Story Summary

A Call to Adventure!

Introduction

As you step into the outskirts of Luna Pines, the verdant canopy of the dense forest provides a natural ceiling for the lively scene below. The air is infused with the aroma of wildflowers and the distant melody of a lute. A dense crowd have gathered in anticipation for the Festival of Harmony.

Elven families adorned in vibrant attire move gracefully through the crowd. Children with pointed ears chase each other, weaving through the legs of adults. The air is filled with snippets of conversations, creating a tapestry of voices. A firbolg mother urging her three children not to go near the baby dire geese, a drow guard in shining insectile armour complaining to his partner that his gauntlet was crushed by a hulking orc while arm-wrestling, and a pair of young dryads in swimwear hollering as they rush toward the banks of the azure waterfall. Throngs of people, most of them elven or fey weave their way through the crowds, laughing, singing, running, and sightseeing.

Banners showcasing a meat-pie eating contest, while another is emblazoned with the words "Riddles and Rhymes: Unbeatable Riddles!" The festival is yours to explore—where do you want to go?

The Festival of Harmony

The festivities kicked off with a pie-eating contest that drew laughter and cheers from the crowd. As participants dove face-first into sweet, fruity concoctions, the aroma of freshly baked pies wafted through the air. Moon, Myzcali, Tap Tap, Manhik, Zylnaera, and Torrin would emerge victorious over the day.

Herbert and Elspeth, the lovely firbolg couple, hosted a rice harvesting event under the azure sky of Luna Pines. Some teams of two struggled to cut down the rice stalks, while others chose a more...fiery approach. Torrin and Mini (7 min), Zylnaera and Masson (8 min) , Falner and Tap Tap (6 min) where able to encourage one another to victory and embodied the spirit of teamwork.

The arm wrestling challenge, overseen by a local guard saw contestants pitting strength against technique. The ring echoed with cheers and groans as competitors showcased their might, creating an atmosphere of friendly rivalry. Bronwyn, Gethin, Zylnaera, and Blyze were able to show off their muscles!

After a rocky start where Yensen had to calm down a rising mob against a very punchable goblin, a race against the river's current tested the agility and determination of participants. Navigating through the water, they vied to retrieve a spear. Yensen, Velda, and Moon as an Orca were able to set new course records. Moon also cheekily created a large wave to push everyone else across the line.

A labyrinth, masterfully crafted and watched over by a diligent aarakocra, invited participants to test their wit and agility. The twists and turns of the maze mirrored the unpredictable nature of life....Luckily few people lost their way this year.

A strange creature, a male hag, curiously watched over a small riddle games of dragons, celestial objects, and poison. Though it is uncertain how much attention they could possibly have paid as they were asleep the entire time! Nevertheless, the adventurers proved their wit and Icarus had a lovely conversation with the hag.

A pack of predatorial, gargantuan geese were let loose to challenge fair goers to herd them back into their pen. Luckily, no one was seriously maimed but who honestly thought that this would be a good idea? Numen will have her hands full for a while.

Race for the Crystal Flower

As the sun dipped lower, the climax of the festival unfolded—the race for the Crystal Flower. Even the nobles and the High Magister Lady Seraphina came to witness this grand spectacle. The points were tallied, teams were formed and at the beat of the drums, the adventurers were let loose one by one to fly into the sky and scale the mighty pine tree and traverse through enchanted fey landscapes.

The teams faced the gargantuan pine tree, its branches reaching towards the sky. Verdant, bioluminescent arrows guided them along the trunk, through clouds and branches, and into a realm where the mid-afternoon sun mingled with silvery moonlight.

Thick branches animated to block their path and after some trial and error everyone was able to push through tiny gaps while Ferren tried to set the place on fire. Hopefully, that was taken care of... Soon afterwards they reached a split in the path, each direction marked by arrows, one delving into mid-afternoon sun, while the other darkness. The choices were evenly divided.

Some people took the path to the left which spiralled high into the sky and they were blocked by a pair of pillars guarded by ravenous bone white vines. Unfortunately, this is were Icarus had to part with their mighty steed. Pushing through, they would find themselves in an enormous cavern blocked by a landside to one side and a crack in the 100 ft tall dome leading somewhere. Marielle and Moon were even able to find a secret treasure. Most opted to clear the landslide while Moon, Effie, Sam risked flying towards the crack where they discovered a rainbow road filled with hundreds of voices vying for their attention and discovered a shortcut. Effie would hear one voice asking them to find a hidden sanctuary.

Marielle and co. pushed past the landslide and after a brief swim in some very questionable ponds, uncovered a scroll and encountered several schools of vicious flying fish! Nope! Get right out of there!

Meanwhile, down the shadowed path, the contestants would find areas to be bathed in darkness. Velda noticed a glint at the bottom of a deep hole and flew down to investigate. This is where they encountered a pink flying dolphin which telepathically sung sea shanties. Their team immediately fled and left the carnage of the dolphin to the trailing teams.

Next they would have encountered a steep, narrow, verdant tunnel that blasted all with a devastating gust of wind. Unfortunately, this is where Bronwyn, Gethin, and Myzcali had to throw in the towel. However, with some rope play from Irmisz they would help their team cross the wind tunnel. Meanwhile, Mathias would destroy the tablet and turn off the magical wind, allowing everyone else to pass. What a great guy!

Not all was bad though, Moon was able to jump into a pond where they temporarily gained an enhanced polymorph and Sam found a sentient blade that was convinced they were a weapon. Weren't the nicest either...

The adventurers then slowly converged in a crystal chamber where the saturation was turned up to 11! This is where they met the Autumn Fey Lirael and their Moon dragon companion Nalunthir. They fiercely fought the adventurers while offering words of advice. Icarus and Masson helped out the other teams, there is no I in team afterall, while Umberlee's wave returned the favour. Though not all was good times as Marielle made an enemy of Valshoon. Many people tried to claim the Crystal Flower around Nalunthir's neck, Irmisz and Yensen came close but it was Marielle who was able to snatch victory and claim their team the title!

Nalunthir transformed into a humanoid creature and summoned a verdant portal which must have been tampered with as several people found themselves inside a cavern that opened up to the midnight, starry sky. Here they would find a locked golden tome that instigated a vision where a female human, adorned in a peculiar leather armour and tattered white dress, with a shield strapped to her back, and curly auburn hair framing a face that bears unspeakable melancholy would call herself Regna and plead for help from the adventurers. She would pray to the Knowing Mentor and the Dawnfather as she asks for salvation. She requests that they take the tome and visit the site of an evil temple....

Then they would be back in the town centre where they would celebrate their victory in the race and celebrate late into the night. The winners of the race would even receive a golden meddalion depicting a solar eclipse poking out from a mighty tree.

Part 2

Background

The party is drawn to the ominous Betrayers' Rise, a place of torment and mystery. Guided by visions of a kneeling woman in chains and armed with the "Trine of Memory," a powerful relic, they are determined to uncover its secrets and rescue Regna, a figure trapped in an unknown plane of existence.

The Reversed River

The group, consisting of **Effie, Ruigh, Lyndon, Sam, and Alaric**, would venture through the uphil flowing babbling brook filled with multi-coloured fish that would effortlessly pass through the river bed. They would encounter an overturned and ransacked travellers caravan with several bodies and some loot. Ghostly wisps would pull them away deeper into nature.

The Dense Forest

The group, consisting of **Ulgo, Torrin, Funakoshi, Elora, and Orix** push through a humid, dense rainforest with a sweet, intoxicating aroma. They would come across a tiefling and their Moorbounder Rice Pudding surrounded by forecious moorbounders that threaten to eat them alive. They are able to save the tiefling easily!

The Mushroom Desert

The group, consisting of **Savitri, Atlan, Bromir, Moonsilver, and Zylnaera**, advance with caution through a desert comprised of towering singing mushrooms. There is a putrid scent from an immense, fallen body of an ape-like monstrosity surrounded by dead guards. Above, a vrock circles the scene, The group make short work of the demon

The Loop and the Acorn Sisters' Grove

The adventurers, having traversed various terrains and faced numerous trials, find themselves at the Acorn Sisters' Grove, a mystical druidic sanctuary protected by Lanata and Robur, high priestesses of Melora, the Wildmother. This grove serves as a temporary refuge in the demon-infested lands of Xhorhas, offering weary travelers a place to rest, trade, and share knowledge.

- Elora, Aster, and Alaric speak with Justice, a Tiefling traveler who explains the purpose of the grove as a safe haven amidst the demon-infested wastelands. They inquire about the Acorn Sisters' customs and how to show proper respect.
- Orix, Ruigh, and Zylnaera interact directly with the Acorn Sisters, who speak cryptically about the balance of nature and require offerings that carry personal meaning and essence rather than simple material goods.
- Orix constructs an intricate stone tower, an homage to the cycle of nature, knowing that time and the elements will inevitably topple it.
- Elora offers a song from her homeland, singing a haunting melody about war, loss, and remembrance, reflecting the burden of history carried by many in the party.
- Zylnaera presents nut and syrup cakes, a staple of her people, representing survival, community, and shared labor.

The Acorn Sisters accept these tributes, and by morning, Elora, Orix, and Zylnaera awaken to find charms woven from wildflowers, bark, and thread around their necks, subtle boons granted by the Wildmother’s favor.

As the adventurers prepare to leave, Zylnaera approaches Justice, presenting him with a broken flute engraved with the initials J.S., which she found at the site of a battle between Aurora Watch soldiers and a massive ape-like fiend. Justice recognizes it as Piccola, his cherished flute from childhood, which he thought had been lost in the Moorbounder attacks.

Meanwhile, Orix copies maps and gathers intel from the Aurora Watch, confirming that the Betrayers’ Rise is located in Dro’Kan, the very epicenter of demonic incursions. The adventurers realize that their path forward will be fraught with danger, and Dro’Kan is ground zero for the horrors they have been chasing.

Arrival at Dro'Kan

The adventurers arrived in the war-torn town of Dro’Kan, a bleak and crumbling outpost set against the looming backdrop of the Betrayer’s Rise. The settlement was constantly under siege by horrors spilling from the fortress, its defenses maintained by the battle-weary Aurora Watch, led by Taskhand Verin Thelyss. From the start, Verin was skeptical of the adventurers’ abilities but allowed them to prove their worth.

Their investigation led them to several factions vying for control or knowledge within the Rise:

- **Aloysia Telfan**, an ambitious occultist with unclear motives.
- **Prolix**, an archaeologist from the Allegiance of Allsight, obsessed with deciphering an ancient puzzle box.
- **Question**, a quirky but brilliant researcher from the Cobalt Soul, eager to uncover the truth of a lost Calamity-era Champion tied to the Rise.

Unraveling the Secrets of the Betrayer’s Rise

Before venturing into the fortress, the adventurers prepared by gathering intelligence from the Ready Room Inn and the barracks. They encountered a wounded triton named Yesnen and her companions, who had survived a previous skirmish with the gibbering mouthers.

- The party were attacked by gibbering mouthers
- They helped the Allerton brothers are the crematorium and uncovered a cubic relic thanks to Prolix
- Aided Bautha in the healing of the injured at the infirmary.
- Delivered Naevyn's trinket and prayed at the wall of the unforgotten.
- Met a druid named Foghome and witnessed a vision of Regna and her friends.
- Delivered their case to Verin and gained access to the Rise.
- Encountered Aloysia and Question at the Tavern and made friends with Delez while annoying his sister Prima

The Rift and The Trine of Memory

Their journey led them to a mysterious relic known as the Trine of Memory, an ancient tome that seemed intrinsically linked to Ruidus, the Vermilion Moon. According to Question’s research, it was part of a mythic cycle connected to a lost Champion, who may have wielded divine power before being imprisoned. The adventurers speculated that Regna, the woman they sought to rescue, could be this Champion.

The Ready Room: Preparations and Conflicts

The adventurers spent the night at the Ready Room inn, where they encountered notable scholars and researchers, each with their own agenda regarding the Rise. Among them was Question, a bright and eager researcher from the Cobalt Soul, Prolix, a determined archaeologist from the Allegiance of Allsight, and Aloysia, a sharp-minded elf with her own occult interests.

After a night plagued with terrifying visions of the Rise—featuring twisted corridors, relentless demonic pursuers, and a statue of a kneeling man bound in hooked chains—the adventurers woke to strategize their approach. Ultimately, they chose Question as their primary ally, trusting her scholarly curiosity and noble intentions over the more self-serving ambitions of the others. Aloysia, displeased with the rejection, ominously vowed to find her own way into the Rise.

The Puzzle Box and a Risky Heist

While Prolix remained fixated on deciphering the arcane puzzle box, the adventurers devised a daring plan to steal it. Elora orchestrated a well-timed distraction by spilling breakfast and hot tea over Prolix, sending him into a flustered panic. Meanwhile, Orix deftly swapped the cube with an illusory duplicate, slipping away with the real artifact unnoticed.

Arrival at the Betrayers' Rise

Ascending the steep, winding staircase leading to the fortress, the party was met by a contingent of Aurora Watch guards, wary of letting outsiders enter such a dangerous site. However, Ulgo, with his commanding presence, asserted their purpose and invoked Verin Thelyss’ approval, convincing the soldiers to allow them passage.

Before they could proceed, however, chaos erupted. The massive onyx doors of the Rise groaned open, unleashing two monstrous winged creatures wreathed in living shadows. With glowing crimson eyes and razor-sharp talons, the demons shrieked and descended upon the group, heralding the beginning of a deadly confrontation. The soldiers scrambled into action, shouting warnings as the creatures dived with terrifying speed, forcing the adventurers into battle at the very threshold of their perilous journey.

To Be Continued…

Part 3

Looming above Dro'Kan, the Betrayers' Rise was a surviving wound from the Calamity saturated by centuries of demonic influence. Its corridors were infamous for shifting between expeditions, swallowing soldiers and scholars. The party came to the Rise following the growing mystery of Regna, the Apotheon, and the Trine of Memory, whose strange connection to the forgotten champion suggested that answers waited somewhere within.

Their investigations in Dro'Kan had also drawn them into the orbit of several competing scholars. They quickly developed a good relationship with Question, whose genuine fascination with the herstory of the Rise and Regna made her a valuable source of information. Aloysia, however, inspired almost the exact opposite reaction. Her interest in the events were accompanied by evasive answers and an obvious personal agenda. The party distrusted her almost immediately.

Entering the Rise, the group crossed the immense Entrance above its seemingly bottomless mist-filled chasm, where a surviving divine symbol responded to the Trine and opened a way deeper into the fortress. Beyond waited a hall of holes, where offerings and hidden passages reflected the cruel ritual logic upon which much of the fortress had been constructed. The path demanded blood and suffering to safely pass its forest of quivering blades. Nearby, several chambers still held the undead remains of the Betrayers' ancient torturers.

The deeper chambers revealed the individual fingerprints of the Betrayer Gods. Within dense webs, servants and victims twisted by Lolth's influence waited among webs and the remnants of previous expeditions. The cathedral twisted the celebrating dancing fire elementals into something grotesque and murderous, while the pit beyond forced obedience through suffering. Descending farther brought the party to an enormous tormented statue associated with Torog, the Crawling King, whose magic could turn companions against one another.

Elsewhere waited the pool of blood, where corrupted warriors of Dro'Kan tended the magically preserved pool dedicated to Gruumsh. Once awakened, the chamber sealed itself and the blood began to boil and rise, turning the room into a rapidly filling deathtrap.

Eventually the party reached the crystal chamber, a place utterly unlike the oppressive darkness preceding it. Softly glowing amber crystals covered the walls and descended into a great crater, at the centre of which stood an ancient crystalline altar. The Trine of Memory responded immediately. When brought to the altar, the chamber awakened and dragged the party into another memory of Regna. They witnessed the Apotheon amid the horrors of the Calamity, marching into impossible battle alongside soldiers who seemed already resigned to death. They saw something more important than the legendary warrior herstory remembered: a mortal woman who had suffered, endured and been forgotten. Then the vision shifted. Regna was somewhere distant—trapped, isolated and unable to escape whatever had claimed her. Across centuries, she reached toward the adventurers who had followed her memories thers far and pleaded with them to find her and help her.

The vision had barely ended before Aloysia arrived with the other adventuring party. What had been simmering suspicion finally became open confrontation as Aloysia attempted to seize control of the discovery and the Trine. The situation rapidly deteriorated, and with Aloysia facing the very real possibility of being killed, she unleashed an earthquake through the chamber, tearing apart the ancient structure around them, and in the chaos quickly snapped another enchanted tablet, creating a teleportation escape before the party could finish her. The collapsing Rise gave them little time to debate their next move.

Rather than allow Aloysia to disappear with everything she knew, the party followed her through the teleportation magic.

They left Betrayers' Rise knowing that Regna was alive somewhere and that the Trine of Memory was directly connected to hers imprisonment, and that other factions were prepared to kill for the secrets surrounding her.

To Be Continued…

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