you haven't finished playing the current Episode 3 alpha all the way to the end, you may want to ignore them.

Additionally, I am hoping to release a new alpha patch sometime this month to fix ongoing and recurring bugs. The public build also needs to be updated. SugarCube (the story format the game is built in) released an updated version in July and I am currently waffling about whether to use the update or not. The changes break many custom themes and macros developed on the previous version of SugarCube, I risk breaking the whole game. I'm not sure if the updates are worthwhile enough to justify spending a couple weeks resolving errors caused by the new version just to make use of a few new features and to get rid of depreciated code. My gut instinct is to leave it be—you don't always need the most recent version of things, and the game will still work fine as is. Updating the engine can wait when I'm working on Game 2, whenever that happens to be.

I am slowly picking away at some short stories for bonus content, but I can't estimate when they will be available to read. The goal is sometime this month, but that is very optimistic with the amount of work I have to do on the Episode 3 finale.

Additionally, I am in the stages of planning a community event for September. September is Wayfarer's anniversary month (the public build launched on September 9, 2021) and since I didn't organize anything last year, I want to do something special for it this year. This is a public event, not just for Patrons, but I will be releasing more news on that in the coming weeks.

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #1](#)

[Aug 16, 2024](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

Conditions:

- Low Solarath approval (below 50)
- High Lethalis approval (above 50)
- Threatened Sabien Quirinus on the ferry ride to Mahanin
- Did not meet Allegra Arantir at the gala, but spotted her in the crowd
- Punched Quirinus in the face at the gala
- Did not receive the option to make a deal with Veyer for the Astrial
- MC destroyed the shroud
- MC is carrying the Astrial
- Escaped the Astrial's tower by climbing down the side

Notes:

The dialogue options at the end of this preview show the first instance of a new type of stat check which combines two stats together. In this case, you must pass both an agility and a perception check in order to pass the check.



"I suppose it was too much to hope for a Wayfarer not to make a fool of \$himself," a cool voice says. "Come now. On your feet. Best not embarrass yourself further while we decide your fate."

You bristle at the insult and your jaw clenches, your mouth and nostrils still full of dust, crushed stone pressing painfully into your palms. There's something familiar about the woman at Quirinus' side, but you can't place her—and it doesn't take much for you to decide you do not like her.

Tall, haughty, and with kohl-lined green eyes that watch you like a hawk, the woman exudes the same aura of power and beauty you've come to expect from Velantian mages. She is human, mature, in her late forties or early fifties. Her olive complexion is deeply tanned in the sun and her shiny auburn hair has been cropped severely at the chin. Beneath the flowing silks of her serithan, her body is wrapped tightly in glinting chainmail that reaches up the length of her throat. A gold chain bracelet flashes on her hand; it is similar to the one Umbria wore, though the gemstone at its heart glows red.

She must be Quirinus' second-in-command.

You shove the butt of the Astrial into the ground and rise to your feet. This is what they've come here for. If you can't hide it, you might as well make a show of it. "Couldn't think of an introduction before insulting me?" you say.

The woman throws back her head and laughs, amusement glittering in her vibrant green eyes. "You're delightful, \$lastname, truly," she replies. "Such a shame we could not be friends. Perhaps if you had sought me out at the gala last night, you would have had a change of heart."

So that's it... You must have run into her in the pavilions. "Shame you made such an unmemorable impression, maybe I would have changed my mind. Who are you again?"

"Allegra Arantir," Aeran grunts, his voice barely audible. "Imperial general. Battlemage."

Allegra smirks. "So good of you to remember me, Aeran," she says, her gaze passing over him to narrow in on the staff in your hands. "How did your evening last night fare?"

"Shut up."

Her smile widens.

You frown, a dozen questions circling your mind. Whatever the reason for their familiarity, you don't have time to question it now. "I suppose it would be too much to ask you to get out of our way?" you grunt. "You can't imagine the day I had."

Her gaze turns to you. "No," she says coldly. "I can't. And you know full well that such a request is an impossibility while you carry Diradan's Astrial."

Worth a shot. It is taking every inch of your self-control not to reach for your sword and attack. But any sudden movement would be to your detriment; your immunity will protect you, but it will do little to shield you if she smites the ground at your feet in retaliation. Battlemage... godsdamn it. Though that can account for anything, there is a good chance she is a soulweaver or a spiritbreaker, which means you'll be dealing with creation or force magic. And that's without throwing Quirinus into the mix. You may have landed a surprise hit on him last night, but you doubt you will manage such a thing again.

You recall his warning from yesterday.

I command the power of three spheres... You cannot touch me. Even if you survived, what then? What do you think you could accomplish by murdering the Grand Archsage in his own city? Every guard, assassin, and mercenary-for-hire would be searching for you. You wouldn't last a week.

Fucking hells. This is more of the same, isn't it. The bastard has you trapped.

Sweat drips down the nape of your neck. This is no deal with Cere Nalos, no confrontation with a mercenary band. The Order of Solarath has come for the Astrial, and they will get it, one way or another.

You could hand it to them, buy safe passage through their ranks in exchange for not making their lives hell. You would be free of Diradan, free of the Astrial...

But can you do it? Betray Lethalis? After you've come all this way, after Zenaida and her people plucked you from Rona and arguably saved your life. Though you hate to admit it, the Order of Lethalis isn't terrible as far as mages go. You can admire Umbria and Zenaida for their ambition and drive, their desire to protect their city from disorder and chaos. You can respect Malsara's devotion to Zenaida, the lengths she will go to support her mission. Even Veyer's sardonic approach to life is something you can appreciate.

Fuck. You promised them the Astrial, they promised you crowns and freedom. Even without accounting for your scruples, you are in a bind. The gold Malsara paid you this morning is a start, but it won't go far enough to secure a way out of the city. Especially not with an angry Lethalis on your tail. If you fail here, if you do not prevent the very thing Umbria feared so much, they will come after you. Malsara on her own would be enough to contend with; you'd hate to see what the Order's ire looks like.

And you have no idea what Quirinus would be capable of with the Astrial in his possession. It's not just Velantis that is at stake. You could doom all of Rhesainia by saving your own neck.

Fuck, fuck, fuck. You catch Aeran's eye, hoping for some silent advice, some indication of what to do—but there is nothing. He stand still, hands slack at his sides, eyes blankly trained on the ground at Quirinus' feet. His manic energy has evaporated, replaced with hollow acceptance. As if he has already decided you are too late.

You wet your lower lip, running your tongue over dry, cracked skin. "You know what, maybe thanks are in order," you say, desperately stalling for time. "Forget the Astrial, you have your tower back thanks to me. I should be charging you for services rendered."

"You know I cannot do that." She regards you with such powerful self-assurance you doubt she has any doubts. She has already imagined how this encounter will play out; there will be no straying from the course. "For what it's worth, I did very much enjoy our conversation last night. How regretful that Lethalis got to you first."

You bite back a laugh. Funny, how close Lethalis is and yet not close enough. They're just beyond the walls. If only you could get the other side, there's a slim chance you could get the Astrial into Malsara's hands. She could spirit it away while you and the others make your escape. Or you could stall for more time. The shroud's destruction is too large an event for Veyer to mask. They and Ashani must have sensed something has gone terribly awry by now.

Your gaze lands on Quirinus. He observes you quietly with folded arms, his smile smug, his golden hair impossibly brilliant in the sun. Clearly he is enjoying how your conversation with Allegra has played out.

1. "Hey Quirinus, leash your attack dog. Let's have a real conversation."

2. "Your silence speaks volumes, Grand Archsage. Do you have an opinion on this or are you going to let Arantir do all the work?"

3. Stay silent. Maybe if you let Allegra talk herself hoarse you'll have enough time to come up with a plan.
4. [AGILITY & PERCEPTION] Cast a covert glance around the premises. Look for an advantage, a way out, anything. There has to be something you can use here.

[Progress Report 2024.08.23: September Plans](#)

[Aug 23, 2024](#)

Hello friends!

The past two weeks have been very busy. Work on the Episode 3 Finale is progressing smoothly; because of the characters involved in the finale, this part of the episode feels like a breath of fresh air as the MC finally, *finally* has someone to interact with other than Aeran (I love Aeran very much, but I have spent a year of primarily Aeran + MC interactions and it is refreshing to write someone else for once). I am working on Version A of the events and it is currently sitting around 25,000 words total with a lot more to come.

I am reconfiguring my work schedule so I can start fresh in September and shake off some of the cob webs. I have a new social media plan in place; I've been neglecting my regular platforms since 2022 and it will be good to revisit them and start using them properly (if you're interested in following me, it's @idrellegames on Tumblr, Twitter and Instagram, though there isn't much on the latter two accounts at the moment).

Moving forwards, I'll be devoting Mondays to working on bonus content. I know I sound like a broken record at this point, but it has been very difficult to pick away at it and develop new short stories while balancing work on Episode 3. But having time every week set aside for it will help me be able to write some of the things I've really been wanting to write, while not sacrificing whole weeks of development time to the game.

Lastly, the anniversary event is going to run from September 9 to 30! This is a fan-oriented event, celebrating fan art, fan fiction, and the like. Prompts will be released on September 1, but following prompts will not be required in order to participate. There will be more details to follow on my social media next Monday.

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Aug 30, 2024](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

Conditions:

- Low Solarath approval (below 50)
- High Lethalis approval (above 50)
- Threatened Sabien Quirinus on the ferry ride to Mahanin
- MC raised too many alerts during their time exploring the tower
- MC destroyed the shroud
- MC is carrying the Astrial
- MC is currently injured

Notes: the timed choice at the bottom is a bottleneck for this large dialogue branch. Many of the paths through route to here; the fourth option is locked out as taking this particular choice does not unlock something the MC needs to know in order to take that option.

Allegra throws her head back and laughs.

You blink in surprise, caught off guard. You were expecting her to gnash her teeth or turn red with anger at the goad, perhaps even move to attack you outright. But despite the beauty and the poise and the elegant clothing, an Imperial battlemage is nothing like the airheaded nobles of the Velantian elite. It will take much more than that to get under her skin.

"There is no conversation to be had, \$lastname," Quirinus says finally. "You have my thanks for releasing Diradan from its devastation. I am grateful, truly—in only a few hours you and Kellis have resolved an issue that has plagued us for a month. Destroyed as it is, the citadel remains of great import to the Guild. In any other circumstances, you should be congratulated."

Your skin prickles, the dozen of shallow cuts stinging dully. "I would say you're welcome, but I would rather accept thanks in form of payment," you reply. "Or even better—letting us go."

"You know I cannot do that."

Damn it. It was worth a try.

You glance at Aeran, once again hoping for help, but he remains unmoved, unchanged. His expression is dead.

[CHOICE] 1. "Then think of it this way. What happens in the Guild of Mages is of no interest to me. We solved your problem with the shroud. Lethalis gets their Astrial, you get your tower back, and we can go on our merry way. Everyone wins. This doesn't have to end in bloodshed."
2. [PERSUASION] "I don't see why we can't strike a deal. Surely you're a reasonable man."
3. [AGILITY & PERCEPTION] Look for another advantage, anything that will help you make up your mind.

"We are in agreement on one thing, yes. I, too, do not want this to end in bloodshed—"

Aeran snorts, anger boiling in his eyes. It's the first hint of a reaction since Quirinus appeared.

"—but nonetheless I am prepared for it to be so." The Grand Archsage's smile fades, his smug air finally evaporating. The time for games has ended. "I have no interest in killing Wayfarers, \$lastname. It would be a great waste to kill you now when there are so few of your kind left. Your order is gone, and with them went whole generations of trained magiani, the likes of which we may never see again. There is a need for people like you. People with your skills, your talents. Without you, the world will lack balance. It would be misaligned. The Farans understand such things, but here in Arathia we are not so cultured. The emperor—"

"Grand Archsage." Allegra's voice is stern, powerful, like thunder rolling in the distance. "Caution, please."

He pauses, his smile growing thin. "So, then," he begins again. "Out of respect for your fallen order—and in an attempt to sway you from any harebrained ideas—I will tell you the two possibilities of how this will unfold, and perhaps you will see sense."

The air stills, the quiet broken only by the sound of the ward's buzzing hum.

"One: you hand us the Astrial, and we let you walk through that gate and into the city beyond. Whatever fate awaits you there is none of our concern, but I can guarantee you will see neither hide nor hair of Solarath while you remain in the city. My people will interfere with you no longer.

"Or two: you keep the Astrial, giving us no choice but to wrest it from your hands. Look at yourself. You are in no fit state to fight. Even if you were—and even if you managed to kill some of us—this route would still lead to your untimely death. Thanks to your activities, the city is on high alert. All eyes are on Diradan. The Red Guard, the Arcanists' Lodge, the Meissandium, anyone who has a stake in Velantis' future are watching. They will not be afraid to interfere. By all means, fight us if you wish. Decimate our ranks if you can. But even if you manage to escape, you will them to contend with and they will not be

open to negotiations. To kill a single Guild mage—let alone a dozen of them—in the Arathian Empire is treason of the highest order. Your punishment would go far beyond an unpleasant stay in the Themistrya. Last I heard the warden has taken a particular interest in their magiani prisoners. I would not want to count myself among them if I were you.”

You grimace, your mouth twisting unpleasantly. This has all been for nothing, you’re back to where you were before: break your contract and hand over the Astrial, or keep it and face death and imprisonment. There is no negotiating with Solarath. You have only one thing to offer.

[TIMED CHOICE]

- 1. Hand over the Astrial.**
- 2. Stall for more time. If Lethalis can’t take action, then maybe someone else would. Despite Quirinus’ confidence, he seems rushed. On edge. You doubt he wants the Red Guard interfering as much as you do.**
- 3. Attack.**
- 4. Conditional story requirements have not been met.**
- [5. Let time run out or choose to do nothing.]**



[Happy 3rd Birthday, Wayfarer!](#)

[Sep 9, 2024](#)

It's been three years since Wayfarer's launch.

I would like to thank everyone who has joined for the journey so far. When I started making this game I never thought it would grow this much and reach so many people. The players are the ones who make the game what it is. I would never have been able to get it this far without you. There is still so much to come, and I hope you enjoy all of it as much as I have.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you. 💖

Cheers,
Anna ✨

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #3](#)

[Sep 14, 2024](#)

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

Conditions:

- High Aeran approval (+60) + unlocked romance reconciliation scene
- Low Solarath approval (below 50)
- MC is carrying the Astrial



“You know Lethalis is watching, yes?” you say. “What do you think they’re going to do if I hand you the Astrial right now?”

Quirinus’ lip curls. “Do go on. Enlighten me.”

“We are bound to deliver the Astrial to them. If they do not get what they want, it will be open war—and if you’re as clever as you think you are, starting a war in the heart of Velantis is the last thing you want to do. How many of your mages are you willing to sacrifice? Will you forfeit their lives today all for the sake of a crumbling staff? Arantir is a general, I’m sure she’s accustomed to calculating risk—did she estimate one for you today or did you come here with the arrogant expectation that everything would go your way?”

His smile vanishes. “A word of advice, \$lastname: if you intend to proposition me, perhaps your proposal should be laced with swifter explanations and fewer insults.”

“My apologies, then.” Best be careful. You can’t push him too far before you even get to your lie. “You know better than I that you must strike at the right time. Let us go. Let me carry the Astrial out the front gate. We will deliver it to Lethalis, collect what we are owed—then steal it back when they least expect it.”

He regards you silently, stroking his chin in thought. The wait is agonizing. "A double-cross?"

"Yes." You wet your lower lip, desperately considering what else you can do to sell the lie. "My loyalty is not to Umbria Bellaris, nor to Zenaida Anaxas who originally hired me. I came here because the deal was too good to say no to—"

"A favourable way to say that your loyalties lie with the person with the most crowns."

You pause. "Yes."

His eyes glint. "Then perhaps we can come to an agreement, \$lastname. How much does your loyalty cost? A thousand? Two thousand? Less? More?"

Is he asking me to name a price? You glance at Aeran and find him still as stone, staring blankly at the ground.

"If you cannot name a number, \$lastname, then I will name one for you. In fact, this is the only price I will accept. Non-negotiable, as it were."

Your gaze snaps back to him. "How can we make a deal if you're not willing to negotiate?"

"Must I remind you that you are in no position to negotiate?" He smiles lightly and gestures behind him at the detachment of mages. "Your proposition is, in a word, ridiculous. And yet, I do believe there is some truth to it and I can concede that it may be an unlikely solution to both our problems. However, letting you walk freely from these walls and deliver the Astrial unto Umbria Bellaris with the intention of plucking it right out from under her nose... You must understand how such an idea gives me pause."

Your heart hammers in your chest.

"I will need insurance. Something to tie you to this task. I will let you pass with the Astrial, but Aeran Kellis remains with me."

Your stomach drops. "...what?"

"Kellis and I have business to conclude, as he very well knows. Think of it this way: it will give him something to do while you charm Lethalis with that sparkling wit of yours. Besides, I am curious to see how you manage without him. Wayfarers do traditionally work alone, do they not?"

"What does that have anything to do with it?"

He chuckles. "Simply that I find you an enigma compared to your brethren. And regardless of what you think, \$lastname, I do not wish to see the end of the Wayfarers. If you died today, I would count it among the greatest losses the world has suffered. Your order is gone, and with them went whole generations of trained magiani, the likes of which we may never see again. There is a need for people like you. People with your skills, your talents. Without you, the world will lack a certain... balance, shall we say. It would

be misaligned. The Farans understand such things, but here in Arathia we are not so cultured. The emperor—”

“Grand Archsage.” Allegra’s voice is stern, powerful, like thunder rolling in the distance. “Caution, please.”

Quirinus smiles and folds his hand in front of him. “I shall say no more on it, then. This is my offer: I will place my trust in you with your lover as collateral. Ensure the Astrial’s delivery to me by the end of the week, and you may walk out of this city with twelve thousand crowns in your pocket and an insurance that Solarath will shield you from Lethalis’ wrath should the theft be detected. Are we in agreement?”

Twelve thousand crowns?

Your throat runs dry. You turn and look at Aeran, expecting him to interject, for him to say *something*, but all that remains is silence. He stares at the ground, still as a statue, his expression unreadable, his eyes hollow and dead. There’s no trace of his earlier manic mirth. You have never seen him so forlorn. If only you could take him aside in private, ask him what he thought of Quirinus’ offer, come up with some sort of plan, but no.

You cannot fathom what he wants with him.

Can you do this? Accept Quirinus’ offer? How did it come so quickly to this, a choice between Aeran and your life?

1. “I’ll do it.”

2. “No.”

[Progress Report 2024.09.20: September Update](#)

[Sep 20, 2024](#)

Hi all!

I hope you all have been having a good month. I don’t have much to share in terms of an update, other than I have been very busy writing and getting through this next section of the finale. The new character interactions are a lot of fun to write, but there is a lot of cross-referencing that has to be done in order to bottleneck properly and keep the continuity straight. So while there is progress, it is kind of happening in 500-1000 word chunks every day, which in the grand scheme of things doesn’t look like too much.

Your gaze lands on Quirinus. He observes you quietly with folded arms, his smile smug, his golden hair impossibly brilliant in the sun. Clearly he is enjoying how your conversation with Allegra has played out.

1. "Hey Quirinus, leash your attack dog. Let's have a real conversation." [FINISHED]

2. "Your silence speaks volumes, Grand Archsage. Do you have an opinion on this or are you going to let Arantir do all the work?" [FINISHED]

3. Stay silent. Maybe if you let Allegra talk herself hoarse you'll have enough time to come up with a plan. [IN PROGRESS]
[loop mark] 4. [AGILITY & PERCEPTION] Cast a covert glance around the premises. Look for an advantage, a way out, anything. There has to be something you can use here. [double stat check] [USE ALT TEXT]

BRANCH - TWO VERSIONS:

- MC favourable to magic or MC allowed Sablen to investigate their sword
- MC flagged as not favourable to magic
 - Sub branches 1 – 4 depending on question asked
 - #4 loops into others

Sometimes a branch leads to another sub branch and then to a sub branch...

I've had to put some things on hold for a bit because I have some family things coming up in October where I won't be able to write consistently. I've also been poking around with Wayfarer's code and have discovered a solution to a very old problem with the CC. However, I only got half-way through updating it and I haven't had the time to finish it, so all patches are on hold until I get it fixed since it will break the CC if I leave it unfinished.

(The CC is the most fiddly part of the game, I try to avoid going into its code if I can even though I know a number of ways I could streamline it and make it better. So much hangs on it and I don't want to break save files unnecessarily. Unfortunately, it is put together with spaghetti and string.)

I am also considering removing the Quick Character Creator so I can appropriately reference choices made during the Prologue and avoid some issues that the QCC has caused over time (namely with how you can go back and edit your selections—if you go back, your variables are reset completely to the defaults and the game doesn't remember what you selected; so you need to select all your options again, and this can cause confusing bug reports on my end).

Lastly, I am very late to updating the 2024 roadmap with adjustments. As it stands right now, Episode 3 likely will not be released by the end of the year. I am optimistic that the finale will be finished by the end of December, but not the alternate starting routes. The alternate paths through Diradan Tower are going to be cut for time. At this time, I can't estimate when those are going to be complete.

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #4](#)

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

Conditions:

- Any Aeran approval
- Low Solarath approval (below 50)
- MC studied with Sero



“Are you sure you want to do this?” you say. “Fight a Wayfarer?”

Quirinus’ eyes narrow.

“Threaten us all you want, it’s all empty bluster. You know what we’re capable of. You know how your magic will crumble at our touch. You may have us outnumbered, but how many among your ranks are prepared to face alassar steel? We can pass through your barriers, slice through your armour. We can cut you down. How many lives are you willing to risk, Grand Archsage? Because of some ancient staff?”

His gaze darkens. “All of them, if need be,” he says coldly. “Including my own.”

Your heart clenches. This was a fruitless avenue; there’s no talking sense into someone willing to die for their cause.

“Still,” he continues. “I will give you this: your loyalty to Umbria Bellaris is impressive for a mercenary. What did she say to you to earn your trust?”

1. **“I just happen to want the same thing as her. The Astrial *out* of your hands.”**
2. **“She told me what an ass you are. That was more than enough.”**
3. **“Umbria Bellaris is not the one I’m loyal to.”**
- [CHOICE] 4. “Nothing. She’s paying me.”**

He laughs. “Ah, yes. The undeniable pull of money.”

You give him a flat look. “If you think I’m ashamed of it, I’m not. I do the work. I get paid. That’s it. There’s nothing more to it here.”

"I admit, I'm intrigued at how unattached to morals you are, bereft of cause and purpose. So much aggrandizing within the Arathian upper echelons, and yet here you are, free from it all." His gaze flickers from you to Aeran and back again. "It is positively refreshing."

"My life isn't here for your entertainment, Quirinus, refreshing or otherwise."

"Then perhaps we *can* strike a deal after all." He smirks. "How much did Lethalis offer you to retrieve the Astrial?"

Your heart thumps in your throat. Is this the way out? Accept payment from Solarath and give them the staff? Can you do that? You would betray Lethalis, but you would have your gold. You can leave the city.

Lethalis would come after you. No amount of crowns will stop them from setting Malsara on you. You will have to contend with her—and anyone else they send after you. You will not know peace until they are neutralized. Is that a risk you are willing to take?

1. "Three thousand."

[CHOICE] 2. "I can't be bought. I stick to my contract."

Quirinus sighs. "Your scruples are admirable, \$lastname, I'm sure Sero would find your stubborn insistence interesting. They always did prefer hearing out the other side before coming to a measured decision, if only to keep their opponent second guessing. Though I do recall a time when that did not play out in their favour. Not that you would know anything of that, of course. Best remember your dear mentor with fondness. I would not want to stain their memory."

You grit your teeth. "Fuck you."

"Is that a proposal?" His eyes glitter. "I appreciate the offer, but you should know I have no desire to come within certain personal limits of a magianis. It may prove troublesome."

Aeran stiffens. He looks like he is about to vomit.

"You're disgusting."

Quirinus shrugs. "Oh, I am," he says. "I will not argue that. My hands are among the filthiest in Rhesainia, and I have no intention to wash them clean. Not until my work is finished."

"And what work would that be? I have an idea, but I'd rather hear it from you. Curious how a power-hungry degenerate would explain it—"

"Unfortunate, then, that you have not earned the right. Though I doubt any explanation I could give would erase the false perspective Umbria has placed in your mind."

[Oct 4, 2024](#)

Happy October!

It is now the autumn season for me, and work on Episode 3 continues. I am nearing the branch spent September on, with three more splits to cover and some funky new gameplay options. I have also finished overhauling my social media, and I'm very pleased with where things are sitting. [My Instagram](#) has had the biggest changes; I am posting over there every day now and there's a bunch of new things on the horizon!

I will be away from October 7 to October 14 for a family event. My messages will remain open, but it may take some time for me to get back to you. I also will not be working on the game during this time.

In addition to Episode 3 and making some coding improvements, I am cooking up some special extras starting in November!

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #5](#)

[Oct 11, 2024](#)

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

Conditions:

- Low Aeran approval + got shot by him in Episode 1
- Low Solarath approval (below 50)
- MC studied with Varyn

This preview is an example of multiple branching dialogue paths in a confrontation.



[CHOICE DIALOGUE] “Your silence speaks volumes, Grand Archsage. Do you have an opinion on this or are you going to let Arantir do all the work?”

“I would take care not to insult an Imperial general, \$lastname. For it may be the last words you say.”

“She doesn’t scare me.”

“Unwise. She should.” His gaze flicks over you—looking you up and down, lingering on the staff—and his smile only broadens. “My opinions are my own. And you, unfortunately, are not privy to them on account of who you work for. This is an ordinary turn of events, is it not? To refuse to share your motives so openly with those who have not earned your trust, who are one step away from becoming your adversaries. Or does that make me unreasonable?”

“I think you’ve been unreasonable from the day you were born.”

He arches an eyebrow. “Oh?”

“I think your head is so far up your own ass you don’t even know what *reasonable* looks like.”

“Is that so? By all means, do go on.”

[CHOICE] 1. “You’re arrogant, Quirinus. The kind of person who thinks they’re entitled to the world because of their magic and power and circumstances of birth.”

2. This is a game to him. You know it, he knows it, Aeran certainly knows it. Don’t let your distaste for him talk you into playing his game.

“Is it arrogance or is it confidence? I know my place, \$lastname. Do you know yours?”

[CHOICE] 1. “I’m well aware of what I am.”

2. “I did once—and now I don’t. Maybe that phenomenally talented mind of yours can figure out why.”

3. Stop talking.

“Avoiding the question, I see.”

“It’s not one that needed an answer. I’m a Wayfarer. That tells you everything you need to know.”

“And once again you insist on this round-about away of addressing the point. Do you know what I see, \$lastname?”

You grit your teeth. Perhaps you shouldn’t have taken the bait. You are normally so confident in situations like this, and yet you can feel control of the conversation slipping away.

1. "Your opinion of me is the last thing I care about, trust me."

[CHOICE] 2. "Two Wayfarers and the object of your affections. You know what's so curious to me, Grand Archsage? All this talk, and still you hesitate. You want the Astrial so badly, and yet you're unwilling to fight us for it. Why is that, I wonder?"

Quirinus smiles. "Because regardless of what you think of me, \$lastname, I do not wish for this to end in bloodshed."

"Really? Why should I believe that?"

"Because of the truth you've pointed out yourself. We have the means to seize the Astrial right here and now, and yet we have not."

Your eyes narrow, and a dull ache spreading between your brows. You are talking loops around this man, and all you've gotten is a headache. "You're a smart man, Quirinus—"

He smirks. "A compliment? How unexpected—"

"—and because of that I doubt you are one to rush into things until you are certain you have the upper hand. We pose a problem, don't we? You want this staff so badly, and yet you're unwilling to fight us for it. Is it the risk, hm? Unwilling to pitch mage against Wayfarer and see how it ends? We're outnumbered, true, but how many of your people do you think we can kill before we're overpowered?"

His smirk fades. "Enough—"

"One? Two? Six? Twelve?" Your eyes sweep over the contingent of mages. "It could be you. It could be Arantir. Aeran's good with a bow. Usually. Most times. Never misses a shot when facing down his enemies. Who's to say he won't strike you down first?"

"Enough!"

To your surprise, it is Quirinus who spoke, not Aeran. You're a little disappointed—you half expected to goad some kind of reaction out of him beyond his quickly plummeting approval. You turn, raising your head as you face the Grand Archsage—his expression has twisted into something dark and disturbed, anger glinting in his eyes. You have finally gotten under his skin, though you can't imagine why. Talking too much, perhaps.

"Touched a nerve?" you ask.

He passes a hand across his face. "Have you always been such a viper, or are those irritating tendencies something Varyn failed to suppress?"

You shrug. "Varyn never suppressed anything. Encouraged, on the other hand..."

His scowl deepens. “I see of her two students where Brissa chose to focus her time and energies,” he says with cruel swiftness, as if trying to push the knife in deeper. Someone the remark means nothing; it only leaves you numb. “Regardless of what you think of me, \$lastname, I have no interest in killing Wayfarers. It would be a great waste to kill you now when there are so few of your kind left. Your order is gone, and with them went whole generations of trained magiani, the likes of which we may never see again. There is a need for people like you. People with your skills, your talents. Without you, the world will lack balance. It would be misaligned. The Farans understand such things, but here in Arathia we are not so cultured. The emperor—”

“Sounds like bullshit to me.”

[Progress Report 2024.10.18: Canadian Thanksgiving, Bonus Content Return & More!](#)

[Oct 18, 2024](#)

Hi all!

I hope you are having a fantastic October. It was Canadian Thanksgiving this past weekend, and I was fortunate to spend some time with my family on the other side of the country and attend my sister’s wedding. I am a little under the weather now from all the travelling and excitement, but I am back to work and continuing with Episode 3’s finale.

This month I have also continued reconfiguring my work flow, as well as how I run social media. I am very excited to announce that bonus content will be back starting next month, for Apprentice tier members and above! Bonus content will be a little bit different than it was before; I am focusing on shorter pieces that give insight both to Wayfarer’s world as well as to my creation process. Each month there will be:

- **2 Character Scenarios** – flash fiction pieces 1000 words or less that revisits scenes or scenarios from the game’s released episodes from other character’s perspective. Next month’s scenarios are about Quirinus and Umbria during the Prologue and Rhodarth during Episode 1 respectively.
- **1 Behind-the-Scenes** post. Next month’s BtS will give some insight to the sub branch I am currently working on.

Additionally there will be one **Roundtable Question** posted once a month for the Recruit tier and above. These are an invitation to discuss your Wayfarer’s choices during Episode 3 and how they are feeling about different characters, factions and outcomes as they progress through the story. The roundtable is welcome to continue discussion on the Patron Discord server.

I will also be cross-posting some of my social media posts to the free access section of my Patreon page throughout the month!



TOWER FINALE

VERSION A

OPENING



SECTION 1: High Solarath Approval



SECTION 2: Low Solarath Approval



BRANCH 1: Favourable to Magic



BRANCH 2: Not Favourable to Magic



Sub Branch 1



Sub Branch 2



Sub Branch 3 - in progress



Sub Branch 4



to do list

OCT 18-31

☐ Finish Sub Branch 3

☐ Start Sub Branch 4


☐ November Socials

☒ November Roundtable
Question

☒ November Character
Scenario #1

☒ November Character
Scenario #2

☒ November Behind-the-
Scenes



Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #5.5](#)

[Oct 25, 2024](#)

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

Out of the corner of your eye, you see Allegra's mouth open as if she was about to interrupt. You smirk, glad you got there first. You're in control of the conversation again. You have him flustered, frustrated, more prone to make mistakes. If you play this carefully, you may be able to find a way out.

Your glaze flicks back to him and you wet your lower lip, using the natural pause to quickly consider your options. How do you want to play this? If don't speak now he'll use your silence to rebuttal or insult or goad you and you'll lose whatever ground you've gained.

[TIMED CHOICE]

1. [PERSUASION] "Regardless of what *you* say, Quirinus, I am never going to trust a word that comes out of your mouth. You want the Astrial? You're going to have to make a deal. And if it's true you have no intentions of slaughtering the last two remaining Wayfarers, then there's only one way this can go. We walk out of here with the staff, collect our crowns, and be on our way. However you decide to deal with Lethalis afterwards is none of our concern."

**

[CHOICE] 2. [PERSUASION] "If you don't let us go, I'll break the staff. No matter what magic is in here,

it won't stand against alassar. What will you do then, if your precious ancient artefact is gone?"**

The air stills, the quiet broken only by the sound of the ward's buzzing hum.

Sweat drips down the back of your neck. The air is too thick, the sun too bright, and sunlight glints off the staff in your hands. It looks so small, so ordinary.

Mundane.

So devastation for this this simple, simple thing. Your threat was a lie, of course, but now you can't help but wonder if you *should* destroy it. Perhaps the world would be a better place without it.

Quirinus passes a hand across his face and lets out a long sigh.

Allegra stirs beside him, her brow furrowed, a question in her green eyes. "Grand Archsage...?"

"Go," he says, gesturing to the gate behind him. "Take it and walk free."

You blink. "What?"

Out of the corner of your eye, you see Aeran tense. His expression turns dark.

"Take it and walk free, \$lastname," Quirinus repeats. "Seiara's sacrifice is of greater importance than any individual life, and I will not risk a Wayfarer destroying it. Bring it to Lethalis and complete your contract. Or take it with you and sell it to the highest bidder. Regardless of what you do, it will find its way back to us."

Your heart pounds, a beacon of hope rising in your chest. This can't be true, can it? He will let you walk away, just like that?

“Friendships with people like Kellis never end well. The hurt of losing a friend is oftentimes more grievous than that of a lover. Either choose to stand with him—for good or ill—or let him go. I know what I would do, but I am not you. I have found myself in such situations more than once. I do no wish for you to do the same.”



– e p i s o d e t h r e e –

[Episode 3 Public Preview](#)

[Oct 25, 2024](#)

Full previews are available twice a month for Recruit tier members and above!

november

— O N P A T R E O N —

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[Progress Report 2024.11.01: November To Do List](#)

[Nov 1, 2024](#)

Hi friends,

Happy November!

The past two weeks have both been very busy and also not busy at all. I unfortunately caught Covid after my trip and I have been quite sick. I'm over the worst of it, but I am still recovering (the brain fog is not great and at any given moment I feel like a truck has run me over). I am trying to rest as much as I can; last time I had Covid the lingering symptoms caused the writing of Episode 3 to be significantly delayed and I don't want that to happen again.

I am sticking to my to do lists as much as I can so I can keep moving forwards while getting a lot of rest. I have finished almost everything on my to do list from October 18. November socials are drafted and scheduled; I also completed a whole set for December and into January, so I am clear to just write for the last two months of the year. I have also finished **Section 2 Branch 2 Sub Branch 2** (wow that is a mouthfulahaha). Today I need to decide what cuts I can make so that I can push more things towards the bottleneck and start getting this finale finished.

to do list
NOVEMBER 2024

☐ Finish Section 2 Sub Branch
4


☐ Outline Section 2 Branch 2

☐ Start Section 2 Branch 2

☐ December Character
Scenarios

☐ December Behind the
Scenes

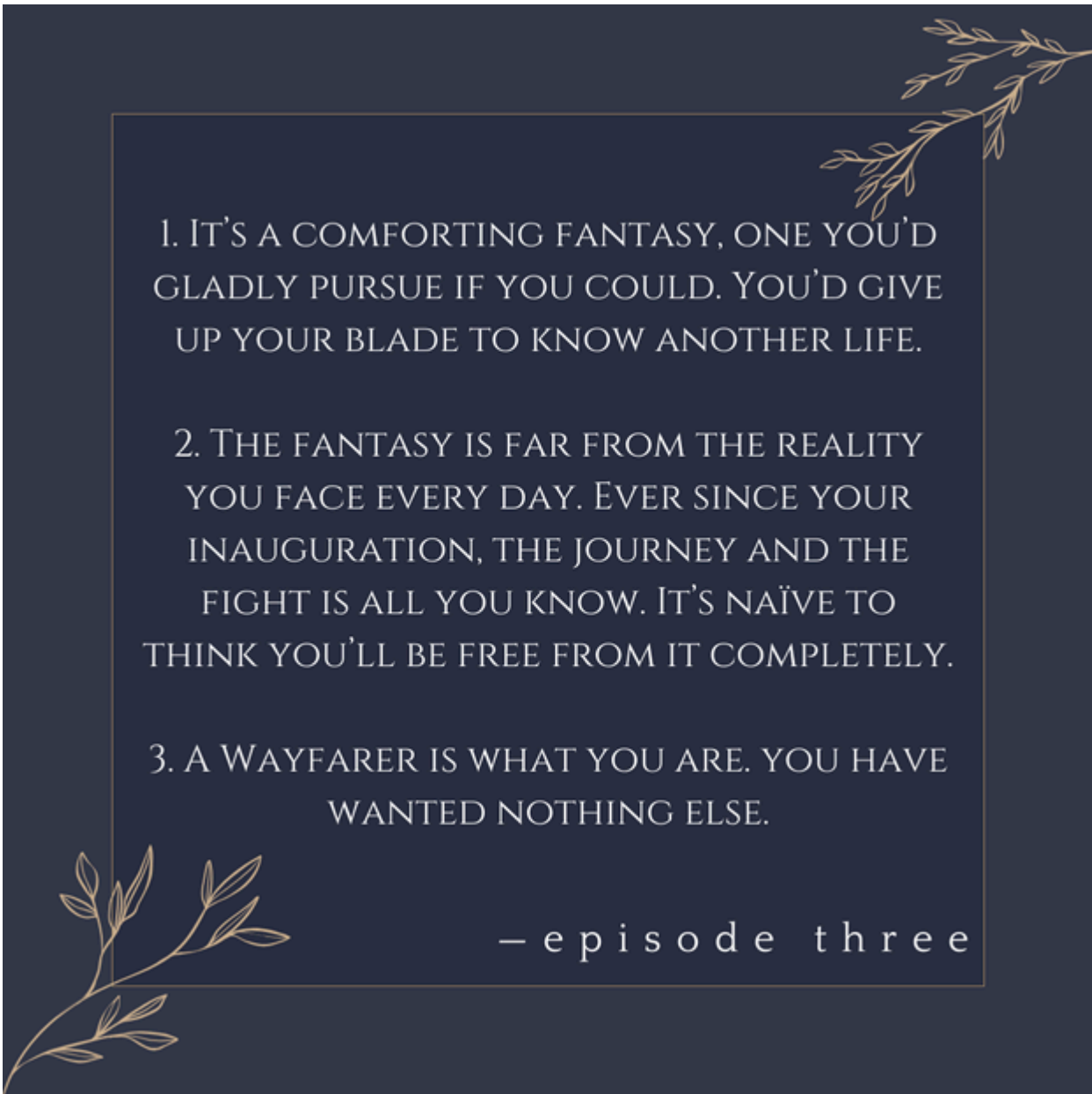
Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖



“...have you ever thought what you would do if you weren’t a Wayfarer?”

A hollow feeling gnaws at your gut. Of course you’ve imagined what your life would be if you weren’t a Wayfarer—every member of the order, from apprentice to grand master, has at one time or another.





[Episode 3 Public Preview](#)

[Nov 5, 2024](#)

Full previews are available twice a month for Recruit tier members and above!

[Character Scenario — Quirinus & Umbria \[Prologue\]](#)

[Nov 6, 2024](#)

Snow falls from a grey sky—cold, dull, lifeless.

He has heard more bards than he can count wax poetic about the beauty of the Artanisian wilderness, but in truth he cannot see it. Perhaps there is something in ice-clad mountains and evergreen forests blanketed in white, but all of it is meaningless when he cannot see the sun. The cold here would be the end of many, but with his magic it is of no concern.

No. The cold is not his enemy. The lack of light is. This far to the south it seems daylight never truly comes. A few hours of endless grey that are encroached upon on either side by the dark of night—a timespan that shortens with each passing week—can scarcely count as day.

It would be enough to drive anyone to madness.

He scowls at the thought. *What a story that would be in the years to come*, he muses, scratching his beard as he surveys the snowfields beyond the camp once more. *The archsage who travelled south on a lark and lost his mind. Oshiro would dearly love to tell that tale, damn the man.*

He exhales an irritated breath and raises a hand, summoning a small ball of conjured light in his palm. It dances, brilliant and warm, a childish echo of the Velantian sun as it sets over the ocean. The Frostmarks leave much to be desired, but at least he has left that nest of vipers in the north where they can squabble and row and jostle for power to their hearts' content. With their attention drawn to the Meissandium in Velantis and the Imperial palace in Erenvor, they will pay him no heed. His work is absurd, after all. A fanciful dream. The Council would not have cleared it if not for the standing his unique abilities have gifted him.

They would offer him anything if it guaranteed keeping the sole triple-attuned individual within the Guild of Mages.

"Sabien?" A muffled voice, a telltale crunch of boots on snow. He doesn't need to turn around to know his apprentice is there, wandering from the safety of the shelter.

"There are no changes," he says shortly and dismisses the orb. "Go back to the tent and wait. Brew yourself a cup of tea if you like."

"I already have. Twice." Umbria draws up next to him with a scarf pulled over her mouth and nose, tears glistening in her brown eyes from the wind. A small coil of dark brown hair has escaped its braid and brushes against her forehead. Eighteen years old now, she is headstrong and reckless and a far cry from the shy young novitiate who joined the Guild only a half decade ago. Unlike the rest of their retinue who have opted for practical gear, she has chosen to venture into the Artanisian wilds dressed like a Velantian. A pink travel serithan drowning in an oversized wool cloak with a puffy fur collar dyed a pale rose, a white fur hood to keep her ears warm and a matching muff to cover her hands. She is perhaps the most colourful thing for miles. "Where do you think it is?"

"It will come. We simply must have patience."

"We have had a fortnight of patience." She lowers her scarf and turns to the mountains, scanning the woods with a keen eye. "Perhaps it will never come. Perhaps it is time we go to it."

"I would advise against that."

"Surely a creature is no match for you."

"It is not the creature that gives me pause. There is more that lurks in these woods than a fannarl." He looks away, his gaze drawn to the mountaintops. It's out there, somewhere. The Spire. That great ancient fortress of obsidian and glass. Twin to Diradan Tower. Home to the Wayfarer Order and its grand designs. Brissa Varyn will be there, not that he has a desire to see her. "I am not often one for caution, but in this case I would heed it."

"Why?"

"Alerting the Wayfarer Order to our presence in their territory would be unwise."

"We may not have a choice. Or rather our quarry may not give us a choice. We need that fannarl."

He glances at her. Once again—as he has often found throughout these few short years—her impatience speaks not just to her youth, but to her human ancestry. A need to move fast, to outplay her elven, dwarven, and melusine colleagues who will have decades to hone their craft. "There is time yet," he says calmly. "Even if fate conspires against us on this particular venture, perhaps at a later date—"

"There *is* no later date. If I am going to commit heresy, then the time is now."

A pause. A winter wind howls, sweeping snow across the field. The grey sky darkens; night is approaching.

"Do you know what death is, Sabien?" Umbria says quietly. "It is the dark and the cold and the nothingness. The space after the heart stops, when the mind is torn asunder and left in freefall. If there is a way to reverse that moment, to snatch the soul from Nashira's grasp and return it to a healed body... I would find it."

"Necromancy is not an advisable path."

"Meissandic bullshit. If what I aim to do is necromancy, then all curative magic should be called so."

Another pause. He blinks, the wind chafing his face, snowflakes clinging to his eyelashes. And yet he is not cold—his spellwork sees to that. "Tell me something," he says after a moment. "You are not the first to attempt to walk this path. Why do you seek immortality?"

"I don't. I simply want to help people." Her lips twitch. She shrugs and pulls her cloak tighter, shooting him a glance from beneath dark lashes. There is fire in her eyes. "And when this goes well—because it *will* go well—just remember that I'm not the one who brought immortality into this conversation. You did."

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #6](#)

[Nov 8, 2024](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

“Is it arrogance or is it confidence? I know my place, \$lastname. Do you know yours?”

1. “I’m well aware of what I am.”

[CHOICE] 2. “I did once—and now I don’t. Maybe that phenomenally talented mind of yours can figure out why.”

3. Stop talking.

“Such high compliments,” he drawls. At least one of you is enjoying this. “What fine acclaim. I am confident in my talents, but to have it acknowledged by one devoid of magic is high praise indeed.”

“I didn’t mean it as praise.”

“Ah, come now, \$lastname, don’t be a spoilsport. Then again, the apprentice of Amali Sero, the most divisive and paradoxical Grandmaster in your order’s history, did not inherit Brissa Varyn’s silver tongue. But I see a hint of something in you. If you wish to spar, let us spar.”

Your throat closes. “Fuck you.”

He sighs. “If that is the way of it... fuck me, indeed. Very well. *If* it makes you happy, then yes, I am arrogant. A self-aggrandizing, egotistical bastard who fully believes he alone can usher in a new age and change the failing landscape of this world before it falls to ruin. I know exactly what I am, for the path I walk is one I do not expect those who would oppose me to understand. And I have many, many opponents.”

Beside you, Aeran tenses, his expression turning dark. His eyes boil with anger, yet he does not reach for his weapon. Under any other circumstance, he would have snapped by now.

“Bullshit,” you say. “All bluff and bluster.”

"Is that your true assessment? Or is it simply the conclusion you came to because you are determined to despise me on principle?"

"Even if I *didn't* despise you on principle, I'd despise you for being a self-aggrandizing, egotistical bastard."

"At least I am content with myself. Some would say it is the age, but you do not need to live a hundred years to achieve clarity of self." His piercing blue gaze sweeps over you. "You have wandered this continent for half a decade, displaced and uprooted. How does one overcome that, I wonder? For all *your* bluff and bluster, you're paralyzed by insecurity, by the thought of the unknown."

You grit your teeth. You hate where this is heading. You hate it.

[CHOICE] 1. "Once again, I *wonder why that is*. Have you figured that one out yet?"

2. Reach for your weapon.

3. Stop talking.

"Oh, the destruction of your order is the obvious cause," Quirinus says. "There. I have said it. Does it make you feel better to hear me voice it? Is that what you wanted?"

Your mouth runs dry; any response you could give has dried up with it.

He chuckles—quietly, delicately, dangerously, as if he is privy to something you cannot fathom. Or perhaps he is enjoying toying with you a little too much. "I do not blame you for your sensitivities. I can imagine all too well what it must feel like, to have been apart of something greater than yourself one moment and to be uprooted and displaced the next. To lose the one place you found sanctuary is a great loss indeed. Rhesainia is unkind to magiani, this we all know too well. And to others who live beyond the sanctified laws of the Hexade."

Ridiculous that he, the Grand Archsage—a man so privileged, so powerful that he can publicly spout heretical beliefs in the heart of the Empire without facing the consequences from the Imperial court or the Meissandium—could empathize with you. Magic—and your lack of it—has been nothing but a blight on your life. You've been maligned for simply existing, used like a tool, and disposed when your presence is no longer beneficial. Some would argue that is just the life of a mercenary, but you know it's more than that.

"...what are you getting at?" you hiss.

He merely smiles. You're getting sick of it.

"Did you know the Guild of Mages and the Wayfarer Order have shadowed each other for much of their history?" he says. "One could say they are two halves of the same coin. But the Guild has forgotten the purpose for which it was created and it is my sworn duty to lead them back to it. As for your order... I cannot say the same—"

“Shut up.” Aeran is shaking with rage.

Quirinus blinks, unbothered. As if he did not hear him. “Consider this, \$lastname,” he continues, his focus solely on you. Regardless of what you may believe about me, I do not wish to see the end of the Wayfarers—”

“Shut *up!*”

“—Your order is gone, and with them went whole generations of trained magiani, the likes of which we may never see again. There is a need for people like you. People with your skills, your talents. Without you, the world will lack a certain... balance, shall we say. It would be misaligned. The Farans understand such things, but here in Arathia we are not so cultured. The emperor—”

“SHUT UP!”

Aeran’s voice echoes across the boulevard.

Quirinus sighs. “By all means, Kellis, if you have something to add, go ahead.”

The air stills, the quiet broken only by the sound of the ward’s buzzing hum. Your gut twists, foreboding creeping across the nape of your neck. The fight last night wounded you deeply, but you made the decision to trust him. Didn’t you?

It’s a goad. It has to be a goad. Quirinus is trying to get him to attack, so Solarath can attack back without consequence. Say they were provoked.

- 1. You have to ask Aeran what Quirinus means. You have to.**
- 2. You’re no fool. Don’t let Quirinus manipulate you.**



[November Roundtable](#)

[Nov 11, 2024](#)

Put your thoughts in the comments or continue the discussion on the patron discord server!

“It was a mistake,” he says finally. “We should never have come here.”

“What do you mean?” you ask.

“This... city... this place, it’s... It’s brought out the worst in me. And you’ve taken the brunt of that, and it wasn’t fair... and for that, I’m so sorry. But I’m not ready to have this conversation. Not now. Not here. Not when we’re surrounded by these people.”



– e p i s o d e t h r e e –

[Episode 3 Public Preview](#)

[Nov 12, 2024](#)

Full previews are available twice a month for Recruit tier members and above!

[Coding: Weird Workarounds](#)

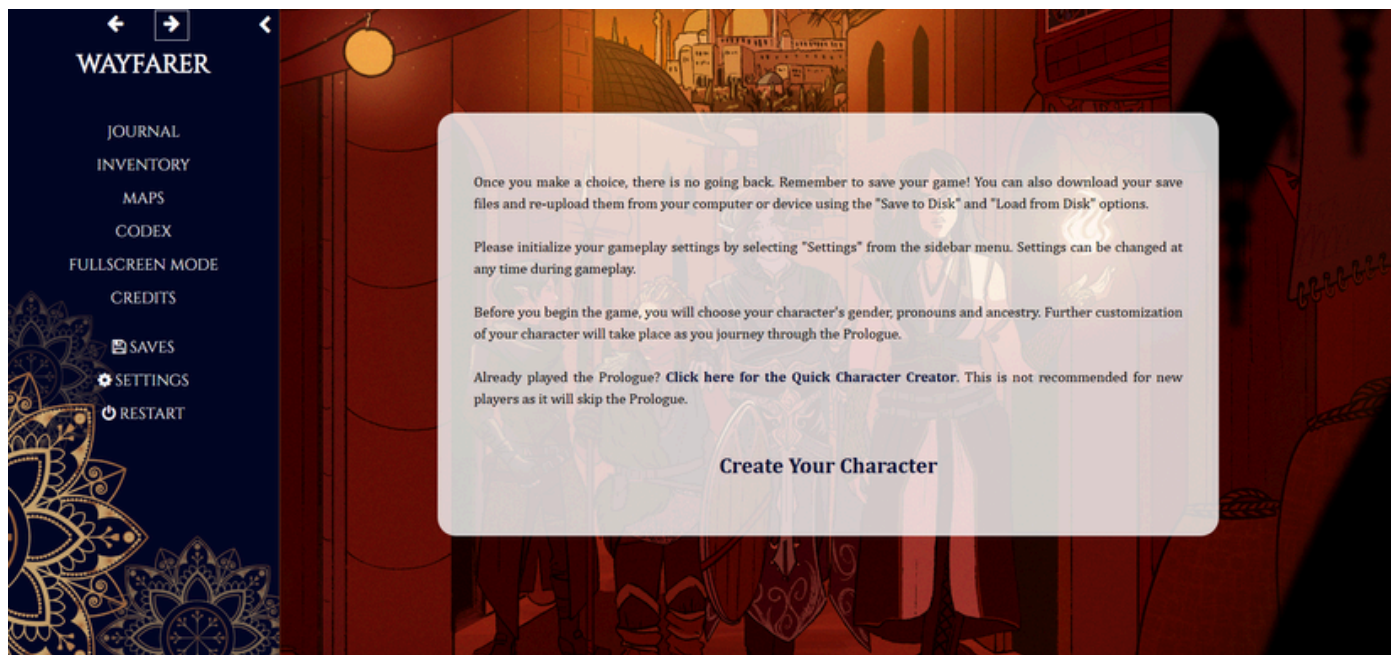
[Nov 13, 2024](#)

Wayfarer has been around for a few years now, and I thought I'd share some of the weird and whacky situations I've had to fix over time. There are a lot of benefits to working with Twine and SugarCube (Twine is the engine, SugarCube is the format). There are many resources, helpful guides, templates and macros that have been created communally over the years. Usually when I want the game to do something specific, there is a macro available that can assist with it so I don't have to create it from scratch.

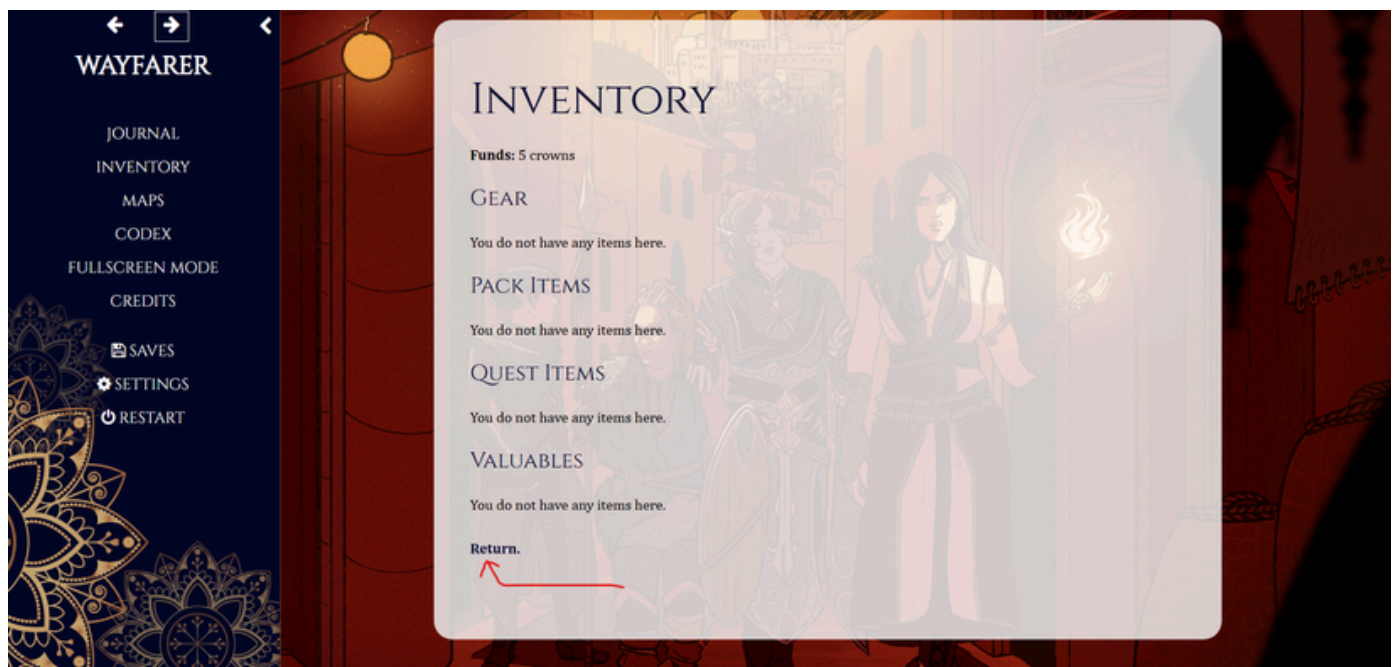
One part of the game that may seem simple on the outside has been the source of many grievances over time. One would think that navigating a menu would be straightforward, but it is not.

1. Issue #1

Wayfarer's original UI looked something like this:



At this point, clicking on any of the menu options would bring you to a different screen. This was fine—the issue was then navigating *back* to the game without it forgetting where the player left off. If you have too many menus, it is possible for the player to click through them to a point where the history will forget where they started, locking them permanently in the menu. There is a macro called the Return macro that resolves this issue.



However, the Return macro depends on the game's history functioning in its default manner, which leads us to—

2. Issue #2

At a certain point, Twine games will slow down if they are storing too many moments in their history states. The most efficient way to resolve this is to limit the max history state (the recommendation in the SugarCube documentation is for 1). Given how large of a game Wayfarer is, this is a change I implemented pretty early on (this is also the thing that prevents the player from being able to navigate backwards and forwards).

When I redid the Wayfarer UI and turned it into its current version, I ran into an issue where I could no longer access the menu correctly due to the history save states. While I could increase them to 20 or 25, I would always run into an issue where the player would eventually get locked into the menu if they clicked around in the menu too long. Because there are so many menu options (Journal and everything in it, the codex, maps etc) and everything had its own page, that was a lot of clicking. And it would only grow with the game.

So, I needed to come up with a different solution for the game menus, one that did not rely on navigating to a new page. SugarCube does support a number of dialogue boxes that you can use as pop-ups, but I was struggle to design them in a way that fit the look of what I was going for and also allowed the player to navigate around inside the dialogue box.

I eventually settled on using the SlideWin Overlay by HiEv. This pulls an overlay over top of the game when the player clicks on a menu option, which means the game doesn't need to access the history at all to navigate menus. I was able to get it to display different bits of information by using a few replace functions (which is how the player is able to see different information depending on what part of the Journal they click on—the buttons have a number associated with them, and whichever number is "active", the overlay shows different information).

```

<<set $nav to 1>><<liveblock>><<nobr>><div class="journal-header">
<center><span class="journal-menu">

<<if $nav is 1>><span class="journal-active">Character</span><<else>>
<<link 'Character'>><<set $nav to 1>><<update>><</link>><</if>> •

<<if $nav is 2>><span class="journal-active">Status</span><<else>><<link
'Status'>><<set $nav to 2>><<update>><</link>><</if>> •

<<if $nav is 3>><span class="journal-active">Abilities</span><<else>>
<<link 'Abilities'>><<set $nav to 3>><<update>><</link>><</if>> •

<<if $nav is 4>><span class="journal-active">Factions</span><<else>>
<<link 'Factions'>><<set $nav to 4>><<update>><</link>><</if>> •

<<if $nav is 5>><span class="journal-active">Companions</span><<else>>
<<link 'Companions'>><<set $nav to 5>><<update>><</link>><</if>> •

<<if $nav is 6>><span class="journal-active">Pacts</span><<else>><<link
'Pacts'>><<set $nav to 6>><<update>><</link>><</if>> •

<<if $nav is 7>><span class="journal-active">Tenets</span><<else>><<link
'Tenets'>><<set $nav to 7>><<update>><</link>><</if>> •

<<if $nav is 8>><span class="journal-active">Story Log</span><<else>>
<<link 'Story Log'>><<set $nav to 8>><<update>><</link>><</if>> /*

• <<if $nav is 9>><span class="journal-active">Playtesters</span><<else>>
<<link 'Playtesters'>><<set $nav to 9>><<update>><</link>>
<</if>>*/</span></center></div><</nobr>><</liveblock>>
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<<elseif $nav is 2>><<include "Status">>
<<elseif $nav is 3>><<include "Abilities">>
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<<elseif $nav is 6>><<include "Pacts">>
<<elseif $nav is 7>><<include "Wayfarer Tenets">>
<<elseif $nav is 8>><<include "Story Log">>
<<elseif $nav is 9>><<include "Playtesters">><</if>><</liveblock>>

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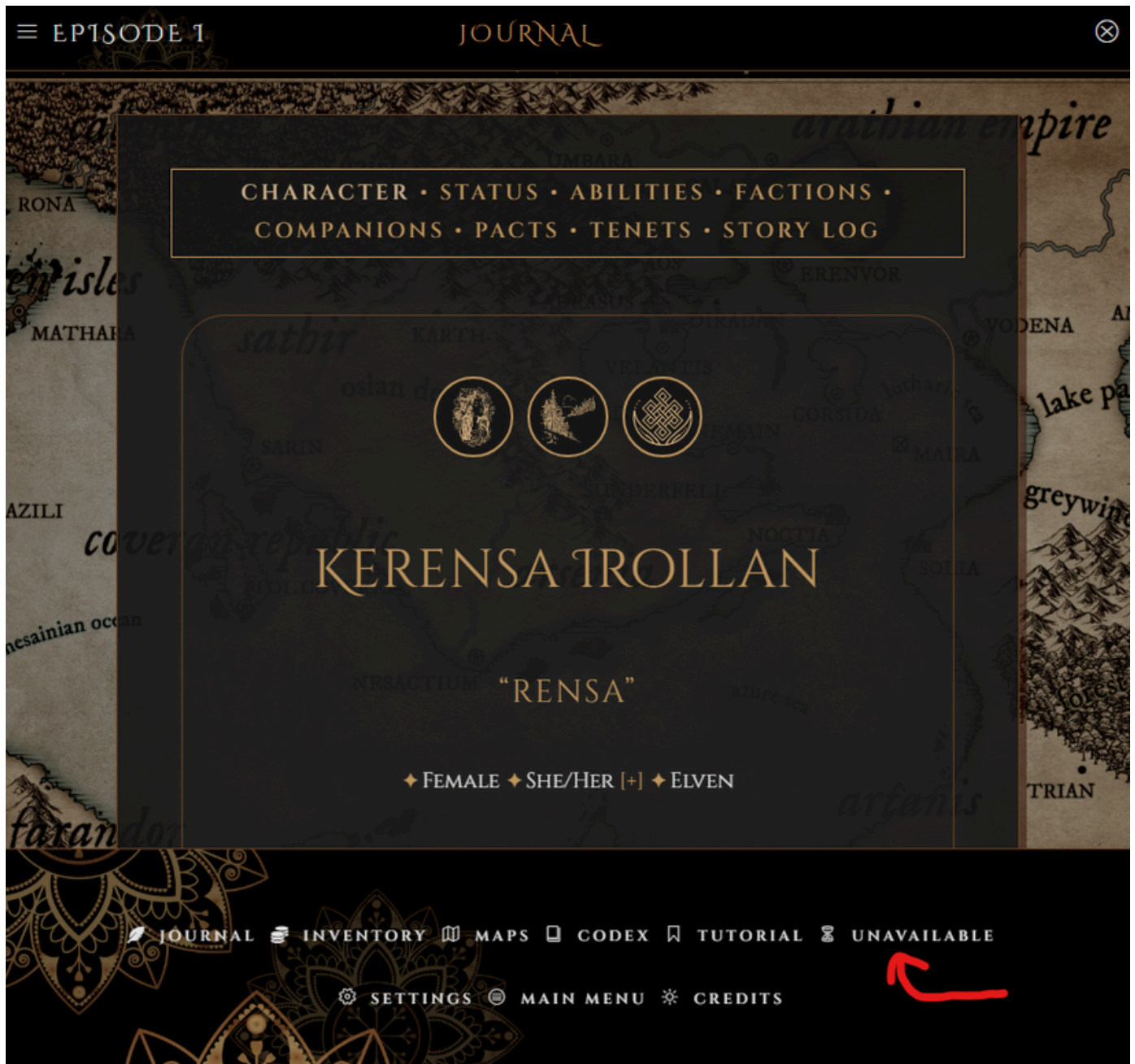
This worked great at first, until I ran into the next issue.

3. Issue #3

Unfortunately because Wayfarer's template has a separate function to pull up the menu bar from the bottom of the page, this conflicted with the overlay. If the player opened the save menu and loaded a save while the menu overlay was open, it would lock their game into the menu and they would be unable to close it. I couldn't disable the player's ability to access the menu bar while the overlay was

open, but I also couldn't change how the open/close button for the overlay worked. The solution for the time being is to make the save menu unavailable.

And that is why if you ever open Wayfarer's menu bar while the Journal or Codex is open, you will see this:



Saves are unavailable so you don't break your game!

[Progress Report 2024.11.15: 64 Lines to a Bottleneck](#)

[Nov 15, 2024](#)

Hi all,

I hope you have been having a good month!

Writing is motoring along this month. I am mostly recovered from Covid and I've been pushing to finish off these last few sections. It's been a lot of work and it has taken a very long time, but I can finally set this one aside and work my way back up the tree. It's hard to express exactly how entangled the Episode 3 finale will be—this is a case where the boss fight and final conflict is much more in the words you say rather than in the actions you take. Depending on your faction approval (with both Solarath and Lethalis) and your MC's approach, you the scene will shift and you will discover new lore. This is definitely a scene where you have to pay close attention to what both your character and the other characters are saying.

Everything is working towards a massive bottleneck, which at this point is getting maybe a tad out of control:

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Page 15 of 1042 of 51545 wordsEnglish (Canada)

I realize 64 entry points looks nuts, but there are definitely parts where I can combine more passages into one. There are many instances of the same goto to keep the document legible when I code it. The idea with these very complex dialogue branches is to pinpoint the moment where the conversation

either ends or gets interrupted by the same event so I can tie everything back together and move forwards. If you don't have bottlenecks like this the story fractures into too many competing continuities. There always have to be moments where events are set in stone (for example, the Episode 2 fight with Aeran is another major bottleneck—the scene always happens, you can't avoid it because having that fight vs not having that fight would split the game in two).

I'm hoping to get as much work as I can done on the rest of Section 2 in the last two weeks of November. Then I need to back up and add flavour text and some alt conversations. The bulk of what I am working on right now will remain the same regardless of whether the MC was fired by Lethalis or not—essentially the difference here will be that many of the references to and discussions of Umbria will need to be replaced with ones of Zenaida. I was originally going to take this text and separate it for the Zenaida version of things, but I think I will be able to weave both world states in the same document.

For other Patreon things, I have the December shorts outlined and in progress (both are Zenaida pieces!).

To Do List

to do list

NOVEMBER 2024



Finish Section 2 Sub Branch
4



Outline Section 2 Branch 1



Start Section 2 Branch 1



December Character
Scenarios



December Behind the
Scenes

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Character Scenario — Rhodarth \[Episode 1\]](#)

[Nov 20, 2024](#)

On days he cannot think, Rhodarth returns to the sea.

Not that Rona's shores amount to much. Murky, brackish water with several centuries' worth of refuse littered across the ocean floor. Tumultuous tides that crash against jagged rocks and bits of surfacing shipwrecks, threatening to pull any swimmers down, down, down into the abyss. It's dangerous to swim here, even for a melusine. No melusine in their right mind would. They would choke on the rubbish.

Still, despite Rona's peculiarities, there is something soothing about looking out to the horizon. He sits perched on a rock jutting out from the shadow of the villa's walls, not unlike he did once as a child in Corsida. The island city is a long way away, Maira even further if you count the fathoms it takes to dive to its borders, but these waters flow to the Lotharic Sea. He remains connected to his homeland. Both of them.

Not that he can return. Not without consequence.

A crumpled letter is crushed in his fists, the ink already smeared and blotched from Rona's endless rain. It's useless now, its contents illegible, but it matters not. The message has been received and memorized.

Rhodarth,

I hear you set yourself up with your own mercenary company. Under normal circumstances, I would congratulate you. But these are not normal circumstances and it is on my honour as your friend to tell you—by the gods above and below, get your fucking head on straight. You've had your moment of dissent—as we all do—and it has been very amusing to watch from a distance, but the overseers want you back. They want answers for Nemain.

I am telling you this as a friend, but consider it a threat if you want. They are prepared to send Nezra once he is finished in Velantis. And unless the Guild somehow manages to pluck all his feathers out, I think you and I both know how that will go.

Enough dallying in the ass end of Rhesainia. It is time you came back into the fold. I'd rather it happen willingly.

laera

Easier said than done. What laera—and the overseers by extension—do not know is that in his efforts to distance himself from the Brightblades entirely, he has bound himself to a pirate warlord. He couldn't return even if he wanted to.

You really fucked us both, didn't you, Aeran?

He looks to the north, following the coast around its twisting shoreline. The harbour is somewhere in the distance, out of sight. Curse the ship that brought him here. He should have expected it. Aeran has as much reason to run from Rhesainia as he does; it was only a matter of time before they both ended up in the same cesspool of a border city. Call it fate or misfortune, but Nashira must be playing games with

him. Perhaps there is some divine law that says as soon as you mend your broken heart, the person responsible for shattering it will stumble back into your life.

Whether he knows it or not, Aeran Kellis continues to make his life difficult. And this time he brought a friend.

Rhodarth exhales a long breath and closes his eyes, listening to the rushing waves crash against the rocks below. Wayfarers in Rona will not go over well. The Seven will do what they usually do—sit and watch and wait and squabble amongst themselves until the Viridian Lady's patience snaps or the Crimson Count gets bored and one of them swoops in to make a move. That's if someone else doesn't try to kill them first.

If he were a better man, perhaps he would try to do something about it out of respect for their former relationship. But he cannot see a way through this that ends well for either of them. If the Count discovers a connection between his new favourite mercenary and a wandering Wayfarer, he will not hesitate to exploit it. And so for now, he can only hope that the Count keeps him close at hand, that he somehow miraculously avoids crossing paths with his former lover until the day he leaves. He will put his faith in the hope that Aeran will not stay for long.

That is his way.

Always on the move, always running.

Some day his luck will run out. Gods willing, it will not be here in the ass end of Rhesainia.

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #7](#)

[Nov 22, 2024](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

You glance to the side, gaze sweeping the premise, searching for something, anything...

"I am speaking with you, \$lastname," Allegra calls, her voice thunderous. Demanding. Impatient. "How long will it be before you understand there is no way forward? Do not search for a way out. Even if you should find one, I will simply rip the ground out from under your feet."

You swallow hard, sweat trickling down your back. Do you believe her?

"I have known many warriors, \$lastname. From infantry to commanders to generals, and, yes, mercenaries aplenty. Very few could have achieved what you have today. In some ways, I admire you—and my admiration is not easily earned. The shroud—as Oshiro so ignorantly named it in a humourless jest, a funny little name from a funny little man—was a monstrous, ancient creation we do not understand and against which we have no defense. Even a veteran Brightblade could not combat it. And yet, here you and Kellis stand, triumphant."

"Is that so surprising?"

"It is a shame. There are those in our number who would have gladly studied this phenomenon longer. Some would argue it posed too much of a danger to the city, but Velantis sits upon a number of cataclysmic dangers, this one is not unique. What could we have learned from it, if not for Lethalis' meddling? Umbria Bellaris waits for no one, dancing to her own tune and ensnaring all those who hear it. The shroud could have been left untouched for years if not for her desire to acquire and control our Astrial."

She raises her chin, her green eyes half-closed. "Did you know she was once one of our own?" she continues, savouring every word. "Oh, yes. The Guild has been split in two long before Umbria Bellaris made her mark, before even the Grand Archsage inherited his mission. Umbria once stood with us. As the Grand Archsage's apprentice she was his right hand in all things, all matters, privy to information kept even from our own. But when she saw an opportunity, she betrayed us. She stands now in control of our opposition, having traded Solarath secrets to claw her way to the top."

The venom in her voice is undeniable. You caught a glimpse of it last night, but now you know for certain: this is a woman who hates Umbria Bellaris with every fibre of her being. What can you make of such anger? In most cases, it does not spring up out of nowhere. If what she says is true and Umbria was Quirinus' apprentice and betrayed Solarath... strange that Allegra seems to take more offense to it than him.

Then again, Quirinus is good at masking his emotions. You can't seem to get a read on him that is anything other than smug indifference. You don't know what to make of this, other than perhaps this is Allegra's attempt to sway you to their side.

"So answer me this—why continue to risk your life for her? Someone who has no qualms about ousting those who put their lives in her hands the moment they no longer serve a purpose?"

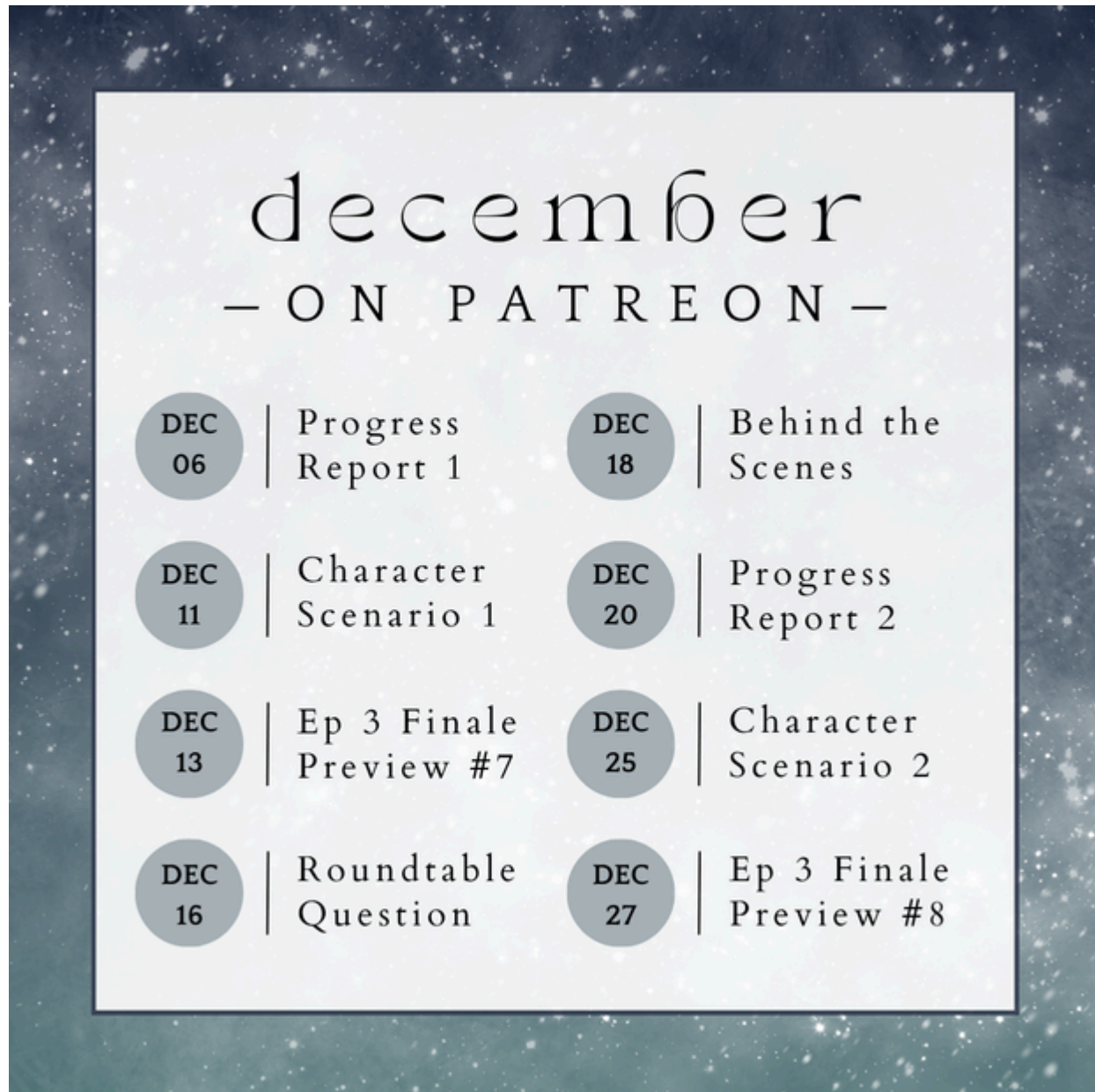
1. "Because she's the one paying me."

2. Draw your blade. Show her that you're not going to stand here and listen to her bullshit.

3. Don't answer. There is nothing you could say she wouldn't take poorly. Besides, if you

continue to stall then maybe, just *maybe* Lethalis will finally show.

4. Conditional story requirements have not been met.



[December 2024 on Patreon](#)

[Dec 1, 2024](#)

Tip Jar

- Progress Reports

Recruit

- Alpha Build access
- Progress Reports
- Episode 3 Finale Previews
- Roundtable Question

Apprentice & Up

- Alpha Build access
- Progress Reports
- Episode 3 Finale Previews
- Character Scenarios
- Behind-the-Scenes

[Progress Report 2024.12.06: December Plans & New Branch](#)

[Dec 6, 2024](#)

Hi all,

Happy December!

This was my November to do list—I've finished everything I had planned outside of the December character scenarios for Patreon, which I am lagging behind on a bit. I have next week's scenario mostly done and should be wrapping it up this weekend.

to do list

NOVEMBER 2024

-
- ☒ Finish Section 2 Sub Branch 4
 - ☒ Outline Section 2 Branch 1
 - ☒ Start Section 2 Branch 1
 - ☐ December Character Scenarios
 - ☒ December Behind the Scenes
-

Additionally, I am well into the thick of it with Episode 3's finale. The branch that took up most of November is now finished and I am now working through the other branch. Just to quickly revisit the general structure of the finale (vague so as not to spoil things):

- There is a split between whether the MC remained hired or was fired by Lethalis (this determines which Lethalis characters are present at Diradan and affects much of the dialogue and how the MC is spoken to)
- There is a split between low and high faction approval, with an additional in-between branch that will route onto either the low or high routes depending on how the MC answered Sabien Quirinus' questions in Episode 2 and what their feelings about magic are
- The low approval branch is done and serves as the template for the high approval branch, which is the one being worked on now

It's always a bit weird to back up and do what is essentially a re-write of an existing scene but with more favourable dialogue. Faction and character approval are one of my favourite things to handle in interactive fiction, but to do it well I think you do need to push outside the boundary of simple flavour text and actually pursue differences in how NPCs engage with the player character based on how they feel about them. An additional complexity is giving flexibility in the MC's dialogue options and general demeanour without bloating the scene too much. Approval tracks not just how a character or faction feels about the MC, but also how the MC feels about them and those two things are not always aligned.

I've been describing the Episode 3 finale to my partner as a verbal boss fight. It will fly by when you play it, but it is a tangled web of action and reaction and consequences.

This is my to do list for December:



The image shows a dark-themed to-do list for December 2024. The title "to do list" is written in a cursive script, and "DECEMBER 2024" is in a serif font. Below the title, there are three items, each preceded by a square checkbox and separated by a horizontal line. The items are: "Continue Section 2 Branch 1", "Finish December Character Scenarios", and "Draft January-March Character Shorts".

to do list
DECEMBER 2024

☐ Continue Section 2 Branch 1

☐ Finish December Character Scenarios

☐ Draft January-March Character Shorts

The very optimistic goal is to finish this high approval branch by the end of December so I can funnel everything into the major bottleneck and start on a fresh scene in January. Since I am writing very slowly right now, I am not going to make that a firm goal, but it is something I am striving for.

Additionally, I want to pen the Patreon character scenarios for January to March in advance so I have those in the backlog and ready to go. Writing in advance helps me keep up to date with Patreon specials and benefits so I can queue them up when finished and let them post themselves.

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Character Scenario — Zenaida & Sophia \[Episode 2\]](#)

[Dec 11, 2024](#)

The door to the audience chamber closes behind her with the sound of a thousand drums beating a single beat.

Zenaida's breath catches in her throat. Her heart pounds in her chest—*thump thump thump*—in time to her footfalls against the marble floors. Though she has treaded here many times in her life, it was always as the daughter of the archon and heir to House Anaxas. Now she returns not as the heir, but a savant of the Guild of Mages, who took what she wanted and made flagrant use of house resources without permission.

It wouldn't be the first time. It has been years since she has asked for permission.

She steps further into the vast room, head high, back straight, each step bringing her closer to her due punishment. Light streams in through the tall stained glass windows, illuminating the massive round table in the centre and the seven chairs drawn around it. The surface is stripped clean and the rich, deep wood polished to a pristine sheen, indicating that whatever meeting the council had planned must have been postponed for now.

Despite its size, the table is dwarfed by its surroundings—the pillars, the vaulted ceiling, the high steps up to the dais at the back of the hall. This chamber was once a throne room in the time of the Velantian royals. Their throne still stands untouched upon the dais, draped in Arathian red. Zenaida knows what is concealed beneath the fabric: a wide seat of red stone carved with ornamental wyrms, their wingspans brought together to support the large golden disk that upholds the back. Though the city has long since replaced the Velantian dragon with the Arathian phoenix, there are some places in which it respectfully remains.

Velantian kings and queens held court here for centuries, ruling from their mighty position atop the dais. The corrupt lavishness of their rule was next to none, this chamber bearing witness to everything from the masked orgies of the aristocracy to the public humiliation treasonous citizens to vivid executions that made the very marble beneath the archon's round table run red with blood. Her historical texts have much to say about the mesmerizing barbarism of the Velantian royals before House Nesarian brought it to heel. Though it is far in the past now there are some among their number, like Councillor Amestris, who have lived long enough to remember it. She has often considered asking her whether it is true, but the councillor is not keen to speak of her experience with past regimes.

And so now the place that was once the beating red heart of an ancient kingdom is now the seat of Imperial bureaucracy and administration.

But it is no more lacking in power.

She raises her head, her gaze drawn across the chamber to the dais and up the stairs to the woman sitting on the top step before the throne. Who waits for her there? Her mother? Or the Archon of Velantis?

Sophia Anaxas rises to her feet, her white and gold serithan flowing about her. "And so you've returned, wayward daughter that you are," she says. "I hope your journey was fruitful. It would break your father's heart to know you've been gone two months and for it to have not been worth the effort."

Ah. So it is the mother for now.

Zenaida passes the table and comes to a halt in front of the dais, folding her hands together in front of her. The perfect image of a respectable Arathian noble. The perfect image of the perfect daughter. "Father has ever been supportive of my ventures, regardless how far it takes me," she says. "My happiness is his happiness."

"And are you?"

"What?"

"Happy." Sophia's brows draw together, the stern angles of her face sharp and imposing in the stark morning light. Despite her short stature—shorter than Zenaida herself—she radiates power and command. "Because your father is not."

Guilt twists in her stomach, sharp as a knife. "How is he?"

"Not well." A pause—the kind she does when she is considering her options. "There is a gala tonight. He will be at the Lyranaeum. I bid you attend."

She nods. "I will."

"Good. He will be glad." Another pause. "He has six months left. Or that is what his medics say."

The guilt stabs deeper. “Is that so?” Zenaida looks away, eyes downcast. A hollow ache pounds in her chest where her heart should be. “I’m sure you are relieved. Tell me, mother, when he is gone, will you seek out a new consort? Raise that bodyguard of yours to an acceptable social standing, perhaps? Or would that be a touch too far, considering she is Faran after all?”

Sophia does not flinch at the jab. “Calla Tormond is no longer of any concern,” she says calmly. “But I see you are in a surly mood. I know you do not mean such words. I did not call you here to punish you, Zenaida, but to talk*. * I care—”

“For what? My happiness?”

“Yes. What must I do to prove it?”

Zenaida raises her head. “If you truly do care, then why interfere? For what reason did Sabien Quirinus become the bearer of *your* message? Or was it your intention to humiliate me on all fronts in the hope that I would learn a lesson?”

“I intended to ensure your swift return to Mahanin.” Sophia’s gaze hardens. “Without delay and without distraction. You have shown, daughter mine, that my wishes are not held in high regard and are easily circumvented. I had hope that if you would not listen to me, you will at least listen to the superior of your order. If he reprimanded you for your behaviour, that is not my business. That is the choice you made when you chose to join the Guild of Mages.”

“So the Archon of Velantis sends the Grand Archsage to play messenger. I never imagined the day would come when you would get into bed with him, but I suppose unpredictability has come to define your term.”

Another barb that goes ignored. “Lord Quirinus and I share a certain understanding, this is true, but I would not say it is unpredictable. Diradan Tower did explode, after all. I would say that is reason enough to greatly concern both the Guild’s official overseer and my government.”

“And what is this understanding exactly?”

“Something that only concerns myself and the Velantian High Council. Perhaps it would concern you, too, if you had not forfeited your position within my administration by undertaking a journey across Rhesainia to an embargoed city-state with whom the Empire has an untenable relationship.”

“I would hardly call Rona a city-state when it is composed of petty thieves and pirates—”

“Then consider it. Are you aware that since your departure, all Imperial citizens within the city limits have been rounded up and executed by the local authorities?”

What? “I did not think—”

“No, you did not. Rona is bathed in Imperial blood and *that*, daughter, are the consequences of interfering with local politics in the pursuit of your own personal gain. You are fortunate such matters are of no import to the emperor now, but your movements have not escaped the notice of the Great Houses.”

Zenaida inhales a shaky breath, panic bubbling in the pit of her stomach. She should have expected this, considering the disaster that was their exit from Rona. What should have been a situation handled with subtlety turned into anything but that thanks to Kellis and his fellow Wayfarer. The month at sea now truly feels like a sanctuary, stretches of weeks upon the waves where time stood still. But the world moved on and she has not returned with a triumphant homecoming, but to a deadly reckoning.

It takes her a moment to speak. “Then let them notice,” she says. “Let them think what they wish. I am a savant of the Guild of Mages as much as I am a scion of House Anaxas. There is an active chapter in Rona; I had every reason and every right to visit—”

“Zennia, enough.”

The childhood name—the one her father still calls her by, the one her mother has not spoken in years—silences her. Sophia gazes down upon her from above, as rigid and still as a statue, no softness in her voice. “There is a time and a place to be a firebrand,” she says, descending the dais one step at a time. The train of her serithan rustles across the marble behind her. “Whatever your intentions were, you have thrown nothing but suspicion upon our house at a time when we need to marshal trust, not doubt. Velantis sits in a perilous position now that Arathia’s attentions have turned north. Emperor Ariston seeks a unified Rhesainia to stand against an uncertain future. Conflict with Aos is all but assured. The very reason we were granted our jurisdiction may be the reason it is taken away. Do not forget from where we come, *ma’thaia*.”

The word hangs heavily in the air. A word that for anyone else would be spoken with affection and warmth, but her mother wields it like cold steel. A threat. A reminder that Aosian blood runs in her veins, just as it does Zenaida’s. The remnants of a tenable alliance between House Anaxas and the great aeda megapolis that ousted the Velantian royals and secured the peninsula for the Empire’s glory.

An alliance that has faded over the passing decades.

Sophia descends the final step and comes to a halt at Zenaida’s side. “If Arathia is to go to war with its northern neighbours, then House Anaxas’ loyalty must not seed any doubt,” she says grimly, resting a hand on her daughter’s shoulder. “We must be steadfast. United. Devoted to the emperor to the very last. And devoted heirs do not wander off to the far corners of the continent to make underhanded dealings with unknown factors whenever they please.”

Zenaida stiffens. When she left to undertake this mission, Velantis was at peace—relatively, so to speak. It was the perfect opportunity to slip away quietly, make the journey to Rona and return with a Wayfarer. But in the past two months since she’s been gone, Diradan Tower has gone up in flames, border disputes have broken out, and House Anaxas’ standing has fallen in the Imperial court. “I am ever the loyal servant to both my house and my emperor,” she says.

“Are you?”

“I am.” She pauses, twisting her hands together—a way to soothe away the panic while maintaining a noble’s composure. Her mother will see through it, no doubt. Rasmira does the same. “There is nothing more present in my mind.”

“Then tell me truthfully: what were you doing in Rona and why did you return with Wayfarers in your midst?”

And there it is. The question she knew would eventually be asked. The question which—no matter how carefully she prepared herself to answer—leaves her trembling. *Well, you see, mother, the Guild of Mages has been housing an Astrial undetected for several centuries and some of us would like to spirit it out of your new friend the Grand Archsage’s clutches before he uses it to bring the whole of Rhesainia to its knees.*

That is what Nova would say, were she in her place.

But Nova has ever been free to have a sharp tongue without consequence.

“It is a Guild affair.”

“And when you say *Guild*, do you mean the Guild as a whole or the operations of the ones known as the Order of Lethalis?”

“It is a Guild affair,” Zenaida repeats, careful to keep her tone even. Neutral. Balanced. Unreadable. The way her mother taught her. “One of paramount importance. One that could very well benefit House Anaxas in the future. Did you think I would willingly allow the Guild of Mages to exploit my connections and status if the end result did not aid the house?”

“That does not answer the question, Zennia.”

“You should realize that I am of course not at liberty to discuss this subject now. Not until the plan I have set in motion reaches fruition.” She pauses, her next words restrained on the tip of her tongue. She should leave it be here. Sophia wants an explanation, to be sure, but she wants a truce more than anything else. It does not do House Anaxas good to have strife between the archon and her heir. But the desire to drop the façade and ram the metaphorical knife deep... It tempting. Too tempting.

Wetting her lower lip, she raises her head and meets her mother’s eyes. “Unless I have your word.”

Sophia’s expression softens. “You do. You always have.”

The temptation wins. “Thank you,” Zenaida says, a little thrill rolling down as she savours the words. “Unfortunately, Sophia, your word alone means nothing to me. If you intend for me to be punished for my actions, then by all means. Do so.”

The change that comes over her mother is immediate. Whatever inkling of softness she had retreats, vanishing into the hard edges of the archon. Governor. Ruler. Majesty. A woman who demands duty—and will not tolerate disobedience. She could very well be the empress of a nation. “I see you have learned nothing,” the archon says. “If you have chosen where your loyalties lie, then so be it. This meeting is adjourned. Return to your chambers.”

The note of finality is cold. Unfeeling. Inevitable. She steps back, hands at her sides, passing through light and shadow as she heads for the doors.

“Is that what this has come to, then?” Zenaida calls after her. “Sending me to bed like an unruly child?”

The archon draws to a halt. “No,” she replies, glancing over her shoulder. “I am placing you under house arrest. For your trespasses and the threat you have posed to your own family. You will find this a punishment befitting of any treasonous noble of your station.”

“Treason? I have not—I would never—that is a gross exaggeration—I want what is best for our family and our nation—”

Zenaida’s heart stops.

“Mighty ideals, but actions, as they always do, speak louder than words. Marcius and Nesarian wanted what was best for family and nation and the ghost of his actions haunt us still. Where you are concerned, an archon from another Great House would be quick to let you rot in the Themistrya for less.”

Silence falls through the audience chambers, interrupted only by the sound of the archon’s footfalls. Zenaida stands still, frozen in place, torn between a childish desire to shout and yell and beat her fists against the wall and the overwhelming urge to soothe her rising panic by crumpling on the floor in tears.

But she does neither.

When at last the deep, resounding *boom* of the doors closing marks the archon’s exit, she simply turns her face upwards, to the line of arched windows and the brilliant sun gleaming through the stained glass. This is a set back, but she has experienced enough of those to know they can be overcome. No one—not even the archon, not even this house arrest—can stop what she has set in motion.

And the day will come when the archon understands.

They all will understand.

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #8](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

[CHOICE] 3. “Tell me something, Quirinus. How does one become both a heretic and a Grand Archsage? Seems to me the two don’t go together.”

Quirinus throws his back and bursts into laughter. “Oh, my dear,” he says with a devilish smile. “What a question! What a thought! And how easily said—only a Wayfarer could put it such a way, truly.”

“Are you going to answer the question or not?”

“Yes, I think I just might.” His smile only grows. “Simply because of your charming phrasing.”

“I assure you I have no intention to charm.”

“Of course. That much is evident.” He regards you evenly. How long as he been waiting for this, you wonder? This moment where he can proudly unveil his intentions and present his true self. He is relishing in it. “Heretic. A fascinating word, don’t you think? Misbeliever. Cynic. Skeptic. The Meissandium would say I am all these things and more, and yet we maintain an amiable relationship.”

“That’s it then? You keep your mouth shut and the Meissandium is happy to turn a blind eye?”

“We may have our disagreements, but I am not such a fool so as not to recognize their position and worth. Regardless of my personal beliefs, I am still of value to them, just as they are to me. I am the first triple-attuned individual to be born to this world; my existence proves their doctrine as much as it proves my own theorems.” He pauses. “Do you know what it was that first declared me a heretic? A spark. An idea. A *concept*. That magic is perhaps not limited by its laws as we know them. That perhaps there is more to the Hexatheon’s influence upon the Hexade than we first believed. But to the Meissandium to posit there are more spheres of magic than the six we know is sacrilege, for it would imply the unthinkable.”

Your jaw clenches. You don’t like where this is going. “What?”

“That perhaps the pantheon is larger than just the six.” He pauses, watching you carefully. “I see you find the idea unsettling.”

"I'm not unsettled." Frankly you don't know what to think, but you're not about to let him know that.

"These are questions that don't need answers, it doesn't change that I am magianis and everything that comes with it."

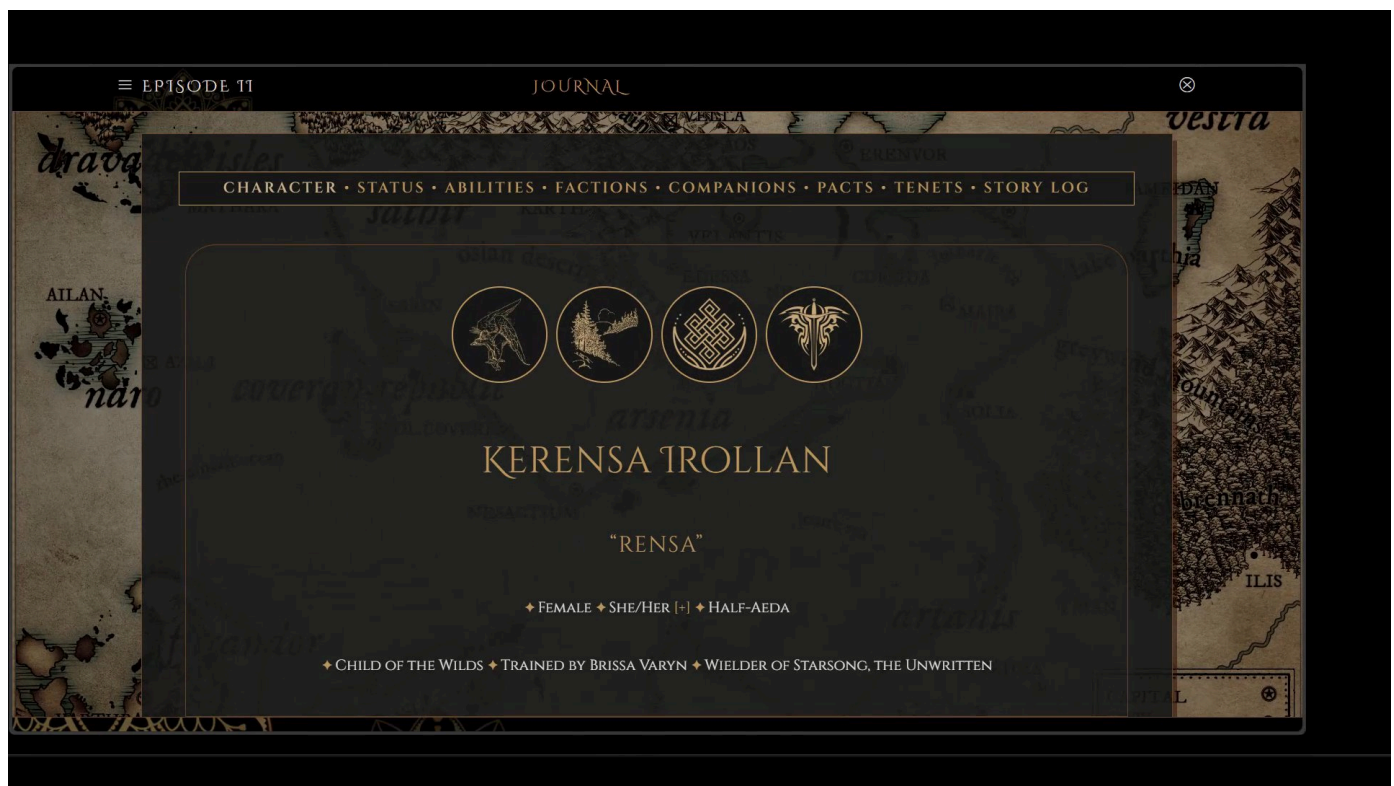
"And if it did?"



[December Roundtable](#)

[Dec 16, 2024](#)

Put your thoughts in the comments or continue the discussion on the patron discord server!



[Coding: Adventures in Responsive HTML Game Design from a Non-Web Developer](#)

[Dec 18, 2024](#)

So, a question I get a lot is “why isn’t your game on the app store?”

This is a very fair question. ChoiceScript games are easily accessible through the app store if they are published with Choice of Games or Hosted Games; many VNs have an app version or were designed specifically to be played on mobile. Outside of that, a lot of people read on their phones, whether it’s the news or eBooks or fanfic, or any number of other things. It might seem a little odd from the outside to make such a text-heavy game and not make it available as an app.

When I was starting out, I don’t think this even occurred to me. I personally don’t use my phone for much (the dry eye is real), so thinking in terms of mobile development just wasn’t in consideration. When I first started, any mobile compatibility happened because it was built into the base SugarCube template. This, of course, meant that as I added more and more stuff on top of it, the less mobile compatible it became. I remember there was a time when the game would only present itself in landscape mode, which made it pretty awkward for mobile players who preferred playing and reading in portrait mode. Eventually I hit a point where I needed to learn at least a little bit about responsive web design and try to make Wayfarer has compatible on both mobile and PC as possible.

This has been... a challenge. I am not a web developer and I don’t have a background in web development. I, quite literally, do not know what I am doing and I am making it up as I go along. :)

While I do rely a lot on the responsiveness that is in my UI template, but like with the default SugarCube UI, I have also had to adjust things as I added more features to this one. I really did not understand media queries or a number of other CSS things that would be obvious to a web developer—I was trial and erroring my way through making something that was (hopefully) readable regardless of the size of your viewport.

There are some consequences to this: the game definitely looks better on PC since it was designed for PC first and mobile second (which is kind of a no-no in web development, as I've come to understand—so much is mobile now, it's generally smoother to develop your design ideas for mobile first and then for desktop). While I think the base game looks pretty good, the Journal, Codex and other menus still need some work. There's sizing issues with icons, I'm not happy with the placement of some elements. And of course the menu selection on mobile is really, really small (I know! I know! It's a lot of stuff to squish into that box!)

It's not easy to take something that fills a full screen and squeeze it down into portrait mode and still have it relate all of the necessary information without losing out.

There's also some weird moments where on some small viewports the companion/faction cards are very small, and then you go a step smaller and boom, they're big again. I know why it is like that, but can I fix it? Um. Not right now.

(Related to this—there is an error in the stylesheet when it comes to the media queries for small viewports and “extra small” font is larger than “small” font. This is another case of I know why it is like this but I can't fix it easily without messing up something else or confusing myself.)

But to answer the question of “why isn't your game on the app store?” Wayfarer is a HTML game, and there's a lot of really good stuff that comes out of this—namely that is accessible across all kinds of devices. As long as you can run a browser, you can play the game. For now, I am happy with the system I have and playing the game through the browser. It would add too much to my workflow to package it as an app and get it on the app store while it is in development. Eventually, of course, I would like to make it available as an app and on Steam, but there is no point in pursuing that until it is finished.

[Progress Report 103: End of the Year](#)

[Dec 20, 2024](#)

Hi all,











Happy holidays!

The year is coming to a close and this will be my last progress report for 2024.

There have been the usual ups and downs; I am very pleased with my decision to release more Episode 3 content when I did this spring. After attempting to do more regular updates, I did hit a wall in July as I started writing a new section and ran out of things to update with. I think it was a reminder that though I would love to be able to update the alpha build more regularly, Wayfarer's scope doesn't really allow it without there being massive parts missing. This just isn't an update every month sort of game. However, I am really happy that I have reached the end of the episode, and while I did miss my mark of finishing both branches of the finale this month, I am content that I finally got here.

I am also very pleased with the revival of my social media accounts. Instagram has been going really well, and I'm having a lot more fun with it than I thought I would. Social media management is always daunting when you're a solo creator; it's a lot of work to manage (I don't think people necessarily understand how much it is from behind-the-scenes), but it is important work to keep things floating. There are a lot of aspects to indie development that go beyond just writing and coding and putting the game together, and I think I got into the habit of not really thinking of those aspects of work when they very much are.

I am also very happy with my new Patreon bonus content. It was stressful trying to find a balance between Patreon extras and developing the game, and I think I finally found something that doesn't feel like a pain or a chore to create every month. Here's a look at some of the upcoming bonus content for the Apprentice tier and up:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Character Scenario — Veyer x MC [Episode 2]	Mar 19, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 779 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Behind the Scenes: Episode 2 Cut Content – Melchior Romance Alt	Mar 12, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 780 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Character Scenario — Phaedra x MC [Episode 2]	Mar 5, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 767 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Character Scenario — Melchior x MC [Episode 2]	Feb 19, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 1,185 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Behind the Scenes: Episode 2 Cut Content – Captain Xanael	Feb 12, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 4,541 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Character Scenario — Aeran x MC [post-Episode 1]	Feb 5, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 894 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Character Scenario — Phaedra [pre-Episode 2]	Jan 22, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 1,191 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Behind the Scenes: An Outline Old as Time	Jan 15, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 930 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Character Scenario — Lilac Company [Episode 2]	Jan 8, 2025 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 1,111 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Character Scenario — Veyer [Episode 2]	Dec 25, 2024 Scheduled	Selected Tiers 4 tiers	 949 words

With that out of the way, this is where things are sitting from my to do list:

to do list

DECEMBER 2024

-
- ☐ Continue Section 2 Branch 1
 - ☒ Finish December Character Scenarios
 - ☒ Draft January-March Character Shorts
-

Patreon bonus content is drafted and scheduled up to the end of March. Section 2 is zooming along; I'm seeing a different side to the characters and their interactions on this branch which has made it a lot of fun.

Next year, I will be doing quarterly road maps. I have done year-long road maps twice in the past and fell flat on my ass with both of them, so I'm hoping by doing quarterly ones I can keep the goals more realistic. You can expect the first one on January 2. It will be posted publicly here on Patreon as well as on my socials.

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Dec 25, 2024](#)

Content Warning: *this story contains depictions of drug use & mature subject matter*

A curl of smoke rises through the hazy crimson light.

Veyer watches it float away through unfocused eyes. The reed dangles between their long fingers, held at arms length above their face. The lit end glows like a dying ember, a spark of orange pulsing within the charred black. Waiting. Waiting for them to make use of it. The compulsion simmers within them, whispers in the back of their mind that coax them to action. Take it. Inhale. Let their mind go blank, let all their fears and sins be washed away like debris carried out to sea.

Tempting. So very tempting.

Giving in now would defeat the point. It is enough to be left to stare longingly at it, daydreaming about the way the scent would burn their lungs and the haze would comfort their restless mind. The warm oblivion that cocoons them in a sense of pleasant nothingness, masking their perception of the world if only for a moment.

But pleasing is still a feeling—and today Veyer is not in search of feeling.

Today, they are in search of numb.

The door creaks open and shuts. “You’re back,” a familiar voice drawls.

Veyer sinks deeper into the plush pillows, a pleasant tingle prickling their skin. “How could I resist this establishment’s charms?” they say, staring at the curl of smoke as it fades from existence. “It is one of Velantis’ only two merits.”

A laugh. “Don’t say I’m the other one.”

“Such a thing would never cross my mind. The food is the other. Clearly.”

“Ah.” Bare feet tread across the floor, their passing muffled by thick rugs and cushions. The pop of a decanter uncorking and the trickle of liquid pouring into a glass rushes in their ears. “Certainly you will have much to savour tonight, what with the archon’s gala and all. She has every need to impress the Aosian delegation.”

“You know of it already? And here I thought it took an age for news from the upper districts to travel to the Undercity.”

"News travels only as fast as my clients. And you know how eager they are to make the journey, given you are one yourself." Liquid swishes in the glass. Lips smack with satisfaction. "Though I suspect you are not here to discuss politics."

I have not given a rat's ass about Imperial comings and goings in three decades, I am not about to start now. If Ariston wants a war, he will get one. "No. I am not."

"Then shall we begin?" Firm fingers brush their arm, following the vibrant patterns marked in their skin. Faran tattoos with an Arathian flair. A curiosity here in Velantis, especially this deep in the Undercity. Elsewhere in the Empire such a thing could get them killed even with the emperor's favour. It would be funny if someone tried. Hysterical, even. "Tell me what it is you seek."

At last, Veyer lowers the reed. They proffer it, smoking end and all, and watch as it is plucked from their fingers and snuffed out. Shadows fuzz in their peripheral visions, the enchantments pulling tight to mask their source. Many lightseekers of different varieties and talents are employed at this establishment, weaving illusions of all kinds to please and satisfy their guests.

But there is only one Sol.

A façade of a name as surely as their illusions are a façade of themself.

"I want..." The words sit heavily on Veyer's tongue. They inhale deeply, regretting the reed's disposal, and stare mindlessly at the ceiling. The bed creaks, the mattress sinking with Sol's weight. Warm hands brush their collarbone and down their chest, roaming with an alluring promise. A touch that traces over the steady beat of their heart and the tangled knot that holds it in a vice-like grip.

Sex is pleasant, but it is not why they employ their services.

"I want to feel nothing. I want to forget."

A pause. "You all do, Veyer. That's why you come to me."

Veyer nods, a sigh on their lips, and closes their eyes. The bed creaks again as Sol moves around them, re-arranging themself to a more comfortable position. All these years of seeking them out and Veyer still has no knowledge of what they look like. Even their voice changes from time to time. But their presence is immediately identifiable, like a scent that never quite washes out. That is how Veyer is certain that Sol is one person, not multiple individuals masquerading under the same title.

No one else feels more like Sol than Sol.

Though that could very well be their magic manipulating them. Perception is a tricky thing, especially in the hands of a master. Veyer never truly understood the dark side of their own sphere. Illusions make sense, manipulating what can and cannot be seen. But manipulating the inner mind? Pulling on emotion and sensation, encouraging some while suppressing others... There is a reason its use is highly

regulated by the Arathian Empire. And there is a reason its greatest practitioners are condemned to work in the underbelly of the city.

Long fingers run through their hair, brushing it back from their forehead. “Are you certain this is what you want?”

The knot around their heart tightens. “Yes.”

“Then let us begin.”

Veyer inhales, their bare skin tingling with a flush of heat and excitement. One moment the knot is there, its decades-old roots twisted and snarled where it presses against their heart. And the next—

Nothing. Blissful, empty nothing.

It will not last, but even an hour’s reprieve from the oath they swore is good enough.

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #8-5](#)

[Dec 27, 2024](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

The following dialogue occurs on a favourable Solarath path.

“I’m listening,” you say.

Aeran stirs beside you, jaw clenched, body tense, eyes trained on the ground. He looks as though he could snap the staff clean in half from the way he’s holding it.

“Your blundering here was too much for even the greatest illusionist to shield. Whoever Lethalis has employed to keep your activities contained has put forth a commendable effort, but it is all for naught with the city on high alert. All eyes are on Diradan. The Red Guard, the Arcanists’ Lodge, the Meissandium, anyone who has a stake in Velantis’ future are watching and will not be afraid to interfere.

And should events play out where you are forced to contend with them, you will find them hostile to negotiation. Some may even determine your actions here today treason of the highest order, even though you act on the behalf of an Arathian citizen. Your punishment would go far beyond an unpleasant stay in the Themistrya.”

Of course it would come to that. “Well, they’re not here now, are they?”

“Precisely.” He smiles. “Which is why it would benefit us both to reach a solution sooner rather than later. Time is slipping away and Nashira waits for no one. Consider your circumstances: you are a stranger to this city, ignorant of its inner workings. How many, do you think, would be willing to kill you just to be rid of you? A Wayfarer without their order is little more than a specialized mercenary, and mercenaries are a means to an end. Unimportant next to those whose fervent beliefs and even more fervent choices would shape the world. Were this a story recounted upon the stage, you would be little more than an unnamed character within the chorus, disposed of quickly and forgotten.”

A muscle twitches in your jaw. “Say what you want to, Quirinus.”

“I believe you are more than a means to an end. You are an open-minded individual—more open than most—and though we may be at odds now, it need not remain that way. These circumstances are why I must implore you to come to a peaceful solution. Let no blood be split between us, for if we make enemies of each other, neither of us will be better for it.”

january

— ON PATREON —

JAN 03		Progress Report 1	JAN 15		Behind the Scenes
JAN 08		Character Scenario 1	JAN 17		Progress Report 2
JAN 10		Ep 3 Finale Preview #9	JAN 22		Character Scenario 2
JAN 13		Roundtable Question	JAN 24		Ep 3 Finale Preview #10

[January 2025 on Patreon](#)

[January 1](#)

Tip Jar

- Progress Reports

Recruit

- Alpha Build access
- Progress Reports
- Episode 3 Finale Previews
- Roundtable Question

Apprentice & Up

- Alpha Build access
- Progress Reports
- Episode 3 Finale Previews
- Character Scenarios
 - Character Scenario 1: Lilac Players (the theatre company from episode 2)
 - Character Scenario 2: Phaedra Amestris
- Behind-the-Scenes



WAYFARER

2025 Q1 ROADMAP



JANUARY

- ◆ Complete **Episode 3 Finale Part 1 Version A**
- ◆ Draft & Complete **Episode 3 Finale Part 1 Version B (Branches 3 & 4)**

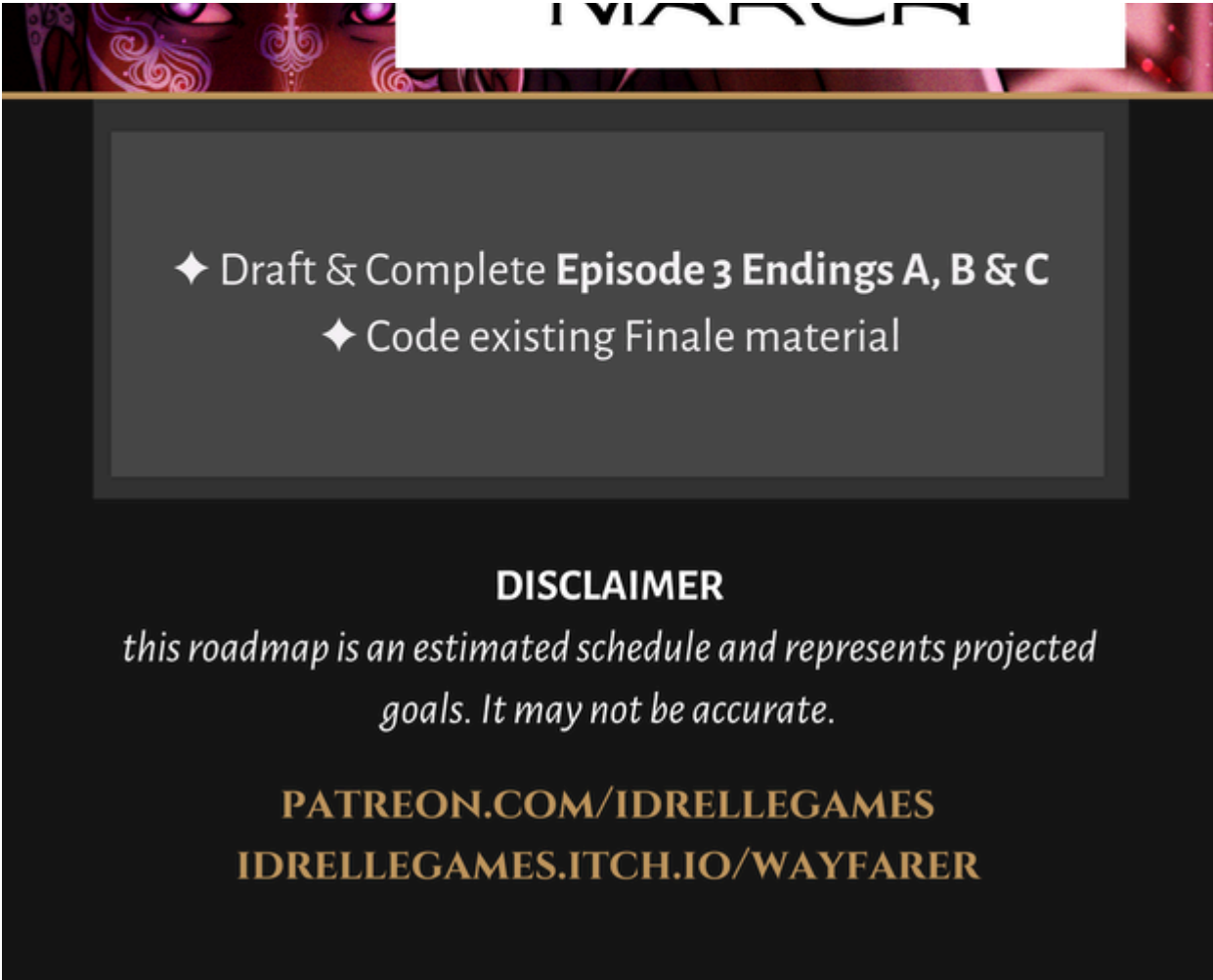


FEBRUARY

- ◆ Draft & Complete **Episode 3 Finale Part 2 Version A**
- ◆ Draft & Complete **Episode 3 Finale Part 2 Version B**



MARCH

- 
- The graphic features a dark background with a decorative header at the top showing stylized eyes and the word "WAYFARER". A central grey box contains two bullet points. Below this, the word "DISCLAIMER" is centered, followed by a italicized disclaimer sentence. At the bottom, two Patreon and Itch.io links are listed in gold text.
- ◆ Draft & Complete **Episode 3 Endings A, B & C**
 - ◆ Code existing Finale material

DISCLAIMER

this roadmap is an estimated schedule and represents projected goals. It may not be accurate.

PATREON.COM/IDRELLEGAMES
IDRELLEGAMES.ITCH.IO/WAYFARER

[Wayfarer 2025 Roadmap Q1](#)

[January 2](#)

Hello all!

It is the start of a new year and I'm excited to announce Wayfarer's new development plan. Unlike previous years, I will be doing quarterly roadmaps so I can be more transparent about how things are going and make adjustments should I fall behind.

The goal for Q1 (January to March) is to finish the Episode 3 finale. This finale is important—it is not just the end of an episode, but the end of Act 1 and represents a major story shift. Some things will come to a head, some things will be resolved, and you will be left with many, many more questions. The final includes two versions that are split between a story consequence from Episode 2—whether the Wayfarer remained hired by the Order of Lethalis or were fired from their mission. These two versions are then split in two branches, for a total of four branches that lead into 3 separate endings.

The Episode 3 finale has been in development since last summer, and I am hoping to pick up the pace with it and get it out of the drafting stage in the coming months. Should drafting go well, I will be able to code the new material starting in March. It is undecided as of now as to whether it will be added to the

alpha build immediately after coding or not. Right now I don't want to release the finale until everyone can play it regardless of their route (right now there are incomplete starting routes—if you are not on an Aeran or Veyer route, then you will not be able to play Episode 3), but this may change.

Wayfarer's roadmap is an estimated timeline and is subject to change.

The State of the Episode 3 Alpha

This is an overview of where the Episode 3 alpha is currently sitting. There is a lot of playable material with multiple intersecting sections dependent on previous choices, faction approval, and character approval.

As of January 2025, the Episode 3 alpha contains approximately 483,800 words of total playable content (the average play session is much shorter than that).

Other stats include (for Prologue to Episode 3):

- Average Word Count Per Playthrough: 193,900 words (approximate)
- Average Playtime: 11 hours
- Total Cumulative Word Count: 1,414,800 words (approximate)

The build was last updated in July 2024. It is playable on the Recruit tier and up.

FAQs

****When will Episode 3 be finished?**

****There is no release date! The goal is for this year.**

****When is the next public build update?**

****TBD.** Episode 3 will not be released publicly until the Episode 4 alpha is finished. As I am still working on Episode 3, it will be a long wait. I will be doing some maintenance patches on the public build this year, but they will not be content updates.

****It's been over 2 years since Episode 2, why is it taking so long?**

****I'm a solo developer, so when I get sick or need to take off due to personal reasons, that is development time lost. Unfortunately, 2023 and 2024 were both unexpectedly difficult years and despite my best attempts to stay on track, delays happened. Wayfarer's scope is very ambitious and I know this; I am making cuts where I can, but there is a balance between scaling down and losing the vision entirely. Wayfarer is built on the idea that your choices matter, and to make those choices meaningful and impactful takes time.**

****Is every episode going to take this long?**

****Nope!** Episode 3 is unique in how all its threads come together. I certainly do not intend to take this long with following episodes.

**When will we meet the other companions (the characters on the cover art)?

**Alexia, Ren, and Calla will be introduced in Episode 4 and 5. Nelani is introduced in Episode 6 and Felix in Episode 7, which marks the end of Game 1.

Thank you so much for your continued support! Let's get this done. ❤️

~ Anna

Idrelle Games

[Character Scenario — Lilac Company \[Episode 2\]](#)

[January 8](#)

Kit has seen many things in her life time, but even she has to admit this one is new.

Moments ago, she flew off the stage in a glorious exit that had her levitating above the company and disappearing into the heavens in a flash of smoke and light. Now she stands in the darkened wings with her hands on her hips, sweat clinging uncomfortably to the inside of her silks and brocades, her scalp aching from the headpiece pinned firmly to her curls, her skin raw and tingling beneath the layers of makeup. They have yet to reach act two and already a headache is pulsing in her temples, her left knee aches something fierce from a poorly performed lift, and her shoulders are protesting from the weight of her costume. Discomfort is a small sacrifice for the art—although she does not fail to note that the discomforts grow with every passing year.

Retirement would suit her. But she is not ready to give it up yet. For the art, for one. And incidents like this, for the other.

ONE FACE DECEIVES, ANOTHER PORTENDS
TWIN DUTIES FROM WHICH THERE IS NO END
TO YOU WHO WOULD BURY THE PAST AND LET FATE DESCEND
PRESS THE DAGGER TO YOUR THROAT, DEEPEN THE SCAR
FOR I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE

Kit makes a face. “Euch,” she mutters, careful to keep her voice low. Even staring down a threat written on the wall in dripping red letters doing their best impression of splattered blood, she is not about to break an actor’s protocol. Especially not here, not in this lyraeum. Performances at Mahanin Palace are far high stakes than their customary venue in Ithyria, and Sandro Anaxas is in the audience tonight. Nothing can spoil it for their patron.

Or any other nobles who they may need to charm. For all they know, this performance may very well dictate the company's future. They will be in the market for a new patron if the rumours about Lord Anaxas are true.

Music thrums in her ears, a chorus of voices swelling in a grand crescendo, and her heat thuds in her chest, keeping time, counting the bars. Six minutes. She has six minutes from the moment she exits stage left to the time she re-enters stage right. There's a costume change to be done, props to gather. The sword is important. Though she supposes if worst comes to worst, she can conjure illusions of such things.

Her eyes dart up and down the darkened corridor. No stage hands about... They'll be on the other side, preparing Demetrius for his entrance. A blessing, perhaps, that she insisted she could do the transition on her own. This... *graffiti*, for lack of a better word, was not here when the show started. Chances are it hasn't been noticed. Even if a stage hand passed by, only elven members are likely to detect it in the dim light.

*Press the dagger to your throat, deepen the scar
For I know what you are*

"Fucking hells." She sucks in a breath, one finger resting against her lip. Of all the times for another one of these damned things to show up... "So much effort for something that doesn't even sound half decent, the little pricks..."

"Kit? What are you doing back here?"

Long-forgotten panic rises like bile in her throat. The panic of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, of lines forgotten and choreography spoiled. The sting of humiliation that comes with being the one person out of place. "I know where I'm supposed to be, don't tell Vesepia," she hisses, stepping in front of the graffiti. "Shouldn't I ask the same of you, Sab? What are *you* doing wandering backstage?"

Sabriel's brows draw together in confusion. "I'm not performing this show, you know that. Hand's still healing. Do you need help?"

"Do you have a cloth?"

"...excuse me?"

"A cloth, Sabriel! Some strip of fabric! I don't care if you don't, rip it off your serithan if you must, I need one *now*."

He blinks. True to form, he pulls his sash free and hands it to her, no questions asked. *Tsking* under her breath, Kit wheels around, balls it up and begins furiously scrubbing the wall. The paint bleeds across her hands, but she pays it no heed as Demetrius' high notes pierce the air, ringing out clear and bright.

She is down to four minutes. How many bars is that?

"Oh." Sabriel sucks in a breath. "Did... did you write this?"

"You think I have time to paint threatening poetry on the wall between scenes?" Kit pants, sweat shining on her brow from the exertion. She may not be able to get it clean, but she will certainly be able to smudge it to within an inch of its life. As long as it is unreadable, she is satisfied. The audience may have questions about why their leading lady's hands are stained red, it's an Arathian classic. There's enough violence to justify it. If anyone is looking too closely, they can wave it away as an artistic choice. "I'm talented, but not that talented."

"Who was this for? You?"

"No, it's for Melchior." Who else could it be for? "Don't you dare tell a soul about this. If the company knows, then he knows—and trust me when I say he doesn't need to know."

"Kit..." A pause. He has questions, no doubt. She can all but hear him thinking. "If this... whatever this is... is for Mel, I'm sure he can manage it. Why do this?"

"Because someone has to manage our manager. Now that Lyrian is gone, that task has fallen to me."

The music swells. Three minutes. Shit. She needs to go.

Sabriel lays a hand on her shoulder and gently pries her away from the wall. "If you're managing our manager, then perhaps someone needs to manage you," he says, tugging the sash from her hands. "That's what a company does when it comes down to it, no? Help each other. So, run. Get back out there, Tamara and Vestillion. I'll take care of the rest."

Kit smiles faintly. Leaning in, she kisses him gratefully on the cheek, holding it for a breath. A moment. The space of a bar, seconds slipping away as easily as the passing notes. Then she kicks off her slippers and takes off at a sprint, bare feet pounding against stone as she darts down the corridor and out of sight.

Kythera Solaria, leading lady of the Lilac Company, has not missed an entrance in forty years.

She is not about to start now.

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #9](#)

[January 10](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

The following dialogue occurs on a favourable Solarath path with low Lethalis approval and high Aeran approval.

This sneak peek is also very short due to how twisty the branches are in this particular version of the scene. Also, the finale has officially passed the 60,000 word mark which is an awful lot of time spent talking to one character in all these different possibilities.



“That’s fascinating and all,” you say, “but even with that all said you still have one small problem: I am not going to hand you the Astrial.”

“And what would it take to convince you?”

“You want to bargain?”

He spreads his hands. “By all means.”

You cast a sideways glance at Aeran, hoping for guidance or reassurance or anything to back up your decision—but you find him deathly still, gaze absent, face pale and stiff. Something is wrong—horribly, terribly wrong, but there is no way for you to pull him aside and ask in private.

You are on your own.

[CHOICE] 1. Bargain.

2. Do not bargain.

“Then I’m willing to talk,” you say.

Quirinus smiles. “Splendid. I knew you would see reason.”

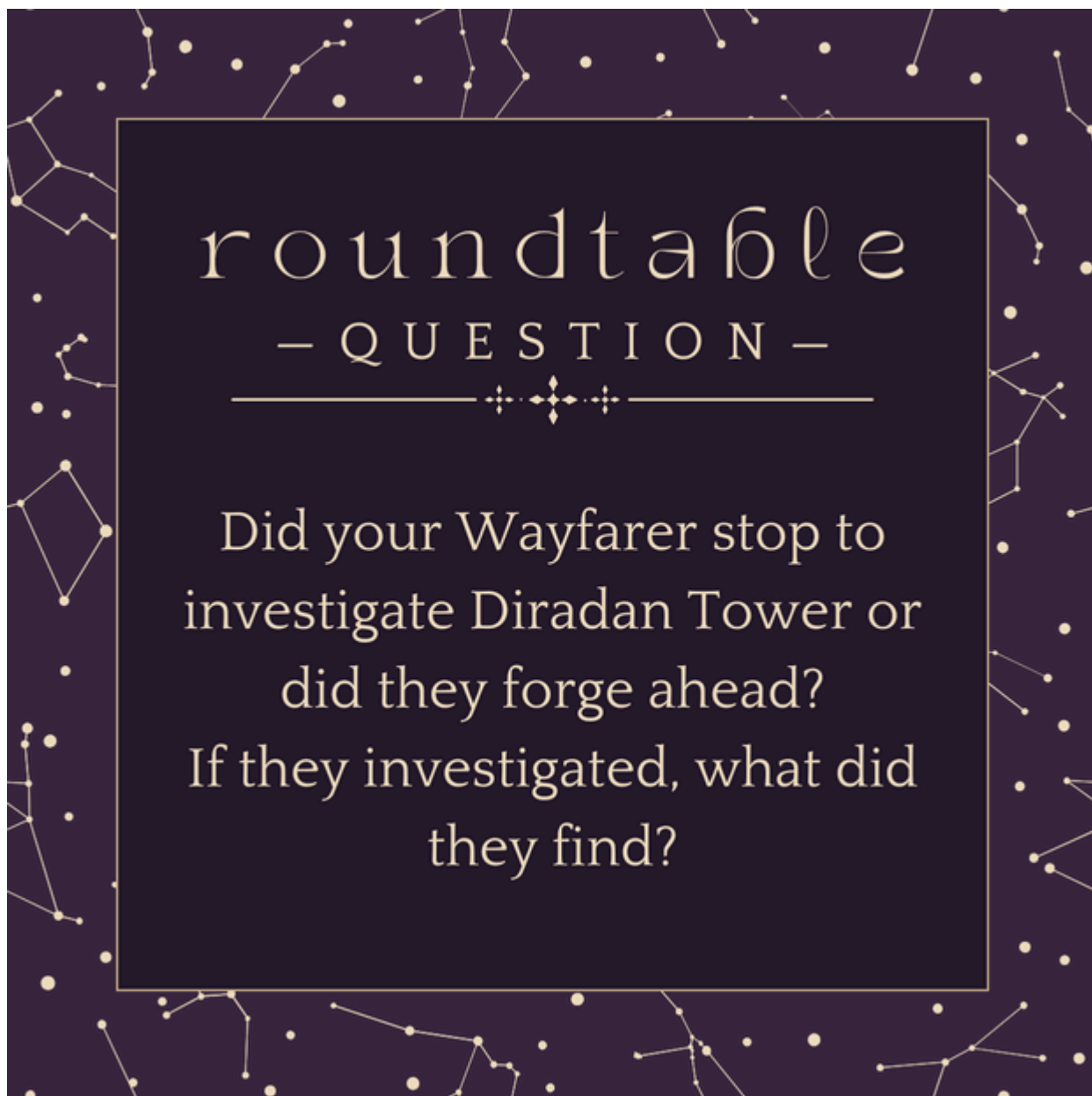
“Then I hope I can say the same for you. Breaking a contract is no mean feat and I do not enjoy going back on my word. I don’t care what happens to the Astrial; whose hands it falls into—be it yours or Umbria’s or someone else’s—and what happens to it afterwards is none of my business. But Lethalis will want my head on a pike for turning my back on them, and I would rather fight for my life now than spend the rest of it on the run. I need assurances.”

“Very well. What kind? Name your price.”

You pause. He’s being a little too reasonable, isn’t he?

How much can you get away with? There are things you should ask for, but you could use this as an opportunity to gather more information. The Grand Archsage certainly knows things you don't—if you care about that. Then again, he wants the Astrial no matter the cost. He may say that he does not wish to see the death of more Wayfarers, but you doubt that will hold him back from attacking you should this go sour.

- 1. Secure protection from Lethalis should they come after you.**
- 2. Demand the crowns you were promised. If Lethalis is not going to pay you in full, someone else should.**
- 3. Request a ship out of the city.**
- 4. Ask him about the phenomena you witnessed inside the tower. The ghosts, the imprints... the nature of it perplexes you. Perhaps he can tell you more.**
- 5. Ask him what he knows of Varyn. He's Arathian—perhaps he knows what happened to her.**
- 6. Ask him what he intends to do with the Astrial.**
- 7. You've asked for enough. Do not ask for more. [option only appears once one question as been asked.]**



[January Roundtable](#)

[January 13](#)

Put your thoughts in the comments or continue the discussion on the patron discord server!

[Process: An Outline Old as Time](#)

[January 15](#)

I was digging around in some of my old Wayfarer folders and came across one from June 2020 (almost 5 years ago now wow). I can tell how old it is without looking at the date because of the font I was using and also that I hadn't switched to working in dark mode yet. What I was trying to put together at the time was a list of different elements I wanted in the character creator, and there are some surprising similarities and differences between what I was thinking of then and what I have now.

CC's are weird, especially in interactive fiction where there is no visual component. Appearance is still important though, and you almost have to be more specific about it because if it's going to play a role at all and not be something that the player selects and then forgets about, you have to decide how those elements are going to be referenced in the text and what they add to it. Outside of appearance, CC's are also weird because you need to decide what is and is not important. You can get infinitely more and more specific, but more specificity does not necessarily make a good CC unless it has some kind of *use*.

My original notes—called “act 1 outline” and yet failed to go over more than basic CC ideas—are a bit funny because they're both specific and not.

Elements that the player can adjust:

- name (different default name suggestions depending on race and gender, last name will depend on who their mentor at the Spire was)
- race (human, elf, dwarf)
- gender
- pronouns
- age (different ranges depending on race selected – will give different perks depending on experience level)
 - 20s-30s
 - 30s-40s
 - 40s-50s
 - 50s-60s
- height (short, average, tall)
- hair colour (dependent on what race is selected)

Two things jump out to me here.

At one point, I seem to have been playing with how to name the MC. I think it's interesting that I seemed to want to make the MC's surname static, something that the player could not adjust, and their surname would depend on who their mentor was. I got rid of this idea early on (I don't even remember this note) since IF is the one place where player inputted names can really shine because everything is text.

There is no reason not to let the player name their character in a game like this. But what I do remember is the moment when I added in the option for the MC to take their mentor's surname. This wasn't in the first demo (prologue + a portion of episode 1), but I remember the fan discussion in the Discord server surrounding it and there was enough instances of people either wishing their MC could have the same surname as their mentor, or specifically inputting it so they could roleplay like they did. I decided to add it as a CC feature that has gameplay consequences since it was such a popular idea.

This is extra funny to me because before I ever gave the Wayfarer Grandmaster a name, Amali Sero was on a list of default human names. Brissa Varyn's surname was also once Aderyn, which I think is still an optional default surname in the existing game.

The second thing that jumps out to me is this idea of choosing the MC's age, with different perks depending on "experience level" (I guess my justification would be the older the MC is, the more experience they have, therefore the better Wayfarer they are... or something like that?). I remember considering this as a way to confront the age differences between different ancestries in the game—elves and dwarves live longer than humans (melusine and aeda heritage were not an option for the player character at this time). But I remember this getting a little finnick to deal with especially as Aeran's role grew and it became very important that he and the MC were around the same age. If the player can choose the MC's age and Aeran needs to be the same age as the MC so they can train together, then Aeran's timeline suddenly can get shifted around by player choice which plays hell with the overall timeline.

I like the concept, but I'm glad I got rid of the idea.

The next note that I find interesting (after a lot of scrambling around with ideas about what elves look like that eventually got scrapped, although I think some of the small details—like having two-toned hair—made their way into the codex and then I got rid of it, so if there is ever confusion about elven hair colour from a lore point this is the likely culprit) is that the player could choose from three backstories: Renegade, Survivor and Hero.

Oh no.

(This sounds pretty Mass Effect for someone who has not actually ever played Mass Effect. 😂)

Choose from three backstories

RENEGADE (broke from the Wayfarer Order and is working completely on their own)

SURVIVOR (tragic backstory that has taken them away from the order)

HERO (work tirelessly for the benefit of others, made a name for yourself by coming in and fixing problems)

So, the Renegade was supposed to have broken away from the Wayfarer Order and is working completely on their own. The Survivor has a tragic backstory that has taken them away from the Wayfarer Order. And the Hero works tirelessly for the benefit of others and the player character made name for themselves by coming in and fixing problems.

This idea lived and died in the outline, I never tried to implement it. I think with the scope of the game (and also how the Wayfarer Order's history changed) it would have been a lot to manage three very different starting points for the player character. Regardless of how your MC behaves or what relationships they make, all of them start in the same place: down on their luck in Rona, having a very bad day that only continues to get worse.

I do think it's interesting that this background choice determined the moniker that the MC goes by. There may be something similar to this in the future, but for now, we leave it there.

[Progress Report 104: The Way I Forgot...](#)

[January 17](#)

Hello all,

So, I am only realizing now that I forgot to do a progress report on January 3rd, so it has been a while! 😊 I think between getting Wayfarer's Q1 out and announced, and getting ahead on my social media for the next three months it just somehow completely slipped my mind. However, I didn't really have much to say on Jan 3 anyway other than the plan for the first half of the month, which is now over.

Things I Did:

- Social media and Patreon posts (minus progress reports since I write those the day of) are drafted and queued up until the first week of April, which means I only have to focus on writing and game development. Yay!
- For the first time in a long time, Episode 3 is actually on track with what I have planned! Yay! The main structure of **Finale Part 1 Version A – Branch 1** ([see the Q1 roadmap for what I mean](#)) is finished, which means I just have to fill in the gaps from dialogue choices and write some alt dialogue.

This is going to take a little bit, but it is in very good shape and I am aiming to have it finished by Jan 24. Though **Finale Part 1 Version B** looks like it's massive, a lot of the gameplay is going to be the same text as Version A. Once Version A is done, all that is left is to go through the whole document and add in flavour text / change references as needed to reflect the correct continuity.

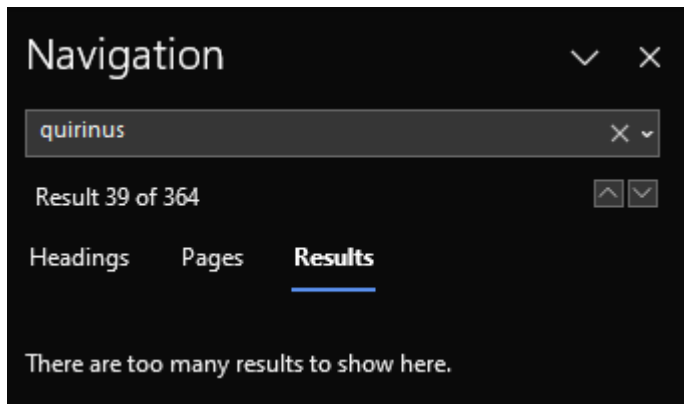
I am hoping to finish these branches at around the 100,000 word mark (the document is currently 72,000), but we'll see what happens. Certain characters like to talk, and can talk a *lot*. I don't have a good sense of how this is going to play yet—this is the most complicated dialogue sequence to date, so even though this word count is very high due to variations (saying different things, going down different paths, successes/fails) what you actually play in one playthrough is going to be much smaller. Checking how it flows together will be something for the playtesting team once the finale is finished.

I am a little too sleepy today to make a to do list graphic (I cut caffeine out recently which has been excellent for my overall health but if I don't get enough sleep I sure feel it the next day 🤪), but this is what is on the agenda:

Things I Am Going to Do:

- **Jan 20-Jan 24:** finish all variations within Finale Part 1 Version A Branch 1
- **Jan 27-Jan 29:** Add in Version B Flavour text
- **Jan 30-31:** Another pass through to make sure everything connects

For the first time in a long time I am actually satisfied with my progress and I am excited to be flying through this. A fun fact, Quirinus' name is written 364 times in this document and I'm sure there are going to be more. Maybe it will end up being a full 400.



Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Character Scenario — Phaedra \[pre-Episode 2\]](#)

[January 22](#)

There are many things to enjoy about her life in Ithyria, and yet Phaedra Amestris cannot quite shake the feeling of dissatisfaction.

It starts slow, lingering in the pit of her stomach—a small negligible ache that never interferes but also never goes away. A hollow feeling that has been with her for years, as familiar as her reflection in the mirror. She should be proud of the things she has accomplished, of the life she has cemented for herself and her family. Not many of the old Velantian houses can say the same; even fewer for those of Nemain. Arathia has seen them all displaced or obsolete. House Amestris is the exception to the rule, not the standard.

They alone have adapted for a new era, leaving allies and rivals alike in the dust.

“...so, naturally, Helenus went beet red in the face and cried and screamed and stamped his feet like a toddler bereft of their favourite toy. Knowing the man’s propensities, he may as well be.”

Phaedra blinks. “He may as well be what, dear?”

Her guest sighs and flops sideways in his chair, wine glass balanced sloppily in one hand, his robes billowing about him with little dignity. He dangles his legs over the arm rest and stretches out, staring blankly at the ceiling. It is as much art as the sculptures about the room, painted in a daring new style to rival the mosaics preferred by the Arathians. Meissandic imagery, of course. House Anaxas is nothing if not devout.

“You know, auntie, these scheduled respites are the highlight of my month, but more and more I feel as though I come here to be plied with wine and air my woes to the ceiling. And as pretty as she is, she has nothing to say.”

“By all means, Evander, tell me of Oriath’s meissant and his beet red face. I’m sure it’s the most important event to occur Eidranian City this year.”

“It will be if he drops dead in a month or two—a very real concern with his health the way it is. The man could very well outrage himself to dead, and then there will be another vacancy in the ranks.”

Phaedra pauses, pursing her lips. Evander can be difficult, but if his surliness is the price she must pay to have reliable eyes and ears in Eidrania, then she will gladly pay it. She needs someone unimportant with unquestionable loyalty to the house. And Evander—a cousin so distant he doesn’t even bear the name Amestris—is exactly that person. Annoying, irritable, too old to behave the way he does, and yet his mind is as sharp as a dagger. He seems to have made it a point to live his life being underestimated.

“Demophen’s seat is not vacant, merely paused,” she says finally.

Evander makes a face. “The man was almost assassinated.”

“Almost, yes.” Terror lingers on the edges of her mind, a ghost of the moment when the news broke. Her dearest nephew, the recently elected meissant of Ithyria, attacked by League agents in a coordinated assassination attempt in the one place he should have been safe. He survived, but his spouse did not. Demophen is the best of their house’s scions—the kindest, the wisest, a paragon of chivalry. If she has one regret, it is placing him in a position where his death would benefit others. “But if Helenus falls, then it is all but confirmation that Demophen was not an attack on House Anaxas, but the Meissandium itself. Someone in this city takes issue with the Velantian meissants.”

“Someone, indeed. I wonder who that someone could be.” He rolls his eyes and sinks deeper into his chair, crushing his salt and pepper curls against the arm rest. “As if the Grand Archsage isn’t spouting heretical nonsense from the top of Diradan Tower every other week.”

She sighs, pushing her long braided plait over her shoulder, and casts a quick glance out the window. The mid-afternoon sun shines bright over Ithyria, glimmering against the golden rooftops and white

walls of the district's manors and villas. In the distance, the walls of Oriath District rise up to tower above the rest of the city, just as the strange spires of Diradan Tower rise beyond them, and the snow-capped mountains beyond it.

This is the shape of Velantis: no matter how far you climb, there is always another standing over you, casting a long shadow.

"Sabien Quirinus may be a thorn in our sides, but even he would not be such a fool to call for the assassination of meissants," Phaedra says after a moment.

Evander raises an eyebrow. "Oh? My impression of the Grand Archsage—from hearsay that is, let's be honest I've never crossed paths with him personally nor do I want to—is that he is a blight upon the Guild of Mages and the organization has fallen far since electing him as their leader. And yet the Great Houses are happy to entertain him."

"Emperor Ariston is happy to entertain him, and so the Great Houses follow suit."

"Does that include us?"

She meets his eyes. "I believe Lord Quirinus is much like our house, for a matter of fact. Not the standard, but an exception to the rule."

He whistles. "And here I thought I would never see the day where you defend the bastard."

"Mind your tongue, Evander."

"I'm too old for that. That's the beauty of aging, auntie. People demand you have manners during the second act of your life, but act one and act three? No one gives a fuck."

"Must you do that?"

"What? Say fuck?"

"Call me auntie." Her eyes narrow. "I am younger than you."

"By a hair." He smirks. "And that, *auntie*, is the beauty of being the unattached head of house. You're everyone's aunt. Mine, your sister's, your cousin's, your cousin's cousin's... and perhaps even your mother's."

She rises to her feet and turns her back on him.

"What? What did I say this time?"

"By all means, keep talking until you come to your senses, Evander. I'm sure the ceiling will listen—"

A crack reverberates through the air and, for a brief moment, Phaedra thinks she is dead.

The sound is engulfing, overwhelming, like a tidal wave crashing against the sand. She floats in the wave, dragged here and there in the rush, the sound pressing against her ears with such force she cannot think. The floor shakes, the house quakes, and she is sure the earth itself is surging beneath them all.

She cannot move. She wants to scream, but all she can do is choke.

With her hands slammed against her ears and tears streaming from her eyes, Phaedra drags herself to the window and slams her hands on the sill, gripping it with all her strength. When she looks out, she witnesses a world split in twain, half-obscured in oblivion. On one side, Velantis remains the bright and shining city, glowing in the sunlight. On the other, the heavens bleed red, lightning crackling through clouds of ash as they unfurl across the skyline.

In the distance, Diradan Tower burns.

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #10](#)

[January 24](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

The following dialogue occurs on a favourable Solarath path with an MC trained by Cenric, if the MC answered certain questions about magic in a positive way during the ferry ride in Episode 2.

“A mere observation, I assure you,” he replies. “One I would make regardless of my rank. In my experience, most Wayfarers were taught an instinctive distrust of the Guild on the assumption that our natures are in opposition to one another. It takes an open mind to look past that. Rindan Cenric was ever the traditionalist. To his eye, magiani and Wayfarers both fulfilled a specific role regardless of whether the world accepted it or not. Saviour or outcast, they would continue to fulfill it the way they always had until they were no more. Now, tell me—do you agree with that assessment?”

[CHOICE] 1. You do. Cenric was as traditional as they came; throughout your time at the Spire many of his decisions were grounded in what his master had taught him, and what his master taught him—back and back and back for generations.

2. You don't. Cenric gave the appearance of being gruff and tetchy and wanting to abide by the rules, but at his core he was far more flexible than that. He respected tradition; he didn't let it rule him.

3. You don't know. Cenric did as he did because he was Cenric. It's no more complicated than that.

"Yes, I would." You pause. "Traditions are there for a reason, Quirinus, and I think they made Cenric who he was. He was among the most sympathetic and kind-hearted people I've ever known."

"But not curious."

You frown. "Why does it matter?"

"Because, \$lastname, curiosity is the centre of *everything*."

He smiles, an avid gleam in his eye, and takes a step forward.

Beside you, Aeran stirs restlessly, curling his fingers into a fist. He is strung tight as a bowstring, and yet keeps his mouth clamped shut. You can't imagine he is happy with you liaising with Quirinus of all people, but he seems to have given up on stopping you.

"Have you never wondered about the stars in the sky, the mysteries of the sea, the wonders of this world both broad and deep?" he asks. "There are secrets that escape even the most knowledgeable of scholars. When we look to history, we see a planet scarred and a civilization crumbled, and yet the remains of Eleneid civilization remain. A fantasy made real. No matter what strides we have made, how far our progress has come—whether it is the inventions of the Arcanists' Lodge or the ingenuity of the Guild of Mages or even the technological innovation of Farandor—we cannot achieve the heights they once did."

His gaze trains on you, bright and fervent. You do not doubt he wholeheartedly believes what he is saying. "There are many questions we have yet to answer—not just in Rhesainia, but the world over—and there are more still left in the dark. For some, it is a simple matter of the question going overlooked or neglected. For others, it is a matter of barriers from those who fear that any potential answer is a threat. And for others more, it is a simple matter that we did not have the wits or the proof to grapple with such ideas before.

"I am a seeker of knowledge, \$lastname. My existence may be fleeting, but I intend to do what I must to unearth what I can, no matter the disruption it causes. It may be simpler to accept our lot in life for what it is, but I am not content with that. There is much I have learned. I aim to learn more."

Well, that certainly is enlightening. [if mc religious] You're not sure what to make of it other than you understand why he's been called fanatical. And he is a fanatic—the urgency and passion with which he

speaks can only point towards a fervent belief that what he is doing is right. No wonder Umbria called him a heretic. **[else – other options]** You're not sure what to make of it other than he is confirming why Umbria called him a heretic. Someone who speaks like this has no doubt come into conflict with the Meissandium.

"You are questioning," he says, his smile widening. "You are wondering. Good. I am no reader of minds—nor would I be successful if I tried against you, of course—but I may hazard as guess. You are curious as to how one becomes both a heretic and the Grand Archsage, no?"

[Character Scenario — Aeran x MC \[post-Episode 1\]](#)

[February 5](#)

high romance MC with he/him pronouns

For the first time in what may be years, Aeran Kellis is bored.

Perhaps that isn't quite true. There were many times in Rona where he was bored—dealing with petty landlords, bartering with petulant merchants, desperately searching for anyone who could stomach hiring a magianis mercenary, and generally navigating a landscape doing its best to choke him the same way the tangled rainforest chokes the coastline—but that was different. Failing in any of those capacities had dire consequences. The city itself was a threat, and while living there was unpleasant and exhausting, at least it kept his mind sharp. So, perhaps in that way, life in Rona could never truly be boring. The risk was far too great.

But life on the *Dareia* is well and truly boring.

And he doesn't mind.

The ship goes up, the ship goes down. The sun beats down from a turquoise sky, the endless swath of colour broken by the occasional cloud or a flock of birds. Weaves crash against the ship to throw mist high in the air, and the sparkling ocean stretches to the empty horizon. The crew does what they do best, and the ship continues on towards its destination.

Out here, it is easy to forget about where the *Dareia* is taking them or where they left from. Out here, there is nothing but open sky and endless seas. Which, of course, means there is nothing to do but sit and wait and contemplate.

Admittedly, he has never been great at any of those.

“So, this is where you’ve been hiding.”

Aeran blinks, startled, and looks upwards. He is currently leaning against the wall of the master cabin, squeezed between the door and the steps that lead up to the poop deck. If Nova came out she would accuse him of lurking, but thankfully the pair of Lethalis mages and their sullen bodyguard have little desire to walk the deck. No one has taken note of him save for his fellow Wayfarer, who now crouches on the steps and peers through the balusters. He grins, eyes sparkling with mischief, playful and carefree. Whatever injuries he is still nursing from their last day in Rona—and the hell he went through there—are a distant thought. Aeran can’t remember the last time he saw him so lighthearted.

“It’s not so much hiding as it is staying out of the way,” Aeran replies, stretching his arms above his head. “One more day below decks and I was going to lose my mind.”

A smile tugs at the corners of his friend’s lips. With a *thump*, he sits down on the steps and stretches out his legs, then presses his face to the balusters. “Truly? And here I was under the impression you had already lost it.”

Aeran catches his eye, whatever retort he had dissolving into laughter.

Satisfied (this was probably his plan all along), his friend flashes him a grin and pulls himself closer, gripping the balusters tightly with both hands. “Captain Xanael said we aren’t to train on the deck,” he says after a moment. Strips of light and shadow ripple across him in a pattern. Dark, light, dark, light. “Did you know that?”

“I hadn’t thought to ask. Getting on the wrong side of a captain doesn’t usually end well in my experience.”

“You’ll have to tell me about that sometime.” He pauses, his fingers idly curling around the wood. “Looks like we won’t have much else to do except talk.”

A lump forms in his throat. Though Aeran is certain he doesn’t mean it, the comment feels pointed. They should talk. They should do nothing but talk. There is a lot they have to say to one another, whether they know it or not.

Regardless, this isn’t the time or place for that conversation. Not when Zenaida, Malsara or Nova could be within earshot. “I’m sure we’ll think of a way to keep ourselves occupied,” Aeran murmurs distractedly, glancing at the door. “It’s a long way to…”

Velantis. The name makes his stomach drop.

A gentle touch brushes his hand. “Aeran.”

He looks up and finds his friend reaching past the balusters, his hand pressed firmly around his. Warmth spreads in his chest and it is far too easy—dangerously easy—to imagine reaching up and kissing him through the gap. Gods, he is a fool, isn’t he? All this time on the road travelling together, and yet it took

the realization that he could lose him forever to knock some sense into him. Perhaps because of that Aeran is now trapped in this limbo, captivated by the thought of what could have been just as much as he is fearful of the thought of what could be.

Some days it is easier to pretend the thought never occurred to him.

"I'm all right," he says quietly.

His friend meets his eyes. "Are you sure?"

For a moment, all is quiet. Calm. Nothing but the slow, purposeful beat of the waves and the scent of the sea and the warmth of the ocean sun. Then Aeran smiles—a false smile this time, but if it gives his friend peace of mind, he will do it. "Why wouldn't I be? Rona's long gone. Couldn't be happier."

Another lie. Perhaps more to himself than to him.

It will have to do for now.

february

— ON PATREON —

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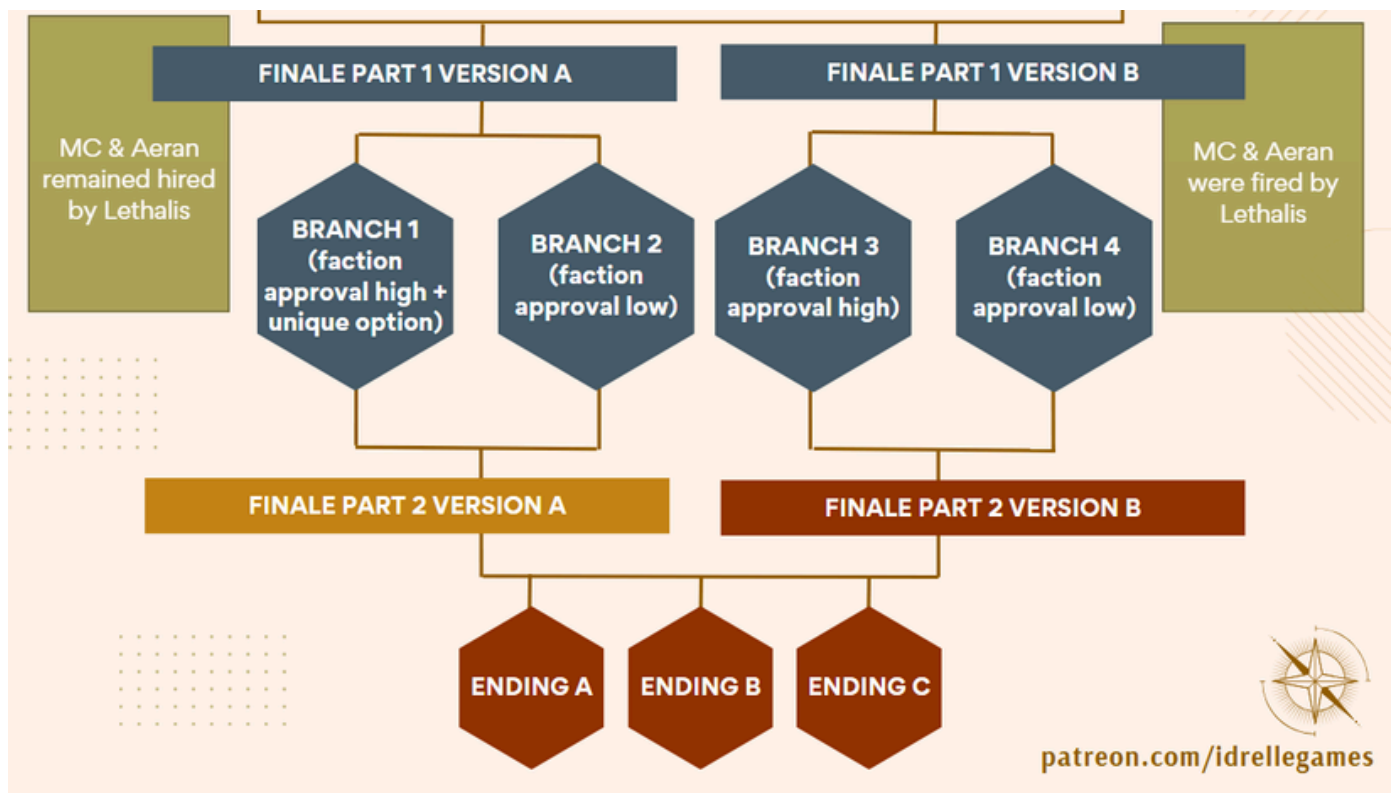
[Progress Report 105: February Developments](#)

[February 7](#)

Hello all,

Happy February! I hope everyone is having a good start to their month.

I have some very good news and that news is that Wayfarer's Q1 is **on track!** I finished the **Finale Part 1 Version A Branch 1**, as well as adding in the **Version B flavour text** to the document. I completed a couple of passes over it to make sure that everything works continuity wise and I have officially move onto the next section. Which means that the workflow diagram now looks like this:



The parts in blue are complete, orange is in progress, and red means I have not yet started

All of this turned out to be around 100,000 words. There are still more edits to be done, but this is probably the most complicated scene in the game to date (and will likely be a head-scratcher for those figuring out walkthroughs, I'm sorry 😊).

The outline for **Finale Part 2 Version A** is done and I am about 7,000 words into it. There is a lot packed into this final sequence before we reach the end; there are some scenes and exchanges that I am incredibly excited for and I think it is going to be a blast to play.

I haven't decided yet about how I am going to handle sneak peeks for February and March while I am working on the ending. I really do not want to spoil anything from the current section since it is the end of the end; I have a codex entry that can be unlocked in the new content scheduled for February 14, so I may use another codex entry for the sneak peek on Feb 28 and we'll go from there.

I am dealing with some health issues right now, but I don't think they are severe enough to impact my normal workflow for writing. The finale is set to come together pretty quickly now that the Big Scene is over with, so my goal is to finish **Finale Part 2 Version A** in the next couple of weeks, then take that text and transform it for **Finale Part 2 Version B**. (Unfortunately here while some actions may remain the same, it's not as easy as just adding in flavour text, these do have to be two completely separate branches for reasons).

Because the outline reshuffled things, Ending A, Ending B, and Ending C still exist but not strictly in the same form as before. They flow very quickly into the other text I am working on, so I may end up writing them while I write the other sections this month, which would actually put me ahead of schedule in March.

February Schedule:

- **February 10-14:** Draft the first half of **Finale Part 2 Version A**
- **February 17-21:** Draft the second half of **Finale Part 2 Version A**
- **February 24-28:** Draft **Finale Part 2 Version B**

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖



[February Roundable](#)

[February 10](#)

Put your thoughts in the comments or continue the discussion on the patron discord server!

[From the Vault: Episode 2 Cut Content – Captain Xanael](#)

[February 12](#)

When I was writing Episode 2, I remember struggling with the very start of the episode only to hit a wall and get very frustrated because I could not continue, but I didn't want to give up on all of the stuff I had written. The initial version of the scene had the MC talking to Captain Xanael (the captain of Zenaida's ship) rather than Malsara, and it was through them that they got all the juicy gossip about Zenaida and Nova, as well as Velantis itself.

Xanael was, quite pointedly, three exposition dumps in a metaphorical trenchcoat and a pirate hat.

I remember the point where I got stuck. Xanael could have easily given the MC the information both they and the player needed through a simple dialogue loop, where the player selects which order they want to ask questions and they move on from there. But for some reason, while I was writing, Xanael's personality emerged from the depth and I ended up on a split-track where I had a branch for if Xanael liked the MC and if they did not like the MC...

And it started to get worse from there.

In the end, it was easier to cut Xanael completely and rework the conversation so that the MC is speaking with Malsara instead of introducing a bit character who would not appear past this episode. I find that in the pursuit of writing natural dialogue, I often end up down branching paths that were not initially part of the plan because I am following ideas as they develop in the moment. In some cases, I need to cut the whole thing out in order to let go of them because my brain will only be happy with either fully committing to it or cutting it, nothing in-between.

Without further ado... here is the cut content (you may recognize some passages from the current game).

The ocean waves crash against the ship, thundering against its sides to a steady beat. Cool mist brushes against your skin, settling lightly on your face and arms. You lean against the railing and inhale a breath—the air is crisp and sharp today, a far cry from the heavy Ronan humidity you left behind six weeks ago.

Six weeks... Can't keep track of time...

You shake your head and exhale softly, linking your hands together as you lean out over the railing. The dark grey waters part smoothly before the prow, churning up rustling white caps as the ship glides

forward. Dense fog swirls around the ship, misting over the water and obscuring the view. It's a strange shift in weather. Aside from a few stormy days as you rounded the Arsenian coast and entered the Lotharic Sea, your journey has been filled with bright sun and turquoise waters. You're not sure what has caused this change, but your gut tells you it has something to do with Velantis.

You glance over your shoulder, your eyes sweeping the bustling deck. The prow has become your favourite spot over the course of your voyage—out of the crew's way, with as much distance as possible from Zenaida's cabin, where your intrepid employer and her retainers spend most of their time.

[if high approval] Though part of you half-expected Zenaida to take an interest in you—given that you work for her now—she has been noticeably withdrawn over the past month. She remains as enigmatic as she was the day you met her. **[if low approval]** Though part of you wondered whether Zenaida would take an interest in you—you work for her now, after all—she has remained withdrawn, barely speaking to you over the past month. **[/if]** Malsara and Nova, too, have kept their distance, though Nova has sought you out on more than one occasion to make a barbed comment. Her dislike for you and Aeran is palpable, though whether it stems more from a hatred of what you are or who you are is anyone's guess.

"Crown for your thoughts, Wayfarer?"

You glance over your shoulder. Captain Xanael stands a few feet behind you, hands shoved deep into the pockets of their canvas tunic. Their long, dark locs are pulled back and partially covered with a red scarf tied at the nape of their neck. A brown sash cuts diagonally across their body and loops over their shoulder. Their dark eyes shine bright with mirth, the corners etched with a multitude of smile lines.

1. You smile. "It'll cost you more than a crown."

2. You grimace. "Aren't you supposed to be running a ship?"

3. Turn back to the sea. They can stay if they want, but you're not going out of your way to be conversational.

1. "It'll cost you more than a crown."

Xanael chortles and flashes you a toothy grin. You catch a glimpse of gold shining within their smile. "I'd wager that," they say as they step up beside you. "You seem a scant perplexed. Moreso than usual."

You chuckle. "More than usual?" you reply, raising an eyebrow. "You're too kind, Xanael."

Xanael removes their hands from their pockets and stretches, unfurling like a cat. They fold their arms and lean casually against the rail with the natural grace of someone who has spent their whole life at sea, unbothered by the ship's uneven gait.

The captain has been a surprise.

[if child of the seas] Knowing how easily it is for you to destroy a ship's functionality, you were prepared for them to treat you with suspicion. When you sailed with your family's fleet, your parents had

you carefully watched, usually enlisting a cabin boy or two to tail you until you learned which areas you should never touch. You expected the same from Xanael—and they proved you wrong.

For reasons you still don't know, they've taken a shine to you. Though other members of their crew had misgivings, the captain insisted you and Aeran be allowed to go where you wish. When the boredom of the journey settled in, they assailed you at unexpected times to drag you all over the ship, excitedly inquiring about everything from whether you liked the colour of the sky to your opinion on different types of fish.

[elseif - not child of the seas] Based on your previous experiences, you expected them to treat you with suspicion and mistrust, enlisting some poor cabin boy to tail you all over the ship to make sure you didn't unbind any fundamental enchantments by accident. But instead, the captain has taken a shine to you. Though other members of their crew had misgivings, Xanael insisted you and Aeran be allowed to go where you wish. When the boredom of the journey settled in, they assailed you at unexpected times to drag you all over the ship, excitedly inquiring about everything from whether you liked the colour of the sky to your opinion on different types of fish. **[/if]**

Continue. [goto: CONTINUE ALL]

2. "Aren't you supposed to be running a ship?"

Xanael smirks. You catch a glimpse of gold shining within their mouth. "Aye," they say. "I am. That's what delegation is for."

You clench your jaw and resist the urge to roll your eyes as Xanael removes their hands from their pockets and stretches, unfurling like a cat. They fold their arms and lean casually against the rail with the natural grace of someone who has spent their whole life at sea.

Continue. [goto: CAPTAIN NEGATIVE+]

3. Turn back to the sea. They can stay if they want, but you're not going out of your way to be conversational.

You cast an eye out at sea. The fog swirls ahead, obscuring the view. **[if elven]** You have a vague sense that you must be passing by large rocks and islands, but even your keen eyesight can't penetrate haze this thick. **[elseif high perception]** You have a vague sense that you must be passing by large rocks and islands, but you can't tell for sure—there's no chance your eyesight can pierce haze this thick. **[else low perception]** You wonder what's out there, beyond the fog. Not that you'll never know—your eyesight can't pierce haze this thick. **[/if]**

"No?" Xanael presses. They remove their hands from their pockets and stretch, unfurling like a cat. "Nothing at all?"

You ignore them.

“Suit yourself, then,” they say. They lean casually against the rail with the natural grace of someone who has spent their whole life at sea. “I like silent types, myself. Good listeners.”

You shrug and resist the urge to roll your eyes.

The captain has been a thorn in your side.

Continue. [goto: CAPTAIN NEGATIVE]

CAPTAIN NEGATIVE

[Xanael has a negative opinion of the MC]

The captain has been a thorn in your side.

[if child of the seas] Knowing how easily it is for you to destroy a ship’s functionality, you were prepared for them to treat you with suspicion. When you sailed with your family’s fleet, your parents had you carefully watched, usually enlisting a cabin boy or two to tail you until you learned which areas you should never touch. You expected the same from Xanael—but then they proved you wrong.

For reasons you still don’t know, they’ve taken an annoyingly persistent shine to you. Though other members of their crew had misgivings, the captain insisted you and Aeran be allowed to go where you wish. While you appreciate the freedom to roam, what you don’t appreciate is Xanael’s tendency to assail you at unexpected times. They’ve dragged you all over the ship, doggedly inquiring about everything from whether you liked the colour of the sky to your opinion on different types of fish.

[elseif - not child of the seas] Based on your previous experiences, you expected them to treat you with suspicion and mistrust, enlisting some poor cabin boy to tail you all over the ship to make sure you didn’t unbind any fundamental enchantments by accident. But instead, Xanael proved you wrong. Though other members of their crew had misgivings, the captain took an annoying persistent shine to you and insisted that you and Aeran be allowed to go where you wish. While you appreciate the freedom to roam, what you don’t appreciate is Xanael’s tendency to assail you at unexpected times. They’ve dragged you all over the ship, doggedly inquiring about everything from whether you liked the colour of the sky to your opinion on different types of fish.

Continue.

[CONTINUE FOR ALL]

If Captain Positive, Xanael calls MC by \$lastname, if Captain Negative they call them by Wayfarer

The ship crests a wave and tilts forward. You feel the pull of gravity as the ship lurches downward; **[if high agility/merchant]** you stand firm, accustomed to swaying deck. **[else]** your hands grip the railing tight, steadying yourself on the swaying deck. A spray of water rushes up over the side, splattering the deck.

"Foul weather," Xanael says. "Not uncommon as you approach the city."

[if positive] "Interesting," you say, scrunching your face against the cool sea air. "How about a crown for your thoughts, Xanael? Seems like you want to say something."

[elseif negative] "Is there something you wanted?" you say shortly. **[/if]**

[IF MC IS MELUSINE]

Xanael shifts their weight, rolling their shoulders as they cross one leg in front of the other. "You were born to be at sea, Wayfarer / \$lastname," they say. "It's in your blood."

Your hand flexes, your fingers gripping the edge of the railing.

1. **"You could say that, Xanael. But I'm half-human, too. There's a part of me born to be on land."**
2. **"Yeah. I know. I'd like that."**
3. **Shrug and say nothing. How you feel about your Melusine heritage isn't really their business.**

1. **"You could say that, Xanael. But I'm half-human, too. There's a part of me born to be on land."**

They chuckle. "Maybe so," they say. "But any sailor with a decent pair of eyes can see you're adaptable. You'd do well here."

You glance at them. "You offering me a job, Xanael? Little devious to do that right under Zenaida's nose, don't you think?"

The captain throws back their head with a hearty laugh. "Oh no, I'm not that daring," they say, one hand stroking their bearded chin. "I've sailed for House Anaxas long enough to know better than that. But once your business in Velantis is concluded, perhaps you could consider the work of a privateer. With the right ship and the right crew, you could truly know no bounds."

You press your lips together and grunt noncommittally, unsure of how to answer them. A gull screams and you raise your head, eyes searching the sky. Through the thick, grey clouds, you spot the shadow of a bird's wingspan, soaring high above.

Continue.

2. **"Yeah. I know. I'd like that."**

They grin. "Consider it, then," they say. "Any sailor with a decent pair of eyes can see you're adaptable. You'd do well on a crew like mine."

You glance at them. "You offering me a job, Xanael? Little devious to do that right under Zenaida's nose, don't you think?"

The captain throws back their head with a hearty laugh. “Oh no, I’m not that daring,” they say, one hand stroking their bearded chin. “I’ve sailed for House Anaxas long enough to know better than that. But once your business in Velantis is concluded, perhaps you could consider the work of a privateer. With the right ship and the right crew, you could truly know no bounds.”

You press your lips together and grunt noncommittally, unsure of how to answer them. A gull screams and you raise your head, eyes searching the sky. Through the thick, grey clouds, you spot the shadow of a bird’s wingspan, soaring high above.

Continue.

3. Shrug and say nothing. How you feel about your Melusine heritage isn’t really their business.

Xanael’s dark eyes narrow slightly as they look you up and down. “You’d do well out here, on the seas,” they continue. Any sailor with a decent pair of eyes can see you’re adaptable—”

“I’m not interested in where this is going, Xanael,” you interrupt sharply. “Drop it.”

They fall silent and lean back against the rail, one hand stroking their bearded chin. In the silence, a gull screams overheard, its call echoing across the water. You raise your head, eyes searching the sky. Through the thick, grey clouds, you spot the shadow of a bird’s wingspan, soaring high above.

Continue.

[ELSEIF MC IS CHILD OF THE SEAS]

Xanael shifts their weight, rolling their shoulders as they cross one leg in front of the other. “You were born to be at sea, Wayfarer / \$lastname,” they say. “It’s in your blood. Any sailor with a decent pair of eyes can see that.”

Your hand flexes, your fingers gripping the edge of the railing. “Not any more,” you say. “I left that behind years ago.”

“You could return to it, if you wished.”

You glance at them. “You offering me a job, Xanael? Little devious to do that right under Zenaida’s nose, don’t you think?”

The captain throws back their head with a hearty laugh. “Oh no, I’m not that daring,” they say, one hand stroking their bearded chin. “I’ve sailed for House Anaxas long enough to know better than that. But once your business in Velantis is concluded, perhaps you could consider the work of a privateer. With the right ship and the right crew, you could truly know no bounds.”

You press your lips together and grunt noncommittally, unsure of how to answer them. A gull screams and you raise your head, eyes searching the sky. Through the thick, grey clouds, you spot the shadow

of a bird's wingspan, soaring high above.

Continue.

[ELSEIF MC HAS HIGH AGILITY - 8 AND OVER]

Xanael shifts their weight, rolling their shoulders as they cross one leg in front of the other. "I know you were not born to be at sea, Wayfarer / \$lastname," they say. "This is no slight against you; most folk are not. Though, in all fairness, six weeks is a good amount of time to test your sea legs. You could learn."

Your hand flexes, your fingers gripping the edge of the railing. "You offering me a job, Xanael? Little devious to do that right under Zenaida's nose, don't you think?"

The captain throws back their head with a hearty laugh. "Oh no, I'm not that daring," they say, one hand stroking their bearded chin. "I've sailed for House Anaxas long enough to know better than that. But once your business in Velantis is concluded, perhaps you could consider the work of a privateer. With the right ship and the right crew, you could truly know no bounds."

You press your lips together and grunt noncommittally, unsure of how to answer them. A gull screams and you raise your head, eyes searching the sky. Through the thick, grey clouds, you spot the shadow of a bird's wingspan, soaring high above.

Continue.

[ELSE – ALL OTHER OPTIONS]

Xanael shifts their weight, rolling their shoulders as they cross one leg in front of the other. "I know you were not born to be at sea, Wayfarer / \$lastname," they say. "This is no slight against you; most folk are not. Six weeks is more than enough time to test your sea legs, and you, I'm afraid, have none."

Your hand flexes, your fingers gripping the edge of the railing. "I try my best."

They chuckle and fall silent, one hand stroking their bearded chin.

A gull screams, its call echoing over the water, and you raise your head, your eyes searching the sky. Through the thick, grey clouds, you spot the shadow of a bird's wingspan, soaring high above.

Continue.

[CONTINUE FOR ALL]

"There's always foul weather when approaching the city from the west," Xanael continues after a moment. "Won't be long now. Once we clear the Themistrya, it'll be smooth sailing."

The unfamiliar name draws your attention. "Themistrya?"

A dark look crosses the captain's face and the mirth fades from their eyes. "The Velantian prison," they say. "Occupies an entire island off the peninsula's western coast. The security enchantments disrupt the peninsula's natural weather patterns—it's the cause of all this fog. Can make the route difficult your first few tries. Lucky for you, my crew is more than accustomed to coming this way. It's what Her Grace preferred."

Your skin prickles, though whether it's from the cold, ocean mist or Xanael's dark tone is anyone's guess. Your mind churns, as restless as the sea below.

Zenaida. It seems uncharacteristic of her to purposefully take the more dangerous route. What could be her reasoning? Despite the six weeks of travel, you barely know a thing about her.

- 1. Ask Xanael for more information. If they've sailed for House Anaxas for as long as they've implied, they must know something about Zenaida you'll never pry out of Malsara and Nova.**
- 2. Leave it be. No sense pitting Xanael and their livelihood against their long-time employer. Besides, you'll reach the city soon enough. Doesn't really matter how you get there.**

1. Ask Xanael for more information [...]

You scratch the back of your neck, trying to keep your movements casual as your fingers brush over your damp skin. Captain Xanael is loyal to Zenaida, there is no doubt about that. **[if captain positive]** No matter how much they like you, they may not appreciate you rooting around for information. **[elseif captain negative]** You've been surly towards them; they may not appreciate you rooting around for information. **[/if]** You should consider your questions carefully.

QUESTIONS CYCLE

Note: Asking about Zenaida or House Anaxas first nets failure, but ONLY if you have a negative relationship segment with Xanael

- 1. Ask Xanael why Zenaida wanted to take the more dangerous route.**
- 2. Ask Xanael about House Anaxas.**
- 3. Ask Xanael about Zenaida.**
- 4. Ask why Zenaida needs discretion. [unlocks after Question #1 is asked.]**
- 5. No sense on bothering Xanael any longer. You're done asking questions. [unlock after one question is asked.]**

- 1. Ask Xanael why Zenaida wanted to take the more dangerous route.**

[IF CHILD OF THE SEAS]

"What I don't understand, Xanael," you say, "is why Zenaida asked you to take this route? Velantis is a major port city; I highly doubt major merchant vessels would risk this fog every time they sailed into the harbour. There must be easier ways to reach the port."

Xanael chuckles. “Aye,” they say. “See? You have a mind for this.”

[if captain negative] “I’m not joining your crew, captain. Please just answer the question.” **[elseif captain positive]** You smile. “Don’t get distracted by the idea,” you say. “I never said I’d consider it.” **[/if]**

[ELSEIF NOT CHILD OF THE SEAS] “If sailing close to Themistrya is so dangerous, why did Zenaida ask you to?” you ask. “I’m not the one to tell you how to do your job, but seems to me there must be a better way of accessing the city.”

“I didn’t say dangerous, Wayfarer / \$lastname, I said ‘difficult,’” Xanael replies. “There’s a difference.”

[if captain negative] You exhale a sharp breath. “Just answer the question.” **[elseif captain positive]** You chuckle. “Fair enough,” you say. “But I’d appreciate an answer.”

[both continue here]

Xanael pauses and folds their arms leisurely. “The peninsula has many harbours,” they say. “Her Grace intends to dock at one that sees far less traffic. The *Dareia* is the flagship of House Anaxas. Arriving at any major port on the peninsula will draw more attention than Her Grace desires. She wishes to keep her return to the city—ah, shall we say—*discreet*.”

Your brows draw together as your lips turn downwards in a tight frown. While you’re not surprised Zenaida wants to avoid attention, there’s something about the way Xanael said it that leaves you with more questions than you had before.

Continue. [return to question selection]

2. Ask Xanael about House Anaxas. [Success Branch - need to ask Question #1 to get this]

[if child of the city] You pause, considering how best to ask your question. Though you are unfamiliar with House Anaxas, you were raised in the Vestran aristocracy. There are enough similarities between Arathian Empire and Vestra that you have a good idea of what to expect.

“You’ve sailed with House Anaxas for quite some time,” you say after a moment. “What are they like? Not that I expect to spend a lot of time with them—”

[elseif - not child of the city] “Say, Xanael,” you say after a moment. “You’ve sailed for House Anaxas for a long time. What are they like? Not that I expect to spend much time with them—” **[/if]**

The captain interrupts you with a burst of raw laughter. “Ah, onto the chin-wagging, are we?” they say. “Didn’t think you were the type. I’m sure either Lady Markal would be a better source of gossip. In fact, I’m sure Lady Nova would be delighted.”

“I was hoping for an unbiased opinion,” you reply. “Someone familiar with the House, but outside their inner circle.”

“And you think my opinion fits that description?”

“I think you’ve been around long enough to form one.”

Xanael chortles. “A fair point, Wayfarer / \$lastname,” they say. “And for that, I’ll indulge you.”

Continue. [+unlock house anaxas codex]

The fog swirls around the ship, parted by its prow. Xanael casts an eye above their head, as if searching for something just out of sight. “House Anaxas is a very old Arathian house,” they say. “One that has served the Empire in many capacities. Its ties to the Imperial family go back centuries—it is how they came to rule Velantis—though the current magistrate has no fondness for Emperor Ariston.”

Your ears perk up. **[if child of the city]** The politics between the Arathian aristocracy is notorious fraught, with many noble houses vying for the emperor’s good graces. To outwardly show dislike for the emperor is a bold stance—and likely a dangerous one. **[elseif not child of the city]** Though you have little understanding of Arathian politics, it seems to you that showing outward dislike for the emperor is a bold—and dangerous—stance. **[/if]**

“Sophia Anaxas is the current head of the house and the magistrate of Velantis,” Xanael continues.

“Zenaida’s mother?” you prompt.

“Aye,” they reply. “She is well-liked among the populace, though she has her fair share of detractors. Her rule has not been without controversy.”

“Such as?”

Xanael’s lips twitch. “Not my place to say,” they reply, shrugging. “House Anaxas has always been contentious. ‘Tis a story played out a thousand ways, in a thousand cities. Velantis has only known one governing family since it became part of the Empire. There are those who believe it is time for its governance to be handled by someone else. Someone more adept and less prone to... debacle.”

Interesting. **[if child of the city]** That Sophia Anaxas’ government is considered controversial comes as no surprise to you. You’ve seen such things before, played out among the Vestran senators in Vodenā—though you were far too young to understand what was happening at the time. **[elseif not child of the city]** You’re not here for Velantian politics, but if Zenaida’s mother is as controversial a figure as Xanael implies, it’s something to be aware of. **[/if]**

“You’ve said what the city thinks,” you say. “But what about you, Xanael? As someone who has been in their employ for—what was it?—a long time?”

The captain stretches their arms above their head. “House Anaxas is very much like the rest of the Arathian nobility,” they say. “They pay their tithes to the Meissandium, oversee their holdings, negotiate

favourable alliances between their house and others... The magistrate's consort is an avid supporter of the arts, funding lavish theatrical performances in the Lyranaeum."

They let their hands fall to their sides. "I am but a sailor, Wayfarer / \$lastname. I know naught of that."

Continue. [return to questions]

2. Ask Xanael about House Anaxas. [Fail Branch - did not ask Question #1 first]

[if child of the city] You pause, considering how best to ask your question. Though you are unfamiliar with House Anaxas, you were raised in the Vestran aristocracy. There are enough similarities between Arathian Empire and Vestra that you have a good idea of what to expect.

"You've sailed with House Anaxas for quite some time," you say after a moment. "What are they like? Not that I expect to spend a lot of time with them—"

[elseif not child of the city] "Say, Xanael," you say after a moment. "You've sailed for House Anaxas for a long time. What are they like? Not that I expect to spend much time with them—" **[/if]**

The captain bursts into raw laughter. "Ah, onto the chin-wagging, are we?" they say. Their dark eyes glint and their laughter dies. "Believe you me, I am not the person for that, Wayfarer / \$lastname."

"I was hoping for an unbiased opinion," you say flatly. "From someone familiar with the House, but outside their inner circle—"

"Then you will have to take such questions elsewhere," Xanael says firmly.

Continue. [goto: end xanael questions]

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #11](#)

[February 14](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

The following is a codex entry that can be unlocked on certain paths.

Animant Memoria

Excerpt from Conjunctions: Mapping Interactivity Between Spheres, The Journal of Advanced Arcanum (CCXXII.I) by Kyrre Galen

[...] while a rare event, dynamic interactions between spheres are known to occur even without the direction of multiple casters or multi-attuned individuals. Studies suggest when an augmented caster unleashes spellwork in an area with sufficient ambient magic, their sphere will impress upon that of the environment's. The intent and will of the caster play a significantly role—the greater the intent, the more likely an impression will be made.

This is the case of animant memoria, the term given to the interaction between Preservation and Dispersion. Here, strong wards preserve the actions of their targets in a moment of time, causing the resulting fragments to play those actions out like actors upon the stage forevermore. The duration of the moment captured will not exceed more than sixty-seven seconds. Clarity of the animants is random; in some cases, they may be clear duplicates of the original actors, in others faces and forms may be obscured.

In most instances, animants absorb the hue of the caster's magic.

[Character Scenario — Melchior x MC \[Episode 2\]](#)

[February 19](#)

Content Warning: *mature content & implied sex.*

The MC in this short uses they/them pronouns.

High above Mahanin Palace, the immovable star shines bright, a single bead of silver light pulsing within an endless sea of blue and black.

Melchior gazes upon it from the divan. He lies still, his long figure stretched out in the perfect image of blissful repose, taking care not to disturb the figure dozing in his arms. Their head rests on his bare chest, one arm thrown sloppily over him, the other resting against the pillow above his head, their legs tangled between his. Though goose flesh ripples over their bare skin, they seem unbothered by the sharp nip of the air. It is cool now in these ambiguous hours between midnight and dawn, and he has some regret in initiating this tryst in the courtyard. But warm, unoccupied rooms are difficult to come by

when you live with a grand company of players—out here in the dark of night, caught between brilliant starlight and the swell of water, nothing exists save that which you invite in.

For a person who has devoted themselves to such an unkind life, it's remarkable how all traces of the warrior within have faded tonight. He suspects it is rare for them to allow themselves much vulnerability; once given the chance, they seized it with astonishing eagerness. A part of his heart—the remaining sliver that does not belong to Lyrian—breaks for them. The life of a Wayfarer, in many ways, is one of isolation. The wandering lifestyle plays a role, the societal suspicion another, but even if both factors were disregarded, the harsh truth is that many are not keen to have their magic silenced by a lover.

There are, of course, exceptions.

“Are you awake?”

The murmur is so soft, so quiet, so lost in the afterglow's haze, he cannot hear it. He senses the words through rhythm and resonance, their chest—so alive and thrumming with the beat of their heart, the flood of breath in their lungs—vibrating against his hollow one. He pauses, his gaze still trained on the flickering star above. “My dear,” he says, his hands gently tracing the contours of their back, “I have not yet shut my eyes.”

They snort with laughter and roll over onto their side, curious eyes wandering over him. A gentle tug pulls at his hair as they thread their fingers through it. “Can't sleep? Or don't want to?”

“It evades me, one could say.”

The pressure lightens. Their fingers pause. “I can go if you want me to,” they say. “I'm the one trespassing here.”

“You are a guest.”

“I'm more than capable of overstaying my welcome.”

“Do you wish to leave?”

A pause. A rest in the measure of dialogue, a beat in the cadence of speech. And so it is his lover's silence that finally draws his attention away from the glistening night sky and the star that so often gives him much to think about. He pushes himself up on his elbows, yellow eyes seeking theirs, his gaze wandering across the planes of their face as he searches for the answer they cannot voice.

They do not wish to leave, that much is certain. Their presence here, beneath his roof and behind closed doors, is a much needed respite. To leave now would be to exit into whatever chaos waits for them. But perhaps they are searching for confirmation that they are still wanted. Still needed. Still desired. This night was spontaneous on both their parts, following the whims and fancies of longing and lust, and once the heat of sex fades, too often the rest goes with it.

Still, his lover does not speak. With a smile and a sigh, they press a hand to his cheek and their mouth to his. He groans against their lips, desire stirring within him once again as they shift above him, their tights tight against his own.

The kiss is an invitation to distraction, searching for more. A chuckle rumbles in his throat and he throws his head back, enjoying the thrill as they run kisses from jaw to ear, keen to discover the exquisite spots that leave him breathless. But two can play this game and it doesn't take much for him to grip them by the waist and flip them over, effortlessly trading their positions. He settles on top of them and they part their legs, pressing them firmly against his hips.

His lover's eyes glow with a rosy haze and they lift their chin. "What were you looking at?" they ask archly, eyes flicking upwards.

Melchior smiles, stroking a line across their jaw with the tip of his finger. "Give me an answer and I will tell you," he says. "Do you wish to leave or do you wish for more?"

A pause. "More." They meet his eyes. "I have no intention of leaving just yet."

His smile grows. "Good." He arches his neck, looking upward at the shining star even as his fingers trail down their neck and across their collarbone. Firm enough to be felt, but light enough to drive them wild. "You have travelled by sea, yes?"

They inhale sharply as he continues his slow, deliberate journey downwards. "Let's pretend for a moment I have not."

"Then are you familiar with the star above?"

"Which one?"

He runs a hand over their hip and along their thigh, and leans in close. "The brightest of them all," he murmurs huskily in their ear. "In Rhesainia it is called Phaesos. In Calantha, Avara. The Farans, practical as always, simply call it the ship star. No matter its name or its guise, it is the one constant in the night sky. The beacon by which you may find your way."

He does not say it all. There has ever been a connection between the heavens and the sea, but it is not what most realize. Phaesos is dead. It has been for years too numerous to count. The people of this world place their faith in this immovable star, and yet they are guided by a ghost.

Strange how these things come to pass.

He slips his hand between their legs.

A moan trembles on their lips. "Are you planning on journeying somewhere?" they ask, once again beautifully breathless beneath his touch.

“Velantis is my home, I have no intention of leaving it.” He kisses them, fleeting. Teasing. A promise of something else. They murmur a reply, the shape of their words lost against his lips. “One can admire a thing of beauty even as it is of no use to them.”

His lover nods, their eyes fluttering closed, eyelashes soft against the crest of their cheekbones. Their curiosity sated, he now loses them to desire and pleasure and the need he has coaxed from them with every caress. Words, no matter how gentle or enchanting, have no more use here.

So, he kisses them again, lulling them to gentle contentment the way the sea lulls one to sleep—making love once more beneath the guidance of a world lost to time.

[Progress Report 106: February Disruptions](#)

[February 21](#)

Hello all,

For the past two weeks I have been steadily working away at **Finale Part 2 Version A**. It is coming together, though it is proving to be challenging thanks to all of the cross-referencing I have to do. Despite getting ahead of schedule last month, I am now behind schedule due to some health related things (I've had to take several days off, including today, which means a bunch of writing days are getting missed).

But I do have a breakdown of how the current section is going. Whenever I do my initial outline, it can always be broken down into smaller and smaller pieces as I work through it—this helps me keep track of different continues and the paths through which choices get directed, even if when you take a step back it looks like it all arrives to the same place.

MC & Aeran remained hired by Lethalis

FINALE PART 1 VERSION A

BRANCH 1
(faction approval
high + unique
option)

BRANCH 2
(faction approval
low)

FINALE PART 2 VERSION A START

CATEGORY 1
(#1 - #6)

CATEGORY 2
(#7 - #17)

CATEGORY 3
(#18 - #24)

CATEGORY 4
(#25 - #29)

ZONE 1

PASS

FAIL

ENDING C

ZONE 2

PASS

FAIL

ZONE 3

PASS

FAIL

ENDING A

ENDING B



patreon.com/idrellegames

So, to describe a little bit about what is going on here:

Coming out of the big document I finished last month, there are **29 unique exits** leading into the bottleneck (technically there are 76 in total, but some of them have very similar text to others). I grouped all 29 exits into 4 categories based on what is happening. Each category has its own flavour text that relates to the events on the exits (when needed – this is not the case for all of them), but they are roughly all the same.

The next scene is divided into 3 zones that the player will progress through depending on whether they pass their checks or not. If they fail their checks, Zones 1 and 2 direct them to Ending C. If they get to Zone 3, then a pass will direct them to Ending A and a fail will direct them to Ending B.

(I then need to do all of this all over again to account for the continuity where Aeran and the MC get fired, but it is not as complicated as this due to a different set of characters being involved.)

Currently, this next section of the finale has about 28,000 words in it, and I am approaching the point where I can start working on Zone 1.

Updated Schedule & Goals

February 24-28: Finish Entrance 3 and 4, start Zone 1

March 3-7: Draft Zone 2

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #12](#)

[February 28](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on

companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

The following is a codex entry unlocked on all paths.

NECROMANCY

*Excerpt from **The Varfalen Codices** by Anonymous, collected in *The Book of Kalranth**

[...] then this, perhaps, is the question that should be asked: where is the line between life and death, and who are we to seek it? As Lyrana preserves, Nashira disperses, shuffling our mortal coils to what lies beyond. The soul is not the body, nor is the body the soul, and yet the two are as one, balanced in all things. One cannot exist without the other, but a body without a soul is not life, just as a soul without a body is death. Is this not, then, a question of two dominions? Where the domain of one sphere intersects the other?

Look to, then, to bloodbinding. It is an instinctive and uncontrollable act to those with the gift, one that supersedes the moment of the soul's departure no matter the damage done to the body. It retains it, clings to it. But this is not the nature of most. For all others, when the body fails the soul becomes irretrievable. Is this not, then, the great question behind the art of necromancy: how does one restore a soul once it has past the point of no return?

march

— O N P A T R E O N —

MAR
05

Character
Scenario 1

MAR
14

Ep 3 Finale
Preview #12

MAR
07

Progress
Report 1

MAR
19

Character
Scenario 2

MAR
10

Roundtable
Question

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21

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Report 2

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12

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MAR
28

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 - Character Scenario 1: Phaedra x MC (Episode 2)
 - Character Scenario 2: Veyer x MC (post-Episode 2)
- Behind-the-Scenes

[Patreon & the iOS App](#)

[March 4](#)

Hi all,

I want to put this out here for those who are interested in joining my Patreon.

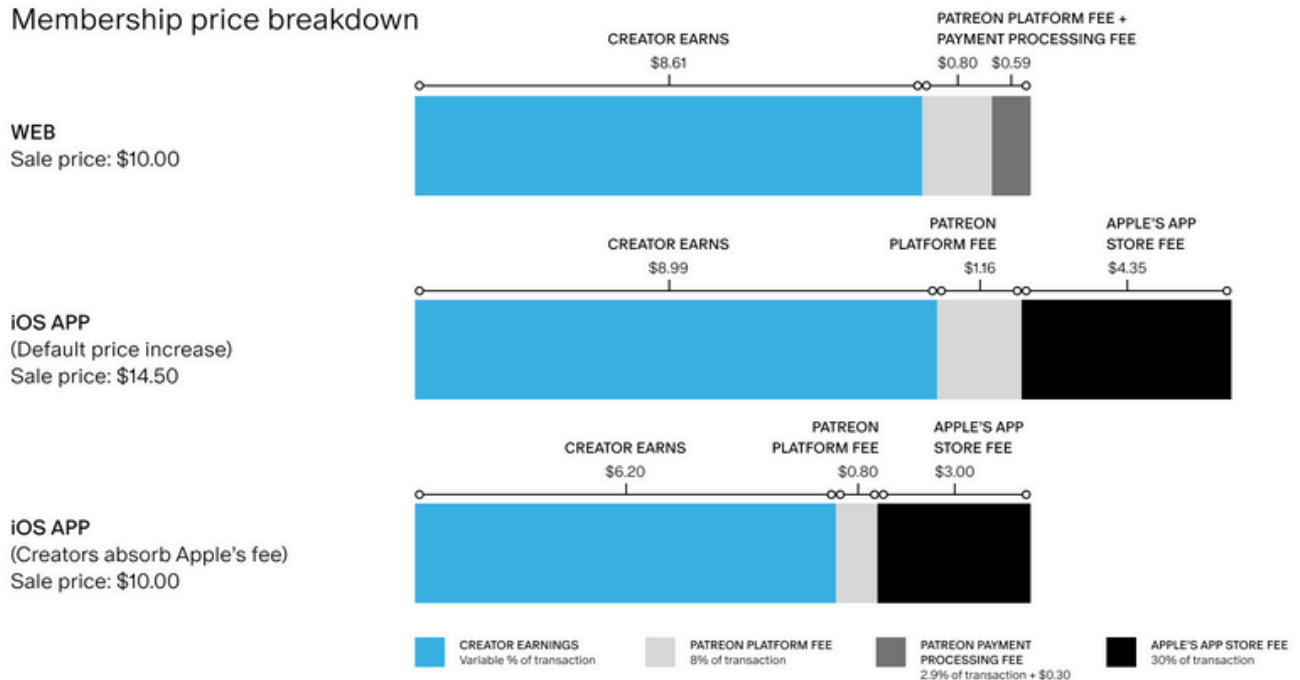
Due to changes in the Apple App Store, Apple requires that Patreon use iOS in-app purchases for all new purchases made in the iOS app. This applies to new memberships, as well as any posts or collections for sale.

Any memberships from November 2024 onwards made with the iOS app are subjected to Apple's 30% App Store fee. This is in addition to other fees Patreon applies in order to fully off-set the App Store fee so it doesn't hurt creators' income.

What This Means

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Membership price breakdown



If you were subbed to my Patreon prior to November 2024 via the iOS app, you are exempt from this additional fee. However, if you de-pledge and pledge again at a later date through the iOS app, your new membership will have the fee applied.

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CA\$0.00

These recent earnings will be processed shortly. [Learn more](#)

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Earnings from transactions made in the iOS app become available 75 days after purchase. The current amount is an estimate. [Learn more](#)

What You Can Do

Subscribing to a creator's Patreon through the iOS app hurts both the creator and their subscribers. If you have an iPhone and want to avoid extra fees and ensure your money is reaching your supported creators on time, subscribe through your mobile browser or a web browser on a computer.

- [How iOS in-app purchases work on Patreon](#)
- [How iOS in-app purchases work for Commerce](#)

The MC in this short uses she/her pronouns.

Phaedra Amestris is—for lack of a better word—perplexed.

It does not happen often. Though some meissants would argue the world works in mysterious ways, following the whims of fate and the desires of gods, she does not agree. The way of the world is dictated by the way of the people, and people—though not always logical—have ever been simple. Action and consequence, need and desire. Is the world just? Is it fair? No. But it doesn't need to be to understand it.

It is a thought that is almost heretical.

Almost, but not quite.

Which brings her to the reason she is perplexed. This person sitting beside her, this warrior turned bodyguard. For one, she would never have expected Zenaida Anaxas of all people to show up with two Wayfarers in her retinue. A statement to her mother, perhaps? A statement to the Velantian Council? Or to the Guild of Mages? There is a reason for it, but she does not have enough information to place a finger on it. Still, it is very strange that their Anaxas heir vanished from the city days before Diradan went up in flames, only to return with two of the very people who could break the out-of-control wards and restore the tower.

For another, the warrior is truly, undeniably, indisputably, *irritatingly* interesting.

Perhaps it is the allure of a warrior among civilians. She cuts a striking figure, this Wayfarer—strength and poise innate in ways others can only achieve through illusions and imitation. Though others were keen to ignore her, she drew Phaedra's eye the moment she stepped into the room and she cannot bring herself to look away.

The sting of disappointment twists in her gut. She has always had an unfortunate choice of lovers; her life's history is so littered with them it is a common joke among the younger scions of the house. But one does not live to her age without a few trials and tribulations. And sometimes a sweet taste, however fleeting, can be worth the bitter aftermath.

"Indebted?" the Wayfarer asks, bringing her back to the conversation at hand.

Phaedra chuckles and places a hand on her arm—a simple gesture, and yet even as she performs it, it occurs to her that not many would be willing to touch a magianis. Still, it would send the wrong message to withdraw now. "That is a story for another time, I'm afraid," she says. "Perhaps I will tell it to you, if you ever happen to extricate yourself from House Anaxas. I do hope you will. Between you and me, you are wasted as a bodyguard."

She meets the warrior's eyes, holding her gaze. There is something there—a spark in her eyes that is telling her that the attraction is mutual. A flush of heat rushes through her. To find a kindred spirit here tonight, and in such an unexpected form... It would be easy enough to extend an invitation to see where the night leads them. She is sorely tempted and there would be consequences.

But sometimes, one must fuck the consequences, as Evander would say.

Angry voices rise from the far side of the gallery, jolting her out of these dangerous thought. Her gaze flicks across the room, ears pricked as she sorts out the familiar tones. Orestis and Axeon, making another mess. The young hotheads have already done enough damage this evening. Sighing wearily, she squeezes the Wayfarer's arm and rises to her feet.

"Remember that," Phaedra says, pressing a hand to her cheek and taking her in one last time. Her magic vanishes the moment they touch, the bright light in her heart puffing out like a candle snuffed. "Should Velantis become the city where you wish to ply your trade, I have a place for you. When Zenaida loosens her grip on you, come find me in Ithyria."

Something akin to regret flickers in her eyes. "I don't know if that's possible—"

"Ah ah." Phaedra presses a finger to her lips. How she would very much like to trace the shape of them. "The invitation stands. Think on it."

And there. The seed is planted. It is unlikely the Wayfarer will act on it, but people sometimes are surprising and act contrary to their nature. And if anything, after the life she has lived, she does still enjoy being surprised.

With one last look and her yearning heart both mourning what could have been and hopeful for what may be, Phaedra turns her back on her intriguing warrior and slips away through the crowd.

[Progress Report 107: Zone 1 Work](#)

[March 7](#)

Hello all,

Happy March! I hope you are all having a good month.

February was a pretty strange month for me. I unfortunately hurt my neck and my shoulders, so I was out for a few days at the end of the month (I have seen a doctor, no serious injuries, I'm just at an age now where if I pull a muscle I feel it for days).

Finale Part 2 Version A is still in progress. I finished wrapping up all of the unique entrances and filtered them down into the next bottleneck. I am currently working on **Zone 1** and I am doing my best to keep it under control so it doesn't branch too much while I deal with its pass/fail checks. I am maybe about a week and a half behind schedule; I did lose a lot of work time at the end of February and I'm not able to make that up, but my overarching goal is to get **Version A** (including its endings) finished by the end of the month.

My current document is sitting at around 47,000 words, which is a little less than double of where it was at my last progress report. Altogether, Episode 3 right now is around 630,000 words (cumulative total, not for an individual playthrough), which surpasses Episode 1's length. This is very much the finale of Act 1—big things are happening, answers to some questions will be answered, other questions will be raised, and your player character will have some very tough decisions to make.

Ideally I would like to wrap **Finale Part 2 Version A** as soon as possible as I am at the end of my Patreon content and I will need to set aside some time to draft new short stories and bonus content.

Updated Schedule & Goals

- **March 10-14:** Finish Zone 1 of Finale Part 2 Version A
- **March 17-21:** Draft Zone 2 of Finale Part 2 Version A

Thank you all so much for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below. 💖



[March Roundtable](#)

[March 10](#)

Put your thoughts in the comments or continue the discussion on the patron discord server!

[From the Vault: Episode 2 Cut Content – Melchior Romance Alt](#)

[March 12](#)

I really like how Melchior's scene at the end of Episode 2 turned out. Regardless of whether you pursue a fling with him or not, his dynamic with the MC is very enjoyable to write. When I was drafting the romance version, I hit a moment where I needed to decide how the asexual and allosexual versions of the scene would play out.

I had already written Aeran's scene and that was straightforward. Sex can be a part of Aeran's romance with the MC, but it doesn't have to be. It's important to him, but it's not defining (and at least from what I can assess from player response, the asexual version of the scene is just as touching as the allosexual one, and one doesn't feel more impactful than the other). Veyer's tryst was also straightforward since romance is not in the equation—it is a question of whether the MC wants to have sex with them or not in the moment they propose the tryst, and then you are committed to that for the rest of the episode.

But with Melchior... he's a bit tricky. He will be a companion character further down the line, and his first interactions with the MC can shape the course of their relationship and also not. It's much more open than what is going on with Aeran, but more concrete than what is happening with Veyer. I decided that because of who Mel is and the direction of the scene, I needed to be firm about what he is looking for from the MC. Whereas Aeran and the MC are coming to a conclusion together, Melchior and the MC are opening a door that could lead somewhere. Relationships in Wayfarer are complicated; this is not structured like a dating sim and any romanceable character has their own wants and needs that may sometimes clash with what the MC wants.

Melchior is a character who will struggle with asexual MC's because he, very much, is not. Physical intimacy is important to him and it is part of what drew him to the MC in the first place. In this cut content, I was attempting to write an asexual version of the scene, but his response ended up feeling out-of-character for him. There's nothing structurally wrong with it and it is still his voice, but I think I ended up going in a different direction (with him gently turning the MC down) felt much better while also introducing the idea that romanceable characters are and will be independent from the MC.



2. “Just to be clear, are you asking me to sleep with you?”

He pauses, caught off-guard by the candour of your question. For a moment you think he's going to draw away, leave you standing awkwardly by yourself, stranded in this sea of nobles—

His fingers skate across your skin, cupping your chin as he draws your face close to his. “It was not such an invitation, no,” he murmurs. He leans in, his lips pressing against your ear. “But perhaps it could be—if we're both willing. Shall we see where the night takes us?”

Your heart thuds in your chest. The erratic rhythm makes you tremble beneath his touch.

1. [ROMANCE ALLO] “I’ll think about it.” [+melchior romance]

2. [ROMANCE ACE] “I’m not really... uh... interested in that kind of thing. But I am enjoying

this.” [+melchior romance]

3. “Maybe. I’m not sure yet.”

1. [ROMANCE ALLO] “I’ll think about it.” [+melchior romance]

He chuckles, the melodious sound murmuring in your ear. You can feel him grinning. All too soon, he draws away and returns to gazing out at the silent grounds. Cool air rushes across your cheek and heart trembles, aching in your chest. You miss the touch of his hand and the closeness of his lips already...

Continue.

2. [ROMANCE ACE] “I’m not really... uh... interested in that kind of thing. But I am enjoying this.” [+melchior romance]

He chuckles quietly, the melodious sound murmuring in your ear. He draws back and his eyes meet yours. “If friendly conversation is all the enjoyment you need, that is more than enough,” he says. “But should you change your mind, I am open to other possibilities.”

You swallow hard, watching him in silence as he returns to gaze at the silent grounds.

Continue.

3. “Maybe. I’m not sure yet.”

He chuckles softly, the melodious sound murmuring in your ear. “That is well,” he says, drawing away. “But should you change your mind, I am open to possibilities.”

You swallow hard, trying not to think too much about it, and watch in silence as he returns to gazing at the silent grounds.

Continue.

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #13](#)

[March 17](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

To keep the mystery, some passages in this preview have been REDACTED.

Apologies for the delay in getting this out, I forgot to queue it for last Friday!

A wave of nausea twists in your stomach as the smell of burnt flesh sears your nose.

[REDACTED PARAGRAPH]

And yet—miraculously—[REDACTED] is still breathing.

You curse. “Oh, hell. [REDACTED]...”

You don’t know what to do. What *can* you do? Your medical kit isn’t equipped to handle this severe of an injury, nor would you even know where to begin. If this happened to a Wayfarer in the field, they would be dead. [REDACTED] must have residual magic around [REDACTED], something on [REDACTED’S] person that is keeping [REDACTED] alive, which means...

You can’t risk touching [REDACTED].

“[REDACTED],” you repeat, hoping [REDACTED] can hear you. “[REDACTED].”

[REDACTED] draws a slow, rasping breath. “\$lastname...”

“Shit.” You press a hand over your nose. The stench is unbearable, even for you. “Fuck.”

Laughter wheezes past [REDACTED’S] lips. “Shit fuck indeed.” [REDACTED] coughs, blood leaking from [REDACTED’S] mouth. “Why are you here? Come to gloat at my foolishness?”

1. “Don’t be an idiot, I’m here to help.”
2. “I don’t think you’re a fool for not knowing that would happen.”

[Character Scenario — Veyer x MC \[Episode 2\]](#)

[March 19](#)

Content Warning: *mature content & implied sex.*

The MC in this short uses she/her pronouns.

Veyer flops over on the threadbare couch, breathless and animated and so so alive.

The hum of muted music and voices thrums in their ears, but it could be their imagination for all they know. This little storeroom is distant enough from the hall that their chances of being discovered are not high, but close enough just to entice danger. The possibility of it is almost as scintillating as the sex itself. They didn't know they would end up entangled with a Wayfarer tonight, and it is—quite possibly—the best decision they have made.

Or the most interesting at least.

Their lover stands before them, a dark silhouette in a moonlit room. "Satisfied?" she murmurs huskily, cupping Veyer's jaw with her hand.

Veyer smirks. "You could come here and take a guess," they say, raising their arms and resting them behind their neck. "That is where the fun lies, is it not?"

She snorts with laughter. In answer, her gaze sweeps over them, lingering on their body. Pressing a knee against the cushions, she leans in against them, pinning them to the backrest of the couch. "Fun? Now, what would I know about that..." Shooting them a mischievous look, she trails her fingers across their chest, tracing the vibrant tattoos that flare across their torso and down their arms. The tattoos have been a point of curiosity and appreciation since she wrangled them out of their tunic.

She can't seem to stop touching them, and—frankly—Veyer is more than open to that.

And so, she kisses them—lips parted, sloppy and rushed and heated, more devouring than it is a kiss—and they think it's a fine time to close their eyes and sink into the cushions. And it is fine, is it not? An evening where they can pursue their distractions in earnest, where they do not need the efforts of Sol's magic or the taste of wine or the smoke of dreamweed to keep the tangled knot around their heart in check. It is still there, of course, but in the presence of a Wayfarer it may as well not be.

It has made this evening deliciously satisfying. Not just the sex—though she has certainly been worth the while—but that their longstanding theory was correct.

Their lover breaks the kiss and draws back, gazing down at them with hazy eyes. "Well?" she asks, raking her fingers through their hair and smoothing it back from their forehead. "What now?"

Veyer pauses, garbled words on their lips as they nod off deeper into contented sleep, their chest rising and falling with a slow and steady rhythm. The feel of their fingers in their hair is mesmerizing, lulling them to sleep...

Movement rustles around them and a weight lifts off the couch. Veyer's eyes snap open and they catch the Wayfarer's hand, halting her in her tracks. "If you need an answer, I can think of one," they say

quickly, recoiling inwardly at how needy they sound. They aren't ready to give this up yet, but they cannot voice the reason why. They aren't prepared to experiment with their very life if their next theory is proven wrong.

"I thought perhaps..." She trails off and sits down beside them, a wistful look on her face. "Never mind."

Ah. An opening. "You thought...?"

"That you have better places to spend your night than a storage closet."

"I have no complaints with the storage closet." They snake a hand around her waist. "Nor with the company within it."

She laughs and allows them to pull her into their lap. The wistful note has not yet disappeared.

Veyer presses a thumb to her jaw, gently turning her head towards them. "Something is on your mind," they say, glancing up to meet her eyes. Such beautiful eyes. Stern and strong and certain. She may have her doubts about her standing with Lethalis or her fallen order or even the bastard who accompanies her, but doubt in herself? You do not get eyes like that through self-doubt. "Is it not?"

Their lover arches a brow. "And something is on yours. It takes like to recognize like—or so they say."

"So they say."

A pause.

Veyer tilts her chin and captures her mouth in a kiss. She melts into them, eager and spellbound, and when they finally draw away they are both left breathless and wanting. "What do you say, then?" they ask, pulling her down on top of them. "Shall we find an excuse to ignore the pesky somethings on our minds?"

The answer she gives is something they will remember for many months.

[Progress Report 108: Moving Right Along](#)

[March 21](#)

Hi all,

As we come up on the end of March, I just wanted to do a quick check in about Episode 3's status. Currently, I am behind schedule and where I projected to be in my Q1 roadmap, but I am still very pleased with how the material is shaping up.

Though I divided the different portions of the finale into three zones based on the player character's physical location, it's not quite as easy as writing Zone 1, and then moving onto Zone 2, and then onto Zone 3. Each zone has its own checks that the player needs to pass in order to proceed (otherwise they get sent down an early ending), which means that some routes are technically finished! Currently I've finished two endings. Most of Zone 2 is complete, but I need to back up and finish Zone 1 before moving onto the third one.

Currently, **Finale Part 2 Version A** is 65,000 words, which pushes the current Episode 3 total to 647,780 words. I'm estimating that this document is going to be around 80k or 90k by the time it's done, and then I need to do Version B (which is shorter due to story reasons).

I am hoping to finish Version A by March 31. I need to take two weeks off of episode development to prepare the next round of social media posts and bonus content/short stories for Patreon. I am also preparing something special for the short stories, but I'm not quite ready to announce what that is yet.

I will continue to release sneak peeks on Fridays, but they will be heavily redacted and shortened so as not to spoil the characters involved.

I will be releasing a Q2 roadmap on April 2 that will give my projection of where I hope to be by the end of June. This episode has been an absolutely massive undertaking; it is a game within itself, and the flexibility of choice, roleplay options, and consequences for choices will reflect that. I am very aware of how long it is and that I will be pushing the Twine engine as far as it will go in terms of content. I have made cuts where appropriate, but I cannot cut or change more without sacrificing the vision or discarding routes that players are attached to. I am very grateful for your patience and your support while I finish it.

I hope it will be worth the wait and that it will be a hell of an episode to play.

Updated Schedule & Goals

- **March 24-28:** Finish Finale Part 2 Version A
- **March 1-April 4:** Finish any incomplete parts of Finale Part 2 Version A, start social media and Patreon content updates

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to let me know below.

[Episode 3 Finale Sneak Peek #14](#)

SPOILER WARNING

The following preview is of the Episode 3 finale. If you have not played the alpha build up to the very end of its current content, or if you would like to avoid major spoilers for how things play out, you may want to skip this post. As the finale is very dependent on companion and faction approval levels, prior actions, and player choice, the following is only a sample of what may occur on some routes.

To keep the mystery, some passages, names, and pronouns in this preview have been REDACTED.

“Don’t,” [REDACTED 1’s] voice hisses in your ear, [REDACTED 1’s] fingers digging into your back. “This situation is in shambles, it’s only a matter of time before it collapses completely. The moment you draw your blade will be the catalyst. [REDACTED 2] will have no choice but to attack, and we really don’t want that quite yet, now do we?”

You turn your head, glancing over your shoulder. You catch a gleam of faint [REDACTED] light. “What are you—”

“Don’t move, \$firstname dear, for Metisara’s sake. Keep your eyes forward, straighten that sword arm. You have no idea I’m here. Act like it or we’re done for.”

[REDACTED 1] has hidden [REDACTED 1]. An illusion woven around [REDACTED 1], making [REDACTED 1] invisible to all eyes save your own. [REDACTED 1] must have slipped out of the [REDACTED 3] formation, counting on [REDACTED 1’s] fellows to be too distracted by [REDACTED 4] and [REDACTED 5] to notice [REDACTED 1] is gone. Even Aeran hasn’t noticed.

“Now?” you ask under your breath. Your lips are parched, your mouth dry. The air tastes like dust. “You want to do this *now*?”

“Better a certain now than an unpredictable later. We may have [REDACTED 2] outnumbered, but that does not mean what you think it does. You have no comprehension of the power we’re up against. [REDACTED 6] is the only reason we’re alive to have this conversation.”

You pause. With [REDACTED 7] and [REDACTED 8] out of the picture, [REDACTED 1] is the only other option for getting the Astrial away from [REDACTED 5]. [REDACTED 1] can guise [REDACTED 1] and the relic, spirit it away through the front gate while the rest of the [REDACTED] are distracted. But the question remains: with the Astrial gone, what happens next?

And what happens to you when both sides realize it is no longer in your possession?

"Please, \$firstname. Please."



[April 2025 on Patreon](#)

[April 1](#)

Due to a family funeral at the start of April, I am shoving Patreon content back by a week and there will only be one sneak peek, one progress report, and one character scenario this month.

Tip Jar

- Progress Reports

Recruit

- Alpha Build access
- Progress Reports
- Episode 3 Finale Previews
- Roundtable Question

Apprentice & Up

- Alpha Build access
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- Character Scenarios
 - Character Scenario 1: Zenaida x Malsara (Episode 1)
- Behind-the-Scenes



WAYFARER

2025 Q2 ROADMAP



APRIL

◆ Patreon & Social Media content

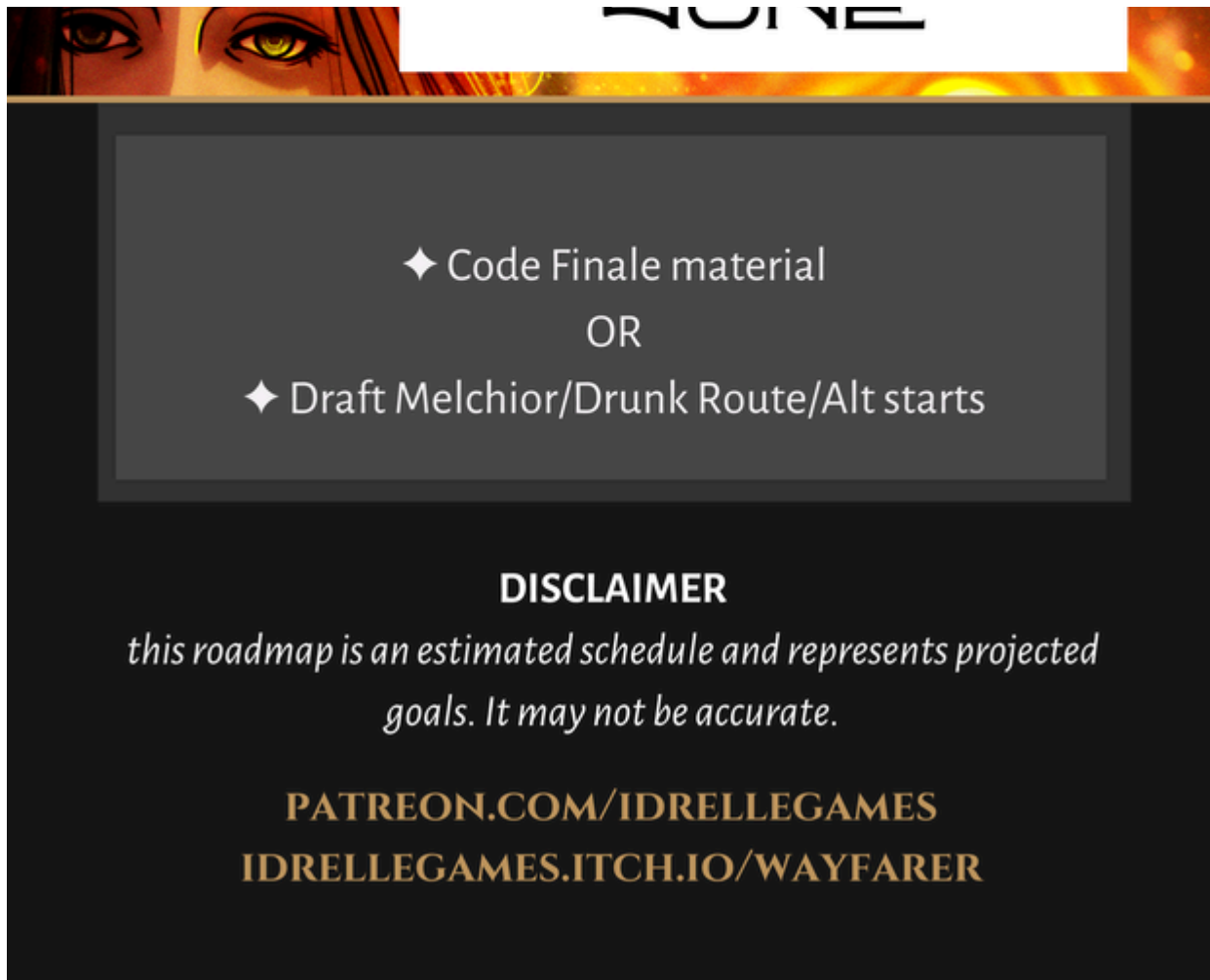


MAY

- ◆ Complete Episode 3 Finale Version A
- ◆ Complete Episode 3 Finale Version B



JUNE



[Wayfarer 2025 Roadmap Q2](#)

[April 2](#)

Hello all!

Welcome to Q2. Before I go over what's in store for the next three months, I want to revisit what has been done and catch you up on where Episode 3's development.

The goal for Q1 was to complete the Episode 3 Finale. January started off really well, and I actually ended up about a week ahead of schedule. Unfortunately, I had a host of health problems in February which meant that I had to take additional time off of work and I was unable to make up that lost time. I did not complete the written portion of the finale by the end of March, but that being said, it is still coming along really well. There is currently around 180,000 words of uncoded alpha content and I am rapidly approaching the ending. Two of the three endings have been written, and four of the pathways through to those endings have been finished. I will go more into detail about how everything breaks down in my Q2 roadmap.

Wayfarer's roadmap is an estimated timeline and is subject to change.

Q2 Overview – April to June 2025

Over the next three months the goal is to complete the Episode 3 finale. Due to some extenuating circumstances (a family funeral and some other personal events), I am not going to set a goal of working on finale content in April as I need to take time off. I also need to take some time to create the next round of Patreon bonus content and short stories, as well as my social media for Instagram and Bluesky.

May is going to be focused on getting these last variations finished, and tackling **Version B**. I am crossing my fingers that this will be the last month I spend writing finale content.

If all goes well and I don't have any more setbacks, in June I will have to decide between coding and updating the alpha build with the new content, or going back to the start of Episode 3 and working on the incomplete routes.

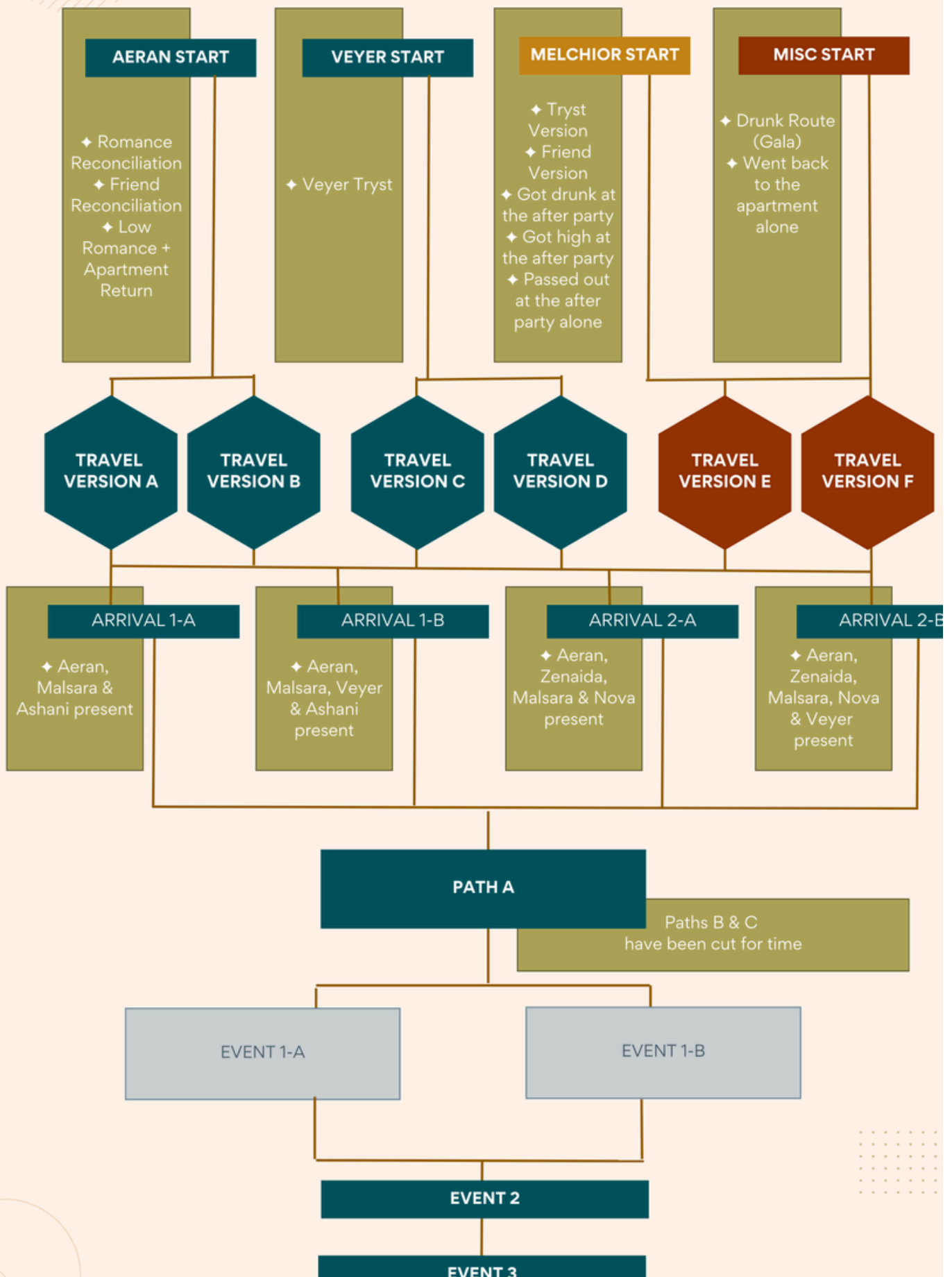
The State of Episode 3 — April 2025

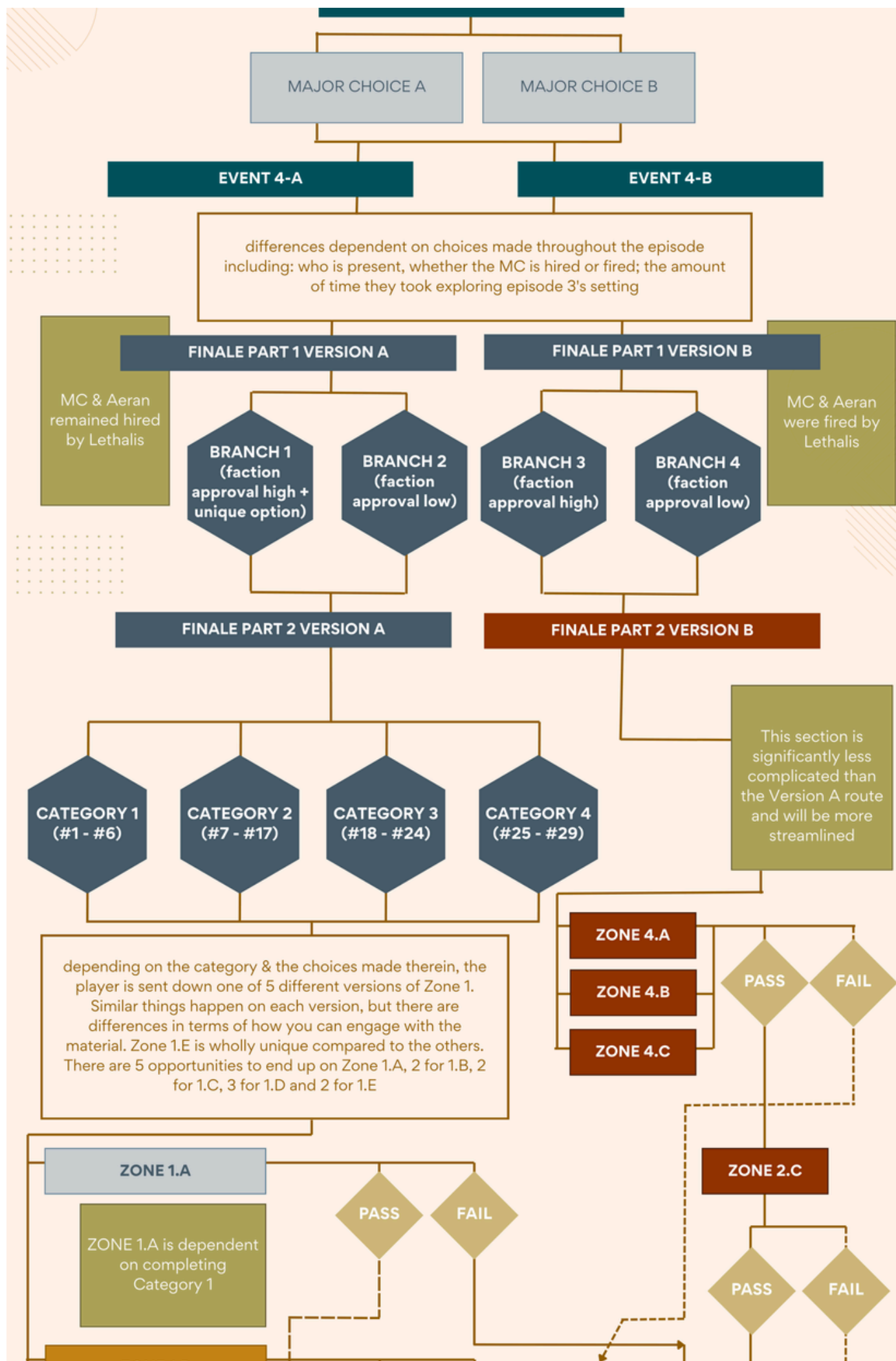
THE STATE OF WAYFARER

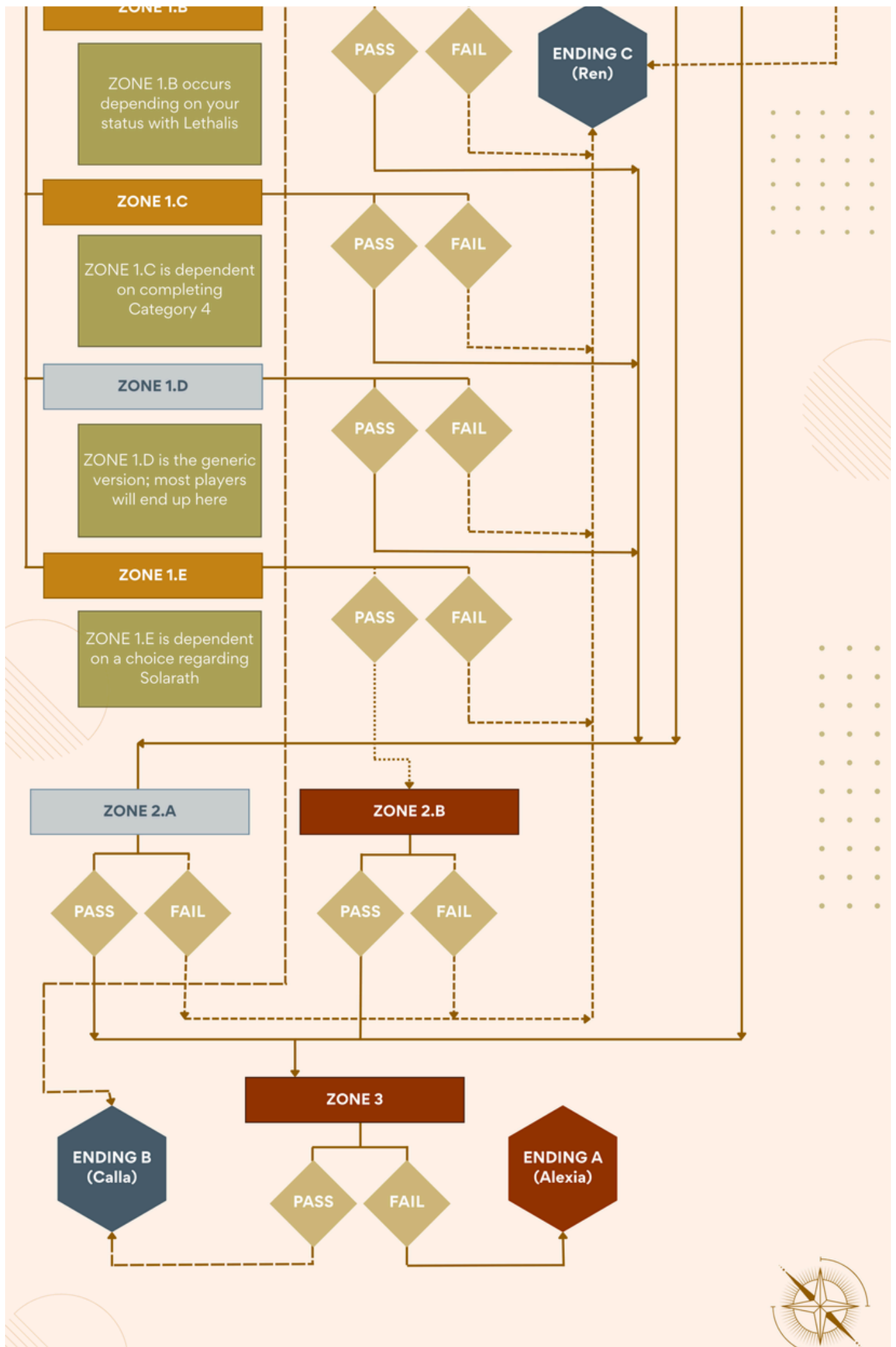
EPISODE 3 ALPHA

APRIL 2025

- = not yet written
- = drafting
- = finished + added to alpha build
- = finished + not added to alpha







This flowchart is a summary of the paths, variations, and routes involved. Teal sections have been added to the alpha build; blue sections have been written, but not coded. Orange sections are WIPs. Red sections have not been drafted yet.

There are three endings in Episode 3, and each one will determine which new companion character you will meet first in Episode 4. **Ending A** leads to Alexia, **Ending B** leads to Calla, and **Ending C** leads to Ren (information about these characters can be found here on the character roster).

The finale is first divided into two major variations, **Version A** (which occurs if the player remained hired by Lethalis after Episode 2) and **Version B** (which occurs if the player was fired by Lethalis). These differences have followed them throughout the entire episode as it changes which characters are involved in certain events.

Version A is then split into four categories based on dialogue options, choices, and faction approval. Basically, coming out of **Finale Part 2 Version A**, there were 29 different endings that needed be rounded up and bottlenecked. Instead of writing unique outcomes for each one, I grouped similar variations together into the four categories. Those four categories then feed into Zone 1, which has 5 subsections depending on the player's actions. Should the player successfully pass Zone 1's checks, they will proceed to Zone 2. They then need to pass Zone 2's checks to proceed to Zone 3.

With a couple of very specific exceptions, failure in Zone 1 and Zone 2 results in Ending C. Failure in Zone 3 results in Ending A. Success in Zone 3 leads to Ending B.

While **Version B** reflects similar events to **Version A**, there are some major differences due to different character involvement. This B route will be much more streamlined than the A route, and I do not expect it to be as intensive as the A route.

This is where the episode's total word count and breakdown are currently sitting:

EPISODE 3		
episode 3 - part 1 - aeran branch pt 1	90855	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 1 - aeran branch pt 2	83967	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 1 - veyer branch pt 1	20498	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 1 - veyer branch pt 2	90265	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 1 - veyer branch pt 3.1	18851	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 1 - veyer branch pt 3.2	69475	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 2 - melchior party branch start	5934	INCOMPLETE
episode 3 - part 2 - drunk route/other/misc start	0	NOT STARTED
episode 3 - part 2 - melchior/drunk route/other/misc travel	0	NOT STARTED
episode 3 - part 3 - [REDACTED]	69140	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 3 - [REDACTED]	33695	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 4 - finale start (versions a & b)	100100	COMPLETE
episode 3 - part 5 - finale - version a (mission)	82114	WIP
episode 3 - part 5 - finale - version b (fired from lethalis)	0	NOT STARTED
EPISODE 3 WORD COUNT	664894	

Once both **Version A** and **Version B** are complete, I will be able to return to the unfinished routes at the start of the episode.

I do not have an estimate for the Episode 3 alpha's release date yet. The public build will not receive any content updates until the Episode 4 alpha is complete.

Alpha Build Stats – April 2025

- Average Word Count Per Playthrough: 193,900 words (approximate)
- Average Playtime: 11 hours
- Total Cumulative Word Count: 1,414,800 words (approximate)

The build was last updated in July 2024. It is playable on my Patreon. If you are interested in the alpha, please note that you do not need to restart the game from the beginning. The alpha and public builds share meta data, so any public build saves can be loaded directly into the alpha and they should work.

Socials

- **Tumblr** — [@idrellegames](#)
- **Instagram** — [@idrellegames](#)
- **Bluesky** — [@idrellegames.bsky.social](#)
- **Patreon** — [patreon.com/idrellegames](#)

Thank you so much for your continued support! ❤️

~ Anna

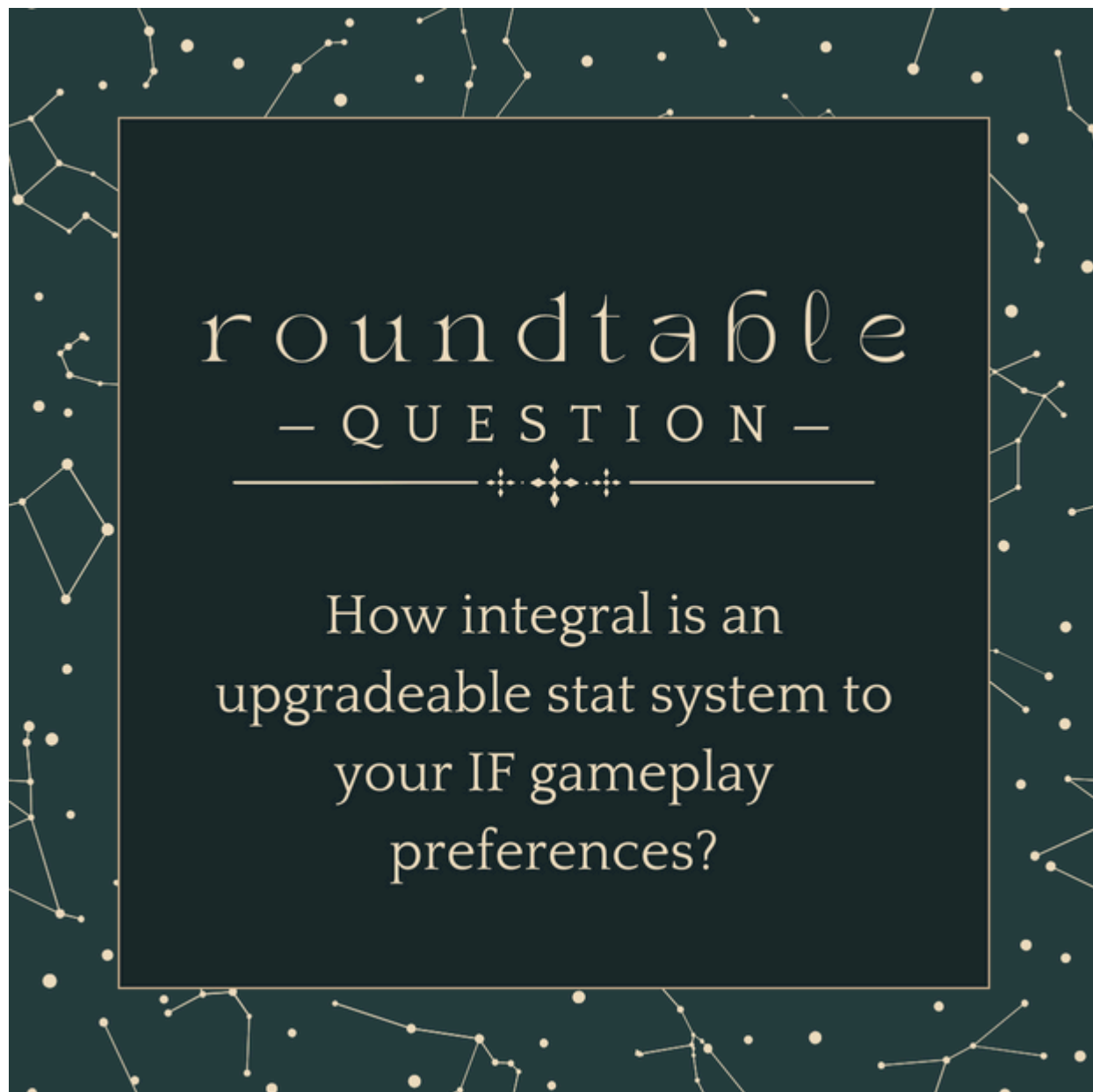
Idrelle Games

[5 days ago](#)

Hi all,

I am out of office until April 17. I will not be checking my social media or my Patreon notifications during this time. If you need to reach me, please message me via Patreon chat and I will get back to you once I am back.

See you then! ✨



An hour ago

Hi all!

For this month's roundtable question I wanted to open a discussion about how stats work in Wayfarer. Currently, I am debating removing the post-episode level up from the game. Without it, players would be locked into playing their character a certain way from the start of the game without the ability to readjust their stats as they move forwards.

Now, I still intend for there to be ways to permanently increase stats through special events later, but these will be few and far between. Think of it more like how you can choose your starting stats in BG3, and then use the Ability Improvement feat to increase one ability by two or two abilities by one rather than choosing additional point allotments every time you level up.

My concern with giving the player a level up screen at the end of every episode is that eventually the player will reach the upper limits for their rolls and it will become more and more difficult for them to fail. The risk vs reward of the pass/fail system is integral to Wayfarer, and I feel that making it harder to fail and more likely to succeed will end up naturally cutting players out from a good chunk of the possible content unless they start save scumming. The original plan was to slowly raise the threshold of the dice system as players progress through the game to off-set this, but I think that would just end up keeping the pass/fail percentages where they currently are, defeating the purpose of the level up in the first place.

I also think that with what I've seen from how players are roleplaying and thinking about their characters, stats reflect how they consider their MC's physicality. With that in mind, levelling up at the end of each episode may start to press against the suspension of belief – for example if you have a character with 9 strength and you think of them as fairly muscular and then they suddenly jump to 15 strength in the span of a couple of episodes and are now exceptionally bulky.

I think a level up system is not necessary for how I've designed Wayfarer, and is a carry-over from looking at games that do merit from point allotment. My gut instinct is that I'd rather have players design their character from the get-go and let their stats define who they are. If I remove the ability to level up with each episode, I will likely increase the number of skill allotment points so it can be a little more balanced, but not so much that you can design the perfect character who has a good chance of passing all checks no matter which skill.

This is what the current pass/fail success percentage is for regular checks:

- 5 (base stat, you cannot go lower than this) – 40%
- 6 – 45%
- 7 – 50%
- 8 – 55%

- 9 – 60%
- 10 – 65%
- 11 – 70%
- 12 – 75%
- 13 – 80%
- 14 – 85%
- 15 – 90%
- 16 – 95%
- 17 – 100%

Put your thoughts in the comments or continue the discussion on the patron discord server!