

OPEN THREADS

- Ishild
 - Barber paradox → Ishild killing barbers
 - Get 20M gold pieces worth of Greencake
 - Get the True Name of Ajana (of God)
 - Tora/Wolfgang Religion check: the True Name of Ajana is “every true statement that can’t be proven true.”
 - Beale: turn Ishild good?
 - Marina: kill Ishild?
 - Black horse and carriage to Kairos
 - Find phylactery
 - Free Modalye Grelle from the Grimoire?
 - Penelope
 - Penelope’s research on Ishild seems to be done - give Penelope a new research topic?
- Other
 - Matilda bells?
 - Hobnail gang member Ulrike is loose?

CAMPAIGN RECAP

Player characters

- Beale the Goldenpiper (James); Bard 6
- Hughe Lane (Keith); Rogue 1, Cleric 5
- Marina Gale and Boom (Tracy); Ranger 6 + wolf companion
- Rosy Claster (Amy); Rogue 6
- Rowan Hashin (Carrie); Rogue 6
- Tora Loudpass (Kristal); Cleric 6
- Wolfgang Ignoti (Henele); Sorcerer 6

Nick’s character Melek will be an NPC at game 4.

- Melek Vallentooth (Nick); Warlock 6

The Far Shore mini-campaign (2020-2021)

Carrie (Rowan), James (Beale), and Keith (Hughe) played the Far Shore together, and they had repeated dealings with the lich Ishild. Beale eventually asked Ishild if he could perform bardic research in Ishild’s underground library lair, the Hollin Grimoire. Ishild agreed, and in return Beale agreed to chronicle Ishild’s story.

Nick played in a different playthrough of the Far Shore, as the warlock and compulsive liar Modalye Grellen. Ishild was Modalye's warlock patron, but Modalye turned on Ishild and tried to assassinate him in the Grimoire. Ishild's Perception roll was better than Modalye's Stealth roll though, and Ishild captured Modalye to use for his experiments.

The Master of Revels mini-campaign (2022-2024)

Different players were in different playthroughs of Master of Revels. But in each playthrough, the party freed the mathematician Manfred Unger from a long imprisonment.

In Master of Revels game 2 at ATW Con 2023, Beale, Rosy Claster, and the Hobnail Ulrike went into Hobnail Prison to rescue Rosy's uncle Jimmy Claster from the Company's secret police. There, they found secret police communiques suggesting that Ulrike had betrayed Jimmy to the secret police, and that Ulrike and Rosy had brought each other into the prison to betray each other. However, they killed the secret police leadership together, freed Jimmy and Christopher Cotton, and escaped the prison.

In the Master of Revels Game 3 at ATW Con 2024, Ishild summoned Beale to the Grimoire. There, Beale found Ishild violently beating Modalye's cage and screaming, demanding that Modalye tell him if the sentence "this sentence is a lie" is actually a lie.

Ishild also told Beale that he urgently needed to solve the Two Guards riddle, the riddle about an honest guard and a lying guard. To get intuition about the riddle, Ishild wanted to replicate the riddle physically, and he would use the compulsive liar Modalye as the lying guard. However, he would also need an honest person, two doors, and a hungry lion, and he asked Beale to get them.

Ascent into Madness Game 1: Doubt (Discord May 2025)

The Company asked the party to check up on Voorman the prosthetist, who hadn't returned their letters for a few weeks. Going to Voorman's shop, the party discovered that Voorman had been experimenting with astronomical clocks, self-replicating mechanical spiders, and automatons.

They discovered that "Brunn," "Herndon," and "Zarrada" had given Voorman a "Pneuma" spell - life and breath from air and fire; and a Caliphate rune priest Rana had given Voorman a "Doubt" runespell - free will. Voorman and Rana brought the automaton Hestor to life with Pneuma, but when they gave her free will with Doubt, she killed them both. Hestor built her own astronomical clock spider god Chronos, which could end time, but the party beat Hestor and Chronos. Rosy took Chronos's gear train and Melek took Chronos's clock gyro, which each give one portent per day.

Also:

- The party met Beale's barber Matilda Clippenstein wandering on the street, confused. She was wearing bells on her ankles and wrists but didn't know why.
- Beale visited Manfred Unger to ask about paradoxes. Manfred told Beale that many paradoxes are actually *reductio ad absurdum* proofs - proofs by contradiction. He gave the Barber Paradox as an example: does the barber who shaves everyone who doesn't shave himself, shave himself? Manfred said that the Barber Paradox was actually a *reductio ad absurdum* proof that a "barber who shaves everyone who doesn't shave himself" can't exist.
- Beale discussed the Two Guards riddle with the party. James said that Beale wasn't evil and didn't want to give an honest person to Ishild, and he proposed other ways they might solve the riddle or free Modalye. Beale argued that the rewards could be great if they could get Ishild on their side, "to put good in the world," but Marina said that they should kill Ishild.
- After the game Beale set up a PC bastion in Miss Miller's old apartment in the Mooncalf, with a library and librarian, Penelope. He asked Penelope to research Ishild, and Ishild gave Penelope access to the Grimoire. Since then Penelope has uncovered most of Ishild's history, and some about the Grimoire itself.

Ascent into Madness Game 2: Brock House Monument (ATW Con 2025)

Beale brought Ishild a solution to the Two Guards riddle and suggested he could let Modalye go. Ishild tentatively agreed, but asked that Beale check his solution first, at the Brock House monument in Hollin's City of the Dead.

Going there, the party learned that Brock House was Hollin's last royal house, and that Brock House monument is their crypt. They learned Brock House's history, and that King Bullington Brock was a usurper backed by the Coven. They fought and beat Bullington's ghost, and bearded devils whose beards seemed scraggly and unkempt.

They found the ghost of Winnie Brock, the last Brock monarch. Winnie's ghost was cursed, bound until she could solve a riddle, a love triangle riddle. Marina solved Winnie's riddle, and although it was a reskin of the Two Guards riddle, she solved it without Beale's Two Guards solution.

Happy that the party had killed Bullington and resolved Winnie's riddle, the other Brock kings' ghosts gave the party some items from the crypt, including Holbein Brock's Arcane Compass, which Rosy took.

Also:

- Wolfgang met with the Company chair Melina and Singleton again, and noted that they looked a bit scraggly.
- Thrilled that Beale had solved the Two Guards riddle, Ishild also asked Beale to bring him 20M gold pieces worth of doubly refined Greencake and the True Name of Ajana. Marina asked Beale why Ishild wanted the Greencake and the True Name, but Beale didn't know.
- Melek's familiar Grave reported seeing a key near Modalye's cage, and Melek suggested they could break Modalye out. Beale pointed out that 17 years ago, Kasskar's party had killed Ishild twice, but killing Ishild would be futile unless they also found and destroyed his phylactery.

Ascent into Madness Game 3: Barber Hall (Discord May 2026)

The party met seven strange women, who seemed to know everything and questioned the party's decisions.

- They presented Wolfgang with the many weird barber clues the party had seen, and pressed him on why the party had not investigated them.
- They pointed out that Marina and Beale had solved Winnie's love triangle riddle without Beale's Two Guards solution. So they hadn't actually confirmed Beale's solution as Ishild had asked. They asked Marina if they would tell Ishild they'd confirmed the solution anyway, and Marina curtly said "yes."
- They pressed Hughe Lane on whether he, as a cleric of Ajana, would let Beale give Ishild the True Name of Ajana. Hughe deferred; he rolled Religion to see what he actually knew of the True Name, but came up empty. Tora, also a cleric, rolled Religion with Wolfgang's help and they learned that the True Name of Ajana is "every true statement that can't be proven true."
- The women suggested that Rosy was lax in letting the Hobnail gang member Ulrike roam the city, even though a secret police communique had suggested that Rosy betrayed Ulrike.

Marina pressed the women in turn, asking how to kill Ishild. The women told them that Ishild had a "space-time" phylactery; that the phylactery could be destroyed in Kairos, the plane without time; and that a black horse and carriage in the Braddock square travelled to Kairos.

The party found the black horse and carriage in the square, and children there told them the horse played a game, or could count: "The children told the horse some numbers, and were able to make it stomp and whinny different ways by giving it different numbers." I hadn't run the horse's game in 15 years though, so I asked to push this off until game 4.

The party went to Barber Hall, the guild hall of Hollin's barbers, to investigate the barber clues they'd seen. There, they found Ishild's caliphate assassins had attacked the hall and taken the

guild's member list. They ultimately found the assassins in the guild's underground crypt and beat them.

Marina realized that Ishild was killing all of Hollin's barbers to resolve the Barber Paradox, and said again that they needed to kill Ishild.