



THE ATLAS OF WORLDS  
LORE SUPPLEMENT

Up-to-date for game version 3.25.0

Compiled by POE Loremaster

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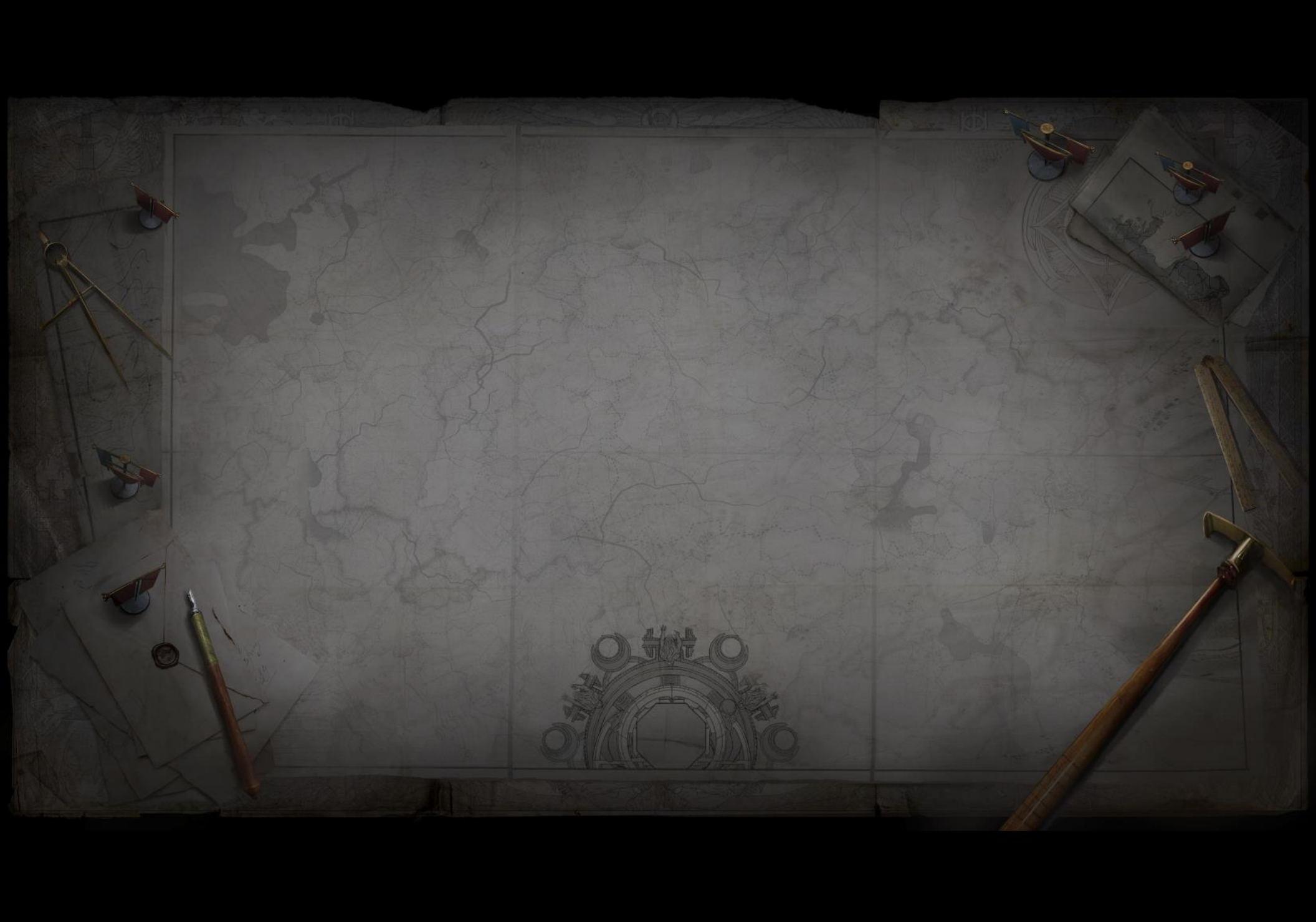
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## THE HISTORY OF THE ELDER

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Another child was taken last night, so tonight we wait, praying the demon does not return, but it does. It soars through the air and passes through the wall of the hut. We catch only a glimpse of its grey skin beneath the moonlight. We pursue the demon on foot to the edge of the woods. The child it carries does not cry out.

Anaris follows closely, but I hesitate out of fear. I gather my will and I leap into the shadows, tracking the demon by the tendrils left in its wake. But I am too late. The demon and child are gone, and Anaris stands frozen, pale as the moon. He whispers something I do not understand and falls, dead. I fear we will be hunted to extinction.

--Unknown, Grim Woods Memory (POE I)

They called it the Elder. A creature of malignant madness, born of that oblivion from before time itself began. Once only an abstract expression, the Elder was given physical form. It entered our realm. It fashioned for itself a bauble of chaos and secret worlds to use as a kind of... hunting ground. This "bauble" is undoubtedly the dreamlands I've uncovered.

The Elder came here out of hunger. Preferring victims of a younger flesh, it became the bogeyman, dragging our children off into the night, casting them into its realm of shadow and feasting upon their nightmares undisturbed, for it was imagination that truly satiated it.

With such sustenance, the Elder deigned to cultivate something. To... sustain and birth forth its true goal. Its true self. The Oblivion from outside time and space. The Decay. ...

--Book of Memories, Page 9 (POE I)

The Decay infects thought itself, leaving nothing but hollow husks filled with virulent void...

--The Devourer of Minds Pig-Faced Bascinet (POE I)

A void where only terror and emptiness exists; those who attempt to struggle only hasten the assimilation [sic]

--Decaying Fragment (POE I)

... It's hard to say whether The Elder created [the Atlas] or simply found it in ancient times, but the realm served as a haven from which humanity could be preyed upon for thousands of years. ...

--Helena, "The First War" (POE I)



## RESISTANCE & THE ENTRAPMENT OF THE ELDER

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### THE WATCHERS OF DECAY

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One by one, they stood their ground against a creature they had no hope of understanding, let alone defeating, and one by one, they became a part of it.

--Watcher's Eye Prismatic Jewel (POE I)

... we are not the first people to have set foot in this world. There are signs of the Elder's victims everywhere, as well as memories and references to those who first stood against it.

The Watchers of Decay. A sect we could perhaps learn a great deal from. ... I took some time to explore my Father's [sic] Laboratory once more in search of any references he might have collected regarding these "Watchers." Though I couldn't ascertain anything relating to them in our modern age, there were some remaining scrolls hidden beneath the floorboards that detailed this group as having existed far back in the smoke of history.

The Watchers claim to have gotten their start when a nameless god of Wraeclast endowed an Azmeri mother with knowledge of the Elder's existence. She had lost her boy to it months before, you see, and sought revenge. Somehow the god saw it fit to help the woman in her quest. Perhaps he took pity on her? Or did he consider the knowledge a curse?

--Zana, "The Watchers of Decay" (POE I)

I've been doing more research into the Elder and its battle with the Watchers of Decay. It's truly mortifying the things they've endured at the creature's hands.

These Watchers, they were all... parents. It seems the Elder prefers its prey young. These men and women fought tooth and nail to avenge their children...

--Zana, "The Elder's Victims" (POE I)

... By the gods... Even now as I write this, I feel my hand trembling, and I struggle to keep my mind on the task ahead... The Elder. It cannot be killed. The Watchers, they built the device, so as to travel to and lock tight its kingdom of torment, bringing with them the blade I saw - Starforge - it [sic] was called. A weapon capable of divorcing agency from form, to give the Elder a kind of eternal rest... There in its den, amongst the gibbering nightmares of child victims, the Elder became trapped. Starved. Unable to hunt. Held in ungodly chains.

The Elder's form may be trapped in stone. But its agency roams free. I have met it. ...

--Book of Memories, Page 9 (POE I)



## VALDO CAESERIUS & THE RELEASE OF THE ELDER (CA. 1581 IC)

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I am Valdo Caeserius, chief Arkhon of the Oriath academy in Theopolis. Servant of the High Templar Venarius.

I begin these writings as a record of events transpired, in hopes that the penning of such horrors will help bring sense to the matters at present. Some time ago, I was commissioned in the repairing of a strange device delivered into my hands. A golden machine found broken in the ruins of Wraeclast. Believing it to contain some dark infernal secret, the High Templar asked that I restore it and weaponize whatever powers it might contain.

Though I saw it as mostly inconsequential at the time, it is worth noting, my daughter, a quiet young thing of five, suffered nightmares and tantrums unlike any I'd seen, during those former weeks I spent working on the device. I'd assumed that she missed her mother and was going through a rough patch grieving. Now, however, I can't help but wonder if perhaps it was a sign.

I'd considered refusing Venarius, though not in any serious nature. Though my personal politics remain my own, I've often struggled to follow his instructions and rule - filled with such malice and hunger. Regretfully, I accepted his orders, for I know of many families who have refused the High Templar before. They have all vanished now.

--Book of Memories, Page 1 (POE I)

The device lay on my work table, shattered and in pieces. I'm ashamed to admit now that not once did I ask of what design it belonged to. Rather, I busied myself on all the little pieces, ignoring the sum of its parts. I pondered on how it had been structured for days on end, until at last, a creeping dread submerged me.

I was unable to rebuild this relic - whatever it was. Though it seemed to be mostly functioning, something... important appeared to be missing. Worse still, it seemed as if the part required, well... it didn't exist. Not in our reality anyhow. The thing that made it tick, the thing that was mysteriously vacant, I could only conceive of in the half-baked imaginings of my own mind.

My thoughts felt like a fleeting dream during the first few minutes of waking. I worked tirelessly in search of answers, exhausting myself beyond what I'd ever done before, until finally, at the base of that cruel device, I fell into a deep, deep sleep.

--Book of Memories, Page 2 (POE I)

I awoke in the most beautiful of places. The skies were blue, unlike the greyness of Oriath. Birds fluttered through the air, singing pleasantly. Around me, a warm wind brushed my face, and tall grass tickled playfully against my skin. I couldn't know where I was, though even then I suspected the place was somehow connected to the infernal mechanism lying dormant on my workbench.

As I wandered this strange new land, I felt a growing sense of realization that I was not alone. Exploring the fields of tall grass, I sought a peace within the brush. It was in that moment that I met a fellow wanderer. It was a Shade - a whisper of embodied smoke, barely heard or seen amongst the vegetation. It rose and spoke to me not through language, but through thoughts and pictures, colours and emotions, bursting into my mind like water, billowing up through cracks in the earth.

The Shade welcomed me to its land and asked how it was that I arrived. Eager for answers, I found myself enthusiastically volunteering information in detail of Oriath, of my daughter and of course, the strange and mysterious device I suspected had lead [sic] me to this place.

--Book of Memories, Page 3 (POE I)

With the patience of a prowling lion, the Shade watched the Scholar.

--Cyclopean Coil Leather Belt (POE I)

The Shade nodded thoughtfully. It knew of the device. The machine was a doorway between my world and the dreamlands, I was told. The device had been lost. Broken and torn apart by villains and thieves. The Shade was overjoyed to hear it found, and offered to help me rebuild that final missing part.

It seemed too good to be true. We would open the gateway between worlds, and then, all the goodness of these lands would flow out into Oriath leading us into a new age of prosperity. I agreed wholeheartedly - for I feared, and I still do fear, what will become of my daughter under High Templar Venarius' reign. All that the Shade asked of me was to return the favour, when the time came.

And as I lay down in the cool grass bathing myself in the soothing sun, I found that sleep once more took my body, only this time, when I closed my eyes there, I also opened them in the cold, empty darkness of my study...

--Book of Memories, Page 4 (POE I)

Weeks passed. The sun set and the moon rose countless times. And every night, I found myself asleep at the foot of the strange device, awoken to the reality of another world inside my own. I would transition into the dreamlands.

In my sleep, I would apprentice myself to the Shade, allowing it to teach me the ways of this strange place. I learnt how to shape and build things from my imagination, forming them in thin air as if by some great, thaumaturgical marvel. It was through this tempering of the mind that I, under its instructions began rebuilding the missing component of the device. And most exciting of all, how to transport such phantasmagorical treasures back into the world of man.

When High Templar Venarius visited during Oriath hours, I'd lie to him and make excuses. Arrogantly, I didn't want him to know of the power I'd uncovered. I wanted these dreamlands to be my secret, to belong to me and me alone. Not even my daughter could know...

--Book of Memories, Page 5 (POE I)

...like a temptress, the dreamlands seduced him...

--Zana, on receiving Memory Fragment 3 (POE I)

The day came when the missing part of the great device had finally been formed. A bizarre segment meant to hold mystical images of ancient maps. It was on this day that the Shade requested its one favour.

I was shown suddenly images of the past, of the Shade's once proud rule as King of all the dreamlands. I saw his good and noble kingdom, and the shadow that fell upon his domain. A sect of hateful men and women - The Watchers of Decay rose up to destroy the Shade. Questing to control the land, these terrorists fashioned a powerful blade meant to divorce the King's spirit from his body and curse it to wander his former kingdom while his body blistered in stone.

I was mortified! How could people do such cruel things to this humble creature? And where were these villains now? Had they been the same ones whom had made off with the device? Had they been the ones who severed the connection between worlds and ruined its function?

The Shade led me deep into a dark forest and revealed to me in the depths of a forgotten cave, a statue, cast from black marble, pierced by what I assumed to be the very same sword from my visions. The effigy was frightening. Utterly terrifying to behold. The creature it depicted - a violent and abhorrent thing, stood amidst an altar of ancient wood and bone. I felt a chill go up my spine as in that moment, the Shade closed in behind...

--Book of Memories, Page 6 (POE I)

Pull the blade from my chest. [sic] the Shade imposed upon my mind in both image and thought, "remove [sic] the sword. Free me." But as I found myself reaching out to do as asked, a great horror came upon me and for the first time, doubt entered my mind. I wondered if this creature was who it had told me. I resolved to hold off for a moment, to ask more questions and discover a greater understanding of the Shade, and so in trepidation, I refused.

At merely the suggestion of rebellion, the Shade flew into a fury! It flamed red, full of rage! And though it could not speak, it made its intentions very clear. I felt my mind torn asunder as images of murder and mutilation were forced upon me. I was... doing things. Terrible things to the ones I loved... to my daughter.

I fled in a panic, running from the cave, through the dark forest, cursing myself for ever trusting such a strange creature so blindly. At last, in desperation, I found a small, abandoned fox-hole and burrowed inside. The Shade passed by, still flaming in anger, searching desperately for me. It was in that dark damp hole that I trembled with revulsion and terror, weeping in silence until at last I fell into sleep returning once more to my laboratory.

Once back, I fled into the streets, arriving home in the dead of night. Bursting through my daughter's bedroom, I woke her and hugged her tight, shaking and crying as I did so. Promising that I would never, ever, let her go again.

--Book of Memories, Page 7 (POE I)

Months have now passed since my horrifying descent into that fox-hole, since the Shade revealed its true nature. Every day, the slimed and poisoned tendrils of fear grip ever tighter into my flesh, and each morning, I lock myself inside my study, delving into the darkest tomes one can find, searching for some infernal, occult knowledge that might save us from the thing I fled.

I'd almost given up hope, so little did I really know about the Shade and its "dreamlands". That is, until this morning when a shipment arrived for me from Eramir, a scholar whom I greatly admire. Sifting through the countless fragments of parchments and books he has sent me, I have found at last, some information which could be of some use.

These Watchers of Decay did indeed exist at one time in our world's distant past, and now, I've some of their work! The truth of their history... it's... it is so unutterable that I hesitate even now, to write it down, to put the words to my own journal. Yet I am an Arkhon and us Arkhons record all...

--Book of Memories, Page 8 (POE I)

They called it the Elder. A creature of malignant madness, born of that oblivion from before time itself began. Once only an abstract expression, the Elder was given physical form. It entered our realm. It fashioned for itself a bauble of chaos and secret worlds to use as a kind of... hunting ground. This "bauble" is undoubtedly the dreamlands I've uncovered.

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The Elder's form may be trapped in stone. But its agency roams free. I have met it. What if someone else were to enter the dreamlands and encounter the Shade? What if Venarius...? My meeting with the Elder, must have invigorated and refreshed its fervour. I must find a way to put a stop to it, before it finds a path to freedom. If not for my own sake, then for that of my daughter...

--Book of Memories, Page 9 (POE I)



They hoped that, trapped in its prison, the creature would age and perish. But time would not touch the fiend.

--Nebuloch Nightmare Mace (POE I)

Though its body was locked in stone, its essence wandered the infinite, learning, and preparing.

--Impresence Onyx Amulet (POE I)

Time has passed since my last entry, of that I am aware. I've spent every waking hour since, trying to find a way to end this unholy Elder, though nothing has, yet, fit.

Within my secret study, I've begun work on a device of my own. Whereas the Watcher's [sic] map device was designed to enter and lock tight the Elder's pocket dimension, my machine is of a different nature, though not entirely dissimilar.

Day and night, I have toiled away, tinkering and shaping this invention. When I'm finished, this Elder will never bother our world again. The creature cannot be killed, and divorcing its spirit from its body has not kept it silent, but maybe... just maybe... It can be exiled...

--Book of Memories, Page 10 (POE I)

How could I have been so stupid? So caught up in this whole nightmare that I forgot my work as an Arkhon! My "supposed" lack of progress on the Map Device has given the High Templar cause for suspicion.

At noon, as I neared the completion of my work, he and his guards interrupted my tinkering with a furious rage! Tossing my machine to the ground, he destroyed much of my research, demanding to know why I no longer focused on the task given to me. Clapped in irons I was led off to the Theopolis prisons for my insubordination.

I write this now, due only to the kindness of a friend in the Templar guard, he [sic] knows of my partiality to journaling and so as soon as he heard of my capture, managed to sneak in a diary for me scribble [sic] upon.

I don't know what Venarius plans to do with me. I've heard whispers of public shaming and lashes, but none of that is certain. What is certain, is that the Elder is coming for us. It's coming for us all. No matter whether you are High Templar or the lowest of the Karui slaves, the Elder knocks at the threshold. Bringing Decay... I must find my way from these chains at all costs. Only I can save us from this blasphemy that has fallen upon Oriath...

--Book of Memories, Page 11 (POE I)

My daughter... My darling daughter... By the gods. So much has transpired since last I wrote. So much horror... I've not a moment to lose, but I need to... I have to... I must write down what has

occurred. It's the only way I shall keep my sanity. I believe I'm safe for the moment, so I shall rest and reflect, in the hope that it will give me new insight on how to proceed in this current disaster.

Venarius, that bastard... Enraged by my lack of progress on his occult weaponry, he marched me through the streets. "This man has betrayed me!" he shouted as his men stripped me of my robes and beat me with sticks. When I was but an inch from death, he took me aside once more, demanding to know why I'd failed him. In my... in my foolishness, I... I told him everything.

I'd hoped to appeal to his better nature, to his higher self, that he might rally the Templar army behind me. Together we could defeat the Elder once and for all! But you should never appeal to a man's better nature. He may not have one. Venarius... he... he took Zana! Held her at knife point. Demanded... demanded that I take all of us through, into the dreamlands - to meet with the Elder!

Please, whoever you are, reading this - do not think wrong of me. If it were your daughter's life at risk, would you have done this any differently? I... I did as I was asked. Using the Map Device, we stepped through a gateway and I found myself once more setting foot in this atlas of worlds...

--Book of Memories, Page 12 (POE I)

The land was as beautiful as it'd been when last I'd visited. The breeze rippled across the meadows and the sun beat affectionately down on our necks. The High Templar and his men marvelled at such wonders. My daughter cried in fear. I felt sick to my bones.

As we trampled through the wilderness, it wasn't long before we were met by the overwhelming presence of the Shade itself. The very essence of the Elder stood silently before us. I felt its eyes bore deep into my skin. Demanding of me in visions to tell it why I had returned. But before I could answer, Venarius stepped forward and greeted the phantom, offering his words up into the air:

"He tells me you are King of this land," he said, "My [sic] poor, poor scholar says that you are imprisoned, that you need a key."

As he spoke, the shade stayed quiet, listening and smouldering smugly.

"I can be that key for you." The [sic] High Templar announced.

For a moment more, the Shade did not respond. A perverse, pensive, pregnant pause lay heavily upon us all. Then finally, casting an image at once upon all of our minds, we felt it ask of Venarius:

"What dost thou want?"

The High Templar smiled. "Why, power, of course." He [sic] replied.

--Book of Memories, Page 13 (POE I)

The shade spluttered into a great shimmering blaze, moving rapidly forward into trees up ahead. The High Templar gave chase, his soldiers dragging my daughter and I along behind. I recognized where we were headed. The forest was as dark as I remembered, and the cave, just as terrible.

Before we knew it, we stood at the base of that blasphemous effigy seated atop its crude pagan altar.

"Pull the sword from my chest."

The Elder imposed and the man, in all his vanity, didn't hesitate for a second. He took the sword and yanked it forward. A great earthquake shook the land! It was as if the very ground itself was cowering in the face of the Elder's reunion with its frigid body.

Bursting forth from cold stone, the Elder approached us all. The blade dropped from Venarius' quivering hand and clattered to the ground, a white light in the hilt flickered and shrank until it at last was put out by the great darkness of a tentacular void.

Realizing what it meant to look upon its face, I turned and shielded my daughter's eyes, and [sic] as the true scope of the Elder befell the High Templar and his men. I could hear screaming and mad gibbering! The Elder did not speak. Visions no longer left its mind. It was free. It had no need to communicate with mankind any longer.

As the richness of life fled from the quickly shrivelling bodies of the High Templar and his men, I readied myself and my daughter to flee. While the Elder began to feed, starved from millennium upon millennium of constraint, I took up the Map Device Venarius had dropped and together, we ran...

--Book of Memories, Page 14 (POE I)

I fear this to be the end. Not just the end for me, but the end of all things. The Elder has been freed. Soon it will feast on me and then, my daughter. Once it has finished with us, it will turn its sights on the rest of the world.

Times will become as they were in the days of old, when the Watchers of Decay were formed. Children will go missing from their beds. Parents will mourn, darkness will descend, and then birthed from that carnage, the Decay will arrive, finding its physical form in our dimension - for that is the Elder's true master! The fungal monstrosity will manifest and spread forth its mighty tendrils. The mould from before time and space began, will seek out the destruction of all things...

As we fled through the forest, I focused my resolve. It was too late for me. I knew of the shaping powers. Only I could have a hope at defeating the Elder. Preoccupied with its feast, the eldritch abomination had somehow forgotten us, and as we made our way back, retracing our steps, I found myself standing once more before the portal home. Not even stopping to look behind, I dove through the shimmering window, and together, we collapsed into Oriath.

With not a minute to waste, I took a nearby tool and jammed it into the infernal device, where it hummed, ominously entrenched in my laboratory floor. The Elder had to be stopped, and so... I left her there, bidding her to hide in a closet or beneath a work table. Then, with the portal flickering and shrinking steadily, I turned back and stepped forward into the dreamlands, one final time.

--Book of Memories, Page 15 (POE I)

A single act of love and defiance may cascade destruction across the cosmos.

--Cosmic Fragment (POE I)



# THE WAR FOR THE ATLAS (CA. 1600 IC)

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## ZANA CAESERIUS & THE MAP DEVICE

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It's all a blur... My father was the chief Arkhon for High Templar Venarius - a cruel and pernicious ruler. Venarius wished to hold the world ransom with his occult relics from the rubble of Wraeclast, he believed they could venerate him even higher in his status.

My father was forced to experiment on the map device for him, in hopes that he would uncover some kind of weapon. I don't need to tell you that my father found something worthy of attention. And instead of handing it over, he made sure its power could not be misused, a surety that cost him his freedom and me... my childhood.

--Zana, "The Shaper" (POE I)

My mother died not long after I was born, and my father, too, was gone only a handful of years later. Orphaned, my family's assets were seized and I was handed off to a series of well-off foster homes as an indentured servant.

But children are curious creatures, and even by those standards I was extremely curious indeed. I grew up reading everything I could get my hands on, and questioning everything they tried to teach me. I was too smart for my own good, I suppose, because eventually, I started drawing the attention of the Templar.

Luckily for me, Dominus was much less subtle than the previous High Templars, so I managed to leave Oriath on my own terms, mostly, before my impending exile.

--Zana, "Exile" (POE I)

I returned to Oriath with one of the early survivor fleets, excited to finally have the opportunity to put my knowledge to good use. During the rebuilding effort, we stumbled across the golden device - a device I later learned once belonged to my father.

I'd hoped that it might be useful in the resettlement effort at first...

--Zana, "Exile" (POE I)

Hurts my eye just to look at. ... Angles that don't make sense, shapes that shouldn't exist, and corners to trap the sight. ...

--Kirac, "Salvage" (POE I)

This map device is a miracle of both engineering and thaumaturgy. It's truly astounding.

Given the right coordinates from a map, this device can take you to places that... well, honestly I think it's easier for you to see for yourself just what it is capable of.

What lies beyond is dangerous...

--Zana, "The Map Device " (POE I)

... I've spent some time out there, exploring the maps, and despite their apparent randomness, there are threads that connect them. ...

The more we understand these connections, the more each of these maps can offer us, and the closer we'll be to finding out the secrets that twist them.

This is the Atlas of Worlds, and we can use it to track these connections; we can use it to chart a path.

--Zana, "The Atlas" (POE I)

I first started exploring the Atlas as a way to grow closer to my estranged father. I had no idea just how close I would get to him, though there was not much left of his mind by then...

--Zana, "Research" (POE I)

These worlds, they've changed since last I remember. They've become darker, more... twisted in a way that betrays their true origin.

I no longer believe these are realms of chance, rather, they must have been formulated by a sentient mind... a designer or architect. Every shadow in this place creeps about with an unforeseen purpose.

Whatever is out there forming these worlds concerns me. We should find the source of the darkness and put an end to it before something leaks out into our reality.

--Zana, "The Hidden Architect" (POE I)

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## RECRUITING EXILES

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I assembled a team in absolute secrecy, comprised of exiles who had proved their combat know-how in Wraeclast...

--Zana, "Exile" (POE I)

Baran: Prayer is the centre of his regimen. All other activities are flexible, including eating and sleeping, but prayer time never shifts. Bad knees.

Veritania: Insists on reading every night. Not sure where she got the books. Don't really care. Talks in her sleep. Just noises, though - no discernible words.

Zana: Hiding something important. Not sure what yet. Probably related to what happened to the previous group. Keeps checking on us.

Drox: Loudmouth. Does weapon drills late into the night. Sometimes I hear him patrolling around the camp early in the morning. He must sleep, but I don't know when.

--Al-Hezmin's Journal I (POE I)

... Sirius: Quiet, but when he does speak, speaks with authority. Likes Zana? Definitely something going on there.

Al-Hezmin: The greatest hunter alive.

--Al-Hezmin's Journal II (POE I)

... Sirius was the leader of the group of Exiles I recruited. Brilliant and determined, and a force to be reckoned with even before we travelled the Atlas together. We... grew close. ...

--Zana, "Sirius, The Awakener" (POE I)

... My younger brother, Baran, fell in with a radical by the name of Zana Caeserius some time ago. She's a bit of a famous one in certain parts. Many who have worked with her have ended up two pews short of a congregation, ranting and raving on street corners or accosting random citizens... you can see the cause for my concern. I've reason to believe she was working out of an old Templar Laboratory off the Square. ...

--Kirac, "Kirac's Brother" (POE I)

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## PURSUING THE SHAPER

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That creature you encountered out in the maps, he was... shaping things. Perhaps he's the architect we seek.

There was something off about him exile, something I can't place... Perhaps... no. This "Shaper" may have the answers.

Continue in your explorations, track this mystery man down once more and question him, so that we might be able to learn what exactly these worlds are for.

--Zana, "The Shaper" (POE I)

The Old Man: Zana knows him. Grandfather? Mentor? Either way, he doesn't seem to recognise her. Impressive powers. Must be careful around him. ...

--Al-Hezmin's Journal II (POE I)

My dearest Zana,

Where are you now? I hope, as a father often does, that you are happy and tucked away in the safest of places. I hope you grow up kind and strong, that you love and are loved. It is my life's greatest regret that I will not see you again, but I must do what I can to protect you from the evils of this outer dark.

I have failed against the Elder. To be honest, I never had a chance. The creature was too strong, too well versed in the shaping ways. If Venarius had not damaged the weapon I built, that day he arrested me in my study, then perhaps I could've opened a void, forced it from its physical shell and out of this reality. But I no longer possess such a device and the Elder has suckled at my mind so many times now, that I fear I could not remember how to rebuild it, even if I tried.

My war with the creature is far from over however. I've no upper hand. But like a cornered animal, I will bite until I am gone. I've attempted to sleep and awaken in Oriath, many times. Hoped that one night I might get to hold you in my arms once again. But instead of my study, I dream of nothing.

I know this letter might never reach you, but I write it anyway - if not for you, then for the sake of my own fragile wits. I love you my darling daughter, and hope the best for you, far away from all this... cosmic darkness. You've made me very proud, and I've considered each day a blessing that I've been able to call you my daughter...

I must keep moving. I must keep fighting. Perhaps one day, if the gods allow it, we shall see each other once more. I love you greatly.

Your Papa, Valdo Caeserius

--Book of Memories, Page 16 (POE I)

This world is not good enough for her, so I will make a better one. Nothing matters but the pursuit of perfection.

--Sublime Vision (POE I)

I've not been entirely honest... I'd suspected my father was involved in all this, now this memory fragment proves his engagement in ways I hadn't anticipated... I'm sorry for keeping the truth from you. I was worried that, had you known the truth, you would not have followed me into this nightmare...



Let's start over. I need your help. My memory is cloudy, but I'll tell you all I can recall. When I was a child, my father and I, we were... separated. I was told he was lost to that unearthly realm when the Atlas closed, and the men who feared it took it apart. I spent my whole life trying to track down its pieces and repair his machine. A few years ago, I did just that. But now that we've found him, something is not right... My father was a kind, temperate man. A good person and a loving human being. Nothing like that... thing you just saw! ...

--Zana, "The Hidden Architect" (POE I)

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## INVESTIGATING THE ELDER

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It appears my Father [sic] encountered this "Elder" sometime before his entrapment in its lair. Many of his most recent diaries make reference to the creature and his learnings around it. There wasn't much, just second-hand myths from the research journals of the Watchers of Decay.

One concept however, came up time and time again. This Elder is not a lord unto itself. It serves a greater master, or... a greater purpose... I'm unsure. It's confusing; both my father and the Watchers refer to the Elder as "coming from the nothing" while also being "a carrier for the nothing." There are also mentions of an unholy desire to spoil and decay... perhaps it all relates somehow to those fungal growths we've seen in the maps...

--Zana, "The Elder" (POE I)

This... thing, it appears to have been feeding on my father's memories. Should it eat its fill, he will be merely a hollowed out husk... A wraith and nothing more. Unless... If we were to locate more of these memory fragments, then perhaps we could restore his mind to him and free him from this nightmare.

...

It must be stopped, whatever it is. It seems to bleed Decay into the surrounding areas. If that voracious... mould that grows from its very shadow were to ever find its way into Oriath or Wraeclast... We cannot let that happen.

--Zana, "The Memory Eater" (POE I)

...the Elder has been free for the better part of two decades. Its taste in food could explain the steady disappearance of children in the upper class of Oriath.

What if those children are still here, in this place? Twisted, tormented creatures, clinging to whatever fragments of happy memories they've left... We must alleviate their sufferings.

--Zana, "The Elder's Victims" (POE I)

... The Demon: Bad, bad, bad. No discernable motives. No discernable weaknesses. Completely silent. Need to be really, really careful around it. Probably better just to run. ...

--Al-Hezmin's Journal II (POE I)

Baran is talking about God again, so I told him I need to go "write in my journal". What is it about the Templar training that results in such boring storytellers? He's nice enough, I guess. I just wish we could weaponise his stories somehow. Could probably just send the demon to sleep for good.

Yesterday I hunted a boar for the group. Today, Drox brought back two. Tomorrow I'll bring back three. Show that loud idiot that I'm the top hunter.

I know Zana can sense the tension between Drox and myself. I don't think she knows that I can sense the tension between her and Sirius. I've seen her making eyes at him. I've seen him making eyes at her too. I don't think either one of them knows the other is interested.

I thought Veritania was flirting with me, as she spoke with a smile for once, but I just had boar blood on my lip and it looked like a red moustache. After I wiped it off she went back to reading.

Shut up Baran. Shut up. Shut up. Shut up.

I forfeit. He wins. I'm going to bed.

--Al-Hezmin's Journal III (POE I)

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## ATTEMPTING TO SAVE THE SHAPER

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Exile, it is time to make our move. We must save my father. These memories were sundered from his mind in a moment of great violence. I fear only great violence will provide us the opportunity to return them.

I've scouted these worlds and I'm certain my father lies deep within the centre of the Atlas, but as suspected, he does not reside there unguarded. Four great brutes surround him, unpassable by me. If you were to go on ahead and remove those threats, then we will have a clear path to my father, and our little "operation" can begin.

--Zana, "The Shaper's Guardians" (POE I)

I think I understand it now... This Atlas, these maps... they aren't so much worlds as they are like the performance stage in the Theopolis Amphitheatre. These worlds are merely disguises for what truly lies behind the curtain.

This place... this is the nexus of the Elder's worlds, the place from which all its hunting grounds are formed... We are close to the void from which it was birthed, yet my Father [sic] has chosen this as his home. Curious indeed. Hiding in plain sight perhaps? Though, what captain regularly frequents

the bowels of his ship? Maybe the Elder rarely visits this place. It is busy, I suppose, hunting and feasting elsewhere in the maps...

--Zana, on The Shaper's Realm (POE I)

The way is clear. Though our agenda won't be without difficulty, exile. My father was a kind but stubborn man. If any of that stubbornness has survived, then restoring his memories will be no easy task.

We must enter this new realm of shadows at the centre of the Atlas and beat his madness into submission. Only then will his mind be pliable enough to remember these fragments as they are returned to his flesh.

--Zana, "The Shaper's Realm" (POE I)

Father, it's me! Let me help you!

--Zana, mid battle with The Shaper (POE I)

I'm so sorry father. I'm so sorry it came to this.

--Zana, on The Shaper's defeat (POE I)

You did not slay me. You saved me. I forgive you.

--A Father's Love Relic Vault (POE I)

His memories... of me... gone. Devoured by that abomination! Curse it! My Father will... he'll never know me again.

At least... At least I got to speak with him one last time. He recognized me. Did you see that, Exile? He knew my face! ...and now he's in torment once again.

If we cannot restore his memories, then we must free him from this prison. I can't believe I am to ask this of you, but we must defeat this Elder. Perhaps with it gone, my Father [sic] will give up his ghost and be finally laid to rest.

--Zana, "The Shaper" (POE I)

## THE FINAL BATTLE

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... The key to his private study back in Oriath! If what he said is true, then there must be some kind of weapon inside that can stop this "Elder". And stop it, we must.

I know I ask more than you've signed on for, but this creature - we've both seen the effects it has had on the maps. The Decay it spreads... that it births from its victims. If that Decay were to reach out of the maps, as I'm certain is its intention, all the world would be lost to those malignant spores!

...

--Zana, "The Shaper's Key" (POE I)

... Look, it seems my concerns were... justified. The Decay we've seen throughout the Atlas, it's here. Perhaps our activities in the Atlas might have weakened the barriers between this world and the maps. Without my Father's full strength to keep it at bay, the Elder's true master - Decay - is seeping through. ...

--Zana, "The Elder" (POE I)

This is it. The device that can save us. "The Cosmic Arcana." With it, we can force the Elder from the maps and into the abstract of non-reality. The only catch? We must use it at the Atlas center. The nexus of worlds where the veil is the thinnest.

That's where you come in, Exile. I need you to lure the Elder into that place. I will use the weapon to remove it from our world. Keep your wits about you though, my father is still at large. He was weakened in that last battle, but knowing his current lunacy, I doubt he's stopped fighting against the Elder. We must conduct this final effort with considerable care...

--Zana, "The Decay" (POE I)

I remember almost everything now about my Father's [sic] studies into the map device. I remember how he locked himself away to work on this weapon. I've managed to read his notes on the weapon while I was waiting for you to arrive. The science is... incomprehensible at best. Nearest I can tell, the Arcana exhibits a blast of wrath once it has been fully charged, and when directed at the Elder will force it to take on the form it held before it entered our dimension.

We know that form to be, as my father puts it, non-corporeal. In short - that which is not physical cannot exist in a dimension of physics. It will be forced out and back to where it belongs, hopefully unable to return. As I said, it is tenuous, but I trust my father, and this is the only hope we have.

--Zana, "The Cosmic Arcana" (POE I)

I always wanted a purpose. I wanted to find my place in life. Had I known just what it would entail, I probably would have tried to enjoy my purposeless life a little more.

I hate this place. I hate what it makes us do. I don't want to be in charge of these people, because I don't believe we will survive this, and it will be my fault.

If it weren't for Zana...

If it weren't for Zana, I'd probably still be miserable.

I'll do it for her.

--Sirus' Journal I (POE I)

I've done a fair bit of travelling in my life, as smugglers tend to. I'd seen some strange sights. Met some very homely, unsympathetic, and downright frightening individuals, usually 'round the pub. I thought I was as brave as they come.

What I saw today shook me to my core. It emerged from nothing, like mist rising from the water's edge, accompanied by dozens of shapeless... things. I felt my heart freeze. Goosebumps, everywhere, and I really mean everywhere. Its arms were tangled and many, its mouth an endless black abyss. It was the monster we were pursuing [sic]

I have never been more scared. Just being in its presence, I could feel my life being ripped away, dissolving like sugar in water.

I understand now just how great the stakes are. I wanted a purpose... well, now I have one.

--Sirus' Journal II (POE I)

We have cornered our foe in the heart of the Atlas. My heart aches for Zana. Her father is caught in the centre of this whole debacle, and I don't see any way he leaves this alive.

Drox has been unusually silent all day. Al-Hezmin has been checking and rechecking his supplies. Baran and Veritania haven't even argued. We all realise these may be our last moments of life.

To have spent so long pursuing wealth and notoriety... Gods, if only I could wind back the clock. Without meaning, without purpose beyond my own selfishness... So much time wasted.

If I survive after tomorrow, I'm going to tell her how I feel.

--Sirus' Journal III (POE I)

It's happening, isn't it? The Elder is on its way. We are at the end of the road, Exile. Does it look off into success? Or does the horizon hold nothing but death and decay? I hope you're ready, my friend.

We need to weaken the creature before the Cosmic Arcana can do its job. I wish you luck, and should we not meet again... it's been an honour to fight by your side.

--Zana, "The Elder" (POE I)

I, Baran, son of Galhad, being of full age and sound mind and memory, do make, publish and declare this to be my Last Will and Testament. We shall soon meet a cosmic abomination in battle in a place truly outside of all that is Good and Meaningful. Our chance of success, even by God's grace, is slim.

To my good friends and allies, Veritania, Sirius, Drox, and Al-Hezmin, I bequeath to you my staff and platemail. May you use it to seal the great evil that haunts these lands.

To my brothers and sisters of the Templar faith in Exile, Herules, Gomin, Cassia, and Landren, I bequeath to you my home in Oriath, that you might never be without one again.

Signed,

Baran, son of Galhad

--Baran's Journal I (POE I)

To the discoverer of this letter,

What transpired here in this strange and twisted realm is beyond comprehension. An evil older than time itself roamed these lands feeding on the memories of Valdo Caeserius, a son of Oriath.

Alas, the fiend that fed upon him was powerful beyond measure, and unerring in its desire to spread what we discovered was known as the 'Decay.' I know not how long we pursued the demon. Long enough that my allies began to show signs of madness. We'd surely have fallen to the evil were it not for Sirius' courageous leadership... and his sacrifice.

We could find no way to slay the demon, though we tried countless times. It was the daughter of Valdo who found a way to seal it, though it cost poor Zana her father, rest his soul. Our gambit would have failed were it not for Sirius. The demon would not give in, clawing its way from Zana's device. Sirius... He leapt onto it. We saw the demon tap into his body, at last relinquishing its grip. Sirius and the demon spiraled into the trap and out of our reality. Both gone. ...

--Baran's Journal III (POE I)

The Elder fed on all that gave life meaning until it encountered an unbreakable bond.

--Decayed Voidstone (POE I)

They left me. In my moment of need, they left me.

I remember seeing a light swallowed in an orb of darkness. Suspended. I remember its hands reaching out for something to hold. Desperation. I remember stepping forward. I wasn't thinking of myself, or of Oriath. I was thinking of my friends, and of my brothers and sisters whose lives depended on me. I remember its cold grip tightening, then I slipped away.



I remember... glass. Encased in glass. I couldn't move. Couldn't speak. But I could see everything. I saw everything. I saw everyone. Saw them leave. Saw her leave. ...

--Sirus' Journal IV (POE I)

We did it... It's over... it's finally over. My father, wherever he is, I can sense him. He's at peace... Thank you, exile.

The Arcana! It worked! And I wasn't worried for a second! Though... The Elder and the Decay... Although we have banished them both, the encounter has... changed me somehow. I feel the creature, scratching at the skin between our dimensions. It's desperate. It's hungry. It's... trying to find a way back in.

I don't think I'll sleep again for a long while. I need to make sure we are prepared in case it returns. Perhaps I'll restore the Watchers of Decay to guard our world... This place - the Atlas, is of the Elder. With more research it could give us further clues to the exact nature of the Decay. If you wish to, you're free to study and explore these worlds alongside me. Perhaps you could still do some good in this place - the Elder's victims - all those children... there must be thousands of them, wandering these lands, twisted and corrupted, alone - perhaps even afraid. Like my Father, they beg to be set free from their torment. Killing them would be an act of mercy. You could be an agent of that mercy, my friend.

For now, I must leave you. I need to prepare for my next expedition.

--Zana, "The Elder" (POE I)

# THE CONQUERORS OF THE ATLAS

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## THE NATURE OF THE ATLAS

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Like stepping into a dream...

--Duelist, on entering first map (POE I)

The first explorers took to the hills to discover the lay of the land, and watched with wonder as the land undulated, crashed and twisted.

--The Closest Peak Platinum Lex Proxima Watchstone (POE I)

There were seasons in this strange new place, but not of sun and snow. Seasons of stone that rose and fell like waves. Seasons of structure and growth and madness and chaos. Seasons of birth and decay that seemed untethered to cause.

--Restless Cycles Platinum Valdo's Rest Watchstone (POE I)

For a time, it was thought this place could seed an empire greater than any in history. The lands could be tamed, and commanded, they thought. But control, like all things in that place, was an illusion.

--The False Hope Platinum Lira Arthain Watchstone (POE I)

Not too long ago I'd have told you that maps were a beautiful mix of science, thaumaturgy, and imagination, that I need only picture a place to conjure a path to it.

I thought them a paradise waiting to happen, but they're more like a tempting morsel sitting below a massive cage. The hunter may be no more, but all the traps are still set.

--Zana, "Maps" (POE I)

The Atlas contains many strange manifestations, the least of which are mirror-cultures of Wraeclast. ...

--Zana, on a warband mission (POE I)

...somehow, memories can remain real in the Atlas... and lethal. Be careful.

--Kirac, on an Elder Guardian mission (POE I)

Memories resound in the Atlas, echoing forever.

--Influencing Scarab of Conversion (POE I)

I long thought corruption a phenomenon unique to Wraeclast, but you need only a passing glance at any one of the lands in the Atlas to see that something frighteningly similar, if not identical, has taken hold there.

Is it the corruption that is unique to Wraeclast, or is it the apparent lack of corruption elsewhere that's truly the rarity? Instead of lamenting the cursed continent, perhaps we should be counting our uncorrupted blessings.

--Zana, "Corruption" (POE I)

... There are times when I feel like the Atlas is watching me, observing me, and offering me a glimpse of my desires to keep me coming back. It's as though the deeper into it I explore, the more it wraps itself around my mind.

--Zana, "Exploring the Atlas" (POE I)

... Looking back, I think I was overly optimistic about what the Atlas could mean for... well, for everyone. Imagine limitless worlds, limitless resources, limitless open space in which to live.

But now I understand that it all comes at an insurmountable price. To dwell there is to leave yourself vulnerable to unspeakable madness. It's inescapable and insidious. It taps into your greatest desires, offering you a glimpse of what might be, and that temptation... it's all I could do to stop myself from falling into the same patterns as my friends...

--Zana, "Research" (POE I)

The group of exiles that slew the Elder was, unfortunately, not the first group I'd enlisted. The rest went mad or were slain much more quickly, and yet even the dead ones are still rattling around out there. ...

--Zana, on a rogue exile mission (POE I)

... The Atlas is a dangerous place. It assaults both body and mind. It makes Wraeclast seem positively tame. My team, my friends, they were deeply affected by the journey. The allure of power finally caused them to lose their grip on reality.

And it was only a matter of time until I joined them.

--Zana, "Exile" (POE I)

You have already done this before. You are caught in a loop.

--Tangmazu, on a random map (POE I)

... I thought we were done, but... but my companions just kept... returning. Over and over again, they would enter the Atlas, wiping clean entire worlds. It wasn't about saving Oriath, or discovery, it was just... killing.

The Atlas does strange things to one's thought processes. I thought at first the madness was a symptom of the Elder, but now... it's the Atlas itself. I'm sure of it.

But these exiles are now so strong... I saw no other choice but to destroy our only way out. I sealed us all in and waited for death to find us. ...

--Zana, on entering Hideout (POE I)

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## FALLING OUT

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My dearest Landren,

It seems we may never leave this strange place. Our guide claims the device we used to come here has been broken and cannot be fixed, and that it would take a miracle for a path home to open. Unfortunately, we know the value of miracles.

I can only hope that perhaps some intrepid explorers will discover this place and see to it that this letter finds you, though that could be a thousand years from now.

How I wish I could have spent but a few more moments with you, and felt your hand in mine just one more time. Fate has seen to it, that like our days in the Courts, duty must come before desire.

Know that I did it all so that you might be safe.

I hope you find happiness.

Yours eternally,

Baran

--Baran's Journal II (POE I)

## AL-HEZMIN, THE HUNTER

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When you spend as much time in the Atlas as we did, basic survival skills no longer suffice, and it becomes necessary to master the lay of the land. That's a tall ask in a place where the land changes from day to day, and yet Al-Hezmin took to it like a rhoa to mud. I could not count the number of times he saved us from getting lost in endless twisting caverns, or spotted the tracks of a dangerous beast far sooner than the rest of us would have.

Our praise must have gone to his head, because he began to strive to be the best at all times. If Drox brought back two boars from a hunt, he needed to bring back three. In battle, he had to deal the flashiest and most devastating blows, and he had to make sure we all saw him do it.

His fixation on honing his skills was actually quite useful during our campaign against the Elder, so at the time we thought nothing of it, but... It hollowed him out in some fundamental way. He was full of bravado, yet at the same time desperately afraid of being exposed as merely second or third best. He was never unkind to me, even as the madness crept upon him, but for capable warriors like Drox that threatened his self-image... A clash was inevitable. We slipped away in the dead of night, but I doubt we've escaped a man of his talents. He's out there, lurking and watching, waiting for the best time to strike...

--Zana, "Al-Hezmin, The Hunter" (POE I)

New Person: I don't recognise this one. Doesn't move like the other ones. More sentience. Saw them talking to Zana. Didn't see where they came from or where they went.

Seems strong. Stronger than a lot of the other exiles we saw. Would definitely have remembered this one if I'd seen them before. Maybe Zana hid them from us.

Not as strong as me though.

Going to lay some traps. Test them out. See what they are made of.

Then I'll kill Drox.

--Al-Hezmin's Journal IV (POE I)

Are you even real? I can't tell anymore.

--Al-Hezmin, three-stone encounter (POE I)

Home is a dream. I no longer remember why I fight.

--Al-Hezmin, four-stone encounter (POE I)

## DROX, THE WARLORD

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There is always another verdant hill over the horizon in these untouched endless lands. Once exiled and left with nothing, now I have found a realm where life can be built anew.

Now that the Elder and Shaper are gone, we can craft a kingdom of law and justice here. We can leave the militant domination of the Templars behind. No more will we have to fear those in power, for I shall be the one who leads, and by my strength the law will be equal and fair for all.

A dream, perhaps, but one that I can make reality through force. Each valley whose threats I fell is one more valley for the people I will one day bring here. They will be free, and I will be their lord, ruling by the people's respect rather than through fear or religion.

Drox the Just

--Drox's Journal I (POE I)

Each valley I secure adds to the width and breadth of my lands, yet when I return they seem populated by phantasms and twisted imaginings once more. Are the mists coalescing into feverish creatures as soon as I move on, or am I unable to find my way back along my own path? A kingdom lost in fog is no kingdom at all.

Yet I find that the mists hearken to my expectations in subtle ways as my strength grows. Perhaps I can control this realm with greater finesse as my might becomes unquestionable.

Yes, that is the key. I must grow stronger. Only then will my kingdom become real.

Drox the Mighty

--Drox's Journal II (POE I)

I strike harder and move more quickly with each passing clash. Always, I am on the verge of reaching that glorious flow of battle when my haste shall outmatch the mists. I feel it in my limbs, burning in my arms as I cleave the enemy in twain. It no longer matters what phantasm I fight, only that it falls in a single blow, making way for my next opponent.

The dream is close. My kingdom is nearly within my grasp. I will have it, even if it means I must fight ceaselessly and forever. Raw might flows through me, and exhilaration is my constant companion. My people will have their home.

Drox the Warrior

--Drox's Journal III (POE I)



The people hail their king! They cheer for the awe and power of my reign as I fell enemy after enemy in a blaze of golden glory. This is justice! Free lands for a free people, raising their hands and shouting their hopes out of the mists as I obliterate the enemies that fill these lands.

Finally, we are free, through the force of our arms and the blade of justice. I shall never rest, so that my people may fill the valleys of the Atlas and prosper. They will know me as they know the Sun, shining on them as I pass in a golden blaze.

Drox the Warlord

--Drox's Journal IV (POE I)

I've seen my fair share of combat, Exile, but never have I seen someone more comfortable on the battlefield than Drox. Though he was not our leader, he was our commander. When an impossible decision had to be made in the midst of battle, somehow, Drox always found the right path forward. He led us through numerous situations we thought fatal with an unflagging warm grin that let us know he believed in us.

But at some point, almost imperceptibly, Drox stopped making decisions for the group, and started focusing only on his new dream. His smiles turned to scowls. He remained fixated on this mad idea of building a kingdom in the Atlas. He became cold to Veritania and distant to the rest of us. All his efforts went towards securing the Atlas and establishing law. His obsession was putting us in danger, and that is something I could not tolerate.

When I led the group away from him, he either didn't notice, or didn't care.

--Zana, "Drox, The Warlord" (POE I)

Hahaha! Glorious freedom. Violence. Death! This is our promised land!

--Drox, four-stone encounter (POE I)

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## VERITANIA, THE REDEEMER

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This so-called 'Atlas' makes me uneasy. When the Elder and the Shaper fought for dominion, their territories made a certain violent sense. There was a known purpose behind the miscreations we fought. Now that those purposes are gone, these lands have reverted to a primordial malleable clay which seems to offer up our very desires as offering and appeasement.

Long ago, before I was exiled, indeed before I truly knew the uncouth adult realities of humanity, I wandered a hall of mirrors at a carnival in Theopolis. By flickering torchlight, I saw myself reflected into infinity, finally obscured not by any horizon, but by the darkening and shrinking of my own image as it grew more and more distant behind echoes of itself.

The mists of the Atlas are the same. There is no fog, no humidity, no obscuring and coiling haze. There is only my will, my thoughts, and my expectations, reflected as countless echoes through a vast and immeasurable space. A pure being might make this a paradise, but we are mortal, and brimming with vices.

Desire is the true enemy here.

Veritania the Disciplined

--Veritania's Journal I (POE I)

For a brief time before we lost Sirius, I would have called these fellow exiles friends. Perhaps, even family. A certain bond forms between those who believe they are about to die, and that kept us focused... but we did not die. Sirius sacrificed himself, and we won the day.

At what cost? We are drifting apart. Each of us sees that which we desire on the formless horizon, and each of us pursues our own path. I saw Baran continuing his crusade in a righteous wrath, though I know not how many days past, for the sun is false in this place. I suspect each valley I tread has a sun only because I expect it to be hanging in the sky. Does each valley only have a sky because I expect that, too? I no longer believe anything at all.

I would not call myself bitter, but I do see the others descending, while I remain steadfast in my convictions. Drox believes he can forge a new land here, with himself as king. His pride draws him ever further from me. Al-Hezmin seeks to hone his skills against ever more dangerous enemies in a vain attempt to be more powerful than Drox and Baran, a curious kind of envy that poisons both his soul and the land around him.

They are all becoming disgusting.

Veritania the Principled

--Veritania's Journal II (POE I)

I understand now. I must serve as the moral heart of this place. The others are lost in their own gluttonous pursuits. They have become naught but delusional addicts lost in a haze of indulgence, and the thought of them makes me nauseous.

I continue to fight the horrors out of the mists because I must keep them in check. The pure require strength to impose order on a chaotic world, and I cannot allow the likes of Al-Hezmin or Drox to spread their filthy vices.

Yes, I am the only one among us free of the hall of mirrors. I am the only one still thinking clearly. I have to get us out of here before it is too late... I am the only one that can save us.

Veritania the Pure

--Veritania's Journal III (POE I)

Loathsome, foul creatures! This 'Atlas' is infested with vice. In every direction, they emerge from the mists, dancing, laughing, eating, drinking, and cavorting in grotesque exaggeration of mortal frailties. The smack of their lips as they chew grates on my ears, the gulps from their bulging throats as they down their wine fills me with fury, and the embrace of coins and jewels and golden treasure makes me shudder.

Do you not see how repugnant you are? Stop consuming, stop partaking, and look at the abomination you have become! Every morsel you stuff down your gullet and every lie you tell yourself just makes you that much more monstrous. You are changing. You are misshapen. Your mouth bulges and grows, your eyes bulge, and your hands bloat. Do you not see yourself?!

I shall save you from your own vices by purging your weakness.

Veritania the Redeemer

--Veritania's Journal IV (POE I)

When I met her, Veritania was a paradox. She was quiet and reserved to the point of reclusiveness, yet she seemed to feel compelled to help others by a humanistic moral code she'd profess by the campfire. Before, she took care of the hungry, the down-on-their-luck, the homeless, the addicted, and the enslaved alike. She was, in fact, exiled for her charity work... helping one too many mistreated Maraketh or Karui made powerful people in Oriath very angry.

As we explored the Atlas, Veritania's mind became an invaluable resource. Thanks to her, we were able to stretch our limited resources farther than I could've possibly hoped, avoiding fruitless confrontations and conserving our strength for moments that mattered most. She'd see a bad situation coming sooner than anyone, and help steer us away from it.

But her mind, like the others, soon broke beneath the weight of the Atlas, and the once-merciful Veritania became contemptuous of all we encountered. It was impossible for anyone but Drox to meet her increasingly high standards. She broke away from the group not long after we left him. The last time I saw her, she accused me of using the mysteries of Atlas as a drug to distract myself from the loss of my father. After that barb, you can imagine I'm not too eager to see her again.

--Zana, "Veritania, The Redeemer"

(POE I)

Welcome! Time has no meaning here. Your pain will be endless.

--Veritania, four-stone fight (POE I)

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## BARAN, THE CRUSADER

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Like many of those once loyal to the Templar regime, Baran held particular contempt for his former brethren. Our mutual disdain for Dominus helped us bond. We stayed up far too late on many nights, discussing where science and spirituality overlapped... and where they clashed.

While I tended to agree with Veritania's secular view that people must be responsible for their own actions, Baran was still a firm believer that trust in God was necessary for good moral judgement. Despite everything the Templar put him through, his faith was unshaken.

We didn't always see eye-to-eye, but we respected each other's positions. Of course, once the madness set in, that respect vanished, replaced by fevered argument and name-calling. As the group dwindled, he found reasons to cast doubt on each of the departed. In our last fight before the two of us went our separate ways, he accused me of being sent by a shadowy demon to draw him away from the righteous path...

And then I was alone.

--Zana, "Baran, The Crusader" (POE I)

You seek the light, and you have found it. I am become God, Creator and Shaper of Worlds.

--Baran, three-stone encounter (POE I)

So that's it then. Baran can't be saved. Caeserius... did she understand the costs? Did she know the fate she was consigning my brother to? I've no small bitterness over how far she went to try to save her father, yet here we are, abandoning my brother to eternal madness. There's nothing to be done about it, but it still burns.

--Kirac, "Baran" (POE I)

In my heart, I do blame her for what happened to Baran. If he was simply dead, that would be one thing, but he's out there suffering eternal madness because of her. I can't deny that bitterness. ...

--Kirac, "Zana Caeserius" (POE I)

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## WATCHSTONES & THE RETURN OF SIRUS

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... It was all so quick. A thousand days and nights passed in a flash. Then...

Nothing. I felt nothing. No sadness or anger. No joy. No pain. No pleasure. I was free. Free to move, to go where I please. Free of desire. Free to see the universe for what it was.

Empty.

--Sirus' Journal IV (POE I)

... Sirius... None of us witnessed his return. His eyes did not move, he did not blink, and his mutterings... Mad and unceasing. Then his face contorted in ways I'd seen only from men possessed by the black spirit. He struck at us again and again. We could not restrain him. We had to flee that place. That is when we discovered our path home was sealed. Valdo's daughter had sabotaged our return.

I do not know how long we have been trapped here. Weeks, at least. Possibly years. Time in the Atlas is a mirage.

Please, dear reader, if you have an ounce of sense in your body, do not dwell here. Return to Oriath, or wherever it is you are from. Tell of Sirius' heroism and sacrifice, and leave him, and us, to die with the secrets we uncovered.

Baran, the Faithless

--Baran's Journal III (POE I)

He has gone silent. At long last, he has finally ceased his mad mutterings.

It was inescapable. No matter where we tread, where we hid, where we sought solace, his mutterings found us. Even when we splintered, his voice wrapped around our heads like a snake, squeezing every other thought into warped shapes. I could not hear God's whispers with such constant noise.

I dare not visit him now. I want only to escape this prison and punish that insolent blasphemer, Caeserius, for her foolishness. Then, perhaps, I will return here with an army, and take the Atlas. What better show of faith is there than the establishment of a nation in God's name? And then? Whatever God whispers.

He has shown me a door. The stones. The paths they reveal. I need only find the right key.

God almighty, I am your servant. I am your sword. I am yours, mind, body, and soul, and I promise I will deliver unto you all you wish to have.

Baran, the Blessed

--Baran's Journal IV (POE I)

When Baran fled, he left a stone behind. Superficially, it resembles a virtue gem, but I don't think that's quite what it is.

When we defeated the Elder, we didn't kill it. I don't think something like that can be killed. Instead, we sealed the Elder using a device designed by my father -- a design we salvaged from physical memories of his we found. When we sealed the demon, some of my father's memories were expelled, along with those of the Elder's countless other victims. They were muddled together, completely unparsable.

These stones are what's left of the Elder's victims from across aeons. Crystallised and concentrated, and drawing the latent energies of the Atlas towards them. To hold one is to hold countless lives in your hand, to fill your mind with a maddening mix of sounds and images and emotions.

I don't know if Baran knew what he had, but I think he knew what it did. They are intoxicatingly powerful. It took all my willpower to lift my hand from the stone and step away. ...

--Zana, "Baran's Watchstone" (POE I)

Each Watchstone contains an immense amount of information from the earliest explorers of the Atlas. ...

--Zana, "Watchstones" (POE I)

... I've begun finding altars like this one hidden in the spaces between maps. I'm worried the others are building them as a means of escape. ...

--Zana, "The Elderslayers" (POE I)

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## THE AWAKENER

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There's something happening to the Atlas... A storm on the horizon... a creek becomes a river... I'm not a man of metaphor, but I don't know how else to describe the crackling feeling of power on the wind. If the Atlas is a sleeping giant, our unknown force out there is slowly waking it.

--Kirac, "Awakening the Atlas" (POE I)

While you've been tracking the Conquerors, I've continually noticed swaths of devastation left by a force unknown. The land reshapes and awakens with riotous power afterwards, so I thought it might simply be a property of the Atlas, but now I see there's a pattern: a storm. There's a storm somewhere out there, massive beyond anything we've ever seen, and roaring with enough force to disintegrate anything in its path. That storm... I'd bet my eye we'll find our enigmatic Awakener right at the center.

--Kirac, on unknown awakener (POE I)

No... Sirius is still alive? Gods, I thought he was dead! He took the brunt of the energy released when we sealed the Elder. How did he survive?

Sirius was the leader of the group of Exiles I recruited. Brilliant and determined, and a force to be reckoned with even before we travelled the Atlas together. We... grew close. I was distraught when

he vanished with the Elder. At first I thought the other Exiles were looking for him as I was, but perhaps they knew he was still alive...

I have a terrible feeling that Sirius may be tied to the madness of the others. Or perhaps he is just as mad as they are. We need to find and stop him -- if the others are looking for a way out, I'm certain he is too.

--Zana, "Sirus, The Awakener" (POE I)

Exile, this is urgent. While you were gone, our Map Device began acting strangely. Vibrating, humming, aligning its gears as though being tugged by invisible strings. I fear I know the cause...

There's an enormous storm at the heart of the Atlas that has masked all information in that region since Sirius' return. Sirius wants to escape, and he may have found a way. A Map Device of his own creation, built inside the Atlas, for a journey back to Wraeclast. That's the only possible explanation for our own Map Device's erratic movements. Even that storm wouldn't be able to diffuse the energies of another Device.

We must hurry, Exile. If Sirius makes it back to Oriath... Gods... We must destroy that device, or all is lost.

--Zana, "Eye of the Storm" (POE I)

Agony born of ennui. Hate born of love.

--Awakening Fragment (POE I)

You want the Atlas? Take it. It's yours. But Oriath? Oriath I will burn to the ground. Perhaps the suffering of my fellow citizens will finally stir something.

--Sirus, before fight (POE I)

There is nothing left for me here. For a few brief days, destroying something real may make me feel alive again.

--Sirus, during fight (POE I)

You left me there, Zana... centuries alone in the Atlas... all I wanted was to feel something again...

--Sirus, on his death (POE I)

I'm sorry... Sirius... This was all my fault. I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry.

--Zana, on Sirius' death (POE I)



The man Sirius was and the entity that destroyed our homes are night and day. Whatever happened to him in the wake of the Elder's sealing stole the very essence of his being. When Sirius returned, he returned incomplete, missing that vital essence.

Not long ago I might've held hope that we'd find that piece out there, that the true Sirius might be drifting through the Atlas, waiting for us to find him and bring him home.

I know better now than to hope. Perhaps the Atlas has eroded that part of me, as well.

--Zana, "Sirus' Death" (POE I)

Was he an evil man? I think on it when I'm trying to sleep at night, because it seems the wound he gave me will never fully heal. It itches like rabid mudflies, damn latent disintegration eating away at me about the same speed as the skin naturally grows back...

Oh, but Sirius. I can't imagine being abandoned in darkness for a subjective eternity. I also can't imagine becoming so hollow that I would attack people I loved. I suppose, in the end, it doesn't matter. We did what we had to do... and we will again, when the time comes.

--Kirac, "Sirus" (POE I)

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## THE EXILE'S FATE & ZANA'S DEPARTURE

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You've not seen tragedy until you've seen former comrades forced into killing one another by circumstance. Sirius could have been our salvation against the coming darkness, had he not been consumed by his own. The powerful exile I was working with at the time gave [his/her] life to deal Sirius a near-lethal wound, and then eight hundred of the Vanguard died finishing the bloody job. I myself earned an injury that will never fully heal... and Zana... well, often the heart suffers deeper cuts than the body. That was the last time any of us worked with her.

--Kirac, "Sirus" (male/female versions) (POE I)

She's got a long and storied tale involving the Atlas and her father, but you'll have to ask someone else about that. I'm not one for gossip. All I'll say: our campaign in the Atlas resulted in the death of a man she loved. She seemed filled with despair after that, and then, that sadness became anger. I know what a desire for vengeance looks like, Godslayer. Someone's going to get what's coming to them.

--Kirac, "Zana Caeserius" (POE I)

... It was her work that enabled all of this. The Vanguard's foothold on the Atlas. The efforts against the mad Elderslayers. She even did some initial work with the exile The Maven first fancied as a

plaything. But when Sirius died... she quit. She walked off into the Atlas, and we haven't seen her since.

--Helena, "Zana Caeserius" (POE I)

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## ZANA'S FATE

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I'm so happy you're alive! I always wondered what happened to you. A shame about your father. He was the smartest man I've ever known. Of course I'll keep you apprised of my progress with the map devices! We should definitely correspond about the strange effect Kalguuran runes have on portals. I'll send more in my next letter.

--Isla, Oil-smudged Letter (POE I)

I do business with her as well, but she has asked me to keep those dealings private for now...

--Cadiro, on Zana (POE I)

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## THE SECOND FALL OF ORIATH

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Seems enough was enough. The Vanguard undertook the largest evacuation in history... hundreds of ships... and Oriath has been abandoned. After the domination of the Templar, then the crackdown under Innocence, then the slaughter at Kitava's hands, and finally the ruination by Sirius, it's clear our little island is no place for men to live. Even cursed, one could say, though we are not entirely blameless for those disasters.

No small irony that the Oriathan people now depend upon the Karui we once enslaved. I always said that if you kick a rhoa in the arse, one day, it'll kick you in the head, but I underestimated the honour of our new hosts. They're different after the death of their gods... and we are, too, after the departure of ours. I wasn't a believer, but I can feel it. We're on our own now.

We're going to have to work together to face what comes next...

--Kirac, on Karui Shores (POE I)

Faustus: Strange turn of events, eh Karui?

Whakano: Are you speaking to me, sir?

Faustus: Never imagined my people living peacefully with your people, let alone on your lands!

Whakano: No? Some would say you've been living on Karui islands for generations.

Faustus: Well, they were our islands by then, weren't they? Anyway, perhaps I should thank you.

Whakano: Me?

Faustus: Though our beautiful metropolis is now but smoldering ruins, you have given us a new home. A chance to build society anew. Hope.

Whakano: I didn't do any of that, sir.

Faustus: You know what I mean! Learn to accept a compliment.

Whakano: I'm sorry, sir. Allow me to return a compliment: Thank you for not trampling our homes, taking our children, our brothers and sisters, our wives and husbands, and binding their arms and legs when you washed ashore. Thank you for limiting your recolonisation to one island, and for breaking only a few of our laws and traditions in these early days.

Faustus: You're very welcome. See? It's not hard.

--Faustus & Whakano, "Banter B" (POE I)

## ECHOES OF THE ATLAS

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Its body contorts weightlessly in the vast emptiness, twisting and dividing, etching scars in the darkness. Light spills through the rift, and a vast army follows, clamouring to be seen and sanctified by the living abyss.

--The Envoy, 3.8 (POE I)

The emptiness shattered like ice, and through each crack rushed the tumult and mass, carving their place in existence with the desperate ferocity that attends every fight for life. Even the stars themselves began to vanish behind the tangle of grasping limbs and screaming mouths. Yet there was no predator but the one that lurked in the shadow of each newborn mind.

--The Envoy, 5.2 (POE I)

The eternal stillness was replaced by a billowing storm of movement; eyes and teeth reflecting the smallest of lights like furious and starving constellations. It felt instantaneous, but I cannot be certain. The time before held no meaning and left no mark.

--The Envoy, 5.3 (POE I)

They cried out for the milk of the mother and it was given. They danced rapturously beneath the nourishing rain, suffocating in the tangled amnion, falling one by one to the selfish scramble for survival.

--The Envoy, 1.8 (POE I)

They were bred in a cosmic ocean of raw creation. Feasting and drinking of the milk of the mother, they fought to the death for every last drop.

--Progenesis Amethyst Flask (POE I)

## THE SILENCE OF THE ELDER

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It lurched across these places with a hunger insatiable. It craved events past and prevented events passing. A mind like yours, so full of ideas and memories that flutter and swirl around you like smoke, would have been an irresistible temptation.

It went by a great many names. The Unraveller. The Child of Decay. The echoing whispers of history here give a different name. The Elder.

It served greater forces, as I do. Those forces are still at work, but the servant is gone, the home left vacant. For now.

--The Envoy, "The Elder" (POE I)

For an eternity, the darkness swelled within a ceaseless churn of its feeding, and then... silence. Such silence is deafening to those who listen for it. The abyss cast its gaze upon its source. The first lurching movement of boundaries drawn long before the dawn. A claimant has arrived. You may know who. You wish to know why.

The Maven seeks new conflict. Bored, she is, with the realm she has given. She is not the only one. The silence is deafening to all.

You fear The Maven. You fear she is The Elder, returned and emboldened. She is, and she is not.

The Maven serves not the Decay. She serves only her own amusement, passing eternity with an endless string of meaningless struggles.

She is not the Elder, but you are right to fear her.

--The Envoy, "The Maven" (POE I)

The eyes that dwell among the stars, each burning with envy and desire, roll and turn and focus on this place. It is the source of the silence. The beginning of the beginning. The point where that which roamed and fed ceaselessly was undone.

--The Envoy, 5.4 (POE I)

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## THE HISTORY OF THE ENVOY & THE MAVEN

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Good tidings, Nomad. I am a simple messenger from a place of great darkness and great distance, in a form most pleasing for those who must listen.

Those great and unreachable have heard the Silence echoing from that which once hunted here, and they have turned their gaze to this place. Rejoice, Nomad, for she approaches, and she seeks to witness your struggle.

--The Envoy, "Introduction" (POE I)

We are of one flesh, but two minds, two bodies. We are kin, both born of the tangled anarchy of the void, but we share not the same creator. She is my ward, and she is my prison. I am her protector, and I am her servant.

--The Envoy, "The Maven" (POE I)

Woven, were we, from thread spun in long-dead stars, in its image, to take on the image of those who needed to hear its message. I try to remember its shape and cannot. Try to fall into my past and cannot. I am anchored by you, Nomad. Buried and drowned by your presence, by my duty, as, far above, the thread weaves on, a serpent swimming across the ocean surface.

--The Envoy, 1.5 (POE I)

...the messenger from the stars was once a man, but before that, he was a father. A sliver of his heart still remains, somewhere deep inside... he knows something vital, but he doesn't know that he knows...

--Hinekora, 7 (POE I)

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## THE MAVEN

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Creation begets creation begets creation. Order and ambition urge progress, and time and entropy stay progress' hand. Her progenitor sought to test the limits of limitless power, to bear the burden of the creator and wade through time's mire. A meaningless obstacle in the face of eternity. But the silence deafened all.

--The Envoy, 1.4 (POE I)

She grappled with her being from the beginning. A lesson hid in everything that moved and everything that did not. What separated the two? Why did it move, why did it not? A life, she determined, was the difference. But she moved, and would never not, for that was my duty. Was she alive? She did not know, and I could not answer her.

--The Envoy, 1.6 (POE I)

Full of youth and vibrancy was she, that all was new to her. Imbued with a childlike wonder at once enlivening and exhausting. They sought novelties from far and wide at her insistence, never satisfying her curiosity, her lust for conflict and contest.

--The Envoy, 1.7 (POE I)

## THE ENVOY'S DUTY

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I thought myself different from the countless reflections I saw etched in the darkness. I am free, I thought. They are not. And each had the same thought, and each took the same path, and each befell the same fate. But I am different, I repeated, and heard its echoes forever.

--The Envoy, 2.4 (POE I)

I came across a bastion of flesh that towered above, smothering the stars. Those who followed in my footsteps did not halt, pushing me against the warm walls. I was crushed and swallowed whole, urged unerringly by those I led. I was welcomed into his embrace.

--The Envoy, 3.9 (POE I)

I was led into the darkness and given a torch burning with fury to guide my path to her. I felt her pull, felt the fires grow and lick and lash at my face. I was consumed by the journey and thrust into her care as a hollow shell, to protect and limit and never leave her. This would be my punishment beyond measure.

--The Envoy, 3.10 (POE I)

Each night the silence came and drove all thoughts of leaving into the inky black sea. I watched my hopes drown, watched them wash ashore lifeless and limp, adorning the sharp sands like clothes cast off with reckless abandon.

--The Envoy, 4.0 (POE I)

Duty is a blessing afforded to the fortunate, to the ones whose fates are given over to the weavers of destiny. We act without hesitation or thought to the murmurs of the lightkeeper. Though the path is illuminated by him, we do not see it, and do not need to see it. To look ahead is to fall to dust in the light.

--The Envoy, 4.4 (POE I)

## THE MAVEN'S ESCAPE

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She was the last of countless progeny bred to test the limits of limitless power. In the cosmic prison of her birth, her siblings fought each other to the death for supremacy. She alone reached her limit... and broke through.



--Impossible Escape (POE I)

She tried to flee, to leave the island prison of her making. Teeth gnashing, claws whirling like dancers to music I could not hear. But the prison walls towered so far above, lined with silent sentries armed with sharp spears that could pierce her shadow.

--The Envoy, 4.2 (POE I)

The great silence came suddenly and without warning and was deafening to all. The walls still towered but now folded and frayed to her touch. She fled and in doing so dragged countless in her wake. The invitation was clear and could not be refused. It was deafening to all, and we could not look away.

--The Envoy, 4.3 (POE I)

I tried to count the ones who followed her past the barrier but none did, or all who did fell to dust in the light. This was the duty of one alone, to hold vigil as nascence ripened and the raw and unshaped was forged in the heat of time's passage. My punishment would not be so easy to escape.

--The Envoy, 4.5 (POE I)

I followed her though I did not want to. I saw a moment, brief as a life, when I could stray and never return, and I did not take it. My thoughts were free and wandered and danced with abandon, but my form was ensnared and tethered.

--The Envoy, 3.2 (POE I)

## ARRIVAL OF THE MAVEN

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Halt, and heed this warning. The Maven has come, Nomad. She has come to witness you struggle. She has come to witness you conquer. She has come to ensure you are adequately challenged, and that, should you falter, your death does not go unsavoured.

She is waiting for you, Nomad, and she is not known to be patient.

--The Envoy, "A Warning" (POE I)

In the wake of the deafening Silence, she was drawn here. It pleases her that you, too, are here. You find yourself in her playground, scattered with toys for her amusement. You ceaselessly invoke

destruction, and in doing so, you gladden her. She delights in the clashes of blades, the relentless bloodletting, and the slaughters without mercy.

Silhouetted in starlight, she is forever learning and playing, unaware of the consequences of her actions. I have witnessed inordinate destruction at her behest. She is but a petulant infant, subject to the whims of her desires and unaware of her own strength. I care for her, though it is a joyless and thankless task. I am bound to her, imprisoned in servitude to her, acting as her protector and custodian.

--The Envoy, "The Maven" (POE I)

The Maven fixates on struggle and suffering. Such was the agony it created that it seeped deep into the fabric of the void. Its influence unseen but pervasive, filling every empty space with the recurring torment the Maven wrought. You feel it. You are filled with it. You are perpetuating it.

--The Envoy, 2.2 (POE I)

Conflict for my entertainment!

Relieve my boredom. Kill for me.

I want more fights. Always more!

It feels good when playthings die.

--The Maven, miscellaneous (POE I)

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## FIGHTING THE MAVEN

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You must rise from mere amusement to respected equal.

--Reality Fragment (POE I)

The Maven knew nothing of mercy until she herself needed it.

--Ceremonial Voidstone (POE I)

Caretaker! To me!

I am being hurt!

The toy refuses. The toy causes me pain. Is the toy... alive...?

I apologize to the toy. I did not realise... *you*... were like me...

I hope we can continue to play together.

--The Maven, on her defeat (POE I)

You force an intervention, Nomad. You have proved your might. You have proved your ignorance.

The Maven is a toddler, a nymph, a hatchling that has wandered too far and made a new nest in this realm. Her progenitor nears, drawn by Silence and conflict. Were I to allow you to continue, it would arrive to find its progeny wailing and maimed. Were I to allow you to continue, you would engender wrath immeasurable. To cease and still and grow cold is far preferable to punishment without end, punishment without time.

The Maven must be protected and guarded. A mercy for you both. Savour your remaining time, I urge you. Prepare for its arrival, I urge you.

--The Envoy, "Admonishment" (POE I)

## SIEGE OF THE ATLAS (CA. 1601 IC)

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It's hard to believe it's been a full year since you slew Kitava. This place is almost starting to feel like home. I left behind a piece of my heart in Oriath, even though I know we can never return there. Too many terrible things took place on that island. I think I agree with the popular sentiment that it was somehow cursed.

--Helena, "Kitava's Defeat" (POE I)

## THE CITIZEN VANGUARD

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Kirac's my name, Commander of the Citizen Vanguard. We're the front line, ensuring callous gods and bloodthirsty fiends never blindsides us again. The Templars kept the true nature of the world hidden from the populace, but now the rhoa's out of the sack, and we'll keep both eyes open. Or the one eye open, in my case.

--Kirac, "Introduction" (POE I)

Families. These courageous men and women have families. That's the difference between them and a traditional military. No disrespect to my old comrades in arms, but this organisation is not comprised of solitary violent-minded young men. The Citizen Vanguard is a volunteer effort filled with the ranks of ordinary people who are tired of the endless parade of doom and nightmare we call Wraeclast. I said we'd all have to work together to face what's coming, and that's exactly what we're doing.

--Kirac, "The Citizen Vanguard" (POE I)

We are the people's response to the madness of Wraeclast. We've had enough of corruption, gods, and would-be dictators. The last year or so, the Citizen Vanguard has embarked upon a celestial war in secret in a realm called the Atlas, and we've lost many valiant men in battle. We need all the soldiers we can get, so it's time for you to put your strength and wits to good use.

--Helena, "The Citizen Vanguard" (POE I)

They are probably better referred to as the Elderslayers now, but for a time, the Vanguard battled Baran, Veritania, Drox, and Al-Hezmin for control of the Atlas. The leader of the Elderslayers, Sirius, was far more powerful than the rest. Before they all went mad, he sacrificed himself to help seal The Elder, and they thought him dead... until he somehow returned, full of pain and ennui. He alone managed to escape the Atlas, and he took out his despair on Oriath, during our rebuilding efforts. As you can see, that triggered the evacuation, and we haven't returned.

--Helena, "The Conquerors" (POE I)

I can't help but feel a sense of hope that the people we have gathered are part of something greater. We're all utterly different, but something has brought us together here and now. Alva, with her blood thaumaturgy. Tane, with his dark science. Einhar, with his natural wisdom. Niko, with his machinery skills. Jun, with her combat prowess. Kirac's leadership, and your strength, make me confident that we can handle whatever the future brings.

--Helena, "These People" (POE I)

History, as I was taught it in Oriath, seems very skewed now. There were a great many events that were hidden from the public eye, and the use of map devices throughout the ages was one of those secrets. We know Maligaro experimented with one. There was also a map device in the possession of the Templars, though they did not know what they had. As far as we know, map devices can open portals to almost anywhere, even locations not of this world. We generally use it to enter the Atlas, although some of the exiles we worked with traveled to the domains of the Breach Lords. Those exiles were never heard from again, of course, but the portals worked.

--Helena, "The Map Device" (POE I)

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## THE CHANGING ATLAS

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The Atlas is a grave threat to mankind, a realm unlike any we've seen. It offers up your wildest desires, urging you ever onward into madness and danger... and yet, it may be our greatest defence as well. The Atlas draws the attention of eldritch creatures that would otherwise destroy us without a second thought. It's too dangerous to interact with, but too valuable to be left alone. You can see the position that leaves us in.

We used to have the Atlas fully mapped, but it changes. It grows. After recent major events, it completely changed form. We've started from scratch at a moment we can ill afford to be blinded. The more you explore the Atlas, the better our chances of survival.

--Kirac, "The Atlas" (POE I)

Quite a bit has happened in the Atlas already. Suffice it to say, we have it on ominous authority that some unknown 'they' are coming. Judging by the one who gave us that warning, all of Wraeclast would be in jeopardy should 'they' take notice of us. It's best for everyone if we draw a hard line in the sand across the Atlas and keep them busy there instead.

--Kirac, "The Coming Darkness" (POE I)

## SEEKING THE MAVEN'S HELP

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You encountered The Envoy? This is exactly what I was hoping for. He's an enigmatic being, but he never strays far from his ward. He serves and guards a being called The Maven, and she is the true reason I've asked you to work with us. She is... a horrific abomination of a similar kind to the ones that are on their way. You might think I'm crazy for seeking her on purpose, but she may be the only one who can help us. You'll understand when - and if - you find her.

Something dark is coming, Godslayer. Time is short. Keep exploring the Atlas. Where The Envoy resides, The Maven cannot be far.

--Kirac, "The Envoy" (POE I)

You've found The Maven! Then perhaps we have a chance after all. Do your best to win her over. She's drawn to conflict — the bloodier, the better. Try working your way deeper into the Atlas. Entertain her with combat. She might just aid her 'favourite toy' when the time comes.

--Kirac, "The Maven" (POE I)

## THE MAVEN'S TOYS

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The Maven is a powerful entity with a penchant for forcing combatants to fight to the death. Then, she resurrects them to do it all again, over and over. She's tortured more than a few of my men and added them to her collection... my own brother included.

A previous exile worked with her on our behalf, catching her interest for a time. That didn't last. Don't let her make you part of her collection.

--Kirac, "The Maven" (POE I)

My brother, Baran, was one of the Elderslayers. I'm immensely proud of him for that, but the toll of that victory was too high. It cost him his sanity. In my first campaign in the Atlas, I worked with an exile who was forced to slay him. It couldn't have ended any other way. I thought that would be the end of it... but The Maven 'collected' Baran and keeps resurrecting him for her sick games.

When all this is through, there will be a reckoning with that creature. Mark my words.

--Kirac, "Brother" (POE I)

Murky waters have cleared, giving light to the past. Silence befell this realm at the hands of the Nomad. Silence befell this realm at the hands of the six. As one, they achieved the impossible, but

scattered and alone, they were vulnerable. She keeps them still, her four prized trophies, a source of unending amusement. Two remain elusive, much to her ire...

--The Envoy, "The Elderslayers" (POE I)

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## THEY ARRIVE

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After all this time, all this dread and waiting... they're finally here. This is it, Godslayer. A struggle for the fate of Wraeclast. From what I can gather, the Atlas is a tempting treasure that keeps these creatures occupied. So long as we wage war in the outer realms, Wraeclast is safe. Should we lose the Atlas to their control, it will only be a matter of time until they take notice of us... we are nothing to them, and that is our greatest opportunity. Aid The Maven. Pit these entities against each other. It may be our only chance.

--Kirac, "Enemy Entities" (POE I)

They set foot upon this realm as a challenge to The Maven. Omnipotent and merciless, an eternity of suffering underlies and begets the annihilation they wreak.

Their power is an insurmountable summit. You will not give them cause to falter. The Maven stakes her claim here, and only her voice might give them pause. Cling to her, Nomad, and pour all your hopes into the Struggle.

--The Envoy, "Their Arrival" (POE I)

The veil of constancy drew all beneath its shadow into a steady sleep bereft of the petty squabbles that hemmed the time before time. Those who seek to seize The Maven's new realm are chained by that constancy, for they are as foreign to each other as they are to you. Were conflict even possible, it would rend the very cosmos asunder. Order requires that mortal champions are wagered and set against one another. The Maven's claim here depends upon victory, Nomad. Do not disappoint her.

--The Envoy, "The Struggle" (POE I)

The weavers of destiny do not share knowledge of the path. The murmurs of the lightkeeper are not for our understanding. He illuminates the way forward, but our eyes are ever locked downward on the steps we take, marking each moment in tireless sequence. Only the progenitor may cast its gaze forward, birthing new ambitions apace as the old turn to dust in the light. In this cold conflict, an Impulse emerges. The winter forest grows, and does not burn. Not a miracle, not a gift, not a thinking mind. Simply the way it must be, so that existence may be.

--The Envoy, "Order" (POE I)

## THE CLEANSING FIRE

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An intellect of blazing suns and black stars scours the firmament in search of all that is and all that shall be. The Cleansing Fire desires omniscience, but it does not understand what it learns, nor does it care to. The minds etched into ashen captivity by the disintegrating light of clarity are nothing more than motes, droplets amidst the tempest, a fan to the flames of the inferno. This obsession leaves it blind to the path set before it by the lightkeeper.

--The Envoy, "The Cleansing Fire" (POE I)

The minds of those studied utterly by the Cleansing Fire continue to think and dream and beg for silence...

--Forbidden Flame Crimson Jewel (POE I)

We awoke to a sudden dawn cresting through the mountains. Each peak rose into searing fire, a massive roiling tide. A great eye gazed upon us, and we became known—utterly.

--Dissolution of the Flesh Prismatic Jewel (POE I)

Where that searing dawn fell, silence reigned.  
We sought the shadows, but none remained.

--Sudden Dawn Steel Circlet (POE I)

Those that escaped the annihilating light sank eternally into crushing darkness.

--Polaric Devastation Opal Ring (POE I)

... The Cleansing Fire seems to be a colossal brain composed of 'blazing suns and black stars' that developed the ability to think, and has spent eternity voraciously seeking knowledge at the expense of disintegrating everything it studies. Somehow, it even keeps a library of minds, refusing to let those it has annihilated actually cease to exist. ...

--<https://www.pathofexile.com/forum/view-thread/3245186> (POE I)

Pray that the flames find fascination, for the true end follows when the great eye closes.

--Annihilation's Approach Dragonscale Boots (POE I)



## THE TANGLE

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The wind speaks in silver whispers, barely perceptible to those lost in the mire. The sky is tinged with screams of pain. They cry out in agony from the depths of The Tangle, for they are ever-consuming and eternally consumed, their hunger forever insatiable. Their misshapen mass drags itself across the firmament in search of ecstasy, each limb grasping in a different direction, each mouth desperate for a different escape from pain. So overcome, it cannot fathom the will of its progenitor, nor any other.

--The Envoy, "The Tangle" (POE I)

A multitude of beings share a wretched existence irrevocably bound together in perpetual torture.

--Inextricable Fate Fugitive Boots (POE I)

The bodies of those wholly subsumed by the Tangle continue to merge and mutate and cry out for release...

--Forbidden Flesh Cobalt Jewel (POE I)

Lost in a sea of limbs and screaming faces, they claw for any fleeting pleasure which might dull the pain.

--Ceaseless Feast Spiked Gloves (POE I)

To eat, to feast, to forget the horror of endless agonising existence if but for a moment... only to disgorge and do it all again...

--The Gluttonous Tide Citadel Bow (POE I)

We awoke to a sudden jungle rupturing the valleys of our home. Grasping limbs coiled around us, into us. We sank into each other, then rose into the living sky. My family screams alongside me still.

--Melding of the Flesh Cobalt Jewel (POE I)

He reached for his home one last time, a shining jewel among the stars... only to watch in horror as it ruptured and shattered under a tide of limbs.

--Black Zenith Fingerless Silk Gloves (POE I)

That which could not be digested remains lost within, the buried remnants of whole cultures, of entire worlds.

--Visceral Reliquary Key (POE I)

...the Tangle is some sort of horrific mass of organic beings melded together, and every one of those beings is pulling and clawing away eternally, trying to escape the pain and pursue even the smallest pleasure or consumption to distract themselves from the agony of their horrible existence. The more those trapped in the Tangle reach out, the more beings get absorbed, making the whole thing even more painful and cacophonous. ...

--<https://www.pathofexile.com/forum/view-thread/3245186> (POE I)

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## THE BATTLE FOR THE ATLAS

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### THE CLEANSING FIRE'S CHAMPIONS

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Take this device and use it to extinguish The Cleansing Fire!

--The Maven, on giving the Luminous Astrolabe (POE I)

With this new piece of equipment, we can hunt The Cleansing Fire's footholds on the Atlas. Attack them on her behalf, and we can set them up to fight each other instead of us.

--Kirac, "Luminous Astrolabe" (POE I)

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### THE BLACK STAR

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Once within the grasp of the Black Star, there can be no escape.

--Polaric Invitation (POE I)

This key glows brighter in proximity to the Map Device, as if it's trying to tell us it wants to be used. It will take you beyond the Atlas itself, to some unknown place in the celestial realm. Rather than defending known lands, this will be an offensive mission into enemy territory. Wherever it leads, be ready for a skirmish.

--Kirac, "Polaric Invitation" (POE I)

Maven! The Challenge begins! Your champion will fall.

--The Black Star, at start of fight (POE I)

Champion against champion. So it must be.

Ready yourself, my champion. I cannot aid you in this battle.

--The Maven, on The Black Star fight (POE I)

The dark light fades...

--The Black Star, on its defeat (POE I)

Webs span between countless stars both blazing and black, a shroud of intellect eternally hungry for knowledge. The destruction of a single neuron goes unnoticed by the mind at large. The Maven's claim stands, but the challenge continues.

--The Envoy, "The Black Star" (POE I)

Our strategists believe that by defeating The Black Star, you've strengthened The Maven's claim on the Atlas. No cause for celebration just yet, though. This is far from over. By all accounts, there's something far more deadly ahead. Be ready, Godslayer.

--Kirac, "The Black Star Defeated" (POE I)

## THE SEARING EXARCH

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Constellations are systematically incinerated in the wake of an ever-expanding archive of minds.

--Blazing Fragment (POE I)

In a void strewn with incandescent stardust, the emissary of flame traverses interplanetary space consuming the knowledge of fallen civilisations.

--Dawnstrider Vaal Greaves (POE I)

The Searing Exarch spread the Word of Enlightenment for countless eons without ever understanding its master's message.

--Omniscient Voidstone (POE I)

From the corona of an ancient star, the Searing Exarch seeks to master the Atlas.

--Incandescent Invitation (POE I)

That key is not a mechanism, nor a map. It appears to be an invitation. Brace yourself for battle. The Cleansing Fire's champion will be ready for you.

--Kirac, "Incandescent Invitation" (POE I)

Your absurd defiance ends here, hatchling.

--The Searing Exarch, at start of fight (POE I)

The Cleansing Fire's champion must fall.

I shall aid my champion in this battle, if needed.

--The Maven, on The Searing Exarch fight (POE I)

The hatchling... Surprises...

--The Searing Exarch, on its defeat (POE I)

My lady bids you farewell, Exarch. This is her kingdom!

--Duelist, on The Searing Exarch's defeat (POE I)

The blazing iridescence that seared the firmament for a timeless time now flickers cold for the briefest of moments. The enlightenment of its master has been impeded by your victory. The Maven is triumphant... for now.

--The Envoy, "The Searing Exarch" (POE I)

I'm glad you survived your battle with The Cleansing Fire's emissary, but I suspect this is hardly the end of The Maven's battle for ownership of the Atlas. Keep fighting as her champion, Godslayer. She's the best of our terrible options.

--Kirac, "The Searing Exarch Defeated" (POE I)

## THE TANGLE'S CHAMPIONS

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Use this device to rid me of my opposition!

--The Maven, on giving the Flesh Compass (POE I)

So The Maven has given you a tool to begin hunting The Tangle. I knew finding her was our best shot at facing these abominations. Attack it on her behalf, and we can begin setting them against each other.

--Kirac, "Flesh Compass" (POE I)

## THE INFINITE HUNGER

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The Infinite Hunger awaits in a cosmic stomach where whole civilisations are digested - but do not die.

--Writhing Invitation (POE I)

My engineers have looked at that key... it's some sort of purposeful invitation, almost ceremonial in design. If you put this in the Map Device, it will open the way to somewhere far beyond the Atlas. It's about time we went on the offensive. Prepare yourself for a bit of a tussle.

--Kirac, "Writhing Invitation" (POE I)

It is champion against champion. Mine will be victorious.

--The Maven, on The Infinite Hunger fight (POE I)

Foolish Maven, come to feed me her champion!

--The Infinite Hunger, at start of fight (POE I)

Death... is meaningless...

--The Infinite Hunger, on its defeat (POE I)

An open maw is merely a gateway to a labyrinth of stomachs that can never be filled. The destruction of a single mouth does not stem the tide of the ceaseless hunger within. The Maven's claim stands, but the challenge continues.

--The Envoy, "The Infinite Hunger" (POE I)

Our best researchers believe you've just won some sort of ritual for control of the Atlas against The Tangle. Defeating The Infinite Hunger is just one stage of the conflict, however. It can never be simple, can it? Keep up the pursuit, Godslayer. There's something much worse out there, readying itself.

--Kirac, "The Infinite Hunger Defeated" (POE I)

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## THE EATER OF WORLDS

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At the core of the mass, a fierce hunger seethes, as the Tangle's champion devours a myriad of worlds...

--Devouring Fragment (POE I)

The Eater of Worlds consumed for countless eons to satiate the desperation of masters that could never be satisfied.

--Grasping Voidstone (POE I)

From the heart of the Tangle, the Eater of Worlds reaches out for control of the Atlas.

--Screaming Invitation (POE I)

This is it, Godslayer. That key is an invitation to face The Tangle's primary champion in some far-off realm. The enemy is expecting you, so stay wary.

--Kirac, "Screaming Invitation" (POE I)

This is not a battle you can win, hatchling.

--The Eater of Worlds, at start of fight (POE I)

I will not let The Tangle's champion claim the Atlas!

The Tangle has empowered their champion. I shall do the same.

--The Maven, on The Eater of Worlds fight (POE I)

You deny us... escape from pain...

--The Eater of Worlds, on its defeat (POE I)

Spires grow upon conquered ground at the behest of The Tangle's emissary, marking troves of screaming flesh to be consumed. The destruction of the herald balks the hunger within. The Maven's claim stands... for now.

--The Envoy, "The Eater of Worlds" (POE I)

You've given The Tangle's champion a beating, but this was only one part of some ritual of ownership between eldritch entities. You've solidified The Maven's hold on the Atlas, but I doubt this is the end of the conflict. Stay wary.

--Kirac, "The Eater of Worlds Defeated" (POE I)

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## THE MAVEN'S VICTORY

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Oh, what a delight! We've won! The Atlas is ours.

Now I can play with my best friend, forever.

Or at least... until the others arrive to challenge me for this realm...

But we won't give it to them, now will we?

--The Maven, on all bosses defeated (POE I)

Two claimants have arrived, desperate in their hunger. Two claimants have been turned away. The Maven and the Nomad stand bloodied and victorious, but time is fleeting, and time is eternal. The enemies outnumber the stars in the sky. The enemies are the stars in the sky. Mark this as the moment you finally understand the insurmountable weight of the approaching tide. This is not the end. This was merely the beginning.

--The Envoy, "Not the End" (POE I)

By the gods, you actually did it! You did battle with those eldritch fiends and lived to tell the tale. You've bought us some time, Godslayer. For the moment, The Maven has full control of the Atlas, and she's content to play there and leave us alone. Keep doing what you're doing... very carefully.

--Kirac, "A Moment's Respite" (POE I)