

## ~~Prologue: Road to Kesselring~~

*Sarius, leader of the Young Wolves, is dead.*

*He was all well and healthy when he was going to the bed at the inn in the small village of Pores. Next morning, he was found dead, his face pale grey, strong smell of vile herbs coming from his mouth. The guards quickly found out signs of struggle, and the conclusion was drawn that Sarius was poisoned.*

*This bodes bad to his mercenaries, a band of young men and women just making first steps on the road to glory and wealth. Normally in such circumstances, one would call mission aborted and return. But this was a mission given in the name of Menelean royalty, and thus, even with the Sarius dead, the group had to continue onwards.*

*Toward the Fortress Kesselring...*

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The sun is shining high on the cloudless sky, the sunrays warming the spring fields and budding trees after another harsh Menelean winter. Snow is long gone, but the cold still persists. The group of young mercenaries recently passed a small caravan which informed them that Fortress Kesselring is just one hour of foot travel away.

The youngsters, slightly cheered up by the news that the long journey from Mercia will be ended, now were entering a small forest surrounding Kesselring, the road winding back and forth between the larger groups of trees, rugged and cracked terrain, and small pools and lakes.

It's still some time before they reach their destination, and there are several questions that need answers. Who poisoned their leader. Why? Who will now declare himself the new leader of Young Wolves? Will they be still 'Young Wolves', or will they change name? Who will take responsibility of the command, and what's more important, who will parley with Lady Prixima after they finish the trip?

It would be wise to sort these things now...

**Sterling, Ami Storm, Henry, Derick, Daniel, Adrien are in.**

**Road leads generally to the north-west, the forest is rather quiet, and there are no other travelers on the road.**

Daniel sighed and looked towards the group. Morale was lower than it had been for a while and they were going into what could quite possibly be a nasty bit of combat. After all, why would someone hire mercenaries if they DIDN'T expect a fight? He rubbed his hands together and spoke.



(Daniel): "Right then. We need to get some details down before we get to the

Fortress. We at least need to decide whether we are keeping our groups name and who our new leader is. I don't have any particular preference for the leader but I think that we should stay as the Young Wolves. It's a good a name as any and this way we smooth out any problems in case the good Countess was told our motley crew's name beforehand."



(Sterling): "The name's as good as any, I guess. We are inexperienced, sad to say. I wished it'd be otherwise, but we weren't able to help..."



(Adrien): "I, for one think we should change the name. Sure, we may be inexperienced, but we really don't need to go parading that around. We'll lose too many potential jobs otherwise."

-Henry (the True Faceless): "Well. I for one am not a big fan of the name. But Daniel makes a good point about recognition. I guess we should keep it for now. But after this job is complete we could look into changing it? Or maybe not, it's not that bad, I am sure that with time it will grow upon me. As for the leader..."

Henry shrugged and scratched the back of his head.

-Henry: "It seems just a little bit disrespectful to Sarius to be trying to replace him so quickly... Although we do need one... I would also be loath to pick the wrong man"

Ami tapped the ground with her staff.



(Ami): "I maybe the youngest in our group, but I am the who responsible for keeping us in one piece so I step forward as a candidate for leader. Young wolves should stay as our name."

Henry nods to Ami.

-Henry: "Or woman for the job. Maybe we could at least for now share command? I have not known all of you long, but you seem like good enough people, perhaps in time one of us will raise to the top and we can make them the official leader, but until we get to know each other better I think it would be best to just leave it as shared command."

Adrian sighed as he walked, the long trek was beginning to take it's toll, as he became more and more bored. Up until Ami declared her intent for leadership...





"Now, it's nice to see someone trying to step up, unfortunately, you have neither the right demenour nor the skills to lead us. I say Daniel should be the leader, atleast he has some of the skills needed for such a task."

Ami nods.



"Ok Henry, Adrian, guess it would a bit early for me to lead."



"I have no problem with that suggestion."

Derick scratched the back of his head.



(Derick): "Well I don't really have much of an opinion on the name, but I kinda like the wolf motif we've got going on. If we change it could we at least try to still have wolf in the name?"



"In that case, might I suggest *Sarius' Wolves*? That way our leader lives on, if in name only."

As the group followed the twisting road, talking and discussing who should be leader and if to keep the name or not, they could, at one moment, notice someone, or rather, several someones, far to the north-west.

In a minute or so, both groups will meet with each other. And it looked like that group was coming directly toward the mercenaries - even better, they seem to have noticed the youngsters and picked up on the walking speed.



"Oh look, we have company. Maybe they need our help!"



"Nah, it's overused by everyone. How about the *Drakefangs* instead?"

Silently listening to the discussion, Daniel noticed another group coming from the opposite direction they were traveling. Going to the front of the party, he kept a close eye on the other group, trying to see whether they were simple travelers or something more sinister, like bandits.



"Not really feeling *Drakefangs* myself. How about *Wolfpack*?"

Ami look toward the sounds of the other group.

Henry slowly slowed his walking pace until he was situated behind the group, then slid his hand into his pack and grabbed his book of fire magic.

-Henry: "Out of those options I would totally vote for Sarius' Wolves. The other names sound a little... ridiculous. On the other hand I am not sure if that is really the name of a successful long term company, since it sorta brings to mind how on our first mission we lost a important member fairly quickly... But hey. Better than Drakefangs."

The other group at last came close to the mercenaries. It was a small group of rough looking men, dressed in dirty, ragged uniforms of PRIXIMA's guards. The girl leading them, however, had ebony-purple armor without any insignia at all. She looked like a soldier, true, and she kept her right hand on her sheathed blade. After her group stopped in front of the mercs, blocking their way and thus forcing them into a stop, she saluted briefly.



"Greetings! I'm Arinne of the Kesselring Fortress Road Guard. Who are you?"

Her voice and laconic speech sounded perfectly like of an army officer.



"We are a group of Mercenaries hired to do a job for Lady PRIXIMA in the name of Menelea."

-Henry: "Ah hello. We are the mercenary company 'Young Wolves'. We were hired by Lady PRIXIMA for a mission and we are on our way to the keep to receive further orders."

Arinne blinked with surprise.



"Mercenaries?... Oh, right, mercenaries! Those are good news. And here I was worried that you might be attacked by bandits. This forest is close to the Fortress, but there are always few bold bandits these times. We will gladly escort you in the final part of your journey." With those words, Arinne turned on her heels and back walking

through her soldiers, mumbling commands and waving her right hand toward them in somewhat informal-looking gestures, and they began following.

Henry looked at his companions and shrugged, starting to follow after.

Daniel nodded and started to follow the soldiers.

Derick started to open his mouth to introduce himself as the others did before being cut off by the woman's response. With a dejected look on his face he continued walking with the others.

As the time passed, the mercenaries could notice few - maybe important, maybe not - things:

Arinne's group was getting thinner and thinner with every minute. Not by the way of numbers, but by the way how stretched it was. While the pair of axemen who were walking basically in front of the mercenaries kept the same pace all the time, Arinne and most of her group was already several metres away from them, and Arinne was seemingly taking lead in this marching differences.

Derick took note of this and continued walking, assuming that they were either leading the way there or keeping watch for trouble.

Daniel raised an eyebrow at the soldiers' actions and subtly shifted his posture to quickly draw his sword in case of trouble.

The guards' group thinned even more until a moment in which Arinne briefly disappeared from the sight. Then, from east, came a loud whistle noise. The axemen in front of the mercenaries turned around, brandishing their axes, and from forest to the south, several other similar men ran out.

"**Suckers!**" Arinne's voice could be heard and then she stepped from behind the trees into a view, on other side on a small ravine.



"It worked! It worked! I can't believe that worked! Oh if only those merchants last week were *that* stupid. Now let me re-introduce myself. I'm Arinne Gloomblade, bandit leader! Welcome in *my* part of the Kesselring forest! Ha, ha, ha!" Just as a smirk appeared on her face, her men began encircling the mercenaries from both sides; bandits, archers, with few others near Arinne.



"Koch!"



"Eh, yes, missus?"

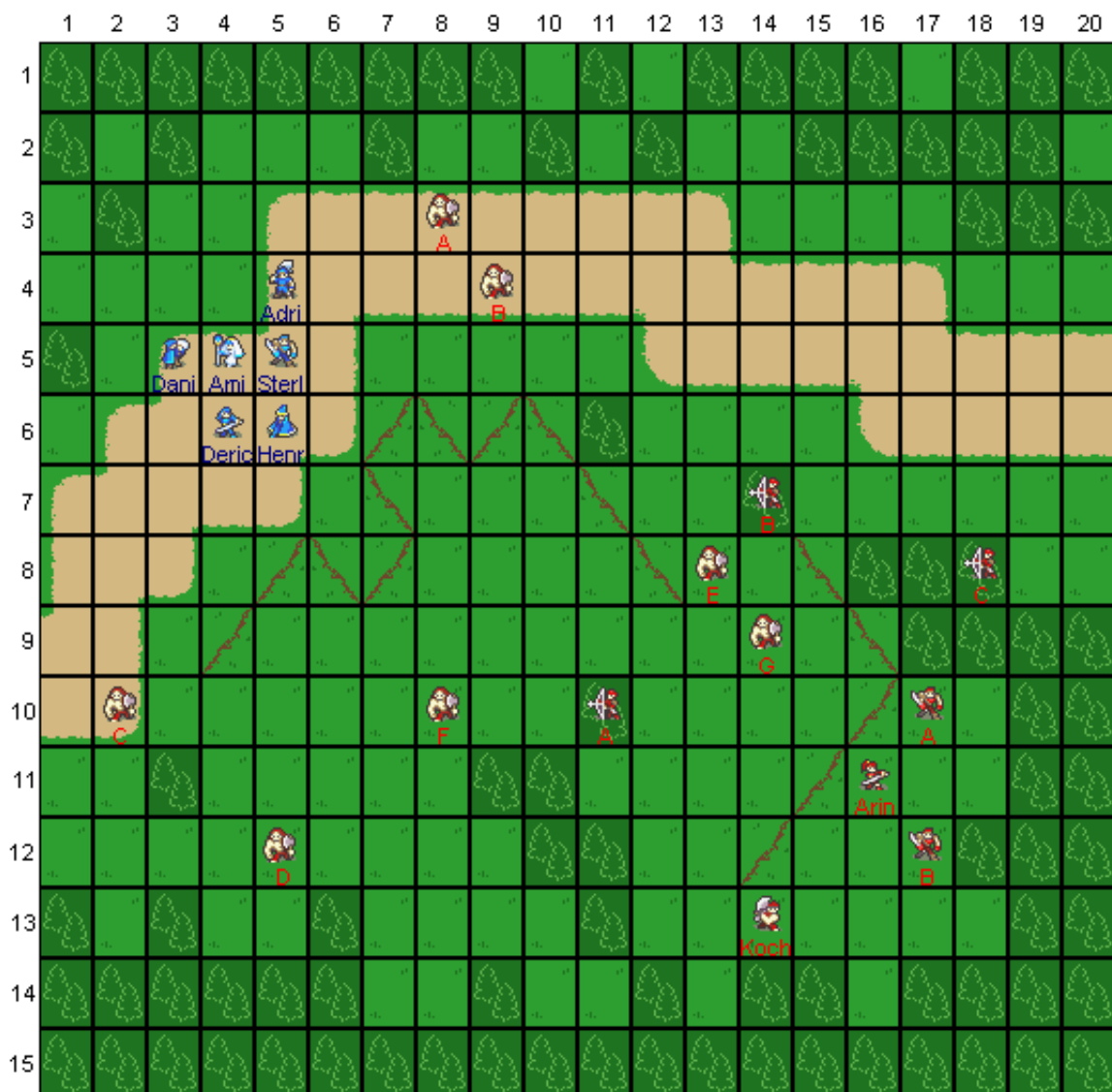


"You will stay close me this time, understood?"



"Eh, sure thing, missus."

### ~~Player Turn 1~~



| Mercs:        |                  | Bandits:        |                    |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 20/20 | Ami Storm: 16/16 | Bandit A: 24/24 | Archer A: 20/20    |
| Daniel: 16/16 | Derick: 18/18    | Bandit B: 24/24 | Archer B: 20/20    |
| Henry: 17/17  | Sterling: 18/18  | Bandit C: 24/24 | Archer C: 20/20    |
|               |                  | Bandit D: 24/24 | Mercenary A: 21/21 |
|               |                  | Bandit E: 24/24 | Mercenary B: 21/21 |
|               |                  | Bandit F: 24/24 | Koch: 25/25        |
|               |                  | Bandit G: 24/24 | Arinne: 24/24      |



"I can't believe they're attacking us now! Why would they do that?"

**Sterling: 3 steps to the east, 1 north, attack bandit b.**



"Who knows?"

Sterling ran almost between the two axemen, and swung his sword at the one to his right - slashing at his chest. The wounded axeman tried to hit the swordman, but Sterling was too fast.

**Sterling vs Bandit B**

Sterling attacks!  
Hit:  $113-6+15 = 122$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $8+1-3 = 6$ dmg

Counter Hit!  
Hit:  $79-14-15 = 50$   
Roll: 60, miss!

**Ami: Stay in spot.**

-Henry: "Well. Nothing for it I guess."

**Henry: Two steps North and two steps east (7,4). Then fire on Bandit B. (9,4)**

Henry took cover behind Sterling, mumbled few arcane words and second later a bolt of fire smashed into Bandit B's face, scorching it.

**Henry vs Bandit B**

Henry casts Fire!  
Hit:  $101+10-6 = 105$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $11-0 = 11$ dmg

Then, Derick went behind Henry! And after that, Daniel moved as well.



"We'll make them pay for this"

**Derick: Move to 6,4**

**Daniel: Move to 3.7**

Daniel unsheathes his blade and moves to protect the group's flank.



"You know, it's not that surprising that they tried to attack us. Bandits are not that well known for their brains after all."

**Adrien: Move to 7x, 3y. Attack Bandit A**

Tightening his grip on his hatchet's handle, Adrien runs toward the other bandit and swings at him - scoring a hit on his chest.

**Adrien vs Bandit A**

Hit:  $92+10-6 = 96$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Dmg:  $10-3 = 7$ dmg  
  
Counterattack!  
Hit:  $79-17 = 62$   
Hit roll: 83, miss!

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The enemies began their march - and the bandits A and B engaged Sterling in combat!

**Bandit A vs Sterling**

Bandit A attacks!  
Hit:  $79-14-15-15 = 35$  //Forgot about your PS last time >.>'  
Roll: 87, miss!  
  
Sterling counterattacks!  
Hit:  $113-6+15+10 = 132$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $8+1-3 = 6$ dmg

**Bandit B vs Sterling**

Bandit B attacks!  
Hit:  $79-14-15-15 = 35$   
Roll: 52, miss!  
  
Sterling counterattacks!  
Hit:  $113-6+15+10 = 132$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $8+1-3 = 6$ dmg  
  
((You have bad luck, no crit rolls so far :v))

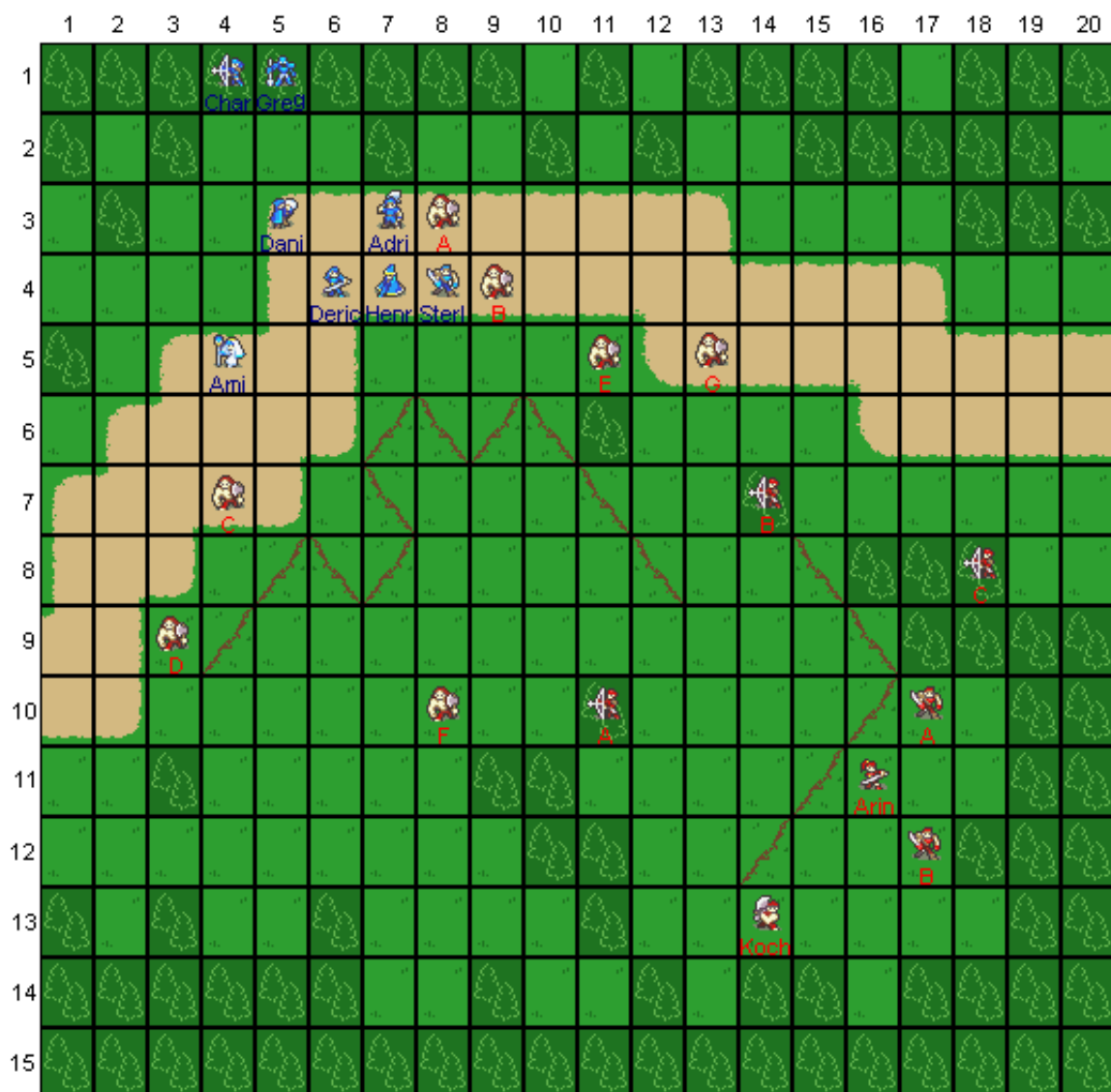


"Hmph, I thought they would be dead by now. Guess they can fight... oh well, it will just take little more time than I thought... Wait, what's that?"

**In the meanwhile...**

"So, you say you just roam on your own? It's dangerous, especially in such thick forest as Kesselring's... oh look, there's the road, you're now back to civil-"

**~~Player Turn 2~~**



"Oops."

**Gregor von Haxham and Charlotte Braxis enter.**

| <b>Merces:</b>           | <b>Bandits:</b> |                    |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 20/20            | Bandit A: 11/24 | Archer A: 20/20    |
| Ami Storm: 16/16         | Bandit B: 1/24  | Archer B: 20/20    |
| Charlotte: 16/16         | Bandit C: 24/24 | Archer C: 20/20    |
| Daniel: 16/16            | Bandit D: 24/24 | Mercenary A: 21/21 |
| Derick: 18/18            | Bandit E: 24/24 | Mercenary B: 21/21 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 20/20 | Bandit F: 24/24 | Koch: 25/25        |
| Henry: 17/17             | Bandit G: 24/24 | Arinne: 24/24      |
| Sterling: 18/18          |                 |                    |

**Ami: Head to 6,3**



"Pardon me."

**Henry: I cast fire on bandit A**

Charlotte clasped her hands over her mouth, pointing Gregor toward the fight scene



nearby.



"Ssshh! That poor group is being surrounded by innumerable axemen. Could it be a bandit raid?"

Charlotte listens closely.



"Yes, I believe I heard someone mention 'bandit' just a few moments ago. That's no good. They're obviously outnumbered. Quickly, let's lighten the load for the group huddled together."

**Charlotte: move 3E, 1S (to 7,2). Attack bandit A next to Adrian.**

**Sterling: South1, East 1. Attack bandit B**



"Friends? This is an omen! With our combined power, we can teach these vagrants a lesson!"

**Derick: Move to 8,2 and wait for the enemy to get closer**

Gregor quickly recognizes the larger (and smellier) group as one of the bandit gangs plaguing the Kesselring Forest, or at least part of one. He doesn't know who the smaller group is, but as a soldier it's his duty to defend the citizenry! Even if they had axes and he had a spear...He turns to the young woman who arrived with him.



"These are definitely bandits; we've been getting reports about them causing trouble. I'll take the rearguard and hold off the ones coming in from the west!"

**Gregor: Move to (5,4) and prepare for the attack.**

Henry flung another firebolt, this time at the other Bandit. With a scream, and a gurgle, the bandit in question fell dead.

#### Henry vs Bandit A

Henry casts Fire!

Hit:  $101+10-6 = 105$ , autohit!

Dmg:  $11-0 = 11$ dmg

Bandit A dies!

Then, Charlotte tried to get into combat, but she lacked mobility to get into the trees in time.

#### **Sterling vs Bandit B**

Sterling attacks!  
Hit:  $113-6+15 = 122$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $8+1-3 = 6$  dmg

Bandit B dies!

With a swing, Sterling decapitated Bandit B shortly afterwards, as Derick moved along the treeline.

Brave Gregor moved to the south in the meanwhile, ready to take on incoming bandits.



"I.. uh... good that he can't fight back anymore and all, but... that's kind of gruesome..."



"Right, someone go over the flank, there's two axemen coming up behind us!"

**Adrien: Move four spaces east, attack Bandit E.**

Adrien runs and tosses his hatchet, and there he goes, striking at the head! That must've hurt. It's miracle itself that the bandit is still standing.

#### **Adrien vs Bandit E**

Hit:  $92+10 = 102$ , autohit! Crit roll: 2!  
Dmg:  $10-3 = 7 \times 3 = 21$

**Daniel: Move to 4.6 and attack the bandit**

Daniel runs toward the bandit and stabs him in the torso. The axeman swings his weapon but fails his attack.

#### **Daniel vs Bandit C**

Hit:  $111+15 = 126$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $9+1-3 = 7$  dmg

Bandit C counters!  
Hit:  $79-15-14 = 50$   
Hit roll: 80, miss!

### **~~Enemy Phase~~**

Heavily wounded bandit decides to try and enact revenge on Adrien.

#### **Bandit E vs Adrien**

Hit:  $79-7 = 72$

Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Dmg:  $17-3 = 14$   
  
Hit:  $92-6 = 88$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Dmg:  $10-3 = 7$

He smacks Adrien hard, but the bandit dies himself in the process. Then his comrade runs up to Adrien, trying to finish the job.

#### Bandit G vs Adrien

Hit:  $79-7 = 72$   
Hit roll: 74, miss!  
  
Hit:  $92-6 = 88$   
Hit roll: 81, hit!  
Dmg:  $10-3 = 7$

He fails and gets himself wounded instead. An archer ran from the trees! He took position behind his bandit fellow, and... TWANG! THUD! The arrow went straight through Adrien's chest. In disbelief, shock and terror, the young axeman slumped to the ground.

#### Archer B vs Adrien

Hit:  $99-7 = 92$   
Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Dmg:  $10-3 = 7$ dmg

In the meanwhile, two bandits assaulted Daniel: Bandit D and C. Both of them failed to even scratch the thief, while Daniel's blade left a bloody mark on both of them.

#### Bandit C vs Daniel

Bandit C attacks!  
 $79-15-14 = 50$   
Hit roll: 69, miss!  
  
Daniel counterattacks.  
Hit:  $111+15 = 126$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $9+1-3 = 7$ dmg

#### Bandit D vs Daniel

Bandit D attacks!  
 $79-15-14 = 50$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!  
  
Daniel counterattacks, again.  
Hit:  $111+15 = 126$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $9+1-3 = 7$ dmg

### Meanwhile...



"Ha! One idiot down! Maybe it's not as bad as it looks."

The archer at the far right of the ambush site suddenly went into the trees with rather worried face. He emerged behind Arinne and coughed.





"Oh dear, hang on!"

**Ami: 10,3 heal Adrien**

**Gregor: Move to (5,7). Attack Bandit C**



"Great Dragon..guide my lance and make it strike true!"

Sterling runs toward his enemy and ~SLASHES~ at him. In result of this awesome cut, Bandit G politely drops dead.

#### **Sterling vs Bandit G**

Hit:  $113+15 = 128$ , autohit! Crit roll: 6!  
Dmg:  $8+1-3 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$

Just in the same time, Ami runs up to Arien, plucks the arrow out and touches him with her staff. Angelic chorus sings as golden light imbues the axeman's body with healing energies.

#### **Ami with Heal Staff**

Heal:  $10 + 4 / 2$  (KO'd ally) = HP 0 -> 7.  
Adrien regains consciousness!

And in the same time, few metres away, valiant Gregor rushed with his mighty spear at one of the enemies! He stabbed nicely, but got axe-smacked in turn for that.

#### **Gregor vs Bandit C**

Hit:  $92-15-6 = 71$   
Hit roll: 37, hit!  
Dmg:  $8-1-3 = 4\text{dmg}$

Bandit counterattacks the stab.

Hit:  $79+15-5 = 89$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Dmg:  $17+1-5 = 13\text{dmg}$

Henry looked between the bandits attacking Daniel and those attacking Adrien, weighing his options he made his choice and moved.

**Henry: Move 2 west then two south, fire bandit C.**

Henry moved closer to attack. Soon, Bandit C screamed in pain before he succumbed to the magical fire cast by Henry.

#### **Henry vs Bandit C**

Henry casts Fire!  
Hit:  $101+10-6 = 105$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $11-0 = 11\text{dmg}$

Bandit C dies!

## Daniel: I show Bandit D my stabs



"This is way too easy. These chumps are some of the weakest bandits I've ever seen!"

Stabs are shown. Bandit D tries to show his cuts, but he is terrible at them.

### Daniel vs Bandit D

Daniel goes stabby.  
Hit:  $111+15 = 126$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $9+1-3 = 7$ dmg

Bandit D tries to counter!  
 $79-15-14 = 50$   
Hit roll: 52, miss!

Charlotte realized she could not yet reach any of the bandits, but she saw a poor boy surrounded by two bandits to the south.

**Charlotte: Move to 3, 2. Hide in the forest until next turn.**

**Derick resolved to be less overly cautious and moved to 10,4**



"Ouch..."



"Hang on, who ever you are."

Charlotte went into hiding, Derick moved closer.

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Hey! You're supposed to be dead!" Said Archer B, before launching another arrow. And like the one before, it struck Adrien's chest, who, again, collapsed to the ground.

"And stay that way!"

### Bandit C vs Adrien

Hit:  $99-7-10-10 = 72$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Dmg:  $10-3 = 7$ dmg

Bandit F moved closer to Gregor and his axe swung at soldier's head. Gregor's vision faded to black a second later. In the meanwhile, Bandit D moved past Daniel and tried to kill Henry, but the mage sidestepped the attack and then scorched the bandit, until he died.

### Bandit F vs Gregor

Hit:  $79+15-5-10 = 79$

Hit roll: 58, hit!

Dmg:  $17+1-5 = 13$ dmg

### Bandit D vs Henry

Bandit D attempts murder.

Hit:  $79-2-5 = 72$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

Henry casts Fire!

Hit:  $101+10-6 = 105$ , autohit!

Dmg:  $11-0 = 11$ dmg

Bandit D dies!

## A bit away from the slaughter...



"What!? Entire cavalry unit?"

"I'm telling you, they're riding down here from Kesselring Fortress, saw them leave it less than a minute ago.



"That will make them get here... in... in... ah dammit, they will catch us if we don't get outta here. Koch! KOCH!"



"Eh, yes, missus?"



"Go, kill the peasants."



"Eh, sure thing, missus."



"And this time bring their *valuables*, not their *bodies*."





"Eh, of course, missus... You, wit' da bow, you come wit' me."

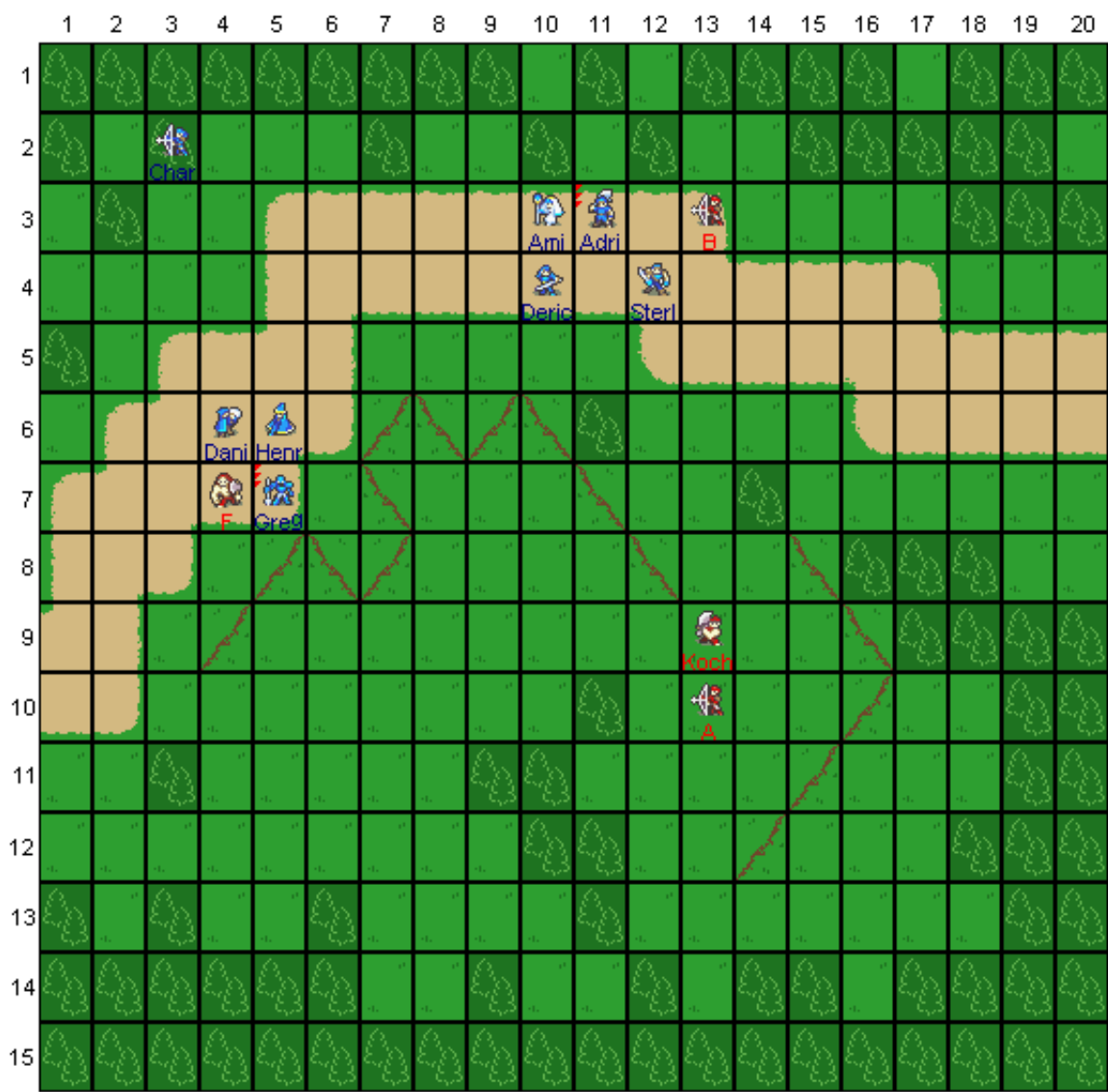
Koch goes North and Archer A backs him up, while Arinne watches them for a moment.



"...Good. He should be enough of a distraction. Let's go boys, there will be some other day to get filthy rich."

And then she, her bodyguards, and the archer, dissappear into the trees to the south.

### ~~Player Turn 4~~



| Merces:                          | Bandits:        |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Adrien: -/20 3/3 left            | Bandit F: 24/24 |
| Ami Storm: 16/16                 | Archer A: 20/20 |
| Charlotte: 16/16                 | Archer B: 20/20 |
| Daniel: 16/16                    | Koch: 25/25     |
| Derick: 18/18                    |                 |
| Gregor von Haxham: -/20 3/3 left |                 |
| Henry: 17/17                     |                 |

**Sterling: 1 East, attack Archer B.**



"Will you *stop* hurting my friends?!"

Stab stab stab. Archer B seems to be bleeding. Lightly.

**Sterling vs Archer B**

Hit:  $113 - 12 + 10 = 121$ , autohit!

Dmg:  $8 - 6 = 2$  dmg

**Derick: 12,3 attack the archer**

**Ami: Use heal on Adrien.**



"Stop doing that!"

Archer B got slashed quite hard, but he is still standing.

"Ha, fear my double-layered, quilted and padded leather armor!"

**Derick vs Archer B**

Hit:  $112 - 14 + 10 + 10 = 118$ , autohit! Crit roll: 3!

Dmg:  $8 - 6 = 2 \times 3 = 6$  dmg

In the same moment, Ami's healing staff revived poor Adrien. And yes the arrow was pulled out too.

**Ami heals Adrien**

$10 + 4 / 2 = 7$  HP



"Aaaaa! Gregor looks hurt. I'm coming!"

**Charlotte: Move to 3,6. Attack Bandit F.**

Charlotte runs closer, and TWANG her bow go. And the Bandit F gets hurt.

**Charlotte vs Bandit F**

Hit:  $108 + 10 + 10 = 128$ , autohit!

Dmg:  $7 - 3 = 4$  dmg

Henry didn't want to have to leave a very wounded man, a archer, and a 'swordsman' all alone to take on a axe man alone. But he did not see much choice in the matter, The

archers were a great threat to everyone, and with that beefy axe man and another one coming in to the east soon, he really had no choice.

**Henry: 1 north 3 east**

**Daniel: Stabity stab Bandit F**

While Henry is en route to other mercs, Bandit F gets stabbed by Daniel. In the heart. And he dies.

**Daniel vs Bandit F**

Daniel goes stabby, again.  
Hit:  $111+15-6 = 120$ , autohit! Crit roll: 11!  
Dmg:  $9+1-3 = 7 \times 3 = 21$ dmg

**~~Enemy Phase~~**



"Eh, nothin' personal but I have to kill ya now."

With those words, Koch runs toward Sterling and swings his mighty axe at the swordsman. And he promptly misses. Steling responds with STABS.

**Koch vs Sterling**

Hit:  $84-14-15-15 = 40$   
Hit roll: 49, miss!  
  
Sterling counter-stabs:  
Hit:  $113+15-3 = 125$ , auto-hit!  
Dmg:  $8+1-3 = 6$ dmg

Then the two archers cross-fire at Sterling! While the first arrow hit the swordman in leg, the second archer launched his arrow a bit too high and it flew past Sterling.

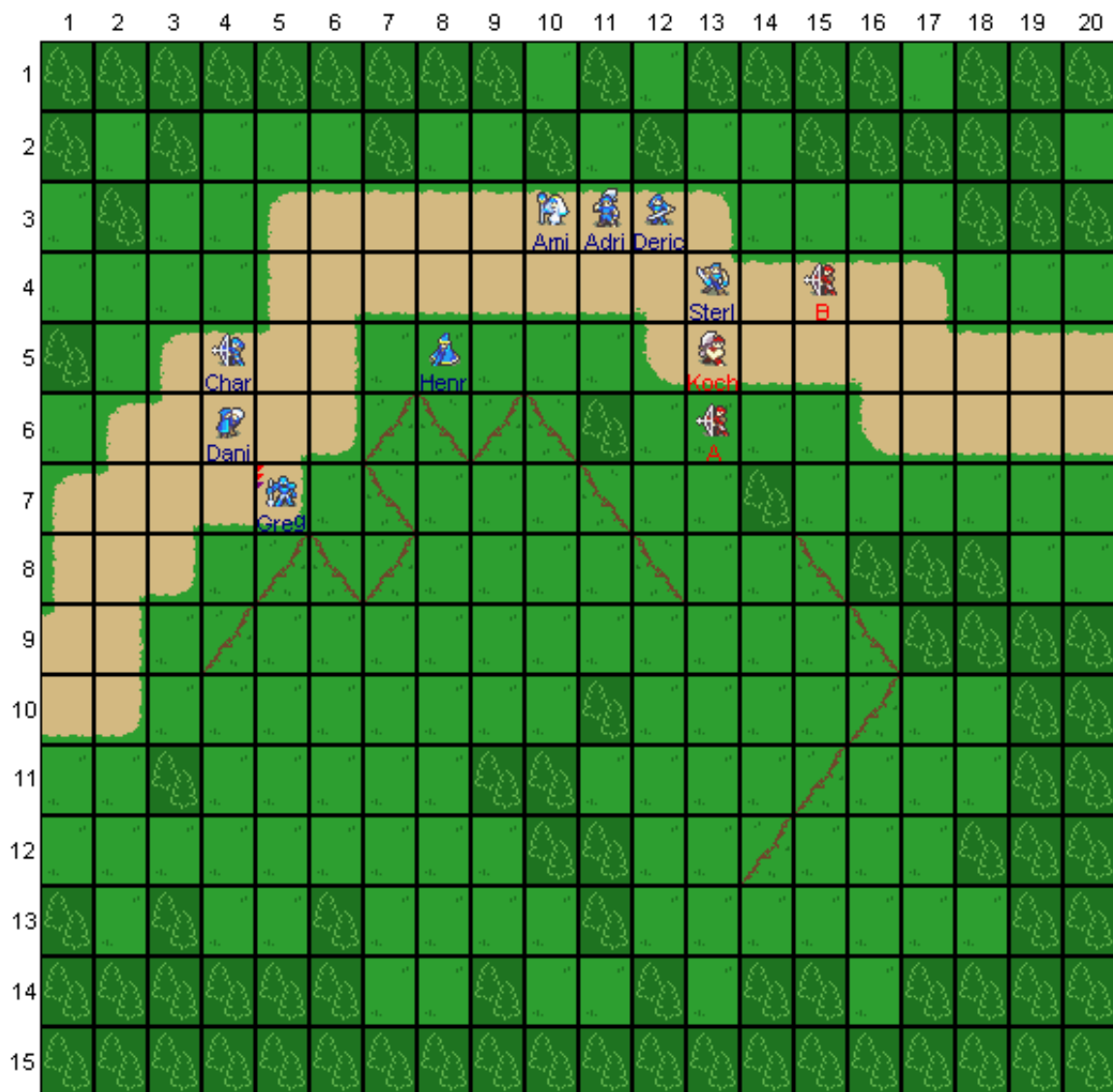
**Archer A vs Sterling**

Hit:  $99-14-15 = 70$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Dmg:  $10-2 = 8$ dmg

**Archer B vs Sterling**

Hit:  $99-14-15 = 70$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

# ~~Player Turn 5~~



| Merces:                                                                                                                                                       | Bandits:                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 7/20<br>Ami Storm: 16/16<br>Charlotte: 16/16<br>Daniel: 16/16<br>Derick: 18/18<br>Gregor von Haxham: -/20 2/3 left<br>Henry: 17/17<br>Sterling: 10/18 | Archer A: 20/20<br>Archer B: 12/20<br>Koch: 19/25 |

Picking up her hem, Ami started running.



"Time to move."

**Ami: Heat to 7,4**

**Gregor: Continue to bleed to death**



"Same to you."

### Sterling: Attack Koch.

While Ami ran toward bleeding Gregor, Sterling and Koch have it on again.

Koch gets stabbed again in the process.

#### Sterling vs Koch

Hit:  $113+15-3 = 125$ , auto-hit!

Dmg:  $8+1-3 = 6$  dmg

Koch counter-whacks:

Hit:  $84-14-15-15 = 40$

Hit roll: 60, miss!

Charlotte saw a cleric running their way, but it didn't look like they were going to get to Gregor in time. She moved to heal him on her own.

### Charlotte: Move to 5,6. Use vulnerary on Gregor (if possible?)



"Don't worry. I won't let you die."

Some white powder gets cast onto Gregor's face, and he miraculously awakes from near-death slumber!

#### Charlotte heals Gregor

$10 / 2 = 5$  HP



"Ugh...I'm alive? I'm alive!"

Gregor notices who exactly saved him.



"You're the woman I was helping earlier! Charlotte, right? Thank you, I owe you my life."



"Do not worry yourself. I cannot stand to see an innocent die."

Charlotte thought for a moment then furrowed her brow.



"Ah, say... earlier you were curious about my forest residence. However, it's awfully strange to see a man such as yourself venturing through the woods. What brings you out all this way?"



"Ah. Well, you see...I kind of got separated from my patrol. We were checking the woods for bandit camps, but to be honest most of the time we just make enough noise to scare them away for a while."

Gregor's face goes red with embarrassment before continuing.



"I...well, I tripped. Over a log. By the time I picked myself up, I lost sight of the rest of my group and couldn't figure out where they had gone. I decided that it would be better for me to head back to the fortress instead of wandering around alone, and that's when I stumbled across you. Come to think of it, why were you living alone in the woods in the first place?"

### **Daniel: Move to 7.5**



"Ehe! Goodness. Aren't you just the peak of masculinity?"

Charlotte giggles a little as Gregor mentions tripping *over a log*.



"I was driven out of my hometown long ago, though, by what I can only assume was a political assault. The whole town was burnt to the ground by assailants on horseback. I'd always trained for that day, but I didn't think it would ever come. Say, is that not the kind of thing you investigate? I am unclear on your job duties."

Charlotte's giggles made Gregor wish that he had died after all, if only to avoid the shame.



"Well, I haven't been a soldier very long. I mean, my father and brothers have been, and they trained me to follow the family tradition...anyway, I was only

transferred out to Kesselring Fortress a little over a month ago. Our everyday job is to eliminate or disperse bandit gangs, make sure the roads remain clear, stuff like that. When we get word of an attack, we send some soldiers to assist, but it's sadly rare that we get there in time to help. If war ever broke out, I suspect things would get much more interesting."

Charlotte frowned. That was a little less... grandiose than she'd imagined. Still, he had a lot of heart for a common soldier of the law.



"I'm afraid I've been secluded too long to know if a war is afoot. Say, Gregor, if you trip over a log and get lost around here again, just shout my name into the Kesselring Forest. It's nice to have someone around even though the accommodations are not... fortress-quality."

Gregor couldn't help but chuckle at that.



"I may have to take you up on that someday!"

He staggered to his feet, already feeling better.



"But for now, I believe the battle is still raging just down the road. Shall we go help them out?"



"Indeed. To battle! For the good of, er, not dying horribly!"

**Adrien: Move to 13, 3, Throw axe at Koch! (AKA Attack)**

**Derick: Move to 15, 3 and attack Archer B**

**Henry: Move 3 east and put the kibosh on Koch.**

As Daniel moved toward his companions, Adrien tossed his hatchet at the enemy fighter. And he didn't miss.

**Adrien vs Koch**

Hit:  $92+10+5-8 = 99$

Hit roll: 78, hit!

Dmg:  $10-3 = 7\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Derick assaulted the 'heavily-armored' archer. Barely cutting him.



#### Derick vs Archer B

Hit:  $112+10-14 = 108$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $8-6 = 2$ dmg

And then suddenly Koch screamed in pain as the firebolt that was flung by Henry began searing his face. Fortunately for himself, Koch managed to die quickly from that.

#### Henry vs Koch

Hit:  $101+10-8 = 103$ , autohit!  
Dmg:  $11-1 = 10$ dmg

Seconds later, the mercenaries, and two remaining bandits, could hear the galloping. Lo and behold, a group of no less than fourteen horsemen rode from the north-east, amongst them few bow knights and even a troubadour. The cavalier in the front raised his heavy, iron blade at the wounded Archer before he and his comrade screamed 'We surrender!' in unison.



"Hmph, take those men and tie their hands. We will interrogate them. Allright, you others! I'm Captain Torres of the Kesselring First Cavalry Unit. Pleasure to meet you! I reckon you're the mercenaries that our beloved Lady PRIXIMA hired. Sorry for this mess - our troubadour will heal you up. Any greviously wounded amongst you?" Torres offered his smile as his men rushed to help the mercenaries, and to tie up the two remaining archers.

### ~~Prologue Complete!~~



"Last I checked, the worst injuries have been treated, albeit Adrien \*points at the fighter\* and the helpful lancer back there were hurt the most. ~~Got an arrow to the knee myself.~~ Thanks for helping us, by the way."



"Just another duty to perform today, really. Besides, if I see correctly, those were affiliated with that witch Arinne. Less men she has, the more peaceful life in the region is-"

Torres looks to the west and squints his eyes a bit.



"Look who we got there! Isn't that Gregor, one of the Forest Guards? Don't tell me you got separated again, Gregor! Captain Marpa will get you expelled if that happens again, and even your father won't convince her! Even if you're such fine lad."

Gregor gulps and throws a sharp Menelean salute.



"Private von Hexham reporting, sir! I did indeed get lost again sir, and apologize! I happened upon this skirmish shortly after it started and decided to provide any assistance I could."

He winces as he feels the pang from his wounds.



"I'm not sure they needed it, sir. They were very skilled."

Sterling walked across to the soldier and archer.



"Thank you for the compliment. And I think I speak for all of us when I say thanks for helping us. They would have flanked us if not for the two of you."



"Yeah. We owe you one."



"Ah, well. No thanks needed. You said you are all 'mercenaries'? Are you accepting recruits? It's awful lonely in the forest."

Charlotte turned to Gregor.



"Does this mean you have to go back to your post? I mean, you said how dissatisfied you were about 'rarely getting there in time to help.' But look, just an hour with this new group and you're already fighting like part of the team! You were there to help when they needed it! Isn't that satisfying?"



"Well, we're without definite leadership at the moment, unfortunately, so I don't know how that would work out. But I don't think anybody would mind the help."

Pause.



"Did you say you lived in the forest?."

-Henry: "I certainly wouldn't mind if such capable fighters were to join us. Although without a leader I'm not sure if we are in a position for the technical side of things like 'pay'. So until we get ourselves sorted that might be a issue, but not a large one."



"Money is not an issue. I just need a change of lifestyle. Being secluded so long, it, uh. It does things to a girl's psyche. You got a new recruit!"



"As much as I'd love to come along with you all, I've sworn an oath to serve in the Army. I can't just up and run away; I could get charged with desertion and get thrown into prison! ...Plus I'm pretty sure my father would kill me. I'm not sure which outcome would be worse."



"Well that's disappointing. I understand."

-Henry: "Yeah. I mean, I would not want to be tied down in such a way, but I am sure we all understand. If you ever need a job someday feel free to look us up."

He then turned to Charlotte.

-Henry: "How about you miss? Did I hear correctly that you wanted to join? You seem like a good shot, I am sure we would be happy to have you as well."



"Oh, that's the forest girl we have been hearing about lately? Miss, we have been trying to catch you for a week, but you always run away from us. Even Lady Prixima wants to meet you, mostly because you have tresspassed the Grave Glade on several occassions, but that's the lesser of the reasons." Torres nodded at his cavaliers and then began to line themselves with the mercenaries.



"My men will give you a ride to the Kesselring Fortress. All eight of you, get

on the horses!"

Charlotte jumped when the man mentioned the Grave Glade.



"ACK! I... I'm so sorry. I really didn't mean to hurt anyone or anything if I did."

However, seeing as he said "the eight of you," she begrudgingly **hopped upon that horse as best she could.**

Ami hops on one of the waiting horses.



"Let's go then."

**Gregor does a quick headcount, figures out that he's one of the eight, and climbs onto the nearest horse.**

After the mercenaries, starting with Ami, were placed on the horses, entire unit trotted on the road, up north and east and north-east, toward the Kesselring Fortress.

It is mighty keep, square-ish and with tall towers, lookout spire seemingly piercing the heavens. Made of the black and grey stone, the fort itself looks rather foreboding, standing out in the background of lush forest and crystalline lake that surrounds the island on which the fort was built.

Torres himself escorted the mercenary group through the wide corridors and twisting staircases. With each passed corridor and floor, the Fortress was growing quieter and quieter, indicating that they were passing from common areas to the bedrooms and halls used by the Kesselrings themselves. The valiant knight didn't stop until they were standing at the end of a corridor, and through windows it could be easily seen that they were at the highest floor in the whole fortress.



"Wait here a moment." Captain Torres spoke, knocking at the door. A brief, distant 'Enter!' could be heard, and the stocky, short man slipped inside the room. Seconds passed into minutes, before he emerged from the room, and wordlessly invited the mercenaries inside, bowing slightly toward the youths.

As the group entered, Gregor and Charlotte included, the small door was closed behind them.

In front of them, there was a sturdy-looking desk made from dark wood, the desk was

perfectly placed between two rows of bookshelves filled with ancient tomes and dusty scrolls. A woman in her early thirties was sitting behind the desk, her hair dark like a night, and her nails, glittering with red paint, were looking as if they were claws. She looked at the youths with content, before letting out a hum.



"All I see are kids with toys for weapons, with one of my squires as an extra for some reason. Where is the renowned mercenary, Sarius? Is he afraid to meet with me in person?" She asked, tapping the desk with her right hand's fingers.

Sterling steps forward.



"Sarius is... well, I'm afraid I have to tell you that he is unable to meet you in person anymore. He got poisoned on the way here."

A frown twisted the woman's lips, and after a while she let out an annoyed huff, brushing the hair behind her left ear.



"So he is dead. And who are you to speak in that manner to Lady PRIXIMA Kesselring? Do you know your place, little one? Or are you the new leader of the group?" She raised her hand to silence Sterling before he could even respond.



"That's not important. What is important is that not only your group is now bound in contract with me, which means I have to feed you and offer you beds until the contract is finished, but also that I don't think you're suited for the job, which further complicates everything. Tell me of Sarius' death, though. Who poisoned him, and where?"

-Henry: "My lady, if I may." Henry says as he bows. "We don't know who killed our leader. He died in the night at the village of Pores."

Daniel is also bowing.



"There were also signs of a struggle at the scene. When we found him his face was pale and there was a vile herbal smell coming from his mouth."



"Hmph. That's no good. I could name at least twelve different people or groups that could use herbal poisons. Pores is just outside my county, so I can't really turn it upside down in search for clues... Well, you have no leader, I won't let you take the job, you don't have money I presume, and you have nowhere to go. What I am supposed to do with you?"

"Excuse me, Lady Prixima, but may I?" A clear voice suddenly came from behind the mercenaries, and when they would turn around, they would see a man, in full armor, standing completely noiseless - right near the door. For all possibilities, he possibly was there when the mercenaries entered.



"I believe that, my wife and I, and Torres, could give them some training, say, a week or so. And during their stay, they could work in the garden, kitchens and stables, so they wouldn't be completely a nuisance. After that, you could re-evaluate their strength and I assure you, they will fare much better. What do you say, my Lady?"

There was a brief silence before Prixima waved her hand at the man in the armor, and the mercenaries.



"Fine. I could agree to that. The question is: do *they* agree?" Both the soldier and the countess turned their looks at the young mercenaries; or to be more precise, at Sterling, from all the people.

Sterling is feeling uncomfortable with so many people staring at him.



"It is true that we are inexperienced. I would gladly accept any training that I can get. It's probably what Sarius would want us to do."



"Wonderful. I will see that you will have something to do between training sessions and sleeping. Can I take them down to the barracks, my Lady?" The soldier asked politely and Prixima waved her hand at him, letting out a loud sigh, and then she opened a book, clearly showing she won't be dealing with the mercenaries anytime soon. The man in armor bowed, and then gently led the group out of the study.



"Well, that's it. I can feel natural charisma coming from you, young man, even if you still have to learn your ways around noble ladies. I'm Aaron, Captain of the Kesselring Fortress Guards. Could you introduce your group to me? Gregor I know of, and you must be the 'forest girl' that has been roaming our forests for a while, hmm?" His eyes landed on the face of Charlotte, and then he sent her a charming smile.



"Ah-- yes. I am sorry if I intruded or stepped where I should not. You had mentioned gardens, um, and I could take care of Lady PRIXIMA's if she needs."



"Er, right. The swordsman's Derick, and our, ah, scout's name is Daniel. Adrien's the muscle and our resident force of nature's called Henry. The acolyte's known as Ami and me as Sterling. The archer is... uhm, I'm sorry, I didn't even ask for your name."



: "Charlotte. Just call me Charlotte. It's good to meet you, Sterling."



"I see. We will give you all two sleeping rooms in the barracks. No worries, thanks to the continuous bandit and Berebian attacks, we... have lots of empty space in few places. And there will lots of work. Even in gardens, young lady."

And then the tour began. Aaron took the mercenaries everywhere except few restricted places. They've seen gardens, and kitchens, and storage rooms, and barracks, and trianing halls, libraries, armories, even the smallest of rooms were shown to the mercenaries. It took a full hour before the captain took the youngsters to their new 'quarters'.



"You have now time for yourselves. Your training starts from tomorrow's morning. Make sure that all of you get some rest." With that, Aaron nodded, and went on his own way.





"Yawn sleep does sound like a good idea."

-Henry: "Well that worked out better then expected. I thought we would be out on our ass after we told them about the loss of Sarius."

With that Henry stowed his gear and sat down on a bed, ready for **sleep**.



"Yeah same here. I'm going to head to bed too. We should be rested for when the training starts."

Derick set aside his weapons and armor, climbed into a bed in the corner of the room and went to **sleep**.



"Whew. The lady's kind of scary, but I think we can trust her."

He turns back to Charlotte.



"So you live in a forest? How come, were you raised in one of these hidden villages that you keep hearing about in stories yet nobody ever managed to find? I could imagine wanting to leave and seeing the world..."



"Well, one thing we should decide these coming weeks is who our new leader should be. After all, we were interrupted by bandits before we could quite decide on who it was. But it's late at the moment and we can wait until tomorrow before deciding who it is. Night everyone."

That said, Daniel goes to **sleep**.



"Well, this is rather exciting. At least the chances of getting lost are greatly reduced here in the fortress."

Gregor tends to his armor and weapon before going to **sleep**. He'll introduce himself to the rest of the group tomorrow after everyone gets some rest.

And so to sleep they all went, eventually.

They were woken up early at the morning, so early that even the rooster didn't sing his terrible melody yet. Moon was down, sun not within a sight, albeit the sky was grey and not dark blue. A group of soldiers then accompanied the mercenaries to a large dining room, where they had a small meal alongside soldiers, who were all wearing uniforms.

And then the training began.



"Today we will be marching all the way to the northern part of the forest, and then my soldiers will stage a mock ambush against you. No worries, they will only have wooden weapons. Their road is long, so you better..

It was full of exercise...



"...move, move, MOVE! Higher with those legs! My two little daughters are running faster! In combat you must be quick and agile, because, as my husband likes to say..."

And more exercise...



"...an immobile soldier is dead soldier. I will show you the differences between heavy and light armor, how to exploit them for your benefits. After that, we will move on to specialized weaponry..."

And a little theory. Seven days of training, from early morning to late night. There was marching, and combat practice, and obstacle courses, and mock battles, and tactical deployments, and quite possibly every nuance of combat was covered. Also...



"...it's *third* time you've collapsed at my obstacle course! What's wrong with you?"

...the whole ordeal was extremely exhausting.

However, the youngsters built a little of physical prowess, not to mention all that knowledge and experience they have been gifted. //People get +1 to CON

A week have passed. Unlike during the training course, it was late morning when the

mercenary group was awoken, by no one else than Aaron himself. He gave everyone a slight push, and then woke Sterling up.



"Good morning. I hope you and your six mercenaries had nice sleep, hmm?"



"My back still hurts from yesterday's exercise... but it could be worse."



"If it hurts, it means it's working. Now, Lady Prixima wants to see your group today. I believe she will decide today if you're up for the job she promised to your late leader Sarius."



"Well, if she decides we aren't, I am leaving. That was exhausting, and I think a few of my tendons rearranged themselves during that obstacle course."



"And where will you go if she doesn't agree, Charlotte? You will be back to the life of vagabond and trespasser? Sterling, please gather your group, I will wait outside." Like he said, that he did - he left the bedroom and closed the door.



"I do question why you put the healer through that or why I did better than most of the melee members."

She rolls her arm.



"Anyway it best not to keep our employer waiting."



"I don't think we're gonna disappoint. Not after all that work we went through. Grab your stuff, we're going there and show her what we're made of!"

Aaron silently took the mercenary group upstairs, through the same amount of staircases and corridors as at the first time, a week ago.

Gregor was standing right near the door leading to Prixima's study.



"Please wait a moment." Captain Aaron said, knocked on the door and then slipped in. Less than a minute later, they could hear elevated voices, and few words that Gregor could catch in his ears, were 'certain death' 'incompetent kids' 'one more chance' and such. Suddenly, there was shouting, abruptly replaced by silence, and amidst that silence, Aaron came out, letting out a sigh.



"She will only see Sterling, no one else."



"Me? B-but... why me in particular?"



"Well, I believe you're the new leader of the group, are you not?" Aaron moved himself away from the door, showing that Sterling is free to enter the study.



"I... see. I better don't let her wait, I guess."



: "So, Aaron, how much are we being paid for this job, and how difficult is it. And we haven't exactly decided on a leader either as well."



"That's why Sterling is going inside. Well, that and few other things that Lady Prixima wants to talk about with him." Aaron explained, and closed door after Sterling when he went inside.

---

Lady Prixima was waiting for the young lad, sitting behind her desk. She looked over Sterling, and then licked her finger, turning a page of a book, but it was clear she didn't paid attention to the words - it was all about making the moment a little more dramatic.



"Well, isn't it... Sterling, yes? First of all, tell me; do you take responsibilities of the leader of this mercenary group?"

Gulp.



"Yes, Melady. Somebody has to do it, and it might as well be me."

Prixima clasped her hands and grinned widely, showing her way of satisfaction. She could easily pose as a demon too.



"Wonderful. Per contract with the Mercian Mercenary Guild, the mission that I've assigned with Sarius was for five thousand golden coins of reward. That sum would be yours if you could perform duties that I wanted to entrust to Sarius, but he is dead, and now that you've taken the responsibility, you have to see the contract fulfilled. I hope you understand so far?"



"Yes, Melady. What is our mission?"

Prixima laughed and leaned against her chair, then she looked at Sterling with a grin.



"Oh, the actual mission is still beyond your reach, as I believe you're still neither competent nor experienced enough to even try to accomplish the mission. I've seen your training, I've got reports from Aaron and the other two, I heard some things about you... You of course understand, that this means I want to void the contract. Unfortunately, it would leave a stain on the honour of Kesselring family, which was dealing with mercenaries for almost a century. Still with me, kid? Fortunately, in my ingenuity, I thought a plan that could easily let me kill two birds with one stone. And it involves your group. Do you agree to follow it?"



"Yes, Melady. What would you have us do, then?"

Prixima raised her eyebrow in surprise.



"Ooh? No complaints? No hesitation? My, you will be a man one day. Well, let's get to the point, then; the archer who survived our interrogations diluted the location of the hideout of that bitch Arinne just tonight. Normally I would send the soldiers to kill the pests, but by pure coincidence I have a mercenary group at my disposal. Isn't it interesting?"

Prixima lifted herself from the chair and placed her hands on the desk, looking more imposing than before.



"Bring me the head of Arinne. If you do, I will finally agree that you're good enough. I believe Aaron will give you the details. Do you have any questions that I might or might not answer to?"

Yes, why are you so goddamn scary.



"No, Melady. Aaron can probably answer just as well, and I do not wish to waste more of your time."



"Good. Begone, then."



"By the look on your face, I will assume everything went as she have planned and discussed with me. Which means I will have to take your group to the armory. We will supply you with iron weapons if you want them, but of course you can keep your lightweight blades instead."

Aaron turned to look at Ami and Henry with a slight grin.



"Unfortunately, we cannot be that generous in terms of magical tomes and staffs. Our garrison's healers and mages need them as well. So, who wants to exchange their weapons for iron ones?"



"I would love a decent iron bow before the mission. They must be very costly to make, though, as many of the armored bowmen I've seen hold a traditional wood-carved weapon."



"I wouldn't mind if I could have a better sword too. This old thing could barely put a scratch on those bandits when we fought."

Derick drew his sword to show it to Aaron for dramatic effect.



"Before we go anywhere, Sterling, how much are we being paid for this job, and what is it?"



"Remember the bandit leader? Apparently they found out the location of her hideout", in a tone that expresses disapproval, "and we're supposed to go get her. Five thousand gold, and the new weapons I guess. Urgh, I'm not made for dealing with that kind of person... Actually, sir Aaron, while we fought her goons, she vanished from the battlefield. It didn't seem like it was your men who made her leave. Do you know if she has other enemies that we should know about?"

-Henry: "You sure about that? Her disappearance coincides with the arrival of the knights pretty well. Seems like a safe bet that they are the reason she left. At any rate, this is good. A chance to get back at her for her attack on us, and we get paid for it. Certainly seems like a good job. Although don't have any idea of her strength, so we should likely be cautious. But hopefully the defeat we gave her yesterday weakened her."



"Arinne is known for her wisdom, even if it doesn't show. She never picks on strong targets. All the victims that fell to her group were hapless adventurers or poorly defended caravans. She also spent most of her life in a small village on the outskirts of the forest, so she knows her way around the woods better than most of Torres' men." Aaron made a brief pause to brush his hair with his left hand.



"Our informants told us that she and her group are occupying an old manor



from the times of Great Deynastia. It's in the hills to the north-west from Kesselring Forest, and because there's no settlements, or mines, or trade routes there, no one really visits these parts. I will be in Armory if any of you want the iron weapons." With that, he saluted briefly, and then went down the corridors, and then, down the stairs.



"Informants. Right. I almost feel sorry for the man."

Daniel momentarily thought about switching before deciding to stick with his lightweight sword.



"Eh, don't get too discouraged boss. Bandit hunting is far from the most... unsavory job a mercenary could ask for. Plus, you already accepted the job, too late to go back now. I'm ready to leave when you are."



"You don't need to call me that. I'm not going to order anyone around or anything. Just do whatever you think is best. Anyway, I'm going to take Aaron up on his offer and get myself a new sword."

After giving it some thought, Gregor opts to keep his lightweight lance until he can become stronger.



"Well, I think this is a fantastic opportunity! If we can disrupt bandit operations in this area, the villages will be safer and trade will be able to get through more easily." He salutes Sterling. "Private von Hexham, ready to move out!"



"Oh, so you're joining us? Fancy that. The more the merrier, as they say."



"Of course I'm coming along!...I think. I mean, I assumed that's why I've been training with you and your group for the past week."



"Oh yeah, I forgot you were there most of the time..."





"I tend to have that impression on people, I'm afraid..."

At the Armory, Aaron issued an iron sword to Sterling and Derick, and iron-wrought bow went into Charlotte's hands. Aaron took the lightweight weapons, scribbled something in a giant ledger, and put the slim blades and training bow on the weapon racks. Then he snapped his fingers and opened a small chest that was standing on a counter.



"I almost forgot. Ernest, our resident, errr... *diplomat* told me to issue you one of his older lockpicks. It's not in the best condition, but Ernest is sure that if you will be frugal with using the tool, it should be of great help in your mission." Aaron handed the lockpick to Daniel.

**Derick&Sterling get Iron Sword, Charlotte gets Iron Bow, Daniel gets Lockpick (6/15)**



"Is that everyone who needed an iron weapon?"

Daniel eyed the Iron Sword again while shifting his current sword, and then hands his sword over.



"Hmn... Actually I would like to upgrade my sword. Only so much this flimsy thing can do against armor."

Aaron takes Daniel's sword, gives him an iron one, writes something in the ledger and puts the old sword on the rack, right near the two other swords.



"That's everyone, I presume?"



"I don't think Adrien's changing, so that's all of us ready to go."



"I see. Torres wanted to give you a lift with his cavaliers, but unfortunately he had to leave for patrol. You will have to march on foot. Good luck on your mission."

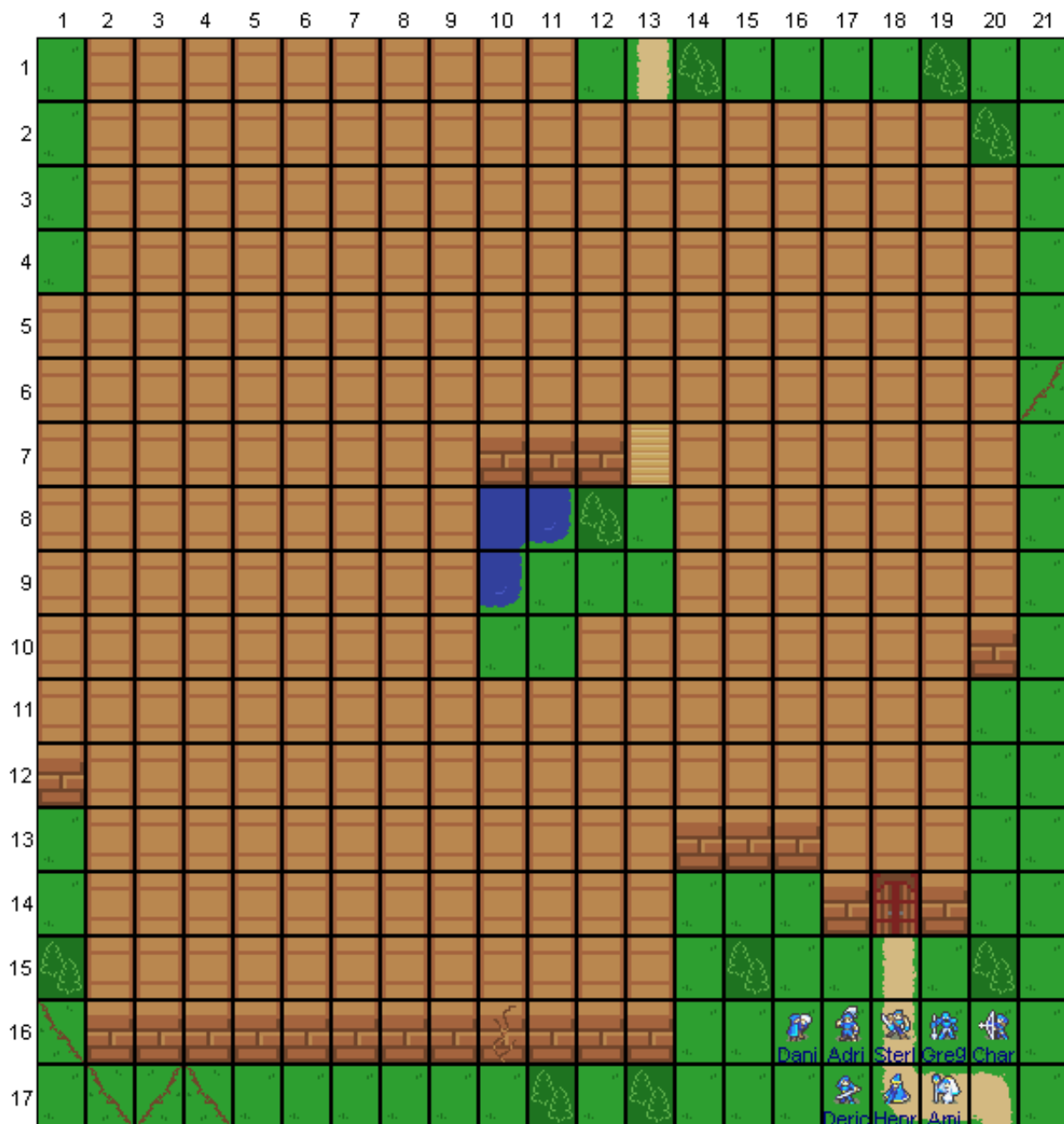
And with that, the mercenaries were off.

## **~~Chapter 1: The Proof of Courage~~**

*The utterly boring and nondescript trip through the grassy fields, and then, low hills, took approximately two hours. And then, at the horizon, they could see the 'manor' - a ruined building, made of old, brown bricks. Only the ground floor remains now - what's left of the first floor are bits of walls and corner pillars. And the exterior of the ground floor isn't very appealing either - the windows were blocked with planks, and the large entrance door in the corner of the building looked as if it was tightly shut.*

*The group approached the building slowly and cautiously, but there were no sentries. Actually, it looked as if there was no sign of life at all. The only sign of recent human activity - a path of trampled grass and sand leading to the door. Is it really the bandit hideout? There's only one way to check that - get in.*

# ~~Player Turn 1~~



| Merces:                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies: |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Adrien: 20/20<br>Ami Storm: 17/17<br>Charlotte Braxis: 17/17<br>Daniel: 18/18<br>Derick: 18/18<br>Gregor von Hexham: 20/20<br>Henry: 17/17<br>Sterling: 20/20 | ?        |

Gregor hefts his lance, gesturing towards the door.



"Well ladies and gentlemen, anyone want to vote on what to do? I can probably hold this doorway easily enough if there are enemies on the other side, assuming we can get it open."



"This feels too easy. Gregor, will you aid me in checking the around the wall nearest for anything suspicious while the others take the door?"

**Charlotte: Move to 17,15.**

Gregor shrugs, then moves to follow.



"Sure, I'll come along, unless the captain has other ideas."

**Gregor: Move to (16, 15)**



"I suppose that's my cue, stand back for a second."

The supplies acquisitionist went up to the door and took something out of his pocket. He knelt before the lock before pausing.



"Actually, with this building being as old as it is, we might be able to find another was in. Want me to take care of this lock or should we flank any possible resistance?"



"Well if we broke through the wall we might lose our element of surprise but- oh. That works Daniel"



"It probably would be best if we split into two groups. One or two more people should probably go with Miss Forestry and Mr Soldier while I take care of this door."

**Daniel: Go to 15.18 and pick the door's lock**



"I stand here to heal who ever the pointman is."

**Ami: head to 19,15**



"I'll stay back here too"



"I suggest to open the door first. We can decide whether to flank them through the wall after we find out what's inside."



"Good point. If nothing comes out, I'll take the west wall with Gregory. Otherwise, I'll stay here and fire."



"Sounds good to me. If there are sword fighters in there, let me know and I'll fight them for days if needed."

**Click!**

The door was opened. Few metres ahead, there was a band of poorly clad men, laughing and chatting over something, one of them glanced at the opening door.

"And then I told her--OH SHIT!"

"We're under attack! To arms! To arms!"

---

On the other side of the manor...



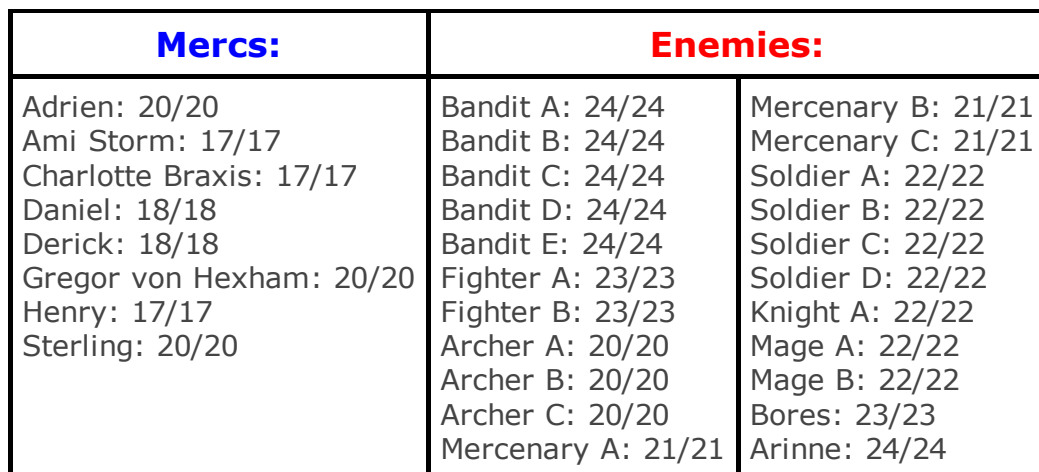
"WHAT!? Someone found us? We're under attack? Idiots, kill them all!"



"Arinne, girl, you didn't mention *that* when I asked about risks of living in that place of yours.



"Oh shut up, Bores. We will talk it over when I deal with the intruders."



**Sterling: 3 North.**

Ami peeks around the corner



"We found them...not that they were missing in the first place."

**Ami: Stay put.**

**Derick strolled calmly into the doorway at 18,14**



"Hi there!"



"Well, sounds like this is the place after all."



"....Oh. Looks like we're going to need my bow after all."



"I can see... one sword-fighter, a door and another cracked wall to the left."

-Henry: "Oh boy. Here we go again. I guess the meatheads are just going to charge right in. That will work."



"You lot have fun then, I'm going to go around."

**Adrien: Move to 14,17.**

I guess I better go with Adrien then to make sure he does not find more trouble than he can handle, Henry thought to himself.

**Henry: Move to 15,17**

After the initial 'oops', most of the group began to concentrate on the main entrance, while Henry and Adrien went toward the cracked wall.

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Then, the soldier in the main hall rushed at Sterling! He stabbed him greviously, and the swordsman responded with a cut across the spearman's arm!

Second later, a deadly-looking arrow barely missed Sterling, flying past his head. Archer A cursed at his terrible aim while his two Bandit buddies moved closer.

Sterling could see that there was pair of two other criminals heading right toward the main hall.

### **Soldier B vs Sterling**

Hit:  $93+15-15-16 = 77$

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Dmg:  $12+1-3 = 10$  dmg

Sterling counters!

Hit:  $105-27 = 78$

Hit roll: 66, hit!

Dmg:  $11-1-5 = 5$  dmg

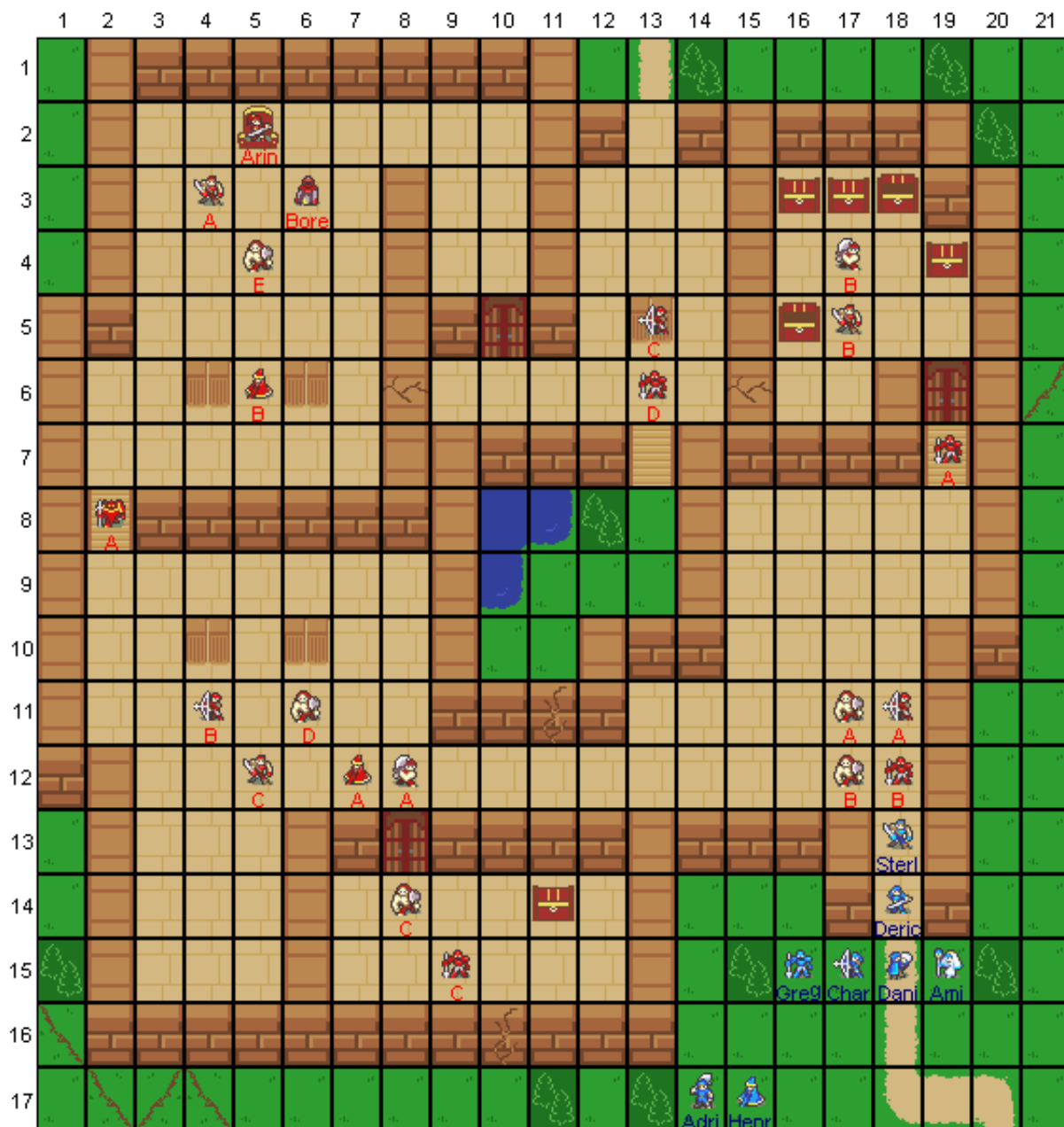
### **Archer A vs Sterling**

Hit:  $99-15-16 = 68$

Hit roll: 84, miss!



# ~~Player Turn 2~~



| Merces:                  | Enemies:           |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 20/20            | Bandit A: 24/24    | Mercenary B: 21/21 |
| Ami Storm: 17/17         | Bandit B: 24/24    | Mercenary C: 21/21 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 17/17  | Bandit C: 24/24    | Soldier A: 22/22   |
| Daniel: 18/18            | Bandit D: 24/24    | Soldier B: 17/22   |
| Derick: 18/18            | Bandit E: 24/24    | Soldier C: 22/22   |
| Gregor von Hexham: 20/20 | Fighter A: 23/23   | Soldier D: 22/22   |
| Henry: 17/17             | Fighter B: 23/23   | Knight A: 22/22    |
| Sterling: 10/20          | Archer A: 20/20    | Mage A: 22/22      |
|                          | Archer B: 20/20    | Mage B: 22/22      |
|                          | Archer C: 20/20    | Bores: 23/23       |
|                          | Mercenary A: 21/21 | Arinne: 24/24      |

**Adrien: Move to 12, 17.**



"Sterling, back up and let me heal ya."



"Uh oops, I'll step back a bit so that Charlotte can do her thing."

**Derick: Move to 18,16**



"On it! Gregor, take Sterling's place and help me out here!"

**Charlotte: Move to 18,14 to replace Derick. TWANG at nearest soldier/spearman.**

Shuffling was had, and then Charlotte, thanks to being close, TWANG'd at the spearman in front of Sterling. The arrow went straight into Soldier B's chest, forcing him to vomit out some blood.

**Charlotte vs Soldier B**

Hit: 108+10-12, autohit! Crit roll: 2!

Dmg: 10-5 = 5x3 = 15dmg



"Thanks!"

**Sterling: 4 south!**

**Ami: Head to 19,17 and heal Sterling(is that the right place?)**



"A nasty wound, and now it gone."

Sterling retreated and Ami healed him up nicely, back to full health he was.

**Ami heals Sterling**

10+6 = up to 16HP healed

**Henry: Move to 13, 17.**



"I'll be right there!"

**Gregor: Move to (18,13), ready weapon but do not attack.**

**Daniel: Move to 16.16**



"My treasure sense is tingling."

Sterling fell back and Gregor took his place while the swordman got himself healed.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Then, the spearman lifted his spear and stabbed at Gregor! The wound wasn't that bad, and Gregor easily retaliated, ending the life of the soldier.

#### **Soldier B vs Gregor**

Hit:  $93-14+15 = 94$   
Hit roll: 26, hit!  
Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$   
  
Gregor retaliates!  
Hit:  $96-12 = 84$   
Hit roll: 8, hit!  
Damage:  $11-5 = 6\text{dmg}$

Unfortunately, the so-far-unlucky archer readied his bow and shot an arrow at Gregor. It got embedded in his armor, bruising his stomach.

#### **Archer B vs Gregor**

Hit:  $99-14+15 = 100$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10-6 = 4\text{dmg}$

And then it was even worse - the nearby bandit rushed at the poor spearman and whacked Gregor with the iron axe, knocking him to the ground.

#### **Bandit A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $79-14+15+15 = 95$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
Damage:  $17+1-6 = 12\text{dmg}$

### Meanwhile...



"Arinne, girl." Bores suddenly got nervous and slightly pulled his hood further over his face. The myrmidon girl sighed, and glared at him.



"What is it this time, old man?"



"There's a slight, uh, problem. I think I've, err, misplaced my dark magic

book and left it somewhere nearby. I think I should get it."



"...Right. You misplaced that *huge* spellbook. Honestly I don't know how such old guy, who misplaces his *primary weapon*, survived in this world for so long. Go grab it, and get back before those mercenaries get here."



"But of course, I will be right back." With speed unusual for an old man, Bores went to the side room. After a moment, he sighed in relief and began mumbling to himself.

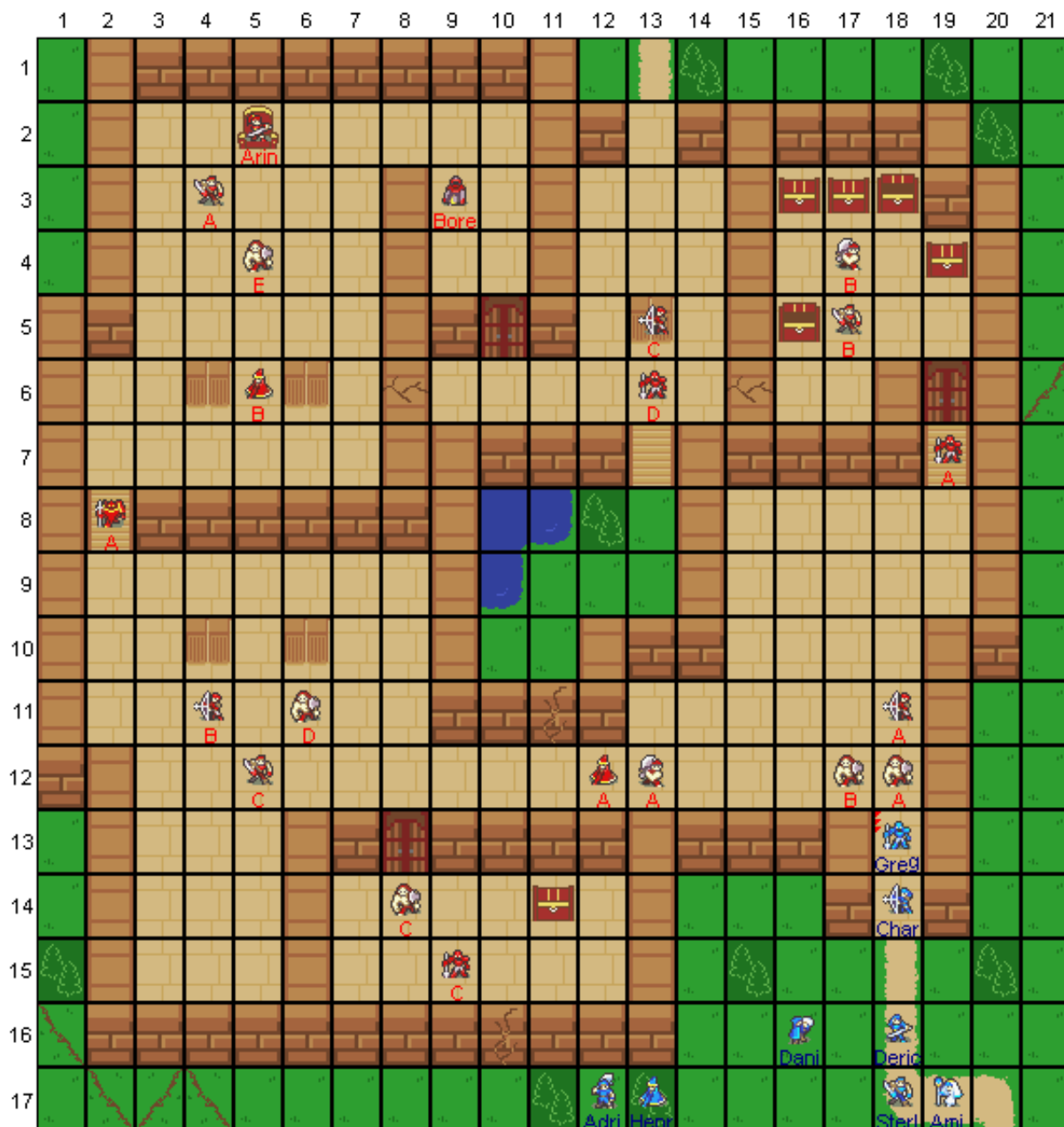


"...Some people are so naive. Not that I dislike her, but still. Time to leave and find some other living place, I guess... Bores began to check his pockets wildly.



"Now, where did I put that door key."

# ~~Player Turn 3~~



| Merces:                     | Enemies:           |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 20/20               | Bandit A: 24/24    | Mercenary B: 21/21 |
| Ami Storm: 17/17            | Bandit B: 24/24    | Mercenary C: 21/21 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 17/17     | Bandit C: 24/24    | Soldier A: 22/22   |
| Daniel: 18/18               | Bandit D: 24/24    | Soldier C: 22/22   |
| Derick: 18/18               | Bandit E: 24/24    | Soldier D: 22/22   |
| Gregor von Hexham: -/20 3/3 | Fighter A: 23/23   | Knight A: 22/22    |
| Henry: 17/17                | Fighter B: 23/23   | Mage A: 22/22      |
| Sterling: 20/20             | Archer A: 20/20    | Mage B: 22/22      |
|                             | Archer B: 20/20    | Bores: 23/23       |
|                             | Archer C: 20/20    | Arinne: 24/24      |
|                             | Mercenary A: 21/21 |                    |

**Charlotte:** Move 1 S, 1 W so that the rest of the party can do their thing.

**Adrien:** Move to 9, 17 and throw my axe at the spearman inside!

**Derick:** Awkwardly hang out at 15,17 since I can't get in

**Ami:** Move to 18,14 and heal Gregor.



"you be back on your feet in no feet." ???

As Charlotte moved away, Adrien, in the meanwhile, tossed his magical phasing hatchet of doom at the spearman on the other side of the room!

#### Adrien vs Soldier C

Hit:  $92+15-12 = 95$   
Hit roll: 76, hit!  
Damage:  $12+1-5 = 8\text{dmg}$

Derick moved to east as Ami went into the doorway and bapped Gregor's face with her staff, bringing him back to the world of life.

#### Ami heals Gregor

$10+6 / 2 =$  up to 8HP restored

Gregor gets up, wincing.



"You...you'll have to do better than that to bring me down!"

**Sterling: Move 2 North because Ami is just going to get hurt for no good reason.**

**Henry: Move 10, 17 and cast fire on the cracked wall.**

-Henry: "Heh. This was a good idea Adrien. This wall looks weak, won't be able to last for more then one or two more blasts. Then we can get in and flank those bandits, and we won't get caught in that clusterfuck at the main door. I'm glad I decided to follow you."

**Daniel: Move to 14.17**

Sterling went behind Ami, ready to jump into action. Meanwhile, Henry flung a fire ball at the cracked wall, damaging it.

#### Henry vs Cracked Wall (Outside)

$13-0 = 13\text{dmg}$

Daniel moved past Sterling, his treasure senses still tingling.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Goddamit where did that thing come from? Seen it?" The soldier asked the bandit close to him, but the axeman shook his head.

"I better move away from that damned wall..."

In the meanwhile, Bandit A again attacked Gregor, who just got revived. But he missed!

Gregor decided to counterattack; he plunged his spear into bandit's chest, wounding him.

Then the archer behind Bandit A launched another arrow at the spearman - barely scratching him. The mage and fighter reinforced the entrance hall group, though.

#### **Bandit A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $79+15-14-10-5 = 65$

Hit roll: 72, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $96-15-6+10+5 = 90$

Hit roll: 35, hit!

Damage:  $11-1-3 = 7\text{dmg}$

#### **Archer A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $99-14-10-5 = 70$

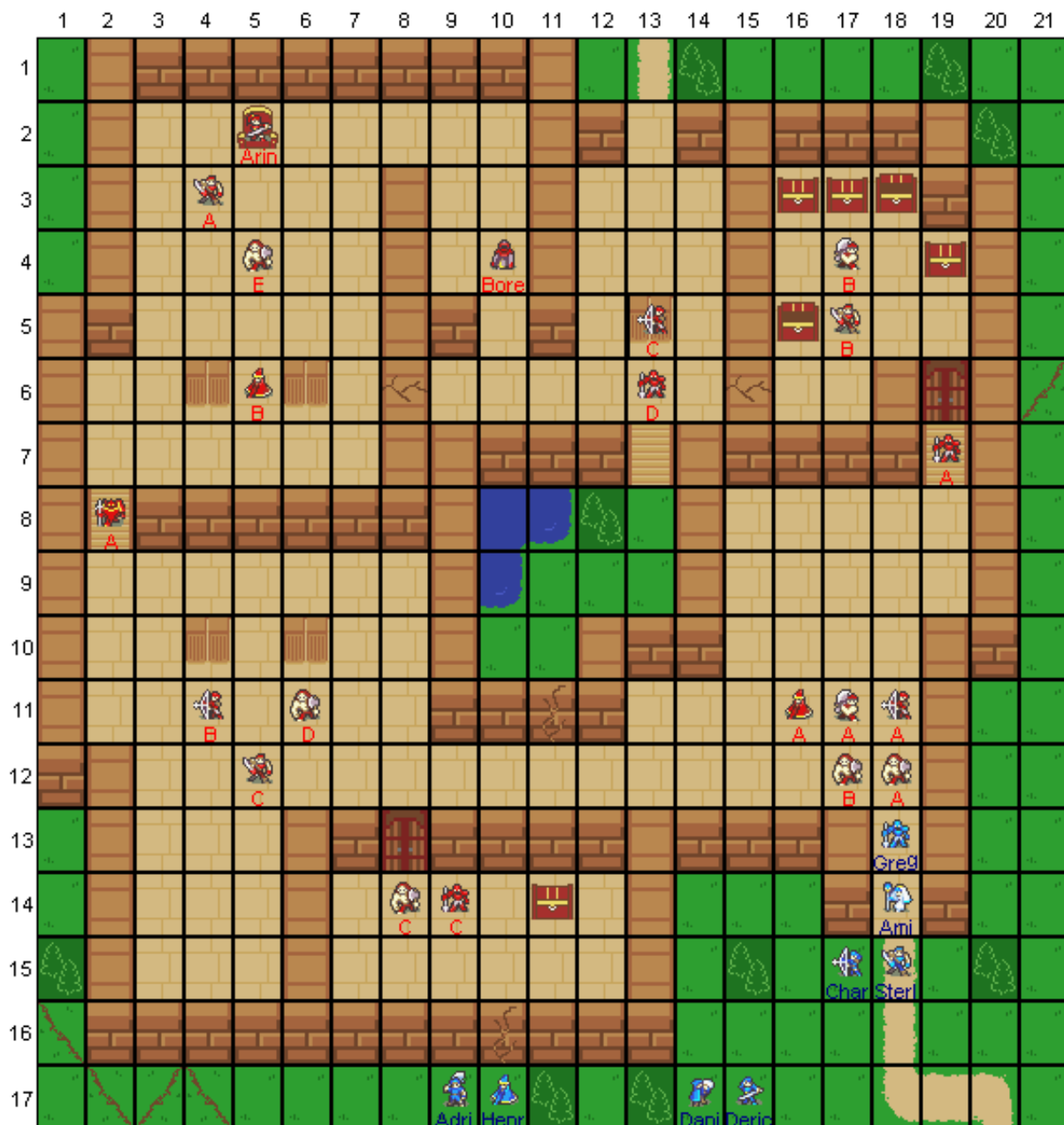
Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $10-6-3 = 1\text{dmg}$



"Ahhh, right, here it is." With a smile, Bores moved to the door, put the key into the hole, and turned said key - the door was unlocked with a loud click.

# ~~Player Turn 4~~



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 20/20<br>Ami Storm: 17/17<br>Charlotte Braxis: 17/17<br>Daniel: 18/18<br>Derick: 18/18<br>Gregor von Hexham: 7/20<br>Henry: 17/17<br>Sterling: 20/20 | Bandit A: 17/24<br>Bandit B: 24/24<br>Bandit C: 24/24<br>Bandit D: 24/24<br>Bandit E: 24/24<br>Fighter A: 23/23<br>Fighter B: 23/23<br>Archer A: 20/20<br>Archer B: 20/20<br>Archer C: 20/20<br>Mercenary A: 21/21 | Mercenary B: 21/21<br>Mercenary C: 21/21<br>Soldier A: 22/22<br>Soldier C: 14/22<br>Soldier D: 22/22<br>Knight A: 22/22<br>Mage A: 22/22<br>Mage B: 22/22<br>Bores: 23/23<br>Arinne: 24/24 |

-Henry: "Alright, I will break down the wall and you run in and kill everyone? Sounds like a plan Adrien?" Henry called out as he summoned a ball of fire into his hand.

**Henry: Attack dat wall.**

The cracked wall exploded into cloud of dust and rubble, exposing the inside of the room to Henry and Adrien. The two bandits inside were speechless.



13-0 = 13dmg

**Ami: Fall back to 19,16, heal Greg if he fall back near me**

**Daniel: Move to 12.17**



"Sterling, you're up!"

**Gregor: Fall back to (19, 15)**

Daniel moved past Derick, while Greg and Ami left the building. Her staff touched his wounds, and they healed up rapidly.

#### Ami heals Gregor

10+6 = up to 16HP healed



"I'm on it!"

**Sterling: 2 North, aggress bandit.**

Sterling went inside with a roar and slashed at the bandit. Said bandit tried to retaliate, but tripped, and then Sterling slashed again - blood burst around, staining: Sterling, his sword, his shoes, and floor. The bandit died few seconds later.

#### Sterling vs Bandit A

Hit:  $105+15-6 = 114$ , autohit!Damage:  $11+1-3 = 9$ dmg

Bandit A counterattacks!

Hit:  $79-15-15-16 = 33$ 

Hit roll: 86, miss!

Sterling strikes back!

Hit:  $105+15-6 = 114$ , autohit!Damage:  $11+1-3 = 9$ dmg

**Charlotte: Move to 18,14 and wait for the next mindless bandit to approach Sterling.**



"Works for me, moving in!"

**Adrien: Move to 10, 14. Attack that soldier!**

Tap tap tap, went Adrien's shoes when he went in with his hatchet held high. Then he smacked Soldier C's head with it. With a crunch, the blade almost split the soldier's head

in two. Even when the body slumped to the ground, pink bits of brain matter remained on the hatchet's edge.

#### Adrien vs Soldier C

Hit:  $92+15-12 = 95$   
Hit roll: 5, hit! Crit roll: 2!  
Damage:  $12+1-5 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$



"Guys! Wait for meeeeee!"

#### Derick: Move to 13,17

Derick went after Henry.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Bandit C went around Adrien and lunged with his axe at Henry! The blade easily slashed across the tender mage's flesh. Henry, almost dead, retaliated with firebolt to the face.

#### Bandit C vs Henry

Hit:  $79-5-2-10 = 62$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $17-0 = 17\text{dmg}$   
  
Henry counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $105+10+5-6 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $13-0 = 13\text{dmg}$

"Move away, you sniveling toad!" The mage shouted at the bandit in a raspy voice and when Bandit B did move away, the mage's hand began crackling with thunder; which soon struck Sterling's chest.

#### Mage A vs Sterling

Hit:  $97-15-16 = 66$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Dmg:  $11-0 = 11\text{dmg}$

What followed was an arrow - it struck Sterling's stomach.

#### Archer A vs Sterling

Hit:  $99-15-16 = 68$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Dmg:  $10-3 = 7\text{dmg}$

And then, Fighter A swung his axe at Sterling, trying to add third wound on the mercenary's body. He missed, and Sterling retaliated with two cuts of his blade.

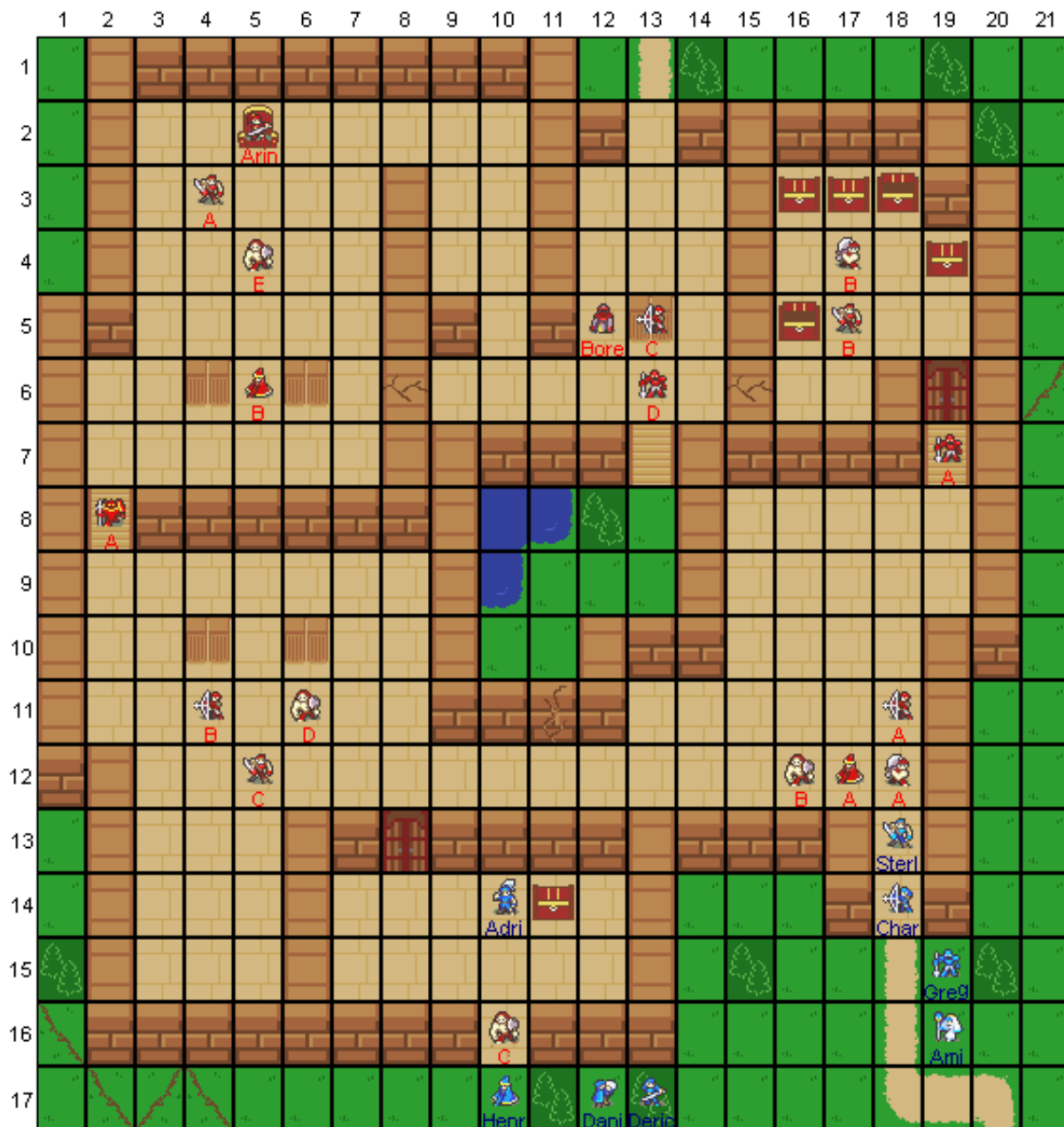
#### Fighter A vs Sterling

Hit:  $84-15-15-16 = 38$   
Hit roll: 49, miss!  
  
Sterling counters!  
Hit:  $105+15-6 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $11+1-4 = 8\text{dmg}$

And again!

Hit: 105+15-6 = 114, autohit!  
 Damage: 11+1-4 = 8dmg

## ~~Player Turn 5~~



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                      | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 20/20<br>Ami Storm: 17/17<br>Charlotte Braxis: 17/17<br>Daniel: 18/18<br>Derick: 20/20<br>Gregor von Hexham: 20/20<br>Henry: 2/19<br>Sterling: 2/20 | Bandit B: 24/24<br>Bandit C: 11/24<br>Bandit D: 24/24<br>Bandit E: 24/24<br>Fighter A: 7/23<br>Fighter B: 23/23<br>Archer A: 20/20<br>Archer B: 20/20<br>Archer C: 20/20<br>Mercenary A: 21/21 | Mercenary B: 21/21<br>Mercenary C: 21/21<br>Soldier A: 22/22<br>Soldier D: 22/22<br>Knight A: 22/22<br>Mage A: 22/22<br>Mage B: 22/22<br>Bores: 23/23<br>Arinne: 24/24 |



"GET BACK HERE YOU!"

**Adrien: Throw axe at bandit C**



"I think I see an opening..."

**Charlotte:** Rush over to 16,14 and use magical hax arrows to shoot the axe-wielder through the wall.



"Holy moley, magic! Time to switch again, Greg!"

**Sterling:** 2 South and use a vulnerary!



"Hold on, Sterling!"

**Ami:** Head for 18,16 and heal Sterling



"These guys have mages too? Damn, I'm on my way!"

**Gregor:** Move to (18, 13). Stab Fighter.

**Derick:** Move to 13,17 and tap foot impatiently.

Adrien, with his angst, tossed the hatchet at Bandit C; it hit him in the back. But he was still alive.

#### Adrien vs Bandit C

Hit:  $92+5-6 = 91$   
Hit roll: 8, hit!  
Damage:  $12-3 = 9\text{dmg}$

Then Charlotte indeed found an opening and launched an arrow at Bandit B, striking him in the leg.

#### Charlotte vs Bandit B

Hit:  $108+10-6 = 112$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10-3 = 7\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Sterling retreated and rubbed Vulnerary at his wounds, which soon were further healed by Ami's healing staff.

#### Sterling uses Vulnerary

up to 10HP restored

**Ami heals Sterling**

10+6 = up to 16HP restored

Few seconds later, Gregor took initiative, ran up to Fighter A and tried to stab him with the iron spear. The wound looked fatal, but the axeman managed to survive and counterattacked Gregor, barely missing the spearman's head. Talk about luck.

#### Gregor vs Fighter A

Hit:  $96+10-15-6 = 85$   
Hit roll: 85, hit!  
Damage:  $11-1-4 = 6\text{dmg}$   
  
Fighter A counters!  
Hit:  $84+15-10-14 = 75$   
Hit roll: 98, miss!

While the battle continued, Derick moved through the thick bushes and between the trees.

Henry watched the bandit in front of him get stuck by a thrown axe. He wiped off a streak of blood, his or the bandits he did not know, from his robe. "Messy business this killing. I am surprised that you are still alive." He then summoned a ball of fire into his hand. "Don't worry, I will make the pain stop."

#### Henry: Attack Bandit C.

FWOOSH! Went the firebolt when it struck the Bandit C in the face. Soon, said man collapsed to the ground, dead.

#### Henry vs Bandit C

Hit:  $105+10+5-6 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $13-2-0 = 11\text{dmg}$

Seeing the way clear, Daniel continued on.

#### Daniel: Move to 10.16

Daniel went inside the side room, chest right in front of him.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"DIE, puny spearman!" The Fighter A shouted and then slashed with his axe at Gregor's chest, wounding him grievously. In return, Gregor impaled the axeman on his spear.

#### Fighter A vs Gregor

Hit:  $84+15-10-14 = 75$   
Hit roll: 65, hit!  
Damage:  $18+1-6 = 13\text{dmg}$   
  
Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $96+10-15-6 = 85$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $11-1-4 = 6\text{dmg}$

But then, Bandit B ran closer and attacked Gregor. The bandit's axe slammed against Gregor's head, knocking him down instantly.

**Bandit B vs Gregor**

Hit:  $79+15-10-14 = 70$

Hit roll: 5, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-6 = 12\text{dmg}$

After that, Mage A moved along the wall, concentrated, and then electrocuted Charlotte with power of Thunder. Charlotte wasn't going to just stand and get killed, so she shot at the Mage.

**Mage A vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $97-15-10 = 72$

Hit roll: 20, hit!

Damage:  $11-1 = 10\text{dmg}$

Charlotte counterattacks!

Hit:  $108+10-10 = 108$ , autohit!

Damage:  $10-1 = 9\text{dmg}$

Suddenly, in a bold move, Archer A went toward Sterling. But the mercenary wasn't his target - the cleric behind was! The arrow easily pierced Ami's dress and struck into her right shoulder.

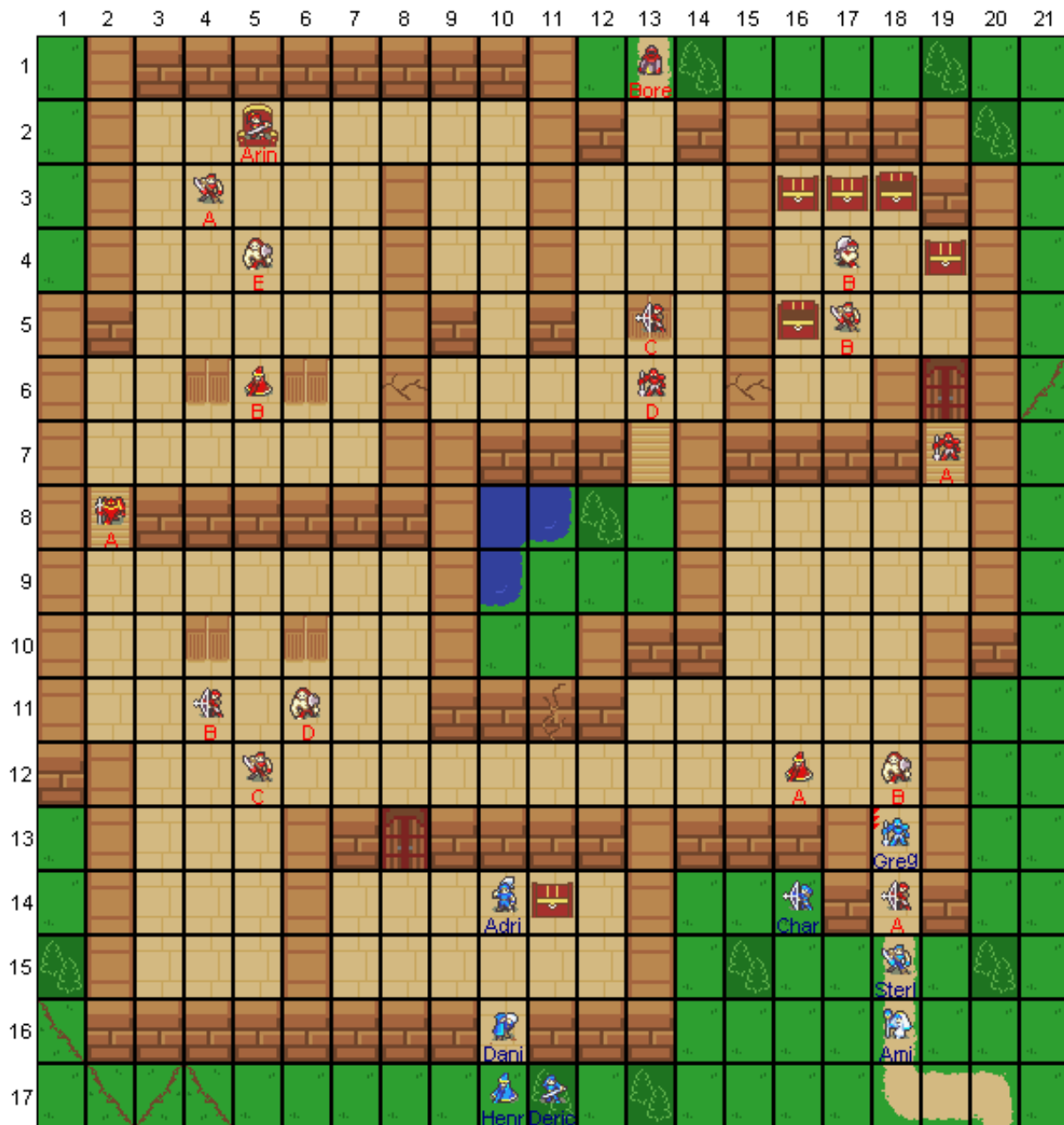
**Archer A vs Ami**

Hit:  $99-14-10-5 = 70$

Hit roll: 4, hit!

Damage:  $10-2 = 8\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 6~~



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 20/20<br>Ami Storm: 9/17<br>Charlotte Braxis: 7/17<br>Daniel: 18/18<br>Derick: 20/20<br>Gregor von Hexham: -/20 3/3<br>Henry: 2/19<br>Sterling: 20/20 | Bandit B: 17/24<br>Bandit D: 24/24<br>Bandit E: 24/24<br>Fighter B: 23/23<br>Archer A: 20/20<br>Archer B: 20/20<br>Archer C: 20/20<br>Mercenary A: 21/21<br>Mercenary B: 21/21 | Mercenary C: 21/21<br>Soldier A: 22/22<br>Soldier D: 22/22<br>Knight A: 22/22<br>Mage A: 13/22<br>Mage B: 22/22<br>Bores: 23/23<br>Arinne: 24/24 |



"You son of a-"

**Sterling: Avenge Ami for great justice!**



"I not dead."

Sterling slashed at the bold Archer A, easily hitting him in the arm.

**Sterling vs Archer A**

Hit:  $105+5-14 = 96$   
Hit roll: 56, hit!  
Damage:  $11-6 = 5\text{dmg}$



"Ami! Circle around behind me where you can't be reached and heal me if I'm hit too hard."

**Charlotte: Rush to 17, 15 and TWANG the other archer.**

Charlotte moved closer to the entrance and TWANG'd another arrow, this time at enemy Archer A. He shot back at her, but missed by a wide mark.

**Charlotte vs Archer A**

Hit:  $108+10+10+5-14 = 119$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10-6 = 4\text{dmg}$

Archer A countershoots!  
Hit:  $99-10-5-15 = 69$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

**Ami: Wander over to 16,15, pop a verabry(Or whatever the potion thing is)**



"You need another arrow?" she says pointing to her wound.

Om nom nom delicious white powders.

**Ami uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

**Adrien: Move to 7, 14. Start taunting the bandits on the other side of the wall.**



"COME AND GET ME YOU GITS!"

After Adrien moved closer to the door, he started taunting the bandits, but they don't seem to be listening at all.





"Aw sweet treasure, how I love thee."

**Daniel: Move to 11.14 and grab the loot.**

**Click!** And from inside the chest, Daniel pulled out an **Iron Blade!** Unfortunately, that leaves Daniel with only one more empty inventory slot.

-Henry: "Well. This is going swimmingly." Henry muttered to himself as he pulled out a vulnerability and wiped it on his wounds and walked into the mansion.

**Henry: Move to 8, 15 and use a vulnerability on myself.**

The powder sparkled and the terrible gash mostly healed up.

**Henry uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

**Derick: Move to 9,15**

Derick moved inside as well.

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Using his magical hax omnivident eyes, Mage A went down the corridor and then cast Thunder at Daniel, through the wall, hurting him rather badly.

**Mage A vs Daniel**

Hit:  $97-18 = 79$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $11-3 = 8\text{dmg}$

"Hmph, I better go help them..." Said Soldier A after much hesistation, and then went toward the manor's entrance. Just as his fellow bandit, namely Archer A, initiated another ballistic exchange with Charlotte.

Both proved their archery skills with spilt blood.

**Archer A vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $99-10-5-15 = 69$

Hit roll: 45, hit!

Damage:  $10-4 = 6\text{dmg}$

Charlotte retaliates!

Hit:  $108+10+10+5-14 = 119$ , autohit!

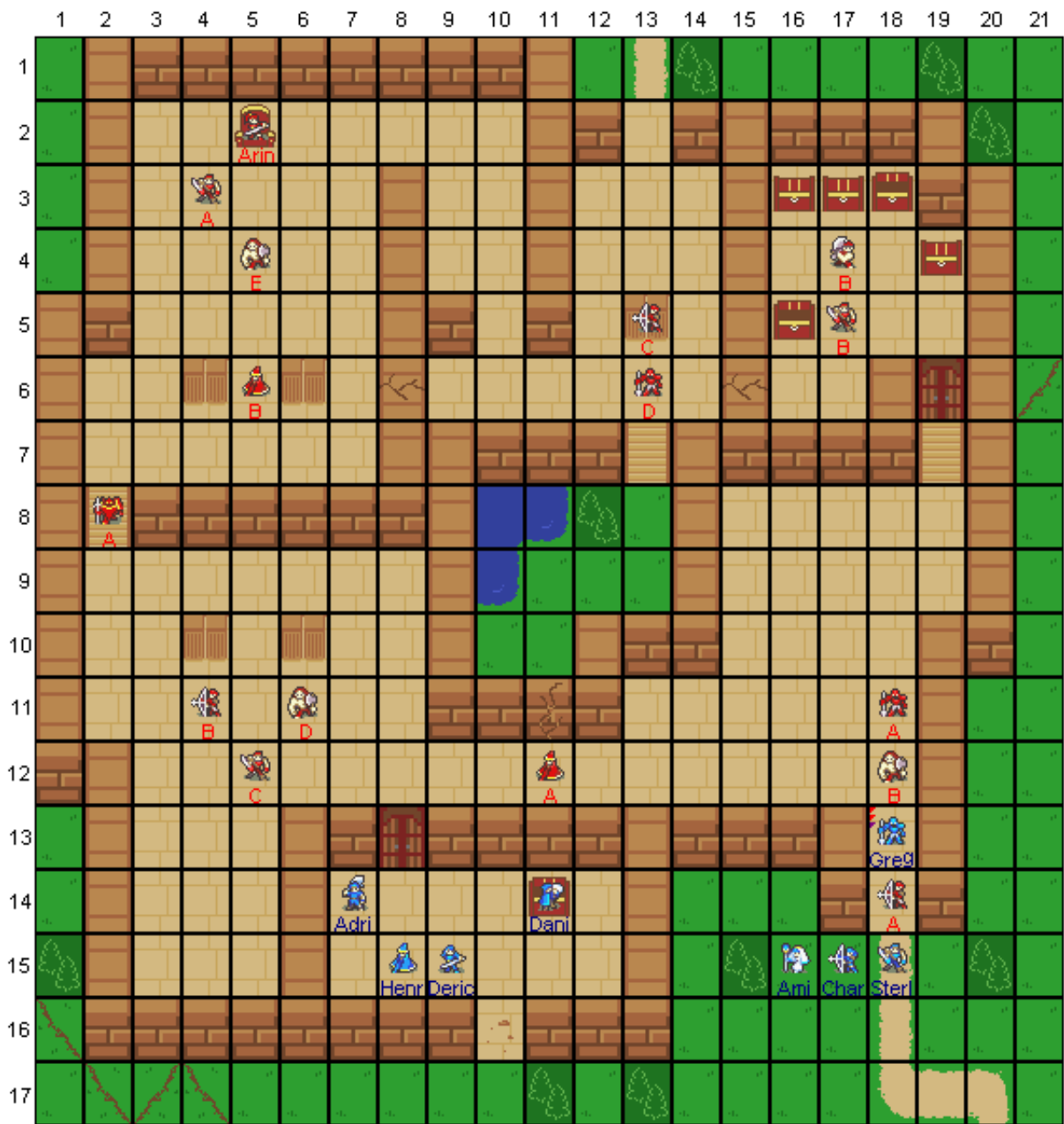
Damage:  $10-6 = 4\text{dmg}$



"Phew, it seems I've avoided the battle altogether. This is lucky day indeed!"

Now, maybe it's time to check Fezzan library..." Bores mumbled to himself, before silently slipping away from the manor, toward the forested hills to the north east.

~~Player Turn 7~~



| Mercs:                      |  | Enemies:           |                    |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 20/20               |  | Bandit B: 17/24    | Mercenary B: 21/21 |
| Ami Storm: 17/17            |  | Bandit D: 24/24    | Mercenary C: 21/21 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 1/17      |  | Bandit E: 24/24    | Soldier A: 22/22   |
| Daniel: 10/18               |  | Fighter B: 23/23   | Soldier D: 22/22   |
| Derick: 20/20               |  | Archer A: 7/20     | Knight A: 22/22    |
| Gregor von Hexham: -/20 2/3 |  | Archer B: 20/20    | Mage A: 13/22      |
| Henry: 12/19                |  | Archer C: 20/20    | Mage B: 22/22      |
| Sterling: 20/20             |  | Mercenary A: 21/21 | Arinne: 24/24      |

Adrien: **ATTACK THE DOOR!**



"Ah, Sterling! Let's finish off the archer. You first, though. Ami, if we can get to Gregor in time, we need him safe. If not, heal me instead, please!"



"Here goes nothing."

### Sterling: Attack the archer

Henry looked at the solid wooden door that his comrade was asking him to break down. He shrugged. "Sure."

### Henry: Attack door

**Derick: Move 1 North since even if I wait for the door to break down I won't be able to reach any enemies**



"Ready!"

Adrien tossed the hatchet at the door, making the splinters fly.

#### Adrien vs Door (Left)

Damage:  $12-5 = 7\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Sterling again slashed at the bold Archer A.

#### Sterling vs Archer A

Hit:  $105+5-14 = 96$

Hit roll: 12, hit!

Damage:  $11-6 = 5\text{dmg}$

Then Henry tossed a fireball at the sturdy door, turning part of the nice polished brown wood into charred black surface, while in the meanwhile Derrick moved closer to the door.

#### Henry vs Door (Left)

Damage:  $13-0 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Charlotte: Autohit Archer A for four damage.**

TWANG! Archer A collapsed dead after three seconds.

#### Charlotte vs Archer A

Hit:  $108+10+10+5-14 = 119$ , autohit!

Damage:  $10-6 = 4\text{dmg}$

**Ami: Head to 18,14 and heal Greg**



"Walking on the bodies of my enemies as it should be..."



*\*cough\* don't know happen there."*

The healing staff tapped Gregor's face, and his eyes opened, his wounds partially healing. He looked as bad as a mangled puppy after falling down eight stories of stairs.

#### Ami heals Gregor

$10+6/2 = \text{up to 8hp healed}$

Taking his new ill-gotten blade, Daniel assists in the breakage of the door.

#### Daniel: Move to 8.14 and attack the door with the Iron Blade

The door almost broke in half, but it withstood the heavy blow.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~



"Alright! Enough fooling around, it's time to show my worth to the team by--"

"Yer alive again!" Shouted Bandit B and swung his axe at Gregor. And sent him to dreamland again. "And stay that way!"

#### Bandit B vs Gregor

$79+15-5-10-14 = 65$

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-6-3 = 9\text{dmg}$



"Oh gods the pain..."

In the meanwhile, Archer B shot at Adrien! And then, Mage A electrocuted the brave axeman through the wall! In both of these instances, Adrien retaliated with hatchet throwing, but he missed the Mage a bit. The nearby mercenary moved in toward the door.

#### Archer B vs Adrien

Hit:  $99-15-9 = 75$

Hit roll: 9, hit!

Damage:  $10-3 = 7\text{dmg}$

Adrien counters!

Hit:  $92-14 = 78$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$

#### Mage A vs Adrien

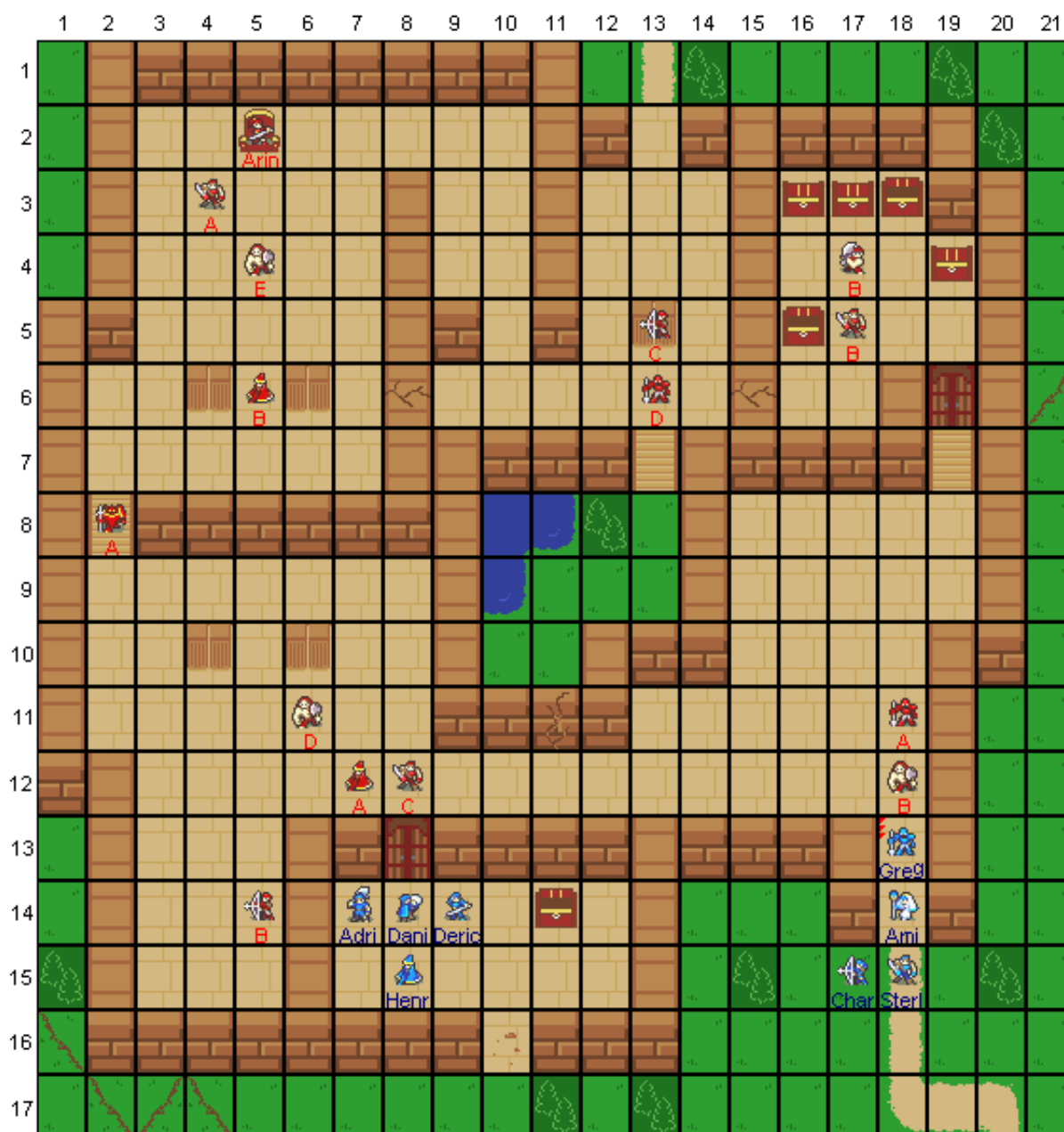
Hit:  $97-15-9 = 73$

Hit roll: 59, hit!

Damage:  $11-0 = 11\text{dmg}$

Adrien counters!  
 Hit:  $92 - 10 = 82$   
 Hit roll: 99, miss!

## ~~Player Turn 8~~



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 2/20<br>Ami Storm: 17/17<br>Charlotte Braxis: 1/17<br>Daniel: 10/18<br>Derick: 20/20<br>Gregor von Hexham: -/20 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span><br>Henry: 12/19<br>Sterling: 20/20 | Bandit B: 17/24<br>Bandit D: 24/24<br>Bandit E: 24/24<br>Fighter B: 23/23<br>Archer B: 14/20<br>Archer C: 20/20<br>Mercenary A: 21/21<br>Mercenary B: 21/21 | Mercenary C: 21/21<br>Soldier A: 22/22<br>Soldier D: 22/22<br>Knight A: 22/22<br>Mage A: 13/22<br>Mage B: 22/22<br>Arinne: 24/24 |



"I think that's your cue, Charlotte."



"That is IT. Ami, move out of the way so I can blow his face off!"



"ok"

**Ami: head for 19, 15**



**"FOR GREGOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOR"**

**Charlotte: Move to 18, 14. TWANG.**

After some shuffling, Charlotte TWANG'd the bandit with much angst. The arrow went into bandit's left eye, then burst through the back of his head and got embedded in the wall, that powerful the shot was.

And of course Bandit B died instantly.

**Charlotte vs Bandit B**

Hit:  $108+10+10-6 = 122$ , autohit! Crit roll: 3! //That muthafucka a demon D:  
Damage:  $10-3 = 7 \times 3 = 21\text{dmg}$

**Sterling: Move 3 North.**



"You're not gonna knock him down this time!"

**Adrien: Move to 9, 15. Use vulnerary.**

Adrien felt much better after ~~snorting~~ eating some of the delicious white healing powder. In the meanwhile, Sterling went up and blocked access to Gregor's corpse with himself.

**Adrien uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored.

-Henry: "Damn doors. So... Doory. And wooden. Where I came from we didn't even have doors. We had flaps, and we were perfectly happy with them!"

**Henry: Attack door.**

When Henry's firebolt hit the door, the wooden planks gave in and the door exploded. The way deeper inside the manor was open.

**Henry attacks Door (Left)**

Damage:  $13-0 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Derick: Move to where the door use to be and attack that guy there**

Derick swung his sword at the Mercenary. That knocked him outta balance and he wasn't able to retaliate!

**Derick vs Mercenary C**

Hit:  $106+5-17 = 94$

Hit roll: 9, hit!

Damage:  $11-3 = 8\text{dmg}$

Cancel roll: 3, success!

**Daniel stays right where he is.****~~Enemy Phase~~**

Mercenary strikes at Derick, hitting him, but the young swordsman hit back, evening their match.

**Mercenary C vs Derick**

Hit:  $112-14-5 = 93$

Hit roll: 61, hit!

Damage:  $13-4 = 9\text{dmg}$

Derick counters!

Hit:  $106+5-17 = 94$

Hit roll: 91, hit!

Damage:  $11+2-3 = 10\text{dmg}$

Woe! Mage A moved to the side, allowing Archer B to reach Derick. Both attacked the swordsman, who got electrocuted by Thunder, and then barely avoided an arrow to the face.

**Mage A vs Derick**

Hit:  $97-14 = 83$

Hit roll: 61, hit!

Damage:  $11-3 = 8\text{dmg}$

**Archer B vs Derick**

Hit:  $99-14 = 85$

Hit roll: 93, miss!

On the other side of the manor, Soldier A engaged Sterling in combat, plunging the spear into his chest. Sterling countered this right away, cutting across Soldier's arm.

**Soldier A vs Sterling**

Hit:  $93+15-15-16 = 77$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $12+1-3 = 10\text{dmg}$

Sterling retaliates!

Hit:  $105-15 = 90$

Hit roll: 45, hit!

Damage:  $11-1-5 = 5\text{dmg}$



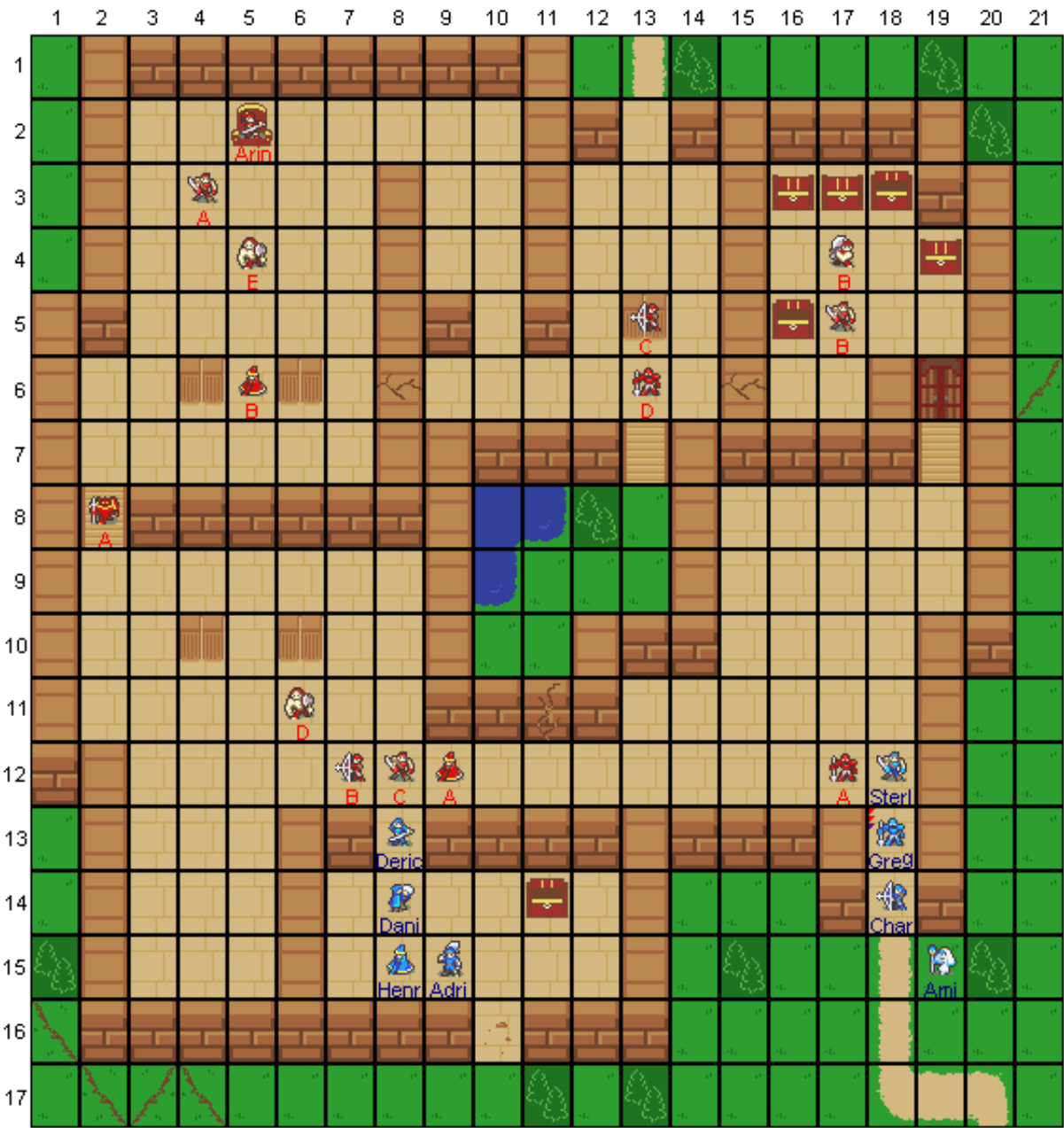
"Hmph... Where is Bores? Gosh, with whom I have to work here... Armor guy, how fares the battle?"

"Err, we seem to be... I mean, I think we and they are even. Hard to tell."



"Grr! Can't they handle a bunch of poor vagabonds? Some more of this and I'm going to do it myself..."

### ~~Player Turn 9~~



| Mercs:                 | Enemies:         |                   |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Adrien: 12/20          | Bandit D: 24/24  | Mercenary C: 3/21 |
| Ami Storm: 17/17       | Bandit E: 24/24  | Soldier A: 17/22  |
| Charlotte Braxis: 1/17 | Fighter B: 23/23 | Soldier D: 22/22  |
| Daniel: 10/18          | Archer B: 14/20  | Knight A: 22/22   |
| Derick: 3/20           | Archer C: 20/20  | Mage A: 13/22     |



Gregor von Hexham: -/20 **2/3**  
Henry: 12/19  
Sterling: 10/20

Mercenary A: 21/21  
Mercenary B: 21/21

Mage B: 22/22  
Arinne: 24/24

**Derick: Move to 10,15 and use a Vulnerary**



"Someone switch in!"

Derick used up a Vulnerary and his wounds healed a bit.

**Derick uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP healed

**Sterling: Use Vulnerary.**



"Ready for some more? 'cause I am."

OMNOMNOM

**Sterling uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored



"Charlotte, let me heal Greg."



"As you wish."

**Charlotte: Move 3 North. Attack Soldier A.**

**Ami: Head for 18,14 and heal Greg**



"Henry, go deal with the other mage, I'll take the archer down!"

**Adrien: Move to 7, 14. Throw axe at the archer!**

Charlotte went north and TWANG'd at the enemy Soldier, sticking an arrow in his right arm.

**Charlotte vs Soldier A**

Hit:  $108+10+10-12 = 116$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10-5 = 5\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Ami moved to Gregor, bapped him with her staff, and brought him back to the living. For the N-th time this month.

#### Ami heals Gregor

$10+6 / 2 =$  up to 8HP restored.

On the other side of the corridor, bloody battle continues - Adrien, **whose wounds magically healed thanks to some divine entity that at last noticed something in the strings of fate**, tossed his hatchet at Archer B, hitting him in the abdomen. Said archer tried to shoot Adrien in the head, but in the crucial moment of launching the arrow, he retched and the arrow shot missed Adrien by a wide mark.

#### Adrien vs Archer B

$92-14 = 78$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$   
  
Archer B counterattacks!  
Hit:  $99-9 = 90$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

**Daniel: Go to 9.13 and finish off the Merc 3 with my Iron Sword**

**Henry: Move one east then one north (to 9,14) and use a Valery.**

Daniel moved closer and swung his sword at the Mercenary C, who dropped dead a second later.

#### Daniel vs Mercenary C

Hit:  $106+5-17 = 94$   
Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Damage:  $10-3 = 7\text{dmg}$

In the same moment, Henry used another vulnerary to patch his wounds.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

**"Waaagh!"** Shouted Bandit D, rushing at Daniel. Thief easily avoided the attack and then twice stabbed bandit's ugly face.

#### Bandit D vs Daniel

Hit:  $79-15-5-18 = 41$   
Hit roll: 97, miss!  
  
Daniel counters!  
Hit:  $106+15+5-6 = 120$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10+1-3 = 8\text{dmg}$   
  
And once more!  
Hit:  $106+15+5-6 = 120$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10+1-3 = 8\text{dmg}$

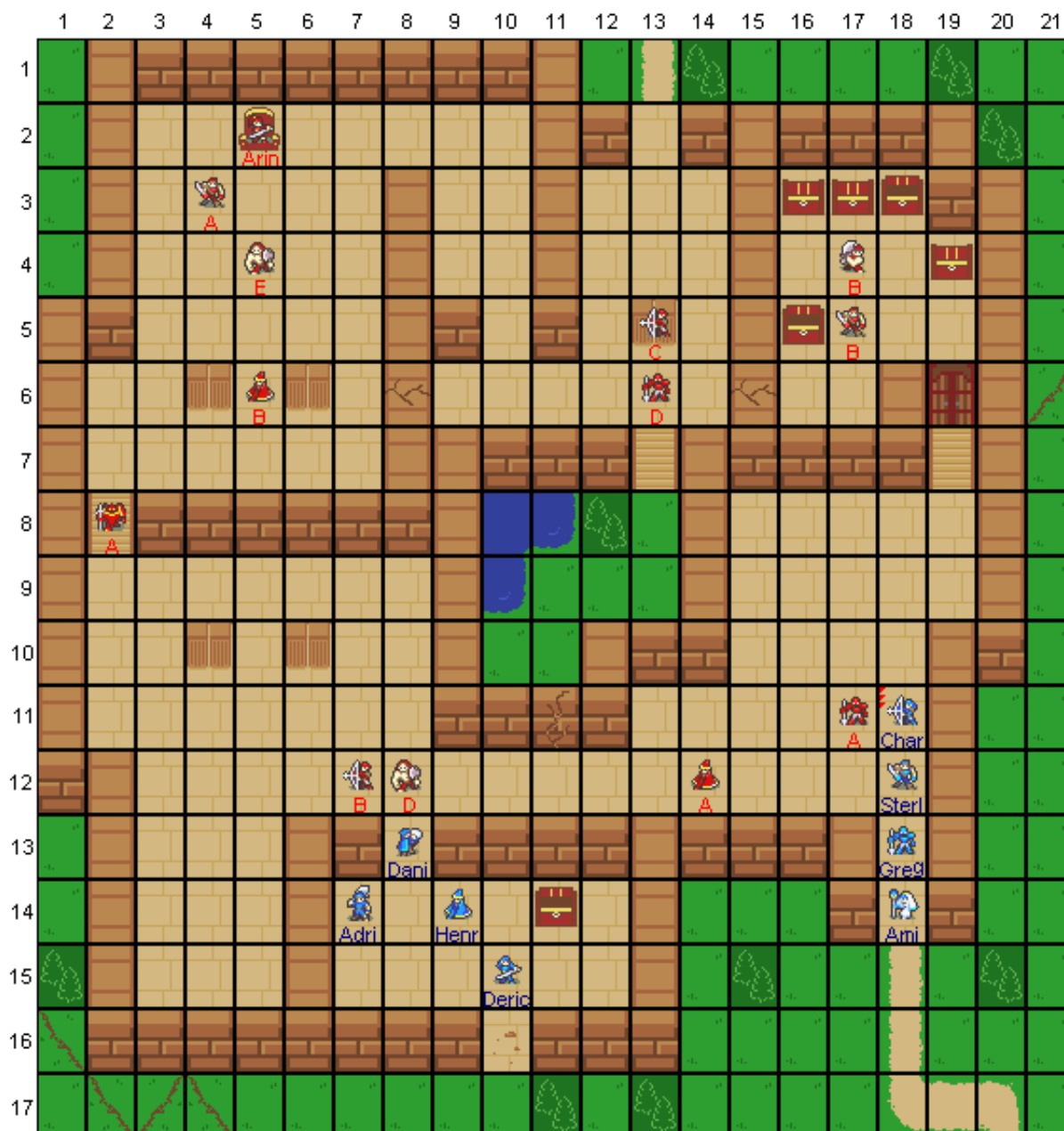
Nearby archer launched an arrow at Daniel a second later, hitting him in the stomach, while the mage went toward the entrance hall.

**Archer B vs Daniel**Hit:  $99-18 = 81$ , hit!Damage:  $10-3 = 7$ dmg

In said hall, Soldier A moved closer to Charlotte and stabbed at her! By some ill luck, she was hit in her chest and collapsed under the attack with a groan of pain.

**Soldier A vs Charlotte**Hit:  $93-10-10-15 = 58$ 

Hit roll: 1, hit!

Damage:  $12-3 = 9$ dmg**~~Player Turn 10~~****Merces:**

Adrien: 14/20  
 Ami Storm: 17/17  
 Charlotte Braxis: -/17 **3/3**  
 Daniel: 3/18  
 Derick: 13/20  
 Gregor von Hexham: 8/20  
 Henry: 19/19  
 Sterling: 20/20

**Enemies:**

Bandit D: 8/24  
 Bandit E: 24/24  
 Fighter B: 23/23  
 Archer B: 8/20  
 Archer C: 20/20  
 Mercenary A: 21/21  
 Mercenary B: 21/21  
 Soldier A: 12/22  
 Soldier D: 22/22  
 Knight A: 22/22  
 Mage A: 13/22  
 Mage B: 22/22  
 Arinne: 24/24

## Ami: Heal Greg



"push that Soldier away."



"You'll pay for hurting Charlotte!"

## Gregor: Move to (17,12) and STAB

Gregor got healed by Ami...

### Ami heals Gregor

10+6 = up to 16HP restored

...And then he went stabby at Soldier A. He even managed to avoid the counterattack.

### Gregor vs Soldier A

Hit:  $96+10-12 = 94$

Hit roll: 87, hit!

Damage:  $11-5 = 6\text{dmg}$

Soldier A retaliates!

Hit:  $93-10-14 = 69$

Hit roll: 84, miss!



"Ow my everythings."

## Daniel: Use a Vendetta to heal myself.

## Furtuka: Moe to 15,8 and use vulnerary a second time

## Adrien: Throw axe at Archer B again. +15 EVA from personal skill.

Daniel noms a vulnerary.

### Daniel

Up to 10hp healed

Derick moves away and too gobbles down some powder.

### Derick

Up to 10hp healed

In the meanwhile of this curage, Adrien's wounds healed a bit in the very moment in which he tossed his hatchet at the Archer B, and then Adrien skillfully dodged the arrow.

#### Adrien vs Archer B

Hit:  $92-14 = 78$   
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$

Archer B counters!  
Hit:  $99-15-9 = 75$   
Hit roll: 76, miss!

**Sterling: Hold my ground.**



"Enemy mage incoming. Get ready!"



"Got it!"

-Henry: "Well that worked out well."

**Henry: Move west one (to 8,14) and attack bandit D**

**FWOOSH!** went Bandit D's face when the fireball engulfed and scorched his head. He was dead before his body slumped to the ground.

#### Henry vs Bandit D

Hit:  $105+5+10-6 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $13-0 = 13\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

With the fall of his bandit comrade, Archer B moved away to launch an arrow at Daniel; the thief barely managed to dodge.

#### Archer B vs Daniel

Hit:  $99-5-18 = 76$   
Hit roll: 77

In the meanwhile, Mage A moved closer to Gregor and cast Thunder at him, with success. If that wasn't enough, Soldier A stabbed at Gregor, further wounding him - the squire replied by stabbing the bandit in the face, ending his criminal career.

#### Mage A vs Gregor

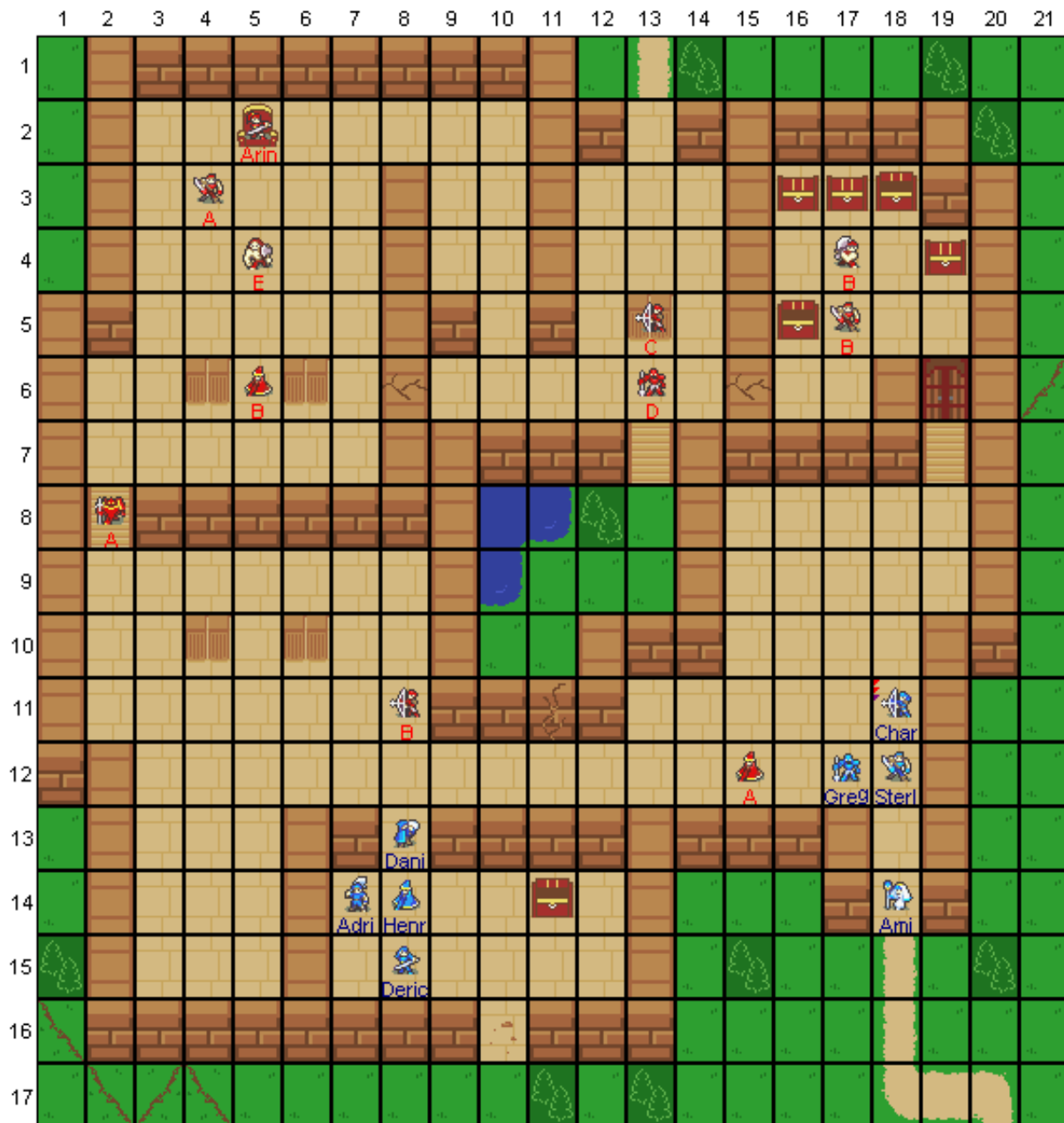
Hit:  $97-10-14 = 73$   
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage:  $11-0 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### Soldier A vs Gregor

Hit:  $93-10-14 = 69$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $96+10-12 = 94$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!

## ~~Player Turn 11~~



| Mercs:                            |  | Enemies:           |                  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------|
| Adrien: 16/20                     |  | Bandit E: 24/24    | Soldier D: 22/22 |
| Ami Storm: 17/17                  |  | Fighter B: 23/23   | Knight A: 22/22  |
| Charlotte Braxis: -/17 <b>2/3</b> |  | Archer B: 2/20     | Mage A: 13/22    |
| Daniel: 13/18                     |  | Archer C: 20/20    | Mage B: 22/22    |
| Derick: 20/20                     |  | Mercenary A: 21/21 | Arinne: 24/24    |
| Gregor von Hexham: 3/20           |  | Mercenary B: 21/21 |                  |
| Henry: 19/19                      |  |                    |                  |
| Sterling: 20/20                   |  |                    |                  |

**Adrien: Move to 8, 12. Finish that archer off!**

Adrien's wounds further healed as he moved closer and swung his hatchet at the archer, killing him with one hit.

**Adrien vs Archer B**

Hit:  $92+5-14 = 83$

Hit roll: 15, hit!

Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$

**Sterling: 2 West, tear the mage a new one.**

**Ami: Head for 17,11 and heal Charlotte.**

Sterling rushed at the Mage and sliced his arm open - in gratitude, Mage A zapped Sterling's face anew.

**Sterling vs Mage A**

Hit:  $105-10 = 95$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $11-1 = 10\text{dmg}$   
  
Mage A counters!  
Hit:  $97-15-16 = 66$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $11-0 = 11\text{dmg}$

In the next second, Ami used her healing staff and healed Charlotte, bringing her back into consciousness.

**Ami heals Charlotte**

$10+6 / 2 = \text{Up to 8HP restored}$



"Right then, see you all!"

**Daniel: Move to 11.12**

Charlotte felt life come back to her. In the midst of the battle, she could noticed that most of the soldiers that previously surrounded them were lying on the ground bleeding out. She **turned to Ami.**



"Thanks for your help, by the way. I doubt we would have survived this battle were it not for your proficiency. What inspired you to take up the path of a healer?"

Ami starts fiddling with her staff.



"I...well...um it started when I get lost in the woods near my home one day. In my panic, I found this cave and I was heading for it then my memory go blank. The next thing I know I'm at the village gates with this tattoo."

Ami looks across to see the men focused on the mage before turning round and lifting her robes, showing a red cross tattoo. She drops them again and faces Charlotte.



"Since then healing been as easy as breathing for me."

Charlotte just stared at Ami, mouth wide open.



"That's... unusual. From what I know of magic, it often requires years of study. Perhaps, sometime soon, you should get your markings appraised by someone very knowledgeable about these things. A priest, maybe? I would accompany you if the thought is frightening."



"My parents first action was that, all we got was that it wasn't harming me, but I guess a check up couldn't hurt. And since you asked me may I ask why be a archer?"



"The area I grew up in was rather poor. We had to hunt for food, and we didn't have much in the way of metal weapons like blades or lances. I ended up making the right choice, though, because hunting in the forest was a cinch with a bow."

-Henry: "Nice job Adrian!" Henry said he he walked up to Adrian and slapped him on the back. "We make a fairly okay team I would say. I noticed another one of those crumbly looking walls over there? Should we give it a bash and see what is behind it?" With that Henry walked over to the wall and flung another fire ball at it.

**Henry: Two north then two east to 10,12 and attack crumble wall.**



"I think I feel my few remaining organs cooking..."

**Gregor: Move to (15, 11) and stab the mage. RESOLVE Skill activates, granting +50% Speed and Skill.**

Part of the wall crumbled when Henry shot a Fire at it.

#### Henry vs Crumbling Wall (Middle)

Damage: 13-0 = 13dmg

Gregor then moved toward Mage A, and plunged his spear into the magician's chest, piercing his heart and killing him instantly.

#### Gregor vs Mage A

Hit: 106+10+5-10 = 111, autohit!





"Good work everyone! Especially you, Greg. Must be tough to get beaten over and over, though. YOU DONE OVER THERE TOO, ADRIEN?"

Gregor gives Sterling a thumbs-up.



"I grew up with two older brothers...so I'm sort of used to this."



"You too, eh? Mine are a bit older though, so they were out of the house before fighting ever became an issue."



"Not fighting: training. Father was a very...let's say blunt man. He was virtually born and raised in the army and wanted his sons the same way. If we weren't bruised and bleeding at the end of the day, we didn't eat supper. I'm curious, what did your parents and brothers do? Were they mercenaries like yourself?"



"Oh. I see. No, we're pretty much born and raised craftsmen. My oldest brother all but took over me dad's carpenter shop a couple years ago, as for me, I took an apprenticeship at a local smith. I don't know anyone in my family who has any fighting experience beyond militia duty."

**Derick: Move to 9,12**

Tap tap tap.

**~~Enemy Phase~~**



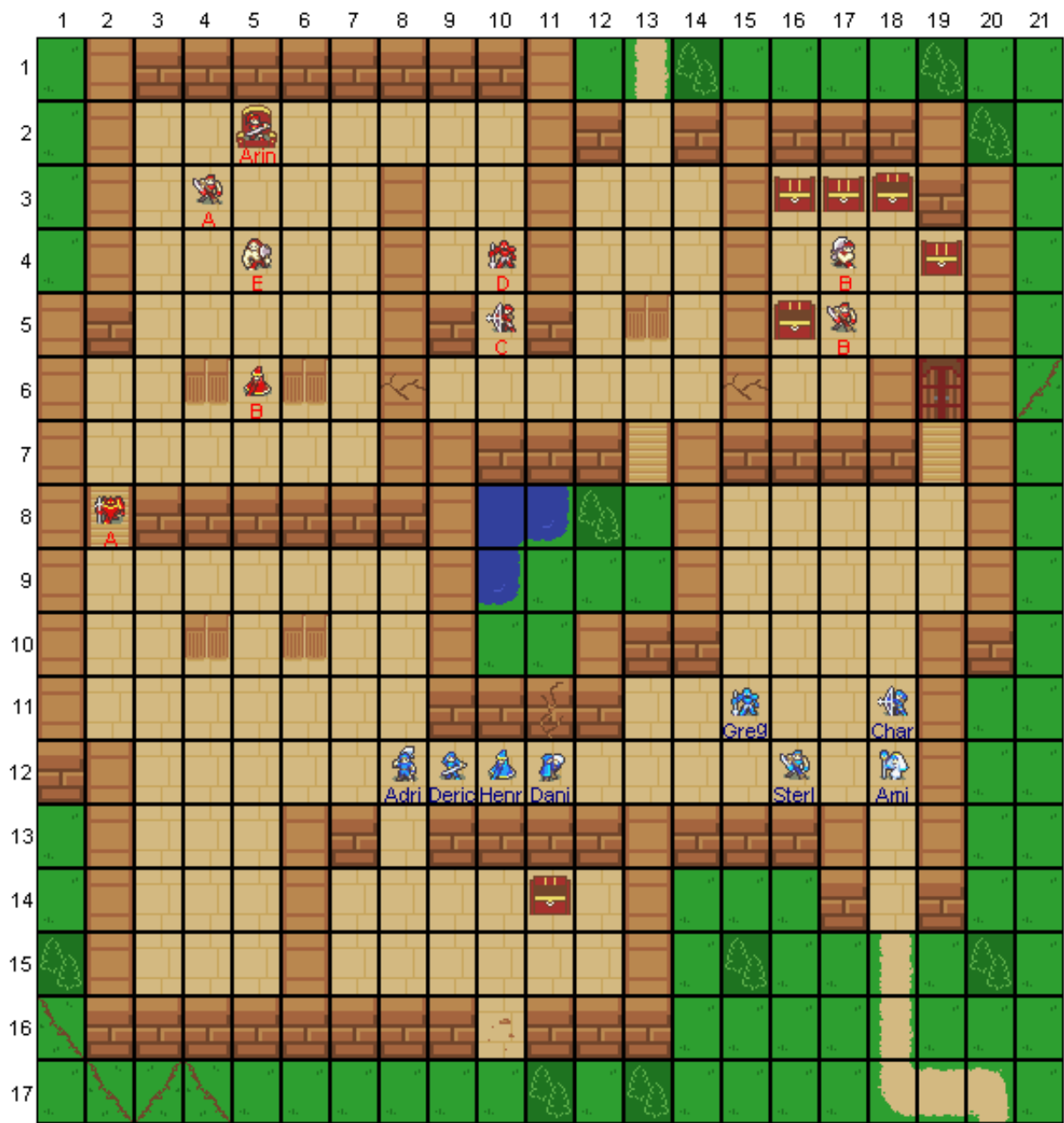
"Armor guy, report."

"Our guys are dead, miss."



"At last, make sure-- wait, WHAT? Unbelievable! Chios, Eurikos, come here!  
I'm not gonna let them kill us that easily!"

~~Player Turn 12~~



| Mercs:                  |  | Enemies:           |                  |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------|
| Adrien: 16/20           |  | Bandit E: 24/24    | Soldier D: 22/22 |
| Ami Storm: 17/17        |  | Fighter B: 23/23   | Knight A: 22/22  |
| Charlotte Braxis: 8/17  |  | Archer C: 20/20    | Mage B: 22/22    |
| Daniel: 13/18           |  | Mercenary A: 21/21 | Arinne: 24/24    |
| Derick: 20/20           |  | Mercenary B: 21/21 |                  |
| Gregor von Hexham: 3/20 |  |                    |                  |
| Henry: 19/19            |  |                    |                  |
| Sterling: 9/20          |  |                    |                  |

Sterling: 4 West



"Nice sword you got there. So, any suggestions for our next plan of actions?"

**Ami: Head to 15,12 and heal Greg**



"Is that the other group I see? Oh, I'm coming!"

**Charlotte: Head to 14, 11.**



"Thank you again, Ami. Sorry for all the trouble."

**Gregor: Move to (14,12), address Sterling and Daniel**



"Think maybe we should split up again? These hallways are a little narrow for all of us to fight in at once."

**Derick: Move to 7,12**



"I think we should wait in this plaza for the other team to reach the other entrance to the upcoming room, then we can attack from both sides"

When the rest of group was regrouping (heh), Ami healed up the grievously wounded Gregor.

**Ami heals Gregor**

|                            |
|----------------------------|
| 10+6 = Up to 16HP restored |
|----------------------------|



"Right, You guys take Daniel and go hit that room to the east. I'll take Henry and Derick and we'll tie up the enemy here. I suggest one of the swordsmen go in-front this time, and TRY not to bottleneck yourself at the door this time!"

**Move to 5, 11.**

-Henry: "Sup guys? I guess we are doing that... See you all later!" Henry said as he waved and ran off.

Henry: Move four west.

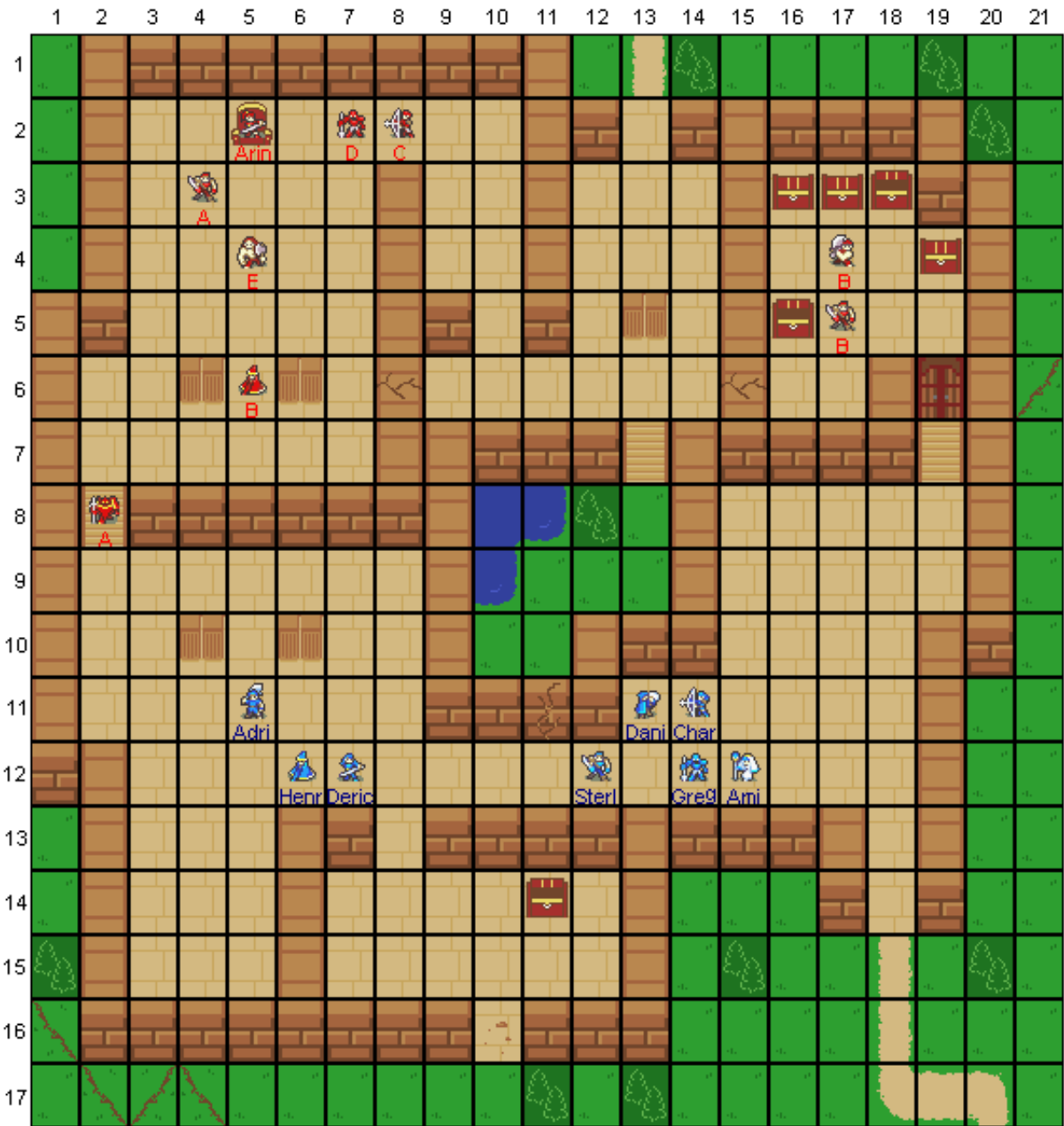
Daniel: Move to 14.11

More walking was had.

~~Enemy Phase~~

Same for the enemies.

~~Player Turn 13~~



| Mercs:                   |  | Enemies:           |                  |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------|
| Adrien: 16/20            |  | Bandit E: 24/24    | Soldier D: 22/22 |
| Ami Storm: 17/17         |  | Fighter B: 23/23   | Knight A: 22/22  |
| Charlotte Braxis: 8/17   |  | Archer C: 20/20    | Mage B: 22/22    |
| Daniel: 13/18            |  | Mercenary A: 21/21 | Arinne: 24/24    |
| Derick: 20/20            |  | Mercenary B: 21/21 |                  |
| Gregor von Hexham: 19/20 |  |                    |                  |
| Henry: 19/19             |  |                    |                  |
| Sterling: 9/20           |  |                    |                  |

**Derick: Move to 4,11**

**Sterling: Sod it. 4 West, use last ventilator.**

**Daniel: Go to 15.10**

**Ami: Walk to 13,12**

**Adrien: Move to 2, 10. Throw axe at knight.**

**Gregor: Shrug and move four squares west. Sounds like the fighting is already starting over there.**

**Henry: Three West one North.**

**Charlotte: Follow Daniel to 16, 9.**



"Ah, I was wondering if someone would try to take that unguarded door over there. I'll help you get it down as the others fight."

During the re-re-grouping, Sterling consumes a Vulnerary, last of his bunch, while Adrien tosses a hatchet at the armored knight.

**Sterling uses Vulnerary**  
Up to 10HP restored

**Adrien vs Knight A**  
Hit:  $92+15-9 = 98$   
Hit roll: 66, hit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $12+1-9 = 4 \times 3 = 12\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"That hurt, you maggot!" Knight A said and then rushed from his guarding spot at stairs toward Adrien, missing by wide mark, and getting a smack of hatchet against armored face in return.

**Knight A vs Adrien**  
Hit:  $87-15-5-9 = 56$   
Hit roll: 84, miss!  
  
Hit:  $92+15+5-9 = 103$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $12+1-9 = 4$

Suddenly, Mage B appeared at the stairs, mumbled a word and tossed a Thunder at Adrien; axeman got shocked, and thrown his axe at the magician, hurting him as well.

**Mage B vs Adrien**  
Hit:  $97-9 = 89$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!

Damage: 11-0 = 11dmg

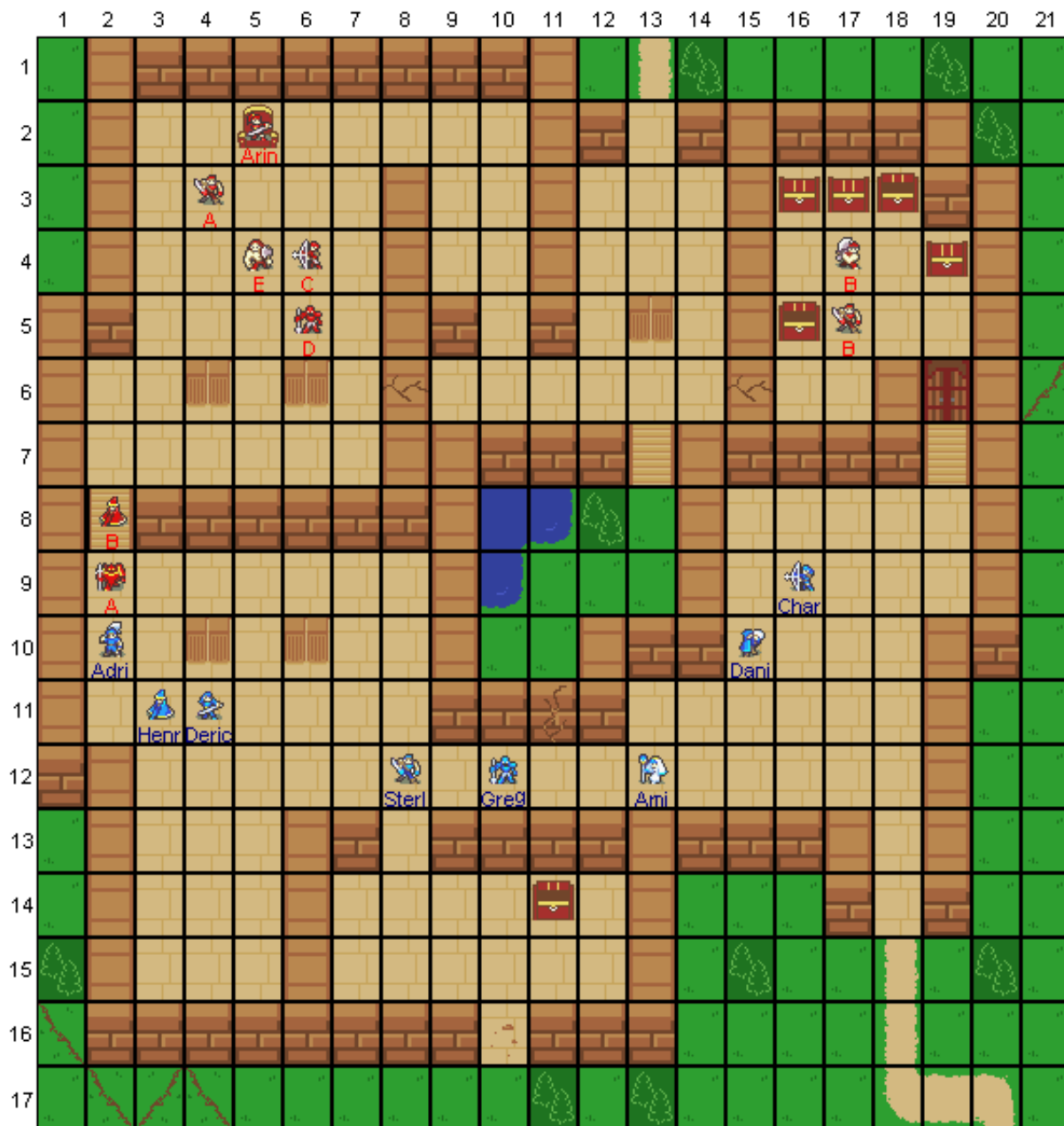
Adrien counters!

Hit: 92-10 = 82

Hit roll: 11, hit!

Damage: 12-1 = 11dmg

## ~~Player Turn 14~~



| Mercs:                   |  | Enemies:           |                  |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------|------------------|
| Adrien: 9/20             |  | Bandit E: 24/24    | Soldier D: 22/22 |
| Ami Storm: 17/17         |  | Fighter B: 23/23   | Knight A: 6/22   |
| Charlotte Braxis: 8/17   |  | Archer C: 20/20    | Mage B: 11/22    |
| Daniel: 13/18            |  | Mercenary A: 21/21 | Arinne: 24/24    |
| Derick: 20/20            |  | Mercenary B: 21/21 |                  |
| Gregor von Hexham: 19/20 |  |                    |                  |
| Henry: 19/19             |  |                    |                  |
| Sterling: 19/20          |  |                    |                  |

**Ami: Head for 9,12**



"If you would like to unlock the door, feel free. If not, I'm after it."

**Charlotte: 19,8. Send an arrow through the door.**

Arrow was launched and it got stuck in the door.

**Charlotte vs Door**

Damage:  $10-5 = 5\text{dmg}$

**Daniel: Move to 18.9**



"We have time. It's not like any treasure will magically disappear when we clear out this fortress."



"Henry, finish the knight off, I'll deal with the mage!"

**Adrien: Hold firm, throw axe at the mage.**

**Sterling: 1 North, 3 West.**

Adrien ax'd Mage B a question so hard he died.

**Adrien vs Mage B**

Hit:  $92-10 = 82$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $12-1 = 11\text{dmg}$

-Henry: "Got it!"

**Henry: Move one west and attack the knight.**

With a Fwoosh went the fire bolt at Knight, and said Knight died with a scream.

**Henry vs Knight A**

Hit:  $105+5-9 = 101$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-0 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Gregor: Move another 4 squares west.**

**Derick: Move to 2,9**



"Hey save some for me!"

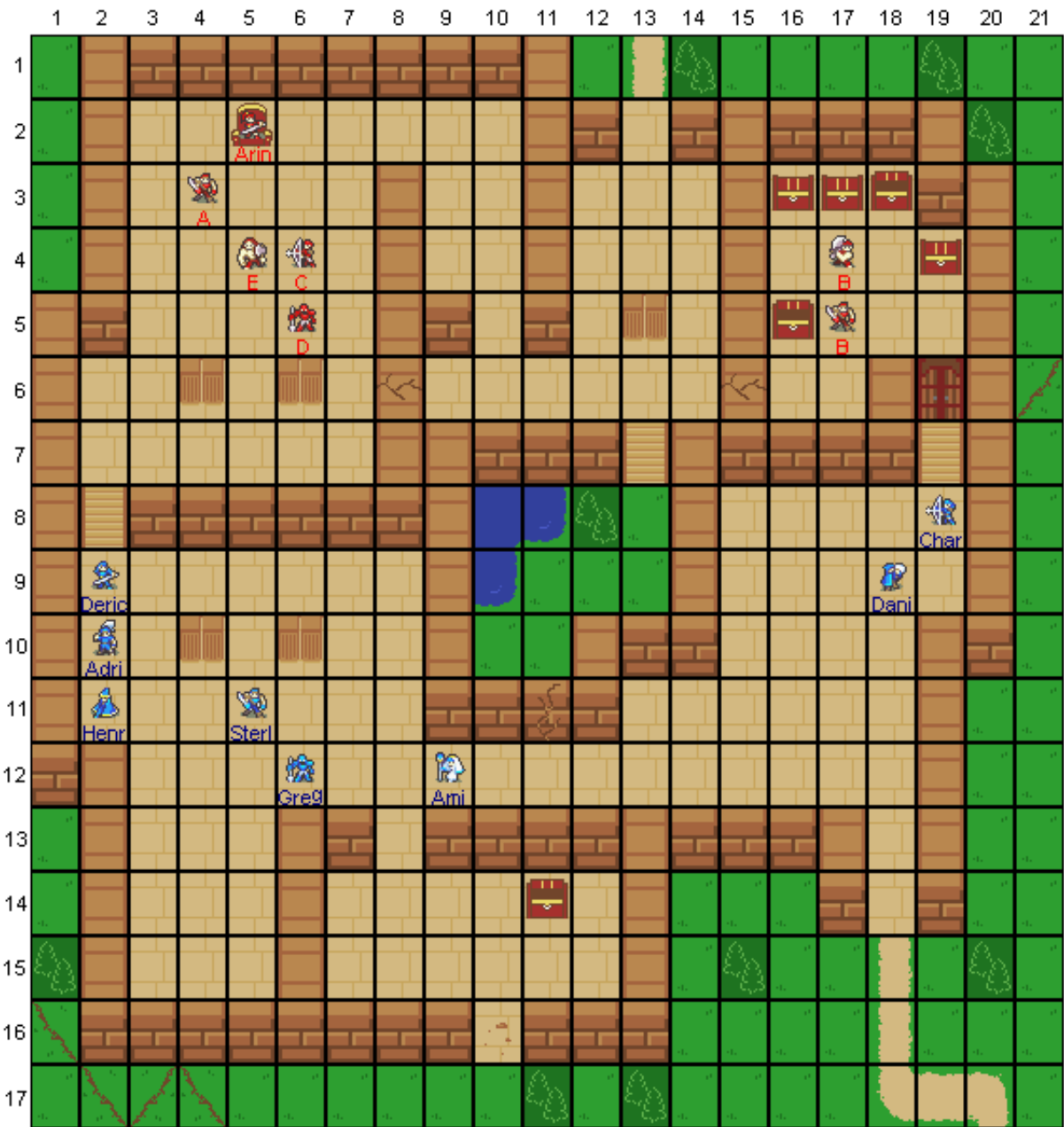
More moving around.

~~Enemy Phase~~

It's all silent there.

~~Player Turn 15~~

((Achievement Unlocked: "24 Hours, 3 Turns"))



| Mercs:                   | Enemies:           |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 9/20             | Bandit E: 24/24    |
| Ami Storm: 17/17         | Fighter B: 23/23   |
| Charlotte Braxis: 8/17   | Archer C: 20/20    |
| Daniel: 13/18            | Mercenary A: 21/21 |
| Derick: 20/20            | Mercenary B: 21/21 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 19/20 | Soldier D: 22/22   |
| Henry: 19/19             | Arinne: 24/24      |
| Sterling: 19/20          |                    |



**Ami: head to 13,12**

**Sterling: Walk next to Derick.**



"Right, Daniel and Charlotte are still doing something back there. Let's wait here for Ami to heal us before we charge in there mindlessly."



"Yes, we should be at our full strength before charging in there."

**Gregor: Move up to (3,11)**

**Daniel: Move to 19.7**



"Hmn, I hear someone behind the door, gonna pick it. By the way, can you hold onto this for me?"

**Daniel: Give Charlotte the Iron Blade and pick the door's lock.**



"Alright. I'll stand here and back you up. Assuringly."

Shuffle shuffle thud.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

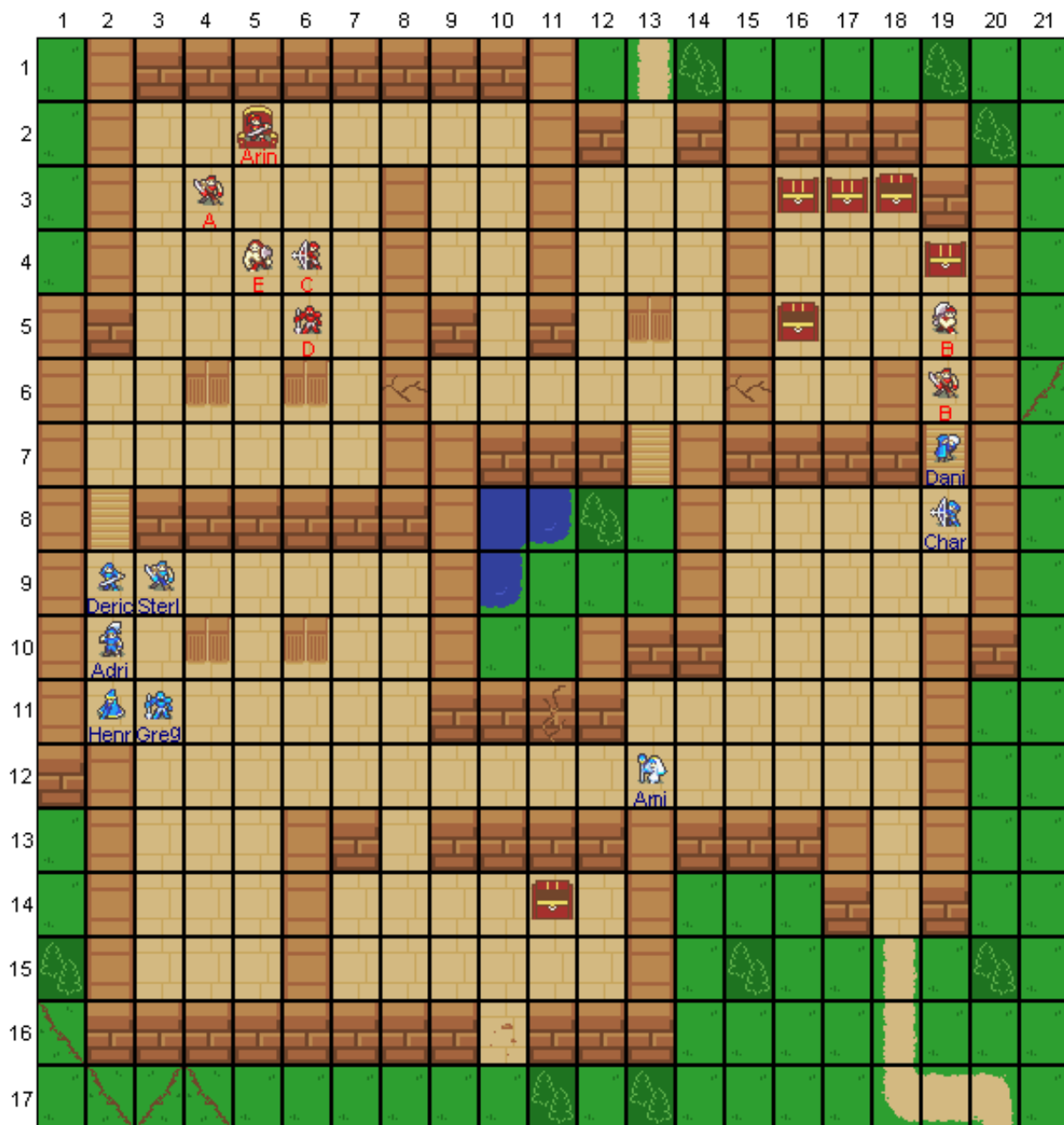
Upon opening of the door, Mercenary B, backed by Fighter B, rushed at Daniel, with intention to KILL. Daniel retaliated, hitting the swordman in the arm.

#### Mercenary B vs Daniel

Hit:  $112-10-18 = 84$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Damage:  $13-3 = 10\text{dmg}$

Daniel counters!  
Hit:  $106+10-17 = 99$   
Hit roll: 84, hit!  
Damage:  $10-3 = 7\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 16~~



| Merces:                  | Enemies:           |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 11/20            | Bandit E: 24/24    |
| Ami Storm: 17/17         | Fighter B: 23/23   |
| Charlotte Braxis: 8/17   | Archer C: 20/20    |
| Daniel: 3/18             | Mercenary A: 21/21 |
| Derick: 20/20            | Mercenary B: 14/21 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 19/20 | Soldier D: 22/22   |
| Henry: 19/19             | Arinne: 24/24      |
| Sterling: 19/20          |                    |



"Daniel, back up! You're too wounded! Let Ami support us as we draw them out."

**Charlotte: Back up to 16, 9.**



"Ow ow ow ow"

**Daniel: Move to 17.9 and use another Vulnerability.**

**Ami: Head for 16,11**



"I would roleplay, but it's hard to talk when you're running away from Treasure Guardians."

**Charlotte: Quickly re-calibrate thought process before slaying the fourth wall accidentally.**

**Everyone else: Do nothing!**

Daniel slurped the medicine with gusto.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Miss, I have a plan." The Mercenary A suddenly spoke and moved closer to Arinne, and the other of bandits moved closer to listen to the whisper.

Meanwhile, at the other half of the ruined manor, Mercenary and Fighter B rushed out of the storage room - axefighter engaging Daniel, swordsman engaging Charlotte. Soon, Daniel collapsed under the heavy axe strike, and Charlotte slumped to the ground with a groan, a wide cut on her stomach.

Ami was now facing two bandits on her own.

#### **Fighter B vs Daniel**

Hit:  $84-15-10-18 = 41$

Hit roll: 17, hit!

Damage:  $18-1-3 = 14\text{dmg}$

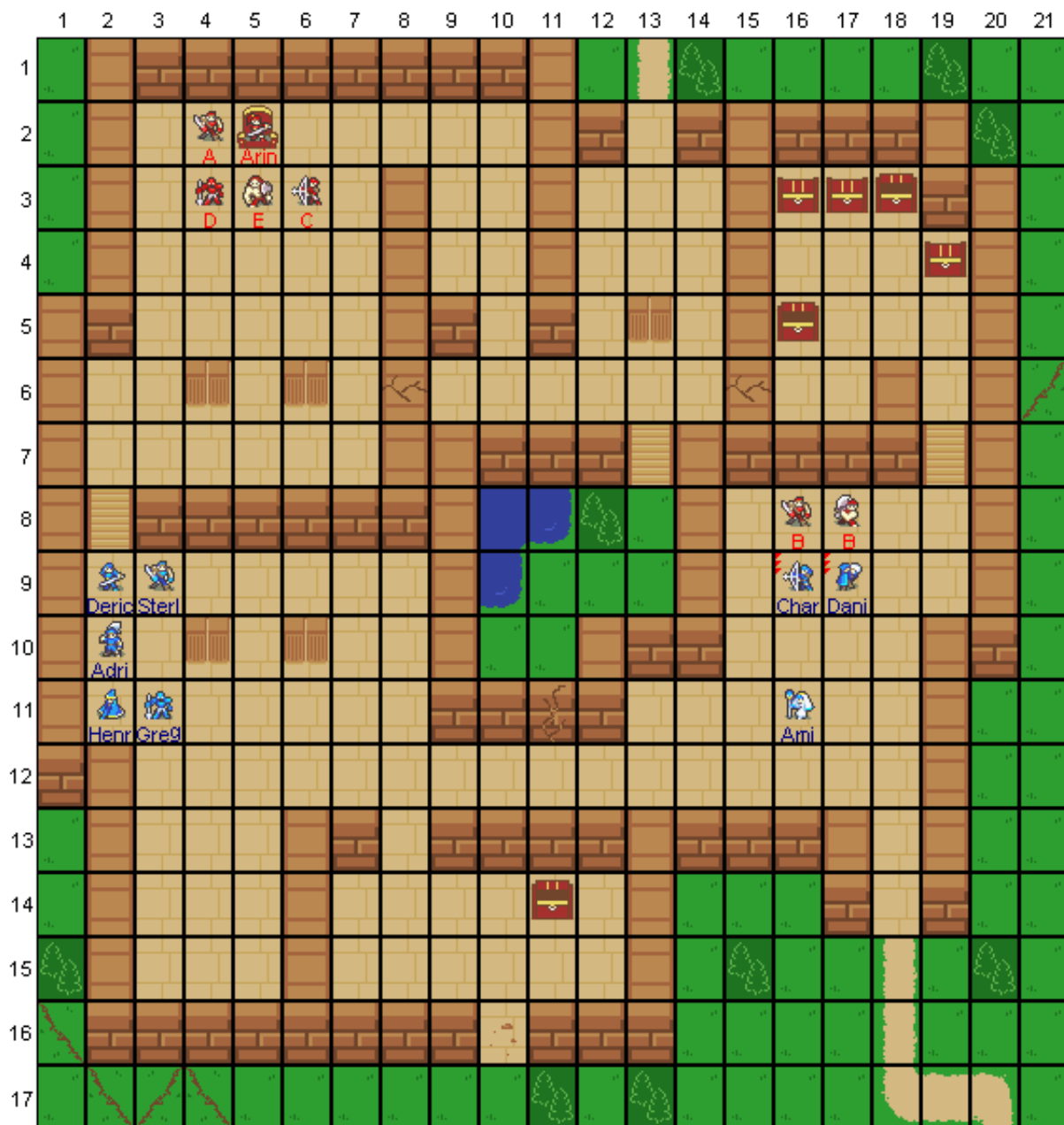
#### **Mercenary B vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $112-10-5-15 = 82$

Hit roll: 50, hit!

Damage:  $13-3 = 10\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 17~~



| Merces:                    | Enemies:           |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 11/20              | Bandit E: 24/24    |
| Ami Storm: 17/17           | Fighter B: 23/23   |
| Charlotte Braxis: -/17 3/3 | Archer C: 20/20    |
| Daniel: -/18 3/3           | Mercenary A: 21/21 |
| Derick: 20/20              | Mercenary B: 14/21 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 19/20   | Soldier D: 22/22   |
| Henry: 19/19               | Arinne: 24/24      |
| Sterling: 19/20            |                    |

**Adrien: Move to 2, 7.**



"Sterling, go over to help Daniel and Charlotte out, NOW!"



*"You do realize that I cannot help them, at all, right?"*



*"No, Charlotte, Daniel!"*

**Ami: Move to 17,10 and heal Daniel.**



*"You are not dying!"*

**Gregor: Move to (6,12)**



*"Charlotte...Daniel...please hold on as long as you can!"*



*"I trust the three of you not to also get beaten down."*

**Sterling: 2 East, 2 South.**

Chaos ensued after Daniel and Charlotte fell. Ami moved up toward her enemies, and her allies, and brought Daniel back to life.

**Ami heals Daniel**

10+6 /2 = up to 8HP restored

**Derick: Move to 4,11**



*"No... I won't let you die! Not while I can help it!"*

**Henry: Move Henry to help the others.(3,12)**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

When Adrien entered the large, once-ornate throne room of sorts, bandits which were in somewhat whispery discussion, got a little startled, much like their leader.



"Ah dammit, they're here! Forget the plan! Get them! Kill them all!"

In the meanwhile, on the other side...

"Get the girl, I will busy this sword kid!" Said Mercenary B to the axeman, who followed with the plan. Not only Daniel and Ami dodged the burly men and their weapons, but the thief even managed to stab the mercenary in the stomach.

"Fucking... I will kill you for that, little bastard!"

**Mercenary B vs Daniel**

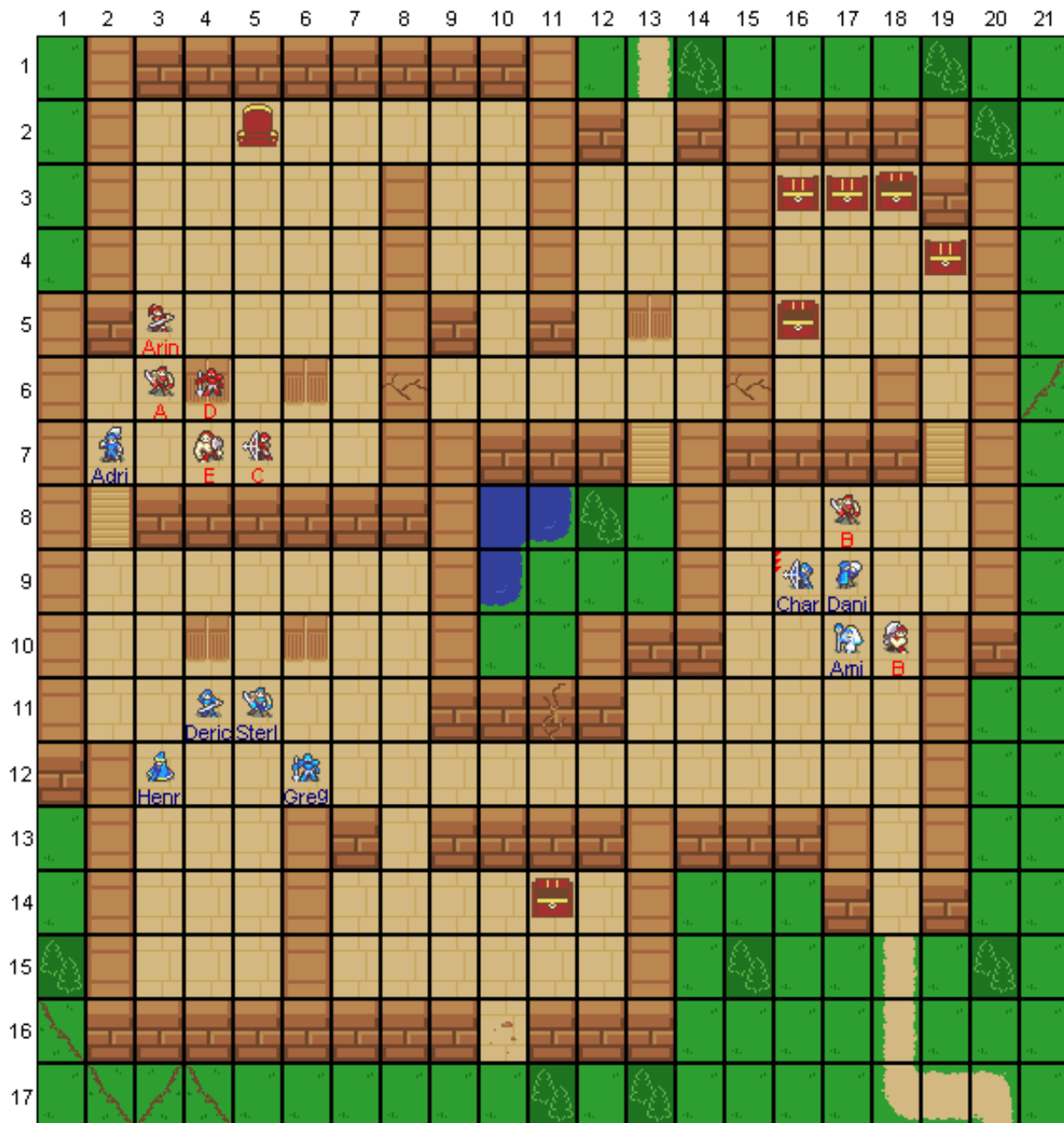
Hit:  $112-10-5-18 = 79$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

Daniel counters!  
Hit:  $106+10+5-17 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10-3 = 7$ dmg

**Fighter B vs Ami**

Hit:  $84-5-14 = 65$   
Hit roll: 67, miss!

# ~~Player Turn 18~~



| Mercs:                     | Enemies:           |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: 11/20              | Bandit E: 24/24    |
| Ami Storm: 17/17           | Fighter B: 23/23   |
| Charlotte Braxis: -/17 2/3 | Archer C: 20/20    |
| Daniel: 8/18               | Mercenary A: 21/21 |
| Derick: 20/20              | Mercenary B: 7/21  |
| Gregor von Hexham: 19/20   | Soldier D: 22/22   |
| Henry: 19/19               | Arinne: 24/24      |
| Sterling: 19/20            |                    |



"Sorry you're not my type."

**Ami: Move to 16,10 and heal Charlotte**



"This won't work. Henry, we need to get back and help Adrien!"



"Wait, the bandits are attacking? I have to help...but Charlotte, Daniel, and Ami also need my help! What should I do?!"

**Gregor holds.**



"Oh. RUN AWAY!"

**Adrien: Move to 2, 9.**



"Okay, okay. Falling back then."

**Sterling: 3 East, 1 South.**

**Henry keeps moving to help the group just to make sure nobody would get killed. (7,12)**

**Daniel: Ask Mercenary B a question. By stabbing him in the face. It's not a very good question.**

**Derick: Move to 8,11...and then Anna stabbed me in the face and demanded I move to 2,11.**

While the mercenaries re-grouped for fourth or fifth time, Ami healed Charlotte, while Daniel asked the Mercenary B a question. It was too hard for him, and he perished.

**Ami heals Charlotte**

10+6 /2 = Up to 8HP restored

**Daniel vs Merc B**

Hit: 106+10+5-17 = 104, autohit!

Damage: 10-3 = 7dmg

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Fighter B went against Daniel, trying to avenge his companion. Thanks to a fluke of luck, he managed to sent Daniel back toward the deadlands.

**Fighter B vs Daniel**

Hit: 84-15-10-5-18 = 36

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Damage: 18-3 = 15

In the same time, Archer C appeared at the top of the stairs and shot Adrien with an



arrow, wounding him; Adrien of course replied with throwing his hatchet at archer's chest.

#### Archer C vs Adrien

Hit:  $99-9 = 90$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage:  $10-5 = 5\text{dmg}$

Adrien counters!  
Hit:  $92-14 = 78$   
Hit roll: 74, hit!  
Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$



"Move aside, you idiots! Lemme show you how it's done!" Arinne spoken, ran past the archer and then went into melee with Adrien. Soon her blade went straight through the young axeman's chest, bursting from his back, before Arinne kicked Adrien off her blade, and he fell to the floor, bleeding profusely.

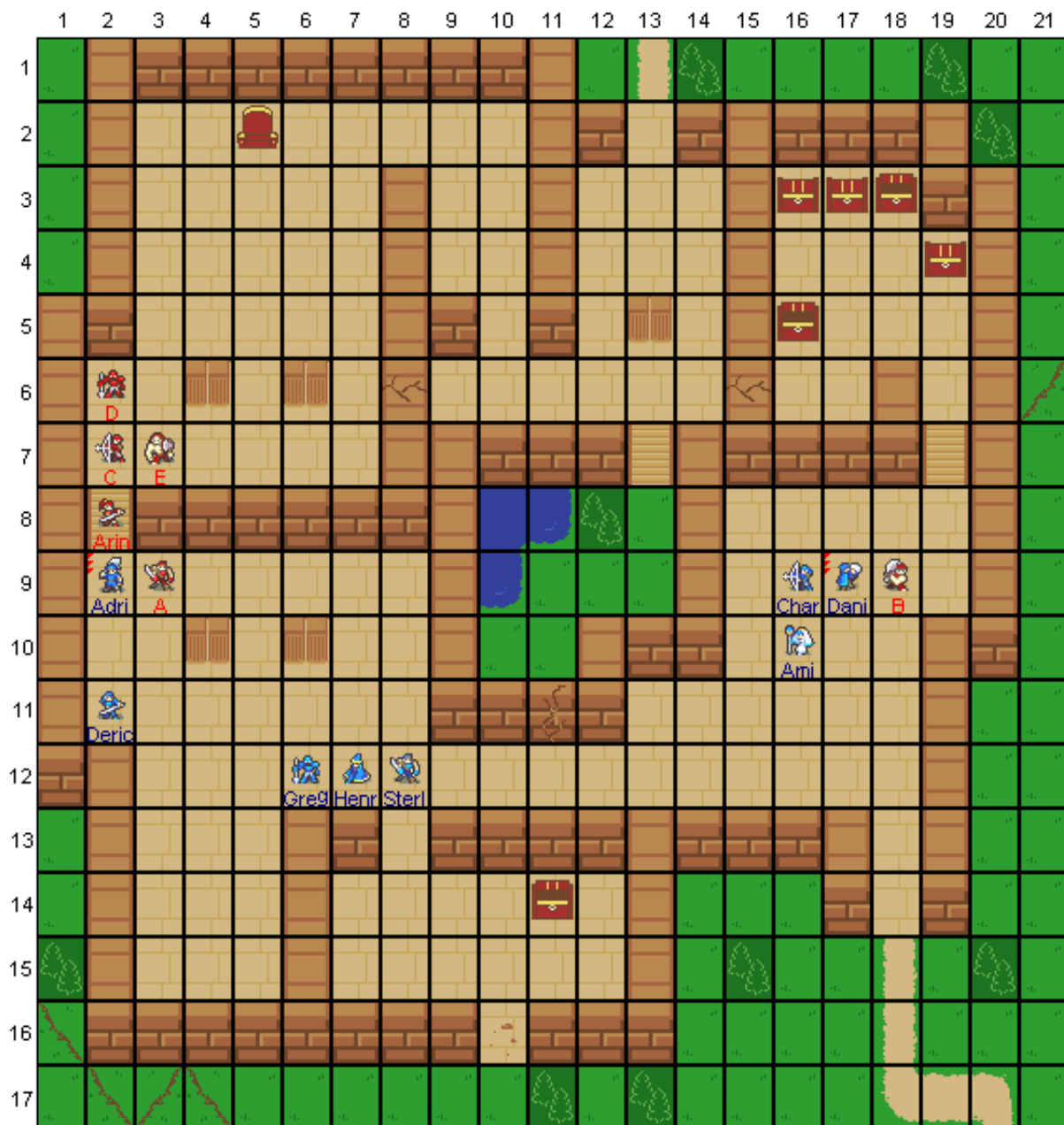


"See? They fall down that easily! Now kill the rest and get their belongings!" She commanded her bandits as they tried to get into the room.

#### Arinne vs Adrien

Hit:  $125+15-9 = 131$ , autohit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $9+1-5 = 5 \times 3 = 15\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 19~~



| Mercs:                   | Enemies:           |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: -/20 <b>3/3</b>  | Bandit E: 24/24    |
| Ami Storm: 17/17         | Fighter B: 23/23   |
| Charlotte Braxis: 8/17   | Archer C: 14/20    |
| Daniel: -/18 <b>3/3</b>  | Mercenary A: 21/21 |
| Derick: 20/20            | Soldier D: 22/22   |
| Gregor von Hexham: 19/20 | Arinne: 24/24      |
| Henry: 19/19             |                    |
| Sterling: 19/20          |                    |



"Dammit to the Dragon's back yard. I'll go help the others, you try to fend them off!"

On second thought, they're doing well enough there.



"You're going to pay for that, Arinne!"

**Sterling: 3 North, 1 West.**



"Umgawaah- how did I get here?"

**Derick: Move 1 north and give Adrien my last vulnerary**

**Ami: Move to 17,8 and bring back Daniel**



"Mahahaha"

**Gregor: Move 2 spaces north, use pillars as cover.**

**Charlotte: 17, 10. TWANG!**

While Ami healed Daniel, Derick restored Adrien.

**Ami heals Daniel**

10+6 /2 = Up to 8HP healed

**Derick heals Adrien**

5HP recovered

Then Charlotte moved closer to Fighter B and TWANG'd him so hard that there was an audible 'thud' when the arrow struck his chest. He almost collapsed.

**Charlotte vs Fighter B**

Hit: 108+10+5-6 = 117, autohit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage: 10-4 = 6x3 = 18dmg

**Henry: Move to help Adrien as it seemed the other group managed to handle the situation. (3,12)**

~~Enemy Phase~~



"Grrr, stay down, you dog!" Arinne slashed across Adrien's beautiful face, knocking him down again.

**Arinne vs Adrien**

Hit: 125+15-15-9 = 116, autohit!

Damage: 9+1-5 = 5dmg



"Now take care of the rest of them!" What Arinne told them to do, the bandits obeyed.

**Archer C vs Derick**

Hit:  $99-5-14 = 80$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!

**Soldier D vs Derick**

Hit:  $93-5-14 = 74$   
Hit roll: 76, miss!

Derick counters!  
Hit:  $106+5-15-12 = 84$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $11+2-1-5 = 7\text{dmg}$

**Mercenary A vs Henry**

Hit:  $112-10-5-10-4 = 83$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $13-0 = 13\text{dmg}$

Henry counters!  
Hit:  $105+10+10+5-17 = 113$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $13-2-1 = 10\text{dmg}$

Merc gets another attack!  
Hit:  $112-10-5-10-4 = 83$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!



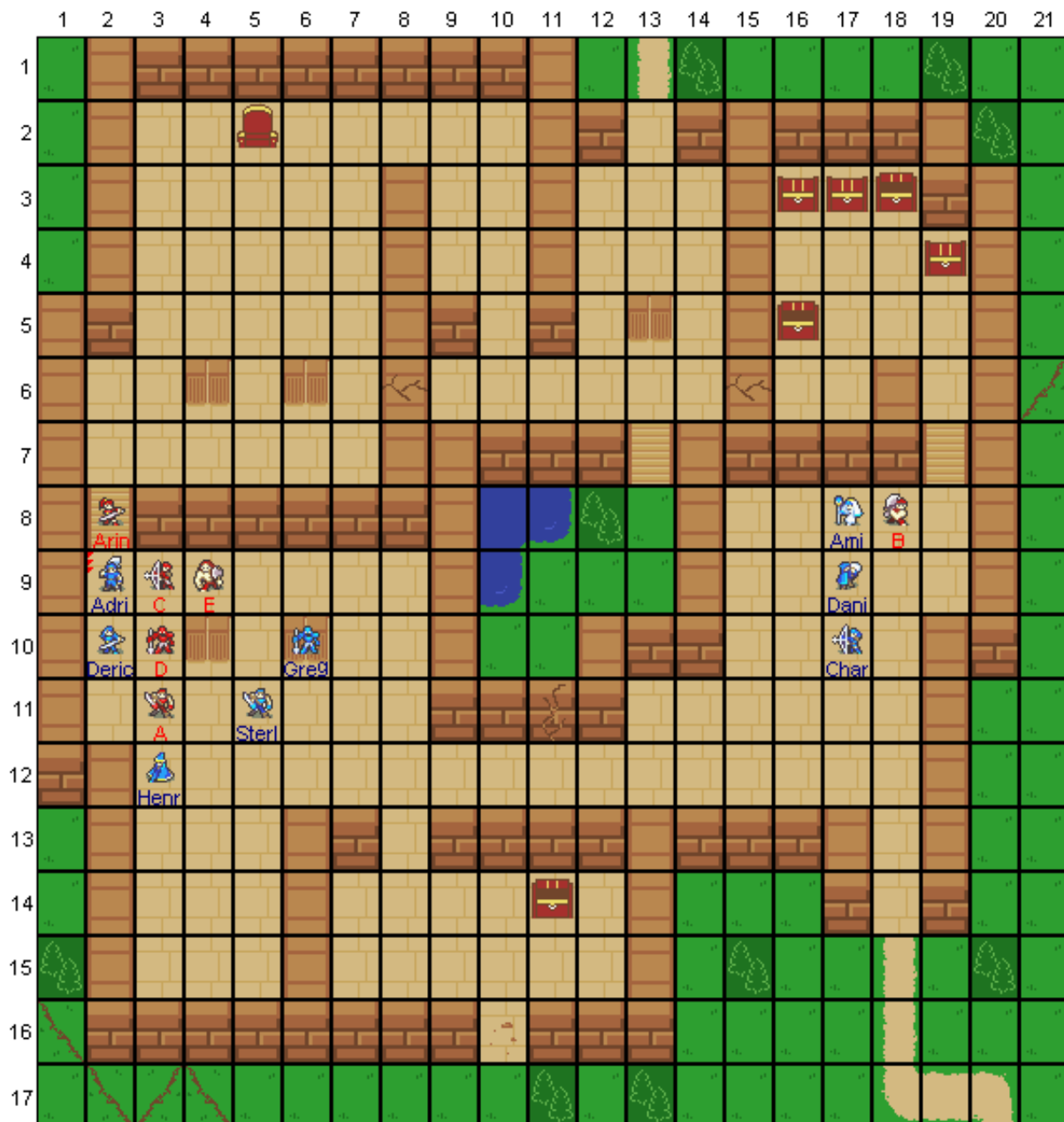
"Oh my godness are you *blind!?*"

At the other side of the manor, Fighter B grunted and ran toward Ami, almost smashing her into the floor.

**Fighter B vs Ami**

Hit:  $84-5-14 = 65$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $18-2 = 16\text{dmg}$

## ~~Player Turn 20~~



| Mercs:                   | Enemies:           |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Adrien: -/20 <b>3/3</b>  | Bandit E: 24/24    |
| Ami Storm: 1/17          | Fighter B: 5/23    |
| Charlotte Braxis: 8/17   | Archer C: 14/20    |
| Daniel: 8/18             | Mercenary A: 11/21 |
| Derick: 20/20            | Soldier D: 15/22   |
| Gregor von Hexham: 19/20 | Arinne: 24/24      |
| Henry: 6/19              |                    |
| Sterling: 19/20          |                    |

**Sterling: 1North, 1 West, attack Bandit E.**



"Ami, follow the sounds of battle! We'll grab the loot. But first..."

**Charlotte: Dash to 19, 9. Finishing TWANG.**



"On it, teehee."

**Ami: Head to 15,10**

**Henry: Move away from the swordsman and use a vulnerary. (7,12)**



"Sterling, get on those pillars and take out the axe wielder!"

**Gregor: Move to (4, 11). Stab the swordfighter.**

**Derick: Move south by 1 and attack the mercenary**

**Daniel: Move to 19.7**

Sterling, supported by pillars, scored two hits at Bandit E's face, while the bandit scored none.

**Sterling vs Bandit E**

Hit:  $105+15-6$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $11+1-3 = 9\text{dmg}$

Bandit E counters!  
Hit:  $79-15-15-15-16 = 18$   
Hit roll: 20, miss!

Sterling attacks again!  
Hit:  $105+15-6$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $11+1-3 = 9\text{dmg}$

TWANG, and down went Fighter B.

**Charlotte vs Fighter B**

Hit:  $108+10+5-6 = 117$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10-4 = 6$

In the meanwhile, Henry walked away and used a vulnerary to heal his wounds a bit.

**Henry uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

Then, Gregor moved up to the merc and stabbed him so hard in the face that Mercenary A fell down with a squeal of butchered piglet. Derick looked a bit dissappointed.

**Gregor vs Merc A**

Hit:  $96+15+10-17 = 104$ , autohit! Crit roll: 1!  
Damage:  $11+1-3 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Derick suddenly found himself under attack - from the soldier, and archer. They both

have hit him, and the swordsman partially avenged that by giving Soldier D a cut on the shoulder.

#### Archer C vs Derick

Hit:  $99-10-14 = 75$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $10-4 = 6\text{dmg}$

#### Soldier D vs Derick

Hit:  $93+15-10-14 = 84$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $12+1-4 = 9\text{dmg}$   
  
Derick counters!  
Hit:  $106+10-15-12 = 89$   
Hit roll: 82, hit!  
Damage:  $11+2-1-5 = 7\text{dmg}$

Then Bandit E ran up to Henry, and tried to cleave him apart with his axe. Instead, he got seared into a crisp by Henry's Fire.

#### Bandit E vs Henry

Hit:  $79-5-4 = 70$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!  
  
Henry retaliates!  
Hit:  $105+5-6 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $13-0 = 13\text{dmg}$



"You! Now I remember where I saw you guys, it was back then in the forest! I will make you pay dearly for that one time!" Arinne shouted and then ran up to Sterling. Two sword-wielders engaged in a duel. Arinne quickly stabbed Sterling's left shoulder, and he responded by cutting on her stomach. Hissing in pain, she quickly spun and managed to slash over his right arm.

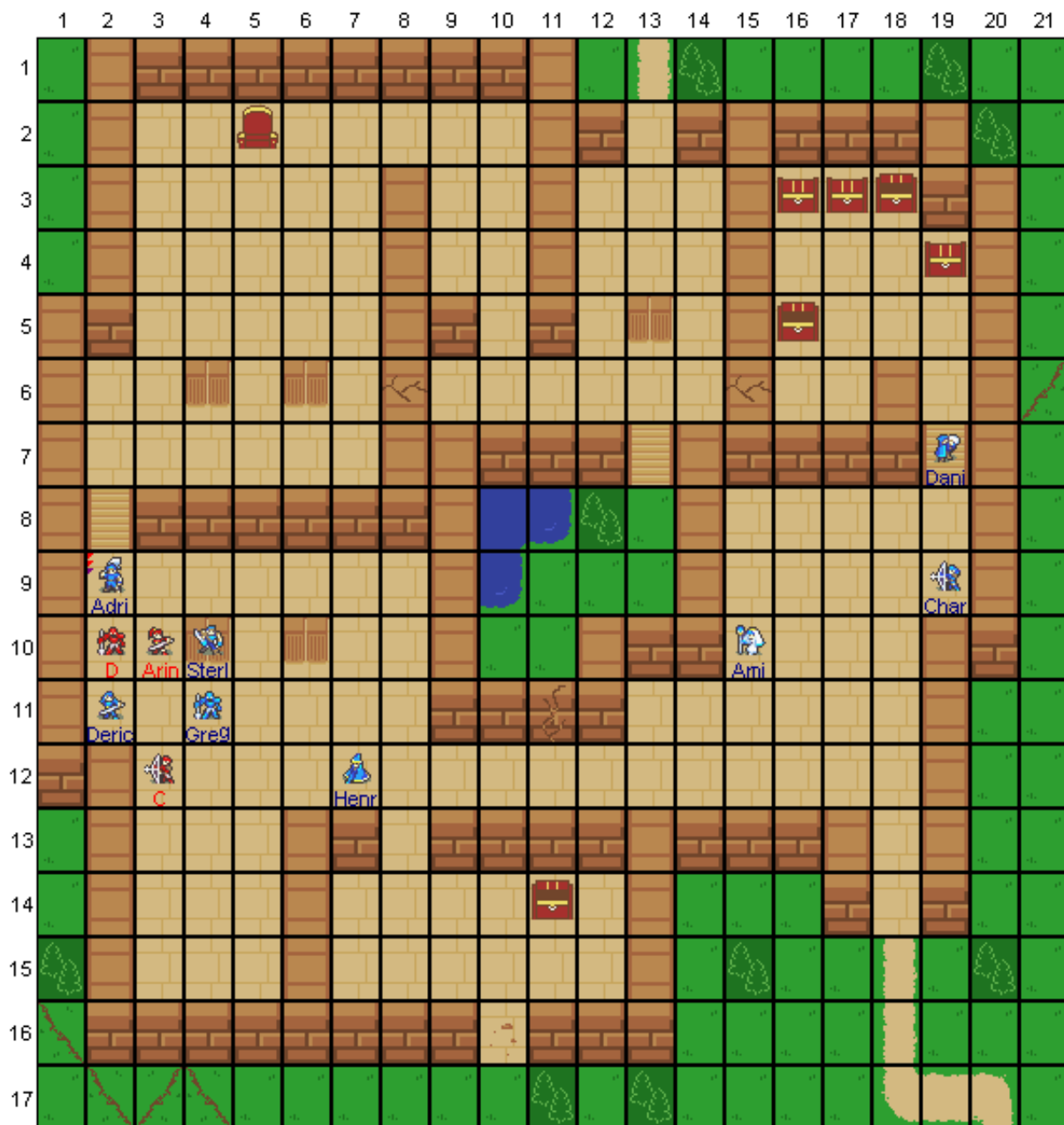
#### Arinne vs Sterling

Hit:  $125-15-15-16 = 79$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $9-3 = 6\text{dmg}$   
  
Sterling counters!  
Hit:  $105-24 = 81$   
Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage:  $11-3 = 8\text{dmg}$   
  
Arinne attacks for 2nd time!  
Hit:  $125-15-15-16 = 79$   
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage:  $9-3 = 6\text{dmg}$



"That hurt, you bastard!"

## ~~Player Turn 21~~



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: -/20 <span style="color: red;">2/3</span><br>Ami Storm: 1/17<br>Charlotte Braxis: 8/17<br>Daniel: 8/18<br>Derick: 5/20<br>Gregor von Hexham: 19/20<br>Henry: 16/19<br>Sterling: 7/20 | Archer C: 14/20<br>Soldier D: 8/22<br>Arinne: 16/24 |

**Ami: Skip to 13,12**

**Charlotte: Move 4N. Try to open the chest but if that doesn't work then wait on Daniel.**



"Grab the loot!"





"You've hurt your last innocent! Now pay the price for your crimes!"

**Gregor: Move to (3, 11) and STABBITY-STAB Arinne.**



"Give up, Arinne! You're outnumbered, outweaponned, and possibly outsmarted. Preying on those weaker than you only proves that you're weak yourself."

**Sterling: Attack Arinne.**

Charlotte found a lock on the chest. And she couldn't reach it, even. Her hands were too short. She should've asked for longer hands at birth.

MEANWHILE.



"Grr! Be silent you two leperous man-twats!" She said and then had to fight against Gregor, and then, Sterling.

#### Gregor vs Arinne

Hit:  $96+10+15-25 = 96$

Hit roll: 99, miss!

Arinne counters!

Hit:  $125-15-10-14 = 86$

Hit roll: 31, hit!

Damage:  $9-1-6 = 2\text{dmg}$

And again she goes!

Hit:  $125-15-10-14 = 86$

Hit roll: 45, hit! Crit roll: 11!

Damage:  $9-1-6 = 2 \times 3 = 6\text{dmg}$

#### Sterling vs Arinne

Hit:  $105-25 = 80$

Hit roll: 88, miss!

Arinne counters!

Hit:  $125-15-15-16 = 79$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $9-3 = 6\text{dmg}$

And another time!

Hit:  $125-15-15-16 = 79$

Hit roll: 100, miss!



"And who is weak here, EH!?"



"I'd say you are, considering that we've barely been scratched..."

**Henry: Move really close to the archer and burn him. (4,12)**

**Daniel: 19.4 LOOT LOOT LOOT**

The moment in which Daniel opened the chest, his eyes were laid upon a beautiful, if not a little un-impressive looking, slim bow.

**Daniel got Short Bow!**

Meanwhile...

Henry crept to the Archer C and seared his face a little.

**Henry vs Archer C**

Hit:  $105+10+10+5-14 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-1 = 12\text{dmg}$

**Derick: ...er just head to 6,11**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Arinne engaged Sterling in combat once more. After a quick lunge, she pierced his chest, and grinned right into his dimming eyes as he slumped to the ground.



"Son... of a..."

**Arinne vs Sterling**

Hit:  $125-15-15-16 = 79$

Hit roll: 37, hit!

Damage:  $9-3 = 6\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Gregor got attacked by a 'fellow' soldier. Said spearman missed, and Gregor followed with a retaliatory strike, adding a wound on the armored bandit's body.

**Soldier D vs Gregor**

Hit:  $93-5-14 = 74$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

Gregor counterattacks!

Hit:  $96+5-12 = 89$

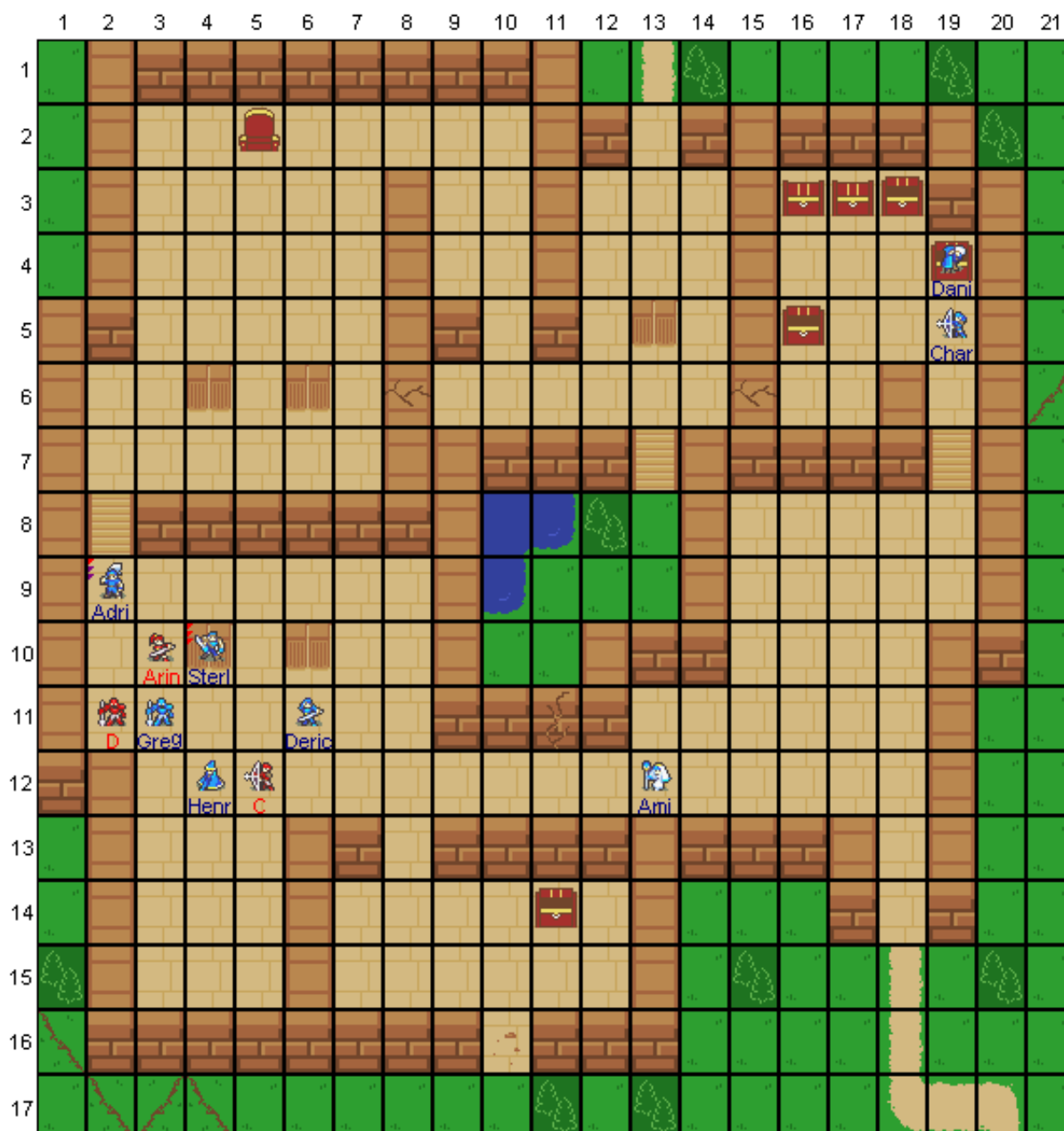
Hit roll: 50, hit!

Damage:  $11-5 = 6\text{dmg}$

Then, Archer C manuevered around Henry and shot Derick! The arrow flew an inch away from his ear, it was so close he could hear that 'zipping' sound as it passed him.

**Archer C vs Derick**Hit:  $99-5-14 = 80$ 

Hit roll: 97, miss!

**~~Player Turn 22~~**

| <b>Merces:</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Enemies:</b>                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: -/20 <b>1/3</b><br>Ami Storm: 1/17<br>Charlotte Braxis: 8/17<br>Daniel: 8/18<br>Derick: 5/20<br>Gregor von Hexham: 11/20<br>Henry: 16/19<br>Sterling: -/20 <b>3/3</b> | Archer C: 2/20<br>Soldier D: 2/22<br>Arinne: 16/24 |

**Derick: Move South by 1 and attack the archer**

Archer C got stabbed by Derick in face, and promptly slumped to the ground, dead.

**Derick vs Archer C**Hit:  $106+5-14 = 97$ 

Hit roll: 8, hit!

Damage:  $11+2-6 = 7$  dmg

**Ami: Run to 9,12, pop a pot.**

**Henry: Burn the soldier D to open a path to let the others help Adrien. (4,11)**

Ami went SLURP.

**Ami uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

And then Henry roasted Soldier D unto death.

**Henry vs Soldier D**

Hit:  $105+5+10-12 = 108$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-0 = 13$ dmg



"As much as I'd love to finish you off, I have friends to save. Excuse me..."

**Gregor: Move to (2,10), use vulnerary on Adrien.**

White powder glittered on Adrien's face, and he woke up a second later.

**Gregor uses Vulnerary on Adrien**

Up to 5HP restored

**Daniel: 3 West, 1 North, open chest.**

**Charlotte: 2 West, 2 North, get short bow from Daniel and attempt to open chest.**

While Charlotte grabbed the bow and struggled with the lock, Daniel quickly opened his chest. There, on a pillow, laid a piece of sparkly, azure cloth, certainly magical.

**Daniel gets Angelic Cloth!**

~~Enemy Phase~~



"Ha! Haha! I will get you all killed, healing won't help you!" Arinne shouted with slightly panicked voice and ran up to Henry, slicing on his arm. Then Henry retaliated - however, something went wrong and instead of a bolt of fire, a huge cloud of flames engulfed Arinne. her pained screams were comparable with screams of a man tortured over a firepit. After the fires went off, Arinne's body, steaming and charred, fell to the ground with a soft thud - she was dead.

**Arinne vs Henry**

Hit:  $125-5-4 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $9-0 = 9$ dmg

Henry counters!  
Hit:  $105+5-25 = 80$   
Hit roll: 68, hit! Crit roll: 1! //WHAT.  
Damage:  $13-2-1 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$

## ~~Chapter 1 Complete!~~

Welp, that just happened.



"Wow, Henry, what was that? Hurgh!"

Sterling holds his chest, spitting blood over the floor.



"I feel better, one second." *Tap* "You're better, Sterling?"



"Bluh, this will take ages to get out of my clothes. While you're at it, the rest is also hurt."

Ami give a statute (I have no idea what this meant).



"On it."



"Thanks. I'll go look what the other two are up to."



"I wonder how the others are doing. Daniel, you have any uses of that lockpick left for the other chests here?"



"Are you two okay? I have good news and bad news. The good news is that we cleaned up on the other end. The bad news is that we have to clean ourselves up **NOW**. Seriously, this is going to take a lot of twine to fix..."



"Is everyone okay? We didn't lose anyone, did we?"



"Daniel and I are alright. You look a bit battered, though. Are we supposed to walk back to Kesselring in this condition?"



"Hmm...perhaps we should rest here overnight before returning. We might start feeling better after a decent meal and a good night's sleep."



"Good idea. But we should barricade the building or at least keep guard shifts overnight. It's possible that there's still some marauders outside who might come back overnight."



"I'll see if I can find some furniture to stack up at the entrances. I think there's a fancy chair in the other room that we don't need."

**Gregor: Run off to do that.**

Rather quickly the manor entrances were barricaded. There were no signs of anyone coming, though.

Does anybody notice the open backdoor?



"I'm fine. Still got a bit of use in these lockpicks too."

**Daniel: Go to unlock the remaining chests.**

Adrien dusted himself off after standing up, he had been adapting to the amount of pain brought on by near-death experiences, and due to some innate ability, his wounds were already healing up if at a slow rate.

Three other chests; amongst them, one had rags and clothes, other had dry foodstuffs: bread and sausages, mostly.

The third one was locked and the lockpick broke after unlocking said chest. Inside Daniel

haven't found much except a large bottle with medicinal label.

**Daniel got Concotion!**

**Daniel's Lockpick breaks!**

Sterling found the pond! Or at least he goes there.



"Ah, before it dries out and becomes impossible to remove..."

He takes off his shirt and washes the blood off in the water.

Ami rides a horse into the manor.



"I found this guy round back."

It's jet black and it's eyes are glowing red. You lot also notice that the grass it walked on is dying.



"That's a, er, fine animal."



"Right, remind me to turn her in to the inquisition next time we're in town. I'm not losing contracts because folks think we're devil worshippers. That kind of reputation leads to a fate that crispy over there suffered." Adrien pointed his thumb at the charred, rotting carcass of Arinne to further drive his point.



"Do we even have inquisitions? And to be fair the only problem was the two lightly armor people running off on their own, not a failure of tactics."



"Now, onto the next thing. Sterling, I am relieving you of command of the company, Because you have a less than capable grasp of tactics as so keenly demonstrated by this battle."



"...what'd I do?"

Derick weakly raises his hand.



"I'm alive... I may have multiple broken ribs and an arrow stuck in my arm, but I'm alive."

He then noticed Ami and her horse.



"...well that's terrifying. What god are you a cleric of again?"



"Don't know and why is everyone scared of Tenebra?"

She gives the horse a rub.



"I'm pretty sure that eyes aren't supposed to glow like that... where did you say you found it again?"



"Out back, with some other horses...that were standing as far away as possible without running into the woods. I think the fighting scared them"



"The fighting. Suuuurre lets go with that...."



"Can we forget the direhorse for a moment? Even though it looks like we made a clean sweep of the bandits, there's no telling if someone else might come around to spend the night here. I'll take the first watch shift; who's willing to take the second and third?"





"I wouldn't mind first shift either. I still have to sew the holes in my shirt closed."



"I'll take a shift I suppose. It wouldn't surprise me if the horse scares all the bandits off."

Daniel walks in with the loot.



"Hey guys I found some stuff! One of which is seems to be a magical robe. Who wants it?"

Daniel pauses when he sees Ami's new horse.



"Huh. Nice horse you have there."



"Or we could make Ami take all three watches while the rest of us get a good night's sleep."

Smiling as sweetly as possible, Ami says.



"You don't need your liver to live, I make sure of that."



"Now Adrien, no need to be a prick. But the horse could make for a good, ah, "scarecrow" of sorts. Just imagine how it must look by night."

Sterling turns to Daniel.



"Find anything else? I recall seeing quite a few chests back there."



"I'll keep that in mind in case I ever get stabbed in the gut. Oh also no killing each other. We already have had enough people trying to do that today."



"Come now, ladies and gentlemen. We're all just a little weary from a hard battle; let's have some food and rest and we'll all be friends again in the morning."



"I would hug you, but I'm on a horse at the moment."



"Heheh. Nothing would stop you from getting off your horse, of course."

During their conversation and subsequent rest, dark clouds began to linger on the sky above their heads after their slow march from the east. Not of the stormy kind, though - it looked that worst they could do was few minutes of summer rain.

The sun was hidden from their view, but they could deduce it was close to late afternoon now.

Then, suddenly, on the horizon, there was a tiny cloud of dust. The cloud moved closer until Gregor, who was outside during his shift, could recognize a cavalier coming toward the manor. He had someone seated on his horse.

Then, Gregor easily recognized something else - Kesselring's crest on the rider's armor. The robed man behind him quickly jumped from the horse as it stopped, and looked at Gregor with a wide grin.

### **Olison Eul and Christopher Shields are in!**

Gregor warily throws a salute towards the newcomers.



"Greetings, my lords. What news from Kesselring?"



"Are they friends of yours?"



"Oh, I'm no one's friend or lord. My name is Christopher."

The spy pushed back his hood just enough that his eyes were now visible as well. The smile on his face didn't quite reach them.



"Our Lady Prixima instructed the pair of us to retrieve your group as quickly as possible."

He looked from Gregor over to Sterling and gave him the elevator eyes treatment. His grin faded as he did so.



"You're the leader of these mercenaries, correct?"



"Due to a change in leadership, he is no longer."



"Adrien, I think everybody else would like to have a word in that too."

Chris smiled at Adrien.



"I don't believe you. You look like a hired sword."



"Hired axe, to be more probable. And even then, that would mark me out as a proper mercenary. Now as for the reasons you are no longer fit as a leader Sterling, I think you need to look back at your actions during the last battle. Half of our injuries would've been prevented had you not been so yellow-bellied and moved at full speed down that hallway after we opened the door. With a cleric and an archer, we could've whittled them down until they were destroyed."



"... says the guy who charged into a room full of enemies, on his own."

He turns to Chris.



"Don't mind him. He's actually a good guy when he's not being brash. So whom do we have the pleasure talking to?"



"As I said, my name is Christopher. I'm an agent of Lady Prixima. This fellow is Olison."

He gestured over his shoulder to the mounted man.



"We're to escort you back as soon as possible. Doubtless the Lady has further plans for you, since you're still alive."



"It worked, now didn't it? We did not have to face them where they had a defensive advantage. Oh yes, one other thing: I assume Prixima sent you with our payment for removing Arinne?"

Charlotte yawns and rolls over.



"Morn alreddy? Mmm, guys, stop arguin bout leader. Juss... make Gregor leader... pfffaha."

She goes back to sleep.

Olison's eyes narrowed at Adrien from atop his horse.



"No. If I recall correctly; this mission was a prelude to prove that you are ready for the job which was to be assigned to your group before the death of your

leader."



"Let me get this straight, we aren't getting paid for removing Arinne from Proxima's lands? Sterling, get over here right now, you have some explaining to do."

Olison looked past Gregor and into the fort.



"And I assume you have proof of her demise?"



"There a char-grilled copse somewhere round back."

Olison's horse whickered, edging away from the entrance. Olison rubbed the back of it's head.



"Easy, Steil, easy. I'm not making you go anywhere inside."

Olison dismounted and tied his horse to a nearby fencepost.



"Show me."



"I'll come along as well to verify, of course. If you would be so kind?"



"Follow me and hold your nose, the smell is quite strong."

Ami leads the men to a blacken body.

Gregor gestures to the crispy lump of meat that used to be a person.



"That'd be the work of our mage. She must have been made of coal or something to go up in flames like that."

Olison grimaced as he took a close look at the husk.



"Ergh. I sincerely hope you didn't do this after her death."

Olison craned to a different angle.



"I suppose if that was a face, it would match. Probably best to look for any documents or other identification. Thoughts, Christopher?"

### **Olison searches for documents/evidence to the body's identity**

After brushing the charcoal from the armor, Olison could see that it still had the dark purple shade of the armor, unique in this region to no one else than Arinne herself.

But other than that, there was nothing else that could prove her identity.

Chris toed the body with a boot, prodding various areas and eventually turning it over.



"I do believe this just might be the burned body of a woman, I've seen enough of them to know."

The spy looked over at Olison.



"There's not really much left to identify, but I'll believe them."

He grinned at Gregor.



"Just this once."

Chris' grin makes Gregor slightly uneasy.



"Er...thanks."

Olison rises, looking over to the rest of the group.



"Fine. In any case you did manage to clear a house of bandits, so that's at least a dozen less troublemakers. Lady Prixima will likely take that as a sign of competence."

Olison glares towards Sterling and Adrien.



"Figure out which one of you is leader and get your unit prepared, Prixima needs an update by the morrow."



"Well, since she did not pay us at all, you can go tell Prixima that she can shove the next job up her own ass until she pays us for this one. She has to realize that despite the inexperience, were mercenaries, not a bunch of adventurers. That understood?"

Seconds after Adrien finished, first droplets began soothing the warm, early summer ground.

Soon, everything was obscured by curtains of heavy rain.



"Before any of you lot get superstitious, the rain is just a co-incidence."

Chris shrugged.



"It's no concern of mine whether or not you ever get paid. If you have issues with your contract, you can take it up with your employer."

He walked over to a window and looked out of it.



"I like the rain. Especially when it's heavy like this, so thick that it obscures both sigh and sound..."

Gregor fidgets uncertainly.



"I'm not sure antagonizing the most powerful woman around is a good idea, Adrien. Especially since she has access to more than enough of my fellow soldiers to grind us into dust.."

Ami grinds her teeth.



"Rain, flipping rain! Any one got a umbrella?"



"Er yeah I don't think this is a good idea Adrian."



"Well, in this weather, we'd be stuck here until it lightens up. As you've so kindly pointed out Chris, it's raining hard enough that we can't see or hear far. We leave, and we're perfect targets for an ambush. Of course, with all the broken walls here, staying would be foolish, but less so than leaving."



"And Gregor, we're just telling her to pay us what she owes us."



"Adrien, I'm sure she's going to pay us once we're back. What is she gonna do, somehow magic the money next to us? And she really seems to want that other job done, so it's in her own interest to do so."

Sterling takes a look outside the window. It's raining, but not exactly the kind of downpour that drenches one to the bones.





"It doesn't look like it's going to stop anytime soon. Sorry Ami, but we're on a schedule here, so we should head out as soon as possible. It doesn't look like it'll stop anytime soon"



"But if Sterling didn't manage to secure any promise of payment, she doesn't owe you anything! My impression was that this mission was an audition of sorts so that your group could do the job you were originally going to be paid for. And I agree, we should stay here until the weather clears."



"I suppose we could use Daniel's magic cape as a tarp should worse come to worse..."



"Let just head back before I go weird again. Bloody rain."

Olison scoffed.



"Gregor has the right of it. And in any case, if she was planning on paying you, she would not risk sending payment beyond her walls. Negotiations will have to be left for when you return to Kesselring. You had best hope PRIXIMA can overlook that kind of prudence."



"Frankly I'm for informing our Lady that the lot of you - regardless of the majority of your skills and talents - are led by incompetent morons."

Chris continued to stare out the window at the rain.



"The brunette with the axe is a dullard too concerned with money and status, and the other has potential but is too concerned with making everyone happy. I kind of like that, though."



"Listen to Olison. He's trusted for a reason. And we can stay until the rain quits if the majority of you wish. I enjoy watching it as much as I enjoy being in it."



"Eh, we can wait, rushing out would just be folly. And the status bit is untrue Chris. Money, and only money is my motivation."



"I'm sorry, you seem to have mistaken me for someone who cares."

Chris continued to smile at Adrien.



"Only about updated information."

Chris gestured for Olison to come over as he went back to looking out the window.



"Olison, what's your opinion of these people?"

Olison walked over to the window, keeping his voice low.



"As you've said. This Adrien figure is a brickheaded sort, and this 'Sterling' is being too indecisive."

Olison paused to look at what evidence remained of the battle.



"I won't deride the possibility of individual combat skill. Perhaps it would have been wiser to observe the battle ourselves to weed out the real foolhards."



"Agreed. The one with the monocle - Gregor, I believe they said his name

was - said it was their mage that defeated Arinne. Perhaps we should move among the group, determine their worth individually. Who would you like to talk to first? I'll choose someone else and we'll work our way through."

Ami sidles over.



"And me?"

Olison slowly nodded to Chris before turning to Ami.



"Curt and quick. I can respect that in a healer. And seeing as how your group has had no casualties and no visible wounds despite what apparently was a massive failure in tactics, I'd assume you've done your job well."

Charlotte finally forced herself awake.



"Mmm, sorry, I hadn't slept like that in-"

She gasped at the new figures.



"ACK! Who are these?"

Derick gestured toward them.



"Charlotte, Christopher and Olison. Christopher and Olison, Charlotte.""



"Just some of PRIXIMA's men. Pay them no heed."

Then Adrien headed over and promptly grabbed Sterling off the ground.



"You're coming with me. Keep your mouth shut and it'll be easier for you."

Derick started to open his mouth towards Sterling and Adrien but was at a loss for words.

Chris nodded to Olison and approached Gregor.



"You're a Menelean, are you not? What's your training?"



"Charlotte. I see from your equipment that you're an archer."



"While Gregor organizes his thoughts, why don't you tell me about your role in the battle?"



"Yes, that's correct...I'm trained in lances, medium armor, and shield-use. I guess I'm just like any other Soldier in the army."



"The battle that just occurred, or is there a larger battle going on I don't know about? I just joined, you see. I'm not doing this for money but for four walls around me when I sleep."

Chris addressed Gregor first.



"All right. What would you say you contributed the most in this battle?"



"Does 'serving as a living shield' count as contributing? All I really remember is getting hurt a lot and stabbing brigands in response. Though I think someone shouted my name at one point, it's all a little hazy..."



"I see. Yes, it does. The fact you're still standing says quite a bit about both you and your healer, although not necessarily anything about your other teammates."

Next, Charlotte.



"This one you were just in, of course."

Finally, he glanced over at Adrien and Sterling.



"If you're going to drag Sterling off for what it sounds like you're going to do with him, do try to keep it down. I might get jealous of you. He has such pretty hair."



"Mmm. I stuck by the others - mainly Gregor and Daniel - and helped them take down foes who could not reach me with my bow. I will, though, say this: I could not have done it without Ami. None of us could. Without a healer we'd have been dead in the water against the first couple waves of bandits."



"I see. So the three of you - assisted by Ami, your healer - did most of the fighting?"



"I would say that's unfair. I did not see anyone who did not play their part. Gregor, though, does tend to bleed out more than the others."

Charlotte winked at Gregor.

Gregor couldn't come up with a suitable retort, so he just smiled and shook his head in exasperation.

Chris nodded, and directed his next question at both of them.



"Very well. What's your opinion on Adrien and Sterling?"



"Oh, I don't know. Adrien's pretty gung-ho and wants to be the leader, but I'm pretty sure you can see that for yourself. Sterling isn't so bad, but his tactics need some work. Both of them are good guys, in their own way."



"Sterling should remain leader. Adrian just seems to be looking for a fight, and I can't expect him to properly direct an entire group of mercenaries to perfection in his first battle. Plus, Sterling is apparently good at handling the Lady, and Adrian suggested we actually revolt after our very first mission!"



"That's the impression Adrien gave me, too. And he's not nearly as cute."

It was hard to tell if Christopher meant that last sentence or not.

Derick was still staring at Adrian and Sterling struggling with each other.



"Uhhhh... should I step in?"



"It's your decision. I don't care." Grin.



"I'm glad you shared your opinions. Anything else the pair of you wish to tell me?"



"I can't think of anything off the top of my head. Charlotte?"



"I think we should celebrate completing our mission by finding some custard!"



"Just finding some, or eating it as well? Because I could go for the second option."



"I'm sure we can arrange that once we're back."

Chris patted Charlotte and Gregor on the shoulders, then walked over to Derick to talk to him for now.



"I didn't catch your name..."



"Call me Derick. I'm part of the mercenaries."



"All right, Derick. I suppose you heard the questions I asked Charlotte and Gregor, and I suppose it's obvious I'm going to ask you the same questions. You would be correct. All the same, let's start from the top."



"What's your training, and how would you say you did in the battle against Arinne?"



"Training? Uhhh... well I'm a swordsman. I was taught how to fight by a friend who took me in after my family were... killed by bandits, and trained myself from there. During the battle I did my part, but I've been working on breaking a bad habit of mine where I'm overly cautious a lot and wind up limiting myself as a result."





"A surprisingly honest and informative answer. Well, onto the next one, concerning the leadership role of this group. As I understand it Sterling is your leader but Adrien wants the status of being 'in charge.'"

Chris did indeed do the air quotes with his fingers.



"What do you think about that situation?"



"I honestly have been trying to avoid taking sides since they've both brought up good points, I've been thinking maybe they should co-lead, though Adrian's recent actions have been starting to make me reconsider" said Derick as he glanced over at the two of them still grappling with each other.

Chris nodded.



"I see. Finally, anything else you would like to say to me? Opinions, thoughts, comments about your allies...?"



"Ami's horse is terrifying."



"I haven't seen it yet, but noted. Thank you for your time and information, Derick."



"This is incredibly detailed. Why are you doing this? Is the Lady considering firing a portion of us? Or is she testing us for another reason?"



"Whether it seems useless or it seems 'too personal,' gathering information is my job, Charlotte."





"One might even call me a spy."



"Well, that was quite honest."



"Perhaps so. I have been referred to as a spy in the past, but I prefer to think of myself as an observer. To me, 'spy' implies gaining the trust of others on false pretenses and manipulating them for one's own ends."

Chris looked around.



"Well, that seems to be everyone, save for the healer, the man over there, and your... leader. Whichever of those two it may turn out to be."

Chris found a seat near the window and sat, reaching into his robes. After a moment he pulled out what appeared to be a biscuit stuffed with cheese and meat and started eating as he watched the fight between Adrien and Sterling.



"Kick him in the shin."

Olison looked towards the rest of the group and sighed.



"Well, Shields certainly works fast. And where's that mage the healer spoke of?"

Olison's gaze drew over Daniel.



"You, the one in the corner with the fancy robe. Have anything to say about the battle?"



"Not much. I opened the front door and helped loot the place mostly. Which reminds me."

Daniel turns towards Charlotte.



"You still have that hunk of metal pretending to be a sword I handed you Char? You might want to give that to someone who can use it effectively."



"Mhm. Who would you recommend?"



"I'd say Sterling personally."

As for the rain, it has lessened by now to the point of being a dribble, and so did the clouds on the sky dispersed a little, occassionally showing patches of blue sky in the holes.

As for Henry, he is currently laying in the corner, incredibly pale and inactive.



"Ok I'll admitted that Tenebra eyes are a little odd, but terrifying?"



"The horse seems pretty nice to me. What are you guys all freaked out about?"



"Now is the best time to start towards Kesselring. Finish your preparations soon."

Olison looked towards Ami's horse.



"What, the horse is terrifying? Did he run someone down?"



"Not that I know of, but I only had him for a couple of hours."

**Charlotte: Hand the iron blade to Sterling.**



"Are we headed back on foot?"

Olison bowed his head slightly in regret.



: "Yes. The Lady could not spare any other horses. I have brought provisions for the trip back."

Olison looked towards Ami's horse again.



"That is, unless you've found more of these 'Terrifying' horses?"

Ami jumps on Tenebra.



"I'm ready to move out."



"We better get on with it then. It's not that long of a march anyway."

Gregor shoulders his lance and prepares to move out.



"Too bad it's not still raining."

Chris got back to his feet, still eating, and followed Olison out.

And so the group left the old manor, all in one piece - besides Henry who still looked a bit pale.

Just like the trip to the manor, trip back to the Kesselring was uneventful one. The rain lessened with each passing minute, and the moment they've entered the forest that encircled the Kesselring Fortress, the rain stopped completely and the sun began to peek shyly from behind the grey clouds.

When they got to the entrance, there was a groan in the back of their little group - it was Henry, who soon fell onto the ground with a soft thud, uncounscious.

Ami gives him a once over.



"I can't find anything wrong with him. Barring being uncounscious."

Chris glanced back at Henry.



"Poor bastard. The walk must have finished him off."

He crouched beside him, grabbed his wrists, and started dragging him inside.



"I'll just chuck him in one of the maid's rooms for now. I'm sure he won't mind at all when he wakes up."

Ami watches Chris drag away Henry away.



"Why do I get the feeling he going to dump him in a occupied bed?"

Turning back to the party Ami says:



"Who is going to talk to our employer?"



"I'll go deal with her. If only so the rest of you don't have to do so."

The whole group was escorted upstairs by two soldiers - except Olison, who was allowed to stay downstairs and take care of his horse. And of course Henry, who was resting gods know where.

When upstairs, Aaron came out of the Prixima's study and opened the door.



"Lady Prixima will see Adrien now." He announced in a brief speech.



"Right, let's get this over with..."

Adrien strode through the doorway into Prixima's study, wary of the woman. He made his way into the room before stopping, standing straight in order to look as formal as possible.



"Lady Prixima, I trust you have our payment ready?"



"But of course!" Prixima said, *enthusiastically* clapping her hands. Then she nodded at small wooden box at her table.



"The reward for Arinne's head is there. Now that the test mission was a success, I believe we can proceed with original mission of Sarius' group that I had for him and you?"



"Regardless of whether the previous mission was a test, payment must still be rendered for those services. If you are unwilling or unable to pay us for them, we will discontinue our current service with you and take our leave of this place."

Prixima furrowed her eyebrow.



"Well, if you don't want all those golden coins hidden safely in that box, how about a magical tome from my collection? Also, you sound as if I'm some kind of terrible, crafty witch, my dear Adrien."



"At most, that box would only be able to contain around 500 gold coins, and somehow, I doubt it contains that. Now, if you were willing to show me the contents of the box before I accepted it as payment, then maybe I could agree to take it as payment. As for what I think of you, I will be honest and say that you summed it up perfectly. You have not demonstrated any incompetence that I have had the opportunity to witness, thus I am taking the caution of assuming you are perfectly competent. Don't exactly care about the morals though, but that's coming from a mercenary."

Prixima laughed and clapped her hands together.



"You're definitely more interesting than Sterling. As in, more mature, that's for sure. Wiser, too. I wonder if more... experienced as well." Prixima grinned, before letting out a chuckle. Her hands then reached for the box's lid and lifted it. Glittering coins filled the inside's to the brim and beyond, actually forming a small pile on top of the other coins.



"One thousand six hundred coins are in the box. That's the exact prize for Arinne's head that was on the posters we issued few weeks ago. No one decided to try and kill her, so all that gold is yours for taking."

Adrien looked over the coins, before turning back to Prixima.



"Well, the payment looks acceptable to me. Now, tell me more about that job you were going to give to Sarius."



"Did you ever heard of the Dragonstones? I doubt that, so let me explain a bit." Prixima sat down on the chair and crossed her arms.



"Back in the days of demons and heroes, Dragons, which still roamed the world, gave the Humans a set of seventy seven magical stones, each with different names, and all of the Dragonstone wielders then fought against the Demon Gor-Tah. My family had one of the Dragonstones since we became a barony, and then, a county in Deynastia, and then, in Menelea. I will spare you the political nuances. During the last five centuries, though, many of those Dragonstones were lost, either destroyed, stolen, and few are possibly resting in some old crypt or ruin, forgotten by everyone. Nowadays only historians and eccentric arcane researchers bother themselves with the knowledge of Dragonstones. My family Dragonstone was called 'Lapis Lazuli'." She let out an annoyed sigh.



"Unfortunately, over the last fifty years, the Dragonstone changed the owner in the family, and ultimately fell into hands of my cousin, Eor Kesselring. That stubborn old fool isn't going to give it back, and in the last year, he moved from his manor, along with his rag-tag band of vagabonds, to the hills in the western part of Kesselring county. Now, make a guess why you're involved in this family matter."



"No need to guess when the answer is obvious. Any other objectives aside from the acquisition of the Dragonstone?"

Wide grin appeared on Prixima's face.



"Not at all. Just bring me the Dragonstone. At any cost. I've actually allowed myself to arrange something - one of my other diplomats, Taki, went with our new pegasus rider to Eor's village to snoop around, try to find some details about him you could exploit and even try to hire some help. I have my doubts about the latter part, but you will see that for yourself. Christopher, Gregor and Olison will go with you as well - Eor is a skilled tactician."



"Anyway - just bring me Lapis Lazuli, and the contract is fulfilled."



"Very well, now may I ask you something?"



Prixima glared at Adrien, but only briefly, before she waved her hand at him.



"What is it?"



"I think our cleric is possessed, or something like that. Considering that horse of hers, along with the behavioral and voice changes when closely exposed to violence. You know anyone that can do anything about it? Preferably without killing her, or affecting her ability to do her job."



"Hmph, I'm neither a priest nor someone from the now-defunct Inquisition. You will have to deal with her on your own. Of course, I can always confine her to my castle's jail until you find someone who can deal with her."



"The latter would work better for the time being, but I doubt that would be done for free."

Prixima grinned yet again.



"Oh, don't worry about that. We can discuss the payment for using my prison after you're back with Lapis Lazuli."



Alright then. I assume your troops can put her under lock and key immediately?"



"I can, indeed. Tell me though, why you're so inclined to get her into jail, hmmm? As far as Christopher told me, she kept you and others alive so far."

---

MEANWHILE





"Why do I want to hurt Adrien a lot?"

Gregor shrugs; who knows why magic users feel the things they feel?



"I have no idea. Isn't your job kind of the opposite of that?"



"Doesn't mean I can't sock someone if they being stupid."



"I'm no expert, but wouldn't that go against your cleric-y vows or something?"



"Dragons 14:7, if your patient run into a very one sided scrap and end up on your table again missing an arm, you are allow to punch him or her in the face for not using ones brains. There another one about removing someone baby maker if they try and put you in jail for no good reason."



"Oddly specific."



"...Have you even seen her horse? Besides, while she is useful, that sort of thing kinda gets you labled as demon worshippers. That'll cut down the amount of potential jobs we'd have immensely, and I'd rather not get lynched by a mob of angry farmers. I'd rather get that problem dealt with so she can continue her job, without the prospect of her going insane and trying to kill everyone."



"I don't think anyone remembers the demons nowadays. Besides, you yourslef just mentioned she is useful. Let's make a deal: you bring me Dragonstone, and I jail her in as an extra, and even hire few priests and monks with my own money to check her out." PRIXIMA let out a loud sigh, showing she is getting tired by this.



"No, don't worry about it. I'll see if I can find someone who can see what's the deal with her. Especially since I have a feeling if you were to do that, the money for it would come out of our payment. I assume that is all, so I shall take my leave now."



"Yes, that would be all, you can go now."

Adrien nods, and leaves the study before heading back to the party.

---



"Right, let's get moving. Next mission is in a village around the western part of the county. Wants a man named Eor taken care of and a possession of his to be returned to her. Chris, Gregor and Olson are going to be assisting us, along with a couple more of PRIXIMA's men in the village."



"'Taken care of'? Does that mean what I think it means? Also, I need a new lance. This one's just about had it."



"If I may - on the way to Eor's village, there's small town called Vilino. I reckon you might need few supplies, I would consider stopping there. I think you Gregor were there few times, too."



"Oh yes, I remember that place. Adrien, if it won't be too much trouble I'd like it if we could stop there and do a bit of shopping."

Aaron coughed and looked at Gregor.



"I would like to remind you, Gregor, that you're one of Lady PRIXIMA's soldiers. We can give you some supplies, if you need them."

Derick suddenly exhales, having apparently been tensely holding his breath while waiting.



"We could do with some more vulneraries."



"And maybe an axe."



"Considering we just got paid, that's not a bad idea at all. I could use a few new weapons, and I reckon the rest of you could too. But Ami, you're not getting a proper axe until you can hold one without much difficulty. You're going to be using a club or quarterstaff for now."



"Daddy didn't want a petty princess that shied from dirt."

She holds her hand out, palm up.



"I'm good with axes, let me show you."



"They still fall under the same banner when it comes to training and such. Club will be lighter and thus easier for you to use without sacrificing the killing power of an equivalent axe. Not as balanced though, so you have to watch your aim more carefully."

Ami crosses her arms.



"Fine I'll use a club."



"Now, has anyone seen where Chris went? I want to leave as soon as we able to."



"Saw him head towards the Duchess' room when we came back. Haven't seen him since though."

---

Prixima waited a moment after Adrien left, and then turned her head to shadowy corner of her room, toward the curtains.



"...You can come out, Christopher. He's gone. I have something for you as well."

Chris stepped out of the shadows behind the throne.



"Is the thing you're giving me Adrien?" Grin.



"Because that's awful generous of you, Lady, but I would have to decline if so."



"Oh, my dear Christopher, magnitude of your jokes is simply splendid." With that, she reached for a small piece of paper and hastily scribbled something with a pencil. She signed it at the bottom and then handed it to Christopher.

Chris read the note, his grin growing wider as he did so.



"Oh. Really now? Well then, I'll keep their leader on his toes. See if he's... good enough. And I might even have some fun along the way."



"Besides that, I think Ernest made you another set of lockpicks. Now go."

Upon hearing about the lockpicks, Chris nodded, his grin fading even more rapidly than it had appeared.



"Understood. I'll escort them around and help them out, if I have to. Thank you for the lockpicks, my Lady. They may come in handy yet."

He inclined his head to Lady Prixima, ate the note, then headed down to retrieve his lockpicks from Ernest. And possibly see if the man could make him a bladed mechanism for his left bracer.

Christopher found Ernest's room. There was a note on the door, signaling that he was away, again. The note simply said: "Lockpicks - same box as before"

Chris pushed open the door, went to the bed, and reached under it. As expected, there was a slender wooden box. He took the leather packet of picks out of it and replaced the box under the bed.



"And that's that. A pity he wasn't in."

He went to meet up with the main group of mercenaries.

---



"Hello again. It looks like I've been asked to accompany you."

He shrugged and closed his eyes, grin still wide as he shook his head as if in disbelief.



"It seems as if you'll just have to get used to me."

Ami gives a smile.



"I sure we'll get along fine."

Chris nodded to Ami.



"You're the healer, right? I'm sure we'll probably be seeing each other a lot on this mission. Things are going to be dangerous."



"You do your job well, and I'll see no reason why I cannot appreciate your talents. I may not not why they are, arpart from the snarking. But I'm sure they'll be useful."



"My talents... That remains to be seen, doesn't it?"

Olison appeared round a corner of the castle walls.



"Ah, there you all are."

Olison made his way to the group, and on stopping saluted Aaron.



"Preparations are complete, sir. Standard equipment and provisions for a week's travel between Hexham, Shields and myself. Is there anything more I should have ready before we depart?"



"You have an a-club?"



"I don't think there's anything else you could take. And by Prixima's orders, I can only supply people from the Fortress who are coming with your mercenary band, so that's Olison, Christopher and Gregor."

Olison made a short bow to Aaron.



"Very well, sir. Hopefully the prices at Vilino won't leave them too impoverished."

Immediately Olison's gaze shot to Adrien



"I understand that I will be assisting your force in this assignment. Do make sure everyone's talents are used fully."



"Um. Could you wait for me to run down to the warehouse for an Iron Lance and a vulnerary? I'm afraid I would be less than helpful in the next battle without them."



"I don't think they would mind. Now, I have something else to do. Good luck on your quest."

Saying these words, Aaron turned on his feet and marched away.

Gregor goes and does exactly that, trading in his Slim Lance as he does so.



"Well, Aaron seems to be acting especially stuffy today."

He nodded to Olson.

Olson shrugged.



"The stuffiness is just part of the job, I know I wouldn't take managing an entire castle's goings lightly."



"No offense but I think this time I'll ride second with the healer. I quite like her horse."

Olson raised an eyebrow.



"And what is with that horse? Honestly, everyone's going on about it, even Steil is acting so timid and callous around him. But I swear I could name at least five horses that look just like him."



"Our weapons surely have worn down by now. I wonder where I could get a replacement or at least backup option for my iron bow."

Olison turned to Charlotte.



: "The smith in Vilino is a versatile fellow, he should have weapons for each of you."

Charlotte nodded.



"Thank you for the information. So, we are to ride to Vilino post-haste? Is our next target there, or is it just a stop along the way?"

Olison briefly looked at the rest of the group.



"Oh, I thought Sir Aaron would mention. Vilino's just on the way to our target. Our provisions withstanding, there should be plenty of time."

Gregor comes running back to the group, breathing heavily from sprinting around in full armor.



"I'm \*pant\* here! Are we ready \*wheeze\* to go?"



"Well, ready whenever the rest of you are."

Ami climbs on her horse.



"Ready."





"Ready. Let's ship off."

Olison started off towards the castle.



"Go ahead, I'll catch up. I've got to see if Steil has calmed down enough to make the trip."

Chris hopped onto the demonic-looking horse behind Ami.

After a while, everyone was ready to go. And so they left the Kesselring Fortress yet again, leaving Henry behind who was resting some kind of unknown injury.

The one-hour march to the town of Vilino was marked with sudden crash of weather; the sunny, hot morning quickly turned into heavy rain, the lighting flashing the skies and thunders ringing in the group's ears.

Fortunately they've reached the town...

## ~~Chapter 2: In the Search of Lapis Lazuli~~

...yet the main gate, a heavy pair of brass slabs, is, strangely, closed. There are several tents and pack animals tied to the tents' poles. A pair of guards is standing in the small watchtower constructed on top of the gate's arch, and they looked at the wet mercenaries.

"What do you want, strangers?" One of them shouted in rather raspy voice.



"We got money, and we want to spend it here. That good enough?"

"Then spend it at the tents. There are travelers, merchants, migrants and helluva other people. Vilino itself is closed." He shouted back, staring right at Adrien. Second later, lighting flashed brightly and a thunder followed quickly, the mighty roar almost deafening.



"Why is the town closed off anyway?"

"Plague." He replied, looked briefly at his fellow guard, and then back at Adrien.

"Yesterday it was ten people in a tavern, so people thought old Maxim served spoiled fish again. But today morning it's already hundred or so, writhing in pain and fever, all of them locked in different parts of the city. Mayor Fullen, as always, got a little panicky and closed the city off. Do you have important business in Vilino?"



"We were here to see the smithy. Do you know if he's stricken by the plague?"

"I don't think Harald got it. But Mayor forbade all entry into town, unless the visitors are healers, priests, or diplomats. And, sorry, but you don't look like any of those."

"See that dark red tent behind few others?" The other guard suddenly joined the conversation, pointing at the tents to the left of the road. "If I recall correctly, its owner is a weapon merchant. Try him, if you really need weapons that badly." The last word was almost silenced by the boom of the latest thunder.



"Well, that's a shame."



"Maybe you can earn us some coin, Ami, putting those healing talents of yours to use. As for me..."

Chris slid off of the horse.



"I'm going to enjoy the rain."



"Plague, this close to Kesselring? Damn it, I've half a mind to go back and warn the garrison."

Olison's teeth gritted for a moment, but then fell back to his normal glare.



"But my orders still stand. Perhaps I can get a courier here to warn them..."

Chris glanced over to Olson.



"That's probably not a bad idea. I'm sure you can find some layabout around here who would deliver a message for a gold or two."

Olson squinted through the rain to assess the other tents.



"Then there's the risk that the courier himself may carry it."



"But it's far more risky to leave Kesselring uninformed. I'll be right back."

**Olson leaves to find a courier to send back.**



"Plague huh. I suppose it would be too much of a risk to send in Ami to check on things. Shall we go visit the tent?"



"The risk is not too great if she's getting paid for it. But yes, let's go see what the merchants have to offer."

The moment in which Adrien got to the tent and brushed away the cloth, a black dog appeared in front of him and began barking awfully loud. It was baring its teeth, his ears low. Few seconds later there was a whistle and the dog ran into the tent.

A short, pudgy man in leather pants and red tunic stepped out, a small lamp in his hand, giving off some light. He squinted his eyes.

"Wuzzat? Watcha want, kiddo?"



: "You the weapons merchant?"

The guy picked his nose, grumbled something so quiet that Adrien couldn't hear, and then licked his lips.

"Ahhh, a customer. I thought I won't profit today, what with that damned closure... Axes, spears, daggers, javelins... Wassit you seek, hmm? Come in, don't get all wet."

Adrien pushed the fabric of the tent's entrance aside as he walked into the tent.



"Mind showing me the goods then please?"

"Why, yes, sure." He turned around and moved toward a pile of crate tucked in the other side of the tent. The dog was sitting near the lamp, his ears up, his eyes stuck at Adrien's frame.

The fat merchant grabbed one of the crate and pulled it away, and then another, and opened both. Iron blades, steel swords, axes made from iron as black as coal.

"Feel free to browse the wares, friend, while I scribble the prices for ya." He then reached behind the pile, pulling away large block of slightly charred wood, and fished out a piece of chalk from his pocket. He then began scribbling words and prices on the wood.

"There ya go." The merchant grinned widely and gave Adrien the wooden plank.

-PRICES-

Iron Axe: 350 gold  
Iron Dagger: 400 gold  
Iron Javelin: 300 gold  
Steel Sword: 600 gold  
Hand Axe: 350 gold  
Iron Lance: 400 gold  
Steel Lance: 500 gold  
Iron Club: 350 gold  
Steel Axe: 450 gold  
Iron Blade: 500 gold

Ami peeked over Adrien's shoulder.



"Let see, club for me and what?"

Adrien popped his head outside the tent after seeing the prices, the plank still in his hand.



"Okay, who needed a new weapon?"



"They don't seem to have bows for sell out here. Hey, **Daniel**. Do you have a moment to talk in private?"

Charlotte gestured to Daniel. Chris made her uncomfortable or she would have asked him.



"Sure, what do you need?"

Charlotte whispers to Daniel.



"I think you and I should sneak in. Not here, of course, but there has to be a least-guarded place on the city walls. There are hundreds of people out here and likely many things we could loot inside. Additionally, we could get some more reliable information on the start of the plague and maybe even the 'Dragonstone' we're searching for."

Charlotte eyed the rest of the group.



"It seems like there is something the city guards are not telling us."



"I'm for it, but are you sure we're going to be staying here long enough? I don't think it's worth sneaking in only for everyone else to leave us behind."



"Good point."

---

Unfortunately for Olson, there was no one interested in becoming a courier for a piece of gold.

Which Olson didn't even had, considering the box was in Adrien's ownership...

Olson approached the group again, grunting.



"Urgh. I could have sworn I at least had pocket change on hand, and not a person among these lot like the sound of a simple courier job. I just hope Kesserling remains vigilant until we return."



"That's annoying."

He looked around at the various passerby.



"I can't believe these people are all so well off in times of plague that they would refuse a simple job offer. Thoroughly annoying..."

---

Gregor peers over Adrien's shoulder at the weapons.



"That's not a bad selection of weapons actually. Shame about the lack of magic staffs or tomes."

He looks around and calls to Ami.



"How much longer do you think that staff of yours will work? If we're going into another battle, we'll want to make sure that you can do your job properly."

Ami tapped her staff, listening to it.



"A little over half the magic remained, we be fine for now."

"So what it will be, young man, eh? I don't mind doing occassional business, but I would prefer making meself a lunch at the moment." The merchant asked, as if in hurry.



"Well. Ami, you go pick out what weapon you want, and I'll pay for it. But my good man, I should ask if you have some more... "Select" stock available."

The merchant grimaced after hearing that Adrien was picky about the armaments.

"Bah, fine, I was going to sell it my usual client but... the city is closed, yes... safer to get profit now..." Mumbling, he went back toward the pile of crates, rubbing his large, pudgy hands, eyeing the crates for a moment. Then he grabbed one of them and opened it - inside, on a pile of hay, a curved, slim-looking sword was laying. The edge looked unusually sharp; it was a Shamsir.

"Fine quality steel, forged just a week ago. That blade screams murder, I tell ya." The merchant mumbled. "One thousand gold, and it's yours. Besides that, I don't have anything else."

Derick stopped what he was doing and started staring at the sword with longing in his face.

Though he himself wasn't a swordsman, Gregor couldn't help but appreciate the craftsmanship of the blade. This was the kind of thing usually reserved for officers in the army.



"Done deal, 1000 gold it is." Adrien said, as he handed over the gold for the purchase.

"Wonderful." The fat man grabbed the money, and then handed the sword to Adrien.

"Is that all?"



"A club for me, please."

The merchant fished out a small, but heavy, club.

"That's 350 coins."



"May I have that Adrien? It looks like it would go well with my fighting style."



"Well Derick, guess what you're getting?"

Adrien handed over the sword to Derick, and then paid the merchant for Ami's club before turning back to him.



"A pleasure doing business with you."

"Likewise." The merchant mumbled out and then closed his tent, almost punching Adrien in the nose.

The rain, by now, have lessened a bit, and thunders haven't grumbled for a while as well.

Chris looked at the sky with a disappointed frown.



"I suppose it can't rain all the time."

He patted Ami's horse on the neck and waited to see what their next move would be.



"Right then, if no-one else has any business to attend to here, we keep moving. No need to waste time here."



"I'm ready to go at any time!"

Charlotte approaches Adrian and the others.



"Will we be resting here or going on?"



"Well, unless anyone knows of a job on offer here, we're moving out soon."

Olison let out a short sigh before climbing on his horse.



"Well, break's over. Time to move."

**Charlotte: Heading on, it seems. Motion to Daniel that we're leaving sooner**



than expected.

And so they resumed their trip, passing the plague-ridden town, They could feel the gaze of guards on the walls, even if sometimes the fortifications were obscuring said guards from the view. The feeling passed, of course, after they moved away from the town.

The rain lessened even more, and at one point, it stopped fully. The heavy clouds, however, decided to stay on the skies and look angrily at the mercenaries, as if ready to wash them with rain again.

The surroundings changed a bit - the flat farmlands gave in to small hills and rocky plateau's, the road was trying to go as straight as possible, only sometimes turning to bypass the hills that were too steep.

But the trek through the unfriendly region lasted less than an hour - they could see, at the horizon, a small village; cluster of homesteads and fences, and in middle of that, a large building, presumably the mayor's house, or the local inn, or maybe both.

And just as the mercenaries were on the outskirts of the village, the rain began attacking them again.

Ami yells at the skies.



"Make your mind up!"

The rain stopped less than a minute after Ami's shout.



"Thank you!"

Heavy droplets started to fall seconds after her speech, and half a minute later, it was raining heavily again.



"Don't. Say. Anything."

Gregor finds himself agreeing with Ami's frustration with the weather, but decides to change the subject.



"Milord Olison! How will we recognize the man we came here to see? Is he dangerous?"

Olison paused to calm his horse down.



"Eor's definitely dangerous, from what I hear he's as sharp as Lady Prixima herself. As to what he looks like, however, I can't say much, I've never seen him. I do know that he's a stubborn man, and doesn't go anywhere without his suit of armor. Of course, he may have even taken precautions to his appearance to better hide himself."

Olison squinted, eyes darting across the village rooftops. His voice drew quieter.



"Which is why there's supposed to be a diplomat or somesuch here to help us track him down."

They have arrived at the village by now.

Every house had it's windows closed - and those that were still open, were quickly closed by hands of villagers hiding behind them. It was clear that everyone knew who they are and what they're trying to achieve.

In front of the large, two-story building, there was a pegasus, tied to a post and lazily munching on scarce grass around it's feet. After a moment, a young woman went outside - upon spotting the group, she waved at them slowly, her eyes locked at Christopher.

**Taki Greenstone is innnn. Valor Inara, Tantallos Forsaken and Seyena Ikane are inside the building.**



"Well... Let's go introduce ourselves and get inside. If the villagers know what we're here for it won't be long before the militia shows up..."



"Good idea..."



"Ah. If you'll excuse me, I have someone to meet with."

Chris slid off of Ami's horse and sauntered over to Taki.



"Well, well. If it isn't Taki Greenstone."

He leaned on the wall next to her and crossed his legs at the ankle.



"Enjoying the weather as much as I am?"

Taki had remained tactfully silent, which was rare for her.



" ... "

In this case, she took the rule of 'do not bother the animals'-she had made the mistake of trusting him, once, and had been repaid in a predictable manner. He had left her with an arrest warrant, an empty gold purse and a scar on her left thigh. Probably because it was funny.

So, she felt she didn't even own him the time of day. Such interaction with him was as close to indulging in a self destructive habit as dared to get close to.



"So you still haven't forgiven me, Taki? All right. That's perfectly understandable. We'll talk later."

---

A well muscled, straw haired young man with a sword on his back stood leaning against the wall, arms behind his head. His right foot jostled up and down, the heel of his boot generating a light tapping noise against the floor. He turned his gaze to meet the other two people who were with him, whom he presumed to be mercenaries as he was.



"...So, does anyone know when this job is supposed to be started? The sooner we get cracking, the sooner I can get paid."

Valor tried not to ask too many questions when he took on a job. Some employers did not enjoy being questioned. Such employers tended to rescind offers as questions appeared. It was hard getting work as a mercenary without an established reputation, and Valor did his best not to muck it up.

The person covered in robes with the other two people had been spending his time reading a thick book until the other mercenary spoke up, his head moved up a bit to stare at him before replying.



"Honestly? I have no idea...I am just here to test my skills.. and maybe have some fun killing bandits..heh..hehe..."

The creepy shaman rubbed his hands together after his statement, clearly he seemed too... pleased about the idea of killing others, the money was not so important to him as he was from a royal family and because he was just a bit insane.



"My name is Valor." He offered, trying to get a conversation started. With mercenaries, this was occasionally a difficult proposition.

With most of his face covered with the hood yet, the shaman nodded to Valor.



"The name is Tantallos."

He replied with a lazy tone before closing his book.



"Hello, Valor and Tantallos. I'm Ami." (read in a glum tone)



"Nice to meet you Ami!" Valor said, jumping onto a chance to talk to someone who wasn't clearly bonkers. "I take it you're a healer? Hopefully we won't have too much need of your services, haha!"



"Well, if the last assignment was anything to go by..."

Gregor holds out a hand to shake with the new faces.



"Private von Hexham. Call me Gregor. I take it you're a mercenary?"



"You got it." Valor gripped Gregor's hand firmly, gave him a one pump handshake, and dropped his own arm back to his side. "Kind of a large-ish group we have here, isn't it?"



"You've got that right. I'm just not sure why Lady PRIXIMA needs so many strong arms lately."

A young woman with fair hair sat on a chair against the wall, her lance nested in a crook of the wall nearby. Her hair fell somewhat messily over her shoulders, and her eyes were concealed by her long bangs, as she sat with her head held low.

Seyena straightened up when she heard voices nearby, rubbing the sleep from her eyes. She stood up, grabbing her lance as she approached the new arrivals.



"Ah, are these the rest?" She examines the group in front of her curiously.

Chris went inside in time to see Seyena wake up and hear her question.



"Yeah. This should be everyone Lady PRIXIMA hired on. Except for that Henry guy, but last I saw him he was occupying a maid's bed."

The spy moved to the nearest window and leaned on the wall next to it, staring out at the rain.

Taki nodded to the lancer.



"Glad to see you lively and spry, sunshine. Aye, a good lot, hmm? Except, well, stay away from the skeevy feller looking out the window, though." She said in a perfectly audible tone, shooting a dagger stare at Chris.



"Ami hm? So you are the healer of the group, that is nice. I am a shaman, you point it, I kill it. Simple like that..heh..hehe.. I do not know about the others, but I am just around to explore and improve my ancient magic."

He tapped the book he was reading before hiding it on his robes.



"Ah yes, good old dark magic, I always like meeting participator of it."



"....Yes... "dark" magic. My intention is to prove the others that ancient magic can be powerful and used for the good too, too many people think dark magic is related to evil, even if it is not. And I also will need it to solve some.. family issues..but that is another story."

Taki came up behind Tantallos, clapping him on the back and interrupting his conversation with Ami.



"Well-magic is magic, huh? I didn't hire ye to pontificate on it. Just make guys trying to gut us go boom. Aye? Boom! And, I heard ya give your name earlier to this pretty lass. Ami, right? Call my Taki. Nice to meet ya! Me, I'm a...diplomatic specialist, yeah? Aren't we all?" She said, grinning cheekily and running a hand through her black hair. She held out her hand to Ami for a firm shake.



"Indeed, I mean I can think of at least 8 ways to use light magic evilly. And why call it ancient? Anima is the first magic, if I'm remembering it right and no one says 'the ancient night' so why is black coloured magic called ancient? Always made no sense to me."



"You got it. Cause if my sword was colored like a rainbow, it wouldn't make those I stab it with any less dead, yah? It's all in the person, not the weapon."

Her hand was still out for Ami to shake, and would probably remain there as long as it took.



"Tradition often makes little sense."

Taki heard something squeak behind her.



"Speak up there Lad, I didn't hear ya!" She said, motioning for him to join the conversation circle.



"Alright, save the talking for later. Let's get inside before a militia patrol comes to see what all this commotion is."

Adrien said, before heading towards the doorway at a brisk pace.

Tantallos disliked the physical contact but just gave a sigh in disapproval.



"I do not remind being hired to deal with illogical people too.. magic is not simple and is not the same...and ancient magic is the most old, besides being the one requiring more studies to be used. But nothing is perfect, there are always the risk of being consumed by the dread magic or the need of learning more."

Giving a shrug, he looked to the group and leaned his back against the chair before finally standing up, but keeping his lazy tone of voice following the others.

Ami shakes the hand of Taki.



"Hello Swordwoman, I look forward to seeing you in battle."

Taki pulled her hand away as Ami leaned in, playfully.



"Likewise. I'm Taki, right? Don't stand on ceremony, nah. Ey, you need a nickname! I name all my friends. Like, Tantallos there is 'Bookworm', and Seyena is 'Sunshine'...judging by how ya are shirking in this storm like a cat that hates water, I think you'd make a good 'Rainy'. Aye, so hows it going Rainy? Catch any good fish lately? Hah! That was a bad joke, and it didn't even make sense, but oh well. I told ya my name was Taki right? Aye, I think I did, friend..."

After, she followed the rest with Adrien into the doorway.



"That a new one, I like it um...let see...what would, ah Tiny."

Taki echoed out a belly laugh.



"Hah! I like you Rainy. You got a subtle and cunning wit-bet the fellas really enjoy that, huh? I'd win that bet!" She said with a wink.



"Sunshine?"

Seyena sighs, shaking her head as she followed the group out as well, intent on checking on her pegasus.



"That's better than 'Six Pockets', 'Sneaky Bastard', or 'Hoody McBackstabber'."

Chris said to Seyena, referring to a couple of things Taki had called him in moments of particular irritation toward him. They weren't really nicknames; she didn't seem to have gotten one for him yet. Which was fine. Nicknames implied a sense of familiarity with another person and he didn't feel like he needed or wanted one from anybody.

Olison climbed down from his horse, tying him to a fencepost under an overhand and giving him a pat to the head before walking inside.

As he paced towards the door, he spoke towards Taki.



"Still as forthright as ever, Taki. Looks like you've been at work, I trust you have the information we'll need?"

Taki gave the man one of her favorite smiles.



"Aye, it's all in my big pocket." She said, tapping her forehead. "How's all that thing going on your end, Tinman? You got clear of that business, right-with the Horse Guild? Something about money, I recall. Bunch of crooks in my subtle opinion,



mean buggers...poor horses...hope you got clear of that trouble, anyway." she trailed off.



"So, anyway. Looks like we're all here and the merc leader is rarin' to go. Any word on what the plan is?"

Olison grunted at 'Tinman', but proceeded on with a light tone.



"Hm, crooks is right. It's quite settled, for the moment. I expect it won't be long before they start cropping up again."



"Olison hmmm? My name is Tantallos.. from the Forsaken family. And not really, I was just pulled into this group. What is the mission again?"



"All I know is that we're here to "take care of" someone. Adrien (that's the large man with the axe) should know the details."

Gregor says this from his post near the entrance of the tavern. His lance is within easy reach, and he's prepared to hold the doors if anyone decides to attack the group.



"What is her problem with you anyway? Not likely it's any business of mine, though." Seyena said to Chris, looking curious.



"Oh, we have more than just one problem. Latest one is - according to her - I pinned a theft on her, took the money, and got her injured. If you want my side of the story, she blew my cover while I was infiltrating and I did what I had to do to complete my mission. So yeah. I did do that. She got away fine, though, so what's it matter?"



"It's just one of those things. You know."

Olison briefly turned to Seyena, and then the mercenary and shaman.



"You must be the pegasus rider I've heard about. Name's Olson, I'm one of the guards of the castle. I take it you've all been briefed on our mission here?"

She turns around, distracted by another voice.



"Yes, I'm the rider. My name's Seyena, and yes, I know what we're doing." She says, nodding and getting to the point rather quickly.



"I'm also interested in exactly what the plan is. Also our objective. Pretty much all the details I need to know."



"The objective is simple, find Eor, and eliminate him. The plan is a little harder, since we don't know where he is, nor have a map of said place. I expect Taki would have information on both of those."



"Right, right, of course. Now, how will I know this Eor fellow when I see him? And who is he?"



"So basically we will be looking for someone we do not even know where is at and without a map, that is just a well-planned strategy you have there.."

He gave a quiet laugh and rubbed his hands together.



"Hopefully this person will have the needed information..and I am not sure about the others, but I am in no hurry..heh..hehee..there is a lot to read yet."

---

Charlotte headed inside the building with everyone else. She noticed people laughing and calling each other names, but her eye was caught in particular by the fair-haired woman in a knightly black suit.

Charlotte crept up around to Seyena, attempting to evade notice by all the other new, rowdy folk.



"Hello. You have the prettiest voice I've heard in a while. It's familiar and soothing."

Seyena heard a quiet voice from behind her, and she swung around to the source, somewhat surprised, and beaming from the compliment.



"Oh, thank you!"

Charlotte extended her hand.



"I'm Charlotte. Who are you?"

Seyena takes the hand offered, giving it a firm shake.



"I'm Seyena, it's a pleasure to meet you." Her eyes seemed to fly towards the quiver that rested on Charlotte's belt, as if by instinct. "Are you an archer, by any chance?" She said, as if she wasn't pointing out the obvious.



"Yes. By necessity."

Charlotte didn't take her eyes off the girl's odd face.



"This may be a bit sudden, but where are you from? Originally, that is."



"Huh? Oh, I grew up in a small village near the mountains, it was really, really remote. Why..." She raised an eyebrow, noticing a peculiar expression upon Charlotte's face.



"Is there something wrong-?" She felt a small question pop up in the back of her head, but she suppressed it, the chances were very, very slim.



"Your village... it wasn't in the remote mountains in the North, was it? North as in the wilds further north of Kesselring?"

Charlotte shook her head.



"Never mind. It's likely nothing."



"Actually, yes, it was, and that's an accurate description... you know of it?"



"There were quite a few remote villages in the North. I do not know how many there are now. Berebea is always attempting to expand - violently."

Charlotte whispered. She didn't want anyone else to know what she was about to ask.



"You remind me of someone who once approached me as a child. Before my home went up in smoke. A man who had the same fair hair and distinctive beady blue eyes. Once this next mission is completed, I wish for you to follow me into Kesselring forest instead of making our way back to the mercenary hideout. Even if you do not know what I have to show, you may when you see it."

Seyena thought for a moment. She had left her home far behind... and from what Charlotte had said, would it still be there? She couldn't go so close to home after she had lost her sister. It wouldn't feel right... But then again, she was curious as to what Charlotte's connection to her home may be, for she sensed it was something more than just the proximity. And as for the man who resembled her...



"Yes... I'll go with you... if we have time. Though I wonder what you wish to show me." She says, somewhat apprehensive.

Outside, there was no one. No militia. No messengers. No angry mob.

Only the rain was still going down on the already muddy ground.

And inside, there was a lonely innkeeper. The moment he noticed that Taki brought in more people, he grumbled, tossed his cleaning rag to the corner of the counter and disappeared behind a door leading, most probably, to a kitchen.

Olison's gaze slowly inched around the room.



"Town seems pretty tense. Has Eor been active lately?"



"What has this Eor guy been doing, exactly? I mean, why are we here? Why are we so concerned about the militia? If we're under official orders to apprehend a dangerous criminal or something, they should be helping us out."



"Oh, it's because Eor has-"

Charlotte clasped her hands to her mouth. She couldn't say she'd been eavesdropping and picked up bits and pieces of Prixima's confrontation with Adrian. But she had to know.



"-stolen lots of money from Prixima and Mercia at large! We need to get it back."



"I guess that's why we're chasing him down. But that still doesn't explain why we seem to be viewing the militia as a threat instead of requesting their aid. They'd probably have important information."



"Most likely the militia is loyal to Eor rather than Prixima. Not suprised by that, what with Eor being the local lord or somesuch." Adrien interjected. Still, he weas getting impatient with Taki over the information on the mission...



"What? Does Lady Prixima even have the authority to order another lord arrested?"



"If she wanted him arrested, why do you think she'd send mercenaries?"



"Surely you don't expect that the sort of man who steals from people is going to come quietly with men at arms behind him, do you?"



"You don't mean...?"



"Gregor, do you now have a problem with killing a man for his thievery?"



"Ohhh... so this Lady expect us to kill him..? Heheh...I do not know her, but I like the way she solves problems..heh.."

Derick had a not too happy look on face, but didn't say anything.



"I...I don't know..."



"Well, I do not! If he stole all that money from someone, he should be punished for his crime. What if he had to kill people in Mercia to get it? What about their

families? I won't sit idly by as Eor clasps his grubby hands around such an important family treasure!"



"...Such important. Money. Gold. That was probably passed down for generations. Via inheritance."

Olison glared at Adrien, then to Chris and Taki, speaking in a quiet voice.



"That wasn't what I was told. Did the Lady intend this?"



"What can I say, Olison? Eor's family are a bunch of thieving bastards and we're supposed to get the 'thing' back from him. And it's a virtual certainty he won't want to part with it while he breathes."

Chris looked around at the mercenaries.



"Wait. Did Adrien seriously not tell you what you were hired to do? Ha ha ha. Well, what Lady Prixima said is that about fifty years ago or so, a possession of her family's ended up in Eor's possession and he isn't planning on giving it back. So, like a brute squad, you people have been hired to help us - that would be me, Olison, and these four who were waiting for us - get it back from him at any cost. That doesn't necessarily mean killing him, but it's very likely we'll have to."



"As for the item, don't worry about what it is. I'll know it when I see it - Adrien might as well - and I'm the one who's supposed to handle it, with Olison as the back-up keeper if something were to happen to me. Besides that, she sent Taki up this way to spy on him instead of me, but the fact she hasn't told us anything about his defenses yet says to me that our Lady picked the wrong person to go and get information... Unless you care to prove me wrong, Taki?"

Taki yawned, ordering a round of chicken wings from the bar.





"Don't bait me, you skeevy bugger. All I learned was Eors location-the old eastern windmill-and the fact the town will probably fight to the death to protect him. Why not? He spends what he takes there. They think he's the second coming of our Lord, or a real life Robyn Hyood\*. I'd put their forces at say...30 militiamen, 8 lieutenants, and 2 Captains-but less than half on duty at any one time, usually-and probably double that if we make them mad-small towns are used to everybody grabbing a pitchfork and joining in regardless, lots of em have experience-retired soldiers and all that. Numbers ultimately vary on how drunk they all are, which varies. Needless to say, alot of buggers if we choose to go in the hard way. "



"So, what would you suggest as the 'easy way' then Taki? Though at this moment, I am seeing the value of taking the hard way, if only due to the simplicity of it."



"For what it's worth, I'm in favor of whichever method does not involve slaughtering the townsfolk wholesale. "



"A quiet-like nighttime raid. We move in after a long harvest day, when they're drunk and happy and asleep-get to this Eor when he takes his boots off, when he thinks he's safe. Snag him with minimal fuss and risk. If we're quick, probably not a whole lot of people have to die, most importantly not us. As for my own belief, we do the job like professionals, we avoid needless killing-not botch the thing into a gory mess. I'm only on my side...being quick and not making mistakes, that counts alot better than just having good intentions."



"And for this nighttime raid, a crack squad of..." Valor paused to count off the number of people assembled, slowing near the end. "... Ten and three, looks like, one of whom is a Pegasus rider, was assembled?" Unease spread across Valor's face. "We're a mite hefty in numbers for such a thing, wouldn't you say?"

Taki nibbled one of her chicken wings, enjoying a meal while discussing death and mayhem.





"Not easy, but not impossible-I have to work with what I'm given. Could probably do this with half as many of ya who was twice as good, but I get the feeling Princess Prix doesn't really care about collateral. We'll need the numbers anyway, in case he has any personal guards, which I suppose he does. And, assuming we've a need for close in quiet work, that's my specialty-along with the Skeever over there. I assume you all are not idiots and can walk in a staggered formation without making alot of noise, we're fine...but I understand your concern. Unless you'd prefer to march through town square in the morning sunlight, we'll see how that works, ey?"



"Sounds like a good, basic plan. Not too much that can go wrong. And it's likely that alot of the militia would be tired after helping with the harvest too, so we could count on not having much resistance in taking Eor and the objective unless he has retainers or the like. All in all, a fairly reasonable plan Taki, and a professional one at that. Suffice to say, I'm glad Prixima assigned you to us for this mission. Now, do we have a map of the area around the windmill? That would certainly help us plan this in detail."

Taki seemed uncomfortable at the praise.



"Erm, thanks... And on the other thing, ALOT can go wrong. Men plan and the Gods laugh, remember that?"

With that, she shrugged and took out a hand drawn map from a cylinder on her waist (done in her own roughly serviceable scribble) and placed rolled it out onto the table.



"I for one certainly don't want to kill more people than we have to." Gregor muttered to himself.



"What you will do with this guy really does not interest me.. I just want to study the dragonstone, I never saw one before.. but I heard about them a lot of times. AND maybe we can even kill some guards too..hehe..he.. the only thing that bothers me yet is that I am not really sure if we are on the "right side". I saw too many royal people hiring others to execute low-class members that were turning into a bother to them as they were helping their villages... so we may need to stop and think about it for a while. "

Valor grimaced, staring into the middle distance.



"If you're planning to lose sleep over whether or not the side you're on is 'right', I suggest a different line of work. These are father's sons and mother's daughters you're going to be asked to fight and kill. The side that has the moral high ground is of little consequence."



"Do not be a fool.. it was just a thought, nothing else. As long as we get the dragonstone and have some fun, I am just fineeee... hehe..heh..."

It was at this point that Valor pointedly took a step away from Tantallos. Occasionally you had to work with one of these types in the mercenary business - People who were far more interested in ensuring someone else's life ended sooner than expected than any compensation offered by their employer.

He just hoped he wouldn't one day be one of them.

Tantallos noticed Valor moving away and gave a quiet laugh, rubbing his hands together.



"What is the matter...? You are a mercenary... you should not be worried about having your hands covered in blood..heheh.. I am not even a mercenary at all.. I just like to explore and learn.. and when I heard about the dragonstone I got interested..."

The shaman slowly crossed his arms and moved his head to the side to show the grin he had on his face.



"You can keep talking.. after all it is always good to have someone to talk with, right? "

Valor grimaced again.



"Just because I work as a merc doesn't mean that I take unsightly glee in tearing people in half. I just do this because it was the only method I could find to provide for myself."

Tantallos gave a shrug, not really seeing any difference on his response.



"Well, everyone have their tastes, and you know what...when I finish this mission I had been on to get stronger, I will help you so you will have enough money to stop needing to be a mercenary, how does that sound for you? But keep in mind that will take a while as we are really far away from where I live AND I still weak compared to the traitor I will have to face."

Valor's right eyebrow shot up so fast that it threatened to tear off and fly into the sky.



"What, are you saying you're some kind of wandering noble scion, destined to slay the grand vizier what murdered your father, the sultan? Because I saw a mummer's farce like that once."

Tantallos' expression turned into a something from amused to unamused, the frown on his face could be seen.



"You really like to take things in a way to offend others, do not you? I am a noble indeed, but I am not going to slay some grand vizier that murdered my father. I am from a family of mages, druids to be a little more specific, we always tried to show the world that ancient magic can be used for the good and stop this negative fame of the dark magic. As you might know, it is difficult to reach some places due to this problem.. We even managed to have some progress, BUT one of the members of my family became greedy for power and for information, before we could even notice, he was gone and formed up his own army to raid places, it seems he managed to dominate the most obscure kinds of magics, we believe it is related to draining people's energy. So on other words, I am here to stop a madness before it is too late, thanks to his insane decision, the Forsakens suffered more problems than ever."

He gave a sigh and looked down for a moment, letting a hand move up to pat his Flux tome.



"It is hard to find people to discuss about a fragile topic like this, you know. Especially because they always think it is only our fault and ignore the intentions of the group itself. Nobody here expected to see that, and he was considered a traitor for choosing that path, even if we do not approve his decision, they think we are all the same. Ancient magic is really a problem sometimes.."

Taki belched loudly, wiping her chain with her sleeve.



"Get a room you two." She commented diplomatically, before going back to her meal.

In an hour that have passed by now, the rain has ended. Dark clouds mostly dispersed, showing the darkening sky of early evening.

Olison heaved a loud sigh, his eyes darted to the window.



"In any case, we had best start moving before Eor catches on. Staggered formation, no? We should leave at different times and reconvene near the windmill."

Olison stood and made for the door, giving Gregor a slight pat on the shoulder.



"When the time comes, we'll make the choice clear to Eor and his men. There will be no unnecessary deaths."



"Everytime I heard that phase, the graveyard get overflowing. But you right, let get a move on."



"Very well. We'll meet up later on at the windmill, then. Shall we?"

Chris said, putting an arm around Ami's shoulders and making to leave first.



"Please remove your arm from my shoulder."



"Oh, fine. Spoilsport."

Chris did so.



"We probably shouldn't split up too much, though. There's thirteen of us; that's enough for five pairs and a group of three."



"How about six pairs and Chris goes alone?" Taki suggested helpfully.



"Shouldn't it be three groups of three and a group of four?"



"That would work as well Ami, but I feel that larger groups would be more likely to be noticed. And Taki, if anyone's going to go alone, it should be the pegasus rider since she can stay up in the air where people are less likely to see her."



"I was about to say so myself. Although, well, I'm visible to anyone that looks up in a several mile radius." She said, "Anyway, I can't be of much help if I'm paired up with someone else that doesn't have the same mobility I do."



"Unless two people can fit on your winged horse."



"Well... there are two problems." Seyena said, counting on her fingers, "One: Ilya isn't a fan of archers, period. Granted, it's natural, we've both been shot at and injured by arrows, and two: unless you can shoot that bow *really well* while on Pegasus back, you'll inhibit both my fighting ability, and my ability to rescue someone who is injured."



"What about Tantalos, then? As a magi, he has no need of perfect precision, and he does not carry a bow."

Tantalos turned around when he heard his name being mentioned and gave a shrug.



"My precision is good enough. And that is true, unless you also have problems with dark magic."



"Right then, how are we divying up the groups? Let's do this fast and get moving, eh?"



"Agreed. Let's see. Olison, Seyana, and Ami. You three are cavalry, so you stick together. Charlotte, Gregor, and Daniel, you guys are group two. Group three will be Tantallos, Valor, and Derick. And I'll be keeping Adrien and Taki to myself."



"Any problems?"



"So we, the cavalry are first out?"



"I am fine with Chris' decision. I will **head out with Gregor and Daniel when they are ready.**"



"**I'm ready.** Let's get this thing done."

And so they began to move out.

After each group left the inn, they could feel the stares of the villagers peeking through the holes in their windows, eyeing them closely.

First to arrive at the windmill was the cavalry group - they were welcomed by a gloomy sight of crumbled windmill, the once towering building almost reduced to rubble. The surroundings were overgrown with thick bushes and occassional young tree; Mother Nature was eager to claim this place for herself again.

There was no one inside the windmill, and no one around. An overgrown road led deeper between the hills.

Soon, Charlotte, Gregor and Daniel arrived at the windmill, with Tantallos, Valor and Derick soon arriving as well. Then, there was a flash of thunder as the rain intensified... and someone stepped on a hill overlooking the windmill. Said man was wearing armor and had an oddly shaped sword at his belt. Then, through the overgrown road between two hills a large squad of militia began to pour into the windmill area, locating themselves in front of the hill or just behind the corner of the windmill.

The man coughed a bit and looked at the group with angry stare, his wrinkles showing his age.



"I'm Eor Kesselring. Next time ye visit a village of your contractor's enemy, make sure that the tallest guy on a horse isn't bearing her markings, or at least that certain lady isn't speaking that loud at the inn. I should ask what are you doing here, but I believe it's unnecessary. Now, which one of you is yer leader?"

Charlotte realized that neither Adrian nor Sterling were present. Being the only one around with scant knowledge of the crime, she stepped up.



"**Um.** I am the leader of this small group. We were told to retrieve from you a sacred family treasure. Why did you take it in the first place?"

Ami whispers to Charlotte.



"Bet you 10 gold he said 'stole? That treasure belong to me' at some point."

Adrien, Sterling, Taki and Christopher could see the scene from a bit far, behind a small bridge.



"Hmph. Prixima still lies at every moment of her petty life? The Lapis Lazuli is MINE! It was always in my part of the family! And I'm not interested in giving it away. Now, get lost and run back to her, unless you want to die today."

Sigh.



"Predictable. That said, I can see why you would feel that way about such a treasure. However, before we engage in deadly combat, I have to ask..."



"Does the Lapis Lazuli hold some kind of power? If not, why fight over it so? I can't see 'sentimentality' as a good reason to murder for a simple stone. On top of that, Prixima is a Kesselring too, so it belongs, in some way, to both of you."



"Call it!"

A thunder rolled over the skies above the two little armies as the rest of mercenaries fully joined the other.



"Lass, ye look like a peasant, so let me tell you that a Dragonstone is pride of ancestry, a proof that my forefathers fought Gor-Tah himself! Besides, Prixima already has one other Dragonstone that belonged to her grandmother's family. That woman is just greedy! As for magical powers - do I look like a scholar to ye?"

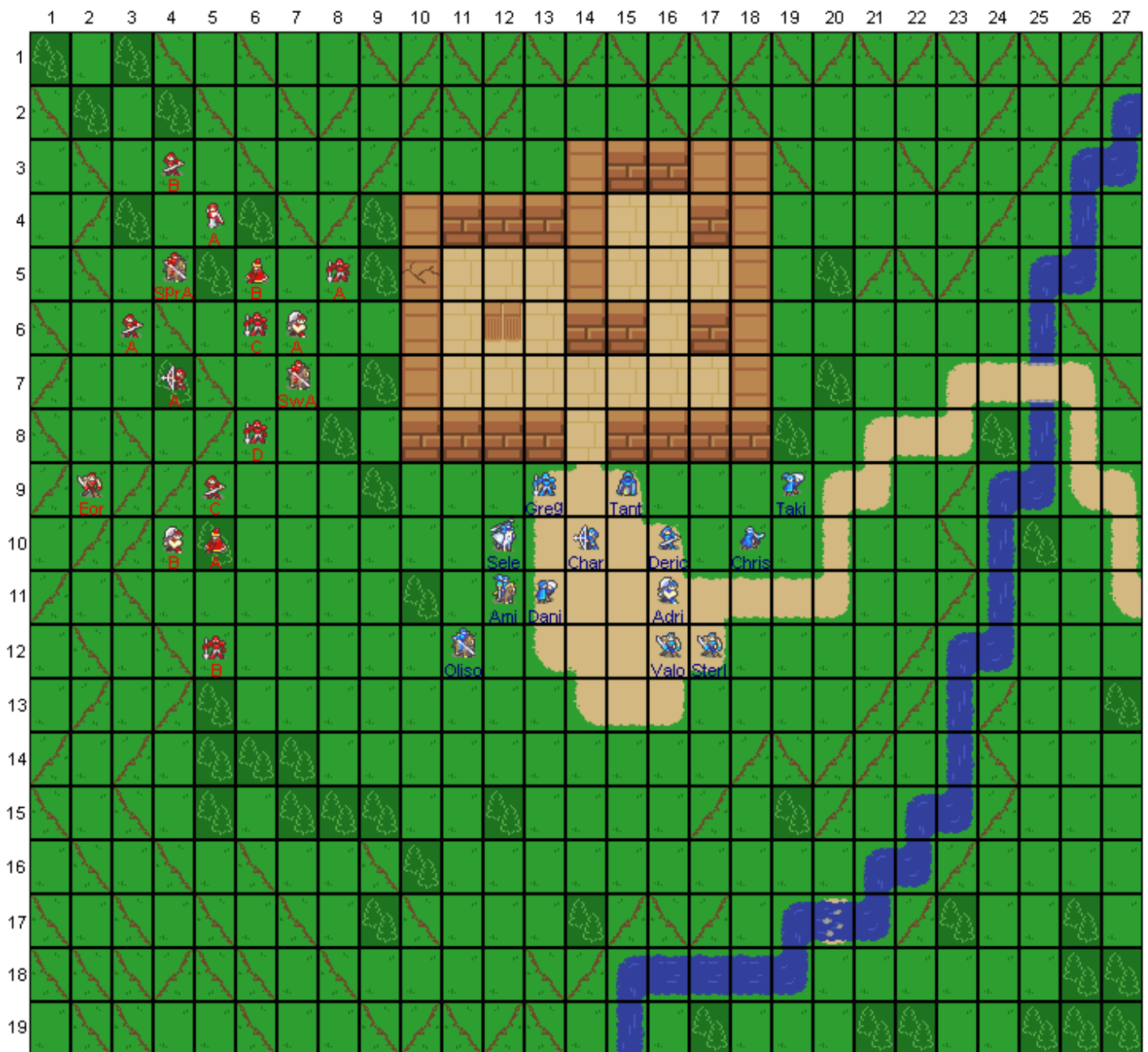


"No, you do not look like a scholar to me. Therefore! I would not expect you to understand the importance of our mission."

**Charlotte: Battle.**



# ~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

It is now Raining.

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 25/25<br>Ami Storm: 19/19<br>Charlotte Braxis: 21/21<br>Christopher Shields: 20/20<br>Daniel: 21/21<br>Derick: 23/23<br>Gregor von Hexham: 24/24<br>Olison Eul: 20/20<br>Seyena Ikane: 18/18<br>Taki Greenstone: 18/18<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 19/19<br>Valor Inara: 21/21 | Fighter A: 25/25<br>Fighter B: 25/25<br>Soldier A: 24/24<br>Soldier B: 24/24<br>Soldier C: 24/24<br>Soldier D: 24/24<br>Myrmidon A: 20/20<br>Myrmidon B: 20/20 | Myrmidon C: 20/20<br>Mage A: 22/22<br>Mage B: 22/22<br>Monk: 19/19<br>Female Archer: 24/24<br>Spear Cavalier A: 23/23<br>Sword Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Eor: 30/30 |



"I say head for the building, get a bottle neck on."

Olison gritted his teeth at the change in situation.



"So much for subtlety. I'm with Storm on this one, we need a terrain advantage here. Braxis, Forsaken and Adrien should be able to take advantage of the windows."

**Olison: Move to 14,9**



"Got it."

**Charlotte: Move to 13,7.**

**Derick: Move to 14 8**



"Let go, Tenebra"

**Ami: Head to 15,7**



"As good a plan as any. You guys go ahead."

**Chris heads to 19,8 and takes cover amongst the trees.**

**Daniel: Move to 13.10 and give Seyena the Angelic Cloth.**



"Take this. It might come in handy for you."



"Ah, thank you, I could use something like this."

**Seyena uses the Angelic Cloth, and moves to 16,13.**



"They'll still be able to see me through a window. Still, denying our foes their terrain advantage is a wise move. Clear a path to Eor, I can finish him off myself. The fool brought with him only one blade. I need a few of you to watch the river crossings, odds are there's more militiamen on the way."

**Adrien: Move to 12, 11.**



"This is going to be interesting.. hehe..he.."

**Tantalos: After rubbing his hands and giving a sinister laugh, he moved inside the building with the other group. (14, 7)**



"Heading there now."

**Valor: Move to 21, 12**



"Why did it have to come to this?"

**Gregor: Move to (11, 9)**

Everyone moved around - Ami couldn't get deep enough into the windmill, and Tantalos squeezed his way past her, and then the rain made pegasus' wings heavy and Seyena didn't get as far as she wanted. Her body sparkled for a bit after the use of Angelic Cloth.

**Taki: Move to (20, 8)**

Taki moved closer to trees.

**~~Enemy Phase~~**



"Hmm, they're trying to hide in the windmill. You, cast down that wall! Attack them from both sides!"

Soldier A and Mage B quickly crushed the wall whilst few of their comrades began piling up at the new entrance. Others formed a line just around the corner of the windmill.

Mage B vs Crumbled Wall

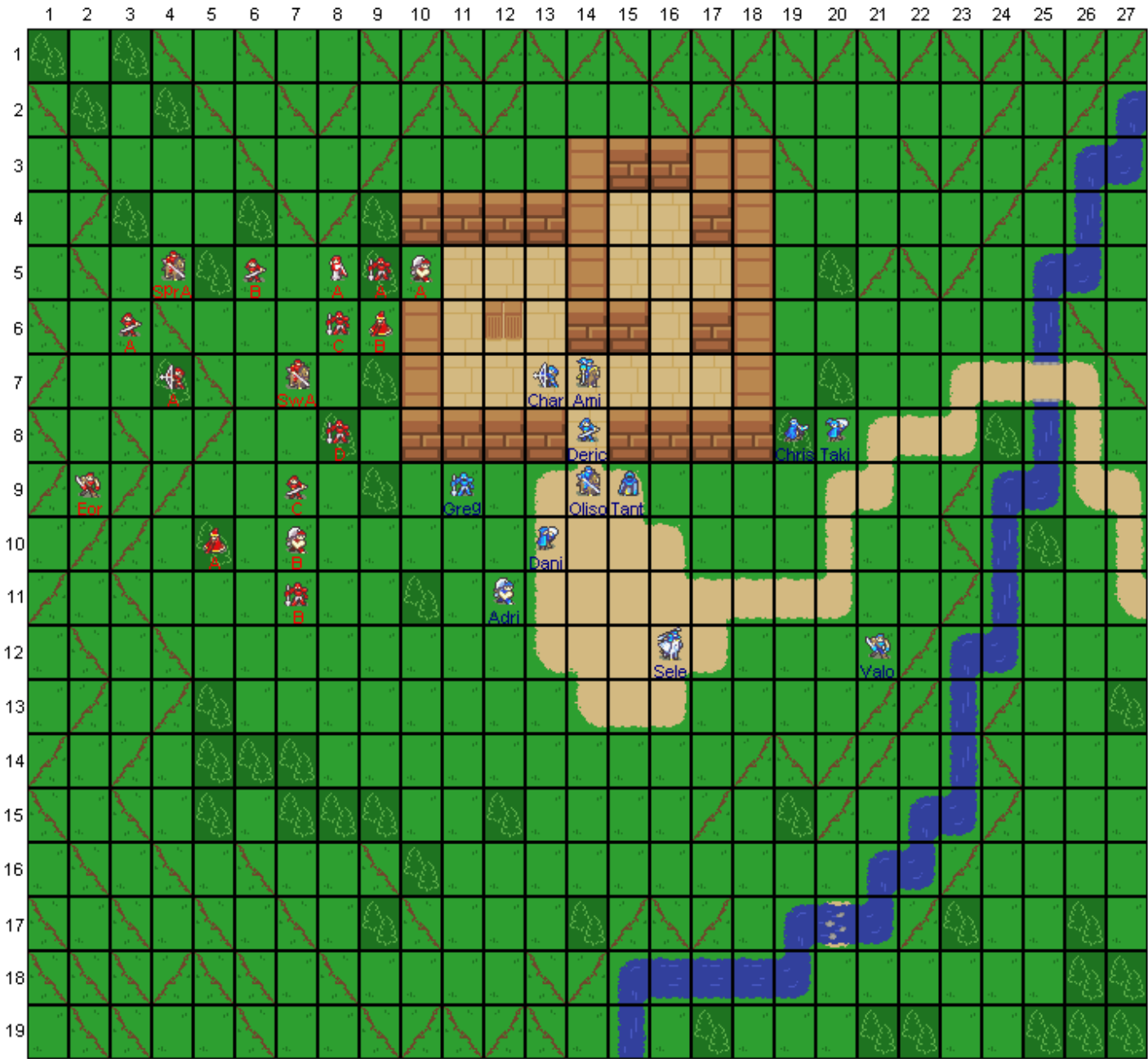
12-0 = 12dmg

Soldier A vs Crumbled Wall

13-5 = 8dmg

~~Player Turn 2~~

Sterling has been removed due to ~~Adrien~~ throwing him down a well player disappearance.



Weather:

| Mercs:                     |  | Enemies:          |                         |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Adrien: 25/25              |  | Fighter A: 25/25  | Myrmidon C: 20/20       |
| Ami Storm: 19/19           |  | Fighter B: 25/25  | Mage A: 22/22           |
| Charlotte Braxis: 21/21    |  | Soldier A: 24/24  | Mage B: 22/22           |
| Christopher Shields: 20/20 |  | Soldier B: 24/24  | Monk: 19/19             |
| Daniel: 21/21              |  | Soldier C: 24/24  | Female Archer: 24/24    |
| Derick: 23/23              |  | Soldier D: 24/24  | Spear Cavalier A: 23/23 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 24/24   |  | Myrmidon A: 20/20 | Sword Cavalier A: 22/22 |
| Olison Eul: 20/20          |  | Myrmidon B: 20/20 | Eor: 30/30              |
| Seyena Ikane: 18/21        |  |                   |                         |
| Sterling: 24/24            |  |                   |                         |
| Taki Greenstone: 18/18     |  |                   |                         |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 19/19  |  |                   |                         |

**Adrien: Move to 12, 15.**



"Right, they're taking the bait. Get itno the windmill, stay away from the exterior walls sot they can't fire into the building and hold them off at the two chokepoints. Now fools, come and get me!"



"Everyone, In here, I'll hold them off."

**Ami: Head to 11,5, no attacking.**

**Valor: Move to 21,7**

**Chris stays put for the moment.**



"There's too many of them! Fall back!"

**Gregor: Move to (13, 9)**

**Daniel: Move to 13.7**



"Why is our healer on the front line? I thought the fighter and the soldier were going to block the entrances or something..."

**Tantallos shrugged but moved anyway. (15,7)**



"Ach, Ami, are you crazy?"

**Charlotte: Move to 12, 5 and TWANG the only reachable unit from behind Ami.**



"What are you doing, Storm? Argh, sorry Steil, I need to take you inside."

**Olison: Move to 12,6. Dismount.**

**Taki: Stay put for the moment**



"I can take a hit, relax."

**Derick: Move to 10, 6**

Everyone rushed into the ruined windmill, the rain following them through the mostly broken roof, making puddles on the nice, polished stone floor.

As Ami's horse neighed and wanted to rush at the Fighter, Charlotte sent an arrow from behind the cleric, striking the axeman in the left thigh.

**Charlotte vs Fighter A**

Hit:  $113+5+10-12 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-4 = 9$  dmg

**Valor could swear he just heard a distant sound of galloping horses amongst the murmur of the rain and rumbling of the thunder.**

Valor grimaced. Horses often meant lances, and his sword wasn't designed to get inside a lance's reach. He shouted to the others over the storm.



"We might have riders!"

Seyena turns, hearing Valor's call, as faint as it was through the rain.



"I hope the others in the windmill can manage, there seems to be trouble coming."

**Seyena: Fly to 21,11.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Fighter A attacked Ami; his axe hacked her body, and she bonked the enemy on head. Then, there was a shuffle behind the axeman, and Mage B sent a fire bolt at poor troubadour, knocking her and her dark horse to the floor.

**Fighter A vs Ami**

Hit:  $86+10-5-17 = 74$

Hit roll: 28, hit!

Damage:  $17-2 = 15$

Ami counters!

Hit:  $79+5-10-12 = 62$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $11-4 = 7\text{dmg}$

#### **Mage B vs Ami**

Hit:  $105+10-5-15-17 = 78$   
Hit roll: 65, hit!  
Damage:  $12-8 = 4\text{dmg}$

A moment later, Derick could see the monk on the other side of the window - a bolt of light struck the young myrmidon right in the face.

#### **Monk vs Derick**

Hit:  $110-20 = 90$   
Hit roll: 54, hit!  
Damage:  $10-4 = 6\text{dmg}$

Outside, Eor's men slowly, but rather surprisingly slowly, moved toward Gregor and the windmill's door. The cavalier with a sword shook his sword threateningly toward the few of trees in which Adrien currently was hiding.

And then, just as it stopped raining... the reinforcements arrived. A group of cavaliers, sword and lance wielders - the group was complete with a troubadour and dedicated bow knight, who wore a definitely better suit of clothes than the rest.



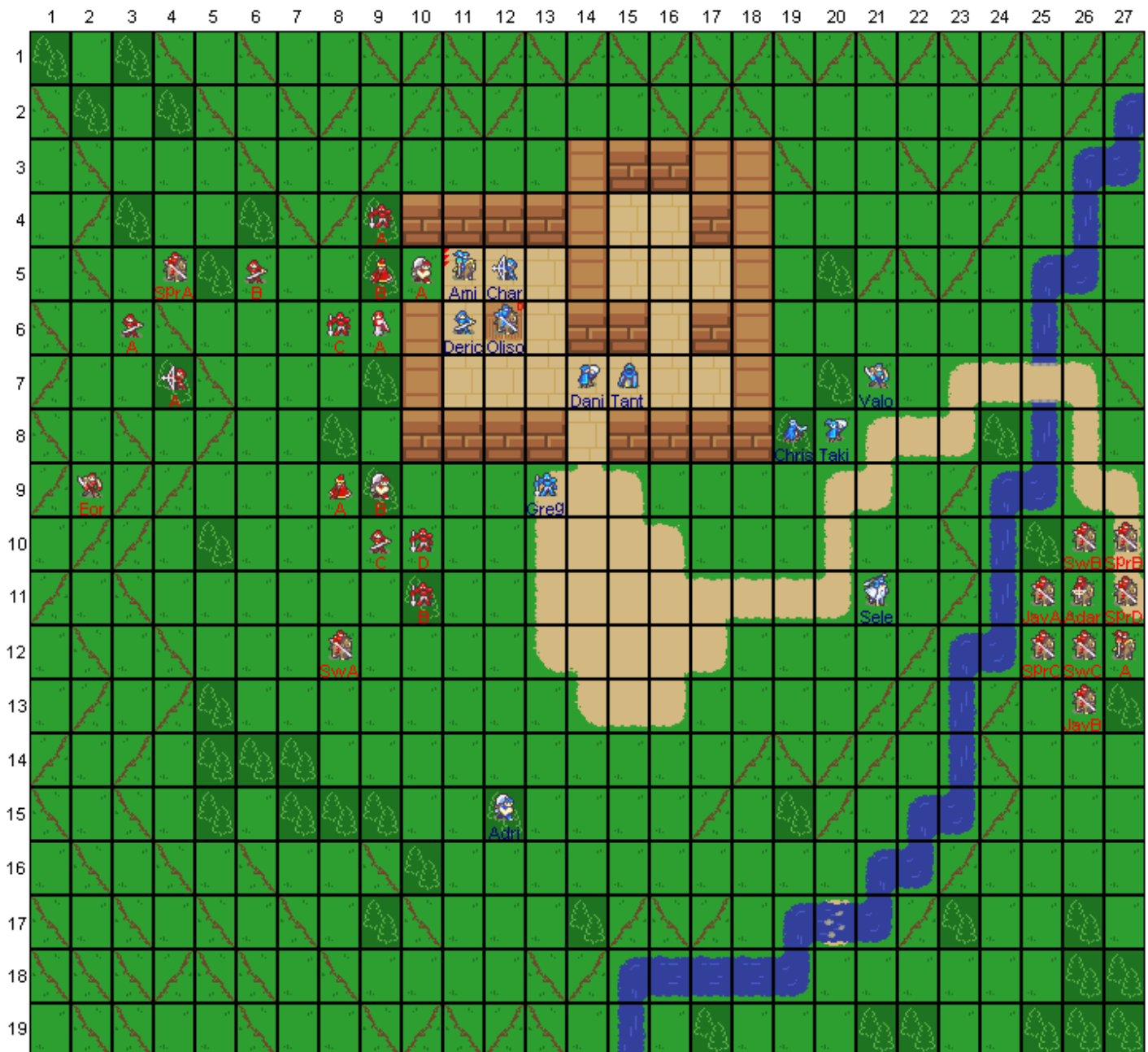
"Are we late?... No! The battle is still going on! Come, friends, let's help Eor and kill all those thugs!"



"For Dragon's sake, Adarlan is here! This boy have best timing, I swear!"

# ~~Player Turn 3~~

The rain has stopped.



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 25/25<br>Ami Storm: -/19 <b>3/3</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 21/21<br>Christopher Shields: 20/20<br>Daniel: 21/21<br>Derick: 17/23<br>Gregor von Hexham: 24/24<br>Olison Eul: 20/20 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 18/21<br>Taki Greenstone: 18/18<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 19/19<br>Valor Inara: 21/21 | Fighter A: 9/25<br>Fighter B: 25/25<br>Soldier A: 24/24<br>Soldier B: 24/24<br>Soldier C: 24/24<br>Soldier D: 24/24<br>Myrmidon A: 20/20<br>Myrmidon B: 20/20<br>Myrmidon C: 20/20<br>Mage A: 22/22<br>Mage B: 22/22<br>Monk: 19/19<br>Female Archer: 24/24 | Spear Cavalier A: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier B: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier C: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier D: 23/23<br>Sword Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Sword Cavalier B: 22/22<br>Sword Cavalier C: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier B: 22/22<br>Troubadour: 20/20<br>Eor: 30/30<br>Adarlan: 23/23 |

**Adrien: Move to 7,15.**





"Hey conscript, You're going to be here for a long time!"

**Chris darts to 20,7 and stays in the trees.**

**Valor: Move to 24,7**

Valor moved to the river crossing, squared his shoulders and assumed his fighting stance.



"Well then, c'mon if you think you're man enough!"



"Gregor, you're going to get slaughtered out there! Come inside with me or at least hold up the doorway in here!"

**Charlotte: Twang Fighter A. BOOM, HEADSHOT.**

**Taki darts to 19,8 and climbs up a tree like a snarky monkey.**

TWANG indeed. Fighter A slumped lifeless to the ground.

**Charlotte vs Fighter A**

Hit:  $113+10-12 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-4 = 9$ dmg



"Valor, you can't hold them off on your own!"

**Seyena: Move to 23, 8.** Keep an eye on Adarlan and his damned bow.



"The others are holed up in the windmill, and that archer can shoot you out of the sky. For now, I'll have to." Valor smiled to himself. *But your concern is touching.*

**Daniel will hold is position at the entrance of the windmill**

**Olison: Move to (10,5) and use Vulnerary on Ami.**



"So the plan will not go as expected..that is a pity.."

**Tantallos: Move to the group close to Ami and get ready to any possible attack.**  
(13,5)

**Derick: Move to 10, 5 and attack the mage**

The enemies seemed understandably hesitant to come within range of Gergor's lance. A quick check over his shoulder revealed that everyone who was heading inside had already done so, leading Gregor to rush into the windmill.

**Gregor: Move to (13, 7)**

Derick appeared in front of the Mage; slashing across his chest with his iron sword. The mage retaliated with fire-bolt-to-stomach.

**Derick vs Mage B**

Hit:  $112-12 = 100$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $12+2-1 = 13$

Mage B retaliates!  
Hit:  $105-20 = 85$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $12-4 = 8\text{dmg}$

After that, Olson revived Ami with sprinkling of white dust at her face.

**Olson uses Vulnerary on Ami**

Up to 5HP restored.

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Mage B retreated and tossed another firebolt at Derick, scorching his face a bit. Waves of heat and pain washed over the swordsman. And then, it only got worse - a soldier with a sharp, iron spear went to the front and stabbed at Derick, who by pure stroke of luck managed to evade the deadly blow. And then, he attacked the spearman, who didn't had that much luck and got a bruise under his armor.

**Mage B vs Derick**

Hit:  $105-5-20 = 80$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $12-4 = 8\text{dmg}$

**Soldier C vs Derick**

Hit:  $93+15-5-20 = 83$   
Hit roll: 97, miss!  
  
Derick counters!  
Hit:  $93-15+5 = 83$   
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage:  $12+2-1-5 = 8\text{dmg}$

In the same time, the monk noticed his new target - and sent a lighting at Olson.

#### Monk vs Olison

Hit:  $110+5-5-16 = 94$   
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
Damage:  $10-1 = 9\text{dmg}$

Few other of Eor's soldiers moved around, and Daniel could see that a spearman, backed by the myrmidon, were almost in the windmill.

Nearby, at the bridge...



"You three, get to the ford, the rest - after me!"

Adarlan rushed to the bridge and stood on the side opposite to Valor's.



"I applaud your courage to stand against us, young outlaw - but your life ends today!" The bow knight then shot an arrow at Valor, striking him right in the abdomen, and then another, into his left shoulder.

After that, a cavalier with spear rushed onto the bridge, and plunged his spear into Valor's chest, striking down the young mercenary, who only had time to groan in pain.

#### Adarlan vs Valor

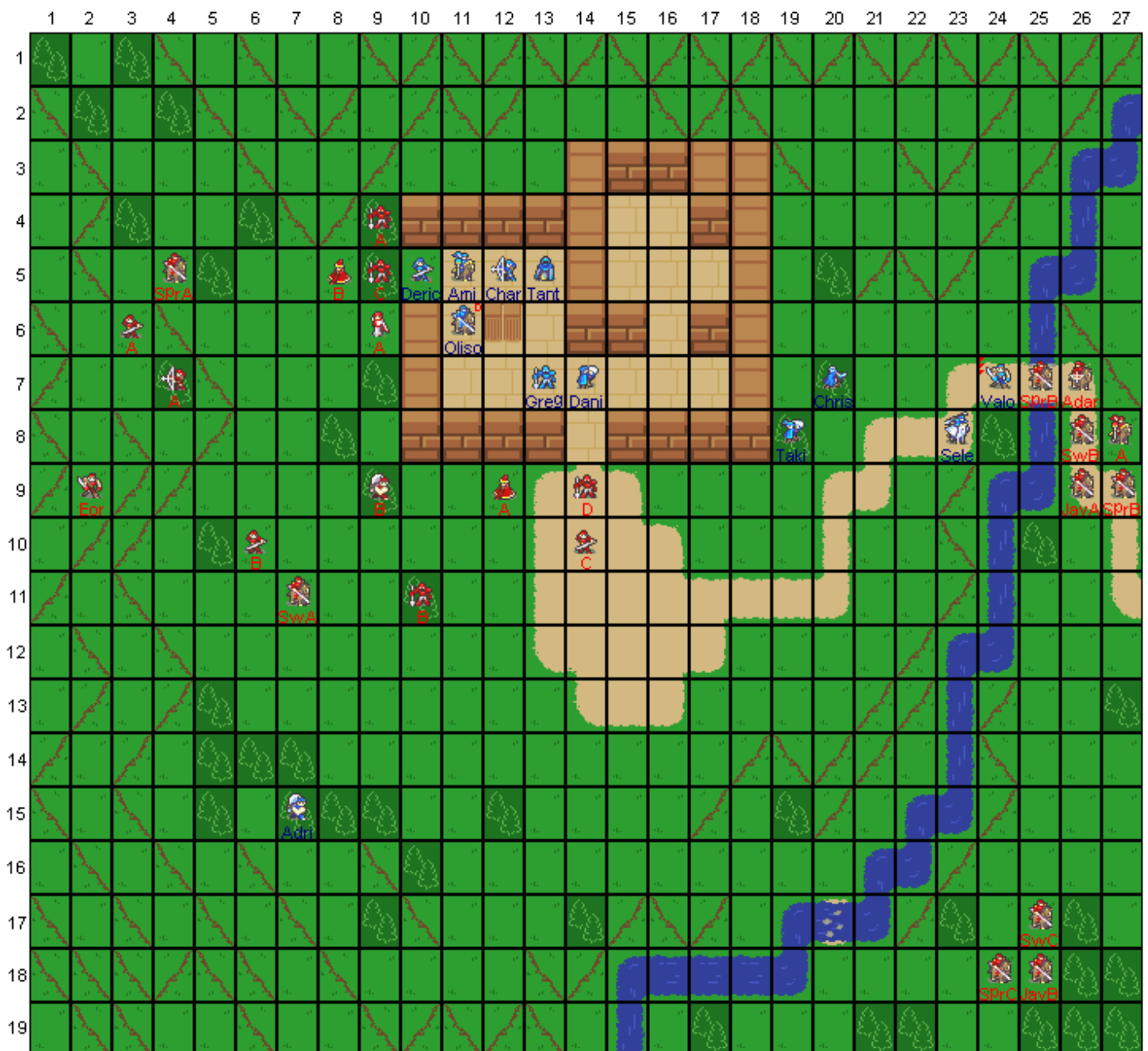
Hit:  $107-15 = 92$   
Hit roll: 82, hit!  
Damage:  $12-2 = 10\text{dmg}$   
  
Hit:  $107-15 = 92$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $12-2 = 10\text{dmg}$

#### Spear Cavalier B vs Valor

Hit:  $95+15-15 = 95$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $13+1-2 = 12\text{dmg}$

The rest of his cavalry unit flocked behind, ready to cross the bridge any second.

# ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 25/25<br>Ami Storm: 5/19<br>Charlotte Braxis: 21/21<br>Christopher Shields: 20/20<br>Daniel: 21/21<br>Derick: 1/23<br>Gregor von Hexham: 24/24<br>Olison Eul: 11/20 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 18/21<br>Taki Greenstone: 18/18<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 19/19<br>Valor Inara: -/21 <b>3/3</b> | Fighter B: 25/25<br>Soldier A: 24/24<br>Soldier B: 24/24<br>Soldier C: 24/24<br>Soldier D: 24/24<br>Myrmidon A: 20/20<br>Myrmidon B: 20/20<br>Myrmidon C: 20/20<br>Mage A: 22/22<br>Mage B: 9/22<br>Monk: 19/19<br>Female Archer: 24/24 | Spear Cavalier A: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier B: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier C: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier D: 23/23<br>Sword Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Sword Cavalier B: 22/22<br>Sword Cavalier C: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier B: 22/22<br>Troubadour: 20/20<br>Eor: 30/30<br>Adarlan: 23/23 |



"Hell that hurt. Hey Derick, you look as bad as I feel."

**Ami: Heal Derick and head to 13,6**

## **Taki: Hold Position**

The healing light engulfed Derick for a brief moment, restoring his health almost completely.

### **Ami heals Derick**

10+9 = Up to 19HP recovered



"That north-western group needs to fall back a little. They're being ganged up on, and the enemy has the advantage of cover!"

**Gregor: Hold position for now (subject to change)**



"Ah, good! I was worried. Hold on, I will take on a foe behind the walls."

**Charlotte: Move to 12,7 and TWANG the mage from beside Gregor.**



"I'm worried too. It looks nasty out there, and I think the mercenaries to the east are about to be overwhelmed. I don't even know what Adrien is doing."



"Let's move this fight inside. Derick, move to Charlotte's last position!"

**Olison: Stay Put and use a Vulnerary**

**Adrien: Move to 6, 13.**

**Derick: Move back to 12,5**



"Allow me to assist you, myrmidon."

**Tantalos: Attack soldier C (11,5)**

Valor slumped onto the ground, bleeding badly.



*Is this it? Is the end already here? ...Mother... I'll see you soon.*

Seyena readies her lance, about to try and attack one of the cavaliers when she sees Valor fall. She changes her plan, quickly hauling Valor away from the enemy group.



"What did I tell you?"

**Seyena: Move to 23, 7, rescue Valor. Then move to 21, 11 and use vulnerable on Valor if possible.**

**Chris moves to 20,11 and uses a Vulnerary on Valor.**



"So, retreat into the windmill? We'll have to take down a few thugs on the way in..."

**Daniel: Move to 16.4**

The arrow shot Mage A in the knee chest, and a fire bolt struck her stomach in return.

#### Charlotte vs Mage A

Hit:  $113+10+2-12 = 113$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-1 = 12$ dmg

Mage A counterattacks!

Hit:  $105-10-2-18 = 75$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $12-2 = 10$ dmg

Olison in the meanwhile healed himself with some medicine.

#### Olison uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP restored.

While Adrien left the woods, Tantallos moved in front of Derick who just retreated from the chokepoint, and sent a glob of darkness at the lance-wielding soldier. It struck his chest, and he fell dead to the ground.

#### Tantallos vs Soldier C

Hit:  $93-20-12 = 61$

Hit roll: 47, hit!

Damage:  $15+2-1 = 16$ dmg

In the same time, the terrible situation of the eastern group had to be fixed. Seyena swooped down near the bridge, grabbed Valor's body on the fly and fled away with her bleeding friend.

Christopher left his bush and rubbed the healing drug on Valor's wounds, reviving him - whilst Daniel hid deeper into the windmill, amongst old wooden cogs and gears and axles.

#### Christopher uses Vulnerary on Valor

Up to 5HP restored

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Tantallos was going to regret his decision - a Monk, hidden in the bushes, targeted him and cast a bolt of holy energy at the shaman. Tantallos flung the dark glob in retaliation, but it missed, and the angered monk purged the poor dark mage again.

But wait, there's more! Soldier A rushed into the windmill, and, seeing wounded Tantallos, didn't waste the opportunity and stabbed the shaman in the chest, causing him to fall down and start bleeding profusely.

#### Monk vs Tantallos

Hit:  $110+15-6 = 119$ , autohit!

Damage:  $10+1-5 = 6$  dmg

Tantallos counters!

Hit:  $93-15-18 = 60$

Hit roll: 81, miss!

Monk gets second strike!

Hit:  $110+15-6 = 119$ , autohit!

Damage:  $10+1-5 = 6$  dmg

#### Soldier A vs Tantallos

Hit:  $93-6 = 87$

Hit roll: 64, hit!

Damage:  $13-3 = 10$  dmg

And Olson got a firebolt to face this time!

#### Mage B vs Olson

Hit:  $105+5-16 = 94$

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage:  $12-1 = 11$  dmg

Outside, the myrmidon and sword cavalier rushed at Adrien a second they noticed he left the safety of the thickets. First to strike was Myrmidon; his blade without problem slice across axeman's right shoulder. Adrien retaliated, tossing his hatchet - the throw was so powerful that it slammed right in the middle of the Myrmidon's face. He only managed to cross his eyes and grunt in disbelief before he slumped, lifeless, onto the grass.

"What in the... you bastard!" The cavalier swung his sword at Adrien, hitting the young axeman in the chest. Adrien retaliated, but missed this time.

#### Myrmidon A vs Adrien

Hit:  $107+15-13 = 109$ , autohit!

Damage:  $11+1-6 = 6$  dmg

Adrien counters!

Hit:  $93-15-17 = 61$

Hit roll: 11, hit! Crit roll: 1! // I:

Damage:  $16-3-1 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg!}$

#### **Sword Cavalier A vs Adrien**

Hit:  $90+15-13 = 92$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $15+1-6 = 10\text{dmg}$

Adrien retaliates!  
Hit:  $93-15-17 = 61$   
Hit roll: 73, miss!

Somewhere else, the Adarlan's cavaliers rushed through the bridge. They've spotted Taki trying to hide in the bushes - fortunately only the Spear Cavalier B and Adarlan himself were in range to attack her.

The cavalier managed to stab her with his spear, and she retaliated, only scratching him through his chainmail. Soon afterwards, Adarlan sent an arrow at her; but she managed to evade it.

#### **Spear Cavalier B vs Taki**

Hit:  $95+15-15-20-23 = 52$   
Hit roll: 37, hit!  
Damage:  $13+1-1 = 13\text{dmg}$

Taki retaliates!  
Hit:  $104-15-15-14 = 60$   
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage:  $10-1-5 = 4\text{dmg}$

#### **Adarlan vs Taki**

Hit:  $107-20-23 = 64$   
Hit roll: 98, miss!

Last but not least, we concentrate on the main entrance to the windmill - a soldier, mage and myrmidon rushed inside. Soldier locked spears with Gregor, barely scratching the sturdy armor of the spearman. In response, Gregor stabbed at his enemy, wounding him grievously.

Unfortunately, Mage A, who was right behind, flung a Fire at Gregor - it hit him and the magical fires easily scorched his flesh through his armor.

#### **Soldier D vs Gregor**

Hit:  $93-4-5-18 = 66$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $13-3-9 = 1\text{dmg}$

Gregor retaliates!  
Hit:  $97+4+5-12 = 94$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $16-5 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### **Mage A vs Gregor**

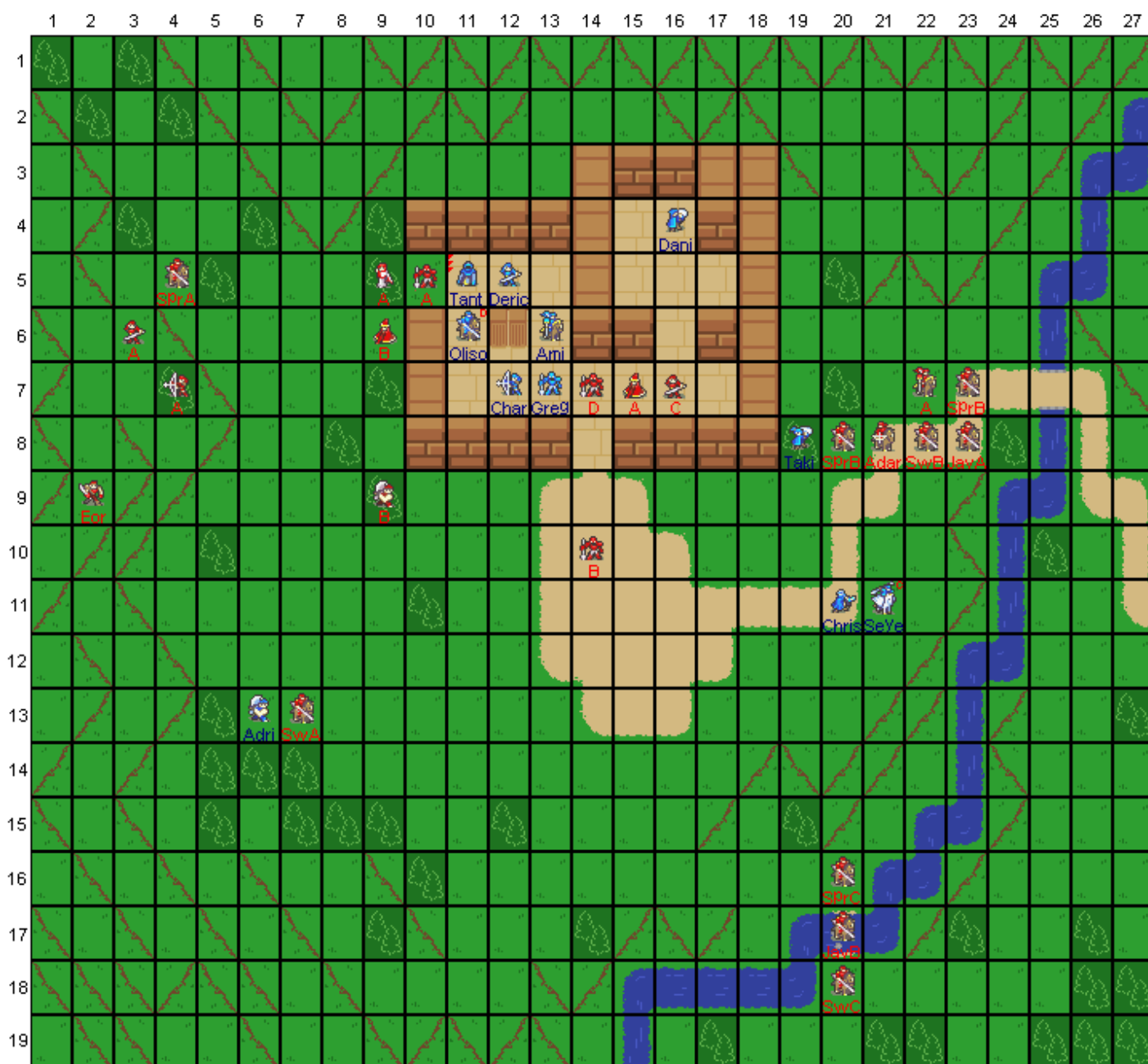
Hit:  $105-5-4-18 = 78$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $12-0 = 12\text{dmg}$

Myrmidon, that one armed with shamsir, moved past his comrades and spotted Daniel, all alone in the small room. Myrmidon grinned widely and unsheathed his blade.



# ~~Player Turn 5~~

And let's mention that the shroud of clouds on the sky is thickening; no doubt it will be raining soon.



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 9/25<br>Ami Storm: 5/19<br>Charlotte Braxis: 11/21<br>Christopher Shields: 20/20<br>Daniel: 21/21<br>Derick: 20/23<br>Gregor von Hexham: 11/24<br>Olison Eul: 9/20 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 18/21 <b>Carrying: Valor Inara</b><br>Taki Greenstone: 5/18<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/19 <b>3/3</b><br>Valor Inara: 5/21 | Fighter B: 25/25<br>Soldier A: 24/24<br>Soldier B: 24/24<br>Soldier D: 13/24<br>Myrmidon B: 20/20<br>Myrmidon C: 20/20<br>Mage A: 10/22<br>Mage B: 9/22<br>Monk: 19/19<br>Female Archer: 24/24<br>Spear Cavalier A: 23/23 | Spear Cavalier B: 19/23<br>Spear Cavalier C: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier D: 23/23<br>Sword Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Sword Cavalier B: 22/22<br>Sword Cavalier C: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier B: 22/22<br>Troubadour: 20/20<br>Eor: 30/30<br>Adarlan: 23/23 |



"Come on, get out of the line of fire!"

**Olison: Rescue Tantallos**

**Adrien: Move to 5, 13. Use vulnerary.**

**Ami: Go to 12,6 and heal Tantallos**



"Back to the land of the living, dark mage."

Olison grabbed Tantallos' bleeding body and Ami moved closer, tapping the shaman on face - her healing staff got him abck from the dead.

**Ami heals Tantallos**

10+9 /2 = 9.5 => Up to 9HP restored

Adrien hid in the bushes and used his Vulnerary as **his wounds closed a bit on their own.**

**Adrien uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored



"Gregor, follow after me!"

**Charlotte: Stay put and TWANG the Soldier near Gregor for dear life!**

TWANG indeed. The arrow hit the poor soldier right in the throat. He collapsed, choking on his own blood.

**Charlotte vs Soldier D**

Hit: 113+10+5+4-12 = 120, autohit! Crit roll: 5! // Mothefu\*\*ing...

Damage: 13-5 = 8x3 = 24dmg!



*This is the perfect opportunity. If I kill the leader, the rest of the cavalry might fall into disarray... and I want to see him bleed.*

Chris steeled himself, reaching under his red cloak and putting his hand on the hilt of his sword. Without saying a word, he dashed into the fray...

**Chris moves to 21,9 and attacks Adarlan.**



"Great shot, Charlotte!"

**Gregor: Move to (14,7) and consume vulnerable.**

Seyena saw Chris rush at Adarlan. He was going to get injured, or worse... She looked at the crowd of cavaliers. Hopefully, they would focus less upon a sole man on foot, and more upon her Pegasus and herself. If she even drew a few her way, Taki and Chris would have better chances to get to the mill, and she could retreat to the cliffs herself if she felt the need. She flew by the Cavaliers, crossing the river as she shouted obscene insults, hoping to anger them, or present herself as a threat.

**Seyena: Move to 25, 10. Use Vulnerary on Valor.**

Valor regained consciousness just as Seyena's pegasus carried the pair across the river. Valor's face, already pale from blood loss, went even whiter as he clutched Seyena's arm.



"Ye GODS! What's going on?"

Seyena nearly jumped a mile when Valor grabbed her, nearly slipping off. She righted herself on the saddle, trying to make sure they both didn't fall.



"You were injured after what was either a brave or foolish stunt. So, I dragged you onto Ilya here, and we are flying. It would be nice if you could recognize that and try not to knock both of us off, as hitting the ground would hurt." She said, casting a worried eye towards the group of horsemen. Would they fall for her little ploy?

Valor maintained his hold on the arm of the pegasus rider.



"I'm sorry, really, but I think I may have discovered a fear of *heights*!"

Seeing he was spotted, Daniel rushed towards the swordsman with his sword drawn.



"Your mother was a dog of questionable heritage!"

**Daniel: Go to 16.6 and stab the Myrmidon in the face.**



"Ehhh.. looks like I am not that lucky when it is about dodging or not being

the target....this surely is going to give me a headache later."

Gregor noted with satisfaction that the two enemies were now cornered and cut off from any reinforcements on this end. It was almost as if the party had planned this!



"Throw down your weapons and surrender! You will not be harmed!"

He could only hope that the group holding the western entrance were faring as well.

Christopher ran up to Adarlan and stabbed at his side, wounding him only lightly.



"Argh, that hurt! Someone get rid of that pest!"

#### Christopher vs Adarlan

Hit:  $108-25 = 83$

Hit roll: 7

Damage:  $9+2-7 = 4\text{dmg}$

Then Gregor blocked the entrance and quickly used a vulnerary.

#### Gregor uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP healed.

Seyena fled away and used a vulnerary on Valor. Adarlan glared at the fleeing pegasus rider, but didn't give his men a pursuit order. Or at least, not a visible one.

#### Seyena uses Vulnerary on Valor

Up to 10HP restored.

And then, brave young Daniel ran up to the Myrmidon and attacked him. He slashed the myrmidon's arm, and the swordsman cut across Daniel's stomach. The thief, thanks to his speed, attacked his opponent once again, and again he wounded him.

#### Daniel vs Myrmidon

Hit:  $112-17 = 95$

Hit roll: 7, hit!

Damage:  $11-3 = 8\text{dmg}$

Myrmidon counters!

Hit:  $97-15-29 = 63$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $13-5 = 8\text{dmg}$

Daniel strikes again!

Hit:  $112-17 = 95$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $11-3 = 8\text{dmg}$

Taki stealthily jumped out of a tree to flee.



"Surprise retreat! Evading Branch Style! Eiyayayayeee!"

**Taki: Move to 14, 9. Attack if possible, Target B**

**Derick: Move to 14, 8**

Taki burst from the trees, went to the entrance of the windmill, brandished her sword and attacked Soldier B; she wounded him slightly through his armor, evaded his nasty spear, and then stabbed him again for good measure.

**Taki vs Soldier B**

Hit:  $104-15-12 = 77$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $10-1-5 = 4\text{dmg}$   
  
Soldier B counters!  
Hit:  $93+15-23 = 85$   
Hit roll: 86, miss!  
  
Taki gets second attack!  
Hit:  $104-15-12 = 77$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $10-1-5 = 4\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The sword cavalier moved away from the bushes in which Adrien was hiding; the three other cavaliers crossed the ford and got to the frontyard of the windmill; and the windmill became a slaughterhouse.

Namely, the crafty Soldier A ran around the three mercenaries and suddenly appeared behind Gregor - but stabbed at Charlotte instead! She easily dodged his thrust.

**Soldier A vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $93-5-4-10-18 = 56$   
Hit roll: 83, miss!

Then Mage A, cursing at lack of space, cast a Fire at Gregor; he got hit, his flesh again seared by the magic. He retaliated with spear-to-the-face technique, which killed Mage A easily.

**Mage A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $105-4-18 = 83$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $12-0 = 12\text{dmg}$   
  
Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $97+4-12 = 89$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Damage:  $16-1 = 15\text{dmg}$

Myrmidon C struck Daniel with the shamsir, slashing him across the chest, just as the thief almost evaded the nasty cut. Daniel wasn't going to stand and get himself killed, so he silenced the myrmidon with a quick stab into the stomach.

**Myrmidon C vs Daniel**

Hit roll:  $97-29 = 68$   
Hit roll: 32, hit! // Crit roll was 15; if not your Uncanny Dodge, you would get crit'd =P  
Damage:  $13-5 = 8\text{dmg}$

Daniel retaliates!  
Hit:  $112-17 = 95$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $11-3 = 8\text{dmg}$

In the same time, Olison had been assaulted by Mage B with the fires again - this time Olison got knocked down, and Tantallos slipped from his grasp onto the floor nearby. Then, the Monk that fought with Eor, moved in and targeted the shaman with light magic; Tantallos, with last of his strength, tossed a dark bolt at the Monk, who shuddered from the attack - and then knocked Tantallos out with another bolt of holy energy.

**Mage B vs Olison Eul**

Hit roll:  $105+5-5-10 = 95$  // Halved SPD from rescuing is terrible thing =P  
Hit roll: 41, hit!  
Damage:  $12-1-2 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Monk vs Tantallos**

Hit roll:  $110+15-5-6 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10+1-5 = 6\text{dmg}$

Tantallos counters!  
Hit:  $93+15-5-18 = 85$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $15-1-8 = 6\text{dmg}$

Monk gets another shot!  
Hit roll:  $110+15-5-6 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $10+1-5 = 6\text{dmg}$

The worst was with Chris; the cavaliers surrounded him. One of spear cavalier stabbed at him with his spear, but Chris managed to avoid this one - unfortunately his blade couldn't reach the cavalier.

Then, from his side, the sword rider attacked, slashing across Christopher's shoulder, and the spy responded by stabbing the cavalier in the guts, but only slightly.

A second later, Christopher looked down at his stomach, as he felt pain there. He could see a spearhead poking out from his stomach - Spear Cavalier D impaled him. With a quick pull, the spear left Christopher's body and he fell to the ground bleeding heavily.

**Spear Cavalier B vs Christopher**

Hit:  $95+15-18 = 92$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

Christopher counters!  
Hit:  $108-15-14 = 79$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!

**Sword Cavalier B vs Christopher**

Hit:  $90-18 = 72$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $15-2 = 13\text{dmg}$

Christopher retaliates!  
Hit:  $108-17 = 91$

Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage:  $9+2-1-5 = 5\text{dmg}$

#### **Spear Cavalier D vs Christopher**

Hit:  $95+15-18 = 92$

Hit roll: 34, hit!

Damage:  $13+1-2 = 14\text{dmg}$

Adarlan sighed a little, as the troubadour in his group moved to him and her magic healed his minor wounds.

#### **Troubadour heals Adarlan**

$10+6 =$  Up to 16HP restored

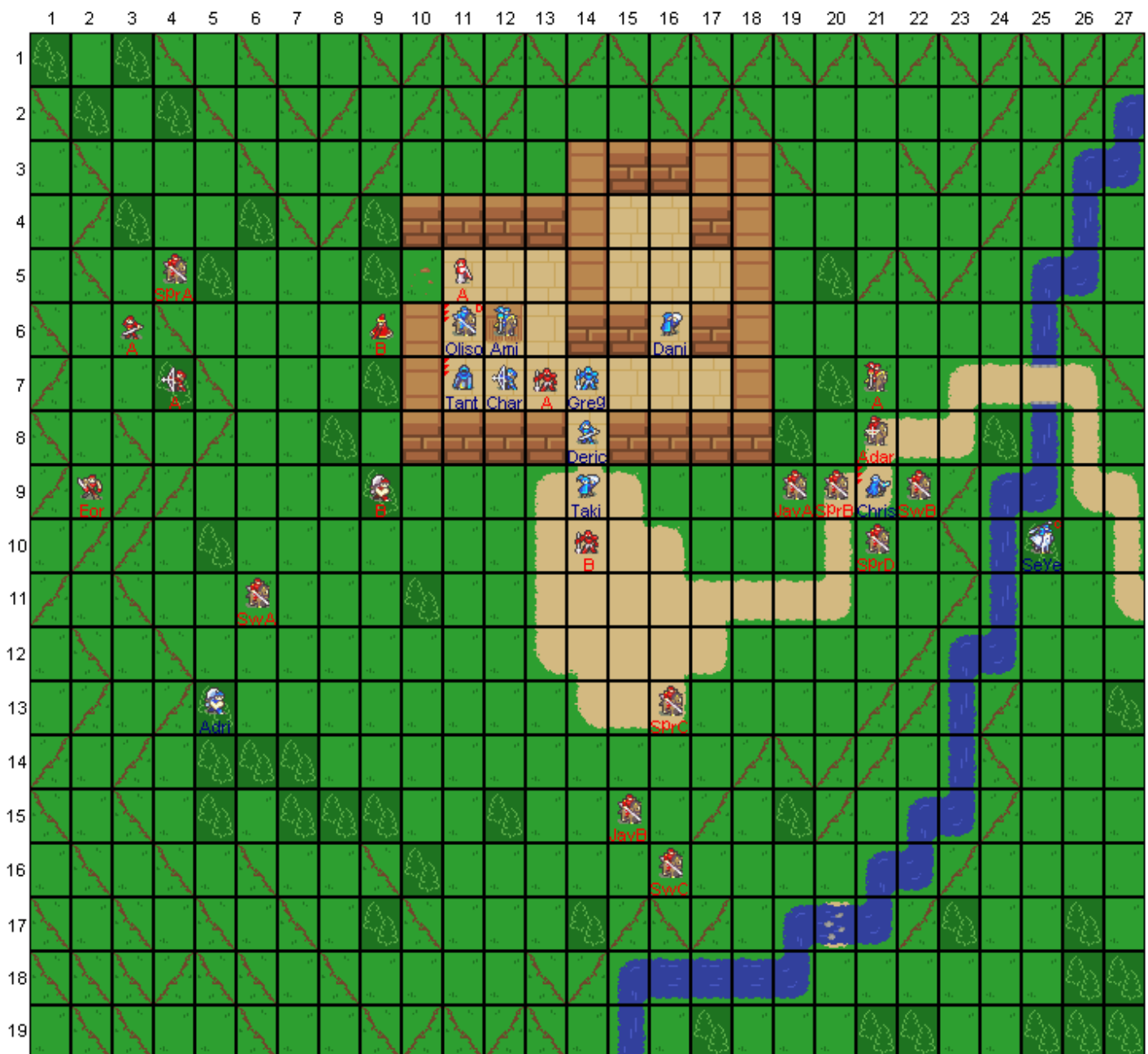
**And then the rain started again.**



"Damned weather, we're not even close to Eor..."

Eor, in the meanwhile, didn't comment on the weather. He stood still on top of the cliff, eyeing the combat outside, and windmill as well, as if he was trying to pierce the walls and see what's happening inside.

# ~~Player Turn 6~~



Weather: ///

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 22/25<br>Ami Storm: 5/19<br>Charlotte Braxis: 11/21<br>Christopher Shields: -/20 3/3<br>Daniel: 5/21<br>Derick: 20/23<br>Gregor von Hexham: 9/24<br>Olison Eul: -/20 Dismounted 3/3<br>Seyena Ikane: 18/21 Carrying: Valor Inara<br>Taki Greenstone: 5/18<br>Tantalos Forsaken: -/19 3/3<br>Valor Inara: 15/21 Carried by: Seyena Ikane | Fighter B: 25/25<br>Soldier A: 24/24<br>Soldier B: 16/24<br>Myrmidon B: 20/20<br>Mage B: 9/22<br>Monk: 13/19<br>Female Archer: 24/24<br>Spear Cavalier A: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier B: 14/23<br>Spear Cavalier C: 23/23 | Spear Cavalier D: 23/23<br>Sword Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Sword Cavalier B: 22/22<br>Sword Cavalier C: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier A: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier B: 22/22<br>Troubadour: 20/20<br>Eor: 30/30<br>Adarlan: 23/23 |

**Adrien: Move to 5, 10.**



"You better not walk away from me! I'm not done with you yet!"



Chris growled at Adarlan, trying - unsuccessfully - to get back to his feet.

Taki scuttled into the farmhouse, not wanting to end her life as a shishkabob like Chris was apparently.

**Taki: Move to 7, 15**



"Agh, not again.. I don't want to take another nap.."

**Ami: Head to 12,5**



"Stop that!"

**Ami: Bash the monk in the head and go back to 12,6**

Whack! Went Ami's club against Monk's face. He got disoriented and missed with his holy magic, striking the poor pillars instead.

**Ami vs Monk**

Hit:  $79+5-18 = 66$   
Hit roll: 14, hit!  
Damage:  $11-1 = 10\text{dmg}$

Monk counters!  
Hit:  $110-5-15-19 = 71$   
Hit roll: 93, miss!



"Time to take out the trash."

**Charlotte: Head 1 N, 1 E, 1 N and TWANG the Monk with my short bow, slaying it.**

TWANG! And the Monk eagerly dropped dead.

**Charlotte vs Monk**

Hit:  $113+2+5-18 = 102$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $12-1 = 11\text{dmg}$



"Don't you DARE attack my friend!"

**Gregor: STAB the Soldier A!**

STAB! Soldier A too went down after Gregor's attack which basically pierced the soldier's skull in and out. Oh look, there are pinky brain bits on Gregor's spearhead now.

#### Gregor vs Soldier A

Hit:  $97+4+5-12 = 94$   
Hit roll: 48, hit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $16-5 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

Charlotte laughed a little.



"Nice shot, Gregor."

Gregor looks a little aghast.



"I aimed for his shoulder...he picked a really bad time to duck..."



"He knew, as least should of know, that could of happen. Don't stress too much about it."

**Derick: move to 9,15**



"Oh gods my everythings all they feel are pain"

**Daniel: Move to 13.6**

Seyena flies towards the cliffs, making sure to keep herself out of range of Adarlan's bow. Maybe she could fly around, and enter through the other entrance to drop Valor off inside, and in range of the healer.

**Seyena: Move to 25,3**

#### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Mage B moved in, close to Charlotte, and cast a firebolt at her face. He missed by a wide mark.

#### Mage B vs Charlotte

Hit:  $105-2-5-10-18 = 70$   
Hit roll: 97, miss!

And then Derick had to withstand a torrent of cavaliers. First was a spear-wielder coming from the ford-side. His spear stabbed the myrmidon in the left leg. Derick stabbed at him.

#### **Spear Cavalier C vs Derick**

Hit:  $95+15-20 = 90$   
Hit roll: 46, hit!  
Damage:  $13+1-5 = 9\text{dmg}$

Derick counters!  
Hit:  $112-15-14 = 83$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $12+2-1-5 = 8\text{dmg}$

Then one other thrown a javelin at Derick, hitting him.

#### **Javelin Cavalier B vs Derick**

Hit:  $92+15-20 = 87$   
Hit roll: 80, hit!  
Damage:  $11+1-5 = 7\text{dmg}$

And then a Sword Cavalier went at the poor myrmidon, slicing across his face. Derick fell down with a groan of pain.

#### **Sword Cavalier B vs Derick**

Hit:  $90-20 = 70$   
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage:  $15-5 = 10\text{dmg}$

Done with Derick, the enemies began to converge on the entrance. Unfortunately, the rain already turned the otherwise dry and stable ground into wet, soft mud, which made Adarlan and his cavaliers curse under their noses as they couldn't storm the windmill properly.

Unfortunately, the Javelin Cavalier A and the Soldier B got to Gregor; first, a javelin was flung at the brave soldier, hitting him in the chestpiece of the armor - upon hit, the javelin snapped near the tip, making the horseman blink in disbelief. Soldier B spit at the ground and stabbed with his spear at Gregor, barely scratching Gregor's armor. He responded in force, stabbing deep into Soldier B's stomach.

#### **Javelin Cavalier A vs Gregor**

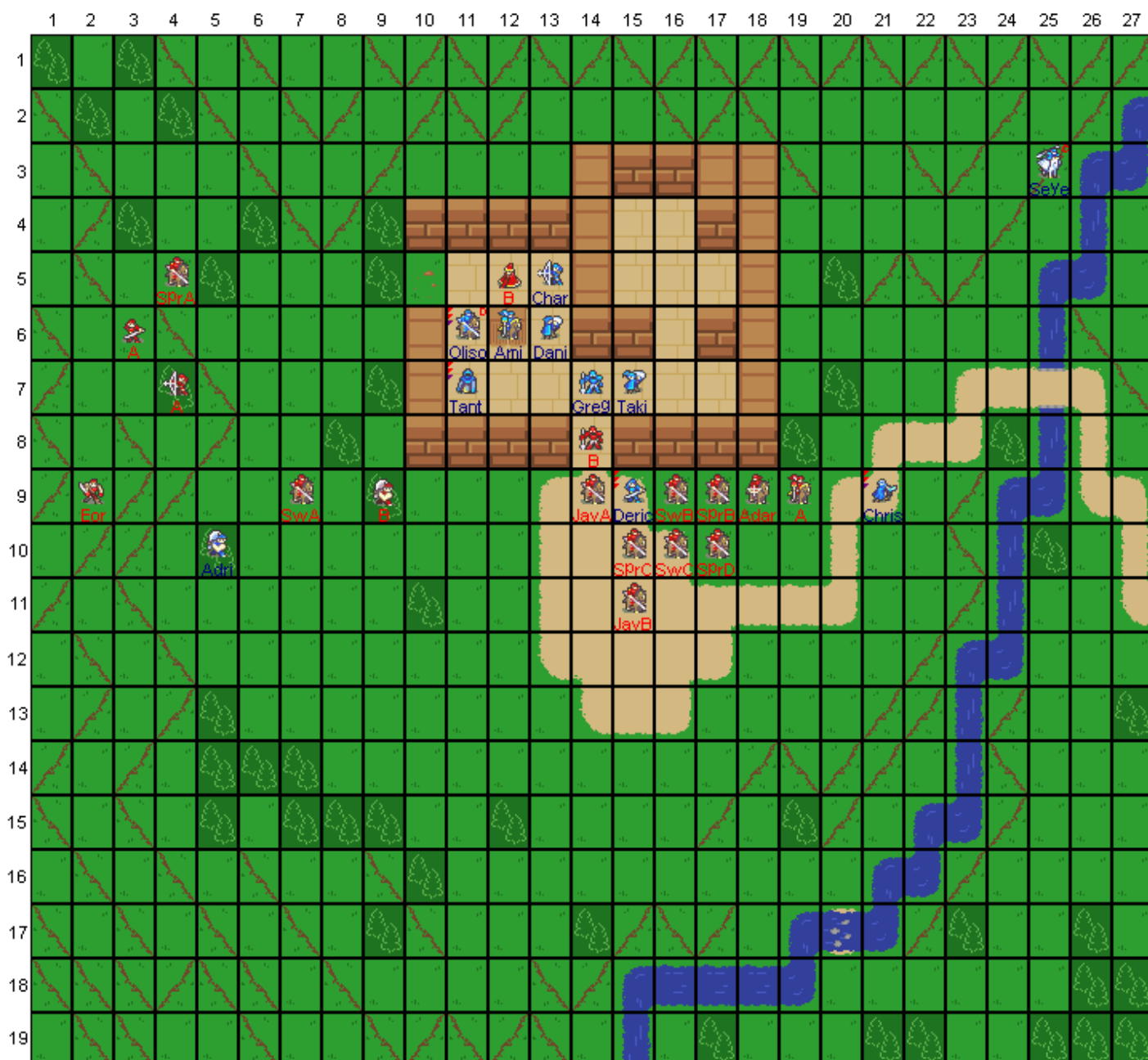
Hit:  $92-4-18 = 70$   
Hit roll: 17, hit!  
Damage:  $11-3-9 = 0!$  //TIL Gregor is a Knight without being one v:

#### **Soldier B vs Gregor**

Hit:  $93-4-18 = 71$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $13-3-9 = 1$   
  
Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $97+4-12 = 89$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $16-5 = 11\text{dmg}$

There was a flash, and then a rumble of a thunder, indicating that the rain wasn't going to give up soon.

# ~~Player Turn 7~~



Weather: ///

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Adrien: 22/25<br/>                     Ami Storm: 5/19<br/>                     Charlotte Braxis: 11/21<br/>                     Christopher Shields: -/20 2/3<br/>                     Daniel: 5/21<br/>                     Derick: -/23 3/3<br/>                     Gregor von Hexham: 8/24<br/>                     Oliso Eul: -/20 Dismounted 2/3<br/>                     Seyena Ikane: 18/21 Carrying: Valor Inara<br/>                     Taki Greenstone: 5/18<br/>                     Tantalos Forsaken: -/19 2/3<br/>                     Valor Inara: 15/21 Carried by: Seyena Ikane</p> | <p>Fighter B: 25/25<br/>                     Soldier B: 5/24<br/>                     Myrmidon B: 20/20<br/>                     Mage B: 9/22<br/>                     Female Archer: 24/24<br/>                     Spear Cavalier A: 23/23<br/>                     Spear Cavalier B: 14/23<br/>                     Spear Cavalier C: 15/23<br/>                     Spear Cavalier D: 23/23</p> | <p>Sword Cavalier A: 22/22<br/>                     Sword Cavalier B: 22/22<br/>                     Sword Cavalier C: 22/22<br/>                     Javelin Cavalier A: 22/22<br/>                     Javelin Cavalier B: 22/22<br/>                     Troubadour: 20/20<br/>                     Eor: 30/30<br/>                     Adarlan: 23/23</p> |

Ami: head to 11,5 and heal Oliso.



"Back on your feet, soldier."



"Oh dear. I think I might need some backup over here!"

Blink~!

#### Ami heals Olson

10+9 /2 = Up to 9HP healed



"I'm here!"

**Charlotte: Dash 2S near Gregor. TWANG the remaining spear-soldier-guy!**



"Coward... if you're going to kill a man, the least you can do is watch him die."

Chris coughed some blood into the soft dirt and rolled onto his back.



"At least it's raining."

Olson slowly got to his knees, glaring menacingly at Mage B.



"Pray I don't get to you first, cretin."

TWANG! The arrow went into the helmet's visor, and the soldier crashed onto his back, dying instantly.

#### Charlotte vs Soldier B

Hit:  $113+2+10-12 = 113$ , autohit! Crit roll: 12!

Damage:  $12-5 = 7 \times 3 = 21\text{dmg}$

**Adrien: Move to 8,8**

Gregor winced. The enemy soldiers were having such terrible luck! He could only hope that it didn't apply to him as well.



"You will not be getting in here!" He raised his spear, braced his shield, and prepared for the next attack.

**Gregor: Stay put.**

**Daniel: Move to 12.6 and attack that mage.**

Daniel moved to show his mad attacks to the Mage B. They were effective in slashing his throat open. Warm, fresh blood splattered around, including Daniel's face, as the Mage dropped dead.

**Daniel vs Mage B**

Hit:  $112+10+5-12 = 115$ , autohit!

Damage:  $12-1 = 11$  dmg

**Daniel gets a Vulnerary (3/3)!**



"Ugh, lesssssss complaining more actiooon... some of us are not even on our feet yet.."



"With you in a minute, Mr mage."

Seyena watched the crowd of horsemen gallop away from Chris' prone form. She couldn't get to him right now, but by the time she would reach him, that damned bowman would be out of range.



"I'm sorry for dragging you around, Valor.. But I see an opening to help Chris, and I can't let him die when I have an opportunity to help."

She had to suppress a shudder. This situation was too familiar.

**Seyena: Move to 26, 9.**

Valor visibly shook, eyes shut tight. To his credit, his voice remained steady.



"Of course. We can't let him die."

~~Enemy Phase~~

The cavaliers looked at each other, and then went away from Gregor's position, only to stop at the numerous windows of the ruined windmill; Javelin Cavalier A appeared in front of Charlotte's window and thrown a javelin at her. He missed, and the sniper girl-in-training sent an arrow that shot him in the chest, making him gasp for air, not to mention he almost fell off his horse.

#### **Javelin Cavalier A vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $92-10-2-18 = 62$

Hit roll: 82, miss!

Charlotte counters!

Hit:  $113+10+2-15 = 110$ , autohit! Crit roll: 15!

Damage:  $12-6 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$

Sword Cavalier B engaged Gregor in melee; he swung his sword at the spearman, missing like his comrade - Gregor stabbed him grievously in the chest.

#### **Sword Cavalier B vs Gregor**

Hit:  $90-15-4-18 = 53$

Hit roll: 89, miss!

Gregor retaliates!

Hit:  $97+15+4-17 = 99$

Hit roll: 97, hit!

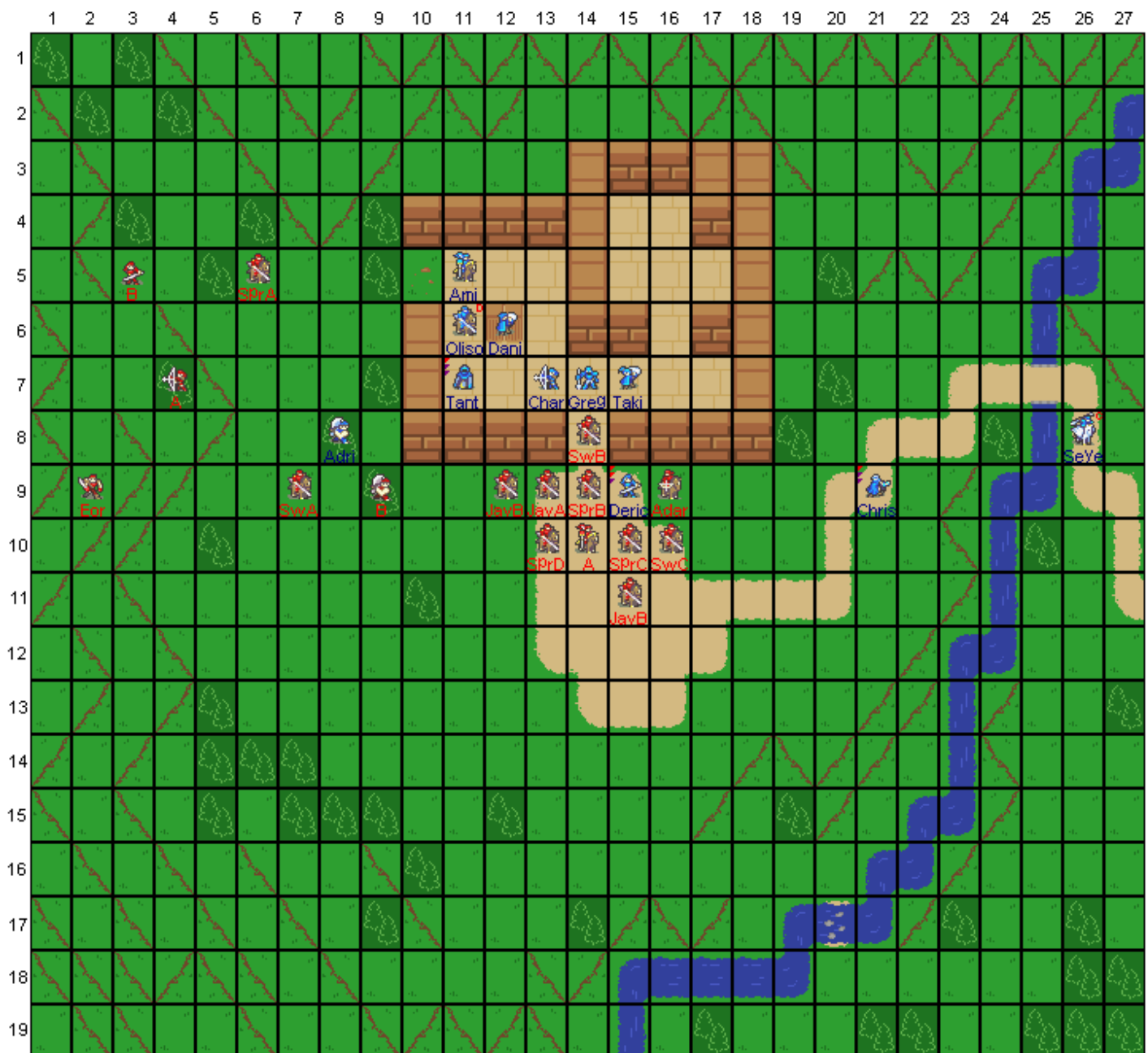
Damage:  $16+1-6 = 11+5 = 16\text{dmg}$  //Forgot the bonus last time :p

Troubadour moved to one of the lance-wielding cavaliers and healed him up.

#### **Troubadour heals Spear Cavalier B**

$10+7 =$  Up to 17HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 8~~



Weather: ///

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Adrien: 25/25<br/>           Ami Storm: 5/19<br/>           Charlotte Braxis: 11/21<br/>           Christopher Shields: -/20 1/3<br/>           Daniel: 5/21<br/>           Derick: -/23 2/3<br/>           Gregor von Hexham: 8/24<br/>           Olison Eul: 9/20 Dismounted<br/>           Seyena Ikane: 18/21 Carrying: Valor Inara<br/>           Taki Greenstone: 5/18<br/>           Tantallos Forsaken: -/19 1/3<br/>           Valor Inara: 15/21 Carried by: Seyena Ikane</p> | <p>Fighter B: 25/25<br/>           Myrmidon B: 20/20<br/>           Female Archer: 24/24<br/>           Spear Cavalier A: 23/23<br/>           Spear Cavalier B: 23/23<br/>           Spear Cavalier C: 15/23<br/>           Spear Cavalier D: 23/23<br/>           Sword Cavalier A: 22/22</p> | <p>Sword Cavalier B: 6/22<br/>           Sword Cavalier C: 22/22<br/>           Javelin Cavalier A: 4/22<br/>           Javelin Cavalier B: 22/22<br/>           Troubadour: 20/20<br/>           Eor: 30/30<br/>           Adarlan: 23/23</p> |



"We gotta hold this line no matter what! Keep it up!"



**Charlotte: TWANG Javelin Cavalier A!**



"Don't worry, they won't be getting past if I have anything to say about it!"

**Gregor: STAB Sword Cavalier B!**

With a TWANG, Javelin Cavalier A went to dust.

**Charlotte vs Javelin Cavalier A**

Hit:  $113+10+4-15 = 112$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$

With Gregor's spear to the chest, Sword Cavalier B fell from his horse, dead.

**Gregor vs Sword Cavalier B**

Hit:  $97+15+4-17 = 99$   
Hit roll: 41, hit!  
Damage:  $16+1-6 = 11+5 = 16\text{dmg}$

**Ami: Head to 12,7 and heal Tantallos.**



"Time to shine, Mr mage."

**Adrien: Ambush Sword Cavalier A, via an axe throw.**



"Come on you incompetent fools, I will strike you all down. Your leader is nothing but a shriveled-up husk!"

Ami accidentally poked him in the eye with her staff, but Tantallos got better anyways.

**Ami heals Tantallos**

$10+9 / 2 = \text{Up to 9HP healed}$

In the very same moment, Adrien came out of concealment and tossed his hatchet at the nearby rider, but missed by a wide mark.

**Adrien vs Sword Cavalier A**

Hit:  $93-15-17 = 61$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!



"I guess I will pass the "shine" part. But it is good to be back on my feet, thank you."



"That why I here after all."

Seyena saw a break in the crowd of horsemen, and she spurred her Pegasus forward, quickly flying towards his body.



"Valor, hold on, I have an idea..."

**Seyena: Move to 22, 9, use Vulnerary on Chris**

Seyena gives Chris the medicine, all the while quickly turning back towards the river.



"I can't pick you up right now, but get as far away from the cavaliers as you can! Head for the river!"

**Seyena: Move to 24, 9 after using Vulnerary.**



"Will do. Thanks."

Chris got to his feet, wiping the blood from his lips. He would make Adarlan pay... but later. For now, he had to get away, take some time to lick his wounds, and maybe wait for an opening.

**Chris moves to 24,7 if possible to move this turn.**

Olison grimly surveyed the situation outside.



"This can't end well, but I have to try..."

**Taki: Move to 11,5**

**Olison: Move to 15,7. Re-mount.**

((Note: Taki's player has disappeared by this point))



"Sir Olson! How are you faring? Does the eastern entrance still hold?"



"East side's been cleared out, and I think I saw an axe fly out of a nearby tree towards an enemy, so I suspect Adrien's holding. I'll need help opening a gap here, I'm not about to let anyone die under my watch."



"You're going to try and rescue Derick? Fantastic! Charlotte, after their next attack, stick close to me. We're going to try and force a gap through their ranks."

White powder fell onto Chris' face and he got up, miracles I tell ya.

#### Seyena uses Vulnerary on Chris

Up to 5HP restored.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Let's break the hell loose! Adrien suddenly found himself in company of no less than four enemies. Firstly, the Javelin Cavalier B tossed a javelin at him, and it hit a tree instead of Adrien. Then, in retaliation, he got hatchet-to-the-face.

Next in the go was Fighter B - axe versus axe. The large iron edge slashed across Adrien's chest, and he repaid the Fighter with smacking his head with the hatchet.

After that, Spear Cavalier D tried his chances, no matter how small they are. He missed terribly, and Adrien's hatchet scored a hit on his shoulder.

#### Javelin Cavalier B vs Adrien

Hit:  $92-15-15-20-15 = 27$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

Adrien counterattacks!

Hit:  $93+15-15 = 93$

Hit roll: 91, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-6 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### Fighter B vs Adrien

Hit:  $86-15-20-15 = 36$

Hit roll: 13, hit! //Lawl

Damage:  $17-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

Adrien counters!

Hit:  $93-12 = 81$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $16-4 = 12\text{dmg}$

#### Spear Cavalier D vs Adrien

Hit:  $95-15-15-20-15 = 30$

Hit roll: 95, miss!

Adrien retaliates!  
Hit:  $93+15-14 = 94$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $16+1-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

#### Sword Cavalier A vs Adrien

Hit:  $90+15-15-20-15 = 55$   
Hit roll: 66, miss!

Adrien counters!  
Hit:  $93-15-17 = 61$   
Hit roll: 16, hit!  
Damage:  $16-1-6 = 9\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, one of the other lance-wielding riders rushed into the windmill's second entrance, up to Taki, and knocked her down with his spear.

#### Spear Cavalier vs Taki

Hit:  $95+15-23 = 87$   
Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Damage:  $13+1-1 = 13\text{dmg}$

Christopher, who almost took a step to the east, had to face other spear cavalier; and soon he was back at the ground, bleeding from the spear wound.

"And stay that way!" The cavalier shouted at wounded spy.

#### Spear Cavalier C vs Christopher

Hit:  $95+15-14 = 96$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $13+1-3 = 11\text{dmg}$

Suddenly, a javelin was tossed at Ami! The spear hit her stomach and knocked her off her horse. By pure coincidence, a thunder hit some nearby hills in the very same moment.

#### Javelin Cavalier B vs Ami

Hit:  $92+10-5-15-20 = 62$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $11-3 = 8\text{dmg}$

Then, Adarlan stopped his horse in front of the window, behind which stood no one else than Charlotte, and he stared at her for a moment.

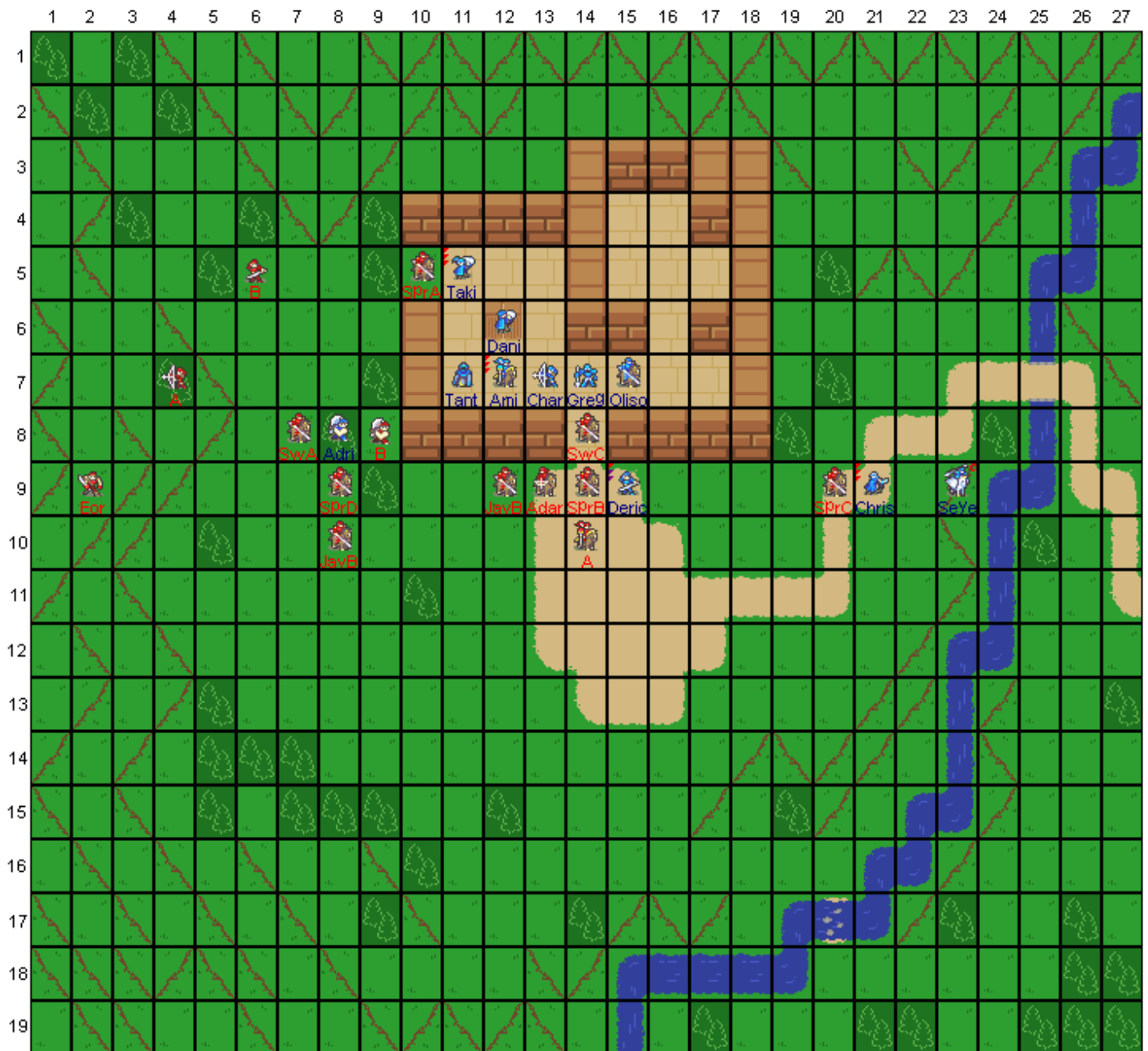


"You must be that archer who killed my men, aren't you? Let's see who is better archer here!" Right after that, he shot at Charlotte, striking her in the left leg. In response, she shot him in the left shoulder, not doing much damage thanks to his armor.

#### Adarlan vs Charlotte

Hit:  $107-4-5-10-19 = 69$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $12-5 = 7\text{dmg}$   
  
Charlotte counterattacks!  
Hit:  $115+4+5+10-25 = 109$ , autohit!

## ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather: ☁☁☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 15/26<br>Ami Storm: -/20 <b>3/3</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 4/21<br>Christopher Shields: -/21 <b>3/3</b><br>Daniel: 5/22<br>Derick: -/23 <b>1/3</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 8/25<br>Olison Eul: 9/21<br>Seyena Ikane: 18/21 <b>Carrying: Valor Inara</b><br>Taki Greenstone: -/18 <b>3/3</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 9/20<br>Valor Inara: 15/22 <b>Carried by: Seyena Ikane</b> | Fighter B: 13/25<br>Myrmidon B: 20/20<br>Female Archer: 24/24<br>Spear Cavalier A: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier B: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier C: 15/23<br>Spear Cavalier D: 11/23 | Sword Cavalier A: 13/22<br>Sword Cavalier C: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier B: 11/22<br>Troubadour: 20/20<br>Eor: 30/30<br>Adarlan: 18/23 |

**Adrien: Move to 9, 4. Trollface all the way.**

As Seyena saw Chris get struck down once more, she had already reached the edge of the thicket near the river.



"Valor, stay here for a moment."

**Seyena: Move to 25, 9, drop Valor on trees. Preferably from safe height.**



"Ach! Olson, I'm hurt. Please, I would like to exchange sides as we support Gregor!"

**Charlotte: If Olson agrees to swap places, move 2 E and pop a Vindiction. If he doesn't, move 3 E then 1 N and pop a Vindiction.**



"If there was just a little more room outside..."

Olson's horse nervously whickered as Olson peered outside, seeing Derick slowly bleeding out.



"Close enough! Out of my way!"

**Olson: Move to 16,9, rescue Derick. Move to 15,9 and use last Vulnerary on him.**



"That should hold you for a bit longer... Now which one of you is going to try to stop me first?"

Just as Seyena dropped Valor in the forested area, Olson burst from the windmill, scaring the horses of the cavaliers, picked up Derick and revived him with a vulnerary. And in the meanwhile, Charlotte went to the doorway leading into smaller room and healed herself as well.

**Olson uses Vulnerary on Derick**

Up to 5HP restored

**Charlotte uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored



"AHHHH! This is incredibly painful."



"Tell Daniel and the magic user to hold the eastern door! If that cavalier gets in here, we're all in trouble!"

**Gregor: Just keep STABing**

Valor leaned against a tree, breathing heavily as his knees shook.



"Never again. Never, ever again." He muttered to the nearest tree.



"FINALLY! Finally a victim.."

**Tantalos moved close to the wall [11,6] and began to cast Flux, letting the dark energy fall on the ground and move towards the Cavalier, raising under him as dark spikes.**

**Daniel: I use the Vyrnilyr on Ami as action 1.  
Action 2 will be move 1N dip into my other Vulcan for Taki.**



"Sometimes I think maybe I ought to have worn armor."

Verily, Gregor hast stabbeth at his foe! And truly, thou would not find betterest spearman than the braveth Gregor himself! Hast the lance struck mightier, the Sword Cavalier C would hast no opportunity to strike back, alas, the blade is swung and Gregor's arm hath been sliced open, woe upon that foolish soul!

**Gregor vs Sword Cavalier C**

Hit:  $97+15+4+5-17 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17+1-6 = 12+5 = 17\text{dmg}$

Sword Cavalier C retaliates!  
Hit:  $90-15-4-5-20 = 46$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $15-1-3-9 = 2\text{dmg}$

Meanwhile, Tantalos moved closer to the cavalier and cast Flux on him. Unfortunately, the cavalier evaded the magic.

**Tantalos vs Spear Cavalier**

Hit:  $95-17 = 78$   
Hit roll: 98, miss!

Then Daniel began to heal up his companions; first Ami, then Taki.

**Daniel uses Vulnerary on Ami**

Up to 5HP restored

**Daniel uses Vulnerary on Taki**

Up to 5HP restored

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The Sword Cavalier C moved away, and the Troubadour healed him up.

**Troubadour heals Sword Cavalier C**

$10+7 =$  Up to 17HP healed



"I will try!" Shouted Adarlan, moving near to Olison. And then he shot him in the heart, knocking him and Derick from the horse.

**Adarlan vs Olison**

Hit:  $107-11 = 96$   
Hit roll: 16, hit! Crit roll: 6!  
Damage:  $12-2-5 = 5 \times 3 = 15\text{dmg}$



"Get that sword boy!" With that command, Javelin Cavalier B and Spear Cavalier C rushed toward Derick; first, a javelin was thrown, thudding at the myrmidon's feet. Then the spear-wielding rider stabbed at Derick, who evaded the strike and even managed to slash on the Spear Cavalier C's left hand.

**Javelin Cavalier B vs Derick**

Hit:  $92+15-22 = 85$   
Hit roll: 97, miss!

**Spear Cavalier C vs Derick**

Hit:  $95+15-22 = 88$   
Hit roll: 98, miss!  
  
Derick counters!  
Hit:  $112-15-14 = 83$   
Damage:  $13-1-5 = 7\text{dmg}$

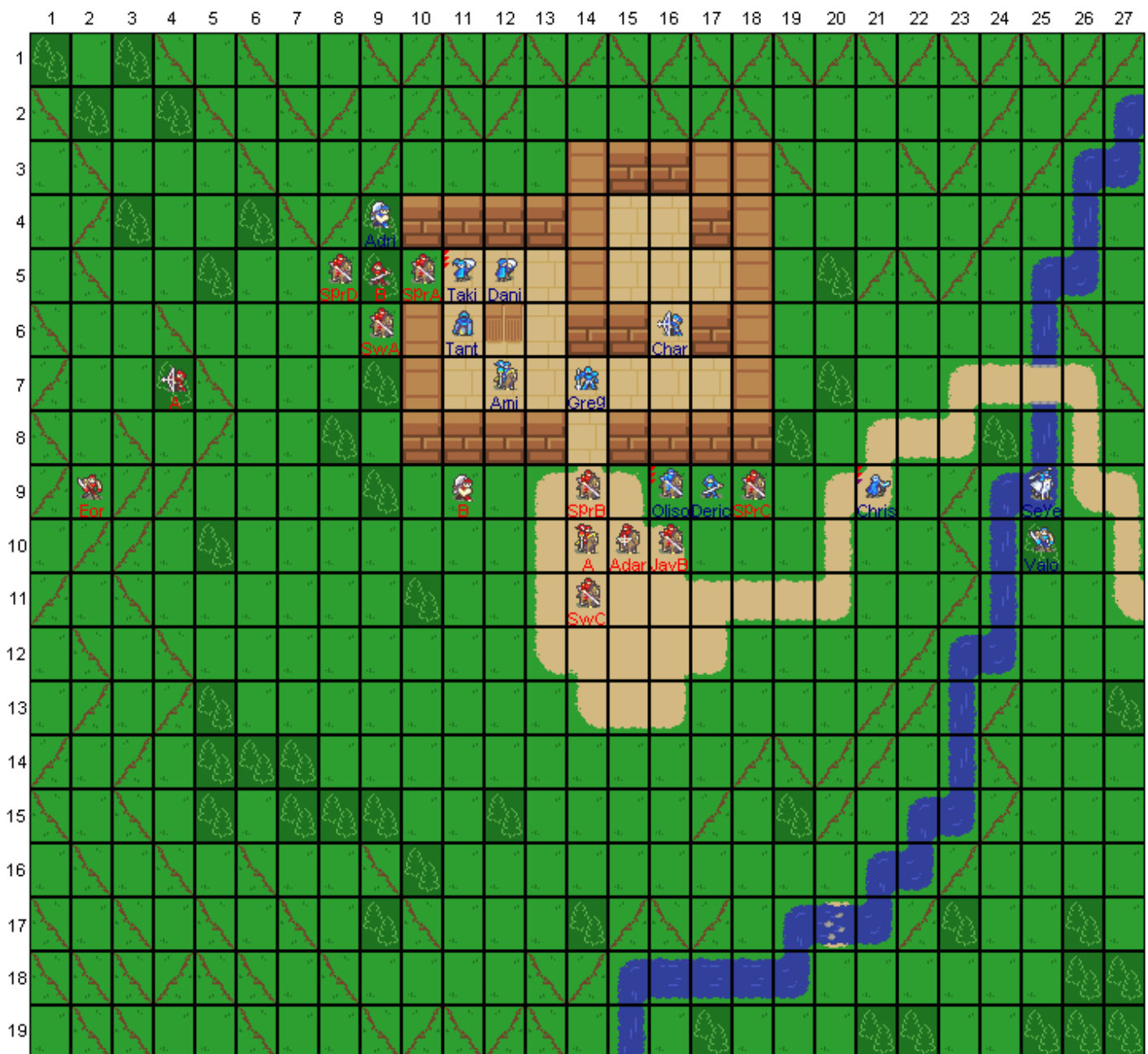
Then, Taki was attacked by Spear Cavalier A, who knocked her down again.

**Spear Cavalier A vs Taki**

Hit:  $95+15-23 = 87$   
Hit roll: 69, hit!  
Damage:  $13+1-1 = 13\text{dmg}$



# ~~Player Turn 10~~



Weather: ☀☀☀

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 18/26<br>Ami Storm: 5/20<br>Charlotte Braxis: 14/21<br>Christopher Shields: -/21 <b>2/3</b><br>Daniel: 5/22<br>Derick: 5/23<br>Gregor von Hexham: 6/25<br>Olison Eul: -/21 <b>3/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 18/21<br>Taki Greenstone: -/18 <b>3/3</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 9/20<br>Valor Inara: 15/22 | Fighter B: 13/25<br>Myrmidon B: 20/20<br>Female Archer: 24/24<br>Spear Cavalier A: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier B: 23/23<br>Spear Cavalier C: 8/23<br>Spear Cavalier D: 11/23 | Sword Cavalier A: 13/22<br>Sword Cavalier C: 22/22<br>Javelin Cavalier B: 11/22<br>Troubadour: 20/20<br>Eor: 30/30<br>Adarlan: 18/23 |

Having finally steadying himself, Valor moved to the land bridge, and healed himself.



*I can't leave the rest of them. I have a job to do.*

**Valor: Move to 25,7 and use vulnerary.**

**Adrien: Stay put, throw axe at spear cavalier D**



"Ah! I'm coming to help! Ami, take care of Gregor, I won't be able to back him up in a moment!"

**Charlotte: Move to 13,6.**

**Daniel: Move to 13.7 and use the Varnish on Gregor.**

Seyena, now free of her burden, was able to pick another. She flew towards Chris, quickly dragging him onto her Pegasus.



"You're not going to die here..."

**Seyena: Move to 22, 9. Rescue Chris.**

Seyena flew towards the river once more, trying to stabilize Chris' wounds, as she had no vulnerary. At least he wasn't in danger of death any more. Now all she had to do is stay away from the range of that infuriating bow.

**Seyena: Move to 24, 11.**



"So this is flight, huh? It's kinda nice. Sorry for getting blood all over your horse."

Chris coughed, keeping his head turned away from Seyena and the pegasus.

Upon the bridge, Valor used a vulnerary.

**Valor uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

Adrien tossed a hatchet at Spear Cavalier D, and it slammed unto his skull, knocking him from the horse which ran away with scared neigh.

**Adrien vs Spear Cavalier D**

Hit:  $93+15-14 = 94$

Hit roll: 75, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-5 = 12$ dmg

Daniel healed up Gregor a bit, whilst Seyena flew to Chris and grabbed him unto her lap.

#### Daniel uses Vulnerary on Gregor

Up to 10HP healed



"No more! No one else will fall here!"

**Gregor: Move to (14,8). STAB.**



"When they said shamans had bad luck, I did not believe on them, but now....I am starting to think it is possible, lets try this again!"

**Tantalos: Attack the same annoying cavalier.**

**Ami: go to 12,5 and heal Taki**



"Back on your feet, Tiny."

Gregor moved forward and stabbed at the Spear Cavalier B. Their spears failed to inflict any damage at any of the two lance wielders.

#### Gregor vs Spear Cavalier B

Hit:  $97+4+5-14 = 92$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

Spear Cavalier B counters!

Hit:  $95-4-5-20 = 66$

Hit roll: 70, miss!

Tantalos tried his magic again, but, again, the magic energy failed to wound the cavalier.

#### Tantalos vs Spear Cavalier A

Hit:  $95+5-14 = 86$

Hit roll: 93, miss! //Lol, worst hit rolls so far for you guys.

In the same time, Taki was revived again by Ami's healing magics.

#### Ami heals Taki

$10+10 / 2 =$  Up to 10HP restored

**Derick: Move 19,9 attack SPrC**



"Augh! If I'm going down again I'll take one of you with me!"



"...maybe the magic doesn't like being called old?"

Derick moved past the Cavalier and then stabbed at his neck, knocking him off the horse.

#### Derick vs Spear Cavalier C

Hit:  $112-15-14 = 83$   
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage:  $15-1-5 = 9\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Spear Cavalier B went after Derick, stabbing at him with the iron lance, knocking him down again.

#### Spear Cavalier B vs Derick

Hit:  $95+15-22 = 88$   
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
Damage:  $13+1-5 = 9\text{dmg}$

"Hah, make way for me!" Fighter B said and then moved up to Gregor, swinging his axe at the spearman. Gregor got a wound first time in a while, and retaliated with a quick stab, almost killing the axeman. Unfortunately, the Troubadour was right there and healed the Fighter into better shape.

#### Fighter B vs Gregor

Hit:  $86+15-5-4-20 = 72$   
Hit roll: 27, hit!  
Damage:  $17+1-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $95+4+5-15-12 = 77$   
Hit roll: 71, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1-4 = 12\text{dmg}$

#### Troubadour heals Fighter B

$10+6 =$  Up to 16HP healed

Adarlan went right at Gregor, readying his bow and arrows. He shot the soldier in the arm.

#### Adarlan vs Gregor

$107-4-5-38 = 60$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Damage:  $12-9 = 3\text{dmg}$

Then, a javelin cavalier went near the window and have thrown a javelin at Daniel, but the thief ducked under it in the last moment.

#### Javelin Cavalier B vs Daniel

Hit:  $92+15-5-32 = 70$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

//It was going to be hit, but I forgot to add Skirt Chaser, so after adding, you evaded the attack :p

The last remaining myrmidon swung his sword at Adrien, but the blade hit the tree instead of the axeman. Adrien swung his hatchet at the attacker, cutting at his arm.

#### **Myrmidon B vs Adrien**

Hit:  $107+15-15-20-15 = 72$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

Adrien counters!

Hit:  $93-15-17 = 61$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage:  $16-1-3 = 12\text{dmg}$

Then, with a frown, the spear cavalier in front of Taki attacked her again. But he missed! And so did Taki.

#### **Spear Cavalier B vs Taki**

Hit:  $95+15-5-23 = 82$

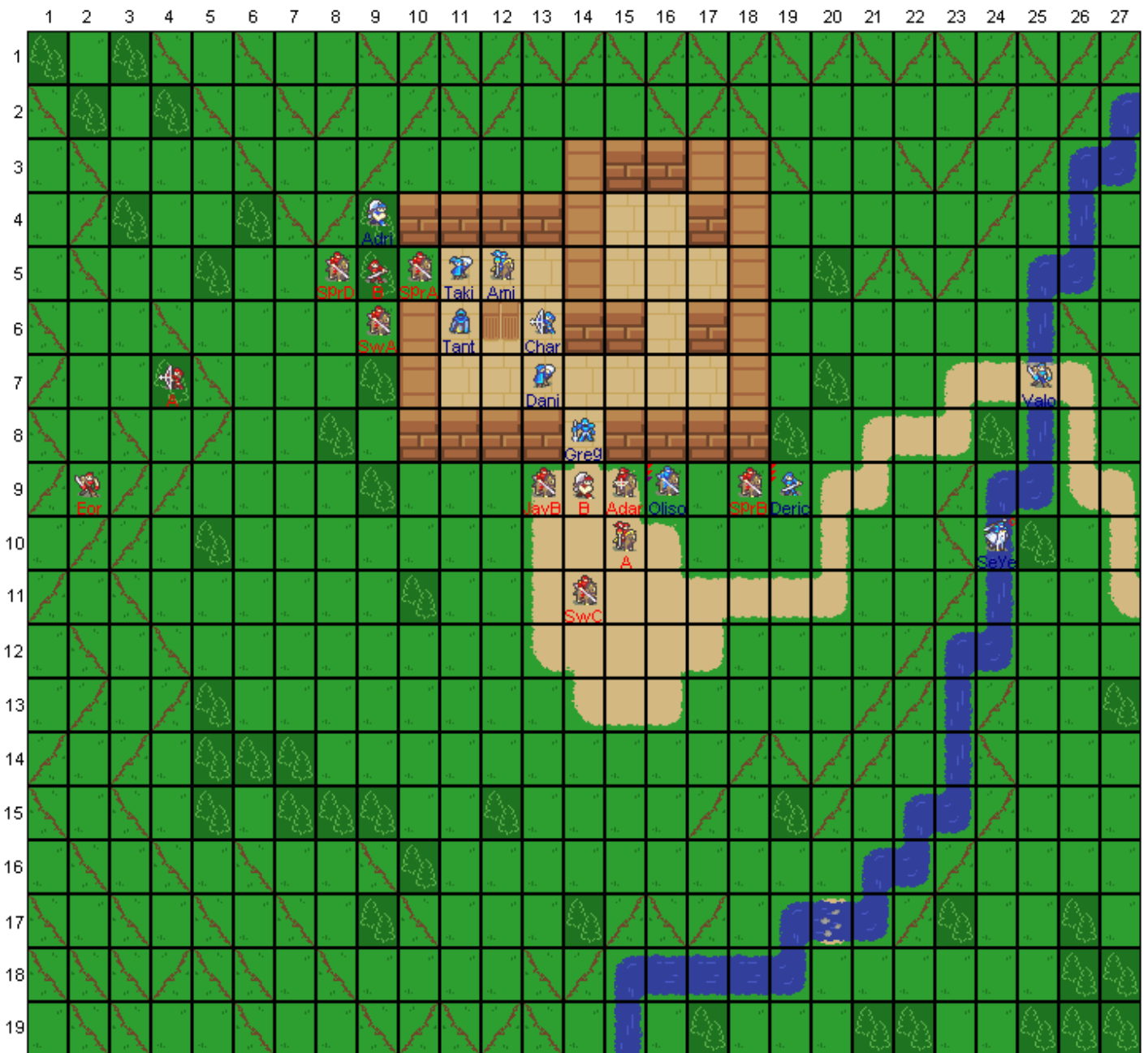
Hit roll: 89, miss!

Taki retaliates!

Hit:  $104+5-15-15-14 = 65$

Hit roll: 95, miss!

## ~~Player Turn 11~~

Weather: 

| Merces:                                                | Enemies:                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Adrien: 21/26                                          | Fighter B: 17/25          |
| Ami Storm: 5/20                                        | Myrmidon B: 8/20          |
| Charlotte Braxis: 14/21                                | Female Archer: 24/24      |
| Christopher Shields: -/21 2/3 Carried by: Seyena Ikane | Spear Cavalier A: 23/23   |
| Daniel: 5/22                                           | Spear Cavalier B: 23/23   |
| Derick: -/23                                           | Sword Cavalier A: 13/22   |
| Gregor von Hexham: 4/25                                | Sword Cavalier C: 22/22   |
| Olison Eul: -/21 2/3                                   | Javelin Cavalier B: 11/22 |
| Seyena Ikane: 18/21 Carrying: Christopher Shields      | Troubadour: 20/20         |
| Taki Greenstone: 10/18                                 | Eor: 30/30                |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 9/20                               | Adarlan: 18/23            |
| Valor Inara: 22/22                                     |                           |

## Ami: Heal Taki



"Just a little longer, Tiny."

Blingingingingi-chink~!

Ami heals Taki

10+10 = Up to 20HP restored



"I need some help over here! They are about to overwhelm me!"

Gregor: Consume a vulnerary



"Ok, lets try this again.."

Tantallos: Attack the same cavalier again.

Valor: Move to 21,7 and prepare for the inevitable.

Gregor uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP restored

In the meanwhile, Tantallos once more tried to wound the cavalier with his black magic. The mass of dark energy hit the cavalier and he, along with his horse, had a split second left to scream before the magic engulfed them and turned them into steaming puddle of tar.

Tantallos vs Spear Cavalier A

Hit: 95+5-14 = 86  
Hit roll: 62, hit! Crit roll: 1!  
Damage: 16+2-1 = 17x3 = 51!



"Oh please, please, please strike true..."

Charlotte: Move to the tile just north of Gregor and TWANG Fighter B with the Short Bow.

Throw axe at sword Cavalier A. Remind GM to remove Spear cavalier D from the map since he's dead

Charlotte moved behind her ~~sexy spear lover~~ friend and TWANG'd at the Fighter B, hitting him in the chest, but not that hard.

Charlotte vs Fighter B

Hit: 115+2+5+10-12 = 120, autohit!  
Damage: 12-4 = 8dmg

Adrien have thrown his hatchet at the sword-wielding rider, hitting him in the face - he would be dead if not that metal helmet of his.

#### Adrien vs Sword Cavalier A

Hit:  $93-15-17 = 61$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $16-1-6 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Daniel: Move to 12.6 and use a Visigoth on Ami.**



"Hahahaha! NOW that is more like it."



"Valor, I hate to ask this of you, but can you use a Vulnerary on Chris? I will then be able to leave him aside and pick up someone else."

**Seyena: Move to 20, 7.**



"Yeah, a vulnerary sounds nice right about now..."



"Of course. He assisted you in saving my life, after all."

**Valor: Heal Chris this turn if possible, since I moved but did not take an action. If not, allow Seyena to 'borrow' my vulnerary.**

//One day I will kill you people for those extra actions and conditional posts. One day.

#### Valor uses Vulnerary on Chris

Up to 5HP restored

#### Daniel uses Visigoth on Ami and she gets pregnant with barbarian babies

Up to 10HP restored

### ~~Enemy Phase~~



"A-ha, I knew there's a pegasus rider!" Shouted Adarlan, emerging from around the corner. And then he shot at Seyena, twice.

He missed with both shots.





"Just you wait...!"

#### Adarlan vs Seyena

Hit:  $107+10-15-20 = 82$

Hit roll: 89, miss!

Adarlan strikes again!

Hit:  $107+10-15-20 = 82$

Hit roll: 92, miss!

Spear Cavalier B ran toward Valor, stabbing at him. Valor, filled with determination, jumped at the horse and sliced the horseman's throat open. Blood splattered on Valor's face as he landed onto the ground, near the fallen cavalier, as the horse rode away in shock and terror.

#### Spear Cavalier B vs Valor

Hit:  $95+15-18 = 92$

Hit roll: 18, hit!

Damage:  $13+1-2 = 12\text{dmg}$

Valor counters!

Hit:  $106-15-14 = 77$

Hit roll: 39, hit! Crit roll: 1! // You're definitely getting too much lucky crits, people :I

Damage:  $10-1 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$

Somewhere else, the myrmidon yet again attacked Adrien. His blade slashed over the axeman's shoulder - Adrien's hatchet smacked the swordman in the face for that.

#### Myrmidon B vs Adrien

Hit:  $107+15-15-20-15 = 72$

Hit roll: 41, hit!

Damage:  $11+1-7 = 5\text{dmg}$

Adrien counters!

Hit:  $93-15-17 = 61$

Hit roll: 28, hit!

Damage:  $16-1-3 = 12\text{dmg}$

And somewhere else, Fighter B swung his axe at Gregor. The axe sliced over the air as Gregor ducked and then impaled axeman's guts on his spear. After Fighter B fell, Sword Cavalier B ran into his place and tried his chances against Gregor.

As a result, the soldier got a cut on his cheek, whilst the rider began to bleed profusely. Fortunately troubadour behind him quickly healed the cavalier.

#### Fighter B vs Gregor

Hit:  $86+15-5-4-20 = 72$

Hit roll: 82, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $95+4+5-15-12 = 77$

Hit roll: 43, hit!

Damage:  $17-1-4 = 12\text{dmg}$

#### Sword Cavalier C vs Gregor

Hit:  $90-15-5-4-20 = 46$

Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage:  $15-1-3-9 = 2\text{dmg}$

Gregor counterattacks!

Hit:  $95+15+4+5-17 = 102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $17+1-6 = 12+5 = 17\text{dmg}$

#### Troubadour heals Sword Cavalier C

$10+6 =$  Up to 16HP restored.



"Grr... these guys are stronger than I thought, they're slaughtering our village's militia... Liz!"

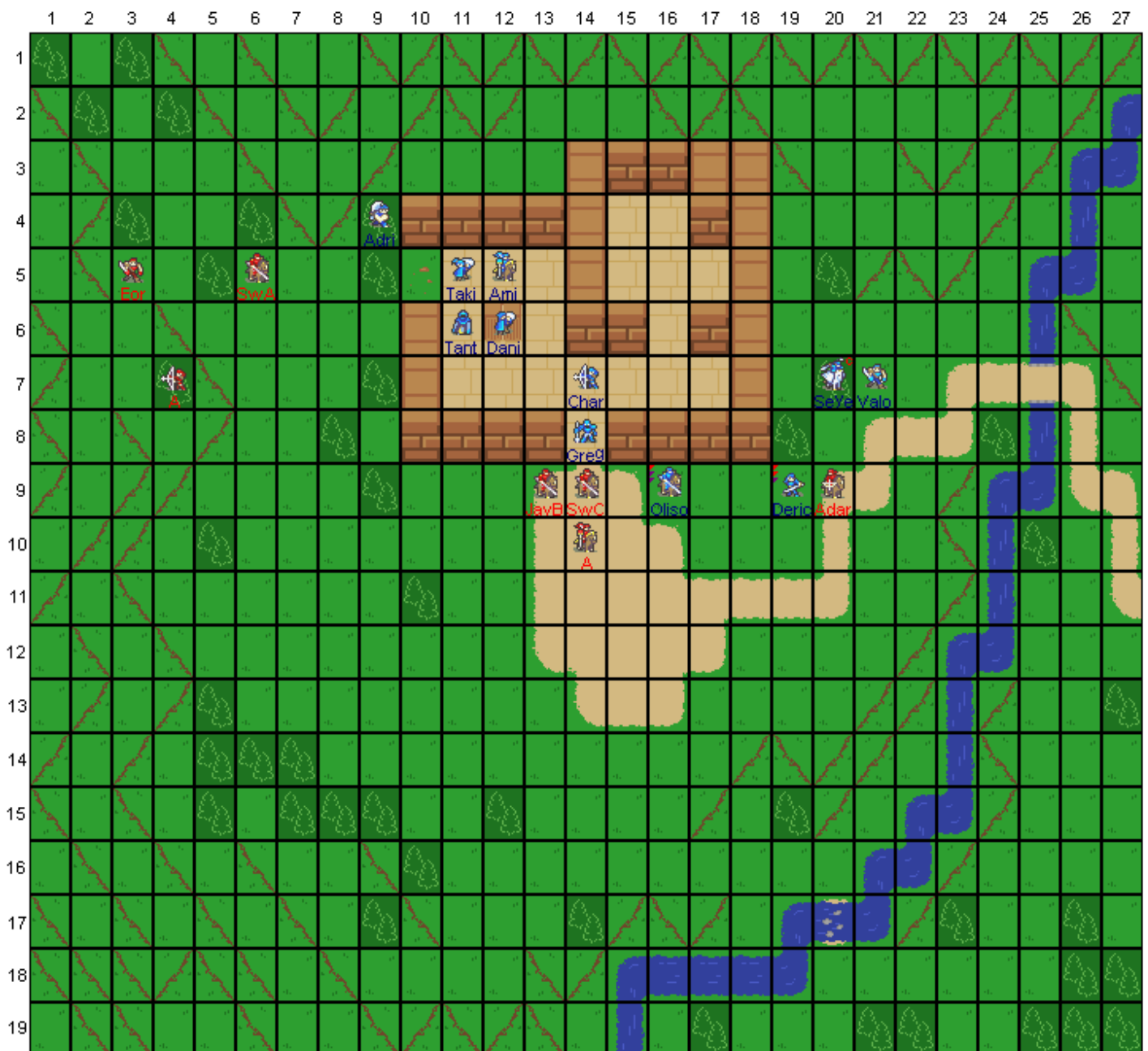
"Yes, sir Eor?"



"Prepare to lift your longbow. It is time I take the fight into my own hands."

The clouds are thinning, and the rain is getting weak. It might stop raining completely very soon.

# ~~Player Turn 12~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 19/27<br>Ami Storm: 15/21<br>Charlotte Braxis: 14/22<br>Christopher Shields: 5/21 <b>Carried by: Seyena Ikane</b><br>Daniel: 5/23<br>Derick: -/24 <b>2/3</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 12/26<br>Olison Eul: -/22 <b>1/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 18/22 <b>Carrying: Christopher Shields</b><br>Taki Greenstone: 18/18<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 9/21<br>Valor Inara: 10/23 | Female Archer: 24/24<br>Sword Cavalier A: 4/22<br>Sword Cavalier C: 21/22<br>Javelin Cavalier B: 11/22<br>Troubadour: 20/20<br>Eor: 30/30<br>Adarlan: 18/23 |



"Char-gor double team assault: **ACTIVATE!**"

**Charlotte: Strike the sword cavalier with short bow.**



"...Greglotte? Hmm."



"HEY! Remember me?" Valor dashed at Adarlan, ignoring his fresh wound, and slashed at the archer. "Seyena, get out of here! It's not safe!"

**Valor: Move to 20,8 and attack Adarlan.**

**Adrien: Move to 9,5**

**Ami: To 10,5 and heal Adrien**

TWANG!

**Charlotte vs Sword Cavalier C**

Hit:  $116+4+5+10-17 = 118$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $13-6 = 7$  dmg

In the meanwhile, Valor ran toward Adarlan and slashed at him; the bow knight managed to evade that, and smirked.



"You've picked wrong target, kid!"

**Valor vs Adarlan**

Hit:  $108-25 = 83$   
Hit roll: 88, miss!

Ami moved up to the hole in the wall and sent her healing magic toward the bushes in which Adrien was hiding.

**Ami heals Adrien**

$10+11 =$  Up to 21HP restored



"I'm no kid, and you're a fool. Your master is a thief, and you choose to die defending him. Say your prayers."



"Hmph! Prixima has been sending thugs for years, trying to take what's rightfully belonging to Mister Eor. Her thugs didn't succeed in the past, and you will fail

today as well!"



"We'll see."



*"Char-gor? Greglotte? What is she going on about...?"*

**Gregor: Feel the teamwork and STAB! sword cavalier.**



"Valor, you'll just get shot again!" Seyena said, then she turned to Chris. "The others inside should be able to reach Olson, can you use a Vulnerary on Derick as I get closer?"

**Seyena: Move to 19, 8. ~~Hope to the gods that Adarlan shoots at something else.~~**



"Yeah, probably!"

**Tantallos: Use vulnerarurturb**



....I hate having to wait.



"I got it. Just get me close enough to sprinkle that magic dust."

**Chris uses a pinch of ~~cocaine~~ vulnerary on ~~Olson~~ Derick when Seyena moves him in close enough.**

Stabs are shown yet again today. Sword Cavalier C dies as a result.

#### **Gregor vs Sword Cavalier C**

Hit:  $97+4+5+15-17 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $17+1-6 = 12+5 = 17$  dmg

In the same time, Seyena moves Chris to Derick and thus the swordsman is revived, and somewhere else, Tantallos devours a vulnerary.

**Chris uses Vulnerary on Derick**

Up to 5HP restored

**Tantallos uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

**Daniel: Move to 15.9 can use a concussion on Olison.**

Golden dust hits Olison's face and he gets up.

**Daniel uses Concoction on Olison**

Up to 15HP restored.

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Adarlan ran around Valor and went into the thicket, from where he launched his arrow at Seyena; he knocked her off her pegasus, which tipped to the side, throwing Chris onto the ground as well.

**Adarlan vs Seyena**

Hit:  $107+10-20-18 = 79$

Hit roll: 72, hit!

Damage:  $22-4 = 18\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Javelin Cavalier B moved away from the windmill and thrown another javelin at Daniel, which he evaded as well. Troubadour in the meanwhile healed javelineer's wounds.

**Javelin Cavalier B vs Daniel**

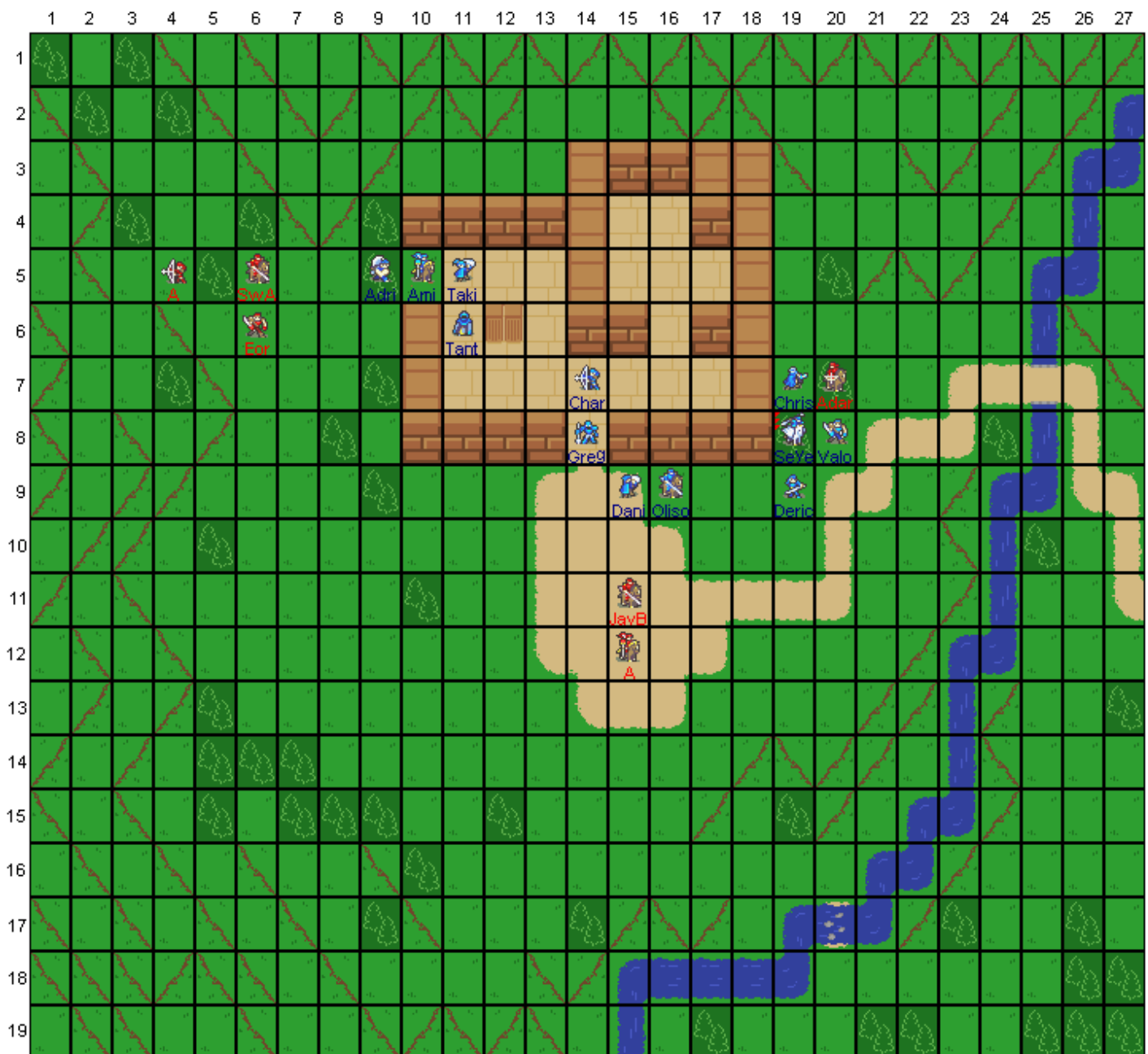
Hit:  $92-10-35 = 47$

Hit roll: 59, miss!

**Troubadour heals Javelin Cavalier B**

$10+6 =$  Up to 16HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 13~~



Weather: ///

| Mercs:                        | Enemies:                  |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Adrien: 27/27                 | Female Archer: 24/24      |
| Ami Storm: 15/21              | Sword Cavalier A: 4/22    |
| Charlotte Braxis: 14/22       | Javelin Cavalier B: 22/22 |
| Christopher Shields: 5/21     | Troubadour: 20/20         |
| Daniel: 5/23                  | Eor: 30/30                |
| Derick: 5/24                  | Adarlan: 18/23            |
| Gregor von Hexham: 12/26      |                           |
| Olison Eul: 15/22             |                           |
| Seyena Ikane: -/22 <b>3/3</b> |                           |
| Taki Greenstone: 18/18        |                           |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 19/21     |                           |
| Valor Inara: 10/23            |                           |

**Ami: Head to 12,5 and heal Daniel //wut**



"How many left?"



"We have to take down that troubadour! Olison, Daniel, with me!"

**Gregor: Move to (14, 12), STAB.**



"SEYENA!"

**Valor: ENGAGE MURDER MODE: TARGET: ADARLAN. EXECUTE.**



"Well, that was fun. I've never been shot down before."

**So saying, Chris sprinkled some magic dust on Seyena to wake her and her pegasus up.**

Olison groaned as he got up, only taking a brief moment to notice the bolt sticking out of his chest.



"Ohh, that's going to smart for awhile... Thanks for the assist, all of you."



"Battle's finally clearing up, and I haven't even hit anyone. Unbelievable."

**Olison: 16,12. Joust Troubadour.**



"Everyone, go deal with the cavaliers to the east, I can take these three on!"

**Adrien: Come out of hiding in the woods, but otherwise no action.**

Ami was too far to heal Daniel this time.

Gregor left his post and went after Troubadour; he stabbed her in the stomach.

"Oww! You monster! You thug!" She screamed in pain and hit his helm with her sword, producing quite melodic clink and a small bruise on Gregor's forehead.



#### Gregor vs Troubadour

Hit:  $97+15-5-18 = 99$   
Hit roll: 71, hit!  
Damage:  $17+1-4 = 14+5 = 19\text{dmg}$

Troubadour counters!

Hit:  $101-15-5-20 = 61$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $11-1-1-9 = 1\text{dmg}$

Valor slashed at Adarlan; this time, even with the help of bushes and thick branches, he didn't escape Valor's blade.

#### Valor vs Adarlan

Hit:  $108-20-25 = 63$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $11-7 = 4\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Seyena got revived by the remaining Chris' healing powder.

#### Chris uses Vulnerary on Seyena

Up to 5HP restored

And then Olison killed the Troubadour girl with well-aimed thrust of his spear into her face.

#### Olison vs Troubadour

Hit:  $94+5-18 = 81$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $15+2-4 = 13\text{dmg}$

Seyena slowly stood, wincing as she did so.



"Thanks... and sorry about dropping you." She quickly checked on her fallen Pegasus, but finding her with no injuries, Seyena quickly (and painfully) remounted, holding onto her lance tightly. The adrenaline would wear off soon, and she'll start to really feel the wound soon, as well as those she suffered from falling.



"Also, Valor, there's no need to yell. It's one arrow."

#### Seyena: Stay put because was just dead

Charlotte winked at Daniel.



"That's our cue, thieffy boy! Come on, it'll be just like last time. Follow my lead and strike!"

**Charlotte: Head 4S and TWANG the Javalineer.**



"Roger that!"

**Daniel: Move down one and ~~get horribly murdered~~ stab the Javelin User in the face.**

Charlotte went out of the windmill as well and shot at the javelin wielder, hitting him in the throat. He survived, and tossed his javelin at the archer girl, missing her completely.

And then he got finished by a stab, courtesy of Daniel.

**Charlotte vs Javelin Cavalier B**

Hit:  $116+2+5+10-15 = 118$ , autohit! Crit roll: 16!

Damage:  $13-6 = 7 \times 3 = 21\text{dmg}$

Javelin Cavalier B retaliates!

Hit:  $92-2-5-10-22 = 53$

Hit roll: 97, miss!

**Daniel vs Javelin Cavalier B**

Hit:  $117+5+10-15-15 = 102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $11-1-6 = 4\text{dmg}$

**Derick: Move to 21,7 and attack Adarlan**



"Oh, nice hit! We make a good team, actually. All of us, I mean."



"Thanks for the assistance, Olson. How's that wound treating you?"

Olson briefly made a sort of praying gesture while looking towards the troubadour before turning to Gregor.



"I will be fine, I think. Urgh, I'll be sore for a while but I've been through worse things."

Olson's expression briefly betrayed a smirk.



"Impressive work, though, if you and Charlotte didn't break that line I would've bled out for sure. I ought to step things up soon if I'm being shown up like this."



"It was definitely a team effort. I still can't believe it, but it looks like everyone is going to make it out of this in one piece - if a little battered."

Gregor winced a little at his many cuts and bruises, minor though they may be.



"Ami's going to be earning her keep patching us all up after this."



"Perhaps we should rest and heal here for now. It appears the others have Adarlan surrounded. Let's watch to see if they need help. If not, we can assist the others with Eor and the archer."



"Ah yes. Healing. Now THAT'S something I can get behind."



"I think I can still feel my spleen."



"Hmm. That's a good idea, but let's stick close by. I'm not very good at running around in all this armor."

Olison nodded in agreement, looking towards his wound.



"Keep both options open, but it seems both battles are well in hand. Until then a respite would be appreciated."

He slowly took to searching his horse for any injuries



"Still no injuries, I swear horses have an unnatural gift for avoiding attacks..."



"Now that you mention it, I don't think a single horse - or pegasus - got injured in this battle. What are the odds of that?"



"Pretty low odds, most of the time, it's the pegasus that gets hit with an arrow. I wouldn't say that getting shot by an arrow is a welcomed occurrence."

**Tantallos: Move closer to the other group. [13,7]**



"Good luck, fighter. I will try to see what I can do over there."



"Hehe...well this is actually being fun.. you know..at this point they might be scared, at least the soldiers.. but the leader I doubt."

Derick brandished his iron sword and went at Adarlan.

#### Derick vs Adarlan

Hit:  $112 - 25 = 87$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Damage:  $13 + 2 - 7 = 8\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~



"Don't you dare ignore me!" Adarlan's arrow made a thud when it hit Derick's back, sending him back to the ground.

#### Adarlan vs Derick

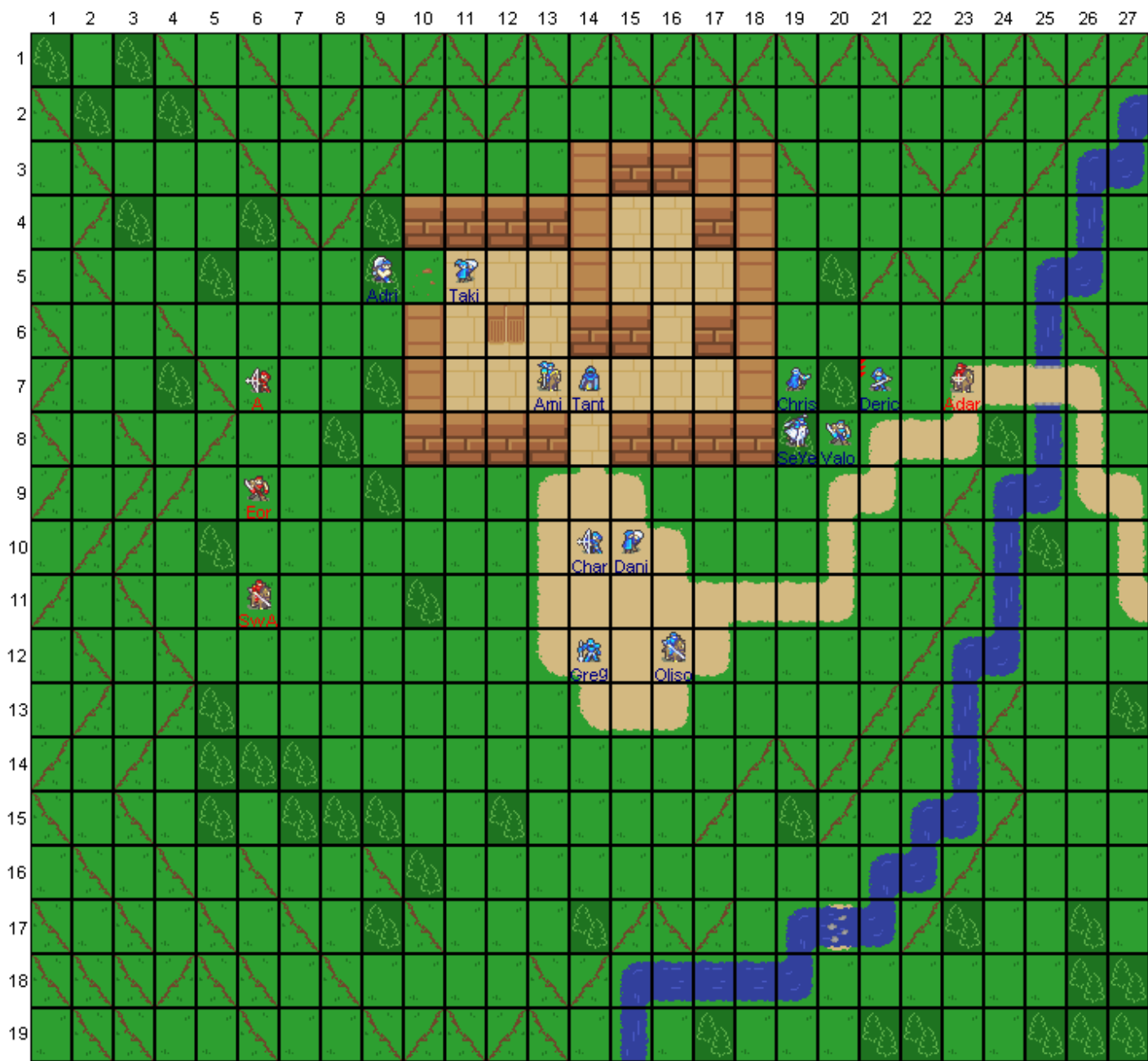
Hit:  $107 - 25 = 82$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $12 - 6 = 6\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Eor gave Adrien a glance and then... went in the other direction.

The rain have stopped, and the clouds are breaking apart, showing splotches of pristine,

blue sky.

~~Player Turn 14~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Enemies:                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 27/27<br>Ami Storm: 15/21<br>Charlotte Braxis: 14/22<br>Christopher Shields: 5/21<br>Daniel: 5/23<br>Derick: -/24 3/3<br>Gregor von Hexham: 11/26<br>Olison Eul: 15/22<br>Seyena Ikane: 5/22<br>Taki Greenstone: 18/18<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 19/21<br>Valor Inara: 10/23 | Female Archer: 24/24<br>Sword Cavalier A: 4/22<br>Eor: 30/30<br>Adarlan: 6/23 |

Ami: Head to 15,9 and heal the guy below me

Adrien: Move to 9,9. No hiding.

Oweeeewoooo~!

#### Ami heals Daniel

10+10 = Up to 20HP restored



*Now's the perfect opportunity to finish him.*

#### Chris moves three spaces east and attacks Adarlan.

Chris ran up to Adarlan and stabbed him.



"Arrgh, damn you!..." And then the proud bow knight fell down.

#### Christopher vs Adarlan

Hit:  $112 - 25 = 87$

Hit roll: 86, hit!

Damage:  $11 + 2 - 7 = 6\text{dmg}$

#### Tantallos: Keep moving. [13,9]

#### Gregor: Move to (12,11).



"Now I'm going to do you a favor."

Chris sat down next to Adarlan, with his legs crossed and his elbows resting on his knees, eyes locked on the dying knight's.



"See? It's not so bad, is it? It might hurt at first, but not for that long. I enjoy the numbness, myself."

He waited a few moments, until it became obvious Adarlan wasn't going to reply since he'd already passed. He sighed.



"I always seem to miss that moment."



"Agus a chríochnaíonn sin do ról sa dráma seo. Dea-oíche."

Chris closed Adarlan's eyes and stood, brushing the mud from his robes.

Charlotte watched from afar.



"Damnit, \*I\* wanted to kill that smug prick."



"There's plenty more smug louts in the world, you'll have your time."



"I think you're right. Speaking of which..."

**Charlotte: Head to 10,11.**

Olison turned to the west side of the windmill, noticing Eor and his guard.



"And where do you think you're going?!"

**Olison: Move to 12,9**



"Everybody's so quick to try and get the kill, but left Derick lying on the ground?" Seyena scoffed, awkwardly flying towards his prone form and hauling him onto the pegasus with a degree of difficulty. She watched Chris perform his odd vigil over the body, but flew on with nothing more than a raised eyebrow and a small amount of curiosity.

**Seyena: Move to 20, 7, pick up Derick. Then move to 16, 9.**



"Hey, Troubadour, mind healing him?" She asked, motioning to Derick, sitting atop her pegasus.

Much movement was had; Seyena didn't got as far as she wanted, and Charlotte couldn't get into the forest...

//Count, people, count!

Valor: Move to 18,11

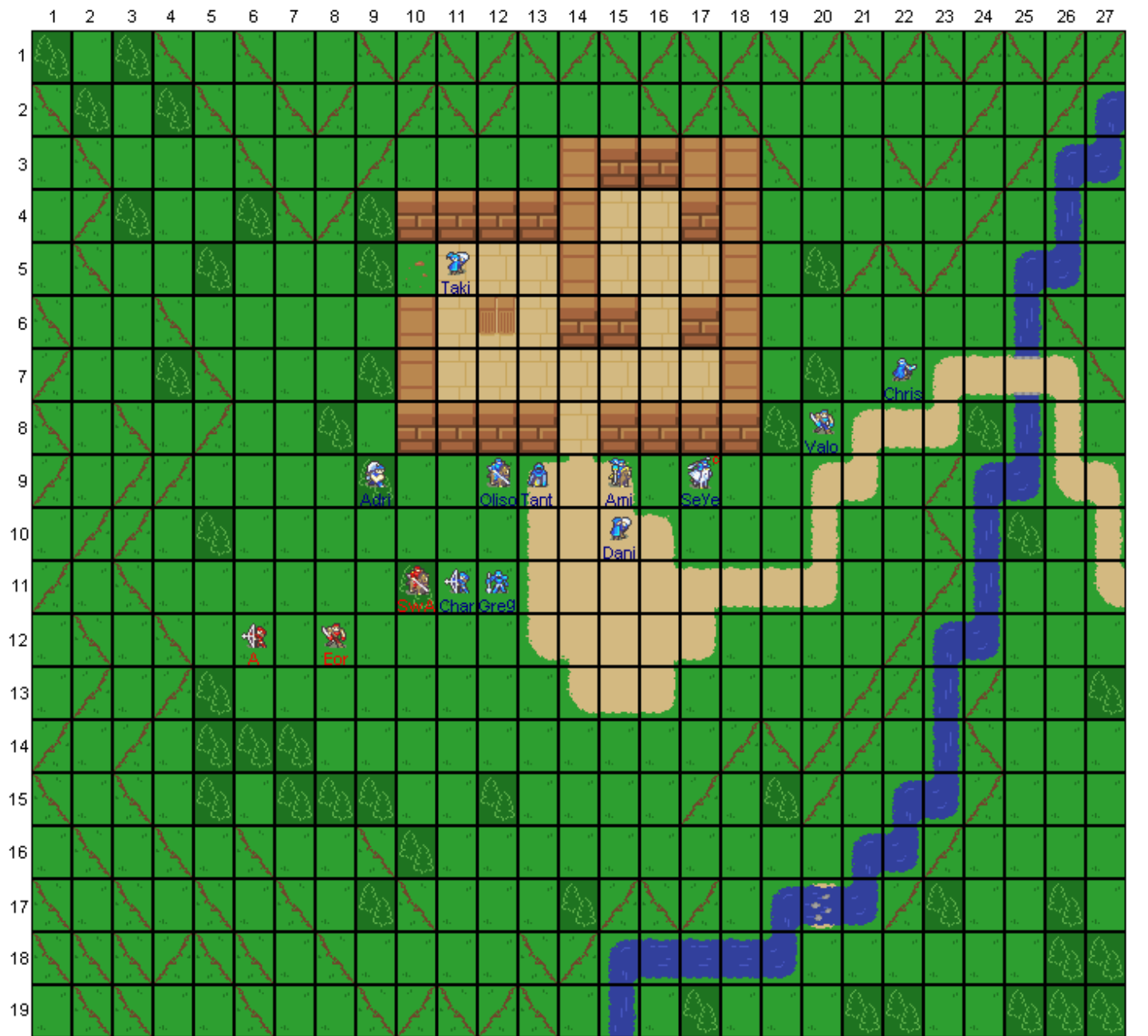
~~Enemy Phase~~

The cavalier jumped with his horse into the thicket and then rushed at Charlotte, slashing with his sword across her chest. Eor and his longbow accomplice slowly approached the windmill's front too.

Sword Cavalier A vs Charlotte

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Hit: $90-2-5-10-22 = 51$      |
| Hit roll: 25, hit!            |
| Damage: $15-5 = 10\text{dmg}$ |

~~Player Turn 15~~



Weather:



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Enemies:                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 27/27<br>Ami Storm: 15/21<br>Charlotte Braxis: 4/22<br>Christopher Shields: 5/21<br>Daniel: 23/23<br>Derick: -/24 <b>3/3 Carried by: Seyena Ikane</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 11/26<br>Olison Eul: 15/22<br>Seyena Ikane: 5/22 <b>Carrying: Derick</b><br>Taki Greenstone: 18/18<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 19/21<br>Valor Inara: 10/23 | Female Archer: 24/24<br>Sword Cavalier A: 4/22<br>Eor: 30/30 |

**Valor: Move to 16,12**



"Ach, they jumped up on us! Ami, Gregor, Olison, assist me!"

**Charlotte: Move 1 N, attack sword cavalier!**

**Chris moves to 19,10**

Twang! And the rider got killed.

#### Charlotte vs Sword Cavalier A

Hit:  $116+2+5+10-17 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-6 = 7$  dmg

**Ami: Head to 12,10 and heal Charlotte**



"I got you."



"Charlotte! Are you okay?!"

Gregor saw the rider fall, but just beyond the stand of trees was the man they came for in the first place: Eor!



"Adrien, let's catch this guy!"

**Gregor: Move to (9, 12). Attempt to talk to Eor. If talking doesn't work, STAB.**

**Tantallos moved close to the area where the cavalier was killed and shook his**

head a bit. [10,10]



"Do not worry.. you did not die in vain. The Plague Dragon appreciates your kindness."

Wave of healing magic engulfed Charlotte and closed her wounds completely.

#### Ami heals Charlotte

10+10 = Up to 20HP healed.

Then Gregor ran to Eor and stabbed at him, as the swordsman seemingly didn't had any automated talk script on him. The spear poked Eor's stomach, who then lifted his blade.



"Let's see how tough PRIXIMA's thugs are this time!" The blade cut deeply into Gregor's side, letting the blood flow as the spearman fell.

#### Gregor vs Eor

Hit:  $97+4+5-15-20 = 71$

Hit roll: 60, hit!

Damage:  $17-1-8 = 8\text{dmg}$

Eor counters!

Hit:  $105+15-4-5-20 = 91$

Hit roll: 31

Damage:  $19+1-9 = 11\text{dmg}$



"A lancereaver, eh? Oh, what a fool I was..."

Gregor fades out of consciousness. Eor spitted to the side.



"Well then, who's next?"

**Adrien: Move to 7, 11. Throw axe at Eor.**



"Gregor, you fool. Fall back and deal with the horseman. Now then Eor, I suggest you stand and fight if you want a fighting chance of survival, since running only means you get an axe to your back."



"Charlotte already shot the horseman down, Adrien!"

Chris yelled across the battlefield.

### Daniel: Move to 9.10

The hatchet has been tossed. Eor leaned to the side, thusly evading said hatchet.

#### Adrien vs Eor

Hit:  $93+15-20 = 88$

Hit roll: 94, miss!

Seyena could really only sit aside and watch the fight. She was dealing with Derick, as well as the fact she had a nasty wound of her own.

### Seyena: Move to 14, 9.

### Taki: Move to 14, 8. Give Vulnerary to Seyena.



"A Lancereaver, hm? Shame, if I didn't have a bolt sticking out of my heart now I'd finally get a use for my training."

### Olison: Move to 6, 10



"You, Archer! I'd say this is quite enough death for the day. And for what, a stone?"

Whilst Seyena was getting herself new vulnerary, Olison moved forward.

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The archer girl moved a bit away, pulled on the string of her longbow and shot at Adrien, hitting him in the shoulder.

#### Female Archer vs Adrien

Hit:  $87-15 = 72$

Hit roll: 6, hit!

Damage:  $12-7 = 5\text{dmg}$

Eor ran past uncounscious Gregor and appeared at Ami's side. He looked only briefly at her demonic horse, and slashed at her, knocking her off the black steed.

#### Eor vs Ami

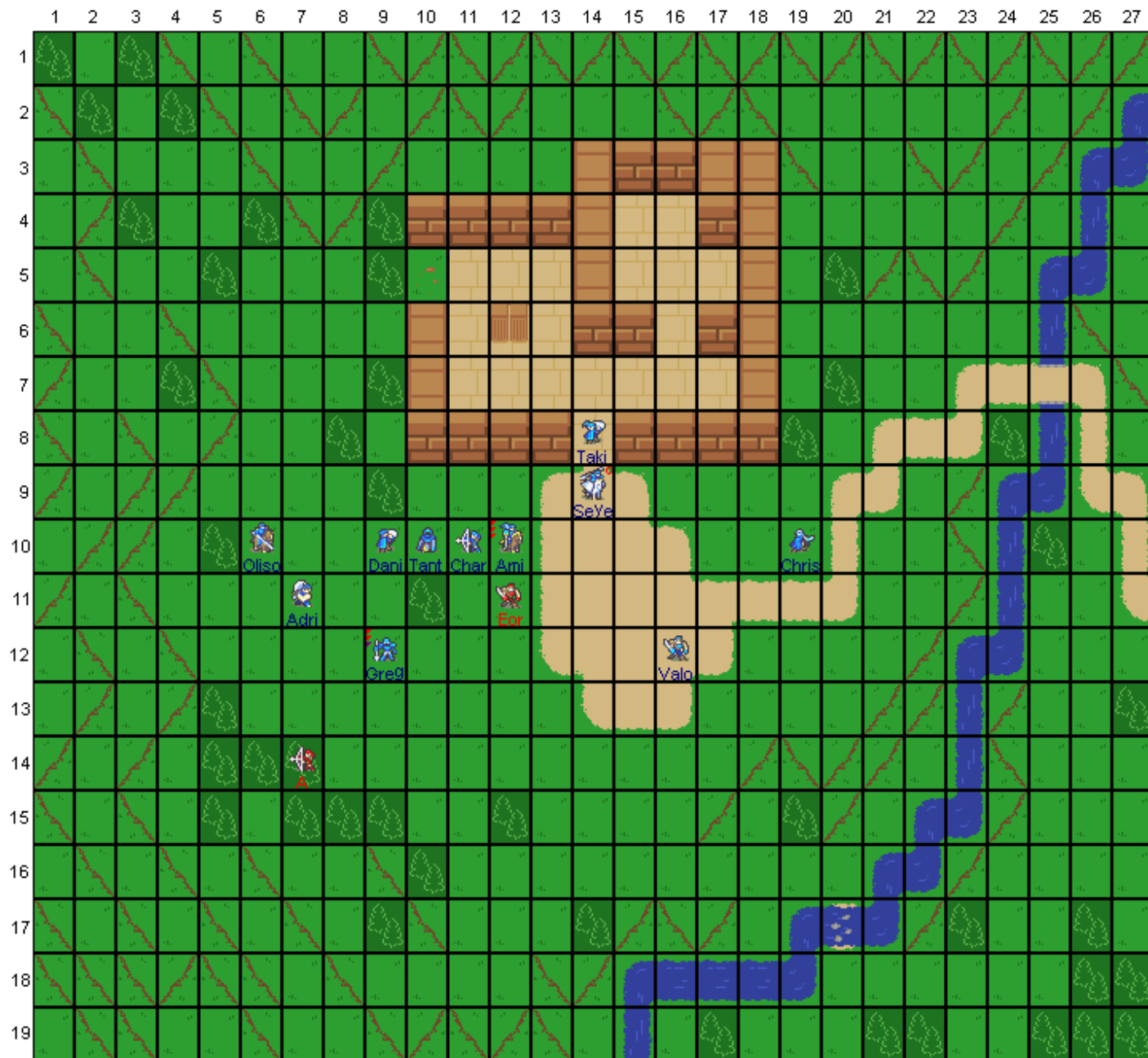
Hit:  $105-5-15-20 = 65$

Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage: 19-1-2 = 16dmg



"And that's two."

## ~~Player Turn 16~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Enemies:                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Adrien: 27/27<br>Ami Storm: -/21 3/3<br>Charlotte Braxis: 22/22<br>Christopher Shields: 5/21<br>Daniel: 23/23<br>Derick: -/24 3/3 Carried by: Seyena Ikane<br>Gregor von Hexham: -/26 2/3<br>Olison Eul: 15/22<br>Seyena Ikane: 5/22 Carrying: Derick<br>Taki Greenstone: 18/18<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 19/21<br>Valor Inara: 10/23 | Female Archer: 24/24<br>Eor: 24/30 |



"Damn! Gregor!"

**Charlotte: Move 1 S, 1 W into the forest! TWANG Eor!**

Twang! Went an arrow toward Eor, hitting him right in the back.



"Oh dammit, that hurt!"

**Charlotte vs Eor**

Hit:  $116+10-22 = 104$ , autohit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $13-8 = 5 \times 3 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Adrien: Move to 11,11, Attack Eor.**



"Stop running Eor, You're beaten, completely and utterly. Stop prolonging the inevitable."



"No one else has to die if you hand over the stone!"



"Such a big man, attacking a helpless girl."

Ami? growled from the ground as a tattoo appeared for a second on her cheek.

Adrien ran up to Eor and smacked him hard into his side, knocking him down.

**Quote from: Adrien vs Eor**

Hit:  $93+15-20 = 88$

Hit roll: 62, hit! Crit roll: 2! //I'm frowning so hard right now :I

Damage:  $17+1-8 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$

Coughing up blood, Eor rolled onto his back, looking at the sky as the pool of blood under his grew. There was a high-pitched scream as the archer girl ran away.



"...Perhaps I've underestimated... you. Just a bit..."

## ~~Chapter 2 Complete!~~

**Chris moves to 12,10 and uses a vulnerary on Ami.**



"Let's get you back on your feet."

Chris said as he grinned, holding out a gloved hand to help her up.



"Thank you."

Ami blinked and the tattoo disappeared.



"Best start get started healing everyone else."



"Damn it, get back here!"

**Olison chased after the fleeing archer.**

The archer girl seems to have either dissappeared, or had an escape route - one way or another, Olison couldn't find her in the thickets.



"Urgh, that leaves no-one to question. The stone better have been on Eor's person or we've just wasted dozens of lives, our standing to the village, AND days of our time."



"Eh, what's done is done."

**Chris moved to Eor's side and went through his pockets. If he found the stone,**

he took it.



"Damn, that was a good hit. And I have to say, I'm suprised this hatchet lasted as long as it did, usually they break by now." Adrien said, before moving over to the now lifeless corpse of Eor.



"Right, let's bring you back so we can get paid. And no looting Chris." he said, lifting Eor's legs up and started to drag the body to the river.



"Thank goodness that's over." Valor cleaned his sword on the wet grass, sheathed it, and took stock of himself. "Eurgh. I'm a mess. I think that was, hands down, the hairiest job I've ever done."



"If it isn't on him, we search his estate. Worst case scenario, someone is already moving it, in which case we go after them." Valor shrugged.



"I told you... you won't get... the... stone... from..." His last breath sounded like a chuckle.

What's more important was that Christopher couldn't find the stone in any of Eor's pockets. Or his shirt. Or belt. It wasn't even in his pants nor shoes.



"Estate raid time."



"Seems that way." Valor glanced over at Ami's horse for the first time, and did a visible double take. "...Did you know your horse is... What am I talking about, of course you do." Valor silently filed away Ami's horse under the 'Not My Problem' column.



"He could've swallowed it. We can cut him open once the body is cleaned up."

Olison heaved a heavy sigh.



"Great, more needless risk. The stone's probably hidden or guarded, or both."

Olison gave a heavy glare to Adrien.



"And further, your contract was for the stone, not Eor's head or guts."



"Sure, but there's always a chance for a bonus due to his death."

Olison turned away, lowering his head into his palm, muttering something quietly.



"It's like I've traded one group of savages for another."



"What Olison said. The job's not considered complete until I hand the stone over to Lady PRIXIMA."

Chris said to Adrien as he stood and put his hands in his robe sleeves.

Charlotte ran up to Chris after hearing this.



"Well? Did you find it? Is it safe?"

She looked awfully exasperated. He turned to Charlotte.





"No such luck, I'm sorry to say. So, let's tear apart Eor's estate. I'm sure you can find some jewelry or something there to suit your fancy. Mercenaries like to loot, if I'm not mistaken."

He looked around the group.



"Just so long as we're all clear that the stone isn't up for grabs."



"It'd be awfully hard to get paid without the stone."

Charlotte glared at Chris.



"You think my interest in this mission is limited to collecting mere shiny baubles? My armor is but a series of dirtied rags!"



"Forgive me. You're both a woman and a mercenary so I thought that would be your interest. If anything, blame your leader for my beliefs that you lot thirst only for riches. Although... are you really saying you don't want to find things to sell so you can afford decently protective armor?"



"...I like your thinking. I'll loot the estate with our Thief momentarily. Perhaps a bonus or two is in order."



"Ready when you are Miss."

Daniel walks over to Gregor and starts patching him up.



"Eh, even if we don't find the stone on these grounds, there might be a hint somewhere. You don't leave ancient family heirlooms unwatched, and if there's a guard, there's a payroll."

Gregor revived somewhat from the first aid.



"Owww...What happened? Did we win? Is everyone okay?"



"We won. I'm just glad you're alright. It's funny: when we first met, I took you as a lightweight rookie soldier. However, I'm entirely sure we could not have won this battle without you holding the line at the door."



"You are kind, but I don't think I could have done it without your support, Charlotte. Your skills with a bow are amazing, after all, and the knowledge that you were close by kept me fighting when I probably would have dropped from exhaustion otherwise."

Charlotte blushed at Gregor's praise.



"Eheh. Same to you."

---

Olison approached Seyena, who was still carrying Derick.



"Is he still breathing? I didn't take a bolt through the chest just to have him die out here."



"He is fine for now, but the troubadour should look at him." She takes her bloodied hands away from Derick, dismounting with a small wince.

Olison nodded in agreement.



"Storm has definitely got her work cut out. Probably high time I got this thing removed, it's starting to muck up my armor."



"I think nearly all of us should. Are you all right?"



"Well, I got shot by an arrow and fell quite a distance, but it seems I'm alright." She says, giving a shrug. *Besides, I'm far from in the worst shape here, I can't complain.*



"How are you feeling? You nearly got stampeded." She asks, turning to Valor.



"I'm feeling extremely sore. Several untreated wounds, etcetera. I'm alive though, just like everyone else. With the lady on horseback here, that's what matters."

Olison looked up to the sky, when they left it was just early in the evening, now...



"Hm. It's been a while, if the estate's too far we may need to camp."

---

Adrien carried Eor's body down to the ford, before dumping the body into the water, holding it only by the right forearm...

Some point later, Adrien hoisted up Eor's corpse, and placed it on the riverbank.



"Right then, let's see if you didn't decide to eat the damn thing."

He then started cutting up the corpse's digestive system, which would've likely held the stone if he had swallowed it.



Valor spoke to Chris while watching Adrien's actions at the riverbank. "Do you have any idea what the size of the stone is?"



"...Good point. I'm just hoping it's not a small stone because that'll be an absolutely monumentous task to find, and they could hide it anywhere."



"Not particularly... Valor, was it? Just that I'll know it when I see it."

He turned to Charlotte.



"I'm coming to the estate as well. I have something of a talent for lockpicking myself and I really must insist on joining the search for it."

For once his voice was as cold as his eyes, making it plain he wasn't going to budge on those terms.



"Mind if I come along? It's either that or stay here and listen to..."

Gregor gestures towards the river, which was thankfully out of view though the sounds of butchery continued.



"...that."



"We should probably all search. No reason not to. And yes, my name is Valor." Valor extended a hand to Chris. "I don't recall us being properly introduced. I must say, your calm on the field of battle is impressive."

He looked at Valor.



"No, I don't believe we have. My name is Christopher Shields. I'm Lady Prixima's liaison to these mercenaries; Olson is my partner for this mission. How do you do? As for my calm, well..."



"I guess I'm just used to it. It's as simple as that."



"Let me finish, then we'll go into town. We're going to need a lot more supplies, along with some pitch before we assault the manor house."



"Um. Why would we need pitch? You aren't planning on setting buildings on fire, are you?"



"We're not being paid for arson, unless I'm much mistaken."



"Well, the stone is fireproof. And we don't get paid by the method Valor, we get paid by the objective. If fire happens to be the easiest way to complete our objective then we use fire. If not, we use other alternatives."

Chris turned and looked toward the river.



"So what? Eor's dead. It isn't as if he's going to complain."



"Anyway, as many of you can come along as you like. I have no objections. Except to burning the house. I may want something in there for myself and it would be very hard to find something I might like among ashes."



"Well, better to search through the ashes than to suffer several injuries to vital areas, isn't it Chris?" Adrian said in a sardonic tone.



"This has nothing to do with getting paid! We're not bandits!"

He turns to Adrien, angry but still weak.



"This mission has already gone horribly wrong from killing the militia, and now you want to burn down buildings?"



"I'm a mercenary. For me at least, it has everything to do with being paid."



"Gregor, you tirelessly complain about my own amorality, yet fail to look at what your liege is doing as well as the behavior of some of your comrades. I doubt you have any sort of moral high ground to judge people from." he said, focussing back on searching the carcass for the stone.



"That's rich, coming from you..."



"I'm shocked - absolutely and utterly shocked - that you people let that sociopath be your leader."

Chris's words might have been sarcastic, ironically hypocritical, or just meant to stir up trouble. It was hard to tell.

Olison shrugged before returning to a sharp stare.



"Chris may just be being Chris, but he's got a point honestly. It makes me

curious what kind of man your last leader was, the one that PRIXIMA actually wanted for the job."

Chris shrugged.



"As long as we understand that you answer to me, Adrien, and not the other way around as long as you work for Lady PRIXIMA. I'm not one of your mercenaries; you're one of ours."



"Besides, your methods will only attract yet more attention. We would have to set the fire, wait for the fire to burn the entire house down - assuming it doesn't start raining again and put it out - and then search through the wreckage while people come to see what's going on and generally cause a fuss. Or we could do it my way and break in, wipe out what little resistance there probably is given Eor likely gathered his forces to stomp us out before we got close to the stone, search the house, and be off without such flashy displays."



"My, my. I did not even have the opportunity to "speak" with that mercenary too, that is so unfair. So, now what are we going to do?"



"Now now Chris, please don't start trying to assume that Eor intended to survive this. And while PRIXIMA may be our employer, she has not dictated and conditions in regards to time or infact any other conditions. All we are is to get the stone, nothing else matters. I hardly assume that the militia would have sent a large number of their troops to dispatch of us. If anything..." Adrien stood up and started walking back towards the party, not paying much heed to the dissected corpse of "Eor".



"I doubt that was the real Eor. Odds are this was a diversionary attack so they could move the stone into a new hiding place. I have a doubt that the information gathered by Taki was false, or even fake information to throw us off. Considering the family reputation, I would not be suprised if PRIXIMA's retainers are so incompeant that they need outside help in order to solve thier own problems. And do not forget that we could easily leave PRIXIMA's employ for another lord or merchant."





"That seems unlikely, considering that Knight Archer's attitude. And what kind of clients do you think you're going to attract leaving a job half finished? How long have you been a merc, exactly?"



"We are not burning down houses, and we are not going to loot and kill innocent people!" Seyena exclaims loudly, looking at Chris and Adrien both with an incredulous expression. "We're here for a stone, not a body count!"



"Brave and sensible. Nice." Valor smiled. In the privacy of his thoughts, Valor added, *Not too bad to look at either.*



"I have to agree here. How we do the job is as important as doing it; reputation matters."



"Now Valor, I should assume you know of magic right, along with acting, this could be used to create a very convincing facade. I suspect that her ladyship also intended this battle to happen, due to the intelligence that Taki received, and in my opinion, the choice to use Taki as our informant. If anything, I think Prixima is intend to get two jobs done whilst only paying for one."



"...You're not big on the idea of trust, or honor, are you Adrien?" Valor spat on the ground. "See that? That is what a merc without honor is worth. First thing I learned in this work is people need to be able to believe you if they're going to hire you." Valor looked at the others imploringly. "We should get moving. The sooner we search the manor, the better."

Tantallos rolled his eyes and crossed his arms.



"Not wanting to be negative or anything, but we will get stomped by his army if we just go around looking for the stone without any kind of plan, some of us barely



survived this fight. Or at least we need more people to assist us."

Derick rolled off Seyena's pegasus and landed in a mud puddle.



"Ow..."

Olison stifled a small chuckle.



"Still alive? Good. Let's get you patched up before those cuts get infected. Little help, Storm?"



"Thanks... I feel like I got ran over by a griffon. What happened? Did we win? I don't remember anything after I got rushed by all those horsemen..."

Derick looked around and saw the messed up body lying on the ground and his allies arguing again.



"Oh."



"Yes, 'Oh'. In summary, Eor's dead, the stone we were looking for is not here, and apparently Adrien wants to feed his inner pyromaniac by burning down his estate, all the while spouting conspiracy. Honestly now, how did you survive this long by distrusting your employers?"

Olison looked over to Gregor.



"And ignore him, Gregor. Pixmapia may be ambitious, but there are tyrants out there who would not give his soldiers the choice to be moral when issued orders."

Gregor began to stagger away.



"I need some fresh air; something about this place turns my stomach. Let me know before you run off to torch any homes."



"Probably all the corpses. Do you mind if I walk with you, soldier?"



"I suppose not. Valor, isn't it?"



"Yes. And I believe your name is Gregor, correct? I hope you don't think ill of me. We are both mercenaries, but I am not cut from the same cloth as Adrien."

Charlotte facepalmed at Adrien's ridiculous conspiracy theory and pyromania.



"Daniel, Chris: you guys should handle the estate. I don't think I'm ready to be around when something inevitably horrible happens."

She quickly sprinted up to Gregor and Valor.



"Why don't we head south? I could deal with a break from these guys. Besides, I have something I'd like to talk about in confidentiality."

Charlotte piqued Gregor's interest, but he decided to say nothing until they could get a good distance away.



"I don't think we should stray too far. Without the Dragonstone, our job isn't yet complete."



"Feel free to stay if you like. I'd rather be far away when I talk about this. It only concerns me, Gregor and someone else I cannot mention."



"Maybe it's conspiracy, maybe it's not. But it's best to expect every possibility, every potential move a foe can make. And Tantallos, half of the failings within this battle on our side was due to a lack of co-ordination between everyone. Now Valor, the very "Honour" the nobles espouse is nothing but a way to restrict the more trustworthy of their number while leaving the ones with enough cunning to do as they please. But trust, I think not trusting anyone here is a learned trait. And you lot are not going anywhere. We will not raid the manor before we are rested and resupplied, We will not charge foolishly into the enemy spearwall and we shall certainly not give them the satisfaction of victory."



"We won't go far. And don't forget, I work for PRIXIMA, not you."

Olison heaved another sigh.



"You're outnumbered on this, Adrien, let's drop the conspiracy and arson and just lick our wounds and rearm, my ears are starting to go numb."



"If you say so. I just hope they do not have a LOT more of them waiting for us."



"And here I thought these would be professionals, not soft-bellied whelps fresh off the teat. Guess that's why her family needed so many mercs."



"Well, that settles that."

Chris found a shady tree to sit under and relaxed.



"Exactly. She wants us to grab a stone, not do a mass *genocide*." Seyena gives a pointed look towards Adrien. *How did a man like this get in charge?*



"Just stuff it already." Seyena scoffed. She watched the group depart, but she couldn't catch up to them now, not in her condition. *And I had wanted to ask him something.*

She pulled her pegasus towards the river (Although, away from the mauled corpse), letting out a sigh. The entire back side of the pegasus, which used to be a gleaming white, was now painted a deep crimson. And she didn't look much better, her armor was covered in blood. Those of others, and her own. She set about trying to wash off the blood upon both mount and rider.

Suddenly Adrien slipped into the river, faceplanting the Eor's gutted body. Besides intestines and bones and blood, there was nothing else inside the old man's body.



"Well, at least he didn't pull that stunt." Adrien said, before climbing out of the river.

---



"It's funny, you know. I used to read adventure stories about mercenaries when I was younger. Full of selfless heroism, chivalry, stuff like that. I always wanted to be one of them."

He let out a wry chuckle.



"You seem like a decent sort, *especially* compared to that maniac, but I think the reality is starting to set in."



"Lead the way, I suppose."



"If you insist on leaving the group, it'd be somewhat safer if I joined you."



"It's not a pretty occupation, and I have done things I'm not proud of. But I keep my word, and I am not yet so far gone that I take joy in slaughter. Tell me, what is

the Lady PRIXIMA like? I have never met her in person. Is she just, and fair?"



"For a...certain definition of just, I suppose. Criminals are treated quite harshly under her command. She wasn't my first choice for commander; I think my father may have had some say in my posting at her fort."

Gregor was a little surprised to speak as openly as he did, but he was tired and irritable.



"Just so long as she has her reasons for this job, I'll rest easier. As a relatively unknown mercenary, I can't afford to pick and choose my employers, but it helps to know that they aren't monsters. Why is Adrien the leader here?"



"It's complicated. See, his former leader was killed - poison, I believe - before his group could start this job. Someone else was in charge, but he and Adrien had a falling out after some questionable tactics. He's the only one of the original mercenary group to step up to the plate, though I wouldn't mind a change in leadership once we get back."

Charlotte nodded and began walking south. After the arguments of her other allies were quiet and distant, she decided to confess to Gregor as they were discussing PRIXIMA and her leadership.



"Since the start of the missions, it's become apparent the Dragonstones have some kind of amazing power or worth beyond their mere rarity. I mean, Eor stood there and died for his treasure. He wasted his own life and lives of dozens to protect, what? A family bauble?"



"You'd be surprised what a man will do for treasure, Char. Your experiences with bandits should have taught you that'd they kill dozens for far less than a Dragonstone."

She tilted her head to the ground, unwilling to look at her allies.



"It's very concerning. To put this as bluntly as possible: I know the location

of a second stone, and I think Seyena, our Pegasus Knight, might be its rightful heir. But only now is it clear there's amazing value held by the stones. The idea that someone could find out about it and start this sort of bloodshed again... it's very unnerving."



"Again? This sort of thing has happened before?"

Gregor tried to parse this for a moment.



"That's...quite a claim."



"I don't know for sure. I only know she looks and speaks a lot like the man who originally handed me the gem a week before my home village was torched. Whether the invasion was to find the stone or for some other reason I've never found out. You can probably guess where I've kept it all this time."



"You're saying that she's nobility?" Valor asked, having no idea about where Charlotte may have hidden the stone.



"Perhaps. She doesn't look at all like the people I spent childhood around in the northern mountains, and she claims to be from the same area."



"Well, I don't think you'd carry it around, and if it was back in your home village the invaders likely would have found it..."

He lowered his voice to the barest whisper.



"The forest I met you in! You mentioned you were living out there for some reason, but you wouldn't tell PRIXIMA why!"

Gregor was slightly thunderstruck, and wondered if this was all a blood-loss induced hallucination.

Valor gave a look of disapproval at Gregor's whispering, though he could not make out what he said.



"I know enough already, there's no point hiding anything from me. I hope you realize that. You have my word I won't betray anything either of you tell me in confidence, if it makes you feel better."

Gregor pinched the bridge of his nose, irritated. His latest wound was aching terribly despite Daniel's ministrations; he was beginning to sorely regret storming off without having Ami work her magic first.



"My apologies, Valor. I didn't mean to cut you out of the loop like that."

He repeated what he said before, though still quietly so that only Valor and Charlotte could hear.



"I see." Valor crossed his arms, and thought quietly for several moments before speaking again. "Have you considered what course of action you plan to take? I'm certain that if certain other members of the group were to find out, they'd be extremely... Opinionated. Also, Charlotte? I take it you haven't discussed any of this with Seyena?"



"Nnnot exactly. I alluded to part of this before the mission, but I think it would be best to show her instead of tell her."



"Probably for the best. At least she seems like a decent person, which will be good if she actually is some sort of heir."



"Is it nearby? Otherwise, it might be difficult to do that until after we complete this job without drawing suspicion. Afterward, we can break off from Adrien's group and claim that we're starting our own mercenary team. Not that I'd be opposed to doing that for real. Of course, Gregor is a career soldier. That may not work well."

It would be around this time that a stream of green liquid (and some solid chunks) flew out of one of the trees. What it hit showed something not very... good.

Namely the fact that Adrien may've heard the entirety of the conversation, and was likely close by. Admittedly, the vomit may've said something else, but vomit doesn't talk.



"We can worry about that later. Right now, we need food, medicine, and maybe some rest."

He glanced at his spear, but it seemed to be in decent shape.



"Some of us might need weapons as well. We better head back to the group so we can discuss our plans. Hopefully Adrien has given up on his pyromania for now."



"I'm fine with heading back."



"Charlotte, are you ready to go?"



"Yeah."

**Charlotte heads back to the group to consider next actions.**

---

Tantallos began talking to himself and whoever was nearby.



"Dragonstones are way more important than you think they are.. I would not be surprised if we were doing something "wrong" to get it. After all, there are too many people wanting to take that little thing... I would love to study it sometime. But it is like I said, many people would take it without caring of the consequences or how many they will have to kill to get it."

Tantallos began to walk in circles giving a quiet hum wondering about something.





"...You know. The dragonestone have many powers.. do not you think "the lady" had it all planned? She knew where it was located, and instead of going there by herself or with her own soldiers, she sent us."

Tantallos shrugged to himself as it seemed nobody was really interested on hearing anything and just opened a book to check what he could learn from it.



"Well, back to the old days."

---

Olison made his way upriver, away from Eor's corpse, and shore a bit of cloth from a nearby soldier's uniform. Dismounting and leading his horse to the fresh(er) water, he sat and prepared to tug at the bolt lodged in his heart.



"Bloody bow knights..."

Olison sat cross-legged next to the stream, fashioning the cloth into a makeshift bandage. He took a momentary glance over to Seyena who was washing her own armor before turning to his own.



"Right. This one's probably too deep to heal completely with a staff anyway. I've done worse before..."

Olison wrapped his hands around the bolt and gave a stern tug, the bolt instantly slid out, and with it a fresh coat of blood.



"URGH! Honor in victory, death before failure, honor in victory death before failure-"

Olison pulled his armor off and let it soak in the river before quickly applying the bandage. Minutes later he covered his chest in a large vest of bandage, and after ensuring the wound was sealed, pulled his armor back on.



"Hm. Soft-bellied whelp, my arse."

---

Seyena finished washing her pegasus, having long since cleaned herself off. Although the pegasus was far from perfectly clean, at least she wasn't drenched in blood any more. Now it came down to her side, which had been pierced by the arrow. It had fallen off when she fell, most likely. Or, the arrowhead broke off inside, which would be worse.



*I don't wish to waste a vulnerable, and I think a proper healer should look at it anyway.*

She gave her pegasus a reassuring pat, taking a small bit of cloth from a saddlebag. She used it to make a very impromptu bandage until she could find that troubadour. At least she wouldn't bleed out now.

---



"So.. now we recover ourselves from the previous fight and move on to look for it on the village? Or is there anything else to be done?"



"I'd suppose so, until someone has a plan of what to do next, or the militia makes a move first." Seyena says, sitting down with her back against a tree. *Although I'm sure that they know where we are.*

Olison stretched his shoulder, ensuring the bandage underneath was still in place.



"Leaving here is probably the best idea in any case. For the stone, though, our best lead is going to be in Eor's manor, as was just said. The question is- will there be resistance, and are we prepared enough to meet it? I would suggest resupplying, but the village is no doubt is on to us now."

Tantallos looked to the side to stare at Seyena and gave a shrug.



"We can't wait for the enemies attack first. You are right about them knowing our location, so the chances are that they are bringing a lot of soldiers to get us."

The shaman crossed his arms and looked up for a moment, taking some time to think.



"Of course there will have resistance, I told you what that stone is capable of,

most of people would kill thousands for it. And you got a good point there, we need to be ready for it, if we already faced a large group like that now, we should expect many more on the village."



"This is assuming that the common militiaman knows of the dragonstone and whether Eor even possessed it. They will be angry over Eor's death, not clamoring for a mythical object they've never heard of. And it's also likely that we've faced the more trained regiment of the militia here, that which is left is likely disorganized. I'm more concerned about any security in the manor itself."



"Ah, the funny thing is, I don't know anything about the stone, to be honest. I was probably sleeping when you gave your little mystic lectures." She fiddled with her lance for a moment, thinking.



"But as Olson said, the resistance we'll likely face would probably be farmers that are easily scared away, and I don't see the point of fighting our way through the manor. We should have Chris and Daniel sneak inside, steal it, and get out."



"Precisely."

Olson nodded in confirmation before groaning.



"I just wish we didn't have to waste all this just to come to this conclusion. But perhaps the Lady foresaw this? Surely she would have sent a master thief instead of some mercenaries if it were that easy. Maybe the stone's guard has been specifically trained for this."



"Potential for a diversion? Everyone else makes a ruckus at the front, while whoever has the sticky fingers sneaks in?"



"Possibly. But if the guards know the importance of their charge they would be resilient to distraction. But no use speculating on the matter when we don't even know if the stone is there. Eor moved from the manor for a reason- leaving a potentially dangerous artifact unattended? It seems unlikely."

Tantallos placed a hand over his hood like a facepalm.



"Thank you for not paying attention... and maybe you are right about it, but we must keep our guard up, all we have now are just theories, who knows what we really will find? And "the lady" probably knew this would happen.. think about it, she knew the location, she have better soldier than us and instead of sending them, she sent a bunch of mercenaries. Do not you think she knows what is going to happen next?"

He moved a hand under his mantles and pulled a thick and old book out of it.



"For you Seyena, here is the quick info about the dragonstone, its power is beyond anything you could imagine if you use it right... but I am quite sure it would require some kind of ritual, but then again, I did not find too many books mentioning the stone besides talking about the power. But one thing is sure, MANY people would kill for it, and that is what had been poking me, why did not we face other bandits looking for it? How that crazy lady knew about the location and others did not?"

Olison heaved yet another sigh, then looked towards Tantallos.



"Again, are we sure that the militia, or bandits for that matter, even know it is in their possession? The dragonstones are myths for archaeologists and scholars, not common men. And the 'crazy lady' knows because this particular stone was held in the Kesselring family, your employers."

Tantallos shrugged and closed his book.



"Whatever. If we will have to kill again, then we will do it.. heh..hehe... and maybe I get a lighter tome when we return, you know, for specific situations..archers..myrmidons..thieves..the "Flux" tome is not exactly known for being light, so it is a bit hard to carry it around sometimes."

Derick was still sitting up in the mud puddle, having been observing the argument in silence and left there unnoticed by the others. He eventually stood up and walked under a tree to bandage his wounds.



"\*sigh\* Sarius... what would you have done?"



"Everyone who need healing, line up!"

Chris gets up and trots on over.



"I wouldn't mind your assistance. That spear to the spine did me no favors, I can assure you."

A soft glow spring from Ami's hands.



"Minor damage to the spine, right kidney more or less destroy. Give me a moment."

The shaman slowly raises his a hand.



"I need assistance too if you do not mind."



"One second."

Ami walks over to Tantallos.



"Nothing too bad, were you a poorly child?"

Tantallos stares and gives a confused look.



"..Not really? That surely is some random question.."



"It just your organs seem underdeveloped possible showing a long state of illness during childhood."



"I really do not know what you are talking about. If I was sick I would know, or the medics of the place I used to live on."



"Guess you just have small organs then."



"Oh, finally." Seyena walks up to Ami, pointing to her arrow wound. "Could you fix this?"

Ami places a hand on Seyena's wound.



"Through the liver, hold still, there, good as new."



"Honestly, Storm, if I were you I'd demand a larger cut from Adrien with all the work you're doing."



"Maybe."



"I could use some help as well Ami, if you don't mind."



"Okay, and done."



"Ami, when you have a minute, can I get a heal?"



"Here you go."

Derick walked over to Ami and silently gestured to his wounds, apparently still deep in thought.

Ami turns to Derick and mended his wounds.



"Penny for your thoughts?"



"...hey Ami? Who do you think Sarius would have agreed with? In that argument I mean."



"He wouldn't cut and run in the middle of a contract less there a very good reason and I can't see one."



"Good, everyone's back. Adrien's recklessness aside, I see our best option is to press on to Eor's manor while sending Chris and Daniel ahead to scout. Any objections?"



"Just one, sir: We used a lot of medicine in the last fight, and some of our weapons might be in danger of failing. I recommend that everyone takes a look at their supplies, and a small group of us head to a nearby village to see if anyone is willing to barter for new things if needed."



"I have no objections to this if Daniel doesn't."





"My staff is almost dead and I think everyone could use more Vulnerary."



"Noted. Someone discreet could probably find someone who will trade. The problem is that we don't exactly have much to barter with."



"Adrien has gold, and I'm willing to sell my iron bow if needed.."



"Hell, send me to do it. I have a talent for not being noticed. Just tell me what to get for who and how much money you're willing to trust me with."



"Hm. All right, provided Adrien is willing to part with the gold. But our first priority here is medicine and a healing staff, not expensive fancy swords."



"Then it's settled. The rest of us on the other hand should get away from here as soon as possible. We're only going to draw attention like this."



"Now *that* I can agree with. I just hope this whole debacle ends soon."

Gregor inspects his pack; he doesn't need anything, and the iron lance looks sturdy enough for another battle or two.



"No complaints here. If the last battle is any indication we need to be prepared. Tell me when to go."



"...They are not small.."



The more of the keen-eyed in the group could notice something peculiar. Namely, from the direction of the Eor's village, a thin, black tongue of smoke was rising to the skies. Something is burning there...



"...Where's Adrien?"



"I haven't seen him since I went for a walk. Why?"

Chris points the smoke out to Gregor.



"Remember his 'plan'?"

Daniel sniffs the air.



"Is something burning?"

Olison made something of a surprised noise as he grabbed his horse's reins.



"Damn it, what now? Chris, Daniel, can you two get forward eyes on the village? Everyone, we're leaving this place. Now."

**Olison rallies everyone to move into a nearby forest.**



"Very well."

**Chris left for the village.**

Tantallos nodded and moved a hand up for a moment.



"And here we go again."



"Ah- Gregor? Adrien? Where'd they get off to?"

Charlotte saw the smoke.



"Oh, don't tell me..."

### **Charlotte tries to find Gregor.**

Daniel and Christopher sneakily moved toward the village. From quite a distance they could see what was going on there.

There was a knight in bleached-blue armor and brown hair, wielding a rather large spear. A flurry of soldiers, checking on the houses and rounding the population, few other grabbing bucketfuls of water, trying to put a fire of something that looked like a small country estate; as in, poorly constructed and made mostly of wood, bar the stone foundations. The man with the 'pastel' armor and the spear often checked on the various belongings and bags that his soldiers took from the scared peasants or from inside of the abandoned houses.

The spear knight in question was no one else than Aaron himself.

Christopher approached him.



"Hello, Aaron. What's all this then?"

Gregor saluted the knight.



"Lord Aaron? What are you doing here, sir?"

Aaron looked at Christopher with distress on his face, before he recognized the spy. He also nodded to Gregor who appeared in the village seemingly from nowhere.



"Ah, it's you Christopher. As you can see, now that the Eor's band isn't around, we're searching the village. Unfortunatelly, someone set fire to Eor's house and it spread over entire structure. Damned wooden buildings... Considering you're alone

here, either the mercenaries were decimated and you're the only survivor, or the battle were won and you were going here to investigate." Aaron looked around, and the up, at the pillar of dark smoke.



"Oh, the smoke, isn't it?"



"That imbecile."

Chris sighed.



"The 'leader' of the mercenaries you hired is the moron who torched the house. He seemed to insist it would be more efficient to spend days sifting through wreckage than a few hours ransacking the place."



"Hmmm, is it really that guy? The fire started a while after we got there and started searching the houses. I was under the impression that it was accident. And my soldiers didn't notice.. what his name, Adrien? They haven't noticed him either. But I will take your word - if I will find Adrien, he is going to spend a while with me. Anyway - we haven't found the stone on our own. Had any luck with the Eor and his band?"

In roughly the same time, Charlotte ventured through the hills and bushes to the outskirts of the village, and she could see Gregor, and Christopher, and Aaron.



"No such luck. He didn't have it with him."

Chris looked at Aaron's troops.



"I guess it was for the best our Lady sent you. We'll need the extra manpower to sift through the wreckage in any reasonable amount of time."



"Eor didn't seem to appreciate our presence. He ordered his troops to attack

and most of them were killed in the battle, along with himself."



"One of his soldiers did get away though. Probably long gone by now."

Daniel paused for a second.



"Do you need any help here? An extra pair of hands can be quite useful at times."

---

Meanwhile.



"That a lot of smoke...in the direction we are traveling...should we hurry up?"



"Probably"

Olison stopped with everyone who was following him as they made into a clearing. The smoke was clearly visible above.



"I just hope it doesn't start spreading to these woods. And there's been no report from Chris or Daniel, they must have been held up by something. Keep your weapons sheathed for now, we're moving in."

**Olison rallies the group into the village.**



"Ok then, lets move out..heheh.."

---



"No. I don't think that my soldiers aren't enough to sift through the wreckage. It's basically the only thing left. Or do you really took a lazy turn and want to spend whole day waiting until the house stops burning?"

In the very same moment, there was a crack, then another, and the second floor

collapsed onto the ground one, turning the burning house into burning pile of wooden planks.



"...When the ruins stop burning, that's it." A moment later, the whole mercenary group, bar Adrien, who gone MIA, arrived at the village.

Olison stood at the ready, peering into the road where the burning building just stood.



"Is that... Sir Aaron?"

Olison immediately trotted his horse to the group there. On arriving he firmly saluted, though he visibly winced as he pulled the wound in his chest.



"Sir Aaron, I wasn't expecting you here this soon. I assume Shields has filled you in?"

Charlotte crept out of the bushes as soon as she saw the others arrive onto the scene. Villagers were most likely giving strange looks to this group of mercenaries by now.



"Sir Aaron. Good to see another level-headed ally again. It looks like this is Adrien's doing after all."



"I'm not feeling too good about Adrien as team leader now. He wasn't even around during the battle. The team leader is supposed to give orders and coordinate a strike, not run off and taunt foes alone. And now he ignores us all and burns down Eor's manor? Honestly, even Chris would be a better leader."



"That does appear to be the case, Charlotte. It looks like he threw a tantrum over no one agreeing with him and went off to do it anyway on his own."



"Not much we can do about it now, I suppose."

Chris turned to Aaron.



"So what do you propose we do?"



"*Slowly* make your way back to Kesselring. So, by pure *coincidence*, I will arrive right with you and explain how the stone-hunt went. If, of course, we do find that gemstone. If not, I will try to soothe Lady PRIXIMA's anger by at least some degree."



"...Oh! I should make a quick request. Could you have some of your soldiers, before entirely moving out, search for an archer girl named Liz? She was the only one of Eor's soldiers who escaped from the battle. He may have given the stone to her when it looked like he was going to fall."



"I could take care of that. I trust OLISON to lead the rest of you back to Kesselring, and I would rather remain in this area for the time being. Unless Aaron objects, of course."



"**Damn bears...**" Adrien said, appearing at the rear of the group, looking a little worse for wear, though the scratches and bite wounds he had suffered had started to heal up.



"Now, who started the fire before I could?"



"**You didn't?**" Seyena asked, curious.



"One second."

Ami heals up Adrien's scratches.



"There you go."



"Considering that I was waylaid by a bear attack, and had nothing on my person to set a building alight, I rather doubt it could be me. And I could heal myself up Ami."

Ami frowns.



"Well let see if I do anything nice for you in the future."



"...Bear? You'd have to have wandered off pretty far to run into one, what were you even doing in the last hour?"



"I think I know which girl you're referring to. Unfortunately, armed and in rather angered state, she made the mistake of lifting her bow at my soldiers. I don't have to elaborate what happened next. We searched her body, of course. Unfortunately, she didn't have the stone either. This isn't pretty situation and Lady Prixima won't be happy about it." Aaron then glanced at Adrien, and moved up to him.



"I would like to hear your excuse too, Adrien."

Tantallos followed the rest of the group and gave a quiet laugh.



"Some people just do not know how to spell the words 'Thank you'. heheh.."





"I think we both know we saw the wounds I had before Ami healed those up. I doubt anyone inside the manor, or outside it for that manner, could've inflicted those. Not to mention, that as I have said before, I had nothing on me to start that fire. There was a reason that I was deciding to buy pitch you know, and you can't exactly get that in the middle of a forest."



"Putting aside the whole burning manor debacle, why were you out in the forest in the first place? You disappeared just after Gregor, Valor and Charlotte left."



"Took a hike after our little heated discussion to calm myself."



"Alone. Without mentioning to any of us. Not even a "I'm going for a walk"."



"Peace, Olison. He might be just a reclusive boy."



"Can we stop arguing and focus on the mission?"



"But at any rate, if it wasn't me that started the fire at the manor, do you think his guards could've done it instead?"

Olison heaved another trademark sigh before bowing.



"Pardons, Sir. I'd be more inclined to believe him had he not spent a good half hour of discourse raving on about conspiracy from the Lady to stifle his pay, just



after gutting Eor."

Aaron looked at Tantallos.



"And who you might be? Besides an obvious magician of some kind."

Then he looked back at Adrien and let out a hum.



"After we're done with checking for the gemstone, we will interrogate the peasants to see if they know something. Also, Olison, Adrien is a mercenary, of course he will plot to get as much money as possible. Do tell me the details, though, if you heard them, because I thought that Mercian mercenaries have more honour than greed..."

Tantallos gave a brief bow and rubbed his gloved hands together.



"I am Tantallos. ...from a family really far away from here. As you might know, I am working to "the lady" too. I wanted to explore new places and learn more, so this was a good way to do it, especially because I am also being paid for it."

He tapped his tome and shrugged.



"And if it is not apparent, I am a shaman."



"If no one has any objections, I'm going to go chase down this archer named 'Liz'."



"Er. I believe Lord Aaron said that she had been killed by his soldiers."



"That's what I heard."

Chris cleared his throat.



"Ah. Apologies. I was busy thinking about the fire and didn't hear Aaron say that."

Olison inclined his head.



"After suggesting said arson plan to the manor and preparing Eor's corpse to be gutted- since he wanted to check if Eor had swallowed the stone by the way- Adrien had some colorful words to say about Kesselring's intelligence and military capabilities before suggesting that the Lady intended two jobs to be completed in one contract payment by pinning possession of the stone to Eor. Oh, and somewhere in between all that suggesting that the Eor we slew was a fake and the whole battle was a distraction to buy time for the stone's transport to somewhere safer."



"Having said all that, I'm willing to attribute it to a brief fit of madness brought on by the waste of energy in having to slay the local militia for no discernible result and leave it at that."

Charlotte thought for a moment and remembered something critical.



"Wait. Everyone stop fighting about Adrien for a moment - I'm pretty sure he's telling the truth and couldn't have set the manor on fire himself. As Adrien dealt the final blow, Eor muttered something with his last breath. I remember it distinctly. He said:"



"I told you... you won't get... the... stone... from..." His last breath sounded like a chuckle.



"WHAT IF ONE OF EOR'S MEN SET HIS MANOR ON FIRE SO THAT WE WOULDN'T FIND THE DRAGONSTONE!? That would be the perfect plan!"



"That could very well be it. We know that that archer escaped the battle alive. She, or possibly some hidden observer, could have gotten word of Eor's defeat to someone in the manor."



"The manor's collapsed in on itself, though. I doubt it's possible to search it as it is."



"Hm, probably not. We'd have to wait for the fire and any buried embers to die down to search safely. That could take hours, even days."



"...I said that earlier Charlotte. And honestly, I could see them doing it as a matter of pragmatism. And if anything, it would likely be a distraction while the person with it sneaks off with the stone. And theoretically we could put the fire out you two..."



"Are you willing to go inside that inferno with a bucket? This isn't some one-room cottage here, Adrien. This place is enormous and completely ablaze. The best we could do is put out the fires on the outside; the fires on the inside are too dangerous to go after."



"I'm pretty sure I heard an impressive collapse from the building in any case. It's too late to bother putting out the fire. That place is going to be so much ash."



"So.. do you think it will be on the ashes or do you think someone also took it away and burned the place down to make us think it is there yet while they get away?"

Valor turned his head toward Tantallos for a moment, then returned his gaze to the column of smoke.



"Personally? The latter.."



"Well, if someone HAD run off with the stone after burning down the mansion, I can look for them. I can cover a lot more ground in the air than you all can do on foot." She said, shrugging. "Even if someone hadn't taken the stone, it wouldn't hurt to look."

Tantallos nodded to both and hid his arms under the long mantle.



"Sounds like a good plan, we will have to wait for the fire extinguish and the pieces get cold anyway.."



"Or we could follow Aaron's 'suggestion' and meander on back to the keep. He said his troops would be searching the rubble already anyways."



"I suspect we will not be paid the minute we return to the keep however. Thus, it is in our best mutual interest to continue looking for the stone until the contract is either canceled or we receive payment."

Tantallos moved a hand up but slowly moved it down as the point was already mentioned.



"As the axe guy said, we cannot just return, do you really think they are going to pay us if those guards find it? We would be "failing" on our mission."



"You're quite distrustful of Lady Prixima, Adrien. Bad impressions about your last employer or just worried about your near future? Well, let's make this an extra." Aaron looked into his satchel near his waist and took out a small bag, which made clinking noises and looked quite heavy. He passed it not into Adrien's hands, but into Charlotte's.



"Five hundred or so coins. Just don't mention it to Lady Prixima. Buy yourself some supplies with that, or something. The tent village around the closed Vilino is still there."

### **Charlotte gets 500 gold!**

A piteous noise emanated from Valor's stomach. The mercenary looked abashed.



"Er, I don't suppose we could take some time to get some kind of meal?"

Gregor arched an eyebrow.



"How could you be hungry at a time like this? We need to get on the road as soon as--"

His own stomach emitted a rumbling sound.



"...though a warm meal would probably keep us marching until nightfall..."



"I see. I will have some soldiers give you some of our food supplies." With that, Aaron was away to the group of horses and few soldiers that tended to them and bags that were sitting on the saddles.



"I already ate, but you guys go ahead and grab something if you're hungry. It doesn't seem like we're in any particular rush right now."

Chris stretched, testing the soreness of his stab wound. It felt mostly healed.



"Right, everyone get some rations unless you aren't hungry. once everyone is ready, I want everyone in formation and ready to move out. Got it?"

Shortly afterwards, a soldier brought a bag; inside, there was bread and dried meat. Two other soldiers brought two waterskins - after uncorking, it was clear it's wine inside them. Aaron returned a moment later.



"You're leaving?... Let's meet at the outskirts of the Kesselring Forest, tomorrow, at morning. What do you say, Adrien?"



"Agreed, We'll meet you there."

Olison saluted Aaron again before turning to the others.



"Very well. I'm prepared to move when everyone else is."

And off they went. Toward the Vilino, toward that closed down, plague-ridden city and the small town of colorful tents that have appeared around its gates. Now that the rain have passed and it was afternoon, said tent city was much more lively - people were eating on the fresh air, some were moving crates around, others preparing for journey, and few other were setting up new tents as fat merchants were shouting at them.

Someone, half-seriously, half-jokingly, put a sign near the road, which said "Welcome to Vilino, City of Tents"

Charlotte was happy to see activity in the area. She went over to the merchants and asked about the wares.

**Charlotte inquires what's for sale around here.**

Tantallos followed the rest of the group and glanced around before taking some time to think.



"If you do not mind, I will walk around to check if I can get myself a Worm tome, a not-so-heavy tome will be handy depending of the situation."

Gregor decides to walk around with Charlotte, despite not needing to buy anything at the moment.

Olison's tone lightened on seeing the folk still healthy.



"Glad to see the plague hasn't spread. I wonder if it's passed inside the city."

Upon closer inspection of the various mercantile businesses, there were:

- A bow-maker.
- Weaponsmith dealing mainly with spears and lances.
- Traveling mage selling anima and dark tomes of low quality.
- And a fortune-teller, who also run a small medicine shop.

**Gregor examines the lances on display.**



"Ah! Gregor, a fortune teller! Let's get our fortune told together!"

Few moments of inspection later Gregor could easily recognize javelins and lances, all of common iron and steel alloys. Nothing fancy to ogle at there.



"Sure, that could be fun."

Gregor goes to fortune-teller's stall/tent/whatever.

A green-haired, tanned woman was sitting at the table inside the tent, which was awfully dark inside.

"Welcome." She said curtly, her amber eyes glancing at Gregor more often than Charlotte.

Charlotte glared at the fortune-teller for a moment then perked up.



"Oh! How much for a reading for my friend and I?"

"Four pieces of gold." She murmured and then, from under the table, she procured a small wax candle, red in colour. With a wave of her left hand, the knot on top began to burn with small, yellow fire. She then placed the candle in small ceramic bowl at the top of the table.



"So, how does this work, exactly? I've never been to a fortune teller's before."

"I grab your hand and put it above the fire, and then I look into your skin, and veins, and divine your future from the relentless movements of the etheric fluids inside your palm. Simple as that, but from your outfits, I guess you're not mages and have no idea what I'm talking about."



"You first, then me."

Charlotte then laid down four gold pieces in front of the fortune teller.



"Alright, let's do this!"

Gregor extended his hand towards the green-haired woman.

The woman quietly took hold of Gregor's palm. Her fingers began to brush at his skin, from his wrists, to his middle and index finger, and then she pulled his hand above the fire, so the bottom was lit but the fire wasn't doing anything else than comfortable warmth on the skin.

"...Very interesting. Can I see your hand too, sweetheart?" She asked, tilting her head to the side and looking at Charlotte.

### **Charlotte offers her hand.**

The woman took Charlotte's palm in the other hand, her fingers doing the same kind of movements across her skin. For a brief moment, the fortune-teller's face twisted in a grimace. She faked a smile quite quickly after that and let out a hum.

"...I see the lives of you two intertwined closely. The further in the future, the closer your fates become. I can't see very far into your future, though, which puzzles me, because most of the time I'm able to see as far as into someone's elderly years... so I cannot say that your lives will be long. You might die before my time comes, and I'm already past child-bearing age. That's what I can say you."



"That's not exactly a difficult fortune to tell. I'm a soldier, and she's a mercenary. It's dangerous work."

"Sounds logical. I did see lots of pain in your later years. You might want to enjoy 'now' as much as possible, because the future might have no spare time for you two."





"Hnm. I will need some... Supplies... of my own."

Daniel tries to procure a set of lockpicks from somewhere.

But there was no lockpick maker in the tent city. Nor any more or less shady person who would be dealing in them.

---

Tantallos looked at the mage and presented a brief greet before checking the dark tomes to find out if there were any others besides the basic Flux. Maybe the Worm tome.



"How much money do we have?"

From Dark Magic, the mage had few copies of Flux, a copy of Worm tome and the heavy Carrion tome.

Tantallos rubbed his gloved hands together, clearly interested on two specific tomes and nodded.



"Yeah.. I need to know how much money we have too. Just look at those tomes... I have not seen a Carrion tome in months."

Adrien should still have the leftovers from Prixima, and Aaron's bag was still in Charlotte's hands, it seems.



"Dammit. Where is that axe guy when you need him? Next time someone else should carry the money. Maybe Olison, at least he keeps around...."

Giving a grumble, he looked back to the mage and stared at both of the tomes.



"How much for the Worm and the Carrion?"

"Five hundred for Worm, eight for Carrion. No haggling." The mage spoke quietly and rubbed his goatee.

Tantallos looked to the side and nodded a bit.



"Very well.."



"Where is Adrien anyway?"

He turned around and looked from side to side.

---

Olison paced through the town, looking at the various wares the merchants were pushing. On passing the spear merchant, he made a mental note to check Kesselring's stocks for javelins. Just a few steps more, he stopped dead at the tattoo maker, laughing heartily.



"Ha ha! I didn't know they had these this far south. Where do you hail from?" He spoke to whomever ran the shop.

"...From somewhere else than here. Escarnas." The tattoo maker spoke with irritation in his voice.

Olison's smile faded, and he bowed his head apologetically.



"My apologies, I mistook you for a man of another city. Best fortune with your business, next we meet I may have cause to buy." Olison nodded respectfully before moving on.

The man grumbled under his nose and started polishing a small knife and several long, flat needles.

---

Seyena quietly entered the 'city', peering at wares and other things on sale with a curious expression.

Besides the obvious supplies, there were few merchants dealing in exotic perfumes from Deynastia, an make-shift inn tent and tatoo-maker.



*There are a lot of tents, one of them might have what I'm looking for...* Seyena continues walking amongst the tents, looking for a merchant that sells relics, or magical items.

Unfortunately, there was no one dealing in magical items, antiques or old relics.

---

### **Adrien starts looking for a weapons merchant, one that dealt with axes.**

Adrien found him very quickly - his stand was near the main road. He was incredibly pale of someone traveling in the sunny south, and his hair was black, betraying his Berebian roots.

"Can I help you somehow?" He asked, glancing at Adrien's armor.

Tantallos followed Adrien and poked his shoulder.



"Axe guy, how much money left do we have?"



"Indeed, any axes for sale?"

The merchant squinted his eyes and then began putting down various axes on his small wooden table. Hand axes, normal axes, made of iron and steel. He also had a massive, iron halberd, as well as a spiked hammer, bane of armored knights and such folk.



"Mind giving me a list of prices please?"



"Adrien, I was talking to you. How much money left do we have?"

"I don't have such thing at me... give me a moment." With that, he managed to procure a piece of wooden board and a piece of charcoal. He began scribbling words and numbers at it, and then handed it to Adrien:

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| Axe, iron: 250 coins     |
| Axe, steel: 350 coins    |
| Poleaxe: 400 coins       |
| Halberd, iron: 300 coins |
| Hand axe: 280 coins      |
| Short axe: 410 coins     |
| Hammer: 420 coins        |

### **Adrien handed over 250 gold to the merchant in exchange for an iron axe.**

The merchant counted the money, and then handed Adrien the heavy axe. It's edge was sharp and shiny, the axe must've been made very recently.



"Thank you good sir. And Tantalos, that leaves us with roughly 600 gold, and since Ami needs a new staff soon I doubt we can afford to get you anything."

Tantalos facepalmed and shook his head a bit.



"That is just great...I knew I was supposed to bring my own money."

---

Chris wandered into town and looked around to see if there might be anything of interest to him.

Ami heads over to the mage.



"Do you have any heal staffs?"

"Nope, lil miss. I only deal in magical tomes."



"Do you know where I can get?"

The mage just shrugged his shoulders.

Chris approached Ami.



"I overheard. You're looking for a new staff, right? I'll help you find one. If you want me to, that is."



"That would be lovey, thank you."

Unfortunately, even when teamed, the duo couldn't find anyone selling magical staves, even the simplest ones.

Chris tilted his head to the side.



"Fate seems to be mocking us. Perhaps there's one in the city. If you'd like me to risk it, I can sneak in there and look around."



"Nah, best not."



"All right. I wonder if I can find Esteban around here."

He glanced around.



"He's this traveling merchant I know. He's usually in this region of the country, this time of year, but he might be closer to Kesselring then here and he doesn't exactly have the most stable inventory. I'll take a look around for his cart."



"Okay let go."

After another tour around and between tents, the two didn't find Esteban. One merchant, when asked, mentioned that he saw Esteban at the north, near Fezzan city, less than a week ago.

Chris sighed.



"Well, this is just going to make things more difficult. We should've looted that healing staff off of Adarian's troubadour. Anything else you'd like to look for?"



"Only vulnerarys, but everyone running low on thoses."



"Yeah, my pouch of healing dust is looking pretty sad and empty right now too. Let's go find those."

A friendly bystander pointed the duo to a fortune-teller's tent, as she was known to deal with medicine around.

Inside said tent, Christopher and Ami found Charlotte and Gregor.

"Another pair of lovers? Please wait outside a moment, I'm busy with those two sweethearts."

Chris looked at Ami.



"Ami and I? I don't know. We're pretty split on the rain. She hates it, I love it. That's a pretty big stumbling block to a relationship in my opinion."

His tone suggested he wasn't taking this that seriously.



"All the same, getting our fortunes told could be interesting. Want to give it a shot?"

Gregor turned slightly pink at being referred to as a "sweetheart", hoping that the relative darkness of the tent would hide it.



"Hmm? What are you two doing here?"



"We were looking for a new healing staff originally, but no such luck. So we decided to come here for vulneraries since we heard the fortune teller sells them. I would ask if that's what you two are here for, but considering our hostess's words I think you were here to get a reading. Am I right?"



"Well...yes, actually. Charlotte seemed to think it would be fun, but she's been pretty quiet for about a minute now."



"So...what the price of vulneraries?"

"Hmph, how rude. The telling is ruined. As for vulneraries, two hundred coins."



"Perhaps she's thinking over the fortune you received."

To the merchant, he added,



"If Charlotte here doesn't mind forking over a small amount more, how about giving me a reading as well?"

Ami shrugs.



"If everyone else is going to..."



"Enjoy the 'now'...?"

Charlotte sighed and snapped back to reality.



"Oh. Sorry. I guess I don't need anything - I've still got the use of my iron bow. Chris, Ami, you can have it."

**Charlotte hands the other 496 coins to Chris.**



"Thank you very much, Charlotte. I appreciate it."

**Chris takes the money and buys a vulnerary for himself and Ami, as well as a fortune each for the pair of them.**

The fortune teller lady gave them the two bags of healing powder and then told their future. First, Ami:

"...Hmmm. I see fame, but no glory... power, but no one to command... and you sitting on an ornate chair.. made from darkness and... jewels? Your life will be surely long and twisted, and there are things I don't want to speak of... dark things."

Then, she grabbed Christopher's hand, and began to stare into it intensely.

"Your life, on the other hand, pardon the joke, is cut abruptly in close future... I see a great event in your life, and three branching paths. One path belongs to reason, the second, to loyalty, the third belongs to hunger for power and wealth. I... see... yes... you have to choose wisely, because only one of said paths will make you survive that important event. Which path it is - I do not know." The fortune teller let go Chris' hand and rubbed her forehead a bit with a grimace.

"That was more tiring that I expected... Please leave, I think I need a rest."

Chris grinned.



"I can't say I expected much different. Thanks for your time."



*I can cross loyalty right off of that list, though. I told Prixima when I started working for her that I wouldn't be with her forever. So... reason or power...*

His eyes slid over to Ami for a moment.



*...Her future says power. If I want to stay alive, I should stick with her. I guess I don't have much choice but to wait and see which is correct...*



"I guess we're about ready to move on, then?"



"It one of those fortune that don't make sense till after the event, isn't it?"

Ami turns back to Chris.



"Yes, let move out."





"I find a lot of them like that, although yours sounds better than mine. Want to trade?"

Chris said jokingly.



"Very funny."

**Ami heads back to the group.**



"Hey, you'll never get anything if you don't ask, so it was worth a shot."

**Chris heads back to where the majority of the group is as well.**

---



"OK, we have two new pouches of healing dust, but we couldn't find a new healing staff. Just giving you guys a heads-up on the situation. Now, what's our next move?"



"I guess we head back to where Sir Aaron said to meet him. It's gonna be a long hike..."



"Good, I was afraid the gold would be spent on something less helpful. As Charlotte said, there is little else to do but make our way back."



"OK, I'm riding with Ami again then. It's too far to walk."

Chris vaulted onto the back of the evil-looking horse.



"Once everyone's here, we'll start our journey back."

Valor, having no coin of his own, rested at the outskirts of the tent city, eating the bread and meat he'd been given. It was solid stuff, and would surely keep him on his feet for a good while.



"May as well head out now. My instinct is telling me we're walking into an ambush though. Ami and Chris, I want you two on point as scouts. If there's anything unusual about the meeting place, report back immediately."

Back with the group, Gregor stretched his limbs in preparation for the journey and glanced at Charlotte.



*She's been kinda out of it ever since we heard the fortune...I wonder what's wrong? Should I talk to her?*

He hefted his lance and rested it on his shoulder. Perhaps an answer would come to him as they walked.



"Sending out our only healer to scout for an 'ambush' is a good idea? It would be better if I checked ahead, as I can see quite a bit from the air."



"I think Adrien is afraid of her. He tried to get her locked away on witchcraft charges once."



"What's there to be afraid of?"

Chris asked, reaching past Ami to pat the horse on the neck. Tenebra neighs happily.



"There's a reason I sent Chris along as well. Besides, I doubt you'd be able to see as much due to the foilage blocking your view. Those two aren't exactly the most valuable of the group. And before anyone complains, Ami is only worth something so long as she has a staff, without that, may as well use her as fodder."



"We can get a new staff. Finding someone else who knows how to use one and is willing to join us can be a bit trickier."



"Staffs can be replaced. Dead healers can't." Valor looked imploringly at the rest of the group. "Why is this person tolerated? I don't understand."



"I find myself asking the same question. I can't do much about it except for voice my objections until we get back, though."



"So, Ami is a witch, Prixima is going to kill us all or something, and Eor definitely swallowed the stone- let's cut him up. Next thing you know, he's going to tell us that the villagers are demons in disguise."



"Has anyone found a replacement staff then? If not, quit the complaints and get moving."



"By the Dragon, Adrien! Surely even you should recognize the value in thinking about the future!"



"Adrien, aren't you the guy who's good at hiding in forests? Why don't you scout ahead?"



"That would leave us all in one place to plot against him." Valor said, his voice flowing with sarcasm.



"A good suggestion, but I have a feeling you lot would run off if I did that

though.



"...Then again, I'd assume you'd all run off anyway. Am I right in this assumption?"



"Send the healer and thief as your scout? Don't remember reading that one in the book of war. Let go Tenebra."

**Ami rides ahead.**



"Later! I'll keep her safe!"

Chris yelled over his shoulder as Ami rode off with him.



"I'm not leaving until I receive my pay. At which point I will leave to find a new job with less monstrous companions, make no mistake."



"You must be new as a mercenary then Valor. I can honestly say that unless you retire and join a town militia, you aren't exactly going to find more moral companions in a mercenary. All the other companies do is lay on the positive reputation they have to mask all the nasty things that actually keep them running."

Olison silently palmed his face.



"Ugh. Why do I even bother."



"Enough! Just forget it for now. We can't afford to be wasting our breath arguing with every word that leaves Adrien's mouth when we can just walk."

Olison made his way over to Valor.



"You'll receive your pay in Kesselring, if I recall correctly the lady doesn't like paying her mercenaries impersonally. Also, if you don't mind, can I ask you something?"



"Thank the gods for gracious lords. No, I don't mind the conversation. Ask away."

Olison began to move forward and gestured for Valor to follow. When they were out of earshot of Adrien, Olison would ask in a quiet tone:



"I don't mean to besmirch the occupation, it can be an honorable venture, but why be a mercenary? There are plenty of lords and cities out there who would house and feed men with talent like yours, but to stake it out on your own seems a tad... Unnecessary."

Valor followed Olison, and considered his question.



"...I come from the Peaks." He answered lamely. "In Mercia, when you have nothing left, you take up a weapon and sell your skills. By the time I was far enough from home that I could find Lords or cities that would consider permanent employment... I don't know, I was already used to wandering. I once worked for a noblewoman for 2 months as her personal bodyguard. She paid me handsomely, but... I never defended her. Not once was she in danger in the time I was under contract. I felt like I was taking her money for nothing, so I left."



"I must sound like a fool. Passing up easy money like that."

Olison let out a small chuckle before replying to Valor in a more serious tone.



"Understandable. Undisciplined and with no practice, such easy money makes even the most skilled fat and slow in time. But it isn't just a sword the nobles look for, it's the knowledge of safety. With just presence and the careful, disciplined air

about oneself, one's duty is fulfilled, so I see no money being stolen. Such as your story is, tell me- is it the fight you look to most?"



"Sometimes I worry that it is." Valor sighed, looking at the ground. For a moment, he looked like a child. "You here a lot of stories growing up in Mercia, you know? About the great mercenaries of the past, their triumphs, the ages they brought about... But then, you hear the stories about those men who leave home looking for glory, and by the time they meet their end, they need blood the way you or I need food. That thought scares me. More than death itself."

Olison exhaled sharply, pondering for a moment.



"I wouldn't know of the exploits of heroes in Mercia, I am no Mercian. But I do know that feeling you describe. Blood. Certain men want nothing but to see rivers tainted in it. Certain men want nothing but to speak an order, extend a sword, loose an arrow to unleash a torrent of it. You need not fear that fate, though, if you keep yourself in check. Remember why you fight, and if nothing else, stay your blade and use your head. I have no doubt these great men fought with purpose, all men worthy of respect do."

Seyena had a sudden thought, so she rode next to Valor, her mount walking on the ground in lieu of flying to save strength.



"Valor, how did you learn to fight? Did somebody teach you, or did you sort of teach yourself?" She asked, completely out of the blue.

Valor snapped out of his reverie as Seyena rode up to him and Olison and questioned him.



"Huh? Oh, well, I used the coin I got from selling the things in my house to convince one of the retirees to teach me the basics. Since then, I've just been polishing what I know. Why the sudden interest?"

Olison's face suddenly lit up a bit.



"Ha, was just about to ask that myself. If that's your history then I'd offer

to teach you a thing or two about facing down horsemen- from the last battle it seems like you could use it!"

Valor laughed a bit, feeling somewhat embarrassed.



"Thanks, I'd appreciate any extra tutelage. I certainly wasn't as of much help as I'd have liked to be in that skirmish."



"Well, you stood off against an entire column of mounted soldiers and lived. You're doing something right." Seyena said.



"Thanks to you. If you hadn't swooped in and saved me, I'd have come out of that like Eor."



"Was that what happened? Well done, Seyena. And don't worry, Valor, it was a pretty bad spot to begin with- I certainly didn't expect an entire mounted unit in the militia, that kind of training is rare among villagers."

Olson stopped himself a moment.



"Come to think of it, I wonder just who that guy was, the one leading the column. He wasn't some ordinary soldier."



"The two spies were right behind you, they could have given you a vulnerary. I just kept you out of the fight for too long."

Seyena thought about this for a moment.



"The village really isn't that big, not big enough to warrant that amount of mounted troops. Maybe they were mercenaries hired to help protect the stone?"





"And then they'd have been run down, and me again. You don't give yourself enough credit. As for that bow knight, all I could tell is he was loyal and the way he spoke colored PRIXIMA as the thief. There's likely going to be resentment toward her from this region."

---

Charlotte just walked alongside the rest of them - silently, for the most part.



"It's dangerous work,' yeah. So why keep doing it? Too moral for a mercenary's job..."

Daniel puts his hand on Charlotte's shoulder.



"If you're bothered by Adrien's words, don't worry so much. Not all of us believe that in order to do mercenary work you have to go full blown evil"

Charlotte practically jumped from Daniel's hand on her shoulder out of nowhere.



: "**OH-** No, I uh. I didn't mean Adrien. I don't think he's worth arguing with anymore. It's nothing, I'm just being silly as usual."



"If you say so. Just remember that no one is an island in case you need help in the future."

Charlotte nodded and almost resumed her quiet state but then looked back at Daniel.



"You're so quiet. What's your take on all this? I mean... if you could break off from PRIXIMA, would you do something more 'helpful' or 'right?' Even if just to keep your life and the lives of others safe?"



"Honestly, it depends on what that 'something' is. I generally try to do the right thing, but sometimes all you can do is not do the wrong thing."



Daniel sighs to himself.



"It's so easy to think back and go 'what if I did this' or 'what if I didn't do that'. But once of the most important lessons I've learned is that those thoughts cannot actually change things. It's so easy to forget at times though."

The thief then shook his head.



"But I digress, we're already caught up in this mess and the best we can do now is make sure we can live with ourselves afterwards."



"Yeah. Maybe so. I was thinking more along the lines of changing the future..."

---

Hanging back in the rearguard, Gregor had an opportunity to observe everyone else as they marched. Eventually his natural curiosity took over and he tapped the cloaked mage's shoulder.



"Pardon my intrusion, I don't think we ever had a chance to talk. My name's Gregor von Hexham. What's yours?"

Tantallos looked at the group talking and shrugged to himself, he was not even sure he was supposed to talk right now.



"...Why is Adrien giving the orders again? He sent our healer as a scout without even waiting for our opinion. I think Olson or anyone else here would be doing better leading the group instead of a bea hugger."

Tantallos turned around to face the soldier and shook his head a bit.



"Indeed, we did not. My name is Tantallos, from the Forsaken family..heh..heh."



"So, Mr. Forsaken, I'm curious. You obviously don't use a staff. You don't look anything like the mages back at Kesselring Fortress. And, to be frank, you don't really dress like a practitioner of light magic. You wouldn't happen to be...a shaman, would you?"

Tantallos gave a quiet laugh and rubbed his gloved hands together in amusement.



"At this point I thought you already knew I was a shaman, you were on the fight, you probably saw when that cavalier turned into nothing but something that looked like a puddle of tar. And now I had been looking for a lighter dark tome, I found it but as we are running low on money.."



"I was on the other side of the windmill during the battle and couldn't see what was going on, though I had suspicions. And I was shopping with Charlotte at the tent city and didn't really see anyone else. But you ARE a shaman! Fantastic, I've never met one before!"

---



"So, Chris, everyone else apart from Olison and I find Tenebra unsettling. How about you, seeing as you actually touch him without running for the nearest church."

Chris thought about it.



"I don't know why it doesn't bother or scare me. A lot of things don't."

He chuckled.



"I guess I'm just drawn to things most people flee from. A lot of people don't like the rain; I like to soak it in. A lot of people fear the darkness; I'm more comfortable in it. A lot of people would see Tenebra and think 'demon'; I see him and think 'that's a unique horse'."

Ami giggled.



"Haven't heard that view on life, You're unique yourself."



"Thanks. I don't get that many compliments."

He seemed genuinely pleased for a moment, before looking down.



"Heh... to be honest, I don't usually talk about myself. It seems too... personal with most people. You're not like most people, though. Something... different about you. I don't mean the healing or anything like that. Just something about your presence that doesn't feel the same."



"Something dark, and dangerous, like Tenebra himself. It's intriguing."



"I see."

Ami gives a look around.

**Chris also looks around, checking behind them since he has a better view from where he's sitting.**



"If you don't mind me asking, how did you come by Tenebra?"



"Found him after my second proper battle. Just saw him in a pen and felt...I not sure...like we were of the same cloth or something, I don't know."

Chris nodded.



"No, I understand. You two suit each other. Tenebra seems like a sort of... of personification of that feeling I get from you."



"Frankly I would find it hard to picture the two of you apart from each other... or Tenebra ever belonging to someone else."

As the sun was slowly going downwards toward the horizon, turning the sky from blue to orange, Christopher and Ami managed to get to the meeting spot thanks to the Tenebra's quick hooves.

---

The forest looked darker than usual, and that would be all that's interesting to say about it. Besides singing of few birds, it was rather quiet and peaceful.



"Right, everyone, start finding a good campsite, make sure to keep it hidden. Find suitable ambush positions and await further orders. I'm going on up ahead to check on the other two and to tell them about the fallback point."



*Hidden...that means no fire. That means no warm meal...*

He sighed. Cold rations again.

---



"It seem clear, do we head back. I never trained for scouting, because I'm just a healer."

Chris nodded in agreement.



"I don't see anything either. Let's head back in a moment..."

He seemed unsure for a moment, gathering his thoughts before speaking.



"Ami... I kind of like you. I mean to say that... well, Adrien's a jackass and some of the other mercs are all right, but... I don't mind being around you. This... sounds terrible, doesn't it? I'm sorry. I probably shouldn't have said anything."

Ami's cheeks coloured.



"Oh. Thank, I like being around you too. Tenebra, let go."

### **Ami heads back to the group.**

Chris was still blushing, and hid his face in the shadows of his hood for the moment.



*I can't believe I actually went ahead and said that... but... at least she wasn't mad, and she didn't laugh in my face. Maybe... maybe I've made a friend. That's a first. I hope I can handle having one.*

The spy smiled to himself, but stayed quiet on the ride back. He needed to organize his thoughts.

The 'scouts' rejoined with the group that was making a small camp, hidden between two small hills, near the road that led into the Kesselring Forest, which loomed at the horizon, with the outlines of the dark castle towering in the middle of it.

The late afternoon passed into the evening, and evening, into early night, the moon began to shine brightly. On the road, there was no one to be seen.



"I'll take watch, you lot get some rest." Adrien said, wrapping a thick woolen cloak around his body to stave off the cold.



"Alright. Night everyone." And thanks for talking through stuff with me, Daniel.

### **Charlotte goes to sleep.**

Ami yawned.



"Yes sleep sound nice."

### **Ami goes to sleep.**

Soon after mostly everyone went to sleep, those who were awake, with Adrien especially, could hear a neigh. Then, sounds of a galloping horse and someone's shout.

A dark, barely noticeable silhouette was going from the west, from the direction of Vilino, toward east, into the forest and presumably, the Kesselring fortress.

Gregor, with troubled thoughts floating around in his head, was awake despite having a turn to stand guard in a few hours. He heard the commotion, but did not see anything. He went over to Adrien's spot, as quietly as he could.



"Psst! You see anything?"

Tantallos remained awake staring at the others, he probably would be reading if there was any kind of effective light resource, but as that was not the case, he just tried to pay attention to the sounds.



"That might have been Aaron."

Chris speculated to Gregor when he walked up. He had been staying up because he planned to get some sleep on the ride to Kesselring, he preferred the night anyway, and frankly Adrien needed someone to keep an eye on him.

It was all Gregor could do to keep from shouting in alarm; he hadn't even noticed the black-clad spy until he spoke.



"It sounded like there was only one horse, at least to me. Why would Aaron be riding through the woods at night on his own?"



"Maybe he found the stone and is rushing it back while the rest of the soldiers stay behind as a decoy. I don't really believe that possibility, though. If it even is him."

Chris looked in the direction the silhouette had gone, then looked at Gregor.



"I'm going to go check it out. Want to come with?"



"Sure, I can't sleep anyway. Let's go."

**Chris heads off with Gregor to investigate the silhouette.**



"So, you and Charlotte."

It seemed safe to assume they were either together or thinking about it. The two of them had been getting their fortunes told when he and Ami had walked in, after all.



"What do you think about her?"

The two could see as the horseman disappears in the forest, albeit the sound of horse's hooves on the dirt road was heard for some more time.

Gregor arched an eyebrow, though he was far from certain that Chris could see it.



"Of all the potential conversations to be had while tracking a horse and rider, that wasn't what I was expecting. Why do you ask?"



"We'll never catch up to that guy on foot. Maybe we can ask Seyena to track him."



"Good idea, though I wonder if she can even see whoever that is from the air at this time of night. Perhaps we can find some tracks to follow in the morning."

That stated, Chris turned back to Gregor.



"I was curious, about several things. One is that you two seem happy. Another is that I wonder if it could work. You're a von Hexham, not a free commonblood nobody like myself. What's it like, being from a prestigious family?"

Gregor scratched his head at Chris' questions. He still didn't know what the sudden interest was, but at least the inscrutable spy seemed genuinely curious and not merely fishing for gossip.





"Well, while I can't speak for Charlotte, I know I feel happy whenever she's around. Like the world is made just a bit better by her presence alone. And trust me, my family is hardly on the level of say, Lady Prixima. My father has some clout in the Menelean Army, and my older brothers are fine warriors in their own right, but it's not like we're nobility or even particularly wealthy. I suppose the biggest difference between most commoners and myself is that I had a chance at formal education before getting enlisted."



"Hmm. Lady Prixima must hold your family in high regard anyway. One of my particular orders was to make sure you stay alive. Even if everyone else dies."

Chris shrugged, but not sarcastically as he usually did.



"Well, I'll drop the subject for now. Doubtless the two of you will figure out a way to cross that bridge when you come to it. In the interest of fairness, you can ask me a few questions if you'd like."



"Hmph. I don't know why Prixima cares so much, but keep that particular order to yourself, please."

Now *that* was a disturbing thought. He quickly changed the subject.



"So while we're on the subject, what's going on with you and Ami? You actually seemed happy for once when you two came back from scouting."



"Ami... Well, I don't know. To be perfectly honest I really don't care about almost anything one way or the other - just getting the job done. But I find myself wanting to keep her alive. I would miss her if we parted ways."

Chris looked uncomfortable for a moment.



"I guess that's not quite the same way you feel about Charlotte. But I do



know if you guys stop working for Prixima, I'll come with you. She knew I was going to leave her service one day; I told her as much before I started working for her."

Gregor couldn't help but smile.



"I don't know...sounds at least a little like the way I feel. And I may take you up on that offer one day."



"So...how long have you been a spy? Or is that classified?"

---

The shaman sighed watching the other two leaving and crossed his arms.



"I wonder what is the limit of people's curiosity sometimes."

Ami pops up behind Tantallos.



"I don't there is a limit."

Tantallos blinked and slowly turned his head to the side to stare at Ami.



"Probably.. I just think they should share their thoughts with more people."

Charlotte snapped at Ami and Tantallos.



"Does no one sleep around here!?"

The shaman shrugged at Charlotte and grinned under his hood.



"I do sleep. I was taking a nice nap earlier when everyone was discussing about Adrien. But do not worry, we will not speak so loud."



"On a belly full of cold food, and with horsemen tromping about in the woods near our stealth camp? Doesn't seem like." Valor sat up atop his bedroll, grabbing his blade for assurance in the dark. It was still there, of course.

Olison, somehow, was still dead asleep through all the noise.



"Mrf. Trk th' flnk. Y'll do fn, js... follw m' lead..."



"Dammit... Someone take over watch for me, I'm going to bring the other two back..." Adrién said, before rushing off in pursuit of the other two that left camp.



"Whatever, axe guy, some of us still awake, right Ami? Also do not stop to hug bears this time."



"Indeed."



"..Also I do not think we happened to talk too much, did we? I was talking to Gregor some time ago, the soldier did not even know I was a shaman."

Seyena was completely unfazed by the activity around her, still deep in her own sleep. Her pegasus, on the other hand, was wide awake as well, standing near her sleeping rider while watching the groggy mercenaries go about their business.

---

Chris thought about it.



"Always, I suppose. It's the easiest way to make a living, even for a child. Just keep your ears open and find someone willing to buy the information you have, and you can usually get a meal out of it."

He scratched his chin as they walked.



"If you meant 'how long for Prixima' then about two years, give or take a few months. I thought I might try steady employment for a change, but I'm not sure it suits me. What about you? Are you a warrior because it's the family business, or because you want to be?"

Gregor sighed.



"Little of both, I suppose. It started as just being the 'family business' as you put it. I was never very fond of my father or brothers for dragging me away from my books to smack each other with sticks. It's different now, though to what degree I can't say."

A thought struck him.



"What about you? Is this your 'family business'?"



"Couldn't tell you who my family is or what business they were in. Same reason I can't tell you what my 'real' name is or how old I actually am if you asked."



"Well...alright then. Can't blame me for being curious."



"Eh, you didn't know; I don't either!"

He seemed to be playing it off as a joke.



"I've done fine on my own. I'm still here, aren't I? Well. Maybe I do owe Seyena and Valor a little for that last jam we were in, but regardless. You get my point, right?"

Gregor thought for a moment, but then shook his head.



"I'm afraid I don't. I'll think about it, though, and maybe it'll come to me."



"Fair enough. Oh, look. It's Adrien, no doubt come to scold us for showing some initiative and not being pretty little princesses following his every command. Shall we duck him and just head back to camp?"



"Between that comment, and the fact that you ran off meant that you heard the horseman come through, correct?"

Gregor jumped. Sneaking had sounded much more fun when he wasn't on the receiving end.



"I tried to report it to you. I think you were asleep with your eyes open because you didn't respond, so Chris and I went instead."



"Fair enough then. You saw where the rider went?"



"Kesselring probably. Hard to tell when you can't see them."



"Right, good work you two. I'll go take up a forward position in the forest. You two go get some sleep, and I'll see you in the morning."



"You sure? It's almost my turn to take watch."



"Eh, maybe I should take up this forward position with him. Gregor, talk

later?"



"Yeah, sure. See you two tomorrow."

---

Gregor wandered back to camp and settled onto his bedroll. Or at least that's what he was going to do, until...

Tantallos waved a hand to the soldier.



"Gregor, if you want to talk for a bit, I will keep awake for now."

First Chris, now Tantallos. He wasn't sure what was going on, but he could only theorize that the dead of night made cloaked individuals more talkative.



"We might have a long march tomorrow, Tantallos, and you'll need your rest. If you're up to it, I suppose I can talk. What's up?"



"I already took some naps during those discussions earlier, I will be fine. I just want to know about your story, I am surprised you never saw a shaman."

On the grounds that others are awake, and no one is bursting into the camp with naked steel, Valor tries to resume sleep.



"It's not so surprising. The city of Garnes has this preconception that ancient or "dark" magic is the work of demons. As a result, if any shamans do visit the city they must keep a low profile or risk getting thrown out by superstitious mobs."

He shrugged.



"Even among the scholars, opinion on whether dark magic is evil or just misunderstood is divided. Menelea doesn't have a whole lot of knowledge about your brand of magic."



"That doesn't surprise me at all. Ancient magic is usually seem as "evil magic" but it is not. Many of us tried to prove them that it can be used to help others, and my family had been trying to do that for years in a attempt to show other nations how useful it can be."

---

Chris turned to Adrien.



"After you."



"So long as you stay hidden, we'll be good. Let's move."



"Oh, I think I can handle myself just fine."

After a moment, the sound of galloping horse returned. Then, the dark silhoutte of the cavalier could be seen again. This time, of course, he was running out of the Kesselring Forest, following the road toward Vilino.

---

Gregor thought he heard something off in the distance, but he couldn't tell what it was. It didn't seem to be an immediate danger in any case.

He rolled onto his back, gazed at the stars, and tried to calm the thoughts whirling around his head.

---

Chris nudged Adrien with his elbow.



"There goes our friend the midnight rider again. Shall we do something about it?"



"Right, on three, we pounce him, if that's alright with you."



"Sure. Count down whenever you're ready, then."



"Right. One... two... THREE!" On three. Adrien leapt into action, throwing his hatchet at the rider at full force. Even if the rider survived that hit, a trail of blood would be an obvious trail to where he would be...

### **Chris deflects the hatchet as he moves to tackle the rider from the horse.**

The rider got knocked from his horse and crash-landed on the road with a crack. His satchel, upon hitting the dirt, released series of loud, rather wet cracking noises, as if lots of glass just got shattered. The horse, panicked, ran away.

As they got closer to the KO'd rider, Chris could notice what's wrong - he easily recognized broken neck.



"Well, that was unfortunate. Let's see who he is and what he had."

### **Chris investigates the sack and the person's identity.**

Chris easily recognized the face as one of the Kesselring messengers, but his name slipped from his mind at the moment.

The satchel had a pile of glassy chunks, corks and glassy chunks with corks, and lots of green liquid that was quickly getting into the satchel's cloth or leaking onto the dirt. There was also a large piece of paper, with something written on it, and the paper was mostly wet by now.

### **Chris took and hid the paper. He'd read it later when it dried off. For now he inspected the green liquid to see if he could recognize what it was.**

Using his vast espionage knowledge, Chris easily deduced that it's not poison.



"Well, that's probably it for this kid. I wonder if Ami could heal him."

Chris slung the messenger over his shoulder and started walking back to camp. He also took the bag with him; maybe the healer could identify it.



"Right, I'll stay here and keep an eye out for anyone else."





"If you do see anyone, try to flag them down instead of throwing an axe at them."

Chris walked away.



"Right, noted. See you back at camp after daybreak."

---

Ami sees Chris come back.



"Oh, you're back. With a body. Who is it?"



"I don't know. One of the Kesselring messengers. He was carrying a bag of glass flasks full of green liquid. I don't recognize those either."

Chris frowned.



"We probably could have asked the guy, but Adrien threw an axe at him. I tackled him to get him out of the way and he broke his neck in the fall. Can you do anything for him, Ami? Or identify these potions?"

Gregor was finally ready to fall asleep. He closed his eyes, breathed deeply, and-

A body? Now what was going on? He briefly considered feigning sleep, but instead forced himself to his feet and wandered over to see what was this latest commotion was.

Valor, on the other hand, sword still clutched in his hand, was dreaming happily about an incredible feast, at a table a mile long with food piled two feet high.

Chris looked over at Gregor.



"Accidental death, some messenger carrying strange potions. I brought him to Ami to see if she could heal him or identify the liquids."





"I'll see what I can do."

### **Ami tries to heal the dude and check the liquids.**

Unfortunately, Ami lacked the proper staff and powers to revive the dead guy.

She however managed to identify the potions as some plague cure.



"A messenger? Any indication who he is or where he's from?"

And then Gregor easily recognized standard Menelean uniform armor.



"A plague cure? I wonder if I can make it?"

### **Ami tries.**

Ami tried her dardest, but after whacking a bunch of grass with her fist, she deduced she requires proper ingredients and alchemy equipment.

In the meanwhile, the night sky got more of grey and light blue colors than dark blue. Morning must be close.



"A messenger from Kesselring. Judging from what Ami just said, he was on his way to distribute a plague cure."



"A Menelean soldier? Oh dear, Prixima will NOT be happy with whoever killed him."

Chris facepalmed and rubbed at his forehead.



"Maybe we can scrape together enough of the remains to bring some of it over. It'll be less than what they wanted, but some is better than none. Do we have any containers?"

Gregor empties a waterskin and holds it out to Chris.



"It's all I've got. We're not exactly a merchant caravan here."

Chris shrugged, albeit not sarcastically.



"You can blame either me or Adrien for that, then. It depends on which matters to you more: the fact I accidentally broke his neck, or that Adrien threw the axe which necessitated tackling him out of the way in the first place."

He emptied his own waterskin as well. **He then attempted to fill both waterskins with plague cure.**



"I'm not going to blame anyone right now. Sounds like it was an accident, and I wasn't there to see anything."

**Gregor sees if he can identify the body.**

Gregor actually easily recognized the body. It was Roy, the red-haired nephew of Captain Torres, a young and dutiful messenger-courier in Kesselring fortress.



"Oh no...not Roy."



"You recognize him, huh."

Chris scratched his chin.



"Well. I suppose we should bring the body back to Kesselring. Somebody there might want him for funeral services."

Gregor nods.



"His uncle is a captain at Kesselring Fortress. He's a nice guy normally, but

when he sees this...this could be bad news."



"...We'll see, when we bring him back. I think we should keep his identity quiet for now. Olison might recognize him, and he won't be too happy if he does, but I think he respects you enough that if you asked him to keep quiet he would, Gregor."

He looked at the waterskins.



"Not sure how much use this will be, but someone should run them back to town."

Unfortunately, Chris got only an approximate of quarter-of-a-glass, because the liquid dribbled from the bag all the way from the road to the camp, then during the lengthy healing attempt, and then the talking.

But still, better than nothing.

### **Chris gets Antidote (1/3)!**

The spy sighed.



"Might not even be worth the trip, to be honest. I guess we can ask Seyena to run it over when she wakes up and rejoin us on the road."



"Her pegasus is probably the fastest one here, though I don't envy her having to explain why there's so little antidote. Maybe Valor or someone should go with her, just in case things get a little, um, unfriendly."



"I would go myself, but I want to explain this to Lady Prixima. It would sound better coming from me, for all of the disaster this mission has been."

Chris closed his eyes, pinching the bridge of his nose just between his eyes for a few seconds, before speaking again.



"If I remember correctly you did very well for yourself in that battle. I would ask you to go with her; if things do turn hostile, I trust you most to get you and her out of there alive."



"I appreciate your faith in me, but I think it would be best if I stayed here. Like you said before, Olson shouldn't know that this is Roy. If he finds out, he'll want blood, and I've got as good shot as anyone of calming him down without hurting him."

Gregor felt very, very tired all of a sudden. What the hell were they going to do now?



"Wait, wait.. are you telling me you two killed a guy randomly? I doubt they will let any of us live if they know who killed him."



"I already said I would explain all of this. You have nothing to worry about, Tantallos."

He turned back to Gregor.



"Who should we send with her, then? We can't let her go alone. You said Valor earlier. Anyone else come to mind? Because if not we'll see if he wants to go."

Gregor began counting off names on his fingers.



"Adrien's run off somewhere and will likely be wanted for questioning, so he's out. Ami and Olson use horses, so they're out. Charlotte has a bow, which pegasus riders tend to be afraid of, so she's out. Prixima will want to hear from you, so you're out. It seems to be down to Valor, Derick, Daniel, Tantallos, and myself. I didn't see them much of them during the last battle, but Valor and Seyena seem to get along fairly well. That's my vote."



"If that's the way you want it. I'll go wake Valor and Seyena up and let

them know they have a job to do."

Chris walked off until he found Valor's sleeping form and lightly prodded his chest with the toe of his boot.



"Rise and shine, it's almost dawn! Come on, follow me. There's work for you."

So saying, he went off and found Seyena, then woke her up by shaking her shoulder.



"Time to get up. Got a job for you and Valor."

Charlotte yawned.



"...NNN-nn. Wereseyena goinn'? Needa go with 'er."

Valor groaned at the prod of Chris' boot, clutching the comfortable weight of his sword close to his chest.



"ergh ful murgum buh." As Chris's words eventually wormed his way into his brain, Valor sat up, and yawned mightily. "I don't know what it is, but it's too early for it."

Seyena groans, slowly sitting up.



"Whassit?" Her words were slow and somewhat slurred. She rubbed her eyes, giving a sigh.

In the meantime, Gregor covered up the messenger's body with his bedroll. He didn't know what else to do.



"It's a little complicated. If you can stay awake, Chris might be able to explain better."



"It's important, Valor. We have... some... plague medicine that needs to get back to town. Seyena can get it back fastest, and you've been elected to ride with her. Just in case of trouble."

Seyena hears Chris' statement.



"Plague medicine, for the plague city. How do you know we won't catch it?"

Valor distractedly rubbed at his eyes with the heel of his palm.



"Yeah, okay. Sure. Can't send one person alone, too dangerous. Lemme jus' pack up."

Valor had stood up and was halfway done packing his bedroll before anything occurred to him.



"Wait, plague medicine?"



"I don't know that you won't, Seyena. But it needs to get there. Let me reconstruct the scenario for you."

Chris folded his hands behind his back.



"I'm not sure if either of you noticed last night, but a person rode through the forest past our camp twice. Gregor and I investigated a bit initially, then came back to camp. Adrien wanted to intercept the rider so I came with him. Once we were on the path, he suggested we pounce the rider. I agreed on the thought that we would simply stop him, grab him, and interrogate him."



"Of course, Adrien being Adrien, he attempted to kill the man outright by throwing an axe at him."



"So I tackled the rider - a young Kesselring messenger named Roy, I found out afterward - off of the horse to try and keep him from getting hit, and ended up breaking his neck in the fall... and shattering the flasks of plague medicine that no doubt were being sent by Lady Prixima as a relief effort. This waterskin is all we could save from the mess. It's important that we get what we can back to the town. I'll explain to Prixima what happened and take any heat if necessary."

Valor stood in open mouthed disbelief at Chris' tale as it unfolded.



"...That man is dangerously insane. Maybe I should subdue him before Seyena and I head for... Vilino? That's the name of the city nearby with all the tents, right?"

Chris nodded.



"Yes, that's the one. As for Adrien, don't waste time finding him. It's not that important. Yet."

Seyena was speechless for a few seconds.



"You *KILLED* a Kesselring soldier, who was delivering *PLAGUE* medicine to a destroyed city..."

She buried her face in her hands, groaning.

Valor nodded in return.



"Alright, I guess I'm ready to go as soon as Seyena is." Valor gazed forlornly at the small, unimpressive skin filled with medicine. Well, filled wasn't the right word. "I wonder if there are any alchemists in that tent field who'd be able to whip up more..."



"I have never seen a job go so unerringly badly before. Not even once."



Olison turned a bit in his sleep, and lightly grasped his lance which he kept by his side.



"Ghn. Tk hm pss th moat... Th men a' th fort cn take care..."

Valor noticed Olison moving around, muttering to himself.



"He's sure to be thrilled with the news when he wakes up." Valor sighed, and resumed packing his supplies. "Let's just hope that PRIXIMA is reasonable and only hangs Adrien by his entrails."



"Yes. I know, Seyena. This job has indeed been a disaster since the first two leaders of that mercenary company died or disappeared."



"Yes, it has. Anyway, Valor, you have the medicine, right? Let's take care of this." She says, quickly strapping on her armor and grabbing her lance as she mounted her pegasus, offering him a hand up.

Chris handed the medicine to Valor, then laced his hands together to offer Valor a step up onto the horse's back.

Valor finished gathering his things, took the medicine from Chris, then looked at the pegasus. The corners of his mouth took on a greenish hue.



"Ah. Right." Shakily, Valor took the offered step from Chris, and mounted the pegasus behind Seyena. "...Alright then. Let's go."

Gregor, seeing that they were about to take off, ran over.



"Hold up, you three! Charlotte said something about wanting to go with Seyena instead...assuming she's still awake."

Chris paused for a moment.





"I'm not sure that's a good idea. No offense to Charlotte, but it might be better to have someone who can handle themselves in close quarters. Just in case. However, if she really wants to go and Valor doesn't want to, well, it's up to them."



"Pretty much. I'm not much in the fighting department, and unless she can shoot really well, I don't think we would do well in a fight against bigger opponents."



"Well, she *is* a pretty good shot...anyway, there might not be any fighting at all."

Valor considered the possibility of swapping with Charlotte.



"Maybe it would be better that I go. I'm sure Charlotte works best with someone to cover her while she shoots in any case."



"I don't know, if they were expecting serious relief, and we just show up with this, there could be a riot, we don't know."



"Mmh."

Charlotte was still processing what was going on.



"s best Seyena go with Valor. Wanted her for a different reason. It can wait."



"Oh, right. You don't do heights, do you? You sure you want to go?" Seyena asked, concerned.



"I'll be fine." Valor lied, trying to control his breathing. "We'll just head on over, deliver the medicine, explain the situation, and head back to Kesselring. Easy."



"Alright then, hang on." Seyena said, urging her pegasus into the air rapidly, heading for the tent city once more.



"Good luck, you two. If it gets too dangerous, just get out of there."

Valor gritted his teeth and said nothing as they soared into the air, choosing to scream internally instead.



"What about us? What should we do? Besides letting Olson take charge of the group of course, the plans of that crazy bear-hugger are horrible."



"We head back to Kesselring as Aaron requested. We have to take this body back, at the very least. Seyena and her companion - whoever it ends up being - can rejoin us there easily."



"You know they will ask us who killed him, right?"



"I know. And I already said I'll tell the truth. If there's something Prixima has always known to get from me, it's honesty."



"Well, hopefully she'll understand...and hopefully she'll be able to break the news to Captain Torres gently."

Tantallos would fall on the ground laughing if he was not already on the ground sitting, but he laughed anyway.



"You cannot be serious. Do you REALLY think she will understand some crazy axe guy jumping on and killing because he is insane? I doubt... if I was carrying some money I would bet Adrien is going to get killed or at least be tossed in the prison."

Gregor gave Tantallos a look.



"I *meant* that hopefully she won't simply execute all of us for Adrien's actions."



"I was not talking about us. I was talking about him."

He gives a shrug and stands up, tapping his mantle.

---

Seyena looks back with what could be a smirk.



"Do you want to speed up? If you're okay like you said, we can speed up."

Valor managed to speak, or croak rather,



"Oh, y'know. Whatever. You're the rider after all." He still appeared rather green. *If we go really fast, if I fall off, I might die fast enough to not feel it. So there's that.*



"You're still acting odd. You know, you're perfectly safe right now."

Seyena thinks for a brief moment.



"What exactly are you afraid of? Heights, falling, or is it something else entirely?" *It's a pity that quite a lot of people are terrified by flying, even upon the back of a pegasus.*



"I do believe it might be the height!" Valor said, a note of hysterics creeping into his voice. "I don't know how you can do this *and* fight. It's incredible."



"Well, I don't even get to fight much. I'm more of a flying stretcher that happens to carry a pointy metal stick." She said somewhat bitterly, but quickly changed her tone.



"But we are a little close to the ground, and it does get a little unsettling." Seyena says, urging the pegasus to slowly rise. "Just bear with me for a second, everything changes when you go higher. It's like looking at a little toy world." *I'm probably doing something stupid, but maybe he could see flight the way I do...*

Valor sucks in a sharp breath of air as the pegasus rises ever higher. He'd found that looking straight ahead eased his troubles somewhat, but she had made it clear that she wanted him to see what she saw, flying around up here, fearless.

He forced himself to look. And it was amazing. Everything so small. If it wasn't for the wind, he'd think they were moving at an unimpressive trot.

It was also extremely high.



"Eurgh." He clutched the rider in front of him a little tighter, doing his best not to squeeze the life out of the poor girl.

Seyena winced at the sudden pressure, but that was the last of her worries.



*He's still not good with heights, it seems. But, I can't indoctrinate everyone to something like this.* "Sorry, it was probably a bad idea to do this to you, I'll go low, if you want." Seyena apologized, ready to direct the pegasus into a steady descent. No diving, as that probably *would* knock Valor off.



"Don't worry about it. It's fine." Valor croaked, his eyes shut tight. "I'm the one who wanted to come along, after all."

---



"Yaaaaaawwn, good morning guys what's all the yelling about?"



"A whole lot of things... Derick, was it? Yes. A whole lot of things. You'll hear all about it soon."

Chris crouched and picked a few flowers.

Gregor watched the flower-picking with bemusement.



"...What are those for?"



"Lady Prixima likes flowers. I thought it might be a good idea to bring some, to soften the blow a bit."

Chris thought for a moment.



"Do you suppose Ami likes flowers?"



"Blow? What blow? What happened this time?"



"I accidentally killed a young messenger from Kesselring by tackling him from his horse, in an attempt to keep him from getting killed by Adrien. This messenger was carrying plague cure to Vilino. You can imagine what happened to the plague cure."

Chris went on picking flowers.



"I...don't know. Is now a good time to be thinking about that?"

Gregor was secretly pondering the same thing about Charlotte, but the small matter of

the dead messenger and destroyed medicine seemed like they would ruin any potential moments. *Later*, he promised himself.



"Probably not. I really have no idea how Prixima will react to this level of bad news, Gregor. It's completely unfathomable. All the same, if I end up dead over this, I would at least like to have given Ami something first."



"You make a persuasive argument..."

Gregor picks a few flowers before feeling too awkward to continue. He then starts putting together a makeshift stretcher to carry Roy's body.



"You...this is one of your jokes right? Please tell me you're joking."



"I'm being completely serious. Hence the flowers."



"Oh-Oh gods this is worse than the thing with the wolves."



"I'm not even sure what that is, but I can safely say this is much worse than the wolves."

Chris started to wrap the flowers he had into a bouquet. Once he was done with that, he started gathering flowers for a second one.



"Uh well a client of ours had given Sarius bad directions on where to find our target, and we wound up ambushed by a pack of hungry wolves. Then the noise from that wound up drawing a group of bandits, who were completely unrelated to our target by the way. After we had narrowly managed to fight them off, we wound up stumbling upon another group of mercenaries and some guardsmen, who as it turned out had been searching for said bandit group, and wound up mistaking us for them on account of all the blood and stuff. They nearly killed Sterling and I before Sarius managed to explain to them what was going on. Even so a few of them were still mad because they thought

we were trying to steal the bounty from them. Finally we managed to find out that our target was actually in the completely opposite direction so Adrien-



"Wait why am I telling you all this when there's more important things to be rambling about! We're all DOOMED!"

Olison turned a little bit more in his sleep before grumbling audibly and sitting upwards. Using his lance as a crutch, he pushed himself upright while rubbing his eyes.



"Hmh. Morning."

On taking a single glance, Olison instantly frowned.



"Chris... Gathering flowers. What in the world happened this time?"

Gregor quickly got up from the stretcher he was putting together.



"Morning, Olison. May I have a quick word with you?"

Chris sighed. This was the part he looked forward to about as much as explaining it to Prixima. At least Gregor was going to explain it to Olison; that was good, since Chris had been about to ask him if he would.



*Looks like I ended up owing him one anyway.*

Charlotte did not bother speaking much as this was clearly a nightmare.



"Someone pinch me."



"Let's hear it."



Olison muttered while moving to his horse, which had woken up long ago and was grazing nearby.



"Hm. A tad late in the morning, we can make it up with a bit more pace..."

Gregor moved closer, putting a hand on the older man's shoulder and speaking as low and calmly as he could.



"Last night, there was an...well, I'm not sure I can call it an accident. We heard some horses riding down the road, at least twice. Chris and I went to investigate the first one by found nothing. He and Adrien decided to check out the second one. I had been sent back, so I wasn't there to witness anything."



"The way Chris tells it, Adrien threw his axe at the horseman, forcing Chris to tackle the rider to avoid it. Unfortunately, the rider broke his neck in the fall, as well as the vials of medicine in his bag. We think they were for the plague in that village we passed by."



"The rider was a Menelean Army messenger. Valor and Seyena took what medicine could be saved to the village, and will be catching up as soon as they can. In the meantime, we have to get to Fort Kesselring and let Lady Prixima know what happened."

Olison listened intently, creases started forming in his face that made him look more wrinkled than usual. When he opened his mouth, the following words came out as more of a growl than a sentence.



"Show me the body."

Gregor gestured towards the covered body and continued speaking in the same tone of voice.



"It's over there. Just...don't look at the face. Trust me on this, sir; you need to be clear and sharp in case we're ambushed by bandits, not rampaging around seeking



vengeance. We have to get back to Kesselring Fortress - all of us, in one piece! - and make our report. We'll see what happens after that...okay?"

Olison instantly turned and walked towards the body. Crouching down, he looked the figure over twice before ignoring Gregor's advice and looking under the cover. Olison visibly recoiled, standing up, and stood still for a minute.



"..."

Much stiffer in his movements, Olison made his way back to Gregor, this time maintaining a more coherent tone.



"Gregor. I believe you know who that is, correct?"

Gregor nodded.



"I assume you know as well?"

Olison sharply exhaled, speaking with a tense calm.



"The mercenary 'leader' has much amends to make. We are not to let Adrien out of our sights from here until Kesselring. If he does so much as bark a single order or lift his axe, I will detain him myself. Where is he now?"

Gregor said nothing.

Olison sharply exhaled again, this time sounding more like an exasperated sigh.



"Realize that he is a criminal now, and justice will wait until he is brought to the Lady. I will not harm him unless he attempts to flee."

Olison made his way to his horse, preparing to mount up.

After a moment, Gregor spoke out loud to the group:



"I need a volunteer to help me carry the stretcher. And someone wake up Daniel; we need to get moving."



"I'll help, if you'd like me to. It's partially my fault anyway."

Derick is too busy freaking out and muttering to himself to hear Gregor.

Gregor nodded to Chris.



"Alright. If you get tired, be sure to speak up so someone else can trade in."

He then walked over to Charlotte, who seemed a little dazed.



"Are you okay?"



"I'm great. Especially now that I've realized this isn't just a horrible dream."



"Because I fucking quit."

Well, that certainly wasn't what he was expecting.



"You...quit?"

He wondered if a punchline was coming up.



"I doubt she is enjoying the killing party some of us are having..heh..ehe.."



"Yes. As soon as we get this thing with the Lapis Lazuli settled, I am going to quit and make my own group of mercenaries. Merely being in proximity to this ragtag gang of chronic felons makes me feel like killing and eating an orphan. I'm honestly surprised we *haven't* done that yet, actually."



"But the truth of it is? Despite the ridiculously stupid things we've done, I think this whole thing was stacked against us in the first place. Eor's confidence... I don't think we could have found the Lapis. He was one step ahead of us the entire time. Maybe PRIXIMA knew that. All the more reason to start Charlotte's Angels. That's what the group will be called, by the way."



"..."

Chris sighed.



"If you'd like to try, I'm right here."



"...Well, I can hardly fault your reasons for wanting to leave."

He closed his eyes and pinched his the bridge of his nose as hard as he could. Surely this was all some crazed daydream brought on by lack of sleep, right? Right? The pain in his nose told him it probably wasn't.



"So, now what?"



"The only thing we can do now. Regroup, and move out."

Eyes still closed, he nodded at OLISON's suggestion.



"Charlotte, can we talk about this later?"



"Sure."

**Charlotte heads out.**



"Right behind you."

**Chris follows, helping carry the litter bearing Roy.**

**Gregor heads out, helping to carry the litter.**

Olison nodded, starting to move at a trot.

**Olison moves out, keeping lookout for Adrien.**

Ami rode up to the litter.



"We're moving out?"

Chris nodded.



"Seems to be the only thing to do."

Shifting his grip so he could hold the litter in one hand, he reached into his robes and pulled out a bouquet of flowers.



"Err... I was picking some flowers earlier, because Lady Prixima likes them and I thought I ought to take her some when we report given how badly everything's gone... and I thought, I don't know, you might like flowers..."

Chris decided to just shut up there before he made a total ass out of himself and held the flowers out toward Ami.

Ami takes the flowers.



"Wow, I...they lovey, thank you, Chris."

Ami's face lits up with a smile.

Chris smiled and resumed carrying the litter with both hands; for the first time since the group had seen him his expression was genuine, not mocking.



"I'm glad you like them."

It was a simple statement, but he meant it.

---



"Well well... Best to stay hidden until we reach the castle though..."

---

The pegasus quickly carried Seyena and Valor towards the city. When they were almost there, they could see a group of riders going toward Kesselring.



"What's this?" Seyena peers towards the riders, keeping an eye out for ranged weapons first, and markings and identification second. She could always get closer to identify them, but not unless she knew she was in danger of being shot. "Valor, you see those riders over there?"



*It's possible that this is just a Kesselring patrol, but suspicion is what keeps me alive.*

There was approximately fifteen of them, and all wore Menelean armor. All of them had lances, or swords, or both.

Valor risked a quick peek and saw the group of riders.



"Think we should talk to them? They might be looking for the rider Adrien waylaid."



"Not a bad idea, they might also have news from the plagued city. I don't see any bows, so even if they are hostile, we should be fine." Seyena said, guiding the pegasus downwards towards the horsemen, but just out of range.



"I hope you all don't mind if I ask your business upon the road?" Seyena called to the horsemen cheerfully.

Valor said nothing, letting Seyena handle the talking for now.

The riders stopped their horses slowly and then mumbled between themselves, before someone shouted 'nonsense! move aside!'. The owner of the voice moved in front of the group, riding on a black horse, unlike the rest of his group; they used brown horses.



"Such pure flower of moonlit beauty cannot be a Berebian spy! But where are my manners. Sir Larion Rosecross, at your service, m'lady. I'm leader of this cavalry unit, and we're going home, to Kesselring. And what business brings such fair lady into the nightly ride on a pegasus with her... humble servant, I guess?"



"Well, say what you will, but he seems polite enough." Seyena muttered, trying to hide her amusement.

Seyena called out to the knight.



"Me and my companion -not a servant- are heading towards Vilino to deliver a small amount of plague cure. If you know anything new about the city, it would be nice to hear now, rather than find out later."



"Well, we haven't stopped there because the city is under quarantine, I heard there's more than six hundred afflicted by now. Fortunately, they're getting the cure from passing healers, and from our castle. Oh, you must be delivering that last shipment for today? The healers there are already fuzzing on it's lateness. I would speed up that pegasus of yours if I were you. Now, if you excuse us, m'lady, we need to join Captain Aaron and the rest of our troop." With that, he snapped with the reins - the horse carried him away, and the rest of the riders followed.

Valor scowled at the riders as they galloped away.



"Servant indeed." Valor turned his gaze toward Vilino, and gave a small sigh of relief. "If nothing else, this was at least not all the medicine they were depending on."



"He seemed quite a bit sure of himself, didn't he?" Seyena said, urging her pegasus on the last stretch to Vilino. "Anyway, those at the city will have to deal with what we have- it's not our fault Chris and Adrien killed that poor man."



"Well, obviously the fault doesn't lie with us." Valor said, eyes fixed resolutely ahead. "Still, people sometimes let fear and anger get the best of them. With a plague about, I'm sure many people are afraid it may be the end of them. It's hard to say how many people Adrien killed on the road last night." Valor shook his head sadly.

The rest of the journey went without incident. The pegasus got them to the city of Vilino, and they could easily see a large white tent, set adjacent to the northern gate. It would be best candidate for the residence of healers or at least someone in charge of the gate.



Valor did his best to descend from the pegasus with a hint of grace, but only managed to dismount and immediately fall in a heap on the ground. "I'm alright! Just uh, give me a minute."

Seyena dismounts, chuckling. She extends a hand towards Valor, to help him up.



"Need me to get you a ladder?" She joked.

The 'crumbling into heap' performed by Valor left a shocking impression at the priest who was outside the tent. He raised his hands and looked at the mercenary.

"He collapsed from plague! That girl brought a plague-bearer outside the city! We're all doomed!" The priest shrieked and then several healers and soldiers encircled the two, readying weapons and spells, hopefully of less painful kind.



"Oh hell." Valor struggled to his feet, hoping that he could prevent a panic. "Calm yourselves, I'm not sick. Just... I'm not used to riding a pegasus is all. We're here to deliver medicine, and an explanation." Valor weakly held out the skin of antidote.



"You should get used to it, we might need to fly really quickly away from these people. They were going to stab you for falling..." Seyena muttered to Valor.



"Yeah, probably but you can hardly blame them for being jumpy, they think they have it contained." Valor whispered back.

The priests and soldiers grumbled amongst each other, after one of the healers, a fat, short man, moved closer to Valor and inspected his face from close, but safe, distance. He then extended his right hand and his fat finger poked at Valor's neck, on the left, and then right side.

"Well he doesn't look like he is suffering from plague! Apologies, we aren't used to pegasus deliveries, considering how flying mounts are expensive." The fat healer sighed in relief as the most of the circle broke out.

"Praise to Lady Prixima; the previous shipments helped a lot, and with this one, we should be set for a day or two. Twelve bottles, like before?"

Seyena sighed.



*They're expecting twelve bottles, Chris. You gave me a waterskin half-full of the antidote. Was that really all you could scavenge?*

Valor groaned, putting his face in his palm.



"Ugh, well, about that. You see, we're under contract as mercenaries, and the former leader of the main group mistakenly waylaid the original messenger, causing his death and the... destruction of the majority of the medicine. I'm afraid that this is all that remains." Valor handed the priest the small waterskin, sticky with dried antidote residue on the side from when it had been filled. "We're returning to Kesselring. If you like, we can deliver a message as we go."

Seyena was about to make up a story, when she heard Valor talk, too late for her to



interrupt.



"*Valor! You don't tell the truth! That will get us killed!*" She hissed, trying to keep her voice low.



"People don't like being lied to, the truth always gets out. Besides, they're a couple guardsmen and some priests, they couldn't hold us if they tried." Valor whispered back hurriedly.



"But you do understand that truth is sometimes stranger than fiction? And in this case, the truth is pretty strange." Seyena whispered. "For all they know, or care, we could be bandits making fun of them."

The fat priest blinked, and then grabbed Valor by collar of his shirt, pulling him a bit down.

"Are you mad? This is no time for jokes! Twelve bottles means more than twenty people! How am I supposed to-- bah! Get out of here before I call the guards! You can't ever rely on those pesky nobles, they always screw up, I hope Prixima's castle gets conquered or she dies in an explosion..." He trailed off with his curses, walking away without even accepting the waterskin from Seyena's hands.

Valor brushed himself off, scowling.



"Ungrateful bastard. At least we tried." Valor sighed and turned back to Seyena. "That didn't go so well as I would have liked. Let's get out of here." Valor eyed the small quantity of antidote. "He didn't take it. Should we leave it or what?"



"Let's... let's just take it. It might turn out useful, as we've already insulted him with this small amount." Seyena said, sighing as she remounted, pocketing the antidote.

Seyena extended a hand to help Valor up for their return trip.



"But, as rude as he may have been, he *is* dealing with a plague. It's got to be stressful."

Valor clambered onto the back of the pegasus with Seyena's help.



"You're right. Let's just get out of here."

Seyena nods, directing the Pegasus into the air, headed straight for Kesselring.

Valor sat in silence on the back of Seyena's pegasus as the two flew toward Kesselring. For his part, Valor did his damndest to ignore the fact that he wasn't on solid ground.

The silence started to wear on Seyena after a while, so she decided to strike another conversation up.



*It might take his mind off the flying, and pass the time until we reach the castle.* "What do you plan to do after this whole fiasco with PRIXIMA is over?" Seyena asked, as she noticed the Kesselring fortress in the distance. It shouldn't be much longer now.



"I'll start looking for work again, like I always do. I spoke to Charlotte about the possibility of forming a small mercenary troop with her. From the sound of it, she's had her fill of current leadership. More importantly, she said she has something she *wants to show you.*" Valor knew a bit more than that, but decided it wasn't his place to say what. "If you don't have other obligations, maybe you'd like to join up? People do like to hire mercenaries in groups, and we'd have a good, diverse skill set..." *And I'd like for you to stay around.*



"Oh, I'd love to go with you!" Seyena said, smiling. She had done mercenary work for too long alone... she could use a group again.



"But, that thing Charlotte mentioned, I think she said something about it to me, started asking me about my village, and... my father."

---

The rest of the group managed to set off from the 'stealth' camp and then through the forest road, toward the castle. They were surrounded by forest when neighing and sound of many hooves reached their ears from behind. Soon, a group of Kesselring soldiers, led by no one else than Aaron himself, got to them from behind. He looked a bit concerned, and his glance quickly landed on the stretcher.



"I think I now know why we have found a Kesselring-branded horse without a rider, on the middle of the road. What happened, though?" Aaron looked around, trying to find Adrien, but he wasn't here.



"And where's Adrien? And the pegasus rider, for that matter?"



"...How funny. For the first time on my life, I do not know what to say. I wonder if we will have at least four people on the group yet when this ends."

Gregor looked around at the rest of the group, then spoke up.



"Lord Aaron, I regret to inform you that this messenger is dead. Adrien had a role in his death, though Chris here was also involved. Adrien ran off, and we don't know where. As for Seyena, she and Valor - the blonde sword-mercenary - flew off to Vilino with what little of the potions we could save."

Chris raised the litter he was carrying a little, as if to indicate it to Aaron.



"I'm going to make a report to Lady Prixima. If you want to learn what happened, you can be there when I do."

Aaron rubbed the back of his neck, looking quite unsure what to do now.



"So, I think the larger problem will be Captain Torres as it was his nephew. Lady Prixima isn't the one to care about every soldier's life in her castle. So there's that, I will have to speak with Lady Prixima and Captain Torres. You really keep me stressed sometimes..." Aaron, after that, instructed his soldiers to tie the litter and the body to

the late messenger's horse, and then he instructed his group to go toward the fortress at reduced speed, and to look around for Adrien.



"You're welcomed to have a ride with my cavaliers if any of you doesn't feel like walking."



"I think I would prefer to walk, milord."

An almost genuine smile crossed Gregor's face.



"I promise not to get lost this time."



"I'll walk. But thanks anyway, Aaron."



"If you say so." Not waiting for anybody else, the patrol-funeral-mercenary group went it's slow way toward the castle. They've passed that serpent-shaped part of the road, and the small piles of dark dirt indicated the burial spots of the bandits who died here some time ago, from mercenaries' blades.

After some more time, they got to the castle, and Aaron, without a moment of rest, brought the whole group inside and upstairs, until they ended at the door leading to Prixima's office.



"I will go first, please wait here a moment." With that and face full of optimism, Aaron went into Prixima's office.



"I'm going as well. I might as well give my report at the same time."

Chris said as he followed Aaron in.



"And no doubt she'd need to see me as well, for one reason or another. Sorry about the surprise entrance, but I prefer walking in the woods rather than the path itself." Adrien said, appearing from behind the group, brushing off a fallen leaf off his armour.

Olison whipped around on hearing Adrien's entrance. After a few seconds of intense glaring, Olison calmly spoke.



"Yes. She will need to see you as well. But Aaron and Chris' reports will come first."



"There you are Adrien, where the heck have you been?!"



"And which building did you burn down this time?"

Gregor said nothing, but inched his way around until he blocked the nearest passageway downstairs.



"Heheh... and here we go again..hehe. another mess."

Prixima looked at Aaron, then at Christopher, then at Aaron, and narrowed her eyes. With a hand wave, she sent the guards away and they closed the door behind themselves, blocking the entrance into the office for the rest of the group.



"You two rarely come in together. Where there any problems in retrieving the Dragonstone?"



"Only one, slight."



"Do tell."



"We haven't got it, my Lady PRIXIMA."

PRIXIMA looked at Aaron with disapproving glare, her eyes narrowing until they were slits spitting out malice and hatred. She then looked at Christopher, eyeing him from head to toes.



"Details, Christopher, you first."

Chris cleared his throat.



"Well... it goes something like this. We met up with Taki's mercenaries, as planned. When we regrouped at the windmill, we encountered Eor. Things escalated into full-scale combat, and the Vilino militia rode out to fight us under the presumption that we were bandits attacking Eor."



"We were forced to kill all of them. I checked Eor's pockets for the dragonstone but he didn't have it on him. Afterward, Adrien cut his corpse up to check that he didn't swallow it, which he hadn't. There was a heated discussion in which Adrien proposed the idea of burning Eor's house to the ground and searching through the remains for the dragonstone, while literally everyone else argued that it was a stupid and bad idea."



"We lost track of Adrien while our wounds were being tended to, and when we spotted smoke coming from the village we hastened to it. There we met up with Aaron, who reported that someone had set Eor's house on fire. I believed at the time Adrien was the culprit and I still do, despite him saying that at the time it was happening he was fighting a bear. Aaron told us to come back here, so we set off."



"We made camp in the forest off the road. We heard a horse ride by, so Gregor and I went to investigate. We didn't find anything of note and headed back, where the pair of us met up with Adrien. He wanted to investigate as well, so I headed back out to the road with him. When the rider came back, Adrien proposed we jump him. I agreed as I thought maybe we should interrogate him, but when the rider came close Adrien threw an axe at him with intent to kill."



"I deflected the axe by diving at the rider and knocking him from his saddle, unfortunately breaking his neck and smashing the potions he was carrying. When I brought the body back to camp, Gregor identified him as Torres's nephew Roy. I scraped together what was left of the plague cure and sent it with the mercenaries Seyena and Valor back toward Vilino, and on our way back here we met up with Aaron once more. And... here we are."

Prixima listened, her fingers tapping at her shoulders as her annoyance with the report grew. but it was evident she began to lose interest after the report moved from Eor and lack of Dragonstone to the mention of the messenger.



"So, my cousin is dead. This is a good thing, at last I will have entire county under me. You don't have the Dragonstone, and I don't even feel surprised. Aaron, make sure that the messenger boy problem with be dealt with. I'm not interested in pampering every soldier here. As for Adrien--"

Prixima suddenly sneezed, so loud that it was heard outside the office. The guards briefly looked at the door.



"Hmph, I have to whip that maiden. The dust is all ov.. ov..." Prixima could only cover her mouth before she sneezed mightily again. When she looked at the two, she had slightly reddish eyes.



"My allergy! Flowers! Which of you brought flowers here!"

Chris blinked.





"...That would be me."

He looked ruefully at the bouquet he had hidden in his robes.



"I suppose these are the wrong ones. I remember that you were quite pleased with the ones you were given for your most recent birthday, so I thought I would bring you some as an apology. If you want I'll throw them in the fire."

Aaron grabbed the bouquet and moved toward the window, as Prixima was ravaged by the allergy fit, sneezing three more times before Aaron opened the window and tossed the flowers out. Snorting and sobbing, Prixima moved from her desk and toward one of the low dressers near the window, taking out a small towel out of it. Aaron, with pokerface on and no word at all, re-joined Chris in front of Prixima's desk as she sat down, breathing slowly and wiping away tears.



"As far as flowers go, last time you brought me the graveblooms. It's the only type I don't have allergy to." Prixima sighed aloud, cleaning her nose into the small towel. She certainly didn't look like a lady right now.



"Apologies. Here."

Chris removed some cloth from an inner robe of his pocket and handed it over.



"...Is there anything further you wish to ask of me? Any point you want clarified? If not, I think Aaron's ready to turn in his report as well."

Prixima eyed Chris for a moment, refusing his cloth.



"Go on, Aaron."





"We have put out the fire that was devouring what's left of Eor's home. Then my soldiers searched through the rubble, and we checked for hideouts or basements or hidden rooms. None found. If I may suggest someth--



"No, you can't. Now get out. Keep these mercenaries in here. Do not let them leave the castle. The contract isn't fulfilled yet. Feed them if you must. In the meanwhile... I have to think of something. Some other possibility." Upon hearing those words, Aaron bowed slightly and turned on his heel, moving towards the door, while Prixima looked into a drawer at her desk and took out a pile of various notes and documents.



"You too, Chris."

Chris nodded and left the room.

---



"So.. what should we do now?"

The shaman seemed a bit confused about the situation, probably because he was distracted with the book he had been reading during the conversation.



"Well, that went about as well as you guys might have expected. Probably better, actually. But for now we're all restricted to this area, so... I suggest you get comfortable."

The spy sighed and rubbed at his forehead. Two years working under Prixima and never had such a massive disaster occurred at every level of a mission until now. He really didn't know what to make of it.

Gregor spoke up from his post.



"By the way, look who wandered in while you were giving your report." He gestures at Adrien.



"Well, I'd reckon I'd be able to get through to her. Though I have to ask this first: How fast do you lot think you can run?"



"For the love of God or money or whatever the hell it is you care about, Adrien, don't antagonize her any further right now. Give her at least an hour,"

Chris said with a sigh, rubbing his forehead with his thumb and index finger.



"I think we should change leaders."



"Hear, hear!"



"Adrien." Aaron looked at the young axeman, and then moved past the group.



"I will go speak with Captain Torres..." He explained, walking downstairs. The guards at the door crossed their spears, showing that none shall pass.



"He's getting Captain Torres now? Oh, I am not looking forward to this..."

Now that the door is properly guarded, Gregor very carefully makes sure that he is not in between it and Adrien.

Ami on the other hand waits where she can get his axe after whatever happens.

Olison remains eerily silent as he moves to the nearest window, not taking his eyes off Adrien.

Chris found a spot near Ami and leaned against the wall, face hidden in the shadows of his hood. Right now he just wanted to think.



"I will still go with the idea of letting Olson be the new "leader."



"This isn't going at all how I planned..."

Chris glanced over.



"How did you plan it, if you don't mind my asking?"



"Oh- I didn't mean - no, this is fine. I was thinking of a different thing I was going to be doing today if we weren't locked in here together."

Chris glanced over at Gregor, then locked eyes with Charlotte again and tilted his head slightly in the soldier's direction as if to ask if it would have involved him.

After a while, Aaron appeared on the floor, backed by several soldiers, armed and armored. He coughed into his glove and looked at Adrien.



"Captain Torres demands trial by combat. Adrien have to fight Torres until Torres surrenders the cause or Adrien dies. I'm sorry, I couldn't persuade him otherwise." With that, the soldiers lunged for Adrien and numerous hands grabbed him by his arms. Few other looked at the rest of the mercenary group, their hands on the handles of their swords or poles of their spears.



"The rest of your group is allowed to view the match, but for sake of all gods, do not interfere... Good luck, Adrien." He added.

## ~~Chapter 2x: Trial by Combat~~

The soldiers brought Adrien outside, toward the stables in one of the less populated parts of the castle. Aaron followed right behind them. Torres, a burly man in heavy armor, was already there, a steel spear in his hands. The soldiers blocked all exits from

this courtyard, as servants and stable boys began to gather behind them to peek at the combat.



"Child-murderer! Bastard! I will cut you to pieces!"

~~Player Turn 1~~

|   |   |   |      |   |   |      |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|------|---|---|------|---|---|---|----|
|   | 1 | 2 | 3    | 4 | 5 | 6    | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 1 |   |   |      |   |   |      |   |   |   |    |
| 2 |   |   |      |   |   |      |   |   |   |    |
| 3 |   |   |      |   |   |      |   |   |   |    |
| 4 |   |   | Adri |   |   |      |   |   |   |    |
| 5 |   |   |      |   |   | Torr |   |   |   |    |
| 6 |   |   |      |   |   |      |   |   |   |    |
| 7 |   |   |      |   |   |      |   |   |   |    |
| 8 |   |   |      |   |   |      |   |   |   |    |

Weather:

|               |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Mercs:</b> | <b>Knights:</b>                 |
| Adrien: 28/28 | Torres: 34/34 <b>Dismounted</b> |

While everyone was busy at the courtyard-turned-arena, Chris slipped away to head to the armory and see if it was guarded or not.

Yes, the armory was guarded by two soldiers, as always. Not everyone in the castle was watching the match, after all.

Chris walked on by and eventually returned to the courtyard.

Derick looked back and forth between Adrien and his heavily armored opponent, taking in the differences in their strength and equipment.



"The poor guy is doomed."



"I'm not exactly fond of Adrien, but being forced to fight to the death seems rather barbaric..."



"They still haven't started yet, I see."



"Well.. if you look by another side Adrien's decisions are also barbaric at most of situations. But lets see by a bright side, the other guy is not on his horse."



"I... don't think the horse will make much of a difference in this arena."



"Adrien's actions might have been barbaric, but a pit fight doesn't seem like a punishment for a man like him...especially if he wins. He should be jailed instead."



"Pffahahahaha. You really want to do this? You really want to throw your own life away for some "honourable" cause? Shit happens all the time Torres, and death was a risk your son was well aware of when he signed up. And if he wasn't, I guess that makes you a terrible parent as well. Now, SHOW ME WHAT PASSES FOR COMPETENCE AMONG YOUR MISBEGOTTEN ORDER!"

**Adrien holds ground, equips the Iron axe.**



"...I hereby retract my statement of poorness, not the doomed part thought. I still think he's doomed."



"See what I mean? This isn't a punishment, he's enjoying this!"



"It WOULD be a punishment if that guy was using a sword... and I doubt a prison would hold him. He probably would bite the bars every day to open a path and run away to hug bears again or kill another person randomly."

Tantallos shrugged and began to laugh at the situation.



"And they call me CRAZY..."

~~Enemy Phase~~



"How dare you mock my nephew's honour! You're a bandit and not a mercenary! I can bet my entire career that you killed your own mother to sell off her dress!"

With that, Torres moved up to Adrien and thrustured with his spear at the young axeman - the weapon stabbed into axeman's stomach, making the crowd go 'oooh!'. Adrien then slashed with his iron axe, yet he missed. The knight spit at the ground and thrustured at Adrien again, but this time his opponent managed to evade the heavy lance.

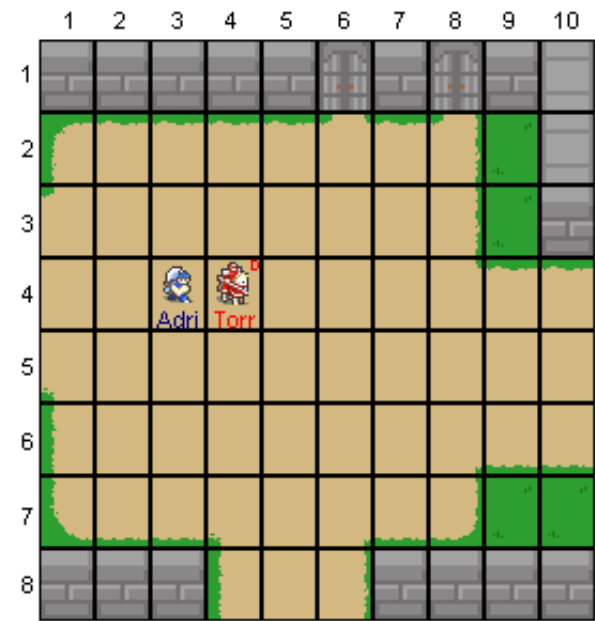
Torres vs Adrien

Hit: 99-15-15-16 = 53  
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage: 26-1-7 = 18dmg

Adrien counters!  
Hit: 86+15-30 = 71  
Hit roll: 83, miss!

Torres strikes again!  
Hit: 99-15-15-16 = 53  
Hit roll: 77, miss!

~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

| Mercs:        | Knights:                 |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| Adrien: 10/28 | Torres: 34/34 Dismounted |

Derick glanced uneasily at Daniel and Ami and did his best to look inconspicuous.

Chris shrugged at Tantallos's statement.



"Can't exactly say I disagree."



"At least I do not put myself in a risk like that. And it seems this battle is going to end really soon."



"Well, it's not looking good for Adrien."

Gregor couldn't help but feel sorry for the axe-wielding lunatic, despite all of the things he'd done.



"So, Gregor. Who do you think is going to take over? Even if Adrien wins, I don't see him remaining the leader of that group."



"I'd say Olison. He took Roy's death far more calmly than I feared he would, not to mention he's the oldest and most experienced of everyone here. I think he could be a good leader, though whether he wants to or not is up to him."



"Fight! Fight! Fight!"

Charlotte looked a little too excited by this.

Gregor raised an eyebrow at Charlotte's antics, but said nothing.

Chris also raised an eyebrow at Charlotte.



"Living vicariously, are we?"

He turned back to Gregor.



"I don't know. Depends on if he's willing to leave Lady Prixima's service or not. I am, because I found a reason to move on, but... well, who knows. Let's say he doesn't. Do you consider yourself part of this group? If so, I think a lot of them would feel more comfortable with you leading."

Gregor gave Chris a grumpy look.



"You have a way of asking difficult questions, you know that?"

He thought for a few seconds.



"Yes, I like to think of myself as part of the group. However, I'm waiting to hear more of Charlotte's "Angels" idea before I do anything else. I'm in the Army, don't forget, so technically I'm in Prixima's service as well. Leaving it could be...difficult."



"Gregor? Leader? Sounds good to me!"

She gave him a thumbs up.



"Gregor sounds like a good option..and if this group spreads, I doubt we will keep around here, they will probably tell us to go."

He flushed a little at the vote of confidence.



"Heh...well, we'll see."



"Don't be so modest! From what I can tell everyone likes or at least respects you. That's a start to being a leader. I would follow you."





"And sorry. It's part of my curious nature."

Ignoring the conversation around him, Olison leaned against a nearby wall, looking onto the battle. His expression was stiffer than ever as he muttered something under his breath.



"How cruelly fitting he would get the chance to fight, when so many others don't."



"Well, I hope you intend to exile yourself immediately, because I did not at all but that may just be due to the fact she never once wore a dress. And for your nephew's honour, I believe you've already took it from him like a priest. I'd say Chris snapping his neck was a mercy kill compared to the torments he likely suffered under you."

**Adrien uses a vulnerary, stays put.**

Sprinkle sprinkle~

**Adrien uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

~~Enemy Phase~~

Torres' face went pale, then red, and then purple, before he managed to say anything.



"I will skin your corpse! I will make his funeral shroud out of your face skin!"

With that, he lunged at the young axeman. The bloodthirsty lance again pierced Adrien's body. This time, however, the axe managed to hit the armoured man.

And then it happened.

Adrien almost got away from the spear. Almost. The infuriated Torres attacked from an angle and impaled the axeman on his lance. With momentum, he lifted the spear, keeping Adrien's body up like a grotesque banner. Only after a while of silence - disrupted by Torres' heavy breathing - the lance was lowered and Adrien's corpse landed on the ground.

The castle servants murmured and gossiped for a while before the crowd began to disperse. The wall of soldiers kept the rest of mercenaries away as Torres looked down at Adrien's body, not uttering a word. Seconds turned into a full minute, before Torres lifted his lance, turned around and moved away, mumbling something under his nose, his face twisted in mix of satisfaction and anger.

Only then the soldiers broke the formation.

#### Torres vs Adrien

Hit:  $99-15-15-16 = 53$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Damage:  $26-1-7 = 18\text{dmg}$

Adrien counters!

Hit:  $86+15-30 = 71$

Hit roll: 13, hit!

Damage:  $21+1-13 = 9\text{dmg}$

Torres gets second strike!

Hit:  $99-15-15-16 = 53$

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Damage:  $26-1-7 = 18\text{dmg}$

A couple of pained coughs came from Adrien, his wounds bleeding profusely.



"Ehehe... Ehehe. You... really think... That this is the end Torres? That... You've done... the right thing? All... you've done... is consign yourself... to a fate... worse than death. His death... will have... been in vain."



"Now... Go get... someone to... heal my corpse... I have... a date... with PRIXIMA... And I'd... Rather be... dead for that."

And with that, Adrien's eyes closed, and his breathing stopped.

But Torres was too far to hear that, sadly. Or maybe, fortunately.

**Adrien is dead.**

~~Chapter 2x Complete~~



"... And yet it makes no difference in the end."

Tantallos gave a sigh and shook his head.



"Even if he was crazy, he died young.."



"..."



"Well then. Looks like we're going to find out sooner rather than later who the new leader will be."

Chris went over and picked up Adrien's equipment.

Chris found his arms a bit too fragile to pick up everything; two axes and that healing bag. Seems no scavenging for the spy.

---

In the very same moment, Seyena's pegasus landed at the bridge leading into the Kesselring Fortress. The soldiers at the guardpost looked at her, before recognizing her. They did give Valor a more than few glances of doubt.



"And, we're here."



"Greetings." Valor dismounted, with less grace than he would have liked, but managing to stay on his feet this time. "We're part of the mercenary group. May we pass?"

"Fine, you may go in." The guard on the left replied and nodded at the entrance, allowing the two (three) to pass freely.



"Thank you." Once inside, Valor took a glance around. "Well, I've never been here before. Where do you think they are?"



"I don't know... maybe we should look?" Seyena said. "I remember where Prixima's office is, we could start looking from there." Seyena said, already walking towards her destination.



"That makes sense." Valor said, following after Seyena.

---

Chris decided to just take the better axe and the healing bag. The axe he would give to Ami, and the healing bag to someone at random who needed it. Probably Gregor.

Chris only got the heavier axe before he noticed that the vulnerable, unfortunately, was untied and the powder fell out onto the dirt, most possibly during Adrien's last moments.

### **Chris gets Iron Axe!**

Then, Chris came back to the group and looked for Ami.

Tantallos finally pulled his hood down for the first time and looked at the others.



"OOook.. who will be carrying the money now and leading the group?"



"...you know, I never really him to go out like this. Thought he would be struck by lightning or something. Climbing on the side of the wall of a tower. While escaping from a prison. On top of a volcano. Overlooking a bottomless pit. "



"...Yes...but there is nothing to be done for now.. besides praying for the Plague Dragon at my case."

Tantallos looked to the side for a moment and walked away wondering if they had any tomes as he could not get any before due to the lack of money.

The shaman looked at both the directions unsure which way to go and stared at a soldier before speaking up.



"Excuse me, do they have dark magic tomes on this castle? In a library, maybe?"

The soldier blinked and thought a bit.

"We have no shamans there. And such exotic books would be in Lady Prixima's private

library methinks."



"Hmm.. private library... maybe I talk to her about it later, thank you for to the info."

Tantallos moved away and looked for the group again.

---

Wordless, Olson stood from the wall and made his way out of the room towards the Armory. When there, he would look for a Sword and Javelin.

Two soldiers standing at the door of the armory looked Olson over.

"What do you want?" One of them asked without much interest in his voice.

With a steel gaze, Olson replied sternly.



"Supplies. My last assignment left my comrade's weapons in ill condition. In addition, I may require a sword for close quarters for our next assignment."

The soldiers looked at each other, and the one who spoke to Olson shrugged.

"Just remember to write down yer name in the Acquisition book. And don't take everything."

Olson nodded and, moving inside the armory, checked the stocks for swords, javelins and vulneraries.

There was a ton of iron weapons, some steel weapons, and few crates of vulneraries. Also, the giant acquisition ledger, all pages divided for names, dates, and items taken.

Olson gathered an Iron Sword, two Iron Javelins and a vulnerary before scratching the appropriate logs in the ledger and leaving to find everyone else.

---

Just as they were in the middle floor, someone bumped at Seyena. He wore red armor and looked down at her - the man was more than six feet tall.



"Ah, isn't it our moonlit beauty and her friend. I didn't suspect anyone is busy at these floors now, what with the duel and the fact that Lady PRIXIMA is busy in her study."



"Oh- hello, Sir Rosecross..." Seyena said, looking up. She wasn't the tallest in any regard, and this man seemingly towered above her. "What duel are you talking about?" She asked.



"Oh? You didn't see it? Captain Torres have challenged that axeman to a trial by combat. It's been a while since I saw them gather at the rear courtyard, so I think one of them is dead by now."



"And how do we get to the rear courtyard? Just a straight shot to the back?"



"Just go downstairs to the main hall, then go into one of those two small corridors in the back, and open a door. And you're there."



"Right, thanks." Valor began making his way toward the courtyard, assuming Seyena followed. If so: "Adrien in a duel? I'm curious to how that turned out."

---

Charlotte thought for a moment then turned to Gregor again.



"Hey, Gregor. I know this is a bad time, but you know PRIXIMA better than I do. Do you think she'd send us out on the same mission again? Or do you think she has a worse punishment in mind?"

Gregor thought for a moment about Charlotte's question.



"I doubt that she'd have us thrown in jail or forced to work in a chain gang, if that's what you meant by 'punishment'. I'm sure she has another assignment for us, though what it is..."

He spread his hands to show his uncertainty.



"I couldn't even begin to guess."

He forced some cheer into his voice.



"Who knows? Maybe you'll get a chance to do that Charlotte's Angels thing you mentioned!"

Tantallos, Seyena and Valor reunited with the mercenaries just as two soldiers loaded Adrien's body on a stretcher and carried it away toward small, stone building in the corner of the courtyard. One other soldier began swiping the ground with a broom, pushing dirt onto the large pool of blood, to cover it.

Gregor noticed Valor and Seyena returning.



"Welcome back, you two. I'm not sure if anyone told you, but there's been a duel. And Adrien lost."



"Is it bad for a healer not to care about the death of a person?"



"It depends. Can a healer aligned with one lord feel bad when the soldier of an enemy lord dies in battle? Or when someone they've never met in another country dies?"

Chris said, answering her rhetorical question as he approached. He held out the Iron Axe.



"I managed to recover this before they hauled Adrien's body away. I thought you might want it."



"A new axe!"

Ami hugged the axe, somehow not cutting herself on it.

Chris smiled, happy she was happy.



"I have something else I want to ask you about. With Adrien gone, that group of yours is going to need a new leader. I think the popular vote is Gregor. What do you think about the situation?"

Ami puts the axe away.



"Well Gregor does seem the most level headed here, apart from Charlotte. And he seem to have the right mind set for a mercenary band unlike Charlotte, so yes I would vote for Gregor."



"Same here."

Chris said nothing else, seemingly content just to hang around in Ami's general vicinity.

After a brief moment, Olison *slowly* rejoined the group, hugging some weapons with him and almost tripping over the javelins.

Chris raised an eyebrow at Olison.



"They're letting you into the armory? You should've grabbed a crossbow while you were there, I could use one. I suppose I'll see if they'll let me in now."

He went back to the armory to request entrance.

The soldiers looked at Christopher, and then at each other.

"Yees?"



"I need a crossbow. Are any in there?"

The soldiers shrugged and uncrossed their spears.

"Go check if you want. Remember to write down in ledger if you take anything."





"Right then."

Chris entered the armory and looked at the selection of bows.

Bows, there were plenty - iron and steel-wrought, few longbows as well. There was also only a few iron crossbows at one counter.

Chris considered the selection. He was good with all sorts of bows, although his specialty was crossbows. He could probably use a longbow to the same effect. After a few moments, he grabbed a steel-wrought longbow and an iron crossbow. He checked those out in the ledger and left to go find Charlotte.

---



"...Isn't Gregor one of Prixima's men at arms? Kind of hard for him to be the designated leader of a mercenary group that way." Valor said, pointing out the obvious flaw in this plan.

Sheathing the sword and pulling one of the javelins over his back next to his other lance, Olson moves towards the rest of the group.



"Gregor, catch." He states as he tosses the other javelin sideways towards Gregor.

Gregor fumbles the catch slightly, but manages to avoid dropping the weapon.



"A javelin? Thanks, Olson!"

**Gregor: Javelin Get. Keep Iron Lance Equipped.**



"Should give you something to throw back at those accursed mages."



"Any bows in there?"

Charlotte had been following Gregor the whole time.



"Plenty. But as usual they're kept under tight guard. I'm not about to further damage the situation by sneaking equipment out, apologies. Maybe Chris will pick up an extra on his way out."



"If he doesn't think of it, I can go with you, Charlotte. We should also see if they have any healing staffs for Ami; I remember her saying that she needed a new one and I don't know if its been replaced yet."

Just as Christopher returned to the group, a young soldier approached Olson and saluted.

"Sir, Lady Prixima calls the mercenaries back to her study. Apparently it's something important."

Olson sharply exhaled.



"Very well, we'll be right there." He solemnly stated before moving off.

Chris handed the steel longbow to Charlotte as soon as he arrived.



"Thought you could use this. Now, let's see what the Lady wants, huh?"

With that, he turned to follow Olson.

**Charlotte gladly accepts the longbow from Chris as they head to the boss' study.**



"... On second thought, that might have to wait until later."

**Gregor: Go to Prixima's study.**



"It is not like we do have options, right? Heh..eeheh. And I can see Olson brought some gifts."

---

Two minutes later..

Prixima sat down at her desk, eyeing the mercenary group as her hands held a large, yellowed note. She squinted her eyes, tilted her head a bit and then grimaced slightly.



"And where's Adrien? Why your group always have leadership problems?"



"I am afraid Adrien had a date with death and will not be able to show up."

At the second question, he just shrugged.

Gregor blinked in surprise.



"Milady...Adrien died in a duel. Did you not see it?"

Prixima frowned.



"I don't pay attention to outside when I'm busy. A pity, he looked like a strong boy. Well then, that's third leader since I recruited the group. I will never deal with Mercians again." She rubbed her forehead and straightened the note in her hands.



"Neither Eor nor his mansion had my family's Dragonstone. Because of that, I had to shuffle through my... notes to search for a clue. In his young age, Eor served as a temple guard in the Temple of Scriptures. It's actually a big library filled with monks and mages, and books of course, in eastern part of Fezzan. According to one report, Eor was there two weeks ago."



"One propability is that he moved the stone to the Temple, or left it under guard of one of his temple friends. You will go there, search around, and, if needed, turn the temple upside-down. If you find the Dragonstone, bring it to me so I can give you the reward. If not... come back to me and we will try something else. Is that understood?"



"Clear as crystal, but talking about books I do have a question, do you happen to have any dark tome on your library?"

Prixima narrowed her eyes and a wrinkle appeared on her forehead.



"I might have a few."



"....I heard there are no shamans on this castle, would it be possible to take one of them?"

Prixima chuckled.



"No."

Olison quickly walked to Tantallos and hurriedly whispered to him:



"We are heading to a Library filled to the brim with books, you'll have your chance there."

Tantallos looked to Olison and whispered back.



"Yes, a place filled with books and monks and mages too. Do you think we will have time even look at the books being attacked by them?"

Olison frowned and whispered:



"I can appreciate preparation, but that's assuming they're going to give us trouble."

Regardless, Olison then made a slight bow to Prixima and walked out of the room.

Tantallos nodded to Olison and gave a brief bow to Prixima before stepping away.



"One more thing." Prixima said as the group prepared to leave.



"Captain Marpa and her riders are leaving for Fezzan in less than an hour. Tell her that I'm ordering her to give you a lift. This way you should be in Fezzan by tomorrow's morning."



"Very well. We'll do so."

Chris stepped out of the shadows behind Olison, where he had been lurking.



"Anything else we need to know, or shall we get underway?"



"Milady Prixima, will you be giving us any sort of letter stating our intentions? If the learned men and women at the Temple think we're bandits or vagabonds, they may turn on us."



"It's better if they don't know I've sent you. Pose as some of Eor's friends or something. Or his soldier band. Or his family, I don't care - bring me the Dragonstone."



"Very well then, I don't think there's anything else."

Gregor saluted and walked out of the room.

### **Gregor: Go find Captain Marpa**

Captain Marpa wasn't at her office. She wasn't in her troops' dining hall either. She was, however, outside, her soldiers saddling the horses and tying supply bags to their sides. Marpa was on the side, arguing with no one else than Aaron, with some young, armor-clad man behind the latter.



"I told you, Aaron, I won't be taking Alexander with me. He is a damned armour knight, not a cavalier. He will crush the horse under him!"



"You're exaggerating, Marpa. Torres wears full armor and his horse doesn't even budge." Marpa sighed and rubbed her face with her left hand, before pinching her nose for a second.



"But Torres' horse was bred for carrying knights. Besides, Alexander is not even in my troops. You know that I don't like newcomers, even if they're your soldiers."

Aaron was going to respond, but then he noticed Gregor, and the rest of the mercenary group, behind him.



"It's you, guys? You need something from me?"

### **Alexander Jorinn is in!**



"Actually, I needed to speak to Captain Marpa. Lady Prixima has ordered us to go to the Temple of the Scriptures in Fezzan, and she wants us to go with Marpa's riders."

He paused.



"Also, I don't suppose either of you have a spare healing staff? Ami's is

almost broken, and I forgot to ask Lady PRIXIMA for one."



"I won't be spoken--"



"Excellent! Thanks for reminding me, Gregor. I forgot to tell you, dear, that Alexander was supposed to go with those mercenaries! How could I have forgotten that slight detail." A wide grin appeared on Aaron's face. Marpa, on other hand, squinted eyes at her husband, turned pale, then red, and walked toward her riders, grumbling under her nose.



"Unfortunately, you know that magic is rare amongst our troops and we don't spare magical items to outsiders. Let me... where I had it..." Aaron searched his armor and pulled out a small coinpurse, which looked miserably empty. He put it in Gregor's hand.



"I doubt it's enough to buy you a healing staff, but who knows. You might find some merchant selling staves cheaply. Now, will you take Alexander with you? Considering Adrien is dead, you need someone with good armour and strong hand."

**Gregor gets 110 gold!**



"You mean Sir Jorinn? Sure, I suppose he could come with us. Do you think he'll get along with the rest of the group?"



"I never saw him having problems socializing with other soldiers. I think--"



"Hey, mercenaries!" Marpa interrupted from the top of her horse. Her cavaliers, twenty in total, were on their horses; the entire unit was ready to go.



"I won't be waiting endlessly until you get yer arses on the horses!" She looked irritated, but her face was back to paleness. Aaron chuckled and saluted curtly to Gregor, and then he moved off towards the keep.

Alexander mostly remained silent, though with what could be described as a sighing expression throughout the conversation- up until the point where he was suddenly shoved into a mercenary group. Taking a moment to adjust before deliberately speaking:



"...Well. I suppose that means a change. ...And I don't believe I'll pick any fights, von Hexham. ...And you're a mercenary now? Did I miss somethi- ... alright. Moving, then."

Gregor saluted Marpa.



"Apologies, Captain! We'll be ready to leave momentarily!"

He checked his bag, but it didn't look like he needed anything for this trip.



"It's good to see you again, Sir Jorinn. And no, I'm not a mercenary...it's complicated. I'll explain it all and introduce you to everyone on the road."



"Oh... so we are leaving? Good.. maybe I can learn something there, hopefully Eon's little friends will buy our story and let us get there without getting into some insane fight."



"Complicated things, the best kind... Ah well, nothing to be done about it... so what exactly will I be doing?"



"We're on a special assignment from Lady Prixima herself, hunting for something called the Dragonstone. Right now, her best guess is that it's in a temple in Fezzan. Assuming we can't avoid a fight, you'll be doing what knights do best I suppose."



Alexander nodded, understanding.



"Alright."



"Time for introductions I think? I am Tantallos Forsaken, from the Forsaken family, as you can see I am a shaman."

He looked at Gregor for a moment and shook his head.



"Lets hope at least this time we can get it done without a fight. I have some hopes on that."



"Nice to meet you, Tantallos. I am Sir Alexander of the Jorinn family."



"Great Dragon, I hope so. Killing Eor's militia was bad enough. Killing a bunch of scholars in a temple would probably condemn us all."



"That's surprising coming from you, Tantallos. I thought you liked fighting?" Seyena asked, giving the newcomer a quick glance before she mounted her pegasus.



"It would likely not condemn us if they try to kill us. Though of course that is hardly preferable. ...Assuming there will be talking first. There will be talking, not just brandishing of weapons, right?"

Gregor glanced at the pegasus rider.



"Ah, Seyena. This is Sir Jorinn. He'll be joining us for now. Sir Jorinn, Seyena."



"We'll certainly try talking first..."

Alexander nods at the pegasus rider.



"Nice to meet you, Alexander. "

Tantallos laughed and turned around to face Seyena.



"I have my moments, you know. Besides.. I would not be able to look for books and tomes if we were under attack, right?"

Seyena gives a quick smile to the knight, before addressing Tantallos.



"That's a good point."

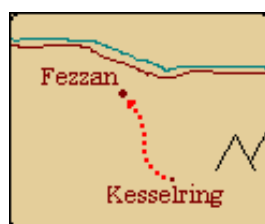
Marpa sighed, seeing all the mercenaries slowly loading themselves on the horses of her riders. More than half of the horses had to bear not one, but two people on the saddles.



"I'm going to kill someone when we get back. I'm so going to..."

After that, the troop left the fortress in a rhythmic trot, the horses being swift even with the extra weight.

### ~~Chapter 3: The Border City of Fezzan~~



*Fezzan.*

*Large, prosperous city, that was changing the owner more then thirty times in the last one hundred years.*

*Originally Menelean, it was bought or conquered by the two warring sides many times*

*because of it's strategic location.*

*It's been four years since Menelean troops took the city back from Berebian occupation forces. It seems as if Berebians almost gave up on the city.*

*As the mercenaries enter the city, everything seems to be at peace...*

Marpa's riders passed the large, stone arch that was leading into the city. As promised by Prixima, Marpa got the mercenaries to the city in less than a day. The morning coldness was giving away to the brightness and warmth of noon time.

The city gate was wide open, allowing every person to come in and leave Fezzan as they want - as if the citizens were oblivious to the fact that they're half a day travel from Berebian border, and their vast armies.

Captain Marpa sighed with content when her riders stopped on a small plaza, with a fountain at its centre.



"Ahh, nothing beats a city like this. Well, you guys can get off my horses now. I hope next time I will hear less complaints."



"You were in Fezzan before... right? You know where to go?" Marpa asked, her face suddenly shaded with doubt.



"I've been here before. I'm pretty sure I remember where the Temple is." Seyena spoke up.

Marpa sighed in relief, not bothering to hide it.



"My mission takes me to the Fezzan Keep. I will be returning to Kesselring tomorrow morning. If you want to ride back with us, make sure to meet us at this plaza here, tomorrow morning, when the sun will be still low. We will wait for you for a while, but no more. I hope that's clear?"



"You couldn't have made it more so."

Tantallos clapped his gloved hands together and nodded.



"Well, if you might know where it is, it will take less time than I thought."



"Good. Until tomorrow, then." With that, she shouted at her riders, and the entire cavalry unit moved up the main street, to the north.

When the cavaliers cleared the plaza, the crowds returned, and the mercenaries found themselves in a sea of random people.

Gregor sighed.



"I guess we better get to work if we want to make the deadline. Seyena, do you remember where the Temple of the Scriptures is located?"



"Yes, as I recall, it's in the eastern part of the city. It's not that hard to miss when you get over there, really." Seyena said, starting to cut through the crowd towards their destination.



"Make sure everyone follow a line so nobody get lost."

Gregor followed Seyena in silence, marveling at the sights. He knew that Fezzan's history had been a bloody one, but it looked just like any other Menelean city. He could only hope that the soldiers defending the place were on top of things.



"I wonder where Prixima will send us if the stone isn't here? Also, what's our cover story for speaking to these priests and scholars? I suggest Olison, Gregor and Alexander stay back, while the rest of present ourselves as mercenaries hired by Eor before his 'murder', to claim the stone and transport it to... Hm, does anyone know if Eor had family beyond Prixima?"



"Keeping the obvious soldiers out sounds good, but hold on a moment. It's possible that word of his death hasn't yet reached here."



"Even better if they don't yet know. They use magic to confirm it, and we look more like we're in the know. And, in the initial panic over learning of his death, they'll miss things we would otherwise be caught out over."



"I guess that makes sense. I've never heard of magic like that, but I wouldn't want to lay bets on what a bunch of scholars can do!"



"How would you use magic to tell if someone really far away is dead or not?"



"Uh... I just assumed that that was a thing magic can do. Otherwise, I'm sure they'll just send a flesh and blood messenger."



"EXCUSE ME, but the magic user here exists, and I know how I may get you all inside. I did not give details about the Forsakens to you all, but we are a noble family, do not even ask why I am here. But as I was saying, we are a noble family of magicians, druids, shamans, necromancers! And I am quite sure they know about us, so I will just tell them I will be bringing of people who are willing to give up on the melee combat and learn about the many ways of magic. "

He shrugged to himself and crossed his arms behind his back looking up.



"Or we could try to scout, and if they get us, well, we will face another fight, and as most of us cannot stand magic.. it will be a difficult one."

Seyena looks amused at Tantallos' outburst.



"Alright, you can give us the details of your fancy bloodline later. But how are you going to present most of us as 'potential magic users'? Like me, I'm more adept at fighting mages than being one."



"I don't think that wanting to learn magic will allow us to search for the Dragonstone. At least, not if we want to be out of here by tomorrow. I think Valor's idea of posing as friends or family of Eor is the best one."



"Mercenaries hired by Eor. We already are mercenaries, so it's the perfect cover."



"Right! My apologies."



"I agree with Gregor and Valor: posing as Eor's mercenaries is the best bet, however, there are still a million things that can and will go wrong."



"Undoubtedly. But my plan should at least get us well inside, and maybe even to the stone before they realize they've been had. Or, the stars could all align and things could go without a hitch. But I won't hold my breath."



"Fine, do it your way, but keep cool there. If there is one thing mages, monks, or shamans can do is "feel" when someone is nervous, especially mages, those crazy elemental adepts... "

Tantallos pulled his hood off and gave a grin to Seyena, a cheek to cheek smile, creepy yes.



"Your affinity helps us to know how you could be one. It is not difficult at all, it is more related to your intelligence, will of learning and your affinity."



"That sort of thing takes time to test, Mr Forsaken. It can take several days, depending on how many applicants they have, and in the end you might not have any potential at all..."

Gregor shut up.



"So you're saying that I can just be taught magic, just like that? If so, hand me a book. I'll start throwing fireballs from the air, or whatnot."

Tantallos shook his head and slowly covered his face with his hood again.



"Not exactly, it would require some time, focus, read a lot.. and you would need to stop fighting for quite a while as it would take your focus. That is why you do not see mages running around with swords, unless they are REALLY experienced.. the mage knights.. but that is just an example."



"And troubadours"

Gregor turned to Chris and Daniel (his player left by this point).



"You two are good at this sort of thing. Do you think you could sort of...scout around? See if there are any rumors or wild stories about Eor?"



"Understood. I'll hit the streets. I've been in Fezzan before, so I might be able to find a few old contacts here and there."

**Chris slid off of Tenebra's back, nodded to Gregor, and disappeared into one of the many alleyways to scout around for rumors or any information about Eor, and maybe anything else that could be of interest. Also he equips the Crossbow for now, just in case.**

From what little he got about Eor, only few people recognized the man, and even less could tell him that he was a Temple Guard in the Temple of Scriptures, or that he was here in Fezzan two or three weeks ago. He also noticed something else - all hooded people, if he passed near some or had to talk with, smelled like sewers, or vinegar. Sometimes, both in the same time.

---

The rest of the mercenaries got to a small, walled district. It was considerably smaller than the rest of the districts. Far to the east, they could see a bridge over the moat, and further in that direction, small houses and farmlands. The district, however, was

dominated by a large building, similar to small keep, made of white stone. It had several towers, and all windows were made from expensive-looking stained glass.



"I told you all it wasn't too hard to find."



"Alright, so, who's going to do the talking?"

Chris caught up with the rest.



"Quick report. No one here really knows anything about Eor - and for some reason, everyone who isn't me or Tantallos but is wearing a hood really stinks. They smell of the sewers. I'm thinking there might be something down there - a thieves guild, perhaps."

Alexander looks up at the towered building, and at the walls and moat around the district.



"...Yep. Definitely shouldn't do anything stupid."

The group got to the library 'keep' and the entrance was guarded by two bored swordsmen. The door was open. Upon approach, one of the soldiers yawned as the other placed a hand on his sword's handle before speaking up to the mercs.

"Welcome to the Temple of Scriptures. Yer here to browse the books, or do you have an appointment with one of the members?"

Gregor decided to speak up.



"We wish to speak to the Captain of the Temple Guard. We have news most dire regarding Lord Eor, a former Guardsman."

Alexander stayed quiet. No point in interrupting, in fact it'd probably screw things up if he did.

The two swordsmen looked at each other.

"We dun have a Capt'n here. And I don't remember the name Eor.. Give me a moment,



I will bring magister Tiron..." The talkative swordsman went inside the building, as the other kept a vigil at the entrance. Next half a minute he spend eyeing the group, before his comrade came back with a young, red-haired man behind. Said man dind't look pleased when he noticed the entire group at the entrance.



"Geh, I don't have time to deal with entire group of pilgrims. Do you have leader or something? I can talk with one person. Well, okay, maybe two. I'm a busy man."

Alexander proceeded to back up, to not give the man the impression of wanting to speak to him.

Chris also stepped back. He was interested in how Gregor would handle this.

Gregor turned back to the group under the pretense of choosing a second person, but he was actually giving everyone a dirty look.

Seyena gave Gregor a bemused look, leaning on the neck of her pegasus as she wondered whether or not to say something.

Alexander just kinda shrugged.

Gregor gestured to the spy.



"Chris, you're with me. The rest of you, stay put. We'll be back soon."

The red-haired man grumbled.



"So? Have you forgotten your tongue? You know how important my research is?"

The young soldier bowed.



"Apologies, Magister. The information I have for you is of the highest secrecy and cannot be discussed in the open. May we go inside?"



"It is only highest secrecy if it deals with the King or my research. Speak up already, I don't have whole day."

Tantallos stared at one of the swordmen.



"I would like to look for some dark tomes there if you do not mind."

He hoped the symbol on his cape would be enough or just the fact of being a weird man using a heavy robe.

Gregor took a deep breath.



"Magister, I regret to inform you that Lord Eor is dead, his mansion a pile of ash. I am here in regard to his visit to this temple shortly before his death."

He paused.



"Is this sufficient to attract your attention?"



"We wouldn't waste your time if this wasn't of political importance."

Tiron gave Tantallos a glare.



"We don't give out books. As for Eor guy, I do recognize the name. Wasn't he a Temple Guard, though? You want Grigorij for that. A moment, please." Magister cleared his throat, turned around and placed his hands at his mouth.



"**GRIGORIJ!!**" The shout was clear and definitely disturbed every single reader in the library. Several seconds later, a short, chubby man went inside the main hall through one of the doors on the left. He was lame on the left foot - it was twisted strangely outwards. He was huffing and grumbling as he moved closer.



"...and for the sake of all that's written, Tiron, this is a LIBRARY! You don't YELL in here!"



"Look who's talking. Old man, those people are here to talk with you." The elderly priest huffed, puffed, and then rubbed his forehead with the left sleeve.



"I'm sorry for the impertinence of this young scholar." Hearing that, Tiron scowled and crossed arms at his chest while the priest tried to smile. "I'm Bishop Grigorij, Keeper of the Religious Texts. How can I help you?"

Chris briefly touched Gregor on the shoulder to indicate him.



"My colleague and I are here on matters of great importance, concerning a former Temple Guard of yours. A man named Eor. Did he visit here recently?"

He knew Eor had, but was using the question as an opening gambit.



"Ahh, good old Eor. Yes, he always visits us at least once a month. A young, heavily drinking adventurerm turned into a guard of faith, would you believe? Ahh, the old times... He likes reading, and he sleeps in his old quarters, we keep them vacant for him. Is something wrong, though? He never sent anyone to us, he always came personally..."

Gregor bowed deeply.



"Father, I apologize for being the bearer of grave news. Lord Eor is dead, and his mansion has been burned to the ground. Although there is no official word yet, we suspect foul play. That's one of the reasons we came here, Father; he came to this place just a couple of weeks ago, yes?"



"Aah, that's a pity... Yes, he was here two weeks ago, on usual visitation. Are you here to take his possessions? You didn't have to come as such large group, he kept his cell mostly empty. I think it was--"

Just in the same moment, a rumble of explosion was heard, and then another - across the walls to the west, the mercenaries could see black smoke rising into the sky as a wave of vinegar odour washed over their faces. Then, few more explosions. A commotion near the main road - the keen eyed of the mercenaries could see the previously hooded people pulling their hoods away.

The sun shined on the purple armors of Berebian army.



"Oh no, Berebians are trying to capture the city. Tiron, warn the readers!"  
The red-haired man was away before the bishop could finish.



"I'm sorry, I would be more than happy to talk, but in this situation, I must urge you to leave. There's an inn down the road; conceal your weapons and hide in there until this matter is resolved." Moment later, Tiron came back with two young women in tow.



"The people in the main library left through the rear exit and I posted our other guards there. These two ladies, however, insisted that they will help us."

**Raquel Torriani and Riven are in.**

---

**Meanwhile...**

"Sir Morko, our troops are in disarray. It will take some time until all people from our troops will get here."



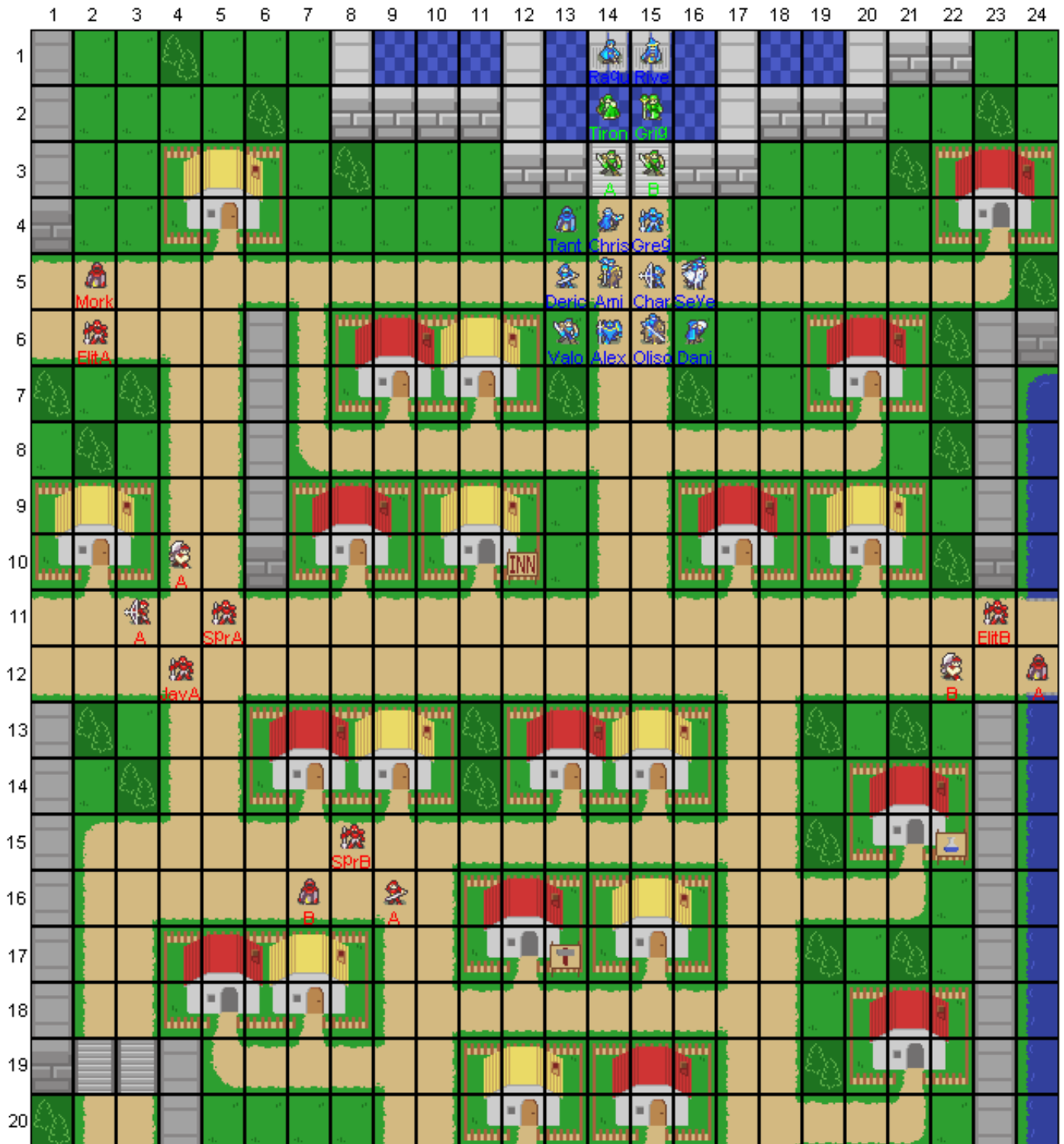
"Tsk, I knew that the timing will be off. No matter, we proceed as planned. Secure this district, and then sack the library, no need to wait for the rest of 7th Army to join in! Count Sunningham promised us a hefty sum of gold if we bring him the all three 'Scrolls of Sety'."

"What if the library people will interfere?"



"Are you stupid? Kill them off, of course!"

## ~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

| Merces:                    | Enemies:            | Allies:                |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 25/25    | Myrmidon A: 24/24   | Temple Guard A: 27/27  |
| Ami Storm: 21/21           | Axeman A: 27/27     | Temple Guard B: 27/27  |
| Charlotte Braxis: 22/22    | Axeman B: 27/27     | Bishop Grigorij: 27/27 |
| Christopher Shields: 21/21 | Lancer A: 26/26     | Tiron: 30/30           |
| Daniel: 24/24              | Lancer B: 26/26     |                        |
| Derick: 24/24              | Javelineer A: 25/25 |                        |

|                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Gregor von Hexham: 27/27  | Elite Lancer A: 25/25 |
| Olison Eul: 23/23         | Elite Lancer B: 25/25 |
| Raquel Torriani: 23/23    | Crossbowman A: 25/25  |
| Riven: 21/21              | Shaman A: 22/22       |
| Seyena Ikane: 23/23       | Shaman B: 22/22       |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 22/22 | Morko: 26/26          |
| Valor Inara: 23/23        |                       |

Charlotte's eye twitched at the sight of the Berebian army.



"Ach! Berebian thugs! This is a quiet, restful place. You can't take over the whole world."

Charlotte turned to **Alexander**.



"Alexander, I'm sorry I didn't introduce myself before. I'm Charlotte Braxis. Would you stay here and protect the library for us while we take down the invaders? You're build like... like a wall."

Alexander let out a snarl and quite the loud curse as the Berebians revealed themselves- Alexander was not known for his calmness in battle.



"Oh, that's RIGHT! Come here to deal with a DOMESTIC PROBLEM, and end up in the MIDDLE OF A *BEREBIAN ATTACK!*" After another curse, he turned to Charlotte. "And yes! Yes I can defend the library!"



"Hmmm.. at least those we will not have to be "sad" about killing, right? Heheh....ehh."

Olison quickly moved in with the rest of the group, having remained on watch behind them as they spoke with the librarian.



"Berebian soldiers. Figures they'd move in today, of all days. This should prove an interesting encounter, I wonder whose bannermen these are..."



"The Berebian Army? Of all the rotten timing..."

Gregor took in the number of enemy units and began to strategize.



"Gregor, I've scouted the areas south of here- the villagers there are poorly defended, they probably won't survive for long without intervention. I suggest I take someone down there to assist."



"You won't survive long down there either, unless the Berebians honestly thought this many troops would be enough to take the city. If you and maybe Seyena get down there, you'd only have enough time to warn the villagers to take cover before coming back. If the two of you fall, I don't know if the rest of us could arrive in time to help."

Seyena looked at the oncoming Berebians, her expression hardening.



"I can make it. I'd suggest you all stay here, and warn those in the closer houses. I'll warn as many as I can down there, and if I get surrounded, I'll make my way back."



"Don't take too much risk. I'm going south regardless, I'll be nearby to help."



"Do your best, and fall back if the enemy is in danger of overwhelming you. That's all anyone can ask. We'll be heading south to assist as soon as we can, so don't die."



"Good idea. Gregor, Daniel: let's take the boys to the left, why don't we?"

**Charlotte: Move 5 W.**





"Right. Everyone else, watch each other's backs and use your vulneraries! I don't want to lose anyone else if we can avoid it."



"I wonder who is leading the attack... you know, during my travel I met some people from different places- well, mostly shamans, druids and summoners.. I had some issues with one or two, mostly because of specific tomes. One of them tried to look for our special tomes from the family.. the other.. I do not remember."

Tantallos shrugged to himself and looked to the sides.



"But forgetting a little about the past, we got some people to kill, right?~"

The shaman seemed a bit if not too happy about the idea of killing others again.

The darker-dressed of the two young women in the back gave a short bow, looking at the rather large group clustered past the library guards.



"Um, pleased to meet you. I'm Riven. I fight best against warriors, while behind allies. I'm also good at leading."



"Pleased to meet you too, Ms Riven. If you feel you can help, feel free to do so. We'd be grateful for any assistance."



"We're involving ourselves then? Let's try to end this quickly, in case they're expecting reinforcements."

Olison patted his belt, and his expression widened slightly.



"Damn it, I thought I took one out of the armory... Does anyone have a spare vulnerary?"



Gregor quickly checked his pack and came up with two packets of the healing powder; one single-dose, and one with three doses.



"One dose or three, Olison? Take whichever."



"Just the single dose, you may need the extra doses."



"Here, want mine?" Seyena said, "Also, Valor, would you mind holding onto the antidote? If I fall, I don't want it to smash."



"...Sure. Be careful out there."



"Seyena, you have some extra, right? You might need some medicine as well if the enemy troops manage to catch up to you."



"Yes, I have extra." Seyena said, pulling out two vulneraries, one full, one with a third left. "But, you're making it sound like they have a chance to catch me."



"I'll be fine. As I said earlier, if I need to retreat, I will."

Gregor chuckled.



"Good point. Fly safe, and we'll catch up soon."

Gregor observed the rest of the party. He wasn't going to move until everyone knew what they were doing; if they wanted to elect him leader, then dammit he was going to do his best.



"Alright, let's get in position to defend the temple. Obviously, we can't let the enemy inside."

**Valor: Move to 18,6**



"Here, Olison. You're going to need it more than I will." Seyena said, handing him a vulnerary.

**Seyena: Move to 15, 7. Give Olison Vulnerary 3/3**



*I'll be back soon. All I have to do is warn a few people...*

**Seyena again: Move to 15, 11.**



"Thanks. I'll cover you, if we play this right we can warn the villagers quickly before the enemy can get a bead on us."

**Olison: Move to 15, 12**

Tantallos turned around and replied to the bow.



"Riven hm? Are you a shaman too?"



"Yes. Preferred the term 'Dark Witch' elsewhere, but it's not a common term here."



"Dark Witch"? Hmmm.. that is different for sure. But it is good to find another person using ancient magic, heheh..."



"Are dark magic users that rare around here? I haven't seen very many, but I did at least find this library."

**Riven: Move to 5,16.**



"Yes there are, just to give you an idea, the soldier over there just saw one, and it was me."

Tantallos shrugged and laughed quietly.



"But it is better this way, I had some problems with shamans close to this area.. well not me specifically... but the family."

The other mage, her forest-green robes stained by dust and ink, steps forward as well.



"I am Raquel Torriani, a mage from Ys. It is a pleasure to meet you all, even in these ill times."

She glances west, then south, then shakes her head.



"I cannot believe the audacity of these knaves; this is a house of knowledge and learning, not a fortress. To which group do you wish for me to apply my magics first?"

Gregor glanced at the young mage as he prepared to leave.



"Ms Torriani, I think you would be most helpful with the group heading south. They're good people, and will need your assistance."

He shook his head.



"Be careful. I'm sure your colleagues would be most upset if you and your

friend got hurt helping a bunch of mercenaries."



"Then I shall endeavour to catch up." At Gregor's polite mention to remain careful, she glances aside briefly, then nods, returning her focus to him.



"Keep safe as well, you and all of your band. To act so quickly to protect the people and this library, you must be good people."

**Raquel: Move to 14,6**

Having finished mumbling about the attacking Berebians, Alexander sighs, and manages to calm down.



"I'll aid with the defense here. As long as their shamans don't get to me, I should be able to take them."

He takes out his large lance, and takes a place by the wall, setting himself against the wall and pointing his lance out, warily watching the Berebian shamans.

Gregor quickly outlined his initial plan to those still milling around.



"Stay flexible. If anything comes up, use your best judgement and watch each other's backs. We'll get through this!"

With that, he ran off to join Charlotte.

**Gregor: Move 5 west, or as far as possible.**

Alexander watches Gregor rush off, and wordlessly steps a few times into Gregor's place, guarding the door-area- and taking up a rather large amount of space, what with being practically a wall of armor.

**Alexander: Move to 15x, 4y**

**Tantallos: Move to East. [17,4]**

Tantallos just waved to the mage.



"Another magic user? Looks like we are finally having some reinforcement after all..heh..ehh.

Whilst the group moved around, few stumbling and bumping on others, Olison got a vulnerary from Seyena.

As for the rest of the city, at one point at the east, the smoke was much thicker and darker than rest; must be a fire somewhere.

**Chris moved three spaces south.**



"Ami, stick by me. I'll do my best to protect you. No matter what."



"Okay."

**Ami: Head to 14,8**



"Eleven, twelve. Kind of small for a invader force, assuming this is the numbers in each part of the city."

Chris nodded.



"It might be an advance guard. If that's the case there will likely be reinforcements."

Ami nodded back



"Best be careful then."

Chris smiled.



"Don't worry. I won't throw myself into harm's way unless I have to."

## Move Daniel to (12, 5)

Meanwhile, Gregor had caught up to Charlotte.



"Hey, can we talk for a minute? About that fortune teller thing?"



"This is kind of a poor time, but I suppose so. Did you have something to say?"



"I know, and I'm sorry, but we didn't have a chance before with everything that happened. I was just wondering what your take on it was. You seemed...well, you seemed kind of down."



"Well, I'm not one to believe in silly fortunes, but the teller herself seemed surprised. What if it is true? What if we really are going to die young and suddenly? That would be awful. Sure, we're mercenaries, but that doesn't mean we can't enjoy long, healthy lives after we retire."



"Honestly Charlotte, I don't really believe in fortune tellers either. I mean, did you hear the fortune Ami got? A throne made of darkness and jewels? Crazy talk. But listen! I have no intention of dying young, and I don't want you to die either. Working together, we can prove the fortune wrong...or at least, that part of it."

He chuckled.



"You want to hear something strange?"



"Sure. What is it?"



"Well, maybe 'strange' is too strong a word, but...When you said that you quit, I half expected you to march into PRIXIMA's office right then and declare your resignation. I wouldn't have blamed you, to be honest. Here's where it gets weird: I realized that if you quit, I probably would have as well. Even if it meant desertion! That sort of thought had never crossed my mind before, but I realized that being a mercenary with you and some friends would make me happier than just being another soldier...*especially* if I had to keep working for PRIXIMA."

He paused.



"I'm not sure if I made any sense or not..."



"You know, I intended to do that. I got cold feet, though. PRIXIMA is terrifying! And maybe, JUST MAYBE, we'll have the chance to do more good than bad this time around. I realize we could have just snuck into the temple and snatched the stone while the temple guards were focusing on the Berebians, but maybe helping people and saving innocent lives is more important."

Charlotte looked at the ground.



"I wonder: is there any work in the world for a moral mercenary group? A group that only tracks down and confronts those who are corrupt and greedy. Steal from the rich and give to the poor, if you will. Perhaps that's why the name 'Charlotte's Angels' hit me."

She then look back up, turned to Gregor on the spot and, surprisingly, grabbed hold of his hand.



"In the end, though, it doesn't matter to me what a fortune teller says or how pure and ethical our group is. The important thing is we enjoy the time we have together now and cherish the moments that are good, even when things are looking bad. As long as we have those moments, everything else will work out."

Gregor gently squeezed Charlotte's hand.



"I don't know the answer to your question. But we can certainly give it a shot, right?"

He smiled.



"I think this is one moment I'll cherish for a long time."

**Derick: Move to 14, 9.** Some more movement.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The enemies (most, but not all) moved around as well.

### ~~Ally Phase~~

The temple guards don't move an inch.

Then...

"Sir Morko, our soldiers are slowly entering the district, but..."



"What is it, Lieutenant?"

"It looks like some armed citizens are moving toward us."



"Hmph, kill them off so they learn their mistake."

"Yes, sir- Sir Morko! South!"



"What? Where?" The shaman in charge raised his gloved right hand to his forehead to see better and protect the eyes from sunlight.



"Oh for Dragon's sake, City Guard, here, already?..."





| <b>Mercs:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Enemies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 25/25<br>Ami Storm: 21/21<br>Charlotte Braxis: 22/22<br>Christopher Shields: 21/21<br>Daniel: 24/24<br>Derick: 24/24<br>Gregor von Hexham: 27/27<br>Olison Eul: 23/23<br>Raquel Torriani: 23/23<br>Riven: 21/21<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/23<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 22/22<br>Valor Inara: 23/23 | Myrmidon A: 24/24<br>Myrmidon B: 24/24<br>Axeman A: 27/27<br>Axeman B: 27/27<br>Lancer A: 26/26<br>Lancer B: 26/26<br>Lancer C: 26/26<br>Javelineer A: 25/25<br>Javelineer B: 25/25<br>Elite Lancer A: 25/25<br>Elite Lancer B: 25/25<br>Crossbowman A: 25/25<br>Crossbowman B: 25/25<br>Shaman A: 22/22<br>Shaman B: 22/22<br>Morko: 26/26 | Temple Guard A: 27/27<br>Temple Guard B: 27/27<br>Bishop Grigorij: 27/27<br>Tiron: 30/30<br>Fezzan Knight A: 29/29<br>Fezzan Knight B: 29/29<br>Fezzan Knight C: 29/29<br>Fezzan Knight D: 29/29<br>Fezzan Cavalier A: 26/26<br>Fezzan Cavalier B: 26/26<br>Captain Syrea: 27/27<br>Captain Leon: 31/31 |

**Valor: Move to 21,8**

**Ami: Head for 14,12**

**Chris equips his crossbow and heads to 14,11.**

**Tantallos: Hide on the trees. [16,7]**



"Hmm.. guess I should try to be a little more..talkative..heh..eh.."



"Daniel, follow me. We're gonna take out the axeman. If I can't get him in one shot then you're up."

**Have Daniel move 2 W. Charlotte then moves 4 W and DOUBLE AUTOTWANGS Axeman A with her Shortbow.**



"We're right behind you!"

**Gregor: Move to (7,5), equip Javelin.**

And so the first (two) shots of the battle were, err, shot. With two arrows for both eyes, Fighter A slumped dead a second later. And then Gregor moved closer.

#### Charlotte vs Fighter A

Hit:  $118+10+2 = 130$ , autohit! Crit roll: 14!

Damage:  $13+1-6 = 8 \times 3 = 24$

Hit:  $118+10+2 = 130$ , autohit! Crit roll: 9!

Damage:  $13+1-6 = 8 \times 3 = 24$

**Have Daniel finish his move by heading to 7,7.**

**Derick: Head to 16,12 and attack Axeman B with shamsir.**

**Raquel: Move to 14,8**

Derick ran toward the Axeman and shamsir'd at him, doing it so well that he separated the head from body with the precise slash.

**Derick vs Axeman B**

Hit:  $104+15-11 = 108$ , autohit! Crit roll: 16!

Damage:  $15+1+2-6 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

Seyena looked at the oncoming Berebians.



*I can't hope to hold my own against them...* She turned her Pegasus towards a pair of houses that seemed safe to warn, as all the other destinations would likely get her killed.

**Seyena: Fly to 15, 17.**

**Olison: Move to 11, 10. Do NOT Visit. Javelin the Soldierx2.**



**"Get out of here, cretin! You failed to take this city many times before, and this time will be no different!"**

**Riven: Move to 15,9.**

Alexander **remains where he is.**

Olison blocked the entrance to the inn and thrown a javelin at the closest soldier, and then again; but only the first one found it's mark.

**Olison vs Lancer A**

Hit:  $91-14 = 77$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $14-8 = 6\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $91-14 = 77$

Hit roll: 83, miss!

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

As it could've been predicted, enemies swarmed at Charlotte. Firstly, the myrmidon ran up to her and slashed at her chest. Then, the javelineer tossed his heavy javelin at her,

but missed, and for this he got shot in the knee. And after that, a crossbow bolt went toward Charlotte, striking her in the arm. She could feel the searing pain suddenly flowing across her body.

#### **Myrmidon B vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $115-5-10-2-22 = 76$

Hit roll: 21, hit!

Damage:  $14-6 = 8\text{dmg}$

#### **Javelineer B vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $84-5-10-2-22 = 45$

Hit roll: 97, miss!

Charlotte counters!

Hit:  $118+10+2-16 = 114$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-7 = 6\text{dmg}$

#### **Crossbowman B vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $105-5-10-2-22 = 66$

Hit roll: 52, hit!

Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$ , Poisoned!

Charlotte retaliates!

Hit:  $118+10+2-24 = 106$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13-9 = 4\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, both the lancer and javelineer attacked Olson, who thrown his javelins at his foes.

#### **Lancer A vs Olson**

Hit:  $89-25 = 64$

Hit roll: 11, hit!

Damage:  $16-6 = 10\text{dmg}$

Olson counterattacks!

Hit:  $91-14 = 77$

Hit roll: 45, hit!

Damage:  $14-8 = 6\text{dmg}$

Olson strikes again!

Hit:  $91-14 = 77$

Hit roll: 21, hit!

Damage:  $14-8 = 6\text{dmg}$

#### **Javelineer A vs Olson**

Hit:  $84-25 = 59$

Hit roll: 86, miss!

Olson retaliates!

Hit:  $91-16 = 75$

Hit roll: 74, hit!

Damage:  $14-7 = 7\text{dmg}$

Just as that happened, Elite Lancer B ran toward Ami and stabbed her stomach. She bonked his head in gratitude.

#### **Elite Lancer B vs Ami**

Hit:  $91+15-5-2-20 = 79$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-1-3 = 14\text{dmg}$

Ami retaliates!

Hit:  $84+5-15-18 = 86$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $16-1-9 = 6\text{dmg}$

Derick was assaulted by the dark robed figurine that wasn't Tantallos; a worm of black smoke jumped from the shaman's palm toward the swordsman, who quickly ducked away from the magical bolt.

#### Shaman A vs Derick

Hit:  $109-27 = 82$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!

At the south, the Myrmidon and Shaman attacked Knight A; the blade, whilst quick, barely scratched the armored man - he then stabbed at the swordsman, wounding him badly. Then, the myrmidon made another scratch on the knight's armor. Moments later, the shaman cast Worm at the Knight; the dark magic easily pierced the layers of steel and badly wounded the city guardian.

#### Myrmidon A vs Fezzan Knight A

Hit:  $115-15-12 = 88$   
Hit roll: 79, hit!  
Damage:  $14-1-12 = 1\text{dmg}$   
  
Fezzan Knight A counterattacks!  
Hit:  $91+15-26 = 80$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Damage:  $15+1-5 = 11\text{dmg}$   
  
Myrmidon A gets another strike!  
Hit:  $115-15-12 = 88$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Damage:  $14-1-12 = 1\text{dmg}$

#### Shaman B vs Fezzan Knight A

Hit:  $109-12 = 97$   
Hit roll: 96, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1 = 16\text{dmg}$

In the same time, their companion Lancer ran to Knight B and stabbed at him; he had a bit more of luck than the myrmidon and managed to wound the knight. The knight in question then stabbed deeply into the soldier's flesh.

#### Lancer B vs Fezzan Knight B

Hit:  $89-12 = 77$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $16-12 = 4\text{dmg}$   
  
Fezzan Knight B counters!  
Hit:  $91-14 = 77$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $15-8 = 7\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Basil, you're wounded, make way!" When the badly wounded knight moved away, his captain took his place and looked at the myrmidon.



"Berebian scum, today is your funeral!" The bloodthirsty spear soon impaled the poor myrmidon through chest, who then slid noiselessly - and lifelessly - to the ground.

**Captain Leon vs Myrmidon B**

Hit:  $96+15-26 = 85$   
Hit roll: 56, hit! Crit roll: 12!  
Damage:  $19+1-5 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

The myrmidon's spot was swiftly taken by the Fezzan Cavalier, who swung his heavy sword at Shaman's face, slashing mightily on it, leaving a bright, long cut. The shaman cast his magic at him, and the cavalier screamed as the black worm pierced his body.

**Fezzan Cavalier A vs Shaman B**

Hit:  $92-15 = 77$   
Hit roll: 4, hit!  
Damage:  $17-3 = 14\text{dmg}$   
  
Shaman counters!  
Hit:  $109-21 = 88$   
Hit roll: 73, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1 = 16\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Fezzan Knight B continued his spear-match with the Lancer B. However, this time only the more armored of the two hit his opponent.

**Fezzan Knight B vs Lancer B**

Hit:  $91-14 = 77$   
Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Damage:  $15-8 = 7\text{dmg}$   
  
Lancer B retaliates!  
Hit:  $89-12 = 77$   
Hit roll: 96, miss!



"Oh, look, it seems that someone is already fighting Berebians in our absence. Let's go help them." Captain Syrea took her troop north; only after a while she noticed Seyena.



"Hey, young one, you better run away with your lil pegasus! This place will soon be a bloodbath!"

**Meanwhile, away, but not that far...**



"Alright, boys, few more houses and we get outta here. We will be rich by the day's end!"

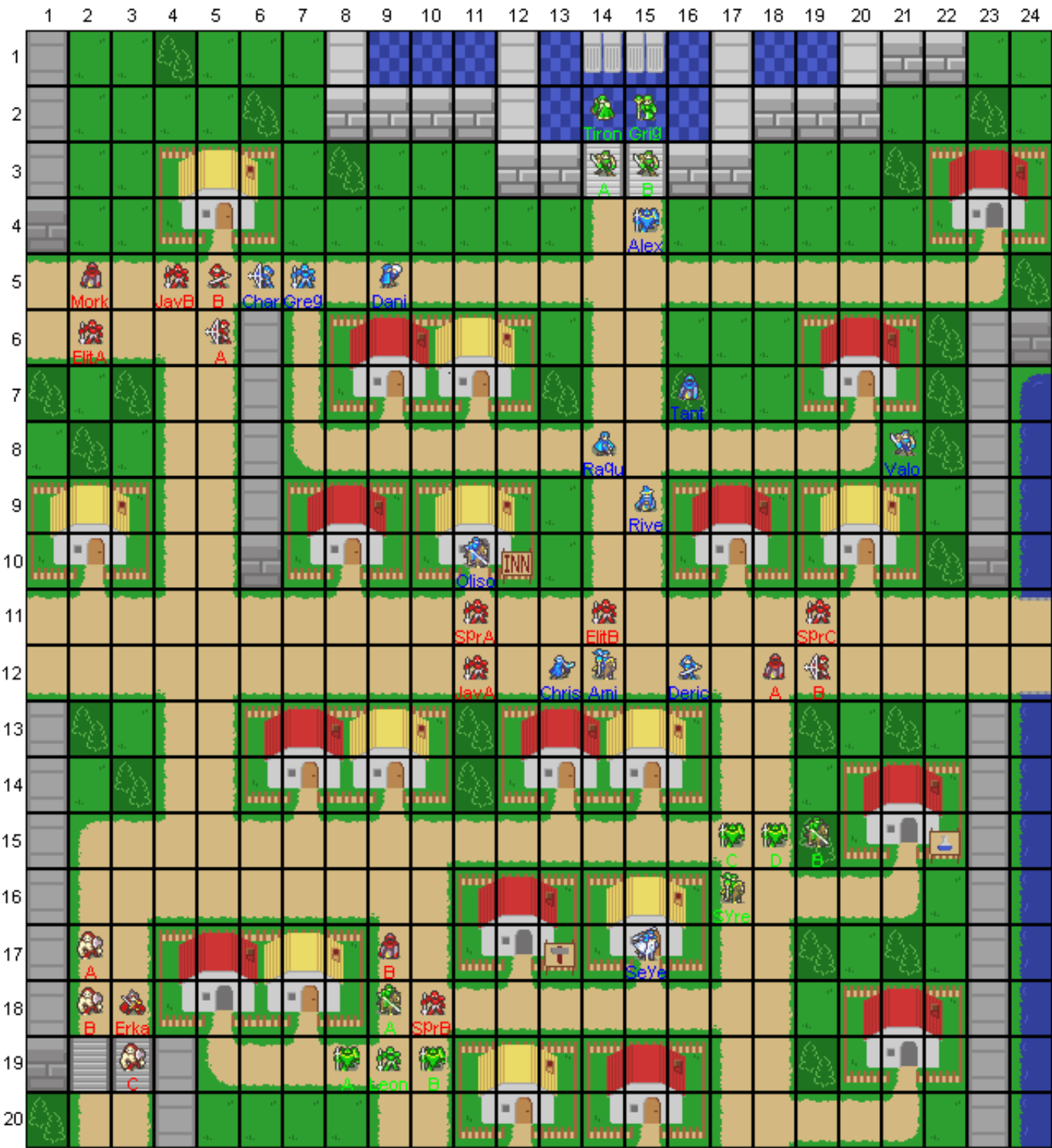
~~Player Turn 3~~

Olison at Inn

Up to 10HP recovered

Poison rolls

Charlotte: 4



Weather:

|         |          |         |
|---------|----------|---------|
| Merces: | Enemies: | Allies: |
|---------|----------|---------|

|                                            |                          |                          |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 25/25                    | Myrmidon B: 24/24        | Temple Guard A: 27/27    |
| Ami Storm: 7/21                            | Lancer A: 8/26           | Temple Guard B: 27/27    |
| Charlotte Braxis: 4/22 <b>Poison (4/5)</b> | Lancer B: 12/26          | Bishop Grigorij: 27/27   |
| Christopher Shields: 21/21                 | Lancer C: 26/26          | Tiron: 30/30             |
| Daniel: 24/24                              | Javelineer A: 18/25      | Fezzan Knight A: 11/29   |
| Derick: 24/24                              | Javelineer B: 19/25      | Fezzan Knight B: 25/29   |
| Gregor von Hexham: 27/27                   | Elite Lancer A: 25/25    | Fezzan Knight C: 29/29   |
| Olison Eul: 23/23                          | Elite Lancer B: 25/25    | Fezzan Knight D: 29/29   |
| Raquel Torriani: 23/23                     | Crossbowman A: 25/25     | Fezzan Cavalier A: 10/26 |
| Riven: 21/21                               | Crossbowman B: 21/25     | Fezzan Cavalier B: 26/26 |
| Seyena Ikane: 23/23                        | Shaman A: 22/22          | Captain Syrea: 27/27     |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 22/22                  | Shaman B: 8/22           | Captain Leon: 31/31      |
| Valor Inara: 23/23                         | Morko: 26/26             |                          |
|                                            | Erkand's Bandit A: 29/29 |                          |
|                                            | Erkand's Bandit B: 29/29 |                          |
|                                            | Erkand's Bandit C: 29/29 |                          |
|                                            | Erkand: 27/27            |                          |

**Valor: Move to 22,10**



"Charlotte, get back! I'll handle this for now!"

**Gregor: Throw Javelin at Myrmidon!**

Swiish~ THUD!

**Gregor vs Myrmidon B**

Hit:  $94+15+5+4 = 118$ , autohit!

Damage:  $17+1-5 = 13$ dmg



"Ow."

**Ami: use a venararely and run to 12,12**



"Could you stab him, Chris?"

Olison shouted in an excited tone while he continued engaging his opponents.



"You call that a fighting stance? Ha! Pathetic excuse for Berebians, you wouldn't have survived an hour's training in The Vale!"

**Olison: Switch to Lance. JOUST Lancer A. Switch back to Javelin after.**

Whilst Ami vulnerary'd herself, Olison jousted his lance-wielding opponent. In the end,



the footsoldier got killed.

#### Ami uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP restored

#### Olison vs Lancer A

Hit:  $96-14 = 82$

Hit roll: 73, hit!

Damage:  $15-9 = 6\text{dmg}$

Lancer A retaliates!

Hit:  $89-25 = 64$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $16-6 = 10\text{dmg}$

Olison gets second attack!

Hit:  $96-14 = 82$

Hit roll: 50, hit!

Damage:  $15-9 = 6\text{dmg}$



"Um, I trust you two can handle this one?" Riven said, glancing back at Raquel and Tantalos, then at the spearman in front of her.

**Riven: Move to 12,11. Nearly melt Javelineer A.**



"You may wish to surrender."

Seyena looked at the rider, offended.



*I'm not going anywhere.*

**Seyena: Move to 10,13. Kill shaman.**

Riven moved close to Javelineer. Her dark magic burst from the ground around the poor soldier, and then it tightened around his chest, crushing the blood-vomiting man into something resembling a mangled hourglass.

#### Riven vs Javelineer A

Hit:  $99+10+5-16 = 98$

Hit roll: 75, hit! Crit roll: 1!

Damage:  $19-2 = 17 \times 3 = 51$

In the meanwhile, Seyena swooped toward the Shaman and ended his dark life with a spear stab to his chest.

#### Seyena vs Shaman B

Hit:  $98-15 = 83$

Hit roll: 66, hit!

Alexander watches the fighting in the west, grimaces, takes his spear, and begins hauling himself westward as fast as he can.



"I'll reinforce you over in the west!"

### Alexander: Move 4 West

Raquel nodded at Riven, then looked to the other shaman working with the mercenaries.



"I believe we can handle him."

### Raquel: Move to 14,9; Ziedyne Thunder EliteB



"I'm not feeling so well..."

### Charlotte: Move to 7,7. Longbow the archer without retaliation. :3

### Move Daniel to (7,6) to give Charlotte extra support.

Raquel cast Thunder at the elite lancer, electrocuting him heavily.

#### Raquel vs Elite Lancer B

Hit:  $100+5-18 = 87$

Hit roll: 62, hit!

Damage:  $17-4 = 13\text{dmg}$

Whilst Alexander was en route to help his companions, Charlotte moved away and longbow'd at the crossbowman, hitting him in the stomach. Daniel then moved closer to Charlotte, just in case of melee attacker.

#### Charlotte vs Crossbowman A

Hit:  $93+5+10+2-24 = 86$

Hit roll: 80, hit!

Damage:  $16-9 = 7\text{dmg}$



"I am starting to have some respect for the mages hehe..heh. Lets make that soldier cry in pain and have a terrible death..."

Tantallos nodded back to the mage and moved closer to attack EliteB. The shaman opened his arms and began to create a dark energy ball in front of him before letting it slide to the grass and move towards the soldier to emerge under him as spikes of dark energy.

**Tantallos: 15,10 blast**



"I'll get him."

**Chris opens fire on the Lancer who just stabbed Ami. Unless Tantallos kills him first. If he does, then Chris shoots the enemy two tiles to the west.**

The glob of dark energy struck the lancer in the chest, sending him to dust.

**Tantallos vs Elite Lancer B**

Hit:  $100+5-18 = 87$

Hit roll: 83, hit!

Damage:  $17+2-4 = 15\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Chris sent a bolt of ~~murder iron~~ love and gratitude right into mangled body of Javelineer A.



"Haha! At last.. the first kill of the day! The Plague Dragon will be pleased.. heh..heh.."

Raquel gave an askance glance at the shaman's exultations in the death of their foe, but declined to comment.

Tantallos looked to the side to stare at the mage and gave a shrug.



"What? I like to have fun, you know. heh..heh.. And as most of people are not willing to talk to me at most of occasions, this is one of my hobbies."



"Perhaps your 'hobbies' are the reason few wish to speak to you. I do not understand why you would find such joy in killing."



"What? They are actually a common thing on my lands! And that soldier Gregor talked to me too, I do not think he minds, and I feel joy in killing because I will

be also helping the Plague Dragon.. but that is another story. Here is a deal then, I will stop demonstrating my happiness about killing others and you will talk to me, how is that for you?"

## Derick: Move to 17, 12 and attack Shaman A

Tap tap tap went Derick's shoes as he swung his shamsir at Shaman B.

### Derick vs Shaman B

Hit:  $104-15 = 89$   
Hit roll: 63, hit! Crit roll: 22!  
Damage:  $15+2-3 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

As the bandits moved deeper into district, the solitary Berebian Lancer stabbed at the Fezzan Cavalier, sealing his fate as another name on today's death list.

### Lancer B vs Cavalier A

Hit:  $89+15-21 = 83$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $16+1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

Then, Derick had to deal with Lancer C; the lancer hit at the myrmidon's abdomen, who the retaliated with heavy cut into the chest. Because it didn't kill the lancer, Derick fixed that problem with additional slash to the stomach, this time killing the soldier properly.

### Lancer C vs Derick

Hit:  $89+15-27 = 77$   
Hit roll: 16, hit!  
Damage:  $16+1-6 = 11\text{dmg}$   
  
Derick retaliates!  
Hit:  $104-15-14 = 75$   
Hit roll: 30, hit! Crit roll: 19!  
Damage:  $15+2-1-8 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$   
  
Derick counters again!  
Hit:  $104-15-14 = 75$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $15+2-1-8 = 8\text{dmg}$

But then, Crossbowman B shot his deadly crossbow and the bolt flew toward Derick, swishing an inch from his left ear.

### Crossbowman B vs Derick

Hit:  $105-27 = 78$   
Hit roll: 88, miss!

In the meantime, Javelineer B moved in front of Gregor and there goes another lance match; the javelin stabbed lightly, whilst Gregor's javeling was much more powerful in delivering the strike.

### Javelineer B vs Gregor

Hit:  $84-4-5-22 = 53$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Damage:  $15-9-3 = 3\text{dmg}$   
  
Gregor counterattacks!

Hit:  $94+4+5-16 = 87$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $16-7 = 9\text{dmg}$

Second later, Charlotte got shot with the crossbow bolt and went down with a sigh.

#### Crossbowman A vs Charlotte

Hit:  $105-2-5-10-18 = 70$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $12-6 = 6\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Captain Leon moved closer to the spearman and pierced his chest through with the lance. He then looked at Seyena and nodded.



"Thanks for killing that dark mage; we would be in trouble if not you." His knights marched up the road as he spoke.

#### Captain Leon vs Lancer B

Hit:  $96-14 = 82$   
Hit roll: 68, hit! Crit roll: 13!  
Damage:  $19-8 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

In the same time, Syrea's troop was moving too; her cavalier went into the thicket near the crossbowman and slashed at his arm. The retaliatory bolt struck deeply - into the tree trunk near cavalier's horse. One of the Syrea's knights stabbed at the Crossbowman as well, but this time the bolt struck in the armpit, scratching delicately on the skin there. It wasn't a wound, but the deadly poison was already leaking into the knight's body.

#### Fezzan Cavalier B vs Crossbowman B

Hit:  $92-24 = 68$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $17-9 = 8\text{dmg}$   
  
Crossbowman B counters!  
Hit:  $105-21-20 = 64$   
Hit roll: 79, miss!

#### Knight D vs Crossbowman B

Hit:  $91-24 = 67$   
Hit roll: 60, hit!  
Damage:  $15-9 = 6\text{dmg}$   
  
Crossbowman B retaliates!  
Hit:  $105-12 = 93$   
Hit roll: 65, hit!  
Damage:  $12-12 = 0!$

Syrea then moved onto the main road and shouted in surprise, seeing entire mercenary group near the inn.



"Oh, so it's an entire army of sellswords, huh? No wonder those Berebians are falling down like drunk flies." She then turned her head around and noticed Derick's wounds. With wave of her staff, blue energy fell on the swordsman and his wounds healed in an instant.



"There you go, sweetheart."

**Syrea heals Derick**

20+9 = Up to 29HP healed

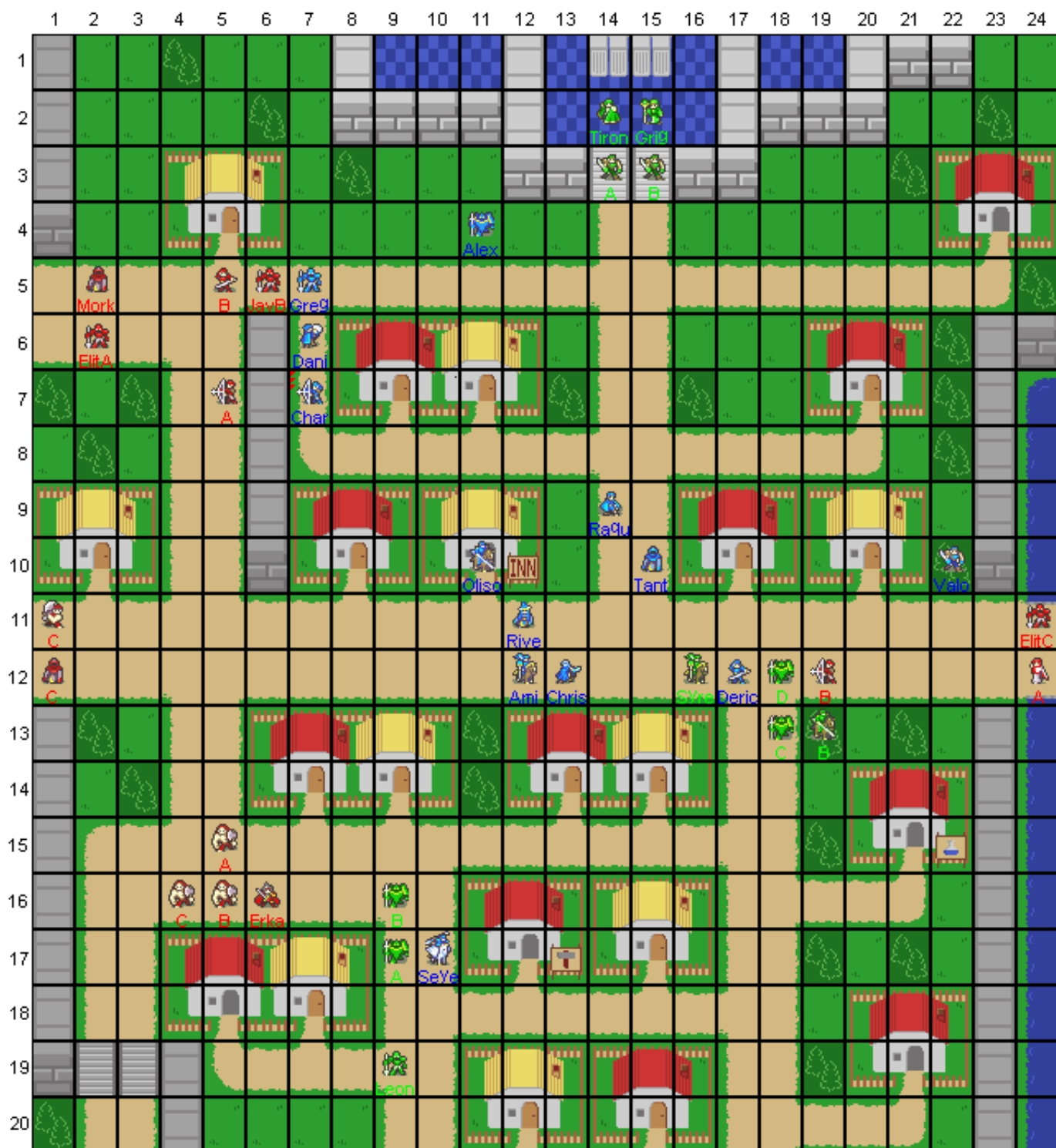
# ~~Player Turn 4~~

## Olison at Inn

Up to 10HP restored

## Poison rolls

Fezzan Knight D: 2



Weather:

| Merces:                    | Enemies:              | Allies:                |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 25/25    | Myrmidon B: 11/24     | Temple Guard A: 27/27  |
| Ami Storm: 17/21           | Axeman C: 27/27       | Temple Guard B: 27/27  |
| Charlotte Braxis: -/22 3/3 | Javelineer B: 10/25   | Bishop Grigorij: 27/27 |
| ^ Poison (4/5, stalled)    | Elite Lancer A: 25/25 | Tiron: 30/30           |
| Christopher Shields: 21/21 | Elite Lancer C: 25/25 | Fezzan Knight A: 11/29 |
| Daniel: 24/24              | Crossbowman A: 14/25  | Fezzan Knight B: 25/29 |
| Derick: 24/24              | Crossbowman B: 11/25  | Fezzan Knight C: 29/29 |

|                           |                          |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gregor von Hexham: 24/27  | Monk A: 22/22            | Fezzan Knight D: 27/29   |
| Olison Eul: 23/23         | Shaman C: 22/22          | ^ <b>Poison (4/5)</b>    |
| Raquel Torriani: 23/23    | Morko: 26/26             | Fezzan Cavalier B: 26/26 |
| Riven: 21/21              | Erkand's Bandit A: 29/29 | Captain Syrea: 27/27     |
| Seyena Ikane: 23/23       | Erkand's Bandit B: 29/29 | Captain Leon: 31/31      |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 22/22 | Erkand's Bandit C: 29/29 |                          |
| Valor Inara: 23/23        | Erkand: 27/27            |                          |

**Chris moves to 8,11.**

**Olison moves to 11,13 and Dismounts**



"Thanks for that. Wow I feel a lot more active than usual today."

**Derick: Move to 11, 19 and Shamsir the Crossbowman**

**Valor holds position.**

Ami looks off into the distance.



"Charlotte doesn't look to good. Back in a moe."

**Ami: Head to 11,8**



"Good idea. I'm going to go along the other way and flank their attackers, maybe draw some aggression. Keep safe, Ami,"

Chris said as the two parted ways on their individual tasks.



"It's not much." Seyena said, but she seemed to smile a little more than usual for the thanks.

She looked around the battlefield, and it seemed like the Berebians were being slaughtered.



*This can't be all of them, there should be more. Either that, or the rest of the city is putting up a bigger fight than expected.*



**Seyena: Move to 5, 18 and warn the people inside. Get goodies.**

Alexander curses quietly as things begin to take a turn for the worse where he's running to, and continues to move, moving **another 4W**.



"CHARLOTTE! Leave her alone, you bastards!"

**Gregor: STAB the Javeliner!**

Raquel paused for a moment, as though considering the offer seriously.



"Very well, then."

Her mood shifts slightly, as she notes something unfamiliar that he has mentioned twice, now.



"Perhaps we can speak of the Plague Dragon. I must confess, I cannot say that I am familiar with it."

As others moved around, Derick went closer to Crossbowman B and shamsir'd him. Then, the same crossbowman shot him point blank.

#### **Derick vs Crossbowman B**

Hit:  $104 - 24 = 80$

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Damage:  $15 + 2 - 9 = 8\text{dmg}$

Crossbowman B counterattacks!

Hit:  $105 - 27 = 78$

Hit roll: 1, hit!

Damage:  $12 - 6 = 6\text{dmg}$ , Poisoned!

Seyena landed near the entrance. A young, tough-looking man looked at her when she told him of the incoming baddies.

"Oh, don't you worry, I'm... I was an... an adventurer, yes. Here, take one of my... spare, special blades. As I said, I was an adventurer... Thanks for the warning." He placed a knife in Seyena's hands, and she examined the blade as he closed the door - there was some strange, greenish coating on it, like tar.

**Seyena gets Poison Dagger!**

In the meanwhile, Gregor had another stabby javeling stab-stab at Javelineer B. He tried to retaliate, but missed Gregor again.

### Gregor vs Javelineer B

Hit:  $94+5-16 = 83$

Hit roll: 3, hit!

Damage:  $16-7 = 9\text{dmg}$

Javelineer B retaliates!

Hit:  $84-5-22 = 57$

Hit roll: 68, miss!



"Daniel, please help Charlotte up. I'll keep these three occupied."

**Have Daniel heal Charlotte with a concoction.**



"It doesn't seem I can use this... maybe Chris would like it?" She wondered aloud. Poison daggers seemed right up his alley.

Tantallos nodded and rubbed his gloved hands together.



"Excellent....."

The shaman looked to the sides to make sure nobody else would hear and spoke up in a serious tone now.



"That is because the Forsakens prefers to hide their beliefs as they would affect the economy of the closest towns, and even the castle visitors would not get in. There is a long story about the Plague Dragon, it is said that he was the protector of those lands against a greater power, some said they were huge armies looking for places to take over, others said they were abominations, but one thing is sure.. he was the one protecting them, in exchange he asked for sacrifices of those who were not worth living. It was not difficult to find those as they were exactly the ones trying to attack, so they had been safe until another group came up.."

Tantallos gave a sigh and shook his head.



"This time they had bishops, priests, and Plague Dragon knows what else.. they managed to weaken him and force his retreat, they were fools! They were so blinded with the need to take places they brought a large problem over not only them but anyone around that area, the blood and the rotten skin of the plague dragon poisoned the land, and those who fell on those grounds were brought to life as

revenants and skeletons and most of them are wandering and killing travellers. Even if we do not know if the Plague Dragon is alive yet, we still kill for him, we believe he will be able to give us power yet."



"That is...horrifying. Why would you worship something that demands human sacrifice? Surely protection cannot be worth that kind of price. I have read of such faiths in the ancient texts of..."



"...of my old home."



"But, I had thought them long since stamped out by priests of the Divine Dragon."



"Were you paying attention to what I said? "Those not worth living." The Plague Dragon looks for real murderers, those who are on the world just for destruction, do you think he was doing something bad by preventing families from being destroyed because of a bunch of coward bandits? I guess not, but most of people do not pay attention to the details at all.. they judge him by the name and appearance.. just like they do to most of the shamans, even if we have good intentions."

Tantallos looked down and sighed.



"But I guess that is something we are supposed to live with. And... what happened to your old home?"



"That turn of phrase I've heard on occasion in my travels, and has always twisted and turned to suit the speaker's whims. Still..." and here she ducks her head slightly, "I will concede that brigands are rarely so good, and very few murderers I've encountered have been the kindest of souls. I still cannot help but find the concept repulsive, but I apologize for leaping to the worst of interpretations."



"As I said, those were willing to take over all the lands.. they were up to no

good, many would have died if the Plague Dragon was not there... and sadly even with his presence we lost important people on those days of war, my father mentioned some generals who bravely passed days fighting until they could not anymore. I am sure they are in a better place now.. And you might have heard ancient and magic creatures are capable of knowing who is guilty and who is not, so I doubt he would have killed anyone who was innocent."

Tantallos pulled his hood down and gave a small smile.



"It is ok, you are not the first one to say something right away without stopping to hear the details.. but at least you understood the situation.. and I am grateful for that.



"Certainly, I have heard myths and legends of dragons, which ascribe to some of them such powers as the ability to peer into the hearts of people and there discern truth from falsehood. As a scholar, I have found it difficult to credit at times the degree to which they and their powers have been romanticized in ancient stories, but there is a certain consistency in the stories even from widely separated cults that suggests a grain of truth. It may well be that your dragon had this ability, as you say."



"And... what happened to your old home?"

At the mention of her old home, she shakes her head slightly.



"My father died of illness, and I left that place soon after."



"Still, that was many years ago. Death comes to all in the end; it's how we lived that matters, and he lived both a good and wise life."

The shaman heard to her quietly, giving a slow nod.



"Yes you are right.. and I am sure your father was a good person, I can tell it by your behavior.. after all, some of the things we know were passed from our

parents..."

At his words on her father, she smiles briefly, if a trifle sadly, then looks away, towards the sounds of oncoming soldiery coming from the southwest.



"In either case, I believe we still have invaders to deal with. There seems to be another group moving up from the west we may want to help with."

**Raquel: Move to 11,11**



"Well, all the families who were in risk of being killed during the attack survived, so it is a good example that the Plague Dragon had that ability..."

The shaman noticed the smile and blinked when she looked away, preferring to not make any more questions, he just nodded and covered his head with his hood again.



"Indeed... but I will just be helping a bit, I heard there is a shaman on the other side, I want to find out if I know him or not."

**Tantallos followed her and began to look around. [12,11]**



"Oh. Sometimes that happens too," Riven said, glancing at the javelineer's mutilated corpse.

**Riven: Move to 9,11.**



"Hello. I don't think we've met," she added to Chris.

Chris looked over his shoulder at Riven.



"You are a new face, that's true. What do you think about all this?"

he asked, gesturing vaguely with his crossbow at the battlefield.



"Um... very disorganized. I'm not really sure what they're fighting for, nobody appears to be in charge- of each cluster, I mean- and they don't seem to have a good plan."



"In my experience, that's usually how battles are. It's pure chaos. Take our unit, for example."



"Right now, the people I work with don't even have a leader... although I think they're going to rally around Gregor. I'd support him too if we're being honest here."

Chris looked around again.



"So how did you get mixed up in this? Local student wanting to lend a hand?"



"Something like that. Um... I've also actually been looking for allies, and a battle seemed like a convenient opportunity. The library itself doesn't seem very ambitious."

Chris looked her over.



"You could find a place with us, if you wanted one - and it sounds like you do. I don't think anyone would object to a little extra manpower around the battlefield."



"That might be nice. You certainly seem fairly strong, if not quite as organized as I'm used to. I suppose that's why you have room, though."



"So tell me. If learning isn't your ambition, what is?"



"Ah... well, I do value learning, but I suppose you could say ambition is my ambition. Power, wealth, prestige... just the usual things."



"...that sounds oddly petty, somehow..."



"You're just looking out for number one. It's human nature. As long as what you want doesn't compromise the rest of us, I'm not going to look down on your ambitions or stand in your way."



"I suppose. It just sounds like I should want something more when I put it like that. Something in particular."



"What do you want, if you don't mind my asking? For that matter, does this group of yours have a, ah... a particular focus?"

Chris leaned on a nearby wall.



"What do I want? Huh. No one's ever asked me that."

He thought very seriously for a few moments.



"If you had asked me that two days ago, I wouldn't have had an answer for you. Now... Now I want to be a part of this group. I want to know what it is about Ami that draws me to her. I want to know what it's like to have a soul, like everyone else. Like normal people, good and evil."



He spread his hands and grinned an empty grin.



"It's been so long that I can't remember what fear, pain, remorse, anger, warmth, or happiness is really like. Even though I live as a shadow myself, I'm tired of only feeling the shadows of true emotions. That's what I want. I want to be a normal person, who can believe in something and..."



"And can be someone other people can rely on. That's what I want."

Riven blinked a few times at Chris' answer.



"That's... I mean, I'd heard... uh..."



"If you don't mind my asking, who... why don't you... have a soul, as you put it? Was it something that was done to you on purpose, or...?"



"And... if you don't mind me asking again, who's Ami? That pink-haired girl from earlier?"



"Easy enough to answer that. I traded it off as a child. My parents both died of plague fairly early into my life - I don't even remember what they looked like, or what their names were... or mine, for that matter - and I had to survive somehow. Back then, I was scared enough of death that when I was offered a hot meal and a place to sleep out of the cold and snow for the price of my soul, I jumped on it."

A hollow smile.



"I was already what some people would consider 'strange' as a child, so I'll admit that part of my motivation was just to see if it was possible. That part of my



memory is hazy, but I remember a ritual. Being made to drink a bitter potion. A gleaming knife. A dull pain, about here."

He touched his chest, on the right side, and traced a steep diagonal line down to around the navel.



"Chanting voices. And darkness. Most of my memories are quite gray and drab after that, and feel rather samey. And to answer your other question, yes, that's Ami."

He shifted position slightly, but remained on the wall.



"Your turn. What drew you to practice magic? Family tradition, intrigued by it, had a talent for it...?"



"Strange... but very interesting. Did you ever learn anything about who did that to you or why?"



"As for me, sort of all of those. I came from a part of Ys ruled by warring covens, but I was very eager to join them. Becoming a Dark Witch was very prestigious and rewarding. I really couldn't imagine being anything else."

Daniel tossed some golden powder at Charlotte's face, and she was back on her feet, just a little unsteady.

#### Daniel heals Charlotte

Up to 15HP restored

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The crossbowman immediately shot at Charlotte when he saw she is up again. The bolt struck in her left thigh and she could feel another dose of poison coursing in her veins. Charlotte pulled the string of her longbow and sent an arrow toward the crossbowman, which struck his face and pierced the skull behind. He was dead before his body hit the dirt.

#### Crossbowman A vs Charlotte

Hit: 105-10-18 = 77

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage: 12-6 = 6dmg, Poisoned!

Charlotte counters!  
Hit:  $93+10+2-24 = 81$   
Hit roll: 44, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $16+1-9 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

The nearby Javelineer stabbed Gregor again; Gregor stabbed Javelineer to death. Seeing that, the myrmidon moved away and stopped right after seeing Morko's glare of disapproval.

#### Javelineer B vs Gregor

Hit:  $84-5-4-22 = 53$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Damage:  $15-3-9 = 3\text{dmg}$

Gregor retaliates!  
Hit:  $94+5+4-16 = 87$   
Hit roll: 27, hit!  
Damage:  $16-7 = 9\text{dmg}$

The other crossbowman moved away and launched another bolt at Derick, but missed. Soon, a monk moved closer to Derick as well; this time the myrmidon didn't have much luck and the white energy struck him in the chest.

#### Crossbowman B vs Derick

Hit:  $105-27 = 78$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

#### Monk A vs Derick

Hit:  $116-27 = 89$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $12-5 = 7\text{dmg}$

Valor, on other hand, soon had to face Elite Lancer C, whose spear's bloodied tip shined in the sunlight like a red gem. The spear missed Valor's face by inches, and Valor tried to hit the lancer, who blocked the sword with his spear.

#### Elite Lancer C vs Valor

Hit:  $91+15-20-20 = 66$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

Valor counterattacks!  
Hit:  $110-15-20 = 75$   
Hit roll: 76, miss!

Suddenly, a small throwing axe struck Seyena's back, producing an audible 'thud'.

#### Bandit B vs Seyena

Hit:  $74+15-20 = 69$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $18+1-4 = 15\text{dmg}$

Erkand, in the meanwhile, moved closer to the knight and chuckled.



"Hey, city guard guy, ready to die today?" Then his rapier struck the knight's left shoulder, piercing the armor on the joints. The armored guard groaned and thrust

with his spear, stabbing the mighty fencer in the guts.



"Urgh, congratulations, you scratched me. Now, die." The rapier went right into the vizor of knight's helmet, and when Erkand pulled it out, the knight collapsed with a quiet gurgling sound escaping his throat.

#### Erkand vs Fezzan Knight B

Hit:  $134-15-12 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28-12 = 16\text{dmg}$

Fezzan Knight B counters!  
Hit:  $91+15-35 = 71$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Damage:  $15+1-5 = 11\text{dmg}$

Erkand gets another strike!  
Hit:  $134-15-12 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28-12 = 16\text{dmg}$

One of his bandits moved closer and tossed his hand axe at the remaining knight; the axe struck at his chest piece. Then, the third bandit moved in front and struck the poor knight in the helmet, the small axe cutting deep and killing the city guard on spot.



"Excellent, boys, now that fancy spearman and we're free to plunder!"

#### Bandit A vs Fezzan Knight A

Hit:  $74+15-12 = 77$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $18+1-12 = 7\text{dmg}$

#### Bandit B vs Fezzan Knight A

Hit:  $75+15-12 = 77$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $18+1-12 = 7\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"You want to loot the houses? Over my dead body, you dog!"



"Heh, that can be arranged." Erkand grinned widely.

Captain Leon moved toward the closest bandit, swung his lance and struck from below, piercing the thug's chin, a sickening crunch followed, and the bandit fell dead.

**Captain Leon vs Bandit C**

Hit:  $96-15-12 = 69$

Hit roll: 13, hit! Crit roll: 20!

Damage:  $19-1-4 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

Away from there, one of Syrea's knights moved closer to Crossbowman B and struck him in the abdomen.

**Fezzan Knight C vs Crossbowman B**

Hit:  $91-24 = 67$

Hit roll: 5, hit!

Damage:  $15-9 = 6\text{dmg}$

After that, the cavalier rushed through the thickets and attacked the monk; cutting on his chest, and the monk sent a bolt of holy energy at the cavalier's face. Then, Knight D moved to kill the monk, but he missed with his lance. The bolt that the Monk cast in counterattack left a steaming hole in the chestpiece of the knight's armor as he slumped to the ground.

**Fezzan Cavalier B vs Monk A**

Hit:  $92-26 = 66$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $17-2 = 15\text{dmg}$

Monk A counters!

Hit:  $116-21 = 95$

Hit roll: 62, hit!

Damage:  $12-1 = 11\text{dmg}$

**Fezzan Knight D vs Monk A**

Hit:  $91-26 = 65$

Hit roll: 82, miss!

Monk A counters!

Hit:  $116-12 = 104$ , autohit! Crit roll: 6!

Damage:  $12-1 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

Syrea moved close to Derick again and grinned a bit.



"You really get hurt a lot, don't you? Sorry that I can't clear the poison, I left my other staff in my office." Another move of staff, another wave of healing power fell on Derick's wounds.

**Syrea heals Derick**

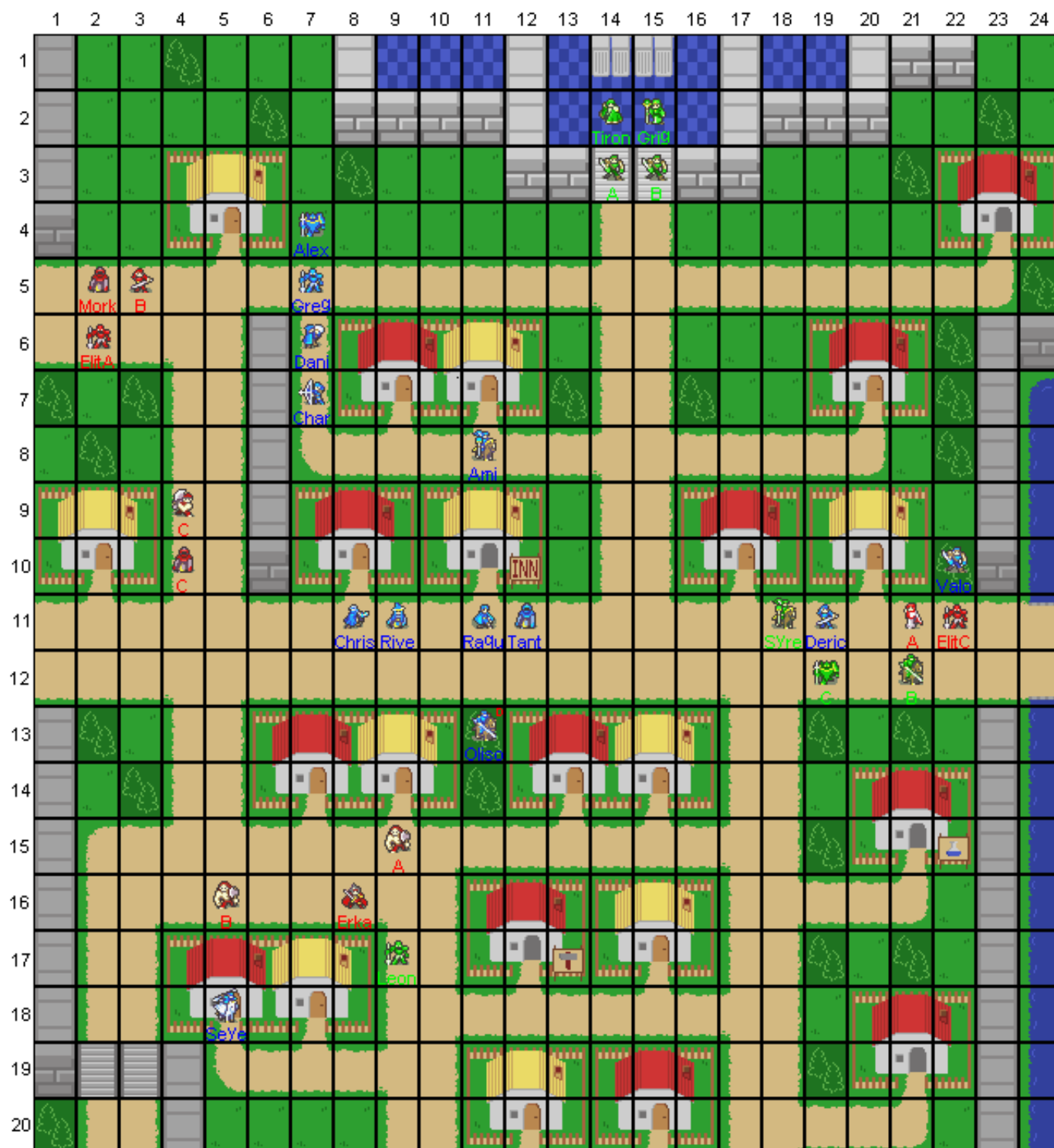
$20+9 = \text{Up to } 29\text{HP restored}$

# ~~Player Turn 5~~

## Poison rolls

Charlotte: 1

Derick: 4



Weather:

| Merces:                              | Enemies:                 | Allies:                  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 25/26              | Axeman C: 27/27          | Temple Guard A: 27/27    |
| Ami Storm: 17/22                     | Elite Lancer A: 25/25    | Temple Guard B: 27/27    |
| Charlotte Braxis: 14/23 Poison (4/5) | Elite Lancer C: 25/25    | Bishop Grigorij: 27/27   |
| Christopher Shields: 21/21           | Monk A: 7/22             | Tiron: 30/30             |
| Daniel: 24/25                        | Shaman C: 22/22          | Fezzan Knight C: 29/29   |
| Derick: 20/25 Poison (4/5)           | Morko: 26/26             | Fezzan Cavalier B: 15/26 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 21/27             | Erkand's Bandit A: 29/29 | Captain Syrea: 27/27     |
| Olison Eul: 23/24 Dismounted         | Erkand's Bandit B: 29/29 | Captain Leon: 31/31      |
| Raquel Torriani: 23/23               | Erkand: 16/27            |                          |
| Riven: 21/21                         |                          |                          |

|                                                                       |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Seyena Ikane: 8/23<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 22/23<br>Valor Inara: 23/24 |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|



"Not... again..."

Charlotte coughed.



: "Hey. Gregor. Daniel. Alexander. I hope you guys can take this... from here. Ami, heal me up. I'm going to... go visit that house on the other side of the field."

**Charlotte: Move to 10,8 and await staffing.**

Chris and Riven were still talking.



"No. It's been... fifteen years, maybe? I don't know if the person or people or cult or whatever is even still around. I wasn't in this country though. Maybe Mercia. I can't remember."

Chris looked ahead and noticed an opening.



"All right. I'm going to attack that magic-user."

**Chris moves to 5,10 and stabs the Shaman with his Iron Sword.**

Christopher moved to the shaman, grabbed his shoulder and then stabbed with the sword right into the dark mage's throat. The blood gushed around as Christopher's victim slid to the ground.

**Christopher vs Shaman B**

|                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hit: 116-15 = 101, autohit! Crit roll: 10!<br>Damage: 12+2-3 = 11x3 = 33dmg |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Chris crouched, head tilted to the side, and watched the shaman's face for a few moments.



"Mn. Already dead. Missed it again."

He wiped his sword clean on the shaman's robes and stood again.

### Ami: Staff Charlotte and ride to 13,5



"Go on and take a breather. We've got this side covered."

He then shouts at the Myrmidon who clearly doesn't want to be here anymore.



"Hey you with the sword! You don't have to die here today; give me your weapon and behave yourself, and we won't have to hurt you!"

### Valor: Attack the lancer!



"Interested in a bit of friendly advice? Get lost!"

#### Ami staffs Charlotte

10+13 = Up to 23HP healed

In the meanwhile, Valor valiantly attacked the eliter spearman.

#### Valor vs Elite Lancer C

Hit:  $110-15-20 = 75$

Hit roll: 68, hit!

Damage:  $12-1-9 = 2\text{dmg}$

Elite Lancer C counters!

Hit:  $91+15-20-20 = 66$

Hit roll: 6, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-5 = 12\text{dmg}$



"Oh? A brigand? Ok then..heh..ehh.."

Tantalos shrugged and moved to hide in the trees to wait for a opportunity to strike.

### Tantalos: Move 11,13.

Olison charged from the forest, straight towards one of the bandits.



"Looters! I would have offered you a chance to surrender, but that's clearly

too good a fate for such craven lives. Engarde!"

**Olison: Move to 10,15. Activate reliable attack. Attack the bandit with sword.**

**Derick: Move east and attack the monk**

Olison reliably slashed at the Bandit A, who then struck Olison's chest with the hand axe. The dismounted cavalier then slashed again at the Bandit, leaving another mark on the thick body.

**Olison vs Bandit A**

Hit:  $108+20-12 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $14+2-4 = 12$ dmg

Bandit A counters!

Hit:  $74-15-27 = 32$

Hit roll: 4, hit!

Damage:  $18-1-6 = 11$ dmg

Olison attacks again!

Hit:  $108+20-12 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $14+2-4 = 12$ dmg

In the same moment, Derick moved closer to the Monk and with a diagonal slash, he ended monk's military career. And life as well.

**Derick vs Monk A**

Hit:  $106-26 = 80$

Hit roll: 33, hit!

Damage:  $15+2-2 = 15$ dmg



*Damned bandits...* Seyena itched to kill them- she knew full well what they would do, and what people like them have done. *But I'd just get killed, I can't fight them in my condition.*

For now, she needed to focus on finding that healer; the axe left quite more than a scratch. With a gentle tug on the reins and a few whispered words, her pegasus took flight.

**Seyena: Get away from deadly bandits- move to 8, 20.**

The young soldier surveyed the enemy group in front of him. The Myrmidon was clearly more afraid of the shaman than Gregor himself, and the other two didn't seem in any sort of hurry. Well, two could play at that game. He spoke to his comrades nearby.



"Looks like a stalemate, gentlemen. Let's see if we can hold off attacking until Charlotte gets back, or one of the mages catches up to us. We'll need the fire support."





"Alright, I'll at least make a defense."

Alexander clanked over, neatly filling in the space between the wall and the house (and pretty much being a wall in and of himself), setting his spear and looking the Berebians straight in the eyes.

**Alexander: Move to 6x, 5y**



"Just be careful, Sir Jorinn. Something about that shaman gives me the creeps, and that lancer looks like he knows his business."



"They're going to attack us sometime anyway. Better to be prepared than not."

Gregor nodded in agreement, before realizing that the knight probably couldn't see it and followed up with:



"I guess that makes sense. I've got javelins ready in case anything comes after you."



"Good. If the shaman comes after me though, I'll just have to weather it-but I can do that."



"This looks dangerous, but..."

**Riven: Move to 4,11. Attack Axeman C.**



"Missed what?"

The dark blob of negative energy struck Axeman C, rending his flesh horribly.

**Riven vs Axeman C**

Hit:  $102-11 = 91$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1 = 18\text{dmg}$

Chris glanced at Riven.



"When one dies, the soul has to leave the body for the afterlife, correct? And yet no matter how many people I see die, I never see the moment when it departs."



"Anyway, don't worry about how dangerous it is. I'll keep you alive as long as I can."

**Gregor equips the Javelin if it somehow wasn't already equipped. Daniel does nothing this turn.**

**Raquel: Move to 11,12**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Elite Lancer C gave up on Valor, hidden in the thicket, so he moved to the Fezzan rider and stabbed at him. The wounded cavalier swung his sword and slashed at the spearman's left shoulder.

**Elite Lancer C vs Fezzan Cavalier B**

Hit:  $91+15-21 = 85$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $16+1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

Fezzan Cavalier B counterattacks!

Hit:  $92-15-20 = 57$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1-9 = 7\text{dmg}$

Axeman C spotted a squishy target, Riven namely, so he moved close and swung his axe, but the sorceress side-stepped. Immediately after that, her dark magic struck his chest, destroying his flesh and causing him to scream in agony for a brief moment before he died.

**Axeman C vs Riven**

Hit:  $82-10-16 = 56$   
Hit roll: 68, miss!  
  
Riven counters!  
Hit:  $102+10-11 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $19-1 = 18\text{dmg}$



"Hehehe... now let's see if you're tough enough to withstand my rapier!"

Erkand swished with his blade and stabbed at the city guard captain, piercing his armor and striking his chest. Coughing up some blood, Leon roared and impaled the bandit lord in the chest, the spearhead bursting from Erkand's back. All that the fencer could do is sigh heavily before falling to the ground.



"And that's why you don't mess with Fezzan City Guard, dastard." Leon spoke before rubbing off some blood from the corner of his lips.

#### Erkand vs Leon

Hit:  $134-15-26 = 93$

Hit roll: 20, hit!

Damage:  $28-1-9 = 18\text{dmg}$

Leon retaliates!

Hit:  $96+15-35 = 76$

Hit roll: 66, hit! Crit roll: 11!

Damage:  $19+1-5 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

The remaining bandits, seeing that their boss was killed, dropped their axes and ran away. Leon chuckled.



"City gates are closed. They won't get away. Thanks for the help, friend... even if it was a bit late." The spearman looked at the corpses of his fallen soldiers and sighed quietly.

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"No enemies around... I think I will join Syrea." Leon looked around and then went to the east.

Meanwhile, Fezzan Cavalier B moved away from the lancer. His place was taken by Knight C, who thrust his spear at the enemy, and then Elite Lancer C retaliated; both of them scored a hit on each other. Syrea in the meanwhile moved closer to her wounded cavalier and quickly healed him.

#### Fezzan Knight C vs Elite Lancer C

Hit:  $91-20 = 71$

Hit roll: 30, hit!

Damage:  $15-9 = 6\text{dmg}$

Elite Lancer C counters!

Hit:  $91-12 = 79$

Hit roll: 95, miss!

Elite Lancer C counters again!

Hit:  $91 - 12 = 79$

Hit roll: 40, hit! Crit roll: 9!

Damage:  $16 - 12 = 4 \times 3 = 12\text{dmg}$

**Syrea heals Fezzan Cavalier B**

$20 + 9 =$  Up to 29HP healed

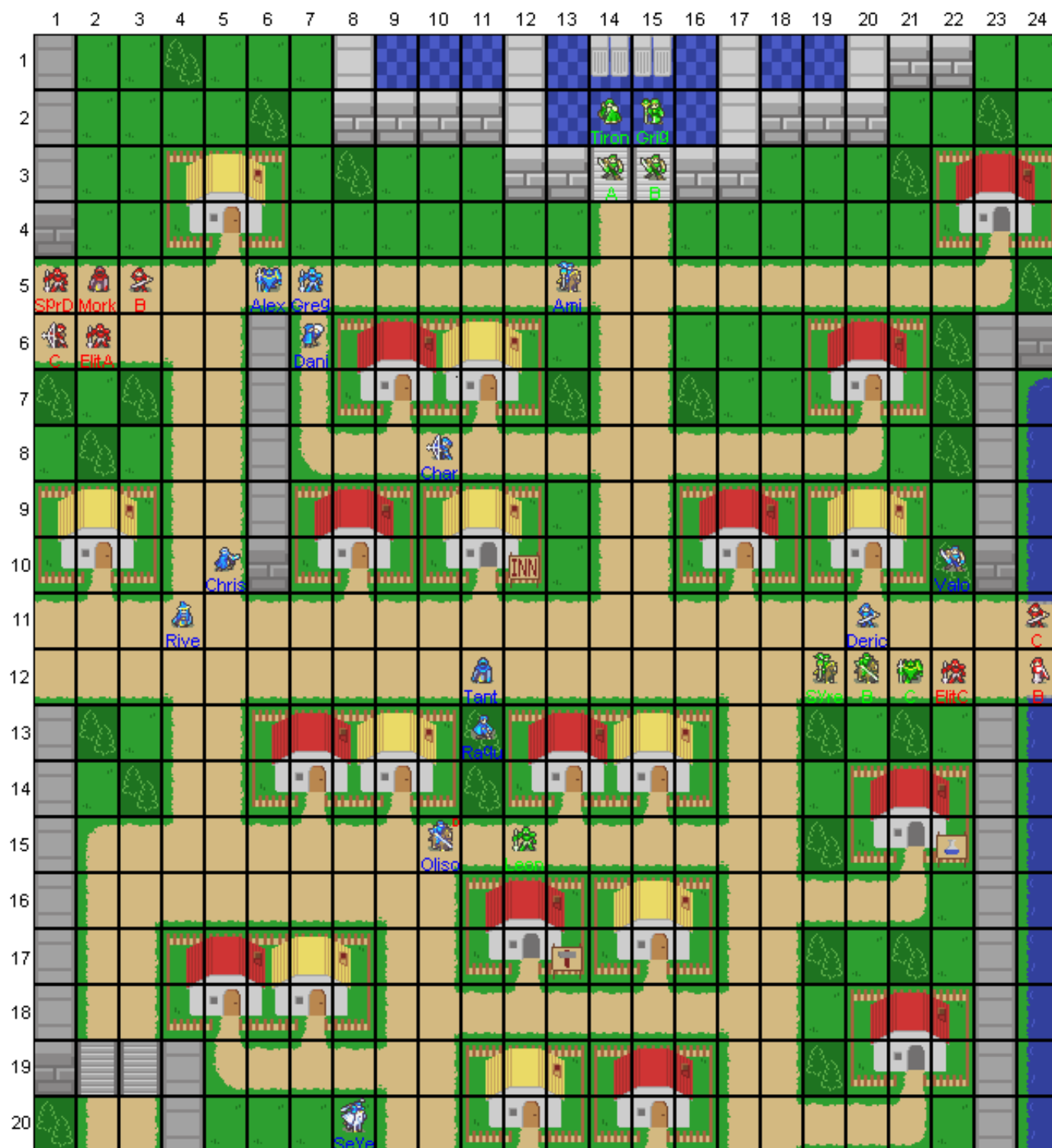
Seconds later, more Berebians appeared on the battlefield.

## ~~Player Turn 6~~

**Poison rolls**

Charlotte: 5

Derick: 1



Weather:

| <b>Merces:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Enemies:</b>                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 25/26<br>Ami Storm: 17/22<br>Charlotte Braxis: 18/23 <b>Poison (3/5)</b><br>Christopher Shields: 21/21<br>Daniel: 24/25<br>Derick: 19/25 <b>Poison (3/5)</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 21/27<br>Olison Eul: 12/24 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Raquel Torriani: 23/23<br>Riven: 21/21<br>Seyena Ikane: 8/23<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 22/23<br>Valor Inara: 11/24 | Myrmidon B: 11/24<br>Myrmidon C: 24/24<br>Lancer D: 26/26<br>Elite Lancer A: 25/25<br>Elite Lancer C: 10/25<br>Crossbowman C: 25/25<br>Monk B: 22/22<br>Morko: 26/26 | Temple Guard A: 27/27<br>Temple Guard B: 27/27<br>Bishop Grigorij: 27/27<br>Tiron: 30/30<br>Fezzan Knight C: 17/29<br>Fezzan Cavalier B: 26/26<br>Captain Syrea: 27/27<br>Captain Leon: 13/31 |

Alexander's eyes narrowed at the now larger force, but he nonetheless **stayed there** and continued to keep up a defense.



"Alright... now they outnumber us, unless some of the others get here..."

**Raquel: Move to 7,12**



"Steady, Sir Jorinn. We have the defensive advantage here and none of them carry axes. We can hold them off for as long as we need - this is what you and I do best."

**Gregor and Daniel stay put for now.**

**Charlotte: Head to 13,10. Use Pure Water.**

**Tantallos: Move to 6,12.**

Olison exhaled sharply before turning to move east.



"Their lives were not in vain. They fought well for their city, not something every person can shoulder proudly." Olison stated solemnly, gesturing to the dead fencer.

**Olison: Move to 15,15. Re-mount.**

**Ami: To 7,4**



"Hello again."



"Hmm? Oh, hello Ami. What's the news down south?"

Whilst most of the group moved, Charlotte walked toward the main district road and sprinkled some of the pure water on herself. Her clothes sparkled for a brief moment.

**Charlotte uses Pure Water**

+10 RES for 3 turns



"Well we wiped out all but one group of the enemies last time I looked."



"That's good. Is everyone alright?"



"I wouldn't be here if they weren't."



"Really? That's excellent! I was a little worried, to be honest; a lot of us got hurt in the last fight we were in."

**Chris heads to 10,11.**



"I'm going to go check on the inn owner. You can come along if you'd like, Riven, but I suggest you don't run up there and attack on your own."



"I'm not a fool." Riven replied lightly.

**Riven: Move to 9,11.**



"Never thought you were... but I promised to keep you safe for the battle, so I'm looking out for you."



"Aw, that's sweet."



"I should probably visit that house... I have a little time." Seyena said, heading in that direction.

**Seyena: Move to 15,20**

**Valor: Move to 22,7**

**Derick: Move 22,11 attack the lancer**

Chris was flustered for a moment, unsure of how to respond. He settled for playing it off, as he usually did.



"Just the truth, miss Riven. Just the truth."

Derick moved up to Elite Lancer C and shamsir'd him, but not enough to kill him. Unfortunately, the lancer easily impaled Derick on his spear.

#### Derick vs Elite Lancer C

Hit:  $106 - 15 - 20 = 71$

Hit roll: 26, hit!

Damage:  $15 + 2 - 1 - 9 = 7\text{dmg}$

Elite Lancer C retaliates!

Hit:  $91 + 15 - 30 = 76$

Hit roll: 34, hit! Crit roll: 10!

Damage:  $16 + 1 - 6 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Sir, this soldier brought a message." The shaman grabbed the note and looked at it closely.



"Hmm... ...what?! Groups five and six? General Roubois dead!? Argh! Those

fools!... Lieutenant, we're going for the library! We can fortify ourselves there and be a thorn in the Menelean side for weeks! Move out, you idiots!"

The crossbowman moved closer and his poisoned bolt flew above the wall, striking Daniel in the left arm.

#### Crossbowman C vs Daniel

Hit:  $105-10-5-39 = 51$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $12-5 = 7\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!

Then, Morko himself moved closer to Alexander. With wave of his hands, a cloud of black insects appeared and then flew toward Alexander, the tiny magical bugs biting him through his armor, clothes and flesh, cutting his skin and injecting poison into him on top of that. And then another cloud of insects sent Alexander to dust.

#### Morko vs Alexander

Hit:  $106-5-13 = 88$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $22-0 = 22\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!

Morko attacks once more!  
Hit:  $106-5-13 = 88$   
Hit roll: 77, hit!  
Damage:  $22-0 = 22\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!

Meanwhile, Elite Lancer C swung his spear against Fezzan Knight C; after getting scratched, again, the knight stabbed at the lancer, killing him. Unfortunately, Monk B easily struck the Knight with holy magic. Then, Myrmidon C moved to the Knight, wanting to finish him. Lo and behold, the Knight managed to avoid the first strike and even stab the swordsman in the guts. In response, the myrmidon stabbed with his sword at the knight's vizer.

#### Elite Lancer C vs Fezzan Knight C

Hit:  $91-12 = 79$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $16-12 = 4\text{dmg}$

Fezzan Knight C counters!  
Hit:  $91-20 = 71$   
Hit roll: 69, hit!  
Damage:  $15-9 = 6\text{dmg}$

#### Monk B vs Fezzan Knight C

Hit:  $116-12 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $12-1 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### Myrmidon C vs Fezzan Knight C

Hit:  $115-15-12 = 88$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

Fezzan Knight C counterattacks!  
Hit:  $91+15-26 = 80$   
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage:  $15+1-5 = 11\text{dmg}$

Myrmidon C gets another strike!  
Hit:  $115-15-12 = 88$   
Hit roll: 69, hit!  
Damage:  $14-1-12 = 1\text{dmg}$



## ~~Ally Phase~~

Syrea looked at her knight, then at Derick, and cursed under her nose.



"Devon, fall back! And you, friend! Don't die on me!" Her healing powers once more helped Derick's soul remain amongst the living. In the meanwhile, the remaining city guard cavalier moved up to Myrmidon C, and struck him in the head - that was enough to kill the swordsman.

### Syrea heals Derick

20+9 /2 = Up to 14HP healed

### Fezzan Cavalier B vs Myrmidon C

Hit: 97-26 = 71

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage: 18-5 = 13dmg

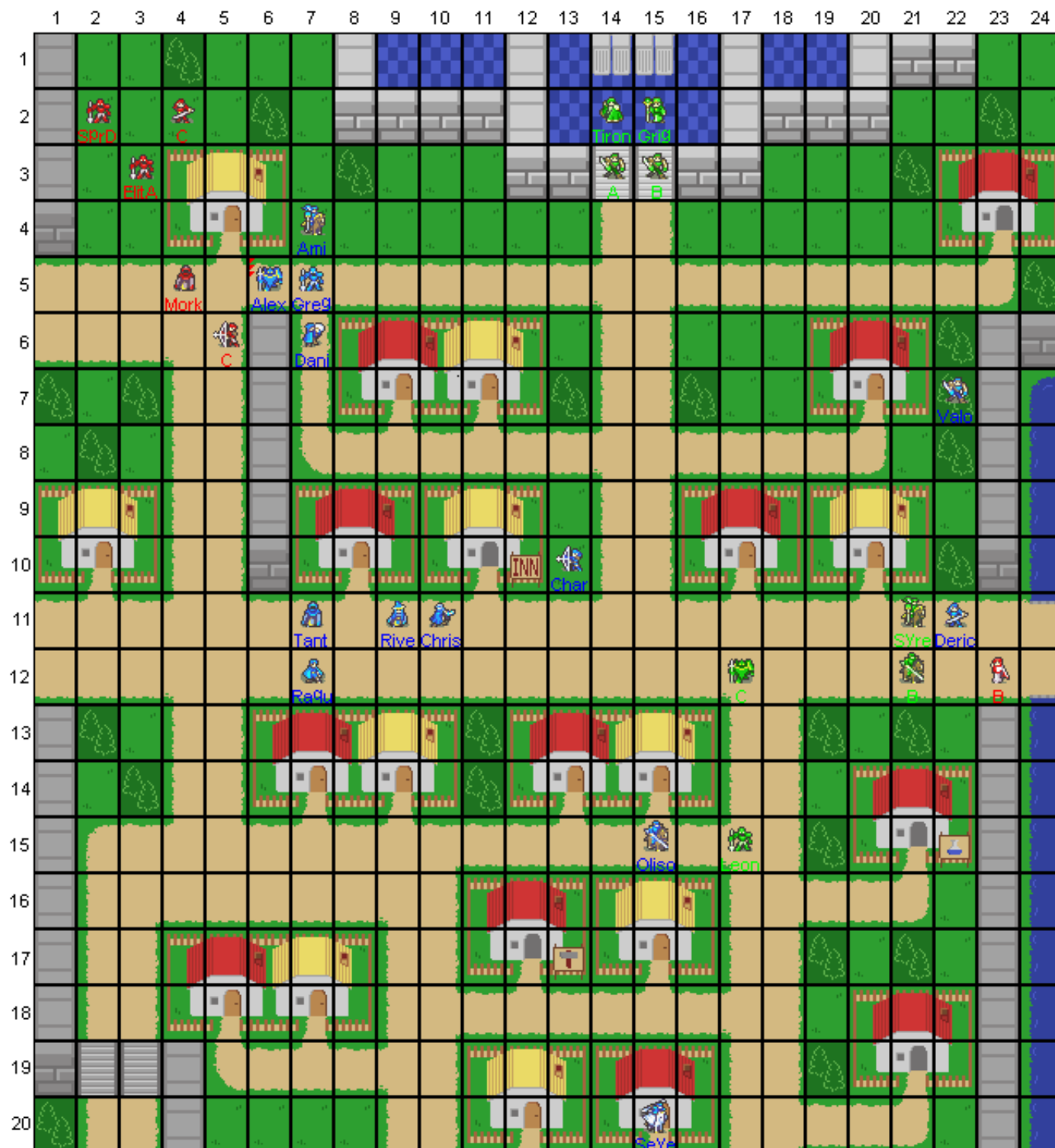
## ~~Player Turn 7~~

## Poison rolls

Charlotte: 2

Daniel: 4

Derick: 2



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Enemies:                                                                                                               | Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/26 <span>3/3</span><br>^ <span>Poison (5/5, stalled)</span><br>Ami Storm: 17/22<br>Charlotte Braxis: 16/23<br>^ <span>Poison (2/5)</span> <span>Pure Water (2/3)</span><br>Christopher Shields: 21/21<br>Daniel: 13/25 <span>Poison (4/5)</span><br>Derick: 12/25 <span>Poison (2/5)</span><br>Gregor von Hexham: 21/27 | Myrmidon B: 11/24<br>Lancer D: 26/26<br>Elite Lancer A: 25/25<br>Crossbowman C: 25/25<br>Monk B: 22/22<br>Morko: 26/26 | Temple Guard A: 27/27<br>Temple Guard B: 27/27<br>Bishop Grigorij: 27/27<br>Tiron: 30/30<br>Fezzan Knight C: 1/29<br>Fezzan Cavalier B: 26/26<br>Captain Syrea: 27/27<br>Captain Leon: 13/31 |

|                                                                                                                                      |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Olison Eul: 12/24<br>Raquel Torriani: 23/23<br>Riven: 21/21<br>Seyena Ikane: 8/23<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 22/23<br>Valor Inara: 11/24 |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|

### Olison: Move to 18,11

Gregor surprised himself with a vicious Menelean curse at how quickly Alexander was brought down. Now what?!

Alexander was surprised with the strength of the first strike, letting out a "Gah-" especially when he felt the poison, and then the second cloud struck, sending him to the ground with a groan followed by a curse.



"Ami, get away from the guys going around the house and heal Daniel. We'll have to hold here!"

### Gregor consumes a vulnerary, both Gregor and Daniel hold still.

Ti-ti-ti-ti-ti-tinkle.

#### Gregor uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP restored.



"Thanks again. Now I really owe you one. Now then..."

### Derick: Move east and attack the monk

Derick moved to the Monk, and with a quick slice, he sent the robed man's head into the air. It fell into the moat with a quiet 'sploosh'.

#### Derick vs Monk B

Hit:  $106 - 26 = 80$

Hit roll: 29, hit! Crit roll: 2!

Damage:  $15 + 2 - 2 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$



"Hey, Chris! You'll need this to fight the leader up top! CATCH!"

### Charlotte: Head to 10,12 and give Pure Water to Chris.



"...Then I'll attempt another flanking attack. Riven, do you mind checking on the innkeeper?"

**Chris takes the Pure Water, drinks a little of it, equips his Crossbow, and heads back the way he came to 5,10.** Glub glub glub. \*~~Sparkle~~\*

**Christopher uses Pure Water**

+10 RES for 3 turns.



"Not at all."

**Riven: Move to 11,10, pester innkeeper.**

"Oh you need some rest too? I had this horseman for a while, tough-looking guy, I think I have some tea for you here..." And he walked off to the kitchen.

**Valor: Move to 23,4 and select visit from the drop down menu.**

Valor reached the north-eastern house. An elderly man with white hair but amazingly healthy-looking body smiled at him.

"Ahh, them young'uns, allways be fighting. I loved a good fight, I was war cleric you know, hammer here, poison-spewing staff there... ahhh, good times, good times... Oh yes, you fighting for the city, more or less, eh? Here, take this, it should help you in a pinch. If you know how to use it, that's it!" He given Valor a staff with blue gem on top, and then locked the door.

**Valor got Rescue staff!**



"...What the crap is this thing? I wonder if Ami can use it."



"Mage lady, I will need your assistance, I am almost sure at least one of those will get here to attack.. so depending of who it is, you might have an advantage."

**Tantalos: Move 5,11.**

Tantalos blinked and looked at the other shaman.



"I am Tantallos from the Forsaken family, did we happen to talk before?"

He hoped the other would at least reply before another carrion party, he was sure the knight would not be his last victim.

She nodded at Tantallos and his friend, who, she couldn't help but notice, also wore a dark hooded cloak. As they passed the corner, she saw the fallen knight on the road leading straight to the library, and other soldiers working their way around the house as though for an ambush.



"Indeed but we'd best hurry if we're to help your friends. They appear to be hard-pressed."

**Raquel: Move to 4,11**

Chris glanced at Tantallos and his lady friend as he moved past.



"I'm going to lead an assault on that group up there. Care to join me, you two?"



"You know that we will not be in advantage, right? But as we will have to stop them from reaching the library...we do not really have many options."

Chris nodded.



"I know. But we have to attack, for the sake of the mission. Besides, Gregor's unit is up there; when we sweep from the side they can join us."



"As for me, I'm going to take the fight right to their leader, alone or not."



"I would tell you to be careful.. but as you used a pure water, I doubt it will be

that difficult, only the poison may really bring you any serious harm, or with some luck you can even dodge his strike."

Chris grinned.



"I'm not afraid of dying, Tantallos. Not if it serves a purpose."

Tantallos laughed and rubbed his gloved hands together.



"Well, well, well. That is a good quality.. heh..ehe.. I am quite sure not being afraid of death will help you in a lot of situations."

Chris laughed along with him for a few moments.



"What about you? Are you afraid of death?"

Tantallos shook his head and looked to his emblem.



"Not really.. I know the Plague Rider will give us a good place to live. But.. I do not think I am even allowed to die so soon, they expect me to take the throne when I return as a druid."

Chris nodded.



"I think all magic-users have such ambitions."

He beckoned Tantallos a little closer, then leaned over so he could whisper privately in his ear.



"If you're really going to be a king, you might have a shot with the shaman in the hat, Riven. She told me earlier her ambitions are power and prestige... and if your family values the use of dark magics, they might welcome her."

He stepped back a pace.



"Just something to consider."



"Don't be so sure about it, some of us are guided by our beliefs, some who do not have a objective on their lives may be afraid of dying."

Tantallos raised an eyebrow when he noticed the other was trying to whisper something and gave a twisted laugh.



"You cannot be serious, thief...I barely talked to that lady.. and it seems you two are actually getting pretty well."

He shaman tapped Chris' shoulder and grinned under his hood.



"..Besides.. that mage will probably keep around as she disapproves my hobby, and I do not need to tell you how amusing it is to me..."

Chris raised his eyebrows for a moment, glanced over Tantallos's shoulder at the black-ponytailed mage, and returned his gaze to the shaman's to resume whispering.



"Oh, you like her, then? I wish you luck."



"A different question. What's this 'Plague Rider' you mentioned? Something parallel to the usual personification of Death?"



"The others are going to finish this soon..." Seyena noted, looking over at her allies. She urged her Pegasus towards the last house. *If I'm fast, I can join them before the battle's end.*

**Seyena: Move to 21, 19**

Seyena arrived at that house. A girl, all wrapped in midnight blue silk, peeked from inside, and then handed her a massive, iron shield.

"The Astral Machinations whisper to me that your future depends on this item, so take it like the Divines say you would. Yes. Good. Now go." The strange girl shut the door in front of Seyena's nose.

### **Seyena got Iron Shield!**

Tantallos shrugged.



"Hey, hold right there.. I just said it was amusing, I do not even know what she thinks about me. But I am almost sure it is not something good. If you sneaked up here to tell me about the shaman lady, maybe you can find out what she thinks of the shaman over here."

He pointed to himself and laughed again, as always being insane.

Chris' smile was conspiratorial this time.



"Hey, no worries. I'll talk to Riven for you if you'd like me to. Maybe suggest the two of you compare notes on magic."



"The Plague Rider? That is another name given to the Plague Dragon. He is a real creature, just like dragons, he is powerful and there is a long story about him and the lands I live on. He helped us to protect many villages, but in exchange he asked us to kill those who were not worth living.. on other words, those who wanted to murder everyone, destroy families and all those things."

He shrugged to himself and looked to the side.



"Even if it was a fair change, not many people are happy about it. If it was not bad enough, those who were attacking us brought priests and bishops to weaken him and force him to leave... we do not even know if he is alive yet, but we still pray for him and give him the so needed power he asks for helping us. I should show you what those bishops did with our lands.. by wounding the Plague Dragon, his dark blood and his rotten skin fell on the ground, bringing all the fallen soldiers back to life, and I do not need to tell you what happened next.. or how many suffered and still suffer with this."



Chris listened to Tantallos's explanation quietly.



"Sounds like a harsh God to follow... but I can't say he's unfair, either. I don't think anyone would miss the kind of people he wants for sacrifices."

Chris put a hand on the shaman's shoulder.



"For what it's worth, I'm not going to look down on your beliefs. I might not share them - at least at the moment... maybe I could be convinced - but you can trust me to respect your right to believe them."



"And that's a more honest promise than you'll get from many people."



"Maybe when we have a moment after battle, we can talk more about this Plague Dragon. I've always found this sort of thing interesting."

The spy was a bit of a cryptozoologist and was, as he told Ami before, fascinated by the mythological and things that most people would be scared of.

Gregor braced himself. For some reason, dark magic didn't seem nearly so interesting when he was about to be on the receiving end...

### **Ami: Head to 8,5 and heal Gregor**

Ami went behind Gregor but healing was unnecessary as he consumed vulnerable.

### **~~Enemy Phase~~**

Morko moved toward Gregor and grinned. Then, a ball of magical black insects flew toward the spearman, who evaded the spell in the last moment. Then, he thrown a javelin at the shaman, who stepped away from it's trajectory.



"Tsk, my aim must be off..."

Hit:  $106-5-22 = 79$

Hit roll: 91, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $96+5-22 = 79$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

Then, crossbowman shot at Daniel again, striking him in the chest.

#### **Crossbowman C vs Daniel**

Hit:  $105-5-10-39 = 51$

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage:  $12-5 = 7$  dmg, Poisoned!

### **~~Ally Phase~~**

The Fezzan Guards moved toward the library, and Syrea healed up her knight.

#### **Syrea heals Fezzan Knight C**

$20+9 =$  Up to 29HP restored

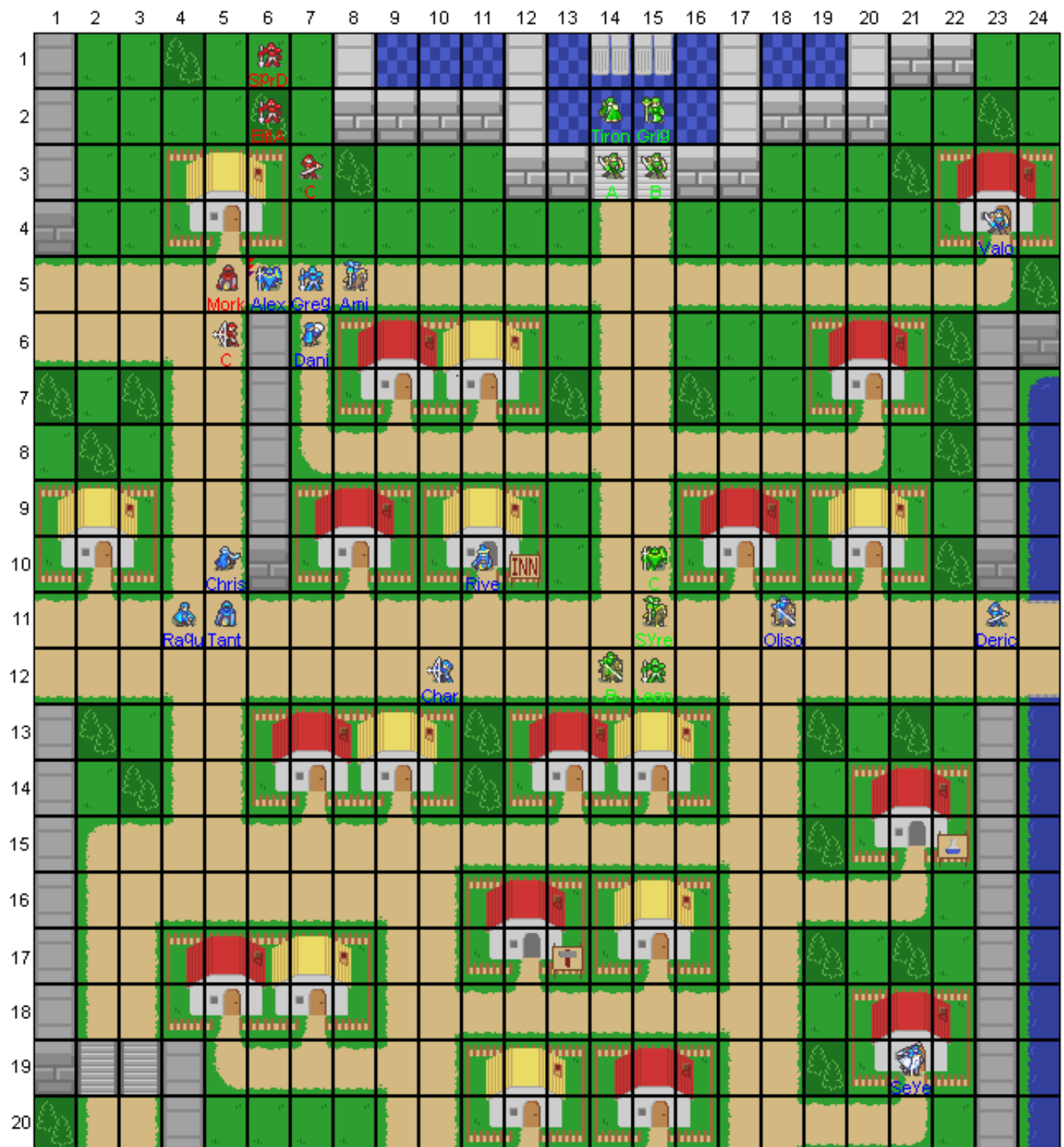
# ~~Player Turn 8~~

## Poison rolls

Charlotte: 1

Daniel: 5

Derick: 5



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Enemies:                                                                                                             | Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Alexander Jorinn: -/26 <b>2/3</b><br/> ^ <b>Poison</b> (5/5, stalled)<br/> Ami Storm: 17/22<br/> Charlotte Braxis: 15/23<br/> ^ <b>Poison</b> (1/5) <b>Pure Water</b> (1/3)<br/> Christopher Shields: 21/21 <b>Pure Water</b> (2/3)<br/> Daniel: 1/25 <b>Poison</b> (4/5)<br/> Derick: 7/25 <b>Poison</b> (1/5)<br/> Gregor von Hexham: 27/27</p> | <p>Myrmidon B: 11/24<br/> Lancer D: 26/26<br/> Elite Lancer A: 25/25<br/> Crossbowman C: 25/25<br/> Morko: 26/26</p> | <p>Temple Guard A: 27/27<br/> Temple Guard B: 27/27<br/> Bishop Grigorij: 27/27<br/> Tiron: 30/30<br/> Fezzan Knight C: 29/29<br/> Fezzan Cavalier B: 26/26<br/> Captain Syrea: 27/27<br/> Captain Leon: 13/31</p> |

|                                                                                                                                      |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Olison Eul: 12/24<br>Raquel Torriani: 23/23<br>Riven: 21/21<br>Seyena Ikane: 8/23<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 22/23<br>Valor Inara: 11/24 |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|



"Well that's the last of them over here."

**Derick: Move over by Olison**



"Can I get a lift?"

**Charlotte: Move to 11, 14. Moving through forests sure is hard work!**



"Ami, I'm fine! Go heal Daniel!"



"That would help a lot.. and that will help to know if we do have anything in common, if not, well nothing we can do about it, right?"

He laughed again and looked to the side, starting to wonder which enemy they would try to take down first before looking back to Chris.



"That is my point, they are called "those who do not deserve to live" for a reason, they are just around to destroy and kill others without any reason besides their own interest. And thank you for not saying anything negative about my beliefs, I am actually surprised you are interested to hear more about it, most of people would just want to hear about the other creatures.. but I guess this falls on the same logic of considering ancient magic "evil magic", it is all about the way you see it."

The shaman gave a slow nodded and finally turned around to take a glance at the enemies.



"So, who are we going to attack first?"

## Ami: Head to 7,7 and heal dan

Ami moved down to Daniel and healed him up.

### Ami heals Daniel

10+13 = Up to 23HP healed

Chris scanned the opponents.



"We take out their leader, and it's all over. I'm going for it while this pure water is still working."

## Chris heads to 4,5 and stabs Morko.

Christopher went stabby at Morko.



"That was a mistake." He said and Christopher got hit by the cloud of poison-carrying magical beetles.

### Christopher vs Morko

Hit:  $116 - 22 = 94$

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Damage:  $12 + 2 - 6 = 8\text{dmg}$

Morko counters!

Hit:  $106 - 27 = 79$

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Damage:  $22 - 10 - 3 = 9\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!

Seyena nearly fell forward, carrying the heavy shield. With a sigh, she tied to to the side of her saddle, as it was too big for the rest of the saddlebags. She quickly remounted, already starting to fly towards the rest of the group.

## Seyena: Move to 20, 13

## Riven: Move to 13,9.

Olison helped Derick up.



"Indeed. Sounds like the fighting's still going on to the west." Olison briefly looked at the bisected corpses, then to Derick's new blade. "Did you do all this?"

## Olison: Rescue Derick, Move to 14,8, Drop Derick North.



"Hm? Looks like the fighting isn't over just yet."

**Valor: Move to 19,5**



"Uh, yeah mostly. Valor and the guards helped too. I guess I just needed to focus better and not be so overly cautious; not to mention that this Shamsir is really something, I should have used it in our last fight."

Gregor was filled with relief at the sight of Chris, knowing that further reinforcements couldn't be far behind. He decided to try and defeat the Myrmidon now charging his way.



"You should have surrendered when you had a chance."

**Gregor: Throw Javelin at the Myrmidon.**

Raquel nodded at the other hooded mercenary's words.



"Agreed. I'll remove the lackey supporting him."

**Raquel: Move to 4,6; Attack Archer C with Thunder**

The javelin went toward the Myrmidon with a swoosh. Then it went with a thud when it struck the myrmidon in the chest, killing him.

**Gregor vs Myrmidon B**

Hit:  $96+15-26 = 85$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $16+1-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

Then Raquel went north the road and sent a Thunder at the crossbowman. The spell fried him on spot into charred corpse.

**Raquel vs Crossbowman C**

Hit:  $102-24 = 78$   
Hit roll: 62, hit! Crit roll: 6!  
Damage:  $18-2 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$



"Was that thunder and screams I just heard? But there's no clouds in the sky..."

Suddenly Daniel burst from his spot, running directly towards the enemy lancers! Such bravery! To hold the line against two opponents who have a clear advantage over you must take a great deal of courage!

### **Daniel moves to (7,2) and steals the Goddess Icon**

...or maybe it was just the scent of treasure...



"Shaman! You should stop now, do you have any idea of what you are doing to all of us? Ancient magic already is respected by a few, and you are just making it worse for us. And as a member of the Forsakens, I will have to stop you."

Tantallos pointed his gloved finger towards the other shaman before starting to attack and hoped for the best.

### **Tantallos: Move 3,6 attack Morko.**

Alexander continued to bleed on the ground. And considering the knight's weak immune system, the poison had knocked him out by now.

Chris fended off the majority of the insects with his cape, but a few got through, stinging and biting him. He managed to scrape them off and crush them in his hand.



"Sorry we're late, Gregor. We'll make it up to you by eliminating this bastard."



"Better late than never, I say! I don't think we could have held out for very long, and this battle hasn't been won yet. Ami said the south was mostly cleared out. I assume that's still the case?"



"As far as I'm aware this is the last squad of enemies here."



"We've almost got this fight won. All that's left is to finish it."



"Now if only these fools would figure out the same thing and give up. We could avoid a lot of bloodshed that way; ours and theirs."



"Gregor, I like you - not as much as Ami, but a little - so I'm going to give you some advice. There are some people you just can't reason with. I'm not going to call them animals because they think differently than I do, but in this line of work you will encounter many people who have deeply held ambitions and beliefs that they will not change no matter how persuasive you are."

He gestured at Morko.



"This man, for instance, believed something - perhaps taking something in the library, or maybe just destruction for its own sake - was worth risking his life and his men's lives to accomplish. The same as we and the town guards have staked our own lives on the opposing side - that there's something in this town worth protecting. These viewpoints are irreconcilable. And since neither side is going to be swayed, one must be destroyed."



"I would prefer it to be theirs. I'm getting rather used to you all."

Gregor shook his head.



"It's times like these when I'm not sure if you're wise or simply cynical. Maybe a little of both. I just hate the idea that we might be killing people who would rather surrender but are forced to fight alongside those 'believers' you mentioned."

He gestures towards the body of the myrmidon.



"Like that one. I could see in his eyes that he wanted to flee, but the shaman forced him to fight anyway."



"Neither. I don't have the capacity for wisdom or cynicism. But I do have



experience and an objective view of existence."

Chris tilted his head at the fallen Myrmidon.



"That is what it means to be a leader. Even though this soldier would rather have fled or given up, he fought anyway. Because he respected his commander, or more likely because he feared him. If you're going to be a leader, Gregor, you have to be able to inspire that level of loyalty among those of us following your banner."



"Frankly I think you should go the respect route. You're altogether too friendly and approachable to try to get the rest of us to fear you."



"Hmm...maybe if I work at becoming more frightening, enemies will surrender!"

He paused.



"On the other hand, I might end up acting crazy like Adrien. I'm not sure that'd be worth it."



"It wouldn't suit you anyway."

Daniel pulled a small porcelain idol from the Elite Lancer A's pocket.

### **Daniel got Goddess Icon!**

Morko got hit by the glob of negative energy, and turned toward Tantallos, listening to his words.



"Magic is just a tool, you fool. And if my army tells me to, I shall use it - like now!" Tantallos got hit by Morko's magic, and then again.

#### **Tantallos vs Morko**

Hit:  $100+5-22 = 83$

Hit roll: 34, hit!

Damage:  $18-9 = 9$ dmg

Morko retaliates!

Hit:  $106-5-12 = 89$

Hit roll: 71, hit!

Damage:  $22-8 = 14$ dmg, Poisoned!

Morko attacks again!

Hit:  $106-5-12 = 89$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $22-8 = 14$ dmg, Poisoned!

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The elite spearman stabbed Daniel. Daniel wasn't going to be worse and stabbed the lancer. Twice.

### Elite Lancer C vs Daniel

Hit:  $91+15-39 = 67$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-5 = 12$ dmg

Daniel counters!

Hit:  $122-15-20-20 = 67$

Hit roll: 56, hit!

Damage:  $13-1-9 = 3$ dmg

Daniel counters again!

Hit:  $122-15-20-20 = 67$

Hit roll: 3, hit!

Damage:  $13-1-9 = 3$ dmg

His companion with the less pretty lance moved up to Daniel and stabbed at him as well, knocking him out.

### Lancer D vs Daniel

Hit:  $89+15-39 = 65$

Hit roll: 61, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-5 = 12$ dmg



"You, stabby one. Time for revenge." The magical bug swarm engulfed Christopher, who burst from it and ran at Morko. The shaman coughed up blood and looked down, at the hilt of Christopher's sword almost touching his chest, the robes going crimson from all the spilled blood.

Chris hooked an arm around Morko's neck and pulled him closer, pushing the blade further into him as he did, until eventually their foreheads touched and he locked his eyes on the dying man's.



"...Like I was saying to Gregor, one side had to live, the other had to die. Rest easy. Your death ensures - for a time, at least - the lives of your men. Agus a chríochnaíonn sin do ról sa dráma seo. Dea-oíche."



"Argh... but it was... the best... plan--"

The shaman died, and Chris closed his eyes for him before pushing him to the ground. He wiped his sword clean on the last purple spot of his robes, then sheathed it and rubbed his forehead.

#### Morko vs Christopher

Hit:  $106 - 5 - 27 = 74$

Hit roll: 26, hit!

Damage:  $22 - 10 - 3 = 9\text{dmg}$

Christopher counters!

Hit:  $116 - 22 = 94$

Hit roll: 75, hit! Crit roll: 7!

Damage:  $12 + 2 - 6 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

### ~~Chapter 3 Complete!~~

Seeing their commander's death, the lancers behind the house thrown their spears away and raised hands up. In the same time, the Fezzan guards arrived - or rather, their troubadour captain. She healed up Alexander who was in the worst condition.



"Good work, people. We are in your debt! Tend to your wounded, magical poison should pass on it's own soon." With that, she and her soldiers detained the remaining Berebian soldiers.



"We will begin an investigation at once - an army doesn't slip through city gates unnoticed. I know you might be in hurry, but I'm asking you mercenaries, to stay at the Inn until tomorrow and don't leave the city."

In the meanwhile, a messenger, this time wearing Menelean armor, ran up to Syrea and gave her a note. She clapped her hands after reading it.



"Baron Strahov and his paladins destroyed the most of Berebian army in the Keep district, and the other troops in other districts are giving up. We won!" She sighed in relief.



"Another boring day, hmm, darling?"



"Another boring day... but don't call me darling in public." Leon's comment made the troubadour chuckle.



"Spectacular work!"

Charlotte made the trek back when she realized her comrades had won. She then tilted her head in Captain Leon's direction.



"Oh- I'm sorry to inconvenience you, but we actually came here on some, er, 'ambassador' work at the library. I'm afraid we don't have time to dilly-dally, so I'd quite like to finish up with Tiron and Grigorij before we nod off."

Alexander somewhat slowly reentered the world of consciousness, but when he did, he immediately heaved himself off of the ground, and then leaned on the wall until the poison wore off, clenching his teeth- but still thanking the troubadour who had healed him.



"Rrrrng... thank you."

Alexander looked around.



"Huh... Guess it is over."

Seyena soon landed amongst the group, her Pegasus buffeting the ground with her wings.



"Is it over already?" She asked as she dismounted. "And is everyone alright?"

The spy nodded to her.



"Stung and bitten, but I'll live. Mainly thanks to Charlotte giving me an item to raise my magic resistance temporarily."

Olison also approached from the eastern street, with Derick in tow.



"Ah, looks like the fighting's over. Good."



"We're all alive and the Temple is safe. I'll call that a victory any day!"

He picked up Daniel and administered basic first aid until a healer could take care of him properly.



"Is everyone all right?"

Chris asked Gregor. He could see more of them... more importantly, he could probably see Ami from his position. While waiting for a reply, Chris moved to Tantallos to check on him.



"Daniel got hit pretty hard. He bought us time, though, and he'll be fine with a little rest. Sir Jorinn is already on his feet, as you can see. Ami and I are fine."



"I've been better, but I'll be fine once the poison wears off. This nice lady took care of most of my injuries in the fight."



"Good to see you in one piece, Derrick."



"Good. And it looks like you got your wish - those two lancers surrendered when their commander fell. Although that does prove my point about leading; he did indeed lead through fear. Now that they don't have to worry about what he would do if

they quit, they gave up. If he had had their respect... they likely would've fought harder after I killed him."

Tantallos seemed to be all right if a bit stunned, so Chris helped him to his feet and hooked his arm over his shoulders so he could walk him back to the group. Once there, it was clear the shaman could stand on his own, so he let go of him.



"In any case, what do you propose we do now?"



"..You know... there is something he said that was unexpected. He said that ancient magic was a "tool". What are these shamans doing to this culture?"

Tantallos shook his head a bit and gave a weak shrug.



"Looks like my family was right about this after all.. but what is done is done."

The shaman gave a quiet laugh and looked down for a moment.



"Even if I was almost killed by a Carrion tome.. I will still look for one around...hehh,heh"



"It's all in the viewpoint, Tantallos. If what you want is to destroy and subjugate, then yes... magic of any kind is a great tool for that."

He put a hand on the shaman's shoulder.



"I would have grabbed his tome for you, but... I'm afraid I might have thoroughly soaked it in his blood. Tends to happen when you stab someone in the heart."



"That is the problem, Chris. Some of us are trying to prove the others ancient magic is not "evil", but there are too many people around using it for evil. But if you stop to think about it and use this logic, every weapon would be considered "evil" when they are used for destruction."

Tantallos gave a shrug and slowly crossed his arms.



"Well.. maybe we can find one at the library."



"You're right, of course. Anything is in how you use it. A sword can kill or defend; a hammer can build a home or pulp someone's brains. It all depends on the user."

Seyena listened to the discussion, before gasping aloud, and pulling out the poisoned dagger from a saddlebag.



"Hey, Chris, you might like this. This sort of thing seems right up your alley." She said, holding up the sharp blade gingerly, trying to avoid getting the poison on her. "I almost forgot about it."

Gregor eyed the dagger warily.



"Where on earth did you find...never mind, I probably don't want to know. Oh! Were all the townspeople warned about the attack?"



"I believe so, Seyena and I did rounds to the south while you held up here. Good thing too, some blighted looters looked like they were ready to sack whatever houses they happened on."



"We should get back to the Library, this is no place to idle."



"If you're in such a hurry, at least stay in Fezzan until evening. You won't tell me that you aren't tired and hungry. See you in the local inn, in few hours." With that, the guards, with Berebian remnants tied up, marched off to the west.



"Thank you, Seyena. But you shouldn't give me something for nothing. Here."

Chris took the dagger, placing it in an appropriate sheath on his belt, and handed his Iron Sword to Seyena.



"I don't know if you can use it or not, but at the least you can probably sell it. It's still in fairly good condition."



"I uh, you don't want to give me your sword, Chris. A knife isn't a very good primary weapon..." She still took the sword and gave Chris the knife anyway. She held the blade up awkwardly, unsure of how to hold it. *I need to learn how to use these...*



"Anyway, I'm with Tantallos on this one. Let's head back to the library for now, shall we?"



"Inn?"

Gregor turned to the rest of the group.



"I vote for the Inn. Temple can wait until everything's settled down."



"I agree with staying at the inn for now, it has actual food, and proper beds!"





"I have a bad feeling about that. On the off-chance we're right AND someone at the temple's caught on to us, staying at an inn would give the temple guards time to move Eor's possessions out. I'm heading to the temple, one way or another."

Charlotte nodded to Chris.



"It's possible the temple guards are on high alert. If they won't allow us entry, I may need your help getting in."

Gregor sighed and glanced longingly at the Inn, but followed Charlotte and Chris. He'd already been up for nearly two days, what was another few hours?

Olison moved to join the rest in the temple, but before he did he stopped by one of the slain Berebian soldiers, looking him over for a sigil or any way he could identify their lord.



"...Baron Strahov's men? Shame, the rumors told better of him."

Olison made his way towards the library, but on approach his horse stopped on seeing the mass of robed figures flowing around the halls.



"Erm. Right. Sorry, Steil. Hm, Chris, Gregor and Charlotte are already inside, surely they'll be fine."

### **Olison instead heads into the inn.**

Normally, for Alexander, duty came first. But Alexander didn't cope with poison well- and it was pretty obvious by sight that the poison had done a number on him. Combine that with the fact that he wasn't fast enough- especially like this- to catch up with the group heading to the temple, and Alexander just grumbled and began to trudge towards the inn. Not like he could help things, anyway...

---

The trio marched to the temple entrance. Magister Tiron was off somewhere, whilst the elderly bishop was talking with the guards. Seeing the mercenaries approach, he spread his arms and smiled.



"Ah, isn't it our heroes! Our saviors of the library and local citizenry! How did the battle go?"

Gregor raised a hand in greeting.



"No losses amongst this group, and the Berebians have been routed or captured. Not sure how the town guard did, I wasn't there to see them."

Charlotte stepped up.



"Very well. It seems no one from the library was injured - not even the two magi who joined our cause. Before the battle started, however, you were mentioning Eor kept his cell mostly empty. However, our mission is not complete until we have returned his prized possessions to his family. Is it possible we could visit this cell?"

The bishop nodded.



"Fate was smiling upon us today, then."

He listened to Charlotte and again, he nodded.



"Ah right, Eor's possessions. Please follow me, then. One of you is enough, he never left much in his cell. I don't think there will be much heavy lifting for you."

**Charlotte follows the bishop.**



"I'll go then. I think these two should take a moment to relax."

He patted Gregor on the shoulder.



"Mind getting him to the inn, Charlotte? He looks dead on his feet."

The bishop lead Charlotte - and Christopher - to the other side of the Library, and then into a tight, dimly-lit corridor. It had four doors on each side, and he opened the first one of the left.

Inside the room, there was a bed with mattress and pillow, a shelf with few empty wine bottles, a round, metal box, and a small dresser.



"Like I said, he kept it poor. Empty bottles after his favourite wine, box of sweets, and dresser with some clothes in it. Feel free to take everything. If you need me, I will be in the main library hall." With that said, he walked off.

A box of sweets?

**Charlotte opened the box and looked through it. She then opened the dresser and took all the clothing out of it. Finally, she look under the mattress.**

The box was full of dark blue, vaguely orb-shaped candy. The scent of blackberry couldn't be mistaken for anything else. There were spare pants, sandals and tunic in the dresser, all without pockets. Nothing else could be found in the dresser. There was nothing under pillow nor mattress.



"It has to be here somewhere. Chris, I need manpower."

**Charlotte moves the dresser out from the wall. Do the same for the bed. Look inside the pillow and inside the wine bottles. Lastly, eat one of those candies!**

**Chris assisted as Charlotte asked. He also looked inside the mattress and, if nothing bad happened to Charlotte in a minute or so, ate a candy as well.**

Gregor waited outside. Bishop said the cell was only big enough for one person, so two would probably be crowded enough as it was.



"Hmm. So, Charlotte. What was this 'Charlotte's Angels' thing about?"

Chris asked.

Charlotte shrugged.



"I don't plan to work for Prixima forever. As soon as we complete this primary mission, I'm going to start my own group. We won't be mercenaries so much as adventurers, doing good for the sake of the world and its people. I've already got a few people who say they'd split off with me."

Everything was checked, but Dragonstone wasn't there.

The candy tasted dull and barely sweet. The box was tightly filled with them to the brim, so they could have blue candy eating orgy if they wanted to.



"I don't plan on it either. To be perfectly honest, as soon as this Dragonstone is delivered, I thought I might leave and see if I can join Gregor's group."



"I think he's going to leave her service as well. Lord knows I've been working as hard as I can to convince him to step up as the leader of your mercenary group. His potential is being wasted as just another soldier."



"Fancy helping me talk him into it?"



"Doubt it would take much talking. Gregor is very optimistic and loyal but highly impressionable. I love him for those qualities, but what's frightening is if I ask him to step up as leader, he might not be able to say no."

Charlotte sighed and grabbed another candy but handed it to Chris. Eor being a sweet tooth was... surprising.



"Maybe I'm overthinking it. Gregor can be headstrong when he needs. If he didn't feel up to the job, maybe he would say so."

When Charlotte took away the candy, she could catch a glimpse of something flickering

deep under the rest of the candy.



"Charlotte, let's put all our cards on the table here. Who else do you think your group would rally around? Without a leader, what's going to happen is exactly what you said Charlotte's Angels would be - all of you breaking off from one another."



"There's only three of us who are both capable and willing to lead these mercenaries. You, me, and Gregor. You seem like a nice person, but Gregor has something neither of us do - the advantage of his birth status. He's a noble. People are always going to see him as better, more respectable than the common-blood spy or archer. As for me, I don't think anyone would be willing to follow me. I gather information and kill people from the shadows - that's not exactly the kind of qualities one would look for in a commander."



"But let's say you do form your own group apart from the rest. What are your plans?"

**Chris took the candy and ate it. Then he saw the flicker and took the box, emptying the candy into a pouch so he could see what was under it.**

Under the pile of candy, there was an object, a gemstone, shaped similar to the candy, just in a more perfect way. Motes of light were flickering, or rather, swimming inside. The gem had almost the same dark blue hue like the candy, but was larger. If not the flickering, it could pass as oversized candy piece.

**Chris grabbed it, dropping the Pure Water if need be.**



"Ah. Perhaps we lucked out."



"Oh my God. This is it. Finally, after all that time."

Charlotte's eyes lit up.

Chris laughed silently.



"I know. I think this will serve well as a letter of resignation."



"Yes. The temptation to make off with the Lapis and send Prixima a mocking letter is high, but I think that's unwise. Besides: if we head off for work in a distant city, I can always have someone I trust carry the Tiger's Eye. It's not like when it used to be just me guarding it."

Although Chris's eyes remained blank and emotionless, they narrowed, and he hid the Lapis inside his robes.



"Yes... most unwise. Let's get out of here, shall we?"

He started moving the furniture back to where they had originally found it.

Since he finished and Charlotte had nothing to say, Chris shrugged.



"I'll be heading back to the inn now."

He left and did as he said.

**Charlotte silently followed Chris to the inn, her head filled with "what-ifs" and dreams of the days to come.**

---

Seyena sighed, watching the group walk off towards the library. She looked at the sword she held in her hands.



*I can't use it, so I might as well sell it like Chris said.*

She sneaked away, heading towards the armory she saw while flying over the town. She might be able to get some money.

The blacksmith was open for business - a tall, muscular man with brown skin and bald head.

"Hello there. How can I help ya, lass?"

Seyena smiled, holding up the Iron Sword, and presenting it to the smith.



"Do you happen to buy? I have a sword that I can't use." She said. "It's in near-perfect condition."

The man grabbed the blade and looked it over.

"Hmmm... few scratches, but otherwise the blade is fine. I can give ya two hundred coins for it. No haggling."

Seyena was useless at haggling- she wasn't even going to try.



"Sure, I guess that would work." She gave the smith the sword, still getting a nagging feeling that it was worth quite a bit more.

The smithy took the blade and then gave her a bag of coins.

"There you go."

**Seyena got 200 gold!**

Seyena took the money, heading towards the inn with her paltry amount of money. She took a seat inside, letting her mind wander.

---



"I do not know about you all.. but I will explore the library and look for a better tome.. or a more accurate or a more dangerous, hopefully they will allow me to get something, after all we stopped those crazy soldiers from getting here."

**Tantalos looks for something useful on the library.**

Before Tantalos could forage for books, he was intercepted by Magister Tiron.



"You. You're one of those mercenaries, right?"



"Yes I am, why?"



"Good. Here." Tiron handed Tantallos a thick, heavy tome wrapped in dark leather.



"I've noticed there's a few dark magic users in your group, so I thought this tome might be useful. Just don't mention it to Grigorij, he wouldn't reward you even if you personally saved him from a dragon. Now go before he notices you're leaving the library with a book in your hands."

**Tantallos got Nosferatu!**



"Thank you, and I will."

Tantallos shoved the tome under his robes and gave Tiron a brief bow before walking away to make sure nobody would notice him carrying the book. He moved back to meet with the small group smiling under his robes.

---

**Derick went to go obtain a vulnerary or something healy, recognizing that his failure to remember to obtain one before their previous battle would have killed him if it weren't for the guards**

The lady in the shop clapped her hands when she saw Derick.

"Oh, a customer! And a handsome one, too! What do you need?"



"Thank you ma'am, I'm looking for a vulnerary or other healing item."



"I'll go look for a new staff."

**Ami: To the potions shop, maybe.**

The shopkeeper glanced only briefly at Ami before turning her attention back to Derick.

"Oh, I deal mostly with healing staves and magic books. But I have some poison curing drinks, and some healing powder as well. Both for three hundred coins a piece!

Derick reached into his pouch and suddenly became very very aware of how broke he



was.



"I uh... uh uh I'll be right back. Uh here, Ami you can talk to her now"

He then ran out of the shop at high speeds.

"...What a strange boy. How can I help you, dearie?"



"How much is a heal staff, sir?"

The shop lady pouted.

"I'm not a man! How dare you insult my beauty like that! Get out!"

### Ami: Retreat!

---

Olison hitched his horse to a nearby fencepost and walked into the inn. He took brief notice of Seyena seated to the side before moving to the bar.



"Hello? Are you still there, innkeep?"

"Why yes, I am! Free meal and drink for our city heroes." He said with a smile. Then he placed a piece of roasted lamb on a plate in front of Seyena, as well as a mug of strawberry wine.

Seyena's eyes lit up when she saw the food in front of her.



"Oh, thank you!" She quickly started to eat. *When did I last eat? Yesterday morning?*

Olison chuckled as the innkeep went about preparing meals.



"Ah, thank you. And thank you again for helping me earlier, without your help those soldiers might have brought me down. That stew was incredibly refreshing."



"If I may ask, do you have any firewood I can use?"

"Firewood? Why do you want it?"

Olison shrugged.



"I'm just looking for wood to carve into training swords. Some in my unit are a bit... unfurnished in their technique."

The innkeeper scratched his head.

"Well, there's some by fireplace in the corner, help yourself. Eat something first, will you?" He served another roast, chicken this time it seems, near Seyena's spot.



"My thanks." Olison bowed curtly before grabbing the two sleekest pieces of firewood he could find and seating himself in front of the meal. Picking up a knife, he began eating somewhat reservedly.

Derick went to the inn, figuring that there wasn't much he could do to deal with his money issues on short notice.

Tantallos looked for a place to write something on a old book and whispered some words while doing so.

Chris entered the inn, taking a seat next to Olison.



"...I've recovered the Lapis. Tomorrow we'll have to head back to Kesselring."



"Wait, you actually found it?" Seyena looked surprised. She leaned in, curious. "What does it look like?"

Olison's head snapped up as he heard that last sentence.



"Blue. Slightly shiny. Not very large. I'm not going to show it off in public, Seyena."

He had been speaking quietly this whole time, so as not to alert anyone beyond the table. He took some of the food and strawberry wine for himself.



"Maybe once we're on the road."



"So it wasn't just a wild goose chase this time, excellent." Olson stated as he swallowed the last bit of his meal. "Now all that's left to wonder is what the Lady will do with it..." Picking up one of the firewood pieces and setting it next to the hearth, Olson unsheathed his sword and began shearing off chunks of the wood, feeding the spare bits into the fire.

Chris shrugged.



"That's no concern of ours; only returning it. By the way, Olson... I figure it's only fair to warn you, since we've worked together a few times before, that once I hand this stone over to PRIXIMA I'm going to resign from her service."

Olson's hand slipped mid-stroke, only shearing a small shaving off the firewood.



"Really? We may have only worked a few times but that seems a bit... Out of character with the Chris I know. If my curiosity permits, can I ask what brought this on?"



"I want to be where Ami is. That's all."

He folded his hands on the table.



"And also I've been trying to talk Gregor into leaving as well, so he can lead these mercenaries. But if he won't do it... I suppose I could try to step up and lead. I don't know if they would follow me."



"Hmmm.. so if the "mission" is finished, we should return now, right?"



"Hm, Gregor to lead the pack? Ha, well I suppose he does have a good heap of the party's interests at heart."

Olison returned to shearing the firewood, with more focused strokes this time.



"But mercenaries or no, does Gregor really have the mind to lead, not only in combat but in survival and spirit as well? If he does not, do you?"



"Now might be a good time to mention that, if Gregor does not lead and Chris backs down, I've been mouthing off strategies and instructions in the heat of battle for quite a while now."



"We'll see. I would still prefer Gregor over either of us. No offense meant, Charlotte."

He took a drink of the wine.



"What is wrong with Charlotte? She seems to be perfectly capable to lead." Seyena looked at Chris with a curious expression.



"It's less about leadership and more about the leader. To be honest, we are

all fairly competent without being ordered around. Gregor, being a minor noble's son, would be an excellent face for our adventurer group."

Olison picked his head up to acknowledge Charlotte before returning to smoothing the first sword's hilt.



"This is true. But riddle me this, what do you do if you cannot afford so much as a stale slice of bread with no jobs to hunt? What do you do if you must pick between one of your unit and your objective? What if you must pick between an easy job that will pay for one meal, or a suicidal one that will feed everyone? Your leadership will not be limited to the battlefield."

Now that Berebians were defeated, the people began returning to business. That includes the inn, and soon, besides the mercenaries, there was a small crowd of workers, travelers and other ordinary inn folk. There was also a brightly coloured lady, looking like a dancer, or a gypsy, or someone of that kind.

Soon the inn was mostly filled with customers, and rarely anyone paid attention to the mercenary group.

Olison grunted in frustration as the other customers filled in.



"Ngh. So loud..."



"Exactly what Charlotte said, Seyena. And Olison is correct too. These are things one has to think about..."

Tantalos looked to the sides for a moment and began to look at the heavy tome he received.



"Hmm.. if we are going to have a new "leader", I would vote for Gregor."

Gregor, who had been eating silently during this conversation, spoke quietly without looking up from his food.



"I'll do whatever I can to help. If you want me in charge, fine. If you just

want me to be the "face" for the group, that's fine as well. I'm terrified that a choice I make could lead to someone's death, so perhaps the second option would be best."

He forced himself to his feet, before putting the gold he had on him on the table.



"Buy whatever you think we'll need; Ami, I'm pretty sure you still need a new staff. Now I'm going to get some sleep before we head back with the Captain tomorrow, and I suggest you all do the same."



"Understood."

Chris took the pure water out of his pockets and set it on the table.



"Selling this should bring in some money for that staff as well."

Seyena looked at the gold on the table, before adding her own amount to the pile.



"Like Chris, if anyone has anything they don't need or want, I'd say we should put it on the table. I could run over and sell it, and we could purchase supplies as needed with the gold left over."

Derick put his old iron sword on the table



"Here, I don't need this one anymore, and we really do need more money."

Olison passed his sword one last time over the wooden replica before laying it down and starting on the next one.



"A lesser man would call such fear of leading one to their death cowardice, I call it wisdom."

Gregor simply shrugged.



"You're too kind. Father always said I could use some wisdom instead of 'book smarts'."

He managed to put a genuine, if tired, smile on his face.



"Wake me up if you need anything or if something happens. Otherwise, I'll see you all tomorrow."

Gregor went to his room and **dozed lightly**.

Seconds after Gregor left for sleep, someone, escorted by two spearmen, entered the inn, causing the gathered people to go silent. That someone was no else than Captain Leon. He approached the mercenaries' table, a small man with papers and a bag followed.



"Came as quickly as it was possible... Right. Which one of you is the leader of this group? My friend here has few questions for you..."

The man with the papers and bag stepped in front.

"Yes, yes, pleasantries aside. I have few questions I would like you to answer. Firstly, did any of you notice anything strange before the attack? Did you too noticed the scent of vinegar, or sewer odour, during the first explosions? If you have something to add, I will gladly listen."



"I'm not the leader, but I'll speak for us. Yes, I did notice a vinegar smell."



"Sewer odor- wait..." Seyena leaned in next to Chris, whispering, "Didn't you say you saw a bunch of cloaked people that smelled like the sewers?"

Midway through hewing the second blade, Olson sat up with a short glance at Leon and the others before looking towards Chris. His expression turned questioning with a raised eyebrow.



"Yes, actually. I assumed they were thieves or the like."

"Eh, everyone is saying that. Hooded people from the sewers. Nothing new here as well, it seems..." The man handed the bag to Leon and took off with papers, and the soldiers followed. Captain Leon shrugged.



"There's that. Anyway; here, have some gold for your good work. If not you, our unit could be wiped out. Together with Syrea we were pondering how we can repay for your help during the attack, and concluded that, given you're mercenaries, gold will be most appropriate." He placed the not-really-heavily looking bag into Christopher's hands.



"It might feel light, but there's some Deynastian platinums as well. In the name of Fezzan City Guard, thanks again." He then saluted to the group, turned on his heels and walked out of the inn.

**Christopher got 500 gold!**



"Thank you very much."

Chris set the pouch on the table beside the Pure Water and the Iron Sword.



"Well. Between that and some items we can sell, I imagine we can get Ami a new Healing Staff and have some money left over if anyone else needs something as well."



"Seems like your mercenary group is already turning a profit again." Olson smirked before returning to his work.



"Mine?"





"Olison... are you bitter I'm leaving Prixima's service?"

Olison's smirk instantly turned neutral again.



"Hm. Unlikely. But it does stir some questions." Olison stated flatly as he smoothed the edges of the replica blunt.



"Go ahead and ask them then. We won't be leaving until tomorrow, so we have plenty of time."

Giving one last swipe to the second blade, Olison picked it up and looked it over.



"I would, were they questions for you or for any other person in the group for that matter. It's a matter of contemplation."

Olison twirled the sword in his hand briefly before picking up the other one.



"I'll see you all in the morning."

Olison stood and made to **Leave the Inn for a walk.**

Chris watched him leave.



"Interesting. Sometimes I wonder what's going on in his head. He's quite the quiet man."

He ate a few bites and waited to see if anyone wanted to strike up a conversation of any sort.

Seyena sat quietly for a moment, before quickly counting the money laid out in front of her. She enjoyed the somewhat menial task, it allowed her to think.



"Hey, it seems we have... coins worth around 902 in gold. That blade might catch 200 or so from that cheapskate blacksmith, and the water, I don't know. But we would likely have plenty for a new staff, at least, with a bit left over."

Chris looked to Seyena.



"All right. I'll trust you with making sure we get what we need. All I have in mind is a Healing Staff and perhaps another vulnerary. I'm sure one of us could use one."



"Well, I'm not good with shopping, but I'll try." Seyena scooped the money into a bag, tying it tight and standing. "Anyone want to go with me?"

Tantallos looked at the tome he received some time ago and looked to the side.



"There is a magic shop close to the Inn, right?"



"Depends on what you think is close. There is one a few houses away."



"That works.. going to see if I can get myself a Carrion tome and some extra gold with this."

Tantallos tapped the tome and walked away to look for the shop.

The shopkeeper lady looked at the shaman when he entered.

"What is it?"



"I am here for a trade proposal..."

He took the Nosferatu tome and placed it over a table.



"What are you willing to pay for this? I am accepting tomes and gold."

She flipped through the tome and whistled.

"My, where did you got this book. It's some powerful dark magic, that's for sure. I'm willing to pay nine hundred for the book. I do have few other magical tomes if you want to strike a barter."



"Hmm.. it was a gift.. tell me, what other tomes do you have?"

"As you wish." She began to place magical tomes on her counter; Singe and Static from Anima family; Photon from Light; she also had few copies of Flux and Worm as well.

Tantallos looked at the books and nodded slowly.



"Hmm... would you happen to have a Carrion tome around here? I noticed some around here got a thing for poison.. "

"I don't have that one."

---



*Well, it seems nobody wants to go.* Seyena took the money, water, and sword, walking out of the inn. She walked towards the shop alone, deciding to give her pegasus a break.

She came upon the shop, walking inside behind Tantallos, the bag of gold in one hand, lance in the other.

Tantallos heard the steps of someone getting closer and slowly turned around just to see the pegasus knight.



"Oh, it is you."



"That's a rather brusque way to greet someone."



"How much are your staves and vulneraries?" Seyena addressed the shopkeeper.



"I was not expecting to see someone from the group here, that is all..."

He turned around and patted the Worm tome.



"Very well then. How about the Worm tome and some gold?"

"Worm tome and 400 coins, how does that sound? Vulneraries are three hundred, same for cheapest healing staff and for a poison-removing one. I have a Mend staff for 800, if you want that."

Tantallos nodded and pushed the Nosferatu tome forward.



"Deal."



"Okay, so I will take 1 staff, and two vulneraries, please." Seyena addressed the shopkeeper, putting the bag of money in front of her to pay for the goods.

Deals were made! Seyena got Heal staff and two vulneraries and Tantallos his buggy tome.

Tantallos grinned and took the bag of gold to hide it under his mantles and looked at the Worm book.



"Ah.. finally, this one will do wonders against fast enemies."

One of the vulneraries slid from Seyena's grasp and fell onto the ground. When she picked that up, the leftover antidote slipped from her grasp as well while the healing staff almost got under her feet and knocked her down.

The shaman looked to the side and hid the new tome under his mantles and opened his

hands.



"Do you need help with these things?"

Seyena stumbled back to her feet, groaning. She still didn't get her wound properly treated, and falling on it hurt quite a bit.

She tried to cradle both her lance and staff in one arm, putting the two vulneraries in her pocket, and holding onto the antidote with her other hand.



"I might need help, yes..."

Tantallos blinked and moved closer to take the staff and the antidote.



"There you go.. if you help with anything else, let me know. You could say carrying heavy tomes is some kind of way to keep yourself exercised."

He gave a quiet laugh and waited for her.



"Thanks, that's appreciated." Seyena handed Tantallos the antidote and staff. "We should head back to the inn now, the others will be waiting." She started to walk out, waiting for Tantallos to follow.

The shaman nodded and followed her.



"You are welcome, and yes we should get going."

As she was walking to the Inn, Seyena turned to Tantallos with a quizzical expression.



"Hey, why do you enjoy killing so much?"



"Long story, but to make it simple for you, I just like to please the Plague Dragon. Killing those bandits and whatever else we find are sacrifices for him. By killing those who do not deserve to live, he gets stronger. On other words, if we kill people who are trying to destroy villages, they are guilty, once they die, the Plague Dragon gets stronger."



"Well, I can definitely say I don't like bandits, so I have no problem with this Plague Dragon." She smiled dryly.

Tantallos gave a sadistic laugh and rubbed his hands together.



"Glad to know we share the same opinion on that..."



"What happens if you kill an innocent in the name of this Dragon? Does it smite you?"

Her second question made Tantallos shiver before finally replying.



"If we kill a innocent, we will not be blessed by him anymore, AND when we die, we will have the same fate of those who killed innocents, and I can guarantee you it is not a good one."



"Well, that makes sense. I guess I learned something today."

Tantallos nodded and smiled under his hood.



"Well, I am glad you consider it learning something new... I am actually surprise you did not say anything bad about it, most of people do not care if the Plague Dragon is helping us to get rid of those bandits or other people with evil intentions, I guess the name does not help, or the sacrificing part.. but it is good to know some people on the group are ok with it."

Seyena shrugged, her expression becoming somewhat solemn.



"I guess. Everyone has their own reasons for fighting, and it is not my place to judge whether or not it's a good one."

The shaman nodded and looked to the staff for a moment.



"Yes, thank you..."

Seyena looked up- they were getting close to the Inn.



"And here we are, let's give Ami her new staff." She said, opening the door and walking inside.

Tantallos nodded to Seyena and moved in carrying the staff and the antidote.



"Oh, by the way.. why did not Ami get the staff herself?"



"I actually don't know.. Chris just said to go get a staff and a vulnerary or two. Maybe Ami was busy?"

She looked around for the Troubadour.

He shrugged and kept holding the healing tools looking around as well.



"...Busy hm?"

---

On his way out, Olison gave a pat to his horse's flank before making his way to the road where he and Leon's troop fought the marauding looters. He stopped and sat on a nearby stump, silent for minutes before mumbling to himself as he looked at where the fencer fell.



"Crass, arrogant. Reminds me of the oaf. But his fighting style seemed familiar."

Olison exhaled sharply before looking to the sky.



"Hope you're still out there, Liss. I could use your help again someday, loathe as I am to admit it."

---

**Charlotte heads to the blacksmith and asks what he'd buy the iron bow for. She also asks what's in stock.**

Gregor did not sleep well at all. He was plagued with dreams: good dreams, bad dreams, out-and-out nightmares...even one very strange dream where Charlotte shot him through the heart with her bow.

That one woke him up. He decided to get some fresh air before trying to sleep again, and **went for a walk.**

Charlotte was on her way around town to the Blacksmith's store when she saw Gregor walking around, unable to sleep.



"Mm? Gregor, what's got you up? You seemed awfully intent on nodding out earlier."

Gregor flinched momentarily at Charlotte's voice, before he realized that she *probably* wasn't going to shoot him.



"Oh! Hi, Charlotte. Just had some bad dreams; couldn't sleep."

She looked around.



"The stars are pretty tonight."

He looked up at the night sky.





"Yeah, they are." He hesitated. "Do you mind if I walk with you while you do...whatever it is you're doing?"



"Of course. I was heading to the Blacksmith. I doubt the fellow's even open at this time of night."



"Well, we won't know until we try, right? Lead the way."

Charlotte walked slowly, though. Gotta cherish the moment, right?



"Sorry we had that whole discussion about leadership without you. We were right there and you were eating and I hadn't even talked it over with you. Chris had brought it up in the temple out of the blue, and I guess we just continued it in there without even thinking."

As they walked, Gregor listened to Charlotte's apology. He felt strangely touched.



"Don't beat yourself up over it. If anything, I should apologize for my attitude back there and for leaving like that. It really wasn't the way a leader should act, whether I am one or not." He shrugged. "Besides, Chris has been pestering me about this for the last day at least. It hasn't been entirely out of the blue." He decided to try and bring the conversation in a happier direction.



"So, we got the jewel, right? We're almost done with this job! This could be the moment you've been talking about; the chance to be the hero you want to be."

They got to the Blacksmith, and the man grabbed the bow, plinging the string a bit.

"Hmm, it's not in best shape. Well, I can give you 150 coins for it." He then grabbed a small wooden price list that was hanging behind him and handed it to the two:

|                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Iron (axe, sword, blade, dagger, javelin, lance, bow): 250 gold |
| Steel (axe, sword, lance, bow): 450 gold                        |
| Cutlass: 500 gold                                               |
| Iron Rapier: 320 gold                                           |
| Hand Axe: 320 gold                                              |



"Yeah. Maybe so. Speaking of jobs."

**Charlotte handed the Iron Bow to the shopkeeper for 150G then gave the money to Gregor.**



"If you think of any better way to spend this, go right ahead. I don't need anything at the moment."

More deals were made! Gregor got a bag of money from Charlotte.

Gregor shook his head.



"150 gold can't buy much in the way of combat supplies anyway. Let's go back to the inn; we have a long day ahead of us tomorrow."

He looked at the stars again. They really were quite nice at this time of night.



"Yeah. I think we should just stockpile the gold for now. We may come across something really expensive later."

Charlotte motioned toward Gregor and **headed back to the inn for the night.**

Gregor walked back to the Inn with Charlotte, wished her good night, and fell asleep once more.

When he woke up the next day, he felt better than he had in days.

---

After finishing his meal, Chris got up from the table.



"I'll be retiring for the night, if anyone happens to need me for anything. Until tomorrow."

He inclined his head to the rest of the party as a way of saying 'bye' and headed upstairs, where he found a windowless room and locked himself inside it to sleep.

Alexander was sleeping quite heavily, and had been, basically recuperating from the day.

Ami walked in.



"Anyone wish to buy me a heal staff because I pissed off the shopkeeper by accident?"



"How about this?" Valor retrieved the rescue staff, holding it slightly aloft. "I went to inform the residents of one of the homes about the battle, and I received this in exchange. Not sure if it's the right kind of staff though."

Ami took the staff.



"Someone gave this to you?"

She looked closer.



"In new condition?! Free?!"



"Yeah, they did. I can't make heads or tails of it though. You can have it, since we're working together."



"Oh right, not everyone know staffs. What the one thing that make or break a battle?"



"Ami, here is the staff."

Tantalos placed the staff over a table and walked away to finally read the Worm tome.



"Thank, Mr mage."

Ami says as she picks it up.



"You are welcome."

Tantalos gives a nod and keeps staring at the tome.

Valor considered Ami's question for a moment.



"There are a lot of factors, but I'd say the best answer would be positioning. Why do you ask? Does that staff make people run faster or something?"



"Bingo, wars have been lost because the star unit were out of position and destroyed. This staff is basically a undo magic, allow one to drag a person, depending on the user, hundreds of meters in a instant. However, despite their usefulness, they are rare, one can make a book that rip open a black hole easier than it is make one of these. So what I'm saying is this is worth many times it weight in gold and someone, who must be clueless about it, gave it to you for free. I know we saved a town or city, not sure which, but still, it like saving the captain of the guard and the king giving you his throne."



"Well, no take backs now. Sounds like this is quite the find. Good thing it's gonna be in capable hands."

One of Ami's staves slipped from her grip, to the ground, with a loud clack.



"I suppose that holding on to 3 staves is hard. Since it took so long to find another one, anyone got space for the nearly dead one?"

---

Olison walked the street outside the Inn, having rounded the perimeter of the city's walls studying the stars. He stopped briefly by his horse who was nearby attempting to graze on the larger tufts of grass growing near the inn's foundation. Startled, his horse looked up towards him for a moment before going back to eating.



"Ha, don't worry. I'll be sure to get you an extra bag of oats when we get back to Kesselring." Olison chuckled before pushing the door open and walking inside to see the others still seated.



"Still awake? It'll be a long trip tomorrow, and I don't think the Captain will like dozers."



"You're still awake as well." She said, watching Ami take her new staff. "By the way, what happened to those training swords of yours?"



"Hm, true enough." Olison made his way back to the hearth, near the others.



"I left them outside, by Steil. Mayhaps I'll get a chance to use them soon, I've neglected my training for a bit too long now. I'll admit, if those looters didn't flee and that fencer wasn't taken down, I may have been overrun. You saw how skilled that one was."



"I'd offer to spar, but I haven't swung a sword since I got my wings, so to speak. I'd probably get more training out of it than you would."



"But don't doubt yourself, you could have taken the looters. The fencer, well... he could have killed anyone in the group by coughing in our direction."



"Aha, but if the fencer was alone I could have probably taken him. Where I come from that sort of quick and graceful style of swordfighting is a popular art, and the knights from there are at least briefly trained against it."

Olison shifted to settle further into his seat.



"Regardless, I'm glad we did manage to get to the townspeople in time, even if it was unnecessary with the militia around the corner. Where war goes, so do people like that shifty lot."



"It's nice we helped, but I still think the bandits would not have gotten far. The townspeople seemed prepared to deal with an issue like that already. It must be hard to live with the threat of attack every day. She shifted a charred log with her boot, watching the embers fly up in the firepit, remembering the large 'adventurer' with the collection of exotic weapons.

Olison looked into the fire intently, brow furrowed.



"That much would figure. After multiple assaults, it only makes sense that the townspeople be accustomed to such."

Olison remained silent for a minute before speaking again.



"Hm. Seyena, do you mind giving me an honest opinion?"



"Uh, no, I don't mind. What do you want my opinion on?"

Olison sat up, eyebrows unfurrowed, looked towards everyone else in the room and spoke quietly.



"Do you think it would be an honorable venture to fight against a reigning lord you respected, and were once a subject to- to help the people you care for?"

Seyena thought for a moment, looking into space. When she spoke, she mimicked Olison's softer tone.



"Protecting those dear to you is not dishonorable, whether it's a bandit, enemy, or even a former lord who threatens their safety."

She rested against the wall, shifting her weight from one foot to another, taking another brief moment to think.



"For me, if it becomes a choice between the life of someone else, or the life of a friend, I would fight for my friend. It does not matter who it is." *But what made him ask this question, and to me, of all people?*

Olison leaned back in his chair, closing his eyes.



"Hm. I see..."



: "I apologize. I had a friend once who swore to do just that. I never quite understood the motive behind that particular ambition, but looking back I think I can see why. Thank you."

At the end of that sentence, Olison's expression quickly lightened as he spoke to the entire group.



"I can't tell you all why, but a certain axeman aside I had a good vibe about this group's synergy in the last two fights. All of us have the makings of an excellent unit. I hope that the Lady has another job for the mercenaries, I'd rather they didn't go under."



"You're welcome, Olison." Seyena was curious as to who his friend was, but now wasn't exactly a good time. She was tired.

**Seyena decided to go and get some sleep.**

---



"Hmm.. looks like nobody is willing to talk at all."

### **Tantallos: Sleep.**

And then it was definitely tomorrow morning.

At the very morning, when the early meal was served - the innkeeper again didn't took any money from the 'Fezzan Heroes' - and the mercenaries were busily eating it, aa soldier, wearing the Kesselring armor, stepped into the inn and began looking around; when his gaze noticed Gregor, he hurriedly walked to his table and saluted briefly.

"I bring... news... from Captain Marpa."

Gregor was in a good mood, though something in the soldier's demeanor told him it might not last long.



"News? Let's hear it."

Chris came downstairs a bit late, still raising his hood over his head, but was in time to hear the messenger say he brought news. He grabbed a sandwich from the table and waited to hear what he had to say.

The soldier plucked a crumbled note from behind his armor, coughed, and began to read.

"To the mercenaries and Prixima's soldiers. Heavy losses during Berebian attack. Captain Marpa down with infection and high fever. Our unit won't be leaving Fezzan for at least few more days. Continue with your mission. Find new means of transport back to Kesselring. A merchant caravan going south, or something similar should suffice. Signed by Peter, Captain Marpa's aide." With that, the soldier gave a quick salute and marched away.

Not many other people heard this 'report', besides innkeeper and a brightly-dressed lady who was in the inn yesterday as well. She was on her way outside when the soldier started, and left before he finished.



"Wow...the fighting must have been fierce if it took Captain Marpa down."

He pinched the bridge of his nose.



"Chris, I don't suppose you'd know any merchants or the like around here,



would you? A contact from a previous 'job', maybe? Valor, what about you? And Seyena, I know you've been here before."

Valor sat at one of the tables, picking at his food with less than his usual gusto, half slumped over. Every few minutes or so, he would release a staggering yawn.



"I should have gotten to sleep earlier..." He mumbled to himself, his face resting in one hand. He absentmindedly fiddled with **the staff that had a low charge he was carrying for Ami.**

Gregor patted the sleepy mercenary on the shoulder.



"Come on, Valor. I know you're tired, but you need to focus. Do you know anyone in this city who might be willing to give us a ride to Kesselring?"

Valor slowly shook his head.



"This is the longest I've ever spent in this town. Last time I was here, we stumbled in at dusk, and wandered out come the morn."

Chris thought for a moment.



"Let's see. I asked around about Esteban back at Vilino when Ami and I were shopping, and I heard he was last seen near here a week ago. He's an old merchant contact of mine. He might have room for us - or need us if the roads are dangerous."



"Does that mean there's a chance of getting paid? My wallet has seen better days."



"I hate to send you off when you just got up, but do you think you could look around for this Esteban fellow? After some food, of course."



"It's fine, Gregor. If he's here, I'll find him. He's a flamboyant sort of fellow. As for getting paid... can't say one way or another yet, Valor."

Chris grabbed another sandwich and a full waterskin, putting the latter into his robes, and left to hunt down his quarry.

The quick search gave Chris an answer about Esteban's whereabouts; his fellow merchant, Kurlung, a rather thug-faced man affected by dwarfism.

"Ya didn't hear it from me, but I heard he decided to do business in Berebia nowadays. Old guy proolly got himself into smuggling or something worse, if he decided to go there."



"Thank you. I'll be on my way."

---

Pair of horses neighed right behind Gregor's back, or rather, from behind the window that was behind Gregor's back.

Gregor looked out the window, distracted by the horses.

The distraction came from pair of horses, being prepared by the 'pastel cloth' lady to be tied to a large wagon, which was seemingly empty.



"Hmm..."

Gregor went up to the innkeeper and asked if he((or she)) knew who the woman with the wagon was.

"That girl? Oh, that's Anja. Some call her a traveler, some a merchant, some a storyteller, some a dancer, some a blade for hire. Hell, if I recall correctly, someone once called her lost princess of Deynastia, older sister of the current King. She do talk a lot, and have lots to talk about. Why do you ask?"

Chris returned to the inn, glancing at the wagon, before heading inside. After listening to the innkeeper, he reported in to Gregor.



"Our luck remains as poor as our pockets. Apparently he's in Berebia."



"Anyway, are we going to talk to this Anja?"

Gregor thanked the innkeeper and gave a gold coin for the information. He then turned to Chris.



"I was thinking about it. Merchant or not, that's a big wagon and the roads can be dangerous."

He walked outside and called to the woman.



"Pardon me. Are you Lady Anja?"

Chris followed him out, staying silent for now.

The girl in question had bright red, short hair, and a dress of many colours. Now that Gregor was close to her, he could notice that the dress was sewn from few different dresses of various colours - the top was made of red and orange pieces, the middle of yellow and green, and the bottom was adorned with dark blue triangles of sewn cloth.

She looked like a gypsy.



"Greetings, sir soldier. You smell like business. Or you have a hangover and are in seducing mood. One of those for sure, I can bet all my money to the Lady in the Sky."

Gregor covered up his confusion at her odd manner of speaking with a short bow.



"The first one. My name is Gregor von Hexham, and I was wondering if you would be willing to give my companions and I a ride to Kesselring Fortress."

She let out a hum, looked at Gregor's face, then his armor, *sniffed* at his neck, then peeked into her wagon.



"How many people are with you? One hundred golden coins and my wagon is

yours."



"Twelve of us or thereabouts."

Chris handed over his 92 gold.



"I'm afraid that's eight short, though. Gregor, if you could cover the rest...?"

This was odd...and a little uncomfortable. Gregor briefly considered finding a different wagon, but that could take hours, if not days.



"Yes, I have some left." He hands over 8 coins from selling the bow last night.

She happily took the money from Gregor's hands.



"I don't like imaginary money, Mr.Hoody. Well then, I don't think that twelve will be comfortable in the wagon. You better wake your friends up, because I'm leaving in few minutes."



"I'll gather them up in a moment. What were you expecting to smell on him?"

Anja smiled at Chris.



"To check for alcohol or perfume. He smells of neither, so I assume he is a person I can trust."



"Many thanks. I'll be right back."

He went into the inn to make sure everyone was ready to go, after first bowing to Anja

again.



"Fair enough."

Chris headed inside with Gregor, where he whistled a bird call loud enough that it could easily be heard even outside.



"Everybody! We're on the road in five minutes! If you're not done eating, grab something you can take on the road with you!"



"Oh! Nice! I'm ready."

Valor blinked twice, then lifted his plate and shoveled what was left on it into his mouth, and stood up chewing.



"Hmmmhm hmhmhm mhm hm hm mhm hmhm mm!\*" \*Read as: Alright, finally going to get paid for this rotten job!

Riven half-stumbled in a rush down the stairs a few moments later, obviously a bit distressed.



"Ahhh, I only meant to sleep a few more minutes, and I nearly missed it like I was supposed not to." She lunged for some food on the table, then hurried over to Chris.



"Ah, about going with you." she said, after gulping loudly to clear her mouth of food but before stuffing more in.



"Still want to come? I wouldn't mind. I don't think anyone else would either."

Riven took another moment to chew, nodding in the interim, then swallowed again to speak.



"Yes, and thank you. I meant to wake up earlier, but, uh... sometimes things just slip away from you, you know?"

Gregor is **ready to go whenever.**



"Okay."



"Good morning, Ami. Sorry for going to bed last night without saying good night, but you were still out..."

He turned his attention back to Riven.



"It's all right. We still need to grab Daniel, Alexander, Seyena, Tantallos... practically everyone, actually. I'm sure they'll all make it in time."

Seyena has already finished eating, and was actually energetic this morning, which was rare for her. She checked the straps on her armor, and stepped outside to her pegasus, quickly climbing atop her steed.



"..Zz..I hope I am dreaming yet.. or I am going to paint the floor with blood..heh.eh..."

Riven resumed eating, ready to leave whenever everyone else was.

Derick rushed downstairs, jammed a hunk of something from the table into his mouth, he couldn't really tell what, and came to a stop half a foot behind Chris.



"mvi mvtink tjhmat mmp maaft it mholells mgik chemmrries"



"Hmm. Riven, you said you had ambitions of power, right?"

It was merely a lead-in; his memory wasn't THAT bad.



"What if I told you that one of our group might potentially become a king and would be quite accepting of your use of dark magic, buuuut you'd probably have to be open to his religion?"

He nodded over his shoulder to Derick, acknowledging his arrival.

Riven furrowed her brow.



"What do you mean 'open?'"



"I mean to not dismiss it out of hand. If you do that, you'd never have a chance with the guy."



"That doesn't sound hard... but, um, is there a reason I would be tempted to dismiss it out of hand?"



"I don't think so, but on the other hand I like hearing about such things. I just know some people get up in arms when it comes to religion."



"Ah. I don't much care for it, but I don't mind some patrons."

---

Anja walked up to Gregor's side and leaned with her face close to his.



"How well you know Mr.Hoody?" She asked, her hands behind her back, her eyes struck at Gregor's face as if she was trying to divine the truth from his facial features.

Gregor resisted the urge to pull away from Anja...barely. She clearly had a hard time understanding the concept of "personal space".



"Well enough, I guess. He hasn't been with the group long and is a little secretive, but I trust him. Why do you ask?"



"Because he smells of tears and murder, and I learned not to trust such people." She explained with a smirk on her face.



"How do you smell murder?" Seyena asked, looking at Anja with a mixture of curiosity and skepticism.

Gregor shrugged. He had to be polite, or they'd lose their ride.



"From what little I know, his past was not a happy one. I'll talk to him and get him to promise that he won't commit any murders on or near your wagon, okay?"



"Oh, I'm fine with murder when it's necessary. I just don't want to find myself its victim. I will trust you, Mr.Soldier."



"I will do my best to ensure that your trust is not misplaced."



"You also haven't mentioned that you do have riders. That pegasus girl, for example. Her animal can carry one of you, thus lowering the amount of people on my



wagon."

---

Olison wound his shoulder as he got up, walking groggily downstairs, sticking a knife into his meal and tearing off large clumps of it with his teeth. Clearly someone didn't sleep much.

Olison finished his meal quickly, but at his seat he was slowly drifting...



"..."

Only to snap back up moments later.



"Argh! I can't ride like this." He shouted as he immediately stood up and made his way to the door. "Valor, can you come outside for a few moments?"

Valor chewed a couple more times, then swallowed hugely.



"Yeah, alright." The swordsman hurried after Olison.

Olison made his way over to his horse, and leaning nearby on the fenceposts were the training swords he carved out last night. Olison took both of them in his hands.



"Catch." He spoke as he tossed one of them at Valor, "Consider this your first lesson on fighting against cavaliers."

Valor caught the wooden blade in one hand, and swung it easily a couple times, testing the weight.



"Alright. Just don't go easy on me. I'm ready to learn!" Valor held the wooden swords before him, feet shoulder width apart in his standard fighting stance.

Olison turned sideways to Valor, sword in his right hand pointing at him and left hand behind him.



"I'd have skipped straight to dealing with the horse, but I'd rather not run you down- Hrah!" Olson immediately advanced forward and raised his arms up, grasping the sword with both hands in an overhead swing.

Seeing Olson raise his sword overhead, Valor dashed forward, aiming a slash at Olson's exposed midsection.



"Eeyah!"



"Hm!" Olson immediately pulled back and angled his high swing to the side, no longer to attempt to slash Valor but to catch the blade going for his midsection.

Valor's sword impacted on Olson's with a dull thwack that filled the open street in the early morning. Grinning, Valor shifted his feet, and shoved against Olson and his sword, using his own wooden blade as a lever to push the cavalier away from him.



"Not bad!"



"I don't want to be rude or anything, but please, are you people leaving or not? I can't waste all day and watch manly men whack each other with sticks in cacophony of heavy grunts and groans of painful satisfaction."



"I guess everyone is here, so I do not know what we are waiting for."

Riven turned to Anja, trying and mostly failing to contain a smile.



"Oh? So what are you into, then?"

Valor looked up, distracted by Anja.



"Oh. Er, right. Apologies."

Olison, disengaging and regaining distance from Valor, twirled his sword in his hand once.



"Pardons. This will just be a moment." Olson hastily moved back in again, aiming a more cautious slash to Valor's legs.



"Huh- Hey wait!" Was all that Valor managed to say before having his legs swept out from under him, causing him to land painfully on his back. The swordsman sat up, rubbing at the back of his head where it had bounced off the ground. "Cripes, that's what I get for not keeping focus on my opponent."

Olison pulled back.



"Interesting strategy. A cavalier is taught to fight cautiously and defensively when they are separated from their mount. It's good that you attacked when I did instead of parrying, I would have tried to disarm you." Olson lowered his empty hand down in offer to help Valor back up.



"Right. I'm awake now, ready to go when everyone else is."

Gregor shrugged again.



"It's up to them and their mounts. I'm not going to force the issue if it means the cavalry can barely move in the event of a bandit attack."

Now that Olison and Valor were done fighting, it looked as if everyone was ready to go. He also noticed one of the mages from the Temple in the group, but decided not to interrupt her and Chris to find out what was going on.

Tantallos looked to the sides for a moment and stretched himself.

Alexander got out of the inn at a pretty fast pace, putting on the last shoulder plate of

his armor, carrying his helm in his other hand with a small sack of food quickly grabbed from the inn inside.



"Agh! Someone should have woken me up! Are we going?"

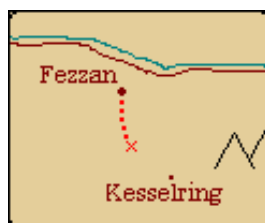
Alexander looked like he would take up quite a lot of space in his armor...



"Those who have their own horses do not get my wagon, teehee! Now get up here, the rest of you!"

When everyone was ready, Anja grabbed the reins and smacked her two chestnut horses. The wagon cracked from sudden pull, as if it was going to snap in two, and began rolling down the street in slow movement. They passed the southern gate, then several farmhouses, and soon they had the troubled city of Fezzan behind their backs.

### ~~Chapter 3x: Dissappointed Customers~~



*The mercenaries, after many struggles, at last recovered the Dragonstone of Kesselring family, Lapis Lazuli.*

*By unfortunate turn of events, they were robbed of their easy way back to Kesselring; but Anja the traveling merchant agreed to take them to Kesselring on her merchant wagon.*

*Sadly, they forgot to ask her one, very minor question...*

Wheels of the wagon clacked in a rhythm, the wooden circles oft passing a stone that was sticking out of the dirt road, or a small hole here and there. The journey was slow, but Anja shared her food supplies with the mercenaries, herself remaining rather silent during the trip. From farmlands and plains, they went into region of forests and glades, pretty much uninhabited by anything else than wild animals.

It was afternoon of the day they left Fezzan, the sky and forest bathed in orange light, when Anja's wagon found yet another bridge over a brook to cross. Suddenly, Anja shouted and stopped her horses, and looked around in alarm.



"Oh... oh dear..." That's all she said in explanation, her eyes glancing from side to side in nervous rhythm.

The forest, on other hand, looked peaceful, calm and devoid of any suspicious activity.



"My nose is ticklish!" Anja added after a moment.

Gregor looked up from his spot in the wagon.



"Is that your way of announcing that you're about to sneeze?"



"Is it some kind of allergy?"

Alexander looked completely and utterly mystified.



"Your nose... is ticklish? And therefore... you're acting like something's wrong?"

Valor was jolted awake by the sudden stop of the wagon, and leaned toward their driver.



"Eh? What's going on?"



"Do... do you want one of us to hand you a hankerchief?"

Chris looked at him from over Ami's shoulder, having taken up his usual position behind the troubadour on Tenebra.



"Shall we prepare for trouble? I'm sure that's what she means."

Anja huffed and frowned at the men.



"Ah, no! You don't understand... When my nose is ticklish, it means trouble. And my nose is often ticklish in this special way it is now, only when someone is after me."



"You see, I believe we're being surrounded by those who have business with me. Unfortunately, not the pleasant kind of business. I hope you understand."

Whatever her nose was telling her, the forest was still calm and even serene by some standards.

Olison immediately snapped to scanning the trees on hearing the word 'surrounded'.



"Everyone. You may want to get off the wagon."

Gregor peered into the woods.



"You're saying that someone's trying to hurt you? Why?"



"....What kind of business?"



"..." Anja remained silent to that question, and managed to make a forced, weak smile for Gregor.



"Business that involves, uh... lateness, and broken promises... and a debt, or two... and misplaced 'legal' goods. The usual."



"Oh? What do you usually do when the people out for your head show up?"

Alexander frowns, puts on his helmet, and looks out of the wagon, mostly tuning out Anja but listening to Olison.



"I don't see anything... Hmm, I doubt it can hurt to be prepared..."

Alexander gets off of the wagon.

Gregor facepalmed at that.



"Please say that you aren't in trouble with the authorities. Please..."



"Soldier, I doubt we are going to have to worry about "authorities" right now, if they are going after her for breaking promises and debts I bet they are a bunch of bandits."



"Don't worry. We have your back."

Charlotte thought for a moment while readying her longbow.



"Unless this is a sinister plan to trap us, kill us and take our stuff. In which case we have your back in a different way."

Chris swung a leg over and slid off of Tenebra's back, putting one hand on his dagger and the other on his crossbow as he did so.



"I suggest we spread out in groups. Three in a group, in each cardinal direction. That way we'll be ready no matter where they strike from."



"Just...don't go too far. We don't want to get ambushed and cut off." He muttered this next part to himself: "assuming our driver isn't simply insane..."



"Oh, no, that kind of trouble I fix very easily. You see, what I mean--"

"AHA! HERE SHE IS!" With those words shouted from somewhere in the front of the wagon, the bushes and branches *everywhere* began to rustle and crackle from some force. Scantily-clad muscular men with axes and swords and even bows showed up at the outskirts of the forested areas, and two massive... two people of unspecified gender showed up on the other side of the bridge, wielding massive axes.



"The gypsy!" "The witch!"



"Oh, dear Cilia, do thou not see the end of our perils?"



"Verily, my dear Dora, it is her! The gypsy! The red-haired scoundrel! And look, if it is not a band of hired vagrants at her side!"



"Oh... Hi, Dora, Cilia! How nice to meet you today! Unfortunately, I'm not selling any more of sun toffee at the moment!"



"Nay, I say, you spawn of villainy! We're here to put you to justice!"



"Thou speaketh the true, my sister! Anja, you remember that Wooden Idol of Fertility you sold us?"





"Not working!"



"And the Chain of Midnight Pleasure?"



"Glass beads!"



"And thou surely remember the Tome of Eccentric Blanket Gymnastics you advertised so loudly, so seducingly?"



"We can't read!"



"Oh, haven't we searched back and fro, daring the unspoken nightmares and venturing to the cities on the other side of the world?"



"Imagine our surprise, when we learned that thine wagon was spotted in the city of Fezzan, right under our nose!"



"Look, girls, if you're here to get your money back, I told you back then: no refunds! And these people have nothing to do with us! Let's us walk away from those guys, and fight... fi... guh~" Suddenly, Anja swayed forward, fell from the wagon onto the grass, and began snoring.



"Miracle! Working merchandise!"



"Why, that merchant haven't lied when he spoke of the branch's powers!"



"Indeed, my sister. We should've left his precious malehood intact!"



"Let's show that gypsy what we do with those who double-cross us, sister!"

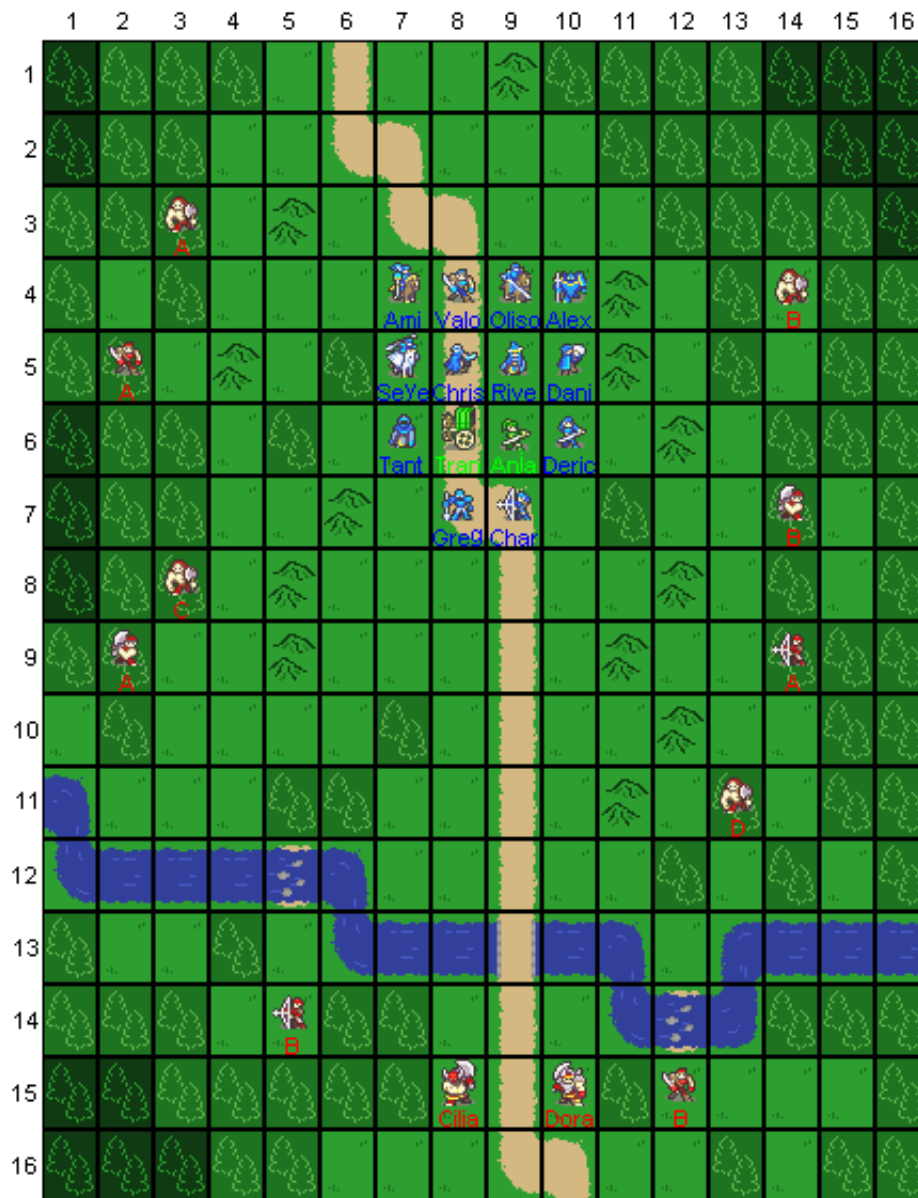


"Anja!" "Time to die!" They shouted at the wagon, but the red-haired girl was snoring loudly as if enjoying a good night of sleep on a comfy bed in luxurious inn.

**Objective:**

1. Anja and her Wagon must survive!

# ~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Allies:                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 26/26<br>Ami Storm: 22/22<br>Charlotte Braxis: 23/23<br>Christopher Shields: 21/21<br>Daniel: 25/25<br>Derick: 25/25<br>Gregor von Hexham: 27/27<br>Oliso Eul: 24/24<br>Riven: 21/21<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/23<br>Tantalos Forsaken: 23/23<br>Valor Inara: 24/24 | Bandit A: 30/30<br>Bandit B: 30/30<br>Bandit C: 30/30<br>Bandit D: 30/30<br>Archer A: 24/24<br>Archer B: 24/24<br>Mercenary A: 26/26<br>Mercenary B: 26/26<br>Fighter A: 28/28<br>Fighter B: 28/28<br>Dora: 34/34<br>Cilia: 37/37 | Anja: 25/25 Sleep (5/5)<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits left |



*What on earth did I get us into?*

**Chris moves to 6,5 and hides in the trees for the moment.**



"Tell me I am sleeping yet.."



"Uh... ma'am? I don't think now is the time to..?"

**Derick poked her a few times before giving up, and moving to 12,6**



"I... No comment."

**Olison: Ensure sword is equipped. Move to 11,5**

Alexander stared, speechless for quite a while at the situation.



"...I can't believe this."

Alexander sighs, **clunks down to 7, 10.**



"...Well, I do not even know if I really should make any questions about it so I am just going to keep quiet for now."

**Tantallos: Move 6,6 and equip Worm.**



"Charlotte, are you with me?"

**Gregor: Move to (5, 8 ), equip Iron Lance. Move Daniel to (11, 7)**



"On it. Hm-hm. Does this strategy remind you of another battle?"

**Charlotte: Head to 6, 7 and perch. Equip Shortbow for +48 total EVA.  
HOOOOHOOOOHOOOO**

Gregor thought for a moment.



"Our first one, way back before this whole mess started? How so?"



"I was thinking of the fight with Eor. Most of the time, you act like that soldier who still trips over logs, but when it comes to protecting me on the battlefield, you can stand against an army of lances and not flinch. It's rather endearing."

Gregor flushed. He had kinda hoped that she had forgotten the log thing.



"It's just what comes natural to me. I see people trying to hurt the people I care about. If I can keep the people I care about safe by throwing myself in the way, my body just seems to act on it's own sometimes."

Tantallos looked to the side and crossed his arms.



"Hm. Chris? How did the things go?"



"If you're talking about what I think you're talking about... all right, I suppose. Hard to say at this point, but there might be interest."

He threw a wink at Tantallos. No use saying what was going on out in the open.



"...Well that is good.. at least I hope."

He raised an eyebrow finding awkward the wink and gave a slow nod.



"So, what are going to be your plans when you get done with these missions? You already know mine."



"Hmm. I thought - if she's agreeable - I might pursue these feelings I have for Ami."

Chris didn't have the capacity for hope, but if he could have, he would've hoped so.



"If not, maybe I'll come with you and learn more about the Plague Dragon. I've tried freelancing, I've tried working in service to a Lady... pretty soon I'll be giving the mercenary business a go. If that doesn't work out, perhaps dedicating myself to a religion might suit me."

The shaman grinned under his mantle listening to the other and began to rub his gloved hands together, obviously amused at what Chris was saying.



"Oh really? That would be interesting... we did not receive too many people willing to learn about our culture so I am quite sure you will be more than welcome to join us and learn more, you will see it is actually a interesting and logical way to follow."

Tantalos gave a quiet laugh and nodded a bit.



"Well, well.. so you got a thing for Ami hm?"

**Valor: move to 11,4**



"Well... yes. I don't know what it is that draws me to her. There's something about her, a sort of quiet feeling that I don't get when I'm near anyone else. It's not lust; I find her attractive but I know what that feels like and this isn't the same thing."

He sighed, deciding to focus his thoughts elsewhere.



"I understand you entirely. There are many interesting things to see and do and learn in this world of ours and I don't see the point in shutting oneself away from them. While we wait, why don't you tell me some more about your homeland?"



"Any interesting legends or bits of folklore, for example?"

The spy quite enjoyed hearing those kinds of stories.



"Hmmm.. you probably have your own reasons, there are things that we cannot really explain, especially when it is related to feelings."

He shrugged to himself and pulled his hood down, showing his sadistic grin.



"You want to hear about my homeland? That is surprising.. well we do have some stories, but most of them are true, like the "Path of the undead". As I told you, when they forced the Plague Dragon to escape, his blood and rotten parts brought life to some soldiers, and they still there wandering, time to time some families send their soldiers to "clear" the area to prevent more victims, but for one you kill, three or four rises..there are bodies from so many soldiers there that I think it would take many years to take them all down... and for stories... have you even heard about the "Dark Druid"? My father told me about it, they are a superior class, they are stronger than the usual druids, but we barely found information about them or how reach that level of power."



"No, I haven't heard. Tell me about them?"



"It is said Dark Druids are masters of ancient magic, their power is superior to any other druid, but from what we heard, the most knew Dark Druid went "evil", and they killed him... so it is not like we have too much information about their skills, but my father expects me to be one even if I do not even know how to reach something like that."



"Hmm. I wish you luck on this quest to become one. It doesn't sound like an enviable position, if the last one went down in infamy."



"Thank you.. hopefully everything will work well.. I guess this one failed because he allowed himself to be consumed by his curiosity.. that is the dangerous part of ancient magic, you start wanting to learn more and more."

Seyena quickly took off, heading away from the group, she might as well give the others some space to move around, and she could use the trees for cover.

**Seyena: Move to 11,2, and dismount for that glorious +20 evade**



"..."

**Tenebra trot over to 8,5 while Ami recover.**

**Riven: Remain still.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Firstly, Christopher got assaulted by Bandit A and Mercenary A; the bandit missed and in response, he got a bolt to his chest - and the same happened to Mercenary A.

**Bandit A vs Chris**

Hit:  $75-5-1-20-19 = 30$   
Hit roll: 39, miss!

Christopher counters!  
Hit:  $106-11 = 95$   
Hit roll: 64, hit!  
Damage:  $16+2-5 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Mercenary A vs Chris**

Hit:  $92-5-1-20-19 = 47$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Christopher counters!  
Hit:  $106-18 = 88$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $16+2-6 = 12\text{dmg}$

Then it was Gregor's turn to defend himself; a short axe flew toward him from the bushes in which Fighter A stayed, but the throw was inaccurate and Gregor evaded it. As for Bandit C, he swung his axe at Gregor's helmet but he managed to get out of the way in time. Twisting on his left foot, he then stabbed the bandit twice in the stomach with his iron lance.

**Fighter A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $77+15-5-7-20-22 = 38$   
Hit roll: 70, miss!

**Bandit C vs Gregor**

Hit:  $75+15-5-7-20-22 = 36$   
Hit roll: 39, miss!



Gregor retaliates!  
Hit:  $101+7+5-15-20-11 = 67$   
Hit roll: 46, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1-5 = 11\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters once more!  
Hit:  $101+7+5-15-20-11 = 67$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1-5 = 11\text{dmg}$

Bandit B in the meanwhile burst from the bushes and with axe held high, he rushed at Olison; the horseman easily evade the blow, and then slashed twice at bandit's torso.

#### Bandit B vs Olison

Hit:  $75-15-20-27 = 13$   
Hit roll: 33, miss!

Olison counterattacks!  
Hit:  $108+15-11 = 112$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14+1-5 = 10\text{dmg}$

Olison retaliates again!  
Hit:  $108+15-11 = 112$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14+1-5 = 10\text{dmg}$

But the most of fun went for Derick; first, Bandit D tried to behead him and failed miserably. Derick was eager to show him how to do that and seperated bandit's head from his neck with one clean cut. After that, he had to dodge Fighter B's thrown axe, and then an arrow shot at him by Archer A. He managed to evade both.

#### Bandit D vs Derick

Hit:  $75-15-20-30 = 10$   
Hit roll: 41, miss!

Derick counters!  
Hit:  $106+15-11 = 110$ , autohit! Crit roll: 11!  
Damage:  $15+1-5 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

#### Fighter B vs Derick

Hit:  $77-15-20-30 = 12$   
Hit roll: 75, miss!

#### Archer B vs Derick

Hit:  $95-20-30 = 45$   
Hit roll: 83, miss!



"Cilia, dear, thy eyes see what mine do?"



"Verily, my sister. These people, they're strong."



"What shall we do about that?"

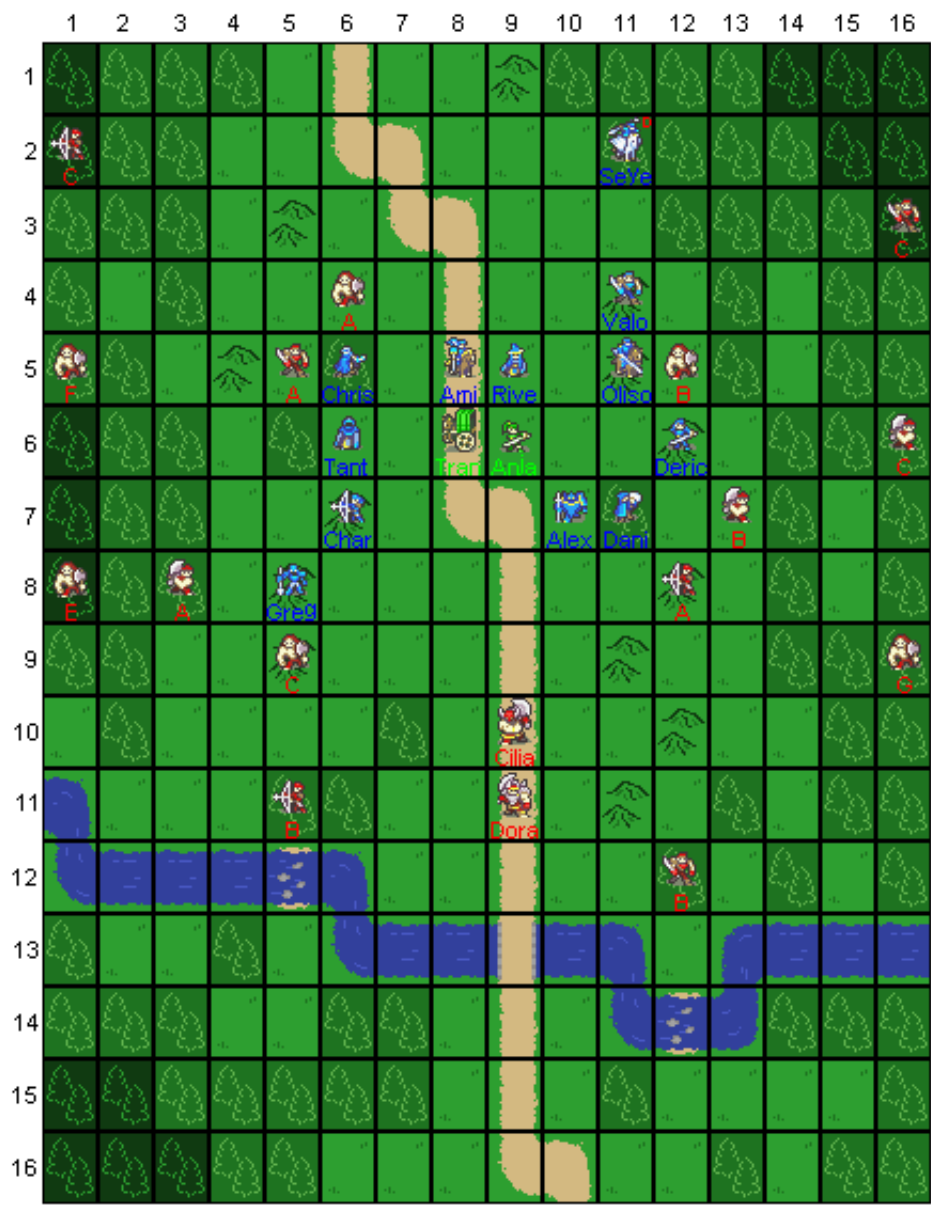


"I think we should call the rest of our friends." After saying that, Cilia put her fingers to her mouth and whistled loudly for a moment. The rustling from the forest resumed and the mercenaries could see more faces between the trees and branches.

~~Ally Phase~~

Zzz~  
Neeigh.

~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

| Merces:                 | Enemies:        |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 26/27 | Bandit A: 17/30 |

|                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Ami Storm: 22/23           | Bandit B: 10/30    |
| Charlotte Braxis: 23/23    | Bandit C: 8/30     |
| Christopher Shields: 21/22 | Bandit E: 30/30    |
| Daniel: 25/25              | Bandit F: 30/30    |
| Derick: 25/25              | Bandit G: 30/30    |
| Gregor von Hexham: 27/28   | Archer A: 24/24    |
| Olison Eul: 24/25          | Archer B: 24/24    |
| Riven: 21/22               | Archer C: 24/24    |
| Seyena Ikane: 23/24        | Mercenary A: 14/26 |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 23/24  | Mercenary B: 26/26 |
| Valor Inara: 24/25         | Mercenary C: 26/26 |
| <b>Allies:</b>             |                    |
| Anja: 25/25 Sleep (4/5)    | Fighter A: 28/28   |
| Wagon: 5/5 hits left       | Fighter B: 28/28   |
|                            | Fighter B: 28/28   |
|                            | Dora: 34/34        |
|                            | Cilia: 37/37       |



"Ah! Gregor, take the fighter in the tree cover with your javelin, please! I'll handle the mercenary beside you."

**Charlotte: Longbow Bandit C. Remember: 1.5x supports. HOOHOOHOO**

**Ami snap out of her horror and picked up Anja from 10,6 and go back to 8,5**



"Got it!"

**Gregor: FLING Javelin at Fighter A. 1.5x Support bonus goooooo**

It was then that Gregor noticed the two sisters(?) charging the wagon and unconscious Anja.



"Damn, I was hoping they'd hang back. Can someone hold them off? Little busy up here..."



"Ok, lets see what I can do...heheh...heh."

**Tantallos: Move 8, 9 and attack Cilia.**

Longbow awaaaay~ Bandit C dropped dead with the arrow sticking out of his neck.

#### Charlotte vs Bandit C

Hit:  $97+7+5-20-11 = 78$

Hit roll: 71, hit!

Damage:  $17-5 = 12$  dmg

And then, Gregor flung his javelin at the fighter who was hidden in the bushes. His first throw missed, just like Fighter have missed with his short axe. Gregor then tried again, but missed once more.

#### Gregor vs Fighter A

Hit:  $98+5+7-15-20-11 = 64$

Hit roll: 83, miss!

Fighter A strikes back!

Hit:  $77+15-5-7-20-25 = 35$

Hit roll: 54, miss!

Gregor attacks again!

Hit:  $98+5+7-15-20-11 = 64$

Hit roll: 74, miss!

In the meanwhile, Tantallos went over to Cilia and chanted his magical words. A black worm sprung from his palm and with hiss and struck Cilia's mighty flat chest, making her 'oof!'.



"Uhh, my dear sister, that's a mage there. What do we do with mages?"



"Don't we impale them on branches and spit-roast them over fire?"



"I think thou art wrong. Spit-roasting is for monks, no?..."



"Oh, wait, my dear sister, I know! We split mage's skull open and spread the brain on toast."



"Right you are, yes! So I will go and axe him when I have a chance."

#### Tantallos vs Cilia

Hit:  $111-2-22 = 87$

Hit roll: 13, hit!

Damage:  $17+2-1 = 18$  dmg



"You two should be more worried about what the Plague Dragon will do to both of you after death..heh..heh."

Chris moved through the trees with practiced swiftness, ducking under a low-hanging branch to dodge a sword strike and retaliated with a crossbow bolt. As he was reloading, an axe came at him and he ducked under it, slamming the stock of the crossbow into the man's groin before shooting him in the stomach.



"You were just unlucky today. Bealtaine na Dragon thámh shlogadh tú."

With no time to reload, he put the crossbow away and took out his new dagger, going for the axeman's throat.

**Chris attacks Bandit A with his Poison Dagger.**



"Too slow!"

**Derick: Move 14, 7 attack Fighter B**

Bandit A went 'GHRK' when Chris' dagger slashed his throat open and the blood burst onto spy's face and suit.

**Christopher vs Bandit A**

Hit:  $111+15+10+5-11 = 130$ , autohit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $14+1+2-5 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

In the same time, Derick walked toward the Fighter B, and sliced his chest open, killing him on spot. The shamsir once more sated its thirst for blood.

**Derick vs Fighter B**

Hit:  $106+15-14 = 107$ , autohit! Crit roll: 16!

Damage:  $16+1+2-7 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

Riven took a deep breath, then dashed forward.

**Riven: Move to 9,8, attack Cilia.**

Tantallos clapped his gloved hands together and looked to the side.



"Well, well, look who is also willing to murder that berserker.."

Seyena looked back, seeing Ami pick up their unconscious guide. She quickly remounted, flying towards her.



"Ami, you should let me carry her, she'd be less of a burden on me than she would be to you."

**Seyena: Move to 8, 4. Take Anja if Ami agrees, stay put either way.**



"A standoff, I guess. He can't hit me, I can't hit him."

**Alexander stayed there,** protecting the wagon.

Ami passed Anja to Seyena.



"Here."

**Valor: 12, 4. Attack the Brigand.**

Riven moved to Cilia as well and launched the dark glob at her. She knelt and coughed blood.



"Oh nooo, my heart cries for thee, my dear sister! But remember one thing...!"

Suddenly Dora began clapping in rhythm.



"Never gonna give you up~ UH UH!"



"Never gonna let your down~ UUUH!"



"Never gonna run around and desert you~! Even in afterlife, sis."



"That was incredible... sister..." Cilia coughed, sighed, and died.



"Grrr! Kill them all, friends! I will make a dungeon harness out of their genitals, worthy of my dead dear sister!"

#### Riven vs Cilia

Hit:  $104+10-2-22 = 90$

Hit roll: 13, hit!

Damage:  $20+2-1 = 21\text{dmg}$

#### Riven got a Concoction (3/3)!

Shortly after this astounding funeral service, Valor moved closer to the bandit and slashed at him with his sword, cutting across his chest. Bandit B swung his axe at the swordsman, and it crashed into Valor's left shoulder.

#### Valor vs Bandit B

Hit:  $110+15-11 = 114$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13+1-5 = 9\text{dmg}$

Bandit B retaliates!

Hit:  $75-15-23 = 37$

Hit roll: 16, hit!

Damage:  $23-1-6 = 18\text{dmg}$



"..."

Ami falls back into a coma after the horrible rick roll.



"..."

**Olison: Move to 11,8. Attack archer. Move to 10,9 after.**



"Tantallos, please tell me you know some sort of memory-wipe curse."



"Ashes to ashes....the plague dragon will be amused.. I am quite sure the power of a berserker will be of his interest."



"..."

**Daniel moves to (11,8), attacks Archer A.**



"Geeow, man alive that stings! You're going to regret that- Briefly, at any rate."

Olison trotted on his horse toward the archer and swung his sword at him, wounding the thug's shoulder.

#### **Olison vs Archer A**

Hit:  $108+10-20-23 = 75$

Hit roll: 41, hit!

Damage:  $14+2-9 = 7\text{dmg}$

Shortly afterwards, Daniel slashed at the same archer; he missed twice!

#### **Daniel vs Archer A**

Hit:  $124+10-20-23 = 91$

Hit roll: 98, miss!

Daniel attacks again!

Hit:  $124+10-20-23 = 91$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

### **~~Enemy Phase~~**

Going counterclockwise - the Mercenary A again tried to kill Christopher. He did manage to wound him rather badly, but Chris then sliced his face twice and the merc dropped dead.

#### **Mercenary A vs Christopher**

Hit:  $92-5-1-20-29 = 37$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $20-3 = 17\text{dmg}$

Christopher counters!

Hit:  $111+5-18 = 98$

Hit roll: 75, hit!

Damage:  $14+2-5 = 11\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!

Christopher attacks again!

Hit:  $111+5-18 = 98$

Hit roll: 18, hit!

Damage:  $14+2-5 = 11\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!



## Christopher gets Iron Blade, but his inventory is full! Iron Blade dropped.

Gregor got assaulted as well. Firstly, Bandit E rushed him with his heavy axe, missing and incurring Gregor's wrath, who stabbed him twice with his trusty javelin. Second time concluded with bandit's throat getting poked out.

Then, Fighter A hit Gregor with the thrown axe, wounding him a bit. The soldier thrown his javelins at the axeman - first one hit his knee, the other got lodged in a nearby tree trunk.

### Bandit E vs Gregor

Hit:  $75+15-5-7-20-25 = 33$

Hit roll: 78, miss!

Gregor retaliates!

Hit:  $98+5+7-15-11 = 84$

Hit roll: 79, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-1-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $98+5+7-15-11 = 84$

Hit roll: 17, hit! Crit roll: 16!

Damage:  $17+1-1-5 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

### Fighter A vs Gregor

Hit:  $77+15-5-7-20-25 = 35$

Hit roll: 2, hit!

Damage:  $21+1-1-3-10 = 8\text{dmg}$

Gregor counterattacks!

Hit:  $98+5+7-15-20-14 = 61$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

Gregor retaliates again!

Hit:  $98+5+7-15-20-14 = 61$

Hit roll: 77, miss!

Nearby, Archer B snuck into the trees and launched an arrow at Tantallos, it lodged in his stomach. Tantallos' Worm spell missed, and so did Archer's second attack.

### Archer B vs Tantallos

Hit:  $95-10-17 = 68$

Hit roll: 58, hit!

Damage:  $17-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

Tantallos retaliates!

Hit:  $111+10-20-23 = 78$

Hit roll: 95, miss!

Archer B attacks again!

Hit:  $95-10-17 = 68$

Hit roll: 89, miss!



"You're bad, bad mage, mage!" With those words, Dora's axe struck into Tantallos' face, sending him to grass.

### Dora vs Tantallos

Hit:  $78-10-17 = 51$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $26-5 = 21\text{dmg}$ , Poisoned!

Olison found himself under attack as well - Mercenary B swung his sword at him, and without the hills, the cavalier got easily wounded. He did respond to this with striking at merc's chest with his sword, though.

#### **Mercenary B vs Olison**

Hit:  $92-10-27 = 55$   
Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage:  $20-7 = 13\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!  
Hit:  $108+10-18 = 100$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14-5 = 9\text{dmg}$

Then, Fighter C and Archer A attacked Derick from away; the axe missed by wide mark, the arrow missed too.

#### **Fighter C vs Derick**

Hit:  $77-15-31 = 31$   
Hit roll: 60, miss!

#### **Archer A vs Derick**

I lost this part somehow but it was a miss.

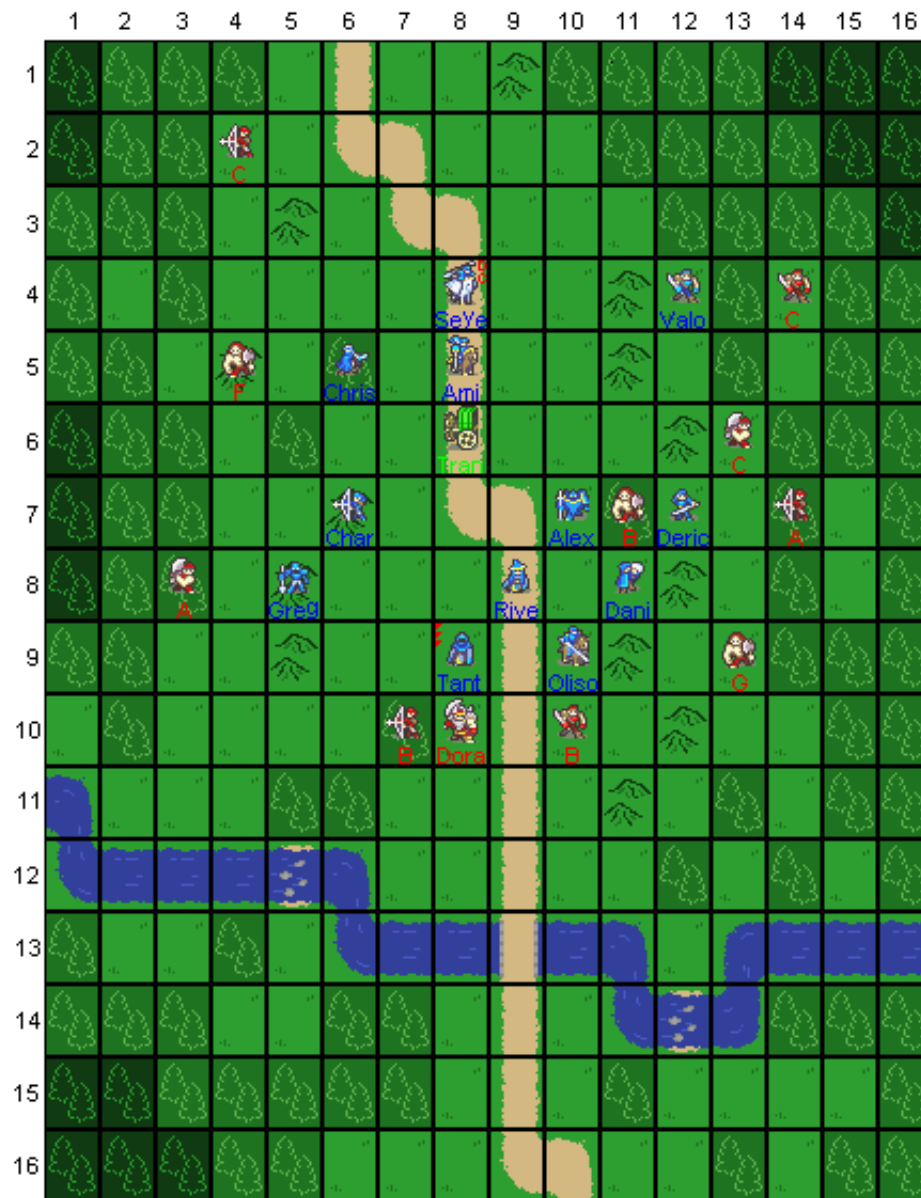
Suddenly, Bandit B jumped from his forested place and attacked Alexander, easily hitting him on the helmet. Unfortunately, he didn't manage to score a hit on the axeman.

#### **Bandit B vs Alexander**

Hit:  $75+15-10-13 = 67$   
Hit roll: 45, hit!  
Damage:  $23+1-2-15 = 7\text{dmg}$

Alexander counters!  
Hit:  $93+10-15-20-11 = 57$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

# ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 19/27<br>Ami Storm: 22/23<br>Charlotte Braxis: 23/23<br>Christopher Shields: 4/22<br>Daniel: 25/25<br>Derick: 25/25<br>Gregor von Hexham: 19/28<br>Olison Eul: 11/25<br>Riven: 21/22<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/24 <b>Dismounted</b> <b>Carrying: Anja</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/24 <b>3/3</b> <b>Poison (5/5, stalled)</b><br>Valor Inara: 6/25 | Bandit B: 1/30<br>Bandit F: 30/30<br>Bandit G: 30/30<br>Archer A: 17/24<br>Archer B: 24/24<br>Archer C: 24/24<br>Mercenary B: 17/26<br>Mercenary C: 26/26<br>Fighter A: 18/28<br>Fighter C: 28/28<br>Dora: 34/34 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Anja: 25/25 <b>Carried by: Seyena Ikane</b> <b>Sleep (2/5)</b><br>Wagon: 5/5 hits left                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



"Agh.. I am not bad....just let me stand up again and prove it by sending a

giant worm of dark energy to tear you apart.."



"Comin' around!"

**Charlotte: Move to 5,9. TWANG Fighter in trees for 11 damage if I hit.**



"Here's hoping you're a better shot than I am!"

**Chris healed himself with a Vulnerary and stayed in position.**

**Derick: Go to 14, 8 and attack the Archer**

Charlotte's longbow went TWANG. The tree behind Fighter A creaked slightly in pain when the arrow lodged in it's trunk.

**Charlotte vs Fighter A**

Hit:  $97+5+5+10-20-14 = 83$

Hit roll: 97, miss!

Christopher popped a Vulnerary, while Derick continued his death march; with a slash of his shamsir, left arm of the archer fell to the ground as he screamed and slid to the ground, blacking out and bleeding to death after a while.

**Christopher uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

**Derick vs Archer A**

Hit:  $106-20-18 = 68$

Hit roll: 8, hit! Crit roll: 19!

Damage:  $16+2-9 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$



"Valor, are you alright?" Seyena hurried forward, worried about his wounds, and pulling out a vulnerary. "Here, this should help a little bit..."

**Seyena: Move to 11,4 and use Vulnerary 1/3 on Valor.**



"I guess not."



"Um...I think the breeze must have picked up at the last second. You would

have nailed him otherwise."

**Gregor: FLING Javelin at Fighter A**



"Not wanting to be rude or anything but I am dying over here... and there is some axe-wielding abomination here with a terrible breath. I guess even the revenants would laugh at her."

**Valor: Proceed to 12,6. Hit the fighter and summon Critzocoatal.**

**Ami: head to 10,8**



"Let heal you first."

**Ami: Heal Olson.**

Sprinkle sprinkle cocaine vulnerable.

**Seyena uses Vulnerary on Valor**

|                   |
|-------------------|
| Up to 10HP healed |
|-------------------|

Gregor in the meanwhile thrown his javelins at the Fighter again; the first one struck the axeman in the stomach. He thrown his axe at Gregor, hitting him in the leg, but then the second javelin killed Fighter A after hitting him in the chest.

**Gregor vs Fighter A**

Hit:  $98+5+7-15-20-14 = 61$

Hit roll: 29, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

Fighter A retaliates!

Hit:  $77+15-5-7-20-25 = 35$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $21+1-1-3-10 = 8\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $98+5+7-15-20-14 = 61$

Hit roll: 48, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

In the same time, Valor ran to Fighter A and sliced mightily at him, but it wasn't enough to bring him down. The axeman tried to hit Valor, but failed to do that properly.

**Valor vs Fighter C**

Hit:  $110+15+5-14 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13+1-7 = 7$

Fighter C counters!

Hit:  $77-15-20-23 = 19$

Hit roll: 41, miss!

Shortly afterwards, Ami trotted to Olson and patched him up.

Ami heals Olson

10+13 = Up to 23HP restored.



"Ow. But at least there's one less bandit attacking us."

Tantallos coughs and looks to the side.



Just wait.. it is all a matter of time..heh..heh."

**Move Daniel to (11, 6). Attack Bandit B.**

A rivulet of blood dripped down the front of Alexander's head, from under his helmet. But Alexander merely glares at the forested area the bandit is probably in, sighs, and clanks over to a weak spot in the wagon's defense.



"I've got more important enemies to deal with than you right now."

**Alexander: Move to 7x, 6y.**



"Thank you, Ami."

**Olison: Move to 11,9 and Javelin Mercenaryx2. Switch to sword after.**



"Face it, you're outmatched! Surrender is the only way to guarantee another breath."

Riven gulped.



"Well, worked out last time..."

**Riven: Move to 9,9. Blast Dora.**

Tantallos rolled to the side and pulled his hood down before looking at Riven.



"What a pleasure meet you here! You know, we should take some time to talk, maybe in a graveyard during the night?"

He laughed and coughed a bit due to his wounds.



"...you have pretty hair."



"But, uh, more importantly, I hope we wouldn't both be *interred* in there..."

She glanced at Dora.

Tantallos raised an eyebrow and tapped his head for a moment.



"Oh, thank you... your hair is pretty too.. and I liked your hat...it is fancy!"



"We will not die here, her little friend did not stand a chance against us, she will have the same fate. BUT I really hope she move away if she is going to keep alive for now, seriously she is smelly... I guess even a revenant smells better than that."



"Thank you. It's is a mark of a Dark Witch where I came from."



"Mark of a Dark Witch hm? That is interesting.. the only different thing I carry with me is the emblem of the Forsakens.. the Plague Dragon turned into our new family symbol, that would just work to say to which family I belong to as just a few people know about our beliefs..so they would not really guess what the dragon on the emblem would really mean."



"Oh, so you have a family sigil? Is your family large?"

Tantallos coughed again and gave a slow nod.



"You could say so, the "family" does not include only people from my family at all, it includes other shamans, druids and summoners who are on the castle, that is why we even have a symbol for the whole family. It is really common to some magic user families.. hmm.. talking about them, I should try to be a druid as soon as possible to claim the throne, I heard some people were planning to attack us again, and this time we do not have the Plague Dragon to assist us."

Daniel shows his extraordinary stabs again. Bandit B is so amazed that he dies.

#### Daniel vs Bandit B

Hit:  $124+15+10+5-20-11 = 123$ , autohit!

Damage:  $13+1-5 = 9$ dmg

While Alexander slowly clanked to his new position, Olison thrown his javelins at Mercenary B. After turning into pincushion, the merc died.

#### Olison vs Mercenary B

Hit:  $93+15+10+5-20-18 = 85$

Hit roll: 9, hit!

Damage:  $15+1-5 = 11$ dmg

Olison gets another strike!

Hit:  $93+15+10+5-20-18 = 85$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $15+1-5 = 11$ dmg

Then, Riven cast her magic at Dora. While the dark bolt struck the warrior, she thrown her axe at Riven - knocking her down, right beside Tantallos.

#### Riven vs Dora

Hit:  $104+10-22 = 92$

Hit roll: 11, hit!

Damage:  $20+2-1 = 21$ dmg

Dora counters!

Hit:  $78-10-16 = 52$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $26-4 = 22$ dmg, poisoned!

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Alexander suddenly found himself attacked from two positions. Bandit F swung his axe at him and hit him in the plated shoulder; Alexander's lance stabbed the thug's leg. Then, Archer C went closer to Alexander and struck him - unfortunately, the arrow just bounced off his armor.



**Bandit F vs Alexander**

Hit:  $75+15-5-13 = 72$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $23+1-2-15 = 7\text{dmg}$

Alexander counterattacks!  
Hit:  $93+5-15-11 = 77$   
Hit roll: 44, hit!  
Damage:  $15-1-5 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Archer C vs Alexander**

Hit:  $95-5-13 = 77$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $17-2-15 = 0\text{dmg!}$

Dora and Archer B struck the wagon, smashing few planks and wounding the poor horse as well.

**Dora strikes Wagon**

4/5 hits left

**Archer B strikes Wagon**

3/5 hits left

In the meanwhile, Bandit G swung his axe at no one else than Ami; she evaded the strike and smashed her club at bandit's face, disfiguring it more than it was before.

**Bandit G vs Ami**

Hit:  $75-5-20 = 50$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

Ami counters!  
Hit:  $86+5-11 = 80$   
Hit roll: 44, hit!  
Damage:  $17-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

Shortly afterwards, Mercenary C swung his sword at Valor quite ineffectively. Valor, on other hand, slashed across the swordsman's chest. Unfortunately, even that powerful strike wasn't enough to send the thug into afterlife.

**Mercenary C vs Valor**

Hit:  $92-20-23 = 49$   
Hit roll: 73, miss!

Valor counters!  
Hit:  $110+5-18 = 97$   
Hit roll: 30, hit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $13-5 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

Fighter C went into the woods and thrown his axe at Seyena, the axe swooshed near her head, cutting off few of her hairs. A tiny bit closer and she would lose her ear, too.

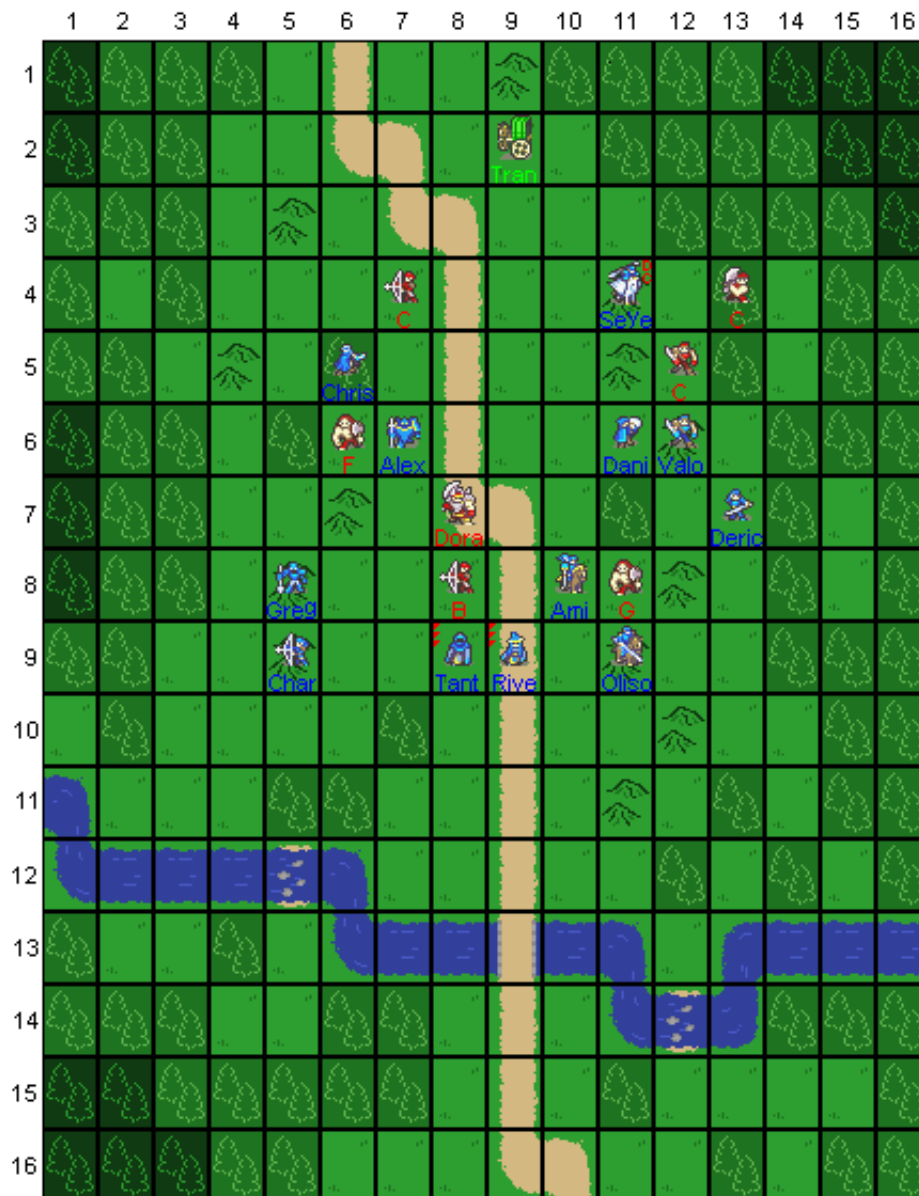
**Fighter C vs Seyena**

Hit:  $77+15-20-25 = 47$   
Hit roll: 48, miss!

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Anja still slept against Seyena's shoulder, while the terrified horse dragged the wagon away.

## ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Alexander Jorinn: 12/28<br/>           Ami Storm: 22/24<br/>           Charlotte Braxis: 23/23<br/>           Christopher Shields: 14/22<br/>           Daniel: 25/25<br/>           Derick: 25/26<br/>           Gregor von Hexham: 11/29<br/>           Oliso Eul: 25/26<br/>           Riven: -/22 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span> <span style="color: green;">Poison (5/5, stalled)</span><br/>           Seyena Ikane: 23/25 <span style="color: red;">Dismounted</span> <span style="color: green;">Carrying: Anja</span><br/>           Tantallos Forsaken: -/24 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span> <span style="color: green;">Poison (5/5, stalled)</span><br/>           Valor Inara: 16/25</p> | <p>Bandit F: 21/30<br/>           Bandit G: 18/30<br/>           Archer B: 24/24<br/>           Archer C: 24/24<br/>           Mercenary C: 2/26<br/>           Fighter C: 21/28<br/>           Dora: 13/34</p> |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p>Anja: 25/25 <span style="color: blue;">Carried by: Seyena Ikane</span> <span style="color: orange;">Sleep (1/5)</span><br/>           Wagon: 3/5 hits left</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**Derick: Move to 13, 5 and attack the fighter**

**Charlotte: Move to 6,7. TWANG Archer B with longbow.**

**Have Daniel move to 7,7, activating his support boni with me and double-autohitting for Dora 16 total damage.**

**Gregor: Move to (7,8) and STAB Archer B with Iron Lance**

Derick moved after Fighter C. Soon, a scream followed and bloodied head tumbled from the bushes toward Seyena and rested few meters from her feet.

**Derick vs Fighter C**

Hit:  $106+15-20-14 = 87$   
Hit roll: 70, hit! Crit roll: 10!  
Damage:  $16+1+2-7 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Charlotte moved to new position and TWANG'd at Archer B.

**Charlotte vs Archer B**

Hit:  $99+10+5+5-23 = 96$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Damage:  $18+1-9 = 10\text{dmg}$

Daniel ran to the Dora's side and STABSTABSTABS.

**Daniel vs Dora**

Hit:  $127+10+2+5+15-22 = 137$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14+1+1-7 = 9\text{dmg}$   
  
Daniel attacks again!  
Hit:  $127+10+2+5+15-22 = 137$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14+1+1-7 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Charlotte got 404 gold!**



"Oh, my dear sister, I'm coming to thee..." Dora coughed, sighed, and died. Before Gregor could do anything, his target, just like the rest of the bandits, sped off into the woods.

**~~Chapter 3x Complete!~~**

Then, there was a long yawn as Anja woke up.



"Wuh... oh, oh! Miss, if you wish to kidnap me, please let's have a date first. Or a lunch together, at least." Anja smiled and quickly moved away from Seyena, only to notice the bodies littered around - her eyes easily noticing that the sisters are dead too.



"Oh dear, problematic customers are the worst kind. A pity, really, they often paid a lot... but maybe because they never could count properly, teehee."

Gregor lowered his lance and sighed.



"Lady Anja, are there any *other* groups of unsatisfied customers we should be wary of?"



"Um, I guess? But I doubt that any of them would be determined to pursue me for a bunch of faulty items. I am thankful, though. If not you guys, I would probably end in their basement!" Anja went to Gregor, leaned toward him and gave him a big smooch on the cheek.



"I'm forever in your debt. Think you need a merchant lady with mobile campsite? I want to pay off my debt."



"That sounds fine. I'd just like to get back to Kesselring at this point, though."



"Uh..."



"I mean, I guess we could use your help. We're not entirely sure what will happen once we reach Kesselring, though."



"Hmm, I will just park my wagon at their gate and wait for you guys to finish your whatever job you have to do. I don't like dealing with aristocracy types because, um, I have my reasons. Nevermind, it is settled! Help your friends, get on my wagon and we're back on the way."

## NPC Anja joins the party! Party now has Storage!



"Best get everyone back on their feet."



"Ami's got the right idea. Let's get everyone healed and loaded onto the wagon, and we can take off as soon as possible."



"Shamans first... as both of us literally need to get on our feet..heh..ehhe."



"Both'? We have two shamans now?"

He glances at Riven as he's helping Tantallos up.



"That girl from the Fezzan Temple? I can't believe I've met two shamans in the space of a week."



"Do not tell me you just noticed now...you are pretty slow, soldier."

He laughed and stood up with Gregor's help.



"I think I've said exactly 10 words to her, and that was before the battle in Fezzan. I simply assumed she was another mage, and when she joined us with the wagon I figured someone invited her along so I chose not to say anything."

He decided to change to subject.



"Looks like your wounds aren't too serious. Let's get a move on, shall we?"

Tantallos pulled his hood down and shrugged.



"I am fine with that, there is not much to be done on this place anyway... "

Chris stepped out of the woods and hopped onto Tenebra's back, like he had never left.



"Fine with me."

Olison made his way beside the wagon, ensuring the horses carrying it wouldn't run any farther.



"Anything to put some distance from this place."



"Why is that? Do not you like the smell of death?"



"Not everyone enjoys death, Tantallos." Seyena said as she looked about the battlefield, before climbing aboard her Pegasus.

Gregor muttered to himself.



*That shaman in Fezzan, and Tantallos too...is this just how shamans are?*



"True, true, but you know why I do that."

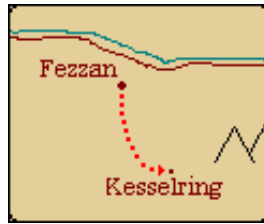


"Thank goodness that's over. Maybe now we can get paid." Valor muttered irritably, climbing into the back of Anja's wagon.



"Let's be on our way. Hyah!" Anja smacked her horses with the reins and the mercenary band continued it's journey toward Kesselring.

## ~~Chapter 4: The Shadows of War~~



*The journey to Kesselring is almost complete.  
One full day passed before the group managed to get to the Kesselring forest.  
It seems that the end of the mercenaries' mission is just few minutes away.  
Fate, however, have something else planned for them...*

The wagon rolled into the Kesselring Forest, on the road the mercenaries recognized easily - soon they recognized the very spot in which they battled Arinne's thugs. A large pile of ground marked the mass grave into which the fallen criminals were interred by the Kesselring troops.

The forest was very quiet, though. Birds weren't singing, and the dark clouds above threatened to cast rain upon the returning mercenaries.

As the wagon rolled, the monotonous sound of the wheels soon was joined by some other, stranger noise. After a while longer, Anja stopped her wagon and they could hear the other noise better now:

It was gallop of a single horse.



"Now what? If this is another messenger, please don't tackle him Chris."



"I doubt he is going to, Adrien was the crazy one always forcing others to do things his way."



"...You're right. Sorry Chris, I'm in a bad mood. I just want this over with."



"Your foul mood is excused Gregor, I find myself in a similar state."

The gallop intensified in the volume for a while, and then, a rider ran from around of the corner. He wore Kesselring armor, but he looked battered, his helmet was amiss, and there were even burn marks on his chestpiece.

"Re.. Reinforcements! I must get... reinforcements!" He yelled at the mercenaries, his horse going onto hind legs because the way was blocked. With a loud groan, the cavalier fell onto his back and breathed deeply as the horse ran away.

"I must warn!... Reinforcements!" The cavalier shouted, waving his right hand at the sky, seemingly he was in shock or something. Gregor, again, recognized the man; the red-haired knight was Eliwood himself, cousin of Captain Torres.

Valor held his face in one hand.



"We better get paid extra for this. Sometimes I miss that bodyguard job."



"Ami, he looks hurt! Could you heal him?"

Gregor ran over to the stricken cavalier, beckoning Ami along with him.



"Milord Eliwood! What's going on? Ami, help him!"

Tantalos pulls his hood back to cover his face and shakes his head a bit.



"I doubt we are going to get paid so soon."



"We may have to drive off an invasion force first, by the look of it. I am convinced that this job is cursed."





"Cursed aaaaaand for free."

Valor groaned.

**Seeing Ami distracted, Charlotte sprinkled a little white powder on Eliwood.**

Ami appeared to be distracted. Gregor cursed and was about to apply a vulnerary when Charlotte did instead.



"C'mon, Eliwood. You have to tell us what's going on!"

"Thanks." Eliwood sat up and looked around, his eyes wide.

"Am I outside, yes, I am... huh... Gregor! Between all the small and large calamities, seeing you is a good sign. Are you here to help?"



"Well, we are now. What happened? Is Kesselring under attack?"

"Yes! From the above! A throng of wyvern riders and pegasi fell onto the fortress, each of them carrying one other soldier."



"Sounds like someone was slacking off on their watch duties."

"We did! We had the sentries posted! But when they attacked, there was no signal horn, no shouting, none of the ballistas were let loose, as if no one was on the walls at all... We only noticed them after they fell onto the squires training in the main courtyard. And our enemies wore both Berebian and Menelean armors! One of the wyverns bitten on the main gate chains and I barely managed to run off the castle... to get reinforcements. I must get them! Can I have your horse, m'lady?"



"What? Oh, um..."

"My own ran off. I swear to care for your horse. Gregor, I beg you, find a way into the Fortress and... and try to help." Eliwood then, with a weak groan, slid onto the horse that Anja untied from her wagon.

Gregor watched Eliwood ride away, his teeth gritted.



"This doesn't make any sense at all..." He strode back to the wagon and filled everyone in on what he had heard. "I know most of you are mercenaries, and I don't have much gold to pay you with. But I'm going to go help, and I'd appreciate it if you folks joined me."



"Save it. I'm charging the lady Pridima for this. Let's get a move on, the longer we give them to work out defenses, the harder time we'll have getting in."



"Yes, you're right. And thank you."

Olson had just caught up from the rear guard of the wagon to hear the larger portion of Eliwood's account from Gregor.



"What?! Blast, it's been nothing but trouble lately. I'm scouting ahead."

Chris rubbed his forehead.



"You know, Olson, it seems like this sort of thing always happens the second we leave to go do something. I won't miss cleaning up these messes, I can say that for certain. Good luck."

He turned to Gregor.



"I'm with you for obvious reasons. Contractual obligations, for one. For another I can't turn in my resignation if I don't actually go do it, so..."



"Oh no."

Charlotte hopped off the wagon and checked her quiver. It looked like her longbow, at

least, was still in good shape.



"Gregor, Olson: you've seen Kesselring Fortress inside out. I trust you to lead the others to safety. Unfortunately, I have to split off for now. Something very precious could be in danger."



"Anyone who wants to join me is free, but do realize your assistance would be more effective handling the assault on Kesselring."

Gregor felt terrible about not being able to help her, but he had a duty to help his fellow soldiers first.



"Best of luck, Charlotte. We'll meet up back here at the wagon. I promise."

Olson nodded to Chris and Charlotte before cracking the reins on his horse, starting to **Speed towards Kesselring.**



"I'll go with Olson." Seyena said, preparing to take to the skies, following Olson.



"Looks like we will be facing another challenge after all.."



"Alright. Anyone willing: I'm heading out."



*With that, Charlotte slowly made her way deep into the Kesselring forest. Miles away, in a mountainous clearing under the star-lit sky, a stone shrine holding the Tiger's Eye awaited. It would a long journey on foot...*

---

Olison got to the Fortress in a minute or less. Corpses of wyverns and pegasi could be seen in the moat, at least few of them, with some unfortunate, either mangled or drowned riders floating in the water as well. The drawbridge was down albeit the main gate was tightly shut.

A ballista bolt flew past Seyena. It seems that the soldiers already had the defenses ready - or at least the enemy archers seized the siege weapons on the towers.



"Seyena, get down!"

Olison remained at the perimeter of the forest as he looked onto the bloody scene.



"By the gods. They've got the entire place locked up. Question is, are they ours or theirs?"

Olison squinted his eyes as he attempted to **Identify the dead riders, along with any soldiers he might be able to see manning the defenses.**

The wyvern and pegasi raiders whose corpses were floating in moat had all Berebian armor, or the variations thereof from different duchies there. One of the wyverns must've slammed against the sewer grate, smashing it open.

Olison could see Berebian and Menelean armors on top of the walls. In few places, they were fighting against each other. The only Menelean soldiers that were seemingly friendly with Berebians wore the armors of Rosecross county, far to the east.



"Menelean and Berebian soldiers, both occupying the fortress... What in the hells is happening here?"

Olison shouted upwards to Seyena.



"Seyena! Get back to the others! Fill them in, I'll keep watch here."

Seyena was just as confused as Olison, she had to make a steep dive to avoid that bolt, and she responded to him with a somewhat panicked tone.



"I will, but be careful!" She quickly turned her pegasus around, heading for the group- namely Gregor- to tell them of the upcoming ~~clusterfuck~~ battle.

---



"Oh, I forgot to ask. Chris, what kind of a person is this Lady PRIXIMA?"

Chris thought about Riven's question.



"Harsh, but mostly honest. She pays well and on time, tends to treat people as tools but takes care of them. You know the type, right?"



"Oh, so she sounds like a standard leader, then."



"I'm going to go ahead. I have... an alternate entrance into the fortress. I need to make sure it's still secure."

He patted Ami on the shoulder and dismounted.



"Stay here and take care of yourself. All of you."



"Good luck."

With that, Chris disappeared into the nearby shadows and started running ahead to a different side of the castle, to find his way in...



"Forget that. Let's hit them before they know what's going on."

**Valor: Proceed to the castle. Time for a blitzkrieg approach!**

---

Christopher - with Valor following closely - got to the only part of the fortress that wasn't protected by the moat, but a sharp cliff and field of thick bushes, thorns and trees.

The backdoor was still there, and when he peeked in, it smelled of stale water, indicating it was knee-deep flooded as always. There were absolutely no voices coming from there. It might be different in the storerooms that the tunnel is connected to, though.



"You have anything resembling a plan?" Valor asked, looking in through the back door.

Chris nodded in satisfaction before turning to Valor.



"Tell the rest my entrance is still viable, and get them here. I'm going in ahead to check and see if the way is clear. I'll try to stay out of trouble until the rest get here."

With that, he entered the waters and started making his way down the hallway.



"... I hate playing messenger."

---

Riven turned to Ami.



"Hello, I'm Riven. I don't think we've properly met, but I've heard about you from Chris. He speaks very highly of you."



"Hello Riven and well people do speak highly of the healer."



"Haha... I think it's more than that, though."



"Speaking of which, that's a fascinating steed. Where did you get it?"



"Well I got Tenebra nearby our second mission. I just saw him and felt draw to him so I claimed him as my steed."

Gregor waited (im)patiently for the scouts' return, pacing back and forth with butterflies churning in his gut.

Seyena flew towards the group, making a beeline for Gregor. She landed quickly, generating a large plume of dust.



"Gregor! I'm pretty sure that whomever we're fighting here, the Berebians and their Menelean friends have taken, or are about to take the castle. Also, the sewer gate to the moat is smashed open, we might be able to get in that way." She took a brief pause, giving a breath to settle her nerves somewhat. "There is still a lot of fighting on the walls, however, but it's difficult to tell who is winning."

Gregor took a deep breath before speaking.



"Alright, let's get moving. That sewer gate might be our ticket in. ...Did you happen to see Captains Torres or Aaron among the fighters? If they're still alive, we might be able to turn this around with a proper distraction."



"I don't think I did, Olison might have seen them, he's still back there."

Valor hurried back to the group, to guide them to the rear entrance.

Gregor listened to Valor's report.



"Seyena, did the people on the walls notice you or Olison? If so, we might want to try this back entrance. Even I didn't know about it, so it's not likely to be heavily guarded."



"Well, I got shot at by a ballista, so I'd count that as getting spotted. I don't think Olson was seen, though."



"Valor, could that tunnel you and Chris found fit the horses and pegasus?"



"I guess I still start accepting the logic "when things are bad, they will just get worse"."



"Not a chance. The approach would be a problem for Olson's horse as well. It's thornbushes and cliffs and such. We should split into two groups, and have the rear entrance group strike to create an opening for the front group."



"I'm willing to volunteer for the rear group."



"Alright. Seyena, Ami, Valor and I will meet up with Olson and cause a distraction out front. The rest of you go in through the back entrance and see if you can meet up with any of the surviving forces. It's not the best plan, but under the circumstances..."

---

Derick, Tantallos, Riven and Daniel joined Chris. Soon, Alexander clunked there as well.

**Chris was still inside checking to see if the way was clear for his group.**



"I will just pretend we are not going to get into some fight again, it will make me feel a little more...sane.. heh.eheh."

Alexander merely mumbled a few choices curses to himself at the situation, making sure all of his armor was securely on.

Entire tunnel is safe. Unfortunately, when Chris got to the storeroom the tunnel was connected with, he could hear angry voices, someone barking orders, and various metal things clanking right behind the door.





"What now?"

Chris returned to the entrance of the tunnel.



"It's secure... to a point. Once I open the door at the end we're going to have to fight. We should decide a marching order right now."

The spy poked himself in the chest with a thumb.



"No arguing this one; I'm taking point. Only I know how to open the door and it would take more time to explain how to do it to one of you than we really have. If there are no objections, I want Derick behind me. The two of us are going to charge in there and catch them off-guard if we can. I want Alex after us to protect Tantallos and Riven; he can shield them while they cast spells if necessary, but maybe we'll be lucky enough that we can take all the intruders down before they realize what's going on."

He doubted they would have that kind of opportunity.



"Daniel... I guess you can rear-guard. Is everyone all right with this plan?"



"Roger! Shirsy and I are ready for battle!"



"That can work."

The group got to the storerooms easily. The noises behind the door were still loud.

**~~Player Turn 0~~**

|    | 22 | 23                                                                               | 24                                                                                      | 25                                                                                       | 26                                                                                     | 27 |
|----|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 14 |    |  |                                                                                         |                                                                                          |                                                                                        |    |
| 15 |    |                                                                                  |                                                                                         |                                                                                          |                                                                                        |    |
| 16 |    |                                                                                  |  Chris |  Derick |                                                                                        |    |
| 17 |    |                                                                                  |                                                                                         |  Alex   |  Rive |    |
| 18 |    |                                                                                  |  Tant  |                                                                                          |  Dani |    |
| 19 |    |                                                                                  |                                                                                         |                                                                                          |                                                                                        |    |

Weather:

**Derick: Move to 24, 15**



"Ready when you are Chris."

**Chris moved to 23,15 and waited for everyone else to get into position.**



"As soon as we're all in position."

Alexander readied his lance, nodding as he moved over behind Chris.



"Alright, I'm ready as well."

**Alexander: 23x, 16 y**



"Hmm... as always the curiosity will bring us problems..heheh."

**Tantalos: Move 25,15**



"OK. I'm going to get this open."

Chris pushed a stone to his left into the wall. While still holding it in, he knelt and pressed on three seemingly-random stones in the floor, before standing, releasing the stone he was pushing, and sliding down another stone close to the door. Once he did

that, he pushed the stone again, pressed the three stones in a different order, and released the first stone before sliding the last stone back up. He then reached down and removed a stone, revealing a metal insignia of a skull. He hooked his fingers in it and lifted, twisted it 180 degrees, and pushed it back down before replacing the stone.



"...There we go. If I remember correctly, the other side of this door is a wine rack, so there might be some spillage when I push it open. On three."



"One, two, three."

Chris kicked the door open and dashed through it, drawing his crossbow in one hand and his dagger with the other as he did so...

Chris found out a patrol of Berebian soldiers. In front of his face.

---

Ami, Gregor, Valor and Seyena joined the lone cavalier. Ballistas and the archers with longbows were trained at the plot of land before the drawbridge. Even approaching the moat would be suicide.

They could also see that the entire front part of the walls was now quiet. It seems that the enemies took hold of the main gate fortifications by now.



"I don't see any more fighting here. Did they all...?"



"There you all are. No, the fighting's just about finished up inside, it seems. We'd best make our move quickly before they can regroup. Where are Chris, Derick and the Shamans?"



"Someone won by now... question is- who?" Seyena said, looking at the ballistae with a twinge of unease.



"Chris and Valor found a 'back door'. The other half of the group went that way, since the entrance is too small for horses."



"...Well now what?"



"Well, Seyena said something about a sewer drain. Where is it, again?"

Olison pointed near the beginning of the moat, where a broken grate lied.



"One of the Wyverns must have torn it open. We may be able to make it through there, but to where it leads I have no idea."



"Well, unless Seyena's willing to run the gauntlet of archers to drop us off on the roof one by one, that's probably our only way in from here. If it can provide some cover from the ballistae, all the better."



"No. A million times no. We take the grate."



"I think you're referring to the backdoor that I mentioned. I guess we'll wait on the others. Let's see if we can distract them in the front."

Valor cupped his hands to his mouth and hollered to the battlements; they clearly didn't have surprise, in any case.



"YO! WHO'S IN CHARGE IN THERE RIGHT NOW?"



"..."

Gregor pinched the bridge of his nose and groaned.

In response, the area in which Gregor and rest were hiding was peppered with arrows and few large ballista bolts. One of the arrows was now sticking out of Olison's armor,

and other from Valor's left knee.

#### Arrow spam

Olison hit, -10HP until healed

Valor hit, -10HP until healed

Olison's horse reared at the wail of arrows raining from above. Olison barely managed to control his mount with an arrow now sticking out of his chest.



"Aargh! Damn it! Vacate the area!"



"Dammit! DAMMIT! We're just wasting time out here!"

Gregor kept his shield above his head as he helped Valor away from the fortress.



"Grrr, fucking barbarians. What kind of man shoots at a man attempting to parley, I ask you?"



"Berebians, perhaps?"



"Oh come now, you can't seriously be saying that an entire culture is filled with arseholes, can you? That's ridiculous."



"Maybe it's not 'arsehole-ish' in their culture to kill everything that moves." Seyena said while giving a somewhat-guilty shrug.

Olison looked about sheepishly.



"Eeehhhh you'd be surprised."



"I think they'd have trouble getting to the civilization level if they attacked each other on sight. Probably not what you meant though."

Gregor took a deep breath, trying to calm down. It didn't help much.



"So now what? We can go to that back entrance and catch up to the rest, we can run for the sewer drain and risk getting shot, or we can stay out here and keep their attention on us...and risk getting shot again."



"We wait for the other team to make their strike. They took Tantallos and Derick with them. When they get started, we should know about it fairly quickly."



"Let me deal with these minor wounds."

**Ami: Heal Olson and Valor.**

Valor glanced at the castle.



"... I wonder what's taking so long."



"They're trying to work their way into an occupied and fully stocked castle, and with Chris there I know he's going to take his time."

Olson trotted around behind the brush, trying to keep a good eye on the battlements, ready to jump at a moment's notice.



"As for attacking on sight- They're deep in enemy territory with no known backup aside from their mysterious Melenean cohorts, or perhaps Meleneans in disguise. Either way they can't be taking risks allowing any unknown persons near, and if I know Berebian style; the best way to deter investigation in this instance is the direct way."

Olison quickly hid behind a tree when he thought he saw a blur fly from the battlement.



"...Like that."

---

## MEANWHILE...

A man in black cape and deep purple robes approached an armored man, who kept silent vigil over a small courtyard, his eyes darting over the high wall, from where sounds of battle were coming.



"Goering, what's the situation?"



"Mmn, we secured this part of the castle and, as a precaution, placed slabs on the door leading to the main courtyard. I believe that most of Kesselring soldiers are fighting to the death in the main barracks."



"Their resistance is futile in the long run, although I thought our soldiers are better trained."



"That Aaron and the other one, they are skilled leaders and tacticians, it seems... Unfortunately most of our wyverns and pegasi are dead, so getting out of the castle, if we're defeated, is slim at best... and you keep pacing around, why?"



"I'm waiting for a word from that Larion guy so I can go with the main part of the assault against that witch. My bolganone tome might be sufficient to kill her. I hope. But we cannot let her--"

"Sir! A message from Sir Larion!" The man in the cape turned around toward a young soldier.



"Yes, what is it?"

"Sir Larion reports that he have pacified the middle rooms and just broke into the top floor."



"Wonderful, lead me there. Goering, I'm going in. Glory to Berebia, my old friend."



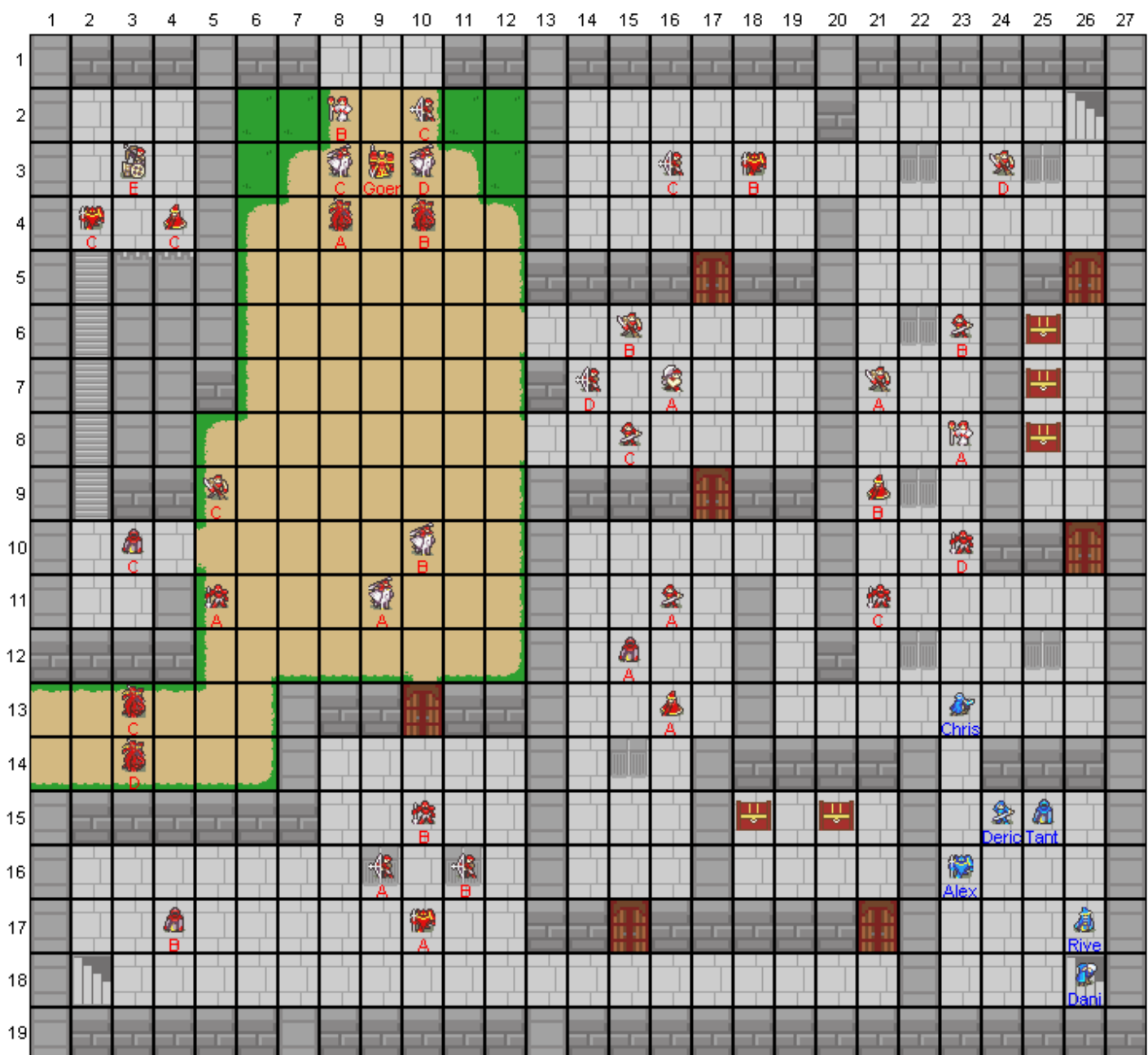
"Mhmm... Glory, glory. Rest assured - even if they do break through the gate, they still need to defeat me. And no one defeated Goering the Mountain yet." He smiled weakly toward the sage going inside the main keep.



"Alright, men. We have to hold this yard. An hour, I think, should do the trick. Prixima shouldn't survive more than that."



# ~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                               | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 28/28<br>Christopher Shields: 22/22<br>Daniel: 25/25<br>Derick: 26/26<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 24/24<br>Riven: 22/22 | Myrmidon A: 26/26<br>Myrmidon B: 26/26<br>Myrmidon C: 26/26<br>Archer A: 25/25<br>Archer B: 25/25<br>Archer C: 25/25<br>Archer C': 25/25<br>Archer D: 25/25<br>Archer E: 25/25<br>Knight A: 30/30<br>Knight B: 30/30<br>Knight C: 30/30<br>Halberdier A: 27/27<br>Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Halberdier C: 27/27<br>Halberdier D: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider A: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider B: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23<br>Wyvern Rider A: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider B: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider C: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider D: 31/31<br>Swordsman A: 28/28<br>Swordsman B: 28/28<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Swordsman D: 28/28<br>Fighter: 29/29<br>Priest A: 21/21<br>Priest B: 21/21<br>Mage A: 26/26<br>Mage B: 26/26<br>Mage C: 26/26<br>Shaman A: 25/25<br>Shaman B: 25/25<br>Shaman C: 25/25<br>Baron Goering: 40/40 |

Derick peeked his head through the doorframe slowly. His eyes widened and he withdrew his head. After a few seconds he calmly strode out, pushing his way past Chris.

### Derick: Move 23, 11



"Ahem. Hi, we're the ... something something wolves? We never really got that straightened out. Anyways we'll be taking back this castle now."

### Derick: Attack Soldier D

Tantallos was not sure if he was supposed to laugh or facepalm, again they were going to face a large group of enemies and this time with a small group.



"Well, here we go again.. I hope Plague Dragon is watching because I will need some luck on this day."

### Tantallos: Move 21,13.

Derick ran toward the soldier, slashing at his arm mightily. The halberdier in retaliation cut against Derick's left side. Tantallos in the meanwhile moved closer but was out of range to attack the other halberd-wielding Berebian.

#### Derick vs Halberdier D

Hit:  $106-15-26 = 65$

Hit roll: 47, hit! Crit roll: 19, hit!

Damage:  $16+2-1-9 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

Halberdier D retaliates!

Hit:  $94+15-33 = 76$

Hit roll: 41, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-6 = 11\text{dmg}$



"Gah! Guess I've been getting a little too cocky huh."

Alexander's eyes narrowed and he let out a groaning grumble upon seeing the size of the force they were facing. Nevertheless, he started clanking into the room.



"Cursed Berebians..."

### Alexander: Move to 22, 13

Chris set his jaw with a sigh.



"You know, sometimes I really regret my life decisions."

With that said, he moved to back up Derick, sliding in behind the myrmidon and firing a bolt over his shoulder.

**Chris moves to 23,12 and x-bows Halberdier D. Unless he's unable to. Then he moves to 24,11 instead and shoots.**

The crossbow went with a TWANG and a split-second later the bolt found itself in the Halberdier's stomach, killing him.

**Christopher vs Halberdier D**

Hit:  $108 - 26 = 82$

Hit roll: 63, hit!

Damage:  $16 + 2 - 9 = 9\text{dmg}$



"That wasn't one of the ones I regret, though. Are you all right, Derick?"

Chris asked, looking to see if the myrmidon had been injured badly from the halberdier's counter.



"...can we really beat all those?"

**Riven: Move to 23,15.**



"...I don't know, Riven. I'm not one for speculation but I would not say the odds are in our favor."



"I guess we can. The question is how... at least against most of those we have some kind of advantage, they do not have monks around here, so at least we will not need to worry about divine magic."

Chris sighed and loaded another bolt into his crossbow.



"So, if we can't cut our way through to our allies and we do all die here... what are you going to regret not having had a chance to do?"

The question was addressed to the group at large.



"I can take a couple more hits. And seriously? Don't be so morbid. We'll make it out of here somehow!"

Alexander considered Chris's question, while keeping his lance up.



"If that happens, I'll regret having failed my duty. But that won't happen. I failed once- now I shall never again. I'll complete my duty no matter how many wounds I have to suffer or how many Berebian *cur* I have to cut down. I *won't* fail."



"I see. Me... It would be dying with so many things left that I want to see and do. I've never been out of this country, for example."

**While they were talking, Daniel moved himself as close to the doorway leading to three treasures as he could.**



"Dying is not even a option to me, I will need to claim that throne some day, besides the fact I still need to give more sacrifices to the Plague Dragon, and this castle will be a banquet for him!"

Alexander seemed to be somewhat irked by Tantallos' words.



"This castle's not going to be a *banquet* for anyone. It's going to get *taken back*."

**Move Daniel to 23, 16**



"I was talking about the soldiers we are going to kill, not the castle itself. Yes, we will take it back but we will need to kill these soldiers, and THESE soldiers will be the Plague Dragon's banquet."



"...dying without knowing what it is I'd regret not accomplishing."



"Knowing what?"

---



"So how much of a distraction do we need to cause?"



"Oh, this ought to get their attention. Watch for my signal."

Gregor took a deep breath and **ran for the sewer entrance.**



"I guess that count."

And so Gregor went running.

Arrow hit! -10HP until healed  
Arrow hit! -10HP until healed

He ended in the moat, at the sewer entrance, with two arrows sticking out of his armor, and few more hitting the water with wet 'flops'.



"Why did-... He's supposed to be running things, not causing diversions!"



"..." Valor watched the sewer grate that Gregor had dashed into, awaiting some form of signal.



"Probably not one of my smarter ideas..."

**Gregor: Scout the passageway. WITHOUT exposing self to incoming fire.**

With the little light he had coming through the entrance, Gregor got inside only several metres, before he found out another large grate blocking his pass. The only other exit was a staircase leading up, linked with, hopefully, one of non-walled off places, if the castle had such places at all.

**Gregor: Use a vulnerary. Attempt to sneak up the stairway. Stop and go back if Gregor hears suspicious noises or sees light.**

Gregor got himself to the top of the staircase, into small storeroom, which had a staircase leading up. From above, through opened hatch, he could hear noises of combat and angry shouts.

Gregor ran back to the drain entrance and waved his arms, beckoning the others to follow.

Valor exhaled slowly, then made a mad dash for where Gregor was waving, keeping his head down and praying that the archers would miss.



"...Well, I guess that's a signal."

Olison dismounted and tied his horse to a nearby branch. He was about to speak when Valor made a maddened dash.



"I'll go first-... Nevermind. Ami, you'll want to stay behind me or Seyena when we move in, I am not risking you getting injured."

The arrows fell onto the two other runners, albeit no ballista bolts scoured the ground. Either they ran out of ammo or had trouble loading them.

When Valor got to the sewer entrance, Olison collapsed on top of him with several arrows sticking of him, while Valor himself miraculously got there unscathed.

3 hits to Olison: -30HP: Death counter until healed.  
0 hits to Valor: no damage



"Dammit!"

Gregor dragged Olson inside, away from further arrows.

Valor assisted Gregor in pulling Olson safely inside.



"I realize this was at least partly my idea, but I'm beginning to think we might have been better off entering through that backdoor the others used."



"I'm starting to think you're right."



"But we're here now, and unless you want to try to run that gauntlet again and lead the girls along the other path, we're committed. I heard fighting not far ahead, which either means we're close to the rest of the group, or we're near some of my fellows, who are probably in dire need of assistance. To turn back now would waste precious time."



"Yeah, running back out to lead them around the other way would just waste more time we don't have. At the very least, no one on the other side of that wall is likely to expect us to come through. I sincerely doubt the invaders have familiarized themselves with PRIXIMA's plumbing."



"Yes, let all go!"

**Ami: Run run run!**

The arrows mysteriously evaded Ami - until she got into the moat. That's where two arrows struck her.

|                                   |
|-----------------------------------|
| 2 arrows hit = -20HP until healed |
|-----------------------------------|

Gregor helped Ami inside, then waved to Seyena.



"Here comes miss first aid. Fingers crossed... Oh hell, if Seyena doesn't hurry up, she's going to wind up with all the archer's attention on her." As Ami entered, Valor took out the last of his vulnerary and administered it to the troubadour. "Could you heal

up Olison, Ami? He got perforated on his way in."



"What- No, no, no, no! I didn't agree to this! There's got to be a different way!" Seyena watched her companions run past the arrows, both her and her mount growing anxious. "I don't want to end up like the Berebians!"



"If you're worried about your mount, I can keep my eye on it. Like I will on the rest, anyways." Anja spoke from behind Seyena's back.

Seyena nearly jumped hearing Anja behind her.



"Alright..."

She dismounted, taking a nervous glance towards the ballistae, and then **she ran for dear life.**

And so she ran. Just as she went over the edge...

5 arrow hits = -50HP = Death timer untill healed

...she fell ungraciously and with loud splash into the moat, not far from the sewer entrance.

Seyena tried to get up, before falling back down with a groan.



*I shouldn't have gone... I didn't want to die like this...*



"...Ami, heal me. I'm going out there."

Olison sat up against the wall as Gregor laid him aside.



"...Damn it, if I ever see another arrow... Did.. Did the others get in alright?"



Seeing Seyena collapse in the moat, Valor dropped what he was doing, and dashed out to grab her and drag her inside, using his body to shield her from additional arrows.

Only few arrows fell into water from strange angle, as Valor dragged Seyena in.

Gregor shouted after Valor, but the man had already gone. He turned to Olison instead.



"Seyena and Ami are hurt, but they'll be fine. You'll be fine. Just rest for a moment." *This is all my fault. My fault.*

Valor finished bringing Seyena inside, and shouted impatiently at Ami.



"Hey, either pick up the pace or toss me a vulnerary, Seyena's hurt bad!"

Valor turned his gaze back on Seyena, where his expression softened and his voice lowered to a more soothing register.



"Heeey. Good news, I think I've found something that scares me more than flying. Plus, I'm pretty sure this makes us even, eh? ...Well, it would if this whole 'charge the front gate while the other half of the team makes a ruckus' fiasco hadn't been my plan. Yeesh, what a mess."

Ami healed people up.



"And what would that be? It would have to be terrifying, judging on that expression you get when you're flying." Seyena asked, wincing.

Ami removing the arrows made her feel slightly better, but she was still terrified of going back out.



"You getting shot nearly to death, of course. I think you're pretty cute after all, and a damn fine soldier from what I've seen as well." Valor turned a bit red and exhaled. "Hehe, that was pretty sudden, wasn't it? Must be the adrenaline. I'll leave you in Ami's capable hands; Me and Gregor have a keep to re-take."

Valor coughed nervously, realizing he'd performed a confession in front of three more people than were strictly necessary.



"Um, right. Let's go kick butt and stuff."



"Duck the arrows this time."



"Once everyone has caught their breaths, we'll move out. I can go first, Valor behind me. The two of us are not badly hurt."

Gregor lead Valor up the stairs, into the storeroom, and prepared to see what was going on outside.

---

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Whilst surprised, the soldiers took only a moment to get their combat training kick in. First to move was the humble priest. He lifted his staff, tipped with emerald, and a cloud of greenish mist hit Derick's face.

#### Priest A vs Derick

Poison Hit:  $\{30+[(10-6)\times 5]+6\}-(2\times 2)=30+26-4=52$  //Oh my goodness ailment staffs have most ridiculous hit formula ever.  
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Derick is Poisoned!

Then, Halberdier C ran past the mercs and slashed at Tantallos with the heavy halberd, cutting his arm. The black worm that burst from shaman's palm went right into Halberdier's helmet and then shot out from the other side, as the soldier collapsed lifeless.

#### Halberdier C vs Tantallos

Hit:  $94-20=74$   
Hit roll: 65, hit!  
Damage:  $16-5=11\text{dmg}$   
  
Tantallos counters!  
Hit roll:  $112-26=86$   
Hit roll: 43, hit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $17+2-3=16\times 3=48\text{dmg}$

Mage B glued himself to the pillars, in metaphorical way, and the extended his hand toward Alexander, who could see, then feel, mighty thunder striking him and cooking him inside his armor. He tried to stab the magician in retaliation, but failed to deliver the blow, and another thunder sent the armored man to the ground.

#### Mage B vs Alexander

Hit:  $102-13=89$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1=16\text{dmg}$   
  
Alexander counters!  
Hit:  $95-15-18=62$

Hit roll: 77, miss!

Mage B strikes again!

Hit:  $102-13 = 89$

Hit roll: 73, hit!

Damage:  $17-1 = 16\text{dmg}$

But let's shift our attention back to Derick; the myrmidon was now assaulted by Swordsman A and Myrmidon B, in that order. Swordsman A slashed at Derick, hurting him mightily, and Derick cut his head off for that. Somehow a key dropped into Derick's pocket

#### **Swordsman A vs Derick**

Hit:  $99-33 = 66$

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Damage:  $18-6 = 12\text{dmg}$

Derick counters!

Hit:  $106-18 = 88$

Hit roll: 78, hit! Crit roll: 7!

Damage:  $16+2-6 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

### **Derick got Door Key!**

Unfortunately, right after that, Myrmidon B stabbed at Derick's back and sent him to the floor.

#### **Quote from: Myrmidon B vs Derick**

Hit:  $117-33 = 84$

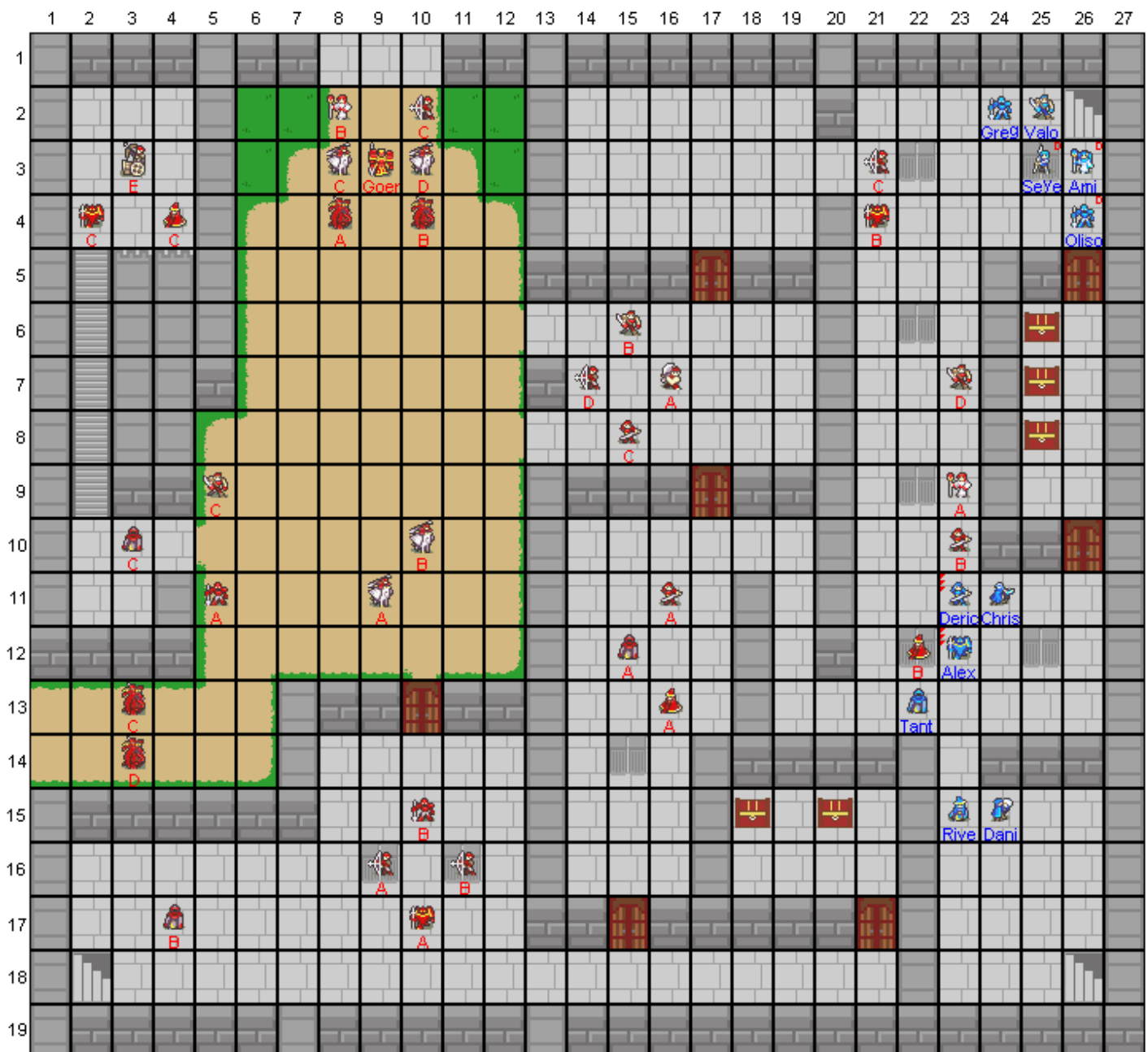
Hit roll: 35, hit!

Damage:  $14-6 = 8\text{dmg}$

More Berebians poured into the hallway... until one of them noticed something and yelled in alarm.

Gregor and his friends went upstairs.

# ~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/28 3/3<br>Ami Storm: 13/23<br>Christopher Shields: 22/22<br>Daniel: 25/25<br>Derick: -/26 3/3 Poison (5/5, stalled)<br>Gregor von Hexham: 29/29<br>Olison Eul: 12/26<br>Riven: 22/22<br>Seyena Ikane: 12/25<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 13/24<br>Valor Inara: 25/25 | Myrmidon A: 26/26<br>Myrmidon B: 26/26<br>Myrmidon C: 26/26<br>Archer A: 25/25<br>Archer B: 25/25<br>Archer C: 25/25<br>Archer C': 25/25<br>Archer D: 25/25<br>Archer E: 25/25<br>Knight A: 30/30<br>Knight B: 30/30<br>Knight C: 30/30<br>Halberdier A: 27/27<br>Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider A: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider B: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider C: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 | Wyvern Rider A: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider B: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider C: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider D: 31/31<br>Swordsman B: 28/28<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Swordsman D: 28/28<br>Fighter: 29/29<br>Priest A: 21/21<br>Priest B: 21/21<br>Mage A: 26/26<br>Mage B: 26/26<br>Mage C: 26/26<br>Shaman A: 25/25<br>Shaman B: 25/25<br>Shaman C: 25/25<br>Baron Goering: 40/40 |

Derick's mind began flashing back to the battle at the fort, images of falling to the

ground and being trampled and then blackness.



"Not again..."



"For Kesselring! For Menelea!"

**Gregor: Move to (22,3). STAB Archer C with Iron Lance.**



"...and for my friends!"



"It takes more than some feathered sticks to take me down!"

**Olison: Move to 23,5. Javelin the Merc.**

Alexander lay on the ground, struggling futilely to get up.



"I can't... no... no failing... grrrrgh..."

Gregor STABS. Unfortunately, it seems he missed.

#### **Gregor vs Archer C**

Hit:  $105+5-23 = 87$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

In the meanwhile, Olison ran around the corner and thrown his javelin at the Swordsman D's back. And then again.

#### **Olison vs Swordsman D**

Hit:  $96+15-18 = 93$

Hit roll: 61, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-6 = 11\text{dmg}$

Olison strikes again!

Hit:  $96+15-18 = 93$

Hit roll: 2, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-6 = 11\text{dmg}$

Seyena followed the others, her eyes set upon the archer in front of her.



"Surprised to see us?" She spat, lunging towards the bowman.

**Seyena: Move to 21, 2. Payback with strategically placed holes in the archer's stomach.**



"First sacrifice of the day! That felt good... but now we need to push these others back to assist the wounded ones... where is the rest of the group anyway?"



"The Plague Dragon gave me luck on my first strike so I will NOT fail him! You are next!"

Tantallos punched the floor to call the worm of dark energy out of the ground to attack the mage.

**Tantallos: Move 24,12 attack Mage B**

**Ami go to 23,4 and heal Olson.**

Tap tap tap, STAB.

**Seyena vs Archer C**  
Hit:  $102+5-10-23 = 74$   
Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage:  $14-9 = 5\text{dmg}$

Bzzzrt... SWOOSH!  
Crackle-BZZZT!

**Tantallos vs Mage B**  
Hit:  $112+15-18 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17+1-9 = 9\text{dmg}$   
  
Mage B retaliates!  
Hit:  $102-15-20 = 67$   
Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1-9 = 7\text{dmg}$

OweeWWOooOOooo~

**Ami heals Olson**  
 $10+14 = \text{Up to 24HP restored}$

Chris cursed under his breath.



"Derick, Alex, hold on for as long as you can. I'll get you back on your feet when I'm able. First, that mage has to die."

**Chris moves to 22,13 and stabs Mage B with his Poison Dagger.**

Chris went stabby against Mage B; the blade sank into the soft flesh, the venom quickly spreading in the mage's body. He gathered some energy and bolt of electricity hit Christopher in stomach, knocking him onto the floor.

**Chris vs Mage B**  
Hit:  $113-15-18 = 80$   
Hit roll: 79, hit!  
Damage:  $15+2-4 = 13\text{dmg}$   
  
Mage B counters!  
Hit:  $102-29 = 73$   
Hit roll: 55, hit! Crit roll: 1!  
Damage:  $17-4 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$



"...dammit."



"Hey! I like him!"

She turned to Daniel.



"You there. *Dispose* of that one."

**Move to 22,11, blast Myrmidon B.**

**Daniel: Move to 21,12, stab puny mage.**

Chris reached into his robes and curled his hand around the dragon stone hidden there.



"I wonder if just anyone can use this, if it even holds any power at all."

He leaned his head back against the wall.

Tantallos waved to the other shaman with a smile under his hood.



"Hello again! Looks like we will be on the front line until everyone get back on their feet hm?"



"So it would seem. Your band seemed a lot harder in the town."



"Well, I never said they were that good. After all, we ARE a small group of mercenaries.. or at least we used to be. From what I can see we will end up getting into battles that we will not even get paid now."

**Valor: Move to 22,4, and not attack.**

Riven blasted some dark magic at Myrmidon B, while Daniel went and stabbed Mage B to death.

**Riven vs Myrmidon B**

Hit:  $108+10-29 = 89$   
Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage:  $20+2-4 = 18\text{dmg}$

**Daniel vs Mage B**

Hit:  $127+10+10-15-18 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14-4 = 10\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"Sir Goering, I bring urgent report."



"Hm? What is it, soldier?"

"Sir! It seems that some people engaged our soldiers in the hallways to the east."



"Oh? Hmm... it must be a bunch of servants or soldiers that holed up somewhere. No matter - take few more of our boys, and execute those troublemakers. And next time, check the storerooms more thoroughly."

"Of course, sir! Right away, sir!" The soldier went back inside the rooms as Goering stared at the ground with slightly troubled face for a moment.



The soldiers inside began to move and a door was opened.

### Myrmidon A uses Door Key!

In the meanwhile, Priest A moved closer to Daniel and lifted his staff; and poisonous mist briefly engulfed the thief.

#### Priest A vs Daniel

Poison Hit:  $\{30+[(10-3)\times 5]+6\}-(2\times 2)=30+41-4=67$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Daniel is Poisoned!

Myrmidon B wasn't going to let Riven kill him like that - he moved to her and slashed at her with his sword. She quickly sent him to ground with another dark bolt.

#### Myrmidon B vs Riven

Hit:  $117-10-19=88$   
Hit roll: 2, hit!  
Damage:  $14-4=10\text{dmg}$   
  
Riven counters!  
Hit:  $108+10-29=89$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $20+2-4=18\text{dmg}$

At the other end of hallway, Archer C took a step backwards and then launched an arrow at Seyena, striking her under her right breast.

#### Archer C vs Seyena

Hit:  $99-5-25=69$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $18-7=11\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Knight B thrust with his spear at Valor - he missed, and Valor slashed at the armored Berebian in return, and again, only to be mocked with loud clanking of the blade against thick armor plates. Right afterwards, Swordsman D struck Valor's side, and for that Valor sliced at Berebian's throat, turning it into gurgling and collapsing fountain of blood.

#### Knight B vs Valor

Hit:  $85+15-5-10-26=59$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!  
  
Valor counters!  
 $111+5+10-15-8=103$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $13-1-13=0!$   
  
Valor retaliates again!  
 $111+5+10-15-8=103$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $13-1-13=0!$

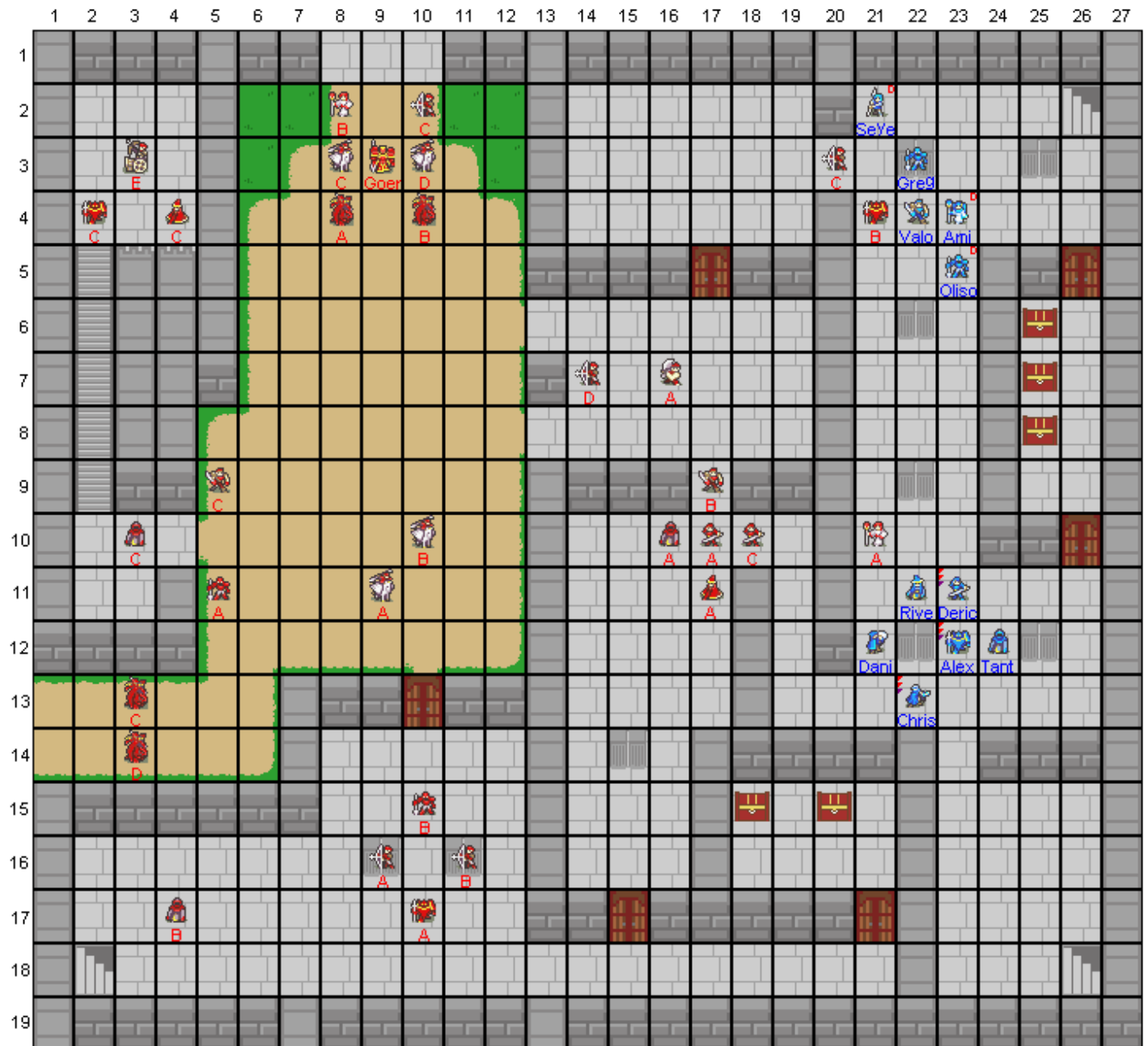
#### Swordsman D vs Valor

Hit:  $99-5-26=65$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $18-6=12\text{dmg}$   
  
Valor counters!  
Hit:  $111+5-18=98$   
Hit roll: 72, hit!  
Damage:  $13-6=7\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 3~~

## Poison rolls

Daniel: 3



Weather:

| Mercs:                                 |  | Enemies:               |  |
|----------------------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/29 2/3             |  | Myrmidon A: 26/26      |  |
| Ami Storm: 13/24 Dismounted            |  | Myrmidon C: 26/26      |  |
| Christopher Shields: -/23 2/3          |  | Archer A: 25/25        |  |
| Daniel: 22/25 Poison (4/5)             |  | Archer B: 25/25        |  |
| Derick: -/27 2/3 Poison (5/5, stalled) |  | Archer C: 25/25        |  |
| Gregor von Hexham: 29/29               |  | Archer C': 20/25       |  |
| Olison Eul: 26/26 Dismounted           |  | Archer D: 25/25        |  |
| Riven: 12/23                           |  | Archer E: 25/25        |  |
| Seyena Ikane: 1/26 Dismounted          |  | Knight A: 30/30        |  |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 6/25               |  | Knight B: 30/30        |  |
| Valor Inara: 13/26                     |  | Knight C: 30/30        |  |
|                                        |  | Halberdier A: 27/27    |  |
|                                        |  | Halberdier B: 27/27    |  |
|                                        |  | Pegasus Rider A: 23/23 |  |
|                                        |  | Pegasus Rider B: 23/23 |  |
|                                        |  | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 |  |
|                                        |  | Wyvern Rider A: 31/31  |  |
|                                        |  | Wyvern Rider B: 31/31  |  |
|                                        |  | Wyvern Rider C: 31/31  |  |
|                                        |  | Wyvern Rider D: 31/31  |  |
|                                        |  | Swordsman B: 28/28     |  |
|                                        |  | Swordsman C: 28/28     |  |
|                                        |  | Fighter: 29/29         |  |
|                                        |  | Priest A: 21/21        |  |
|                                        |  | Priest B: 21/21        |  |
|                                        |  | Mage A: 26/26          |  |
|                                        |  | Mage C: 26/26          |  |
|                                        |  | Shaman A: 25/25        |  |
|                                        |  | Shaman B: 25/25        |  |
|                                        |  | Shaman C: 25/25        |  |



"Seem our friends were put through the grinder."

**Ami: Head to 23,9**



"Ah, there you all are. On your feet!"

**Olison: Move to 23,10. Apply Valediction to Derick.**

Seyena quickly retreated due to her heavy wounds, hiding behind a pair of pillars to heal herself.

**Seyena: Move to 25, 3. Use a Vengeance-ary**

Some white powder hath been snorteth and thusly two personages felt better. Unfortunately Seyena didn't get to the pillars. The curse of footmen hath fell on her.

**Olison uses Vulnerary on Derick**

Up to 5HP restored

**Seyena uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

**Valor: Proceed to 21,3. Introduce new archer friend to my sword.**



"Thank you I- Olison! How did you get here?"



"Through a sewer grate and a gauntlet of arrows. Everyone else managed to make it in, thankfully not a moment too soon."



"It's good to see you made it in alright. We can use all the strength we can get."

Derick grimaced, and winced with a nauseous look on his face.



"I hate poison."

**Gregor: Move to the newly-vacated (22,4) and STAB the Knight.**

**Tantallos: Use vulnerary on Alexander**



"Rise and shine."

Alexander's struggles to get up are allowed to complete once the vulnerary is used upon him- he finally pushes himself up, scrapes his legs under him, and gets up, grabbing his lance again.



"Thank you..."

Valor went stabby upon Archer C.

#### Valor vs Archer C

Hit:  $113+5-23 = 95$   
Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage:  $14-9 = 5\text{dmg}$

Gregor in the meanwhile stabbed the nearby Knight, and after he failed to strike back at Gregor, the soldier in question stabbed again.

#### Gregor vs Knight B

Hit:  $107+5-8 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $19-13 = 6\text{dmg}$   
  
Knight B counters!  
Hit:  $85-5-25 = 55$   
Hit roll: 67, miss!  
  
Hit:  $107+5-8 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $19-13 = 6\text{dmg}$

Right after that, Tantallos sprinkled some vulnerary on Alexander, allowing him to rise up.

#### Tantallos uses Vulnerary on Alexander

Up to 5HP healed

**Daniel: Move down a square and use my last coconut on Christopher.**



"You are welcome!"



"So Riven, what are going to be your plans for the future? Most of us here already have something planned or at least have an idea of where they are going."



"I'm still working on that, actually. I don't know exactly what I want to accomplish."

**Riven: Stay still.**



"You can't win this battle, knight. Surrender now, and *maybe* you'll be stripped of your title and sent back to Berebia. Otherwise I'll kill you myself."

Sprinkle sprinkle white powder~

**Daniel uses Concoction on Christopher**

Up to 15HP restored

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The priest began his poisoning shenanigans again - this time he moved away and pointed his staff at Olson. The cavalier got a cloud of poison at his face.

**Priest A vs Olson**

Poison hit:  $\{30+[(10-2)\times 5]+6\}-(3\times 2) = 30+46-6 = 70$

Hit roll: 59, hit!

Olson is Poisoned!

The knight taunted by Gregor scoffed.

**"I ain't be workin' with demon lovers, I be killin' them! Watch!"**

And with those words, he thrustured his heavy lance at Valor's stomach, but he missed. Valor then slashed at the armor rather ineffectively.

**Knight B vs Valor**

Hit:  $85+15-10-5-28 = 57$

Hit roll: 86, miss!

Valor counters!

Hit:  $113+10+5-15-8 = 105$ , autohit!

Damage:  $14-1-13 = 0!$

Valor counters again!  
Hit:  $113+10+5-15-8 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14-1-13 = 0$ !

Suddenly an arrow struck Valor's chest.

**Archer C vs Valor**

Hit:  $99-28 = 71$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $18-7 = 11$ dmg

Suddenly enemies began to show up around the corner and Myrmidon C wasted no time - his sword went at Daniel who easily dodged the blow and then stabbed the myrmidon twice with ease.

**Myrmidon C vs Daniel**

Hit:  $117-10-10-46 = 51$   
Hit roll: 77, miss!

Daniel retaliates!  
Hit:  $129+10+10-29 = 120$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14-5 = 9$ dmg

Daniel attacks again!  
Hit:  $129+10+10-29 = 120$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $14-5 = 9$ dmg

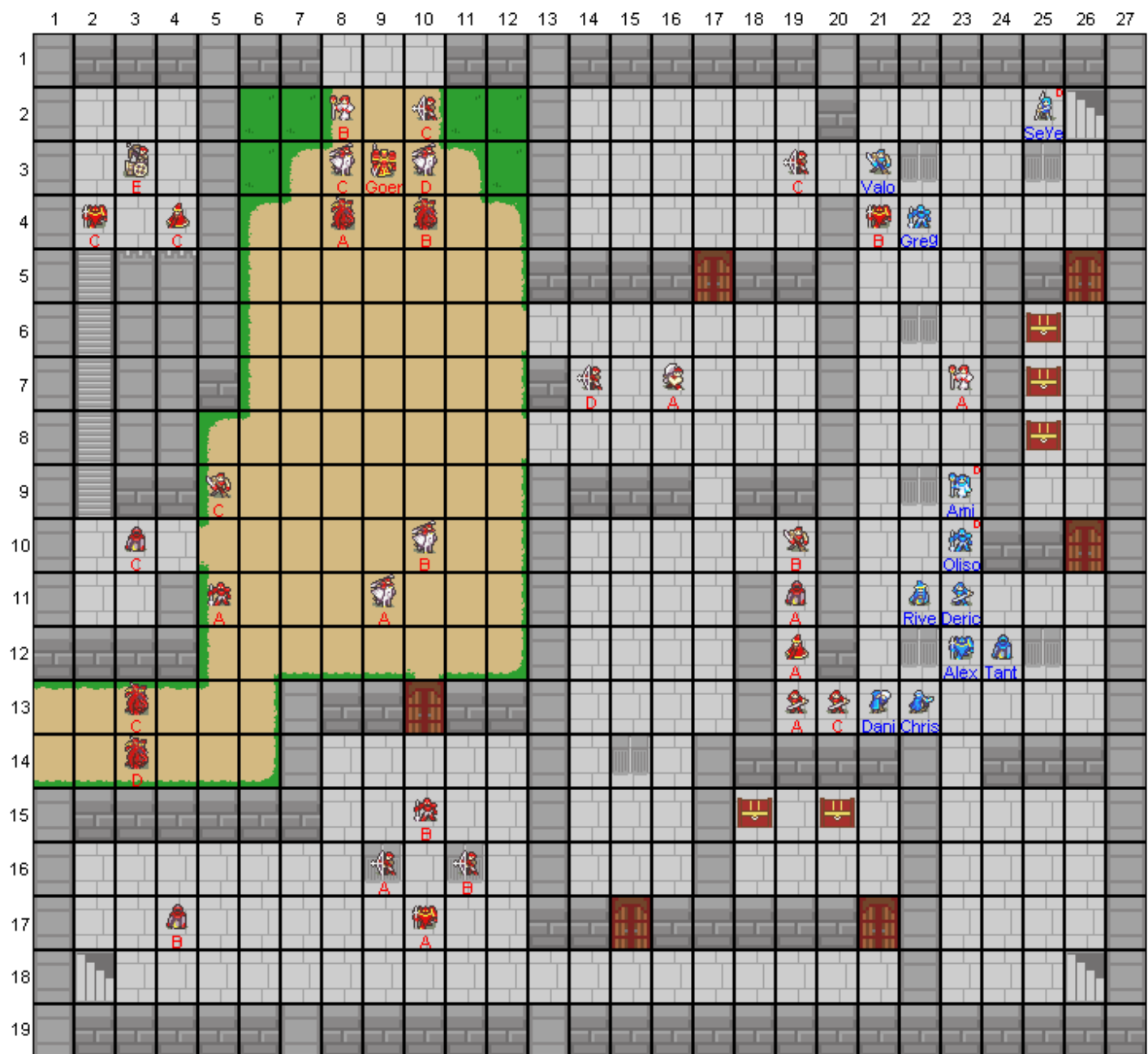
# ~~Player Turn 4~~

## Poison rolls

Daniel: 3

Derick: 4

Olison: 2



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Alexander Jorinn: 5/29</p> <p>Ami Storm: 13/24 <b>Dismounted</b></p> <p>Christopher Shields: 15/23</p> <p>Daniel: 19/25 <b>Poison (3/5)</b></p> <p>Derick: 1/27 <b>Poison (4/5)</b></p> <p>Gregor von Hexham: 29/29</p> <p>Olison Eul: 24/26 <b>Dismounted Poison (4/5)</b></p> <p>Riven: 12/23</p> <p>Seyena Ikane: 11/26 <b>Dismounted</b></p> <p>Tantalos Forsaken: 6/25</p> <p>Valor Inara: 2/26</p> | <p>Myrmidon A: 26/26</p> <p>Myrmidon C: 8/26</p> <p>Archer A: 25/25</p> <p>Archer B: 25/25</p> <p>Archer C: 25/25</p> <p>Archer C': 15/25</p> <p>Archer D: 25/25</p> <p>Archer E: 25/25</p> <p>Knight A: 30/30</p> <p>Knight B: 18/30</p> <p>Knight C: 30/30</p> <p>Halberdier A: 27/27</p> <p>Halberdier B: 27/27</p> <p>Pegasus Rider A: 23/23</p> <p>Pegasus Rider B: 23/23</p> | <p>Pegasus Rider D: 23/23</p> <p>Wyvern Rider A: 31/31</p> <p>Wyvern Rider B: 31/31</p> <p>Wyvern Rider C: 31/31</p> <p>Wyvern Rider D: 31/31</p> <p>Swordsman B: 28/28</p> <p>Swordsman C: 28/28</p> <p>Fighter: 29/29</p> <p>Priest A: 21/21</p> <p>Priest B: 21/21</p> <p>Mage A: 26/26</p> <p>Mage C: 26/26</p> <p>Shaman A: 25/25</p> <p>Shaman B: 25/25</p> <p>Shaman C: 25/25</p> |



"Valor, after the archer! I'll take care of this knave."



"With pleasure!" Valor snarled, leaping at the unfortunate marksman.

**Valor: Move to 20,3! Call forth Critzocoatl to slay the archer!**

**Gregor: Move to (21,3).**



"The only demons I see here are you and your fellow attack dogs. You will never harm any more of my friends again!"

**Gregor: STAB the boastful knight!**

Chris got back to his feet.



"...Thanks. Sorry for causing you trouble, Daniel."



"And by the way, duck."

As soon as the thief did so, the spy shot over his head toward the swordsman attacking him.

**Chris x-bows Swordsman C.**

**Ami head to 24,11 and heal Derick**

Chris looked over.



"Good to see you, Ami! It's great that you're here, but how did you get here?"

He was curious, since the rest hadn't followed them through the back way.





"Through the sewers and arrows. Had to leave Tenebra behind."

Chris shook his head.



"Through the sewers, huh... that's not good. Well, if we can bail Prixima out of this mess she'll owe you and your team a bath, at the very least, and clean clothes."

He brightened up.



"Forget that, though. I'm just happy you're here. I was worried for a bit there after I got taken down by a mage that I was going to die without seeing you again. Getting from here to the front door to let the rest of the team in... the situation looked pretty hopeless."



"Valor, I'm right behind you!" Seyena said, coming up behind him.

**Seyena: Move to 22, 3, and help call forth Valor's critcacockil with ze supports**

Valor went after Archer C and cut him down with single slash of his sword.

#### Valor vs Archer C

Hit:  $113+5-23 = 95$   
Hit roll: 11, hit! Crit roll: 33!  
Damage:  $14-9 = 5 \times 3 = 15\text{dmg}$

Then Gregor attacked Knight B with his lance, stabbing once. The heavy spear struck Gregor's chest but the soldier continued his assault and stabbed the knight once more.

#### Gregor vs Knight B

Hit:  $107+5-8 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $19-13 = 6\text{dmg}$

Knight B retaliates!  
Hit:  $85-5-25 = 55$   
Hit roll: 40, hit!  
Damage:  $20-11 = 9\text{dmg}$

Gregor attacks again!  
Hit:  $107+5-8 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $19-13 = 6\text{dmg}$

Chris put a bolt on the crossbow and sent it flying. The bolt struck the Myrmidon's face with such force that blood (and pinky brain matter) exploded in small area as the poor

swordfighter fell onto his back.

#### Chris vs Myrmidon C

Hit:  $110+10-29 = 91$   
Hit roll: 88, hit! Crit roll: 10!  
Damage:  $16+2-5 = 13 \times 3 = 39$  dmg

In the meanwhile, Ami tapped Derick with her wand, revitalizing him, while Seyena moved closer to Valor.

#### Ami heals Derick

$10+15 =$  Up to 25HP healed



"Gotcha..." Valor turned to watch Gregor engage the Knight, since he himself was now safe from harm for the moment.

Tantallos nodded to Riven and looked to the side for a moment.



"Hmmm...well if you wish you could join me when I return to the castle of the Forsakens, after all I will need to claim the throne soon..and it seems Chris will be willing to join me to learn more about the Forsakens culture."



"....Just give me a moment, I need to get some energy."

The shaman snapped his fingers and in a few seconds, the worm of dark energy emerged on the other side of the wall to attack the Swordsman.

#### Tantallos: Move 21, 10 and attack Swordsman B

The worm ate away on Swordsman B's health.

#### Tantallos vs Swordsman B

Hit:  $112+10-18 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17+2-2 = 17$  dmg  
 $17/2 = 8$  HP restored!

Olison, in a panic, waved his open arm widely in attempt to force the cloud away to no avail. Immediately he hunched over in a fit of pain.



"Urgh.. Poison? Damn it, you'll pay for that!"

**Olison: 23,8. Iron Lance to Priest.**



"NOW I feel a bit better."

**Derick: move 22,12**

Alexander looked over to the corridor, glaring at the Berebians within.



"I'll block off that corridor." He talked as he moved, ripping open a packet of vulnerary with his teeth and letting the powder sprinkle over his burns.

**Alexander: Move to 20, 13 and take a vullamarerary.**

Chris nodded to the knight as he clanked up.



"No offense, but it's nice to have a wall of steel between me and our enemies. I'll back you up to the best of my ability."

He sort of knew Alex - or at least knew of Alex - as they both worked under Prixima, but they had never really worked together due to their extremely different specialties.

Alexander had never paid much attention to things outside of his duty and his direct (in his group of knights) comrades, who he'd made friends of. He'd known of Chris before - but now that they were in the same group, that put Chris as a direct comrade.



"No offense taken. Being a wall of steel is my specialty."



"Got it. Hey, I have a drop of Pure Water left. If you give me a minute to find it, I can use it on you. Should help you out against those mages, for a little while at least."



"Yes, thank you, I'll most definitely need that."

Chris nodded.



"Just let me find it, and I'll be right with you..."

### Daniel: Move to 26.11

Olison thrust his lance at the priest.

"Urgh... how do you dare to attack a holy man, gah-!" And that's when Olison stabbed again and the priest collapsed.

#### Olison vs Priest A

Hit:  $101 - 28 = 73$   
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage:  $18 - 4 = 14\text{dmg}$   
  
Olison strikes again!  
Hit:  $101 - 28 = 73$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $18 - 4 = 14\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Alexander used some healing powder.

#### Alexander uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP healed

Olison pulled the lance from the Priest and watched him collapse. A minute later, he raised his hands in a sort of praying gesture.



"A man of the cloth that turns to inflicting poison on others is anathema. You'll find your peace beyond."



"What do you mean claim the throne soon? Is there to be a contest over it soon?"



"Oh, that looks handy..."

Riven then dashed over to the wall and smirked at the ~~mage~~ shaman with nothing of use to her on the other side.



"You're out of your league, you know."

**Riven: Move to 21,11, blast ~~mage~~ lootless shaman.**

Riven cast her Flux onto enemy shaman, and he responded the same way, knocking the lady witch out.

**Riven vs Shaman A**

Hit:  $110-21 = 89$   
Hit roll: 87, hit!  
Damage:  $21-9 = 12\text{dmg}$

Shaman A retaliates!  
Hit:  $99-21 = 78$   
Hit roll: 7, hit!  
 $22-9 = 13\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Alexander got electrocuted, again.

**Mage A vs Alexander**

Hit:  $102-10-14 = 78$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $17-2 = 15\text{dmg}$

Having been electrocuted, Alexander keeled over.



"Oh, Ffff..."

And then the enemies spilled into the hallway.

Swordsman B went after Chris - the steel sword almost cut him down, but the spy prevailed and then rewarded Swordsman B's skills with bolt to the stomach, killing him on spot.

**Swordsman B vs Chris**

Hit:  $99-21 = 78$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Damage:  $18-4 = 14\text{dmg}$

Chris counters!  
Hit:  $110-18 = 92$   
Hit roll: 74, hit!  
Damage:  $16+2-6 = 12\text{dmg}$

After that, Shaman A took his place, and flung the dark glob at Derick, but the myrmidon easily dodged that one. Right afterwards, Myrmidon A swung his sword at Derick, cutting at his left knee. Shamsirman was so delighted by this that he separated Myrmidon A's head from his body.

**Shaman A vs Derick**

Hit:  $99 - 35 - 15 = 49$

Hit roll: 56, miss!

**Myrmidon A vs Derick**

Hit:  $117 - 35 - 15 = 67$

Hit roll: 48, hit!

Damage:  $14 - 7 = 7\text{dmg}$

Derick counters!

Hit:  $108 - 29 = 79$

Hit roll: 56, hit! Crit roll: 17!

Damage:  $16 + 2 - 5 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

In meanwhile, Knight B clunked toward... Seyena, and with mighty stab, he brought her down.

**Knight B vs Seyena**

Hit:  $85 - 15 - 15 - 27 = 28$

Hit roll: 7, hit!

Damage:  $20 - 7 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Meanwhile, in the other part of the hallways...**

"...should be enough, no?" A mercenary asked, ascending stairs right after young girl. She giggled.



"Bro, you forget what Great Night Mother says!"



"Eh, how was it again... 'If you can get extra loot, take it?'"



"Right! Oh... the combat is still going on here?" Both of the duo listened for a moment.



"Seems like it. We should return."



"Oh, no, please! One more storeroom! The last one got you this shiny red stone! What if there's another one in next room?" The other sighed with disapproving stare.



"Pretty please?" At that, the man rolled his eyes.

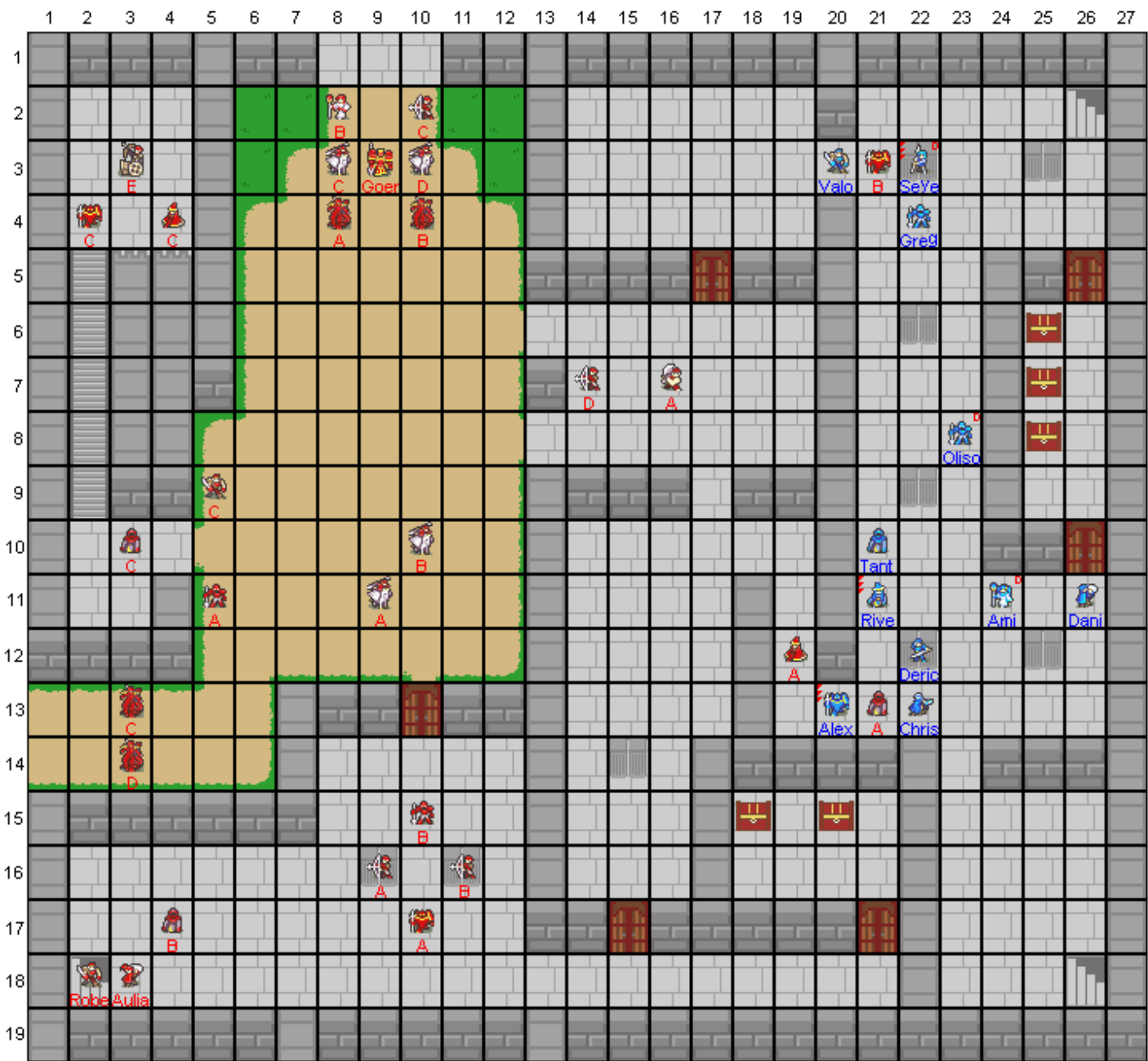


"Okay, Aulia... One more storeroom. Then we get outta here, sis. And it's better be worth the money I had to give those Berebians in exchange for getting us in..."

~~Player Turn 5~~

Poison rolls

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Daniel: | 4 |
| Derick: | 4 |
| Olison: | 5 |



Weather:

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| <b>Mercs:</b> | <b>Enemies:</b> |
|---------------|-----------------|

Alexander Jorinn: -/29 **3/3**  
Ami Storm: 13/24 **Dismounted**  
Christopher Shields: 1/23  
Daniel: 15/25 **Poison (2/5)**  
Derick: 15/27 **Poison (3/5)**  
Gregor von Hexham: 20/29  
Olison Eul: 19/26 **Dismounted Poison (3/5)**  
Riven: -/23 **3/3**  
Seyena Ikane: -/26 **3/3 Dismounted**  
Tantallos Forsaken: 14/25  
Valor Inara: 2/26

Archer A: 25/25  
Archer B: 25/25  
Archer C: 25/25  
Archer D: 25/25  
Archer E: 25/25  
Knight A: 30/30  
Knight B: 6/30  
Knight C: 30/30  
Halberdier A: 27/27  
Halberdier B: 27/27  
Pegasus Rider A: 23/23  
Pegasus Rider B: 23/23  
Pegasus Rider C: 23/23  
Pegasus Rider D: 23/23  
Wyvern Rider A: 31/31

Wyvern Rider B: 31/31  
Wyvern Rider C: 31/31  
Wyvern Rider D: 31/31  
Swordsman C: 28/28  
Fighter: 29/29  
Priest B: 21/21  
Mage A: 26/26  
Mage C: 26/26  
Shaman A: 13/25  
Shaman B: 25/25  
Shaman C: 25/25  
Baron Goering: 40/40  
Robert: 28/28  
Aulia: 24/24

Gregor turned to face the knight, with fury in his eyes.



"You'd flee from a duel to attack a wounded woman? You are truly without honor."

**Gregor: Move to (21,4). FINISH HIM.**

The spear went with a loud clank right into the neck of the Knight, who fell over with a loud crash.

#### Gregor vs Knight B

107+5-8 = 104, autohit! Crit roll: 2!  
Damage: 19-13 = 6x3 = 18dmg

Seyena groaned, sliding down the pillars and leaving a bloody remnant behind.



"Just... give me a vulnerary, I can still fight..."

Gregor yanked his lance free of the knight's corpse, trembling. He had failed again.



"Valor, help me carry her. We're going to get the two of you to see Ami and get those wounds patched up."

**Valor: Move to 21,3 and rescue Seyena!**



"I'm all out of vulnerary. Let's get you to Ami." Valor lifted Seyena off of the pillar, and set her on his back.





"I'm sorry, Valor. I didn't think that knight would attack her so suddenly."



"You couldn't have known, Gregor. Besides, you took him down, and it shouldn't be a huge problem getting Seyena to Ami. We'll get through this whole thing, just you watch."



: "You'll forgive me if I don't share your optimism." He shook his head. "How do you do it, Valor? You seem so confident, even when you're bleeding all over the floor. Meanwhile my hands are shaking and I feel sick to my stomach."



"Not exactly. To claim the throne I need to be at least a druid, you know, I need to be capable of leading them and defending the place. And if it that was not enough, they expect me to be a Dark Druid too."

The shaman nodded and sighed when he saw the other shaman being taken down.



"Yes, draining energy can be quite handy.. also do you need some help over there?"



"Oh dear."

**Ami: To 22,11 and heal the dying Riven**



*Damn it. I can't get to Alexander with this guy in the way. I'll just have to take him out.*

**Chris attacks the shaman in front of him with his crossbow and also adds that, as usual, he does +2 damage for attacking a man and has +10 to his crit chance. And he has Cancel. >.>**

Sparkly magic is gooo~

**Ami heals Riven**

10+15 /2 = Up to 12HP restored

Christopher in the same moment bolt'd the enemy shaman to death.

**Christopher vs Shaman A**

Hit: 110+10-14 = 106, autohit!

Damage: 16+2-5 = 13dmg

**Daniel: Move to 21.12**

**Olison: Move to 23,13**

**Derick: Stay put since we need Daniel to steal that thingy.**



"Hey Chris? That question you asked us about what would we regret if we died. I thought about it when I got downed a little while ago, and I think I know what my answer is now."



"Ah. And what is your answer?"

Chris was curious to know.

**Tantallos: Move 24, 12 and wait for the Mage A show up.**



"Not being able to travel and go on adventures with you guys anymore. I mean, we've really grown into quite a team over the past week, and well... I really would like to get to know everyone better."



"That's a good answer. I'm coming along, too. I think it would be much more interesting to be along with all of you than to stay here."



"That's good to hear, I don't know where we'd be without you and Gregor."



"...Probably still working for that one reckless fool, if he didn't lead you all into an early grave..."

Chris sighed.



"Maybe... You know, the guy was a lot saner back in the old days when Sarius was still alive."

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Mage A continued with assault - and stumbled upon whole group of mercenaries. Not wasting a moment, he sent a thunder at Chris; the spy skillfully evaded the magic and then sent a bolt into the magician's side.

#### Mage A vs Chris

Hit:  $102-5-10-29 = 58$

Hit roll: 78, miss!

Chris counterattacks!

Hit:  $110+5+10-18 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16+2-4 = 14$  dmg

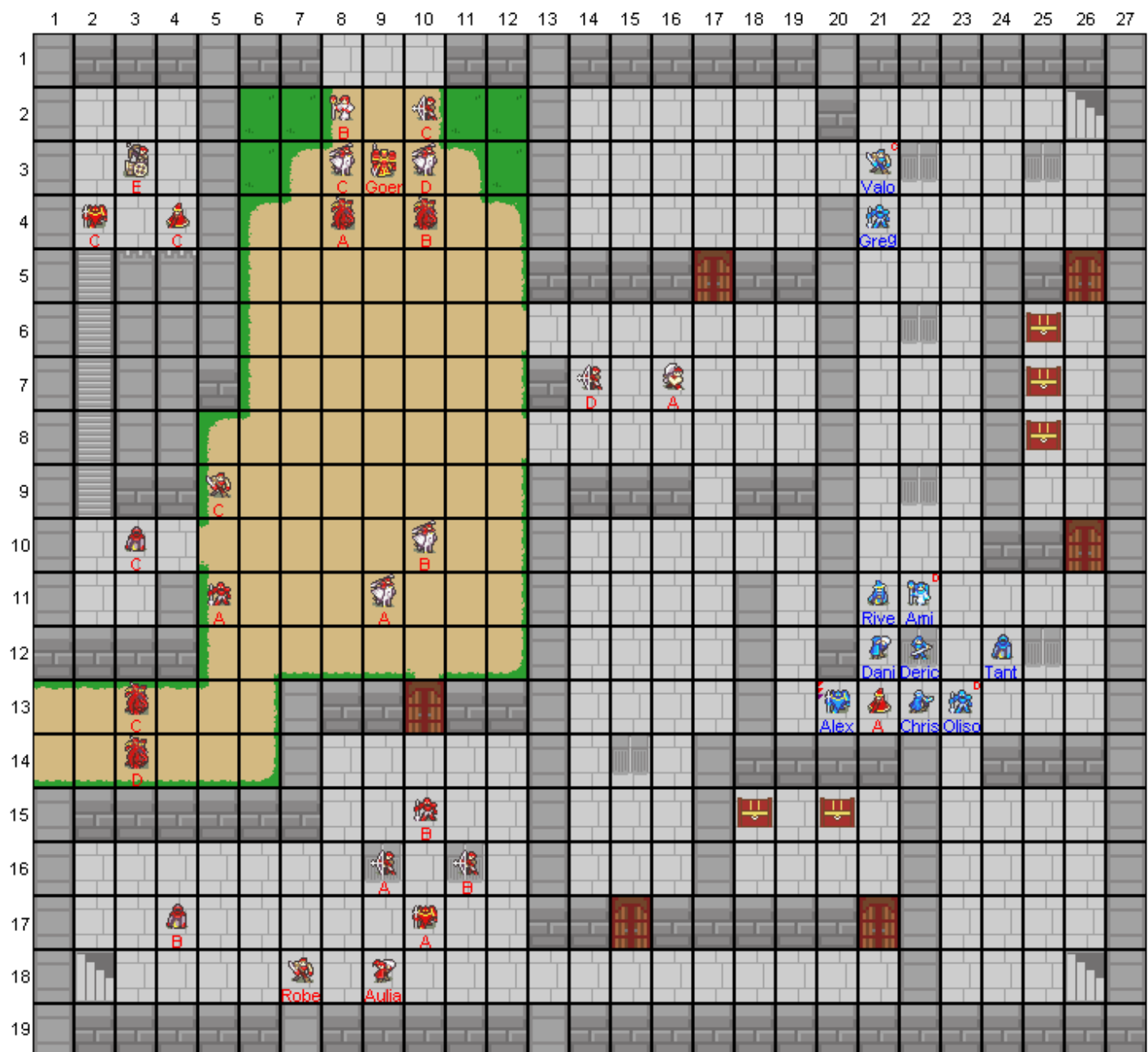
# ~~Player Turn 6~~

## Poison rolls

Daniel: 5

Derick: 4

Olison: 2



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Alexander Jorinn: -/29 <b>3/3</b></p> <p>Ami Storm: 13/24 <b>Dismounted</b></p> <p>Christopher Shields: 1/23</p> <p>Daniel: 10/25 <b>Poison (1/5)</b></p> <p>Derick: 11/27 <b>Poison (2/5)</b></p> <p>Gregor von Hexham: 20/29</p> <p>Olison Eul: 17/26 <b>Dismounted Poison (2/5)</b></p> <p>Riven: 12/23</p> <p>Seyena Ikane: -/26 <b>3/3</b></p> <p>^ <b>Dismounted Carried by: Valor Inara</b></p> <p>Tantallos Forsaken: 14/25</p> <p>Valor Inara: 2/26 <b>Carrying: Seyena Ikane</b></p> | <p>Archer A: 25/25</p> <p>Archer B: 25/25</p> <p>Archer C: 25/25</p> <p>Archer D: 25/25</p> <p>Archer E: 25/25</p> <p>Knight A: 30/30</p> <p>Knight C: 30/30</p> <p>Halberdier A: 27/27</p> <p>Halberdier B: 27/27</p> <p>Pegasus Rider A: 23/23</p> <p>Pegasus Rider B: 23/23</p> <p>Pegasus Rider C: 23/23</p> <p>Pegasus Rider D: 23/23</p> <p>Wyvern Rider A: 31/31</p> | <p>Wyvern Rider B: 31/31</p> <p>Wyvern Rider C: 31/31</p> <p>Wyvern Rider D: 31/31</p> <p>Swordsman C: 28/28</p> <p>Fighter: 29/29</p> <p>Priest B: 21/21</p> <p>Mage A: 12/26</p> <p>Mage C: 26/26</p> <p>Shaman B: 25/25</p> <p>Shaman C: 25/25</p> <p>Baron Goering: 40/40</p> <p>Robert: 28/28</p> <p>Aulia: 24/24</p> |



"I'm sure he used to be a nice guy, maybe even reliable. Some people just can't handle having authority. It makes them... paranoid, at the very least. Excuse me a moment."

**Chris stabbed the mage who just attacked him with his dagger.**

Chris stabbed the mage, who died.

**Chris vs Mage A**

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| Hit: $115+5+10-18 = 112$ , autohit! |
| Damage: $15+2-4 = 13$ dmg           |

Valor smiled weakly at Gregor.



"Well... There's a bunch of us. And we're damn good fighters, all of us. Well, not Ami, but she's a healer, so that's okay. The thing is, even if I worry about what happens if I screw up... It'll happen if it happens. So, I have to trust that things are going to go the way I want, and if they don't, it's just too bad." Valor winced, grimacing again. "Y'know, now that you mention it, this really freakin' hurts. Let's get moving."

**Valor: Move to 22,7!**



"I'm not doubting anyone's skill or courage. It's just that this is by far the most dangerous battle we've faced yet. I just worry too much, I guess. But you're right, let's keep moving."

Gregor walked along with Valor until he noticed the group of his friends ahead. He smiled in sheer relief.



"I can't believe it...did everyone make it?"

**Gregor: Move to (21,9)**



"I HOPE we get paid well for defeating a whole castle, or I will find a way to bring these corpses in front of that guy's house."

Alexander groaned, still attempting to get up but still unable to do so. He attempted to

reach his vulnerary- but it was pinned under him.



"Ugh... can't reach my vulnerary... and can't get up, either... urgh. Wonderful. Just... wonderful."

**Ami: Head to 21,13**



"Don't worry, you'll be fine."

**Ami healed Alexander.**

Alexander begins to get up, climbing with the walls next to him until eventually he's completely up.



"I'm sure others more needed your help... Not that much can be done about it."

Alexander picked his lance up.

Olison looked about to the rest of the group, affirming that each one was okay.



"So it is, Gregor. It's practically miraculous we've managed it."



"Let's recuperate and move forward. Alex, go ahead and rest for now, I'll take point."

**Olison: Move to 19,12. Equip Javelin.**

Even more healing.

**Ami heals Alexander**

10+15 /2 = Up to 12HP restored



"I need not to *rest*, I need only to be able to move. I shall only need a

small amount of time."



*Maybe Valor is on to something after all..*



"I'll be right behind you, Olson."



"Pace yourself, Jorinn. I refuse to have an ally die where I could serve in replacement."



"Then it is a good thing I do not intend to die."

**Derick: Move 19,13**

**Tantallos: Move 23,12.**



"I doubt anyone will be able to rest or relax so soon."



"Your body might not agree. I will not see another join the ranks of those who fall to such zeal."

Olson exhaled sharply.



"Just know your limits. That's all I ask. It would be pointless for anyone to fall here of all places."



"Yes, *especially* here. But it would be worse if I allowed this place to fall. It is my *duty* to protect it. I cannot fail my duty; I shall not *allow* myself to do that ever again. And as such. I must move, and I must fight."



"Hm. Then tell me, is this duty to this hunk of rock? Or is to the Lady? Or your comrades? A dead soldier is just another fallen corpse to the halls of a castle, one whose protectors will be replaced. But to the Lady and to your Unit, a dead soldier is another asset, another protector lost. We'll be doing these people no favors by taking a step too far. Castles can be retaken, lives cannot."



".....My duty's to my comrades. And though a comrade dead is truly the worst of things... If I stay, what if a comrade dies because of it? What if the castle is not taken and a comrade falls because of that? What if one of myriad things that could go wrong from not fighting when there are those who are in *worse* condition than me are doing so happens? Who would I have to blame but myself? Having a comrade die is a horrible thing, and I'll do what it takes to prevent that from happening and to follow my duty."



"A noble outlook. I pray you can handle it better than I did long ago. But those that are still alive in this castle can no doubt last long enough for us to find them. In fact, I wager our movements are providing ample distraction enough for others to escape. If we stay a steady course and rescue those we come across, we can save many more lives than if we try to evict the invaders."



"This assumes those here are not also fighting- and besides, we are not getting anywhere without fighting, rescue or no."

Alexander paused.



"And I'll be dead before I allow Berebia to take more from me."

Olison visibly winced at Alex's last statement. He spoke a bit more lightly than usual.



"I apologize. The Duk-... I mean, the Berebians will answer, this I promise."





"...Yes, I have a particular vengeance to deal... but I don't want to repeat that happening, so it is better to focus on the battle than its perpetrators.... though it'll be a few seconds before I can move."



"Yes... That's for the best."

Olison nodded before moving past Alex and further down the hallway.

**Daniel: Move down a square and ask Chris for his lockpicks**

**If Chris can give him the lockpicks this turn, do so. Otherwise it'll have to wait. :|**



"'Expect' you to? Are you a prince or somesuch? And what's a Dark Druid? I don't think I've ever heard of them."

**Riven: Move to 23,14.**

Daniel got lockpicks from Chris while rest of the group prepared to move to another room.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The thieving duo move further east. The girl crouched in front of the door and peeked through the keyhole.



"What is it? Treasure room?"



"No... I... I think it's a hallway or corridor of some sorts. Let's check the next door."

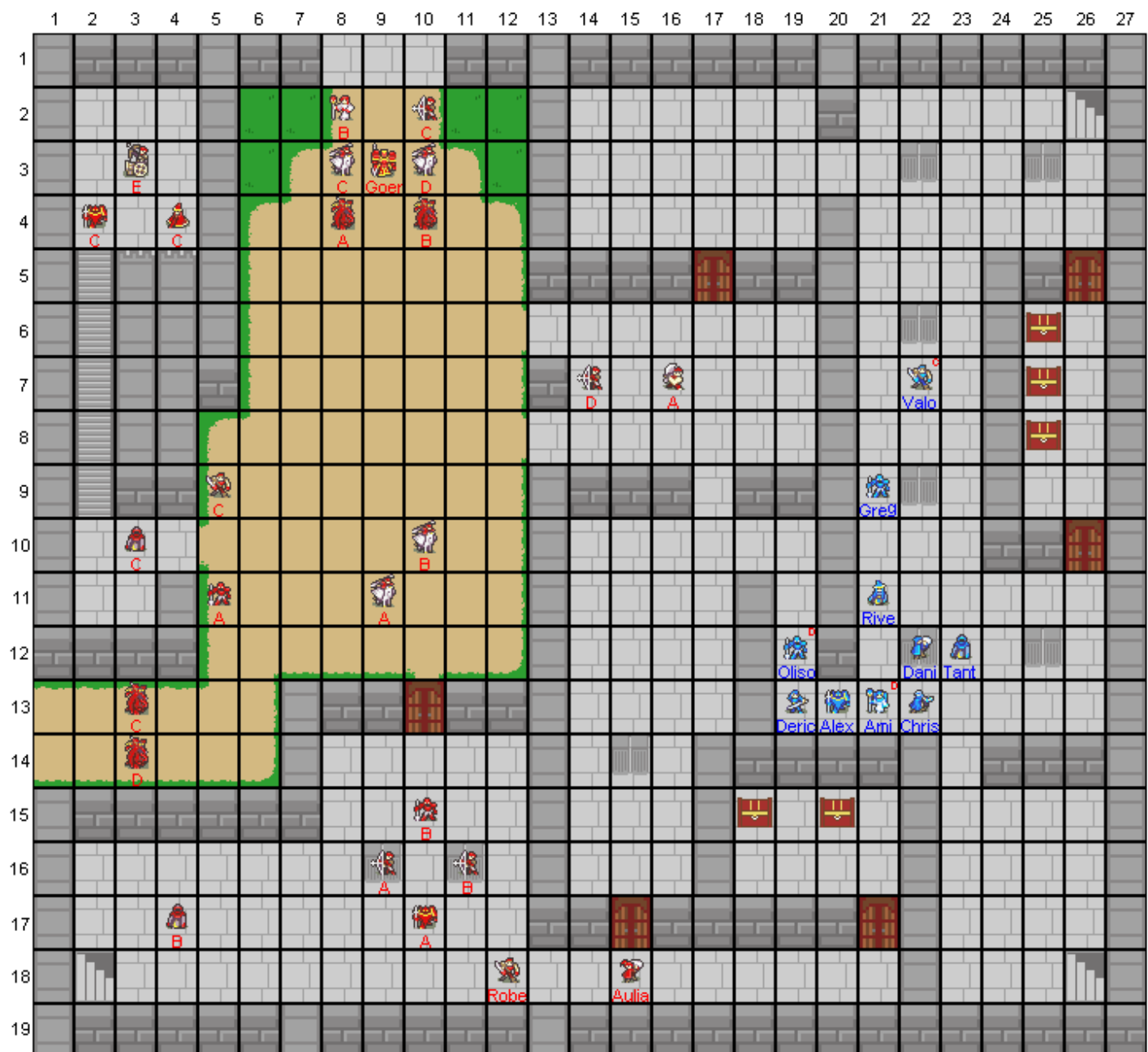
# ~~Player Turn 7~~

## Poison rolls

Daniel feels better

Derick: 3

Olison: 1



Weather:

| Mercs:                                           |  | Enemies:               |                       |
|--------------------------------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 12/29                          |  | Archer A: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider A: 31/31 |
| Ami Storm: 13/24 <b>Dismounted</b>               |  | Archer B: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider B: 31/31 |
| Christopher Shields: 1/23                        |  | Archer C: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider C: 31/31 |
| Daniel: 10/25                                    |  | Archer D: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider D: 31/31 |
| Derick: 8/27 <b>Poison (1/5)</b>                 |  | Archer E: 25/25        | Swordsman C: 28/28    |
| Gregor von Hexham: 20/29                         |  | Knight A: 30/30        | Fighter: 29/29        |
| Olison Eul: 16/26 <b>Dismounted Poison (1/5)</b> |  | Knight C: 30/30        | Priest B: 21/21       |
| Riven: 12/23                                     |  | Halberdier A: 27/27    | Mage C: 26/26         |
| Seyena Ikane: -/26 <b>3/3</b>                    |  | Halberdier B: 27/27    | Shaman B: 25/25       |
| ^ <b>Dismounted Carried by: Valor Inara</b>      |  | Pegasus Rider A: 23/23 | Shaman C: 25/25       |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 14/25                        |  | Pegasus Rider B: 23/23 | Baron Goering: 40/40  |
| Valor Inara: 2/26 <b>Carrying: Seyena Ikane</b>  |  | Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 | Robert: 28/28         |
|                                                  |  | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 | Aulia: 24/24          |

**Valor: Move to 23,11, and release Seyena onto 22,11**



"Ami! Seyena could use your assistance!"

Alexander ripped open another packet of vulnerary as he shoved his way to the front, sprinkling it along his wounds.

**Alexander: Move to 19,10 use a vulramalamadingdongerary**



"It would make sense if I were at least *somewhere* near the front, to absorb blows taken, though I don't unfortunately move that fast..."

**Riven: Move to 23,17.**

Gregor jogged ahead, nodding politely to those he passed.



"Glad to see everyone made it here in one piece...more-or-less."

**Gregor: Move to (20,13).**

Omnomnomnom.

**Alexander uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP healed



"You got that right. I am a prince. And Dark Druids are almost a legend as we just heard about one, it is said he had the power superior to the normal druids, but sadly his curiosity took over his mind, giving the opportunity to the ancient magic to control him.. and now the Forsakens expect me to be a "not so crazy" Dark Druid."

**Tantalos: Move 23, 16.**

**Olison: Move to 17,9. Switch to sword. Use venerable-erary**



"On it!"

**Ami: Head to 22,10 and heal Seyena.**



"Nothing to it."



"Thanks Ami. I owe ya one." Valor breathed a sigh of relief.

Seyena slowly stood up after quickly thanking Ami, looking at Valor with concern.



"Valor, you don't look too good either, Ami should take a look at you as well..."

**Derick: Head back to 21,12**

Sparkly magics, sparkly powders.

**Olison uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP healed

**Ami heals Seyena**

$10 + 15 / 2 =$  Up to 12HP healed

Valor breathed a sigh of relief.



"No, no, I'll be alright. There are others who need it more than me. I'll be just fine."



"Who the healer here? You are dead on your feet. Now stay still till I can heal you."



"I said I'll be fine. There are others who are in greater need than me. I can afford to wait a little while longer."



"I said..."



"SIT!"



"Please."



"..." Valor sat, half sullen, half bewildered.

Seyena took a slow step back from Ami.



*Did her eyes... just... glow?* She thought, confused and somewhat frightened.



"Huh?"

Gregor was around the corner and missed this, but he felt a slight and unexplainable chill go down his spine. He ignored it and continued to push forward.

**Chris moves to 19,11 and uses a Vulnerary on himself.**

**Daniel to 26,11. Lockpick Open-sesame.**

\*SNORT\*

**Christopher uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

The door got unlocked.

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The two soldiers didn't wait with responding to Olison's trespassing. Berebian Fighter swung his deadly-looking axe at the cavalier, cutting into his arm, and Olison double-slashed at the burly man. Moment later, an arrow struck Olison's left leg.

**Axeman vs Olison**

Hit:  $84+5-15-31 = 43$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $23-1-9 = 13\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!

Hit:  $111+15-15 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16+1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

Olison attacks again!

Hit:  $111+15-15 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16+1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

#### Archer D vs Olison

Hit:  $99+5-31 = 73$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $18-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

"Sir, reporting!"



"Go on. Did our men got rid of those leftovers?"

"Err, actually, sir... those leftovers seems to be, um..."



"I see the answer on your face, lieutenant. Maybe I have underestimated them." He whistled, gaining the attention of two pegasi riders on the other side of the courtyard, and pointed them at the doors.



"You two on wyverns, go help them too." The wyvern riders saluted and moved their mounts toward the doorways.

#### Meanwhile...



"Eeee! I see chests! I see chests on the other side!" The girl giggled and quickly unlocked the door.



"Great. Loot those chests and we will be on our way. I think the combat is drawing close."



"Gee, why you're so impatient?" Aulia sighed and pushed the door open.

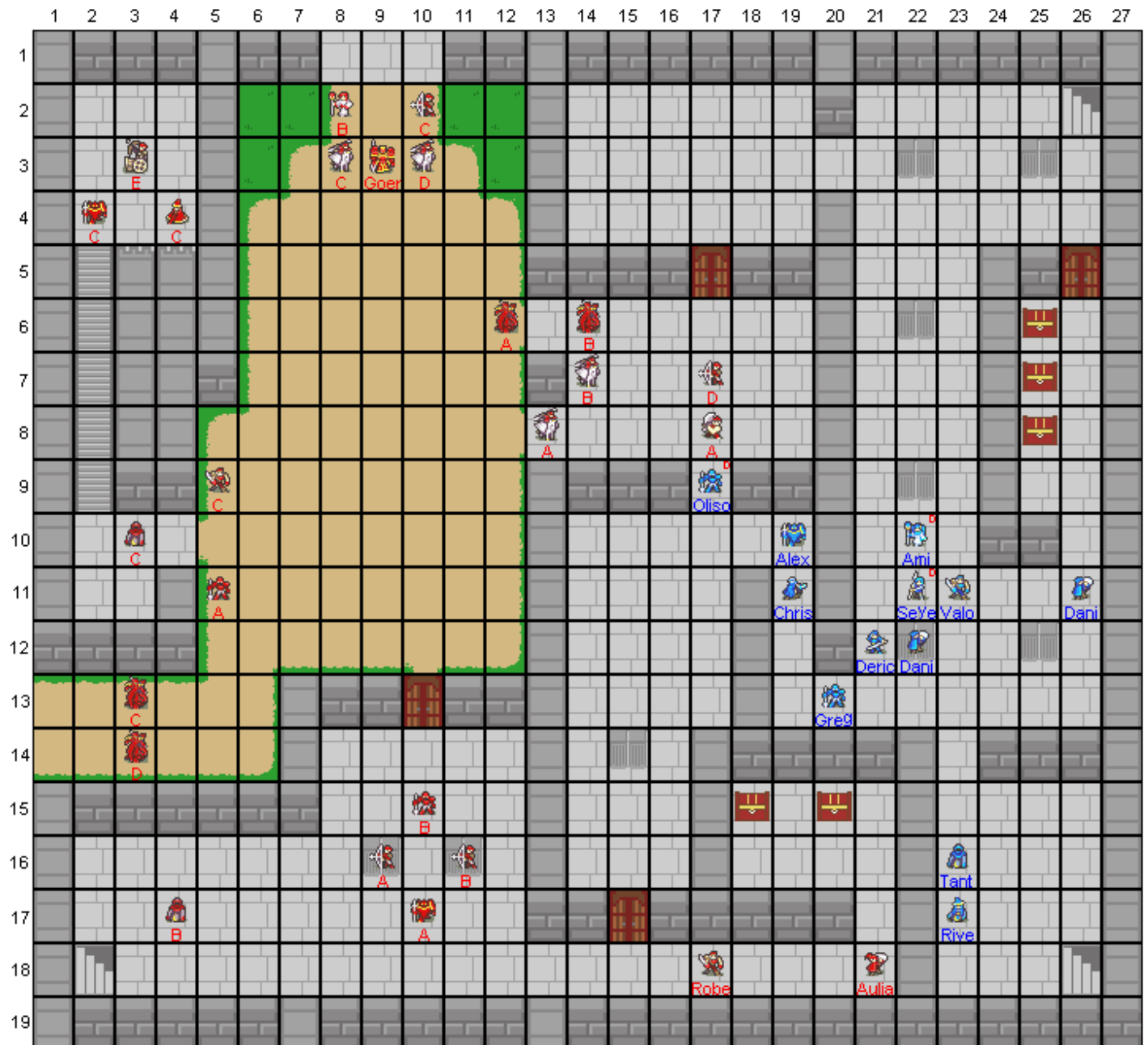


"Smells of dust and metal. Oh please, not another armory..."

## ~~Player Turn 8~~

### Poison rolls

Derick feels better  
Olison feels better



Weather:

| Mercs:                                |  | Enemies:              |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 22/29               |  | Archer A: 25/25       |  |
| Ami Storm: 13/24 <b>Dismounted</b>    |  | Archer B: 25/25       |  |
| Christopher Shields: 11/23            |  | Archer C: 25/25       |  |
| Daniel: 10/25                         |  | Archer D: 25/25       |  |
| Derick: 8/27                          |  | Archer E: 25/25       |  |
| Gregor von Hexham: 20/29              |  | Knight A: 30/30       |  |
| Olison Eul: 4/26 <b>Dismounted</b>    |  | Knight C: 30/30       |  |
| Riven: 12/23                          |  | Halberdier A: 27/27   |  |
| Seyena Ikane: 12/26 <b>Dismounted</b> |  | Halberdier B: 27/27   |  |
|                                       |  | Wyvern Rider A: 31/31 |  |
|                                       |  | Wyvern Rider B: 31/31 |  |
|                                       |  | Wyvern Rider C: 31/31 |  |
|                                       |  | Wyvern Rider D: 31/31 |  |
|                                       |  | Swordsman C: 28/28    |  |
|                                       |  | Fighter: 9/29         |  |
|                                       |  | Priest B: 21/21       |  |
|                                       |  | Mage C: 26/26         |  |
|                                       |  | Shaman B: 25/25       |  |

Tantallos Forsaken: 14/25  
Valor Inara: 2/26

Pegasus Rider A: 23/23  
Pegasus Rider B: 23/23  
Pegasus Rider C: 23/23  
Pegasus Rider D: 23/23

Shaman C: 25/25  
Baron Goering: 40/40  
Robert: 28/28  
Aulia: 24/24

**Ami: to 23,10 and heal Valor**



"There you go."

Another healing discharge of the staff.

**Ami heals Valor**

10+15 = Up to 25HP restored



"Time for some action, I hope the Plague Dragon will be willing to assist me on this strike."

The shaman placed his hands on the wall and launched the worm made of dark energy to the other side to attack the thief.

**Tantallos: Move 23, 18 and attack Aulia.**

Tantallos cast his magic. The worm sprung from the wall as Aulia ducked under it with a scream.

**Tantallos vs Aulia**

Hit:  $112+10-44 = 78$

Hit roll: 85, miss!



"Woah, what was that?"



"A magic trap, perhaps? Considering the owner of this castle is some powerful sorceress of sorts. Be more careful, Aulia."



..."That was a REALLY bad signal..."

Valor relaxed slightly as his wounds sealed.





"Thanks..." But something was still bothering him.

Valor leaned forward, staring at Ami's head with no respect for her personal space.



"..."



"Yes?"



"Earlier, just before you healed me, I thought... Nah, nevermind. It's stupid."



"Okay..."

**Valor: Move to 21,13. Try not to feel dumb about inspecting Ami for weird glyphs or glowing eyes that she clearly doesn't have.**

Seyena noticed Valor examine Ami, so she walked up beside him and began speaking in a quiet tone.



*"Did you see that too?"*

**Seyena: Move to 22, 13**

Valor shrugged, and kept his voice quiet.



"Honestly, I don't know what I saw. We're a little worse for wear at the moment, I'm not going to rule out the possibility we're seeing things."



"I think I hear voices on the other side of this wall...isn't that a storeroom of some sort?"

Gregor: Stay put, equip Iron Javelin.



"I'll back you up, Olson."

Chris moves to 17,10 and shoots the Axeman.



"Urgh. Thank you, Chris. Alex, looks like you're on point again."

**Olison: Move to 16, 11. Use last viscount-erary if I have one**

Alexander nods at Olison's suggestion of where to move, and promptly clanks over to fill in the doorway, readying his lance.



"Yes, I'll be in front, of course."

He is, however, glaring *daggers* at the enemies he is facing.

**Alexander: Move to 17,9**



"No thanks necessary. Really, when you think about it, this is just business as usual for the pair of us."

Olison managed a chuckle as he ruffled around for a Vulnerary.



"True enough. Though usually the jobs involved more sneaking than laying siege to castles."



"Laying siege to our employer's castle when someone else is trying to take it is definitely a new one for us."

Fighter have died. Crossbow bolt is suspected for blame, but who knows.

In the meanwhile, Olison ~~snorted~~ applied some white powders to himself.

**Olison uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP healed



"I... I'd suppose." Seyena looked somewhat confused, before sighing. *I can't be crazy, Valor definitely saw something...*



"Sorry, it's just... I thought I saw a mark appear on her cheek, and her eyes looked like they were glowing..." Valor shook his head sharply and forced a laugh. "That's ridiculous though. Tattoos don't come and go, and peoples eyes don't change color. Well, not that drastically. I was just seeing things. Obviously." It sounded like Valor was trying to convince himself as much as Seyena.



"Maybe it was just the reflection from her staff. It glows, right?" Seyena said, shrugging.

She paused for a moment, her expression softening.



"Anyway, thank you for carrying me to her in the first place, especially since you were wounded as well..."

Valor reddened noticeably.



"Ah, it was nothing. Any time you get in trouble, I'll be right there to pull you out of it."



"It was a little more than *nothing*." Seyena said, looking aside for a moment, before gaining a wry smile.



"But, I'll make sure to do the same when more cavaliers show up."



"I get the feeling I'm not going to live that one down for a while." Valor chuckled wryly. That had been a bad spot.



"One day... I'll be strong enough to stop a battalion of cavaliers. I'll be able to live a life of peace, secure in the knowledge that I can stop any bandit foolish enough to think my home is easy pickings. I'll never go hungry another night, once that day comes..." Valor closed his eyes, sighing. "All I have to do is fight my way to that future."

Gregor overheard Valor, and privately agreed. He wasn't like his father; he didn't want to be a soldier his entire life. Settling down somewhere peaceful sounded alright to him.

But for now...he was fairly certain that someone in the next room was trying to steal stuff.



"That seems like a worthy reason." Seyena seemed absorbed in thought, distracted from her own words as she said so. *Tantallos fights for the Plague Dragon. Valor fights to own a peaceful future. I don't know why I fight.*

Olison applied the white powders to himself, his wounds sealing in quick fashion.



"All the better, I was never one for sneaking anyway. And somehow I think this won't be the last time I'll be fighting down the halls of a castle. I think I'll chalk this one up as 'Practice'."

Chris nodded.



"You can't solve everything through, eh, 'non-violent' means. Sometimes you just have to get your hands bloody."



"Sadly I'm starting to think I'm getting better at killing than sneaking."

Olison shrugged back.



"You take what skills you can use. When things quiet down I have no doubt you'll be slipping through shadows again."



"And you'll be back on your horse in no time as well."

Chris thought for a moment.



"You know, I've never thought to ask you your horse's name, or how long you've had him... or her. I only thought of it just now because Ami named hers."

**Derick: move 23,13**



"Oh, Steil?"

Olison thought as he tucked away the now-empty bag.



"I've had him for something of eight or nine years now. I think I've lost count. He was bred to be particularly enduring and strong but-" Olison chuckled a little, "He's got a rather soft heart for a horse, not to mention timid. In all honesty though, he's served me well."



"Nine years..."



"You must be close."

The longest Chris had ever stayed anywhere - or known anyone - was two years here at Kesselring. Knowing someone or something for almost five times that long was a foreign concept to the spy.



"He is a strong horse, though. He's carried the both of us quite a number of times."



"I'm sure he'd be able to carry four people and a baggage train if it really came down to it. Not that I'd impose that just for the sake of it."

Olison smirked for a moment, contemplating the idea before speaking again.



"He's seen me through a lot, and I'd say he's more than happy to be with me rather than his previous owner."



"His previous owner?"



"Oh, Erm."

Olison's eyes dart to the side for a moment before returning to the hallway.



"Well you might call the guy a knight, depending on who you were. To me the guy was more of a bandit and a warlord than anything else. Though from what I know, he's stuck with a busted shoulder, so he isn't going to be doing any more riding."



"Oh, a previous employer. I just assumed you had always worked for Lady Prixima."

Chris rubbed the back of his neck.



"Despite working together so much, I know so little about you. I suppose that goes both ways. If you'd like, you can ask something of me. Fair's fair."

**Riven: Move to 22, 13, yell at Gregor until he shoots straight.**

Olison thought for a moment.



"I can't say I'm much of a question asker, well aside from military rhetoric, but have you ever been outside of Melenea?"

Chris shook his head.



"I've been to lots of places in Menelea, but I've never been outside of its borders... yet. I do want to see the rest of the world. What about you? As a horseman, you must have done some traveling in your time."

Olison looked through the hallways to the approaching wyverns before pulling back.



"I have been around, yes. Though after a time when you're moving from place to place sometimes you forget which country you're in. The common folk tend to not care much for who's ruling them. I've been to parts of Berebia, Melenea, maybe the borders of Mercia, but people look for help all the same."

Chris nodded.



"That's true. I spent most of my life in the slums of various cities, before I found employment here. It's pretty much the same all over. I suppose really the only difference between countries is which flag you fight for."



"I've tried living alone, I've tried working for a lord... I think I'm going to try working with a group of equals now."



"Olison, you're a trustworthy man. I'm going to leave Prixima's service once this job is done and go with these mercenaries. I'd like you to come with me. You don't have to answer right away - in fact it would probably be better to take some time and think about it."



"Yes, I wouldn't make a call on it right now. But if I'm being honest, this particular employment is starting to wear on me. I'm not going to do well staying here for long..."

Olison looked through the hallway again.



"Especially if these are the kinds of enemies the Lady is making."



"It's good to hear that you're at least considering it. It would be nice to have someone with me that I know for a fact I can trust to watch my back."



"That was too weird..I doubt I would miss whatever is on the other side after asking for the Plague Dragon's help..unless.."

Tantallos looked to the side and tapped the ground with a boot for a moment taking some time to think about it.

**Daniel to 26,8. LOOTLOOTLOOTLOOTLOOT-**

So people moved around while Daniel opened the first chest and pulled a deadly-looking spear from it.

**Daniel got Killer Lance!**



## ~~Enemy Phase~~

One of the wyvern riders brought his mount near Alexander and then stabbed the knight. Alexander stabbed back.

### Wyvern Rider B vs Alexander

Hit:  $89 - 14 = 75$

Hit roll: 58, hit!

Damage:  $22 - 2 - 16 = 4\text{dmg}$

Alexander counterattacks!

Hit:  $98 - 16 = 82$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $16 - 12 = 4\text{dmg}$

The archer behind the rider was going to shoot at the knight, but after noticing how armored he is, Archer B gave up on the idea.

Meanwhile:

Aulia moved to and opened the closest chest, pulling out a sword out of it.

### Steel Sword pilfered!

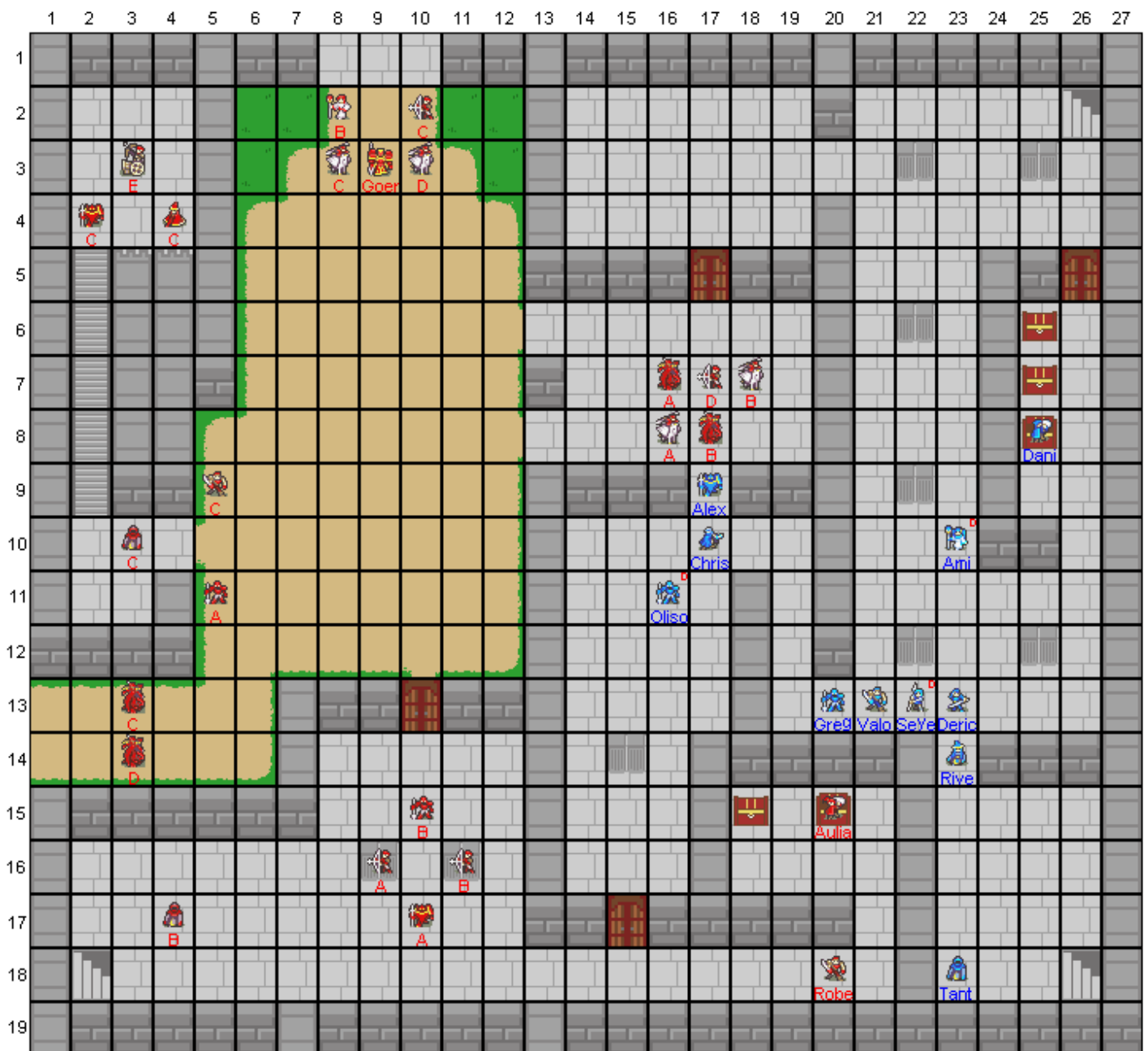


"Aw, dammit. It's just a sword, Robert."



"Check the other chest, maybe something more valuable is there. I will keep watch on the corridor."

# ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                | Enemies:               |                       |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 18/29               | Archer A: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider A: 31/31 |
| Ami Storm: 13/24 <b>Dismounted</b>    | Archer B: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider B: 27/31 |
| Christopher Shields: 11/23            | Archer C: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider C: 31/31 |
| Daniel: 10/25                         | Archer D: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider D: 31/31 |
| Derick: 8/27                          | Archer E: 25/25        | Swordsman C: 28/28    |
| Gregor von Hexham: 20/29              | Knight A: 30/30        | Priest B: 21/21       |
| Olison Eul: 14/26 <b>Dismounted</b>   | Knight C: 30/30        | Mage C: 26/26         |
| Riven: 12/23                          | Halberdier A: 27/27    | Shaman B: 25/25       |
| Seyena Ikane: 12/26 <b>Dismounted</b> | Halberdier B: 27/27    | Shaman C: 25/25       |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 14/25             | Pegasus Rider A: 23/23 | Baron Goering: 40/40  |
| Valor Inara: 26/26                    | Pegasus Rider B: 23/23 | Robert: 28/28         |
|                                       | Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 | Aulia: 24/24          |
|                                       | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 |                       |

Gregor's eyes snapped open.



"I knew it! Someone's stealing in there! We should try to stop them!"

**Gregor: Hurl Javelin at Aulia! Massive Hit boost for the win!**

Alexander took the "minor" wound with nothing more than a "Hng!" and **stayed there and attacked the wyvern rider back.**

**Chris takes a shot at the wyvern rider.**



"Alex, are you all right?"

**Ami: 23,12 and heal Derick**



"Perfectly."

Gregor hurled his psycho-gentlemanly javelin at poor teen girl. For crumpets and murder.

#### Gregor vs Aulia

Hit:  $102 + 15 + 5 + 10 - 5 - 44 = 83$

Hit roll: 9, hit!

Damage:  $18 + 1 - 3 = 16\text{dmg}$



"Ow, ow, ow... damn, they have traps in here."



"Are you hurt? We should leave and check your wounds outside."



"No! Just one chest left! I must have it!"

In the meanwhile, Alex poked the wyvern rider, and reverse happened too.

#### Alexander vs Wyvern Rider B

Hit:  $98 - 16 = 82$

Hit roll: 74, hit!

Damage:  $16 - 12 = 4\text{dmg}$

Wyvern Rider B counters!  
Hit:  $89-14 = 75$   
Hit roll: 2, hit!  
Damage:  $22-2-16 = 4\text{dmg}$

Then Chris murdered the wyvern with crossbow bolt.

#### Chris vs Wyvern Rider B

Hit:  $110-16 = 94$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $48+2-12 = 38\text{dmg}$

And Ami healed Derick.

#### Ami heals Derick

$10+15 =$  Up to 25HP restored

Still too injured to help effectively, Olison **remains where he is.**



"Don't take on more than you can handle. If it gets to be too much, let me know, or call for Ami."

He looked over his shoulder at Olison.



"And how are you holding up? If you need a vulnerary, I still have a little left; you can have it."



"Save it, you never know when you might need it."



"They're only wyvern riders, not too much for me to handle..."

Chris nodded.



"Understood."

He turned to Alex.



"I'll be backing you up, just in case. Oh, and here. It might be better if you kept this on you."

**As Trade is a free action, Chris will use it to give Alex the Pure Water.**



"Thank you, I actually need that."

**Tantallos: Move 23, 15.**

**Daniel to 25,7. MOAR LOOTING.**

**Valor: Head to 19,11.**

While others moved around, Daniel fiddled with the lock and soon lifted the prize, a heavy sword with wide blade.

**Daniel got Armorslayer!**

**Derick: Move 19,12**

Seyena was still somewhat wounded, **so she decided to stay put and wait for Ami heal her completely.**

**Riven to 19,13.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Aulia looked around and moved to the other chest, quickly opening it.



"Oh, bummer, it's armory after all..."

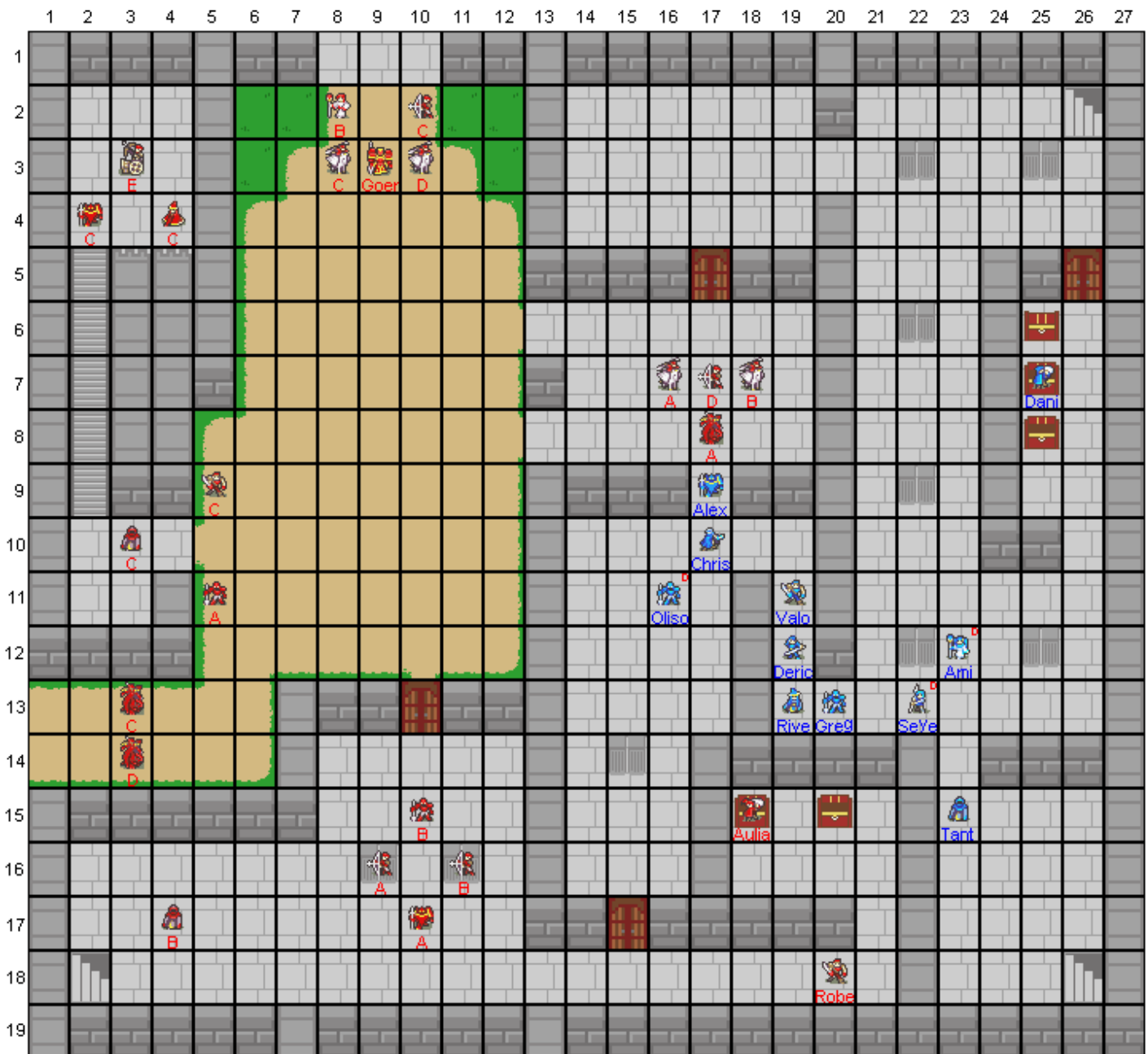
**Heavy Gauntlet seized!**

In the same time, the other Wyvern Rider moved to Alexander and stabbed him - and Alex failed to stab back.

**Wyvern Rider A vs Alexander**

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Hit: 89-14 = 75        |
| Hit roll: 63, hit!     |
| Damage: 22-2-16 = 4dmg |
| Alexander counters!    |
| Hit: 98-16 = 82        |
| Hit roll: 84, miss!    |

# ~~Player Turn 10~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 10/30<br>Ami Storm: 13/24 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Christopher Shields: 11/24<br>Daniel: 10/25<br>Derick: 27/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 20/29<br>Olison Eul: 14/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 12/24<br>Seyena Ikane: 12/27 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantalos Forsaken: 14/26<br>Valor Inara: 26/27 | Archer A: 25/25<br>Archer B: 25/25<br>Archer C: 25/25<br>Archer D: 25/25<br>Archer E: 25/25<br>Knight A: 30/30<br>Knight C: 30/30<br>Halberdier A: 27/27<br>Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider A: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider B: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23<br>Wyvern Rider A: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider C: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider D: 31/31<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Priest B: 21/21<br>Mage C: 26/26<br>Shaman B: 25/25<br>Shaman C: 25/25<br>Baron Goering: 40/40<br>Robert: 28/28<br>Aulia: 8/24 |

**Gregor: Move to (18,10)**



"Sir Jorinn, Chris. How are things going over here?"

**Derick: Move to 17,11**

**Chris shot at the wyvern rider again.**



"Sitting pretty, Gregor. Watch out for falling enemy soldiers, by the way."



"More looters. Pity your opportunistic nature will be your downfall."

**Olison: Move to 16,15. Activate Reliable Attack, Javelin Aulia.**

Alexander continued to be there, though he was more obviously wounded, he wasn't doing much to react to it, merely holding his ground.



"Yes, we're doing perfectly well over here."

**Alexander: Stay there.**



"Take care of yourself, Sir Jorinn; I can switch places with you if needed."



"It's not needed. The amount of threats to me is rapidly dwindling."



"Just...be careful, alright? We've lost more than enough of our fellow soldiers today."



"Don't worry. I've got my eye on him... and a Vulnerary in my pocket in case the worst happens."



"I also have a vulnerary, anyway."



"Oh! That's good, then. Glad to see you two have it covered."



"I don't have any at all!"



"Y-you don't?! Why didn't you get any back in Fezzan? Or did you just run out?"



"I'm broke."



"But...I put all of my money on the table...people went and bought stuff with it..."



"Ugh. When all this is over, we're getting you some medicine. Can't have Ami around all the time."



"We do seem to operate on extremely limited funds. With the return of this dragon stone, that should improve however."



"Hopefully there'll be someone to return the dragonstone to."



"Good point. If not, well... it's possible we could find a buyer."



## Daniel to 25,6. CONTINUE THE LOOTENING

**Valor: wait up for now.**

PTONK!

### Chris vs Wyvern Rider A

Hit:  $113+10+5-16 = 112$ , autohit!

Damage:  $48+2-12 = 38$ dmg

The javelin was thrown reliably; and reliably struck Aulia's guts, killing her.

### Olison vs Aulia

Hit:  $98+20-44 = 74$

Hit roll: 45, hit!

Damage:  $17+2-3 = 16$ dmg

**Olison got Heavy Gauntlet!**

In the meanwhile, Daniel opened the last chest, finding twenty or so small bags with coins. Are those soldiers' payments? Supply reserves? No matter, they're in Daniel's pockets now.

**Daniel got 1000 Gold!**

**Ami head to 22,12 and heal Seyena.**

And thusly Seyena was all healthy again.

### Ami heals Seyena

$10+16 =$  Up to 26HP healed

Chris calmly loaded another bolt into the crossbow as the wyvern rider crashed to the ground, making a pile.



"That's another one. How are you holding up, Alex?"

**Tantallos: Move 20,13.**

**Riven to 19,10.**



"Thank you, Ami." Seyena ran to catch up with the others in the group.

**Seyena: Move to 19, 12**

~~Enemy Phase~~

Pegasus Rider A flew closer to the wall and began throwing her javelins at Riven; two javelins brought the shamaness down, and her retaliatory strike between the two throws wounded the rider only slightly. The rest of the Berebians just stood there, weapons ready and angry stares sent toward Alexander.

#### Pegasus Rider A vs Riven

Hit:  $104-5-21 = 78$

Hit roll: 59, hit!

Damage:  $14-4 = 10\text{dmg}$

Riven counters!

Hit:  $110+5+10-31 = 94$

Hit roll: 58, miss!

Damage:  $22-10 = 12\text{dmg}$

Pegasus Rider A attacks once more!

Hit:  $104-5-21 = 78$

Hit roll: 22, hit!

Damage:  $14-4 = 10\text{dmg}$

Upon hearing the sounds of agony, Robert peeked into the storeroom, noticing his sister's body ridden with javelins, and then leaned into the corridor's wall, covering his face with his free hand for a moment. Then, he pulled the sword out.

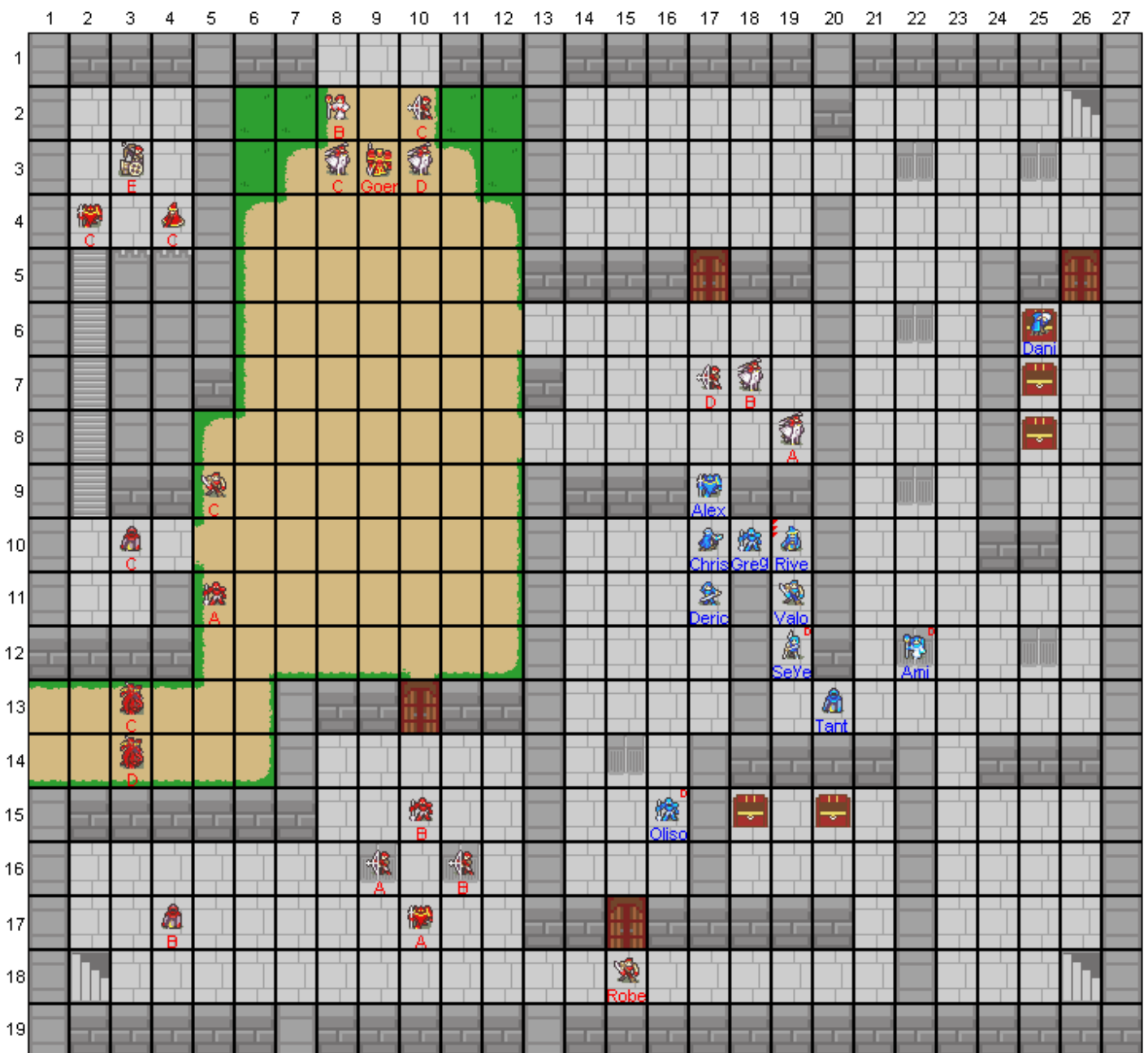


"He always warned us, didn't he? 'Don't become mercenaries like your father'... Aulia... But it is not time to grieve. Sis, either I avenge you, or I shall join you!" And with that, he went to the door and began pounding on it with his sword.

#### Robert vs Door 15.17

Damage:  $21-5 = 16\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 11~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 10/30<br>Ami Storm: 13/25 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Christopher Shields: 11/24<br>Daniel: 10/25<br>Derick: 27/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 20/29<br>Olison Eul: 14/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: -/24 <b>3/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 27/27 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 14/26<br>Valor Inara: 26/27 | Archer A: 25/25<br>Archer B: 25/25<br>Archer C: 25/25<br>Archer D: 25/25<br>Archer E: 25/25<br>Knight A: 30/30<br>Knight C: 30/30<br>Halberdier A: 27/27<br>Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider A: 9/23<br>Pegasus Rider B: 23/23 | Pegasus Rider C: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider D: 23/23<br>Wyvern Rider C: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider D: 31/31<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Priest B: 21/21<br>Mage C: 26/26<br>Shaman B: 25/25<br>Shaman C: 25/25<br>Baron Goering: 40/40<br>Robert: 28/28 |

**Valor: head for 17,12**

**Ami: Head to 19,13 and heal Tantallos**



"Looks like you two have this covered. I'll head south."

**Gregor: Move to (16, 13).**

Plinkplinkplink

**Ami heals Tantallos**

10+16 = Up to 26HP restored



"Thank you for the help."



"No problem."



"So, you think I'll let the lot of you attack my comrades, *hmm?* Is that what you think? Well, you're gravely mistaken."

Alexander clanked a step forward and stabbed at the archer.

**Alexander: Move to 17,8 and attack Archer D**

Stabby went Alexander.

**Alexander vs Archer D**

Hit:  $98-23 = 75$

Hit roll: 15, hit!

Damage:  $17-9 = 8\text{dmg}$

**Olison: Move to 15,16. Javelin Robertx2.**

**Olison vs Robert**

Hit:  $98+15-22 = 91$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-7 = 11\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $98+15-22 = 91$

Hit roll: 5, hit!

Damage:  $17+1-7 = 11\text{dmg}$



"...I have to take out those riders."

**Chris moves to 18,8 and shoots Pegasus B.**

Chris ran around the counter and shot his bolt at the pegasus; the rider ducked and then attacked with her slim lance, pinning Chris to the floor.

#### Chris vs Pegasus Rider B

Hit:  $113-31 = 82$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

Pegasus Rider B counters!

Hit:  $114-21 = 93$

Hit roll: 79, hit! Critical roll: 8!

Damage:  $13-5 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

**THE LOOTENING IS COMPLETE. Daniel to 26,11.**

**Tantallos: Move 19,13 and wait for a better situation to attack.**

**Seyena moves to 19,11**

**Derick: move 15,14**

Ami twitched as she changes.



"Something wrong. Why am I in control?"

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Robert continued his door assault.

#### Robert vs Door 15.17

Damage:  $22-6 = 16\text{dmg}$

"Grr... guys, retreat!"

The pegasus riders and archers moved swiftly away.

**Meanwhile...**

Three soldiers emerged from the inner keep, bearing Berebian armor.

"Sir Goering, we're reporting in!"



"Hmm? Weren't you three cleaning the upper floors?"

"Sir, that's true, but Lord Vagor met us and told us to reinforce you here, sir."



"Well, I assume that is a good thing. Assume positions in front."

"Sir, yes sir!"

**A moment later...**

"Sir Goering, this is urgent!"



"What is it this time? Don't tell me the 'leftovers' got through."

"Err..."



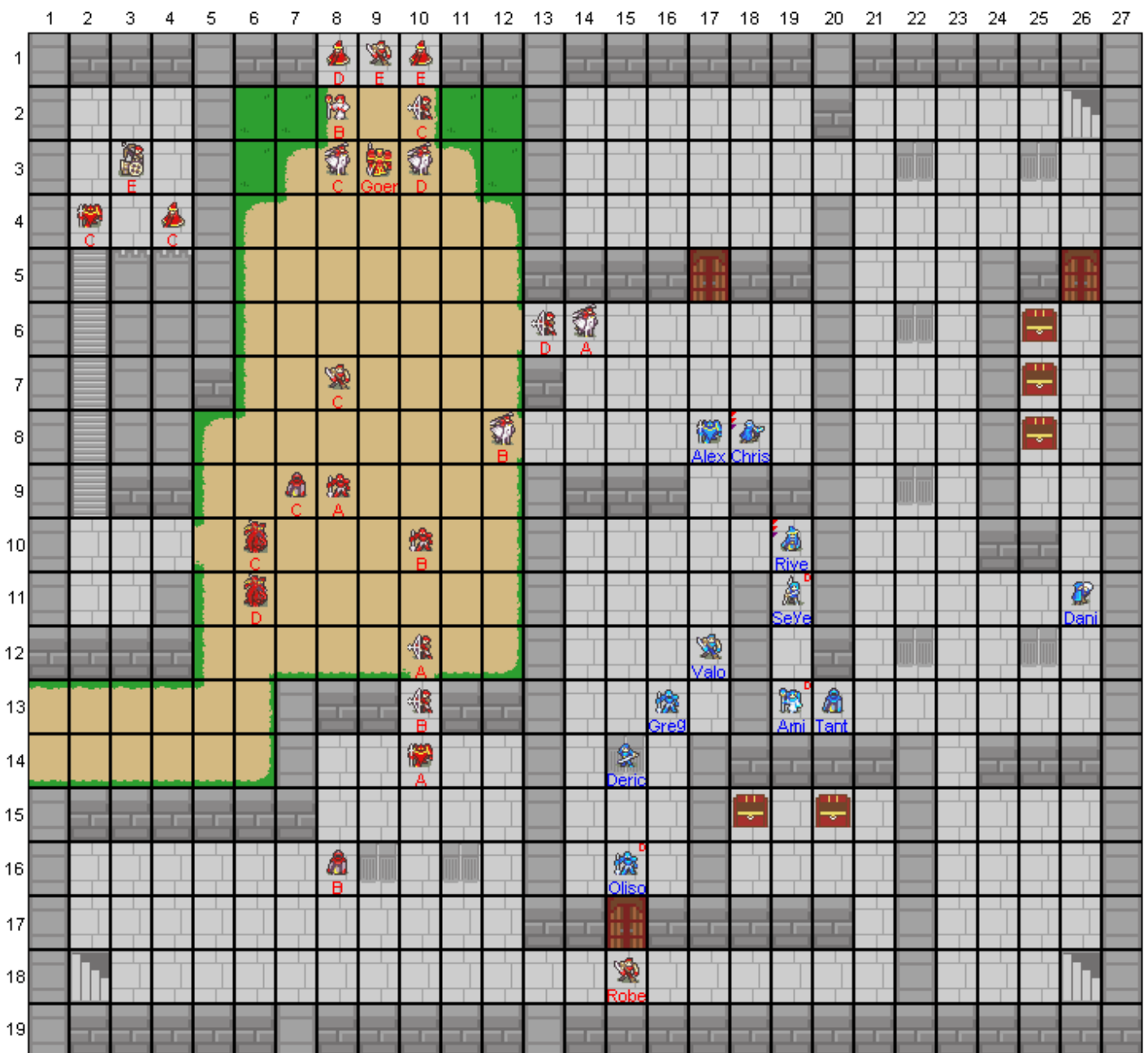
"..." The General looked down at the ground, pondering for a moment.



"This is vexing. Who are they if they're cutting through my best soldiers? No matter; they might be good at fighting in tight hallways, but let's see how they will fare against superior numbers on a wide field." With that, the General grabbed a small horn and blown into it for a short moment. The troops around the place began to gather.

**Knight A uses Door Key!**

# ~~Player Turn 12~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 10/30<br>Ami Storm: 13/25 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Christopher Shields: -/24 <b>2/3</b><br>Daniel: 10/25<br>Derick: 27/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 20/29<br>Olison Eul: 14/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: -/24 <b>2/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 27/27 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantalos Forsaken: 26/26<br>Valor Inara: 26/27 | Archer A: 25/25<br>Archer B: 25/25<br>Archer C: 25/25<br>Archer D: 17/25<br>Archer E: 25/25<br>Knight A: 30/30<br>Knight C: 30/30<br>Halberdier A: 27/27<br>Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider A: 9/23<br>Pegasus Rider B: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider C: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 | Wyvern Rider C: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider D: 31/31<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Swordsman E: 28/28<br>Priest B: 21/21<br>Mage C: 26/26<br>Mage D: 26/26<br>Mage E: 26/26<br>Shaman B: 25/25<br>Shaman C: 25/25<br>Baron Goering: 40/40<br>Robert: 6/28 |

**Ami: To 18,10 and heal Riven**



"Back on your feet, Exile."

**Daniel to 22,13.**

**Olison to 16,12**

Alexander looked at where Chris had fallen, cursed. **He picked Chris up off of the ground.**



"Just wait a second, and I can get you healed."

Gregor heard the sound of the horn.



"That doesn't sound good..."

**Gregor: Do a 180 and run to (17,9)**

Healing powers, ho!

**Ami heals Riven**

10+16 /2 = Up to 13 HP restored

**Tantallos: Move 19, 12**



"Hmm... looks like this is going to take more time than I expected."

Seyena came out of the corridor, hearing the door to the south being destroyed.



"Anyone else hear that?" She decided to investigate.

**Seyena: Move to 16, 11**



"I hear it." Valor said, watching the door as it strained before the unseen swordsman. "Not sure what I can do beyond wait for whoever it is to break in."



Valor: Move to 15, 13

Derick: move 16,16

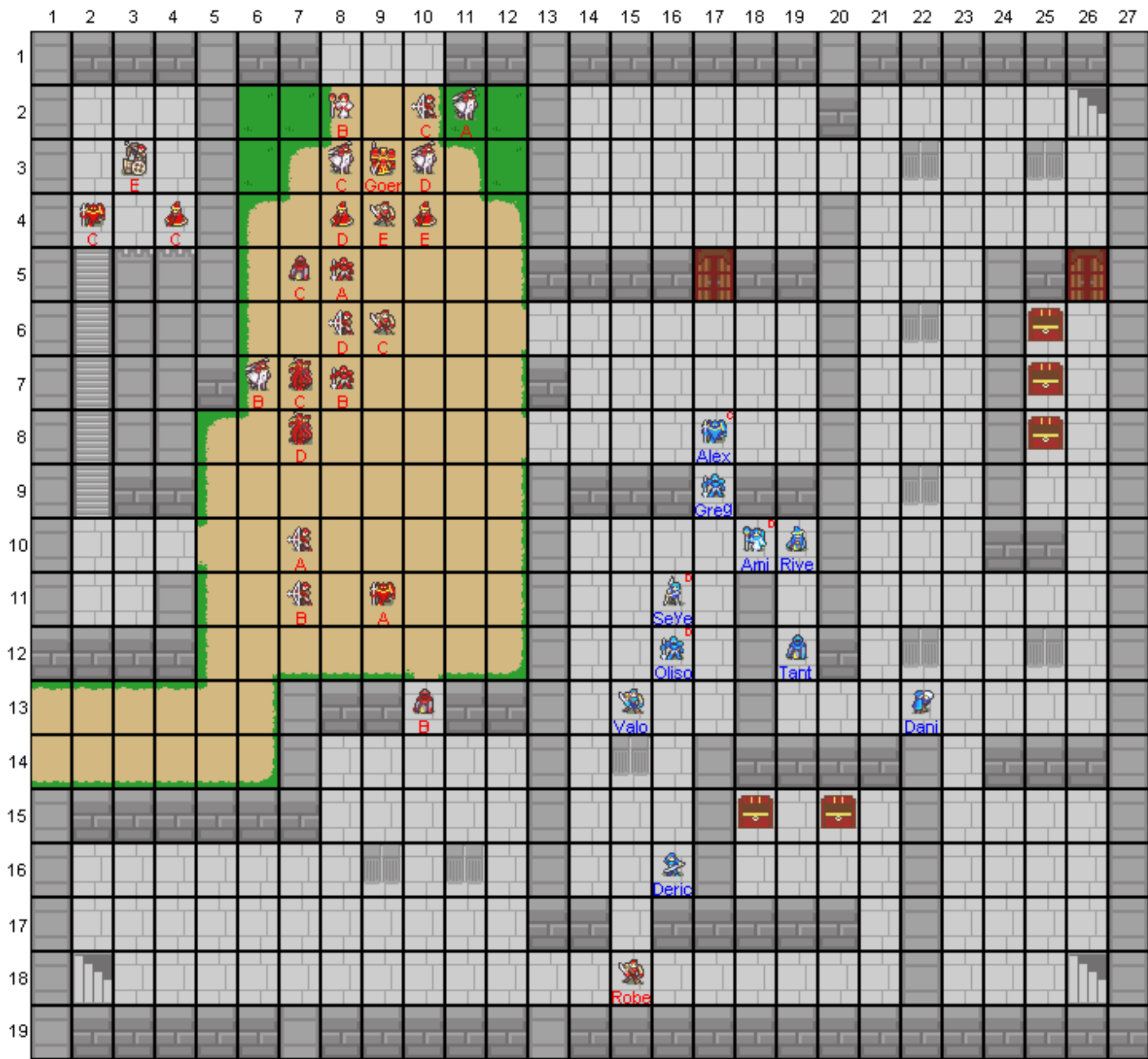
~~Enemy Phase~~

As Berebians gathered and formed a troop on the courtyard, Robert broke through the door. With sword in hand, he set his eyes on Derick.

Robert vs Door 15.17

Damage: 21-5 = 16dmg

~~Player Turn 13~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                     |  | Enemies:        |                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 10/30<br>^ Carrying: Christopher Shields |  | Archer A: 25/25 | Wyvern Rider C: 31/31 |
| Ami Storm: 13/25 Dismounted                                |  | Archer B: 25/25 | Wyvern Rider D: 31/31 |
| Christopher Shields: -/24 2/3                              |  | Archer C: 25/25 | Swordsman C: 28/28    |
| ^ Carried by: Alexander Jorinn                             |  | Archer D: 17/25 | Swordsman E: 28/28    |
| Daniel: 10/25                                              |  | Archer E: 25/25 | Priest B: 21/21       |
|                                                            |  | Knight A: 30/30 | Mage C: 26/26         |

|                                       |                        |                      |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Derick: 27/28                         | Knight C: 30/30        | Mage D: 26/26        |
| Gregor von Hexham: 20/29              | Halberdier A: 27/27    | Mage E: 26/26        |
| Olison Eul: 14/26 <b>Dismounted</b>   | Halberdier B: 27/27    | Shaman B: 25/25      |
| Riven: 13/24                          | Pegasus Rider A: 9/23  | Shaman C: 25/25      |
| Seyena Ikane: 27/27 <b>Dismounted</b> | Pegasus Rider B: 23/23 | Baron Goering: 40/40 |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 26/26             | Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 | Robert: 6/28         |
| Valor Inara: 26/27                    | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 |                      |

Gregor hesitated as he saw the sheer number of troops gathering outside.



"That's...that's a lot of Berebians."



"Yeah... we might be in some trouble here."

Chris moved an arm weakly from his position over Alex's shoulder, as if to indicate the Berebians.



"It's going to take a lot of effort, that's for sure..."



"Stop worrying, none of them are a threat."

She noticed Chris's blood.



"What! Who did this?"

Chris laughed weakly.



"I made a miscalculation. It turns out if you shoot down two wyvern riders, the pegasus rider behind them is going to be a bit more cautious when you run at them with a crossbow."

He tried to smile for her, but he was feeling pretty weak at the moment.



"Don't be so reckless next time. We would be sad if anything happened to you."

**Ami: Head to 18,8 and heal Chris**



"There we go."

Chris wiped his mouth off and coughed until he felt better.



"Thank you. I'm sorry for causing you these problems; I'm supposed to be supporting you, not being a burden."

He tilted his head to the side as he thought for a moment.



"We would be sad'...? Hmm..."

The spy noted her eyes appeared to have a red glow to them, and there was a similar glow in a crucifix form on her left cheek.



"Oh, I think I see. The person I'm speaking to now... THAT'S the odd thing I couldn't place about Ami. What's your name, if I may ask? Or... are you also Ami? A different facet, perhaps?"

Moar healing!

**Ami heals Chris**

Up to 13HP healed



"A smart person, I see. Then again, you wouldn't be a spy if you weren't. As for what I am, would you believe I don't know myself. I could be her darker side, or maybe I'm a demon who has forgotten herself. Maybe one day I will know for sure. As for names, Ami will do, we both own this body and her memories and goals are my memories and goals."

Chris considered this.



"You are a very interesting person. I think I'll enjoy traveling with and learning about you quite a bit, Ami..."



"Uh... Hello there. You look pretty angry? Usually we're the one breaking doors down around here."

**Derick: Head back to 15 14**

Alexander watches this conversation with quite the amount of bewilderment, but settles for **setting Chris down**.

Gregor was only slightly less bewildered than Alexander (this wasn't the first time "other Ami" had made an appearance). Nevertheless, he trusted that she wouldn't suddenly turn on them, and decided that now was not the time to worry about it.

**Gregor: Move to (16,6)**

Olison only paid slight mind to the exchange between Chris and Ami, he was more preoccupied with watching the mobilization outside.



"Quickly, form up!"

**Olison: Move to 17,9**

**Riven to 17,7**

**Daniel to 19,10**

**Tantallos: Move to 17,10**



"Patience.. it is not like they will run away from us or anything."

**Seyena stays put.**

**Valor: Move to 15,11**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~



"I will avenge Aulia! I will avenge her!"

Robert ran toward Derick and swung his sword at him - the myrmidon just ducked and then slashed across the mercenary's stomach, spilling his guts and sending him to the floor.



"Oh, sis... I... I'm--"

### Robert vs Derick

Hit:  $97-15-37 = 45$

Hit roll: 69, miss!

Derick counters!

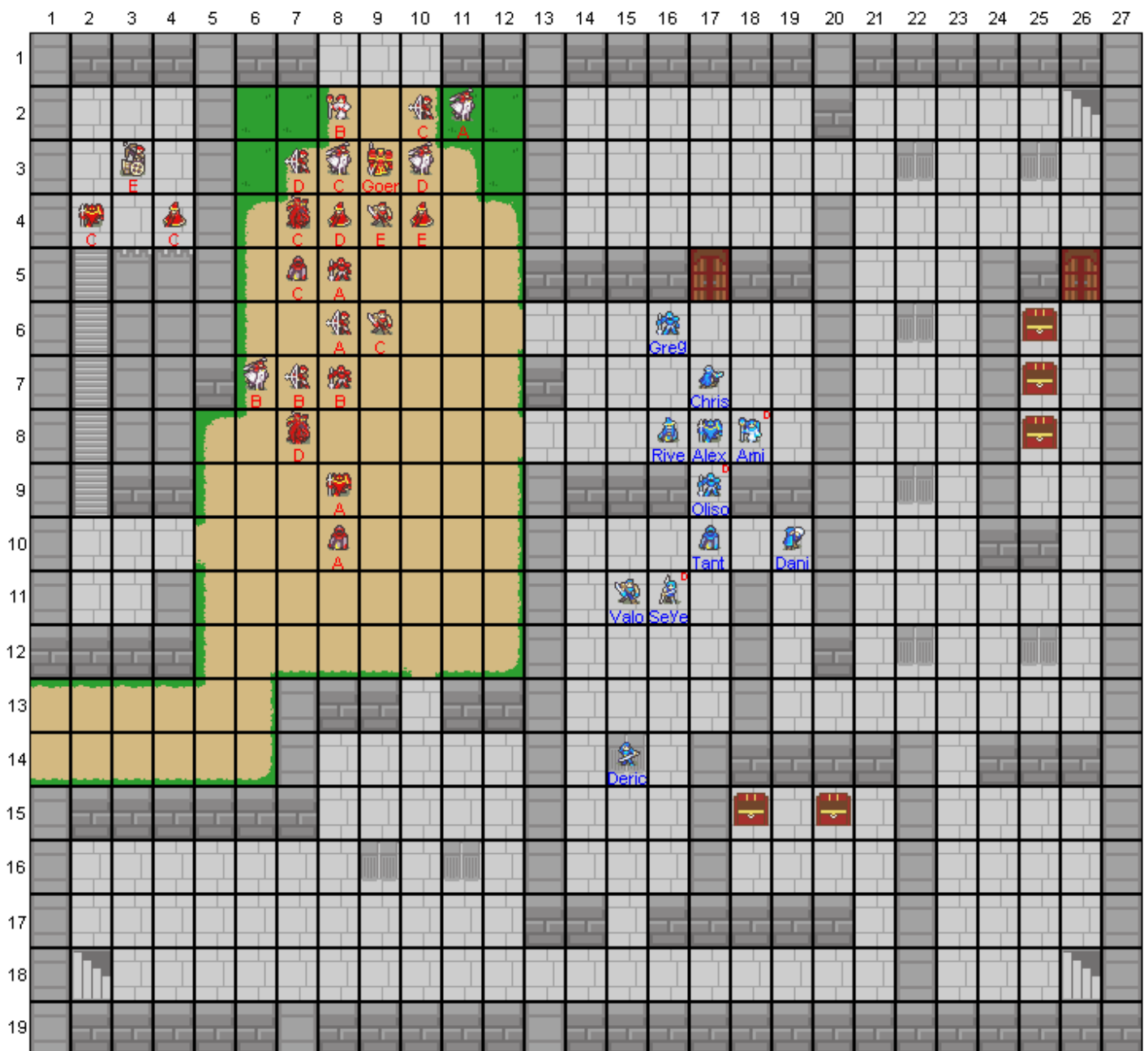
Hit:  $110+10-22 = 98$

Hit roll: 80, hit!

Damage:  $16+2-7 = 11$  dmg

In the meanwhile, most of Berebians got to their positions.

# ~~Player Turn 14~~



Weather:

| Merces:                               | Enemies:               |                        |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 10/30               | Archer A: 25/25        | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 |
| Ami Storm: 13/25 <b>Dismounted</b>    | Archer B: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider C: 31/31  |
| Christopher Shields: 13/24            | Archer C: 25/25        | Wyvern Rider D: 31/31  |
| Daniel: 10/25                         | Archer D: 17/25        | Swordsman C: 28/28     |
| Derick: 27/28                         | Archer E: 25/25        | Swordsman E: 28/28     |
| Gregor von Hexham: 20/29              | Knight A: 30/30        | Priest B: 21/21        |
| Olison Eul: 14/26 <b>Dismounted</b>   | Knight C: 30/30        | Mage C: 26/26          |
| Riven: 13/24                          | Halberdier A: 27/27    | Mage D: 26/26          |
| Seyena Ikane: 27/27 <b>Dismounted</b> | Halberdier B: 27/27    | Mage E: 26/26          |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 26/26             | Pegasus Rider A: 9/23  | Shaman B: 25/25        |
| Valor Inara: 26/27                    | Pegasus Rider B: 23/23 | Shaman C: 25/25        |
|                                       | Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 | Baron Goering: 40/40   |

**Daniel to 15,10. Give Valor the Armorslayer.**



"Woah..." Valor took the Armorslayer from Daniel, testing it's weight. It was

heavy- maybe a bit *too* heavy. But there was no denying that it was the sort of blade that sheared through armor.



"Thank you kindly." Valor grinned, setting the Armorslayer into his belt.



"Poor guy. I wonder what happened to his sister."

**Derick: Move 16,10**

Alex warily eyed the huge mass of enemy soldiers, and stepped forward to fill a hole in the wall, ripping open a vulnerary as he went.



"I'll keep them from getting in over here, but we're about to be in trouble."

**Alexander: Move to 13, 8, vulnerm Cary.**

Seyena hurried to follow the others, but as soon as she saw the horde approaching them, she went pale.



"That's... that's *a lot* of Berebians..."

**Seyena: Move to 17,9. Panic.**



'Hello, hello soldier person."

**Tantallos: Move 17,6.**

Gregor looked over his shoulder at the sound of the shaman's voice.



"Ah, hello Tantallos. Holding up okay?"



"Indeed! This place is starting to look like a large graveyard, so it is almost

like being home. And how are the things going for you?"



"Feels more like returning home and finding it burned to the ground, personally..."



"But I'm trying not to think about that too much. Right now, my priorities are trying to keep us all alive and getting us inside that keep to rescue any Meneleans still holding out."

**Olison to 15,7. Switch to Javelin if it isn't already.**

**Riven stays put.**



"That is what you think. Since the last war we had there we need to deal with revenants and other dark creatures, so I do not need to say we "see" death wandering around. One of the things I am planning to do when I return is to finally put a end to that cursed graveyard, so nobody will be hurt there again... but that is another story."

Tantallos shrugged and took his hood down just to smile at the soldier.



"Well, well, well.. so the soldier have priorities. You know something I learned during the time I lived? We cannot be too serious about everything, at this point you probably noticed I am taking everything like a daily routine...but there is a reason, besides really looking like a routine to me! If you focus on something too hard or get too worried you will not be able to reach your objectives at all. Your mind will begin to be filled with "What ifs" and you will lose complete focus.. I do not need to tell you what happens next, so do not be afraid of relaxing your shoulders sometime and stab some revenants in a relaxing afternoon, I mean... get a book to read or talk to friends.



"You are still young to be one of those serious soldiers that I like to annoy during the visits on other castles."

Gregor was a little surprised; he couldn't remember ever seeing Tantallos' face.





"I'd like nothing more than to relax with friends or a good book. However, I can't do that while we still have a job to do. If that makes me a serious soldier..." He shrugged. "Father would be pleased, if nothing else."



"Who told you cannot do both? What are we doing right now? We are talking, soldier! So yes you can do that even while working... actually that is more common than you think. Talking during wars or fights makes people keep themselves "sane", it is a way to keep their feet on the ground.. at least that is what I heard..heh...heheh. So make sure you take some time to relax.."



"Huh. I never even thought about it that way...though I'd still prefer to talk in a place where there wasn't the imminent threat of death. Maybe after we finish PRIXIMA's job, we can all have a short vacation. That'd be nice."



"Well, I doubt we will have this so called "peace" so soon, so you better get used to talk in combat. Like I said... take some time to relax, worrying too much can affect your skills in a negative way."

Tantalos nodded and crossed his arms.



"About that you are right, a vacation would do wonders... but I cannot tell how far we are from reaching the lady, we may end up getting on more fights that we can count just by accident."



"Hmm..."

Gregor thought for a moment, but then shook his head.



"I think I'm just a worrier at heart. But I'll try not to let it affect me too much, at least not when there's a small army standing only a short distance away."



"As you wish, I guess that is just how you are, soldier. Maybe the Plague Dragon will gift you someday, who knows. You look like the kind of person who would deserve his assistance..heh..ehh. After all... the ones willing to bring the good always receive their part."

**Valor: move to 17, 10**



"We can take 'em."

**Chris decides this game needs more cover-shooter, blind-firing style mechanics and throws himself into the chest-high cover that is 14, 7.**



"I think we'll have to continue this later. Looks like we're about to get started."

**Gregor: Move to (14,6). Equip Javelin. Thank the Divine Dragon for lack of axe users among the enemy forces.**

Tantallos nodded and covered his face with his hood again.



"Very well then. Good luck, soldier guy."

**Ami: Head to 17,8 and heal Olson.**



"Let finish this slaughter already."



"If that makes you happy, then that's what I'm going to do."

While Alexander used up some more of his medicine, Ami healed up Olson.

**Alexander uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP healed

**Ami heals Olson**

10+16 = Up to 26HP restored

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

"General, all units are in position. Three more of our men returned from the inner keep."



"Splendid. Now, we wait until either those strangers attack, or Vagor comes back with PRIXIMA's charred corpse. After that, we will prepare the torches and ruin this castle a bit so Menelean's won't be that eager to retake it."

"Yes, sir!"

## ~~Ally Phase~~

The archer behind the ballista yawned and looked at the two of his fellow soldiers.

"Hey, you guys new in the army? I don't- GHRK!"

"Berebian army at it's best."

"Heh, heheh... seen better."

### PRIXIMA's Spy A vs Archer E

Hit:  $116-7 = 109$ , autohit! Crit roll: 15!

Damage:  $19-9 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$

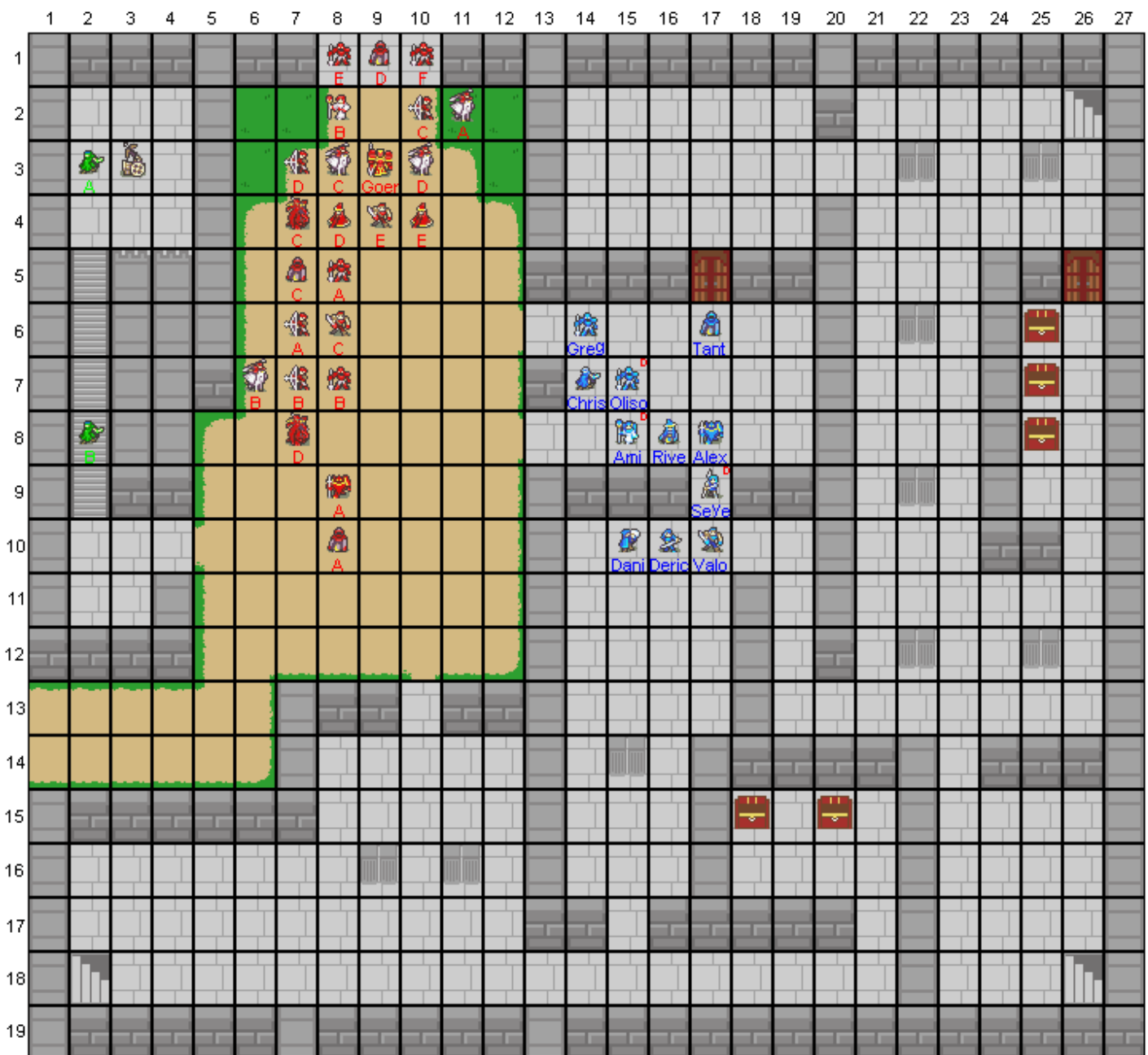
In the same moment, few heads below turned up, only to see the archer getting slashed to death.

"Sir Goering! Traitors! Traitors in the tower!"



"WHAT!? What's the meaning of this! Oh for the sake of all that's sacred... prepare to fight! Enough of this idle wait! Bring me heads of everyone who doesn't wear Berebian uniform! No one will be mocking my brilliant tactics with such foul diversions!"

# ~~Player Turn 15~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 20/30<br>Ami Storm: 13/25 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Christopher Shields: 13/24<br>Daniel: 10/25<br>Derick: 27/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 20/29<br>Olison Eul: 26/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 13/24<br>Seyena Ikane: 27/27 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 26/26<br>Valor Inara: 26/27 | Archer A: 25/25<br>Archer B: 25/25<br>Archer C: 25/25<br>Archer D: 17/25<br>Knight A: 30/30<br>Halberdier A: 27/27<br>Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Halberdier E: 27/27<br>Halberdier F: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider A: 9/23<br>Pegasus Rider B: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23<br>Wyvern Rider C: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider D: 31/31<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Swordsman E: 28/28<br>Priest B: 21/21<br>Mage D: 26/26<br>Mage E: 26/26<br>Shaman B: 25/25<br>Shaman C: 25/25<br>Shaman D: 25/25<br>Baron Goering: 40/40 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| PRIXIMA's Spy A: 27/27<br>PRIXIMA's Spy B: 27/27                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

**Valor: Move to 14, 8. Iron Sword should be equipped.**



"Huh. Didn't see that coming."

### Ami: Heal Riven

Magics go back and forth. The shine of the staff's crystal is mere 2/3 of what it was once, at Fezzan.

#### Ami heals Riven

10+16 = Up to 26HP restored

**Daniel to 16,7. Give Gold and Killer Lance to Riven**

**Riven to 15,6. Give Gold and Killer Lance to Gregor.**



"Looks like Joseph and Robert made it! Good work, guys!"

Chris did a small fist-pump motion and **waits**.

Gregor takes the vicious-looking lance warily.



"This looks like it could be dangerous...Chris, what's going on? Do you recognize those guys?"

**Gregor: Stay put. Keep Javelin equipped for now.**

**Olison stays put.**



"Yeah. Joseph and Robert Emerson. Joseph's the older brother. I trained both of them to be spies a year ago, worked with them a bit after that but normally I partnered with Olison while they stuck with each other."



"Well, clearly you must have done a good job. With that ballista out of commission, the enemy general will have to send some of his forces up there to regain control. Fewer things for us to worry about."

**Derick: move 16,7**



"Why's everyone crowded around her- that is a lot of Berebians."

**Tantallos: Move 16, 6.**

Alexander finishes moving over, filling the chokepoint with the wall of armor that he is.

**Alexander: Move to 13, 8**

**Seyena squeezes in to 17,6**



"I do my best, but I can't attribute their success solely to my training. The brothers have a lot of natural talent."

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The Berebian mass began moving - partially after spies, partially after mercs, few remained around the General. Firstly, one of Shamans attacked and knocked down Alexander.

#### Shaman A vs Alexander

Hit:  $99-14 = 85$   
Hit roll: 77, hit!  
Damage:  $22-2 = 20\text{dmg}$

Archer B moved closer to the entrance and sent an arrow at Chris, missing him. Chris decided to show off his skills and head-shot'd that archer.

#### Archer B vs Chris

Hit:  $99-5-10-21 = 63$   
Hit roll: 97, miss!  
  
Christopher counters!  
Hit:  $113+5+10+10-23 = 115$ , autohit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $16+2-9 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$

Gregor then saw a dire sight - Mage E moved to him and cast his magic, electrocutting him but Gregor managed to double-javelin him right afterwards. But then, Gregor got shot by an archer and fell down.

#### Mage E vs Gregor

Hit:  $102-5-10-30 = 57$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $17-1 = 16\text{dmg}$   
  
Gregor retaliates!  
Hit:  $103+5+10+10-18 = 110$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $18-4 = 14\text{dmg}$   
  
Gregor attacks again!  
Hit:  $103+5+10+10-18 = 110$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $18-4 = 14\text{dmg}$

**Archer A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $99-5-10-30 = 54$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $18-12 = 6\text{dmg}$

Pegasus Rider A flew into the entry door and began tossing javelins at Riven. After the first one hit, Riven blasted the wounded rider and killed her.

**Pegasus Rider A vs Riven**

Hit:  $104-21 = 83$   
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage:  $14-4 = 10\text{dmg}$   
  
Riven counters!  
Hit:  $110-31 = 79$   
Hit roll: 34, hit!  
Damage:  $22-10 = 12\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Spy A ran downstairs and his killing edge began slashing at Pegasus Rider B. She stabbed him, but then he cut her down.

**Prixima's Spy A vs Pegasus Rider B**

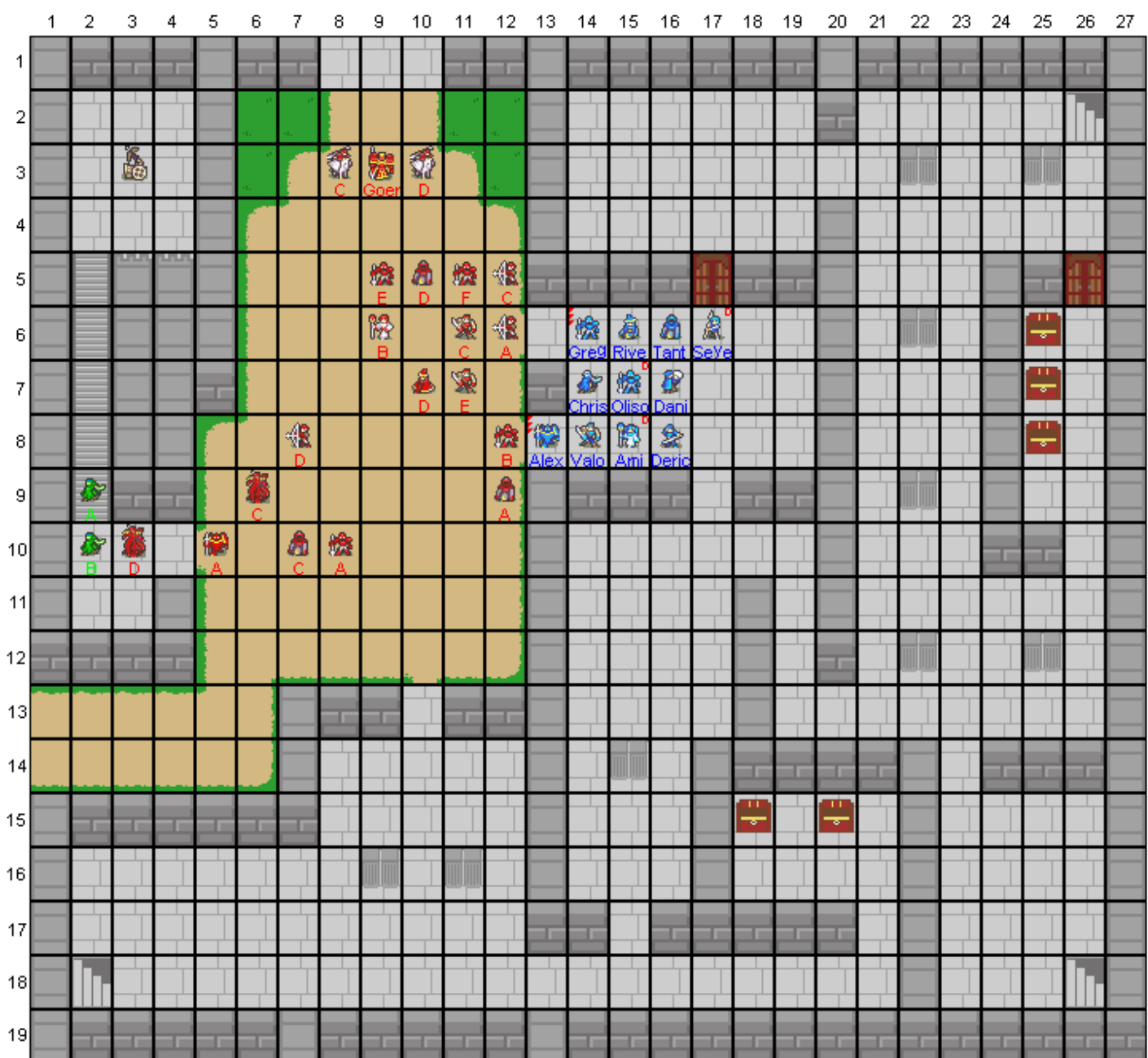
Hit:  $116-15-31 = 70$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1-6 = 12\text{dmg}$   
  
Pegasus Rider B counterattacks!  
Hit:  $114+15-48 = 81$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $13+1-4 = 10\text{dmg}$   
  
Prixima's Spy A strikes again!  
Hit:  $116-15-31 = 70$   
Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1-6 = 12\text{dmg}$

With the pegasi out of the way, the other spy ran downstairs as well and engaged the Wyvern Rider D in combat. The first slash was light one, but the rider didn't manage to stab the spy with the heavy lance. Next of the spy's strikes was a bit more dangerous.

**Prixima's Spy B vs Wyvern Rider D**

Hit:  $116-15-16 = 85$   
Hit roll: 68, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1-12 = 6\text{dmg}$   
  
Wyvern Rider D retaliates!  
Hit:  $89+15-48 = 56$   
Hit roll: 82, miss!  
  
Prixima's Spy B attacks again!  
Hit:  $116-15-16 = 85$   
Hit roll: 41, hit! Crit roll: 21!  
Damage:  $19-1-12 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$

**~~Player Turn 16~~**



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/30 <b>3/3</b><br>Ami Storm: 13/25 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Christopher Shields: 13/24<br>Daniel: 10/25<br>Derick: 27/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: -/29 <b>3/3</b><br>Olison Eul: 26/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 14/24<br>Seyena Ikane: 27/27 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 26/26<br>Valor Inara: 26/27 | Archer A: 25/25<br>Archer C: 25/25<br>Archer D: 17/25<br>Knight A: 30/30<br>Halberdier A: 27/27<br>Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Halberdier E: 27/27<br>Halberdier F: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider C: 23/23<br>Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 | Wyvern Rider C: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider D: 7/31<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Swordsman E: 28/28<br>Priest B: 21/21<br>Mage D: 26/26<br>Shaman B: 25/25<br>Shaman C: 25/25<br>Shaman D: 25/25<br>Baron Goering: 40/40 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Prixima's Spy A: 17/27<br>Prixima's Spy B: 27/27                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |



"Damn. Magic doesn't look nearly as fun when you're on the receiving end..."





"I don't think your friends are going to last long, Chris."



"Perhaps not. But I can't abandon the mission. On your feet, Gregor!"

**Chris vulneraries Gregor.**

Sprinkle sprinkle.

**Christopher uses Vulnerary on Gregor**

Up to 5HP restored



"Thanks Chris. Much obliged."



"Sorry I can't do more for you. That was my last bag."

Chris tossed the empty leather pouch aside.

Seeing himself unable to press forward to cover Alex, Valor turned away.



"Well, here goes nothing." The swordsman sprinted past Chris and Gregor to engage the bowslinger beyond.

**Valor: Move to 13,6 and attack the archer!**



"Get outta my way!" Valor roared, aiming a slash for the archer's neck.



"That's not good...hopefully after we defeat these Berebians we'll have a chance to restock. Thank the Dragon for Ami and her healing powers, eh?"



"Thanking the Plague Dragon? I didn't know you believed in him, too."

Chris was probably joking around to take Gregor's mind off his wounds. He was in one of those moods again where it was hard to tell with him.

Valor went slashy against Archer A, hurting him a bit.

#### Valor vs Archer A

Hit:  $115+5+10-23 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $14-9 = 5\text{dmg}$



"Not *that* Dragon, Chris. The Divine one."

He couldn't tell if Chris was joking or not either.



"What if there isn't a difference? That certainly would be interesting."

Chris patted Gregor on the shoulder, then took out a cloth from his robes and pressed it against the cut on Gregor's cheek.



"Here. That should help with the bleeding."

**Ami: To 14,8 and heal Alexander**



"The battle far from over, Alex. Stop napping."

Well, that stung. Still, it beat bleeding all over the place.



"Ah, thank you. Do you think Ami's staff can prevent scarring?"

**Olison to 15,8**

**Riven uses Concoction on Gregor**

**Daniel to 18,6**

**Derick: step to 15,7 and be a sardine**



"I don't know. Probably so. Nobody here has any scars that I can tell... or at least, in my case, none that weren't already present."

Ami? started filing through her pockets



"Where is it?"



"Ah ha!"

She toss a small jar of clear liquid at Gregor



"Rub a little on your wound. It won't do jack for the pain, but your look may pull through."

She think for a second



"Though I heard some chicks dig scars."



"Are you one of them? And would you like to see mine, later? They're almost all on the torso, though. Mostly across the back and a few across the chest. A few on my arms and legs."

Gregor gingerly dabs some of the liquid on. Between that and the concoction, he's already feeling much better.



"It seems to be working. Thank you, Riven and Ami. ...You are still Ami, right?"



"Eh."



"More or less. Maybe some more anger here and there."

Ami heals up Alexander.

#### Ami heals Alexander

$10+16 / 2 =$  Up to 13HP restored

Riven poured some drinks upon Gregor's face.

#### Riven uses Concoction on Gregor

Up to 30HP healed

**Tantallos: Hold still.**

Alexander groaned, grumbling about magic in general as he pulled himself up off of the ground and once again filled the hole in the wall.

**Seyena stays put**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The shaman easily brought Alexander back to the floor.

#### Shaman A vs Alexander

Hit:  $99-5-14 = 80$

Hit roll: 49, hit!

Damage:  $22-2 = 20\text{dmg}$

Priest B then waved his staff, and suddenly Riven's mouth was blocked by a pink ball-shaped gag of magical nature, forbidding her from talking, not to mention casting spells.

#### Priest B casts Silence on Riven

Silence chance:  $\{30+[(10-10)\times 5]+6\}-(5\times 2) = 30+0+6-10 = 26$

Hit roll: 13!

Riven is Silenced!

Archers A and C then shot arrows at Valor; the first one struck his left shoulder, and he dodged the second one. After that, Valor got hit by Swordsman C. In retaliation, Valor first struck deep into his opponent's abdomen, then pulled the blade and messily beheaded him. On top of that, he also evaded a glob of dark matter flung at him by Shaman D, but then got knocked down by Halberdier E.

#### Archer A vs Valor

Hit:  $99-5-10-28 = 56$

Hit roll: 37, hit!

Damage:  $18-7 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### Archer C vs Valor

Hit:  $99-5-10-28 = 56$   
Hit roll: 89, miss!

#### Swordsman C vs Valor

Hit:  $99-5-10-28 = 56$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $18-7 = 11\text{dmg}$

Valor counters!

Hit:  $115+5+10-18 = 112$ , autohit! Crit roll: 18!  
Damage:  $14-6 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

Valor counters again!

Hit:  $115+5+10-18 = 112$ , autohit! Crit roll: 25!  
Damage:  $14-6 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

#### Shaman D vs Valor

Hit:  $99-5-10-28 = 56$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

#### Halberdier E vs Valor

Hit:  $94+15-5-10-28 = 66$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $16+1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

At the other side of the battlefield, Spy B got himself assaulted by the Wyvern Rider D, but easily dodged the clumsy thrust. His strike was too slow and the wyvern evaded the hit, but the very next strike went right between eyes of the rider and then down onto the wyvern's skull, smashing it. That was nowhere close to his troubles - enemies were many, and Knight A just moved close. The heavy lance stabbed the spy between ribs, but he pulled himself from it and then went slashy at the Knight A's face, wounding him grievously but not managing to kill him outright. But wait, there's more! Wyvern Rider C flew into the little room and thrust with his lance; the sharp tip plunged right into Spy B's guts, forcing him to vomit some blood.

"Sh-shit..." That was all he managed to say before falling to the floor.

#### Wyvern Rider D vs Spy B

Hit:  $89+15-48 = 56$   
Hit roll: 84, miss!

Spy B counterattacks!

Hit:  $116-15-16 = 85$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

Spy B counters once more!

Hit:  $116-15-16 = 85$   
Hit roll: 53, hit! Crit roll: 14!  
Damage:  $19-1-12 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$

#### Knight A vs Spy B

Hit:  $85+15-48 = 52$   
Hit roll: 40, hit!  
Damage:  $20+1-4 = 17\text{dmg}$

Spy B retaliates!

Hit:  $116-15-8 = 93$   
Hit roll: 16, hit! Crit roll: 22!  
Damage:  $19-1-13 = 5 \times 3 = 15\text{dmg}$

Spy B counters again!

Hit:  $116-15-8 = 93$   
Hit roll: 78, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1-13 = 5\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern Rider C vs Spy B

Hit:  $89+15-48 = 56$   
Hit roll: 1, hit!  
Damage:  $22+1-4 = 19\text{dmg}$

Shaman C then moved right to the front of Spy A, and cast his dark magic at the hooded man. Unfortunately for the dark mage, Spy A was quite skilled at evasion - and soon the killing edge slashed open the shaman's throat, sending him to the afterlife.

#### Shaman C vs Spy A

Hit:  $99-48 = 51$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!  
  
Spy A counters!  
Hit:  $116-14 = 102$ , autohit! Crit roll: 7!  
Damage:  $19-5 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

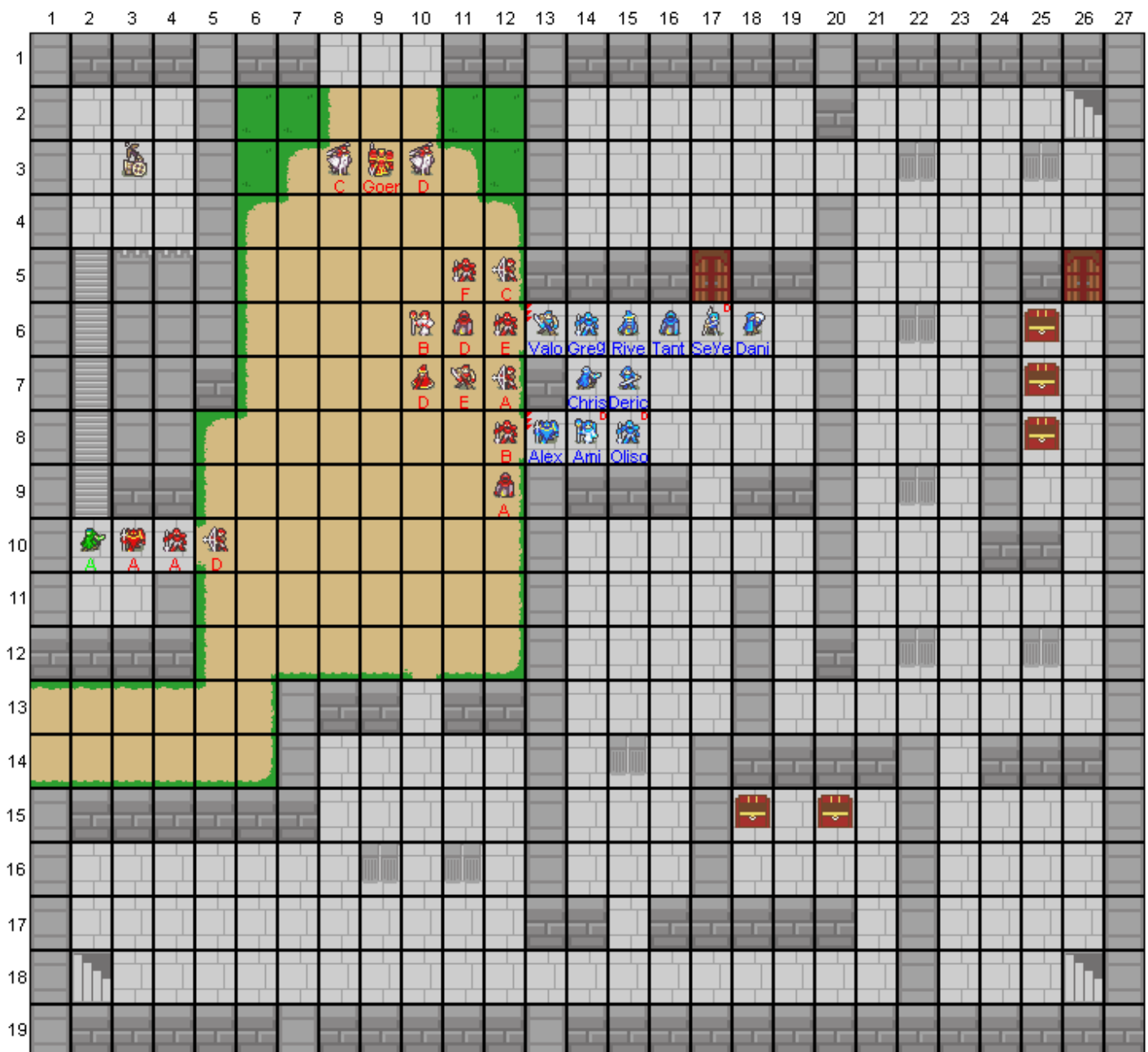
### ~~Ally Phase~~

With a shout of anger, Spy A ran toward the remaining wyvern rider, beheaded him and then split his wyvern's head with few furious strikes, evading a lance thrust in the meanwhile. Blood-soaked as he was, he turned to look the other Berebians right into their eyes.

#### Spy A vs Wyvern Rider C

Hit:  $116-15-16 = 85$   
Hit roll: 26, hit! Crit roll: 20!  
Damage:  $19-1-12 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$   
  
Wyvern Rider C counters!  
Hit:  $89+15-48 = 56$   
Hit roll: 61, miss!  
  
Spy A strikes again!  
Hit:  $116-15-16 = 85$   
Hit roll: 55, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $19-1-12 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 17~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                         | Enemies:               |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/30 3/3     | Archer A: 20/25        |
| Ami Storm: 13/25 Dismounted    | Archer C: 1/25         |
| Christopher Shields: 13/24     | Archer D: 17/25        |
| Daniel: 10/25                  | Knight A: 10/30        |
| Derick: 27/28                  | Halberdier A: 27/27    |
| Gregor von Hexham: 29/29       | Halberdier B: 27/27    |
| Olison Eul: 26/26 Dismounted   | Halberdier E: 27/27    |
| Riven: 14/24 Silence (5/5)     | Halberdier F: 27/27    |
| Seyena Ikane: 27/27 Dismounted | Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 26/26      | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 |
| Valor Inara: -/27 3/3          | Swordsman E: 28/28     |
| Allies:                        | Priest B: 21/21        |
| Prixima's Spy A: 17/27         | Mage D: 26/26          |
|                                | Shaman B: 25/25        |
|                                | Shaman D: 25/25        |
|                                | Baron Goering: 40/40   |

Note about Archer C: the GM put him in the map twice, didn't realize until after the first one died, and now the second is suddenly on the verge of death.

Gregor glared at the Berebians outside.



"I'll rescue you in a moment, Valor. I'm sorry, but we're a little busy."

**Gregor: Toss Javelin at Halberdier E.**

Valor looked up at Gregor from the floor, where he was half sitting, half leaning against a wall.



"I'll be fine for a bit. Finish these bastards off. Ugh..." Valor lapsed into a fit of bloody coughs, which seemed to surprise him. "Oh... That's probably no good."



"Shit... Joseph..."

Chris clenched his fist momentarily.



"Tantallos, can you take this spot and attack that archer?"

**Chris moves to 18,7 and takes his lockpicks back from Daniel.**



"I'm sorry, Chris. I'm not normally one for glorious battle and death, but at least he fought well."



"Drop dead, Berebians."

**Ami: Heal Alexander**

Alexander smirked a bit when Ami said "Drop dead, Berebians."



"Heh, that's a sentiment I can agr-"



Alexander proceeded to cough a sizable amount of blood onto the wall, cursing violently.

Gregor thrown his javelin at Halberdier E.

#### Gregor vs Halberdier E

Hit:  $103+5+10-26 = 92$

Hit roll: 91, hit!

Damage:  $18-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

Whilst Christopher was stripping Daniel from ~~tight clothes~~ possession of lockpicks, Ami healed up Alexander, again.

#### Ami heals Alexander

$10+16 / 2 =$  Up to 13HP restored



"You know that it is dangerous, right? I do not really like arrows, you know."



"You have to do something, Tantalos! Ami can heal you if you get hurt, but we really need to break through the enemy lines!"



"Relaaaax, soldier.. I will do that.. but I must warn you I have a thing for ranged duels.."

#### Tantalos: Move 14,7 attack Archer A



"Let the duel begin!"

Seyena saw Valor fall, obscured by the rest of the group. She tried to push her way forward, a task that proved impossible due to how packed in they were.



"Valor! Is he alright? I can't see anything from here!"

#### Seyena: Move to 16, 7. ~~Lament shortness.~~

#### Tantalos vs Archer A

Hit:  $114-23 = 91$

Hit roll: 20, hit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage:  $17-3 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

**Olison, Riven and Daniel all stay put.**



"HAHAHA! I LOVE killing! I never get tired of that! Look at thaaaat! Thank you again Plague Dragon!"

After laughing for some seconds, the shaman placed his hands together and prayed for the Plague Dragon.

**Derick: Stay put**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The Berebians moved around to accomodate for ranged targets. Before that, though, Shaman A blasted Alex yet again.

#### **Shaman A vs Alexander**

Hit:  $99-5-14 = 80$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $22-2 = 20\text{dmg}$

Then, Archer C shot Ami so hard she collapsed.

#### **Archer C vs Ami**

Hit:  $99-5-10-23 = 61$   
Hit roll: 19, hit!  
Damage:  $18-5 = 13\text{dmg}$

Mage D attacked Tantallos...

#### **Mage D vs Tantallos**

Hit:  $102-15-5-10-23 = 54$   
Hit roll: 75, miss!

Tantallos counters!  
Hit:  $114+15+5+10-18 = 126$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17+1-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

And Shaman D blasted Gregor with magic, but it wasn't powerful enough to knock him down. In retaliation, two javelins were thrown at the shaman, killing him.

#### **Shaman D vs Gregor**

Hit:  $99-5-10-30 = 54$   
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage:  $22-1 = 21\text{dmg}$

Gregor counterattacks!  
Hit:  $103+5+10-14 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $18-5 = 13\text{dmg}$

Gregor retalaites!  
Hit:  $103+5+10-14 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $18-5 = 13\text{dmg}$

Afterwards, that berebian clergyman waved his staff at Tantallos, but it seems nothing

have happened.

**Priest B casts Silence on Tantallos**

Silence hit:  $\{30+[(10-10)\times 5]+6\}-(4\times 2)=30+0+6-8=28$

Hit roll: 49, miss!

In the meanwhile, Archer D moved into the tower and shot an arrow at Spy A, who evaded the projectile. He didn't evade the halberd slash from Halberdier A, though. He stabbed him twice in retaliation. Unfortunately, second later, Knight A impaled the spy on his lance.

"Goddamned spies... you, up the tower, and man the ballista."

**Archer D vs Spy A**

Hit:  $99-48=51$

Hit roll: 75, miss!

**Halberdier A vs Spy A**

Hit:  $94+15-48=61$

Hit roll: 50, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-4=13\text{dmg}$

Spy A retaliates!

Hit:  $116-15-26=75$

Hit roll: 18, hit!

Damage:  $19-1-9=9\text{dmg}$

Spy A attacks again!

Hit:  $116-15-26=75$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Damage:  $19-1-9=9\text{dmg}$

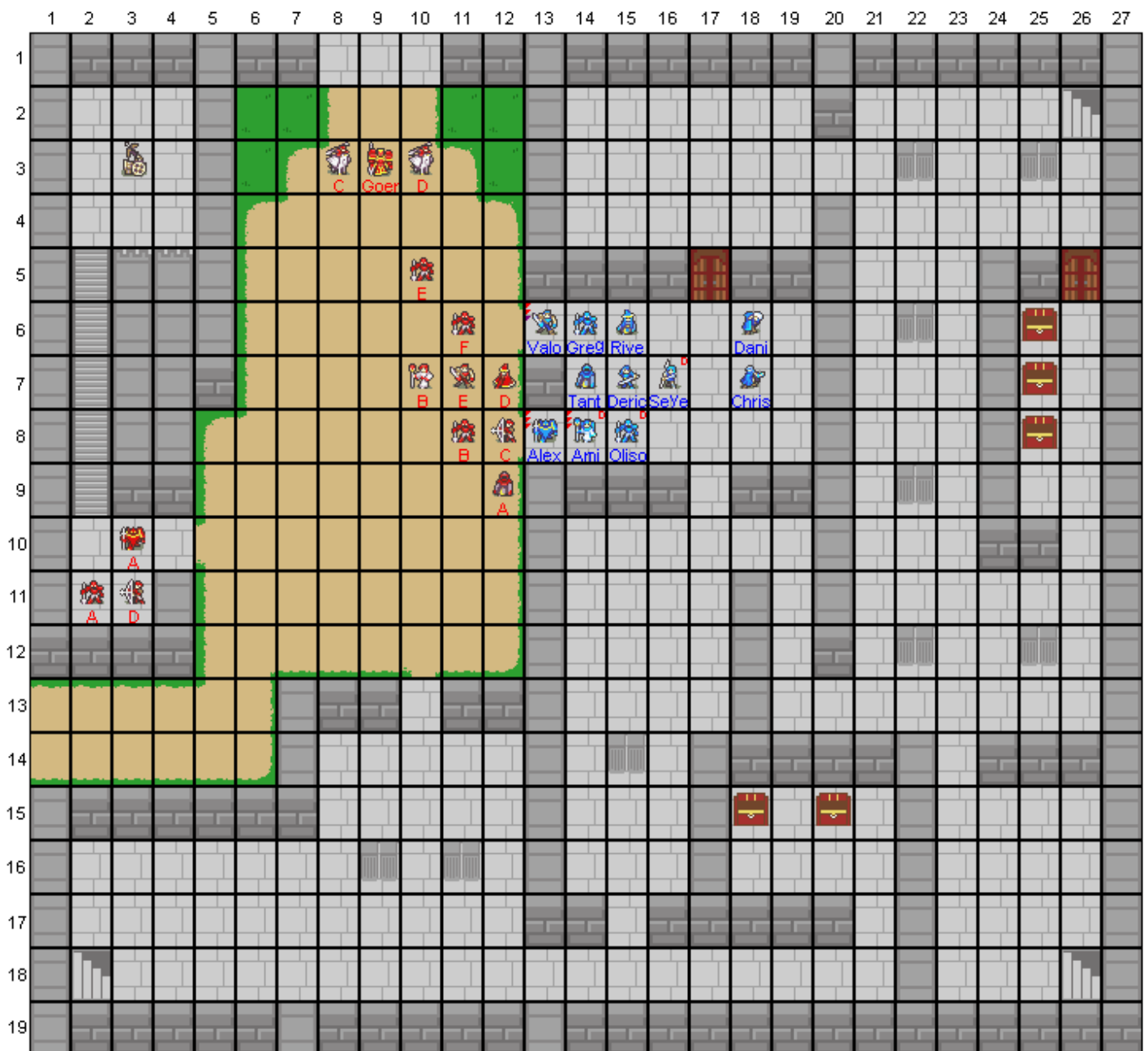
**Knight A vs Spy A**

Hit:  $85+15-48=52$

Hit roll: 20, hit!

Damage:  $20+1-4=17\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 18~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                         | Enemies:            |                        |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/31 3/3     | Archer C: 1/25      | Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 |
| Ami Storm: -/25 3/3 Dismounted | Archer D: 17/25     | Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 |
| Christopher Shields: 13/25     | Knight A: 10/30     | Swordsman E: 28/28     |
| Daniel: 10/25                  | Halberdier A: 9/27  | Priest B: 21/21        |
| Derick: 27/29                  | Halberdier B: 27/27 | Mage D: 17/26          |
| Gregor von Hexham: 8/29        | Halberdier E: 18/27 | Shaman A: 25/25        |
| Olison Eul: 26/27 Dismounted   | Halberdier F: 27/27 | Baron Goering: 40/40   |
| Riven: 14/25 Silence (4/5)     |                     |                        |
| Seyena Ikane: 27/27 Dismounted |                     |                        |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 26/27      |                     |                        |
| Valor Inara: -/28 2/3          |                     |                        |



"ACH! I'm in a lot of pain with this arrow in my..."

She looks at the arrow.



"Heart?"

She vomits some blood.



"No wait, the left lung."



"Damn it! Can someone heal Ami, or at least move her to safety?"

If Ami is Rescued and 14,8 becomes clear to move to, Chris will move there and attack the archer who shot her. Unless Tantallos wants to move there and attack the archer; in that case, Chris will instead move to Tantallos's former position and attack the mage. If neither action is possible, Chris will just wait this turn.

**Derick: Move 12,6 attack the mage!**

Derick went outside and beheaded the mage, per usual.

#### Derick vs Mage D

Hit:  $110+5+10-18 = 112$ , autohit! Crit roll: 16!

Damage:  $18-4 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

**Tantallos: Use vulnerartby on Gregor.**



"Hello again soldier person."



"Much obliged. And I do have a name, you know. You don't have to call me "soldier person" all the time."

**Gregor: Move to (12,7). STAB Archer C with Killer Lance!**



"I know you have a name, but I find really amusing to call you by soldier person. But if you prefer I can just call you by Gregor soldier person."

Gregor's got sprinkles.

**Tantallos uses Vulnerary on Gregor**

Up to 10HP restored

And then Gregor went outside and stabbed Archer C to death.

**Gregor vs Archer C**

Hit:  $100+5-23 = 82$

Hit roll: 67, hit!

Damage:  $22-9 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Olison to 12,8. Iron Lance to shaman.**

**Riven to 15,8. Concoction to Ami.**

**Daniel stays put.**

Olison went after Shaman A, but just as he was going to strike the dark mage, the cavalier tripped over a small rock and missed with his stab. Of course, the Shaman used the moment and blasted him with dark magic, just before Olison struck him with the lance. A second later, Riven have revived Ami.

**Olison vs Shaman A**

Hit:  $105+5-14 = 96$

Hit roll: 97, miss!

Shaman A counters!

Hit:  $99-5-35 = 59$

Hit roll: 31, hit!

Damage:  $22-3 = 19\text{dmg}$

Olison attacks again!

Hit:  $105+5-14 = 96$

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage:  $18-5 = 13\text{dmg}$



"Come on, get up..."

**Seyena: Move to 14,6. Use Varnishier on Valor.**

**Seyena uses Vulnerary on Valor**

Up to 5HP restored



"Oh man, that was pretty bad." Valor said, forcing himself to his feet.  
"Thanks."

~~Enemy Phase~~

First of all, the Priest B made another attempt to silence the mercenaries - this time he pointed his staff at Ami. Yet, nothing happened.

**Priest B casts Silence on Ami**

Silence roll:  $\{30+[(10-10)\times 5]+6\}-(4\times 2)=30+0+6-8=28$

Hit roll: 54, miss!

After that, the other Berebians moved in to attack.

Shaman A went behind the remaining Swordsman and flung his dark magic at Gregor, knocking him down.

**Shaman A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $99-5-30=64$

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage:  $22-2=20\text{dmg}$

Then, Halberdier E went after Derick, but instead of hitting the myrmidon, he got cut by Derick's shamsir instead. Halberdier F tried his chances next moment - he did slash across Derick's arm, but the shamsir was the last thing the Berebian saw in his life. The less spoken of the messy death, the better - we shall just mention he died crosseyed. Right afterwards, Swordsman E went for Derick, further wounding the myrmidon, who, in return, sliced across his chest, and then stomach.

**Halberdier E vs Derick**

Hit:  $94+15-39=70$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

Derick counters!

Hit:  $110+10-15-26=79$

Hit roll: 89, miss!

Derick counters again!

Hit:  $110+10-15-26=79$

Hit roll: 13, hit!

Damage:  $18+2-1-9=10\text{dmg}$

**Halberdier F vs Derick**

Hit:  $94+15-39=70$

Hit roll: 67, hit!

Damage:  $16+1-8=9\text{dmg}$

Derick counters!

Hit:  $110+10-15-26=79$

Hit roll: 21, hit!

Damage:  $18+2-1-9=10\text{dmg}$

Derick counters again!

Hit:  $110+10-15-26=79$

Hit roll: 32, hit! Crit roll: 9!

Damage:  $18+2-1-9=10\times 3=30\text{dmg}$

**Swordsman E vs Derick**

Hit:  $99-39=60$

Hit roll: 53, hit!

Damage:  $18-8=10\text{dmg}$

Derick retaliates!

Hit:  $110+10-18=102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $18+2-6=14\text{dmg}$

Derick retaliates!

Hit:  $110+10-18=102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $18+2-6=14\text{dmg}$

Moments later, Halberdier B dueled with Olison; the Berebian missed, but the mount-less cavalier did not.

### Halberdier B vs Olson

Hit:  $94 - 5 - 10 - 35 = 44$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

Olson counters!

Hit:  $105 + 10 + 5 - 26 = 94$

Hit roll: 7, hit!

Damage:  $18 - 9 = 9\text{dmg}$

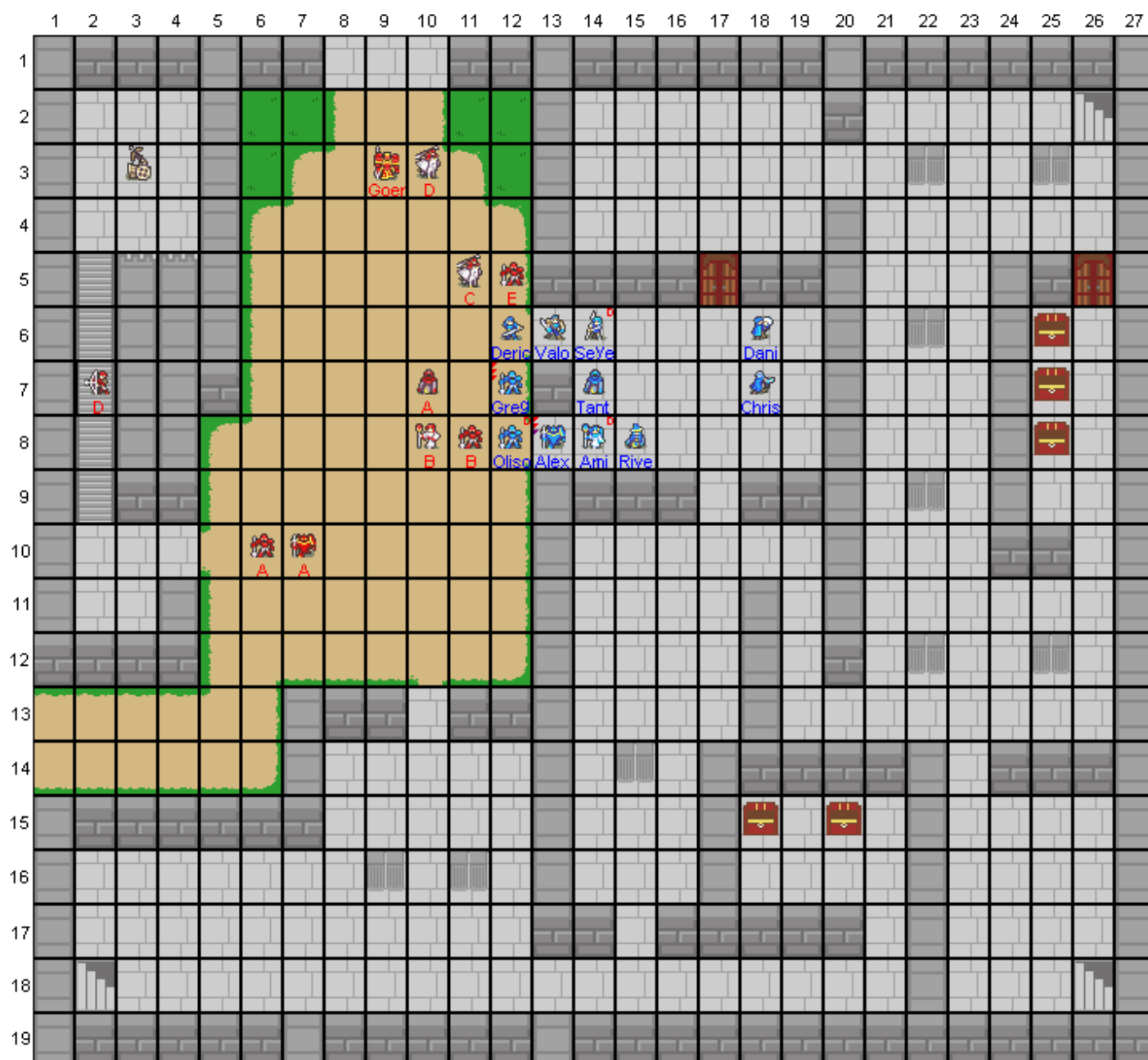
Then, Pegasus Rider C flew toward Derick, and threw her javelin at him - he dodged with ease. The other pegasus rider remained at Berebian General's side after he raised his hand toward her in stopping motion. His eyes were fixed at mercenaries fighting his troops, but his mind seemed to be a bit away from here.

### Pegasus Rider C vs Derick

Hit:  $104 + 15 - 39 = 80$

Hit roll: 91, miss!

## ~~Player Turn 19~~



Weather:

**Mercs:**

**Enemies:**



|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/31 <b>2/3</b>     |
| Ami Storm: 15/25 <b>Dismounted</b>    |
| Christopher Shields: 13/25            |
| Daniel: 10/25                         |
| Derick: 8/29                          |
| Gregor von Hexham: -/29 <b>3/3</b>    |
| Olison Eul: 7/27 <b>Dismounted</b>    |
| Riven: 14/25 <b>Silence (3/5)</b>     |
| Seyena Ikane: 27/27 <b>Dismounted</b> |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 26/27             |
| Valor Inara: 5/28                     |

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Archer D: 17/25        |
| Knight A: 10/30        |
| Halberdier A: 9/27     |
| Halberdier B: 18/27    |
| Halberdier E: 8/27     |
| Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 |
| Pegasus Rider D: 23/23 |
| Priest B: 21/21        |
| Shaman A: 12/25        |
| Baron Goering: 40/40   |

**Derick: Attack adjacent soldier**



"Not again..."

**Chris wandered back toward the fighting (move to 15,7).**

Derick slashed at Halberdier E again, killing him.

**Derick vs Halberdier E**

Hit:  $110+10-15-26 = 79$   
Hit roll: 19, hit!  
Damage:  $18+2-1-9 = 10\text{dmg}$



"Alright, back-"



"-into-"



"Huh? Did I blackout again?"

**Ami: Heal Alexander.**

Alexander was still injured, and the constant cycle of taking wounds until he fell and then getting magically healed left a strain upon his body. He coughed again, but nonetheless pulled himself off of the ground.



"I... MUST not falter again... Rrngg..."

**Daniel Stays Put**

## Riven uses a Vulnerability on Ami.

Healing here and there.

### Ami heals Alexander

10+16 / 2 = Up to 13HP healed

### Riven uses Vulnerary on Ami

Up to 10HP restored

## Valor: Move to 10,6 and introduce shaman to my blade.

## Seyena moves to 11,6, gives Derick her last vulehrabob

Blade introduction went rather messily. For both parties involved.

### Valor vs Shaman A

Hit: 115-14 = 101, autohit!

Damage: 14-5 = 9dmg

Shaman A counters!

Hit: 99-28 = 71

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Damage: 22-3 = 19dmg

And Derick got sprinkled with white powder.

### Seyena uses Vulnerary on Derick

Up to 10HP healed

## Olison to 11,7. Shao Shaman his stabs.



"You're not getting away!"

## Tantallos: Move 17,7 and use vulnerary on Chris.



"Hello, hello, just making sure you will not end up talking to the floor."

Whilst Olison gutted down the stubborn Shaman, Tantallos gave Chris some snort powder.

### Olison vs Shaman A

Hit: 105-14 = 91

Hit roll: 30, hit!

Damage: 18-5 = 13dmg

### Tantallos uses Vulnerary on Chris

Up to 10HP restored

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Priest B gave up on silencing, it seems, because he ran toward Knight A and healed up him.

### Priest B heals Knight A

10+10 = Up to 20HP restored

After that, Halberdier B tried to behead Olison with the halberd, but not only he missed, he got stabbed by Olison's spear too.

### Halberdier B vs Olison

Hit:  $94-35 = 59$

Hit roll: 95, miss!

Olison counters!

Hit:  $105-26 = 79$

Hit roll: 49, hit!

Damage:  $18-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

Then, the pegasus rider with javelin tried to hit Derick again - this time she scored a hit. Her companion, Pegasus Rider D then moved after Derick and with exceptionally fast and vicious strike, she pierced him through. The myrmidon pulled on the lance to get her face closer and cut her down as she looked into his eyes with terror. Then he pulled the lance from himself and bled a little more.

### Pegasus Rider C vs Derick

Hit:  $104+15-39 = 80$

Hit roll: 22, hit!

Damage:  $14+1-8 = 7\text{dmg}$

### Pegasus Rider D vs Derick

Hit:  $114+15-39 = 90$

Hit roll: 65, hit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage:  $13+1-8 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$

Derick retaliates!

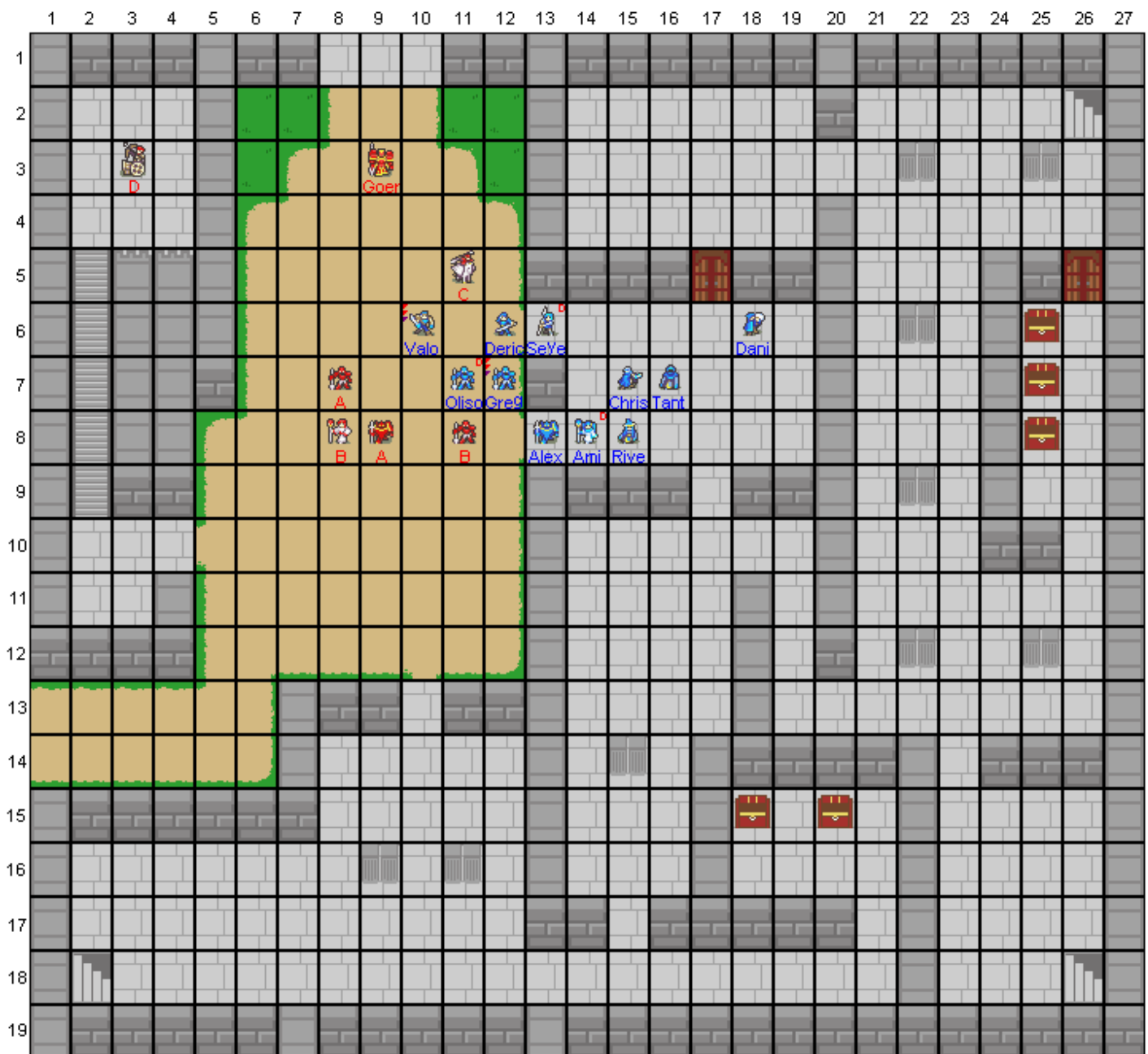
Hit:  $110-15-31 = 64$

Hit roll: 15, hit! Crit roll: 11!

Damage:  $18+2-1-6 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

Second later, Archer D got to the ballista on top of the tower.

# ~~Player Turn 20~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                | Enemies:               |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 13/31               | Archer D: 17/25        |
| Ami Storm: 25/25 <b>Dismounted</b>    | Knight A: 30/30        |
| Christopher Shields: 23/25            | Halberdier A: 9/27     |
| Daniel: 10/25                         | Halberdier B: 9/27     |
| Derick: 3/29                          | Pegasus Rider C: 23/23 |
| Gregor von Hexham: -/29 <b>2/3</b>    | Priest B: 21/21        |
| Olison Eul: 7/27 <b>Dismounted</b>    | Baron Goering: 40/40   |
| Riven: 14/25 <b>Silence (2/5)</b>     |                        |
| Seyena Ikane: 27/27 <b>Dismounted</b> |                        |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 26/27             |                        |
| Valor Inara: -/28 <b>2/3</b>          |                        |

**Tantallos: Move 12,8 finish the halberdier B.**



"It is killing time again!"

Chris dashes to 11,6 and tries to shoot the pegasus rider.



"Valor, hold on. If I have to I'll carry you out of here."

Tantallos ended the miserable life of the halberdier just like Chris shot the pegasus rider out of the picture.

**Tantallos vs Halberdier B**

Hit:  $117+5+10-26 = 106$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17+2-3 = 16$ dmg

**Chris vs Pegasus Rider C**

Hit:  $115-31 = 84$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $48+2-6 = 44$ dmg

Chris passively observed the pegasus crash to the ground and the rider roll out of the saddle, both dead on impact.



"...I wonder if she feared dying today, or if she was confident their forces could crush Pnixima's."

Olison to 8,9, Iron Lance to Priest.

Riven to 11,7, Vulnerary to Gregor.

Daniel to 14,6.

Stab stab.

**Olison vs Priest B**

Hit:  $105-28 = 77$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $18-4 = 14$ dmg

Olison strikes again!

Hit:  $105-28 = 77$   
Hit roll: 68, hit!  
Damage:  $18-4 = 14$ dmg

Sprinkle sprinkle.

**Riven uses Vulnerary on Gregor**

Up to 5HP restored



"Wow, I didn't think that would work!"

**Derick: Move to 9,7 and attack the soldier.**

Derick went after the remaining halberdier... and got himself stabbed.

**Derick vs Halberdier A**

Hit:  $110-15-26 = 69$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!  
  
Halberdier A counters!  
Hit:  $94+15-39 = 70$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Damage:  $16+1-8 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Alexander: Move to 10, 8 engage in knight-fight with Knight A**

**Gregor: Get up and hope the bad guys ignore a wounded soldier.**

**Ami: Head to 12,6 and heal Gregor.**

Alexander went into knight-fight.

**Alexander vs Knight A**

Hit:  $98-8 = 90$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $18-13 = 5\text{dmg}$   
  
Knight A counters!  
Hit:  $85-15 = 70$   
Hit roll: 14, hit!  
Damage:  $20-2-17 = 1\text{dmg}$

And Ami tapped Gregor with her staff.

**Ami heals Gregor**

$10+16 = \text{Up to 26HP restored}$

**Seyena: Move to 8,6 and attack halberdier**

Seyena, after a long while, went stabby! She almost killed the halberdier, and evaded his counter-stab.

**Seyena vs Halberdier A**

Hit:  $106-26 = 80$   
Hit roll: 65, hit!  
Damage:  $17-9 = 8\text{dmg}$   
  
Halberdier A counters!  
Hit:  $94-31 = 63$   
Hit roll: 82, miss!

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The General lifted his spear and moved!



"Less than five of us... how did this happen... nevermind! Come, show me what you've got!" Second later, he plunged his heavy spear right into Riven's stomach, knocking her off.

#### Goering vs Riven

Goering uses Parity!  
Hit:  $89-23 = 66$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $25-4 = 21\text{dmg}$

Halberdier A then slashed at Seyena, cutting her slightly, and she brought him to his grave in return. Seconds later a ballista bolt hit her stomach as well. Then, Knight A went after Seyena. He missed, and she scratched him twice with her lance.

#### Halberdier A vs Seyena

Hit:  $94-31 = 63$   
Hit roll: 32, hit!  
Damage:  $16-7 = 9\text{dmg}$

Seyena retaliates!  
Hit:  $106-26 = 80$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $17-9 = 8\text{dmg}$

Seyena retaliates again and keels, GM lost this part

#### Archer D shoots Ballista at Seyena

Hit:  $89-31 = 67$   
Hit roll: 2, hit!  
Damage:  $17-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

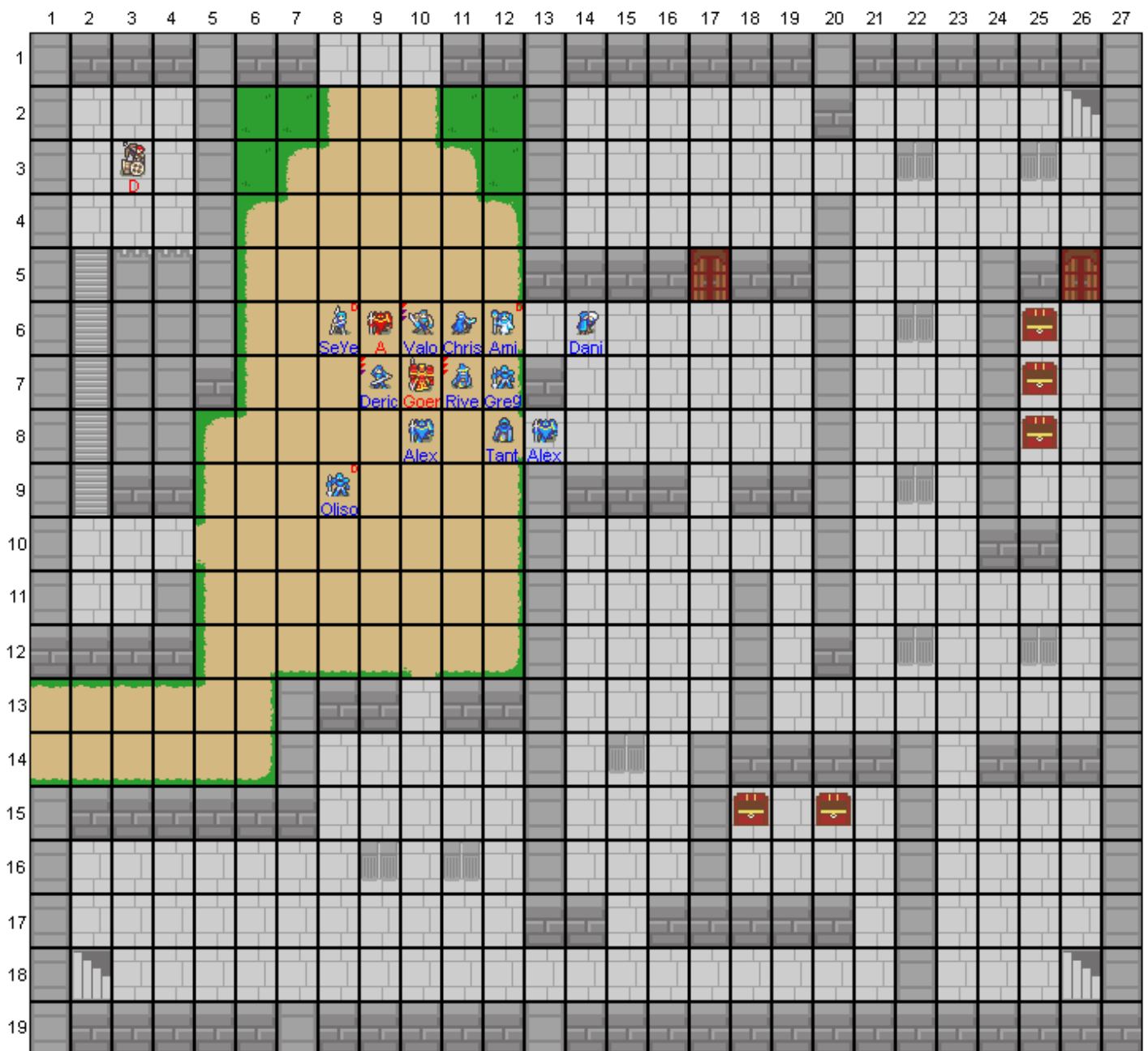
#### Knight A vs Seyena

Hit:  $85-31 = 54$   
Hit roll: 73, miss!

Seyena counters!  
Hit:  $106-8 = 98$   
Hit roll: 76, hit!  
Damage:  $17-13 = 4\text{dmg}$

Seyena strikes again!  
Hit:  $106-8 = 98$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $17-13 = 4\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 21~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                       | Enemies:             |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 12/32                       | Archer D: 17/25      |
| Ami Storm: 25/26 <b>Dismounted</b>            | Knight A: 17/30      |
| Christopher Shields: 23/26                    | Baron Goering: 40/40 |
| Daniel: 10/25                                 |                      |
| Derick: -/30 <b>2/3</b>                       |                      |
| Gregor von Hexham: 29/30                      |                      |
| Olison Eul: 7/28 <b>Dismounted</b>            |                      |
| Riven: -/25 <b>3/3 Silence (2/5, stalled)</b> |                      |
| Seyena Ikane: 8/28 <b>Dismounted</b>          |                      |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 26/28                     |                      |
| Valor Inara: -/29 <b>1/3</b>                  |                      |



"Gregor, you're clear!"

**Olison to 11,8. Rescue Riven.**



**Daniel to 11,9.**



"Hmm... have to do what I can... Ami, can you heal Valor? And Tantallos, take this spot! Attack whoever you will from it!"

**Chris dashes to 9,5 and tries to backstab the knight with his poison dagger.**



"Can someone tell me what happen while I was out?"



"Well... It seems you have a split personality, Ami. I talked to her a bit and she healed some of the wounded. Other than that, all you really missed was the tide turning in our favor..."

Chris wondered how she would take that news. It's not every day one finds out they have another entire 'self' with them.

Christopher went behind the knight and stabbed him with his dagger.

#### **Christopher vs Knight A**

Hit:  $122+5-15-8 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16+2-1-13 = 4$ dmg, poisoned!

Cancel roll: 6, success!

Christopher strikes again!

Hit:  $122+5-15-8 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16+2-1-13 = 4$ dmg, poisoned!



"Oh, oh! That would explain a lot actually."

**Ami: To 10,5 and heal valor**



"You're taking it rather well."

Chris grunted as he stabbed the knight in the lower back a second time, poisoning him.



"Not going to worry about which one I might like better?"



"I would then be completing with myself, which would be sign of madness. Then again, I have a split personality so I'm already mad...I think. Man, physiology is hard, no wonder I'm a healer of the body and not the mind."

Chris smiled.



"It's OK. To be honest I like both of 'you' about the same. One is sweet and kind, and the other is dark and aggressive, but there's still the same sort of 'Ami core' between them. It's most easily compared to a prism. If you hold it correctly it refracts light into many colors - these can be likened to the different sides of you, but they both originate from the same source, and all are beautiful in their own way."



"Here's one Menelean soldier that your little massacre missed!"

### Gregor: STAB the General with the Killer Lance!

Ami's wand spread healing light again, the magic of the staff dimmer and dimmer each minute.

#### Ami heals Valor

10+17 /2 = Up to 13HP restored

And then Gregor stabbed the enemy General, ducked his counter-stab and poked his side again.

#### Gregor vs Goering

Hit: 102+5+10-19 = 98

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage: 22-16 = 6dmg

Goering counters!

Hit: 89-5-30 = 54

Hit roll: 66, miss!

Gregor attacks again!

Hit: 102+5+10-19 = 98

Hit roll: 54, hit!

Damage: 22-16 = 6dmg

Seeing Valor healed, Seyena could now face the knight without a worry. She immediately struck before the pain from her injuries would overtake her.

**Seyena: Stab the knight, bend like reed to avoid attacks**

**Tantallos: Equip Flux, move 11,8 and attack the general.**



"Hello, hello general person!"

Still bleeding everywhere, his grey armor in many places stained red, Alexander faced Goering with pure malice. He raises his lance and begins to shout angrily as he struck at the Berebian general, man-shaped mountain of metal meeting man-shaped mountain of metal.



"You came here to tale what it is my duty to protect! You came here to slay my comrades and to desecrate my home! You came here to DIE! You may have thought you succeeded! But you will fall and your allies HAVE fallen! And no matter how many times I fall, Iwill get up! I cannot be stopped! We will slay you! We will retake this castle! AND YOU CANNOT STOP US!"

**Alexander: Attack Goering**



"I am starting to like this guy. He is talking about killing and slaying! So nice".

Seyena poked the knight again. After dodging his attack, she stabbed him again.

#### **Seyena vs Knight A**

Hit:  $108+5+10+5-8 = 120$ , autohit!

Damage:  $18-13 = 5\text{dmg}$

Knight A counters!

Hit:  $85-5-31 = 49$

Hit roll: 74, miss!

Hit:  $108+5+10+5-8 = 120$ , autohit!

Damage:  $18-13 = 5\text{dmg}$

After that, Tantallos cast Flux at the General.

#### **Tantallos vs Goering**

Hit:  $107+10+5-19 = 103$ , autohit!

Damage:  $21+2-6 = 17\text{dmg}$

And then, Alex went after the General himself.

#### **Alexander vs Goering**

Hit:  $98+10+5-19 = 94$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage: 19-16 = 3dmg

Goering counters!

Hit: 89-5-17 = 67

Hit roll: 62, hit!

Damage: 25-2-17 = 6dmg

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Seyena smashed against the ground after the ballista bolt went through her.

### Archer D fires Ballista at Seyena

Hit: 89-31 = 58

Hit roll: 7, hit!

Damage: 17-7 = 10dmg



"You, kids, have lot to learn. It's better to kill a garrison of hundred than let thousands die nex... enough talk. Have at you, cursed Menelean!" And that's when Alexander went down, again.

### Goering vs Alexander

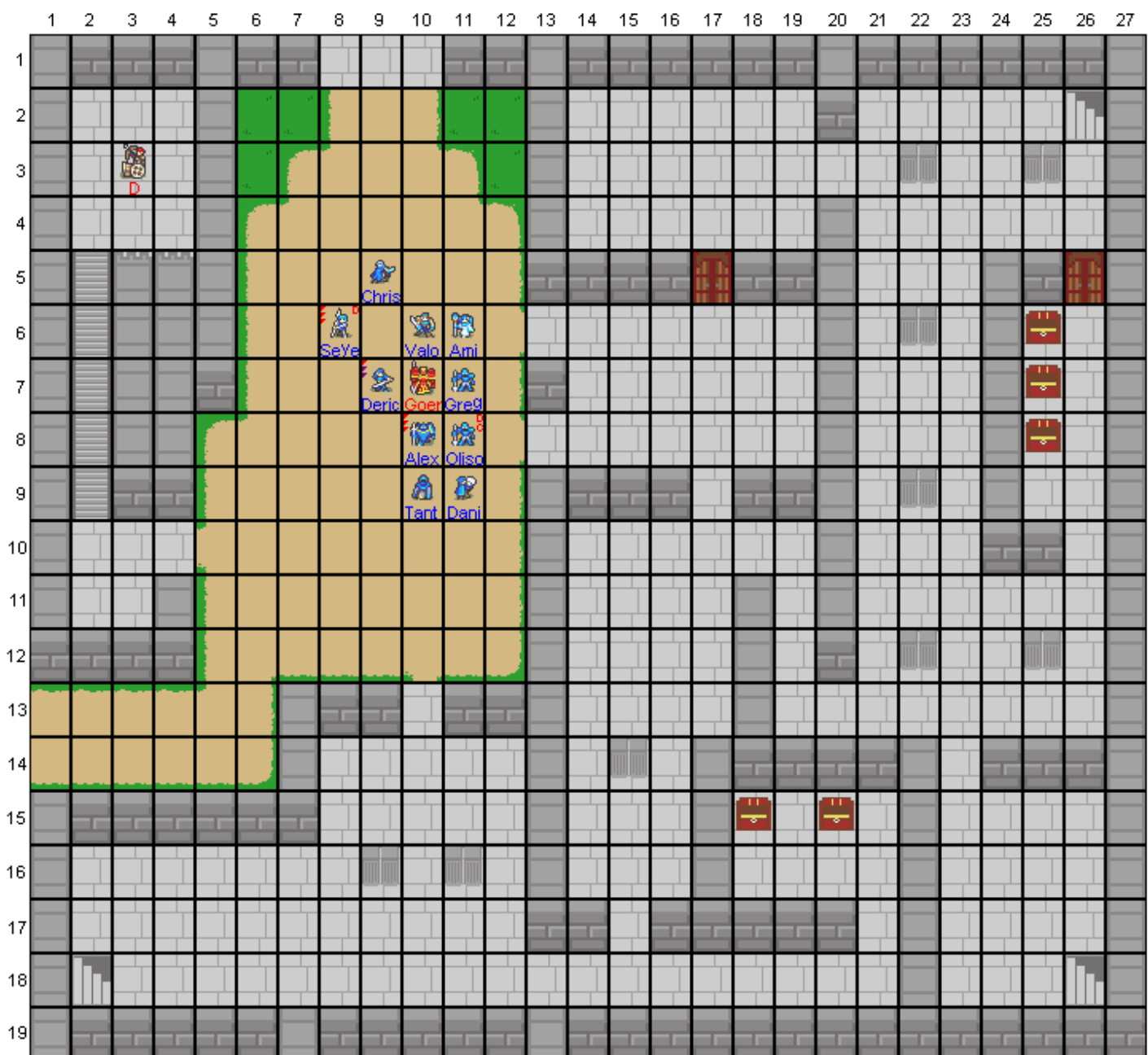
Goering uses Parity!

Hit: 89-17 = 72

Hit roll: 16, hit!

Damage: 25-17 = 8dmg!

# ~~Player Turn 22~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Enemies:                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/32 <b>3/3</b><br>Ami Storm: 25/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Christopher Shields: 23/26<br>Daniel: 10/25<br>Derick: -/30 <b>1/3</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 29/30<br>Olison Eul: 7/28 <b>Dismounted</b> <b>Carrying: Riven</b><br>Riven: -/25 <b>3/3 Silence (2/5, stalled)</b> <b>Carried by Olison Eul</b><br>Seyena Ikane: -/28 <b>3/3 Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 26/28<br>Valor Inara: 13/29 | Archer D: 17/25<br>Baron Goering: 8/40 |

Valor's blood ran cold as Seyena fell to the ground, then turned to lava as the swordsman was consumed by rage.



"And you need to learn to prioritize targets!" Valor drew the armorslayer,

aiming to pulp the man's head.

**Valor: Swap to armorslayer, attack attack attack!**



"That's enough out of you. Murderer of Kesselring, I declare your life at an end."

**Gregor: STAB.**

**Just in case that isn't enough, Chris moves one space south and fires at Goering with his crossbow.**



"Yeah... I think it's time we ended this. We have to hurry onward to PRIXIMA and we really can't dally with you all day."

Unfortunately for Gregor, Valor was at the General first, cutting at his armored chest.

**Valor vs Goering**

Hit:  $105+5+10-15-19 = 86$   
Hit roll: 79, hit!  
Damage:  $34-1-16 = 17\text{dmg}$



"Urghkk... you fools, you have... no idea... what we are... trying... to... accom... plish..." With a moan, the Berebian General fell forward, the armor crashing and rattling upon impact.

**~~Chapter 4 Complete!~~**

Chris knelt at Goering's side.



"Frankly, I don't care what you are trying to accomplish. Your mission is at odds with mine... Agus a chríochnaíonn sin do ról sa dráma seo. Dea-oíche."

The spy reached over and closed the general's eyes for him.

Gregor took a deep breath. He wanted a break quite badly, but couldn't rest yet.



"Alright, let's get patched up really quick and get into the inner keep. Maybe some of ours are still holding out or hiding, and if so we need to help them."



"Good riddance." Valor spat, sheathing his sword. He moved towards Seyena, kneeling at her side. "Are you going to be alright?"

Seyena propped herself up, an arm wrapped around the duo of bolts that penetrated her armor. It hurt, but it wasn't fatal, for now. She noticed Valor was at her side.



"I'm fine... I'm not going to die. I just need Ami to get me on my feet..."



"Good. I'm glad. Once we're all back on our feet, we still need to get to PRIXIMA. Then... we're done." Valor stood, and gave both his swords a quick glance before wiping what blood there was off of them. **He also swapped back to his iron sword.**



"...We have to hurry to PRIXIMA."

Now that they were out of combat themselves, they could hear combat still raging behind the wall to the west, in the main courtyard. It was, however, very quiet combat - as if there were actually only few duels or something of that kind.

The entrance to the inner keep was quiet and, to a degree, serene.

Chris turned to Gregor.



"What's the plan? Do we go for the inner keep or check out the main courtyard, to see if there's anyone there we can save that will help us fight when inside?"

Alexander pulled himself out of yet another pool of his own blood, scraping himself painfully to his knees, and with a grunt, still slowly, off of the ground.



"Alright then, I'm ready to go, whichever way."

Olison stood quietly as he looked over the corpses strewn about the courtyard.



"Agreed on finding the Lady. My advice would be to continue inwards. We should not stay here more than we need to, our luck might not hold out..."

Olison crouched down to the nearest soldier and **looked them over, attempting to identify their heraldry.**

Olison could easily recognize the Berebian crests; most of the soldiers had black deer on crimson field of Tunhausen; or two brown bears facing each other - it was the crest of Vagamoor. Few had the iron gauntlet on teal field, the very crest of descendants of General Bereb, current rulers of Berebia.

Olison stood, shaking his head.



"My word, this is quite a task force here. Multiple houses, and even some of Bereb's own soldiers... This was no mere attack of opportunity, this must have been well planned."



"We...we..."

Gregor's fists clenched.



"...we go to the keep and find Prixima. If anyone can tell us what's going on here, it's her. Maybe she still has some soldiers to help as well." *I'm sorry, everyone...*



"We just made a giant graveyard here, so if you really want to save some soldiers, we can get into this "rescue mission". The more we kill, the better it will be for the Plague Dragon, so I do not have objections."

Alexander thought, torn.





"...I agree we need to enter the keep. If Prixima is still there... ...yes, we *need* to enter the keep. Gregor's decision was a wise one."

And so, the group ventured into the keep.

The main audience hall was filled with bodies, of all kinds of armors, both Berebian and Menelean. The floor under the mercenaries' boots was giving away wet, squishy noises of blood and gory bits being crunched under them, the once white marble floor panels were now completely red.

The corridors upstairs were less bloody but still had corpses littered in every corner and nook. And what's worse, not all corpses belonged to soldiers - some of them were unarmed servants, scholars and such. It was now clear that it wasn't a simple takeover of a castle, it was a *cleansing*.

One floor before the Prixima's part of the keep, the mercenaries began to hear shouts, clanking of weapons, and screams of dying. It seems that they weren't too late.

Or are they?

**Two access points are currently available:** One of those is by going through the main stairwell into the few more halls and corridors before arriving at Prixima's office. This is the way which mercenaries were normally using when going to meet with Prixima.

The other possible entrance is small tower embedded in the very middle of the keep. Whilst being closer to Prixima's office, there's not enough place for more than **6** people in its tiny stairwell room.

Gregor was, to put it mildly, not happy at the sight of the bodies. He struggled to keep it under control.



"So...is anyone taking this tower route?"



"I'm not sure if it'd be wise to split up, but if we do, I'd be willing to come along."

Olson grimaced on seeing the carnage inside.



"Even they wouldn't be *this* merciless. This is something else."



"The route is a bit small, some could get inside from there but it might not do us wonders in securing a solid escape route."



"I agree. Splitting up last time almost got some of us killed. We stick together and we stay alive."

Seyena was appalled by the blood that littered the ground. Until now, she had only seen smaller battles with mercenaries. This... this was like war. And it horrified her.



"There's too much blood..." She muttered, carefully choosing her steps so as to not trod on the fallen.



"I could join if you need another shaman around, your call."



"I agree. We enter through the halls. They cannot stand before us now." Valor clenched his fist, his face set with grim determinaton.

Alexander, who had been smothering most of his outrage with his sense of duty up until this point, could no longer contain it. He was obviously enraged, in a blind rage in fact.



"TELL ME WHERE THE BEREBIANS ARE! TELL ME SO I CAN RIP THEM APART WITH MY BARE HANDS!"

And with this he charged down the **halls**.

Seyena looked up, seeing Alexander charge down the hall.



"Hey, you dumb knight! Don't yell that loud, you'll warn them that we're here!" She quickly ran after him, attempting to grab onto his armor to slow him down.

Unfortunately for Seyena, a slim pegasus rider without her pegasus grabbing at the armor of a 6'5 bulky man with as much armor as Alexander has does not do a lot to slow him down.

Riven glanced at Alexander, then turned to Chris.



"Um, if I might ask, do you know the purpose of this? It seems like they could have absorbed them instead. Were they trying to send a message?"

Chris turned to Riven.



"I don't know. If I had to guess I would say they're trying to eliminate PRIXIMA before I can finish my mission. It doesn't matter. Whatever their mission is, they're going to fail."

He seemed confident.



"I agree with Sir Jorinn. The time for subtlety and sneaking about has passed. These murderers will never stop us."

**Gregor: Follow Alexander down the hall.**



"Let's just get it done, it is not like we really could turn around or anything. BUT we should charge more for helping them heh..heheh."

## ~~Chapter 5: Song of Blood and Victory~~

---

"Sir Vagor! Only few of PRIXIMA's guards remain before we gain entry to her study."



"And my son said we wouldn't make it... hmph. So this is it. This is where

that damned witch resides. Listen, soldiers of Berebia! It doesn't matter how many friends you have lost today, how many sons and brothers you saw dying, how many servants and maids you had to execute. Today, we will cleanse demonic filth from this world! For Berebia!" The soldiers cheered, prepared their weapons and went after Vagor's lead.

---

## Meanwhile...

"Sir Rosecross... it's still treason. Are you sure there was no other way?"



"Julie... and all of you. If there was any other way, I would do it. With death of my father, Rosecross family went into my hands. And we swore to protect the weak from the fangs of wicked. Even if our home is at war with our current allies, we have to follow our vow. Besides--" The soldiers around Larion noticed that mercenaries were coming, and everyone in his unit drew weapons from sheaths, or in case of the archers, prepared their arrows. Larion slowly slid his silvery blade as well out of its jeweled sheath. His eyes briefly glanced at the mercenaries, and rested on Seyena. For a moment, he looked a bit sad at her sight.

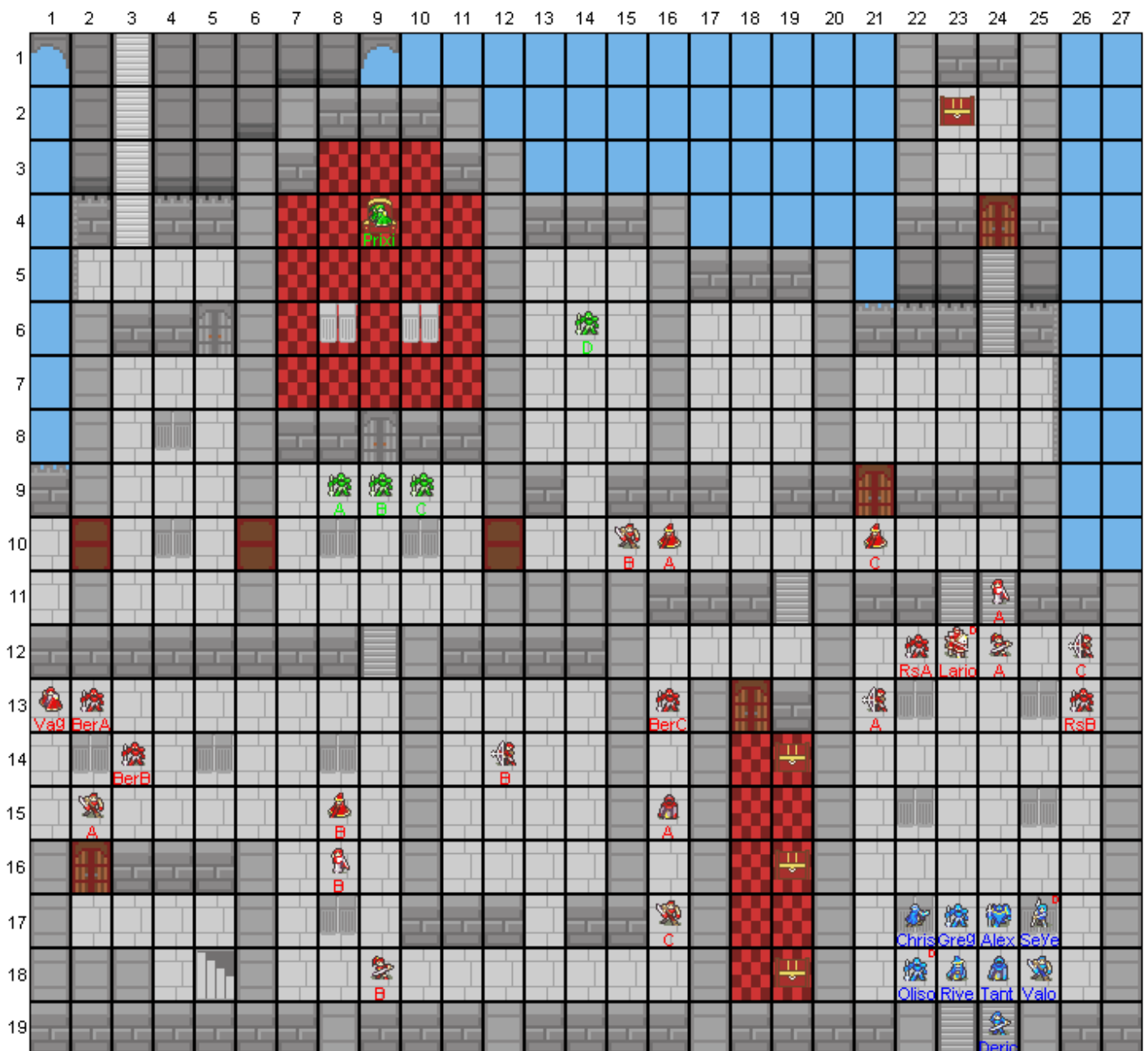


"Ah... I don't know how you people got here in the first place, but I have to admit - I never even considered you in my plans. And as I see, the moonlit beauty that seized my heart back then, under the shining moon... you're here too. My only regret is the circumstances in which we meet this time - and it's the last time, I'm afraid." He looked over the mercenary group once more.



"Enough. Victory or death - let it be swift."

# ~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 32/32<br>Ami Storm: 26/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Christopher Shields: 26/26<br>Derick: 30/30<br>Gregor von Hexham: 30/30<br>Olison Eul: 28/28 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 25/25<br>Seyena Ikane: 28/28 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 28/28<br>Valor Inara: 29/29 |  | Archer A: 25/25<br>Archer B: 25/25<br>Archer C: 25/25<br>Berebian Halberdier A: 27/27<br>Berebian Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Berebian Halberdier C: 27/27<br>Swordsman A: 28/28<br>Swordsman B: 28/28<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Mage A: 26/26<br>Mage B: 26/26 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | Mage C: 26/26<br>Shaman: 25/25<br>Vagor Tunhausen: 37/37<br>Rosecross Spearman A: 28/28<br>Rosecross Spearman B: 28/28<br>Monk A: 24/24<br>Monk B: 24/24<br>Myrmidon A: 26/26<br>Myrmidon B: 26/26<br>Larion Rosecross: 35/35                             |  |
| Guard A: 33/33<br>Guard B: 33/33<br>Guard C: 33/33<br>Guard D: 33/33<br>Pricima Kesselring: 47/47                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |



"What the...Menelean troops? Here in the keep?"



"Comrades, sheathe your weapons! We've been hired by Lady PRIXIMA and seek to save her; we're on the same side!"



"Your simple brain will never grasp the intricacies and complexity of... simple politics. We are Meneleans, but we're now serving greater cause. You, on other hand, are no more than hired thugs who are turning everything into a mess. Eliminating you will only do us a favor!"



"Wait...you're working *with* the Berebians? You violate your oaths to King Paragor? You participate in the butchering of the defenseless?" Gregor lowers his lance to the "ready" position. "You call us thugs? The world doesn't need honorless scum like you. Prepare yourselves!"

Seyena was momentarily shocked by Rosecross' appearance. She was about to take a step forward to ask for his aid when she heard him speak.



"A greater cause? Just what exactly are you trying to achieve by this?"



"You, my lady... It pains me greatly that I will have to violate your body in combat. You shouldn't be here - maybe you should run away... As for greater cause - you're not my covenant. I have nothing to talk about with you, or any of your fellow vagrants."



"Violate her... ew. I thought you were suppose to be above that kind of stuff!"



"You forget that dictionaries of the nobles vary with those of alley rats. That's it, if you are able to read."

Seyena pushed aside the idiotic conversation.



"Rosecross. You knights seem to hold your honor and loyalty above all else. Why are you throwing that away, by taking up arms with Berebians? You don't seem like the type of person who would be easily swayed to do so."



"Oh ho ho. I like this one. You might want to keep him, pegasus knight."



"As for you, though, I think you're underestimating us. Hired thugs or no, we have more than enough power to crush your noble band here. Getting on our good sides might be a better strategy than trying to stab us all."



"We've toppled scores of soldiers and their general to get here. Your resistance will be inconsequential."



"As a matter of fact, I can! I-s-t-h-a-t-a-p-r-o-b-l-e-m?"

Hearing of Larion's betrayal, Alexander got *even madder*.



"You TRAITOR! You betrayed your country! YOU BETRAYED YOUR KIN! *YOU BETRAYED YOUR COMRADES AND YOUR DUTY! YOU JOINED THE BEREBIANS! I WILL DESTROY YOU!*"

And with that, Alexander roared and charged straight forward, ignoring the large force in the spot he was attacking- attacking the nearest enemy.

**Alexander: Move up 4 squares and attack myrmidon/swordsman/whatever A.**



"...Enough pointless bickering. Whether you end up in heaven or hell is no

concern of mine, Rosecross..."

**Chris moves to 22,14 and stabs the Archer with his poison dagger.**



"Wait, wait, what are you two doing? We can try to negotiate with them!"

Seyena looked shocked, but knew that she couldn't do anything to hold Alexander or Chris back.

**Riven: Sit there.**

Valor drew his blade with a flourish, and pointed it at Rosecross.



"I knew. Right from the moment I met you, I knew you were the worst sort of scum. I could feel it in my skin. If you don't want to talk this out, it's fine by me... But I've been hired to do a job... and you are in! My! Way!"

**Valor: Move to 25, 15**



"I really don't get it, we may be just 'hired thugs', but we can see that nothing good ever follow the words 'greater cause'. Why do 'nobles' go crazy about that?"

**Ami: 22,15, suport Chris.**

Alexander went against the myrmidon, but he couldn't hit her with her fast reflexes. On other hand, she hit him twice, but wasn't able to even scratch him.

#### Alexander vs Myrmidon A

Hit:  $98+15-34 = 79$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

Myrmidon A counters!

Hit:  $107-15-17 = 75$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $18-1-17 = 0\text{dmg}$

Myrmidon A attacks again!

Hit:  $107-15-17 = 75$

Hit roll: 39, hit! Crit roll: 11!

Damage:  $18-1-17 = 0\times 3 = 0\text{dmg}$

Chris had better luck with his own target.

#### Christopher vs Archer A

Hit:  $122-23 = 99$

Hit roll: 82, hit!

Damage:  $16+2-9 = 9\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!

Christopher strikes again!



Hit: 122-23 = 99

Hit roll: 11, hit!

Damage: 16+2-9 = 9dmg, poisoned!



"I hear barking, but I don't see the dog. Are you afraid to approach me?"

Larion looked at Valor with straight face.



"Patience, wretch."



"Is just me or everyone is going crazy around here?"



"I perfectly sane...or mad with a solid grip on what real I hope."



"These people are yelling at each other, and it seems that Paladin guy went insane, so I doubt sanity is around. But it does not matter at all, the Paladin guy will have a horrible death just like these others and the Plague Dragon will probably chew on his miserable soul."



"Wait a second, one last thing. Hey! Prettyboy! Did you or your allies have anything to do with the death of our old leader. Of Sarius?"



"Never heard the name."



"\*sigh\* Oh well..."

**Derick: Move to 25,15**



"Who's up first?"

**Gregor: Move to (23,13). STAB Rosecross with the Killer Lance! Invoke Critzocoatl!**



"Hehe... I cannot wait to see that Paladin dying and saying something pathetic like "Ohh impossible". It will amuse me..."

Gregor went stabby against Larion, piercing through his heart. The paladin collapsed against Gregor and looked him into the eye, his hand weakly grabbing on the soldier's collar.



"Now... I hope you're satisfied... with what you have done. Take joy in it... because... your... time-- He didn't finish; life escaped his body faster and he slid to the floor, leaving a long smear of his blood on Gregor's armor.

"Lord Rosecross!!!"

"Damn you, Prixima's lackeys!"

"Death to you all!"

#### Gregor vs Larion Rosecross

Hit:  $102+15+10+5-33 = 99$

Hit roll: 59, hit! Crit roll: 23!

Damage:  $22+1-12 = 11 \times 3 = 33+5 = 38\text{dmg}$



"They call us bad and they the ones who attacked our's employer first. They probable we finished first."

Seyena was quiet, following Valor. From what she had seen in the previous room, she thought that enough blood had been spilled.



*But now, it is too late for talking.*

**Seyena: Move to 24, 16.**



"Curse us all you want... it was your decision to come here. You have no one to blame but yourselves."



"That's unfortunate..."

**Olison 23,14. Glare disapprovingly.**



"I told you he would die in a few minutes! Now it is the part that I should point and laugh, or is it laugh and laugh? Hmmm.. I should decide later."

**Tantallos: Remain on the same position and laugh about people dying.**

~~Enemy Phase~~

The fight began.

Mage C released his magic at Gregor, electrocuting him heavily.

**Mage C vs Gregor**

Hit:  $102-5-30 = 67$   
Hit roll: 61, hit! Crit roll: 2!  
Damage:  $17-2 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

After that, the Rosecross Monk A hit Alexander with the light magic; and the knight went down beside Gregor.

**Monk A vs Alexander**

Hit:  $108-17 = 91$   
Hit roll: 72, hit! Crit roll: 9!  
Damage:  $14-2 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

Myrmidon A then moved to Valor's front. With a wide grin, she slashed at him, cutting him down.

**Myrmidon A vs Valor**

Hit:  $107-28 = 79$   
Hit roll: 34, hit! Crit roll: 1!  
Damage:  $18-8 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$

Archer A took a step away from Chris and shot at him, but the arrow flew above the spy's head. Unfortunately, Chris didn't manage to evade the spear thrown by Rosecross Spearman A one moment later.

**Archer A vs Christopher**

Hit:  $99-31 = 68$   
Hit roll: 72, miss!

**Rosecross Spearman A vs Christopher**

Hit:  $91+15-5-31 = 70$   
Hit roll: 32, hit!  
Damage:  $18+1-6 = 13\text{dmg}$

Then, Archer C went after Derick - and hit his arm. Spearman B then thrown his spear too, and it pierced the myrmidon's stomach.

**Archer C vs Derick**

Hit:  $114-43 = 71$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage:  $14-9 = 5\text{dmg}$

**Rosecross Spearman B vs Derick**

Hit:  $91+15-43 = 63$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $18+1-9 = 10\text{dmg}$

In the other places; Mage C went upstairs and cast his magic at one of PRIXIMA's guards, wounding him a bit.

**Mage B vs Guard B**

Hit:  $102-29 = 73$   
Hit roll: 17, hit!  
Damage:  $17-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

One room away, Guard D had to first endure magic cast by Mage B, and then also a slash from the Swordsman (which wasn't that hard, actually). With two stabs with the steel lance, he sent the swordsman into afterlife.

**Mage A vs Guard D**

Hit:  $102-29 = 73$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $17-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

**Swordsman B vs Guard D**

Hit:  $99-15-29 = 55$   
Hit roll: 14, hit!  
Damage:  $18-1-12 = 5\text{dmg}$   
  
Guard D counters!  
Hit:  $104+15-18 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $22+1-6 = 17\text{dmg}$   
  
Guard D strikes again!  
Hit:  $104+15-18 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $22+1-6 = 17\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Guard D went toward Mage A to finish what they started - unfortunately, the retaliatory thunder that struck him punched a hole through his body, killing him outright.

**Guard D vs Mage A**

Hit:  $104-18 = 86$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $22-4 = 18\text{dmg}$   
  
Mage A counters!  
Hit:  $102-29 = 73$   
Hit roll: 58, hit! Crit roll: 10!

Damage:  $17-5 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

Roughly at the same time, Guard A left his post to bring Mage B to justice - he managed that with two stabs and even managed to dodge the magician's counter attack.

#### Guard A vs Mage B

Hit:  $104-18 = 86$

Hit roll: 57, hit!

Damage:  $22-4 = 18\text{dmg}$

Mage B counters!

Hit:  $102-29 = 73$

Hit roll: 95, miss!

Guard A attacks again!

Hit:  $104-18 = 86$

Hit roll: 81, hit!

Damage:  $22-4 = 18\text{dmg}$

### ~~Player Turn 2~~

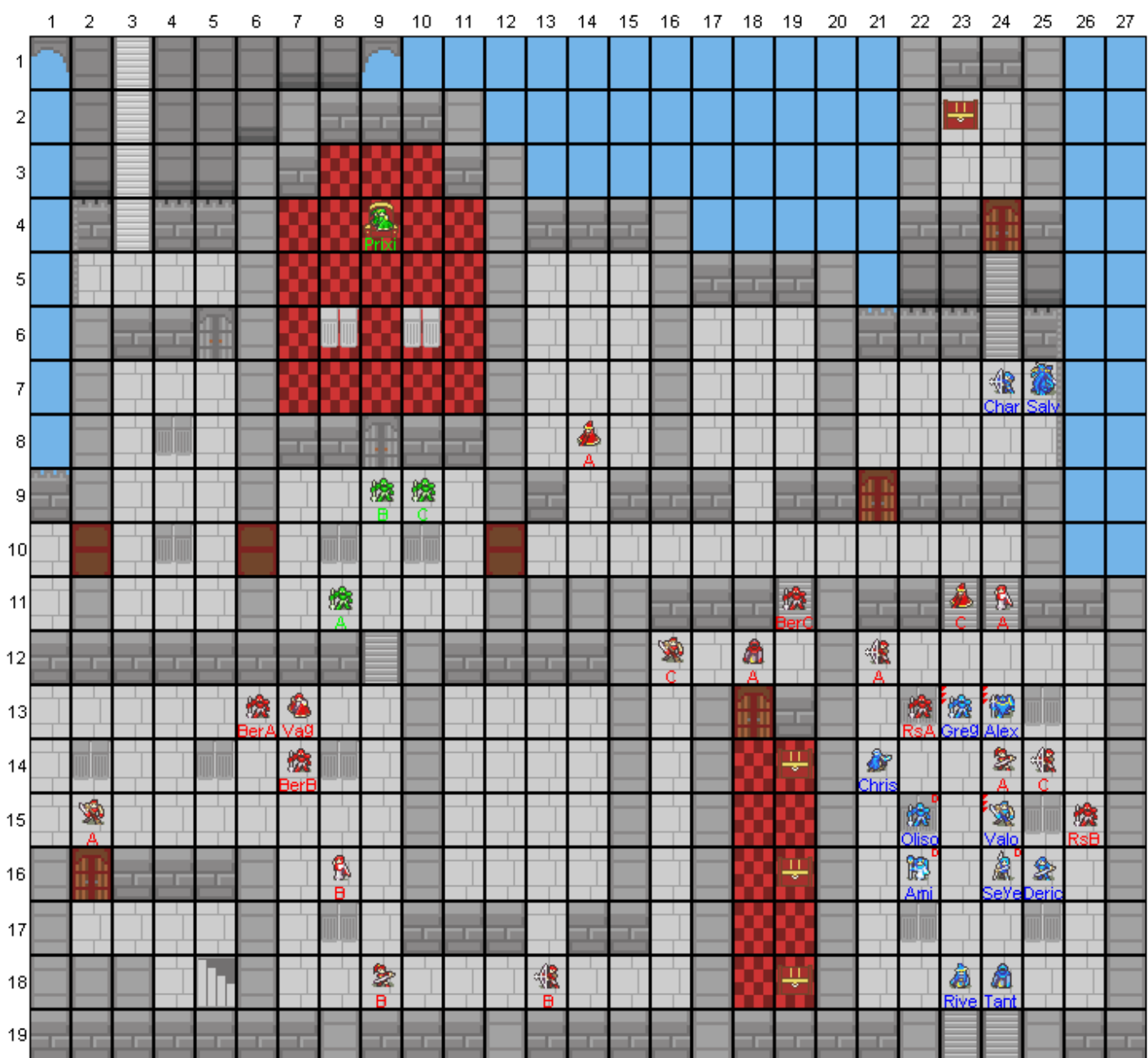
#### Poison rolls

Archer A: 5

### Suddenly...

With loud flapping of the wings, the wyvern, still a little jittery from all those arrows that tried to reach it, landed on the small balcony connected to a tower. As the reptile shrieked, a young, orange-haired girl hopped down from the rider's saddle, her bows clinking against each other. Through the small windows, she could see the battle still raging on just behind the wall.

**Charlotte Braxis and Salvatore Vaughan are in!**



Weather:

| Merces:                        | Enemies:                     |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/33 3/3     | Archer A: 2/25 Poison (4/5)  |
| Ami Storm: 26/26 Dismounted    | Archer B: 25/25              |
| Charlotte Braxis: 26/26        | Archer C: 25/25              |
| Christopher Shields: 13/27     | Berebian Halberdier A: 27/27 |
| Derick: 15/31                  | Berebian Halberdier B: 27/27 |
| Gregor von Hexham: -/31 3/3    | Berebian Halberdier C: 27/27 |
| Olison Eul: 28/29 Dismounted   | Swordsman A: 28/28           |
| Riven: 25/27                   | Swordsman C: 28/28           |
| Salvatore Vaughan: 30/30       | Mage A: 8/26                 |
| Seyena Ikane: 28/29 Dismounted | Mage C: 26/26                |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 28/29      | Shaman: 25/25                |
| Valor Inara: -/30 3/3          | Vagor Tunhausen: 37/37       |
| Allies:                        | Rosecross Spearman A: 28/28  |
| Guard A: 33/33                 | Rosecross Spearman B: 28/28  |
| Guard B: 21/33                 | Monk A: 24/24                |
| Guard C: 33/33                 | Monk B: 24/24                |
| Prixima Kesselring: 47/47      | Myrmidon A: 26/26            |
|                                | Myrmidon B: 26/26            |

Charlotte jumped off Salvatore's flying mount and hit the ground rolling. With a quick

glance, she checked on Tiger's Eye - yes, still there. Now there was one thing left to handle.



"Thanks for the assistance, Sal. Your appearance was a boon indeed. Why don't we go find Lady PRIXIMA?"

**Chris moves to 23,12 and attacks the mage north of him.** He pulled the spear out of his chest as he moved, casting it aside carelessly.

Having been fried by light magic, Alexander curses as he noisily crashes to the ground.



"Hmm. Is that the sound of war I hear? Familiar footsteps, indeed."

**Charlotte: Head to 24, 8. SURPRISE LONGBOW DELIVERY FOR MONK A!**

**Ami: 23,15 heal valor.**

Chris, in less than three seconds, plunged his blade into Mage C's body - twice.

#### Chris vs Mage C

Hit:  $122-18 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17-4 = 13$  dmg, poisoned!

Cancel roll: 7, success!

Chris attacks again!  
Hit:  $122-18 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17-4 = 13$  dmg, poisoned!

Then, Monk A got himself shot by Charlotte's longbow. And then again. And that was enough to kill him.

#### Charlotte vs Monk A

Hit:  $105+10-26 = 89$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $18-4 = 14$  dmg

Charlotte strikes again!  
Hit:  $105+10-26 = 89$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $18-4 = 14$  dmg

Ami, in the meanwhile, walked to Valor and patched him up with her magic.

#### Ami heals Valor

$10+17 / 2 =$  Up to 13 HP restored



"Heh, ain't ah problem that, anythin' ta help ah people in need."

Spoken with a grin almost as if joking, Sal patted Ormm's neck to calm the jittery wyvern. Ormm contented himself with a growl-chirping like mixture of a noise due to the attention, calmed.



"If'in the scenes below were any indicator, things are probably ah touch grisly. Now let's get this door down, yeah? Ain't be but ah moment, weak thing as it is."

With a chuckle, they **moved to 21.8, ventilated the door** a bit with the added momentum, and **moved to 21.7** getting ready for another go at it.



"Certainly don't make doors like they used ta."

**Olison: To 25,15, Javelin to Myrmidon**

A slightly-sizzling Gregor noticed the monk fall down with two arrows protruding from his corpse.



"That archery skill...could it be...?"

No, of course not. He was clearly delirious.

Seyena saw Valor fall, and ran up to attack the mymridon.



"I think I'll wipe that idiotic grin off your face."

**Seyena: Move to 23,14 and poke nice pretty holes into mymridon A.**



"Oh my, that bad, huh?"

**Riven: Move to 23,16. Inspire everyone with my presence!**



**Salvatore attacks Door 21.9**

Damage:  $23-5 = 18\text{dmg}$

Olison went to the pillars on the other side of the hall and then thrown his javelin at the swordgirl.

**Olison vs Myrmidon A**

Hit:  $100+5+10+15-34 = 96$

Hit roll: 77, hit!

Damage:  $18+1-4 = 15\text{dmg}$

Then Seyena poked Myrmidon A as well, killing her.

**Seyena vs Myrmidon A**

Hit:  $110+5+10+5+15-34 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $19+1-4 = 16\text{dmg}$

**Derick: Move 25,13 Attack the archer.**

**Tantallos: Move to 22, 17.**

Derick slashed at the archer twice, but that wasn't enough to kill the stubborn enemy.

**Derick vs Archer C**

Hit:  $112+10+10+5-23 = 114$ , autohit!

Damage:  $19+2-9 = 12\text{dmg}$

Derick strikes again!

Hit:  $112+10+10+5-23 = 114$ , autohit!

Damage:  $19+2-9 = 12\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Archer A, on last of his strength, went closer and launched an arrow at Derick, who took said arrow to the knee.

**Archer A vs Derick**

Hit:  $99-10-5-43 = 41$

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Damage:  $18-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Ami found herself attacked from two sides. Firstly, Archer C shot her in the stomach and one of the spearmen stabbed at her with his spear, wounding her. In retaliation, she bonked him in the face with her heavy black club.

**Archer C vs Ami**

Hit:  $114-5-10-29 = 70$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $14-5 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Rosecross Spearman A vs Ami**

Hit:  $91-15-5-10-29 = 32$

Hit roll: 11, hit!

Damage:  $18-1-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

Ami counters!

Hit:  $95+15+10+5+10-27 = 108$ , autohit!

Damage:  $19+1-9 = 11\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Valor dodged a spear thrown at him by Rosecross Spearman B.

#### Rosecross Spearman B vs Valor

Hit:  $91+15-5-10-32 = 59$

Hit roll: 69, miss!



"I feel... yes, an enemy..." Vagor concentrated - on the other side of the wall, floor under one of Prixima's guards turned red, then yellow, and then it burst some magical fire upwards, incinerating the soldier. After the fire dissappeared, the soldier heaved, barely alive, but then one of Berebian soldiers cut him with the halberd... and the guard was still standing! The guard then poked a hole in the Berebian's armor.

#### Vagor vs Guard A

Hit:  $134-29 = 105$ , autohit!

Damage:  $33-5 = 28$ dmg

#### Berebian Halberdier A vs Guard A

Hit:  $94-29 = 65$

Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage:  $16-12 = 4$ dmg

Guard A counters!

Hit:  $104-26 = 78$

Hit roll: 71, hit!

Damage:  $22-9 = 13$ dmg

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Rest of the guards joined in. Guard C stabbed at the Halberdier, hurting him and the halberdier couldn't counter properly. He did evade the stab from Guard B, and failed to hit that one as well. Then, he evaded the stab from Guard A and then counter-slashed him to death.

#### Guard C vs Berebian Halberdier A

Hit:  $104-26 = 78$

Hit roll: 23, hit!

Damage:  $22-9 = 13$ dmg

Halberdier A counterattacks!

Hit:  $94-29 = 65$

Hit roll: 74, miss!

#### Guard B vs Berebian Halberdier A

Hit:  $104-26 = 78$

Hit roll: 91, miss!

Halberdier A counterattacks!

Hit:  $94-29 = 65$

Hit roll: 78, miss!

#### Guard A vs Berebian Halberdier A

Hit:  $104-26 = 78$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

Halberdier A retaliates!

Hit:  $94-29 = 65$

Hit roll: 15, hit!

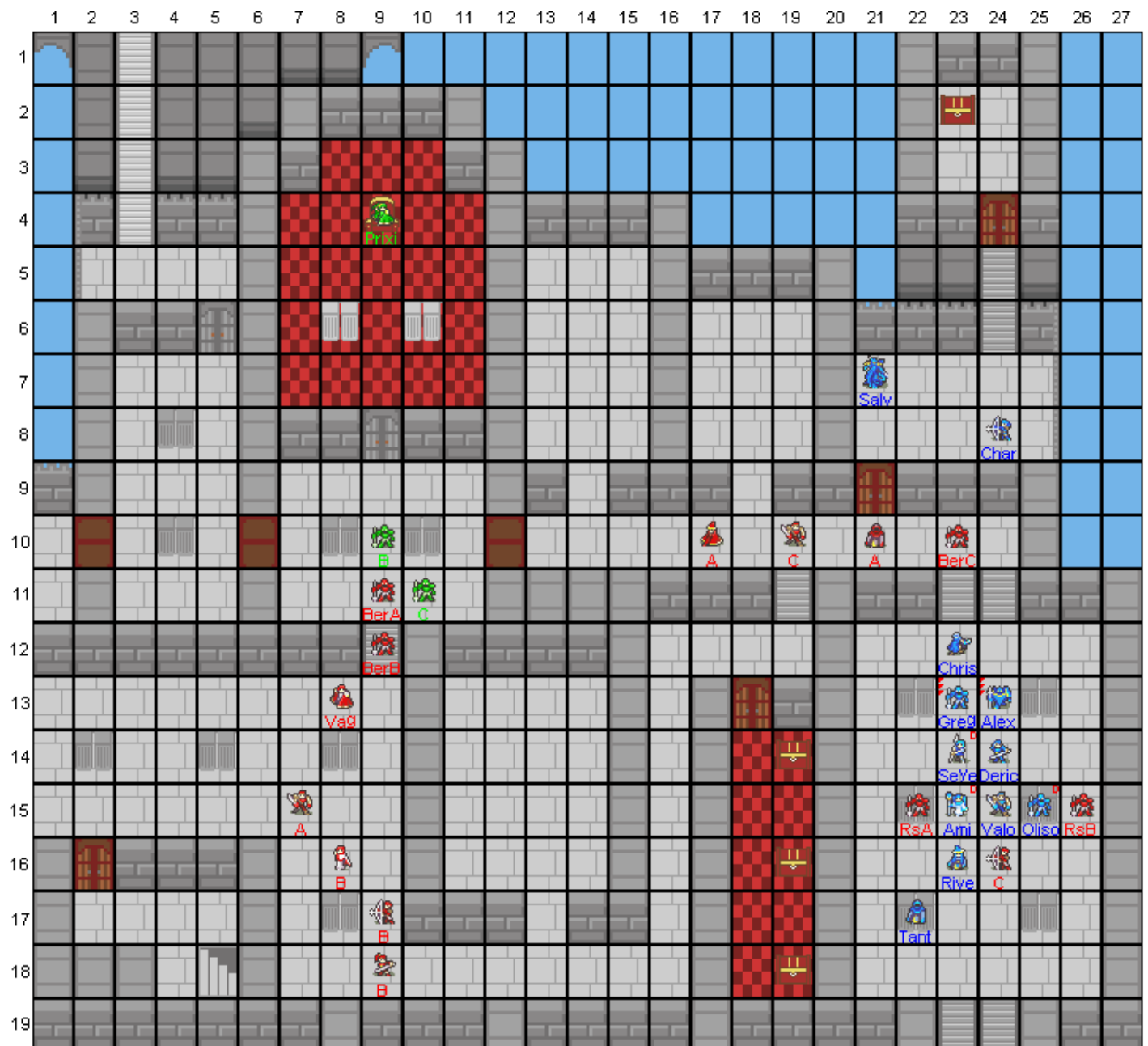
Damage:  $16-12 = 4$ dmg

## ~~Player Turn 3~~

Suddenly, Archer A collapsed to the ground.

### Poison rolls

Archer A: 4



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Allies:                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/33 <b>2/3</b><br>Ami Storm: 5/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 26/26<br>Christopher Shields: 13/27<br>Derick: 15/31<br>Gregor von Hexham: -/31 <b>2/3</b><br>Olison Eul: 28/29 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 25/27<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 30/30<br>Seyena Ikane: 28/29 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 28/29<br>Valor Inara: 13/30 | Archer B: 25/25<br>Archer C: 1/25<br>Berebian Halberdier A: 1/27<br>Berebian Halberdier B: 27/27<br>Berebian Halberdier C: 27/27<br>Swordsman A: 28/28<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Mage A: 8/26<br>Shaman: 25/25<br>Vagor Tunhausen: 37/37<br>Rosecross Spearman A: 17/28<br>Rosecross Spearman B: 28/28 | Guard B: 21/33<br>Guard C: 33/33<br>PRIXIMA Kesselring: 47/47 |



"Ha, ha, ha." (heavy breathing)

**Ami: Head to 22,13 and heal Greg**

**Valor: Attack the archer!**



"Dammit, they're slowing us down too much!"



"Ami! Hold on!"

**Chris moves either to the space Ami just vacated (if allowed) or 21,14 and attacks the column-hugging soldier with his dagger.**

**Tantallos: Equip Worm and attack the Rosecross Spearman A.**



"Ok.. I guess we should teach these gentlemen a bit about ancient magic, do not you think, Riven?"



"Oh. More footsteps. Is that the gentle whoosh-whoosh of a shaman I hear? No Plague servant's boastful banter, no purple-haired maiden's sad gait. It must be a foe."

**Charlotte: Move to 22,8 and double autohit the Shaman to death with longbow.**

Ami brushed Gregor's face with her healing staff.

**Ami heals Gregor**

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| 10+17 / 2 = 13HP restored |
|---------------------------|

Valor in the meanwhile cut off Archer C's head.

**Valor vs Archer C**

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| Hit: 118+10+5-23 = 110, autohit! |
|----------------------------------|

|                     |
|---------------------|
| Damage: 15-9 = 6dmg |
|---------------------|

Shortly afterwards Chris attacked the spearman with his poisoned dagger; the first stab chipped off some stone from the pillar, and the spearman stabbed into Chris' stomach. Next moment, Chris' dagger found it's way right into the spearman's throat.

#### Chris vs Rosecross Spearman A

Hit:  $122+10+10+5-15-15-27 = 90$

Hit roll: 97, miss!

Rosecross Spearman A counters!

Hit:  $91+15-5-10-2-33 = 56$

Hit roll: 24

Damage:  $18+1-6 = 13\text{dmg}$

Chris attacks again!

Hit:  $122+10+10+5-15-15-27 = 90$

Hit roll: 40, hit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $17-1-9 = 7 \times 3 = 21\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!

That deprived Tantalos from getting a kill, as he just opened his beloved Worm tome.

In the meanwhile, Charlotte double-shotted the Shaman who didn't even had time to react.

#### Charlotte vs Shaman

Hit:  $105+10-8 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $18-5 = 13\text{dmg}$

Charlotte gets another strike!

Hit:  $105+10-8 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $18-5 = 13\text{dmg}$

#### Charlotte gets Door Key!

#### Derick: move 26,14 attack the spearman



"Ami, are you all right?"



"I suspect our healer requires attention first, unfortunately. She's quite dedicated."



"Here, this should help."

**Riven: Move to 22,12, forcefeed Ami some crack.**



"Damn it, enemy reinforcements inbound."

Slash, stab, SLASH.

**Derick vs Rosecross Spearman B**

Hit:  $112+10-15-27 = 80$

Hit roll: 79, hit!

Damage:  $19+2-1-9 = 11\text{dmg}$

Rosecross Spearman B retaliates!

Hit:  $91+15-43 = 63$

Hit roll: 20, hit!

Damage:  $18+1-9 = 10\text{dmg}$

Dericks has 2nd attack!

Hit:  $112+10-15-27 = 80$

Hit roll: 33, hit! Crit roll: 14!

Damage:  $19+2-1-9 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

**Riven uses Vulnerary on Ami**

Up to 10HP restored



"... Remind me not to let the power of that sword get to your head, Derick."

**Olison to 24,11. Javelin to Soldier.**



"And here's the rest of the rabble! Give my regards to your leader."



"I'll be fine for now, just-"

She groans.



"Finish them off then worry about me."

Chris nodded.



"If it gets too dangerous, stay behind me so they'll hit me instead. I don't mind a bit of pain."



"Noice shootin', sure yer gettin' them dead with that."

Sal **moves south one space to door.**



"Wishin' there was ah easier way ta crack this door open, shouldn' be much longer though now with how flimsy it is, less yah have ah easier suggestion."

**Salvatore initiates trade with Charlotte, accept key when Charlotte finds mysterious key-that-wasn't-there-before and offers it.**



"Ah key? Where'd yah find this? Eh, no matter that, good thinkin'!"

**Salvatore: Open door with key.**

Ormm growls loudly when the door swings open, dead shaman now visible with two arrows in the corpse. Sal readies his lance, watching Ormm's disturbance.



"Enemies about, think Oi found yer kill too."



"That is true... but I guess we still have MANY soldiers to kill, so take your time! And I still need to tell you a little more about the Plague Dragon."

Some javelin throwin' there, some door openin' here...

#### **Olison vs Halberdier C**

Hit:  $100+10+5-26 = 89$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $18-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Seyena moves to 24,10 and attacks the halberdier.**

Le stab-stab.

#### Seyena vs Halberdier C

Hit:  $110+5-26 = 89$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $19-9 = 10\text{dmg}$

Halberdier C counters!  
Hit:  $94-5-31 = 58$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $16-7 = 9\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

That halberdier continued stabbing Seyena, just like she counter-stabbed him a moment later. Then she had to repel the attack of the swordsman, and she didn't manage to.

#### Halberdier C vs Seyena

Hit:  $94-5-31 = 58$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $16-7 = 9\text{dmg}$

Seyena counters!  
Hit:  $110+5-26 = 89$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $19-9 = 10\text{dmg}$

#### Swordsman C vs Seyena

Hit:  $99-5-15-15-31 = 33$   
Hit roll: 8, hit!  
Damage:  $18-1-7 = 10\text{dmg}$

Moment later, Salvatore got himself hit by a thunder.

#### Mage A vs Salvatore

Hit:  $102-18 = 84$   
Hit roll: 44, hit!  
Damage:  $17-5 = 12\text{dmg}$

Vagor moved upstairs and then waved his hand - the outburst of volcanic fire engulfed Guard B, turning him into a crisp.

#### Vagor vs Guard B

Hit:  $134-29 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $33-5 = 28\text{dmg}$

Then - whilst rest of invaders moved toward the stairs - the Berebian Halberdiers, A and B, respectively, tried their luck against the remaining guard. The former went to the pillars, trying to get some cover - alas, it didn't help him much. The other halberdier ahd a bit more luck.

#### Halberdier A vs Guard C

Hit:  $94-29 = 65$   
Hit roll: 85, miss!

Guard C counters!  
Hit:  $104-15-26 = 63$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $22-9 = 13\text{dmg}$

#### Halberdier B vs Guard C

Hit:  $94-29 = 65$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $16-12 = 4\text{dmg}$



Damage:  $22 - 9 = 13\text{dmg}$

## Allies:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                          |                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/33 <b>1/3</b><br>Ami Storm: 15/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 26/26<br>Christopher Shields: 13/27<br>Derick: 5/31<br>Gregor von Hexham: 13/31<br>Olison Eul: 28/29 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 25/27<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 18/30<br>Seyena Ikane: -/29 <b>3/3 Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 28/29<br>Valor Inara: 13/30 | Berebian Halberdier B: 14/27<br>Swordsman A: 28/28<br>Swordsman C: 28/28<br>Mage A: 8/26<br>Vagor Tunhausen: 37/37<br>Monk B: 24/24<br>Myrmidon B: 26/26 | Guard C: 29/33<br>Prixima Kesselring: 47/47 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|



"Thanks, Ami!"

**Gregor: Move to (23,11), STAB Swordguy C with Iron Lance.**

**Derick: move 23,12**

Salvatore grunted at the pain, **urging his wyvern forward to 21.9** as he **readied his spear to be stabbed at the wounded mage.**



"Die!"

STAB! STABSSS!

#### Gregor vs Swordsman C

Hit:  $114+15+10+5-18 = 126$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21+1-6 = 16\text{dmg}$

Swordsman C counterattacks!  
Hit:  $99-15-10-5-32 = 37$   
Hit roll: 39, miss!

Gregor attacks again!  
Hit:  $114+15+10+5-18 = 126$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21+1-6 = 16\text{dmg}$

There was another stab when Salvatore poked Mage A's face with his spear.

#### Salvatore vs Mage A

Hit:  $99-5-18 = 76$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $23-4 = 19\text{dmg}$



"What in the-"

Olison instinctively raised his lance as the large wyvern moved into the hallway.

**Charlotte: Move to 19, 10. Wave and shout at the spearman on the stairs on the way there.**



"GREGOR!"



"More enemy reinforcements are coming in! We need everyone up here n-"

He stopped as he heard Charlotte next to the rider, wearing a shocked expression.

The spearman in question didn't even notice the wyvern in question, such was his shock at the sight of a familiar orange-haired archer.



"Charlotte? CHARLOTTE!"

**Curse that Gregor can't make an additional move this turn.**



"Pssss, Gregor. What's all the noise over there? I can't see!"



"Dammit!"

**Valor: Get to 24,12, nothing else to do.**

Seyena fell back, leaning on the wall, coughing up blood.



*That damned blade narrowly slid under my guard...* She thought, as she did her best to wipe the blood from her face. Then she heard a voice, and looked up, her vision blurry.



*Is that... Charlotte?* And then she saw the wyvern, and his rider.



"And is that a w-wyvern!? By the dragon-" She made an effort to stand and raise her lance defensively, but slid down the wall when her legs collapsed from under her.

Sal grumbled as he shook the dead mage off his lance, spilling a bit of more blood in the hallway as a result, then patted Ormm's neck in a congratulatory manner. Hearing a shout about being called an enemy, he reared around to view the sources with his weapon at ready to see happy shouting, waving, and general surprise at his appearance. Salvatore lowering his weapon once more.



"These tha friends yah were tellin' me about?"

Obvious Berebian slum accent is rather obvious.



"Wyvern? What?"

Gregor finally noticed the reptilian creature.



"Wyvern! Charlotte, look out!"

Alexander mutters some curses at hearing the Berebian accent, but they trail off as he is preoccupied with dying on the floor.



"What, yah never seen ah wyvern 'round here before or somethin'? 'Sides, he has ah name yah know. Not all o' them are nasty, Ormm here wouldn't hurt a fly. Well, lest I tell him to."

Sal spoke rather defensively, resting a hand on the wyvern's neck to calm it from the agitated people nearby. Ormm, for his part, still watched them warily however.

Olison, still locked in the same shocked expression and his lance still raised, barely managed to clear some words out of his throat.



"Charlotte... Can you... Explain?"



"...I take it you aren't with the other Berebian's around here?" Valor said distractedly, eyes flitting between Sal's lance and Seyena.



"Considerin' tha if Oi was ah part o' their army Oi'd be strung up by mah neck an' gutted several times, no."

**Tantallos: Move to 23, 13.**



"So, you're saying you're not with the force attacking this fort? What are you doing here, in that case?"



"Helpin' the lady here ta her friends, from the looks o' it."

The wyvern rider stated simply, pitching a thumb towards the archer girl up the hall.



"Nah, wouldn' say Oi'm with those finks, what with the guttin' thing an' all."

After a moment's pause though, the wyvern rider looked at the bleeding soldier woman in the corner.



"Eh, yer friend there doesn' look so roight, she okay?"



"..Did anyone notice there is a knight dying on the floor? I doubt this is the time to go all "Oh a wyvern rider are you a enemy or not?". Unless you want to add

another person to the graveyard."



"I'm sure our healer can handle it. If not, I suppose I can."

**Riven: stand still.**



"Hehe.. someone is feeling pretty helpful today. Anyway, are you willing to learn more about the Forsakens culture and see if you desire to assist the Plague Dragon? I am quite sure we will still have to face many enemies before having some peace."



"Uh... I suppose. Your family's a cult, then?"

She didn't sound very enthusiastic.



"Not exactly. By "family" I mean the whole group in the castle, the Forsakens is a group formed by shamans, druids and summoners. The "cult" part is mostly a religion, there is a long story behind this. But I will make it short, basically the Plague Dragon existed and helped us to keep our lands safe against the enemies until they found a way to take him out of here so..."



"We do not know if he is alive yet, but we still killing "the ones who do not deserve to live" in exchange of power. Yes, the Plague Dragon was making us stronger too, but there was this price, and honestly I doubt that could be considered a price as we would be killing bandits and murderers in general."



"Ami! Can you heal Alexander? He's looking pretty bad."



"Sure, one second."

**Ami: Hobble over to 24,12 and heal Alex.**

Chris took a white cloth out of his robe and gently wiped at the cut on Ami's cheek with it.



"Thank you. I was going to try to get him on his feet myself, but I'm just not strong enough to pick up a guy that big with that much armor on him."

He indicated the cut with his free hand.



"...How bad are your own wounds?"



"With Riven's aid, I'll be fine. There are other worse than me at the moment."

Ami give Chris a look over.



"Thinking about it, you don't seem to sure on your feet either."

#### Ami heals Alexander

10+17 /2 = Up to 13HP healed



"I'll be fine. Probably. Pain is just the body's way of saying something is wrong, and since I know exactly what's wrong - a few puncture wounds from spears, none of which hit my vitals - I feel free to ignore it."

**Chris moves as close to the door leading to the chests as he can, I guess? And if an enemy gets in his way, he attacks it.**



"Don't worry, everyone. Sal's an ally. I even rode on his wyvern on the way here. It was really a rare and fateful chance that he happened upon me as I was finishing the job."



"Well, I can't wait to hear this story! Later, though." He turned to the

newcomer. "Sal, was it? Are you willing to help us out? There are still lots of Berebians between us and our goal."



"Well, Oi'm in the area an' Berebs controllin' this 'ere castle would be bad for mah health an' business. Folks 'round 'ere already jumpy enough with me 'round, bet they'd be down-roight hostile if'in they took this castle."

The wyvern rider mused as he scratched the wyvern's neck, which responded happily.



"Oi'm in."

Alexander pulls himself off of the ground, and then sees the wyvern.

He stares.

Chris pats Alex on the back now that he's up.



"Glad to see you on your feet again."

Olison lowered his lance slowly, his face pulling back to it's normal glare, but his eyes not leaving the wyvern.



"All right... I'll accept any help we can get."

**Olison slowly moves past Sal to 20,10**



"We've taken some injuries in our fights, we've been running rather low on medicine, you wouldn't happen to have any on you..?"



"Yeah, Oi got some meds on me, try not ta travel without some. If'in yah need some healin' just ask, more than enough for meself an' others. Seems yer friend is up an' about again though, offer still standin' however."



## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Some moving happened, and the siegers ganged on the remaining Guard. Myrmidon B went against the lance wielder, slashing mightily across his face, but he remained alive enough to counterstab her guts. And then, he saw light. And then he saw nothing else.

### Myrmidon B vs Guard C

Hit:  $107-15-29 = 63$   
Hit roll: 32, hit! Crit roll: 11!  
Damage:  $18-1-12 = 5 \times 3 = 15\text{dmg}$

Guard C counters!  
Hit:  $104+15-34 = 85$   
Hit roll: 26, hit!  
Damage:  $22+1-4 = 19\text{dmg}$

### Monk B vs Guard C

Hit:  $108-29 = 79$   
Hit roll: 57, hit! Crit roll: 7!  
Damage:  $14-5 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$

As this happened, Vagor took out a small key out of his pocket and opened the door, leading into Prixima's study. And there she was sitting - behind her desk, her eyes fixed at a booklet she was reading. She looked up, her face without emotion and her eyes staring at the intruder.

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Prixima closed the booklet, thrown it nonchalantly onto the desk and stood up, waiting for him to come closer.



"You've interrupted my reading, Berebian dog."

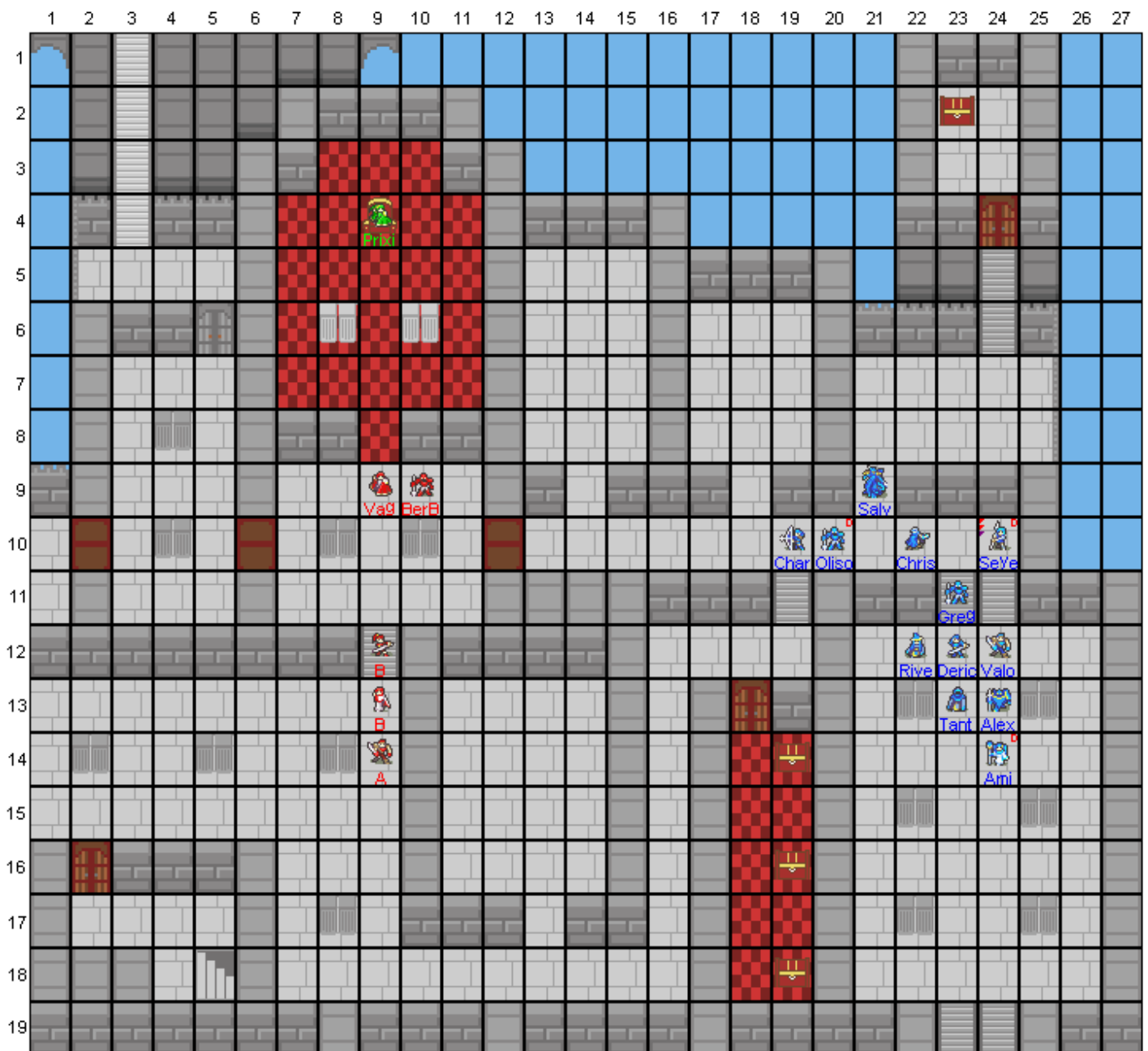


"Gah, how dare you! After I'm done with you, you won't be reading ever again!!"



"We will see about that. Come! Show me what northern savages can do, besides mating with their livestock!"

# ~~Player Turn 5~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Enemies:                                                                                                          | Allies:                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 13/33<br>Ami Storm: 15/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 26/26<br>Christopher Shields: 13/27<br>Derick: 5/31<br>Gregor von Hexham: 13/31<br>Olison Eul: 28/29 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 25/27<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 18/30<br>Seyena Ikane: -/29 <b>2/3 Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 28/29<br>Valor Inara: 13/30 | Berebian Halberdier B: 14/27<br>Swordsman A: 28/28<br>Vagor Tunhausen: 37/37<br>Monk B: 24/24<br>Myrmidon B: 7/26 | PRIXIMA Kesselring: 47/47 |

Chris dashes to 18,12 and picks the lock.



"Hmm, would someone mind coming with me? I don't know if I'll be able to

carry all this by myself."

Chris patted his various pockets for emphasis while looking at the three treasure chests.

Just before Chris picked the door, he noticed a small plaque on it. Said silvery plaque reads as follows:

EXPERIMENTAL MAGICAL ITEMS  
Thieves will be electrocuted on spot  
Prixima

The door swung open after the easy lockpicking.

Chris tapped his chin thoughtfully. He had never noticed this plaque before. Maybe it had been put up just before the attack, to keep looters out? Nothing ventured, nothing gained, he figured. He could open one chest at least and find out if the plaque is truthful or not.

**Ami: Head to 23,10 and heal Seyena.**

**Olison to 15,10**

Some healing and Seyena was back on her feet too.

**Ami heals Seyena**

10+17 /2 = Up to 13HP restored

**Tantallos: Move to 21, 10.**

**Gregor: Move to (20,10). Give Charlotte a quick hug.**

Charlotte laughed as Gregor came up behind her and hugged her.



"I was so worried about you. All of you. How did you get up here? There must have been dozens upon dozens of soldiers on the ground before I took off."



"It was no picnic, that's for sure. We had to sneak in and fight our way through a small army in the courtyard outside. Somehow we all made it. What about you? I was worried that the woods might be filled with Berebian troops and give you trouble."



"That's good to hear. It does not seem anyone has fallen. Though... I wonder where that scarlet-haired knight ran off to. Even Anja would be helpful now."

Charlotte shrugged and headed slowly toward the west door.



"The forest was empty. Very much so, in fact. Even the Kesselring patrol I normally have to dodge was spread thin - I assume they were all fighting in the main fort here. Very unnerving, but at least attention was taken away from my goal."

She lifted her robe and pulled out, from a hastily-constructed side pocket, an almost spherical, reddish-gold gemstone. It was about the size of her hand, and flecks of light seemed to dart back and forth around the stone's center. She stuffed it back in her robe after letting Gregor see.



"I would like to know this from you, though, Gregor. Let us assume the Berebian guard is correct in whatever fears they hold about Prixima. These fears must be monumental to waste hundreds of lives for one minor royalty. Surely you've glanced at the tall, private bookshelves she owns. If it turns out we've been helping her perpetrate a sinister, potentially harmful plot this whole time, where do your loyalties lie? With your long-term employer, despite her dark dabbling? Or with my arrow pointed at her and the fate of whomever it may save?"

**Charlotte: After Gregor replies, start moving 5 W and shoot the door to my west.**

Gregor had been nodding along with Charlotte's story, but her sudden query brought him up short.



"That's...that's a tough question. I'm not totally blind to Prixima's actions, you know. And I'd much rather go with you and everyone else than stay here, especially after this attack. But all my life I've been taught to respect and obey my superiors, militarily and socially. Prixima, unfortunately, fits under both categories."



*This would probably be an easier choice to make if we weren't constantly running around fighting for our lives...*

He sighed.



"...I want to hear Prixima's response. To all of this Dragonstone nonsense, to this attack, to the Berebian's allegations. I'll have my final answer then."



"Good. I was hoping you'd say Prixima. Even tentatively."

Charlotte looked more serious for some reason.



"You don't really belong in the mercenary business, Gregor, but you've been loyal to your allies and your employer even through all this. The fact is: I'm not a soldier like you. I'm not even a mercenary. I'm a survivor, and that means I'm going to do some things you aren't going to like. If necessary, things you are opposed to on principle. Knowing you wouldn't drop me even then is comforting."

#### Charlotte vs Door at 12.10

Damage: 18-5 = 13dmg

Seyena stood up, sighing in relief as her wounds healed. Or at least, healed enough to where she wasn't in constant pain.



"Thank you, Ami." She took a moment to rest. *I'm still not in the best condition, and I'll have to wait until Ami heals the more important members of the group.*

#### Valor: Move to 22,10



"Are you going to be alright, Seyena?" Valor asked, still concerned. Ami was a skilled healer, but this constant abuse couldn't be good for any of them.

Seyena smiled, hoping to ease his worries.



"I'm fine, I'm fine, my only problem is that this blood is going to be an

outright pain to clean." She said, tapping her armor, which was stained a faint crimson.

Then Seyena looked at Valor, becoming concerned herself.



"But I should be asking that question of you. You got a nasty cut from that mymridon. Oh, if I just had one vulnerary..."

**Derick: Just stay put**



"Yeah, that girl was a nasty piece of work, no doubt about it." Valor sighed, visibly exhausted. "I'll be fine, but I tell ya, I am so ready to be done with this crap. I want to get paid, repair my clothes, and buy a mess of food, in that order."



"Well, after this, we can rest for a good while. Prixma should pay us all well for the trouble we went through."

Seyena thought for a while, slowly growing disconcerted.



"After this... Valor, where are you going to go once this is all done?"



"Hell if I know." Valor said, chuckling a bit. "Just... Nowhere around here, at least for a while. I know some of the others were talking about forming a new mercenary troop. I might join up, depending."



"How about you? What are your plans when we're done here?" *Please say you're sticking around...* Valor crossed his fingers inside his jacket pocket, hoping.

Seyena was surprised, learning that Valor would likely stay.



*I'd always thought he was more of a 'work on my own' type...*

She couldn't help but smile, just a little bit.



"I'm probably going to stay with the group, I don't do too well on my own..."  
*But now... I think I have other reasons...*

**Salvatore: Move to 16.10**

Gregor looked up from his brief hug.



"Glad to have you with us, Mr. Sal. That wyvern of yours ought to come in handy; we had to leave our mounts outside."

Alexander advanced as far as he could in the mob of people, casting a suspicious glance at Salvatore.

**Alexander: Move to 23, 11**

**Riven: Hold still.**



"Hmm.. looks like everyone is busy talking...better read a book or pray to the Plague Dragon to pass the time."

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Vagor, confident and smirking, moved into PRIXIMA's room, opening a large crimson tome.



"Haha! Tremble before the power of my Bolganone tome!" A second later, red spot appeared under PRIXIMA and her desk, and flames shoot up as if it was volcano eruption. The flames consumed the desk, and when they passed, said desk was a pile of smoldering ashes... whilst PRIXIMA wasn't even sizzled. She brushed a piece of soot from her shoulder.



"Hmph, you missed. You need your eyes checked."



"Grr, you wretched woman! If you stay still and--"



"Silence! You invade my castle, you slaughter my servants, you pilfer my treasuries, you accuse me of witchcraft and now you dare to attack me, Prixima of the House Kesselring! You piece of Berebian muck! For all that, I sentence you to DEATH."

Her hands sparkled before two arcs of brilliant blue energy burst toward Vagor. As the energy scorched and burned his body, the elderly mage screamed aloud from pain. Prixima didn't stop, even when the scream, heard even by Riven and Derick, turned into inhumane shriek, and then, for a short time, a gurgle resembling a sound of boiling stew. Only after that Prixima stopped her spell, and Vagor fell onto his knees - or rather, his burned carcass, devoid of hair and skin in many spots, the blood leaking and steaming out of his wounds. Then he collapsed to the side.

Prixima then looked down at the pile of ash in front of her.



"Hmph, I will need a new desk."

#### Vagor vs Prixima

Hit: 134-10-48 = 76

Hit roll: 87, miss!

Prixima counters!

Hit: 149-35 = 114, autohit! Crit roll: 15!

Damage: 44-23 = 21x3 = 63dmg

"Oh gods, did you see what she did to Lord Vagor?"

"Damn you, Berebians, we shouldn't have allied with you!"

"We're doomed!"

The remaining four mooks then turned around, only to hear something... it was faint... sounds of battle. And then, a battlecry that made Berebians turn pale:

"Soldiers, re-take the keep!"

"For Lady Prixima!!!"

It seems that some Menelean soldiers at last broke the siege and ventured into the main keep.

"Oh no, Meneleans are in the keep! Quick, let's try this door!" The monk and myrmidon



then pounded at the door, blasting it open.

Monk B vs Door at 12.10

Damage: 14 = 14

Myrmidon B vs Door at 12.10

Damage: 18-5 = 13dmg

"Agh! Enemies are already here! Out of my way!!" The halberdier ran toward Charlotte, slashing at her arm.

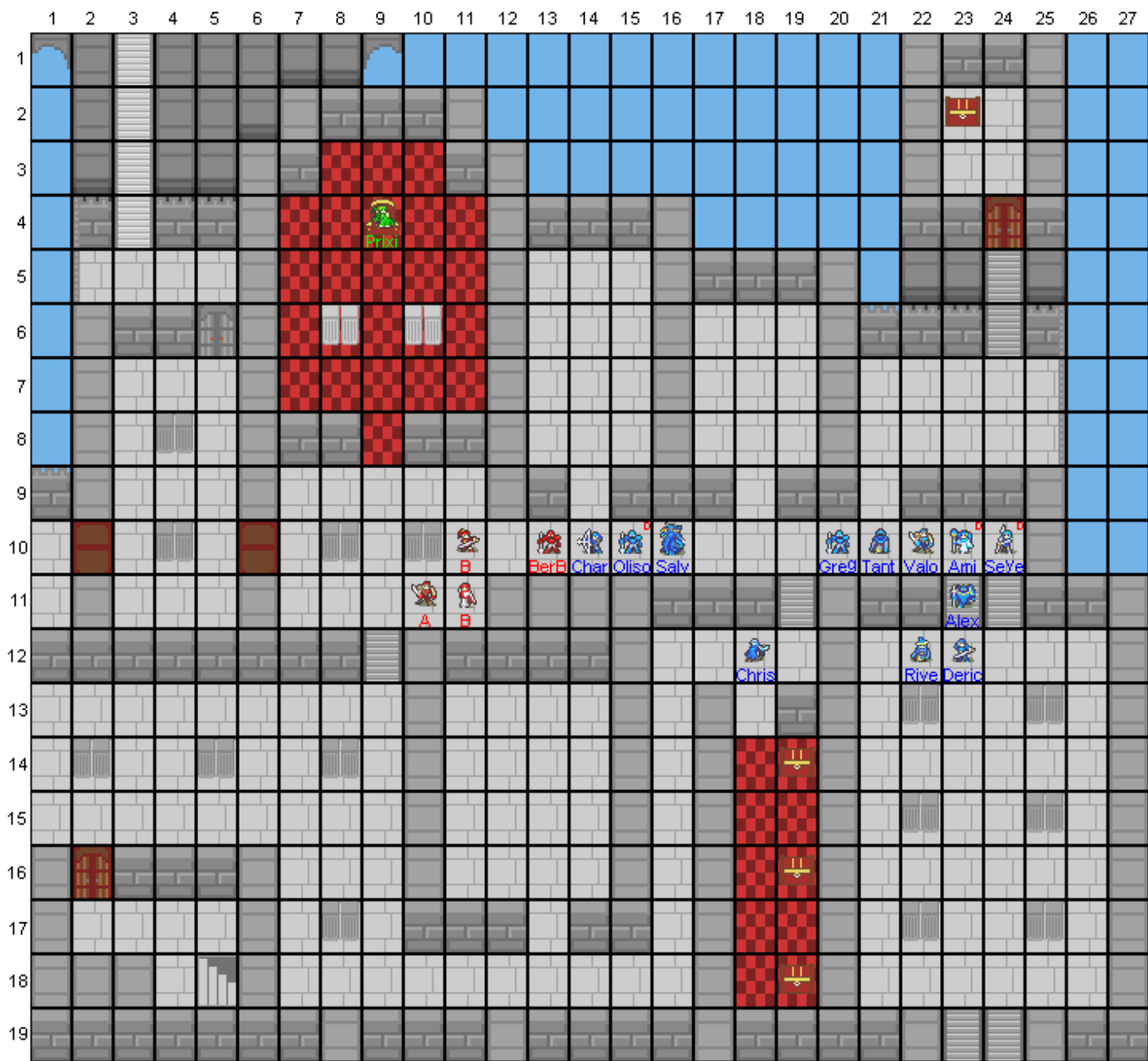
Halberdier B vs Charlotte

Hit: 94-10-25 = 59  
Hit roll: 37, hit!  
Damage: 16-9 = 7dmg

~~Ally Phase~~

\*tumbleweed\*

~~Player Turn 6~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Enemies:                                                                                | Allies:                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 13/33<br>Ami Storm: 15/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 19/26<br>Christopher Shields: 13/27<br>Derick: 5/31<br>Gregor von Hexham: 13/31<br>Olison Eul: 28/29 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 25/27<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 18/30<br>Seyena Ikane: 13/29 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 28/29<br>Valor Inara: 13/30 | Berebian Halberdier B: 14/27<br>Swordsman A: 28/28<br>Monk B: 24/24<br>Myrmidon B: 7/26 | Prixima Kesselring: 47/47 |

Chris cocked his head.



"Well. Sounds like someone just made the last mistake of their lives. Now, do I open those chests or not, considering I might end up the same way...?"

He kept in mind that if Prixima asked him directly if he had taken anything, he couldn't lie about it.



"...Well, there might not be any harm in just looking to see what's in each chest. I can always put the items back."

**Chris moves to 19,14 and opens the chest.**

**Ami: Heal Valor**

Chris opened the chest... nothing happened. Inside, on a pillow, he found a necklace with large ruby, the whole piece of jewelry tingling with protective magic.

**Chris got Talisman!**

In the meanwhile, Ami tapped Valor's face with her staff.

**Ami heals Valor**

10+17 = Up to 27HP restored

Alexander continues to try and move through the crowd, with some difficulty.

**Alexander: Move to 21, 9**

**Charlotte: Do a conditional action:**

**1. If Gregor comes within 3 spaces before the end of player turn, move 1 N and shoot the berebian speardude with Shortbow.**

2. If Gregor does not come within 3 spaces before the end of player turn, 1 N and shoot the berebian speardude with Longbow.



"What in all the world was tha?"

Sal looked ahead seeing several Berebians fleeing towards them.



"Must o' been ah good thing Oi guess..."

Seeing one of the group split off to the south with no one else going with him, he **initiated a trade with the man in front of him, Olson, and gave him his Vulgarities.**



"Yah mentioned yah needed meds, here yah go. Yah all seem ta have this taken care o', Oi'll go make sure the guy headin' south ain't in any trouble. Bet yah'd need it more 'ere anyhow."

Olson nodded as he recieved the Vulnerary from Sal, though he still watched the wyvern warily.



"My thanks."

On hearing the scream from the room over, and the door breaking down, Olson immediately broke into a headlong charge, bashing the Halberdier aside with a stab along the way.

**Olson to 12,10. Iron Lance to Halberdier.**

That done, Sal **moved to 18.12**, and looked in the room to see the hooded man poke at some chests.



"Everythin' alroight in 'ere?"



"Going well so far, I would say."

Chris tucked the Talisman into his robes.



"Although I can't place it I'm fairly certain that's not a Menelean accent... but seeing as you haven't attacked me yet, I'm going to assume you're on my side. My name's Christopher Shields. Everyone just shortens it to Chris, the lazy buggers."

He seemed to be in a joking mood again.



"Wow, that sounded nasty. Let's finish off the stragglers. From the sound of it, PRIXIMA was able to handle herself."

**Valor: Move to 17,10**

**Tantallos: Move to 17, 11.**



"Hello, hello swordsman person."

Olison's lance easily found it's target - and so did the halberd.

#### **Olison vs Halberdier B**

Hit:  $105 - 26 = 79$

Hit roll: 15, hit!

Damage:  $19 + 2 - 9 = 12\text{dmg}$

Halberdier B counters!

Hit:  $94 - 35 = 59$

Hit roll: 2, hit!

Damage:  $16 - 11 = 5\text{dmg}$



"Oh, hey Tantallos." Valor thought about what Tantallos said for a moment, then turned back to the shaman. "If I'm swordsman person, what do you call Derick?"

Tantallos gave a shrug and took some time to think.



"That is a good question as I barely talked to him. Probably myrmidon

person, or something a little more short like.."



"Tiny swordsman person with a weird looking bandage on the head."



"I'm not certain that's shorter."



"Of course it is! You just need to use a logic that is illogical, then it will be shorter than the first one!"



"...What's a logic?"



"..You do not know what is logic?"



"Well... when something makes sense you could say it is "logic". Like...if you are tossing a spear on someone, it is going to hurt, that is logic. So you could say anything that makes sense or have been proved to make sense could be considered logic. For example, if someone come up with a plan and it looks possible for the group you can consider it "logic", like it is possible to reach the objective with it."



"Now if they make a plan for five people that includes bringing up giant flying balistas and Plague Dragon knows what more, it is illogical, it just does not make any sense and it is not possible."

Chris somehow overheard Tantallos and Valor's conversation because ~~his player wanted to say something~~ he wasn't a spy/information gatherer for nothing... one had to have good hearing in this line of work, after all.



"You should call him wolf-person! He has a wolf on his headband, after all."

The shaman raised an eyebrow when he heard the spy and turned around and took some time to think again.



"You know what.. that actually might work!"

**Gregor: Move to (15,10). Equip Iron Javelin. Ignore crazy shaman and logic talk.**



"So, logic is things that make sense, and are by their nature self-evident. Am I getting this right?"

**Seyena moves to 19,10**

**Charlotte vs Halberdier B**

Hit:  $130+5+5+10-26 = 124$ , autohit!

Damage:  $15+1-9 = 7$ dmg

Tantallos nodded to Valor and crossed his arms.



"Correct."

**Derick: Move 20,10**



"Uhhhh... does Tiny myrmidon swordsman wolf person with a weird looking bandage on the head have any say in this?"

The shaman laughed and clapped his gloved hands together when he heard the myrmidon.



"You just had one, and you gave me the perfect name for you, a mix of all the suggestions."



"Hey doomed soldiers!" Riven called into the hallway ahead. "If you offer to

serve me, the owner of this castle might let you live!"

**Riven: Move to 21,10.**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The remaining trio seemingly was going to fight to the death! Both Monk B and Myrmidon B attacked Olison, trying to get through him, but this ended in the swordgirl getting impaled on Olison's lance.

Then, Swordsman A and Olison had strange duel, where Olison made holes in said swordsman.

### Monk B vs Olison

Hit:  $108+5-35 = 78$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $14-3 = 11\text{dmg}$

### Myrmidon B vs Olison

Hit:  $107+5-15-35 = 62$   
Hit roll: 78, miss!  
  
Olison retaliates!  
Hit:  $105+15-34 = 86$   
Hit roll: 55, hit!  
Damage:  $19+1-4 = 16\text{dmg}$

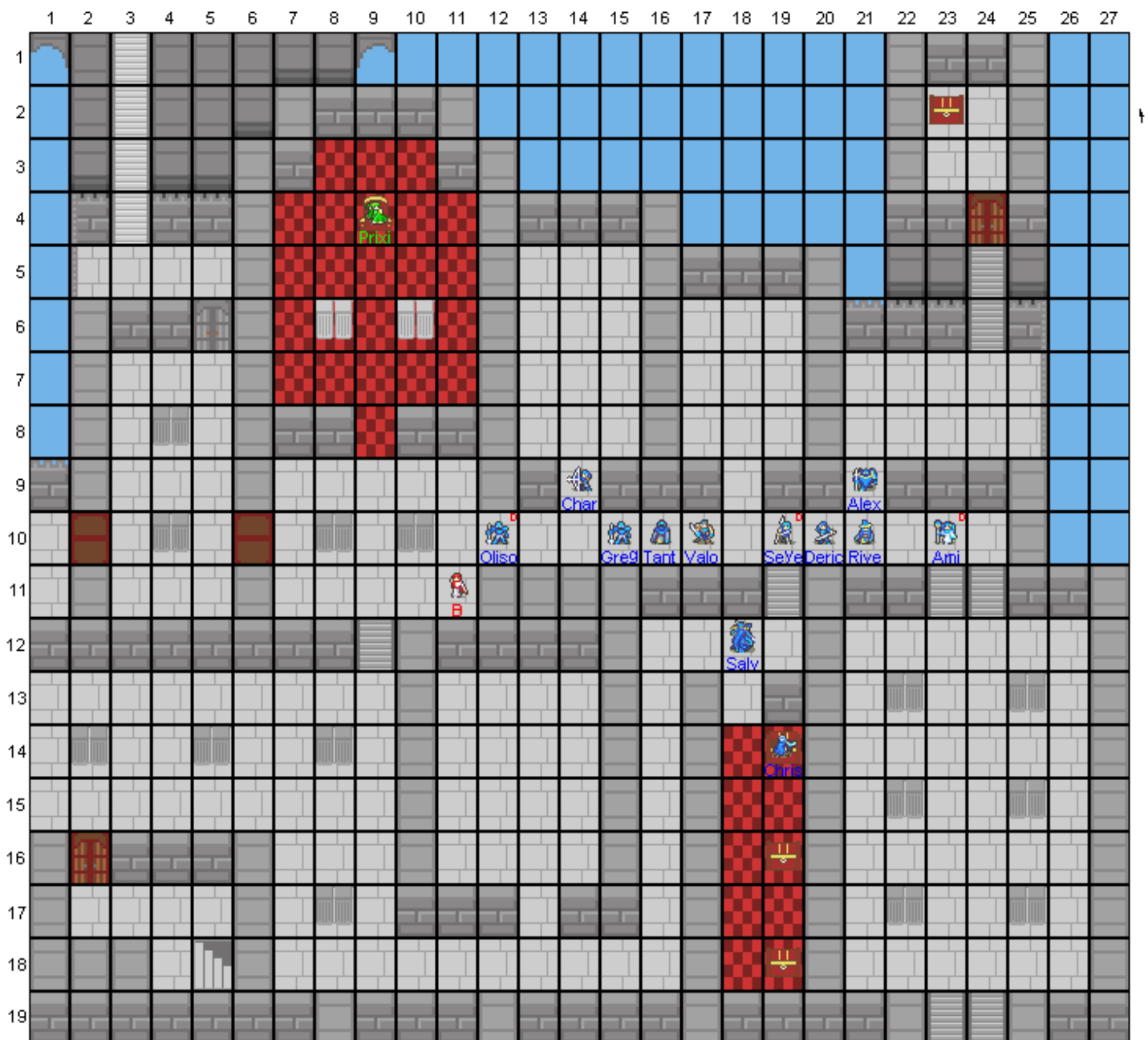
### Swordsman A vs Olison

Hit:  $99+5-15-35 = 54$   
Hit roll: 61, miss!  
  
Olison counters!  
Hit:  $105+15-18 = 102$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $19+1-6 = 14\text{dmg}$   
  
Olison counters again!  
Hit:  $105+15-18 = 102$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $19+1-6 = 14\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Nothing at all.

# ~~Player Turn 7~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Enemies:      | Allies:                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 13/34<br>Ami Storm: 15/26 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 19/27<br>Christopher Shields: 13/27<br>Derick: 5/31<br>Gregor von Hexham: 13/32<br>Olison Eul: 12/30 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Riven: 25/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 18/31<br>Seyena Ikane: 13/29 <b>Dismounted</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 28/29<br>Valor Inara: 30/31 | Monk B: 24/24 | Prixima Kesselring: 47/47 |



"Ah roight good guess tha, not Menelean at all, it's Berebian. Barely notice Oi do tha at times. 'Course, tha don' mean Oi'm on their side. As Oi told yah friends,



they'd have me up by mah toes an' gutted several times if Oi was with them."

He stated rather matter-of-factly with a shrug, leaning slightly on the wyvern's neck. The wyvern, Ormm, for its part looked at the hooded man strangely with its slitted green eyes, as if pondering what he is.



"Course, that's all if'in they even remember littl' ol' me, been ah while since Oi've been back an' don' plan on any surprise returns if Oi can help it. Yah can call me Salvatore Vaughan, most jus' call me Sal though."



"Good to meet you, Salvatore. If it's not too much trouble to ask, can you come here and hold my dagger for a minute? I might need the space open for all the treasure, you see."

**Salvatore nudges Ormm into moving and moves up to Chris, initiating a trade and accepting the dagger.**



"Not ah problem that. Mind me askin' what's all the fuss about? Oi know Bereb's an expansionist lot, but this is ah bit much. Figured they'd bring ah larger force if'in they wanted ah true border redrawin'."

**Chris hands over the item when Salvatore initiates the trade with him, then heads two south and opens the next chest.**



"Eh, I have a particular item to deliver to Lady Prixima and as close as I can tell, the attacking forces don't want her to get it and think it's worth losing all these men just to stop us."

Sal holds the dagger, tapping the flat of the blade with his gauntlet-ed hand out of boredom. Ormm continued to watch at Chris oddly, sniffing lightly in his direction.



"Bit much that, all this work fer ah thing. Must be important ta them fer all this show, but Oi don' much care ta know what it is. Oi know better than tha'."



"Their loss."

Sal gave a toothy grin at that comment.



"Yeah, their loss. 'Though does hurt mah business ah bit, bet people won' much trust me 'round 'ere anymore. ...Not that they did much in the first place."

Chris nodded.



"Indeed. And mind you don't cut yourself with that. It's laced with poison."

Sal stopped tapping the blade.



"Roight, think Oi'll not do that, poison an' me don' mix well."

After a moment, the wyvern rider speaks bluntly.



"Bit odd, yah. Everyone else all be barring spears an' swords at me, yah just shrug an' ask me ta hold ah dagger fer yah. Only met ah few types like tha."



"Among my other traits, I lack prejudices. Berebian, Menelean... what matters is we're all just human beings, despite such minor differences."



"For example, no one else in my group - ours, if you're thinking of perhaps joining up with us - has the same accent I do, but otherwise we're all Meneleans. It's a superficial difference at best."



"Rare opinion these days, specially with all the tension, Fezzan bein' attacked just made things worse."



"Joinin'? Eh, didn' put much thought in'it ta be honest, didn' even know yah were all ah group beyond friends 'er some such. Explanations were ah touch rough in the gettin' 'ere. Had plans ta head ta Garmes, though weren' much o' plans..."



"In all honesty, I'm not sure how many of us are going to stick around for a group. I've talked to a few people already about staying together once we finish this mission, and so far the reception has been positive, but, well..."



"Who knows what people will do? Certainly not me."



"All the same, how about it? As you said, a lot of people would be suspicious of you just because you were born elsewhere. Group up with us, and you'll at least have someone you can trust to watch your back."

Sal was silent for once, thinking on the offer. Certainly wasn't what he expected out of this, at most he was hoping for something to ease his conscious a bit and hopefully a bit of coin maybe, but to join a group?



"Oi already got someone ta watch mah back, this big 'ole lizard 'ere."

Sal scratches the wyvern under its head crest, smile on his face as it replied by moving its head towards his hand to try to encourage continued scratching, content look on its face. Sal's however turned solemn and serious.



"But yah make ah lot o' sense though... Yah know tha mah crimes may be the groups if'in Oi join? Oi'm not sure Oi'd feel roight gettin' others in what Oi got comin'

ta me. Berebians won' jus' have one noose ready if'in they catch me wit' ah group, though it was ah bit ago. If'in tha don' scare yah off, Oi'd be good wit' it if'in the others are.

From his spot in the corridor, Alexander could occasionally catch glimpses of Salvatore, and he could hear what he was saying. Despite the surprising lack of racism among the group, Alexander, when he saw Salvatore, eyed him with an obvious mix of distrust, suspicion, and even a *touch* of hostility; and the rage Alexander had embarked into this area with certainly did not help.



"Whether or not you've committed any real 'crimes' is all the same to me. I'm not exactly... how to put it... an 'innocent soul' myself."

For one thing, that would require being in possession of a soul in the first place. For another, Chris hadn't exactly been a paragon of virtue before - or after - he'd entered Prixima's service. There was a reason he was good at brutally murdering people when they least expected it - the same reason he was skilled at picking locks.



"It's likely everyone in our group has at least a little blood on their hands. Regardless, you can trust me. I'll talk to some of the others about bringing you along with us. I don't know how it happened, but I seem to have the ear and trust of most of my allies."

Chris got another chest open, and inside it was a magical ring.

### Chris got Guiding Ring



"Hah, seems Oi moight fit roight then, in Oi suppose." He spoke jokingly, before continuing. "But thanks, think it'll do me some good ta be in ah group."

Then he was silent, pondering the idea of being in a group. Would be a touch odd, Sal being on his own for so long, well rather with Ormm but the wyvern makes for quite one-sided conversations on the road. And speaking of Ormm...

The wyvern, having tried to determine the oddity that is Chris from afar, **moves two spaces south**, next to Chris, trying to get a closer look at the hooded man and smelled him. Sal finally noticed the odd attention the wyvern was giving the hooded man, looking at Chris with a shrug.



"Sorry 'bout tha, usually Ormm doesn' much bother strangers but he seems ta find yah interestin'. Yah don' have meat on yah, do yah? Guessin' he's hungry an' thinks yah have food."

Ormm just continued to watch the hooded anomaly with his reptilian eyes, although looked away when Sal rubbed his head. **"Come'on, Oi'll feed yah when this is over."**

Chris looked over the ring. He had no clue what it did. Well, he'd just ask someone later. For now he put it away and turned his attention to the wyvern.



"I wonder why. I don't have any meat."

He thought for a second.



"...Does Ormm like marshmallows, by any chance? I've got plenty."



**"Marshmella?"** Sal thought on it, a little confused. **"Not sure what tha is, so can' roightly say. Usually he eats meat, 'though Oi've seen him eat some other things from toime ta toime though can' roight say if'in he was eatin' it 'er chewin' on it."**

For the best Sal could answer, it was the equivalent of a verbal shrug. Ormm continued to look at the man curiously, like he's never seen something of what he was before.



"One of these things. To be honest, I'm not entirely certain how they're made. They're quite delicious, however. Especially when they've been melted with a little bit of chocolate and put on some sort of hard food like crackers."

Chris pulled out his bag of marshmallows and ate one, handing two to Sal so he could have one for himself and one for Ormm if he wished.

In the third chest, Chris found another ring - albeit of different nature.

### **Chris got Blade Ring!**

As the enemies crashed against him to no avail, Olison stood face to face with the last

remaining monk. Instead of charging him like the rest, he spoke quietly.



"Enough men of the cloth have given their lives today. Surrender your tome and you will not be harmed."

**Olison takes a step back (13,10) and lowers (unequips) his lance.**

**Charlotte also lowers her bow but moves to 11,10 in an attempt to surround the Berebian monk.**



"For Dragon's sake, listen to him. Enough blood has been shed this day. No need to add more."

**Gregor moves to (11,9) and lowers his javelin.**

Seyena overheard Gregor and Olison attempt to talk the monk down.



*Adorable. Now, they preach for peace, yet when I tried not even half an hour ago, they killed Rosecross before I could even convince him.* Seyena scowled- she was beyond irritated, both at the group, but mostly at herself. *Because I wouldn't be much different in the same situation, would I?*

With her mind in turmoil, **she moved forward to 14, 10.**

Alexander **advanced to 17, 10.** It looked like they were attempting diplomacy with these *traitors*. Fine, but if they were attacked (and Alexander suspected they would be, why trust a traitor?) Alexander would be there to back them up as soon as possible.

Charlotte turns to the Monk.



"By the way, if you try to flee: spellbooks aren't any help when the pages are stuck together by two ends of a steel-tipped arrow."



"Can we finish this already? I want to tell someone about leading a army of druids to retake some of my lands."



The monk ran away and downstairs...

## ~~Chapter 5 Complete!~~

Suddenly, there were screams from one of lower halls - a quick peek resulted in a scene where a bunch of Meneleans stood over bloodied body of the monk who just escaped from the mercenaries. The Meneleans then approached Prixima's study, blades and spears ready to engage the mercenaries. There were shouts and sounds of feet behind the mercenaries as well.

Just as the mercenaries were getting surrounded, a man in bright blue armor stepped forth - his armor covered in blood both dry and flesh, his forehead had a bloody gash on it, and his face screamed 'exhausted'.



"You! Of all people! Why are you here? How did you get in there? Are you with the Berebians? I swear, if you turned on us--"

"Peace, Aaron." The voice came from inside the study. Then, there were sounds of footsteps, of someone calm and in no rush. Prixima left her study and looked at Aaron, then mercenaries, then the soldiers gathered in here.



"Don't you see the bodies of the traitors and the Berebian scum under the feet of our little mercenaries. Clearly, your mind must be foggy from the combat." Prixima grinned and turned to the mercenaries.



"I am interested how did they got there, and why they came back. I think there's lot to talk about. I also see unfamiliar faces between them as well. For those who weren't briefed in - I'm Prixima Kesselring, employer of Sarius' Wolves, or what's left of it. I see more of my own servants and blades than the original mercenaries."



"Lady Prixima, we have repelled the siege, albeit at great cost. We lost more than half of our men, most of the civilians were killed. Furthermore, Captain Torres and Captain von Hexham are both dead, and--"



"Aaron, please take care of the aftermath affairs. I trust you capable hands and mind. I will be talking with our mercenaries. You, people, come to my study."

With that, Prixima turned around and slowly moved to her study, as if the castle was never attacked and the day wasn't marked by heaps of corpses. Aaron's soldiers, along with the man himself, began to disperse to clean up the whole mess.

Charlotte followed into the study behind Riven. She had much to say but said nothing.

Chris shrugged.



"I suppose I'd better talk to her. Here..."

**Chris gives the Talisman to Alex, then takes his dagger back from Salvatore.**

Salvatore nodded and returned the dagger to Chris, having tried the marshmallow a while ago. It was surprisingly good. Ormm sniffed it, licked it, even chewed on it a bit, but ultimately didn't eat it. The wyvern still watched Chris with curiosity however, but seemed more content with his presence.

Seeing everyone head into the study, he did the same after dismounting Ormm and followed the group. Sal isn't exactly sure if he was 'part of the group' but he has a feeling the noble-lady would shout at him to get inside if he tried to wait outside. The wyvern tried to follow him inside, but some quiet words and comforting gestures from Salvatore had the wyvern waiting outside the study, staring into the room from outside the study.

Olison had many questions, especially on Aaron's account, but barely had the time to even parse them all. He tried to carry himself with a soldier's gait he moved in the study with the others, but his exhaustion showed.

Derick followed the others, waiting anxiously for an explanation.

Valor grinned like a kid who'd been given a sack full of candy as he followed Prixima to what remained of her study.

Seyena entered the office, hearing Aaron's words. She couldn't help but think the name was familiar for a second.

Riven followed Lady Prixima politely, following her lead of acting as though nothing was amiss.

Tantallos followed the other shaman and looked for the sides for a moment.



"Hmmm....better start working on future plans, I bet there will have a lot to be done on when I return. I could use the assistance of another ancient magic user to



lead the groups we will be using to retake some areas lost by those crazy undeads."



"Undeads? I may have missed it, but I don't recall you mentioning undead. Are they related to your patron somehow?"

Tantallos pulled his hood down and shrugged.



"Not really. It was a consequence of the huge mistake our enemies did. Like I told you, they forced the Plague Dragon away from our lands and he was wounded, so the rotten skin and blood of the dragon fell on some lands..."



"Mostly on the battlefield and it brought life to EVERYONE who died there, countless people returning to life as mindless creatures just wanting to kill... sadly most of our attempts to push them back failed, mostly because they have a large army of skeletons and revenants, so we will need to use strategy to finally get rid of them. But I know I will not be able to lead our whole army by myself, I will need someone else to lead another group from another direction."



"Silence. You can talk over you petty affairs when we're done here." PRIXIMA sat down at her throne and then let out a sigh, her eyes looking at the mercenaries. She first looked at OLISON, then GREGOR, then SEYENA and then DERICK, before her eyes ultimately landed on CHRIS' face. She squinted them for half a second, and then her lips twisted upwards in a smirk.



"Chris, the Dragonstone, please."



"NO! Wait. Don't give it to her."

Charlotte surprised herself. This was the first time she'd ever spoken up in PRIXIMA's presence.



"Lady Prixima, what use do you have for this stone? No more lies."

Tantallos went quiet when he heard Prixima and shook his head a bit. A sadic grin grew on his face when he heard the voice of the archer and crossed his arms waiting for the answer, that surely was going to be interesting...

Riven gave a polite bow and a whispered apology at Prixima's outburst, then blinked in surprise at Charlotte's.

Seyena's thoughts were quickly swept away when she heard Charlotte speak up.



"Why not? We were paid to give her the stone, weren't we? Who cares about what she wants with an old rock?"

Valor groaned and placed a hand on his face.



"Ye gods, why?"



"I don't care about payment anymore. I lived most of my life without a single coin. The Dragonstone is clearly not an 'old rock' or we wouldn't have had to slaughter hundreds to get it."

Olson barely registered Charlotte's interjection as he was about to ask about the attack. He almost questioned her objection, but fell silent as he was curious himself.



"Of course it is not a "old rock", I believe I told some of you how powerful it can be. But we were paid to give it to her."

Prixima scoffed at Charlotte, and then looked at her with a stare that betrayed both amusement and annoyance.



"You want to know? Then I shall tell you." She leaned into her throne, staring

at Charlotte.



"I wanted it back, because I promised my father that I shall cleanse Eor's family line from this world. That Lapis Lazuli shall return to us. He didn't live long enough to see that moment, but I intend to. What did you assumed I wanted it for? To gain supreme power? To start a bloody war to conquer the world? Please, little forest girl. You know nothing. Those under me can all rot and die for all I care. The point is - you're my pawns bound to do what I want, and I want my family's jewel, to restore our honour! I don't care how many you had to kill! All that is irrelevant. Now... shall I get the Dragonstone, or do you want to preach surrealistic morals at me, Charlotte? You better wake up and look around until you notice how the cruel the world is."

Riven stood up a little straighter. She recognized a coldblooded Matriarch when she heard one.

She leaned over to Chris, glancing back at Charlotte.



"Should we warn her?"

Tantallos gave a grumble of annoyance and slowly covered his head with his hood again, and moved his hands back into his mantle to hold the Worm tome.



"....Heh..pawns.."

Charlotte looked at the floor upon hearing Prixima's reply.



"...You're right. The world is a cruel place. I stepped over the broken bones and splattered blood of bright-eyed young hirelings on my way to this room. Some of them I'd killed myself. Combat is cruel. War is cruel. The world is cruel."



"But it's only cruel because of people like you."

Charlotte subconsciously reached toward her quiver.



"I'm not your pawn. I was never your pawn. I only went along with this in hopes of finally finding out why I was told to protect this precious gem for all my life."

**Charlotte pulled out the Tiger's Eye. The faint, translucent red-gold hue reflected the light shining through tiny cracks in the tower.**



"If you're right, and they really are simply useless, shiny rocks - then fine. I walk out, start an poverty-ridden adventuring group and bother you no more. But after all I've seen, I can hardly believe your words."

Valor continued to mumble into his glove.



"All I wanted was to get paid, and go far, far away, and have something nice to eat. Is that so much to ask for the hard work I put in for this?"

Salvatore continued standing silently, watching the back and forth. He frowned deeply from the back of the crowd at what he heard from Prixima, then grew a solemn look again. Sal remained silent throughout the exchange. He didn't understand all this killing over petty stones, nor sure if he wanted to know.

Derick was silent, but looked incredibly unsure of what to do.

Olison stepped back, clutching his lance tighter.



"A-...Another stone?" He immediately knew fire may well be flying in the next moment. Yet as his muscles tightened, he wasn't sure who he would jump to defend. *This feeling is all too familiar...*

Prixima squinted her eyes at the sight of Tiger's Eye, before letting out a sigh.



"I don't remember anyone of Latzenhommer family being married to anyone remotely close to the name of 'Braxis'. You don't believe my words? See - I don't care about that too. If you want to be an adventurer, fine, then show me you can be loyal to your employer, that's quite important in your future career. Hand me the Lapis Lazuli, take the money, and leave my castle. I won't shed a single tear after you, girl."

Seyena observed the exchange between Prixima and Charlotte with a mixture of horror and awe at Prixima's cold demeanor, and Charlotte's fiery resistance.



*She reminds me a bit of Nala...* But when Charlotte pulled out the new stone...



*"Is that a different Lapis Lazuli?"* Seyena said. To her, it looked... odd.



*"It is the Tiger's Eye, jewel of Latzenhommer family that's extinct for over a century now."*

As if continuing that thought line, Prixima spoke her piece; and Olison sharply exhaled.



*If there's going to be a fight, it isn't going to be here...*

Sal was simply more confused as he watched everyone speak about the stones as if they were of great importance, and everyone declaring free allegiance from Prixima. He shuffled on his feet, not sure of what else to do besides listen, watch, and hope things don't go badly. All this trouble just for some stupid stones? All the men and women killed? Why?



*"Um, if you don't mind my asking, Mistress, what is the significance of these family gems?"*



*"Answers, answers, what am I, a traveling minstrel?"* Prixima rubbed her forehead.



*"Well, if that will make you all shut up and get my stone back at last... Once upon the time, the world was populated by humans. Also, dragons, to lesser degree."*

And then, from other dimension, came Gor-Tah with his hordes of demons. Dragons and demons fought a great war, but humanity just stood in the way. Humans, however, had the advantage of numbers. Dragons, a proud but small race, forged Dragonstones, fusing some of their raw power into the jewels, and gave one hundred and one of those gemstones to the Chosen Ones - the humans that possessed great magical skills, incredible strength, charisma, or combination of the three."



"As you can guess, a Dragonstone is proof that my ancestor was one of the Chosen Ones, the very person who helped to kill Gor-Tah and ensure the safety of the whole world. Today, Dragonstones still hold these powers, a fraction of that - that's why the Dragonstones have that 'swimming' glow in them. I do not seek the power. I merely want to make sure that now one forget the name of Kesselrin, the Golden Sorceress."



"Thank you." Riven said quietly, bowing to Prixima again.

Tantallos looked to the side to stare at Charlotte for a moment and shrugged.



"Well, if we are going to start a mess here, I am sorry to disappoint you too "Prixima", but I am no pawn. I am Tantallos Forsaken, the prince of the Forsakens, and I am not going to keep taking part on this. You have your stone now."

Prixima turned her gaze onto Tantallos.



"Your family doesn't concern me, prince Forsaken." Prixima managed to squeeze some proper respect and restraint into that sentence, though.



"Can we please just give the lady her blasted stone already?" Valor said, far too loudly.

Chris took out the Lapis Lazuli, glancing at Valor as he did so.



"Nice to see everyone is so concerned, but this is my decision to make. My

mission to complete."

He examined the jewel and compared it to the Tiger Eye Charlotte held. They just looked like differently colored rocks, to his empty eyes.



"Well, here's your stone."

He walked over to Prixima and held it out toward her.

Prixima couldn't help but grin, and eagerly took Lapis Lazuli from Christopher.



"At last. Almost twenty damned years I've waited for this moment." Prixima stood up and looked over the mercenaries.



"Proud mercenaries, you're free to stay until evening. In the meantime, my people will clean up the fort and then I will bring five thousand gold I promised in the contract."

She turned toward Charlotte.



"Is that okay with you, forest girl, or are you now suspecting me of trying to cheat you?"



"...I suppose that was hasty. I will never understand the total apathy of mercenary groups."

Charlotte tapped her foot.



"Very well. I'll take my share and wait outside for the night. No need to sleep among the shed blood of warriors."

Chris looked down for a moment.





"Well, there's no easy way to say this."



"You might remember that when you offered me a place here in Kesselring, I told you I would be moving on someday. That would be today. I'm going to be joining this mercenary group."

He glanced in Ami's direction before returning his eyes to Prixima's, as if to indicate why he was leaving.



"A pity, Christopher. I started to like you. We could've had a more... closer relationship. You might've ended as my advisor, even. Well, you're free to go. Gregor, Olison, Seyena - report to your squad leaders, if they're still alive, and prepare for whatever duties you will have to perform. The rest of you - go to the guest quarters two floors below my study, and wait."



"You could have said something earlier, Prixima. I've only been trying to get in your bed for the last year and a half."

He wondered what she thought the flowers, various trinkets people he had been spying on had 'misplaced', and other such things had been for. Even noble women liked that sort of thing, right?

Valor relaxed visibly, and he let out a sigh of relief.



"Thank you milady." Valor turned on his heel, and strode happily out of the office, ignoring the rest of the group. He was annoyed with several of them, mostly Charlotte, but it had all come out right in the end.



"Very well then..."

Tantalos gave a nod and stepped back to look for said place.



Derick slowly raised his hand.



"My apologies ma'am, but can I ask one more question?"

Olison stood straight at attention.



"Milady, if I may make an inquiry. This battle, it was clearly no ordinary siege. Multiple houses, traitors, even some of Bereb's own soldiers..."

He quieted for a moment and cleared his throat.



"Is there anything that would have prompted such a focused attack?"

Derick lowered his hand.



"Nevermind."



"Well, anyway. After we hear the answer to Olison I suppose I'll be going down to the guest quarters."



"Yeah, the cavalier guy also got me curious."

Prixima took a breath and then looked at Derick, then at Olison, sneaking a glance at Christopher as well.



"Of course. The reason is simple. Sasha Rosecross, daughter of Vostin Rosecross, was to be married to Mannan Tunhausen to 'ease the tension'. Of course, I couldn't allow such treacherous marriage to occur and pollute our noble houses. So I sent them some special apples. They must've worked perfectly considering this siege came mere two weeks after I sent them my gifts. Now that Rosecross sieged a fellow Menelean noble, King Paragor will have the entire Rosecross family executed for high

treason. Menelea once more will be a strong country without insidious traitors amongst our ranks."



"Poison huh... Well that's all I guess."

Derick left the room.



"House Tunhausen..."

Olson stood quietly, sifting through his familiarities with the political dealings of the Berebian counties.



"And with Rosecross' aid Bereb would have a new expansion opportunity at hand... This would explain much." *Except a few... Minor details.* He finished in his mind. Olson spoke no further and bowed, and looked towards the others, as if awaiting any further questions.



"Well, I am going to start working on the plans to deal with that undead swarm."

Tantalos gave a brief bow and walked away.



"Well, I'm heading downstairs. Come see me if you need anything."

Riven silently followed after Chris.

Suddenly as Christopher turned a corner, he bumped onto someone a bit taller than him. The cold eyes and lack of any emotion showing on the face... it was one and only...



"Christopher. I just heard that you left Prixima's services. But do not worry my comrade, I will always remember you. Keep the lockpicks, I hope they will remind you of me." Some other person would grin or smile, but Ernest just kept a straight face.



"Can we talk for a moment? I just need to exchange few words with you before we part ways."



"Ah, Ernest. Of course. What is it you need?"



"Oh. Would you like me to leave you two alone?"



"Oh, I don't need anything. I just wanted to give you this..." Ernest pulled out a scroll, tightly rolled and with a black wax seal. One of 'those' contracts.



"...Unfortunately I learned that during the siege, I've lost some of my apprentices. So, as much as my heart would love to reward you for our cooperation, I think I will use that to hire replacements." For a brief moment, Ernest smiled, showing his steel-tipped teeth.



"I hope you understand. Now, I won't be keeping you here. Don't die out there." He hid the contract back between folds of his robe.

Chris raised an eyebrow.



"So... you just wanted to show me a piece of paper? Without even telling me what's on it or why I should care about it?"



"Whatever floats your boat, I suppose."



"Sorry about Joseph and Robert. They fought well. If we could have gotten across the courtyard to save them we would have, but as it stands their efforts to take over an enemy position bought us the time we needed to kill an enemy general and fight our way into the keep."



"Oh I won't mourn them. They did their job." With that, Ernest passed Christopher and went off somewhere.

Chris waited until Ernest passed him, then immediately faded into the shadows and started following him.

Ernest quickly disappeared from Chris' radar. He was that good.

Chris sighed. He wondered what was so important about that piece of paper that Ernest wanted him to see it for no given reason. He'd never understand regular people, with their ability to lie and think illogically and have dreams and feel emotions. Well, that last was technically half-true. Chris could still distantly feel some emotions, and right now, he was a trifle annoyed by this turn of events.

He turned around and headed to the guest room, looking over the rings he had taken. He would have to ask one of the magic-users what they did. Riven or Tantalos would know more about their function. Not to discount Ami, either, for that matter, but she would be busy tending the wounded for awhile and shouldn't be bothered.



*I'm not particularly tired, hungry, or thirsty. Now is as good a time as any to track down one of the magicians and ask.*

He decided to walk around until he bumped into one of them.

Unfortunately, when he was going through a particularly tight corridor, around the corner, Ernest bumped at Chris, pushing his back against the wall.



"Hello Christopher. It seems you were following me for some reason. Tell me, why? Miss me already?" His hand rested against the wall near Chris' left ear, the eyes looking at him and those lips forever locked in straight line of pokerface.

Chris wondered why his attention was directed to Ernest's lips.



*...I just bet Prixima is watching this somewhere.*



"Just curious about that piece of paper, that's all. I wanted to get a closer look at it."



"Hmm, do I will have something from letting you look at it? It is, as you said, just a 'piece of paper' after all. Feeling greedy?"

Chris raised an eyebrow.



"I don't quite follow. Are you asking for a bribe to let me look at it, or threatening me to not look at it 'or else'? I really don't understand why this paper is so important."



"Naaw, not a bribe, my friend. I was just wondering why you're so inclined to look at it. I mean, you rarely dropped by my quarters all that time and now you were seeking me. Is that paper more interesting than my... friendship? That would be cruel, Chris." Ernest moved an inch closer, possibly getting Chris a lot more uncomfortable than before.



"Just when I'm ready to leave, both you and Prixima... Last chances, I suppose?"

He shook his head, still smiling.



"Well, we could always... barter. I stay with you in your quarters for the night instead of the guest rooms, and in return I get to find out why those papers are so important. Sound like a fair trade?"



"That would be interesting, but not necessary." He pulled the scrolls from his robes, brushed Chris' lips with the tip of the scroll and then left it in Chris' hands.



"Feel free to peruse the scroll, my dear friend. If you ever feel like repaying the favour, you know which inns in Vilino I frequent."

**Chris got Fell Contract!**



"Thank you. That's very generous of you."

Chris took the scroll.



"I'll stop by after nightfall anyway. Fair's fair."

If he was going to be up all night - and he probably was - it would be a better use of his time than pacing around and failing to sleep, as usual. He stepped past Ernest, placing a hand on his shoulder as he did so.



"Unless you'd prefer to go now? All of my other affairs can wait for a few hours."



"Work first, Christopher. And please don't follow me around like a lost puppy." With that, Ernest took off and went his way, somewhere else.



"All right. Later, then. I'll look forward to it."

Chris headed off in the opposite direction of Ernest to find one of the party mages.

---

At Prixima's command, Gregor gave a lazy sort of salute and wandered off in a haze.



*Brother...I can't believe anyone could defeat you, Charles...*

As Gregor passed some soldier, someone grabbed him by shoulder. It was Captain Aaron.



"Gregor, I need to talk with you, if you... can spare a moment."



"Huh? Oh, yes. Of course."

**Gregor follows Aaron.**

Aaron took Gregor to the other end of the hallway, where it was quieter.



"I understand that you are upset. Your father's death wasn't in vain, his courage helped many of the trainees to escape. And you should know that your brothers got through this bloody mess in good shape. Just few bruises and scratches."

Aaron placed his hand on Gregor's shoulder.



"I'm sorry for your loss. But we all knew that one day, he might die at his post."



"My...my father?! That can't be. There must be some mistake!"



"No... I did told you up th- Oh. I'm sorry, I... I still not used to call your oldest brother a 'Captain'." Aaron looked away in awkward silence, unsure how to move the conversation.





"...I'm really sorry, Gregor... my condolences."

The world spun around Gregor, who was forced to use his lance to stay upright. This had to be a bad dream. Sure, it was bad before, but this just wasn't possible!



"How...how did he die?"



"...From what I gathered, he was overseeing the usual morning training session for the recruits. Then, the Berebians fell on us from the clouds... he was at the courtyard... even for him, three Wyvern Riders were too much."

The young soldier's eyes burned. He managed to hold himself in check, barely.



"I...thank you for telling me, Captain. Do you require anything else of me for now?"



"Yes, I have a question. Charles told me he is leaving Prixima's service, he said 'I'm not going to live on my father's grave'. What about you? I do hope you stay - Lady Prixima will need loyal, dutiful soldiers to protect her after his gruesome siege."



*Charles was thinking of leaving? That doesn't sound like him...* Out loud, he said, "I need to talk to some people first. I'll let you know when I decide."



"Of course, take your time." With that, he bowed his head a little and then moved away to talk with some other soldiers.

Gregor saluted Aaron, and walked away. However, he didn't plan on talking to anyone just yet. Instead he went back down through the keep, through the courtyard rapidly filling with cremation fires, to the barracks where he was assigned. The barracks were now empty.



As he sat on his cot, the full weight of everything that happened in the past day came crashing down all at once. He put his head in his hands and wept bitter tears.

---

Olison watched Gregor silently drift away from the room. He saluted as well before making his way out. As he moved he gave a cursory glance at Charlotte, and briefly clasped Gregor's shoulder, giving him a sympathetic look before continuing on, silently.

He would report to Aaron, but not before looking to **Find Anja and everyone's mounts outside.**

Olison found Anja and the mounts right at the courtyard, some of Menelean soldiers brought them in. Anja looked rather disgusted and concerned at the sight of bloody siege, but kept a smile on her face.



"You! You are one of the Gregor's guys, aren't you? You guys are alright?"

Olison spoke sullenly.



"It was a tremendous effort, but we've managed to pull through."

He walked up to Steil, who was keeping well away from the blood. He looked the horse over for injuries, gladly seeing him unhurt. He moved along to look over Seyena and Ami's mounts.



"Though not without some losses. It will be a while before we recover."



"Phew! It would be terrible to learn that guys who saved my life once got killed shortly afterwards. Do you know how many of you guys will be going off this damned place? I thought about staying with that Gregor guy, or maybe Charlotte girl, and I think others would like a lift somewhere nearby as well."

Olison nodded in resignation.



"No, I would suppose not. But as a soldier at heart, it can be tough to resign service when you've been brought up that way."

---

Seyena leaves the study, quickly heading towards the wagon to check on her pegasus.

Seyena quickly runs up to her grey pegasus, relieved that she wasn't harmed. With a few softly spoken words and a gentle tug on the reins, Seyena led Ilya to where the fliers kept their mounts, talking to Ilya the way there. It was therapeutic for her, to be able to talk and not be actively judged, and to know her words were falling upon a creature who understood them.

It wasn't till her feet met the soft hay that was strewn across the stable did she snap out of her reverie. She made sure to ensure her pegasus was accounted for, and to report in to whomever commanded the pegasus knights in Kesselring.

Seyena quickly learned the terrible truth - there no more remaining pegasus knights in Kesselring. The only trace of the once-famous unit was a pair of pegasi that nibbled on grass in corner behind the stables, their eyes wide and large from confusion, fear and stress, their owners dead.

---

Olison stood back as Seyena led her mount away, he turned back to Anja.



"Three, maybe four? I honestly don't know how many of us are going to be heading off. Maybe when the dust settles... Many of us are still loyal to this castle, others are loyal to no-one. Some might still band together and face the odds."



"You don't sound particularly sure about that 'loyalty to the castle' thing, darling. And I know what I'm saying!"

Olison remained quiet for a moment before sighing, saying as bluntly as possible.



"You would be correct. This would be the third castle I've served and I've yet to see respect among any of their keepers. But so it goes, a soldier does not question, only serves."



"You have a bad luck when it comes to castles. Maybe stop looking for one and just travel around? There are so many stories of brave, solitary knights travelling through the countryside, you wouldn't be the first!"

Olison managed a bit of a laughing wheeze in spite of the solemn air about the castle.



"I've tried. Solitary knights don't seem so brave or heroic when they're scrambling for jobs, especially with two mouths to feed." Olison gave a pat to Steil's side. But quickly resumed his neutral glare.



"So, being solitary is bad, being a castle guy is bad too. Doesn't look like you have many options left, then!"

---

Tantallos crossed his arms and looked around.



"So, I heard some people were going to make a new group hm? I may need some help to deal with those revenants...not on the front line, but on the roads as we heard some stories of adventurers being attacked by skeletons and other undead creatures."

Tantallos just shrugged and walked away to check for anything interesting as it seemed most of people were talking.

The shaman could see that funeral pyres were being constructed already. It seems that per Menelean customs, all of the bodies were going to be cremated, including the traitors and foreigners.

Tantallos placed his hands together and shook his head a bit.



"The Plague Dragon is with you all now..."

The shaman decided to move a bit closer just to check the progress.

The bodies had priestly markings written at random parts of their bodies, possibly to either bless their souls or keep them away from raising the bodies.

Tantallos sighed and walked away to see if he could find a tome, if not just return to the group.



"Hmm... this place is too weird... maybe I should just get back to the group. 'Borrowing' a tome besides the money would probably drive that lady insane..heh..eheh."

---

Alexander casts a sympathetic glance at Gregor as he leaves. Captain von Hexham...? Truly a shame... And Alexander was unsettled with this news about the poison apples. Did this mean that Prixima had poisoned a fellow Menelean noble? Worse, did this mean that Prixima had incurred a siege upon Menelea? Alexander's head was swirling with thoughts about loyalty. But now he had an order, and... it was one he was going to follow. And as such, Alexander looked around for Aaron.

Alexander all of a sudden *stops* as he begins to dwell on something that, though it had flown him into his rage, he had not stopped to think about. And with a dismayed, and even somewhat terrified expression, he rushed down to the courtyard full of bodies and blood, or if the bodies had already been moved, near the funeral pyres. He began looking at the Menelean bodies, particularly the knights.



"No no no no NO NO NO!"

Who did he know? Which of his comrades had died?

From what he could see and what he could hear from surviving soldiers, almost everyone from his unit were now dead. Those who were 'lucky' were now resting in quarters and infirmaries.

Alexander was in shock, looking at the bodies, and hearing more words of horror. Almost... all of his comrades were... were dead. Dead, and he hadn't been there.

He hadn't been able to protect them.



"They're... they're dead. It's my fault, I... failed. I wasn't there, they're dead, oh God, oh god..."

Alexander sat down against the nearest wall, looking at the bodies of his comrades. And as such, he practically shut down.

---

Salvatore noted everyone moving off, their business done, and he does the same. He's greeted by a curious wyvern outside of the study, and he patted Ormm on the head as he followed the others in hopes they knew where they were going. The wyvern followed, trying not to be too far away from Salvatore.

Seems there's only two things that can happen now, Sal considers in his head. Either the group accepts him and he throws his lot with them, or they don't and he... Supposes he tries his luck in Garnes and hopes for the best? Its times like this that Sal wishes he could go off of more than chance for fate.

Salvatore was lost. There was no other explanation for it, he swore he saw that speck of dried blood several times now. How he even got lost, he's not entirely sure. He was

walking down a hallway, hoping it lead to the guest room, then... Then.... Well, sufficient to say, this is now his fourth time walking down it.

The wyvern rider gave an exasperated sigh, trying to figure out where the hell he is and why he can't figure his way around a bleedin' keep! Dammit, if there's one positive thing Sal will attribute to Berebians, they can make a keep that's easy to navigate through. He's not even sure what level of the keep he's on... Somewhere in the middle? He knows he went down some stairs. The wyvern for its part just sniffed at the various things, looking at everything with great interest as it explored the new area with its rider.

Somehow, Salvatore ended outside, near stables.

Okay, okay, take a left here, right here, down some stairs, few hallways, some directions from a shady guy, through this door and... And... Now he's at the stables. He's not even sure if he can recall having gone outside before the door.



"What."

Sal could only stare for a few moments at the various horses as Ormm soon filed in next to him. He was so confused as to how he could get so irrefutably lost he almost didn't notice Seyena, almost bumping into her.

---

Seyena felt hollow.



*I should be grieving, crying, probably.* She thought, with the smallest twinge of sadness.

Isn't this why she remained so aloof around her fellow riders? To not feel grief, like the grief she felt when her mentor died? How had all of them died? How did they die? Anger started to rise inside of her, anger of many things; herself for not grieving, the Berebians for slaying them...

And for PRIXIMA, whom Seyena once respected. But to her, she was merely a tool, much like her sisters in arms.



*Not any longer...* Seyena thought, walking up to the two frightened pegasi. With a few gentle words, and a sugar cube or two as a tantalizing treat, she hopefully calmed their nerves.

Then she felt something large bump into her. Stifling a shout, she turned around, surprised.



"Eh, sorry there, didn' see yah. ...Yah wouldn' be tha one Oi saw in the corner, were yah? Wounded an' all tha? Glad ta see yah better, enough dead today as it is."



"Yes. I suppose I'm better." Seyena said, rubbing her shoulder, still somewhat frightened by the wyvern. "You're the rider that brought Charlotte back, right?"



"Yeah, Oi'd be him, picked her up at the forest needin' ta head ta the castle 'ere wit' ah hurry. Well, tha an' ah few bandits, but tha wasn' much o' note."

The rider stated simply, looking around the stables for a bit. Ormm looked between the pegasi and Seyena, but otherwise stayed behind Sal and occasionally shifted a bit, eager to resume what it assumes to be an exploration of a new and fascinating area. After noticing the solemn air in the area, he quickly pipes up.



"If'in Oi'm interruptin' anythin', Oi can scram fer yah. Not, if'in Oi can ask ah few questions o' yah?"

Seyena looked back at the stables, noticing how empty it seemed.



"Not much to interrupt."

She took a moment to compose herself. Why was she this rattled? She knew that death could happen.



*Just, not all at once.* "What questions do you have?"



"Yer name would be ah good start. Mine's Salvatore, most jus' call me Sal

though. Yah wit' tle rest o' the group? Charlotte, Chris, an'... What's his name... Gregory?"

While Sal spoke, Ormm was beginning to realize that they wouldn't be moving soon yet. So the wyvern contented itself by sniffing around the stables, occasionally scratching at the dirt in a spot or two.



"I'm Seyena, most don't shorten it to anything." She said, nervously looking back at the wyvern. She wondered if they would eat a pegasus as she subconsciously pulled Ilya closer to her. "And... yes... I'm with the group."

Seyena took another cautious glance back at the wyvern.



"On the topic of names, what's the name of your wyvern?"

Salvatore nodded at the pegasus rider. He figured as much, and with the question in return glanced at the golden wyvern who was currently digging in a spot in the corner of the stable. Sal's not entirely sure why, but he doesn't really know what goes on in its head at times.



"His name be Ormm." The armored man pitched a thumb towards the gold wyvern.

At the mention of his name, the wyvern stopped what it was doing and looked up at his rider, then Seyena, before eventually trotting back over to them leaving the beginning of the hole in the stable alone. Ormm watched them expectantly, as if wondering why its name was called. Sal simply scratched Ormm's chin before turning back to the pegasus rider.



"Friendly fella he is, yah ah pegasus rider yerself? Don' see much o' them."



"He reminds me a bit like a puppy. An over-sized, scaly puppy with wings, but the demeanor is still there." Seyena said, cautiously extending a hand towards the wyvern to scratch its chin, imitating Salvatore.

She was ready to draw her hand back at a moment's notice, should Ormm decide her



arm might possibly taste like chicken.

Ormm watched the pegasus rider's hand carefully with his slitted green eyes, not blinking, as if unsure what she was doing until her hand scratched the bottom of his chin. At that, the wyvern looked more at ease after realizing what Seyena was doing, giving what could at best be considered a happy look from the lizard.



"Hah, never thought o' tha comparison before, though he does have ah loike ta chew things when he thinks Oi don' look." Sal gives a faux-suspicious glance at the wyvern in jest at that, before returning to look at Seyena.



"Raised Ormm up from ah egg Oi did, there were some trials but it was fun all the same. Raised him good if'in Oi do say so mahself, an' Oi do!" He spoke with a rather obvious hint of pride in his tone.



"Yes, I'm a pegasus rider. But to be honest, I haven't seen many wyvern knights, except for when this... invasion started."

The smile however soon turned to a scowl though at the mention of the Berebian's wyverns.



"Eh, those finks raise them roight nasty they do, treat the poor wylm loike ah monstar an' what do yah get? Ah monstar. Makes me sick, thinkin' o' what they do."



"I'll admit, Ormm doesn't seem as vicious as I used to expect around wyverns. You've raised him well... but I'm no experienced wyvern knight, so I wouldn't really know, would I?"



"Eh, 'knight', Oi'd call mahself ah lot o' things, but ah knight ain't one. Only wyvern 'knights' I know treat their wylms loike trash, not ah thought ta them, 'er worse raise them ta be mean. Ta them, the poor wyvern is ah status symbol, somethin' ta show off an fer it ta do what they say 'er else." Sal continued to scowl, before sighing,



realizing he was starting to rant.

Seyena grinned slightly, before she felt a force push into her from behind, she stumbled for a minute, nearly losing her balance, and she felt a tug on the reins simultaneously. Ilya was nervous, as she typically was near unknown men, but her nervousness was tenfold around the wyvern.



"Ilya, come on, calm down, they're not going to hurt you." She spoke in soft tones, quickly trying to sooth her mount with a few gentle pats, and it seemed to work momentarily. Ilya stopped pulling, resolving instead to give as distasteful a look as a pegasus could towards Ormm. She quickly looked up towards Salvatore. "Do you want to walk, I guess? I could help you find your way, and Ilya could spend energy on something other than panicking."



"Yeah, ah walk moight do me some good, hopefully better than the one tha took me 'ere. Don' think Oi can foind any blasted thin' in this place." He shook his head a bit, more calmer now. "Wyverns are less loike animals than ah lot think. Tha's all Oi can say after raisin' Ormm, Oi barely know what goes on in his head at toimes."

Ormm, while the conversation was going on however, was giving curious glances (although with a wyvern that typically means stares instead) to the pegasus that attracted its attention, causing the wyvern to sniff in its direction (sniffing being sticking its tongue out akin to a snake). The wyvern had never seen a pegasus before, what a strange creature it was to it. Like a horse but not.

Seyena listened to his rant, curious.



"Just what exactly do these men do to their wyverns? Why would they treat a wyvern like that in the first place- the creature is the only thing stopping them from a long fall and a grisly death."



"Funny, Oi heard much the same 'though the other way 'round. What exactly they do, dominate 'em. Make 'em understan' the power in the soituation ain' in them but the rider, an' they take means ta do this thoroughly, 'though the ways ain' always the same. They break 'em, bluntly. Oi don' even think tha the worse though, some do some real nasty stuff, teach the wrym somethings they shouldn' be teachin' 'em." In contrast to before, this was spoken mostly matter-of-factly, ending on a solemn note however.



"But I know what you mean, I personally hate it whenever someone thinks Ilya is just some horse. Personally, I believe she's smarter than most people, and shows more emotion than many others." She said, as Ilya stopped glaring daggers at Ormm for a second to wonder why her name was called, her ears pricking up at the distraction. "The problem with Ilya, I can usually tell what she's thinking, and she's a really, *really* devious pegasus. She could probably hatch a plan to steal Lapis Lazuli right back from PRIXIMA if she could speak, and if it would earn her a sugar cube."

Salvatore perked up, happy to be off that subject if at least for the moment.



"Hah, count yahself lucky, sometoimes Oi wished Oi knew what went on in his head, think it moight save me some trouble. Wouldn' be the first toime Oi see 'em havin' chewed something ta nothin' when Oi get mah back turned fer ah moment, 'er him lookin' happy wit' himself an Oi gotta figure out why." The rider couldn't help but laugh a bit, any levity beforehand forgotten.

Seyena saw a fork in the hallway ahead, and she gasped, the conversation had distracted her, and she almost didn't know where she was.



"Ah, I think I might be able to get to the guest rooms from here, if you're intending on staying the night? I don't think many would begrudge you for it, seeing as you helped us." It would only leave the small matter of making sure his wyvern was taken care of, but once she showed him the way, it shouldn't be too hard for him to return to the room, or at least, she hoped.



"Yeah, if'in Oi can help it. Ain' got much else ta go, not much else plans ta do, may as well make ah burden o' mehself if'in Oi can." He spoke jokingly.

By now however, it should be obvious that the golden wyvern had followed them inside and was currently sniffing at a door. Either Sal hasn't noticed yet, or he doesn't find this odd at all for some reason.



"Here, it's just around the corner." Seyena said, letting go of Ilya's reins, quickly telling her pegasus to stay put. "You really can't miss it."



"Thank yah, don' think Oi'd foind mah way 'round 'ere wit' out some help. Oi'm still not entirely sure how Oi got ta the stables fer tryin' ta get ta the rooms." Sal scratched his helmet at the thought, the action a reflex.



"If you want, I can take Ormm and give him a place in the pegasi stables until we all leave. There's... there's plenty of room for him. She shrugged, looking at the curious wyvern. "Or if you want to walk him back yourself, I understand, I just wanted to make sure you knew how to get here."



"Oi can take care o' him, don' worry on mah account. Hah, sides, if'in yah tried he'd be tryin' ta slip away all the toime an' tryin' ta foind me. Ain' tha roight Ormm?"

At the mention of his name, the wyvern stopped what it was doing and stalked over to Sal, where it got the base of one of its horns scratched for its trouble.



"In any case, I need to go look for a few people..." Seyena said, about to leave Salvatore to his own devices, since she has shown him the way.

A sudden thought invaded her mind, and she turned around to face Salvatore again.



"What are you going to do after this?" She was curious, he has made it clear already he doesn't get along well with Berebians, and it's likely he would be ostracized by Meneleans due to his strong accent and peculiar mount. After this siege, he would have to move somewhere else, as she suspected the local populace wouldn't take too kindly to a Berebian, even if he wasn't part of the army.

Sal turned to face the pegasus rider, face thoughtful.



"Well... Oi had the idea o' goin' ta Garmes, away from Fezzan an' the attack there, but wit' the siege 'ere... Oi guess Oi moight need ta head farther ta foind good work an' faces. People get antsy 'nough when Oi'm 'round, doubt the attacks made tha any better. Maybe Cere? 'Er Ys duchy, don' think they cared much where yah from last Oi was there." The rider explained slowly, thinking it up as he spoke about it.

After a moment though, he remembered something.



"Well, tha Sheilds guy, Chris, the hooded one, he said somethin' about seein' if'in Oi could join ah group he was talkin' about. What he said made ah lot o' sense too, 'though Oi'm not sure if'in tha would work out. Everyone seemed pretty jumpy o' me, not tha Oi could blame 'em."



"Well, you did show up in the middle of a fight, both looking and speaking like a Berebian. But other than that, I doubt that anyone would have an objection for you coming along, we could use more muscle, and another flier would be great to have." Seyena said, shrugging, and leaning on her lance. Plus, it would be better for her nerves to know there is another flier who could potentially help her. She was terrified of being injured or shot out of range of the group.



"Loike Oi said, don' blame 'em, Oi would be jumpy mahself if'in their boots. But yeah, if'in they'd have me Oi wouldn' moind joinin' the group, scroungin' 'round fer work ain' easy when yah got two mouths ta feed an' people don' trust yah much. Company by mahself ain' bad, but it makes fer some pretty one-sided conversations." Sal joked.



"Then it's settled, you're coming with us." She said, a faint smile starting to appear. "But... we can't leave until we have everyone, and I haven't seen the others since we were all in PRIXIMA's study."



"Hah, it'd be noice ta work in ah group again. Oi can try ta help yah foind 'em, they can' o' gotten too far. Maybe Oi can get Ormm ta sniff 'em out." Sal spoke half-jokingly.

The wyvern just continued to watch the two of them, wondering if they'd be moving again. More places to explore, maybe. All of it is so strange, tastes/smells so weird.



"That would be appreciated. I guess a good place to start would be the guest

room... if we were to find Gregor, Alex or Olson, we would need to look in their respective barracks or ask their commanders... then, we could look in the courtyard, I'm sure a few of them might amass there if not for the sake of nowhere else to go." Seyena said, starting to walk towards the guest room, **looking to see if anyone was inside.**

Sal looked in the guest room with Seyena, Ormm trailing behind them lazily, looking and sniffing at various things.



"If'in yah want me ta foind them tha way, Oi'd need somethin' fer Ormm ta go off ah. Hm... He moight know what Chris smells loike though, seemed he interested the wrym. Would need somethin' though fer the others." Sal explained, before continuing to help Seyena search.

Charlotte heads down the castle stairs and out into the entrance hall for one last look at the place before she leaves it all behind. Best to handle this as maturely as possible after that immature outburst. But after hearing a familiar voice or two outside the castle, she investigated.



"Oh, isn't it Charlotte, hello! You seem to have terrible mood. Did you broke off with that Gregor guy?"

Olison dimly recognized Charlotte approaching.



"Ah, Charlotte." Olison made a curt bow to her, despite his exhaustion, "I apologize for all that back there. With PRIXIMA."

Tantallos found himself at the outside, and at the other side of the courtyard, just outside the main gate, he saw Anja, Olison and Charlotte.

Tantallos moved closer to see what the small group was doing and just gave a nod as a greet.



"....So... now what. I mean, after getting the money."

After his short cry, Gregor wiped his face off as best he could and stood up. He felt...well, not *better*, exactly, but at least he could come to terms with things a bit better.

He left the barracks and returned to the maincourtyard. There, he saw a small grouping of his companions, and went over to greet them.



"Hey."



"Where is the spy guy anyway? I have not seen him since the group began to wander around the castle."

Charlotte waved.



"Hi, Gregor. Sorry about earlier."

Tantallos shrugged to himself again and began to look for the spy guy.



"Sorry? You didn't do anything wrong. In fact, you got exactly what I was looking for. Well, you and a couple of the others."



"...What were you looking for? I mean the whole, uh, anti-climactic showdown. And the surprise question before we went in. None of that was really right."



"I said that I wanted a response from PRIXIMA, remember? Well, I got one."



"Oh. Right. Does that mean you'll be staying? It looks like Anja and some of the others are ready to leave PRIXIMA's service for the moment. Maybe head to MENELEA to look for work or something. It would be lonely without you, though."

Gregor laughed bitterly.





"All this time I tried to hope that PRIXIMA had a good reason for all the things she's done, and had us do. But this wasn't about protecting the kingdom, or Kesselring. All this death and suffering was solely to increase her own political power. Even Rosecross, may the Divine Dragon bring him peace, had been effected by what she's done. Charlotte, all my friends here are dead. My father is dead. My eldest brother is moving on, my other brother I don't particularly care for, and my sister is off in a convent somewhere. There's *nothing* for me to care for here. I'm going with you...that is, if you'll still let me."



"...Oh. Gregor, I'm- I didn't know. Your father's the one who died in battle? Was he an inspiration to you?"



"I suppose you could say that. I know I may have spoken of him poorly at times, but he was my father and I did love him. I have to believe that he felt the same way about me."



"I understand. Family must be awfully important, especially when they're soldiers like you. I'm truly sorry for your loss."



"Thank you, Charlotte. I appreciate it."

He coughed, trying to change the subject.

Charlotte thought for a minute.



"Well... as much as it pains me to say, I'm not sure we're good at much as a group other than killing, looting and serving. So what I've been thinking tonight is, essentially: why don't we ride with Anja to Garnes and look into joining the Menelean Royal Guard? They're a fairly benevolent people, even with people like Rosecross. Maybe we could do some real good there."

He pulled himself together.



"You're saying you want to become a Royal Guard? What happened to your wandering heroes idea?"

Charlotte perked up at the wandering heroes thing.



"As for that... Olson happened. He said something a while back that made me realize I'm not fit to lead an adventuring group. I doubt I could keep us all from starving, much less lead us to success. And, after a certain measure of desperation, 'adventurer' starts to resemble 'road bandit.'"



"Personally, I think you're selling yourself short, but I see your point. You told me that joining you might mean doing things I'd rather not. Well, that's nothing new. But if Father or my brother Charles knew that I had taken up banditry, they'd hunt me down themselves, assuming I hadn't already turned myself in. Perhaps joining the Guard would be a good choice for some of us, at least."

---



"Well... plague! It surely will not be easy to convince these people to deal with a bunch of crazy flesh-eating bastards on the route close to the castle.."

Chris turned a corner and almost bumped into Tantallos.



"Ah. Lucky coincidence, I was looking for you."

He observed Tantallos with his hood down for once before continuing on.



"I actually had something I wanted to ask you. Earlier I found these rings."

Tantallos raised an eyebrow and nodded to the spy.



"Well, talk about coincidence, I wanted to talk to you about something too. And what rings?"



Chris removed the Guiding Ring and Blade Ring from his pockets and held them out for the shaman to see.



"I don't know what they do, but I can tell they're magical."

The shaman looked at the rings and exclaimed something that probably was used for surprise on his lands.



"For the LETHAL BREATH OF THE PLAGUE DRAGON! Where did you get these? I had been looking for a guiding ring in quite a while.. and the other one is the so called blade ring, it is said if that you wear it, it will increase your strenght.. curiously it will vanish after a while but the power will keep with you."

Chris cleared his throat and looked around. No one around, so that was good. He sidled up to Tantallos so his mouth was about an inch from the shaman's ear and started whispering.



"I nicked them from the vault earlier during the fighting. I take it you want the Guiding Ring, so... take it, with my blessings. And thanks for the info on the other ring. I'll try to figure out who could use it later."

He handed the Guiding Ring to Tantallos and stuck the other one back in his pocket.

Tantallos hated this thing of having someone so close to him, it really felt awkward but heard in silence what the spy had to say.



"Well, well, well.. now that is amusing.. and do not worry about it, spy guy. I will not be using it until I get stronger, I do not feel ready to use it yet."

He took it anyway but hid it under his mantles.



"The other thing I have of interest is a contract of some sort. I still need to read it myself, although you can look at it too if you'd like."



"A contract? Let me take a look..."



"All right. Here."

Chris took out the contract and showed it to Tantalos.

Tantalos took a look at the contract and gave a slow nod.



"..As I suspected.. you will need this little thing to reach "another level of power", if you know what I mean. The same way some of us needs a certain kind of object to prove we are worth getting stronger, you need it, and this contract is your passport to be knew as a assassin or a master spy. But I do not know much about how it works...probably because we do not receive too many spies or assassins as guests on the castle."

Chris raised his eyebrows.



"Oh, I see. That's... very interesting. I'll have to thank Ernest later then."



"Well, moreso than I already planned to. And on a related note, it seems I have a date for tonight. What about you? Any plans?"



"Indeed..you had a pretty lucky day, spy guy. Maybe the Plague Dragon is helping you after all."



"A "date" hm? Looks like you are really having a good day, spy guy. And me? I have plans for the future..and I was going to talk to you about them. But right now, nothing at all.. and I do not really think it will be easy to get closer to the shaman lady."



"But that is another story. I wanted to talk to you about something, as it seems most of the people of the group will leave the Prixima lady person, I wanted to see if any of them would be willing to help me to clear a important route close to the Forsakens castle. As I told you, even if we had been trying to years, many of those undeads managed to spread around and make some important roads turn into dangerous ones, and as I cannot return yet to claim my position as a king, we need to at least help them from outside."



"So you want me to come with you? Well, it depends on what the group wants to do, but I'm not against the idea. It might be a good thing to get out of this section of the country for a bit, and let some of us who lost people like Gregor and Alex take out their frustrations on the undead."



"Basically, and you said you wanted to learn more about the Plague Dragon right? We may find some statues during the travel, so I will be able to tell you more. And that is true, spy guy. They will be able to kill without worrying about anything.. actually by killing them he will be helping those tormented souls to get the rest they need."



"That sounds good to me. Maybe when I see the others I can pass the idea along to them, get their opinions."



"Sounds like a plan."

Chris thought for a moment.



"Assuming we end up not doing that for whatever reason, though, what do you think we'll end up doing next? Another job for Prixima, going out and just adventuring around...?"

Chris left the question open.

Giving a shrug, Tantalos looked at the emblem of his family before speaking.



"I will not be around for the next mission. I do not want to keep killing people without knowing if they were guilty or not, or the Plague Dragon will make me pay for it. So I will just start wandering around again and finish what I started, become a druid AND with some luck.. a dark druid, then return to help the Forsakens to clean those lands."



"And this ring I found will help you become a druid? Sounds like a bit of good luck, then. Use it in good health."



"Even if we part ways, at least you got something out of this endeavor, right?"



"Yes it will. Maybe if I ask for the Plague Dragon's assistance.. I may become a dark druid instead of a druid.. who knows."



"You got that right, at least one good thing happened. Besides the sacrifices and how I improved with all those fights.. but honestly I hope our group do not split so soon, I want to make sure I will have enough time to thank each of them... and.."



"...And see if I can get Riven a little more interested of course heh...eheh. And if you wish to follow me on my return, I will make sure to put you in a important position as I know what you are capable of."



"Same here. I want to experience life with a group and it would be a bit of shame to have it be a small group. To be honest, not that I would mind striking out, just Ami and I, but that's neither here nor there. While we have so many people gathered, I feel we ought to band together for the time being."



"I'm sure we can get the rest to agree to come with you... although you might have to figure out a way to pay them. If I read him right, Valor at least will want something material out of the deal."

As for Chris, he was fine as long as he had something to eat and drink and a place to sleep. His wants and needs were few.



"That is the idea... I am quite sure if we keep working as a group we will have more results, we will be able to prevent any of us from being killed too early, besides being amusing to have some people to talk with. At most of occasions, my conversations were limited to shamans, druids and summoners, so this is being a good experience to me."



"And you will not have to worry about the payment, you know that I am a prince, so if they want money for killing those undeads, they will have it. And this time they will not need to kill people and wonder if they did the right thing."



"I'm not worried that much about payment. I get by just fine as long as I have the basic necessities, with maybe a little extra for tool maintenance."

By tools, Chris meant his weapons as well as his lockpicks.



"I also agree with you about learning more of our companions. My curiosity, sad to say, has gotten me in many situations, most unpleasant, some not so much."



"We all have our faults. Mine will probably get me killed someday, but there's no use worrying about it."



"I doubt your fault will get you killed, and I doubt the group would allow

that to happen."

Chris patted Tantallos on the shoulder.



"By the way, you're a handsome fellow. You should try showing your face around the ladies more often. If you play your cards right, you might have a date before the day is over, too. And speaking of, I think I'm going to go raid the kitchen for a few things before I head off for mine. Catch you later... druid-guy."

Tantallos couldn't do much besides laughing at the others statement.



"You know showing the face is not exactly my thing, but I will try to do that more often. Good luck with your date, spy guy."

Chris grinned and strolled off.

---

Valor, having left before the others, continued alone towards the guest quarters.

After the meeting Derick had wandered off. As time passed his mind started to go back to the conversation with Rosecross.



"Rosecross didn't know who killed Sarius, and it makes no sense for PRIXIMA to have been the culprit, while she did admit to poisoning people just now, the way it happened doesn't fit her style anyways. It was too messy. I-I've barely thought about this ever since the night he died, what's wrong with me... Sarius was practically a father to us. Well except for Adrien and Henry. Which was almost half of us. So maybe I was exaggerating."



"Concentrate Derick. Concentrate. I need to get to the bottom of this. I owe it to Sarius... Alright I swear, after this, I will find out why he died. And once I do, I'll avenge him."

Suddenly, he stopped and looked around.



"I'm completely lost."

Derick picked a random direction and started checking every room he passed

for someone recognizable

Valor looked up from his cot when Derick poked his head into the guest room where the group was supposed to eventually meet up.



"Oh, hello Derick. Anyone else with you?"



"Ah Valor, hello. If there are, then I was more lost than I thought."



"You're lost?" Valor asked, sitting upright and placing his feet on the floor. "Where are you trying to go?"



"To be honest, nowhere. I wound up wandering aimlessly and got so lost that I had no idea where I was in the castle anymore. Where is everyone?"



"No idea, actually. I came straight here after Prixima dismissed us. No one else followed me. I assume Olison, Ami and Seyena went to get their mounts, and Alex and Gregor probably went to report to their commanders. Other than that, I don't know what's up." Valor laid back down, arms behind his head, staring at the ceiling. "I'm just going to stay here and relax, I think. It's been a hell of a week."



"You've got that right. I can hardly believe that it's only been that long. Feels as if its been months."



"I'm glad it's over. Hands down, this has been the most hectic, out of control job I've ever done. But now, it's time for the best part of any job: Pay Day." Valor closed his eyes, smiling. "I think I'll get some repairs done on my sword. It's seen a little wear. Which reminds me." Valor sat up, and looked at Derick. "I don't suppose you have a needle and thread, do you?"





"Well actually..."

Derick rummaged through his pouches for a few moments before pulling out a slightly bent needle and some red string and tossed them to Valor. He then tapped his fingers on the side of his own head.



"For some reason my headband use to rip at the seams all the time back when I first joined the Young Wolves. Eventually Sarius told me to just carry these around and fix it up myself."



"Thanks!" Valor said, catching the needle and thread and setting them down next to him before pulling off his jacket, and immediately began work on sewing up the number of shreds and tears that'd been visited upon it in the last few days. "Ugh, maybe I should just buy a new one..."



"Don't think of this as your jacket being ruined. Think of it as... an excuse to add more belts to it!



"But more seriously, need some help?"

Valor laughed at Derick's joke.



"Ahaha, I think it has enough belts as it is. But yeah, a bit of help would be appreciated. I was never too good at this..." Valor held out the jacket, needle and thread.

Derick carefully took the items and started working on them.



"I'm pretty sure I can fix most of this. My stitching will look pretty obvious though."

Valor shrugged.





"Just so long as I don't leave this castle in tatters."

---

Olison looked over Ami's horse with a careful eye, determining no wounds on it. Satisfied, Olison's gaze rose again to see more of the party forming in the courtyard.



"I take it no one else's partial to taking a rest either, then."

Olison looked outward to a large heap of metal near a wall on the edge of the courtyard, which by now was still soaking in the blood of enemy and ally alike as their corpses were being dragged off. He could see Alex slouched on the wall, staring off into the distance.

Though he was intimidated by what sounded like a troubled event in Alex's past, Olison still dredged up concern for his comrade and made his way beside the knight, turning to face the same direction and resting against the wall.

It took Alexander a while to notice Olison's presence, in his state. And even then, Alexander only found the strength to say four words.



"That... was... my unit."

Olison nodded in silence, looking in the same direction out towards the rest of the courtyard. He spoke minutes later with a solemn tone.



"Their spirits rest in the honor of their kingdom and their comrades."

He remained silent for a few more moments before briefly turning his gaze towards Alex.



"How well did you know them?"

One word.



"...Well."

Olison's gaze turned upward to the sky, at the faint outlines of the stars, leaving the silence as it was for minutes more before speaking again.



"The priests of my home always told us of the strength of a warrior's spirit. How even through death a strong soldier lights the path for his comrades in arms to victories unforeseen. To give them a chance to shine brighter." Olison sharply exhaled with a slight smirk to his face.



"I still believe one of them, an friend of mine named Rhyat is following me. He preceded me in every art of the lance before I could even begin. Headstrong and ready to prove to anyone his worth, unable to take even a single slight. Even now I think I can hear him pushing me to become stronger, guiding my spears and aligning my charges towards the fray."

Alexander shakily exhaled, listening to Olison's words.



"...I, I suppose you could compare the duty that drives me to something like that, but... I end up driving myself through my *failures*. When people die. Like..." Alexander buried his head in his hands. "Like this."

Olison looked back down to the courtyard, which by now was mostly cleared. At a loss for words, he only spoke in a quiet mumble by now.



"I know the sting... But in the end we only take our lessons from our failures."

Alexander sighed, looked at the ground.



"...I suppose, but I've more formed my life from them... I've, I've got to think, they all died for Prixima's cause... and Prixima's cause involved killing fellow Meneleans. Did... did my unit die for something *against* Menelea...?"



"They died in the knowing defense of Menelea. I would say they died as a

result of hostility against Menelea, not in support of it."

Olison sighed in resignation.



"I will admit... That their leader may not have had their best interests at heart. Something far too common these days."

Alexander stands up, still depressed (though that wouldn't change soon in any case.)



"It reassures me a little to hear you say so... but... I suppose I need to report to my squad leader."

And with that, Alexander once again went looking for Aaron.

---

In the stables:



"How are you Tenebra?" She says as she feeds an apple to the horse.

A pair of soldiers found Derick working on the jacket. Same for Ami, the soldiers approached her as she was tending to Tenebra.

"Lady Prixima calls you to her study so you can receive your payment."

Valor sprung off the cot, full of energy once again.



"Ha ha, alright! Let's go get paid!"



"Alright, just one second"

Derick made some finishing motions on the Jacket and handed it to Valor.



"All done, here you go."

**Derick then followed the soldiers**



"In person? Sure, let go."

The duo, with Valor in tow, were brought before Prixima. A soldier stood beside her, with a metal tray, with ten small bags on it.



"As you two are the remainder of the Sarius' group, I am thereby fulfilling my part of the contract. These ten bags have exactly five hundred coins in each of them. In total, five thousand gold. Take it, and what you do with it, is not my concern. Also, leave my castle at once."



"Well I guess this is it. It's been nice working with everyone."

Derick took his money and paused.



"Money is money."

**Ami takes the gold and leave with Tenebra.**



"How literally do you mean- actually nevermind."



"Hey Ami wait up!"

**Derick ran after her.**



"Huh? Sure."

Ami stops for Derick to catch up.



"So what now? I mean, like Prixima said, we're the only ones of the Young

Wolves left."



"That right, I guess I'll do what I did before I joined the wolfs and wander till I hit something interesting. I don't like hanging around the same place for too long. Maybe Deynastia or Ys duchy? How about you, Derick, what are your plans for now."



"I'm going to find out who killed Sarius. I'm not quite sure where to start though..."



"Maybe, the inn where he died? It seem unlikely to find any clues anywhere else."

---

Olison looked over to Alex and nodded as he walked off to find Aaron. He also began to move looking for his commander albeit at a slower pace. One part to let Alex gather his thoughts, the other part keeping a lookout for Chris anywhere nearby.

Chris, still holding a bottle of wine, almost ran into someone while coming around a corner for the second time that day.



"Olison."

He nodded to the older man and made as if to continue on. If Olison wanted to talk to him about something, now was the time to get his attention...



"Chris." Olison nodded in return, taking brief notice of the wine. "Do you have a moment?"



"I have some time, sure. What do you need?"



"I've thought over your suggestion earlier, as we were breaking into the castle." Olison peered over his shoulder for a moment before turning back. "I think I'm

done serving crown and bloodline."

Chris nodded.



"I see. I can't say I'm displeased. So... what are you thinking about doing now?"

Olison sharply exhaled.



"Therein lies the problem. I would strongly consider joining your group-"  
Olison looked to the side, scanning the area. "- but I refuse to work with others under equal conditions unless there is complete trust. So I must ask for your thoughts."

Chris thought about it for a moment.



"What would you define as complete trust? If you're merely asking for my opinion, I've already given the Lady my resignation notice and I'm moving on with the group. And you know that, if no one else, you can trust me at least. I've never lied to you. As for the remaining members of Sarius's Wolves, Charlotte seems like a decent if emotional girl, you already know what I think about Ami, and Derick is an all right guy from what I've seen. The only one slightly 'untrustworthy' of those three is Charlotte, and only because I think that she would do what she thinks is 'right' instead of being loyal to whatever mission she's been given."

Olison sharply exhaled with a slight smirk.



"Just about sums up my assessment."



"But my point lies morein what they will think of me, rather." Olison's face contorted a bit, but he raised his right hand and pulled off the large rider's glove on it. Drawing back the leather of the bracer's straps, on the pale skin underneath it was a faded and cracked tattoo of oak leaves encircling around his wrist. "Do you recognize this?"

Chris tilted his head.



"I don't believe it's a Menalean marking... So you must be a foreigner as well. You have an excellent Menalean accent in that case. And judging from your worries over what they would think of you combined with the siege we just fought through, I would further assume you are a Berebian in origin and that tattoo means some sort of special division or group that you think the other would have cause to hate."

Olison chuckled as he pulled the glove back on his hand as best he could.



"Ha, good then. It took a lot of work to get rid of the accent."



"Yes. It marks me as a servitor of the Ferwelk family, a noble house of Berebia." Olison gruffly stated as he tightened the bracer's straps again. "Former militia, soldier, squire and subject as it stands. And I have every intention to keep it that way. But the past has a way of dredging up again, and I refuse to have any misunderstandings if I were to work with you and the others."



"Ah. Well, you're in luck then. The information is interesting and does clear up certain points about you I was unable to piece together, but frankly I don't really care that you're a Berebian. You're still my old partner Olison."



"If you're worried about it, though, it would be best to tell the other straight off. Better they hear your origins and your reasons for leaving from you than from, say, a former commander we might run into someday."

Olison nodded.



"Always counted on your instincts, Chris. Thanks. I won't take any more time from-" Olison gestured to the wine bottle Chris was holding, "-well, whatever you were doing."

Chris laughed.





"It's not completely for me... but now that you mention it, I'm going to be busy until tomorrow morning. Could you ask everyone to meet up at the inn nearby so we can take a day to discuss our future plans? I would do it myself, but..."

He shook the wine bottle a little to indicate he had plans.

Olison's mouth slanted downwards a little in a slight gesture of disapproval, but his tone remained light.



"Certainly."



"Until tomorrow, Olison!"

Chris wandered off to Ernest's quarters and settled in to wait for the spymaster's return.

Olison waved as he turned to find his squad leader first, passing through the courtyard on his way.

---

Alexander found Aaron with group of soldiers, inspecting some burnt room.



"Alexander. You need something of me?"

Alexander was notably downcast, a thing quite odd for him. Nevertheless, he responded to Aaron.



"Sir. I was told to report in."



"Ah, yes. You're ready to return to your duties, it must seem. I need you to help me check the inventory at the armories, can you handle that? I don't really have anything else for you to do... unless you want to help count the bodies."

Alexander winced and went rigid at the mention of counting bodies.





"Well- Ergh- I would rather n... I... already somewhat have."



"Alexander, I know it's hard for you to get back to work with all that happened, but trust me, you will be seeing that kind of carnage maybe few times more in your life. And whilst I would gladly help, I'm not going to pamper you."

Alexander sighed miserably.



"Yes, sir. ...I've already seen the bodies of the dead in my unit. ...I can count those off to you, if you wish."



"You don't sound like you're interested in helping me, Alexander. If you can't stand some blood and dead friends in front of you nose, maybe you should take that armor off. Or find a post somewhere else."

Alexander had had enough that day. The horrible fight through his castle. The death of almost all of his unit. The discovery that Prixima's motives were not so pure. And now, Aaron's implication that he was weak in his duty, the final insult. He would take Aaron's suggestion. But not before a few words.



"You know what? *You know what?! I will find another post. A post where some remorse is allowed when counting the bodies of one's dead friends.*"

Alexander wasn't even yelling, mostly. He was just talking coldly, and angrily, though a yell was in the occasional area.



"And a post that serves Menelea better than Kesselring. A post that serves Menelea better than killing its nobles, poisoning them, having them murdered. A post that serves Menelea better than *invoking a siege upon its city!* A post that serves Menelea better than doing all of this for a *trinket*. I will find a better post than this! For my loyalties lay in two places main: The knight that squired me, and Menelea! The knight is long dead. And I now question whether I can serve Menelea as well if I stay here. My third loyalty had been to you. But you made it plenty obvious that wasn't needed. Menelea. That is my only loyalty now. Not to Kesselring, not to Prixima, and not

to you. I will take your suggestion. I will leave for somewhere better suited for that loyalty."

Aaron's face shown anger but he remained calm.



"Take care of yourself." He spoke with cold, emotionless tone.

And with this, Alexander turned on his heel, and stormed out.

Alexander kept walking. Through the inner castle. Through and past the courtyard. And out of the castle. The Menelean Royal Guard, Alexander thought, "That's where I will go."

---

After resuming his initial goal, Olson did find his squad leader in one of the infirmaries, he was in the process of being bandaged around head and left arm.

"What is it, Olson?"

Olson stood at attention for a moment.



"Good to see you're still in shape."

Olson loosened and looked directly at his commander.



"It has been an honor working under you, sir, but my term is now over."

"Leaving us? Right now? Go then, I don't need those who turn on me when I need them most." He got a coughing fit, and one of the healers quickly administered some herbs to him.

He would have responded in kind, but Olson stood and bowed curtly before making his way outside again. Looking around, he searched for anyone from the group he could, starting at the courtyard.

---

Tantallos ran to try and meet up with a group, but there was none, and he gave a quiet laugh.



"Late as always. I hope I did not miss anything too important."



"Looks like it will not be easy to get them together again."

Tantallos shrugged to himself and walked around to look for people to talk with.

Riven was currently sitting on a low wall in the courtyard, humming to herself and kicking her feet rhythmically. She seemed fairly happy about something.

Tantallos raised an eyebrow when he saw the other shaman and moved closer, giving a nod as a greet.



"Hello, hello witch lady. May I know what are you doing here by yourself?"



"Mm? Oh nothing, just sitting around. I was following Chris but he left, so I decided to just take a break."



"Oh, the spy person? He told me he would be going on a date, so I do not think we will be seeing him so soon heh..heh. I am plenty sure he will have a good night."

Riven had a brief giggling fit.



"Really? Well, I hope that works out for him."

She giggled a bit more.

Tantallos raised an eyebrow at the other shaman and crossed his arms.



"May I know what is so funny?"



"Oh, nothing, nothing. I don't think you'd get it anyway."



"Do not make mystery about it... just tell me already. I am quite curious."



"Hehe, it's really nothing... I just saw Chris hanging out with someone else in a cowl, and they seemed, ah... well, you know. Very cuddly? That's why hearing he had a date tickled me so, I was thinking of that."



"Heheh.. now I see why you were laughing..and that is exactly why I told you I was "plenty sure he would have a good night".

The shaman gave a laugh and began to rub his gloved hands together.



"Well, I do believe I told you something about a date on a graveyard.. but I doubt we will find any close around here. But I think we can still talk on this place, not many would really be willing to bother shamans, right?"

He joked before sitting by her side.



"Yes, I suppose we could chat. Did you want to tell me more about your family?"



"Well, I do not want to make you bored. So ask something about it that is of your interest as you already know the basics right now, we are a large group of ancient magic users, we follow the Plague Dragon and I am going to be the next King to lead them against a new attack of undeads. Those are the basics..if you want to know about something specific, just go ahead and ask."



"Hm... are the undead mindless? Have you tried communicating with them?"



"Yes, they are mindless. Some of us prefer to say that they are just poor souls locked on a insane body as they cannot think anymore. So by "killing" them we would be finally letting their souls rest. The only communicating undead we heard about was Nerthal, one of the Plague Dragon's messengers. It is said he warned our family about the "final attack", and this is exactly why I will have to return as a Dark Druid. We will need to face a large scale attack of undeads, just think about it... many and many corpses from the war we had, it is like facing the army that attacked us years ago again, and now with more power."



"More power? Are they... recruiting? And if they're mindless, how can they coordinate a new attack?"



"Yes, MORE power, Riven. As they are not living creatures anymore, they do not need to eat, and they will not get tired during the fight, that makes them stronger than the average soldier. They are not "recruiting", but more corpses are raising, and in a fast pace, if we do not stop this quickly it will be the end of the Forsakens and the other lands close to that area. And they are not coordinating, they will just kill everything on sight, and like I told you, the war was close to the castle as we were trying to protect it, consequently.. that will be their main target."



"Hm... where are they getting more bodies from, though? Just everywhere?"



"Also, perhaps I'm not taking this seriously enough, but it sounds like it'd be fascinating to fight against them. They're just sort of wandering around whatever fields or forests they fell in, right? So, assuming you can take them, it'd be 'safe' to go hunting for them?"



"It is like I told you oh-witch lady that I probably had been staring at in a really awkward way while you were not noticing, we had a war, the enemy army wounded the Plague Dragon, making him bleed and the dark blood fell on the battlefield, and there were countless corpses on the area, so they are just coming from there and wandering on the lands looking for people to kill."



"You actually just made this easy to me, I do not intend to keep on this place with miss crazy dragonstone. I will help my family to clear some of the most important roads, but I will need help for that. And it does mean you are invited to kill as many as you can. It would be a good way to know more about each other you know. Sharing ideas and killing revenants....skeletons.. "

The shaman laughed a bit before getting a bit serious.



"And this may help some of those who received bad news to calm down, they will be killing monsters, not people.. and they will be making them a favor as they will be releasing the souls stuck on those bodies."



"Hm, that does sound interesting... have you talked to Chris about it? I'm not sure what he was planning, but I know he's mentioned you before."



"Yes I did, he was the first person to hear about it, we just need to make sure the group will join us too. And I believe the spy guy may be willing to join the Forsakens too."



"Oh, did he? That is nice, I think?"

---

Chris found Ernest in his bedroom, finding the other spy with back facing the door, but instead of un-dressing, he was putting on his travelling robe.



"Hello Chris, please do not sneak on me. You know you can't do that." He spoke quietly, reaching for a set of tools and knives he had put on a table.



"I wasn't trying to. I can see you're preparing to leave already, but... there's probably still time to split this bottle with me, wouldn't you say?"

He held up the wine invitingly.



'I don't have time for neither wine or even one of your quick tricks. Goodbye, Christopher.' With that, he moved past Chris, without any gesture or word of feelings toward him.



"Ah, oh well. I'll hold on to it for next time we meet up. See you later, Ernest."

The other spy left, so Chris politely left the room as well and closed the door behind him. There went his plans for the night, but there was still something he could do. Instead he went back to his room - well, until tomorrow it was still his room anyway - and opened the scroll. He would spend the rest of the day studying this 'Fell Contract' intently until he thoroughly understood what it meant to be an assassin.

### **Chris classes up into Assassin.**

Chris finished with the contract way sooner than he thought he would and finished packing his meager belongings. He left the contract on the table in case Ernest wanted it back, along with a thank-you note, and headed outside. It looked like many of the others had grouped up, but who did he want to talk to was the question... Well, maybe someone would hail him first.

---

Olison scanned the courtyard, he elected to talk to the two remaining mercenaries first, making his way over.



"Hello Derick, Ami. I trust you've received your pay with no trouble?"

Ami shakes her coin bag.



"Of course. Anyway, what you going to do now?"



"Glad to see it, you've done your work ten times over by now I wager."

Olison straightened up.



"Now? Well, I spoke with Chris, he wants to meet you, Derick, and everyone else at the nearby inn tomorrow morning. I intend to come along, now that I'm back on the streets again."



"The inn, huh? I guess I can make it."



"Sure I guess."

Alexander bumped onto Olison, Derick, Ami and Anja who were gathered in front of the main gate.

Olison's ears perked as he heard the crashing of Alex's armor as he stormed through the courtyard.



"...Oh dear."

Gregor left to find some of the others to see if they wanted to come along. Who will he run into first?



"Hullo! Sir Knighty! Where are you stomping off too? Why so grumpy? It's dangerous to go alone. Here, take this!" Anja leaned toward Alexander and planted a smooch on his forehead.

Alexander briefly froze in utter bewilderment at Anja's act.





"Uh..."

Alexander got a hold of himself pretty quickly though, considering he was leaving the castle he'd been in for his entire life.



"I have decided to leave Kesselring and join the Menelean Royal Guard."



"...Sir Jorinn, have you been speaking to Charlotte? She's had the exact same idea."

This was news to Alexander.



"...No, actually, I haven't. But Aaron's lack of regard towards me combined with PRIXIMA's not entirely pro-Menelea intentions have pushed me into the decision."



"I'm sure Aaron is just under a great deal of stress at the moment. We all are. But if you would like to come with us all the same, I personally have no objections."

Alexander was angered by Gregor's thinking that Aaron was just under stress, but he did not fault him for it- he would just inform him what Aaron had said.



"He all but told me to leave or quit when I was hesitant when speaking upon being ordered to count the bodies of my dead unit."

That shocked Gregor. It didn't sound like Aaron at all. Then again, he and Gregor's father had been friends; perhaps the man had treated Gregor differently than he did the other soldiers.



"Okay, I agree. That's hardly the way to speak to your subordinates. You have to realize though, that the Royal Guard might act the same way."



"I'm aware. But at least the Royal Guard doesn't get Menelean cities sieged for a *bauble*."

Gregor nodded, slowly.



"A fair point."

Olson tried waving to get the attention of Gregor.



"Gregor, are you alright?"

Gregor walked over to Olson.



"I'll be alright. Listen, I don't suppose you'd be wanting to leave Prixima's service, right?"

Olson raised an eyebrow, then laughed.



"Ha! Ha... Leagues ahead of you, Gregor. I've resigned already."

Gregor was momentarily dumbfounded (was he the only one who hadn't officially quit yet?), but pressed onwards.



"Great! Charlotte was thinking, since wandering hero types tend to starve, why not travel to the Menelean capital and join the Royal Guard? I'm sure they could use a group like ours, and well, I wanted to see if you would like to join us."

Olson cocked his head to the side.



"The Royal Guard? That sounds like a difficult position to obtain. I would, but the life of the castle soldier has... dulled on me. I had actually received word from Chris that he wants to speak with you and everyone else tomorrow at the inn, to talk of

the future, I plan to go."

Gregor tried his best to hide his disappointment.



"Well, I wish you the best of luck, whatever you do. You say Chris wants us to meet at the inn tomorrow? I'll try to get Charlotte and Sir Jorinn - he might be coming with us - to be there as well."

Olison nodded respectfully.



"To you as well, Gregor. Make the best of it."

He looked over to the shamans, Tantallos still engrossed in conversation. He opted to leave them be for the time being, wondering where Seyena and the Wyvern Rider were.

Gregor decided to try and find Valor or Derick instead.



"Oh hey Gregor."



"Ah, there you are, Derick! Did Prixima pay you and Ami yet? Does she have anything else for you to do?"



"Yep, gave us 5000 gold to split between us!"



"And uh... she also kinda told us to leave the castle immediately... We probably shouldn't hang around for so long."



"Must be nice to have that much gold in your pocket, eh? So, you got any other jobs lined up yet? I've got something that might interest you, and Chris wants to see everyone at the inn tomorrow."



"We've heard about the Inn at least. Olson told us."



"Oh. Good."

He paused.



"We don't talk much, do we? I wonder why?"



"That is a very good question. To be honest I have absolutely no idea... So, what was that job you had in mind?"



"Well, there's still some details to work out. But the short version is that some of us are thinking of going to the Menelean capital and trying to become Royal Guards. They're often in need of skilled fighters."



"Oh... I can't speak for Ami, but I'll need to think about it. I have some plans that it would not be beneficial to be tied down for..."



"That's pretty much what I expected. I was just letting you know of our plans, and of course you're welcome to join us if you wish. See you at the inn tomorrow?"



"I'm not interested in a position with the royal guard, but I'm certainly going to stay at the inn, and see what Chris has to say. I'll figure out what I'm doing from there, I guess." Valor looked back over at Derick, frowning a bit.



"By the way, how is the money getting split up? I know I was promised an equal share when I was hired, but I don't know how many of us were under contract..."



"I have no idea, I had assumed that Lady PRIXIMA had a separate payment for you."



"...Dammit."



"You're right Valor, we should hear what Chris has to say. Though I am sorry that neither of you are interested; I think we made a pretty good team when our backs were against the wall."

---



"It doesn't seem like anyone's here... want to check the courtyard?" Seyena asked, starting to go back the way they came, towards the courtyard.



"Yah're roight, ain' ah soul 'ere. If'in they're anyplace, they gotta cross the courtyard eventually, yeah? 'Er we can foind least one o' 'em there though." Salvatore agreed, following Seyena with Ormm trailing behind them.



"Let's check if anyone's out here, then?" Seyena said, walking back out to the courtyard with Salvatore hopefully following her. After making sure Ilya was alright, she grasped her pegasus' reins and **looked around for familiar faces**.



"Hey, don't get me wrong, all of you are some of the most talented and pleasant people I've had the good fortune to work with. But I've tried working long contracts before, and I don't think I could stand pledging months or years of my time to the royal guard. I like to wander, meet new people, pick and choose what jobs I take. You understand, right?" Valor spotted Seyena, and waved her over.



"Yes, of course! Dragon knows I'd like to wander a bit myself. But I don't think I could do the lone mercenary thing."

He waved to Seyena as well.



"No reason to go it alone, if that's not your thing. There are plenty of famous stories about mercenary companies that numbered in the dozens. Besides, most lone mercenaries tend to end up working with other lone mercenaries. Seems to me it'd be easier to work with someone you know and trust."



"I guess that's true. But right now, the person I trust the most is heading towards the capital and I intend to follow."



"Oh- there they are... most of them, I think. Come on!" Seyena said, seeing Valor and Gregor wave. She quickly hurried over with her pegasus in tow, wondering if Salvatore would follow. Once she got over to the group, she remained mostly quiet, not wanting to jump in on a conversation uninvited.

Salvatore followed Seyena into the courtyard, looking around to see most of the group congregated there. Well, most he thinks, he's not entirely sure on the size of the group.



"Well, this all o' the faces yah were lookin' fer?" Sal queried Seyena. Seeing Seyena hurry to them, and his question answered, he followed her to the rest of the group.



"'Ello, noice ta see some familiar faces again." Sal isn't nearly as considerate as Seyena, greeting the group as he got there.

Ormm stretched his wings, not being in cramped hallways or stables and having room to finally fully unfurl them. The wyvern shook and stretched for a minute before moving to catch up to the two riders.

Chris decided to take a seat on a nearby bench and started eating from his supply of marshmallows. He'd just watch and wait for now.

Valor cast a cautious eye on the wyvern for a moment before turning his attention to Salvatore.



"You're that rider from before. I don't think we got a chance at proper introductions?" Valor thrust out a gloved hand, offering it for a shake. "Valor Inara. Wandering Mercenary."



"Indeed Oi'd be, Salvatore Vaughan, Sal fer short. Merc mahself as well." The wyvern rider met Valor's gloved hand, shaking it. "Wyvern's name's Ormm, if'in yah care ta know." He continued, pitching a thumb towards the golden wyrm. It perked up at hearing its name, looking(staring) at the others and sniffing(snake tongue thing) their direction occasionally.

Gregor nodded at the new wyvern rider.



"Hello again."



"I'm Derick!"

Salvatore turned to the myrmidon.



"Sal, noice ta meet'cha."



"Nice to meet ya Sal. I must say, I don't think I've ever met a wyvern riding mercenary before. Takes all types, I suppose." Valor glanced distractedly at Orm's tongue. "Uh... Is he friendly?"



"Don' suppose yah do, though Oi figure they're probably more than me. Wasn' always ah merc though, but tha's far behind me." Sal mentioned dismissively, before looking at Ormm, still looking at the rest of the group. "Yeah, friendly, he's only nasty if'in Oi tell him ta be, other wise he's as friendly as ah kitten." The rider mentioned with a grin, happy to be on this topic.



**"Come'ere Ormm, meet the fella!"** At the request, the wyvern looked at its rider and moved over towards him, looking curiously at the man before him. Salvatore gave his head a friendly rub. **"Trained him roight from birth Oi did."** He continued, obvious pride in his voice.

Valor examined Ormm with a not insignificant bit of trepidation, before gingerly extending his reach to stroke the wyvern's head.



**"Er... Hello there."**

The gold wyvern watched the man carefully with its slitted green eyes, unblinking, although that isn't too out of the norm since it doesn't seem he blinked much before hand. The wyvern almost seemed unsure of what the man was attempting with his hand, watching it until it touched his head. Then Ormm was more at ease, no longer watching the man carefully but rather curiously again, giving almost a happy look from the attention. The wyvern's tongue stuck out, sniffing at the man's arm, then Ormm cocked his head curiously at the man.

---

Alexander, on the other hand, was significantly less friendly to Salvatore, still glaring at him with barely-restrained hostility.

Seeing the man with the huge armor staring at him, he tried to recall who he was. Sal thinks he remembers seeing him with the group, though he was in the back. Either way he left Ormm to be with Valor as he walked up to the man, not noticing the hostility.



**"Heya, name's Sal, think Oi saw yah wit' the others, yeah? Noice ta meet yah."** He gave a friendly smile and held out his hand to shake.

Images flashed through Alexander's mind. The knight who had squired him, dying from an axe piercing through his soldier and into his chest on an excursion into Berebia, his killer going straight past Alex, who was unable to protect him. The bodies of his dead unit, bodies broken and emptied of blood, killed by the Berebians.

And here was a Berebian, talking to him.

Alexander raised his fist, teeth clenched, about to slug Salvatore in the helmet. But he put some thought in. This man may be a Berebian... but he was his ally, for now. Alexander couldn't harm him, as the man was on his side. And though he was still loyal to Menelea, he'd just left Kesseling. It's not like he had anyone who would be on his side about this.



And so with a sigh, Alexander lowered his fist, although he couldn't quite bring himself to shake Salvatore's hand. Through gritted teeth, Alexander spoke.



"Sir Alexander Jorinn. Menelean knight. Formerly of Kesselring."

Salvatore retracted his hand after a moment, watching the man and nodding.



"Salvatore Vaughan, mercenary, if'in we're bein' formal an all. Formerly, eh? Can say Oi've been there, though Oi imagine yah probably left on better terms than Oi." Sal attempted small talk with the man, either not noticing the momentarily raised fist, or didn't pay it any mind.

Alexander did not particularly feel like discussing his new leaving of Kesselring with the Berebian man- and so he settled for an incomprehensible muttering.

Sal on the other hand, smiled at the heavily armored man.



"Take it yer wit' the group then, remember seein' yah Oi think when Oi was there fer the bit o' foighting Oi was in, noice ta meet yah, we may be seein' each other more in the future then." Sal said, echoing his previous sentiment, then continued to speak. "Well, can' say Oi'm familiar wit' leavin' the duchies, nobles, 'er barons, 'er whatever they call 'em 'ere in Menelea, but Oi got experience there."

The strange wyvern rider took a step back, looking at what Ormm was doing. After a bit, he looked back at the man and turned around to walk back to the group. However, two steps out, he turned back to Alex, same smile on his face, only speaking loud enough for Alex and those close to him could hear.



"Shame yah didn't slug me when yah wanted ta. Moight ah made yah feel better about it. Don' keep tha stuff bottled in yah, ain' good fer yah Oi can say." After the comment, he turned back around and stalked back to the group with a wider smile than he had before.

---

Gregor turned to the pegasus rider.



"How are you holding up, Seyena?"

Seyena heard Gregor's question, and she looked somewhat solemn when she replied.



"I'm holding up well, better than most, at least."

Gregor nodded sympathetically. He knew at least some of what she was going through via rumors around the fortress; perhaps this wouldn't be the best time to bring up leaving.



"Did you run into Chris by any chance? He wants to meet us all at the local inn tomorrow. Think you can make it?"

Chris, overhearing that question, smiled to himself.



*I wonder if the reason they don't recognize me sitting here is because I'm not wearing my robes.*



"Uh, no, I didn't see Chris, but I can make it to the inn easy enough." She nodded, falling onto her habit of leaning on her lance. "Yeah, I'll be there."

Gregor nodded again.



"Sounds good. Try to get some rest, okay?"

Seyena watched the hostility Alexander displayed with nothing short of worry. After seeing there wasn't going to be a fight, she turned to Gregor.



"Hey, Gregor, do you know where Charlotte is? I have been meaning to ask her something for the longest time..."

Gregor scratched his head. He could sense the hostility between Sir Jorinn and Salvatore, but didn't know the reason. Instead he answered Seyena.



"Last I saw, she went looking for Anja. Try near the main entrance?"



"Alright... I'll check." Seyena said, starting to walk towards Anja's wagon to search for Charlotte. The longer she waited to ask, the more likely she was sure she was going to forget it. *And it's so petty, too, it probably just has to do with mere coincidence...*

---

Meanwhile, Charlotte tried to find Anja to inform her about their next destination.

Anja was sitting on top of her wagon, checking something under a pile of blankets. When she noticed Charlotte approaching, she pulled the blankets on their place and smiled.



"Hello again. How can I help you?" Seyena got there a second later.

---

Gregor dreaded what was to come next, but there was no sense in putting it off any longer. **He looked for Captain Aaron so he could inform the captain about his decision.**

Gregor, after long time, found Aaron in one of the hallways.



"What is it, Gregor? You're leaving as well?"



"How did you--yes, sir. I wish to travel to the capital and join the Royal Guard. Start over with some new friends, faces, and places...all I can think of here, sir, is all the people I will never see again."



"If that's what you want. Go then." Aaron spoke with a slight frown on his face.



"Thank you, sir. It has been an honor serving under you."

Gregor saluted Aaron one last time before turning to leave.

---

Valor shrugged, continuing to pet the wyvern.



"Huh. This is the first time I've been so close to a wyvern without it trying to shorten my arm. Or leg. Or neck. Basically anywhere they could reach."

Ormm looked more obviously happy at the attention he was getting, his eyes now closed, not understanding the words the man was saying.



"He's kind of like a really big dog. With scales." Valor said as he continued, more to himself than to anyone else.

Chris came over to join Valor in petting Ormm.



"He is, isn't he? I met him earlier. He seemed pretty interested in me for some reason."



"Maybe he thought you smelled interesting. I hear you've scheduled a meeting at the local inn?"

Chris nodded.



"I wanted to talk to everyone about their future plans. Have a round-table discussion, as it were. Speaking of... are you for hire?"



"Well, I'm not under contract at the moment. Why, do you have a job?" One of Valor's eyebrows rose. That certainly hadn't taken long.



"Tantallos is planning an undead extermination mission. I'm hoping that most of our group comes along. You'll have to talk to him about the details for getting

paid after it, but I can give you a sign-on bonus."

Chris grinned and pulled the Blade Ring out of a pocket.



"I believe a magic ring that increases one's strength would do nicely. It should be worth a bit. From what I hear, you wear it for a few days and then the magic permanently becomes part of the wearer; no need to keep the ring on if you didn't want to after that."



"That's... certainly interesting..." Valor said, eyes locked on the ring. He tore his gaze away and shook his head shortly, trying to think about something other than sweet magic loot. "Uh, did you say undead? Listen, I've never seen undead before, heard stories and all, but that's it. Stories. Do you really think they exist? Because I'm not certain. Magic ring or no, I don't savor the idea of trekking across the continent to stand in a field and pantomime fighting a revenant for funny munny."

Chris shrugged.



"That's part of why I'm going. I have no reason to disbelieve Tantallos, but I want to know and experience fighting the undead for myself. It'll be an adventure! And best of all, there's no 'moral quandaries' when it comes to the undead. It's an absolute truth that killing them is doing them a favor."

He rolled the ring along the backs of his fingers, then flicked into the air, caught it, and pocketed it.



"Anyway, you still have some time to think about it, maybe talk to Tantallos yourself. We have that discussion about what paths we're going to take tomorrow ahead of us, and then we'll go from there."



"Hmm. Alright, I'll give it some thought. In the meantime, I'm going to head for the inn." Valor patted Ormm one last time, and turned toward the castle exit. "I'll see you all there." And with that, Valor left for the inn.



"Until then, Valor."

**It is now next day, shortly before sunrise, an inn at Vilino, 'The Roaring Rooster'.**

**It is one of currently open and plague-free inns in the town.**

Twelve mercenaries are sitting at the tables, given bread and meat and water for breakfast.

It is time of farewells and splits and preparations for the journey into the sunrise.

For adventures~!



"Zzzzzz..."

Valor nursed his water slowly, occasionally taking bites of meat and bread with tectonic slowness.



"I should have just slept in..."

Gregor ate silently. He didn't know what Chris had in mind, but something told him that this group he had come to admire so much was about to split. Temporarily or permanently, only the Divine Dragon knew.

Salvatore walked into the inn, sitting at the table with the others and tucking into his own meal with his usual friendly attitude today. He was wearing his helmet at the table, the others so far haven't seen him without it, him having entered his room and exited his room with it on.

Ormm was on top of the roof of said inn, enjoying a chunk of meat that was tossed to him from his rider just moments ago, basking in the morning sun happily.

Ami merely sat at the table in the main area. She rarely thought about what to come and she wasn't about to change that.

Chris came in a bit late and sat down.



"Right. As you all may have guessed, I've asked for this meeting so we can discuss where we go from here. I've heard some of us are going to be heading off to join

the Menalean Royal Guard. I have another option for those that wish to consider it: come with me and Tantallos. We are planning an assault on a group of undead currently occupying a major trade route in Forsaken lands."

He looked to Tantallos, to see if the shaman wanted to present any more details.

Olison, who was near the edge of the inn performing push-ups, stopped and looked towards Chris.



"Undead?"

Chris nodded.



"Indeed. From what I've gathered, the undead plague Forsaken lands. I believe it would be a good idea to help them now, before the amount of undead increases enough to be a problem elsewhere as well. Cut it off at the root before it flowers, as it were."

Tantallos moved in to meet with part of the group, this time not even caring about using the mantle anymore, showing the armor he had under it with the symbols of the Plague Dragon.



"You heard the spy guy. We had been dealing with a undead plague for years after a large scale war. And this is the year every single soldier who died on the battlefield will return, so I need to stop them from reaching the castle or attacking other places, too many innocents already suffered with the mistake of those who attacked us."

The shaman crossed his arms and began to walk around the room.



"I will not have time to reach the other castles to warn them about any possible attacks, so we will clear it. And differently of "Prixima", I will giving you a simple task, you will not need to hurt people or be worried about doing something bad, you will indirectly be saving many people, many adventurers, maybe even small villages."





"And I know gold is important, so I will be paying anyone willing to take part on it. My offer will be 8000 gold for now. If we face a large scale attack, be sure this will increase. And for those who are willing to join the Forsakens, this is your chance. We may not be respected by many, but we do have good intentions, and we need loyal soldiers to assist us to recover ourselves and those who suffered with the war."



"...Alright. Some questions: What are these undead like? What are their capabilities? How strong are they, on average, and how many can we expect to face?"

The shaman looked to Valor and shrugged.



"They are undead, swordman guy. Just think about a dead person, decaying... rotten flesh, skeletons.. this will be like visiting a graveyard, but the corpses will be trying to kill you."

Olison peered at Tantallos intently.



"Sounds like a fair deal, but I still don't follow- 'Un'-dead? As in, something that is the reverse of dead?"



"What, you never heard bedtime stories about walking corpses and skeletons?"



"Not where I've come from. Our stories were more... Relevant to our times. But if the nature of these creatures are as Tantallos says, then I will have no issue dealing with them."



"As Valor said, in its simplest form, undead are corpses that are walking around on their own and eating the living. There are variants, like ghosts, which are souls that are for one reason or another still confined to this realm of existence instead



of moving on. I'm sure Tantallos knows more than I do; I've just picked up a little knowledge from my own studies of the mysterious and unusual."



"Uh... Revenants, I think, like the things in the stories my father told us before bed, when I was a child."



"But they are... just stories, right?"



"Make no mistake, Seyena; things such as souls are real. Therefore ghosts have to be real as well, and so by extension other forms of undead most likely exist. Also, this is an easily verifiable thing. All we have to do is go to the Forsaken lands and we can easily see the undead for ourselves."

Tantallos laughed to the pegasus rider and shook his head.



"They are not stories, my friend. They already made many victims, mostly messengers and adventures, so we need to stop them this year or this is over. Not only the Forsakens may disappear but many close villages, we cannot waste time."

Gregor looked skeptical.



"Undead? You mean things like walking corpses and animated skeletons? I thought those were just a legend. Something to scare disobedient children with."



"Yes, undead. On other words, the person WAS supposed to be dead, but it is not. You could say it is just a wandering corpse with only one function: Kill. And we will stop them and release the souls stuck on those bodies. If this is your first time dealing with monsters and undeads, you better start reading some books. We will be facing revenants and skeletons, and they will not have any mercy."

Valor's voice tinged with annoyance.



"Listen, I intend to do this whole mercenary thing for a long time, and that means I ask questions before I take a job. I would like real answers. Have you fought these things before? Where would you gauge their strength and skill? Like the Berebian forces we just faced, or more akin to the militia that served beneath Eor? Stronger maybe? And again, what sort of numbers will we be facing? I will not march to my death Tantallos."



"I understand why you are worried, swordsman guy. You will have your answers, I am paying high and offering positions on the castle because it will NOT be an easy task. Yes, I did fight some before, we are always forced to fight them to guard the castle or to clear some roads."



"Do you really want to know how strong they are? They might be as strong as the Berebian forces, but most of them lack magic resistance as they are not living things anymore, and they are slow. If I am calling you for this it is because I know you will not die. But it will not be easy.. they will not get tired during the fight, they do not need to eat, you will be fighting some kind of super soldier, except by the part they are slow and have terrible reflexes."

Sal listened in as he ate.



"Never saw ah undead in mah travels, though never been ta these Forsaken Lands either. Always up fer ah bit o' adventure though, new sights an' scenes, do some good, an' some money on top o' tha. If'in yah don' moind me comin' along, count me in." Well, he was easy to convince.



"We would be glad to have you. In fact I would like it if all of you came with us, but I understand that some of you will have things of your own you wish to accomplish."

Chris glanced at Ami, wondering what she would do, before looking around the rest of the group.

Gregor decided to seize this chance.



"If anyone is unsure about fighting undead, the offer to come along with Sir Jorinn, Charlotte, and I to join the Royal Guard still stands. It won't be easy, I grant you, but it pays well and you won't have to fight things out of a nightmare. Think about it."



"Uh-huh. I see."



**"Very well, Tantallos Forsaken. I'm willing to do this job for you. You have my sword."**



"I suppose we should lay our cards on the table. I'm going with Tantallos, as are Valor and Salvatore. Charlotte, Gregor, and Alex are joining the Royal Guard. Now's the time to either say who you're coming with, or if you're going alone, or ask any further questions of either Gregor or Tantallos."



"The way it seems, is I either work for a noble and kill people, or I work for a different noble and re-kill monsters." Seyena said, leaning back in her chair. **"I'll go with Tantallos, and fight the revenants."**

Tantallos gave a brief bow to both the mercenary and the pegasus rider.



"Thank you."

Alexander gazed steadily at Tantallos as he spoke.



"I'm afraid I shall continue with my voyage to the **Menelean Royal Guard**, and will not take the job fighting magical beasts. I did vow to work a Menelean post."

Tantallos looked at Alex and crossed his arms.



"I respect that, knight guy. But if any day you feel like joining the Forsakens, the gates will be open to receive you. I may be a bit.. crazy, but we do respect every single soul that lives on that castle, we have a reason to be called a "Family", we are not just another group of arrogant nobles wanting to kill people for fancy things or take over places."



"Tantallos, why do you refer to everyone as "so-and-so guy"? Are names really so difficult to use?"



"I just chalk it up to crazy."



"They are not. That is just a way we use to express respect, we mention the person's job or function, but if you really prefer to hear the sound of your name, I can call you by Seyena. And where is Riven anyway?"

Olison sat down, pondering for a moment.



"Very well, this is an affliction that can't remain unchecked. **Steil and I are at your disposal, Forsaken.**"

Chris reached over and shook Derick to try and wake him up.



"It'll be good to have you along, Olison. Ami, what do you plan on doing?"



"..."

Ami weights the choices.



"Since I don't have anything better to do at the moment, **I'll go with Tantallos's mission.**"

Chris closed his eyes and let out a silent sigh of relief. He would've missed her - he would've understood her choice, but still missed her - if she had went with Gregor's group or Derick.



"I'm quite happy to hear that, Ami."

Not many things could make Chris legitimately happy, save certain memories from just over a decade ago and now this.

Sal simply enjoyed his meal as he continued to listen to the group talk, not much else to do or say he imagines. Already threw his chips in, may as well finish eating. Surprisingly, he has little difficulty eating through his helmet, one can only guess practice garnered that ability.

Derick's eyes snapped open.



"Guh, sorry, I was barely able to get to sleep last night."



"Right, well... what are you going to do in the future? Tantallos, Valor, Salvatore, Seyena, Olison, and myself are going to Tantallos's homelands to fight the undead. Pay is 8,000 gold to start with, may go higher based on the opposition. Gregor, Charlotte, and Alexander are joining the Royal Guard. Ami and Riven haven't said what they're doing yet. So... what about you?"



"Speaking of money, we need to divide up the cash from the Prixima job. Obviously, when we started, several of us were in Prixima's employ. But now they're not, and I bet they'll need some money. So, how are we dividing it?"

Chris shrugged.



"I don't particularly need a share, I think. I can get the basic necessities for

life through other means, not the least of which is surviving off the land."

Alexander shrugged at the mention of pay.



"I'm about to get a new job, anyway."

Olison chuckled at Valor's suggestion.



"Keep your gold. Hells, I never even took money before I was employed, only food and shelter directly. It's surprising how many innkeepers are partial to that form of payment."



"I... I have something I need to do. **I'm going to go find out who killed Sarius. I figured out my plan last night, first I'll go to the Inn where the attack occurred. Then I'll retrace our steps across Mercia and check in with any contacts Sarius had that I know of to find out who might have had reason to kill him. I'll try to send word to you guys if something comes up.**"

Chris nodded.



"All right. Stay safe, Derick. And good luck in your journey."



"Best of luck to you, Derick." Olison nodded towards him. "And don't let that fancy sword get to your head." He added with a laugh.



"Indeed. Keep your sword and wits sharp, okay?"

Tantallos nodded to Derick and gave a brief bow.



"Good luck on your mission, Derick wolfy ninja myrmidon small swordsman guy. I am sure the Plague Dragon will assist you."



"Good luck to you Derick. I hope you don't run into anyone stupid enough to challenge you."



"Th Thank you. Everyone. I'll make sure to keep safe when I can."



"Keep in mind you should also think about the present, not only the future, you may need some money for weapons too. When we hit the now named Death Throat, I will look for any of the Forsakens guards and send them a message about the area being safe again, and if everything works as planned, we will get on the castle, get your payment. As for Chris... if he is willing to join the Forsakens I will initiate the process during the time we will spend wandering around."

Chris laughed, although his expression remained serious.



"I'll join, as long as I won't be tied to the castle. It will be nice to have a home to come back to, but I still have an entire world to explore before I settle down somewhere permanently."



"And what's the point in having a home to come back to if you never leave it in the first place?"

Tantallos laughed and nodded to Chris.



"Of course you will not be tied to it. As you can I see I am not there, and I am supposed to be a king in a while. We give freedom to those who are willing to join us, as long as they are there to help them too. I am quite sure they will appreciate your spying skills."

Charlotte snapped awake and found her face covered in breakfast foods.





"Guh- why is my face covered in breadcrumbs? I must have fallen asleep..."

She looked around and noticed everyone saying goodbye.



"Is everyone leaving already? Oh. So it seems Tantallos was really serious about that thing with the undead."



"Chris... I just hope you come back in one piece. You may think nothing of it, but I'd miss your insight if I didn't see you again. Good luck."

As for her own mission...



"It doesn't look like many are interested, sadly. Did I hear Sir Jorinn will be going? Perhaps that's good. Another knight in tow to handle to royal drama high military brings. **I wish you the best, but Von Hexham, Jorinn and I are indeed going to join the Royal Guard.**"



"Er, sorry Charlotte. You looked like you really needed some sleep, so I didn't have the heart to wake you up..."



"And good luck to you too, though I don't think you'll be getting into much trouble beyond the occasional criminal in Games... and that won't be much trouble considering your skill with a bow. Anyway, perhaps we can send messages to each other once we get the roads cleared off and keep in touch that way."

He looked at Alex and Gregor.



"You two and Derick as well, of course."





"Of course. I'll want to hear all about these undead that apparently actually exist. And, of course, how everyone is doing."



"Sound's great!"

So, it was time to say farewell. Alexander turned to Olson, with a respectful expression.



"Thank you, for the times you've counseled me. Farewell, and I sincerely hope you take your own advice and take care of yourself."



"Glad to have worked with you, Jorinn. And you needn't worry about that-caution is burned into my every step."

Then to Christopher.



"And farewell to you."



"Farewell, Sir Jorinn. Good luck."

Then, Alexander turned to Salvatore... with a much less hostile expression than he had had before. Now it was more puzzled and more... open to talking than before.



"And you... well... I'll have to think about you."

Sal grinned at the comment, having finished his food a while ago.



"Hah, yeah seems we won' be seein' much o' each other as Oi thought. Got some partin' words fer yah though 'fore yah go, think it be somethin' yah should hear." The rider stood up and moved to a less crowded part of the inn, beckoning the

heavily armored man.

Alexander somewhat hesitantly followed along- but followed along.

The rider nods as Alex moved to him, speaking.



"Oi didn' plan on sayin' it if'in yah didn't need it, but no real toime it seems ta see if'in yah do turns out. It be somethin' told ta me when Oi was in a tough spot at crossroads wit' mah loife an no idea what ta do, when Oi left." The man simply left it at that, before continuing.



"It may have meanin' ta yah as it did ta me. 'Er it moight not, can' say, could be wrong. But doesn' hurt, no?"

With that, the rider grew a far off, serene look, remembering times ago, intoning words he's said many times before, oddly bereft of his accent. Others could hear it if they were listening in.



"Oh truly death, dreadful specter, can only be repaid by life, for nothing else stands as strong as that of life to the shadows of fate and the temper of time. Hold true, hold true, hold true ye of dark surroundings and cruel machinations, for all work is rewarded and all eyes watched over. Thou of dark thought and action though remorse, there is yet but hope, always hope, for all debts can be repaid, all sins atoned with work. Work of life."

And with that, the wyvern rider was back to his typical cheery attitude, smiling and enjoying the pace of life, clasping the armored man on his shoulder friendly then heading back to the group.



"Best o' luck ta yah!" He is a weird one.

Alexander mainly stood there, confused. ...Maybe he'd understand it later...?

Alexander supposed he was busy now, anyway, and the fact that he still held a small though not hostile seed of resentment towards Salvatore for being Berebian did not help his consideration of the phrase- so he just rejoined the group.



"Farewell Sir Jorinn. I didn't get to know you as well as I might have liked. Still, there'll be time for that later, when we meet again, eh?"

Valor turned to Charlotte and Gregor.



"You two take care of each other. Good luck in the Royal Guard. I'll see you around."



"Good luck for you all. And knight person, I hope you reach your objective, even if I don't know what is it."



"Yes, you're right. I'm sure there will be time. ...And well, my objective is simply to help Menelea. Any other objectives I've had are simply too specific."

Gregor nodded to Valor, Chris, Tantallos, et al.



"So, this is goodbye, right? I've never been the best at those. Stay safe, all of you. We'll meet again some day...at least, I hope we will."



"Goodbye, but probably not forever Gregor. People like us... we tend to move in the same circles, and we can keep in touch through letters. We'll meet again someday."



"Trust me."



"The spy guy is right. We will be meeting again pretty soon. And we can still communicate using letters too."



"Of course!"



"After all our bad luck recently, some good has to be coming our way. We'll see each other again for sure!"



"I will accompany Chris and Tantallos to find these undead."

Chris nodded to Riven.



"And that decides it for all of us. Gregor, Charlotte, Alexander, Daniel... best of luck to you on your travels. As for the rest of us, whenever everyone's ready, we'll move out."

He wondered which group Anja would go with...

Only after a moment Anja noticed that Chris is staring at her.



"Oh, me? Well, it was Gregor the Sweetheart who asked me for a lift back here. And Charlotte told me yesterday they want to go to Ganes, sooo, I guess I will be going with the future fancy knights!"



"All right. Take care, Anja."

Anja gave Chris a big hug.



"You too, mister Spy Fancyrobes! I will be outside, gotta prepare my horses." And with that, Anja left the inn.

Chris returned it easily. Despite what some might expect, he didn't avoid physical contact with others; he just didn't initiate it if he was uncertain whether the other party wanted him to.



"You'll be in good hands while they're with you. As for me, well..."

Chris looked around the group he was traveling with.



"I think we'll be just fine."



"...Well, there's no point in dragging things out any longer, or it will only get harder to get moving. Take care, everyone."

Gregor is **ready to go become a royal guard.**

Something else occurred to Chris.



"Actually, one last thing before we split up. Valor raised the question of splitting the gold from Prixima's contract; everyone who wants a share of it should discuss it."

~&~

*And so, the group of mercenaries, deserters, soldiers without cause and random vagabonds have left the inn. Bidding farewells, they have split, and wandered off into opposite direction, with one, lone myrmidon taking a stroll somewhere down the road.*

*One group went to the east, one to the south. Numerous perils will await them, albeit no one will chronicle their little victories and defeats.*

*But there's no time for despair!*

*Through perilous, they future shall be filled with adventure, fortune, fame and glory, not to mention untold riches. Who can complain about such life? It's mercenary life, alright, one of the better ones at least.*

*Who knows - maybe one day, they will all meet together again, to share stories and boast of their achievements, to drink wine and remind old days in atmosphere of joy...*

*Who knows... maybe it will be like that...*

Unfortunately...

## Someone else awaited the sunrise...

---

*A lady dressed in black, silken dress stood in front of the window in her study, a pile of burnt debris behind her back. She had her right hand up, her eyes admiring the beauty of a dark blue stone as she turned it around. The sun, that just peeked from behind the horizon, lighted the stone up with the sunrays.*

*The woman smiled widely, her gaze fixed into that small speck of liquid light trapped within the Lapis Lazuli.*



*"Family honour... oh please, I could've said something less idiotic... well, no need to worry myself with that..." PRIXIMA Kesselring moved away from the window and then slowly walked across the study towards a small table. On the table, there was a silvery box.*

*She opened it, and placed the dark blue Dragonstone in it...*

*...and immediately, it began pulsating with stronger light than before, just like three other Dragonstones around it began to pulsate as well, one of dark red colour, other of dark purple, and the last one was bright yellow.*

*PRIXIMA grinned.*

*And then, she chuckled.*

*And then, PRIXIMA's quiet chuckle turned into outburst of the loud laughter, one of the maniacal, insane kind, as the Dragonstones kept pulsating in her box, reacting to each other's presence.*

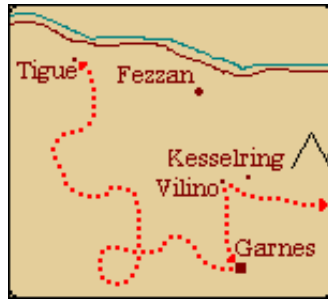
*Two burly soldiers stationed outside her study heard her laughter. They looked at each other, and then shrugged, deciding not to disturb their mistress. What could they know?*

*After all... they are merely **pawns**.*

**~~ACT I COMPLETE~~**

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## ~~Intermission: Change of Plans~~



*Gregor and his two friends moved south, to the royal city of Garnes, with intention to join the Royal Guard.*

*They weren't allowed in.*

*But, they weren't thrown out either - Luxor Caspar, the Aide of the Chief Advisor to the King, Guben Flaux, gave the trio a courier mission. Before they set out, the court allowed them to stay in the lavish quarters, filled with silks.*

*The courier mission brought them to a noble by name of Valard Skirenden. Upon arrival at his estate, Baron Valard took care of his guests and then sent them with another mission.*

*You can see how that went. Unfortunately, mission after mission, the four travelers moved away from the cozy and wealthy Garnes and the courtsmen, and in the end, their last job was this:*

*'Find an escapee wolf and bring it back to the circus owner'. They performed the job without any problems, besides the fact that the wolf took a liking to Alexander's face.*

*Now, they're in the small farming settlement of Tigue, at its local inn - The Prancing Hedgehog.*

*All in all, four months have passed since they've left Kesselring. Summer turned into autumn, and the cold winds announced that winter is just weeks away...*

---

The auburn-haired girl, daughter of the circus owner, bowed gently and left the inn. The heavy sack of coins laid lazily in front of Gregor. The few other customers, mostly drunks and farmers, gave no attention to the mercenaries.

**Gregor got 1000 gold!**

His companions were sitting at his side; Charlotte, Alexander, and Anja as well, the trader merchant gypsy girl decided to stick with the others for a while longer.



"Like I said before - I don't need my share at all. I have enough feed for my horses, and trust me, I've spend enough money on my hair already. Besides, even with those bought supplies, I'm still fine, really." Anja smiled at Gregor, and then leaned in her chair, taking a sip of the wine from the mug, just as one more customer entered the inn - with his rather elegant looks and long cape, he was probably a traveling mage, a scholarly noble or someone else of that kind.

**Gregor von Hexham, Charlotte Braxis and Alexander Jorinn are in!**

**NPC: Anja the Gypsy is in!**

Gregor took the money with a sigh and divided it out; 500 each for Charlotte and Alexander.



"The gods have a sense of humor. We left to become royal guards instead of scrounging up money like an adventuring group. Now we're scrounging up money like an adventuring group."

Charlotte sighed and drank a sip of her mead. She turned to Alexander.



"I'm surprised either you or Anja didn't split by now, Sir Jorinn. This surely can't be the kind of work you're used to. And after that fell beast tried to rearrange your face..."

She then turned back to Gregor.



"Still, though, I think we should celebrate finishing the job - **BARKEEP! ANOTHER FOUR ROUNDS!** - perhaps by getting knocked off our rockers. Gosh, I've never tried mead before. It's awful, but this feeling is great!"



"That wolf just wanted to play with Alexander. And I didn't know you're such heavy drinker, Charlotte! Enjoy your alcohol, don't get smashed with it." Anja took another sip of her wine, eyeing Charlotte from above the mug.

As the months had gone by, Alexander had become more and more willing to live out



this style of life.



"Well, it's work, and I was hardly going to leave a *second* noble's service. ...and besides I was fine once I got the shield between it and my face."

Gregor watched Charlotte carefully. He wasn't sure how well she could hold her alcohol, and he didn't want her to get sick from overdoing it. Still...this *was* as good a reason to celebrate as any. After the Royal Guard thing fell through, morale in the group had been fairly low. Earning some extra money was never a bad thing, even if it did mean wolf bites.

"Excuse me..." A voice called from behind Gregor's back.



"..." The elegant man who went inside the inn few minutes ago was now standing over Gregor and was rudely staring at his face with utmost interest.



"Um, yes? Did you need something?"

The man kept staring for few more seconds, before nodding.



"You are Gregor von Hexham, aren't you." He spoke quietly, staring right at Gregor.



"That didn't sound like a question. Who are you?"

Gregor tensed, in case the man tried to attack him.



"I'm Dag, traveling mage and a mercenary of sorts. We have to talk." He replied to the query, then looked around, before leaning in closer to Gregor.



"In private."



"Greggo goin somewhar? Okidokey."

Three out of the four cups mysteriously disappeared by the time Charlotte said this.



"Ohhh yeou juss sayinn that. Imm notta hevvydrinker. Common annaja less get drunkk an fall ashleep somewere."

Everything Charlotte said made complete sense to her, but her face was all red at this point.

Gregor was about to respond, but Charlotte's increasingly slurred speech cut him off.



"Charlotte, are you sure you're alright? It might be time to call it a night."

Anja looked at Charlotte, then at Gregor.



"Maybe I will drag her off to the wagon or a room, if you guys are going to rent one?" The man behind Gregor patiently waited for reply in the meanwhile.

Gregor reached for his bag, pulled out 30 gold, and handed them to Anja.



"Here. Take these, get a room for the night. Make sure she gets some sleep. Please."



"Arright!" Anja took the money and then lifted Charlotte from the chair, and dragged her off to a bedroom.

Gregor turned back to the new arrival.



"So what's so important that it can't be discussed in front of my friends? It

better be good if you want me to go talk to you without Alexander here around."

Dag looked after the ladies before they went away, and then sat down at the Gregor's table. He reached into his robes, and pulled out three pieces of papers of roughly the same size.



"You might want to read them." The mage explained, and Gregor could see what was on the first paper:

WANTED: Dag, the mage and trickster

Price: 1500 gold

Committed crimes: Assault on a maid from Fortress Kesselring, multiple thefts, death threats toward Countess PRIXIMA Kesselring.



"I assume these are referring to you, and not some other Dag. Why show this to me? I don't think we're really in the bounty hunting business."

Dag rolled his eyes and then pulled the first paper from Gregor's hands.

The second paper referred to someone by name Colchana, and some other person named Barlos. Dag then took the second paper and Gregor could see the last one...

WANTED:

Gregor von Hexham, Derick, Ami Storm, Christopher Shields, Alexander Jorinn,  
Charlotte Braxis, Seyena Ikane, Riven, Olison Eul, Valor Inara

Price: 2500 for each of them, 4000 for the head of the leader, Gregor von Hexham

Crimes: Mass killing of Kesselring servants and soldiers, desertion from post, treachery to Menelea, pillage of two Kesselring settlements, numerous thefts from Kesselring Fortress, conspiracy with Berebians



"Interesting, isn't it?" Dag didn't even try to smile.

Gregor had to put the page down to avoid crumpling it in anger.



"That...that witch! So now what? Why show me this?"

Dag tapped the table.



"Actually, it is a coincidence. I never thought I would meet any of... fellow 'criminals' on my trip." Dag looked behind his back as if bounty hunters were at the door's inn already.



"Listen carefully - every soldier and mercenary east and south of here is looking for me and you guys. I won't be surprised if Mercian guilds will soon get hands on these posters as well. I'm a kind-hearted man, so I'm offering you a proposal: flee with me to Berebia. My sister is a maid at one of the wealthier courts. You could stay with me there, or just go somewhere else. I ask for no payment, hell, all I want is get out of Menelea as soon as possible."



"What do you say?" In the same moment, Anja walked back to the table, looked at Dag, then at Gregor, and then at Dag again.



"What you sweethearts are talking about, hmm? Business?"

Gregor sank in his seat, a sense of impending doom overtaking him.



"Of a sort, Anja. Take a look." He handed her the third wanted poster.

Anja grabbed the paper and read it, her eyes getting a little wide.



"Oh dear, you're in quite a pickle." She then handed the paper to Alexander just in case he didn't look before.

Alexander took the paper. He began to glance at it- and then he *stared* at the paper, with a horrified expression.



"Wh... what is this?!"

Gregor sighed.



"It's a warrant for our arrest and/or death. Looks like I, at least, am worth more dead than alive." What an unpleasant thought.



"A promise of reward for your dead body, sweetheart." Anja quietly spoke after Gregor while Dag stood up.



"I'm leaving after I get something to eat." Dag turned away and moved to the counter, quietly starting a conversation with the short, stout innkeeper. Anja, looked after the mage.



"Soo... I wasn't in Berebia in a while." The gypsy spoke, her lips curving upwards in a smile.

Alexander just *stood there* frozen in the terror of what remains of his devotion to Menelea he had had were brutally shattered.



"Are you saying that there probably isn't anyone there who wants to kill you?" Gregor asked dryly. He then realized that Alexander had basically become petrified, and patted the other man on the shoulder to try and shake him out of it. He was far from certain the knight could feel it through the thick armor, but it was the thought that counted.

Anja grinned.



"I recall only satisfied Berebian clients. Would be a surprise to be proven otherwise. Should I drag Charlotte from the bed?" She then noticed the state in which Alexander was.



"Knighty guy, hellooo... do you need another motivational gesture from Anja the gorgeous?"



"If we're gonna leave with that man, you better get her. Hopefully she'll be able to sleep in the wagon." A thought occurred to Gregor. "You're pretty good at reading people, right? What did you think of our mystery mage over there?"

Alexander returned to a state of awareness- but only semi-awareness, allowing him to edge away from Anja. He was still obviously horrified by what he had just seen.



"Me? Well, I don't think he is lying. I never did business with him, so I don't know how he is, honestly."



"Good enough for me, at least in the short term. Alexander? Are you going to be okay with going to Berebia for now? Just to evade the bounty hunters?"



"Gah- uh- Berebia?"



"Dag over there is offering us sanctuary there, if only temporarily. I know you aren't overly fond of them, but in this case I'm not sure what other options we have."

Alexander took an (obvious) moment to compose himself, and it only partway worked.



"We've been at *war* with them! Why would you think that they'd look at us too happily either? Why not... Deynastia, or... Ys, or... even the North!"



"We're not at war with them right now, the attack on Fezzan notwithstanding. Besides, Ys is far to the south and Deynastia is separated from us by an extensive mountain range, which is likely to be swarming with bandits. A wanted man would be crazy to go near Mercia, and we'd have to pass through Berebia to go to the North

anyway. Berebia is the best option at the moment, even if we're only passing through to somewhere else. Unless you can make Anja's wagon fly, at least."



"Well- well- if we're in Berebia... I want to find a particular man to have vengeance on."

Gregor frowned.



"Alexander, we're trying to avoid trouble, not make more of it. We'll see how things are once we get there, okay?"

Dag walked to Gregor's table, still rubbing his lips clean from the tiny bits of food. In the background, Anja led Charlotte from a room towards the main door, the sniper lady heaving to the sides from the drunken weakness.



"So, have you decided?" Dag asked, and then the three men could hear a muffled thud coming from outside. Anja peeked inside the inn with a smile.



"Charlotte and my wagon are ready."



"Looks like we're going with you, at least for now."

Dag managed to smile a little, and he shook Gregor's hand.



"And I hope we all get to safety alive."

**NPC: Dag the Sage joins the party!**



"Likewise. Now let's get a move on; we have a wagon, so we won't have to march all night."

## ~~Chapter 6: At the Border of Freedom~~



*With the hefty reward on their heads, Gregor and his companions had only one real route of escaping: Berebia.*

*Anja's wagon took them through the forests and valleys, and the broadleaf forests gave in to the dark cyan pines of native to this region of the world.*

*But, will they get through the border safely?*

The cobblestone road under the wheels of the wagon quickly got replaced by dirt and sand. They were entering the border area, area that could turn into a battlefield between two hostile nations any moment.

Then, in the short distance, they could see a stone bridge, partially overgrown with moss. On their side, they could see the crimson banner of Menelea. On the other, the purple flag of Berebia proudly announced what land are entering those who are crossing the bridge.

It was peculiarly silent as the wagon rolled from the hill side into a small valley, through which the river dividing Menelea and Berebia was passing.

Just few metres away from the bridge, Anja became nervous and began watching the forest behind them.



"Did you hear that?" She asked, as the distance between them and the bridge was shorter and shorter with each passing second.

What could they hear, was quiet snoring of Charlotte, who was still sleeping after getting drunk at the inn few hours ago.

Gregor looked around warily. Surely this was just paranoia left over from the last botched bridge crossing, right?

Alexander was not particularly attentive- he was silently mourning to himself his ability to be loyal to Menelea, and his exile into, of all places, *Berebia*.

Anja stopped her wagon so the sound of wheels wouldn't interfere with listening.

And then they could all hear it - many, many hooves stomping the ground south from the wagon, with occasional neigh and shout mixed in as well. And those were getting louder.





"Horses!" That's all Dag could say before Anja smacked her horses with the reins. The beasts, neighing loudly, pulled the wagon with so much force that Dag almost fell off the wagon and Gregor fell onto his back, squishing Charlotte underneath. Alexander of course haven't moved an inch.

They were almost at the bridge when something shone on the sky. The orange-red point suddenly descended onto the bridge, and there was explosion. And then, another meteor struck the bridge. Anja's wagon almost fell to one side while she stopped her horses and tried to change direction in the same time, as the bridge crumbled and collapsed, sending pieces of stone and flint everywhere.

Then, south from bridge, on the very ledge that Gregor's troupe left a minute ago, several horsemen appeared, each of them carrying someone else behind their backs. There was also one balding knight with impressive, red beard. He rubbed his gauntlet-covered hand.



"Geheheh! What do we have here! Smugglers, spies, deserters? Traitors of Menelea who try to sneak away into Berebia, for sure!" The man grinned, and his footmen jumped from the horses onto the ground, brandishing weapons.

Gregor drew himself up with all the haughtiness he could muster from his days at court. Even if he was on the run and branded a traitor, he didn't want to kill fellow Meneleans if he could avoid it.



"Foolish man. You think we're deserters?"



"You have just destroyed a rather expensive bridge and attacked an innocent trader. Give me your name and rank! We *will* be reporting this to your superior."

The bearded knight frowned a bit.



"Hmph! You think I will believe that? If you must know, I'm Wodan Barbarossa, Lord of Castle Tumbrand, Captain of the Clemont-Fezzan Border Guard! And who YOU are? Give me your name at once! Otherwise, we will cut you down!"



"I have to question your methods, milord. Destroying a perfectly serviceable bridge just to stop one wagon? Say goodbye to any trade - and gold - passing through until it's replaced."



"I am Gregorio, and I have the honor of being bodyguard of the merchant Lady Anna. We are on our way to Ugral, or were until you decided to wreck the border crossing."



"If you are who you are and you speak the truth... why I wasn't informed? All the traffic and notification papers go through my hands personally. Surely you filled out Document 11 when your group visited the main border keep?"

"Sir, may I have a moment..." One of the soldiers approached the heavily armored knight, whispered something to him and gave him some papers.

Gregor whispered to Anja, Alexander, and Dag.



"Get ready to fight if it all goes wrong. I'm hoping it won't come to that, but..."

Alexander grimaced, shutting his eyes closed tightly. He did not want to fight Meneleans. He... he couldn't fight Menelea. That would make him a true traitor, and what was the point of his existence then? And so he started praying quietly under his breath, desperately.



"Dragon of the Divine, do not force me to face a Menelean in combat, do not force me to fight those of my own loyalty, do not force me to fulfill the charges I have been falsely laid with into reality, do not force me to become a traitor, Divine Dragon, this is all I can beg of you, all I can hope for now."

Barbarossa looked at the papers, then began to intensely stare at Gregor for a moment.

Then, he looked at the papers, at Gregor, at papers again and crumpled the sheets.



"It's Gregor von Hexham and his lackeys! Get them boys! Before the Berebians show up!" The footsoldiers began moving down the slopes as the horsemen swiftly moved past their fellow guards.

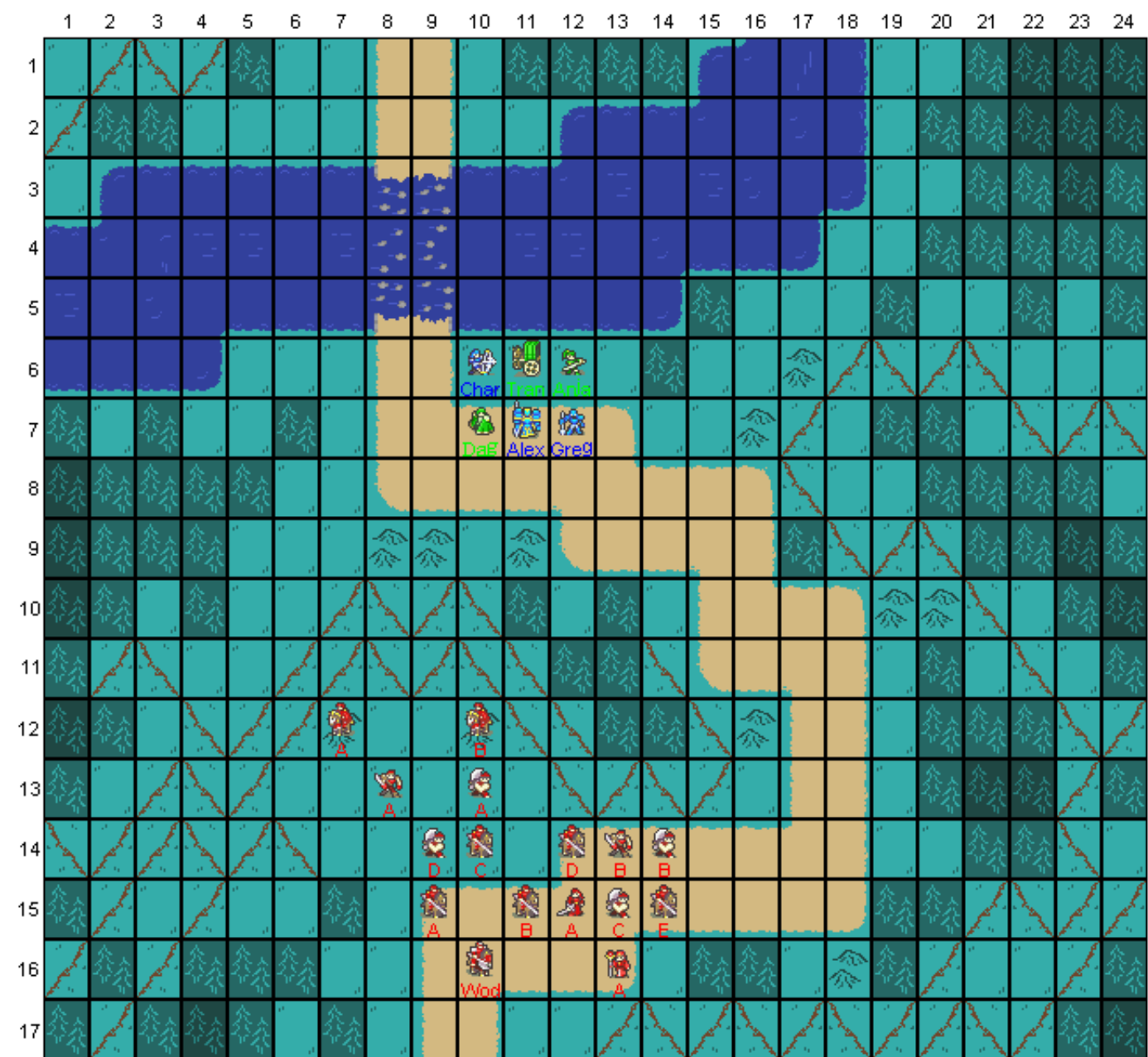
~~Player Turn 1~~



"I will be right behind you, guys."



"Um, if you don't mind, I will stick close to my wagon..."



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                         | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 38/38<br>Charlotte Braxis: 30/30<br>Gregor von Hexham: 32/32 | Swordsman A: 31/31<br>Swordsman B: 31/31<br>Cavalier A: 32/32<br>Cavalier B: 32/32<br>Cavalier C: 32/32<br>Cavalier D: 32/32<br>Cavalier E: 32/32<br>Axe Thrower A: 33/33 | Axe Thrower B: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower C: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower D: 33/33<br>Wodan: 45/45<br>Mage Knight A: 31/31<br>Mage Knight B: 31/31<br>Bishop: 27/27<br>Swordmaster: 30/30 |
| Allies:                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Anja: 28/28<br>Dag: 33/33<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits                                   |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                             |

Alexander moved a small amount to let his allies get behind him (**move to 11, 8**), but he had never taken out his lance in the first place, both hands instead holding his shield. (**Unequip lance**) He would not allow his friends to be harmed though- he would gladly take the shots for them. He would stall conflict for as long as he could. (**Activate Guard on all possible enemy attacks this turn**) Meanwhile, the fervent prayer continued, accompanied by the use of the purest of water. (**Use Pure Water**).



"Dragon, my only wish is not to become that like PRIXIMA but worse- I wish to not betray MENELEA's interests for my own. And even though MENELEA faces me with intent of harm today, allow me not to strike a MENELEAN. For what worth is a traitor, and what worth his life? Allow me not to betray my kingdom."



"So much for that idea..."

**Gregor: Move to (12,8) to cover Alexander's flank.**



"Mmmm? Why'd you guys wake me up? I was having the best-"

Charlotte looked ahead.



"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA ARMORED HIGHWAY NIGHT BANDITS!"

**Charlotte: Move to 12,7 within Alex's Guard range and equip Iron Longbow.**



"Charlotte, wait! They think we're criminals; these are MENELEAN soldiers!"



"Oh. Alright."

Charlotte thought for a minute.



"Well, if we're criminals and they want to kill us, I vote we NOT get killed. Let's kill them instead!"



"Except we're *not* criminals. We've been framed...presumably by PRIXIMA. Someone very powerful has put a large bounty on just about every one of us."

Alexander briefly interrupted his prayer.



"I shall NOT strike another Menelean!"



"Oh! But... I thought we WERE criminals this whole time. I mean, are you saying the atrocities our group committed to get to the Dragonstone - particularly around the time of Eor - were legal?"



"Well...probably not."



"But we didn't burn down Eor's mansion, nor did we attack Fezzan, nor did we put Kesselring Fortress to the torch and murder its inhabitants. All of these things and more have been laid on our shoulders. Even fighting Eor and his men, as distasteful as it was, was done with PRIXIMA's tacit approval. This sudden rash of charges disturbs me...I think she's trying to get rid of us now that we got her jewel."

Whilst Charlotte prepared her bow, Alexander psinkled himself with remainder of the Pure Water.

**Alexander uses Pure Water**

+10 RES for 3 turns

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Of course, the Mage Knights weren't going to miss an opportunity to blast a large hunk of metal under them. Meteor flew and both hit Alexander.

### Mage Knight A vs Alexander

Hit:  $109-2-17 = 90$

Hit roll: 11, hit!

Damage:  $24-10-2-5 = 7\text{dmg}$

### Mage Knight B vs Alexander

Hit:  $109-2-17 = 90$

Hit roll: 47, hit!

Damage:  $24-10-2-5 = 7\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, most of the troop began moving down the hill. Wodan's lieutenant leaned toward him again.

"Sir, there are pegasi in the eastern skies, seems like they will be here in a moment."

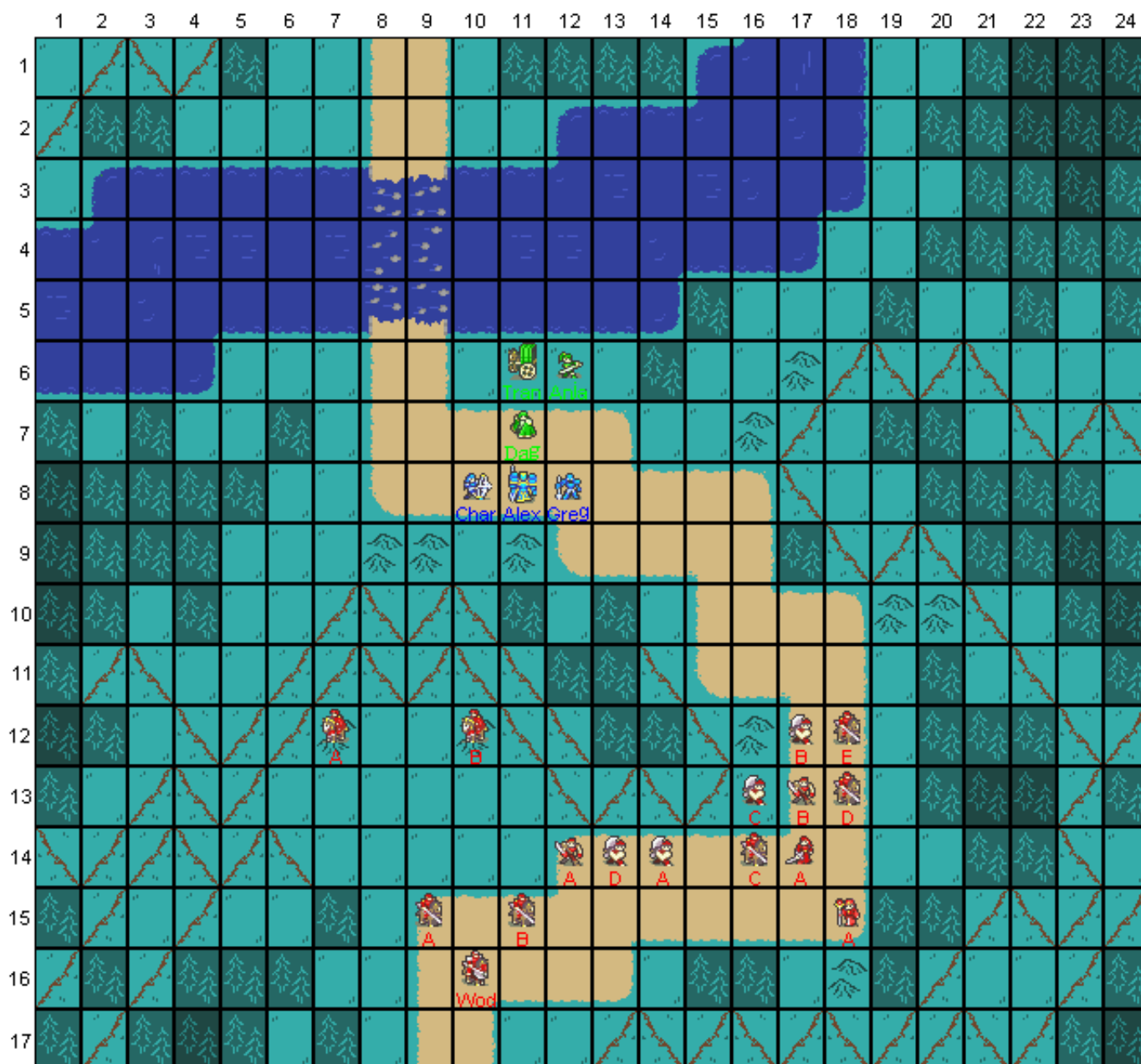


"Gehehahah! Must be our riders. With them attacking from one side and our men from south, these traitors won't stand a chance!"

## ~~Ally Phase~~

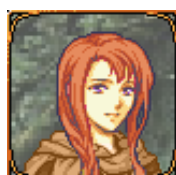
Dag moved behind Alexander, just in case.

# ~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 24/38<br>^ Pure Water (+10 RES, 2/3)<br>Charlotte Braxis: 30/30<br>Gregor von Hexham: 32/32 | Swordsman A: 31/31<br>Swordsman B: 31/31<br>Cavalier A: 32/32<br>Cavalier B: 32/32<br>Cavalier C: 32/32<br>Cavalier D: 32/32<br>Cavalier E: 32/32<br>Axe Thrower A: 33/33 | Axe Thrower B: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower C: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower D: 33/33<br>Wodan: 45/45<br>Mage Knight A: 31/31<br>Mage Knight B: 31/31<br>Bishop: 27/27<br>Swordmaster: 30/30 |
| Allies:                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Anja: 28/28<br>Dag: 33/33<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                             |



"...Oh my. Here they come."

Charlotte: TWANG magey knight B with iron longbow.



Gregor counted the enemy numbers. It looked grim.



"Anja, can you try to get the wagon across the river? They shouldn't dare cross into Berebian territory."

And so Mage Knight B was twanged twice by Charlotte.

#### Charlotte vs Mage Knight B

Hit:  $116+10+10-20-21 = 95$

Hit roll: 6, hit!

Damage:  $18-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

Charlotte shoots again!

Hit:  $116+10+10-20-21 = 95$

Hit roll: 45, hit!

Damage:  $18-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

Hearing Gregor's question, Anja looked at the river.



"I can try, no promises!"



"Alexander, if you fall back a little I can heal you. If we can get across the river before they catch us, we won't have to fight at all!"



"There's no need, I have a vulnerary left, and I hardly intend to let either of you out of my protection... but it would be wise to move towards the remains of that bridge."

Alexander continued his prayer as he walked a little bit, to **10, 7** still in a defensive position to **Guard against all attacks, consuming a vulnerary as well**, mumbling a bit when he ripped the packet apart with his teeth.



"Divine Dragon, grant me the" (rip of a vulnerary) "skill to protect my comrades, and aid them in their escape. Grant me the luck to not have to protect myself from the weapon of a Menelean. And grant me and my allies the strength to continue going through this false accusation of betrayal."

**Gregor moves to (9,7).**



Just as Gregor moved away, Alexander munched some white powder.

#### Alexander uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP restored

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Unfortunately for their plans, the Mage Knights immediately picked another target - the fleeing Gregor. Poor soldier got blasted by the duo of meteors smashing into him.

#### Mage Knight A vs Gregor

Hit:  $109 - 32 - 7 = 70$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

#### Mage Knight B vs Gregor

Hit:  $109 - 32 - 7 = 70$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $24 - 3 = 21$  dmg

Just as other troops continued their march, a trio of pegasi riders appeared above the trees to the east, and several more could be seen further away.

### ~~Ally Phase~~



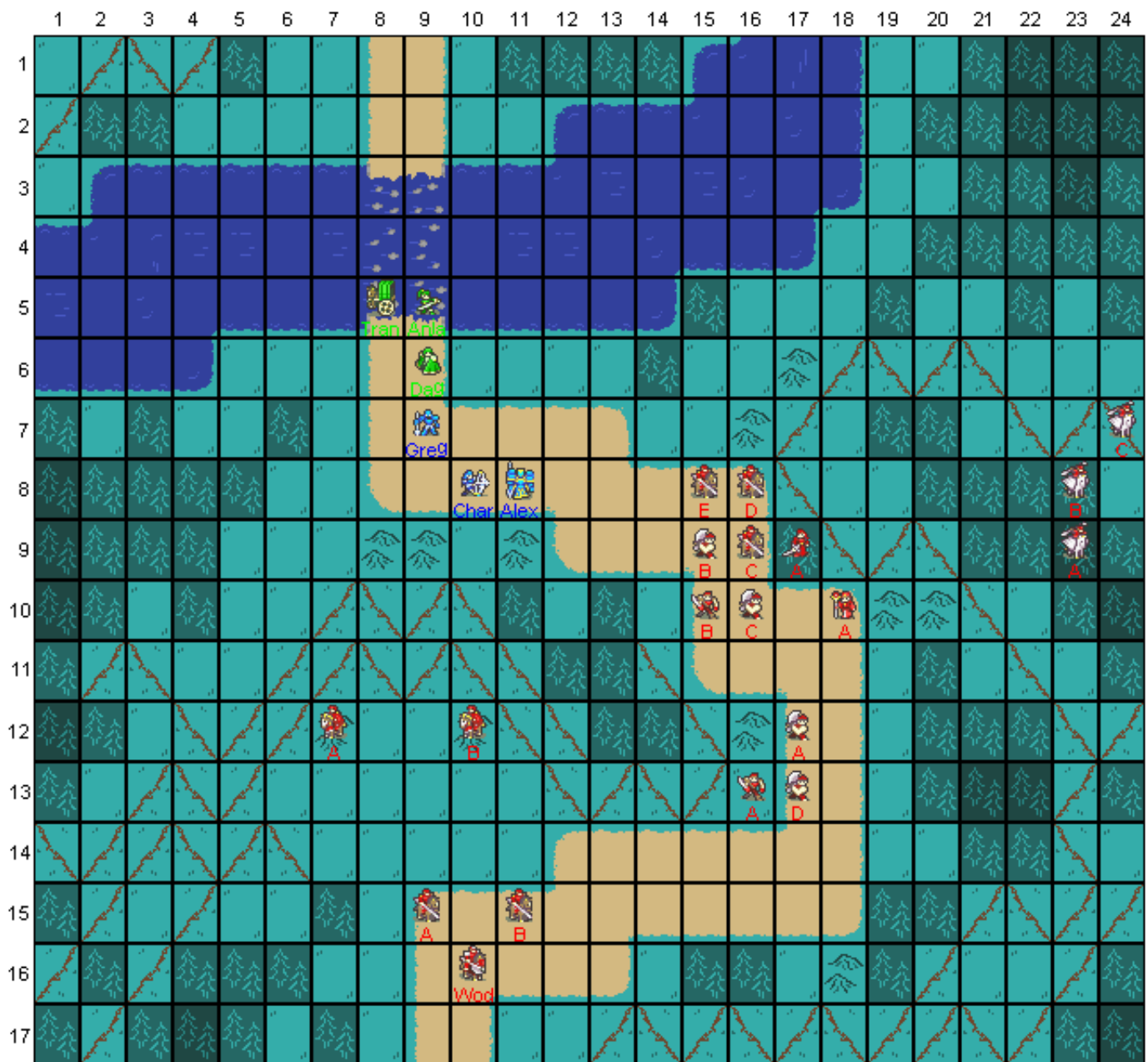
"That must've hurt. Here, buddy." Dag moved closer to the felled Gregor and with wave of his wand, his brought him back into the cruel world.

#### Dag heals Gregor

$10 + 19 =$  Up to 29HP restored

In the meanwhile, Anja dragged/pulled/pushed her wagon and the stubborn horse into the water.

# ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 34/38<br>^ Pure Water (+10 RES, 1/3)<br>Charlotte Braxis: 30/30<br>Gregor von Hexham: 32/32 | Swordsman A: 31/31<br>Swordsman B: 31/31<br>Cavalier A: 32/32<br>Cavalier B: 32/32<br>Cavalier C: 32/32<br>Cavalier D: 32/32<br>Cavalier E: 32/32<br>Axe Thrower A: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower B: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower C: 33/33 | Axe Thrower D: 33/33<br>Pegasus Rider A: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider B: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider C: 27/27<br>Wodan: 45/45<br>Mage Knight A: 31/31<br>Mage Knight B: 13/31<br>Bishop: 27/27<br>Swordmaster: 30/30 |
| Allies:                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Anja: 28/28<br>Dag: 33/33<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Gregor hauled himself to his feet, spitting out some blood as he did so.



"K-keep moving and stick together! We can't fight them all!"

Alexander stopped praying, just plain pissed that he had failed to protect Gregor.

Nonetheless, his weapon was not out.



"Agh, missed my block! I'll have to keep you under closer cover!"

**Alexander moves to 8, 7 and guards for all attacks.**



"...Geh. That hurt you a lot, Gregor. Should I move back to let Alex block their attacks or take out the mage knight from here?"

Gregor looked at the charging cavaliers and infantry, and then back to Charlotte. A part of him wanted nothing more than to order her to run away, but he knew she could look after herself and make her own choices.



"Up to you, Char. I've got your back whatever you do."



"Alright."

**Charlotte: Move to 9,9 and Iron Longbow Mage Knight B from the hills.**

**Gregor: Stay put in Charlotte's support range.**

An arrow later, Mage Knight B died from a case of severe headshotting.

#### **Charlotte vs Mage Knight B**

Hit:  $116+10+7-20-21 = 92$   
Hit roll: 47, hit! Crit roll: 18!  
Damage:  $17+1-9 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$

### **~~Enemy Phase~~**

Seeing his comrade die, the other mage knight aimed his meteor at Alexander.

#### **Mage Knight A vs Alexander**

Hit:  $109-2-17 = 90$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $24-10-2-6 = 6\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, two cavaliers rushed at Charlotte to stab her with their lances. The first of them missed, but the other stabbed her left shoulder.

#### **Cavalier D vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $109-5-10-20-7-31 = 36$   
Hit roll: 83, miss!

#### Cavalier E vs Charlotte

Hit:  $109-5-10-20-7-31 = 36$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $22-1-12 = 9\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Dag frowned, seeing the cavaliers ganging on Charlotte, and whispered few words; a second later, blast of wind and green energy hit the cavalier who was in range.



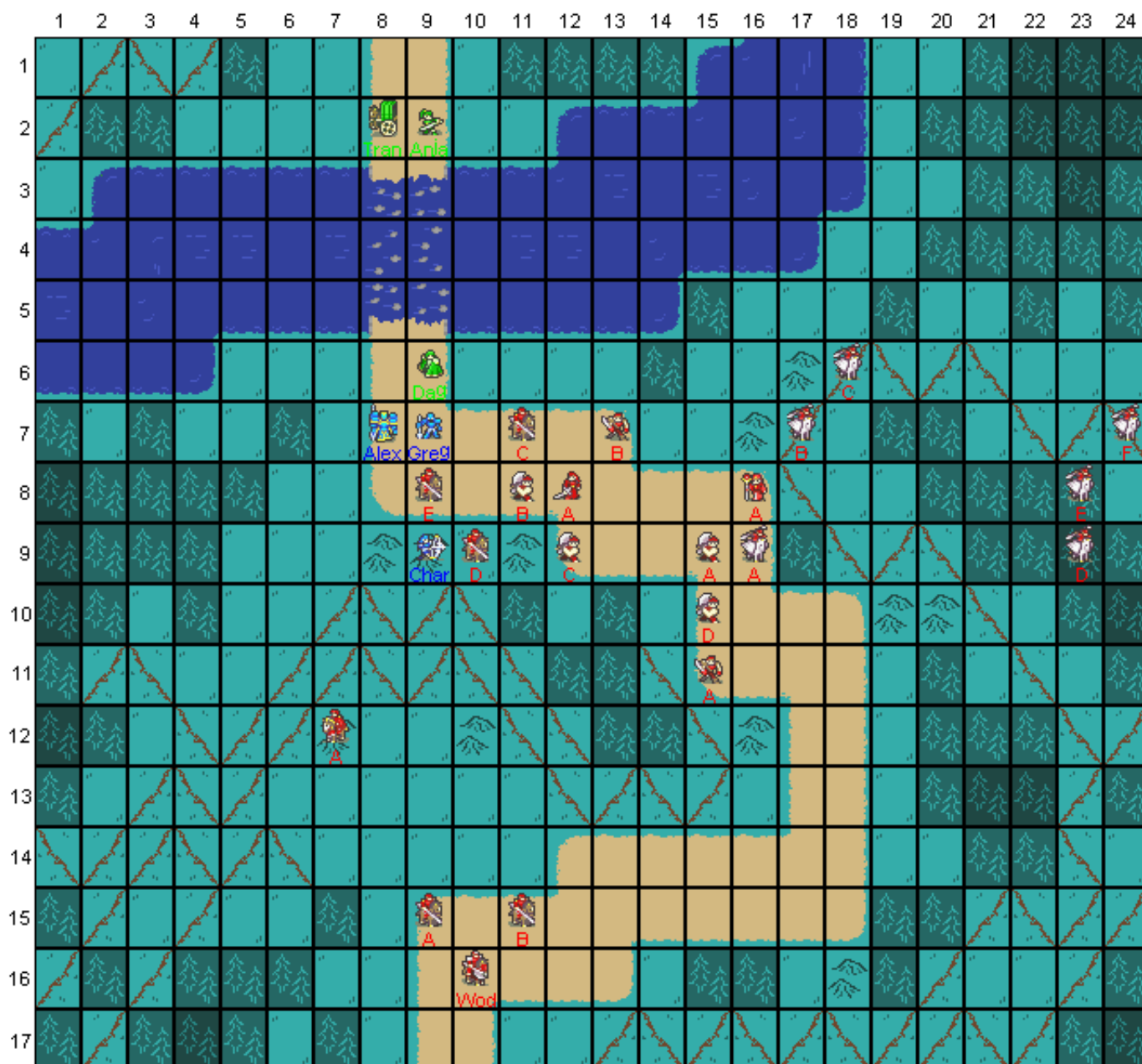
"Treacherous bastards, I'm innocent!" The sage shouted, more in anger than an attempt to convince the border guards.

#### Dag vs Cavalier E

Hit:  $124+5-35 = 94$   
Hit roll: 89, hit!  
Damage:  $23-4 = 19\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, Anja pulled the wagon from the water on the other side - onto Berebian soil.

# ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 28/38<br>Charlotte Braxis: 21/30<br>Gregor von Hexham: 32/32 | Swordsman A: 31/31<br>Swordsman B: 31/31<br>Cavalier A: 32/32<br>Cavalier B: 32/32<br>Cavalier C: 32/32<br>Cavalier D: 32/32<br>Cavalier E: 13/32<br>Axe Thrower A: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower B: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower C: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower D: 33/33 | Pegasus Rider A: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider B: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider C: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider D: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider E: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider F: 27/27<br>Wodan: 45/45<br>Mage Knight A: 31/31<br>Bishop: 27/27<br>Swordmaster: 30/30 |
| Allies:                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Anja: 28/28<br>Dag: 33/33<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

Charlotte looked at Axeman C's poison tipped axe.



"Don't you even think about it."

**Charlotte: Twang Axeman C with steel longbow. Continue praying to critzoacotl.**

TWANG!

Thud!

**Charlotte vs Axeman C**

Hit:  $111+10+10-23 = 108$ , autohit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $20+1-9 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$



"SCORE!"



"I didn't want to do this, but you leave me little choice. May the Divine Dragon forgive what I am about to do."

**Gregor: STAB Cavalier E with Iron Lance.**

**Gregor vs Cavalier E**

Hit:  $114+5+10-35 = 94$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $23+1-8 = 16+5 = 21$

Alexander made a pained expression whenever a Menelean got killed, but nonetheless he plodded in between Charlotte and Gregor- right over the freshly dead Menelean, causing Alexander's expression not to leave his face. He with both hands raised his huge shield, ready to take whatever attacks went at his companions.

**Alexander: Move to 9,8 guard allll the attacks.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The remaning Mage Knight thrown yet another Meteor at Alexander, and given the pure water was no longer in effect, it hurt him quite a bit.

**Mage Knight A vs Alexander**

Hit:  $109-2-17 = 90$   
Hit roll: 7, hit!  
Damage:  $24-2-5 = 17\text{dmg}$

Then, oh boy, Swordsman B ran toward Alexander. The first swing ended with a loud clank when the blade hit the young general's shield, but the second strike went from the side and gruesomely gutted Alexander.

**Swordsman B vs Alexander**

Hit:  $115-5-2-17 = 91$   
Hit roll: 34, hit! Alexander's Great Shield roll: 9!  
Damage: 0!

Swordsman B strikes again!  
Hit:  $115-5-2-17 = 91$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $39-2-21 = 16\text{dmg}$

With Alexander down, the rest of the guards tossed themselves at the other mercenaries.

Cavalier D tried his chances with Charlotte, but the critlady was seemingly unreachable in her spot now.

#### **Cavalier D vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $104-5-10-10-20-31 = 28$   
Hit roll: 59, miss!

Axe Thrower B tossed his hand axe at Gregor, but the soldier ducked in the last moment. He didn't had such luck against the swordmaster who engaged him in melee. The swift strikes of the lancereaver easily cut through Gregor's armor, but it wounded him only slightly. Gregor's lance cut deep into the Swordmaster's abdomen. But much to Gregor's chagrin, his opponent got blasted with white light from behind and the wound quickly healed.

#### **Axe Thrower B vs Gregor**

Hit:  $97+15-5-10-32 = 65$   
Hit roll: 68, miss!

#### **Swordmaster vs Gregor**

Hit:  $114+15-5-10-32 = 82$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $22+1-3-2-15 = 3\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $114+5+10-15-44 = 70$   
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage:  $23+2-1-7 = 17\text{dmg}$

#### **Bishop heals Swordmaster**

$10+14 =$  Up to 24HP restored

Meanwhile, Cavalier C attacked Dag, but the traveling sage dodged the attack, and windblasted the horseman in retaliation.

#### **Cavalier C vs Dag**

Hit:  $109-5-32 = 72$   
Hit roll: 93, miss!

Dag counters!  
Hit:  $124+5-35 = 94$   
Hit roll: 79, hit!  
Damage:  $23-4 = 19\text{dmg}$

### **~~Ally Phase~~**

Dag looked at the other side of the river, then at cavalier, then at Alexander and frowned.



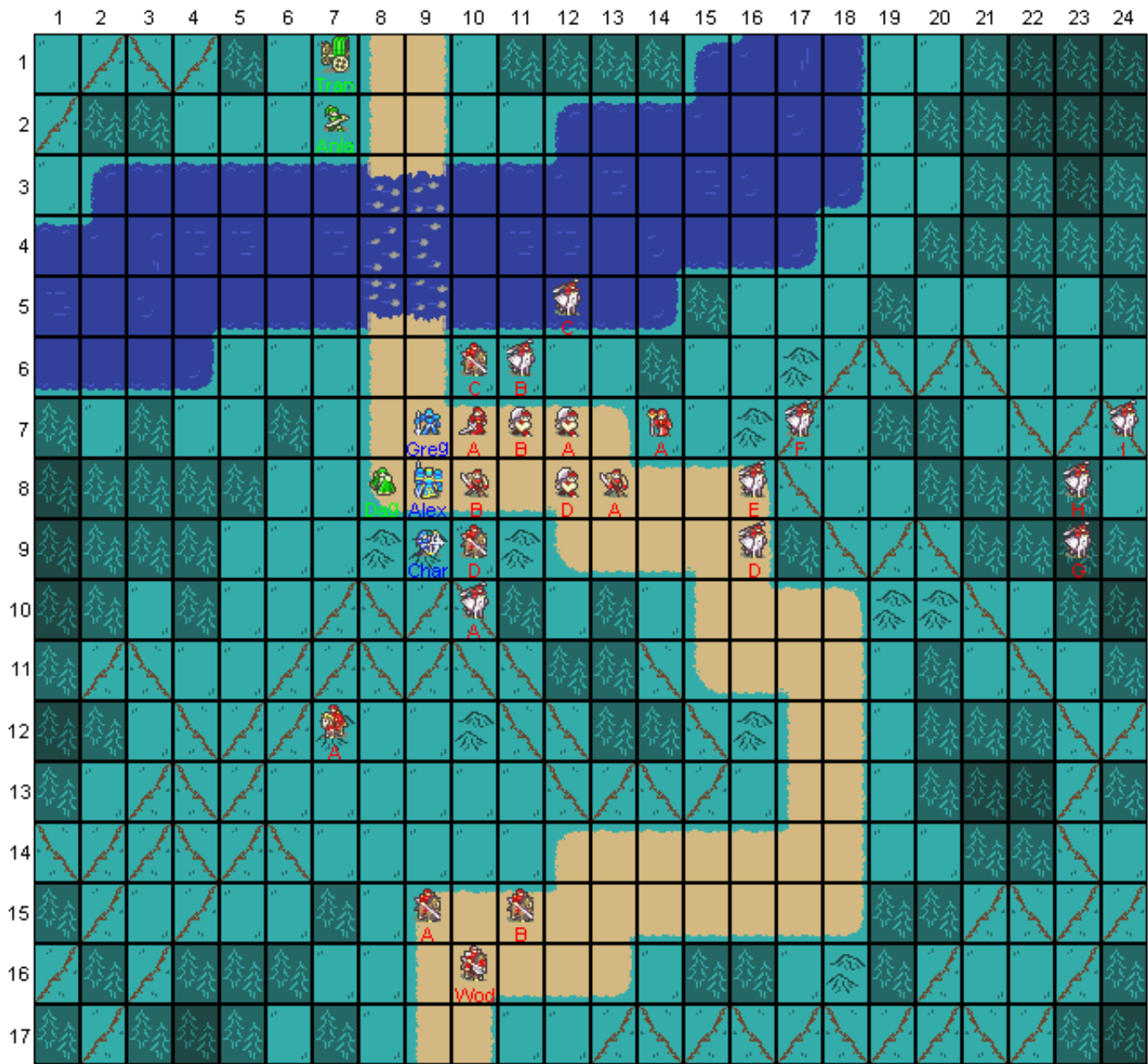
"I hope I'm doing the right thing..." With that, Dag ran from the cavalier, stepped close to Alexander and with wave of healing magic, brought him from the dreamland.

Dag heals Alexander

10+19 / 2 = Up to 14HP healed

Anja moved her wagon from the road and brandished her thing, long blade just to be prepared for those pegasi in case they follow her.

~~Player Turn 5~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                         |  | Enemies:                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 14/38<br>Charlotte Braxis: 21/30<br>Gregor von Hexham: 29/32 |  | Swordsman A: 31/31<br>Swordsman B: 31/31<br>Cavalier A: 32/32<br>Cavalier B: 32/32<br>Cavalier C: 13/32 | Pegasus Rider C: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider D: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider E: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider F: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider G: 27/27 |
| Allies:                                                                        |  |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                |



|                 |                        |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|                 | Cavalier D: 32/32      | Pegasus Rider H: 27/27 |
| Anja: 28/28     | Axe Thrower A: 33/33   | Pegasus Rider I: 27/27 |
| Dag: 33/33      | Axe Thrower B: 33/33   | Wodan: 45/45           |
| Wagon: 5/5 hits | Axe Thrower D: 33/33   | Mage Knight A: 31/31   |
|                 | Pegasus Rider A: 27/27 | Bishop: 27/27          |
|                 | Pegasus Rider B: 27/27 | Swordmaster: 30/30     |

## Charlotte: Steel Longbow on Pegasus Rider A.

Charlotte crit-murdered the pegasus, her rider, and everything in radius of half a metre, which resulted in flash of light.

### Charlotte vs Pegasus Rider A

Hit:  $111+5+10+10-42 = 94$

Hit roll: 44, hit! Crit roll: 4!

Damage:  $36+2-7 = 31 \times 3 = \mathbf{93dmg!!}$



"Does that happen everytime you shoot someone?"



"It's been happening more and more often, lately, yes. I don't question it."

Alexander groans as he gets up, clenching his teeth and clutching at his stomach with his lance hand, speaking to the swordsman who had just swept a sword through his innards.



"Please... don't make me fight you. I've... never wounded a Menelean before, and I do not want to start now."

"Then just lie down and let me cut you, traitor!"



"If Alexander is a traitor, then I'm a druid. He's a brave and loyal man, and he would never betray Menelea! None of us would!"



"If I were a traitor, I would have my lance out. If I were a traitor, I would have fought back. But my lance is on my back, and I only defend."

"Then lay down your weapons and surrender!"

Alexander briefly went pensive.



"I cannot speak for my comrades, and do not attempt to do so. But I would gladly do so... excepting if Prixima were to be the one judging us, for between her poisoning of other Menelean nobles, and the attack she caused because of that upon Fezzan, the one we supposedly betrayed is the one truly without Menelea's best interests at heart."

"Your lies and accusations against a Menelean noble only solidify your guilt! Prepare to die!"



"I've been prepared to die for Menelea for a long, long time. Yet, Prixima has a particular stone. Find out why she got that, if you're going to kill me. At least do a favor for Menelea."

**Alexander continued to stay still and guard his comrades.**

"I won't, just because I don't believe traitors!"



"...I fail to see what harm finding information can do. I'm not asking you to harm any Menelean- I would never. ...I was the kind of man who would say the things you do for his country, until I discovered Prixima's motives. Now I'm merely the kind who would die for his country."

The soldier just spit on the side and prepared to strike Alexander without further words spoken.



*Sorry, Alexander. You tried your best, but if these men aren't willing to listen I would rather condemn myself than see you or Charlotte killed.*

**Gregor: Fling Iron Javelin at the swordguy with the Armorslayer. Invoke Critzocoatl.**

First javelin ended in the swordsman's stomach, the other in his chest.

#### **Gregor vs Swordsman B**

Hit:  $109+5+10+15-27 = 112$ , autohit!

Damage:  $22+2+1-8 = 17$

Gregor hits again!

Hit:  $109+5+10+15-27 = 112$ , autohit! Crit roll: 14!

Damage:  $22+2+1-8 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Another meteor fell onto Alexander. When the dust settled, his friends and the Menelean border guards could see the shield still smoking a bit when Alexander lowered it. Like a bawse.

### Mage Knight A vs Alexander

Hit:  $109-2-17 = 90$

Hit roll: 20! Alex's Great Shield roll: 9! //Fukken tank >:U

Damage: 0!

After initial shock, the guards rushed at the mercs. Axe Thrower D tossed his poisoned axe at Alexander, hitting and poisoning him. Then Axe Thrower A moved close to panzerman and gently tapped him on face. And then many others moved around to hit other mercenaries but Alex defended them all with his heart and few hundred kilograms of steel.

### Axe Thrower D vs Alexander

Hit:  $92-5-2-17 = 68$

Hit roll: 60, hit!

Damage:  $25-2-21 = 2\text{dmg}$ , poisoned!

### Axe Thrower B vs Alexander

Hit:  $97-5-2-17 = 73$

Hit roll: 60, hit!

Damage:  $24-2-21 = 1\text{dmg}$

### Swordmaster vs Alexander

Irrelevant, either miss or no damage.

### Pegasus Rider B vs Alexander

Irrelevant, either miss or no damage.

### Cavalier D vs Alexander

Irrelevant, either miss or no damage.

### Cavalier C vs Alexander

Irrelevant, either miss or no damage.

Unfortunately, Pegasus Rider C turned her mount toward other side of the river - toward Anja. The bloodthirsty spear went easily into the gypsy's blade, who, with hiss of anger, slashed mightily across the pegasus and its rider.

### Pegasus Rider C vs Anja

Hit:  $107+15-58 = 64$

Hit roll: 37, hit!

Damage:  $22+1-7 = 16\text{dmg}$

Anja counters!

Hit:  $139-15-40 = 84$

Hit roll: 43, hit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage:  $16-1-7 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja cursed under her nose and sliced across the rider's throat, killing her.

### Anja vs Pegasus Rider C

Hit:  $139-15-40 = 84$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $16-1-7 = 8$

Dag waved his staff and Alex was fully healed. Well, except the poison in his veins.

### Dag heals Alexander

$10+19 =$  Up to 29HP restored

## Meanwhile...

"Sir Wodan, there are silhouettes above the forest to the no-"

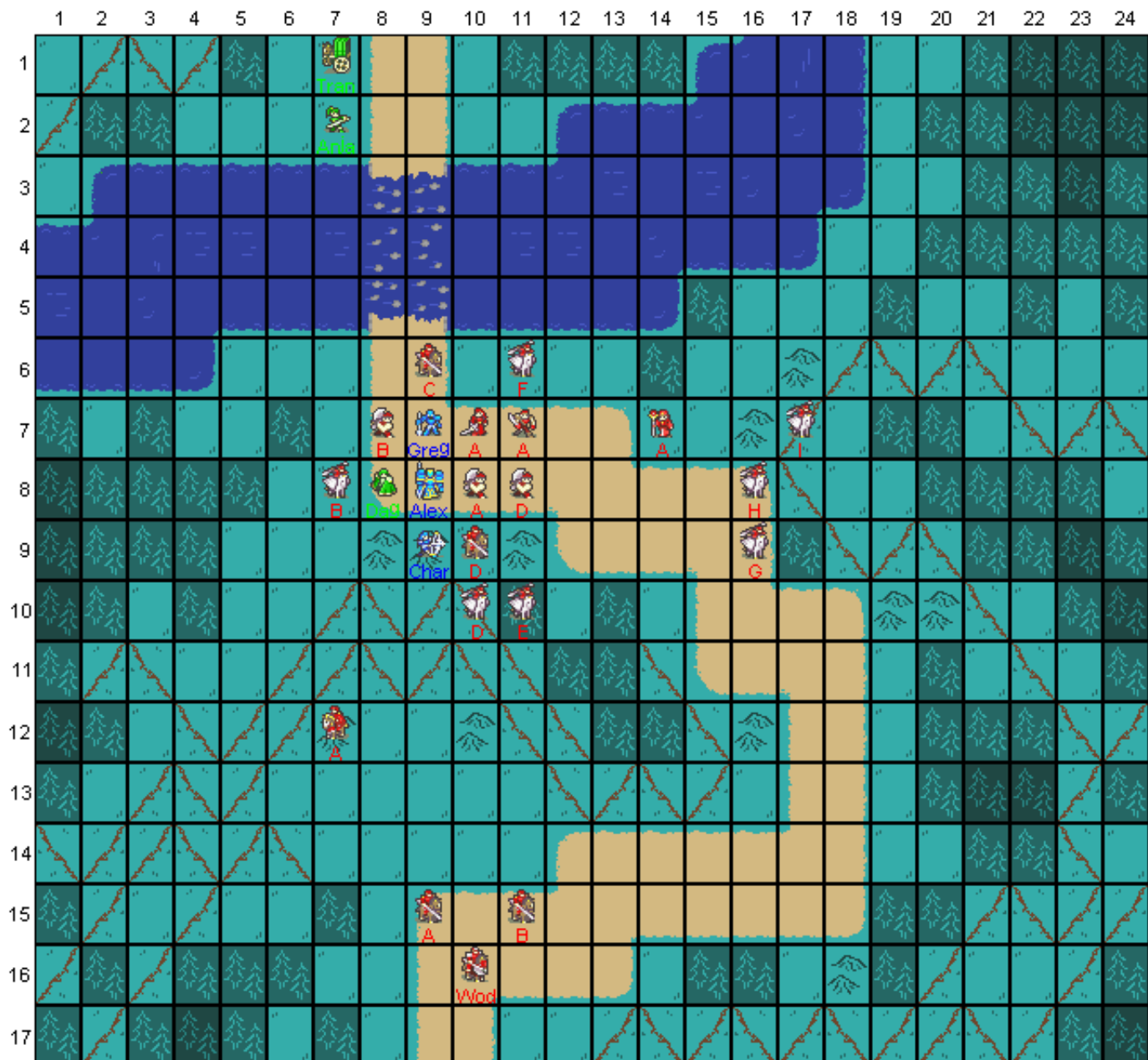


"I am not blind, darnit! You guys down there just kill those criminals and take their heads! We need to get out of here before Berebians arrive!"

# ~~Player Turn 6~~

## Poison rolls

Alexander: 4



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                   | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 34/38 <span>Poison (4/5)</span><br>Charlotte Braxis: 21/30<br>Gregor von Hexham: 29/32 | Swordsman A: 31/31<br>Cavalier A: 32/32<br>Cavalier B: 32/32<br>Cavalier C: 13/32<br>Cavalier D: 32/32<br>Axe Thrower A: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower B: 33/33<br>Axe Thrower D: 33/33<br>Pegasus Rider B: 27/27<br>Pegasus Rider D: 27/27 | Pegasus Rider E: 27/27 |
| Allies:                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Pegasus Rider F: 27/27 |
|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Pegasus Rider G: 27/27 |
| Anja: 12/28<br>Dag: 33/33<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Pegasus Rider H: 27/27 |
|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Pegasus Rider I: 27/27 |
|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Wodan: 45/45           |
|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Mage Knight A: 31/31   |
|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Bishop: 27/27          |
|                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Swordmaster: 30/30     |

Charlotte: SNIPE CAVALIER C



"There's so many of them...yet with Alexander around, we still have a chance. I'd rather not have my life end with my head getting hacked off to appease some mad noblewoman."

**Gregor: Avoid giving in to despair by FLINGing Javelin at Swordguy A.**

Alexander lowered the glowing, smoking shield slightly, staring the border guard in the eyes.



"I believe I have established. You shall not harm me or my comrades."

**Alexander: Stay there, guard all attacks.**

Two javelins and an arrow later, two more Meneleans departed to afterlife.

**Gregor vs Swordsman A**

Hit:  $109+15+10+5-31 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $22+2+1-8 = 17\text{dmg}$

Gregor strikes again!  
Hit:  $109+15+10+5-31 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $22+2+1-8 = 17\text{dmg}$

**Charlotte vs Cavalier C**

Hit:  $111+10+10+5-35 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $20+2-8 = 14\text{dmg}$

**Suddenly...**

With loud neighing, a group of bow knights appeared on the road to the north, as the silhouttes above the forest turned into a swarm of pegasi riders.



"Damnation! Retreat! Before we get slaughtered!" Before his troops managed to climb onto the horses and pegasi, Wodan himself left a cloud of dust behind.

**~~Chapter 6 Complete!~~**

The bow knights (and few cavaliers) seized Anja and her wagon, keeping weapons locked at her. The pegasi began flying in a wide circle around Gregor, Charlotte, Dag and Alexander, the number of the pegasi being twenty one, the wings knocked clouds of dirt and dust around. Soon, they all landed in a circle, in an ideal choreographic move, and one rider, armed with silvery lance and sword at her belt, landed in the inside of the circle of riders, near Gregor.

After the captain of the pegasi rider attached her lance to the saddle, she slid from it, keeping her left hand on the sword's handle.



"Deserters, refugees or spies? Speak quickly!"

Gregor gulped. He wasn't very knowledgeable about Berebian custom, so he had no idea if honesty would help or hurt in this situation.



"I guess you could call us refugees. We have been accused of crimes we did not commit and seek sanctuary. This man, Dag, suggested that we flee to Berebia."



"Oh? Criminals on the run, then. Still, if you want to live, put your hands forward so we can tie them. After that, we can carry you to our border keep. The armor guy will have to ride on that wagon behind the river. Oh right, that redhead there is with you?"



"You mean Anja? Yes, she's with us."

He did not, however, put his hands forward just yet.



"Thank you for the timely assistance, by the way. Who are you?"



"Captain Danya, of Tunhausen Keep, Watcher of the Border. Now, your hands please." Her riders lifted their spears and pointed them at the faces of the four 'captives', but Danya remained calm.

**Charlotte happily put her hands forward, ready to be rid of this mess.**

Gregor realized that cooperation would be the best thing here and **put his hands forward.**

Alexander tightly closed his eyes, and clenched his teeth, but (hesitantly) **put forward his hands.**



"Nice to see someone who cooperates." Just after Dag placed his hands before himself, few of the riders dismounted and wrapped rope tightly around the wrists of all four people. And then, they procured blindfolds.



"It might be inconvenient for you, but I'm sure you will manage." With those words, she nodded toward the other riders and blindfolded the mercenaries.

They were then taken across the river and they were helped whilst climbing onto Anja's wagon, the familiar, uncomfortable benches on it couldn't be mistaken for anything else. Someone rummaged near them.

"Looks like a lance and some supplies in there." They could hear a voice of young woman. After that, the wagon began to move...

Alexander remained silent, but the sound of him grinding his teeth was probably somewhat audible.

-Gregor: "...well, at least we made it to Berebia. That's a plus, right?"

Alexander quietly muttered: "no."

Gregor sighed.

-Gregor: "It beats torture and execution, doesn't it? You know as well as I do what PRIXIMA is like towards 'criminals'."

-Dag: "Definitely better if you ask me." Dag's voice could be heard from behind Gregor.

-Anja: "I'm prisoner on my own wagon." Anja finished with a sigh of defeat.

-Gregor: "Don't worry, Anja. You'll be back in the driver's seat in no time!" *I hope...*

A thought occurred to Gregor. "Dag, you have family here, right? Do you have any idea what will happen next?"

-Dag: "Well, they will interrogate us thoroughly, and then let us go? I think so. The place where my sister lives isn't far from Tunhausen Keep... if that's where they are taking us." There was a moment of silence.

-Dag: "Is Charlotte with us?" Dag asked after a while.

Gregor's heart skipped a beat.



-Gregor: "I saw her get her hands tied, but then we were blindfolded...Charlotte? You there?"

-Alexander: "...I'm sure she's here, as I can't think of a reason why she shouldn't be."

-Charlotte: "I'm here, and I think you guys are being needlessly negative. Or, at least, Alex is! I mean, this is what we were looking for, right? A new start to our life? I thought all Berebians were cold hearted meanies... but if they're allowing us to defect without harm, maybe we'll get that second chance. Who knows what adventures await us here?"

The young soldier sighed in relief. Not only because Charlotte hadn't been taken away, left behind, or worse, but also because she sounded so enthusiastic about this new, if unexpected, opportunity. Gregor felt pretty much the same way; this would be his first time visiting a different country!

-Gregor: "Exactly! Even if this wasn't the way I wanted to visit Berebia, we should still make the most of it. And the Captain at least seems to be a decent sort."

-Alexander: "...still, it's Berebia, and..."

Alexander descends into mumbling.

The wagon suddenly jerked and they could feel they started to get on a hillside. Sometimes the dull grinding of dirt under their feet was exchanged for creaking of planks, possibly from a miniature bridge or something.

Then, it became darker and echo began to reverbate in their ears, they must've gotten into some building.

Then it got brighter, and then it got darker again, some voices and commands being spoken. The wagon stopped after a moment and some hands quickly got all the captives off the wagon. They were then pushed into some kind of building, and then downstairs.

Gregor could feel himself being pushed onto a chair in some cold room.

"Take off his blindfold." A soft, male voice spoken and someone untied the blindfold from Gregor's eyes.

Firstly, he didn't had much trouble getting used to the light - there was just a small, lit candle on the middle of the table.

Secondly, he could see that he was in some kind of storeroom rather than a dungeon - there were wine barrels and heaps of grain sacks in places, and the ceiling was low, supported my thin pillars.

Thirdly - there was no one beside him and the man at the other side of the table. Charlotte and others were taken away.



"Welcome to Berebia. I hope your journey was interesting." The man spoke and crossed arms on his chest.



"Let's start with simple questions. Tell me your name and where do you come from."

---

Charlotte, Alexander and their friends were pushed into some room and then their blindfolds were taken off. They were in a cell, with thick walls and dark iron grate for a door.

Gregor wasn't with them. Neither were their weapons.

Charlotte looked for her bow, her gold, anything - but nope, she was practically naked (except for clothes). She then looked at Alexander.



"..."

Charlotte sighed.



"...Okay, you were right."

Alexander groaned, quite angrily. Of -course- they'd jailed them. It was BEREZIA.



"I knew it. ...Could have gone to Deynastia, but nooo... there could have been *bandits*. 's better than being in Berebia, if you ask me!"



"Hmm..."

**Charlotte looks around for any way to peer outside the cell.**

The tiny holes in the grate that serves as door gave more than enough places to peek through.

**Charlotte sees if there's anyone guarding the cell outside.**

Outside the cell, no, but she could catch a glimpse of three, maybe four men silently playing dice near a passageway to somewhere.

**Charlotte attempted to communicate with the men: loud enough for one or more of them to hear, but no louder.**



"Pst. Psssst. Hey, boys."

One of the men stood up and moved closer to the grate, eyeing Charlotte from behind it.

"Whaddaya want?" He asked in raspy voice.

Charlotte moved her head up to make sure her lips were the only thing the man could see. She also lowered her voice to where (hopefully) only her could hear.



"Rolling dice with your buddies, guarding dark cells all day... gets pretty lonely down here, doesn't it?"

"I have a wife, you perverted witch." With that, he kicked the grate, making it rattle, and a loud laughter came from the corner where his buddies played the dice. The guard who spoke to Charlotte quickly rejoined the others.

Charlotte shrugged and turned back to Alexander.



"Well, there goes that plan. Hey, Anja, Dag: are you both still awake?"

Alexander continues to lean on the wall in full armor, mumbling to himself.



"Too cold for me to sleep." After Anja replied, Dag waved with his left hand and mumbled something under his nose, sitting in the corner.



"Oh. Yeah, me too."

Charlotte nodded to Anja then lowered her glance at Dag.



"What are you mumbling about?"



"Nothing. Just grumbling about our current situation."



"I *hate* Berebia."

---



"I'll answer your questions if you answer mine. Sound fair?" Without waiting for a response, he continued. "I am Gregor. I hail from Garnes in Menelea. Are my friends safe?"



"As long as you cooperate, and as long as you're not spies - they are safe. Why were you trying to cross the border? From what I heard, your fellow countrymen just couldn't let you go." The man pushed his fingers together, forming a triangle on his stomach.

Gregor said nothing, but handed the man the sheet of paper/parchment that showed the bounty for him and his friends. He then waited for the man to finish reading it.

The man took the crumpled paper and read it thoroughly. He squinted his eyes at the end of it, then looked at Gregor, then back at the paper. He snapped his fingers at one moment.



"Leave us." Gregor could hear footsteps of two men, and then a thud when a door was closed. The 'interrogator' leaned into his chair and crossed his arms, but remained silent for a moment. And then, a moment longer.

He stared for at least a minute.



"Gregor von Hexham. Before you say anything - don't worry, I'm not one of my bloodthirsty cousins. I prefer to ask questions than kill and then ask them. So tell me - why, all of the sudden, your own lord is sending out a bounty after you and bunch of other people? It doesn't happen to be partially related to some... magical item... is it."

Gregor leaned forward.



"Possibly. There are many lords and many magical items. Do you have anything more specific?"



"Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe it's about Dragonstones, who knows. Did you get her one of them, perchance?"

Gregor arched an eyebrow.



"Interesting idea. Who would 'her' be?"



"Oh, please. I've already stated your name. We both know that you're from Kesselring. Now tell me, did she get another Dragonstone thanks to your efforts?"



"...Did you just say 'another' Dragonstone?"



"Yes, let it sink in. Then guess why so many people suddenly have death warrants on them. They all worked for Prixima, all of them brought her a Dragonstone. My family - my father, tried to stop her, but ultimately, he failed. I am Mannan Tunhausen, son of Vagor, current Count of Tunhausen. And you, Gregor von Hexham, you and your friends have brought her another stone, Lapis Lazuli! I should execute you on spot for your naivety and blind loyalty!"

Gregor slammed his palms against the table and half stood up. He had been threatened with death more than enough for one day and was quite simply fed up.



"How dare you! Do you not demand equal amounts of loyalty from the men and women under your command?! Do you not expect them to follow your orders without question, lest your plans and castles crumble and anarchy reigns?"

He sat down again, but remained angry.



"I had sworn an oath to obey my lord - Lady Prixima in this case - which I did. A good soldier, just like any here in this castle! But once we began to see the merest hints of what she was actually capable of, of the depths she would sink to in order to gain power...we left her service at once. We are not the blind, blinkered fools you accuse us of being; I don't think any of us wished to remain in her employ longer than necessary."

He slumped in his chair, anger draining away into confusion.



"What is she up to? Why would one person need so many Dragonstones? You clearly know something about what's going on. Tell us, and maybe we can do something about it."

Mannan kept hands crossed on his chest, looking at Gregor during his outburst, not looking particularly surprised nor amused at the show. After his captive slumped back to the chair, he leaned forward.



"My soldiers are trained to work efficiently and think from time to time. But maybe that's why we have better spy network than we have army." He mused, and then let out a sigh.



"We have found some evidence that Prixima is trying to work on the Dragonstones. Is she trying to make a weapon? Enhance her powers with the stones? We don't know, as far as it goes she is paying lots for simple information about their location or current owners." He went silent for a brief moment.



"As far as reports go, she got five Dragonstones since my father's disastrous attack. Do you know anything we can use against her?"

Gregor thought for a moment, but then shook his head.



"Not at the moment, no. Other than an allergy to flowers, at least. I'm sorry."

Mannan let out a hum, and after a while, he rubbed his hands.



"Well then, you're free to go. I hope you find yourself quickly accustomed to harsher weather, less varied food and to less equal standing in the army. But before I let you go, just one more quick question: tell me where do you see yourself in Berebia?"



"I can't answer that without speaking to my friends. We might not even stay here; just pass through to someplace else."



"What if I offered you the position of 'chief advisor in matters pertaining to Prixima Kesselring.' What do you think, too lengthy of a title? Your knowledge about the castle and people inside could prove valuable when we make another attack at the lair of that witch. Of course, I would take your friends into my ranks as well."

Gregor shrugged.



"Again, I would have to see what my friends want to do. I'll be sure to tell them your offer, though; some of them just might decide to take you up on that."



"Good. Guards!" One of the soldiers opened the door and peeked in.





"Release the rest of new captives, and bring them here. Tell Stork to make some warm food for our 'guests'." The soldier nodded softly and closed the door again, while Mannan looked into Gregor's eyes.



"You don't sound really confident about your friends. Any of them holding a particular grudge against my peo- oh why I'm asking, you're all Meneleans. relationship between our countries was never the best..." He crossed his arms on his chest, pondering.

Gregor shook his head ruefully. So far as he knew, the only one in the group who had a real problem with Berebians was Alexander. Sadly, he hated them enough for any two people.

---

Charlotte could hear someone speaking with the guards, and then some hurried steps. The grate-door was opened, and she and the rest of prisoners could see that three soldiers stood outside.

"You guys, Lord Mannan wants to see you. No tricks and funny moves." With that, they stood out of the way, but kept their hands on the weapons.

Alexander follows the guard. *Grudgingly.*



"Oh. Finally."

The guards brought all four to the very storeroom in which Gregor was 'interrogated' for a moment. Mannan looked over the newcomers, and then rubbed his hands.



"Together with Gregor we have agreed that you will be working with me to bring downfall to hideous Prixima Kesselring. That's it, if you don't have any other plans."



"I do." Dag mumbled out, looking at Gregor, and then back at Mannan. "I will be going to Mackerey castle, to my sister."

Mannan nodded slowly, and his gaze fell onto Charlotte.



Alexander made a quiet strained noise in his throat. He had no wishes to join Berebia, yet *what else could he do?*



"...That's all?"

Charlotte looked bewildered.



"No execution? No public stoning, even? Just, 'you are hired?' How oddly... non-standard for my knowledge of Berebia. Regardless, I gladly accept the offer. That wench backstabbed us, and I already hated her in the first place."



"I think I will stay with Gregor and Charlotte and Alexander, then." Anja spoke quietly. Then, a pair of servants brought five plates of food - some red mash, some cooked meat, all this lingering in hefty amount of dark sauce. They put them at the table, and then walked away when Mannan nodded at them.



"I would execute you if you didn't cooperate, but why so cruel? Eat something, we will talk later." Mannan left along with his servants, whilst Anja grabbed a spoon and poked the mashed red pile on one of the plates.



"Eugh, bagroots. Those are worse than potatoes, they taste like flour." Anja commented, whilst Dag was eating his rather eagerly.

Alexander made another strained groan and put his head onto the table. He did *not* want to join Berebia.

Gregor chewed at the meal thoughtfully. Not bad per se, but if this was standard fare in Berebia he shuddered to think what prison food must be like.

Alexander just kinda of stayed with his face on the table. After a short amount of time, he uttered a quite vigorous expletive.

Anja leaned over Alexander with a bright smile.



"Knighty guy, are you depressed again?"

Gregor raised an eyebrow.



"I didn't think that knights were taught that kind of language..."

Alexander merely groaned.



"...And I *guess* this means that I'm in the Berebian army now." Another expletive.



"I think he needs a drink. Or a kiss. Maybe both." Anja pondered, rubbing her chin, before she started to eat her share of food. Except the mashed orange veggies.



"Well, is this the kind of adventure you were hoping for, Charlotte? We're "chief advisors" now."



"Well, it is better than being jailed or put to death. I just wish I had some more alcohol to wash all this down. Though, I am curious: why does Berebia have such an interest in Kesselring all of the sudden? Is it still about Rosecross?"

Charlotte giggled and wiped her face.

Gregor sighed.



"It seems we weren't the first group Prixima hired to fetch her a Dragonstone. We were the third... and she has two more by now. Our host here seems to think she's up to no good."

Charlotte slammed her fist on the table, shaking everyone's plates.



"I KNEW IT!"

She then leaned back in her seat and stared off to the side.



"I should have shot the witch where she stood. She lied to my face about the Lapis Lazuli. Who knows what else she lied about?"

Charlotte felt for something in her robe then sighed.

Gregor grimaced.



"Lots of things, probably. And I fell for it hook, line, and sinker."

Dag placed the empty plate onto the table and coughed.



"...so, if you don't mind me asking, when did you guys brought 'your' stone to her? I was at her castle half a year ago, you?"



"It's been...four months, I think? We left shortly after bringing her the blasted gem and have traveled a lot since then."

The door was opened and a soldier peeked into the storeroom.

"Lord Mannan says you can leave the room. He is waiting in his study. Apparently it is important."



"Very well."

**Charlotte heads to the study to see what's so important, but behind Gregor and Alex.**

Gregor shrugged and **followed the guard, keeping watch for an (unlikely) ambush.**

The guard took them outside, into the coldness and overall darkness of the evening. Few fires in the corners of the keep, where soldiers were cramped for warmth and company, provided little warmth. Winter was coming, but up north here, it was going to be something definitely more miserable than grey skies and occasional thin snow layer of Menelea.

Few more guards walked after the group, seemingly to keep eye on them. The five travelers were taken to a keep, which was cramped and for some, it could be borderline claustrophobic. Labyrinthine design with tiny corridors and staircases everywhere.

They were taken into highest square tower, onto it's top floor. The guard who was leading them knocked on the door.

"Enter."

The soldier looked at the mercenaries, then opened the door for them, and went downstairs. Mannan was sitting at the fireplace in his study, tending to tiny flames that tried to burn several large chunks of wood. After noticing Gregor and rest of company, he stood up.



"Oh, it's you. Right. Close the door after you get in. We have lot to talk before we leave tomorrow."



"We're leaving already? Where to?"

Alexander sat there quietly and miserably, thinking.



"To the Blackmoore Abbey. An old abbey that was often used as garrison as well. In two days, Council of Sages will be hosted there. I'm going to ask the ones learned in ancient magic and scrolls if Dragonstones can be misused for some greater use than mere family stones. Dragon Magistrate will be there, scholars from Horenn University and some Ysian mages as well. Surely representatives of scholarly families like Forsaken or Camillant will show up as well. Plenty of opportunities to study, who knows, maybe they willl be interested in helping us in some other ways, too."



"...if you don't mind, I will be leaving now. I've already said I feel no interest in this dirty affair." Dag chimed in right after Mannan, and then looked at Gregor's group.



"Thanks for your help. If not you, I would be dead by now. Maybe the spirits guide you well."

Alexander looked at Dag, entirely tempted to follow him. It was his last chance, after all...

Charlotte looked at Mannan, a bit confused in their purpose in this affair.



"And you want us to... guard you from danger while you're there?"



"Yes. I won't ask you to participate in our discussions. I found out that mercenaries fare better than soldiers when someone sneaks away for a meeting with enemies of the king, really."

Charlotte nodded, a bit relieved.



"Very well. But... would your highness allow me to listen in, even if I do not participate? I, too, have a vested interest in the nature of the Dragonstones, though it is not as sinister as I assume Lady Kesselring's to be."

Mannan looked Charlotte over, his lips curved in a smirk. Dag silently nodded and walked out of the room.



"You have interest in Dragonstones? May I ask - why? You don't look like a scholar to me, or a noble."

Charlotte reached into her robe and, once again, pulled out the **Tiger's Eye** in all its luminescent, red-gold beauty.



"I have been protecting it for a purpose which I, to this day, still do not understand. Perhaps knowing more about the stones' nature will reveal this purpose to

me."

Mannan's eyes widened, but he allowed himself to be surprised only for a moment.



"Hmmm, that's.... that's Tiger's Eye, if I'm not mistaken. It's history is as tumultous as it's owners' past. I don't remember the name of the family that had it... but if you wish, I believe the library of mine might be of some help. It's in the tower opposite to this one. If you want to read on this stone before this night's sleep. And please... keep it out of sight. You will be in trouble if someone less friendly than me finds out."



"Hmm. You may have a point there. I think I'll visit the library as well; two people can deal with troublemakers better than one, and I can help find whatever documents she needs."

Besides, he hadn't seen the inside of a library for several months. It'd be nice to do a bit of reading.



"And in the meanwhile, I will take knighty guy here for a walk to an inn."  
Anja murmured, patting Alexander on the head.

---

The soldiers paid no attention to the couples as they moved to their destination. The library tower was dusty, a little quiet, quite dark, and inhabited by a wrinkly, old man with impressive goatee-like beard that reached down to his waist.

"Erro, younguns. How old Garpan can 'elp ye? Sneaking into the night? Need a manual?"  
The old man chuckled and then lit a lantern, and then another, illuminating the first floor. Shelves had many books on them, and whilst dust was basically everywhere, the books were clean of it.

Gregor breathed deeply, smiling a little at the familiar scent of paper and leather. Memories of his childhood filled his head: reading history texts, magical theory and, when his father wasn't looking, tales of brave heroes like Ike or Lyndis.

Sadly, there was no time for idle reading at the moment. He nodded politely at Garpan.



"Good evening. Do you have any information on Dragonstones? What families are said to own them, for instance?"

The old man scratched his head and glanced at the shelves for a moment.

"There are few volumes regarding ownership of the Dragonstones. Which Berebian stone interests you? I think I had a copy of 'The List of Holy Dragon Stones and their Rightful Owners' from the third century... unless you meant something more recent? I might have a copy of 'History of Berebian Dragonstones' somewhere too..."



"That third century text sounds like as good a place to start as any. We're not sure if we're even looking for a Berebian stone." Gregor carefully ignored the question about which stone in particular they were hunting for. He doubted the old man would try to steal it, but the fewer people aware of the Tiger's Eye the better.

"Please sit on th' table, then. I will find it for ye. And no finger licking! I hate that! It glues the pages!" He grumbled out loud, beginid slowly walking off toward the shelves with one of the lanterns in his hand.

After a while, he was back, with three rather small books in his hands. The titles read 'The List of Holy Dragon Stones and their Rightful Owners', 'History of Berebian Dragonstones' and 'On the Missing Dragonstones'. The last one was from year 504, quite recent, so to speak.



"That one."

Charlotte pointed to the "on the missing dragonstones" book.

The elderly librarian left all three, just in case.

The 'On the Missing Dragonstones' book had very long, very vivid tales and rumours and sayings about the lost Dragonstones.

Somewhere in the middle of the book, they found entry on Tiger's Eye. It was quite verbose, with descriptions of family members and their deeds appearing more often than mentions on Tiger's Eye. In short, the tale went as this:

*'Latzenhommer family was a family of proud Deynastian cavaliers and paladins, who lived in prosperity and fame for centuries, yet they were one of the first families to break the vows of honour and follow General Menelos to form Menelea.*

*The family was strong and influential until the year 467, when Count Edwin Latzenhommer and his three sons all went to battle the Berebians at Loras Plateau. The battle, whilst being a decisive victory for Meneleans, saw the death of Count Edwin and his youngest son, Renault.*

*Shortly afterwards, the eldest of sons, Reinche, was killed during a Berebian ambush,*



*whilst the middle son abandoned his troops and ran into the forests south of Fezzan, never to be heard from again.*

*It is unknown who was the last to possess Tiger's Eye, or where it is now. It might be in Berebian hands, or in a grave of a Latzenhommer family member. Some of rumors claim that Dalin, the middle son of Edwin, who ran into the forest, settled down under new name in village of Kasteia, or Kallachia, or Chalche, or Zalchia, or similarly sounding village near Fezzan.*

*With all four males of Latzenhommer family dead, Countess Karla, wife of late Count Edwin turned to alcohol and fell into depression, and took her own life with poison during a cold winter night in 468. As Count Edwin had no brothers, the family history ends there.*

*That's all about Tiger's Eye.'*



"Under a new name..."

Charlotte thought for a minute then lay back in her seat.



"I want to look at one more thing before we go."

**Charlotte examined both "The List of Holy Dragonstones and their Rightful Owners" and "On the Missing Dragonstones" for any information on Lapis Lazuli.**

Gregor simply watched Charlotte work, helping occasionally when asked. Since he knew virtually nothing of the Tiger's Eye, he'd likely just be a distraction offering unwanted assistance.

There was nothing on Lapis Lazuli in 'On the Missing Dragonstones'.

'The List of Holy Dragonstones and their Rightful Owners', however, had a brief paragraph on Lapis Lazuli (like all other stones in the book):

*'Ah the brightest of blue stones, the sacred Lapis Lazuli, forged from the heavenly droplets by Dragon Reeo, and given into hands of the Holy Crusader Numer Zwei Sechs, the Golden Sorceress, Kesselrin. As stone of blueness, it partially governs over the skies and waters of the world, as allowed by Dragon Reeo. It is by divine right that Kesselrin and all her direct descendants are to be rightful owners and protectorates of this Dragonstone, for the all of time.'*





"Hmm..."

Gregor decides to **check the book about Berebian stones for any mention of the Tiger's Eye or the Lapis Lazuli.**

There's no mention of either Lapis Lazuli or Tiger's Eye in 'History of Berebian Dragonstones'.



"Damn. That would have been an interesting twist."

Gregor put his book down.



"I think we're done here, don't you, Gregor? It's good to know the truth about what we have, but perhaps knowing what was done in the past is not as important as knowing what to do in the future. A book can't tell us that."

Charlotte stood up, yawned and started putting the books back in the order they were handed to her.



"We have to make our own history. Not rely on someone else's."

After saying this, Charlotte bent down toward Gregor and, to his surprise, briefly kissed him on the cheek.



"Thanks for all your help today. Now let's get some sleep. We have a big day ahead of us, don't you think?"

---

The morning came quite quickly and found the two sleeping in separate beds in one room. Servants entered the room, opening the door with a loud creak. They've brought a bowl of warm, brown drink and a freshly baked bread with poppy seed. Nothing else.

"Lord Tunhausen will be awaiting you outside. He asks you to be quick in your preparations." One of the young men spoke and then left with the rest, before Anja snuck inside.



"Oh, I see they've brought you bread and that hideous 'tea' stuff as well."

Gregor cautiously tasted the beverage. So this was "tea"? A little bitter, but he liked it. He was in a good mood this morning.



"Morning, Anja. Is Alexander feeling any better?"



"Oh, I don't know. We went to the inn for few drinks, then he had an argument with some drunken Berebians, then they arm-wrestled a little and then they got drunk together even more. I don't think he remembers much but I tell you, he is heavy to push around in his drunken state. I've got him to bed and he is grumpingly waking up, I believe."

Indeed, Alexander groaned as he woke up.

Gregor winced.



"He didn't kill anyone, did he? He looked mad enough last I saw him."



"Few bruises, that's all I think. I will meet you two outside." Anja quickly moved out from the room and went back to the quarters she shared with Alexander.



"Hello, knightly guy! Woke up already?"



"That's a relief. I was half afraid he'd accidentally murder some farmer."

Gregor muttered as Anja left the room. He gulped down some tea, feeling more awake already.

Charlotte, having disappeared a few minutes ago, finally left the room's clothing closet and presented her new outfit to Gregor while he was eating.



"What do you think? Perfect attire for the job, no?"

Unfortunately, Charlotte's reappearance occurred just as Gregor was taking a drink, causing him to choke temporarily. After a moment of coughing, he responded:



"Wow. I mean, yes. Looks perfect."



"Excellent. I can hardly eat from excitement, so ready as soon as you are."



"Sounds good. Let's be off."

Gregor grabbed a couple of the bread rolls (for later) and was **ready for Chapter 7.**

---

When they got outside, Mannan waited with someone new.



"Let me introduce Edwin Westbringer, a traveling mage. In exchange of staying at my place, he is my aide of sorts. Sometimes. He will go with us, if you don't mind."

Seconds later, Anja got her wagon right beside Mannan. It seems it was going to be their vehicle of choice for this journey as well.

**//Edwin Westbringer is in!**

Gregor shrugged and offered his hand to the newcomer.



"Nice to meet you, Mr Westbringer. Guess we'll be traveling together for now."

Alexander grumbles to himself, walks out of the room. He has what can only be described as an expression of extreme dread on his face.

Edwin looked at Gregor closely for a second and seemingly satisfied for now, he shook his hand.



"Hello, you look like a somewhat decent sort. And you also look like you've gone through some trouble, which you definitely have if I recall. Has your stay been satisfactory?"

Gregor shrugged.



"I suppose you could say that. At least we didn't spend the night in some dungeon, so it could have been worse. So, how much did Lord Tunhauser tell you?"

Mannan, who was standing nearby, coughed.



"I told him all that you know."



"Indeed, I think that you have definitely been through a lot recently, but you definitely have something that's of more interest to me, as a scholar of the magical arts." Edwin rubbed his hands gleefully and grinned.



"I would love to take a closer study at that object later on, ideally in a safer environment and without kingdom changing events about to happen of course. There's just so little that anyone knows about them after all, and it's an incredible opportunity that may help with future problems if we discover anything about them." He looks hopefully at each of the group, a questioning look on his face.

Gregor arched an eyebrow.



"That's a little presumptuous, isn't it? We just met literally a moment ago."

Charlotte narrowed her eyes and nodded toward Gregor.



"Indeed. I cannot prevent his highness from sharing the knowledge which I

shared with him, but I'm not going to let just anyone study what I've protected for years."

Edwin sighed and nodded sadly.



"Yes, I thought as much. I apologise if I came off as rude, but you have to understand, this sort of chance happens something along the lines of once in a life time, if ever. I had to try, but I understand you wanting to keep it safe, as it's dangerous in the wrong hands. I'm sure we all know that at least, so it's good to see that you are taking this whole mess seriously."

He gives a sad smile and shakes his head.



"And I must admit: The scholar in me has a severe craving for new knowledge, especially where magic is concerned. Typical of one wanting to become a sage, I would say. So once again, I'm sorry."



"Guess we got off on the wrong foot. I'll accept your apology this time, but remember that as far as that object goes, Charlotte has the final say."



"We can discuss that topic when we're back... and in private." Mannan climbed the wagon and sat in the back.



"You ready?"



"Yes, let's get going."

When the wagon was going out of the keep, Gregor and his friends could see the outside for the first time, in bright light.

Entire Tunhausen was built into a hillside. Not only the keep on top of it, no - the construction zig-zag went all the way from keep to the outskirts of the settlement, from top of hill to it's base.

It provided quite some defense against footmen, but it was basically target practice for catapults if they ever attack Tunhausen from the east - every building was plain visible.

And then, the wagon went on the road to the east.

## ~~Chapter 7: Blackmoore~~



*Blackmoore, an abbey-turned-keep many times by Berebian border army.*

*Now, the halls of old monastery were going to host a meeting between magicians and sages not bound by allegiances and oaths of loyalty, but by common need for research and gathering knowledge.*

*This was also a chance for Mannan Tunhausen and his newly hired mercenaries to, possibly, gain some insights into Dragonstone lore, and maybe get some aid in dealing with the ever-so dangerous Prixima Kesselring.*

The jagged cliffs of Blackmoore Abbey gained insight into the defensive properties of the place - a winding path took every incoming assailant around the building, exposing him to all the tiny arrow slits and windows before they would wind up at the top of the hill, in front of a tiny entrance gate, an excellent choking point.

On the way upwards, the wagon with Mannan and rest of his companions could see several hooded men patrolling the path. Whilst they had cloaks and hoods, people with keen eyes and some concentration, could notice the coloured collars of Berebian, Menelean and Ystian armies - purple, dark green, bright red. They've glanced at the wagon, but said no word to the travelers.

No one was shooting arrows at them nor flinging bolts of magic from the stout, thick towers.

And they have arrived at the gates. A young spearman approached the wagon, eyeing the group with some distrust.

"Yer name, please?"



"...Mannan Tunhausen, bishop. These are--"

"Arright, lemme get the... the council members." The soldier gave Mannan's friends a dirty look and then walked into the abbey.



"What a... strange man." He said, jumping from the wagon onto the grass below.

### **NPC: Mannan Tunhausen joins the list!**

Charlotte turns to Bishop Mannan.



"Your highness - er, your holiness - may I ask you a question? Why do you trust us like this? It is true that we are working for the same cause, currently, but it is remarkable you would ride in Anja's wagon alongside Sir Hexham, Sir Jorinn and I. You must trust your intuition very heavily - at least compared to most nobles."



"Well, he does have me, for what it's worth. And he is quite skilled in combat too, I'm sure." Edwin chips in before sticking his nose back into the book he was reading and writing in. It looked like a personal diary or scrapbook, judging by the various bit of parchment stuck between it's pages.



"And if you did try anything, then I suggest you remember the not inconsiderable amount of troops that we've passed recently. Even if you did do anything, you wouldn't get far."



"I've once prayed to my gods at a small village shrine, asking them for guidance when my father left for Kesselring. The night of that day, I was returning for rest at an inn when I was mugged in an alley. The bandits almost killed me, but then a young man appeared in the alley and knocked the bandits down. He wasn't a Berebian, he was a Menelean, he wore the armour of my enemies in plain sight! He helped me stand up... I've looked at the uncounscious bandits for a brief moment, and when I turned to thank my savior, he was gone. You might be an atheist, you might have your own beliefs - but I believe it was a knight sent by my deities, a sign that I should seek the aid of Meneleans. And then, few months later, you came. Not only you're Meneleans, but you had dealings with Prixima and are now hunted by her. Coincidence? I say not."

---

**Meanwhile, inside the Blackmoore keep...**



"...I will have to give Lady Prixima my sincere gratitude. If not for her letter, and the little gifts, I wouldn't bother to come here." The elderly druid nodded to a young man in mercenary attire.

"I will tell her next time I visit the keep. May I ask, how did you and your fellows overtake the Blackmoore so easily?"



"Oh, it is simple. The cursed staves that cause insanity and madness wouldn't work on the mages, like I assumed. Unfortunately for them, their armed escorts weren't that resistant. Oh if you could only see the shock on the faces of all those strangers when they began killing each other! The blood that kept pouring from the stab wounds as they screamed in pain and terror, the life essence that I managed to absorb... I feel younger already! My research will bring fruit of immortality to me! I, Bores the Wise, shall last forever!"

"Right. Of course. Well we hope that you will join our side of the future war, master Bores. When the war breaks out--"

The talk was interrupted by the very soldier that asked Mannan his name a moment ago.

"Master Bores, someone named Mannan Tunhausen just arrived, with his entourage."



"Mannan... Tunhausen... I don't know him. Kill him and his aides."

"Yes sir."



"What about that Forsaken kid and his band of bravados? Are they dealt with?"

"Err, they've barricaded themselves in the stables in the back of the abbey. The guy who went to feed the wyvern barricaded himself in the tower and--"



"They're still alive?"



"When I came here a moment ago, you told me all of the dignitaries are dead, Bores."



"Bah! You, come back when they're all dead, and don't let anyone interrupt us!"

"Sure thing, boss." The young spearman bowed and sped off toward the door at the other side of the chamber.



"Now, stop worrying, and let's get back to our talk, my Menelean friend. You mentioned something about the war..."

---

### **Back at the entrance...**

The soldiers who were patrolling the road marched back toward the entrance, meters away from Anja's wagon.

Suddenly, there was a whistle coming from the inside. And then, a very clear shout:

"Kill them all!"



"What? What's the meaning of this!" Mannan looked around and saw that all the soldiers around them, no matter the markings at their collars, have drawn weapons.



"It's a trap!"

---

### **And at the same moment, at top of staircase leading to small tower...**

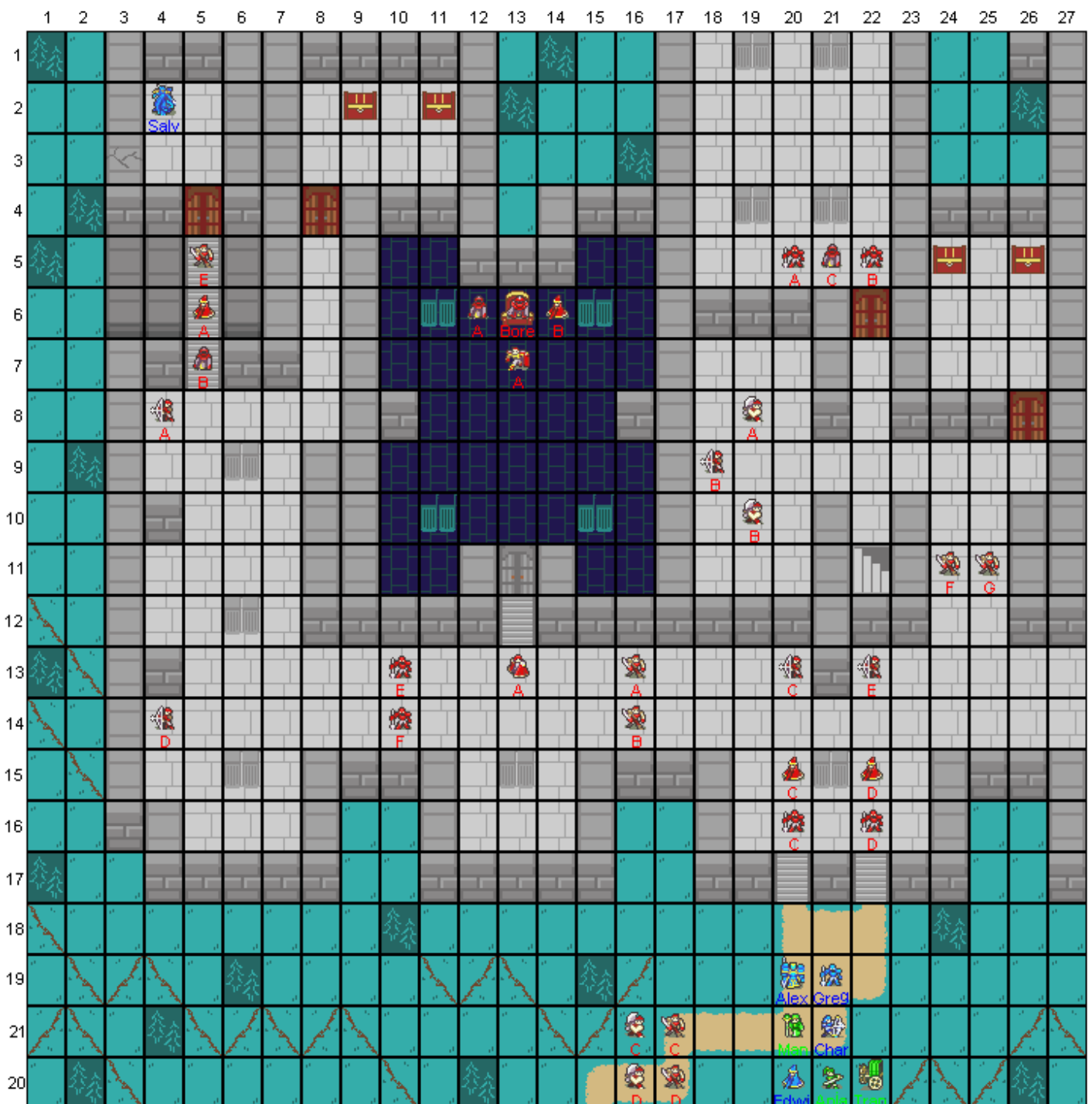
"Open the door or we will bash it open! No matter - whatever you do, yer dead, fella!" Bores' thugs waited for a moment, and then nodded to each other, preparing their weapons

Inside, Salvatore's wyvern growled, the beast and it's rider in the corner. And then Salvatore noticed one thing:

A crack in the wall.

**//Salvatore Vaughan is in!**

# ~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                 | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 38/38<br>Charlotte Braxis: 30/30<br>Edwin Westbringer: 27/27<br>Gregor von Hexham: 32/32<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 32/32 | Sellsword A: 32/32<br>Sellsword B: 32/32<br>Sellsword C: 32/32<br>Sellsword D: 32/32<br>Sellsword E: 32/32<br>Sellsword F: 32/32<br>Sellsword G: 32/32<br>Fighter A: 35/35<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Fighter D: 35/35 | Hired Spearman A: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman B: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman C: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman D: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman E: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman F: 31/31<br>Mage A: 29/29<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Mage C: 29/29<br>Mage D: 29/29<br>Shaman A: 30/30<br>Shaman B: 30/30<br>Shaman C: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36<br>Sage: 33/33 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Anja: 26/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 31/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



"..." Ormm continued to growl menacingly at the door, Sal rubbed the wyvern's neck reassuringly. Has to be an answer...



"If'in yah want me... YAH'LL HAVE TA COME AN' GET ME YAH FINKS! MEN O' BLACK HEARTS AN' FOUL MACHINATIONS! GREED RULES YER SOULS AN' CORRUPTS YER MINDS, TA DRIVE INNOCENTS TA DEATH! LOOK AT YERSELVES, THIS WHAT YAH WANT WIT' YER LIVES, HOW YAH'LL REMEMBER YERSELF ON YER DEATH BED?! DEATH BE BUT AH SPECTER WHO COMES FER ALL IN THEIR DUE TIMES!" He's not sure how many there are, nor if he can indeed kill them all. Maybe one or two, maybe, just maybe, three...

Then a light in the dim room, something he didn't notice before. Truly, a silver lining in clouds so dark. "Mah time ta die may yet still come, but it's not this day, no..."

With a flurry of motion, the rider stirred the wyvern into action, it **tromping to 4.3**, and the rider rearing his (Killer Lance)spear back and **dealing a foul blow at the wall**. His mission for life still not done, the wyvern jumped out of the tower through the crumbled masonry, letting out a roar of defiance at its new found freedom, **flying to 1.5**. Have to get to the front, maybe he can get help... Maybe.

---



"I sure hope you lot have a plan for this sort of thing, because I don't!"

**Edwin: Move to 19, 20 and attack Sellsword D.**



"I don't know what's going on here, but we can sort it out once people aren't trying to kill us. Charlotte, can you do anything about the mage on the right?"



"The plan is simple, we fight for our lives and then find out why this mess happened in the first place."

Edwin delivered a firebolt at Sellsword D's face, searing it.

#### Edwin vs Sellsword D

Hit:  $122 + 10 - 31 = 101$ , autohit!

Damage:  $21 - 5 = 16$ dmg

In the meanwhile, Salvatore burst through the wall, his wyvern roaring in triumph. The thugs that tried to break through the door noticed his escape through small arrow slits at the staircase's walls.

"Shit, he escaped!"

Salvatore vs Cracked Wall

Damage:  $26-5 = 21\text{dmg}$



"Yes. I would be exposing myself, though. Alexander, guard me, please!"

**1 E, 2 N then attack Mage D with Iron Longbow.**

Alexander looked... rather hollow. Indeed, he'd realized, he was a traitor to Menelea. And as such, he removed his thoughts from his actions. It's not like he could take them, and as such his body pretty much moved on instinct, a nearmindless shell. And if he didn't know that Prixima was evil, he wouldn't have allowed his body to function either. Against a gang of non-Menelean thugs though? Alexander was plenty able to get angry.

He took out the lance he had had since squirehood, trudged to **22, 17** and stabbed at the spearman there. (**Attach Spearman D to my lance's point**) He also put up his shield to **guard**.



"Looks like you two have that entrance covered...I'll take this one! The rest of you guys take the ones outside!"

**Gregor: Move to (20,18) and FLING Iron Javelin at Spearguy C**

Lots of fighting.

Charlotte vs Mage D

Hit:  $116+10+7-31 = 102$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17+1-6 = 12\text{dmg}$

Alexander vs Hired Spearman D

Hit:  $104+5-32 = 77$   
Hit roll: 23, hit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $22-13 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$   
  
Hired Spearman D counters!  
Hit:  $105-17 = 88$   
Hit roll: 60, hit!  
Damage:  $24-2-21 = 1\text{dmg}$   
  
Hired Spearman D strikes again!  
Hit:  $105-17 = 88$   
Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage:  $24-2-21 = 1\text{dmg}$

Gregor vs Spearman C

Hit:  $109+11+5-32 = 93$

Hit roll: 13, hit! Crit: 12!  
Damage:  $22+2-13 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Even more fighting.

First two blasts of magic slammed into Alexander. Yet up he stayed- until the third blast hit him. He stayed up for a few seconds, and maybe (though with a salvo the likes of with he had just been hit with, not very likely) he could have stayed up, if he had a bit more will to him. But alas, he did not.

And as such, he fell to the ground, with an incredibly loud clatter of metal.

### Mage D vs Alexander

Hit:  $125-17 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21-2-5 = 14\text{dmg}$

Mage D attacks again!  
Hit:  $125-17 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21-2-5 = 14\text{dmg}$

### Mage C vs Alexander

Hit:  $125-17 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21-2-5 = 14\text{dmg}$

### Lonbowman C vs Gregor

Hit:  $116-11-5-32 = 68$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $21-2-15 = 4\text{dmg}$

### Lonbowman C vs Gregor

Hit:  $116-11-5-32 = 68$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

### Spearman D vs Gregor

Hit:  $105-11-5-32 = 57$   
Hit roll: 58, miss!  
  
Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $109+11+5-32 = 93$   
Hit roll: 46, hit!  
Damage:  $22+2-13 = 11\text{dmg}$

### Swordman C vs Edwin

Hit:  $110-10-23 = 77$   
Hit roll: 79, miss!  
  
Edwin retaliates!  
Hit:  $122+10-31 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21-5 = 16\text{dmg}$

### Swordman D vs Edwin

Hit:  $110-10-23 = 77$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $24-6 = 18\text{dmg}$   
  
Edwin retaliates!  
Hit:  $122+10-31 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21-5 = 16\text{dmg}$

### Fighter D vs Edwin

Hit:  $97-10-31 = 56$

Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $28-6 = 22\text{dmg}$

#### Fighter C vs Gregor

Hit:  $97+15-11-5-32 = 64$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-2-15 = 12\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $109+11+5-15-23 = 87$   
Hit roll: 14, hit!  
Damage:  $22+2-1-11 = 12\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters again!  
Hit:  $109+11+5-15-23 = 87$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $22+2-1-11 = 12\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Here, mister Westbringer." Mannan pointed his staff and waves of healing energy revived the downed mage.

#### Mannan mends Edwin

$20+14 / 2 =$  Up to 17HP healed

#### Anja vs Fighter D

Hit:  $141+15-23 = 133$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $16+1-11 = 6\text{dmg}$

Fighter D counters!  
Hit:  $97-15-60 = 22$   
Hit roll: 44, miss!

Anja strikes again!  
Hit:  $141+15-23 = 133$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $16+1-11 = 6\text{dmg}$

### Suddenly...

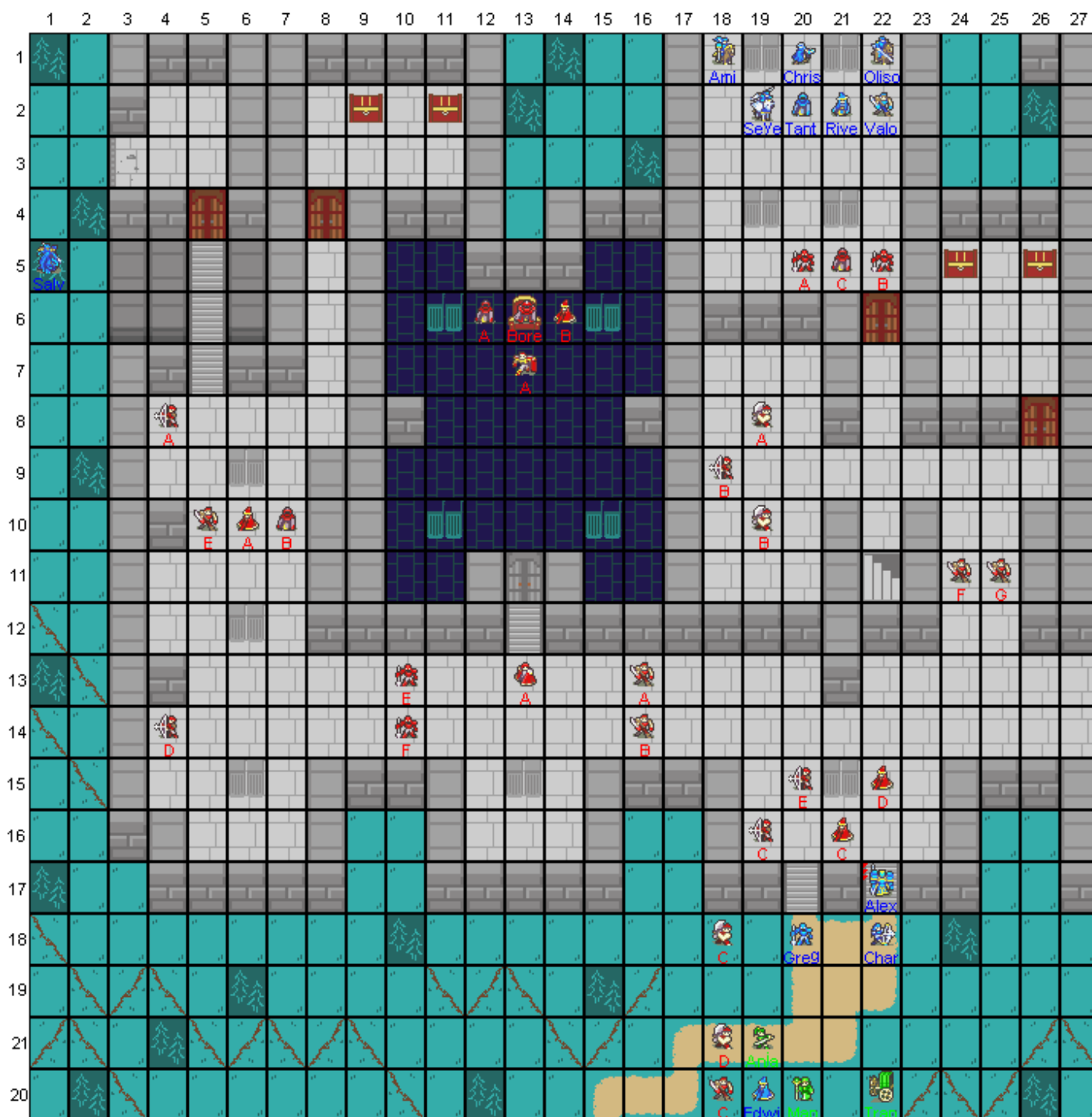
The large door that led from back hall to the stables' courtyard suddenly exploded into cloud of splinters and loose planks. After the dust settled a little, Tantallos Forsaken stepped into the hall, and along with him, his humble entourage.

"D-damn, we can't let them escape!" The shaman guarding the inner door pulled out his flux tome.

//Ami Storm, Christopher Shields, Olison Eul, Riven, Seyena Ikane, Tantallos Forsaken and Valor Inara are back~!

# ~~Player Turn 2~~

The grey skies overhead turned a bit darker. It seems that it's going to rain soon.



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/38 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span><br>Ami Storm: 26/26<br>Charlotte Braxis: 30/30<br>Christopher Shields: 31/31<br>Edwin Westbringer: <span style="color: green;">22/27</span><br>Gregor von Hexham: 16/32<br>Olison Eul: 31/31<br>Riven: 28/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 32/32<br>Seyena Ikane: 31/31<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 29/29<br>Valor Inara: 32/32 | Sellsword A: 32/32<br>Sellsword B: 32/32<br>Sellsword C: 16/32<br>Sellsword E: 32/32<br>Sellsword F: 32/32<br>Sellsword G: 32/32<br>Fighter A: 35/35<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 11/35<br>Fighter D: 23/35<br>Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman B: 29/29<br>Longbowman C: 29/29 |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Hired Spearman A: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman B: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman E: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman F: 31/31<br>Mage A: 29/29<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Mage C: 29/29<br>Mage D: 17/29<br>Shaman A: 30/30<br>Shaman B: 30/30<br>Shaman C: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36    |  |

|                                                           |                     |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| <b>Allies:</b>                                            | Longbowman D: 29/29 | Sage: 33/33 |
| Anja: 26/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 31/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits | Longbowman E: 29/29 |             |



"Thank you." Edwin replied, standing upright again in a small cloud of light vapour, his wounds already sealing themselves with small hisses of steam from his elemental synergy.



"I suggest eliminating those mages quickly, before they let off another volley!"

**Edwin: Move to 20, 21 and attack Fighter D.**

Under fire from all sides, Gregor could do little but defend himself and fight back when possible. Still, the sound of a distant explosion made him pause for a moment.



"What on Earth is going on?"



"Start running."



"I am not in the mood for little games today, so bring them hell. As for you, little enemies... the prince of Forsakens is here for a little conversation with your boss, but as I know you won't let me do that so easily, prepare for the blood bath."

**Tantallos: Move to 19,4 and attack Hired Spearman A.**

Without so much as a word of warning, Valor dashed toward the nearby shaman and attacked.

**Valor: Move to 21, 4 and attack the shaman.**



"It's not smart to stand in our way. Those who try usually end up dead."



**Seyena: Moves to 20, 4 and attacks Spearman A with her Iron Lance.**

Fire!

**Edwin vs Fighter D**

Hit:  $122+10-23 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21-4 = 17$ dmg

Worm!

**Tantallos vs Spearman A**

Hit:  $119-32 = 87$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $22+2-5 = 19$ dmg

IRON SORD!

**Valor vs Shaman A**

Hit:  $122-25 = 97$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $16-5 = 11$ dmg  
  
Shaman A retaliates!  
Hit:  $110-15-32 = 63$   
Hit roll: 30, hit!  
Damage:  $26-5 = 21$ dmg

And Iron Lance.

**Seyena vs Spearman A**

Hit:  $116+10-32 = 94$   
Hit roll: 60, hit! Crit roll: 14!  
Damage:  $21+1-13 = 9 \times 3 = 27$ dmg

**Ami: Move to 18,4**

Just as silently, Olison strafed behind Valor, lobbing javelins at the Shaman in droves.

**Olison: Move to 21,3. Javelinx2 to Shaman A.**

**Chris moves to back up Olison and Valor by going to 22,4 and going after the shaman with his crossbow... unless Olison kills the guy, in which case he goes for the spearman a tile below him with his Switchblade.**



"I've never been one for revenge or vengeance, but I think now sounds like a good time to try the concepts out. And it's the perfect weather for it, too."

**Olison vs Shaman A**

Hit:  $100+5-25 = 80$   
Hit roll: 59, hit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $19+2-5 = 16 \times 3 = 48$ dmg

Christopher went to do what he does best - stabs.

#### Chris vs Spearman B

Hit:  $122+1-15-32 = 76$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

Spearman B counters!

Hit:  $105+15-1-43 = 76$

Hit roll: 31, hit!

Damage:  $24+1-1-8 = 16\text{dmg}$

Christopher attacks again!

Hit:  $122+1-15-32 = 76$

Hit roll: 53, hit! Crit roll: 20!

Damage:  $22+2-1-13 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$



"Have ta get ta the others, have ta foind help..." The wyvern rider muttered to himself as he saw the sky darkening. More tests of his worth. So be it then.

Spurring the wyvern into action, **they flew to 1.10**, exploiting gaps in the arrowslits that dot the walls. Who knows how many could be in there, but chances aren't something he's happy to rely on. Hm... From this vantage, he almost sees... Something in the front of the castle.

A group of people? Hard to see but from the specks of fire flaring up, only way he could actually notice them from here thanks to the darkening sky, seems there is fighting going on. Perhaps he could come to his help's help then...



"Not a finger."

**Totally ignoring her immediate danger, Charlotte instead took aim for Fighter C with her steel longbow.**



*Sure could use Ami's magic right now...but in the meantime, I'll have to patch myself up. At least Charlotte has my back.*

**Gregor: Use vulnerary, stay put. All personal skills and support bonuses activate. Keep Iron Javelin equipped.**

Twang!

#### Charlotte vs Fighter C

Hit:  $111+11+10+5-23 = 114$ , autohit! Crit roll: 21!

Damage:  $20+2-11 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

Snort!

#### Gregor uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP restored



"You know, your current job doesn't seem to pay very much. If you start working for us I'll offer you your life. That's a pretty valuable offer, I would think."

**Riven: Move to 22, 3. Futile diplomacy on Hired Spearman B, gratuitous and excessive murder if he refuses.**

The lance soldier got squished into pool of tar before he could respond.

**Riven vs Spearman B**

Hit:  $116+10+2-32 = 96$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Damage:  $26+2-5 = 23\text{dmg}$

~~Enemy Phase~~

**Fighter D vs Gregor**

Hit:  $97+15-11-5-32 = 64$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-2-3-15 = 9\text{dmg}$   
  
Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $109+11+5-15-23 = 87$   
Hit roll: 81, hit! Crit roll: 2!  
Damage:  $22+2-1-11 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

Sellsword C rushed at Mannan, who calmly evaded the attack.



"I hope you will find peace in afterlife, villain." With that, and few bolts of holy magic, Mannan knocked the swordsman down.

**Sellsword C vs Mannan**

Hit:  $110-44 = 66$   
Hit roll: 77, miss!  
  
Mannan counters!  
Hit:  $138-31 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $20+2-5 = 17\text{dmg}$

Meanwhile, Gregor got a bit scorched.

**Mage C vs Gregor**

Hit:  $125-11-5-32 = 77$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $21-3 = 18\text{dmg}$

After Gregor fell, the two bowmen moved out and attacked Anja and Edwin. And then Charlotte had to duel with a mage.

**Longbowman C vs Anja**

Hit:  $116-60 = 56$   
Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $21-7 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Longbowman E vs Edwin

Hit:  $116-10-23 = 83$

Hit roll: 62, hit!

Damage:  $21-6 = 15\text{dmg}$

#### Mage D vs Charlotte

Hit:  $125-10-31 = 84$

Hit roll: 35, hit!

Damage:  $21-3 = 18\text{dmg}$

Charlotte counters!

Hit:  $111+10-31 = 90$

Hit roll: 52, hit!

Damage:  $20-6 = 14\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

#### Anja vs Longbowman C

Hit:  $141-33 = 108$ , autohit! Crit roll: 4!

Damage:  $16-11 = 5 \times 3 = 15\text{dmg}$

Anja attacks again!

Hit:  $141-33 = 108$ , autohit!

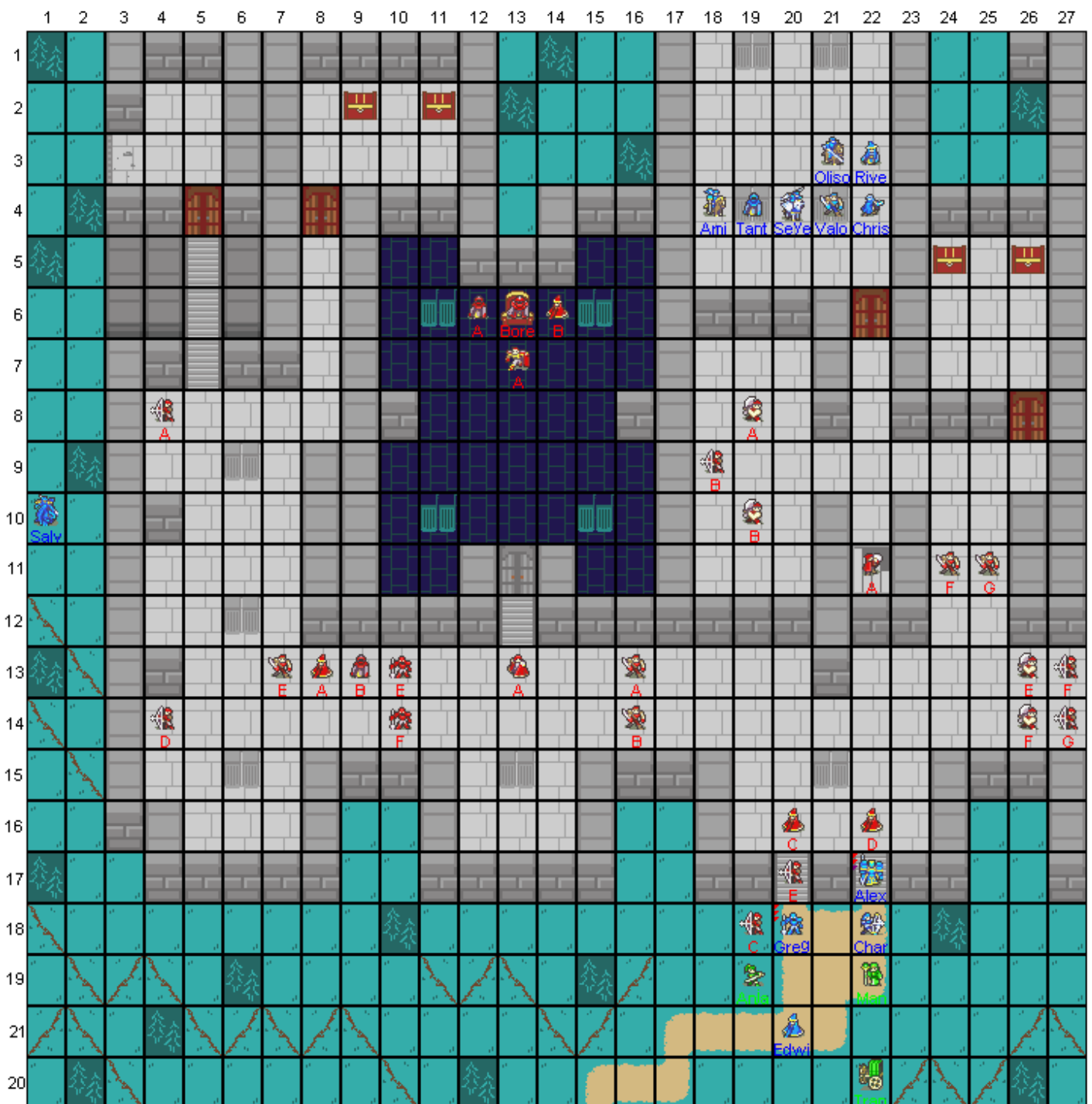
Damage:  $16-11 = 5\text{dmg}$

Mannan moved up to Charlotte and mended her scorch wounds.

#### Mannan mends Charlotte

$20+14 =$  Up to 34HP restored

# ~~~Player Turn 3~~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/39 <span style="color: red;">2/3</span><br>Ami Storm: 26/27<br>Charlotte Braxis: 30/30<br>Christopher Shields: 15/32<br>Edwin Westbringer: <span style="color: green;">12/27</span><br>Gregor von Hexham: -/33 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span><br>Olisc Eul: 31/32<br>Riven: 28/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 32/32<br>Seyena Ikane: 31/31<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 29/29<br>Valor Inara: 11/33 |  | Sellsword A: 32/32<br>Sellsword B: 32/32<br>Sellsword C: 16/32<br>Sellsword E: 32/32<br>Sellsword F: 32/32<br>Sellsword G: 32/32<br>Fighter A: 35/35<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter E: 35/35<br>Fighter F: 35/35<br>Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman B: 29/29<br>Longbowman C: 9/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29<br>Longbowman E: 29/29 |  |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  | Longbowman F: 29/29<br>Longbowman G: 29/29<br>Hired Spearman E: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman F: 31/31<br>Mage A: 29/29<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Mage C: 29/29<br>Mage D: 3/29<br>Shaman B: 30/30<br>Shaman C: 30/30<br>Thief: 26/26<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36<br>Sage: 33/33                                              |  |
| Anja: 12/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 31/31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |



"Let me just see about this door."

**Chris moves one south and lockpicks the door if possible. If not, he just attacks it.**

The door opened with a click.

Chris pushed the door open.



"And that's that. Now, who's going to lead the charge to kill these arrogant assholes?"

Olison snorted bemusedly.



"Was waiting for you to say that."

He then immediately stormed down the hallway, **to 22,9. Tossing a Javelin at the Thief on his way down.**



"I was hoping you'd say that. I'll be right behind you, Olison."

**Tantallos: Move to 22, 6.**



"Now you are with the Forsakens, so all these enemies you kill will be helping the Plague Dragon."

Valor followed Olison, teeth gritted against the pain he'd experienced at the business end of dark magic.



"I guess I'm not used to fighting living opponents. Let's get out of here!"

**Valor: Move to 22, 8!**



"I started dedicating kills to the Plague Dragon before I joined up."



"You really know how to make me happy, do not you? I am quite sure the Plague Dragon is assisting you for the hard work. "

Chris laughed again. He seemed actually happy for once.



"Well, I'll be honest. I enjoy this work much more than the last job I had... although maybe it's just the company."

He smiled at the rest of the group.



"Probably it is, and at least this time we just had to kill a bunch of undeads, you know. So there wasn't anything to stress them or make them feel sad. And better yet, they got paid for a task that didn't mess up with their heads.."

He scratched his head and shrugged.



"...Well not too much as some of them did not believe undeads existed. It will be a pity to see them leave as it seems they already have their own plans. We really could use some help, after all.. we will have to end that undead problem really soon."



"No worries, Tantallos. You know I have your back."



"Thank you, I will make sure to give you a important position when we return to the castle and deal with the undead army, you are going to be our first

assassin after all! And as soon as we finish the life of the funny guy who decided to bother our group I will be ready to put the Forsaken's mask and claim the title as a king. At least I hope so."



"It's a kind offer, but I don't need a fancy title."



"I'm happy enough continuing to work alongside everyone."



"Just because you will have a fancy title, it does not mean you will stop working with the others. Like I said, we like to give freedom to our followers, this is why we have so many ancient users around. Usually they would be bothered depending of the town they were on, after all.. you know some places do not approve "Dark Magic."

Chris laughed.



"Well, in that case, we'll see if I can earn one."

He laughed as well and shrugged.



"Frankly, fancy titles just have one function, give you more permissions when moving around. When I am on the caste my title as a prince means nothing, we are all followers of the Plague Dragon after all."

---

It should have worked. The mages should have thrown themselves at him, leaving Charlotte free to snipe them in her normal fashion. Gregor had felt confident, psyched up. He *knew* he could dodge those spells, he *knew* he could block those arrows.

And it would have worked if that whoreson bastard with an axe hadn't appeared out of nowhere and lodged said axe in his shoulder, throwing him badly off balance. He fell moments later, cursing the axeman to whatever hell Adrien ended up at.



"I think that it's time to get up and stop lounging around..."



Edwin: Move to 20, 19 and use a vulululungary on Gregor.



"Takin' tah long..." Salvatore muttered to himself. By the time he got to whoever was at the front of the castle, they'd of been long gone. No other entrances besides the one he made himself... And with the sky darkening... Sal grumbled as he urged Ormm to turn around, **soaring to 1.4**

Perhaps he could be a distraction then, if nothing else... A deadly distraction, if he had any say in it.

Whilst Olison was exchanging projectiles with the thief, Edwin revived Gregor with white goodness.

Olison vs Thief

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| Hit: $100+15-55 = 60$           |
| Hit roll: 52, hit!              |
| Damage: $19+1-5 = 15\text{dmg}$ |
| Thief counters!                 |
| Hit: $115+15-15-39 = 76$        |
| Hit roll: 6, hit!               |
| Damage: $16-1-12 = 3\text{dmg}$ |
| Thief retaliates again!         |
| Hit: $115+15-15-39 = 76$        |
| Hit roll: 67, hit!              |
| Damage: $16-1-12 = 3\text{dmg}$ |

Edwin uses Vulnerary on Gregor

|                    |
|--------------------|
| Up to 5HP restored |
|--------------------|

Charlotte: One last shot! Iron Longbow -> Mage D!

Twanging continues on the front.

Charlotte vs Mage D

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Hit: $117+10-31 = 96$         |
| Hit roll: 15, hit!            |
| Damage: $17-6 = 11\text{dmg}$ |

Revived somewhat by the medicine, Gregor hauled himself to his feet and braced himself. He was under no illusion how little it would take to knock him down again, but he did not falter.

Seyena moves to 22,6

Ami head to 21,5

Chris nodded to Ami when she stepped beside him.



"Hey there."



"Hey Chris, was the room okay?"



"Suitable enough for my purposes. What about you? The Forsaken treating you OK?"

**Riven: Hold still.**



"Well enough, but I can't shake that feeling...never mind. The line between me and-"



"Huh?"



"Not again."



"I haven't seen YOU in awhile."



"All the same, good day, Mia. How do you like that name, by the way? I came up with it while you were... sleeping?"

He wasn't sure what the word should be.



"Mia, Mia Storm?"

She says, tasting the word.



"Yes, I like this name. Thank you, Chris."



"You're quite welcome, but your smile is all the thanks I need."

He placed his hand on her shoulder for a moment.



"It would be awfully rude of me not to put the same question to you. How have you been doing with everything we've done since parting ways with Gregor's group?"



"Well enough, some of the Forsaken are worshiping me, something about my tattoo being a symbol of Sydel or something, I ignore them for the most part."

Tenebra neighs.



"Same thing happened to you, Tenebra?"



"Sydel, Sydel... something about that rings a bell, but I can't quite recall."



"Hmm. Maybe it'll come to me later. Nevertheless, that's good news."



"It's a shame we haven't had much time to talk - you, me, and Ami I mean."



"But at least we've been doing good, honest work."



"Yeah, fun too. I thought dealing with the undead would be boring, but something about them make them so fun to beat up."



"Indeed! They're not as difficult as thinking opponents..."



"...though they do have the advantages of large numbers, not being crippled by pain, not getting hungry, thirsty, or tired."



"But on the bright side, at least only us humans get love, happiness, compassion, altruism, art, philosophy... I wouldn't give up anything for their 'advantages'."



"It would be horrible to be like them, but aware of it. I sometimes wonder if they can remember what they used to be like..."

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

### Mage C vs Gregor

Hit:  $125-5-11-32 = 77$

Hit roll: 88, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $111+5+11-34 = 93$

Hit roll: 78, hit!

Damage:  $22+2-6 = 18\text{dmg}$

### Longbowman E vs Gregor

Hit:  $116-5-11-32 = 68$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $21-2-15 = 4\text{dmg}$

### Longbowman C vs Gregor

Hit:  $116-5-11-32 = 68$

Hit roll: 73, miss!

Whilst Gregor haxed his survival, the fighters deeper in the abbey assaulted the other group. Or, rather, just Olson.

#### Fighter A vs Olson

Hit:  $97+15+15-2-39 = 86$   
Hit roll: 17, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-12 = 17\text{dmg}$

Olson retaliates!  
Hit:  $100+5-15-23 = 67$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

Olson retaliates again!  
Hit:  $100+5-15-23 = 67$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1-11 = 7\text{dmg}$

#### Fighter B vs Olson

Hit:  $97+15+15-2-39 = 86$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

Olson retaliates!  
Hit:  $100+5-15-23 = 67$   
Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1-11 = 7\text{dmg}$

Olson retaliates again!  
Hit:  $100+5-15-23 = 67$   
Hit roll: 71, miss!

#### Longbowman B vs Olson

Hit:  $116+15-2-39 = 90$   
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
Damage:  $21-12 = 9\text{dmg}$

With Olson downed, the thief slipped away and unlocked the door leading to a small storeroom.

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Charlotte, you have to move." Mannan spoke rather calmly, nodding toward Alexander whilst his wand healed up Gregor.

#### Mannan mends Gregor

$20+14 =$  Up to 34HP restored

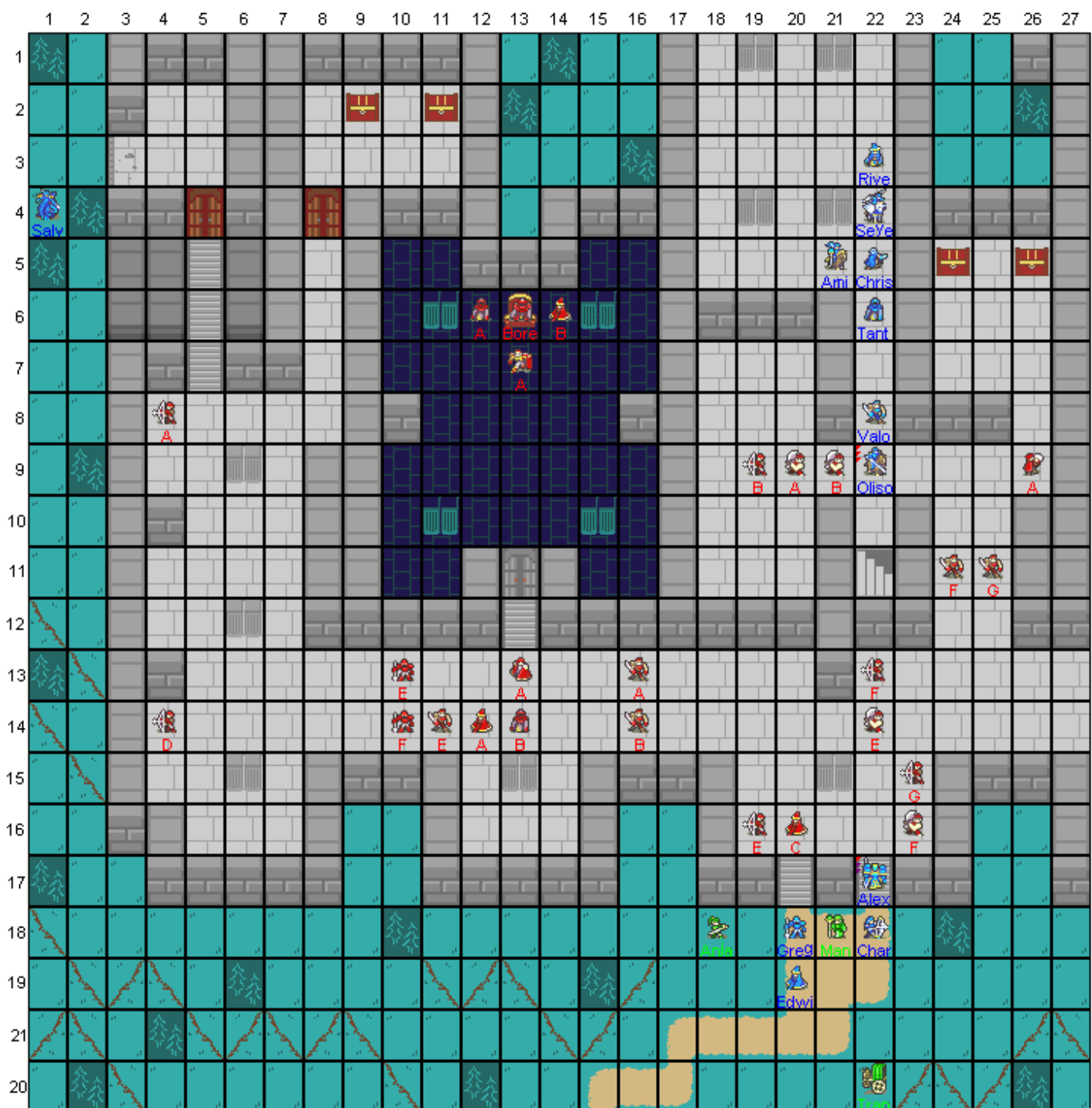
Anja in meanwhile ran after the archer and cut him severely, including his throat.

#### Anja vs Longbowman C

Hit:  $141-33 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $16-11 = 5\text{dmg}$

Anja strikes again!  
Hit:  $141-33 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $16-11 = 5\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/39 1/3<br>Ami Storm: 26/27<br>Charlotte Braxis: 30/30<br>Christopher Shields: 15/32<br>Edwin Westbringer: 17/27<br>Gregor von Hexham: 33/33<br>Olison Eul: -/32 3/3<br>Riven: 28/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 32/32<br>Seyena Ikane: 31/31<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 29/29<br>Valor Inara: 11/33 | Sellsword A: 32/32<br>Sellsword B: 32/32<br>Sellsword C: 16/32<br>Sellsword E: 32/32<br>Sellsword F: 32/32<br>Sellsword G: 32/32<br>Fighter A: 28/35<br>Fighter B: 28/35<br>Fighter E: 35/35<br>Fighter F: 35/35<br>Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman B: 29/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29<br>Longbowman E: 29/29 | Longbowman F: 29/29<br>Longbowman G: 29/29<br>Hired Spearman E: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman F: 31/31<br>Mage A: 29/29<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Mage C: 11/29<br>Shaman B: 30/30<br>Shaman C: 30/30<br>Thief: 11/26<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36<br>Sage: 33/33 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Anja: 12/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 31/31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



"Let hope not, it seem that one of our friends got themselves hurt, keep safe."

**Ami: Head to 22,10 and heal Olison.**



"You okay, big guy?"



"My turn."

**Gregor: Move 1 square north. STAB the Mage with the Iron Lance!**



"Well done! Now let's move in before their ranged weaponry can cause anymore trouble!"

**Edwin: Move to 19, 18 and burnify Longbowman E!**

**Ami heals Olison**

$10+20 / 2 = \text{Up to 15HP healed}$

**Gregor vs Mage C**

Hit:  $116+5+11-31 = 101$ , autohit!

Damage:  $23+2-6 = 19\text{dmg}$

**Edwin vs Longbowman E**

Hit:  $122+10-33 = 99$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $22-5 = 17\text{dmg}$

Longbowman E counters!

Hit:  $116-10-25 = 81$

Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage:  $21-6 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Tantallos: Move to 23,9 and attack Fighter B.**



"EDWIN! Please, help Alexander! I shall assist Sir Hexham."

**Charlotte: Move to 19,21. Iron Longbow the longbowman E. HOHOHO**

**Tantallos vs Fighter B**

Hit: 119-23 = 96  
Hit roll: 99, miss!  
  
Fighter B retaliates!  
Hit: 97-26 = 71  
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage: 28-9 = 19dmg

The arrow launched by Charlotte pinned Longbowman E's head to the wall.

#### **Charlotte vs Lonbowman E**

Hit: 117+10-33 = 95  
Hit roll: 88, hit! Crit roll: 7!  
Damage: 17-11 = 6x3 = 18dmg

**Chris moves to 24,9 and heals himself with his concoction.**



"You know, I think that's a storage room over there..."

No sooner than when Olison and his horse hit the ground, they got back up again as Ami healed him.



"Argh. Thanks again, Ami." And just as soon his attention turned back to the enemy group "Just a scratch! Come on! Round two won't be as easy!"



"Hey, Valor, let me hold on to that staff for you; I might as well." Seyena said, moving forward to take the item in question.

**Seyena moves to 22, 7 and steals Valor's precious low-power staff.**



"Alright. I actually think Ami forgot she handed it off to me." With that, Valor ran past Olison and Chris, bearing down on the thief who'd slipped past Olison while he was down. "Where do you think you're going?"

**Valor: Move to 25,9! Iron sword! Eliminate thief!**

---

With the enemy mage dead, Gregor could see into the entrance hall and the teeming masses of enemies inside.



"Um. There's quite a lot of them. Help!"



### Christopher uses Concoction

Up to 30HP restored

Seyena grabbed teh staff and Valor ran toward the Thief, and with single slash he cut off the arm that was holding the lockpicks.

### Valor gets Lockpick (14/15)!

#### Valor vs Thief

Hit:  $124+5-55 = 74$

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage:  $17-5 = 12$

Having finished with the thief, Valor turned to the two swordsmen in the hallway, flashing a dangerous smile.



"Alright, which one of you unfortunate bastards is next?"

### Riven: Move to 22,8, Flux Fighter B.

### Gregor: Have Anja stay back if she can.

Salvatore urged Ormm back into the tower, **moving to 5.3**. The wyvern's claws clinked on the stone as it touched down. Seems the room was untouched... The men trying to break down the door must of left. Perfect. **Unbarring and opening the door**, the wyvern rider looked down the stairs.



"OY! WHO WANTS SOME?!" Not his brightest of plans...

The wyvern then **moved to 4.3** at its rider's urging, its rider lying in wait for whoever comes.

#### Riven vs Fighter B

Hit:  $118+10+5-23 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $27+2-4 = 25$ dmg

Fighter B counters!

Hit:  $97-10-5-31 = 51$

Hit roll: 56, miss!

Riven attacks again!

Hit:  $118+10+5-23 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $27+2-4 = 25$ dmg

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

#### Fighter A vs Olson

Hit:  $97+15+15-5-10-2-39 = 71$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

Olison counters!  
Hit:  $100+5+10+10+2-15-23 = 89$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

Olison retaliates again!  
Hit:  $100+5+10+10+2-15-23 = 89$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1-11 = 7\text{dmg}$

#### Longbowman B vs Olison

Hit:  $116+15-10-2-39 = 80$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage:  $21-12 = 9\text{dmg}$

Just as Chris got hit by the swordsman, he plunged his blade into the throat of the Sellsword F, opening a long vertical gash through which blood gushed heavily as the swordsman fell.

#### Sellsword F vs Chris

Hit:  $110-1-5-10-43 = 51$   
Hit roll: 30, hit!  
Damage:  $24-8 = 16\text{dmg}$   
  
Chris counterattacks!  
Hit:  $124+1+10+5-31 = 109$ , autohit! Crit roll: 20!  
Assasination roll: 6!  
Sellsword F dies!

#### Sellsword G vs Valor

Hit:  $110-5-2-32 = 71$   
Hit roll: 2, hit!  
Damage:  $24-9 = 15\text{dmg}$

#### Longbowman F vs Ami

Hit:  $116-5-5-37 = 69$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $21-5 = 16\text{dmg}$

#### Fighter E vs Gregor

Hit:  $97+15-5-34 = 73$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Fighter F vs Gregor

Hit:  $97+15-5-34 = 73$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Longbowman G vs Mannan

Hit:  $116-5-44 = 67$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $21-8 = 13\text{dmg}$

The Longbowman who heard Salvatore peeked at the staircase and then ran away, shouting at his nearby comrades. Soon they gathered into loose group, ready to take on Salvatore if he tries to enter the main hallway.

### ~~Ally Phase~~

#### Mannan mends Alexander

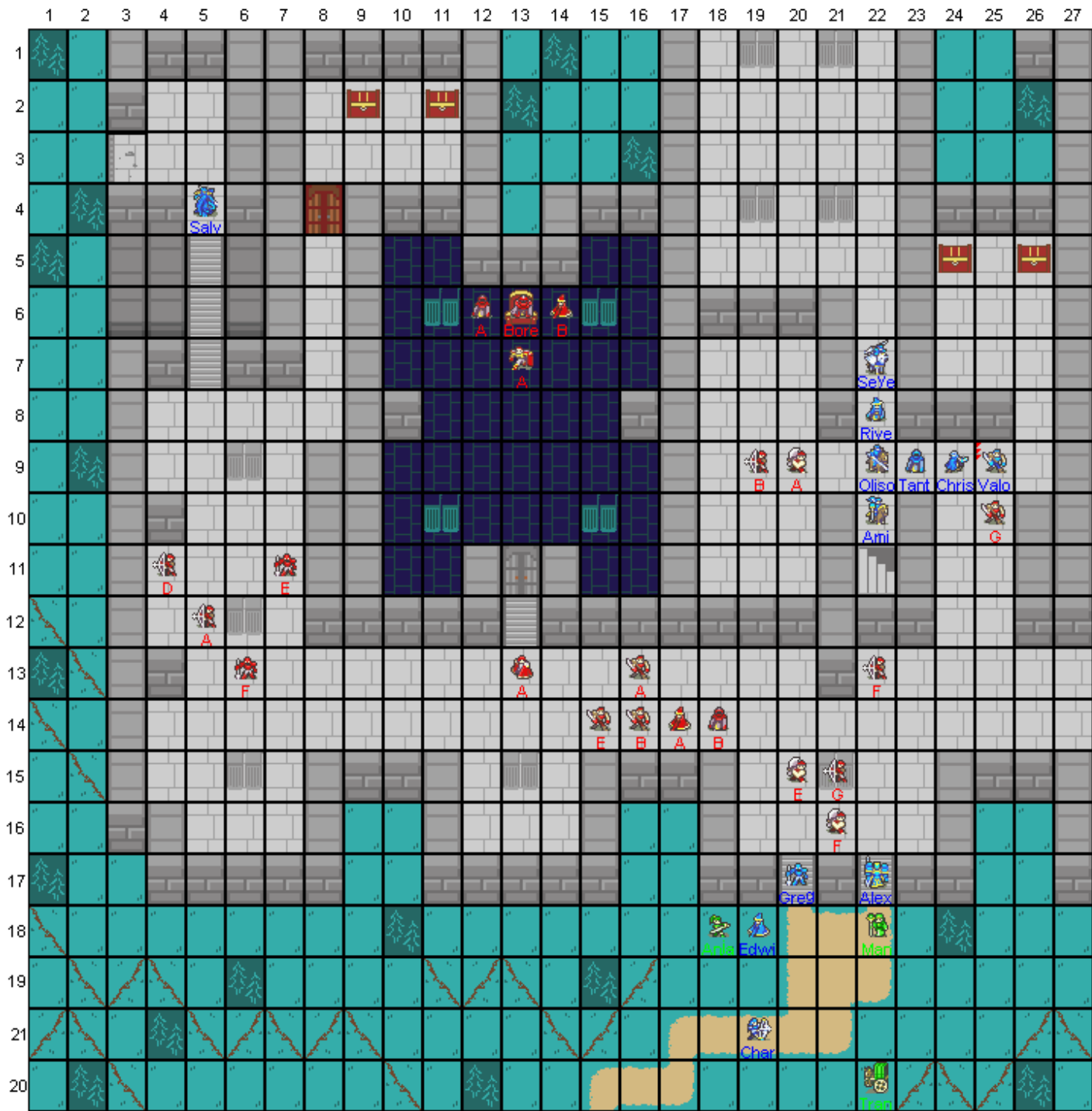
$20+14 / 2 = \text{Up to } 17\text{HP healed}$



"My swordarm is itching!..." Anja said and gritted her teeth, wanting to fight but easily seeing she would get killed if she went inside with wounds like hers.

~~Player Turn 5~~

It looks like the heavy clouds rolled in on the dull skies. Rain is a possibility.



Weather:

| Mercs:                     |  | Enemies:                |  |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/39    |  | Sellsword A: 32/32      |  |
| Ami Storm: 10/27           |  | Sellsword B: 32/32      |  |
| Charlotte Braxis: 30/30    |  | Sellsword C: 16/32      |  |
| Christopher Shields: 16/32 |  | Sellsword E: 32/32      |  |
| Edwin Westbringer: 7/27    |  | Sellsword F: 32/32      |  |
| Gregor von Hexham: 5/33    |  | Sellsword G: 32/32      |  |
|                            |  | Longbowman F: 29/29     |  |
|                            |  | Longbowman G: 29/29     |  |
|                            |  | Hired Spearman E: 31/31 |  |
|                            |  | Hired Spearman F: 31/31 |  |
|                            |  | Mage A: 29/29           |  |
|                            |  | Mage B: 29/29           |  |

|                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: 6/32<br>Riven: 28/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 32/32<br>Seyena Ikane: 31/31<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 10/29<br>Valor Inara: -/33 <b>3/3</b> | Fighter A: 21/35<br>Fighter E: 35/35<br>Fighter F: 35/35<br>Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman B: 29/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29 | Shaman B: 30/30<br>Shaman C: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36<br>Sage: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                |
| Anja: 12/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 18/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits                                                                                        |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                |

### Ami: Heal Olison



"Make them regret locking us up."

Healing staff activate!

#### Ami heals Olison

10+20 = Up to 30HP restored



"As much as I like giving sacrifices to the Plague Dragon, I want to find the leader of this castle as soon as possible."

### Tantallos: Move 20,9 and attack Fighter A.

### Chris heals Valor with a concoction.



"On your feet. You're too handsome to die."

Chris might have been trolling the females of the group by saying that. Maybe.



"This isn't looking good..."

### Charlotte: Move to 21, 19. Iron Longbow Fighter G.

#### Tantallos vs Fighter A

Hit:  $119+2+5-23 = 103$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $23+2-4 = 21$ dmg  
10HP restored!

In the same time, Chris revived Valor with some golden powder shower.

#### Chris uses Concoction on Valor

Up to 15HP restored

And then there was some twanging, too.

#### Charlotte vs Fighter F

Hit:  $117+10+7+5-23 = 116$ , autohit! Crit roll: 30!

Damage:  $17+1-11 = 7 \times 3 = 21$  dmg



"Chris, you seem like you could use a little help."

**Seyena moves to 24,10, heals Chris, and then zooms off like seaweed to 26,9**

Maybe it was just pain and bloodloss, but Gregor could have sworn he saw a pegasus flying around down the far hallway. No time to worry about that now though; the axe throwers were both closer and far more dangerous.



"Have to...hold out! Just a little longer!"

**Gregor: Use last vulnerary, equip Javelin. Stay put.**

Just a bit further...



"Men o' foul hearts an' minds yah be! Listenin' ta nothin' but the sound o' coins jinglin' in yer pockets! Have yah no mind ta what yah be doin'?! No soul?! No heart?! Do yah even know why yah do what yah do?!" **The wyvern rider backed up a square to 5.3.** That was more people than he was hoping for... The man only hoped that the others were doing better than he was.

#### Seyena heals Chris

$10+5 =$  Up to 15HP restored

#### Gregor uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP healed



"Thanks, Seyena. Much appreciated."

Olison managed out a laugh as his wounds shut.



"Heh. Can do, Ma'am."

**Olison: Move to 20,9. Sword to Archer.**

**Olison vs Longbowman B**

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Hit: $115+10-33 = 93$         |
| Hit roll: 23, hit!            |
| Damage: $18-11 = 7\text{dmg}$ |
| Hit: $115+10-33 = 93$         |
| Hit roll: 77, hit!            |
| Damage: $18-11 = 7\text{dmg}$ |



"Take heart, we've got them in a bottleneck. If we can kill any spellcasters and archers that show themselves before they do too much damage, we should be able to take care of the rest! Hold fast Alexander and Gregor! We've got them right where we want them!" Edwin cried over the sound of battle.

**Edwin: Move to 21, 18 and burninate Fighter F.**

FWOOSH! That's a sound unheard around the mercs for quite some time.

**Edwin vs Fighter F**

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| Hit: $122+10+5-23 = 115$ , autohit! |
| Damage: $22-4 = 18\text{dmg}$       |

Alexander stays there, and wordlessly holds the line. **Alexander: Do nothiiiiing**



"Thank you Chris." Valor said simply as he struggled to his feet. Several moments later his brain kicked into gear again. "Wait, what?"



"Hmm? Did you want something, Valor?"

**Riven: Move to 20,8, Fluxmelt Longbowman.**

**Riven vs Longbowman B**

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Hit: $118+10+2-33 = 97$       |
| Hit roll: 2, hit!             |
| Damage: $27-5 = 22\text{dmg}$ |

~~Enemy Phase~~

**Sellsword G vs Valor**

|                      |
|----------------------|
| Hit: $110-5-32 = 73$ |
|----------------------|

Hit roll: 28, hit!

Damage:  $24-1-9 = 14\text{dmg}$

Valor counters!

Hit:  $124+10+5-31 = 108$ , autohit! Crit roll: 55!

Damage:  $17+1-11 = 7 \times 3 = 21\text{dmg}$

Twang!

#### Longbowman F vs Ami

Hit:  $116-5-2-37 = 72$

Hit roll: 29, hit!

Damage:  $21-1-5 = 15\text{dmg}$

Gregor was attacked again by magic, his mortal enemy.

#### Mage A vs Gregor

Hit:  $125-11-5-34 = 75$

Hit roll: 66, hit!

Damage:  $21-3 = 18\text{dmg}$

#### Longbowman G vs Mannan

Hit:  $116-44 = 72$

Hit roll: 96, miss!

#### Fighter E vs Alexander

Hit:  $97+15-17 = 95$

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage:  $28+1-2-22 = 5\text{dmg}$

#### Shaman B vs Alexander

Hit:  $110-17 = 93$

Hit roll: 56, hit!

Damage:  $26-2-5 = 19\text{dmg}$

From the side corridor, more enemies joined the gruesome fight in the entrance hall.

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"AYAYAYAYAYY!!" Anja ran inside, and cut the Mage A's head off, which tumbled toward the pillars.

#### Anja vs Mage A

Hit:  $141-31 = 110$ , autohit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $16-6 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$



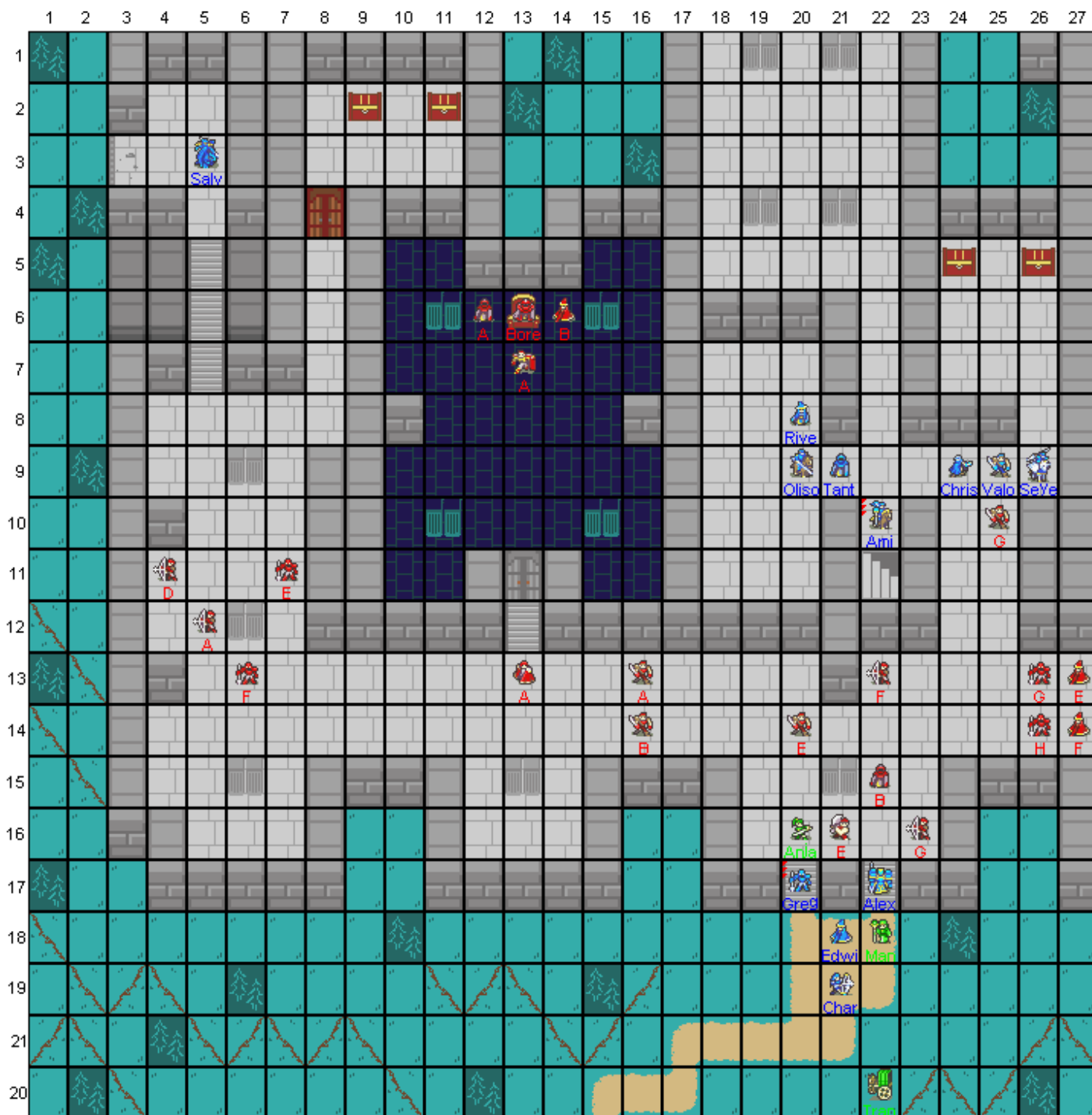
"Stay with me, friend!"

#### Mannan mends Alexander

$20+14 / 2 =$  Up to 17HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 6~~

First droplets fell on the ground, and shortly afterwards, the rain started, pouring heavily like a waterfall.



Weather:

| Merces:                     | Enemies:                |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/40     | Sellsword A: 32/32      |
| Ami Storm: -/28 3/3         | Sellsword B: 32/32      |
| Charlotte Braxis: 30/31     | Sellsword C: 16/32      |
| Christopher Shields: 31/32  | Sellsword E: 32/32      |
| Edwin Westbringer: 12/28    | Sellsword F: 32/32      |
| Gregor von Hexham: -/34 3/3 | Sellsword G: 11/32      |
| Olison Eul: 32/33           | Fighter E: 35/35        |
| Riven: 28/28                | Longbowman A: 29/29     |
| Salvatore Vaughan: 32/33    | Longbowman D: 29/29     |
| Seyena Ikane: 31/32         | Longbowman F: 29/29     |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 20/30   | Longbowman G: 29/29     |
| Valor Inara: 1/34           | Hired Spearman E: 31/31 |
|                             | Hired Spearman F: 31/31 |



| Allies:                                                   | Mage B: 29/29<br>Shaman B: 30/30<br>Shaman C: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36<br>Sage: 33/33 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anja: 12/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 18/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |                                                                                                                 |



"Anja! Please, come back this way! It's too dangerous there. Also: Edwin, could you please heal Gregor or move somewhere else? I am going to line up a shot against the Shaman."

Gregor coughed and tried to force himself back up, but lacked the strength to do so. He fell back and muttered.



"I wish I could block magic. That would be so helpful..."

Charlotte watched him try to get up and fail.



"You're doing great! Just keep it up!"

Gregor tried again, managing to leverage himself up to sit against the wall.



"I'm not giving up! Just gotta...catch my breath."

---

**Tantallos: Move 24, 11 and attack Sellsword G.**



"I am surprised these guys still fighting."



"Ow..."

Olison returned to the hallway to help Ami up.



"Favor for a favor, up and at 'em."

**Olison: Move to 22,9. Vulnerary to Ami. Then to 25,11.**

Tenebra pulls himself and his rider to his feet.



"Thank, Olison."

#### Tantallos vs Sellsword G

Hit:  $121+10+2-31 = 102$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $23+2-5 = 20$ dmg

#### Olison uses Vulnerary on Ami

Up to 5HP restored



"Go for it! I'll help Gregor!" Edwin replied as he moved quickly over to Gregor.



"Come on, we need you on your feet."

**Edwin: Move 1 tile west and use a vulnerary on Gregor.**

**Charlotte: Move 1 N. Pray to Critzalcoatl. TWANG Shaman B with Iron Longbow.**

#### Edwin uses Vulnerary on Gregor

Up to 5HP restored

TWANG! The arrow went under the hood of the shaman and he collapsed with a groan.

#### Charlotte vs Shaman B

Hit:  $119+10+11-25 = 115$ , autohit! Crit roll: 22!  
Damage:  $18+1-5 = 14 \times 3 = 42$ dmg

Alexander walked up a step, and brought his lance down at the enemy axeman.

**Alexander: Move to 22, 16 and attack fighter E**

Le stab.

#### Alexander vs Fighter E

Hit:  $109+5+5-15-23 = 81$   
Hit roll: 46, hit! Crit roll: 7! //Fukken support crits I: <

Damage:  $23-1-11 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

Fighter E retaliates!

Hit:  $97+15-5-20 = 87$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage:  $28+1-2-23 = 4\text{dmg}$

Gregor finished standing up. Though the medicine healed the worst of the burns, he still ached all over. He surveyed the number of enemy troops bearing down on the group and winced.



"My thanks, Mr Westbringer - I mean, Edwin. Something tells me I'm going to need help again before long..."

**Riven: Move to 24,10.**

---

Salvatore doesn't move an inch, and instead keeps yelling at the four down below. If this keeps up he'll have a full blown brimstone and hellfire sermon going on.



"Well do yah?! Tell me, yah there, man wit' the bow! Do yah have dreams, hopes fer ah better life?! Do yah think yah can achieve tha' 'ere, snuffin' out the candles o' others from 'em wit'out ah care?! Yah there! Wit' the spear! How many lives have yah taken wit' it, how many dreams an' hopes have yah crushed wit' it?! How many widowed mothers cry fer their husband who'd never return, their children askin' what's wrong because o' yah?! Do yah honestly think this loife will give yah anythin' other than ah short one spreadin' misery ta others, causin' pain by yer actions?! Have yah no morals, no emotions, no feelin' fer those kindred souls who jus' want ah happy existance?! What deity do yah believe in tha' would approve o' what yer doin' 'ere?! Tell me what yah use ta rationalize ta yerselves at noight when yah try ta deem yerself ah good man, an' fail ta sleep yer demons away!"

---

**Chris moves to 22,9, and uses his last bit of Concoction on Ami.**



"You're still bleeding... let me help you."

The assassin put golden powder on a white cloth and pressed it against the cut on Ami's cheek.



"Sorry if it stings..."



"Thank Chr-



"-Her is getting blurred. Wait..."



*Okay... I don't think I can take those guys in my condition. Not right now. So...*

**Valor uses concoction and equips killing edge!**



"Is that...?" Seyena muttered, looking towards a fight a small distance away.

**Seyena moves to 25,10**

**Christopher uses Concoction on Ami**

Up to 30HP restored

**Valor uses Concoction**

Up to 30HP restored

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

**Sellsword E vs Anja**

Hit:  $110 - 5 - 60 = 45$

Hit roll: 61, miss!

Anja counters!

Hit:  $141 + 5 - 31 = 115$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16 - 11 = 5$ dmg

Anja attacks again!

Hit:  $141 + 5 - 31 = 115$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16 - 11 = 5$ dmg

**Fighter E vs Anja**

Hit:  $97 - 5 - 15 - 60 = 17$

Hit roll: 23, miss!

**ongbowman G vs Anja**

Hit:  $116 - 60 = 56$

Hit roll: 33, hit!

Damage:  $21 - 7 = 14$ dmg

The bolt of fire was blocked by Alex's massive shield. At least, the first one.

**Mage F vs Alexander**

Hit:  $125 - 2 - 20 = 103$ , autohit!

Alex's Great Shield roll: 12, success!

Mage F attacks again!  
Hit:  $125-2-20 = 103$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $21-2-6 = 13\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile...

#### Longbowman F vs Tantallos

Hit:  $116-10-5-26 = 75$   
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage:  $21-10 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### Spearman H vs Tantallos

Hit:  $105-10-5-26 = 64$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $24-10 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Mage E vs Olison

Hit:  $125+15-2-40 = 98$   
Hit roll: 76, hit!  
Damage:  $21-4 = 17\text{dmg}$

#### Spearman G vs Olison

Hit:  $105+15+15-2-40 = 93$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $24+1-12 = 13\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!  
Hit:  $118+5+10-15-32 = 86$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $19-1-13 = 5\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

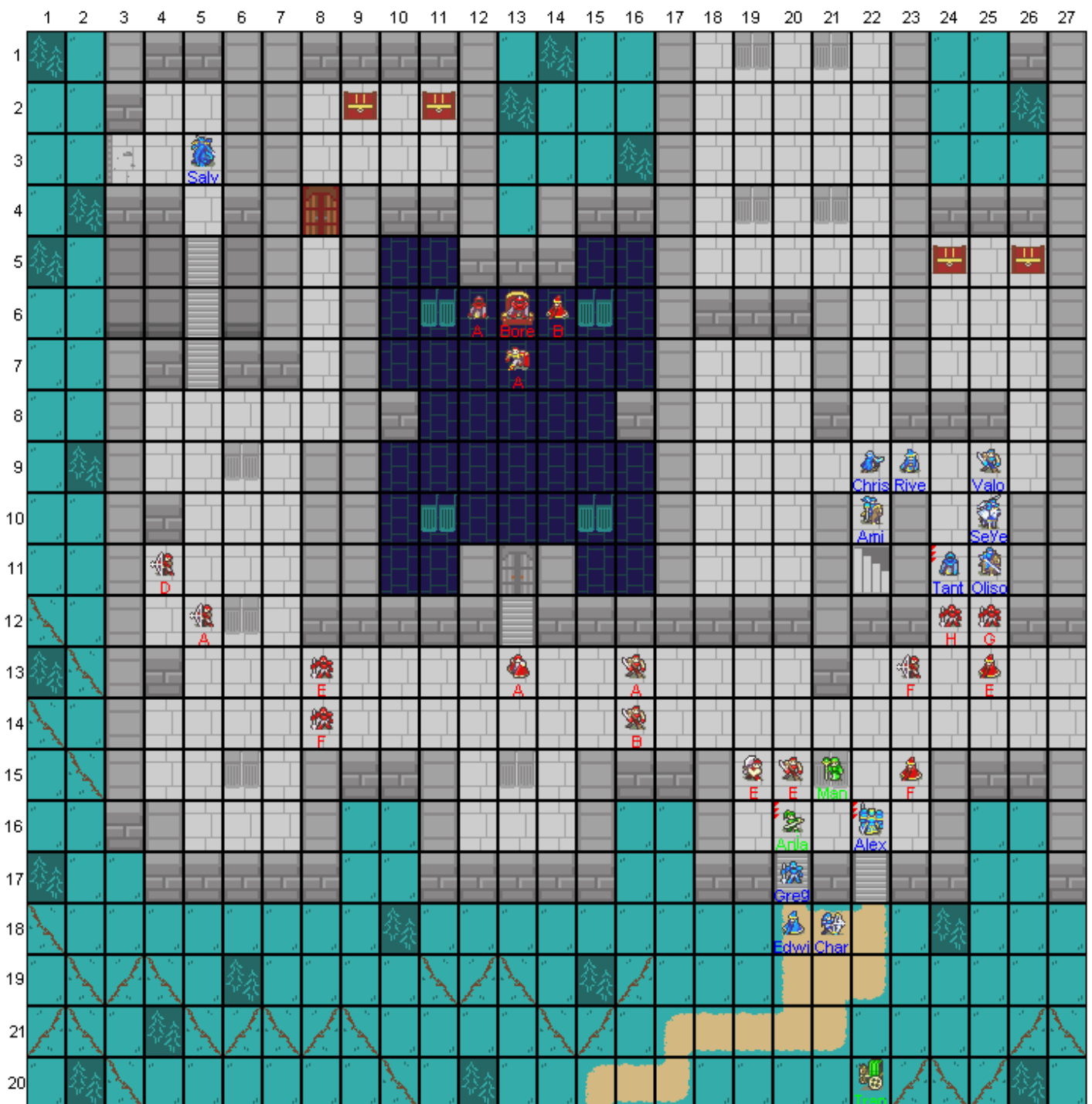


"I've had enough of this!" Said Mannan in anger, then ran inside and blasted the longbowman with holy magic.

#### Mannan vs Longbowman G

Hit:  $138-33 = 105$ , autohit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $20+2-5 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

# ~~~Player Turn 7~~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/40 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span><br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 30/31<br>Christopher Shields: 31/32<br>Edwin Westbringer: <span style="color: green;">17</span> /28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 5/34<br>Olison Eul: 2/33<br>Riven: 28/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 32/33<br>Seyena Ikane: 31/32<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/30 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span><br>Valor Inara: 31/34 | Sellsword A: 32/32<br>Sellsword B: 32/32<br>Sellsword E: 22/32<br>Fighter E: 2/35<br>Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29<br>Longbowman F: 29/29<br>Hired Spearman E: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman F: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman G: 26/31<br>Hired Spearman H: 31/31<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Mage E: 29/29<br>Mage F: 29/29<br>Shaman C: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Anja: -/26 <span style="color: red;">1/3</span><br>Mannan Tunhausen: 18/31                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |



"You bastards will pay for hurting my friends! I'll..."



"Speaking of friends, am I seeing things? Who's that down the hallway?"

**Gregor: Move to (21,16). HURL Javelin at Sellsword E!**

---



"Remind me to kill every single archer we find on this castle when I get back on my feet."

Olison, barely managing to sit straight atop his horse, only smirked on hearing Tantallos' remark.



"Can do. Valor, Seyena, back me up."

Without another moment's notice, Olison broke into another charge through the enemy lines, tossing a spear at a soldier on the way through until he stopped in the middle of the enemy unit, brandishing his weapon defiantly. However, a familiar glint of metal from down the hallway caught his eye.



"Is that..?"

Continuing his assault through the enemy lines, he found his way to the entrance amidst the other group.



"Jorinn? On your feet, soldier!"

**Olison: To 24,13, Lob Short Spear at Spearman G. Move to 22,15.**



"Olison?!"



"And Hexham? Weren't you-" Olison shook his head, "Nevermind, the questions will be later. We just need to hold out for a few more moments, the rest of us have almost broken through."



"Right, questions later. Wait, just one thing: when you say 'rest of us', who do you mean exactly?"



"By 'rest of us' I mean *the bloody rest of us*." Olison gave out a derisive laugh, "Chris, Ami, Seyena, Valor, every one of us who traveled to the Forsaken lands when we left Kesselring's service. All right down the hallway, probably stabbing spearmen as we speak."

**Ami: Head to 21,9**



"No need to be rude. For all I knew you were with a different group now."



"But Charlotte and Anja are also here. The whole team's together again! Assuming, at least, Derick's with you as well."

Olison's focus turned towards the nearby mage as he spoke.



"Heh. Apologies, I meant no offense. But Derick, we haven't seen nor heard anything about him in the last few months. Here's hoping he hasn't been captured by now..." Olison paused a moment, "Wait, do you know about the arrest warrant?"



"Yes, we know about it. We fled to Berebia trying to avoid it. It's a bit of a long story, but we're working with that Bishop over there at the moment."

#### Gregor vs Sellsword E

Hit:  $111+15+11+5-31 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $22+1+2-11 = 14$  dmg

Gregor attacks again!



Hit:  $111+15+11+5-31 = 111$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $22+1+2-11 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Olison vs Spearman G

Hit:  $93-32 = 61$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Damage:  $24-13 = 11\text{dmg}$



"So I assume this knight is friends of yours, Gregor? Like the other people down that corridor? Good thing I learned *before* I tried to blast them with divine energies."



"I most certainly hope you *don't* blast them!"



"Being a Berebian noble, I must be wary of all attempts on my life. But as long as they don't point weapons at me, they will be considered non-hostile."



"As much as I like chatter, we're in middle of combat. We should prioritize our enemies over pleasantries and formalities."



"TIME TO BRING THE PAIN"

**Charlotte: Move to 22,18. Speaketh holey wordes unto His Most Holy Critness. TWANG Mage F with iron longbow.**

Olison briefly turned his head to get a look at Mannan



"**Hmm... House Tunhausen?**" He muttered, returning his gaze back to the mage, watching for the inevitable fireball. And just as well, he heard a familiar bow being drawn... And a not-so-familiar battle cry.



"LESS TALK, MORE BURN!"

**Edwin: Move to 19, 16 and turn Fighter E into a crisp!**

Twang!

**Charlotte vs Mage F**

Hit:  $119+10+11+5-31 = 114$ , autohit!

Damage:  $18+1-6 = 13$ dmg

Fwoosh!

**Edwin vs Fighter E**

Hit:  $124+10-23 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $23-4 = 19$ dmg



"Yes, I'm Mannan Tunhausen, current Lord of Tunhausen, formerly archpriest of Golden Dragon in Lascondes. How did you know? It's rare to meet someone so learned in heraldry." Mannan mused, looking at his cloak clasp, and his signet, both bearing the mark of Tunhausen.



"And that would be Edwin, a mage working for Lord Tunhausen. He reminds me of Tantallos, for some reason."

**Riven: Move to 24,10, Flux Spearman H.**

**Riven vs Spearman H**

Hit:  $118+10+10-32 = 106$ , autohit!

Damage:  $28+2-5 = 25$ dmg



"Hello again, Ami. Mia stepped in for a moment."

The priestess walked away, doubtlessly to attend to the wounds of their allies, so Chris thought he had better get cracking with his own unique skills and ran for the treasure room.

**Chris moves to 26,7.**



"Goodbye."

**Valor: Move to 25, 11. Killing Edge and Critzocoatl, slay the fool!**

**Valor vs Spearman G**

Hit:  $111+10+10-15-32 = 84$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Spearman G counters!  
Hit:  $105+15-34 = 86$   
Hit roll: 63, hit!  
Damage:  $24+1-1-10 = 14\text{dmg}$



"Hey. Get up." Seyena poked Tantallos with her staff. "Come on, this is no time for a nap, Tantallos."

**Seyena moves to 24, 10, and heals Tantallos.**



"Ugh! That didn't go as intended..."

---

**Salvatore moves to 5.4, cranking up the FIRE AND BRIMSTONE to full blast**



"No words! No rationalizations! Oi hear nothin' from the four o' yah! Nothin'! Even now, even now people die! What o' the ones who were 'ere in the first place, the *mag*es, the *scholar*s, the *priest*s, did any o' 'em deserve what yah all have done ta 'em?! Did they?! Ta be slain by ah brother, ta be slain by ah friend driven mad by... By... *Mag*ic most foul, most horrid, most vain an' corrupted! Ta see one o' 'em joke ah moment wit' their charge, an slay 'em the next as if'in possessed! No man can call 'emselves good wit' tha kind o' foul sorcery wit' 'em! NO MAN! What o' yah four, why do yah throw yer lot wit' 'em?! Ta work wit' so foul ah method?! Gold?! Misplaced ideals o' justice?!"



"TELL ME! TELL ME O' THE EVIL THA INHABITS YER HEARTS, THE SHADOWS ON YER SOULS AN' THE FOUL MACHINATIONS IN YER FATES! TELL ME WHY! WHAT DRIVES MEN TA SUCH BRINKS, TA SUCH DEPTHS O' BILE! THERE IS ALWAYS LIGHT, ALWAYS TIME TA CHANGE, NO FATE IS STONE, NO DEED TAH BLACK, YAH CAN CHANGE NOW AN STOP THIS MADNESS, STOP THIS ALL! IT TAKES BUT ONE STEP, ONE GOOD DEED AFTER THA OTHER! LOOK AT WHAT YAH'VE BEEN DOIN', WHAT YER ALLOWIN' TA HAPPEN! CHANGE IT! FOIGHT IT! IS THIS HOW YAH WANNA BE REMEMBERED, AH FOUL MAN, AH FOUL SOUL, AH FOUL HEART, AH FOUL MIND?! NO! NO MAN WANTS TA BE REMEMBERED THA WAY, NONE! YAH HAVE AH CHOICE!"



"..But already? I barely took a nap.. this floor surely is comfortable compared

to the other castles, I will make sure to take a note about that."

Unfortunately, the spot was taken by Riven so Seyena's magic staff couldn't revive the shaman.

~~Enemy Phase~~

The situation became more and more perilous.

**Mage F vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $125-5-10-7-35 = 68$   
Hit roll: 16, hit!  
Damage:  $21-4 = 17\text{dmg}$

**Sellsword A vs Edwin**

Hit:  $110-5-25 = 80$   
Hit roll: 68, hit!  
Damage:  $24-7 = 17\text{dmg}$

**Sellsword B vs Mannan**

Hit:  $110-15-5-44 = 56$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!  
  
Mannan counters!  
Hit:  $138+5-31 = 112$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $20+2-5 = 17\text{dmg}$

**Spearman H vs Olison**

Hit:  $105+15-5-40 = 75$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $24-12 = 12\text{dmg}$

**Longbowman F vs Seyena**

Hit:  $116+10-10-43 = 73$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $35-1-8 = 26\text{dmg}$

**Spearman G vs Valor**

Hit:  $105+15-10-34 = 74$   
Hit roll: 83, miss!  
  
Valor counters!  
Hit:  $111+10+10-15-32 = 84$   
Hit roll: 65, hit! Crit roll: 12!  
Damage:  $21+1-1-13 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

**Mage E vs Valor**

Hit:  $125-10-34 = 81$   
Hit roll: 34, hit!  
Damage:  $21-7 = 14\text{dmg}$

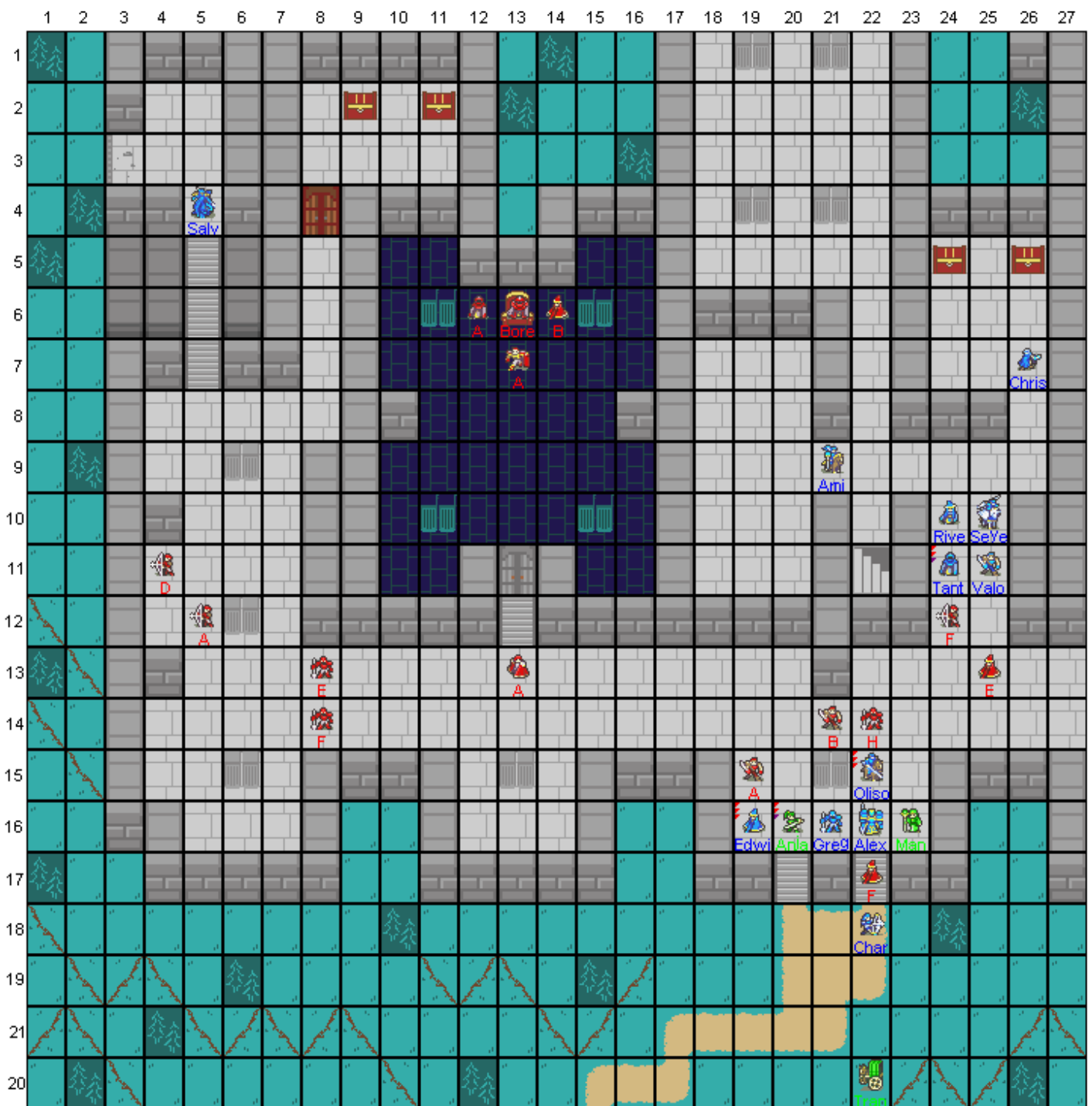
The enemy sage pondered something for a moment, and then shook his head.

~~Ally Phase~~

**Mannan heals Alexander**

$20+14 / 2 =$  Up to 17HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 8~~



Weather: ///

| Merces:                      | Enemies:                  |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/40      | Sellsword A: 32/32        |
| Ami Storm: 28/28             | Sellsword B: 15/32        |
| Charlotte Braxis: 13/31      | Longbowman A: 29/29       |
| Christopher Shields: 14/32   | Longbowman D: 29/29       |
| Edwin Westbringer: -/28 3/3  | Longbowman F: 29/29       |
| Gregor von Hexham: 5/34      | Hired Spearman E: 31/31   |
| Olison Eul: -/33 3/3         | Hired Spearman F: 31/31   |
| Riven: 28/28                 | Hired Spearman H: 6/31    |
| Salvatore Vaughan: 32/33     | Mage B: 29/29             |
| Seyena Ikane: 5/32           | Mage E: 29/29             |
| Tantallos Forsaken: -/30 2/3 | Mage F: 16/29             |
| Valor Inara: 3/34            | Shaman C: 30/30           |
| Allies:                      | Bores: 34/34              |
| Anja: -/26 2/3               | Kesselring Officer: 36/36 |
| Mannan Tunhausen: 18/31      | Sage: 33/33               |

**Chris moves two spaces north and opens the chest.**

Click!

Creeeeeak!

**Christopher got Elfire!**

The assassin inspected the tome.



"Tantallos! Riven! Got a book called 'Elfire' here if one of you want it!"

Chris yelled down the hall at the mages.



"This is starting to look bad again..."

**Gregor: FLING Javelin at Mage F! Critzocoatl's aid is not needed this time.**



"Let keep this up!"

**Ami: Head to 25,9 and heal Seyena**

Alexander didn't say anything, or even react to Olson's presence... but he did start moving (**Move to 22, 14**) and proceed to **introduce spearman H to his lance.**

#### Gregor vs Mage F

Hit:  $111+5+11-31 = 96$

Hit roll: 60, hit! Crit roll: 21!

Damage:  $22+2-6 = 18 \times 3 = 54\text{dmg}$

#### Ami heals Seyena

$10+20 = \text{Up to 30HP restored}$

#### Alexander vs Spearman H

Hit:  $109+5-32 = 82$

Hit roll: 63, hit!

Damage:  $23-13 = 10\text{dmg}$

Gregor waved outside.



"Alright Charlotte, you're clear! Come on in out of the rain."

Valor sprinted toward the mage, intent on separating his head from his body.

**Valor: Move to 25,12! Attack with Killing Edge! Call for Patron Diety Critzocoatl, but really only as a formality because 80+ crit chance HOHOHO**

**Valor vs Mage E**

Hit:  $111+10+10-31 = 100$ , autohit! Crit roll: 83!

Damage:  $21+1-6 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$



"I'll be right there! I just need to focus..."

**Charlotte: Move 1 N and TWANG sellsword B. Refuse prayer to Critzoacotl because HE HAS ABANDONED ME. ABANDONED ME.**

**Charlotte vs Sellsword B**

Hit:  $119+10+5+7-31 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $18+1-11 = 8\text{dmg}$

**Seyena moves 2 down and heals Tantallos.**

**Riven: Move to 24,13, point-blank Longbowman.**

**Salvatore moves to 5.5 STILL YET MORE HELLFIRE AND BRIMSTONE PREACHING**



"An' yet still no answer! What is there ta say! Look 'round yah! See the blood tha taints the very walls, the floors, the groanin' o' lives cut short, o' lives wrongfully taken! Don' tell me yah can' hear it, yah can feel it jus' by bein' 'ere, the very foulness o' what happened! O' what moight happen! O' what could still happen! What happened has happened, there is no denyin' it! But the future can change, the future can be fixed ta solve the crisis o' now!"



"Yah may think o' me as ah idiot blaring at yah, screamin' their lungs off fer no reason, but there is ah reason! Oi was loike yah once! There was no deed Oi wouldn' do fer coin, fer pleasure, fer any reason o' there bein' one! But Oi had tha smacked outta me by ah man wit' sense, ah man who saw tha Oi could change, tha what Oi had been foighting fer wasn' what Oi wanted! Petty foights, fer petty reasons, fer what?! Money, greed, sin, any reason under tha sun! Oi won' say Oi'm ah good man,



Oi moight never will, but Oi damned wouldn't stay how Oi was! So Oi'm offerin' yah the choice Oi was given! What is it tha yah want ta do in life, is it this?! Killin' those by foul methods fer foul reasons! 'Er do yah want better?! Better fer yah, better fer yer families, better fer yah friends, better fer everyone 'round yah?! Ta stop the spread o' misery in its tracks takes but one step after the other!"



"Tell me now, is this really what yah want? Really? Ta do these things, ta be remembered fer 'em, ta only realize tha yer life did only harm ta others?" Salvatore shook his head. "Oi don' think tha be what yah want. Yah have ah choice, one Oi can help wit'. Oi don' offer coin, Oi offer salvation, Oi offer yah ah better future than what yah have before yah. What do yah think will happen 'ere when all is said an' done? What plans do yer bosses think they have in store fer yah? Ta use such... *Magics* foully, yah think they care about yah, if'in yah live 'er die? Death can only be repaid wit' loife, so live, an' help others live! Yah've been given yer choice, what do yah choose?!"

---

#### Seyena heals Tantallos

$10+5 / 2 = \text{Up to 7HP restored}$

#### Riven vs Longbowman F

Hit:  $118+2+10+10-33 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $28-5 = 23\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Hey you guys, stop loitering there and get yer asses here!" The sage shouted at his fellow mercenaries to the west, and they complied to his command.

Meanwhile...

#### Sellsword A vs Gregor

Hit:  $110-15-5-11-36 = 43$

Hit roll: 81, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $111+15+5+11-15-31 = 96$

Hit roll: 76, hit!

Damage:  $22+1+2-11 = 14\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters again!

Hit:  $111+15+5+11-15-31 = 96$

Hit roll: 4, hit! Crit roll: 18!

Damage:  $22+1+2-11 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

#### Sellsword B vs Riven

Hit:  $110-10-5-33 = 62$

Hit roll: 28, hit!

Damage:  $24-8 = 16\text{dmg}$

Riven counters!

Hit:  $118+10+2+10-15-31 = 94$

Hit roll: 60, hit!

Damage:  $28+2-5 = 25\text{dmg}$

#### Longbowman F vs Seyena

Hit:  $116+10-10-43 = 73$

Hit roll: 57, hit!



Damage: 35-1-8 = 26dmg

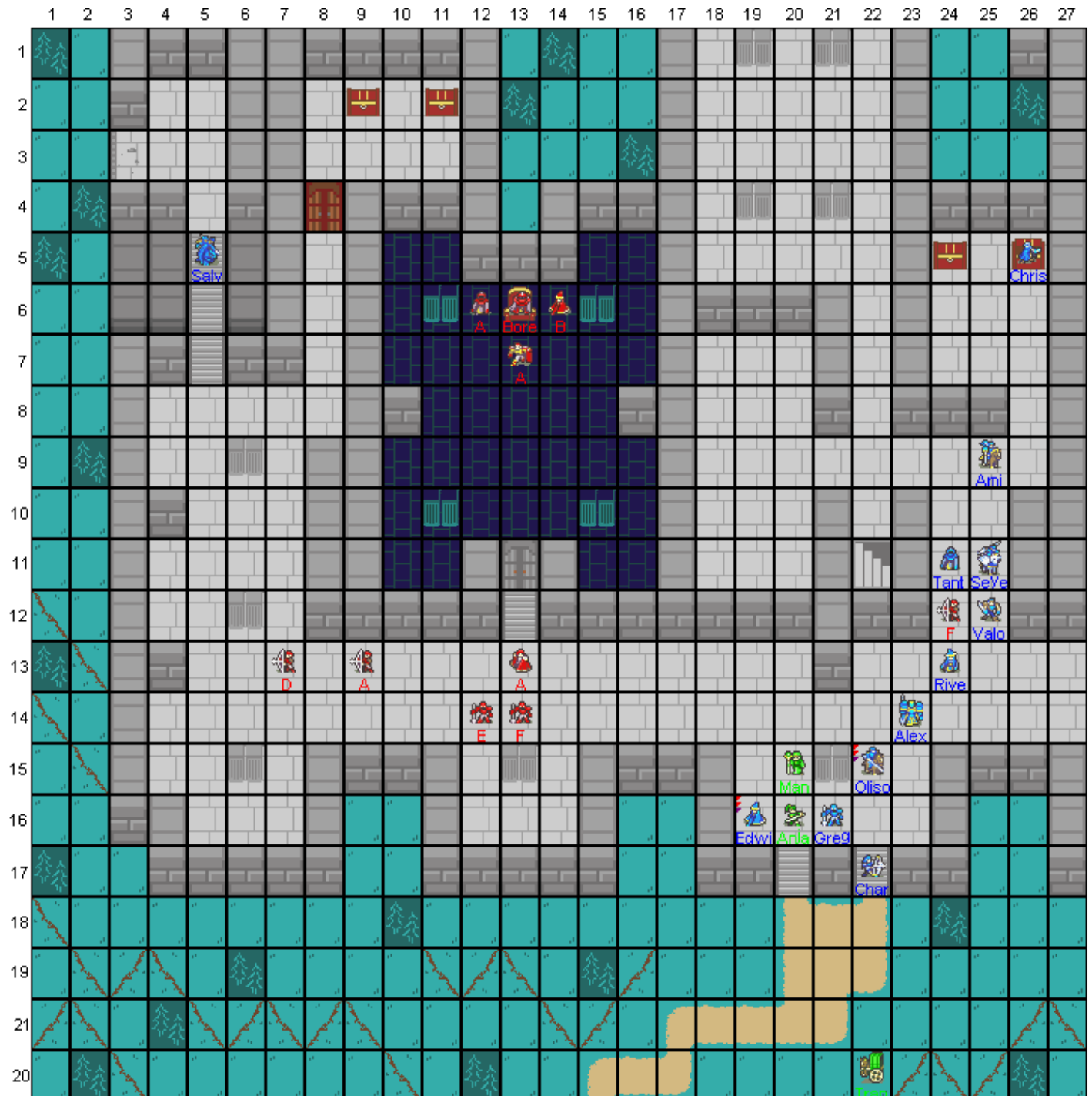
## ~~Ally Phase~~

Mannan let out a sigh and ran toward Anja, bringing her back amongst the alive.

### Mannan mends Anja

20+14 /2 = Up to 17HP restored

## ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather: / / /

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                | Allies:                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/41<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 13/32<br>Christopher Shields: 14/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: -/28 2/3<br>Gregor von Hexham: 5/35 | Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29<br>Longbowman F: 6/29<br>Hired Spearman E: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman F: 31/31<br>Mage B: 29/29 | Anja: 17/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 18/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |

|                             |                           |  |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Olison Eul: -/34 <b>2/3</b> | Shaman C: 30/30           |  |
| Riven: 12/28                | Bores: 34/34              |  |
| Salvatore Vaughan: 32/33    | Kesselring Officer: 36/36 |  |
| Seyena Ikane: 6/33          | Sage: 33/33               |  |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 7/30    |                           |  |
| Valor Inara: 3/34           |                           |  |

Neither of the mages responded, so Chris moved onto the next chest.



*I've been using these picks for months... they're probably going to break soon. I think I saw Valor grab some. I'll ask him if I can have those.*

**Chris: Loot the chest two spaces west. Chuck the damn near broken lockpicks in favor of whatever's in it.**

**Valor: Punish archer, as he is clearly to blame for my god-awful level. Killing Edge, go! Critzocoatl, aid me in purging the vile bowman!**

Seyena did her best to ignore the wound, instead quickly flying over to Olison.



*"Come on now, let's get you back up."* She tapped Olison with her staff, quickly offering a hand after to help him up.

**Seyena: Move to 23,15 and poke Olison with heal staff**



*"Is that you, Seyena? When did you learn how to use healing staffs?"*



*"I picked it up along our little extermination mission, it's been pretty useful. I guess that makes me a Valkyrie, now."*



*"Valkyrie, huh? Sounds like you learned a lot while fighting undead!"*



*"But I'm still wondering how your lot ended up here... Weren't you trying to join the Royal Guard or something like that? Berebia is an odd place for a group of Menelean soldiers to be."*



"The Royal Guard...long story short, it didn't work out. We did some odd jobs instead until we found out about the warrant, then fled to Berebia. It seemed like the best option at the time."



"Sorry that happened. But what warrant? Who are you hunting- maybe we could help you find them?" Seyena offered.

Charlotte noticed there were no more enemies around and finally lowered her bow. Her eyesight was still drenched in sweat from stress and panic.



"Is that- OH GOODNESS! Hey, everyone!"

Seyena heard a voice outside.



"Why is Charlotte standing out in the rain?"



*Did Olison not tell her that we're wanted dead or alive? I better not mention anything.*



"She was providing covering fire, but now all the bad guys are dead. Charlotte, you can come inside now! You'll catch a cold if you don't dry off; Berebian rains tend to be rather nasty if I remember my geography book correctly."

Edwin stirs, despite his bleeding out state, and mumbles something.



"Mmmnooo, not the tome... That could be useful..."



"Well, well, well.. who knew we would end up meeting the rest of the group again? Looks like the Plague Dragon really knew we would be needing help here."

**Ami To 25,13 and heal Valor.**



"Thanks Ami, you're a lifesaver." Valor rolled his neck, producing a dull cracking sound.



"It no problem, mister Val."

Chris opened the next chest and lifted the heavy accessory of murder.

**Chris got Steel Mace! Lockpicks dropped.**

**Valor vs Longbowman F**

Hit:  $112+10+10-33 = 99$   
Hit roll: 68, hit! Crit roll: 64!  
Damage:  $21+1-11 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

**Seyena heals Olson**

$10+6 / 2 =$  Up to 8HP restored

**Ami heals Valor**

$10+20 =$  Up to 30HP healed

**Gregor does nothing but catch his breath this turn.**

**Tantallos: Move 22,14 and use vulnerary on Olson.**



"Not a good time to relax, cavalier guy."

Alexander **moves two spaces left**, *just* outside the range of that berserksage.

**Tantallos uses Vulnerary on Olson**

Up to 10HP restored

**Riven: Move to 22,13.**

**Charlotte: Move to 21,15. Take Iron Lance from Alex. Best idea ever.**

Alex makes a half-hearted grab for his lance, but doesn't really follow up on it, and his

Lance is taken.



"Charlotte, why did you...oh, never mind."

---

**Salvatore stays where he is**, watching the archers move out of sight from within the tower. The rider was silent as he watched them go, no reason to preach more for now at least. He's given them their choice.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The soldiers gathered around the Sage, who yet again decided to bid his time.

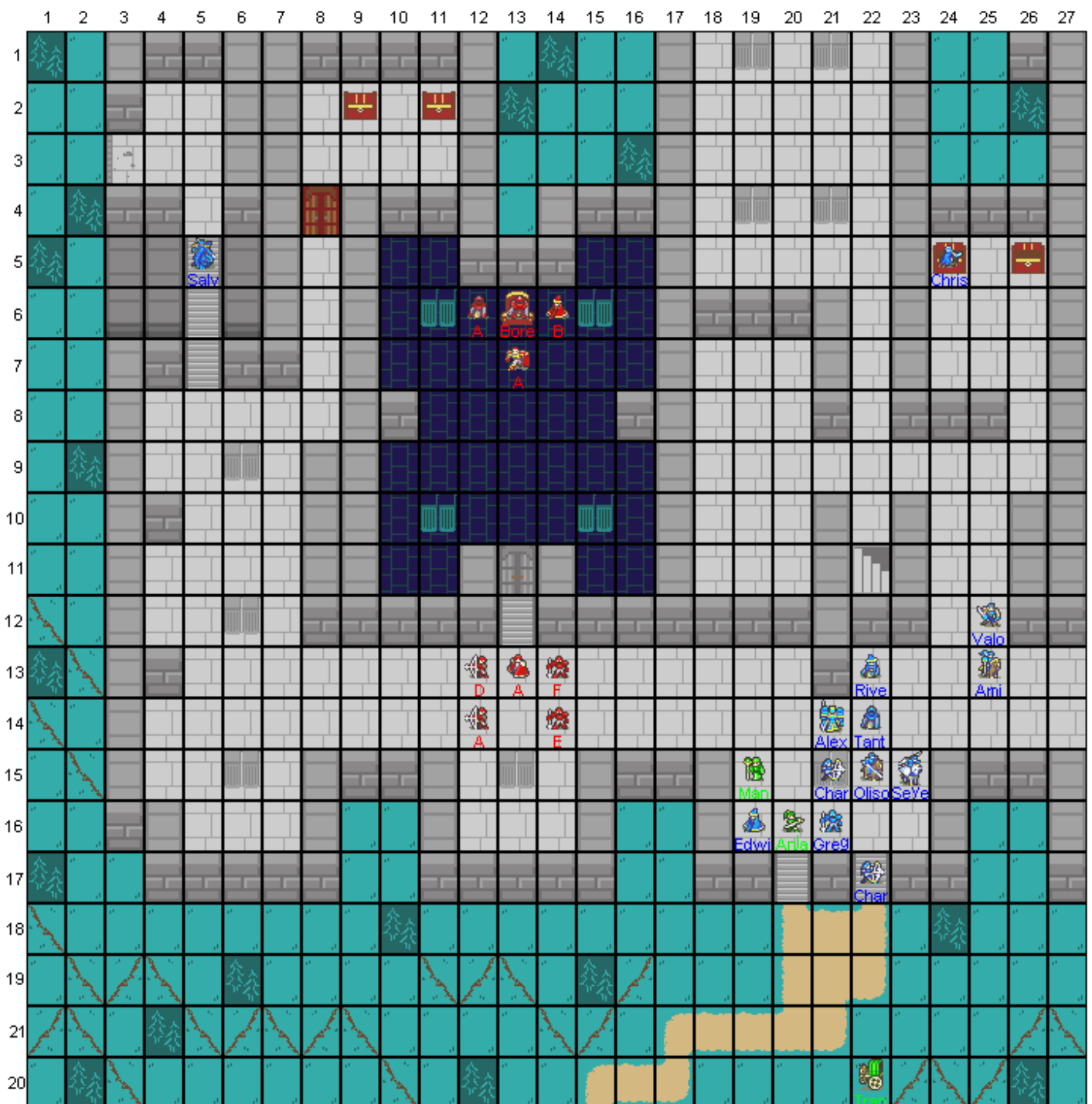
### ~~Ally Phase~~

Mannan moved over to Edwin and healed him.

#### **Mannan mends Edwin**

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| 20+14 /2 = Up to 17HP healed |
|------------------------------|

# ~~Player Turn 10~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                         | Allies:                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/41<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 13/32<br>Christopher Shields: 14/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 22/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 5/35<br>Olison Eul: 18/34<br>Riven: 12/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 32/33<br>Seyena Ikane: 6/33<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 7/30<br>Valor Inara: 33/34 | Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29<br>Hired Spearman E: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman F: 31/31<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Shaman A: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36<br>Sage: 33/33 | Anja: 17/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 18/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |

Sal, hearing silence for a while, **moved outside of the tower to 6.9**, moving behind the pillar. Seems there wasn't anyone around... Have they all moved to another part of

the castle? The wyvern rider strained his ears to see if he can hear anything.

---

**Ami: Go to 22,16 and heal Greg**

**Ami heals Gregor**

20+10 = Up to 30HP restored

Alexander doesn't have a lance, so he stands there and **does nothing**.



"Thank you, Ami. How was it fighting undead?"



"More fun than I thought it would be."

**Chris wanders back toward the group to 26, 9.**

**Charlotte holds her position on the Pillars of Evasion.**



"C'mon, Anja. Better let Ami have a look at you after your little beatdown."

**Gregor: Rescue Anja.**

**Tantallos: Move one to right.**

**Valor: Move to 22, 14 and equip iron sword.**

**Seyena moves to 20,15**

**Edwin: Hold position and do nothing.**

Anja grumbled in Gregor's grip.



"Augh, Gregor, move your hand a bit lower, your gauntlet is crushing my breasts!"

**Riven: Stand still.**



"What? No I'm n--" He looked down. He was. He hadn't even noticed through the thick leather gloves.



"Erk!" Somehow he managed to avoid dropping her completely, instead shifting his hands to avoid further groping.



"sorry..."



"Those soldier types, no gentleness in their touch..." Anja giggled quietly.

**Olison remains still.**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Okay, that's enough." The nameless Sage raised his staff. Red light blinked at the gemstone on top of the staff.

Seyena suddenly began to foam at her mouth.

#### **Sage berserks Seyena**

Berserk roll:  $(30 + \{[19-15] \times 5\} + 18) - (9 \times 2) = 50$   
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Seyena is Berserked!

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"I hope you will forgive me, young lady..." Mannan opened his tome and cast his holy magics at Seyena, but she swiftly evaded the attack.



"Uh-oh..." He said, and then he got stabbed twice.



"Urgh... that hurts..." He fell down.

#### **Mannan vs Seyena**

Hit:  $138 + 5 - 15 - 45 = 83$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

Seyena counters!  
Hit:  $122 - 5 - 44 = 73$   
Hit roll: 40, hit!



Damage: 21-8 = 13dmg

Seyena counters again!

Hit:  $122-5-44 = 73$

Hit roll: 64, hit!

Damage: 21-8 = 13dmg

## ~~Player Turn 11~~

"CRAP! MAIM! KILL!!" Seyena almost stabbed Charlotte once, and the second stab poked the column, chipping off some rock.

### Seyena vs Charlotte

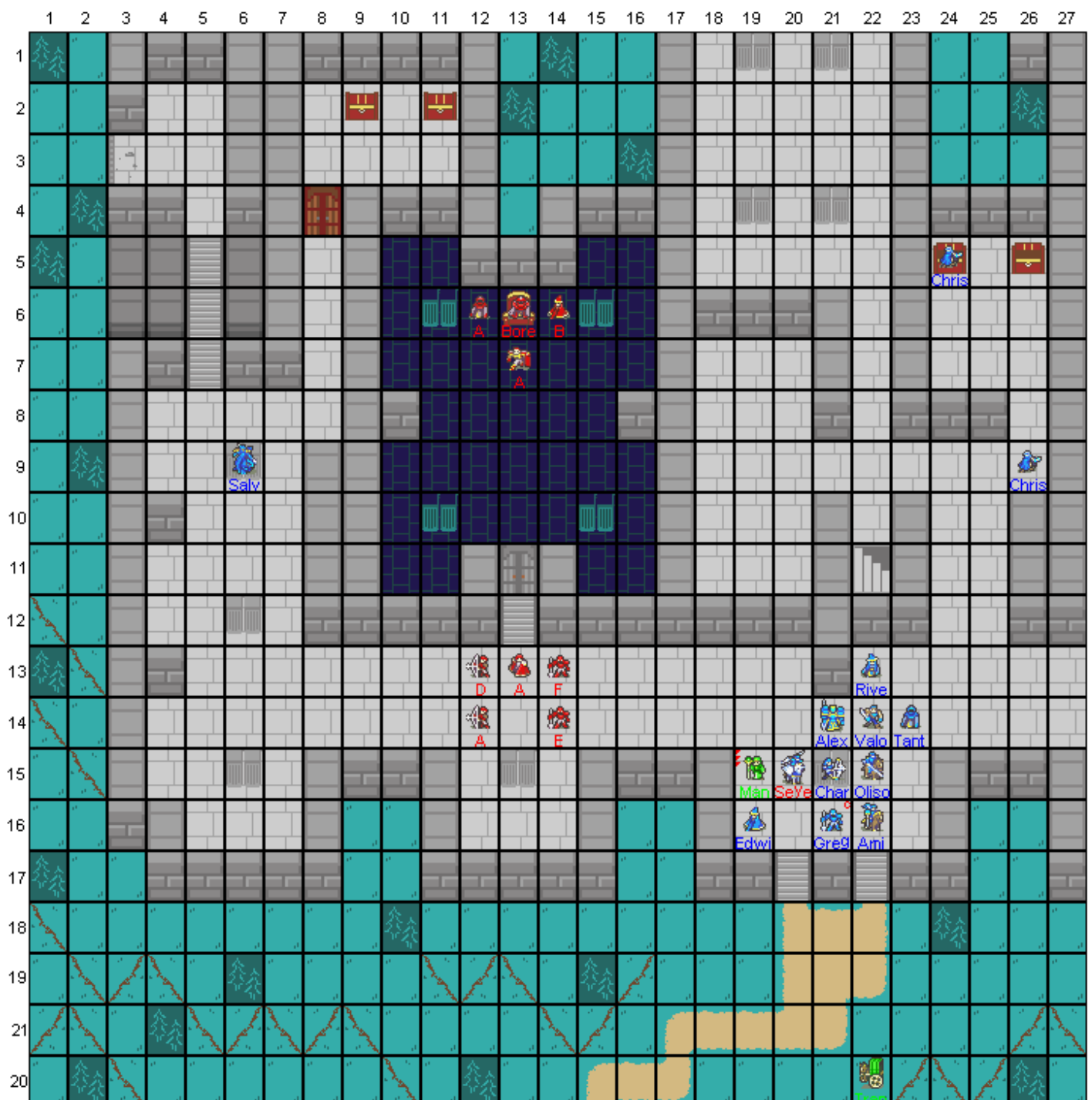
Hit:  $122-10-10-11-5-15-38 = 33$

Hit roll: 40, miss!

Seyena attacks again!

Hit:  $122-10-10-10-11-5-15-38 = 33$

Hit roll: 76, miss! //Tsk, a pity c:



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                         | Allies:                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/41<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 13/32<br>Christopher Shields: 14/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 27/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/35<br>^ <b>Carrying: Anja</b><br>Olison Eul: 18/34<br>Riven: 12/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 32/33<br>Seyena Ikane: 6/33 <b>Berserk! 4/5</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 7/30<br>Valor Inara: 33/34 | Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29<br>Hired Spearman E: 31/31<br>Hired Spearman F: 31/31<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Shaman A: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36<br>Sage: 33/33 | Anja: 17/26<br>^ <b>Carried by: Gregor von Hexham</b><br>Mannan Tunhausen: -/31 <b>3/3</b><br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |



"What the hell? Seyena, what are you doing?!"



"Crap, the enemies have a berserk staff! Anyone come across a soothe staff by any chance?"



"Sorry, Seyena. Ami, stay here an heal her once I'm through! Everyone else, take on the sage!"

**Charlotte: Move 1 south, 1 west, 2 south and Iron Longbow Seyena.**

Alexander continues to not have his lance **and just stand there.**

**Chris moves to 23,13.**



"Dammit! Hold on sir, I'll fix you up." Edwin remarks as he quickly starts digging in a sleeve. "Stop that sage! Before he get another one of us with his staff!"

**Edwin: Use a vulnerary on poor Mannan.**

#### Charlotte vs Seyena

Hit:  $121+10-7+5+10-15-45 = 93$

Hit roll: 92, hit!

Damage:  $28+1-9 = 20\text{dmg}$

#### Edwin uses Vulnerary on Mannan

Up to 5HP restored



"A berserk staff? That sounds nasty...and no, I don't think we found anything like that."

Valor **moves to 17, 14**, roaring in fury at the sage.

**Riven: Move to 18,14.**

**Tantallos: Move to 19,14.**



"Well, well, well.. if it is not the witch lady."

---

**Salvatore: Move to 7.13**

Was that a shout? It almost sounded familiar, although he wasn't sure if it was wishful thinking in this dark situation... The wyvern rider decided to look either way, he needs to see what was going on. Moving within view of down the hallway, he saw the four, a robed man that must be their leader or something, and... Is that Valor? And Riven? He can't quite tell, too many people in the way... But they seem to be attacking the enemies!



"Oh yah o' little faith, how Oi have told yah this would come ta bein'. Yah have ah choice comin' up, an' yah won' get ah chance ta try again, 'er put it off. Yah could stop this madness, this cruelty ta fellow man, what is goin' on 'ere, ah chance ta make things roight. Everybody has ah chance, ah choice ta make in their life. What are yers?" The golden wyvern growled as the rider readied his killer lance.



"Indeed. My advance apologies if I succumb to mind-warping magic. I suspect this will be hectic, though I'm not especially worried."



"I am not really a fan of that kind of magic, but I doubt he is really going to waste his time with us, after all.. those aren't that effective against other magic users. "

**Olison rushes past Valor to 16,14, tossing a Spear at the soldier.**



"Agh... I... I've got an arrow in me..." Seyena tries to pull herself to a sitting position. "What just happened?"



"Sorry Anja. Looks like we need to take out whoever is using that berserk staff quickly!"

**Gregor: Move to (19,13). Drop Anja in an available space if possible.**

Gregor put Anja down behind himself just as Olison's spear pinned the unfortunate spearman to the ground.

**Olison vs Spearman E**

Hit:  $95+10+5-32 = 78$   
Hit roll: 22, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $25-13 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

**Ami: Head to 21,18 and heal Charlotte**

**Ami heals Charlotte**

$10+20 =$  Up to 30HP restored

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The sage raised his staff again, and...

**Sage berserks Olison**

Berserk roll:  $(30+\{[19-4] \times 5\}+18)-(4 \times 2) = (30+75+18)-8 = 115$ , autohit!  
Olison is Berserking!

Olison went 'RRRHGHRGHRGHGHRGRGGHHH'.

**Spearman F vs Valor**

Hit:  $105+15-10-5-35 = 70$   
Hit roll: 69, hit!  
Damage:  $24+1-11 = 14\text{dmg}$   
  
Valor counters!  
Hit:  $127+15+10+5-15-32 = 110$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $17-1-13 = 3\text{dmg}$

Salvatore suddenly got under fire.

**Longbowman A vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $116-21 = 95$   
Hit roll: 62, hit! Crit roll: 1!  
Damage:  $21-18 = 3 \times 3 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Longbowman D vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $116-21 = 95$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $21-18 = 3\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

### Quote from: Mannan mends Seyena

20+14 /2 = Up to 17HP restored

### Anja vs Spearman F

Hit: 141+10+5+10-15-32 = 119, autohit!

Damage: 16-1-13 = 2dmg

Spearman F counters!

Hit: 105+15-5-10-60 = 45

Hit roll: 62, miss!

Anja attacks again!

Hit: 141+10+5+10-15-32 = 119, autohit!

Damage: 16-1-13 = 2dmg

## ~~Player Turn 12~~

"RRHGRHGHRHGRHGRHMURDERRRR!!"

### Olison vs Riven

Hit: 95-5-35 = 55

Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage: 25-9 = 16dmg

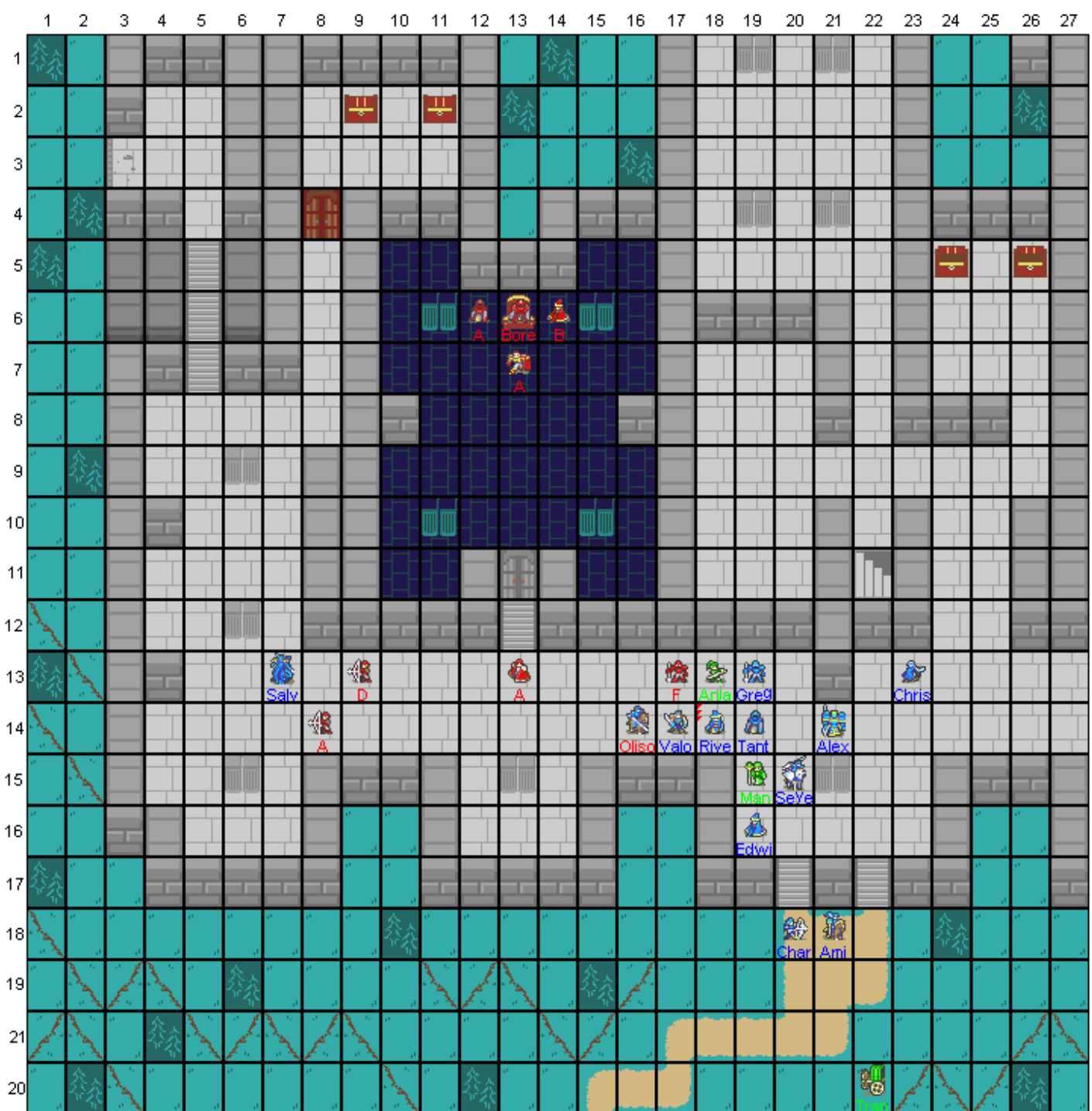


"...overconfident... again..."

Riven then collapsed back into a hatted purple lump.

### Meanwhile:

Charlotte noticed a group of mercenaries running from around the corner of the slope leading to the abbey. They will be at the gates in a minute or two.



Weather: ☁☁☁

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                              | Allies:                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/41<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 13/32<br>Christopher Shields: 33/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 28/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/35<br>Oliso Eul: 18/34 <b>Berserk! 4/5</b><br>Riven: -/28 <b>3/3</b><br>Salvatore Vaughan: 20/33<br>Seyena Ikane: 17/33<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 7/30<br>Valor Inara: 19/34 | Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29<br>Hired Spearman F: 24/31<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Shaman A: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36<br>Sage: 33/33 | Anja: 17/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 5/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |



"Sorry about this, Oliso..."

**Gregor: Move to (16,13). STAB Olison with the Iron Lance. Aim to wound instead of kill.**



"Get the sage dammit! Stop him!"

**Edwin: Move to 19, 13 and fry spearman F!**



"I need to stop him using that staff, or we'll end up killing eachother."

**Seyena moves to 13, 14 and attacks Sage with Glaive, praying to Hitzocoatl**

#### **Gregor vs Olison**

Hit:  $118+15+10+5-42 = 106$ , autohit!

Damage:  $24-13 = 11+5 = 16\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!

Hit:  $95+15-5-36 = 69$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $25+2-16 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### **Edwin vs Spearman F**

Hit:  $126+10+5+10-32 = 119$ , autohit!

Damage:  $24-5 = 19\text{dmg}$

Spearman F counters!

Hit:  $105-5-10-27 = 63$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $24-7 = 17\text{dmg}$

Seyena slashed at the Sage, who then engulfed her with pillar of fire. Just as the last tongues of flame dissipated, the brave valkyrie slashed at the Sage from above, and the blade of the glaive cut deep into his skull, making loud, unpleasant sound. He fell on his knees and then sprawled on the floor.

#### **Seyena vs Sage**

Hit:  $112+5-32 = 85$

Hit roll: 24, hit!

Damage:  $26-9 = 17\text{dmg}$

Sage counters!

Hit:  $125-5-41 = 79$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $25-15 = 10\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $112+5-32 = 85$

Hit roll: 77, hit!

Damage:  $26-9 = 17\text{dmg}$

"I hear sounds of battle. You assured us you can deal with any problems!"



"That's... that's a mere coincidence. Possibly a miscommunication between my lackeys, yes... Even if they get here, I will just drink the very essences of their lives. They should prove to be valuable research targets, yes..."

"Pathetic old man, better don't fail Lady PRIXIMA here! Or you can forget about your private laboratory."



"Yes, yes... always the demands. Just like that girl." Bores sighed and then pulled a large tome out of his robes.



"Nevertheless, I'm ready. Should we open the door for them?"

"...."

At the lack of reply, Bores chuckled a little.

---

**Charlotte: Move to 17,16. Iron Longbow-> Spearman F.**



"Well done, Seyena!"

Gregor watched Olison warily. Would the strange rage disappear with the Sage's death?



"Stars above, he's dead! Thank you a lot, this should definitely make things easier for us. Hopefully."

**Chris moves to 19,14.**



"Ah. I can't say I expected to see the four of you here."

**Tantalos: Move to 15, 13 and attack Olison.**

**Charlotte vs Spearman F**

Hit: 121+10+10+5-32 = 114, autohit!

Damage: 18-13 = 5dmg



### Tantallos vs Olson

Hit:  $123+10+5+15-42 = 111$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $26-4 = 22$ dmg  
2HP restored!

### Valor: Use concoction on Olson!



"You going to be okay?"

### Valor uses Concoction on Olson

Up to 15HP restored

Olson groggily rose again.



"Hn-.. gh. What just happened?"



"That bastard-" Valor used a thumb to indicate the Sage's corpse, "-was using some kind of magic to make you crazy. Seyena took him out."

Olson sighed sharply.



"Magic..."

Valor shrugged.



"Well, things seem to be calming down a little. Can you bring the wagon inside, Anja? No sense leaving it out in the rain."

Alexander *continues* to not have his spear and **do absolutely nothing**.



"So be it then... Yer choice has been made. It could o' been ah different one, yah could o' changed yer fates. Oi hope yah find yer penitence in the next life, if'in yah won' find it in this one."

Salvatore: The golden wyvern's growls soon turned into a roar as it charged forward to 8.13, its rider striking at Archer D

Salvatore vs Longbowman D

Hit:  $95-33 = 62$   
Hit roll: 71, miss!

Ami: To 20,13 and heal Edwin.

Ami heals Edwin

$10+20 =$  Up to 30HP restored

~~Enemy Phase~~

Longbowman A vs Salvatore

Hit:  $116-21 = 95$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $21-18 = 3$ dmg

Longbowman D vs Seyena

Hit:  $116+10-15-41 = 70$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $35-9 = 26$ dmg

~~Ally Phase~~

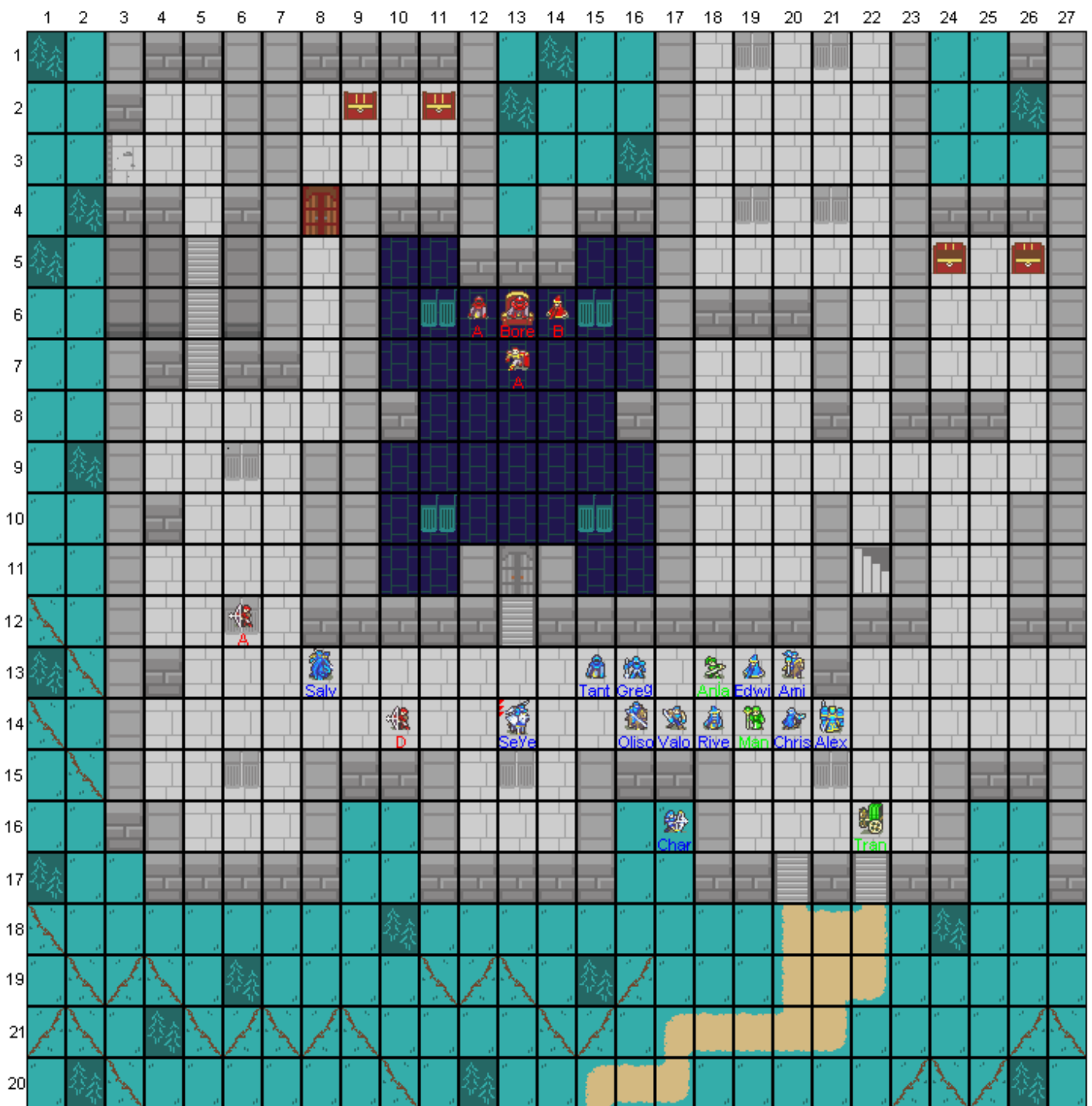


"Huh? Well, if you want!" Anja put two of her fingers to her lips and whistled rather loudly. The horses neighed and moved the cart inside the abbey, while Mannan approached Riven to heal her.

Mannan mends Riven

$20+14 / 2 =$  Up to 17HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 13~~



Weather: ///

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                                                    | Allies:                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/41<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 13/32<br>Christopher Shields: 33/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 28/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 24/35<br>Olison Eul: 15/34<br>Riven: 17/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 17/33<br>Seyena Ikane: -/33 <b>3/3</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 7/30<br>Valor Inara: 19/34 | Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Longbowman D: 29/29<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Shaman A: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36 | Anja: 17/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 5/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |



"Oh, thank you. Are you a new member of Charlotte's group?"

**Tantallos: Move 10, 13 and attack Longbowman D.**



"Don't mind me, I am just here to drain your energy."

**Ami: Head to 14,14 and heal Seyena**

**Chris nodded to Alex. The knight seemed too out of it to talk. Instead he continued to move on 15,14 to hang out.**

Gregor gave the assassin an odd look as he passed.



"That you, Chris? What's with the new outfit?"



"Tantallos gave me some new robes, since the old ones belonged to PRIXIMA. I'm officially part of the family."

He looked over Gregor.



"I thought you and yours were joining the royal guard. Didn't work out?"



"Ugh. Royal Guard turned us down; we didn't even get a chance to prove ourselves."



"Seems like your undead adventure went well, though. I'm looking forward to hearing more about it, once we sort out whatever's going on here. I don't suppose you have any idea? We came here for some sort of council and then got attacked, and that's all I know."



"Went well enough. I really got to know Tantallos and Olison. Truth be told it was pretty fun. The battles weren't exactly easy - that is, where do you stab an enemy that has no need to breathe or retain blood? - but they were... interesting."

Chris took out his switchblade and flicked it around a bit, to show it to Gregor.



"I've gotten a lot better with knives, because of it. And I had a lot of opportunities to practice blows that would be fatal to mortal men with the zombies."

Gregor couldn't help but raise an eyebrow at the switchblade and talk of fatal strikes.



"That's interesting. And have you...ah, *practiced* those on any living people yet?"



"Just the occasional bandit. Nobody worth mentioning or remembering."



"As for what's going on here, I can't say for sure. We were invited here under the pretense of a council - as you said yourself - and suddenly there was an attack. We holed up in the stables until we could all regroup and take stock of the situation. If I had to hazard an educated guess I'd say Prixima is behind this."



"Anyway, how did the three of you make out over the last few months?"



"The last few months..."



"Not nearly as exciting as yours, I'm afraid. Still, we had some fun, did some good deeds, made a little gold. Alexander and I have been sparring, and I think he and Charlotte have become friends as well."



"Sounds like it's been rough for you. At least you had the opportunity to bond."



"Friends are what really matter in the world, if you ask me."



"Oh I agree. But now that I think about it, didn't you have sort of a thing for Ami? How's that working out?"



"I do care for her. But with one thing and another, we haven't been able to spend much time together - practically none, actually. It's a little frustrating."



"That's neither here nor there, I suppose. We're both young, with our lives ahead of us... assuming we all live through this attack and whatever follows in the coming days."



"I get the feeling things are going to be very turbulent for us from here on out, for a long time. It might be best if you banded together with us. And we really need to find Derick, as well. I don't think he's safe out there by himself."



"Oh, right. I guess you guys were probably a little busy for stuff like that. And I agree; it seems obvious that Prixima wants us all dead, so it'd probably be safest if we stuck together. I just hope she didn't get Derick already.."



"Well, I for one would be happy to have you and yours aboard again, and I hardly think anyone would protest combining our strength for the duration."



"I do hope Derick is safe. It's a shame he went on his own."



"I haven't heard anything of him... which might be a good thing."



"Tantallos? Seyena? Ami? Hah! Good ta see yer alright, knew yah wouldn' be confined in tha place fer long! Everyone alive an' well Oi take it?" It was as if the dark clouds that have been hanging over Sal were lifted at seeing his friends, alive well and taking the fight to the enemy. Speaking of the enemy...

**Salvatore: Move to 11.14, attack Archer D**



"It didn' have ta be this way!" The wyvern rider yelled at the archer as he took another stab at him.



"If it is not the wyvern rider. Yes everyone is alive and around here, quite a surprise to find the other group here."

Seyena stood up, leaning on Ami for support as she remounted her pegasus.



"Tantallos, people have names. What happens if we drag along another wyvern rider? You couldn't both call them by their profession."



"Anyway, it's nice to know you're alive, Salvatore. We were worried when you got separated from the rest of us."



"Hah, it's alright, don' care much wha' people call me. Oi've survived, still more work fer ta do, don' need ta worry about me. Did yah manage ta see who was

causin' the ruckus up front? Saw 'em from the tower, but not wh--Is tha Gregor?" Salvatore looked to see a soldier in a purple uniform with a familiar monocle.



"Relax, that is just my way of talking, try to get used to it. If we get another one I will just call this one by "wyvern rider with a helmet and a different accent."



"And he does not seem to mind it, so relax. And honestly, I have no idea who did that, but he is going pay for it... and then I will talk to the rest of the group, there is a lot to be said."



"Alright, it's great to see all of you, really, it is, but for the love of all that is decent can we please finish off the bastards who tried to kill us *before* we catch up?"

**Valor moves to 13,13**



"Chris, if you wouldn't mind..." The mercenary gestured toward the door in front of him.



"I used up my lockpicks earlier, but I believe I saw you take some from a fallen thief. If you'll trade me those for this mace, I can get to it soon."



"Done. How the hell do these things work anyway? Nevermind, tell me later."



"OK, we'll talk about it later."



"Nice to see you too, Valor. Still as professional as ever."





"Damn straight."



"Valor, we might as well catch up now while we all try to patch ourselves up, since the only enemies remaining are hiding behind a door."



"Well, there's actually two archers runnin' 'round 'ere. Not sure how long one o' 'em is gonna last though, other probably less. Tis ah shame..." Turned to the archer(s) remaining. "Yah can still give up yah know! Nothin' keepin' yah 'ere anymore, the vile man wit' his horrid magic is gone."



"The number remaining and their exact location is immaterial. Until they're dead or have surrendered, they are threats."



"As much as I'd love to spend some time swapping stories, I have to agree with Valor. Whoever our foe is, they obviously have access to some nasty magic. We should deal with them as soon as possible."

Olison looked at the door with a careful eye.



"Agreed. I'm not stopping until the perpetrator here is stopped."

Olison made his way further down the hallway, **To 11,14 and stabbing the archer provided he isn't already dead.**



"Well, at least one of those archers will be kind enough to lend me some of their energy."

Edwin stayed silent as the two groups joined and mingled with each other, greeting each other like old friends. His eye however, was caught by a certain book carried by the shady looking man.



"Oh! Excuse me, but is that a tome of Elfire you have there? Where did you get that?"

Chris nodded.



"Yes, I found it in here a little while ago. I don't believe we've met."



"Christopher Shields, assassin and information gatherer for the Forsaken."

He held his hand out to Edwin, any actual tile distance between them be damned.



"Edwin Westbringer, mage and, if I survive this mess, future sage." Edwin said as he bowed to Chris.



"I apologise if I offend you by not shaking your hand, but I think it's somewhat prudent not to shake the hand of someone who regularly uses hidden sharp objects and poisons to kill people. On a brighter note, where exactly did you get that tome, and why are you carrying it? You don't exactly seem like the type to be interested in such things, if I may say so."

Chris looked at his hand.



"If I wanted to kill you, I would have attacked you without introducing myself. I haven't thought about using poisons. It's... a bit rude, really."



"If you're going to kill a man, I've always believed he should have a chance to defend himself, and that one should be with their opponent until death. No one should have to die alone, even if their company is the man who killed them."

Seyena couldn't help but interject, overhearing Chris' statement.



"Why? I doubt your enemy would offer the same sentiment if you two swapped places."



"Seyena, it's been four months. You know me well enough by now to know I don't care what people think; I do things my way."



"Though I do apologize for attempting to chat up Valor that one time. I won't even blame it on the drinks we were all having."



"Anyway, I got this tome from a chest in the storage room. I thought perhaps Riven or Tantallos could use it, but then I remembered this isn't their kind of magic. It seemed a shame to just toss it on the ground to be trampled on, so I held onto it. Do you want it?"

Edwin blinked.



"Oh. It seems as though assassins are not all like they are in books. Sorry. And yes, I would love to have that tome! Anima magic is my speciality, especially fire based magics, so I would hopefully be able to put it to good use!"

He pauses to lean a bit towards Riven for a moment and does something odd. He sniffs the air for a few breaths, slightly frowning in concentration, before straightening with an understanding smile.



"Ah, and you would be correct in Anima not being their kind of magic. They use ancient magics, otherwise known as 'dark' magic to the superstitious. I had a feeling that was the case, but now I am sure."

He pauses to glance at Ami with slightly narrowed eyes.



"Yes... You certainly travel with interesting companions, that's for sure..."

Chris also glanced at Ami, then back at Edwin.



"I dislike making threats, so I'm going to leave one unspoken but implied..."

He closed his eyes for a moment.



"In any case, you may have the tome for free; I've no need of it and it'll be more useful in a capable ally's hands. I've already been requested to open the lock ahead, but you can take it from me then if you wish."



"Well, it was less about questioning you specifically, and more about questioning why most people think that there's an 'honorable', or 'right' way to fight. For me, honor and fairness go right out the window when I'm fighting for my life."



"Also, I'm not really mad about that, I don't think Valor swings that way."



"To be perfectly honest, I don't think he remembers that... or even notices. I've hit on him a few times since then and he is literally clueless."

Chris had a good, quiet chuckle over that. He and Seyena were whispering so it wasn't likely the swordsman could overhear them talking about him like he wasn't around.



"So yes, you have a point there. I don't think he's even aware there is a 'that way' to 'swing', as it were."

He stretched and cracked his knuckles in preparation to switching back to the other topic she had brought up.



"Anyway, well, yes, that is an equally valid way to think and fight. I don't exactly fight 'fairly' myself."

Seyena gave a wry smile.



"I think your definition of a fair fight would be giving your enemy a knife and shooting them in the face when they give you a funny look."



"It's just that I would not want to die alone, either. Unlike you or anyone else present, neither heaven nor hell await me; when I die, my existence completely ceases. So even if it's the man or woman who defeated me, I would want someone around for my end, to remember that I ever walked these lands."



"Your existence... Do you not believe in the afterlife?" Seyena asked, looking curious.



"To me, the evidence suggests that they exist. The same evidence also states one needs a soul to be damned or rewarded. Something more than the body that continues on once the shell has rotted away."

He tapped himself on his chest.



"I have no such animating force; I surrendered it in my childhood. I do not - can not - feel very strongly about anything, I do not dream when I sleep, I find it very difficult to speak untruthfully - the only falsehoods I can tell are ones that I do not know are false..."



"Although... in the past few months, I've felt more alive than I have for most of my life. I... have friends now. A family. People who accept me for who I am despite my faults. I have a purpose."



"I actually do care for the lot of you, not just Ami and Tantallos and Olison. It's strange... but it's nice."



"Gentlemen, ladies, relax... if there is something that people really should not discuss about are their beliefs and ways of living their lives. As for the assassin guy, he is one of us now. I am actually really glad he decided to join us. His thoughts are really close to the thoughts we share on the castle. But it is a pity that not too many wanted to join the guard. We really could use more people there, you know there is a lot more to be learned besides the basic about the Plague Dragon."



"It's all right. I don't mind, Tantallos. If people are going to work with me, they should probably know about my... disadvantage, I suppose you would call it."



"No... soul?" Seyena almost wanted to ask why. But she couldn't. Did that... make Chris inhuman?

She thought for a minute, before her lips curved into the smallest of smiles. No, humanity wasn't based upon an invisible object.



"Regardless, you've still turned out to be a better person than most people with souls; including most of us here."



"...Thank you. That's kind of you to say. ...I wasn't expecting that."



"To be honest I thought you would say it was creepy!"



"I wouldn't be offended if you thought so. It's simply a fact. I've learned to cope with it."



"Incidentally, would you like a marshmallow? Standing offer."

Chris retrieved his bag of marshmallows from under his chestplate and ate one.



"Oh dear, it seems I've done it again... I've had a lot of trouble with the whole 'social' thing, so I apologise if I came off as insulting or something like that. I suppose that sort of thing happens when you've been around books more than people... In any case, thank you for letting me have that tome. I hope I can be useful with it in the future. As for your supposedly soulless condition..."

Edwin shrugs and makes a noncommittal grunt.



"It doesn't matter to me, not really. Good or evil, innocent or killer, soul or soulless, in the end it doesn't matter. When we die, we will simply just break down over time and merge with the natural currents and magics of the world, which is where we emerged from in the first place. The world doesn't care what you do or have done, it will simply go on regardless, like it always has and what we were will be reused in the creation of something else. So, in a way, we're all immortal and have always been. Food for thought, as I like to think of it."

#### Tantallos vs Longbowman D

Hit:  $123-33 = 90$   
Hit roll: 82, hit!  
Damage:  $24-5 = 19$  dmg  
9HP restored!

#### Ami heals Seyena

$10+20 / 2 =$  Up to 17HP restored

#### Salvatore vs Longbowman D

Hit:  $95+5-33 = 67$   
Hit roll: 97, miss!

#### Olison vs Longbowman D

Hit:  $95+10+5-33 = 77$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $25+2-11 = 16$  dmg

**Olison gets Chest Key! No place in inventory, Chest Key dropped.**

**Riven: Move to 14,13, snort the last of my powder.**

**Riven uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP healed

**Gregor stays where he is. Have Anja bring the wagon further inside.**

Alexander **trudges over to 20, 17**

**Charlotte: Move to 20,17**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Twang.

**Longbowman A vs Tantallos**

Hit:  $116 - 28 = 88$

Hit roll: 66, hit!

Damage:  $21 - 10 = 11\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Something round and hard hit Chris' back. It was the bulbous handle of Anja's sword.



"Spy guy! I can't believe you just passed by me and didn't even say hi!"

Her wagon moved deeper into the abbey, just a bit, whilst Mannan approached Alexander and fixed his wounds.

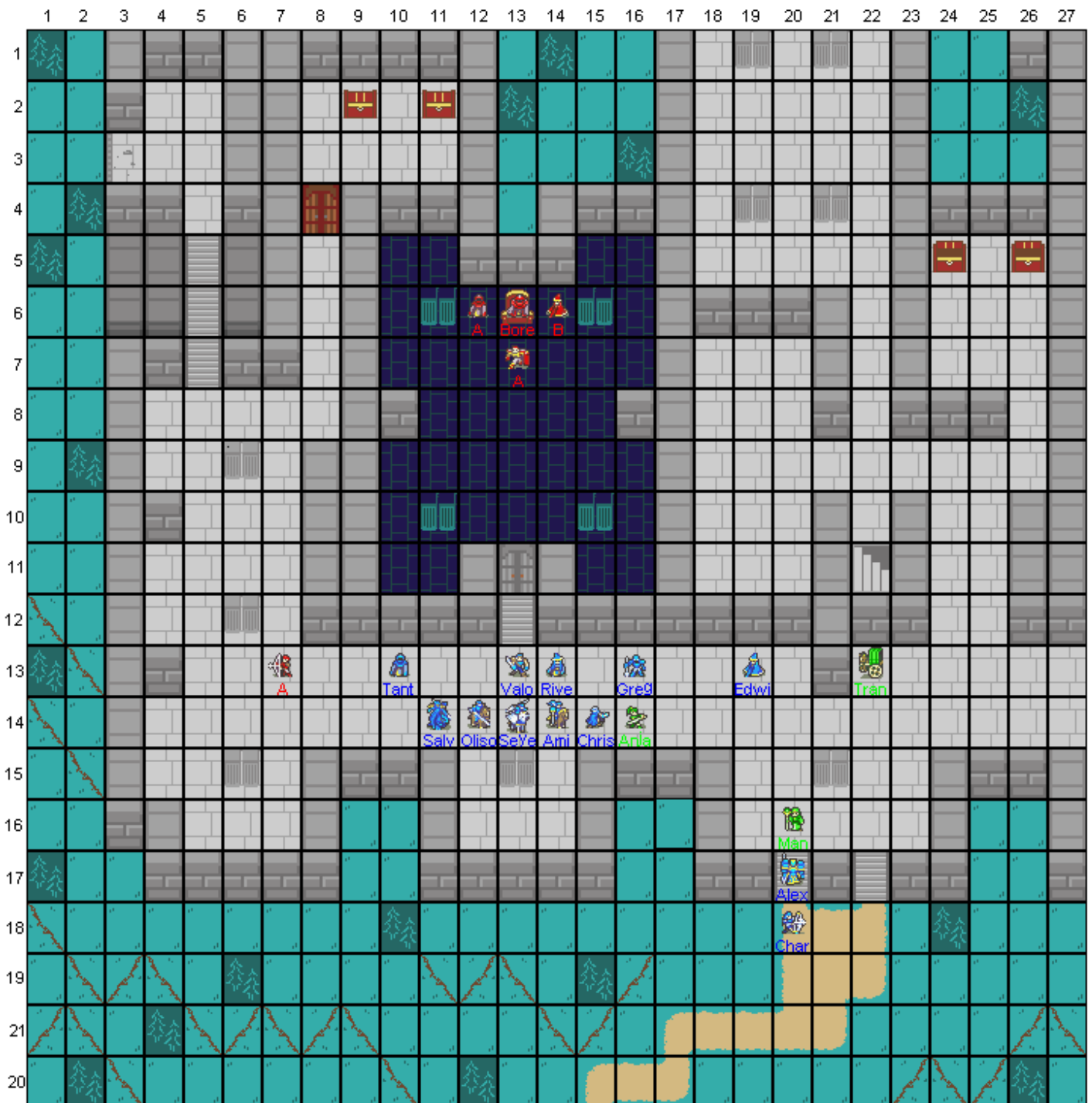
**Mannan heals Alexander**

$20 + 14 =$  Up to 34HP healed



# ~~Player Turn 14~~

It looks like the rain is getting weaker.



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                             | Allies:                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 41/41<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 13/32<br>Christopher Shields: 33/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 28/28<br>Gregor von Hexham: 24/35<br>Olison Eul: 15/34<br>Riven: 27/28<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 17/33<br>Seyena Ikane: 17/33<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 5/30<br>Valor Inara: 19/34 | Longbowman A: 29/29<br>Mage B: 29/29<br>Shaman A: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36 | Anja: 17/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 5/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |

Chris looked over his shoulder at Anja.



"I didn't see you, actually. How are you, Anja?"

**Valor: Move to 15, 13. Toss Chris the lockpicks, and take the tome instead.**



"Thanks, Valor. Now to do my part."

**Chris moves to one space south of the door and picks it open.**



"Speaking of parts to do: pardon me, coming through."

**Gregor moves to (13,11) once the door opens.**

**Tantallos: Move 7, 14 and attack that longbowman.**



"Oh, so now I will have to drain your energy."

Chris moved aside so Gregor could pass.



"It didn' have ta be loike this... Please, may yah foind yer peace in the next loife. Oi'm sorry Oi didn' convince yah well enough." The wyvern rider spoke to the archer as the **wyvern made its way to 6.13, stabbing at the archer!**

Noticing something he hasn't before, he looked towards the group.



"Oy, there's doors back 'ere, think there moight be more survivors?"



"Hey, you seem like you could use a little help, Valor." Seyena said, bopping him in the back with her staff.

## Seyena: Heal Exvalibur.



"Thanks, Seyena." Valor exhaled as the staff closed his wounds. "You're getting pretty good at that."



"Thanks. Healing is actually a little more complicated than I thought it would be." Seyena said, taking a careful look at Valor.



"I am still a little new to it, so I... might have missed something, hopefully just minor scratches."



"Hey new guy. You wanted the book?"



"Indeed! I would love to have that tome and put it to use. My name is Edwin, what is yours?" Edwin replied before turning to the wyvern rider.



"Valor Inara. Mercenary." Valor said to Edwin, leaving him to speak to Salvatore.



"If there are more doors in the back, then perhaps we should investigate? There might be more useful equipment that we could use there, or more prisoners!"

Sal squinted, seeing someone he doesn't know asking him something down the hall. Some mage perhaps?



"If'in there moight be survivors o' this mess, Oi say we should check. Oi managed ta hold off in ah tower fer ah while, someone moight o' hid in tha room."



"Sounds like we should check, just in case."

**Edwin: Move to 17, 14.**

**Riven: Hold still.**

The door opened with a creak.

Gregor could see that the man with large sword wore Kesselring armor - the green variant, with lieutenant's sash and the Kesselring's emblem at his chest.

"Tsk, I don't like spearmen." The officer mumbled, readying his sword.

**Tantallos vs Longbowman A**

Hit:  $123 - 33 = 90$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!

**Salvatore vs Longbowman A**

Hit:  $95 - 33 = 62$   
Hit roll: 57, hit! Crit roll: 12!  
Damage:  $28 + 2 - 11 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

**Seyena heals Valor**

$10 + 2 + 4 =$  Up to 16HP restored

**Ami: To 8,14 and heal Tant**



"A little pick me up."

Seyena peered through the door, looking at the swordsman.



"Is that- hey, that's... that's a Kesselring uniform! What's he doing here?"



"...Removing any doubts as to the reason behind this attack, if you're asking me."



"Would you mind terribly if, instead of killing him, I merely cut the tendons of his arms and legs so we may interrogate him at our leisure?"



"Fighting for one's life being what it is, of course. There's no such thing as guaranteeing the safety of an enemy on the battlefield."



"No promises, Chris. I'll do my best to merely wound him."



"Noice ta see yah 'gain Ami, keepin' tha cheer up yeah? Glad ta see yah okay an' makin' sure others stay tha way." The wyvern rider greeted the troubadour.

**Olison stays put.**

Ami notices Salvatore.



"Hey Salvatore, good to see you still alive."

**Quote from: Ami heals Tantallos**

10+20 = Up to 30HP restored

**Alexander nabs his lance back from Charlotte.**

**Charlotte: Move to 17,14.**



"Okay, I'm back!"

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The mages prepared their spells as the heavily-armored swordsman took a defensive stance, eyeing Gregor a moment.

"Hey, you are one of Hexham brothers, aren't you? Ha hah ha! Come, kneel before my blade - you will rejoin your family faster that way!"

**~~Ally Phase~~**

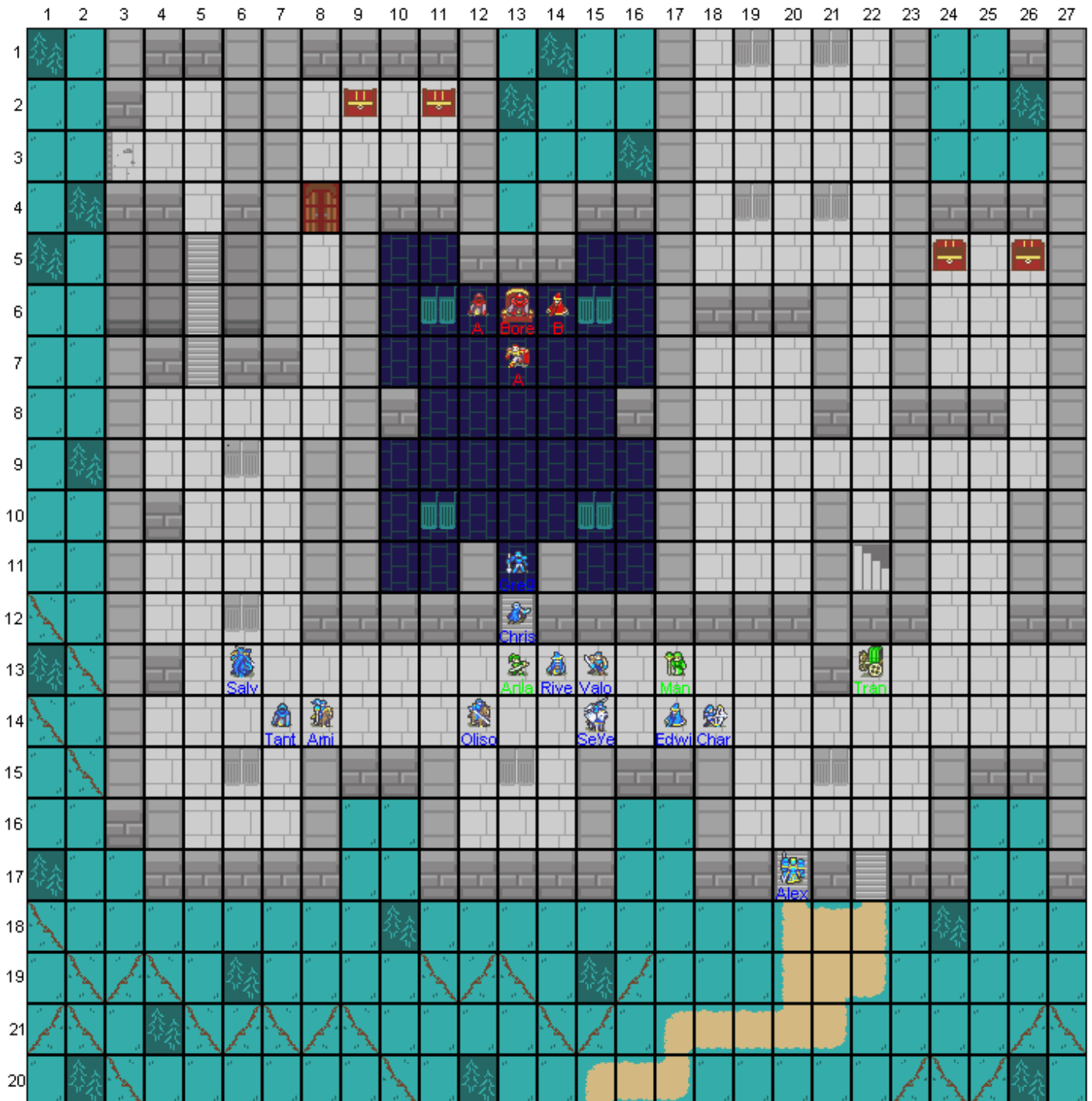
In the meanwhile, Anja and Mannan rejoined the group.



"Is there someone in need of thorough healing?"

## ~~Player Turn 15~~

The rain is gone, and Alexander could spot soldiers walking up toward the gate. They're several metres away now.



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                      | Enemies:                                                                      | Allies:                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 41/42<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 13/32<br>Christopher Shields: 33/34<br>Edwin Westbringer: 28/29<br>Gregor von Hexham: 24/35 | Mage B: 29/29<br>Shaman A: 30/30<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 36/36 | Anja: 17/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 5/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |

|                                                                                                                                         |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Olison Eul: 15/35<br>Riven: 27/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 17/35<br>Seyena Ikane: 17/33<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 30/30<br>Valor Inara: 34/34 |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|

**Charlotte: Move 2 W and glomp Seyena. Yes, on her Pegasus and everything.**



"Hey! Been a while since I've seen you."

**Ami: To 7,13 and heal Salvatore.**



"So...minor damage?"

**Ami heals Salvatore**

|                           |
|---------------------------|
| 10+20 = Up to 30HP healed |
|---------------------------|

Salvatore contemplated trying to suggest to the healer to heal someone else who could be more wounded. Salvatore remembers how well the last few time went when he tried that and wisely reconsidered.



"Hah, takes more than what 'ey got ta kill me, nothin' but some archers thinkin' 'ey can put the hurt on me wit' their arrows. Not sure why 'ey always think tha, never works."

Ormm watched Tenebra carefully. A much better reaction compared to the first one they had when they first met, which was Ormm trying to forcefully drag Salvatore away from the horse.



"My...family? What did you bastards do?!"

The Kesselring officer grinned.

"Oh, your family dared to question the logic of mighty Prixima Kesselring! They were branded traitors to Menelea, and I think you know what happens to them according to the letter of law. After I'm done with you, we just need to find the eldest of you. And then all you traitors will be erased from history! Come! Let's get you killed!"

Gregor had heard the term "seeing red" before, of course. However, this was the first

time he had ever actually experienced it. His eyes burned, and his hands clenched his lance so tightly that it would have splintered were it made of wood. He charged forward, bellowing in rage:



"I'LL KILL YOU!!"

**Gregor: Move 3 N. MURDER Officer with Killer Lance! Invoke mighty Critzacatl!**

"Do try if you think-" He didn't had time to finish, as he had to clash with the enraged Gregor! The lance struck deep into the hero's chest, who then quickly slammed his blade into Gregor's stomach, knockign him down.

"That's all, little Hexham?" The man asked in mocking tone.

#### Gregor vs Kesselring Officer

Hit:  $110+5+15-36 = 94$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage:  $27+1-13 = 15\text{dmg}$

Kesselring Officer counters!

Hit:  $120-5-15-36 = 64$

Hit roll: 23, hit! Crit roll: 2!

Damage:  $29-1-17 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

Gregor spat blood on the officer's boots in defiance.



"Don't count me out just yet. It will be the last mistake you ever make."

Seyena moved over to the doorway, seeing Gregor's charge- and fall.



"Oh- damn it!" She rushed in to toss him on the back of her pegasus.



*I'm not good enough at healing to give Gregor a fighting chance... pulling him closer to the rest is probably the safest idea right now.*

**Seyena: Move to 13,9, pick up Gregor, and then retreat to 13,10. Drop Gregor behind her.**

Gregor flopped behind Seyena like a bag of potatoes.

Gregor stirred feebly from his spot on the floor.





"Let...let me at him. I can take him.."



"By bleeding all over him? Wait for Ami to get here- you can get another shot at him later."



"Would you like us to leave him for you?"

**Riven: Move to 14,10.**

Gregor, finally conceding that he couldn't fight at the moment, lay still.



"Dammit..."



"Hmm, sounds like trouble in there... I suggest helping Gregor, before he gets in over his head. I'll relieve you of that tome, so you have more room."

**Edwin: Move 1 West and 1 North. Take the Elfire tome from Valor and equip it!**

Olison moved his way inside the room, past a wounded Gregor, keeping his eye locked on the swordsman.

**Olison: To 12,10. Use a vulnerary.**

**Olison uses Vulnerary**

|                     |
|---------------------|
| Up to 10HP restored |
|---------------------|



"Looks like we're charging. Alright then." Valor moved up behind Gregor. "I see that was as bad as it sounded." Valor said, making a face at Gregor's condition. "Boy, this stuff sure goes fast." He said, dropping the last of his golden powder on Gregor.

**Valor: Move to 13,12, and use concoction on Gregor!**



"Damn it..."

Since Seyena had the situation in hand and it was likely the rest of the party would move in to help the pair of them, Chris withdrew for the moment. He had seen another treasure room before the attack and he was going to head there now, to take advantage of the chaos and maybe loot some things the party could need.

**Chris moves one south and five west, ending his turn just north of Ami. He then gives her the Steel Mace**



"Ami, here. You might need this to defend yourself. And..."



"Can you go the way I just came from? Gregor is badly injured and needs your help."

He looked at Salvatore.



"And can you give me a lift north? There's a a storage of some sort down that way; we might be able to use the gear there."



**"Is tha foightin'?"** Salvatore muttered to himself as he heard the scream of rage and the faint sounds of battle. The wyvern rider almost didn't notice Chris walk up to them.



**"Noice ta see yah alive an' kickin' Chris, had no doubt about tha though. Gregor's injured? Eh, tha don' sound ta good..."** Salvatore's tone dropped to a more worried one at the end, although he nodded at Chris' request.



**"No problem, hop on, let's do this quick so we can get back ta 'em an' help**

out yeah." The wyvern rider moved to 9.13, rescue Chris, then move to 7.12 and releases Chris at 7.11

Chris hopped on behind Salvatore and locked his arms around the man's waist.



"Believe it or not, this is the second time I've had a chance to fly. The first time, on Seyena's pegasus, was a little more dire as I was bleeding out from several puncture wounds through the torso. Regardless, i wonder why some people seem scared of flying. I quite enjoyed it even in those circumstances."



"Really? Sorry fer the rather nasty soundin' foirst toime flyin', good tha yer keepin' ah good moind on it though. Guessin' most prefer ta keep their feet on the ground, Oi was one o' 'em really back then."



"I've always been drawn to the things that scare most people. I'm just unusual that way."



"Heh, never thought Oi'd be ah wyvern roider back then, believed people when 'ey said Oi'd never be good at it. Things surprise yah in loife, tha's what Oi always found ta be true. Mah foirst toime wasn' as bad as yers though, tried before Oi had ah proper saddle, when Ormm sped up Oi slipped plum off an' smacked into ah tree, hahahahah! Oi was picking branches outta mah armor fer weeks!" Salvatore rambled into one of his stories, as the more perceptive people have recognized that he does when he tries to lighten the mood when he thinks it dark.



"Fell off into a tree? Sounds painful."



"At least it wasn't the ugly tree!"

A rare complimentary joke.



"Hah, nah, think the ground took care o' tha the second toime Oi fell. Learned ah few things when Oi fell though, one bein' tha roidin' ain' as easy as Oi thought it would be, an' two bein' tha Oi probably wouldn' be breathin' through mah nose fer ah few weeks after tha, hahah." Sal scratched his crooked nose idly as he laughed, remembering those few weeks briefly.



"Oh! Jus' remembered, yah know what this thing is? Got it from tha archer fella, some key is all Oi could guess. Figured yah moight know more." Salvatore dug into the saddle bag, before bringing out a small key to show Chris.

Chris examined the key Salvatore showed him.



"Ah. It looks like a skeleton key. These can open most - if not all - types of strongboxes, but if memory serves me they're very fragile due to their universal nature and break after being used once. A nice find, Sal."



"Good ta hear about tha key, though makes me wonder what tha archer was doin' wit' it. Probably had the same idea Oi guess, though Oi'm more hopin' we foind other survivors. Couldn't o' jus' been us who survived this mess, roight?" A slight pause, before a determined nod to himself, as if agreeing with an unseen comment. "Roight. If'in 'ey were payin' attention ta me, someone 'er another could ah hid."

**Tantallos: Move to 11,13. Use Guiding Ring.**



"That is it, time to show them what is a real druid."

---

Meanwhile, near the gates of the building, Alexander kept up his mental breakdown for a little while. But then he let out a low, long sigh. He had to get a hold of himself, he supposed. ...He would fail his one and only remaining duty -that to his friends-otherwise. And he would never get a chance to wreak vengeance upon the axeman that had a long, long time ago killed sir Arotos. He'd sought that for years. He wasn't going to let these... dire straits (an understatement by any means) stop him. As such, he stopped looking down and looking blank, and looked up to... see soldiers! Hostile or friendly he didn't know, but they would likely be here soon. He turned around to warn the others.



"There are soldiers moving in towards the gate, I don't know whose side they're on."

And with that he moved away from the doorway to protect the wagon, walking and then turning around and raising both his shield and the lance he'd barely managed to hold in his hands in the days when he was still a naive squire.

Alexander: Move to 22, 15

Valor uses Concoction on Gregor

Up to 15HP restored

~~Enemy Phase~~

Kesselring Officer went after Riven whilst the two mages concentrated at Olison. Bores looked at Seyena with a slight grin of his wrinkled grin.

After the Officer dodged Riven's attack, small glass orb slipped from his pocket and crashed at the ground, making the man frown.

"Damnit, there goes deception..."

Kesselring Officer vs Riven

Hit:  $120-5-10-35 = 70$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $29-9 = 20\text{dmg}$

Riven counters!  
Hit:  $122+5-15-36 = 76$   
Hit roll: 87, miss!

Shaman A vs Olison

Hit:  $110+15-10-45 = 70$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $26-5 = 21\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!  
Hit:  $97+10-25 = 82$   
Hit roll: 64, hit!  
Damage:  $25-5 = 20\text{dmg}$

Olison counters again!  
Hit:  $97+10-25 = 82$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $25-5 = 20\text{dmg}$

Mage B vs Olison

Hit:  $125+15-10-45 = 85$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $21-5 = 16\text{dmg}$

Alexander could notice, that the men approaching the Abbey turned translucent, and soon, dissappeared completely!

~~Ally Phase~~

Mannan tapped Charlotte with his big staff, as the magics patched her wounds.



"There you go."

#### Mannan mends Charlotte

20+14 = Up to 34HP healed

Out of the sudden, Anja stepped into the council room, and brandished her sword at the enemy officer.



"Here, sweetheart! Let me show you how Anja can *dominate* a man like you in less than a minute!"

There was a flurry of swift strikes and a 'woosh' as the blade swished above Anja's head. On other hand, the Kesselring guy came out of this with few cuts.

#### Anja vs Kesselring Officer

Hit:  $141+10+5-36 = 120$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16-13 = 3\text{dmg}$

Kesselring Officer counterattacks!

Hit:  $120-15-10-5-60 = 30$

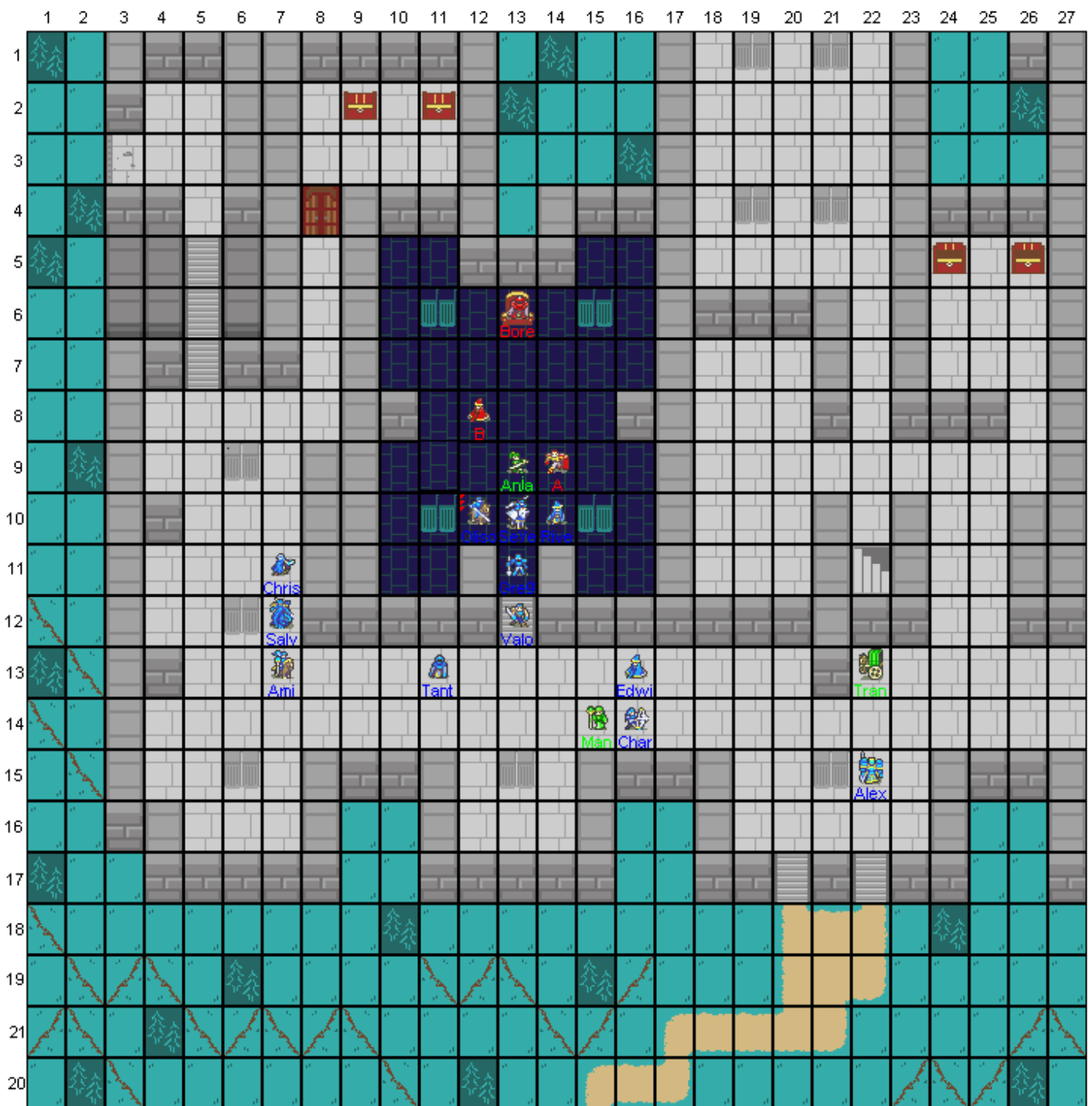
Hit roll: 55, miss!

Anja gets 2nd attack!

Hit:  $141+10+5-36 = 120$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16-13 = 3\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 16~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                   | Allies:                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 41/42<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/32<br>Christopher Shields: 33/34<br>Edwin Westbringer: 28/29<br>Gregor von Hexham: 15/35<br>Olson Eul: -/35 <b>3/3</b><br>Riven: 7/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 35/35<br>Seyena Ikane: 17/33<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 30/30<br>Valor Inara: 34/34 | Mage B: 29/29<br>Bores: 34/34<br>Kesselring Officer: 15/36 | Anja: 17/26<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 5/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |

Alexander's eyes widened as the soldiers disappeared, and he backed up a step to put his back against the wagon, raising his shield in alarm.



"The approaching soldiers! They've *disappeared!*"

**Alexander: Move to 22, 14**

---

**Gregor moves to (15,9) and STABS the Officer with the Killer Lance!**

One stab, it's all it took.

Bores frowned when the Kesselring lieutenant slid to the floor, lifeless.



"He, that kinda makes sending letters to PRIXIMA a bit difficult. I was hoping you would leave him alive."

**Gregor vs Kesselring Officer**

Hit:  $110+15+10+5-36 = 104$ , autohit! Crit roll: 13!

Damage:  $27+1-13 = 15 \times 3 = 45$  dmg

Gregor pointed his lance at the old man.



"And who the hell are you?"



"Please do not point that lance at me, I'm not good at being interrogated. My name is Bores, a scholar and researcher, working for the good of my own self. He."

The old man chuckled and then looked Gregor over.



"You look fresh and young, good! When you will die, I shall extract your essence. My technique was crude and painful when I worked with the bandits and mercenaries, but now, I have my own schematics and formulas for channeling the ethers and essences, he. Trust me, it will be quick and painless! He! You will be one of hundreds who will help me achieve immortality! Think about it!"

**Charlotte: Move to 13, 11 and TWANG Mage B with iron longbow. Heh heh hah!**





"...You're insane. If you think you're going to take the 'essence' of me or any of my friends, you have another thing coming!"

TWANG!

**Charlotte vs Mage B**

Hit:  $123+10+10-31 = 102$ , autohit! Crit roll: 1!

Damage:  $19-6 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$



"He, you think so young man? Even with the death of this man, I'm pretty sure that I and my magic shall prevail in case of a clash between you and me. He."



"We'll see about that..."

Edwin calmly strode up to behind Valor and finally got a good look at the man behind this debacle, having overheard what the druid and officer were saying before hand.



"So! You are the foul cretin that's responsible for this, and for the deaths of who knows how many others! It's THINGS like you that give magic a bad name! And I will not stand for that! You will pay for what you've done, and this horror will come to an end!" Edwin shouted over his comrades.

**Edwin: Move 3 west and threaten Bores with rightful justice!**

Seyena noticed his glare.



"You should be watching my lance instead, old man. It's going to go through your skull."

**Valor: Move to 13, 7, make sure Killing Edge is equipped. Select End from the drop down menu.**

Valor stepped forward, his expression calm.



"Alright old man, either surrender, or I will kill you. Keep in mind, this isn't a threat; it is an undeniable fact." "Well, technically, one of my friends here might off you instead of me if you don't give up, but you'll be dead either way. Drop the book."



"You youngsters are persistently miscalculating who will be dying here, today. That's very unhealthy thing to do. Who knows, you might *die* from it. Ghe he, he heh. It was a joke, of course. Whatever. I shall drain your essence like many before. Make whatever rituals are necessary for your beliefs."

**Tantallos: Move 13, 12.**



"What is going on over there?"



"I believe that you're about to die, so I'm going to prepare for that."



"I'm getting a sense of deja-vu. Maybe because that's the same thing they all say right before we do, in fact, kill them."



"Who is the guy over there?"



"Just some loser who thinks he can get eternal life by draining others or something. He's going to do a trick where he transforms into a pile of cooling meat in a minute."



"..What? He knows he is going to get killed, right? We just killed his entire castle army."



"I think he actually believes he can take all of us! Weird, right?"



"For a druid, he doesn't really sound too bright. Actually.. this guy is insane."



"Insane or not, he's going down."

**Ami: To 13,12**



"23 bottles of beer on the, not again."



"Maybe he should have taken pointers from the sage he had at the door. I think we were all more cautious around his lackey than we are around this old coot himself."



"Of course he is. He is begging to be killed.. and I am quite sure the Plague Dragon will have use for a person like that. Especially because of the possible long list of crimes."



"I do so hope you wrote all that down. It'd be a shame if we couldn't prise your secrets from the corpse."

**Riven: Move to 15, 7.**



"Oh please, do you have any idea how many times people have tried to gain immortality through magic? There are actual studies on the attempts in the academies in Ys about it, there are even lists of the different ways that people have tried! Noone has actually come even close to achieving it, and this idiot will be just the same as the others." Edwin replied curtly to Riven.



"Hmph. Maybe no one you've heard of. If he says he's found a way, I'd like to see it. Moreso were he not attempting to slay us and feast on our essences, but it's still a pity."



"Well, let me put it to you like this: Who is more likely to find a way to achieve immortality through magic? A selection of magical universities and colleges with the best and brightest of minds working together, or a single madman who is using a common life draining spell? In any case, even if he did find a way, you would have to kill many, many people to achieve the effect desired. And I don't think people are going to take kindly to that."



"How about a different question. Who's more likely to discover the secret- a bunch of bumbling, weak-minded fools more concerned with each others' approval than getting things done, or a single, experienced, brilliant lunatic with no limits and a desperate reason to stop time *now*?"



"As for the price, it wouldn't surprise me if it wasn't feasible, for one reason or another. He is desperate, as I just said. Still, I'd rather take a look at it than dismiss it as useless out of hand."



"He he, you clearly haven't gone to a Ys university. And I'd be careful about who you call a bumbling, weak-minded fool when said fool can just casually rip apart the fabric of reality according to their whim. They just like to put up those fronts to trick you and lure you in, and they somehow have a frightening tendency to know when they are being talked about... And of course we're going to look at his research, I'll even join you in reading through it. It would be foolish not to look. I'm just saying that I highly doubt that he actually found a way when compared to the previous patterns of lunatics. I really, really doubt it."



"You people should write down those ramblings of yours and print them as a book. Title it as 'Humour for mentally challenged'. He. As for that wizard who is currently

a corpse."

Bores shrugged.



"I'll get another one, he."

**Seyena stands stock-still**

**Chris moves to 8,5 and picks the door open.**

The door opened with a creak.

Inside, Chris saw two small chests with extensively engraved and decorated locks.

**Salvatore moves to 8.7.**



"Any survivors in there?" The wyvern rider called up to Chris at the door.



"Just two strongboxes. I take one, you take the other?"



"Ah... Yeah, sounds good ta me. Oi think Oi hear 'em foightin' behind this 'ere wall, we should hurry. Can' quite figure anythin' else though, ta muffled."



"Agreed. I am certain they can handle the battle, but it would indeed be wise to hurry back on the chance they need us."

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Suddenly Charlotte was pushed inside as the entrance turned into solid rock!



"Do not take me for a conjuror of cheap tricks, he! He, heheh, heheh!!"

Suddenly, the walls of the room moved closer with thundering rumble!

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"What is happening!" Mannan asked, moving closer to see the entrance, or rather, lack of it.

Meanwhile Anja shrieked.



"I don't like it! Stop this!"



"He! Make me! Hehe heh eh ehheh!"

Anja, with another shriek, cut at Bores' hand and was readying herself for the second attack when she suddenly collapsed, unconscious.



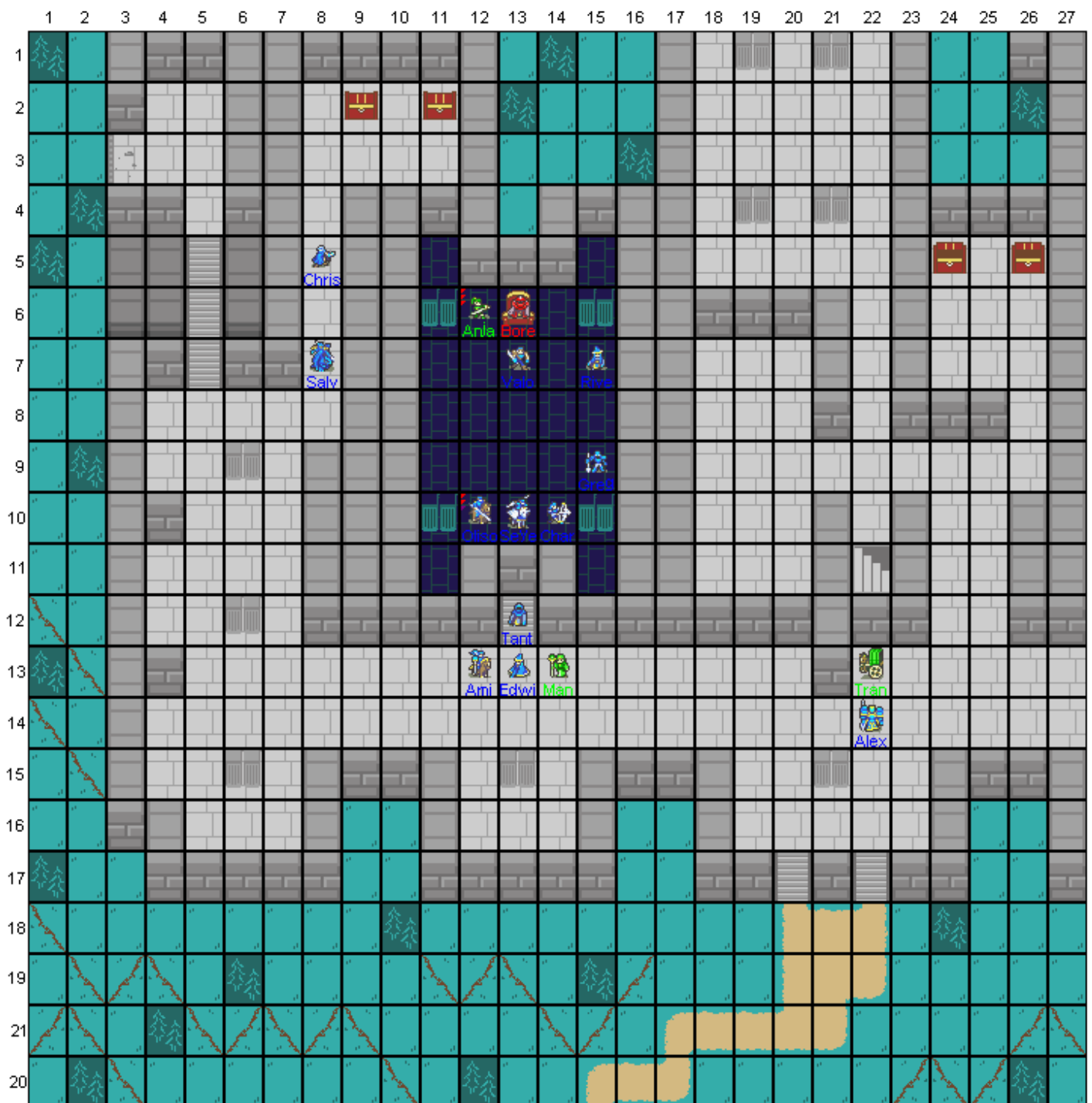
"Oh, the juice of life! So delicious! He! Hee Heheh!"

#### Anja vs Bores

Hit:  $141+10-10-36 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $16-10 = 6\text{dmg}$

Bores counters!  
Hit:  $119-60 = 59$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage:  $33-6 = 26\text{dmg}$   
17HP healed!

# ~~Player Turn 17~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Enemies:     | Allies:                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 41/42<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/32<br>Christopher Shields: 33/34<br>Edwin Westbringer: 29/29<br>Gregor von Hexham: 15/35<br>Oliso Eul: -/35 2/3<br>Riven: 7/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 35/35<br>Seyena Ikane: 17/33<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 30/30<br>Valor Inara: 34/34 | Bores: 34/34 | Anja: -/26 3/3<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 5/31<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits |



"What the heck happened? Where is the damm entrance? We need to find a way to get in!"

**Chris moves to the chest in the upper-right corner of the room (11,2) and opens it.**

With a creak, Christopher got it's content - a golden ring adorned with golden wings.

**Hermes' Ring got!**



"Damn it all! He must be using magic to separate us! Judging by the fake soldiers from before, there must be a hidden enterance nearby, so look for it! Check in the last place where the door used to be, they definitely went in through there!" Edwin quickly replied, inspecting the nearby walls.

There was absolutely nothing strange in any of the walls. Even the wall that just appeared looked as normal as the walls around it.

Alexander **stood there**, being horribly paranoid about the disappearing soldiers.

**Salvatore moves to 9.2, uses chest key to open chest.**

**Tantallos: Hold position as there is nothing to be done.**

Salvatore used the key and got a shiny ring.

**Guiding Ring got!**

Riven began slowly laughing, building up to a maniacal cackle.



"Ha... hahahaha... AAAHAHAHAHAHA!"



"I've underestimated you, old man! No wonder you were so confident, well done!"

Charlotte looked skyward.





"O Lord of Laceration, O Consul of Crit. I have not been Your most humble nor most dedicated servant in recent times. I accept that, and if You would choose He Who Stabs With Killer Lances over my gleaming longbow, I would not begrudge such punishment and abandonment. Indeed: it would be a reasonable course of action toward the recent shows of hubris with which I have abused You.

But, if just once! If only this time You would favor me once again like You have in past times of need, I would be grateful for eternity. I would don my little Critzalpapal Hat if you wish. Create an altar to Your Word. Name a city - nay, my future Nation - in Your Name. Critzopolis. Its roads would be paved with the dried blood of the right-fallen and glorious names of the wrong-martyrs. I beseech You, Critzalcoatl: AID ME IN MY TIME OF NEED!"

**Charlotte: Move 1 N, TWANG Bores with Steel Longbow.**

Twang.

**Charlotte vs Bores**

Hit:  $118+10+10+10+7-10-36 = 109$ , autohit!

Damage:  $22+1-10 = 13$ dmg



"Critzalcoatl has such a sense of humor."

Seyena paled when their only exit was blocked. With both Olison and Anja down, it would be best if this man was killed before he pulled any more tricks from his sleeve.



"Old man, you didn't trap us in here with *you*."

She urged her pegasus forward, preparing to strike at the Druid.



"You're trapped in here with *us*!"

**Seyena: Move to 14, 6, and stab the creepy old man with Glaive 'till he stops twitching**



"You really think, those walls can hurt me? He!" Bores taunted Seyena as she

slid to the floor.

#### Seyena vs Bores

Hit:  $112+10+10+10-10-36 = 96$

Hit roll: 91, hit!

Damage:  $26+1-10 = 17\text{dmg}$

Bores counters!

Hit:  $119-10-43 = 66$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $33-16 = 17\text{dmg}$

17HP healed!



"How dare you!" Valor leapt at Bores, going for the kill.

#### Valor: Execute the enemy! Go for the crit! Blood for the Blood God! Crits for the Critical Throne!

The old druid groaned as the jagged blade dug into his shoulder, rending the flesh and hitting the ribs. He leaned forward a bit, blood leaking onto his robes.



"Guh... He, no! My research! My goal, my brilliant mind... he, heh... at least I will die... knowing... that you... won't... get... alive..." His confident voice slowly turned into whisper, and then, he breathed his last breath. His body froze still in the throne as if he was a statue.

#### Valor vs Bores

Hit:  $114+10-10-36 = 78$

Hit roll: 59, hit! Crit roll: 17! //Dammit I:

Damage:  $22-10 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

However, the walls still rumble and are ready to close on the mercenaries and crush them! Something else than Bores himself must be controlling this contraption.



"Do you hear this loud noise? Come on guys, lets take this wall down!"



"Well, at least that lunatic is dead. Now what?"

Valor takes a close look at the throne.



"Everybody calm down! Something is pushing these walls in, so unless you

can break them down, start looking for a way to make them stop!"

**Gregor runs over to the throne to examine it more closely.**

**Charlotte searches Bores' corpse for anything that may be relevant.**

Whilst the throne didn't had anything peculiar about it, Charlotte found a small glass orb in Bores' robes.



"Oh! No time to study - I found a glass orb on Bores. Riven, quickly, do you recognize any enchantments on this?"



"Stop wasting time and smash it!"



"I don't want to trap us in here if I'm wrong!"



"Dont be an idiot! Blindly smashing a random magic orb could kill us all!"



"That swordsman dropped and broke one already! He didn't look happy about it, and I don't see anything better!"



"We have no idea what the other orb did, if anything at all. For all we know, this one is some sort of concentrated fire spell and will roast whoever breaks it!"

Valor rounded on Gregor, jabbing him in the chest with a finger.



"What would *you* know about it? Only an imbecile would craft something so dangerous and keep it in his pocket! Seyena is dying and this room is about to become a people sandwich, so unless you have a better idea, SHUT IT!"

Gregor didn't even flinch.



"The man was Dragon-damn INSANE! There's no telling what he might have decided to put in his pockets in the middle of a deranged rant! Now, I don't want to lose anyone else today, so until we know what the hell this orb is or run out of options we don't. Fucking. Smash it!"

Now convinced he was not going to be killed by invisible people, Alexander heard the sounds of grinding stone. Alarmed, he turned, and began moving in that direction.

Seyena propped herself up against a wall, wincing.



"If you two don't stop fighting, we'll all die anyway. And Valor, I'm not going to die any time soon, give me a little credit at least."



"I'm in favor of smashing it, unless Charlotte happened across any other potentially magical items when looting the old man."



"It *does* look like the one the soldier dropped, but let's see..."

### **Riven: Try to figure out what the orb does.**

The orb looked almost identical to the one which the officer had. Some strong magic emanates from the glass, but none of the common kind.

The walls moved closer with another thunderous rumble, smashing the columns to the ground.



"Don't know about you guys, but I think we run, now."

Olison barely managed to stay on his feet beside his horse, who was starting to kick and rear in a maddened panic at the closing walls. Olison's eyes betrayed a similar panic.



"I'll just have you know being crushed to death was NOT on my list of honorable deaths. Just smash the thing!"

Alexander *continues* to move towards the walls. The moving ones.

Edwin, hearing the pillars fall in the next room over quickly gets up against the wall where the door used to be and shouted above the grinding.



"Listen! Whatever you did to make those illusionary soldiers disappear worked! Maybe you can do it again for whatever this is! You've got to try something!"

**Charlotte grabs her bow, tosses the orb into the air, readies an arrow at lightning-fast speed, and TWANGs the orb in twain.**

The glass orb shattered into thousands of pieces that rained onto the floor. The moving walls disintegrated into thin air, as well as that wall blocking the entrance. Surprisingly, the actual columns were still there. The room was back to normal, the elaborate and powerful illusion broken.

## ~~Chapter 7 Complete!~~



"Thank the Dragon..."

Gregor collapsed against one of the real walls.



"Well. Thank goodness that's over. Hey Ami, we have wounded in here!" Valor glanced at the body of the swordsman wearing Kesselring armor, his eyes resting on the shield he'd been carrying. "...Hm."



"I am glad everyone is ok. And for that druid.. the Plague Dragon will make him pay for his mistakes...death won't give him peace at all."

As the walls reverted, Olison was left with his panic subsiding. His horse, however, continued to rear and jerk his head about.



"Easy, Steil, easy. Come on, let's get you outside." Olison attempted to lead his horse out of the room, no doubt looking for some fresh air himself.

Edwin sighed in relief as the wall dissolved in front of him. He had been right, it was another illusion.



"I should definitely research how to cast that... Could definitely be useful."

Strolling inside quickly to check up on the others, he gave a quick look and seeing how Anja looked the most rattled out of all of them, he hurried over to her side to help her to her feet.



"Miss, it's safe now. It was just an illusion, it wasn't real. Are you alright?"



"Uhhh... I'm feeling better with each passing second. That's why I don't like magic." Anja stood up on her wobbly feet and then brushed her dress a bit.

Edwin flinched and bit back a unpleasant response.



"Well, I can assure you that I'm not going to roast you with mine if that helps comfort you."

Mannan ventured into the main hall, and spread an aura of soothing light that gradually healed the wounds.



"I was worried that I might be a moment too late. Good to be proven otherwise."

Edwin then turned to look at Bores' cooling corpse.



"I wonder what you found..."

**Edwin has a look through Bores' notes and research and searches his body for anything.**

There was no notes or books of scholarly type within his robes.



"Damnation. They must be somewhere..." Edwin sighed as he stood and wiped his slightly bloodied hands on Bores' robes. He would just have to go looking for them.

**Edwin: Go wandering through the rooms looking for those notes! Take notice of anything or anyone interesting as I move on through.**

---

A group of battered, wounded mercenaries ran toward Alexander, few of them stopping to take hold of Anja's wagon. Amongst them, there was this elderly robed man. The soldiers pointed their blades and spears at the heavily armored Alexander.

Alexander heard them coming, and had begun to shout and raise his lance before the man began to talk.



"I *KNEW* there were more of you... you robbers, or whoever you are! Your disappearing trick didn't fool m-..."



"You, young knight! Explain immediately why you and your dead friends have dared to attack me, a minister of Deynastian court! You have nowhere to hide nor run, so better do not try anything if you want to keep your neck on your shoulders!"

Upon hearing the words of the minister, Alexander lowered his lance.



"...Oh. You are a minister of Deynastia. Sir, my friends are all inside of this building, having finished fighting criminals. Whoever attacked you, they had nothing to do with me or my allies."



"Oh, that's what happened. Good thing you explained yourself because I might've gotten you killed!" The elderly minister laughed and then tapped the blood-stained floor with his black cane, its head shaped after a lion's maw.



"So where are those friends of yours? I want to speak with them, I need to know more! I didn't plan to be attacked at this years' council!"



"I believe they are in the central room, sir. I do know an amount about what is going on though- although a large group of my friends have just recently met with me and a few of my closer friends again and might know different things than we do, and, well... Lord Tunhausen likely... knows more than me."

**Tantallos moved to the rest of the group to meet with them.**



"Well, well! Who knew I would be seeing you all again! It is indeed a pleasure to see some friendly faces after seeing so many zombie faces."



"It Mia right now, Ami out for now. Gather up everyone."



"Hold it right there!" The elderly sage stepped up toward the entrance to the main chamber, his mercenaries holding Ami, Olson and Edwin (who tried to leave on search) on spear-and-sword-points.



"No one is going anywhere until I, Minister Rozard of Deynastian Court, gets a proper explanation from someone more conscious than that walking bucket of steel."

Mannan just finished healing up those gathered in the chamber, and moved out, stepping down the stairs toward the minister. He placed his right hand at heart and bowed, but only slightly.



"My name is Mannan, of the House Tunhausen. Let me explain what has happened here since I and my entourage got here. When we got here, we found ourselves under attack by those mercenaries and sellswords. We have fought a gruesome battle against them, and their leader, whom I heard called himself Boris or



something like that. I didn't hear his name well enough. As I gather, this young man in dark blue robe, a friend of my bodyguards, appeared with his own troupe and together we managed to pierce through the entire army of hired blades, and ultimately, but not without problems of many different kinds, we have slain Bordes. How come I haven't seen you the entire battle, Lord Rozard?"



"Well, I and my guards were staying in our guest room, like all those other scholars, when suddenly these pathetic fools came barging in with swords drawn and magical tomes open, like cheap alley thugs. We made our way to the shrine devoted to, the irony, Valkor the Guard of Honor, and took our stand there. We tore the enemies to shreds, we have survived indeed, which I cannot say for any other scholar who might've come to this bloody castle! That said, my soldiers will now look around for remnants of the mercenaries and survivors of the massacre."

Minister Rozard clapped his glaved hands and his men quickly dispersed, their weapons still drawn. Most of them went east, whilst a group of them went west and then around the corner, to the north.

Olison batted his gloved hand across the air where sword and spear had just pointed against him a moment before.



"How irksome. Come all this way only to have more plots of Kesselring biting back at us yet again."



*Not a big fan of manners, are you, old man?* Valor thought to himself, his expression carefully neutral. "We came with Prince Tantallos Forsaken at his request. The soldiers in this keep tried to lock us up. They are now all dead. I for one would like to know what's going on. Usually when people are trying to kill me, it's because someone paid me to do them the same."



"As Valor said, old man." She doesn't care about titles.



"They are right. So you should stop demanding for answers we don't even have. If someone should be giving answers here it is you. They tried to kill us, we killed them, so nothing more fair."

He tied the mask back onto his face and crossed his arms.



"Also, swordman person not a Prince anymooreeee."

He said in a joking tone.



"I would like to know that too." Rozard mumbled after Valor.



"As far as it goes for me and my bodyguards, we have certain... dealings with House Kesselring of Menelea. The bad kind of dealings. I assume-"



"Kesselring? Kesselring... You mean, Siegfried? That old rat is behind this? I doubt that, I know my dear cousin as good as I know my sisters! He wouldn't be one to sneakily murder unarmed scholars and dignitaries..."



"...Prixima Kesselring. No Siegfried. More conscious than this walking bucket of steel, he says..."

Rozard rubbed his forehead.



"Oh, right, Siegfried died nine years ago. Prixima... Prixima- oh, that ungrateful young wretch of a niece. That kind of dishonorable conduct looks like her work, yes."

Gregor hadn't moved from his spot on the floor, and was only half paying attention.



"'Dishonorable conduct', he says. He doesn't have the slightest clue..."



"Who wants to explain him the whole thing? "

---

Salvatore had been rushing back after he heard the crashing from the next room, trying to figure out what the hell was going on in there because that did *not* sound good.



"Chris! We gotta move, somethin' bad happened from tha sound!" The wyvern rider shouted back at the spy as he moved ahead, hoping he makes it to the scene of whatever happened in time.

"Look, a wyvern rider!"

"You will pay for attacking Lord Rozard, you thug!"

The slightly mangled soldiers pointed their weapons at Salvatore and his poor mount, but it was obvious they're not very keen at attacking something as large and vicious as a wyvern.

The wyvern reared to a halt, its wings splayed wide as it pushed itself back from its forward momentum. The golden wyvern growled at the soldiers pointing their weapons at both it and Salvatore, obviously not amused at the antics. Salvatore watched the soldiers warily, although he rubbed Ormm's neck in an attempt to ease the agitated wyvern. It kinda worked, he was now growling less loudly, but still eyed the soldiers uneasily with his slitted eyes.



"Oi don' know who yah are, nor this 'Lord Rozard,' an' the only foightin' Oi did was defendin' mahself from the madness tha was caught up in 'ere. 'Nough blood has been shed this day, an' Oi don' aim fer more... Who are yah, an' who is this 'Lord Rozard?'" The rider spoke slowly and carefully, eying the soldiers carefully.

"Uhh, we were attacked a while ago by some mercenaries. Are you one of them? Speak or we will gut you and then ask again!"

They still stood in their spots. They weren't moving toward Salvatore, but they weren't backing away from him either.



"Oi certainly hope yah don' go through this wit' every man who yah see, Oi can only see tha goin' rather poorly, heh. Me an' the group Oi was wit' were attacked 'ere, 'ey forced into the back an' me into tha tower there." The main pointed behind him

to the stairs going up.



"If'in Oi was one o' the mercenaries who attacked yah, why would Oi be talkin' ta yah? 'Ey didn' see ah rather chatty bunch, what wit' 'em attackin' everyone. Loike Oi said, 'nough blood has been spilled 'ere due ta tha horrid... Magic 'ey used, Oi don' have the moind ta see more. Now then, did yah see any o' the group Oi was wit'? Should be ah man wit' blue hair an' robes, ah pegasus rider, ah red headed lass wit' ah horse, an' others. Oi'd rather loike ta see what tha crash was ah while back, makin' me ah touch worried."

Salvatore tried to talk calmly to the soldiers, seeing no need for a fight if one could be avoided, but he sounded rushed at the end of it, still worried about his friends and the crash.

"It sounds logical, but what if--" One of his fellow soldiers smacked the talking one at the back of his neck.

"Oh just shut up and let him pass, I'm hungry and Rozard will propably want to go underway the moment he finishes his job here.

"Riiight, fine." The soldiers circled the wyvern in a wide bow and then went upstairs to the tower.



"Thank yah, now Oi gotta see what happened." The wyvern rider did just that, moving back towards the main hallway that lead to the main chamber, it was the only way that he knew of to enter the main chamber where the noise came from after all.

---

Seyena stepped forward, leaning heavily on Ilya, staining the pegasus' flanks red. She had been listening to the conversation, mulling thoughts over in her head, and she had an odd suspicion.



"Minister Rozard, are you familiar with the magical relics known as 'Dragonstones'? Prixima seems to have quite the fascination with them- one in particular, actually."



"Of course I do know, little girl! Once in a time I had three of them under my guard! I'm from a crusader house, see? If you're literate then you surely read on them."



"Well apparently, the meeting that was to take place here was to discuss the stones and Prixima's collecting of them. Do you know anything of that?" Edwin asked politely as he eyed the guards warily.



"You're wrong. The annual Council of Scholars was to be held here, not a meeting on Dragonstones! But now that most of attendees are dead, I think I will be going home."

Mannan grabbed the old minister by arm, and Rozard quickly swatted his hand away.



"Wait, you're not going to help us stop your niece from doing... from gathering Dragonstones?"



"And why should I? Whatever she is up to, she is a young girl with single castle and few barely magical gemstones. If anything happens, I'm sure that other local lords shall cut her to pieces. You're exaggerating the issue, young man!"



"But..."



"Lieutenant, call your men and prepare for journey back to Deynastia. We're leaving in a minute!" Minister Rozard turned his back at Mannan and others and walked down toward the abbey's entrance.



"I have a feeling Prixima arranged this with the intention of trying to kill all of her loose ends in one fell swoop." Seyena muttered.



"Minister Rozard, before you go- you said you 'had' three dragonstones. Did something happen to them?"



"And who are you, little girl, that you speak like that to me, hm?"



"I offer my apologies, sir, I had no intentions to offend. I merely wanted to satisfy a curiosity, for you implied that you have since lost the stones in your possession."



"And for that matter, don't you think that it's odd that a meeting of the council of scholars has been the target of a band of killers? I mean, why would they even come here? There's nothing of value here, and they didn't seem to take any prisoners for that matter for a ransom..."



"You know the 'little girl' over there has a point, right? And you know how powerful the dragonstones are, so tell us what happened to those."



"I have nothing to say to you, masked toad. But you, girl. Well, my family's dragonstone was mine, per birthright, before I passed it on my own. In the same time I possessed my family's jewel, I also had my hands on Fire Emblem itself, the very Dragonstone of Dey! My tenure as the Keeper of Emblem coincided also with few years when I held my friend's Dragonstone, Poison Ivy, until his son reached adulthood. But those times were decades ago, and now I have no Dragonstone to call my own. As for the assassins - my death would cause some chaos in Deynastia! That, or there's someone as important as I am in this building." Rozard then began to ponder something.



"Or was it my grandson who has the Dragonstone, hmm, yes, I think it is Robert who has it now... well, time for me to go." With that, he turned his back again and walked away.



"I am no "masked toad", I am the King of the Forsakens.

He crossed his arms and shook his head.



"And you know, if the crazy lady have more than one Dragonstone, this is not only going to be our problem, it will be yours too. We are talking about some powerful stones, I am quite sure you know how destructive they can be. Or at least heard stories about it."



"And you still haven't answered my question about why a meeting of scholars of all things were attacked. I think it's important, to say the least, since the men and women here WERE among the best." Edwin added.

Minister Rozard left the building, not even stopping to listen to either Edwin or Tantallos anymore.

Mannan rolled his hands into fists, and took a deep breath.



"Oh Golden Dragon, give my will some strength, because I feel like mauling someone." A deep breath later, Mannan sat at the stairs leading to the inner chamber and his mind sank into thoughts.

Edwin sighed and walked over to stand next to Mannan.



"How bad do you think this could get? Do we really need that idiot's help at all for that manner?"

Mannan sighed.



"To be honest, I'm stumped. I've put all my hope in meeting the various scholars from different lands. Instead, I almost got killed myself. This is a disaster. I have no idea what to do besides going back to my castle, and try to send letters. Maybe



we will find some listening ears." Mannan looked at Tantallos.



"You fought at my side, dark mage. Thanks for that. As it seems that you and your bodyguards are friends with Gregor, I would like to invite you to my castle. We seem to have a common goal, or at least, a partial one. Even if you do not want to help my cause, I could provide you with beddings and provisions until you leave. What do you say?"



"Oh? You are welcome, it was good to talk to them again! And well.. as it seems the crazy witch lady is going to affect everyone with her dragon stone plans, I doubt we have many options, right? I will be helping to take her down before returning to my castle. That is the least I could do for those who are not going to join the Forsakens, I am thankful for their assistance on my quest."

---

**Charlotte knelt down at the wall beside Gregor as this was all happening.**



"You aren't looking very good, Gregor. Did Ami not heal you?"

Gregor shook his head. He had to force himself to speak, as his throat felt like it was trying to close completely.



"No, its not that. See the dead man in the Kesselring uniform? He told me that..Prixima had my family ki-- That my family is de--"

He couldn't say the actual words; he choked each time, knowing that saying them out loud might just ruin what little composure he had left.



"Oh..."

Charlotte folded his arms.



"Well, that can't be right. I think he was just doing that to rile you. If your family is half as strong as you are, I bet they're still alive somewhere."





"Well, if that was his plan, it worked. But I thought the same thing about my father, and look what happened to him! We've seen firsthand how ruthless PRIXIMA can be...I wouldn't admit this to anyone else, but I'm scared, Charlotte. If he was telling the truth I've lost almost everyone I care about, and it terrifies me to think you might be next."



"That wouldn't happen!"

Charlotte perked up, hoping to inspire a little confidence in Gregor.



"Besiiiiides, I'm practically invulnerable shooting from half a castle away. If anything, you'll die a tragic death before me."

Wait.



"That sounded different in my head. I'll just be quiet now."

Somehow, that did actually put a smile on his face. A small one, and it didn't last long, but there it was.



"That's true. I've seen ballistae with less range than you, Char."



"You don't need to be quiet if you don't want to. Could you just..stay here, for a moment? I'll be okay in a little while; just have to get my thoughts sorted out."



"Neither of you are going to die! I swore to protect my friends, so that means I'm very well going to protect the two of you!"



"You can't protect everyone all the time, Alexander. But I appreciate the sentiment."

---

Salvatore moved over to join the group, now dismounted off of Ormm who was currently following him, seeing that the danger has possibly past with the strange old man and his soldiers gone. He left Gregor and Charlotte, along with Alex, to their moment, instead heading over to the blue robed shaman.



"Tantallos." Sal nodded to the mage in greeting. "Oi heard ah crash an' went ta see what happened, was stopped by some soldiers demandin' ta know who Oi was. Everyone good?"

Alexander sighed and gestured with one arm to all of the others in the group, before letting Gregor think.

Tantallos nodded to the Salvatore and remained with his arms crossed.



"Hello wyvern rider person, I almost forgot to ask you if you would be willing to serve the Forsakens cause, because you know, once we kill the crazy lady, I will have to return to the castle to deal with the problems we are having there. And I do believe everyone is fine now, nobody is greeting us with swords or hugging with knives anymore."



"Oi'll put some thought inta it, can' roightly say roight now, ask me later. Glad ta hear everyone's okay, was worried when Oi heard tha crash."



"...Crazy lady? 'Fraid Oi'm not sure what yer talkin' about... OH! Are yah talkin' about tha Prixia 'er some such Oi've been hearin' yah'll talk about now an' again? Anyhow, yah ever foind out what this bloody mess was about? Why were there soldiers 'ere? Who was leadin' 'em? Was it tha guy?" Salvatore bombarded the shaman with questions, and pointed at the dead sage.

Ormm, for his part during the conversation, was keeping a wary eye on the corpses as if he thinks they'll rise again.



"Yes, that crazy lady. And we are talking about how she is going to use those dragonstones to do something really dumb and destructive that is probably going to affect every area around here, if not more than just that. And we do not know about it yet, the guy we asked does not know about it too. The guy who was leading it was some Druid that was pretty crazy, I wanted to end his life, but sadly he used some trick to prevent us from helping those who managed to get close to him. And the sage guy was just the one bothering us with some stupid staff that could affect your mind and make you lose control over your body, he was blocking the gates."



"Also, you ask a lot of questions, wyvern rider person."



"Sorry, but Oi don' loike it when all of yah are put in danger an' Oi don' know anythin' about it. Oi'm not even sure if'in anyone survived this mess 'sides us." The wyvern rider sighed. "Thank yah fer some answers, though Oi got another. What are 'ey doin' 'ere? Oi'm happy ta see 'em, though wish it was under happier chances, but weren' 'ey goin' ta be top guards 'er somethin'." Sal gestured towards Gregor, Charlotte, and Alex. They seemed busy so he figured it was best to ask Tantallos about it besides bother them.



"Does anyone want to tell me what's going on with Prixima? Specifically, why one of her officers was working with a mad man out to murder us? It's not exactly an ideal severance package."



"Valor, glad ta see yah alroight." Sal greeted the swordsman.



"Good to see you're fine yourself. I wasn't too worried though, to be honest. You're a tough nut to crack, Sal." Valor sighed, the smile he'd worn when complimenting the wyvern knight quickly fading. "What the hell was that even about? And I heard that swordsman talking about Gregor's family being dead- Why? His family are loyal Meneleans, I thought. What does she stand to gain? This is bothering me, badly."



"Hmm.. well, lets just say we had our own problems and we ended up being tossed on a prison, but as you can see, they failed on holding us. I do not really know what exactly happened at all..I am just as confused as you and the rest of the other group."



"Well, I suppose there's little point in staying here. At least back at your castle we can plan in comfort. Just give me a few minutes to have a look through this place. There may be something useful lying around."

**Edwin: Search the place for anything useful. Keep an eye out for those research notes!**

After thorough search, Edwin found nothing useful, as if some higher power denied him loot.

Edwin sighed as he walked down the stairs to regroup with the others in the hall, before leaning up against the wall near the newly promoted druid.



"So... I don't believe we've met. What's your part in all this exactly?"



"Me? I did not even know I would be getting into this mess at all. I was hired to look for that dragonestone with them and was using that as a opportunity to get stronger before claiming the throne of the Forsakens. And as I do not think you know my name yet, it is Tantallos, from the Forsaken family."



"The forsaken family... Hmmm... Ah! That's the one with all the ancient magic users in it, isn't it? I think I may have read some of your family history here and there. Your family does seem to get around a bit. How did you end up so far from home? Just wandering, looking for knowledge like myself? Oh, and my name is Edwin. It's nice to see a fellow wandering scholar."



"It seems that there's nothing else for us here. Anja, please prepare the wagon. We will be leaving for Tunhausen in a minute."

With that, Mannan walked after the gypsy outside, **giving the rest a moment to talk, maybe.**

After a few minutes, Gregor stood up and got ready to go. Charlotte was right; he couldn't give up hope just yet, and if it turned out his family really was...gone, he'd have to grieve later. Right now it sounded like the rest were preparing to leave.

Charlotte, still in the room, watched Gregor walk away from her. She sat for another moment then got up and walked over to the spot where they had slain Bores. Glassy fragments still littered the ground.



"It's funny. You talk to a simple-minded Berebian soldier and they seem like heartless, disgusting thugs who delight in the sound of blade against bone. Never once would I imagine their leaders to be any different, but...."

Charlotte kneeled down.



"What separates a charismatic leader from another heartless thug is a goal. A long-term project beyond kill, kill, kill. All the cruelest men and women we have conquered have had goals. Protect the Lapis Lazuli. Get revenge for a midnight pleasure chain scam. Perfect a method of draining life force from a foe."

She stood back up and walked out of the room toward Mannan and the others, still monologuing.



"The frightening thing is these people could have been good men and women with a cause. Not a lot different than us and our goals. Nothing is more dangerous than a good man whose cause keeps him alive."



"**Hey, people!**" Anja yelled through one of the slit-shaped openings in the walls that served as a window for the corridor, the gypsy's head on level with the bottom part.



"Mannan says we're going back, so unless you want to run after my wagon, I would hurry if I were you!" Then she moved away.

Gregor shrugged and **went outside**.

Salvatore watched the bishop leave, a little confused. He felt like he should know him but... He couldn't quite put his finger on it. Tip of his tongue... Ah well, it seems the group is leaving now.

The rider headed outside himself, leaning his spear lazily against his shoulder as Ormm followed, still watching everything warily. Noticing it himself, the man scratched the wyvern behind one of its horns with a smile to calm the beast, and it succeeded for the most part.



"Nothin' 's gonna jump out at us now, we're good." The man spoke softly to the wyvern.

The entire group gathered near the wagon, and those who were without horses boarded the sturdy vehicle of Anja, or mounted the horses belonging to Ami and other riders. And then they have set off, leaving the dark, blood-soaked abbey behind.

Back to Tunhausen.

~~&~~

*The journey back to the Tunhausen Castle took two days. Mannan spent several hours at nearby outpost, directing the soldiers and describing what will be found in Blackmoore. Then, the road to Tunhausen was clear and safe, local militia provided escort on the way there.*

*Mannan hosted a small meal with all of the mercenaries and other guests that came along to Tunhausen, and everyone went to sleep in rather merry mood, expect those who were troubled by problems personal or trivial.*

*Next morning, a disaster struck.*

*The first people to notice how horrible the weather became, were Mannan's soldiers. They've made quite a ruckus because the magnitude of the problem was, like every year, very severe.*

*Powerful blizzard brought layers upon layers of snow, and the sky was continuously dark with the clouds, the high winds making the life of flying creatures and their riders terrible. Tunhausen Keep and the village underneath was cut off the world, pretty much like any other village and fort in local neighbourhood, or maybe further north.*

*Then, even worse news came - Menelea made a surprising move and attacked Berebia, using the snowy paralysis cast over the country to the advantage of the army. Whilst the borders were now nigh-impassable for normal travelers, the Meneleans haven't got far, the snow and natural sturdiness of the Berebians didn't allow their southern*

*enemies to gain more than ten kilometers of soil.*

*Nine days have passed.*

*And for the first time in a while, the blizzard lessened it's anger. It was no longer blizzard - it was merely snowing.*

## ~~Intermission B: The White Towers of Tunhausen~~

Mannan looked at the snowy morning, eyeing the bleakly lit horizon to the east - somewhere there, the sun was rising over the clouds. Lord Tunhausen took a sip of the drink from his silver mug, and let out a loud sigh, before footsteps directed his attention to his left.



"Gregor, on feet already, I see?" He spoke with a smile, and took a sip of his drink again.



"I haven't asked you how you like our Berebian weather this time of year. Cozy enough?" Mannan tried to smile, but it turned into some terrible hybrid between a frown and a smirk.

Gregor had been going through some ups and downs in the past week, but today the knowledge that the blizzard may be passing definitely was a plus. He poured himself a glass of tea in a far more simple cup.



"I had read about it, but I didn't think it would be so...brisk."



"Ha. I guess down in the Menelea you rarely get anything remotely close to this? I was in Arco one winter, when I was on a pilgrimage. It was winter, I recall. All I saw was grey soil and only one night I caught a glimpse of some snowflakes." Mannan paused for a moment, remembering the better and simpler times of his life. There was a neigh under the window, and the young bishop looked outside.



"Isn't that Olson and Chris returning from the patrol... they don't look wounded, and they don't seem to be in hurry... I bet all they saw is snow. Kinda



strange, the Menelean army is an hour of horse riding to the south, beyond the Cagarian forests... I'm sorry that I can't provide any particular help with the Prixima and everything. The war broke my communications with the south, so I can't even get my spies' reports."



"I bet the weather isn't helping in that regard."

Gregor hesitated for a moment, but decided to speak his mind.



"I have to ask: what do you think Prixima is hoping to gain by this invasion? I'm no expert in warfare, but attacking in the dead of winter like this seems almost suicidal. She must be aware that your troops are more used to the cold than hers are, and every moment the invasion stalls just gives her enemies time to rally. She must have a goal in mind, and I bet you have a good idea what it is."

Mannan arched his left eyebrow and looked at Gregor.



"You really think it is Prixima's doing? I think you might be slightly paranoid, Gregor... shady dealings and hired assassins is one thing, but to mobilize Menelean army? Eight thousand at Fezzan front, another two thousand at the mountain trails, and those few divisions of wyverns raiding our outposts and supply caravans. That's more than eleven thousand Menelean soldiers pushing against Berebian defences. I don't think Prixima could get more than one eighth of that under her banner without toppling your King."

Gregor grimaced.



"Our short journey for just *one* of the Dragonstones resulted in the deaths of two nobles. I wouldn't want to lay bets on what she's done in the past few months."



"But perhaps you're right. If that's the case, I hate the idea of fighting Meneleans even more. Prixima's hired goons are one thing, but I'm sure the vast majority of the soldiers out there...well, they're probably just like I was."

Mannan nodded and drank the last of his drink, letting out a sigh as his eyes turned toward the snowy landscape. He then turned to Gregor.





"Well, time for me to go to work. There might be some correspondence and reports waiting for me. I've given orders to the village shopkeepers to re-open their stores with the worst of weather passing. You should be able to get supplies and weapons from them at lowered price." After saying those words, Mannan patted the young soldier on shoulder and moved passed him, going to his office room of sorts.

---

Meanwhile, outside...

"Ah... Ahh-CH!"

Olison shuddered.



"Ugh. Consider this another thing I don't quite miss about home." He muttered as Steil trudged through the snow, white flakes gathering in stark contrast to his black hair. He and Chris had just recently returned from an uneventful patrol outside the castle. "How you holding up, Chris?"

Chris walked through the snow beside Steil, keeping pace with the horse's shoulders.



"Fine, I suppose. I would have preferred rain. Also, bless you."

The assassin rubbed at his nose, which was feeling quite cold indeed.



"What about you? Are you really all right with being back in Berebia?"

Olison attempted to sniff.



"I can't say I'm thrilled. Last I was here, there was a bounty on my head." Olison shuddered again, about to sneeze, but staved it off, "It's been years, and I haven't heard head or tails on it, but I still can't shake off this hunch."

Steil made his way towards the stables, attempting to shake off some of the snow on his coat.



"Then again, bounties are probably low on priority when there's an army knocking on your borders. Perhaps I should ask Lord Tunhausen if he knows anything about House Ferwelk's activities."

Chris laughed quietly.



"Well, that's amusing. There's a bounty on our heads now, too. I guess some things never change."

He brushed some snow from his robes, flicking his hood back momentarily to clear it before putting it over his head again.



"Ah, well. Olison, if there's anyone in House Ferwelk you need dead, you know you only need to ask."

Olison smirked as Steil finally moved into the relative warmth of the stables.



"Definitely. But it shouldn't be necessary, the one person I needed dead, I put a spear in his weapon arm when I fled from Ferwelk lands. And if I know Lord Ferwelk right, a useless arm will send the poor sod into exile or on a suicide mission." He explained as he dismounted from Steil, leading him to a tiny bale of hay, no doubt the last they're going to get at least until the snow stops.

Chris hoisted himself up onto one of the narrow dividers between the stalls for the horses and paced back and forth across it, his arms folded behind his back.



"Well then, I suppose that's for the best. It's not that I would necessarily mind another bounty on my head - assuming they could figure out who did it - but it might make things with our current host a bit... troublesome."

The assassin leaped up and caught one of the beams, swinging his body back and forth in an arc until he could swing all the way around and perch on top of it. He stayed crouching for the moment, holding onto it with both hands in a similar position to a gargoyle.



"We're relatively safe and secure for awhile, it seems. Do you have any plans?"

Olison shrugged in response, only deigning to remove his pack from Steil's saddle and to look outside.



"Aside from keeping up with current events, no plans. Things are no doubt going to get hectic here soon enough with Menelea marching their way in."

Chris leaped to another beam and resumed gargoyle-ing.



"I see. I thought I might go out into the village and help children build snowmen."



"I like kids, you know? They... enjoy life, more than us adults do."



"Sometimes I try to imagine what life would have been like if I had done things differently when I was a child. But I don't know. That kind of thinking is... difficult for me."



"Ha, sometimes I envy kids. They've got a better outlook than I could ever dream up."

Olison chuckled briefly.



"But for people like me, there's no point in trying to enjoy the world if there's no-one there to protect it."

Chris stood up and walked around on the beam for a moment.



"I suppose that's true. If children are to enjoy life there have to be protectors around. People like you and I who are not afraid to die should fate dictate it."

He put a hand on the slope of the ceiling.



"There were more children than I expected at the Forsaken castle."



"Perhaps one day there will be a little Shields running around among them and getting into trouble."

He was quiet for a few moments before he lightly dropped off of the beam and landed in the middle of the floor.



"...Although sometimes I worry what any child of mine would be like."

He fixed his eyes on Olison.



"What about you? Ever have any thoughts about a family of your own?"



"Hm..."

Olison briefly looked to the side before looking back up to Chris.



"Honestly, the thought hadn't occurred to me. But now that I do think about it, I'm not exactly sure I'd be a good parent." Olison made a nervous chuckle and shrugged.



"I suppose every person worries about such things. Is it wrong to say I'm glad it's not just me?"

He dropped the subject anyway. It didn't seem to be something Olson wanted to discuss.



"Well, I suppose we should go inside and report in. Doubtless people are waiting to be enthralled with our gripping, scintillating tale of finding absolutely nothing in the great snowy outdoors."

---

The druid gave a sigh relaxed and closed his eyes, just enjoying the weather outside.



"Ahh.. how I missed this weather.. and how I miss the Forsakens..I wonder what the Plague Dragon is saving for us on this place."

Salvatore watched as the flames crackle and dance to its own tune in a fireplace, his eyes glazed over and his thoughts lost to the aether of his mind. During the nine days he was inordinately quiet compared to his usual chatty self, giving and returning greetings and attempts at small talk but little more. The man hasn't been seen without his helmet during the entire stay here either, either only removing it when he believes himself unwatched or perhaps just never removing it.

There was a soft thud as a golden scaled tail smacked the ground softly, its owner asleep near said fireplace almost blocking the view of it entirely with its bulk. The only thing Sal wasn't silent on during his stay was his adamant insistence on Ormm staying inside, far away from the blizzard and its cold grasp.

Valor grunted, his breath heavy as he practiced sword-swings in the snow blanketed courtyard. Though at the time he'd been extremely distraught, he had come to terms with the bounty Prixima had placed on his head, and was currently preparing for the only goal he had in mind: Revenge.

Gregor returned to the bedroom and changed into his new armor. While it was very nice for Mannan to provide it, the Berebian purple still looked strange to him.



"I don't know if I'll ever get used to this thing..."

Now in his new duds, Gregor walked to the common area where many of the group

spent their time. He spoke up, attempting to let everyone hear his voice:



"Listen up, everyone! Now that the blizzard is calming down, we've got a chance to run to the local village for supplies. If there's anything you need, or think you need, or think *someone else* might need, meet up in the courtyard in 30 minutes. We've got some vulneraries in the wagon, but other than whatever you're carrying that's it."

Edwin looked up from the book he was reading from a seat next to the fireplace as Gregor entered.



"That sounds wonderful, even if it is snowing. I could definitely use the opportunity to stretch my legs, and maybe find a new magic tome or two if I'm lucky."

Charlotte nodded toward Gregor's mention of the local village.



"That's a good idea, actually, Gregor. My longbows are really torn up from all the running around and banging them against walls and heads accidentally. We should head out"



"'Accidentally', huh? And here I thought you were mad at me for some reason."

He said this in a teasing tone of voice.



"I won't need anything."



"You sure? Well, alright. How about a sparring session later? I think I just about have this new fighting style nailed down."



"Yes, later, I'll gladly do that."

Alexander is acting as his normal, somber, and quiiite serious self.

Gregor decided not to press the subject. Instead, he set off to find Chris and Olson.

The druid gave a slow nod and looked around.



"Hmm.. I will actually look for a "cold" magic, heh...I really enjoy a good joke, besides the fact that would help me to deal with light magic... but before I do that I will talk to the assassin person, he really got a thing for chests, so talking to him is always a surprise."

And after saying that, he began to look for Chris, he would also need to talk about his new functions too, after all.



"Assassin person...you mean Chris? Last I saw he just got back with Olson. Let's check the stables, see if they're still there."



"Yes, sentinel person. I am talking about Chris. Amd sure, we can do that."

Giving a shrug, Tantallos followed Gregor to find Chris and Olson.



"Oh, by the way..fancy armor."



"Yeah. Comes with working for Mannan, I guess. Never thought I'd be wearing anything other than Menelean colors."



"Well, you should not be sad about this or anything, think about this as a new life opportunity. Or if you prefer.. you could join the Forsakens.. but I doubt it would change too many things."





"No offense, but all I really want to do is get back to Menelea. Preferably *without* someone trying to kill me or anyone else here. Though congratulations on becoming King of your people."



"Not offended at all. And I guess we will have to kill the crazy lady to reach that. And thank you, as soon as we finish this, I must return to solve the undead problem for once, and then...study more to become something better than a Druid.."



"Fancy...hat? What's the deal with that thing, anyway?"

Gregor led the way to the stables.

Tantallos took his hood and his mask off and shook his head a bit.



"I guess you may be needing glasses instead of a monocle, my friend, that was no hat. It was just my hood, as for the mask.. it is how I tell the Forsakens that I am the king now. You could say it works as a king symbol, just like a crown."



"I only called it a hat because I didn't know how else to describe it. My eyes are fine. Mostly."



"A hood is a hood, sentinel person. Well, I still need to talk to the assassin person about his new functions as he is going to be our spy and.. "problem solver", if you know what I mean. And that obviously mean stabbing people who are bringing problems to us."

---

Charlotte walked over to Seyena (who hopefully should be in the common area).





"Would you join us, Seyena? I saw you throwing around a staff last battle but didn't get to talk much before now. I'd love to hear how you learned to do that."



"Oh- Ami taught me when we were off re-killing the undead."



"She didn't have to teach much, using a staff is simple enough."

\*Crack\*



"Whoop, broke a cup. I'll better hide the pieces."

Edwin glanced over to Ami as she scrambled to hide the cup pieces.



"I know, I get like that too when people talk about Anima like that. I've broken my share of cups, let me tell you."



"I just get a little annoy when said it's simple. Swinging a sword is simple, but there a clear gap between a farmer who just picked one up and a master who train with it his whole life."



"Oh I know that feeling. There are wizards out there who don't think too much of Anima magic, because of it's perceivably simple components of fire, lightening and wind. There are ancient magic users who think it's simple to cast because theirs is seemingly so complex in comparison, which means they don't bother with it, and there are light casters who think that it's too crude and unrefined compared to light magic for them to bother putting any effort into it. It's very frustrating when I meet these people."

Edwin shakes his head before looking back at Ami.



"Actually, I don't remember if we have introduced ourselves to each other back at the castle. I was quite a vicious affair, and in all the fighting it slipped my mind if we have or have not... My name is Edwin. What's yours, my dear?"



"Please to meet you, Mr Edwin. I am Ami Storm or Mia Storm if my other self take over."



"It's lovely to meet you Ami. I have to say, I'm somewhat surprised about you, in many ways."

Edwin looks around at the others and then leans in a bit towards Ami.



"To be honest... When I first met you, you were Mia at the time I believe, you gave me a somewhat bad and very strange feeling when I was around you. And since we mages, or at least proper mages from a Ys Academy, utilize all our senses in the perception of magic, I can say that when you gave me a bad and strange feeling, I mean it literally! I am very interested and curious in your explanation about how you are like this, as is proper for a future sage I would say. Can you provide me with any information about your... condition? State? I'm not quite sure how to describe it actually..."



"I'm afraid I can tell you little about my condition."

Ami turns.



**"The only thing I know is that I became aware after Ami trip into the wood."**

Mia fades back into Ami.

Edwin jerked back a bit in surprise at the sudden change, before leaning forward again, even more curious and even a bit excited.



"So, that's how the change occurs... Fascinating! The sudden change in magic fluctuations and forces was incredible! You say that you became like this because you entered some woods? Which woods were these exactly? Can you explain that mark on your cheek?"



"The wood?"



"Oh, Mia must of come out. Deynastia, north, in a small village called Noel, there just a large decaying forest to the west. One day I just walk into the area and the next thing I know walking out of it with the feeling of dread everywhere. I came use to it now, but it was unsettling at first. What does the mark look like?"

Edwin pulled out a worn looking, leather covered book with small bits of loose paper sticking out of the edges here and there. Flipping it open and turning to a blank page while pulling out a sharpened pencil out of a pocket, he quickly gets to work on drawing a picture in the corner of a blank page. Finishing in under a minute and giving it a look over, he turns the book around and shows a perfect replica of the symbol to Ami.



"This is what it looked like. Can you recognise it?"



"That look like the mark on my back. So I also get one on my cheek in Mia's mode, interesting. Anyway, since I told you a little about myself, how about you tell me about your hometown or childhood?"



"Hmmm... I believe that I will have to look into this... Most interesting... I'll get back to you after I've done some research on the mark, as well as your condition. If you'll excuse me, I've got a library to search." And with that Edwin closed his book, got up, and left for the library.



"What, really? I always assumed magic came from the wielder, and the staff was merely a conduit. Thought that's why most of us can't use them or at least well.

ALTHOUGH there was that one time with the Pegasus Rider..."



"Well, yes, I apparently have a little bit of magic in me. It's not much, and I haven't trained my entire life devoted to healing like most priests or clerics- so my ability suffers somewhat." She shrugs, shifting Ilya's reins to a different hand. "But, at the end of the day, I could at least keep someone on their feet. That's the important part, right?"



"Anyway, how did you guys end up at the castle anyway? I've always forgotten to ask. It certainly wasn't a Royal Guard mission, Gregor told me your lot was rejected."



"Funny thing about that. Running from some very powerful assailants who wanted our heads for bounty money, we took solace in Berebia. Gregor has a good head on him and was able to talk Bishop Mannan out of jailing us for good - or worse. As it turned out, Mannan shared some goals with us all along, so we were drafted as, essentially, special advisors for combating PRIXIMA and her growing power while under Berebia's royal wing. That's why I'm wearing purple, the official color of Berebia!"



"It's nice to hear you're working for Berebia, now, even though you guys just swapped one set of corrupt, selfish nobles for another."



"But, on the more pressing side; you have a *bounty*? Do you know who set it on you? Maybe one of the relatives of that guy that Adrien turned into mush, or something?"



"Oh! I thought someone would have told you by now. Uh, PRIXIMA backstabbed all of us and handed out false bounties for our heads, essentially making us outlaws. We didn't know this until recently."

Charlotte kind of contorted her face trying to remember. She then looked at the ground, not at Seyena's face, as she recited them.



"Gregor, Derick, Ami, Chris, Alex, Riven, Olison, Valor. Finally, you and I. I'm assuming PRIXIMA didn't want to anger the Forsakens, and that's why Tantallos is not on there. 2500 gold for each of us, but 4000 for Gregor. Dead."

Even Charlotte was surprised she remembered this. She was in a drunken stupor by the time she saw the poster.

Seyena stood still for a few moments, her expression unreadable. Then:



"That explains the Kesselring officer aiding the creepy druid, doesn't it?"



"She must really want us dead. Is that stupid rock so important to keep secret?"



"Well..."

Charlotte reaches for something in a pocket in her armor and sighs in relief. She motions toward Seyena and then toward the door.



"Why don't we take a walk?"



"Uh, sure." And Seyena began to walk, assuming Charlotte would follow.

Charlotte followed alongside Seyena. Even though the worst of the blizzard was over, it was still colder than a witch's - er - mitts.

---

Alexander turned off, and went off clanking in search of Salvatore. It was funny, really. The man was Berebian- the only one he knew to be Berebian, and yet Alex would not rather talk to anyone else but him- he wanted to know if he was a traitor, and if he was, he didn't want any of his Menelean comrades to view him as one. And as such, he was looking for Sal. He had some talking to do.

Salvatore was in one of the lesser used studies, since Ormm's presence tended to

disturb those who weren't used to him. He was currently sitting on a wooden stool instead of some of the much nicer chairs around the study, Ormm still resting on the floor in front of the fire, close to its warmth. Sal was brought to the present at the sound of heavy clanking, deferring that it was either a squad of men marching in step to patrol somewhere or Alexander out and about. Thankfully, it turned out to be the latter.

The rider gave a nod to the knight in greeting.



"Alexander."

Alexander was for several moments silent, leaning on the wall (there were not many places for a man in as much armor as he to it), and contemplating. Eventually, he piped up to ask a question, his hand gesturing to the walls around him.



"This place... being here, and fighting for here... Does it make me a traitor?"

Sal waited until the armored man spoke, furrowing his brow under his helmet at the question, getting up and sitting back down to where he's facing Alex instead of the fire.



"...Do yah think yerself ah traitor?"



"For a stretch of time after I ended up in the employment of Mannan, I did. During this last battle, even. Now... I just wonder."



"Have yah been losin' the strength o' yer ideals? O' what yah stood fer? Does followin' one nation 'er ah 'nother rattle yah? Do yah consider yerself ah traitor?"  
The rider stated simply as he watched the man.



"My belief in duty has remained unchanged, that I am utterly sure of. ...But the switch in who I work for, that I can say has rattled me. I'm not sure if it is the ideals one carries or their current actions who defines a traitor, and... that's what makes me unsure. That's why I asked."

Salvatore sat up a bit straighter instead of slouching.



"Tha brings the question as ta if'in ah man's actions are what he's thinkin', 'er not, don' it?" A pause. "What country yah follow, what mortal lord yah kneel ta, what metric yah measure yerself wit', tell me, what makes ah true man? Ah good man?"

The question proved to be rhetorical however, as it was soon followed up.



"What are yer actions tha cause yah confusion, yer ideals tha cause yah pain, is it worth it? This strife yah put yerself through, this inky blackness yah see an' only see as the path tha yah walk?"



"What scares me, Salvatore, is the possibility of betraying the sense of duty I've *utterly* devoted myself to for a long time."

Salvatore was silent for a bit after Alexander's answer. Wasn't the reaction he was looking for, not at all, indeed he was hoping to rile the knight and put a fire in him, show him that if he's devoted to his cause. But this... This will be more difficult than he thought... The man sighed.



"Duty is ah funny thing. It can make one do ah lot o' things, o' all the saints an' sinners ah duty was their drivin' force, their goal, their loife, but all o' 'em duty one the same. Oi could tell yah if'in Oi think yer ah traitor.. But, heh, tha don' matter worth ah rat's arse, trust me, Oi know." The man shook his head. "No, the real question, is if'in yah think yer one, but it isn' one yah can jus' know by thinkin', no. If'in yah were hopin' fer me ta tell yah yer not an' tha bein' tha, Oi'm afraid Oi can' do tha... Heh, such matters ain' so simple, yah see, though Oi wish it were. But what Oi can do, what Oi can do is maybe help yah understand what bein' one is, an' what bein' one isn'. Oi've been on both sides o' tha coin." Although his tone unusually somber, he held a smile on his face.



"Now tell me, what are yah devoted ta? Ah sense o' duty can mean ah lot o' things, what do yah see as the apple in yer eye, the goal tha yah strive fer? Yah don' loike Berebia, 'er the people in it, tha much Oi've guessed enough, haha." The laugh



was an attempt at humor, although not a particularly good one.



"Well, Menelea. ...But also, I hold the most loyalty to the man who squired me, though he's long been dead- he died in this country, to an axeman who came in from a flank I couldn't protect."

Sal shook his head.



"War's ah terrible thin', the taker o' lives an' the shredder o' dreams, ain' it? Let me ask yah, why Menelea? Why do yah feel such ties ta yer country?" His tone wasn't confrontational, rather honestly curious.



"Do yah wish ta protect yer home, yer hearth, the people there yah feel ah kinship wit'? Yer ah soldier, ah knight even. But are yah one o' the place... 'Er the people? This man, the man who squired yah, he was important ta yah, wasn' he." The last comment was more a statement than a question.



"Yes. He was. ...And I suppose the reason I feel such duty to Menelea in the first place is to carry on his."

Salvatore nodded.



"Ah will ta carry on the torch, Oi see. Well then, what was his duty, his will ta his country? What do yah think he'd say 'bout all o' this mess?" The man relaxed in his chair more, and Ormm was now watching the two converse lazily from his position on the floor.



"He was more lighthearted a man than I am now; but I think he'd be trying to avoid conflict. ...And I have no wish to fight Menelea anyway."





"There's many ah way ta avoid conflict, an' who's ta say yer foightin' Menelea? Last Oi recall, yer foightin' tha PRIXIMA, no? Do yah think tha bein' 'ere, now, tha means yer enemy wit' all o' Menelea?"

The man paused for a moment, and after some hesitation added another question, seeing it needed.



"Tell me, are yah honorin' who he was, 'er what he meant ta yah? The man, 'er yer memory? Yah say he was ah loight hearted man, what do yah think he'd want fer yah? Ah man makes many ah decision in his loife, o' the paths he takes an' travels, o' the memories he'd leave an' the lives he'd effect. Ah true man is ah man who makes the decisions he feels he's ta take, whether fer ill 'er good, fer when his moind is wit' his actions, an' his actions his moind. Tell me, what do yah think he'd want yah ta do? Want fer yah? What do *yah* want fer yah?"

Alexander didn't have a reply to this; he'd not considered his own wants in a long time, nor had he come to the realization (as he had now) that he *truly* was honoring merely his memory of Sir Arotos.



" ... "

Salvatore let the knight have his silence, watching the snow fall softly from outside a window. The man got up and walked over to the window, to get a closer look as he watched the sky and the lands through the glass.



"There's nothin' wrong wit' wantin' ta protect yer home, the people there, yer friends an' family. Ah place yah know will always be there fer yah when yah leave an' go, ah place where yah got nothin' ta worry about, where ah day is jus' ah day an' the people 'round yah are what matters. But yah have ta wonder, what be tha' which is more important, *what makes it home*. Some say, its the people. Others the locale, tha' which is familiar. Oi say it ain' ah choice between the two, it be both o' 'em. Yah got ah home, an' words on ah sheet o' paper by ah crazy broad ain' gonna change tha. Oi've heard from the others what she's been doin', schemin', harmin' those 'round her fer her own wants. Tell me. Yah think yah want her there? Doin' what she's doin'? Tryin' ta take yer home away, tryin' ta brin' it down wit'out ah care in her moind 'sides what's innit fer her?"

The man turned around to face the knight.



"Yah got ah home, an' only yah can take it away from yerself. Don' let her try ta take it from yah."



"...No. I will not let her do to Menelea what she's been doing, and that's something I've been sure on since I left."



"Then Oi ask yah the question again. Do yah think yer ah traitor?"

After a moment to let the question sink in, the man smiles more broadly, as if all of the previous heavy discussion never took place.



"But enough o' all o' this thinkin', the day is young an' we ain' got the toime ta be dreary, no? Loife's short, lets get outta this stuffy place while its just flurryin'."



"...And then no, I do not consider myself a traitor. ...And yes, you are right. Perhaps spending all of the day inside is not good for my mood."



"Good. Let's get outta 'ere then, got ah town ta see!" The rider boldly proclaimed as he walked outside of the room, then to the main common area.

---

Once they were a decent distance away from prying ears, Seyena spoke up.



"Is something the matter? You seemed a little nervous earlier."



"The name 'Latzenhommer.' Does this mean anything to you?"



"I can't say it does- wait-" and then she held up a hand, furrowing her brow.



"Didn't Prixima mention that about that orange dragonstone of yours? It's an old royal family with dragon's blood or something, right? Kind of like the Kesselring line?"



"You have a remarkable memory. But yes, she did. I, ah... I would like to get to the bottom of this before our next encounter. Would you like to hear how I originally got my hands on it? It's a bit of a long story, but it may interest you. Even if this silly hunch is completely wrong."



"Sure, I'd like to hear."



"Very well. I'm sorry if this is long-winded. It's the first time I've remembered it with clarity since childhood."

Charlotte cleared her throat, preparing her *Italics Voice* for the backstory.



*"When I was six years old, I was already carrying water back and forth between a nearby river and my village in the north. The water was cleaner than any you can now find within reach of empires like Berebia, Menelea or Deynastia. It was the main reason the village was founded in the place it was. In the wild mountains up north, there's quite a lot of spots where the water is iced over, rendering it inaccessible.*

*There were other boys who were brought water, but many of them dragged their feet (much to the anger of our elders). Only I was sent every day. It wasn't a terrible job. It made my parents proud, and prepared me well for what I had to do in the future. This is not the story, though. The story is six years later. I was twelve years old when it all happened.*

*I had just jumped the little cliff near the stream when he came into view. A man with bright blonde hair and - ah, how do I put this - those bizarre eyes that you have, Seyena. Less like eyes and more like blue portals to another time and place. This, please*

*understand, is why I acted so oddly toward you when we first met.*

*Anyway, this man was just standing by the river, looking into it. He had this dark cloak, and it was really fitting with how sad he looked. The last time I saw someone that horrifically sad was... in the last battle, actually, when Gregor mentioned his family. Huh.*

*I didn't have to approach him. He certainly didn't approach me. But when I did, he turned, looking a little surprised. He said something to me:"*



*"Do you know how it feels to lose everything?"*

*"Of course I didn't. Nothing horrible had ever happened in the village except a death here and there. I was just standing there, speechless at the large man's forward attitude."*



*"Don't take that water back to the village. It's not clean. Take this instead."*

*"He handed me a completely different pail of water. It didn't look as fresh as the river water normally was. I smelled something funny, but it wasn't coming from the pail. It was coming from something close by. Walking over to the river with the man's pail in hand, I spotted an odd coloration in the normally-clear flow. It was... a hint of purple. Yes, the water was tinted purple, and no matter how much ran downstream, it didn't clear up. In fact, it seemed only to discolor itself further.*

*Looking back, you know what was quaint about it?*

*The river was turning the color of Berebia."*



*"There's something else in there, too. I need you to keep it safe no matter what, alright? It's the most important thing you've ever done."*

*"That was a little bit of an odd thing to say, but sure enough, I looked into the pail and spotted a faint, gold-ish gleam. Reaching inside, it was a stone about the size of my fist, pulsing with a color - a color not unlike his hair in the sunlight. Or yours."*

Charlotte looks back up at Seyena.



*"The man walked down the side of the river alone. I headed back to the*

village in a daze, the Tiger's Eye - as I would later hear it called off-hand by someone in-the-know - beneath my clothes, much like it is now. I didn't think much about what I would do if the water was still not 'clean' tomorrow, but I didn't really have the opportunity.

Later that night, I jolted awake in a coughing fit. My parents were not in the hut. It seemed a little odd they would leave without telling me, so I stepped outside only to see the village's inhabitants, all four or so dozen of them, screaming, leaving their huts and running in many directions. Their visions were obscured by a thick cover of smoke from some burning houses. Fire magic. Not something anyone in the village knew or could afford to learn.

Off in the distance, there were some figures on black horses, their lances clattering against heavy shields. They seemed to be approaching - fast - so I ran in the only direction I knew to run: back toward the river. I was terrified. Every few steps, I'd hear a CLANG, but the smoke was wide-spread, and I couldn't tell whether one of the invaders had followed me or not. Not until I reached the river.

On top of the smoke, it was dark. Still, the light from the full moon and the distant fire allowed a brief glimpse of the river's color. It was still sickeningly purple, and oddly, it seemed to have slowed down. As if the purple material was simply too heavy for the water to carry downstream.

For the next three days, I walked downstream alongside the unclean river. I was too scared to drink its water, and I had forgotten to bring any food, so I was very hungry and very thirsty. But, finally, the river branched in two directions. One continued to carry a faint purple hue. By some miracle of nature, the other did not. I considered it a sign and hopped across some rocks, careful not to fall in the water. For a whole day, I filled up on the clean water while following along its path.

Finally, after two more days had passed, I collapsed. No more progress could be made. Legs were bruised. Feet were swollen. Eyelids were heavy. I wanted to finally let loose and cry about all that happened, but I didn't have the strength to do that. I simply fell asleep.

I don't remember when I woke up, but I remember where. It was a small clearing between a thick forest cover. Kesselring Forest, though at the time, it was just 'the forest.' Above my head, there was a small stone structure. Smaller even than the lance you carry. It was beautiful. A little stone model of a winged serpent rested on top of it. I called it a 'shrine,' but no one else ever visited it, so who knows?

You don't need to hear the rest of my story. You can probably guess it. Three or so years learning to hunt and fend in Kesselring forest, keeping the Tiger's Eye safe within the dragon shrine. Right up until I met Gregor in the forest, and everything changed awfully fast."

Charlotte took a long, deep breath and allowed for a moment of silence.



"Anyway. I'm probably wrong, but I like to believe everything is connected in a sort of cosmic way. When I first saw you in that tavern, you stood out of the crowd, Seyena. From a distance, it even looked like you might be him. You know, the one from before, by the river. I don't know what happened to him or if he was even a Latzenhommer. Maybe it's just one big coincidence, but - ah - "

It was a little difficult to spit the words out.



"But wouldn't it be funny if this stone really did belong to you?"



"The stone- wh-what, mine? How...?" If it was hers- that meant it would have been one person to give Charlotte that stone. Only one person she knew would fit that description. Did Charlotte meet her father? No, she would have remembered if he kept the stone on his person. *Wait- he had a box that could have housed it. He never yelled at us, save for the time we tried to see what was inside. Back then... I was five, Nala would have been nine.*



"But... it could have been anyone." Seyena muttered. It wasn't her father, the likelihood is nearly impossible- she didn't believe in fate.

And then she began to think- to recall- trying to line up Charlotte's story with her own memories.

*I was eleven, Nala was fifteen. That's when she was murdered, and I was taken away. If me and Charlotte are close to the same age... Then my father could have met her shortly after.*

If it was her father that gave Charlotte the Tigerseye, did that mean she could be a Latzenhommer? *No, I still have no idea whether or not it was him. Unless...* She could really only think of one way to verify for sure.

She finally spoke, but her voice carried the smallest quiver. This was a lot to take in for her.



"Charlotte. Did... did the man who gave you the stone... d-did he have a scar on the back of his right hand?"



She was terrified of a yes.



"I don't know. He had a long, full-body robe. Only his head was uncovered. It was like he was hiding from something."

Charlotte kicked the snow under her foot and turned away from Seyena, ready to head back to the common area.



"Don't let it get to you too much. We have other things to worry about. Why don't we go look for Chris, Gregor, Alex and the others?"

Seyena fidgeted with her lance for a few moments before replying.



"Yeah, let's do that."

And with that, she set off, thoughts broiling in her head. Last she remembered, everyone was loitering around the courtyard, so she headed there.

---

Tantallos finally approached both the assassin and the cavalier.



"Gentlemen. Any interesting news?"



"Yeah, we had a nice walk. It was a shock to everyone involved."



"Seriously though, I'm surprised we DIDN'T run into some form of trouble or another. Anyway, what about you? Any plans? I'm going to be heading into town soon, myself."



"That's actually just what I was coming out here to talk to you two about."

With the blizzard dying down, the stores in the local village will be open today. We're heading there to purchase supplies and weapons."



"Ah, so you want an escort. Fair enough. I can handle that for you."



"I'm not going to go shopping myself, though. I have everything I could want for right now."



"Well, almost everything, but that's neither here nor there."



"Anyway, how many of us are going, and when are we leaving?"



"Well, actually I was going to ask if you wanted us to get anything for you, seeing as how you just got back from patrol. You're welcome to come along though. Let's see...I'm going, I'm pretty sure Tantallos here and Charlotte are going. Not sure about the rest. Oh, and I need to find Valor and ask him. What about you, Olson?"



**"I believe I will be fine as far as supplies are concerned."** Olson shook his shoulder, rattling the various polearms drawn across his back. As he tried to speak again, he hastily brought a hand up to his nose, **"Ah- I think I'll need to lie down for a few moments, I might have something coming on, maybe pick up some extra medicine if you spot any. I'll go ahead and ask Valor if I see him."**



"You should get some hot tea or chocolate and rest in front of the fire. Take care of yourself, Olson."



**"Aye. And you too, Chris."** Olson nodded towards everyone and made his



way back out into the courtyard through the snow, intent on making his way to the keep.



"Later, Olison."

Chris turned to Gregor and Tantallos.



"So, should we wait here for Valor, or go somewhere else, or talk about girl troubles, or what?"



"Actually.. now that I am the King of the Forsakens, I need to pass your new tasks as soon as possible, assassin person. That is why I was looking for you, and also to see if you found any shiny things to surprise me again!"

Chris considered his Hermes Ring.



"Well, I looted this during the attack. I'm thinking about giving it to someone, but I'm not sure who, yet. I've worn it for awhile now and I noticed that it improves reaction time and physical speed, so I was thinking about giving it to you or Alex... somebody who needs it. I still haven't made up my mind yet."

He shrugged.



"Anyway, I have time now, so if you'd like to talk about my duties this is a good time."



"How interesting! That is a Hermes Ring, my friend! Those are really rare, and what you felt is exactly what it does to people. If you wear the ring, you will be able to move faster, it is indeed a useful tool in combat, besides being fancy."



"As for your functions.. as you might know, you will be "solving problems" we may have during diplomacy visits. You are going to work as our shadow. If any of our soldiers get attacked during a diplomatic mission, you will know what to do, and you will have a big advantage over them, surprise attack. Besides that, you will also assist us on the guard and possibly recruit new followers."

Chris nodded to Tantallos.



"That's about what I expected. I can do that."

Gregor made a mental note to keep an eye open for medicine at the market, then turned to respond to Chris' question.



"This is strange...I can't think of anything to talk about. Normally we're either discussing what to do next or talking about the last battle. I don't think we've ever sat around this long without much happening. So, you decide."

Tantallos didn't seem to be forthcoming with any information, so Chris turned his attention to the soldier.



"Might as well talk about the women in our lives, then. We all have one. How are things between you and Charlotte?"



"Oh, it could be worse I guess." He smiled slightly as he remembered the past few months.



"I think we've gotten closer than we were before the group split up. We joke around a bit more, trust each other a bit more. Sometimes I wonder what my family would think of her if I ever brought her around for dinner or something." He was lost in his thoughts for a moment, but then shook himself back to the present.



"But, uh, that's just my take on it. So have you and Ami/Mia managed to spend any time together since coming here? I remember you saying that there wasn't much time when you had undead to fight."



"A little, here and there."



"I wanted to take her out to the village for a day, but the blizzard pretty much ruined any chances of that. I don't know if she wants to come with us today."



"But we've spent some time getting to know each other, yes. I've helped her groom and feed Tenebra, and we've explored the grounds together. Roasted marshmallows and made hot cocoa. Read in the library."



"Simple things, but doing them with her - just being around her - makes me feel... happy. I haven't really felt that in years."



"Honestly... I think it might be love. I don't know how she feels though, and that worries me."

He scratched at his jaw nervously.



"For some reason I can't seem to work up the courage to ask her. Strange, isn't it..."

Hearing Chris describe his relationship made Gregor smile...until the last few sentences, which awoke some worries he didn't even know he had.



"I...think I know exactly what you mean. I'm not sure whether fighting a berserker or asking Charlotte what she's thinking about our relationship is more frightening at the moment."

Well, that was a bit of an exaggeration.



"So it's not just me... that's good. Although... I think it's more obvious between you and Charlotte. She really likes being around you, too. Anyone can see it."



"With Ami... it's a little different. I like both her and Mia - that's what I've named her other personality, and she seems to like it - but I'm never certain how much time I'll get to spend with either. And it's always a little strange to be talking with one about one thing, then have to pick up an old conversation thread when the other one suddenly appears."



"It's certainly a challenge!"

Gregor blinked, suddenly dumbfounded by the type of problems such a situation could present.



"I never even thought of that. That must be tricky to keep track of!"



"But if nothing else, at least it looks like both halves of Ami - or Mia, or whatever she likes to be called - seem to like you. It could certainly be a lot worse, or at least more awkward!"



"Indeed. It must be difficult for her, too."



"And you're right. I do have that going for me."

Chris adjusted his knives and crossbow out of habit.



"Anyway, aside from shopping for supplies, anything you'd like to get up to while out in the village?"

Gregor thought for a moment.



"Seems like Olison could use some medicine, assuming Ami or Seyena can't cure him. Other than that, I guess we'll have to see what the village has to offer. At least Mannan - sorry: Lord Tunhausen - has arranged reduced prices for us. What about you, got anything in mind?"



"Well... I was going to play in the snow, to be perfectly honest. Build snowmen. Make snow angels. Maybe arrange a snowball fight."

Gregor raised an eyebrow.



"A good portion of the Menelean army is camped just a day's march away, we barely have enough supplies and gold for another battle or two, we still have no idea where Derick is, and you're gonna play in the snow?"



"...Count me in? After shopping, of course."

Anything to keep his mind occupied on happier things...



"Well... yes! People could do with some cheer around here. Everyone is so gloomy."

Chris sighed, his tone becoming more serious.



"...And as you implied, we could all die soon. So I'm going to take this opportunity to do the things that I'm 'not supposed' to."

He suddenly lightened up.



"We could even organize a cookout of sorts. I'm sure Charlotte and I can catch a deer or two to cook, and we can camp in the woods. Roast marshmallows, tell stories around a campfire..."



"Whoa, hold up there."



"I'm all for unwinding a bit after all the recent bad news, but don't you think a campout is a little much? My understanding is that it gets pretty cold out here at night."



"That's what the fire is for. And hopefully perhaps sharing someone's bedroll."

Chris gave him a thoughtful look before chuckling quietly.



"Well, maybe not. You and Charlotte don't seem the type to do that sort of thing. At least not without vows first."

Gregor's face rapidly turned various shades of pink as he struggled to respond.



"I...that's...what?...how could you?...I mean...that is to say..."

He continued in this rambling, semi-incoherent fashion for a few more seconds.



"...If you agree never to mention that again, I will come to this cookout of yours."



"Woah! Calm down, Gregor!"



"I know not everyone is as open or casual as I am about this sort of thing. Since you asked, I won't bring it up again. But we should talk to the others and see what they think about the camping idea. I want to ask Charlotte at least. I'm good enough with a bow to catch food but I suspect she's a better hunter than I am."



"She caught you, didn't she?"

Chris winked and made a ~~gun~~crossbow-finger at Gregor, but didn't go any further so as not to embarrass the poor soldier.



"Joking aside, I'm certain she's a better shot than I am. Anyway, I think I'll go post a notice in the main hall here in a while, let people who want to participate sign up."



"Um. Yes. Please do that."

The soldier coughed and calmed down. Good-natured teasing aside, Chris' idea *was* a good one. Perhaps a nice cookout would be just what the group needed.



"Just remember, we're leaving in about twenty minutes. We want to get back early enough to actually have time to prepare for this campout, right?"





"Indeed! I'll go round up some materials and post the notice in the main hall. I'll meet you at the gates in twenty."

Chris patted Tantallos and Gregor on the shoulder in turn, taking his leave of them, and went back to the library. He knew he could find parchment and writing tools there. In short order he had his message down and took it to the main hall, where he attached it in a very visible spot on a column.

**ATTENTION!**

*I would like to invite any and all to a cookout/camping trip in the woods near the castle. Current plans include:*

- \*Catching and cooking a large dinner*
- \*Telling stories around a campfire*
- \*Making snacks out of chocolate, biscuits, and marshmallows lightly roasted*
- \*Snowman contest*

*And we'll have enough time for other things as well! If you are interested in participating, please sign below my name!*

*P.S. We'll be meeting here in the main hall about an hour before sunset. Don't be late!*

-----  
*Christopher Shields*



"...And they call me crazy."

He gave a shrug and just crossed his arms behind his back before proceeding to look at the snow again.

---

Chris looked around for the red-haired gypsy, finding her after a few minutes.



"Hey, Anja. Gregor, Tant, and I are heading into town. We could probably use your cart to carry supplies. Can we borrow it? Unless you'd like to come along too, I mean."



"Ooh, why do you need my wagon, spy guy? I can give you it only if you let me hang around with you guys." Anja replied and then hummed for a moment.



"Aand that you sit at my side when I will be driving." The gypsy's lips curved into a grin as she sat at the driver's bench and patted the little available space for Chris.





"Can I ask you a question?"



"For supplies and such. Although between you and me I plan on getting a few barrels of mead for a cookout later. As for your second demand, I have no problem with that. Finally, go ahead. What's on your mind?"



"Is there something wrong between you and Ami? As I recall, before we all split off half a year ago, you two looked rather close. Nowadays it seems your relationship devolved into friendship or something. Just wondering if you're available, spy guy!"

Chris laughed.



"Well, that was unexpected! Let me think for a moment."

The assassin did so, sorting out his recent experiences and his feelings.



"I wouldn't say it devolved into friendship. We're more than that... but not quite lovers, I think. I believe I do love her; hard to say, as it's the first time I've ever thought in this manner about another person. I'm not entirely certain if she likes me as a friend or if she feels the same."



"I await the day things finally settle down and we can see what's between us and not worry about fighting or dragonstones or things of a similar nature getting in the way."

He thought for a moment more, scratching his chin.



"If you just want company for the short term, I suppose I'm available."

Maybe Ami would get possessive.



*...Am I seriously considering trying to make Ami jealous?*



"I just like to... sit near someone sometimes. That's all. And to think my nose sniffed tears and murder coming from you back in Fezzan."



"Tears and murder?"

Chris scratched the back of his head.



"I'm not sure what you mean. Regardless, I would be happy to sit with you on the ride over. It's cold out there."

Chris lifted an arm, showing that he had a lot of material in his robes.



"I could help keep you warm on the trip."



"That's very kind of you. Spy guy. When the rest of our companions will arrive? I'm kinda interested in that cookout you mentioned."



"Hmm. Gregor said twenty minutes a little while ago... We'll be meeting him and Tantallos at the gates in six, seven minutes or so."



"And I'd be happy to have you at the cookout! You're good at spreading

cheer, in my opinion. Also, Gregor said he was coming, too. I left a notice in the main hall for everyone to read and sign if they want to participate. It would be nice if everyone did."

Anja blinked and then let out a cheerful laugh.



"Gregor? Cooking? Last time he cooked for me and Charlotte and Alexander, he burnt the roast. But that was more of an accident, now that I think of it..."

Tantallos finally decided to move and look for Anja to **store the Flux tome**.



"Take good care of this, sword lady! For now I will see if I can find something interesting around here."

Anja took the tome, wrapped it in some cloth, and stuffed under the large sheets in the back of her wagon.



"Here you go, blackheart prince guy." Anja grinned smugly.



"Blackheart prince guy? Touche, lady, lady."

He waved to Anja and began to look for any kind of Wind tome.

---

Valor decided that, for the moment, enough was enough and dragged himself in out of the snow, brushing snow out of his hair and shoulders as he walked. On his way to the nearest fireplace, he noticed a piece of parchment attached to one of the columns. He took a quick glance to see if there was some kind of picture drawn on it, but no. Just words.



"It's times like this that I really wish I knew how to read." The mercenary muttered, his mood worsening, if that was possible.

With only about ten minutes to spare, Gregor decided to try and track down anyone who might have missed what was going on. Namely, Valor. He had no idea if Olson found the guy or not.

Gregor found Valor in the main hall, staring at a piece of parchment. A quick glance confirmed it to be the sign-up sheet Chris must have posted.



"Hey Valor, we're heading down to the village in a few minutes to do some shopping. You can come along if you like, if only to get away from the castle for a bit. Also, you gonna go to Chris' cookout thing?" He gestured towards the parchment as he asked the question, searching the nearby area for a quill.

Charlotte walked in from the cold, presumably with Seyena close behind.



"Hey! You guys are leaving soon, right? I'll be heading out with you, and Seyena might, too."

Gregor finally found a quill and signed his name on Chris' note.



"Hey, Charlotte! Yes, we're leaving soon, and Chris had this idea that seems like a good one. Check it out."



"Sounds fun! But... would this be after we went shopping?"

Charlotte borrowed his quill and signed her name, too.



"That's what it sounds like. Shop now, have fun later."



"Anja, could you hold onto these while I shop around?"

**Charlotte: Put in storage: Vulnerary (1/3), Short Bow (10/25). Retrieve from storage: Vulnerary (3/3)**

Anja politely managmented the supplies.



"I think one day I'm going to sell some of the junk. One day. Might net me quite a penny, I think. Are we going to the town or not yet? I've seen Prince Bluehair leaving the keep already."



"I think so. We probably shouldn't leave Tantallos alone, anyway. Who knows what kind of trouble he could get into."

Charlotte waved to everyone she could see.



"ALRIGHT! Let's not waste time chewing the fat! Time to head to town. We want to be done shopping before it's completely dark, right?"

### **Charlotte: Head to Tunhausen with Anja the others.**

After her companions boarded the wagon, Anja smacked the horses with the reins and the wagon rolled out of the keep, going down the slopes down to the town.

Chris also rode beside Anja, as per her request, with an arm around her shoulders to keep her under his cloak and hopefully warm.



"What a charmer, for a spy." Anja commented on the extra cloth over her shoulders. At one moment, she even leaned against Chris' shoulder, until they got to the center of the town, a large empty plaza, with just few people passing by, where she slid from the wagon.. Considering the size of the plaza, one could theorise that in warmer times, the merchants kept bazaar here. Now, the plaza is simply surrounded by various shops, built into ground floors of surrounding townhouses.

### **The signs on the buildings were:**

Two arrows forming an X  
Beer mug with obligatory beer foam on top  
Two swords forming an X  
Rather spiky hammer  
Snake coiling around leafy branch  
Crescent moon with black cat sitting in the middle  
Open book with 'SPELLS' written in the middle  
Metal helmet and gauntlet

Chris grinned at Anja.



"You would be surprised."

**Chris immediately went for the store with the beer mug sign.**

The two went their separate ways at the village and Chris found himself immediately stymied by a locked door. There were three options: pick it, knock, or look for another entrance. He decided to knock first.

The response to the knock was complete silence.

After a moment, Chris wandered around the building once to look for an alternate entrance. If he saw none by the time he got back to the front, he would look around to see if anyone was watching him... and if they weren't, he would just let himself in.

The alley leading to the back of the building was blocked with several crates and barrels stacked on each other.

The door wasn't locked. With strong enough push, Chris opened the door and a chair that was blocking the knob fell onto the floor with a thud.

The spy saw large pool of giant red liquid on the floor and several broken bottles. At left side, he had bottle shelves and several barrels. On right side, a counter, and behind the counter, a rather young looking, red-haired woman was sitting on a chair. And considering the shiny steel dagger plunged in her neck, the stains on her green dress surely weren't just wine.

Suddenly, Chris heard someone cursing and some hasty footsteps, and then, a door in the back of the building was closed with loud thud.



"It's always something... can't anything ever be simple?"

Chris immediately took off for the back door, to give chase to the mysterious killer.

Chris ran outside the building through the back door.

On his left, he could see a small wall and a cape and hood of a man that just jumped over said wall. Then, footsteps as the murderer began running way deeper into the alleys between the townhouses.

Chris followed, glad he hadn't given away the Hermes Ring just yet. It would certainly be a help right now, and he slipped it on as he ran.

The ring did help. When Chris jumped over the wall, the murderer was several metres ahead of his, turning around the corner. When Chris got there, the suspect was few metres closer. The man panicked and turned left at next split of the alleys, too late noticing that he picked wrong and the alley was going right toward a main road.

When the alley opened into the road, Chris had the murderer's hood in arm's reach. Unfortunately, a group of knights was speeding down the road and one of them crashed right into the murderer. The knight fell onto the cobblestone road as the horse crushed the murderer under itself.

"What the hell is happening here!?" The captain of the cavalry unit, a man in his thirties with bald head glared at Chris as two of his soldiers dismounted the horse to help their fellow man to stand up, and two others went toward the horse to help the trapped, hooded guy.

Chris pointed at the trapped man.



"I have reason to believe this man is a murderer. I entered the bar and saw a woman dead behind the counter, a knife in her throat. Someone cursed and ran out the back. I pursued, catching sight of my quarry quickly enough."

He looked at the knight.



"That man on the road is the one I chased to this point."

The knights brought both the knight and the hooded man onto their feet, but it was evident that the murderer had broken legs. One of the soldiers looked under his hood and blinked.

"Lord Sigurd, this man, it's Vagris!"

"That serial killer? Are you sure?" The knight asked and looked at the young soldier.

"Definitely, sir! He looks just like on the poster!"

"Tie his hands!" Two more knights dismounted and they quickly tied up the murderer, as Lord Sigurd looked back at Chris, eyeing his robes, and then looking at his face closely for a brief moment.

"You don't look like one of Tunhausen citizens, but I won't be prying too much. I'm grateful for what you have done, that man is known for both the speed in his legs as well as his bloodlust. I'm Sigurd, Captain of the Guard of Tunhausen. What's your name?"





"Christopher Shields. And no, I'm not a Tunhausen citizen. My lord is currently staying with Lord Mannan; I'm in town to purchase supplies."

He looked over at Vagris before looking back to Sigurd.



"In any case, I'm happy to do a service for the citizens of Tunhausen. I'm certain the populace will sleep easier knowing this man is not walking the streets."



"Too late for that shopkeeper, though."

"Aye, a pity. There are seven ladies, well, eight now, who died by his daggers. There were fifty pieces of Deynastian platinum of bounty for his head, that's almost two thousand in gold. Can you come with us to the garrison? We ned to file in a report and then of course give you the reward."



"Of course. Lead the way."

Chris waited for Sigurd to lead him off.

The knights mounted their horses and the serial killer was flung over one of the larger mounts.

"Tell me more about the murder scene. Which bar it was?"



"I didn't see the name. There was a sign in the front of a slightly overflowing beer mug. The woman behind the counter had red hair, was wearing a green dress. She was young, seemed like she would be pretty if I hadn't seen her in such a state. A steel knife had been lodged in her throat. The counter was on the right as I entered."

That should be enough information for Sigurd to know where he was talking about.

"Oh damn, that's the wine shop, not a bar. The worse thing is that the lady that owned the shop is - was Lord Tunhausen's distant cousin. Our young Lord won't be happy at all, I believe."





"Oh. I see. I suppose I'll tell him myself when I return to the castle."



"Perhaps he'll take comfort in the fact her murderer was quickly apprehended."

"Might be for better, yes... and here we are." The unit go to the garrison, the a small keep nested at the western edge of the town's walls. The gate was open and the knights rode through onto small coutyard as a squire helped Sigurd dismount.

"Can you wait here a moment? I don't think you are interested in dealing with stubborn old office clerks."



"Actually, before you go in, I have a question. This Vagris... where is he from? Where has he done most of his crimes? And have all of his victims been related to nobility, however distantly?"

If need be, Chris would go in and find some sort of record keeper to ask these things.

"He is homeless, he was living in Tunhausen with her wife before she was stabbed by aa drunked man. Trauma got him, I bet. And no, he targeted random girls, but all of them pretty. Lady Cadara was his first victim who had any connections with aristocracy, as far as our investigation goes." Sigurd nodded to Chris and then went inside the inner keep.



"All right, thanks."

Chris sat on a nearby stone bench to wait. He didn't really care about the reward - he didn't have much need for large sums of gold - but someone in the group could probably use it.

Time slowly passed and Chris couldn't help but notice a small change in the soldiers' behaviour. Few minutes after Sigurd went inside the keep, the soldiers that were leaving the keep to get to their posts began giving Chris some special attention, namely they were staring at him, some even tried to point others to look at the spy.

Chris looked back at the soldiers, wondering if one of them would work up the courage to come ask him whatever it was they were gossiping about. He also sat intently and listened, to see if he could pick up some snatches of conversation.

The more time passed, the more soldiers began to gather near the doors and columns. All of them were armed, and the spy could see some crossbowmen sneaking behind the groups.

After a moment later, Sigurd left the inner keep, surrounded by several soldiers.

"Christopher Shields. I knew that this name sounds familiar." The captain of the guard snapped his fingers and every soldier in vicinity drawn their swords and pointed their spears at Chris.

"You're one of Prixima's spies!"

Chris sighed and reached into his robes.



"No. I'm not. I haven't worked for her for several months now. If you don't believe me, look at this."

He pulled out the WANTED poster for himself and held it out for Sigurd to see.



"We didn't exactly part on good terms. Besides, if I hadn't wanted you to know who I was, I wouldn't have told you my name."

Sigurd grabbed the poster, looked at it briefly, and then crumbled it into a ball before tossing it away.

"A poor fake. Tie his hands and put him into a cell! You will give us all the army details and secrets of the Kesselring County! Whenever you choose to cooperate or not!" Several soldiers ran to Chris and quickly pushed his hands behind his back whilst others searched him for weapons and took them away. They were almost done before one of the soldiers found the lockpicks in Chris' sleeve, and those were taken away too.

Then, he was taken into the inner keep, then into it's basement, and psued into a small, cold cell. After the key-wielding soldier went away, Chris was alone, with a lit torch on the corridor's wall as his only companion.

---

### **Charlotte: Two arrows forming an X!**

As it could be easily guessed, it was fletcher's shop. A man in his thirties was smoking a pipe behind a counter, whilst his younger 'copy', his son propably, was sitting in the corner on a chair, slowly cutting off pieces of wood from something resembling a bow frame.

"Aye, miss, how can I help ya?" The owner of the shop spoke. The boy looked at Charlotte, blushed a little, and went back to his work.



"Hey. I have a few questions about your stock. One: what bows do you keep in stock here? Two: what are there prices? Three: Do you buy used? I have an iron and steel longbow, and they're a little creaky, but the iron one's still in alright condition."

"Oi, I be sellin' mostly recurve bows and longbows. Normally I have crossbows but the army be takin' them fresh after making, for the war thing. And I don't buy used bows, but ye can sell'em to that old fart Gregor in the next building on the right. It has no sign, so normally ya don't even know it is there. As for the prices..."

#### Quote

Steel Bow: 400  
Short Bow: 300  
Composite Bow: 900  
Killer Bow: 950  
Steel Longbow: 500  
Steel Yari: 800



"Alright. I'll take a Steel Longbow and be right back after I look into the other store."

**Charlotte buys Steel Longbow then heads into that other store he pointed to.**

"Here ya go lass." The man handed the longbow to Charlotte and took the money eagerly.

The other shop, without a sign. had two shelves at each side of the counter. There were numerous things on them, from old bottles, through strange blades, to shiny jewelry and ancient-looking books.

"Wassit?" The small man with face of a mouse and sparse orange moustache - the only hair on his head - looked at Charlotte and licked his lips.



"What would you take for these? Steel one's pretty beat up, but the iron one has some use in it still."

**Charlotte offered the iron and steel longbows (the used ones).**

"Hehe, well. Hmm. I think, five hundred, total, for both of course."

Charlotte nodded.



"Wow, that's actually pretty reasonable! Thank you. Also, I noticed some, ah... jewelry on the shelves. What do you stock in the way of fancy baubles?"

**Charlotte sells both old bows and asks for jewelry prices.**

"Hehe, I have lots of... things. The jewelry... Heh, actually I think it will be better to just show you my... price list."

**Quote**

Restore (3/10): 700  
Element Ring: 2000  
Yotsmungand (8/20): 1600  
Steel Knife (22/30): 600  
Elixir (1/3): 500  
Angelic Cloth: 2500  
Hellfire (9/20): 1100  
Elysian Whip: 4000  
Axereaver (11/20): 1000  
Poison Crossbow (17/40): 650  
Veteran's Lance (14/20): 1400  
Energy Ring: 2400



"POISON Crossbow...?"

Charlotte was entranced. She would love to spread poison through Lady Kesselring's veins. Still... it looked a bit worn



"I'll be back. Maybe. Thanks for your time."

Charlotte headed back out toward the magic shops where she hoped Ami would be.

**Gregor decided to try the store with the helmet and gauntlet.**

The shop turned out to be armory full of spiky gauntlets, helmets, shields, and some occasional axe and hammer. Incredibly tall man, at least 7ft, with arms thicker than Gregor's neck, was standing behind the counter, with eyepatch over his left eye and several scars on his chest.

"Yes?"



"Yes, hello. I'm looking for some good lances, and hoping that you'll buy a couple of used ones. They're still in decent shape; I'm sure they could be refurbished."

The giant squinted his eyes, thinking.

"I no buy old. I sell armor. Big axes. And hammers. Yes." He spoke slowly, but even then his breath was raspy and as if the man just finished one hour run across the town.



"Well, sorry for bothering you. Have a good day."

Gregor went back outside, confused. Perhaps the **store with two crossed swords?**

The shop was weaponsmith's shop. Just behind the counter there was an anvil and at nearby pillar, various metalworking tools were hanging on small hooks. The furnace was cold, and the bearded man behind it clapped his hands and grinned widely, showing off two golden teeth.

"Aye this must be my lucky day how can I serva ya son are you looking for something particular today?" The weaponsmith spoke quickly and without pause to even breathe.



"Good morning. I have some lances to sell, and I'd like to replace them with new ones. Got anything of that nature?"

"Ah lances you say mostly I deal in swords and rapiers but I do have some pointy sticks just a warning no fancy materials I only have steel and I will gladly buy your spears too I can always melt them down after all."



"Well, okay! Can I see what you have and a list of prices?"

"Alright."

#### Quote

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Steel Sword: 300       |
| Steel Lance: 350       |
| Steel Blade: 350       |
| Steel Knife: 300       |
| Steel Spear: 400       |
| Steel Javelin: 450     |
| Steel Rapier: 400      |
| Steel Great Lance: 750 |

Gregor hesitated. Steel weapons were far more powerful than simple iron, but they came at the price of greatly increased weight and fragility. Still...they might come in handy.



"Alright. How much can you offer me for these?"

Gregor **placed his iron lance and javelin on the counter.**

The weaponsmith looked the iron lances over and then shrugged.

"I'm gonna offer ya four hundred for both of these."



"Okay, I'll sell you these, and take a Steel Lance and a Steel Javelin. Deal?"

"Deal." The weaponsmith took Gregor's weapons, the extra cash and then handed him the heavier versions of lances he sold.

Gregor happily took his purchases and went outside. To avoid a repeat of checking the wrong store, he asked a passing villagers where he could get medicine.

---

Seyena puts her Glaive, Antidote, and Concoction into storage. She probably snaps the old heal staff in half, seeing as it's nearly useless.

She goes into the shop with a Snake around Leafy Branch ~~jutsu~~ sign.

The medicine and glaive were put right into the wagon after the staff was broken with loud snap.

The moment Seyena got inside the shop she choosen, her nostrils were invaded by at least several different scents, the mix burning her nose for a moment before she adjusted to the herbal smell.

A young girl in sister's garb was sitting behind, grounding some green paste in the mortar. She looked at Seyena with a smile.

"Ah, a customer! May Sacred Snake bless your health. How can I help you?"



"Hello- do you happen to sell staves here?" Seyena asked the priestess. "Well, probably not... do you know where I can buy staves?"

"Well, that depends on what kind of staves you're looking for. I deal mostly with medicine but I have some cheaper healing staves too. You should seek Mistress Adelaide in the 'Mooncat', it's that shop with a moon and kitty on it. She has more... *interesting* staves, I hope you know what I'm talking about."



"Cheaper healing staffs are fine. Do you have a normal heal staff?"

"You mean that simplest one used by acolytes? I have three of them! Two hundred and fifty coins each."



"250 should be fine."

She prepared the required amount of gold, hopefully receiving the staff in return.

"Here you go." The young priestess gave Seyena the staff, a simple wooden stick with small blue gem on top. "Are you sure you won't need my medicine, though?"



"No, I don't need any medicine, but I have several companions who might. I'll be sure to tell them about your shop."

And with a smile and a wave, Seyena departed. She wanted to see about buying a javelin in one of the other shops, but the "Mooncat" shop interested her. She decided to check it out next.

---

After several minutes of wandering through the small town of Tunhausen, Tantallos found a small shop that was selling magical tomes. An old man, with impressively long white beard reaching his knees, was sitting behind the counter.

Given the loud snoring, he was asleep.

Tantallos looked at the man and poked him to wake him up.



"Wakey, wakey.. you have a customer."

---

**Assume that Ami go to town after Edwin's chat, check the SPELLS shop**

When Ami got to the spellbook shop, she found Tantallos poking an old man.

**Okay then Ami'll go to the Crescent moon shop.**

The inside of the shop was very dark. Two red candles on the counter lit the immediate surroundings, as well as a face of slender, pale-skinned woman with long black hair.

"I have to ask why a child like you decided to visit my shop. My wares interest mostly

assasins and shamans. And you don't look like either of those."



"I know with both an assassin and lots of shamen, I'll go get them."

### Ami: Back to the spell shop

---

The old man grumbled, snorted and licked his lips, barely opening his eyes to look at Tantallos.

"Duh, what? What storm?"



"There is no storm. I am just here to see what you are selling, any Wind tome or Dark tome? Well.. mostly Wind, you know how monks are!"

"Telling a find tome? Speak coherently young man!"



"..Hmm.. .this is going to be tough. I want a telling tome storm thing."

"Am I selling Worm tome? Son, I'm a honest scribe, I don't sell the dark magic books!"



"No dark magic hm? Lets try wind. Tome thing blizzard snow on the spine?"

Tantallos didn't even mind to talk like a crazy, after all he was a bit crazy anyway!



"Tantallos!"



"Oh! Hello, Ami, how may I help you?"

"Something about wizards and pines? Sorr young man, but I don't deal in scientific treatrises either!"





"Found a shop that sell 'dark' things. Thought you might be interested."

Tantallos shrugged and **decided to just look for any Wind book on the place.**



"Eh. I will just look for one and show this guy."

He looked back to Ami and nodded.



"Thank you for the information, I will be there as soon as I check if this shop have any wind books. Hopefully they will have something useful."

Charlotte found Ami - and Tantallos - in the magic books shop.



"Ami, I distinctly remember you being weighed down by a very large amount of gold. Do you think I could take 1,100 of that off your hands for some very deadly weaponry? I sold my busted ones, but it's not quite enough. I'll pay you back if I ever get the opportunity between now and whatever we do next."



"1,100 gold? Umm...here."

**Ami hands the money over to Charlotte.**



"Thank you Ami!"

Charlotte makes a mad dash to the fletcher.



"HI I WOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE A KILLER BOW THANK YOU HAVE THIS GOLD."

**Charlotte: Purchase Killer Bow. Leave.**

And then to the other shop.



"I WOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE YOUR POISON CROSSBOW THANK YOU  
THANKS HAVE SOME GOLD."

**Charlotte: Purchase Poison Crossbow. Leave.**

Charlotte left the pawn shop with another piece of archery weaponry.

Ami turns to the old man.



"What do you sell?"

Tantallos quickly found an single Elwind tome, as well as few copies of the lesser spell, Wind, whilst Charlotte left with Ami's money.

The old man made sure that Tantallos was busy perusing the books, and leaned toward Ami's left cheek.

"Don't tell him anything, but I'm just pulling a joke on him - he woke me up from my nap after all!" He quickly leaned back into his chair.

"What I sell? Books! It's a bookstore!"



"I see, intresting. Say, do you know where I can get a new staff."

"I don't need a staff! Try the medicine girl, she is a collector I think!" The old man winked to Ami.



"Thank you, sir."

**Ami: To the medicine girl**

Tantallos took the Elwind book and looked to the man.



"How much for this one?"

"This one? Six hundred!"

Tantallos nodded and pushed the money towards him.



"Deal."

The old man took the money and pushed the Elwind tome on the counter toward Tantallos.



"Well...now what should I do.."

### **Tantallos looks for Gregor and Chris.**

---

Seyena got inside the 'Mooncat' shop. The pale maiden behind the counter grumbled and rubbed her forehead.

"Apologies. Your holiness blinded me for a moment."

Seyena raised an eyebrow at the shopkeeper's comment.



"You must have me confused for another- I'm far from a holy person."

"Right." The woman shifted on the chair, which creaked painfully loudly.

"So why are you here? Are you looking for poison, cursed staves, books on forbidden romances, books of dark magic, or something else?"



"Yes- sorry. Which staves do you have for sale? And also, do you happen to have a Delphi Shield?"

"I've heard of that item, but never seen it. As for staves. I have one that cast poisonous cloud, one that makes the target slow, and other that puts the victim into magical sleep. I also have one that enhances magical protection.



"Oh, magic protection. Alexander and some of the others would love that."

She mutters.



"These staffs would likely be expensive. I'm going to go make another purchase, and if I have enough left, I might get that magic protection staff. Thank you for your time, miss."

Seyena departs, heading for the weaponsmith's shop.

Seyena goes inside the weaponsmith shop just as the smith was putting some iron weapons in various degrees of usage in a crate.

"Hello there young lass how can I help you today looking for some sturdy steel weapon I hope?"

Seyena regarded the weaponsmith with a smile.



"Can I buy a set of your javelins, please?"

"Of course you can why I have this set of marvelous steel javelins that I finished just yesterday so there's not a single dent on them." The man brought a small pile of javelins bound with wire.

"That will be four hundred fifty gold coins lass."



"I'll take it, thank you."

Seyena hands over the money, getting the javelins in return. She turns to leave, looking for the others.

---

A girl carrying a basket of cloth hummed at Gregor's question.

"Well this sister has a shop near the central plaza. The sign is that one with snake coiling around the branch, you can't miss it!"

Gregor thanked the local girl and went to the shop she pointed out, asking if they had any medicine to treat colds.

"Praise to Sacred Snake, another customer. And yes, I have a mix of herbs that works wonders. Just put some into warm water and drink it, it has nice, mint taste." She then stood up and took a small ceramic jar from a shelf.

"That will be eight coins."



"That should be perfect! Thank you, I'll take it." He reached for his coins, but was stopped by a sudden thought. "Do you happen to have anything that would make a nice gift? I have this friend, see, and I'd like to get her something. I just don't know what..."

"Ooh, let's see... I have some rosy perfume, and this blue eye powder... and this green paste that will smooth her skin if she has wrinkles! The perfume would be fifteen, eye powder is ten, and the paste is fifty because it's my special recipe."

Gregor stared at the array of goods, suddenly and belatedly realizing that he had no idea if Charlotte would actually like any of these things. He had never seen her use perfume or makeup, and something told him that implying she had wrinkles would simply get him punched.



"Um..do you have anything more, I don't know, practical? Or some candy, maybe?" *Dammit, what was that stuff she liked in Fezzan? Blackberry? I think it was some sort of berry...*

Ami got to medicine girl just as Gregor was pondering the purchase.

"Oh, candy? Um, no, I don't have candy. And what do you mean 'practical'? Things that enhance beauty are practical! Well... do you want some aphrodisiacs, then? I have this drink that will make her go wild and crazy for you!"

Gregor had been *about* to point out that Charlotte had never really needed such things to look beautiful...but then the shopkeeper mentioned aphrodisiacs of all things. Thankfully, his earlier conversation with Chris meant that he avoided the worst of the embarrassment.



"Now see here. I don't know what kind of "sister" you are, but that's a rather inappropriate thing to--"



"..."



"So you're that sort of guy, I see."

When Ami/Mia showed up however...well, that was a little too much to bear gracefully.



"Wha--no! This is a misunderstanding! I didn't -- I...I.."

He shut up.



"...I will buy the cold medicine, and ONLY the cold medicine. And then I will go get some fresh air." He put some coins on the counter.

The sister took the money and gave Gregor the jar.

"Well, there you go! What it will be for you, child?" She looked at Ami now.

Gregor stormed out, his face still as red as a tomato. He hadn't given up on the gift idea, but there was no way in hell he was going back there.

After a bit of wandering, Gregor decides to find some of the rest of the group...preferably not Mia or Ami.



"Ugh. Fools."

Chris finished loosening the knot and freed his hands.



"I suppose I'll probably end up having to kill every last one of them on my way out. A shame that they wouldn't listen to the truth."

He removed the spare lockpick he kept in the lining of his cloak and picked the lock. Once it clicked open, he moved into the hallway and blended into the shadows. He hadn't been one of Prixima's best for nothing - if these guards wouldn't think to check for all of his equipment, that was their own lookout.

After a few moments, Chris heard footsteps... a guard, patrolling the cells. There was a startled cry when the man noticed that, although the door of the cell was closed and locked, the prisoner was nowhere in sight. He grinned to himself as the man rushed over and flipped through the keys at his belt. Now was the time. He stepped out of the shadows, grabbed the back of the man's head, and slammed it against the bars to stun him before pulling him back into the shadows and slamming him back-first into the wall,

forearm against his throat.



"Hello there. We meet again. I expect you're not going to talk to me out of a sense of bravado, so I'll not ask you to. Instead, I'm taking your keys, but I'm leaving you your life. Be grateful I'm not actually your enemy."

He shifted around and put the guard in a choke, releasing him once he was unconscious, and took the keys from his body after checking to make sure he was still alive and breathing. He had been in his share of jails (many small village didn't like vagrants and would lock him up overnight before throwing him out in the morning), and in his experience the evidence room was always near the cells. This jail didn't disappoint him. No one was in it at the moment, and it was a simple task to retrieve his equipment from the various places it had been placed. He put the keys on the table as he left... but also grabbed the 2000 gold reward he had been promised.

Getting out without hurting anybody should have been hard to do, but he managed it... mainly because the majority of the guard (captain included) were speaking with Lord Mannan and trying to convince him they had caught a spy. He stepped out of the shadows of the corridor and threw a sarcastic little salute at the bishop and the guards.



"Ah. There you are, Lord Tunhausen. Have these incompetent louts bothered to tell you that your cousin, Lady Cadara, was killed in her own shop by a man named Vagris, and that if it wasn't for my efforts he would have gotten away with it? And as thanks for that, they accuse me of working for Prixima Kesselring and locked me up?"

He laughed as he walked past them to the exit.



"They're quite silly, aren't they? Tell them they can give me the reward money later. I have better things to do than languish in their hospitality. Oh, and the keys are in the evidence room."

He found Gregor outside not long after that and waved in greeting.



"Good to see you again, Gregor. A word of warning: the guards here still think we work for Prixima. They already tried to lock me up."

Gregor pinched the bridge of his nose and sighed.





"Please tell me you didn't kill anyone breaking out of jail?"



"I didn't use excessive force. The guy patrolling the cells is going to wake up with a headache and a sore throat, though. I imagine the lot of them are getting a lecture right about now."



"Anyway, I have a question, sort of related to what we were talking about earlier. If you could give Ami - or Mia I guess - a gift, what would you get?"



"Hmm. I suppose it depends on which one. I've noticed Ami prefers books and flowers, while Mia likes things like perfume and jewelry. The ideal gift would probably be a jeweled pendent depicting a flower."



"You're asking because you're looking for something for Charlotte. Am I right? If so, I don't know much that can help you... except that when the two of us found the Lapis Lazuli, it was hidden in a box of blueberry sweets, which we split. She seemed to enjoy them."

Gregor sighed again - but in relief this time - when Chris assured him that no-one was irreparably harmed, then listened closely. When the assassin finished, Gregor snapped his fingers in recognition, his face lighting up.



"Blueberry! *That* was the flavor!"



"Yeah, it's for Charlotte. The problem is that store over there-" he pointed to the medicinal shop "-only sells things like perfume, which I'm not sure she is interested in. I don't know if any place around here sells sweets. The only other thing I can think of is either a new bow or a necklace of some sort."





"She'll probably handle getting a new bow herself. She seems practical that way."

He thought for a moment, then put a hand on Gregor's shoulder.



"I think the best thing you can do is get her a pendent that expresses how you think of her. For example, perhaps a tiger, to represent her fierce, hunting side. Or perhaps one of a carnation flower, which if I remember correctly, in some old legends indicated love and innocence."



"A pendent, huh?"



"That does sound like a better gift than a box of sweets, though it still doesn't solve the problem of where to find some for sale."

Gregor reciprocated with a hand on Chris' shoulder, as a sign of solidarity.



"Thanks for the advice, Chris. You're pretty much the only person here I can talk with about this sort of thing, and I appreciate it."



"Hey, I'm here for you if you need me."



"Unless those guys try to lock me up again, of course!"



"Heh, you'd probably just break out again!"



"Well, that aside, want me to help you look around? I might find something I want for Ami or Mia, and I have a thousand or so on me... so if you want to borrow some, all you have to do is ask."



"Sure, that sounds good. I've still got a decent amount on me after selling my old lances, so hopefully I won't need to borrow any gold. I mean, how expensive can pendants be?"



"You would be surprised..."

Chris laughed and rubbed the back of his neck.



"I was a thief, among other things, before I became a spy. Some things could fetch quite the price to the right buyers..."



"Well, anyway. It depends how what the pendant is made out of. Simple iron or steel shouldn't be too costly, but once you get into adding gemstones or gold and silver, that's when the price can rise quite dramatically."



"Huh. I *guess* that makes sense." Gregor had never gone shopping for jewellery or other expensive gifts before, so he really had no idea what sort of prices to expect.



"Still, can't hurt to take a look. I do want to get Charlotte something nice, and that doesn't mean it has to be made of gold or encrusted with diamonds."

Chris nodded.



"Exactly right. The whole point is to get something that says 'Charlotte', not something that's expensive for the sake of being expensive."



"I know some women - and men - enjoy receiving that sort of gift but I always felt it was a little demeaning... like saying 'I don't really care about you as a person, but I want you to think I do so here's something gaudy since obviously something expensive is equal to caring'."



"I should know. I used to give Prixima expensive jewelry I 'found lying around' and I was only trying to get into her bed for a night or two."



"I gave that up maybe a month before we met. Hypocritical humor at my expense aside, what sort of thing do you think would fit Charlotte?"

---

Valor had also followed the others into town, even though his none of his weapons were in truly critical condition. Still, it might not hurt to get a backup. Obviously, he checked the store with the crossed blades first.



"Only steel? Hm. That's... unfortunate. I suppose **I'll take a steel sword.**"

Valor was handed the heavy sword after the weaponsmith got the money.

"Is there something else you want maybe this steel blade it's even more powerful than the one you bought!"



"Thank you, but no. I find precise strikes to be more useful than overwhelming force." With that, Valor left the shop, glancing around for others from the group.

Valor found Charlotte outside one of the buildings without a sign.



"Hey Charlotte." Valor said as he approached the archer. "What do you know about the thing Chris is doing?"



"I haven't been paying attention. Mostly just running from store to store. I think I robbed Ami. But it was worth it. Hey - isn't that a couple over the others over there?"

Charlotte points to the other end of the street where Gregor and Chris are talking.

---



"...I'm sorry, I know I should be focusing on the rest of what you said. But: you tried to...with *Prixima*, of all people? That's going to be a mental image I'd sooner forget." He shook his head.



"Well... you have to admit, her being a total bitch aside, she is quite attractive and she has a position of power. That and it was two years ago when I started, and frankly I made an attempt toward every female in the vicinity of Kesselring."



"It, uh, it wasn't until after I met Ami that I really started caring about people."



"...I didn't even really try to get to know Olson, and I worked with him the majority of my time in Kesselring."



"Eh, I never really saw her that way. To me, she always seemed so cold and a little cruel, even before...well, all this happened. I know some of my fellows fantasized about her though, so I guess you weren't alone in that regard."



"But you know, I'm glad you met Ami and started coming out of that shell of yours. When we first met I had no idea what to make of you; it was a little creepy to be honest. You seem more...human now, I guess would be the term."



"I'm glad I did too. It's... difficult to not act like the wise-ass lone wolf role I was used to portraying, but however hard it is to try and relate to other people, I prefer it over being alone again... but I think the only reason I've come this far is because I feel like I can trust the lot of you. That's not something I'm used to."

Chris exhaled slowly.

Gregor coughed, realizing that he might be making Chris uncomfortable.



"Anyway, I think it'd be best to see what they have in stock first. We probably won't be able to wait around long enough for a custom piece to be made, assuming it was even halfway affordable."



"Anyway, you're right. Look first, plan later. But if you could get something made, what would it be?"



"Well, we know what you'd get for Ami and/or Mia. For Charlotte...maybe a copper chain with a gemstone the color of her eyes. I'm afraid I'm not very good with imagery, so none of that."



"That sounds good. Simple. I think it suits a girl like her. To me, she doesn't seem the type to prefer the ornate although I could be wrong."



"That's what I'm hoping. From what she's told me and from what I overheard, she's never really had a keepsake of her own except for her memories and that Dragonstone she feels she must protect. I think she deserves to receive a gift from

someone close to her, is all. Come on, let's go find a store. Sounds like we both have something to get."



"It shouldn't be too hard to find that sort of store around here. Let's go."

Chris fell into step behind Gregor.

---

Deciding that it would be nice to take a break from the dusty tomes, Edwin decides to walk into town. The cold didn't even faze one such as him, and the snow simply melted and evaporated before him as he walked, so he could make good time into town.

### **Edwin heads to town and searches for a store that sells tomes.**

Edwin quickly found a small bookstore. The elderly man with impressively long beard behind it was yawning.

Edwin approached and nodded to the man.



"Hello. I'm looking into buying and selling some tomes. What fire based magic tomes do you have?"

The old man pointed the mage at the bookshelf behind Edwin.

"Help yourself, youngling."



"Thank you."

### **Edwin searches for Anima tomes, keeping an eye out for a Gotoh tome.**

There were a single Fire tome, one Elfir, two Singes, a Meteor tome, four Winds, two Thunders and two Elthunders. Unfortunately there was no Gotoh tome.

Edwin picks up the Meteor tome and brings it over to the man.



"How much for this?"

The old man looked closely at the tome for a moment.

"Two thousand!"



"Huh. And how much will you buy this?" Edwin says as he plonks his Elfire tome onto the bench.



"Pristine condition. You won't get any better unless you make a new one from scratch."

"Hmm, it does look like it's fairly new book. Well then, six hundred coins will be a fair price."



"I see. I'm looking for a specific tome in particular, a Gotoh tome. Do you know where I can get one?"

The old man scratched his balding hair and then rubbed his beard, thinking heavily.

"I think there should be copy in Great Library of Horenn!"

Edwin deadpanned at the man.



"Of course. I WAS hoping you'd know where I could BUY a copy, or at least know someone who would?"

"I told you! There's a copy at Horenn!"

Edwin blinked in surprise.



"I didn't know you could buy the books out of a library. Can you tell me where this library is? Also, I'm looking for some... offensive magical staves. Any idea where I could get any?"

"Are you out of your mind, son? Where does 'Great Library on Horenn' can be? In Horenn of course! As for darker magic and cursed staves, as that witch in her shop. It's the one with crescent moon on the sign."





"Hey, I've got a lot on my mind lately. But thanks for the help."

**Edwin: Replace the book and go look for that staff shop and see what they have in stock.**

The darkness of the shop contrasted with the paleness of the grim lady behind it. The slender woman leaned into her chair and looked at Edwin.

"Yees?"



"I was wondering what kind of stock you have in magical staves, particularly the more... offensive magics."

"At the moment, I have four staves. One casts poison, other sleep, the third slows the target, and the fourth one enhances one's resistance against magic."



"I'd like a listing of the prices for all of those staves. I'm undecided on which one to get..."

"The one slowing enemies is for three hundred, sleep and poison casting staves for four hundred, and the barrier staff is for one thousand."

**Edwin: Go sell my fire tome back at the book shop, keeping my Elfire tome. Then go borrow money from my teammates until I get 800 gold. Then buy a poison staff and a sleep staff.**



"Oh. Well, if you need some money, then here you go."

Chris handed his 300 over to Edwin.

Edwin got his staves. He is finally happy.



"What do you have in staffs?"

"Oh, well, I have a pair of simple heal staves, one of the stronger ones, plus a soothe staff. And I think I have a poison healing, or maybe two, in the back room."





"So what their cost and any value in this staff or should I just chuck it?"

The priestess took the staff and stared intently at the gem on top.

"Um, the magic is almost gone. This is basically a walking stick. As for my prices, two hundred and fifty for the heal and antidote staves, four hundred for soothing one, and six hundred and fifty for Mend."

**Ami: Toss Iron mace and iron axe into the storage. Buy two heals, an antidote, the sooth and mend for 1800 gold. Put sooth, anti and one of heal into storage.**

The sister took the money and handed out the staves, her eyes shining at the coins.

"My, maybe I should atake a staff creating course and make some extras... this is far more cash than I get for my herbal mixtures!"

---

There was a jeweller shop far from the plaza, at the corner of two roads.

Inside, a greying man with many wrinkles was sitting behind the counter, and the shelves behind him had many kinds of jewelry - copper, silver, even golden pieces. Rarely any of them was encrusted with jewels.

"How can ya help ya?"



"Good morning. I'm looking for a pendant necklace or an amulet of some sort. Can I see what you have available?"

"Oh yes, of course I do have them! I have copper and silver neckales, and a gold plate amulet, do you want with some sort of metalwork decorations, or maybe jewels, or just smooth metal will do?"



"Copper. Definitely copper." The metal was almost a mix of Charlotte's hair color and the color of the Tiger's Eye. It was perfect. "As for the rest..."



"Hmm... I'm afraid I don't know much about gems. Got anything sort of purple in color?"

"Well, I have few copper necklaces, but it's rare to adorn the metal with gems. As for

purple, how about maethyst? It's neither expensive nor cheap, I had take a piece and add it to a necklace. What shape it should be?" The jeweller then looked at Chris, letting Gregor think.



"What do you have in the way of rings?"

"Simple metal bands, ornate rings and signets, with or without gemstones? Is it for your girlfriend, or a random lady? Or are you looking for a simple wedding ring?"



"Er, well, not a wedding ring. Not yet, anyway..."



"Right. What about a silver ring with a red gemstone?"



"It's...rare? Why, is there some problem with doing that?"

"I have a silver ring with small, round cut of rose quartz, polished. If you want something more expensive, I have the same ring, just with ruby in the place of quartz. As for copper and gems, I just find it hard to properly embed the gem into piece of copper."

Chris ~~looks up Rose Quartz on Google~~ considers his options.



"Hmm. The rose quartz is pretty, but I'll go for the ruby. How much is it?"



"Oh. I see."



"In that case, would it be possible to maybe hang a gem from a hole drilled in it? Sort of like this? That way you wouldn't need to worry about embedding it or whatever."

Gregor snatched up a nearby quill and drew a quick sketch of what he was picturing in his head.

"The one with ruby will be one thousand coins." The jeweller then took the paper with sketch and let out a hum.

"I see. Yes, I can do that. It will cost you five hundred coins. It will be ready by tomorrow."



"Sure thing. Here."

Chris handed over the money and took the ring.



"Do you know of a pawn shop nearby? I have an old dagger I'd like to sell."

"Err, there is one near the medicine shop. It has no sign. I think it will be... if you leave my shop, it will be the door on the left from medicine shop. Yes, I think that's that."

Gregor ~~checked Google image search~~ considered his options, and found a triangular amethyst that reminded him of an arrowhead. Perfect.



"This one, please. Should I pay now, or when I come pick it up?"

"You can pay tomorrow."



"Thank you, sir! I'll be back tomorrow!"

Gregor walked out of the shop, feeling happier than he had in days, and decided to rejoin the group. But first he would wait for Chris; it seemed like the polite thing to do.

**Riven looks around for jewelry or other shiny baubles for sale.**

There was a small jewelry shop at a corner of two roads. Riven got there just in time to see Gregor and Chris enter it.

After a brief search, Tantallos spotted the two down the road, entering a shop at the corner. A bit farther, he noticed Riven standing and looking at the very same shop.

Riven stopped to look at Gregor on her way into the shop.



"Oh? You look happy. They have what you want?"

Gregor looked at the dark magic woman, surprised by her sudden appearance.



"I guess you could say that. It won't be ready until tomorrow, but the castle isn't far from here so its not so bad. You looking for something as well?"



"Nothing in particular. But I don't need much, and I do like pretty things, so I figured I'd see what they had."



"But I'm curious what you're up to. New monocle?" she asked jokingly.



"Heh. No, nothing like that."



"It's actually a surprise present for someone...I'd, uh, appreciate it if you didn't mention I was here."



"Hey, Riven."

Chris exited the shop and waved at the woman.



"If you guys stick around, I'll be right back."



"Ah, hello."

She turned to Gregor as Chris left.



"He seems to be in a good mood too! Ooh, was he getting something for Ami?"

Gregor waved at Chris as he passed to indicate that he would sit tight, then turned back to Riven.



"You'd have to ask him. He might want it to be a surprise as well."



"Aaaaaaah, I see. I'll keep quiet about it, then. Hehe."

---

Chris entered the pawn shop.



"Let's get down to brass tacks. I have a perpetually poisoned dagger I'd like to get rid of. I've got some use out of it, but it's still in quite good condition."

The short, nervous man looked at Chris, and extended his hand.

"Can I have a look?"



"Sure."

Chris handed it over.

The pawn shop owner pulled the blade from it's sheath, looked at it from both sides, and then looked at Chris for a brief moment... before putting the blade back in the sheath.

"Three hundred coins."



"Fair enough. We have a deal."

Chris collected his money and went back outside to Gregor and Riven.



"So, what are the pair of you discussing?"



"Special surprises for special someones, apparently. Did you want me to keep quiet about you being here too?"

Chris thought about it.



"...Nah, I don't mind if Ami and Mia know I bought something for them."

He showed her the ring.



"What do you think?"



"Oooh, I'll bet she'll like that. Very... fitting, somehow. Not quite sinister, but with a touch of cold power, perhaps?"



"How much was it, by the way?"



"A thousand. I worry that maybe it's a bit too expensive for a first gift..."

Chris sighed and rubbed the back of his neck.



"Oh my, you really don't play around. Fitting for an assassin, I guess."



"Hm. As for whether it's too expensive... well, what does this gift feel like to you?"



"Well... it's a gift because I like Ami and Mia and want to be around her. I guess I won't tell her how much it cost."



"I'd prefer it if she didn't feel obligated to be around me just because of this."



"...Does that make any sense?"

He seemed worried about it.



"Yes, and that sounds like a perfect gift, then. So long as she agrees on what it means, you shouldn't have any problems."



"All right. Thanks, Riven. That helps a lot."

It was reassuring to hear that from a woman, who would undoubtedly have a better perspective on what another woman would think about something than he did.



"I'm glad to hear that."

Gregor checked the position of the sun, trying to determine what time it was.

The sun was rather high, but it was still a bit away from reaching the highest point of it's journey today.



"Well, I'm done with my shopping, until tomorrow at least. Riven, you want us to wait for you while you check the store out or will you be fine?"



"Oh, I'll be fine. If you don't want to watch me gawk over gemstones there's no reason to hang around."

**Riven enters jewelry store, asks what they have.**

"Gemstones, you say, young lady? Well, I don't sell gemstones alone. Only as part of the jewelry I make personally."



"Oh, that's fine. Have anything in purple and gold?"

"Why, yes! I have a bracelet encrusted with spherically shaped amethysts of various size. I also have a pair of golden chain earrings with diamond cut garnet. Also a small necklace, with a tanzanite cube locked in an enlarged chain piece. I can also make you something else, but that might take a day or two."



"I suspect I'll be here a while, so that shouldn't be too much of an issue."



"Ah, but could I see the bracelet and the necklace? And anything in gold and red, while we're at it?"

"Unfortunately, at the moment I don't have any golden jewelry with red gems." The man then unlocked one of the cabinets, took out a small box, unlocked it as well, and then pulled out the bracelet. Beside what he described, the bracelet had golden leaves sprouting around each of the embedded gemstones.

Then the man also brought Riven the necklace. It was as he described, but the tanzanite's size was large, it was almost as large as someone's eye.





"Ooooooooooh. How much are they?"

"The bracelet is one thousand and two hundred coins. I've priced the necklace at one thousand and five hundred, but I've made it half a year ago and still nobody bought it, so I'm willing to sell it as low as for full thousand gold."



"Oh my. I'll have to think about that. Until next time, then."

**Riven: Leave jewelry shop. Search around for impoverished urchins that nobody would miss.**

---

Gregor shrugged and went back to the rest of the group. Even with the price of the necklace, he still had some gold that perhaps someone could use.

Charlotte ran up to Gregor's side from out of pretty much nowhere. She seemed to have come from a side street.



"THERE you are! I've been looking all over the place for the rest of the group. Did we even set up a time and place to meet back up before we headed off to camp?"

Gregor jumped and nearly fell down from shock. She was really rather good at sneaking up on him!



"Oh! Um. No, I don't think we did. Oops."

Charlotte turned around in a circle a couple of times.



"Great. Now Valor's gone off somewhere. He, too, was here just a moment ago. Anyway, did you find something you wanted? I certainly did."

She jostled her somewhat elaborate backpack-esque gear, making her three new, deadly bows clatter together.



"I just got a couple of lances and some medicine for Olison. Nothing fancy."

He indicated the new lance and javelin strapped to his back. At the same time, he sent a fervent, silent prayer to the Divine Dragon or Critzacoatl or whoever would listen that Charlotte didn't see the jewelery store.



"Hey, Charlotte. How's it going?"



"You're the one who ran off, not me." Valor said, tromping up behind Charlotte. "Shame about the weapon shop, I'm partial to iron gear myself." Valor said, indicating his newly purchased weapon.



"Hey Valor. You too, huh?"



"Hey Valor."

Chris waved to the new arrival as well.



"Well, it was either this or practice with my sword all day. Again. For the I don't know how manyeth day in a row." Valor sounded a bit bitter. "All gonna be worth it, eventually."



"Well, I was actually referring to your preference for iron weapons. But it's good to see you out and about."



"Ah. I see. Feeling lonely, Valor? Or just bored?"



"More pissed than anything else, really." Valor said, his expression turning sour. "I am going to destroy that woman."

Chris nodded.



"I can understand that. But you shouldn't let anger take all the joy out of your life. You should relax. Find something fun to do for a bit and take your mind off of things until you get a chance to eliminate PRIXIMA."



"For example, I'm trying to put together a small party for this evening. Food, drink, storytelling, sleeping out under the stars, that sort of thing. You could look around for someone to take to it."



"You want to go sleep outside in the dead of winter." Valor said, more than asked. Eventually he sighed. What the hell, he was closer to these people than anyone else he knew. Spending some time not simmering in hatred might be good for him. Maybe.



"I dunno, I guess it would depend on who was coming."



"I think we *all* want to bring PRIXIMA down. Don't worry Valor, I doubt anyone here would try to stop you...though some may want to take the shot themselves."



"But Chris is right, you should try to relax a little. Last time I saw the list, it was just Chris, Charlotte, and I, but I'm not sure if anyone else saw the notice. I'm sure more people would be interested if they knew about it."



"I left a sheet in the main hall for people to sign if they're interested, since I'd be in town and couldn't talk to them."

He tilted his head to the side.



"You know, Seyena might like to go. She might've even signed already. You should ask her the next time you see her."

Chris was certainly an underhanded bastard.

Valor reddened visibly.



"Uh, well, you know, maybe. I guess it couldn't hurt to ask."



"I need to ask Ami, myself. Maybe Tantallos and Olison, too, but I don't know if the latter's feeling up to it. Gregor picked up some medicine for him."

Chris leaned on the nearest wall.



"While we're talking about it, what sort of alcohol do you prefer? Ale, mead, wine...?"



"Alcohol? Doesn't that Cloud The Mind and Upset The Body's Natural Humors?" Valor asked, without a trace of irony. "I usually have boiled water..."



"Some people believe that. I subscribe to the belief that it makes one relax. I don't drink often myself, but I can safely say I've never had a bad time after imbibing."

Valor considered this. Chris usually seemed to have the group's best interest at heart.



"I suppose it couldn't hurt to try."



"Excellent. I think I'll go with wine for you then. It's a more flavorful drink in my opinion."



"So is there any more shopping that really needs to get done? I'm ready to head to the forest if not."



"One last thing to do. We have to get the drinks - which I'll take care of - and then we have to gather everyone together at the gates. You can go ahead if you're ready, though."



"Shouldn't we look around for some of the others first? Just to see if they want to go?"

After a bit of searching, Seyena rode up to the group.



"Is everyone done already?"



"Oh, hi Seyena. Yeah, it looks like everyone is pretty much done." Valor turned red again, but not quite so noticeably as before. "Uh, did you hear about the sort of campout party Chris is organizing? I was wondering if you were going..."



"A campout? No, I haven't heard of it."



"I'd have no complaints with doing one, seeing as how that's what we do most of the time on the road."

---

Seeing no one besides a sheet of paper on a pillar, Salvatore gives it a look.



"Seems Chris got ah plan goin', some cook out 'er somethin'. Ain' got ah clue where the others are though, any idea? Seems most o' 'em jus' up an' vanished." The man wondered to Alex as he gave a glance around the common area.

After a moment, Ormm lazily followed them, having lagged behind to soak up a bit more heat from the fire before finally deciding to get up and going.



"They're gone shopping."



"...Shoppin'?" Sal paused for a bit, before laughing. "Darn, 'ey don' wait 'round do 'ey? Hah, seems we're playin' catch up then. Any place yah wanna see, thin' yah wanna do? Heh, even jus' stretchin' the legs would be noice in mah opinion, don' much loike bein' cooped up in ah keep fer so long." With that, Sal started to lazily make his way to town with Ormm following behind him.



"Could go for a drink."



"Heh, Oi'm not much fer drinks mahself, gave tha' up long ago..." The wyvern rider spoke before trailing off, stopping just between the castle and the town as if something occurred to him.



"Yah know, since yer 'ere Oi think Oi should teach yah an' ole Berebian tradition, ta honor yer toime 'ere. Yah see, where Oi'm from yah had ta earn yer drinks, give 'em somethin' ta boast about instead o' loutin' 'round wit' their heads in ah mug,

an' Oi think if'in yah want ah drink yah should earn it." The man audibly cracked his knuckles as he wheeled around, his grin widening, then pointing a finger at the heavily armored man following him.



"Yah didn' punch me all tha' toime ago, an' Oi think yah still got ah few thin's ta work out, an' what better way than ah good 'ole fashion brawl, yeah? Come'on, yah'll enjoy it, s'all good fun! Oi wanna see if'in yer as tough ah nut ta crack as Oi've been hearin'! 'Sides, drinks always taste better after yah've had ah few cracks ta the head, ahahaha!" The man gave a good natured laugh as he put up his fists in a fighting stance, bouncing from his left to his right foot in a faux fist fighting manner, a wide smile still adorning his face.

Ormm, for the wyvern's part, was simply confused at the turn of events.



"Heh, you know what?"

Alexander grabbed the helmet hanging just below his neck on the back of his armor, and put it onto his head, seeing as Salvatore still had his helmet on.



"Why not. Let's go."

Alexander proceeded to take less of a traditional fist fighting stance than he raised his arms to protect his face and imitated a wall.



"Tch, not givin' the first blow then huh? Foine then, have it yer way hahaha!" Salvatore gave another laugh, giving a small shake as if preparing his body for quick movement after nine days of nothing. This will get him back up to speed.

Pushing off his back leg, he lunged forward at Alexander, his body facing the man sideways with his left side facing the man and his right arm reared back. The man stomped on the snow covered dirt and pivoted off of it, twisting his right side forward along with his fist rapidly moving towards the large man.

If Salvatore hadn't been charging, the punch would have very simply bounced straight off of Alexander's armor. However, he was; this added momentum, though it failed to get past Alexander's wrists, did knock one arm out of the way; and Alexander promptly decided to leave the hole in his defense to go for an uppercut with said arm.



There was a very solid **clank** sound as Alex's gauntlet impacted with Sal's chest plate, said man giving an 'oof' and scooting back a bit from a mixture of the blow and him being off balanced from the previous charge. The man quickly tried to capitalize on the added space however by throwing another fierce blow towards the heavily armored man, trying to aim for his chest to hopefully wind the man a bit.

The absurdly thick metal plate armor around Alexander's chest did its job well, and with the defensive capability that stops arrows, nicely spread the force around so that the punch became akin to a simple tap. This left Alexander open to throw another punch- something he did, aiming for the side of the head with a left hook.

Well, that had much less effect than the man was anticipating. The incoming blow however was something he was expecting however, although he was hoping it would of been more wild. Raising his arm to try to deflect the blow, it came too slow to fully knock it off course, but enough to where it hit the man's helmet at an angle instead of directly. Another clank, this time very loud to the man who just got socked.



**"Ey weren' lying about yer armor Oi see now, haha!"** The man spoke as he blinked the stars out and moved backwards quickly, then rushing at the knight with his right shoulder leading in an attempt to tackle/slam into the man to knock him off balance. He's gonna need to fight unconventional if punches aren't gonna do it after all.

The weight of Salvatore in armor was enough to send Alexander staggering backwards and back onto the defense, as he raised his arms in front of his face again.

Salvatore kept on the offensive after recovering from the slam himself, moved to stay on the initiative with Alexander. He flew both arms out towards the man's face, but instead of punches they were attempting to grapple the man's arms away from his head and off to the sides, trying to keep them away while Sal is obviously preparing to attempt a headbutt as his next attack.

Alexander's arms may have been pinned; but his legs were certainly not, and carrying the weight they did, his legs had grown quite strong. And as such, Alexander attempted to knee Salvatore in the stomach to get him off.

The knee connected with Sal's breastplate, sending the man backwards away from the knight, him having let go of the man's arms, and almost falling backwards from putting himself off center with his preparations of the headbutt. Regaining his balance, he looked the knight over with his grin still present on his face. Being on the constant offensive and trying to keep his initiative however is starting to take its toll, and Alex is obviously well versed in defending himself so the effort hasn't been for much gain. Time for a change of tactics.

The wyvern rider put up his fists in a defensive stance as he awaited the knight's offense.





"Jus' keeps gettin' interestin', don' it?"



"It sure does."

With that, Alexander moved forwards, balling up his hands together and coming with a downwards double-fisted hammer blow.

Salvatore saw the blow coming and, in keeping with his continuation of slightly unorthodox tactics against the knight since more conventional are lacking, the rider stepped forwards towards the knight and into the blow to intercept it early. There was a clang and pain as Alex's lower forearm smashed into the rider's shoulder. Better than the alternative at least, and a possible opening...

Salvatore gave a swing at the knight's head with his other arm, the one who's shoulder didn't just get whacked, with a mean hook. He knows he's probably going to regret getting this close, but may as well exploit it while he can.

Finally Alexander actually seriously took a hit, taking a gauntlet directly to the face. This caused him to rear backwards, and in an act of desperation go for a body slam. With all his armor.

Hah, a good hi-



"**This is gonna hu**"-**CLRACK!** While the wyvern rider might debatably be stronger than the knight, he can't exactly hold a candle to the man's armor, size, or endurance, and with momentum and a distracted opponent what happened next wasn't exactly unexpected.

If anyone ever wondered what a man might look like if thrown by some strange force, Salvatore would have solved that wonder in that moment, Ormm's eyes tracking its rider and his arc. There was a loud thud as the man hit the snowy ground, landing on his back. Sal laid there for a moment, dazed, before he pushed himself in a sitting position, looking at Alex. Then promptly busted out laughing.



"**Ahahaha, well Oi'll be damned, tha was ah good hit! Knocked me clean off mah feet! Think yer the only other thin' ta get me in the air 'sides Ormm 'ere!**" The man joked in a good nature, before seeing his helmet laying on the ground in front of him. His smile quickly disappeared.

The rider quickly grabbed it and slammed it back on his head, paused for a second before coughing.



"Roight, think yah won tha bout... Eh... Don' tell the others, yeah?"

---

Olison took in a breath, a clear one this time.



"...Better." He muttered as he pulled himself up off the bed. His head was still feverish and his throat still dry, but overall he was feeling plenty stronger. Renewed, he pulled his armor back on and filed out into the castle halls.

Olison found himself in the barely lit halls, as the **evening** was upon the world, the moon shyly peeking from behind the horizon. It was rather quiet if not for Mannan, staring at the sky and sipping something from a mug. After a moment, he looked toward Olison.



"Good evening. I thought everyone from Gregor's group is at the camp site thing of their."

Olison barely noticed Mannan to the side as he walked the halls, but on recognizing his voice he immediately stood at attention.



"Lord Tunhausen." Olison stated plainly, returning to his regular stance, "Camp site? So that's what's occupying them, I was about to search for them myself."

Olison remained silent a few moments more, perusing the view outside a nearby window.



"Hm, and I just finished reading the letters and reports. I just hope that they won't loiter too long at that camp, or worse, get drunk too much. If certain letter arrives tonight, I will need a small unit of bravados tomorrow morning."



"Olison, may I ask a honest question and await a honest answer?"

Olison nodded curtly.



"I was never employed for dishonesty, I will answer as such."

Mannan looked at the stars and took a sip of his drink.



"Are you a Berebian?" Mannan's eyes glaced at Olison.



"I do not wish to pry into your past. I am merely curious, because I couldn't get any information about you from anyone else in the group. Well, besides the 'he is a knight who served Prixima for a while'. So?"

Olison's eyes narrowed, but he remained civil in his tone.



"I am, though it is not something I am particularly enthusiastic to say."



"As I have suspected. I would say 'welcome home', but you don't seem to be enjoying the stay that much. A grudge against your homeland?" Mannan turned to face Olison and look at his face.



"You don't have to worry about the length of your stay here. After reading today's reports from my... friends, I've decided that in a month or so, my only option will be to attack Prixima like my father did. After that, of course if we are not horribly massacred by her hired thugs and veteran soldiers, I'm going to let you all go your way."

Olison sharply exhaled.



"I wonder just how much her forces have recovered in the interim. After the last attack, her forces were in shambles. But, given how easily she conned the other mercenaries and I, I doubt finding new help will be much challenge..."

Olison pondered the thought for a few moments before recalling something else.



"Lord Tunhausen, if I may, do you know anything recent of House Ferwelk?"



"Ferwelk?" Mannan looked at the sky, rubbing on his chin a bit.



"Oh, Ferwelk. Well, Lord Ferwelk died this summer, then his eldest son died from flu few weeks later. Their riches and holdings dwindled to almost nothing. I don't know where Lady Ferwelk and her second son are now. Presumably moved to a smaller estate. Lots of misfortune fallen onto Ferwelks in last half a year. That's what I know about them, I don't really keep an eye on the eastern houses. Why do you ask, though?"

Olison's eyebrows raised on the news.



"...I didn't expect the old man to last much longer, but his son dead from flu so soon? I thought he was stronger..." He muttered as he briefly turned away, but just as quickly he turned back, "Apologies. I was a former servitor to House Ferwelk, it's a shame that such misfortune has befallen them." Olison made a slight bow, "My thanks."



"Wait a moment. If you served Lord Ferwelk, how come you ended with Prixima? From what I heard, Ferwelk isn't one to... let people go that easily." Mannan looked into his mug and then at Olison.



"Fancy some mint water? I have enough in my office."

Olison peered warily at the mug, but nonetheless nodded.



"Yes, thank you. Perhaps I could use some to help this parched throat."

Mannan nodded and then led Olison to an office in the one of the highest owers. When they've entered the office, it was dimly lit by few candles. Papers and letters and envelopes were piled at one side of the large desk, and in the shadows of the room one could see a cabinet and a table, and an armour stand in the corner.

Mannan moved to the table in the shadows, grabbed a mug and poured some water from the pitcher, before handing it to Olison.



"I would offer alcohol, but I'm allergic to fermented beverages. My apologies."

Mannan then sat behind the desk with a heavy sigh.



"Olison, when you leave my service, where will you go?"

Olison gratefully accepted the mug.



"Again, thank you. And I certainly am in no condition for alcohol at the moment." He lifted the mug below his nose, giving it a careful sniff before lowering it, "As to where I will go? Fate never agrees with plans. I can only plan so far as my intent, and as always, I will go where there are people who need my help."



"Never considered going back under someone's banner?"



"More often than not, service to lords has only served to have me used and

dispatched with a bounty on my head." Olson swirled the water in the mug around for a moment. "I mean no offense, but I've come to believe I perform better under my own guidance."



"I see. I wonder if Gregor will be willing to stay in my keep..." A knock on the door interrupted Mannan's pondering. He leaned into his chair and looked at Olson.



"Come in!" A man in dark clothes went inside, bearing no markings on his clothes. He bowed slightly toward Mannan and approached the desk, handing him a note, completely ignoring Olson. After another bow, the man left the room and closed the door as Mannan began to read the paper with much attention.

Olson intently studied the man as he moved in and out of the room. When he left, Olson finally took a sip from the mug.



"Your 'friends', I presume."

Mannan smiled, but didn't stop reading the note.



"Honestly, if we didn't have both terrain and the harsh weather on our side to which Meneleans aren't used to, we would be crushed by them long ago. Their tactics and skill are far better than ours. So of course, we have to employ more 'subtle' types of units..." Mannan trailed off again, reading the bottom of the paper.

---

A roaring campfire illuminated a patch of woods not far from Castle Tunhausen. The day had been a good one, full of hunting for dinner, snowball fights, and other assorted fun activities. Now however, with the sun going down and the cold setting in, it was time to calm down a little and enjoy the evening.



"...and then, just when the man thought he was safe..."



"THE THREE-EYED WITCH OF DEYNASTIA STOOD BEFORE HIM AND STOLE HIS SOUL!"



"..." Valor coughed slightly. "Was that supposed to be scary or something?"



"No, I don't think so, maybe it's a joke, though I don't quite get it. Nobles usually have an odd sense of humor."



"Of course! It totally scared me when I first heard it! when I was 8..."



"Well, whatever." Valor took another drink from the bottle Chris had handed him earlier. A pleasant, warm sensation was already moving through his chest. "I remember once, I saw this play. It was about this lost prince, who grew up as a street urchin, and he finds a magical lamp that contains a wish granting creature called a genie. He learns of his true parentage, confronts the Grand Vizier, and wins his kingdom back before wishing the genie free. It was really good." Valor takes another pull on the drink. "I wish an acting troupe had been snowed in with us."



"Well, you know what they say: If wishes were fishes..."

He sipped at a cup of some sort of beverage. He would have preferred tea in this kind of weather, but Chris had somehow managed to lose all drinks that weren't in some way alcoholic. Still, at least it kept the chill away.



"Who's next up to tell a story?"



"Oh! Oh! I have one. It is about the large soul-eating larva of the dead forest!"



"What is it with you guys and soul-removal tonight?" Valor asked, an eyebrow



escalating.



"Does something like that actually exist?"



"Hey, I'm just telling stories that are supposed to be scary. Tantallos here is the dark magic guy...person who does vampire magic, so ask him."



"Looks like the swordman person does not like to hear about soul removal. And actually it does exist! Come on, you saw revenants and skeletons, so I do not think you would doubt about its existence."



"According to the stories, there was a summoner that lived on the depths of a forest, and he wanted to reach another level of power, the same way there were dark druids, he wished to reached another level of power.. like a "dark summoner". So he spent years draining life from that forest in a attempt to summon a large and powerful monster, but the spell did not work the way he expected.

Tantallos moved his hands up and began to create a ball made of dark energy in front of him while he kept telling the story.



"Yes.. there was really a monster, it was powerful! But the sacrifice was big, the monster was actually the summoner! He became his own creation! And he turned into a mindless creature, just looking for energy to keep himself alive.. that is how the forest died.. and he needed to find another way to live.. **draining souls from those who dared to move close to the forest!**



"Is not it fun?!"



"The scariest part is that you call it *fun*."





"But, I've always figured that revenants were created by using magic to reanimate bodies. Nothing to do with souls. But then again, I'm not a magician."



"...what she said."



"Why would I not call it fun? It is fun to see how far people go to get more power. And revenants actually are brought to life with magic.. but it is said their souls are forced into those bodies again, like a prison stopping them from being free. That is why I told you I want to put a end to those skeletons and revenants wandering around, besides them being dangerous, they can also be countless souls locked onto those bodies, without even being able to move at their own will, just watching the cruelty those mindless bodies are doing."



"Just, stuck in the bodies? That's... that's actually terrifying. It would be horrible to suffer that fate."



"Why do you think I have a deep hate for that kingdom that used monks and bishops to attack the Plague Dragon? They are not only making the living suffer, they are also making those who were supposed to sleep in peace suffer!"



"Hey hey, Mister Forsaken. We came out here to relax a bit, not stir up old - or new - hatreds."

Gregor thought for a moment.



"How about this: if you be anywhere in the world right now, where would you go? Anyone?"

Seyena briefly considered the question.



"Well, Deynastia, probably. I've never been there, and I've heard they have great, exotic food."



"There's also the Ys Duchy, with magic schools or something."



"Both good choices!"



"It's not that I didn't believe in it, I just wondered why that seemed to be on two story telling minds is all. Just a bit of a weird coincidence, I thought." Valor took another drink from the bottle. It was emptying rapidly. "As for where I'd like to go, I'd appreciate the chance to attend Prixma's funeral. So's I can *piss on her grave*." Valor's expression soured momentarily once again before he forced a smile. "Okay, someone do a story again, but no monsters or shit. Make it a happy story. With a princess."



"Huh? Story time?"



"I think I have one. It was one of my favorite stories growing up."

Gregor proceeded to tell the tale of Lyndis, a young woman raised as a nomad on the plains of what is now Berebia. She lived a simple life until she learned of her true heritage as the daughter of a noble king. The king was very ill and desperately searching for his lost and only heir, but her scheming uncle was seeking her out in order to kill her and take his place on the throne. Together with her brave companions, Lyndis managed to defeat her uncle's treasonous plots and reunite with her father, who was so happy to see her again that he recovered from his illness. The two lived happily together for many years catching up on lost time, and when her father passed away peacefully Lyndis became the queen of her lands, ruling with honor and compassion.

Chris took a drink.



"A bit late on it, but I was thinking it over. If I could be anywhere in the

world right now... I would go into the past and be there at the defeat of Gor-Tah. It is the most important event in history, and I would like to see it with my own eyes."



"If we're limited to the present, then I'm fine with right here and now."

He took a drink.



"I have the sudden urge to challenge you all to Truth or Dare. But we can do another story if you'd like."



"I have more ghost stories, but they're actually worse than the last one...so I have nothing."



"I must be the only one who likes terrible stories, then."

Gregor took another drink.



"What is this stuff, anyway?"



"This? Just claret. I figured I would save the 'heavier' drinks for when some of us are ready for them."

He subtly indicated Valor with a tilt of his head. The poor guy was already halfway to drunk off his arse.



"Well, anyway. I don't have a story so much as trivia. I can't say if it's true or not."

Chris stopped leaning back against the log he was using as a backrest and moved closer

to the fire. Once there, he started roasting a marshmallow.



"I've heard tell that when Menelus and Bereb revolted against Deynastia, there was a certain incident in which a Deynastian deserter managed to capture a lot of gold from Deynastian forces. A Berebian helped him hide it."



"That night, the Berebian threw a party in his village, to celebrate spiting the Deynastians. The celebrations went on well into the early morning, and as this Berebian was going home, he came across three horsemen on a bridge. He offered them a drink from what he had left, but these men were fervent Deynastian supporters, and they killed him when he wouldn't tell them where the gold had been hidden."



"The odd thing is that apparently if you go to this bridge on the anniversary of that party, that Berebian's ghost is still there, still celebrating spiting the Deynastians. I've heard he even still hands out drinks."

The marshmallow had caught fire. Chris quickly pulled it back and extinguished it.



"Too bad no one ever discovered where the gold was, although I'd like to know the day in which you could meet this spirit."

He ate the marshmallow.



"OOH! OOH! TRUTH OR DAAAARE!"

Charlotte, still sitting next to Gregor on a log, finally looked up from her second drink of the night.



"Don't worry, Gregor. I thought your ghost story wash predy scary. *Tantallos had the scariest though...*"



"Sure thing, Charlotte."

Chris placed his empty bottle on the ground near her.



"You spin it first, and then whoever it points at is who you ask for a Truth. If they don't want to answer the question, they have to take a Dare. Sound fair enough?"

Charlotte nods to Chris.



"Sounds cool."

SPIN! The bottle spins around on a small, chopped-up tree trunk. Charlotte watches it with excitement. When it finally stops, it points to... SEYENA!



"Ooh, how fun! So, Seyena... what's the most embarrassing thing you've ever done?"

She clasped her hands evilly.

Chris looked over at Seyena as he retrieved another bottle from his cloak. This might be good.

Gregor, meanwhile, eyed the bottle warily. He had heard of this game but never played it himself. Who knew what might happen?



"Keep in mind, it's Seyena's turn to spin and ask next..."



"Once, I fell from Ilya when I was being taught more aggressive flying closer to the ground."



"That in itself is pretty normal, but the embarrassing part is how I landed on a swordsman sparring below. He was fine, save for a few bruises, but I had a broken arm." And she shrugs. "I don't have many good stories."

And with that, she picks up the bottle, spinning it with a flick of the wrist. It lands on Valor.



"Okay... Valor, what is one thing you regret doing? My, how I hate these games, I have neither good questions nor answers."



"One thing I regret doing..." Valor said, musing as he swayed gently back and forth in his seat. "Hm... Regrets regrets regrets..." Valor seemed to be having trouble here. "Does it have to be something I regret doing or not doing, or can it be somethin' that wasn't my fault?"



"Something you REGRET DOING! That's way funnier!"

Charlotte knew Seyena spun the bottle, but she couldn't simply let her give Valor a free pass here.

Valor frowned a bit.



"But I can't think of anythin'. Every thing that I've done has lead me to this point, with you people. My frieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeends." Valor sang the last word a little, smiling. "I've occasionally regretted not doing certain things over others in fights, but I dun't think that would count by the spirit of the question."

Charlotte HRUMPH'd.



"Wow you suck at this!"

She took another sip of delicious, delicious dizzy juice.



"SHPIN THE BOTTLE!"



"Charlotte, are you okay? You seem a little what's the word zany."



"Hokay." Valor reached for the bottle, missed, reached again, and grabbed it. "Yup, got it. And here, we GO!" Valor spun the bottle, where it eventually rested in front of Charlotte. "Okay... Now I gotta come up with a question." Valor did more gentle back and forth rocking while he thought. "Oh hey wait, it's truth or dare, so I can dare you too... Hm..." More thinking took place. "I dare you... To stand on your head!" This last statement was accompanied by Valor standing and pointing dramatically. It was immediately followed by Valor falling over backward. "Ow, fuck! Chris! I think it's starting to effect me!"

Seyena extended a hand to Valor to help pull him up.



"You're supposed to ask them a truth. If they don't want to answer, *then*, it's a dare."



"...never mind. Now I'm more worried about Valor..."

Gregor hadn't even finished two drinks yet. He just felt slightly flushed.

Chris moved over and pulled the blond swordsman into a sitting position.



"Careful, now. We don't want you hurting yourself."

He raised an eyebrow at Seyena, who was also offering a hand.



"Why don't you sit next to him and make sure he doesn't hurt himself?"



Ever the cupid, that one.



"Yeah, Seyena, come sit with me!" Valor said, the alcohol ensuring the fall was already out of his mind. "Okay, actual questions since I can't make Charlotte do a handstand... ...What is the most moving thing you have ever widniffed. Wipfished. Saw."

Tragically, by this point, Charlotte had already taken off the heaviest of her armor in preparation to do a handstand. She looked a little upset but mostly just drunk.



"Awwww. Wash all redy to get hand stood up butcha gotta question me! Seena's a no fun haver."

She promptly finished her drink in silence. The five seconds she was doing this were very awkward.



"OK OK OK. Most movin groovin thing. It was probably... oh I don know. I think. I know. Wait no. No no. Oh I know!"

Charlotte fell over to the side, her head on Gregor.



"Wash invadig Prixima's castle! But that's not the thing. Walked in with Sal and wasn't sure if you guys were there yet. But then someone hugs me! Inna middle of battle! I didn even see him. At first I was kinda scared, like what if its some ambush from behin, but nope. Is THISS GUY. RIGHT HERE. Thasss right give it up errrybodday for Gregggy Vovexham! Woowhowh!"



"Anneven wenn I kiss em inna library right before a big babble iss not like that. Just go right up an drop everythin an hug me right inna battlefield. Made me rememember whass really imporant in life yanno???"





"Well then. Gonna spin the bottle, Charlotte?"



"..."

Gregor didn't know what to say in response to that, so he simply wrapped an arm around Charlotte's shoulder and gave her another hug. Important in life, indeed.



"Orright. Ish..."



"**CRISH!** I godda great idea ferra dare so yer getta really embarrasin questin. TRUF: how manny boyfrans an girlfrans ya really had tottal ever all tiime? I seetha way ya lookat Valor ferex."



"Wait... what?"



"Gonna have to ask you to clarify, Char. Do you mean people I've slept with because they either paid me or I wanted to, or do you mean people I've actually considered important to me to want to live with?"



"Well ship. I didn know thassa thing, juss kinda thought ya wentaround lookin for people all the time. How abbot 'both' then? Maxxamal embaraasment."



"I do not think any of us is going to forget about this weird but really amusing night."



"Except for the drunk ones. I reckon they'll forget it by tomorrow morning."



"Very well. I've slept with about twenty men and two women for money, sixteen men and twelve women because I wanted to and had the opportunity, and I've yet to actually date anyone. I haven't done anything with anyone present or still back at the castle."

He didn't comment on the Valor situation. Let the swordsman figure it out for himself, that was the only solution.



"Go ahead and give me the dare anyway, though. I'd hate to miss the opportunity to see what it is."



"Oh, well, I'm not the one who spun the bottle, but if you're such a master spy, try to steal one thing from everyone here without us noticing before this camping thing is over. I'd be more impressed to see you actually pull it off."



"Oh common thats like mine bu worser! Holl on."



"Ok ok ok. This is even beber cause of your TRUF anser. I mean sixteen twelve twenty two is.... like..... A HUNDRED PEOPLE RIGHT???"

Charlotte's Moral Center briefly told her "no don't do this," but her Inebriation Cortex quenched this thought immediately.



"Ppfffp arright. So you really know howta getaround. Think off a therotical scenario where ya were tryin to seduse erryone here - Ami, Greggga, Seena, Tant, Valor and me. Then walk around the camp ann tell eachof us what pickup lines yad use to do it. Come on smooth guy. I wanna see your face and erryone elses!"



"Do you really want me going through Valor's pockets, Seyena? ...Or yours, for that matter?"

Chris raised an eyebrow at her, but right about that time Charlotte interrupted with the dare. Chris scratched the back of his head.



"OK. Give me some time to think about it - I think it's fair enough since I answered the question. In the meantime..."

Chris spun the bottle. He gave it only a slight spin, to ensure it stopped quickly... and it did, on Gregor. Chris grinned to himself.



"All right, Gregor... let's see... what's your greatest irrational fear?"



"...Define 'irrational'?"



"Well, there was this one maid at Kesselring who was deathly afraid of sharks despite living far inland. So what makes you scream like a little girl and run away? Spiders, snakes, heights...?"



"Oh! That sort of thing. Okay..."

Gregor looked over his shoulder, as if checking to make sure that whatever it was wasn't out there...a gesture that was only half-joking at this time of night.



"Bats. I don't like them."



"Fair enough. Your spin."

Valor's eyes narrowed, apparently in confusion.



"Waaaaaaait. Two guys... can be a thing?"

Chris pounced.



"If you'd like to find out, we can go away from the group for a bit."



"Uh... yes. It is a thing."



"Ann two girlsh! Butssory Seyna, imm taken."



"By the way, that's one, Charlotte. You didn't specify they had to say yes."



"Thass acceptable!"



"..I'm gonna hafta pass." Valor replied to Chris. He hadn't once felt the desire to hold Chris' hand or kiss him or anything.



"Fair enough. To be honest I don't think anything I can come up with would actually work on any of you guys... you all know me too well! But I'll think of something, trust me."



"Alright, let's see here..."

The bottle spun, and despite putting a good amount of force behind it it ended up pointing right back at Chris.



"Well then, fair's fair. What's your irrational fear, Chris?"

Chris laughed.



"Didn't expect it to be my turn again so soon... Hmm. Thinking of things unlikely to happen is difficult for me."



"I would have to say that my belief about my lack of a soul may be an irrational fear. I truly believe that I do not have one, but for all I know I was merely traumatized in my childhood and I am no different from anyone else. So... the fear that I am little different from the undead I've killed. That is my irrational fear."

Chris spun the bottle. It landed pointing at Charlotte.



"Well, well. So, Charlotte. What's the most embarrassing thing YOU'VE ever done?"



"Geez, Chris. Sorry, I didn't mean to bring up such nasty thoughts."

Chris shrugged.



"Don't worry about it, Gregor. I'm fine with it."

He picked up the bottle, put it to his lips, tilted his head back, and turned it upside down

until he had drank the whole thing.



"Whoo, that's good. I wonder what year it was made."

Chris reached behind the log and felt around until he got another bottle out.



"Luck'ly I packed extras, eh?"



"I guess this bottle is afraid of druids."



"Hey, Ch'rlotte. After ya answer, why don'tcha jus' pick Tant'llos there? See who's afraid of what then!"



"Oh! OK. One time, in th woods, after the Kessering guards started surveyin closer to where I was at? I did sumthin really dum. I tried to get caught! I know thass stupid. But I wass so lonely back en. I coulda ruined everything id worked to build in the foress. Still chicken out at the lass minute, but I think th guard saw me. Never went back to the same place again. I wonder if thass how Prixima knew someone was traipsin around the forst?"

The bottle spins around and almost comes back to Charlotte again, stopping just (juss?) short.



"GREGOR!"

Charlotte sits up straight and looks him in the eye, surprisingly serious for once.



"Uhhmm."

Her breath visibly slows. She pauses for a moment.



"...Truf. How do you... um. I mean. We been doin crazy stuf fer fer months, but we's always been bussy. Not much time to just sit down n talk an think about thinks cept in Anja's wagon. An I means, so much hass gone on, but we don talk about the serious stuff when iss just us, cause thass the only time AWAY from lifes serious stuff."

Uhh. Um. Uhh.



"But I been thinkin maybe were runnin low on time before everythin gets REALLY serious and bigger than just uss sittin around a campfire. So uh. Um. I guess I gotts ask. How doya REALLY feel about me? How do you wan us to be in a month, a year - assuman this all blows over? "



4 "H--how do I feel...?"

To say Gregor was dumbstruck would be the understatement of the year. His heart leapt into his throat and began racing at a thousand beats per minute while his brain ran scenario after scenario, trying to find the best words. Eventually however, he decided to tell the simple "truf":



"Charlotte, I...well, I think I've fallen in love with you." He was only dimly aware of the presence of everyone else; the entire world seemed like it had shrank down to just her and him, and he couldn't look away from her eyes. "I want to stay by your side, whether its for a month or a year or longer still. If we have to make our own destiny, like you've said before...well, I wouldn't mind sharing as much of it as I can...with you."

He waited for her response, hardly daring to breathe. Would she feel the same way? Would she reject him? Did it come out too awkwardly, like some badly written novel? Well, whatever the case, he refused to look away.



"..."





"SCORE ONE FOR GREGLOTTE! All your others guys are now sad an loneyly compar to me an greggor. Relatinship Upgrade!"

Gregor was stunned for a moment, before he broke out laughing. Charlotte was a weird one, alright! Still, at least he finally revealed his feelings, and he was almost positive she felt the same way after all. They'd have plenty of time to work things out a little more seriously later.

He spun the bottle once more, and it ended up pointing at Tantallos.



"Alright mister druid person, your turn. What is the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you?"



"Wait, shit- we were supposed to keep score!? I didn't get the message! Someone get me a piece of papyrus and a stick of charcoal- I need to start keeping tabs!" Seyena said sarcastically.



"Hmm? The most embarrassing..?"



"Well..during a reunion with other shamans, I may have liked one in specific. And while we were talking, we ended up destroying a good part of the meeting room with dark spells during our conversation. We had to fix it all, I guess it took a week, if not more. I do not regret that at all."

He rolled the bottle and waited.



"Ok, sentinel person, time to ask you something too. If you actually stood face to face with the messenger of the undead, what would you say or how would you react?"





"...What kind of conversations involve black magic being flung all over the place? Sounds more like a fight to me."



"Love is a mystery, sentinel person. It can make you feel like destroy things around you that are not even related to the conversation. Now lets hear your answer."



"You shamans have a strange way of expressing love. Anyway, what is a "messenger of the undead"?"



"According to the books, he is the one who visits the kingdoms to see their progress and lead the locked souls into freedom. He is also the "voice" of the Plague Dragon. The book says he is pretty much a giant skeleton in a armor, think about a dead general above our normal height. Oh, he also asks people to sing, funny, is not it?"



"Well, that doesn't give me much to go on, does it?"

Gregor thought for a moment.



"Well, if I came face to face with something like that I'd probably panic a little. Then, depending on if it wanted to hurt me or whatever, I'd either fight it or go about my business."



"I would not sing. My sister was--**is** the only one in the family who could do that. My turn now."

This time, the bottle pointed towards Seyena.



"Oh good, I've been wanting to ask this question for a while. If you could have anything in the world in exchange for never flying again, would you do it and if so what would you take in exchange?"



"I guess he would convince you to sing."

Seyena stared at the ground, troubled.



"There are only a few things I would trade for flight... even so..."

She took a deep breath.



"I keep the clouds. I shouldn't change the past, no matter how much I want to."



"Y'r spin, S'yena,"

Chris said, taking another drink.



"Oh. Yeah, nearly forgot."

With a flick of the wrist, she spun the bottle.

And it pointed towards her.



"Damn it."



"I have no idea for a question... uh- Gregor, if you had to trade in your lance

for a sword or an axe, which would you choose?"

Ami's eyes start glowing.



"Oh yeah, should get around to that, the dating, wouldn't say no to the sex those."

Ami/Mia also answers Valor's question about two guys.



"I got some books on the subject. I would be more than happy to lend them."

Chris raised an eyebrow.



"Oh, izzat so? Well, we can always... be onna way and leave'em to their game."

The suggestion might not have been *completely* alcohol fueled.



"Oh! An' I, I gotcha this earlier. Tot'ly slipped m' mind 'til now."

Chris took the silver ring out of his robes.



"I got it 'cause I really like th' color of yer hair, and when yer Mia yer eyes are red too, an' I thought, 'well, tha' looks kinda like a ruby,' an' I wanted to get somethin' for ya, so..."

He held the ring out to her drunkenly.



"Wow, I, um wow. One second."

Mia writes a note and changes back. Ami looks at the note confused then.



"Oh."



"Thank you, Chris, I should of got you a gift too, but...never mind, shall we go on that date?"



"Iz OK, Ami. I'm juzt happy bein' aroun' you an' Mia."

Chris tried to stand, went backwards over the log, and came up a moment later trying ineffectually to brush snow from his robes. He swayed for a moment, then held a hand out to Ami to help her to her feet.



"No worries! I've been worseoffn this, I azure you."

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### **The worldtime proceeds unto next morning...**

Gregor and his companions were woken up by some soldiers and Mannan, who stood in the middle of the guards. The sleeping room in which the mercenaries slept after getting back from camping was barely greyish, not a single light source besides the greyish sky outside.



"Good morning. The sun haven't risen yet, but I require your skills right now." He looked at few of the group, who looked rather wasted and still asleep.



"That's it, if you're still capable of standing on two legs. If not, I'm sending Olison, Alexander and Salvatore alone. They've already prepared for the trip."

Gregor shook himself awake and stood up. He had only gotten slightly tipsy the previous night; most of it was already on its way out. Still, he hadn't slept much.



"What's going on, sir?" he said, stifling a yawn.

Chris was escorted into the room by a soldier, looking quite a bit happier - tired, but happier - than he usually did. He was just in time to hear Lord Mannan.



"Whatever it is, I'm ready for it!"



"Good. Wake the others. I will be waiting for you at the courtyard." Mannan and his soldiers left the room, leaving the door open.

Gregor looked up in some surprise as Chris entered the room.



"Morning. I figured you'd be sleeping until noon from all that claret last night, but you look almost as awake as Mannan. Some sort of secret assassin technique?"

He looked around for his boots, before belatedly realizing that he never took them off before falling asleep. Come to think of it, he was still in full armor.



"A tolerance built up over a number of years... as well as the fact some people are just lucky and born able to handle alcohol easier than others. I wonder if Valor is one of them."

He leaned on the wall next to the door, waiting for the others to recover.



"So, uh, what did you guys get up to last night after we left?"

Gregor found a jug of water and splashed some on his face, helping him wake up.



"Not much. We kept playing Truth or Dare for a while, but when Valor passed out we decided to call it a night and came back here."

Charlotte stumbled out into the main hall where Gregor and Mannan were.



"Where? Who? Oh - alright. Hello."

Half of her armor was on backwards.



"Good morning, Charlotte. Sleep well?"



"Morning. Feeling any better?"



"Uhhh. I vaguely remember stripping and asking Chris to do something embarrassing, but other than that everything is either totally clear or totally gone. Who knew alcohol did this to you? I'm going off alcohol entirely forever until the next time we have some around."



"Oh. Everything, huh?"



"Oh, no. Not EVERYTHING."



"Oh...good! Forgetting things is so terrible."



"Really... I don't remember that now."

Chris scratched his head. It was impolite to stare at someone, especially when that someone was another person's lover - especially when you had one of your own - but he was pretty sure he would remember Charlotte stripping down and running amuck. It wasn't the sort of thing someone like him would forget easily.



"I do remember that you're a funny drunk, though. Hopefully I'm around the next time."



"I think she's talking about the time she was asked to do a handstand and took off her armor for some reason. By Valor, I believe it was."



"...I think I remember that?"

He still just wasn't sure.



"Hmmm..is everyone awake?"



"Hey. Good morning, Tantallos."



"Not everyone. Which reminds me..."

Gregor went back to the sleeping area and started shaking people awake if they weren't already.



"Anyway, good idea. Once everyone's up I'll go get Ami and meet you all in the courtyard."



"Good morning to both of you."

Seyena was awoken by Gregor's shaking, slowly sitting upright, looking somewhat ruffled.



"Wh-wha... why are you not letting me sleep?"

Chris noticed Seyena awakening and gave her a wave of greeting.



"Good morning, Seyena."

Gregor held up his hands in a "please don't hit me" gesture.



"Sorry. I know it's early, but Mannan has something for us to do. Don't know what it is yet unfortunately."

Seyena lazily waved to Chris, as she turned to face Gregor.



"You nobles are *cruel*. I know you all are vampires who don't need sleep or something, but I need my rest."

With a half-hearted chuckle, she stood up, starting to slap her armor on halfheartedly.

Gregor gave her an overly-exaggerated bow before turning away to wake the others.



"Have fun last night, Tantallos?"



"Yes, the night was pretty amusing!"



"That's good. I thought we could all use a night to unwind and do silly things before we got back to the serious business that is our everyday life these days."





"Well, I'm off to go get Ami. I'll meet you all in a few minutes."

Chris took a ring out of his pocket.



"Oh, and here you go Tantallos. You can probably make better use out of this than I can."

He placed the Hermes Ring in Tantallos's hand before wandering off back to Ami's room.

Tantallos looked at that ring and tested it.



"Oh! Thank you assassin person. I am quite sure this is going to be useful."



"You're welcome, Tant. Take good care of it, it looks extremely valuable."



"Of course it is, assassin person. I do not know if that was your intention or not, but all these favors are going to make you have a boost on your payment. After all, you had been helping me a lot, even when you were not part of the Forsakens yet, so thank you."

Edwin walked downstairs, looking somewhat fresh and alert in his normal robes.



"Morning. I take it that you all enjoyed sleeping out in the cold and snow while getting yourselves drunk last night? Personally, I don't see much appeal in it, but it looks and sounds like you all had a good time at least."

Gregor looked up from trying to wake Valor, who was snoring quite loudly.



"We didn't sleep in the cold and snow, we came back here. We might have had too much to drink, but we're not stupid."

He went back to his futile task.

The lump that was Riven made a "don't wannaaaa" groaning sound, shifted around, and tried to stop moving.

She relented after a few more shakes, but still didn't look happy about it or say anything above a grumble.

---

The group, after waking up against their will, marched outside into the courtyard. It was cold, it was dark, an Mannan stood there, waiting and watching the mercenaries approach. Captain Danya was at his side, and nearby, Olison, Alexander and Salvatore were hanging out near the horse and wyvern.



"Glad to see you could all make it here. Yesterday night I've received a report from one of my... operatives. For some time, we have been tracking a group of mercenaries that have entered Berebia few days ago. They've got through the mountains and their origin point was Menelea."



"Whilst our agents were working on their goal and destination, we also began gathering information on who recruited them. Yesterday report confirmed by fears: they are working for Prixima. Furthermore, we found out that they're going to uninhabited forest north-east of here. It seems that some kind of old, Berebian tomb is located there, and from what we learned, it belongs to Vinegaard family, bearers of Tyrian Agate." Mannan took a deep breath.



"Normally I would send soldiers if not the danger of Menelean armies lingering outside my county. I've decided to dispatch Captain Danya with you."



"I was wondering if I would ever work with you, people."



"Find the mercenaries and stop them. I do not know if what they're looking for is Tyrian Agate, but I'm not going to risk it."

**//NPC: Danya joins the group!**

//NPC: Mannan leaves the group!



"I'll bet that she is, indeed, hunting for another stone." Seyena said, as she clambered on top of Ilya.



"Oh- and where's Anja and her wagon? I want to grab my glaive before I forget."



"Unless she found something else worth hiring a bunch of mercenaries for, a Dragonstone is a pretty safe bet. Damn that woman!"



"Indeed... Let's not waste any time then."

Chris flicked his switchblade out to test the spring, then folded it again and tucked away before checking the set of his crossbow and quiver against his hip, where they hung from his belt.



"I'm ready to go whenever everyone else is."



"**Mornin'.**" The wyvern rider greeted the group cheerfully as he stood near Ormm, the rider having a wide-if-tired grin on his face. Speaking of his face, the suggestion of a bruise is peaking out from under his helmet, from the brawl of yesterday. The wyvern was likewise tired, its eyes half opened and staring at the ground as if contemplating if it could go back to sleep and wondering who would notice.



"Ah, morning Salvatore. I don't think I saw you at all yesterday. Do anything fun while the blizzard was gone?"



"Nah, can' say Oi saw yah either. Heh, chatted ah bit, thought ah bit, talked some more, had ah roight proper brawl, learned what it was loike ta fly wit'out Ormm. Heheh, it was ah good day, ah foine day!" The rider responded, ending in another short laugh. "Yerself? Oi heard yah had ah campfoire, some kinda cookout? Hope yah had fun, most don' spend the noight outside in this chill."



"Oh, we didn't sleep outside. Those of us who could still walk dragged the rest to the sleeping quarters before we all froze."



"Speaking of, has Valor even woken up yet? He definitely overdid it last night."



"Other than that, yes it was a good time. And I'm glad to hear you managed to have a good day, because it sounds like we're going right back into more serious matters."



"Are we getting paid for this or just doing it to ally with Mannan or foil Prixima? And if it's just to foil Prixima, is that for revenge or to stop her from killing us all?"



"...I'm sort of new to being a mercenary. Are we still mercenaries?"



"Not sure about pay. I suppose we can loot the bodies. And yes, we're doing this to throw Prixima's plans in disarray."



"Also, morning, Sal. I take it that bruise is from the brawl you mentioned?"

Salvatore turned to Chris.



**"Yah'd be roight, threw ah hell o' ah hook, haha!"** The man laughed again at the memory, idly scratching his helmet. "Ain' the only mark o' glory from it though. Nothin' loike ah good brawl ta take one outta ah idle, Oi'm rarin' ta go an punch the sky if'in need be!" The man boasted heartily, in a very good mood from the looks of it.

Still with the smile on his face, he addressed Gregor, although his tone bore a slight serious touch. Very slight though.



**"Ah, serious is as serious be, Oi say yah should face loife with ah laugh an' ah grin! Let loife throw yah the storm, an' yah be the rock!"**

Alexander, leaning on (and heavily straining, most likely) the wall, spoke up with a bit of a grin, the beginnings of a bruise on his own chin.



**"You've got a good uppercut yourself, Salvatore."**



**"An' yah ah guard tha Oi couldn' get through fer the loife o' me! But Oi ain' down an' out til mah back hits the ground! Yah won' catch me off guard wit' tha next toime."** The rider retorted in good nature to the knight.

Charlotte approaches Danya.



**"Welcome to the group! I hope you like irresponsible late-night campfire imbibing. And ends that are almost as morally dubious as the means we use to achieve them."**

Valor trudged along with the others, his expression pained and his facial hair scruffier than usual.



**"Yes, I am awake. I've yet to master the art of sleepwalking, so it was either**

this or get dragged. Drug. Pulled along behind. Ugh, my head feels like it's been lined with cotton." Valor turned his head sharply, producing an audible cracking noise to those around him. "Does anyone have any water?"

Charlotte nodded to Valor.



"Hehehe. Speaking of which, how did we even get back here? I just remember a great campout and not much after that. Maybe someone dragged me here. Did you have to be dragged back to base?"



"I think we can do without you two tearing at each other," He turned to Charlotte. "Or with half the team getting drunk in the woods."

Olson stated flatly, but moments later he chuckled loudly.



"Without me, anyway. Serves me for getting sick." Olson's mouth curved upward, pulling out a spare flask of water and tossing it to Valor.

Valor cracked an eye open just long enough to deftly catch the flask, and took a long pull.



"Many thanks." Eyes still closed, he turned his head slightly to Charlotte. "I dunno, maybe? Last thing I remember clearly is you and Gregor getting all lovey dovey. It was cute. After that though, things start to get blurry. I assume I stumbled back with all the coordination of an animated stone." In fact, Valor had to be pulled back.



"If you really want to know what happened during the night, you and Seyena kissed! But I guess you don't remember that, do you?"



"Sorry, just wanted to see how you reacted! I am feeling good enough to make jokes, I guess that night really was good to restore my energy."



"Olison, good morning! Looks like you're doing much better."



"To you as well, Gregor. And it was just a little cold, nothing of much concern." Olison relatively cheerfully stated as he looked over the state of Valor and the others hung-over in the group. "Today seems like it's going to be interesting, at the least."

Turning to Olison, Sal nodded.



"Sorry yah were sick Olison, next toime yeah? Heh, yah can be puttin' bets on it 'er join in fer yerself! Glad ta hear yer feelin' better." The rider proclaimed.



"...Whew, I'm a little more tired than I thought."

Chris shook his head to wake himself.



"Anyway, good morning to everyone I haven't said good morning to yet. Good to see you up and about, Olison."

Valor blushed deeply at Tantallos' "revelation", and his shoulders drooped when he told the swordsman he'd made it up.



"It isn't nice to tease people, Tantallos."



"He's right. You should go kiss her now to fix it, though."



"The witch lady is right, you should get there and fix that up. Also try to see



by the bright side, now you are fully awake!"



"Good idea, Riven."

Gregor simply watched, torn between wanting to scold the shamans for teasing Valor and supporting their idea.



"...I don't think it's really up to me." Valor said to the ground.



"Seyena, are you going to leave the poor guy out in the cold like that?"

The words *"or am I going to have to do it myself"* went unspoken but implied, hopefully to motivate Seyena.



"It's up to you unless she decides to run away, isn't it? C'mon, you don't want her sitting there all lonely thinking it's not up to her either, riiiiight?"

Riven appeared to be having entirely too much fun.



"Yeah, come on swordman person, get going and give her a kiss, it is worth a try. And the witch lady is just showing why I would want to have her around the castle, talk about amusing lady!"

Alright, that went a little too far. Gregor stepped up.



"Come on guys, that's enough. Let them figure things out at their own pace."

Tantallos nodded a bit and stepped back.





"As you wish, sentinel person, but you also need to deal with the same situation. I mean.. the sniper lady might be feeling cold, do not you think?"

Seyena listened to the egging, dismounting and heading towards Valor. She pulled him close, locking her lips with his.

After the kiss, she took a rock, tossing it at Tantallos and Riven. Having it hit either one would do.



"Don't pick on him when you both scare potential lovers of *both genders* away."

Riven tried to instinctively duck under her hat, being all too familiar with slightly deserved projectiles.



"Hey, I haven't scared anyone off yet! Have I? Who did I scare off?"

Tantallos moved down to escape from the rock and shrugged.



"Chill out, we were just trying to help. And we did, did not we? You two kissed!"



"...Well, I guess I deserved that rock as much as they did."

Chris wiped his mouth off with the back of his hand.



"Just a split lip, by the way. I'll be fine."

Valor stood in shocked silence for a little while after the kiss, before smiling widely.



"Wow..."

Gregor hid a smile at Valor's reaction, then adopted a businesslike tone of voice.



"Alright everyone! That's enough messing around for now; we have a long way to go and there might be a fight when we get there. Grab your gear out of the wagon if you need to and we can be on our way as soon as everyone's ready."

**Gregor decided to walk the first stage of the journey. After all, it would be easier to sneakily visit a certain store on foot than if he had to jump off the wagon or somebody's mount...**

Edwin looked around the group as they continued to do their antics and leaned over to whisper to Gregor.



"Are they always like this?"

Gregor whispered back.



"To some extent, yes. I think last night shook things up a little, and of course at least two of them probably have hangovers. But they're a good bunch. You probably saw some of that at that old castle, and as time goes on they'll really start to grow on you."



"Right..."

Edwin looked back over at the others for a few long moments before whispering back at Gregor.



"They do seem alright, but quite weird at times. You've definitely picked up quite a crowd of strange people."

He straightened and walked over to join the others' conversation.



"So, what exactly when on at this cookout of yours? I believe I was in the library when it was happening, so I am behind on the details, as it is."

Chris felt his lip again. It seemed like it had stopped bleeding.



"Lots of things. Everyone set up the camp site while Charlotte and I hunted down some food. Then we cooked and ate, had some wine, had a snowball fight with forts, built snowmen."

Chris pointed out the snowman Riven and Seyena had worked on. It was the only one still standing.



"Around then it was nightfall, so we continued drinking and talked. Swapped stories, told scary tales, finished off by playing Truth or Dare."



"Well, you probably think you're too old for this sort of thing. Too bad! You probably would've had fun."



"I don't think I'm too old for such things, just not really the type to get into that sort of thing..." Edwin replied, scratching his chin through his beard.



"Still, I'd like to get to know each of you better, if I can. You are all so interesting!"

**Edwin: Switch out my used vulnerary for a fresh one in the wagon. Go ahead and walk with the others for the first part of the journey.**

**Chris walks with his ~~supports~~ friends, subbing out Edwin for Gregor since Gregor's got an 'errand' to run in town.**



"Sure. Anything in particular you would like to ask?"



"Oh, where do I start? Umm... How about your general views of everyone in the group? I'd like to know your opinion of everyone and what they do."



"Very well. Let's see."



"Well, first is the red-haired gypsy Anja - I don't know her family name. I know she likes traveling and money. She's very friendly, nice. I think she has a thing for Alexander. As you can see, she travels by cart and basically trades letting us store things on it for protection."



"Charlotte Braxis is the cute girl with brown hair and all the bows. She's a fun drunk, impulsive, an excellent shot, and as near as I can tell, devoted to Gregor von Hexham."



"Speaking of, Gregor is heir to the von Hexham family of Menelea. He's an easy going guy, but pretty shy. He confessed to Charlotte last night. I like him, but he needs to start believing in himself."



"Alexander Jorinn is the steel giant over there. Oddly, he and I both worked at the same place for awhile, but I really don't know much about him. Our paths never really crossed much given our professions."



"I don't know what to make of you yet, Edwin Westbringer. Your accent certainly isn't Berebian or Menelean."



"The man with the wyvern and the accent thicker than mine is Salvatore Vaughan. He, like Alexander, is someone I haven't talked to much, although I did recruit him to our side when we first encountered him. I think he's on the run from something. I also think he's friends with Alexander but I'm not certain. I do know I've never seen him without his helmet."



"The beautiful woman with the red hair is my lover, Ami Storm. She has an alternate personality named Mia. You might have met her already. She is a powerful healer and if someone so much as looks at her funny I will slit him - or her - from gurgles to zatch."



"I, of course, am Christopher Shields. Or so I call myself. I do not know my lineage or what my parents named me. I grew up raising myself in the wilds of Menelea, lost my soul to a cult, moved to the city and learned the fine trades of robbery mugging and prostitution, moved into extortion and murder, caught the eye of Prixima Kesseling and was given the opportunity to work for her - which I did, as a spy, for two years before leaving to be with Ami. Prixima didn't take that well. I now wear the robes of the Forsaken family as King Tantallos's personal assassin slash bodyguard. As for my opinion of myself, I regard my skills quite highly."



"Olison Eul is my old partner. He and I have worked together since I joined Prixima's thugs, and we left her service together. He's a good horseman and is respectable and level-headed, if a bit... stuffy. You might get along well with him... I don't mean that as a judgement, so don't take it personally."



"The attractive blonde swordsman is Valor Inara. He cares mostly for money, his reputation, and Seyena. Despite his gruff exterior and experience in combat he's actually quite innocent in the ways of the world. Did you know he'd never even had alcohol before last night?"



"The blue-haired man in armored robes colored like mine is my Lord, Tantallos Forsaken. He's a powerful Druid and king of the Forsaken clan. He's a bit

eccentric - expect to be called 'sage guy' whether or not you tell him your name - but his heart is in the right place. He - as am I - is a follower of the Plague Dragon. He'd be quite happy to tell you about it if you're curious."



"The cute blonde woman is Seyena Ikane. She's a valkyrie and she likes Valor. There's more to her than that, but for some reason or another we've never really talked much with each other. I do know Ami taught her a little about how to use healing staves."



"Finally, the stately young woman in the floppy hat is Riven. I know even less about her than about Seyena. I do know she is adept with ancient magic, has ambition, and Tantalos has his eye on her. I will also say I've been trying to matchmake the pair of them but it's rough going."



"There's another member of our troupe who sadly isn't here. His name is Derick and he's a dark-haired swordsman who wears a headband with the image of a wolf on it. He's an amazing swordsman - easily my match or better in skill, only with swords instead of knives - and he's quite a loyal person. He left our group to investigate the death of the leader of the mercenary band he and Ami used to be part of. I haven't heard of him since - which, given that PRIXIMA put bounties on most of us, might just mean he's doing a good job at lying low."

Chris finished, stretching as he walked.



"Anything else you would like to ask?"



"Being talkative much doesn't help with my job. We will move out immediately. Lord Mannan. She paused to bow her head and then she sat on her pegasus, one a bit larger than Seyena's.

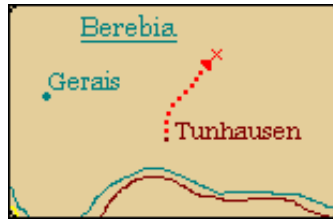


"I have memorized the places where our informants will be waiting to point us toward our direction. Victory, or death, awaits us!" With that, she led the armed convoy-



of-sorts, and the whole group went north-east.

## ~~Chapter 8: Mysteries of the Tomb~~



*The path of the group was winding and often changing course at random points. A blacksmith at small village, a traveling merchant, an innkeeper, a soldier at small road post - all those people had secret information for Danya, about where to go. The last one pointed the group to the Casmere forest, known to be devoid of any settlements.*

*The surroundings turned less and less civilized, the snow-covered roofs of homesteads and road inns replaced by snow-covered hills and trees, by snowy plains of tall rocks and glades of pines. Soon the mercenaries with Danya in the front, entered a vast forest, with a straight path leading through the walls of trees...*



"No sleeping in the wagon!" Danya knocked at the wagon's side with her lance, right near the head of sleeping Charlotte.



"I don't want to bury your corpse just because you are sleeping when enemy might strike." With that, she moved her pegasus closer to Salvatore's wyvern, and smiled to him.



"You were talking about dueling and killing some strong knights. Go on, I'm listening."



"I'M AWAKE!"

Charlotte jumped at the sound of Danya's lance. Maybe the two of them had just gotten off on the wrong foot. Still, a woman as serious as that...



"Don't you guys think the mercenaries would have found the tomb and made off with the treasure by now? I'm starting to lose track of time again..."

Gregor simply kept quiet and watched the surrounding area as they marched. It was more likely for some other group, whether friendly or hostile, to initiate contact with the party rather than the other way around.

Riding on the wagon's front seat with Anya, Edwin turns to Olison.



"So Olison, I was wondering... How did you end up as a cavalier? What made you decide to be one exactly?"

Olison's eyes snapped from scanning the way ahead towards Edwin.



"Hm? Talking won't help us spot any threats, but in a few words-" Olison maintained speed as he began scanning the surroundings again. "It isn't really a choice as much as circumstance. I was given a lance, I excelled at it. Then I was given a horse, I excelled at it even more. I've simply had no reason to change that."



"I didn't realise you were a natural born horseman... You have my admiration and pity for having to sit on that animal for such long periods of time. It must get very uncomfortable." Edwin replied as he looked over the landscape.



"Heh, Oi was talkin' about tha, wasn' Oi? Its ah roight good story tha."

The man put on a pseudo-serious face for the story, although the corners of his mouth keep lifting into little smirks.



"Yah see, it happened back when Oi was takin' ah spell in Deynastia in ah small village. Oi was restin' there from ah long journey from foot, yah see Ormm back then was but jus' ah year old. In the wee hours o' the mornin', there came ah shoutin' an' ah holler--"





"Stop!" Danya stopped her pegasus and then brought her hand to her eyes, staring to north-east.



"Dammit, they've seen us!" She cursed under her nose and prepared her lance. Suddenly, the wind began to blow harder, sending snow into the faces of the mercenaries.

---

A finely-clothed lady brushed some snow from the collar of her robe and stared at the dark staircase leading into the massive tomb, her dark blue hair flowing in the wind that blew from, surprisingly, inside of the tomb.



"Zos! Zos, are you guys alright?"

"Yeah, we will be up there shortly!"



"Okay... what do you think Raquel? Is this wind appeared suddenly because of the curse placed on the tomb, or is it just coincidence?--" As she said that, some snow blasted against the lady's horse.



"It's hard to say, Lady Matilda. There's no sign of any ritual spell from up here, in spite of the warning, and it's not unusual to get a short breeze after cracking a tomb left sealed for this long. Still, normally it's not this long or this strong. I'd like to go down there and take a closer look, see if I can identify anything that could once have been a protective ritual, but..."

One of the horsemen nearby turned to the women.

"Lady Matilda, our people spotted some armed men coming towards us."



"Oh? Tell our people to attack only in defense, or if those people won't stop their approach. Our mission is far too important and profitable to let anyone interfere."

"Sure." The knight turned toward the rest of large mercenary unit and began shouting orders.



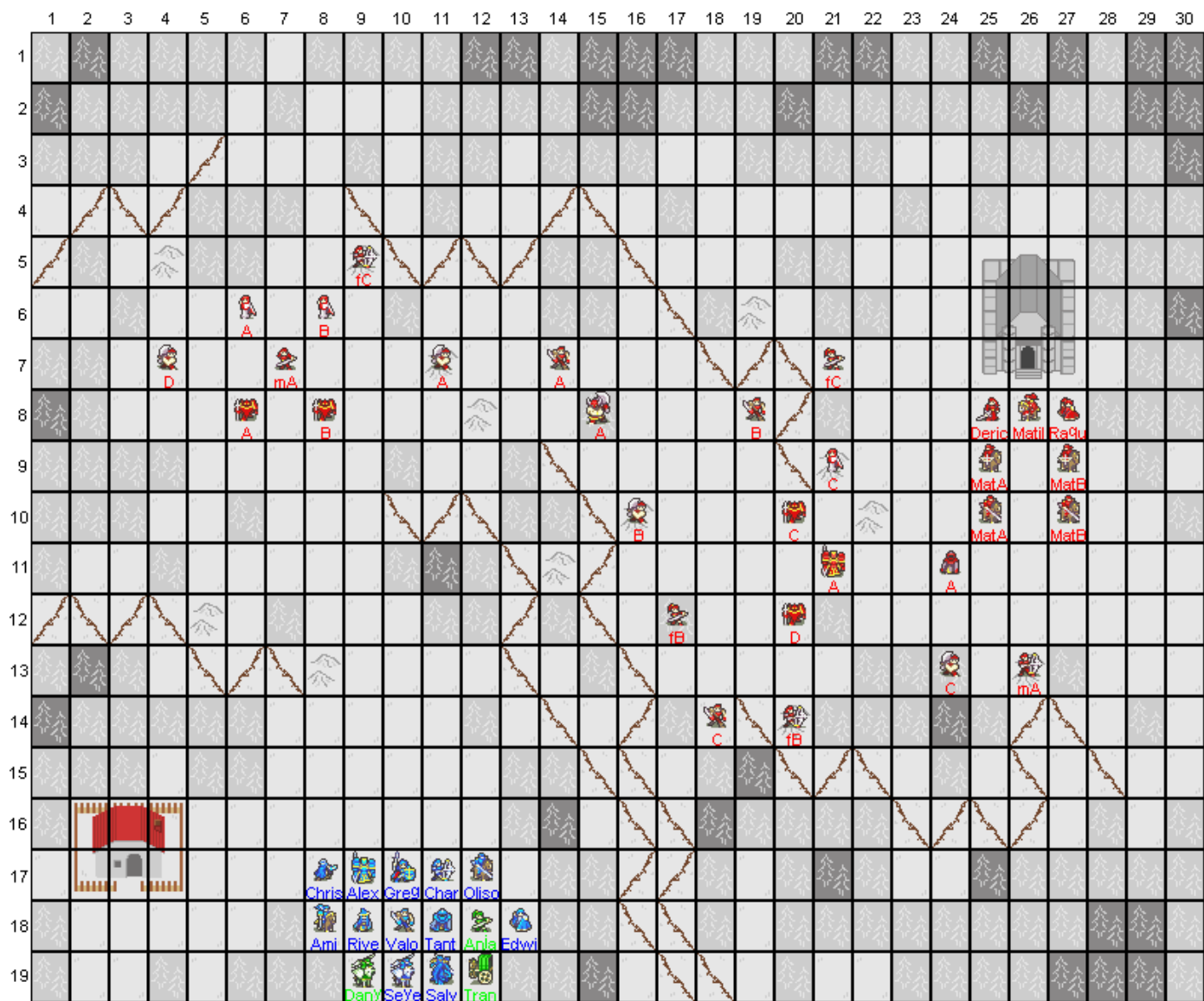
"Derick, Raquel, please stay near me for now." Matilda took out an emerald-encrusted tome from a satchel at the side of her saddle.

At the cry from the scouts, Raquel's head whipped around, but with the steady wind whipping up snow, she couldn't see anything save shadows, and that only faintly.



"Understood." Raquel raised her own tome as well, by contrast to Matilda's bound in a well-worn cover that gave little indication of its contents. "Let's hope they just move on. I'd hate if they were Berebian regulars; they might not look too kindly on us breaking into one of their lord's tombs."

~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather: ☁

| Merics: | Enemies: |
|---------|----------|
|         |          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 42/42<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/32<br>Christopher Shields: 34/34<br>Edwin Westbringer: 33/33<br>Gregor von Hexham: 37/37<br>Olison Eul: 35/35<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 35/35<br>Seyena Ikane: 34/34<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 32/32<br>Valor Inara: 34/34 | Mercenary A: 32/32<br>Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Male Myrmidon A: 30/30<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight A: 37/37<br>Knight B: 37/37<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter A: 35/35<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Fighter D: 35/35<br>Monk A: 28/28 | Monk B: 28/28<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29<br>Matilda's Bow Knight A: 29/29<br>Matilda's Bow Knight B: 29/29<br>Matilda's Lance Knight A: 31/31<br>Matilda's Lance Knight B: 31/31<br>Matilda: 35/35<br>Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>Female Sniper C: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Berserker: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 33/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

Gregor trudged through the drifts and wind, grimacing at the cold feeling of snow getting inside his armor. He muttered to himself:



"Couldn't have been sent on this mission in the summer. Had to be in the dead of a Berebian winter, huh?"

**Gregor: Move forward 3 tiles north.**



"I'm going to check out this house. Maybe there's someone there who can tell us what's going on... or maybe it's abandoned and I can loot it."

**Chris moves to 5,17.**



"I'm not going to be able to get *anywhere* in this snow. Salvatore, mind giving me a lift?"

His story got stopped by the shout, as Salvatore realized they were now about to be in combat. Hearing Alexander's comment, the rider nodded.



"Roight, ain' be ah problem Alex!" Ormm took off from the ground quickly and landed again **at 9.16, and rescued the knight.**



"Roide's gonna be ah bit bumpy wit' these winds, but Oi'm sure it won' be much o' ah problem fer yah."

Edwin looked completely at ease in the snow, with every snowflake that landed on him evaporating almost immediately and his robes staying warm and dry due to his magic.



"It's times like these that I just love being synergised with fire. In any case, it's time to try out my new staves!"

**Edwin: Move to 12, 15, equip my Poison staff and give Female sniper B a taste of some magical gunge!**

**Tantallos: Move to 11, 14.**



"Oh.. fighting on the snow.. this is going to be really amusing."

Edwin pointed his staff at the faraway sniper woman.

#### **Edwin poisons Female Sniper B**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{23 - 7\} \times 5] + 20) - (9 \times 2) = 30 + 80 + 20 - 18 = 112$ , autohit!

Female Sniper B is poisoned!

Olison snorted irritably.



"This snow is just going to slow everything down..."

**Olison: To 11,15.**



"Hold on!" Valor shouted as he saw Edwin deploy his staff. "We don't have any reason to be fighting these people. I doubt they'll be enthused about working for PRIXIMA once we tell them how she backstabbed us."

**Valor moved to 10, 16**



"I'm less than optimistic, but I say we go for it. At the very least, it'd be nice to give them some warning that they'll be dying to their matriarch's discarded servants."

**Riven: Move to 9,13.**



"It's worth a shot, even if we don't exactly have a good record in that department."

Moving through this deep snow was terrible. He was already out of breath and had barely covered any distance.

**Ami: To 8,15**



"Lovey weather for a fight."



"Hey! Any of you interested in parley? There are things you should know about working for Lady PRIXIMA!"



"Valor, I don't think anyone can hear you from there. And even if they can, how do you expect them to just drop their weapons and surrender at our very word?"

**Seyena directs Ilya to 10, 13,** looking at the enemy amassed before them.



"My, that's quite a lot."

**Move Charlotte 3 N**

One of the swordsmen on the cliff glared at Valor.

"We're not working for anyone by that name! Now leave before we will have to kill you!"

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"Lady Matilda, it seems that fight is inevitable."



"Pity, I don't like to resort to killing--"

"Hey, I'm back." A tall, lanky man appeared from the tomb.



"Hello-- Joz! For Dragon's sake, what happened to your face!? You look ten years older!"



"Uhh, the sages say that it's another of the curses of this tomb. It should pass on it's own, though... Here." From inside of his robes, the swordmaster took out a small silver box, exceptionally decorated with silvery lines, flowers and such, and the lock was partially melted, as if intentionally to keep the box inaccessible. He lifted it so others could see it more clearly.



"That box..."



"That's what the man asked for. Silvery box with exceptional flowery decorations. Is something wrong?"



"No, just... I feel some old magic emanating from it."



"The mages who were with me said the same thing."



"Do we..."



"No, we cannot open it. The man who hired us explicitly said to bring it as it is. I don't want to lose ten thousand gold pieces just because we couldn't keep our curiosity in check."



"Allright. We have a slight problem, there are some people on the way up here, and they seem to be aggressive." When Matilda finished, Zos rubbed his chin and then placed the box in her hands.



"Take the box to the village of Fierre. That's the man promised to wait for me."  
"



"And you?"



"Me? Together with Derick and others, we will entertain our rude guests. Look, I got this sword from the tomb." Zos thrust upwards with the shiny blade, creating a gust of green, magical wind.



"Cool, eh? That reminds me... I won't be needing this." He untied the sword he had at his belt and tossed it to Derick.



"Take care of it, Derick. I have better sword now. Oh, and inside the tomb, there was this thunder book. That's a gift for Raquel. For that evening few days ago."

**Derick gets Killing Edge!**  
**Raquel gets Killer Thunder!**

Derick caught the sword and looked at it.



"Shiny."

Raquel smiled as she accepted the tome from Joz.



"Thank you, but I didn't need a gift. It was a pleasure to talk with someone with such an avid interest in history.



"Fine, I see you're quite prepared. Good luck, Zos! Derick, Raquel, don't let our boss get himself killed!" With that, she nodded to the only mounted people in the unit, who followed her. When she moved away, Zos turned to his two accomplices.



"Derick, Raquel, go down the hill and help the rest of the guys. With you two down there, we should deal with the pesky intruders in a minute."



"Alright boss! Leave it to us!"

The sounds of spells being cast and combat being joined began to rise over the wind, and Raquel nodded as the order was given.



"It seems they've left us no choice. Let's be about it then, Derick."

### ~~Ally Phase~~

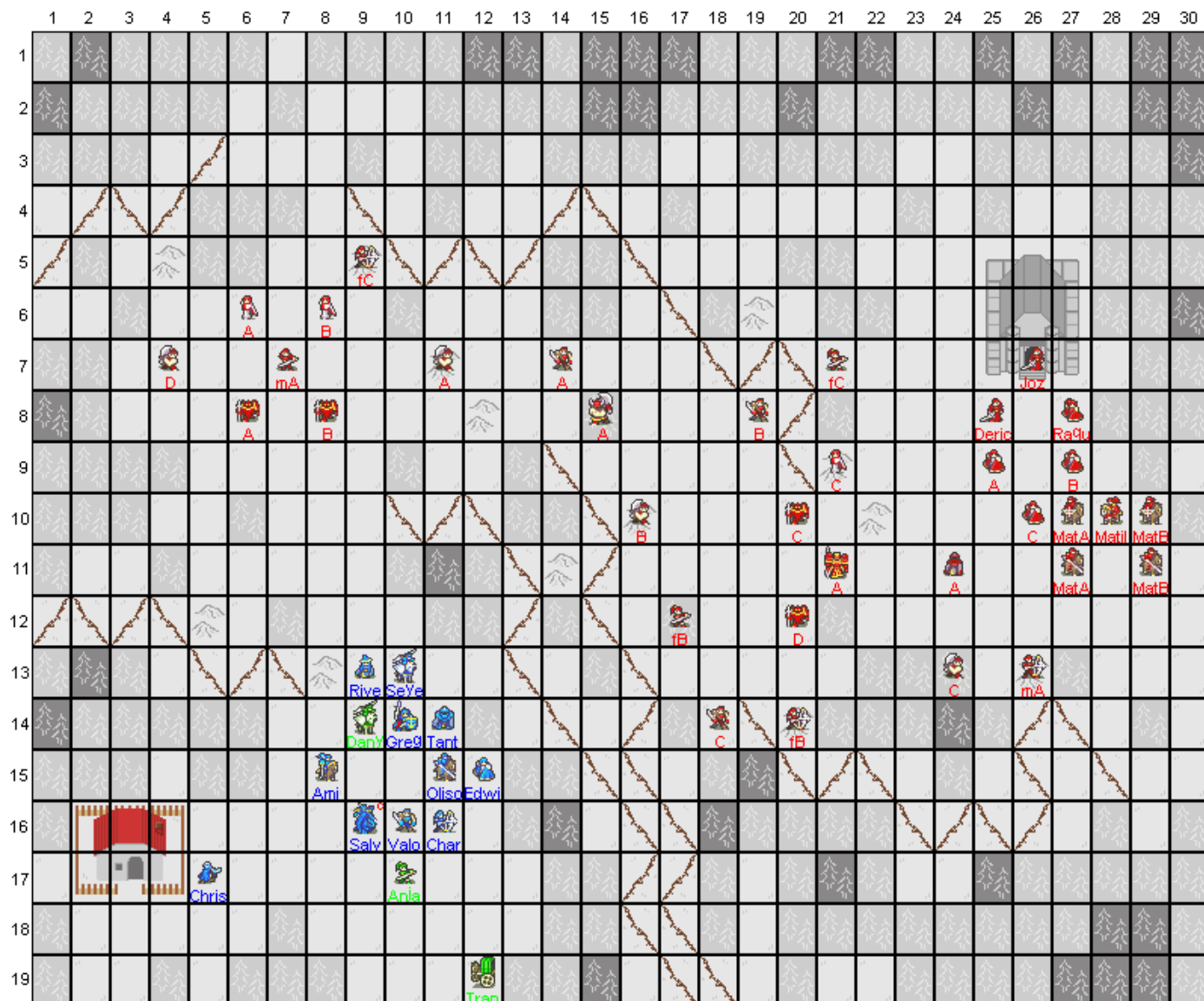
Anja moved after the group, whilst Danya took her pegasus to Gregor's side.



# ~~Player Turn 2~~

## Poison Rolls

Female Sniper B: 1



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 42/42<br>^ Carried by: Salvatore Vaughan<br>Ami Storm: 28/28<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/32<br>Christopher Shields: 34/34<br>Edwin Westbringer: 33/33<br>Gregor von Hexham: 37/37<br>Olison Eul: 35/35<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 35/35<br>^ Carrying: Alexander Jorinn<br>Seyena Ikane: 34/34<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 32/32<br>Valor Inara: 34/34 |  | Mercenary A: 32/32<br>Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Male Myrmidon A: 30/30<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight A: 37/37<br>Knight B: 37/37<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter A: 35/35<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Fighter D: 35/35<br>Monk A: 28/28<br>Monk B: 28/28<br>Monk C: 28/28                                                      |  |
| <b>Allies:</b><br>Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 33/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  | Shaman A: 29/29<br>Matilda's Bow Knight A: 29/29<br>Matilda's Bow Knight B: 29/29<br>Matilda's Lance Knight A: 31/31<br>Matilda's Lance Knight B: 31/31<br>Matilda: 35/35<br>Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 30/31 Poison (4/5)<br>Female Sniper C: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Berserker: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Zos: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33 |  |

**Chris to 18,3.**

**Edwin: Move to 11, 12 and poison Female sniper C!**

**Edwin poisons Female Sniper C**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{23-7\} \times 5]+20)-(9 \times 2) = 30+80+20-18 = 112$ , autohit!  
Female Sniper C is poisoned!

Gregor moved forward and shouted at the people on the cliffs, unaware that Edwin was fast wrecking any chance of diplomacy.



"Please hear us out! We don't have to fight this day! Let us speak to your leader; if this is all a misunderstanding, we can just leave you to your business!"

**Gregor moves to (9,12)**

"You've attacked us first! Forget it!" The voice of one of the people above replied.

**Charlotte: Move to 11,14. TWANG Axeman A with Longbow.**

**Ami: To 10,14**

Valor slapped a palm against his face.



"By the gods Edwin! We could have talked to them! But you had to try out your shiny new staff!"



"I'm sorry! I thought they were going to rush us! And it didn't look like they were going to be friendly anyway..."



"Well, they certainly won't be *now*." Valor sighed, readying his blade. "Just once, I want to be able to talk instead of fight like a rational human being, you know?" He muttered to himself more than anyone.



"Hey! I thought it was a good option at the time! Poison doesn't kill unless the target is weak beforehand, it weakens them so we can take them down easier, and

the damage done can be fixed easily with rest or a simple spell. And in my defence, my previous experience in mercenary work sums up to this: Do guard work, see guys with weapons out who aren't in employers colours then fight for my life. I'm a scholar first and a warrior second, so don't give me that attitude if I think the worst could happen when I see a large amount of armed men looking angry at me!"



"And now you have another one!" Valor shouted clearly pissed. "If experience is a concern, maybe you should have deferred to an expert before firing the first shot when DIPLOMACY IS A VIABLE OPTION FOR ONCE!" You think they'll care that magic can heal them after you poison them? Better question, have you ever been poisoned by one of those staffs? I have, and it is *unpleasant*, let me tell you!"



"Oh, and you're clearly an expert on this sort of thing! A man who kills for money for a living! Yes, clearly you are qualified for talking down a small army!" Edwin shouted back. "I sure didn't see or hear you make any effort before I reacted on past experience, experience which has saved both my life and more, by the way. And for your information, I know more about this kind of magic than you ever will, both physically and mentally, which also happens to be part of the reason of why I chose it in the first place!"



"..I know I should not be laughing but seeing a "sage" doing something without thinking is quite hilarious."

And as it seemed Valor was really angry about the new guy, he pretended he was doing something important, mostly reading some random pages of the Carrion tome.



"Also sage person, you REALLY should not try to discuss with the swordman person.. you made a mistake, is it so hard to admit? If you keep making him angry you will end up with a sword on your guts or something, just saying."



"Not helping Tantallos!" Valor turned back to Edwin. "Maybe I would have had time to react if you hadn't leapt upon the chance to poison someone like a frightened weasel! And I'm a mercenary, yeah, *so are they!* I could have talked to them goddammit!"



"Alright, that's ENOUGH! Both of you!"

Gregor crossed his arms and glared at the two.



"We'll sort this out later. Right now, it looks like we're going to have to fight our way through after all. It's not what I wanted, but this means I'll need everyone concentrating on survival rather than wanting to hit each other. Anyone who feels they can't do that is welcome to wait by the wagon until we're done here."



"Fuck it, maybe I can just maim them and we can heal them before they die from exposure." Valor groused, stomping toward the enemy.

**Valor: Move to 10,15**



"You're right. This will have to come later. You can all yell at me then, if you must." Edwin replied before turning back to what he was doing, after giving a small glare at Valor first.



"Well, look at that, Gregor can be scary enough when he wants to."

She pulled on the reins, directing Ilya to fly higher to get a better view.



"Oh- does anyone else see that? There's a couple of mounted mercenaries starting to leave from the temple. Do you think they have what they came for already?"

Gregor sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. He couldn't help but think this was going to be a recurring problem, at least if Edwin wasn't willing to listen later.



"Can't see anything from down here, Seyena...and I sure hope not. Let's at least try to leave some of these people alive so we can find out where they're going."



"Roight, best prepare yerself, gonna be ah rough roide wit' these winds. Nothin' Oi haven' handled 'fore though, heh." The rider explained to his passenger as he nudged Ormm to fly upwards, off the ground. Few bats of his wings and the wyvern was off into the air again, not showing much bother with the extra passenger.



"Ever fly 'fore? Nothin' loike it Oi tell yah!" The man continued as heavy winds tried to push them around, but did little but slow them down. **Soon they touched down at 10.12, and released Alexander in the snowy forest at 10.11.**

The man looked to the enemies ahead and called out to them.



"Oy! What are yah doin' 'ere if'in yer not workin' fer this Prixima lass? We don' have ta foight, we jus' want answers, an' we're friendlier chaps than yah moight think! Least, noicer than what moight o' come 'ere, yer deep in Berebian lands durin' ah war, an' such ah large, armed group draws eyes, specially one who tends ta take long 'bout routes ta get in 'ere. Oi apologize fer our magick friend, people tend ta get jumpy when yah got armed soldiers starin' yah down, we can fix tha if'in need be. We jus' wanna talk, no need ta turn the snow red! How 'bout it, question fer question, yah ask us some, we ask yah some. Yah start, we hit the dirt up wit' the staff so its the least we can do, 'long wit' healin' 'em." The rider gives a long-winded attempt at diplomacy.

**Riven: Hold still.**

**Blonde valkyrie stays put**

**Olison to 11,13**

**Alexander: Activate Guard on all attacks.**

**Tantallos: Move to 11, 11.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"Zos, some people from that enemy group are willing to talk... and the other seem to be poisoning our troops with long-range magic." One of the Sages turned to the swordmaster.



"Do they take us for stupid? Tell our men that these Berebians or whoever

they are, are honorless and dangerous. Your orders are to kill all of them except one. I need to know what's going on here."

"Alright. Something else?"



"Yes... call me by my work name, not my first name. It sounds... alien." The swordsman chuckled. "Jokes aside; take your colleagues down the hill. When the enemy will be tangled with our footmen, you will strike with your combat magic and heal our wounded from afar."

"Good plan!" The sages moved away as Joz looked at his blade, and then at Matilda and her knights trudging through the snow.



"Why I have this nagging feeling that something is very wrong here..." He mumbled to himself, then shook his head.

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Gregor, I will attack them from the western side. Seyena, please come with me!" With that, Danya pulled on the reins and directed her pegasus to the west.



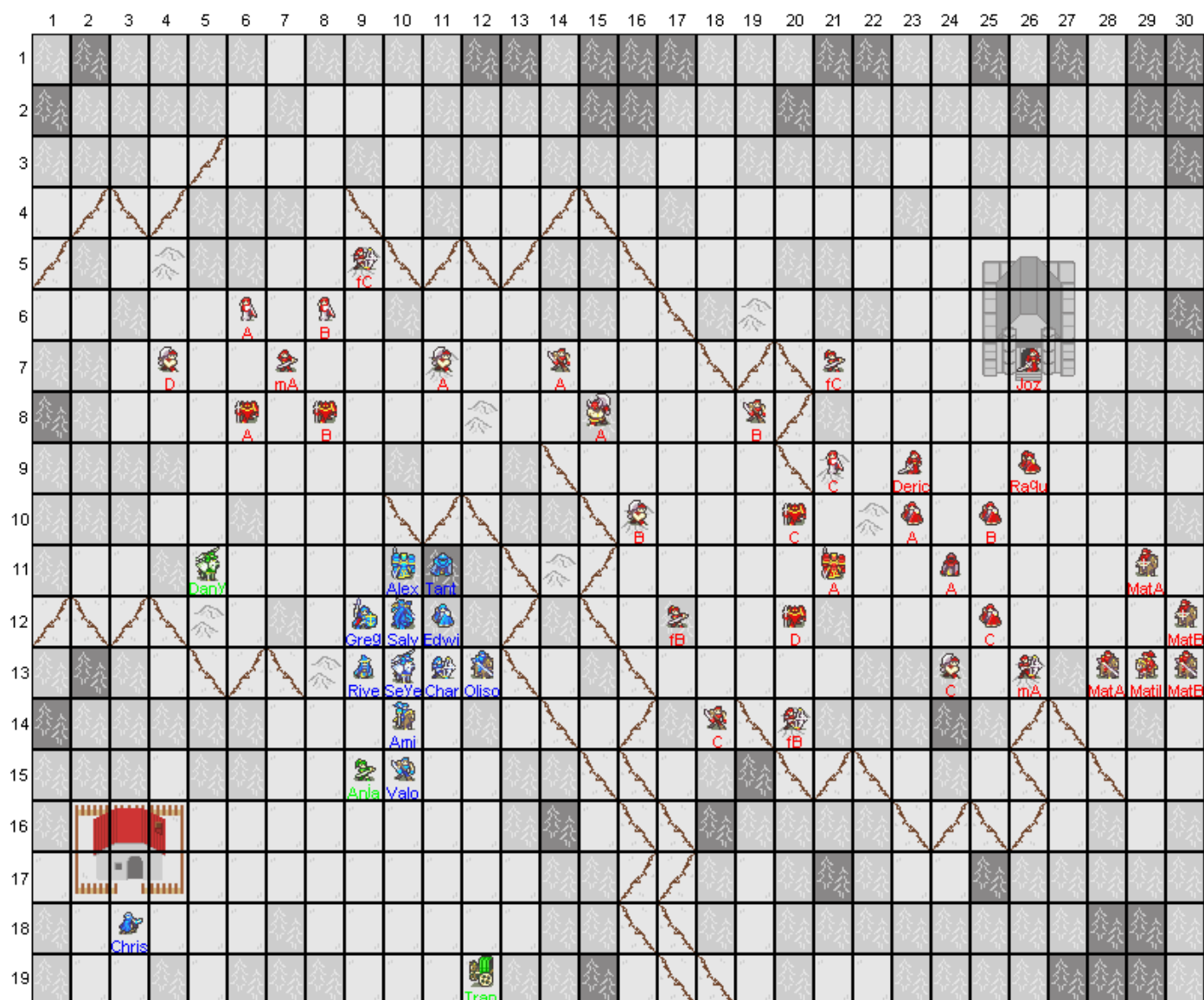
# ~~Player Turn 3~~

The wind is blowing far weaker than before - this blizzard thing might soon stop.

## Poison rolls

Female Sniper B: 2

Female Sniper C: 5



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                     |  | Enemies:                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 42/42    |  | Mercenary A: 32/32                  |  |
| Ami Storm: 28/28           |  | Mercenary B: 32/32                  |  |
| Charlotte Braxis: 32/32    |  | Mercenary C: 32/32                  |  |
| Christopher Shields: 34/34 |  | Male Myrmidon A: 30/30              |  |
| Edwin Westbringer: 33/33   |  | Female Myrmidon B: 29/29            |  |
| Gregor von Hexham: 37/37   |  | Female Myrmidon C: 29/29            |  |
| Olison Eul: 35/35          |  | Knight A: 37/37                     |  |
| Riven: 29/29               |  | Knight B: 37/37                     |  |
| Salvatore Vaughan: 35/35   |  | Knight C: 37/37                     |  |
| Seyena Ikane: 34/34        |  | Knight D: 37/37                     |  |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 32/32  |  | Fighter A: 35/35                    |  |
| Valor Inara: 34/34         |  | Fighter B: 35/35                    |  |
|                            |  | Fighter C: 35/35                    |  |
|                            |  | Fighter D: 35/35                    |  |
|                            |  | Monk A: 28/28                       |  |
|                            |  | Monk B: 28/28                       |  |
|                            |  | Monk C: 28/28                       |  |
| Allies:                    |  | Shaman A: 29/29                     |  |
| Anja: 29/29                |  | Matilda's Bow Knight A: 29/29       |  |
| Captain Danya: 33/33       |  | Matilda's Bow Knight B: 29/29       |  |
|                            |  | Matilda's Lance Knight A: 31/31     |  |
|                            |  | Matilda's Lance Knight B: 31/31     |  |
|                            |  | Matilda: 35/35                      |  |
|                            |  | Male Sniper A: 33/33                |  |
|                            |  | Female Sniper B: 28/31 Poison (3/5) |  |
|                            |  | Female Sniper C: 26/31 Poison (4/5) |  |
|                            |  | General: 41/41                      |  |
|                            |  | Berserker: 41/41                    |  |
|                            |  | Derick: 37/37                       |  |
|                            |  | Raquel Torriani: 38/38              |  |
|                            |  | Joz: 38/38                          |  |
|                            |  | Sage A: 33/33                       |  |
|                            |  | Sage B: 33/33                       |  |
|                            |  | Sage C: 33/33                       |  |



"Alright." She pulls the reins to the side, her mount flying over next to Danya.

**Seyena moves to 4,12**

**Valor: Move to 10, 13**



"Looks like none of them want to listen."

Gregor moved forward, keeping his lance lowered.



"Hello! Listen, I apologize on behalf of our sage; he's new and a little quick to act sometimes. I believe we have a common adversary, or we will if we both survive this day. Would you be willing to listen? Perhaps we could heal your sick fighters?"

**Gregor: Move to (8,10).**

The knight in front of Gregor spit on the snow.

"Our boss just told us you cannot be trusted! What about you go back home and after we're done here, we will consider talking, eh? Don't take us for fools!" The knight lifted his heavy javelin and pointed it right at Gregor's face.



"If I could go home I probably wouldn't be here" Gregor said, frowning. "Let me speak with this 'boss' of yours. Surely we can come to some form of understanding if we could explain ourselves face-to-face."

Gregor still kept his lance from pointing anywhere near the knight.

**Chris moves 1 north into the house and visits.**



"Hello? Anyone home?"

There was no one in home. There were leftovers from a meal, the bed in next room was



unmade, and there was nothing left on the clothes' hooks on the wall. Someone must've left in a hurry.

And left a peculiar pair of shoes right near the door.

**Chris got Swiftsole!**



"Hmm. I wonder what happened here...."



"Anyway, maybe Ami would like these shoes. I might as well take them - the owner must not have cared about them if he or she left without them."

Chris picked up the shoes and put them away, under his cloak, before leaving the house and politely closing the door behind him.

**Ami: Move to 8,10**

Noting the javelin pointed at Gregor's face, Alexander trudged through the snow to the best of his ability, in order to protect Gregor if needed.

**Alexander: Move to 9, 10, guard Gregor.**

**Tantallos: Hold still.**

**Riven: Move to 7,11.**

Ormm and his rider quickly took to the air again, **moving to 10.10**, perching the both of them on the edge of the cliff.



"Aye, listen ta the man, there's no need fer this. We can heal the afflicted, an' talk 'bout this loike rational people. All we want is ta explain, an' ah explanation."

Olison backs up Sal, **moving to 10,12** in his place.

Edwin grumbled quietly to himself but said nothing while watching the approaching forces carefully.

**Edwin: Move to 8, 13.**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Our boss told us to kill you, so dying you will be!" The two knights moved - one closer to Riven, one closer to Salvatore, and there was lots of javelin tossing involved, just as one of the axemen hid into the forest.

### **Knight A vs Riven**

92-5-10-5-35 = 37

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage: 25-9 = 16dmg

Riven counters!

122+5+10-22 = 115, autohit! Crit roll: 7!

Damage: 28-3 = 25x3 = 75dmg

### **Knight B vs Salvatore**

Hit: 92-2-22 = 68

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage: 25-19 = 6dmg

The monks and sages at last remembered how to levitate properly as if they somehow forgot before. //The GM did >.>

They used that newfound tactical power to great advantage.

### **Sage A uses Sleep on Salvatore**

Sleep hit:  $(30 + [\{21-7\} \times 5] + 18) - (9 \times 2) = 30 + 70 + 18 - 18 = 100$ , autohit!

Salvatore is Sleeping!

### **Monk A vs Alexander**

Hit: 128-2-5-10-22 = 89

Hit roll: 68, hit!

Damage: 19-2-6 = 11dmg

### **Monk B vs Alexander**

Hit: 128-2-5-10-22 = 89

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage: 19-2-6 = 11dmg

## ~~Ally Phase~~



"Just because you hide between trees doesn't mean I won't get you!" Danya flew toward the trees and slashed at the axeman.

### **Danya vs Axeman D**

Hit: 125+15-20-26 = 94

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage: 23+1-11 = 13dmg

Axeman D counterattacks!

Hit: 104-15-15-49 = 25

Hit roll: 30, miss!

Danya attacks again!

Hit: 125+15-20-26 = 94

Hit roll: 56, hit!

Damage: 23+1-11 = 13dmg



## ~~Player Turn 4~~

|                    |
|--------------------|
| Female Sniper B: 3 |
| Female Sniper C: 2 |



| Merchs:                    | Enemies:                 |                                                  |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 20/42    | Mercenary A: 32/32       | Monk B: 28/28                                    |
| Ami Storm: 28/28           | Mercenary B: 32/32       | Monk C: 28/28                                    |
| Charlotte Braxis: 32/32    | Mercenary C: 32/32       | Shaman A: 29/29                                  |
| Christopher Shields: 34/34 | Male Myrmidon A: 30/30   | Male Sniper A: 33/33                             |
| Edwin Westbringer: 33/33   | Female Myrmidon B: 29/29 | Female Sniper B: 25/31 <span>Poison (2/5)</span> |
| Gregor von Hexham: 37/37   | Female Myrmidon C: 29/29 | Female Sniper C: 24/31 <span>Poison (3/5)</span> |
| Olison Eul: 35/35          | Knight B: 37/37          | General: 41/41                                   |
| Riven: 13/29               | Knight C: 37/37          | Berserker: 41/41                                 |

|                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Salvatore Vaughan: 29/35<br>^ <b>Sleep (4/5)</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 34/34<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 32/32<br>Valor Inara: 34/34 | Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter A: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Fighter D: 35/35<br>Fighter D: 9/35<br>Monk A: 28/28 | Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                          |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 33/33<br>Wagon: 5/5 hits                                                                     |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                          |



"Hm. Somehow, I wasn't surprised this was going to happen, my actions or not. Oh well."

**Edwin: Move 1 space north, equip Elfire and fry Monk B!**

**Valor: Move to 10,11**



"A little. Anja... I may have to be leaving soon."

**Chris to 18,6.**



"I found these magic shoes inside. Can you come here and take them off my hands? I think Alexander needs them."

**Edwin vs Monk B**

Hit: 127+10+5+15-37 = 120, autohit!  
Damage: 29+1-19 = 11dmg

Monk B retaliates!  
Hit: 128-15-5-10-33 = 65  
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage: 19-1-19 = 0!



"Huh? What do you mean 'I may have to be leaving soon'?"

**Ami: To 9,11(Oh dear) and heal Alex**



"There's something I have to take care of. I don't know how long it'll take me

or when I'll be able to come back to the group."



"Tell everyone I'm sorry, all right?"

#### Ami heals Alexander

10+20 = Up to 30HP restored



"Um, I don't think they will appreciate your disappearance that much. Especially in such difficult combat..."

**Tantallos: Moved to 10, 9, equipped Elwind and showed his opinion about light magic to Monk A.**

**Charlotte: Move to 9,12 and TWANG Monk B with Longbow.**



"It's not something I have any control over, Anja. If I could stay, I would."

Chris gestured halfheartedly towards his group.



"They don't really need me that much. They have it all in hand. I would... just get in the way."

Anja blinked and then looked at the others.



"If you feel that way... I will pass the shoes to Alexander."

#### Tantallos vs Monk A

Hit:  $128+15+5+10-37 = 121$ , autohit!

Damage:  $24+1-19 = 6$ dmg

Monk A counters!

Hit:  $128-15-5-42 = 66$

Hit roll: 41, hit!

Damage:  $19-1-18 = 0$ !

#### Charlotte vs Monk B

Hit:  $118+10+10+10+5+7-37 = 123$ , autohit! Crit roll: 2!

Damage:  $22+1-5 = 18 \times 3 = 54$ dmg

**Alexander: Stay there, guard Salvatore.**



"It didn't have to be this way, you know!" Gregor shouted as he moved forward. The other group was clearly done talking, and so once again violence was the only option.

**Gregor: Move to (9,9), STAB Monk A with Steel Lance.**

**Olison to 8,11.**

And thusly the Monk got impaled on Gregor's hard, murderous lance, glistening with the moisture of the blood. Oh my.

**Gregor vs Monk A**

Hit:  $114+5+2-37 = 84$

Hit roll: 24, hit!

Damage:  $30-5 = 25\text{dmg}$



"Was that an attack? It just felt funny, was he trying to hug me oh-wait. He just received a hug from the sentinel person.."

Chris nodded.



"Thanks, Anja. I knew I could count on you."



"...Don't tell anyone I've gone until they notice, OK? It would be best if I just... disappeared quietly."

**Riven: Nom Concoction.**

**Seyena moves to 4,10 and murderizes axeman**

AW NAWM NAWM NAWM.

**Riven uses Concoction**

Up to 30HP restored

Fwoooosh, stab!

**Seyena vs Axeman D**

Hit:  $126-15-26 = 85$

Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage: 21-1-11 = 9dmg

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The sages got a bit closer and began to fling their long-range magics at the Gregor's friends.

### Sage A casts Sleep on Alexander

Sleep roll:  $(30 + [\{21-8\} \times 5] + 18) - (7 \times 2) = 30 + 65 + 18 - 14 = 99$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Alexander is Sleeping!

### Sage C casts Bolting on Gregor

Hit:  $105 - 3 - 41 = 61$   
Hit roll: 40, hit!  
Damage:  $33 - 5 = 28\text{dmg}$

After that, Sniper C and Myrmidon A attacked the grievously wounded sentinel. The sword tinked against Gregor's armor, who then stabbed the myrmidon.

### Sniper C vs Gregor

Hit:  $123 - 3 - 5 - 41 = 74$   
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
Damage:  $24 - 1 - 19 = 4\text{dmg}$

### Myrmidon A vs Gregor

Hit:  $123 - 15 - 3 - 5 - 41 = 59$   
Hit roll: 50, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $19 - 1 - 19 = 0 \times 3 = 0!$

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $114 + 15 + 3 + 5 - 46 = 91$   
Hit roll: 86, hit!  
Damage:  $30 + 1 - 7 = 24\text{dmg}$

Tantallos found himself under attack from Knight B who tried to use the trees as a cover from the black magic. It didn't work very well.

### Knight B vs Tantallos

Hit:  $92 - 5 - 42 = 45$   
Hit roll: 7, hit!  
Damage:  $25 - 11 = 14\text{dmg}$

Tantallos counters!

Hit:  $128 + 5 + 10 - 20 - 22 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $24 - 3 = 21\text{dmg}$

Tantallos counters again!

Hit:  $128 + 5 + 10 - 20 - 22 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $24 - 3 = 21\text{dmg}$

In the end, Sage B cast his magic and healed the myrmidon stabbed by Gregor a moment ago.

### Sage B physics Myrmidon A

$10 + 21 = \text{Up to 31HP healed}$

Matilda turned her head toward the hill she and her troops left when she heard the mighty thunder of Bolting roar.



"Louis, hand me the telescope glass." She took the tool from one of her knights and brought it to her eye, looking at the battlefield, checking on the mercenaries. At one moment, she gasped, took the telescope from her eye, and then looked again.



"Impossible..."

"Something wrong, Matilda?"



"I think I saw one of my companions... from the times when I still served that Berebian idiot as a troubadour in his knightly ranks... But all people from that unit are dead as far as I know. Must be someone else..." She paused, and then handed the tool back.



"Let's go, we have a delivery to make!"

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja took the shoes from Christopher. Then she hugged him, before pulling away with a smile.



"Just don't get yourself killed, spy guy."

In the meanwhile, Danya snapped at her pegasus with the reins and rushed toward Gregor, stabbing the nearby myrmidon on her silver lance, and easily evaded his counterattack.

#### Danya vs Myrmidon A

Hit:  $125+15+5-46 = 99$

Hit roll: 71, hit!

Damage:  $29+1-7 = 23$  dmg

Myrmidon A retaliates!

Hit:  $125-15-5-15-49 = 41$

Hit roll: 78, miss!

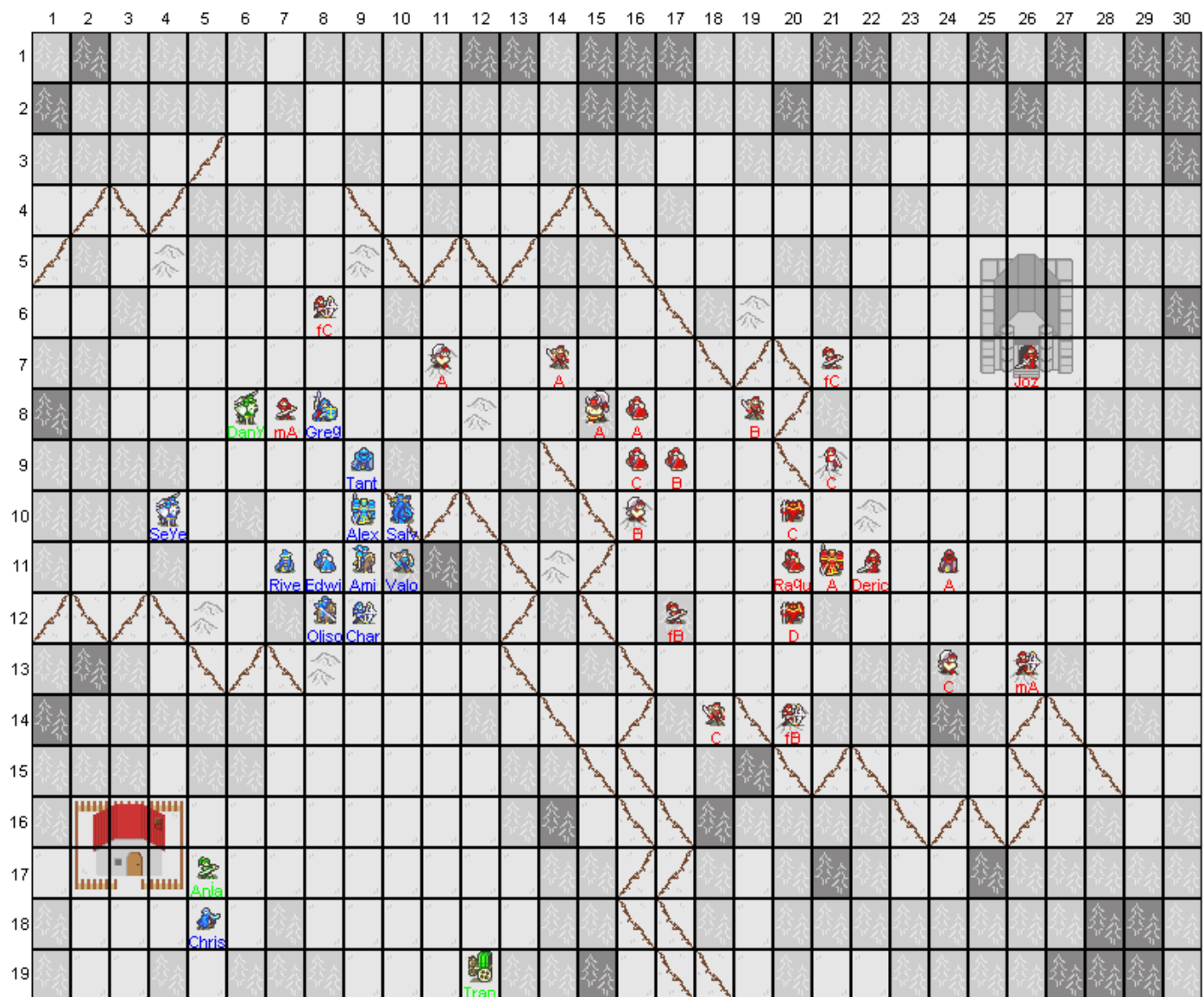


# ~~Player Turn 5~~

## Poison rolls

Female Sniper B: 2

Female Sniper C: 3



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p>Alexander Jorinn: 42/42<br/> ^ Sleep (4/5)<br/> Ami Storm: 28/28<br/> Charlotte Braxis: 32/32<br/> Christopher Shields: 34/34<br/> Edwin Westbringer: 33/33<br/> Gregor von Hexham: 5/37<br/> Olison Eul: 35/35<br/> Riven: 29/29<br/> Salvatore Vaughan: 29/35<br/> ^ Sleep (3/5)<br/> Seyena Ikane: 34/34<br/> Tantallus Forsaken: 18/32<br/> Valor Inara: 34/34</p> | <p>Mercenary A: 32/32<br/> Mercenary B: 32/32<br/> Mercenary C: 32/32<br/> Male Myrmidon A: 7/30<br/> Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br/> Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br/> Knight C: 37/37<br/> Knight D: 37/37<br/> Fighter A: 35/35<br/> Fighter C: 35/35<br/> Fighter D: 35/35<br/> Monk C: 28/28</p>      |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
| <p>Anja: 29/29<br/> Captain Danya: 33/33<br/> Wagon: 5/5hits</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Shaman A: 29/29<br/> Male Sniper A: 33/33<br/> Female Sniper B: 23/31 Poison (1/5)<br/> Female Sniper C: 21/31 Poison (2/5)<br/> General: 41/41<br/> Berserker: 41/41<br/> Derick: 37/37<br/> Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br/> Joz: 38/38<br/> Sage A: 33/33<br/> Sage B: 33/33<br/> Sage C: 33/33</p> |  |

**Ami: Move to 8,9 and heal Greg**

Bling~

**Ami heals Gregor**

10+20 = Up to 30HP healed

**Charlotte: 8,10. Longbow -> Female Sniper C.**

Chris returned the hug.



"I'll try not to. Hopefully I'll be back soon, Anja."

**Chris goes south and leaves the map.**

Gregor spoke to the myrmidon.



"There's no way for you to hurt me. Give me your sword and surrender now, and I won't have to kill you."

He hefted his lance in a threatening manner.

**Tantallos: Move 7,6 and equip Carrion before attacking the Sniper!**



"Plague Dragon, I require your assistance in this attack!"

Tantallos moved both of his sleeves up holding the tome, and sent a swarm of poisonous bugs towards the sniper, hoping to hit.

Edwin eyed up Sage C's book with a grim look on his face. Definitely a threat that needed to be taken care of sooner rather than later.

**Edwin: Equip sleep staff and zap Sage C with it.**

**Charlotte vs Female Sniper C**

Hit:  $118+10+10+10+5+7-44 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $22+1-15 = 8$ dmg

**Tantallos vs Female Sniper C**

Hit:  $113+5-44 = 74$

Hit roll: 86, miss!

Female Sniper C retaliates!

Hit:  $120-5-46 = 69$

Hit roll: 14, hit!  
Damage:  $24 - 11 = 13\text{dmg}$

#### Edwin casts Sleep on Sage C

Sleep hit:  $(30 + [\{23 - 15\} \times 5] + 20) - (10 \times 2) = 30 + 40 + 20 - 20 = 70$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!



"Well.. this did not go as I expected. Would you like some tea before shooting me down?"

**Olison moves to 8,10 and taps (attacks) Alex with the blunt side of his sword.**



"Jorin, get up. You can't help from down there."

TINK!

#### Quote from: Olison vs Alexander

Autohit!  
Damage:  $20 - 2 - 25 = 0\text{dmg!}$   
Alexander wakes up!



"Such a quiet Sniper, you could have at least said "no" !"

**Gregor STABs at the Myrmidon, aiming to incapacitate rather than kill.**



"What... was that? Magic? Rrgh."

**Move to 9, 8 and guard Gregor.**

Gregor incapacitated the swordguy so hard he died. Twice.

#### Gregor vs Myrmidon A

Hit:  $114 + 15 + 5 + 11 - 46 = 99$   
Hit roll: 48, hit! Crit roll: 3!  
Damage:  $30 + 1 + 2 - 7 = 26 \times 3 = 78\text{dmg}$



"Dammit! They always pick the worst time to duck!"



"Sal? Salvatore, wake up, you're supposed to be talking these people into talking to us!"

**Valor: Ring Salvatore's bell with Iron Sword!**



"Hey, Tantallos. You look like you need a little help."

**Seyena moves to 6,6 and heals Tantallos**

**Valor vs Salvatore**

Autohit!  
Damage:  $18-1-19 = 0\text{dmg!}$   
Salvatore wakes up!

**Seyena heals Tantallos**

$6+10 = \text{Up to 16HP restored}$



"Oh, thank you. But will not the crossbow be a problem to you?"

Riven moved over to the sniper Tantallos had failed to murder.



"Hi there! My name's Riven. Instead of being murdered by dark magics, how about you start working for me? You could even wait until this battle is over."

**Riven: Move to 8,7. Convince Sniper to surrender.**

The rider got up with a start as something clanged off of his armor.



"Wha-Jus' ah bit lon... What just happened? Oi... Was talkin' then Oi felt tired fer some reason..." He paused as he took stock of the situation. Looking down at Valor, remembering he said something to him, then looking towards the others to see fighting and dead in the field.



"...Oi think it may be ta late fer preventin' the foight now..." He felt this

whole fight was a mistake, and his voice made such bare.



"But maybe we can stop the fight still." The man sounded determined.  
"Oy, Valor, need ah lift over this 'ere cliff?"

Valor grimaced, blood draining from his face.



"...Guh, fine. Whatever wraps this mess up sooner. Just... Try to keep low, will ya?"

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The Sages started it all again.

### Sage B physics Female Sniper C

10+21 = Up to 31HP healed

### Sage C vs Alexander

Hit: 105-10-2-22 = 71

Hit roll: 39, hit! Crit roll: 1!

Damage: 33-2-6 = 25x3 = 75dmg

### Sage A casts Sleep on Ami

Sleep roll:  $(30+[\{23-11\} \times 5] + 18) - (9 \times 2) = 30 + 60 + 18 - 18 = 90$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Ami falls asleep!

After that, the female sniper moved past Tantallos, raised her crossbow, and twanged Seyena to the ground.

### Female Sniper C vs Seyena

Hit: 123+10-51 = 82

Hit roll: 48, hit!

Damage: 72-10 = 62dmg

## ~~Ally Phase~~

While Anja tried to catch up with the main group, Danya took her pegasus away from the sniper and swooshed at one of the axemen perched at the hill.

### Danya vs Axeman A

Hit: 125+15-20-26 = 94

Hit roll: 75, hit!

Damage: 23+1-11 = 13dmg

Axeman A counters!

Hit: 99-15-15-49 = 20

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage: 31-1-13 = 17dmg

Hit: 125+15-20-26 = 94

Hit roll: 22, hit!

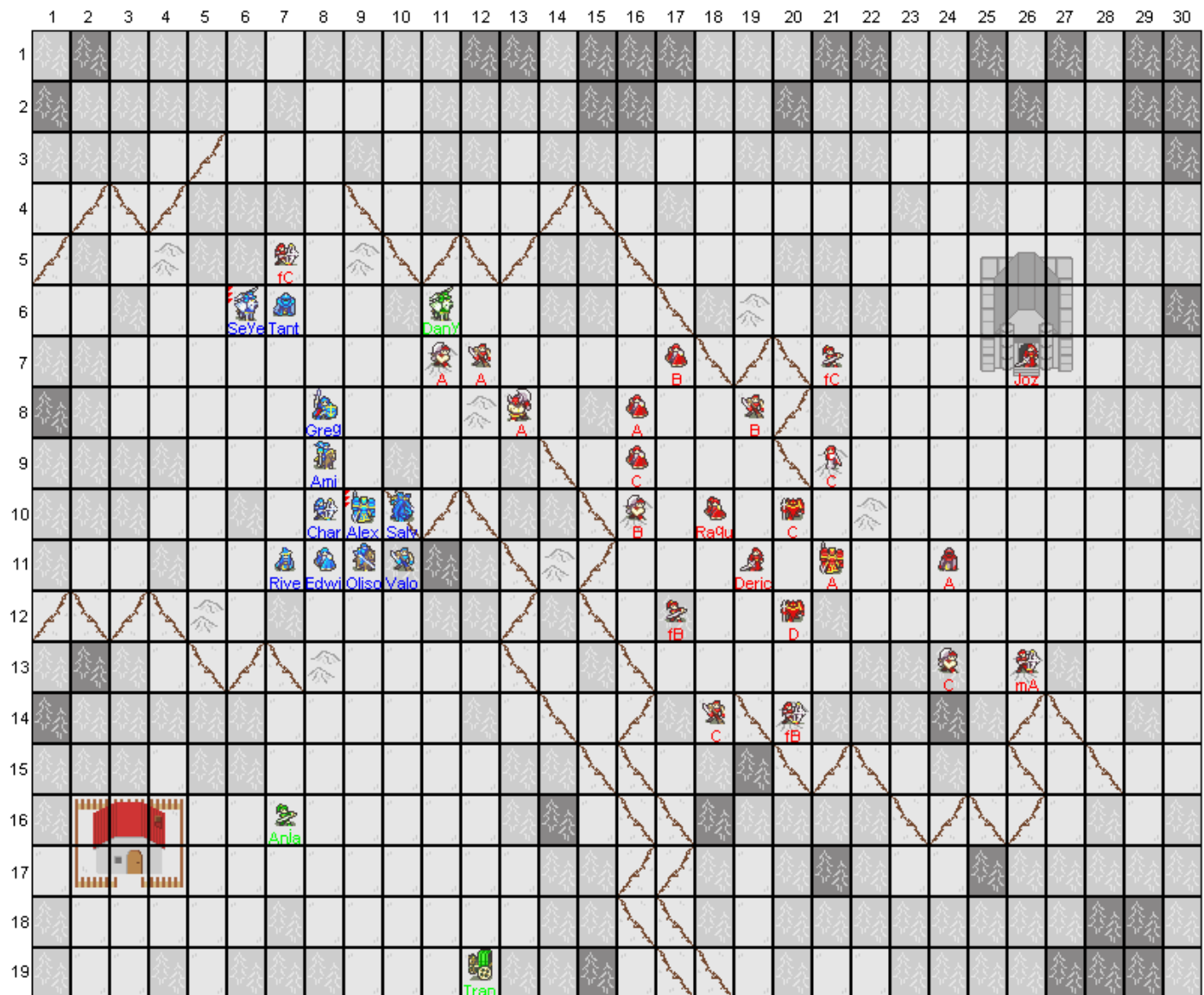
Damage: 23+1-11 = 13dmg

## ~~Player Turn 6~~

### Poison rolls

Female Sniper B feels better

Female Sniper C: 2



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/43 <b>3/3</b><br>Ami Storm: 28/29 <b>Sleep (4/5)</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 33/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38<br>Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: -/35 <b>3/3</b><br>Tantallus Forsaken: 21/33<br>Valor Inara: 34/35 |  | Mercenary A: 32/32<br>Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter A: 9/35<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29<br>Male Sniper A: 33/33 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  | Female Sniper B: 23/31<br>Female Sniper C: 29/31 <b>Poison (1/5)</b><br>General: 41/41<br>Berserker: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33                            |  |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |

**Charlotte heads to 8,7 and TWANGs Fem Sniper C A with Killer Bow.** Now with a stunning 58 Crt!



"...I guess that answers my question."

**Tantallos moved to 6,5 and changed to the Worm tome again before trying to attack the Sniper once more!**



"We need to stop those sages before they mess us up even further!" Edwin shouted over the chaos.

**Edwin: Zap the bezerker with the sleep staff.**

**Charlotte vs Female Sniper C**

Hit:  $134+10+7-44 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $23+1-15 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Tantallos vs Female Sniper C**

Hit:  $130-44 = 86$   
Hit roll: 27, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $27-7 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

**Edwin casts Sleep on Berserker**

Sleep hit:  $(30+[\{23-5\} \times 5]+21)-(8 \times 2) = 30+90+21-18 = 124$ , autohit!  
Berserker is Sleeping!



"That is more like it!"

**Olison to 9,8**



"No!" The rider shouted as he saw Alex and Seyena fall to their wounds, and seeing Ami go slump in the saddle did little to improve the situation. Salvatore took a deep breathe, kicking Ormm off of the cliff and landing near Valor.



"Thin's aren' lookin' good, hop on quick." Rescuing Valor, the wyvern flew again to 9.9, although keeping lowish to the ground, and released the swordsman at 10.9.

The whole time they flew however was in rather uncharacteristic silence, although barely heard past the harsh wind Salvatore was quietly muttering something to himself.



"...Tests ta the wicked are but the path ta truth, let not the sins o' the past lay claim tha o' the future, control is the virtue o' the wise, solace tha o' the good, kindness tha o' the righteous. Let not tha which tempts..."

**Gregor: Move to (9,7) and FLING Javelin at the axe dude. +25 crit from new personal skill and support with Charlotte :v**

**Gregor vs Axeman A**

Hit:  $112+10+11+5-15-20-26 = 77$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

Gregor attacks again!

Hit:  $112+10+11+5-15-20-26 = 77$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $29+2-1-11 = 19\text{dmg}$

Valor remained completely immobile and silent throughout the short flight, concentrating on not panicking. Once he was dropped off in another forest, Valor steadied himself against a tree, panting.



"Guh. Can't stop, gotta focus, gotta get to those casters..."

**Riven: Move to 7,9 and Flux Ami**

**Riven vs Ami**

Autohit!

Damage:  $28-12 = 16\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Long-range magicks ahoy!

**Sage C vs Ami**

Hit:  $105-10-5-48 = 42$

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage:  $33-12 = 21$

**Sage A casts Sleep on Edwin**

Sleep hit:  $(30+[\{21-20\} \times 5]+18)-(8 \times 2) = 30+5+18-16 = 37$

Hit roll: 11

Edwin is put to Sleep!

The mercenary went onto the hill and waved his sword at Danya, and the pegasus captain responded by cutting his throat open.

**Mercenary A vs Danya**

Hit:  $107-5-15-49 = 39$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

Danya counters!



Hit: 125+5-20-28 = 82  
Hit roll: 44, hit! Crit roll: 3!  
Damage: 23-12 = 11x3 = 33dmg

The third sage turned around and his magic flew all the way toward the second female sniper of the mercenary unit.

Sage B physics Female Sniper B

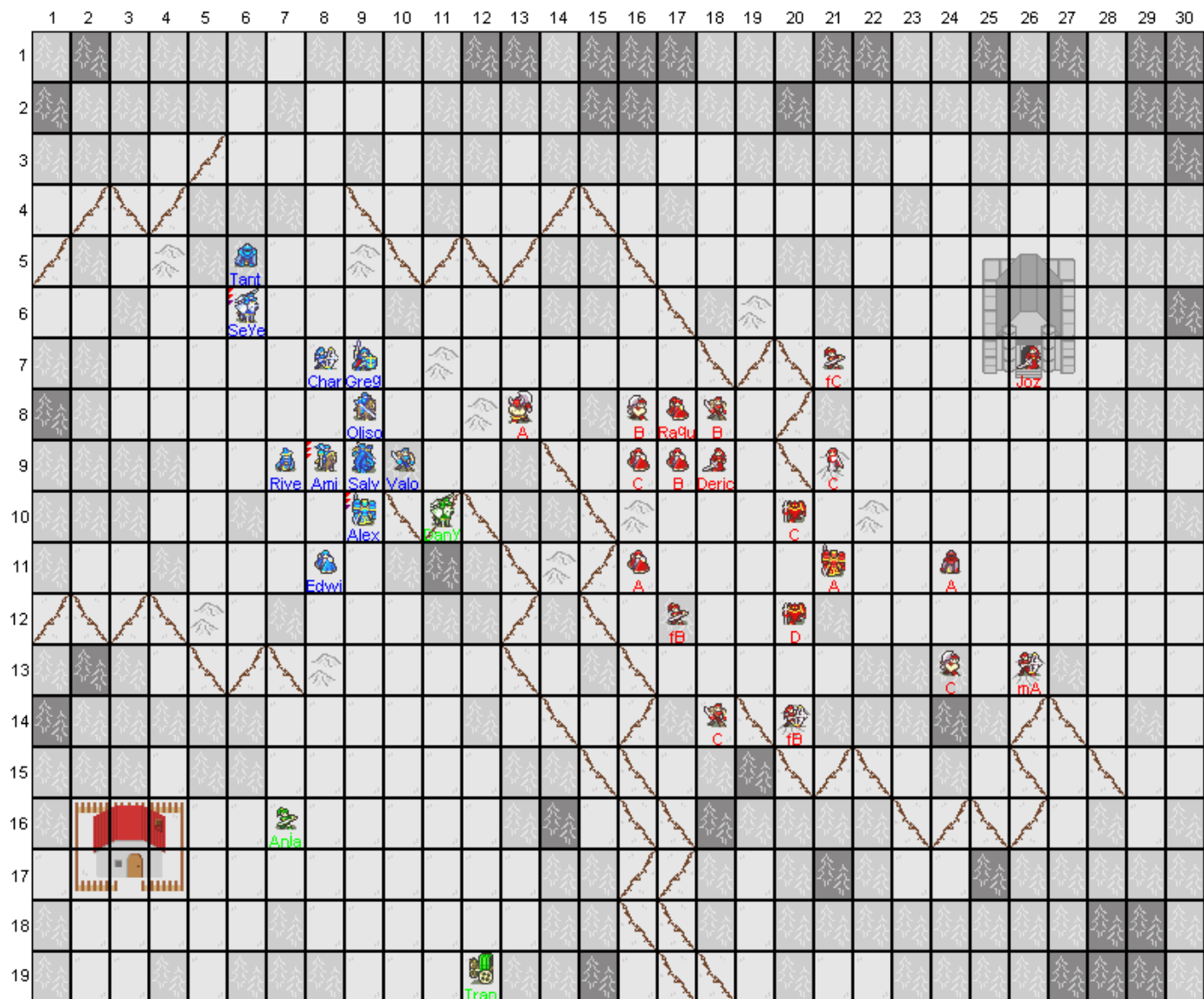
10+21 = Up to 31HP restored

~~Ally Phase~~

Danya flew from one side of the slope to another, gritting her teeth and eyeing the clump of dangerous enemies.

~~Player Turn 7~~

The wind have weakened to the point it no longer slows down the fliers.



Weather:

| Mercs:                               |  | Enemies:                 |                              |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/43 2/3           |  | Mercenary B: 32/32       | Male Sniper A: 33/33         |
| Ami Storm: -/29 3/3                  |  | Mercenary C: 32/32       | Female Sniper B: 31/31       |
| Charlotte Braxis: 32/33              |  | Female Myrmidon B: 29/29 | General: 41/41               |
| Edwin Westbringer: 34/34 Sleep (4/5) |  | Female Myrmidon C: 29/29 | Berserker: 41/41 Sleep (4/5) |
| Gregor von Hexham: 35/38             |  | Knight C: 37/37          | Derick: 37/37                |

|                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                             |                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: -/35 <b>2/3</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 21/33<br>Valor Inara: 34/35 | Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 | Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                             |                                                                                         |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                             |                                                                                             |                                                                                         |

**Valor moves one space east.**



"Yo, ugly!" Valor hollered, thoughts of peace now far from his mind. "Let's dance."

**CAPSLOTTE: MOVE 1 N 1 W AND SPRINKLE MY MAGIC PIXIE DUST ON SEYENA**

Valor got loud snoring as a response, whilst Seyena got some white powder up her nose.

**Charlotte uses Vulnerary on Seyena**

Up to 5HP healed



"Every time I come up with a plan, someone ruins it. Or ignores me. Or waits until the last possible second to enact it. Stupid snow. Stupid Wizard. Stupid hard-headed mercenaries who'd rather fight than talk. Stupid Hell-Bitch. Stupid bounty. Stupid..." Valor continued grumbling for an extended period.



"Oh. You had a plan?"



"I have had several over the course of my career. A multitude, I believe it would be fair to say. Lately they just fizzle out. Also, magic is bizarre, people are falling asleep in freakin' waist deep snow, you can't tell me that's natural." Valor trudged some more. "Not that it was a well developed plan, just keep the guy with the axe from claiming the nice defensive terrain and then dropping his ass. Of course, it's completely unnecessary now, not unlike this entire fight."

**Gregor climbs to the top of a nearby slope (move 2 spaces east) to get a better look.** He gulped before shouting down to the rest of the group.



"There's at least three sages up there, along with guys with axes and swords! I don't even know how many more must be waiting further up!"

**Tantallos: Move to 9,5.**

The wyvern rider gritted his teeth at seeing Ami get downed just after waking up, but relaxed a bit when he saw Seyena get back up. **Taking out his concoction, he used it on Alexander...**



"Yah got yer home ta win back, no toime ta be bleedin', yer not goin' out loike this 'er Oi'll be damned more." ...Then flew over to 6.7 and used another dose of concoction on Seyena.



"Yer still hurt somethin' bad even if'in yah got yer feet, this should help yah."

**Olison to 8,8. Use last Vulnerary on Ami.**



"Up and at 'em. Those mages won't be standing for long..."

**Riven: 9,8.**

**Salvatore uses Concoction on Alexander**

Up to 15HP healed

**Salvatore uses Concoction on Seyena**

Up to 30HP healed

**Olison uses Vulnerary on Ami**

Up to 5HP restored

~~Enemy Phase~~

Zos looked from his spot at the fighting and gritting his teeth.



"This is not going well. Maybe if..." The swordmaster rubbed his chin, and

then lifted a small horn that he had attached to his belt. He blown into it, the instrument producing a bleat-like noise. The mercenaries listened to it, as Zos played on the horn again. The mercenaries began to retreat up the slope.



"I should've pulled those guys into a trap instead of letting them come up like this. Grr..."

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Oi, this one's mine!" Danya swooped down at the sleeping berserker.

#### Danya vs Berserker

Hit: Autohit!

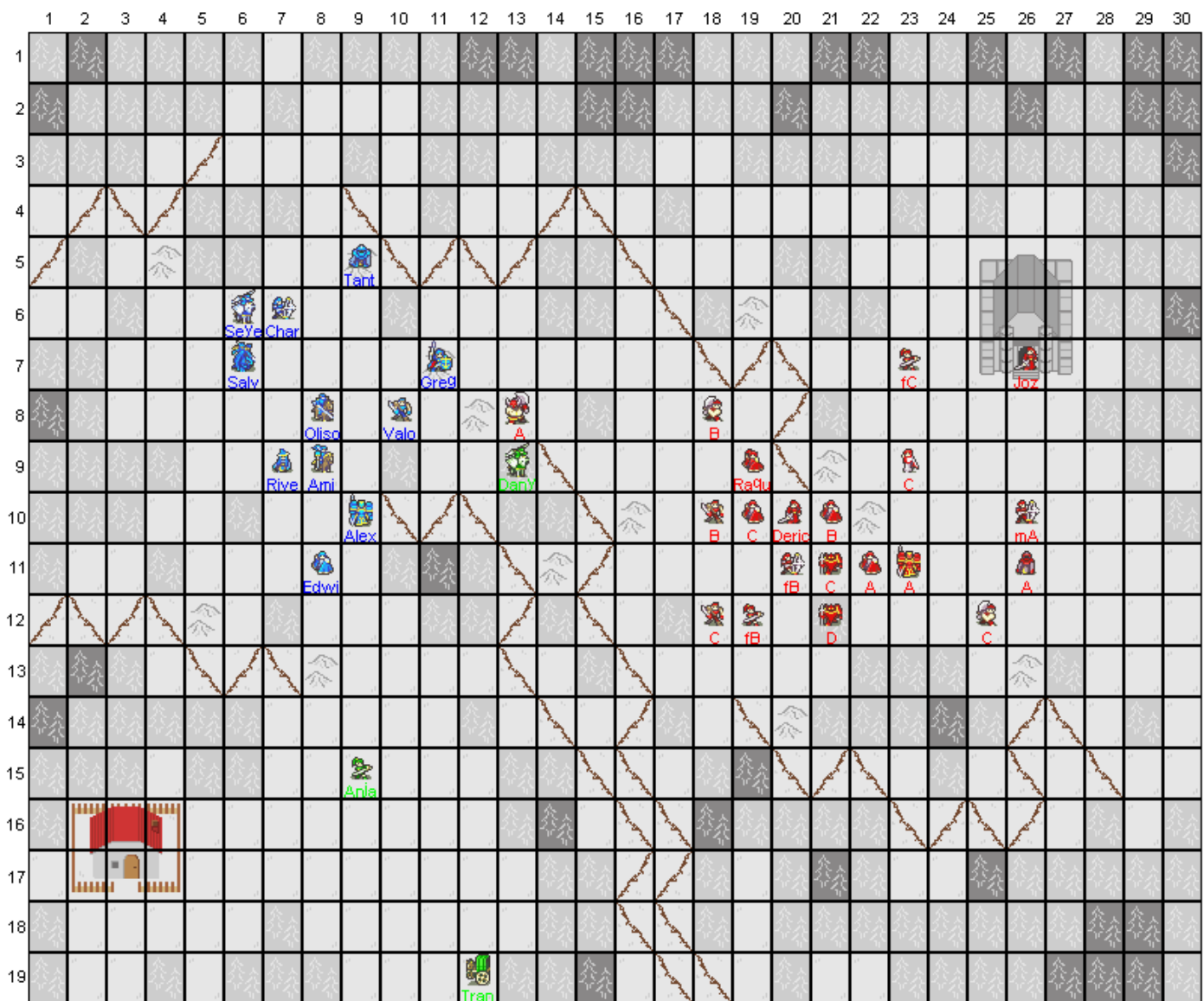
Damage:  $29+1-12 = 18\text{dmg}$

Danya attacks again!

Hit: Autohit!

Damage:  $29+1-12 = 18\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 8~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 15/43<br>Ami Storm: 5/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34 Sleep (3/5)<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38<br>Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 21/33<br>Valor Inara: 34/35 |  | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 |  |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Berserker: 5/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33                    |  |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

**Ami: to 9,9 and heal Alex with heal**

Blinkblinkblink~

**Ami heals Alexander**

10+20 = Up to 30HP restored

Alex growls a little bit, and heads up to attempt to reinforce, moving to **9, 7**

**Move a space east which would put me at 12,9, no matter what the map says.**

Charlotte gestured toward the pegasus girl.



"Hey. How are you holding up?"



"A little shaken up from the fall, but I'm fine overall."

She brushed some snow from her armor- which was now dented from the arrow.



"How are you doing yourself? A couple people seemed upset about the fact we're fighting these mercenaries."

Salvatore looked to Charlotte, then the Seyena.



"Hope tha' suited yah, Oi can' stick around, gotta get forward. If'in yah can, can yah see ta Ami? She's still hurt somethin' bad." Just about to move Ormm onward again, the man hesitated, before looking back at the two, searching for the right words.



"Stay safe, yeah? Tell Ami tha' fer me too." Good enough, he guesses.

**The rider flies to 12.8**, looking down at the axe user.



"Jus' drop it, no more need fer pointless killin', senseless foightin', all o' this never had ta happen."

Gregor shouted downhill towards Valor.



"Looks like they're falling back to that crypt Mannan mentioned. I don't suppose they'd be more willing to talk now?"

Valor's shoulders drooped.



"Honestly? I think they're going to fight until we drop their commander. Once a fight starts, it's a damn sight harder to stop it than preventing it in the first place. They're in deep, and they've probably gotten what they want from that tomb. Even if they haven't, how hard are they going to think it'll be to grab the dragonstone and get out? Not worth abandoning the job at this point."

Valor peered at the enemy forces, one of the sword users catching his eye.



"...Nah, couldn't be."

Gregor sighed.



"I was afraid you'd say that. Still, maybe at least some of them will be willing to see reason now, if only because of how badly this fight has been going for them so far."

He peered towards the retreating enemies. Sadly, his long-distance vision wasn't all that great and he couldn't make out whatever it was Valor might have noticed.



"Like there was any chance at preventing a fight. They have their job, we have ours. We wouldn't budge if they tried to talk us into surrendering either."

She turned towards Valor, noticing his expression.



"Valor, what's wrong?"

**Move to 11,8 and attack the Berserker.**



"Do not mind if I do.~"

#### Tantalos vs Berserker

Hit:  $130+5-34 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $27-5 = 22$ dmg



"I just wish we could have talked to these people instead of fighting them. They're just trying to make a living."

**Olison to 10,7**



"It might be more possible than you think now, Valor. It seems they are attempting to regroup, and if their long-range magics start to wear then we may be able to dig down and try to negotiate from there. I would have suggested we try to take that axeman hostage for extra leverage, but somehow I doubt he would have cooperated..."

**Seyena moves to 10,9 and heals Ami. She then flutters over to 12,9**

**Riven: Move 1N.**

#### Seyena heals Ami

$10+7 =$  Up to 17HP restored

**CAPSLLOTTE: NO TIEM TO RP MOVE 2 E**

**Gregor remains on the hill, watching the enemy forces and waiting for the rest to catch up.**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The mercenaries continued their retreat up the hill, and few already taken their positions. Including the sage with his sleep staff, which he pointed at Valor.

#### Sage casts Sleep on Valor

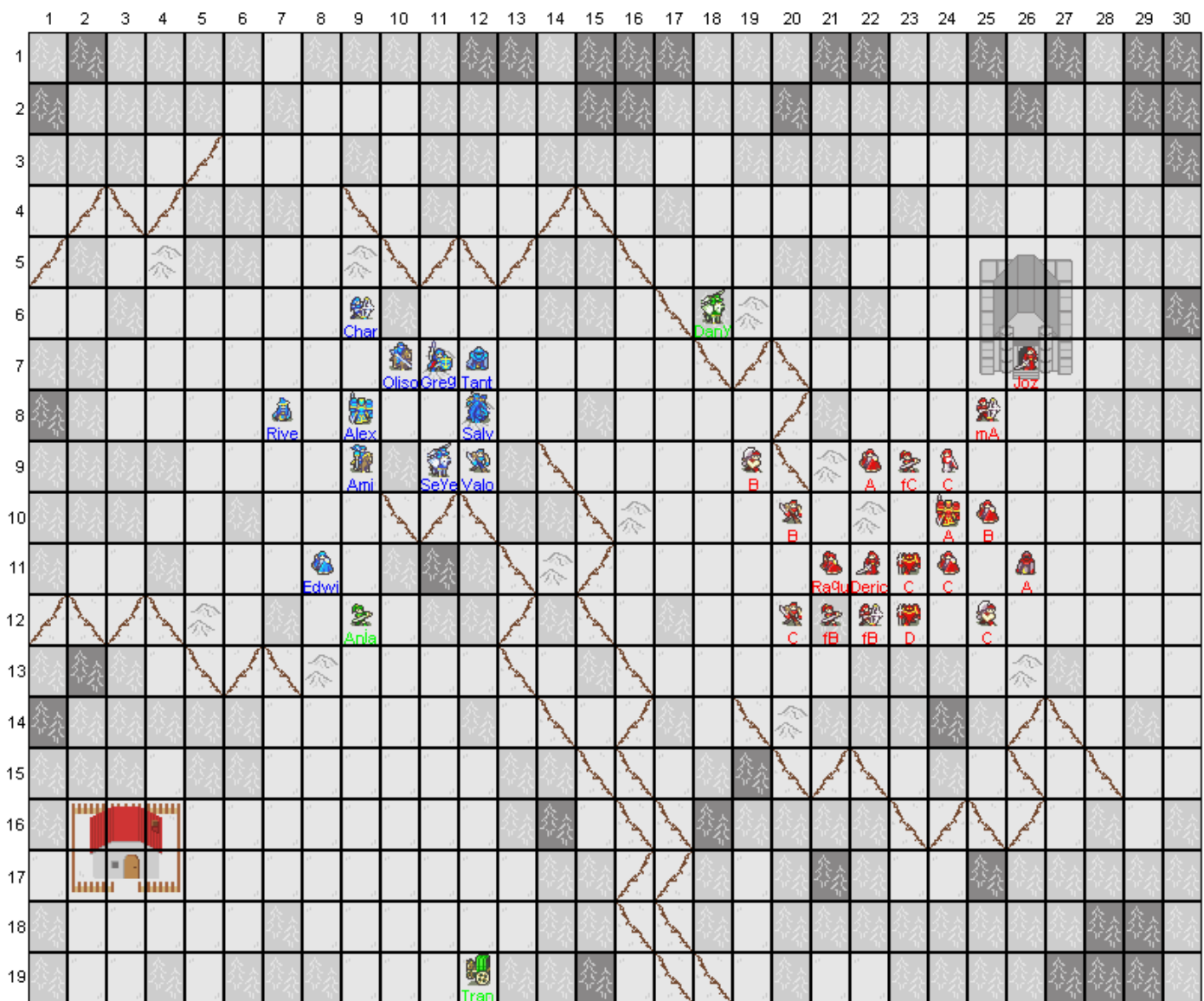
Sleep hit:  $(30+[\{21-8\} \times 5]+18)-(2 \times 10) = 30+65+18-20 = 93$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Valor is asleep!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja moved closer to the group, Danya flew all the way across the slope.



# ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 22/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34 <b>Sleep (2/5)</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38<br>Olson Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 21/33<br>Valor Inara: 34/35 <b>Sleep (6/7)</b> |  | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33                                       |  |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

**Alexander: Move to 11, 8.**



"DANYA! Fall back, they'll slaughter you!"

**Charlotte: Move 1 S, 2 E if gregor moves! Alternately, 3 E.**

**Olison to 10,6.**



"What she said! Stick together if you want to live!"

**Gregor: Move 3 East.**



"This is taking too long, Seyena, can you grab my Soothe from the wagon? I would but this snow..."

**Salvatore: Fly to 14.6**



"Oy, don' be gettin' seperated from us, be ah moight bit dangerous if'in yah get ta far. Specially wit' 'em magick usin' levitatin' finks 'ey got. 'Sides, 'ey don' look loike 'ey be goin' anywhere anytoime soon, 'ey gotta protect tha' crypt."

**Tantalos: Move to 14, 5.**



"Alright. I'll be right back. Anyone else need anything from the wagon?"

**Seyena flitters over to 12,17**

**Ami: To 11,8**

**Riven: Move to 9,7.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"Joz, everyone have retreated. What do we do now?"



"What kind of question is that?" The swordmaster asked, and then, with a sigh, he crossed his arms at his chest, his eyes locked at the group of mercenaries going up the slope.



"We wait until they get closer."

### ~~Ally Phase~~

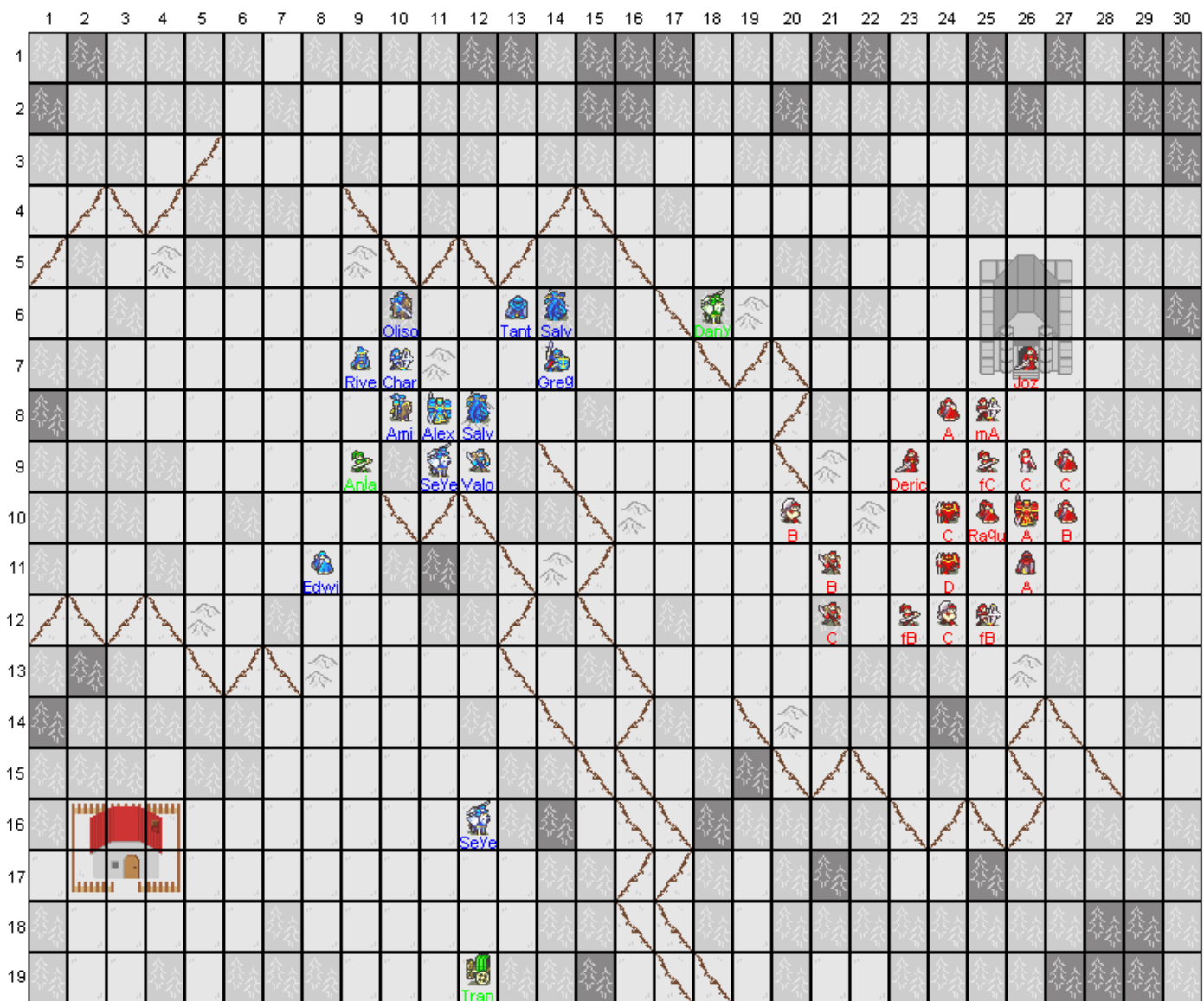
Danya laughed a little.



"Thanks for concern, but I'm pretty sure I will survive."

She didn't move from the forested spot, though.

# ~~Player Turn 10~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 22/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34 Sleep (1/5)<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38<br>Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 21/33<br>Valor Inara: 34/35 Sleep (5/7) |  | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33                                       |  |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |



"What are they up to?"

**Ami: Move to 13,8**



"Hey Sal, do you think you can drop me in that stand of trees to the south?"

Gregor points up the slope, toward (17,12).

The wyvern rider judged the distance, then frowned.



"Oi can' get yah tha' far roight quick, but Oi can get yah ta those hills if'in yah want, 'er as close ta those trees as Oi can manage, 'er if'in yer okay wit' ah small wait Oi can get yah ta those trees yah wanted."

**Olison to 12,7.**

Gregor examined the hill, and nodded.



"That hill sounds good. I'm sure the others would prefer getting a lift as well, so no sense in keeping them waiting." He took a deep breath. What would flying be like?



"Roight, hop on, won' be but ah short jaunt, specially now tha' the winds be gone, ain' gonna be nearly as bumpy." Once Gregor got on, Ormm beat his wings a few times before taking off into the air.



"Yah ever fly 'fore this? Exhilaratin', ain' it? Specially up north 'ere wit' the brisk wind an' snow, is ah real soight if'in yah ask me ta be lookin' down at. 'Course Oi don' suggest tha' if'in yah got ah problem wit' heights."

**Salvatore: Rescue Gregor, fly to 16.9, release Gregor on Hills (16.10).**



"No, never flown before. No problems with heights either." Nevertheless, he barely managed to stay on his feet when getting off the wyvern's back. The flight had

been over almost as soon as it started, and he felt slightly disoriented because of it. He adjusted his monocle, which had fallen off during the flight, before speaking again. "I'll have to try that again some other time. Can you help get the others up here?"

**Tantallos: Move to 15,8.**

**Charlotte: MOVE 1 N 2 E**



"I hate snow I HATE SNOW."

**Seyena moves to 12, 18 and grabs Ami's restore staff or something, leaves her glaive behind if inventory issues arrive. She then flies off to 12,12**

**Riven: Move to 13,7.**

**Alexander moves 2 east.**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The mercenaries spread out in half crescent. Of sorts. One of the Sages then put Gregor to sleep.

#### **Sage A casts Sleep on Gregor**

Sleep hit:  $(30 + [\{21 - 5\} \times 5] + 18) - (9 \times 2) = 30 + 80 + 18 - 18 = 110$ , autohit!

Gregor is asleep!

"Joz, I just looked to the east. Matilda and her companions managed to leave the forest and are going down the road in full gallop." The male sniper said, making the swordmaster grin a bit.



"Your eyesight always amazed me. At least they have secured the money..."

He mumbled to himself as the sniper took the position nearby.



"What do you think of this, Derick? Any chances to see tomorrow morning?"

Joz suddenly spoke with rather grim voice.



"Of course! Just let me at em!"

Raquel looked over at Derick, who was still as eager as ever. She smiled briefly at his

confidence, then looked at Joz seriously. Though it was somewhat uncharacteristic of her, she knew she had to speak up as well.



"I am aware you didn't enquire of me as well, and I'm still new, and I apologize for speaking up. They've already cut their way through a third of our total strength here, and they don't seem daunted at all. With respect, we have what we were hired to seek, and we've bought the time we need for Lady Matilda to withdraw in good order. As tempting as it is to stay to stay and crack the secrets of this tomb, it will cost us quite a few lives to hold the line here even if we prevail." *I can always come back to this tomb after these Berebians move on*, she thought inwardly, frowning as she watched the Berebians' continuing approach. Their fliers continued to rise and fall as they continue to carry their troops ever closer, along with that third flying shadow steadily keeping an eye on all their movements from their right. Aloud, she continued. "If we do stand fast, we may wish to have our forward line at least fall back far enough to set up a killing ground right where the path opens up onto the summit of this hill, so we can concentrate our full force of mercenaries, fighters, and knights on them all at once rather than a couple soldiers at a time."

A faint smile flickered across her face as the distinctive shadow of a wyvern rose from the main body of the troops once more, the only hint of its extra passenger a slight hesitancy in its ascent.



"If we can eliminate their pegasi and wyverns, it should make it difficult for them to pursue Lady Matilda in this weather even if we fail to hold them; they'll lose their scouts and their ferries in a single blow. Not that we will inevitably lose, but we must plan for all possibilities."

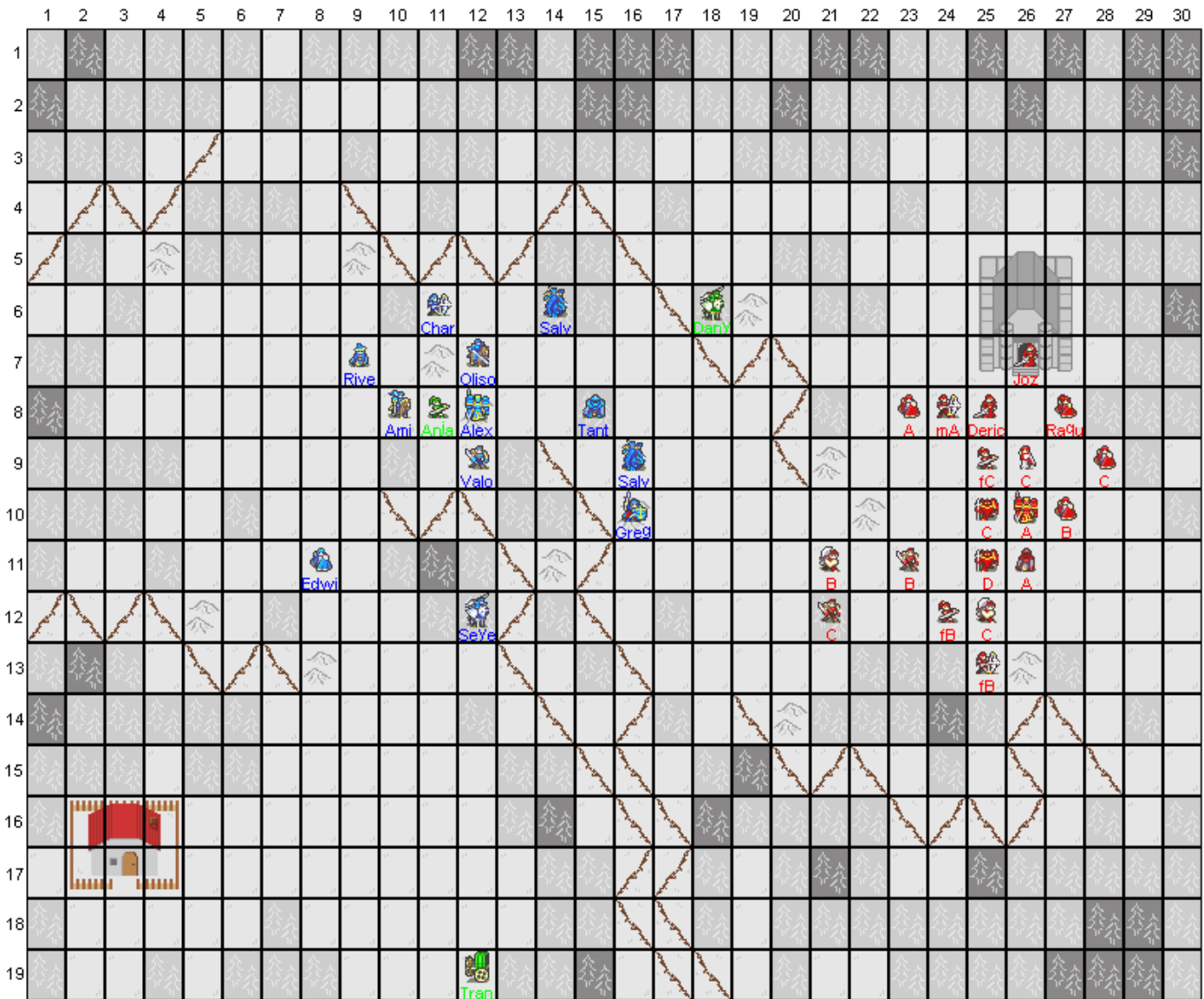
### ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja moved a little closer.



# ~~Player Turn 11~~

**Suddenly, the wind picked up in strength again.**



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 22/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38 Sleep (4/5)<br>Oliso Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 21/33<br>Valor Inara: 34/35 Sleep (4/7) |  | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 |  |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33                                       |  |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

**Charlotte: Move 2 E, 1 S.**





"Hey, Ghost Salvatore. How's it hangin'?"



"Snk! Huh? Wh- Oh dammit..." Edwin groused as he finally woke up. "Wait for me!"

**Edwin: Move 2 N and 3 E.**



"Roight, Oi'll get ta... Er... Yah okay? Gregor?" The wyvern rider looked at the slumped soldier in worry, before looking to the rest of the group. "Er, Oi better get other up 'ere roight quick."

**Salvatore: Fly to 14.7.**



"Gah, blasted winds be back. Oy, Charlotte, yah want ah lift?" If yes, rescue Charlotte, move to 15.7, release 16.7.

**Charlotte: YES! Want lift!**

**Ami: To 13,8**

**Riven: Move to 13,7.**

Valor lay quietly in the snow, a thin line of drool threatening to freeze on his cheek in the extreme weather.



"Zzz..."

**Tantallos: Hold still.**

**Alexander 2E.**

**Olison 1S, Iron Sword to Valor.**



"Sorry, Valor. Anything less won't wake you up."



"I suspected as much..." Edwin remarked, upon seeing Olson resort to whacking Valor with his sword.

#### Olson vs Valor

Autohit!

Damage: 20-13 = 7dmg

Valor wakes up!

Valor was woken by a sharp cut to his shoulder, causing him to rise violently out of the snow with a shout, sword drawn, searching wildly for the threat.



"Olson, where-" The last effects of the magic sleep fading, Valor began to calm, his blade lowered. "Staff slinging fucker got me, eh?" Valor groaned, pinching the bridge of his nose.



"Yes." Olson stated plainly, sheathing his sword. "To be frank these staff magics are starting to become a real pain. We'll see if they're so confident when we're in their faces."

Gregor dozed peacefully, unaware that a significant quantity of snow had gotten inside his armor and was now melting.



"If they are, they're stupid, and not just defensive as I imagined." Valor wrapped his free hand around his torso, beginning to shiver. "Good gods, I'm lucky you were here. If I'd been left in that snow I doubt I'd have woken up." Valor began jogging in place, teeth gritted against the intense cold he felt all over his body.

**Seyena flew over to 13, 9, tossing Ami her restore staff thingy, and then she turned and saw Valor.**



"Valor- you're covered in snow... this is no time to dawdle- hop on! I'll give you a ride!" And with those words, she extended a hand.

Valor stopped jogging in place, but continued shivering while he thought.



"Yeah. Let's go get 'em." The frigid swordsman said, extending a shaking hand.

**Seyena dragged Valor onto her pegasus, flying to 15,10.**



"Isn't this beautiful?" Seyena rambled, quite chipper in this climate. "Snow everywhere, it's nice and cold out, absolutely fantastic, don't you think?"



"I prefer warmer weather." Valor said, trying to keep his teeth from chattering. "Especially when there are maniacs with magic staves putting people to sleep running around." As always, Valor kept his eyes away from the ground.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Another sleep enchantment.

#### **Sage A casts Sleep on Charlotte**

Sleep hit:  $(30 + [\{21 - 5\} \times 5] + 18) - (8 \times 2) = 30 + 80 + 18 - 16 = 112$ , autohit!  
Charlotte is put to Sleep!



"You're right, Raquel. You heard the girl, move back!" With that, the troops formed a wider crescent.



"As for you, Derick... you really think you can hold them off on your own? You want to try?..."



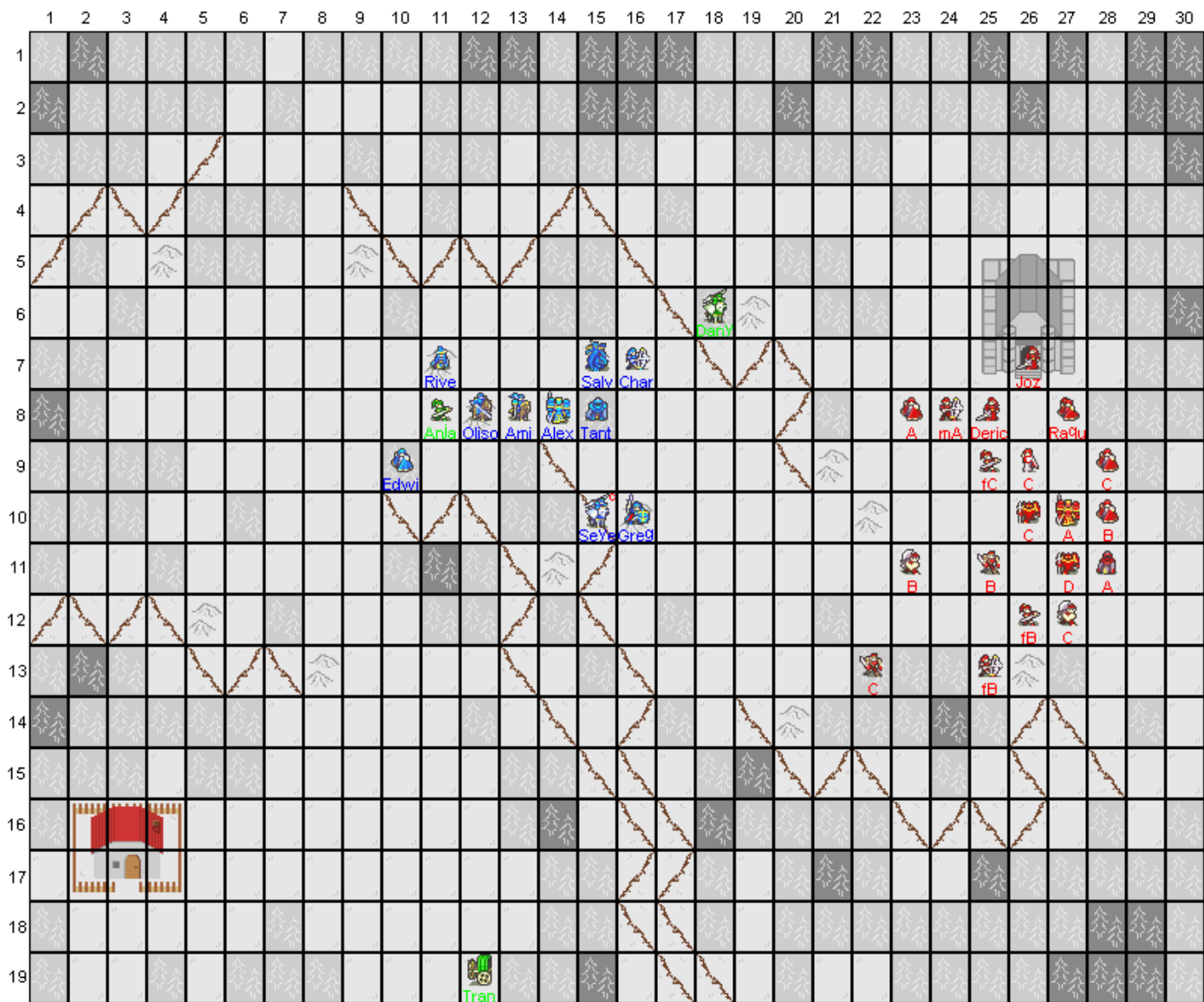
"...That was not exactly what I meant. I meant with everyone else helping too but er. I should probably shut up now."

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Hey mister cavalier, think you can carry me over those hills? I have a delivery for our resident knight guy."

~~Player Turn 12~~



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 22/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33 Sleep (4/5)<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38 Sleep (3/5)<br>Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>^ Carrying: Valor Inara<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 21/33<br>Valor Inara: 27/35<br>^ Carried by: Seyena Ikane |  | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  | Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Deric: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33                                        |  |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

**Ami: Move to 16,8 and sooth Charlotte**



"Please let this work..." Edwin muttered as he hovered over the snow to get into range.

**Edwin: Move 3 East then 2 North. Cast sleep on Sage A!**



"Delivery?" Olson raised an eyebrow for only a moment. "Regardless, here, get on."

**Olison rescues Anja. To 13,7, release Anja to 14,7.**

**Ami: Move to 15,7 and sooth Charlotte when Salvatore moves**

**Alexander: Move to 16, 8 and guard Charlotte.**

**Sal and Ormm move on to ferry more people around, this time landing at 13.6.**



"Oy, yah want ah lift there Olson? If'in yah do, got anywhere in particular yah want?"

#### Edwin casts Sleep on Sage A

Sleep hit:  $(30 + [\{23-15\} \times 5] + 21) - (11 \times 2) = 30 + 40 + 21 - 22 = 69$   
Hit roll: 75, miss!

#### Ami soothes Charlotte

Charlotte awakens!

**Riven: Hover in place mockingly.**

**Seyena moves to 17,11 and drops Valor in forest, then moves to 15,9 and heals Tantallos**

**Tantallos: Move to 18, 10.**

#### Seyena heals Tantallos

$10 + 5 =$  Up to 15HP restored!

~~Enemy Phase~~

Some more formation movement. Suprisingly, no sleep curses were thrown.

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Hey Falconknight lady!" Anja waved at Danya. The Berebian knight snapped with her reins and flew downwards toward the gypsy.



"What is it?"



"Can you take me closer to the armor guy? I have delivery to make."



"Allright. And the name is Danya." She helped Anja climb the pegasus and then she flew closer to Alex, depositing Anja right next to him.



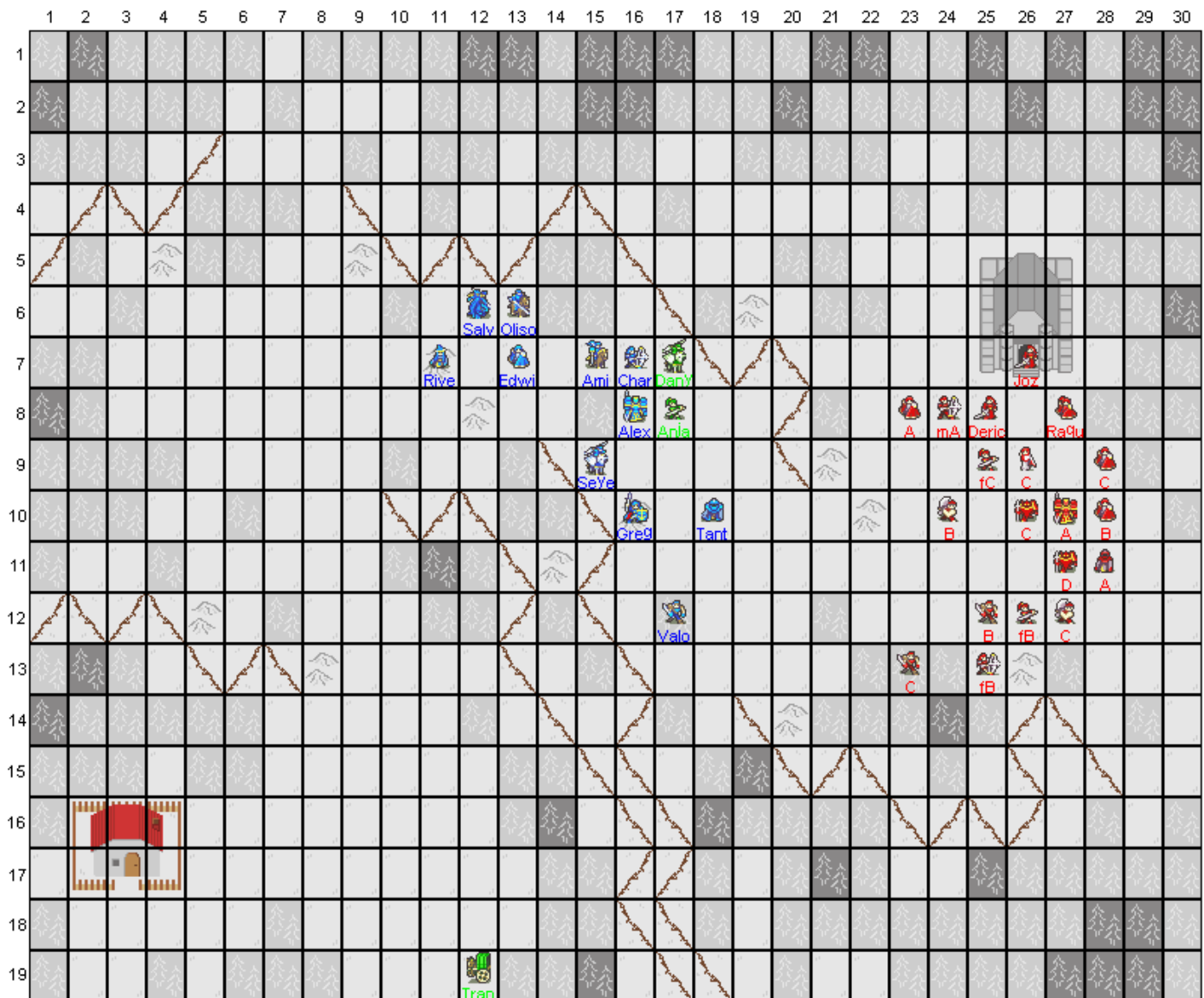
"Thanks, Fal- Danya. Hey armor guy, catch!" The gypsy girl tossed the pair of shoes at Alexander's hands.



"Those are magical fancy shoes that Chris found in that hut down the hill. Wear them!"

# ~~Player Turn 13~~

The wind became weaker again, and even snow was gone; now just single snowflakes falling down from the clouds.



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 22/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38 Sleep (2/5)<br>Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/33<br>Valor Inara: 27/35 | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 | Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                              |

Alexander peered at the shoes, and then he hesitantly put them on. Finding himself faster, he got moving.



**Alexander: Use Swiftsoles. Move to 17, 10 and guard Gregor.**

Olison looked cautiously at Ormm, then to Sal.



"Aye. I doubt I can be much help from behind the lines." Olison seemed doubtful, but on second glance Ormm seemed a lot larger than Olison remembered, "Try to fly low, I don't think Steil will like heights."



"Roight, won' be much ah problem, we won' go ta hoigh. See ah route ta ah good place wit'out any trees 'er hill." Salvatore nodded, before nudging Ormm to move. The wyvern moved towards the rider and his horse, and a distance away took off and hovered above the two of them.

In a trained gesture, the wyvern gently **grabbed the horse, and rider by proxy**, then **flew low to the ground to 16.8, letting the passengers off at 16.9.**

**Valor: North 2, gently rouse Gregor via application of iron sword.**



"Up and at 'em, Hexham."

**Charlotte: Move 1 S 2 E**



"Come on, dammit! Work!" Edwin growled as he glared at the enemy sage he was targeting.

**Edwin: Move 4 E and then 2 S. Zap Sage A with sleep staff again!**

**Riven: Move to 16,7.**

**Tantallos: Hold still.**

#### Valor vs Gregor

Hit: Autohit!

Damage:  $19-1-20 = 0\text{dmg!}$

Gregor wakes up!

#### Edwin casts Sleep on Sage A

Sleep hit:  $(30+[\{23-15\} \times 5]+21)-(8 \times 2) = 30+40+21-16 = 75$

Hit roll: 100, miss!



Gregor, stirred awake by Valor's strike, immediately realized that all of his clothes were soaking wet from melting snow.



"GAH! Blasted sleep magic!"



"Pretty much." Valor said, extending a hand to Gregor. "You should get moving or something. You're gonna realize exactly how cold you are pretty soon, I'd wager."

Gregor took the proffered hand and rose to his feet, shivering. Semi-melted slush dripped down to fill his boots. He mentally cursed whichever god had decided that snow should be both wet *and* freezing cold.



"G-g-good id-d-d-dea." he managed, through chattering teeth.

Not for the first time, Valor considered the swordsman standing near the tomb entrance.



"...Gregor. That swordsman, the way he carries himself... Does he seem familiar?" Valor continued speaking, but his voice lowered to a contemplative mumble. "I feel like I know him. Bit too far to say for sure though..."

### **Seyena moves to 19,5**

Gregor peered at the indicated swordsman, tucking his hands under his arms in an attempt to warm up.



"...Maybe? I can't really see any details from here. This monocle isn't just for show, you know." Still, there was *something* familiar there. Annoyingly faint, but there. "Let's try to get a little closer."

### **Ami: To 16,9**

### **~~Enemy Phase~~**

Seyena almost got sleep'd.

## Sage A casts Sleep on Seyena

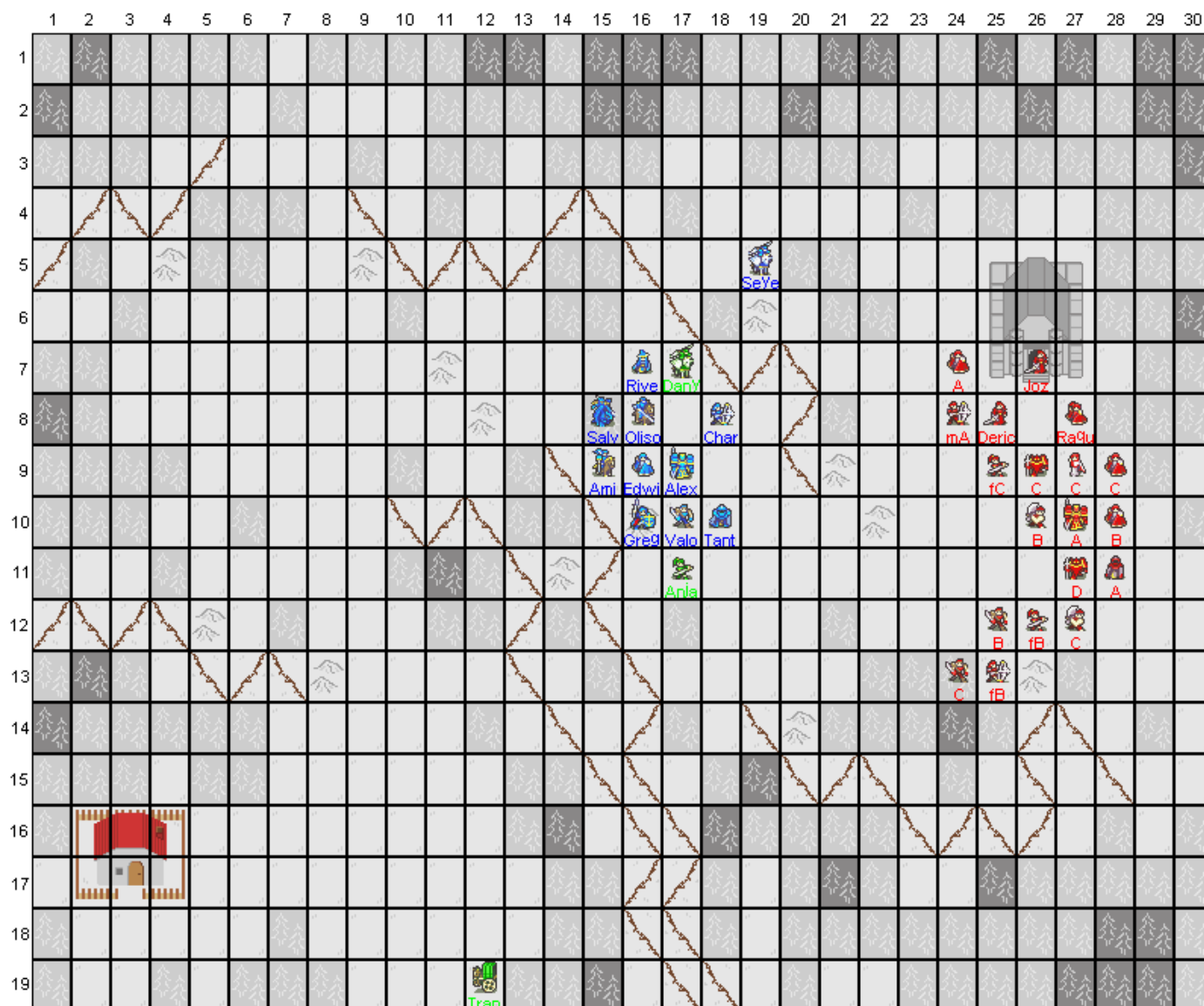
Staff hit:  $(30 + [(21 - 18) \times 5] + 18) - (7 \times 2) = 30 + 15 + 18 - 14 = 49$

Hit roll: 50, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja moved closer whilst Danya kept her pegasus in place.

## ~~Player Turn 14~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 22/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38<br>Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/33<br>Valor Inara: 27/35 |  | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 |  |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33                                       |  |
| Anja: 29/29                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

**Ami: Head to 18.9**

Alexander continued moving, his shield up.

**Alexander: Move to 18, 10.**



"HATE SNOW HATE IT!"

**Charlotte: 1 E 2 S.**



"Hey, Tantallos. How are you holding up?"

**Valor: Move to 18,11**

**Gregor: Move to (17,9)**

**Edwin: Try to sleep Sage A AGAIN. It's got to work sooner or later!**



"Just concerned about this fight. I hope we are doing the right thing, I would hate to have problems with the Plague Dragon because of a mistake like this. But besides that I am fine, what about yourself sniper lady?"



"And you think we've been doing the 'right thing' up until now?"

Charlotte sighed.



"I'm doing alright. Just, you know. Very bored. I think my bows are sticking together from the trace frost."



"Doubtfully. But I do not want to keep doing it just because we were doing that before.



"Heh. Now using these heavy robes can be considered a advantage for me, hm? And I think your boredom will end pretty soon, as we are getting closer to that group of mercenaries, enemies.. or whatever how we should call them."

**Edwin casts Sleep on Sage A**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{23-15\} \times 5]+21)-(10 \times 2) = 30+40+21-20 = 71$   
Hit roll: 72, miss!

**Olison to 19,8.**



"Strange, I feel a little sleepy for some reason." Seyena yawned, directing Ilya further north.

**Seyena moves to 23,3, equipping her Javelins.**

**Tantallos: Hold still yet and wait for the rest reach the front line.**

**Salvatore: Move to 18.5.**

**Riven: Eventually move to 19,9.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"We will go after that pegasus rider, Joz!" The swordmaster nodded to the sage, who took the sniper along with him to hunt for Seyena.

The sage then hid in the woods near Seyena and pointed his staff at her, putting her to sleep.

**Sage A casts Sleep on Seyena**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{21-18\} \times 5]+18)-(1 \times 2) = 30+15+18-2 = 61$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Seyena is asleep!



"..."

Derick started whistling a peppy tune.

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 22/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38<br>Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35 Sleep (4/5)<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/33<br>Valor Inara: 27/35 | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 | Male Sniper A: 33/33<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                              |

**Valor: Move to 20,11**



"Gregor.." Edwin murmured towards the sentinel, trying to catch his attention quietly. "I think we should focus on the southern flank. They are concentrating their stronger troops in the center and the north and the sleep staff sage has split off from the rest. If we can kill the southern troops quickly, we can circle around and attack the wizards in the rear, then mop up the rest. Do you think we can pull it off?"

**Olison to 20,10.**



"Worth a shot, I suppose. Think that sleep staff of yours will have better luck against some other target?"

**Gregor: Move to (18,11)**

**Ami: Move to 19,11**

Alexander circled around to guard Gregor. While he did so, though, he noticed something- though since his eyesight was worse than that of many of the others, he noticed it far later than them.



"Gregor. One of the swordsmen over there is..." He squints. "A familiar shade of blue."

**Alexander: Move to 17, 11 and guard Gregor.**



"I know, right?!?" Valor shouted, having overheard Alexander. "It's been bugging me for a while now... I think... Guys, I think that could be Derick." Valor cast his gaze downward, his expression troubled. "Or maybe it's someone who studied with him. It wouldn't make sense for it to be Derick if these people are working for Prixima, would it? I mean, he's wanted just like the rest of us..."



"You think that's Derick over there? That would explain why he seems familiar...Anyway, its possible that he's working under an alias, if no-one has bothered to make a portrait of him for the wanted posters. I'm gonna try something."

Gregor raised an arm and waved experimentally at the mystery swordsman, while his other hand adjusted his monocle, hoping to draw attention to it.

---



"Uh... Boss? Theres a waving hand poking out from under the cliff. Do you think they're still trying to parley?"

Joz rubbed his chin for a while.



"At this stage of the skirmish, I accept only surrender. And, if they do surrender, we can always tie them up, confiscate and sell their weapons, and then ask their masters for a ransom. Our unit would profit greatly on the side of the mission. What do you think?"



"I suppose it doesn't look like we have that many options anymore. Though... how messed up would this be be if they were telling the truth about this mess being a misunderstanding."



"Then fight to the end, it is." Joz crossed his arms on his chest, not saying anything more, and looked at the mercenaries ascending the hill.

Raquel nodded politely at the conversation between the two swordmasters, but didn't join in. Given the way the Berebians were moving up in force, she agreed that they definitely didn't seem interested in offering their surrender. And, she thought wryly as she glanced over at Derick, none of the others were much interested in surrendering to them, either. To be fair, she thought wryly, she wasn't particularly interested in surrendering, either. She brushed the snow off her cloak and silently watched the enemy's approach.

---



"Oy, Seyena's down an' ah wizard wit' ah archer are at her!" Salvatore relayed to the team from the distance as best he could. "Tell Danya ta get up 'ere, need her help wit' gettin' Seyena back!"

**Tantallos moved to 22, 10.**





"With my little eye I see.. a bunch of people and.. wait a second... is that..? Nah. Couldn't be him, or if it is, I should remind him that we are not here to hug swords with our guts."

Charlotte continually trodded through the snow. The enemies seemed to be outright avoiding her.

They could run, but they could not hide.



"SOON."

**Charlotte: Move 1 S 2 E.**



"Definitely. Take for instance, that sniper that's closing in on our Pegasus riding comrade..." Edwin replied as he floated into position.

**Edwin: Move to 19, 8 and sleep Male Sniper A. Give mean looks at Sage A.**

**Riven: Hold still.**



"Derick? That... could present a problem..."



"Do you really think it is him? What would he be doing with these guys?"

**Salvatore: Move 19.7**



"I'm not even sure it is him. He didn't seem to recognize me, so either we're too far away, or its not Derick." *Or*, he thought, unwilling to say it out loud, *it is Derick, but he no longer sees us as allies.*





"There is only way to find out.."

He took a thinker stance and snapped his fingers.



"When I get close to him I will yell at his face and ask him if he is Derick or not!"

**Edwin casts Sleep on Male Sniper A**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{23-7\} \times 5]+21)-(8 \times 2) = 30+80+21-16 = 115$ , autohit!  
Male Sniper A is asleep!

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

**Sage A casts Sleep on Salvatore**

Staff hit  $(30+[\{21-7\} \times 5]+18)-(7 \times 2) = 30+70+18-14 = 104$ , autohit!  
Salvatore is sleeping!

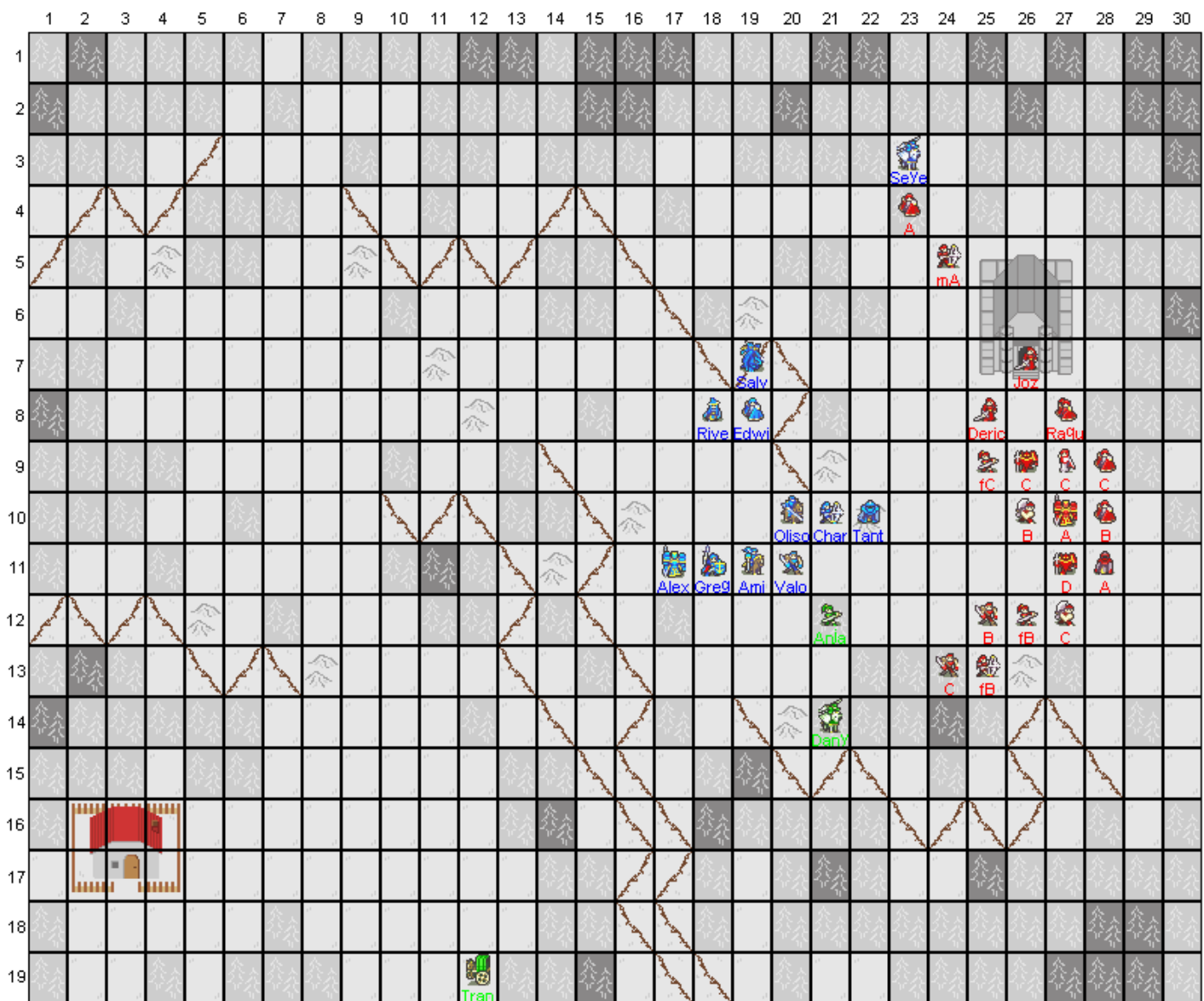


"Just a moment more..."

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Danya and Anja crept into the woods.

# ~~Player Turn 16~~



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 22/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 32/33<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 35/38<br>Olison Eul: 35/36<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 29/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35 Sleep (3/5)<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/33<br>Valor Inara: 27/35 |  | Mercenary B: 32/32<br>Mercenary C: 32/32<br>Female Myrmidon B: 29/29<br>Female Myrmidon C: 29/29<br>Knight C: 37/37<br>Knight D: 37/37<br>Fighter B: 35/35<br>Fighter C: 35/35<br>Monk C: 28/28<br>Shaman A: 29/29 |  |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | Male Sniper A: 33/33 Sleep (4/5)<br>Female Sniper B: 31/31<br>General: 41/41<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Joz: 38/38<br>Sage A: 33/33<br>Sage B: 33/33<br>Sage C: 33/33                           |  |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Captain Danya: 16/33<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

**Ami: Heal Valor**

**Riven: Move to 21,10 as soon as Charlotte moves.**

**Charlotte: Move to 1 E, 1 N. Killer bow Female Myrmidon C.**

Charlotte then noticed what Gregor and the others were talking about.



"...Guys! GUYS! It IS Derick!"

**Gregor: Move 3 east.**

Gregor heard Charlotte's shouting and knew better than to doubt her sharp eyes.



"It is?! We have to try and talk to him! Without killing him, preferably."

**Ami heals Valor**

10+20 = Up to 30HP restored

Then there was a twang, a small one.

**Charlotte vs Female Myrmidon C**

Hit:  $134+10+10-48 = 106$ , autohit!

Damage:  $23-7 = 16$ dmg

**Olison to 21,9. Ensure spear is equipped.**



"I think you're right..." Olison said as he squinted, looking across the snow, "This does not add up. Intelligence says they're working for PRIXIMIA, and the bounty was explicitly on his head as well. Was he captured and then forced to work? Or is it possible that he was fooled..." Olison urged his horse further up the hill, "We need answers."

**Valor: Move to 22, 11**



"You know, as far as my allies are concerned, talking is still an option." Valor offered to the conglomerate of hostile mercenaries in front of him.

Alexander moved up to take the place behind Gregor, and to guard him with his shield.



"If it is Derick like Charlotte says, what are we going to do?"

**Alexander: Move to 20, 11 and guard Gregor.**

Joz blinked and then furrowed his brows, quite easily hearing Charlotte considering she was few metres away by now..



"Derick, what's the meaning of this? How did she know your name?"



"That voice- It's Charlotte! Boss I think I know these guys! Raquel does too! We use to work with them. They're very reasonable people."



"Wait, they're your friends from before? Most of your fellow mercenaries were from Menelea or Mercia, were they not? Why would they be fighting for Berebia?" She said, plainly puzzled.



"...Can they be trusted? Yes, or no."

At Joz's query, she frowned slightly, thinking it over.



"If they really are who Derick is talking about, I only met them briefly, but we fought together to save a city against raiders. They're mercenaries, but they put their lives on the line to protect the people and temple even without pay. I think that if they chose a particular side, they would have been motivated by more than money. I think we can trust them enough to parley, at least." She frowned, thoughtful. "Talking to them will also delay them further, buying Lady Matilda even more time. We can take the pegasus rider prisoner now that she's asleep instead of killing her out of hand, and meet with their leaders. Lady Matilda can use the time to get further away, we might learn something about why they switched sides, and we may even finish this skirmish and win our pay without the cost of any further fighting."



"Trustworthy? Yeah! I would trust any of them with my life! Well okay maybe not that sage guy since I have no idea who he is-

**Tantallos: Hold still.**

Tantallos took off his mask and yelled towards Derick.



"Swordman-ninja-wolf-small-guy can you hear me?! Is that you?!"



"Oh hi Tantallos! I like your new outfit."



"But anyways, yes they definitely are! One of them even use to be in the Young Wolves with me. Please boss, just let me go talk to them and we can sort this all out. Whatever reason they had for coming here had to be good, and I know you have your pride boss, but fighting them isn't a good idea. I mean I know I was so confident before but- Please boss, just send me over to talk to them and I'm certain we can sort this mess out without any more bloodshed."



"Ah, good times...also bad times, but seeing Adrien being cut in half balance that out."



"...Wait, we're not fighting any more?" Valor said, somewhat taken aback. "Well, I'll be damned." The mercenary sheathed his blade, and waved toward Derick.

Joz looked at Derick, then at Tantallos and other behind him, and then looked to the side for a while. Then he put his fingers to his lips and made a loud, high-pitched whistle, which turned the attention of all his mercenaries to him.



"Well then... I guess there's some things to explain. Who is the leader here?"

Danya, seeing that Joz agreed to talks, quickly descended toward Gregor and leaned over to him, her teeth clenched together as she hissed through them in a whisper.



"Gregor! What's the meaning of this! They are gravediggers, enemies of Berebia and possibly agents of that Menelean witch! We should be killing them all by now, not talk and share stories!" Her voice was more jaded than angry.

Olison drew his Spear across his back, but kept one arm on his sword's hilt.



"I have reservations about graverobbing as well, but there's something more strange here." Olson stated as calmly as he could towards Danya, "One of our former allies is in that unit, one that had worked with us in securing the dragonstone from Eor Kesselring. Prixima put out a bounty for him as well, thus it would be downright illogical for him to be working directly for her now. I wouldn't be surprised if this is the result of more deception on her part. We need to see if that's really the case."



"*Danya*. Would you not agree that the safe countering of Prixima's plot is more important than the robbing of a simple tomb? People- criminals, even lords come and go. Let's deal with the survival of kingdoms first."



"I promise not to talk this time. Don't worry. I haven't forgotten how well that went last time."



"I see. I can't stand people who can't put loyalty and obedience above all. Lord Mannan will learn of this." With grimace on her face, she snapped the reins of her pegasus and took off upwards, and then south-east, her mount going fast, even with the persistent winds.

Alexander stared off at the Berebian pegasus rider as she flew away.



"...Ironic."



"...She almost reminds me of myself." Olson muttered quietly.



"Gregor is perhaps the best suit here, him and Chris. There's been numerous times he has been able to negotiate-" Olson paused and surveyed the group

behind him, "...Speaking of, has anyone seen him?"



"Oh, woops! I forgot to tell you that he, um, embarked on mysterious quest full of dragons and spies and legendary treasures of ancient heroes so he could to help your cause in better ways.."

Anja smiled.



"He went into the forest and said not to worry and that he will be back."



"Chris left? That's a little strange, but I'm sure his reasons are good ones. Did he say when he might be back?"

Olson sighed and scratched his head.



"Well, I know better than to worry about him."

Olson turned towards Gregor.



"Gregor, are you going to parley, or will someone else?"



"Yes, I'll go talk to them. I'd prefer to have a friendly face nearby though, in case things turn sour. Want to come along?"

Olson nodded.



"Gladly. Whenever you're ready." Olson turned to speak to everyone else, "It's best everyone stay in formation and patch yourselves up while we have the chance. You'll know if things go awry."





"Let's get on with it, then."

Gregor **approached the mercenary that appeared to be in charge, lance at rest.**



"I see you came with a guard. Fine, then Derick will be at my side." With that, Joz took few steps away from both groups, toward the hills and mounds nearby, and put his hands behind his back, far from the sword hanging at his belt.



"Friend of Derick, huh? Maybe you should start. You guys seem to have a penchant to starting things, bloody or not." He spoke to Gregor, and the winds suddenly blew some snowflakes at the four men.



"Huh? Oh uh hi Gregor. Why are you guys here?"

Raquel watched as the two swordsmasters went forward to talk, met by two men from the Berebian, no, she corrected herself mentally, the other mercenary force. She glanced at the tomb, half-tempted to slip in and see what mysteries lay within for herself, but the battle was far from over, for all that they had bought a momentary reprieve.

Seyena groaned, pushing herself to her feet, brushing snow off her shoulders. She almost couldn't feel her fingers.

She looked around, finding her winged companion resting upon the snow, befallen by the spell like she had been.



"Hey, Ilya, c'mon girl, get up." She jostled her pegasus a bit, allowing her to get to her own feet as well.

She looked out through the trees, seeing the sage and sniper who were presumably sent to finish her off. She grabbed her lance, quickly mounting her pegasus in order to prepare for a fight. The thing is, however, they weren't fighting. Nobody seemed to be.



"What's going on?" She still kept her lance trained on the two enemies, but



inched forward for a better view through the trees.

Valor kept watching the opposing mercenaries across the snow from him.



"...So. Did you get what you came for yet, or did we interrupt?"

Salvatore continues to snore heavily from Ormm's saddle, the wyvern itself also asleep in its perch on the cliff due to the same magic.

Edwin remained silent, seeing that diplomacy was actually underway for once, but remained cautious all the same. These people definitely did not seem all that friendly or trustworthy to him...

As Salvatore snored, the sleeping man moved a bit in his sleep. This caused the wind to move him a bit more, which caused him to move even more in his sleep at the disturbance. With one last shift, there came muffled thud as an exceptionally sharp lance hit the ground point first, digging into it a fair bit. There was a much louder thud and clank however as Sal soon joined his lance in falling onto the heavy snow on his back, close to Edwin.

After a second or two the man twitched, then slowly the man's eyes opened up to gaze at sky. He was silent for a bit more before declaring loudly to no one in particular.



"Oi hate magicks."



"Thank you for insulting my entire profession and the main motivation behind my life." Edwin curtly replied to Salvatore, having overheard his comment before walking over and pulling the man to his feet out of the snow. "If it's any consolation, I hate it when mine don't work when they are supposed to."

Salvatore accepted the help Edwin gave him up, trying not to bring the mage down with him though as he weighs a touch more than him with his heavy armor and all. Wiping off any excess snow on his armor and shrugging off the rest, the Berebian sighed.



"Sorry, jus' ain' been seein' lots ah good usage fer magicks lately. Oi'm jus' frustrated, pay no moind ta me." The man apologized, before moving into a flurry of motion of snagging his spear and facing the front, remembering that there's a fight going on.

...Only to see that it isn't.



**"...Wha did Oi miss while Oi was out?"** The man lowered his spear in relieved confusion.

Edwin glanced over his shoulder at the two parties talking before turning back to Salvatore.



**"Apparently they know each other and are trying to talk it out. I think that it's doubtless that Valor is going to get in my face about this later on, going on about how diplomacy is the sure way to beat all problems despite him being a mercenary."**

He sighs and shakes his head.



**"Ehhh... Maybe I'm just getting jaded from this kind of work..."**

Salvatore took in a deep breath, then let it out.



**"...Oi jus' bloody wished it happened sooner..."** The man looked at the trail of corpses behind them, some half buried and surrounded by reddened snow. The man relaxed a bit, but didn't seem too happy all the same. **"Best not be thinkin' loike tha', loife's as cruel as yer soight, trust me on tha'. Oi don' think we ever met roight an' proper, me name be Salvatore, though most call me Sal. Yers?"** The wyvern rider extended a gauntlet laden hand out towards the man.

---

Gregor spoke to the younger swordsman first.



**"Hello Derick, long time no see. Any luck on your quest?"**

He then addressed Joz.



**"If I may get straight to the point? The one who gave us this assignment**

believes that your group is working for PRIXIMA Kesselring of Menelea. We suspect this because my group once worked for her as well, in similar circumstances, and things didn't exactly work out. In fact, she now wants all of us dead, and if past experience is anything to go by your group will be the next with a bounty on its collective head."



"Never dealt with anyone called PRIXIMA, and the only information on her I have is from Derick, after he joined my troop after we saved him from couple of bounty hunters. My turn."



"If you were so inclined to talk, why did you attack and then kill half of my unit? I see a pegasi and a wyvern rider amongst your midst. Why you didn't send a messenger?"

Charlotte ran up to Gregor's side as fast as she could and elbowed him almost inconspicuously.



"Sorry, I know I said I wouldn't talk, but that's a REALLY important question that all our lives kind of depend on, and I am too afraid Gregor, despite his noble inclination, will say something stupid. The truth is, we WERE the messengers. All of us. However, at the sight of your troops surrounding us on all sides, shouting orders and preparing their weapons, our resident Sage acted out on impulse - in self-defense - and cast a poison spell on one of your archers. We berated him for this and attempted to repair the situation, but your troops viewed all of us as a threat from that point on and, suspecting what we did, we had no choice but to fight as they were now advancing upon us hostilely. Rightly so, too."

Charlotte kind of scratched her head.



"I have a feeling you ordered your unit to only attack if attacked, and that was essentially our plan up until the mistake. However, once we saw Derick here, we knew the situation could still be repaired. Not fully, of course - multiple soldiers have already been slain, and there is nothing I hate more than the needless loss of life. I know Gregor and I are at least on the same wavelength when I say: we'll try to reach a diplomatic solution until your blades reach our skulls. That's a metaphor, of course. Given there are skulls un-bladed, do you think that's still possible? Is this a sufficient answer?"



"Sounds reasonable, but I think you should be apologizing to the dead rather than the living. Still, I'm not sure I like the fact we were beaten in combat first time in six years. And if you need a clarification."



"What we came here was a silver, ornate box. The few sages in my group, along with my friend that departed with it, felt some old magic coming from it. We did not open it. We were told by our employer that if we did, he wouldn't pay us the full price, or maybe he wouldn't pay us at all. The box is already far away from here, I guess. If you want any more answers, I have two conditions."



"You're right. At this point, your group has the right of just about everything, so we'll happily hear those conditions."



"The first condition is: after we finish our 'negotiations', you will let my people go and re-join Matilda and her horsemen. No more killing. Nor any arrest or interrogations. I'm the leader, so you can get most information out of my anyway." Joz took a deep breath.



"The second condition is... I want a duel to the death." Joz smiled.



"It might sound absurd, but, see. I've prided myself on being careful, reasonable and cool-headed mercenary leader. I never lost a battle in the field nor in the narrow corridors of old ruins. I never lost more than three of my friends in one mission, and I never lost a duel, no matter how powerful my opponent was. Maybe except Derick, but those always ended in a draw." His mercenaries looked at each other in panic or at Joz, wide-eyed, but none even spoke against their leader's apparent death-wish.



"Today I lost around fifteen friends. Today, I lost a battle against much

smaller unit. Today, I either lose a duel and die in battle, or I win and at least retain a piece of my honour. I won't just turn my back and walk away in shame." There was some grumbling behind their backs - but Joz cast a glance at his fellow mercenaries, all they went silent, albeit, sadness was very evident on their faces.



"The first condition is simple enough, but the second... I will tell you a story. If I do not change your mind, perhaps we have little choice but to honor that wish. A man's pride is a powerful motivator, after all."



"Not long after I met Sir Hexham, we underwent truly brutal training as mercenaries for an unjust cause. On a journey to retrieve an artifact we knew almost nothing about, much like yours, we slew dozens upon dozens of soldiers with our minuscule yet talented unit. Some of them had families. Some of them had nothing. All of them had a future, and all of them had pride. When we finally retrieved that artifact, it turned out we were working against ourselves all along - working, you might say, for the wrong cause. We were not defeated by combat but by ignorance. That is why we all now have false bounties on our heads."

Charlotte turned toward Gregor once again.



"Do you know what we did? We walked away. Yes, it was shameful. Yes, dying for our morals then and there, on the top of the castle, would have saved us from our shame. Instead, we all set out to regain our honor, our lives, and our individual prides. Do you see the Berebian clothes I am wearing? That is the future I chose, and it was only because I chose to *have* a future that I stand here now, with renewed pride in what I do. The others of our group were dragged into this from similar situations. A ragtag group of misfits is now a loyal task force helping Berebia put an end to the actions of a corrupt noble."

She then turned toward Derick.



"Derick is young. When we *were* a group of misfits, at the beginning, he saw the death of his original mercenary group's leader, Sirius. I think Sirius was like a father to him, and that's why he set out to find the man who killed his leader while worked for Berebia. And now, the way he talks to you, sir... the 'boss,' the 'yessir,' the 'please.' Do you understand what I'm saying here?"



"Please. Swallow your pride as we did ours. If you won't do it for yourself, if you won't do it for us - just understand that if we settle your little duel and win, you're bringing the same fate upon Derick that shattered his soul many months before. You are the new Sirius."



"That was inspirational. But just like every human, every star dims and dies as well, when the time comes. My men will easily find a new star to orbit around, and that star is named Matilda." He stopped for a second.



"Nevertheless, I insist. If I weren't ready to die in battle, I would never pick up a sword."

Edwin gulped as he overheard the mention of a duel to the death and gripped his staff tighter.



"My name is Edwin. And just in case I'm 'volunteered' into taking part in that duel he mentioned for attacking first and starting off this mess... It was nice knowing you Salvatore."



"Nah, Oi don' think we'd throw yah ta the wolves, lest Oi made ah drastic mistake o' character." Salvatore mentioned, withdrawing his hand seeing it ignored. "Sides, looks loike 'ier leavin'. If'in yah excuse me..."

The wyvern rider looked up at the cliff to see his still sleeping wyvern.



**"OY! WAKE UP!"** The man shouted up at the sleeping beast while he thumped the cliff side with the butt of his lance. The golden wyvern groggily looked at the man, gave a wide yawn and flew down by him.



"Had ah noice sleep?" The man joked to the creature, before rummaging around the saddle on the creature while speaking to the sage again. "Up 'ere we burn our dead, less 'ey be nobles 'er some such. The ground be ta hard ta dig in normally. If'in Oi recall roight though... Meneleans loike ta bury 'eir own."

After a bit of finagling, the man produced a shovel and a pick.



"So Oi got some work ta do." The wyvern rider finished as he walked back towards the corpses.



"I suppose that's one way to maintain a sterling reputation." Valor said, arching an eyebrow and approaching Joz and the others. "...So, do we know who's fighting yet?"



"I still want to hear what Derick thinks. In the mean time: Joz, assuming we go along with this, what are the rules for your Duel of Death?"



"I will let you pick the one I will have to fight with. Mind you, I wield a sword, not a bow or a spellbook." He said, glancing at Charlotte and then Tantallos.



"You know, there are other ways if you want to die with a sword in your hand. We still have PRIXIMA Kesselring to deal with, and she doesn't exactly want for soldiers and bodyguards. We could use another skilled blade like yours in the fight against her."

Gregor did not like the sound of this duel at all, and desperately wanted to keep anyone else here from getting killed.



"If I valued my purse higher than my honour, perhaps I could be swayed." He



rubbed his nose.



"So, have you decided who will duel me?"



"Ooh ooh ooh! I vote Tantallos."



"We're not 'voting' for anyone. It needs to be a volunteer if a duel is unavoidable; I won't force someone to fight to the death."



"Awww."



" I was expecting something better from you, Charlotte. Do you dislike me at the point of wanting to put in a fight to the death? I am really disappointed. "

Tantallos shook his head in disapproval and looked to Gregor.



"Frankly.. I do not even know who would be willing to gamble with their lives like that. Especially because most of us are young yet."



"No, I just think you would win."

Gregor shook his head.



"I'm sorry Sir Joz, but you misunderstood me. I'm not offering you any gold; I don't have much to offer anyway. I'm offering the chance to make a difference against a corrupt noblewoman. One who has a history of sending mercenary groups



after ancient magic only to have them killed afterward. A woman who doesn't care about the lives of her men, and would sacrifice them all without a second of remorse. She even had my whole family executed! We could really use your help against her, and the help of any of your men that would be willing to follow!"



"We don't deal with noblemen. Only by proxy, like here - looting some old aristocratic tomb." Joz looked at the entrance, then shrugged.



"And I see you're unwilling to fight with me. That is alright. I will seek death and glory somewhere else. I wanted to share more information with you, but I will just give you the name of our employer: Arvis. He tried his best to sound and act like a Berebian, but it was evident he was Menelean. That's all I have to tell you. Goodbye."

Olison remained quiet through the entire exchange, watching the opposing leader and his men carefully. He tensed as the debate escalated around a duel to the death, but relaxed slightly as the leader gave the name of his employer.



"It'll have to do." Olison stated under his breath.

Joz turned his back at Gregor and his friends, and moved toward his men.



"We're moving - we need to rest." The troop started to move, but the swordmaster stopped, turning toward two people who didn't move.



"Derick, Raquel? You're leaving us?"



"Sorry about this boss, but it looks like my friends may need me for this battle. And who would I be to turn my back on them. Especially when I have a chance to do some good for the world."



"Let's meet each other again after this is over. We still have our bargain after all."



"Yes, Joz, and I apologize for leaving you all like this. I think I still owe them a bit for helping me in Fezzan, and I technically was only brought on for my knowledge of antiquities for this one job." This last sentence she said with a brief motion towards the tomb. "If, after all this is over, you ever get another job like this one, feel free to look me up. Try to keep safe, both you and Lady Matilda."



"Raquel are you coming?"

At Derick's question, Raquel nodded, smiling.



"Yeah, I'll be with. Who knows what kind of trouble you'd get in on your own again."



"I see. Good luck, then." And Joz departed after his troop, which was already a bit away.

## ~~Chapter 8 Completed!~~

Charlotte walked up to Derick through the snow as the other group departed. When she reached him, she actually spread her arms and gave him a hug.



"Welcome back. I think we were all a little worried about you. What did you find? I mean, for the thing you actually wanted to do."

She also nodded to Raquel, but didn't really know her that well. Plus, she now knew mages were categorically untrustable.



"YoDerick, had fun?"

Seyena waited until the enemy troop was a fair distance away before walking up to the rest of the group, her grey steed in tow, both of them rather confused.



"What happened? Why are they... just walking away? And, wait, is that Derick? And that mage from the library!"

Gregor let out a deep breath, glad that a duel had been averted. He then grinned and clapped Derick on the shoulder.



"Good to see you again. We've all been wondering how you were for some time now. And you...", he spoke to Raquel. "Let's see, you were with Riven back in Fezzan, right? I'm afraid your name escapes me, but it's nice to see you again." He held out his other hand to shake.

Alexander didn't have much to do but nod at Derick by this point. He'd never known Derick that well, really, and he'd only seen that mage, what... once?

Derick semi-awkwardly returned Charlotte's hug out of surprise.



"Hey. Yeah it's good to see everyone again. I missed you too."



\*Sigh\* "No, sadly, I still haven't tracked down Sarius's killer. I've managed to gather some clues, but nothing definite. That's part of why I was with Joz actually. He had offered to give me some help with my search if I worked for him for a little while."

Raquel accepted Gregor's handshake, plainly somewhat unsure of herself.



"I'm Raquel Torriani. Pleased to meet you." She paused a moment. "I suppose the first question I have is what job you were here for. Joz already mentioned our goal here, but I don't believe you stated why you came here."

Gregor rubbed the back of his head, putting his thoughts together for the woman who likely knew nothing about these events.



"To put a very long story short, the noblewoman Prixima Kesselring has been gathering objects called Dragonstones, hiring mercenaries like ourselves and possibly Joz's group to do her dirty work. We don't know why she's collecting them, but given how she later puts bounties out for the mercenaries in question and the Dragonstones are said to be magical, we suspect it isn't good. We're here because the Baron we work for suspected your group was trying to find a Dragonstone here for Prixima, and wanted to stop her from having it." He sighed. "I believe the initial plan was to have you all killed, but many of us thought it might be better to warn you instead."



"I see. Then, if your belief that Prixima is behind our employer is correct, the box that Lady Matilda left with is likely the Dragonstone you desire. We were to meet our putative employer for the final exchange in Fierre, a small village east of here, and it is likely he will return from there along the mountain road we took into Menelea if what you say is accurate."



"Still, it is interesting that it would be the Dragonstones that are involved. I am primarily a scholar by trade, not a soldier, and one of the reasons I came this far east was in search of a very old text said to detail the early history of the Dragonstones in antebellum Deynastia. I've heard many of the old legends, but considered most grandiose exaggerations."

Gregor considered the information carefully.



"Do you think you can lead us to this village, or to the mountain road at least? We still have to find out what was in that box Joz mentioned, and I'm hoping that 'Arvis' person might know something. We can also try to warn this Lady Matilda of yours. As far as texts go, I know our employer, Mannan Tunhausen, has a small selection of Dragonstone-related works. Perhaps he has what you seek."



"I can lead you back, yes, though I suspect Lady Matilda will already have been warned by Joz and the others once they arrive. I'm not inclined to fight my former partners unless we must, but unless they expand the contract as a result of this incident, our job was only to bring the box to our employer in return for payment on delivery. Once that is done, our role in this was to have ended."



"So, are we gonna get going after them or what? Standing around wringing our hands while the dragonstone gets closer to PRIXIMA is not high on my list of priorities."



"I don't think we'd be able to catch up to the stone, all of 'Lady Matilda's' guards were mounted, you wouldn't be able to catch up unless you were also mounted."



"Perhaps I could follow her? I would stay out of range, but it shouldn't be too difficult to catch up and possibly figure out exactly where they're going. It's a troupe of mounted soldiers- they'd leave a huge trail in the snow, and finding them would be even easier while flying. Salvatore, if he wishes, could also come, it would be safer for two to go than going alone."



"Hiring someone to hire mercenaries doesn't really seem PRIXIMA's style... still, they should be far away enough."



"She may have had to." Valor said, thinking aloud. "Word has to have gotten out that all the mercenaries she's hired lately are either dead or wanted. That's not a job that I'd rush into, personally. Going through another nobleman, or anyone else really, would be a better way to get cautious thinkers to take the job."



"Mmm. Seyena, I know you've expressed hesitancy with it before, but I have a lot of experience spotting tracks - even in the snow. Two flying lizard riders is doubly conspicuous. I'd be happy to come along if you and Ilya are fine with it."

Seyena had to pause for a moment at Charlotte's comment, taking a deep breath.



"Ilya is likely far from frightened by you now. She would likely not have much of a problem with it, as long as you don't point any of your sharp feathered sticks at her."



"I'm ready when you are. Everyone else: this is just a scouting mission. If they spot us and recognize us, we'll run back."

**Charlotte mounts Ilya and gives the ready signal.**



"Ready!" **Which is just that.**

And the pegasus went up up the sky.

And then east. They've quickly noticed Joz's footsman, who were slowly going east as well, toward a network of de-snowed roads. From this spot and low height, there was no sight of the mounted unit...

---

Olison pondered the next course of action for a few minutes. But he did take the time to acknowledge Derick and Raquel briefly.



"Good to see you're still well, Derick." Olison nodded towards him in passing. But he kept riding further back behind the group, out into the field **until he was in talking range of Sal.**

By now a faint 'thudding' noise could be heard. A glance would see all the (now slowly freezing) bodies gathered and Sal with a pick a ways off in the clearing behind the group where most of the bodies originally fell, breaking the frozen earth up. Another noise could be heard, but the heavy winds obscured it too much.

**\*THUNK\*** The pick struck the ground, further breaking up the frozen earth. With a twist of his arms, Sal wrench the pick back sending bits of dirt and permafrost flying. Rolling his shoulder, the man prepared for another swing. All the while, the man was singing to himself.



**\*THUNK\*** "...there, oh there, the snow doth glow. Loike ah fire, from ah thousand embers..." **\*THUNK\*** "...the land's great pyre, housed by timbers. Come, come, ta ah land we do know, there, oh there, the ice doth grow..." **\*THUNK\*** "...No sprin', no green, not even creek's flow, but this is the land we call home..."

Olison, as he was waiting for Sal to notice his approach, was humming the song to himself.

The man stopped mid swing as he looked at Olison, too lost in his task before hand to notice him sooner.



"Oy, sorry 'bout tha', yah need somethin'?" Olison, if he's ever spent time mingling with the more common folk, would recognize the previous as an old folk song about home and hearth. Not a very good portrayal of one, granted.



"Haven't heard that tune in quite some time." Olison nodded, pausing for a moment in a haze of nostalgia before refocusing on Sal. "We'll be giving chase to the courier carrying an ornate box from the tomb quite soon." He summarized quickly as he dismounted, looking over the prepared digs. "Mind if I help?"



"Hehe, ain' tha' good at singin', passes the toime while diggin' though." Salvatore admits. "'Ey be chasin' ah box? Guessin' it contains tha' dragonstone thin'y everyone's in ah tizzy 'bout. Nah, don' moind, be good work." Salvatore set the pick down momentarily to hand a shovel to the rider. Looks like Salvatore has been alternating between the two to dig.



"Poor souls 'ey be. Followin' orders an' sent ta ah death fer ah farce. Ain' be roight ta leave 'em out 'ere fer the wolves an' the cold, no matter who 'ey were 'ey deserve better than tha'." The wyvern rider commented, turning gloomy at the moment, before letting out an exhale of steam and changing the subject abruptly.



"So, yah heard tha' song? Gotta say Oi'm surprised, most don' hear tha' outta Berebia cept' from travelers who miss it. Gotta love it, eh? Seems ah touch gloomy, but there's ah real spirit in it, thinkin' o' it always brings back memories o' the snow ta me."

Olison immediately took the shovel and drove it into the frost.



"Hh!" He heaved the first bit of snow out of the ground and set into a



rhythm. "I forgot the words quite some time ago, but I never forgot the tune. It's just one of those things from home that stays with you..." Olison paused a moment to shake some snow off his shoulder. "Can't say I'm as fond of the snow, though. Looks nice from inside a castle's walls, but I know all too well that it'll bite your limbs off given the chance."

Salvatore took up the pick again and followed Olison's rhythm, when Olison would heave the snow away he'd strike the ground with the pick to dislodge more.



"Some Oi can' quite remember roight, but Oi'm sure Oi got the jist o' it. Then 'gain, been so long since Oi've heard it, fer all Oi know half what Oi said be different from what Oi first heard, heh. Heard yah on tha', not prepared roight yer oft ta freeze... But the snow in places untouched, it be so... Pure. Hard ta explain it meself Oi guess. Always adds ah sense o' calm, though it jus' be maskin' what be underneath." Salvatore explained. "So yer from 'ere then? Can' say Oi recall hearin' yah talk 'bout it much, though Oi can' exactly be callin' the kettle black 'ere now, can Oi? Hahaha."

Olison briefly smirked before continuing on.



"Not something I mention often, yes. I used to live in a small town far to the east, near the border." Olison explained as he attempted to clear his throat. "Use' ta 'ave make me life ou' on tha fiel's fer a few bits a-"

He cut himself off, producing some sort of hacking noise before laughing loudly.



"Ha! Hah. To think I used to speak like that, it almost sounds foreign to me now." He continued to chuckle as he drove more ice and dirt from the ground.



"Hehe, meself, Oi was more north, near the coast an' all tha'. Gotta say, yah managed ta do ah good job wit' tha accent. Oi've tried once 'er twice ta get rid o' moine, but it be ah touch 'ard when yah think loike this, yeah? Sticks fer ah week 'er two 'fore slippin' roight back. Ain' got tha "talkin' from the tongue" thin' down." He paused as he put a bit more strength into his next blow to the earth, driving it through a thicker piece of rock and permafrost.





"East, near the border yah say? 'Magine tha, we may o' actually crossed paths 'fore... Though Oi suppose Oi wouldn' ah stuck 'round ta long considerin'."



"It's not so hard to get rid of an accent when you've got a superior constantly berating you for using it." Olison explained as he attempted multiple times to lift the broken rock from the ground. "And I must say, I haven't seen that many wyvern riders in my time. The only riders I've ever met were from my former lord's personal brigade, and even then they weren't ones for mingling with lesser soldiers. Nonetheless, they've given quite a fearsome mien around the idea of a wyvern and its rider." He paused to exhale as he lifted the larger pieces of rock out. "Hah... Might I ask how long you've known yours?"



"Oi don' doubt it, much similar where Oi was. Closest yah ever got was if'in yah were the unlucky bastard who was chosen ta feed 'em, if'in 'eir owners didn' already feed 'em 'emselves, 'course 'ey were more usual affair an' the pride in his eyes of the baron. Tha' don' answer yer question though, do it? Been wit' Ormm since he hatched, raised him up an' watched 'em grow. Big fella now, remember when Oi was larger than 'em, now Oi don' doubt he moight be able ta lift tha' wagon if'in he tried hard 'nough." Salvatore boasted with a chuckle, gesturing towards the golden wyvern who, now that the fight was over, showing his dissatisfaction with the snow and winds and cold with a snort and kicking some of it up in a futile attempt to get back at it from robbing its warmth.



"Ah, I can't say I've had the same pleasure." Olison nodded as he moved on to another dig. "Might not have known my own for as long, but he's had my back just as well. Even now, back in our home country again." He gave a cursory glance over to his horse, who kept a healthy distance away from Ormm while trying to scratch at the ground in attempts to find some hint of grass.



"Gotta say, tha' horse got itself some good control. Most horses Ormm picks up tend ta panic, nary ah problem. Don' know much 'bout horses ta be honest, but it's obvious he trusts yah well, an' been trained well. Mark o' ah grand roider, tha'."

Olison paused as he heard some sort of commotion further uphill.



"What is it now..." He muttered, looking over the dirt beds in judgement, "They might be moving soon, shall we see these souls off?"

Salvatore commented as he looked at the graves, then at the bodies. After a moment of silence on Sal's part, he sighs.



"Ey didn' deserve this. An' 'eir leader jus' leavin' 'em there ta freeze an' be picked by the wolves. Ain' ah glance at the field, not ah request fer 'em ta be brought home. Oi don' know who these men be, the loives 'ey lived, the people 'ey've met an' impacted, but ah death ain' just be ah removal o' somethin', it ripples loike water. Effects everyone, those 'ey know, even those 'ey don'." The rider walked down the ranks of the dead, looking at them each in turn. Their helmets had been removed, their eyes closed, and a coin on each eye to keep it closed, twenty coins for the ten of them used. "Ey say tha' when ah man dies, their face takes on ah look o' their last thought. Pain, regret, fear, confusion, surprise, peace... 'Tis ah dark world we live in. Death be plentiful, an' peace be short."

Salvatore set his pick aside as he waited by the one that was the farthest away from the group, seeing to work towards the group.



"Hold true, yah o' dark surroundin's an' cruel machinations. Fer all work is rewarded in the end, all eyes watched over, all thoughts an' actions taken account o'. All debts can be repaid, all sins atoned, yah oh remorse, fer death can be repaid wit' loife, fer nothin' stands as strong against tha' o' evil. Those who have left us are free o' pain, ta seek 'eir own ends an' be balanced in the end by the grand scales o' fate an' seek the peace each man has sown. An' let it be said, so ta, shall we join 'em when our time has come, through the tests o' adversity, through the perils o' those o' darker spirit an' twisted soul, lose not yer hope in loife, in love, in happiness an' kinship, fer these be our weapons an' our guide, our shield an' our loight. Oi don' know the men 'fore me, 'eir fears an' joys, 'eir trials an' victories, loives taken from 'em by violent hands. May 'ey foind the peace 'ey seek, so far from home."

Olison silently followed his way to the first body, listening intently.



"...So say we, children of light and reason. As those who still live may continue their everlasting stand against the darkness that be." Olison stated in a solemn tone, almost impulsively. After a pause he spoke one more time. "Lie relieved, and find your peace."

Olison made his way around to the body's head, crouching down and placing his hands on their shoulders, awaiting Sal's help.

Salvatore nodded when Olison continued, saying 'foind yer peace' quietly with the rider at the end. With that, the wyvern rider took his position around the feet of the body, grabbing them when Olison grabs his end and works to lay the body in its final resting place. Once the first is done, he moves onto the second and so forth, leaving the filling of the graves for last.



"Thank yah Olison, fer the 'elp an' the conversation. Its been good talkin' ta 'nother from Berebia... Oi've forgotten how much Oi missed it 'til we got 'ere. Its land, its people, heh, even its weather. It may not be mah home anymore, but it was good ta see it 'gain, if'in only fer ah while."

Olison dusted his gloves off before he grasped the shovel.



"It's no trouble, Salvatore. The dead make ill company for the living." Olison added with a wry chuckle. "Although it has proven a harsh land on more than one occasion, Berebia's still my home. Mayhaps I'll get the chance to show you the mountains south of Ugral sometime. Even harsher than here, but some of the lakes up there are worth seeing." With a moment more, Olison drove the shovel into the fresh mound of ice and dirt, taking chunks out of it at a time to fill the dirt beds below at an even pace.



"Think Oi'll take yah up on tha' offer once this is all over."

---

Growing bored and cold, Valor made his way to the plundered tomb, peeking at the entrance.

Darkness peeked back at Valor, and some cold wind blew at his face, right from inside the tomb. In the dim light of a torch, he could notice few lid-less boxes in the corner, and nearby, an entrance deeper into the tomb.

Derick noticed Valor poking around the tomb and walked up to being directly behind him



"Looking for something?"



"Yes and no. I was thinking about whether I should use this place to get out of the cold. This snow is awful, and I wound up sleeping in it for a bit, you see." Valor glanced into the darkness again. "Is there anything interesting in there? Murals, or artwork?" A cold wind from within the tomb forced Valor to stumble backward in surprise. "What the hell? It's protected from the snow and wind, how is it so bloody cold?"



"Do magic curses count as interesting?"

Valor allowed his palm to collide with his forehead.



"Magic is complete garbage. Except healing magic, that stuff is pretty cool." Valor turned and looked at his fellow swordsman. "What *kind* of curse?"



"Well you saw Joz back there right? That wasn't his normal appearance. After he came out of the tomb he looked like he had been aged a whole decade. He said that it was only temporary, but well still. On the bright side he had found some neat weapons down there too!"



"Do you figure it'll go off if I just go inside? I'm not going to be rooting through graves, but I dunno if that'll make a difference. Icy wind or no, it can't be worse than the snow and wind out here."



"To be honest I have absolutely no idea. I guess it might not be a problem if you don't go too far in."



"Even if it does go off... Might be worth it, if it's any warmer inside." Valor took a few cautious steps into the tomb, on the alert for the barest sign of malevolent magics.



"Ah! What if we asked Tantallos about it? He seems like he might know something about this kind of thing."

After getting inside, he could sneak a peak into the boxes - they were empty. The people who were here before must've stashed the things they found there for a while.

Then Valor could look deeper into the darkness. It wasn't just a darkness of light-less place - it was darker than that, almost perfect black colour.

Then, as Valor kept staring...

A pair of red eyes blinked at him from the darkness.



"HELLO!" Valor had his blade drawn in a flash, and quickly settled into a fighting stance. "...I'm not here to take anything. Not that I know if you can understand me. Or what you are."

Derick saw Valor draw his blade and ran into the tomb.



"Valor what's going on down-"



"What is that!?"

---

Riven stopped playing in the snow and finally perked up.



"Oh? Did someone find something?"

She moved over to peek inside the tomb.

Hearing shouts from the tomb, Edwin shook his head, sighing in exasperation.



"They should know better than to mess around in a tomb like that. Judging by the owners, they were pretty well off and people like that tend to protect their tombs with latent spells and curse traps."

He began floating over towards the tomb to check things out, muttering to himself.



"They had better not have been stuck with a curse of some kind, because I'm sorely tempted to leave it on them as a lesson..."

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There was no more eyes. There was only darkness. Before, behind, around Valor.

He could hear the crunching of bones under his feet. Then a light shone before him, and a young maiden materialized, pale and shining...

...before Derick bumped against Valor, who was standing still, and both tumbled to the ground.

Valor found himself in the familiar, dimly-lit entrance room, with those boxes and torch and everything else.

Valor slowly sat up, loosely holding his sword in his off hand. After a few moments of silence, he mumbled to himself, almost so low that Derick couldn't hear.



"That was my mom..."

Derick got off the floor.



"Your mom is a spooky pair of eyes?"



"Don't be stupid. Didn't you see?" Valor's expression grew faraway.



"The woman who was here, just for a moment, pale, with hair the color of straw... I miss her." Valor sighed deeply, and hugged his knees to his chest against the cold, and the world. "I miss her so much."



"Valor I didn't see anything other than-"





"Oh..."

Derick knelt down and attempted to pat Valor on the back.



"Ey are you alright? Need to talk about it?"



"So, it was just more pointless magic then?" Valor said, sadly. "That's too bad. It's been so long. Hell, I haven't even been home in years, much less visited... The grave."

Valor lifted his head, staring at the ceiling without seeing.



"You have any family Derick? Mine is all gone. What there was of it."



"Mine too. Bandit attack a long time ago. After that all I had were Sarius and Old George."



"Hah!" Valor let loose a bark of a laugh, devoid of humor. "My father was nearly a bandit. More of a petty thief. Got his stupid ass killed, trying to steal from a passing merchant caravan. Left my mother and I to fend for ourselves." Valor shook his head, and closed his eyes again. "I was just a kid, and she was never a healthy woman. She got sick one day... And that wasn't weird, it happened all the time. But she didn't get better, no matter what I did. One morning, when I woke up... She was gone." Valor thumped a fist against the floor. "I didn't get to say goodbye. I don't even know if she was asleep when it happened."



"I know how you feel. What I wouldn't give to be able to speak to my family again... to apologize for running off that day, and say goodbye. For Sarius at least, I have this search of mine to make it up to him, but the chances of ever finding out who was responsible for that day are a million to one. Derick started tracing patterns in the tomb's floor with his finger



"I guess I still have Old George, but I haven't seen the old man in years. For all I know he may have died since then anyways. I still feel like I need to repay him for taking care of me after what happened to my parents."

Valor noticed that the ceiling was infested by many, many black spiders that were looking down at him.

Valor was silent for a few moments, thinking about what he'd done with his life since his mother's death. Whether she'd be proud. Whether he'd done it for the right reasons. If he should've done those things he'd done. For the first time in a long time, Valor had thoughts about 'what if?' and 'what could have been'.



"...Let's get out of here. By the way, how do you feel about spiders?"



"Uh... I'm fine I guess if they're not sitting on me?"



"Good to know." Valor said, calmly striding toward the entrance to the tomb. "Ceiling's covered in 'em."



"Wha?"

Derick slowly looked up and jumped back a few steps, eyes widening, before briskly walking out as quick as he could.



"That's why I asked." Valor said, a bare hint of a smirk creeping back onto his face. "If you'd have told me they bothered you, I wouldn't have said anything."



"They don't normally but WOW that crosses so many lines of creepy."

---





"Raquel! Who knew we would be meeting again. And now you are a sage, hm? Interesting."



"I wonder if that deal we did before is still up."



"Hello, Tantallos. It seems you've improved your skills as well. As for the deal, I don't mind continuing it. Is there something in particular you wished to discuss?"



"Then we will keep it up. Well, I just want to know what you had been doing, at our side.. I brought some people to help me to deal with some revenants for a while. It is a long story.. and now Chris is working for me as a Forsaken. But I do not really know where he went or why he would do that, but we have different rules on the castle, so he can wander freely."



"He will just need to show up when we really need his assistance there. It is just a job after all!"



"Ah, I see. It seems many creatures and stories of myth have been reemerging of late, if you have been fighting revenants. It is certainly an enlightening time we live in. For my own part, I've mostly been traveling since Fezzan in Menelea, trying to find ancient books to bring back with me to Ys. I accepted this job largely for the money to further fund my travels, not to mention my curiosity regarding certain antiquities." She motioned over towards the tomb, but by this point, Derick and Valor had already gone within, with no sign from outside of their ingress.

---



"I can't see anything, let's go a little higher, and if we still have no clue as to where they are, we'll head in their direction and look for tracks." Seyena said, **reining her pegasus up quite a bit higher in order to get a good look around.**

Increasing the height helped enough to see that further east, there's a network of

roads, more or less blocked by occasional pile of snow. They were leading to several single homesteads, and further east, to a small village. There were some people on the distant roads, but they were so small and far away, that neither Seyena nor even Charlotte could discern if they were mounted, or if those were humans at all.



"This is ridiculous, they shouldn't be more than... fifteen, twenty minutes away. I can't even see them anywhere..." Seyena moaned, growing annoyed at the failure. "Let's go check a little bit to the east, and if we still can't find them, then we'll head back."

With those words, **Seyena spurred Ilya forward at an alarming pace, looking for any sign of the mounted mages. Check on those far away people provided it's no longer than a mile or two.**

As the pegasus went eastwards, Seyena and her companion girl could see that there were not one, but several horsemen groups. Some looked like travelers, some were definitely knights on patrol. Plus one should not dismiss the several horses tied near various homesteads in the closest village.



"This is useless- we won't find them like this." Seyena muttered, turning her pegasus around to head towards the group.



"Sorry. I'm good at spotting tracks, not people in a crowd. We don't even know who the mercenaries' employers look like. What do we do now? We technically failed the mission from Mannan. Plus, that fiery snowflake Danya will probably put in a bad word with us."

Charlotte thought for a minute.



"Have you ever thought about just returning to Kesselring and cutting the problem at its root? All our difficulties stem from Prixima in some way. I realize she's incredibly powerful, but we've been training for months now. Don't you think we could take her on?"

Seyena eventually landed with a blast of snow and wind, and she dismounted, leaving her Ilya to her own devices. She looked around, noticing a few people were missing, notably, Valor and Derick. Plus that sage-that-she-seriously-contemplated-hitting-with-the-blunt-end-of-her-lance, but she doubted that he would stick with Valor and Derick.



*Maybe they're sparring somewhere?* She wondered, looking around, as she enjoyed watching the mock fights.

Gregor had built up a small fire while all this was going on, trying to get a little warm and dry after snoozing in the snow and mentally rehearsing the talk he would have with Edwin and Valor later. Trying to do it while cold and miserable, he knew, would only result in more yelling on all sides.

He waved to the two girls as they landed, but otherwise stay put near the fire.

Seyena saw something at the tomb entrance. Her curiosity piqued, she walked over to inspect, seeing Derick and Valor.



*"Oh, this is where you two were... why are you walking around in a creepy old tomb?"*

The moment in which Seyena stepped into the tomb, ceiling spiders began happily falling off en masse, especially onto Valor.

Valor swore loudly, throwing himself onto the floor, where he rolled around in a desperate attempt to crush all of the damned things.

Derick ran out of the tomb yelling and started hitting himself to squish them.

The spiders scattered and then dissappeared into air as if they never existed.

Valor stood, reflexively brushing off his coat, despite the fact that the apparently illusory spiders had evaporated.



*"Yeah, this place doesn't want us here. Let's leave."* The swordsman moved to Seyena's side, gently taking hold of her wrist and walking toward the exit. *"You don't want to be in here. Trust me."*



*"Get them off-"*

Derick looked around puzzled before peaking his head back in to the tomb.



"I think I'm gonna go get Tantallos now."

Gregor looked up at the sound of yelling, reaching for his lance as he did so.



"What the hell...?" When Derick came running out of the tomb hitting himself, Gregor started heading over. Had Derick gone berserk from some ancient curse?

Seyena was more than happy to get away from the tomb, filled with those miserable web spinning creatures.



"Was-... was that an illusion?"



"Looks that way." Valor said as the two emerged from the tomb. "That place has a lot of protective spells within, apparently. Fat lot of good they did."



"If you guys are done rummaging around? Raquel seems to know where to go next, so we best head out soon. No telling how far away this road back to Menelea is."



"...Do we have to return to Mannan?"



"Not yet, but I think the idea was to go back eventually. What do you have in mind?"



"I'm getting tired of being a Special Advisor. We only took this job because the alternative was death. Even though we've been doing good work under orders, why don't we track them down on our own? If it really is PRIXIMA, whatever's in that box

might give us an idea of what she's trying to do. Raquel has information about them, and while on Ilya, we saw where the group was headed. Maybe it would be possible to get that box WITHOUT any unnecessary death. Does that makes sense?"



"Makes sense to me. In fact, I was thinking along the same lines. No sense in letting that box get away while we scurry back to Mannan's castle empty-handed. As for avoiding death...well, that always seems to be the tricky part, doesn't it? Still, we can do our best. Personally, I want to try to capture this mysterious employer and see if he or she has any connection to PRIXIMA."

Valor approached Gregor and Charlotte, frowning.



"So, we're finally headed after them? Great... Actually, I want to know something before we go. Charlotte, do you still have that Dragonstone?"



"Yeah. Why do you ask?"



"Figured as much." Valor folded his arms, setting one hand beneath his chin. "I've been thinking... Everyone thinks these things are worthless beyond what amounts to sentimental value, right? So it doesn't have any constructive use we know about, or anyone except maybe PRIXIMA could tell us about. And PRIXIMA obviously has some kind of use for them if she has several; it makes no sense to collect them if they're just proof of lineage, unless she *wants* to be known as a thieving murderer, which I doubt." Valor took a short pause and deep breath before finishing his thought. "I think... We should destroy it."



"WHAT!? No! I promise, there is no scenario in which PRIXIMA pries this from me. It will be returned to its heir. Eventually."



"How can you be certain?" Valor asked, raising an eyebrow. "Let's face it, we're a bunch of soldiers, mostly unbacked, with a grudge against a noblewoman in command of a fortress and its garrison. Plus, she's tough. Real tough, if half the stories are true. If she offs us, she'll take it off your corpse, and use it for whatever scheme

she's plotting. If you hide it before we go, maybe she won't find it. Maybe she will. Maybe some other wackjob with the same idea finds it. Who knows? But we can be fairly certain it has some kind of hidden use. Seems to me that the safest way to keep it from being misused is to destroy it. Besides. It's a frickin' rock. What's this heir going to use it for, a paperweight?"



"Isn't that doublespeak? You just said it probably has some kind of hidden use, enough of one to destroy it, and then you said it's just a rock. Even assuming PRIXIMA was lying about their use during the Old War, I think there's something contained in these that's important to their family tree."



"Okay, functionally, to us, it's just a rock. But, in the hands of a certain deranged madwoman, it is... Something. Likely something not good. Unless you have some idea of what she plans to do with the thing, it's infinitely more useful to her than it is to us. And whatever she's gearing up to do, she needs lots of them. So, the one you have is likely useless alone. And she might need all. Or, for her, it might just be that more is better. I really don't know. But I don't see any value in holding onto it."



"I dunno...destroying an ancient magical artifact - assuming they can BE destroyed - doesn't strike me as the best idea. I mean, what if it unleashes some nasty curse? Look Valor, even assuming we can't defeat PRIXIMA, and she or someone else gets the stone, that doesn't automatically mean destroying it would solve our problems. It might even accelerate PRIXIMA's plan."



"That... Strikes me as an outside possibility. And these things were sort of weapons back in the day, right? Most people don't boobytrap weapons. Maybe their containers, but not the weapon themselves. Unless they're trying to kill whoever they're giving the weapon to."



"Uh didn't PRIXIMA say the dragons infused their power into it? What if it explodes or something?"



"I'll do it myself if it makes you feel better. And... If Charlotte agrees. It's

hers, technically."



"Curse was a poor choice of word. What I mean is: if these things were used as weapons, they must have some sort of power inside them. Sorta like a healing staff or a magic tome. If we break a Dragonstone, the energy will be released. Who knows what sort of effects that could have? Anyway, you're right about one thing at least. It's Charlotte's stone, and thus her call."



"I don't think we should destroy *Tigerseye*. Prixima is cunning and rather cold, but she isn't foolish. I think that they have a purpose, maybe they're a sort of divine weapon. If they are, then having one of our own would give us a slight step up in a fight, or it could be used as a bargaining chip."



"And like Gregor said, trying to break something that is quite possibly a very, very strong magical artifact seems like a bad idea. A staff being broken already has an effect like that, in part."



"But, off the topic of the stone, as it's hardly urgent. What are we going to do about that box? I believe that our orders were something along the lines of "Find and kill those mercenaries desecrating the tomb of my great grand-father's uncle" or something like that. We did let them walk away, so why not ambush them at the village while they're tired and unarmed, and get the box?"

Derick's comment lit up Charlotte's eyes.



"Derick... let us assume the opposite. Prixima was entirely truthful - aside from her 'family honor' bit. If the Dragonstones really do contain a fraction of their past power, that's just a fraction, right? Assemble enough, and you create a whole. Her library was filled with ancient manuscripts, some surely dating back to..."



"What if Prixima is trying to bring back the very winged beasts that died out forever ago?"



Gregor had been about to respond to Seyena, but... His face blanched at the implications.



"Is...is that something that she could do? I've never heard of magic like that, but if that's the case...Well, we'd all be in even worse trouble than we are now."



"Anyone who knows about the magic she practices seems to revile her for it. We'd never seen anything like what Bores was doing, so what's to say a foul witch with enough books, artifacts and diabolicalness couldn't pull off Summonings? I mean, pulling living creatures from thin air... it sounds impossible for anyone but the most skilled magi."

She then scratched her head again. This was the Thinking Motion.

Seyena eyed Charlotte with a mixture of disbelief, and something else. She was unsettled.



"We've established that the stones are all just mere fractions of their power, it should surely take a large, large amount to even make one dragon. Even if Prixima has the means to do so, I don't think she's even found nearly enough stones by now, and I'm sure even more have been lost with time."



"Besides, like Gregor said, it's likely impossible, you can raise dead bodies into revenants, but creating a living, breathing dragon from scratch, No. She probably wants the stones for their power alone, if anything. Prixima wouldn't, no, *she couldn't* bring the dragons back."



"You have a point. It's just a guess, but hear me here: assuming her story is true, the Humans and Dragons defeated the old demons for good. Where are the Dragons now? Did they go extinct? Or did they go somewhere else? I've rehearsed that story a few times since then. It's almost like humanity was caught in between a war of two species from a different time and place. If the dragons disappeared, then she wouldn't have to 'create' one, would she?"

She sighed.





"Just a theory, of course. I'm getting too crazy for my own good."



"Well, we can't do much about it right now. Anyway Seyena, to answer your question I think we're going after the box. Joz didn't have it; according to Raquel someone called Matilda took it early in the battle to bring it to their employer. Raquel knows where the meeting will take place and possibly where the employer will go afterward, so perhaps we can set up an ambush of sorts to get the box, and hopefully learn a little more about what's going on."



"I don't feel comfortable with outright attacking the exchange. It seems kinda..."



"I understand what you mean. I wasn't talking about the exchange anyway; sounds like Matilda got quite a head start. I was thinking of ambushing the employer as he tries to return to Menelea."



"Good. So I guess everything went well. I just hope we get rid of that crazy witch soon, I still need to take care of some pending problems on the castle."



"Which reminds me of something. Sage lady, do you intend to keep wandering around? Because if you wish to get a permanent job, you could join the Forsakens. You probably would be the first Sage working for us. The assassin person is already our first assassin, so I would not mind adding more surprises on that place."

Tantallos looked to the side and took a hand to his chin.



"And it seems something is already going on.. maybe we should check."



"Joining the Forsakens is a possibility, but I have my own obligations back home. Thank you for your kind offer, though."

As Tantallos pointed out the others, who had gathered near the tomb, she glanced over as well.



"Agreed. Shall we, then?"



"Lead the way."

**Charlotte follows Raquel along with any others that may want to come.**



"Valor... As a sage, an avid researcher, a passionate scholar and a skilled practitioner of the magical arts, I feel like it is my duty to say this to you: If I so much as see you give a dragonstone a sideways look while holding a sword or heavy object, then I will personally burn your hands off." Edwin calmly remarks as he passes by, following Charlotte as she seemed to know what to do.

Valor stepped in front of Edwin, stopping the Sage in his tracks.



"Threaten me again, and my sword will be in your throat, you single minded simpleton. For now, the Dragonstone is safe. However- should Charlotte, the custodian of the stone, change her mind, or if PRIXIMA is about to get her filthy mitts on the stone, I *will* do everything in my power to sunder it. No matter *who* stands in my way." Valor stepped out of Edwin's path at that, following Charlotte instead. "Pompous fucking spellslinger." He muttered to himself.



"It doesn't matter what we think. If we have to do it, we do it. The last thing I want to do is piss off another noble by coming back empty handed."



"Noble? If the item *is* what we think it is, who says we have to bring it back

to Mannan?"



"What? What else *could* we do with it? I've no interest in bargaining for a truce with PRIXIMA." Valor folded his arms across his chest, eyes narrowed. "...You're not thinking of trying to actually use the dragonstones, are you? We don't have the first idea of what they can do, beyond speculation... Right?"



"Mannan does. Or do you want another bounty in Berebia, too?"



"I doubt she is. Honestly, I'd wager that these stones are still alien to PRIXIMA and Mannan both. How would we find out what to do with them?"



"I'm more interested in keeping magical artifacts away from the hands of nobles in general."

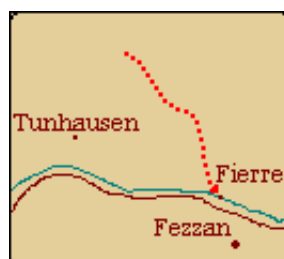


"Look... Nobles are just like anyone else, but with money. They can be bad... And they can be good. Personally, I'd sooner have a dragonstone under castle guard than in one of our pockets. Besides. Mannan seems alright. And he's opposed to PRIXIMA. For me, for now, that's good enough."

After some quarrels and talks, the group decided to try and wrestle the box, and, whatever is inside, from the possible agent of PRIXIMA. So they've set out.

To Fierre.

## ~~Chapter 9B: The Box of Silver~~



*To catch the box, the group headed to Fierre, a small border town, dangerously close to the regions of the fighting between the two nations locked in bitter war of hatred.*

*For two days, the mercenary group ventured east, and then south, through the snow-covered roads. As they proceed, they could see the tracks of Joz's group, and the innkeepers and merchants mentioend seeing a group of horsemen under command of blue-haired beauty.*

*They were quite fast in their march, but alas, they always seemed to miss the other group by the matter of hours, maybe even less.*

*Soon however, they've got themselves to a forest, behind which - according to a lone woodcutter - Fierre lies. They've gotten to the end of the forest, without problem.*

*And it was very, very quiet.*

The group trudged through the fresh snow that fell this morning, the white powder crunching under their boots. They've just wandered between two long piles of snow, when suddenly...

Raquel tripped.

And Derick, who was walking right behind her, could easily see what she tripped over.

Human, blood-stained hand, still looking fresh and pink despite the cold. From the nearby pile, some fingers were sticking out as well. There were corpses under the snow.

Many corpses, it seems.

Derick swore and helped Raquel up.



"Please don't be them please don't be them"

He kneeled down and started brushing away the snow.

Derick quickly brushed away enough snow to notice that the unfortunate dead man wore red cape, just like one of the Joz's sages, and that said sage had a tattoo on his neck.

That was definitely Hans, the healing mage. He was laying on his stomach, but the large wound in his back was more than obvious.

Derick sat silent for a moment before scrambling to check the other corpses, looking for Joz and Matilda in particular.

Alexander regarded the corpses and Derick's frantic scrabbling.



"...Damn."

Then he began looking for any leftover enemy troops, or tracks. They couldn't be far, and if they wished to stop PRIXIMA, they needed to be careful. Not miss any opportunities, either.

The tracks that led toward Fierre were numerous now. Approximately double the 'usual' amount - someone must've come back here or something like that, from the village. There were even marks of something heavy dragged back, and those tracks ended right at the snowpiles.



"This looks pretty bad. What happened here?"

It was a rhetorical question, of course. Gregor began checking for survivors, though he didn't have high hopes.

There were no survivors, and none of the corpses that Derick managed to uncover from the piles looked like either Joz or Matilda. Most of the corpses had large puncture wounds - few bodies still had arrows embedded in them.

And then Gregor noticed the color of the fletchings on the arrows - dark green. It was Menelean.



"Blast. Now the only question is if they were attacked by a regular army unit or someone a little less official." He grabbed one of the arrows and looked around. "Any of these bodies in Menelean uniforms?"

There were no bodies wearing Menelean uniforms.

Olison, having been in the rear guard, had only just managed to catch up.



"Hm? What happened?" Olison stopped his horse, looking at Gregor and Derick as they investigated the ground.

Olison dismounted to get a better look, but only from the lowered height could he see the bodies in the snow.



"Blast..."



"I'll scout ahead, it's not like I'm going to get picked off by an arrow."

**Yes, do that. Scout.**

Alexander went forward and looked around, quickly finding, just behind the corner, the body of Swordmaster Joz, sitting against the tree. His hands were still clutching on the thin, magical sword from the tomb, said blade now broken and the metal had lost its magical shine. The snow around Joz was red from the amount of spilled blood.

"You're... late..." Alexander suddenly heard those words, coming from said body.



"Shit! Derick! Ami! I think it's... the mercenary swordmaster! And... he might be alive, but he won't be for long!"

**Alexander gives him a vulnerary or other healing product, if I have one. But does make sure he's alive and it's not something else going on.**

Joz was barely, barely alive, but was already deathly pale. Most of the bleeding came from a bolt in Joz's chest and a slashing wound slightly above. Alexander found out he doesn't actually have any medicine at all on himself.



"Get here... that spear guy of yours..."



"What happened!? Were they intercepted?"



"Joz?!"

Derick ran to where he heard Alex from and skidded to a halt in front of Joz.



"Boss. What happened?!"

Valor stood back from the others, attempting to remain detached from the situation. It was not succeeding.



*Well, let's see... Group's dead, no sign of the other group. Lots of puncture wounds, total rout. Almost definitely an ambush, or, at the very least, they were off their guard. Whoever it was ~as if I couldn't guess~ already has the stone. Unless, we can catch them.* "...What are his chances, do you think?" Valor asked, posing the open question to the others in the group. By his guess... It looked bad.



"Shit. Gregor! Get over here!"

Joz took a deep breath.



"Derick... that Arvis guy... turned out he is... Menelean officer, not a collector... He held Matilda hostage in the inn... whilst his entire troop rushed at us from all... directions... they're entrenched in Fierre, but we managed to... kill many..." Joz's body tensed a little as he reached with his left hand to his right hand. Struggling for a moment, he managed to pry the ring he had on the middle finger.



"The ring... got it from the tomb... keep it Derick... and find... Matilda... she might... alive... still..." His head hung lower and his body relaxed. He was dead.

### **Derick gets Zeus' Ring!**



*"...That's about what I figured."* Valor stepped toward the fallen mercenary, and reached a hand forward before hesitating. *"...Derick. I don't believe in waste, but you knew this man. Do you mind if I search him?"*

Seyena had pried her staff from her bag, running over to the fallen swordsman.

Only to arrive too late.



"Damn it... this is not good. We need to get a move on, now, to see if we can help this Matilda person."



*"This reeks of PRIXIMA's doing, though."*



"I'd be hard pressed to believe it could be anyone else." Valor agreed.



"..."

Derick slowly clenched his fist.



"Thank you what you've done for me Joz. No matter what it takes, I'll avenge you too."



"Raquel, could you tell me what this ring does?"

Not having received a proper answer, Valor lowered his hand back to his side.

Seyena sidled up to Valor, whispering carefully.



"Valor, I wouldn't. Derick seems to be rather upset."

She then mounted her trusty pegasus, addressing the group.



"Now, are we going to go or what? The more we dawdle, the larger a chance the box gets away!"





"What do we do, though? We don't know who took the box. I guess I could try to make out their tracks..."



"Joz said they were in Fierre. That's where we should go."



"Derick is right. Let's mosey."

Tantallos remained quiet for now, just looking over those corpses before sighing. That was one of those situations he could not really assist, except by the part of getting rid of the crazy witch.

Derick looked around and sighed.



"We should send someone back after we deal with the box. They deserve a burial."



"First things first. We have some of Prixima's lackeys to destroy." Valor began walking in the direction of Fierre, confident the others would follow.

Derick took one last look at the dead before following him.

Alexander only looked forward as he began moving as fast as he could to Fierre.

And the group went further south, through the snow, through the forest. And they managed to get on the outskirts, only to see a grim sight:

Menelean banner was flying over the inn of the village, as green-armored men roamed the perimeter. Few of them were putting crates and bags on a pile, and behind them, some houses were slowly burning, producing thick smoke. It wasn't just an occupation, it was wholesome plundering as well.

And the low wall surrounding the village was being manned by the soldiers. Soldiers, who, the moment they saw a group of mercenaries emerging from the forest, began to shout and give signals to their fellows deeper into village.

---

"Arvis, a large group of armed people is approaching from the northern forest."



"What? Shit, I didn't plan on that." The blonde crossbowman, wearing a mark of Kesselring on his armor's chestpiece, grimaced and then moved toward the inn and kicked on the closed door.



"Get out! We're under attack!" The door clicked after a while and Arvis stepped aside as the tall, hooded man stepped out, putting gloves onto his hands. He squinted his eyes for a moment, and then looked at the crossbowman.



"I haven't finished interrogating her yet. Why did you interrupt?"



"I just said, you blockhead! We're under attack! Berebians, maybe. I don't think we left any of those mercs alive, so, yeah..."



"I see." He blinked. "And what of it?" The reply shocked Arvis for a moment, before he smirked.



"What 'what'? You... You don't give a fuck what happens to us soldiers, eh? EH? You glow-eyed bastard, you-"



"If you're done with insulting me, you should get to work. I've managed to pry the box from the woman's hands, but keep her under lock for now. I will be leaving for the border. Burn the papers-"



"Wait, what about me?"



"You're the military here, Arvis. Use your brain for a change. Rally the wyvern riders, or maybe call Wodan. Yes, a duo of a mad knight and a serial rapist should work. And speaking of your 'hobbies', no more violating women on the job. Lady PRIXIMA and I won't pull you from prison for the fourth time, Arvis. And my eyes aren't glowing." Ernest then walked away, whilst Arvis spit on the ground.



"Bullshit. You, that Aaron guy, and those others... if I see glowing eyes, I fucking see glowing eyes. Creepy bastards..." After the grumble behind the spy's back, the crossbowman reached for his little quiver at his hip.

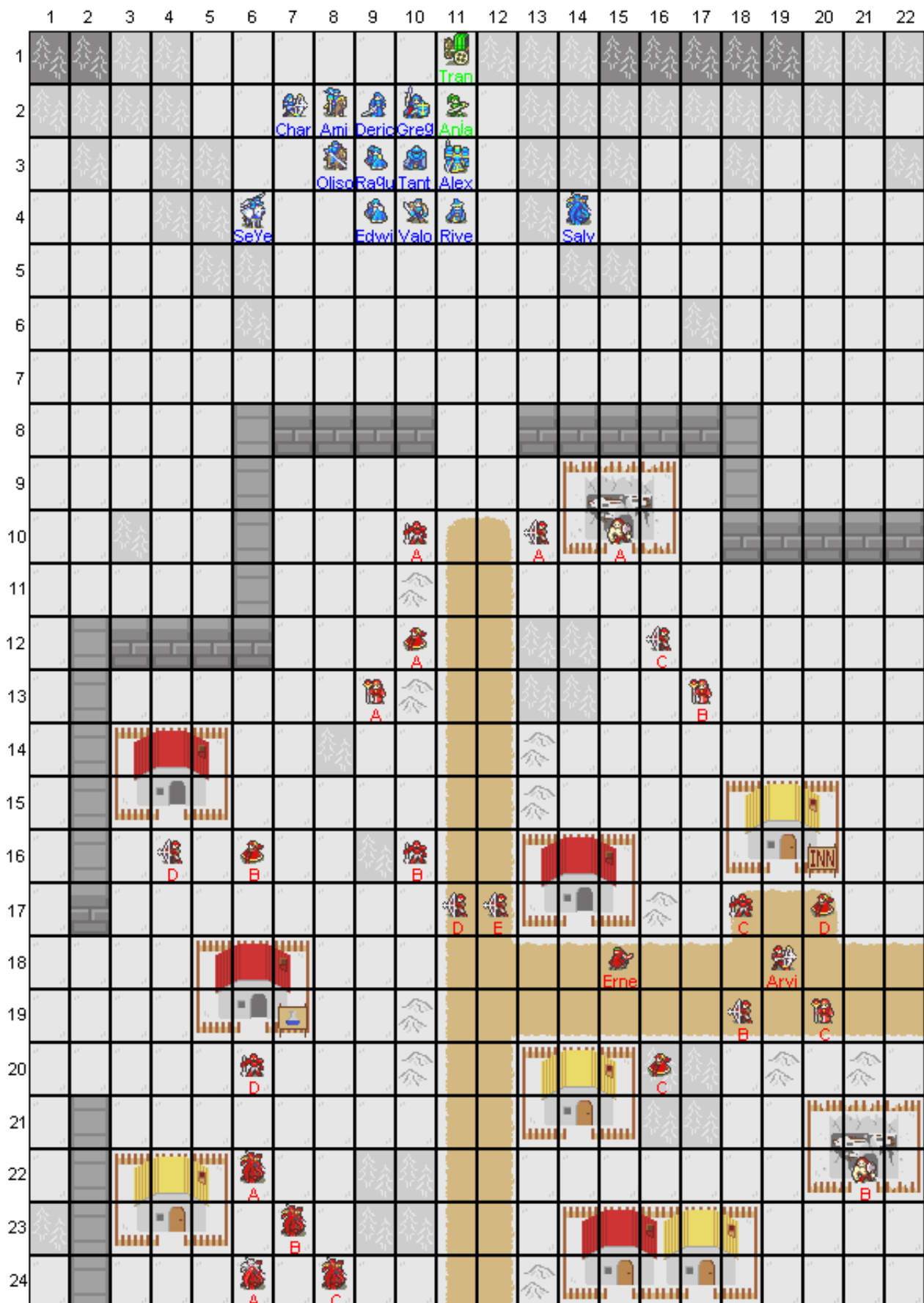


"Okay people, get ready for action! Rally the wyverns, and send for Wodan and his buddies!" As the soldiers prepared for combat, Arvis grinned.



"...He kinda didn't mention my hobbies *after the job*, did he...?"

# ~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

| Merces:                  | Enemies:                |                       |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43  | Pillager A: 40/40       | Thunder Mage A: 31/31 |
| Ami Storm: 29/29         | Pillager B: 40/40       | Thunder Mage B: 31/31 |
| Charlotte Braxis:        | Menelean Elite A: 32/32 | Thunder Mage C: 31/31 |
| Derick: 37/37            | Menelean Elite B: 32/32 | Thunder Mage D: 31/31 |
| Erwin Westbringer: 34/34 | Menelean Elite C: 32/32 | Wyvern Rider A: 36/36 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 38/38 | Menelean Elite D: 32/32 | Wyvern Rider B: 36/36 |

|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: 36/36<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 36/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/33<br>Valor Inara: 35/35 | Menelean Archer A: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer B: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer C: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer D: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31 | Wyvern Rider C: 36/36<br>Arvis: 40/40<br>Ernest: 45/45<br>Army Bishop A: 36/36<br>Army Bishop B: 36/36<br>Army Bishop C: 36/36<br>Wyvern Knight A: 41/41 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                          |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                          |

**Derick: Move 9 5**

**Valor: Actually get to 10 6**

**Olison to 8,6.**



"There are bandits inside the village, we need to kill them before they raze any more houses."



"WAIT! Seyena, could I have a lift to -"

Charlotte watches her fly off.



"Nevermind."



"Hm- oh, where do you want to go, Charlotte?"



"Could you bring me closer to the wall? I could get a head-start on these enemies from a safe distance before the rest of you guys arrive for the main event."

**Charlotte: Move 3 S and have Seyena fly me to 9,7 if she's willing**



"Alright. Leave some for the others, though!"

**Seyena moves to 7,6 and picks up Charlotte. She then moves to 9,6 and drops Charlotte at 9,7.**



"What happened while I was gone? Menelean soldiers aren't supposed to act like this..."

**Gregor: Move 3 south.**



"This... isn't some gaggle of bandits, that's for certain."

**Riven: Move to 11,6.**



"This isn't good... I think those look like Menelean colours. They might be making a push, so there's probably more where they came from. I suggest we move quickly before they can send for reinforcements!" Edwin called over the rush of everyone moving to positions.

**Edwin: Move to 12, 6. Zap Bishop A with sleep.**

**Edwin casts Sleep on Bishop A**

Sleep hit:  $(30 + [\{23 - 21\} \times 5] + 21) - (10 \times 2) = 30 + 10 + 21 - 20 = 41$

Hit roll: 69, miss!



"...This don' look good. Oy, Alex, yah wanna lift?"

Alexander grimaced at the barbarians over there calling themselves Menelean. Even the Berebians at Fezzan hadn't looted the damn city.



"Yes. Salvatore. I will need it."

**Ami: move to 5,8**



"Aye then, we best make this quick." Salvatore moves to 12.3, rescues Alexander, then moves to 13.5 and releases Alexander at 13.6.

**Tantallos: Move to 11,5.**



"Another fine day to bring more sacrifices to the Plague Dragon."



"This is just...too terrible. First Joz and the others, and now an innocent village. We cannot let these dastards have their way."

**Raquel moves to 10,7** yay, levitate

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The enemies near the open gate formed a defensive perimeter.

With neigh of an armored horse, a bulky, red-bearded knight arrived with his entourage, passing Ernest.



"Ernest! I was busy killing enemies to regain my HONOUR! Where are you going!? Why I was called HERE!"



"Hello, Wodan. So you were killing civilians, I see."



"ENEMIES! Their DEATHS shall help me regain my stolen HONOUR!"



"But of course! Those are mighty deeds." Ernest said without any emotion on his face. "See, you were called here because there are Berebians coming from the north-"



"BEREBIANS! I lost my honour because of Berebians! No, because that smug GREGOR was BEREBIAN TRAITOR! He mocked ME! He ran away from honorable fight! I lost my rank, my post, I lost everything, my HONOUR! All because of that BEREBIAN SCUM! I shall have it back! I will have my HONOUR! I WILL KILL THEM ALL!!" With a sound that was more akin to growl than a shout, he commanded his knights away. Ernest blinked and then turned to continue his leave.



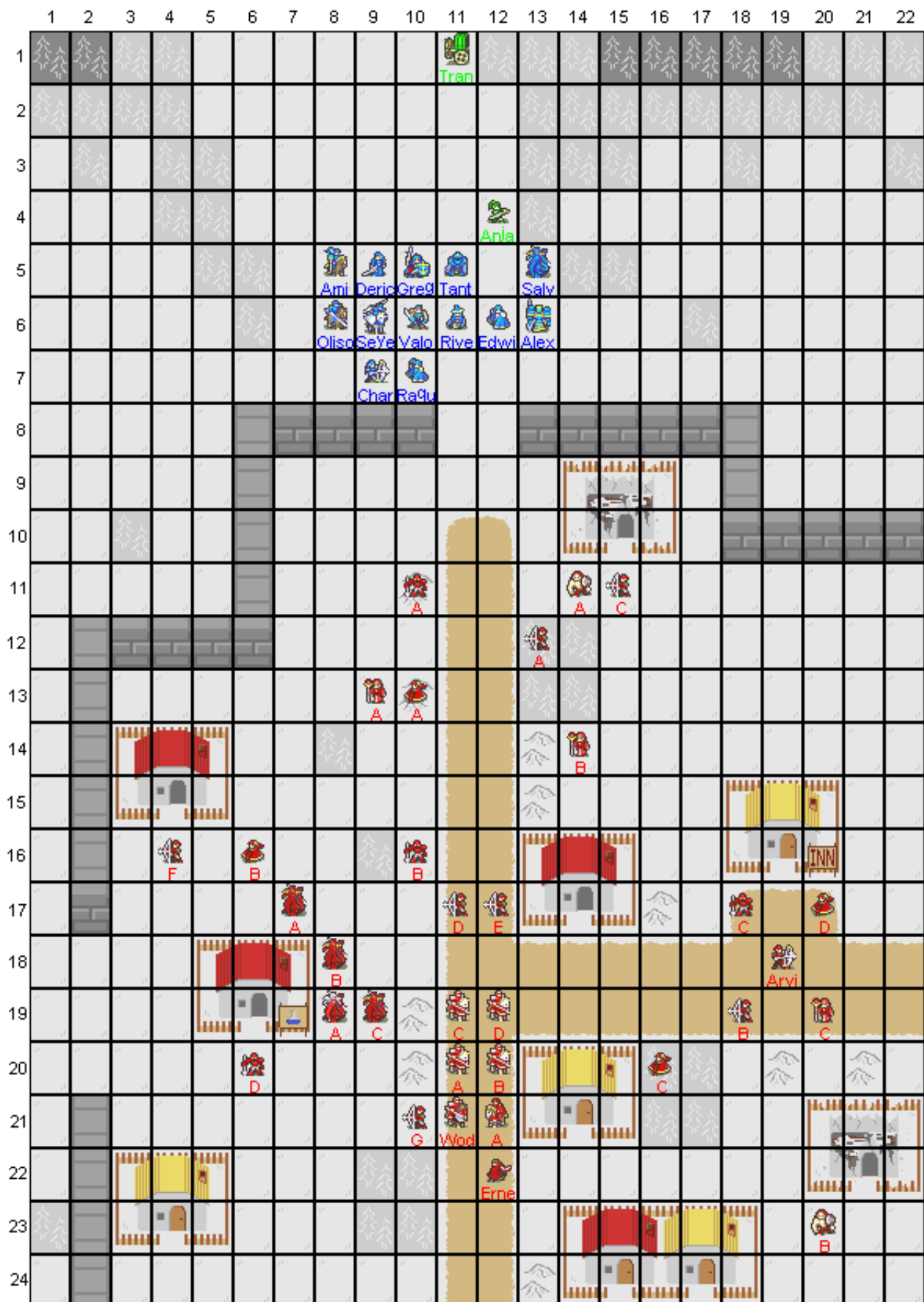
"Pathetic."

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Anja quietly moved after the others.



# ~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 29/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 33/33<br>Derick: 37/37<br>Erwin Westbringer: 34/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 38/38 | Pillager A: 40/40<br>Pillager B: 40/40<br>Menelean Elite A: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite B: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite C: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite D: 32/32 | Thunder Mage D: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider A: 36/36<br>Wyvern Rider B: 36/36<br>Wyvern Rider C: 36/36<br>Arvis: 40/40<br>Ernest: 45/45 |

|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: 36/36<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 36/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 35/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/33<br>Valor Inara: 35/35 | Menelean Archer A: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer B: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer C: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer D: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage A: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage C: 31/31 | Army Bishop A: 36/36<br>Army Bishop B: 36/36<br>Army Bishop C: 36/36<br>Wyvern Knight A: 41/41<br>Wyvern Knight B: 41/41<br>Wodan Barbarossa: 50/50<br>Paladin A: 33/33<br>Paladin B: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |



"Ahh, that's what I thought would happen... Salvatore, maybe you should get Alexander over the wall so he can close in with the enemy quicker? I'll cover your approach from those archers!" Edwin called back over his shoulder as he raised his staff.

**Edwin: Sleep Archer A. Laugh at his anger of not being able to shoot me with that nasty bow of his.**

#### Edwin casts Sleep on Archer A

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{23-7\} \times 5] + 21) - (7 \times 2) = 30 + 80 + 21 - 14 = 117$ , autohit!  
Archer A is asleep!

Salvatore studied the situation from his elevated position in the sky before replying to Edwin.



"Oi don' think tha' be ah good idea from what Oi be lookin' at, two magicke users from the looks o' it o'er there, by those hills." The wyvern rider gestured towards the two. "Dyin' in the breach ain' much o' ah breach, yeah? Oi'll get ah better look an' tell yah what Oi see."

**With that, the wyvern ridier flew to 14.8, perching on the wall.**



"Tha'... Tha' ain' the soight Oi was hopin' fer..."

**Valor: Go to 11, 7**

**Ami: Move to where Valor used to be.**

**Charlotte: After Raquel moves, move 1E and use Longbow on Elite A.**

**Gregor: Move to (9,7) after Charlotte moves.**

**Alexander: Move to 12, 7**

**Derick: move to 11 6 after Riven moves**



"Wh- hey, I wasn't-" Riven protested as Derick pushed her forward in his slog through the snow. She wobbled a bit through the air, the levitating equivalent to stumbling, before glancing around and deciding to get out of the way.

**Riven: Move to 14,7.**

**Tantallos: Move to 12,8.**

**Seyena moves to 15,8**

**Raquel: Move ~~out of the way~~ to 13,7**

**Olison to 8,7. Ensure Spear equipped.**

**Charlotte vs Elite A**

Hit:  $119+7+10+10-20-42 = 82 \Rightarrow 85!$

Hit roll: 83, hit!

Damage:  $22+1-13 = 10\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"Hey Arvis, the rest of our troops are coming."



"Oh, that's neat. We will move out too. You with the lance, guard the door."

"Yes, sir!" The soldier saluted to Arvis and his men as they moved west.



"I see Wodan is already coming there. Hey, Wod-"



"MY HONOUR shall be restored after I CRUSH their SKULLS and KILL THEM ALL! I shall have it BACK! MY HONOUR!" The knight and his buddies moved past Arvis.



"...Geez, maybe I should go back to my old job in the alleys. I work with creepiest people on the continent."

Meanwhile, the bishop saw the arrow wound and moved closer, healing the elite lancer.

#### **Bishop A heals Elite A**

20+20 = Up to 40HP restored

And then, Seyena could see an arrow pointed at her from under the arch of the ruined house. And then the arrow hit her pegasi, which stumbled and almost fell down the wall with the rider girl. Still having her javelins at hand, she have thrown two at the archer, wounding him quite greviously.

#### **Archer C vs Seyena**

Hit:  $111+10-10-2-47 = 62$

Hit roll: 33, hit!

Damage:  $42-10 = 32\text{dmg}$

Seyena retaliates!

Hit:  $111+10+5-40 = 86$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $22-13 = 9\text{dmg}$

Seyena retaliates again!

Hit:  $111+10+5-40 = 86$

Hit roll: 48, hit!

Damage:  $22-13 = 9\text{dmg}$

Bishop B saw the exchange of ranged attacks, and moved over to quickly heal the wounded archer.

#### **Bishop B heals Archer C**

20+20 = Up to 40HP restored

### **~~Ally Phase~~**

Again, Anja moved closer.

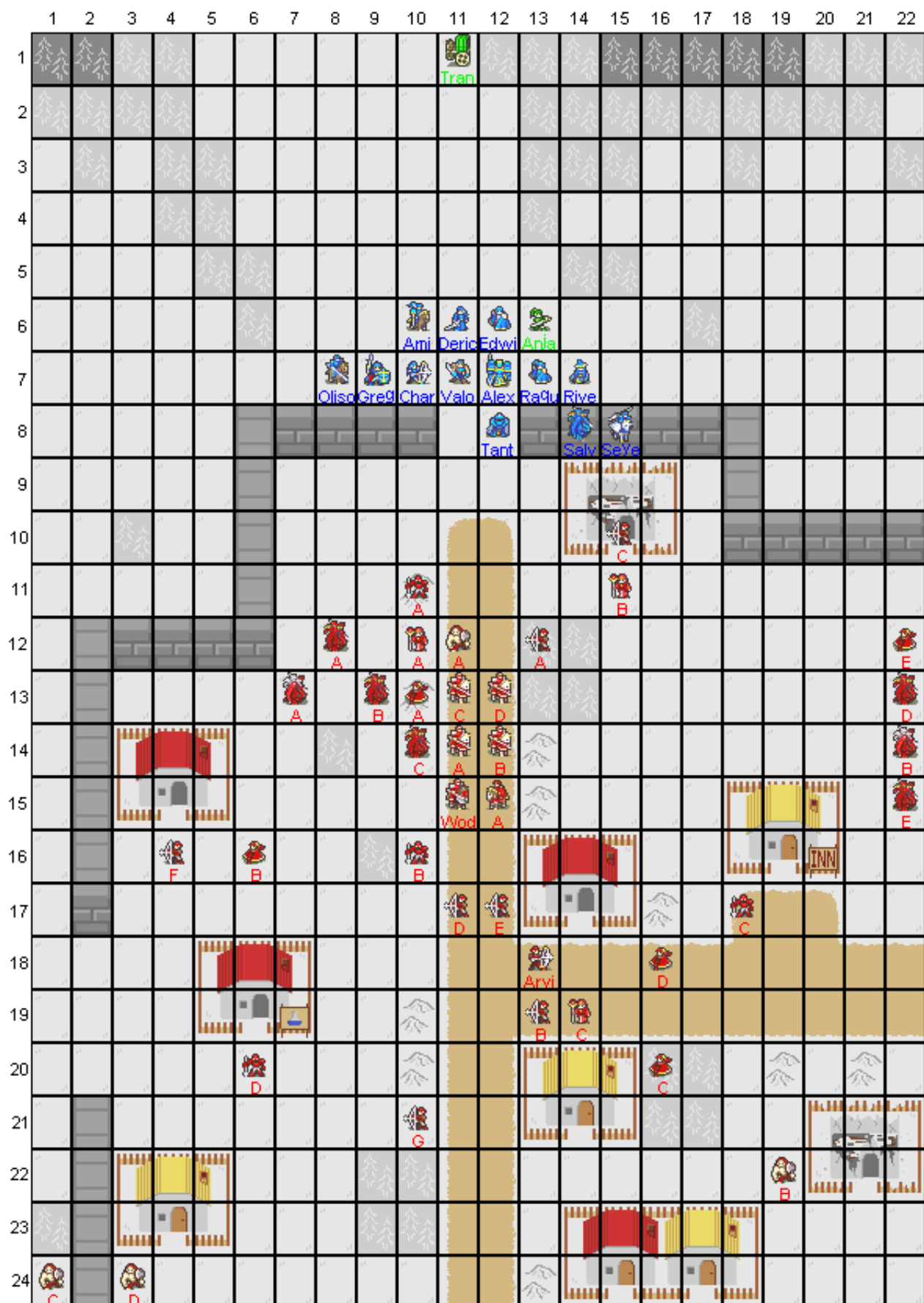


"Yes! I did it!" The rope slid from her wrists onto the ground and she stood up from the chair, rubbing her hands. For a moment she listened to the voices and sounds outside.



"Battle?... I have to get out of here."

## ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather:

| Merchs:                  | Enemies:                |                       |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43  | Pillager A: 40/40       | Thunder Mage D: 31/31 |
| Ami Storm: 29/29         | Pillager B: 40/40       | Thunder Mage E: 31/31 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 33/33  | Pillager C: 40/40       | Wyvern Rider A: 36/36 |
| Derick: 37/37            | Pillager D: 40/40       | Wyvern Rider B: 36/36 |
| Erwin Westbringer: 34/34 | Menelean Elite A: 32/32 | Wyvern Rider C: 36/36 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 38/38 | Menelean Elite B: 32/32 | Wyvern Rider D: 36/36 |

|                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: 36/36<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 36/36<br>Seyena Ikane: 3/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/33<br>Valor Inara: 35/35 | Menelean Elite C: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite D: 32/32<br>Menelean Archer A: 31/31 Sleep (4/5)<br>Menelean Archer B: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer C: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer D: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage A: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage C: 31/31 | Wyvern Rider E: 36/36<br>Arvis: 40/40<br>Army Bishop A: 36/36<br>Army Bishop B: 36/36<br>Army Bishop C: 36/36<br>Wyvern Knight A: 41/41<br>Wyvern Knight B: 41/41<br>Wodan Barbarossa: 50/50<br>Paladin A: 33/33<br>Paladin B: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

CAPSLOTTE: LONGBOW -> ELITE A. FULL 45% SUPPORT BONUS HEUHEUEHH.

Ami: Stand my ground

TWANG! But not so much.

Charlotte vs Elite A

|                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hit: $119+11+10+10-20-40 = 90$<br>Hit roll: 1, hit!<br>Damage: $22+2-13 = 11\text{dmg}$ |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Edwin: Sleep Pillager A.

Derick: Move 11,8

Edwin casts Sleep on Pillager A

|                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sleep hit: $(30+[\{23-4\} \times 5]+21)-(7 \times 2) = 30+95+21-14 = 132$ , autohit!<br>Pillager A is Sleeping! |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Salvatore flies over to 10.8, setting his spear in a defensive stance as he watches the oncoming wyvern riders.



"Hoo boy, that is a lot of bastards." Valor looked at his compatriots, and then spoke to Gregor. "So, what's the plan? Advancing wall?"

Valor: Stay put, for the moment.

Gregor listened to the sound of charging enemies. Sounded like a lot of horses out there, along with the inevitable footmen.



"Let's break their charge first. We have this gate to thin their numbers, and they seem perfectly willing to come to us."

Seyena flies to 9,6.



"Ami, I need you to heal Ilya. She was shot by one of those damned archers."



"Should be simple enough-"



"Oh! Oh."



"Yeah, that arrow a little to close to the heart for my liking. Let just ease that out..."

**Heal (Ilya)Seyena**

**Olison 1E if Gregor moves, stay put otherwise.**

**Riven: Hold still.**

**Raquel: Hold still**

**Gregor: Move to (11,6), equip Steel Javelin**



"Okay, I've got you covered!"

**Alexander: Hold Position.**

**Tantallos: Hold still.**



"So many of them.."

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The wyvern rider and his commander have flown to the side of the mercs and attacked Seyena. But even while wounded, her pegasus listened to her commands and not only she managed to evade the spears and lances of the wyvern guys, but she managed to lob her javelins at them, too.

#### Wyvern Rider A vs Seyena

Hit:  $103-5-15-47 = 36$

Hit roll: 45, miss!

Seyena counters!

Hit:  $111+5+10+10-32 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $22+1-16 = 7\text{dmg}$

Seyena counters again!

Hit:  $111+5+10+10-32 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $22+1-16 = 7\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern Knight A vs Seyena

Hit:  $105-5-15-47 = 38$

Hit roll: 98, miss!

Seyena counters!

$111+5+10+10-35 = 101$ , autohit!

Damage:  $22+2-21 = 2\text{dmg}$

Seyena counters!

$111+5+10+10-35 = 101$ , autohit!

Damage:  $22+2-21 = 2\text{dmg}$

Then, one other wyvern rider swooped down onto Olison, and was soon backed by one of the magicians. But even the heavy lance and magical thunder didn't brought Olison down (but he wasn't in best shape either).

#### Wyvern Rider B vs Olison

Hit:  $103-2-5-45 = 51$

Hit roll: 6, hit!

Damage:  $29-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

Olison strikes back!

Hit:  $97+5+5+10-32 = 85$

Hit roll: 6, hit!

Damage:  $25+2-16 = 11\text{dmg}$

Olison counters again!

Hit:  $97+5+5+10-32 = 85$

Hit roll: 81, hit!

Damage:  $25+2-16 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### Mage A vs Olison

Hit:  $112-2-45 = 65$

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Damage:  $26-5 = 21\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!

Hit:  $97+5+10-34 = 78$

Hit roll: 89, miss!

Olison retaliates again!

Hit:  $97+5+10-34 = 78$

Hit roll: 65, hit!

Damage:  $25-9 = 16\text{dmg}$

Then, the nearby bishop moved closer and blasted Salvatore with holy magics. And then again, knocking the rider off his mount.

#### Bishop A vs Salvatore

Hit:  $133+10-5-22 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $28-7 = 21\text{dmg}$

Bishop A attacks again!

Hit:  $133+10-5-22 = 116$ , autohit!



Damage:  $28-7 = 21\text{dmg}$

Derick found himself under assault from Elite Lancer A, and after suffering a lance blow, he took care of the spearman with ease. Then Paladin C smashed his lance into Derick, who then killed the rider. Unfortunately, another paladin rushed right after his fallen comrade and this time Derick was struck down.

#### Elite A vs Derick

Hit:  $110+15-5-2-57 = 61$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $24+1-11 = 14\text{dmg}$

Derick counters!  
Hit:  $120+5+5+10-15-42 = 83$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage:  $28-1-13 = 14\text{dmg}$

Derick counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $120+5+5+10-15-42 = 83$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Damage:  $28-1-13 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Paladin C vs Derick

Hit:  $128+15-5-2-57 = 79$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $30+1-11 = 20\text{dmg}$   
  
Derick counters!  
Hit:  $120+5+5+10-15-57 = 68$   
Hit roll: 56, hit! Crit roll: 18!  
Damage:  $28-1-14 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

#### Paladin D vs Derick

Hit:  $128+15-5-2-57 = 79$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $30+1-11 = 20\text{dmg}$

But that wasn't the end of their fighting. Bishop B moved onto the road and used his sacred magic against Tantallos, whose Worm spell barely scratched the holy man. After that, Tantallos got attacked by Paladin B, and the lance hit deeply. The druid struck the enemy with dark magic and healed himself a bit, but the second lance attack brought him down beside Derick.

#### Bishop B vs Tantallos

Hit:  $133+15-5-10-46 = 87$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-18 = 11\text{dmg}$   
  
Tantallos counters!  
Hit:  $130+2+10+10-15-48 = 89$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $27-1-21 = 5\text{dmg}$

#### Paladin B vs Tantallos

Hit:  $128-5-10-46 = 67$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $30-11 = 19\text{dmg}$   
  
Tantallos counters!  
Hit:  $130+2+10+10-54 = 98$   
Hit roll: 96, hit!  
Damage:  $27+2-10 = 19\text{dmg}$   
 $19/2 = 9.5 \Rightarrow 9\text{HP restored!}$   
  
Paladin B attacks again!

Hit: 128-5-10-46 = 67  
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage: 30-11 = 19dmg

Suddenly a meteor 'exploded' Valor a bit, sending snow and dirt flying everywhere around.

#### Mage Knight vs Valor

Hit: 115-10-37 = 68  
Hit roll: 26, hit!  
Damage: 26-8 = 18dmg



"YOU!" Wodan yelled, pointing at Gregor. "GREGOR! You have stolen my HONOUR! You RUINED everything! I will crush your skull and rip your smug grin from your face! I will strangle you with your own GUTS! I will KILL YOU!"

Arvis rubbed his chin after he got to the crossroad and was able to get a look of the situation ahead.

"Aren't we going to rush there, Arvis?"



"It kinda looks like we don't have to. Yeah, let's wait here. Would be nice to get away today without fighting, don't you think?"

"..."



"Psh..."

#### ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja couldn't move anywhere, but a curse was heard coming from her mouth. Something about someone's two fathers.

Meanwhile, Matilda checked the door, but it was locked. Then she paced around the room, before her eyes landed on a bag tucked under the table. She looked into it and blinked in surprise.

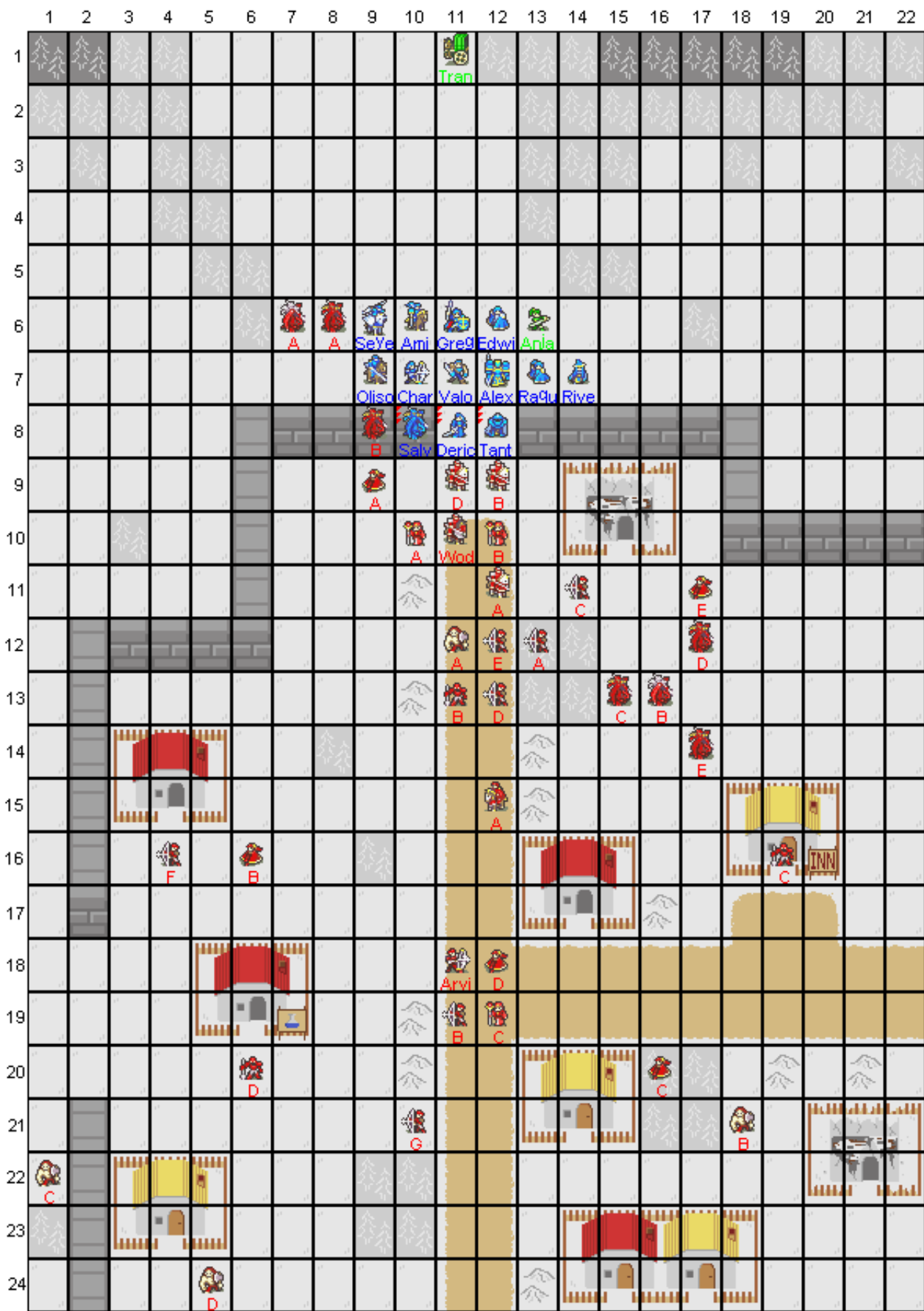


"That's my spell book... this charm looks magical, I will take it... and what are those papers?" She flipped one page before she heard an explosion. "There will be time for reading later." Matilda mumbled to herself and then moved closer to the door,

peeking through a crack in the wood. Then she struggled with the handle before the spearman moved closer and knocked on the door with his lance.

"Be quiet there!"

~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

|        |          |
|--------|----------|
| Mercs: | Enemies: |
|--------|----------|

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/43<br>Ami Storm: 29/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 33/33<br>Derick: -/37 <b>3/3</b><br>Erwin Westbringer: 34/34<br>Gregor von Hexham: 38/38<br>Olison Eul: 1/36<br>Raquel Torriani: 38/38<br>Riven: 29/29<br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/36 <b>3/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 3/35<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/33 <b>3/3</b><br>Valor Inara: 17/35 | Pillager A: 40/40 <b>Sleep (5/5)</b><br>Pillager B: 40/40<br>Pillager C: 40/40<br>Pillager D: 40/40<br>Menelean Elite B: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite C: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite D: 32/32<br>Menelean Archer A: 31/31 <b>Sleep (4/5)</b><br>Menelean Archer B: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer C: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer D: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage A: 15/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage C: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage D: 31/31 | Thunder Mage E: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider A: 22/36<br>Wyvern Rider B: 14/36<br>Wyvern Rider C: 36/36<br>Wyvern Rider D: 36/36<br>Wyvern Rider E: 36/36<br>Arvis: 40/40<br>Army Bishop A: 36/36<br>Army Bishop B: 31/36<br>Army Bishop C: 36/36<br>Wyvern Knight A: 37/41<br>Wyvern Knight B: 41/41<br>Wodan Barbarossa: 50/50<br>Paladin A: 33/33<br>Paladin B: 33/33<br>Paladin D: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

### Ami: Heal (Ilya)Seyena

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| <b>Ami heals Seyena</b>     |
| 10+20 = Up to 30HP restored |

### Edwin: Sleep Wyvern Knight A.

### Olison Spears Mage A, then moves 2N 1E.

|                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Edwin casts Sleep on Wyvern Knight A</b>                                           |
| Staff hit: $(30+[\{23-10\} \times 5]+21)-(5 \times 2) = 30+65+21-10 = 106$ , autohit! |
| Wyvern Knight A is asleep!                                                            |

Olison missed with his spear, and then was smitten with the thunder.

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Olison vs Mage A</b>               |
| Hit: $97+5+10-34 = 78$                |
| Hit roll: 84, miss!                   |
| Mage A counters!                      |
| Hit: $112-2-45 = 65$                  |
| Hit roll: 39, hit! Crit roll: 16!     |
| Damage: $26-5 = 21 \times 3 = 63$ dmg |

### Charlotte: We need instakills! Killer Bow -> Wyvern Rider A. Offer up the following statistic to Critzalcoat!: 43+22=65.

Wyvern Rider A ceased to exist with a flash.

|                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Charlotte vs Wyvern Rider A</b>                                     |
| Hit: $134+5+10+10+11-32 = 138$ , autohit! Crit roll: 18! //Hisssss >:v |
| Damage: $41-16 = 25 \times 3 = 75$ dmg                                 |

### Valor: Stay put.

### Raquel: Move to (8,7), zot Wyvern Rider B with Killer Thunder



"..."

**Riven: Move to 11,5.**

Gregor looked with some surprise at the shouting man.



"Wait...you're that maniac that blew up the bridge, right? What was your name again...Wide-end? I'm pretty sure it started with a W..."



"Anyway, I didn't 'steal' anything, your honor included. Pretty sure you lost that yourself when you turned to pillage and plunder like some common bandit."

**Gregor: Use Elixir on Valor, stay put to provide sweet DEF bonuses. Bemoan the absence of a simple vulnerary in inventory.**

**Seyena rescues Olison, placing him 1W from her, nice and cozy next to the sleeping knight.**



"Some... Man o'... The... Cloth... Dis... Grace..." Salvatore growled at the bishop, his consciousness wavering then dipping.

#### **Raquel vs Wyvern Rider B**

Hit:  $104+15+10+5-32 = 102$ , autohit! Crit roll: 38! //Noooooooo >:v

Damage:  $29-6 = 23 \times 3 = 69$ dmg

#### **Gregor uses Elixir on Valor**

All HP restored

Alexander grimaced at Wodan.



"Fortunately for you, the tactic I used earlier won't work now. Unfortunately for you, I no longer wish to use it. Go away."

**Alexander: Stay put.**

Edwin paused in thought before turning to Gregor.



"Who is this idiot anyway? Did you embarrass him somehow? He certainly seems like the type to hold a grudge easily."

Gregor sighed.



"When Charlotte, Alexander, Anja and I were first trying to escape from Menelea, this maniac had his mages blow up a bridge to prevent us from crossing the border into Berebia. He then had his men charge us, only to retreat when Mannan's pegasus riders showed up. I think he was actually the first one to flee, and now I guess he blames me for some reason."

~~Enemy Phase~~

Mage A exchanged some thunders with Raquel, and only one of them survived.

**Mage A vs Raquel**

Hit:  $112-45 = 67$   
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
Damage:  $26-13 = 13\text{dmg}$   
  
Raquel counters!  
Hit:  $104+15-10-34 = 85$   
Hit roll: 10, hit! Crit roll: 38!  
Damage:  $29-15 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

Then, one of the bishops blasted Charlotte with magic, and earned an arrow for his troubles.

**Bishop A vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $133-5-10-10-7-42 = 59$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Damage:  $28-5 = 23\text{dmg}$   
  
Charlotte retaliates!  
Hit:  $134+5+10+10+10+7-48 = 128$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $23-11 = 12\text{dmg}$

Then, a meteor fell onto Charlotte, the explosion forming a cloud of snow. When it disperses, it turned out that Charlotte sidestepped the magical projectile in last second.

**Mage Knight vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $115-10-10-7-42 = 46$   
Hit roll: 50, miss! //Gawddammit v:<

And then there was a nasty surprise for the mercenaries. The other wyvern knight and one of his riders transported their mount-less companions across the wall!

~~Ally Phase~~



"That was a grave mistake on your part!" Anja rushed between the mighty wyverns and slashed at the Mage E, barely avoiding the retaliatory thunder. And then she slashed at the Mage again, cutting her throat and making the forested spot her eternal resting place.

#### Anja vs Mage E

Hit:  $143-20-34 = 89$   
Hit roll: 86, hit!  
Damage:  $18-9 = 9\text{dmg}$

Mage E counters!  
Hit:  $112-15-63 = 34$   
Hit roll: 63, miss!

Anja attacks again!  
Hit:  $143-20-34 = 89$   
Hit roll: 11, hit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $18-9 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$



"But, but mister Menelean... I'm so weak and tired... I need a... strong arm to support me, and I could use some refreshment too~" 'Oh gods Matilda what are you doing', the sorceress shook her head.

"...Oh really?" The soldier leaned against the door. "Well, I could provide those things easily, my little peach." Matilda's eyebrow twitched when she heard that 'name', and then she quietly flipped her book open.



"Are you still there, my manly knight?"

"Yes, why do you as-" The door exploded under the power of the magical wind, which cut through the wood and the armor of the unfortunate soldier alike, not to mention propelling him all the way onto the snow pile on the other side of the road.



"THAT'S WHY! And I'm not your peach, you bastard!" Matilda yelled, stepping outside the inn.

#### Matilda vs Elite C

Hit:  $125-42 = 83$   
Hit roll: 29, hit! Crit roll: 1! //Crit roll definitely not sponsored by cutscene shenanigans, no sir.  
Damage:  $23-9 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

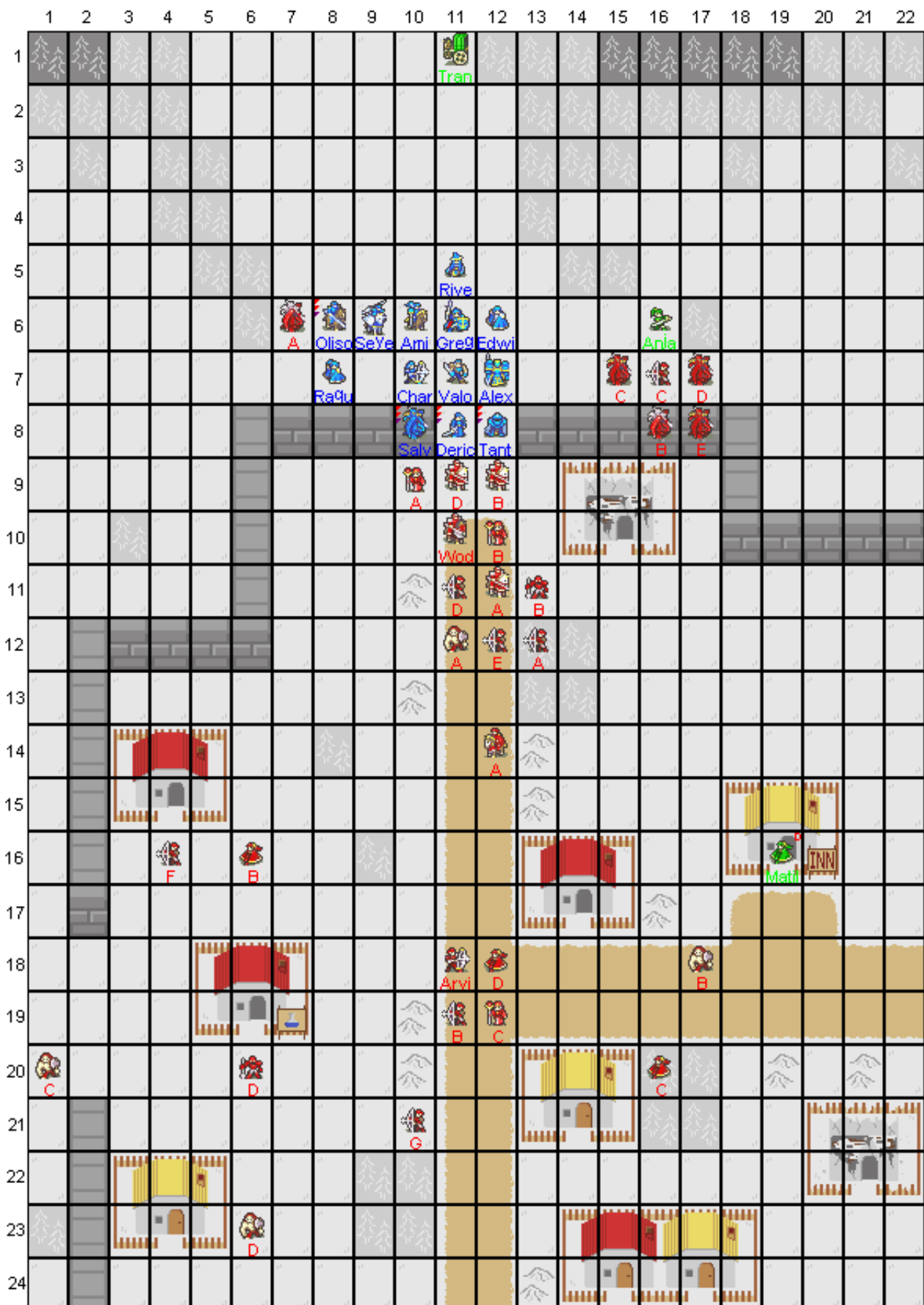
Of course, Arvis and his buddies both heard and saw the whole thing.



"What the...! Don't let that woman escape! Kill her if you must!"

**NPC: Matilda joins the Part-ay~!**

**~~Player Turn 5~~**



Weather:



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 43/44<br>Ami Storm: 29/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: 10/33<br>Derick: -/38 <b>2/3</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/35<br>Gregor von Hexham: 38/38<br>Olison Eul: -/36 <b>2/3</b><br>Raquel Torriani: 25/39<br>Riven: 29/30<br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 <b>2/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 33/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/34 <b>2/3</b><br>Valor Inara: 35/36 | Pillager A: 40/40 <b>Sleep (3/5)</b><br>Pillager B: 40/40<br>Pillager C: 40/40<br>Pillager D: 40/40<br>Menelean Elite B: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite D: 32/32<br>Menelean Archer A: 31/31<br>^ <b>Sleep (2/5)</b><br>Menelean Archer B: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer C: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer D: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage C: 31/31 | Thunder Mage D: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider C: 36/36<br>Wyvern Rider D: 36/36<br>Wyvern Rider E: 36/36<br>Arvis: 40/40<br>Army Bishop A: 24/36<br>Army Bishop B: 31/36<br>Army Bishop C: 36/36<br>Wyvern Knight A: 37/41<br>^ <b>Sleep (4/5)</b><br>Wyvern Knight B: 41/41<br>Wodan Barbarossa: 50/50<br>Paladin A: 33/33<br>Paladin B: 33/33<br>Paladin D: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Matilda: 36/36<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

## CAPSLLOTTE: KILLER BOW-> ARMY BISHOP A

**Ami: Heal Olison, move to 9,7**

TWANG!

\*gurgle\*

### Charlotte vs Bishop A

Hit:  $136+5+10+10+10+11-48 = 134$ , autohit! Crit roll: 48!  
 Damage:  $23-11 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

OweeEEeooOooo~!

### Ami heals Olison

$10+20 / 2 = \text{Up to 15HP restored}$

**Raquel: Move to (13,7), zap Wyvern Rider C with Killer Thunder**

Zaaaap!

### Raquel vs Wyvern Rider C

Hit:  $106+10-32 = 84$   
 Hit roll: 76, hit! Crit roll: 7!  
 Damage:  $29-6 = 23 \times 3 = 69\text{dmg}$



"Hey Gregor, hand me that medicine so I can get Derick on his feet."



"Sure, here you go. Let's hope he can dodge just after waking up."

**Gregor: Trade Elixir to Valor.**

**Valor: Forcefeed Elixir brand elixir to Derick.**

Seyena looked off into the distance, seeing the action evolve down at the inn.



"Hey, guys- I see the mage knight! She just escaped from the inn!" Seyena called down to the rest of the group. *Of course, we can't do anything about it now... we have our own problems to deal with. Hopefully she'll survive long enough so we can reach her.*

She then turned towards Salvatore and Ormm slumped on the wall, **and moved to 9,8, tapping the duo with her staff, and then flying off to 12,5.**

Alexander grimaced as his two allies lying on the ground. Then he picked up Tantallos and slung him around his back.

**Alexander: Rescue Tantallos, stay there.**



"Right. I'm going to circle around. Maybe I'll draw off some people with my longer range..."

**Edwin: Move to 7, 7 and then Sleep Wyvern Knight B.**

**Riven: Move to 12,5.**

As healing and rescuing was being performed, something strange happened - the wyvern knight didn't go to sleep!

**Valor uses Elixir on Derick**

Half of HP restored

**Seyena heals Salvatore**

10+7 /2 = Up to 8HP restored

**Edwin casts Sleep on Wyvern Knight A**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{23-10\} \times 5]+22)-(10 \times 2) = 30+65+22-20 = 97$   
Hit roll: 99, miss! //YISSSSSSSS

**Gregor: Move to (7,6), FLING Steel Javelin at Wyvern Knight A!**

Gregor lobbed two javelins, and one struck the wyvern in its head.

**Gregor vs Wyvern Knight A**

Autohit! Crit roll: 3! //say what V: noooooooooOooOooOooo!  
Damage:  $30+1-21 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$

Gregor strikes again!  
Autohit!  
Damage:  $30+1-21 = 10$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

First of all, Alexander got smashed by the Meteor. After that, the Bishop moved closer and blasted Alexander with sacred magic; twice, and Alexander didn't even hit the Bishop in-between. He fell onto his back as uncounscious Tantallos flumped into the deep snow behind.

### Mage Knight vs Alexander

Hit:  $115-2-10-14 = 89$   
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage:  $26-2-6 = 18\text{dmg}$

### Bishop B vs Alexander

Hit:  $133-2-10-14 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28-2-6 = 20\text{dmg}$

Alexander counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $97+10+10+5-48 = 74$   
Hit roll: 77, miss!

Bishop B attacks again!  
Hit:  $133-2-10-14 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28-2-6 = 20\text{dmg}$

After that, it was even worse; the Paladin in front of Derick simply stabbed him again.

### Paladin D vs Derick

Hit:  $128+15-10-2-58 = 73$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $30+1-11 = 20\text{dmg}$

And then, Wodan smashed Salvatore into a pulp with the steel mace.

### Wodan vs Salvatore

Hit:  $103+15-25 = 93$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $38+1-20 = 19\text{dmg}$

Right after that, the two wyvern riders swarmed onto Anja. The first of those hit her hard in the stomach, but she managed to avoid the second rider's lance.

### Wyvern Rider D vs Anja

Hit:  $103+15-15-63 = 40$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-8 = 22\text{dmg}$

Anja counters!  
Hit:  $143-15-32 = 86$   
Hit roll: 46, hit!  
Damage:  $18-1-16 = 1\text{dmg}$

Anja attacks again!  
Hit:  $143-15-32 = 86$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $18-1-16 = 1\text{dmg}$

### Wyvern Rider E vs Anja

Hit:  $103+15-15-63 = 40$

Hit roll: 53, miss!

Anja retaliates!

Hit:  $143-15-32 = 86$

Hit roll: 86, hit!

Damage:  $18-1-16 = 1\text{dmg}$

Anja retaliates!

Hit:  $143-15-32 = 86$

Hit roll: 12, hit!

Damage:  $18-1-16 = 1\text{dmg}$

Archer C twanged at Raquel, but he missed and got toasted in return.

#### Archer C vs Raquel

Hit:  $111-47 = 64$

Hit roll: 77, miss!

Raquel counters!

Hit:  $106+10+15-40 = 91$

Hit roll: 33, hit! Crit roll: 25!

Damage:  $29-7 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$

The wyvern knight quickly swooped toward the chokepoint and quickly grabbed Bishop B, depositing him near the other wyverns. The bishop's place at the chokepoint was taken by one of the Paladins.

Meanwhile, Matilda found herself besieged by a Pillager and a Mage that rushed from her hiding spot, heeding Arvis' command. She did evade the blow from the mean looking axe, but the thunder hit her in the shoulder.

#### Pillager B vs Matilda

Hit:  $91-63 = 28$

Hit roll: 56, miss!

Matilda counters!

Hit:  $125-27 = 98$

Hit roll: 15, hit!

Damage:  $23-4 = 19\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters again!

Hit:  $125-27 = 98$

Hit roll: 72

Damage:  $23-4 = 19\text{dmg}$

#### Mage C vs Matilda

Hit:  $112-63 = 49$

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Damage:  $26-3-17 = 6\text{dmg}$

Matilda retaliates!

Hit:  $125-34 = 91$

Hit roll: 4, hit!

Damage:  $23-15 = 8\text{dmg}$

Matilda strikes again!

Hit:  $125-34 = 91$

Hit roll: 80, hit!

Damage:  $23-15 = 8\text{dmg}$

Arvis turned his head when he shriek of a wyvern coming from the south. He frowned a little.



"Tsk, that's the last team, isn't it." He mumbled to himself. "But they can easily do the job without me."

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Gregor, help!" Anja ran between the trees for protection as the fight looked grim near her.



"Let me go, Menelean bastard!" With those words, Matilda blasted the Pillager away.

#### Matilda vs Pillager B

Hit:  $125 - 27 = 98$

Hit roll: 57, hit!

Damage:  $23 - 4 = 19$  dmg

# ~~~Player Turn 6~~~



Weather:

| Merces:                    | Enemies:                      |                       |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/44 3/3 | Pillager A: 40/40 Sleep (2/5) | Thunder Mage D: 31/31 |
| Ami Storm: 29/29           | Pillager C: 40/40             | Wyvern Rider D: 34/36 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 10/33    | Pillager D: 40/40             | Wyvern Rider E: 36/36 |
| Derick: -/38 3/3           | Pillager E: 40/40             | Wyvern Rider F: 36/36 |
| Edwin Westbringer: 34/35   | Pillager F: 40/40             | Wyvern Rider G: 36/36 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 38/38   | Menelean Elite B: 32/32       | Arvis: 40/40          |

|                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: 15/36<br>Raquel Torriani: 25/39<br>Riven: 29/30<br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 <b>3/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 33/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/34 <b>1/3</b><br>Valor Inara: 35/36 | Menelean Elite D: 32/32<br>Menelean Archer A: 31/31 <b>Sleep (1/5)</b><br>Menelean Archer B: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer D: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage C: 15/31 | Army Bishop B: 31/36<br>Army Bishop C: 36/36<br>Wyvern Knight B: 41/41<br>Wyvern Knight C: 41/41<br>Wodan Barbarossa: 50/50<br>Paladin A: 33/33<br>Paladin B: 33/33<br>Paladin D: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Anja: 7/29<br>Matilda: 30/36<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |



"No, no, no! Valor, move out of the way!"

**Raquel: Move to (15,7), zorch Wyvern Rider D**

**Charlotte sprinkles magic fairy dust on Salvatore to heal him.**

**Raquel vs Wyvern Rider D**

|                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hit: $106+15-32 = 89$<br>Hit roll: 57, hit!<br>Damage: $29-6 = 23\text{dmg}$<br><br>Raquel strikes again!<br>Hit: $106+15-32 = 89$<br>Hit roll: 49, hit!<br>Damage: $29-6 = 23\text{dmg}$ |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Charlotte uses Vulnerary on Salvatore**

|                    |
|--------------------|
| Up to 5HP restored |
|--------------------|

**Valor: Move 2 east to keep the heat off of Jorinn.**

**Gregor: Move to (11,7). FLING Steel Javelin at Paladin A! Pray for Critzacoatl's favor with 36 Crit!**

**Gregor vs Paladin A**

|                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hit: $114+5+10+10+11-54 = 96$<br>Hit roll: 6, hit!<br>Damage: $30+2-14 = 18\text{dmg}$ |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Ami: Move to 10,6 and heal Charlotte.**



"Man there a lot of blood."



"Oi think mos' o' tha' moight be moine, heh... Heh." Sal grunted as he got up for the second time now. "Oi've taken harder hits from... Bleedin' children yah horsed

bastard. Show me ah real hit! Strike me yah fink! Fight ah man wit' ah weapon in his hand facin' yah 'stead o' ah civvie wit' his back ta yah! Show me yah got a smidge o' pride an' honour in tha' skull o' yers!" The Berebian spat out at Wodan, trying not to waver too much from his wounds.

Seyena whacks Tantallos with her staff.



"Come on, up-and-at'em, shaman prince, or whatever you are."

She then moves to 14,5, rescuing Anja.

Riven: move to 14,5 and feed Anja a concoction.

Edwin: Move to 5, 11. Sleep Pillager D.



"Your sense of humor is curious, maybe I should learn about it sometime. But for now.. vengeance time."

Ami heals Charlotte

10+20 = Up to 30HP restored

Seyena heals Tantallos

10+7 /2 = Up to 8HP restored

Riven uses Concoction on Anja

Up to 30HP restored

Edwin casts Sleep on Pillager D

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{23-4\} \times 5]+23)-(11 \times 2) = 30+95+23-22 = 126$ , autohit!  
Pillager D is sleeping!

Olison hunched over as he re-mounted his horse.



"Hah... I'm not exactly proving myself a good asset here... Hah... Damned snow..."

Olison stays put

~~Enemy Phase~~

The wyvern knight swooped between the mercs and struck down Tantallos.

Wyvern Knight B vs Tantallos

Hit:  $105-5-10-46 = 44$



Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $36-12 = 24\text{dmg}$

With Tantallos out of the way, one of the Paladins rushed amidst Gregor's companions and grievously stabbed Valor. After Valor bruised the Paladin's arm, the horseman struck him down.

#### Paladin A vs Valor

Hit:  $128+15-10-5-40 = 88$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $36+1-1-14 = 22\text{dmg}$

Valor counters!  
Hit:  $131+10+5+15-15-54 = 92$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $19+1-1-14 = 5\text{dmg}$

Paladin attacks once more!  
Hit:  $128+15-10-5-40 = 88$   
Hit roll: 76, hit!  
Damage:  $36+1-1-14 = 22\text{dmg}$

The bishop nearby went between two trees and blasted Riven with magics, and she retaliated. Right afterwards, the nearby wyvern rider fell onto her but she managed to jump away from his lance. In return, she blasted him with dark magic until he and his mount were nothing but something akin to a pile of tar-coated bodyparts.

#### Bishop B vs Riven

Hit:  $133+15-10-38 = 100$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28+1-17 = 12\text{dmg}$

Riven counters!  
Hit:  $123+10-15-48 = 70$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $28-1-21 = 6\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern Rider E vs Riven

$103-10-38 = 55$   
Hit roll: 59, miss!

Riven counterattacks!  
Hit:  $123+10-32 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28+2-6 = 24\text{dmg}$

Riven counters again!  
Hit:  $123+10-32 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28+2-6 = 24\text{dmg}$

Salvatore in the meanwhile got knocked down again by one of the Paladins while Wodan moved closer to Gregor, grinning and breathing heavily, his left eyebrow twitching.

#### Paladin D vs Salvatore

Hit:  $128-5-5-25 = 93$   
Hit roll: 27, hit!  
Damage:  $30-20 = 10\text{dmg}$



"See Gregor? They are DYING! I make them DIE! I will make you die in the most painful of WAYS! FOR MY HONOUR! AHAHAHAHAH!"

And as if to prove 'his' lethality, a meteor smashed onto Olison, sending him and his horse to the snow - that's because the Mage Knight moved closer to get in range. After that, he discarded his burn-out book.

#### **Mage Knight vs Olison**

Hit:  $115-47 = 68$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $26-5 = 21\text{dmg}$

Somewhat away, the mage moved closer to the wall and struck Edwin with thunder, who in turn scorched her dress a bit.

#### **Mage B vs Edwin**

Hit:  $112-35 = 77$   
Hit roll: 58, hit! Crit roll: 19!  
Damage:  $26-20 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$

Edwin counters!  
Hit:  $131-34 = 97$   
Hit roll: 88, hit!  
Damage:  $29-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

Meanwhile, Matilda got her hands full of aggression; every Menelean in vicinity moved in to attack her. She killed the mage that was already wounded, and then had exchange of magic with the Bishop, and the other mage got blasted a lot as well. The archer struck an arrow into her arm, making her cringe and cough blood, but she blasted him with the magical wind as well.

#### **Mage C vs Matilda**

Hit:  $112-63 = 49$   
Hit roll: 66, miss!  
  
Matilda counters!  
Hit:  $125-34 = 91$   
Hit roll: 77, hit!  
Damage:  $23-15 = 8\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters again!  
Hit:  $125-34 = 91$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $23-15 = 8\text{dmg}$

#### **Bishop C vs Matilda**

Hit:  $133-15-63 = 55$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $28-1-17 = 10\text{dmg}$

Matilda retaliates!  
Hit:  $125+15-48 = 92$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $23+1-21 = 3\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters again!  
Hit:  $125+15-48 = 92$   
Hit roll: 89, hit!  
Damage:  $23+1-21 = 3\text{dmg}$

#### **Mage D vs Matilda**

Hit:  $112-63 = 49$   
Hit roll: 68, miss!  
  
Matilda counters!  
Hit:  $125-34 = 91$   
Hit roll: 27, hit!  
Damage:  $23-15 = 8\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters!  
Hit:  $125-34 = 91$   
Hit roll: 78, hit!  
Damage:  $23-15 = 8\text{dmg}$

#### Archer B vs Matilda

Hit:  $111-63 = 48$   
Hit roll: 12, hit!  
Damage:  $23-13 = 10\text{dmg}$

Matilda counterattacks!  
Hit:  $125 - 40 = 80$   
Hit roll: 71, hit!  
Damage:  $23-7 = 16\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters again!  
Hit:  $125 - 40 = 80$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Matilda rushed at the archer, clenching her teeth from pain, and then she sliced him with her wind magic.

#### Matilda vs Archer B

Hit:  $125 - 40 = 80$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $23-7 = 16\text{dmg}$



"Eeeeeee, diediediediedie!" Anja screamed, running toward the Bishop, slicing at him with her sword and even managing to avoid his holy spell.

#### Anja vs Bishop B

Hit:  $143+10-20-48 = 85$   
Hit roll: 82, hit!  
Damage:  $18-11 = 9\text{dmg}$

Bishop counters!  
Hit:  $133-10-15-63 = 45$   
Hit roll: 49, miss!

Anja attacks again!  
Hit:  $143+10-20-48 = 85$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $18-11 = 9\text{dmg}$

## Player Turn 7



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                      | Enemies:                                                          |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/44 <span style="color: red;">2/3</span> | Pillager A: 40/40 <span style="color: orange;">Sleep (1/5)</span> | Thunder Mage F: 31/31 |
| Ami Storm: 29/29                                            | Pillager C: 40/40                                                 | Wyvern Rider F: 36/36 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 33/33                                     | Pillager D: 40/40 <span style="color: orange;">Sleep (4/5)</span> | Wyvern Rider G: 36/36 |
| Derick: -/38 <span style="color: red;">2/3</span>           | Pillager E: 40/40                                                 | Arvis: 40/40          |
| Edwin Westbringer: <span style="color: green;">22/35</span> | Pillager F: 40/40                                                 | Army Bishop B: 7/36   |
| Gregor von Hexham: 38/38                                    | Menelean Elite B: 32/32                                           | Army Bishop C: 30/36  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: -/36 <b>3/3</b><br>Raquel Torriani: 25/39<br>Riven: 17/30<br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 <b>3/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 33/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/34 <b>3/3</b><br>Valor Inara: -/36 <b>3/3</b> | Menelean Elite D: 32/32<br>Menelean Archer A: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer D: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 17/31<br>Thunder Mage D: 15/31 | Wyvern Knight B: 41/41<br>Wyvern Knight C: 41/41<br>Wodan Barbarossa: 50/50<br>Paladin A: 10/33<br>Paladin B: 33/33<br>Paladin D: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Matilda: 10/36<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                               |



"You're insane. You're a rabid animal and you need to be put down for good. One of us will kill you, mark my words, and we'll all survive while you fall into the blackest pits of Hell. Maybe you'll find your 'honor' there!"



"Greg, move."



"Get Alexander up, please. I'll keep you covered, but be careful!"

**Gregor: Move 1 square north. FLING Steel Javelin at Paladin A! Get all the bonuses!**

**Ami: Head to 11,7 and Heal Alex**

**Charlotte: Move 1N, longbow Wyvern Knight**

#### Gregor vs Paladin A

Hit:  $114+5+11-54 = 76$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

#### Ami heals Alexander

$10+20 / 2 =$  Up to 15HP restored

#### Charlotte vs Wyvern Knight B

Hit:  $121+5+10+7-35 = 108$ , autohit!

Damage:  $38-21 = 17$ dmg

**Riven: Move to 14,7. Blast paladin.**

#### Riven vs Paladin A

Hit:  $123+5+10-54 = 84$

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage:  $28+2-10 = 20$ dmg

**Edwin: Move North 5 and sleep Wyvern Knight B!**

## Seyena moves to 14,7 and heals Valor

### Edwin casts Sleep on Wyvern Knight B

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{23-9\} \times 5] + 22) - (9 \times 2) = 30 + 70 + 22 - 18 = 104$ , autohit!  
Wyvern Knight B is asleep!

### Seyena heals Valor

$10 + 7 / 2 =$  Up to 8HP restored

Valor moved to his feet with a groan, gripping a blade tightly in his off hand.



"I am just getting sick to death of being hit by cavalry."

**Valor: Equip Killing Edge if possible.**

**Raquel: Move to (15,6), zot Bishop B with Killing Thunder**

### Raquel vs Bishop B

Hit:  $106 + 15 + 10 + 10 + 15 - 10 - 48 = 98$   
Hit roll: 12, hit! Damage:  $29 + 1 - 21 = 9$ dmg

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The mage knight sent Alexander a fireball, which knocked him down.

### Mage Knight vs Alexander

Hit:  $125 - 5 - 10 - 2 - 22 = 86$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $23 - 2 - 6 = 15$ dmg

Using the hole in the defensive corpse wall, Wodan ran through and stopped just short behind Gregor.



"Ha! You cannot run NOW, Gregor! Come to me! Give back MY HONOUR, YOU ORPHAN SCOUNDREL!!"

In the same moment, Ami got shot. And so did Valor.

### Archer D vs Ami

Hit:  $111 - 5 - 10 - 51 = 45$   
Hit roll: 2, hit!  
Damage:  $24 - 5 = 19$ dmg

### Archer E vs Valor

Hit:  $111 - 10 - 40 = 61$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $24 - 1 - 14 = 9$ dmg

Meanwhile, Matilda had to endure even more attacks. Unfortunately, the blast of

Bishop's magic sent her to the ground.

**Bishop C vs Matilda**

Hit:  $133-15-63 = 55$

Hit roll: 30, hit!

Damage:  $28-1-17 = 10\text{dmg}$

The mage raised her hand to Arvis, and he nodded.



"Good, now haul your asses here, we have to go and help Wodan. That idiot still haven't killed them!"

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Anja moved around the trees.

# ~~Player Turn 8~~



Weather:

## **Mercs:**

Alexander Jorinn: -/44 **3/3**  
 Ami Storm: 10/29  
 Charlotte Braxis: 33/33  
 Derick: -/38 **1/3**  
 Edwin Westbringer: **27/35**  
 Gregor von Hexham: 38/38

## **Enemies:**

Pillager A: 40/40  
 Pillager C: 40/40  
 Pillager D: 40/40 **Sleep (3/5)**  
 Pillager E: 40/40  
 Pillager F: 40/40  
 Menelean Elite B: 32/32  
 Thunder Mage D: 15/31  
 Thunder Mage F: 31/31  
 Wyvern Rider F: 36/36  
 Wyvern Rider G: 36/36  
 Arvis: 40/40  
 Army Bishop C: 30/36



|                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: -/36 <b>2/3</b><br>Raquel Torriani: 25/39<br>Riven: 17/30<br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 <b>2/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 33/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/34 <b>2/3</b><br>Valor Inara: -/36 <b>3/3</b> | Menelean Elite D: 32/32<br>Menelean Archer A: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer D: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 17/31 | Wyvern Knight B: 24/41 <b>Sleep (4/5)</b><br>Wyvern Knight C: 41/41<br>Wodan Barbarossa: 50/50<br>Paladin B: 33/33<br>Paladin D: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                              |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Matilda: -/36 <b>3/3</b><br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                              |

**Charlotte: Move 1 S. Killer bow Archer D.**

**Edwin: Move South 3, sleep Pillager C.**

**Ami: Heal Derick, Move to 10,7**

TWANG!

**Charlotte vs Archer D**

Hit:  $136+5+7+10-40 = 118$ , autohit! Crit roll: 25!  
Damage:  $23+1-13 = 11 \times 3 = 33$  dmg

**Edwin casts sleep on Pillager C**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{23-4\} \times 5]+22)-(9 \times 2) = 30+95+22-18 = 129$ , autohit!  
Pillage C is sleeping!

**Ami heals Derick**

$10+20 / 2 =$  Up to 15HP restored

Raquel, by this point, had had quite enough of the mad dog's ranting. This man worked with those who had killed Joz, Hans, and all the others she had worked with for the last several weeks, if he wasn't responsible for it himself. He had slaughtered a village of innocent people, and he had the gall to claim it was all in the name of honour. Her silent sorrow crystallized into a cold anger as he continued to scream his insults heavenward.



"Sir Knight, are you responsible for slaughtering my friend mercenaries? Are you responsible for the disaster that has befallen this harmless village, which had done naught but suffer the ill fortune of being in your path? You talk of honour, but you show none, and an honourless dog you shall remain as you die here, today."

**Raquel: Move to (14,5), FROTZ Wodan with Killer Thunder**

Raquel's thunders smashed into Wodan and his horse, the brilliant orange light flashing in rhythm of the rumble and sparkling sounds of the energy ravaging the flesh and metal. After Raquel's attack, all that left of the knight was a pile of black-burnt, smoking meat and steel.

#### Raquel vs Wodan

Hit:  $106+15+5+10-41 = 95$

Hit roll: 65, hit! Crit roll: 4! *// \*tableflips\**

Damage:  $29-9 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$



"About time he shut up. Excellent shot, Raquel."

**Gregor: Move 1 west.**



"Great shot! Okay, NOW I'm glad to have another mage on the team."

**Riven: Hold still.**



"...Wow that was a good shot."

**Seyena heals Tantallos (again) and moves to 17,7**

#### Seyena heals Tantallos

$7+10 / 2 = 8\text{HP}$  restored

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

#### Mage B vs Edwin

Hit:  $112-35 = 77$

Hit roll: 35, hit! Crit roll: 26!

Damage:  $26-20 = 6 \times 3 = 18\text{dmg}$

Edwin counterattacks!

Hit:  $131-34 = 97$

Hit roll: 87, hit!

Damage:  $29-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

The wyverns flew closer, some attacking the mercs, and one fetching one of the archers around the wall.

#### Wyvern Knight C vs Riven

Hit:  $105-10-5-35 = 65$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $36-10 = 26\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern Rider F vs Charlotte

Hit:  $103-10-5-7-42 = 39$

Hit roll: 9, hit!

Damage:  $29-1-5-15 = 8\text{dmg}$

After that, Archer A sniped at Derick, but he missed. Then Mage Knight tried to scorch Derick, but he failed too. Unfortunately for Derick, Paladin D was on the better side of

weapon triangle.

**Archer A vs Derick**

Hit:  $111-5-58 = 48$

Hit roll: 71, miss!

**Mage Knight vs Derick**

Hit:  $125-5-58 = 62$

Hit roll: 65, miss!

**Paladin D vs Derick**

Hit:  $128+15-5-58 = 80$

Hit roll: 70, hit!

Damage:  $30+1-11 = 20\text{dmg}$

Then, Paladin B rushed through bodies and stabbed with his lance at Tantallos, again knocking him down. Then the other archer moved closer to shoot Ami, but his arrow went way above her head.

**Paladin B vs Tantallos**

Hit:  $128-5-46 = 77$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $30-12 = 18\text{dmg}$

**Archer E vs Ami**

Hit:  $111-5-51 = 55$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

In the meanwhile, one of the pillagers plundered the inn and set in on fire. Soon, the smoke signaled that the building was being consumed by flames.

**Inn have been pillaged!**

**Pillager F gains 1000 Gold!**



"Back, I see. You done with the woman?" The female mage nodded to Arvis' question.



"Good. We will be moving toward the gate after all. I haven't heard Wodan's mad laughter for a while and that makes me worried."

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Anja moved into the forest.

# ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather:

## **Mercs:**

Alexander Jorinn: -/45 2/3  
 Ami Storm: 10/29  
 Charlotte Braxis: 25/33  
 Derick: -/39 3/3  
 Edwin Westbringer: 14/36  
 Gregor von Hexham: 38/38

## **Enemies:**

Pillager A: 40/40  
 Pillager C: 40/40 Sleep (4/5)  
 Pillager D: 40/40 Sleep (2/5)  
 Pillager E: 40/40  
 Pillager F: 40/40  
 Menelean Elite B: 32/32  
 Thunder Mage D: 15/31  
 Thunder Mage F: 31/31  
 Wyvern Rider F: 36/36  
 Wyvern Rider G: 36/36  
 Arvis: 40/40  
 Army Bishop C: 30/36

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Olison Eul: -/36 <b>1/3</b><br>Raquel Torriani: 25/40<br>Riven: -/30 <b>3/3</b><br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 <b>1/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 33/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/35 <b>3/3</b><br>Valor Inara: -/36 <b>2/3</b> | Menelean Elite D: 32/32<br>Menelean Archer A: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer E: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 3/31 | Wyvern Knight B: 24/41 <b>Sleep (3/5)</b><br>Wyvern Knight C: 41/41<br>Paladin B: 33/33<br>Paladin D: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                   |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Matilda: -/36 <b>2/3</b><br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                   |



"This is not as fun as it looks. I guess they do not like Druids at all."



"They don't seem particularly thrilled with swordfighters either." Valor said as he tried and failed to prop himself up on an arm. "I wish we had more Amis. Even better, more Seyenas. Hmm..." Valor's blood deprived brain took that last idea and ran with it.



"Yes, more people able to cure us would be really helpful- "

He stopped and coughed before laughing.



"I will pretend I did not hear the last part. I am sure you would be wanting another kind of assistance at that case."



"Shhh..." Valor said, his voice growing weaker. "I'm having the most wonderful dream..."

Alex looked up at the sky, in annoyance.



"I *hate* enemy mages."

Edwin gritted his teeth through the pain as he saw Olison on the verge of bleeding out in the snow, with no one around to help him. He knew what he needed to do, and it wasn't

going to be pleasant.



"You had better appreciate this..." He muttered as he levitated towards him.

**Edwin: Move to 7, 6 and call magic to cast heal on Olison!**

**Edwin heals Olison**

10+23 /2 = Up to 16HP restored

**Charlotte: Move 1 E 1 N, cast "Killer Bow" spell on Wyvern Rider F.**

**Charlotte vs Wyvern Rider F**

Hit: 138+10+7+5-32 = 128, autohit! Crit roll: 30!

Damage: 42+1-16 = 27x3 = 81dmg

**Raquel: Hold still; Mjollnir Paladin B with Killer Thunder**

**Ami: Move 1 to the left and heal Salvatore.**



"Back on your wings."

**Raquel vs Paladin B**

Hit: 108+5+15-54 = 74

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage: 30-10 = 20dmg

**Ami heals Salvatore**

10+20 /2 = Up to 15HP restored



"Here goes nothing..."

**Gregor: Politely ask for a vulnerary from Charlotte. Once vuln is received, move 1 south and 1 east. Use vulnerary on Alex. Maintain shield wall duties.**



"Urngh, thanks."

**Guard Gregor- and remember, Guard isn't an action!**

Charlotte nods and **hands Gregor a vuln.**



"LEEEEROY JEEENKINS ~~oh god I hope nobody dies~~"

## Seyena flies to 19,13

### Gregor uses Vulnerary on Alex

Up to 5HP restored

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

FWOOSH!

### Mage Knight vs Alexander

Hit:  $125-5-2-22 = 96$

Hit roll: 48, hit!

Damage:  $23-2-6 = 15\text{dmg}$

### Wyvern Rider G vs Edwin

Hit:  $103-10-36 = 57$

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage:  $29-12 = 17\text{dmg}$

### Mage F vs Salvatore

Hit:  $112-5-5-25 = 77$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $26-7 = 19\text{dmg}$

### Mage B vs Ami

Hit:  $112-15-5-51 = 41$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $26-12 = 14\text{dmg}$

### Paladin B vs Charlotte

Hit:  $128-10-7-5-44 = 62$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $30-1-5-16 = 8\text{dmg}$  //Charlotte is more tanky than I thought V:

Paladin B strikes again!

Hit:  $128-10-7-5-44 = 62$

Hit roll: 83, miss!

### Archer E vs Gregor

Hit:  $111-5-11-45 = 50$

Hit roll: 76, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $116+5+11-40 = 92$

Hit roll: 26, hit! Crit roll: 7!

Damage:  $30+2-13 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

### Archer A vs Gregor

Hit:  $111-5-11-45 = 50$

Hit roll: 12, hit!

Damage:  $23-2-20 = 1\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $116+5+11-40 = 92$

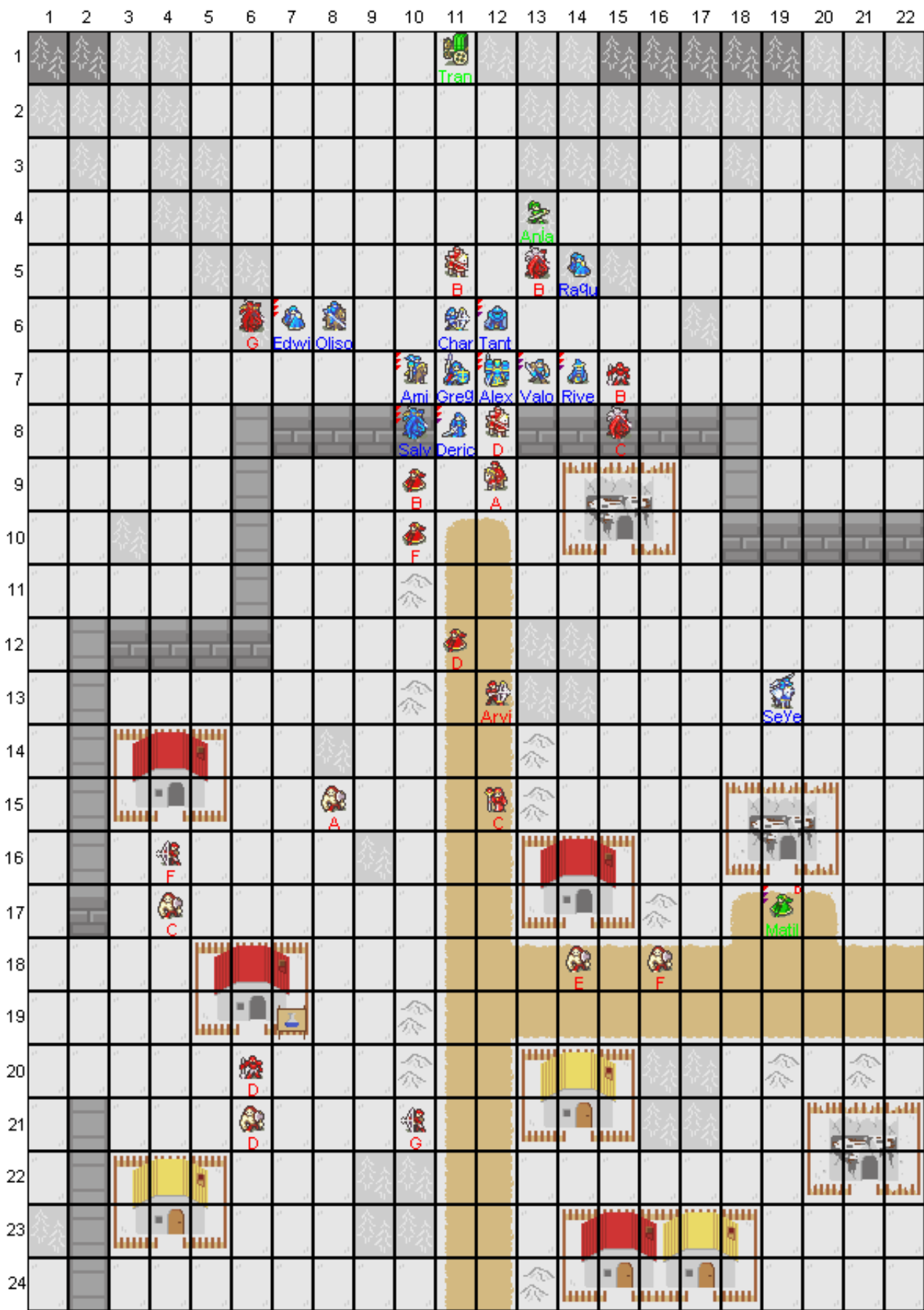
Hit roll: 75, hit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $30+2-13 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja hides in the forest still, not even daring to test her skills against so many and powerful lance-users.

~~Player Turn 10~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                     |  | Enemies:          |                       |
|----------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/45 3/3 |  | Pillager A: 40/40 | Thunder Mage D: 15/31 |



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: -/29 <b>3/3</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 17/33<br>Derick: -/39 <b>2/3</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: -/36 <b>3/3</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 37/38<br>Olison Eul: 16/36<br>Raquel Torriani: 25/40<br>Riven: -/30 <b>2/3</b><br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 <b>3/3</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 33/37<br>Tantallus Forsaken: -/35 <b>2/3</b><br>Valor Inara: -/36 <b>1/3</b> | Pillager C: 40/40 <b>Sleep (3/5)</b><br>Pillager D: 40/40 <b>Sleep (1/5)</b><br>Pillager E: 40/40<br>Pillager F: 40/40<br>Menelean Elite B: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite D: 32/32<br>Menelean Archer F: 31/31<br>Menelean Archer G: 31/31<br>Thunder Mage B: 3/31 | Thunder Mage F: 31/31<br>Wyvern Rider G: 36/36<br>Arvis: 40/40<br>Army Bishop C: 30/36<br>Wyvern Knight B: 24/41 <b>Sleep (2/5)</b><br>Wyvern Knight C: 41/41<br>Paladin B: 13/33<br>Paladin D: 33/33<br>Mage Knight: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Anja: 29/29<br>Matilda: -/36 <b>1/3</b><br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

Raquel looked at the oncoming soldiers, then heard a rustle behind her. Turning, she saw Anja, unhurt but clearly worried, next to the trees.



"Anja, we're going to need more medicine for everyone. Can you get to the wagon and grab as much as you can?"



"Um, uh... well, okay, I will try!"



"Thank you, Anja, and stay safe."

**Raquel: Move to (14,6); Call Magic (Heal): Riven**

Raquel then moved forward to Riven, and with a few muttered incantations, channeled healing magic into her hand. Reaching down, she let the magic flow through Riven, helping the shaman to her feet.



"Are you alright now? We'll have to watch out for these soldiers."



"Yes, thank you. Uh..."

She glanced around at all the soldiers around her, not looking very confident.



"Suh-woon! Now THAT's my Gregor!"

## CAPSLLOTTE: KILL THUNDER MAGE B WITH LONGBOW

### Charlotte vs Mage B

Hit:  $123+10+11+5-34 = 115$ , autohit!

Damage:  $23+2-9 = 16\text{dmg}$



"Heh, it was nothing compared to some of your hits..."

His silly grin quickly faded however, as he realized just how close Valor was to death. This was no time for idle banter, even with the woman he loved!



"Oh crap! Raquel, medicine please!"

**Gregor: Move to (13,6), ~~steal~~ borrow vulnerary from Raquel, use it on Valor.**

Valor was no longer quietly muttering nonsense into the snow, but rather lay extremely still, his skin deathly pale. The snow around him was stained crimson, creating a sharp contrast.



"..."



"...Valor?"

That was strange; he could have sworn that the swordsman had been (relatively) fine until just a moment ago. Was he...?



"...Valor, Seyena is nowhere near here to give mouth-to-mouth. If that's what you're hoping for, quit it. If you are actually dying...well, guess it'll be up to me."

Tantallos gave a sigh and pulled his mask over his head again before resting both of his hands over his chest.



"...It seems death is getting close, Plague Dragon."

**Seyena flies to 19,16, rescuing Matilda. She then moves to 19,11**

**Olison spears the Wyvern Rider 2x. He then moves 2E.**

Ami keeps laying.

**Raquel heals Riven**

10+22 /2 = 16HP restored

**Gregor uses Vulnerary on Valor**

Up to 5HP restored

**Olison vs Wyvern Rider G**

Hit: 97-32 = 65

Hit roll: 17, hit!

Damage: 26-16 = 10dmg

Olison strikes again!

Hit: 97-32 = 65

Hit roll: 52, hit!

Damage: 26-16 = 10dmg

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Of course, the wyvern wasn't going to just sit and get spear'd. Unfortunately for him, Olison survived the hit, and the spears proved to be as deadly as short they were.

**Wyvern Rider G vs Olison**

Hit: 103-47 = 56

Hit roll: 34, hit!

Damage: 29-15 = 14dmg

Hit: 97-32 = 65

Hit roll: 63, hit!

Damage: 26-16 = 10dmg

Olison strikes again!

Hit: 97-32 = 65

Hit roll: 13, hit!

Damage: 26-16 = 10dmg

After that, FWOOSH went Valor when the Mage Knight tossed fire at him.

Valor had just managed to prop himself up onto one arm before being set to well done. The swordsman screamed in anguish before collapsing. AGAIN.

**Mage Knight vs Valor**

Hit: 115-5-10-40 = 60

Hit roll: 43, hit!

Damage: 23-8 = 15dmg

Then, the Wyvern Knight tossed a spear at Riven, and that was prelude to his quick undoing.

#### Wyvern Knight C vs Riven

Hit:  $105-10-38 = 57$   
Hit roll: 71, miss!

Riven counters!  
Hit:  $123+10-35 = 98$   
Hit roll: 53, hit! Crit roll: 2! //Nooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo D:  
Damage:  $28+2-10 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

Then, Charlotte was attacked from both sides by two Paladins.

#### Paladin B vs Charlotte

Hit:  $128-10-5-11-44 = 58$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Paladin B attacks again!  
Hit:  $128-10-5-11-44 = 58$   
Hit roll: 63, miss!

#### Paladin D vs Charlotte

Hit:  $128-10-5-11-44 = 58$   
Hit roll: 44, hit!  
Damage:  $30-2-16 = 12\text{dmg}$

Paladin D strikes again!  
Hit:  $128-10-5-11-44 = 58$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

That's when Raquel got attacked by the elite lancer - the lance plunged deep into her body and struck her down.

Raquel, for her part, crumpled up with barely a whimper in surprise as she collapsed to the ground. Shock, she realized dispassionately as she curled up on the cold snow, slowly bleeding out. Hopefully Anja would make it in time to save everyone else...

#### Elite B vs Raquel

Hit:  $110-10-5-47 = 48$   
Hit roll: 29, hit! Crit roll: 11!  
Damage:  $24-8 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

Arvis moved closer, pointed his crossbow at Charlotte, and shot her down.

#### Arvis vs Charlotte

Hit:  $125-10-11-44 = 60 \Rightarrow 85!$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $30-2-16 = 12\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, one of the pillagers pillaged the house next to the inn.

**House B pillaged!**  
**Pillager F gets 500 Gold!**

~~Ally Phase~~

Anja whistled quietly and the horses pulled the wagon through the snow as she moved closer.



|                                     |                                           |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/45 <b>2/3</b>   | Pillager A: 40/40                         | Anja: 29/29                       |
| Ami Storm: -/29 <b>2/3</b>          | Pillager C: 40/40 <b>Sleep (2/5)</b>      | Matilda: -/36 <b>1/3</b>          |
| Charlotte Braxis: -/33 <b>3/3</b>   | Pillager D: 40/40                         | ^ <b>Carried by: Seyena Ikane</b> |
| Derick: -/39 <b>1/3</b>             | Pillager E: 40/40                         | Wagon: 5/5hits                    |
| Edwin Westbringer: -/36 <b>2/3</b>  | Pillager F: 40/40                         |                                   |
| Gregor von Hexham: 37/38            | Menelean Elite B: 32/32                   |                                   |
| Olison Eul: 2/36                    | Menelean Elite D: 32/32                   |                                   |
| Raquel Torriani: -/40 <b>3/3</b>    | Menelean Archer F: 31/31                  |                                   |
| Riven: 16/30                        | Menelean Archer G: 31/31                  |                                   |
| Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 <b>2/3</b>  | Thunder Mage D: 15/31                     |                                   |
| Seyena Ikane: 33/37                 | Arvis: 40/40                              |                                   |
| ^ <b>Carrying: Matilda</b>          | Army Bishop C: 30/36                      |                                   |
| Tantallos Forsaken: -/35 <b>1/3</b> | Wyvern Knight B: 24/41 <b>Sleep (1/5)</b> |                                   |
| Valor Inara: -/36 <b>3/3</b>        | Paladin B: 13/33                          |                                   |
|                                     | Paladin D: 33/33                          |                                   |
|                                     | Mage Knight: 33/33                        |                                   |

(Thunder Mage F seems to have mysteriously disappeared)

Alexander looked around him. ...They were falling. Had they failed? Had *he* failed?



"...Dammit..."

Olison barely managed to stay on his mount with that last blow. Unfortunately the lance managed to slip under his armor, into the side of his chest. Judging from the rasping noises coming from him, one of his lungs must have been pierced. Regardless, he urged his bleeding mount across the reddening snow, mustering the strength to reach down and pull Tantallos a little ways.



"Hh... You'll have time... Hh... To meet your Plague Dragon later..." Olison muttered quietly, before attempting to breathe deep and shout in a hoarse tone **"Anja! Help him!"**

**Olison to 12,5. Rescue Tantallos and Release him North.**

Gregor ran over to where Charlotte had just been struck down, shaking. Everything was going wrong...



"C'mon Charlotte, this is no time to quit. We still need you. *I* still need you! We're going to survive, and win!"

**Gregor: Move to (12,6). Use vulnerable on Charlotte. Ensure that Steel Javelin is equipped.**

Plink plink~

Seyena fearfully watched the chaos unfold. This was bad, they wouldn't win this fight. Her grip tightened on the reins, knowing all too well that she could run. If she left, she could survive, as she's done before.



*It shouldn't be any different, should it? I... I could just run.* She thought. But her gaze swept over her fallen comrades, and she saw Valor, lying motionless like many others in the group.



**"Damn it Damn it Dammit Dammit DAMMIT!"** She swore, yanking the reins forward, pulling out a javelin. She would never forgive herself if she left this time.

**Seyena moves to 12,10, and murderizes Thunder Mage D with a Javelin.**



**"...Cavalier person. If I really die on this place, at least inform the Forsakens. I do not want to fail with them, but if it is really my time, I want to make sure they at least get their defenses ready for any possible attack."**

The mage went down.

#### Seyena vs Mage D

Hit:  $113+10+5-34 = 94$

Hit roll: 72, hit!

Damage:  $24-9 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Riven: Move to 12,8. Concoction Derick.**

#### Riven uses Concoction on Derick

Up to 15HP restored

### ~~Enemy Phase~~



**"Hey you, pegasus girl!"** Arvis pointed his crossbow at Seyena and pulled the trigger.



**"BAM! Hahaha!"** The bolt flew right in front of Seyena's eyes, and she could

easily hear the 'swish' it made and feel the air moved before her nose.



"Headsho- I missed!? Shit, I should concentrate more and imagine less..."

Arvis cursed under his nose, already loading another bolt.

#### Arvis vs Seyena

Hit:  $125+10-10-49 = 76 \Rightarrow 85$

Hit roll: 87, miss! // \*rumblerumbletableflip\*

Then there was some magic flinging.

#### Mage Knight vs Derick

Hit:  $125-10-61 = 54$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $23-10 = 13\text{dmg}$

#### Bishop vs Derick

Hit:  $133-10-5-61 = 57$

Hit roll: 89, miss!

Then there was some lance stabbin'.

#### Paladin D vs Charlotte

Hit:  $128-5-10-11-10-44 = 48$

Hit roll: 18, hit!

Damage:  $30-2-5-16 = 7\text{dmg}$

#### Paladin B vs Olson

Hit:  $128-5-10-47 = 66$

Hit roll: 5, hit!

Damage:  $30-5-15 = 10\text{dmg}$

#### Elite B vs Gregor

Hit:  $110-5-10-11-45 = 39$

Hit roll: 33, hit! Crit roll: 8!

Damage:  $24-2-20 = 2 \times 3 = 6\text{dmg}$  // .\_.

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $116+5+10+11-42 = 100$ , autohit!

Damage:  $30+2-13 = 19\text{dmg}$

A scream came from the shop, and then there was silence. **Shop pillaged! Bandit D gets 1000 Gold!**

~~Ally Phase~~



"Creepy shaman prince, wake up." Golden powder was sprinkled onto Tantallos' face.

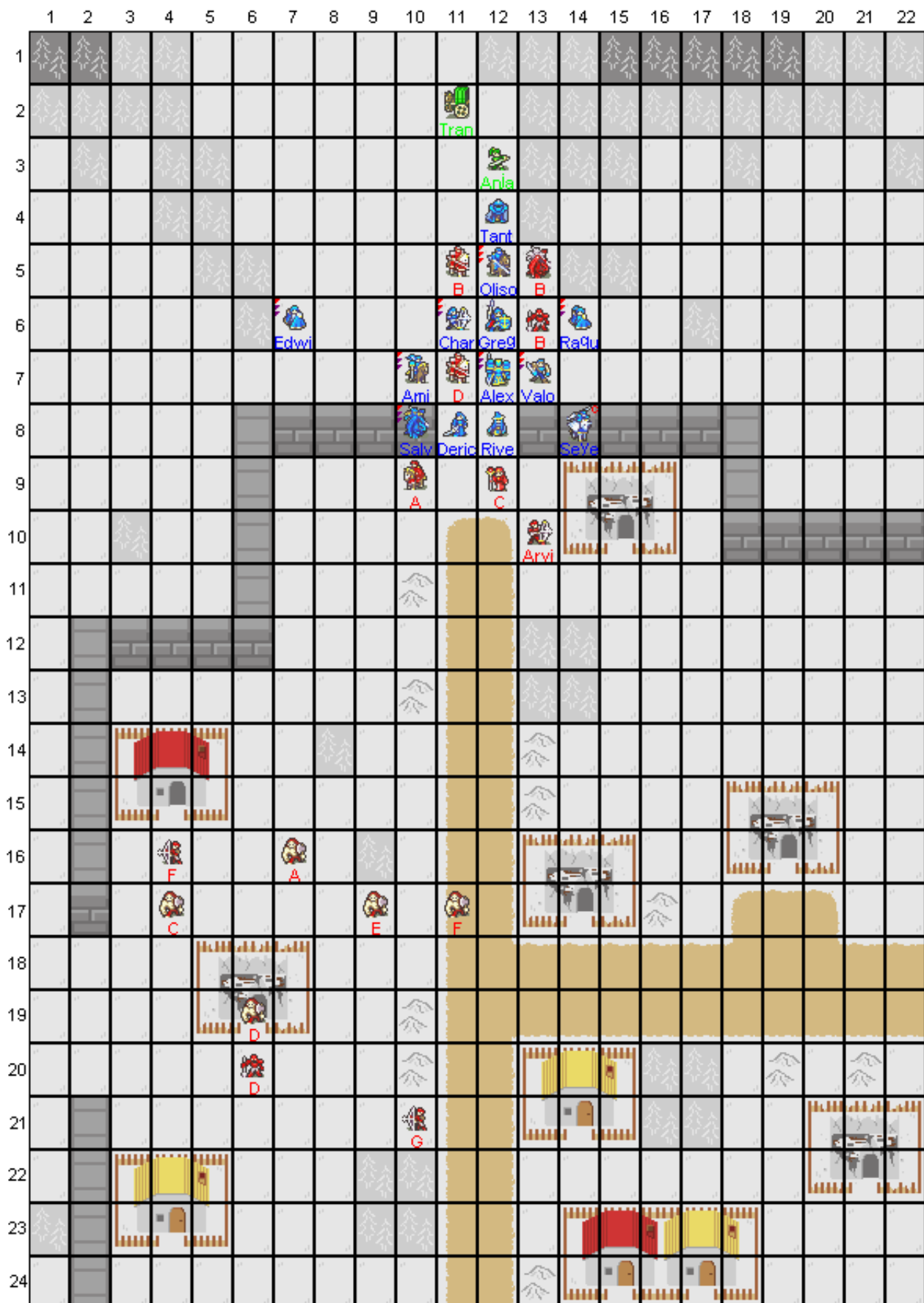
#### Anja uses Concoction on Tantallos

Up to 15HP restored



# ~~Player Turn 12~~

The wyvern, upon waking up, roared, as its knight looked around in confusion.



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                     | Allies:                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/46 1/3<br>Ami Storm: -/29 1/3<br>Charlotte Braxis: -/34 3/3<br>Derick: 2/40 | Pillager A: 40/40<br>Pillager C: 40/40 Sleep (1/5)<br>Pillager D: 40/40<br>Pillager E: 40/40 | Anja: 29/29<br>Matilda: -/36 1/3<br>^ Carried by: Seyena Ikane<br>Wagon: 5/5hits |

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Edwin Westbringer: -/36 1/3 | Pillager F: 40/40        |
| Gregor von Hexham: 29/39    | Menelean Elite B: 13/32  |
| Olison Eul: -/36 3/3        | Menelean Elite D: 32/32  |
| Raquel Torriani: -/41 2/3   | Menelean Archer F: 31/31 |
| Riven: 16/30                | Menelean Archer G: 31/31 |
| Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 1/3 | Arvis: 40/40             |
| Seyena Ikane: 33/37         | Army Bishop C: 30/36     |
| ^ Carrying: Matilda         | Wyvern Knight B: 24/41   |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 15/35   | Paladin B: 13/33         |
| Valor Inara: -/36 2/3       | Paladin D: 33/33         |
|                             | Mage Knight: 33/33       |

**Tantallos: Move to 10, 6 and heal Ami.**



"If we did not die yet, we will not die so soon. Back to your feet, horse riding magic possessed lady."



"Thank, batman!"



"..."



"Nevermind, it just Tant."



"I mean, um, don't hurt me."

Bling~

**Tantallos heals Ami**

10+23 /2 = Up to 16HP restored

Derick slowly pulled himself off the ground, and braced himself against the wall.



"You! With the crossbow. Are you the one in charge of these guys? What's your name?"



"My name is reserved for friends, and for ladies I claim, and you're neither of those, so shut up!"



"Huh. You remind me a bit of someone we killed a long time ago. Lemme rephrase that question for you. Are you the man called Arvis?"



"Oh, am I that famous already? Ha! Yeah, I might be Arvis, and what of it, kiddo?"



"Oh nothing, I'll get to that in a moment."

**Derick: Trade Concoction from Riven, heal Sal.**

Alexander continued to lie facedown on the ground. He didn't move, but a voice could be vaguely heard coming from the pile of metal.



"Damn. . . it. . ."



"Hey, Sniper. Weren't you talking to a hooded figure not long ago?"

**Gregor: FLING Steel Javelin at Elite Lancer B!**

**Riven: Get concoction from Derick, use on Alex.**

Salvatore slowly rears back into a proper sitting position on Ormm, who was equally wounded.



"**Thank yah...**" The man stated simply as he looked grimly at the scene around him. "**Foul machinations an' evil forces haunt our step... Guide those o' us 'ere today in our time o' need from the wicked... Let faith be our strength, wisdom guide our step, an' insight our actions... Let not those o' the kind fail... Let**

us not falter... Let us not shirk from our duty... May we be given the determination ta not fall today lest it be the will..." Salvatore continued to mumble raggedly to himself as he gripped his spear as tightly as he could in his grasp, it slick from his own blood.

Alexander rattles furiously as he clanks to his feet slowly, raising his shield and lance to their combat positions. His expression changes to a much less despairing one.



"Mmph... Good to know we're not done."

Gregor, who was guarding Alexander's back as best he could while the big knight got up, responded without turning away from the nearest enemies.



"Of course we're not done. Had you given up hope already, Sir Jorinn?"

Alexander doesn't respond, merely turning to guard Gregor instead.

**Alexander: Guard Gregor.**

**Seyena flutters on over to 8,6 and bonks Edwin on the head with her magical healing stick**

**Gregor vs Elite B**

Hit:  $116+10+5-42 = 89$

Hit roll: 54, hit!

Damage:  $31-13 = 18\text{dmg}$

**Derick uses Concoction on Salvatore**

Up to 15HP restored

**Riven uses Concoction on Alexander**

Up to 15HP restored

**Seyena heals Edwin**

$10+7 / 2 =$  Up to 8HP restored

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

**Arvis vs Derick**

Hit:  $125-10-63 = 62 \Rightarrow 85$

Hit roll: 63, hit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $30-13 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

**Bishop C vs Alex**

Hit:  $133-10-5-2-23 = 93$

Hit roll: 75, hit!

Damage:  $28-2-6 = 20\text{dmg}$

Alex stared with a dazed but decidedly annoyed expression at the sky.



"Every. Fucking. Time. Goddamn mages."

#### Mage Knight vs Salvatore

Hit:  $125-5-5-10-25 = 80$

Hit roll: 77, hit!

Damage:  $23-7 = 16\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern Knight B vs Ami

Hit:  $105-5-5-10-51 = 34$

Hit roll: 88, miss!

#### Paladin B vs Edwin

Hit:  $128-36 = 92$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Damage:  $30-13 = 17\text{dmg}$

#### Paladin D vs Tantallos

Hit:  $128-5-49 = 74$

Hit roll: 86, miss!

Tantallos counters!

Hit:  $134+5-54 = 84$

Hit roll: 31, hit!

Damage:  $29+2-10 = 21\text{dmg}$

Up to 10HP restored!

Paladin D attacks again!

Hit:  $128-5-49 = 74$

Hit roll: 35, hit!

Damage:  $30-12 = 18\text{dmg}$

~~Ally Phase~~

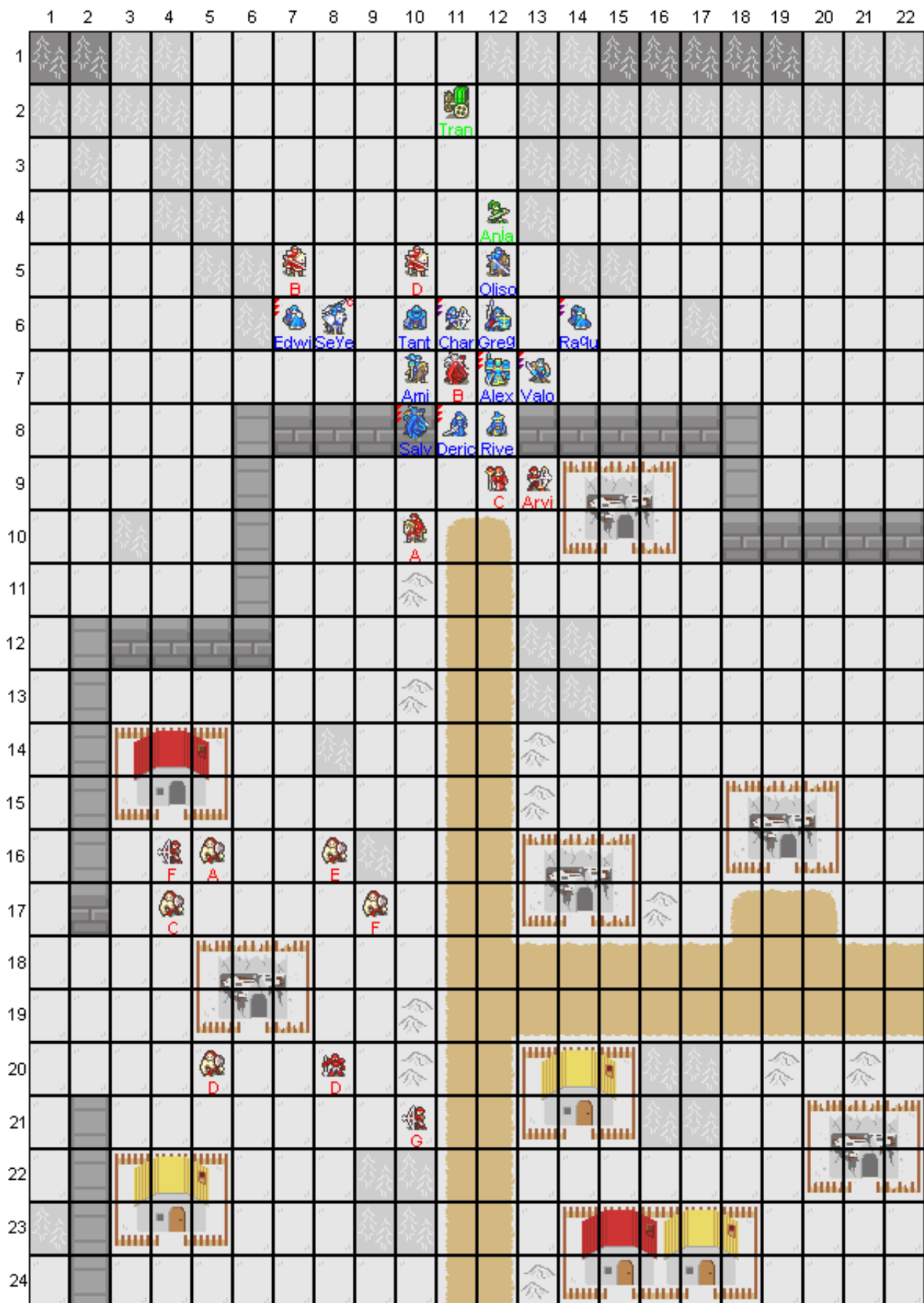


"Hello mister cavalier." Sprinkle sprinkle.

#### Anja uses Vulnerary on Olson

Up to 5HP restored

# ~~~Player Turn 13~~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                  | Enemies:                                                                                                                         | Allies:                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/46 <b>3/3</b><br>Ami Storm: 16/29<br>Charlotte Braxis: -/34 <b>2/3</b><br>Derick: -/40 <b>3/3</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: -/36 <b>3/3</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 29/39 | Pillager A: 40/40<br>Pillager C: 40/40<br>Pillager D: 40/40<br>Pillager E: 40/40<br>Pillager F: 40/40<br>Menelean Elite D: 32/32 | Anja: 29/29<br>Matilda: -/36 <b>1/3</b><br>^ Carried by: Seyena Ikane<br>Wagon: 5/5hits |

|                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Olison Eul: 5/36            | Menelean Archer F: 31/31 |
| Raquel Torriani: -/41 1/3   | Menelean Archer G: 31/31 |
| Riven: 16/30                | Arvis: 40/40             |
| Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 3/3 | Army Bishop C: 30/36     |
| Seyena Ikane: 33/37         | Wyvern Knight B: 24/41   |
| ^ Carrying: Matilda         | Paladin B: 13/33         |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 4/35    | Paladin D: 12/33         |
| Valor Inara: -/36 1/3       | Mage Knight: 33/33       |



"You bastard..." Edwin muttered to the Paladin as he keeled back over into the snow. "Bleeding to death like this really sucks."



"Tant, move."

**Ami: When Tantallos move, move to 10,6 and heal Charlotte.**



"..I am starting to think I am really dead. Who is batman? And I am healing others instead of exploding people with dark energy.."

**Tantallos: Move to 14, 5 and heal Raquel.**



"Back on your feet, Sage Lady."



"Ow ow ow ow ow." Raquel muttered with a wince as she carefully stood up, brushing snow off her robes and cloak. Her extremities tingled from her enforced stay in the snowdrift, and the wound the lance had left as it slashed through her robes ached sorely, but both were far better than the alternatives that immediately presented themselves to mind even as she thought it. She looked up at the person who had saved her.



"Ah. Thank you, Sir Tantallos, it seems I owe you. From the sounds of combat, I presume the battle is not yet ended?"

Seyena turned, scanning the group for who to heal next. She saw Valor still lying in the snow, and she quickly flew over to him, doing her best to drag him to his feet and tapping the swordsman with her staff.



"Valor! Get up! By the Dragon, you're cold- how long have you been lying here!?"

**Seyena moves to 13,6 and heals Valor then moves to 13,4 after all Feng Shui is done**

Valor was dragged to his feet without ceremony, and was sluggish when Seyena tapped him with her staff.



".... n'sure. ...'ry time I got up, got hurt. Still hurts. 'vrywhere." Valor's entire chest was coated with red snow. "...neat, there *are* two of you..."



"Valor? *Two...* are you going daft? Has that snow gotten to your head?" She paused to clean off the bloody snow as quickly as she could, simultaneously trying to rub some feeling into his undoubtedly numb limbs. "You might have frostbite! Can you feel your fingers?"



".. 'm, yeah, they hurt. 'vrything hurts. Think my hair hurts. Shouldn't do that, should it?" Valor seemed to be becoming more lucid. "Ugh, what's going on? Who's that on Ilya?"



"We're still fighting, it's been rather rough." Seyena said, satisfied that Valor isn't immediately dying, then turned towards Matilda's unconscious form. "That's the mage we're all nearly dying to save. She's rather out of it, as I got to her right before she perished- I haven't had time to properly address her."

Hearing Seyena and Valor talking next to her about much the same topic, Raquel half-turned to look, only to give a small gasp of surprise as she saw the unconscious figure on Ilya.



"That's Lady Matilda! Then she survived the attack on Joz and everyone else...we have to heal her as soon as-" Raquel made a move to channel more healing magic, only to flinch as a sharp pain stabbed through her side where the lance had



struck her.



"I can keep after her for now, she's not going to die any time soon." Seyena said, turning to Raquel.



"I understand, and thank you for rescuing her. I'll just-" She winced again. "Let Tantallos's magic finish healing my own wounds for the moment. As a sage myself, I should know better than this."



"Gregor... there's lots of noise. Are we winning?"

Even after Ami's help, Charlotte was still on the ground.



*Dear Dragon. She doesn't look so good...*

**Gregor: Move to (11,5). STAB Paladin D with Killer Lance! Afterwards, make sure Charlotte is okay and help her up.**



"Yes, we're winning. Things were tense for a moment but we've finally begun to turn the tide. Just hold on a little longer, okay?"

Olson attempted to help his horse up before getting on himself. He clutched his side where the lance made its way in, it was somewhat better, but still in mortal condition.



"Thank you, Anja. Do you have any spare medicine I could deliver?" He spared a cursory glance at Seyena and the others nearby talking about a figure hunched over on Ilya, "And it seems like that one with Seyena could use your help as well."

**Olson: Trade Concoction from Anja. To 12,6 and use it on Charlotte.**



"Stay with us, we're not out of this yet."

Tantalos frowned under the mask and placed a hand on his chest, feeling the pain, the energy cost to heal the Sage.



"Yes, it did not end yet. And soon I may be the one on the snow.. again. But if we are still alive, the Plague Dragon must be assisting us."

**Tantalos heals Raquel**

10+23 /2 = Up to 16HP restored

**Ami heals Charlotte**

10+20 /2 = Up to 15HP restored

**Seyena heals Valor**

10+7 /2 = Up to 8HP restored

**Gregor vs Paladin D**

Hit: 121+5+11+54 = 61

Hit roll: 3, hit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage: 32+2-14 = 20x3 = 60dmg

**Olison uses Concotion on Charlotte**

Up to 30HP restored



"Well, at least it worked." Valor said. He hefted his sword, gritting his teeth. "We should finish this."



"You there! Arvis, was it? I saw you talking to that hooded figure as we were first approaching. Was he a man with green hair and sharp teeth, perchance?"

**Riven: Move to 12,5. Trade vulnerary from Anja, nom vulnerary.**

**Riven uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

~~Enemy Phase~~

**House A pillaged!**

**Pillager C gets 500 Gold!**



"Nope!" Arvis replied to Riven and then shot Valor dead.

Then there was more deding across the battlefield. It was most evident with the poor wyvern and his knight, who were torn to shreds with Raquel's thunder magics.

#### Arvis vs Valor

Hit:  $125-10-40 = 75 \Rightarrow 85$

Hit roll: 81, hit!

Damage:  $30-14 = 16\text{dmg}$

#### Bishop C vs Charlotte

Hit:  $133-5-10-10-11-44 = 53$

Hit roll: 57, miss!

#### Mage Knight vs Olison

Hit:  $125-10-47 = 68$

Hit roll: 12, hit!

Damage:  $23-5 = 18\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern Knight B vs Raquel

Hit:  $105-10-15-49 = 31$

Hit roll: 87, miss!

Raquel counters!

Hit:  $110+10-35 = 85$

Hit roll: 78, hit! Crit roll: 38!

Damage:  $30-8 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$

#### Paladin B vs Ami

Hit:  $128-5-5-10-51 = 57$

Hit roll: 22, hit!

Damage:  $30-5 = 25\text{dmg}$

~~Ally Phase~~



"No no no, sword blondie, get up! There are damsels to rescue and everything."

#### Anja uses Vulnerary on Valor

Up to 5HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 14~~

Strong wind from northeast began to blow.



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                         | Allies:                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/46 <b>2/3</b><br>Ami Storm: -/29 <b>3/3</b><br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/34<br>Derick: -/40 <b>2/3</b> | Pillager A: 40/40<br>Pillager C: 40/40<br>Pillager D: 40/40<br>Pillager E: 40/40 | Anja: 29/29<br>Matilda: -/36 <b>1/3</b><br>^ Carried by: Seyena Ikane<br>Wagon: 5/5hits |

Edwin Westbringer: -/36 **2/3**  
Gregor von Hexham: 29/39  
Olison Eul: -/36 **3/3**  
Raquel Torriani: 16/41  
Riven: 26/30  
Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 **2/3**  
Seyena Ikane: 33/37  
^ **Carrying: Matilda**  
Tantallos Forsaken: 1/35  
Valor Inara: 5/36

Pillager F: 40/40  
Menelean Elite D: 32/32  
Menelean Archer F: 31/31  
Menelean Archer G: 31/31  
Arvis: 40/40  
Army Bishop C: 30/36  
Paladin B: 13/33  
Mage Knight: 33/33



"Do you think you're hot stuff just because you can shoot from behind that wall where we can't reach you? You're not the only one who can do that. Take this!"

**Charlotte: Move to 13,5. Longbow -> Arvis.**

The arrow struck Arvis' arm.



"Tsk, you little... after I'm done with your friends, I will drag you into a shed and show you some hot stuff of highest quality!"

#### Charlotte vs Arvis

Hit:  $123+10+10+10+7-50 = 110$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $24+1-14 = 11\text{dmg}$



"Lay a single ill-intentioned finger on her and you'll be dead before you hit the ground."



"Stop posturing and help us please." Edwin moaned from his position in the snow. "This position is most uncomfortable, and not to mention painful..."

**Gregor: Move to (11,6). STAB Bishop with the Steel Lance! Still in support range C:**



"Motherfucking stupid snow, stupid crossbow bastard, stupid useless wall..."  
Valor struggled to collect himself, his head foggy from near death once again. *...Maybe this is all pointless.*

#### Gregor vs Bishop C

Hit:  $121+5+10+10+11-48 = 109$ , autohit! Crit roll: 21! // I:  
Damage:  $33+2-11 = 24 \times 3 = 72$  dmg

Valor noticed Alex lying in the snow. Again.



"Hey, Anja. Swap ya?" Valor held up the nearly emptied bottle of elixir- The tide of battle was turning, and once the enemies were down, the healers would be able to do just as much as the medicine, and much more cheaply.

**Valor: Trade Anja a vulnerary for the elixir. Use said vulnerary on Alex.**

**Seyena moves to 11,7, reviving everyone's favorite Swordsmaster, then moving to 8,7 and equipping Glaive.**



"Oh, that's a shame."



"Say, how'd you like to live anyway? I could use a servant like you, and your own minions are looking pretty thin right now."

**Riven: Move to 10,7. Dispose of Paladin B for emphasis.**

**Valor uses Vulnerary on Alexander**

Up to 5HP restored

The wind blew mercilessly against the pegasus' wings whilst Seyena was getting around.

**Seyena heals Derick**

$10+7 / 2 =$  Up to 8HP restored

**Riven vs Paladin B**

Hit:  $123+10+5-54 = 84$

Hit roll: 29, hit!

Damage:  $28+2-10 = 20$  dmg



"Well that depends if you can scream a lot when we end in bed. Screams of a hapless, milkyskin women like you are the best. Oh right, orange-head! Do you scream a lot? You're, like, the prettiest in the bunch, so..." Arvis grinned.



"...the orange-haired one is both the monocled gentleman's beau and NOT the one currently offering you a chance to live. You might want to reconsider calling her prettier than me and asking about her bedroom habits."



"And I'll have you know I have a *prince* vying for my-"



"Wait. Do I *still* have a... HEY TANTALLOS! Do you still like me?"

At Riven's shouted query, Raquel couldn't help but smile.



"Oh, you and Riven? You two seem like you would make a lovely pair. Hold on, Tantalos, before you go running over to her. For helping me, I'll help heal some of your injuries."

**Raquel: Call Magic (Heal) on Tantalos**



"After all, it would be rather gauche to bleed on her robes."



"Doubtfully. We barely had been talking lately, and it seems she is just looking for minions, so I think I may have to return to the castle on my own."



"Do not worry about that, I will not be running for her. But this will be helpful as I may be running for a kill, but without laughing, a deal is a deal."

Tantalos shrugged and shouted back before moving.



"You will have to guess on your own, minion recruiter."

He grinned and covered his face with the mask again, whispering to himself.



"Let the real game begin...maybe that will be enough to make her talk more often, heeeheh."

**Tantalos: Move to 9,6 and heal Matilda.**



"Back to your feet person that I never saw before."

**Raquel heals Tantalos**

10+22 = Up to 32HP restored

**Tantalos heals Matilda**

10+23 /2 = Up to 16HP restored

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Arvis grimaced and... ran away toward the road.



"Oh yeah, I almost forgot!" The blonde officer turned around and sent a bolt right into Derick's chest.

**Arvis vs Derick**

Hit: 125-10-63 = 52

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Damage: 30-13 = 17dmg

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Matilda slid from Seyena's pegasus and fell onto the snow, but she raised herself, looking around in confusion.



"Uhh... oh, oh my, I must've been out for long. What am I doing here?" She held her book closely, staring at Gregor's companions.

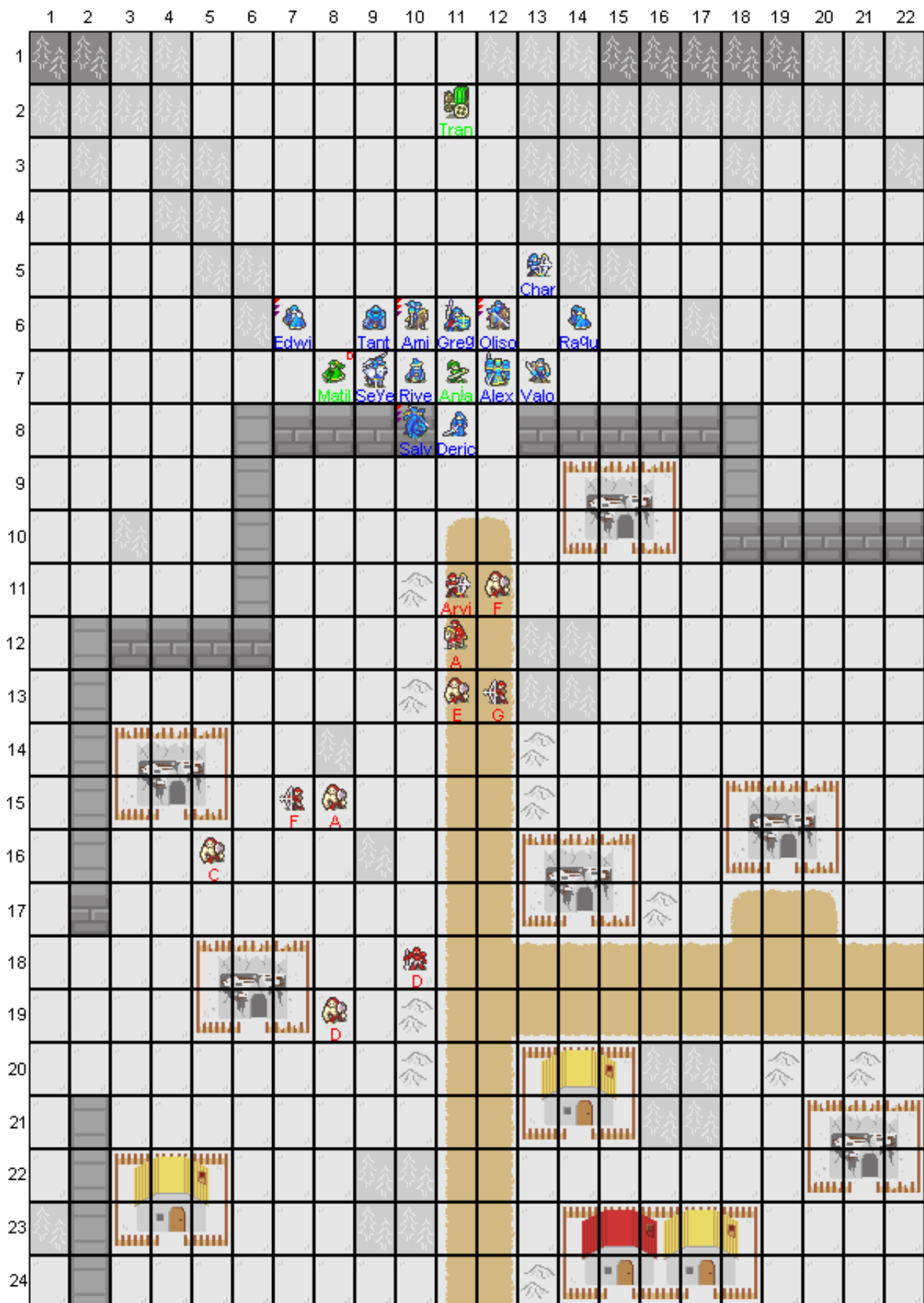
In the meanwhile, Anja approached Derick and flushed the blue liquid onto his wound.

**Anja uses Elixir on Derick**

Up to 20HP restored



# ~~Player Turn 15~~



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                      | Enemies:                | Allies:        |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 5/46      | Pillager A: 40/40       | Anja: 29/29    |
| Ami Storm: -/29 2/3         | Pillager C: 40/40       | Matilda: 16/36 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 34/34     | Pillager D: 40/40       | Wagon: 5/5hits |
| Derick: 20/40               | Pillager E: 40/40       |                |
| Edwin Westbringer: -/36 1/3 | Pillager F: 40/40       |                |
| Gregor von Hexham: 29/39    | Menelean Elite D: 32/32 |                |

Olison Eul: -/36 2/3

Raquel Torriani: 13/41

Riven: 26/30

Salvatore Vaughan: -/37 1/3

Seyena Ikane: 33/37

Tantallos Forsaken: 30/35

Valor Inara: 5/36

Menelean Archer F: 31/31

Menelean Archer G: 31/31

Arvis: 29/40

Mage Knight: 33/33



"Matilda- is it? You're still a little woozy, don't worry, go take a seat. We're on your side, we don't need you attacking the wrong guy. We're all coughing up enough blood as it is."



"Hey, Alex! Could you move forward a little bit? Not to sound rude, but I think I've got a good shot at one of those bandits from where you're standing."

Derick pulled himself up his feet.



"Thanks for that Anja."



"Alright Arvis. So where was I?"



"Hmm? Oh, you again. I believe you're supposed to be dead now?"



"No no, before that. Uh..."



"Oh yeah. You were asking why I wanted your name."



"You... you and your men betrayed and murdered people I considered my friends. Joz and all the others! You- you're despicable! When we found them they had be left to rot. But Joz managed to live long enough to tell me what YOU did! I swore to

him... and and all the other members of the band, that I would avenge them. And now I'm here in front of you."



"I'm not going to let this chance pass by! I won't leave myself with another search to complete! I'll kill you here and now, and fulfill my promise! Prepare to pay for everything you've done!"

**Derick: Move 11, 10 and Attack Arvis!**

Charlotte wiped the blood off her face.



"GO, DERICK!"



"Ha! Nice speech, kiddo! Let's see if you stay true to your words!"

Arvis braced himself for the attack and tried to dodge, but Derick's shamsir struck him in the arm. The crossbowman cursed and shot Derick in the leg.



"Heh, you bleed like-wh-!" Arvis looked down at his stomach - the shamsir was deep in his body up to the hilt. Stunned, the blonde man stumbled backwards and fell onto the muddy dirt, gasping for air.



"You.. you wretched...! And... and what did you accomplish? You've got NOTHING! Your dear, dead friends will still... be dead! Hhghhk-! Arvis vomited up some blood, which splattered over his face, and went stiff, the shamsir still embedded in his corpse.

#### Derick vs Arvis

Hit:  $125 - 50 = 75$

Hit roll: 70, hit!

Damage:  $31 + 2 - 14 = 19\text{dmg}$

Arvis counters!

Hit:  $125 - 63 = 62 \Rightarrow 85$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $30 - 13 = 17\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $125 - 50 = 75$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $31 + 2 - 14 = 19\text{dmg}$

"Oh, shit!" The rest of Menelean soldiers began tossing their weapons away, their hands up.

"Mercy!" One of them cried. Suddenly, there was commotion behind their backs - a mob of villagers rushed toward Gregor, his friends, and leftover Meneleans. Armed with pitchforks, clubs and knives, and hatred in their eyes, they were closing in on the Menelean soldiers.

## ~~Chapter 9B Complete!~~

Derick stumbled for a second and reached down to pull the bolt out of his leg with a wince. He stood and looked down at Arvis's corpse, ignoring the scores of people by.



"You're right. They're still dead, but at least their souls can rest in piece."



"But you're wrong too. I did accomplish something. I rid the world of a piece of trash like you."

Alexander put his shield up, standing where he could to protect as much of the team as possible in case the peasants had Alexander's friends' murder in their heads. But he also had his lance stowed. He wasn't going to use it, after all.



"Why do I hear more people? Are they on our side?"

The mob fell onto the Meneleans and started the beating. After a short while, when the remaining Meneleans were beaten into submission and bleeding, but not dead, the villagers bound them and dragged them off. Some of the villagers remained, and an elderly man in blue robe and a yellow sash over his chest approached.

"I've told them - I kept saying that our Berebian soldiers will come to aid us, and I began to lose faith, but lo! Here they are! Glory to Berebia!"

"Glory! Glory to Berebian Army!" The villagers chanted along with the elder of the village, who then silenced his townsfolk and turned to Gregor, sighing rather happily.

"Now, now. I'm sorry for prying, but you're quite a strange unit, very peculiar mix of sorts! Tell me, are you stationed in Akuma or maybe Falzisch? Or, perchance, you're patrol from the Gunnermann fortress? I will certainly send a letter with thanks to your commander!"



"Finally. Healing is not really my thing."



"We... Won? Heh... Knew... Thin' would be foine." Salvatore mumbled weakly to himself from his position on Ormm, on the now probably pretty bloody wall. With a sigh, the wyvern rider placed his lance on a resting position on himself and loosened his grip. The golden wyvern tried to rear its head back to get a look at its rider although couldn't quite crane its neck, and ultimately sat on the wall for fear of aggravating wounds in either itself or its rider.

Seyena looked up, seeing Salvatore and Ormm perched upon the wall. Seyena carefully directed Ilya onto the wall, where the poor pegasus slipped a few times, the hooves not able to find as much traction.



"Yes, we've won. Come on now, we've all been through a little hell, but we got to get up." Seyena said, tapping both wyvern and his rider with her staff to heal their injuries.

Salvatore took a deep breath as he felt the healing energy flow into him, then a sharp exhale as he felt his skin and flesh forcibly knit together, along with a strange tingling in his bones. Always felt strange to the rider, but instructions on coping with it are plentiful in armies and by now he's used to it. Ormm merely shivered and stretched on the wall, his claws gripping into the stonework.



"Thanks Seyena! Feel roight as rain Oi do, loike Oi can run ah field an' back now! Can' roightly say thin's woulda turned out as well as 'ey did if'in yah weren' 'ere, haha! This place will recover roight an' foine given ah bit o' toime, Berebian's are resourceful loike tha'. Glad ta see ah good number o' 'em are roight an' safe, back home where 'ey need be."

Sal wiped what blood he could off of him, which was mostly a mixture of breaking off that which was frozen on him, and smearing that which wasn't. The rider nudged his helmet, and felt more blood underneath. He sighed.



"...Blast. Tha ain' comin' off roight an' easy. Ah well, nothing a bit o' toime can' get rid o', no? Either way, Oi'm sure Ormm don' much loike bein' on this 'ere wall."

The rider patted the wyvern's neck with a smile, which was all the incentive the wyvern needed for getting off of the wall and landing on the ground, happy to be on something flat for once. "Seems Oi was roight!" The rider called back to Seyena with a laugh.

Alexander looked amusedly at Salvatore, whilst he rubbed soot off of his hair, helmet, and the underside of his helmet.



"You think you have cleaning problems? It's going to take me hours to get all of the soot off of this armor."

Alexander looked down and sighed. The majority of his plate was turned almost black from the soot he'd acquired from mass magic murdering. He shrugged, though. He was used to it.

As the lynch mob reverted to a gaggle of villagers in gratitude to the "Berebian" mercenaries, Raquel stepped back to the wagon and picked up the healing stave, then returned forward to where everyone else was busily dealing with the villagers, the bodies, and their own wounds. She saw Derick, looking down at the dead body of Arvis, bleeding from his leg from a bolt wound.



"This is the one, then. The one Joz told us about. At least it is done." She looked at Derick for a moment, then gestured with the stave at the wound.



"Hold still a moment; that bolt seems to have missed the important arteries, but it's not a good idea to leave it be. And who knows if a..." She swallowed the word she was about to say, "...if such an individual as that may have used poisons as well." Without waiting for his say-so, she brought the stave down beside the wound, channeling the healing magic through it into his leg.

Derick looked up, a little confused for a second before he snapped out of it.



"Huh- Oh. Thanks Raquel. I didn't even think of that."

A little bit of blood sprayed up from the snow as Edwin coughed, weakly trying to catch some healing attention.



"A bit of help here please?"

Trying to sit up, Olson looked over the rest of the group from his crouched position.



"No casualties..." Olson concluded and closed his eyes.



"Thank goodness... This didn't end up... Like before." He muttered under his breath. His reverie was short lived, as he immediately set to work tearing cloth from his spare reserves and whatever corpses remained around, working them into bandages for himself and his hurt horse laying nearby.



"I see... is that... is that Olson? Olson! You're alive! That's impossible, but you're alive!" Matilda quickly moved toward the wounded horseman.

Olson attempted to keep his horse calm enough to tie one last bandage around his front leg. Cleaning and dressing his own wounds may have been an old practice to the cavalier, but his nervous horse never failed to make the task into a test of patience.



"Easy, Steil. It's nothing worse than what we've been through before. I know you can- Hm?" His own ears, however, perked on hearing his name from a voice he couldn't recognize as being from the group. Propping himself up on his lance, he attempted to identify the source. The rider's gaze immediately settled on Matilda and his face scrunched a little, as if stressing to remember something. "I apologize. I think you have me at a loss, Ma'am." He stated in resignation with a curt bow.



"Oh, you don't remember... then again, it's been ages." Matilda looked down for a moment, and then smiled to Olson.



"When you were still serving Ferwelk as a squire, almost a decade ago... Your unit had a pair of troubadours. The first one was a fat guy named Leon. The other was a girl, and she had her hair dyed black, but everyone in the unit knew that her real hair colour was dark blue."



Olison's expression loosened somewhat in surprise. He held his tongue a moment before muttering to himself.



"My old unit... Lyciah, Rhyat, Devan," His tone was light and quiet as he continued on, "Inius, Ferth, Leon-..."

Olison's typically steely glare suddenly gave way to something that resembled shock.



"Matilda?" The rider straightened himself up, trying to get a good look at Matilda's face. "The dye removed changes your profile a great deal. But Dragon's fangs, it is you!"

Tenebra walked over with Ami on his back, still bleeding. "Neigh." it, well, neighed.

Unfortunately Olison's horse, still reeling away from his owner's attempts at bandaging him, reared and attempted to back away with a loud whinny on hearing the demon horse.



"Gha!" The rider uncharacteristically jumped. "Easy, boy! Easy!" He sighed and immediately attempted to resume his normal demeanor.



"Ah, right. Hold a moment." Pulling out the healing powders he still carried, he limped over to Tenebra and applied some to its rider.



"...ZZZ" Ami snores.

Tenebra does a nicker at Olison before trotting off.



"I'm glad you remember me. When Derick was wandering with me and Joz and others, he mentioned you several times, but I was skeptic, I thought it was some other guy named Olison..." Matilda couldn't help but giggle a little.





"So, you're mercenary now?"

Olison spent a moment trying to keep his horse calm.



"In essence, yes. I don't know if Derick told you the story, but in short it's become a tad bit... Hectic lately." Olison brushed the side of his horse's mane, and he seemed to calm down considerably as Tenebra left. With a sigh of relief, Olison turned back to Matilda.



"Though, what's happened to you to have come all the way out here? I take it you're not serving Ferwelk either anymore."



"First I went north-west, and served Baron Ingramm, his castle was on the border of the Northlands. Then, I was traveling with various troupes and mercenary bands for a while. After two years of that, I met Joz in a tavern, and he was boasting about his thirtieth completed job in a row with his mercenaries. He said his group was always lacking healers and mages, so I joined him." Matilda sighed, and paused for a moment, remembering things.



"I've spent four years with him and his men. It was like an army of friends, no... a family of sorts. Derick joined three months ago, along with Raquel. Funny, I didn't talk with him that much, now to think of it. Now those two... are the only people left."



"Olison, do you think I could join your group? To be honest... I have nowhere else to go."

Olison looked to the side, towards the spot where Arvis fell.



"I see... Such an injustice that our group would come to peaceful terms with Joz, only for them to be betrayed and ambushed by such cravens." He grunted in frustration and returned his gaze back to Matilda.



"But as for you joining the group, well that's ultimately up to the group itself." Olison stifled a wry chuckle. "They're not picky, and you have my say in the matter. They'd more than likely be thrilled to have you."

---

Gregor thought fast. He had no desire to end up like the other Meneleans, nor did he want to kill simple villagers.



"Send your thanks to Lord Mannan, if you please. We were just happy to help, though I'm sorry we were unable to save all of the buildings."

"Tunhausen?" Oooh's and mumbling came from the mouths of the villagers. "That's quite far from here. Well we will prepare a feast for your men, you need rest and food, and you can't deny that!" The villagers dispersed as the old man took Gregor by hand and began to led him into the village.

"Now tell me young man," he started, letting out a hum. "What kind of mission or errand brings you here all the way from Tunhausen, of all the places? Or is it one of those secret missions for the King, hmm?"



"I'm sure we'd all appreciate a chance to relax. The battle was very difficult...as I'm sure you can see." Gregor gestured to the corpses strewn about everywhere, slightly amazed that none of them were his companions. He then allowed himself to be led away, listening to the elder's questions. "I'm afraid its a bit of a secret, but the gist of it is we were chasing a group of mercenaries out this way. The mercenaries were wiped out by that Menelean battalion first, unfortunately, but when we saw what the soldiers were up to we could hardly ignore them, right?" Gregor was not aware that Matilda or any others of her group had survived the battle, though if any of the mercenaries had survived Gregor wanted to keep them from getting beaten up and taken captive as well.

"I see, I see... yes, we saw the mercenaries and the army fight... that was... it was more bloody than the fight you had. The mercenaries fought like lions, and I believe they slew a whole unit of mages. But in the end, they were killed, one by one. We were afraid to interfere, but what we could do with few pitchforks against a veteran army? And

then, with all that pillaging... and that blonde scum! The things he had done, oh! They were such nice, young girls... Oh, I'm sorry. You need rest whilst all I'm doing is complaining to you. There's one house that's big enough to house even twenty people. I will arrange for the food and beds to be prepared. If you excuse me." The elder bowed his head and then moved away. Villagers began to slowly clean the rubble, cover and take the corpses outside the village's walls.

Gregor sighed to himself as the old man moved away. He felt terrible that so many bad things had happened to this little village, and wished that his group could have done more to help. Still, it could have been worse for all involved...much worse.



"Well folks, the head of this village just offered us hospitality for the night. It's the big house over there, if anyone wants food and sleep." He noticed a blue-haired woman among the group, and addressed her. "Are you Matilda? If so, I'd like to talk to you after you've had some time to rest, if you don't mind."

Valor began making his way into the sacked village, wincing whenever he saw one of the freshly ruined buildings- Or his injuries acted up.



"What's going to be up next?" Valor asked, stopping to talk to Gregor. "Back to Mannan? I don't think we're catching whoever that Arvis guy was talking to when we got here."

Gregor lowered his voice to speak to Valor, not wanting others to hear.



"I'm hoping that woman Seyena rescued will have some ideas about what to do or who that guy was. Other than that, I've got nothing. We might have to go back to Mannan after all." He sighed. "I understand that Derick wanted revenge and all, but I sort of wish he had taken Arvis alive. We could have questioned him."



"We're lucky we're alive." Valor said, a dull anger rising in his blood. How could Gregor be anything but grateful the battle was over? "... I doubt it would've mattered anyway. I didn't overhear it all, but I heard some- That guy was sick. Even if we'd tortured him, we wouldn't have learned anything. Anything useful, anyway." Valor resumed his labored trudge into town. "I need to rest."



"He was sick alright, but he still might have known something. Oh well. I wouldn't trade a million of him for anyone here anyway. Go get some rest, you look like you need it."

Charlotte ran up to the blue-haired girl, recognizing her name from Joz's rebuttal.



"You're Matilda...? I hate to interrupt and be so curt, but we came a long way... do you have the box?"



"What? Oh, no... that hooded creepy guy with eyes have taken it. I wish I could help you-- papers! Do I still have them...?" Matilda opened the bag she carried and began to frantically search through them.



"I believe it's the spy guy's bag or something, he had those strange... papers, here!" Matilda pulled out several small sheets, bound together in a corner with a piece of string, and shown them to Gregor.



"I didn't had time to read them."



"Ah, thank you! These might be promising. If I may...?" He held out a hand for the papers, wanting to read them.



"Of course, here." She handed Gregor the papers.

The first page, was blank. The next one, Gregor could see, was written in code.

*Raozomsyr Aptf Zsadytpz pg Nrtrnos*

*Zslr oy appl aolr svvofrmy*

✓

The next page of the code was:

*Svwiotr Xrmoyj Dimdypmr om Ysaomm, Nrtrnos*

✓

The third coded page was:

*Yslr mpc eoyj Vtozdpm Tpdr gtpz zrtvd*  
*Zshrd pg Vpimy Htizzra eoaa pqrm yjr drsa*

And the message on final page was:

*Trvtioy Doabrtop'd ytpiqr om Grxxsm*

✓

There were no keywords or cipher or anything that could help with breaking the code in any way.

Gregor stared at the pages, frustration building up inside. What the hell was this nonsense? It had to be important for it to be in code, but cryptography wasn't something the average soldier was trained in. Even the noble ones.



"...I have no idea what any of this means. One of our companions might be able to help, but he took off to do something." This seemed right up Chris' alley, but of course the hooded man was nowhere to be seen.



"Hm. Those fancy 'codes', then." Olison scratched his head for a moment. "He's always had a habit of disappearing. He'll turn up when he needs to. Whatever it is he left for, it must be important."

He turned to Matilda.



"Hmm, this code will likely take most of our attention. We'll have plenty of time to share stories in the days to come." Olison made his way towards Gregor, though stopping briefly as he passed by the troubadour. "And it's good to see you again, Matilda." Olison made a slight smile towards her.



"Here, let me take a look at that. I've picked up some things while working with Chris, at least." Olson looked over Gregor's shoulder, "That and perhaps we could use some sharper intellects on this. Mayhaps Tantallos, Riven, Edwin or Raquel have something to see?"

Gregor handed the papers over to Olson, choosing to ignore the possible slight on his intellect.



"I can't make heads nor tails of this. Father never had any books about deciphering codes, and the adventure stories tended to gloss over the cracking itself - probably because the authors didn't have the slightest clue either."

Olson's eyes glazed a little over the paper. He bit his lip occasionally at some times, mumbling to himself at others.



"The check marks suggest it's a list. Objectives, perhaps?" Olson switched between the second and third papers back and forth, "Unless there's another trick in play with them, the words starting with capital letters could be names of places or people. And there's two instances of 'Nrtrnos'..." Olson groaned in frustration "Somehow I'm getting a headache even in this numbing cold. This will take time."

Mia turns up next to Greg.



"Gregor! Tenebra said you found a whip during the battle."

Gregor arched an eyebrow. "Tenebra said"...?



"Yes, one of the wyvern riders was carrying it. If you want it, you can have it."



"Thank, Greg."

She wanders off.

Salvatore was by now with both feet firmly on the ground, looking at the field of bodies and the red snow. The rider was watching for a bit to see if the villagers were attempting to give the fallen enemies a burial of some kind, and if so would pitch in and help.

Ormm, in contrast, had found a particularly deep bit of snow and was rolling around in it, leaving smears of blood on the shapes he was making, attempting to get the blood off of itself.

---

Seyena dismounted, quickly catching up to Valor, staff in hand. Ilya grudgingly followed behind her rider.



"Hey, Valor? I'm doing a quick check on everyone. Are you still hurt? Anything I need to tend to?"



"Yeah, I think a couple of my ribs might be bruised, not sure. Somethings going on, at any rate."

Seyena quickly checks Valor's wounds, tapping the afflicted areas with her staff as Ilya starts to wander off.



"There, should start to feel better. Does it still hurt, by any chance?"



"No, I'm fine now." Valor said, though his expression was still pained. "...Do you think this is what we're supposed to be doing? I have to wonder if fighting against that witch isn't pointless. For a little while, I thought I was going to die."



"I don't know. It seems like we've traded one morally-questionable noble for another. I have a feeling as soon as he has no more need for us, Mannann will do the same thing PRIXIMA did. And all because of these damned stones."



"You know, as much as I'd like to deny it, something about anyone - especially PRIXIMA- getting their hands on a large quantity of the dragonstones frightens me a little bit. While the rich and powerful can be foolish, with this much stigma and desire surrounding them, they are likely to be *something* more than just mere jewels."



Exactly what they are though, I wouldn't know, and wouldn't want to find out."



"Well... We've come this far. I guess I don't really want to back out now. Wouldn't look good, to abandon a goal, right?" Valor stood, cricked his neck and looked at Seyena. It was more than a glance, nor a furtive stare out of infatuation. It was thoughtful.



"Well, that's true. We have come quite far, we couldn't just go up and quit now."



"Hey, uh, you know how in stories, the hero always gets the girl?" Valor asked, the barest hint of a blush creeping onto his face.

Seyena couldn't help but chuckle, her cheeks starting to turn a faint crimson as well.



"I'm well aware. But this story is far from over, and you've already got me."

Valor reached for Seyena's hand, taking it in his own.



"In that case... We better get cracking on that happy ending." *And I need to start being more careful. I can't let myself keep getting injured.*

---

After giving Mia the whip, Gregor decided to check on Charlotte, make sure she was okay after the difficult battle.

Charlotte was wrapping some cloth around her leg. The team's healers helped a lot, but she wasn't as - er - used to being wounded as Valor and Tantallos.



"Hey, Gregor. Doing well now that it's over? What's the plan from here on out?"





"Doing okay. I think I got off the easiest in that last battle, somehow. As far as plans go, I think it all depends on whether or not we can break that message and what it says. If we can't figure it out, there goes our lead and we'll probably have to go back to Mannan." He gestured to the cloth around her leg.



"How about you? You had me scared back there, you know. Do you need some more medicine?"



"And if we do figure it out? Keep chasing the box, right? Ah- oh, medicine, no. I've used up enough of our medicine for now."



"Don't you wonder what the point of this is? We go on a little mission, run away, chase something, report back to Mannan... do you even remember we're only working for him on the promise of safety? As much as I'm curious about this box, we're standing in a village far away from Tunhausen. No one knows we're 'wanted.' No one cares. It's peaceful! Maybe, one day, we could just run away and settle down somewhere further north. Deynastia, maybe. Some place like this."



"Gregor, right?" Matilda approached the soldier in the meanwhile.



"Olison told me that if I would want to join you, I should speak with the group... and it looks like you're the leader here."

Gregor had been about to respond to Charlotte's query when the blue-haired woman showed up.



"Olison said that, huh? And I take it you're Matilda? Well, I personally have no objections to you joining; Derick and Raquel have both spoken highly of you." He returned his attention to Charlotte, determined to respond before having to focus on

whatever happened next.



"I'd love nothing more than to settle down someplace safe. Away from wars and witches and bounties. Take up woodcarving or something. Maybe even have ch--" He cut himself off, coughed, and changed the subject.



"You're right, we did come to Berebia seeking safety. But as you can see, safety is no longer a guarantee here. We could keep running, but I fear it would only be a matter of time before trouble catches up to us. I'm worried that if we don't do something - *anything* - to thwart whatever Prixima is planning, we won't be safe anywhere. The contents of that message are our best leads so far, but I promise if nothing comes of it we'll get out of this mess right away. Deal?"

Charlotte laughed but into her shirt.



"Sometimes, I don't say anything when you do that because it's funnier. But you don't have to cover yourself up. I'd like to have children too, someday, just... like you said, when this all blows over."



"You're right, though. As usual. If Prixxy's influence extends all the way out here... we'll never escape her. You were a well-known face where you came from, and I defied her in front of everyone. We'd be the first targets. Chasing the stone it is, and if nothing comes of it: deal."

---



"Thank you, Plague Dragon.."

The druid mumbled something and kept with his hands together to pray, and after that, he turned around and presented a brief bow to Raquel.



"Thank you for the help too. I guess most of us danced with Death for quite a while."

Raquel dipped slightly in response to Tantallos's bow in a move somewhere between a half-bow and a curtsy.



"Indeed, but we pulled through thanks to our good fortune and the talents of your fellow mercenaries." Her smile quirked slightly. "Here, now, let me help heal the wounds I missed before. My apologies, but we were somewhat rushed earlier." Bringing up the stave again, she channeled the magic again to Tantallos.



"I guess luck was not the only thing we counted with this time. We are not a bunch of new mercenaries anymore, but honestly.. I think we may need some extra help. If it was this difficult to deal with those guys.."



"Who knows what the crazy witch lady has under her sleeves. We may need at least better equipment for that."



"That's true, but the question, I suppose, is who will help? You are working for a Berebian lord, but Berebia is quite busy fighting its own war with Menelea. For all that the offensive has temporarily stalled, it is still taking much of Berebia's attention simply to keep the Meneleans from advancing further; that was large part of the reason we felt confident enough to cross the border without being spotted."

A groan came from under a small pile of snow that managed to burst apart to show the still bloody form of Edwin pushing himself to his feet with a staff.



"Forgotten and left behind... Wonderful... Just. Wonderful."

Upon noticing the Tantallos and that lovely female sage that they had meet only a few hours ago, Raquel was her name if he was correct, he staggered over towards them.



"May I trouble the two of you for some medical assistance, please? I'm in somewhat bad form..."



"Ah, of course. My apologies."

With those words, she brought out even more of the healing stave's magic, rejuvenating Edwin.

Derick ran over to where the mages were talking, nearly tripping over a rock hidden under the snow.



"Gah! I almost forgot! Raquel I needed to ask you about something. You have a minute?"

Edwin sighed in relief as his wounds closed.



"Ahhhh, that's much better. You have my gratitude." Glancing over to look at Derick running over to them, Edwin faces Raquel again and bows to her.



"It seems you have someone in need of you. I'll leave you be, but I'd really like to talk later with you. You are especially skilled and capable in the arts of magic, given that I could hear and see it from across the battlefield, and I would love to chat with you about it later when you have time. Maybe we can learn something new from each other?"

Tipping his hat to her, Edwin quickly walks over to the others where they are gathered around some pieces of paper.

Derick's shout drew Raquel's attention, and she turned just in time to see Derick almost stumble and fall, catching himself at the last minute.



"Oh? Of course, Derick, I can spare a moment. I'm sorry, Tantallos, but perhaps we can discuss this later? It seems that your leaders and ours have been discussing it as well," this said with a nod to Gregor, Charlotte, Matilda, and Olison, "and they will likely have ideas of their own. Edwin, thank you as well, and I wouldn't mind speaking with a fellow sage of the natural magics as well of knowledge. Perhaps another time."

Tantallos gave a nod and gave a brief salute.



"I do not know about these "leaders" you are talking about, but take your time. I am just going to see if I can find a Tome around this mess, the chances are ridiculously low but.. we need more power."



"It's about the ring that Joz gave me. I wanted to ask you if you could tell me what it does. It has to be useful for something for him to have handed it to me like that. I tried to ask back at the forest, but we got caught up in all the running and..."

Derick fumbled around in his pack for a moment before digging it out and handing it to her.



"Here."



"Certainly, I can look at it." She paused, examining the engravings of lightning that ran along the ring, running a finger over the emblem of an eagle grasping two lightning bolts delicately traced into the bezel and inlaid with gold. Testing her growing suspicion, she pulsed an invisible strand of magical weave into it through her finger, and her suspicion was confirmed when she felt it immediately echoed back, slightly magnified. "I've heard of these in my readings, but I've never seen one for myself. This is called a 'Zeus Ring,' and it is said to have been used to empower one's magical spells. Since Joz gave this to you, you should try to keep it safe." She handed it back to Derick gently.



"Zeus ring huh? I dunno. With me it wouldn't really do any good."

Derick rolled the ring around in his hands, feeling the engravings beneath his fingers.



"I mean, well- As a parting gift from Joz, it would be well meaning to keep it as a memento... but something like this, wouldn't it be a greater honor for it to be used? For it to be somewhere it could make a difference in this battle? I'm no mage, I don't even know where magic comes from!"

He looked up sharply.



"Do you want it?"

Raquel was plainly startled by the question as she became slightly flustered, her words tripping over each other.



"Do I...I mean, that...Joz gave it to you, but...I couldn't just...this..."

She paused a moment, collecting herself, forcing herself to consider the question purely rationally. Calmly, her voice level again, she continued.



"I can see how it will be helpful, and we've only fought the soldiers who actually committed the deed here. The people who gave the order for this, Lady Prixima Kesselring, she's still far away from here, isn't she? You are correct in that it could make a difference in the battles yet to come. Then, until the battle is won, I will bear this ring for you, use it to fight alongside everyone, and when that day comes that this battle has ended, I'll return it safely to your care."



"I'm certain that you're right about honoring Joz's memory. Thank you, and I'll try not to let you, or him down."



"And where is Riven anyway? This thing of looking for "Servants" is getting old."

---

Meanwhile, heard from the trees line.

"Here the whip, why did-STOP EATING IT! IT NOT FOOD! It got spikes on it for started. If you get a tummy ache, don't come crying to me."



"Damn horse, eating that-"



"Sigh"

Mia notices the code breakers.



"And what going on here?"

Olison was sitting cross-legged on the ground, looking from one paper to the next, all the while mumbling to himself.



"Assuming it could be... And replacing those words with... Could perchance involve... And makes that sentence more sensible..." Only after a couple minutes did Olison notice Ami nearby.



"Ah, feeling better Ami? Or was it Mia, whichever it is at the moment."

Olison pulled the second and third pages to separate hands, rapidly looking between them both. "Apologies for the curtness, I'm trying to break the code on these papers here."



"I'm petty good at puzzles, may I look? Two heads make light work, no, that not the right saying.""

Olison broke his glazed stare from the papers to look up at Ami.



"Hm? Well, it couldn't hurt." Olison propped himself up with his lance and handed the papers over to Ami. "To sum up my thoughts, the text is clearly in some sort of list. The best lead I could find in the text was in the capitalized words, and I was in the middle of trying some name combinations through the ciphered word 'Nrtrnos'. The best match I could come up with was 'Berebia'." Olison sighed and scratched the side of his head. "I admit it would go a lot faster if I had a paper to track all this on."

Mia thinks.



"Nrtrnos may mean Berebia, N=B, R=E-"





"I got it!"

She pulls out another piece of paper and starts writing. A minute later...



"Okay, I think I got it. It read

*'Eliminate Lord Malstrom of Berebia make it look like accident*

*Aquire Zenith Sunstone in talinn berebia*

*Take nox' I think that suppose to be Box 'with Crimson Rose from mercs Mages of Count Grummel will open the seal.*

*Recruit Silverios troupe in Fezzan"*

Matilda heard Ami speak up the name.



"Grummel? Aren't his county just west of Fezzan? I heard he has unique seniority situation; apparently he is both vassal of the Mariendorf and Kesselring families. Something like that."



"That was... Quick." Olison remained still with a blank stare for a few moments. "But it sounds like we still have a lead on the box, and a good confirmation that there is indeed a Dragonstone inside."



"I'm glad to see you're all right, that was a nasty battle we just went through. Gregor, you look troubled. Is something the matter?"

Gregor fought down the urge to glare at Edwin for interrupting. Instead he gave Charlotte a quick kiss before regretfully getting back to business.



"There you are, Edwin. I lost track of you during that mess...anyway, no trouble right now. We found a coded message that gave me some trouble, but it looks like Mia took care of it. Now we just need to figure out what to do next."

Olison paced back and forth for a few moments, making a clear rut in the snow. Within tens of passes, he then drew his attention over to Gregor.





"Our next move needs to be made. If we move quickly enough, we may still be able to intercept the box towards the region of this Count Grummel. Yet at the same time, we have suffered many injuries here, we may be able to afford some rest."

Gregor pondered what Olson told him. As much as he loathed the thought of the box getting further away, he knew how much even a few hours of rest could help after a fight like the last one.



"We'll rest here until midnight. Get a nice warm meal and a couple hours of sleep, at least. By then the moon should be up and the stars out, giving us plenty of light to travel by."

---

Within few hours, all of the 'Heroes of Fierre' as the village folk named them, were feasting in a large living room of the wealthy blacksmith. They were given bread and wine, meat and dried fruits. It was almost like a celebration of sorts, but it was quiet, as almost everyone left them to their own devices, besides the village elder who often visited the house to check on the 'heroes'.



"I think that first thing in the morning, we should check if this village have any shops left. Or are we going to get a little of the track and visit Fezzan? I haven't seen my cousin for a while..." Matilda trailed off, while Anja leaned against Alexander's arm and apparently dozed off.



"Fezzan's a little out of the way... I love the place, but do you think it would throw us off the tracks of the box-thief?"



"Well... we could buy some supplies and weapons in case the matter with Count Grummel turns ugly in some way. It's just an idea."



"I'm fine with that. How does it sound to the rest of you guys? With the Library in town, we could easily stock up on magical goods. I noticed we were a bit low

on restorative powders after the last battle. Still, it would be good to check around Fierre first, too. I'm going to take a walk."

**Charlotte exits the inn and takes a walk around the evening-dim Fierre, looking for any shops left after the attack.**

Charlotte found out that whilst the medicine shop burned down, the blacksmith was intact, and so was a small shop where a stout, bearded man was selling various kinds of adventure gear. Whilst the blacksmith was closed for today, the other shop was apparently still open.

**Charlotte visits the shop and asks for a list of their wares.**

The bearded man put away a set of tools and a key he was working on, and told Charlotte the prices of his tools and few of magical books that he had in his desk:

Torch: 100 Gold  
Antidote: 100 Gold  
Door Key: 50  
Chest Key: 120  
Iron Knife: 300  
Secret Book (1): 1500  
Singe (1): 250  
Worm (1): 250



"What's the Secret Book about?"

"Deadly secrets."

Edwin, having decided to have a look around town and following Charlotte, suddenly got a certain and all too familiar feeling that told him that there was new knowledge to be had, and that it was located inside the shop that Charlotte had entered. He promptly hurried inside to catch the end of the conversation.



"What's this about deadly secrets? Are they magical secrets?!"

"I dunno, I just selling things. Are you interested in it?"

Edwin scratched his chin through the beard there and hummed in thought for a moment.



"Do you mind if I take a closer look at this book of secrets? I'd like to know if either my companions or myself can even use it before buying it."

"Of course not, you're not leaving with it until you pay for it."



"Well, I suppose that's only fair... Maybe I'll be back later..." Edwin sighs as he leaves the shop. He perks up as he remembers something and heads off to find his fellow sage, Raquel, finding her back where he started.



"Hello! I was hoping we could have that chat I mentioned before. Are you free?"

---

Charlotte, deciding there was nothing she wanted at the store, headed back to the inn where most of the group was still sitting around. The sun was most of the way down by down. She walked up and put her hand on Seyena's shoulder.



"Want to take a walk?"

Seyena looked over at Charlotte, standing up.



"Hm? Oh, sure, why not? It would be nice to have a quiet chat after that chaos earlier."

Assuming Charlotte follows her, Seyena heads outside the inn, looking up at the sky for a brief moment.



"How are you holding up? My heart skipped a beat when Arvis pointed his bow at you earlier. It was just an inch off..."



"Oh, I'm holding up just fine. I actually came out of everything relatively unscathed. And I don't think that absolutely insane archer could have touched me if he tried."



"I'm more worried about you and all of the others. From what I saw, it was... rather messy down there. How are you yourself holding up?"



"You've got a lot of spunk. We held up pretty well, but it all came down to Derick in the end. You know... he doesn't talk much. Hasn't changed much, either. He's still just following whichever blind leader will lead him... Gregor included."



"Derick probably deserved to kill Arvis most of everyone- save Raquel. Though I doubt she's the type for revenge."



"How do you mean by Gregor being blind, though?"



"Oh- I didn't mean that. It was more for the metaphor. In a group like ours, you've got four types of people. Gregor always tries to make things right, no matter the odds. That's why he's the leader. Then you've got people like Chris and I who will always look toward our own goals, odds be damned. Third and fourth are the followers. You've got the Valors and Amis of the world who are just along for the gold and the ride... and, finally, the Dericks. They're not fighting because they believe in themselves. They're fighting because they believe in their leader. They would spill blood for a man with a good heart and a good cause."



"Which do you think you are?"



"I'd suppose I would fit into the second group the most." Seyena said, after a moment of thought. "Though I don't usually categorize people into groups. It usually undermines the actual reasoning behind their actions."



"So, speaking of goals, what is yours? Why do you fight against Prixima?"



"Good question. I know Olson thinks I am impulsive... the truth is, I do not focus on what is right for you or me. I try to think bigger. What is right for the world? They build statues of the best warriors, but those people were only thinking about the war. They were not thinking about the orphans that could have had fathers. You could say I have the weight of the world on my shoulders. Responsibility not to us but to our children and their children. "



"Ah, you goody-goody selfless types, making me seem selfish and self-absorbed."



"I want to help others, to save innocent lives, and stop those who do evil. But... it would be a comfort to me, to know that our fight wasn't forgotten. Dying unknown seems so much colder than dying alone, in an odd way. Like the stories my father told me when I was a child. I'd like to be in one of those."



"Maybe you're right. The work we do will reach thousands, but with no one to attribute it to... maybe these kinds of questions are a bit much for me."

---

As Tantallos didn't receive a answer, he just went out to **look for equipment too.**



"I hope this is not one of those Ancient magic hating villages... it would be a pity to not find a Luna tome around here."

Tantallos stopped looking for the tome and just crossed his arms behind of his back, looking around and taking some time to think about those days. He was not exactly being too talkative compared to his normal behavior on the castle, but then again.. they were not always dealing with people trying to attack the castle.



"Looks like I will be counting with your assistance again, Plague Dragon."

**Tantallos shrugged again and walked around to look for any place selling Tomes.**

The only shop selling tomes was the one selling tools; the shopkeeper had three books with him.

Tantallos glanced over the three books and tapped his chin.



"Do you happen to have a Luna tome?"

"Those are not the books you're looking for, I'm afraid."



"That is a pity. But thank you."

Tantallos nodded before walking away, it was time to check the others to see if everything was ok.

---

Alexander looked down. Anja was (somehow, given his habit of wearing his armor through the entire day), sleeping on his arm. Alexander looked at her for a bit- and couldn't quite bring himself to shake her off. He shrugged his unburdened arm. It's not like he usually went shopping anyway.

Salvatore sighed as he finally walked into the room, dirty and tired looking from having spent all of the time from the end of the battle till now helping the village deal with the dead. Ormm poked his head into the building shortly after, to which Sal nabbed a large chunk of meat and tossed it to the wyvern. It caught the meal and disappeared from the door.

With a thunk, the rider sat in a chair and began to fill a plate for himself to eat, not entirely paying attention to much right now. After a moment or two, the man grew more aware of his surroundings and looked around, nodding towards Alexander still at the house trying to be respectful of Anja. The others seem gone it seems. A few threads of dirty pink hair covered in specks of dried blood was showing from his helmet, unaware to the man.

Alexander nodded at Salvatore, at this point just sitting there and trying not to disturb the woman currently sleeping on his arm. Then he took a closer look at Salvatore, and spoke quietly.



"Salvatore, your hair's showing. ...Actually, I've been meaning to talk to you about that, but..."

Alexander points with the non-pillow arm at Anja.



"She might wake up."

Salvatore was in the middle of eating and coughed in surprise when Alex spoke, quickly feeling around his head and readjusting his helmet.



"Thank yah." The wyvern rider looked at Anja as Alex spoke, then back to the metal-clad giant. "...If'in she can sleep on yer arm, Oi think ah hushed voice 'er two won' do much. Yer lucky yah know, Oi know guys who'd love ta 'ave ah lass loike tha' on 'eir arms." The man gave a muffled chuckle that slowly died off into a sigh. He was just changing the subject.



"Say what yah need ta. Ta be honest, Oi'm surprised Oi kept it ah secret fer as long as Oi did. Seems the others didn' care much about meh always wearin' ah helmet thankfully."



"Heh, well... I was more concerned about her waking up and hearing. I know you didn't want me to tell anyone. But..."

Alexander grew more confused.



"Why do you hide it, is what I wanted to know."

Salvatore gave Alex a look like he just questioned if winter was cold.



"Why would Oi hide it? Why wouldn' Oi? It's bloody pink. *Pink*." The man muttered the next part quietly to himself. "Why couldn' Oi 'ave gotten mah mum's red hair 'stead o' mah father's?" After a moment, he sighed. "Oi didn' want the others ta know, still don' really. What would 'ey say? Oi'd lose what respect Oi 'ave in this group, be ah mascot 'er ah joke. Nobody would see me beyond mah hair, 'ey would never take me seriously anymore. Mah blood would be pink ta 'em, not red." While hushed, he sounded annoyed... Or rather tried to sound annoyed, it seemed forced. He wasn't being entirely honest.

Alexander listened to Salvatore. ...And then he couldn't help breaking into a bit of a grin, speaking less questioningly, and with more of a confident, amiable overtone.





"Salvatore. You've got to realize that noone will judge you on the color of your hair. A few of the others in the group have strange hair. Tantallos has blue hair, Riven has purple. ...Heck, Ami has pink hair, and frankly she can be one of the scarier people here. ...But, that's not all. This group has the most caring people I've met in my life. I can't imagine Gregor judging a man unfairly, he just... I'm not sure if there's a single one among us he doesn't like, I'm not sure if there's anyone who isn't a monster that he wouldn't be willing to be kind to. Charlotte too, really. ...And Olison, and, well... the list goes on. You wouldn't lose any respect, Salvatore. We have respect for you that isn't based on how you look. ...Admittedly, I was once one to judge, but... talking to people -mostly you-, and being with this group changed that. I can't see you ever being a joke." Alexander didn't catch the undertones, or even Salvatore talking to himself. He'd been a sociable squire once, but years of wrecking himself socially for the pure fitness to follow a cause had left him unable to catch some of the minor things in conversation.



"We'd never only see your hair- we see people more than they look like. Salvatore, you're our friend. It's the merits of a man that matter. Not what they look like. Not who they work for. You taught me that. And now let's see if I can't show it to you, too. ...I can see a bit of ribbing for a while, but nothing beyond that. Would any of us trample over you because of hair? Would any of us abandon you because of hair? No."

Salvatore listened, a bit shocked at Alexander to be frank. Once the man was done speaking Sal was quiet for a while, looking at the plate of partially eaten food in front of him, his expression a mixture of a man in deep contemplation, and a child who's been lectured on something that should of been obvious.

Finally the man sighed.



"If'in Oi taught yah all tha', then maybe some good has come o' me loife. Yah know, yer not the first one ta tell me somethin' loike tha'. Yer ah good friend. Ta be honest, Oi think Oi'd probably be happy in this group if'in all 'ey saw was mah hair, 'er ah Berebian." With that, the man took his helmet off and placed it on his knee.



"Cause if'in 'ey don' look past tha', 'ey won' see who Oi be. Yah remind me ah lot o' him, an' Oi guess tha' be why Oi'm 'avin' such ah hard toime lyin' ta yah." Salvatore gave a soft laugh at that. "Yah never see it, he never did either. Oi could o' told 'em the sky was red, an' the grass white as the snow an' he'd probably believe me."



"Oi don' care about mah hair. It's jus' fookin' hair. Yah grow it, yah cut it. Yah may not see many o' people wit' pink hair but tha' don' mean much. Oi wear ah helmet 'cause it helps distance mahself from the others, an' 'em from me. Didn' work, else Oi wouldn' be 'aving this conversation."





"Oi ain' ah roightous man. Oi try ta be, but Oi ain'. Oi bluster an' rumble but Oi know tha' deep down, it just be the tollin' o' the bell on mah damned soul. Oi don' care if'in the group judges me on mah hair, Oi care if'in 'ey put toll an' judgement where it belong, mahself. If'in Oi told yah, yah'd judge me to, Oi would ta if'in yer shoes. Talkin' ta yah, bein' back 'ere in Berebia, tha' battle... Knock's thin's loose, yah know? Oi was thinkin' tha' if'in Oi jus' never told anyone, it wouldn' matter. Oi'd be wit' good company, 'elpin' others maybe. Drop ah few hints 'er be evasive if'in 'ey be curious."



"Talkin' ta yah, hearin' tha'... Jus' makes me realize Oi can' do tha'. Won' be roight. Not wit' this company, these... Friends. Oi'd jus' be stainin' black loike Oi did then. Oi need ta tell someone, else Oi feel loike... Oi don' even know. Wrong. Bad. Evil. If'in yah don' want ta hear, Oi'd understand. Oi'll put the helmet back on an' we'll jus'... Forget Oi said anythin'."

Alexander was, for a while, stunned. Then his visage morphed, growing steadily annoyed, to angry, to almost even enraged. He stared straight at Salvatore's eyes, not glancing at the man's hair. When he spoke, he spoke actually loud- before remembering about the sleeping redhead on his shoulder, and quieting down- though still with a fair amount of righteous venom.



"Salvatore. You **presume**. I- ... "

A glance spared at Anja.



"I said I would not judge. I *meant* that I *would not judge*. Because I'm *sick* of deciding what's right with a man and what's wrong with it. I'm *sick and tired of it*. My entire *goddamn life* has for years been a sad swirl of *judgement*."

Alexander began to speak in a mocking voice, looking only at his chest as he did so.



"Ohh, how can I betray my *country*? Ohh, how could I be such a *failure*? I should have *caught* that axe, ohh, I should have taken the blow! And you know **what?** That got me **nowhere!** I was too busy sniveling at my own damn failures to look more than six inches in front of my own damn **head!** And it wasn't just me judging myself! I was afraid of judgement. **That was the goddamn lynchpin. Right. Fucking. There.** I was afraid that other people would look at me as a failure. I was afraid that I'd be nothing but a man who got his mentor killed. And you know what? I spent years twisting myself into what I *thought* was the perfect model of duty. It wasn't. And I'm still getting over it. But I **am** getting over it. Because I stopped **blaming myself!**"

Alexander froze for a moment, hoping he hadn't woke Anja.



"If you opened yourself to me, revealed the deepest black sins, revealed a past of nothing but darkness? I wouldn't judge you. I'm tired of hanging on to peoples' pasts. You know who the one judging you is? It's not any of us. It's **you**. And until you get *past* that, you'll be stuck here. If I hadn't stopped, listened to the lot of you, bothered to actually look *above* what I'd done, what people'd done? I'd be *out there*. *In that snow*. *One of the bodies*. I'd be stooping to that level for the sake of getting revenge on an entire country due to one man. But I'm not, am I?"

Alexander opened his eyes to continue to stare at Salvatore levelly.



"Your situation isn't unique. Don't hide under your gods-cursed helmet! You don't wear the damn thing to keep yourself away from others. You wear it to keep you away from *you*. **You wear it to forget!** But... you can't, I *won't*. And... I'm not going to lie here. The way to make yourself the better man you wish to be? It's to *get over yourself*. I got over myself. Take away your self-damnations. Throw them away! Are you sticking to some... single way of being a good man? Throw it away. Think of what you fight for. Think of why you're here, right now. "

Alexander looked down, back to himself as he continued talking.



"Think. Think good and long. Because that's how I've changed. Would I be here if I were still fighting blindly for PRIXIMA? For MENELEA's glory or side, even? No. I would not. I'd be dead in that fucking snow. Probably having fought you and the rest of the squad. But I'm not. I didn't. I've rethought what I'm doing, Salvatore. I'm fighting to keep away the upheaval of a world. I'm fighting, now, for the status quo. Not any of the petty goddamn squabbles of lord or kingdoms. I'm trying to keep the world the way it's been for many, many years."

He looked back up at Salvatore, staring with more intensity than when he'd first hated the man for being a Berebian. But not aggressively now. Just unbendingly, and moreso than any previous stare in this conversation.



"What are you fighting for? What matters in a man is what and *why* he does in the now, and the now to come. I know what it is for me. Do you for yourself?"

Salvatore listened to the tall metal clad man intently. As Alex spoke on and on, the more Salvatore shrank under his stare, little more than a look of confused shock on his face. At the final question the man looked blankly, staring at the his friend's shoulder instead of his face. He couldn't meet the stare.



"Oi..." He was, for once, at a loss for words. He tried to look at Alex's face but couldn't quite bring himself to do it. Instead he looked down, at the helmet at his knee. The man rubbed the edge of the guard at the front of the helmet, gingerly picking it up and setting it on the table besides his now-forgotten food. "Oi... **Don't know.**" He finally managed to spit out, the words more tumbling than flowing as before.

The man stared intently at the helmet, looking at every scratch and mar, every burn and dent. He watched the light flicker on it softly, vague reflections of things he vaguely knows. He turned it around, looking inside of it, slowly as if afraid of what he might see in the dark inside of it. There were no monsters, no grasping hands, no vicious eyes. Just dull leather that was covered with dried blood, bits of his hair that stuck inside, dirt and grime. His face held inklings of horror as he placed it aside, not daring to touch the thing now lest he not be able to let it go again. He looked at his hands, the table, his food, the fire's light in the room, the wall, anything but his friend. Salvatore didn't know what he could say, what could he say? ...What was there to say?

Slowly after a silence, Salvatore looked at Alex. He tried to speak, his mouth opened but no words came out. He gritted his teeth visibly, and tried again. Still nothing. Anger filled his visage, something he hasn't felt for a long, long time. Grasping at the back of his neck, he grabbed hold of the cloth and chain that was attached to his armor for the helmet laying on the back of his armor uselessly. With a grunt, the man ripped it free and set it by the helmet. He grasped the helmet once more, but this time not gingerly, no, he was holding it fierce enough that one could imagine dents forming on the surface. Moving with purpose towards the door, he opened it inviting the chill of the night into the room. He looked once more at his helmet. Then at Alex, meeting his stare for once. Then outside.

Then he flung the helmet outside as hard as he could.

Salvatore breathed heavily for a few seconds, calming down, and closing the door. He sat quietly in his chair once more. After a heavy minute of silence, he finally spoke softly.



"Yah remember... What Oi told yah so long ago? At tha' inn, 'fore we split up? ...Oi think Oi finally know what it means now." The man sounded... Different. Happy. "Tha--... Thank yah. Yah... Yah really are loike him. No... No, yer not loike him. Yer yerself, an' no one else. He was ah good friend from long ago. Oi can only think he be smilin' roight now, wherever he is. It'd be loike him." The man trailed off, a smile on his face. "Oi don' know what Oi foight fer honestly roight now. But it'll be fun foinding out, won' it? Tha's loife." The man could only muffle the laughter that followed, as if he heard the funniest joke he's heard in a good long time. "Oi've got mah friends, people who actually give ah damn about me. An' Oi was ta stupid ta see tha' until now."



"Yes. I remember what you said. ...And I too understand it now. And, well... understanding yourself -I think we're both finding- is the key to it all. ...Have a good night, Salvatore. You're a good friend."

Alexander didn't bother to move before he fell asleep. The man had stayed up for a long time, and still not having the heart to move Anja (driving and fighting, Alexander figured she did more work than him, certainly she deserved rest), Alexander put his head on the table and fell asleep like that.

---

Olison had finished his piece of food quickly, quietly making his way out behind the Inn by Anja's cart. **He places down his Iron Lance and takes out the Iron Axe in the cart.**



"High time I started practicing these things..." Olison muttered as he attempted to fashion a training dummy from nearby straw.

Valor saw Olison working on the training dummy, and casually approached.



"I think a live opponent would work better than a dummy, don't you?" He asked, removing his recently liberated shield from his back. "What do you think? It's been a while since we've sparred."

Olison barely managed to stuff one bag full of straw before he heard Valor approaching.



"I'd say as much. It's been a bit too long, when was it- when we were still fighting undead? I fear we've gotten a little rusty." Olison placed the bag near his own horse who was nearby, munching quietly on the grass. "Things got a little too close with that last battle." Olison's arm drifted over the spot where the lance managed to pierce his lungs. "You holding up alright?"



"Not really." Valor said, testing the weight of the shield. It felt lighter than he'd expected- Or maybe he had just gotten stronger? "Right after it ended, I really considered the idea of just running away. Leaving PRIXIMA to whatever dark designs she has in mind for the stones." Valor drew his Iron Sword, the sword he had been carrying since it had all started so long ago, and stared at the notched blade. "I don't think it makes me a coward... But all the same, tasting that despair, that sense of weakness.... It was like a slap in the face, you know?"



"Yes. It wouldn't be the first time I felt as such." Olison glanced through a window through to the Inn inside. "The shadows of Wyvern Knights blotting the sky as they flown over the wall. That sight was a bit too familiar for my tastes... Resolve is naught but to be tested through one's life." Olison's hand briefly gripped his sword's hilt. "Much like one's sword arm."



"Let's get some practice in. We should get a hang of these new weapons before we turn them against the enemy, after all." Valor lifted his shield into a defensive stance, and raised his sword behind him. "No holding back. Seyena and Ami will take care of us."

Olison chuckled.



"Aha, a bit more guts from last time. Made an acquisition, have you?" Olison crouched and hefted the Iron Axe from the ground. "So have I." Olison angled the axe in front of him, pointed towards Valor, and he spent the next few moments slowly strafing around his opponent. "Did I ever tell you about my old unit?" He quipped casually, eyes still watching Valor's sword arm.



"Don't seem to re-call!" Valor said, thrusting forward with his shield, aiming to knock the horseman's weapon away before following up with a swing of his sword.

Olison barely caught the movement from the corner of his eye.



"Hm!" The momentum of the bash caught the axe in full and sent it backwards. Olison could barely control it and instead attempted to roll with the blow, distancing himself from the reach of the mercenary's follow up. "Blast this thing's weight." Olison cursed as he attempted to lift the axe up again.



"Yeah, that's something I'm going to have to work with too. I've been meaning to take up the axe." Valor resumed his previous stance, sword high and shield out. "You were saying something about your old unit?"



"Hrh!" Olison hefted the axe up over his shoulder. "Before I worked with Kesselring, when I was growing up in cold lands like here, I lived and trained with a group of skilled fighters." Olison returned to strafing, getting closer as he walked. "Much like this one." He then lifted the axe up and over his head, building momentum into a slash towards the swordsman's side.

Valor confidently thrust his shield into Olson's swing- Only to be nearly turned aside by the force behind the older man's attack. Valor grunted as he moved with the motion, spinning and shifting his stance so that his blade was in front.



"Damn, when'd you get *that* arm? I don't remember you being quite that strong."



"Rh!" The axe clashed onto Valor's shield, and with the rebounding force he easily brought it up to his shoulder again. "And there's the weight's benefit." Olson jumped back to distance himself again. "But it seems like you're a natural with that sheet of metal." He bent his knees, seeming to get comfortable with the new fighting stance. "Every day we would spar like this way back when. Full arms and armor for everyone who knew how to use 'em. I wonder if Matilda had ever gotten sick of patching us up." He made a sort of wheezing chuckle, sparing a moment to clutch his side wound.



"Matilda?" Valor asked, holding his stance, but not advancing as Olson clutched at his wound. "You mean the woman Seyena rescued from the village? You two knew each other?"

Olson composed himself again with a nod.



"I could hardly believe it myself. But she is the very same Matilda that served with us." He explained as he started his strafing motion again, this time in the reverse direction with his knees ready to spring. "Given how badly she was wounded when I left, I could call it a miracle."



"Seeing a lot of those lately." Valor said, keeping his eye on Olson, calmly keeping his blade between them. "Do you two have... History together?" Valor asked, the barest hint of innuendo rearing its head.

Olson's eyes narrowed.





"No... We were just friends in the same unit." His eyes looked to the side for a moment. "If I could even say that. But..." He suddenly broke off his strafing, making a quick jump further towards his opponent's flank, using the momentum into a full swing at the swordsman's legs.

Valor turned away and back, coming full circle in an attempt to slam his shield into Olson.



"But what?" He grunted, less focused on the conversation than the sparring.



"Urgh!" The shield managed to connect to his back mid-lunge, pushing him back just enough for the axe to miss its mark. The force of the swing managed to put him onto the ground. But just as his open arm touched the ground, he rolled with the force and barely managed to put himself on his feet again. "Quite the natural..." Olson tried to steady himself again, pulling the axe on his shoulder and watching his opponent's blade again. "But to be frank, I don't deserve to even speak a word to her. Or anyone from my old unit, really."



"Who decided that- You or her?" Valor asked, swinging his blade at Olson's torso, and following up with a shield bash. "Maybe she'd want to talk to you. Can't know unless you ask!"

Still reeling, Olson could only make a halfhearted attempt to dodge the blade.



"True enough- Rh!" The blow managed to produce a clean scratch in the worn armor and left a good nick in Olson's side. "But I wouldn't be keen on it. Hrh!" The shield bash, however, Olson met head on with a swipe from his axe, aiming the blunt side straight to Valor's extended arm.

Valor hissed in pain as the blunt end of the axe connected with his arm, and he drew back, sword and shield in defensive positions in case Olson decided to press his attack. That was going to leave a mark.



"Well, it is your call. Don't force yourself to do anything you aren't sure about, right?"

Olison backed up and attempted to heft the axe on his shoulder again, though as the first attempt failed he stopped.



"Cumbersome thing, my arm's already sore. And this is just on foot, trying to aim it from a horse's back is a different story." Olison tossed the axe up a slight ways and grabbed it in reverse. "You said you wanted to try one of these? Somehow I think it'd go better with your arm over mine." He extended the hilt of the axe over towards Valor.



"Hey, thanks." Valor said sheathing his sword and taking the axe from Olison. "Do you want my steel sword? I can only be carrying so many weapons, and I don't really care for it."



"No such thing as too many weapons, but I'll make good use of it all the same." The horseman smirked, handing off the axe "Good bout, though. A little bit much on the defensive side there, but it's to your advantage with the shield."

**Olison trades Valor the Iron Axe for Steel Sword.**



"Yeah, with the shield I have a few more options than attempting to secure the initiative via overwhelming offense." Valor gave the axe a few experimental swings- Heavy, but the shield was an adequate counterbalance. "This is going to be a whole new way to fight, though. Should be interesting."



"Indeed it will be." Olison nodded as he checked the edge of the Steel Sword. "We'll need these new styles in order to keep up, if the last fight was any indicator. Our toughest battles are still ahead of us." He sheathed the sword, exhaling sharply. "I guess the point I was eventually getting to with all my banter was that feeling your own weakness is only human. It's failing to meet it that makes you a coward. I know this firsthand." Grasping the hilt of his Iron Sword, he looked towards Valor. "So,



another round? Or shall we conserve our strength for tomorrow?"



"I dunno. But maybe we should get some medical attention before we make a decision. Whatever is going on with your side isn't exactly leaving this a fair fight." Valor rolled his left shoulder, and winced. "That and my arm is still throbbing. Heh."

Olison gave a wheezing laugh.



"It'll heal up soon enough. There's only so much a staff can-"

The horseman's statement stopped the moment a familiar voice hit the air.

---

Gregor excused himself from dinner early and sat alone in the sleeping area. When he was reasonably sure no-one was watching, he removed a small parcel from his bag, wrapped in parchment and tied up with string. As he weighed it in his hand, he could hear the faint clinks of the chain inside.

When he first ordered the necklace, the only thing in his mind had been giving it to Charlotte as a token of affection. However, with the campfire confession and the earlier discussion the two had, it suddenly occurred to him that perhaps the trinket could be used for something else. A necklace wasn't exactly *traditional*...but did that really matter?

He wished that he could talk to someone about this. Someone who could sympathise due to going through the same thing.

One of the shadows near Gregor stirred; he might not have noticed had that same shadow not cleared its throat a second later.



"...Er, hi again... Gregor..."

Chris said, looking nervous.



"So, uh, what do you have there?"

Gregor jumped in shock at the sound of a familiar voice, before reason reasserted itself and he recognized Chris.



"Whoa! Could you PLEASE not do that in the future? I just about had a heart attack!" He calmed down quickly enough, as he was more startled than angry.



"Sorry. Where have you been, Chris?"



"...Personal business. I'm sorry if I scared you."

He sounded pained and worried.



"You, uh, you didn't answer my question."

Gregor's eyebrows narrowed. Chris wasn't acting at all like his usual self.



"It's the necklace I got for Charlotte, but that's not important right now. What's wrong with you? You look like you've seen a ghost or something."



"Not quite."

Chris released a long breath through his nose and crossed his arms, still leaning against the wall.



"Have you ever... thought about your life? Really took a close look at it, objectively?"



"Hmm...I'm not sure I have, really. I know I've made mistakes in the past, and probably will make more in the future, but I don't think that's quite what you mean. Wanna talk about it?"

Gregor put the parcel away as he spoke, giving Chris his full attention.



"I, uh... I've done some terrible things in my life, and I never stopped to think about them until the night after..."

He trailed off.



"...Well... The conversation we had during the camp out, about my greatest fear. I thought about that... and I think maybe... I didn't want to believe someone like me, someone who lived like I did, could be just the same as everyone else."



"It was... easier... to not let myself feel anything for anyone, and keep these walls up, and tell myself it was because I didn't have a soul. It was easier to lie to myself that I enjoyed whoring myself out and murdering people and robbing because I was just doing what I had to to survive and that there would be no greater consequence after my death because there was nothing inside me to judge; that I was as much an animal as a deer or a bobcat and not truly a man."



"I wanted to believe that the only way someone could be like me was to be less than a person, and I was comfortable with that lie. The lie that I could do anything I wanted and I would never have to answer for it."



"But... I can't do that any more. Do you remember the day I left? I asked Anja to give Alexander a pair of shoes an old woman gave me. When I left that house... I saw someone I hadn't seen for ten years. Do you follow?"

After a moment, Chris continued.



"I tracked the man, followed him for days. And when I cornered him in his home, I made him tell me everything he knew about a certain ritual and a certain cult, and I killed him. I hunted and killed all of them."



"And then... I came to my senses. It felt like I had been asleep for the last decade. And I looked at who I was. And then... I cried for a very long time, for everyone I had ever stolen from, everyone I had hurt or killed, everyone I had ever 'loved and left'... but most of all for who I had become. For all the bad choices I had ever made, and all the things I have that I don't deserve."



"This group... you, Olison, and Tantallos, my friends... a future with the Forsakens... and most importantly, Ami. I don't... I've done every possible thing wrong and... and yet, I still have all this. Gregor..."



"Which is better? To possibly break Ami's heart by leaving forever, or to stay here and let her continue loving a monster like me?"

Gregor listened carefully as Chris began to talk, not saying a word. He knew that interrupting would just make it harder for Chris to continue his thoughts. Finally when it was all over, he considered his response carefully.



"...I've heard it said that there is one difference between a man and a monster. A monster is incapable of remorse; he will kill and destroy and do whatever it is he wanted and never feel the slightest bit of guilt for his actions. A man, on the other hand, is capable of regret. He may still do terrible things, but if he winds up feeling genuine remorse for his actions he retains his essential humanity."



"Listen, Chris. By your own admission you have done terrible things. I'm not going to pass judgement on you for those actions - its not my place and Dragon knows I'm no saint myself. Perhaps, at some point you *were* a monster. Now, though?"

He smiled gently.



"A monster wouldn't have wept for all the people he's hurt over the years. He wouldn't question whether he deserves the good things in his life. And he certainly

wouldn't care one bit about his immortal soul. I believe - and this is just me talking - that you have felt that essential, genuine remorse, which makes you just as human as I am. That means it is time to make amends for your past actions, and work towards a brighter, happier future. For you AND for Ami. That is my answer to your question. You don't have to believe it, but it's what my heart says."

Chris closed his eyes for a long time. He finally opened them with a sniffle, his eyes wet.



"Are you sure? My reaction to finding this cult was not to forgive and forget, come back to the people who needed me... but to slaughter every last one of them for what they had done to me. I'm not sure whether I blame them or myself for what I've done... or which one I even should."

He rubbed his eyes with his forearm.



"Maybe... Maybe you're right, Gregor. I have to let go of those thoughts and move on. Consider that the end of a long, dark, and bloody chapter in my life. I still have decades and decades ahead of me to spend doing better and not be who I have been."

For the first time since he had left the group, Chris smiled.



"I already have two things to dedicate the rest of my days too, and Plague Dragon willing, maybe that list will grow."



"If Ami will forgive me for running out on you all. I need to talk to her, to apologize for... for everything, I guess. And if she's mad... then I'll have to figure out how to make it up to her. And figure out how to be the man worthy of her hand."

He rubbed his face for a moment.



"Thanks, Gregor. I think I needed to talk to you more than anyone else."



"I'm sure. Like I said, I'm not going to judge you for your actions when my own record is hardly spotless."



"Remember when that...man told me about how Prixima ordered my family killed? I hated him for that. I wanted to kill him for that, as painfully as possible. Some might say that such a thing was justified...but looking back I know that I wasn't myself in that moment. I don't like being so full of anger and hate."



"But you're right, you need to talk to Ami. She might be mad at you at first, but that's normal...I think. I know everyone else will be happy to see you, and Ami will come around eventually. And Chris, next time you want to talk..."



"Knock on the door or something first, okay?"



"Oh, er, sorry. I'm sort of used to appearing in my commander's room unannounced. Prixima, somehow, could always tell I was there."



"I guess old habits die hard."



"Apology accepted. Anyway, just the same old worries about whether or not I'm cut out for being a leader. I don't think we'll make any progress on that front though, so I won't bother you about it. People seem to listen to me more often than not, so whether I think of myself a leader or not there's no point in trying to fight it, you know?"

Chris didn't leave, though. Instead he walked over to where Gregor was and took a seat.





"...It's not really fair if only I have a chance to talk about my problems and get some advice or comfort from a friend. Is there anything you'd like to get off your chest?"

Gregor hesitated before continuing.



"There is...one other thing. I was actually going over it in my mind when you showed up, so maybe you can offer some insight. You can't tell anyone though, okay?"

He pulled out the parcel again, letting Chris get a good look at it. He didn't unwrap it, though.



"I was thinking...of proposing to Charlotte. With this. Soon."

Chris thought about that for a long moment. He thought about what he knew of Charlotte.



"I think that would make her very happy..."



"..but not tonight. I saw her out talking to Seyena earlier, before I came in here. I think she has a lot on her mind right now."

He reached over and put a hand on Gregor's shoulder.



"I think that... you'll 'know' when the right moment is. I can't help you figure out when. But I believe you'll know what that moment is when it arrives, and it will be perfect."



"And... I believe she'll say yes. She'd be a fool not to, and Charlotte is a very clever girl."



"No, not tonight. The idea just came to me during dinner, it still needs some work. Even if she didn't have things on her mind, this wouldn't be the right time."



"So like you said, I'm waiting for to be the right moment. And when that moment comes...well, we'll see how it goes." Saying this, he tucked the necklace away again, burying it deep enough that it wouldn't accidentally fall out during travel.



"Well, that's about everything that's on my chest at the moment. You might want to get some rest; we're leaving bright and early towards the lands of a Menelean Count who may have something to do with PRIXIMA's plot."



"I can't wait to see everyone's expressions when you show up out of the blue when we set off."



"Well, they might see me a bit earlier. I want to talk to Ami before we leave tonight."

Chris folded his hands on the table.



"Speaking of this Menelean Count... I suppose it's lucky I was able to track you as well as I did with such a cold trail. Do you mind telling me what I missed?"

Gregor's smile faded.





"It wasn't easy, that's for sure. We forced our way up to the tomb Mannan mentioned and it looked bad, but we discovered that Derick and Raquel - one of the mages from Fezzan, I'm not sure you remember her - were with them. With the two of them vouching for us, we were able to avoid further bloodshed and the other mercenaries left. We set off after them shortly afterwards, as some of them had left with a sealed box of some sort."



"We were too late. The mercenary company had been all but annihilated by a Menelean army group led by a horrible young man...no, not a man, a monster. Worse than you ever were, possibly. Anyway, it turned into yet another battle...and this time we very nearly lost."

He shuddered as the too-fresh memories of the earlier battle came flooding back, the sight of all too many of his companions nearly dying on the cold ground.



"Well, at least we all made it out alive. We even saved the last of the mercenaries, a woman named Matilda who Olson apparently used to work with. She had a coded message that Mia somehow managed to solve, which is leading us to this Count who it seems will have his mages open the box Matilda's group found ...and that's the short of it."



"...I see. I should've been there."

Chris's hands clenched for a moment, but then he relaxed and stood.



"You must be under a lot of stress. I won't trouble you further tonight. Rest well, Gregor. Get some much deserved sleep."

He touched the man's upper arm briefly in camaraderie, then left the room to look for Ami/Mia.

"Chris?!" It sounded like... above him?

Chris tilted his head to the side and closed his eyes. He judged the sound to be coming from... that direction. He took off swiftly and was rewarded by his guess being correct:

there, just ahead of him, was the woman who had opened his eyes to both who he was... and who he should be.



"Ami... I..."

He reached out toward her, but then stopped, unsure of what to do with himself.



"..." Ami walked up with her arm pulled back as though to punch.

Chris waited for a moment, then nodded, closed his eyes, and stood still. A punch was less than he deserved, and if that's what she needed to do, then he would take it without complaining.

After a moment, arms encircled Chris. A sobbing could be heard.



"I missed you." Ami sobbed more. She then thumped his back.



"That from Mia for running off without a goodbye."

Chris stood still for a moment. Then he raised his arms and returned her hug strongly, hiding them both inside his cloak and the shadows.



"I missed you too. Both of you."

He hesitated for a moment, then raised a hand and ran it over her hair.



"...It took me a little while to realize where I was supposed to be. I... I've done a lot of bad things in my life, and when I realized that... I thought that someone like me didn't deserve a woman like you or Mia. That I would only hurt you if I came back."



"...I'm glad I did return. Right here... right now, in this moment... this is the first time I've ever really felt like I belonged anywhere."

He was crying too, but silently. He moved a thumb across her cheek, wiping away some of her tears.



"Ami, I swear to you that if you want me to spend every waking moment making this up to you, I will. I don't want to leave you again for as long as I live, to be as lost as I was until you found me all those months ago. I'm going to be a better man for you, Ami. I may not be the one you deserve, but I'm one who loves you. Both of you."

He was silent for a time, satisfied to just hold her close and be held by her, to cry in relief and happiness at their reunion.



"..." Ami frees an arm to wipe her tears.



"I love you too, Chris."

Ami stays quiet, enjoying his present.

Chris kissed Ami's forehead.



"Ami... I have something I want to ask you, and I'm not sure how one usually goes about it so I'll just have to give it my best shot."

He removed his right glove and took a ring from his littlest finger. It was gold, with tiny diamonds set into the band at regular intervals.



"This ring is the only memento I have of my parents. It was my mother's."



"I've lived my entire life without knowing what it is I wanted beyond survival until I met you. Ami, I want to be with you for the rest of our lives. I want to wake up next to you every morning and know how lucky I am to have met you. I want to stand beside you in battle and take care of you when you're not feeling well. When I stumble and fall, I want it to be your hand that helps me to my feet, and when you need a shoulder to lean on I want to be there for you."

He took a moment to collect himself and gather his courage, then pushed his hood off so his face wasn't hidden in shadows as he was accustomed to and knelt, holding the ring up.



"Ami Storm, will you marry me?"



"I..."



"..." She wipes some fresh tears away.



"Yes, I would love to." she hugs Chris.

Chris couldn't help smiling as he got back to his feet. He didn't say anything; he didn't need to. Everything he wanted to express - happiness, gratitude, relief, hope - could be done with a single action, and he kissed Ami gently as he slid the ring onto her finger.



"Ami... You are everything to me. I'm... so happy right now..."

He laughed quietly. Real happiness. That was something he had long thought out of his reach... and then, truthfully, he was scared of it. Scared of the prospect of opening his heart to another person and letting them in. Well. If it was a mistake, then it was the best one he had ever made. His hands held hers, caught between the two of them, his gloves tucked away so he could feel her. Her hands were soft and warm in his, and he looked down at them momentarily before meeting her eyes.



"Us, together. I like the sound of that... and I like finally belonging somewhere... by your side."

A thought occurred to him.



"Hmm. Do you think we should tell the others now?"



"We probable should. It would be good news for the others, I think."

Chris put his hood back on. He thought, only half-jokingly, that they might not recognize him without it.



"Of course. Let's see who we can find, shall we?"

He took Ami's hand and laced his fingers through hers as they walked outside... and found Olson and Valor apparently concluding a duel outside. He cleared his throat politely, just now realizing he was going to have to explain himself to everyone individually. Well. Taking responsibility for his actions and facing their consequences was something he was going to have to do now if he really wanted to be a new man.



"Valor, Olson. Before you say anything I have two things I want to say. The first is that I'm sorry for leaving everyone high and dry. Gregor told me you have had it rough recently, and I should have been there to help and share the burden. Anything you want to say to me is fully justified, and I'll deserve it."



"The second... well..."



"Ami and I... we're getting married."



"Oh, there you are Chris. I was wondering where you-" Olson replied with a calm demeanor until he heard the last bit of Chris' account. "You're getting married!?" He sounded with a sharp tone of surprise, with an eyebrow raised.



"Yes, we are. It's... indescribable. Ami saying yes was the best thing to ever happen to me."

He gave her hand a small squeeze as he said that.



"...Okay. Congratulations? On the whole getting married thing. Not the running off thing." Valor approached Chris and patted him on the shoulder. "And we're all fine, and you're back, so no harm done, really. Nice to have you back." Valor placed his hands on the back of his head, and looked at the couple thoughtfully. "So... Are you going to, like, elope, or have a proper ceremony once we trash PRIXIMA?"



"It will probably be the proper ceremony, don't want to leave you guys to face her alone."

Chris laughed and scratched the back of his neck.



"We'll have to plan that. I think I would like having our ceremony in the Forsaken Keep, with all of you there."

He was much more at ease now that the moment had passed. They had implicitly forgiven him, and he was grateful for it.



"You think Tantallos would let you use his keep for a wedding? It doesn't sound very Plague-Dragon to me."

Gregor was simply joking around, pleased to see that Chris had taken his advice to heart so soon. He knew the two (three?) of them would be happy as well.



"I think he'll be fine with it, Gregor. Yeah... once we get done with this Prixima business..."

Chris smiled to himself.



"I'd like to catch up with the two of you as well, while we're here. How have you been doing?"



"I received the single soundest ass-kicking I ever have. Also, I'm officially a hero now. Oh, and new fighting style, that's new." Valor waggled the shield by way of explanation.

Olison's eyebrow remained up as he continued to look on for a couple moments, but soon he was back to his normal glare.



"You have changed, Shields." Olison's mouth curled upward. "Was that absence that so-nearly doomed us all taken just to get a fancy enough ring?" He asked half-jokingly. "I'm fine as it stands, thanks. A bit of training between battles to keep my skills sharp."

Chris closed his eyes for a moment. Yeah. He had deserved that one.



"...The ring was my mother's. And... no. It was a personal vendetta... one that I realized after I finished it, I should have let go instead of pursuing."



"I won't abandon the group a second time. I promise."



"Heh. No, it's no issue." Olison returned a serious look. "I trust you to do what you need to do, Chris. And in any case, I'm glad for the both of you. It'll take Prixima a hell of a lot more to stop us now."





"She'd need every army in the world to stop us." Valor smiled, confidence shining off of him. "And I doubt that would be enough."



"Thank you. I'm looking forward to seeing her fall."

His time working with Prixima... killing her would be like killing the old Chris, the one he didn't want to be anymore. He needed to be there, to help overthrow her.



"So... you're a hero now, Valor?" He smiled a bit teasingly.



"When do you plan to fly, I mean ride, off into the sunset with your girl?"



"When Prixima is dead, I guess." Valor said, smiling. "We'll stick around for your wedding though, I'm sure."



"What will you do if Seyena catches the bouquet?"



"What does a bouquet have to do with anything? I've never been to a wedding."



"It's an old belief that any woman who catches the bouquet will be the next to get married."

Valor had no response after Chris had clarified what he meant. He hadn't given the idea any thought at all, up until this second.



Chris led them inside, where they were met with a waking Anja, Alexander and Salvatore... and then Charlotte and Seyena arriving as well.

Charlotte, along with Seyena found her way back to big house where everyone was sitting around talking. Gregor, Ami, Valor... Chris!?



"CHRIS! What - when did -"

At the sound of Charlotte's voice, Gregor quickly began trying to make himself scarce.

Anja lifted herself from leaning against Alexander's arm and then looked at Chris with groggy expression.



"Oh! Spy guy! It haven't been even a week and you're back. I knew you would come back, that's what I was telling them!" She sent him a smooch from the palm of her hand and then leaned against Alexander again.



"Hello, everyone. Glad that I could show your faith in me was well placed, Anja. You look pleased with your current position. Charlotte, I got here maybe an hour ago or so...?"

He scratched the back of his head and moved slightly so as to block Charlotte's view of Gregor as the sentinel made a panicked retreat.



"I heard about your struggles from Gregor. I wanted to apologize for running off and leaving all of you like that. My only defense is that at the time I was doing something I thought was necessary... but now I know it really wasn't."



"But there's some good news."

He kissed the side of Ami's head.



"After all of this business with PRIXIMA is over, Ami and I are getting married."



"Married...? Um..." *Out of all of us, those two? A time like this? Right after his disappearance? Something's fishy.*



"It's good to see you back, at least. Our group isn't really the same without all of the Kesselring Rejekts."



"It's good to BE back. Here, with all of you."



"It feels like home."

For someone like Chris, who didn't like to be tied down and had never considered a place 'home' before, that statement meant a lot. Maybe Charlotte would understand, having lived in the woods for a good portion of her life herself.



"Oh, I see. Best wishes to you two." She said to Chris after he mentioned marriage.



"Thank you, Anja."

Seyena walked in, looking curious. And then she saw Chris.



"So, that's what the commotion was about. Where were you, Chris?"

Chris scratched his head, inadvertently knocking his hood off.



"I was discovering the truth... to put it poetically. Or to put it in a more realistic light, I was killing a bunch of people for what they did to me years ago."



"I know now I shouldn't have left; maybe I wouldn't have helped much, but I should have been here, fighting alongside my friends, the people I cared about. But at the time... I saw my chance for revenge, to find out what happened, and I selfishly took it instead of letting it go."

Alexander, having been passed out on the table for most of this time, woke up slightly fatigued.



"Huh? What's going on...?"



"Hello, Sir Jorinn."

Chris cleared his throat politely. He wanted to ask about Salvatore's very pink hair, but didn't quite know what to say about it. Clearly the man knew he had pink hair, and since Alex was also at the table he had to know too. Perhaps it was best to just not bring it up. If he could accept that his love had an alternate personality that may or may not be a demon, then pink hair was no problem. Therefore, it was time to change the subject and comment on something else that seemed obvious - but might not be the case.



"...I trust you and Anja have been getting along?"

Well, Alexander considered, and he and Anja had been rather getting along.

...Continuing to be rather oblivious to any possible undertones, Alexander took the question and answered, literally.



"Hmm, yes, I suppose we have been rather getting along."



"That's good to hear. I saw her sleeping on your arm earlier."



"I'm glad you two are together."



"...I think, in one way or another, that all of us have been good for each other. We're all better people for having formed this group."



"...I know I certainly feel as if I've become a man somewhere along the way, instead of the irresponsible person I was less than a year ago."

Alexander blushed and spluttered when Chris replied to him.



"Together? Er, well, that's not what I thought you asked, and... er..."

Alexander began rather to look like a deer caught in the light, continuing to splutter ineffectually.



"Oh, I'm sorry, Alex. I didn't mean to embarrass you. It's just that the two of you looked so comfortable together I just assumed... Well, we all make mistakes."

Alexander muttered something too quietly and lamely to be understood.

Chris rubbed the back of his neck.



"Well, now I feel kinda bad for bringing it up."

It was at this point that Valor noticed Salvatore was in the room. He did a minor double take first though.



"Sal? That you? Where's your helmet?" Valor had never seen the rider without his helmet before- he'd nearly missed him with a shock of pink hair instead of protective steel.

Chris decided to drop it instead of embarrass the knight further - any relationship between he and Anja, if it existed, was probably still in the formative stages at best. And besides, Valor had found out a way to address Salvatore's new look, and he was interested in hearing the man's response.

Just outside the door, Gregor had been debating whether or not to go back to the main room when he heard Valor's question.



*Ah, a perfect distraction! ...and I kinda want to know, myself.*

He walked back in as casually and inconspicuously as he could.



"Did they have any marshmallows?"

Chris asked Gregor, trying to cover for his entrance in case Charlotte *had* seen him skedaddle earlier.



*"What? Er, no. I'm afraid not."*

Well, that entrance could have gone better. He hoped that people were too busy paying attention to Sal's story to register what was going on.



"Mmm, too bad. I'm almost out. Maybe it's for the best. I've heard they're bad for your teeth anyway."



"Thanks for looking anyway, Gregor."



"Don't mention it. I'm sure Fezzan will have some if you still want them when we get there."

While Alex was sleeping, Salvatore was contemplating. He remembered his food when his stomach bugged him though, but it was only a mild distraction, his attention for now was turned inward. He didn't notice when his plate was empty, nor when the others finally started filing in, starting straight ahead at the wall as if trying to view its every minute detail.

Slowly the sound brought him around as he looked at the others, just in time to catch the good news. Besides all that was going on, he couldn't help but smile. He wasn't smiling for his own sake, no, but theirs. A friend of his that he made through undead misadventures is going to be happy forever with the friend who even got him in this position in the first place, who ever got him amongst friends in the first place. Sal could practically feel the elation in the room, something that... He never noticed before.

It was like everyone around him was suddenly radiating a kind of... Heat to others around them, each warming the other with little more than their very presence. In a way, Sal realizes that he has been suffering from hypothermia for a long while, mistakenly thinking the bone-chilling cold be that instead of warmth, but was only now realizing how cold he was. His smile slowly widened as he knows that soon, they'll help him feel his own heat. He couldn't wait.

The man snapped out of his introspection as he realized Valor asked him a question. At first he wondered what to say, but soon he knew.



"It wasn' needed anymore."



"...Wait, you're done fighting with us?" Valor asked, confused. Why would Salvatore decide he didn't need his helmet all of a sudden?



"Yah can' get rid o' me tha' easily, Oi'm still wit' the group through thick an' thin."



"Oi jus' outgrew the thin' is all. It never really did fit roight though, more

constrainin' than anythin' really. Oi miss anythin' whole Oi out busy? Do we got ah lead on the box?"

Seyena looks around, seeing Valor.



"Hey, Valor- oh, you... you seem a little bruised up."



"Oh this? It's nothing, Olison and I were just trying out some new fighting techniques. He caught my arm with the blunt of this axe-" Valor indicated the axe now slung at his left hip. "-and I think I got his side at one point, but we're fine, for the most part. What've you been up to?"



"I was talking with Charlotte a bit. But less on that- I didn't know you used axes. Finally decided to pick one up?"



"Yeah, I figured a bit more versatility on the field was called for since today's disaster. I'm thinking of looking for one I can throw though- I could use some range."

Tantallos finally reached the group and opened his arms for a moment, with a smile on his face, the not-so-creepy kind.



"And hello again, my friends. I am not sure how long time it will take to us reach and defeat the crazy witch lady. But I would already like to say "Thank You."

He crossed his arms behind of his back and began to walk in circles, taking some time to think how to explain that



"I am sure I will have to explain this, but I just would like to thank you all for the allowing me to have this experience of traveling in a group, to face hard situations, work as a team. To meet new people, new places, honestly.. it is different when you have a group. I may not have talked too much lately, but I certainly will not forget about any of you when I finally return to the Forsaken lands. And as I am not sure how hard it will be our next opponent, I am using this free time to say this."





"Tantalos... I'm happy to have met you, too. And to have a place with the Forsaken."



"But now's not the time to be glum. There's good news."



"It is good to see you again, Assassin person. I knew it was just a matter of time to you return. What good news would you be talking about?"



"Ami and I are engaged. We haven't set a date yet, because we want to be with this group until we finish this business with Prixima, but it's what we both want. And I wanted to ask you something, Tantalos."

Tantalos clapped his gloved hands together and nodded, he surely seemed pleased with the news.



"You two? Those are some great news. I knew you two would end up together, but I did not know when!"



"When the time comes, could we have the ceremony in your castle? I want everyone to be there among friendly faces, and I can think of no better place for us to be married."



"Of course! I was actually going to offer you that already! You are a Forsaken now, after all. And it will be perfect to see the group around again. You already have my bless, that is for sure. And I am quite sure the Plague Dragon will approve this bound too."





"Glad to hear it. Hey, you're a King. You could do the wedding yourself, right?"



"Indeed. And I will do that, why do you think you already have my blessings?"



"I just hope you do not mind the Forsaken ceremony too. And for the surprise of the visitors, it is not a dark and quiet ritual, think about it more like a exciting and fun thing. Our culture is pretty crazy, is not it?"



"Well, that bit's up to Ami. From what I'm given to understand, most girls like to plan the majority of the wedding! I hope I haven't stepped too far already just by asking you. But I'd still like to learn the customs of a Forsaken wedding regardless. Maybe we can talk about it sometime."



"We will see. And of course, there is a lot to be learned, my Assassin friend."

Tantallos sighed and looked up for a moment, he almost forgot about the problem they still had to solve next to the castle, the final strike against the Revenants, to finally bring peace to them and prevent others from being hurt..



"I admit, I'm a little curious as well. Is it okay if I hear about it, or is Forsaken clan members only?"

Tantallos tried to smile and nodded to Gregor.



"Of course you can hear about it, you will probably be taking part on it too. Who knows.. after all it seems you and the Sniper lady have something. And part of this

ceremony involves a dance.. soooo."

He chuckled and gave a nudge on the Sentinel's shoulder.

Chris cleared his throat quietly. Time to try and bail Gregor out with a quick topic shift.



"So, what else is involved?"



"If you are asking about the ceremony yet, we will be testing you, and maybe those around you to "see and learn about yourself". These tests will show us your capacities on certain situations. At first it may be awkward, but once you finish it, you may understand the point of this."

Anja scoffed.



"Pfft, just go with Deynastian civil service. Half a minute, two signatures. and you're newlyweds."



"Ceremonies are more interesting. As a lady with holy vows and priestly seal, I can easily lead the ceremony. That's it, if you prefer the ceremony of the Golden Dragon! Or Sacred Candle. Or Golden Chalice of the East."



"Well, that's up to my lady to decide. But I appreciate the offer, miss...?"

Chris just realized he hadn't met this person before.



"Oh, I'm sorry. We haven't been introduced yet, have we? Christopher Shields, assassin and spy, with the Forsaken clan."



"I'm Matilda. I served the same Lord as Olson once. Then I was a

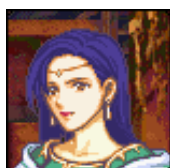
mercenary; Derick and Raquel traveled with me and Joz... and others." Matilda went silent for a moment.



"Pleasure to meet you, Christopher." She then stood up and pulled the robe over her shoulders and neck.



"The same. Olison is an old partner of mine too, and a friend."



"I think it is time to find a bed or couch or a chair to sleep. I don't want to sleep on the way to Fezzan."



"Matilda has a point. Anja's wagon makes for a lousy bed. Wait, where *are* we sleeping?"



"I believe this building has some sleeping quarters. There should be a good place to rest up. From what I've heard, all of you could do with the rest, and it wouldn't be hurting me too much to get some sleep too."



"I could do with a bit of rest, how many beds are in here?"

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### **It is the next day.**

The group travelled through the border of Menelea, finding no resistance and only miniscule border checks. The third inspection party informed them what happened - the two warring antions have signed a non-agression treaty. If history to be true, this one won't last more than a year or two.

And finally, the day afterwards, they got to the city of Fezzan.

It didn't change that much, maybe except some snow lingering on the roofs. The winter was much milder here than in Berebia.



"Well. Let's meet in the 'Drowned Pig' inn at the evening. In the meanwhile I will go see my cousin and ask her for some help from the government nobles. Hopefully..."

**The shops available here are:**

- Magic Shop in Temple District
- Blacksmith in Temple District
- Crossbowmaker in Trade District
- Weaponsmith in Trade District
- Seller of Magic Books in Trade District
- Bowmaker in Trade District
- 'Smash Smash' smithy in Trade District
- Grand Apothecary in Trade District
- 'Yeno the Enchanter' in Trade District
- Royal Weaponsmith inside City Keep

**Valor goes find a tailor: daddy needs a new longcoat!**

There was a tailor dealing in cloth and a tailor dealing in leather. The latter was more pricey.

**Valor asks the latter about pricing for a leather longcoat.**

"Ah yes, I have this perfect longcoat that seems to be just for your height young man. It was made out of the fur of Berebian black bear, and the crimson cuffs and edges are the finest Deynastian thread. Truly a coat for such a man like you. And only forty-nine coins."



**"Done." Valor purchases sweet bear-coat. Then heads to smash-smash smithy.**

A smith, with his body covered in scars, presented a price list to Valor, who was about half the man's size.

|                                        |
|----------------------------------------|
| 'Smash Smash' smithy in Trade District |
| Steel Halberd: 550                     |
| Silver Halberd: 1000                   |
| Swordreaver: 700                       |
| Steel Club: 450                        |
| Steel Mace: 600                        |
| War Hammer: 900                        |
| Silver Flail: 1000                     |
| Francisca: 600                         |
| Tomahawk: 1000                         |



"I want that Francisca, my good man." Valor said, looking up at the enormous weaponsmith. Of course, that'd be one more weapon than he could realistically carry. Again. "How much would you be willing to pay for my Iron Sword?"

"One hundred at most."



"Works for me." Valor handed over the worn, notched blade, as well as the remaining balance for the Francisca.

Once his transactions were complete, Valor left, and began making his way back to the wagon by the most circuitous path possible. He had already put on his new longcoat, his old jacket rolled up under one arm.

### Ami looks in the 'Yeno the Enchanter' shop

Yeno turned out to be a giant, bald man with white skin and lots of tattoos on his body. His workshop was filled with crystals, magical machinery, strange plants and ingredients and other marvels. His prices were exorbitant, but for the items he was offering...

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| Restore: 1000 Gold           |
| Psychic: 2800 Gold           |
| Warp: 1800 Gold              |
| Angelic Cloth: 1000 Gold     |
| Blade Ring: 900 Gold         |
| Energy Ring: 900 Gold        |
| -----                        |
| Rune Sabre (1): 2700 Gold    |
| Mage Masher (1): 1800 Gold   |
| Brave Lance (1): 2500 Gold   |
| Dragon's Fang (1): 1500 Gold |
| Dragon Axe (1): 1900 Gold    |
| Bolt Axe (1): 2800 Gold      |
| Bright Bow (1): 2600 Gold    |
| Thunder Gun (1): 1500 Gold   |
| Angelic Robe (1): 3500 Gold  |
| Dragonshield (1): 2200 Gold  |
| Talisman (1): 2200 Gold      |
| Speedwings (1): 2200 Gold    |
| Goddess Icon (1): 2200 Gold  |
| Body Ring (1): 2200 Gold     |
| Sword Crystal (1): 2500 Gold |
| Axe Crystal (1): 2500 Gold   |
| Anima Crystal (1): 2500 Gold |
| Staff Crystal (1): 2500 Gold |
| Delphi Shield (1): 4000 Gold |
| Egelda Shield (1): 6000 Gold |
| Hoplon Shield (1): 4000 Gold |

### Ami: the Royal Weaponsmith sound interesting.

The Royal Weaponsmith Bulletin had its prices listed:

|                    |
|--------------------|
| Silver Bow: 1250   |
| Silver Axe: 1300   |
| Silver Sword: 1200 |

Chris examines the Thundergun.



"This thing is pretty interesting. What's it do?"

"Well, this intricate piece of machinery and magical elements first shoots a small bolt, that upon impact releases magical thunder across the body of whichever unfortunate soul was struck by it."

Chris put the Thundergun back with a sigh.



"I like the look of it, but I can't afford it. Have a good day, sir."

He left the shop and wandered about to see if any members of the party were doing anything interesting.

**Gregor heads for the Grand Apothecary and asks about the price of medicine.**

The young, blonde priestes handed Gregor a list of the medicine and prices.

|                  |
|------------------|
| Vulnerary: 300   |
| Concoction: 1000 |
| Elixir: 3000     |
| Antidote: 150    |
| Pure Water: 500  |

**Gregor buys two vulneraries, stores them in the wagon, and then checks out the blacksmith.**

The blacksmith, currently sporting an eyepatch over the left eye, handed Gregor a wooden board with prices listed in charcoal.

|                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Iron (axe, sword, blade, dagger, javelin, lance, bow): 250 gold |
| Steel (axe, sword, lance, bow): 450 gold                        |
| Cutlass: 500 gold                                               |
| Iron Rapier: 320 gold                                           |
| Hand Axe: 320 gold                                              |
| Iron Longbow: 320 gold                                          |

**Gregor looks for candy on sale!**

There weren't any candy-selling shops open.

Well, there's not a whole lot that 60 or so gold can buy. Gregor **went back to the wagon to share his gold with any party members who need it.**

**Charlotte looks at Bowmaker store's inventory.**

The young bowyer presented Charlotte with a short list of rather cheap bows.

Iron Bow: 200  
Steel Bow: 450  
Composite Bow: 1050  
Killer Bow: 1150  
Silver Bow: 1250  
Iron Longbow: 300  
Steel Longbow: 500  
Steel Yari: 750  
Silver Yari: 1400

**Charlotte asks how much the bowmaker would take for her used longbow and poison crossbow together.**

The bowyer looked the weapons over, mumbled something twice, nodded and then looked at Charlotte.

"No more than three hundred."

**Charlotte goes back to the bowmaker and sells her poison xbow/used longbow for 300 gold, buying an unused iron longbow for the same amount.**  
Ka-ching!

---

**Olison takes a look at the plain ol' Weaponsmith.**

The smith is dealing in steel weaponry.

Steel Sword: 400  
Steel Blade: 450  
Steel Spear: 450  
Steel Javelin: 500  
Steel Axe: 400  
Steel Mace: 500

Olison made his way quietly through the roads after departing from the weaponsmithy, still clenching onto his payment from the Forsaken family. Not a single coin spent, just how he preferred it.



*Though that will need to change,* he thought solemnly, *the battles continue to grow tougher day by day.*

---

**Edwin visits the bookshop and checks out it's wares.**

Contrary to expectations, the books weren't anything superb at all.

Elfire: 400  
Elthunder: 450  
Elwind: 350  
Shine: 450  
Divine: 600  
Worm: 350  
Luna: 500

**Tantallos visited the bookshop to buy a Luna tome.**



"Going to take this Tome if you do not mind, and here is the gold."

Ka-ching! However, the Worm tome slipped from Tantallos' robes and fell on the ground.



"This is ridiculous! Bah, no selection at all!"

**Edwin cools off by going to the magic shop and browsing their selection.**

The shopkeeper lady gave Edwin a listing on her various, yet modest, goods.

|                       |
|-----------------------|
| Singe: 250            |
| Static: 200           |
| Photon: 150           |
| Flux: 250             |
| Worm: 400             |
| Vulnerary: 300        |
| Heal: 300             |
| Antidote (staff): 300 |
| Mend: 800             |

**Salvatore looks around town, seeing if there are any more esoteric or perhaps even novel stores that might catch his eye.** Ormm is of course at his side, although by now that perhaps goes without saying.

There were various shops, tailors, butchers, wine shops, and plethora of other stores as well.

**Salvatore stops in a tailor shop, one that specializes in travel ware if possible.**

Salvatore ended in a tailor's shop. The elderly gentleman bowed at his entrance, as the wyvern rider was the only client at the moment, it seems.

The wyvern rider paused for a moment, before bowing in return. Must be a Menealian thing, he supposes.



"Good day ta yah sir, Oi was hopin' tha' yah moight 'ave somethin' Oi was lookin' fer. Ah red cloak, 'er somethin' loike tha' would be good. Got ah bit o' travels 'head o' me, so somethin' sturdy would moighty appreciated yah?"

"Sir, your accent is so thick it makes my ears bleed. You must be Berebian or some other northerner. But I heard the most important part, so." The tailor moved between



the shelves and was back within a minute, carrying a long cloak from red wool, the edges were padded with extra thread.

"I also have crimson and brown-dyed cloaks if this one is too bright for your eyes. Thirty coins."



"Eheh, yeah mah accent is ah bit much, ain' it?" The rider remarked sheepishly, scratching the back of his head while looking at the cloak. "Great work tha, but Oi was hopin' fer somethin' ah touch darker, crimson, yeah." **The rider fished out the coins to pay the man with.**

Salvatore donned his bought cloak as he exited the store, making sure it fit right with the armor. He rather liked it, truth be told. Normally he would of avoided bright colors like the plague, but now, well, things have changed. He doesn't see a reason to hide in plain sight anymore. But there was still some things to buy so no time to get distracted in thoughts.

The wyvern rider moved onwards and went to the Blacksmith.



"Greetin's, yah got any javelins wit' yah? Oi'm lookin' ta buy."

"I might have some, yes. Iron only, though."



"Iron works grand, jus' grand. On tha' topic, how much yah willin' ta take my iron spear? Oi keep it in good condition as Oi can, ain' much one fer havin' my stuff break on me yah know." The wyvern rider presents the spear peacefully to the blacksmith for inspection.

"Hmm, looks in quite decent shape. Tell ya what, add fifty coins and you can have the javelin."



"Haha, yah have yerself ah deal 'ere." Salvatore remarked happily as he handed his iron spear over to the blacksmith, then dug out fifty coins for the man. "Thank yah kindly."

Salvatore walked out of the store one spear and fifty coins less, and one javelin richer. A good bargain if he should say so!



"Hm... Been ah while since Oi messed 'round wit' one o' 'ese. Should probably practice ah bit 'fore we go." The rider commented to himself as he pat Ormm on the neck and walked past the wyvern, heading back towards Anja's wagon.

---

For once, Alexander realized, he actually had something he wanted to buy. So he went around looking for other party members with spare money.

Seyena saw Alexander meandering around, and approached the knight, Ilya in tow behind her.



"Hello, Alex, you seem a little lost."



"Oh, well actually, I was looking to see if I could find one of you. I've never claimed any of the money, and I actually want to buy something."



"You could have probably asked Anja, she might have had some money for you." Seyena half-joked, half-scoffed.

Nethertheless, she handed Alex 300 coins.



"It's not much, but go wild- I don't believe I have any use for it. Anything I want to buy myself, is way out of range."

Alexander thanked Seyena, taking the money- but then she had a brilliant idea- asking for some money from Anja... and of course Alexander completely missed any scoffing involved.



"That... is a great idea! Thank you!"

Alexander left, looking for Anja. She'd probably exact a... price. But hey, he was sort of used to the kind of thing by now. kind of. ...Nothing to be done about it though, and it was certainly better than roasting as usual.

Anja was near her wagon.



"Hey, Alexander. Do you guys need my wagon again or something?"

---

Gregor simply waited by the wagon, watching the crowd go by. It wasn't terribly interesting, but in Fezzan there wasn't much to do other than shop and you needed gold to do that.

Chris walked up beside Gregor and leaned his back against the wagon.



"So, how are you finding the trip so far, Gregor?"

Gregor pondered the question, then shrugged.



"Haven't really thought about it, to be honest. I guess I'm glad that no-one seems to recognize us, or know/care about the bounty if they do. Until we arrive at Lord whatshisname's estate, the fewer problems we encounter the better. What about yourself? Find anything interesting?"



"Well, there's a crossbow that shoots lightning. That's pretty interesting."



"We can't really afford it, though. Sin saol."



"A crossbow that shoots *what*? Whoa."

He resisted the urge to run off and see it...somehow.

The assassin shrugged, his tone turning a bit more somber.



"I'm fairly anxious, myself. On the one hand, I really want to punch PRIXIMA

in the mouth for... for... everything, I guess."



"But on the other hand... I'm scared of her. She's even more heartless than I claimed to be, and I know how cruel she can be... and I don't even know how strong she is these days, but I know she's a very powerful mage. You saw that for yourself, during the Rosecross battle. Although, truthfully? I may be scared, but I'm damned determined to put her in the ground before the dust settles."



"I've got jitters for other, better reasons, too. More hopeful ones at least."

He wiggled his shoulders slightly, trying to get more comfortable against the hard wood of Anya's wagon.



"Anyway, I understand your fear of PRIXIMA; I'm scared as well. She's incredibly powerful, and probably has some nasty tricks up her sleeve. She's a dangerous lunatic."



"But honestly, I'm more angry. I've got a good reason for wanting to see her dead or defeated. Several, in fact." He turned away from the grim topic with a mental effort, turning his mind to happier thoughts as Chris mentioned jitters.



"So, have you two planned the honeymoon yet?"

Chris scratched his head.



"Nah, we haven't talked about it yet. I've got my focus on this first, but that doesn't mean I haven't given it some thought on my own time."



"Perhaps somewhere nice in the countryside. Or in the mountains during summer. I hear they're very pretty, that time of year. Or we could head to the coast and

spend some time near the ocean. Or maybe just go from one to the other for a year. There's so many possibilities, and with Prixima feeding the worms we'd have a lot of time to explore them all."

Chris grinned to himself.



"What about you?"

Gregor thought for a moment.



"Good question, actually. Of course, one needs to be getting mar--"

Just as Gregor was about to open his mouth about a Honeymoon or other, Charlotte materialized behind him like someone logging back into an MMO after disconnecting.



"Gosh. It's like we can't stop fighting without you two sitting around talking about life or something. How's it going? Buy anything cool? I bought something cool."

Charlotte jiggled her body enough to make her two bows clink together behind her. They looked exactly like her old bows, just a lot less worn.



"Well, I think it's cool."



"Gah! Uh er, no nothing cool. Just some medicine."



"Reasonable as always. We really exhausted our supply last fight, huh...?"

Chris hid a smile with his hand.



"You really shouldn't jiggle like that, Charlotte. I'm engaged, you know."



*Dammit Chris, why did you have to mention that? I was trying not to stare...*

Well, that was probably enough teasing Gregor.



"So, what about YOUR plans for the future, miss Braxis?"

She sidestepped his mention of jigging and launched right into future plans.



"The future...?"



"Well, I figure after we've been off to kill the wizard, Gregor and I will move to a farm far to the north, saying we're 'tired of all this mercenary stuff.' But really we won't be, or at least I won't be, so I'll start getting violently restless with boring farm life. Like, Gregor will be out in the middle of the night trying to figure out what killed Betsy the Sheep, and he'll find a feral wife chowing down on some bloodied mutton, hissing as he draws near? So in an attempt to help - *swoon* - he'll tell me to enlist with the local militia. Then I'll get bored with that because there is no real crime and the militia does nothing, so we'll be investigating a recent farmhouse break-in and, whoops, never mind guys, it's just Charlotte, casually murdering hens in one of her dreamwalk slaughterings! Everybody go home, nothing to see here. Gregor will swear he didn't see anything, officer."



"We're going to lead a good life."

All Gregor could do was blink. Clearly, she had put a lot of thought into this. Possibly a little too much, but whatever.



"...sounds good to me."



"I guess there has to be a balance of crazy in the world, and with PRIXIMA gone we'd have some big shoes to fill!"

Chris hid a smile with his hand, then went poker-faced.



"If you're going to be slaughtering farm fowl, I do happen to be an assassin. I can teach you some techniques for choking a chicken that would, at the least, impress your husband."

That was pretty naughty for casual conversation, but he wondered if Gregor would even get it. Charlotte very likely would, he thought. Either way, it would be amusing to see their responses.

That was odd. Gregor was under the impression that you were supposed to wring a chicken's neck, or decapitate it. Eh, what did he know, he'd never had to slaughter the livestock himself.

Chris hadn't expected to stun Charlotte into complete and total silence.



*Either she didn't get the joke, or she did and actually thinks I was making a serious offer...*



"Well, anyway, all joking aside... I wonder what those two are up to."

Chris gestured with a tilt of his head to Alexander and Anja.



"Not sure, really. Anja's pretty obviously interested in Sir Jorinn, but he's pretty thickheaded in more than one way. Chances are he just wants to store something in the wagon and will miss every signal she sends his way."





"Well, Anja is a friendly woman in general, but you're probably right. I would explain it to him... but that would make it lose all of its charm."



"Although maybe we should at least pretend we're not watching, eavesdropping, and gossiping."



"You're right, we should at least pretend to not be paying attention to them."

Chris laughed at himself.



"I'm hardly the best person to be giving that kind of advice, anyway! All I have to tell him would be 'don't take less than 300 gp' and things of that nature."



"Well, Gregor! If you're jealous, I can become interested in you as well. Surely Charlotte will agree it will be more fun." Anja stuck tongue out at Gregor. And then at Chris as well, for some reason.



"I think we have a word for people like her... but it's best not spoken."



"Oh dear. Anja, I'm already taken, thank you." *By a woman who could probably obliterate me if I were so foolish as to break her heart...* he left unsaid.



"That was obvious, mister obvious soldier guy!"

Alexander studiously ignored the others.





"Right, uh, Anja. Could I borrow some gold?"



"Depends how much you need and how many kisses I get!"

Alexander broke into a bit of embarrassed spluttering, although a small bit of his mind admitted that the concept wasn't the worst of things.



"Well. Uh. I'm kinda talking a couple hundred pieces of gold, since I haven't used it at all before and..."



"Alexander... GO FOR IT ALREADY!"

Gregor nudged Chris with his elbow.



"Shush, you. Let him figure it out."

Chris ignored Gregor, choosing instead to tap his right index finger against his left palm.



"Alexander! You kiss that girl! You kiss her right now!"



"A-LEX-AN-DER-YOU'RE-THE-MAN, IF-YOU-WON'T-KISS-HER-CHRIS-SURE-CAN!"

Charlotte twirls invisible pom-poms.

Gregor couldn't resist anymore.



"Oh, whatever...you can do it, Sir Jorinn!"



"His relationship progress is just like his battle movement. Slow!" And then she kissed him on the cheek.

Ah hell, Alexander thought. No use in denying it. This was damn *great*. And then he went for Anja's lips.

Anja skillfully slipped away from him and then rummaged in her wagon.



"Is three hundred coins enough? I don't have much left."



"Oh *dam*- Er. Yes. Three hundred will do just fine."



"Damn. That's cold, Anja."

After making a circle on the spot, she waved a long ribbon over Chris' face.



"Shush, spy guy." She then handed Alexander the gold. "What are you going to spend the money on, by the way?"

Alexander sighs.



"Pure water. Hammer, maybe, if I can find and afford one."

Chris twitched his nose, trying not to sneeze after being tickled with the ribbon.



"Just curious, but are you leading poor Alexander - and by extension, the rest of us - on, or are you just teasing him for being as slow as continental drift - which he deserved?"

Alexander takes the moment to affix Chris with a glare.

Chris looked back with a shrug and a smile, as if to say, "well, it's true. At least in my opinion."

Of course, this does absolutely nothing to allay Alexander's gaze. So Alexander just kind of stares at him for a few more seconds, before turning back to Anja. The annoyance doesn't leave his face, even if it is less hostile.



"No, I'm just waiting for a moment when you guys stop harassing poor knightly Alexander. Is all." She then gave her manly knight a smooch on the other cheek.



"Hey, it's not like that! We're all friends here, and I'm something of a matchmaker."



"I simply think the two of you are cute together, you obviously like him, and he's too shy to go for it without encouragement - although you can call it harassment if you'd like."

By this point, Alexander's face was a mixture of confusion and embarrassment.



"Oh, I'm sure they're the *only* ones harassing me- oh goddammit Chris."



"Oh please, you're just jealous you're not like my Alexander here. Look at him, and then at yourself! He is bigger and stronger, and what you can do Chris? Not even lay a scratch on my knightly guy~ Come, Alexander, let's do some shopping together!"

Gregor had been silent, merely enjoying the spectacle, until Anja unleashed the burn on Chris.



"...Ouch."



"You're discounting skill, which I have in spades. Alex is big and built like a wall, true, but every wall has a crack in it somewhere. All I have to do is find that crack and I can take the whole thing down."

Chris shrugged.



"...Am I allowed to be unnerved by your discussion of whether you're able to kill me or not?"



"She started it!"

Chris may have been whining.



"Would you rather have had me say, 'it's not about size, it's what you can do'? Because that was an alternative."



"...Aaallright then... Yeah, let's go. I really do need that pure water."



"Have fun shopping!"

Anja part-followed, part-led Alexander to a shop that sells pure water.

"Five hundred coins per bottle." The helpful merchant said.

Alexander sighed inwardly. He wouldn't get to buy a hammer then- not like he needed one much, though. The absurdly armored man fished in his pack, which hung around a plate of his armor near the side, and put 500 of the coins on the merchant's counter.



"I'd like a bottle then, please."

Charlotte, noticing Alexander had money, had followed him silently like a creepy stalker. After finishing his pure water purchase, she spoke.



"Psst. PSSSST. Alex. Can I borrow 500 coins to complete my... *collection*?"

She jiggled her bows once again.



"Huh, where did you come fr- that is literally *all* of the money I have. *And I had to borrow it.*"



"No, it's okay, I have a plan! See, I'm 1000G or so in debt to Ami, and now I'll be, like, 500G in debt to you. I noticed that Derick has a fair bit of money, so I'll use my charming good looks to coax about 1500G out of *him*. Then, once Ami and you are out of money and still have things you want to buy, I'll *generously* loan you both money, canceling out my previous borrowings."



"Then we'll kill Derick, and everyone's loans will be settled!"

Alexander let out a groaning sigh.



"No murdering teammates, Charlotte. Murdering teammates is bad."

Derick walked by, carrying an oversized bag of coins.



"Dragon, why do I feel so tired lately? Now where was that shop Ami mentioned?"



"Wait what?"

**Derick: RUN FOR MY LIFE**

"Here you go." The merchant took the money and handed the bottle of sparkling water to Alexander.

Alexander scratched his chin, and then discovered that in fact he had another pouch of gold.



"Oh hey, when'd that get ther? Well, that puts me at 700, and I doubt a hammer costs that little. I'll have to borrow a couple hundred from someone else."

Alexander shrugged and began to make his way to the mace shop.

The mutantized muscular giant man looked at Alexander.

"Oo, big little guy coming for big wupons, ya? Axe or hammer or club to bash yer enemies faces in, huh?"



"How much does a hammer cost?"

"Wuddaya want to hit with a tiny hammer, huh? Look at dis!" He presented Alexander with a warhammer with long spike and heavy blunt.

"Dat's a wupon for sumone like yourself, I'm telling ye!"



"Heh, yeah, I was looking for one of those. How much will it cost?"

"Dat be, uuuuh. Nine hundred."



"I'll be right back!"

Alex runs over to the rest of the group he can find.

---

**Derick: RUN FOR MY LIFE... to Yeno the Enchanter**

"Welcommen to the Workshope of Yuno the Magnificent, friend. How can I help thy magical needs?"

Derick looked at the items on the wall before stopping at the Mage Masher. He picked it up and held in his hands.



"A bit heavier than I'm use to... I'll take this please! I get the feeling I'm gonna need it."

### **Derick: Buy Mage Masher**

"Ah yess, the Mage Masher. Truly a glorious choice for a glorious swordsman like you. Perhaps you would be interested in this shiny cloth that would enhance your health? That would allow you to fight even longer."



"Huh. How much is it?"

"Thousand coins a piece! Truly a deal worth considering."



"Oh. Sorry, that's way to much for me. Can't afford it."

"Oh, that's bad. Return when you have more gold, boy." Suddenly Derick found himself outside the store, in front of the shop's closed door. Dat magic.

---

Valor finally makes his way back to the rest of the group, or at least, the majority gathering of it.



"Some of us not quite done yet then?"



"Guess not. I didn't have much to shop with in the first place though. I assume some of us had more."



"Nice coat, by the way."



"Sure is. Best part is, I've still got money left over, even after I got this too." Valor indicates his shiny new Francisca. "Should let me tear through most anything in our way, eh?"

Gregor (somewhat warily) admired the axe. It *did* have a certain amount of appeal to it, though he was of course a lance man through and through.



"I sure hope so. Things are about to get tougher than ever, but then again we're stronger than ever. I think we've got a shot at whatever comes next."

Charlotte snuck up once again behind Valor. Of course, Gregor most likely saw her coming. She couldn't fool him nowadays.



"...how muuuuuch money left over?"

Chris blinked.



"That new coat certainly got the attention of our ladies."

He looked around to make sure Ami also wasn't going to sidle up asking Valor for money. That would have been awkward.



"Less than two hundred." Valor replied, betraying no hint of surprise. "Not the kind of money one would try to outfit themselves with, but it'll keep me fed for a while, at least. Why?"

Seyena sidled up to the group.



"I'm not *too* interested, but, in the hypothetical situation that we have a considerable amount of money left over..."



"I call dibs on buying a Delphi Shield."

Gregor half-jokingly began peering around, trying to see if Riven or Raquel were also approaching.





"We should probably see how much money we actually have left before we start making big purchases. No point in planning on getting a special shield if we're a hundred gold short."



"Has anyone taken stock of our vulneraries and concoctions yet? Gods know they were important in the last scruff-up"



"Two hundred coins! I need two hundred coins, then I can buy a warhammer!"

Chris shook his head and put his hood back up.



"Don't look at me. I'm broke."



*When did everyone become so interested in money...?*



"...Or I could assist Alexander in his quest to get a bludgeoning instrument." Valor carefully counted out his coin, and shrugged. "Unless someone else wants to spot you 49 coins, you're out of luck, pal."



"Sweet Dragon, *everyone* wants money. We're not going to be able to get what everyone wants even if we pool our resources."

Gregor dug into his pockets, coming up with...15 gold. Great.



"I could give you a marshmallow. I'm not working the street corners again, though, and that's all there is to it."



"C'mon only 34 more *and this is my first time ever buying anything please.*"



< "What, ever?" Valor asked, one eyebrow gaining altitude. "You didn't get out much before the Prixima disaster, did you?"



"Sir Jorinn, why did you snatch the money out of my hands without asking...?"



"This is an important question, and one that I'd like the answer to."

Alexander stashes the money into his pouch.



"*This money was always there you have no proooooof.*"



"Wow. He's a bad thief."



"He's a knight- what do you expect? The fact he's stealing at all is miraculous."

Gregor decided to let the matter drop. 15 gold was hardly anything to get in an argument over.



"ANYway, we still haven't heard what Charlotte wants to get, and a Delphi Shield for Seyena does sound quite useful."



"Oh - I wanted a Steel Longbow in case my iron one runs out between now and striking the witch's heart. I doubt that'll happen, though, so everyone else's priorities are first."



"And also a hammer sounds useful right I could actually *hurt* armored people."



"...But the spell slingers and me already *do that*."



"Look at it logically, Sir Jorinn. As you're well aware, magic is very useful against armored enemies. And we have a number of very powerful magic users in our group. So, how useful will another anti-armor weapon be?"



"Well yeah, but whenever there are any other people around, they knock you out."



"Wow, rude. Besides, I've gotten better recently. A lot better. I think anima casters in particular, I've gotten better at reading their wind-up, you know what I mean?"



"But that's your job. You're there to hold the line with Gregor and keep those less armored safe. You kill those guys before they kill ours."



"Well you could probably buy his thing and then buy mine with the leftovers anyway, I only need 35 gold."



"...Also, *mag*es man, have to commiserate there."

Edwin, who happened to be passing by at the moment, stops upon hearing Alex's exclamation.



"I have to agree with you on your point, Sir Jorim. Mages are quite unpleasant to fight against if not prepared properly for. And don't worry, if you get too hurt, I can just heal you myself. It'll hurt on my end, but it works!"



"Healing people hurts you? Funny, Seyena and Ami never mentioned a problem like that."



"That's because they use staves to do their work for them. They also have limited charges, meaning that they have to replace their staves after a number of castings. My method is that of calling magic, something that Raquel or Tantallos know about I suspect. I can use the spell as many times as I want, but it comes at the cost of my own health for each spell cast this way. I'm literally tearing myself apart for each spell I call, but it does mean that I can use it without a staff and without the limits that they imply. I used such a technique once on Olson in the battle, so it works at any rate."



"...So... You're using yourself as the staff, and it's possible to use yourself up. That sounds dangerous."



"No kidding. That sounds like a rather risky technique."

Seyena subconsciously hugged her staff close to her chest.



"By the Dragon..."

Edwin nodded in thought as he considered his companion's reactions.



"Yes, it is somewhat risky if you don't know what you are doing. I thankfully have a bit of an advantage that most don't have when it comes to this sort of thing though... And historically speaking it's also very interesting. Calling magic is one of the oldest, if not arguably one of the first, ways of casting magic. I recall reading accounts of how whole battalions of mages would travel with the armies of footsoldiers to provide support back before the invention of staves and tomes that held magic. It was the invention of both staves and tomes that made a massive change in how battles and wars would be waged in the future, and it was done in order to preserve the lives of those brave mages that literally gave their own away for others."

He looked down at his tome and rubbed it absently with a thumb in thought before looking back up.



"I have a question for you all, if you don't mind me asking?"



"Shoot."



"Do you know how staves and tomes are actually made?"



"Uh... No. But I would assume at this point that a process similar to the magic calling thing you just told us about is employed. Probably at a slower pace though, I'd guess."



"Ooh! Let me guess. Spellpower (and thus life force) from a mage is stored directly within a staff or maybe some kind of object in the staff. When the spellpower runs out, the staff is 'used up?' At least, that's the way I would do it if I knew how magic works."

Edwin nodded as he looked back down at his tome.



"You're pretty close to it actually. They are typically made using groups of people that literally shunt the magic energy from themselves into a medium for storage that has a special release mechanism built into it, the writing for the tomes and runes for the staves. Then they tweak the release mechanism into certain shapes and designs so that it casts a spell for every release. They also leave warnings and spell designs that you can read, so others can recreate them easier without having to work from memory. All that energy has to come from somewhere after all..."



"Well, Oi got all--Ah, sorry." He fell silent seeing as he was interrupting a conversation.



"Salvatore! Can I borrow 35 gold pieces?"



"Hmm? Oh, ya sure. 'Ere yah go." The wyvern rider forked over thirty five gold pieces.



"Don' spend it all in one sittin', an' try not ta destroy the pub this toime, yah? Oi'm still surprised yah still had all tha' foight in yah after the brawl." Sal joked with Alex.

Alexander grins at Salvatore at that, and then rushes off to go **buy the warhammer!**

---

At the moment Charlotte suggested her joke, Raquel paused in her reading for a moment. Looking up from the thick leather-bound tome heavy with age, she glanced around the covered wagon where Anja kept most of the group's supplies, then stuck her head out to see no one else had returned quite yet.



"How unusual, a sudden foreboding." she murmured to herself.

Shifting her Killer Thunder tome slightly closer to her, she returned to her reading, quashing the impulse to sidle over slightly.

A blur flew into the wagon, blowing the doors open. Derick stopped for his breath by

Raquel, cradling the Mage Masher close to his chest.



"Help me hide!"

Raquel leapt up in surprise as Derick plowed in, almost dropping her book. Holding on to it, she looked at Derick, then at the largest boxes which, between them, seemed to conceal a corner, especially with the tarp that normally kept them securely fastened while moving. She pointed.



"Behind there."

As Derick went into hiding, she grabbed the Killer Thunder tome, setting the book down gently beside it, then stuck her head out the wagon, trying to figure out what was happening outside.

Derick dove behind the crates, and popped his head out from the side so he could see the entrance.



"If Charlotte or Alex come by, tell them I'm not here!"

Seeing no one, Raquel pulled her head back into the wagon and closed the door, sitting back down beside her book. Picking it up, she nonetheless didn't open it.



"Of course, but whyever are you hiding from them?"



"I'm not one hundred percent sure, but I caught the tail end of the conversation. But I have to say, any plan that ends in "Then we'll kill Derick, and everyone's loans will be settled!" is NOT A GOOD PLAN"



"I'm sure it was a joke; I doubt they'd seriously try to kill one of their partners."

She shifted her hand to the Killer Thunder tome.



"But, you've know them far better than I do. If it wasn't, I'll stand beside you at the very least."



"..."

Derick slowly walked out from behind the box and took a seat.



"Yeah, you're right. Probably. Hopefully. Sorry about that. I panicked because of all the stress lately."

He started unwrapping the Mage Masher and began looking for a place on his clothing to hook it onto.



"It's certainly no problem. I can definitely understand, with everything that's happened so recently."



"Truth be told, I'm quite looking forward to after this is over. When PRIXIMA is gone, I am certain everyone will be able to rest in peace, and we needn't worry any more about her agents coming after us the way they've pursued your friends."

Derick looked over to the entrance of the wagon, where over the past few minutes a pile of weapons that were being tossed in had formed while hands occasionally reached in and groped around until grabbing an item off the rack and pulling it out.



"Uh. Do... you think something's going on out there?"

---

Minute later Alexander came out the smithy with spiky black hammer. Of war.

Alexander walked back to the group, all smiles.



"Got my hammer."





"Looks loike ah roight fearsome piece 'ere, expectin' ta crack some armor wit' it?"



"Possibly."



"So, we're missing Tantallos, Riven, Derick, Raquel, and Olison, right? How long do we wait before we start searching for them?"



"I think I saw, Derrick I think it was, running towards the wagon for some reason. The one with the headband. He seemed a bit upset about something..."



"Oh, right, that... Charlotte had come up with some insane plan for debt juggling that involved killing Derick and taking his money at the end, though I *think* she was just being silly."

Salvatore looked up from his javelin that he was inspecting.



"**What? Debt jugglin'? Is someone tryin' ta get Derick?**" The wyvern rider looked around as he held his javelin in hand, as if invaders would swarm them soon. He was holding the javelin wrong though, looking more like he'd try to chuck it than actually throw it.



"Charlotte's just being weird again... I hope..."



"What? Oh, I was just joking! Even though you can hardly deny it would be an effective way to settle my debts - I mean, to settle *our* debts."



"Charlotte, murdering our teammates is *not* an effective solution."



"Besides, Derick is too adorable to murder. Just look at the way he barreled for Raquel! Goodness, they've been getting along nicely."

Salvatore gave Charlotte a strange look at the mention of her involvement in the plan before shrugging and going back to inspecting the javelin.

Ormm was by now scratching the cobble floors out of boredom.



"You know, if you're broke, you guys left lots of old stuff in my wagon. You could get some scrap money for it?"

Chris shrugged.



"You guys do whatever you want, as far as money is concerned. Just don't go killing each other; we quit Prixima's employ months ago, so we can afford to have standards now."

In that very moment, Matilda came up to the wagon.



"I asked my cousin in the City Guard to look for information about recent activities of Countess Kesselring and to look around her borders if possible. She said she should have something within few days, so..."



"So that means we have a bit of time to waste, right? No need to get everyone together right now."



"And someone should go tell Derick that we're not going to kill him. *And to be honest, I feel a little insulted he would assume we would.*"



"Oh, I was more thinking about paying visit to the Grummel."



"...The what now?"



"I hope you didn't mention who you were with to your cousin. We're sort of wanted."



"I had to. But as far as my cousin knows, Gregor and everyone who was with him on the posters aren't wanted nation-wide anymore. Apparently the King have launched an investigation after he received a good word of your deeds and pardoned you all. Something of that kind. You're still wanted in Kesselring territory, though."



"Wait, our names have been cleared? Hot damn!"



"She said you have been cleared shortly before the recent border conflict began."



"Yessss!"



"Well, that was nice of him. I suppose that also clears me of all the things that I actually did, too..."



"Ah, we can go back to Menelea? It's too bad- I rather like the climate here."



"Regardless- what's the Grummel?"



"Yeah, I wanted to know that too."



"Count Grummel. Someone found his name in those coded papers, if I remember correctly? That's why we're here, right?" Matilda blinked, seemingly started getting confused herself.

Gregor hesitated, but then spoke up.



"Lady Matilda, I have to ask...in your investigations, did you happen to hear anything about the von Hexham family? While we were in Berebia, I heard something about them being rounded up and executed, but the source might not have been the most reliable."

Matilda was silent for a brief moment.



"I'm sorry, Gregor. Execution of your parents and most of your siblings have been public. Hundreds of people have seen it, my cousin says."



"...I see. Thank you for telling me, Matilda."



"You said 'most' of my siblings. Does that mean at least one is still alive? Maybe in hiding?"



"My cousin do not know details, but apparently one of your siblings left

Kesselring some time after you. That's all, as far as the facts and rumors go. How many siblings did you have?"



"Three...two brothers and a sister. I'm the youngest."

---

**Olison makes his way into the Smash Smash shop.**

"Da? Wussit, another warhammer?" The muscled merchant spoke in grumbling way.



"Good day, and no." Olison politely stated as he peered over the charcoal list nearby "I'd like to purchase a Francisca. And as well, is there any chance you would buy these?" Olison pulls the Iron Sword and Iron Javelin from their sheaths to show.

"Francisca good axe! But I dun buy wupons from others, no."

Olison nodded.



"Ah, shame. But I'll still purchase the axe." Olison pulled out the bag containing his gold and counted out 600 coins.

**Olison: Buy Francisca. (Send Iron Sword to convoy)**

Francisca was a big axe; so big that javelin slipped from Olison's grip.



"Thank you." Olison made a curt bow. He attempted to overhead carry the fallen javelin, making his way **back to the wagon.**

**Valor swaps out his almost depleted Vulnerary with a full one from Storage.**

Valor had just grabbed the vulnerary when he heard Olison walking up.



"Hey, you finish your shopping?"

Olison nodded to acknowledge Valor as he set down the Iron Sword on the wagon.



"Think so. I still have some money left over, if any of us need anything." He took a moment to pull out his new axe, testing out the weight. He gave it a swing or two, "Think I like this one's balance better than that other lumbering one." a chuckle escaped his throat.



"Hey, how about that, we grabbed the same kind!" Valor pulled out he own Francisca. "I mostly grabbed one because I needed an option at range, you know?"



"Huh, with this kind of balance, you're right." Looking to an open clearing, Olson raised the new axe, and with a moment's preparation threw it outwards. After a few meters, the axe hooked around at blinding speed and buried itself into a nearby tree.



"Hah. That'll take some practice."

---

Gregor poked around the wagon, **dropping off his weapons and picking up the two Iron Lances, the Shortbow, the Flux tome, and the Iron Sword.**



"Anyone know where you can sell this stuff? I don't think we'll need it going forward, unless anyone has any objections."



"Weapons at the smithy, the magic book at magic shop?"



"Well, that makes sense I guess."

**Gregor walked to the smithy's and asked him how much the man would pay for the weapons.**

The weaponsmith looked the weapons over.

"Eehh, the bow is almost done for, but this lance looks like new... Four hundred."



"Come on now, the lance alone is worth more than half that. Make it 500?"

"Hmph... well, you're right about it! But I still have to profit on it. 450!"



"Fair enough. Deal."

**Gregor: Hand over the items in question, take the money, go to the magic shop and ask how much for the Flux tome.**

"Hmm, it's in quite good condition. I will re-sell it in few days. I can give two hundred."

Gregor, of course, had no idea what tomes were worth. Sounded like a good price though.



"I'll take it, thank you."

After selling the tome, he returned to the wagon with an extra 650 gold for the pot and **picked up his weapons again (Steel Lance, Steel Javelin, and Killer Lance, lest ye forgot).**

Noticing the weapon pile being pulled out, Derick stuck his head out of the curtain.



"Hello?"



"Derick? What are you doing in there?"



"Talking to Raquel. You?"



"Talking, huh?" Anja whistled right away.



"Yeah, I was going to ask that, Anja."



"...Wha?"



"That's...hardly, I mean..."

Raquel hastily returned to her reading, coincidentally lifting her book high enough that her face couldn't be seen.



"Fair enough, I'll stop teasing you."



"One thing I was sure I'd never hear you say, Chris."



"I bet they actually like the tease. Their bewilderment? Acting!" Anja nodded to herself wisely.

Alexander, who was *still there*, took the opportunity to facepalm at Anja's comment.

Anja took the opportunity during the facepalm to lean against Alexander's left arm.

Alexander grumbles slightly, but lets Anja lean on him.



"I would like to believe I've grown up a little, Seyena."



"A little might be overestimating it."





"I'm shocked. Shocked, Seyena. Utterly so."



"Oh, I didn't mean any offense, it was just a joke."



"I was kidding too!"

Chris laughed and shook his head.



"I'm not THAT thin-skinned, you know."



"Damn it, Chris, you made me feel guilty for offending someone. That's not supposed to happen."

Chris chuckled quietly and shook his head.



"I do apologize for making you feel guilty. How about we call it water under the bridge?"



"Trying to scrape up a little extra gold so we can do some more shopping. You wouldn't happen to have any, would you? And uh, *why* are you hiding inside the wagon?"



"I heard Alex and Charlotte talking and had a horrific moment of panic and terror. Don't worry Raquel talked me out of it so I'm all good now."



"What were they talking about that scared you so much...? Actually, I think I'd rather not know."



"Oh and ah just a sec!"

Derick pulled his head back into the wagon and rustled around for a few moments. His face soon reemerged and he stuck his hand out, plopping a bag of coins into Gregor's hand.



"Here you go."

Gregor took the bag of gold gratefully.



"Thanks. I'm sure we'll find a good use for this."

---

**Meanwhile, Charlotte, hearing they had some time left, had gone to search for a fortune teller in town much like the time before - but, this time, without Gregor.**

An old lady had a small fortune telling 'shop' not far from the temple district.

"Hello darling! You here to check the future of yours and that handsome soldier you snatched?"



"Hm? No. I know what our future holds. I want to know what *my* future holds. I feel the world is closing in around all of us..."

Charlotte tossed her last four coins on the table like last time.



"Will this be enough?"

"This is enough." The old lady took only one coin.

"What exactly do you want to know? Or just your future in general?"



"I guess, in the end, there's only one thing I care about most. Wind knocks trees over, and they degrade, becoming log-homes for ground critters. In time, the log-home grows smaller, and the forest floor grows larger. I understand that."



"I want to know: will anything I've done matter? The lives I've taken, and the treasures I've kept close out of fear. Will my children - or, at least, will the children of others - benefit from my existence? Or will I fade away, a decaying log on a forest floor?"

The old lady began to mumble something under her nose as the air in the house suddenly was filled with scent of sweet incense, then freshness of pine trees, and then delicate aroma of some flowers.

"You are a droplet in a great sea, my dear. The wave that carries you is in the low point; one hundred years ago, it was high and powerful amongst other waves, and in hundred years, it will be strong again. Your children and their children, if they do not drown in the sea, will become strong, tall waves themselves, but your role is to be a mere droplet in the giant sea. While no one might remember Charlotte, many shall remember those she gave birth to, and others."



"...I see. Truthfully, that is how it should be. Thank you."

Charlotte smiled faintly and nodded to the lady then headed back, slowly, to the wagon where the group was still somewhat formed.

...She also thought, for a moment, that the old lady had said her name. Although she'd mostly only gone to make herself feel better, she didn't truly believe in divining.

*"While no one might remember Charlotte,"*

Not until then, at least.



"You look kind of down, Charlotte. Something wrong?"

---

Valor looked forward, squinted slightly, and threw the axe. Like Olison's, it hooked around, but then moved past the tree, where Valor caught it in his hand.



"Hm. Well, hopefully it'll give those under PRIXIMA's command a nasty shock."

Still outside, Olison walked over to the tree and yanked out the axe embedded in it.



"And a deep cut to boot. Smart purchase, I'd say. Remind me to buy from that shop again next time."

Salvatore merely looked on in amusement at the scene before him. He glanced at Alex but saw him currently busy, so shrugged and thought. After a moment, he stood up and looked at the javelin again and went to go find Olison.



"I'm inclined to agree." Valor said when he noticed Salvatore, and gave a small wave.

Salvatore returned the wave with a friendly smile, greeting each with a nod in turn.



"Valor, Olison, glad ta see yah two. Hope Oi'm not interruptin' anythin', but Oi was hopin' ta ask yah ah question." He directed the last part to Olison as he held the javelin at his side a touch awkwardly, Sal treating it more like it was a large lance with his grasp than what it actually was.

Ormm had followed him albeit at a good few paces away, just lazily basking in the sun and relaxing while he had the chance.

Olison cocked his head to the side to look at Sal's grip.



"No, we were just testing out a couple weapons. What do you need?"



"Ah, well... Yah see Oi bought this 'ere javelin recently ta replace mah old

lance since Oi often foind mahself wishin' Oi could help from ah range if'in need be, but, well, yah see..." Sal scratched the back of his head sheepishly, not entirely comfortable with asking for help.



"When Oi was trained ta use ah polearm, Oi was trained in usin' 'em all, but well, tha was ah touch over six years ago since Oi've used one o' these. Oi was wonderin' if'in yah could show me ah few pointers an' help me shake the rust off, Oi've seen yah use 'em 'fore an' yah carry 'em 'round so Oi figured yah'd be the most learned 'bout it."

Olison's lip curled upward.



"Ah, decided to try your hand at it?" Olison slung the Axe and drawn out his battle-worn spear. "It's not too terribly hard from foot, but trying to master it on horseback took one of the better years of my life. Somehow I think doing so from a wyvern's back will be even harder."



"But, basics serve better than anything else. Here, the basic gist of it is probably best watched." Olison hefted the spear up horizontally and caught it in an overhand grip by the midsection, pointing both it and his gaze to the tree that caught his axe a few moments earlier. Cocking his arm back, he led with a single stride and pulled all the momentum into his arm, and by completion the spear left his hand, sailed through the air and lodged itself into the tree's midsection. The cavalier straightened himself up and exhaled.



"And that's it in essence. Though typically throwing spears are weighted more near the tip, be sure to compensate for it with a high arc. Once you get the feel of it you can start to try more varied throws."

Salvatore studied Olison's pose with his javelin as he watched him launch the spear into a tree. Bits of it seemed familiar and clicked in his mind as a few things fell back into place, looking at the spear again.



"Thanks Olison. Think Oi'll give it ah shot. 'Ere goes nothin'."

Salvatore picked a tree in the distance and stared at it as he tried to judge the distance. He held the spear like Olison did, although not as well, and let it sail in the air a bit more roughly than needed. It struck a branch of the tree he was aiming for sinking in the wood and getting lodged in it, although he was obviously aiming for the trunk.



"Blast, think Oi threw ah bit ta hard there."

---



"I've seen you got lots of stuff from the shops! What now, though? Gregor, where to next?"



"Well, looking at all the money we have now its a fairly good amount. Not enough to buy out the city of course, but...anyway, we should probably get some special items for the upcoming fight against Prixima. Did anyone find a place that sells magical items, or anything of that nature? Not tomes or staffs, some really unique stuff."



"I remember looking in the windows of this shop that sold a few expensive-looking things, including the Delphi Shield I wanted. I can show you where it is, Gregor."



"Sounds perfect. Lead the way!"

But first Gregor quickly ~~stole~~ BORROWED money from the other party members.

Seyena nodded, heading towards **Yeno's Shop** to show Gregor the route, pulling Ilya along behind her, who shook her wings every once in a while, getting restless.

~~Because this is Fire Emblem~~ Seyena turned to Gregor while on the way.



"You know, you never struck me as much of a leader when I first met you. Funny how things change."

Gregor shrugged as they walked.



"Trust me, you weren't the only one to think that way. But yes, things changed and not always for the better."

Arriving at the shop, he held the door open for Seyena.



"I'm guessing you've changed as well. Ladies first?"

Seyena nods, stepping inside the shop, but not before muttering a few quiet words to Ilya.



"I'd like to imagine that I haven't changed much. Just my loyalties." She idly glances around to the wares on display, her lance resting over her shoulder, as she continues. "Well, actually, I don't get much sleep anymore."

She looked over towards a collection of rings, forgetting about the Delphi shield while she picks up one of the blade rings on display.



"Hey, take a look at these. I've seen one before- in this very city, to be exact. They're supposed to make you stronger."

Gregor had been examining an impressive-looking lance, but regretfully put it back down.



"Sounds like they could be useful. I also wanted to get Sir Jorinn something to make him a little tougher against magic. Hopefully we wouldn't have to heal him so much in that case."

He examined a strange talisman and read the accompanying note.



"This might work, for instance."

Seyena looked over at the Talisman, chuckling.



"Alex would probably drop Anja and profess his undying love to whoever gives him that."



"So, we could get... one of those, for Alex, and... maybe two of these rings? Give one to Derick, perhaps? Or maybe even you or Salvatore."



*"And I think I know who'd really like the other one."*



"...You know, maybe we should just give the talisman to Anja and let *her* give it to him. Save the trouble and heartache. Plus I'm sure she'd appreciate it."



"Anyway, I'm sure Derick could put one of those rings to good use. Or you, or Charlotte, or Sal..."



"Or Valor, yes. I assume you'd like to be the one to give it to him?"



"Giving it to Anja first might just bring *more* trouble. But for Alex, not us, so I agree with it regardless."



"As for the rings, yes, I want to give one to Valor. It's hardly much, but, it could help keep him alive."

Yuno swatted at Seyena's hands as the ring fell from them, bounced off the edge of the table and then rolled right onto the empty spot that belonged to the ring.

"No touching the merchandise until it is bought! No touching!"





"Sheesh, fine. We'll take this talisman and two of those blade rings." As Gregor spoke, he placed various bags full of coins on the countertop.

The magical items found themselves in Gregor's pockets.

Gregor tossed Seyena one of the rings as he prepared to leave and rejoin the group.

"Come tomorrow! New deals and magickal items of power every day!" Yuno waved after his two newest customers as they left.

Gregor returns to the group, **gives the talisman to Anja to give to Alex, gives the other Blade Ring to Derick, and is ready to move forward already.**

Derick hopped out of the wagon and walked up to the other members of the band who were still gathered together.



"So uh. Hey look what I got!"

He drew the mage masher and presented it to the group.



"I figured since the coded message said something about mages, that this would be useful! The display back at the shop said it was called a mage masher. No idea how it works though."



"So, uh... anybody want to throw this back and forth?"

Chris produced an oblong leather ball from his robes. It somewhat resembled a large brown lemon.



"I found it awhile ago. It seems pretty aerodynamic."

## ~~Chapter 10B: The Ballet of Lies~~



*The group decided to pay a visit to Count Grummel. Nobody stopped them on the county border, patrolling soldiers only asked for destination, and the innkeepers didn't scheme behind their backs.*

*In this way, seemingly free of any danger, they got to the village of Grum, set between two hills, and the castle itself was built at the base of the western hill. The group finally and without trouble got to the castle gates.*

When the wagon carrying most of the mercenaries, with the rest in tow on the horses, stopped at the gate - which wasn't very impressive - one of the two soldiers guarding it raised his left hand and stepped right in front of the wagon.

"Who are you and what's your business with the Count and his house? And what is your name?"

Gregor gave the guard an informal bow.



"Greetings sir. My name is Gregor, and we're here to talk to your lord about something rather important. Could you tell Count Grummel that we've arrived?"

"Gregor, important, alright..." The guard turned on his heel and went inside the fortifications whilst his partner kept solitary watch over the newcomers.

It was very eerie silence.

Gregor whispered to whoever was nearby.



"If I had any money, I'd lay bets that we're going to get into a fight. It seems to always end up that way."



"I'd bet money the count already has something against us, but I spent it all at the fortune teller's."



"Maybe we should have pretended to be traveling performers..." Valor whispered, mostly to himself.



"A traveling band of performers armed to the teeth and covered in steel? It's highly implausible even a child would fall for that."

Salvatore was riding Ormm who was watching the castle intently. The wyvern seemed spooked, although by what was anyone's guess. Its rider however might have some insight as he was just as on edge, his hand close to his javelin at his side although he tried to be at ease.

The guard came back after few minutes and stared at Gregor for a moment.

"Are you, perchance, of von Hexham family?"

Alexander had his shield out and covering most of his body, though his javelin was untouched. He seemed strangely not too tense, though then again his face was partially hidden by that shield. When the guard questioned Gregor about his heritage, the shield moved up a bit, covering more of his face.

Gregor weighed his options. Even if he wasn't wanted by the entire country any more, if Grummel was working with PRIXIMA he'd likely order his troops to attack if Gregor told the truth. Better to try deception this time, maybe.



"von Hexham family? No, I can't say I am. Never even heard of them."

"Then Count Grummel has no time for ye. Come back next week." After that, he and the other guard moved toward their respective posts, and the gate was still closed.



"Ooh! Ooh! Let's break in!"

The guards, with Charlotte well within their earshot, glared at her angrily.



"...No one. Say. Anything."



"I was just joking... we should totally do it"

"Also, your caravan is blocking the road. Move away or you will be fined forty coins."

Gregor doublefacepalmed and spoke quietly to the group as he began to lead the wagon away.



"So it's either Charlotte's suggestion or I admit I lied. Or we simply rush the front door and slaughter everyone...but I'd rather not do that."

Charlotte scooted over to Gregor.



"Psst. Pst. We could always... *push in from the rear.*"

Alexander's shield over his face almost covered the facepalm. But *not quite*.



"You're saying we try the back door? ...Do castles have back doors? I know Kesselring Fort did..."



"Well, I mean, it would make sense, wouldn't it? If the castle was invaded, Grummel would need a way to get out unseen. Why don't we circle around really non-suspiciously?"



"Or, we could tell them the semi-truth. You were unsure of giving your exact name in fear of assassins, but due to the urgency of meeting this noble guy, you've grudgingly decided to reveal it to these *lowly* soldiers."



"I think Seyena's plan is workable. Besides, I'd rather not jump to the senseless violence contingency before they do. We just stopped being wanted."



"Hmm. I tend to agree with Valor and Seyena. HOWEVER, that doesn't mean we can't try a little backup plan as well. Chris, you feel up to sneaking into a castle?"



"I want to sneak into the castle, too!"



"Alright alright, but only if Chris thinks its a good idea. He is the closest thing to an expert we've got."



"Why? If they get caught, I'm sure Grummel would have a *field day* with that. The last thing we want to do is alienate *another* noble."



"Can I also vote for the "*Not* splitting up the group to sneak in while we talk out of our asses" plan?"



"The idea being if Grummel either doesn't let us in or worse captures us, we have at least a few people on the outside who can help. I'm not saying they sneak in first, I'm saying they're a back-up plan. But fine, if everyone is against it I'll drop the idea."

Salvatore chipped in quietly.



"Maybe yah could try tippin' yer hand ah bit? 'Ole guard tactic, let 'em know yah know more then yah should, 'ey'll think yah know ah lot more then tha'. We know 'ey got the stone, we know 'ey're tryin' ta open the box. Tha's jus' 'nough ta be dangerous."

Gregor threw his hands up in the air.



"Fine, fine! I'll be right back." He stomped over to the guards again.



"Well fine, you win. Listen, I am Gregor von Hexham, and I need to speak to Count Grummel about an urgent matter. Tell him its about a box. A *sealed* box. Ask him if he'd be willing to let my friends and I inside so we can talk."

Guards looked at each other.

"Really. One moment ago you were saying you're not who you are saying you are now. Do you have any proof?"

Gregor dug out the old wanted poster with his likeness on it and held it up.



"And before you get excited, my friends and I have been pardoned now." It wasn't *quite* a lie; just about anywhere except Prixima's domain, he was safe.

The guards looked at each other.

"Well... I kinda don't believe you."

"Hey, maybe it is one of those people with split personality problem?" The other guard leaned toward his companion and whispered, but his voice was still rather loud.

Alexander merely groans.

Gregor facepalmed again and muttered before speaking.



"Oh for Dragon's sake... Look, I lied before because people have constantly been trying to kill us all for a few months now, and I've been trying to avoid further instances of that. How about one of you fetch Count Grummel and I can explain the whole thing to him?"

Chris sighed.



"I wonder if they would accept some *personal favors* as a bribe."

"Gee, no need to get so angry."

"Yeah, our job is to question people thoroughly, not simply let any vagrant inside." The guard then turned and knocked on the gate. After few seconds, with loud metallic noise of chains, the main gate opened.

"Left pathway is toward stables, the one in front leads to the main keep. There should be a servant who would take you to Count's office." He looked at the wagon and riders.

"Your friends can wait outside the keep or at the stables."

Chris stepped back into the midst of the group so as to break line of sight with the guards, then moved into the shadows. He wasn't going to let Gregor go in alone, even if he had to find an alternate route to follow his leader. The man might need back-up.

Gregor waved the rest of the group inside and explained the situation.



"So, I'm heading up. The rest of you should make yourselves comfortable; I'll be back as soon as I can."

The two guards watched Gregor enter, and then the rest of the group as well. There was almost no activity inside the walls; few guards were having a break near the door leading to a corner tower, and a servant was carrying some bags behind the right corner of the keep.

There was also another pair of the guards, at the keep's door.

Seyena sighed, ushering Ilya along to go rest in the stables.



"Nobles make things too complicated."

Coming in from the rear column, Olson remained on guard, watching the goings-on in the courtyard carefully.



"So much trouble for this..."

Gregor spoke to the next pair of guards, hoping that this time might go slightly smoother.



"Gregor von Hexham, here to see Count Grummel. May I go inside?"

"Alright. Do not talk too much, Lord Heinrich has problems with breathing lately." One of the guards opened the door and led Gregor through two corridors and one set of stairs.

Then, the guard opened the first door on the right, and Gregor found himself in small office. Behind the desk, a man in suit of armor and cape was sitting, the desk's surface filled with paper and ink splotches. When he lifted his eyes to look at Gregor, he blinked and stood up with a smile.



"It's Gregor! My lad, I've seen you ten years ago but you're still the same boy from the face! Joachim! Call for Alexandra, her promised fiance have finally arrived!" The guard bowed a bit and then walked away.



"When I heard that Lady PRIXIMA had your family executed, I thought that the marriage our families arranged was lost! I'm so relieved, Gregor, you have no idea!"

Wait, what.



"...Beg your pardon? What was that last part again?"

The Count was momentarily confused himself.



"What do you mean, Gregor? When you were six and Alexandra was eight, your father and I decided that to strengthen the bonds between our families - we served together in one army for years! - we should arrange a marriage for our youngest kids. I thought that you-"

"Father?" A young lady in simple, cleric robe walked into the office.



"Why I was called out of the temple? Are you feeling sick again?" She then



looked at Gregor and blinked, as if foggily remembering something, but she remained silent.



"Ah yes, Alexandra! This is Gregor von Hexham! Your arranged husband I told you about sometimes!" Alexandra looked at Gregor, and then at her father, and then at Gregor again.



"Um..."

#### Gregor's Internal Reaction



"WHAT THE HELL KINDA PLOT TWIST IS THIS?!"

Gregor struggled to keep his initial reaction safely tucked away inside, where it would be less likely to result in his immediate execution.



"Count Grummel, I'm afraid you have the advantage of me. I'm afraid I don't remember this at all; Father never mentioned it, and when Mother spoke of me getting married it was always in generic terms. I had no idea that I was...betrothed, so to speak. It's a lot to take in."



"Well, of course! I too haven't visited Lady PRIXIMA's castle so often and it was never with my dear Alexandra, nor I really had time to talk with your father, may he rest in peace. However-"



"Father!" Alexandra's voice was louder than before.



"Can you see that I and Sir Gregor are rather surprised? And don't you remember I've taken oath of chastity?" She glanced at Gregor, and tried to smile to him. Count Grummel, however, looked superbly dissatisfied.



"But, but... it would be perfect match... then, but then, Gregor, if it is not this affair, then why did you come? As Lady Prixima's vassal, I can't really offer you shelter... for too long that's it."

Gregor smiled back, but purely in a polite manner. At least she seemed exactly as enthused about the possible marriage as he was.



"If I may be serious for a moment? It's somewhat of a sensitive matter, Count Grummel; you may wish to speak to me alone, but I won't force you to. It has something to do with a sealed box retrieved from Berebia..."

He left the words hanging, allowing Grummel to make his own decision regarding whether to keep his daughter in the room or not.



"Well, alright. If you think so... Alexandra-" But the girl already slipped away. The Count coughed a bit loud, and then waved to the guard who was outside - said guard closed the door. Then he motioned Gregor to sit in front of the desk whilst Count himself sat back down.



"From the beginning, dear boy. What box are you talking about?"

Gregor pulled up a chair and leaned forward.



"I will be straightforward, sir. My group and I were in Berebia not long ago, right in the middle of the current Menelean invasion of that nation. At one point we were to try to retrieve a box from a group of mercenaries, mercenaries who were later killed by Menelean soldiers who then tried to kill us. In the aftermath of the battle, we found a coded message which mentioned something about you and your mages trying to open the box in question." He paused. "Is this ringing any bells?"

The Count listened closely, his large hands resting on the desk. He leaned toward Gregor as if to hear better.



"GregoOHK-!" Heinrich turned his head away in the last moment, his body wrecked by a coughing fit, but it lasted three seconds, no more.



"Apologies, Gregor, but - I honestly have no idea what you are talking about at all. I did provide the troops to the border offensive, but I didn't sent them to retrieve any kind of a box. Where are those coded papers you speak of? Can I see them?"

Gregor paused.



"One of my companions has it. I'll run downstairs and bring it back up for you. If you'll excuse me?"



"Alright." The count leaned into his chair and wiped his lips with a handkerchief he procured from his desk.

---



"Well, at least this time we were not forced to get into some pointless fight."

Tantalos stared at the group holding his new tome yet.

Salvatore eased up, starting to see that maybe he was wrong about the situation. Ormm was still agitated however, warily sniffing the air with it's tongue and casting its green eyes about in suspicion. The rider patted the wyvern lightly on the side of its head, scratching at the scales as he tried to think of a way to pass the time.

He so far has determined that he needs to take up a hobby.



"I wouldn't let my guard down just yet. We're still, technically, in PRIXIMA's territory." Olson muttered quietly, still ahorse and continuing to scan their surroundings.

Tantalos shrugged and hid the tome under his mantle.



"I never said something about letting my guard down. I am just glad that we were not greeted with arrows, lances, swords, axes.. at least for now."



"Are such pointless fights common? I don't often work as a mercenary, after all."

Olison briefly cast his eyes downward with a sigh.



"More than I'd care to admit. The more ignorant of mercenaries tend to make the most effective fodder." He admitted before shot back to his watch.

Tantallos slid his gloved fingers over his mask, looking for a spot to add a jewel before looking to Raquel.



"Yes, they are. I think most of the fights we went on were pointless. We did not look for them, they came to us."

Edwin leaned slightly towards Raquel, whispering a bit to her.



"Typically not in my experience, but then again, these people do seem a bit... Special. If you get what I mean..."



"Ever since we took on that job for Prixima, yeah, we've been getting into a lot of senseless battles. It's extremely irritating."

Gregor went downstairs as quickly as he could and returned to the group.



"I need that coded message we found, some parchment, and a quill. Who's got the message?"



"What was going on up there...? Something about arranging? Something about MARRIAGES?"

Gregor groaned inwardly, wondering if he'd be getting out of this without bruising.



"Apparently my family and Grummel's family had arranged for me to be married to Grummel's daughter when we were younger. It's fine though; I don't want to be married to her, and she doesn't want to be married *at all*. Grummel seems to have let the matter go."



"Oh. Nobles sure are crazy! Let's marry off our daughter to a minor noble's son for political reasons, yadda yadda..."



"You'll get no argument from me! Nobles have some rather strange customs sometimes. Still the fact that Grummel is at least willing to listen, even if it was just because of a possible marriage, makes me think that maybe he can help us."



"Hm hm!" The cavalier cleared his throat rather loudly. "Here are the papers, Gregor." He procured the coded message from a sack on his horse's saddle and lowered his hand down.



"Speaking of help, thanks Olison." He quickly copied the message onto a fresh piece of parchment, along with the translation Ami/Mia had come up with, and then handed the original message back to Olison. "Well, I'll be back again. Wish me luck!" **Gregor goes back to Grummel.**

The Count didn't move away from his desk.



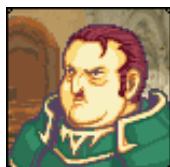
"You are back, I see. Are those the papers you spoke about?" Heinrich pulled

out a monocle out of his suit. It had a golden chain and the glass looked exceptionally smooth and clean.

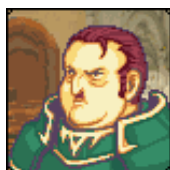


"Yes sir. The jumble of letters is what we found, the actual words are what we translated them to be."

The Count took the paper, put the monocle to his right eye and began reading closely, mumbling under his nose from time to time. Of course, the text was short so it wasn't more than a minute.



"Hrrmm, the translation looks logical and everything, and I'm indeed mentioned in the papers, hmm... but I'm telling you, dear boy, no messengers nor any boxes have arrived lately at my castle. Those papers are lying, Gregor, unless there's some other explanation." The Count rubbed his chin, took another glance at the paper, and then handed it back to the sentinel.



"Also, are you sure you're not interested in the marriage? Alexandra is a nice, polite girl, she could use a companion nowadays. As my in-law, you couldn't be prosecuted by Lady Prixima without a lengthy, thorough trial. And of course she can't just take you from my county." The nobleman coughed and then leaned into his chair.



"Anyways, I want to be a good host, and a good friend of your late father. You and your friends can stay at the castle for the night."

Gregor, who had seen Prixima's ruthlessness up close and personal, had his doubts about Grummel's theory that she couldn't simply take Gregor away. He also wasn't entirely sure of Grummel's truthfulness regarding the box. Still, it wouldn't do to be so rude.



"I believe you, sir. It's possible the note was meant to send us on a wild goose chase, or march in and attempt to kill you without asking questions. Thankfully we are not so inclined to needless violence. And I appreciate your willingness to shelter us for the night. As for your daughter, I'm afraid I have to decline. Alexandra does seem like a fine young woman, but she does seem to take her vow quite seriously and I would never be able to ask her to break it. If she ever does, it should be her own choice to do

so and not because of something arranged a decade ago."



"Besides...my heart belongs to someone else. I apologize, but it simply wouldn't work."



"Oh. A pity." Count looked quite dissappointed on those news.



"Well, like I said, you're welcome to stay for a day. Now please excuse me, I have things to do. Ask one of the maids if you meet one, they should find some empty guest quarters for your group." After that, he pushed the papers he was inspecting before Gregor arrived and resuming reading them.

Gregor went back downstairs *again* and returned to the group.



"Well, good news and not-so-good news. Good news is we can stay here tonight if we wish. The other news is Grummel insists that he knows nothing about the box or any mages."



"Wot? But didn' the papers say... Yah mean we wen' all this way, fer nothin'?" Salvatore sighed as he ran a hand through his hair, scratching his head and frowning.

After a moment he went back to a smile however.



"It's roight noice o' him ta offer us room an' board though, better an' sleepin' outside Oi'll say. Can' begrudge ah man fer jus' not knowin' somethin'."

Alexander shrugs.





"At least we're not in a fight."

Alexander proceeds to get a much more somber expression.



"But what if we get attacked in the night...?"



"In the middle of this castle? I'd doubt it. And if the Count himself also wanted to kill us, I'd figured he would have killed Gregor and taken the rest of us by surprise already." Seyena says, idly feeding Ilya an apple.

Chris stepped out of Gregor's shadow.



"Frankly I don't trust him."



"ANY association to PRIXIMA means we should, at the very least, be leery."

Gregor looked at Chris in exasperation.



"...You were there the whole time, weren't you?"



"No, I couldn't find a way past the guards into the study. There's only one entrance and they weren't stupid enough to fall for the old thrown rock trick."



"I'm just speaking generally. The note mentioned this guy, so he has an association with PRIXIMA, and therefore we shouldn't trust him."





"The man speaks sense. I'm not going to sleep easily, that's for sure..."  
Edwin chipped in quickly.



"Don't get me wrong Chris, I don't really trust him either. But I don't think he's going to have us killed; at least, I hope he doesn't."



"I'll keep watch tonight, then."

---

Count Grummel wiped away some sweat from his forehead.



"Damned von Hexham, as if I don't have enough trouble on my own. And to reject the proposal so rudely, that little-"

"Little inconvenience, indeed." The voice coming from behind one of the curtains made the Count jump in his chair.



"GAH! Ernest! How long have you been standing there!?" The spy moved from behind the heavy curtain and stepped up to the desk.



"I've come in shortly before Gregor have arrived. I'm here to relay to you the last orders from Prixima for now and to say goodbye. Thankfully, your magicians were competent enough to provide me with ingredients and spells to destroy the box and grab the Rosy Quartz. With this stone, Lady Prixima is just one gem away reaching a two digit collection." The Count didn't say anything, and after a moment, he breathed slowly.



"Send Lady Prixima my regards..." Ernest cut short Count's talk with a wave of hand.



"Ah yes, your orders. Kill Gregor and his companions. None must leave your castle alive." This was too much for the Count, who stood up, his face pale for a moment.



"B-But they've been pardoned by the king himself! And I kept close ties with Gregor's father, I-I can't just go and-"



"Heinrich von Grummel. Your orders. Kill Gregor and his companions. None must leave your castle alive. Or are you playing on two fronts? Plotting against PRIXIMA Kesselring? You already have a seat at the future council of the world united under her banner; it would be bad if something would happen to you, and your people, or your beloved daughter, am I right?" The Count grunted in response, and then sat down, resigned.



"I'm pleased that we could reach an understanding. Now, do you require my help with this or..."



"N-no! It... it will be settled as a... as a matter of Grummel county. I will have them restrained, or wait, I can execute them with some pretext... in the morning, I think I could, yes..."



"See, I knew you're a competent man, Count Grummel. I will now excuse myself." The spy bowed mockingly, complete with proper hand motion of a courtier, and then left through a door that led onto the balcony and nearby fortifications. Count Grummel looked down at the papers, before rubbing his forehead with the handkerchief again, his hand reaching toward the jar of ink and a quill lying nearby.



"F-For the county... and for Alexandra... I must do this..." Taking a deep breath, he began scribbling orders and instructions. Outside, a small silhouette moved

away from the door and silently escaped toward into the corridors.

---

Evening reached this part of the world. The mercenaries were placed in a large barracks instead of guest chambers for every of them, but still, the beds were comfy and the food offered was varied and tasty. As most of the mercenaries prepared for sleep...

\*KNOCK KNOCK\* Someone was knocking on the door.

"Excuse me, is Sir Gregor here?"



"Mmm? Who could it be at this time of night?"

Charlotte, as always, slept with one eye open and both her bows at the ready.

Chris was standing next to the door.



"Who wants to know?"

"Um, I'm Alexandra... Sir Gregor knows me!" The voice from behind the door was rather quiet.

Chris opened the door enough to peer through it.

Alexandra gasped in surprise - and fear - when she saw much taller Chris, hooded, standing and staring at her. She was whole head shorter than him, or more.



"H-Hello there, is Sir Gregor inside?"

Chris took off his hood.



"I'm not going to hurt you. Gregor? Visitor for you."

This last was said over his shoulder.

Gregor - who had almost fallen asleep at this point - yawned and walked over.



"Who could be calling at this time of..."



"Alexandra? What are you doing here?"

She remained silent for a moment.



"I... I was wondering if you would be, um, interested in a walk. The moon is pretty tonight. I, um, have something to tell you..." She tried not to be embarrassed but the flush on her cheeks almost radiated off heat.



"Really now?"

Charlotte rose from her bed.



"I'm certain Sir Gregor wouldn't mind me tagging along. After all, we *fire-forged combat allies that didn't just meet today* have to stick together, don't we?"

Alarms were going off in Gregor's head. This whole thing reeked of bad news, and he was determined to at least try to avoid it.



"Can't you tell me here? Not that going for walks isn't nice, but if it's something important I would want to be able to speak with my friends if necessary."



"Um, but, there's too many people working outside, someone might... overhear. So, um, I know a place in the castle... and the peach-head girl can come along..."



"You made the right decision, plum-head."

**Charlotte follows them when ready.**

Chris shrugged.



"Why not just come in here and tell all of us? Gregor knows I'm going to follow you anyway."



"Chris' idea is a good one. No one in here is going to hurt you, or go gossiping to your father if that's what you're afraid of."



"Um... well, if you insist." Alexandra slipped in and closed the door with her body.



"I've accidentally eavesdropped on my father when he was talking with Ernest earlier today... you're going to be executed tomorrow morning. If you do not manage to escape, that's it..."



"So 'Teach' was here. I should've figured."

Chris ran his hand through his bangs.



"All right, what do you suggest we do?"

Upon hearing Alexandra's words, Seyena groaned.



"Why does stuff like this always happen?"



"It was bound to happen. But I did not expect it to happen this way."



"Oh well, it was about time ours lives were in danger again."

Chris smiled at Ami briefly. She had been quiet for awhile and it was good to hear her speak again.



"Seems like it, doesn't it?"



"I don't see any reason not to slip out. Senseless violence and all that. Why don't we get dressed real quick, alert Matilda and be on our way before they notice?"



"We can't leave her here, though. I know how Prixima and by extension Ernest operates. I've done enough of those orders on my own to get an idea of how this is going to play out if she stays."

Chris put a thumb to his throat as he spoke and drew it across slowly.

Alexandra shivered at Chris' finger motion.



"I don't think you will slip unnoticed right now. There are patrols and guards stationed most of the day and night, except the morning prayer." She paused for a while, and looked at the door, as if someone was to burst through right now. But no one did.



"At the morning prayer, most of the soldiers stationed in the castle pray at the shrine or in the mess hall. The main gate is still heavily guarded, but the rear entrance for supply wagons and couriers is not. During the prayer, there's only one guard looking over the road and backyard. I think I have a plan, if you're willing to listen?"

Chris glanced at Gregor and shrugged. He was the leader, after all.



"Of course. You know this place better than we do."

Even as he spoke, he wondered if Alexandra could be trusted after all. Could this "Ernest" person have gotten to her as well?



"See, before the prayer begins, I have to announce it by hitting a gong with a mallet. First hit tells the people to gather, the seconds starts the ceremony. So I thought that, at the first sound of gong, my servant will come and take few of you to the stables to grab your mounts. At the second gong, you would start your escape."



"I could go, and Matilda, we could manage the horses and pegasi. And I think Salvatore should come, too - I'm not sure that anyone else could approach his wyvern without startling it..."



"Now, listen - you're not far from the backyard at all. After you leave this room, instead of going right, toward the mess hall, go down the corridor and down the stairs. Then, go right. You will pass the storeroom and some cells. Then you will have a narrow corridor that leads to one of the doors that come out onto the backyard. If you do it right, you might not be noticed. But you can't open any of the doors; the storerooms are protected. And under any circumstances go left - the corridors lead toward the main exit to the backyard, as well as the officer's quarters and the shrine, where some people will gather." Alexandra took a deep breath.



"You think you can do all that? I... I don't want anyone to die - neither you,



nor any of my father's soldiers. I've had to lead enough funerals this winter and I don't want to lead even more of them."



"If I understand what Chris is saying, you won't be leading any more funerals here, no matter who dies. You're going to have to come with us if PRIXIMA's goons are involved. It's just too dangerous now."

Alexandra blinked.



"Um, but I can't! I'm the one who leads the prayer and hits the golden gong. If I won't start the prayer, everyone will start looking for me."

Seyena had quickly thrown her armor on, standing up with her lance over her shoulder.



"Where exactly *is* this gong?"



"Could your servant do it, maybe? He or she could wear a cloak so that people won't be able to tell right away."



"The gong is in the shrine, of course. And cloaked robes are not allowed - what I wear is the appropriate gear for this ceremony. The whole prayer begins before sunrise and ends some time after the sun is visible. I have to be present during all of it." Alexandra blinked and her cheeks flushed briefly.



"You, you don't have to be so concerned about my safety... I will manage. My father won't raise his hand on me."

Salvatore had been silently listening up until this point, his eyes studying the ground. He never took his armor off.





"Oi knew he didn' loike this place fer ah reason... Oi'll be w'ere yah need me ta be. Ormm's been actin' floighty since we 'ave been 'ere, best if'in Oi went ta get him." The wyvern rider nodded in agreement.



"What about windows? Are there any big windows near the gong, preferably the kind that can open or be smashed open easily?"



"The shrine is located away from the outer walls. The only window is above the entrance, so people gathered inside can see when the sun rises. It is small and round."



"How big is the window?"



"Um..." Alexandra rubbed her chin, trying to remember.



"I think it's diameter is three fourth my height, something like that." As Alexandra was short person, it meant that the window isn't larger than four feet, at most.



"It's not your father I'm worried about..."



"What do you mean by that?"



"What I mean is, I fear us escaping alive in the morning could end badly for you or even others at the castle. I never knew Ernest like Chris did, so it's just a hunch. As much as you love your father, I fear for his and your life once this all blows over. No one's ever in greater danger than a traitor to Prixima..."

Alexander, who had been leaning against the wall with his armor on the whole time and had (much like Salvatore) been listening, sighed.



"I wouldn't worry about staying perfectly unnoticed the whole way through. I can cover our rear, so if they sight us when we're already gone, we're not going to have to worry about ballista fire or the like."

Alexandra looked aghast for a while, and then she looked at the floor.



"I... we will manage, somehow. My father have connections, and lots of loyal retainers and soldiers. You on other hand, are a band of mercenary soldiers without any real power... no offense. But, but I believe we will get out of this somehow. There's one more thing that you might not like..."



"Now what is it? I'm sure we'll *absolutely love it*."



"In case that a fight erupts between you and Grummel soldiers... I'm supposed to be one of the major healers and care for the wounded. I won't be able to lend my powers to you... but you won't fight unless it is necessary, right?"



"I think we owe you a debt. If push does come to shove, we won't lay a hand on you - no more fighting than necessary to escape."



"Thank you, it really calms me down. And sorry about that arranged marriage situation. Gregor is handsome, but... but I don't want to force anyone into a marriage."



Seyena gr



Gregor sir  
Alexandra

A low snow  
Alexandra

The night  
the dawn.

Then, the

The serva  
were take  
outside th

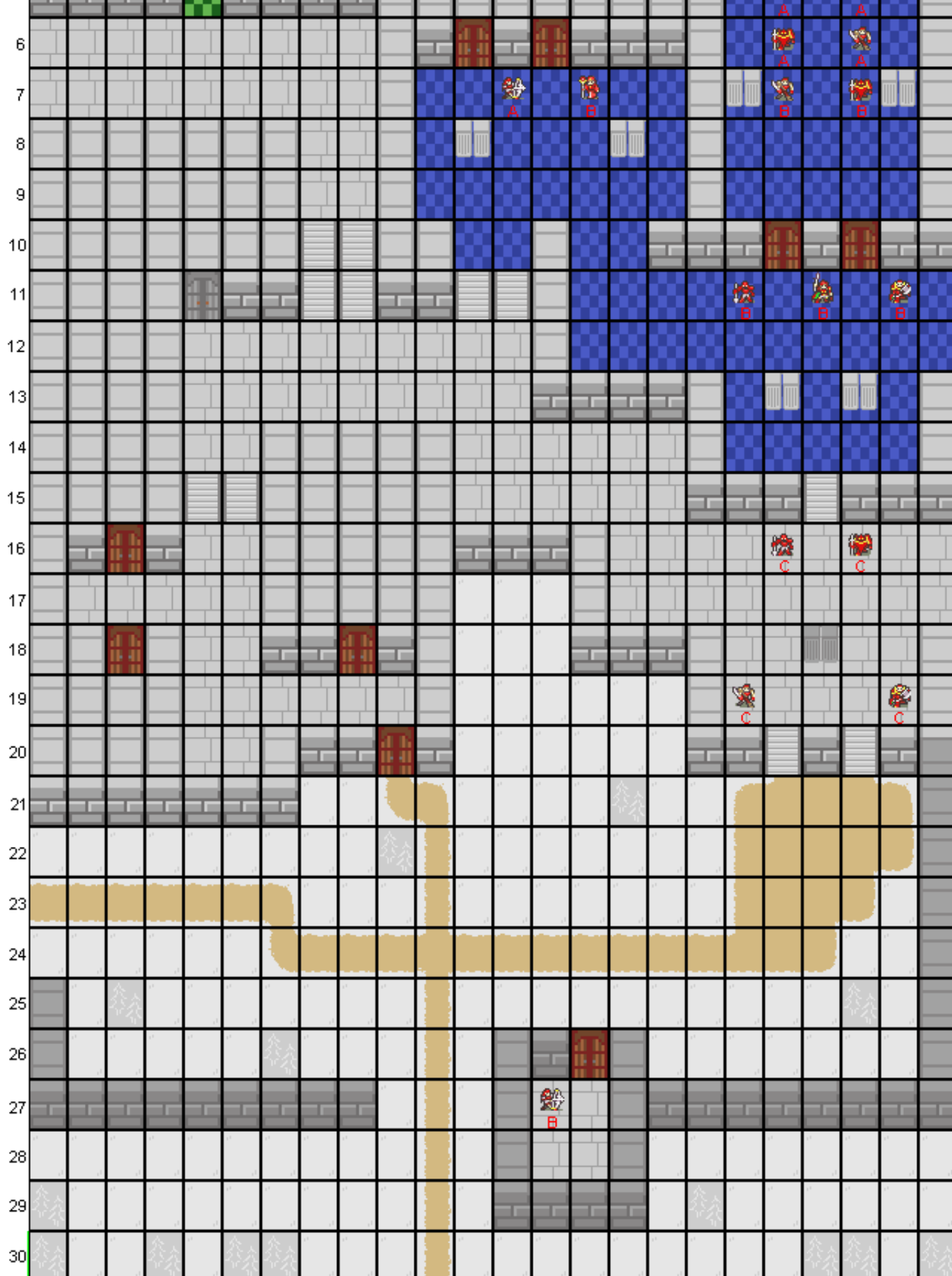
DING~!

There com

## ~~Player Turn 1~~

**Escaping rule: Anyone who gets to the bottom row (surrounded by green line) is considered 'escaped' and removed from battle map to make place for others. When all of you get safely away - Chapter is completed.**

[illegible]



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/47<br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/34<br>Christopher Shields: 37/37<br>Derick: 40/40 | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34 | Axe Guard B: 38/38<br>Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35 |

|                           |                      |                       |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Edwin Westbringer: 36/36  | Royal Guard A: 41/41 | Elite Sentry B: 35/35 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 39/39  | Royal Guard B: 41/41 | Bishop A: 37/37       |
| Olison Eul: 37/37         | Royal Guard C: 41/41 | Bishop B: 37/37       |
| Raquel Torriani: 41/41    | Axe Guard A: 38/38   |                       |
| Riven: 30/30              |                      |                       |
| Seyena Ikane: 37/37       |                      |                       |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35 |                      |                       |
| Valor Inara: 40/40        |                      |                       |

**Chris moves to 7,7.**



"I'll scout ahead a bit."

**Charlotte moves to 5,6.**



"I'll keep the front guarded..."

**Alexander: Move to 7, 6**

Chris nodded to Alex.



"Good thinking. Walk softly, now."

**Tantallos: Move to 5,5.**



"This is going to be amusing.."

Seyena ushered for the door, but felt something in her pocket. She reached in to pull out the blade ring.



"Oh... I completely forgot." She turned towards Valor, her voice rising slightly. "Hey Valor, come over here quick! I need to show you something before the shit hits the fan."

**Valor moves to 6,4, since there's probably gonna be a bottleneck anyways.**



"Yeah, what's up?"



"Remember when I took Gregor to that antique shop, or whatever it was? I got you something."

**Seyena gives Valor the Blade Ring.**



"This is supposed to make you stronger. If something happens, and we end up fighting... maybe the extra edge might help keep you alive."



"Hey thanks, that should be han-" Valor's reaching hand paused as the connotations of ring giving caught up to Valor right behind loot sense.



"Oh. Uh. Wow." Valor continued to reach forward, though more slowly now, and took Seyena's hand in his. "Thank you. Really. I want you to be careful too, you know? No matter what happens, we get through it together."



"Don't worry, I'm the most careful one here. Unlike a certain someone who charged a small army of horsemen once."

Seyena's grip tightened around Valor's.



"But nothing bad's going to happen tonight. All we need to do is stay quiet and stay out of sight." *I wish I had Ilya. I feel too exposed down here, I need to be in the sky.*



"Yeah. We'll just walk out while the whatever is going on. Piece of cake." In truth, Valor was somewhat nervous. Recent events were starting to build paranoia in him.



"Let's go, then, and not squander the opportunity the priestess bought us."

**Seyena holds one of her javelins, sauntering over to 7,6.**

**Gregor moves to (6,7).**



"Remember folks, we want to *avoid* fighting. Let's resist the temptation to find trouble."

**Derick: Move 4,7**

**Olison to 5,7.**



"Oh how I wish I was in a library right about now..." Edwin muttered quietly as he gripped his staff.

**Edwin: Hold position and do nothing.**

**Ami: Move to 4,4**



"I wonder how far we get before they notice?"



"Hopefully all the way out, my love."

Chris gave a reassuring smile over his shoulder to Ami before turning his eyes forward once more.

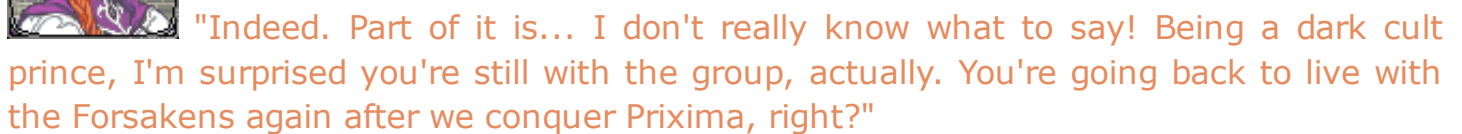
Ami nods.



"Hopefully."



Tantalos stared at Charlotte and crossed his arms, keeping his mask under a arm.



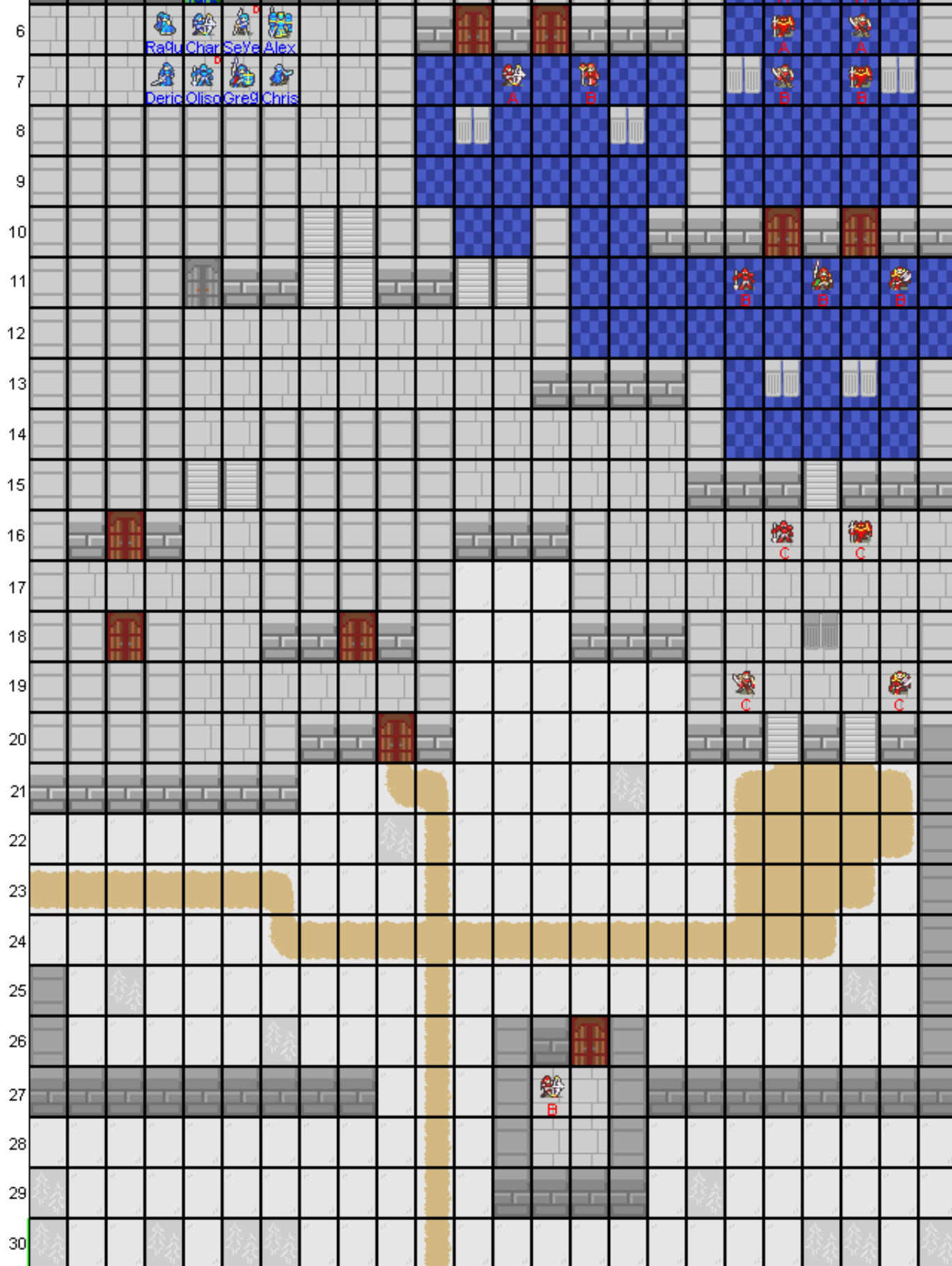
### Riven moves to (5,3)

\*crickets\*

## ~~Player Turn 2~~

[illegible]





Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/47<br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/34<br>Christopher Shields: 37/37<br>Derick: 40/40 | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34 | Axe Guard B: 38/38<br>Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35 |

|                           |                      |                       |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Edwin Westbringer: 36/36  | Royal Guard A: 41/41 | Elite Sentry B: 35/35 |
| Gregor von Hexham: 39/39  | Royal Guard B: 41/41 | Bishop A: 37/37       |
| Olison Eul: 37/37         | Royal Guard C: 41/41 | Bishop B: 37/37       |
| Raquel Torriani: 41/41    | Axe Guard A: 38/38   |                       |
| Riven: 30/30              |                      |                       |
| Seyena Ikane: 37/37       |                      |                       |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35 |                      |                       |
| Valor Inara: 40/40        |                      |                       |

**Valor: Move to 8,6. Stealthily.**

**Gregor: Move to (8,11). Sneakily.**

**Chris to 7,12. As usual.**

**Charlotte to 9, 8.**

**Raquel to (9,7). WITH CATLIKE TREAD!**

**Ami: Move to 6,7**

**Alexander: Move to 9, 10 and DO NOT FALL DOWN THE STAIRS**

Will Alexander fall down the stairs? WILL HE!?

**Alexander stealths down the stairs**

Roll: 68 > 16 CON

Nothing terrible happens.



"Being a Prince never affected my conversation with others. I am just a tad.. different, but there are things to be mentioned! And yes, that is what I am going to do, I will have to claim the throne when I return and get ready to deal with a bunch of revenants again. Some extra work I guess, but this will not stop the other plans. I am not sure if the assassin guy told you about it yet.. but you should ask, time to get moving!"

Tantallos gave a brief bow and covered his face with his mask again before walking once more.

**Tantallos: Move to 6,10.**

**Olison to 8,10.**

**Derick: Move 9, 6**



"Why is everyone tiptoeing around? Come on, they're busy praying, I don't think they'll notice us."

**Seyena moves to 9,9**



"The way I see it, it couldn't hurt..."



"Not everyone attends services, you know. Some people aren't even particularly religious. Those stragglers are the ones we need to avoid alerting."



"Gregor's correct."



"Walk in my shadow. It'll be a welcome change of pace for me."

Olison hugged the wall close to the stairs.



"First assaulting a castle, now sneaking through one. Told you you'd be slipping through shadows again in no time, Chris."



"I never stopped. I walk in everyone's shadow from time to time to keep in practice. Alexander's is the easiest, though."



"Wait- so you're saying you follow everyone around? And nobody notices? That's... rather creepy."



"Only while we're traveling from place to place, or when someone I don't trust like the Count here asks one of us to come with them alone. I've got slightly better manners than to intrude if someone were to want to take someone else to a quiet corner for a few minutes."



"I should probably stop trailing Alexander in general, though. The man's so large I think I'm getting lazy, hiding in his shadow."



"Ouch."



"I'm not insulting him. The man is one of the few of us taller than I am and twice as broad across the shoulders, with arms and legs like tree trunks. I'm sure he could knock me out with a few punches if he wanted to."



"This is such a weird time to be having such a weird conversation."



"No need to be jealous, you're a nice-looking man in good shape too, Valor."

Chris may have been trolling by this point, in an attempt to get everyone's mind off the fact that the wrong turn could lead them to having to take on the entire castle. Better to keep them focused on him while he went the correct way out.



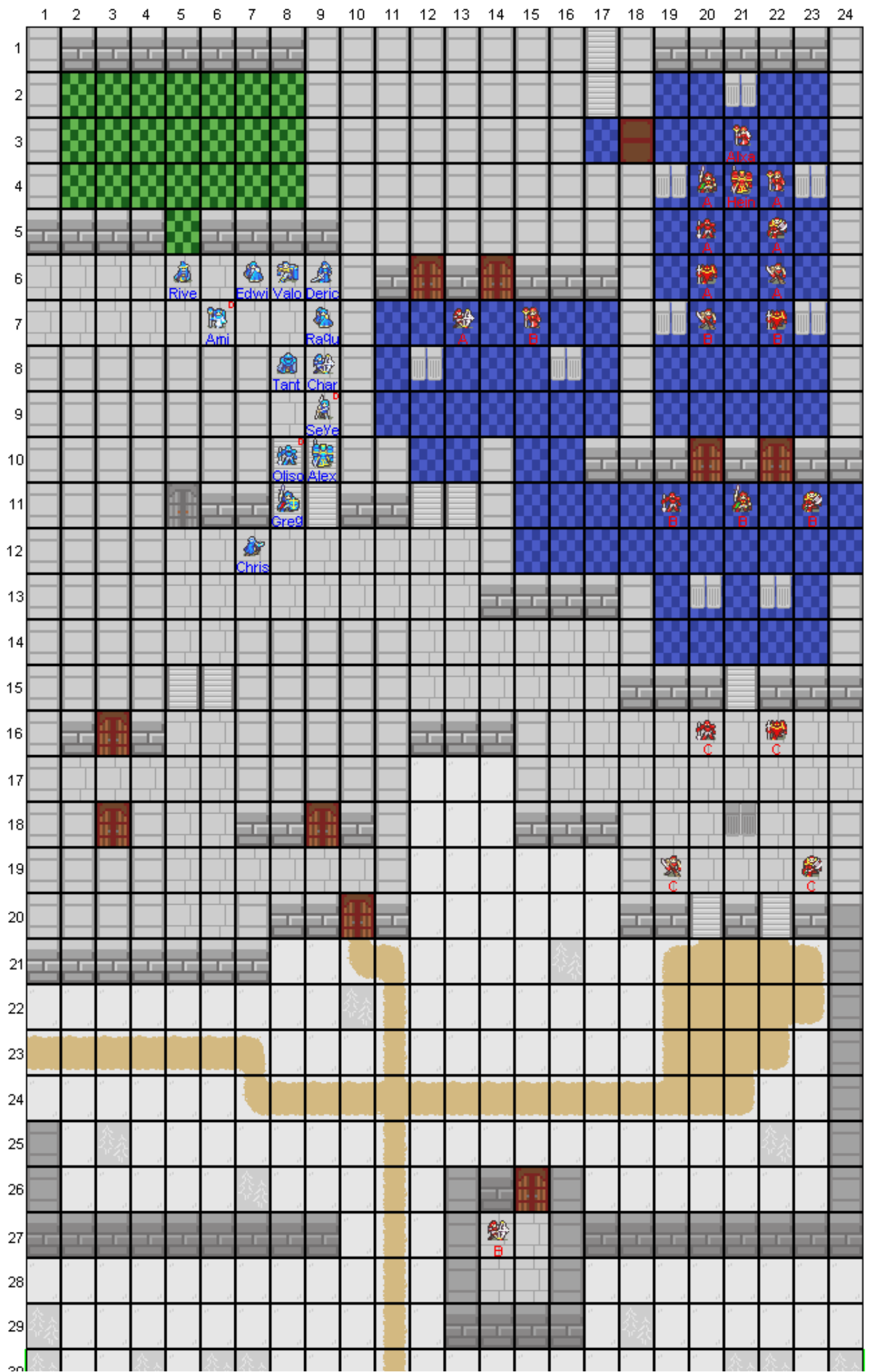
"Seems to be a common occurrence for us."

**Edwin: Move to 7, 6.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

A loud, bored yawn came to Chris' ears from the direction opposite he went.

# ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/47<br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/34<br>Christopher Shields: 37/37<br>Derick: 40/40<br>Edwin Westbringer: 36/36<br>Gregor von Hexham: 39/39<br>Olison Eul: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 41/41<br>Riven: 30/30<br>Seyena Ikane: 37/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35<br>Valor Inara: 40/40 | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34<br>Royal Guard A: 41/41<br>Royal Guard B: 41/41<br>Royal Guard C: 41/41<br>Axe Guard A: 38/38 | Axe Guard B: 38/38<br>Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry B: 35/35<br>Bishop A: 37/37<br>Bishop B: 37/37 |

**Ami: To 8,9**

**Charlotte: Move 4 S 2 W once Chris moves.**

**Edwin: Move to 8, 11 once Gregor moves.**

**Chris to 6,18.**

**Gregor to (6,14) like a ninja**

**Derick: move 9,11**

**Raquel: Move 9,12**

**Alexander: 6, 13 WITHOUT GOING DOWN STAIRS ON FACE**

**Olison to 5,13**

**Alexander vs tricky stairs**

Roll: 58 > CON 16

Alexander didn't tumble down the stairs.

Meanwhile, just as Chris passed the pair of doors...

"Hey, you, wait! Any news about... no, that's strange, you don't wear Grummel's uniform. Suddenly, the occupant of the northern cell moved closer to the small window in the door.



"Who are you?"

Chris looked at him in response.



"First, keep your voice down. Second, who are YOU? Locked up for any particular reason?"



"Alright." He did respond in quieter voice. "I'm Dalban, I've been doing some, err, information gathering for an employer and friend of mine, but, well..." He looked at the door.



"Didn't go well, as you can see."



"Not often I meet someone in my line of work. So, who are - or were - you working for?"



"My employer is, well, Leo Kesselring, son of Lady Prixima. Now it's my turn - who are you and what you're doing now? Spying?" He then heard something coming from the north - he heard Gregor and the rest of the team.



"Guards must be coming, you should hide somewhere."



"Something like that, but the people behind me aren't a concern. How would you describe the relationship between yourself and Leo, and Leo and Prixima?"

He leaned in close to the bars, slipping back easily into the cold, heartless facade he had kept up for so many years.



"I ask because I need to know if I can trust you."



"Heh, two months here and I'm still being interrogated? Allright."



"I have no idea, actually. I'm his milk brother, you could say, we're together since we were toddlers. Leo and I have been away from Kesselring Castle for... eight years? Being few years older, I've accompanied him when he was sent to Ys Duchy to study magic when he was twelve. He often wrote to his mother but the replies were scarce. Last year he decided it'ss time to head home, but first we were in Deynastia, then he insisted on a long tour of southern and western Menelea to 'gain knowledge of the world'. It's rather unnerving, you know - when we weren't heading directly home, all was well, but the moment we decided to finally return to Kesselring, bam, assasins and plotting nobles everywhere. After the first attack, I went on my own to get some information whilst he hired some trustworthy guys. I was going to meet him in Lascondes, its halfway between here and the city of Arco, but when I got there I heard he already had to battle some hired thugs and fled toward Mercia. I wanted to follow but I was captured one night by some other mercenaries and brought here. I'm here for two or so months... and I wish I knew where Leo is, but he is quite possibly doing an investigation of this foul affair on his own." Dalban took a deep breath and crossed his arms on his chest.



"Satisfied, sir interrogator?"

**Valor: Move to 8,12. Also, get around to putting on Blade Ring.**



"Good enough for me. One second."

**Chris picks the lock and opens the door.**



"If you can move quick and quiet, you can leave with us. Get ready to hustle, now."



**Door opened!**



"Thanks. I'm not a good runner, but I will try. Are there many of your friends around?"

**NPC: Dalban joins the party~~**



"Quite a few. Let's wait until we're on the road to talk more about this."

Chris looked around meaningfully.



"We only have so long before morning service ends."

**Seyena moves to 7,13,** noticing Dalban and Chris.



"I'm assuming he's not a guard because he hasn't sounded an alarm, and you haven't killed him yet." Seyena said, giving a cautious glance towards Dalban.

At that point, Seyena approached and spoke.



"He's a spy, like me. I figure springing him and helping him escape in exchange for maybe some information is a fair trade. We'll see how it all shakes down once we're out, no need to discuss it too much yet like I just said to him."



"I'm more of a swordsman than a spy, to be honest. Also, which way you're trying to escape?"



"You shouldn't be spying if you're not a spy. Regardless, we're heading down this corridor, according to the plan, there's a door that we can unlock and access the backyard from. Hopefully, we won't need to fight our way out."

If there was one thing that might bring Riven out of her drowse, it was probably Chris springing a cute man from a cell and being vague on the details.



"Uh? What? I'm here! Chris, is that a...?"

**Riven: Move to 8,7.**

**Tantalos: Move to 8,14.**

~~Enemy Phase~~

Silence~

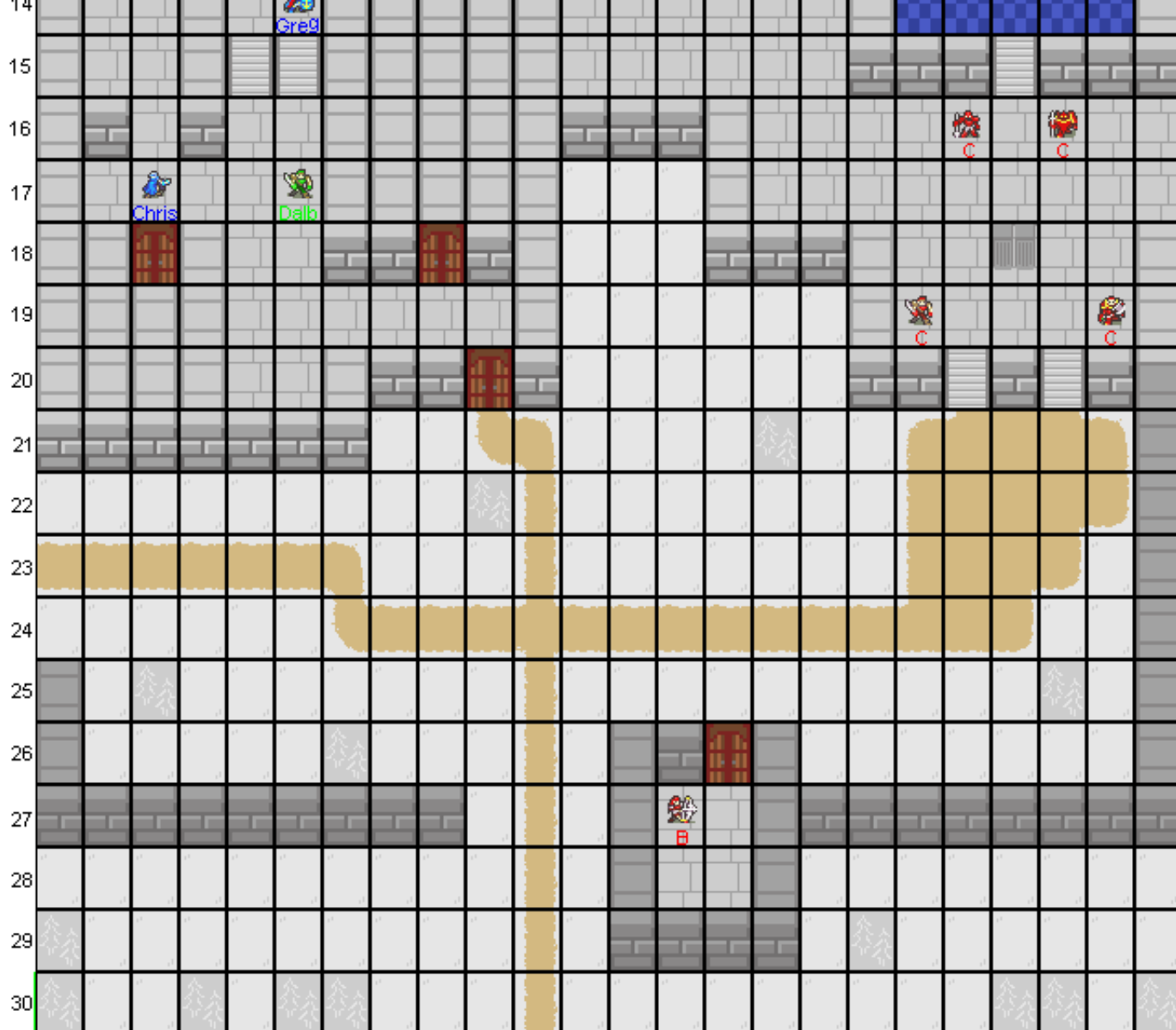
~~Ally Phase~~



"Fine with me, but I feel a little naked without a weapon, so, if you have a spare sword... oh, woah, that's a little army you have there, buddy. Not just a 'few friends'. Also, the room at the end of the corridor, that's where some guards sleep."

~~Player Turn 4~~





Weather:

| Merces:                    | Enemies:                     |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/47    | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50  |
| Ami Storm: 31/31           | Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 34/34    | Menelean Elite A: 34/34      |
| Christopher Shields: 37/37 | Menelean Elite B: 34/34      |
| Derick: 40/40              | Menelean Elite C: 34/34      |
| Edwin Westbringer: 36/36   | Royal Guard A: 41/41         |
| Gregor von Hexham: 39/39   | Royal Guard B: 41/41         |
| Olison Eul: 37/37          | Royal Guard C: 41/41         |
| Raquel Torriani: 41/41     | Axe Guard A: 38/38           |
| Riven: 30/30               | Axe Guard B: 38/38           |
| Seyena Ikane: 37/37        | Axe Guard C: 38/38           |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35  | Sentinel A: 37/37            |
| Valor Inara: 40/40         | Sentinel B: 37/37            |
|                            | Elite Sentry A: 35/35        |
|                            | Elite Sentry B: 35/35        |
|                            | Bishop A: 37/37              |
|                            | Bishop B: 37/37              |
| Allies:                    |                              |
| Dalban: 35/35              |                              |

Valor: Move to 5,14.



"You don't need a weapon. We're almost out of here, and no one has seen us yet. Except you, I guess."



"We're not going to worry about the sleeping guards. This way, and follow me; I'll open the doors silently. If we DO get into trouble, I'll protect you."

**Chris to 8,19.**



"Alright, but what with the guards outside? Are there any?"



"I don't believe so. They should all be in the chapel for morning service. Regardless, if there are any, we're fighting only to distract while we break through."

**Charlotte: Move to 5,16.**



"Don't worry, new, mysterious friendperson. We've faced down huge squadrons and stood our ground with no losses. Plus, even if there's just a couple guards outside, Edwin can sleep them before they have a chance to react."

**Alexander: Move to 6, 19**

#### **Alexander vs stairs**

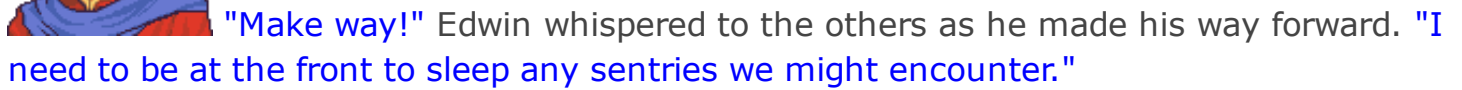
Roll: 20 > 16 CON //Aww, dammit.

Alexander stepped on the stairs and then his left leg swished forward as something oily was spilled there. After some flailing though, the tanky knight regained balance and managed to get down without crashing.

Alexander took a moment to stare at the ground and breathe heavily. His eyes were wide. His heart was pounding against his chest. He felt a little dizzy, even. God damn, Alexander reflected, he was scared. No, more-- he was *terrified*. He'd gone through the reddening of the snow not so long ago with only twinges of worry. He'd been almost *complacent*, except for a few dicey spots. Why was he so scared after only *almost slipping*? Alexander thought he knew. It was the stealth stuff. All the sneaking around, the suspense. It wasn't his kind of thing. Leave that to Christopher, he thought.



## Seyena moves to 6,16



**Raquel: Wait for Gregor to clear, then Move to (6,14)**

**Gregor: Move to (7,19).**

**Tantallos: Move to 5, 17.**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

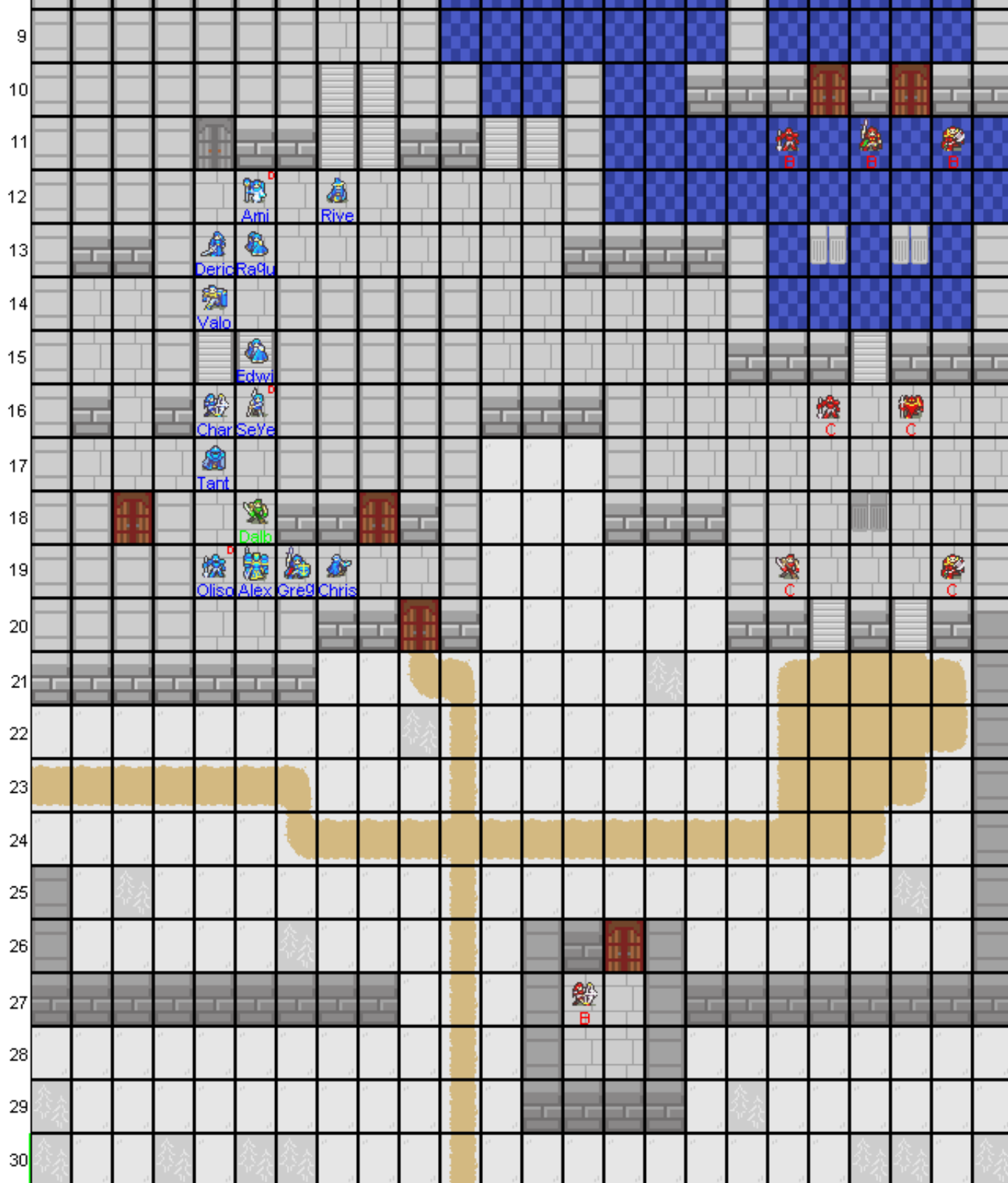
\*wind~\*

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Dalban slid his hands into his pockets and slowly walked after the others.

## ~~Player Turn 5~~

[illegible]



Weather:

| Mercs:                     | Enemies:                     |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/47    | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50  |
| Ami Storm: 31/31           | Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32 |
| Charlotte Braxis: 34/34    | Menelean Elite A: 34/34      |
| Christopher Shields: 37/37 | Menelean Elite B: 34/34      |
| Derick: 40/40              | Menelean Elite C: 34/34      |
| Edwin Westbringer: 36/36   | Royal Guard A: 41/41         |
| Gregor von Hexham: 39/39   | Royal Guard B: 41/41         |
| Olison Eul: 37/37          | Royal Guard C: 41/41         |
| Raquel Torriani: 41/41     | Axe Guard A: 38/38           |
| Riven: 30/30               | Axe Guard B: 38/38           |
| Seyena Ikane: 37/37        | Axe Guard C: 38/38           |
| Tantalos Forsaken: 35/35   | Sentinel A: 37/37            |

|                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Valor Inara: 40/40 | Sentinel B: 37/37     |
| <b>Allies:</b>     | Elite Sentry A: 35/35 |
|                    | Elite Sentry B: 35/35 |
| Dalban: 35/35      | Bishop A: 37/37       |
|                    | Bishop B: 37/37       |

**Valor: Move to 5,20**

**Derick: Move 5, 18**

**Alexander: Move to 10, 21**

Alexander was so eager to run away that he smashed against the closed door, causing quite a ruckus!!

Suddenly, from the small room, there came sounds of shuffling and muttering!!

Alexander lets out a five-second-long curse.

Seyna heard Alex's blunder, and caught a snippet of speech from within the building.



"SHIT!"

**Seyna sprints to 9,19 and barricades the door with her lance.**

**Riven: Move to 6,14.**



*...Am I being punished for something?*

**Tantallos: Move to 6, 20.**

Charlotte pulled out her shiny new Longbow.



"...Battle position prepped.."

**Charlotte: Move 3 S, 2 E once Gregor moves. Equip Longbow.**

Olison's face cringed as he watched Alex smash into the door. Immediately afterwards he whipped his head around to try and find the source of the muttering. And a moment later, he shouted angrily in a similar volume to the crash.



"Damn it, Fredrick! What did I tell you about trying to carry too much?!" Olison gave a loud sigh and continued on, "Pick up what's left of those boxes, come on! Morning service is almost over and you were ordered to get those to the stables!" The paladin gave a quick look over to those behind him and hastily gestured over to the hallway.

### **Olison: Stay Put**

There was some more muttering and rumbling and such. Seyena could easily hear some distinct words, like 'Fredrick?' 'I don't know' and 'Thieves!' And then there was some metal clinking against metal.

**Chris just stands there, shaking his head at that stupid impatient knight who just bollixed everything up.**

### **Raquel: Move to (5,17)**

Alexander sighs, and mutters under his breath, staring at Chris.



*"Do I look like I'm trained in stealth?"*

Gregor let out a few swears that Charlotte and Chris had taught him.



"Chris, don't just stand there! We have to get out before the entire keep comes down on us!"

Chris gestured at Alex.



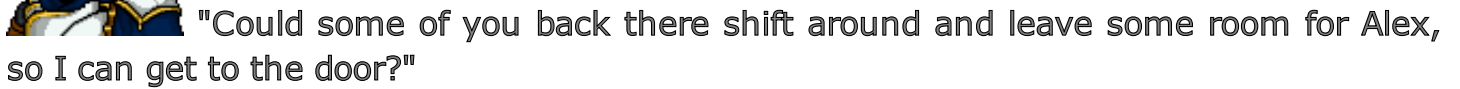
"Well, if he hadn't rushed the door, I could have opened it. As it stands, I can't get around him to get to the lock."

A few more inventive swears came from the sentinel as his brain caught up on the situation.



"Fine. Someone tell Edwin to get his sleep staff ready! If we knock whoever it is out quickly enough, maybe we can still get out with a minimum of bloodshed."





**Edwin: Hold position. If an enemy is sighted or investigates, sleep him!**



**Gregor: Move to (7,20)**

**Ami: Move to 6,17**

## Seyena braces the shit out of the door with her lance

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The door had knobs instead of handles, and it indeed opened inwards. Revealing three guards and behind them, a table and an interrupted card game.

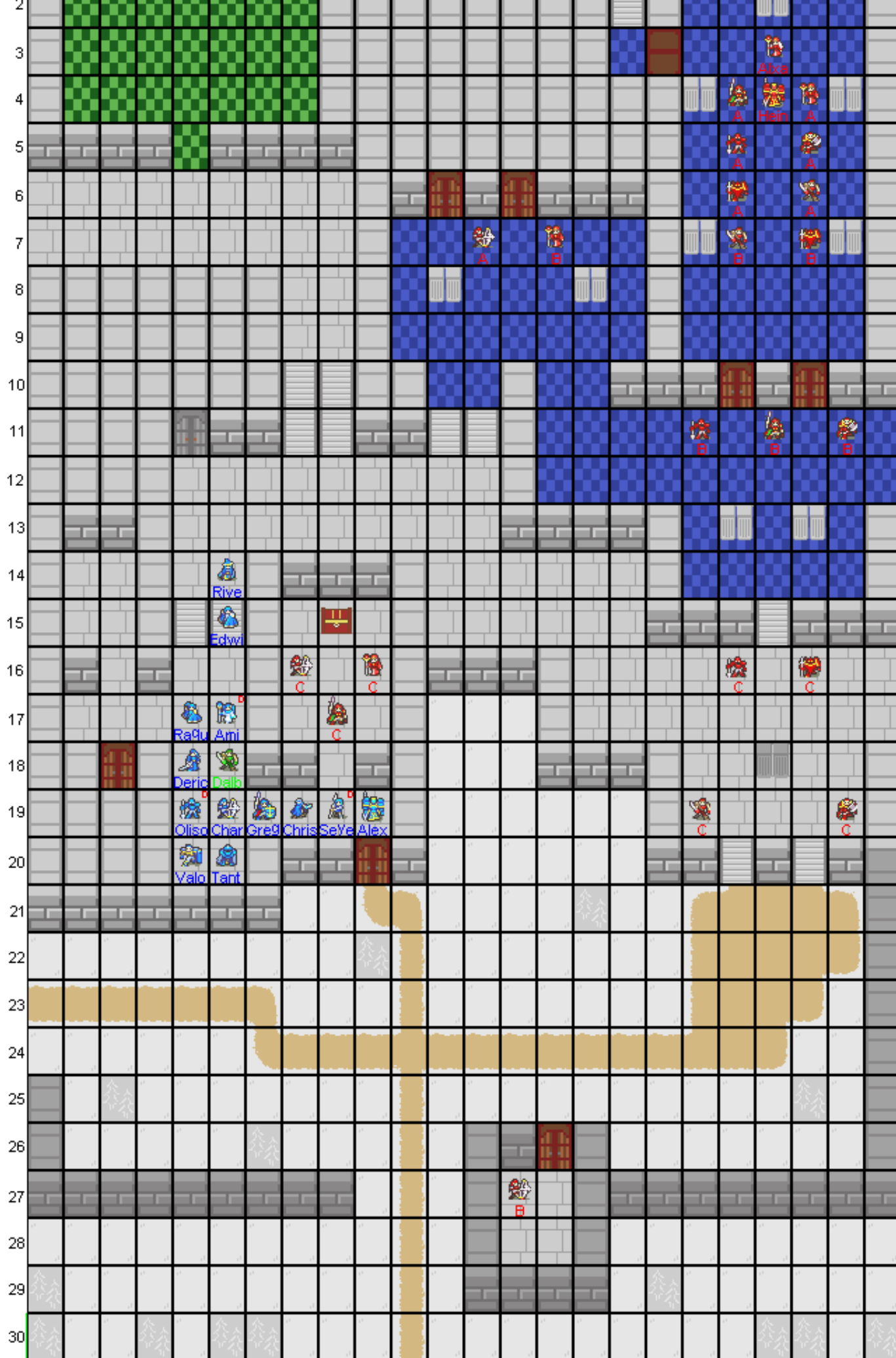
"Shit, it's the guests, they can't escape! Sound the alarm!" The guard with the lance took a defensive position whilst his comrades tumbled around in search for something, maybe an alarm bell or something of that kind.

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Dalban didn't have anywhere to go, really.

## ~~Player Turn 6~~





Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/47<br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/34<br>Christopher Shields: 37/37<br>Derick: 40/40<br>Edwin Westbringer: 36/36<br>Gregor von Hexham: 39/39<br>Olison Eul: 37/37<br>Raquel Torriani: 41/41<br>Riven: 30/30<br>Seyena Ikane: 37/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35<br>Valor Inara: 40/40 | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34<br>Royal Guard A: 41/41<br>Royal Guard B: 41/41<br>Royal Guard C: 41/41<br>Axe Guard A: 38/38<br>Axe Guard B: 38/38 | Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37<br>Sentinel C: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry B: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry C: 35/35<br>Bishop A: 37/37<br>Bishop B: 37/37<br>Bishop C: 37/37 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Dalban: 35/35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

**Charlotte: Move 3N. Twang mageguy C.**

Twangey.

**Charlotte vs Bishop C**

Hit:  $128+10+10-48 = 100$ , autohit!  
 Damage:  $21-12 = 9$ dmg

**Alexander: Move to 9, 18 and drink a Pure Water.** Gul gul gul.

**Chris moves to 10,19 and unlocks the door. Click! Door unlocked!**

And immediatelly the guard at the post turned his attention to the exit.

**Ami: head to 8,19**

**Riven: Hold still, be Charisma.**

**Valor: Everyone is in the way of an expeditious retreat or Heroic assault. Stay put.**

**Tantallos: Hold still.**

**Derick: Go 6,19. Pass key to Gregor. Snatch ring off Tantallos's hand and toss it to Olison while simultaneously catching whatever he throws at me in a moment. Hold Blade Ring aloft and say the magic words or something like that**

**Olison swaps his concoction for Derick's Ring, moving to 5,18 and handing it to Raquel.**

**Edwin: Hold still and sleep Archer dude.**

**Seyena squeezes on to 5,19.**

Raquel moves to (9,19) and frotzes grue Sentinel C with Killer Thunder



"I truly apologize, but we must take our leave. If you shall not permit us to depart in peace, we have no choice but to force our way through."

The archer in the room suddenly slid down to the ground, snoring.

Edwin casts Sleep on Sentry C

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{23-9\}\times5]+23)-(3\times2) = 30+70+23-6 = 117$ , autohit!  
Sentry is asleep!

And Raquel then moved toward the sentinel, turning him into a crisp.

Raquel vs Sentinel C

Hit:  $110+10+5-49 = 76$   
Hit roll: 43, hit! Crit roll: 46!  
Damage:  $35-11 = 24\times3 = 72$ dmg

The sentry at the main gate blinked, seeing the flashing lights coming from the small exit.

Gregor moves to (10,17) and ties up the bishop if he surrenders, regretfully STAB with the Killer Lance if he doesn't.



"Please sir, surrender peacefully and you will not be harmed. I have no desire to see any more death today."

"Never!"

\*STAB\*

\*FLASH-BAWM\*

\*STA-AB!\*

Gregor vs Bishop C

Hit:  $121+5-48 = 78$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $32-12 = 20$ dmg  
  
Bishop C counters!  
Hit:  $133-5-5-47 = 76$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $29-7 = 22$ dmg  
  
Gregor attacks again!  
Hit:  $121+5-48 = 78$   
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage:  $32-12 = 20$ dmg

Guiding Ring got; Door Key dropped!

~~Enemy Phase~~

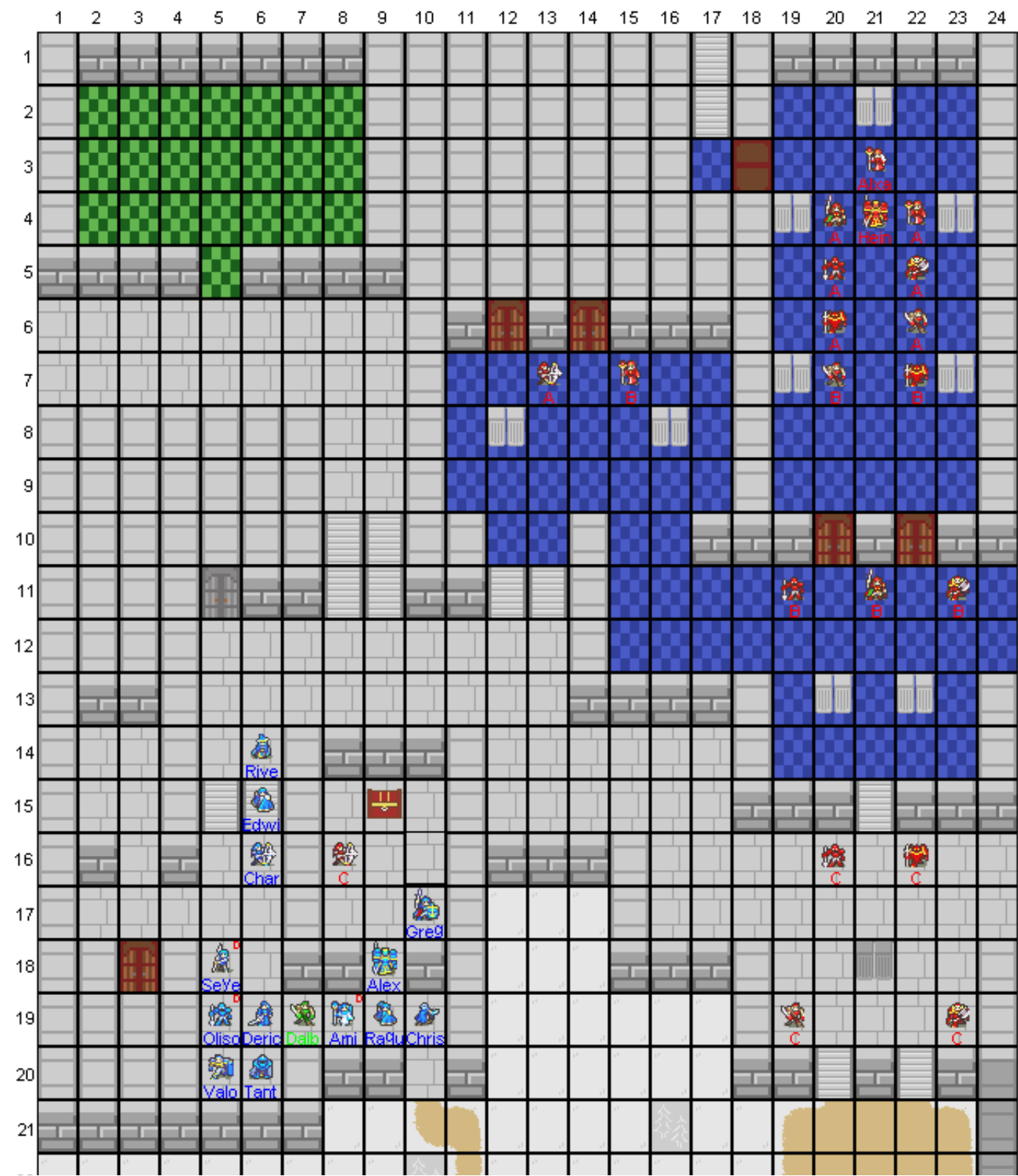
The sentry at the rear post yawned loudly, not seeing the bloody magical stabby action that was happening inside the castle.

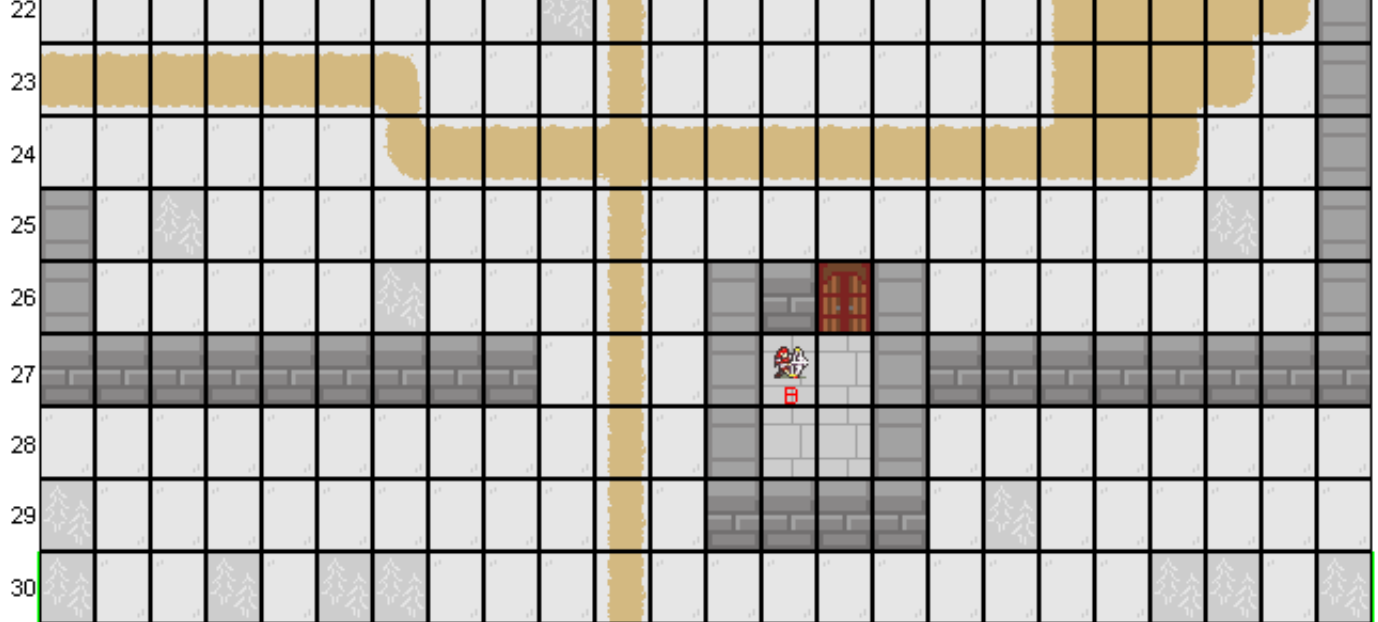
"Brr, it's damn cold tonight..."

~~Ally Phase~~

Dalban slowly squeezed forwardish.

~~Player Turn 7~~





Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/48 <span>Pure Water (5/5)</span><br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/35<br>Christopher Shields: 37/38<br>Derick: 40/41<br>Edwin Westbringer: 36/36<br>Gregor von Hexham: 17/40<br>Olison Eul: 37/38<br>Raquel Torriani: 41/42<br>Riven: 30/30<br>Seyena Ikane: 37/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35<br>Valor Inara: 40/40 | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34<br>Royal Guard A: 41/41<br>Royal Guard B: 41/41<br>Royal Guard C: 41/41<br>Axe Guard A: 38/38<br>Axe Guard B: 38/38<br>Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry B: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry C: 35/35 <span>Sleep (5/5)</span><br>Bishop A: 37/37<br>Bishop B: 37/37 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Dalban: 35/35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

Kind of grimacing, and wishing to take no more mistakes, Alexander **stood still**.

**Chris moves to 9,16 and opens the chest.**



"We might as well get something for our troubles out of this."



"Sure. We've already committed two murders trying to escape, why not add burglary to the list of charges?"



"Don't be like that, Gregor. We're holding our end of the deal up - they aggressed first. We even spared the sniper. And, uh, we didn't say anything about thievery to Alexandria. I mean, it's pretty standard for us."

The chest opened with a soft click. Inside, Chris found a long, jagged blade.

### **Chris got Lancereaver!**

Gregor inhaled sharply at the sight of the weapon.



"Keep that thing away from me, please. I still have a scar from when Eor gutted me with one of those."

Chris examined the blade.



"Who do you think might appreciate it more, Valor or Derick?"

He thought for a moment.



"Hmm... I'll decide later. Those two are juggling enough swords already if I remember correctly."

### **Ami moves to 10,19**



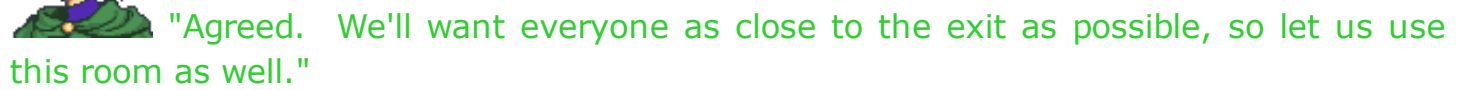
"There a lot of open ground. I doubt we get to the gate without notice. We have to run and not look back probable."

### **Charlotte moves to 6,18 in preparation for the Edwin Escape Plan.**



"Probably. In any case, the way is clear now. Everyone should get ready to move."

### **Raquel moves to (8,17)**



**Riven: Move to 5,17.**

## Olson stays put

**Derick: move 9, 17**

"Coming through... Coming through..."

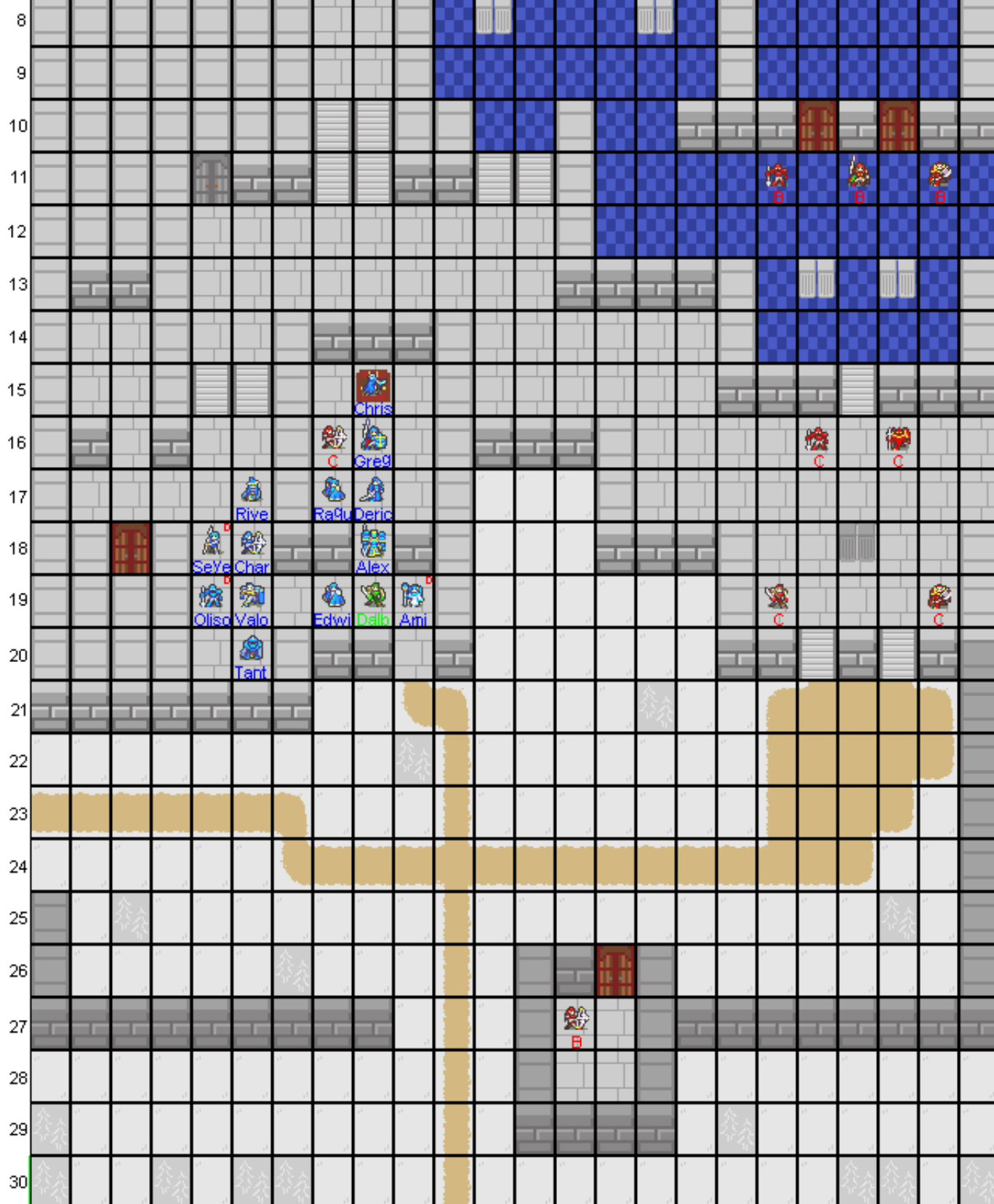
## ~~Enemy Phase~~

## ~~Ally Phase~~

## ~~Player Turn 8~~

[illegible]





Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/48 <span style="color: red;">Pure Water (3/5)</span><br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/35<br>Christopher Shields: 37/38<br>Derick: 40/41<br>Edwin Westbringer: 36/36<br>Gregor von Hexham: 17/40<br>Olison Eul: 37/38<br>Raquel Torriani: 41/42<br>Riven: 30/30 | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34<br>Royal Guard A: 41/41<br>Royal Guard B: 41/41<br>Royal Guard C: 41/41<br>Axe Guard A: 38/38<br>Axe Guard B: 38/38 |

|                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Seyena Ikane: 37/37<br>Tantallios Forsaken: 35/35<br>Valor Inara: 40/40 | Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry B: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry C: 35/35 Sleep (3/5)<br>Bishop A: 37/37<br>Bishop B: 37/37 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Dalban: 35/35                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Edwin looked at the others and gripped his sleep staff tightly.



"Ok, I'm going to make a run for it and try to sleep the guard by the gate as fast as I can. Once I do so, I suggest we leave as quick as we can before he or the other one wakes up."

Looking forward, he gulps and takes a deep breath.



"Wish me luck..."

**Edwin: Move to 11, 22 and sleep the sentry at the exit!**

The sentry wobbled and then fell down.

**Edwin casts Sleep on Sentry B**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{24 - 9\} \times 5] + 23) - (8 \times 2) = 30 + 75 + 23 - 16 = 112$ , autohit!  
Sentry B is asleep!

**Chris to 10,21.**



"Good work, Edwin."

**Gregor: Hold still.**

**Charlotte moves to 10, 20.**

**Ami: Move to 11,23**



"I will also say well done."

**Raquel: Move to (10,19)**



"Thank you, Edwin. Hopefully, we can depart without further loss of life."

**Olison to 8,19.**

Edwin smiles and nods.



"It's so nice to be appreciated for my work every now and then."

**Tantallos: Hold still yet.**



"We aren't completely safe yet, we still need to do the actual escaping."

**Seyena: Moves 1S**

**Derick: Stay put**

**Alexander: Stay there.**

**Valor: Fuck it, I'll wait too. Damn.**

**Riven: Move 1S.**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

In the south, Ami, Edwin and Chris could see a wyvern, a familiar sight.

And then another, and few more - it was foreboding. Suddenly, a whole flock of wyverns flew toward the gate, with a larger and nastier specimen being driven by armored man.



"Ha! Ernest was right, that fat idiot couldn't even kill those bastards! Come on, guys, let's show Lady PRIXIMA the worth of Estbrigg and his Fangs! After that, we will have a talk with the Count!" Estbrigg's wyvern then roared so loud it was possibly heard in nearby villages. And it was definitely heard inside Grummel's keep. The startled guards left the castle to check what was happening and in the greyness of the morning, they managed to notice the faces of the people they were supposed to kill.

"The guests are escaping!"

"Count Grummel, Gregor is running away!" Those were the news that were brought into

the shrine, as alarm bells began to ring and watch dogs in other parts of the castle began to bark. The count paled for a moment, but then regained his composure.



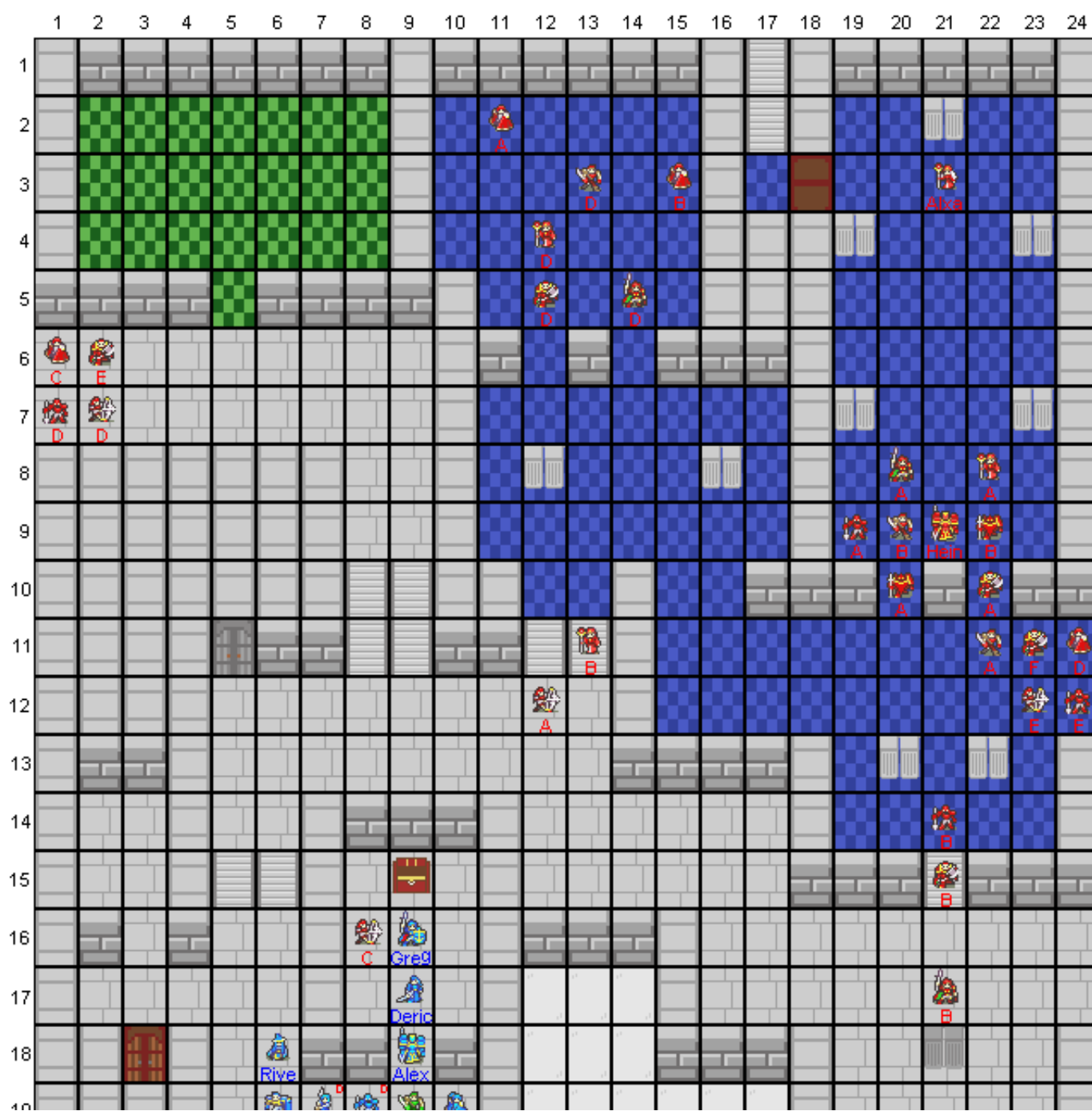
"Stop them! Stop them at all cost! Kill them all! They cannot leave, or we're done for!" The morning prayer was interrupted as Heinrich von Grummel and the guards near him rushed toward the exit. Alexandra remained in the place, turned toward the statue, closed her eyes and began to pray.

## ~~Ally Phase~~



"Okay, was *\*that\** part of your plan!?"

## ~~Player Turn 9~~





Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/48<br>^ Pure Water (2/5)<br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/35<br>Christopher Shields: 37/38<br>Derick: 40/41<br>Edwin Westbringer: 36/36<br>Gregor von Hexham: 17/40<br>Olison Eul: 37/38<br>Raquel Torriani: 41/42<br>Riven: 30/30<br>Seyena Ikane: 37/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35<br>Valor Inara: 40/40 | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite D: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite E: 34/34<br>Elite Swordsman A: 35/35<br>Elite Swordsman B: 35/35<br>Elite Swordsman C: 35/35<br>Royal Guard A: 41/41<br>Royal Guard B: 41/41<br>Royal Guard C: 41/41<br>Axe Guard A: 38/38<br>Axe Guard B: 38/38<br>Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Axe Guard D: 38/38<br>Axe Guard E: 38/38<br>Axe Guard F: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37 | Sentinel D: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry B: 35/35 Sleep (4/5)<br>Elite Sentry C: 35/35 Sleep (2/5)<br>Elite Sentry D: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry E: 35/35<br>Bishop A: 37/37<br>Bishop B: 37/37<br>Bishop D: 37/37<br>Sage A: 38/38<br>Sage B: 38/38<br>Sage C: 38/38<br>Sage D: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang A: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang B: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang C: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang D: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang E: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang F: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang G: 38/38<br>Estbrigg: 46/46 |
| <b>Allies:</b><br>Dalban: 35/35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |



"Nothing's ever easy around here, new guy!"

**Valor: Don't move, again. Equip Francisca anyway.**

**Chris moves to 10,25 and draws his crossbow.**



"I should've figured Ernest would have a back-up plan..."

**Charlotte: Move 1 S, 1 E to stay in range of Alexander (assuming he wants to guard me). Equip Killer Bow.**

**Raquel: Move to (10,22), Equip Killer Thunder**



"Oh BALLS..."

**Edwin: Hold position and poison Fang A.**

Poison mist erupted at the Fang's face.

**Edwin casts Poison on Fang A**

Staff hit  $(30 + [\{24 - 7\} \times 5] + 23) - (10 \times 2) = 30 + 85 + 23 - 20 = 118$ , autohit!  
Fang A is poisoned!

**Olison to 9,21. Equip Francisca.**

**Tantallos: Move to Raquel's previous spot and equip Carrion.**



"I guess I dropped my sanity away some minutes ago. So I think poisoning them to death to express how pleased I am about the unexpected surprise will be enough."



"I've got your back, Tantallos."

**Alexander: Move to 10, 21 and guard Charlotte**



"*What's going on out-oh... fuck.*"

**Riven: Move to 7,20.**



"Oh you got to be kidding me."

**Ami: Move 12,21**

**Seyena moves to 11,21, equipping Iron Lance if she hasn't done so already**

**Gregor moves to (9,18)**

**Derick: move 10,20**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**



"Hmm, who we got here? Nevermind, I will kill you anyways!"

**Estbrigg vs Chris**

Hit:  $112-49 = 63$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $34-10 = 24\text{dmg}$

Chris counters!  
Hit:  $144-38 = 106$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $16-25 = 0\text{dmg}$ !

Estbrigg attacks again!  
Hit:  $112-49 = 63$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

After that, some wyverns blocked the exit whilst rest attacked from afar. Mostly they attacked Edwin. Must be the beard.

**Fang B vs Olison**

Hit:  $100-15-55 = 30$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!  
Hit:  $104+15-35 = 84$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $27+1-19 = 9\text{dmg}$

Olison counters again!  
Hit:  $104+15-35 = 84$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
Damage:  $27+1-19 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Fang C vs Edwin**

Hit:  $100-5-10-37 = 48$   
Hit roll: 66, miss!

Edwin retaliates!  
Hit:  $134+10+5-35 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $29-7 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Fang D vs Edwin**

Hit:  $100-5-10-37 = 48$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

Edwin retaliates!

Hit:  $134+10+5-35 = 114$ , autohit!

Damage:  $29-7 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Fang G vs Edwin**

Hit:  $100-5-10-37 = 48$

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Damage:  $30-14 = 16\text{dmg}$

Edwin retaliates!

Hit:  $134+10+5-35 = 114$ , autohit!

Damage:  $29-7 = 22\text{dmg}$

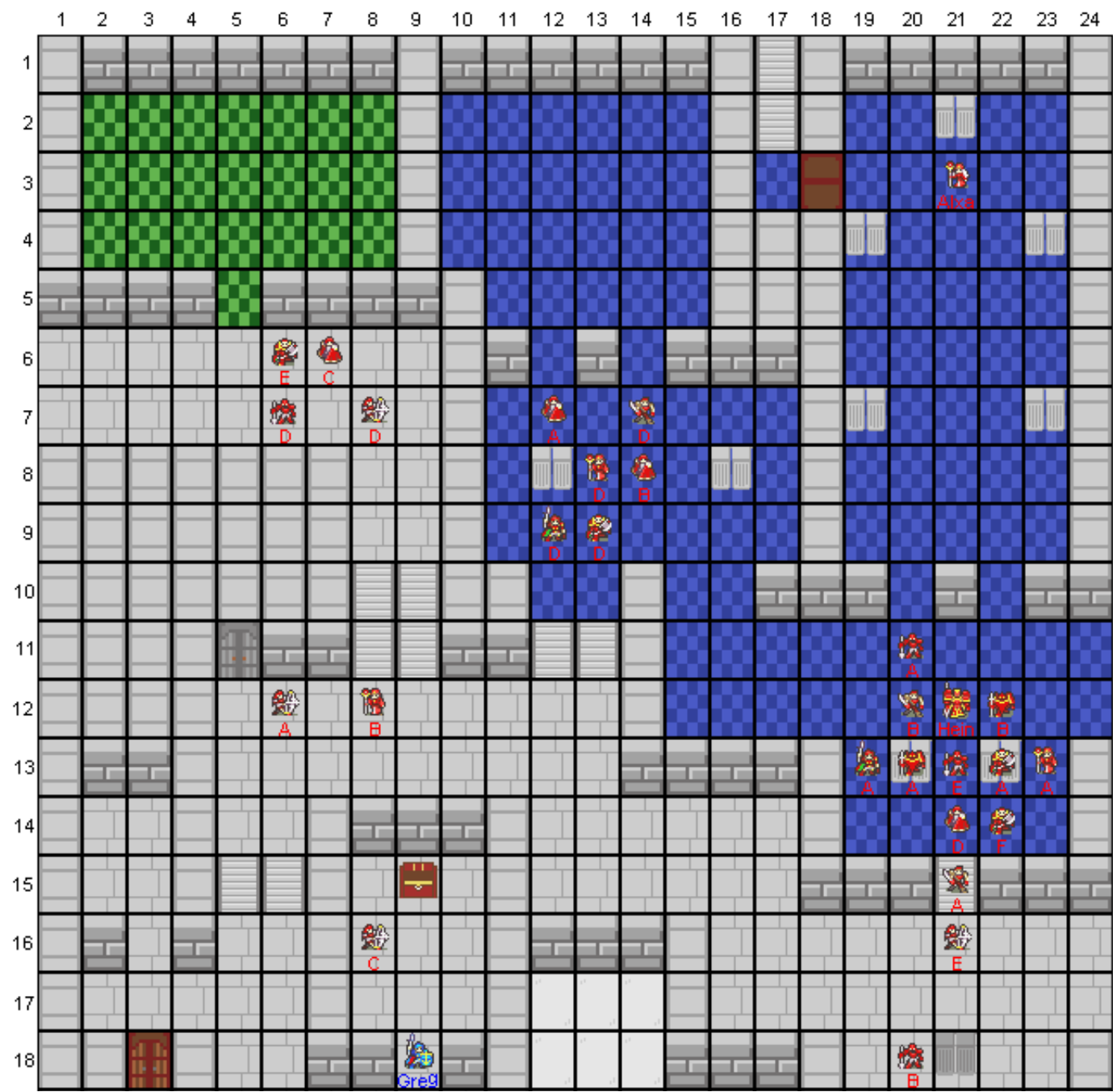
~~Ally Phase~~

Dalban waited impatiently, gritting his teeth.

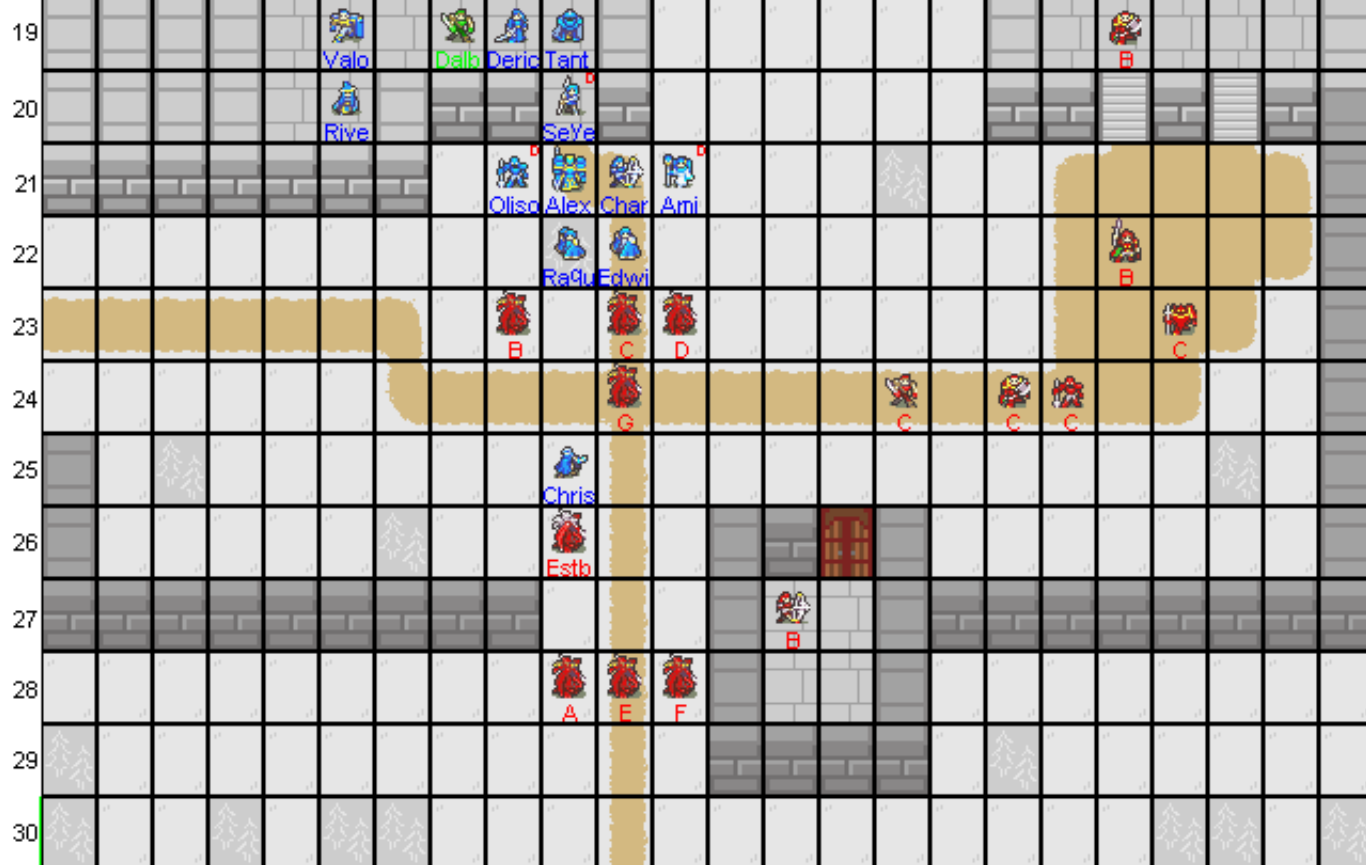
~~Player Turn 10~~

**Poison rolls**

Fang A: 4







Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/48<br>^ Pure Water (1/5)<br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/35<br>Christopher Shields: 13/38<br>Derick: 40/41<br>Edwin Westbringer: 25/36<br>Gregor von Hexham: 17/40<br>Olison Eul: 23/38<br>Raquel Torriani: 41/42<br>Riven: 30/30<br>Seyena Ikane: 37/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35<br>Valor Inara: 40/40 | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite D: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite E: 34/34<br>Elite Swordsman A: 35/35<br>Elite Swordsman B: 35/35<br>Elite Swordsman C: 35/35<br>Royal Guard A: 41/41<br>Royal Guard B: 41/41<br>Royal Guard C: 41/41<br>Axe Guard A: 38/38<br>Axe Guard B: 38/38<br>Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Axe Guard D: 38/38<br>Axe Guard E: 38/38<br>Axe Guard F: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37 | Sentinel D: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry B: 35/35 Sleep (3/5)<br>Elite Sentry C: 35/35 Sleep (1/5)<br>Elite Sentry D: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry E: 35/35<br>Bishop A: 37/37<br>Bishop B: 37/37<br>Bishop D: 37/37<br>Sage A: 38/38<br>Sage B: 38/38<br>Sage C: 38/38<br>Sage D: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang A: 34/38 Poison (4/5)<br>Estbrigg's Fang B: 20/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang C: 16/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang D: 16/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang E: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang F: 38/38<br>Estbrigg's Fang G: 16/38<br>Estbrigg: 46/46 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Dalban: 35/35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |



*Damn... I'm just going to have to spearhead the charge and hopefully break through. Alexander can carry my ass out of here if I go down.*

**Chris to 10,27 and crossbow Fang A.**

**Charlotte moves to 10,24 and Bowkills Fang C with her Killer Bow.**



"ARGH! Get back! Back, you bastards! I'll blast you all to ash!" Edwin shouted to the wyverns as he fended them off with blasts of fire.

**Edwin: Move to 11, 25. Attack Fang G and FINISH HIM!**



"Move, move, move!" The paladin yelled into the building before charging past his opponent.

**Olison to 9,24. Axe Fang G a question. If Edwin gets him first, direct question to Fang B**

Unfortunately for Chris, the rider had a dose of luck this time.

**Chris vs Fang A**

Hit:  $144 - 35 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $48 + 2 - 19 = 31\text{dmg}$

Fang A counters!

Hit:  $100 - 49 = 51$

Hit roll: 49, hit!

Damage:  $30 - 10 = 20\text{dmg}$

Charlotte wanted to bowkill a rider but because of the walk through the bushes and snow, she was too close to get a proper shot.

Then there was some other killing.

**Edwin vs Fang G**

Hit:  $134 + 10 - 35 = 109$ , autohit!

Damage:  $29 - 7 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Olison vs Fang B**

Hit:  $104 + 15 - 35 = 84$

Hit roll: 62, hit! Crit roll: 1! //v:

Damage:  $27 + 1 + 2 - 19 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

Mia looks on in shock as Chris fell.



"NO!"

She clamped down on her urge to run to him, too far, she would be cut down in seconds. Besides the wound wasn't fatal. Mortal? Yes, but not fatal.



"Sorry, Mia. It's not as bad as it looks."

**Tantallos: Move to 9, 22, get the ring back from Raquel and give her that vulnerarybru.**



"Do not mind the weird guy in blue armor getting this ring back. Going to need it."



"Back to business! I guess I will not even need to put my mask this time."

**Tantallos: Attack Fang C.**

**Derick: Move 11, 22 and attack Fang C if it's not dead after Tantallos's attack**



"Of course, Sir Tantallos. As for this, Sir Alexander, if you could hold it for a moment?"

**Raquel: Confirm Trade of Hermes' Ring to Tantallos. If possible, Trade Vulnerary to Alex before moving** (otherwise, don't)

She looked at Estbrigg, the leader of the wyvern riders, as he coordinated the movements of his Fangs, pointing with a plain, unadorned, and absolutely vicious-looking spear to punctuate his orders.



"Again and again, why do you try to stop us? Both you and Count Grummel..."



"All we seek is to depart in peace, but...that's not possible, is it? I apologize for this, then, but I've no choice, either, if I..." She glanced back, seeing the others, including Derick, fighting against the lead wyverns.



"...if we are to survive." Her voice rang with absolute certitude.

**Raquel: Move to (10,24), zot Estbrigg with Killer Thunder**

Alexander nodded to Raquel. **accepting trade.**

**Alexander moves to 10, 22 and guards Charlotte.**

**Riven: Move to 10,19.**

**Valor: Move to 10,21, Rescue Seyena.**



"Stick close to me. I have a really bad feeling about this."

While Tantallos was busy with trading, Derick moved towards one of the wyvern riders and cut him up.

**Derick vs Fang C**

Hit:  $127+5+10-15-35 = 92$   
Hit roll: 19, hit!  
Damage:  $33+5-1-19 = 18\text{dmg}$

Then, Raquel fried Estbrigg to death. He didn't even have time to scream in pain before his and his wyvern's charred corpse fell into the snow.

**Raquel vs Estbrigg**

Hit:  $111+15+10-38 = 98$   
Hit roll: 23, hit! Crit roll: 61!  
Damage:  $36-5-10 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

**Raquel gets Elysian Whip!**

Then, Alexander moved toward Charlotte and Riven moved after the others, whilst Valor *romantically* scooped Seyena into his arms.

**Gregor: Move 1 south, rescue Guest Star Party Member**

**Ami: Move to 10,23 and recuse staff Gregor.**



"Woah, hey, watch yer hands friend, I don't swing that way, could you--"

ZAAM!



"Oh, uh, allright."

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Fuck, they got Estbrigg! Run, guys!" With the screeching of the wyverns, the remaining riders took off into the above and fled the castle.

"Halt!" The castle guards attacked at Gregor who just appeared in the middle of the path with Dalban over his shoulder. The guy with the sword got stabbed terribly and the axe guard missed with his throw. Unfortunately, Gregor (and others) could see that the Grummel soldiers were pouring out of the entrance in numbers.

### Swordsman C vs Gregor

Hit:  $110-15-5-7-27 = 56$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $99+15+5+7-38 = 88$

Hit roll: 51, hit! Crit roll: 40!

Damage:  $32+1+1-14 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

### Axe Guard C vs Gregor

Hit:  $104+15-5-7-27 = 80$

Hit roll: 91, miss!

In the meanwhile, the bound sniper woke up and immediately began to work on freeing himself.

And then, terrible curses were cast. Alexander, Valor and Derick suddenly frozen in place whilst Riven could feel a ticklish sensation for some reason.

### Sage C casts Paralyse on Valor

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{24-9\} \times 5]+23)-(12 \times 2) = 30+75+23-24 = 104$ , autohit!

Valor is paralyzed!

### Sage A casts Paralyse on Alexander

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{24-18\} \times 5]+23)-(12 \times 2) = 30+30+23-24 = 59$

Hit roll: 45, hit!

Alexander is paralyzed!

### Sage B casts Paralyse on Derick

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{24-11\} \times 5]+23)-(11 \times 2) = 30+65+23-22 = 96$

Hit roll: 64, hit!

Derick is paralyzed!

### Sage D casts Paralyse on Riven

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{24-17\} \times 5]+23)-(10 \times 2) = 30+35+23-20 = 68$

Hit roll: 82, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~



"Next time warn me about grabbing me that way." Dalban slid from Gregor's shoulder and grimaced when he noticed he is right near the guards.

## ~~Player Turn 11~~

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/48 <b>Paralyze (5/5)</b><br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/35<br>Christopher Shields: -/38 <b>2/3</b><br>Derick: 40/41 <b>Paralyze (5/5)</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: <b>30/36</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 17/40<br>Olison Eul: 23/38<br>Raquel Torriani: 41/42<br>Riven: 30/30<br>Seyena Ikane: 37/37<br>^ <b>Carried by: Valor Inara</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 35/35<br>Valor Inara: 40/40<br>^ <b>Carrying: Seyena Ikane Paralyze (5/5)</b> | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite D: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite E: 34/34<br>Elite Swordsman A: 35/35<br>Elite Swordsman B: 35/35<br>Royal Guard A: 41/41<br>Royal Guard B: 41/41<br>Royal Guard C: 41/41<br>Axe Guard A: 38/38<br>Axe Guard B: 38/38<br>Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>Axe Guard D: 38/38<br>Axe Guard E: 38/38 | Axe Guard F: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37<br>Sentinel D: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry B: 35/35<br>^ <b>Sleep (2/5)</b><br>Elite Sentry C: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry D: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry E: 35/35<br>Bishop A: 37/37<br>Bishop B: 37/37<br>Bishop D: 37/37<br>Sage A: 38/38<br>Sage B: 38/38<br>Sage C: 38/38<br>Sage D: 38/38 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Dalban: 35/35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

Chris continued to lie in the snow and turn it red. Just to get that out of the way.

**Charlotte nabs Alex's last vulnerability (since he's not able to fight back!), moves 3S, and heals Chris.**

Plink plink~

**Charlotte uses Vulnerary on Chris**

Up to 5HP restored



"This is not going to be pleasant..." Edwin grumbled as he moved into position to hold off the incoming forces. "I don't do the whole front line thing! I'm a wizard, not a warrior dammit!"

**Edwin: Move 1 East. Sleep Axe guard C and prepare for painful retaliation.**

The guard went to sleep in the middle of the road.

**Edwin casts Sleep on Axe Guard C**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{24 - 6\} \times 5] + 23) - (2 \times 2) = 30 + 90 + 23 - 4 = 139$ , autohit!  
 Axe Guard C is asleep!

Chris began to pull himself to his feet.



"Thanks, Charlotte. I appreciate the help."



*For a moment... I thought they'd all forgotten about me.*

**Riven: Move to 9,23.**

**Ami: Move to 11,29 and rescue staff Valor and co to the north**

**Tantallos: Move to 10,28.**



"I am surprised they did not give up yet after watching those wyvern riders getting killed in a few moments."

Zaaam!

**Olison to 11,23. Rescue Derick.**

**Raquel: Move to (10,29). Trade Elysian Whip for Rescue Staff from Ami. Use Rescue Staff on Olison/Derick, destination (10,30).**



"Right, then, you two'd best be on your way. We shall keep by the others, and follow shortly."

Zooooomb! And the two were far from danger.

**Olison and Derick leave the map safely!**

Olison could see that the road was going downhill, and thanks to the moonlight, he could recognize a silhouette of the wagon and something much taller beside it. They were a one minute walk from the gate, hiding near trees.

Olison recoiled a bit with a nauseous look on his face.



"Uhhh... I'd rather not do that again." He took a moment to shake his head.  
"Follow quickly and leave noone behind!"

With those parting words, Olison immediately rushed to the wagon with Derick in tow.

**Seyena frees herself from Valor's grasp, falling onto 10,28.** She looked up, seeing that he hasn't moved.





"Valor, are you alright?"

Valor remained entirely immobile.



*Why can't I move my body? This is probably magic! FUCK MAGIC!*

Alexander kind of just stared at the land in front of him, an annoyed glimmer vaguely visible if one looked hard. *Fuck mages.* Seriously, this happened *every goddamn time*. He'd tried counting, but he couldn't get his fingers up to do so, and had kinda lost count after the last five times anyway.



"Let's **go**, everyone! Move it!"

**Gregor: Equip Steel Javelin, stay still in the rearguard.**

Alexander wittily replied to Gregor with continued staring into the distance.



*Hmm. Maybe not the best choice of words considering the circumstances...*

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The enemies clashed with the 'rearguard'.

### Elite C vs Edwin

Hit:  $112-5-10-37 = 60$

Hit roll: 50, hit!

Damage:  $25-14 = 11\text{dmg}$

Edwin counters!

Hit:  $134+5+10-42 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $29-9 = 20\text{dmg}$

### Royal Guard C vs Dalban

Hit:  $98+15-5-37 = 71$

Hit roll: 92, miss!

Oh, and the sentries, including the one that just cut the bindings, sent four arrows at Alex, but those arrows simply plinged away from the uberarmor.

"Heh, like testing a new archery target... let's move on."

### Sentry C vs Alex

Autohit!  
Damage:  $26-28 = 0\text{dmg!}$

Sentry C attacks again!  
Autohit!  
Damage:  $26-28 = 0\text{dmg!}$

#### Sentry A vs Alex

Autohit!  
Damage:  $26-28 = 0\text{dmg!}$

Sentry A attacks once more!  
Autohit!  
Damage:  $26-28 = 0\text{dmg!}$

The moment the Count ran outside, breathing heavily from exhaustion, he shook his head at Gregor.



"Gregor von Hexham! Stand down and surrender! Your resistance is futile and pointless!" He then wheezed and coughed, rubbing his forehead with his left hand.



"I'm too old for this..."

And then the sages began to paralyze even more mercenaries.

Gregor shouted back at the Count.



"Go to hell! My father would be ashamed of you, betraying us like this! I have half a mind to run back there and kick your fat--"

#### Sage A casts Paralyze on Gregor

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{24-7\} \times 5] + 23) - (10 \times 2) = 30 + 85 + 23 - 20 = 118$ , autohit!  
Gregor is Paralyzed!



*Well...this isn't good.*

#### Sage C casts Paralyze on Dalban

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{24-6\} \times 5] + 23) - (11 \times 2) = 30 + 90 + 23 - 22 = 121$ , autohit!  
Dalban is Paralyzed!

#### Sage B casts Paralyze on Riven

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{24-17\} \times 5] + 23) - (12 \times 2) = 30 + 35 + 23 - 24 = 64$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Riven is Paralyzed!

Sage D casts Paralyze on Edwin

Staff hit:  $(30 + \{24 - 21\} \times 5) + 23 - (10 \times 2) = 30 + 15 + 23 - 20 = 48$

Hit roll: 80, miss!

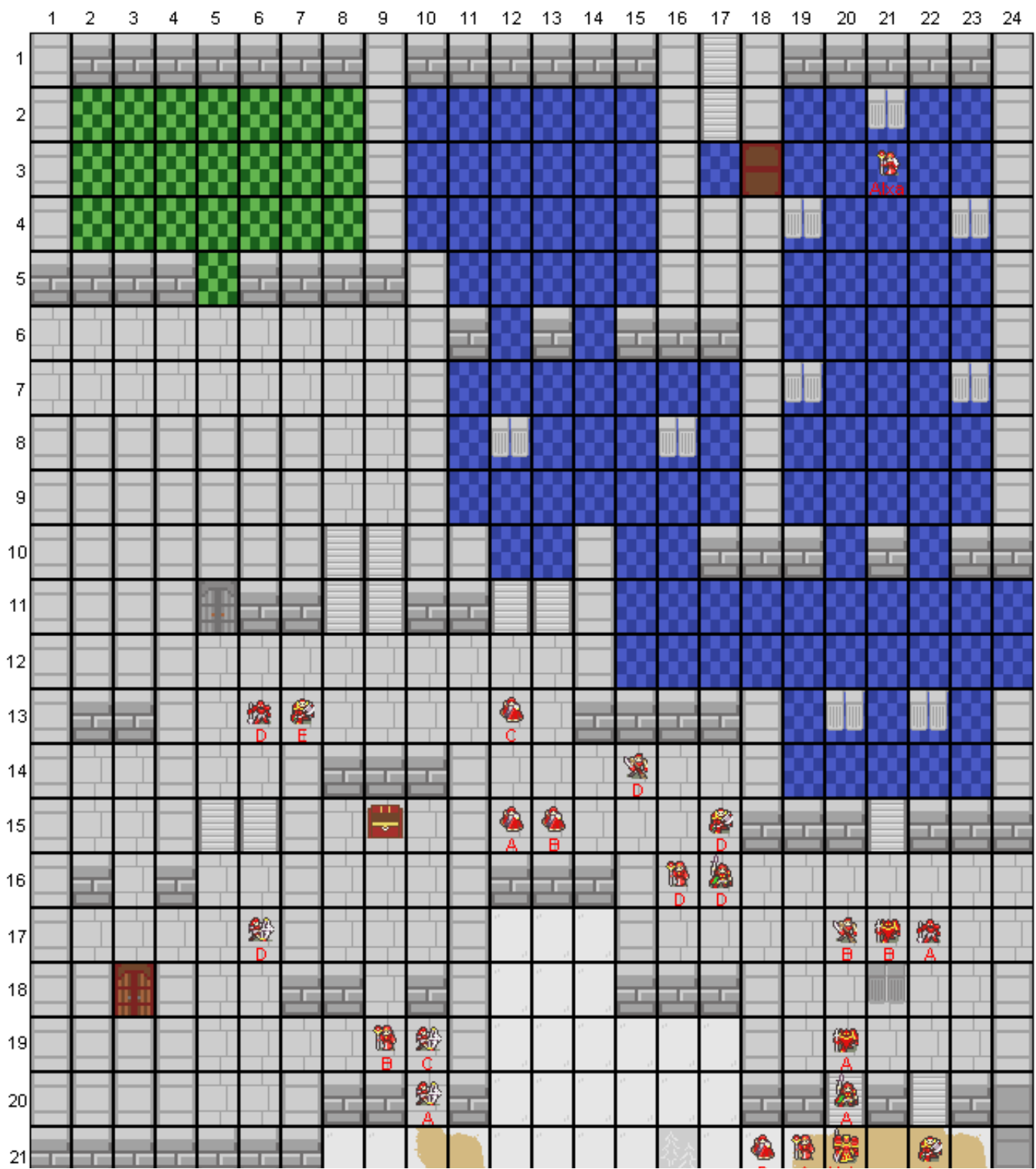
## ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja kept reins in her hands, ready to go, while Matilda watched as Olison rushed to the wagon with Derick over his shoulder.



"Olison? Where's the rest? And why you're carrying Derick like that? And who were those wyvern riders we just saw descend on the castle? Is there combat?"

## ~~Player Turn 12~~





Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 47/48 <b>Paralyze (4/5)</b><br>Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte Braxis: 34/35<br>Christopher Shields: 5/38<br>Edwin Westbringer: 19/36<br>Gregor von Hexham: 17/40<br>^ <b>Paralyze (5/5)</b><br>Raquel Torriani: 41/42<br>Riven: 30/30 <b>Paralyze (5/5)</b><br>Seyena Ikane: 37/37<br>Tantalos Forsaken: 35/35<br>Valor Inara: 40/40 <b>Paralyze (4/5)</b> |  | Heinrich von Grummel: 50/50<br>Alexandra von Grummel: 32/32<br>Menelean Elite A: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite B: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite C: 14/34<br>Menelean Elite D: 34/34<br>Menelean Elite E: 34/34<br>Elite Swordsman A: 35/35<br>Elite Swordsman B: 35/35<br>Royal Guard A: 41/41<br>Royal Guard B: 41/41<br>Royal Guard C: 41/41<br>Axe Guard A: 38/38<br>Axe Guard B: 38/38<br>Axe Guard C: 38/38<br>^ <b>Sleep (5/5)</b><br>Axe Guard D: 38/38<br>Axe Guard E: 38/38 |  |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  | Axe Guard F: 38/38<br>Sentinel A: 37/37<br>Sentinel B: 37/37<br>Sentinel D: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry B: 35/35<br>^ <b>Sleep (2/5)</b><br>Elite Sentry C: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry D: 35/35<br>Elite Sentry E: 35/35<br>Bishop A: 37/37<br>Bishop B: 37/37<br>Bishop D: 37/37<br>Sage A: 38/38<br>Sage B: 38/38<br>Sage C: 38/38<br>Sage D: 38/38                                                                                                      |  |
| Dalban: 35/35                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |

Olison looked back to the gates, then back to Matilda.



"Those riders were expecting us. We need to be ready to move. All of us managed to get out but the entire keep's on our heels now, and some of them are employing some sort of paralyzing magic." Olson helped Derick onto the wagon, taking a moment to look around. "Were the rest of our horses alright?"



"Well, all the horses were alright. The pegasi were fine as well, even that black one which keeps wandering away. It's a stubborn one. And we're ready to go back

to Fezzan any moment. Should I go and help the rest escape?"

**Tantallos: Move to 10,23 and rescue Riven.**

**Raquel: Move to (9,29); Use Rescue Staff on Tantallos, destination (9,30)**

**Ami: Move to 10,29, trade R.staff from Raquel and use it on Gregor to bring him to 10,30**



"Thank you for flying Mia's air. We hope to see you again."

**Edwin: Move to 11, 29, trade the Rescue Staff from Ami and use it on Dalban to bring him to 11, 30.**



"I hope you don't mind me borrowing this. I just think it's best to get our new friend out of that mess quickly."

ZAWM!

ZOOOM!

ZEEAM!

**Tantallos Forsaken, Riven, Gregor von Hexham and Dalban leave the map safely!**



"Sorry, everyone! I must follow Gregor!"

**Charlotte: Head to 11,30 and exit the map.**

And verily, Charlotte ran after Gregor who was tumbling down the slope.

**Charlotte Braxis leaves the map safe and sound!**

Chris tightened his grip on his crossbow and glanced at the remaining mages. Valor and Alexander were both locked down... and that left him as the only person standing between them and the enemy forces.



"...I'm staying until we get Alex and Val out. Where do you need me?"

Raquel looked at the soldiers trying to push their way through the snow on either side of the path, then at Chris. Plainly nervous at being asked, she glanced at the others, then at the spy.



"I believe we should keep clear of them, rather than attempting to stop them directly. If Lady Seyena falls back and rescues her lo...err-" Raquel blushed slightly, before amending her words. "-rescues Sir Valor, the only people they can reach are Sir Edwin and Sir Alexander." She motioned at the staff Edwin had just used to call Dalban over. "We can use that to rescue Sir Alexander. If you step back here," she motioned to the wide space between her and the wall. "they won't be able to reach you, and you can help us if those sages successfully paralyze someone else, heavens forbid."

Chris looked over the mages.



"I can probably carry one of you, yes, though I'm not very strong. But if that's where you need me, then that's where I'll be."

**Chris to 9,28.**

**Seyena trudges to 12,29, snatching the rescue staff desperately from Edwin.**

She raises the staff high. **warping Valor 1 S of her position.** After the spell was done, she tossed the staff to Raquel.



"Now that he's out of the line of fire, all we need to focus on is getting Alexander out. And that's more of your forte', I'd think."



"By the Dragon, I still don't know how we manage to get away from situations like these."

Gregor couldn't do much while tumbling down the hill like a statue, but at the sight of auburn hair following along he would have sighed in relief.



"Now I know Alexander's paaaaaaaiiiiiiiiiinnnn"



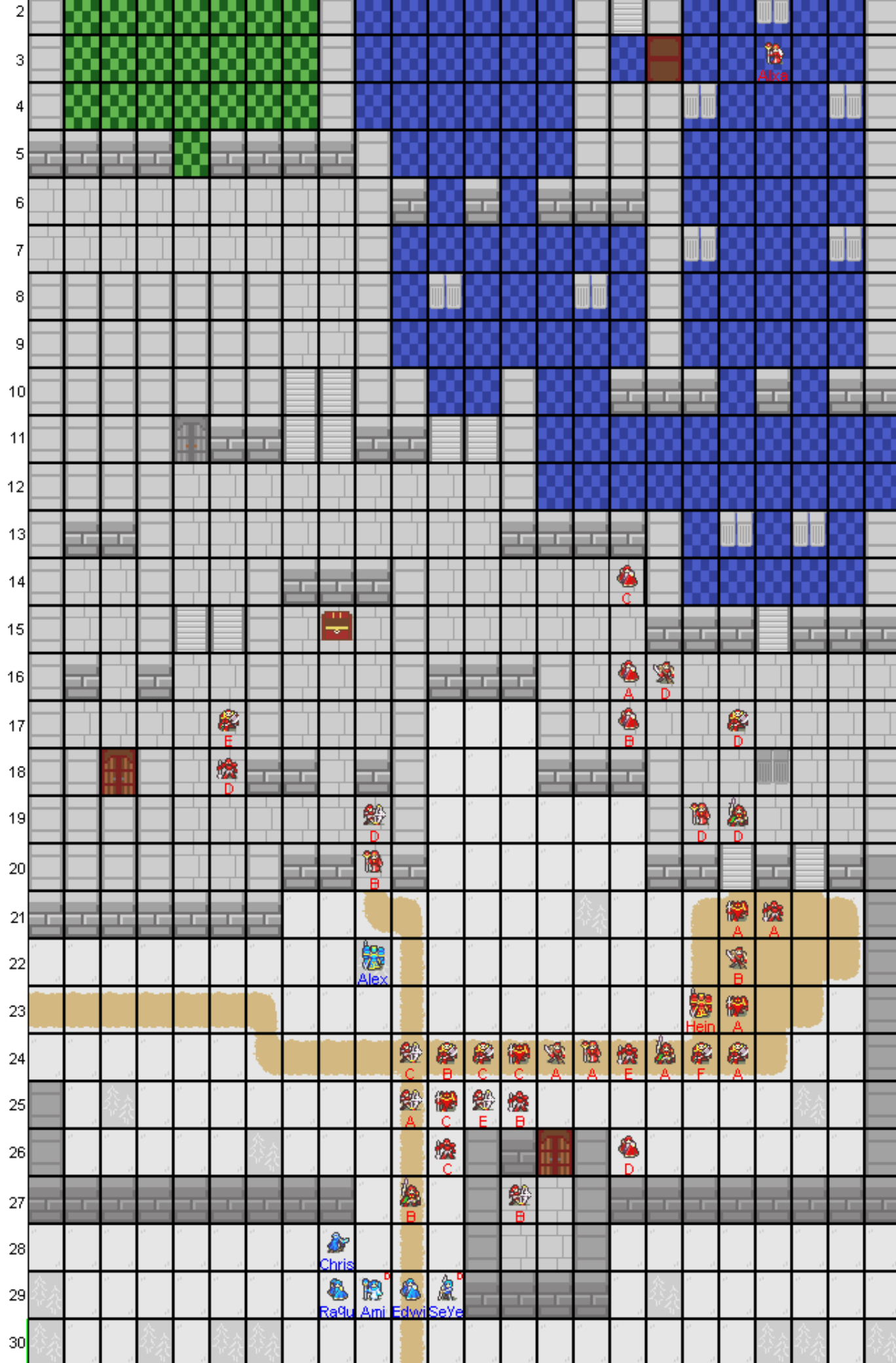
"That's our cue. Let's go."



## ~~Enemy Phase~~

### Sage D casts Paralyze on Chris

## ~~Player Turn 13~~



Weather:



Chris would have frowned, were he able.



*...Looks like I'm not going anywhere at all now. At least I can blink. And now my nose itches and I can't wipe off the blood on my face. Gods. This goes on long enough and I can see how it would drive people insane.*



**"We need to get going. We can probable roll Alex down the hill."**

**Ami: Move to 10,30**

Even less remain.

**Ami Storm leaves the map safely!**

**Edwin: Move to (12,30), Trade for Rescue Staff from Seyena, Rescue Alexander to (11,30), Trade Rescue Staff back to Seyena. Give middle finger salute to enemy sages as I leave.**

Raquel watched as the bulky knight slowly started picking up speed and snow as he went bounding down the hill, Edwin following after making a crude gesture to the enemy.

**Raquel: Move to (12,30); Trade for Rescue Staff from Seyena; Rescue Chris to (11,30); Trade Rescue Staff to Seyena**



**"My apologies for asking you to remain, Christopher. Seyena, there's no point in us remaining any longer, either. Everyone else has escaped, as well."**

Seyena looked towards the oncoming horde, realizing she was the only one left.

**She ran. *not walked*, to 12,30.**

ZOOAAMM!

ZEEUUUM!

**Alexander Jorinn, Edwin Westbringer, Christopher Shields, Raquel Torriani and Seyena Ikane leave the map safely!**

**~~Chapter 10B Complete!**

Gregor, still frozen at the bottom of the hill, could only watch in quiet terror as the

armored general rolled closer and closer. He wondered if paralysis would help prevent him from being flattened.

Alexander turned into snowy ball and smashed into Gregor, knocking him into a pile of snow at the wagon's side. Soon, everyone was near the wagon, but then the shouts 'stables!' 'get the horses!' and such came to the ears of the mercenaries. It seems that the footsoldiers of Grummel thought better and were going to have a little cavalry hunt.



"Quick, get on the wagon whoever doesn't have a mount!" Matilda helped drag Christopher onto the wagon as the spy suddenly began to feel he can move his muscles again - just like the other paralyzed members of the group.



"Tenebra."

A black pegasus appears.



"Ah, good, let..."



"..."



"Huh?"

Ami looks at Tenebra.



"That why Mia muttering to herself."



"Ow."

The slightly-dazed soldier helped Charlotte into the wagon before hoisting himself up.

From top of the hill, they could hear neighing of many. *many* horses and angry shouts of their riders.



"Is it everyone? We have to run, people!"



"Yeah, but where will we go? Anywhere but here?"



"To Fezzan, it's a free city, and there I can ask my sister for protection. It's the least we can try to do at the moment, unless you have better ideas."

Seyena quickly got back into the saddle, looking around for Sal.



"Salvatore! We need to go keep an eye on the Grummel troops, make sure they don't get too close while we're unaware!"

And with those words, she gave a quick tug of the reins, and Ilya started to rise to a safe altitude, so Seyena could get a gander at what was going on at the top of the hill.

Now safely in the wagon, Gregor began helping others inside, focusing on the ones just coming out of paralysis themselves.



"Fezzan sounds good! Grummel wouldn't dare send his troops too far from his territory, otherwise he risks other lords learning that he is disobeying the king's pardon!"

Matilda turned to help the last stragglers get onto the wagon. Just as Gregor stepped onto it, Anja snapped the reins, and the horses took off with incredible speed.

Even from the low height Seyena could see a wave of riders. At first she could count ten, then twenty, and then the number definitely went into fifty of Grummel soldiers. It seemed that a whole cavalry unit was in pursuit of them.

Then, from some small chicken coop in some village nearby, they could hear the sing of the rooster announcing the new day.

Chris crouched in the back of the cart and drew his crossbow.



"These guys just don't give up, do they?"



"Gregor, think it's a good idea to shoot their horses down?"



"Aye!"

The wyvern rider rose into the air, keeping up with the wagon and helping Seyena keep an eye on the encroaching enemy forces.



"Never ah dull moment, ahah!"



"I suppose you could say that." She scanned the cavalry troop, quickly becoming worried, turning to Salvatore.



"With that many, they could easily split up and flank the wagon from another path. Even if they don't, I think Anja would be hard-pressed to outrun them with a fully-loaded wagon. She looked around. **searching for nearby mountainous or valley areas. She also tried to gauge how far away that village with the chicken coop was.**

None of those areas were available. Most of the topography around included single hills or vast patches of snow-covered lowlands.

And the closest village was in the other direction they were fleeing now.

A fireball struck the ground just few metres behind the speeding wagon, seems like there are mage knights in the pursuit unit.



"Never mind, then. They shot first."

Chris went to a prone position to help aim, then sighted down his crossbow to the head of the horse in the lead. After a moment to make sure his aim was steady, he shot.

One of the horses neighed in despair and tumbled onto the road, knocking its rider off, and several of the others tumbled over as well. But the pursuit group didn't stop.

Anja turned with the horses to the left to keep on the road, but the wagon almost fell onto one side as the ice under the snow made it slide dangerously for a moment.

And then a crossbow bolt struck the planks just in front of Chris.

Alexander stood in the wagon's opening (as well as he could while still giving Chris a small amount of aiming room, anyway), shield up.



"I'm going to protect us from the archers. If they go for a side of the wagon, tell me... and that was a mage. Goooddammit."

Chris pulled the bolt out of the wood and loaded it, then fired at another horse.



"Thanks for the cover Alex."



"No problem."

Olson remained at the wagon's flanks every step of the way, his throwing axe in one hand and his loyal horse's reins in the other. He would continually gauge his speed, trying to get just close enough to get a good throw in.



"Hey! Over here! Come on! Think you can hit me?!" The paladin shouted backwards with vitriol, attempting to draw (literal) fire away from the wagon.



"Why are they still pursuing? Are they that desperate to see us dead? Please, pardon me a moment, Alexander."

Raquel moved forward on the opposite side of Alexander from Chris, trying to get a clear view of the enemy soldiers. At this distance, though, trying to actually hit anything with her spells would be next to impossible. Raising her old, trusty Thunder tome, she

murmured the necessary incantations to start lobbing wide orbs of electricity out from the back of the wagon. Aiming more for area more than injury, she directed the bolts down in front of the oncoming horses, trying to spook them and distract the riders from their attacks.



"Sal, any ideas? We need to find a way to slow them down."



"Ey're not much o' ones ta give up." The wyvern rider called, watching the cavalry force chase the wagon.



"Oi think Oi got ah bit o' somethin' cookin'... Tell me if'in yah see ah good rock 'er tree. 'Ey can' much chase if'in 'eir way be blocked, now can 'ey?" Sal looked around for any trees or large rocks that looked manageable. "Alroight Ormm, toime we did some 'eavy liftin' Oi think." The wyvern flexed its claws in response.

The balls of lighting struck in the road, knocking off few horses and making holes in the trampled snow, but it was barely effective.

The wyvern knight couldn't find anything appropriate for the job before he noticed a pile of wide tree logs stockpiled on the side. Some industrious lumberjack must've placed them here for later. Some of these were as long as Ormm, from head to tail. He had to act quickly though, as the wagon was mere seconds away from the pile, and so was the pursuing party.

Doesn't look like there's time to set up a roadblock, but the wyvern knight has another idea... Salvatore nudged Ormm to dive, and the pair swooped towards the logs. The wyvern dug into the logs as it tried to wrench one of the largest from the pile, claws digging into the wood.



"Come on Ormm, I know you can do it! Just a bit more!"

If Ormm can manage it and get into the air, he'll survey the lay of the land, looking for when they hit a low land and generally level area.



"Alroight, one shot at this..." With a harsh turn towards the pursuers,

Salvatore and his wyvern swooped down once more and the wyvern released the log to hopefully roll towards them with their momentum behind it. They both hurried to return to the wagon's side, not even taking time to see the hopeful carnage generated by that.

The wyvern knight found a perfect, flat part of the road and released the log down onto the swarm of pursuers...

\*\*\*KZZZZZZZZZZTT\*\*\*



"...the log smashed into the first line of the pursuit group, and the pursuers ended in a huge pile of horses and men. That's how our venerable ancestor first developed tactical wyvern bombardment, still used in our army." The kids that were sitting around the elderly general all let a loud 'ooooh' of awe and admiration.

"Grandpa, grandpa!" One of the younger boys suddenly raised his hand.



"Yes, Londo?"

"Tell us how he developed *strategical* wyvern bombardment for Lord Yung!"

"Yeah!" One of the girls agreed. "And then, and then, how he rescued that young maiden who then was his wife!" The elderly man laughed at the kids and then rubbed his chin.



"Hah, you little urchins... well, I guess you don't have to go to sleep yet... alright, it all begun when..."

\*\*\*KZZZZZZZZZZTT\*\*\*

...the log smashed into the first line of the pursuit group, and the pursuers ended in a huge pile of horribly mangled/crushed/smashed corpses. The snowy cloud have risen and the neighing and screams was clearly heard, but it was obvious that the pursuers were stopped once and for all.



"That's... horribly effective."

Seyena looked down onto the carnage as Ilya buzzed by, suppressing a bout of squeamishness. A second later, Ilya skidded to the ground next to the wagon, sending



up a cloud of snow.

The wyvern flew above the wagon as both rider and mount surveyed the disaster.



"Oof, tha' looks loike some roight bloody business 'here. Poor bastards..."

The rider closed his eyes, and mumbled a prayer for the fallen.



"Hold true, yah o' dark surroundin's an' cruel machinations, fer all be weighed in the end, an' any can be redeemed through loife. Those who have departed are free o' pain, ta seek 'eir own ends an' be balanced in the end by the grand scales o' fate an' seek the peace each man has sown. Let it be said, so shall we join 'em when our time has come, ta be measured an' weighed accordin' ta our actions an' thoughts. May 'eir souls foind the peace 'ey seek in the next, an' the darkness be cast from 'em."

He left the last part off, for it wasn't custom for the one who begun it to finish it. A silent reminder to those dear lost, should it not be filled, or a reminder of friends near if spoken.

Olison only barely registered the looming shadow passed overhead, but his horse seemed to recognize the fact with a sudden burst of speed.



"What? Steil! Slow-" He barely managed to get out before a whoosh above his head sounded, the wyvern dropped its payload, and the resulting carnage ensued. Only after the snowy dust dissipated did the paladin managed to wrest his horse down to a trot for just a few moments. "...Never trifle in the affairs of wyverns..." He exhaled slowly, examining the scene for any stragglers from a distance before picking up the pace again.



"Oh my. I wonder if dragons were dangerous because they were essentially those with more cunning and a better grip."

Gregor had been preparing a javelin toss for the first rider to come close enough, but lowered his arm.





"I know it was done to defend ourselves...but I feel sorry for them. And poor Alexandra's gonna have to deal with the aftermath."



"Oh, right. Alexandra..."

Charlotte had three arrows under three fingers, ready to fire when Sal dropped the bomb.



"Definitely not a way I would want to die."



"But, I'm not trying to run down and massacre everyone inside the wagon with overwhelming numbers, so tough luck."

Anja yawned and then leaned against Alexander's side.



"Hmm, we should be in Fezzan in few hours time. Do you need to stop and rest on the way there, though? Personally I don't think I will be sleepy for some time..."

Alexander quietly snaked an arm around Anja's waist.

Anja murmured quietly.



"Mmmf... Alexander, dear...?" The gypsy pressed against her knightman.



"Um... you're squeezing a little too hard. And squishing my organs."

Alexander relinquishes his grip a bit.



"Sorrriyyy..."



"Teehee, was only joking, silly knightguy." With that, Anja closed her eyes and went back to sleep.

Salvatore directed Ormm to go lower, closer to the wagon, but still keeping a safe distance so as to not possibly interfere with its movement nor it with the wyvern's.



"Everyone alroight in 'ere? Hell o' ah ruckus all tha' was, what tipped 'em off on us?" He called down to the wagon, doing a visual head count to check to see nobody fell off the wagon or anything.



"Not sure." Gregor responded to the wyvern knight's question. "We accidentally alerted a few of them inside, but I thought we had taken them down before they could sound the alarm. Next thing I know the whole castle is up in arms."



"Such 'ow it goes Oi guess. If'in anyone's wounded Oi got some medicine on me, if'in need be."

Salvatore sunk in the saddle, not needing to give direct guidance anymore, beyond the rare gentle nudge this way or that. Something was bugging him though.



"... What do we do now? Oi thought this trip was fer tha stone, but we don' 'ave it, an' Oi bet we all 'ave ah good guess as ta where it went. Oi don' think tha noble would much 'ppreciate us comin' back empty 'anded."



"You've got a point. Ernest's interception team is probably on their way back to Kesselring. Other than Matilda, we directly disobeyed a Berebian officer's orders and got nothing for it. I don't think we can go back there, now..."

Olison and his horse trotted up to the wagon's flank again.



"They expected us." Olson felt like stating what he felt was obvious. "If our best lead couldn't manage to put us a step ahead of them, then our options are rapidly dwindling. Call it a hunch, but I have the feeling Lord Tunhausen thinks the same."



"Are you suggesting we go back to Berebia then, see if Tunhausen is willing to work with us once more? I mean, Charlotte does have a point that we kinda disobeyed his orders..."

Olison looked to the side, into the wagon and at Gregor.



"I'm not suggesting it outright. But I don't preclude it as an option. And as far as I'm concerned, we disobeyed the Captain- Danya's orders, not Tunhausen's." The horseman made a slight shrug.



"I think what Olison means is, whether we return to Tunhausen or not, we're intellectually flanked. As we saw from the grave robbery, Miss Kesselring's greedy hands are slowly spreading across the world. If we keep trying to futilely 'stay ahead' of the one person *we're supposed to be advisors against*, the world will close up around us."



"Playing keep-away with Dragonstones is just not working. As much as I hate to say it, our old team - the same one that fought through hundreds of powerful soldiers and ascended Prixima's castle - is back together and stronger than ever. Eventually, we're going to have to cut the problem down by her roots."

"Wait." Dalban moved away from his lonely spot at the corner of the wagon.



"Lady Prixima is doing what? And what's with Dragonstones? I think I need some introduction into your situation..."

Salvatore was about to press on with his question due to not having a satisfying answer, but Charlotte finally provided it.



"Roight, tha's what Oi'm wantin' ta hear. Ah plan, somethin' ta do. All we're doin' is reactin' ta 'er, an' tha' ain' no way ta win ah foight, we gotta make 'er react ta us."



"I agree, Charlotte. The only way to get rid of a weed is to pull it up by its roots."

Chris examined his switchblade.



"And frankly, I've done enough bad things in my life. It's about time I did the right thing for once and bury a blade in the heart of someone who truly deserves it."

Olison slowly nodded.



"I didn't want it to end the direct way, but ultimately that is what the hand we have been dealt demands we do." The cavalier looked apprehensive for a moment, but dispelled it "My point is we should not have to do this alone. Tunhausen can be a very useful ally here."

Dalban blinked and instinctively reached for his belt, but he had no sword.



"Are you... enemies of Kesselring family?" He asked, visibly nervous.

Olison's side glancing eye shot to Dalban the moment he spoke.



"Ah. Right. Where to even start..." Olison sighed.

Alexander sighs, and looks at Dalban.



"Well... enemies of PRIXIMA, to be specific. Not Menelea, not any family of PRIXIMA... just PRIXIMA. She's got some plans in store that... would be rather bad for the rest of Menelea, and beyond."



"We weren't... until she tried to kill us. Hell, I was under her command for years, just look at my armor. It's Kesselring make."



"I and Leo haven't been at the castle for eight years by now. I hardly remember things back there, especially given we left in our teens."



"Say... what *is* your friend's relationship with his mother like?" Riven asked Dalban.

Charlotte made little hand motions while explaining.



"We're (mostly) ex-mercenaries. We worked under Lady Kesselring, collecting a 'dragonstone' for her, and finally finished... then immediately framed for horrible crimes. Now we suspect she's collecting other stones, too, for some sinister purpose we can't afford to shrug away. It's longer than that, but I'm tired, my hair's messy, and I really wish this place had seasons other than winter."



"To be fair, I don't think we actually know what her plans are exactly. But her preparations for them have involved a lot of meaningless bloodshed and have made almost all of us enemies of Menelea at some point. But enough about that; what do you know, sir?"

The last question was directed at Dalban.

Dalban looked half-shocked, half-terrified.



"Woah, Lady Prixima was... well a little eccentric as far as I remember, but she wasn't really dabbler in massacres or arcane stuff like Dragonstones. That's, hmm. That changes a lot of things. I and Leo have been assaulted just shortly after we decided to head home, and that was... uh, three months by now? If Lady Prixima went crazy it could be her thugs, or maybe someone feared our return to Kesselring... I left him with some mercenaries, then things turned worse. I got captured and the only rumor about him was that he headed toward Mercia."



"I'm not sure how he will react if he finds out about this whole affair in wrong way. He could rush to her side with the mercenaries I left him with *and* even more hired men from Mercian guilds. Dammit, I have to find him, somehow... Do you have a spare horse?"



"I'm sure we can get a horse in Fezzan, unless Anja can spare any from pulling the wagon..."



"No I can't! Remember that messenger guy? He never returned the one I gave him!"

Dalban let out a sigh.



"Uh, alright. A horse... I need to get a weapon as well just in case. Fists don't do well against bandits, assassins and other folk."



"One of us fliers can take him. It would be faster, as well."



"Mercia's a long way away though, and there's no telling how long it would take for you, Ami, or Sal to find this 'Leo' and get back. Just saying."



"We can jus' get 'em ah horse in Fezzan, if'in we're stayin' 'here. Oi think we got 'nough ta scrape together."



"... I just noticed I did not kill anyone during our escape. That feels awkward."



"Well, if I manage to live through this and have grandchildren, I'll have one of the best stories to tell them." Edwin mumbled and he heated the air inside the wagon with his magic for comfort.



"If we can resupply, that would be most excellent. But I'm not sure if we have much money available..."



"Didn't we find a sword on our way out? Give it to the new guy so he'll stop complaining." Valor said from near the back of the wagon.



"He said horse, Valor, horse."



"Fine with me. You could even give me a pouch of coins and I'm sure I could find a cheap horse and even cheaper sword. But that's when we get to Fezzan."

The journey, even if tense, wasn't disrupted by anything.

They've passed the gates, and the guards didn't stop them.

They got to a small plaza in front of an inn, and there was no wanted posters for them on the nearby post.





"Well, that's that. I will now go and find my sister. Hopefully she is already at the keep. I will be back in a moment." With that, Matilda stepped from the wagon and rushed toward the city center. Dalban left the wagon as well and looked at Chris.



"That sword of yours... looks a bit bulky for a spy." He nodded toward lancereaver.

Chris looked at it.



"I suppose so. I meant to give it to you earlier during the escape, but things were a bit... hectic. You can have it anyway. It might come in handy."

He passed it over.



"Thanks. It will certainly be. I want to find Leo or any rumors about him as soon as possible... can I have, like 100 coins? Horses are rarely more expensive than that."

Chris turned out his pockets, revealing he only had the switchblade, the crossbow, a half-full pouch of lockpicks, and a nebulous quantity of marshmallows.



"Sorry, I'm broke too."



"I could probably go and earn fifty gold, but I don't think my fiance would approve of my fund-raising methods."



"I'm trying to move past that part of my life anyway. Gregor might have some money. You could try him."



Dalban let out a sigh and then moved up to Gregor.



"Gregor, I need to borrow some coinage. Fifty coins, perhaps."

Gregor looked at Dalban in surprise.



"I was sorta hoping to buy some medicine with this money. Is it really so important to find this Leo person?"



"I've been keeping Lady Prixima's son under watch for years, I don't want to fail the task now. Anyway, I will find the horse on my own. Thanks for the rescue, but here we will part ways. Good luck with whatever you will try to accomplish." With that, he quickly walked away.

### **NPC: Dalban leaves da party~~**

Few seconds later, Matilda have returned - on a horse, with a rag-covered staff in her left hand.



"Guys," She looked as if she hurried to get back to the group. "Do you know any Berebian bishops of noble standing, per chance? Apparently we're not the first people today who bothered my cousin about Prixima and her doings."

Charlotte glanced around before replying to Matilda.



"Lord Tunhausen must have come here. It seems we're one step behind him. What did your cousin say?"

Matilda let out a hum.



"Well, according to Syrea, he came to her office with two companions, a dark-haired mage of some kind and blue-haired female soldier. He warned my cousin that

Prixima Kesselring have gone mad, that she is gathering Dragonstones and is a threat to whole of Menelea. My sister agreed to meet with him in few minutes. Then he said that they've stopped at 'The Road's End' inn in the northern district, it's on the other side of the town, and that's where she would find him. That's when they left. Syrea said that he left a moment before I got to her office."



"That may be our best source of information yet! Come on, Gregor, let's go before their meeting is adjourned!"

**Charlotte grabs Gregor by the waist and runs toward Road's End.**



"But I can take you there on my hor- They're gone... well. What are we supposed to do now? Are we gonna follow them?" Anja suddenly woke up.



"Oh, oh, I just remembered something!" She hopped down from the wagon.



"I will be back in some time! Don't leave without me! Take care of the wagon, by the way!" And then she ran away in opposite direction to Gregor and Charlotte.

Alex just stands there to keep the wagon safe.

Salvatore watched the scene with a small amount of amusement, relaxing in his saddle.



"Well, off 'ey go."

After a moment or two, Sal slipped off of the saddle and touched down with a clank.



"So, anyone got ah thin' in moind ta tide ourselves over til' 'ey get back? Don' think Oi can much stand jus' waitin' fer 'em."



"Does anyone have any cards?"

Valor just shook his head.



'Heh. I'm much used to waiting, myself."



"I'm shadowing Gregor and Charlotte. They need someone watching over them in a situation like this."

Chris darted off toward the Road's End himself.

---

When Charlotte and Gregor got to the Road's End and entered it, there was no sign of Mannan... and then, in the corner, they could see a blue-haired lady in purple armor going upstairs, seemingly following someone.

Gregor, badly out of breath from the mad dash across town, pointed towards where the blue-haired woman went.



"That might...have been...Captain Danya. Should we...follow?"

Charlotte nods and follows the blue haired lady.

Thusly the pair went upstairs. They heard a thud as the second door on the right closed.

In the meanwhile, Christopher managed to get to the street at which the inn stood.

Chris headed inside and, seeing Gregor and Charlotte heading upstairs, followed them up, staying out of sight.

Charlotte put a finger to her mouth as if to "sshhhh" Gregor. **She leaned in close to the seam between the door and the wall, trying to hear anything that might be going on in the room.**

"I've brought Lady Commander." Some chairs were moved around, and then it was silent for few seconds.

"Lady Commander, I really need your help in this matter. You're commanding largest city garrison on this side of Menelea. Could you spare soldiers, or supplies? We cannot let

Prixima do what she wants..."

"Call me Syrea, really. As for the soldiers, no - we cannot give you any. We cannot deploy forces against anyone of Menelean nobility unless we get a permit from the King or the royal advisors..."

"What about supplies, then. Weapons? Spellbooks? Staves?"

"Dag is right - what's left of my family's riches was spent on this journey and our meager supplies, so if you cannot spare soldiers, then maybe some weapons."

"Hmm... Wait, you want to go to Kesselring castle only by yourselves?"

"Not really... Magister Tiron will provide us with his magical transportation, and I still have to pay him, but that won't leave me with lots of gold. I will have to hire mercenaries, and they would need supplies-" Someone scoffed.

"Hmph! Mercenaries. My Lord, don't you remember what happened last time? Not only they went on to join the grave robbers, but then they ran for the border. I won't be surprised if von Hexham and his friends turned sides and are servants at Prixima's castle already."

"That was uncalled for, Danya. Besides, we don't know what really happened - we can't assume they betrayed us simply because they crossed the border."

"You're forgetting their unwillingness to stop the grave robbers, not a word of explanation from them, and the recent assassination attempt on your life and Lady Theresa's. My Lord, as far as it goes, they might've been supplying information to that witch since we hired them!"

"You're overreacting. Did you wake up on the wrong side of the bed today?" Charlotte could hear a chair falling down - someone must've stood up rather quickly.

"You two, stop it at once." There was some grumbling after this.

"Oh, I almost forgot. My cousin have shown up shortly after you left. Apparently she is traveling with a group of mercenaries that are involved with Prixima Kesselring in some way."

"Mercenaries? What sort of mercenaries, from where?"

"We didn't have much time to chat, really..."



"It's Danya! No way am I getting us branded traitors by Prixima AND Mannan!"

**Charlotte slowly opened the door and put her hands in the air to signal her**

**lack of hostility.** She also nudged Gregor to do the same.



"We come in peace!"

Gregor stepped forward, hands in the air but ready to act if a certain Pegasus captain made a hostile move.



"Hello everyone. Good to see you again."

Chris immediately moved to the side of the door as soon as his friends were through it, crossbow in hand. If the people in there started attacking Gregor and Charlotte, he could at least give them a bit of covering fire.



"Oh lord..."



"Hi guys."



"Gregor, Charlotte!" Manna stood up and moved closer, shaking the hands of the two.



"I was worried you might've been killed during the border hostilities! Please, come sit down, there's lot to talk about. You're truly a godsend. Are there any of your friends here as well?"



"And close the door, no need to make this conversation louder than necessary." The green-haired lady seated at the table smiled.



"Hey, I remember you. You and some others helped us during that siege back in the summer, didn't you?"

Chris put away the crossbow and came around the corner as well, closing the door behind him. It sounded like things weren't going to turn hostile, and he needed to get out of that paranoid 'always be ready to kill' mindset he had developed from working for PRIXIMA for so long.



"I believe so, ma'am. Sorry for following you two unannounced; I wanted to make sure the pair of you would be all right."

He turned to Mannan.



"So... what's been going on with you since we parted ways?"



"Hey, and who are you?" Danya's hand reached to the blade at her belt, but Mannan stopped her with his hand.



"Danya, it's Tantallos Forsaken. He is Gregor's friend. Don't you recognize the robe?"



"Uh... he was shorter last time... I think?"

Chris pushed off his hood.



"I'm sure Tantallos would think that was funny! No, I'm Christopher Shields. I'm one of the Forsaken Clan, however."



"I'm not sure if we've actually met. A lot's happened, and I've been distracted by... personal matters. Regardless, now you know my name. Can you tell me what this meeting is about?"

As was his wont, Chris immediately leaned on the wall.



"I would just like to say, before Danya kills us or has an aneurism: we had some very good reasons to disobey orders in the earlier mission. Two of our most competent fighters - which we would not be here without - were within enemy lines. From my eavesdropping, however, it seems we still share a common goal."



"We're all here, sir, plus the two extra friends Charlotte mentioned."

He didn't even remark on Chris' sudden appearance; he would have been more surprised had the assassin not followed along.

Danya let out a 'hmph!' when she heard Charlotte.



"If you're talking about Prixima Kesselring, yes. We were worried you might've ran back to her or something of that kind. We lost track of you when you went for the border, and afterwards I didn't have enough money to further employ spies."



"Now we're here."



"Yes, indeed. We are trying to find some... any support in Menelea, and Lady Commander here is the first person to lend her ear. But, with support or not, we will storm the castle and I've managed to secure a way in that will let us bypass the courtyard and lower floors, and the apparently huge army of mercenaries that Prixima have hired." He nodded when he heard that rest of the team is here.





"Clearly, the mad plan we made up is looking better and better with every second, but I have to ask - are you and your group willing to participate in attack on PRIXIMA's castle? I must warn you that I no longer have large sum of money to speak of. The most I can give you would be enough for you to buy some medicine or maybe a weapon or two."



"This I would do for free. Yes, I'll go with your plan."



"Well, I admit the idea of attacking PRIXIMA directly has come up a few times as of late...I guess some of us would be willing to join in, though I'm not sure they all will."



"Very well. I won't even try hiding that for some it might be a suicide mission... but I have nothing left to lose, really."



"I'm here to help only because I was ordered to by Count Mackerey." Dag shrugged.



"Well, I surely can provide supplies, but not weapons. Providing weapons to third parties could be done only as act of counter-insurgency and because PRIXIMA Kesselring doesn't act like she plans an insurgency, I cannot justify this in any way. However, we're free to hand over medicine to people in need. Poor, cold-stricken group of traveling mercenaries sure count." Syrea winked at Gregor.



"I'm not worried about it being a suicide mission. I won't be able to rest easy until my conscience is clear, and I can only do that by making sure PRIXIMA is stopped."

Gregor shook his head.





"I want to stop PRIXIMA as well, but let's do everything in our power to get back from this alive, okay? I'm sure many of us would like to live a somewhat-normal life after this. Grow old, have families, stuff like that." He cast a sidelong glance at Charlotte as he said this. "Do you even have any sort of escape plan yet?"



"Well, uh... that depends if Magister Tiron can do the teleportation trick twice in a row in short amount of time. That's why I said it might be a suicide mission. Then, again... we have a Kesselring officer on our side who was my inside informant for few weeks now. If we manage to kill PRIXIMA, the mercenaries might lose heart, and the soldiers might stand down at the officer's orders. At least, that's what I hope will happen."



"I say we do it. Suicide mission or not, we may be the last hope anyone has of taking out that witch. Of course, a few - Raquel, for one - might be a little hesitant to join, having no initial connection to PRIXIMA."



"Then she can-"



"Easily refuse to come with us, of course. She could stay with Magister Tiron for his safety, or wait for us here if she is so inclined. How many of your companions might be hesitant, though?"



"Hard to say exactly. I'm guessing quite a few will want revenge against her - everyone in this room included. And even those that don't might come along to help their friends. You said you managed to turn one of PRIXIMA's officers. How will we recognize him or her? Code words or something?"



"Hmm, her name is 'Marpa' and she have been given something that will be involved with Magister Tiron's teleportation trick. I've been exchanging letters with her

for some time... of course it might be all a fake and everyone in PRIXIMA's castle knows about this and we will get killed the moment we land in her chambers." Dag coughed at this rather pessimistic view of the future.



"Sorry for that. But the last half year robbed me of much of my former optimism. Gregor, how soon would your friends be able to travel with us? Are you staying here for a while, or did you just arrive? I was hoping we could leave at tomorrow morning."



"Captain Marpa's your contact?! I wonder if her husband's involved as well...and tomorrow morning? That's a little sudden; I would have to check with everyone else, see if they'd be ready."



"I'll go ask. If Charlotte can't watch out for you - and you for her - I don't think I could do any better."

He gave Gregor a quick, reassuring smile, then left and went back to the wagon, politely closing the door behind him as he did.

---

Seyena suddenly felt someone pulling on her hand. It was a boy, no older than ten.

"Miss? Could you help me?" He asked with slightly teary eyes.

Valor looked at the kid.



"What do you need, kid?"

The boy looked at Valor with some uncertainty.

"Um, my puppy ran into an alley but my mom told me to never go into alleys alone... can you go with me?"



"She warned you about alleys but not talking to armed strangers? Well whatever. Let's go find your dog. Which way?"

"This way!" The boy quickly ran toward the alley between two tall houses not far from

the plaza.

Valor followed after the boy, even though he had a feeling it might be a trap.

"**This way!**" The boy led Valor into an alley, and then around the corner, and then another. Valor could clearly hear some doggy whimpering behind a pile of crates and barrels.

"**Can you get him out of there?"**

Valor looked around, and provided he saw no one laying in wait, began moving the topmost crate/barrel. There was, indeed, no-one else as far as Valor could tell. And then he moved the topmost crate.

And then he noticed that there was no dog.

In the very same moment, he felt something sharp pushing at his back.



"I wouldn't recommend shouting for help, my friend. You may, however, turn around at your leisure."



"**Yeah, see, this is why I don't normally do charity work.**" Valor said sourly as he turned around. "**... I don't think I know you. What do you want?**" *More importantly, can I get help here before I die?*



"Oh, indeed, we never did the formalities. I'm Ernest. Chris' former companion. You might have heard of me." Ernest went silent for a second, and then his eyes *flashed* slightly.



"I would like to offer you a deal, Valor."

Valor narrowed his eyes at Ernest.



"I don't seem to recall him mentioning you, at least not by name. And, obviously, you have my attention."



"You were always a little detached."



"First, I will hand you a small pill of poison and you will slip it into Christopher's drink. Secondly, after that, you will take Seyena and leave for Berebia, never to come back, and you will never again be bothered by me or Lady PRIXIMA. As you will agree, this is an easy and simple deal."



"Except for the part where I poison a trained spy, yeah. ... I understand you're offering me my life here. But y'know I need something for my trouble. I'm a professional after all."



"I'm not offering anything." Ernest slid his hand inside his long coat.



"But if you fail your this easy assignment, then by tomorrow morning you will no longer have a girlfriend."

Valor grit his teeth, but otherwise kept his anger in check.



"But I have your word that once I do this, Seyena and I are safe. No assassins, no bounties, no more surprises from your lord?"



"Of course, as long as you migrate to Berebia. But that's not far from here, so it wouldn't be a problem. I believe that we have reached a consensus here?"



"What about Mercia instead? I'd like the chance to return home."



"If that is your wish." He pulled out a tiny sphere, which looked like a piece of white candy, or to be more accurate, a sugary pearl.



"It dissolves fastest in alcohol. It should paralyze and choke Christopher within a minute after digestion, but enough vomiting or healing magic can remove the poison before it spreads. And you know what that means for Seyena." He reached with the hand toward Valor, ready to pass the little poison pearl.

Valor took the pearl in his gloved hand, and put it in his pocket.



"Yeah. I get it."

Ernest nodded, and then he began to get transparent, until he disappeared completely.

"Do not fail." His somewhat distant voice came from behind the pile of barrels, and then Valor was alone. There was no puppy, and no kid, at all.

Valor quietly returned to the group.

---

When Chris got the group, he waved to let them know everything was fine.



"I hope I'm not interrupting anything. Here's the deal. There's a plot to launch an assault on a certain witch we're all familiar with and have no love for. It's likely we may not come back from it. So... are you in, or out?"



"Why would I come so far to turn back now?"



"What Alex said. Besides, we've all our own bones to pick with PRIXIMA."

Chris nodded to Seyena and leaned on the side of the wagon.



"H-how likely?"

Chris shrugged.



"It depends. Gregor and Charlotte are getting more details. Gregor just wanted to know who would be ready in the morning to go."



"Well, I... don't really have anyplace else to go..."



"We could use your magic, Riven. I'm not putting any pressure on you. I understand if you don't want to risk your life. I'm only saying that your help would be appreciated."



"Well... you are the strongest group of people I've ever seen, and PRIXIMA still wants my head last I heard..."



"I suppose I've always wanted to be strong enough to smash a Matriarch's cabal. If we can do this, I'll bet I could do anything!"



"Um, if you guys die I'm going to run, though. Like, immediately."



"No hard feelings. I wouldn't do the same, but my stake is a bit more personal than yours."



"Should we be discussing this in the open street? In, at any rate."



"There's no one around Valor, and I don't think anyone here is going to sell the rest of us out."



"I'm just saying we should be careful. The last thing we need is for one the witch's goons to overhear, afterall." Valor said with a grimace. "if we're staying here anyway, we might want to get ourselves to an inn, rather than discuss these things in broad daylight."

Chris looked around, then at Valor.



"Is Anja not back yet? We should probably wait for her before we go anywhere."



"I don't think she'd have trouble finding us. But, if you're sure."

Edwin shrugged and then smiled.



"I'm involved so deep now that I HAVE to see this through if I want to get back to my studies eventually. Despite the fact that I want to anyway. Of course I'm in."



"Through the hell's 'emselves. Takes more ta shake me an' ah petty chance o' dyin'. Yah got mah lance an' Ormm's claws at yer service, if'in yah don' moind ah bit o' bellowin', heh."



"I surely don't mind, Sal. You're a good man. Storming the gates just



wouldn't be the same without you."

Chris looked at everyone in turn.



"I mean that for all of you. I don't think any of us expected this road to lead here, to end here, when for whatever reasons we had that all of us originally signed on with PRIXIMA. But I wouldn't trade our struggle for anything. In an odd sort of way, I have to thank her. It was because I worked for her that I came to be here, to discover people that I cared for more than myself, to find out that I even *could* care for others..."

He glanced at Ami.



"...To think about love..."

He looked at Tantallos.



"...and to belong to a real home. A family."



"After this goes down, I don't know what will happen. Doubtless we'll all go our separate ways. But I would like to see all of you again, from time to time."

Olison, who was nearby tending to his supplies off his horse's back, broke his silence with a dry laugh.



"I think you can surmise my answer, then." The cavalier finished his organizations and tied his pack onto the saddle. "I've seen plenty of noble's dirty work, but PRIXIMA's disgusts me most by far. Don't think I'll simply sit idle for this." He declared solemnly, turning his gaze onto the group. But somewhere in that steely face, he threw a concerned glance at Matilda.



"Frankly, I was supposed to return to the castle as soon as we got rid of that zombie wave, but this mercenary group become something else to me. Also I still



want to help to kill the crazy witch lady aaaaand probably find a better place to those books of her library. Like on my library."



"How confident we are, already selecting the spoils from victory," Raquel murmured with an eye towards Tantallos, before turning back to Chris. "I am afraid that I have no personal stake in this matter. My journey brought me this far in search of rare books, particularly those on the ancient history of this land before the Empire, but I will not murder someone for the sake of that alone. As for her base deeds, I have seen many corrupt nobles, and many who plant a blade in the back of their erstwhile companions were it to suit them; Lady PRIXIMA is no different from them. The deaths of Joz and all of our friends was a terrible thing, and the executions of those soldiers of PRIXIMA that committed the deed, I think, helped them rest for a time, but now that we are safely away, to throw our lives away in a futile attack against a noble of the realm in her very den in pursuit of vengeance will not help bring them peace. Still, there are those that I, too, have met on this journey..." and here she turned, facing Derick, who had not yet spoken. She spoke, her voice soft.



"Derick, you have traveled with them for far longer than I, before we ever met. You do have a personal stake in this matter, do you not? Shall you be thusly traveling with them on this final charge?"



"Yes, of course. I have to. She's caused so many problems for nearly all of us, and has to be stopped. Whatever it is she's planning, it's going to be big, and probably won't be good for anybody. It's been made pretty clear that nothing good will come out of leaving her alone, and I doubt she's just going to ignore us afterwards if she wins. We all have to do this for us and the future too."



"Besides, I can't just leave my friends to face this on their own. We have to stick together when it comes down to events like this. For me to turn my back and abandon them would just be low. And even if it is futile, at least we'll be dying chasing a noble cause."



"I'm sorry about this, if you really want to leave. I guess that if you do then..."



"...after this is over, if we make it out of there then I promise I'll find and meet back up with you again. Okay?"

Raquel smiled, albeit slightly sadly, in response, hearing him confirm what she had already suspected.



"There shan't be a need for that. If your choice is to embark on this final errand, I shall follow as well. I won't abandon you here, even if it is death we face."

---

Charlotte folded her arms and looked toward Mannan.



"S-so, uh... tell us about the teleportation trick. I've never heard of such a thing before."



"From what I'm understood from his explanation - I'm not specialist - he will use two identical crystals. That will allow him to turn a group of people or items into energy and then send them from one place to another, as long as there's a crystal at the destination point. Teleportation on short distances is common trick amongst mages, but he boasted he can do transport people for several kilometers. If he is correct, that means twenty times the usual range."



"I've already procured a pair of crystals. One is in my pocket." Dag tapped his robe. "And we sent the other one to this Marpa woman."



"We're meeting with Magister Tiron later today, so hopefully one night is enough for him to prepare..."



"It still seems a little sudden to me. A do-or-die assault with less than a day's preparation? What aren't you telling us? What do you think that witch is up to?"



"Hmm, how to say it..."



"Should I?"



"No, I will do it. Look, Gregor - I no longer have a county, nor a title of a count, or any assets. My father, and then I, have spent all our family money on spying and trying to destroy Prixima Kesselring. What is she trying to do - I don't know, but I wouldn't be surprised if it is some kind of war or similar plot. Why would she bother herself with old artifacts, why would she spend so much money on amassing an army of mercenaries? One of the last reports mentioned some strange men with glowing eyes and unmatched strength and power that are utterly loyal to Prixima. What does it mean? I don't know. But I will try to stop her anyways."

Gregor listened carefully to the bishop's words, then sighed and nodded.



"Very well Mannan, you have my support. I'll join in this final battle with you."



"However! I am not fighting for you or your father, or in Berebia's name. I'm fighting because Prixima deserves to pay for the things she's done and the lives she ruined. I'm doing this because I don't want us to be harried by her agents for the rest of our lives. And I damn well intend to come back from this alive, so if we're going to be doing the fighting I would like to ask three favors of you."



"THREE favors? Getting a little confident there, Gregor?"



"I'm certain that they're well within Sir Tunhausen's power to grant, or that of his retinue here. Besides, they have every reason to want to see us succeed and anything we can do to tip the odds in our favor should be worth pursuing."

Danya glared at Gregor while Mannan remained silent for a moment.



"Very well. What would those favors be?"

Gregor easily ignored Danya's glare and focused on Mannan.



"I'm sure they'd be easy enough for a man of the cloth such as yourself. First, and I'm sure you're doing this already, but I want your word that you and this Magister Tiron will do everything in your power to ensure we can make it out once the witch lies dead. I don't care if it comes down to Captain Danya's pegasus riders carrying us out one by one - have a plan. Have several plans, even."



"Second: lately we've been running into a number of magic users who have the ability to put us to sleep, or turn us to stone, or turn us against one another. They nearly ruined our recent escape attempt, and I'm guessing PRIXIMA will have more than a few sages with similar abilities running around. Therefore, the second request is for some sort of staff that can cure these afflictions, something that can Restore us to fighting fit if you will. Either that or enough funds to purchase such a thing."



"The first one... we can think of something. I will talk with Magister Tiron. As for the second, I cannot give you such staff but I can definitely afford one. Here, take this." Mannan stopped Danya from talking with his hand, and then pulled out a small satchel, putting it down on the table near Gregor - the ciming sounds of many coins could be heard.



"That's the emergency money with which I was going to hire mercenaries. Now that you're with us, I think you should use that for your own supplies. I'm not sure how much coinage is in there, but it should be more than two thousand."

**Gregor gets 2305 Gold!**



"That's only two requests! I never went to school and even I am not that bad at math, Gregor."



"Well, the last request depends on what happens next." He removed a small parcel from his pack, opening it to reveal the necklace he had bought back in Mannan's village weeks ago. He fell to one knee and presented it to Charlotte.



"It's not a ring, and these weren't exactly the circumstances I had hoped to ask this, but...Charlotte Braxis, will you marry me?"



"Oh, Gregor, I..."

Charlotte paused for a moment, taking in the sight of her knight in shining armor bent below.



"...know you're only doing this now because you're afraid of what's next. Still, the promise of spending the rest of our lives the same way we have the past several months: together?"

She leaned over and embraced Gregor.



"Of course! Of course I'll marry you, Gregor! I solemnly vow to snipe the butts off anyone who messes with you. Now let's make the rest."

With that, she turned to Mannan, wondering if the whole thing made him a little uncomfortable.



"Of course I'm afraid. This promises to be the most difficult battle we've ever faced, and if the worst were to happen..."

He couldn't finish that thought. It was too horrible to contemplate.



"Still, I refuse to dwell on that anymore. Now we have a whole future to plan for and I intend to start it off on a positive outlook!" With that, he embraced Charlotte and stood up in order to drape the necklace over her shoulders. Finally, he turned to face Mannan as well.



"Which brings me to my final request. Lord Mannan, I would be honored if you would officiate at our wedding - whenever it actually is. You're kinda the only clergy we know that isn't making marriage plans of her own."

Dag and Danya were both surprised this time.



"We're lacking an altar and a chapel for that." Mannan explained, and then smiled.



"Then again, I was conducting marriages in city halls, throne rooms, at death beds, in the backyards... you need to put your weapons away, as the law doesn't allow weapons during the ceremony." Mannan stood up and flattened his robe. It was going to happen!

Wait, really? Right now? Gregor began to put his weapons away, then stopped and looked questioningly at Charlotte. Would she rather wait until after the battle or...?



"Lord Mannan, I don't think this is good place to conduct a wedding ceremony..."

Dag leaned into his chair but remained silent.



"And to think I'm waiting for my wedding two more months. I should grab Leon and drag him to the nearest altar."



"Go ahead. Let's make our vows now."

Mannan finished contemplating.



"...yes, I think I remember it all now. Alright then, as the usual wedding ceremony in the Cult is preceded with an hour of prayer and the closure of the chapel to non-invited people, we will skip that and go to the most important part instantly. Dag and Danya will be the witnesses of this holy act."

Mannan stepped to the middle of the room.



"Gregor, Charlotte, come closer. Gregor, you have to move to Charlotte's right side, and then take a small step forward. And you're sure you don't want a proper ceremony? I have to ask that just to be sure."



"Well...there's no rule against having a second ceremony later, is there? I mean, we don't have a lot of things a 'proper' ceremony needs and no time or money to get them."



*On the other hand, maybe if we wait I'll actually have some vows written up. You know Gregor, those things that just about **every** wedding ceremony includes? Sure hope I'm better at planning battles than I am at planning proposals...*



"The quick version was made for those who cannot wait. Or don't have much time left. You can do proper ceremony later, but the binding you will take here will restrict you only to the Church of the Dragon... I can write a document afterwards and you can show it to the temple in town... they will set you up for the proper wedding."





"You could do the ceremony some other time if you want?"



"...I would rather have a simple ceremony now. We'll have all the time in the world after this is over to have a real wedding. With our friends as witnesses and everything. But that's just my two gold."



"So be it." Mannan raised his hands slightly.



"The Dragon watches this ceremony through my eyes. It is a ceremony to bind two people together, and may nothing bar death separate them. Do you, Gregor von Hexham, agree to take this woman as your wife, to care for her and protect the children she will give you? Do you, Charlotte Braxis, agree to take on the name Von Hexham, and to care for Gregor's homestead, and to provide him with children, and to never leave his side? If you both agree, say 'yes', and you will be bound by the oath of marriage from now on."

Privately, Gregor doubted very much that Charlotte would be content with being a simple housewife. If that one speech she gave about getting bored and butchering farm animals was any indication...but of course Mannan didn't need to know about that. The sentinel figured it was just a rote speech anyway, and what really mattered was that he and Charlotte work together in much the same way they always had.



"Yes. I do."



"Yes. Of course I do! Bring on the wine!"

Charlotte hopped a little in place. Not exactly formal, but she'd never imagined getting married, much less to someone like Gregor.





"Now you're husband and wife, and Charlotte is part of Von Hexham family. May Dragon bless your life and protect you from harm." Dag stood up.



"That's all, right? I will go and tell Magister Tiron that we're in the town. Where is he?"



"Hmm... It's temple district... I forgot the name, ah, I should've brought the letters with me... look for ornate temple that is a library. People should be able to point you there, as far as I know it is the only such building in the city..." Dag hummed under his nose, and left the room.



"I believe that was your last favor, Gregor?."



"Yes sir, I believe it was."



"Then, I believe you're free to go. I'm a bit tired... and I have to think a little."



"In that case, I better go find something useful to spend this money on. Best of luck to all of you...and thank you, sir."

Gregor bowed to Mannan before turning to Charlotte.



"Think we should tell the others the good news?"



"Definitely. Why don't we see if any of them are at the bar downstairs? That's usually where we go first after a mission..."



"The bar sounds like a good idea. I'm sure some of our friends are there, and we'll probably find that wine you were looking for as well."

Gregor **heads downstairs.**

Gregor soon got his left foot tangled in his cape and tumbled down the stairs for a second.

For some reason, no one in the inn paid real attention. Did the cape suddenly got longer? Was it secret assassination attempt on Gregor's life? Who knows. The only fact is that Gregor was sitting on the floor with his cape over his face.



"Ow."

That was the worst trip-and-fall he'd had since that one time he tripped over a log in Kesselring Forest. He would have to be more careful in the future!

After brushing himself off and wiping the worst of his injuries with a cloth, Gregor set off to find his friends.



"I'm back!" Anja moved up to the group in slightly different outfit. Namely, there was a small flute hanging from her belt, she had fancy gloves and shoes, and the blade that she normally had tucked behind her belt was now resting in thick leather scabbard with golden ornaments.



"I hope I'm not late for anything?"

**NPC: Anja re-joins the group!**

Alexander eyed Anja and her new gear.



"...Fancy. We were discussing our likely final assault on the castle... It's risky, and the question was... Well, are you in?"



"Hmm, are you in, knightly guy?"



"Absolutely."



"Then I have to come with you to make sure you don't get killed."



"I want to come as well. As far as I get it, that Ernest person is Pricima's lackey and I have to avenge Joz and others. I want to see that woman bleed to death."

Alexander smiles, and moves next to Anja.



"I look forward to your protection, then."



"Looks like just a few will be getting the Plague Dragon's blessing after all this chaos."



"Speaking of, I have a serious question to ask you."

Chris put a hand on Tantalos's shoulder and drew him aside from the group.



"The kind of person I used to be... it was the kind of person you would sacrifice to the Plague Dragon. I mean 'you' in the generic sense. I would as well if I

encountered someone like who I used to be."



"I guess what I want to ask is... Now that I follow him, is there a way to redeem myself in his eyes? To... to deserve everything I want to have after we send Prixima to him?"

Gregor had accepted him on his return, and so had Ami. But he wasn't sure he could accept himself until he had heard from the other two people he trusted most, Tantallos and Olison. Nothing against the rest of the group - he liked them all and enjoyed their company - but Ami was his lover, Gregor his friend, Olison his brother in arms, and Tantallos was his future lord. Their opinions of him mattered the most. If his life didn't have merit in their eyes, then he would have to figure out how to change that. Speaking of, he needed to talk to Olison before the night was over, as well, to ask him the same.

Tantallos took a deep breath and crossed his arms behind of his back.



"You are right about that. I probably would, or any from my family."



"...But differently of them, you decided to take another path, my friend. You wanted to change, and frankly, you are already on your way to be redeemed by him. I asked you to follow us because I knew you would do great on our family."



"You changed. And that is what matters. No matter what people think about our religion, it gives people more opportunities than others think, and by choosing another path and cleaning your name by risking yourself to reach a important objective, you proved to be worth being a Forsaken, my friend. And as you might know, the Plague Dragon takes sacrifices, and during all those fights, we did kill a lot of people. And some of them were not different from the monsters we kill on those rotten forests, in matters of being a real "human". As some did acts that left some of us speechless."



"Bringing Prixima to him will just be another way to prove how loyal you are to our cause, to him. And for now, I am at least sure about one thing, you already have my blessing, Christopher."

Chris smiled, then stepped forward and hugged Tantallos.



"Thank you, Tantallos. Your counsel means a lot to me."

He stepped away after a few moments.



"I'll be proud to call you my lord as well as my friend. I consider these robes an honor, and I'll do my best every day to live up to what they represent."



"You are welcome. And I should be thanking you too. You were one of them first that proved that you did not mind my.. different behavior, or the religion I follow. And now you are with the Forsakens as well." Tantallos gave a nod and moved a hand forward, placing it over Chris' shoulder for a moment.



"I am sure you will. You are already proving it to me on this quest to take down some crazy witch. Then hopefully we will be able to return to the castle, if possible, with this group, even if it is just for a while, to celebrate after a long and difficult journey."



"It'll be a regular festival!"

He glanced over at Ami, then back at Tantallos.



"I think I'll have quite a bit to celebrate, myself."



"That is more like it! I did not forget about that little promise about you two. So it will not be just a regular festival."

A thought occurred to Chris.



"You know, I didn't start feeling or acting human until about the time I officially became a Forsaken. I wonder if maybe the Plague Dragon didn't have something to do with it...?"

Tantalos crossed his arms and looked up.



"Well, the Plague Dragon is real, we just do not know if he is still wandering. And I told you he can assist us, as long as we assist him. So I would not be surprised if he gave you a "little push" to feel a little more alive."



"Then I have more to thank him for than I realized."

He laughed softly to himself.



"I'm honored that he would think this life one worth saving. I'm truly grateful to the Forsaken."



"Life is full of surprises, isn't?"

Chris leaned on the wall next to Tantalos.



"It's nice to have faith, to believe in something. Even better that what I have faith in is a force of good."



"Sometimes faith help us to reach our objectives, think about it as some kind of extra support for you. Even if you we cannot see the Plague Dragon here in front of us, you know he is doing his work, as long as we help him, he will be helping us."

Chris looked over at Tantalos.



"I am curious, though. Was there ever a time when you didn't believe?"

Tantallos chuckled and nodded.



"..Actually yes. When I was younger, it was hard to believe. But when they began to tell me about some sudden changes on the place, or even on people's life.. I began to understand that the Plague Dragon was real. Especially because some of those situations were almost impossible to happen, so it was hard to come up with some kind of explanation."



"Like my situation?"



"Yes, like your situation."



"I agree. There are many mysteries in the world, and sometimes the only explanation is that there are deities - both benevolent and malevolent - watching over us. How else can one explain the undead, monsters, or demons? So if there are evil deities that create those, then it is logical to assume that there is an opposing force. It's not unreasonable to say that the Plague Dragon is one of them."

Chris grinned, happy to have logic'd the situation out.



"I like your logic. Your mind is pretty open compared to some people I talked to. It seems they ignore the existence of monsters, people being brought back to life.. magic in general. Of course there are more things around us, things that we cannot control at all. But the human is afraid of admitting it, to admit there is something stronger than themselves."



"..But as long as we have at least a few people being aware of the presence



of different forces around, I do not think I should be worried."



"I've always been interested in the strange and supernatural, Tantallos. As for me, I like the idea of there being a higher power that sorts out people based on how they live their lives."



"The truly wicked who go unpunished their entire lives ought to have to make up for it in the afterlife... and the good deserve a reward for being good people. I'm not saying people should be good solely for the sake of a reward later, of course."



"It is good to know you think like that. It really will make things easier for us as there is a lot of to be seen yet. I will be giving you the details as soon as we get back to the castle, so you can fully understand our culture and religion."

Chris patted Tantallos on the shoulder.



"Let's rejoin the others, shall we? Valor looks anxious."

He flipped the hood of his robe back up and walked back to the group, putting his hands in his pockets as he did so.

Tantallos nodded and crossed his arms behind his back again and followed Chris.



"Of course."



"I look forward to it, my lord."

---

Valor grit his teeth as he watched Chris and Tantallos talking in private. He couldn't risk pushing too hard about drinks- It'd look suspicious. But he couldn't have them all standing in the street all night. The sooner he got the job done, the better.

Seyena sidled over to the swordsman.





"You seem a bit glum. What's the matter?"

Valor jumped slightly.



*Ah shit.* "It's nothing, really. I just have something important I need to talk to Chris about, in private. He's busy though. So I have to wait." Maybe he could tell her. But not yet. Not here.



"Hm. I didn't know you and Chris even talked at all. Regardless, what are we doing outside? Anja's back, so let's find a place to rest our feet, no?"



"Yeah... But we may as well wait for Chris, right? He knows which way Gregor and Charlotte went, after all."

As Chris returned to the group, Valor beckoned him closer.



"We should probably get off the street so we can discuss details about the... Mission, I guess. That, and I need to talk to you in private." *Alright, now how am I going to manage this?*



"Hmm? What about?"

Chris looked around.



"I suppose we can all head to the Road's End. That's where Gregor and Charlotte are anyway, so we can catch them after they leave the meeting."



"About things I don't want to risk talking about in the street. I thought I had

a handle on what magic could do for a while, but what with the berserk staff incident, and the illusions in the one tomb, and the magical paralysis... I don't want to take more chances than I absolutely have to. So yeah, let's head for the Road's End, we can get a few drinks, and I can tell you all about it."



"I'll take us there, but let's hold off on the drinking. We're going to be doing something very important tomorrow, and we'll need clear heads for that. Being distracted by a hangover could get someone killed, and I don't want that for anyone."

Chris started heading for the Road's end, checking back over his shoulder to see if they were following.

Valor visibly flinched. This wasn't going to plan. Then again, what ever did?



"Whoa, hey, I never said we'd go like we did for that campout thing, just one drink. Actually, I was planning on boiled water for myself. I don't think you ever warned me about the hangover beforehand last time..." *Just get him to agree to a drink in private- After that, you're home free.*



"Did I not? I apologize, then. My first hangover..."

Chris trailed off. Valor probably did not want to hear that story. Besides, that was part of his life that he was trying to leave behind. Not the occasionally partying with his friends - that was something he still hoped to do in the future - but rather the situations he used to get into.



"...Well, let's just say it's not something one forgets easily."

The assassin patted the swordsman on the shoulder.



"Calm down, OK? No need to be so nervous, it'll just attract attention."

Valor forced himself to take a deep breath, then let it out.



"Right, of course. I'm not really used to not being able to just put things out there in the open, you know?"



"You're just not used to it. Hopefully you'll never have to be. It would be nice to live in a world where everyone can trust each other, but that's never going to be the case. Humans are humans, and so there will always be people like PRIXIMA around..."

The assassin shrugged.



"I guess in a perfect world, you would be out of a job, too. No one would be fighting any more, after all."



"Honestly, I'm really reconsidering my trade. It doesn't matter how skilled I get, eventually I'll wind up in a ditch doing it. I don't want to do that to Seyena." By now they'd reached the Road's End. "You're the master spy- Pick a table where we won't be disturbed. Do you want water?"



"No, I'm not particularly thirsty or hungry right now. Over here."

Chris led Valor over to a corner table and leaned on the wall near it.



"So, what is it? Just want to talk, or need to get something off your chest and don't want to tell someone else?"



"Damn it man, but you are not making this easy. Hold on." Valor went to the bar, and returned with two cups of water. He pushed one toward Chris. "Okay, I know you said you aren't thirsty. But, for the purposes of this conversation, can we assume this is your drink?"



"Valor. You're not acting like yourself. You're being a little too jittery for my liking. Sure, we can assume that's mine, but this is going to a weird place."

Chris thought for a moment about what Valor could possibly want from him before he thought he figured it out.



"Look, if you're trying to work up the nerve to say you're curious about what it's like to lie with another man and want to do it and get it out of your system before you get hitched to Seyena, you're late on that front. If you'd asked me a month or two ago you wouldn't have had to go to this trouble, but now I have a fiancée and I'm not going to do her wrong by sleeping around."



"I'm not saying I'm not tempted. You're a muscular fellow with a decent personality and an attractive face. But I'm trying to leave that life behind me, understand? But don't worry. I'll keep it between you and me if that's what this is about."

Valor gaped open mouthed at Chris for several seconds before shaking his head and waving his hands in front of his face.



"No. No no no no. Nothing like that. At all. Wow, just, no. No. Goodness no. I just needed to make sure you had a drink so I could poison it." Valor reached into his pocket, pulled out the pearl like object Ernest had given him, and went to drop it into the glass that had been agreed upon to be Chris'- But he hesitated, and turned his hand to hold it up for Chris' inspection. "Actually, come to think of it, that Ernest character may have given me some weird explosive magic that activated in the presence of liquid. This is poison, right?"

Chris blinked.



"What? I don't... what?"

After a moment he started laughing in disbelief before rubbing his face and trying to calm down.



"I'm really sorry Val. You just seemed so nervous and insisting on drinking alone with me... and well, everyone knows I play for both teams and have taken money for it... and we're raiding PRIXIMA's castle tomorrow... I honestly mean no offense when I say you seem like the kind of guy who might be experimental and this is the perfect situation to push someone like that into going for it."

Chris took the pearl and looked at it.



"Hmm. To be honest I don't recognize this right off hand, but poison is definitely Ernest's preferred method. I never liked it. I always thought it discourteous to kill someone without being around so they didn't have to die alone."

He returned his attention to Valor.



"Three things. First, you know I'm not giving this back, right? I'm going to destroy it. Likely by tossing it in a fire. Second, thank you for being honest with me about what's going on. I'd prefer not to think about what would have happened had you actually went through with it. Third, let me guess. Ernest said it was either the woman you love or me?"



"Don't destroy it, just put it in your drink. He said I had to get it into your drink, and once it started making you choke, that I couldn't let you throw it back up or be healed. He never said I had to get you to drink it, so I gave my word." Valor smiled toothily. "And it wasn't really an option to be honest. If Ernest wants to be rid of you, that makes you a threat to him- Especially if he didn't want to risk coming himself." Valor looked down at the table, his expression now more akin to frustration. "And yeah, he did threaten Seyena- But he only moved on me while I was alone, so I don't think he'll try anything right away, at least while she's with the others. I know you don't owe me anything, but, as a favor, can you watch her for me?"

Chris nodded and flicked the poison into 'his' cup of water.



"You're sneakier than he gave you credit for, to leave a loophole like that. Good job."



"And yes. I'll watch over Seyena tonight. If Ernest wants her he'll have to get through me, and I would prefer it that way. Just... tell her that's what I'm going to be doing, and maybe why I'm going to be shadowing her around, first? I don't want her to have a conniption if she wakes up and sees me in her room."

Valor nodded.



"Yeah, that was something I was going to ask you as well. I just hope it doesn't scare her too badly. That said, we can't be too safe." Valor grabbed Chris' cup and dumped it out under the table. "I don't want to drink that stuff on accident." Valor said as he had some of his own water. "He claimed that once the deed was done, I could take Seyena out of Menelea, and Prixima and her lackeys would never bother us again. Of course, that's not going to be an issue much longer in any case." Valor smiled to himself.



"Damn straight. By evening tomorrow neither she nor her lackeys will be in a position to threaten anyone ever again."

Chris adjusted position against the wall, getting more comfortable.



"Regardless, you and I don't seem to talk much. Anything you want to ask or say, while we're off alone? I'd prefer it if we kept this Ernest business between ourselves and Seyena for the moment while I think about it, and we should probably stay over here for a few more minutes at least so we can have that 'private discussion.'"



"Uh, no, that was pretty much all I had on my mind right now." Valor took another pull on his water. He set the drink down, looking a little more red than usual. "Uh... That is... Unless you have any advice on, you know. Relationship things."



"I wish I had advice to give! Ami and I... this is the first one where... well, there's no way to make myself sound good on this one."





"This is the first time I've wanted a relationship beyond someone's bed or money for a night."



"But maybe that's what matters most. Just being honest and sincere with the person you love. To trust them. To love them for who they are."



"I suppose that's the best advice I can give for keeping a woman, although I can't pretend I know anything about it. Unless you were asking about, eh, 'other' relationship things. In which case I'm going to sit down and we'll have a much quieter, more serious conversation."

Valor's shoulders drooped.



"Oh. I was just hoping for advice. I've never... Seyena is the only woman I've ever loved. Besides my mother, I mean. And that was kind of different." Valor ran a hand through his hair distractedly. "I uh, kind of have absolutely no idea what I'm doing."



"Oh. You've never...? Yeah, I think this is going to be 'sit down and talk' time..."

Chris pulled up the chair closest to Valor and sat down so he could talk quietly enough that Valor could hear him but no one else in the bar could.



"Now, I got paid for this by women more than a few times, so I like to think I know what I'm talking about in this area..."

\*time passes\*



"...and it's pretty important to remember to pay attention to that..."

\*time passes\*



"...well, no, you don't HAVE to, but..."

\*time passes\*



"...don't ask for the money right away, that's just poor manners. Wait. Forget that last part, that's not relevant at all..."

\*time passes\*



"...and that's about all I can tell you without you getting some practice in, I think. It's probably a lot to take in, so I'd be happy to clarify anything if you want me to."

Valor sort of just sat in disbelief once Chris had finished. After a few moments, his mouth started moving- Though it still took him longer than usual to actually produce words.



"So, how would I bring this up, I guess? I mean, she said I've got the girl, that's a good sign, right? How would I approach the subject?"



"Well, hmm. It's different for each person, of course. Some would prefer it to be talked about or asked for openly, like both myself and Ami. Some might go about it more subtly, romantically - a kiss here or there, perhaps a caress, a whispered suggestion when no one is looking..."

Chris raised his eyebrow.



"I can't claim I know Seyena even half as well as you do. You'll have to figure out the approach on your own. But! If she says you already got the girl, then maybe she's just waiting for you to suggest some alone time. When you do ask, do so



with confidence."

He grinned.



"You know, she's over there right now. Looking a bit lonely. Go ahead, go to her, order her a drink. Flirt with her a bit. And then... well... I'll leave what you ask and how up to you, but I think you get where I'm going with this."



"Yeeeeee-eah. Definitely know what I'm doing." Valor suddenly shook his head sharply.



"Hang on, what the heck am I even thinking about this for? Ernest has her marked for death, I shouldn't be thinking of... That stuff right now. Later. Definitely later. But right now, more important things." Valor raised his hand up in the air, and waved Seyena over to him.

Chris nodded.



"I can see your point, but let me put it this way. If you're in the same room as her, and I'm in the hallway keeping watch, then that's two people Ernest would have to go through to get to her. And if things were to happen between the pair of you during the night, well, that's a risk you're willing to take, right?"

Seyena sauntered over to the duo, noticing Valor's call.



"Need something?"



"Yeee-es. Yes. I need you to sit down real quick, I have something I need to tell you."

Chris folded his hands on the table, but said nothing. It would probably be best for Valor to explain the situation.

Seyena sighed, and sat down at the table.



"I have a feeling this isn't overly positive."



"Not even slightly." Valor admitted. "One of Prixima's goons... Contacted me. Gave me some poison, and a choice. If I were to kill Chris, you and I would be allowed to flee Menelea, and go wherever we wished. If I didn't, we'd both be dead. The guy works for Prixima, so I figured not killing Chris leaves us alive longer. But as it stands... There is an assassin who can become invisible, use illusions, and who I told I would poison Chris' drink who is going to be coming after us. Possibly you first to make a point."

Seyena had to take a minute to think.



"This doesn't bode very well. I'm happy you didn't kill Chris, but now what? We've got an angry assassin who, more than likely, will make good on his word."



"He'll be dead, alongside Prixima. Then we don't have to worry about it. And Chris agreed to guard our room for the night."

Chris noticed the subtle 'our room' Valor threw in there. It was pretty smooth, he had to admit, and the swordsman said it with confidence. Say what you like about him, Valor was a quick study, that much the assassin was certain of.



"I don't know why, but I think Ernest is afraid of me. To put that in context, Ernest is the man who trained me when I worked for Prixima, and who also gave me what I needed to learn the ways of the assassin. And if with all of his abilities he stoops to the level of threatening Valor with your life, then I don't think he'll come near you as long as I'm patrolling."



"To that end, I'm going to have to request we set up the rooms so if your room were in the middle, Gregor's would be on one side of it and Tantallos's on the other, so I may watch over them as well. I may ask Olison if he'll guard with me. He, too, knows what Ernest is like and out of all of our group is the one who would be the next best person to watch."

---

Olison's eye twitched. Something seemed off, but he wasn't in a particular mindset to go about asking questions. He simply nudged his horse along behind them, expecting everyone else to follow. A little ways off, he passed by Salvatore.



"Do you have a moment?"



"Always fer ah friend, need somethin'?" Salvatore responded pleasantly, now back on Ormm and following the rest of them. The golden wyvern was tasting the air and looking about, watching people pass by in the streets.

Olison dismounted as they approached outside the Road's End and led his horse to a health patch of grass.



"I'd just like to ask your opinion." He brushed some dirt off the side of the saddle before turning to Sal and his wyvern. "If a lord, a Berebian lord perhaps, were to lose their holdings and their heirs, it would be safe to assume that their lands would be thrown into a sort of chaos, correct?"



"Been ah while since Oi've thought o' Berebian Lords an' all tha'. If'in ah lord were ta lose 'eir lands, heirs, an' holdin's though Oi'd say 'here'd be ah fair bit o' ah scuffle fer the land by the other lords. All pol-it-ik-al though, much o'er mah head, honest. Places close ta the keep an' areas loike tha' moight be ah bit messed ta figure what ta do, but Oi'd imagine much the same as usual fer the outloiers." The man gave his opinion, pausing for a moment before adding something else.



"Suppose it would all matter on 'ow 'ey managed ta lose 'em. Moight go on same as usual, moight be ah roight brawl up 'here. Bet close lands would lend ah hand though, if'in thin's got ta bad."

Olison's head nodded slowly as he looked down.



"Aye. I would think the same." The paladin hitched his horse to a nearby

post, leaving him contentedly munching away at the ground. "When all this is over, PRIXIMA and her lot dealt with and all, I think I'll be heading back home. Maybe for good."

Sal hopped off of Ormm, the wyvern barely registering his lack of being in the saddle beyond a glance at him before going back to tasting the air.



"Oi think Oi can understan' tha'. Home's where the heat is," he joked with an old Berebian phrase. "But Oi think Oi much prefer the other sayin' mahself, tha' its where the heart is."



"Oi can' say Oi know why yer ah mercenary, but Oi can guess. Fame an' fortune may brin' some ta 'ere, but not all o' us. This loife ain' somethin' one can keep though, not fer long. Yer ah good man, Olison, an' ah home is deserved fer all good men."



"Yah got ah loife o' peace ta look forward ta; rejoice fer yah yah should enjoy it. Oi thank yah fer tellin' me this, an' its been an honor knowin' yah Olison." The wyvern knight out stretched his hand to Olison.



"Course, don' be thinkin' Oi won' hold yah ta seein' those mountain, hahaha."

Olison let out a single laugh, clasping Sal's hand briefly with a shake.



"Heh. I would count on it. But don't think I'll be running off right away..." He nodded, pulling his hand back. "But ultimately it's going to be something I need to do."

Olison's gaze turned back to steel, looking past Sal.



"I had a talk with Mannan back when we were in his territory. According to him, my Lord... Former Lord, had passed away in the summer. And with it, his holdings have grown ever more contested. There's a political rift, and my old home is caught right in the center." Olison looked off in the distance towards Matilda. "When I left, I left a lot of people with it. I may have crossed paths with some now, but there are doubtless those who have stayed. The farmhands, the lowly retainers, are they scattered to the wind? Or were their roots too strong to be uplifted?"

He shook his head vigorously.



"Grh. Well, this is no time to be talking about theories. We have a battle to fight come next morning, after all."

Sal followed Olison's gaze to Matilda, listening with rapt attention.



"Now, don' be thinkin' tha'. Remember what yer foightin' fer, what yer bleedin' an' workin' fer. Even if'in 'ey may jus' be thea-ore-eis," the man butchered the pronouncement of the word quite viciously, "'ey're somethin' ta remember 'cause 'ey're down roight easy ta forget sometoimes."

Salvatore looked at others in the group around him for a quiet moment before looking back at Olison.



"Nothin' droives ah man further than ah memory, ah future, 'er ah callin'. Ta darker paths, 'er broighter roads, an' some ah twistin' o' the two. Some 'ere foight fer 'eir homes, some ta go back, an' others ta get it back. Some fer friends an' love, others fer roight causes an' moral standin's. We 'ave ah foight tomorrow, ah important one, one tha' will determine all o' our fates."



"There ain' no greater toime than tha' ta think o' what yer foightin' fer. 'Ey ain' distractions, 'eir what gives us our strength."



"We 'ave homes ta get ta, friends by our sides, an' ah roightous cause ta give us floight! This Prixi ain' gonna stand ah chance 'gainst us."



"Hm." Olison smirked, holding up a hand towards himself, raising finger after finger. But after opening his entire hand, he openly laughed. "Really, I think I've lost count of the times we've defied the odds. I'm looking forward to seeing just how the Lady plans to counteract a direct confrontation. With the fortune we've been having, mayhaps her lava-magic will just bounce off Jorinn."

Olison forced a laugh at that last one, but shook his head in a quick correction.



"Regardless, preparations will need to be made. I was never one to leave battles to chance, I don't plan on starting now." The paladin nodded curtly and moved to head inside the tavern.

Salvatore nodded as he watched the paladin leave.



"Roight, preparations..."

The wyvern knight made a trip to the cart, glancing at what was currently inside of it. Let's see... Medicine, medicine, a pair of sticks with some fancy stones on them, more medicine... Ah, now this looks promising! **He pulled out the iron club from storage** and tested its weight in his hands. Sal nodded, seemingly satisfied, attaching the metal club to his belt.

---



"Sooo Anja, what's that flute for?"



"Oh, that one? To make sure that bad mages don't knock you down that often, my little cherry knight. You have tendency to fall down during any kind of magical onslaught."





"Heheh, well yeah, that's true. ...It's been a looong journey, you know... I mean, you've been in the group for about as long as I have, so I guess I don't exactly need to tell you, but we've come so far. Since I was foisted off from Marpa's unit... Say, how did you come to meet our group?"



"Aww, you don't remember? We've met right here, it was half a year ago? When the Berebians attacked the city in that surprise assault. You guys asked me to give you a lift back to Kesselring castle. I will remember to buy you a memory tonic, you're getting senile whilst young. Wait, you never told me your age, sweetheart!"



"Well, I remember that much, I just hadn't known how you got to Fezzan! As for age, I'm probably 22."



"Oh, well, I was just passing through, with nothing else to do. But now I know that I'm definitely older than you, teehee!"



"Hmm? How old are you?"

She stuck her tongue out.



"It's rude to ask! Not telling, teehee~"



"Heh, alright. So, uh, remember when you psyched me out about the, uh, kiss earlier and all?"

Anja blinked.



"What, you want to take it to next stage? Alexander I think that kind of talk should be done in private, really. You immoral knight, you."

This for a few moments only exhibits embarrassed muttering from Alex, until he somehow gets what she might be implying, causing said muttering to snap up in intensity.



"Hm-hm. Who knew so many people of this group would end up together?"



"Did anyone see the witch lady?"

Tantallos waited for a bit, but Riven didn't show up.



"Hmmh.. no signal of Riven yet. I guess I should use this time to finish the mask."

After some time, Tantallos' mask was ready.



"Now that is better."

---

Salvatore soon followed the others into the inn, having to stop for a moment by the door to instruct Ormm that he couldn't follow inside for more reasons than just that the wyvern couldn't fit through the door.

He did a quick headcount of all the patrons in the inn, noting the number, and if possible as well any signs that may indicate prices of the drinks. Seeing Gregor though, he walked over with his typical grin. He can talk about his idea later, first important stuff.



"Ow'd it go? Were 'ey 'ere?"

Gregor somehow missed the pink-haired wyvern rider in the crowded inn, but after a short look around he spotted Chris apparently deep in conversation with Valor and Seyena. He caught Chris' eye and waved, wondering if it would be okay to interrupt whatever they were discussing.

Chris cleared his throat.





"I'll leave you two to discuss your plans for the night."

He stood and walked over to Gregor, raising a hand in greeting as he did so.



"So, how'd it go with that bunch?"

Gregor shrugged.



"Well, it looks like they're gearing up for one last-ditch attempt to bring PRIXIMA down - but I'm pretty sure you guessed that. They've got some sort of mass-transit teleportation spell that will set us down inside PRIXIMA's castle...assuming it works anyway."



"Ah, hello Sal. I must have missed you somehow. Sorry."



"Ah, nothin' ta be sorry 'bout, yah answered mah question. We're headin' roight in PRIXIMA's keep, eh? The end ta all o' this business be soon then! Tha' leads in roight great ta what Oi was goin' ta ask yah actually."



"See, Oi've been thinkin', wit' all o' this comin' ta ah head, we should do somethin' special. This ain' no toime ta mop an' fret, now is the toime ta cheer an' relish! Ta remember what all o' this be about, not 'bout death but about loife. Ta think o' 'ow long we've come an' ta think o' how bright the future will be once all o' this be roight an' properly behoid us. What yah say?"



"Sounds pretty good. If we're going to go out tomorrow, let's do it with a bang tonight, right?"



"It does sound like a good idea. I think we're actually ahead of you on that front already, but before we start having a party let's get some business out of the way. Chris, how many volunteered to take part in the mission tomorrow?"



"As near as I can tell, everybody has."



"I wouldn't expect anything less of our band of brothers... and sisters, too, of course."



"That's a relief. Not that I would blame anyone for not wanting to come along, but I feel that our odds are greatly improved with everyone involved."



"The last order of business for now is one we've dealt with pretty much constantly: money. I managed to get some gold from Mannan, which should be enough to get a staff to cure of of that damned paralysis and whatever else Prixima's magic users might throw at us. I have no idea what such a staff might cost, but if there's any leftover start thinking of ways to spend it. Well, I think that's the boring stuff out of the way. Since Charlotte should be coming downstairs any minute now to begin celebrating, I guess I can go ahead and tell you now: I proposed to Charlotte, and she said yes."



"Good on the pair of you, Greg!"

Chris slugged the sentinel lightly on the shoulder.



"I guess that party Sal mentioned has a better reason than 'why not?' now."



"Hey, I did tell you I was going to do it, right? That night you came back?"



"Though to be honest, I don't think I would have if it weren't for all the talk of suicide missions. I wouldn't call 'now or never' the best circumstances to propose under, but I guess I panicked."



"Still, what's done is done and Charlotte and I are officially newlyweds now. Having an extra reason to celebrate is always a good thing, right?"



"Wait, what? Did I miss a step here? I thought you said you proposed to her."



"I mean, uh, congratulations?"



"Don't worry, I was as surprised as you."



"After Charlotte accepted my proposal, I asked Mannan if he would be willing to officiate at the wedding ceremony. I was thinking it would be sometime after the battle tomorrow and just wanted to ask him in advance, but instead he stands up and performs a short and simple wedding right there in the room! I had never even heard of such a thing."



"Oh, wow. Mr and Mrs. Von Hexham already."

Chris grinned.



"Want any advice for the honeymoon? I already gave Valor a good talking to."

Gregor hesitated, turned slightly pink, looked around furtively, and lowered his voice.



"...maybe later. Once things start quieting down." He coughed and resumed speaking normally.



"So, what are your plans after this is over?"

Chris winked, turning his head slightly so Sal wouldn't see it, and leaned a shoulder on the nearest wall.



"Well, while we're speaking of marriages, I planned on going down to Forsaken lands and marrying Ami. Then maybe a traveling honeymoon for awhile before we went back to the keep."



"Distant future? I don't know. I'd like to try my hand at raising kids. I feel... two sons and a daughter sound about right. What about you, Greg? What sort of family are you looking to have running amuck about the household?"



"Oh, I don't know. Maybe one boy and one girl, doesn't matter which comes first. Not sure how we'll raise them or what we'll do to support them yet - something tells me that Prixima's goons 'confiscated' everything my family owned. Still, we'll make it work." A thought struck him. "Say, how quickly do you think you and Ami will be leaving for the Forsaken lands?"



"I don't know."



"I guess it depends on if you want us to stick around for a bit after this battle."



"Well, I was thinking of having a more traditional ceremony after this final battle. Mannan already said he would write a letter allowing us to use a nearby chapel for that purpose, and I'd like as many friends as possible to be there."

He put a hand on Chris' shoulder.



"This is where you come in, if you're interested. I don't think either of us expected it at first, but you've become my best friend in this bunch. How would you like to be my best man as well?"

Chris blinked. Gregor had caught him off guard twice in as many minutes.



"I..."



"It would be an honor. I would be more than happy, Gregor. Although of course, you know that this means that should Forsaken customs include a best man, you're expected to return the favor, right?"

The assassin smiled.



"What you said, about being best friends... that goes both ways. And I'm damn happy that one of the first friends I ever made was a guy like you. Charlotte's a lucky woman; I know you'll take great care of her."



"All you have to do is ask and I'll be there, friend. You know, Ami's a lucky woman as well."



"I think maybe it's more I'm a lucky man on this one, Greg, but thanks."

Sal had kept his peace while the two talked, seeing no reason to butt in between the two friends--not yet at least. His smile did widen at hearing that Gregor got engaged, and married even, while he was here. By now the wyvern knight was sitting.



"Great an' glory, tha'. Oi was jus' thinkin' tha' we get 'em all 'ere ah drink on us, an' ah toast ta happy toimes ahead, but Oi'm thinkin' now we moight need us somethin' more. Yah don' get married tha' often, yah know?"

Charlotte ran downstairs. Gregor and Chris both felt a hand on their backs.



"Oh, by the way, Gregor! We're married now, so all our financial assets are shared. That's how this works, right? Really, though, what I mean is: weren't we all going to do a little last minute shopping before our big day? If you'd like, I'll take the gold Mannan gave you and run off to get some supplies while you and Chris relax."



"Well, sure. What do you have in mind to get?" He **handed over his bag of gold** as he spoke. Sal greeted Charlotte's entrance.



"Ah, 'ere's the lady o' the hour."



"Hi, Sal! Did Gregor or Chris already ask you about coming along to the...?"



"The weddin'? Nah, 'ey hadn' much toime ta ask much o' anyone, much less give the good word out. Less yer askin' 'bout goin' ta thrash this Prixi, in which yah can probably roight guess mah answer. Ain' gonna shy 'way from helpin' friends in need 'cause o' bad chances."

Alexander slowly follows the tide and joins everyone else in the bar, not yet knowing the good news, **hanging the talisman around his neck** as he did so.



"Sal, of course you're welcome to the wedding. I know we don't talk much, but you are a member of the team and we've been through a lot together."

Chris turned to Salvatore.



"That goes for mine, too. And, of course, party organization. We can count on you for it, right?"



"Whoa, wedding? Who's getting married?"



"You mean, 'who already has'?"

Chris pointed a thumb at Gregor.



"This guy made a Mrs. Von Hexham out of Charlotte upstairs while we were down here."



"Well. Whoa! I didn't expect that! Mostly. Anyway, that's great!"



"Thanks, Alex. It was a little spur of the moment, so there wasn't time to get anyone down here to witness it. We'll be having a proper ceremony after PRIXIMA's in the ground though, and everyone's invited."



"I hope you're not planning on skipping that. We need you to stand around and look impressive, if nothing else."

Chris's tone was quite cheeky; one might even say insolent, but he meant well.





"Heheh, well, wouldn't dream of missing it!"



"Make sure you bring Anja along, okay?"



"She can play instruments, right? She could do the music for your ceremony, Gregor."



"Hmm, well if she wants to. She might just want to watch the ceremony...I'll ask her next time I see her."



"What ceremony?" Anja asked, peeking from behind Alexander.



"I was thinking restorative items. No woman left behind, and all that! Be back soon."

**With that, Charlotte headed out to Fezzan to see if she could find a magic/healing shoppe.**

Charlotte quickly revisited few shops that dealt in medicine and magicks - including Yuno the Enchanter's shop which had new items on display and most of the ones seen previously already bought by other people.

**Magic Shop in Temple District**

|                       |
|-----------------------|
| Singe: 250            |
| Static: 200           |
| Photon: 150           |
| Flux: 250             |
| Worm: 400             |
| Vulnerary: 300        |
| Heal: 300             |
| Antidote (staff): 300 |
| Mend: 800             |

**Seller of Magic Books in Trade District**

|                |
|----------------|
| Elfire: 400    |
| Elthunder: 450 |
| Elwind: 350    |
| Shine: 450     |
| Divine: 600    |



Worm: 350

Luna: 500

#### **Grand Apothecary in Trade District**

Vulnerary: 300

Concoction: 1000

Elixir: 3000

Antidote: 150

Pure Water: 500

#### **'Yuno the Enchanter' in Trade District**

Restore: 1000 Gold

Psychic: 2800 Gold

Warp: 1800 Gold

Angelic Cloth: 1000 Gold

Blade Ring: 900 Gold

Energy Ring: 900 Gold

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Rune Sabre (1): 2700 Gold

Lunar Rapier (1): 1800 Gold

The World Knife (1): 3300 Gold

Wing Lance (1): 1500 Gold

Soliferrum (1): 1500 Gold

Dragon's Fang (1): 1500 Gold

Bolt Axe (1): 2800 Gold

Bright Bow (1): 2600 Gold

Meteor (1): 1800 Gold

Paraball (1): 2900 Gold

Hell (1): 2400 Gold

Teleport (1): 1350 Gold

Angelic Robe (1): 3500 Gold

Magical Ring (1): 2200 Gold

Dragonshield (1): 2200 Gold

Goddess Icon (1): 2200 Gold

Body Ring (1): 2200 Gold

Swiftsole (1): 2200 Gold

Lance Crystal (1): 2500 Gold

Axe Crystal (1): 2500 Gold

Anima Crystal (1): 2500 Gold

Dark Crystal (1): 2500 Gold

Delphi Shield (1): 4000 Gold

Hoplion Shield (1): 4000 Gold

Runestone (1): 2500 Gold

**Charlotte, while thinking about what else to buy, nabs a restore staff.** yiss

And thusly heavens rejoiced as the Restore staff have been nabbed.

**COMMUNAL ACTION: Take Antidote and Antidote staff from Storage, sell both. Give heal staff from storage to Edwin. Sal sells iron club, Valor hands iron axe to Sal. Olison sells iron javelin.**

**Count monies.**

Having sold the club, almost used-up antidote, plus the staff, Salvatore counted...

**470 shiny monies.**

Whilst Olison sold his javelin and got...

**180 coinies.**

**COMMUNAL ACTION: Buy 3 Vulnerabilities. Buy 2 Pure Waters. All go to wagon for the moment.**

And thusly wagon had medicine and Salvatore had money. For once.

**Charlotte ran back up to the inn to see if Mannan & Co were still there. If so, she presented the staff to him and said:**



"Lord Mannan Tunhausen, as a sign of our trust forged by a common enemy, take this staff. I will see you all in the morning. Good night... and thank you."

Charlotte burst into Mannan's room just to witness a moment where Mannan and Danya were kissing. In the middle of the room, she was seated on a chair and he was standing over her.

And it was rather passionate but gentle kiss, nothing of very indecent sort. But the moment of Charlotte's entrance startled the two; Mannan froze like a pillar of salt whilst Danya stood up and, speechless, burst out of the room, *purple* on face from embarassement and giving Charlotte a death glare while passing by her.



"W-Well, Charlotte, a staff, thank you, \*cough\* I-let me see it..." And then Mannan was a beetroot like Danya, too.

**Secret: Hidden Bodyguard Romance (support rank A) discovered!**



"I think I'll just... be going... now."

And Char disappeared into her and Gregor's room until the final mission.

---

Danya went downstairs and then outta the inn, red on face and almost steaming from her ears as she grumbled and pushed through the mercenaries, only to storm off down the road.

Gregor raised an eyebrow at the captain's rude behavior, but wisely refrained from saying anything until she was out of earshot.



"...Okay, I know she doesn't exactly like us, but what do you suppose that was all about?"



"She has issues. Heeeehe."



"If I had to guess, our miss upright captain got caught with her hand in the cookie jar. I've seen that face on women a few times. Usually for someone catching them associating with me."

Gregor looked surprised.



"'Associating', huh? I wonder who she's so embarrassed about being seen with..."

Chris shrugged.



"Who knows. She's so closed-off that it could be anyone. I got four marshmallows on the stable-boy though. Makes sense; he's below her station and all of that nonsense."

Gregor made a disparaging sound.



"Nonsense indeed. Nobles get caught up on that sort of thing for their own good sometimes."

---

### **It was then evening.**

Everyone was asleep; except Mannan, who was out for nightly prayer in the temple - under escort of Danya, Dag and Alexander who was pulled into the job simply because of his imposing posture; and Chris, who was perched on a chair in the shadows of the corridor leading to the three bedrooms, of which the middle one was resting place for Seyena and Valor.

Charlotte had the weirdest of nightmares possible. There was Mannan, and Danya, kissing for a moment in the middle of the room, in front of Charlotte; after a while they looked at her with extreme disgust.



"Look at her, barging like that into affairs of others. Has she no tact?"



"That is a trait of low-born, unworthy scum. Hell, I bet that she is having an affair behind Gregor's back. Nothing surprising considering her lineage."

Someone appeared at their side; Dag.



"That is the worst thing to do, young lady. Consider what you have done. Do you want others to barge into your life like that?" The words turned into slurry nonsense. "Such demeanor is worthy of a harlot. You're breaking Gregor's heart. How could you?"

Then someone appeared at Charlotte's side; Gregor.



"Charlotte... I trusted you... how could you?"



"How could you, yeah? That's lowest of low, Charlotte."



"For shame... I thought you're better than that, how could you?"



"Dissappointing, really. How could you?"



"Oi, how could yah?"



"How could you?"

The voices and faces began to appear en masse and flood Charlotte's ears with the question 'HOW COULD YOU!?' and they didn't stop; they picked up in intensity and volume.

And suddenly, Charlotte's mind jerked awake, and the nightmare ended instantly.

---

It was shortly before midnight when Valor heard a clink above his head; at the window.

Valor whipped his head around to look at the window, hand already on the hilt of his killing edge- The bravado and theatrics of the evening aside, he was genuinely worried that Ernest might be able to make good on his threats. Not to say that the creepy bastard wouldn't have to get through him before laying a hand on Seyena.

Chris continued to stand around outside of Valor and Seyena's room, staying still and silent save for his left hand, which was idly spinning the closed switchblade around. He felt it best to keep it in his hand. Just in case.

Seyena muttered and turned over onto her other side, her sleep seemingly undisturbed despite Valor's sudden panic.

Alexander sort of just stood there silently all IMPOSINGLY.

There was no one and nothing outside the window, bar some darkness-covered rooftops of other buildings.

Satisfied for the moment that nothing was about to happen, Valor leaned back against his headboard, his grip loosening slightly on the sword. It was late... He needed to get some rest.

It wasn't long till he heard the same sound again - this time, a bit louder.

And when he opened his eyes... he saw a silhouette of a man, standing at the parapet outside the window, and the moonlight shone onto metal tip of crossbow bolt pointed at Seyena!

Valor leapt at the window, sword in hand, hoping the blade would be able to catch the bolt so his guts wouldn't have to.

The window crashed when the bolt was let loose and pierced the glass, and then it smashed into Valor's left thigh - the man turned slightly and missed his original target, startled by Valor's leap. The ruckus was heard by everyone in the neighbourhood but the quiet 'fuck' was heard only by Valor.

Dogs began to bark and growl in the nearby houses as the man jumped down into the alleys and Valor crashed onto Seyena's face, bleeding profusely.

Valor growled in pain, teeth set together to keep himself from howling at the top of his lungs. On the plus side, mission accomplished!

Chris entered the room as soon as he heard the glass shatter.



"Damn, I should've expected him to come from the window..."

He looked through the remains of the window for the attacker.

Valor propped himself up, tenderly holding the bolt sticking out of his leg.



"I think the guy got away. He jumped down, I think. Not sure, I was a little distracted."

Chris could see the assailant start running from crouching position - she must have just landed - his moving silhouette barely noticeable as the moon got covered partially with thick clouds.

Seyena was quite obviously awake by this point, having been too surprised to call out, yet a small, bone-handled knife was in her hand, and a trickle of blood was starting to drip from her nose. She looked over the scene with mild shock.



"Valor? Are you alright- You're bleeding!" She dropped the knife, reaching around blindly for her staff.

Chris took a potshot at the fleeing assailant.



"Seyena, you can heal Valor, right?"

He watched the wo/man flee, unsure which it was due to ~~shifting pronouns~~ the low visibility conditions, and reloaded his crossbow.



"You may not be the only person they're going after. I'm going to check the other rooms."

Chris left and looked in on each room in turn, starting with Gregor and Charlotte.

Valor still had his teeth grit together, but tried to force a smile anyway.



"Ungh. It's alright. He just got my leg. Nothing that can't be healed." Valor brought his face a little closer to Seyena to make up for the dim light. "Hey, is your nose bleeding? Do you feel alright?"

Seyena quickly wiped the blood away.



"I'm fine, I'm fine, it seems like you fell on me. Regardless, we need to take care of the bolt first. Come on, sit on the bed and prop up your leg." Seyena muttered the last part as she stood up, rummaging for the staff in the corner of the room.



"Right." Valor gingerly repositioned himself so that he was sitting on the bed, allowing Seyena access to the bolt lodged in his thigh. "Hopefully we'll only have to worry about this sort of thing tonight..."



"I have a feeling this isn't the end of it. Regardless, hold on, this is going to sting a tiny bit." Seyena said, using her knife to pry off the tip of the bolt, and pulling the wooden shaft out of the wound. After she was finished, she tapped Valor's leg with her staff, the glowing orb illuminating the wound starting to seal up.

Valor closed his eyes and waited, doing his best not to make a fuss as Seyena pulled the bolt free and healed his wound. Once that was done, he leaned back, feeling exhausted.



"Maybe it won't be the last attempt tonight. But we'll be fine. And once PRIXIMA is dead, they'll stop if they hadn't already. Then we can think about other things."



"I don't believe Ernest is foolish enough to make another attempt so soon. We're all on our guard right now, and I doubt many of us will be getting sleep after this." She stood up, walking over to a basin to wash her hands of blood- they were covered in it. "Although, I have to admit. Why did nobody think of watching the windows in the first place?"



"Someone did think of it. Me, specifically." Valor said, walking over to the window and cautiously peering out through the broken glass. "Good thing too. I don't exactly know how to use a healing staff."

---

The noise managed to shake Gregor from his slumber...somewhat. Enough to notice Charlotte already awake, anyways.



"Whass goin' on?" he slurred.

If the sound of attempted assassination hadn't woken Gregor up, his friend barging into the room definitely did.



"Chris?! What the hell...?"



"Not much time to explain. Assassin tried to shoot Seyena, hit Valor in the leg, she's taking care of him, I'm checking on everyone. You two seem to be OK, so I'm moving on, but I'll be back in a bit. Yell if you need me."

Chris closed the door after him and went to Tantallos's room next to check on his lord.



"Assassin...leg...okay...what?" The poor sleep-addled sentinel tried to process what Chris had said, but the assassin had already left. He groaned and began pulling his armor on, reasoning that if people were getting shot it might be wise to be prepared.



"...Oh, Assassin person. How may I help you? By the noises I heard, I am quite sure something is going on. Is it some kind of night chaotic party?"



"More like an assassination attempt. Someone took a shot at Seyena and hit Valor. I'm checking around to make sure everyone else is safe, my lord."



Chris took a quick look around the room and out the window.



"I think we're good here. I'm going to go check on Ami and the rest."



"Very well, then. Looks like we will need to keep our eyes open for the night. And you probably should, but if they did try to attack Seyena, she is probably their priority, or they would send more assassins to execute each one of us, but then again.. I really do not even know what this is about."



"Long story short, Ernest tried to coerce Valor into poisoning me by threatening Seyena's life. Valor chose to inform me of the plot instead, and I agreed to help protect Seyena against attacks. Seemed the right thing to do, y'know?"

Chris paused at the door for a second longer.



"Just... stay alert, all right? I don't know if the attack on Seyena is just a distraction or not, and I don't want anything to happen to you."

With that, he went to go check on Ami.

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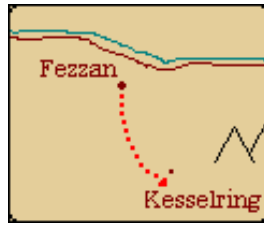
The guards were called in the morning. The assailant, as well as the innkeeper of 'Road's End' have disappeared without the trace. Was the innkeeper the hired thug? Was he Ernest's accomplice and gave him information on the bedrooms? The two young helpers who lived with the innkeeper couldn't explain his disappearance. The guards wanted to keep Valor and Seyena for a while but Mannan came back just in time and used his name to haste the process.

Without further delay, the group of almost twenty people, bent on bringing down PRIXIMA Kesselring, left the city gates to meet with Magister Tiron...



"Bleh, I already regret going with you. It's cold! I should've stayed in the library... oh, it's you guys. Thanks again for the last time. Brrr, damn winter..."

## ~~Chapter 11: House of the Witch~~



*The group spent the whole day in travel. There was little merry talk and Mannan spent most of the time walking and talking in hushed tone with Magister Tiron. Mannan looked more and more concerned with time but didn't respond to any questions.*

*And next morning, they have arrived - not at Kesselring Fortress. They arrived at small, ruined manor in the hills south of the forested area. For Mannan and his group it was rather foreboding place, what with the rubble and occassional corpse, but for some of Gregor mercenaries, including himself, the place was familiar.*

*After all, Arinne's charred corpse was still there.*

The hills surrounding the manor were silent. The snow looked fresh and there was no wind. No animals could be seen hunting in the white layers and not a single crow was creaking at the newcomers to the abandoned house. Mannan slipped down from Danya's pegasus and walked up to Magister Tiron.



"I believe it is time to explain your magic, Magister."



"**Allright, do you have the stone?**" At this question, Mannan pulled out a small crystal, shaped into a rod. It was surely cut from single piece of crystal, but the lack of inner light suggested it was just a glassy rock.



"Like you have asked me to, I've managed to deliver the identical one to my... friend... in the fortress. Is that sufficient?"



"**Well, we will see that! It should be, I believe. I've told you - it is *theoretical* thing. I never attempted this at such long distance.**" He looked at a faint silhouette of Kesselring castle's highest towers, which stood above the forest surrounding it.



"Now, one person, a mage of sorts, have to hold onto the rod. They're identical, right? Right? Then, ten or so people need to stand around the rod-bearer, and-"



"Wait a moment. Ten or so? We need to transport *all* of us! Ten won't do! Magister, why didn't you told me about this restriction?"



"**You didn't ask!**" There was audible facepalm sound coming from somewhere when Dag was standing.



"Can't you transport more people?" At this, Magister went silent for a moment, gritting his teeth and rubbing his chin.



"**Twelve. But without the mounts.**"



"Allright." The bishop turned toward Gregor and the rest. He evaluated the little band of bravados that was soon be going into one of the most dangerous places in whole Menelea. How would this operation end? Will they stop the crazy woman, or will they all perish?



"I will carry the crystal rod. That still leaves twelve spots for you. Choose carefully. Remember - I'm not ordering you to come. I'm asking you to assist me. Gregor, if you or any of your friends want to stay behind, say so. I won't hold it against you."

Danya stepped toward Gregor, and others followed.



"You don't think I will let Lord Mannan go without loyal escort? Let me go."



"I've been given the order from important Berebian lords to lend a hand in Prixima's downfall. If you need my help - say so."



"Let me come - Prixima's lackeys had their hand in murdering Joz and others. I have to avenge them." Someone looked at Anja, who blinked in surprise.



"...What? I don't like aristocracy and this whole affair! I would prefer to stay, unless you really want me to go... then, um, I think it's fine..."

**//Up to 12 players and NPCs can enter the final chapter battle. Do inventory management and choose carefully. After you're done making up the team, post it in OOC. Take your time and remember - you're going against powerful sorceress with host of strong mercenaries and at least one stab-crazy assassin.**

Olison quietly looked from side to side as he rode within speaking distance, glancing at everyone in the party in a quick headcount.



"**Only twelve...**" Frustration audibly bled through a slow exhale from his nostrils, "**As much as I wish to see that witch brought to justice, I admit my reasons are nowhere near as justified as others here. In addition, a cavalier is only half as useful without his horse...**" The soldier spared a single moment to rub his mount's neck.

**While the team decides, Charlotte grabs a vuln and a pure water from the wagon.**



"I've come a long way, considering I'm volunteering to attack the castle I once guarded with my life."



"But I am volunteering to do so. As in, I'd like to be one of the twelve to go."

Anja tapped her foot and grumbled.



"Harrumph. I guess that if Alex is coming, I could go too... if I really have to."

Alexander fights to hide a smile from Anja.



"I'm going as well, Alex. I'll not brook any disagreements to the contrary. This is something I must do."

Riven got slightly dreamy-eyed for a moment, but didn't say anything.



"I will join. At least at this case I can say we will be sacrificing some interesting souls for the Plague Dragon."

Tantallos looked at Riven and snapped his fingers close to her face.



"Witch lady? I tried to talk to you earlier, where do you intend to go after we finally get rid of them?"



"Eh? What?"



"Oh, um. I'm not sure... I'd like to start my own coven, but that could be done anywhere... in theory, at least."



"Nice mask, by the way! You finally look like a proper lord, I'd say."



"I see. I am aware we were not able to talk too much, but I still would like to see you with the Forsakens, if that is not a problem. Unless you really wish to start your own coven, of course I will respect your decision."



"Thank you! It was about time, was not it? I needed to be sure I was ready to put it on."



"Hm... I'd have to think on it. I certainly wouldn't mind sticking around as many members of this group as possible, but after all this it'd seem rather sad if I didn't get some apprentices of my own."



"I am quite sure some shamans would be willing to learn from you. We like to share our experience with everyone there."



"I'm going too. Prixima needs to pay for her crimes and I intend to be there when she does."



"I used to be part of the garrison! I know the castle like the back of my hand- I should go! I'm not going to be left behind, when we've all come this far!"



"If Seyena goes, I go with her. I have business with Prixima the same as any of you."



"Who would I be to back out now?"



"I'm going. There's no way I'm missing this fight."



"Besides!"

He pulled his magemasher, still in its sheath and slammed the tip against the floor.



"I can't let this thing go to waste can I?"

Raquel looked at Derick, then at Matilda.



"I shall be following as well. After all is said and done, while I don't believe in vengeance, I can understand the need to ensure that PRIXIMA cannot harm any others the way she has us. And, should my magic have the power to keep everyone safe, then it would be remiss of me to withhold it in this time of need."



"I shall go."



"Someone need to keep you all alive."



"You could doubtless find use for my skills and magic Gregor. But, I'll let you choose if you want me to come."

Valor grimaced, clearly irritated.



"What of those who stay behind? What do they do? Sit here and twiddle their



thumbs? Return to Fezzan? It's not as though we can take the back way in that Chris showed us last time we were here- They know we know, and it'll either be sealed or guarded."

Olison nodded quietly. He expected as much from the others.



"Valor does raise a good point, though. Should it be necessary for me to stay behind, I refuse to simply sit idle. Perhaps there is a target that could serve as a good diversion away from the assaulting group?" Olison directed the question towards Mannan.



"Nothing comes to my mind, except some ridiculous idea of letting you wave a sword in front of gates of Prixima's castle. Sorry."

**After much tactical planning, the groups were ready.** Gregor, Charlotte, Chris, Ami, Derick, Raquel, Tantallos, Riven, Edwin, Dag and Mannan are the chosen ones to go. Alexander, Olison, Salvatore, Valor, Seyena, Anja, Danya and Matilda stay behind with Tiron.

---

Magister Tiron began his chanting. The spell, however theoretical and new, was very short, because in less than ten seconds white light engulfed the group and when the light dissipated, they weren't in a ruined manor - they were inside a dusty storeoom inside some large building.

In front of them stood blonde woman, in her thirties, with the very same crystal rod that Mannan had; the bishop in question stood few inches away from her.



"Well, that is a sight I didn't think I would ever see... Gregor returning to Kesselring, or what's left of it, heh."



"Marpa, I presume?"



"Whom else I could be?" She replied to Mannan and then looked back at Gregor and the rest of mercenaries who transported inside.





"Well met, Captain. I'm glad to see you recovered from your injuries after the battle in Fezzan."

Gregor looked around as he spoke. He never expected to return to Kesselring quite like this!



"Heh. Considering what Kesselring turned out to be in last half a year, I wish I stayed in Fezzan. Criminals, gang leaders, shady mercenaries, murderers, damn it all! The only real soldiers of Kesselring are outside now. Just for today I sent them all for a lengthy patrol to the north. If you spot a person with weapon outside this room - it is a hired thug for sure." Marpa grimaced.



"Look, I wish I had more time to get friendly with all those new faces you brought along but I don't think we have much time. I fear that PRIXIMA's right hand, Ernest, have been keeping close eye on me as of late. I won't be surprised if there's some covert action going outside."



"That means combat, soon..."



"Aye. I will be more than happy to assist in mutilating some of the faces who live here now. That creep Arvis apparently died in action but I hope that I will a chance to catch his buddy Shimnir, at least." Marpa looked to the side and noticed someone behind Gregor.



"Christopher."



"Marpa." Chris wondered what was with the curt greeting. Did she suspect him of malicious intent?



"I mean no harm. To you, anyway, or my friends here. I certainly mean plenty of harm to the other occupants of the castle."



"Don't worry, Chris has stuck by us thick and thin. I trust him. What about Captain Aaron? Is he the one leading the rest of the 'real soldiers'?"

Marpa was silent for a moment.



"Gregor, my husband... Aaron... he is more loyal to PRIXIMA than even Ernest. He spends more time in her laboratory than outside..."



"Captain Marpa, do you know where we can find PRIXIMA?"



"Yes, well, she is either in her study, or in the laboratory. If the latter, the keys to the laboratory should be in the study anyways."



"We shall go there, then." Mannan looked at the people around him, and then at the door, and pulled a large tome out of his robes.



"Onwards!"

**NPC: Captain Marpa joins the team!**

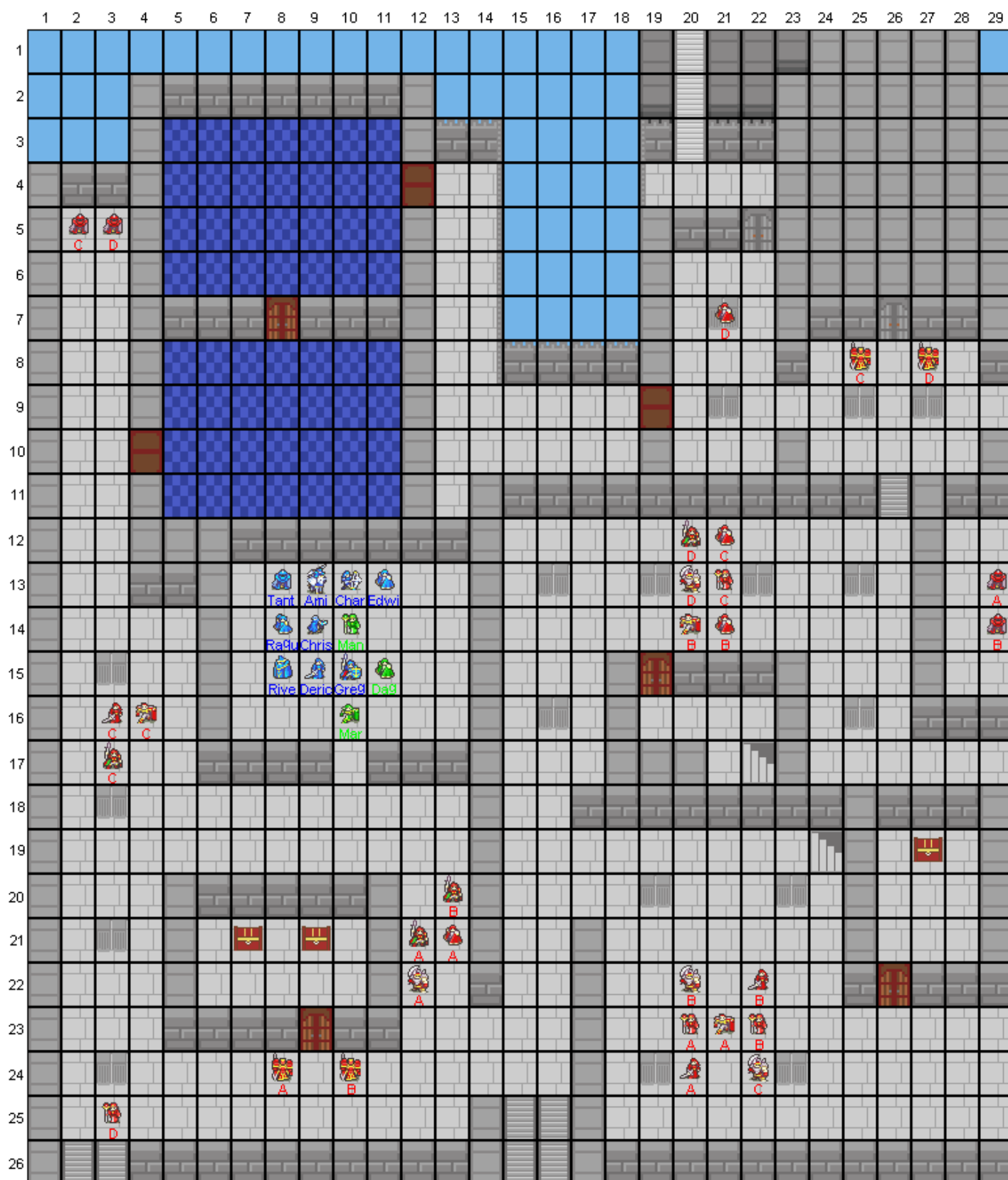


"That reminds me... a large group of PRIXIMA's thugs left the castle, too, earlier this morning. I reckon they went west. I wonder why, though."

# ~~Player Turn 1~~

## Objectives:

Obtain Magic Key



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                     | Enemies:                                                                                                 |                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/31<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 36/36<br>Christopher Shields: 39/39<br>Derick: 42/42<br>Edwin Westbringer: 37/37 | Sentinel A: 40/40<br>Sentinel B: 40/40<br>Sentinel C: 40/40<br>Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Guard A: 46/46 | Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Sergeant C: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38<br>Bishop B: 38/38 |

|                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gregor von Hexham: 41/41<br>Raquel Torriani: 42/42<br>Riven: 34/34<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 36/36 | Elite Guard B: 46/46<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman A: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Swordmaster C: 37/37 | Bishop C: 38/38<br>Bishop D: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Druid C: 35/35<br>Druid D: 35/35<br>Wind Sage A: 37/37<br>Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

**After Gregor moves, Charlotte moves to 7,17 and TWANGS the squishy Swordmaster!**



*Oh no. Why would Captain Aaron side with PRIXIMA?*



*"Don't worry Marpa, the two of us working together should be enough to hold back the first wave of enemies right here."*

**Gregor moves to (9,16), equips Steel Javelin, and lends additional tankiness to Marpa.**

Charlotte twanged the swordmaster, hitting him in the arm.

#### Charlotte vs Swordmaster C

Hit:  $132+10+10+7-63 = 96$

Hit roll: 3, hit!

Damage:  $23+1-14 = 10\text{dmg}$

**Riven Plan achieved: Summon gargoyle (next to me? on 7,15?). Order it to move west to the pillar and attack squishy swordmaster. Or whatever it is that's directly south of the pillar.**

**Chris moves to 11,16 and draws his crossbow.**

Gargoyle appeared out of thin air with a roar and rushed past Gregor and Marpa, leaving the room.

**Edwin: Hold position and poison Elite Axeman A.**

#### Edwin casts Poison on Axeman A

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-10\} \times 5]+23)-(10 \times 2) = 30+75+23-20 = 108$ , autohit!

Axeman A is Poisoned!

**Ami: stay still.**

**Raquel: Move to (8,16); equip Thunder**

Derick: Stay Put

Tantallos: Hold still and equip Carrion.

~~Enemy Phase~~

Long-range magic came upon the intruders with force.

Druid D vs Edwin

Hit:  $119+15-37 = 97$   
Hit roll: 86, hit!  
HP halved!

Druid C vs Charlotte

Hit:  $119-10-10-7-49 = 43$   
Hit roll: 27, hit!  
HP halved!

Sage C casts Poison on Edwin

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-21\} \times 5]+24)-(11 \times 2) = 30+20+24-22 = 52$   
Hit roll: 44, hit!  
Edwin is Poisoned!

Sage B casts Poison on Chris

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-9\} \times 5]+24)-(12 \times 2) = 30+80+24-24 = 110$ , autohit!  
Chris is Poisoned!

Sage A casts Poison on Gregor

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-8\} \times 5]+24)-(9 \times 2) = 30+85+24-18 = 121$ , autohit!  
Gregor is Poisoned!

Only after hellish energies and clouds of poison dissipated, the fighters of PRIXIMA rushed toward the storeroom, their axes and lances and swords high. Poor Phantom didn't stand a chance.

Axeman A vs Phantom

Hit:  $108+15-10-29 = 84$   
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1-10 = 28$  dmg

Then Marpa had to deal with a Sentinel, and that went very bad to her. She managed to stay on her feet, though.



"Now I know where did that recent weapon shipment go, ugh... Gregor I think you're better suited to deal with him!"

Sentinel B vs Marpa

Hit:  $132+15-5-10-46 = 86$   
Hit roll: 17, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-16 = 19$

Marpa counters!  
Hit:  $120+5+10-15-55 = 65$   
Hit roll: 71, miss!

Sentinel B attacks again!

Hit:  $132+15-5-10-46 = 86$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-16 = 19$

In the meanwhile, Bishop D crept closer and cast healing magic from afar, which healed the arrow wound of the Swordmaster C.

**Bishop D psychics Swordmaster C**

$22+10 =$  Up to 32HP restored

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Marpa withdrew to Mannan's side and sprinkled herself with pure waters, while Mannan healed her greivous wounds.

**Mannan mends Marpa**

$20+20 =$  Up to 40HP restored

Dag then stepped in front of the Berebian bishop and smote Sentinel B with windy magicks.

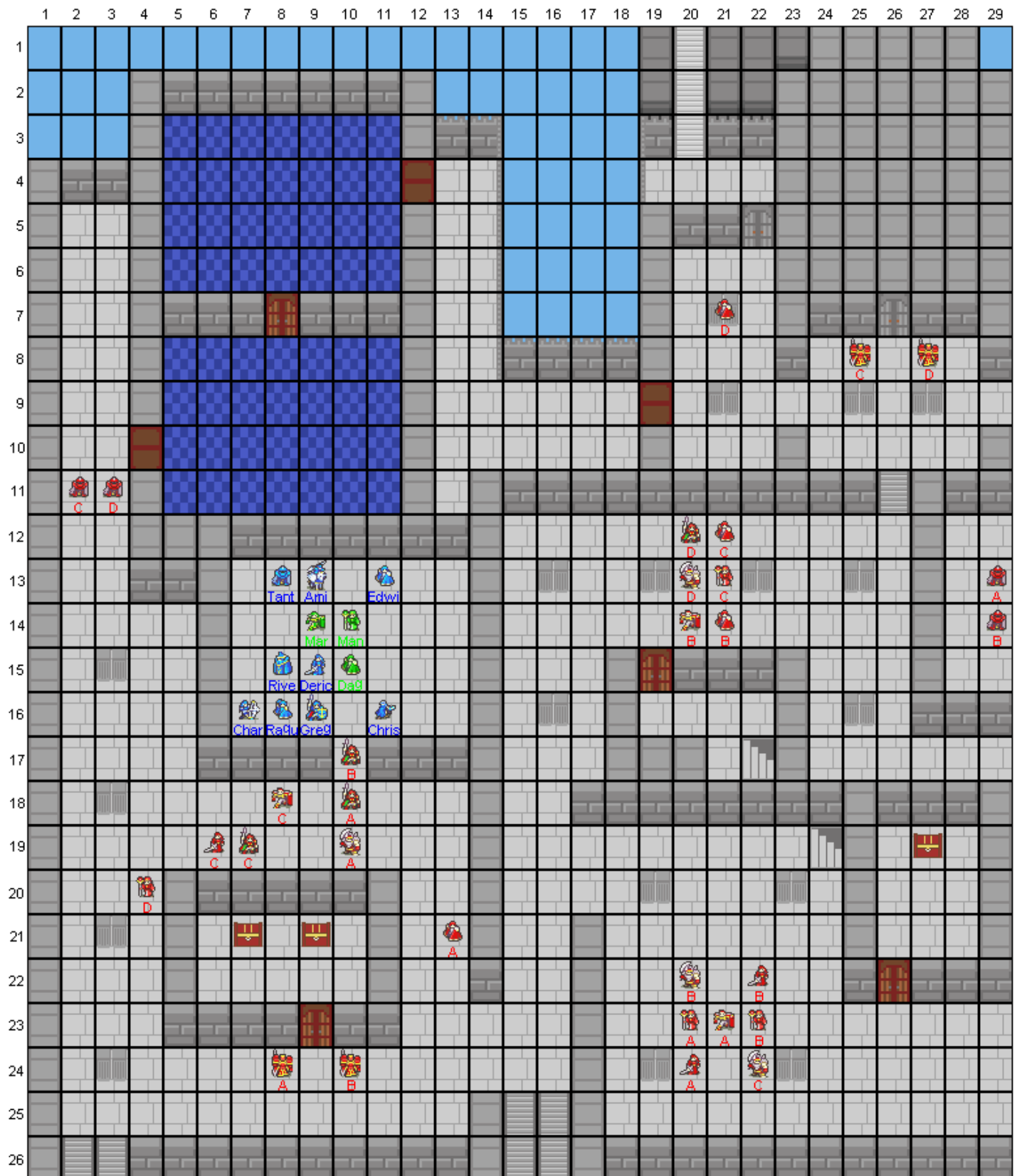
**Dag vs Sentinel B**

Hit:  $132+5+10-55 = 92$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $31-13 = 18$ dmg

# ~~Player Turn 2~~

## Poison rolls

Chris: 2  
Edwin: 5  
Gregor: 1  
Axeman A: 3



Weather:

| Merces:                                 | Enemies:          |                   |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/31                        | Sentinel A: 40/40 | Sergeant A: 42/42 |
| Charlotte von Hexham: 18/36             | Sentinel B: 22/40 | Sergeant B: 42/42 |
| Christopher Shields: 37/39 Poison (4/5) | Sentinel C: 40/40 | Sergeant C: 42/42 |

|                                       |                                    |                    |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Derick: 42/42                         | Sentinel D: 40/40                  | Bishop A: 38/38    |
| Edwin Westbringer: 19/37 Poison (4/5) | Elite Guard A: 46/46               | Bishop B: 38/38    |
| Gregor von Hexham: 41/41 Poison (4/5) | Elite Guard B: 46/46               | Bishop C: 38/38    |
| Raquel Torriani: 42/42                | Elite Guard C: 46/46               | Bishop D: 38/38    |
| Riven: 34/34                          | Elite Guard D: 46/46               | Druid A: 35/35     |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 36/36             | Elite Axeman A: 42/45 Poison (4/5) | Druid B: 35/35     |
| <b>Allies:</b>                        | Elite Axeman B: 45/45              | Druid C: 35/35     |
|                                       | Elite Axeman C: 45/45              | Druid D: 35/35     |
| Captain Marpa: 44/44 Pure Water (4/5) | Elite Axeman D: 45/45              | Wind Sage A: 37/37 |
|                                       | Swordmaster A: 37/37               | Wind Sage B: 37/37 |
|                                       | Swordmaster B: 37/37               | Wind Sage C: 37/37 |
|                                       | Swordmaster C: 37/37               | Wind Sage D: 37/37 |

### Chris took a shot at Sentinel B.

Suddenly Sentinel B's head exploded, sending blood and pink chunks of matter around as the body collapsed.

#### Chris vs Sentinel B

Hit: 144+5-55 = 94  
Hit roll: 64, hit! Crit roll: 3!  
Assasination roll: 5! // V:  
Sentinel B is killed!



"You know, I'd heard there was a spot in a man's brain that, if you shot it, his head would just blow up. I always thought that was a lie, yet here's proof."



"That's a disturbing thought. Here's hoping Ernest doesn't know about that spot..."

### Gregor moves to (10,16) and equips the Steel Lance.

Raquel listened to the sounds of footsteps thundering through the hall just outside the room, her eyes closed in concentration and a hand raised, palm outward, to face the blank stone wall.



"Let us see. Right about...now."

### Raquel: FROTZ Sentinel C with Thunder

### Riven: Summon another gargoyle. Tell it to wait at 8,14 like a good boy.

FROTZ~ Sergeant C suddenly was replaced by pile of ash.

#### Raquel vs Sergeant C



Hit:  $126+10+10-43 = 103$ , autohit! Crit roll: 19! //haaax v:  
Damage:  $33-12 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$



"Gotta open up the path!"

**Charlotte moves 2 E and casts KILLER BOW at Sentinel A.**

TWANG!

**Charlotte vs Sentinel A**

Hit:  $142+10+7+10+10-55 = 124$ , autohit! Crit roll: 6! //fuuuuuu  
Damage:  $27+1-19 = 9 \times 3 = 27\text{dmg}$

**Edwin: Poison Swordmaster C. Hold position.**

**Ami: Move to 10,13 and heal Edwin**

**Edwin casts Poison on Swordmaster C**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-12\} \times 5] + 24) - (11 \times 2) = 30+65+24-22 = 97$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Swordmaster C is poisoned!

**Ami heals Edwin**

$10+24 =$  Up to 34HP restored

**Tantallos: Hold still.**

**Derick: stay put**

~~Enemy Phase~~

More long-range magic before anything else~

**Bishop D psychics Sentinel A**

$10+22 =$  Up to 32HP restored

**Druid C vs Raquel**

Hit:  $109+15-10-5-52 = 57$   
Hit roll: 19, hit!  
HP halved!

**Druid D vs Chris**

Hit:  $109-2-52 = 55$   
Hit roll: 80, miss!

**Sage A casts Poison on Charlotte**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-7\} \times 5] + 24) - (9 \times 2) = 30+90+24-18 = 126$ , autohit!  
Charlotte is Poisoned!

**Sage B casts Poison on Marpa**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-19\} \times 5] + 24) - (12 \times 2) = 30+30+24-24 = 60$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Marpa is Poisoned!

**Sage C casts Poison on Ami**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{25-15\} \times 5] + 24) - (12 \times 2) = 30 + 50 + 24 - 24 = 80$

Hit roll: 37, hit!

Ami is Poisoned!

After that, Gregor had to withstand three attacks, of which two struck against his chest, but he was so manly he didn't go down! In fact, he even managed to counter-kill one of the attackers.

**Sentinel A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $132 - 10 - 5 - 11 - 47 = 59$

Hit roll: 65, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $123 + 10 + 5 + 11 - 55 = 94$

Hit roll: 4, hit! Crit roll: 20! // **OnÓ**

Damage:  $34 + 2 - 19 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

**Axeman A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $108 + 15 - 10 - 5 - 11 - 47 = 50$

Hit roll: 31, hit!

Damage:  $37 + 1 - 2 - 21 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Sentinel C vs Gregor**

Hit:  $132 - 10 - 5 - 11 - 47 = 59$

Hit roll: 24, hit!

Damage:  $34 - 2 - 21 = 11\text{dmg}$

Gregor counterattacks!

Hit:  $123 + 10 + 5 + 11 - 55 = 94$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $34 + 2 - 19 = 17\text{dmg}$

Then there were more shouts and laughter coming from the corridors. It seems some reinforcements have arrived.

**~~Ally Phase~~**

"There." Mannan touched Ami's head with Restore staff, and the poison left her veins.

In the meanwhile, Dag blasted the enemy sentinel with windy magic.

**Dag vs Sentinel C**

Hit:  $132 + 5 + 10 - 55 = 92$

Hit roll: 7, hit!

Damage:  $31 - 13 = 18\text{dmg}$

**~~Player Turn 3~~****Poison rolls**

Charlotte: 2

Christopher: 3

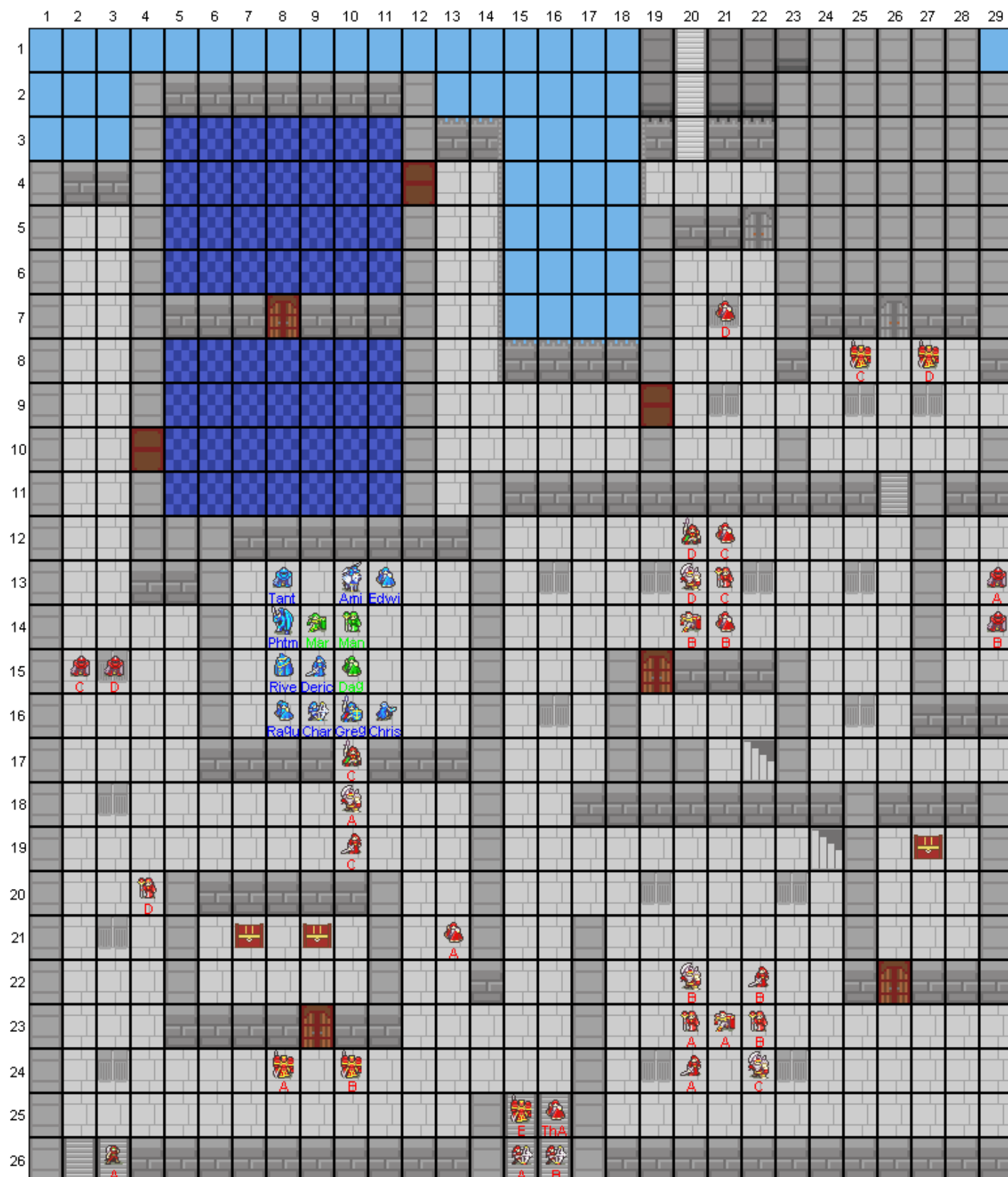
Edwin: 2

Gregor: 3

Axeman A: 4

Swordmaster C: 3

Marpa: 3



Weather:

| Merces:                                  | Enemies:                           |                    |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/31                         | Sentinel C: 5/40                   | Bishop A: 38/38    |
| Charlotte von Hexham: 16/36 Poison (4/5) | Sentinel D: 40/40                  | Bishop B: 38/38    |
| Christopher Shields: 34/39 Poison (3/5)  | Elite Guard A: 46/46               | Bishop C: 38/38    |
| Derick: 42/42                            | Elite Guard B: 46/46               | Bishop D: 38/38    |
| Edwin Westbringer: 37/37 Poison (3/5)    | Elite Guard C: 46/46               | Druid A: 35/35     |
| Gregor von Hexham: 16/41 Poison (3/5)    | Elite Guard D: 46/46               | Druid B: 35/35     |
| Raquel Torriani: 21/42                   | Elite Guard E: 46/46               | Druid C: 35/35     |
| Riven: 34/34                             | Elite Axeman A: 38/45 Poison (3/5) | Druid D: 35/35     |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 36/36                | Elite Axeman B: 45/45              | Wind Sage A: 37/37 |
|                                          | Elite Axeman C: 45/45              | Wind Sage B: 37/37 |
|                                          |                                    | Wind Sage C: 37/37 |

|                                                                                                  |                                                                                                     |                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summon: Gargoyle: 30/30                                                                          | Elite Axeman D: 45/45                                                                               | Wind Sage D: 37/37                                               |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                   | Swordmaster A: 37/37                                                                                | Thunder Sage A: 37/37                                            |
| Captain Marpa: 41/44<br>^ Pure Water (3/5) Poison (4/5)<br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 | Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Swordmaster C: 34/37 Poison (4/5)<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42 | Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 38/38<br>Rogue A: 33/33 |

**Gregor: STAB the foolish sentinel that dares challenge me.**

**Charlotte: move 2w, 1n, SHOOT SOME DRUID**

**Raquel: Move to (7,16); Heal Charlotte**

|                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Gregor vs Sentinel C</b>                                                          |
| Hit: $123+5+10+11-55 = 94$<br>Hit roll: 60, hit!<br>Damage: $34+2-19 = 17\text{dmg}$ |

Tap tap tap TWANG.

|                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Charlotte vs Druid D</b>                                               |
| Hit: $132+10+10-15-36 = 101$ , autohit!<br>Damage: $23-12 = 11\text{dmg}$ |

|                                      |
|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Raquel heals Charlotte</b>        |
| $10+29 = \text{Up to 39HP restored}$ |

**Edwin: Move 2 south and sleep swordmaster C.**

**Ami: Move to 9,16 and heal Greg**

|                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Edwin casts Sleep on Swordmaster C</b>                                                                         |
| Staff hit: $(30+[\{25-12\} \times 5]+24)-(5 \times 2) = 30+65+24-12 = 107$ , autohit!<br>Swordmaster C is asleep! |

|                                      |
|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Ami heals Gregor</b>              |
| $10+24 = \text{Up to 34HP restored}$ |

**Tantallos: Hold still yet.**

**Derick: Move 9, 17 attack axeman**

**Chris: Hold position.**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Derick vs Axeman A</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Hit: $127+15+5-42 = 105$ , autohit!<br>Damage: $33+2+1-14 = 22\text{dmg}$<br><br>Axeman A counters!<br>Hit: $108-15-5-66 = 22$<br>Hit roll: 1, hit!<br>Damage: $37-1-14 = 22\text{dmg}$<br><br>Derick counterattacks!<br>Hit: $127+15+5-42 = 105$ , autohit!<br>Damage: $33+2+1-14 = 22\text{dmg}$ |

Riven: Move 1E. Order gargoyle to 11,15 or close to it, if occupied.

~~Enemy Phase~~

It keeps happening. And suddenly, a blast of dark magic passed through the wall, hit Raquel and sent her to the floor.

Druid D vs Charlotte

Hit:  $109-10-10-49 = 40$   
Hit roll: 34, hit!  
HP halved!

Sage B casts Poison on Phantom

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-9\} \times 5]+24)-(10 \times 2) = 30+80+24-20 = 114$ , autohit!  
Phantom is poisoned!

Thunder Sage A vs Gregor

Hit:  $120-5-47 = 68$   
Hit roll: 2, hit!  
Damage:  $38-8 = 30$ dmg

Sage A casts Poison on Riven

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-18\} \times 5]+24)-(8 \times 2) = 30+35+24-16 = 73$   
Hit roll: 71, hit!  
Riven is Poisoned!

Druid C vs Raquel

Hit:  $119+15-15-52 = 67$   
Hit roll: 16, hit!  
Damage:  $40+1-14 = 27$ dmg

~~Ally Phase~~

Fortunately, Mannan came right up to her and helped her from the ground with his magics and chivalrous arm. Then, Marpa moved past all others and slashed at the Swordmaster C, before Dag finished him off with a blast of ice and winds.

Mannan mends Raquel

$20+20 / 2 =$  Up to 20HP restored

Marpa vs Swordmaster C

Autohit!  
Damage:  $36-14 = 22$ dmg

Dag vs Swordmaster C

Hit:  $132+10+5-63 = 84$   
Hit roll: 82, hit!  
Damage:  $34-12 = 22$ dmg //what's with all those 22's, honestly



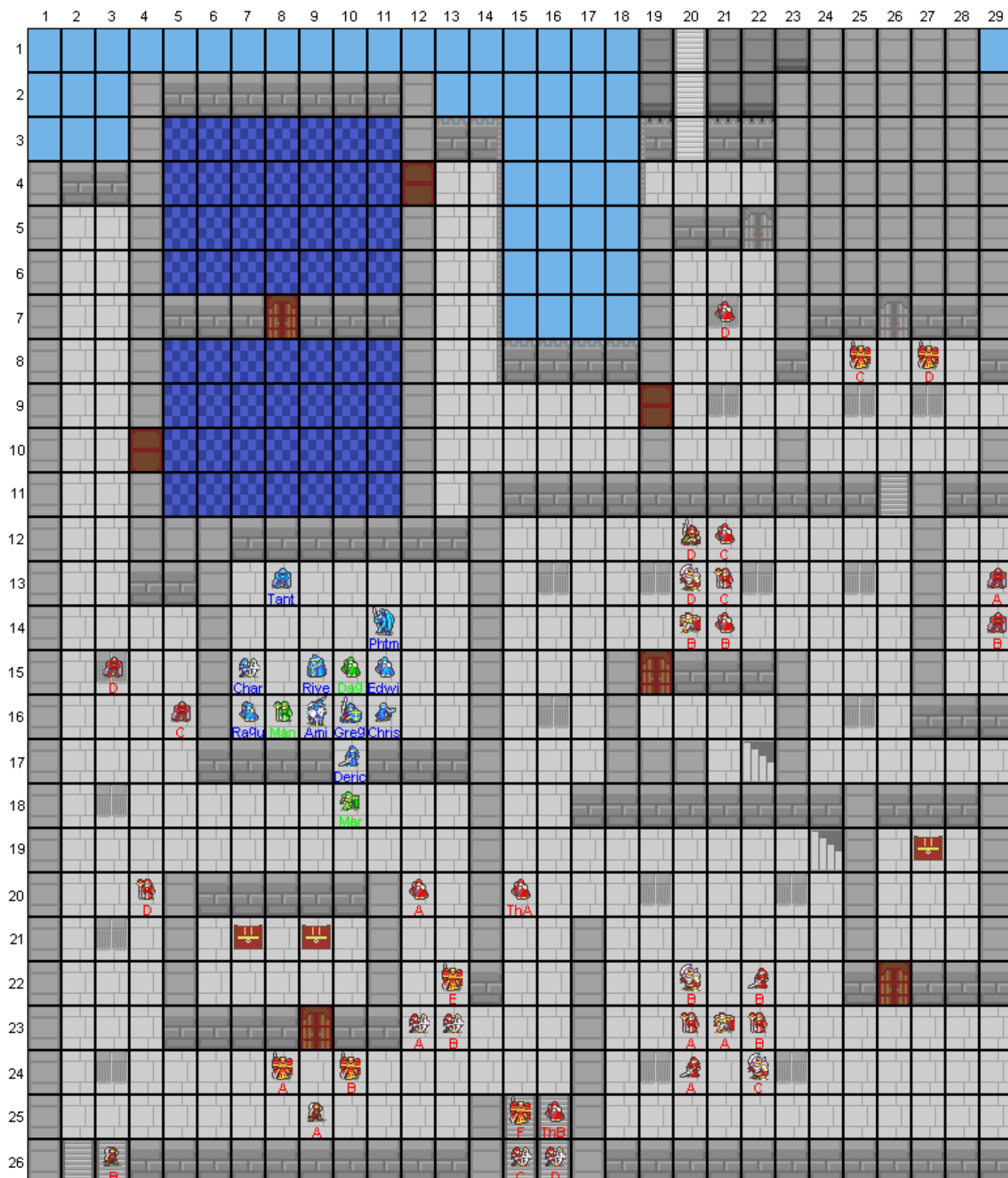
"I believe we're getting too cozy in this room."

~~Player Turn 4~~

Poison rolls

Charlotte: 4  
Christopher: 1

Edwin: 2  
 Gregor: 5  
 Riven: 5  
 Summon Gargoyle: 4  
 Captain Marpa: 3



Weather:

| Merces:                                  |  | Enemies:             |                    |
|------------------------------------------|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32                         |  | Sentinel D: 40/40    | Bishop D: 38/38    |
| Charlotte von Hexham: 14/36 Poison (3/5) |  | Elite Guard A: 46/46 | Druid A: 35/35     |
| Christopher Shields: 33/39 Poison (2/5)  |  | Elite Guard B: 46/46 | Druid B: 35/35     |
| Derick: 20/43                            |  | Elite Guard C: 46/46 | Druid C: 35/35     |
| Edwin Westbringer: 37/37 Poison (2/5)    |  | Elite Guard D: 46/46 | Druid D: 24/35     |
| Gregor von Hexham: 6/42 Poison (2/5)     |  | Elite Guard E: 46/46 | Wind Sage A: 37/37 |

|                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Raquel Torriani: 20/43<br>Riven: 29/35 <b>Poison (4/5)</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 36/36<br>Summon: Gargoyle: 26/30 <b>Poison (4/5)</b> | Elite Guard F: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38<br>Bishop B: 38/38<br>Bishop C: 38/38 | Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage A: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry C: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry D: 38/38<br>Rogue A: 33/33<br>Rogue B: 33/33 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Captain Marpa: 38/44<br>^ <b>Pure Water (2/5)</b> <b>Poison (3/5)</b><br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |



"Raquel, why don't we double team these Druids? They're so close I can hear their footsteps. You take the closest one to you, and if that finishes him off, I'll go after the farther one."

Raquel winced as Mannan helped her back to her feet.



"I...I can try, but I do not believe I can succeed. I am afraid that my talents are rather unsuited for attacking other magic-wielders. Are you certain of this?"

Charlotte nodded at Raquel.



"You know your art better than mine. I'll see if Tantallos can help, then. It sounds like Derick is on the move, so you should probably go help him."



"Thank you. I apologize, but I feel we must know our limits, and in this, I believe Tantallos and you are far more capable than I. For my own part," and she raised the healing stave slightly, "I had best put my healing talents to good use. Thank you Mannan, as well, for aiding me."

**Raquel: Move to (10,19), Heal Marpa**

Oweewooooo~

**Raquel heals Marpa**

10+29 = Up to 39HP restored



"If someone wouldn't mind healing me, I can go after that sage over there. I think he's the one that shot me..."



"On it."

**Ami: Bash Greg with healing**

\*bonk\*

**Ami heals Gregor**

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| 10+25 = Up to 35HP restored |
|-----------------------------|



"Thanks, Ami!"

**Gregor: Move to (12,19) and STAB Sage A!**

**Tantallos: Move to 7,16 and attack Druid C with Luna.**



"At last, a challenge."



"Derrick, I think I can see who's healing them! It's by the corner, opposite the sage, where the druids are firing from! If you can take him down, we can mop up the others easily." Edwin said to Derrick, pointing out the Bishop.

Druid-off time.

**Tantallos vs Druid C**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hit: 117-36 = 81<br>Hit roll: 16, hit!<br>Damage: 25dmg!<br><br>Druid C counters!<br>Hit: 119-52 = 67<br>Hit roll: 13, hit!<br>Damage: 40-21 = 19dmg<br><br>Tantallos attacks again!<br>Hit: 117-36 = 81<br>Hit roll: 79, hit! Crit roll: 3!<br>Damage: 75dmg! |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|





"..Not a challenge at all. How disappointing, heeehe."

And then it was stabby and magicky duel.

#### Gregor vs Sage A

Hit:  $125+10+5-43 = 97$

Hit roll: 37, hit!

Damage:  $34-12 = 22\text{dmg}$

Sage A retaliates!

Hit:  $133-10-5-47 = 71$

Hit roll: 59, hit!

Damage:  $36-9 = 27\text{dmg}$

Gregor attacks once more!

Hit:  $125+10+5-43 = 97$

Hit roll: 99, miss!



"...Damn. Could I get some help, please?"

**Derick: move 11,18**

**Charlotte: Killer bow druid d!**

**Edwin: Hold position. Sleep Rogue A.**



"I've got your back."

**Chris to 11,19, and crossbow the sage.**

Unfortunately for Charlotte, her small bow wasn't good enough to cover the range - so longbow it was.

#### Charlotte vs Druid D

Hit:  $132+10+10-15-36 = 101$ , autohit!

Damage:  $24-12 = 12\text{dmg}$

Then Edwin put some distant foe to sleep.

#### Edwin casts Sleep on Rogue A

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{26-9\} \times 5]+23)-(12 \times 2) = 30+85+23-24 = 114$ , autohit!

Rogue A is asleep!

Twang! The bolt hit the Sage right in the knee and he lost balance, having to lean against the wall.

Chris blindfired around the corner and heard a groan of pain, followed by some chanting.

Clearly a spell to retaliate.



*Not this time you bastard.*

Quicker than he usually did, the assassin loaded a second bolt into his crossbow and popped around the corner. It took barely a second to sight in and fire a second time, dealing the sage a fatal wound.

#### Chris vs Sage A

Hit:  $144-43 = 101$ , autohit!

Dmg:  $16+2-12 = 6$ dmg

Cancel roll: 19!

Sage A cannot counter!

Chris attacks again!

Hit:  $144-43 = 101$ , autohit! Crit roll: 10!

Dmg:  $16+2-12 = 6 \times 3 = 18$ dmg



"...Agus a chríochnaíonn sin do ról sa dráma seo. Dea-oíche."

He knelt by the fallen sage and closed his eyes for him.

**Riven: Move to 10,17. Order gargoyle to 9,18.**



"Good shooting, Chris." With the sage down, Gregor was free to look down the corridor at the unfortunate number of foes. "...better stick close to me. I think things are about to get difficult."



"You know I have your back, Gregor. If we're to die here, then we'll do so standing together."

Chris nodded to Gregor.



"But I don't believe we will die this day. No, I think we are going to have long \_"

The assassin paused to load his crossbow.



"- and happy lives with the women we love, and we're going to be good fathers to our future children. That's what I think."

~~Enemy Phase~~

It's that time of the fight again.

**Druid D vs Chris**  
Hit:  $109 - 2 - 53 = 54$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
HP halved!

**Thunder Sage A vs Mannan**  
Hit:  $120 + 15 - 50 = 85$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $38 + 1 - 24 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Thunder Sage B vs Captain Marpa**  
Hit:  $120 - 46 = 74$   
Hit roll: 96, miss!

And suddenly, a blast of bright magic smote Tantallos in the face. He retaliated but without much luck.

**Bishop D vs Tantallos**  
Hit:  $137 + 15 - 52 = 100$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $34 + 1 - 21 = 14\text{dmg}$   
  
Tantallos counterattacks!  
Hit:  $117 - 15 - 51 = 51$   
Hit roll: 84, miss!

The heavy guard moved past Gregor and swung his halberd at Derick, but the weapon smashed against the ground while Derick evaded the blow. Soon the general learned that it was very bad idea to attack the swordmaster.

**Elite Guard E vs Derick**  
Hit:  $104 + 15 - 5 - 10 - 69 = 35$   
Hit roll: 70, miss!  
  
Derick counters!  
Hit:  $127 + 10 + 5 - 15 - 33 = 96$   
Hit roll: 60, hit! Crit roll: 32!  
Damage:  $34 + 2 - 1 - 25 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$   
  
Derick counters again!  
Hit:  $127 + 10 + 5 - 15 - 33 = 96$   
Hit roll: 96, hit! Crit roll: 14!  
Damage:  $34 + 2 - 1 - 25 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$

Then, both sniper ladies moved up to Gregor and tried to brought him down, but the sentinel proved to be rather stubborn!

**Sentry B vs Gregor**  
Hit:  $138 - 5 - 10 - 5 - 47 = 71$   
Hit roll: 40, hit!  
Damage:  $29 - 3 - 22 = 4\text{dmg}$

**Sentry A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $138-5-10-7-47 = 69$

Hit roll: 49, hit!

Damage:  $29-4-22 = 3\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Mannan quickled mended Tantallos' face, Marpa stuck her sword in one of the sentries, and Dag blasted the offending bishop with magics.

**Mannan mends Tantallos**

$20+20 =$  Up to 40HP restored

**Marpa vs Sentry A**

Hit:  $120+5-53 = 72$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $36-17 = 19\text{dmg}$

**Dag vs Bishop D**

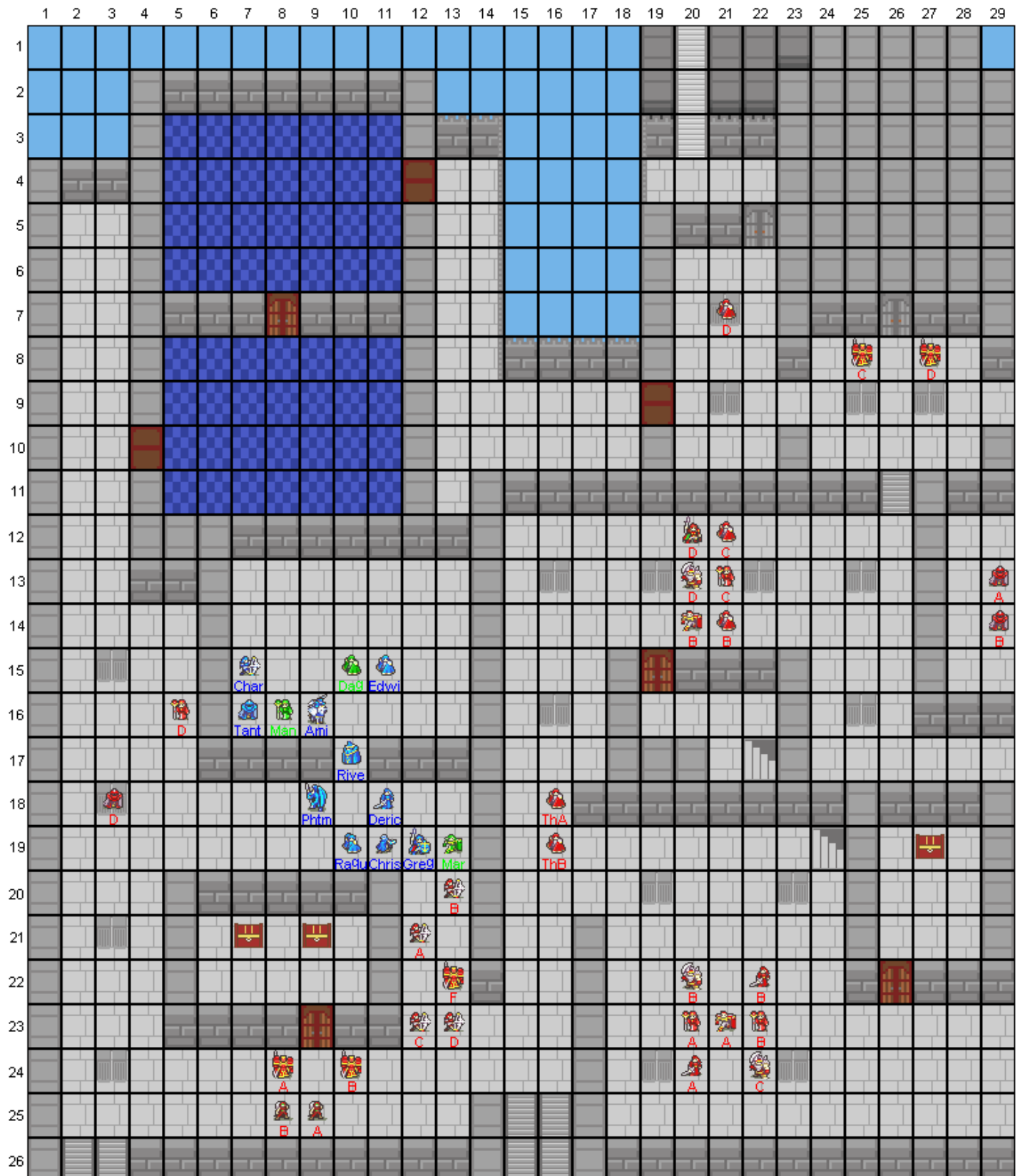
Hit:  $132+15+10-51 = 106$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34-1-22 = 11\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 5~~

## Poison rolls

Charlotte: 4  
Chris: 4  
Edwin: 5  
Gregor: 5  
Riven: 2  
Summon Gargoyle: 2  
Marpa: 1



Weather:

**Merces:**

**Enemies:**

|                                                                                                         |                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32                                                                                        | Sentinel D: 40/40     | Bishop D: 27/38                   |
| Charlotte von Hexham: 10/36 <b>Poison (2/5)</b>                                                         | Elite Guard A: 46/46  | Druid A: 35/35                    |
| Christopher Shields: 13/39 <b>Poison (1/5)</b>                                                          | Elite Guard B: 46/46  | Druid B: 35/35                    |
| Derick: 20/43                                                                                           | Elite Guard C: 46/46  | Druid D: 12/35                    |
| Edwin Westbringer: <b>37/37 Poison (1/5)</b>                                                            | Elite Guard D: 46/46  | Wind Sage B: 37/37                |
| Gregor von Hexham: 2/42 <b>Poison (1/5)</b>                                                             | Elite Guard F: 46/46  | Wind Sage C: 37/37                |
| Raquel Torriani: 20/43                                                                                  | Elite Axeman B: 45/45 | Wind Sage D: 37/37                |
| Riven: 27/35 <b>Poison (3/5)</b>                                                                        | Elite Axeman C: 45/45 | Thunder Sage A: 37/37             |
| Tantallos Forsaken: 36/36                                                                               | Elite Axeman D: 45/45 | Thunder Sage B: 37/37             |
| Summon: Gargoyle: 24/30 <b>Poison (3/5)</b>                                                             | Swordmaster A: 37/37  | Elite Sentry A: 38/38             |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                          | Swordmaster B: 37/37  | Elite Sentry B: 19/38             |
|                                                                                                         | Sergeant A: 42/42     | Elite Sentry C: 38/38             |
| Captain Marpa: 43/44<br>^ <b>Pure Water (1/5) Poison (2/5)</b><br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 20/35 | Sergeant B: 42/42     | Elite Sentry D: 38/38             |
|                                                                                                         | Bishop A: 38/38       | Rogue A: 33/33 <b>Sleep (4/5)</b> |
|                                                                                                         | Bishop B: 38/38       | Rogue B: 33/33                    |
|                                                                                                         | Bishop C: 38/38       |                                   |
|                                                                                                         |                       |                                   |

Edwin: Move to 9, 19 and sleep Rogue B.

Gregor coughed, wavering slightly but somehow remaining on his feet.



"You're right, Chris; I don't think we'll die today either. And if we want to live long and happy lives we'll have to break through this bunch first. Forward!"

Gregor: Move 1 south and STAB! Sentry B!

Chris moves to Gregor's spot as soon as he vacates it and takes a shot at Sentry B as well. If Gregor kills Sentry B, Chris will shoot at Sentry A instead.

Edwin casts Sleep on Rogue B

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{26 - 9\} \times 5] + 23) - (7 \times 2) = 30 + 85 + 23 - 14 = 124$ , autohit!  
Rogue B is asleep!

The concerted attack on one of the female sentries didn't go as planned.

Gregor vs Sentry B

Hit:  $125 + 5 + 10 - 53 = 87$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
Damage:  $34 - 17 = 17\text{dmg}$

Chris vs Sentry B

Hit:  $144 + 10 + 5 - 53 = 106$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $16 - 17 = 0\text{dmg}$   
  
Sentry B counters!  
Hit:  $138 - 10 - 5 - 2 - 53 = 68$   
Hit roll: 34, hit!  
Damage:  $29 - 1 - 10 = 18\text{dmg}$

Riven: Move to 11,19. Order gargoyle to nom Bishop D.

The gargoyle missed, and then got pounded with light magic so hard it turned into fine dust.

Gargoyle vs Bishop D

Hit:  $91-51 = 40$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

Bishop D counters!

Hit:  $137-29 = 108$ , autohit! Crit roll: 12!

Damage:  $34-9 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

**Raquel: Move to (13,18); zap Sentry B with Thunder**

ZAP!

**Raquel vs Sentry B**

Hit:  $128+10+15+5+10-53 = 115$ , autohit! Crit roll: 13!

Damage:  $33-11 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$

**Ami: Move to 12,18 and heal Chris**



"Are you okay, Chris?"

**Ami heals Chris**

$10+25 / 2 =$  Up to 17HP restored

**Charlotte TWANGs Bishop D with the Killer Bow.**

**Tantallos: Attack the same bishop because of his personal fault. And in case he gets killed by Charlotte, move to 10,16.**

**Derick: Stay put**

**Charlotte vs Bishop D**

Hit:  $142+10-51 = 101$ , autohit! Crit roll: 25!

Damage:  $28-13 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

~~Enemy Phase~~

Long range magicks.

**Druid D vs Tantallos**

Hit:  $109-52 = 57$

Hit roll: 86, miss!

**Thunder Sage A vs Raquel**

Hit:  $120-10-5-54 = 51$

Hit roll: 65, miss!

**Thunder Sage B vs Derick**

Hit:  $120-10-5-69 = 36$

Hit roll: 1, hit!

Damage:  $38-12 = 26\text{dmg}$

After that, it was plinging and melee.

**Sentry A vs Gregor**

Hit:  $138-7-5-10-47 = 69$

Hit roll: 70, miss!

#### Elite Guard F vs Marpa

Hit:  $104+15-5-10-46 = 58$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

Marpa counters!

Hit:  $120+10+5-15-33 = 87$

Hit roll: 21, hit!

Damage:  $36-1-25 = 10\text{dmg}$

Marpa counters again!

Hit:  $120+10+5-15-33 = 87$

Hit roll: 28, hit!

Damage:  $36-1-25 = 10\text{dmg}$

#### Sentry D vs Gregor

Hit:  $138-7-5-10-47 = 69$

Hit roll: 99, miss!

#### Sentry C vs Chris

Hit:  $138-4-5-10-53 = 66$

Hit roll: 88, miss! // >:I

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Marpa attacked the armored knight, Dag blasted him out with Blizzard, and Mannan in the meanwhile stepped toward Derick and healed him.

#### Marpa vs Elite Guard F

Hit:  $120+10+5-15-33 = 87$

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Damage:  $36-1-25 = 10\text{dmg}$

Elite Guard F counters!

Hit:  $104+15-5-10-46 = 58$

Hit roll: 47, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-16 = 20\text{dmg}$

Marpa attacks again!

Hit:  $120+10+5-15-33 = 87$

Hit roll: 95, miss!

#### Dag vs Elite Guard F

Hit:  $132+10+5-33 = 114$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34-8 = 26\text{dmg}$

#### Mannan mends Derick

$20+20 / 2 =$  Up to 20HP restored



"Here you go, Derick. You should feel bett-"

"Apologies." A voice spoke from behind Tantallos. With a flash of light, four people appeared out of thin air - three of them unknown, and the last one...



"It seems I was late to welcome you properly in our castle. But please, let me



fix this oversight. Welcome in Kesselring Fortress." Ernest placed his hand on the knife's hilt, his eyes glowing red; whilst his escorts drew their katanas out the scabbards. The spymaster blinked.

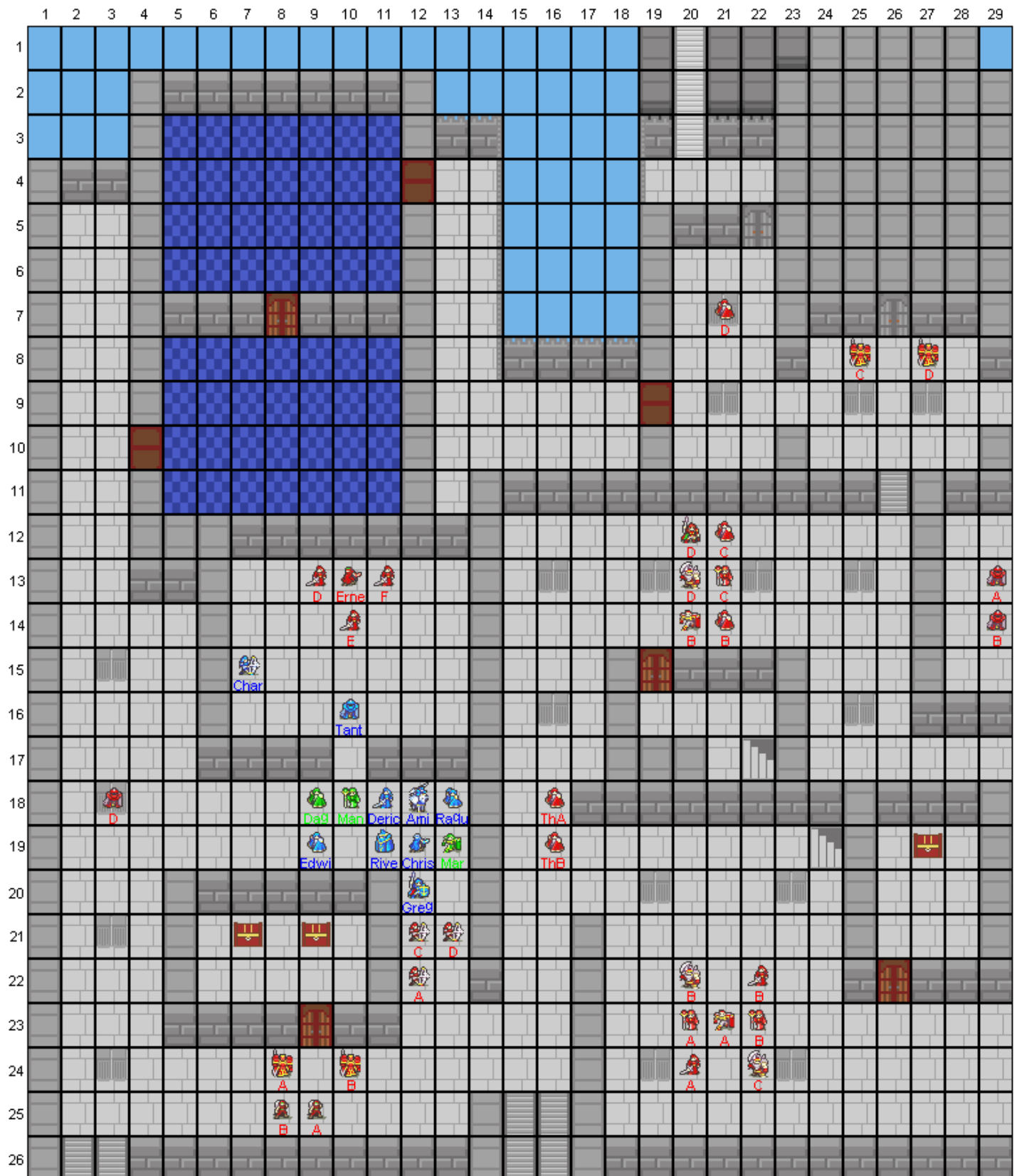


"I don't see Valor here. Pity, really." His tone of voice betrayed slight amusement, yet his face was emotionless.

# ~~Player Turn 6~~

## Poison rolls

Charlotte: 5  
Edwin feels better  
Gregor feels better  
Riven: 5  
Marpa: 4



Weather:

## Merces:

## Enemies:

Ami Storm: 31/32  
Charlotte von Hexham: 6/36 **Poison (1/5)**

Sentinel D: 40/40  
Elite Guard A: 46/46

Bishop B: 38/38  
Bishop C: 38/38

|                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Christopher Shields: 18/39<br>Derick: 21/43<br>Edwin Westbringer: 37/37<br>Gregor von Hexham: 2/43<br>Raquel Torriani: 20/44<br>Riven: 22/36 <b>Poison (2/5)</b><br>Tantallos Forsaken: 36/37 | Elite Guard B: 46/46<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Swordmaster D: 37/37<br>Swordmaster E: 37/37<br>Swordmaster F: 37/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38 | Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Druid D: 12/35<br>Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage A: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry C: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry D: 38/38<br>Rogue A: 33/33 <b>Sleep (3/5)</b><br>Rogue B: 33/33 <b>Sleep (4/5)</b><br>Ernest: 47/47 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Captain Marpa: 19/44 <b>Poison (1/5)</b><br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 20/35                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |



!



"I remember *him*! Ami, look!"



"He does look familiar, the guy that handed Chris that paper a while ago, I think."



"Thanks, love. I'll be fine..."

Chris took a moment to catch his breath and wipe the blood from his mouth.



"...But it sounds like Teach has shown up to play."



"Have *fun*."



"I am not sure who you are, but you are probably not here to offer tea. So if you excuse me.."

**Tantallos: Move to 8, 19.**



"Whoa! How did you do that? I thought teleportation magic required two casters. That's what we did, anyway."



"Charlotte Braxis, join Mistress PRIXIMA and you too, shall be given such miraculous powers. That is all I have to say."



"I resent that such teleportation is considered an act of the gods!" Edwin complained through the door. "Give me enough time, a lab and some idea of how they do it to start from and I can MAKE a spell just like it for you to use. So don't listen to that liar and scoundrel Charlotte!"



"I'd never! Take your 'ultimate power' and shove it!"

**Charlotte moved to 10,16 and TWANG'd Ernest with her KILLER LONGBOW (+10 Hit from PS).**

Pling! Ernest gently tilted his head so the arrow flew past him and hit against the wall with a soft thud.

**Quote from: Charlotte vs Ernest**

Hit:  $143+10-5-83 = 65$

Hit roll: 79, miss!



"If Ernest is here...and Charlotte's back there...she might need help!"

Gregor struggled to shake off the lingering effects of bloodloss and poison.

**Ami: Move to 13,20, heal Gregor, move back to 12,18.**

Bliiiiing~

**Ami heals Gregor**

$10+26 =$  Up to 36HP restored



"You guys handle things here. I have to go back there and help!"

**Gregor moves to (10,17) and rescues Charlotte.**



"Mannan, clear some space!"



"Understood. We shall do our best."

**Raquel: Move to (12,20); zap Sentry C with Thunder**

**Edwin: Move to 5, 18. Call Magic: Shine on Druid D!**

**Raquel vs Sentry C**

Hit:  $130+10+5+10+15-53 = 117$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34-11 = 23\text{dmg}$

Raquel strikes again!

Hit:  $130+10+5+10+15-53 = 117$ , autohit! Crit roll: 12!

Damage:  $34-11 = 23 \times 3 = 69\text{dmg}$

**Edwin vs Druid D**

Hit:  $(90+48+3)+15-36 = 120$ , autohit! Crit roll: 10!

Damage:  $(27+6)+1-19 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

**Derick: 12 21 attack D**

The archer lady's head flew toward Raquel after Derick's second attack. Such a gentleman, he is.

**Derick vs Sentry D**

Hit:  $127+10+10-53 = 96$

Hit roll: 98, miss!

Derick attacks again!

Hit:  $127+10+10-53 = 96$

Hit roll: 44, hit! Crit roll: 23!

Damage:  $35+2-17 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

**Chris to 13,22, shank sentry.**

**Riven to 13,21, Nosferatu sentry.**

Shankin' and Nosferatin'.

**Chris vs Sentry A**

Hit:  $139+10-53 = 96$

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage:  $27-17 = 10$

Chris shanks again!  
Hit:  $139+10-53 = 96$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $27-17 = 10$

#### Riven vs Sentry A

Hit:  $121+10+10-53 = 88$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $35-11 = 26\text{dmg}$   
Riven heals 18HP!

### ~~Enemy Phase~~



"I hope you don't believe I'm still restricted to simple knives, Gregor, after being so loyal to Lady PRIXIMA? Let us demonstrate." Ernest approached the walls left from Gregor, not the sentinel, and placed his hands on the wall... Suddenly, with loud crunching sounds, the walls began to be covered with cracks!

Two of Ernest's swordmasters rushed to knock the weakened walls down, whilst third engaged Gregor in combat.

#### Swordmaster D vs Cracked Wall

Damage:  $27-5 = 22\text{dmg}$

#### Swordmaster F vs Cracked Wall

Damage:  $27-5 = 22\text{dmg}$

#### Swordmaster E vs Gregor

Hit:  $126-15-11-5-27 = 68$   
Hit roll: 37, hit! Crit roll: 6!  
Damage:  $27-1-2-23 = 1 \times 3 = 3\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $99+15+11+5-63 = 67$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1+2-14 = 23\text{dmg}$

Swordmaster E attacks again!

Hit:  $126-15-11-5-27 = 68$   
Hit roll: 26, hit!  
Damage:  $27-1-2-23 = 1\text{dmg}$

In the same time, one of the storeroom guards moved and engaged Chris who just got close enough. That proved to be fatal mistake when Chris managed to stab with his dagger right through the thin vision slit of the Guard's helmet - and given he crashed to the floor with a gurgle, the dagger must have struck his head rather deeply.

#### Elite Guard B vs Chris

Hit:  $104+15-10-57 = 52$   
Hit roll: 85, miss!

Chris counters!

Hit:  $139+10-15-33 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $27+2-1-25 = 2\text{dmg}$

Chris counterattacks again!

Hit:  $139+10-15-33 = 101$ , autohit! Crit roll: 19!  
Assasination roll: 9! // whhyhyhyhyhy ;\_;

Elite Guard B has been killed!

Two thunders struck at Marpa and Chris, but both of the affected managed to step away just in the last second.

#### Thunder Sage A vs Marpa

Hit:  $120-10-46 = 64$

Hit roll: 70, miss!

#### Thunder Sage B vs Chris

Hit:  $120-10-57 = 55$

Hit roll: 81, miss!

Moments later, Derick and Chris had excellent view on a group of mercenaries who climbed the stairs. Reinforcements - again!

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Just what the kind of magic was that!?"



"The *best* kind of magic, Dag of Cere Minor. If you would join us, you too would-"



"So you can put another wanted poster on me? No, thank you."

Then Dag blasted the nearby swordmaster with magic wind, whilst Mannan blasted the one behind Gregor.

#### Dag vs Swordmaster F

Hit:  $132+5-63 = 75$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage:  $31-12 = 19\text{dmg}$

#### Mannan vs Swordmaster E

Hit:  $138+5-63 = 81$

Hit roll: 68, hit!

Damage:  $34-12 = 22\text{dmg}$



"Tsk, that was wrong move, Lord Mann-"



"Look, none of us is interested joining forces with PRIXIMA, so I kindly beseech you: shut up."

Ernest didn't respond.

Meanwhile, Marpa rushed past Chris, seemingly angered by the magic strikes, but when she spotted reinforcements, she stopped in her tracks and used up another dose of pure water.



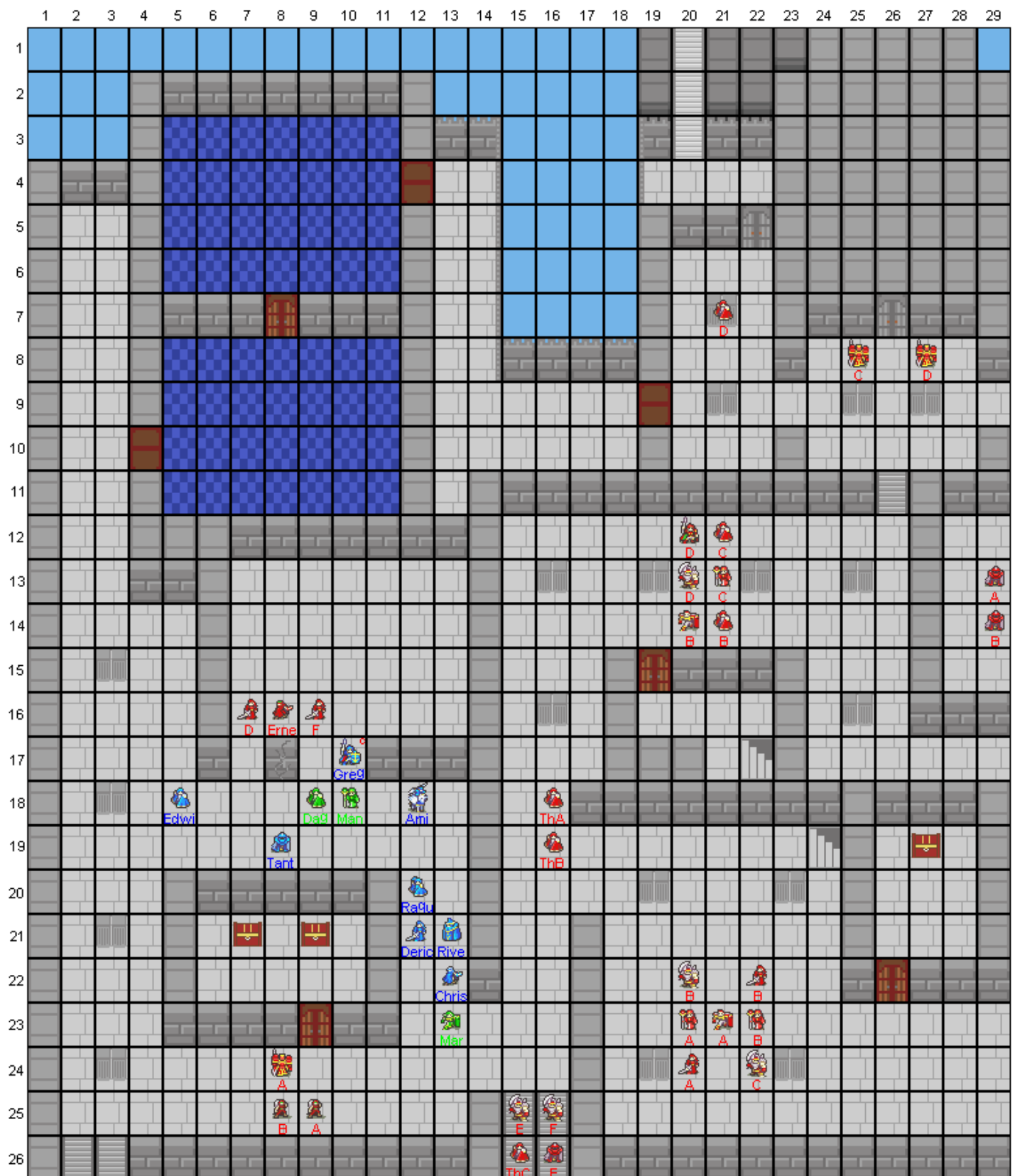
# ~~Player Turn 7~~

## Poison rolls

Charlotte feels better

Riven: 2

Captain Marpa feels better



Weather:

| Merces:                         |  | Enemies:             |                 |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32                |  | Sentinel D: 40/40    | Bishop A: 38/38 |
| Charlotte von Hexham: 6/36      |  | Elite Guard A: 46/46 | Bishop B: 38/38 |
| ^ Carried by: Gregor von Hexham |  | Elite Guard C: 46/46 | Bishop C: 38/38 |
| Christopher Shields: 18/40      |  | Elite Guard D: 46/46 | Druid A: 35/35  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Derick: 21/44<br>Edwin Westbringer: 37/38<br>Gregor von Hexham: 39/44<br>^ Carrying: Charlotte von Hexham<br>Raquel Torriani: 20/44<br>Riven: 34/36 Poison (1/5)<br>Tantalos Forsaken: 36/37 | Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman E: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman F: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Swordmaster D: 37/37<br>Swordmaster F: 18/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42 | Druid B: 35/35<br>Druid E: 35/35<br>Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage A: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage B: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage C: 37/37<br>Rogue A: 33/33 Sleep (2/5)<br>Rogue B: 33/33 Sleep (3/5)<br>Ernest: 47/47 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Captain Marpa: 19/44 Pure Water (4/5)<br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 20/35                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

**Ami: Move to 10,19 and heal Mannan**



"Thank you."

#### Ami heals Mannan

10+27 = Up to 37HP restored

**Riven: Move to 9,19. Summon a gargoyle, tell it to stand at 7,17.**

**Gregor: FLING Javelin at Swordmaster F!**

**Edwin: Move 2 North and fry Swordmaster D!**

swish noises

#### Gregor vs Swordmaster F

Hit:  $(65+26+3)+15+10+5+11-63 = 72$

Hit roll: 30, hit! Crit roll: 13! //many angst noises.

Damage:  $33+2+1-14 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$

fwoosh noises

#### Edwin vs Swordmaster D

Hit:  $138+10-63 = 85$

Hit roll: 93, miss!

**Chris to 12,23.**



"Marpa, if it gets too dangerous just fall back. I'll do what I can to hold this corridor."

**Raquel: Move to (12,22); Heal Derick with stave**



"We need to be careful, all four of us. We need to keep these reinforcements busy long enough for the others to deal with the threat behind us."

Weeeoooo.

**Raquel heals Derick**

10+31 = Up to 41HP restored

**Tantallos: Move to 7, 18 and attack Swordmaster D with Worm.**

**Tantallos vs Swordmaster D**

Hit: 141+10+2-63 = 90  
Hit roll: 54, hit!  
Damage: 32+2-12 = 22dmg

**Derick: Move 13 24**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Long-range magicks. A quite devastating display of those, one could say.

**Thunder Sage A vs Gregor**

Hit: 120-7-27 = 86  
Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage: 38-9 = 29dmg

**Thunder Sage B vs Gregor**

Hit: 120-7-27 = 86  
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage: 38-9 = 29dmg

**Druid E vs Raquel**

Hit: 109+15-15-5-56 = 48  
Hit roll: 91, miss!

**Thunder C Sage vs Chris**

Hit: 120-59 = 61  
Hit roll: 54, hit!  
Damage: 38-10 = 28dmg

Ernest then moved up to Charlotte and stabbed her into chest, watching as she tumbled down onto the floor.

**Ernest vs Charlotte**

Hit: 161-10-45 = 106, autohit!  
Damage: 32-19 = 13dmg

Then it was halberd and double flying axes, courtesy of two warriors and the elite guard.

**Elite Guard A vs Derick**

Hit: 104+15-5-73 = 41  
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage: 37+1-1-14 = 23dmg  
  
Derick counters!  
Hit: 127+10-15-33 = 89

Hit roll: 2, hit! Crit roll: 18!  
Damage:  $36+2-1-25 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

Derick counters again!  
Hit:  $127+10-15-33 = 89$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $36+2-1-25 = 12\text{dmg}$

#### Axeman E vs Marpa

Hit:  $108-15-46 = 47$   
Hit roll: 60, miss!

#### Axeman F vs Derick

Hit:  $108-15-5-73 = 15$   
Hit roll: 27, miss!

The Phantaom perished after the Swordmaster almost cut him in half.

#### Swordmaster D vs Phantom

Hit:  $126-15-29 = 82$   
Hit roll: 13, hit! Crit roll: 14!  
Damage:  $27-1-10 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

And then Derick and others could see even MORE of the castle's defenders pouring in. Was there even any limit to the number of PRIXIMA's thugs?

### ~~ALLY Phase~~

Mannan quickly put Gregor on feet, and Dag used his magic against Ernest. The spymaster didn't flinch at all.

#### Mannan mends Gregor

$20+20 / 2 =$  Up to 20HP restored

#### Dag vs Ernest

Hit:  $132+10-83 = 59$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $31-17 = 14\text{dmg}$



"Let's see how tough they are!" Marpa rushed toward the axeman, and after a short duel, he was dead on the floor.



"Hmph! They have all the expensive equipment, but zero real skill."

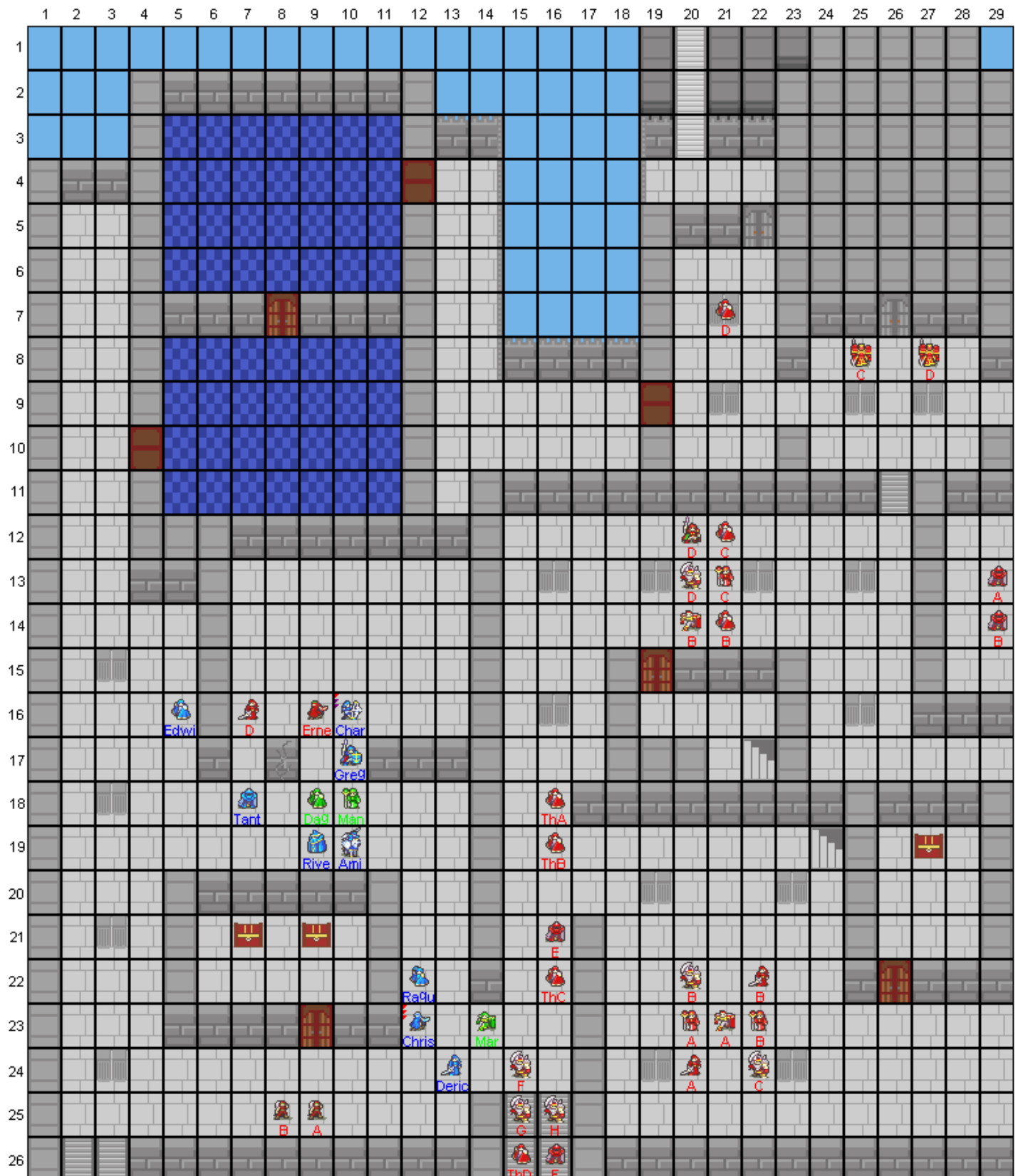
#### Marpa vs Axeman E

Hit:  $120+15-42 = 93$   
Hit roll: 80, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $36+1-14 = 23 \times 3 = 69\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 8~~

## Poison rolls

Riven feels better

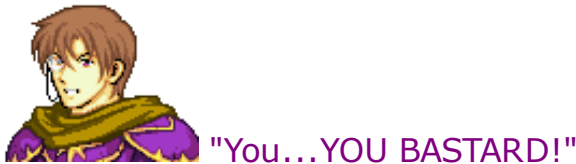


Weather:

| Mercs:                         |  | Enemies:              |                    |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32               |  | Sentinel D: 40/40     | Bishop C: 38/38    |
| Charlotte von Hexham: -/36 1/3 |  | Elite Guard C: 46/46  | Druid A: 35/35     |
| Christopher Shields: -/40 3/3  |  | Elite Guard D: 46/46  | Druid B: 35/35     |
| Derick: 21/44                  |  | Elite Axeman B: 45/45 | Druid E: 35/35     |
| Edwin Westbringer: 38/38       |  | Elite Axeman C: 45/45 | Druid F: 35/35     |
| Gregor von Hexham: 20/44       |  | Elite Axeman D: 45/45 | Wind Sage B: 37/37 |

|                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Raquel Torriani: 20/44<br>Riven: 34/36<br>Tantillos Forsaken: 36/37            | Elite Axeman F: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman G: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman H: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Swordmaster D: 15/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38<br>Bishop B: 38/38 | Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage A: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage B: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage C: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage D: 37/37<br>Rogue A: 33/33 Sleep (1/5)<br>Rogue B: 33/33 Sleep (2/5)<br>Ernest: 33/47 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Captain Marpa: 19/44 Pure Water (3/5)<br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Getting zapped didn't matter to Gregor. What mattered was his wife getting stabbed by some psychopath.

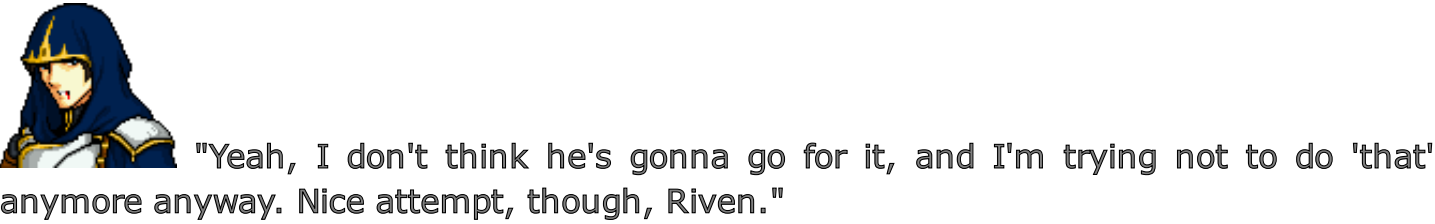
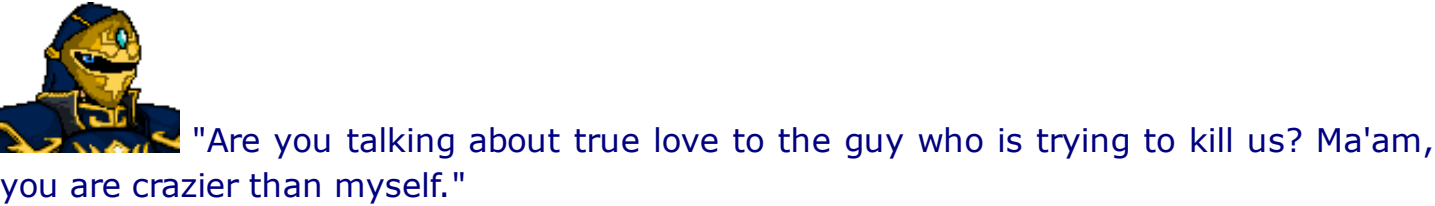
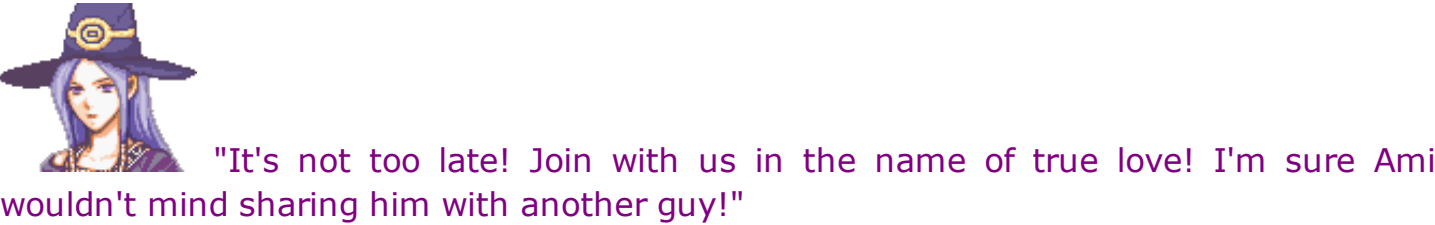


**Gregor: Move 2 squares north and FLING! Javelin at Ernest!**

Ernest looked down at the javelin that pierced his body through, but didn't seem to pay it much attention.

**Gregor vs Ernest**

Hit:  $122+15-5-83 = 49$   
Hit roll: 46, hit!  
Damage:  $33+1-18 = 16$





Murr?"



"Honestly, he not my kind of guy."

**Ami: Move to 11,16 and heal Char**



"RISE FROM YOUR ALMOST GRAVES!"

**Raquel: Move to (13,23); heal Marpa with staff**

Double oweewoo of healage!

**Amia heals Charlotte**

10+27 /2 = Up to 18HP restored

**Raquel heals Marpa**

10+31 = Up to 41HP restored



"I think this calls for something special..." Edwin mutters as he approaches Tantallos. "Do us all a favour, will you? Kill that asshole in there."

**Edwin: Move 2 South and 1 East. Call Magic: Sharpness on Tantallos!**

**Derick: Swig Concoction**

**Derick uses Concoction**

Up to 30HP restored

Chris pulled himself up into a sitting position with his back against the wall.



"Ugh. I kind of empathize with Alexander a bit now. That poor bastard is ALWAYS getting hit with magic."



"I was going to give this honor to the assassin person. But I guess I can kill him, after all, he is not the main target."

**Tantallos: Move to 9,17 and finish Bagel-Man Ernest with Worm.**

Tantallos moved up to Ernest and tossed the dark blast, sending the spymaster down to the floor.

The remaining escort went transparent for a moment, then became solid again, and then melted into the thing air. The dead swordmasters in the room have too dissappeared. They must've been yet another bunch of real-illusions the mercenaries met several times already.

Ernest's corpse, of course, remained solid.

**Tantallos vs Ernest**

Hit:  $141+30+5+10+2-5-83 = 100$ , autohit!

Damage:  $32+2-17 = 17\text{dmg}$



"Awwwww."

**Riven: Move to 13,21. Summon gargoyle, have it attack Thunder Sage C.**



"Impressive how she has more interest on people who are wanting to kill us than on me. Either way.. that soul will be meeting with the Plague Dragon soon. Heeheeheeh..."

Gregor spat in the general direction of Ernest's corpse.



"Good riddance, he was far too dangerous to let live anyway. Well done, Tantallos. We should hurry south to reinforce the rest of the team at once."

\*flutterflutterSTAB\*

**Phantom vs Thunder Sage C**

Hit:  $91+10-16 = 85$

Hit roll: 63, hit!

Damage:  $22-12 = 10\text{dmg}$

Phantom strikes again!

Hit:  $91+10-16 = 85$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $22-12 = 10\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The other sage, with his burn-out blotting tome, quickly got rid of the pesky phantom monster.



**Thunder Sage A vs Phantom**

Hit:  $125-10-29 = 86$   
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage:  $56-9 = 47\text{dmg}$

Then it was long-range magic. As always~

**Thunder Mage C vs Derick**

Hit:  $120-5-10-73 = 32$   
Hit roll: 70, miss!

**Thunder Mage B vs Derick**

Hit:  $120-5-10-73 = 32$   
Hit roll: 58, miss!

**Thunder Mage D vs Derick**

Hit:  $120-5-10-73 = 32$   
Hit roll: 51, miss!

**Druid E vs Derick**

Hit:  $109-5-10-73 = 21$   
Hit roll: 24, miss!

**Druid F vs Marpa**

Hit:  $109-10-46 = 53$   
Hit roll: 82

Some people need to train their accuracy though.

Then, it was tomahawks.

**Axe Guard F vs Riven**

Hit:  $108-10-10-15-48 = 25$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Riven counters!  
Hit:  $123+10+10-42 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $36-10 = 26\text{dmg}$

Riven counters again!  
Hit:  $123+10+10-42 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $36-10 = 26\text{dmg}$

**Axe Guard H vs Marpa**

Hit:  $108-10-46 = 52$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

**Axe Guard G vs Marpa**

Hit:  $108-10-46 = 52$   
Hit roll: 8, hit!  
Damage:  $37-1-16 = 20\text{dmg}$

In the meanwhile, the wounded Sage got healed by one of the bishops.

**Bishop A psychics Thunder Sage C**

$10+22 = \text{Up to } 32\text{HP restored}$

SUDDENLY... Ernest's corpse twitched.

And then he rose up, slowly standing onto his feet. As if it wasn't enough, his wounds

were bleeding but apparently that meant nothing to the spymaster.



"I have told you. Miraculous powers."

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"What the fuck!"



"Gah! Stay dead, you... thing!"

Dag's magic only added a new, pointless wound on Ernest's body, who then easily evaded Mannan's holy blast.

#### Dag vs Ernest

Hit:  $132+5-5-83 = 49$

Hit roll: 17, hit!

Damage:  $31-17 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Mannan vs Ernest

Hit:  $138+5-5-83 = 55$

Hit roll: 72, miss!



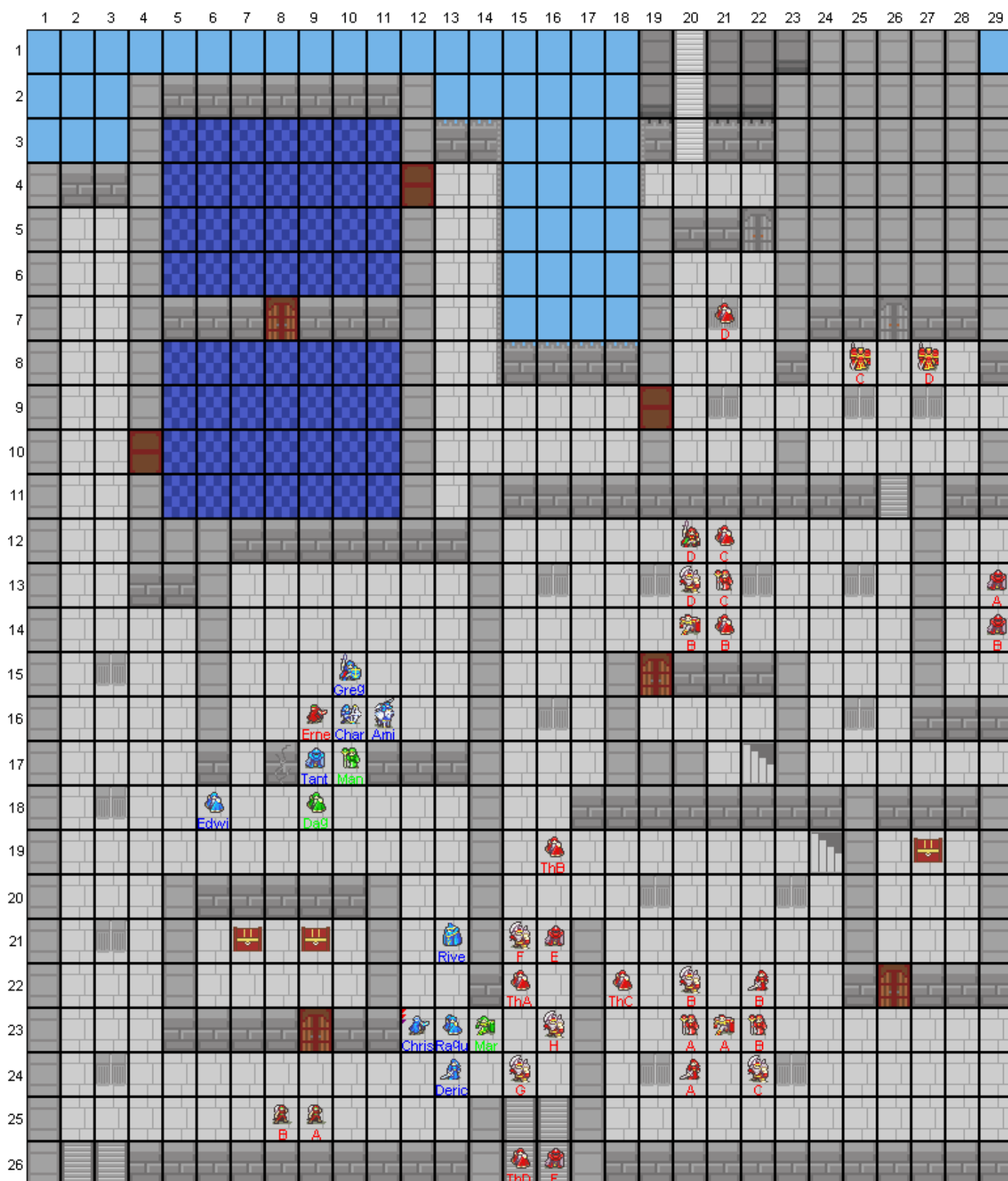
"Any ideas?" Marpa asked, nodding at the swarm of enemies in front of her and others, while quickly drinking some of the medicine from the bottle she had at her belt.

#### Marpa uses Concoction

Up to 30HP restored

### ~~Player Turn 9~~

One of the rogues woke up and blinked in confusion, noticing that some stuff some changed - for example, there was lots of bodies.



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 18/36<br>Christopher Shields: -/40 2/3<br>Derick: 44/44<br>Edwin Westbringer: 38/38<br>Gregor von Hexham: 24/44<br>Raquel Torriani: 20/44<br>Riven: 34/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 36/37 Sharpness (4/5) | Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman G: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman H: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42 | Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Druid E: 35/35<br>Druid F: 35/35<br>Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage A: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage B: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage C: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage D: 37/37<br>Rogue A: 33/33 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

Captain Marpa: 24/44 **Pure Water (2/5)**  
Dag: 35/35  
Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35

Bishop A: 38/38  
Bishop B: 38/38  
Bishop C: 38/38

Rogue B: 33/33 **Sleep (1/5)**  
Ernest: -14/47



"So the guy is back. I just have two suggestions for this situation. Or try to blast him with Divine magic or find a way to use the power of you know, the weird-looking stone. His so called "Miraculous" powers are probably based on dark magic. Usually it is when it is about bringing the dead to life."



"Skeletons, revenants, phantom soldiers, you name it. I would try to think about something else, but the fact we do not really have time for that does not help at all. That and the fact I am almost in front of him. I do not want to hear him claiming to be powerful again."



"Falling back and heading south! Ami, Gregor, you'd be wise to do so yourself! Let the others hold Ernest off!"

Charlotte dashed away before he could take another take at her.

**Charlotte: Move to 13, 19. Pray to critzalcoatl. KILLER BOW -> THUNDER SAGE BEE.**

The arrow struck right through the skull of the mage. Blood shot across the floor tiles as the poor victim of Charlotte's TWANG fell down.

#### Charlotte vs Thunder Sage B

Hit:  $143+10+10-40 = 123$ , autohit! Crit roll: 24!  
Damage:  $30-12 = 18 \times 3 = 54$  dmg



"I have no intention of staying near that thing, thank you very much!"  
Edwin replied as he ran.

**Edwin: Move to 11, 19. Sleep Rogue A.**



"Chop off his head, it will stop him talking about this 'Miraculous' power at least."

## Ami: Move to 12,19 and heal Char

The moment after which Edwin put the Rogue to sleep, the crystal on top of the staff blinked with power for the last time and then cracked.

### Edwin casts Sleep on Rogue A

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{27 - 9\} \times 5] + 25) - (8 \times 2) = 30 + 80 + 25 - 16 = 119$ , autohit!  
Rogue A is asleep!

## Sleep (staff) breaks!

Charlotte wounds closed magically.

### Ami heals Charlotte

$10 + 27 =$  Up to 37HP restored



"On that note, I'm afraid I'll have to hit you one more time with a spell. With luck, it should not hurt quite as much."

## Ami: Heal Chris with staff



"Well, if it's you doing it, I don't have any objection."

Chris tried a smile despite the pain.

### Raquel heals Chris

$10 + 31 / 2 =$  Up to 20HP restored

As the magic flowed from her staff into Chris, she looked around at the battlefield. It was just like one of the old books she had read so many years ago in Deynastia, on military tactics. It hadn't been a particular interest of hers, even then; she had read it largely because it offered an interesting insight into the behaviour of people on the battlefield. But here, and now, real lives were on the line, and the fate of so many...she had to speak up.



"Great. You're looking better already. Chris, Riven, can you help keep the rogues behind us occupied? If they awaken and attack us in the back while we're holding the line here, it would be most problematic. Marpa, Derick, we just need to hold this entrance long enough for the others to aid us. Charlotte, if you can keep taking them down like that, that will keep the onus on them to break through quickly, and they might make a mistake out of haste. Derick, if you can move forward a step, you may be able to take down that Tomahawk wielder and stop them from moving in against Marpa on two sides."



"Got it. Give me a moment to get my feet and I'll do what I can."

Edwin looked sadly on the broken sleep staff before tossing it aside with a mournful look on his face.



"Well... I suppose all good things come to an end sooner or later... I'll miss you friend."



"Of course."



"You shall not pass!"

**Riven: Move to 12,24, summon warrior. Have it move to 8,24 and rough up Rogue B.**



"Yeah, good idea. I trust you four to handle this psychopath!"

**Gregor: Move to (13,18 )**

#### Phantom vs Rogue B

Autohit!

Damage:  $22+1-9 = 14\text{dmg}$

**Tantallos moves to (11,16) and attacks Ernest with Worm.**

**Derick moves 1 square east and attacks Axedude G.**

The dark magic hit Ernest in abdomen, and seemingly had no effect.

#### Tantallos vs Ernest

Hit:  $141+20-5-83 = 73$

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage:  $32+2-17 = 17\text{dmg}$

Axe Guard G suddenly collapsed after a blade flashed for a split-second.

**Derick vs Axe Guard G**

Hit:  $127+15+10+10-42 = 120$ , autohit! Crit roll: 57!

Damage:  $36+2+1-14 = 26 \times 3 = 78$ dmg

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Suddenly, Mannan collapsed as well.

**Ernest vs Mannan**

Hit:  $161+5-50 = 116$ , autohit! Crit roll: 22!

Damage:  $32-11 = 21 \times 3 = 63$ dmg

Long-range magics!

**Druid E vs Edwin**

Hit:  $109+15-39 = 85$

Hit roll: 72, hit!

HP halved!

**Druid F vs Raquel**

Hit:  $109+15-10-5-15-56 = 38$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

HP halved!

**Thunder Sage C vs Gregor**

Hit:  $120+15-7-49 = 79$

Hit roll: 66, hit!

Damage:  $38-9 = 29$ dmg

Then, the two other Sages went after Marpa and Derick, knocking down the latter.

**Thunder Sage A vs Marpa**

Hit:  $125-10-46 = 69$

Hit roll: 62, hit!

Damage:  $36-10-9 = 17$ dmg

**Quote from: Thunder Sage A vs Derick**

Hit:  $125-10-5-73 = 37$

Hit roll: 25, hit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $36-12 = 24 \times 3 = 72$ dmg

The axe soldiers rushed in, attacking Raquel and Riven, and the latter managed to avoid the axe by length of a hair.

**Axe Guard F vs Raquel**

Hit:  $108-10-15-56 = 27$

Hit roll: 1, hit!

Damage:  $37-9 = 28$ dmg

**Axe Guard H vs Riven**

Hit:  $108-10-10-15-48 = 25$

Hit roll: 72, miss!

Riven counters!

Hit:  $123+10+10-42 = 101$ , autohit!

Damage:  $36+2-10 = 28$ dmg

2HP healed!

Riven counters once more!

Hit:  $123+10+10-42 = 101$ , autohit!

Damage:  $36+2-10 = 28$ dmg

The rogue that got abruptly woken up by the phantom took a step away before tossing knives at it. The summoned apparition dissipated after second hit.

#### Rogue B vs Phantom

Hit:  $140-15-20 = 105$ , autohit! Crit roll: 2!

Damage:  $24-1-15 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

Rogue B attacks again!

Hit:  $140-15-20 = 105$ , autohit!

Damage:  $24-1-15 = 8\text{dmg}$

Meanwhile, somewhere else but not that far away, another pilfering challenger appears! Just to match the amount of chests.

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Suddenly Dag snapped his fingers.



"I know! I know what to do!" He mumbled out and then, instead of attacking Ernest with wind magic, he sent magical fireball at Ernest, who didn't manage to dodge the attack. Suddenly, he burst in the flames, as if he was soaked in oil. With screech that was heard down the corridors, he tumbled to the ground and the flames dissappeared abruptly - leaving behind a pile of ash, remnants of few ribs and jaw-less skull. It looked as if someone dumped centuries-old remains on the floor.

Tantallos and Dag could easily notice something peculiar: there was a load of sparkly dust mixed with the ashes, including few nail-sized pieces. The colors well all over the spectrum, from dark blue to bright yellow.

#### Dag vs Ernest

Hit:  $(90+38+4)-83 = 49$

Hit roll: 35, hit!

Ernest has been destroyed!



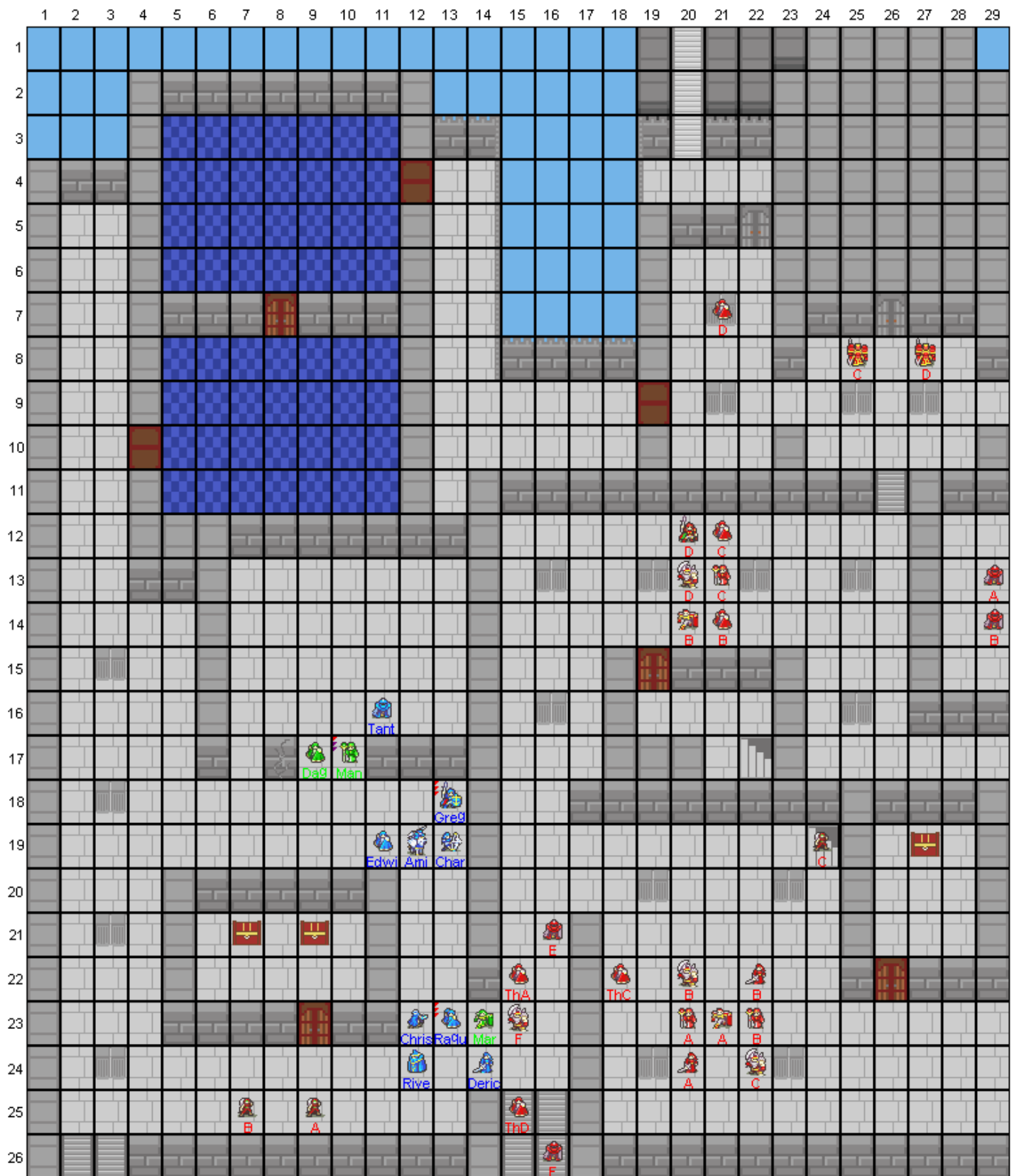
"Hey, swordboy, get up, I need you here." Golden healing drink splashed over Derick's face, bringing him back from the darkness.

#### Marpa uses Concoction on Derick

Up to 15HP restored



# ~~Player Turn 10~~



Weather:

## Merces:

Ami Storm: 31/32  
 Charlotte von Hexham: 36/37  
 Christopher Shields: 20/41  
 Derick: 15/45  
 Edwin Westbringer: 24/39  
 Gregor von Hexham: -/45 3/3  
 Raquel Torriani: -/45 3/3  
 Riven: 36/36  
 Tantalos Forsaken: 36/37 Sharpness (3/5)

## Enemies:

Sentinel D: 40/40  
 Elite Guard D: 46/46  
 Elite Axeman B: 45/45  
 Elite Axeman C: 45/45  
 Elite Axeman D: 45/45  
 Swordmaster A: 37/37  
 Swordmaster B: 37/37  
 Sergeant A: 42/42  
 Sergeant B: 42/42  
 Bishop A: 38/38  
 Druid B: 35/35  
 Druid E: 35/35  
 Druid F: 35/35  
 Wind Sage B: 37/37  
 Wind Sage C: 37/37  
 Wind Sage D: 37/37  
 Thunder Sage A: 37/37  
 Thunder Sage C: 37/37  
 Thunder Sage D: 37/37  
 Rogue A: 33/33 Sleep (4/5)

|                                                                                                       |                                                      |                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                        | Bishop B: 38/38<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35 | Rogue B: 19/33<br>Rogue C: 33/33 |
| Captain Marpa: 7/44 <b>Pure Water (1/5)</b><br>Dag: <b>33/35</b><br>Mannan Tunhausen: -/35 <b>1/3</b> |                                                      |                                  |



"Sounds like my cue. Riven, come on!"

**Chris to 9,24, and attack the rogue south of him.**

**Chris vs Rogue A**

Autohit!  
 Damage: 29+2-9 = 22dmg  
  
 Chris attacks again!  
 Hit: 139+10-53 = 96  
 Hit roll: 29, hit!  
 Damage: 29+2-9 = 22dmg

Chris grabbed the rogue by the back of his head and plunged his knife into his chest several times before shoving him to the ground.



"You chose the wrong side. Get out of here, or I'll kill you, too."

The assassin stared at the other rogue, idly flicking his switchblade open and closed.



"Right! I choose you, Warrior!"

**Riven: Summon Warrior, order it to hack up Rogue B.**

**Edwin: Move to 13, 20 and Call Magic: Sleep on Rogue C.**

**Ami: Move to 10,18 and heal Mannan Tunhausen**

**Tantallos: Move to 12, 18 and call magic to heal Gregor.**



"Sentinel person! Pleased to see you again."

The rogue didn't get much time to response before the giant axe swished over his head. Obviously he wasn't going to just wait and get himself hacked, and he fought back, banishing the phantom after a while.

**Phantom vs Rogue B**

Hit:  $89+10-15-53 = 31$

Hit roll: 49, miss!

Rogue B counters!

Hit:  $140+15-10-24 = 121$ , autohit!

Damage:  $24+1-10 = 15\text{dmg}$

Rogue B counters again!

Hit:  $140+15-10-24 = 121$ , autohit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $24+1-10 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

Somewhere else, a rogue began snoring.

**Edwin casts Sleep on Rogue C**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{27-9\} \times 5]+26)-(12 \times 2) = 30+90+26-24 = 122$ , autohit!

Rogue C is asleep!

In the meanwhile, heals.

**Ami heals Mannan**

$10+27 / 2 =$  Up to 18HP restored

**Tantallos heals Gregor**

$10+26 / 2 =$  Up to 18HP restored

**Derick: 1 right, attack axe**

**Charlotte: Move 2S, Killer Bow->Thunder Sage A with support from Gregor.**

**Furtuka vs Axe Guard F**

Hit:  $130+15+10-42 = 113$ , autohit! Crit roll: 1!

Damage:  $37+1+2-14 = 26 \times 3 = 78\text{dmg}$

TWANG!

**Charlotte vs Thunder Sage A**

Hit:  $143+10+10+7-40 = 130$ , autohit! Crit roll: 42!

Damage:  $30+1-12 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The rogue didn't want to see what else Riven could conjure, and quickly went around the corner.

Long-range and short-range magics again, brought down Marpa and Derick and almost did Edwin.

**Thunder Sage C vs Marpa**

Hit:  $120-10-46 = 64$

Hit roll: 29, hit!

Damage:  $38-10-9 = 19\text{dmg}$

**Druid E vs Edwin**

Hit:  $119+15-41 = 93$

Hit roll: 68, hit!

Damage:  $40+1-24 = 17\text{dmg}$

Edwin counters!

Hit:  $140-15-36 = 89$

Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $33-1-19 = 13\text{dmg}$   
  
Edwin counters again!  
Hit:  $140-15-36 = 89$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $33-1-19 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Druid F vs Derick**

Hit:  $119-10-76 = 33$   
Hit roll: 74, miss!

**Thunder Sage D vs Derick**

Hit:  $125-10-76 = 39$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $36-12 = 24\text{dmg}$

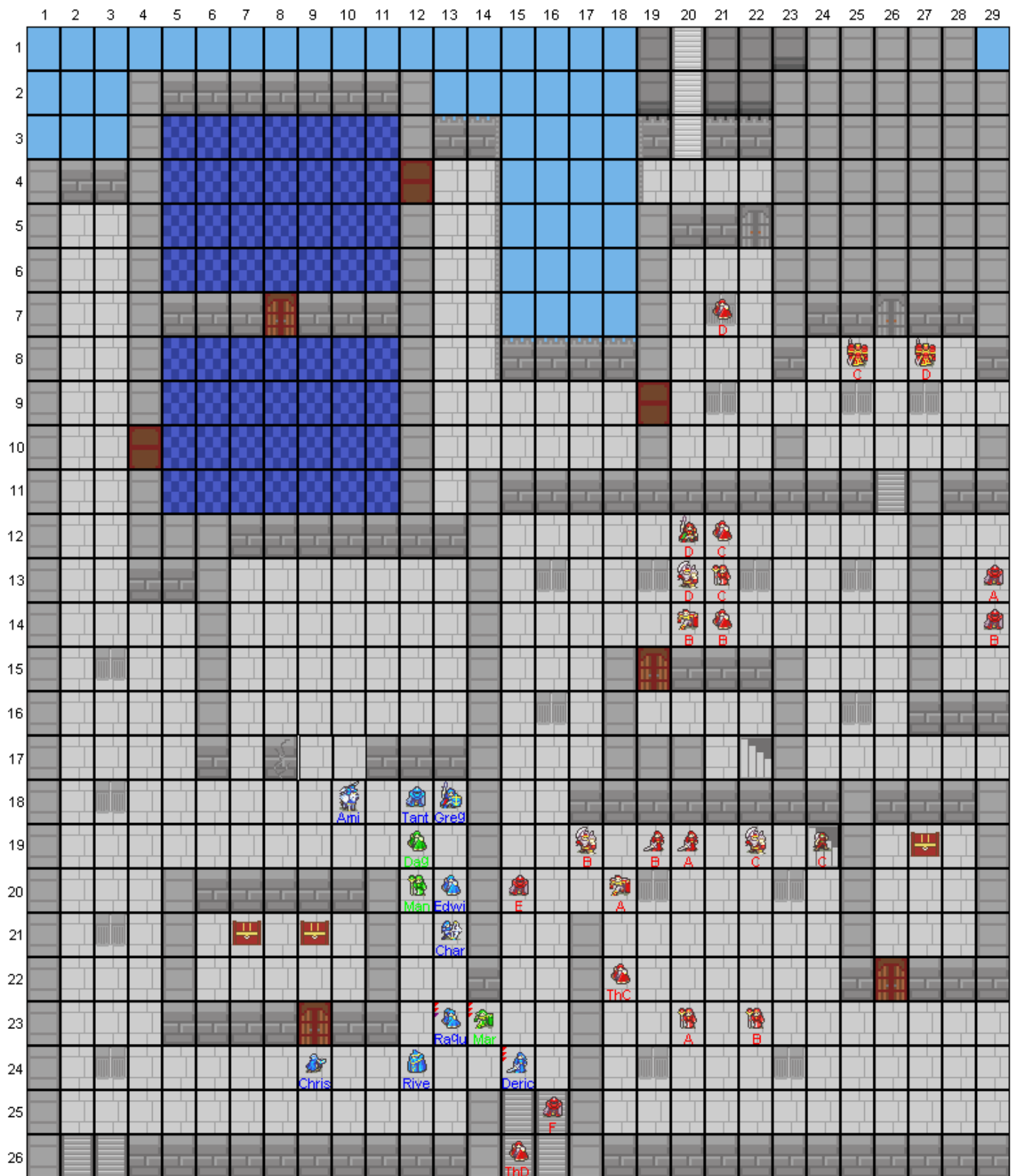
**~~Ally Phase~~**

Dag and Mannan moved down the corridor; the latter stopped by Edwin and healed him up.

**Quote from: Mannan mends Edwin**

$20+20 =$  Up to 40HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 11~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p>Ami Storm: 31/32<br/> Charlotte von Hexham: 36/37<br/> Christopher Shields: 20/41<br/> Derick: -/45 <b>3/3</b><br/> Edwin Westbringer: 39/39<br/> Gregor von Hexham: <b>22</b>/45<br/> Raquel Torriani: -/45 <b>3/3</b><br/> Riven: 36/36<br/> Tantallos Forsaken: 33/37 <b>Sharpness (2/5)</b></p> |  | <p>Sentinel D: 40/40<br/> Elite Guard C: 46/46<br/> Elite Guard D: 46/46<br/> Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br/> Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br/> Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br/> Swordmaster A: 37/37<br/> Swordmaster B: 37/37<br/> Sergeant A: 42/42<br/> Sergeant B: 42/42</p> |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | <p>Bishop C: 38/38<br/> Druid A: 35/35<br/> Druid B: 35/35<br/> Druid E: 9/35<br/> Druid F: 35/35<br/> Wind Sage B: 37/37<br/> Wind Sage C: 37/37<br/> Wind Sage D: 37/37<br/> Thunder Sage C: 37/37<br/> Thunder Sage D: 37/37</p>                             |  |

|                                |                 |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Allies:</b>                 | Bishop A: 38/38 | Rogue B: 19/33                    |
| Captain Marpa: -/44 <b>3/3</b> | Bishop B: 38/38 | Rogue C: 33/33 <b>Sleep (4/5)</b> |
| Dag: 33/35                     |                 |                                   |
| Mannan Tunhausen: 18/35        |                 |                                   |

**Ami: Move to 12,23 and heal Raquel(since she the only 'dead' I can reach)**

**Chris: Pick that lock.**



"I'm going to see what goodies PRIXIMA is hiding. There may be something useful in there."



"Thank you. Now, let's get our comrades on their feet."

**Edwin: Move to 14, 24 and Call Magic: Mend on Derick.**



"Let me know if there's anything good."

**Riven: Summon Gargoyle, have it nom Druid E.**



"I'll keep everyone in the loop, no worries."

Chris flashed Riven a thumbs-up, then went back to picking the lock.

**Ami heals Raquel**

10+27 /2 = Up to 18HP restored

**Edwin mends derick**

20+27 /2 = Up to 23HP restored

After Chris opened the door, he could see two chests and a layer of dust everywhere. It looks like this chamber was seldomly visited, possibly few times in last decade or two.

**Phantom vs Druid E**

Hit: 91-36 = 10, hit!  
Damage: 22-12 = 10dmg

**Gregor: Move to (13,24).**

**Tantallos: Move to 13, 22.**

**Charlotte TWANGs Druid E!** //no she doesnt

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Long-range magics brought down Chris, and then the Phantom poofed after thrown axes hit it. Unfortunately, the officer who tried to bring down Derick quickly lost his head in the heat of fighting.

### Thunder Sage C vs Chris

Hit:  $120-10-61 = 49$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $38-10 = 28\text{dmg}$

### Axe Guard B vs Phantom

Hit:  $108+15-29 = 94$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1-10 = 27\text{dmg}$   
  
Axe Guard B attacks again!  
Hit:  $108+15-29 = 94$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1-10 = 27\text{dmg}$

### Sergeant A vs Derick

Hit:  $132-5-10-5-76 = 36$   
Hit roll: 68, miss!  
  
Derick counters!  
Hit:  $130+10+10+5-43 = 112$ , autohit! Crit roll: 31!  
Damage:  $37+2-17 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$

### Druid F vs Edwin

Hit:  $119+15-10-5-10-41 = 68$   
Hit roll: 65, hit!  
Damage:  $40+1-24 = 17\text{dmg}$   
  
Edwin counterattacks!  
Hit:  $140+10+5+10-15-36 = 114$ , autohit! Crit roll: 6!  
Damage:  $33-1-19 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

### Thunder Sage D vs Derick

Hit:  $125-10-5-76 = 34$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Mannan quickly turned the corner and healed Chris.

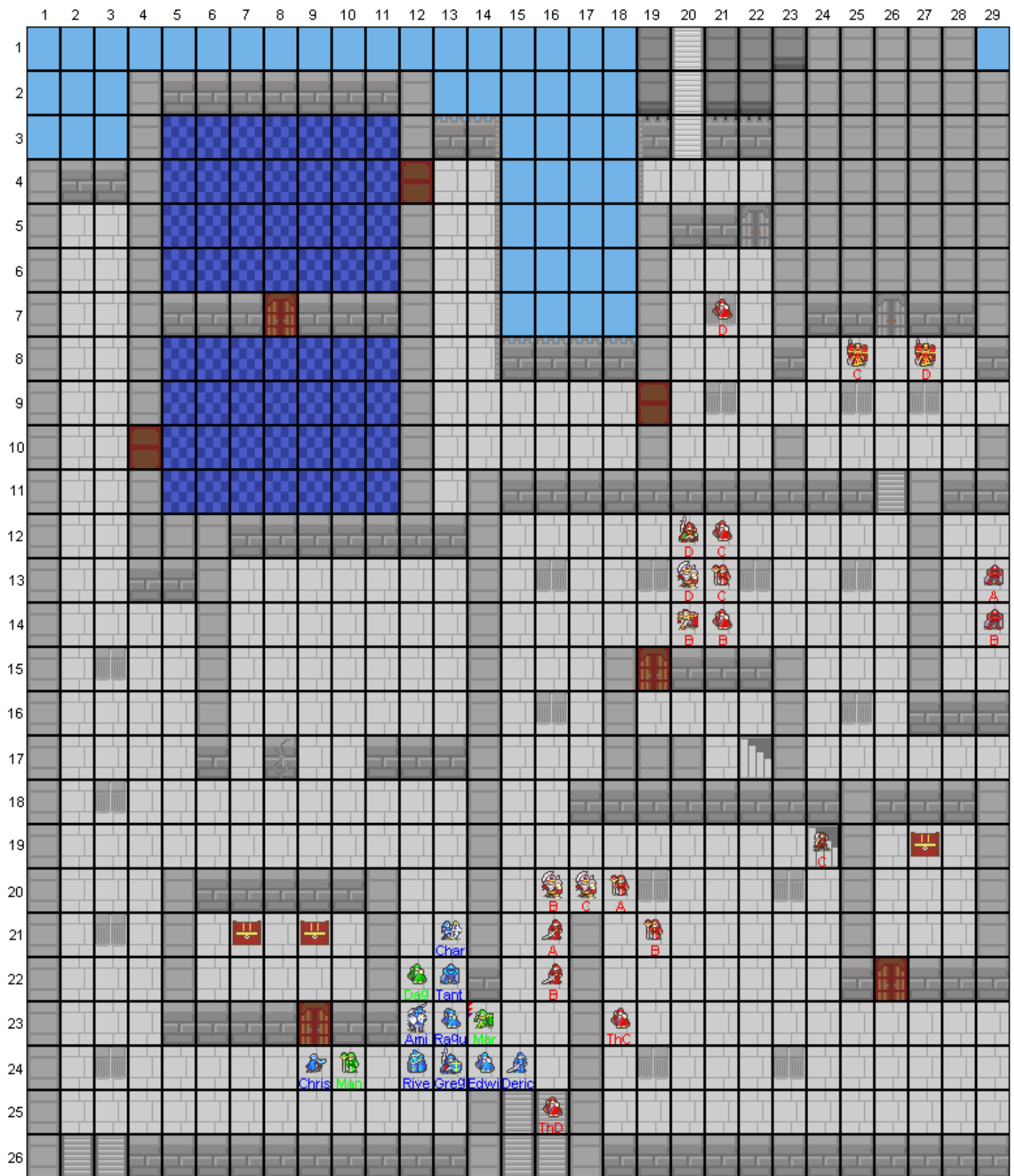


"Ah yes, I had this feeling you were struck by that lighting..."

### Mannan mends Chris

$20+20 / 2 = \text{Up to } 20\text{HP restored}$

# ~~Player Turn 12~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Ami Storm: 31/32<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 36/37<br>Christopher Shields: 20/41<br>Derick: 23/45<br>Edwin Westbringer: 22/39<br>Gregor von Hexham: 22/45<br>Raquel Torriani: 18/45<br>Riven: 36/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/37 Sharpness (1/5) |  | Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38 |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage C: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage D: 37/37<br>Rogue B: 19/33<br>Rogue C: 33/33 Sleep (3/5)              |  |



**Allies:**

Bishop B: 38/38

Captain Marpa: -/44 **2/3**  
Dag: 33/35  
Mannan Tunhausen: 18/35



"Yeah, I guess I have something in my pocket that attracts electricity. Thanks, Mannan."

**Chris: Go to 9,21, and loot that chest.**

Chris opened the chest. Inside, on a big, velvet pillow that already was threadbare from time alone, was a gold-trimmed leather book. There were tiny letters inscribed on the edges of the cover, which, when the beginning of the verse was found, read as follows:

'HEIRLOOM OF HOLY CRUSADER KESSELIN MAY DOOM AND PLAGUE DESCEND UPON THOSE WHO ARE NOT OF HER WOMB AND TOUCH THIS SACRED TOME OF POWER'

Didn't look like the curse worked...

**Chris gets Lumen!**

Gregor held his lance over his head, striking what he hoped to be a heroic pose.



"Advance! Drive them back!"

**Gregor: Move to (15,22) and STAB Swordmaster B!**

One stab, one death.

**Gregor vs Swordsman B**

Hit:  $125+15+5+11-63 = 93$

Hit roll: 9, hit! Crit roll: 16! //>:C

Damage:  $34+1-14 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

Chris considered the tome, then turned and yelled down the hall.



"HEY MAGE PEOPLE I FOUND THIS TOME THAT SAYS LUMEN ON THE SPINE ANY OF YOU GUYS WANT IT BECAUSE I'LL BE BRINGING IT OUT AS SOON AS I LOOT THIS OTHER CHEST!"



"I don't believe I've heard of such a thing, but I certainly would not mind reviewing it for myself." Raquel glanced over at the soldiers. "Once we take care of these."

**Raquel: Move to (16,23); zap Swordmaster A with Thunder**

**Tantallos: Move to 15, 26 and attack the Sage D with Luna.**



"Lumen? I heard about those, I am quite sure you will make good use of it."



"OK I'LL BRING IT TO RAQUEL THEN!"

Ah, yelling was fun. It probably irritated the enemy soldiers to hear him so casually looting the vault, and that was a plus too. Serves them right for electrocuting him. Twice.



"Doing good, everyone! Just keep pushing ahead!"

**Charlotte: Move to 16,24 and TWANG Thunder Mage C!**

**Derick: 16, 22 Attack Swordmaster!**

**Charlotte vs Thunder Sage C**

Hit:  $143+10+7-40 = 120$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $30+1-12 = 19\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $143+10+7-40 = 120$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $30+1-12 = 19\text{dmg}$

**Raquel vs Swordmaster A**

Hit:  $132+15+5+10-63 = 89$   
Hit roll: 71, hit!  
Damage:  $36-12 = 24\text{dmg}$

**Derick vs Swordmaster A**

Hit:  $130+10+5-63 = 82$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!

Swordmaster A counters!  
Hit:  $126-5-5-76 = 40$   
Hit roll: 18, hit! Crit roll: 6!  
Damage:  $27-1-15 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$



"Lumen? Doesn't sound familiar... I'll be curious to see what it's like."



"Poor Marpa, though. Are you okay down there?"



"Augh, and Derick too...? Maybe this will help."

**Riven: Move to 15, 23. Summon soldier, order it to 15,21. Don't bother taking a swipe at the swordmaster. :I**



"This is no time to be lying around, dear lady. Let me lend you a hand."

**Edwin: Use Heal on Marpa. Hold position.**

**Ami: Move to 16,24 and heal Raquel.**

**Edwin heals Marpa**

10+27 /2 = Up to 18HP restored

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

**Thunder Sage D vs Charlotte**

Hit: 125-10-10-5-7-51 = 42

Hit roll: 9, hit!

Damage: 36-7 = 29dmg

Charlotte counters!

Hit: 143+10+10+7-40 = 130, autohit!

Damage: 30+1-12 = 19dmg

**Bishop B vs Charlotte**

Hit: 137-10-10-7-5-51 = 54

Hit roll: 100, miss!

Charlotte retaliates!

Hit: 143+10+10+7-51 = 119, autohit! Crit roll: 43! //omg, just at the crit level...

Damage: 30+1-13 = 18x3 = 54dmg

**Bishop A vs Charlotte**

Hit: 137-10-10-7-5-51 = 54

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage: 34-7 = 27dmg

**Axeman C vs Phantom**

Hit roll: 108+15-5-10-20 = 88

Hit roll: 80, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-15 = 23\text{dmg}$

Axeman C attacks again!

Hit roll:  $108+15-5-10-20 = 88$

Hit roll: 77, hit!

#### Axeman B vs Gregor

Hit:  $108+15-5-10-11-52 = 45$

Hit roll: 31, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-2-24 = 12\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $125+5+10+11-15-42 = 94$

Hit roll: 70, hit! Crit roll: 17! //noooo

Damage:  $34+2-1-14 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

#### Swordmaster A vs Gregor

Hit:  $126-15-5-10-11-52 = 33$

Hit roll: 94, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $125+15+5+10+11-63 = 103$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34+1+2-14 = 23\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

#### Marpa vs Axeman C

Hit:  $120+15+10+5-42 = 108$ , autohit!

Damage:  $36+1-14 = 23\text{dmg}$

Axeman C counters!

Hit:  $108-15-10-5-46 = 32$

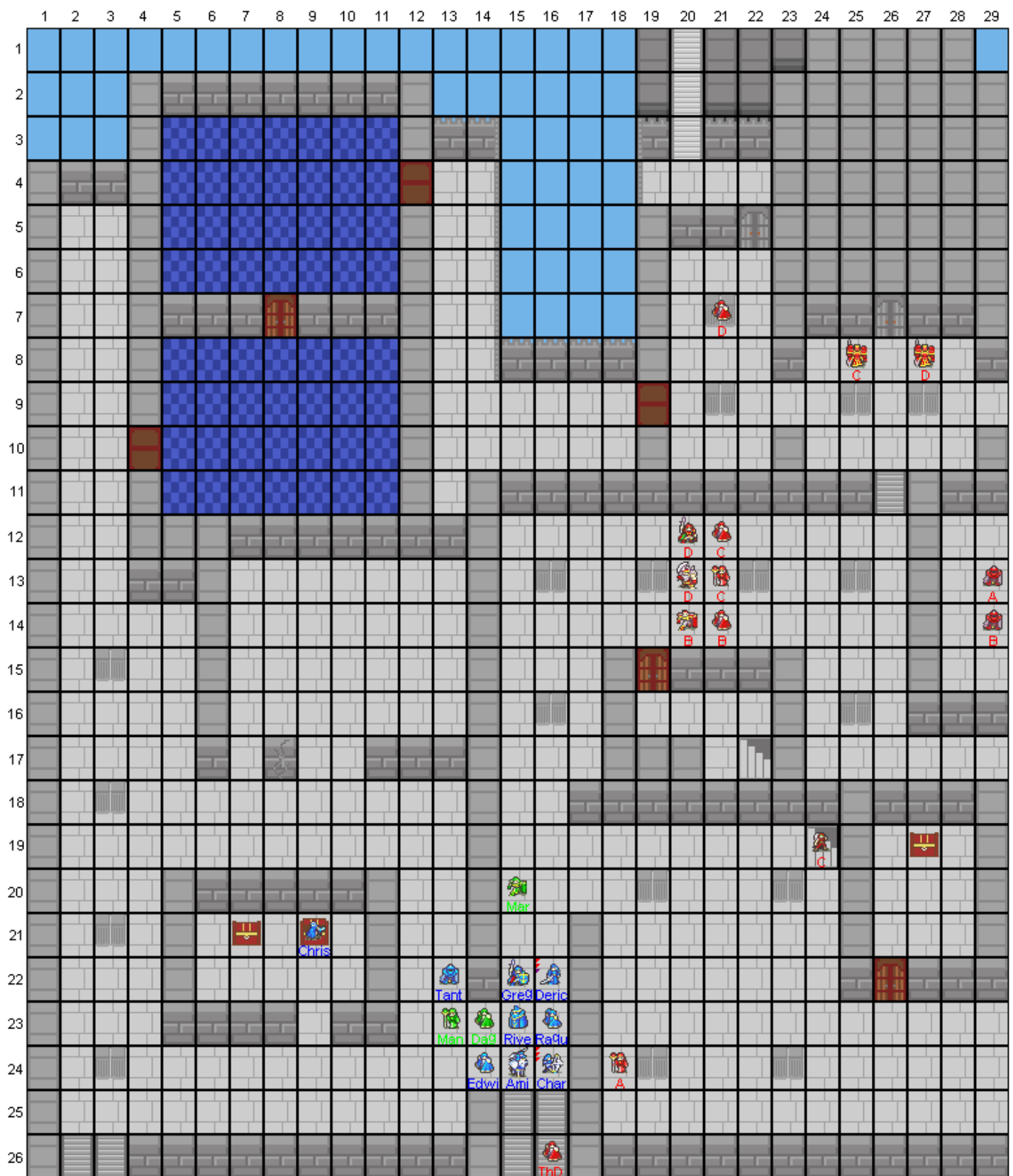
Hit roll: 39, miss!

#### Dag vs Axeman C

Hit:  $132+10+5-42 = 105$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34-10 = 24\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 13~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32<br>Charlotte von Hexham: -/37 <b>3/3</b><br>Christopher Shields: 20/41<br>Derick: -/45 <b>2/3</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: <b>29/39</b><br>Gregor von Hexham: 12/45<br>Raquel Torriani: 18/45<br>Riven: 36/36<br>Tantalos Forsaken: 33/37 | Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Wind Sage B: 37/37 |

|                                                               |                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                | Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage D: 18/37<br>Rogue B: 19/33<br>Rogue C: 33/33 Sleep (2/5) |
| Captain Marpa: 18/44<br>Dag: 33/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 18/35 |                                                                                                                   |

Chris moves two spaces to the left and loots again.

Ami: And then/or instead heal Charlotte.

Crreeeak.

Chris got Rune Crystal!

**Ami heals Charlotte**

10+27 /2 = Up to 18HP healed

Tantallos: Move to 15, 26 and attack the Sage D with Luna. Then move to 15, 19 after killing him.



"That looks quite unpleasant, Derick. Allow me to fix that for you."

Edwin: Move to 16, 21 and use Heal on Derick.

Once healed, Charlotte moves to 18,20 and Longbows the Bishop!

Raquel: Move to (15,21); Heal Gregor with stave

Riven: Move to 17,20. Summon gargoyle, have it move to 18,23 and attack bishop.

The sage dead, the wounded healed, and phantom blasted to nothingness.

**Tantallos vs Thunder Sage D**

Hit: 122+15+10+5+2-40 = 114, autohit!  
Damage: 26-0! = 26dmg

**Edwin heals Derick**

10+27 /2 = Up to 18HP restored

**Raquel heals Gregor**

10+32 = Up to 42HP healed

**Phantom vs Bishop A**

Hit: 91+5-51 = 45  
Hit roll: 54, miss!

Bishop A counters!  
Hit: 137-5-29 = 103, autohit!  
Damage: 34-9 = 25dmg

Bishop A counters again!  
Hit: 137-5-29 = 103, autohit!  
Damage: 34-9 = 25dmg

Gregor stands still in Support range.

~~Enemy Phase~~

Bishop A vs Charlotte

Hit:  $137-10-5-11-51 = 60$   
Hit roll: 74, miss!

Charlotte counters!  
Hit:  $143+10+5+11-51 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $30+2-13 = 19\text{dmg}$

~~Ally Phase~~

Marpa finished off the Bishop, Mannan healed Raquel, and Dag went down the corridor.



"I think there's some soldiers around the corner, too."

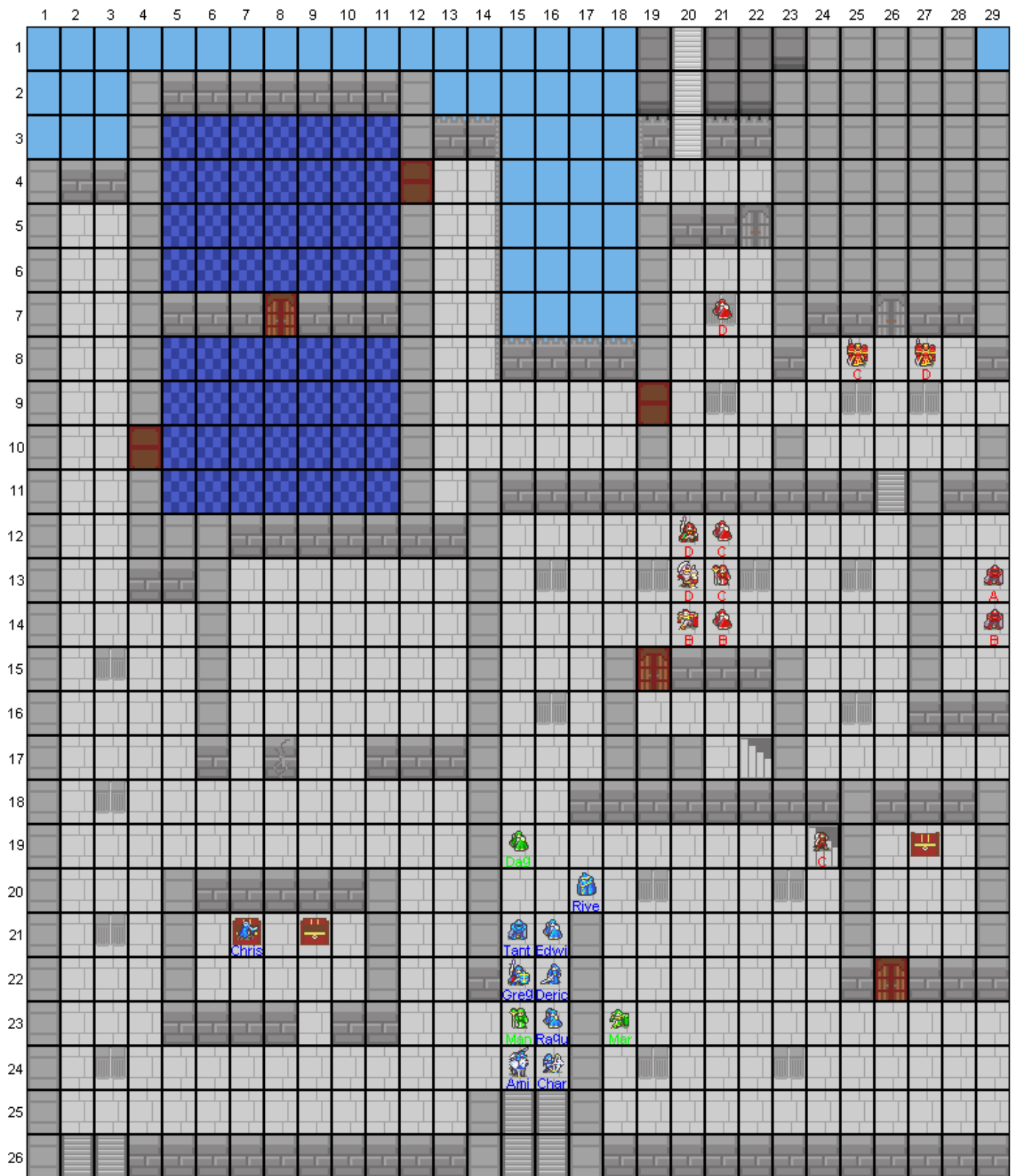
Marpa vs Bishop A

Hit:  $120+5-51 = 74$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $36-13 = 23\text{dmg}$

Mannan mends Raquel

$20+20 =$  Up to 20HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 14~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Allies:                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 18/38<br>Christopher Shields: 20/42<br>Derick: 18/46<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/39<br>Gregor von Hexham: 45/46<br>Raquel Torriani: 45/46<br>Riven: 36/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/38 | Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 37/37 | Captain Marpa: 18/44<br>Dag: 33/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 18/35 |



**Ami: Heal Charlotte with staff**

**Chris to 11,24.**



"I'm coming back your way now with a few gifts."

**Ami heals Charlotte**

10+28 = Up to 38Hp restored

**Riven: Move to 22,19, summon skeleton right in front of the rogue. Then just be there smiling when he wakes up.**

**Gregor moves to (16,19) and prepares for combat.**



"So you found something else besides the book?"



"Yeah, I got something for you too. I'll show you when I get closer."

**Tantallos: Hold still.**



"Is that so? Now I am a tad curious."



"I don't know what it is, but I'm pretty sure it's magic, and I'm pretty sure you'll like it."

**Edwin: Bop Derick with the heal staff and stay still.**

**Raquel: Move to (15,22); heal Mannan with staff**



"Magic, hm? Quite sure I will. That ring you gave me still covering a lot of issues I had with this armor. And by issues, I mean heavy armor!"

Chris grinned, although Tantallos probably couldn't see if from where he was at around the corner.



"Yeah, it's some kind of red crystal. Even a guy like me can feel it has magic power in it. I figure that my king should get first dibs on it."

**Edwin heals Derick**

10+28 = Up to 38HP restored

**Raquel heals Mannan**

10+32 = Up to 42HP healed



"A crystal? Yes, yes.. this is indeed something good. Without doubt, you are proving to be a dedicated Forsaken."

Tantallos laughed under that mask and crossed his arms.



"I would be lying if I said that I am not pleased to hear your decision about the crystal."



"I'm used to giving my lord all kinds of neat stuff I 'find laying around'."



*Difference now is I'm not doing it just to try to get into said lord's robes.*

Chris had a good chuckle at that thought, but there was truth in it. How odd to think less than a year ago he would only do things for people for his own benefit, instead of because he liked them. He really had changed.



"Don't worry. I'll only pilfer the possessions of enemies of the Forsaken."



"Hah, this is going better than I thought, really. And I find amusing how you

are taking things that are "laying around" in her castle now. I am quite sure she is not going to mind, her little zombie friend did not mind, right?"



"I would not say you are pilfering.. you are just giving these things a better use!



"You know, that reminds me. The last time I was here I raided some of her stuff. I bet she has a few more goodies that aren't being used, if I can find them."



"They'll just be lying around, of course."



"Yes, she probably does. I had the opportunity to take a little look on her library. Except they did not exactly let me in, but one of them gave me a tome, so that means she does have dark tomes on her collection."



"And we would not want to waste those now, would we? They are also juuuust lying around.."



"Agreed. We'll loot this place to the bones before we burn it to the ground and salt the earth. We just have to take care of the owner, first."

Something occurred to him. Something from almost a year ago, and he shook his head.



*...Sounds like something Adrian would have said. I'd like to think he would've stood by us.*



"Hm.. I am not so sure about burning it. It would be a waste to take a big castle like this, you know? Maybe we can get some extra money with it. It takes a lot of

effort to raise these things."



"Sorry to say this, but from what I heard from him.. I do not even think we would be here now. If we already got in trouble not looking for it.. I am not sure what would happen to us with someone actually looking for trouble on the group. But...yes, I am quite sure he would approve an idea like that."



"I guess you two are right. It just feels like it would be appropriate to destroy it. Like the final chapter of a book."



"I understand what you are trying to say, we will see about that later."



"On that note, didn't we rescue the best friend of PRIXIMA's son? He might have some interest in this castle once we've defeated his mother."



"Ah, Riven. I think it is also time to talk a little more, hm? I still want to find out if you wish to join the Forsakens or not."

Charlotte saw an opportunity.

**Charlotte: Move to 18,20. Yell at rogue.**



"Another step and I'll be forced to pin you! You can still escape with your life!"

Derick pulled himself up and gave an odd confused look at Edwin before running off

**Derick: move 16, 18**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

It was surprisingly quiet. Especially when the rogue woke up, looked at the skeleton and froze with pale face.

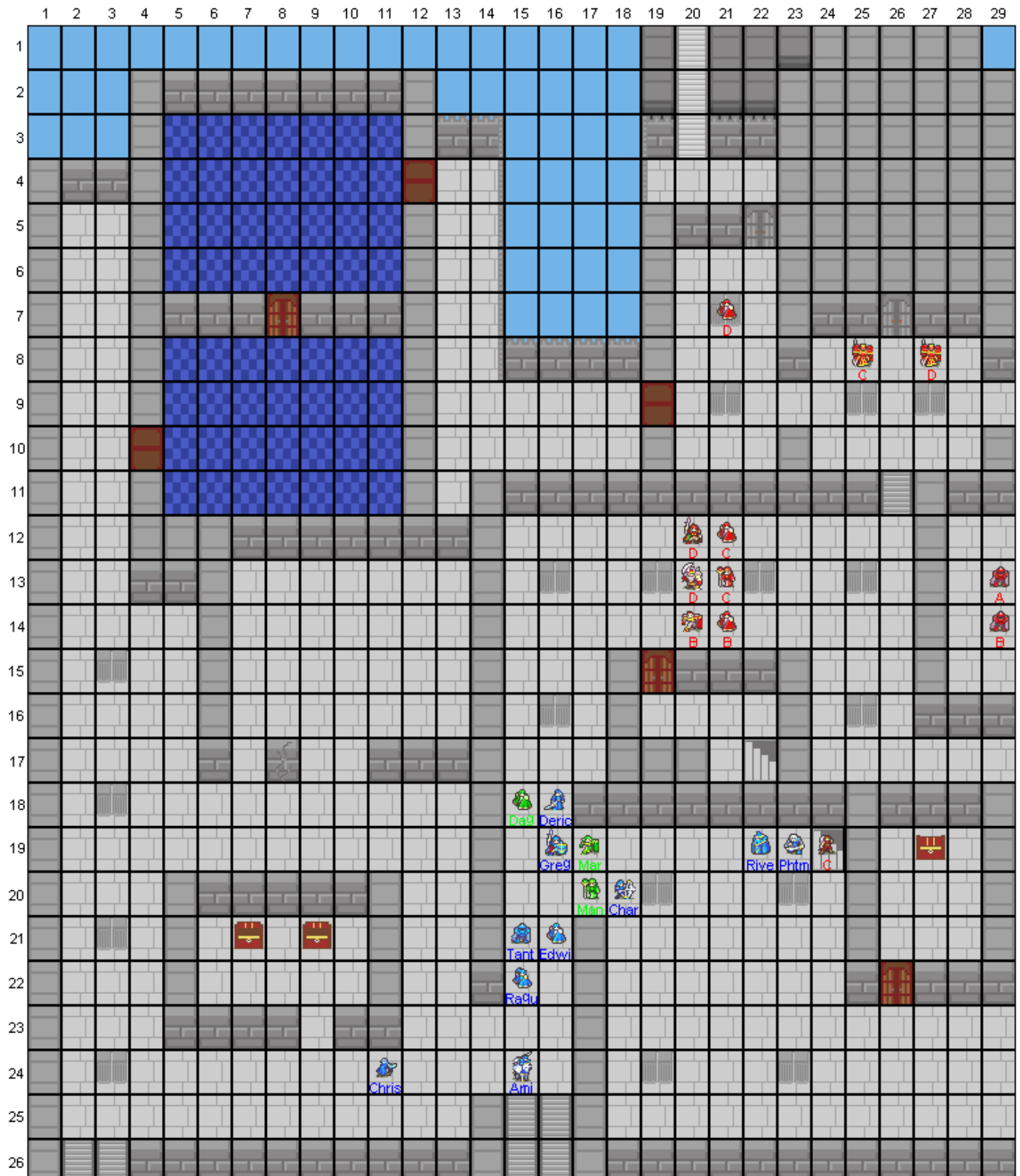
## ~~Ally Phase~~

Dag took a careful step forward, listening for ambush or long-range spells being prepared - but nothing of that sort happened. In the meanwhile, Mannan and Marpa met at the corridor and the bishop healed her wounds.

### Mannan mends Marpa

20+20 = Up to 40HP restored

## ~~Player Turn 15~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Allies:                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 38/38<br>Christopher Shields: 20/42<br>Derick: 46/46<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/39<br>Gregor von Hexham: 45/46<br>Raquel Torriani: 45/46<br>Riven: 36/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/38 | Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 37/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Rogue C: 33/33 | Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 33/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |

**Chris moves to 16,22 and gives Lumen to Raquel.**



"Here ya go, ma'am. Make good use of it."



"Why, thank you." Raquel glanced over the tome, leafing through the first several pages. "This looks like it should be quite helpful against our enemies, as well as for research once this is finished."

She gave Chris a closer look, noticing the injuries that hadn't quite healed.



"It doesn't look like all of your injuries closed properly, however. If I may, I will attempt the healing again."

**Raquel: Heal Chris with staff**



"Thanks. Once the magic's taken effect, and I give Tantallos this crystal, I'm going to get back into the fight. Battles aren't all looting your enemy's possessions."



"I could get there in a moment to get the crystal, then you will only need to focus on dealing with the soldiers. I doubt we are going to find another chest so soon, unless she is..crazy enough to put many rare artifacts on the same area."

Weeeeeeo0000~~

**Raquel heals Chris**

**Gregor: Hold position.**



"...Looks like Riven's got the situation under control."

**Charlotte: Move 2 W, 4 N (unless the move cost is too high!)**

**Tantallos: Move to 16, 23 to take the Crystal and use it already.**



"If you do not mind, I would like to take a look on the Crystal and see how it could help us." Tantallos used the crystal.



"So... it do anything for you?"



"...Actually it did! I do feel stronger. I think it was one of those crystals containing energy. But I am quite sure it is useless now as the energy was transferred. No wonder why they were keeping it in a chest."

**Ami: Move to 15,19**



"Good. The stronger you are, the better chance we have against PRIXIMA. And it's not like that strength is going to be unwelcome in the future, either."

**Edwin: Hold still and do nothing.**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The rogue thought for three quarters of a second and then ran down the stairs, almost tumbling in the process.

Meanwhile...

"They're close. I can see them around the corner! Launch your spells!"

Suddenly, poison mist fell onto Charlotte and Derick.

#### Sage C casts Poison on Charlotte

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{25-8\} \times 5] + 24) - (10 \times 2) = 30 + 83 + 24 - 20 = 117$ , autohit!  
Charlotte is Poisoned!

#### Sage B casts Poison on Derick

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{25-13\} \times 5] + 24) - (9 \times 2) = 30 + 60 + 24 - 18 = 96$   
Hit roll: 45, hit!  
Derick is Poisoned!

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Bah, they're onto us!" Marpa moved to the pillars as Dag hid near the wall and called a blast of icicles onto the officer around the corner; in the meanwhile, Mannan quickly dissipated the poisonous cloud lingering around Charlotte with a wave of his staff.

Dag's spellbook suddenly caught fire and turned to dust.

#### Dag vs Sergeant B

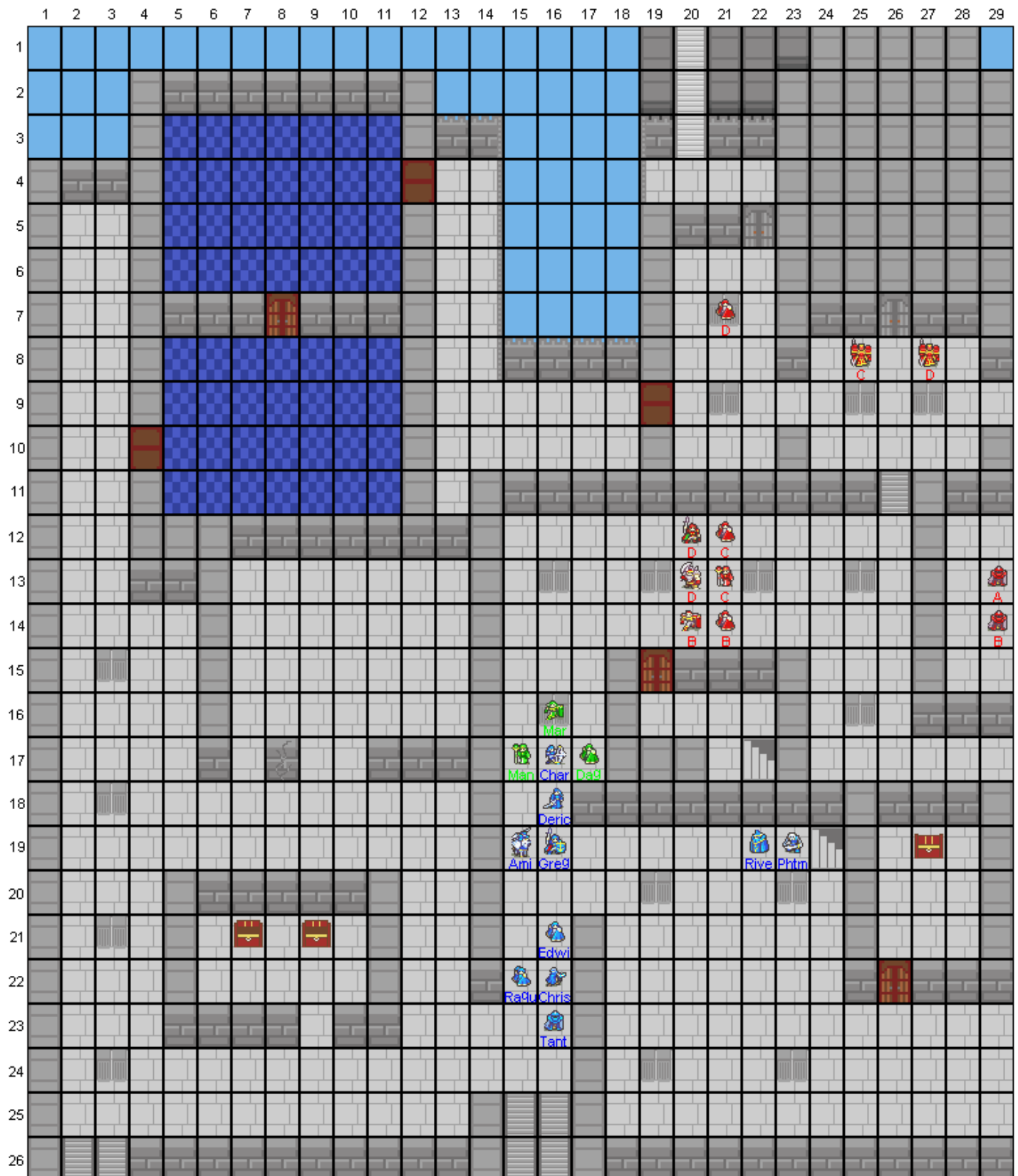
Hit:  $132 + 10 - 43 = 99$   
Hit roll: 93, hit!  
Damage:  $34 - 12 = 24$  dmg



# ~~Player Turn 16~~

## Poison rolls

Derick: 2



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                    | Enemies:                                                                                                                           | Allies:                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 38/38<br>Christopher Shields: 42/42<br>Derick: 44/46 <b>Poison (4/5)</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: 39/39<br>Gregor von Hexham: 46/46 | Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Sergeant B: 18/42<br>Bishop C: 38/38 | Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 33/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |

Raquel Torriani: 45/46  
Riven: 36/36  
Tantallos Forsaken: 33/40

Druid A: 35/35  
Druid B: 35/35  
Wind Sage B: 37/37  
Wind Sage C: 37/37  
Wind Sage D: 37/37

**Chris to 20,21.**



"Actually, if I remember my architecture right, she sometimes keeps chests over here. I'm going to go take a look if no one minds."



"That's all you've got? Humph. Gregor, you might want to move ahead! They've got nasty-looking front liners!"



"Thankfully, we do as well!"

**Gregor: Move to (16, 15). Equip Steel Javelin!**



"Time to attack already? Very well..."

**Edwin: Move to 17, 16 and Call Magic: Sleep on Axe Guard D!**

**Edwin casts Sleep on Axe Guard D**

Too lazy to count the autohit.  
Axe Guard D is asleep!

**Raquel: Move to (15,16); Call Sleep against Wind Sage B**



"With this ability, I wonder if we can reach PRIXIMA without any more killing."



"That...is likely rather over-optimistic on my part."



"You'll forgive me if I don't hold my breath on that. Still, maybe they'll give up and run away like those thieves did."

**Raquel casts Sleep on Sage B**

Hit:  $(30 + [\{(32 - 20) \times 5\} + 23]) - (8 \times 2) = 30 + 60 + 23 - 16 = 97$   
Hit roll: 60!  
Sage B is asleep!

**Derick: Stay put**

**Ami: Stay put**



"Really? She is not too bright when it is about hiding artifacts."

**Tantalos: Move to 15, 18 and cast Sleep on Wind Sage C.**



"This will just delay them. But I do not think they intend to give up. Either way, nap time!



"Nah, it's actually well hidden if I remember correctly. I just don't think she ever thought anyone she trusted with the information would use it against her."



"...It's a bit difficult to admit, but there are a few things I still admire about her. Her talent for deceit and treachery is astonishing, for example."



"Which makes her not-so-smart. She never thought someone would do that, if she was really smart, she would have some kind of backup plan."



"If you admire her talent, then let's build up a chain reaction here. Because I do respect your talents, and come on, you managed to beat her on her own game. You worked for her, and now here we are, inside her castle taking down her soldiers and

"finding" her treasures! You did surprise me plenty of times here, and I am sure many people on this group would agree with me when I say you deserve a lot of respect."



"I highly doubt it."

**Charlotte: Move to 17,12. Longbow -> Sage C!**

Tantallos did put the enemy mage to sleep but the arrow that hit him in the knee quickly woke him up.

**Tantallos casts Sleep on Sage C**

Hit:  $(30 + [\{26 - 20\} \times 5] + 25) - (12 \times 2) = 30 + 30 + 25 - 24 = 61$

Hit roll: 11, hit!

Sage C is asleep!

**Charlotte vs Sage C**

Autohit!

Damage:  $26 - 12 = 14\text{dmg}$



"...oh, I don't know. I suppose if Chris and Ami are that's the shard of this group I'd most like to follow, but... I don't know. Probably."

**Riven: Be sad at my lack of ability to cast sleep, move as far west as I can. BFF phantom does the same.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Officer B and Sage C quickly ganged on Charlotte; the magic frosted her skin and took breath out of her lungs for a moment, but she managed to dodge the officer's sword in last moment.

**Sage C vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $133 - 53 = 80$

Hit roll: 28, hit!

Damage:  $36 - 8 = 28\text{dmg}$

**Officer B vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $132 - 5 - 53 = 74$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

In the meanwhile, Sentinel D stood against Gregor. He examined his foe for a moment, and then there was LANCE DUEL.

**Sentinel D vs Gregor**

Hit:  $127 - 5 - 10 - 54 = 58$

Hit roll: 2, hit!

Damage:  $34 - 25 = 9\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $127 + 5 + 10 - 55 = 87$

Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage: 34-19 = 15dmg

And then, the Bishop ran away to hide near the pillars, then sent some healing magic Sentinel's way.

#### Bishop C physics Sentinel D

10+22 = Up to 32HP restored

Suddenly yelling could be heard, coming from the staircase, and more of castle defenders' shown up! Just like two sages who arrived from the east - but weren't seen yet.

And then, the nearby door exploded, sending splinters at the defending thugs and Charlotte; the loud noise was strong enough to pierce the magical sleep and wake up two thugs. A monstrous, armor-clad man slumbered out of the tower's staircase, his eyes flashing red and his breath loud, erratic and raspy. The eyes noticed Charlotte and the hulk stopped for a moment.



"Charlotte... Kill..." He muttered in the silence that fell on the corridor after his 'explosive' arrival.

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Marpa ran to engage the sergeant and only made big eyes at the 'demon' who just appeared.



"Gods have mercy on us, what is that thing? I thought I knew everything about this castle..."

#### Marpa vs Officer B

Hit: 120+5-43 = 82  
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage: 36-17 = 19dmg

Dag likewise peeked around the corner.



"I thought that undead spy was bad." He said, pale on his face, before directing his windy magicks at the Sentinel D.

#### Dag vs Sentinel D

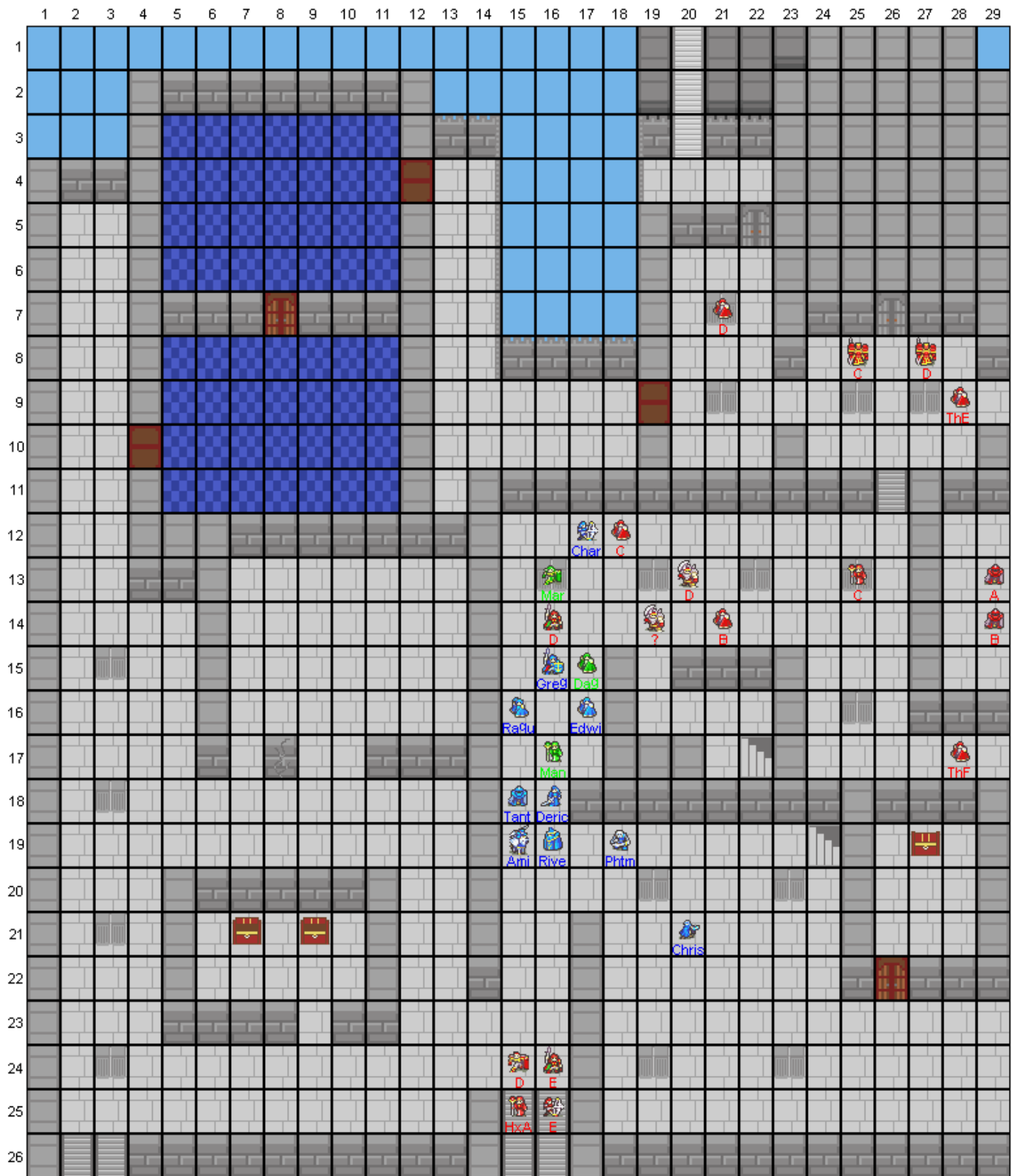
Hit: 132+10+5-55 = 92  
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage: 31-13 = 18dmg

Mannan quickly removed the poison fog that lingered around Derick.



"There. Should do it. Now I think I will have to put my stave away for a moment..." He said, preparing his spellbook for the worst.

~~Player Turn 17~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 31/32<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 10/38<br>Christopher Shields: 42/42<br>Derick: 44/46<br>Edwin Westbringer: 39/39<br>Gregor von Hexham: 37/46<br>Raquel Torriani: 42/46<br>Riven: 36/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 33/40 | Sentinel D: 22/40<br>Sentinel E: 40/40<br>Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Sergeant D: 42/42<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35 | Wind Sage B: 37/37<br>Wind Sage C: 23/37<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage E: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage F: 37/37<br>Hexmaster A: 30/30<br>Elite Sentry E: 38/38<br>?: 80/80 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 33/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Ami: Move to 15,15 Heal Greg

Sparkly magic healed Gregor's wounds.

### Ami heals Gregor

10+28 = Up to 38HP restored

## Chris scoots to 25, 23.



"Quite sure this isn't the best time to keep talking about this, considering there is some giant abomination coming towards us, but.. only them? You do know I am.. a tad interested on you. But it seems you prefer to use your time talking to the enemies in some kind of attempt to get yourself some servants."



"I am not sure if you are just playing some kind of game, Miss, but it surely had been working for a while. Or I would not be trying to get your attention yet."



"What...what the hell is that thing?"

## Gregor moves to (17,14) and STABs the inferior sentinel with the Killer Lance!

### Gregor vs Sentinel D

Hit:  $132+10+11+5-55 = 103$ , autohit!  
 Damage:  $35+2-19 = 18\text{dmg}$

Sentinel D counterattacks!  
 Hit:  $132-10-11-5-54 = 52$   
 Hit roll: 30, hit!  
 Damage:  $34-2-25 = 7\text{dmg}$



"I don't know, but it's coming this way!"

**Charlotte: Move 1 W and Killer Bow on Sage C!**

TWANG! \*splorch\*

**Charlotte vs Sage C**

Hit:  $143+7+5+10+10-43 = 132$ , autohit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $30+1-12 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

**Tantallos: Try to put the Hexmaster to sleep.**

Derick whipped his head around at the noise coming from the other room.



"Hey guys what's going on back there?!"

He felt a breeze go through his hair as a stray arrow flew past. Reminded of the approaching enemies from the back, Derick turned around and clenched his teeth at them, readying his stance.



"I don't have time for you four!"

**Derick: Move 16, 20**

At the sound of the roar, Raquel blinked as she saw a door go flying across the hall in front of her, though she couldn't quite see the source of the large roar that seemed to fill the hallway. Whatever it was, though, the shadow it cast was huge.



"What in the blue blazes..."

She turned in time to see Derick moving back towards the next wave of soldiers.



"We'll keep their reinforcements busy, so the rest of you can handle whatever is going on up there."

**Raquel: Move to (15,19); Call Sleep against Hexmaster A**





"Why do you all keep fighting? There is no need for you all to die here today."

**Edwin: Move 1 West and finish off that Sentinel with Call Magic: Fire!**

Unfortunately, Hexmaster refused to fall asleep.

**Tantallos casts Sleep on Hexmaster A**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{26 - 23\} \times 5] + 25) - (7 \times 2) = 30 + 15 + 25 - 14 = 56$   
Hit roll: 69, miss!

**Raquel casts Sleep on Hexmaster A**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{32 - 23\} \times 5] + 23) - (9 \times 2) = 30 + 45 + 23 - 12 = 86$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Sentinel did turn into a scorched corpse, though.

**Edwin vs Sentinel D**

Hit:  $(90 + 54 + 3) + 10 + 5 - 55 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32 - 13 = 19$  dmg

**Riven orders Phantom to (15,20). Riven holds position**

~~Enemy Phase~~

Suddenly Marpa's eyes blinked red.

**Hexmaster A casts Berserk on Marpa**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{28 - 9\} \times 5] + 11) - (13 \times 2) = 30 + 95 + 11 - 26 = 110$ , autohit!  
Marpa is Berserking!

Then there was some melee'ing south. Some heavy fighting included the moment in which Derick's shamsir broke after slashing through side of Sentinel's body and hitting his armor. The mercenary managed to lean away from incoming arrow just in time and it swished near his ear.

**Officer D vs Phantom**

Hit:  $132 - 10 - 28 = 96$   
Hit roll: 71, hit! Crit roll: 7!  
Damage:  $31 - 8 = 23 \times 3 = 69$  dmg

**Sentinel E vs Derick**

Hit:  $132 + 15 - 10 - 5 - 78 = 54$   
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
Damage:  $34 + 1 - 1 - 16 = 18$  dmg

Derick counters!

Hit:  $132 + 10 + 10 - 15 - 55 = 82$   
Hit roll: 80, hit!  
Damage:  $37 + 2 - 1 - 19 = 19$  dmg

Derick counters again!

Hit:  $132 + 10 + 10 - 15 - 55 = 82$   
Hit roll: 75, hit! Crit roll: 29!  
Damage:  $37 + 2 - 1 - 19 = 19 \times 3 = 57$  dmg

**Shamsir breaks!**

**Sentry E vs Derick**Hit:  $138-10-5-78 = 45$ 

Hit roll: 66, miss!

In the meanwhile, Chris sidestepped some thunders.

**Thunder Sage F vs Chris**Hit:  $120-61 = 59$ 

Hit roll: 100, miss!

Back in the Koolaidman corridor, fighting was intense; everyone piled up on Gregor, including the infamous hulk.

**Thunder Sage E vs Gregor**Hit:  $120-11-54 = 55$ 

Hit roll: 16, hit!

Damage:  $38-10 = 28\text{dmg}$ **Axe Guard D vs Gregor**Hit:  $108+15-11-5-54 = 53$ 

Hit roll: 55, miss!

**? vs Gregor**Hit:  $122+15-11-5-54 = 67$ 

Hit roll: 29, hit!

Damage:  $49+1-2-3-25 = 20\text{dmg}$ 

As Gregor fell to the ground, the mage who was hiding behind the enemies sprung to the front lines and blasted at Ami with his powerful wind magic, almost splattering her and her pegasus against the wall; feathers and blood were everywhere.

**Sage B vs Ami**Hit:  $133-5-63 = 65$ 

Hit roll: 50, hit!

Damage:  $58-17 = 41\text{dmg}$ **~~Ally Phase~~**

**"SPIT CRAP KILL!"** Marpa suddenly growled and slashed at Charlotte, knocking her down.

**Marpa vs Charlotte**Hit:  $120-53 = 67$ 

Hit roll: 24, hit!

Damage:  $36-19 = 17\text{dmg}$ 

Mannan saw what happened and ran toward the affected captain, waving his restorative staff near her head.



"Tantallos!" He shouted south. "Someone is using mind warping magic! You guys have to kill them or we might be done for in few seconds!"

Moments later, Dag ran past the bloody scene and deftly blasted the axeman with magic, dodging the flying axe, that ended stuck in the wall.

Hit:  $132+10-42 = 100$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $31-10 = 21$ dmg

Damage:  $31 - 10 = 21\text{dmg}$

The map is a 29x29 grid with the following features:

- Blue Checkered Area:** A 10x10 area from (5,5) to (14,14).
- Grey Stone Path:** A path from (15,15) to (20,20).
- Central Area:** A 10x10 area from (15,15) to (24,24) containing various characters and items.
- Characters and Items:**
  - Char (blue), Dea (green), Man (green), Mar (green), Ami (blue), Edwi (blue), Tant (blue), Radu (blue), Rive (blue), Deric (blue), D (red), E (red), E (red), F (red), HxA (red), HxB (red), ThE (red), ThF (red), A (red), B (red), C (red), D (red), Chris (blue).
- Obstacles:** Various grey and brown blocks, including a large grey block from (15,15) to (20,20) and a large brown block from (21,21) to (24,24).

| Mercs:                                      | Enemies:              |                       |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ami Storm: -/32 <span>3/3</span>            | Sentinel F: 40/40     | Wind Sage B: 37/37    |
| Charlotte von Hexham: -/38 <span>3/3</span> | Elite Guard C: 46/46  | Wind Sage D: 37/37    |
| Christopher Shields: 42/42                  | Elite Guard D: 46/46  | Thunder Sage E: 37/37 |
| Derick: 26/46                               | Elite Axeman D: 24/45 | Thunder Sage F: 37/37 |
| Edwin Westbringer: 37/39                    | Sergeant D: 42/42     | Hexmaster A: 30/30    |

|                                                                                                           |                                                                          |                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gregor von Hexham: -/46 <b>3/3</b><br>Raquel Torriani: 39/46<br>Riven: 36/36<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 30/40 | Sergeant E: 42/42<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35 | Hexmaster B: 30/30<br>Elite Sentry E: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry F: 38/38<br>?: 80/80 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                            |                                                                          |                                                                                  |
| Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 33/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35                                             |                                                                          |                                                                                  |



"Aheheh... well, sorry if you feel neglected. I notice your mastery of magic has been expanding nicely."



"Say, speaking of which... didn't you tell me once that you wanted to become a Dark Druid, some kind of legendary hero or something that's only existed once in history and was destroyed for being evil, or something?"

Riven glanced at the bodies up north.



"Mmmmmaaaaaybe Mannan's right. You want me on blasting duty or conjuring more phantoms?"



"Or maybe diplomacy duty? I'll bet that giant thing would love to join us if we gave him a chance!"

**Chris takes cover from the magic behind the pillar at 23,20.**

**Raquel Calls Ketamine Sleep against Hexmaster B**

**Raquel casts Sleep on Hexmaster B**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{32 - 23\} \times 5] + 23) - (7 \times 2) = 30 + 45 + 32 - 14 = 93$

Hit roll: 95, miss!



"Ah-..."



"...darnit!"

Derick tore his gaze away from the broken blade and tossed it in the general direction of the enemy, before drawing another sword and charging at them.

**Derick: 1 South. Switch to Killing Edge. Attack Archer**



"If you hadn't noticed, now would be a good time to DO SOMETHING!"

Edwin yelled Mannan, Dag and Marpa as he moved to stand next to Gregor.



"Gregor, you need to get up now and make sure we don't die please. GET. UP."

**Edwin: Move 1 North and 1 East. Call Magic: Mend on Gregor. Pray for mercy.**



"No need to shout, I heard you the first time..."



"Sorry, I'm just feeling somewhat harassed by the giant madman with an axe bearing down on me. Now do get up, I very much want to live."

**Derick vs Sentry E**

Hit:  $127+10+10-53 = 96$   
Hit roll: 49, hit! Crit roll: 44!  
Damage:  $39+2-17 = 27 \times 3 = 81\text{dmg}$

**Edwin casts Mend on Gregor**

$20+28 / 2 = \text{Up to } 24\text{HP restored}$

**If Tantallos doesn't have the ring, he grabs it from Raquel and gives her Elwind. Regardless, he calls Sleep on Hexmaster B.**

**Riven moves to 17, 17, creates a Gargoyle at 17, 16, and orders it to 18, 14.**

**Tantallos casts Sleep on Hexmaster B**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{31-23\} \times 5]+25)-(8 \times 2) = 30+40+25-16 = 79$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!

~~Enemy Phase~~

Long-range thunders smote the phantom and Dag.

#### Thunder Sage F vs Phantom

Hit:  $125-10-29 = 86$   
Hit roll: 27, hit!  
Damage:  $38-9 = 29\text{dmg}$

#### Thunder Sage E vs Dag

Hit:  $125-10-41 = 74$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $38-22 = 16\text{dmg}$

Axeman D got healed and then finished off the Phantom!

#### Bishop C psychics Axeman D

$10+22 =$  Up to 32HP restored

#### Axeman D vs Phantom

Hit:  $108+15-5-10-29 = 79$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1-10 = 28\text{dmg}$

The monstrous man then tossed his axe at Gregor, who barely managed to avoid the attack... but not the cold blast from the sage behind his back.

#### ? vs Gregor

Hit:  $122+15-10-5-54 = 68$   
Hit roll: 70, miss!

#### Sage B vs Gregor

Hit:  $133-10-5-54 = 64$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Damage:  $36-10 = 26\text{dmg}$

The southern enemies ran amongst the mercenaries; the result was bloody, to be honest.

#### Officer D vs Riven

Hit:  $132-10-15-5-50 = 52$   
Hit roll: 41, hit!  
Damage:  $31-11 = 20\text{dmg}$

Riven counters!  
Hit:  $125+10+2-15-43 = 79$   
Hit roll: 37, hit!  
Damage:  $37+2-12 = 27\text{dmg}$   
27HP healed!

Riven counters again!  
Hit:  $125+10+2-43 = 94$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

#### Officer E vs Raquel

Hit:  $132-5-10-58 = 59$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $31-10 = 21\text{dmg}$

Raquel counters!  
Hit:  $134+10+10-43 = 111$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $36-12 = 24\text{dmg}$

Raquel counters once more!  
Hit:  $134+10+10-43 = 111$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $36-12 = 24\text{dmg}$

**Sentinel F vs Derick**

Hit:  $132+15-5-78 = 64$

Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-16 = 19\text{dmg}$

Derick retaliates!

Hit:  $127+10-15-55 = 67$

Hit roll: 53, hit! Crit roll: 65!

Damage:  $39+2-1-19 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

**Sentry F vs Derick**

Hit:  $138-5-78 = 55$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

And then, Tantallos felt tingles and Raquel went crazy.

**Hexmaster B casts Berserk on Tantallos**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{28-24\} \times 5]+11)-(8 \times 2) = 30+20+11-16 = 45$

Hit roll: 46, miss!

**Hexmaster A casts Berserk on Raquel**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{28-17\} \times 5]+11)-(6 \times 2) = 30+55+11-12 = 84$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Raquel is Berserking!

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Dag and Marpa quickly ganged on the pesky Sage while Mannan healed Gregor.

**Dag vs Sage B**

Hit:  $132+10-43 = 99$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $31-20 = 11\text{dmg}$

Sage B counters!

Hit:  $133-10-41 = 82$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $36-22 = 14\text{dmg}$

**Marpa vs Sage B**

Hit:  $120-43 = 77$

Hit roll: 67, hit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage:  $36-12 = 24 \times 3 = 72\text{dmg}$

**Mannan mends Gregor**

$20+22 / 2 =$  Up to 21HP healed

**~~Player Turn 19~~**

**"ARGH MURDER CRAP!"** Raquel turned around and zapped Tantallos a bit; his dark magic knocked her mind out of the crazy and body to the ground.

**Raquel vs Tantallos**

Hit:  $134+15-10-10-15-59 = 55$

Hit roll: 50, hit!

Damage:  $36-1-24 = 11\text{dmg}$

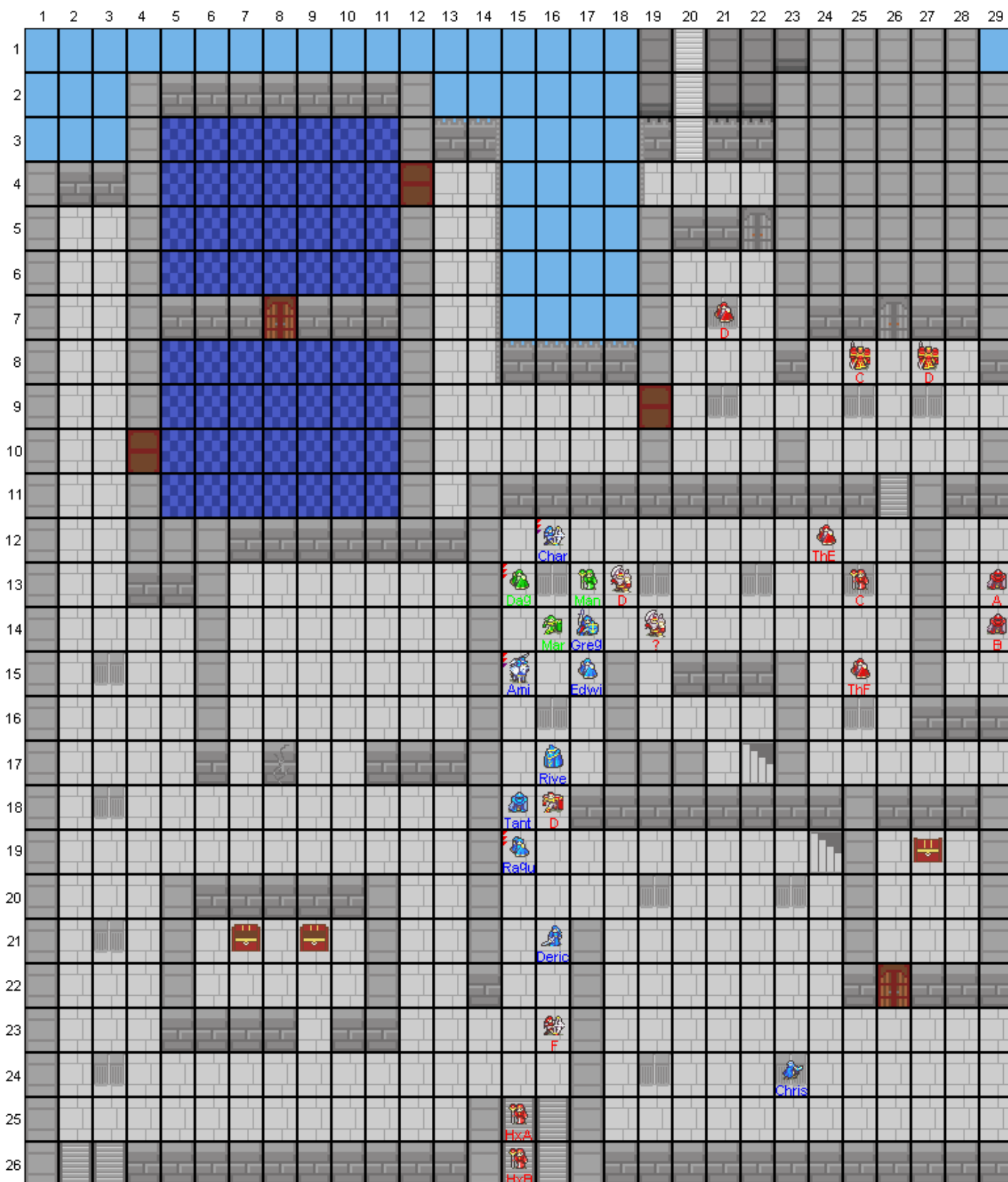
Tantallos counters!

Hit:  $148+15-15-58 = 90$

Hit roll: 72, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-17 = 21\text{dmg}$

10HP restored!



Weather:

| Mercs:                         | Enemies:              |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ami Storm: -/33 2/3            | Elite Guard C: 46/46  |
| Charlotte von Hexham: -/38 2/3 | Elite Guard D: 46/46  |
| Christopher Shields: 42/43     | Elite Axeman D: 45/45 |
| Derick: 5/46                   | Sergeant D: 15/42     |
| Edwin Westbringer: 38/40       | Bishop C: 38/38       |
| Gregor von Hexham: 21/46       | Druid A: 35/35        |
| Raquel Torriani: -/47 3/3      | Druid B: 35/35        |
| Riven: 36/37                   | Wind Sage D: 37/37    |
| Tantalos Forsaken: 26/40       | Thunder Sage E: 37/37 |
|                                | Thunder Sage F: 37/37 |
|                                | Hexmaster A: 30/30    |



|                                                              |                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Allies:</b>                                               | Hexmaster B: 30/30<br>Elite Sentry F: 38/38<br>?: 80/80 |
| Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 1/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |                                                         |

**Gregor moves 2 north, equips the Steel Javelin, and uses his last vulnerary on Charlotte.**

\*sprinkle noises\*

**Gregor uses Vulnerary on Charlotte**

Up to 5HP restored



"Thank you, Ami-"



"Oh, that was you, Gregor. It looks like your powder bag's empty now. Very, ah, sweet of you to jump to my rescue in the midst of battle."



"Medicine can be replaced. You can't."



"Besides, we have to show that big one what Team Greglotte is made of, right?"



"Sorry, Raquel. Derick, could you please get rid of those two troublemakers over there? I do not even think the big menace here is the crazy monster with an axe. If they keep putting us to fight against each other like this, they won't even need to raise their weapons to fight us."

Raquel looked puzzled. She remembered her spells missing the enemy, seeing the enemies casting, and now here she was looking up at the ceiling while Tantallos apologized to her. She shifted, and winced in pain as she felt her ribs shift. She closed her eyes, concentrating on keeping the pain at bay for the moment, but she was pretty sure that at least one rib had broken, probably with internal bleeding.



"W-why? Did something happen?"



"One of those Bishops on the stairs used a spell on you. Being a little more specific.. berserk. As the name suggests, you went into berserk and attacked me, and well..I had to stop you. That is why I am apologizing."



"Ah, I see, then I should be the one to apologize to you. First, I missed, and then I let them turn me against everyone..." She coughed again, leaning against the wall for support as she pushed herself into a sitting position. She looked around, seeing both the scorch on Tantallos' robes and Derick, who had plainly taken severe injuries as well.



"You should not. We are not perfect, we both failed to hit our spells. And you did not "let them", you were hit."



"Hopefully I didn't hurt you too much, but please, can you go help Derick before me? I can hold on here for a bit."

He shook his head a bit and simply tapped his mantle a bit.



"I am just fine, Anima magic doesn't hurt too much, that and I managed to recover some of my energy fast."

Of course he wasn't going to mention the life drain, at least not now. But he nodded and presented a brief bow.



"Of course I can. Hopefully everything will be alright, we just need some time here."

Relieved, she slumped back slightly.



"Thank you, and stay safe."

**Edwin: Move to 15, 14 and use the heal staff on Ami.**

**Derick: 1 S attack Sentry**

The archer went down with a gurgling noise and his blood adding to the red pool under Derick's feet.

**Derick vs Sentry F**

Hit:  $127+10-53 = 84$   
Hit roll: 19, hit! Crit roll: 65!  
Damage:  $39+2-17 = 24 \times 3 = 72\text{dmg}$

**Chris is s'posed to be at 23,20, not 23,24. So moving from 23,20, Chris is going to go to 17,19 and make sure his switchblade is equipped.**



"Wish me luck, one of us may end up going insane."

**Tantallos: Move to 15, 24 and attack HxA with Luna.**

**Riven: Move to 16,16, Worm Sergeant D.**

**Edwin heals Ami**

$10+29 / 2 = \text{Up to } 19\text{HP healed}$

**Tantallos vs Hexmaster A**

Hit:  $130-44 = 86$   
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage:  $32-0 = 32\text{dmg!}$

**Riven vs Sergeant D**

?Flux?  
Hit:  $137+10+10-43 = 114$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $35+2-12 = 25\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Gregor's beau suddenly got hit with thunder. Same for Dag.

**Thunder Sage F vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $120-10-11-10-53 = 36$   
Hit roll: 12, hit!  
Damage:  $38-8 = 30\text{dmg}$

**Thunder Sage E vs Dag**

Hit:  $120-10-41 = 69$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $38-19 = 19\text{dmg}$

Then Gregor got hit with one axe and barely avoided the other one. He retaliated furiously with his javelins.

#### Axeman D vs Gregor

Hit:  $108+15-5-55 = 63$

Hit roll: 56, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-26 = 12\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $129+5+10-42 = 102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $35-1-14 = 20\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters again!

Hit:  $129+5+10-42 = 102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $35-1-14 = 20\text{dmg}$

#### ? vs Gregor

Hit:  $122+15-5-55 = 77$

Hit roll: 80, miss!

Gregor counters!

Hit:  $129+5+10-15-55 = 74$

Hit roll: 88, miss!

Gregor retaliates once more!

Hit:  $129+5+10-15-55 = 74$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $35-1-14 = 20\text{dmg}$

Then the axeman got healed with magics.

#### Bishop C psychics Axeman D

$10+22 =$  Up to 32HP healed

Suddenly...

#### Hexmaster B casts Berserk on Derick

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{28-13\} \times 5]+11)-(5 \times 2) = 30+75+11-10 = 106$ , autohit!

Derick is Berserking!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Marpa quickly got rid of the axeman - the lesser one that's it - whilst Mannan ran to Charlotte's side and used his magics on her.



"I hope you're feeling better now."

#### Marpa vs Axeman D

Hit:  $120+15+5-42 = 98$

Hit roll: 38, hit! Crit roll: 4!

Damage:  $36+1-14 = 23 \times 3 = 69\text{dmg}$

#### Mannan mends Charlotte

Hit:  $20+22 / 2 =$  Up to 21HP restored

### ~~Player Turn 20~~

**"ARRGH! KILL!!** Suddenly Tantallos found himself surrounded by blurry silhouette, and then crimson haze, and then darkness.

#### **Derick vs Tantallos**

Hit:  $127 - 59 = 69$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $39 - 14 = 25\text{dmg}$

Tantallos counters!

Hit:  $130 - 79 = 51$

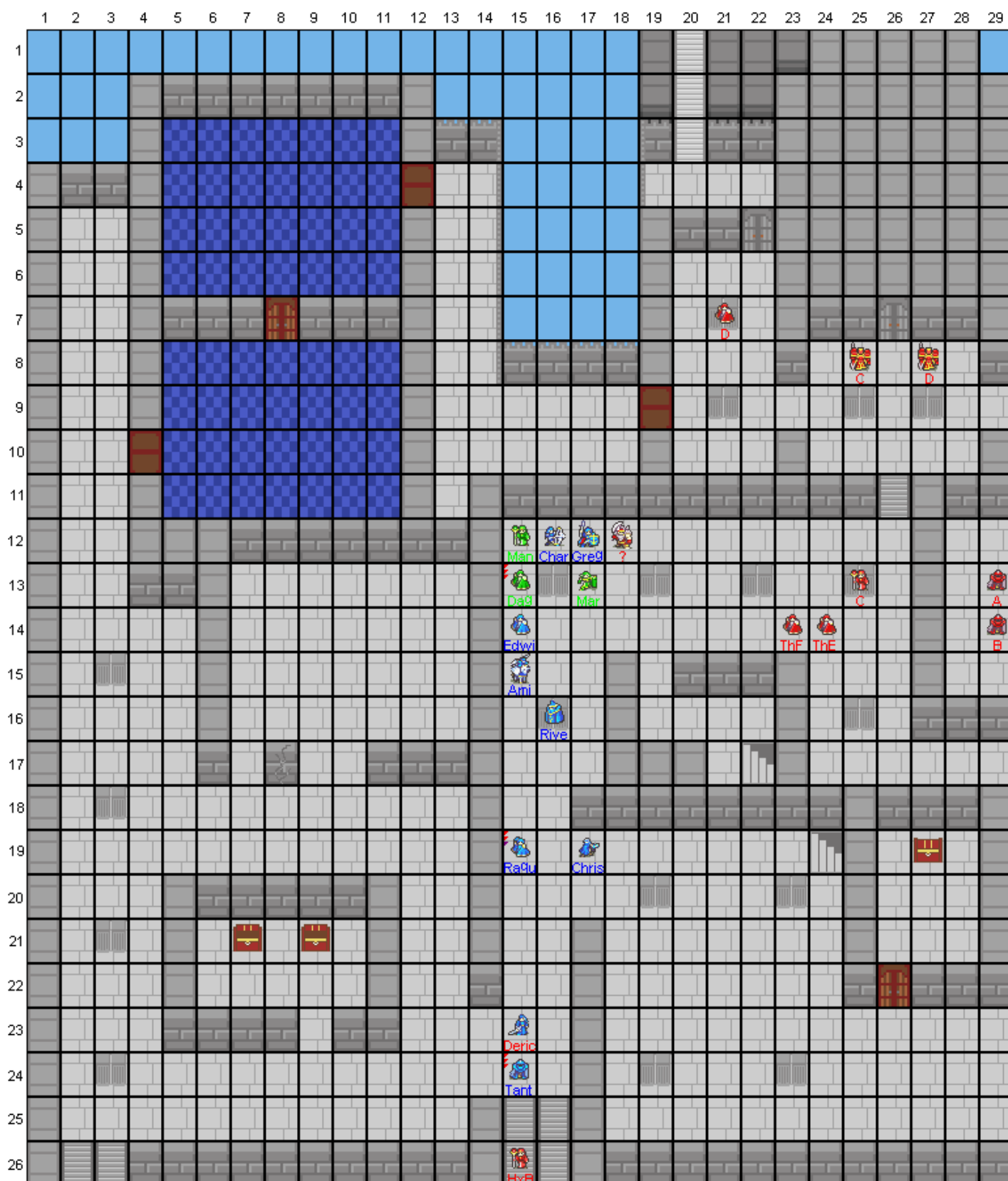
Hit roll: 73, miss!

Derick attacks again!

Hit:  $127 - 59 = 69$

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Damage:  $39 - 14 = 25\text{dmg}$



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Allies:                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 19/33<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 21/38<br>Christopher Shields: 42/43<br>Derick: 5/46 <b>Berserk! (4/5)</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: 40/40<br>Gregor von Hexham: 13/46<br>Raquel Torriani: -/47 2/3<br>Riven: 36/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/40 3/3 | Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage E: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage F: 37/37<br>Hexmaster B: 30/30<br>?: 60/80 | Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: -/35 3/3<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |



"What happened?"

A scream of rage sound behind her.



"That doesn't sound good."

**Ami: Move to 15,22 and soothe Derick.**

**Chris to 16,25, and crossbow the Hexmaster.**

Derick was soothed and Chris put two bolts into Hexmaster's stomach, a fact he wasn't very happy about.

#### Chris vs Hexmaster B

Hit:  $144 - 44 = 100$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16 + 2 - 9 = 9$ dmg

Chris attacks again!

Hit:  $144 - 44 = 100$ , autohit!

Damage:  $16 + 2 - 9 = 9$ dmg



"Derick, can you help me put this idiot down?"



"GRAAAAAAAAAA--"

\*Boop\*



"AAAAAAaahhhh..."



"..."



"Wha?"

Ami points at the bleeding shaman.



"You had a minor episode."

**Riven: Move to 16,20, summon Soldier. Have it move south and butcher that Hexmaster.**



"Lord Mannan! If you can get to Raquel, please heal her. She is vital to our success now."

**Charlotte stays in place for that sweet +50%, initiates GAMBLE, and strikes the Kool-aid Man with her KILLER LONGBOW. Crithax, here we come!**

Soldier phantom took a stab at the Hexmaster, but it was too clumsy to kill the magician.

#### Quote from: Phantom vs Hexmaster

Hit:  $94-44 = 50$   
Hit roll: 75, miss!

Then Charlotte TWANG'd. The arrow lodged right between the eyes of the hulk, who blinked and raised his hatchet, tossing it at Charlotte, and then again, but she ducked twice out of the harm's way.

#### Charlotte vs ?

Hit:  $143+11+10+10+5-55 = 179 / 2 = 89$   
Hit roll: 58, hit! Autocrit!  
Damage:  $31+2-14 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

? counters!

Hit:  $122-11-10-10-5-53 = 33$   
Hit roll: 34, miss!

? counters again!

Hit:  $122-11-10-10-5-53 = 33$   
Hit roll: 69, miss!

**Gregor STABS Kool-aid Man with the Steel Lance!**

\*HEART STAB!\*

The hulk smashed Gregor against the floor in retaliation.

#### Gregor vs ?

Hit:  $129+7+10+5-15-55 = 81$   
Hit roll: 67, hit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $35+1-1-14 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

? counters!

Hit:  $122+15-7-10-5-55 = 60$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Damage:  $49+1-3-1-26 = 20\text{dmg}$



Edwin moves to (15,18 ) and heals Raquel with a staff if he has one, Call Magic if he doesn't.

**Edwin heals Raquel**  
10+29 /2 = Up to 19HP restored

~~Enemy Phase~~

Long range magics were deadly.

**Thunder Sage E vs Marpa**  
Hit: 120-46 = 74  
Hit roll: 46, hit! Crit roll: 7!  
Damage: 38-9 = 29x3 = 87dmg

**Thunder Sage F vs Charlotte**  
Hit: 120-10-53 = 57  
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage: 38-8 = 30dmg

The hulk then moved to the pillars and tossed his hatchet at Mannan, who flipped his book open.



"That's enough. To the abyss with you, foul beast!" The blast of holy magic hit the kool-aid man and set him on fire. The white flames quickly reduced his big shape into a giant pile of ashes - again, mixed with glittery powder.

**? vs Mannan**  
Hit roll: 122-50 = 72  
Hit roll: 92, miss!  
  
Mannan counters!  
Hit roll: 138-15-55 = 68  
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
? has been destroyed!

**Hexmaster B casts Berserk on Derick**  
Staff hit: (30+[{28-13}x5]+11)-(3x2) = 30+75+5 = 110, autohit!  
Derick is Berserking!

~~Ally Phase~~

Mannan quickly moved to the pillars and healed Charlotte.



"Charlotte, do you think you can snipe those thunder-shooting mages? If not, help me heal the others to withstand their attacks. I think these sages might run out of their long-range spells soon."

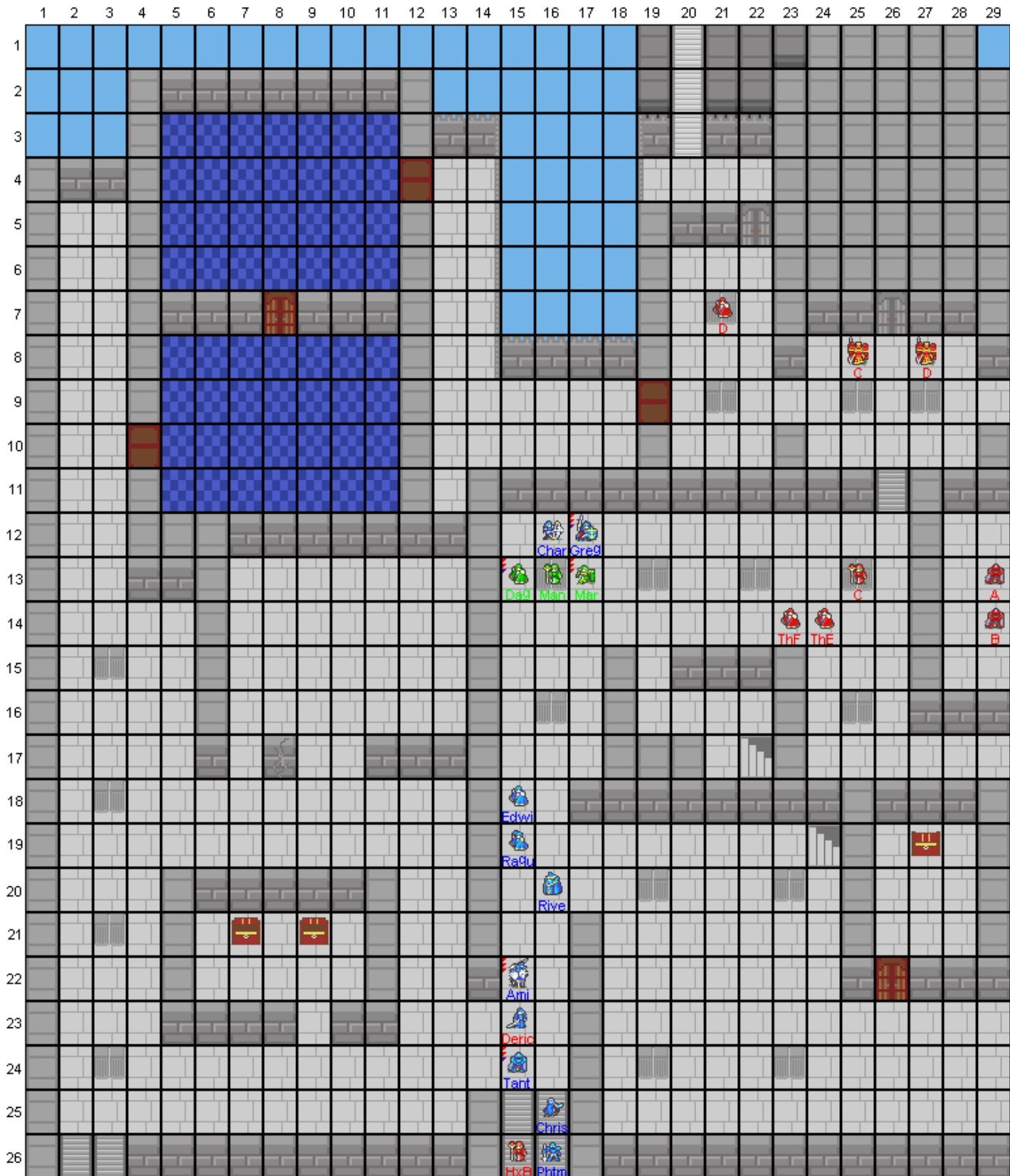
**Mannan mends Charlotte**  
20+22 /2 = Up to 21HP restored

~~Player Turn 21~~

"MURDER CRAP KILL!!" Derick's blade cut down Ami and her pegasus in one wild, wide stroke.

Derick vs Ami

Hit: 127-5-5-10-65 = 42  
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage: 39-6 = 33dmg



Weather:

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

| <b>Mercs:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Enemies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Allies:</b>                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: -/33 <b>3/3</b><br>Charlotte von Hexham: 21/38<br>Christopher Shields: 42/43<br>Derick: 5/46 <b>Berserk! (3/3)</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: 40/40<br>Gregor von Hexham: -/46 <b>2/3</b><br>Raquel Torriani: 19/47<br>Riven: 36/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/40 <b>2/3</b> | Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage E: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage F: 37/37<br>Hexmaster B: 12/30 | Captain Marpa: -/44 <b>3/3</b><br>Dag: -/35 <b>2/3</b><br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |

**Riven: Move to 17, 15. Have phantom ~~swing at and miss~~ gut Hexmaster.**

#### Phantom vs Hexmaster B

Hit: 94-44 = 50  
 Hit roll: 10, hit! // \*frowning noises\*  
 Damage: 22-9 = 13dmg



"A frustrating spell, but now that I've seen it, I believe I have determined how to dispel it."

**Raquel: Move to (16,23); Call Magic: Restore on Derick**

Lo and behold, Derick's eyes returned to normal.



"You guys, take care of Ami and Tantallos. I'm trusting you with this."

He hated to leave people so close to his heart behind, but they needed whatever edge they could get for this last battle and there were people more capable of helping in this situation than he could. He would just be in the way, when he could be doing something useful.

**Chris to 18,20.**



"BLAUGH DIE GETTHEHORSESAWAYFROMMEEEEEE-"

\*Boop\*



"Oh come on! Again?!"

**Edwin: Move south 3 spaces and Call Magic: Mend on Ami.**



"Please help Sir Gregor and Marpa!"

**Charlotte moves 1W and vulns Dag.**

**Edwin mends Ami**

20+29 /2 = Up to 24HP restored

**Charlotte uses Vulnerary on Dag**

Up to 5HP restored

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Long-range magic, books burning and that's it.

**Thunder Sage E vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $120 - 10 - 53 = 57$

Hit roll: 93, miss!

**Thunder Sage F vs Mannan**

Hit:  $120 + 15 - 15 - 50 = 70$

Hit roll: 58, hit!

Damage:  $38 + 1 - 24 = 15\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Enough sleeping, Gregor." Mannan mended the sentinel's wounds.

**Mannan mends Gregor**

20+22 /2 = Up to 21HP restored

Dag stood up and mumbling under his nose, he slowly made his way to Marpa before healing her.

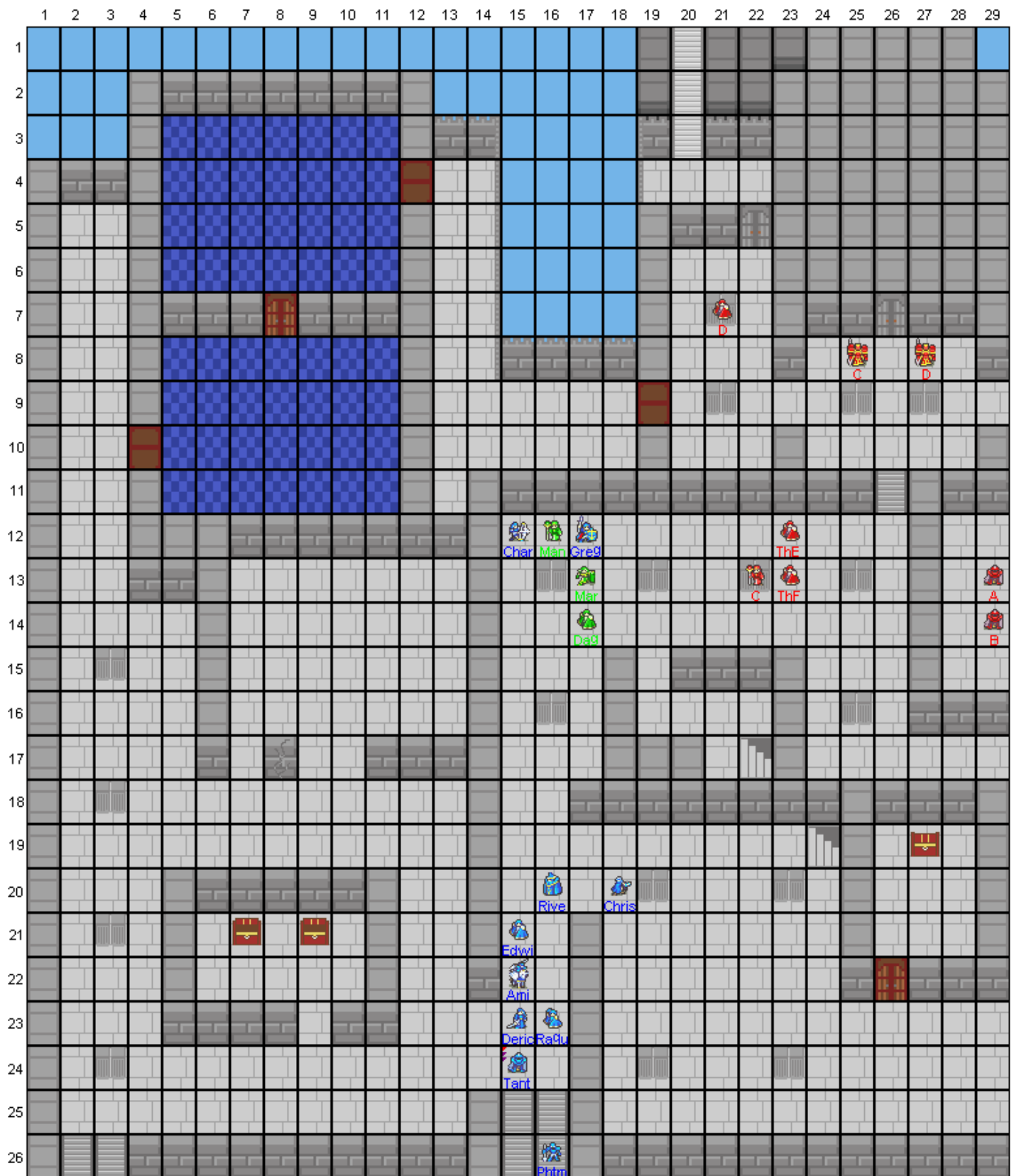
**Dag heals Marpa**

10+27 /2 = Up to 18HP healed



"Besides this magical skirmish here... didn't it got awfully quiet, Charlotte? I hope they ran out of mercenaries instead of preparing an ambush..."

# ~~Player Turn 22~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                    | Allies:                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 24/33<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 21/38<br>Christopher Shields: 42/43<br>Derick: 5/46<br>Edwin Westbringer: 39/40<br>Gregor von Hexham: 25/46<br>Raquel Torriani: 14/47<br>Riven: 36/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: -/40 1/3 | Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage E: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage F: 37/37 | Captain Marpa: 18/44<br>Dag: 2/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 20/35 |

Chris moves to 22x,23y



"Time to shine!"

**Charlotte moves to 19,13 and uses Killer Longbow on Bishop! She also invokes GAMBLE.**

TWANG! \*gurgle noises\*

**Charlotte vs Bishop C**

Hit:  $143+10+10+7-15-51 = 104 / 2 = 57$

Hit roll: 50, hit! Crit roll: 90! //Gamble too OP 0/10 would nerf

Damage:  $31+1-13 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

**Raquel: Move to (16,24); Heal Tantallos with staff**



"And that should be everyone. We should head back to the others before any more guests arrive."

**Raquel heals Tantallos**

$10+28 / 2 =$  Up to 19HP healed



"Thank you, Raquel."



"**BE HEALED!**" Edwin exclaimed dramatically while thrusting his hands toward Derrick.

**Edwin: Move to 16, 23. Call Magic: Mend on Derrick.**

Dramatic 'OWEEWEEOOO~' could be heard as well.

**Edwin mends Derick**

$20+29 =$  Up to 29HP restored

**Ami: Move to 15,15**

**Derick: Move 6 north**

**Riven: Hold still and have my phantom return to me.**

**Gregor moves up to (20,13).**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The thunder sages went and brought down Dag and Charlotte.

### Thunder Sage E vs Charlotte

Hit:  $125-5-10-10-7-15-53 = 25$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $36-8 = 28\text{dmg}$

### Thunder Sage F vs Dag

Hit:  $125-5-10-41 = 69$

Hit roll: 11, hit!

Damage:  $36-22 = 14\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Fortunately Marpa and Mannan quickly brought them back to life.

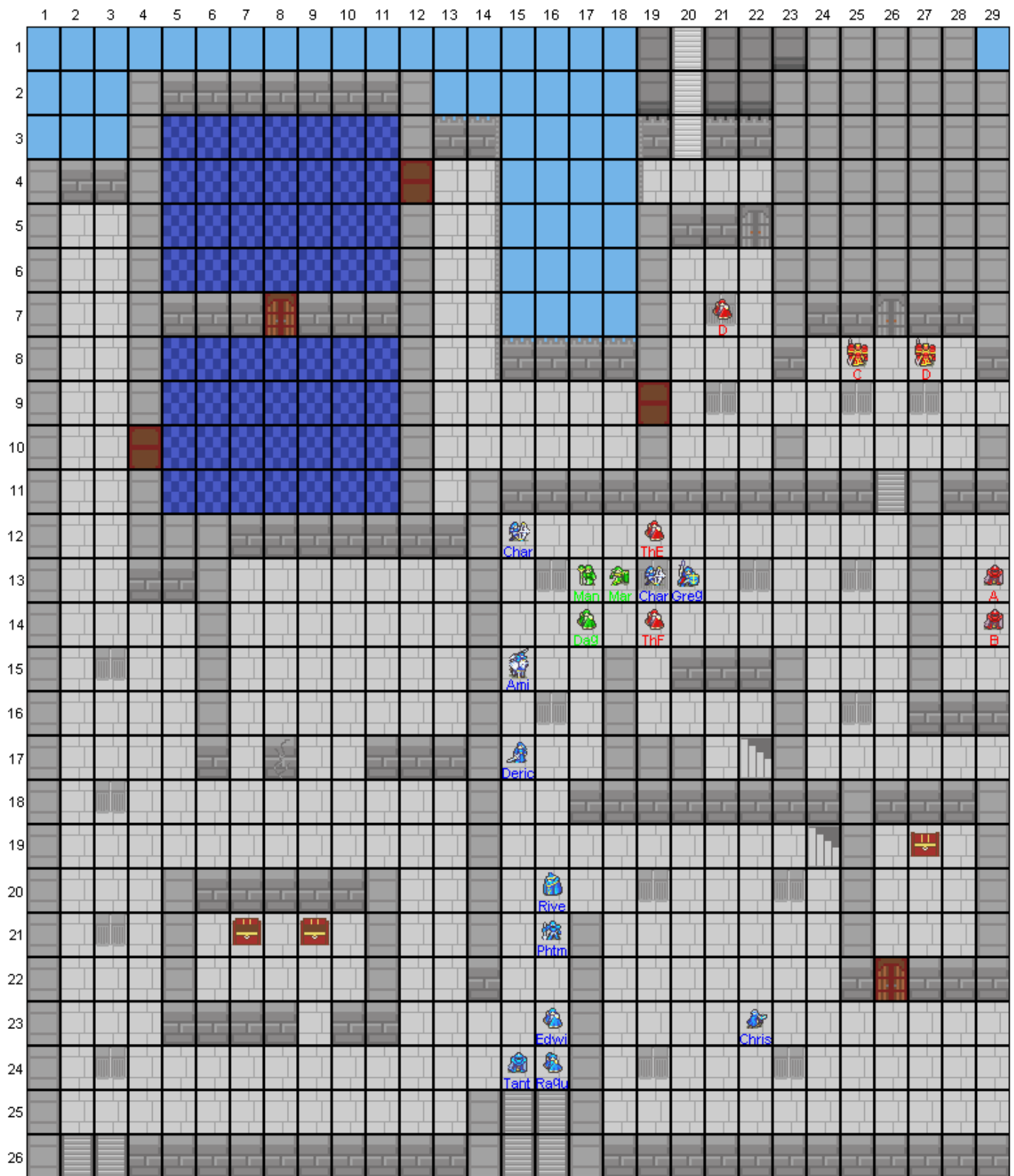
### Marpa uses Concoction on Charlotte

Up to 15HP restored

### Mannan mends Dag

$20+22 / 2 =$  Up to 21HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 23~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                 | Allies:                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 24/33<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 15/38<br>Christopher Shields: 42/43<br>Derick: 46/46<br>Edwin Westbringer: 34/40<br>Gregor von Hexham: 25/46<br>Raquel Torriani: 14/47<br>Riven: 36/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 19/40 | Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage E: 37/37<br>Thunder Sage F: 37/37 | Captain Marpa: 18/44<br>Dag: 21/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 20/35 |



Chris to 26,23 and open that door.

**Derick: Move 18, 15 Swap to Mage Masher**



"Time to test this out!"

**Derick: Attack Sage**

**Derick vs Thunder Sage F**

Hit:  $127+10+5-40 = 102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $57+2-12 = 47$  dmg

**Gregor: Move 1 north and STAB the Sage with the Steel Lance!**

**Tantallos: Move to 15, 18.**

**Edwin: Move to 15, 19 and use the heal staff on Tantallos.**

**Gregor vs Thunder Sage E**

Hit:  $134+5+10+7-40 = 116$ , autohit!

Damage:  $37+1-12 = 26$  dmg

Thunder Sage E retaliates!

Hit:  $125-5-10-7-55 = 48$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $36-10 = 26$  dmg

**Edwin heals Tantallos**

$10+29 =$  Up to 39HP healed



"We'll have you up no time, Gregor! Just hold on."

**Charlotte moves 3E and SNIPES Thunder Sage E with Longbow!**

Twaang~

**Charlotte vs Thunder Sage E**

Hit:  $133-15-40 = 78$

Hit roll: 67, hit!

Damage:  $27-12 = 15$  dmg

**Riven: Hold still. Maybe hum a little tune.**

**Ami: Move to 18,14 and heal Marpa**

Healing magic employed once more.

**Ami heals Marpa**

$10+29 =$  Up to 39HP healed

**Raquel: Move to (16,18); Trade Elwind to Tantallos for Zeus' Ring**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

One of the druids leaned to the other.

"Yo, Henry."

"Mm?"

"They kinda *slaughtered* these guys in the corridor."

"Yeah. Looks like it."

"Do you think what I'm thinking?"

"I think I do, Daniel."

The room was vacant in three seconds.

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Dag healed Charlotte, Mannan healed Gregor. Marpa moved up to him seconds later.



"That's it, Gregor. Her study and personal sanctum are just to the left, up these little stairs... Promise me that I get at least one slash at her face."

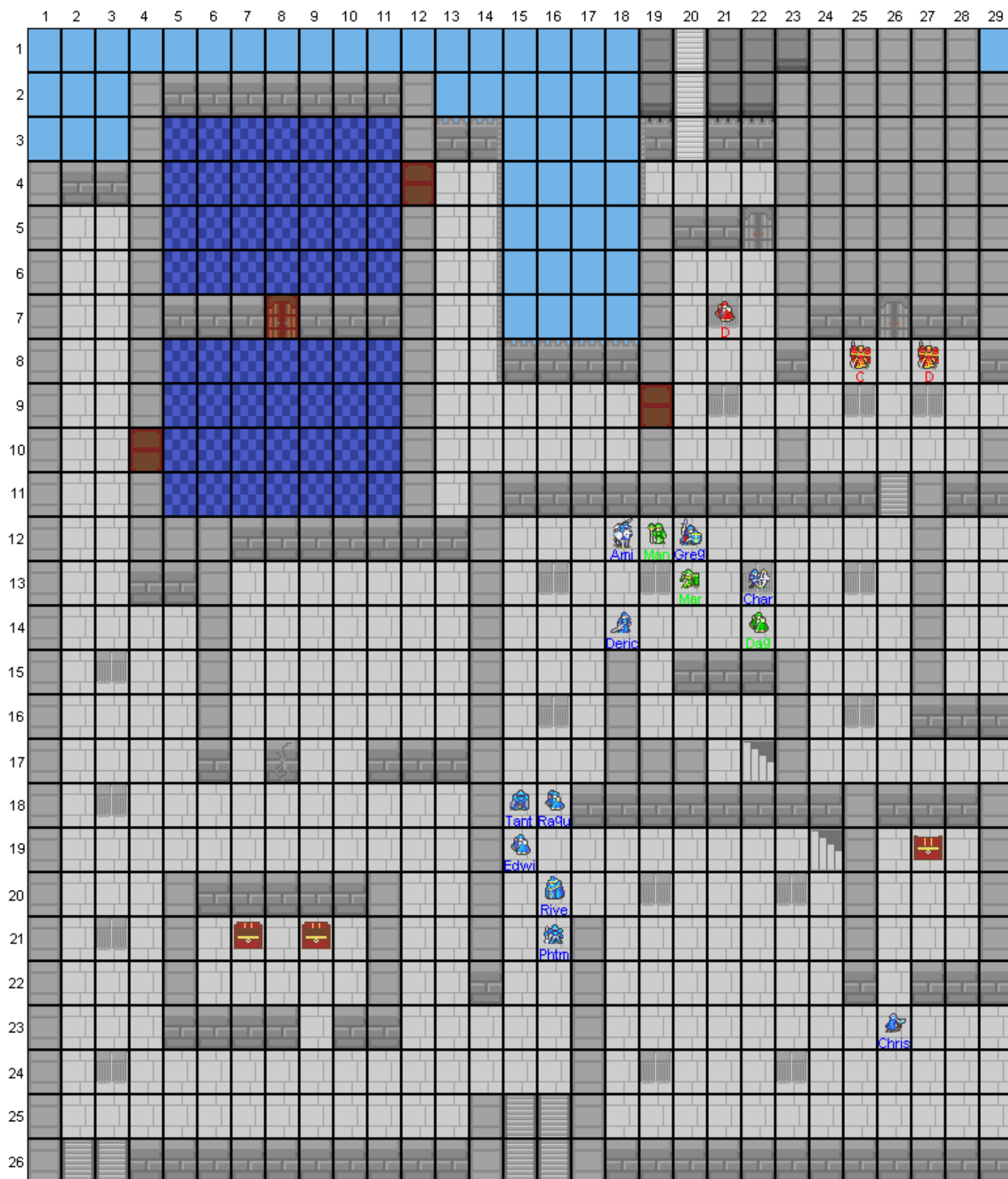
#### **Dag heals Charlotte**

10+27 = Up to 37HP restored

#### **Mannan mends Gregor**

20+22 /2 = Up to 21HP healed

# ~~Player Turn 24~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                           | Allies:                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 24/33<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 38/38<br>Christopher Shields: 42/43<br>Derick: 46/46<br>Edwin Westbringer: 40/40<br>Gregor von Hexham: 25/46<br>Raquel Torriani: 14/47<br>Riven: 36/37<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 40/40 | Elite Guard C: 46/46<br>Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37 | Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 18/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 20/35 |



"I think this is going to require a team effort, Captain. We'll all get a shot at her."

**Gregor moves to (24,14)**

**Riven: Move to 17,15. Phantom to 17,17.**

**Charlotte moves to 25, 12, and lets loose her LONGBO on Great Guardian General C.**

**Charlotte vs General C**

Hit:  $133+10+7-33 = 117$ , autohit! Crit roll: 15!  
Damage:  $27+1-25 = 3 \times 3 = 9\text{dmg}$

Charlotte attacks again!  
Hit:  $133+10+7-33 = 117$ , autohit! Crit roll: 1! //say wot  
Damage:  $27+1-25 = 3 \times 3 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Tantallos: Move to 15, 12.**

**Chris finally moves to and loots that damn treasure chest.**

Crreaaak~

**Chris gets Apollo's Ring!**

**Edwin moves 1 East and uses the heal staff on Raquel. Then moves north as far as he can.**

Edwin stepped a bit east and healed Raquel.

**Edwin heals Raquel**

$10+29 = \text{Up to 39HP restored}$

**Ami: Move to 24,13 and heal Greg**

Moar healing.

**Ami heals Gregor**

$10+29 = \text{Up to 39HP restored}$

**Derick: 23 14**

**Raquel: Move to (18,14)**

~~Enemy Phase~~

The enemies have moved - a cloud of green mist fell near Dag while one of the heavily armored thugs went down to Charlotte and swung his halberd at her, but she jumped safely away.

These are very skillful enemies at all.

**Wind Sage D casts Poison on Dag**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{25 - 22\} \times 5] + 24) - (6 \times 2) = 30 + 15 + 24 - 12 = 57$

Hit roll: 75, miss!

**Guard C vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $104 - 10 - 5 - 7 - 53 = 29$

Hit roll: 30, miss! // I:

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Dag dispatched the halberd-wielding assailant while Marpa and Mannan moved closer; the latter patched up the friendly wind mage.

**Dag vs Guard C**

Hit:  $132 + 5 - 33 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $31 - 8 = 23\text{dmg}$

Dag attacks again!

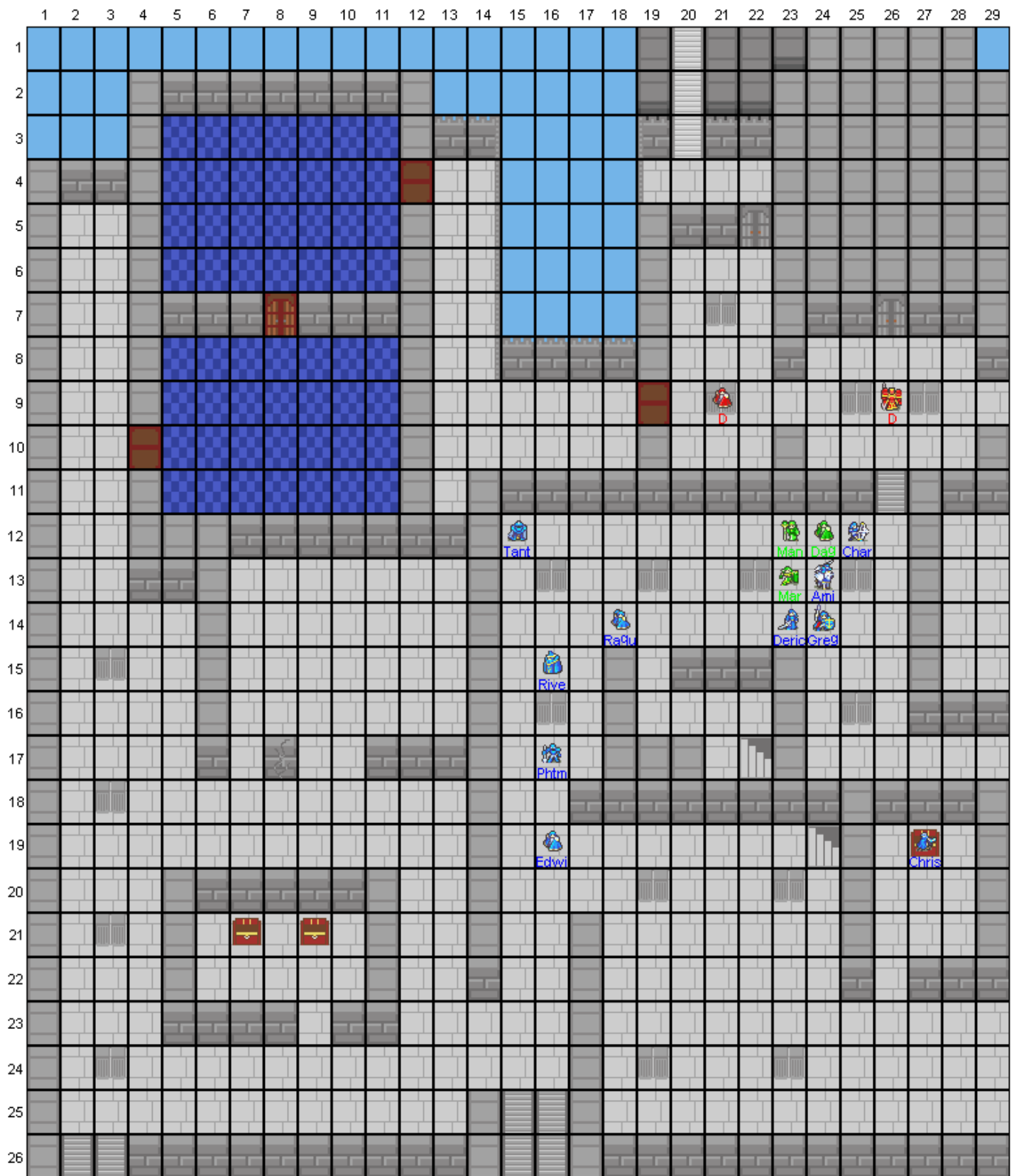
Hit:  $132 + 5 - 33 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $31 - 8 = 23\text{dmg}$

**Mannan mends Dag**

$20 + 22 =$  Up to 42HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 25~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                   | Allies:                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 24/34<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 38/39<br>Christopher Shields: 42/44<br>Derick: 46/47<br>Edwin Westbringer: 40/41<br>Gregor von Hexham: 46/47<br>Raquel Torriani: 47/47<br>Riven: 36/38<br>Tantalos Forsaken: 40/41 | Elite Guard D: 46/46<br>Wind Sage D: 37/37 | Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 18/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 20/35 |

**Riven: Move to 21,14. Phantom follows as best it's able.**

**Chris to 24,23.**

**Derick: 26, 14**

**Raquel: Move to (22,12); Heal Mannan with staff**



"I don't think we should necessarily wait for the others to catch up. PRIXIMA could have reinforcements arriving as we speak. Perhaps you could block the stairs while I snipe the sage?"



"Gotcha. They won't get past me!"

**Gregor moves to (26,11).**



"Hey you over there! I wouldn't blame you if you threw down your weapons and ran away! Whatever PRIXIMA is paying you, I doubt its worth dying for."

**Tantallos: Move to 19, 13.**

**Charlotte moves to 25,9, and snipes the Sage.**

**Edwin: Move to 17, 14.**

Sniping and healing, aka the usual... except that longbow sniping didn't really work.

**Raquel heals Mannan**

10+35 = Up to 45HP healed

**Charlotte vs Sage D**

Hit:  $133+10-15-43 = 85$

Hit roll: 96, miss!

**Ami: Do nothing**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The guard stepped forward and blocked Gregor from entering the antechamber, while the sage moved closer and blasted Charlotte with magical winds a bit.

"Yer aren't going anywhere, girlie."

### Sage D vs Charlotte

Hit:  $133-10-7-15-43 = 58$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $36-9 = 27\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Hmph, you should've listened to this spearman here. Your loss." Dag went behind Gregor and then blasted the armored guard with magics.

### Dag vs Guard D

Hit:  $132+5-33 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $31-8 = 23\text{dmg}$

Dag attacks again!

Hit:  $132+5-33 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $31-8 = 23\text{dmg}$

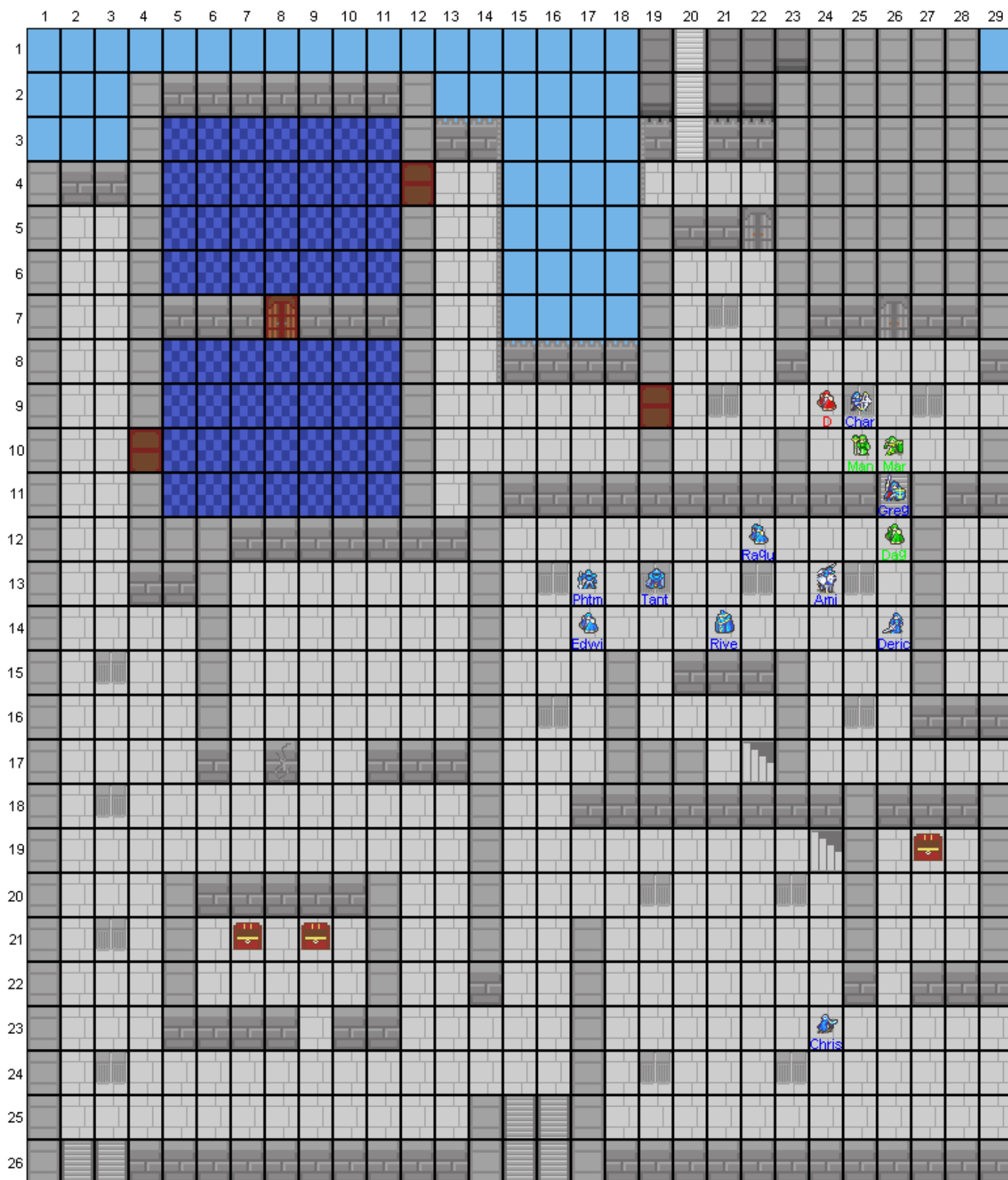
Marpa and Mannan quickly moved past Gregor, the priest stopping by Charlotte to heal her.

### Mannan mends Charlotte

$20+22 =$  Up to 42HP restored



# ~~Player Turn 26~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:           | Allies:                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 24/34<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 39/39<br>Christopher Shields: 42/44<br>Derick: 46/47<br>Edwin Westbringer: 40/41<br>Gregor von Hexham: 46/47<br>Raquel Torriani: 47/47<br>Riven: 36/38<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 40/41 | Wind Sage D: 37/37 | Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |

**Raquel: Move to (24,12); Heal Ami with called magic**

**Chris moseys along to 19,22.**



"Feels like I'm going nowhere fast. Wonder how the others are holding up..."

**Riven: Move to 26, 13. Phantom follows at its own pace.**

**Raquel heals Ami**

10+34 = Up to 44HP restored

**Tantallos: Move to 24, 12.**

**Charlotte moves 2E and KILLER LONGBOWS the Sage. Support power!**

The Sage went down with the gurgle after the long arrow struck his throat.

**Charlotte vs Sage D**

Hit:  $133+10+10+7-43 = 117$ , autohit! Crit roll: 14!

Damage:  $28+1-12 = 17 \times 3 = 51$  dmg



"Okay...that appears to be all of them."

**Gregor: Move to (25,9).**

**Ami: When Edwin moves, go to 17,14**

**Edwin: Move to 23, 14.**

**Derick: 26,9**

**~~Ally Phase~~**

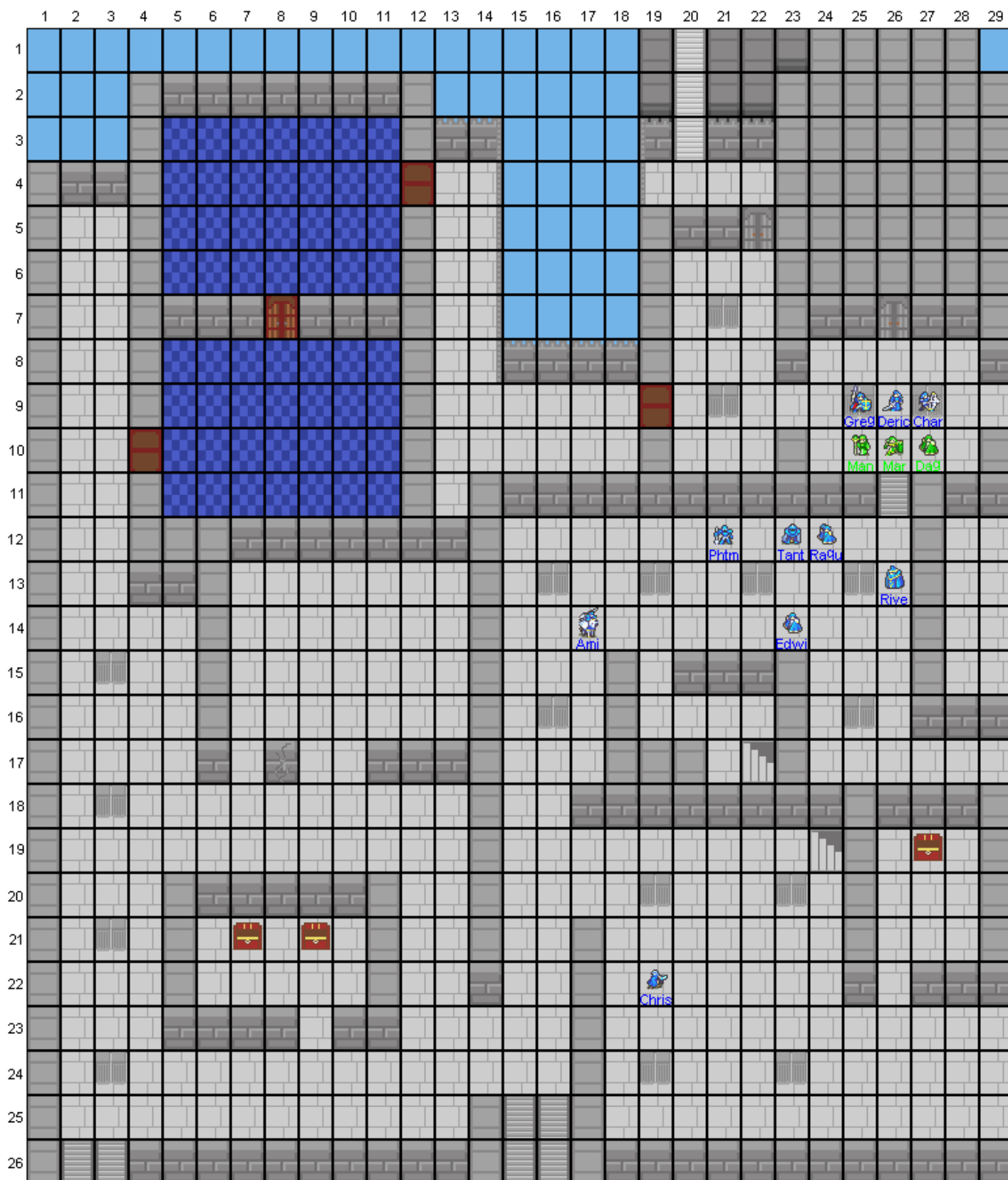


"So... do we barge in? Bring the door down? Open it?"



"Don't look at me... I don't have the keys to this floor."

# ~~Player Turn 27~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:     | Allies:                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 34/34<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 39/39<br>Christopher Shields: 42/44<br>Derick: 46/47<br>Edwin Westbringer: 41/41<br>Gregor von Hexham: 47/47<br>Raquel Torriani: 44/47<br>Riven: 36/38<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 40/41 | *tumbleweed* | Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |

**Chris to 16,18.**



"Chris could probably pick the lock, but I don't know where he ran off to. It would probably be faster to have the magic users blast it down."



"I'm on my way, guys, this is just a really long corridor! I'll be there when I can!"



"Well, we'll need to wait for him anyway, and it might cause less of a ruckus."

Gregor shrugged.



"Guess we'll wait, then."

**Ami: Move to 16,17 and pick up Chris**



"Pegasus for a Christopher Shields?"

**Ami: Move to 17,14**



"Thanks, love. I knew I could count on you. And you too of course, Tenebra."

Chris climbed aboard the dark pegasus and put his hands on Ami's waist for support, and took the opportunity to kiss her cheek from behind.



"Just a little more, Ami, and we can finally put all this behind us. I can hardly wait."

Ami leaned into Chris a little.



"Yes, neither can I."



"What the-? Oh, Mia too."

Chris smiled and rested his chin on top of Ami's head, enjoying the simple closeness.



"I've been meaning to ask, but never really had a chance. After this business is done and we are married, what would you like to do? Go traveling, stay with the Forsakens, maybe visit with our friends...?"



"Oh, certainly traveling. There a few places I always wanted to visit and I would imagine that you would get stir crazy if we 'settle down' too soon after this. A spy is always on the move, right? Hard to break a habit like that."



"That's true! And I've always wanted to see the world too. There will be plenty of time to sit around and relax later on."



"I can't express how much I'm looking forward to exploring with you."



"What *will* we do once the adventure's over? I'm not sure mercenary work is a good idea anymore... and Castle Menelea turned us down."



"Hmm. Well, I remember you saying something about settling down for a little while, joining some village's militia until you got bored and slaught--er, took up some hobbies. Is that still something you'd want to do?"



"I don't really care. What would *you* like to do? We've both served our higher purpose in life after this - if you call can it that - so I guess there's no need to fight any more. Hopefully the next generation won't even have to hear the word 'Kesselring.'"



"...I'm afraid I hadn't thought of it as much as I should have. Taking Prixima down has been the main goal for so long that I was afraid to make too many long term plans in case...well, you know."



"I'd like to try and find my brother Charles. As far as I know, he's my last living relative. After that it'd be nice to see our friends every once in a while. Maybe we can wander around until we find a nice place to set up roots."



"Well, I don't know about you lot, but I definitely know what I'm doing after this mess." Edwin said as he jogged into position. "I'm going to travel a bit more to expand my knowledge, maybe visit some great libraries and powerful masters of the arcane arts for some inspiration, and after all that I'll work towards setting up a college or academy for the magical arts."

After stroking his beard for a little bit in thought, Edwin turns to Raquel.



"Say... Would you like to help? You are very skilled in magic and are definitely intelligent enough for that sort of thing. You don't have to help right away of course, since I would have to work at raising the money to start the academy off in the first place, but I'd value your participation."

**Edwin: Move to 26, 12.**

Raquel looked surprised at the offer.



"Oh, ah...that is..."



"It is a flattering offer, but I would have to take the time to consider it. I already help manage a small academic library in Ys, and I simply couldn't just leave them." She paused, thinking for a moment. "Ah, you could come to Ys. Our own academy is quite small compared to those of the capital, but I am certain the provost would be pleased to accept someone of your stature, and you could gather the money to start your own academy there as well."

~~Ally Phase~~



"Alright - let's open this door."

Mannan and Dag blasted at the door with magics. The hinges creaked, exploded and the door was cast ajar.

Mannan vs Metal Door

Autohit!  
Damage:  $32+2-5 = 29\text{dmg}$

Dag vs Metal Door

Autohit!  
 $31-5 = 26\text{dmg}$

Inside, just four men guarded a certain someone sitting behind the desk - he stood up and looked at the intruders...



"Intruders."



"Aaron! What are you doing! Lay down your weapon, please-"

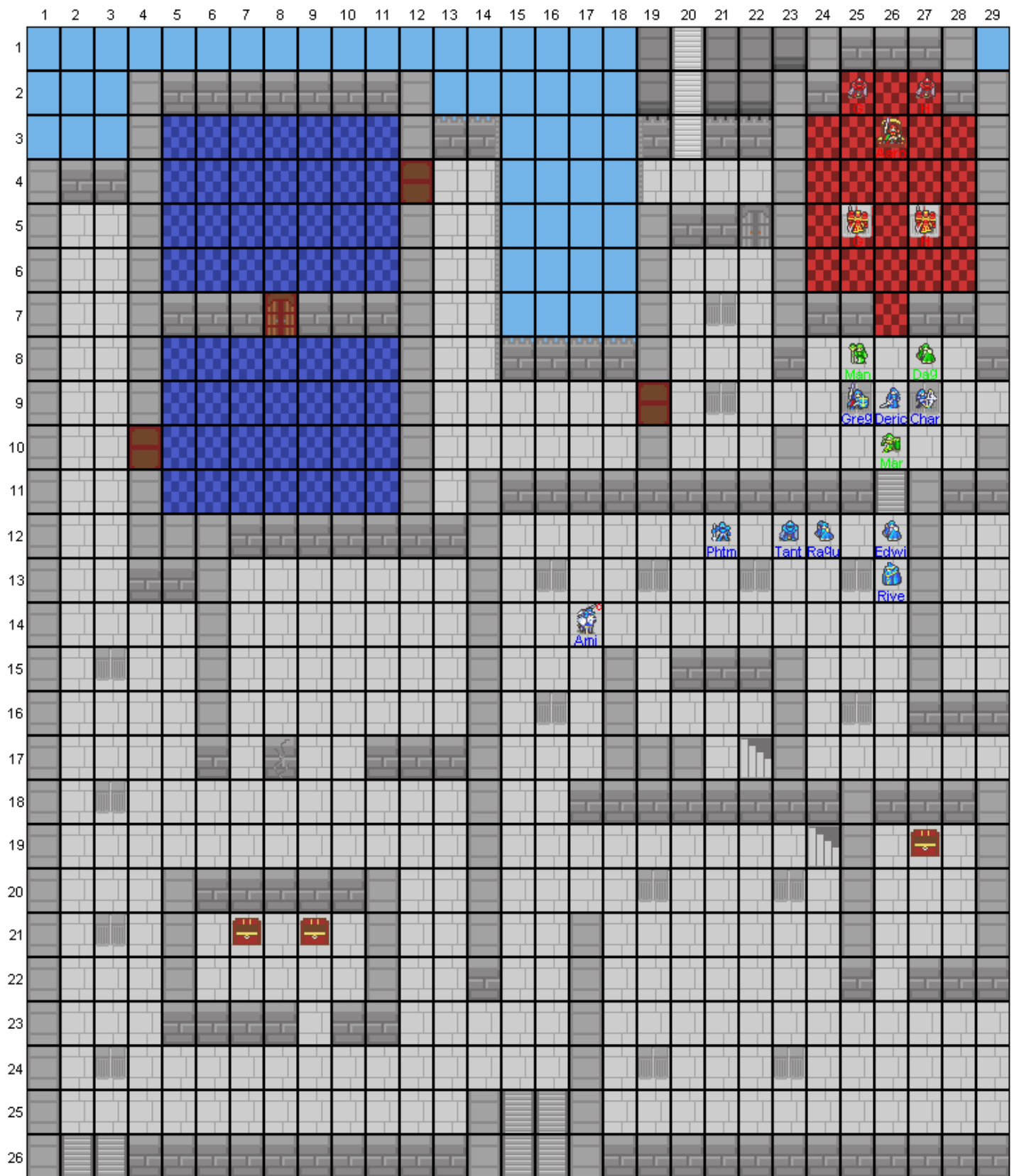


"Prixima Kesselring awaits you in her sanctum." He took a defensive stance, his shiny lance pointing at the entrance.



"Aaron!"

# ~~Player Turn 28~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                | Allies:                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Ami Storm: 34/34 <b>Carrying: Christopher Shields</b></p> <p>Charlotte von Hexham: 39/39</p> <p>Christopher Shields: 42/44 <b>Carried by: Ami Storm</b></p> <p>Derick: 46/47</p> <p>Edwin Westbringer: 41/41</p> <p>Gregor von Hexham: 47/47</p> <p>Raquel Torriani: 44/47</p> <p>Riven: 36/38</p> <p>Tantallos Forsaken: 40/41</p> | <p>Elite Guard G: 46/46</p> <p>Elite Guard H: 46/46</p> <p>Druid G: 35/35</p> <p>Druid H: 35/35</p> <p>Aaron: 55/55</p> | <p>Captain Marpa: 44/44</p> <p>Dag: 35/35</p> <p>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35</p> |



**Gregor moves to (26,6) and FLINGS a javelin at General H.**



"Captain! Snap out of it, we don't want to hurt you!"



"..." Aaron simply stared at Gregor.

#### **Gregor vs Elite Guard G**

Hit:  $129-15-33 = 81$   
Hit roll: 49, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $35-25 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$

Gregor attacks again!  
Hit:  $129-15-33 = 81$   
Hit roll: 76, hit!  
Damage:  $35-25 = 10\text{dmg}$

**Raquel: Move to (26,8), Call Sleep against Druid G**

Someone went to the dreamland.

#### **Raquel casts Sleep on Druid G**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{34-19\} \times 5] + 23) - (7 \times 2) = 30 + 75 + 23 - 14 = 114$ , autohit!  
Druid G is asleep!

**Derick: Switch to killing edge move to 27 6 and attack thingy**

Masterful swording left the Guard H in constant defensive, unable to counterattack Derick's furious slashes.

#### **Derick vs Guard H**

Hit:  $130+5-15-15-33 = 72$   
Hit roll: 32, hit!  
Damage:  $39+2-1-25 = 15\text{dmg}$

Cancel roll: 6!  
Guard H cannot counter!

Derick attacks again!  
Hit:  $130+5-15-15-33 = 72$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $39+2-1-25 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Ami: Move to 25,14 and drop Chris north of me**

**Tantallos: 24, 10. Cast sleep on Druid H.**



"Oh, no... is it some kind of spell, or...?"

**Riven: Move to 24,9. Phantom just chills in the hallway.**



"Thanks, Ami. Now let's see what the guys have gotten up to without me around."

**Tantallos casts Sleep on Druid H**

Staff hit:  $(30 + [\{27 - 19\} \times 5] + 27) - (10 \times 2) = 30 + 40 + 27 - 20 = 77$

Hit roll: 1, hit!

Druid H is asleep!

**Edwin: Move to 27, 10. Call Magic: Sharpness on Charlotte! \*zing!\***

**Charlotte moves to 26,6 and finishes off Guard G.**

Twang!

**Charlotte vs Guard G**

Hit:  $133 + 10 + 5 + 7 - 15 - 33 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $28 + 1 - 25 = 4\text{dmg}$

Charlotte attacks again!

Hit:  $133 + 30 + 10 + 5 + 7 - 15 - 33 = 137$ , autohit!

Damage:  $28 + 1 - 25 = 4\text{dmg}$

Second later, a loud, feminine laughter could be heard.

"Do you really think I will let you win that easily!?" Suddenly, the druids awoke from their magical slumber!

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

No longer bound by the spells, the druids began to sling their dark spells. Very, very ineffectively.

**Druid H vs Derick**

Hit:  $119 - 5 - 5 - 80 = 29$

Hit roll: 65, miss!

**Druid G vs Gregor**

Hit:  $109 - 11 - 57 = 41$

Hit roll: 67, miss!

Then the Guard managed to stab Derick, but that didn't stop the swordmaster from cutting the helmeted head off.

**Guard H vs Derick**

Hit:  $104 + 15 - 5 - 5 - 80 = 29$

Hit roll: 8, hit!

Damage:  $37 + 1 - 1 - 18 = 19\text{dmg}$

Derick counters!

Hit:  $130 + 10 + 5 - 15 - 15 - 33 = 82$

Hit roll: 66, hit! Crit roll: 34!

Damage:  $39 + 1 + 2 - 1 - 25 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Mannan and Dag rushed forward against one of the Druids, heavily wounding him.

### Mannan vs Druid H

Hit:  $138+15+5-15-36 = 107$ , autohit!

Dmg:  $32+2+1-19 = 16$ dmg

### Dag vs Druid H

Hit:  $132+5-15-15-36 = 71$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $31+2-1-19 = 13$ dmg

Marpa rushed into the study as well, her sword-wielding hand a bit shaking.



"Aaron, please..."



"..."



"Intruders."



"Prixima Kesselring awaits you in her sanctum."

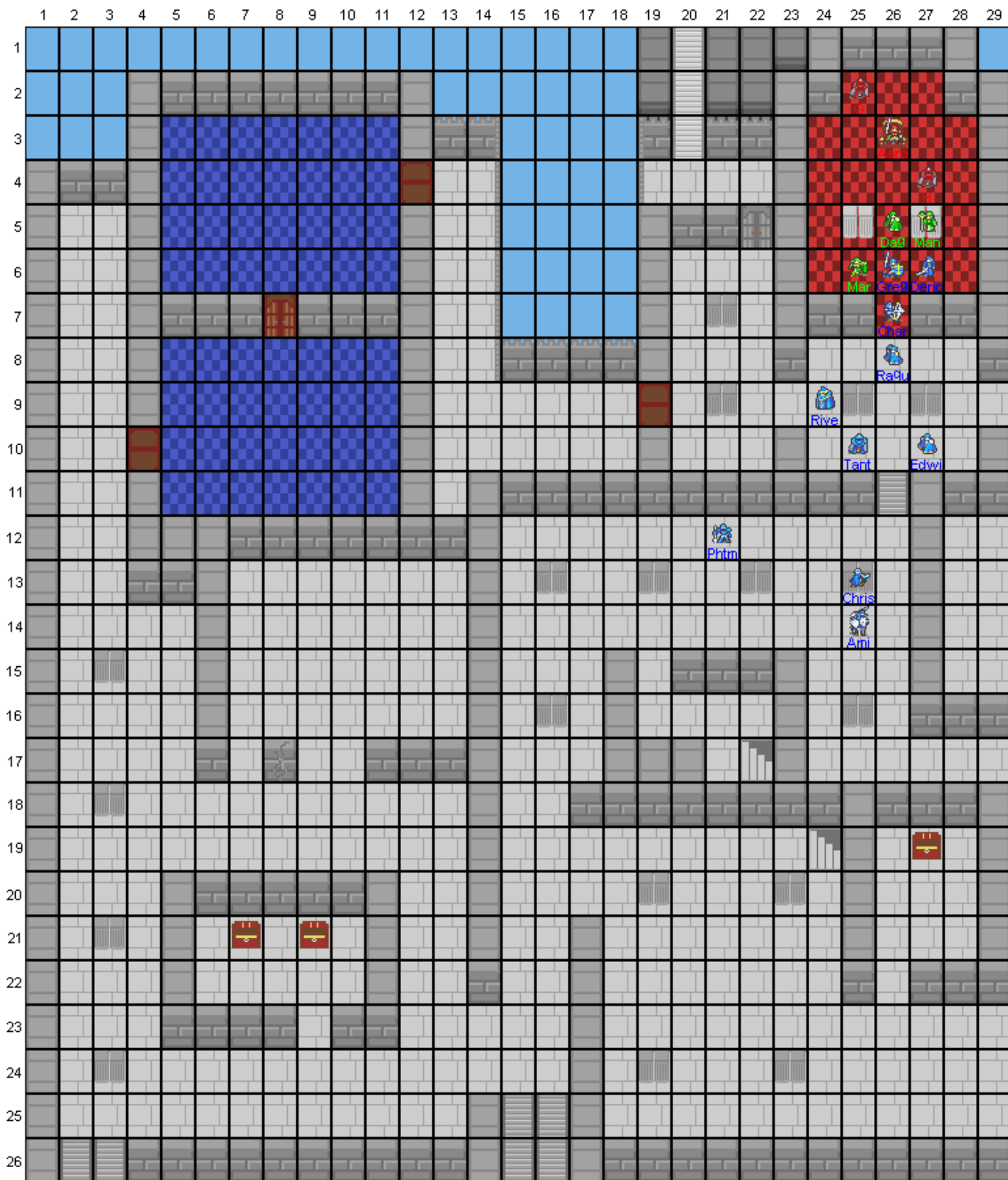
Dag gritted his teeth and turned a bit to Gregor.



"Gregor, I'm pretty sure I feel the same kind of magic emanating from this Aaron guy that I felt from the spy and that monstrous axeman. This man is nothing more but walking corpse - talking to him has no point."

Marpa, hearing this, turned her head away.

## ~~Player Turn 29~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Enemies:                                        | Allies:                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 34/34<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 39/39 <b>Sharpness (4/5)</b><br>Christopher Shields: 42/44<br>Derick: 27/47<br>Edwin Westbringer: <b>41</b> /41<br>Gregor von Hexham: 47/47<br>Raquel Torriani: 41/47<br>Riven: 36/38<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 37/41 | Druid G: 35/35<br>Druid H: 6/35<br>Aaron: 55/55 | Captain Marpa: 44/44<br>Dag: 35/35<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 35/35 |

## Derick: 25, 3 Magemash the Druid

Druid G suddenly became four druids - top druid, head druid, left hand druid and bottom druid.

### Derick vs Druid G

Hit:  $130 - 36 = 94$

Hit roll: 52, hit! Crit roll: 13!

Damage:  $57 + 2 - 12 = 47 \times 3 = 141 \text{dmg}$

**Charlotte moves to 25,5 and strikes Aaron with the Killer Longbow (against her better judgement).**

**Chris to 25,9.**



"...Did I miss something?"

TWANG-\*snap\*

Tip of Charlotte's bow suddenly started to dangle from the loose string. Overuse it seems.

### Charlotte vs Aaron

Hit:  $143 + 30 + 5 + 7 + 10 + 10 - 15 - 72 = 118$ , autohit! Crit roll: 13!

Damage:  $32 + 1 - 25 = 8 \times 3 = 24 \text{dmg}$

**Killer Bow is broken!**

**Edwin: Move to 27, 8. Call Magic: Sharpness on Raquel!**

**Riven: Move to 25,8; be Charisma.**

This was the first of the three revenants that they had faced since entering the castle that Raquel had seen face to face, and now, she could see the true face of what the others had already faced twice before. Raquel flinched slightly at the malevolent aura surrounding the...no, as Dag said, it was not a human anymore.



"The magic around him is...just terrible, like things I've only read about. If PRIXIMA did unto him as these spells seem...it's not killing him. He's...he's already been killed. I do not pretend to have known him at all, but...this does not appear to be anything beyond a revenant, following only what it was ordered to do. And, if his soul was somehow trapped in these spells...I..."



...I am truly sorry, Captain Marpa, but this needs to be done." The words hung in the air as she moved forward, plainly upset by the sight, but still determined. Raising

her tome as Edwin's enchantment glittered around it, she called the storm down.

**Raquel: Move to (25,4); Cast Killer Thunder against Aaron**

**Ami: Move to 27,8**

\*zing!\* \*TZORCH\*

**Raquel vs Aaron**

Hit:  $119+10+5+10+15-10-72 = 77$   
Hit roll: 33, hit! Crit roll: 19! //hisssssssssssssss  
Damage:  $47-21 = 26 \times 3 = 78\text{dmg}$

**Tantallos: Move to 27,6 and use Luna on the last Druid.**

\*fwum\*

Druid H stopped existing.

**Tantallos vs Druid H**

Hit:  $133+5+10-36 = 112$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32-0 = 32\text{dmg}$

Gregor couldn't do much but grieve at Captain Aaron's fate, and **did nothing**.

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Derick got stabs.

**Aaron vs Derick**

Hit:  $157+15+5-5-5-10-80 = 77$   
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage:  $39+1-1-18 = 21$   
  
Derick counters!  
Hit:  $130+10+10+5-5-15-10-72 = 53$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $39-1-25 = 13\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Mannan then tried to blast the revenant with holy magic, but missed. Fortunately, Dag was nearby and used his fire magic at Aaron.

**Mannan vs Aaron**

Hit:  $138+5-10-5-72 = 56$   
Hit roll: 64, miss!

**Dag vs Aaron**

Hit:  $(90+38+4)+10+5-10-5-72 = 60$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Aaron has been destroyed!

Aaron, or rather his husk, burst into white flames. His body and armor began to disintegrate and the fires went out on their own as a pile of ash and glittery powder spilled onto the ground. Amongst these, there was also the lance, not even singed, and

a small pendant with intricately carved key...

Marpa moved to the pile of ashes and knelt in front of it, her face down, eyes fixed on the grey remains of her husband.

"Give me a moment..." She mumbled out, as Dag took few steps away - Mannan left the study altogether.

## ~~Chapter 11 Completed!~~

Chris walked into the room and saw Gregor looking pale and Marpa on the floor.



"...Damn..."

He hadn't really spoken much to Marpa or her husband, but being that he was one of the people of Kesselring he knew they were married and had kids. That was going to be rough for their daughters to hear. He knelt by Marpa and put a hand on her shoulder.



"For what it's worth, I'm sorry for your loss."

Gregor approached the ashes and saluted them.



"Good-bye, Captain. Prixima will pay for doing this to you."

Raquel looked slightly ill as the remains of Aaron crumbled to pieces. As Captain Marpa moved forward to kneel before the remains, she turned silently and stepped out of the study.

Chris stood and left the room, putting his hood back up.



*...We were lucky to get out when we did. Instead of Ernest and Aaron... that could've been me and Gregor. Hell, it would've been Olison and Alexander too. I wonder how they're doing.*

After a few moments, Gregor knelt beside Marpa.



"With your permission, I would like to take his lance. He deserves some manner of revenge for this terrible fate, and the best way I know how is to use it to bring that witch down for good."

Tantallos stepped back and opened a book before starting to mumble some words, obviously he was praying.

Marpa stood up, taking the lance and the key on the pendant.



"Take it. Back... in better times, Aaron considered passing it to some younger spearman. I think he would choose you as the lance's successor... Make sure Prixima feels the sharp end of it." She then passed the lance to Gregor.

### **Gregor gets Avalon!**

Marpa then handed the key to Gregor as well.



"I have never seen a key like this. It looks simple, but those runes... there must be only one door it fits in in this entire castle."

Derick closed his eyes for a moment in respect. He hadn't really gotten know the man very well, but he still gotten a little acquainted when he and the others from the Wolves spent a week training here. It all felt so long ago.

He then sheathed his swords and walked out following after Raquel. He stayed silent until they had walked a certain distance away from the study and looked at the ashes left by the giant axe fighter the others had fought.



...what the hell were those things?



"I'm...not entirely sure. If we hadn't fought one ourselves, I would have thought them simply revenants, the bodies of humans or creatures reanimated by elder magics. They're occasionally seen in places where great magics have been worked or spilled, or else created by less scrupulous mages who care not for the dangers of that side of the arts. I've never heard of a revenant with that kind of endurance, though."



There was something odd about how they fought, how they kept attacking even after their bodies started to come apart, and when it fell to ashes under that fire, something else...ah." She stopped in the hallway, realizing something. She glanced back at the study where the others were, then forward to the ashes of the axe fighter. "Here."

She knelt beside the remains of the monster, and hesitated a moment, before pulling out a small pair of gloves from under her robe. Donning them, she reached forward and picking some of the sparkling powder out, carefully trying to avoid the more organic remains with visible distaste.



"I've never seen anything like this before, but there's still quite a bit of magical power inside of it. I can't imagine how much power this would have contained if it were still whole and unwarded. I think this is what made those creatures so powerful; it was basically a second set of chains binding them together from the inside." She shuddered, plainly disturbed, but still trying to figure out as much as she could about the remnants of the spells that had bound the creature before they faded away.

Chris turned and looked at the party.



"Let's discuss what they were later, shall we?"



"We've come this far. There's no time to hesitate or turn back. For ourselves, and for everyone who suffered from her machinations, we have to press on and put an end to Prixima's plans."

The assassin walked to the door leading to her inner sanctum.



"This is all that stands between us and a better world. Let's go."

Edwin bowed his head to Marpa and silently stepped out to join Raquel and Derrick to look at the ashes.




"I'm inclined to agree with you. This is treading new ground, as far as I'm concerned, and I worry what else is in store for us if this is any indication..."

Putting a hand on Raquel's shoulder in an effort to comfort her, Edwin shook his head in

dismay.



 "I'm wondering if those stones that she's after have any part in this... abomination. And what is the purpose of making these things? Does she plan to replace certain people with them? Make an army of them? I can only speculate as to how many she may already have... Needless to say, we will stop this madness before it spreads further! Come, it is time to end this and deliver some measure of justice to all Pridoria has harmed. She will pay for all she has done, one way or another."

Suddenly the castle shook as bright, white light shone from somewhere above the windows.

The key fit perfectly and the door opened with a quiet click. It was leading to a small balcony, and from the balcony, a thin set of stairs led to a lone-standing tower, from which the light was emanating before dissipating.



"Hopefully, everything will be solved up there."


The group, determined to finish Prixima's vile reign once and for all, began to march out and climb the stairs...

\*kzzzzzttt\*

## Chapter 11x: Splits and Reunions

The white light dissipated and Gregor, Mannan, and all others were gone. The runes on the floor vanished and Magister Tiron took a deep breath, happy to finish his incantations.

Cold wind blew across the ruined manor; Matilda rubbed her hands together for a bit.



"So... what now? Do we wait until they come back from the castle?" She asked, looking at the foreboding forest far to the north-west; a black spire of highest tower of Kesselring was barely visible in this cloudy morning background.

Olison's gaze quietly passed over the horizon. He knew the limitations prevented him from going, but he felt a tinge of irritation in passing up the chance.



"It's out of our hands now..." He paused, thinking over Matilda's question for a moment before turning to the Magister. "I don't suppose the escape plan involved another casting of that spell, did it?"



"If I had time to manufacture third crystal, then I could keep it on me and do the ritual again. Unfortunately I was contacted on short notice... didn't had enough time."

Danya let out a hum.



"I have other concerns. What if a Kesselring patrol winds up here? I don't mind killing some armed thugs, but I would prefer not being surprised by enemies. I think we should scout around or at least have few of us checking the perimeter every few minutes."



"Who'd yah suggest ta scout? Me an' Ormm can do it if'in need be, but we ain' much on bein' 'ard ta see 'oweever, don' take much ta notice ah golden wyvern in the sky."

The wyvern knight patted the golden wyvern's side at the mention of him, with Ormm finally turning its attention away from where the group used to be before they vanished.

Olison sighed a little in disappointment, but nevertheless stood at attention as Danya voiced her concern.



"On that, I agree." The cavalier nodded, briefly looking outside to his grazing warhorse. "I would suggest either myself or Seyena to scout in that case. Having been under employ here, I believe I still know the area well enough to stay out of trouble."



"Pegasi would do better than the wyvern in this... setting. Even flying just above trees would make us hard to spot. I can watch and scout around, and the blonde

here good help as well." Danya nodded toward Seyena.



"..." Valor said nothing. He had come all this way to kill PRIXIMA, not sit in some ruins while people he knew did it for him.

Alexander sat there, thinking to himself while his friends battled in the castle.



"...You know... it's probably better that I hadn't had to fight through that castle. How many people there do I know...?"



"Dear, if they're at least half decent as you are, I don't think they would stay with PRIXIMA for long."

Alexander smiles at Anja.



"Thanks. ...I just wonder how many never got the choice to get out."

Valor thumped a fist against a nearby wall.



"I still wish *I* could have gone." Then he was silent for a few more moments before releasing an emphatic sigh. "Magic sucks."



"I will go then and take watch over the south. The blonde can take the north... when she wakes up." With audible grumble, Danya mounted her pegasus and took off to the skies.



"She seems a bit stuck-up and arrogant." Matilda spoke quietly at Olson's side.



"A... little." Olson winced. "With all the things that have happened, I should be more on edge myself."

Olson's focus quietly trailed off, struggling to remember how things were when he was young. Honor in victory. Death before failure. Loyalty to beyond. Words he lived by for the longest time. They may not ring exactly the same tune today, but they still lead him ever onwards...



"Hey, Alex, dear? Did you think... about our plans for the future, hmm? I'm not particularly a person to settle down for long time..."

Somehow, Alexander took this mostly in stride.



"...you know... After this, I don't really know if I *could* settle down for a civilian life, honestly. So... ...I guess I'd travel with you, right?"

Anja clapped her hands together.



"You would, really? Ah, it would be wonderful! Imagine us, together, traveling from town to town in our big wagon, with at least ten kids! We would be mercenaries and performers! Or something of that kind."

Alexander looks... to say the least, surprised about halfway through that.



"Wh- *At least ten kids?*"



"Oh... i-is that not enough? I think I could... could handle, um, twelve or thirteen if you want..."

Seyena awoke with a start - she had been taking a catnap, leaning on the familiar grey pegasus.



"Wh- yeah, yeah, North..."



"*This sucks.*" She muttered, climbing on Ilya, and sleepily spurring the steed high into the air, in the opposite direction Danya had taken off from.

Sal checked through his supplies and weapons again, now for the third time. The wyvern knight supposes that there isn't really much they can do now, it was up to the others. The thought didn't remove the impatient jitters though, but they should die down in a few minutes.

Maybe he should practice his aim after a bit? Dragon knows he needs it.

After Seyena took into the air, she could make a run and a circle and everything in the air, the pegasus seemingly happy to take flight in less than tense moment.

And Seyena could easily notice at least a squadron of people slowly making their way between the trees, coming from the north-east. It was evident that they were sneaking upon the manor for some reason, and that they will arrive there within minutes. All of them, whilst definitely being a mix of mages and soldiers and archers, had the same crest - Kesselring.



"Of course."

Seyena turned around, heading to pass over the group, yelling out a warning.



"Sorry to rain on the parade, but we've got Prixima's goons incoming!"



"Are you sure it was her thugs? Maybe it was just few huntsmen or something...?"

Magister Tiron didn't want to wait and ran toward southern part of the manor, waving hands at Danya who was still flying on her pegasus above the trees.



"Well, seeing as how they were equipped for war, not hunting, that raises a

red flag."



"And, not to mention - oh, I don't know - the Kesselring crest emblazoned all over their armor?"

Valor stood up from his leaning position, and set his shield in place **drawing his Francisca.**



"Well, how many? How much heat are we keeping off the assault team?"



"Uh... won't argue with that..."

Danya, leading her pegasus, got to the room as well, with Tiron in tow.

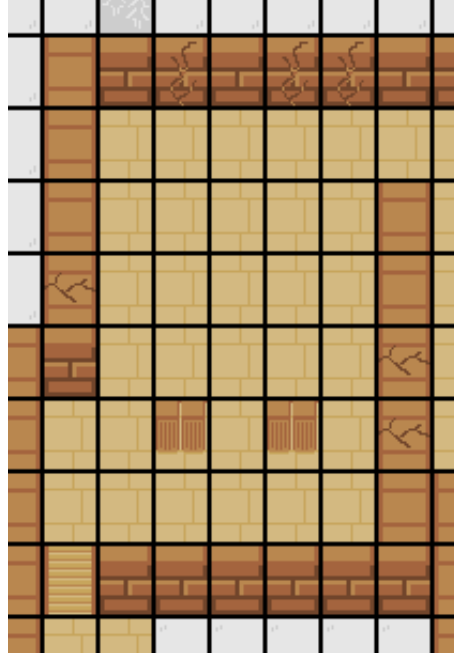


"I was just filled in by Magister. Kesselring troops, huh? We need to set up some defense perimeter of sorts. We can't hold entire ruined manor with such limited numbers."



"Maybe right here?"

**Defense Perimeter A:**

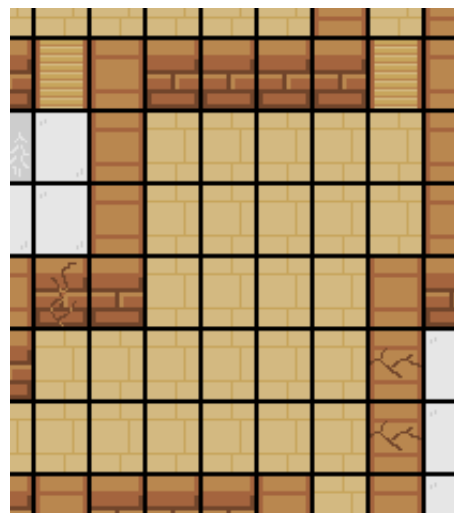


"There are only two entrances to this room and we can easily hide behind these pillars."



"Yes, but look at the walls. Half of them look like ready to topple any moment. I have one other idea: the southern entrance hall."

### Defense Perimeter B:



"I took a peek inside; walls look more sturdy and there are three entry points. No pillars fact, but if we hold the chokepoints..."





"Why not just run away?"



"Seconded." Tiron chimed in, visibly nervous.



"Hmph, and get killed in the field? Leave the others to die in the castle? I think not."



"Maybe if Ami and her... Pegasus was still here, running would be an option. Don't think we can as things are. **I think we should go with Danya's location.** Alex can hold the north position, and Olison and... Maybe Salvatore can hold the south. I'll support as needed."

Alexander begins to blush up.



"That's not exactly what I--"

Seyena approaches, then, and breaks news to the group. Alexander near instantly assumes a very serious expression, whipping his helmet on.



"Dammit. Alright, running is not an option for me, for more than one reason. I'm a defender, so I wouldn't simply retreat like this, and I am not *fast*. I vote we take **Danya's location**. It's got less risk of a mass entry, which I don't think we could easily hold."

Sal thought for a moment before nodding, having made a decision.



"Oi 'ave ta go wit' Danya 'ere. If'in those walls come down 'ey can rush us ah plenty, but there 'ey'll be split more."

The wyvern knight patted the axe at his side and mounted up. This won't be easy, but

whatever draws fire off of Gregor and the others will be worth it.



"Oh yeah. This should be no sweat at all."



*"As much as I loathe to say it, Danya's right. We should take the southernmost position."*

She then turned to Tiron, chuckling.



"Feeling shaky, are we? We'll get out of this fine. We've dealt with worse."



"Such predicaments make me extremely nervous since Fezzan attack. I had a late heart attack the night afterwards. Not a pleasant thing let me tell you."



"Hm..." Olison's focus snapped back to the present as Danya and Seyena returned and explained the situation. **"Given the ability Prixima's mercenaries they have shown in our prior engagements, I have no doubt they will employ heavy force to bear on our position and exploit any structural weakness. I agree with all of your assessments, we will need the southern hall's integrity for this battle."**

**Thus, everyone gathered in the southern hall.**

The wind picked up on strength. The holes in the roof of the room, cracks in the walls and missing doors in corridors let it swirl and blow around the manor, it's whistling and booing making something akin to music at this point.

A very high-pitched, haunting music that's it.

Suddenly, the cracking of snow, distant voices and sounds of weapons being draw alerted the mercenaries that the enemies have arrived - mostly from eastern side. Except one certain man.



"Uh, what a dread place. And a bit of hassle when it comes to sieging that

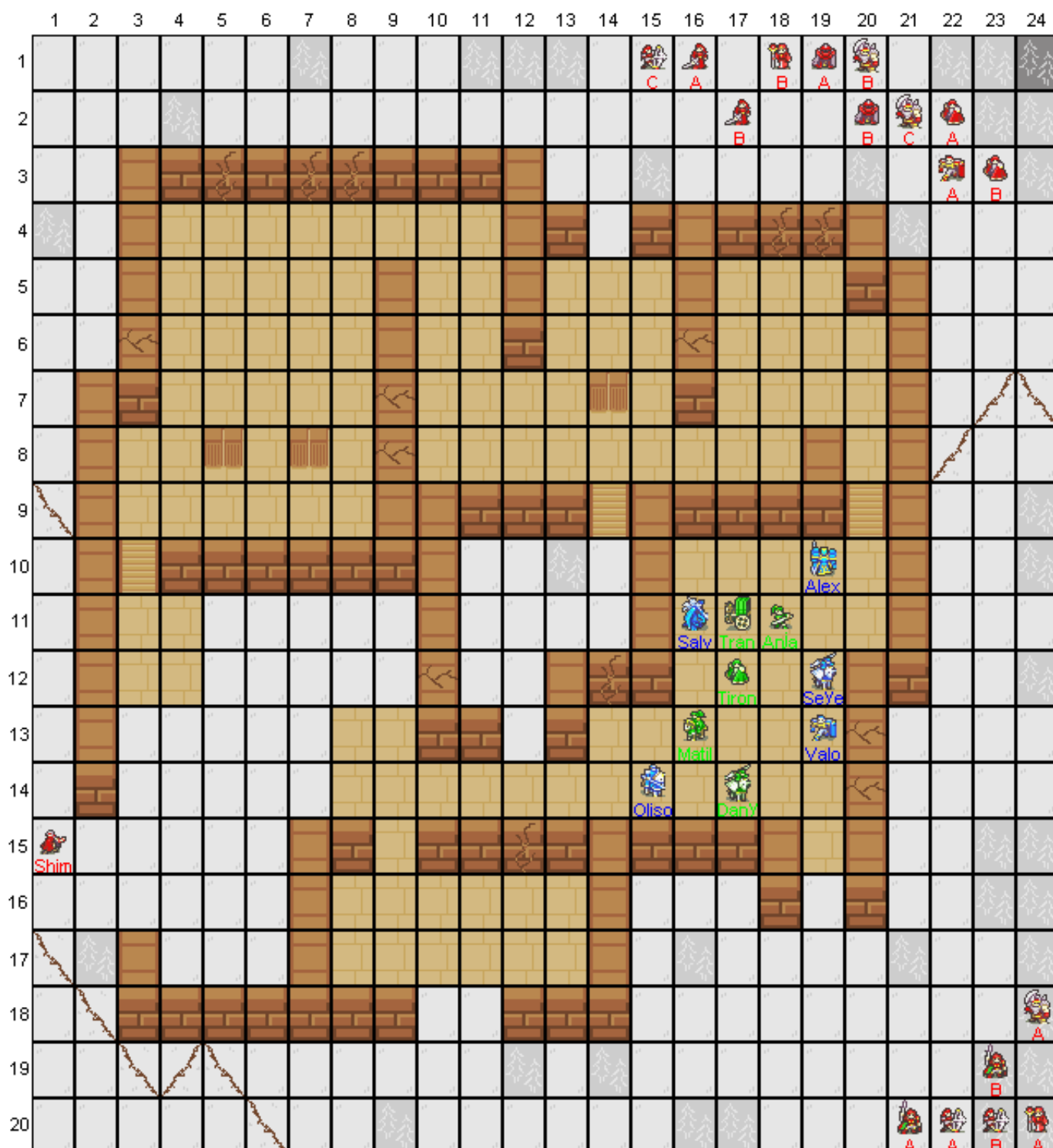
thing-" Loud grumble came from the stranger's stomach, who placed a hand on it.



"Shimnir kill that woman, Shimnir choke this child, sorry Shimnir you will be paid later... Fuck that. I will just kill one of them, rob the corpse and make a run for it. Time to look for better employer anyways." He took a small, ornate knife from his pocket. Then he began to ponder...

## ~~Player Turn 1~~

**Dark clouds are coming from the south. Together with the strong winds already present, there might be a blizzard soon...**



Weather: ☁

| <b>Merces:</b>                                                                                                        | <b>Enemies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 50/50<br>Olison Eul: 39/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 41/41<br>Seyena Ikane: 38/38<br>Valor Inara: 41/41 | Sentinel A: 40/40<br>Sentinel B: 40/40<br>Elite Axeman A: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38 | Bishop B: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Sage A: 37/37<br>Sage B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry C: 38/38<br>Shimnir: 38/38 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Matilda: 36/36<br>Magister Tiron: 35/35<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                    |

Salvatore **snagged a vulnerable from the wagon** and nudged his anxious wyvern along. **moving to (20,10)**



"Let's get roight an' ready ta rumble. Can 'ear 'em, won' be long 'fore 'ey get 'ere."

**Valor: 17,10, vulnerable get!**



"Guess there's no sense in not carrying as much medicine as humanly possible..."



"We can handle this. Anja, will you stand by me?"

**Alexander: Move to 19, 14 and if Anja does go next to me, Guard her.**



"Let's get this over with."

**Seyena heads on over to 18,10, and equips her Javelin.**

Olison warily looked out a window to the south.



"This... Will be a hard fought defense."

**Olison to 16,11 and grab a vulnerary. Then to 16,14 while switching to Short Spear.**

The cavalier made his way back to his position and strained his eyes to look out the west exit.



"Movement... But not nearly as much. A concealed approach, or a lone operative?"

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Two explosions were heard in the north - and then, a savage roar of assault.

#### **Sage A vs Cracked Wall**

Autohit!

Damage: 37-0 = 37dmg

#### **Sage B vs Cracked Wall**

Autohit!

Damage: 37-0 = 37dmg

The group in the south was much quieter about their approach.

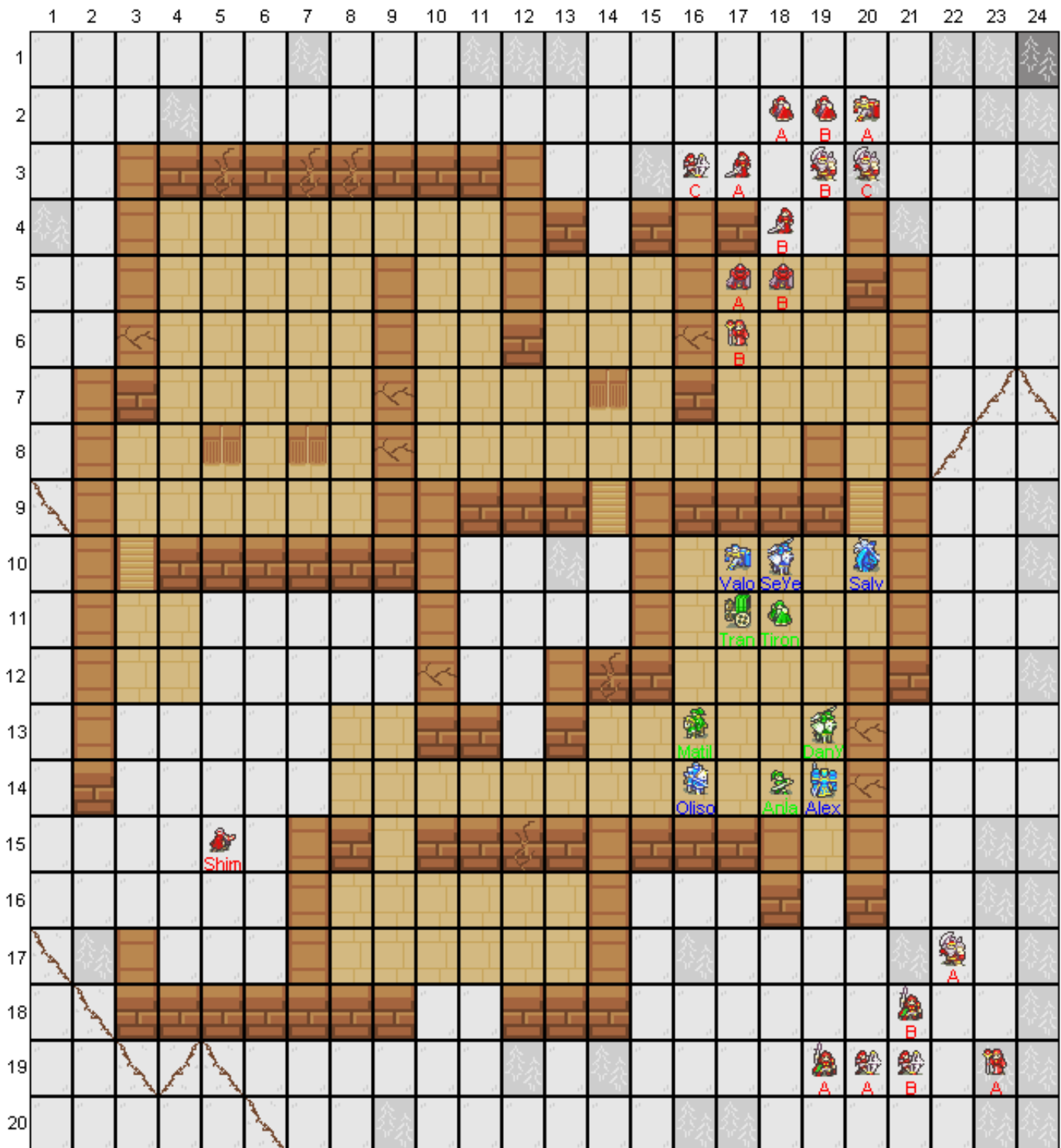
### ~~Ally Phase~~

The others in the group moved along to the entrances. Anja pulled out her flute and played a melody that bathed Alexander in green light.



"I've paid a lot for that flute. Don't waste it's magic!... Don't die, Alex."

# ~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                       |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 50/50 Regen:2<br>Olson Eul: 39/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 41/41<br>Seyena Ikane: 38/38<br>Valor Inara: 41/41 |  | Sentinel A: 40/40<br>Sentinel B: 40/40<br>Elite Axeman A: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                      |  | Bishop B: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Sage A: 37/37<br>Sage B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry C: 38/38<br>Shimnir: 38/38                        |  |
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Matilda: 36/36<br>Magister Tiron: 35/35<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                     |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |

**Valor: 19,11, Charisma for the Charisma throne.**

**Sal paces back to (18,12),** his wyvern rearing back to pounce at whoever charges down the stairs.



"Get ready!"



"Steady..."

**Alexander: Stay there and guard Anja**

Seyena looks through the cracks in the wall.



"Ha, perfect! Mages!"

**Seyena moves to 17,10, puts rescue staff in wagon, grabs pure water, then moves to 20,10 and chugs that shit**



"I fail to see how having mages in the enemy ranks is perfect."



"Because, Valor, me and Ilya- we're a mage's worst nightmare. Their magic hardly even scratches a pegasi and her rider compared to most of you."



"Hmm..." Olison pushed his mount to trot forward and take up the hallway, watching the silhouette in the distance as it drew closer.

**Olison to 14,14.**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Suddenly dark magic squished and mangled Salvatore and Alexander.

Hit roll: 2, hit!  
HP halved!

#### Druid A vs Salvatore

Hit:  $109 - 5 - 10 - 25 = 69$   
Hit roll: 56, hit!  
HP halved!

Suddenly the wall near Alexander's side exploded, sending debris all over him.

#### Axeman A vs Cracked Wall

Autohit!  
Damage:  $37 - 5 = 32$  dmg

Shimnir stepped into the corridor, only to notice the mounted rider waiting for him.



"Aah, looks like I've been expected. I have to applaud your keen eyesight."

Another grumble left his stomach.



"Unfortunately, I'm in a hurry." With his gloved, right hand, the assassin prepared his knife for a throw, and even from afar Olson could see the greenish, oily shine of poison coating on the blade.

Meanwhile, through the crack in the wall, Seyena could notice another group of thugs sneaking directly from the east!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

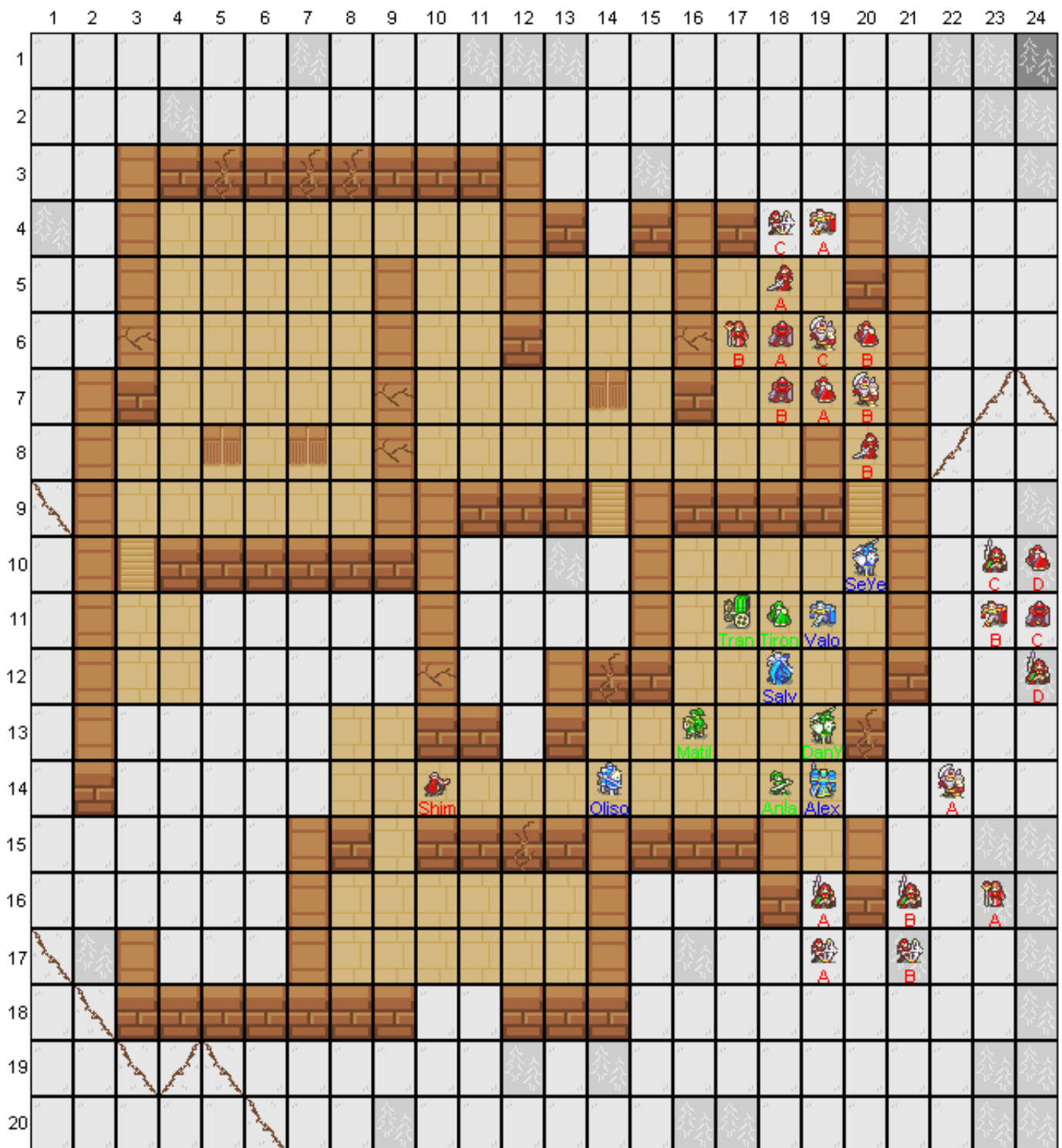
Matilda raised her staff and send a blast of healing energies at Alexander, while Anja winded up beside the wyvern knight and played him the same melody she played for Alexander.

#### Matilda rejuvenates Alexander

All HP healed!



# ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 50/50 Regen:2<br>Olison Eul: 39/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 23/41 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 38/38<br>Valor Inara: 41/41 |  | Sentinel A: 40/40<br>Sentinel B: 40/40<br>Elite Axeman A: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman B: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman C: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 37/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38 |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Allies:</b><br>Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Matilda: 36/36<br>Magister Tiron: 35/35<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                            |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Bishop B: 38/38<br>Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Sage A: 37/37<br>Sage B: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry C: 38/38<br>Shimnir: 38/38 |

Olison raised an eyebrow as he looked over the Assassin. Nowhere around him could he see backup, and the growl of his stomach didn't escape the rider's ears.



"...Is Prixima really paying you enough to send you out this way alone?"



"Not really. That's why my current plan involves killing you, robbing your corpse and running away. I heard it's pretty warm in Arco this time of year... so yeah, if you could just kneel or even better, give me your valuables, we could even go through this without getting you... mutilated."

Olison looked away for a moment. Another soul who seems quite motivated by gold... Olison felt a tinge of annoyance at the simple incentive, but perhaps one less enemy can be made...



"Then perhaps an alternate measure can be made." The cavalier turned back to the Assassin, "Do know that Prixima does not leave well enough alone when it comes to hired hands. All bodies who have entered her employ have left either dead, or under active hunt by her machinations. Most of us here stand to attest to the latter, having survived multiple armies worth of mercenaries sent to silence us. Even further than that, Prixima has continued this long trail of betrayal in pursuit of ancient artifacts capable of mass destruction, a number of them already in her possession. Between these, there is little doubt her intents are hardly noble."



"But to the point, a large team of ours has managed to breach the castle past the majority of defenses and cut a swath towards eliminating Prixima. No doubt as we speak they are knocking down her study's doors. What I propose is this; you turn your knife away from us, and we provide you with the last few hundred of our gold. No harm, no foul."



"However, if you're feeling particularly vengeful at perhaps the most deceitful of employers, stay around for a while. This assault comes with the support from the noble Tunhausen family of Berebia. In addition to that, the young heir to Kesselring, Leo, has also been informed of Prixima's misgivings. Your assistance could prove them both in your debt, especially with a good word from a few survivors who were saved by a timely knife in the back of a hostile general..."

Shimnir let out a loud sigh at the end of the speech.



"Yes yes yes yadda yadda yadda. I know all that - heck my first job was to kill one of such mercenaries. And I did that without hesistation. But that was when PRIXIMA paid me regularly."



"So where is that gold you spoke about?"

Olison only sighed in return. *With the bluntness to shatter platemail. How charming.* The rider turned to the wyvern knight perched in the center of the room.



"Sal. Might I borrow the last couple hundred of your gold?"



"Eh? Is now the best toime ta be thoinkin'--Drat it!"

The wyvern knight cut himself off from his thought due to the roar from the stairs, snagging and tossing all of his gold to Olison.

The bag opened in the mid-throw and ~~some~~ quite a few coins fell down onto the floor.



"Sloppiest throw ever. You're not very skillful bunch are you."

Olison snatched the bag as it sailed over, despite a number of coins falling out. Looking inside, he took a quick count of the remainder.



"...Two hundred fifteen coins. Plus the eighty-odd coins that spilled out, should we survive. Consider it an advance if you take my latter offer."



"Hmph. It will do. Bread isn't that pricey anyways."

Olison fastened the bag tightly and ensured to tie a knot in the strings to keep it shut before tossing the bag over.

Shamsir had no problems about catching the bag. He tossed it up a bit, feeling the weight and listening to the sound of clinking money.



"A fair warning, though. The moment I notice we start losing horribly I'm running away. Without looking back." He stuffed the bag into his tunic and sighed in relief.



"When I can start killing?"

**NPC:Shimnir joins the group!**



"Damn. I can still defend this position..."

**Alexander: Stay there and guard Anja, Pure Water.**

Sprinkle sprinkle.

**Valor: Go north 1, swap Seyena a vuln for a pure water, Equip Killing Edge, and Sip that Pure Water.**

Glub glub.

**Seyena javelins swords master then moves south**

**Seyena vs Swordmaster B**

Hit:  $120+15+10+15-63 = 97$

Hit roll: 72, hit!

Damage:  $25+1+1-14 = 13\text{dmg}$

Salvatore charged the stairs, **moving to (20,9) and (after praying to Critzalcoatl) attacks the Sword Master with his Killer Lance.** Then he'll **move back to 20, 10 and equip his javelins**, readying himself for another go.

**Salvatore vs Swordmaster B**

Hit:  $102+15+15+5+10-63 = 84$

Hit roll: 52, hit!

Damage:  $34+2+1-14 = 23\text{dmg}$

Swordmaster B counters!

Hit:  $126-15-10-2-25 = 74$

Hit roll: 96, miss!

Swordmaster B counters again!

Hit:  $126-15-10-2-25 = 74$

Hit roll: 93, miss! //wtf

Sal gave the swordmaster a stab and dodged both of his counter attacks, much to even the wyvern knight's surprise. Settling back down in front of Valor and Seyena, the wyvern and its rider roared at the encroaching enemies in defiance, with the knight's being particularly more articulated and of the brimstone and hellfire variety.



"Men o' foul deed an' machinations, do yah even know who yah foight fer 'er why? Misguided an' tricked, the horrors brought upon by yer mistress, the innocent blood on 'er hands screams fer solace! Loives dimmed! Villages, gone! Men an' women cut down wit' no blade on 'em 'cept in 'eir back! Turned brother upon brother, friend upon friend wit' magic most foul! Foul magics and foul deeds be all she wrought, an' all she will wrought!"

Holding his javelin steady, the knight pointed it up the stairs.



"Prixi ain' gonna win this foight! Not wit' all she's done! Not wit' all she may do! Choose now, an' choose wisely, 'cause in loife yah don' get many chances ta pick again an' make amends, because yah must make yer own! Why do yah foight? Who do yah foight fer? Is it fer tha vile witch who's every touch taints wit' darkness an' foul machinations, 'er is it fer yer homes an' families? Do yah wan' ta live in ah world where she gets away wit' what she does? Do yah wan' ta raise ah home in tha'? Do yah wan' ta be remembered fer what she's done?"

Salvatore readies himself, the javelin held firmly in his hand poised to strike at any threat.



"If'in yah know wha' she's done, all tha' she's done, an' yah still want ta foight fer her, then Oi've no pity nor quarter fer yah! Come! COME! Test the moight 'o ah man who knows tha' why he foights is roight an' true!"



"I suggest you keep a healthy distance. Most of us will react to an armed

assassin approaching the ranks. We can use a diversion to the north, however." Olson nodded to the doorway that led outside to the north. "They'll likely try to flank us there."

**Olison to 19,12.**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Prixima's soldiers swarmed poor Alexander, who fought bravely and his lance stabbed back fiercely. Alas, magic was his undoing for the n-th time.

### Sentinel A vs Alex

Hit:  $132-5-25 = 102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34-1-2-30 = 1\text{dmg}$

Alex counters!

Hit:  $117+10-55 = 72$

Hit roll: 44, hit! Crit roll: 5! // \*thud\*

Damage:  $26-19 = 7 \times 3 = 21\text{dmg}$

Sentinel A attacks again!

Hit:  $132-5-25 = 102$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34-1-2-30 = 1\text{dmg}$

### Axeman A vs Alex

Hit:  $108+15-5-25 = 93$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-1-2-30 = 5\text{dmg}$

Alex counters!

Hit:  $117+10-15-42 = 70$

Hit roll: 23, hit!

Damage:  $26-1-14 = 11\text{dmg}$

Axeman A attacks again!

Hit:  $108+15-5-25 = 93$

Hit roll: 81, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-1-2-30 = 5\text{dmg}$

### Bishop A vs Alex

Hit:  $137-5-25 = 107$ , autohit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage:  $34-2-10-9 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

More of the wall was torn down.

### Sentinel B vs Cracked Wall

Autohit!

Damage:  $34-5 = 29\text{dmg}$

Then Salvatore got blasted with magics,

### Druid C vs Salvatore

Hit:  $109-2-25 = 82$

Hit roll: 13, hit!

HP halved!

### Sage C vs Salvatore

Hit:  $140-2-25 = 113$ , autohit!

Damage:  $37-5-7 = 25\text{dmg}$

One of the axemen bravely went down the stairs and lobbed his tomahawk at Seyena, wounding her. She responded with javelin to face.

#### Axeman B vs Seyena

Hit:  $108+15-57 = 66$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1-1-13 = 24\text{dmg}$

Seyena counters!  
Hit:  $120+15-15-42 = 78$   
Hit roll: 80, miss!

Seyena counters again!  
Hit:  $120+15-15-42 = 78$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $25+1-1-14 = 11\text{dmg}$

Then, some more dark magics were employed as the heavily wounded Swordmaster was healed from afar.

#### Druid A vs Valor

Hit:  $109-49 = 60$   
Hit roll: 80, miss!

#### Druid B vs Tiron

Hit:  $109+15-35 = 89$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
HP halved!

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"...Heh. Easiest money ever. Morons." Shimnir quickly turned heel and ran definitely not where he was asked to.

Meanwhile...



"I won't be getting down like that! For Tunhausen!" Danya, of all people, broke the line and went after nearby sentinel, lancing his face in.

#### Danya vs Sentinel B

Hit:  $128-55 = 73$   
Hit roll: 46, hit! Crit roll: 1! //noooooo  
Damage:  $33-19 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$



"Ye gods, I'm going to die." Tiron moved up to Seyena and healed her, looking more pale and terrified than she did.

#### Tiron heals Seyena

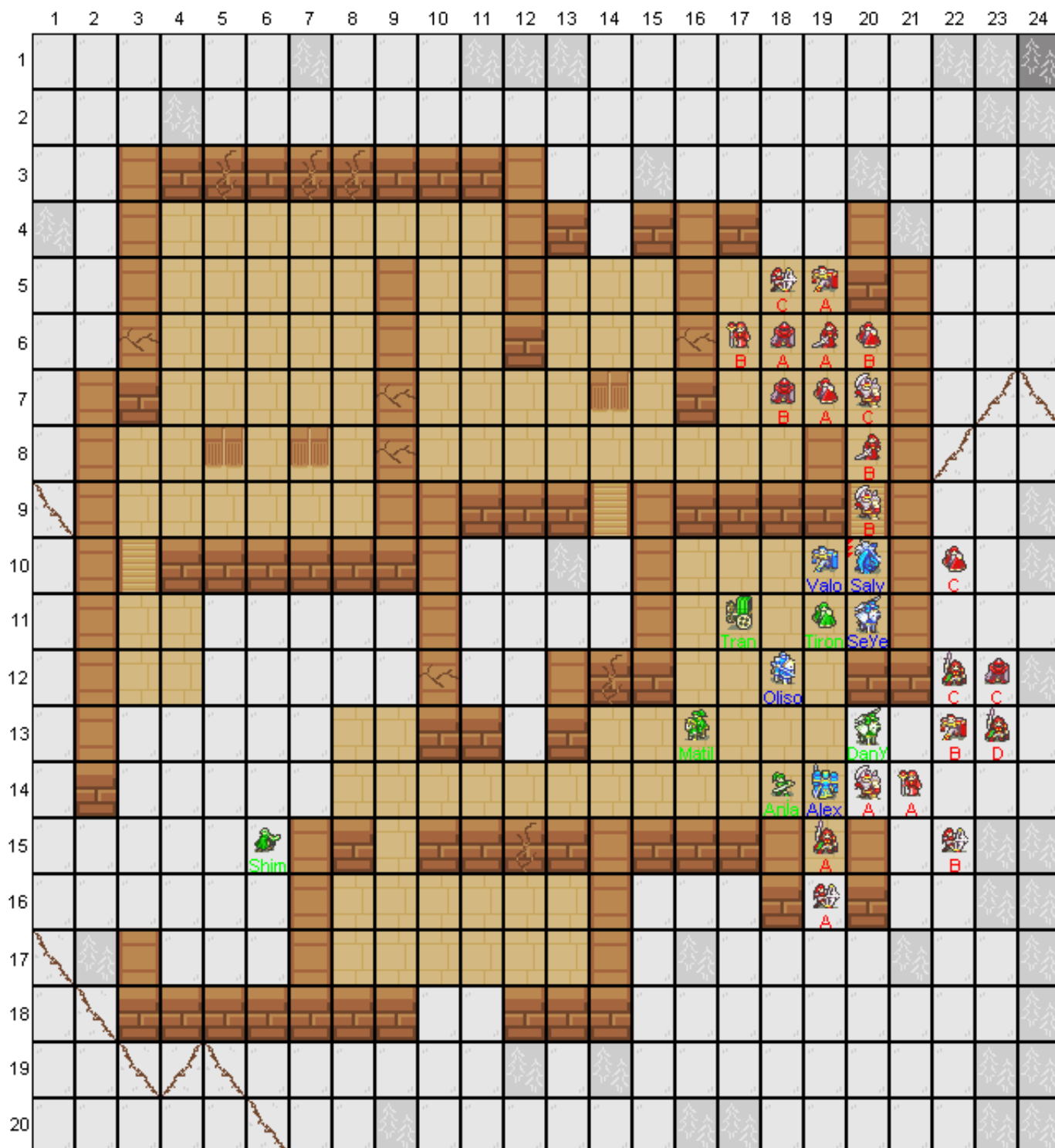
$10+21 = \text{Up to } 31\text{HP healed}$

Then Matilda raised her staff and brought Alexwall back into functionality.



## ~~Player Turn 4~~

A blizzard have started, the strong winds whipping combatants' faces with snow and frost.



Weather: ❄️❄️❄️

**Mercs:**

Alexander Jorinn: 27/50 Regen:2  
 Olison Eul: 39/39  
 Salvatore Vaughan: -/41 3/3 ((Regen:2))  
 Seyena Ikane: 38/38 Pure Water (4/5)  
 Valor Inara: 41/41 Pure Water (5/5)

**Enemies:**

|                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Sentinel A: 19/40     | Bishop B: 38/38 |
| Sentinel C: 40/40     | Druid A: 35/35  |
| Sentinel D: 40/40     | Druid B: 35/35  |
| Elite Axeman A: 34/45 | Druid C: 35/35  |
| Elite Axeman B: 34/45 | Sage A: 37/37   |
| Elite Axeman C: 45/45 | Sage B: 37/37   |



| Allies:                                                                                                    |                                                                                                          |                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Matilda: 36/36<br>Magister Tiron: 15/35<br>Shimnir: 38/38<br>Wagon: 5/5hits | Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 1/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38 | Sage C: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry C: 38/38 |

**Valor: Francisca that jerk. Ask Critzocoatl pretty please with sugar on top??**

The thrown axe split the axeman's head a bit.

#### Valor vs Axeman B

Hit:  $114+15-42 = 87$   
Hit roll: 41, hit! Crit roll: 17!  
Damage:  $29+1-14 = 16 \times 3 = 48$  dmg

For a moment, Valor considered trying to convince the enemies to flee for their lives. But if they weren't going to leave after what Salvatore had said, they weren't going to pack it in just because he'd killed one of them. At least, not while there were still so many of them.



"Next."



"Anja, I think I can still block hits for you if you go right near Danya and help her keep fighting!"

**Alexander: Stay there and guard Anja, Pure Water. If I can equip muh warhammer, do so.**

Merely turning his head around for a moment, Olson could see the Assassin walking away.



"...Hm." He grunted in deference. One less enemy he aimed for, one less enemy he received. Right now, that's all that mattered.

**Olson to 19,13. Francisca ye Elite Axeman A.**

**Seyena heals Salvatore.**

Alexander tankified himself a bit more, while Olson lobbed his axe at the enemy.

#### Olson vs Axeman A

Hit:  $106+10+10-42 = 84$

Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-14 = 16\text{dmg}$

Axeman A retaliates!  
Hit:  $108+15-10-5-57 = 51$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $37-16 = 21\text{dmg}$

Olison attacks again!  
Hit:  $106+10+10-42 = 84$   
Hit roll: 96, miss!

In the next second, Salvatore was healed by Seyena.

#### Seyena heals Salvatore

Hit:  $6+10 / 2 = \text{Up to 8HP restored}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"We need a better plan. You two, with me." One of the druids commandeered two of his allies away from the chokepoint.

The other druid cast his magic at Valor, to no avail.

#### Druid A vs Valor

Hit:  $109-49 = 60$   
Hit roll: 70, miss!

Axeman A was healed by the Bishop (who retreated for a moment), before engaging in some axe throwing with Olison again.

#### Bishop A physics Axeman A

$10+22 = \text{Up to 32HP restored}$

#### Axeman A vs Olison

Hit:  $108+15-10-5-57 = 51$   
Hit roll: 79, miss!

Olison counters!  
Hit:  $106+10+10-42 = 84$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-14 = 16\text{dmg}$

Olison counters again!  
Hit:  $106+10+10-42 = 84$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-14 = 16\text{dmg}$

Danya then performed the famous 'Dance of Endangered Butterfly' and even managed to include a highly-scoring face-stab for Sentinel C.

#### Druid C vs Danya

Hit:  $119-15-55 = 49$   
Hit roll: 80, miss!

#### Sentinel C vs Danya

Hit:  $132-15-55 = 62$   
Hit roll: 68, miss!

Danya counters!  
Hit:  $128-55 = 73$   
Hit roll: 34, hit!

Damage:  $33-19 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Sentry B vs Danya

Hit:  $138-15-55 = 68$

Hit roll: 99, miss //fffffffff-

The Sentinel and Sentry near Alexander didn't move, possibly trying to think how to kill him better.

Meanwhile, Salvatore got roasted while Seyena got axed.

#### Sage C vs Salvatore

Hit:  $140-10-2-25 = 103$ , autohit!

Damage:  $37-5-7 = 25\text{dmg}$

#### Axeman C vs Seyena

Hit:  $108+15-10-53 = 60$

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-13 = 25\text{dmg}$

Seyena counters!

Hit:  $120+15+10-15-42 = 88$

Hit roll: 91, miss!

Seyena counters once more!

Hit:  $120+15+10-15-42 = 88$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $25+1-1-14 = 11\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja took the flut and a scarf and began dancing. Suddenly, the sentinel nearby froze.



"Teehee, that's a lesson for the future - don't make me angry!" She then sent a smooch toward Alexander.

#### Anja dances Enamouring Step for Sentinel C

Dance hit:  $(30+[\{18-13\} \times 5]+15) = 30+25+15 = 70$

Hit roll: 67, hit!

Sentinel C is paralyzed!

Danya, with a stern face, lifted her lance and plunged it into Axeman's face.

#### Danya vs Axeman A

Hit:  $128-15-42 = 71$

Hit roll: 71, hit!

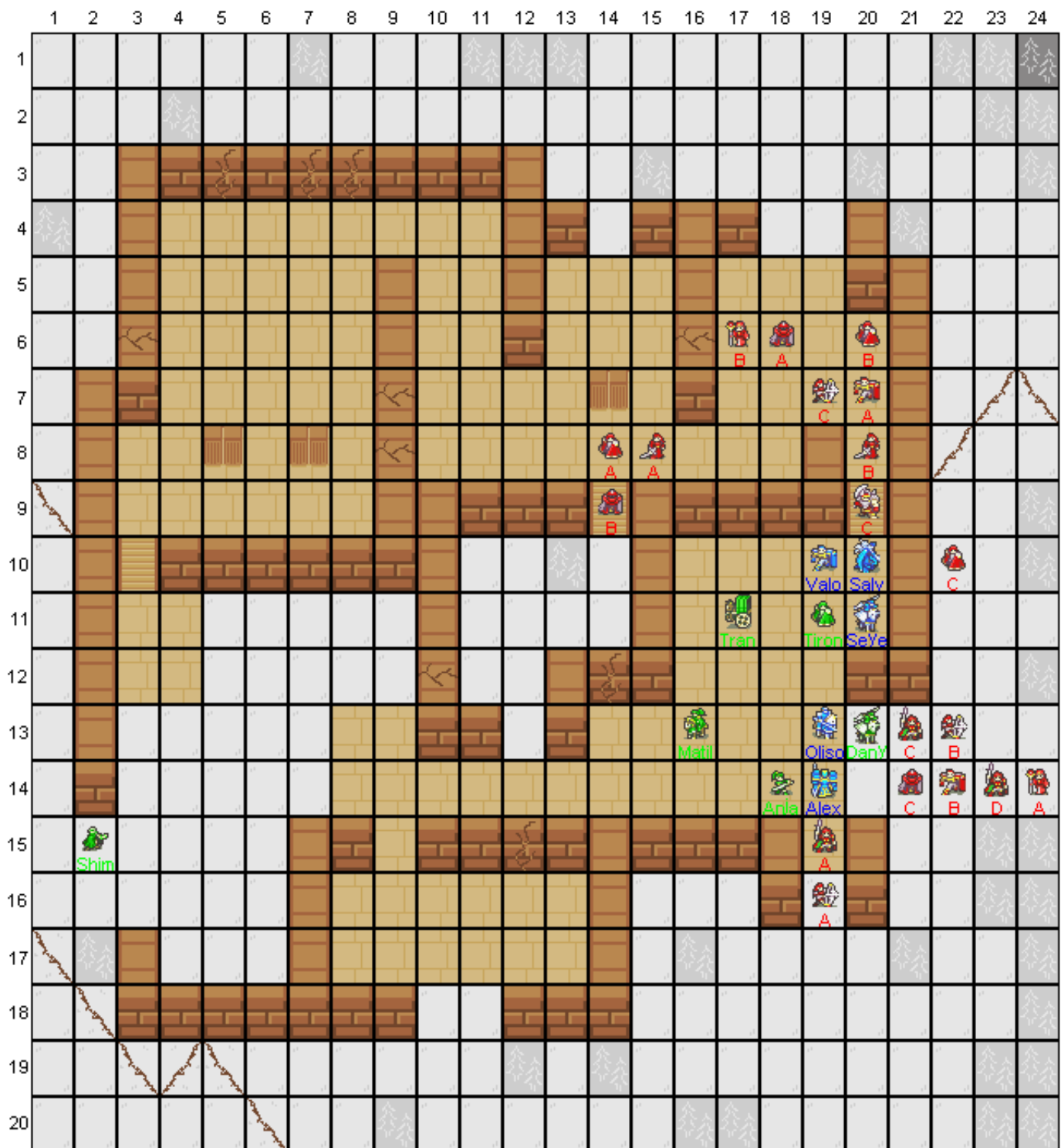
Damage:  $33-1-14 = 18\text{dmg}$

Then, Matilda healed Salvatore from afar while Tiron hugged his book.

#### Matilda rejuvenates Salvatore

$10+20 / 2 = \text{Up to } 15\text{HP restored}$

# ~~~Player Turn 5~~~



Weather: ☁☁☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 29/50<br>^ Regen:2 Pure Water (4/5)<br>Olison Eul: 18/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 17/41 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 13/38 Pure Water (2/5)<br>Valor Inara: 41/41 Pure Water (3/5) |  | Sentinel A: 19/40 Paralyze (5/5)<br>Sentinel C: 26/40<br>Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Axeman C: 34/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Swordmaster B: 1/37<br>Sergeant A: 42/42<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38<br>Bishop B: 38/38 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid B: 35/35<br>Druid C: 35/35<br>Sage A: 37/37<br>Sage B: 37/37<br>Sage C: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry C: 38/38                                                   |  |
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Matilda: 36/36<br>Magister Tiron: 15/35<br>Shimnir: 38/38<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                                                    |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |

**Valor: Nobody hurts Seyena. *Nobody within your reach at least.* Francisca that bastard, ask Critzocoatl for his divine benevolence.**

**Valor vs Axeman C**

Hit:  $114+15-42 = 87$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-14 = 16\text{dmg}$

Axeman C counters!  
Hit:  $108-49 = 59$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $37-1-18 = 18\text{dmg}$

Chuckling quietly, Alexander tucks the advice away for future reference.

**Alexander: Hammer sentinel, Guard Anja.**

Without so much as a shred of recognition of just being a charred, dying body mere moments ago, the wyvern and knight threw themselves at the axeman with an axe of his own.



"Long as Oi still breathe, yah won' take ah step more! Twisted 'round 'er finger so, what is it tha' drives yah ta part death? It ain' fer sanctity, tha' Oi know!"

**AXE the axeman a pertinent question about his outlook on the afterlife. Swap to javelin afterwards if able, stay in spot.**

\*BONK\*

**Alexander vs Sentinel A**

Autohit!  
Damage:  $33+1-19 = 15\text{dmg}$

"Shut up, pinkhair." \*CHOP CHOP\*

**Salvatore vs Axeman C**

Hit:  $107+15+10+5-42 = 95$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

Axeman C counters!  
Hit:  $108-10-2-25 = 71$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $37-25 = 12\text{dmg}$

Axeman C counters again!  
Hit:  $108-10-2-25 = 71$   
Hit roll: 65, hit!  
Damage:  $37-25 = 12\text{dmg}$

**Seyena moves to 18,10, heals Valor, then moves 1 south**

**Olison lobs Francisca at Sentinel C.**

**Seyena heals Valor**

10+6+2 = Up to 18HP restored

### Olison vs Sentinel C

Hit:  $106+15+10+10-55 = 86$

Hit roll: 83, hit! Crit roll: 14!

Damage:  $29+1+2-19 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

### Sentry B vs Danya

Hit:  $138-15-55 = 68$

Hit roll: 59, hit!

Damage:  $55-17 = 38\text{dmg}$

### Druid C vs Alex

Hit:  $119-5-25 = 89$

Hit roll: 46, hit!

Damage:  $40-10-2-9 = 19\text{dmg}$

Druid C attacks again!

Hit:  $119-5-25 = 89$

Hit roll: 75, hit!

Damage:  $40-10-2-9 = 19\text{dmg}$

### Sentinel D vs Danya

Hit:  $132-15-55 = 62$

Hit roll: 71, miss!

Danya counters!

Hit:  $128-55 = 73$

Hit roll: 78, miss!

### Sergeant B vs Danya

Hit:  $132-15-15-55 = 47$

Hit roll: 99, miss!

Danya counters!

Hit:  $128+15-43 = 100$ , autohit!

Damage:  $33+1-17 = 17\text{dmg}$

Danya counters again!

Hit:  $128+15-43 = 100$ , autohit!

Damage:  $33+1-17 = 17\text{dmg}$

### Swordmaster A vs Cracked Wall

Autohit!

Damage:  $27-5 = 22\text{dmg}$

### Sage A vs Matilda

Hit:  $140-65 = 75$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $37-3-18 = 16\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters!

Hit:  $129-40 = 89$

Hit roll: 64, hit!

Damage:  $25-20 = 5\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters again!

Hit:  $129-40 = 89$

Hit roll: 64, hit!

Damage:  $25-20 = 5\text{dmg}$

### Druid B vs Matilda

Hit:  $119+15-65 = 69$

Hit roll: 93, miss!

Matilda retaliates!  
Hit:  $129-15-36 = 78$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $25-1-19 = 5\text{dmg}$

Matilda retaliates again!  
Hit:  $129-15-36 = 78$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $25-1-19 = 5\text{dmg}$

//BS miracle starts here

**Axeman C vs Tiron**

Hit:  $108-10-35 = 63$   
Hit roll: 69, miss!

Tiron counters!  
Hit:  $115+10-42 = 83$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $29-10 = 19\text{dmg}$

**Swordmaster B vs Tiron**

Hit:  $126-10-35 = 81$   
Hit roll: 90, miss //what

Tiron counters!  
Hit:  $115+10-63 = 62$   
Hit roll: 41, hit!  
Damage:  $29-12 = 17\text{dmg}$

**Sergeant A vs Tiron**

Hit:  $132-10-35 = 87$   
Hit roll: 98, miss! //omg

Tiron counters!  
Hit:  $115+10-43 = 83$   
Hit roll: 65, hit! Crit roll: 1! //i just can't anymore  
Damage:  $29-12 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

//BS miracle ends here

**Sage B vs Tiron**

Hit:  $140-10-35 = 95$   
Hit roll: 26, hit!  
Damage:  $37-15 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Sentry C vs Valor**

Hit:  $138-49 = 89$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $29-1-18 = 10\text{dmg}$

Valor counters!  
Hit:  $114+15-53 = 76$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-17 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Bishop B psychics Sentry C**

$10+22 =$  Up to 32HP restored

**Bishop A psychics Sergeant B**

$10+22 =$  Up to 32HP healed

~~Ally Phase~~

**Anja vs Druid B**

Hit:  $149 - 36 = 113$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $23 - 12 = 11$  dmg

Druid B counters!  
Hit:  $119 - 15 - 72 = 32$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!

Anja attacks again!  
Hit:  $149 - 36 = 113$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $23 - 12 = 11$  dmg

**Danya vs Druid B**

Hit:  $128 - 36 = 92$   
Hit roll: 2, hit!  
Damage:  $33 - 12 = 21$  dmg

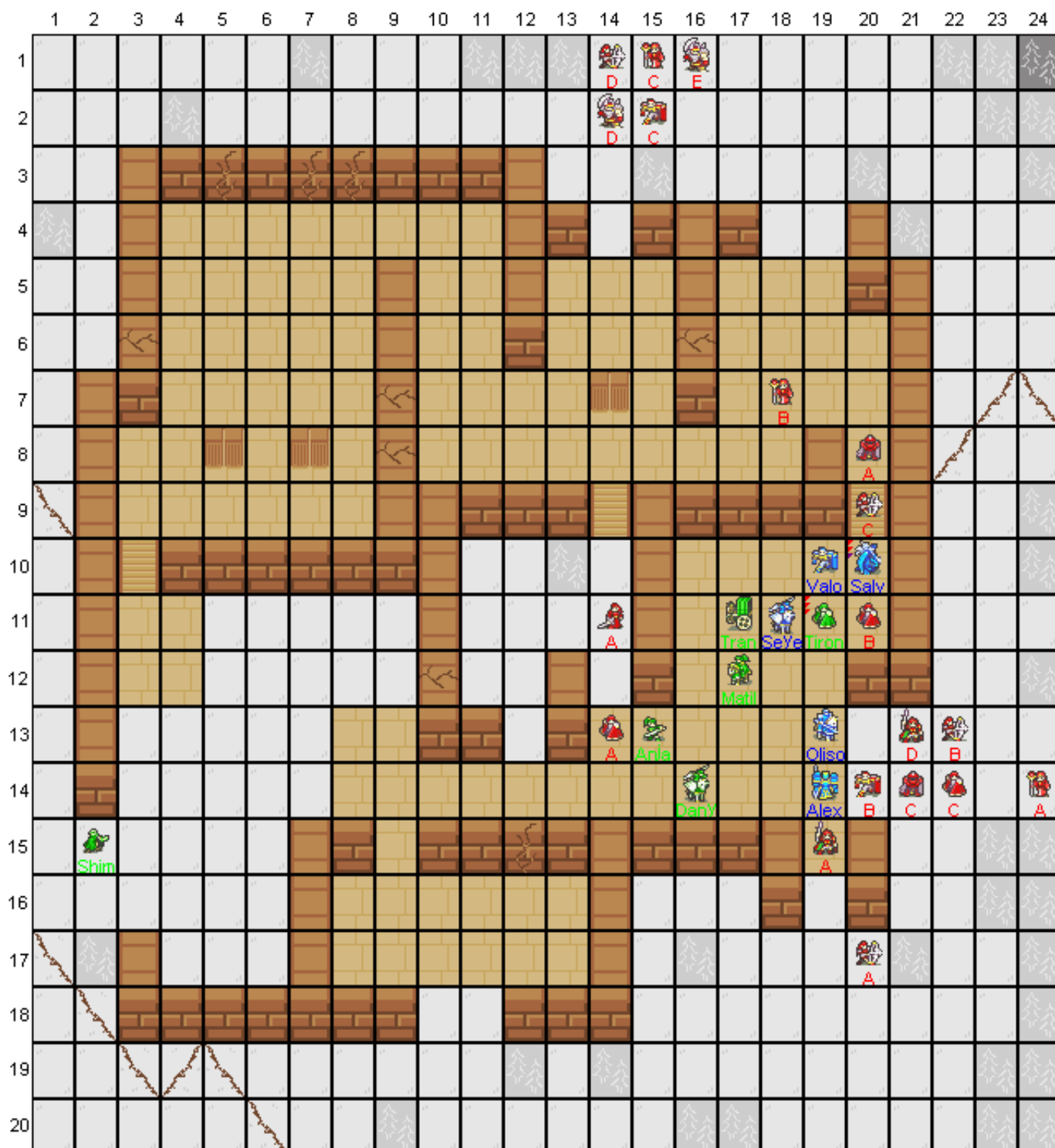
**Matilda rejuvenates Alexander**

Half of HP healed!



# ~~Player Turn 6~~

It stopped snowing, but the winds are still pretty strong.



Weather: ❄️❄️❄️

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                         |  | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 27/50 Regen:2<br>Olison Eul: 18/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/41 2/3 ((Regen:2))<br>Seyena Ikane: 13/38 Pure Water (1/5)<br>Valor Inara: 31/41 Pure Water (2/5) |  | Sentinel A: 4/40 Paralyze (5/5)<br>Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman E: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Sergeant B: 40/42<br>Sergeant C: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38<br>Bishop B: 38/38<br>Bishop C: 38/38 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                        |  | Druid A: 35/35<br>Druid C: 35/35<br>Sage A: 27/37<br>Sage B: 37/37<br>Sage C: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry C: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry D: 38/38                                           |  |
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 1/39<br>Matilda: 20/36<br>Magister Tiron: -/35 3/3                                                                                                       |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |

**Valor: Vulnerary Salvatore. Pray to Critzocoatl for another round of total bullshit.**



"Anja, I wouldn't go that far out! You should probably go and help Danya and Matilda stay mobile! ...and stay close to me."

**Alexander: FINISH the Sentinel. Guard Anja if she happens to be by me.**

**Valor uses Vulnerary on Salvatore**

Up to 5HP restored

**Alexander vs Sentinel A**

Auto-hit!

Damage:  $33+1-19 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Seyena: Use vuln on Tiron, move two west and one north and use vuln on self. Keep steel javelins equipped.**

**Olison: Double down on the vulns on himself. Keep throwing axe on.**

**Someone informs Matilda of medicine and rescue staff in wagon, hope Anja dances, communal prayer for another round of bullshit and some respite.**

White powder snowin', bae caught 'em healin'.

**Seyena uses Vulnerary on Tiron**

Up to 5HP restored

**Seyena uses Vulnerary**

Up to 5HP restored

**Olison uses Vulnerary x2**

Up to 20HP restored

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The moment when Seyena moved closer to wall, the Droid went for a kill... it didn't turn well for him.

**Druid A vs Seyena**

Hit:  $119-10-53 = 56$

Hit roll: 63, miss!

Seyena counters!

Hit:  $120+10+15-36 = 109$ , autohit! Crit roll: 25! //blaugh

Damage:  $25+1-12 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

Then the bishop went after Salvatore and the archer sniped at Valor, only to get sniped in return.

**Bishop B vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $137+10-10-25 = 112$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34-7 = 27\text{dmg}$

**Sentry C vs Valor**

Hit:  $138-49 = 89$

Hit roll: 28, hit!

Damage:  $29-1-18 = 10\text{dmg}$

Valor counters!

Hit:  $114+15-53 = 76$

Hit roll: 70, hit! Crit roll: 11!

Damage:  $29+1-17 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

Unfortunately the nearby sage scorched Tiron a bit more.

**Sage B vs Tiron**

Hit:  $140-10-35 = 95$

Hit roll: 68, hit!

Damage:  $37-15 = 22\text{dmg}$

Then, with loud laughter, the other sage ran into the room and blasted Danya with fiery magic.

**Sage A vs Danya**

Hit:  $140-55 = 85$

Hit roll: 3, hit!

Damage:  $37-16 = 21\text{dmg}$

Right after him, a swordmaster ran up to Anja with intention to cut her down, but she parried his strike with her own weapon. Sparks flew again when her sword smashed against his in fierce counterattack.

**Swordmaster A vs Anja**

Hit:  $126-15-72 = 39$

Hit roll: 62, miss!

Anja counters!

Hit:  $149-63 = 86$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

While an sentry and a sage switched (kinda) palces, the officer moved up to Olison and slashed at him, but Olison was eager to retaliate.

The spot vacated by the swordsman was quickly filled in by the sniper, who took a shot at Olison,

**Sergeant B vs Olison**

Hit:  $132+15-5-10-57 = 75$

Hit roll: 13, hit!

Damage:  $31+1-16 = 16\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!

Hit:  $106+10+10-15-43 = 68$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $29+1-1-17 = 12\text{dmg}$

Olison counters once more!

Hit:  $106+10+10-15-43 = 68$

Hit roll: 75, miss!

**Sentry B vs Olison**

Hit:  $138-10-5-57 = 66$

Hit roll: 77, miss!

Olison counters!  
Hit:  $106+10+10-53 = 73$   
Hit roll: 78, miss!

Olison counters again!  
Hit:  $106+10+10-53 = 73$   
Hit roll: 40, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-17 = 13\text{dmg}$

In the same moment, a blast of dark energy smashed into Alexander... and moments later he pushed his shield away, a black spot sizzling and smoking as the heavy knight didn't got even scratched by that!

The second attack wasn't so fortunate for Alexander.

#### **Druid C vs Alexander**

Hit:  $119-25 = 94$   
Hit roll: 26, hit!  
Great Shield roll: 12! // \*noises\*  
Damage: 0dmg!

Druid C attacks again!  
Hit:  $119-25 = 94$   
Hit roll: 86, hit!  
Damage:  $40-2-9 = 29\text{dmg}$

Right after Alexander fell, the sentinel rushed inside the room. Defense line was breached, but he didn't get far. And the nearby Sergeant got healed from afar.

#### **Bishop A psychics Sergeant B**

$10+22 =$  Up to 32HP healed

### **~~Ally Phase~~**

Matilda healed, then Anja danced and Matilda healed again. The crystal on her staff blinked in irregular manner. It's magic must be close to depletion.

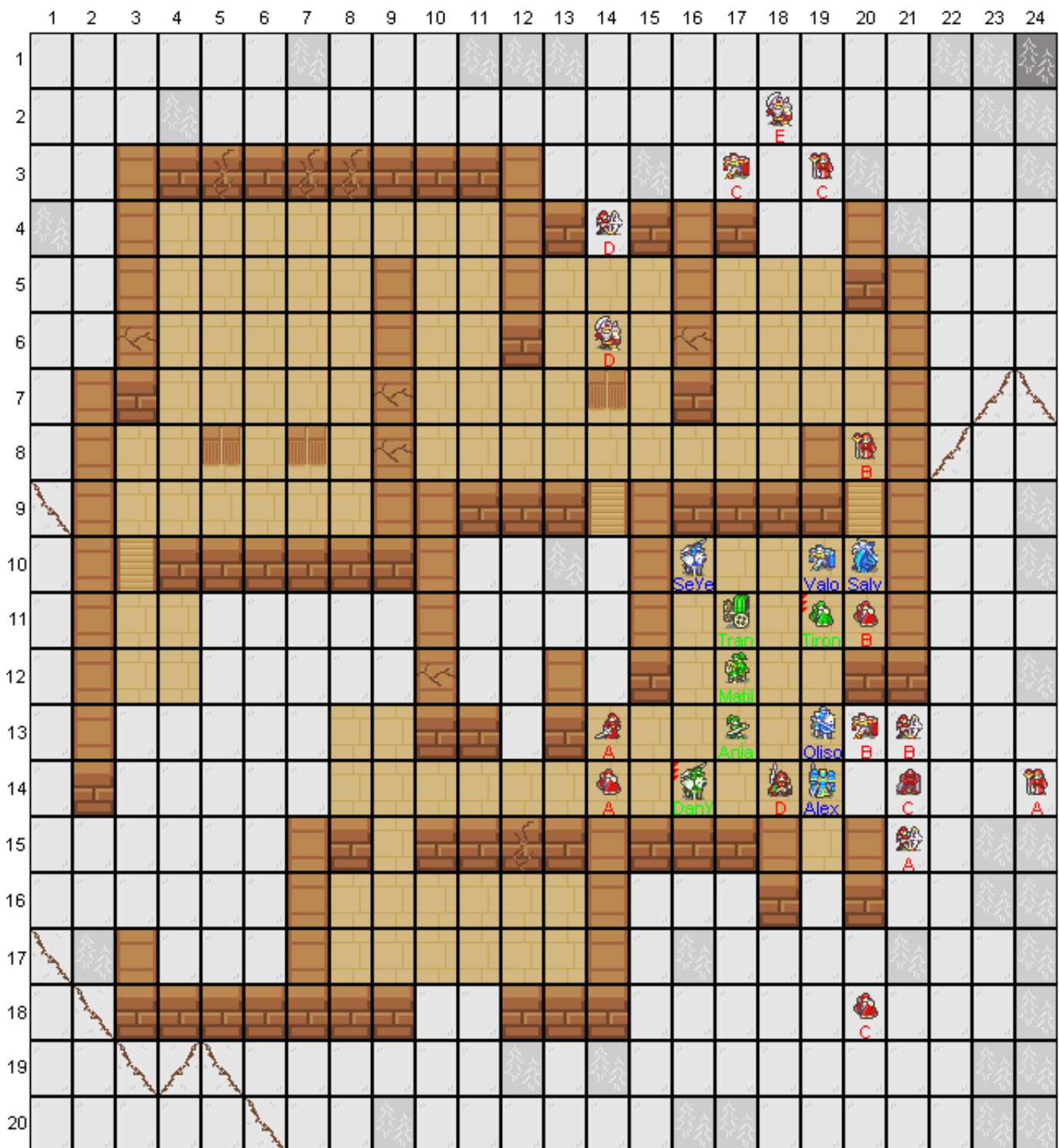
#### **Matilda rejuvenates Salvatore**

Up to 20HP restored

#### **Matilda rejuvenates Alexander**

Up to 25HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 7~~



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                 | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Alexander Jorinn: 27/51 Regen:2<br>Olison Eul: 23/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 22/42 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/39<br>Valor Inara: 21/41 Pure Water (1/5) | Sentinel D: 40/40<br>Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman E: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 37/37<br>Sergeant B: 42/42<br>Sergeant C: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38<br>Bishop B: 38/38 |  |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: -/39 3/3<br>Matilda: 20/36<br>Magister Tiron: -/35 3/3<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|                                                                                                                                                        | Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid C: 35/35<br>Sage A: 27/37<br>Sage B: 37/37<br>Sage C: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry B: 25/38<br>Elite Sentry D: 38/38             |  |

Salvatore moves to 18,11 and uses his concoction on Tiron.



"On yer feet, foight ain' over yet. Touched 'o the dragon yah be, he won' be takin' yah yet."

The wyvern knight cantos to 16,13 and uses his vuln on Danya. Ormm growls at the duo of enemies. Make sure javelin is on.



"'Fraid tha's the last Oi got." His voice took an edge when he soon addressed the two standing against them. "May the dragon take mercy wit' yer lost an' tricked souls, fer the path ta loight is wit' loife, not death! Which do yah foight fer?!"



"MatildaTakeTheStaff!"

Seyena moves to 16,12 and tosses the Heal staff towards poor Matilda. She then gallops to 20,10, stabbing the Sage with great justice

Sprinkle sprinkle coke star~

**Salvatore uses Concoction on Tiron**

Up to 15HP healed

**Salvatore uses Vulnerary on Danya**

Up to 5HP healed

Then there were stabbings so severe they deaded the sage.

**Seyena vs Sage B**

Hit:  $122+10+15-40 = 107$ , autohit! Crit roll: 16! //Damned supports >:I

Damage:  $26+1-13 = 14 \times 3 = 42$ dmg

Valor: 20,10, Initiate One Liner!



"Die!"

Valor: Or not. Attack Bishop, Killing Edge does what it says on the tin!

\*slash SLASH slash! SPLORCH~\* /incredibly sound-alike FE8 crit

#### Quote from: Valor vs Bishop B

Hit:  $127+15-51 = 91$   
Hit roll: 91, hit! Crit roll: 33!  
Damage:  $29+1-13 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

Valor flicked the blood off his sword, and pointed at the far away bishop with his shield hand.



"You want what your friend got? Then bring it, spellslinger!"



"Anja, keep doing the dance-y thing please!"

#### Alexander: Hammer that line breaking jerk.

The sentinel's head was smashed into his neck with sickening, wet crunch.

#### Alexander vs Sentinel D

Hit:  $92+15+10-55 = 62$   
Hit roll: 50, hit! Crit roll: 12! //STAHP :'C  
Damage:  $33+1-19 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$



"Damn it!" Olison's head whipped behind to see the flanking force, but couldn't spare more than a moment before turning back to the enemies at hand.

#### Olison lobs a Francisca at Sentry B.

#### Olison vs Sentry B

Hit:  $108+5-53 = 60$   
Hit roll: 46, hit!  
Damage:  $30+1-17 = 14\text{dmg}$

Sentry B counters!

Hit:  $138-5-57 = 76$   
Hit roll: 60, hit!  
Damage:  $29-17 = 12\text{dmg}$

Olison strikes again!

Hit:  $108+5-53 = 60$   
Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage:  $30+1-17 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The eastern wall faltered!

#### Sage C vs Alexander

Hit:  $140-5-27 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $37-2-10 = 25\text{dmg}$

Sage C attacks again!  
Hit:  $140-5-27 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $37-2-10 = 25\text{dmg}$

#### **Sentry A vs Olson**

Hit:  $138-10-5-57 = 66$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $29-17 = 12\text{dmg}$

The consequences were dire; the mages and sergeant stormed into the room, attacking Danya, Matilda and Tiron; only the mounted sorceress wasn't downed.

#### **Bishop A vs Danya**

Hit:  $137-15-55 = 67$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $34-16 = 18\text{dmg}$

#### **Druid C vs Matilda**

Hit:  $119+15-65 = 69$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!

Matilda counters!  
Hit:  $129-15-36 = 78$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $25-1-19 = 5\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters again!  
Hit:  $129-15-36 = 78$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $25-1-19 = 5\text{dmg}$

#### **Sergeant B vs Tiron**

Hit:  $132-10-35 = 87$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

Tiron counters!  
Hit:  $115+10-43 = 82$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $29-12 = 17\text{dmg}$

Sergeant B attacks once more!  
Hit:  $132-10-35 = 87$   
Hit roll: 80, hit!  
Damage:  $31-2-7 = 22\text{dmg}$

Then, Salvatore got roasted by the Sage while the nearby Swordmaster walked over his knocked body and slashed at Matilda; fortunately she evaded that attack.

#### **Sage A vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $140-25 = 115$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $37-7 = 30\text{dmg}$

#### **Swordmaster A vs Matilda**

Hit:  $126-65 = 61$   
Hit roll: 81, miss!

Matilda counters!  
Hit:  $129-63 = 66$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $25-12 = 13\text{dmg}$

The bishop ran to Valor to smite him for his insolence, but something entirely different happened.

#### **Bishop C vs Valor**



Hit: 137-50 = 87

Hit roll: 89, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~



"**MATILDA CAST THE MAGIC!**" Anja shrieked during her panicked dance. Matilda did cast magics, and then the crystal on top of her staff exploded.

### **Matilda rejuvenates Salvatore**

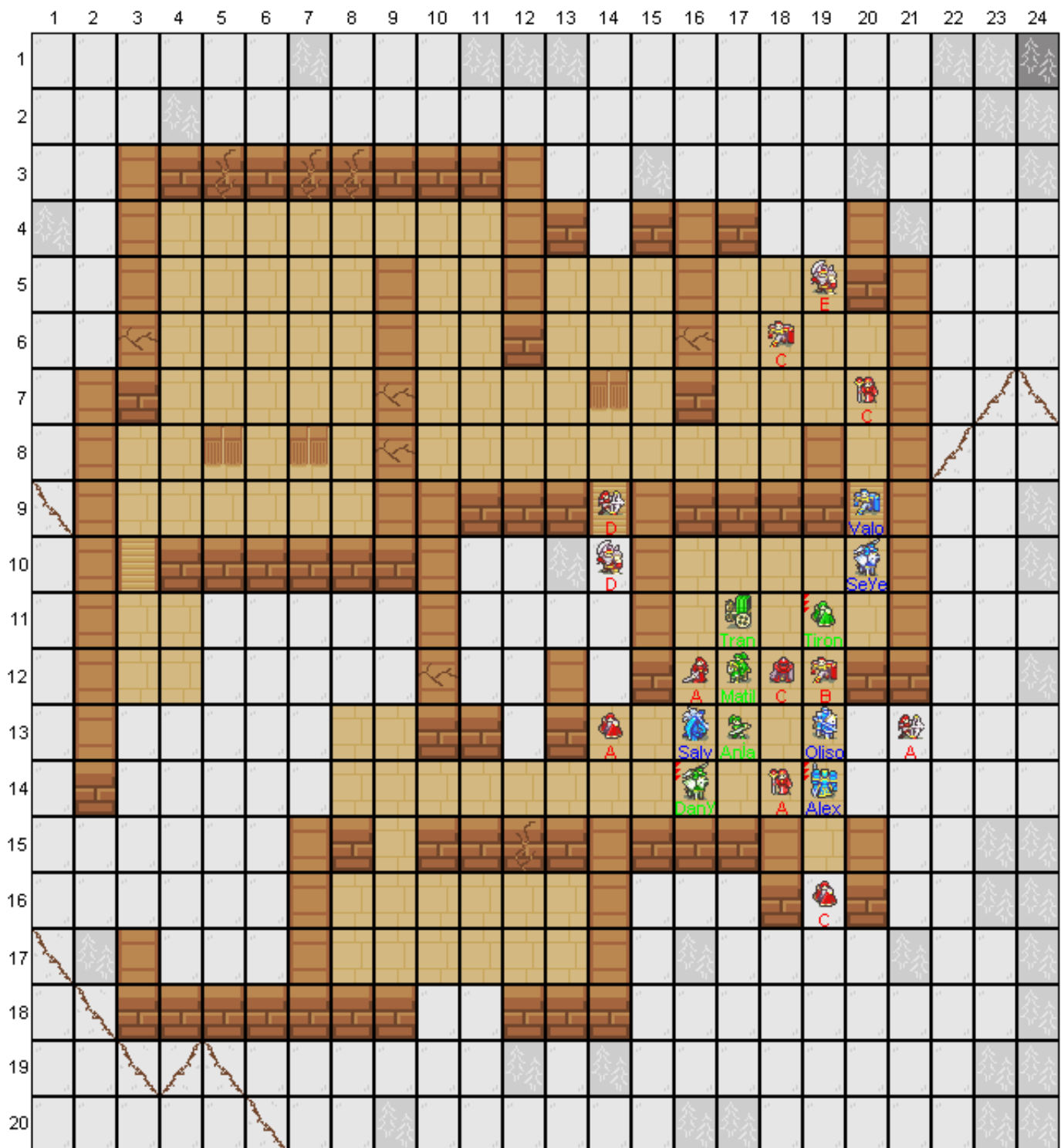
Up to 21HP restored

### **Matilda rejuvenates Olison**

Up to 19HP restored

Rejuvenates has broken!

# ~~Player Turn 8~~



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Allies:                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/51 3/3 ((Regen:2))<br>Olison Eul: 19/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 23/42 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/39<br>Valor Inara: 21/41 | Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman E: 45/45<br>Swordmaster A: 24/37<br>Sergeant B: 25/42<br>Sergeant C: 42/42<br>Bishop A: 38/38<br>Bishop C: 38/38<br>Druid C: 25/35<br>Sage A: 27/37<br>Sage C: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry D: 38/38 | Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: -/39 3/3<br>Matilda: 20/36<br>Magister Tiron: -/35 3/3<br>Wagon: 5/5hits |



"The line's broke! Quick, kill them!"

**Seyena moves to 18,10, jabs Druid in fleshy parts with her Javelin, then goes and snuggles into 17,14 and prays to the mighty serpent critzacatl.**

#### Seyena vs Druid C

Hit:  $122+15+10-39 = 108$ , autohit! Crit roll: 14!

Damage:  $26+1-12 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

Valor growled. The plan wasn't working very well for him right now.



"I'll deal with you in a minute, you son of a bitch." After properly threatening the Bishop in front of him, he went to kill the one near Alexander.

**Valor: 18,13, pass vulnerable to Olson, and Kill the Bishop dead. Thank Critzacatl for his continued benevolence.**

#### Valor vs Bishop A

Hit:  $127+15-51 = 91$

Hit roll: 18, hit!

Damage:  $29+1-13 = 17\text{dmg}$

Bishop A counterattacks!

Hit:  $137-50 = 87$

Hit roll: 52, hit! Crit roll: 9!

Damage:  $34-10 = 24 \times 3 = 72\text{dmg}$



"Damn... My luck never holds."

Olson barely catches the Vulnerary, only to see the Bishop perform that devastating counter. Cursing, he quickly administers first aid.

**Ensure Short Spear is equipped. Olson Vulnerarys Valor, then Alex.**

Sal growled as he rose from the ground, silently cursing magic, and tried to **drive his killer lance into the swordmaster and then swapped to his iron axe afterwards.**

The pink-haired wyvern rider was silent to his enemies this time, instead muttering a long, drawn-out prayer. No matter how bad things look, he had faith, and he had determination. Let them try.

Coke Santa delivers once more.

#### Olson uses Vulnerary on Valor

Up to 5HP restored

**Olison uses Vulnerary on Alex**

Up to 5HP restored

Then stabs were had.

**Salvatore vs Swordmaster A**

Hit:  $104+15+15+5+10-63 = 86$

Hit roll: 58, hit! Crit roll: 30!

Damage:  $35+1+2-14 = 24 \times 3 = 72\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Alex, Valor were downed, and Olison barely managed to avoid holy blast to the face.

**Sage C vs Alex**

Hit:  $140-10-5-25 = 100$ , autohit!

Damage:  $37-2-10 = 25\text{dmg}$

**Sentry B vs Valor**

Hit:  $138-50 = 88$

Hit roll: 26, hit!

Damage:  $29-1-19 = 9\text{dmg}$

**Bishop A vs Olison**

Hit:  $137+15-5-10-57 = 80$

Hit roll: 82, miss!

Olison counters!

Hit:  $108+5-51 = 62$

Hit roll: 3, hit!

Damage:  $30-13 = 17\text{dmg}$

Olison retaliates again!

Hit:  $108+5-51 = 62$

Hit roll: 9, hit!

Damage:  $30-13 = 17\text{dmg}$

**Olison gets Elixir (3/3)!**

Then, the sergeant went after Matilda, but yet again fortune was smiling on her, and he got winded. Severely.

**Sergeant B vs Matilda**

Hit:  $132-65 = 67$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

Matilda counterattacks!

Hit:  $129-43 = 86$

Hit roll: 50, hit!

Damage:  $25-12 = 13\text{dmg}$

Matilda retaliates once more!

Hit:  $129-43 = 86$

Hit roll: 64, hit!

Damage:  $25-12 = 13\text{dmg}$

Then the fire mage made quick work of Salvatore while two more enemies went inside the room.

**Sage A vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $140-5-25 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $37-7 = 30\text{dmg}$

More enemies came from northern passage, and one blasted Matilda off her horse with magics.

**Bishop C vs Matilda**

Hit:  $137-15-65 = 57$   
Hit roll: 34, hit! Crit roll: 6!  
Damage:  $34-1-18 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Anja, not given any orders or even suggestions, ran north and danced for two enemies, pinning them in their spots for a while.

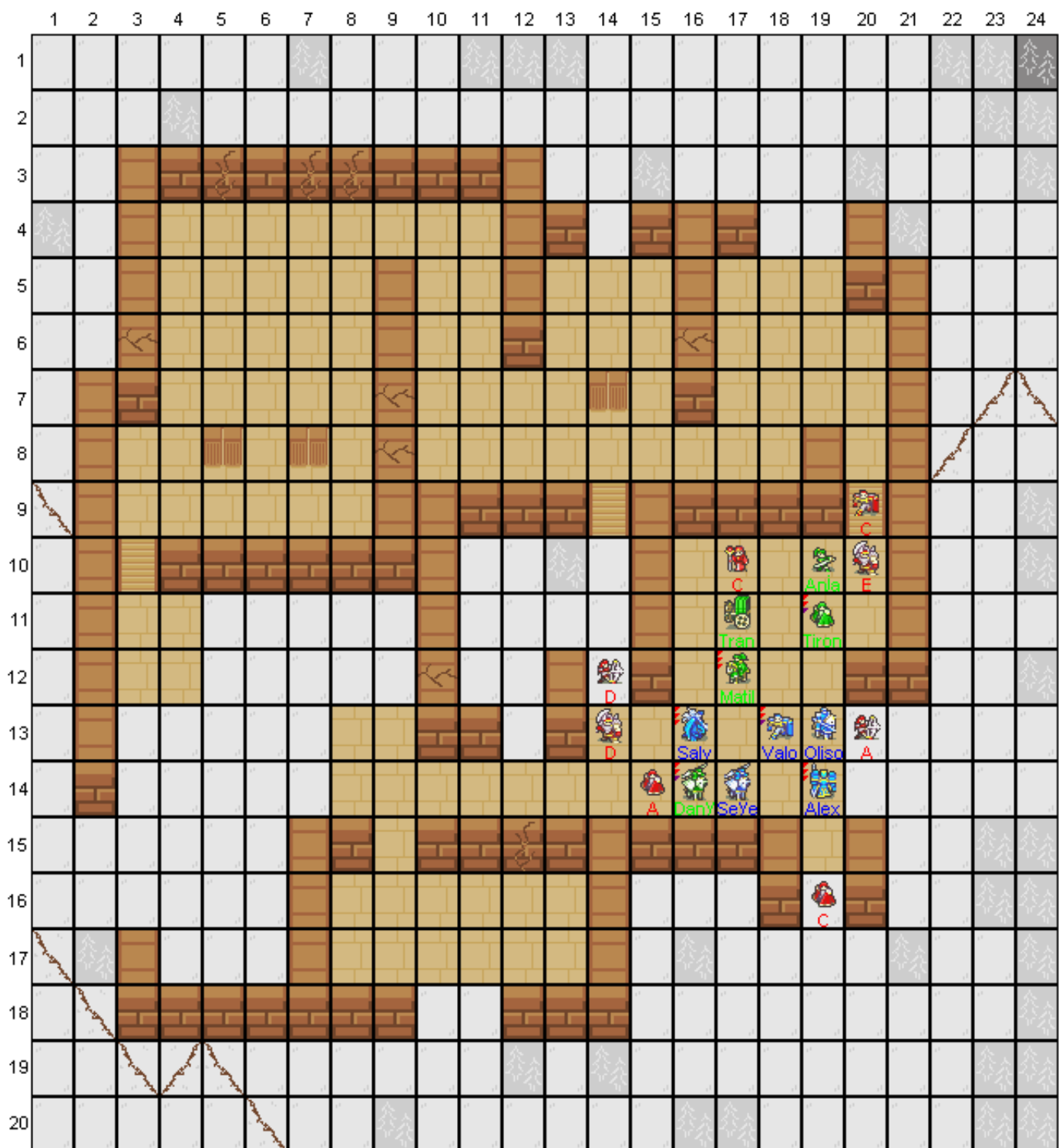
**Anja dances Bishop C**

Dance hit:  $(30+[\{18-22\} \times 5]+15) = 30-20+15 = 25$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Bishop C is Paralyzed!

**Anja dances Sergeant C**

Dance hit:  $(30+[\{18-12\} \times 5]+15) = 30+30+15 = 75$   
Hit roll: 69, hit!  
Sergeant C is Paralyzed!

# ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather: ☁

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                               | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Allies:                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/51 <b>3/3</b><br>^ ((Regen:2))<br>Olison Eul: 19/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: -/42 <b>3/3</b><br>^ ((Regen:2))<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/39<br>Valor Inara: -/41 <b>3/3</b> | Elite Axeman D: 45/45<br>Elite Axeman E: 45/45<br>Sergeant C: 42/42 <b>Paralyze (5/5)</b><br>Bishop C: 38/38 <b>Paralyze (5/5)</b><br>Sage A: 27/37<br>Sage C: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 38/38<br>Elite Sentry D: 38/38 | Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: -/39 <b>2/3</b><br>Matilda: -/36 <b>3/3</b><br>Magister Tiron: -/35 <b>2/3</b><br>Wagon: 5/5hits |

Olison remained steadfast as he cut down one more of the bishops. The dire situation did not escape him, reopened wounds tugged at his nerves. He could almost say he was used to it, ready to fall a hundred times if need be. He just had to keep it together, like

the tens of battles before him, and have a plan...

That train of thought ended immediately with the harsh crack of divine magic across the room.



"**Matilda!**" The paladin wasted no time in ripping the Elixir off the corpse of his last kill and urging his mount further inside, "**Stay with me here...**"

**Olison to 17,13. Elixir to Matilda. Then back to 19,13. Elixir to Valor.**



"**Valor! To your feet! Anja! Give Matilda a boost, we need everyone back in the fray now!**"

Valor shook his head as he struggled to his feet, sword in hand.



"**Ung, damn. I can't keep going through our medicine like this.**"

Seyena saw Valor fall at the last second, about to spring into motion to help him, but Olison managed to beat her to the punch. She wanted to make sure that he was actually alright, but the severe situation wouldn't allow her to be sentimental, as much as she loathed the fact. They needed to keep as many people on their feet as possible.

**Seyena instead moves to 19,12, sprinkling cocaine onto Tiron.**



"**Get up, mage! This isn't over! And Olison, I need that elixir!**"

**And without even waiting for a reply, she grabs the Elixir from Olison, rushing back to her original spot at 17,14, and throwing it at Danya.**



"**I expected more from another rider! On your feet!**"

Still, she couldn't help but feel the old thought creep upon her again. *She could just grab Valor and run. They would live... the situation seemed hopeless anyway.* It only made her angrier, though.

**Olison uses Elixir on Matilda**

Half HP restored!

**Olison uses Elixir on Valor**

Half HP restored!

**Seyena uses Vulnerary on Tiron**

Up to 5HP restored!

**Seyena uses Elixir on Danya**

Half HP restored!

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

**Axeman E vs Tiron**

Hit:  $108-10-35 = 63$

Hit roll: 93, miss!

Tiron counters!

Hit:  $115+10-42 = 83$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage:  $29-10 = 19\text{dmg}$

Axeman E attacks again!

Hit:  $108-10-35 = 63$

Hit roll: 70, miss!

**Sentry D vs Danya**

Hit:  $138-10-15-55 = 58$

Hit roll: 58, hit!

Damage:  $55-16 = 39\text{dmg}$

**Axeman D vs Seyena**

Hit:  $108+15-10-55 = 58$

Hit roll: 84, miss!

Seyena counterattacks!

Hit:  $122+15+10-15-42 = 90$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $26+1-1-14 = 12\text{dmg}$

Seyena counters again!

Hit:  $122+15+10-15-42 = 90$

Hit roll: 37, hit! Crit roll: 16!

Damage:  $26+1-1-14 = 12 \times 3 = 36\text{dmg}$

**Sage A vs Valor**

Hit:  $140-10-50 = 80$

Hit roll: 82, miss //omg

Valor counters!

Hit:  $127+15+10-40 = 112$ , autohit!

Damage:  $29+1-13 = 17\text{dmg}$

Valor counters again!

Hit:  $127+15+10-40 = 112$ , autohit!

Damage:  $29+1-13 = 17\text{dmg}$

**Sentry A vs Olison**

Hit:  $138+15-5-10-57 = 81$

Hit roll: 87 //\*\*facedesk\*\*facedesk\*\*facedesk\*

Olison counterattacks!

Hit:  $108+10+10-53 = 75$

Hit roll: 38, hit!

Damage:  $30+1-17 = 14\text{dmg}$

Olison counters once more!

Hit:  $108+10+10-54 = 75$

Hit roll: 63, hit!



Damage:  $30+1-17 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Sage C vs Olison

Hit:  $140+15-10-5-57 = 83$

Hit roll: 28, hit!

Damage:  $37-9 = 28\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Ha ha, sucker! Watch Magister Tiron being wonderful at combat magics!"

Then, Tiron thought better and ran away to heal Olison instead.

#### Tiron heals Olison

$10+21 / 2 = \text{Up to 15HP restored}$



"Anja, dance for me!" And Anja did for the mage knightess (and for Olison as well) while Matilda went around and brought Salvatore and Danya back to real world.

#### Matilda heals Salvatore

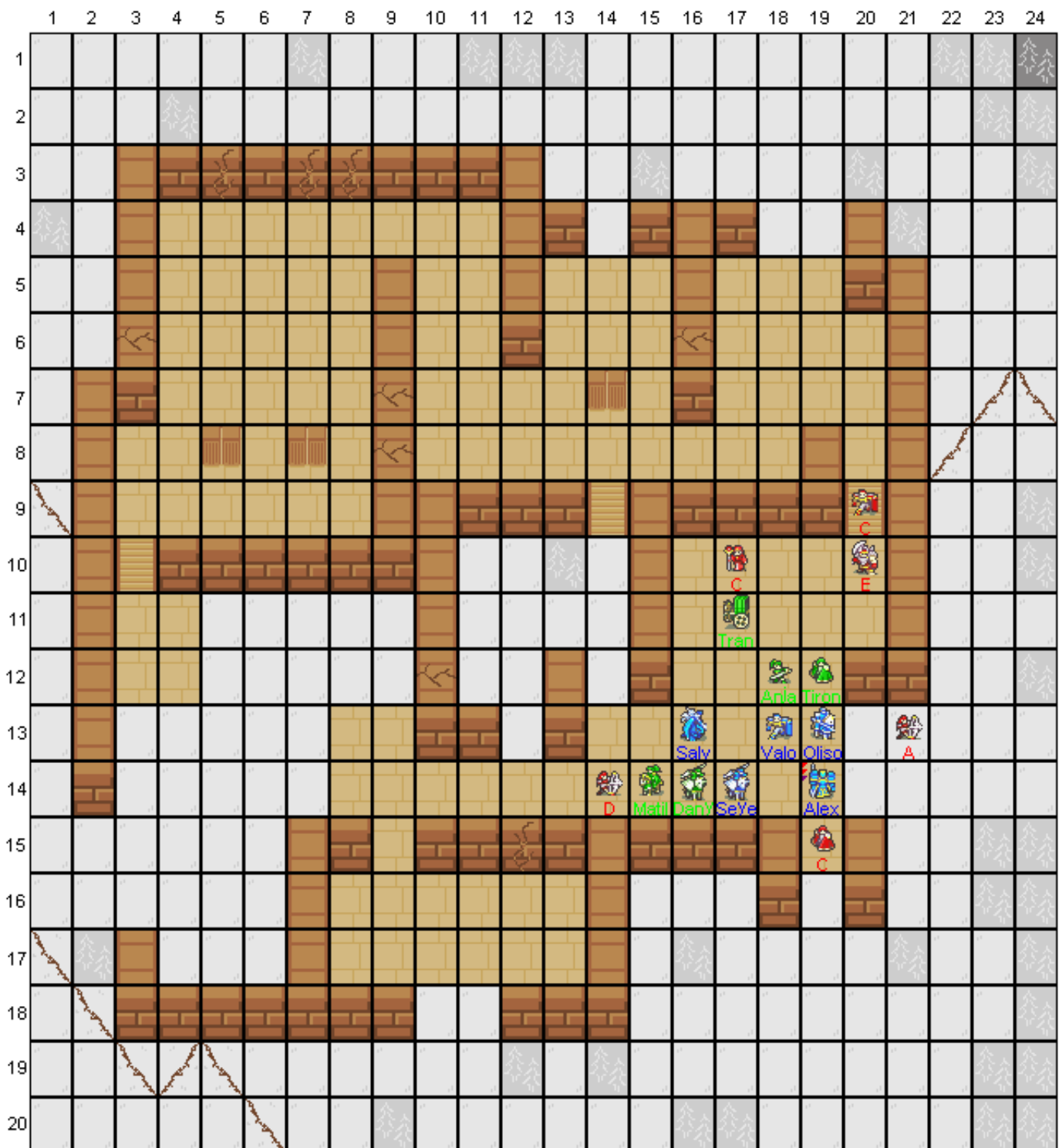
$10+20 / 2 = \text{Up to 15HP restored}$

#### Matilda heals Danya

$10+20 / 2 = \text{Up to 15HP restored}$

# ~~Player Turn 10~~

Olison, staring past sentry, could notice a suspiciously black and low-hanging cloud above the forest in the south-east... after a moment, he noticed it's not a cloud, but swarm of wyverns! They will be at the manor in few moments!



Weather: ☁

| Merces:                                                                                                                                      | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                       | Allies:                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/51 2/3 ((Regen:2))<br>Olison Eul: 15/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 17/42 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/39<br>Valor Inara: 20/41 | Elite Axeman E: 26/45<br>Sergeant C: 42/42 Paralyze (4/5)<br>Bishop C: 38/38 Paralyze (4/5)<br>Sage C: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry A: 10/38<br>Elite Sentry D: 38/38 | Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 15/39<br>Matilda: 18/36<br>Magister Tiron: 2/35<br>Wagon: 5/5hits |

Seyena moves to 18,14 chucks a Jav at sage, she then moves 17,13

Is Seyena strong enough woman to murder the Sage with heavy, unwieldy javelin before he even retaliates and turns her babyface to crisp? Is she!?

Apparently, she is indeed.

#### Seyena vs Sage C

Hit:  $122+15+10-40 = 107$ , autohit! Crit roll: 26! // \*sigh\*  
Damage:  $26+1-13 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

**Valor: 20,13, educate the Sentry about what happens when you smash a large sword into a human skull.**

\*stabs or something\*

#### Valor vs Sentry A

Hit:  $127+15-53 = 89$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-17 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Salvatore: Move to (14,13) stab with killer lance.**

#### Salvatore vs Sentry D

Hit:  $104+15-53 = 66$   
Hit roll: 54, hit! Crit roll: 1! // \*thud\*  
Damage:  $35+2-17 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$



"Damn it, more reinforcements incoming!"

**Olison to 19,10. Vuln self. Then stab ye axeman with the Steel Sword. To 16,13 after.**



"Alex has been out for too long. Matilda, can you help him? And Anja, try giving Matilda and Seyena a boost."

#### Olison uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP restored

#### Olison vs Axeman E

Hit:  $118+15-42 = 91$   
Hit roll: 86, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-14 = 15\text{dmg}$

Axeman E counterattacks!

Hit:  $108+15-15-57 = 51$   
Hit roll: 67, miss!

Olison attacks once more!

Hit:  $118+15-42 = 91$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-14 = 15\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Enemies came from the west... and no one took a look at north and south. Maybe that would be for better...



"You two, help the wyverns with your magic." A pair of red-robed sages moved away quickly. The massive knight looked at lean lady standing nearby.



"So, we're going along with the plan?"



"Yes," the knight spoke quietly. "We will go along with the Kesselring soldiers and crack the entirety of the group hiding in. This manor looks pretty damaged - there should be plenty of entrances."



"Mfmpftfff? Mfpmff memfpf..." A swordsman half the size of the knight mumbled through the rose in his lips.



"Silverio is right on that..."



"Yes, I do admit that these guys are holding much better than this Aaron guy have assumed. Change of plan. We shall wait till the fliers wear down the defenders and then go for a killing blow from behind." The woman laughed.



"Yees. Murder them all, and we shall be living lavishly as Kesselring generals. I can't wait to have my own host of male slaves at my disposal!"

The swordmaster took out his sword, a blade which seemingly had the edge made from crystal or some such, sharpened so much that movement generated sound.



"Mefmemfumpff. Pfmttefmff, peh! Kerpfeh pretfmemff... Pftf?"



"Aye, it's a pity Corcas isn't there. We have underestimated the Berebians back then. He would enjoy today's carnage... Make sure we will all get alive out of this battle. I, for one, am not keen on joining our fallen comrade so early in my life."

~~Ally Phase~~

Matilda went to heal Alexander, Anja danced for Matilda - and Seyena - who went on to heal Tiron. The panicky mage moved aside to heal Salvatore. In the meanwhile, Danya took her pegasus to the other side of the room and mauled the bishop with her lance.

**Matilda heals Alexander**

10+20 /2 = Up to 15HP restored

**Matilda heals Tiron**

10+20 = Up to 30HP restored

**Tiron heals Salvatore**

10+21 = Up to 31HP restored

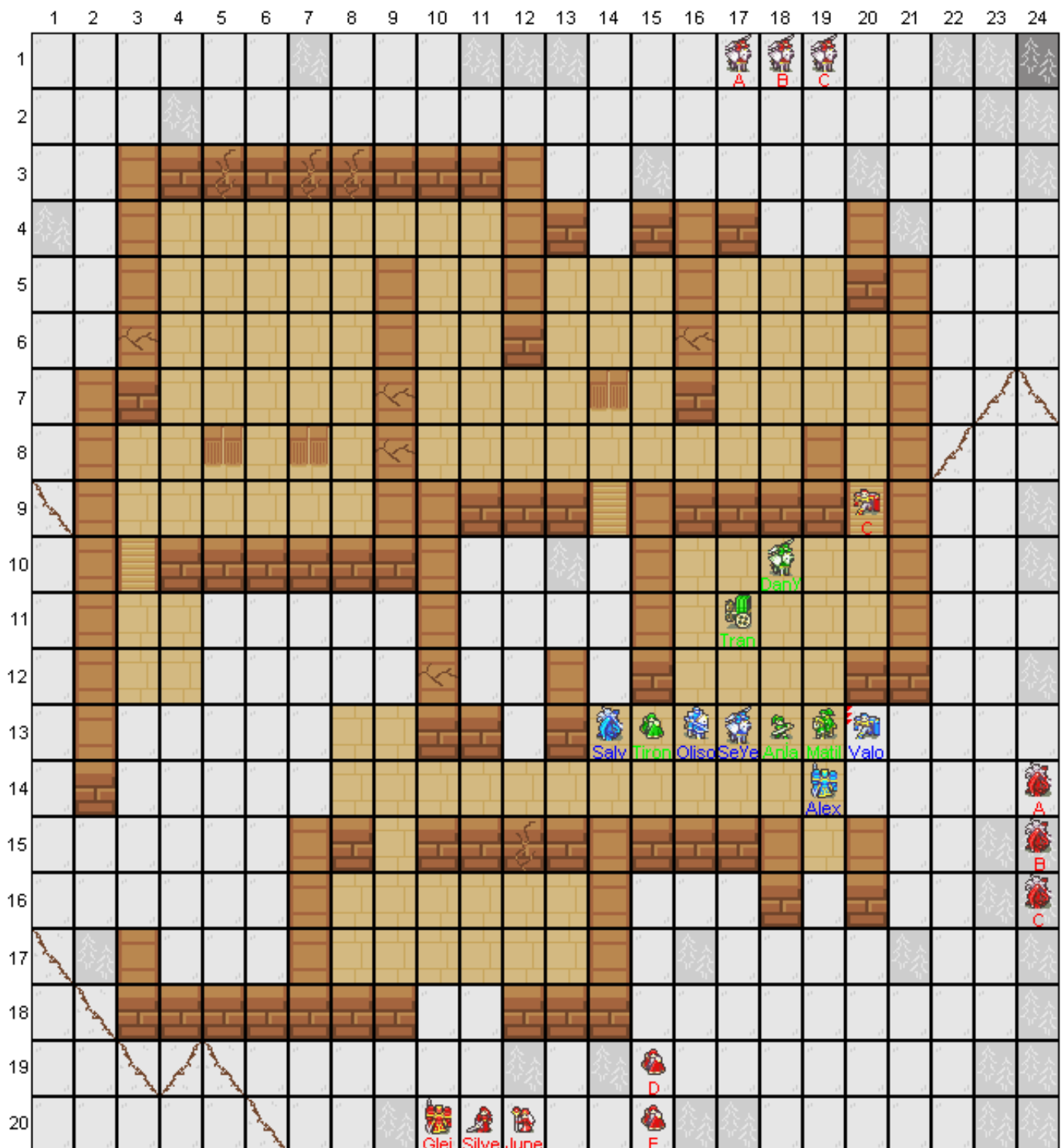
**Danya vs Bishop C**

Autohit!  
Damage: 33-13 = 20dmg

Danya strikes again!  
Autohit!  
Damage: 33-13 = 20dmg

# ~~Player Turn 11~~

**Suddenly**, Valor feels such pain in his thigh that he cannot help but scream! He can feel his veins burning and his lungs unable to breathe as he grasps the hurting leg, momentarily understanding where the pain could come from. But the sudden bout of excruciating pain is too much for him - he faceplants the snow a second later!



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                        | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                         | Allies:                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 17/51 Regen:2<br>Olison Eul: 25/39<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 42/42 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/39<br>Valor Inara: -/41 3/3 (??) | Sergeant C: 42/42 Paralyze (3/5)<br>Sage D: 37/37<br>Sage E: 37/37<br>Wyvern Knight A: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight B: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight C: 44/44<br>Falcoknight A: 37/37<br>Falcoknight B: 37/37 | Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 15/39<br>Matilda: 18/36<br>Magister Tiron: 29/35<br>Wagon: 5/5hits |

|  |                                                                            |  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  | Falcoknight C: 37/37<br>Gleipnitz: 56/56<br>June: 40/40<br>Silverio: 44/44 |  |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

Seyena had just finished helping Tiron up when she heard someone fall nearby.



"Huh- Valor!?"

As far as she knew, there were no mages nearby - something wasn't right. **She moves to 20,14, rescuing him, then moving to 19,12, carefully dropping him while snatching Matilda's staff and healing her beloved mercenary.**



"This'll make you better, come on..."

Oweewooo~~

#### Seyena heals Valor

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| 10+6 /2 = Up to 8HP restored |
|------------------------------|

Valor stood uneasily, then dropped to a knee while holding back another scream.



"M-my leg... It's on fire!" A short visual inspection determined this was not actually the case. "What the hell is this? More magic?"



"N-no, it shouldn't be! All enemy mages are dead. Is it residue magic, or something?" She looked down towards Valor with a worried gaze.



"Are you alright? Can you stand?"



"Ngh... I think so. Just burns like hell, and more when I move." Valor gingerly got to his feet, getting his sword and shield back up into a fighting stance. "Blast and damn this hurts! Sweat was beading on the swordsman's face, and his breathing was labored. "I can still fight, I think. Just, I'm not sure for how long..."

While Seyena focused on helping Valor, Alex was going to focus on protecting Anja. So he moved next to her, where he'd be able to properly guard her.



"Anja, I want you to end up next to me when you do whatever you do-- actually can you do the flute thing for Valor and Olson?"

**Alexander: 17, 13. Guard Anja.**

**Olison to 19,14. Rescue Matilda. Then back to 16,13 and drop her North.**

**Salvatore moves to 17,10.**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The three wyvern riders fled inside while more riders showed up at the manor's perimeter. One of these stabbed at Seyena, only to get smacked in the face by her javelin.

#### Wyvern Knight A

Hit:  $117-10-55 = 52$

Hit roll: 64, miss!

Seyena retaliates!

Hit:  $122+15+10-40 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $26+1-21 = 6\text{dmg}$

Seyena counters again!

Hit:  $122+15+10-40 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $26+1-21 = 6\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Sure thing!" And then Anja played the song of her people for Olson and Valor.

Danya in the meanwhile went to kill the paralyzed swordsman, only to gasp in terror.



"Oh shit! Guys, there's entire falconknight troop coming at us from the north!"

#### Danya vs Sergeant C

Autohit!

Damage:  $33+1-17 = 17\text{dmg}$

Danya attacks again!

Autohit!

Damage:  $33+1-17 = 17\text{dmg}$



Matilda then finished off the poor sergeant while Tiron, at the sight of wyverns, quickly hid behind Olison's mount and called some magic to heal the cavalier.

Matilda vs Sergeant C

Autohit!  
Damage: 25-12 = 13dmg

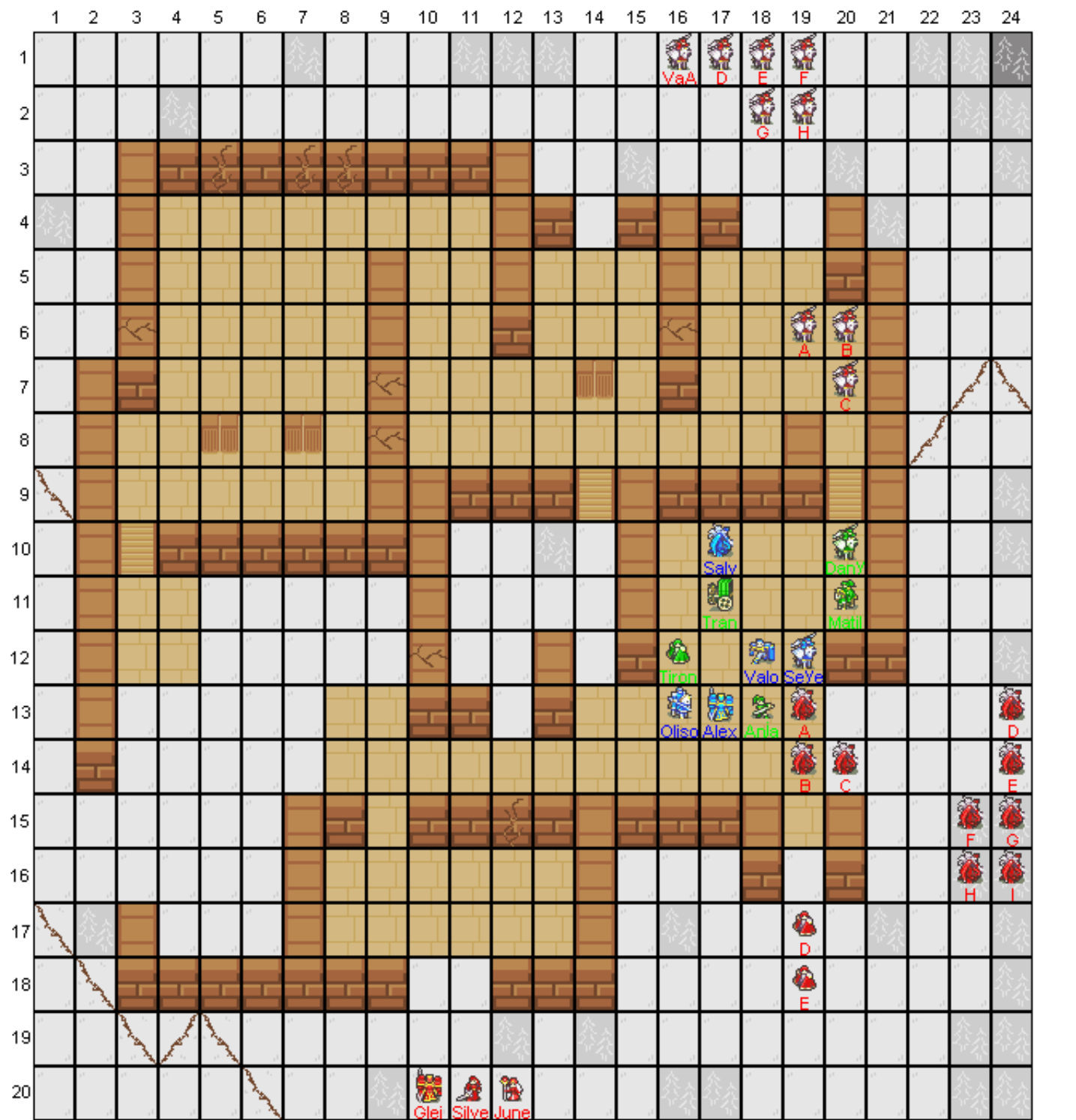
Tiron heals Olison

10+21 = Up to 31HP healed

~~Player Turn 12~~

Poison rolls

Valor: 2



| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 19/51 Regen:2<br>Olison Eul: 39/39 Regen:2<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 42/42 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/39<br>Valor Inara: 8/41 (Poison) | Sage D: 37/37<br>Sage E: 37/37<br>Wyvern Knight A: 32/44<br>Wyvern Knight B: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight C: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight D: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight E: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight F: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight G: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight H: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight I: 44/44<br>Falcoknight A: 37/37 | Falcoknight B: 37/37<br>Falcoknight C: 37/37<br>Falcoknight D: 37/37<br>Falcoknight E: 37/37<br>Falcoknight F: 37/37<br>Falcoknight G: 37/37<br>Falcoknight H: 37/37<br>Valkyrie A: 35/35<br>Gleipnitz: 56/56<br>June: 40/40<br>Silverio: 44/44 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 15/39<br>Matilda: 18/36<br>Magister Tiron: 26/35<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |



"You'll go no further!"

**Olison to 17,14. Francisca Wyvern B. If it survives, axe it again. If not, to 18,14 and Axe Wyvern A.**

Three axes were needed to down that wyvern.

#### Olison vs Wyvern B

Hit:  $108+15+10+10-40 = 103$ , autohit!

Damage:  $30+1+1-21 = 11\text{dmg}$

Olison strikes again!

Hit:  $108+15+10+10-40 = 103$ , autohit! Crit roll: 19!

Damage:  $30+1+1-21 = 11 \times 3 = 33\text{dmg}$

**Seyena to 19 14 iron lance on wyv A**

#### Seyena vs Wyvern A

Hit:  $137+15+10-40 = 122$ , autohit! Crit roll: 33! // \*grabs RNG and throws it outta window\*

Damage:  $25+1-21 = 5 \times 3 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Seyena then moves to 19,15, because second action ftw.**

**Sal snags the vuln from the cart, moves to 19,13, rescues Seyena, moves to 19,14, equips his axe and releases Seyena south at 19,15.**

Valor swayed unsteadily, his leg still burning from the poison he currently suspected was magic. And why shouldn't he? Most of his more serious problems came from magic. He could hold his ground against quite a number of weapon swinging bastards. But pit him against wizards, and it was just trouble, trouble, trouble.

And Valor *hated* trouble. The swordsman gripped his killing edge, hard enough that his arm shook. Or maybe he was shaking from the poison. It was hard for an observer to tell. It was even harder for Valor to tell.

Then he saw a couple of Sages making their way toward the ruins, ready to tear through their defenses like an arrow through wet paper. Valor let out a snarl, and in defiance of

his leg, dashed toward them, raising his sword over his head.



"If you think your petty curses will save you from me, you are sorely mistaken!" He yelled, **moving to 19,16 and attacking the Sage with his Killing Edge**. "Your accursed arcane workings end here, at my hand! Know the name Valor Inara, cower in it, and *DIE!*"

**Once the first action is resolved in Sage D's messy death, use second action to move one south, and give Sage E the same.**

#### Valor vs Sage D

Hit:  $127+15-40 = 102$ , autohit! Crit roll: 31!  
Damage:  $29+1-13 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

#### Valor vs Sage E

Hit:  $127+15-40 = 102$ , autohit! Crit roll: 86!  
Damage:  $29+1-13 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

**Alexander: 19, 13, trade for a vulnerary from Sal, heal myself, and guard Sal.**

#### Alexander uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP healed

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Two wyverns went straight for Valor, and he managed to hurt one before the other knocked him down.

#### Wyvern Knight H vs Valor

Hit:  $117+15-50 = 82$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Valor counterstrikes!

Hit:  $127+15-15-40 = 87$   
Hit roll: 66, hit! Crit roll: 48!  
Damage:  $29+1-1-21 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern Knight I

Hit:  $117+15-50 = 82$   
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage:  $38+1-1-19 = 19\text{dmg}$

Then Wyvern D and C had to deal with Alexanderwall, and he walled them pretty nicely

#### Wyvern D vs Alexander

Hit:  $117-15-5-27 = 70$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-1-2-30 = 4\text{dmg}$

Alexander retaliates!

Hit:  $92+15+10-40 = 77$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!

Wyvern D attacks once more!

Hit:  $117-15-5-27 = 70$   
Hit roll: 72, miss!

### Wyvern C vs Salvatore

Alexander is guarding!  
Hit:  $117-15-5-27 = 70$   
Hit roll: 4, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-1-2-30 = 4\text{dmg}$

Alexander retaliates!  
Hit:  $92+15+10-40 = 77$   
Hit roll: 11, hit! Crit roll: 2! //wtf  
Damage:  $33+1-21 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

Wyvern C strikes again!  
Hit:  $117-15-5-27 = 70$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

In the meanwhile, the falconknights assaulted Danya, from range and at melee, but she resisted and even stabbed back.

### Falconknight C vs Danya

Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$   
Hit roll: 84, miss!

### Falconknight B vs Danya

Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$   
Hit roll: 8, hit!  
Damage:  $30-16 = 14\text{dmg}$

Danya counters!  
Hit:  $128-60 = 68$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $33-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

And then, even more enemies arrived.



"Mefmm mfpftfptt. Pfmemfmfpf?"



"Indeed, that's the last of them. We should start moving." And moving they did.

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Magister, help me there! Heal me!" Danya stabbed at the falconknight after getting them heals.

### Magister heals Danya

$10+21 = \text{Up to } 31\text{HP restored}$

### Danya vs Falconknight B

Hit:  $128-60 = 68$   
Hit roll: 68, hit!  
Damage:  $33-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

Falconknight B retaliates!  
Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$   
Hit roll: 64, miss!

Matilda found a better target than Falconknight, and her wind blasted the wyvern in front of Alexander so hard the poor rider and his beast got torn apart!

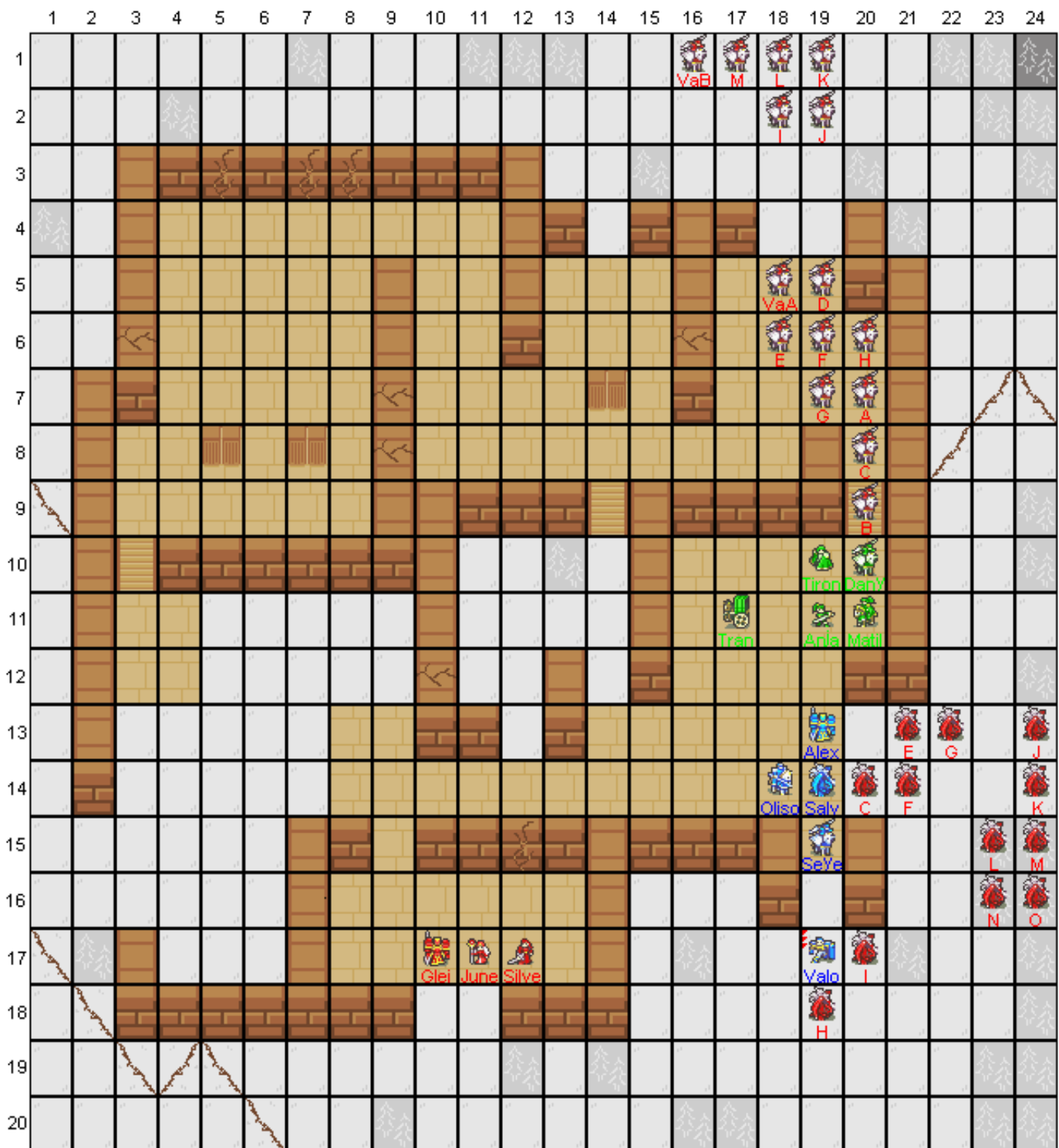
**Matilda vs Wyvern D**

Hit:  $129-40 = 89$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $35-9 = 26\text{dmg}$

Matilda strikes again!  
Hit:  $129-40 = 89$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $35-9 = 26\text{dmg}$

Then, Anja played a song on her flute for Tiron.

# ~~Player Turn 13~~



Weather: ☁

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                   | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 33/52 Regen:2<br>Olison Eul: 39/39 Regen:2<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 42/43 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/39<br>Valor Inara: -/41 3/3 (Poison) | Wyvern Knight C: 5/44<br>Wyvern Knight E: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight F: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight G: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight H: 20/44<br>Wyvern Knight I: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight J: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight K: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight L: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight M: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight N: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight O: 44/44<br>Falcoknight A: 37/37<br>Falcoknight B: 1/37 | Falcoknight D: 37/37<br>Falcoknight E: 37/37<br>Falcoknight F: 37/37<br>Falcoknight G: 37/37<br>Falcoknight H: 37/37<br>Falcoknight I: 37/37<br>Falcoknight J: 37/37<br>Falcoknight K: 37/37<br>Falcoknight L: 37/37<br>Falcoknight M: 37/37<br>Valkyrie A: 35/35<br>Valkyrie B: 35/35<br>Gleipnitz: 56/56<br>June: 40/40 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 32/39<br>Matilda: 18/36<br>Magister Tiron: 25/35 Regen:2<br>Wagon: 5/5hits                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Seyena moves 1S, protectively nabs Valor, then flies to 18,12 and plops the poor guy next to Alex

Salvatore: Autohit axe chop wyvern C! Bask in all of my personal skills activating.

Olison to 19,16. Axe Wyvern H, then back to 18,14.

Both riders scored their kills.

#### Salvatore vs Wyvern C

Hit:  $110+15+10+15-40 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34+1+2-21 = 16\text{dmg}$

#### Olison vs Wyvern H

Hit:  $108+15+5-40 = 88$

Hit roll: 82, hit!

Damage:  $31+1-21 = 11\text{dmg}$

Olison hits again!

Hit:  $108+15+5-40 = 88$

Hit roll: 22, hit!

Damage:  $31+1-21 = 11\text{dmg}$

Nodding at Valor, Alexander applies a vulnerary to the poor man, before settling himself down again and going back into defensive position. He speaks to Anja:



"Anja, I think you should probably keep, uh, dancing for people!"

Alexander: Vuln Valor, Guard Sal.

Valor pushed himself to his feet and turned his head sharply, eliciting a loud crack.



"Well, got the wizards. So that's good." Valor turned to Tiron, and spat a bit of blood onto the floor of the ruined building. "Hey, I saw a few tough looking people coming into the building while I was fighting those riders. Got anything that can give me the edge against them?"

#### Alex uses Powder on Valor

Up to 5HP restored

~~Enemy Phase~~

Winged onslaught continues relentlessly.

#### Wyvern E vs Alexander

Hit:  $117-15-10-5-25 = 62$

Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-2-1-30 = 4\text{dmg}$

Alexander counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $94+15+10+10-40 = 89$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-21 = 14\text{dmg}$

Wyvern E attacks once more!  
Hit:  $117-15-10-5-25 = 62$   
Hit roll: 34, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-2-1-30 = 4\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern I vs Salvatore

Alexander is guarding!  
Hit:  $117-15-10-5-25 = 62$   
Hit roll: 54, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-2-1-30 = 4\text{dmg}$

Alexander retaliates!  
Hit:  $94+15+10+10-40 = 89$   
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-21 = 14\text{dmg}$

Wyvern I attacks again!  
Hit:  $117-15-10-5-25 = 62$   
Hit roll: 45, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-2-1-30 = 4\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern F vs Salvatore

Alexander is guarding!  
Hit:  $117-15-10-5-25 = 62$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-2-1-30 = 4\text{dmg}$

Alexander counters!  
Hit:  $94+15+10+10-40 = 89$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-21 = 14\text{dmg}$

Wyvern F attacks again!  
Hit:  $117-15-10-5-25 = 62$   
Hit roll: 81, miss!

The heavily wounded pegasus moved away and got healed by one of the Valkyrie, while her sisters continued to attack Danya... without much success.

#### Valkyrie A mends Falconknight B

$20+14 =$  Up to 34HP healed

#### Falconknight C vs Danya

Hit:  $123-10-15-55 = 43$   
Hit roll: 82, miss!

#### Falconknight A vs Danya

Hit:  $123-10-15-55 = 43$   
Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Damage:  $30-16 = 14\text{dmg}$

Danya counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $128+10-60 = 78$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $33-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

Then, the wall behind everyone exploded into cloud of dust and rubble, and two characters emerged into the hall!





"MM-MMFFFF!"



"We're Silverio's mercenaries! PREPARE TO DIE!"

#### Gleipnitz vs Cracked Wall

Autohit!

Damage:  $45-5 = 40\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Anja danced Valor and Tiron, Danya stabbed at the falconknight, Tiron healed Danya and sharpened Valor whilst Matilda helped finish off that falconknight.

#### Danya vs Falconknight A

Hit:  $128+10-60 = 78$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $33-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

Falconknight A retaliates!

Hit:  $123-10-15-55 = 43$

Hit roll: 16, hit!

Damage:  $30-16 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Tiron heals Danya

$10+21 = \text{Up to 31HP restored}$

#### Matilda vs Falconknight A

Hit:  $129+10-60 = 79$

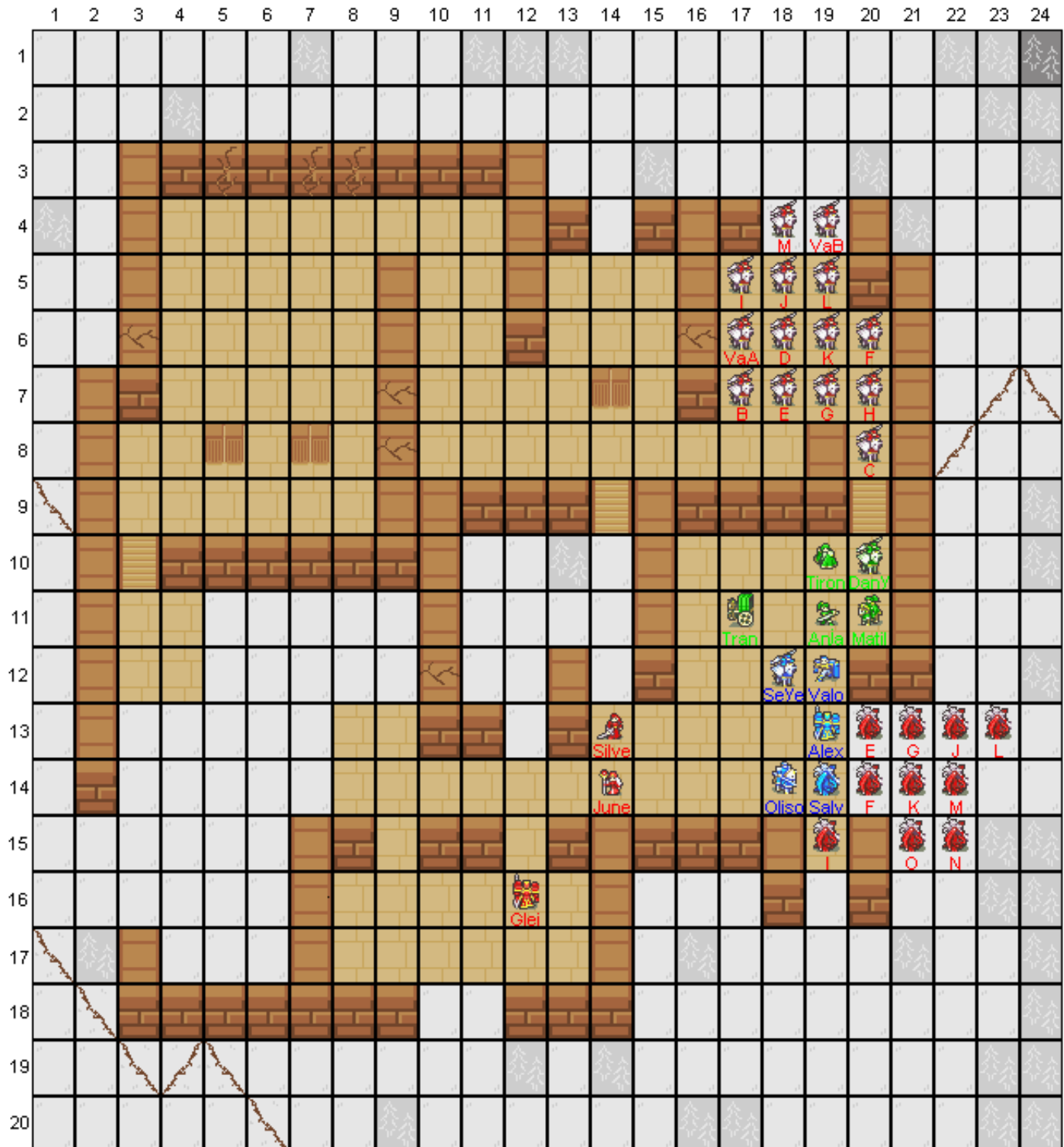
Hit roll: 76, hit!

Damage:  $35-14 = 21\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 14~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 2



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 15/52 Regen:2<br>Olison Eul: 39/39 Regen:2<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 43/43 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 23/39<br>Valor Inara: 3/41 Sharpness (5/5) (Poison) | Wyvern Knight E: 30/44<br>Wyvern Knight F: 30/44<br>Wyvern Knight G: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight I: 30/44<br>Wyvern Knight J: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight K: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight L: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight M: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight N: 44/44<br>Wyvern Knight O: 44/44 | Falcoknight F: 37/37<br>Falcoknight G: 37/37<br>Falcoknight H: 37/37<br>Falcoknight I: 37/37<br>Falcoknight J: 37/37<br>Falcoknight K: 37/37<br>Falcoknight L: 37/37<br>Falcoknight M: 37/37<br>Valkyrie A: 35/35<br>Valkyrie B: 35/35 |
| Allies:                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 35/39                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

Matilda: 18/36

Magister Tiron: 24/35 Regen:2

Wagon: 5/5hits

Falcoknight B: 35/37

Falcoknight C: 37/37

Falcoknight D: 37/37

Falcoknight E: 37/37

Gleipnitz: 56/56

June: 40/40

Silverio: 44/44



"I- Whoa." As Tiron's magicks went to work, Valor's vision became, well, sharper. He could clearly see every detail about the two that had burst into the room. Awesome. "Thanks, Tiron." Valor focused his eyes on Silverio of Silverio's mercenaries. "Never heard of you! Too bad you won't live long enough to spread your reputation! I mean, unless you leave now."



"Mftftfpff? Mftfff mempf, pfmbfpfff!"



"Haha, Silverio's right! Now, surrender, and we promise to kill you quickly!"



"Damn, the one with the rose in his mouth is the leader? Quick question, if I cut his throat, are you likely to stay and fight, or run and live, because I'm pretty sure I can take him." *Stall the enemy as long as possible, maybe see if we can't get them to run away. The less people I need to fight, the better.*



"MFMFFPFTFTFTT!"



"Oooh, you've dug your own grave, boy!" The duo prepared to attack - and kill - Valor.



"Ha, she didn't even answer! I smell a coward!"



"Valor, don't take too long with them. We'll need you back at the real fight soon enough."



"I think Alex and Salvatore have those Wyverns handled. How about I take the girl, and you can handle the chick with the magic?" *I'll be able to focus on Silverio if Seyena can distract the other one...*

**Valor: Spend first action trading Seyena's healing staff away from Seyena, then to Anja, then move to 18,13 and use pure water on Seyena.**



"Anja, get that staff to Matilda!"



"Gladly. I've killed mages worse than her in my sleep."

**Seyena launches to 15,14, stabby-stabbering June with Iron Lance.**



"Thanks."

**Valor: Once Seyena's action is resolved, move to 15,13, offer a prayer to Critzocoatl, equip the Killing Edge, second blade of the crit-serpent, and kill Silverio to death. Crit get!**

Just before Seyena attacks, June mutters short prayer.

**Seyena vs June**

Benediction: Seyena's next crit cancelled  
Hit:  $137+15+10-61 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $26+1-17 = 10\text{dmg}$

June counterattacks!  
Hit:  $146-10-55 = 81$   
Hit roll: 37, hit!  
Damage:  $34-10-24 = 0\text{dmg}$ !  
Seyena is Silenced!

Seyena attacks again!  
Hit:  $137+15+10-61 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $26+1-17 = 10\text{dmg}$   
//There wasn't even a crit ;n;

Then Valor attacked Silverio with a roar, and the blade cut deep into the swordmaster's

body!

#### Valor vs Silverio

Hit:  $127+15+30-85 = 87$

Hit roll: 76, hit! Crit roll: 49!

Damage:  $30+1-14 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$



"Mfpftff..." Silverio fell to the ground with a gurgle.



"S-Silverio! No! Gleipnitz, Silverio's hurt!" The giant knight rushed toward his companions, breaking any rules of fair engagement.



"Get us out of here, June! You, blonde! I will remember your face." The knight spoke as June began uttering some arcane words and brilliantly white light began to engulf him, the priestess, and grievously wounded swordsmaster.

"You will regret the day..." The words faded along with the light.

#### Epilogue Chapter Zero unlocked.

**Salvatore: Smack wyvern F with axe, thoroughly enjoy +40 to hit and +30 crit thanks to supports and personal skills.**

Hack'n'slash'em.

#### Salvatore vs Wyvern F

Hit:  $110+15+15+10-40 = 110$ , autohit! Crit roll: 24!

Damage:  $34+1+2-21 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

#### Olison to 18,13. Axe Wyvern E.

#### Olison vs Wyvern E

Hit:  $108+15+10+10-40 = 103$ , autohit!

Damage:  $31+1+1-21 = 12\text{dmg}$

Olison strikes again!

Hit:  $108+15+10+10-40 = 103$ , autohit!

Damage:  $31+1+1-21 = 12\text{dmg}$



"Damn it feels good to be a badass." Valor swayed dangerously, and leaned against the nearby wall for support. "Ooooh. That's not good. At least I got the answer to my question though. Heh, suckers." Valor stood up straight again, turning to watch

Alexander and Olison fight the Wyverns. "Alright, let's go finish this."

Alex vulns thyself and guards Sal.

Majick powdah is goooo~

Alexander uses Vulnerary

Up to 10HP restored

~~Enemy Phase~~

More flappery wingedy fightan.

Wyvern E vs Alexander

Hit: 117-15-5-25 = 72  
Hit roll: 7, hit!  
Damage: 38-1-2-1-30 = 4dmg  
  
Alexander retaliates!  
Hit: 94+15+10-40 = 79  
Hit roll: 88, miss!  
  
Wyvern E attacks again!  
Hit: 117-15-5-25 = 72  
Hit roll: 96, miss!

Wyvern I vs Salvatore

Alex is Guarding!  
Hit: 117-15-5-25 = 72  
Hit roll: 63, hit!  
Damage: 38-1-2-1-30 = 4dmg  
  
Alex counterattacks!  
Hit: 94+15+10-40 = 79  
Hit roll: 10, hit! Crit roll: 18!  
Damage: 34+1-21 = 14x3 = 42dmg

Wyvern K vs Salvatore

Alex is Guarding!  
Hit: 117-15-5-25 = 72  
Hit roll: 75, miss!  
  
Alexander counters!  
Hit: 94+15+10-40 = 79  
Hit roll: 99, miss!  
  
Wyvern K attacks once more!  
Hit: 117-15-5-25 = 72  
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage: 38-1-2-1-30 = 4dmg

Flap flap flap.

Falconknight C vs Danya

Hit: 123-15-55 = 53  
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage: 30-16 = 14dmg  
  
Danya retaliates!  
Hit: 128-60 = 68  
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage: 33-15 = 18dmg

Falconknight H vs Danya

Hit: 123-15-55 = 53

Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage: 30-16 = 14dmg

Valor and Seyena could see that some of the falconknights were trying to sneak around!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Danya rushed at the falconknight but got wounded grievously.



"F-Finally... I can..."

#### Danya vs Falconknight C

Hit: 128-60 = 68  
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage: 33-15 = 18dmg  
  
Falconknight C retaliates!  
Hit: 123-15-55 = 53  
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
30-16 = 14dmg



"What? No no no no NO! You stay up with me, woman!" Tiron will have none of this and healed Danya back as ~~a meat wall~~ onto her feet, while Matilda blasted at the heavily wounded Falconknight.

#### Tiron heals Danya

10+21 / 2 = Up to 15HP healed

#### Matilda vs Falconknight C

Hit: 129-60 = 69  
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage: 35-14 = 21dmg



"Dancer Anja, please, invigorate me!" And lo! Anja danced for Tiron and for Matilda as to not waste the action. Tiron healed Danya up, pushing away the possible falconknight swarming, while Matilda turned around and blasted the wyvern in front of Alex.

#### Tiron heals Danya

10+21 = Up to 31HP restored

#### Matilda vs Wyvern E

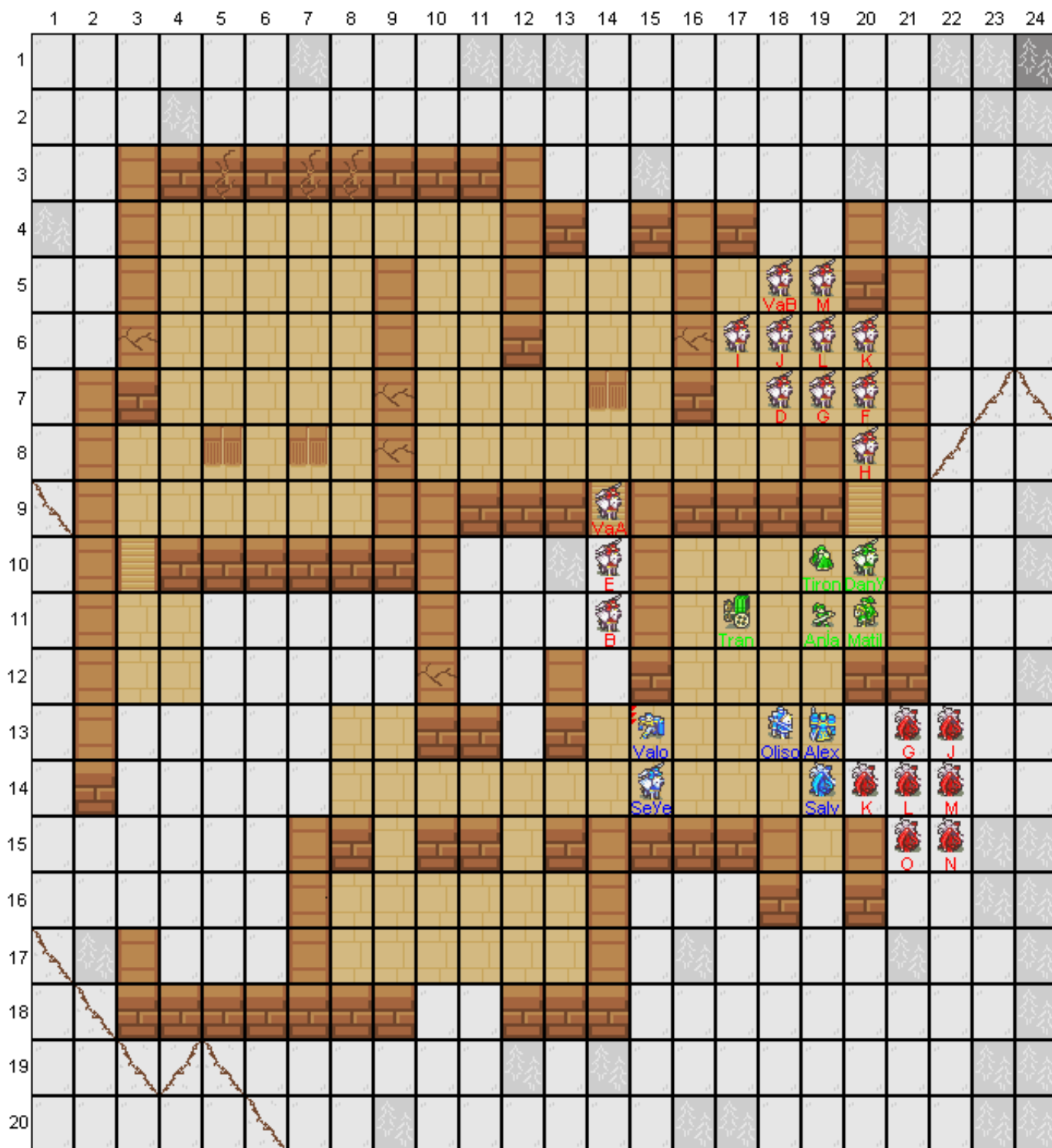
Hit: 129-40 = 89  
Hit roll: 80, hit!  
Damage: 35-9 = 26dmg

# ~~Player Turn 15~~

Alexander, from his spot, can easily see silhouettes of many people sneaking through the trees south-east! They will be at the manor in a moment!

## Poison rolls

Valor: 4



Weather: ☁

| Merces:                          | Enemies:               |                      |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 15/52 Regen:2  | Wyvern Knight G: 44/44 | Falcoknight F: 37/37 |
| Olison Eul: 39/39 Regen:2        | Wyvern Knight J: 44/44 | Falcoknight G: 37/37 |
| Salvatore Vaughan: 43/43 Regen:2 | Wyvern Knight K: 44/44 | Falcoknight H: 37/37 |
| Seyena Ikane: 23/39              | Wyvern Knight L: 44/44 | Falcoknight I: 37/37 |
| ^ Pure Water (4/5) Silence (4/5) | Wyvern Knight M: 44/44 | Falcoknight J: 37/37 |
| Valor Inara: -/41 3/3 (Poison)   | Wyvern Knight N: 44/44 | Falcoknight K: 37/37 |
|                                  | Wyvern Knight O: 44/44 | Falcoknight L: 37/37 |



| Allies:                                                                                          | Falcoknight B: 35/37<br>Falcoknight D: 37/37<br>Falcoknight E: 37/37 | Falcoknight M: 37/37<br>Valkyrie A: 35/35<br>Valkyrie B: 35/35 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anja: 31/31<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Matilda: 18/36<br>Magister Tiron: 23/35 Regen:2<br>Wagon: 5/5hits |                                                                      |                                                                |

After slamming the skull of a wyvern rider into the ground with his hammer, Alexander happened to look to the southeast.



"Oh, Dragon. Really? *Really?! ...More people, coming from the southeast. Damn it!*"

**Alexander: stand there**

The poison overtakes Valor's body once more, and he loses consciousness, sliding down the wall he'd been leaning on and onto the floor.

**Olison to 18,11, take the Heal Staff off Anja. Then to 14,13 and axe ye falcoknight.**

Ye falconknight hath been axed.

#### Olison vs Falconknight B

Hit:  $108+15-60 = 63$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $31+1-15 = 17\text{dmg}$

Falconknight B retaliates!  
Hit:  $123-15-59 = 49$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

**Seyena to 14,14, take Heal off Olison. Then back to 15,14 and ~~heal~~ Valor scowl at being Silenced. Ensure Steel Javelin is equipped.**

**Sal lobs a javelin at Wyvern L, switching back to Iron Axe after.**



"Seyena, why can't you- You're silenced?! Damn it! Matilda, get the staff off Seyena, Valor needs your help!" Olison points over to 16,14 then 16,13. "Tiron, Captain Danya, hold the line! Anja, keep your dances up! Take Matilda's place and keep the choke held!"

#### Salvatore vs Wyvern L

Hit:  $110+15+10-40 = 95$   
Hit roll: 66, hit! Crit roll: 13! //hissssss U: <  
Damage:  $32+2-21 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

~~Enemy Phase~~

Onnn the wiiiings of the dragooooon~

**Wyvern L vs Alexander**

Hit:  $117-15-5-29 = 68$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-2-1-30 = 4\text{dmg}$

Alexander retaliates!  
Hit:  $94+15+10-40 = 79$   
Hit roll: 78, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-21 = 14\text{dmg}$

**Wyvern N vs Alexander**

Hit:  $117-15-5-29 = 68$   
Hit roll: 98, miss!  
  
Alexander retaliates!  
Hit:  $94+15+10-40 = 79$   
Hit roll: 54, hit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $34+1-21 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

Wyvern N attacks again!  
Hit:  $117-15-5-29 = 68$   
Hit roll: 76, miss!

**Wyvern K vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $117-15-5-26 = 71$   
Hit roll: 84, miss!  
  
Salvatore counters!  
Hit:  $110+15+10-40 = 95$   
Hit roll: 92, hit! Crit roll: 8! //aaaugh  
Damage:  $34+1+2-21 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

Wyvern K attacks again! //DETERMINATION  
Hit:  $117-15-5-26 = 71$   
Hit roll: 19, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-1-27 = 9\text{dmg}$

With the streeength of thousand horseeeees~

**Falconknight B vs Olson**

Hit:  $123+15-15-59 = 64$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!  
  
Olson retaliates!  
Hit:  $108+15-60 = 63$   
Hit roll: 54, hit!  
Damage:  $31+1-15 = 17\text{dmg}$

**Valkyrie A mends Falconknight B**

$20+14 =$  Up to 34HP restored

**Falconknight E vs Seyena**

Hit:  $123-55 = 68$   
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage:  $30-14 = 16\text{dmg}$

Seyena counters!  
Hit:  $122-60 = 62$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $27-15 = 12\text{dmg}$

Within the pegasus' soooooul~

**Falconknight H vs Danya**

Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$   
Hit roll: 62, miss!

#### Falconknight F vs Danya

Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Danya counters!  
Hit:  $128-60 = 68$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $33-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

And then, doom have arrived. Another group of diverse soldiers backed by mages, but amongst them, there was a giant with bright red hair, tall than anyone else by at least one and half foot.



"Heh... Hegen smells killing. Let's start killing then! Hegen will chop'em and crush'em and their magicks can't do anything to Hegen thanks to lady's gift... heheh."

Suddenly, there was sound of horns coming from the north! Seyena and Olison could easily recognize it as horn of Kesselring cavalry units.



"Huh? Horsemen coming here too? But Hegen don't like to share his trophies... drat. Still, Hegen has a headstart."

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Right, of course!" Matilda took the staff from Seyena and then tapped Valor gently on his nose.

#### Matilda heals Seyena

$10+20 / 2 = \text{Up to } 15\text{HP healed}$

Danya and Tiron got rid of one of the annoying pegasi.

#### Danya vs Falconknight F

Hit:  $128-60 = 68$   
Hit roll: 13, hit!  
Damage:  $33-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

Falconknight F retaliates  
Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$   
Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage:  $30-16 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Tiron vs Falconknight F

Hit:  $115-60 = 55$   
Hit roll: 45, hit!

Damage:  $29-14 = 15\text{dmg}$



"Anja, dance us! Let's go, Magister, enough of this sloppy defense! FOR TUNHAUSEEN!"



"Gods that woman will get herself killed!..."

#### Danya vs Falconknight H

Hit:  $128-60 = 68$

Hit roll: 68, hit!

Damage:  $33-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

Falconknight H counters!

Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$

Hit roll: 13, hit!

Damage:  $30-16 = 14\text{dmg}$

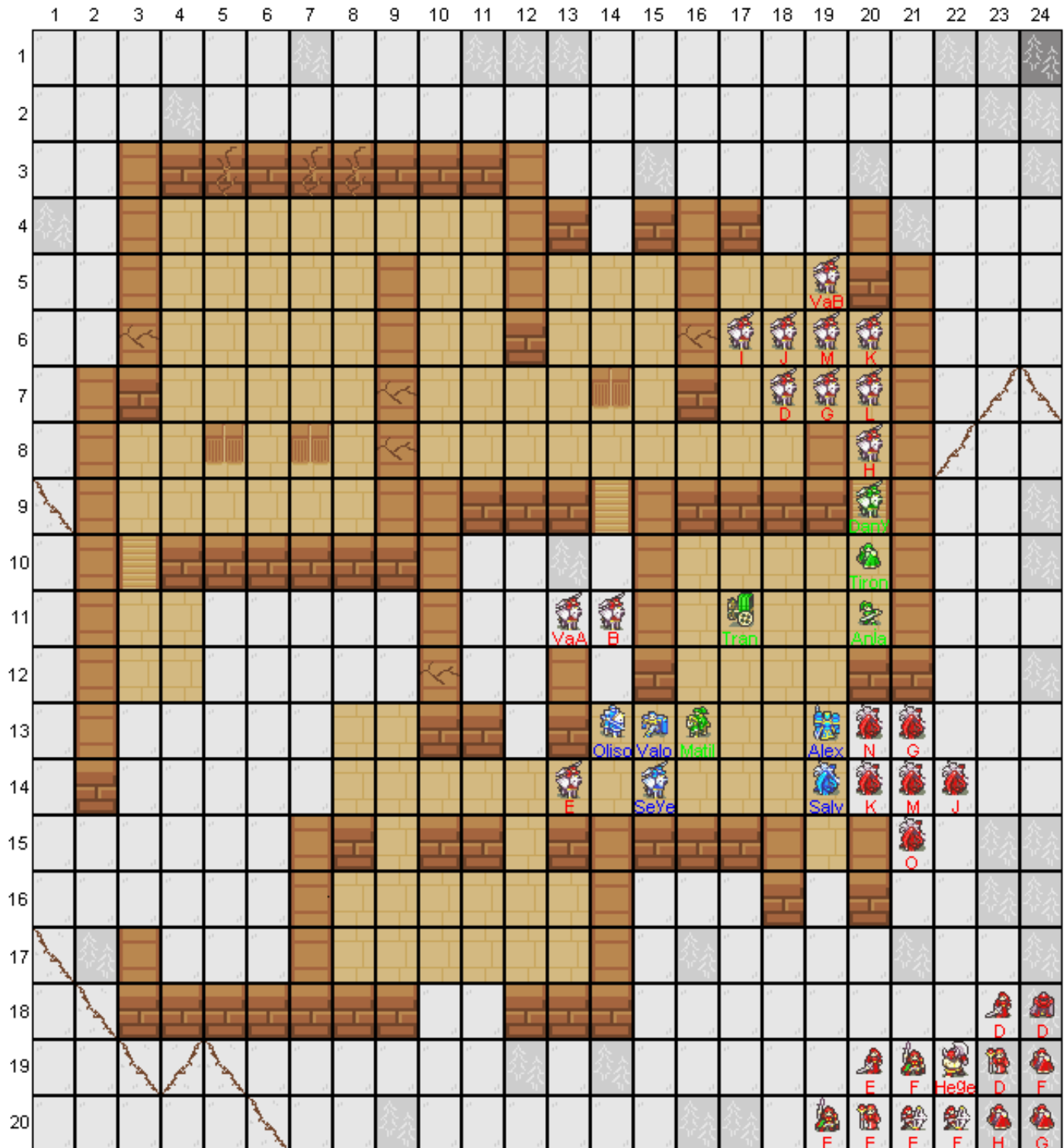
#### Tiron heals Danya

$10+21 = \text{Up to } 21\text{HP healed}$

# ~~Player Turn 16~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 3



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                   | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 13/53 Regen:2<br>Oliso Eul: 39/40 Regen:2<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 36/44 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 7/40<br>^ Pure Water (3/5) Silence (3/5)<br>Valor Inara: 12/42 (Poison) | Sentinel E: 40/40<br>Sentinel F: 40/40<br>Swordmaster D: 37/37<br>Swordmaster E: 37/37<br>Bishop D: 38/38<br>Bishop E: 38/38<br>Druid D: 35/35<br>Sage F: 37/37<br>Sage G: 37/37<br>Sage H: 37/37 | Wyvern Knight O: 44/44<br>Falcoknight B: 35/37<br>Falcoknight D: 37/37<br>Falcoknight E: 25/37<br>Falcoknight G: 37/37<br>Falcoknight H: 19/37<br>Falcoknight I: 37/37<br>Falcoknight J: 37/37<br>Falcoknight K: 37/37<br>Falcoknight L: 37/37 |
| <b>Allies:</b>                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Anja: 31/31                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|                               |                        |                      |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Danya: 39/39                  | Wyvern Knight G: 44/44 | Falcoknight M: 37/37 |
| Matilda: 18/36                | Wyvern Knight J: 44/44 | Valkyrie A: 35/35    |
| Magister Tiron: 22/35 Regen:2 | Wyvern Knight M: 44/44 | Valkyrie B: 35/35    |
| Wagon: 5/5hits                | Wyvern Knight N: 2/44  | Hegen: 56/56         |



Muffled noises.

**Seyena flies to 14, 14, and stabs Pegaknight B.**

Swishy noises.

#### Seyena vs Falconknight B

Hit:  $122+15+10-60 = 87$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

Falconknight B counters!

Hit:  $123-10-15-57 = 41$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

**Olison to 14,12. Axe ye Valkyrie, and then over to 17,14.**

**Salvatore: Move (18,13) to be in Valor's charisma, auto-kill Wyvern Knight N with javelin, swap to axe thanks to canto.**

The thrown axe lodged in the skull of the girl so hard it actually split it in two.

#### Olison vs Valkyrie A

Hit:  $108+15+10+10-64 = 79$

Hit roll: 56, hit! Crit roll: 9! //goddamit

Damage:  $32+1+1-12 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$

And then there were some wyvern stabs.

#### Salvatore vs Wyvern N

Hit:  $112+10+10+15-40 = 107$ , autohit!

Damage:  $33+2-21 = 14\text{dmg}$

**Valor: 1 west, axe falcoknight E. Crit get!**

#### Valor vs Falcoknight E

Hit:  $119+15+15-60 = 89$

Hit roll: 7, hit!

Damage:  $32+1-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

Falcoknight E counters!

Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$

Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage:  $30-1-1-21 = 7\text{dmg}$



"Too many..." Olison grimaced as he looked outside to the south. "Everyone, fall back! Tiron, help Danya if she can't move herself. But if not, Alex needs your aid! Anja, invigorate them if they need it, otherwise get back here and aid Matilda!"

He barked in quick order, taking a moment to quickly re-secure the spear drawn on his back.

Gritting his teeth as the myriad wounds finally began to get to him, Alexander fell back.

**Alexander: 19, 12**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The falconknights tried their best to down Seyena and Valor... but they failed *horribly*.

### Falconknight E vs Seyena

Hit:  $123-15-10-57 = 41$

Hit roll: 50, miss!

Seyena counterattacks!

Hit:  $122+10+15-60 = 77$

Hit roll: 3, hit! Crit roll: 16!

Damage:  $27+1-15 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

### Falconknight B vs Valor

Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$

Hit roll: 80, miss!

Valor retaliates!

Hit:  $119+15+15-60 = 89$

Hit roll: 84, hit! Crit roll: 6!

Damage:  $32+1+1-15 = 18 \times 3 = 54\text{dmg}$

Then, suprisingly, the falconknight closest to Danya lobbed her spear at Tiron! Hacking blood out, the sage scorched her face in retaliation. And then he went down with another spear.

### Falconknight H vs Tiron

Hit:  $123-35 = 88$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Damage:  $30-2-7 = 21\text{dmg}$

Tiron counters!

Hit:  $115-60 = 55$

Hit roll: 3, hit!

Damage:  $29-14 = 15\text{dmg}$

Falconknight H attacks again!

Hit:  $123-35 = 88$

Hit roll: 30, hit!

Damage:  $30-2-7 = 21\text{dmg}$

The Falconknight behind lobbed her spear at Danya from the safety of her own position.

### Falconknight L vs Danya

Hit:  $123-15-55 = 53$

Hit roll: 2, hit!

Damage:  $30-16 = 14\text{dmg}$

The wyvern knights begun their charge against Alexander, Olison and Salvatore, attacking the two latter ones.

### Wyvern Knight M vs Olison

Hit:  $117-15-5-59 = 38$

Hit roll: 24, hit!

Damage:  $38-1-18 = 19\text{dmg}$

Olison retaliates!

Hit:  $108+15+5-40 = 88$

Hit roll: 9, hit!

Damage:  $32+1+2-21 = 24\text{dmg}$

Olison retaliates again!

Hit:  $108+15+5-40 = 88$

Hit roll: 94, miss!

#### Wyvern Knight G vs Salvatore

Hit:  $117-15-5-26 = 71$

Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage:  $38-1-1-28 = 8\text{dmg}$

Salvatore counterattacks!

Hit:  $112+15+15+10-40 = 112$ , autohit! Crit roll: 1!

Damage:  $35+1+2-21 = 27 \times 3 = 81\text{dmg}$

#### Wyvern Knight J vs Salvatore

Hit:  $117-15-5-26 = 71$

Hit roll: 67, hit!

Damage:  $38-1-1-28 = 8\text{dmg}$

Salvatore counters!

Hit:  $112+15+15+10-40 = 112$ , autohit!

Damage:  $35+1+2-21 = 27\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

The Kesselring cavalry have arrived, their lances at ready.



"Are we late?"



"No... no, they're still fighting!"

"My Lord, what are your orders?" The captain of the cavalry spoke to the brunette.



"There are people inside without Kesselring markings. Find and rescue them! Ah, yes... Countess, there will be fight!" A petite, chestnut-haired girl slid from the saddle of Leo's horse.



"Thank you for your concern, Count, but I can take care of myself. And I want to talk with these people, too. I believe they owe me an apology." Leo nodded and pulled out a tome from his robe, preparing himself for combat.





"Gah, I see cavalry coming from the north! Another bunch of Kesselring fighters!" Danya then stabbed the Falconknight to death.

#### Danya vs Falconknight H

Hit:  $128 - 60 = 68$

Hit roll: 35, hit!

Damage:  $33 - 15 = 18$  dmg



"Oh no, Magister is wounded. Olison I'm going to heal him!"

And Matilda did just that, and then Anja danced both, and Danya and Alex got heals too!

#### Matilda heals Tiron

$10 + 20 / 2 =$  Up to 15HP restored

#### Tiron heals Danya

$10 + 21 =$  Up to 31HP healed

#### Matilda heals Alex

$10 + 20 =$  Up to 30HP restored

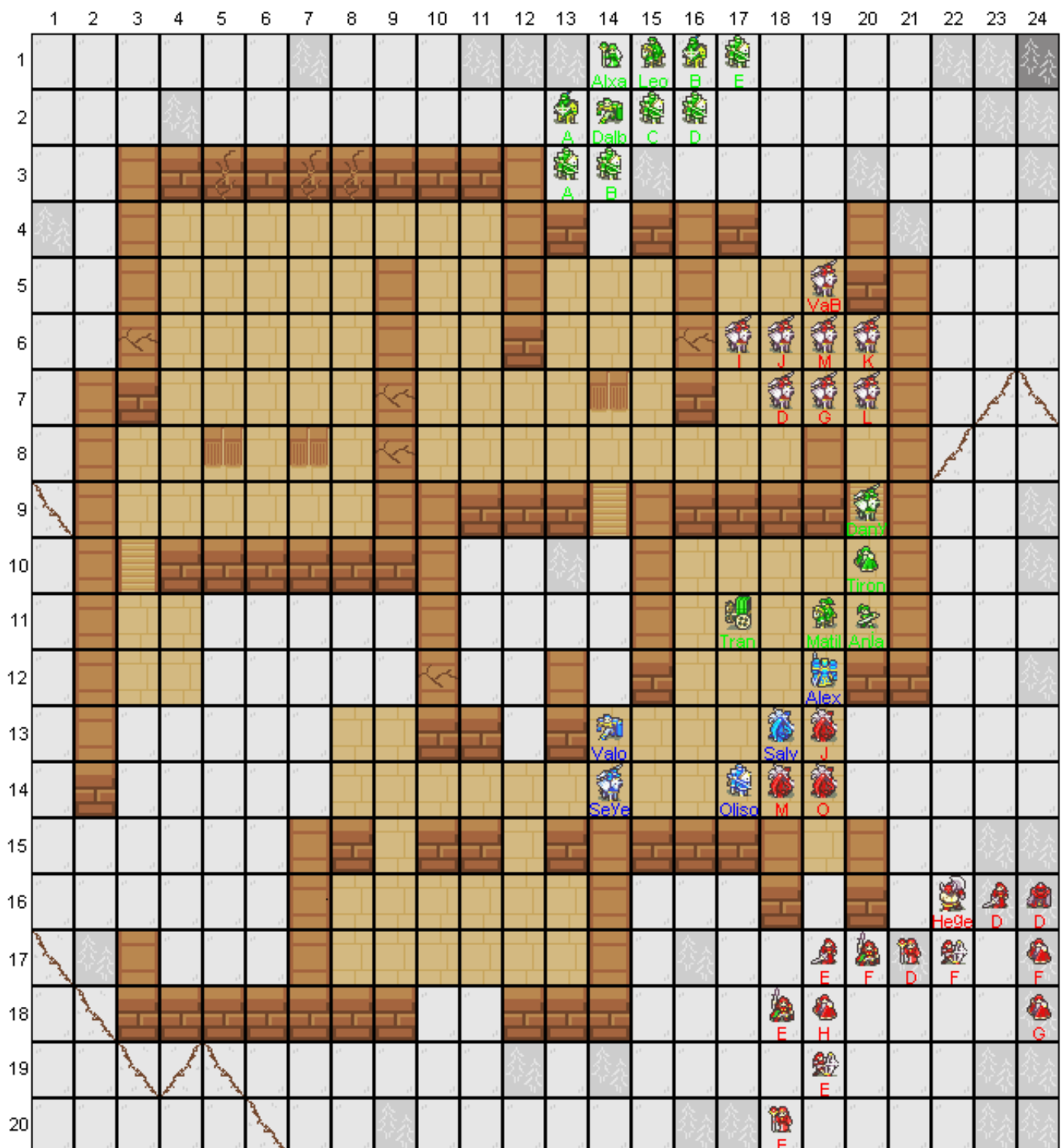
# ~~Player Turn 17~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 2

## Mission objectives:

Kill all enemies!



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                            | Enemies:             |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 45/53 Regen:2                   | Sentinel E: 40/40    |
| Olison Eul: 22/40 Regen:2                         | Sentinel F: 40/40    |
| Salvatore Vaughan: 22/44 Regen:2                  | Swordmaster D: 37/37 |
| Seyena Ikane: 7/40 Pure Water (2/5) Silence (2/5) | Swordmaster E: 37/37 |
| Valor Inara: 3/42 (Poison)                        | Bishop D: 38/38      |
|                                                   | Bishop E: 38/38      |

| Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexandra von Grummel: 33/33<br>Anja: 31/31<br>Dalban: 39/39<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Leo Kesselring: 35/35<br>Matilda: 18/36<br>Magister Tiron: 14/35 Regen:2<br>Paladin A: 36/36<br>Paladin B: 36/36<br>Paladin C: 36/36<br>Paladin D: 36/36<br>Paladin E: 36/36<br>Bow General A: 34/34<br>Bow General B: 34/34<br>Wagon: 5/5hits | Druid D: 35/35<br>Sage F: 37/37<br>Sage G: 37/37<br>Sage H: 37/37<br>Wyvern Knight J: 17/44<br>Wyvern Knight M: 20/44<br>Wyvern Knight O: 44/44<br>Falcoknight D: 37/37<br>Falcoknight G: 37/37<br>Falcoknight I: 37/37<br>Falcoknight J: 37/37<br>Falcoknight K: 37/37<br>Falcoknight L: 37/37<br>Falcoknight M: 37/37<br>Valkyrie B: 35/35<br>Hegen: 56/56 |

**Valor: 16,14, clip another set of wings.**

woop woop CRUNCH!

#### Valor vs Wyvern M

Hit:  $119+15+15-40 = 109$ , autohit! Crit roll: 51!  
Damage:  $32+1+1-21 = 13 \times 3 = 39$ dmg

**Salvatore moves to (20,8) and attacks the pegasus with his axe.**



"Oi got this side, 'ey need 'elp down south!"

That didn't go as planned.

#### Salvatore vs Falconknight L

Hit:  $112+15+15-60 = 82$   
Hit roll: 93, miss!

Falconknight L retaliates!  
Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1$ dmg

Falconknight L counters again!  
Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 7, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1$ dmg



Even angrier-sounding muffled noises.

**Seyena and her pegasus limp over to 18,13, plugging the hole that Salvatore left behind.**

**Olison to 17,13 and Axe Wyvern J Switch to Short Spear after.**

And so Olson ax'd wyvern a question. Lady Francisca answered with bloody tale.

#### Olison vs Wyvern J

Hit:  $108+15+10+10-40 = 103$ , autohit!

Damage:  $32+1+1-21 = 13\text{dmg}$

Olison strikes again!

Hit:  $108+15+10+10-40 = 103$ , autohit! Crit roll: 15!

Damage:  $32+1+1-21 = 13 \times 3 = 39\text{dmg}$

**ALEXANDER: MOVE TO 19,13, Attack Wyvern O. Then resume STEEL WAHL duties.**

\*THWOMP\*

#### Alexander vs Wyvern O

Hit:  $94+15+10-40 = 79$

Hit roll: 66, hit! Crit roll: 18!

Damage:  $36+1-21 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

And the enemies rushed.

The swordmaster closest to the entrance sprinted inside and then quickly went left, swinging his sword at Valor! But the mercenary quickly parried the slice and left a nice mark on the bladesman's face... and it exploded.

And then a Sage tried to roast Valor from afar. Sage exploded too.

#### Swordmaster E vs Valor

Hit:  $126+15-55 = 86$

Hit roll: 99, miss! // \*flips table\*

Valor counters!

Hit:  $119+15-15-63 = 56$

Hit roll: 28, hit! Crit roll: 18! // for god's sake stop those crits already

Damage:  $32+1-1-14 = 18 \times 3 = 54$

#### Sage H vs Valor

Hit:  $140-10-55 = 75$

Hit roll: 79, miss! // why

Valor counterattacks!

Hit:  $119+10-40 = 89$

Hit roll: 3, hit! Crit roll: 70! // \*cries\*

Damage:  $32+1-13 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

Clearly the rest of enemies must've seen what happened because they quickly shifted attention to Alex.

#### Bishop E vs Alexander

Hit:  $137-5-29 = 103$ , autohit! Crit roll: 15!

Great Shield roll: 5!

Attack blocked!

Bishop E attacks again!

Hit:  $137-5-29 = 103$ , autohit!

Damage:  $34-2-11 = 21\text{dmg}$

#### Bishop D vs Alexander

Hit:  $137-5-29 = 103$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $34-2-11 = 21\text{dmg}$

Bishop D strikes once more!  
Hit:  $137-5-29 = 103$ , autohit!  
Great Shield roll: 3! //I hate you all.  
Attack blocked!

#### **Sentinel F vs Alex**

Hit:  $132-15-5-29 = 83$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $34-1-2-1-30 = 0!$

Alex retaliates!  
Hit:  $94+15+10-55 = 64$   
Hit roll: 81, miss!

Sentinel F attacks again!  
Hit:  $132-15-5-29 = 83$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $34-1-2-1-30 = 0!$

We now leave this shenanigans corner and concentrate on the fact that cloud of black magic descended upon Salvatore, sapping his vitality!

#### **Druid D vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $109-26 = 83$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
HP halved!

And then the falconknights rushed at Salvatore.

"Surrender wyrmy, we have backup!" One of them said as spears began to fly. After a moment, Salvatore and his wyvern slumped down, looking like pincushions.

#### **Falcoknight L vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1\text{dmg}$

Salvatore counterattacks!  
Hit:  $112+15+15-60 = 82$   
Hit roll: 93, miss!

Falcoknight L attacks again!  
Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1\text{dmg}$

#### **Falcoknight J vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1\text{dmg}$

#### **Falcoknight G vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 54, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1 \times 3 = 3\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 79, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1\text{dmg}$

#### Falcoknight K vs Salvatore

Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $123-15-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 79, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-28 = 1\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~

"Falconknights are in the way! Chaaarge!!" With loud 'hurray!', the paladins and bow generals rode forth toward the falconknights from two directions, crushing a wall on the way, while Leo put their healer to sleep.

Chaos erupted amongst the ranks of the slim, female riders.

"Eeek!"

"Traitors! Traitors!"

"Kill them, sisters!"

#### Bow General A vs Cracked Wall 16.6

Autohit!  
Damage:  $25-5 = 20\text{dmg}$

#### Leo casts Sleep on Valkyrie B

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{23-19\} \times 5]+20)-(2 \times 4) = 30+20+20-8 = 62$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Valkyrie B is asleep!

#### Paladin B vs Falconknight I

Hit:  $118+10-60 = 68$   
Hit roll: 7, hit!  
Damage:  $31-15 = 16\text{dmg}$

Falcoknight I retaliates!  
Hit:  $123-10-56 = 57$   
Hit roll: 66, miss!



"I think I recognize that wyvern!..." After a brief moment of hesitation, Alexandra raised her staff and sent healing energies toward Salvatore.

#### Alexandra psychics Salvatore

$10+25 / 2 =$  Up to 17HP restored

Danya, seeing what was happening, took her pegasus back to adjacent room in state of semi-shock.



"By heavens, these Kesselring cavaliers, they just attacked! The falconknights I mean! The horsemen are on our side! Someone there even healed Salvatore, at range!"



"Yes, I won't be dying today!" Tiron quickly re-assigned himself to healing duties south - and healed Alex's wounds.

#### **Tiron heals Alexander**

10+21 = Up to 31HP healed



"Even if! We cannot rest yet!" Matilda rushed her horse in front of Valor and blasted the nearby Sentinel with magics.

#### **Matilda vs Sentinel F**

Hit: 129+10-55 = 84

Hit roll: 59, hit!

Damage: 25-13 = 12dmg

Anja then pranced about; this invigorated Matilda and Tiron. The former blasted the sentinel once more while Tiron ran over to Valor and brought him from near-fainting levels of injuries.

#### **Matilda vs Sentinel F**

Hit: 129+10-55 = 84

Hit roll: 59, hit!

Damage: 25-13 = 12dmg

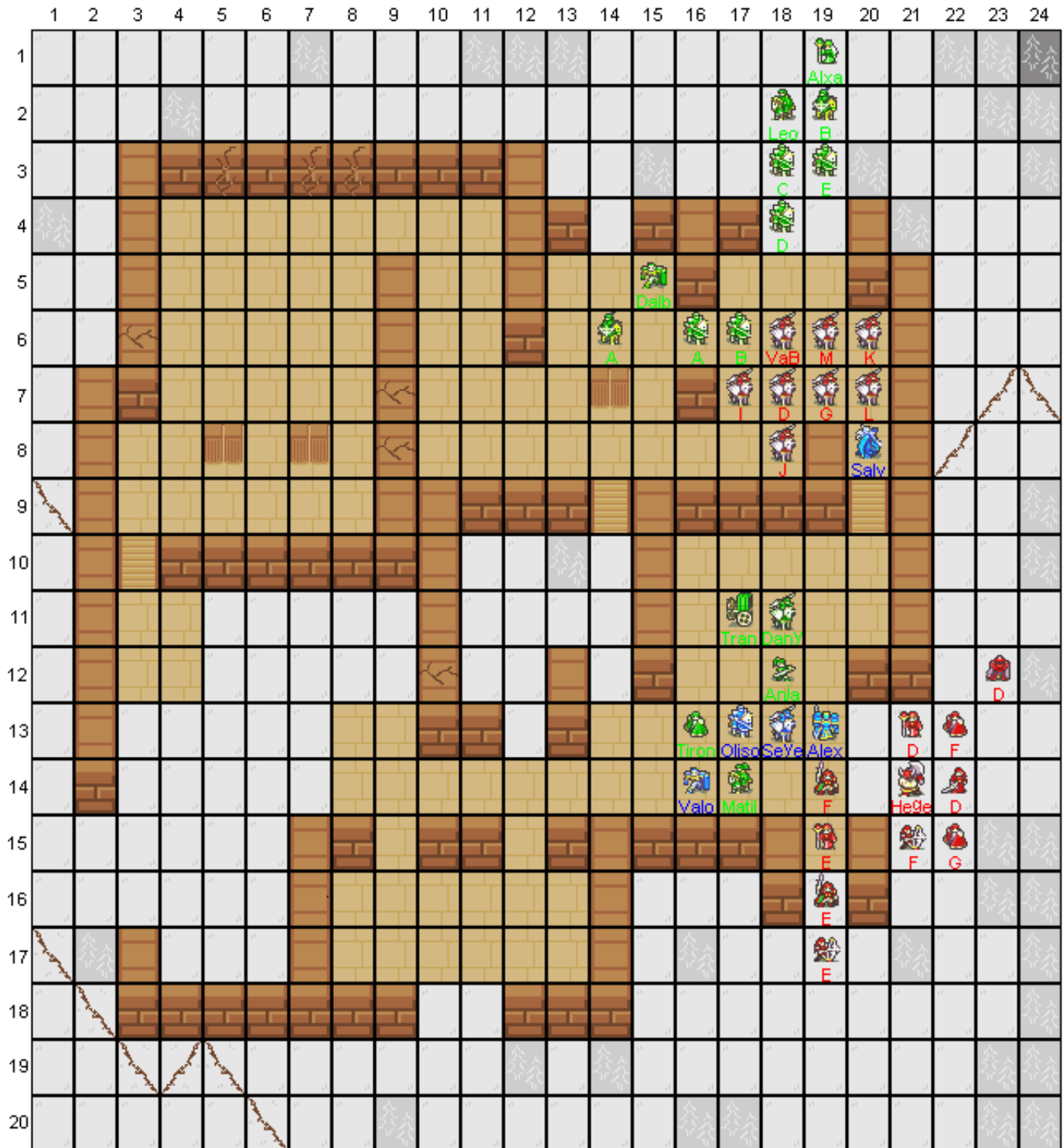
#### **Tiron heals Valor**

10+21 = Up to 31HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 18~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 5



Weather: ☁

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: 36/53 Regen:2<br>Olison Eul: 24/40 Regen:2<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 19/44<br>Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 7/40<br>^ Pure Water (1/5) Silence (1/5)<br>Valor Inara: 29/42 (Poison) | Sentinel E: 40/40<br>Sentinel F: 16/40<br>Swordmaster D: 37/37<br>Bishop D: 38/38<br>Bishop E: 38/38<br>Druid D: 35/35<br>Sage F: 37/37<br>Sage G: 37/37<br>Falcoknight D: 37/37<br>Falcoknight G: 37/37 | Alexandra von Grummel: 33/33<br>Anja: 31/31<br>Dalban: 39/39<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Leo Kesselring: 35/35<br>Matilda: 18/36<br>Magister Tiron: 10/35 Regen:2<br>Paladin A: 36/36<br>Paladin B: 36/36 |



|  |                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                            |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Falcoknight I: 21/37<br>Falcoknight J: 37/37<br>Falcoknight K: 37/37<br>Falcoknight L: 37/37<br>Falcoknight M: 37/37<br>Valkyrie B: 35/35 <b>Sleep</b><br><b>(5/5)</b><br>Hegen: 56/56 | Paladin C: 36/36<br>Paladin D: 36/36<br>Paladin E: 36/36<br>Bow General A: 34/34<br>Bow General B: 34/34<br>Wagon: 5/5hits |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|



**"Olison, I need you to get the one with the lance! That axeman is mine!"**

Valor grinned, stowing his bloodied axe and retrieving his trusty Killing Edge.



**"Defectors? Who could possibly..."** Olison listened, bewildered at the sound of conflict following Danya's announcement.

**Olison to 19,12. Lob axes at ze Sentinel. Then to 20,10. Be the support.**

#### **Olison vs Sentinel F**

Hit:  $108+15-55 = 68$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

**Seyena flies to 20,13 and smashes Bishop D, then flies off to 20,11**

#### **Seyena vs Bishop D**

Hit:  $122-51 = 71$

Hit roll: 47, hit!

Damage:  $27-13 = 14\text{dmg}$

Bishop D retaliates!

Hit:  $137-61 = 76$

Hit roll: 87, miss!

Seyena attacks again!

Hit:  $122-51 = 71$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

**Alexander: Hammer the Sentinel**

#### **Alexander vs Sentinel F**

Hit:  $94+15+10-55 = 64$

Hit roll: 5, hit!

Damage:  $36+1-19 = 18\text{dmg}$

**Valor: Move to 20,14- Attack Hegen with Killing Edge! If Hegen falls, trade the pearl to Alex!**

Things happened.

### Valor vs Hegen

Hit:  $129+15+15-48 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $31+1+1-12 = 21$

Hegen retaliates!

Hit:  $126-15-55 = 56$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $36-1-1-21 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Salvatore moves one north, and borrows Olson's Francisca, making sure Olson equips the short spear instead. Then, back 1 north and end the Player Phase.**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The nearest pegasi tried her hardest.

### Falconknight L vs Salvatore

Hit:  $123-15-5-26 = 77$

Hit roll: 60, hit!

Damage:  $30-1-1-28 = 0\text{dmg}$

Salvatore counters!

Hit:  $102+15+5-60 = 62$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-15 = 23\text{dmg}$

**Francisca breaks!**

Falconknight L attacks again!

Hit:  $123-15-5-26 = 77$

Hit roll: 60, hit!

Damage:  $30-1-1-28 = 0\text{dmg}$

**"Time to show the traitors the payment for treachery!"** The falconknights quickly dispersed to gang-rush single enemies; they managed to kill a horse archer and a paladin!

### Falconknight I vs Bow General A

Hit:  $123-10-62 = 51$

Hit roll: 1, hit!

Damage:  $30-12 = 18\text{dmg}$

### Falconknight J vs Bow General A

Hit:  $123-10-62 = 51$

Hit roll: 37, hit!

Damage:  $30-12 = 18\text{dmg}$

### Falconknight M vs Paladin B

Hit:  $123-10-56 = 57$

Hit roll: 52, hit!

Damage:  $30-15 = 15\text{dmg}$

### Falconknight K vs Paladin B

Hit:  $123-10-56 = 57$

Hit roll: 83, miss!

### Falconknight G vs Paladin B

Hit:  $123-10-56 = 57$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $30-15 = 15\text{dmg}$

### Falconknight D vs Paladin B

Hit:  $123-10-56 = 57$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $30-15 = 15\text{dmg}$



"Heeh... puny sword boy must learn place. Burn him!" And while Hegen went to harass Alex, his mages obliged in burnination of the hero.

#### Hegen vs Alexander

Hit:  $126-10-5-29 = 82$   
Hit roll: 70, hit! Crit roll: 19!  
Damage:  $36-1-2-30 = 3 \times 3 = 9\text{dmg}$

Alexander retaliates!  
Hit:  $94+10+10-48 = 66$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!

Hegen attacks again!  
Hit:  $126-10-5-29 = 82$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $36-1-2-30 = 3\text{dmg}$

#### Sage F vs Valor

Hit:  $140-10-55 = 75$   
Hit roll: 56, hit!  
Damage:  $37-11 = 26\text{dmg}$

And then a bishop blasted Alexander.

#### Bishop D vs Alexander

Hit:  $137-5-29 = 101$ , autohit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $34-2-11 = 21 \times 3 = 62\text{dmg}$



"Heeh! Hegen wins again! Get inside, kill them all! Ha ha haah!"

#### Druid D vs Olison

Hit:  $109-5-59 = 45$   
Hit roll: 98, miss!

#### Swordmaster D vs Matilda

Hit:  $126-65 = 61$   
Hit roll: 81, miss!  
  
Matilda counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $129-63 = 66$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $25-12 = 13\text{dmg}$

#### Sniper F vs Matilda

Hit:  $138-65 = 73$   
Hit roll: 76, miss!  
  
Matilda retaliates!  
Hit:  $129-53 = 76$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $25-11 = 14\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters again!  
Hit:  $129-53 = 76$

Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Damage: 25-11 = 14dmg

#### Sniper E vs Matilda

Hit: 138-65 = 73  
Hit roll: 12, hit!  
Damage: 29-13 = 16dmg

Matilda retaliates!  
Hit: 129-53 = 76  
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage: 25-11 = 14dmg

Matilda counters again!  
Hit: 129-53 = 76  
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage: 25-11 = 14dmg

#### Sentinel E vs Matilda

Hit: 132-65 = 57  
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage: 34-13 = 21dmg

#### Bishop E vs Tiron

Hit: 137-15-35 = 87  
Hit roll: 32, hit!  
Damage: 34-15 = 19dmg

#### Sage G vs Anja

Hit: 140-15-72 = 53  
Hit roll: 85, miss!

Anja retaliates!  
Hit: 149-40 = 109, autohit!  
Damage: 23-13 = 10dmg

Anja counters once more!  
Hit: 149-40 = 109, autohit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage: 23-13 = 10x3 = 30dmg

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Dalban, together with nearby Paladin, ganged on a falconknight.

#### Dalban vs Falconknight J

Hit: 114+15-60 = 69  
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage: 28+1-15 = 14+2 = 16dmg

Falconknight J retaliates!  
Hit: 123-15-41 = 67  
Hit roll: 56, hit!  
Damage: 30-1-15 = 14dmg

Falconknight J counters again!  
Hit: 123-15-41 = 67  
Hit roll: 71, miss!

#### Paladin A vs Falconknight J

Hit: 118+10-60 = 68  
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage: 31-15 = 16dmg

Falconknight J counterattacks!  
Hit: 123-10-56 = 57  
Hit roll: 83, miss!

Falconknight M ceased to exist in the meanwhile.

**Bow General B vs Falconknight M**

Hit:  $129-60 = 69$   
Hit roll: 55, hit! Crit roll: 3!  
Damage:  $43-15 = 28 \times 3 = 84\text{dmg}$

Leo thunderscorched one other.

**Leo vs Falconknight K**

Hit:  $115+10-60 = 65$   
Hit roll: 50, hit! Crit roll: 19!  
Damage:  $31-14 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

Falconknight L, in front of Salvatore, got stabbed and died, whilst her colleague nearby performed dance of ninjapegasus.

**Paladin E vs Falconknight L**

Hit:  $118-60 = 58$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $31-15 = 16\text{dmg}$

Alexandra closed her eyes, and let her healing powers find the right person...

**Alexandra physics Valor**

$10+25 / 2 = \text{Up to } 17\text{HP restored}$

Down there, Anja moved to severely cut the Bishop whilst Danya rushed forth and slashed the nearby sniper in the face.

**Anja vs Bishop E**

Hit:  $149-51 = 98$   
Hit roll: 70, hit! Crit roll: 7!  
Damage:  $23-13 = 10 \times 3 = 30\text{dmg}$

Bishop E retaliates!  
Hit:  $137-15-72 = 50$   
Hit roll: 97, miss!

Anja strikes again!  
Hit:  $149-51 = 98$   
Hit roll: 90, hit!  
Damage:  $23-13 = 10 = 10\text{dmg}$

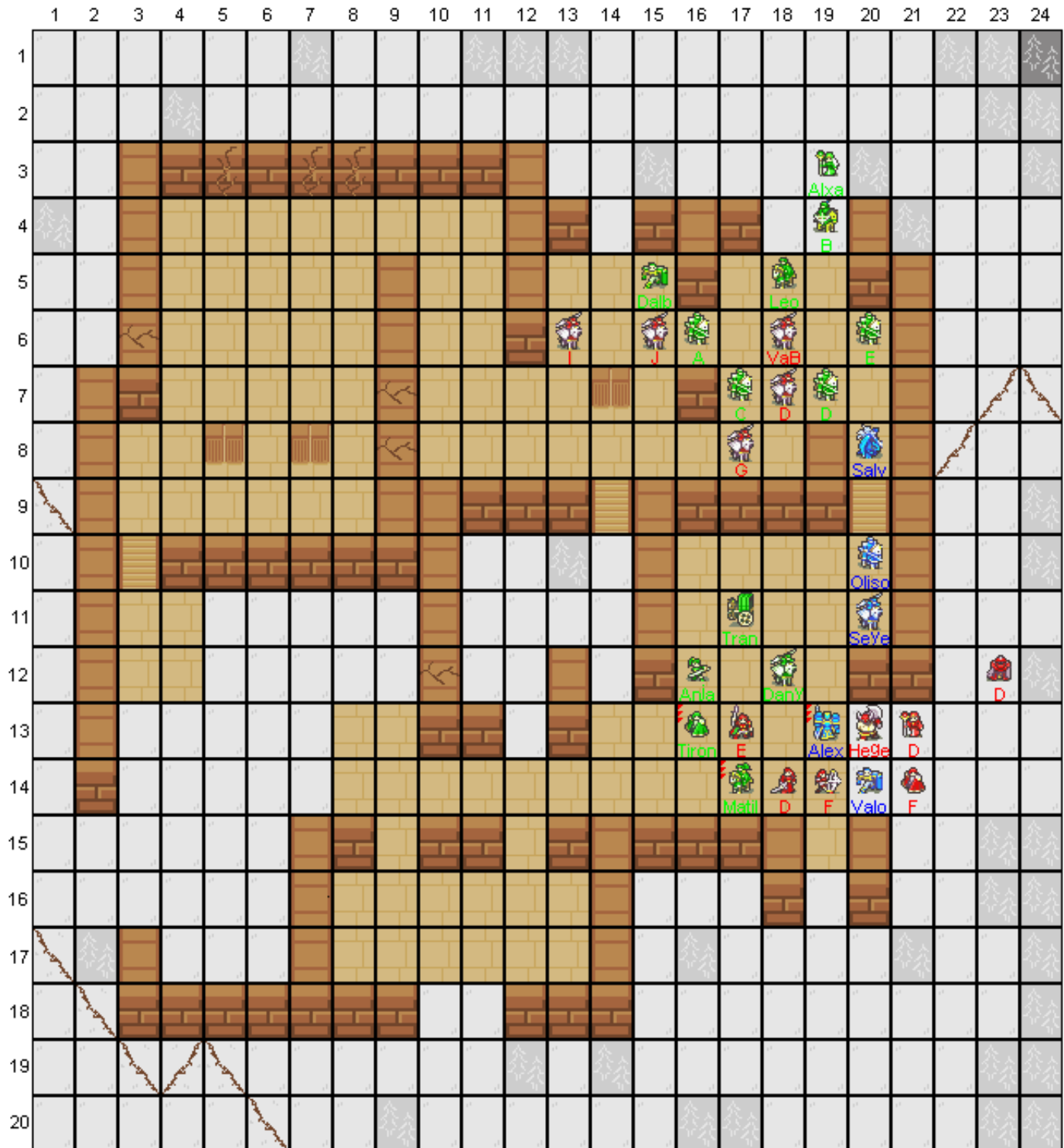
**Danya vs Sniper F**

Hit:  $133-53 = 80$   
Hit roll: 12, hit!  
Damage:  $31-17 = 14\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 19~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 2



Weather: ☁

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                           | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alexander Jorinn: -/53 3/3<br>^ ((Regen:2))<br>Olison Eul: 26/40 Regen:2<br>Salvatore Vaughan: 21/44 Regen:2<br>Seyena Ikane: 7/40<br>Valor Inara: 15/42 (Poison) | Sentinel E: 40/40<br>Swordmaster D: 24/37<br>Bishop D: 24/38<br>Druid D: 35/35<br>Sage F: 37/37<br>Elite Sentry E: 10/38<br>Falcoknight D: 37/37<br>Falcoknight G: 37/37<br>Falcoknight I: 21/37<br>Falcoknight J: 5/37 | Alexandra von Grummel: 33/33<br>Anja: 31/31<br>Dalban: 25/39<br>Danya: 39/39<br>Leo Kesselring: 35/35<br>Matilda: -/36 3/3<br>Magister Tiron: -/35 3/3 ((Regen:2))<br>Paladin A: 36/36<br>Paladin C: 36/36<br>Paladin D: 36/36 |

Valkyrie B: 35/35  
^ Sleep (4/5)  
Hegen: 35/56

Paladin E: 36/36  
Bow General B: 34/34  
Wagon: 5/5hits



"Don't you turn your back on me!" Valor snarled, swinging his blade at Hegen's neck.

**Valor: Try again to kill Hegen! Not quite ready to Wrath, but crit get anyway!**

\*SLASH\*



"No!... Hegen must not die... norgghhhgg--" And he fell down at Valor's feet. A small, black gem rolled on the snow and gently stopped at Valor's foot.

And suddenly he felt better.

#### Valor vs Hegen

Hit:  $129+15+15-48 = 111$ , autohit! Crit roll: 5!

Damage:  $31+1+1-12 = 21 \times 3 = 63$ dmg

**Black Pearl got!**

Valor stooped down and stuffed the gem in his pocket, blinking in surprise as he felt the poison dissipate.



"Huh. Must've worn off."

**Olison to 19,12. Spear ze Sentry. If he dies, 2S to take his place. If not, hold position.**

Sal smiled knowingly at the surprise of allies from the north, for he knows that his prayer has been heard, although in a way he didn't foresee. The dragon is truly a strange one.



"The battle 'as been joined! Allies ta the north!"

**Salvatore: Move to 18,13 and attack the sentinel with his crit lance. All personal skills get! No matter the results, he swaps to his javelin.**

#### Olison vs Sentry F

Hit:  $108+10+10-53 = 75$

Hit roll: 20, hit!

Damage:  $32+1-17 = 16\text{dmg}$

#### Salvatore vs Sentinel E

Hit:  $107+15+10+5-55 = 82$

Hit roll: 95, miss!

Sentinel E retaliates!

Hit:  $132-5-10-26 = 91$

Hit roll: 27, hit!

Damage:  $34-28 = 6\text{dmg}$

Sentinel E counters again!

Hit:  $132-5-10-26 = 91$

Hit roll: 59, hit!

Damage:  $34-28 = 6\text{dmg}$



"Hah! Valor! The tide's turning! Let's finish them off!"

**Seyena flutters to 20,13 and finishes off the cowardly bishop.**

#### Seyena vs Bishop D

Hit:  $122+15+10-51 = 96$

Hit roll: 96, hit!

Damage:  $27+1-13 = 15\text{dmg}$

Bishop D counters!

Hit:  $137-10-61 = 66$

Hit roll: 53, hit!

Damage:  $34-25 = 9\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Northern front:

#### Druid D vs Paladin D

Hit:  $109-56 = 53$

Hit roll: 36, hit!

HP halved!

#### Falconknight I vs Dalban

Hit:  $123-15-41 = 67$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $30-1-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

Falconknight I attacks again!

Hit:  $123-15-41 = 67$

Hit roll: 2, hit!

Damage:  $30-1-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Falconknight J vs Paladin A

Hit:  $123-56 = 67$

Hit roll: 49, hit!

Damage:  $30-15 = 15\text{dmg}$

#### Falconknight G vs Paladin A

Hit:  $123-56 = 67$

Hit roll: 5, hit!

Damage:  $30-15 = 15\text{dmg}$

#### Falconknight F vs Paladin A

Hit:  $123-56 = 67$



Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage: 30-15 = 15dmg

## Southern Front:

### Bishop D vs Danya

Hit: 137-15-55 = 67  
Hit roll: 47, hit! //heh, crit roll was 16  
Damage: 34-16 = 18dmg

### Sage F vs Salvatore

Hit: 140-10-5-26 = 99  
Hit roll: 83, hit!  
Damage: 37-5-7 = 25dmg

### Swordmaster D vs Anja

Hit: 126-15-72 = 39  
Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage: 27-8 = 19dmg  
  
Anja counterattacks!  
Hit: 149-63 = 86  
Hit roll: 73, hit! Crit roll: 11!  
Damage: 23-14 = 9x3 = 27dmg

### Sentinel E vs Olison

Hit: 132-10-5-59 = 58  
Hit roll: 66, miss!  
  
Olison retaliates!  
Hit: 108+10+10-55 = 75  
Hit roll: 56, hit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage: 32+1-19 = 14x3 = 42dmg

## ~~Ally Phase~~

The falconknights were quickly reduced to non-threat levels.

### Leo vs Falconknight D

Hit: 115+10-60 = 65  
Hit roll: 62, hit! Crit roll: 9!  
Damage: 31-14 = 17x3 = 51dmg

### Bow General B vs Falconknight I

Hit: 129-60 = 69  
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage: 43-15 = 28dmg

### Paladin E vs Falconknight J

Hit: 118-60 = 58  
Hit roll: 1, hit!  
Damage: 31-14 = 17dmg

### Paladin C vs Falconknight G

Hit: 118-60 = 58  
Hit roll: 92, miss!  
  
Falconknight G retaliates!  
Hit: 123-56 = 67  
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage: 30-15 = 15dmg

### Paladin D vs Falconknight G

Hit: 118-60 = 58  
Hit roll: 43, hit!

Damage:  $31-15 = 16\text{dmg}$

Falconknight G retaliates!

Hit:  $123-56 = 67$

Hit roll: 70, miss!

It was then when Alexandra rushed inside and then down the set of stairs, raising her staff and sending her healing power at Matilda.



"Hey! It's me! Are you alright!?" She shouted at fighting mercenaries.

#### Alexandra physics Matilda

$10+25 / 2 =$  Up to 17HP restored

Then Anja quickly danced her, and Matilda, after brief consideration, ran up to and healed Salvatore, while Danya death-slashed the nearby Bishop.

#### Matilda heals Salvatore

Hit:  $10+20 / 2 =$  Up to 15HP healed

#### Danya vs Bishop D

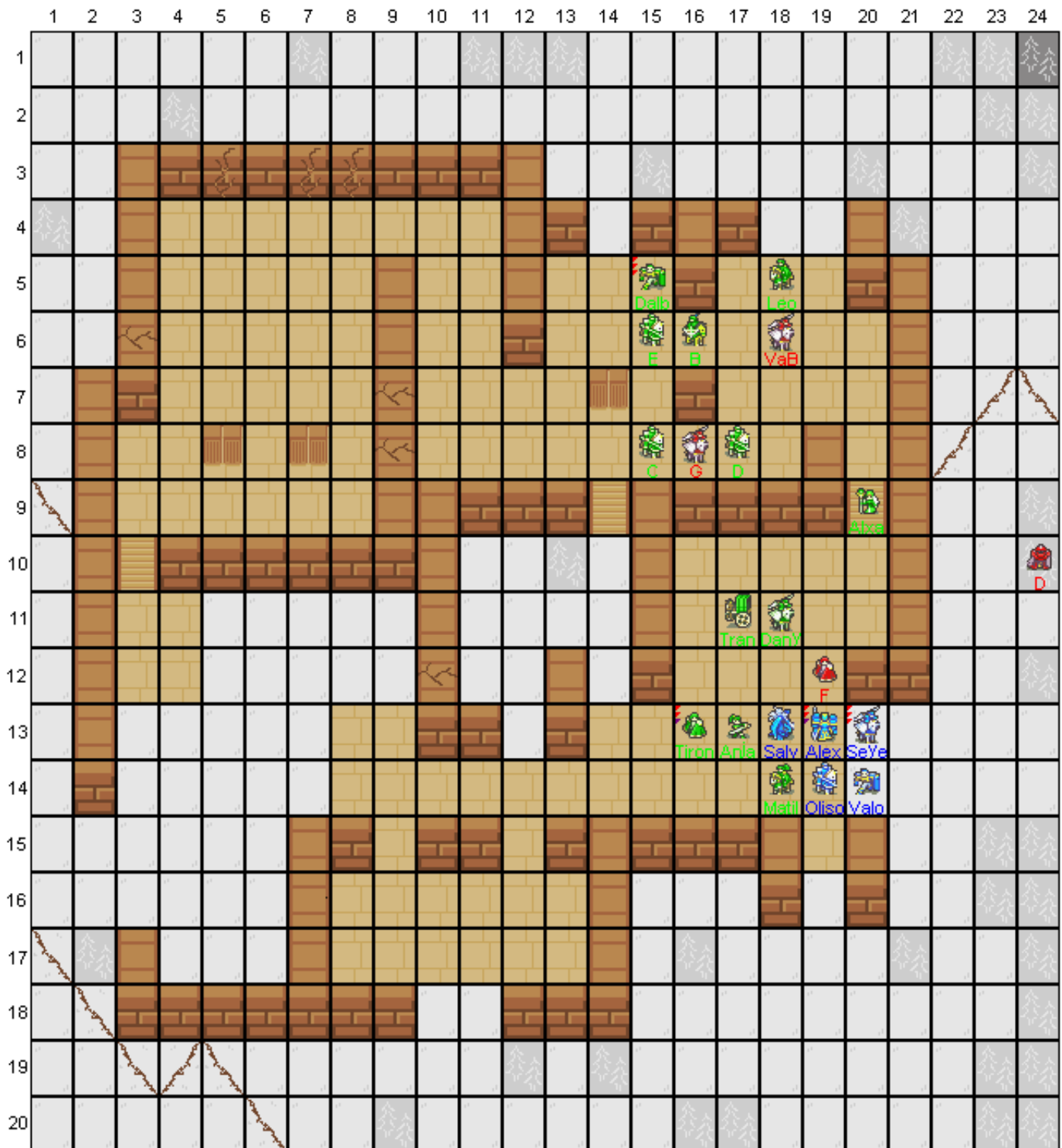
Hit:  $133-51 = 82$

Hit roll: 61, hit!

Damage:  $31-13 = 18\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 20~~

The freezing wind lessened into gentle, cold breeze.



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Enemies:                                                                                                                                         | Allies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Alexander Jorinn: -/54 <span style="color: red;">2/3</span><br/> ^ ((Regen:2))<br/> Olison Eul: <span style="color: green;">28/41 Regen:2</span><br/> Salvatore Vaughan: <span style="color: green;">17/45 Regen:2</span><br/> Seyena Ikane: -/40 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span><br/> Valor Inara: 15/43 (((Poison)))</p> | <p>Druid D: 35/35<br/> Sage F: 37/37<br/> Falcoknight G: 22/37<br/> Valkyrie B: 35/35<br/> ^ <span style="color: orange;">Sleep (3/5)</span></p> | <p>Alexandra von Grummel: 33/33<br/> Anja: 12/31<br/> Dalban: -/39 <span style="color: red;">3/3</span><br/> Danya: 21/39<br/> Leo Kesselring: 35/35<br/> Matilda: 17/36<br/> Magister Tiron: -/35 <span style="color: red;">2/3</span> ((Regen:2))<br/> Paladin C: 3/36<br/> Paladin D: 18/36<br/> Paladin E: 36/36<br/> Bow General B: 34/34<br/> Wagon: 5/5hits</p> |

**Valor: 18,12, Smash the Sage! Killing Edge is a gooooooooooo!**

Olison looked over to the north, casting his memory for a moment.



"Hm... Ah, from Von Grummel's... Alexandra if I'm not mistaken?" Olson quickly edged over to retrieve his spear from the unfortunate Sentinel, "Do you head these forces? It seems we now owe you another debt."

Body rolled left, head rolled right.

#### Valor vs Sage F

Hit:  $131+10+10-40 = 111$ , autohit! Crit roll: 47! //exactly the limit, lol.  
Damage:  $32+1-13 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$



"No, no, it's, well, Count is leading the forces but the story is long and there's still some work to do..."



"Hmph. Trash." Valor turned to Salvatore and Olison. "There's one left outside. Judging by the look of him, he uses dark magic." Valor looked at the healer, who he didn't recognize. "Thank you for coming to our aid."

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The druid, seeing that he was now alone, quickly made way toward trees in the east.

The trapped falconknight tried her hardest to escape.

#### Falconknight G vs Paladin C

Hit:  $123-56 = 67$   
Hit roll: 80, miss!

Paladin C counterattacks!  
Hit:  $118-60 = 58$   
Hit roll: 69, miss!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Her life ended with a well launched arrow.

#### Bow General B vs Falconknight G

Hit:  $129-60 = 69$   
Hit roll: 45, hit!  
Damage:  $43-15 = 28\text{dmg}$

Then, the rest of Leo's troop pointed their lances at the sleeping valkyrie.



"No, wait! Disarm her and tie her up... killing a sleeping person would feel bad." The cavaliers saluted while Leo slid from his horse and quickly moved to the adjacent room. Alexandra excused herself to heal the cavaliers while Matilda slowly healed everyone.

## ~~Chapter 11x Complete!~~



"Are you the mercenaries Dalban told me about? Fighting my mother for last few months?"

Olison did one last sweep outside, and with what seemed to at least be a reprieve, drawn his spear across his back.



"Your mother? Then you must be Leo." The cavalier urged his horse further into the building, giving a short salute, "You would be correct. Olison Eul, former servitor to Kesselring under PRIXIMA."



"Excuse me if I don't recognize you at all, then. I was studying in Ys for over eight years. But Dalban told me that you're commanded by Mannan Tunhausen and some other man, named Gregor. Where are they? I have to speak with them immediately."

Olison nodded.



"Also correct. Unfortunately, they have left within the last hour. They are likely in combat within the castle's halls as we speak."



"They've attacked the gates? Why they left you behind, then?"



"No, as it stands they used some sort of magic to teleport directly into the castle. The spell only permitted a limited amount of our forces through, hence, we were left behind. The Magister here would have more details on the specifics." Olson gestured over to Tiron.



"Oh!"



"Yes, yes, I did it. I've used two crystals to form a link and sent the group one way to the castle... Unfortunately I don't have any way to bring them back, you see."



"I see, we will use horses. The cavalry unit can easily take us all to the castle in less than half an hour. Olson, right? Please gather everyone, we will be leaving shortly."



"And there you go." Alexandra helped Seyena stand up.



"Your turn." She reached with her staff toward Valor, but a spark of blast energy pushed her hand away, startling her.



"What..."



"Eh? Is your staff broken?"



"No... it's barely used... I do sense two sources of power in your trousers,

however."



"Magic! I meant magic, of course." Alexandra paled, blushed and then paled again.



"Are you carrying some kind of magical artifact?"

The wyvern knight slowly rose off of a knee with a clank from his armor, his prayer of gratitude and peace to those who have passed done. With all that had happened, there's no doubt in his mind of the divine providence that had been gifted to them thanks to the watchful eye of the Dragon.

Joining back up with the others, Sal gave a wide, toothy smile at their rescuers.



"Don' think we woulda made it outta tha' wit'out yer help, yah 'ave our thanks."

Alexander forces himself off of the ground, armor screeching against the masonry and sparking. He then took a moment not to talk but to catch his breath and regain his stability.

Seyena nodded, thankful for the priestess' help as she was brought to her feet.

Though at Salvatore's words, she scoffed.



"We've been through worse. We would have survived this just like any other situation before."



"Though, I'm not saying the help isn't appreciated."

Valor frowned, thinking about it.



"Uh, no, I don't think so. To be honest, I don't really trust ma- Hey, hang on

a second." Valor reached a hand into his pocket, and withdrew the black pearl. "I found this on the ugly one with the axe. Well, actually when I opened his throat he sort of dropped it. Anyway, is it what you're talking about?"



"That's Black Pearl! A dragonstone belonging to... to... I think grand-uncle from mother's side of our current King? But I can feel it was infused with such hideous magic... I won't be touching it!"



"I will keep it safe for now." Danya extended her hand for the Pearl.



"We should return it soon... but strangely, I'm still feeling dark magics emanating from your, err... pants. Do you have *another* artifact stashed there?"



"Yeah, actually I think I know someone who could guard it a bit better than you." Valor said. He turned his head to look at Alexander. "Yo, Jorinn, head's up!" The mercenary underhanded the stone to Alex. "It seems that thing blocks magic. Explains why none of those mages came after me just a bit ago. You hold it for me, alright?" Valor looked back at Alexandra. That was the only thing he could think of that was on him. Wait. Was this one of the things Chris had told him about? Oh boy. He'd have to let her down gently. "Listen, uh, you're really nice and all but- HURK." Valor suddenly turned slightly green and grabbed at the poisoned wound. "Gah shit, I thought that was gone. I fucking hate magic."



"I still want to return that- Are you alright? What poison? I will take a look." Alexandra knelt in front of Valor and placed her hand on his thigh, and he could feel warmth emanating from her hand.



"That's not poison, it's powerful dark magic. There's some tiny metal piece in your leg...." Alexandra kept her hand there for a moment, and then just slumped to the ground. Valor felt much much better in the same moment.





"Countess!" Leo turned his attention from Olison and helped Alexandra onto her knees, and then up. She was pale, sweating, yet managed to get her smile back on; the healthy pinkiness of her cheeks returned soon.



"I'm alright... I'm alright. I... I've managed to remove the curse from the metal piece. It's of course still there but I used my magics; there shouldn't be any infection. Just make sure to visit a surgeon that can remove the metal splinter... I need to sit down for a moment." That said, she moved to a large piece of rubble and sat down. Matilda moved by and healed Valor's wounds, now that magic worked on him, and then turned to Seyena.



"Thank you for letting me to borrow your staff; I've healed whom I could, and now I'm returning the staff. Many thanks again."



"Well then. Is there anything else? If not, we should be going. I hope... I hope I can meet with my mother."

Valor eyed Leo, but said nothing. He'd prefer not to go through him to get at PRIXIMA if it came to that.

...He really hoped the others had already gotten the job done.

Olison looked on from a distance, wary. With another moment, he looked outside in the direction of the castle.



"...Very well. We'll need to move fast in order to catch up. Everyone who's coming, take a moment to recoup if you need it, but we leave shortly."

Valor moved over to Seyena, and gave her a confident grin.



"Ready to put this all behind us?"

Alexander nabs the stone from the air.



"Protects from magic, eh? Dragon knows I need this!"

"Sire, my men are ready."



"Let's go, then! I have to save my mother from her madness." Leo quickly mounted his horse.



"If that's still possible." He mumbled under his nose as the twenty-so people rode north-west.

\*kzzzzt\*

---

## ~~Final Chapter~~

The group went in a line on the thin stairs, with rooftops of the middle floors under the thin ascending bridge. And they entered a small antechamber, which quickly opened into a small, tiled room.

It was illuminated brilliantly by candelier above and sets of torches on the wall. It was that place - Prixima's inner sanctum, her secret laboratory... which was sparsely furnished.

There were sets of empty black cauldrons and copper bowls hastily packed at the corners and nooks of the room; a smaller heap of wooden bowls rested near the archway between antechamber and main room; these were stained with some food leftovers, with the one at the bottom already growing mold.

And at the wall away from the entrance, there was a table, with several pulsating gemstones sitting on top, most of them in various states of being shattered; some even resembled piles of dust rather than actual gemstones.

And leaning above it, was a woman, in her early forties, with shaggy black hair, mumbling something under her nose. Prixima Kesselring.

Mannan looked at Gregor, while something at the table sizzled and bubbled quietly. Then, the bishop took a careful step forward, and opened his mouth to talk.

"What do you want? Don't you see I'm busy? Leave." A rather dry, feminine voice interrupted Mannan before he managed to utter a word. It came from under that shaggy hair - Prixima didn't even turn her head - the voice was barely similar to the soft but

cold and demanding voice Gregor and few of his companions knew already.

Chris drew his knife and walked toward Prixima, stopping a few feet away.



"...Prixima. It's time we end this."



"It's over, Prixima. Your castle has fallen and your hired thugs have either fled or been killed. You're our last bit of business here."

At the same moment Chris did that Derick drew his mage masher and ran straight at Prixima as fast as he could, and struck at her with it with all his strength.



"GRAAAAAAAH!!!"

A blast of golden energy pushed Derick away - it didn't hurt him, but he could feel an uncomfortable tingle at his skin. Prixima turned around. She took a step forward, and the energy field pushed Derick, along with Chris as well, away.

Another step, and the field pushed them back to the group.



"Please... refer to me properly. Say good morning or whatever, Lady Prixima. Don't you remember my title? It's Countess." She mumbled, her arms crossed on her chest.



"So you were causing all that noise downstairs. And now you come to interrupt my research by yourself. No questions? No 'why you do this' or 'what's your devilish plan, witch?' No? Hmph, you're worse at this than fictional characters in my collection of bad quality drama plays."



"I don't care why you're doing this. Tell us if you like, but I only want you cold in the ground so I can move on with my life. So we can all move on."



"Gah!"

Derick was thrown to the floor and stunned by the impact. He scrambled to his feet after a few moments and picked the mage masher back up.



"Alright fine! What in the name of the Dragon are you planning PRIXIMA!?"



"Do not worry, my loveboy spy. I will get to that, but first." A ripping noise came from Charlotte as Tiger's Eye that she took with her just shredded her cloth and flew across the room, right into PRIXIMA's waiting hand.



"I will be taking that." PRIXIMA took a deep breath, closed her fist and then all could hear the Dragonstone being crushed in her grip. After she opened her hand, there were few larger pieces and a pile of orange dust.



"Did you know? Why Dragonstones were given to us? Hmph... everyone thought it was a memento, a reward for destroying Gor-Tah! But no, I've got to the bottom of this. The Dragons gave us the stones to make us better! We were supposed to use these stones to infuse our bodies and minds and our progeny with powers that would let us destroy demons like Gor-Tah by hundreds, in case of another demonic appearance." She let the powder fall to the ground, and then she reached behind, placing the chunks on the table.



"Of course, there were no more demons. And our pitiful ancestors simply locked the gemstones away. Waste of precious resource, don't you think?"



"Ah! Destroyed! You destroyed it! All that time guarding the Dragonstone -- for NOTHING!"

Charlotte gaze drifts off.



"Seyena..."



"Oh no! I'm sorry, Charlotte."



"Prixima...you're sick, twisted. Insane, even. Prepare yourself!"

Gregor raises Aaron's lance and settles into a fighting stance.



"By the way, how did you find Aaron, Ernest and Adrien? It was hard, considering I had to work with corpses." Moment later, Marpa let out a gasp, her eyes widening.



"Wait a moment, you mean.. you mean Aaron was... all the time--" Prixima let out a short laugh.



"Oh please, you didn't see a difference? That you were sleeping with your husband's corpse for last three months? Ha ha, this is splendid! **SPLENDID!**" Prixima burst into laughter, her body shivering from entertainment.



"That... that was... **WHY YOOOUUU!!!**"

Derick ran at her again mage masher raised in the air.



"**PAY**"



"...oh my."



"Um, but, Lady Kesselring, what did you mean by progeny? Are these gifts inheritable, or did the Dragons mean for this to be a temporary weapon?"

The force field again bumped Derick back into his place. Prixima scoffed at Riven.



"No, you idiot! We are comprised of tiny little spirals of elements that Dragonstones could change, enhance and empower! You ever wonder why I have managed to gather ten - sorry, it makes *eleven* now - eleven Dragonstones? I've been working with them, crushing them, turning them into dust... and then I found out, to my astonishment, that we're not as magical as before. So of course I needed test subjects. Adrien had strange degree of magic in him so I took his corpse and with power of Dragonstone dust, managed to revive him. Had to clad him in armor, his degree of rot was startling my servants."

Chris shook his head.



"You know, Prixima... you really are a bitch."



"Come on, then. Show us this power you've got."

Prixima was interrupted and glared at Chris.



"Please, Christopher, I'm not done yet." Suddenly a pink ball formed in Chris' mouth, silencing him completely!



"Where was I... oh right. Then Ernest gave me his life. But I overdid with enhancements, really... no matter if you did kill him or not, he would turn into dust in

next few days. But then, then I killed Aaron and his corpse was perfect - fresh, magically potent... Then it struck me."



"Why bother *changing* humans when I could try and *make my own*?" PRIXIMA snapped her fingers.

Suddenly, the bowls at the table began to bubble and rumble, and silvery goo began to overflow them. It washed over the table, sweeping the chunks of gemstones and the dust and then the goo washed onto the floor. Bubbling and expanding, the goo split into four parts and began to rise.

First it looked like columns of quicksilver... then they were twisting like spirals, and some appendages were forming. With dreaded slurping and bubbling, the goo changed colour from metallic grey to the very hue of human pink.

Suddenly, PRIXIMA wasn't alone - four nude men, with their athletic bodies perfectly shaped, stood between her. They looked definitely very human, and were tall like Christopher and handsome like Gregor - the only distinct feature being their golden, glowing eyes and lack of any genitals.



"Look! LOOK WHAT I HAVE DONE! I've brought the will of Dragons into flesh! I've created first representatives of NEW HUMANITY! You, you, you!" She pointed her finger at Tantalos, Derick, Mannan. "You will all be obsolete when I'm done with my work. I will replace the scum that wanders this world with my new, powerful creations, and then we will set forth to conquer lands beyond this mere island on middle of the great water!"

The humans' appendages and bodies warped and bubbled into grey goo, which then reformed into clothes, armors, weapons, spellbooks.



"Of course, if you managed to *survive* until I finish my work. So, let me ask... any final words, my little roaches? Because I see Gregor is ready."

Chris sighed through his nose and shook his head, looking over the creations. He then shrugged and took his crossbow from his back as well, pointing it at the closest one. He was ready to settle things.

Derick climbed back up again and stood with the others, his mage masher sword at the ready in one hand while the other rested on Killing Edge in case he needed to swap quickly. He whispered to the others.





"Raquel and uh... hat guy. Do you have any idea how to break through that barrier protecting her?"



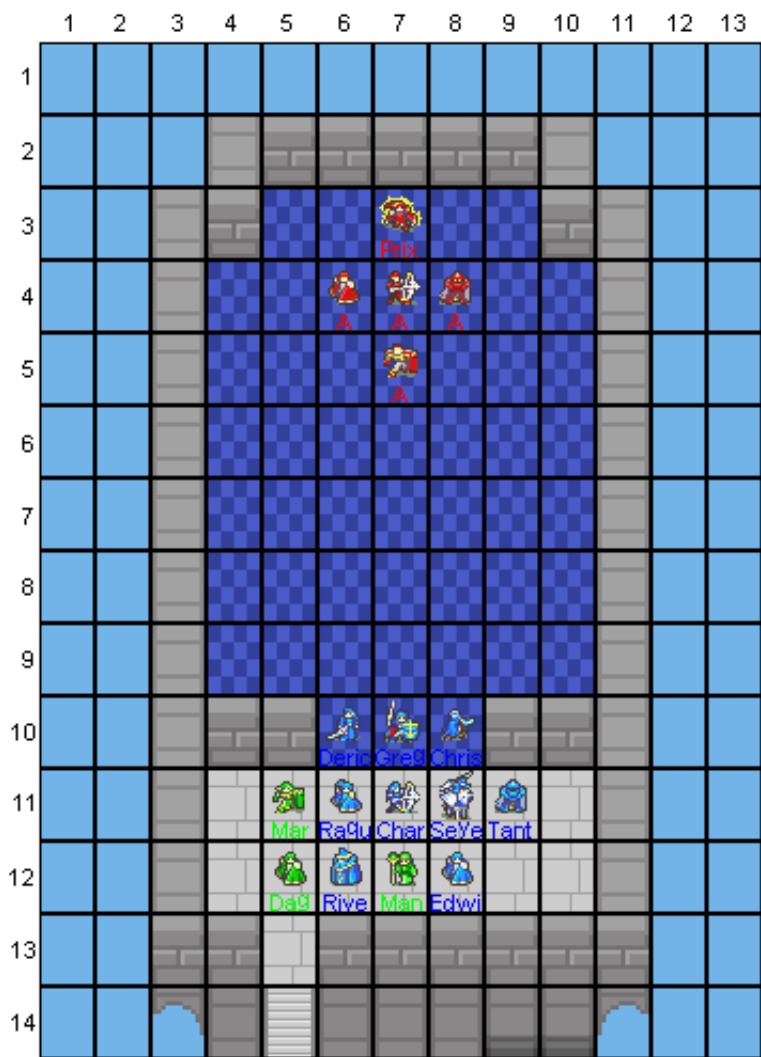
"Do not worry, Derick. Know my mercy - I will give you a fighting chance... After I use the last one Dragonstone I kept for just this special occasion." PRIXIMA pulled out a small, brilliantly golden gemstone and crushed it. It melted in her hands and was absorbed by her skin. A shockwave emanated from her body, washing over the room and almost knocking some mercenaries off their feet. Energy enveloped PRIXIMA and began to send off an aura of golden sparks off her.



"COME! LET THE PURGE BEGIN WITH YOU!!" The humanoid prepared their weapons, while PRIXIMA laughed.

It was now, or never!

~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:



| <b>Mercs:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Enemies:</b>                                                                                                                        | <b>Allies:</b>                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 34/34<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 39/39<br>Christopher Shields: 45/45<br>Derick: 48/48<br>Edwin Westbringer: 41/41<br>Gregor von Hexham: 47/47<br>Raquel Torriani: 47/47<br>Riven: 38/38<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 41/41 | Prixima Kesselring: 147/147<br>Artificial Sage: 40/40<br>Artificial Sniper: 40/40<br>Artificial Hero: 45/45<br>Artificial Druid: 40/40 | Captain Marpa: 46/46<br>Dag: 36/36<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 36/36 |



"Th-this is..."



"But... if they require Dragonstones to make... you can't really expect to conquer the world with four soldiers...?"

Charlotte takes charge and **waits**.



"Okay, this is it. Let's get into formation! **Raquel, Edwin:** our team would appreciate Sharpness. Who knows how fast these constructs are? **Mannan,** please set up a **Sanctuary** and move to our front line. **Derick or Chris,** move out of your spots and behind the front line. **Riven,** summon your best construct and send it to distract the other while we prepare. **Gregor,** stay right where you are. We do our best work when we're extra focused. **The rest of you:** if anyone has a Pure Water or other defensive item, spread it around. Stay behind our front line for now."

**Chris moves to 10,11 and wonders what Seyena is doing there instead of Ami.**



"Oh Prixima, you've gone and convinced yourself that your idiocy is right. This whole 'replace humanity' plan was doomed from the start and you've perverted magic to aid your delusions. The world will be a better place when you're gone. Also, the whole elemental spiral's thing? It's utter horseshit as any PROPERLY taught mage can tell you, and I laugh at your poorly thought through deductions."

Edwin looks over to his allies as he readies himself.



"I'm not sure what good we can do against these things. They seem to have been magically created so maybe we can disrupt the magic holding them together? If that fails, then we go for their creator, who is providing them with the will to keep fighting. Stop her, and these abominations will stop too."

**Edwin: Hold position and Call Magic: Sharpness on Derrick!**



"...this is your plan? Four guys? FOUR?!"

**Ami waits**



"More are brewing in the cauldrons under this very room." PRIXIMA grinned and flipped her book open, preparing for murderizing.



"Oh, good. I would of been pissed if you had gone to all this trouble for such a small amount. I'm still pissed to be clear, but that from a morels standpoint then a poor planning standpoint."

**Gregor: Ensure that the S-ranked lance is equipped, otherwise do nothing.**

**Derick moves to 9,10**



"Right, just need a bit of room to... ah."

**Riven: Move to 4,12 and summon a skeleton. Have it move to 7,9.**

The summoned skeleton walked in front of Gregor whilst Derick bumped onto a wall despite being sharp.



"Oh, was I supposed to be surprised or shocked about that? I am afraid I will have to disappoint you, crazy witch lady, because I am not surprised at all. But I am sure we will be getting a big reward here sending you to the Plague Dragon. "



"I hope you weren't having plans for the future, because I doubt they are going to be merciful after all of that."

**Tantalo: Equip Luna and wait.**

Raquel blushed slightly as the naked men appeared.



"Ah, I congratulate you on creating a magical harem, but I assure you that even my extensive study of natural philosophy is unnecessary to recognize that your creations are missing some...err...prerequisites before they can replace any species."

She raised the Killer Thunder that Joz had given to her, before this woman had killed him and everyone else she had worked with, as she prepared the first spells Charlotte had called for.



"And I apologize if it seems impertinent, but I do not intend to be replaced by any artificial homunculi, and I certainly shan't let you commit any such misdeed against Derick or the others."

**Raquel: Cast Sharpen on Marpa**

~~Enemy Phase~~



"Thank you, Charlotte, for providing me with your battle plan!" With speed of a wild cat, Prixima stopped in front of Derick and with single blast of energy smashed him to the ground.

**Prixima vs Derick**

Hit:  $179-5-80 = 94$   
Hit roll: 53, hit! Crit roll: 15!  
Damage:  $54-14 = 40 \times 3 = 120\text{dmg}$

Then, the axe-wielding construct and his magical buddy teamed against Raquel, knocking her uncounscious as well!

**Art.Sage vs Raquel**

Hit:  $150-5-10-63 = 72$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $37-17 = 20\text{dmg}$   
  
Raquel counters!  
Hit:  $119+10+5-10-50 = 74$   
Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $42-20 = 22\text{dmg}$

Raquel counters again!

Hit:  $119+10+5-10-50 = 74$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

#### Art.Hero vs Raquel

Hit:  $135-10-5-63 = 57$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $45-11 = 34\text{dmg}$

A silver arrow shot Gregor in the left arm.

#### Art.Sniper vs Gregor

Hit:  $140-11-5-10-57 = 57$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $38-1-3-26 = 8\text{dmg}$

Then Tantallos got a little blasted from other side of the wall.

#### Art.Druid vs Tantallos

Hit:  $135-5-62 = 68$

Hit roll: 56, hit!

Damage:  $45-24 = 21\text{dmg}$

Tantallos counters!

Hit:  $133+5-50 = 88$

Hit roll: 45, hit!

Damage:  $27-0 = 27\text{dmg}$

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Charlotte, the front lines are too tight!..." Mannan said, seeing no way he could go to front and perform the ritual - so instead, he stepped up to Raquel and healed her. Dag in the meanwhile blasted one of constructs with wind and Marpa moved to the back and used her last bit of Pure Water.

#### Mannan heals Raquel

$20+21 / 2 = \text{Up to } 20\text{HP healed}$

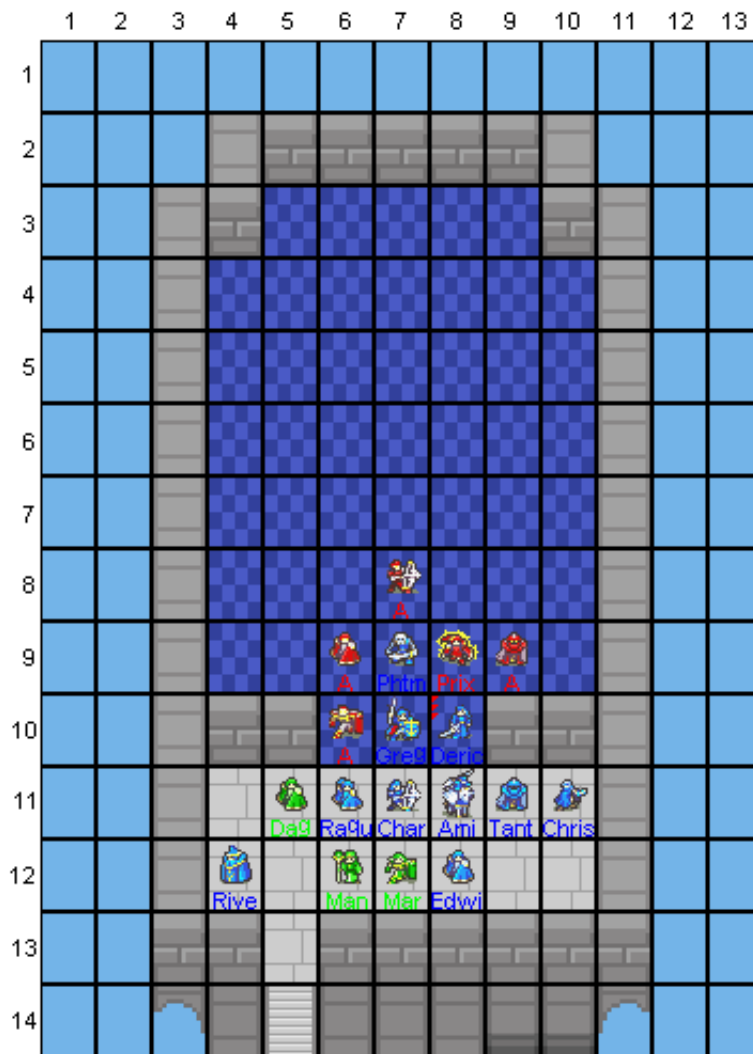
#### Dag vs Art.Hero

Hit:  $132+10+5-50 = 97$

Hit roll: 90, hit!

Damage:  $32-20 = 12\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Enemies:                                                                                                                              | Allies:                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 34/34<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 39/39<br>Christopher Shields: 45/45<br>^ Silence (3/5)<br>Derick: -/48 3/3<br>Edwin Westbringer: 41/41<br>Gregor von Hexham: 43/47<br>Raquel Torriani: 20/47<br>Riven: 38/38<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 20/41<br>Summon: Skeleton: 32/32 | Pixmap Kesselring: 147/147<br>Artificial Sage: 18/40<br>Artificial Sniper: 40/40<br>Artificial Hero: 33/45<br>Artificial Druid: 13/40 | Captain Marpa: 46/46<br>^ Sharpness (4/5) Pure Water (5/5)<br>Dag: 36/36<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 36/36 |



"So thats... what it feels like..."



"We need room to use our superior numbers on them! Push forward!"

Edwin Call Magic: Sharpen on Charlotte!

## Charlotte: Gamble-twang @ sage

### Ami: Heal Derick

The arrow burst through the Sage's head, who quickly changed and collapsed into pile of metallic goo. The goo puddle immediately began to 'flow' northwards.

#### Charlotte vs Art.Sage

Hit:  $133+30+11+10+10+5-50 = 149 / 2 = 74$

Hit roll: 10, hit! Crit roll: 88!

Damage:  $28+1-15 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

In meanwhile, Ami managed to heal Derick back into useability.

#### Ami heals Derick

$10+29 / 2 = \text{Up to 19HP healed}$

### Raquel: Move to (6,8).& Attack A.Hero with Thunder.

Immediately after zorch'ing, the goo splashed to the ground and began slow fluidic travel to the other side of the room.

#### Quote from: Raquel vs Art.Hero

Hit:  $134+15+5-50 = 104$ , autohit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage:  $38-15 = 23 \times 3 = 69\text{dmg}$

### Phantom moves to 8,7. Riven moves to 5,12.

### Gregor moves to (7,9) and STABs the Artificial Sniper!

SCHPLORP~ and the goo was on the floor, going away.

#### Gregor vs Art.Sniper

Hit:  $144+11+5-50 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $40+1+15 = 26\text{dmg}$

Gregor attacks once more!

Hit:  $144+11+5-50 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $40+1+15 = 26\text{dmg}$

Chris looked at Tantallos, then reached over and took the Elwind tome from him before removing the ring he was currently wearing and placing it in his hand. He folded his lord's fingers over it with a confident, somber expression; the look of a man who feels he is about to march to his death but doesn't fear it. He patted Tantallos's shoulder and then moved out.

### Chris switches Tantallos's Elwind tome for his Apollo's Ring, then moves to 6,8.



"Normally I would ask what you are doing, but right now I wish to give the crazy witch a really simple lesson. You cannot replace real Druids with puppets."

## Tantallos: Explode the Druid with Luna.

\*SPLORT!\*

### Tantallos vs Art.Druid

Hit:  $133+10+5-50 = 98$

Hit roll: 71, hit!

Damage:  $32-0 = 32\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Prixima ran away! She got back to her spot at the back and raised her hands.

Suddenly, from small holes in the ground, more goo began to gush out like little fountains!



"Four before, eight now, sixteen in the next hour! More than twenty by the evening! Within week, hundreds! Witness the birth of my unstoppable army, you fools!" The pillars of goo solidified into four more constructs, different from the previous ones... whilst the remnants of the latter began to bubble and sizzle near Prixima, trying to regain their shape.

## ~~Ally Phase~~



"We can't get squished in the back again! Onwards!" The three allies moved forth; Mannan stopped by Derick and healed him, noticing the softly glowing blade.

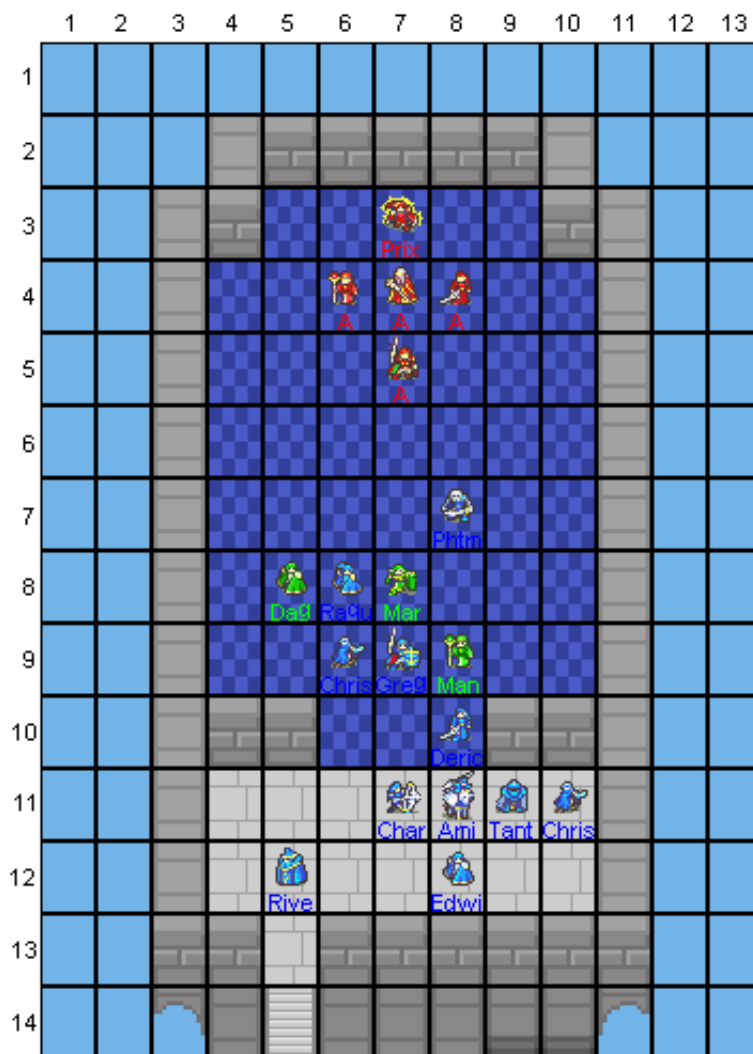


"Put that blade to good use, Derick."

### Mannan mends Derick

$20+22 =$  Up to 42HP restored

# ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather:

| Merces:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Allies:                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 34/34<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 39/39<br>^ <b>Sharpness (4/5)</b><br>Christopher Shields: 45/45<br>^ <b>Silence (2/5)</b><br>Derick: 48/48<br>Edwin Westbringer: 41/41<br>Gregor von Hexham: 47/47<br>Raquel Torriani: 20/47<br>Riven: 38/38<br>Tantalos Forsaken: 20/41<br>Summon: Skeleton: 32/32 | Prixima Kesselring: 147/147<br>Artificial Sage: -/40 ( <b>Regenerating</b> )<br>Artificial Sniper: -/40 ( <b>Regenerating</b> )<br>Artificial Hero: -/45 ( <b>Regenerating</b> )<br>Artificial Druid: -/40 ( <b>Regenerating</b> )<br>Artificial Bishop: 40/40<br>Artificial Swordmaster: 40/40<br>Artificial Hexmaster: 40/40<br>Artificial Sentinel: 45/45 | Captain Marpa: 46/46<br>^ <b>Sharpness (3/5)</b><br>^ <b>Pure Water (4/5)</b><br>Dag: 36/36<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 36/36 |

**Derick: 8, 5 swap to killing edge and attack swordmaster**



"Come on!"

## Derick vs Art.Swordmaster

Hit:  $130 + 5 - 50 = 85$   
 Hit roll: 85, hit!  
 Damage:  $39 - 15 = 24\text{dmg}$   
 Art.Swordmaster retaliates!



Hit:  $145-80 = 65$   
Hit roll: 32, hit!  
Damage:  $37-18 = 19\text{dmg}$

Derick attacks again!  
Hit:  $130-50 = 80$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

**Charlotte moves to (6,7) and TWANGS the Bishop!**

Twang! \*BLORCH!\*

**Charlotte vs Art.Bishop**

Hit:  $133+7+10+10-50 = 110$ , autohit! Crit roll: 15 // \*GRUMBLE\*  
Damage:  $28+1-15 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

**Gregor moves to (7,6) and throws a couple of Javelins at the Hexmaster's ugly face!**

**Gregor vs Art.Hexmaster**

Hit:  $129+5+10+11-50 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $35-10 = 25\text{dmg}$

Gregor attacks once more!  
Hit:  $129+5+10+11-50 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $35-10 = 25\text{dmg}$

**Tantallos: Swap to Worm and move to 8, 6 to attack the Swordmaster.**

**Riven: Move to 5,9. Phantom to 10,4.**

**Tantallos vs Art.Swordmaster**

Hit:  $153+5+10-60 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $33-15 = 18\text{dmg}$

**Edwin: Move to 7, 9. Call Magic: Sharpness on Derrick.**

**Raquel: Move to (9,5); Killer Thunder Sentinel**

Zap.

**Raquel vs Art.Sentinel**

Hit:  $119+10+5-60 = 74$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

**Ami moves to 7,5 and heals Derick**



"Hello, PRIXIMA!"

**Chris moves to 6,5 and attacks the Sentinel at 7,5.**

Oweewwooo~

**Ami heals Derick**

$10+29 = \text{Up to } 39\text{HP restored}$

### Christopher vs Art.Sentinel

Hit:  $139+5-15-60 = 69$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $32+2-1-20 = 13\text{dmg}$

Cancel roll: 5!  
Art.Sentinel cannot counter!

Chris strikes again!  
Hit:  $139+5-15-60 = 69$   
Hit roll: 75, miss!

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Prixima watched in discontent as her slow constructs slowly re-stabilized themselves.



"Hmph!... I have better use for the matter!" Then, she extended her hands and two of the goo figurines destabilized - and absorbed into her skin! Energy crackled and washed over the room, electrocuting those not resistant enough. This shock was rather weak, but one could guess that if more of these follow, they will be more powerful.

### Artificial Sage and Artificial Sniper absorbed into Prixima Kesselring!

#### Shockwave (15dmg)

Christopher: 4  
Charlotte: 6  
Derick: 1  
Gregor: 4  
Phantom banished!

Prixima's skin bulged and bubbled in places as she chewed on something and then swallowed - sound of shattering glass or similar material coming from her mouth. Her skin got greyish, alien spots at some parts as veins showed at her wrists and neck, giving her a daunting appearance.

### Prixima Kesselring powers up!

The sentinel stabbed Christopher, who ineffectively waved his knife a bit.

### Art.Sentinel vs Chris

Hit:  $140+5+15-5-7-63 = 85$   
Hit roll: 46, hit!  
Damage:  $39+1-4-12 = 24\text{dmg}$

Chris counters!  
Hit:  $139+5-15-5-60 = 64$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

Chris counters again!  
Hit:  $139+5-15-5-60 = 64$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~



"I don't like this..." Dag grumbled. He moved up to strike at the Sentinel, but his magic wind missed!

**Dag vs Art.Sentinel**

Hit:  $132+10+5-60 = 87$   
Hit roll: 88, miss!

In the meanwhile, Mannan went up and healed Chris while Marpa ran up to the Artificial Hero and sliced him at him, then evaded his retaliatory strike.

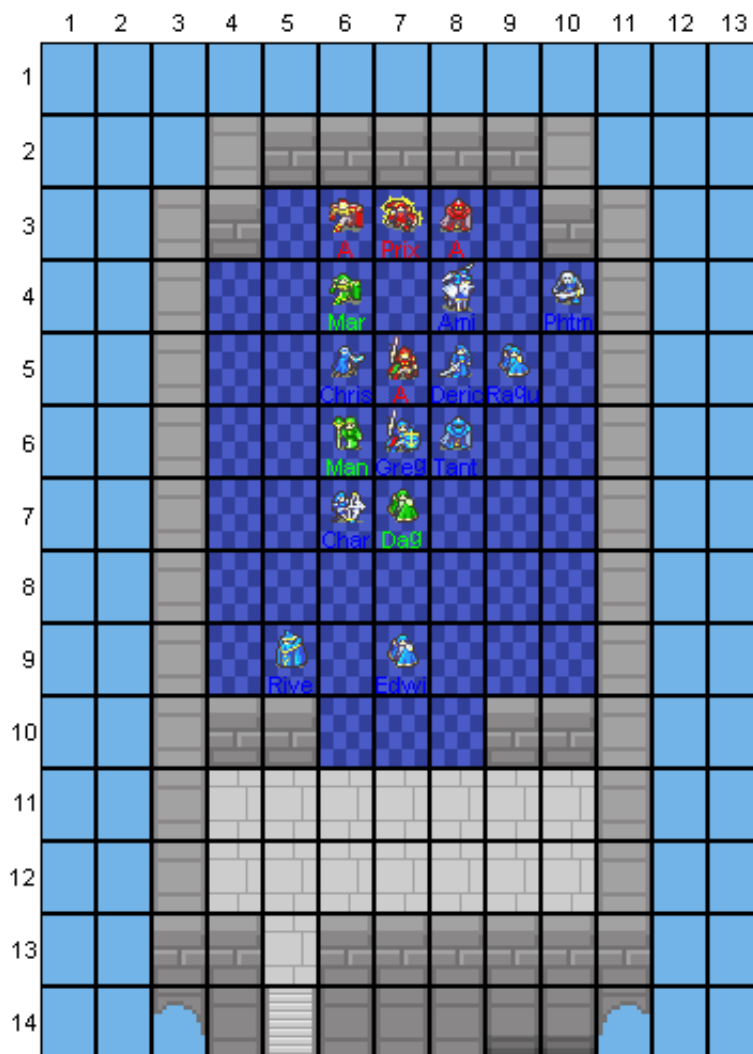
**Mannan mends Chris**

$20+22 =$  Up to 42HP healed

**Marpa vs Art.Hero**

Hit:  $120+30+15+5-5-50 = 115$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $37+1-20 = 18$ dmg  
  
Art.Hero counters!  
Hit:  $135+5-15-5-48 = 72$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

# ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

| Mercs:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Enemies:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Allies:                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ami Storm: 34/34<br>Charlotte von Hexham: 33/40<br>^ <b>Sharpness (3/5)</b><br>Christopher Shields: 45/46<br>^ <b>Silence (1/5)</b><br>Derick: 47/49<br>^ <b>Sharpness (4/5)</b><br>Edwin Westbringer: 41/42<br>Gregor von Hexham: 47/48<br>Raquel Torriani: 20/47<br>Riven: 38/38<br>Tantallos Forsaken: 20/42 | Pricima Kesselring: 167/167<br>Artificial Hero: 7/45<br>Artificial Druid: 20/40<br>Artificial Bishop: -/40 ( <b>Regenerating</b> )<br>Artificial Swordmaster: -/40 ( <b>Regenerating</b> )<br>Artificial Hexmaster: -/40 ( <b>Regenerating</b> )<br>Artificial Sentinel: 32/45 | Captain Marpa: 46/46<br>^ <b>Sharpness (2/5)</b><br>^ <b>Pure Water (3/5)</b><br>Dag: 36/36<br>Mannan Tunhausen: 36/36 |

**Ami: Move to 9,6 and heal Raquel**

**Edwin: Move to 8,7 and Call Magic: Heal on Tantallos.**

Sparkly powers.

## Ami heals Raquel

10+29 = Up to 39HP healed

## Edwin heals Tantallos

10+30 = Up to 40HP restored

Tantallos gives his two rings to Derrick, moves to 8-4, attacks Prix with Luna

Raquel moves to 9-3, blasts Prix with Killer Thunder

Chris grabs vulns from Mannana(aka Banana), moves to 9-4, vulns Tant

Derrick moves to 7-4, grabs Luna from Tant, gives it to Mar, attacks Prix with Mage Masher

Charlotte moves to 5-4, takes Luna from Mar, shoots the hero

Riven moves to 5-3, takes Luna, attacks Prix with Luna

Gregor moves to 6-3, shanks Prix with Avalon

Let's do this!



"Ha! You think you can defeat *ME!*? Let's see what you can do!"

#### Tantallos vs Prixima

Hit:  $135+15+10-5-78 = 77$

Hit roll: 22, hit!

Damage:  $27+1-0 = 28$ dmg

Prixima retaliates!

Hit:  $189+5-15-10-54 = 115$ , autohit!

Damage:  $59-1-25 = 33$ dmg

Adept roll: 16!

Prixima gets extra attack!

Hit:  $189+5-15-10-54 = 115$ , autohit!

Damage:  $59-1-25 = 33$ dmg

#### Raquel vs Prixima

Hit:  $121+10+15-10-5-78 = 53$

Hit roll: 46, hit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage:  $43-32 = 11 \times 3 = 33$ dmg

Prixima retaliates!

Hit:  $189+5-5-63 = 126$ , autohit! Crit roll: 30!

Damage:  $59-17 = 42 \times 3 = 126$ dmg

#### Chris uses Vulnerary on Tantallos

Up to 5HP healed

#### Derrick vs Prixima

Hit:  $132+30+10-5-78 = 89$

Hit roll: 74, hit!

Damage:  $59+2-27 = 34$ dmg

Prixima counters!

Hit:  $189+5-10-90 = 94$

Hit roll: 72, hit!

Damage:  $59-19 = 40$ dmg

Derrick strikes once more!

Mage Masher has been destroyed!

A portrait of a woman with long, wavy purple hair and a halo, wearing a dark, low-cut garment. The image is a small, square icon with a yellow border.

"ARRRGH-!!"

\*kzzzzt\*



\*kzzzzt\*

Chris could notice Charlotte, Gregor, Ami and her pegasus, and other people - all trapped under rubble and wood and red ceramic tiles that once coated the roof of the tower. Even Riven could be seen - her crumpled hat sticking out under a pile of rubble near the entrance to the room. However..

There was one person missing.

Derick was missing.

Did he die in the explosion? Did he plummet to his death? Is he buried somewhere under rubble?

The freezing wind answered - blasting at Chris' face, waking his body from shock and trauma.

Chris pulled himself up onto his hands and knees.



"Ami? Gregor?"

His voice was barely more than a whisper; he wasn't sure if it was because of the lingering effects of Prixima's spell, or because of the pain through his torso. He spit the blood out of his mouth and started crawling towards the nearest person.



"...Come on, Tantallos..."

He tried to shift the stone. If he could just get his lord up, Tantallos could use his magic to heal. After a minute of straining, though, he had to give up. He couldn't shift the stone himself.



"Right, vulneraries..."

He didn't have much left, but he used half of what he had remaining, coating his wounds with it. If he had just a little more strength, maybe he could save SOMEONE... and Raquel wasn't pinned. Chris pushed himself up to his feet and staggered over. The last of the vulnerary went into Raquel's wounds; hopefully she would wake up soon. The assassin took stock of his surroundings again, swaying slightly on his feet.



"...Derick!? Where are you? Can you hear me?"

No immediate answer. He moved across the room to Marpa and shook her shoulder, hoping she was still alive and could help him.

As the vulnerary was applied to Raquel's wounds, she gasped and was brought back to life.

Marpa, after some shaking, coughed and groaned, lifting herself up a little with her hands.



"Uhh... am I dead yet?"



"No. I hope none of us are. How are you feeling? Can you stand? Can you help me?"

Chris waited for a reply, but whether she said yes or no he was about to move over to Mannan and start to try getting that beam off of him.

Marpa mumbled something and sat on the floor, clutching her head a little as she looked at the carnage.

The wooden support wasn't as heavy as suspected - Chris managed to push it off the bishop's body. With a groan, Mannan turned onto his back and looked at Christopher.



"We did it." He whispered and coughed a little. He lifted his upper body and grabbed onto the staff.



"Help me stand up."



"Easy, Lord Tunhausen. I got you."

Chris helped the man stand and kept his hands on his shoulders until he felt the bishop was steady on his feet.



"We'll need you ready to heal. Start with Marpa... I'll be OK for now."



The assassin immediately moved over to Ami and started trying to shift the rubble off of her and Tenebra.



"Come on, come on..."

Mannan began walking around, healing up the visible people and then uncover those buried under rubble. Soon, all of them were alive and conscious - more or less.

The only terrible truth was Dag; he was dead before Mannan got to him, and not by the explosion - a piece of rubble seems to have fallen on his head and crushed his skull.

That was the one casualty... and Derick was still missing, too.



"Poor bastard... rest in peace, Dag."

Chris sighed and made the sign of the Plague Dragon over the fallen man; he may not have been a fellow believer, but if there was anyone that would be found worthy, it would be someone who died fighting such a vile person as Prixima. The assassin turned to his allies.



"We need to find Derick."

Gregor was unsteady on his feet, leaning on Aaron's lance for support.



"I agree. But if he's not up here, then he must be..."

He couldn't voice the thought that Derick might have been blasted off the tower out loud. No one could survive that.

Charlotte got off easy. She took a bump to the head and nothing else. Rising up from the rubble, she fell and caught herself on a downed pillar.



"Oh, no... Dag? Raquel? Gregor?"

She looked up, and Gregor was already standing. Whew.



"Captain Marpa! Let's get everyone out of this room. We don't want to fall into the cauldrons below. Afterward, we should scout the remains of Kesselring Castle for Prixima's old books and any remaining Dragonstones she hadn't crushed. We cannot allow that knowledge and power to fall into the wrong hands again."

Some more rubble fell off the walls. The pieces of stone and roof tiles that went down the hole that was left after Prixima's explosive end produced a curious, metallic sound. It seems that the talk about cauldrons in a room below this one wasn't Prixima's mere boasting!



"...Maybe he fell in the hole."

Chris carefully moved to the edge, then got on his stomach to distribute his weight across a wider surface and hopefully not collapse the nearby floor. He looked over and into the room.



"Derick! Are you down there!?"



"Ow." Raquel carefully made her way to her feet, the healing staff supporting her own weight. She looked around at the others, everyone who still seemed up and about under Mannan's ministrations.



"W...where's Derick? He..."

The crumbling of masonry drew her attention. Forcing herself to walk, she moved to the edge and peered down, hoping to find some hint.

Both Raquel and Christopher could see rows upon rows of cauldrons. Most were broken or melted or toppled over. There was lots of goo, but most already in form of powder or dry stains on the floors or walls - it seems that explosions and silvery goo doesn't mix well in regards of the latter.

There was also one cauldron with peculiar feature. Namely, a pair of legs sticking out of it and wiggling furiously in the air.

Derick got stuck in a pot.



"...I'll go get him."

Chris gripped the edge and slid over, dangling from the hole for a minute before dropping down into the room. Then he made his way over to the cauldron and wrapped his arms around Derick's legs, pulling up and walking backwards in an attempt to free him.

Gregor watched Chris drop into the hole. Hopefully Derick was okay.

Raquel barely even noticed Charlotte's mention of Prixima's wealth of knowledge, watching as she watched Chris try to work Derick free. She gripped the staff tightly, her knuckles almost white.

Chris pulled on the legs.

The cauldron toppled over and it's side bonked on the floor, forcing a loud 'OW' coming out of the pot.

He was OK.



"...At least you're alive, and OK. Come here."

Chris crouched and waited for Derick to crawl out of the cauldron.



"Guh! Don't- worry I'm alive!"

Derick rolled around in the cauldron until he managed to pull himself out. He looked down a second and grimaced at the state of his clothes, and brushed himself off.



"Did we win? Where's Raquel?"



"Up there."

Chris pulled Derick into a hug.



"...Good work, Derick. Thank you."

Derick returned the hug after a second.



"Hey, it's what I do. She needed to be stopped."

Derick let go and began walking back upstairs with Chris.



"Is everyone alright?"



"Everyone except Dag. ...He didn't make it."

Chris looked over at Derick.



"You're going to be a hero, you know. There will very likely be stories about this day and how you struck down that evil bitch."



"Oh"



"I never got a chance to know Dag, but he seemed like a good guy."



"Heh. You think so? That's something to look forward to I guess."



"So... what are your plans? Are you going to reform the wolves?"



"Well... I still have to find out who killed Sarius. Even if I can't avenge him, I would still like to know why he died..."



"But after that, who knows? I might bring The Wolves back but I've been thinking and the mercenary life isn't as appealing anymore really, and I have... other concerns. Maybe I'll open up a school of swordsmanship or something."



"That's an honorable thing to do."

Chris looked over at Derick, slowing his walking slightly.



"...Well, I guess what I'm trying to say is if that... you ever want to settle down somewhere, you could come with me and Ami and Tantallos and live among the Forsaken. I'm not trying to pressure you or anything. I just wanted you to know you could have a home there, if you wanted it."



"You and Raquel."



"Ah- ...was it really that obvious?"



"Well I'll keep it in mind I guess. Raquel said she wants to go back to her library back in Ys. Doesn't sound like that bad of a place to live."

Chris nodded.



"Maybe Ami and I will come visit you two soon. We both want to travel a bit before we settle down."

He patted Derick's shoulder as they reached the top.



"Right now, though, there's someone who wants to hug you herself. Go on."

He pushed Derick forward slightly.

At the top, Raquel was still waiting anxiously. She started forward slightly.



"Ah, Derick, are you OK? I...I...here, hold still." She balanced herself slightly by leaning against a wall as she lifted the staff she was using as a crutch, sending its restorative magic over the swordsman. As the magic settled in, closing his wounds, she frowned slightly.



"D...don't you ever worry me like that!" She stepped forward, seizing him into a tight embrace, ignoring the soot and ash that smudged her own robes. "Please, don't scare me like that ever again." she murmured softly.



"...!"

Derick slowly snapped out of shock and hugged her back.



"Alright, I won't. It's okay now see?"



"Thank you." she murmured in response. After a long moment, Raquel finally let go of Derick and stepped back slightly, but not too far. Her voice was bright and her smile genuine, as she looked from him to the stairs.



"Charlotte's right. We need to get out of here soon; that blast couldn't have been good for this tower."



"Yes... yes sure, it will be her study and quarters." Wobbly and still clutching her head a bit, Marpa left the room, along with Mannan.



"Hm? They're off awfully fast."

Charlotte checked around the room once more to make sure no one else was dead. Ami wasn't up, but she was alive. **Charlotte snuck out of the room and followed Marpa/Mannan.**

Charlotte quickly followed Mannan and Marpa. They were at the door leading to Prixima's study when...



"Wait... I heard someone coming from below." They've both stopped and began listening.

Indeed, even Charlotte, several metres behind them, could hear the sounds of many footsteps that stopped abruptly. Then someone drew out a sword. Marpa pushed Mannan away and walked to the corner from behind which the sounds were coming.

She waited with her sword at ready... and waited... suddenly, footsteps-!



"Hyaa!"



"Yaaah!"

**\*CLINK!\***

The two sword-wielders - Marpa and Dalban - were locked in X-like sword mash.

"**Stop it, Dalban!**" A voice called from behind the corner and the footsteps continued. Leo have appeared - with Alexandra, Tiron, Danya, Matilda, as well as Valor, Seyena, Alexander, Olison and Salvatore right behind him!



"I said, stop!"

Olison quickly moved past their flank, Short Spear outstretched and ready as he quickly scanned their surroundings.



"Captain Marpa, Lord Tunhausen! Are you alright?"



"They seem fine enough - where are the others?"

Seyena spoke as Ilya rode up, her staff already held in hand.



"Everyone all roight?" The wyvern rider spoke up as he saw the state of Mannan and this other woman, both looking like they've been to hell and back. "Wha' appened?"

Alexander rushed towards the group, helmet having earlier fallen off, carefully making sure not to fall off. Upon approaching Mannan, a rock tumbled away.



"Where is everyone? Is Prixima dead? What the hell happened?!"



"With an explosion like that, *someone's* dead. Let's hope it's that witch."

Gregor nearly passed out from shock.



"What in the...how did you all get here?"



"Well, we killed a crap-ton of mercenaries that showed up just after you left. Then we rode here when Leo Kesselring showed up."

Chris checked on everyone.



"I guess it's time to get out of here. Let's go, and leave Prixima behind us once and for all, shall we?"



The assassin waited for a few seconds, then started walking back down the stairs and outside.

---



"Thank goodness they're safe."

Charlotte snuck off into Prixima's study and looked for her books.



"Everyone else has gone on ahead, it seems. Charlotte and Captain Marpa said something about Prixima's study. We should go there, too." She giggled slightly. "I almost forgot, but I did come here for a job."

Derick went with Raquel and Charlotte to help with the books.

Charlotte quickly found a journal of Prixima, nested between various treatises and compendiums on magic and enchanting. Suddenly, the journal vibrated with foreboding crimson aura, which then shot Charlotte in the stomach!

"This is my final parting gift, you wretched worms!" The well-known voice of Prixima boomed in Charlotte's head - the voice disembodied and almost hissing with malice - as the pain overcame her knees and forced her to the floor. "Enjoy your pretty soldier as much as you can, because that's all your family will have!" Prixima's laughter echoed in Charlotte's head for a while before it was replaced with silence.

The journal, lying nearby, was on fire, the flames quickly consuming the numerous pages and years of magical research.

It was this moment when Raquel and Derick stepped inside and were first to see what happened in the study - others still talking outside the room.



"Oh no."

Derick ran over to Charlotte's side and tried to help her up.



"Gregor! Get in here now!"

Charlotte pulled herself up by a wooden chair before the fire took it as well. She chose to say nothing about what happened. It's not important yet... right?



"I'm fine, Derick. Raquel, see if you can salvage anything before all the books burn up. I feel can trust you with this research more than Tantallos or Riven."



"Alright if you're sure."

Derick ran over to the shelves and started pulling as many tomes off the shelf as he could, piling them up his arms.

The other books began to catch fire the moment Derick began to touch them.

---



"Isn't that Valor back there? Valor!"

Valor looked over at Mannan, who'd called his name.



"Yeah, what is it?"



"No, it's... I was wondering how you got there." He nodded at Leo.



"Yes, we brought them here. Are any Dragonstones remaining? How about my mother's research?"

Valor looked at Leo.



"What exactly are your plans for this research?"



"If it isn't destroying it, we're going to have a problem."

Valor just grinned a bit at Chris' response. Thank goodness for sensible people.

Chris nodded back to Valor in greeting.



"Good to see all of you again. For all my bravado earlier... I was pretty worried that we wouldn't."



"Review it, and if necessary, destroy. However, both Menelea and the noble meisters at Ys could benefit from it-"

A rumble came from inside the study.

Salvatore smiled as he saw more of the others make it out of the ruins, exhaling a pent up breath of worry. The deed was done, the witch was slain, and everyone seemed to be fine.

The pink haired wyvern knight couldn't help but back up Valor and Chris, this isn't something that needs a chance to repeat.



"All 'ese stones shoul' be smashed. Ta 'cause all o' this, all o' this sufferin'..." The man shook his head. "Best if'in 'ey jus' be gone."



"No one will benefit from her madness. Best to let sleeping devils lie."



"...Huh. What's in there?" Valor asked, pointing to the study door, in response to the rumbling.

---

Derick had to jump away as the bookcase, now completely on fire, fell forward and crashed to the ground. The flames went large in matter of seconds; clearly it was magical trap and not a simple arson fire.

Soon, the bookcase and the books were all ash while the flames dissipated as quickly as they started.



"Holy SHIT!"

Alex ran towards the study as fast as he could without falling off.



"On my way!"

Unfortunately Alexander tripped over and fell on Gregor, squashing him, fulfilling an ancient prophecy.



"Are you alright, Gregor?" Alexandra asked curiously, standing nearby.

Cursing, Alexander roooooled off of Gregor, and slowly got up.

Gregor half-ran-half-limped towards the study, only to get flattened by Alexander. Again.



"Owwwww..."



"Shit, sorry! Damn, you're wounded!"

Alex helped Gregor up.



"Go!"



"..."

Derick scooped up some of the ashes in his hand and looked at them in shock.



"Sorry Raquel."

Raquel looked stunned. Alongside Derick, she had tried to save several of the books, but they had fallen to flames and ash in her grasp. Gods only knew how many centuries of knowledge PRIXIMA had destroyed in this final pique of vengeance. Finally, she shook her head slightly.



"No, you have nothing to apologize for, Derick. Selfish as she was, it is...fitting for PRIXIMA to have done this out of some final attempt at revenge. It is only fortunate that her trap aimed at her own books instead of our friends..." Her voice trailed off, and she turned back to Charlotte, away from the ruined books, kneeling besides the fallen archer.



"Charlotte, are you certain you are alright?"



"I'm fine right now, but it sounds like there's trouble!"

He accepted Alexander's help gratefully before rushing into the study. When he saw Charlotte, he dropped his lance and knelt by her side.



"Are you hurt? What happened?"



"Gregor, I..."

She shook her head. He'd lost too much already. They could talk about this later with less people around.



"...am just glad you're alright. Why don't we get Ami to look at your wounds on the way around?"

She took his hand and walked out of the burning study, shooting a wicked eye at Leo. If he ever thought about continuing his mother's work, Charlotte would be ready.

Gregor squeezed Charlotte in a quick hug as they walked.



"I'm just happy you're alright too. Though we should probably get that gash of your's checked out as well."

---



"Chris? Everyone.. Good, you're all alright."

Chris turned to Olson.



"...Good to see you too, old friend."

Olson looked to Leo, then Valor, then back to Chris.



"If.. I can ask, though, what was she planning?" It bugged him to say, but he needed to know if Prixima had a reason for all this...



"Hard to believe that we're finally free. We can go home now."

Olson nodded back at Chris.



"Aye..." He turned to look at the stairs up into Prixima's lab. Funny how he would pass by this hallway, yet never did he question what dark things could be going on up there. As he reminisces, though, a thought crosses his mind. "...She is dead, right?"



"I think so. Derick killed her, and then there was an explosion. Um... Dag didn't make it."



"Well, looks like the crazy witch is finally dead. I hope the Plague Dragon

bless us after that."



"Well, at least PRIXIMA is gone. I just hope that's the end of it." Valor rolled his shoulders, finally ready to relax. He slapped OLISON on the back. "Come on OLISON, the tower exploded. It's done. She's gone. We should be celebrating!"

Olison, unprepared, stumbled forward as Valor slapped his back, but quickly regained balance with his spear.



"Tch, well, no matter. This is a victory no matter how you look at it." He spoke with a laugh before standing up straight.



"...But this place may not hold from that explosion... We need to decide what we're doing with the research and get back to stable ground." The cavalier angled his head toward PRIXIMA's study, looking on as Alex helped Gregor up.



"Agreed. Once the others join us, let's evacuate."

Seyena had looked inside the study.



"Hey, Chris. Got those marshmallows? There's a raging fire in there."



"Awesome, I thought burning the books might come to an argument."

Seyena said something, and Chris turned to her.



"As a matter of fact, I do have a few left. Here."

He threw one to her.



"So did I. I'm surprised none of the mages raised hell about it."



"Whatever. Prixima's dead. Let's rub it in her dead face."

And with that, Seyena roasts a marshmallow over a burning tome.

In lieu of roasting marshmallows, Valor just goes to Seyena's side and wraps an arm around her waist.



"I would prefer if you stopped making campfires in my future study. I'm a count now and I could jail you for vandalism, you know." Leo scoffed at the mercenaries. Mannan looked at Leo and shook his head.



"Then I will be leaving with Danya. Gregor, are any of your friends coming with us?"

Leo Kesselring looked at Mannan; the bishop looked at young mage, but they didn't exchange pleasantries. It seems that political tensions prevail even after death of common enemy.



"Father, I have fulfilled my mission... Prixima Kesselring is no more - the world has been saved, is what I would like to believe." Leo looked down at the tiles of the study, his face dark as he heard Mannan's words.



"And..." Leo started. "I won't be keeping anyone here. Leave the castle as soon as you want." Alexandra stepped to Leo's side as Dalban and Marpa began to chuckle, apparently engrossed in some amusing smalltalk, still at the corner of the corridor.



"Yeah, let's get out of this dump." Valor considered looking through the castle



for anything he could sell- after all, he had no money, and he was fairly certain Seyena had none either.

But enraging Prixima's son would likely cause more trouble than it'd be worth.

Chris idly considered stabbing Leo, just in case he turned out to be like his mother, then decided against it. All of Prixima's research, and all the dragonstones she had collected, had been destroyed. This wouldn't happen again.



"Then I'll just get out of your hair."

He went outside and looked up at the sky.

Ami and Tenebra get to their feet.



"We won? Great! Tenebra, if you would be a dear..."

The dire horse grabs the cuff off of the healer's robes and drag her to the rest.

Olison warily looked over through the study door, approaching Leo for just a moment.



"Best of luck, Lord Kesselring. I hope your lordship will prove... Stable in the wake of all this..." He made a short bow to Leo, and nodded towards Dalban and Alexandra before turning to speak to everyone remaining. "We had best not overstay our welcome. Let's get everyone outside, where are Charlotte, Raquel and Derick?"



"Hey, Valor."

After a minute, Seyena sighed, dropping her lance and placing a hand on Valor's arm.



"Come on, everyone seems to be leaving."

She gave a quick tut, calling her pegasus over to her as she started to walk out. She didn't give the nobles a second glance.

Valor followed Seyena away from the ruined tower.



"...Remember when I said we could do mercenary work together? I don't think we should do that after all."

---



"Mannan, I'm thinking about joining you. What do you say, Gregor? They did take care of us. We'd have plenty of resources to look for the surviving members of your family. I could teach Lord Tunhausen's future children to shoot a bow, and you could do what you want. Live in quiet, if you wish."

Gregor thought for a moment before nodding in response to Charlotte's question.



"Those are all good points. Lord Tunhaussen, you're not planning to invade more fortresses any time soon, right?"



"Oh? No, not particularly - especially that I'm not going back to my castle. I had to sell it along with my title, remember? You're free to join me but I'm going to embark on a pilgrimage, maybe find a small village to spread the faith to... hardly anything exciting for two hardened warriors like you two." He rubbed his chin.



"If you really want, though..."



"Hm... I don't care. That sounds fine. What do you want to do, Gregor? Spend the rest of our youth traveling or settle down somewhere nice?"



"Well...we should probably travel at least a little, if only so we can find someplace nice to eventually settle." He chuckled, slightly sheepishly. "Besides, I sort of promised Chris that I'd serve as his best man when he marries Ami. We'll have to travel to Tantallos' realm for that, even if we go nowhere else."

---

As he was leaving, Alex paused.



"Wait a minute... Where's Anja?"



"Anja, you mean the redhead girl?" Dalban spoke, hearing the question.



"I saw her downstairs at her wagon, she's been helping people tie up rest of mercenaries and help the castle's servants with some things."



"Thanks."

Alexander made his way downstairs, to find Anja.



"Hey, uh, Anja. Need any help?"



"No, I'm done here. Actually I even packed some food, we can go any moment!"

The wyvern knight left with the others to the courtyard, seeing as their presence was unwanted. Their work was done, finally. Prixi--or was it Prixiam? Prixia? Prixi-something. He never was honestly very clear on the name--was dead and defeated, her work undone, and whatever foul machinations she had planned broken and inert.

When the light of the sun touched his face he couldn't help but feel as if it was a look of approval from something on high, for a job sought through to the end and done well. A feeling of weight left the pink-haired man with each step as he closed the distance to Ormm, the golden wyvern milling about the stables and sniffing the ground for something. The wyvern came to attention to his presence and Sal gave it an affectionate pat.



"Eems its done." The wyvern cocked its head sideways at the statement, but Ormm's rider just smiled and refused to elaborate.

The rider cast a glance at Anja's cart and waited for the two there to finish their moment before heading that direction, giving the wyvern a last scratch of the head before moving on. Getting there, he clasped the shoulder of the general from behind for a moment in comradery, speaking as he did since he couldn't honestly be sure the man may of felt his hand through the armor.



"Ope Oi'm not interruptin' anythin'. 'Ow's it feel ta 'ave won yer home back an' thwart evil? Ah burden gone an' ah story ta tell, ain' it?"

Alexander turns to Salvatore smiling, only a little bit of uncertainty of *something* showing.



"Nah, I was about to look for you anyway. ...we really did it. Saved Menelea, Berebia, hell, probably the whole world. Quite the ending."

He looked reflectively at the ruins.



"You know, this journey has changed me, for the better. Now that PRIXIMA is dead, I've not got an overarching goal anymore. It used to be the goal of being totally dutiful to Kesselring, then it was keeping the order of the world, and we've *done* that. Now, I get to make my own goals for life. I couldn't have done that before."

He nods and grins again, former uncertainty gone.



"Thanks to you, I can. I think I'll travel with Anja (Dragon knows I couldn't tie you down somewhere if I tried, Anja) and start a family. What are you planning, Salvatore?"

---

Olison made his way down staircase after staircase until he found the courtyard. He could see his horse quietly munching away on the grass, along with Chris looking upwards into the sky.

Olison took a look around for a moment, remembering what this place looked like when PRIXIMA first hired him while he was on the run from Berebia, then how damaged it was after the first attack by Tunhausen and Rosecross. He grunted in deference to the memory, walking over to Chris.



"Suppose this will be the last we'll see of this place then." Olson mused on approach, breaking the silence with a chuckle. "That is, unless Leo decides to put a bounty on us, too."



"I think he knows better than that."

Chris turned to look at Olson.



"After all, we did just kill possibly the most powerful, insane magician in the land, and from what I hear your group cleaned up her army. Leo would have to be a bigger idiot than his mother to come after us."



"But... yes. I don't know. In some strange way... I almost feel like I'll miss Kesselring. It was the first place I ever really put down any roots."



"Aye." Olson nodded. "In the earlier times I was here, it was starting to feel a lot like my times up north. Maybe even better, seeing how my skills were put to the test. However many getaway plans I've had to come up with..."



"I wouldn't worry, though. Servant to a new liege, and to be wed no less!" Olson exhaled a little amused half-breath. "To think when I first met you, you were little interested in more than your spy work and the rain."

Chris shook his head.



"Yeah... I was pretty... closed off. I've been an idiot for a long time, haven't I."

It wasn't a question.



"The two of us... we've been through a lot in the past three years, that's for sure. It'll be strange, not having you have my back anymore."



"Then again, maybe we'll be lucky and won't have to fight anymore."



"I don't know about you, but I'm almost ready to put all that behind me. I just want to live in peace with my wife, maybe be a teacher with the Forsaken. These skills I have... they can still be used for good things, and if another PRIXIMA comes along... well, maybe a student of mine could help out."

Olison looked up into the sky for a moment.



"Hmm." The cavalier grunted. "Peace may be too far of a goal for someone such as yourself. Someone of your skill and capability will always have trouble lingering not too far behind."

Olison pulled his head back down with a smirk.



"But at the same time, that skill can make a difference. You can choose to *make* the peace for whomever you want to keep safe. Your wife, your liege, your students... I know you will not let it go to waste. And I certainly won't let mine. I had a home once, perhaps now is the time for me to go back and make things right."

The paladin shook his head.



"You're probably right. There will always be something to do for people like us. ...And if we don't take care of things, someone else will just have to."



"Oh, and I wouldn't worry about the distance either. Did you know? Berebian tales tell of spirits always fighting on beside their brothers in arms. And if word



is ever sent, I can assure you you'll hear Steil's hooves by the next morn."



"You know that goes both ways, right? If you need me, you'll know where to come find me!"



"So, going back to Berebia... What are your plans there, exactly?"



"Mannan did mention that my former lord Ferwelk had died, and his son lost to sickness." Olison crossed his arms, pensive. "His lands were lost, and I know not what has taken his place. I need to back and ensure order is in place, or if there isn't, make sure the common people don't suffer in the interim." The cavalier paused for a few moments, lost in thought. A moment later he looked over to the side, towards Manaan's entourage.

Chris nodded.



"I see. Good luck with that, old partner."

He patted Olison's shoulder.

Olison nodded back.



"Aye, and to you as well." Olison exhaled. "Don't you have a wife-to-be you should be planning with?" Olison chuckled lightly.



"Heh, well, I do, but I also want to say goodbye to everyone too. I don't know if we'll ever cross paths again."

Edwin silently looked over the burning remains of the magical tomes in the study with an expressionless face. As the flames began to die out, a single tear ran down his cheek.



"Truly. A monster in every way..."

He let out a single sniffle before wiping away his tear and looking over to Charlotte and clearing his throat to get her attention.



"You know Charlotte, I think that you got hit with a nasty magical trap just before, judging by the sounds of it. Mind if I give you a check up to see if anything is wrong? Just in case?"

Riven looked crestfallen. A powerful witch dead, her forces broken, her knowledge lost... she was an enemy, of course, but it all felt so wasteful and tragic. She joined Edwin in staring mournfully at what were once tomes.



"I... guess we're free now, but..."



"Maybe... maybe I can at least take inspiration from her accomplishments, and hope in knowing that what she did was possible. Without so much murdering of everyone's families followed by the destruction of everything she worked for."

## ~~EPILOGUE~~

*And so, the evil in the form of Prixima Kesselring and her vile experiments on the sacred Dragonstones have been destroyed. The world has been saved, albeit the world surely won't care that much, the nations embroiled in conflicts and citizens worrying about their own problems. They won't know of the heroes that destroyed the witch unless some bard tells them a tale for a coin.*

~~~

*And speaking of the heroes, where did they go? How did their history unravel after they have parted ways?...*



**Charlotte and Gregor von Hexham**



*After fulfilling Gregor's promise to Chris, he and Charlotte wandered until they found a peaceful village.*

*Their reputation caught up to them, but after a few more adventures, they settled down for a life of peace and quiet.*

*After many years of living together but without children, and with days growing ominously darker, Gregor finally became a father - and within five years, he found out it was only the first of three children on the way.*



### **Ami and Christopher Shields**

*Chris and Ami returned to the cave where their lives first intersected.*

*It is not known what they discovered there, but eventually they returned to the Forsaken Lands, where they settled down and passed their skills on to a new generation. Their future life disappears from the pages of history, and little is known about their daughter, a skilled priestess on her own.*



### **Raquel and Derick Torriani**

*Derick and Raquel traveled to Ys after Prixima's death, bearing a portion of the wealth of knowledge from Prixima's libraries.*

*However, Derick still had unfinished business to take care of, and so the two journeyed together to Mercia to help the spirit of the murdered Sarius rest in peace at last. After lengthy time traveling together, they've finally settled in Deynastian city of Troi, where the two married and Derick took on the name Torriani; he began schooling youths in swordfighting while his wife took care of local arcane library.*



### **Seyena and Valor Inara**

*After the siege of Kesselring, Valor and Seyena retired to a small farm in the Mercian lowlands.*

*A little less than a year after the incident, they had a child, Hector, a healthy baby boy. He, as well as his younger sister, became a pair of travelling mercenaries just like their parents once.*



### **Anja and Alexander Jorinn**

*With Prixima dead and the group dispersed, Alexander turned to protecting family. With his wife Anja, they had thirteen children: twelve daughters and one son (the youngest).*

*In the future, they would form Alex's Legion, and battle the mages of Magic Wars until their history abruptly ends, and no one can tell what happened.*



### **Olison Eul**

*With the witch dead and his promises fulfilled, Olison bid kind farewells to his companions and made his way back into his home of Berebia with fellow kinsman Salvatore.*

*Perhaps, in due time, he could gather new allies and write history again, bringing stability back to his eastern homelands in the wake of his lord Ferwelk's fall. Later in his life, he finally settled down, acquired a neat parcel of land and lovely wife.*



### **Salvatore Vaughan**

*Salvatore first travelled with Olison back to Berebia and sees the mountains and lakes south of Ugral.*

*Then he made his way back to the old chapel where he both became a traitor and went down a brighter path, where he was given Ormm.*

*After settling down in Berebia, he made a career as wyvern knight instructor and managed to get a rank of Wyvern General of Berebian 3rd Army, holding the position as long as the nation lasted.*



### **Tantallos Forsaken**

*Tantallos returned to the Forsaken Castle to claim his position as a King. He assisted those who were standing by his side to finally repel the undead forces that were threatening to surround the castle.*

*Little is known of him in the future, but the name 'Clan Forsaken' ringed in people's ears long after Magic Wars started.*



### **Riven**

*Riven decided to join the Forsakens after all, and attempt to rebuild a coven of sorts within them.*

*She also had an interest in researching Dragons and Dragonstones, both in pursuit of the kind of knowledge PRIXIMA had gained, and in search of a better understanding of her hopefully new clan's patron.*

*Little is known of her, her name seemingly vanishing from minds of people shortly after*

death of PRIXIMA Kesselring.



### **Edwin Westbringer**

*Edwin decided to roam around the lands for some time in order to collect funds for his dream before he headed back to Ys to start up his new school, having thought of an ideal market of customers to get it off the ground.*

*Due to having accumulated much knowledge and having a preference for 'practical' magics, his new school turned out to be very popular among the more adventurous mages and the 'Westbringer School of Practical Incineration' is currently looking to expand across the land.*

*In his later years, he became staunch opponent of research on the Dragonstones, which put him and his family at odds with Ys Duchy.*

~ ~ ~

*There were few others, who left the group earlier in the adventure; let us remember their names.*

?

### **Henry**



### **Sterling**



### **Taki Greenstone**



### **Daniel**



### **Adrien**

~ ~ ~

*And this concludes the stories of our noble heroes... but let's not forget about their allies, numerous and diverse in their skills, who helped them in small or big ways during their travels.*



**Dag**

*Died during the explosion that occurred during the death of Pricima Kesselring.*



**Danya**

*Remained at Mannan's side for many years, even after he settled down.*



**Mannan Tunhausen**

*No longer a noble nor having a home, Mannan travelled across the country, teaching about Dragon, until he settled down in a small coastal city, where he founded an orphanage.*



**Matilda**

*Returned to Berebia together with Salvatore Vaughan and Olison Eul.*



**Alexandra von Grummel**

*Returned home to lead County Grummel whilst her father was incapacitated after a stress-induced stroke; received the title of Countess after his death three years later.*



**Dalban**

*Became a military instructor at Fortress Kesselring, often embarking to hunt down bandits and thieves roaming the county.*



### **Magister Tiron**

*Resumed his research on long-distance teleportation, until his methods were obscured by much more powerful Dragonstone magic; later, he fell into obscurity.*



### **Captain Marpa**

*Continued her duty at Kesselring Fortress; however after few years, she moved to southern Deynastia along with her young two daughters in tow.*



### **Leo Kesselring, Son of Prixima**

*Publicized and encouraged research on beneficial side of Dragonstone magic, unknowingly dooming the future.*

~ ~ ~

## **~Chronology of the Years after Prixima's Death~**

-591FY: Prixima Kesselring dies suddenly of illness in early February; her son Leo becomes new Count Kesselring.

-593FY: Leo Kesselring travels to Grand Univeristy in Ys Duchy, where he gives the famous lecture 'On the Benefits of Harnessing the Ancient Magics of the Sacred Dragonstones'; he publicizes research on Dragonstones and tells of possibilities of using their magic to heal the worst of diseases, develop new forms of travel, shape land for better use in farming, and so on.

-593-598FY: Together with brilliant magicians of Ys, the study on Dragonstones prospers; within five years the magniture of research on the stones prompts the Ys Duchy to open new cathedral in their University, called 'Draconics'.

-598-608FY: The Decade of Glory; as prophecised by Leo Kesselring, numerous advances in healing and landshaping are made thanks to the power of Dragonstones; however the most powerful ones, like Diamond Star or Fire Emblem, are kept locked in royal treasury of Deynastia.

-607FY: In late autumn, after a dispute in the court of Menelean King, Paragor the Younger, disgruntled sage Yamilik Thorn uses the power of his family's dragonstone, Amber Tear, against the King; Castle Menelea along with hundreds of square kilometres of land are rended and turned into toxic swamp, killing hundreds, including most of Menelean Royal Family that was at the castle during that time.

-608FY: Similar tragedies occur in Deynastia and Ys; misuse of Dragonstones causes land-changing cataclysms that claim thousands of lives. King of Berebia bans research on Dragonstones in Berebia; the nation becomes the pillar of opponents of

Dragonstones, and three well known Dragonstones of Berebia are shattered so no one can misuse them.

-611FY: Xagor the Mad breaks into Dey treasury and acquires Fire Emblem; he razes the castle to the ground and uses the stone to mentally enslave large number of people; later that year he creates 'Domain of Xagor' encompassing northern Deynastian coast.

-612-615FY: Berebian-Deynastian War; first time Dragonstones are used on small scale in tactical combat, only to provide terrifying results.

-618FY: Menelea collapses; several prominent magical generals and researchers use their respective Dragonstones to carve small parcels of land for themselves.

**-620FY onwards:** Owners of Dragonstones battle each other, blasting the land and killing people living in their enemies' lands; Berebian territory and power wanes until the nation occupies land near The North, no larger in size than most of Dragonstones' owners nations. Owners of Dragonstones are dubbed 'Dragonmages'. With death of a Dragonmage, his/her stone is passed to the victor, but no one manages to hoard more than three before losing them to more skilled and/or powerful Dragonmage. With the stones' power unleashed, mountains are shattered and lands submerged, and people are torn to pieces or enslaved as mindless, warped soldiers. In less than a decade, the land is in hands of powerful, magical madmen as no nation nor leader governs over the continent.

That is the beginning of the Magic Wars, an apocalyptic event that would last for more than a century.

~ ~ ~

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. .

Freezing wind blew across the ruined, now ceiling-less tower. There was no other sounds for a while, until footsteps could be heard; soft footsteps of a single young man, who ascended the tower. He stopped in front of the crater that was left after explosion that took Prixima's life.

That man was called Leo Kesselring. Prixima's son.

He looked over the debris and ruination as the freezing wind lashed at his cheeks, so much that he had to cover himself with one hand. He silently prayed for his mother's damned soul to find peace in the heavens, and after he finished the holy words, he was preparing to leave when something caught his attention...

A delicate glow of energy in a pile of rubble. Unsure what to do, Leo stood silently for a moment - and the glow resumed for a second. The young mage moved to the rubble and dug in it, unearthing a dark blue gemstone. It was dark inside - and then a pulse of energy emanated from it, before dying again.



"...Oh, it's my mother's Dragonstone. I thought nothing survived..." The stone's illuminated his face in bright blue color once more.



"...My mother was mad, you know? Trying to do such... crazy things to unleash your power. Maybe she was right, maybe you have incredible powers. But I bet they can be used for... good. Yes. I could prove that." The stone glowed a bit brighter this time as if agreeing with Leo's proposal.



"Mom... if only you could look at these like I do... maybe this could end differently." Leo sighed and pocketed the stone, then turned on his heel and left the tower, his footsteps waning until the only sound in the tower was once more the wind.

That cold wind blew harder and one could think that there was a laughter sewn into the chilling wail of the air; laughter similar to a mad woman cackling quietly....

But no. Surely...

It was just the wind.

**=FIN=**



"Hello! It is me, your beloved Anja the Gypsy! I'm quite excited that it is my duty to tell you something important! And the message is: stay tuned for Epilogue Chapters! I will be going now, darlings. Toodles~!"

"...Alexander, are you there darling?"

"Yeah?"

"Well, I'm busy with the dinner, can you change Austin's diapers?..."

"...Oh and I think and Alisa and Aurora finished their biscuits..."

"...you could also go and blah blah blah..."

"\*siiiiiigh\*"

## ~~Epilogue Chapter Zero~~

### Revenge before Honour

*Somewhere on the road in central Menelea  
Two weeks after death of Prixima Kesselring*

Valor and Seyena were on their way to Mercia. Without much money to afford luxurious carriage or a proper horse for Valor, they've resorted to carrying him by Seyena's pegasus as long as the mount wasn't tired and Valor didn't had objections about spending several minutes in the air.

It was one of these times were he was unmounted, and they were travelling on foot, when the pair could spot some tall, foreboding figure on the road ahead. The man lifted his mace and moved toward them - Valor could easily recognize him.



"I promised you, that you will regret the day we meet again."

Valor wasted no time unslinging his shield and removing his killing edge from it's scabbard.



"Yeah, most people who say that never back it up. So to be honest, I didn't really think you'd bother. Prixima is dead. We're done. So considering last time that I nearly killed your boss I had a cursed bolt head lodged in my thigh and I could barely stand... if you wanna tangle again, I'll pretty much guarantee it's your funeral. I suggest you forget about us."



"You have killed Silverio, and with him, my sister's will to live died as well. She has chosen poison, I have chosen revenge." Gleipnitz coughed for a moment and then raised his hand.

Suddenly, three hooded men in capes emerged from the woods.



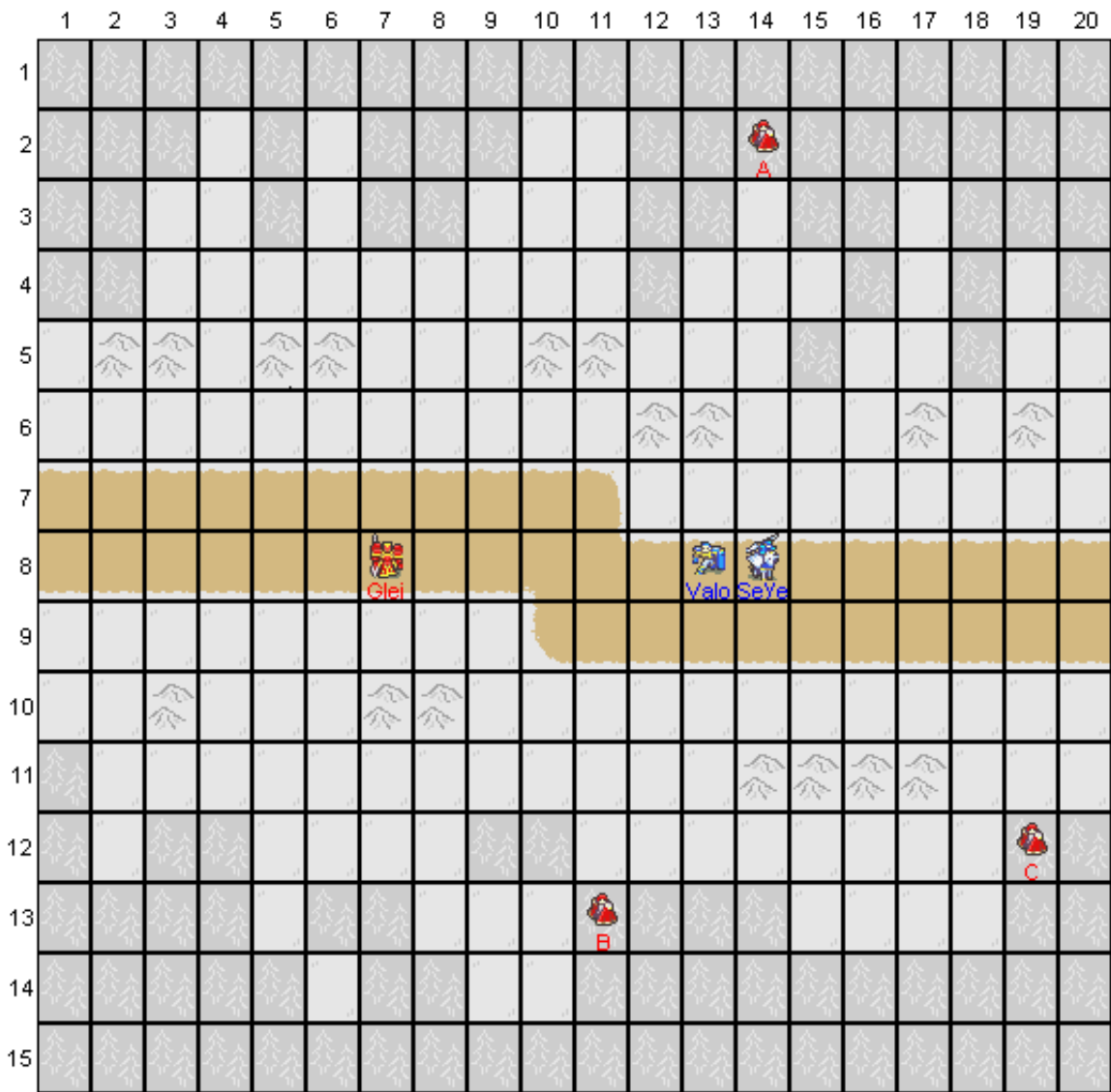
"I've hired some helping hands. If you want, you can run... but trust me, I will find you again. And even if you run away once more, I will stalk you, your girlfriend, your family and neighbours, and I will find you, and I will kill you."





"If you manage to run away, that's it."

~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Seyena Ikane: 40/40 Valor Inara: 43/43	Sage A: 35/35 Sage B: 35/35 Sage C: 35/35 Gleipnitz: 52/52

Seyena retrieves her glaive.



"Looks like we'll have to do this dance of ours for one last time. I thought we'd be done, you know? Back at Prixima's keep."



"You can take him, right? I'll see about keeping the mages off your back."

Seyena urges Ilya on to 11,12, mashing the mage below. No opportunity for surrender, no attempt at diplomacy. After, she moves 1N



"Okay, but stay as close as you can- If I screw up, that hammer of his is gonna sting."

Valor: Head to 9,9, play it safe with the Killing Edge ready for action.



"Not gonna lie, I'm pretty pleased that that rose chewin' dandy didn't make it. Your sister had lousy taste. Now, I feel like pointing out that, with your sister dead, I'm willing to bet that you don't have much left in the way of family. And maybe, considering Silvadio or whoever brought his death on himself by coming at us unprovoked, maybe you should cut your losses. I personally couldn't care less about what you do with the rest of your worthless life."



"Or, at least I didn't, before you decided to threaten to hunt me down and kill Seyena out of petty revenge. That's kind of a sticking point with me. So, I think I'm going to strip that armor off you, beat you half to death, and then *force you to eat your own ribcage*. Pick a God and pray."

Smack smack? More like swish swish.

**Seyena vs Sage B**

Hit: 130-20-38 = 72
Hit roll: 79, miss!
Sage B retaliates!
Hit: 114-56 = 58
Hit roll: 97, miss!
Seyena attacks again!
Hit: 130-20-38 = 72
Hit roll: 87, miss!

Gleipnitz didn't respond, but simply lifted his mace.

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

And he smacked Valor so hard that the swordman saw black dots. For a moment, before retaliating with his deadly sord. Then a Sage tried to zorch Valor but the hero avoided the magical strike.

Gleipnitz vs Valor

Hit: 130-15-10-55 = 50  
Hit roll: 32, hit!  
Damage: 47-1-21 = 25dmg  
Valor is poisoned!

Valor counters!  
Hit: 131+15+10-43 = 113, autohit!  
Damage: 33+1-30 = 4dmg

Valor counters once more!  
Hit: 131+15+10-43 = 113, autohit! Crit roll: 14!  
Damage: 33+1-30 = 4x3 = 12dmg

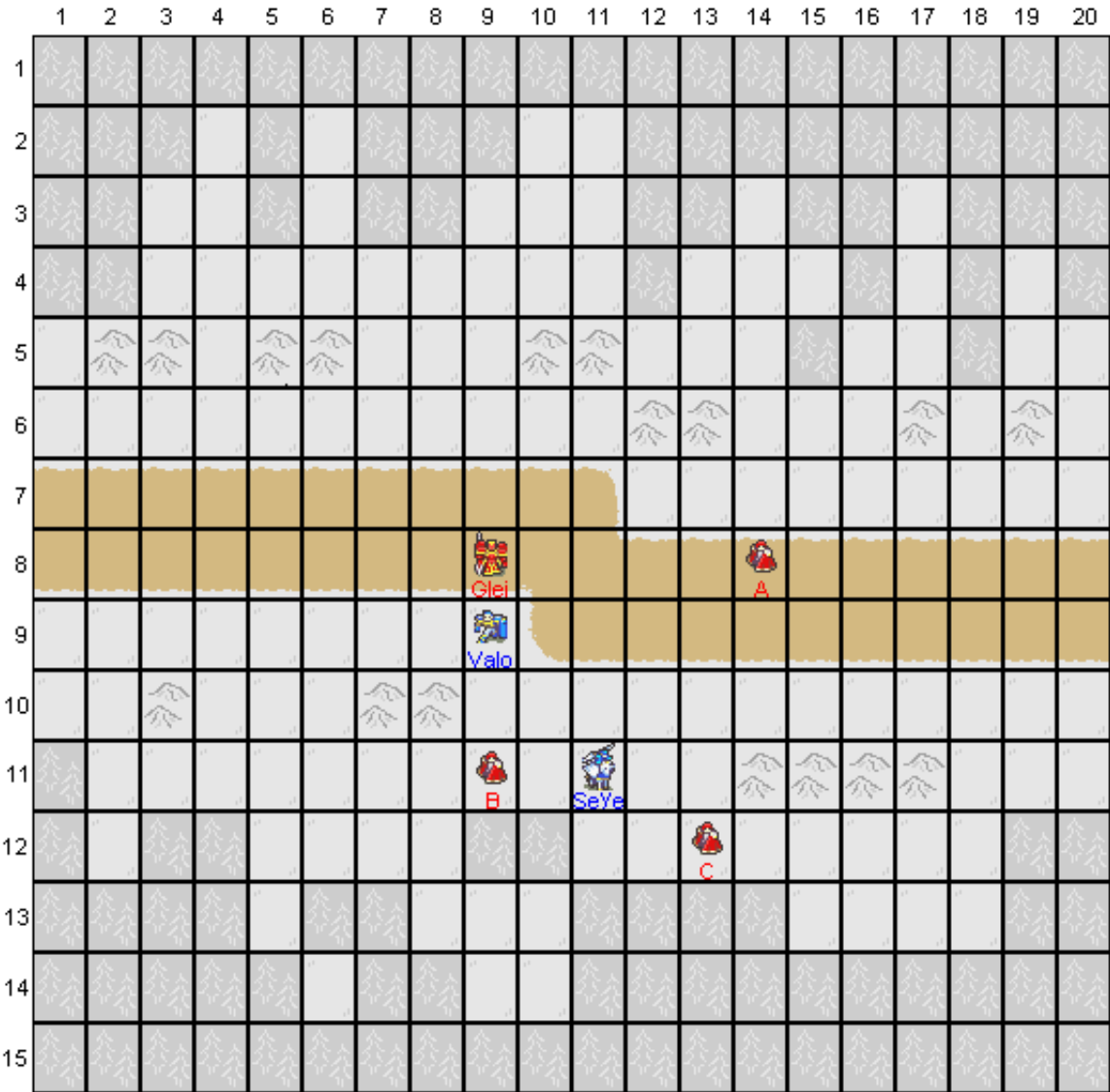
Sage B vs Valor

Hit: 114-10-55 = 49  
Hit roll: 51, miss!

~~Player Turn 2~~

Poison rolls

Valor: 1



Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:
Seyena Ikane: 40/40 Valor Inara: 17/43	Sage A: 35/35 Sage B: 35/35

**Valor: 8,10, Francisca Sage B, wonder what's up with Gleip's family and poison, seriously, goddamn. Oh, and once the wizard is dead, swap back to Killing Edge.**

One down, two remain.

**Valor vs Sage B**

Hit: $121+10-38 = 93$ Hit roll: 65, hit! Crit roll: 3! Damage: $34-11 = 23 \times 3 = 69\text{dmg}$
---

**Seyena flutters to 13,13, mashing Sage C for sure this time**

Only one remains.

**Seyena vs Sage C**

Hit: $130-38 = 92$ Hit roll: 51, hit! Damage: $32-11 = 21\text{dmg}$  Sage C counters! Hit: $114-56 = 58$ Hit roll: 45, hit! Damage: $30-25 = 5\text{dmg}$  Seyena attacks again! Hit: $130-38 = 92$ Hit roll: 88, hit! Damage: $32-11 = 21\text{dmg}$
--

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The remaining Sage, seeing what happened to his comrades, quickly absconded toward the woods.

Gleipnitz swung his mace at Valor, but the hero ducked and felt the air - and warmth - swish above his head. Then there was some sording done in retaliation!

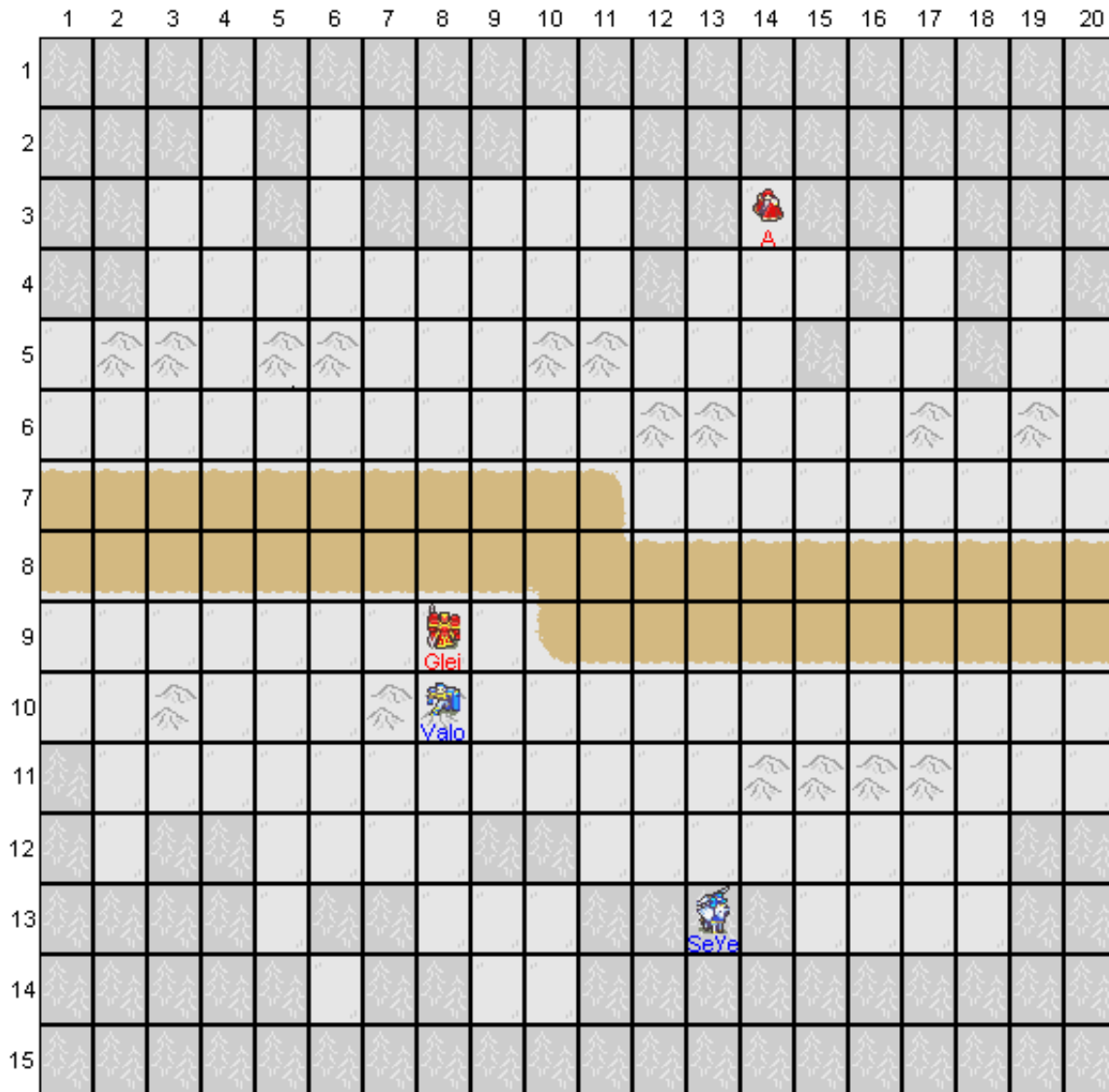
**Gleipnitz vs Valor**

Hit: $130-15-10-30-55 = 20$ Hit roll: 21, miss!  Valor counterstrikes! Hit: $131+15+10-43 = 113$ , autohit! Crit roll: 9! Damage: $33+1-30 = 4 \times 3 = 12\text{dmg}$  Valor counters again! Hit: $131+15+10-43 = 113$ , autohit! Damage: $33+1-30 = 4\text{dmg}$
--

# ~~Player Turn 3~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 3



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Seyena Ikane: 35/40 Valor Inara: 14/43	Sage A: 35/35 Gleipnitz: 20/52

## Valor: Ignore warmhammer. Attack again!

The blade struck Gleipnitz who quickly smashed his mace against Valor's chest. The sound of breaking ribs was audible as Valor, lifted from his feet for a moment, fell onto his back in the snow.



"Hmph."

## Valor vs Gleipnitz

Hit:  $131+10+15-43 = 113$ , autohit! Crit roll: 19!

Damage:  $33+1-30 = 4 \times 3 = 12\text{dmg}$

Gleipnitz retaliates!  
Hit: 130-15-10-30-55 = 20  
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage: 47-1-2-21 = 23dmg

Valor lay back against the snow, face toward the sky. He'd take a look but bright light hurt all of a sudden. Amazingly, he began to chuckle.



"...ahahahah-Ah! It hurts to laugh."

Seyena saw Valor fall, and quickly rushed towards the ground, landing with a snowy skid as she pulled out her staff.



"Valor, get up! He's on his last legs - come on, you can beat him!"

**Seyena flew to 8,11, healing Valor, then retreating 1s.**

Oweeeeweeoo~~

#### **Seyena heals Valor**

10+7+2 /2 = Up to 9HP restored

### **~~Enemy Phase~~**



"Stay down, you little!" Gleipnitz swung his mace, and missed. A blade flashed and his throat was split open - with a gurgling yell and blood spraying onto Valor's face, the large knight fell onto his back, making the snow rise in a cloud.

Then it was all silent.

#### **Gleipnitz vs Valor**

Hit: 130-15-10-30-55 = 20

Hit roll: 76, miss!

Valor counters!

Hit: 131+15+10+15-43 = 128, autohit! Crit roll: 80!

Damage: 33+1+1-30 = 5x3 = 15dmg

### **~~Epilogue Chapter Zero Complete!~~**

Valor spat on the corpse.



"Good riddance to bad rubbish." Then he tried to loot the ring off Gleipnitz's finger.

It easily came off the finger.

Seyena looked down towards Gleipnitz's corpse for a few seconds. Then, she tore her gaze away, and silently tended to the rest of Valor's injuries. Then, she spoke.



"Are you feeling alright? He hit you rather hard. Maybe we could find a town or village nearby? Stay for a few nights?"

Valor shook his head.



"I feel a bit better since you healed me. Then again, I might not feel so hot after the post battle rush wears off. Do we have money to stay somewhere?" Valor considered the ring he'd acquired. "Huh. Kinda looks like some of the other ones around the group." Valor slipped it onto a finger on his right hand.



"We need to find somewhere to stay, first, then we can figure it out." Seyena said, dismounting next to Valor, and squinting towards the horizon. "Oh - see the smoke? I'll bet you there's a village nearby, and people in the mountains tend to not leave poor travelers like us out in the cold."

Her gaze fell to the ring on Valor's finger.



"It's a nice ring. Do you think it's enchanted?"



"It definitely feels like it..." Valor frowned at the ring again, and shrugged. "Well, let's get going then." And with that the two pressed on toward the village.

*With Gleipnitz's death and thusly nothing more harassing them from accursed past, Seyena and Valor resumed their journey toward Mercia.*

*And the next time snow appeared on the ground, they were no longer alone.*

## ~~Epilogue Chapter A~~

### No Rest for the Wicked

*Near village of Sylea  
Six and half years after death of Prixima Kesselring*

Everyone envied Valor. He had beautiful wife, an adorable son and humble, but, one could say, luxurious cottage. Whilst their crops weren't much, they were enough to feed them and sell the excess for coin at the village's market. They lived half an hour away from the closest settlement, a farming village called Sylea; a rare sight considering how hard it is to work the rocky ground of Mercian land.

The main source of income was Valor's swordfighting 'school'; or rather, the private lessons he was giving to the few youths living in the village, including the twin sons of the village's chief, who by some far cousin or something held a minor title and thusly had quite a sum of gold to share with.

One day, Seyena grew ill suddenly, waking at the morning with nausea. However, the reason to worry soon turned into reason to celebrate - the local doctor determined that it wasn't an illness but rather a sign of new life forming in her - Seyena was pregnant again!

Of course, in such small settlement the rumors go around quickly and soon Valor had to deal with the youths calling him 'Stallion' or similar names...

So! Valor was enjoying yet another purse full of coins as he made his way toward his small house in the fields, the afternoon sky having a pleasant, lovely, orange hue, as few lazy clouds pattered above Valor's head....

When the blonde swordsman approached his house, he could already notice something peculiar. Hector, who was often playing in front of the house with Ilya, Seyena's pegasus, wasn't in sight today.

The pegasus itself was missing from its collar. The smoke wasn't raising from the chimney, there was no candlelight in the windows...

And the entrance door - it was open.

Something was very, very wrong here.

Valor quietly removed his practice sword from its sling on his back- He didn't take to carrying real weapons around anymore- No cause to. The last six or so years had been good to him, and quiet. Old instincts however kept his footfalls light as he approached his home, and he pushed the door inwards with his offhand, practice sword held high in the other.

One worry - that someone hostile might be inside - was quickly replaced with another:



Blood and signs of battle; splatterings of the former on the floor, and some more in the kitchen - someone got punched in the face at least twice.

Of the latter, there were many; broken glass, toppled chairs and some other minor furniture. There was struggle, but there was no sight of perpetrators, nor Seyena or Hector. Maybe they were hiding somewhere. Maybe...



"Is anyone still here?" Valor called out, anger more present in his voice than the fear he felt. This had to be... Some kind of misunderstanding or something. Right?

No one replied.

At least not instantly. From somewhere outside, possibly from behind the house, came some noise; it was a bit of a grunt, snort, and something else. It seemed distant, but then again, it might've been just quiet.

Valor made his way to his and Seyena's bedroom, where he retrieved his shield as well as his real blade. He'd picked it up a few years back, but hadn't really expected to use it. He grabbed the axe as well, and then burst out the back door, blade held high.

Again... there was no one else outside, behind the house.

Suddenly, the noise came from behind the large shed where tools and grain was kept. This time Valor heard the noise clearly - it was a pitiful, quiet neigh.

Wildly looking around to make sure no one was sneaking up on him, Valor went toward the neighing- It definitely sounded like Ilya to him... Or was he just wishing it was?

NEIGH!

Ilya was sitting behind the shed, an arrow sticking out of her rear left leg. She stood up after recognizing Valor and snorted, and neighed again, wobbling on her legs. She sure tried to look brave and alright, but besides the arrow Valor could notice her left wing bent slightly downwards; it was broken.

"Neigh!" Ilya said again and then nuzzled his face, snorting onto his shoulder as she took few shaky steps.



"Shh sh sh, easy there. I'm gonna find whoever did this to you and then break their legs. Hang on, I need to get this arrow out of you, and then you can show me where Seyena went, alright? She can fix your wing then." Valor hopefully extended a hand toward the arrow in Ilya's leg as he talked to the pegasus, hoping he could remove it and apply some vulnerary to the wound before being kicked to death.

Ilya snorted and then smacked Valor in the face with her muzzle, before taking few steps away. Seemingly she wasn't going to let him remove the arrow, nor even touch her.

Then she neighed again and turned toward the far, far forest to the northwest.

"Neigh!" She snorted afterwards, took few steps and stopped - but only to turn her head at Valor, checking if he is following or not.



"Aw damn, that far huh? I don't think there's anything I can do to help you if you won't let me take the arrow out..." Valor followed after Ilya, and then began running toward the forest- He had to make sure his family was alright.

And so they embarked on a journey of friendship and- oh wait wrong page...

And so they embarked on a journey toward the dark forest. Valor heard stories about it - pretty devoid of people and with only scarce amount of game animals. But beyond it, there were hills, quickly climbing up as the trees grew taller and darker. And beyond these hills, one would be at the footsteps of the Peaks themselves. But it would take whole day to get to the Peaks from here.

When Valor noticed the change in surroundings, it was dark already. Ilya was still walking in front of him, sometimes trying to run for a moment before the wound got better of her and she had to slow down. But she never stopped; only few times she slowed down to pacing speed, raised her head to sniff and snort - and resumed her trek.

The moon, a thick crescent, was climbing over the forest when Ilya stopped and laid down, snorting and neighing unhappily. It seemed she couldn't go further without rest.

Behind the trees, though, Valor could see a tiny dot of light in the darkness.



"Still no chance of me giving you medicine, eh? Whinny or something if you're in danger. I'm going on ahead." Valor continued toward the dot of light, sword out and looking around. There could be anything in here- And he was starting to worry that Seyena and Hector wouldn't be at the light. What would they even be doing all the way out here? It didn't make much sense to him.

Ilya neighed quietly.

When Valor cleared few more trees of distance, he easily recognized the source of light - or rather, numerous sources. It was light coming from the windows of a ruined fort. He could hear sounds of a party, with lots of laughter and singing masculine voices.

He could easily see that not all of the fort was lit; only few rooms and floors had lights,

the rest was pitch black; and thanks to cloudless sky, he could see the outlines of ruined towers and jagged, crumbled battlements. Whoever had a party in here, wasn't bothering to keep the fort in decent condition.

Then, Valor could notice two silhouettes with bows at the windows near the small entrance door.

Did they see him, or not? He couldn't tell - but if he approached the front of the keep, the silhouettes would clearly notice him; and possibly embed few arrows in him *before* asking questions.

Being out of range to sneak attack the archers, Valor decided to go around, and look for some back way into the fort- with the condition it was in, he would be shocked if there wasn't loose stonework here or there.

Valor then began circling the fort. Few places had cracked walls but they were still sturdy...

---

"And yah sure you dun wanna have some fun, little peach, eeh? I can show yah wut a real man can do!" The drunken, smelly bandit slurped his tongue against his lips in crude, vulgar imitation of a kiss, directed at Seyena through the small barred window of the door. Hector sobbed in the corner of the cell, sitting on a pile of old hay.

Seyena was not about to give the man his satisfaction. She kept quiet, keeping her son close by.

"Fine, stay silent if yah want. I will get yah after the feast's over." The guard mumbled some obscene words under his nose and left.

It was silent for only few moments...

"HUArrg-!" A soft thud followed after a second. Very quiet footsteps turned louder as someone moved up to the cell's door.

"Can you fight well, or not?" A mysterious, feminine voice asked from behind the door.

After briefly consoling little Hector, Seyena stood up, walking towards the door.



"I can fight better than most of these louts. And who are you?"

"Good. Wait here." The voice replied, not bothering to answer Seyena's question. The footsteps moved away from the door, then came back. Suddenly, Seyena could hear that the door's lock was being tampered with, the tumblers and mechanisms turned with speed and precision. With soft click, the door opened.

A suprisingly short woman was standing in the door. No more than five feet tall and of very slim build. Her dark attire blended with the unlit corridor very well, and only thanks

to the moonlight Seyena could see that the woman had a lance in one hand, set of ornate knives at her belt and a tool in her other hand.

The woman passed the lance to Seyena.



"If you can't fight with a lance, the guard had a small sword in at his table as well. There's a sewer drain, I will get you to it, is old and musty and filled with muck but I hope you don't mind getting a little dirty. After you get outside with your boy, head opposite to the mountains, it will take you out of here, by the morning you should be at or near some settlement. I can't tell you my real name, but my pseudonyms for this mission are 'Seyena' and 'Jasmine', whichever you prefer, really."

Hector clung to Seyena's leg.



"Mom, I'm scared..."

---

Valor continued his search for the other entry way and soon he found a promising spot; part of the wall was crumbling behind some thick bushes and the moss and vines were growing freely on the stones. There was a good chance to find a way in here.

Success! Valor finally found a cracked wall. It was overgrown with moss and small shrooms. The elements must've worked on it for centuries now. One good whack and it will tumble down... but will it not alert the bandits?

---

The bandits laughed, drank and eaten, slurping on the bones and chewing into the meat of the roasted chickens and pigs and biting into the bread. Of course, all the foodstuffs came from their latest raid - that's it, on Valor's house.

"Hey, boss. We should bring the girl here for some fun, eh?" The tall warrior clad in cloth and leather belched and rubbed his lips before answering:



"Heh, mah mother said, 'first you do feasting, then you do fricking!'" The bandits roared in laughter along with their boss, who swallowed his bite, and then continued.



"And we hav plenty o'food still. And is not loike she is goin' anywhere anytime soon."

"Boss, you should try her first!" The bandits chuckled.

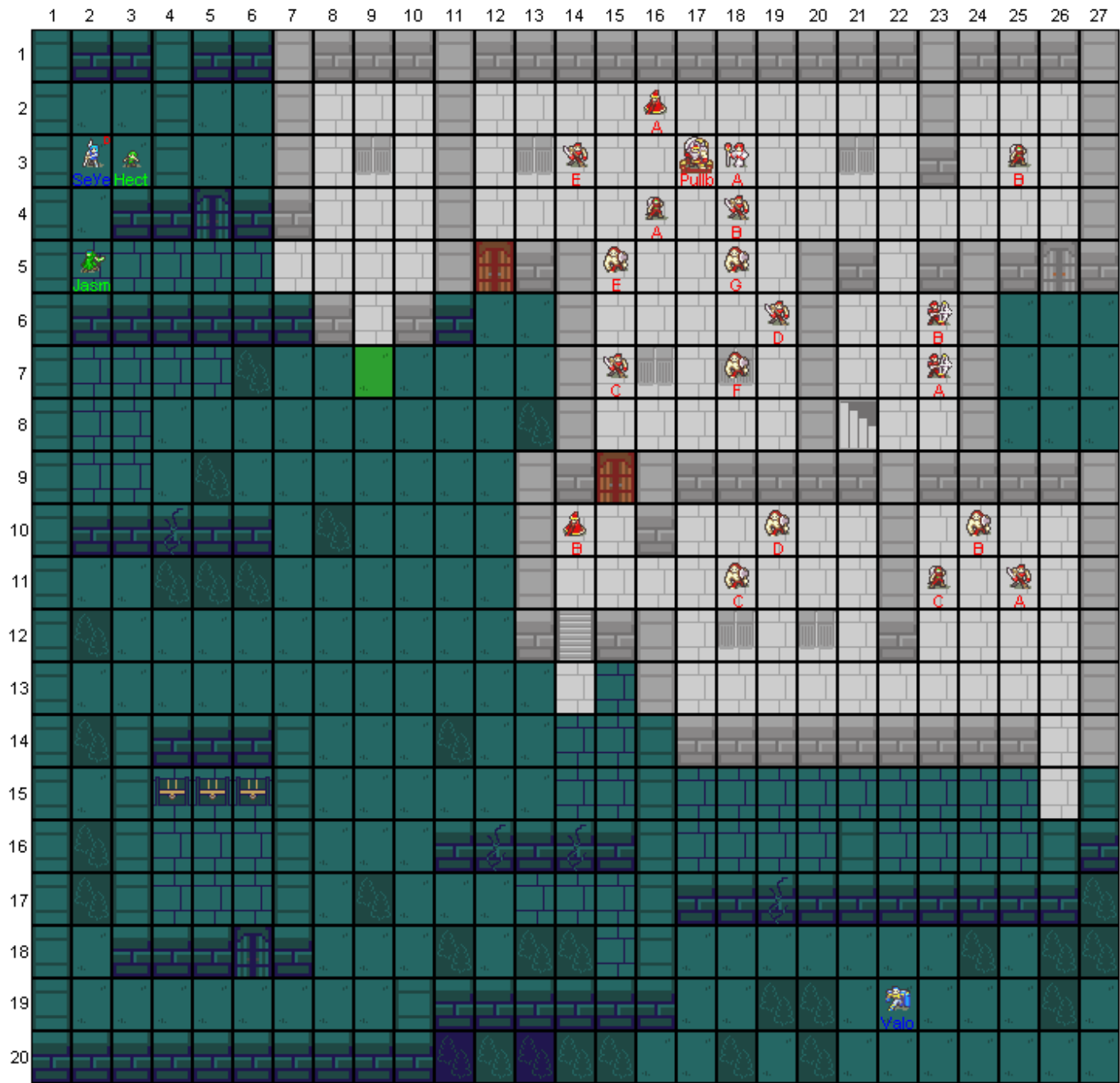


"Dun worry, Migor! I will leave her so wide that even you will fit loike a glove!"

The bandits roared in laughter once more, before resuming their feast.

~~Player Turn 1~~

Lit tiles are completely visible. When you're standing at unlit tile, Enemies that are also standing at unlit tiles won't show up until at range 4 or closer; Jasmine detects enemies at range 8, due to her promotion from Spy. Detection range respects walls!



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40	Pullborg: 52/52	Bandit F: 40/40	
Valor Inara: 43/43	Rogue A: 31/31	Bandit G: 40/40	

	Rogue B: 31/31	Cutthroat A: 38/38
<b>Allies:</b>	Rogue C: 31/31	Cutthroat B: 38/38
	Sentry A: 35/35	Cutthroat C: 38/38
	Sentry B: 35/35	Cutthroat D: 38/38
	Bandit A: ??/??	Cutthroat E: 38/38
Hector Inara: 15/15	Bandit B: 40/40	Trickster A: 32/32
Jasmine/Seyena: 36/36	Bandit C: 40/40	Trickster B: 32/32
	Bandit D: 40/40	Conjuror: 28/28
	Bandit E: 40/40	



"Wait a second - my name is Seyena..." Seyena took the lance, her eyes narrowing for a second.



"You know what - it doesn't even matter. Thank you, whoever you are, for whatever reason you're here. I hope you kill some of these brutes on the way out, though." She then wrapped a comforting arm around Hector, bringing him closer. "Oh, there's nothing to be afraid of. Imagine, this is like those daring escapes in the stories! Pretend you're one of those sneaky heroes, and we'll be out before you know it."

**Ushering Hector behind her, Seyena moves to 5,5.**



"What? I believe you misunderstood me. I'm not here to save you - Seyena? Call me Jasmine then. Anyways, I'm not here to rescue you, I was hired by the Council to find and kill Pullborg, leader of this bandit group. I'm just helping you flee because you're their victim... not to mention that I don't want civilians tumbling under my feet. No offense." She looked briefly at little Hector.

---

**Valor: 19,18 and Tomahawk the wall. Subtlety is back at home.**

In the meanwhile, the wall tumbled partially down, leaving a wide enough opening for Valor to comfortably squeeze through.

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The bandits continued their feast, the two smaller gatherings being a bit quieter than the party in main hall. One of the men in smallest of rooms turned his head toward the staircase.

"Didja hear it?" He asked his drinking companion.

"Hear what?"

"Was like stones' be tumblin'..." His companion shrugged.

"Meh, prolly some loose rocks or sumthin'. We will clear'em \*buurp\* at da mornin', no rush." He chewed on roasted chicken leg with delight. His friend, apparently mellowed by explanation - or the wine they were drinking - dropped the issue and drank some more.

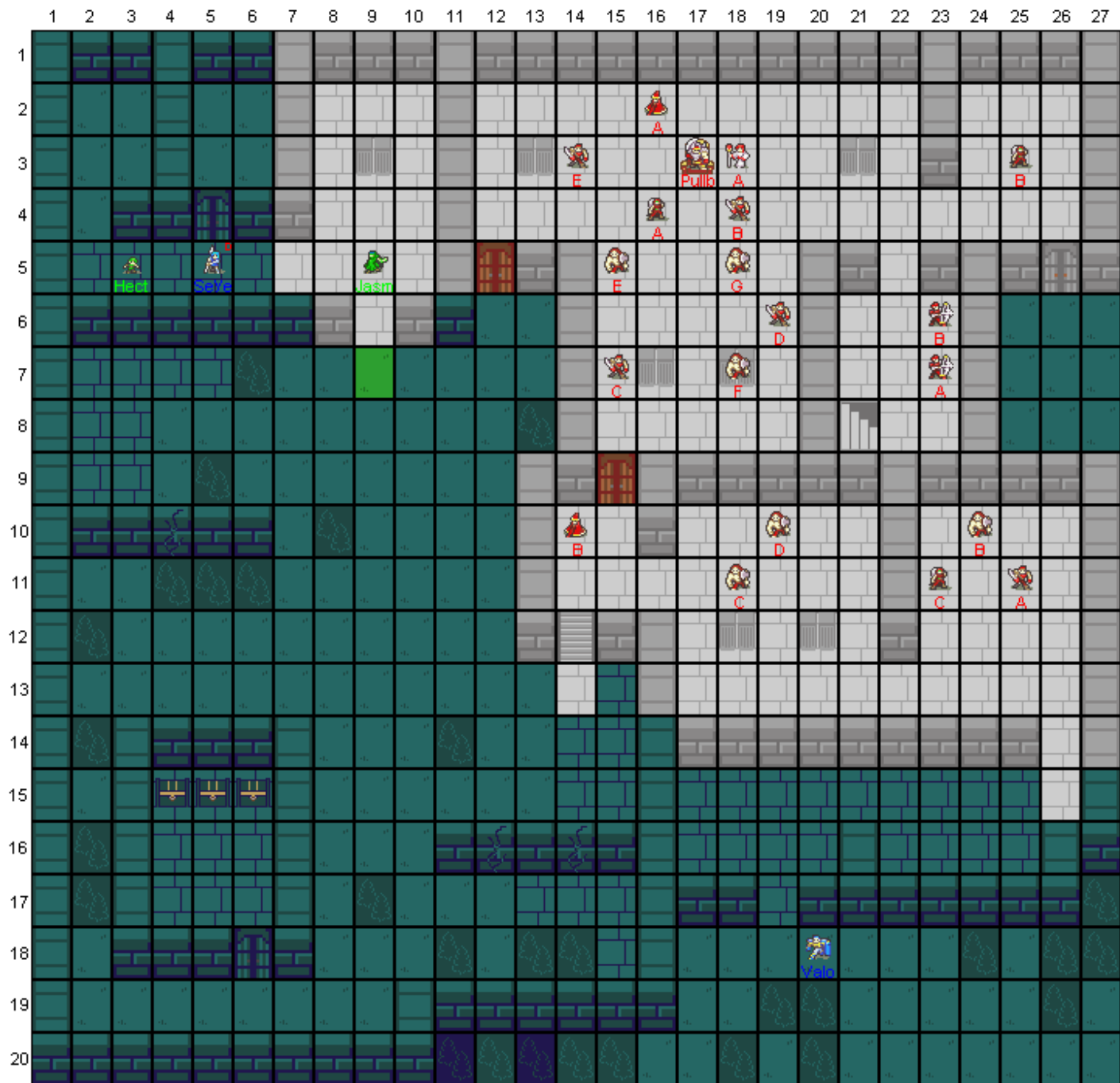
~~Ally Phase~~

Hector moved after Seyena, while Jasmine moved past the blonde woman and into the room, squinting eyes at the light given off by the torch on the wall. She stopped by the entrance and peered outside.



"Clear."

~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

<b>Merces:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Valor Inara: 43/43	Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31 Rogue C: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit A: ??/?? Bandit B: 40/40 Bandit C: 40/40 Bandit D: 40/40 Bandit E: 40/40	Bandit F: 40/40 Bandit G: 40/40 Cutthroat A: 38/38 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38 Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38 Trickster A: 32/32 Trickster B: 32/32 Conjuror: 28/28
<b>Allies:</b>		
Hector Inara: 15/15 Jasmine/Seyena: 36/36		

**Valor: 22,15, with catlike tread.**



"As I already said - it doesn't matter why. Thank you regardless." She ushers Hector along, her lance held in an off hand. "Come on, my little dove."

**Seyena moves to 8,5**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

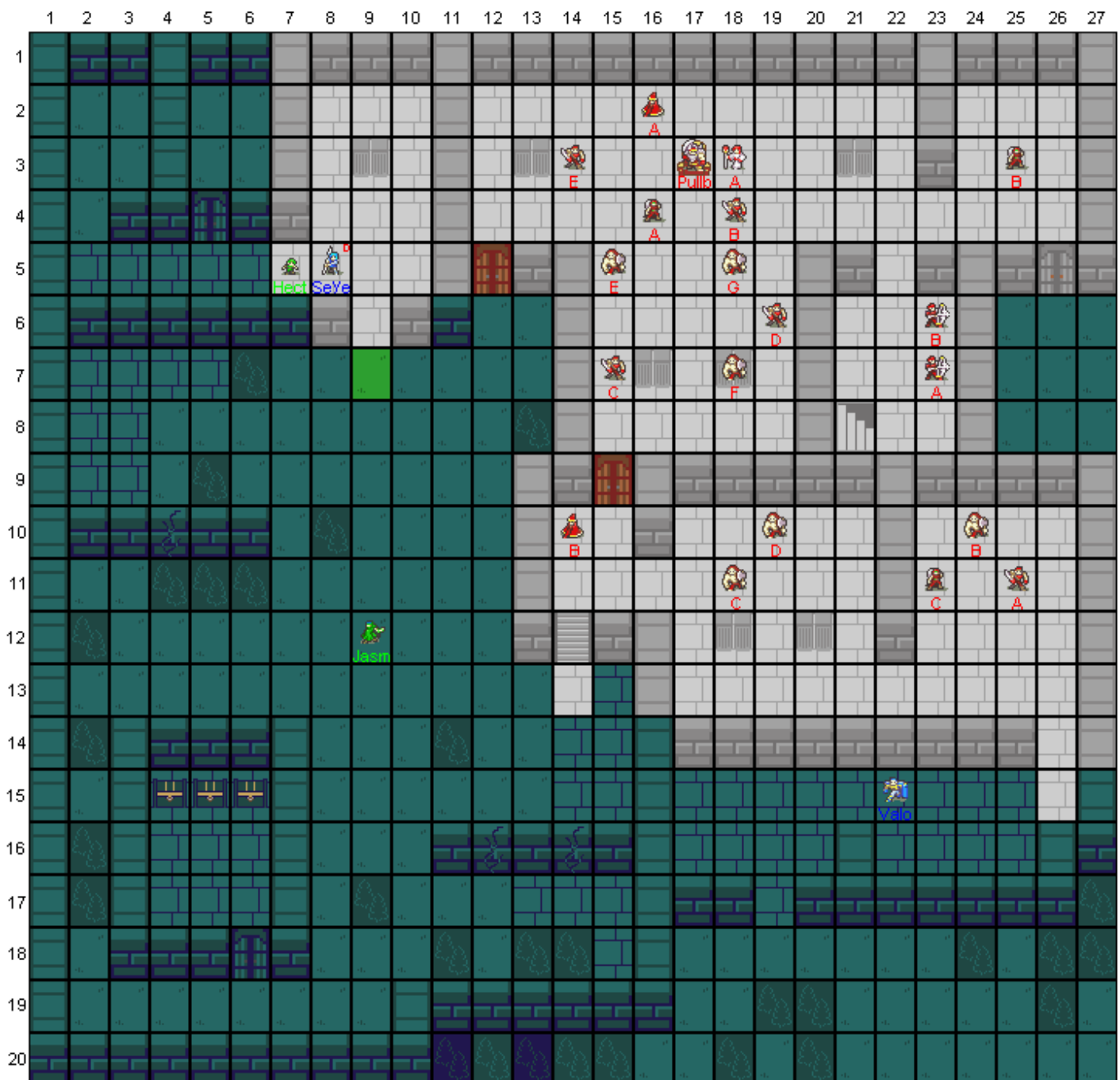
The feasting continued.

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Little Hector ran after his mother as much as his little legs would allow, while Jasmine slipped into the night.



# ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Valor Inara: 43/43	Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31 Rogue C: 31/31	Bandit F: 40/40 Bandit G: 40/40 Cutthroat A: 38/38 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38 Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38
Allies:	Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit A: ??/?? Bandit B: 40/40 Bandit C: 40/40 Bandit D: 40/40 Bandit E: 40/40	Trickster A: 32/32 Trickster B: 32/32 Conjuror: 28/28
Hector Inara: 15/15 Jasmine/Seyena: 36/36		

Valor: 25,15. Begin booting up Murder.exe

Seyena moves to 9,8

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Jokes were passed amongst rounds of drinking and merry-singing.

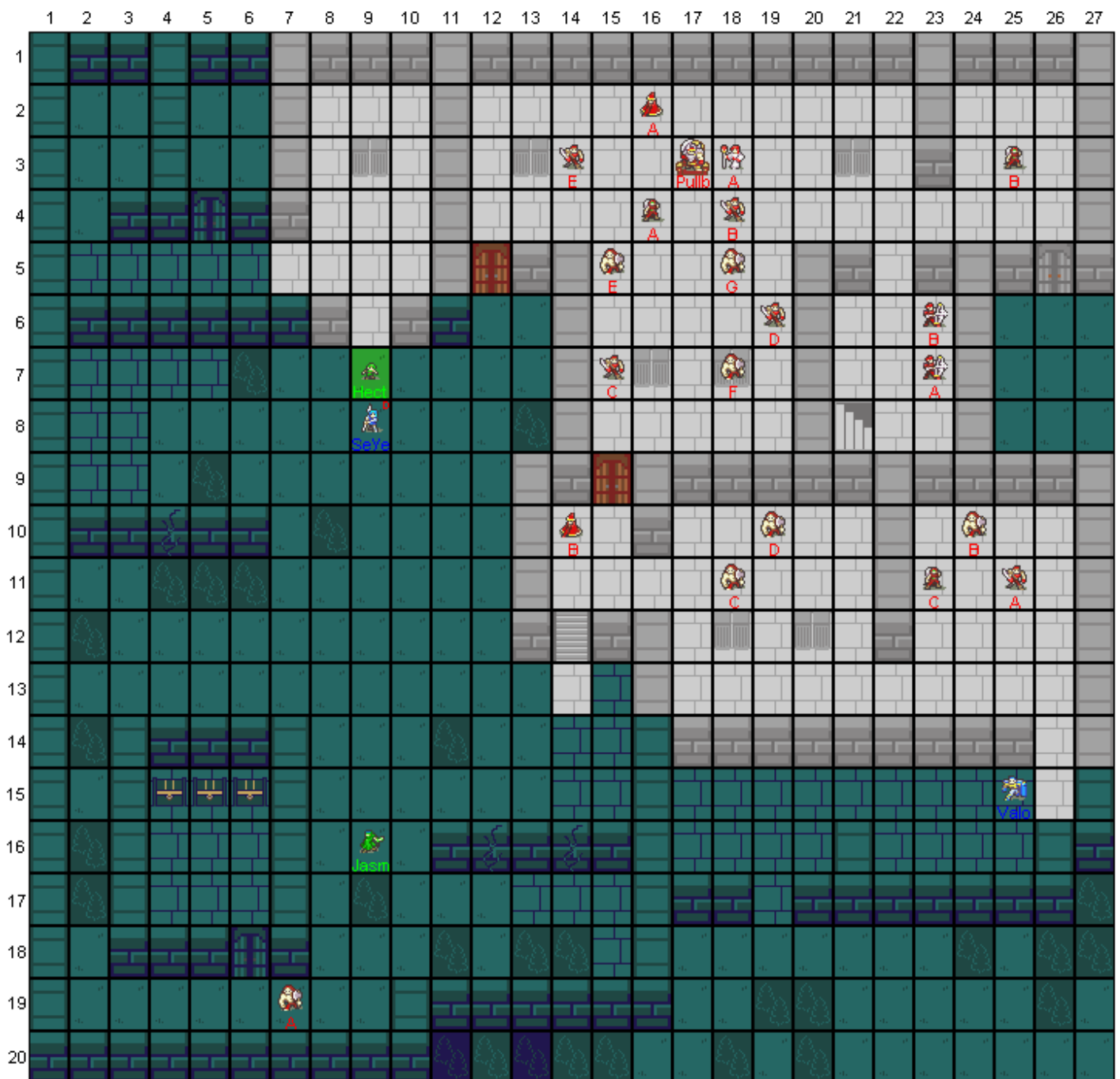
## ~~Ally Phase~~

Hector followed his mother while Jasmine stopped in front of one of the trees, staring intently at the small building.



"..." She noticed movement and pulled the knife from behind her belt.

## ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:

Seyena Inara: 40/40 Valor Inara: 43/43	Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31 Rogue C: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit A: 40/40 Bandit B: 40/40 Bandit C: 40/40 Bandit D: 40/40 Bandit E: 40/40	Bandit F: 40/40 Cutthroat A: 38/38 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38 Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38 Trickster A: 32/32 Trickster B: 32/32 Conjuror: 28/28
<b>Allies:</b>		
Hector Inara: 15/15 Jasmine/Seyena: 36/36		

**Valor: 25,12, Brave Sword attack against Cutthroat A. Make sure his name is very, very literal.**

**Seyena to 9,12**

As Valor ran into the room, he cut down the cutthroat who didn't even have time to respond.

"Wut da heck!?" His comrades stood up. Two bandits in adjacent room heard the commotion, too...

#### Valor vs Cutthroat A

Hit: 131-41 = 90  
Hit roll: 30, hit!  
Damage: 33-13 = 20dmg

Valor strikes again!  
Hit: 131-41 = 90  
Hit roll: 62, hit!  
Damage: 33-13 = 20dmg

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Get'im!" The fight of the drunken bandits didn't go well... Valor did receive a stab with a dagger for his troubles, though.

#### Bandit B vs Valor

Hit: 101-15-55 = 31  
Hit roll: 93, miss!

#### Rogue C vs Valor

Hit: 128-55 = 73  
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage: 25-21 = 4dmg  
Valor has been Poisoned!

Valor retaliates!  
Hit: 131-53 = 78  
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage: 33-9 = 24dmg

Valor strikes once more!  
Hit: 131-53 = 78  
Hit roll: 74, hit!  
Damage: 33-9 = 24dmg

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Jasmine ran to the wall and then dispatched the bandit with well thrown knife to the skull; he fell to the ground without even knowing what hit him.

Jasmine vs Bandit A

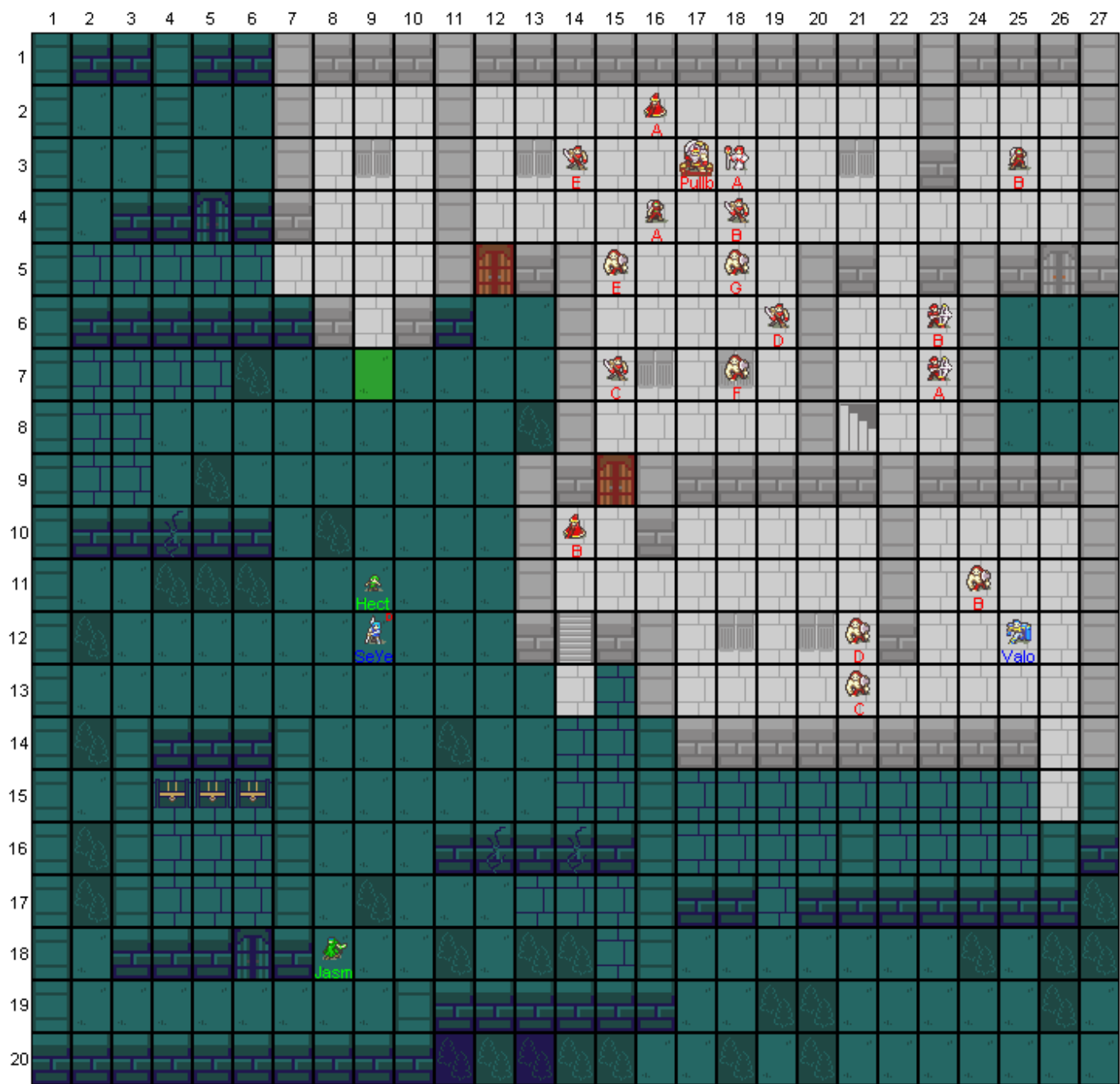
Hit:  $149+15-38 = 126 / 2 = 63$   
Hit roll: 10, hit! Crit roll: 48!  
Damage:  $27+1-12 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

Hector quietly walked after his mom.

~~Player Turn 5~~

Poison rolls

Valor: 3



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40		Pullborg: 52/52	Bandit F: 40/40
Valor Inara: 36/43 Poison (4/5)		Rogue A: 31/31	Bandit G: 40/40
		Rogue B: 31/31	Cutthroat B: 38/38

<b>Allies:</b>	Sentry A: 35/35	Cutthroat C: 38/38
Hector Inara: 15/15	Sentry B: 35/35	Cutthroat D: 38/38
Jasmine: 36/36	Bandit B: 40/40	Cutthroat E: 38/38
	Bandit C: 40/40	Trickster A: 32/32
	Bandit D: 40/40	Trickster B: 32/32
	Bandit E: 40/40	Conjuror: 28/28

Valor pointed at the Bandit just outside the room.



"You're going to tell me where my wife and child are, or you're going to get what they got."

**Valor: 22,13 and Tomahawk him when he invariably doesn't give me the answer I want.**

**Seyena moves to 8,16**

"As heck I'm tellin' you-" The bandit's head split open under the swinging strike of the tomahawk.

#### Valor vs Bandit C

Hit:  $121 - 38 = 83$   
Hit roll: 2, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $37 - 12 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The mage in adjacent room moved in.

"What is happ-oh shit!"

"Aydn, warn the boss, warn the boss!" The bandit shouted as he and his comrade tried to kill Valor.

#### Bandit D vs Valor

Hit:  $101 - 55 = 46$   
Hit roll: 51, miss!  
  
Valor counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $121 - 38 = 83$   
Hit roll: 88, miss!  
  
Valor counters once more!  
Hit:  $121 - 38 = 83$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $37 - 12 = 25\text{dmg}$

#### Bandit B vs Valor

Hit:  $101 - 55 = 46$   
Hit roll: 40, hit!  
Damage:  $30 - 21 = 9\text{dmg}$   
  
Valor counters!  
Hit:  $121 - 38 = 83$   
Hit roll: 64, hit! Crit roll: 1!  
Damage:  $37 - 12 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

As the carnage continued, the group in main hall began singing 'Little Virgin Peach', about very naive barmaid and very cunning pair of twin brothers. Valor heard that one few times and it was both explicit and very unpleasant, at least for the involved maid.

Both the muffled song and the combat noises mixed together came to the ears of Seyena who was just nearby the door.

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Jasmine quickly used her lockpicks to open the door.

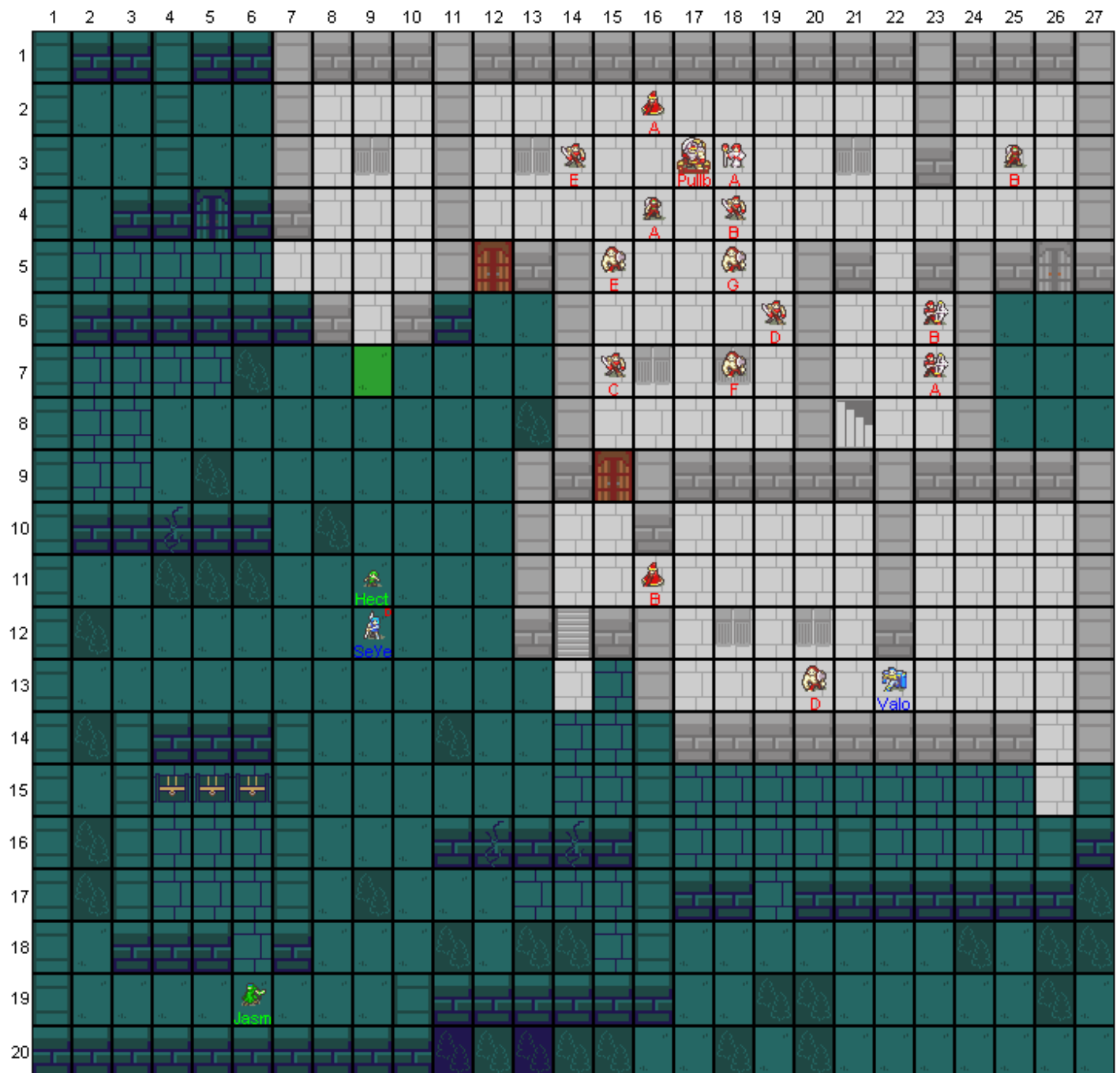


"Like I thought... Seyena, come here, you can have their treasures if you want."

# ~~Player Turn 6~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 3



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Valor Inara: 24/43 <b>Poison (3/5)</b>		Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: 15/40 Bandit E: 40/40 Bandit F: 40/40	Bandit G: 40/40 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38 Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38 Trickster A: 32/32 Trickster B: 32/32 Conjuror: 28/28
Allies:			
Hector Inara: 15/15 Jasmine: 36/36			

**Valor: 18,11, split the mage's head with another well placed Tomahawk.**



"Do you hear that? Doesn't that sound like fighting to you?" Seyena approaches the spy. "And, any better lances among those 'treasures'?"

**Seyena moves to 7,19**

The mage got hit by an axe, cast his flames and then turned around - quickly he fell down when another thrown axe struck him in the back of his head.

**Valor vs Trickster B**

Hit: 121-38 = 83  
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage: 37-7 = 30dmg

Trickster B counters!  
Hit: 126-55 = 71  
Hit roll: 88, miss!

Valor attacks again!  
Hit: 121-38 = 83  
Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Damage: 37-7 = 30dmg

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The other thug ran away in opposite direction.

**~~Ally Phase~~**



"The chests are without locks. Amateurs." Jasmine heard Seyena and moved northwards.



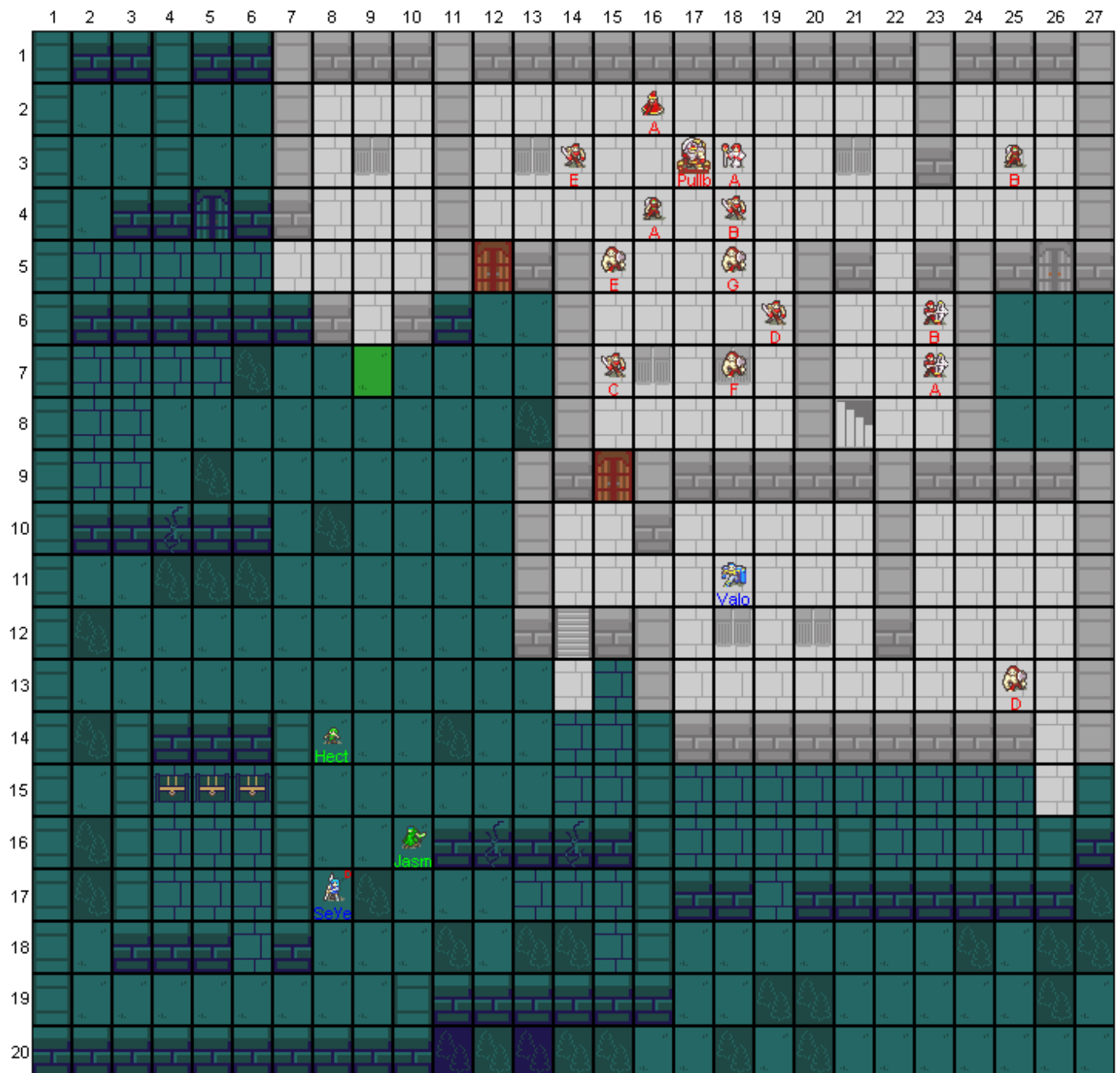
"Hide in the treasury with your son. I will go check what is happening there. I will come back for you when it's safe."



# ~~Player Turn 7~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 4



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Valor Inara: 20/43 <b>Poison (2/5)</b>		Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: 15/40 Bandit E: 40/40 Bandit F: 40/40	Bandit G: 40/40 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38 Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38 Trickster A: 32/32 Conjuror: 28/28
Allies:			
Hector Inara: 15/15 Jasmine: 36/36			

Valor: 14,11, use a vulnerary.

Seyena moves to 6,18

**Valor uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP restored

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Feasting and partying and song and laughter.

## ~~All Phase~~

Jasmine appeared downstairs, pointing her knife at Valor. She briefly looked at his blood-stained armor and blood-dripping sword.

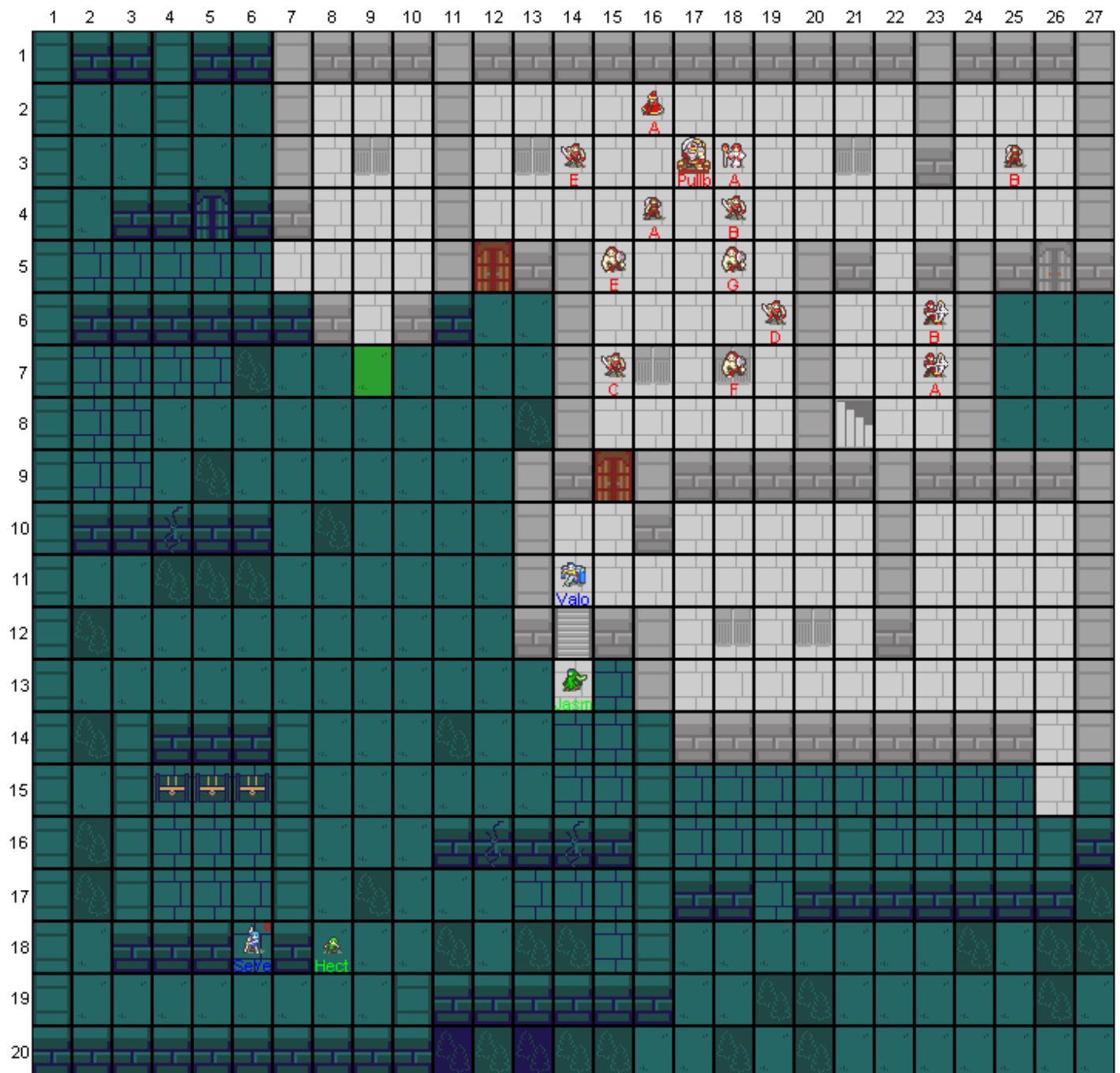


"I will assume you're not one of the bandits, but I would still want to know who are you and what you're doing here, besides stealing my job."

# ~~Player Turn 8~~

## Poison rolls

Valor: 3



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Valor Inara: 27/43 <b>Poison (1/5)</b>		Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: 15/40 Bandit E: 40/40 Bandit F: 40/40	Bandit G: 40/40 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38 Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38 Trickster A: 32/32 Conjuror: 28/28
Allies:			
Hector Inara: 15/15 Jasmine: 36/36			



"Job? Hardly. I'm looking for my wife and child. Both blonde, but her hair is

lighter than mine. Do you know if they're here?" Valor continued applying healing powder to the wounds he'd sustained. "I have reason to believe they are, and I'm going to keep killing bandits until I find them."



"...Seyena, perchance? I've freed her from her cell few minutes ago. I think she is still in the bandit's treasury, right there." Jasmine nodded toward the small, lone-standing building covered in darkness.



"The kiddo is with her I reckon. How did you get inside the fort, though?"



"Hole in the wall down thataway gotta go bye!"

**Valor: 10,13, use vulnerary again**

**Valor uses Vulnerary!**

Up to 10HP healed

**Seyena to 4,15, and let the looting commence**

Seyena opened the chest; inside, she found some bottles, most of them open and empty, but few were corked and still having beneficial fluids in them. This must be their medicine chest or something.

**Seyena got Energy Drops and Concoction (3/3)!**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Same as before... or is it?

"So that's how the fucker got in..." The bandit muttered to himself. He looked at the lit stairs, listened for a while, and got a plan.

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Jasmine moved up to the door and knelt at it, peeking through the keyhole, counting the bandits and checking their movements.

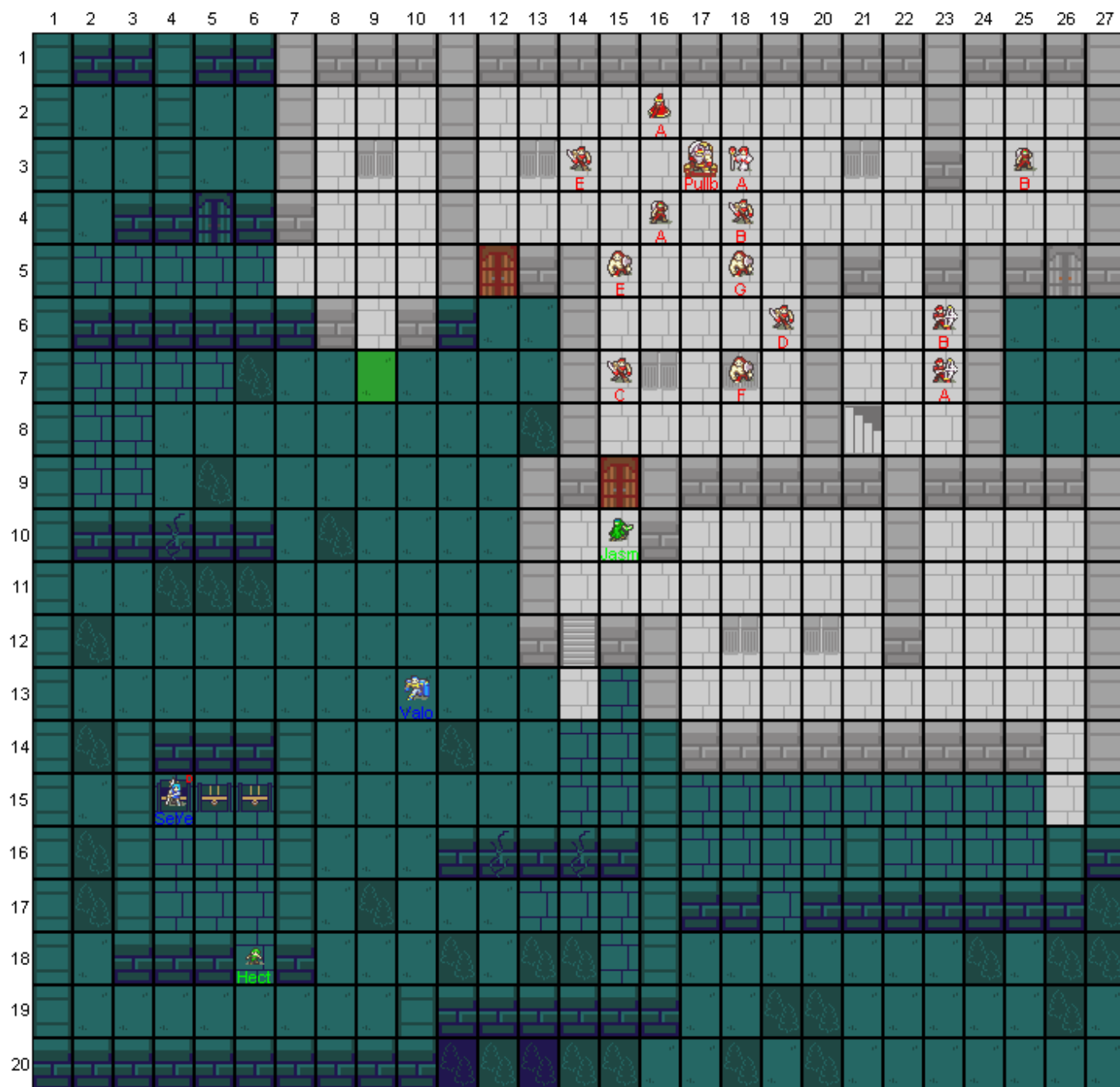


"Mom? Mom are you there? Mom?" Hector asked after getting to the door, not seeing Seyena in the dark.

# ~~Player Turn 9~~

## Poison rolls

Valor got better



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Valor Inara: 37/43		Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31	Bandit G: 40/40 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38
Allies:		Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: 15/40	Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38 Trickster A: 32/32
Hector Inara: 15/15 Jasmine: 36/36		Bandit E: 40/40 Bandit F: 40/40	Conjuror: 28/28

Valor: 9,18. Can't see kid because wahl.



"**Seyena? Hector?**" Valor didn't shout- If he drew out the bandits and Hector got hurt, he'd never forgive himself.



"Come here, honey, it's alright, I'm right here. I'm just looking for something to help us... here - let me carry you like papa does."

**Seyena moves to 6,17, rescuing (piggybacking, whatever floats the boat) little Hector before bandit comes up from corner and murderizes him**

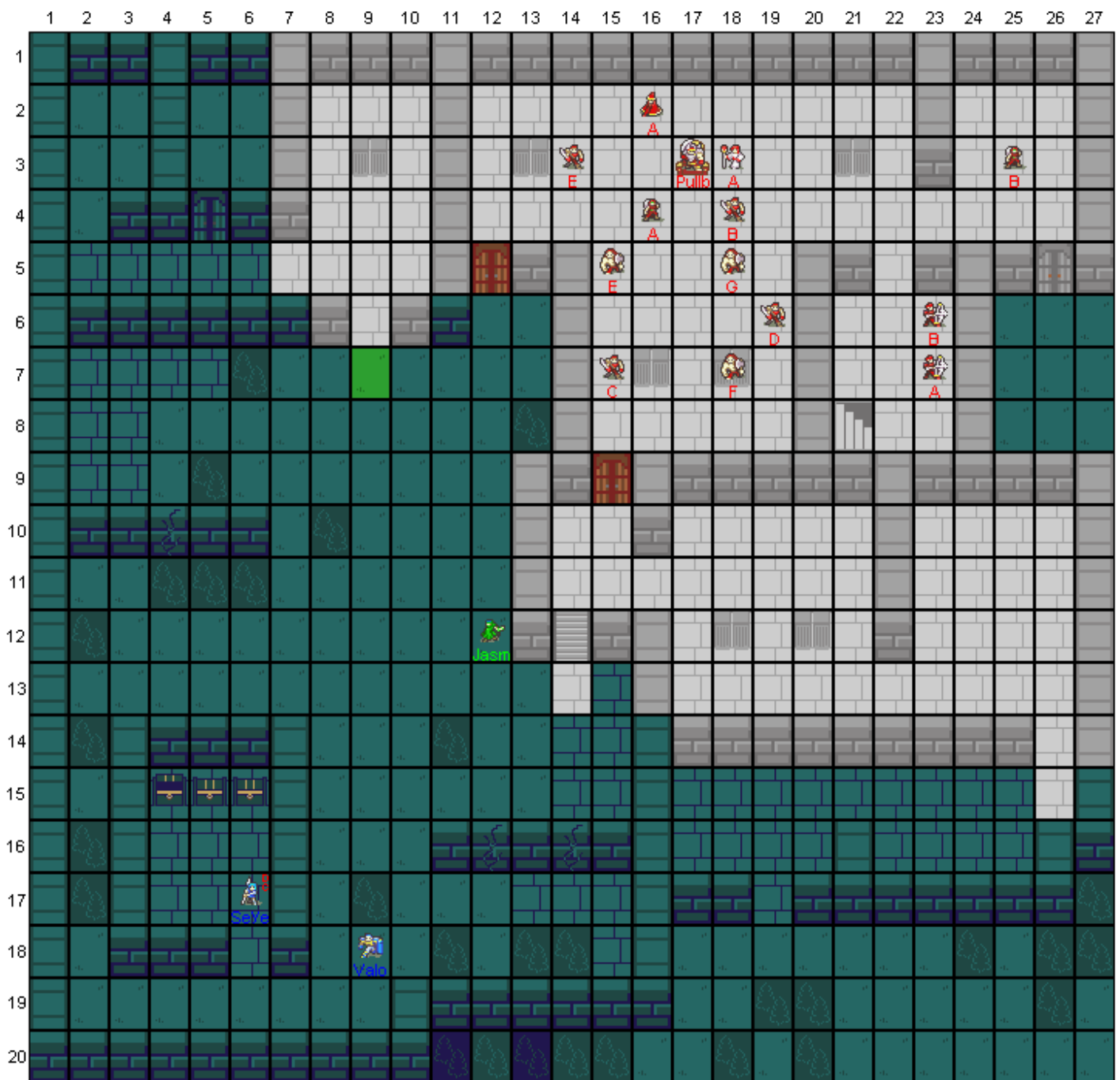
**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Nothing...

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Jasmine stopped peeping and continued with her original plan.

# ~~Player Turn 10~~



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Carrying: Hector Inara Valor Inara: 37/43		Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: 15/40 Bandit E: 40/40 Bandit F: 40/40	Bandit G: 40/40 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38 Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38 Trickster A: 32/32 Conjuror: 28/28
Allies:			
Hector Inara: 15/15 Carried by: Seyena Inara Jasmine: 36/36			

'Yeena to 5,15, and LEWT

Valor: 6,18, initiate tearful reunion.



"Seyena! Hector! I'm so glad I finally found you, I've been looking for hours."

Seyena found her old gear.

**Seyena recovers her old inventory!**

**Too much items; vulnerary and concoction dropped!**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The bandits still feasted in bliss and laughter.

**~~Ally Phase~~**

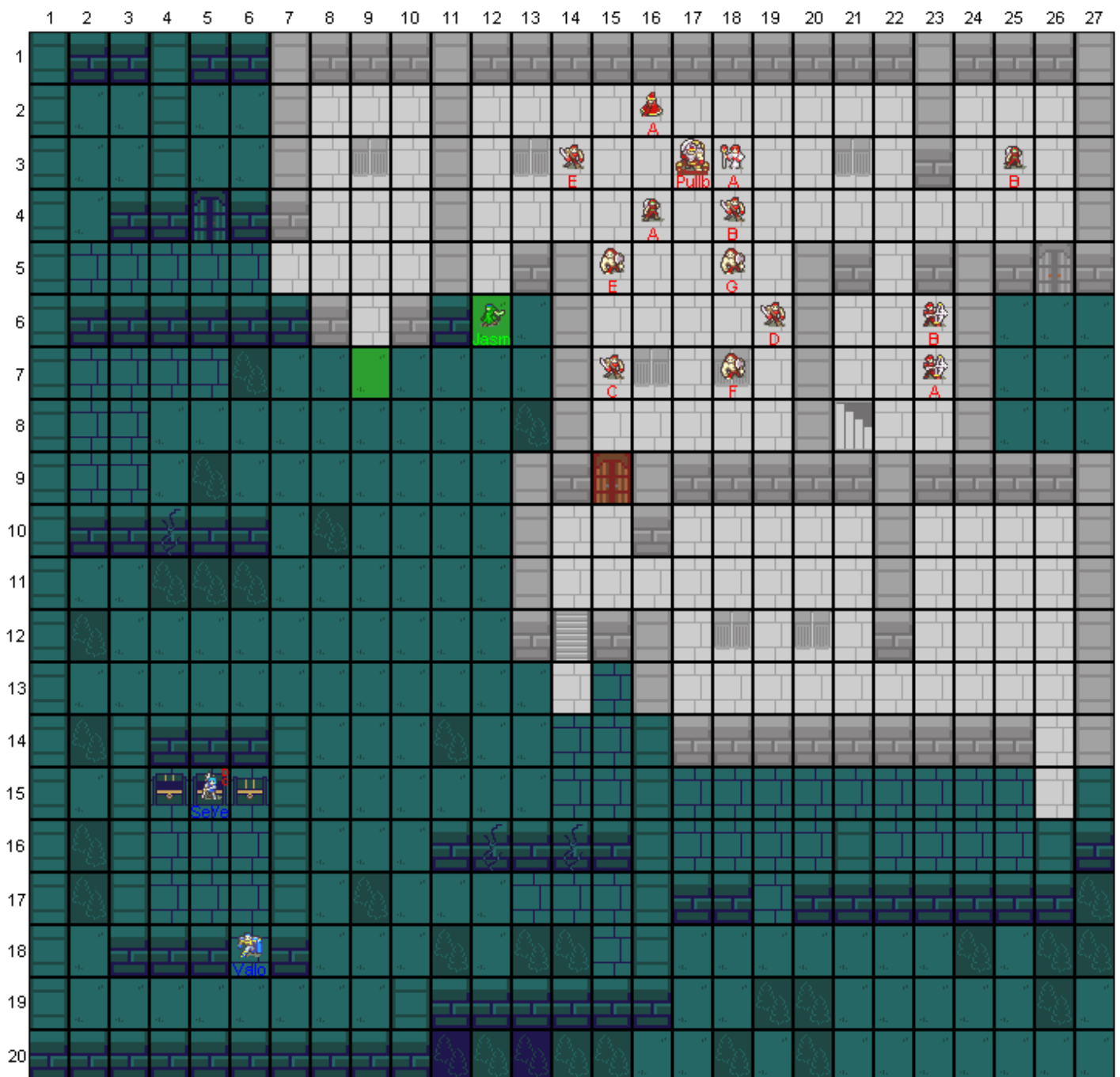
Jasmine slowly unlocks the back door.



"Dad! Dad!" Lil' Hector reached with hands, trying to hug his father from afar.



# ~~Player Turn 11~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Carrying: Hector Inara Valor Inara: 37/43	Pullborg: 52/52 Rogue A: 31/31 Rogue B: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: 15/40 Bandit E: 40/40 Bandit F: 40/40	Bandit G: 40/40 Cutthroat B: 38/38 Cutthroat C: 38/38 Cutthroat D: 38/38 Cutthroat E: 38/38 Trickster A: 32/32 Conjuror: 28/28
Allies:		
Hector Inara: 15/15 Carried by: Seyena Inara Jasmine: 36/36		



"What - Valor?" Seyena moves to 6,17, tearful reunion commence. She also lets Hector do whatever little kids do when they see their father in the midst of a bandit filled fortress. "How - How did you manage to find us? Is Ilya alright?"

Valor goes to 6,15 and embraces his family before opening up that last chest.



"Ilya has a broken wing and an arrow in her backleg. I tried to do what I could to treat her, but she wouldn't let me get close enough. Then she led me here. She's a good distance away from the keep."



Valor put on a smile for his little boy and ruffled the child's hair. "Hey Hector. Have you been being a brave boy for mommy? Everything's going to be alright now, there's nothing on earth that can stop your parent's together." Valor looked at his wife, his expression puzzled. "What happened? Do you have any idea why they broke into the house and kidnapped you?"



"No, I don't have a clue. They're probably just raiders - looting and pillaging innocent villages nearby, or maybe they thought they could hold us for ransom? I don't know - let's just get Hector out of here before he gets in danger."



"I'm sorry. It was so quick, and I hesitated. If I hadn't - I could have driven them off. Kept Hector safe..."



"Seyena, you and Hector are alright, you did nothing wrong. You go heal Ilya and take Hector home. I'm going to go make sure this doesn't happen again."



"No, Valor, you're coming back with us. You can't fight them alone - the minute you step through their door, they'll cut you down."



"I got about a half dozen of them already. And I don't want them coming back to try again." Valor touched Seyena's face with his hand, stroking her cheek with his thumb. "I'll be careful. And if they're tougher than they look, I'll run away- They'll have a hell of a time finding me in the dark."



"I'm sure there's more than just a half dozen in there... Valor, let's make sure Hector is safe, then we can come back. Both of us. Make sure they don't harm anyone again."

Valor gave a resigned sigh. She wasn't wrong...



"Alright. We go back to Ilya, you heal her wing and leg, and she takes Hector home. Then we finish this, alright?"



"Yeah... that sounds like a safe bet. I wouldn't want Hector anywhere near here when it starts."

Valor found the bandits' money cache. There were certainly few hundred coins, but the pile surely wasn't more than a thousand.

**Valor gets 600 coins!**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

One of the bandits, near the opened door, glanced at it cuz of the draft. Then he returned to his drink.

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Jasmine ran into the room and without delay placed two knives in the bandit leader's chest.

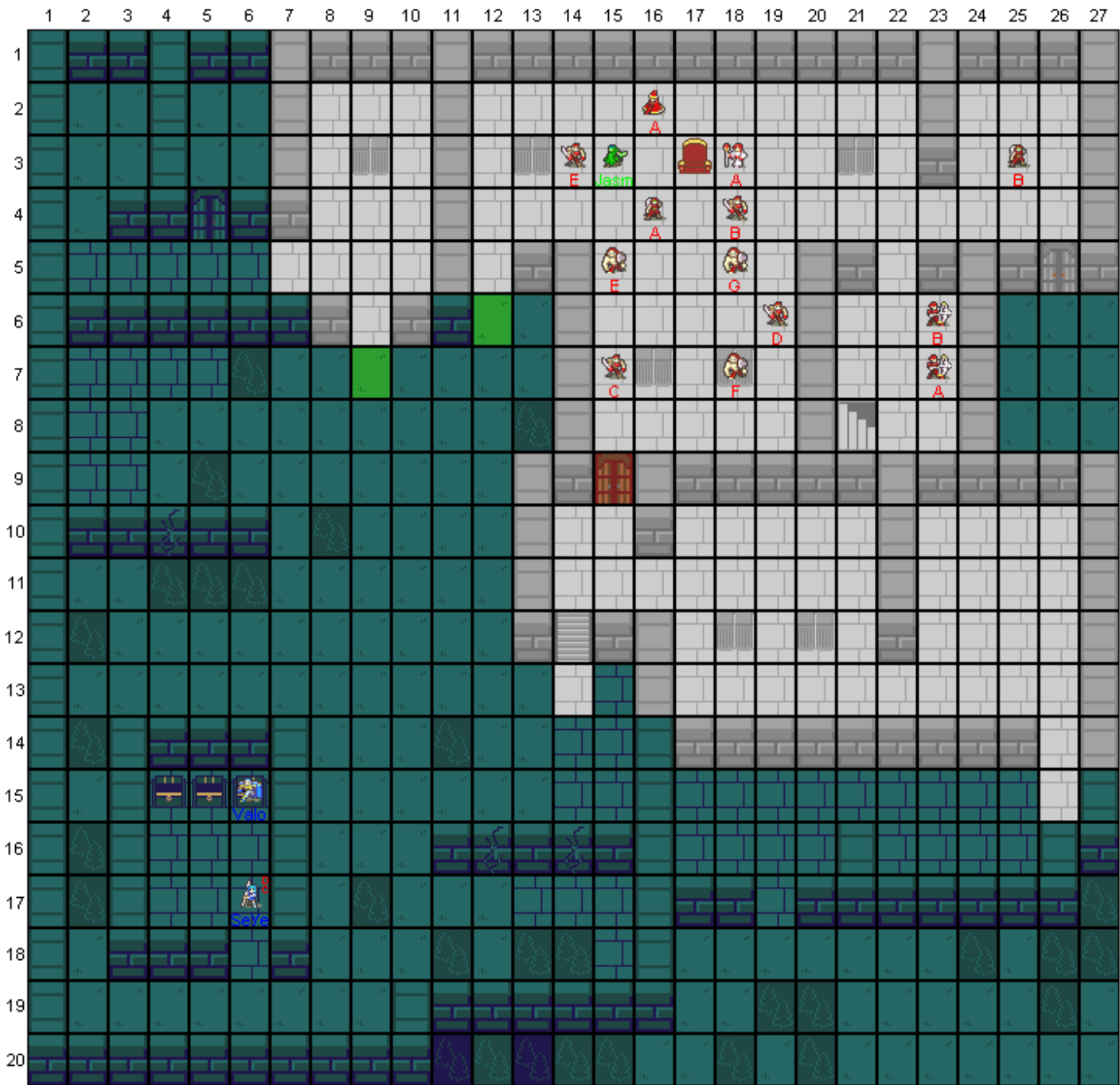
**Jasmine vs Pullborg**

Hit: $149+15-5-10-48 = 101 / 2 = 50$
Hit roll: 30, hit! Crit roll: 6!
Damage: $27+1-20 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$
Hit: $149+15-5-10-48 = 101 / 2 = 50$
Hit roll: 4, hit! Crit roll: 11!
Damage: $27+1-20 = 8 \times 3 = 24\text{dmg}$

~~Player Turn 12~~

Poison rolls

Pullborg: 5



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Carrying: Hector Inara		Rogue A: 31/31	Bandit G: 40/40
Valor Inara: 37/43		Rogue B: 31/31	Cutthroat B: 38/38
Allies:		Sentry A: 35/35	Cutthroat C: 38/38
Hector Inara: 15/15 Carried by: Seyena Inara		Sentry B: 35/35	Cutthroat D: 38/38
Jasmine: 36/36		Bandit D: 15/40	Cutthroat E: 38/38
		Bandit E: 40/40	Trickster A: 32/32
		Bandit F: 40/40	Conjuror: 28/28

Valor: 8,19



"We'll go out the way I came in. No one saw me come in until I was already cutting throats, so hopefully it'll be clear."

Seyena: 9,18

~~Enemy Phase~~

"What woah!"

"Oh shit!"

"Get her, kill her!"

The bandits ganged onto Jasmine. Hearts were stabbed, throats cut open, eyes knifed out and guts slashed. There were some survivors, though!

Mage A vs Jasmine

Hit: 126-67 = 59  
Hit roll: 68, miss!

Jasmine retaliates!  
Hit: 149-38 = 111, autohit! Crit roll: 3!  
Damage: 27-7 = 20x3 = 60dmg

Cutthroat E vs Jasmine

Hit: 120-67 = 53  
Hit roll: 79, miss!

Jasmine counters!  
Hit: 149-41 = 108, autohit!  
Damage: 27-13 = 14dmg

Jasmine counters once more!  
Hit: 149-41 = 108, autohit! Crit roll: 10!  
Damage: 27-13 = 14x3 = 42dmg

Rogue A vs Jasmine

Hit: 128-67 = 61  
Hit roll: 73, miss!

Jasmine retaliates!  
Hit: 149-53 = 96  
Hit roll: 97, miss!

Jasmine counters again!  
Hit: 149-53 = 96  
Hit roll: 82, hit! Crit roll: 9!  
Assasination roll: 6! //jaesus chriest  
Rogue A has been killed!

Bandit E vs Jasmine

Hit: 101-15-67 = 19  
Hit roll: 12, hit!  
Damage: 30-1-13 = 16dmg

Jasmine retaliates!  
Hit: 149+15-38 = 126, autohit!  
Damage: 27+1-12 = 16dmg

Jasmine counterattacks again!

Hit:  $149+15-38 = 126$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $27+1-12 = 16\text{dmg}$

#### Cutthroat C vs Jasmine

Hit:  $120-67 = 53$   
Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage:  $26-13 = 13\text{dmg}$

Jasmine counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $149-41 = 108$ , autohit! Crit roll: 10!  
Damage:  $27-13 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

#### Cutthroat B vs Jasmine

Hit:  $120-67 = 53$   
Hit roll: 70, miss!

Jasmine counters!  
Hit:  $149-41 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $27-13 = 14\text{dmg}$

Jasmine counters once more!  
Hit:  $149-41 = 108$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $27-13 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### Bandit G vs Jasmine

Hit:  $101-15-67 = 19$   
Hit roll: 82, miss!

Jasmine retaliates!  
Hit:  $149-38 = 111$ , autohit! Crit roll: 19!  
Assasination roll: 2!  
Bandit G has been killed!

#### Bandit F vs Jasmine

Hit:  $101-15-67 = 19$   
Hit roll: 23, miss!

Jasmine counters!  
Hit:  $149-38 = 111$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $27+1-13 = 15\text{dmg}$

Jasmine retaliates again!  
Hit:  $149-38 = 111$ , autohit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $27+1-13 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

#### Conjurer casts Poison on Jasmine

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{18-10\} \times 5]+6)-(4 \times 2) = 30+40+6-8 = 68$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Jasmine is Poisoned!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Jasmine jumps onto the throne (and Pullborg's corpse) and throws one of her knives at the staff-wielder, hitting him in the stomach and then in the face.

#### Jasmine vs Conjurer

Hit:  $149-42 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $27-8 = 19\text{dmg}$

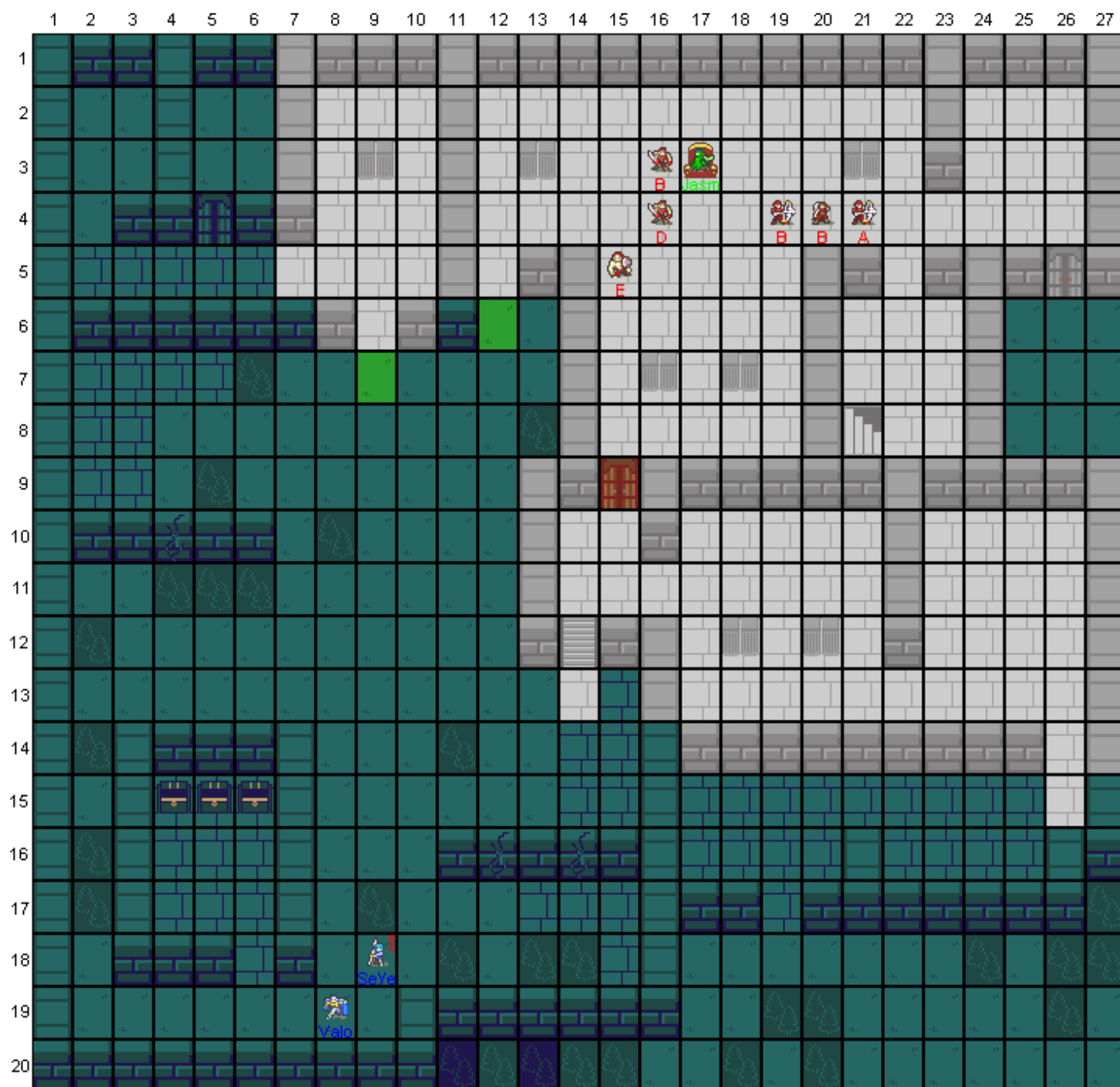
Jasmine strikes again!  
Hit:  $149-42 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $27-8 = 19\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 13~~

The screams and sounds of murder were heard by Valor and Seyena and their kid.

## Poison rolls

Jasmine: 1  
Bandit E: 1  
Cutthroat B: 4



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Carrying: Hector Inara Valor Inara: 37/43	Rogue B: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: ?15/40?
Allies:	Bandit E: 7/40 Poison (4/5) Slow (4/5) Cutthroat B: 6/38 Poison (4/5) Slow (4/5) Cutthroat D: 38/38
Hector Inara: 15/15 Carried by: Seyena Inara Jasmine: 7/36	

Valor: 10,15



"Cover your ears Hector."

**Seyena to 12,15, switching out to Brave Lance.**

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Eat dirt, bitch!"

#### **Sentry A vs Jasmine**

Hit:  $139-10-67 = 62$

Hit roll: 99, miss!

#### **Sentry B vs Jasmine**

Hit:  $139-10-67 = 62$

Hit roll: 34, hit!

Damage:  $26-13 = 13\text{dmg}$

Jasmine looked down at her abdomen and the arrow sticking out of it, and then she collapsed on the seat.

"Finally. 's for boss." The sentries grumbled. "Don't ya stare like idiots, check the rest of the fort! I ain't gonna believe that she was workin' alone."

"You wanna stay here?"

"Nah you idiot, my cousin Volent has a gang higher in da Peaks, I'm gonna join and ye can too. I just wanna make sure we won't get stabbed outside."

### ~~Ally Phase~~

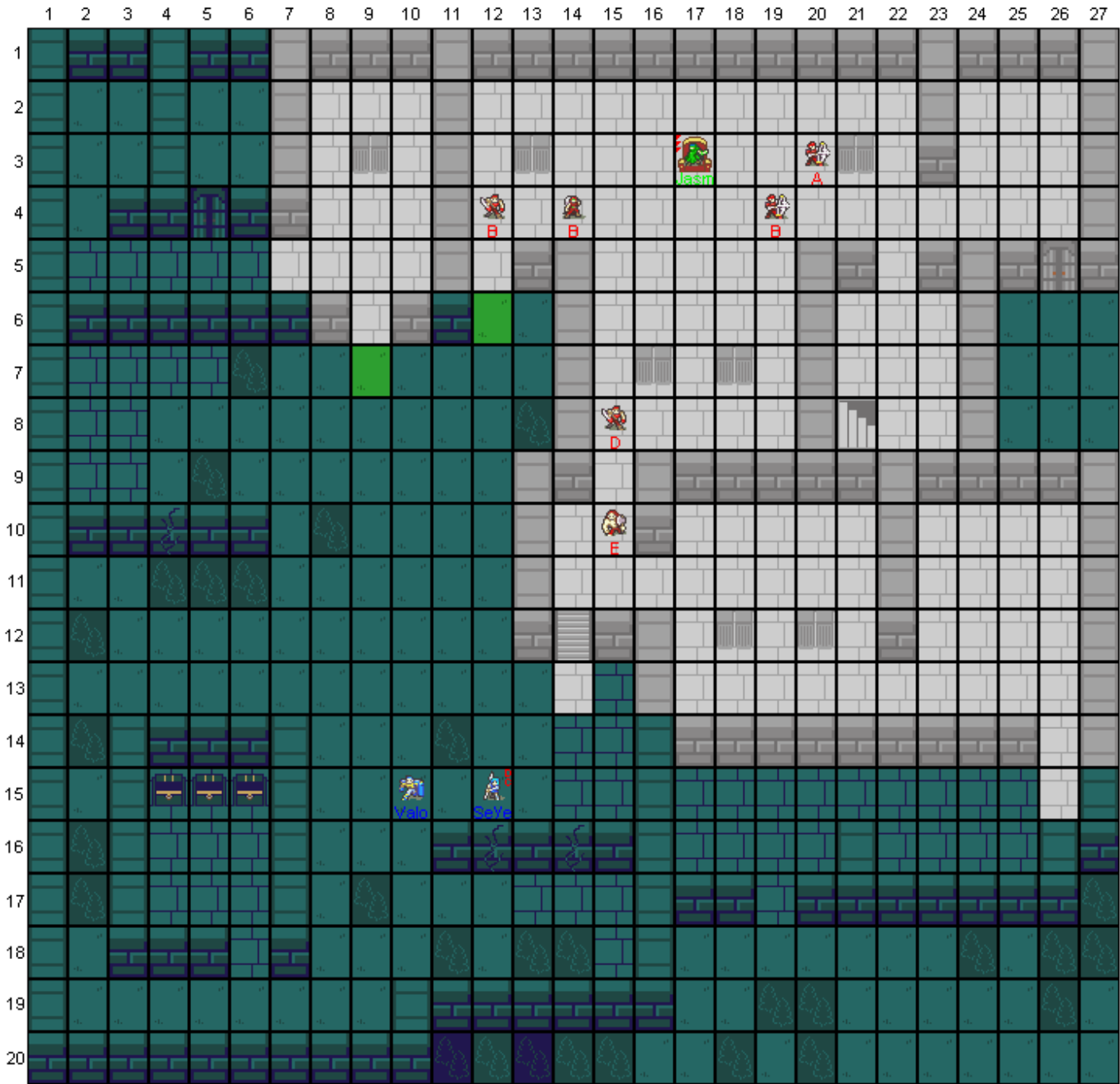
Hector covered his ears and pressed his face against his mother's neck to be as quiet as he can.



~~Player Turn 14~~

Poison rolls

Bandit E: 3
Cutthroat B: 2



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Seyena Inara: 40/40 Carrying: Hector Inara Valor Inara: 37/43	Rogue B: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: ?15/40?
Allies:	Bandit E: 7/40 Poison (4/5) Slow (4/5) Cutthroat B: 6/38 Poison (4/5) Slow (4/5) Cutthroat D: 38/38
Hector Inara: 15/15 Carried by: Seyena Inara Jasmine: -/36 3/3	

Valor: 14,13, equip Tomahawk.



"I've got this one, dear."

Seyena nods, holding Hector tight as she moves to 15,13, and equips a Short Spear.

~~Enemy Phase~~

The bandits noticed Valor immediately.

"There's two! Get them!"

Cutthroat D vs Valor

Hit:  $120+15-5-55 = 75$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $26-21 = 5\text{dmg}$   
  
Valor counters!  
Hit:  $121+15+5-15-41 = 85$   
Hit roll: 93, miss!  
  
Valor retaliates again!  
Hit:  $121+15+5-15-41 = 85$   
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1-1-13 = 24\text{dmg}$

Bandit E vs Seyena

Hit:  $101+15-5-64 = 47$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $30+1-1-14 = 16\text{dmg}$   
  
Seyena counters!  
Hit:  $125+10+15-15-38 = 97$   
Hit roll: 65, hit!  
Damage:  $29+1-1-12 = 17\text{dmg}$

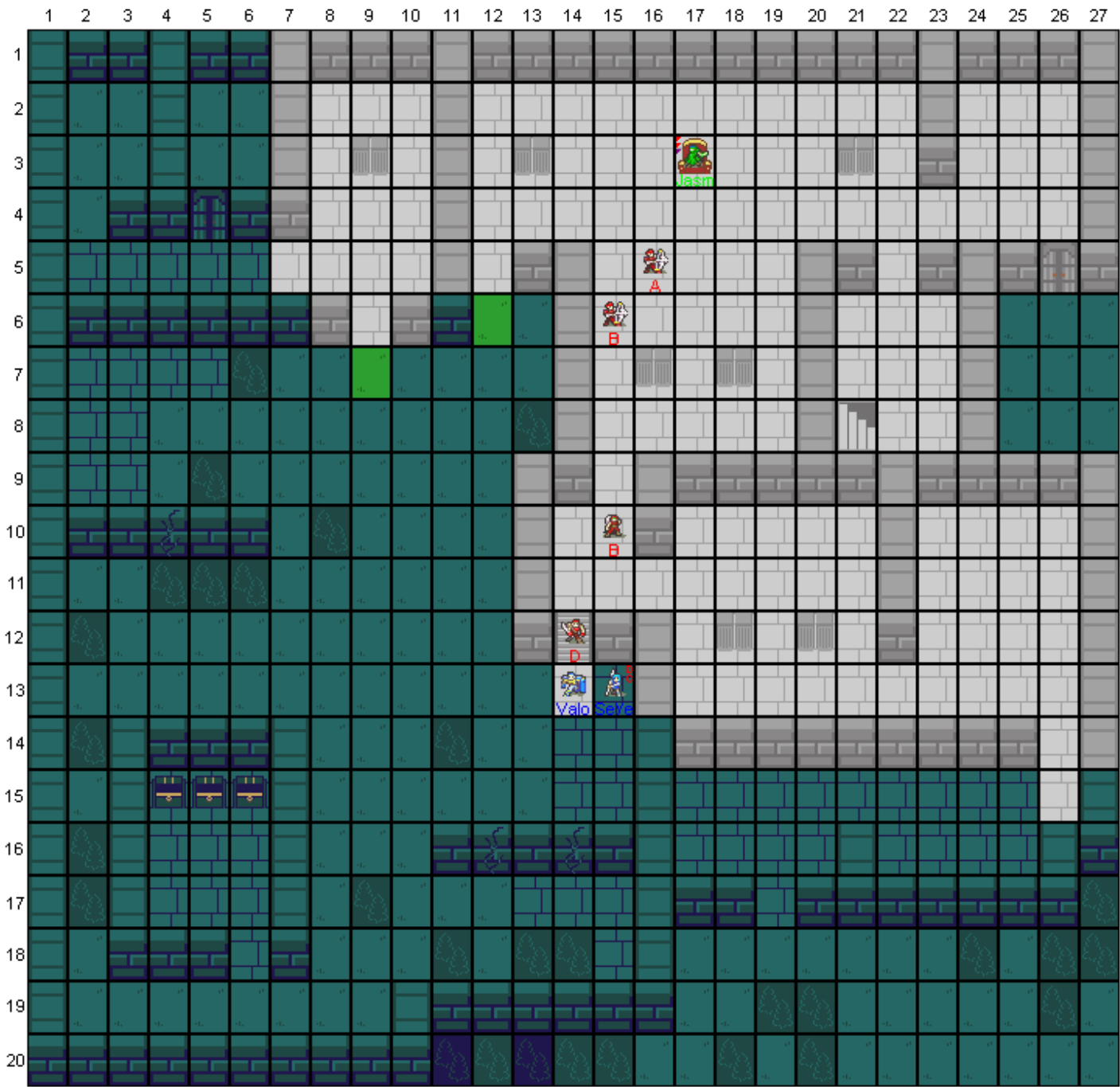
~~Ally Phase~~

Hector began to cry when his mother got hit.

~~Player Turn 15~~

Poison rolls

Cutthroat B: 4



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Seyena Inara: 24/40 Carrying: Hector Inara Valor Inara: 32/43	Rogue B: 31/31 Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: ?15/40? Cutthroat D: 14/38
Allies:	
Hector Inara: 15/15 Carried by: Seyena Inara Jasmine: -/36 2/3	

Valor: Brave Sword, cut the cutthroat's throat.

Seyena moves to 14,14, and staffs Valor.



"Shush, it's alright, Hector. It's just a little scratch, okay?"

"Hurgk--"

#### Valor vs Cutthroat D

Hit:  $131+5+15-41 = 110$ , autohit! Crit roll: 27!  
Damage:  $33+1-13 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

Blue aura engulfed Valor.

#### Seyena rejuvenates Valor

All HP restored!

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The rogue and sentries rushed to bring down Valor, yet they barely scratched him.

#### Rogue B vs Valor

Hit:  $128-5-55 = 68$   
Hit roll: 54, hit!  
Damage:  $25-1-21 = 3\text{dmg}$   
Valor is poisoned!

Valor retaliates!  
Hit:  $131+15+5-53 = 98$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $33+1-9 = 25\text{dmg}$

Valor counters again!  
Hit:  $131+15+5-53 = 98$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $33+1-9 = 25\text{dmg}$

#### Sentry B vs Valor

Hit:  $139-5-55 = 79$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $26-1-21 = 4\text{dmg}$

The metal door clunked a bit when opened.

"Guys! Guys! There's this dude with axes and... guys? ...oy?" The bandit was a bit confused and creeped out when all he heard was distant noises.

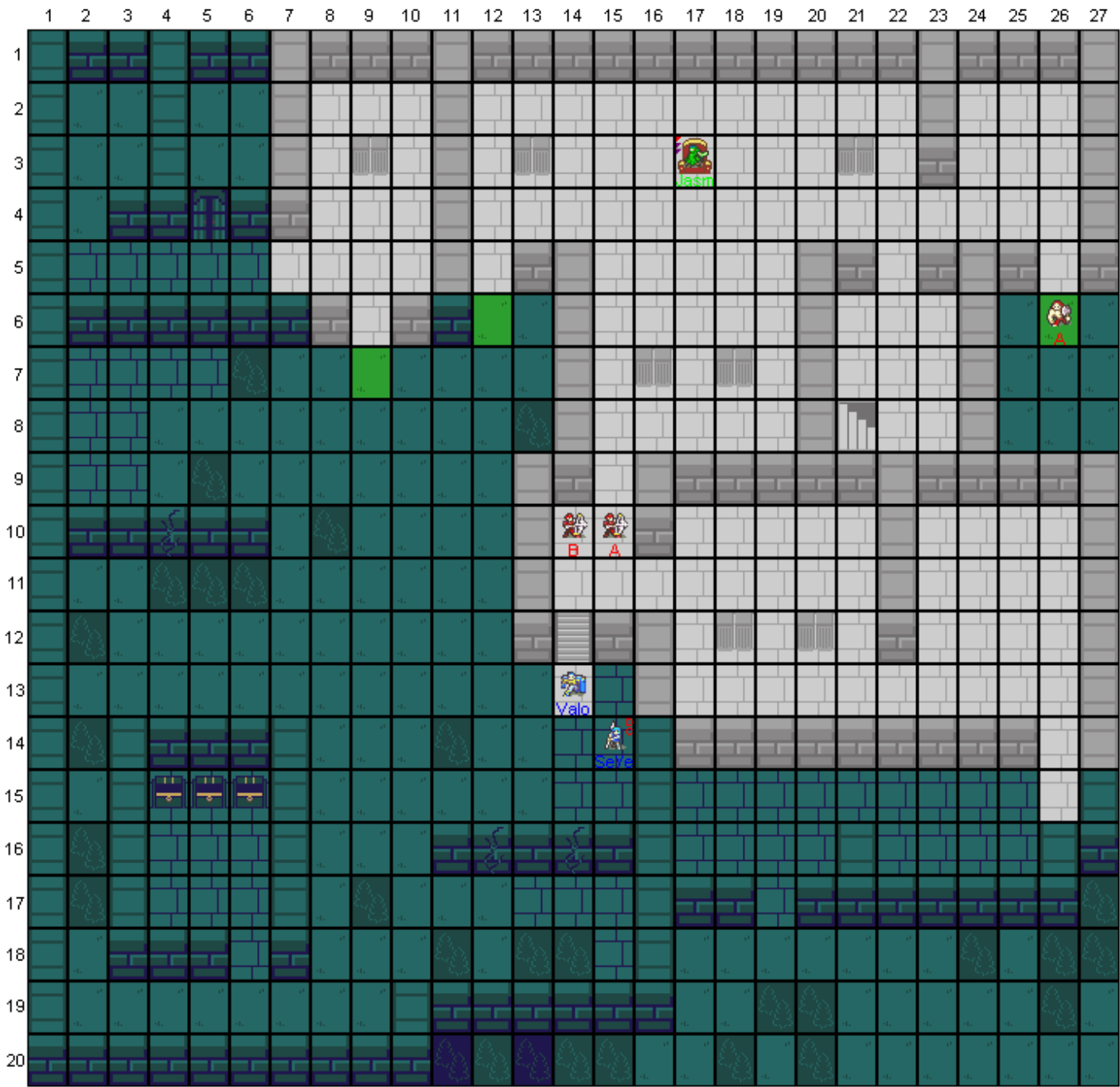
### ~~Ally Phase~~

"You sure?" Hector asked, clinging to his mom.

~~Player Turn 16~~

Poison rolls

Valor: 3



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Seyena Inara: 24/40 Carrying: Hector Inara Valor Inara: 33/43 Poison (4/5)	Sentry A: 35/35 Sentry B: 35/35 Bandit D: 15/40
Allies:	
Hector Inara: 15/15 Carried by: Seyena Inara Jasmine: -/36 1/3	

Valor: 14,11, Brave Sword the Sentry.

With two strikes the Sentry was down.

Valor vs Sentry B

Hit:  $131-43 = 87$   
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage:  $33-13 = 20\text{dmg}$

Valor strikes again!  
Hit:  $131-43 = 87$   
Hit roll: 88, miss!

Valor attacks once more!  
Hit:  $131-43 = 87$   
Hit roll: 60, hit!  
Damage:  $33-13 = 20\text{dmg}$

**Seyena holds Hector tight, facing him away from the fight. She then equips her brave lance, and moves to 15, 11 and gives the sentry a good few clonks on the head with the blunt end, because she's not gon stab a fool with her kid in hand**

#### **Seyena vs Sentry A**

Hit:  $130+10+15+5-10-43 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $30+1-13 = 18\text{dmg}$

Seyena strikes once more!  
Hit:  $130+10+15+5-10-43 = 107$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $30+1-13 = 18\text{dmg}$

### **~~Enemy Phase~~**

The lone bandit peeked inside, noticed the corpses, and bravely ran outside.

### **~~Ally Phase~~**

**Jasmine is dea-**

### **~~Epilogue Chapter A Complete!~~**



"...I think that's the last of them. Let's get to Ilya and go home." Valor casually flicked his blade, clearing off the majority of the blood. He could clean it more thoroughly once his family was home.

*And so, Valor Inara the manliest of husbands, returned home with his family intact and their kidnappers fiercely punished. However, they didn't learn, nor they will ever learn, who Jasmine truly was... but that didn't bother the Inaras as they had to prepare for the coming of second child; cute little girl they named Priscilla.*

## ~~Epilogue Chapter B~~

### Extreme Mystery Solving

*"Courier's Rest", a roadside Inn near Menelea/Berebia border*  
*Four months after death of Prixima Kesselring*

Courier's Rest was bustling with activity as it always was. With Berebians and Meneleans signing - finally - a long-term peace treaty, the borders were once more open and safe for passage. Merchants, couriers, refugees and soldiers came across the borders, to return home, or visit stranded families, or conduct business.

It was late afternoon - Raquel went upstairs, given the key to a small, one-bed room that she and Derick were going to spend night in. Derick was having a delicious, spicy stew and a mug of wine, apparently brewed by the elderly innkeeper himself - a tall, battle-scarred man with impressive beard and shiny bald head.

Derick was finishing a meal when a scrawny-looking youth with stubble came up to his table. The eyes of the young guy looked Derick over and he snorted.

"Yer name is Derick? Ye do swordfightin'?" He scratched his nose a little.

Derick looked up from his meal with a friendly smile.



"Yep and yes I do. Why'd you ask?" he replied, tapping on the hilt of the sword strapped to his back.

"Err, there be that guy outside who wanna talk with ye. He said he will be waitin' near da stables, that'sa behind the inn, and ye gotta come alone, he said. Ye watch out for him, man." The youth snorted.

"That guy wearin' some noble cloak and fancy armor so I bet he be aristocrat and they always screw up nice travelers ya know what I'm sayin?" He grinned, showing his teeth, including three holes in-between them, and extended his palm, open, toward Derick.

"Coin for da messenger?"



"Huh? Oh yeah, sure."

Derick dug around in the pocket of his coat before pulling out a couple spare coins and dropping it in the boy's hand.



"Thanks for letting me know."

He got up and began walking over to the stables before stopping for a moment and spinning on heel to face the other way.



"...I should probably let Raquel know about this first. I promised not to get into trouble."

Derick went upstairs and knocked on the door to their room.



"Raquel? You in there?"

Raquel looked up from the luggage, where she had been unpacking what they'd need for the night. They both preferred to travel light, but the long trip from Ys to Menelea had required that they both be ready for anything.



"Ah, yes, Derick? I'm almost done; I'll be out in a moment."



"Oh take your time. I just came up to let you know there's some noble looking guy outside who apparently wants me to talk to him alone. I'm uh, just making sure you know ahead of time to be ready in case something happens."



"Ah, I see." Her hand strayed to the book beside her, the same as that which she had been given so long ago. Picking it and her other spells up, she opened the door. "I shall wait in the common area, near the door. If anything goes wrong, I will be there alongside you."



"Alright, that's good to hear."



"uh.."



He leaned in and gave her a small kiss on the cheek.



"Well I'll uh see you soon."

**Derick turned around and went downstairs and out the building to go meet with the so called noble**

A man in dark blue armor, brilliant red cloak and purple hair was standing near the stables' doors. He was leaning against a silvery halberd. He noticed Derick approach and halted him, raising his free hand up.



"Before I tell you why I summoned you here, young man," He spoke in confident manner with rather stern yet not harsh, voice. "You have to answer three simple questions."



"First: Are you Derick, the swordmaster?"



"Yep! That's me."

The man merely nodded at the answer.



"Second question is: Do you still remember your mentor... and how Sarius died?"

Derick's face turned serious and he moved his hand closer to the hilt of his sword.



"Of course I can. I've sworn myself to find out who killed him and avenge him."

The man sighed in relief.



"Then the third question should be easy for you to answer. Swordmaster Derick, will you help me avenge my half-brother, Sarius, who was so foully murdered?"

Derick reeled back in shock and let go of his sword.



"Ah- of course. Of course I will!"

He got his bearings back after a couple seconds.



"Sarius never mentioned that he had a brother."



"Half-brother. And he was ordered not to speak of it, as my family and our father aren't kind to bastards. In genealogical meaning of that word. It's a long story though... shall we find a shadowy corner in the inn or somesuch place to talk?"



"Yeah, sure. Um... do you mind if I go get Raquel? She's my uh... she's been helping me with my quest."



"I'm not sure. Can she be trusted?"



"Yes! Definitely! She's in the Inn right now."



"Allright then. Let's go inside; I will find ourselves a table and you go get your friend."

With that, the noble man led Derick inside and moved to the right, toward the tables.



"Alright."

Raquel looked up from where she was feigning reading when the door opened, admitting Derick and a strange man. Derick, she saw, seemed relaxed rather than guarded around the newcomer, and so she stood up and quietly joined the two of them.

Derick's face broke out into a big smile when Raquel went over to them, and he was almost bouncing up and down with excitement.



"Raquel! You'll never believe who I just met. This guy right here is Sarius's brother! He says he wants our help in taking down his killer."



"Ah, truly?"

She glanced over at the newcomer. It seemed convenient, almost too much so, but they had few leads to go on at this point. It might bear watching, but if it were true, it would finally help Derick find closure.



"In that case, it is a pleasure to meet you, Sir..."

The man just sat down and placed his halberd against the wall.



"Oh, you're a fine lady. Please sit down you two." He then dismissed the barkeep, who, seeing a man in such extravagant clothes, surely wanted to get some coins and end the day on high profit. But it wasn't this day.



"I am Arvin, of Deynastian house Raccula. So, Derick, where should I start?"



"...I guess who killed Sarius and why is as good a place as any."



"Very well then. Two years ago, Sarius worked for certain dark cult, that kind of cult using people as sacrifices in bloody rituals. I don't know why, but he was helping them obtain some ingredients from dangerous, dark creatures dwelling deeply in some caves. The cult apparently tried to not pay and kill him, but he managed to run away. I believe they were also scared of their cult being reported to local authorities. I've found from that time onwards he was constantly on the run, and he formed your mercenary group of young, promising people to teach you mercenary work. Unfortunately they've got him last year."



"The cultists however didn't think much and the poisonous herbs that were used to murder Sarius were specialty of only one assassin. I've found him, tried to bribe him, and interrogated him in the end. So that's how I learned who was responsible and I began to search for their temple or gathering place so I could avenge my half-brother."



"Then, when I was ready to strike them this winter, I learned that their group was murdered violently. I'm not sure here, but apparently some assassin or other of such kind decided to clean them by themselves. I couldn't find him; I tried to contact the last family that he worked for, but the Forsaken's - if you ever heard of them - are really reclusive, not to mention the last two months of in-fighting left them weary and unwilling to spare servants."



"Unable to get support, I've decided to track down some of Sarius' pupils, but I've learned that two are dead, few moved to Deynastia and some went to Berebia. I've got to you mostly because I carefully listened to rumors and news, and a charming, handsome swordmaster for hire is a rare sight in this parts, apparently, so you stand out... Apologies for drawing you out earlier with the help of that young man. I simply didn't want to bother if it turned out you weren't who you are." Arvin took a deep breath.



"But that's not all. I searched for you because I have something important to tell you - last month I've found out that the cult is still active. Apparently some priestess of high standing in the cult managed to escape with handful of cultists, or maybe she wasn't present at their temple when the assassin got to them. But they're definitely trying to rebuild their convent."



"Conveniently, I managed to learn where they're hiding. There's a small ruined outpost in middle of the swamp, just few hours travel north of here. I'm going to cleanse that place and get rid of the damned cult once and for all. There; you know what I know and I hope my tale wasn't confusing; I'm man of war, not a storyteller." Arvin went silent for few seconds.



"Would you be interested in coming with me? I have no money to offer; I'm myself driven by vengeance and nothing else. Your lady friend... pardon miss, I didn't get your name - she can wait here if she isn't interested in our 'crusade'."



"Of course I'll gladly come along. This is what I've dedicated the last year of my life to. It's kinda funny that you mentioned the Forsaken though, we're actually friends with a few important guys in them... I don't know if we would be able to get in touch quickly though."



"You're coming along too right Raquel?"

Raquel nodded.



"Naturally. I wouldn't make you go into this battle alone."



"Very well. We will leave by the morning. Questions?"



"Nothing at the moment I guess. There's a few things about Sarius I wanna ask you about but those can wait for another time."

The man nodded, stood up, took his halberd and moved to the counter; in exchange for several shiny coins he received a key to one of the rooms upstairs.



"...so that's that. I guess we should probably go and rest up to prepare."



"So it seems. It's just a little bit further, and your mentor will be able to rest."

Raquel paused, as though to ask something else, but thought better of it. Her question could always wait until after this final job was done.

Derick picked up on the pause and responded with concern.



"Everything all right?"



"No, no. It is simply...I'm wondering if you'll be continuing your traveling afterwards, after we remove this cult. When all this is done, I'll...probably be returning to Ys, after all."



"I know that you're a mercenary, though, and your home was Mercia. So much of what you have is here in the west, and I know it's unfair of me to presume on you like this, but..."



"Maybe it's selfish of me, but I do not wish to say 'farewell' after all is been and done. I...I can't promise the sort of fighting work we've seen, traveling together here in Menelea, but you spoke during our trip out here of teaching others, the way Sarius taught you. Would you come with me to live in Ys, to teach if nothing else?"



"...of course I would Raquel."



"Look I don't really have much tying me to Mercia these days. To be honest ever since what happened a few months ago I've actually been wanting to settle down. And besides..."



"I wouldn't want to leave you."



"Ah, thank you." Spontaneously, she leapt forward, catching the taller swordsman in an embrace. After a moment, she stepped back, her face still red. "W-we should probably get ready for tomorrow, though. We have a lot of work to do." She smiled at him, the worry gone. "And much after as well."

Derick returned her embrace gladly and smiled back.



"Yep. We should probably get rested up early today."

He slipped his arm around her and began walking upstairs.



"I guess this means we'll have to pack everything back up huh..."

*And the next morning, the trio ventured northwards, through the forest and hills and unto a bush-covered glade where the ruins of some outpost stood. It was after the noon when they've arrived at the crumbled, grate-less arch that once held the gate of the mighty fort.*



"They do not perform any particular thing during the day; they prefer roaming the countryside at night. We should attack now; it will take them by surprise." He looked at the battered and crumbled battlements but there was not a single soul watching.



"Their vanity is horrendous; not even bothering to post a sentry."



"So what's the plan?"



"I would like to say that killing the woman in charge is enough, but these are

zealots and fanatics; I doubt we will end the day with killing just one person." He spoke in quiet, calm voice.



"Of course, I will gladly entertain suggestions, if you have any."



"So just charging in then?"



"Works for me!"



"I see, does your friend, miss... Raquel? Do you have any ideas?"



"It would probably be better if we could get a lay of the land, first, and determine if there are any other escape paths beyond this gate. Some of them fled last time, which is why we are here; once the battle turns against them, they may try to do so again."



"That's... something I didn't think off. You two are lightly-armed and I wear heavy armor and a halberd. Would you two look around for escape paths, if any?"

Raquel nodded.



"We can take a quick look around, certainly."

And so they went to check for possible escape routes. There were none.

They searched through the rubble and bushes, into ruined towers and buildings but in the entire ruined fort there was no entrance into the hideout bar the ominous set of stairs that once descended into what must've been either catacombs or cellar. Quiet voices and sounds of dining as well mining noises came from there; someone or rather many someones were busy down there.





"Did you find anything?" Arvin asked after the survey was complete.



"Nothing. Let's get this started."



"Let's go."

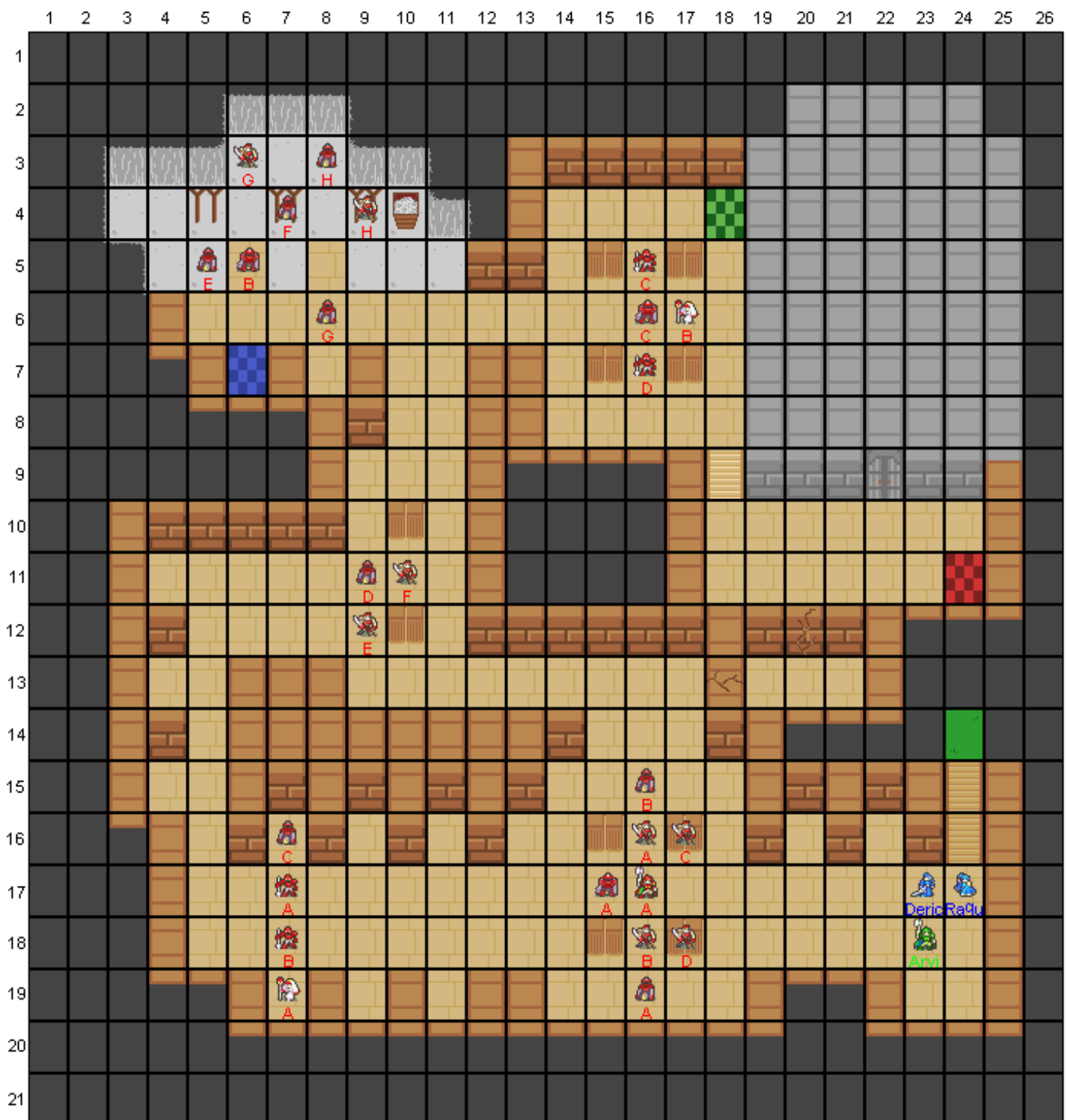
And they've descended. A party of several men, dining amongst crates and rolls of cloth, was the welcoming committee. Far behind them, there were shelves in the walls, some of them containing bodies - of all places, the cult have chosen some forgotten catacombs as a dwelling.

"Infidels! We will cleanse our temple from your disgusting presence!"



"It is you who will be cleansed!"

# ~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Derick: 49/49 Raquel Torriani: 47/47		Dark Knight: 42/42 Zealot A: 37/37 Zealot B: 37/37 Zealot C: 37/37 Acolyte A: 32/32 Acolyte B: 32/32 Acolyte C: 32/32 Acolyte D: 32/32 Acolyte E: 32/32 Acolyte F: 32/32 Acolyte G: 32/32 Acolyte H: 32/32 Swordsman A: 35/35	Swordsman B: 35/35 Swordsman C: 35/35 Swordsman D: 35/35 Swordsman E: 35/35 Swordsman F: 35/35 Swordsman G: 35/35 Swordsman H: 35/35 Javelineer A: 34/34 Javelineer B: 34/34 Javelineer C: 34/34 Javelineer D: 34/34 Witch A: 26/26 Witch B: 26/26
Allies:			
Arvin Raccula: 47/47			



"It's time to pay you monsters!"

**Derick: 18,16 attack with Brave Sword!**



"Derick, wa-"

And off he went. Raquel smiled to herself slightly; he would never change, and she wouldn't have it any other way.



"Ah, and once more..."



"My apologies, Sir Arvin. We shall take point, it seems."

**Raquel: Move to (18,17); Killer Thunder Dark Knight**

Two corpses went down; one slashed masterfully, other scorched horribly.

#### **Derick vs Swordsman C**

Hit:  $132-15-41 = 76$

Hit roll: 79, miss!

Derick strikes again!

Hit:  $132-15-41 = 76$

Hit roll: 71, hit!

Damage:  $39-14 = 25\text{dmg}$

Swordsman C retaliates!

Hit:  $115-80 = 35$

Hit roll: 47, hit!

Damage:  $27-19 = 8\text{dmg}$

Derick strikes again!

Hit:  $132-15-41 = 76$

Hit roll: 1, hit!

Damage:  $39-14 = 25\text{dmg}$

#### **Raquel vs Dark Knight**

Hit:  $121+15+15-56 = 95$

Hit roll: 32, hit! Crit roll: 40!

Damage:  $38-14 = 24 \times 3 = 72\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The enemies that attacked Derick didn't fare well.

#### **Swordman A vs Derick**

Hit:  $115-7-80 = 28$

Hit roll: 40, miss!

Derick retaliates!  
Hit:  $132+15-15-41 = 91$   
Hit roll: 69, hit! Crit roll: 38!  
Damage:  $39-14 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

#### **Swordman B vs Derick**

Hit:  $115-7-80 = 28$   
Hit roll: 75, miss!

Derick retaliates!  
Hit:  $132+15-15-41 = 91$   
Hit roll: 14, hit! Crit roll: 6!  
Damage:  $39-14 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

#### **Swordman D vs Derick**

Hit:  $115-7-80 = 28$   
Hit roll: 57, miss!

Derick retaliates!  
Hit:  $132+15-15-41 = 91$   
Hit roll: 80, hit! Crit roll: 17!  
Damage:  $39-14 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

Dark mages then tried to subdue Derick and Raquel - again, with limited success.

#### **Acolyte B vs Derick**

Hit:  $121-7-80 = 34$   
Hit roll: 43, miss!

#### **Zealot A vs Derick**

Hit:  $123-7-80 = 36$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $41-14 = 27\text{dmg}$

#### **Acolyte A vs Raquel**

Hit:  $121+15-7-80 = 49$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-17 = 12\text{dmg}$

Raquel retaliates!  
Hit:  $121+15+15-15-39 = 97$   
Hit roll: 73, hit!  
Damage:  $38-1-17 = 20\text{dmg}$

Raquel strikes again!  
Hit:  $121+15+15-15-39 = 97$   
Hit roll: 85, hit! Crit roll: 19!  
Damage:  $38-1-17 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

Then, few more enemies moved closer; a green cloud fell upon the poor wall behind Derick.

#### **Witch A casts Poison on Derick**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{18-14\} \times 5]+7)-(9 \times 2) = 30+20+7-18 = 39$   
Hit roll: 88, miss!

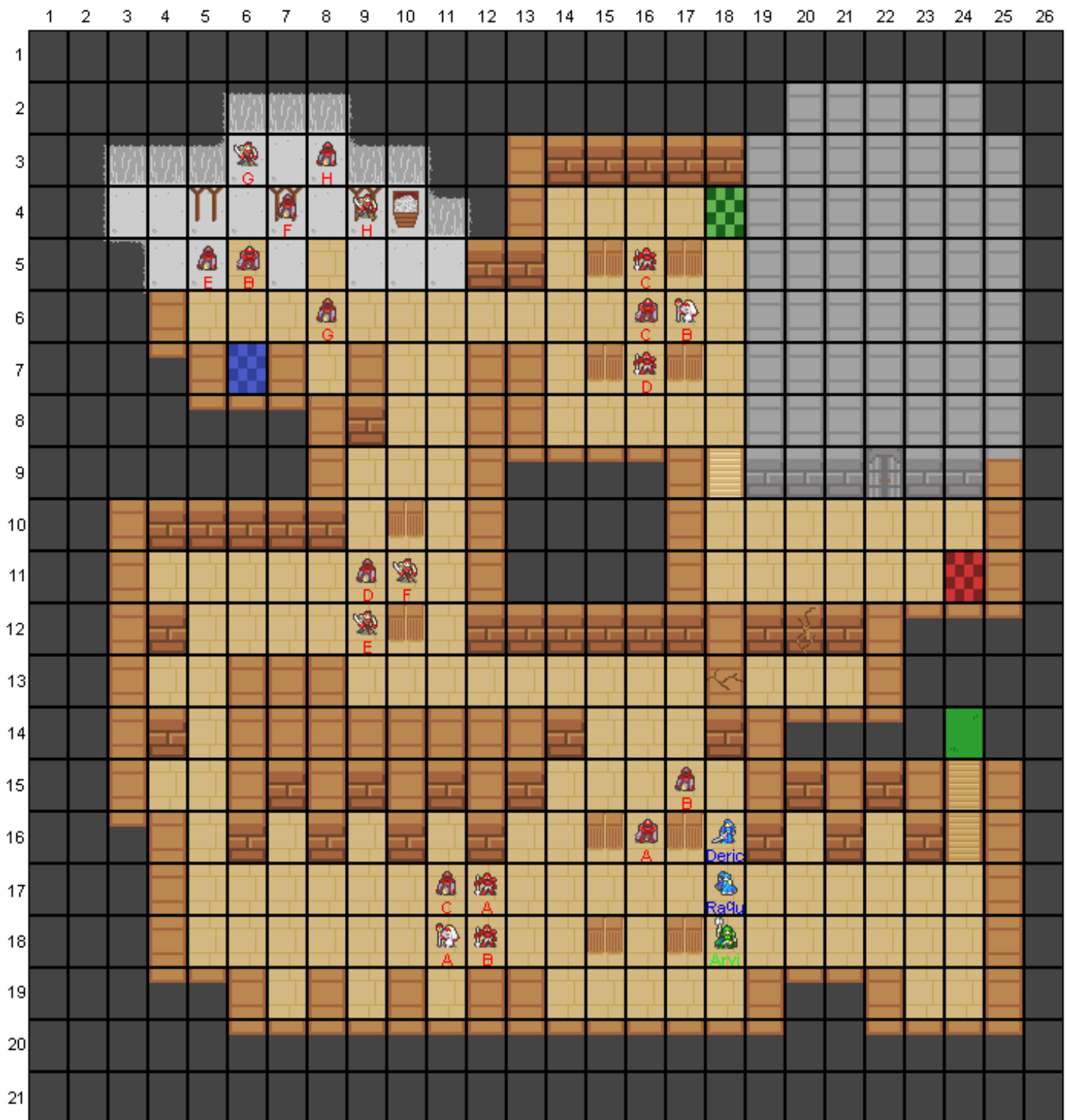
### **~~Ally Phase~~**

Arvin moved closer and looked at already body-covered floor.



"You two are fast, I have to admit."

## ~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Derick: 14/49 Raquel Torriani: 35/47	Zealot A: 37/37 Zealot B: 37/37 Zealot C: 37/37 Acolyte B: 32/32 Acolyte C: 32/32 Acolyte D: 32/32 Acolyte E: 32/32 Acolyte F: 32/32	Swordsman E: 35/35 Swordsman F: 35/35 Swordsman G: 35/35 Swordsman H: 35/35 Javelineer A: 34/34 Javelineer B: 34/34 Javelineer C: 34/34 Javelineer D: 34/34
Allies:		

Arvin Raccula: 47/47	Acolyte G: 32/32	Witch A: 26/26
	Acolyte H: 32/32	Witch B: 26/26



"We've done this a lot."

**Derick: Switch to killing edge, move 1 left, and attack Zealot!**

Raquel smiled at the compliment and response, but said nothing.

**Raquel: Move to (18,16); Recover Derick**

Zealot A collapsed to the ground in 6 pieces.

#### Derick vs Zealot A

Hit:  $132+15-40 = 107$ , autohit! Crit roll: 33!

Damage:  $39+2-12 = 29 \times 3 = 87$  dmg

Raquel then healed her boifwend.

#### Raquel recovers Derick

All HP restored!

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The cultists used their ranged weapons to destroy Derick! Haha, in their dreams.

#### Javelineer A vs Derick

Hit:  $115+15-15-7-80 = 28$

Hit roll: 50, miss!

#### Javelineer B vs Derick

Hit:  $115+15-15-7-80 = 28$

Hit roll: 31, miss!

#### Acolyte C vs Derick

Hit:  $121-15-7-80 = 19$

Hit roll: 44, miss!

Then, a green mist descended upon Derick!

#### Witch casts Poison on Derick

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{18-14\} \times 5]+7-(4 \times 2)) = 30+20+7-8 = 49$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Derick is poisoned!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Sir Arvin then dealt with one of javelineers.

#### Arvin vs Javelineer B

Hit:  $120-46 = 74$

Hit roll: 66, hit!

Damage:  $39 - 15 = 24\text{dmg}$

### Enemies:

Derick: 45/49 <b>Poison (4/5)</b> Raquel Torriani: 35/47	Zealot B: 37/37 Zealot C: 37/37 Acolyte B: 32/32 Acolyte C: 32/32 Acolyte D: 32/32 Acolyte E: 32/32 Acolyte F: 32/32 Acolyte G: 32/32 Acolyte H: 32/32	Swordsman E: 35/35 Swordsman F: 35/35 Swordsman G: 35/35 Swordsman H: 35/35 Javelineer A: 34/34 Javelineer C: 34/34 Javelineer D: 34/34 Witch A: 26/26 Witch B: 26/26
<b>Allies:</b>		
Arvin Raccula: 47/47		

**Derick: 1 North, attack Acolyte**

**Raquel: Move to (16,16); zot Witch A**

Two more corpses!

**Derick vs Acolyte B**

Hit:  $132+15-39 = 108$ , autohit! Crit roll: 77!  
Damage:  $39+2-11 = 30 \times 3 = 90$ dmg

**Raquel vs Witch A**

Hit:  $121+15+15-42 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $38-16 = 22$ dmg

Raquel strikes again!  
Hit:  $121+15+15-42 = 109$ , autohit! Crit roll: 34!  
Damage:  $38-16 = 22 \times 3 = 66$ dmg

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The remaining enemies steered away from Raquel.

**Javelineer A vs Derick**

Hit:  $115+15-7-80 = 43$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-1-19 = 9$ dmg

**Acolyte C vs Arvin**

Hit:  $121-60 = 61$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

**~~Ally Phase~~**

The halberdier rushed at and easily killed the young dark mage.

**Arvin vs Acolyte C**

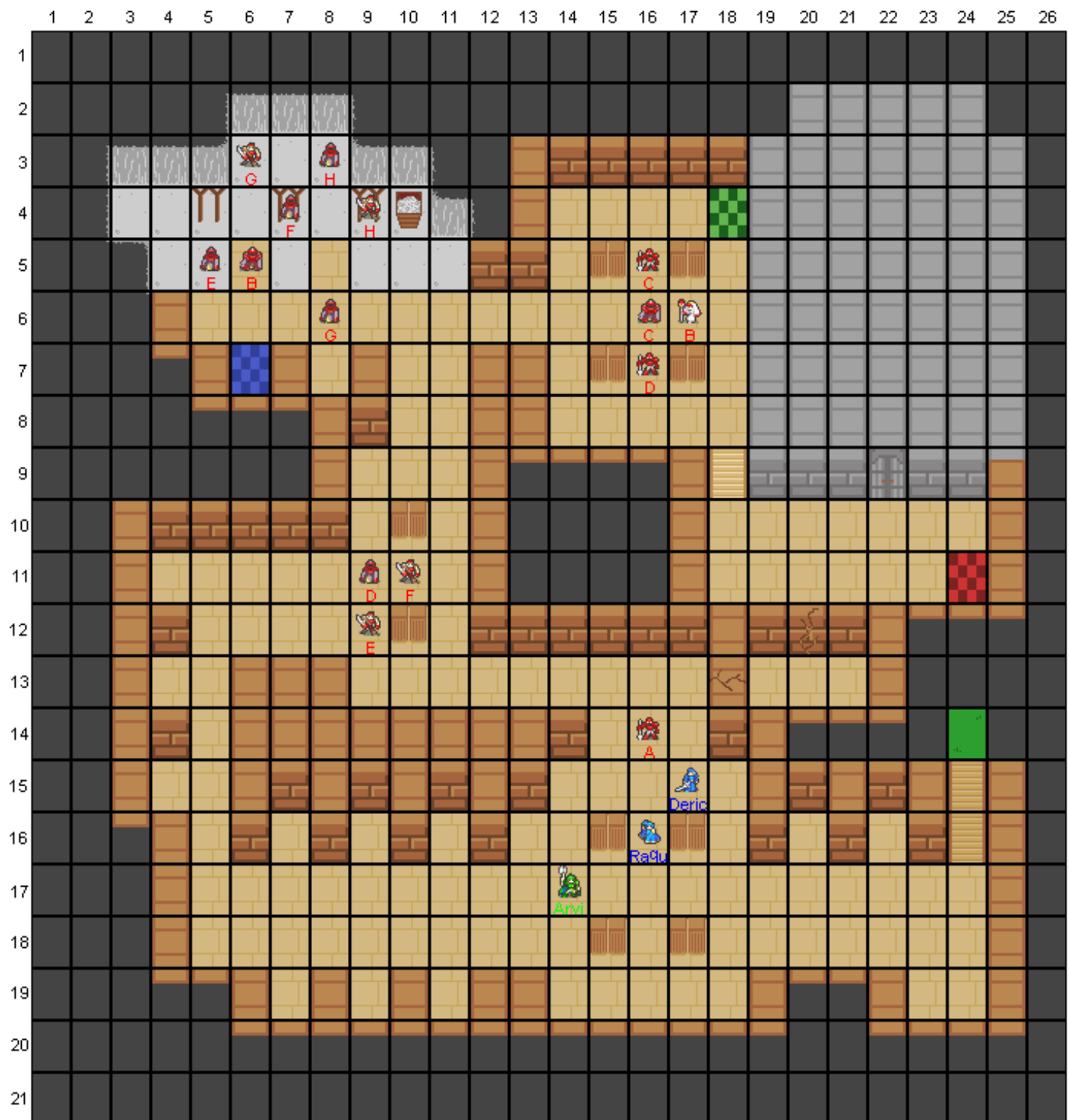
Hit:  $120-39 = 81$   
Hit roll: 70, hit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $39-11 = 28 \times 3 = 84$ dmg



# ~~Player Turn 4~~

## Poison rolls

Derick: 2



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Derick: 34/49 <span style="color: green;">Poison (3/5)</span> Raquel Torriani: 35/47	Zealot B: 37/37 Zealot C: 37/37 Acolyte D: 32/32 Acolyte E: 32/32 Acolyte F: 32/32 Acolyte G: 32/32 Acolyte H: 32/32 Swordsman E: 35/35	Swordsman F: 35/35 Swordsman G: 35/35 Swordsman H: 35/35 Javelineer A: 34/34 Javelineer C: 34/34 Javelineer D: 34/34 Witch B: 26/26
<span style="color: green;">Allies:</span>		
Arvin Raccula: 47/47		

Derick casually strolls 1 North and attacks the Javeliner

Raquel: Move to (15,13); Bolting Witch B

\*ZZZING\* \*K-CHING\* \*ZING!\* \*SPLORCH\*

Derick vs Javelineer A

Hit: $132+15-15-46 = 86$
Hit roll: 82, hit! Crit roll: 27!
Damage: $39+2-1-15 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

Suddenly the witch in a room far away got struck by a lighting and her head exploded; just like a melon explodes after being struck with heavy hammer wielded by a mad poet stuck in romantic rage of unfulfilled love.

Raquel vs Witch B

Hit: $116+15-42 = 89$
Hit roll: 49, hit! Crit roll: 4!
Damage: $46-16 = 30 \times 3 = 90\text{dmg}$

~~Enemy Phase~~

"THE RECKONING! GODS ARE PUNISHING US!"

"AWAY! SAVE THYSELVES!"

"Stop shouting you idiots!" The dark mage turned his gaze from the smoldering corpse of ex-witch, and looked at two peons running away and screaming in amok.

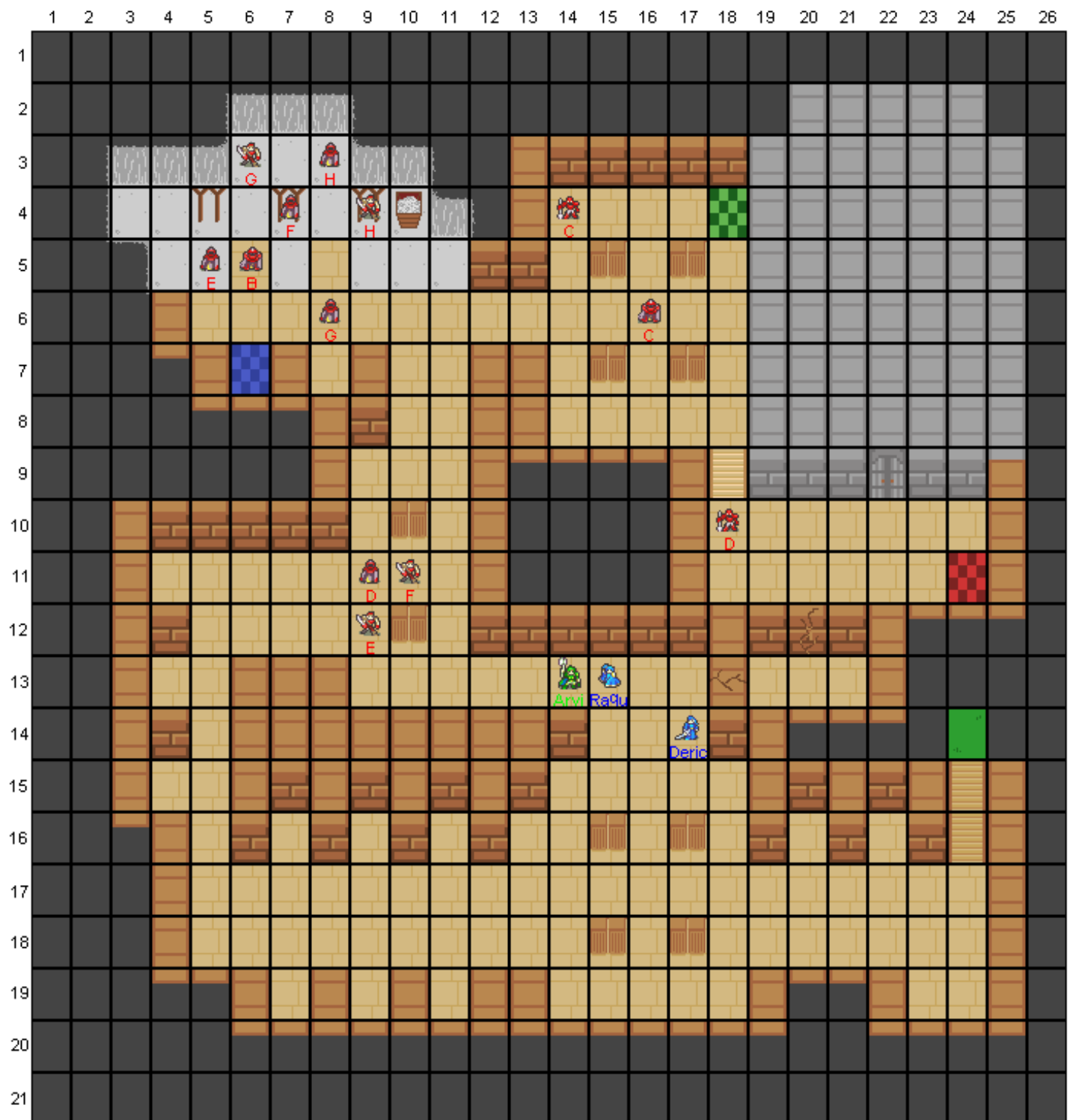
~~Ally Phase~~

Arvin walked into the small corridor, ignoring the cracked wall.

# ~~Player Turn 5~~

## Poison rolls

Derick: 5



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Derick: 29/49 Poison (2/5) Raquel Torriani: 35/47		Zealot B: 37/37 Zealot C: 37/37 Acolyte D: 32/32 Acolyte E: 32/32 Acolyte F: 32/32 Acolyte G: 32/32 Acolyte H: 32/32	Swordsman E: 35/35 Swordsman F: 35/35 Swordsman G: 35/35 Swordsman H: 35/35 Javelineer C: 34/34 Javelineer D: 34/34
Allies:			
Arvin Raccula: 47/47			

Derick: move 12,13

## Raquel: Move to (13,13); Recover Derick

### Raquel recovers Derick

All HP healed!

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The enemies re-scratched Derick who disposed of the swordsmen with ease.

### Swordsman E vs Derick

Hit:  $110-7-80 = 23$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage:  $25-1-19 = 5\text{dmg}$

Derick retaliates!

Hit:  $132+15-41 = 106$ , autohit! Crit roll: 9!

Damage:  $39+2-14 = 27 \times 3 = 81\text{dmg}$

### Swordsman F vs Derick

Hit:  $110-7-80 = 23$

Hit roll: 91, miss!

Derick retaliates!

Hit:  $132+15-41 = 106$ , autohit! Crit roll: 54!

Damage:  $39+2-14 = 27 \times 3 = 81\text{dmg}$

### Acolyte D vs Derick

Hit:  $121-7-80 = 34$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $28-14 = 14\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Arvin ran forward and cut down the acolyte, shrugging off the retaliatory blast.

### Arvin vs Acolyte D

Hit:  $120-39 = 81$

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage:  $39-11 = 28\text{dmg}$

Acolyte D retaliates!

Hit:  $121-60 = 61$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

Arvin attacks again!

Hit:  $120-39 = 81$

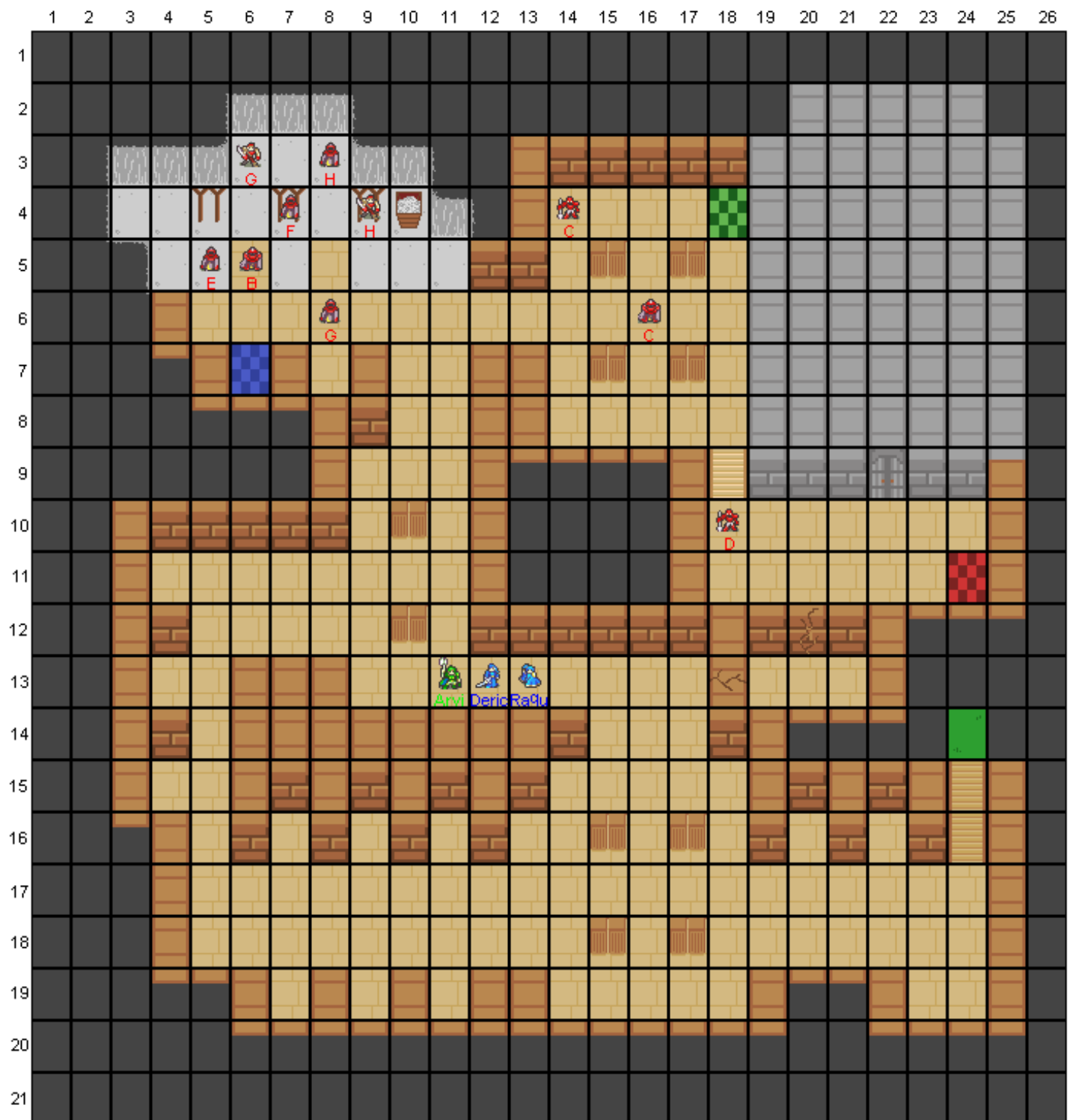
Hit roll: 68, hit!

Damage:  $39-11 = 28\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 6~~

## Poison rolls

Derick: 4



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Derick: 26/49 Poison (1/5) Raquel Torriani: 35/47		Zealot B: 37/37 Zealot C: 37/37 Acolyte E: 32/32 Acolyte F: 32/32 Acolyte G: 32/32	Acolyte H: 32/32 Swordsman G: 35/35 Swordsman H: 35/35 Javelineer C: 34/34 Javelineer D: 34/34
Allies:			
Arvin Raccula: 47/47			

Derick: 11, 8

## Raquel: Move to (11,9) Recover

### Raquel recovers Derick

All HP restored!

Derick and Raquel could notice numerous crates of rubble and pickaxes and sleeping pads and blankets in the half-excavated room. It seems that the cultists were working on expanding this particular corner of the catacombs into something akin to a sleeping room.

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Sightseeing was cut short by two mages attacking Derick; they didn't have much success.

### Acolyte G vs Derick

Hit:  $121-7-80 = 34$

Hit roll: 60, miss!

### Zealot C vs Derick

Hit:  $123-7-80 = 36$

Hit roll: 96, miss!

Other cultists prepared themselves to swarm the incoming trio.

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Arvin quickly ran over to the acolyte and struck him down.

### Arvin vs Acolyte G

Hit:  $120-39 = 81$

Hit roll: 14, hit!

Damage:  $39-11 = 28\text{dmg}$

Acolyte G retaliates!

Hit:  $121-60 = 61$

Hit roll: 82, miss!

Arvin strikes again!

Hit:  $120-39 = 81$

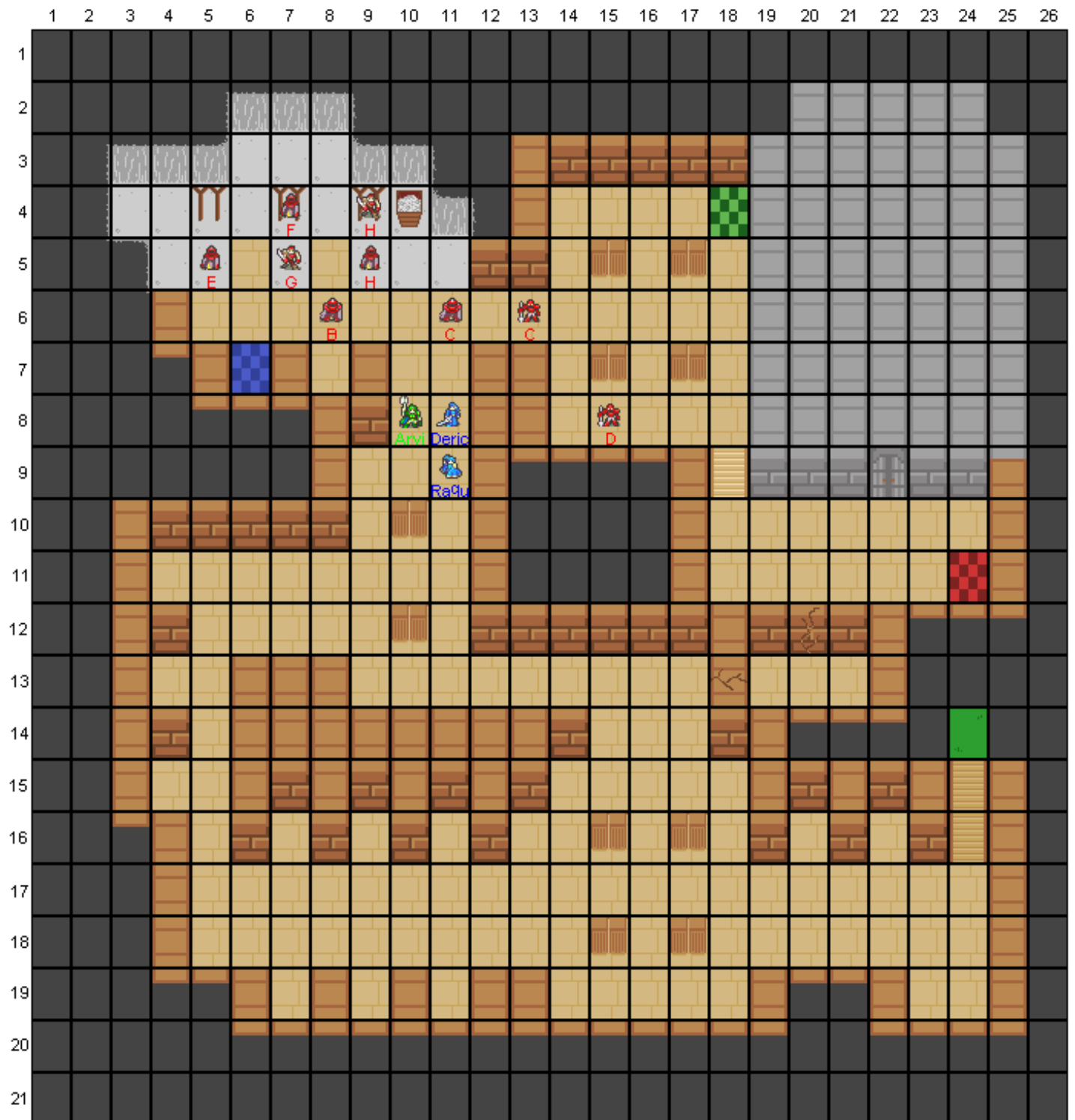
Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $39-11 = 28\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 7~~

## Poison Rolls

Derick feels better!



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Derick: 49/49 Raquel Torriani: 35/47	Zealot B: 37/37 Zealot C: 37/37 Acolyte E: 32/32 Acolyte F: 32/32 Acolyte H: 32/32	Swordsman G: 35/35 Swordsman H: 35/35 Javelineer C: 34/34 Javelineer D: 34/34
Allies:		
Arvin Raccula: 47/47		

Derick: 11, 6 attack Zealot

## Raquel: Move to (11,8); Channel Sharpness on Arvis

Another of the cultists died horribly.

### Derick vs Zealot C

Hit:  $132+15-40 = 107$ , autohit! Crit roll: 67!

Damage:  $39+2-12 = 29 \times 3 = 87$  dmg

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Enemies ganged on Derick who presented his take on combat ballet known as 'The Dance of Bloodthirsty Swan of Steel'.

### Swordsman G vs Derick

Hit:  $110-7-80 = 23$

Hit roll: 98, miss!

Derick counters!

Hit:  $132+15-41 = 106$ , autohit! Crit roll: 29!

Damage:  $39+2-14 = 27 \times 3 = 81$  dmg

### Swordsman H vs Derick

Hit:  $110-7-80 = 23$

Hit roll: 54, miss!

Derick counters!

Hit:  $132+15-41 = 106$ , autohit! Crit roll: 6!

Damage:  $39+2-14 = 27 \times 3 = 81$  dmg

### Zealot B vs Derick

Hit:  $123-7-80 = 36$

Hit roll: 40, miss!

### Acolyte H vs Derick

Hit:  $121-7-80 = 34$

Hit roll: 61, miss!

### Javelineer C vs Derick

Hit:  $115+15-7-80 = 43$

Hit roll: 72, miss!

### Javelineer D vs Derick

Hit:  $115+15-7-80 = 43$

Hit roll: 51, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

The halberd claimed the head of another acolyte.

### Arvin vs Acolyte H

Hit:  $120+30-39 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $39-11 = 28$  dmg

Acolyte H retaliates!

Hit:  $121-60 = 61$

Hit roll: 34, hit!

Damage:  $28-13 = 15$  dmg

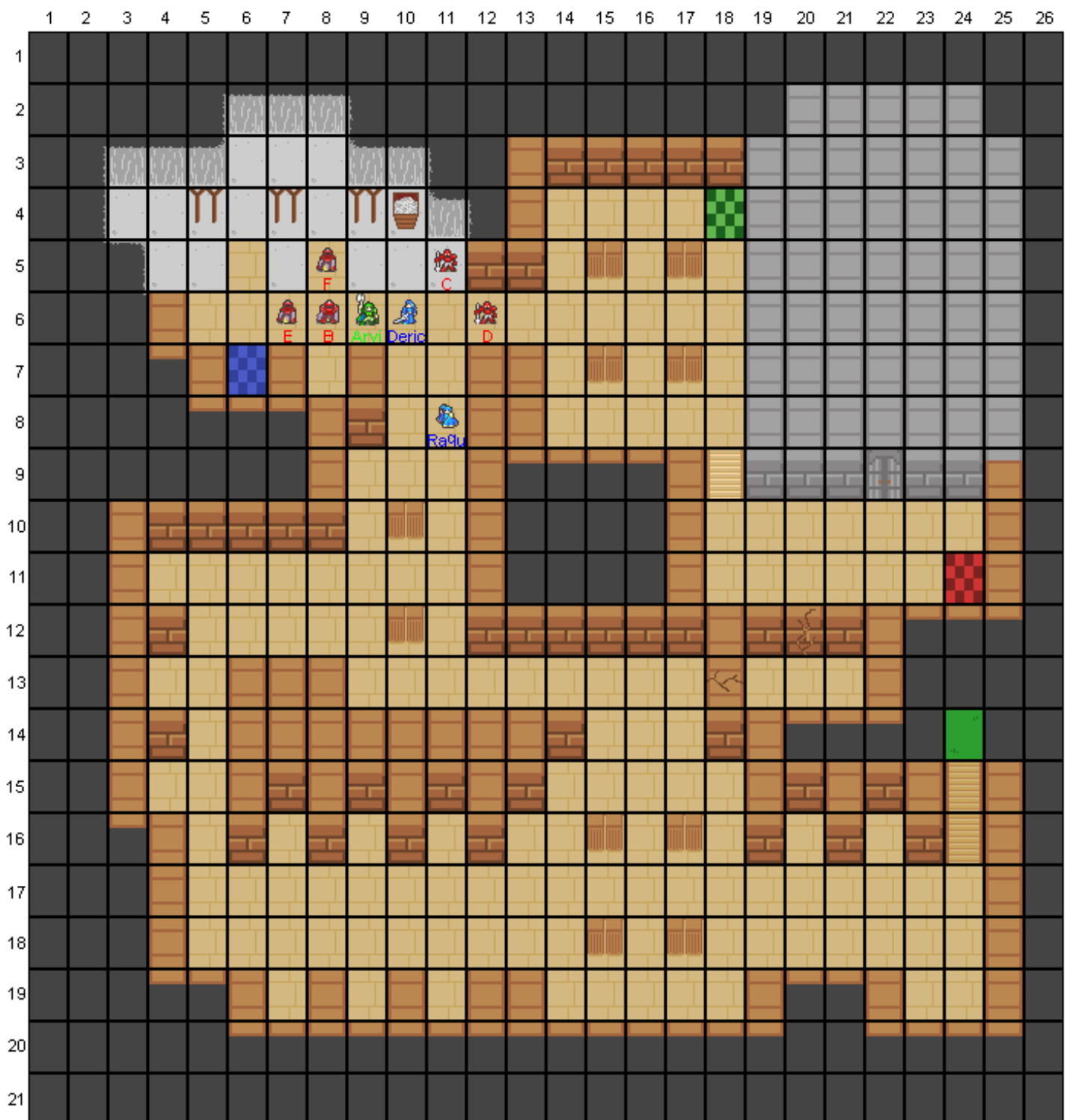
Arvin attacks once more!

Hit:  $120+30-39 = 111$ , autohit!

Damage:  $39-11 = 28$  dmg



# ~~Player Turn 8~~



Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:
Derick: 49/49 Raquel Torriani: 35/47	Zealot B: 37/37 Acolyte E: 32/32 Acolyte F: 32/32 Javelineer C: 34/34 Javelineer D: 34/34
Allies:	
Arvin Raccula: 32/47 Sharpness (5/5)	

**Derick: 7,5 attack Acolyte F**

**Raquel: Move to (10,5); Killer Thunder Javelineer C**

Two more corpses!

**Derick vs Acolyte F**

Hit:  $132-39 = 93$

Hit roll: 79, hit! Crit roll: 40!

Damage:  $39+2-11 = 30 \times 3 = 90\text{dmg}$

ZORCH!

**Raquel vs Javelineer C**

Hit:  $121+15+15-46 = 105$ , autohit!

Damage: 55, hit!

Damage:  $38-10 = 28 \times 3 = 84\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Series of unfortunate events.

**Zealot B vs Derick**

Hit:  $123-7-80 = 36$

Hit roll: 22, hit!

Damage:  $41-14 = 27\text{dmg}$

**Acolyte E vs Derick**

Hit:  $121-7-80 = 34$

Hit roll: 3, hit!

Damage:  $28-14 = 14\text{dmg}$

**Javelineer D vs Derick**

Hit:  $115+15-7-80 = 43$

Hit roll: 29, hit!

Damage:  $28+1-1-19 = 9\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

"Bastards!"

**Arvin vs Zealot B**

Hit:  $120+30-40 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $39-12 = 27\text{dmg}$

Zealot B counterattacks!

Hit:  $123-60 = 63$

Hit roll: 34, hit!

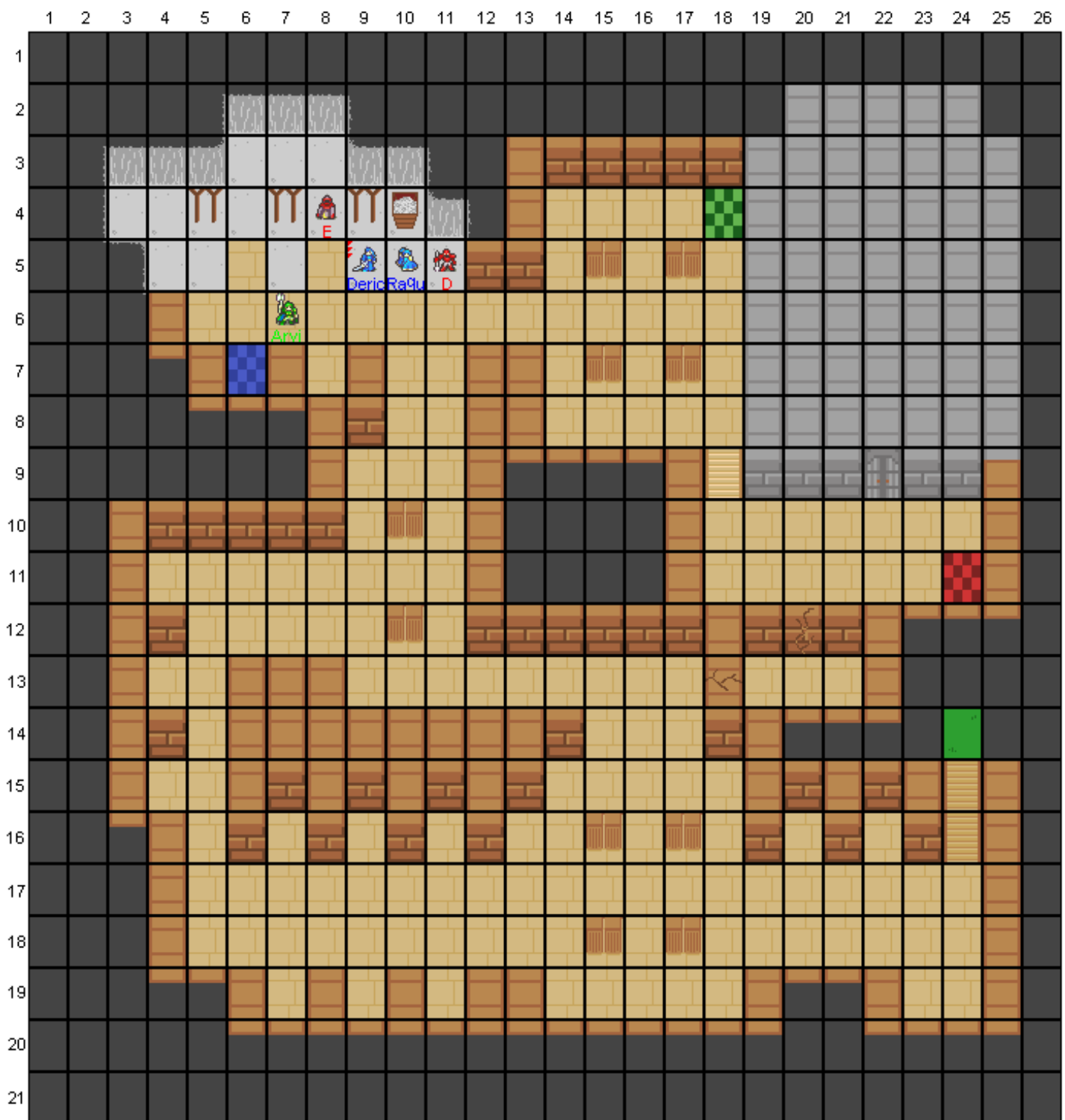
Damage:  $41-13 = 28\text{dmg}$

Arvin attacks once more!

Hit:  $120+30-40 = 110$ , autohit!

Damage:  $39-12 = 27\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	Allies:
Derick: -/49 3/3 Raquel Torriani: 35/47	Acolyte E: 32/32 Javelineer D: 34/34	Arvin Raccula: 4/47 Sharpness (4/5)



"Darnit. Guess I got cocky again huh..."



"Don't worry, I'll not let you die so long as I'm here."

# Raquel: Recover Derick

## Raquel recovers Derick

Upto 24HP restored

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Seeing that Raquel was the most dangerous of all, the two remaining cultists ganged on her, and she easily dominated and electrocuted them with well placed thunder strikes.

### Acolyte E vs Raquel

Hit:  $121+15-7-63 = 66$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $28+1-17 = 12\text{dmg}$   
  
Raquel retaliates!  
Hit:  $121+15-15-15-39 = 67$   
Hit roll: 20, hit! Crit roll: 26!  
Damage:  $38-1-17 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

### Javelineer D vs Raquel

Hit:  $115-7-63 = 45$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $28-1-11 = 16\text{dmg}$   
  
Raquel retaliates!  
Hit:  $121-39 = 82$   
Hit roll: 33, hit! Crit roll: 57!  
Damage:  $38-10 = 28 \times 3 = 84\text{dmg}$

After that, it was eerily quiet here.

## ~~Epilogue Chapter B, 1st half, Complete!~~



"Good miss Raquel, healing would be most welcome."



"**Certainly.**" Raquel brought the healing staff over to Arvis, restoring him to the peak of health, then did the same to Derick.

Arvin turned to look at the blue-colored tiles in one of the catacomb's nooks.



"I wonder why this part of the floor is of different color... doesn't seem like simple decoration."

She examined the blue tile, somewhat puzzled.



"I'm uncertain. It does seem rather odd, and I thought that I saw..." She ran back over to the adjoining room. "Yes, there are two more back here, green and red."



"Some sort of mechanism?" Arvin looked at the nearby tile, and then moved forward, stepping on it.

There was a quiet 'clunk' coming from underneath it, but nothing seems to have happened.



"Well... at least it didn't activate any traps. I hope."



"Maybe something will happen if we stand on all of them?" Derick said offhandedly while peering into the minecart to see what was in it.



"It could be. It may be worth testing, at the least. This last door doesn't seem to wish to open." Walking over, Raquel stood on the green tile.



"Alright."

Derick walked over to the blue tile and stood on it next to Arvin.



"You mind taking the red one Arvin?"

Raquel stood on the green tile and a quiet clunk came from under her tile.

However when Arvin and Derick stood on their tiles, there was no clunking nor their tiles even went downwards; Raquel could feel that her tile slightly pushed her upwards.



"Hmmm, the tile is lifting me up now." Raquel stepped off the tile, examining it

more closely. There seemed to be some sort of lever interaction between it and the other two tiles; perhaps weight had something to do with it.



"Uh. I guess we could try all standing on one tile? Or maybe we could push the minecart onto one of them or something?"



"This angers me - the cultists are safely locked in their inner sanctum whilst we're hopelessly trying to open their doors... Pathetic." Arvin grumbled under his nose and moved back to the room where Derick was.



"This isn't minecart, sir Derick. It seems like giant wooden crate of rubble to me."



"I suppose, if we were bored enough, we could simply starve them out." The joke seemed to fall flat even to her, and she closed her eyes, mulling over the problem.



"We may be able to use that rubble to weigh down the tiles, if it does have to do with weight. I wonder, though, if we should switch tiles, first. It may have something to do with the different colors as well." Out of curiosity, she tried the door, as though to confirm if it was still locked.

The door remained tightly locked, it didn't even budge.



"So, which tile first?"



"We should weigh down the green tile that I was standing on. It was the only one that rose, correct?"



"I guess so."

Derick grabbed a piece of rubble out of the box and stood on the tile.



"Oh, I'm sorry for the confusion. I meant that it should be the tile I am standing on since I was the lightest of us." Taking the rubble from Derick, she stood on one of the tiles.

When Derick stood on his tile, it produced the same 'clunk' as before.

When Raquel stood on the other, there was no clunk, and Derick could feel his tile rising just a tiny bit.



"I guess that didn't work. Maybe we should try them in a certain order? How about Blue, Red, Green?"

Raquel nods, then moves to the tile, ready to step onto it as part of the sequence.

When Blue tile was stepped on, it produced a clunk.

When Red tile was stepped on, it produced a click - and refused to get back up.



"That's new." Arvin looked down at the red tile, stroking own moustache in contemplation.



"Hmmm, it may well be the order. If so, Red may be first." Raquel stepped on the green tile.

There were two clicks after Raquel stepped on the green tile, and it refused to go back up as well.



"Huh." Derick hopped off the Blue tile and hopped back on again.

Click click click-

THUNK! came from the door. Arvin grasped his halberd.



"Come here quick, I think door is... unlocked."

Tome ready, Raquel moved to join Arvin before the door.

Derick joined them at the door.



"Alright, let's finish this."

Arvin nodded and pushed the door inwards - they've opened, exposing a group of cultists surrounding a throne on which an elderly lady was sitting.



"Oh, look, pretties, we have visitors, heh."



"Old hag! Are you responsible for the death of Sarius the mercenary leader?"



"Bitch, I might be! I think I even recognize the name."



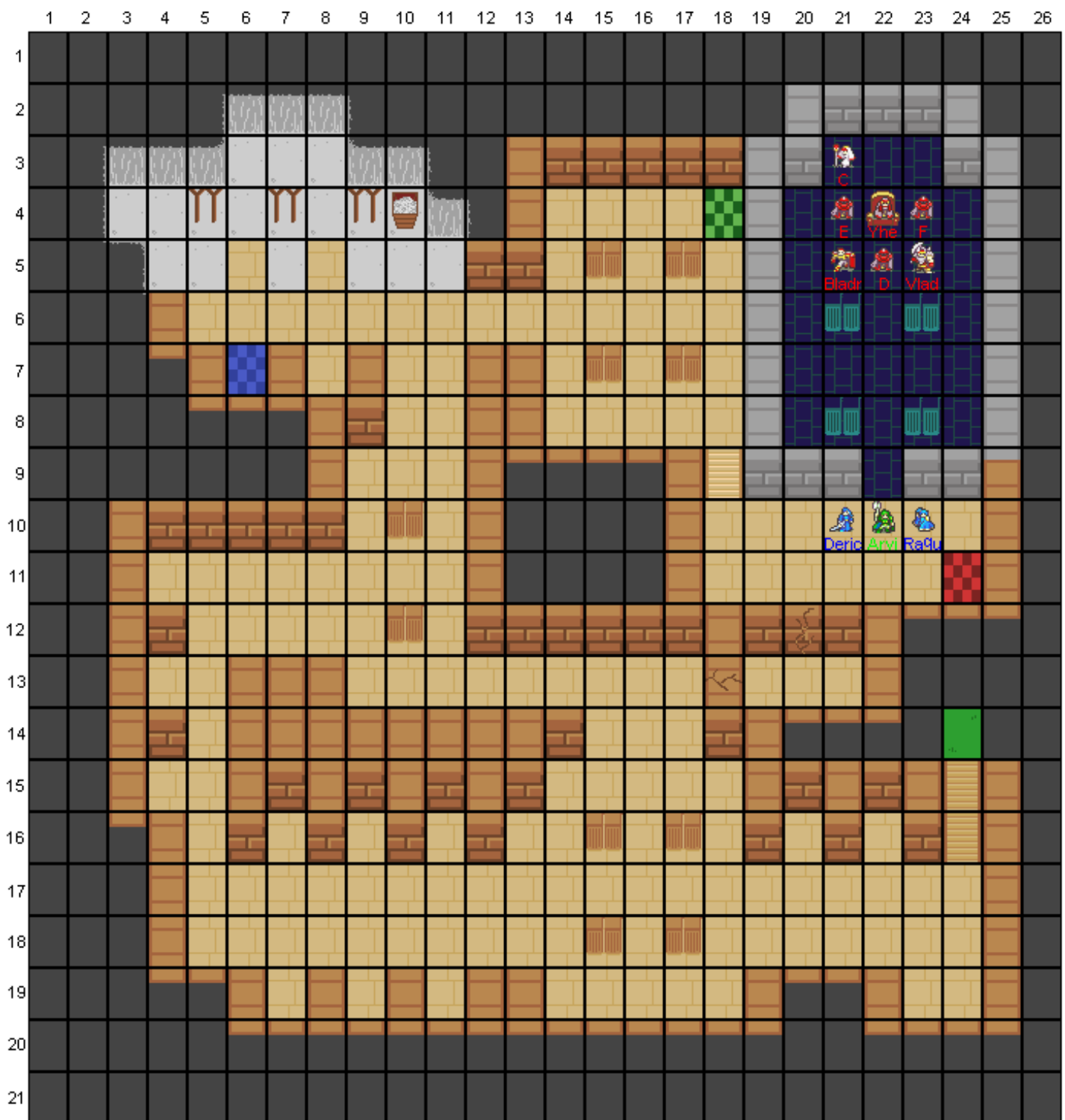
"I will send you to hell!"



"Heh. My sons and I will send YOU to hell, little knight! Vlade, Bladr, get'im!"



# ~~Player Turn 10~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Derick: 49/49 Raquel Torriani: 47/47	Zealot D: 37/37 Zealot E: 37/37 Zealot F: 37/37
Allies:	Witch C: 26/26 Vlade: 48/48 Bladr: 43/43 Yhe: 44/44
Arvin Raccula: 47/47	



"Careful, everyone. These aren't like the ones we fought through to get here."

**Raquel: Move to (22,11); Bolting Witch C**



"Alright. This'll be trickier"

**Derick: move 22,9**

\*KRA-KSHOOOM!\*

**Raquel vs Witch C**

Hit:  $116+15-42 = 89$

Hit roll: 70, hit!

Damage:  $46-16 = 30\text{dmg}$

Suddenly Derick started to feel weak! His knees wobbled and arms felt rubbery.



"Yheh. Welcome to my humble abode, little birdie."

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"**I am Vlade, your death!**" The axeman rushed at Derick, smashing the axe into the swordmaster's shoulder; Raquel, few metres away, could see the thick steel blade that sunk into the flesh of her friend. Derick knelt for a moment, before raising up and slashing the axeman's head off. Blood gushed like fountain as the body slumped to the floor and head flew to the corner of the room in a bloody arc.

**Vlade vs Derick**

Hit:  $122+15-7-76 = 54$

Hit roll: 22, hit!

Damage:  $59+1-1-5-19 = 35\text{dmg}$

Derick counterattacks!

Hit:  $132+15-15-38 = 94$

Hit roll: 41, hit! Crit roll: 1!

Damage:  $37+2-1-15 = 23 \times 3 = 69\text{dmg}$

"**NOOO, VLADE!**" The swordman with a shield ran toward Derick, who should be easy target now; but the man missed and paid for his error with his body bisected neatly at the height of his waist!

**Bladr vs Derick**

Hit:  $128-7-76 = 45$

Hit roll: 72, miss!

Derick retaliates!

Hit:  $132+15-44 = 103$ , autohit! Crit roll: 35!

Damage:  $37+2-17 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$



"My sons! Kill that boy! Rip his heart through his nose!" The zealots obediently attacked Derick, but even while grievously wounded and under curse, Derick evaded the magical blasts.



"Just kill that kid! How incompetent can you be!?"

**Zealot D vs Derick**

Hit:  $123-7-76 = 43$   
Hit roll: 85, miss!

**Zealot E vs Derick**

Hit:  $128-7-76 = 48$   
Hit roll: 60, miss!

**Zealot F vs Derick**

Hit:  $128-7-76 = 38$   
Hit roll: 68, miss!

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Arvin rushed into the chamber, swayed for a moment, and then attacked the mage in front of him; taking the blast like a man, his halberd struck down the druid.

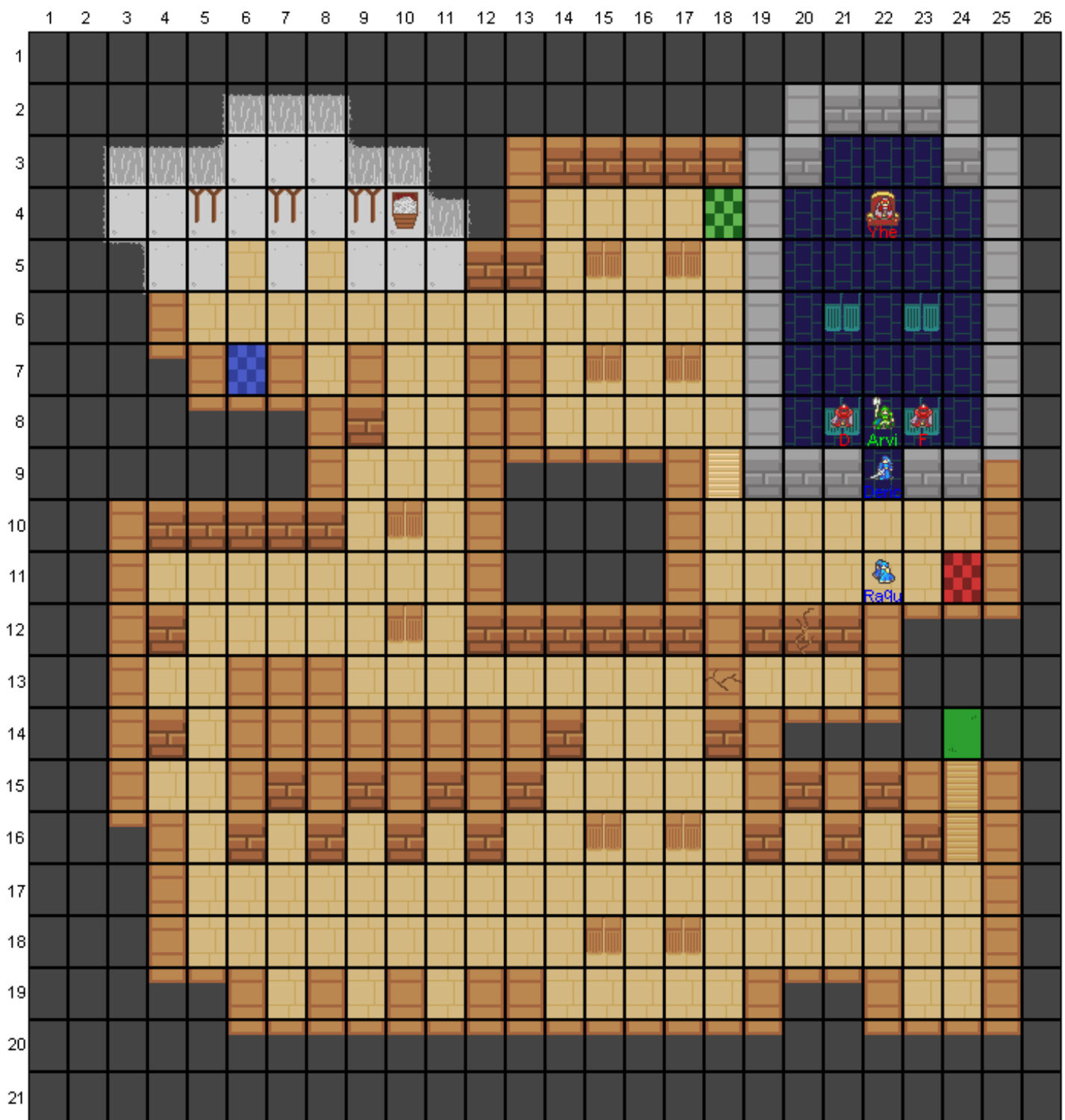
**Arvin vs Zealot E**

Hit:  $120-40 = 80$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $37-12 = 25\text{dmg}$

Zealot E counters!  
Hit:  $128-56 = 72$   
Hit roll: 72, hit!  
Damage:  $38-13 = 25\text{dmg}$

Arvin attacks again!  
Hit:  $120-40 = 80$   
Hit roll: 16, hit!  
Damage:  $37-12 = 25\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 11~~



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Derick: 14/49 <b>Curse!</b> (-2 STR/CON/SPD)		Zealot D: 37/37	
Raquel Torriani: 47/47		Zealot F: 37/37	
Allies:		Yhe: 44/44	
Arvin Raccula: 22/47 <b>Curse!</b> (-2 STR/CON/SPD)			



"Derick, hold on a second and let me heal that wound."

**Raquel: Move to (22,10); Recover Derick**

Derick: 21, 7 attack zealot

Raquel recovers Derick

All HP restored!

Derick vs Zealot D

Hit:  $132-15-40 = 77$   
Hit roll: 56, hit!  
Damage:  $37+2-12 = 27\text{dmg}$

Zealot D retaliates!  
Hit:  $123-76 = 47$   
Hit roll: 74, miss!

Derick strikes again!  
Hit:  $132-15-40 = 77$   
Hit roll: 30, hit!  
Damage:  $37+2-12 = 27\text{dmg}$

~~Enemy Phase~~

In his vanity, the zealot tried to murderize Arvin from safety of the columns, but tables have turned.

Zealot F vs Arvin

Hit:  $113-56 = 57$   
Hit roll: 59, miss!

Arvin retaliates!  
Hit:  $120-15-40 = 65$   
Hit roll: 27, hit!  
Damage:  $37-12 = 25\text{dmg}$

Arvin counters once more!  
Hit:  $120-15-40 = 65$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $37-12 = 25\text{dmg}$

~~Ally Phase~~



"You're next!"



"Heh! Do try, little worm!"

Arvin vs Yhe

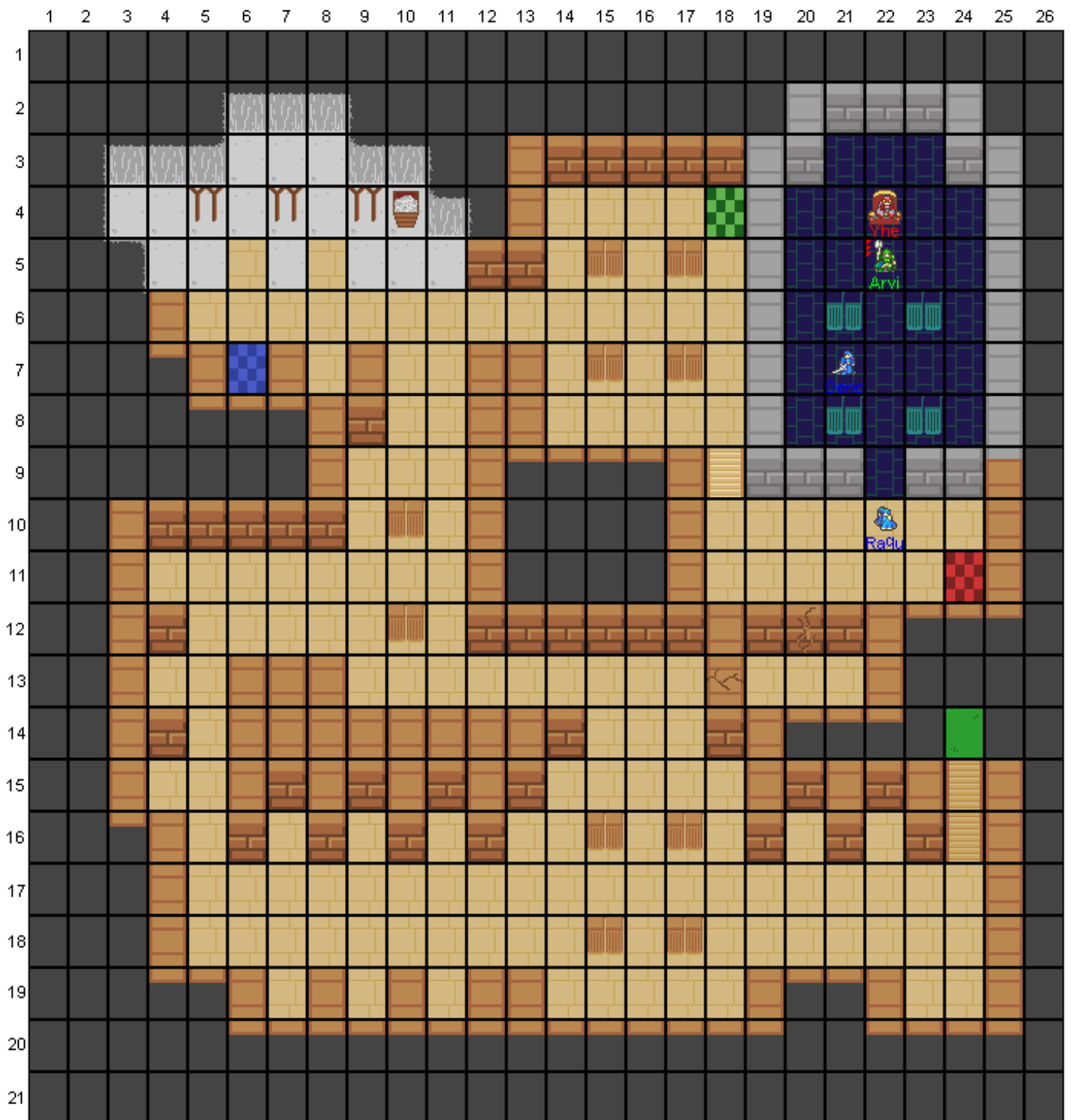
Hit:  $120-5-10-49 = 56$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $37-22 = 15\text{dmg}$

Yhe counters!  
Hit:  $131+5-56 = 80$   
Hit roll: 74, hit!  
Damage:  $45-13 = 32\text{dmg}$   
Yhe recovers 15HP!



"Now, now, kids, scoot back under the bed or you will end like this fool!"

## ~~Player Turn 12~~



Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	Allies:
Derick: 49/49 Curse! (-2 STR/CON/SPD) Raquel Torriani: 47/47	Yhe: 44/44	Arvin Raccula: -/47 3/3 ((Curse! (-2 STR/CON/SPD)))



"Raquel go heal Arvin. I'll deal with this witch."



"I understand." Raquel pushed forward into the oppressive air of the room, and brought healing magic down on Arvin.

**Raquel: Move to (22,6); Recover Arvin**

**Derick: 21, 4 attack!**

Raquel felt the cursed air diminish her powers.

**Raquel recovers Arvin**

Half HP restored!

Then Derick fought against the witch, and ended her miserable life with two swift slashes.

**Derick vs Yhe**

Hit:  $132+15-5-10-49 = 83$

Hit roll: 34, hit!

Damage:  $37+2-22 = 17\text{dmg}$

Cancel roll: 14!

Derick strikes again!

Hit:  $132+15-5-10-49 = 83$

Hit roll: 79, hit! Crit roll: 20!

Damage:  $37+2-22 = 17 \times 3 = 51\text{dmg}$

It was over.

**~~Epilogue Chapter B complete!~~**

Arvin stood up and looked at the throne, where the corpse of old woman was resting.



"It's done. Finally, Sarius can rest in peace."

Derick stuck his sword into the ground and leaned against it, wiping some sweat off his brow.



"Finally..."



"You hear that Sarius?! We did it! I kept my promise!"

Raquel smiled as she watched the two celebrate, she restoring Arvin to the peak of vigor again.



"I'm certain he will be able to rest easy now."



"Yeah..."

He stood up and put his swords back in their sheaths.



"I could use a rest after that."



"I think we all could. Perhaps we can return to the inn. I did not know him myself, but we can drink to Sarius's memory there, and maybe talk about the future."



"Yeah the future."

Derick put his arm around Raquel's shoulder and led her out of the room and away from Arvin.



"...hey I was thinking... uh..."

Raquel was slightly surprised when Derick put his arm around her shoulder, but leaned in slightly against him as he led her aside. She looked up at him as he started to ask something, then trailed off.



"...ah...yes?"





"I mean we've been together for a while now, and with everything we've been through and uh. Once we head back to Ys we could..."



"I'm just gonna say it. Would you marry me?"



"I'm sorry I don't have a ring with me now but I've been saving up and..."



!

Raquel was startled silent for the question for a moment, but looking at Derick's earnest face, and considering her own feelings, there was only one possible answer.



"Yes, of course!" She caught him in a tight embrace, then looked up at him. "Don't...you don't have to worry about a ring. I...I've been thinking about it since I asked you to come with me to Ys, and I'm absolutely certain of it, more than anything. All I need beside me is you."

Derick turned to Raquel and leaned forward returning her embrace.



"And I just need you... Thanks Raquel."

*And thusly Derick proposed to Raquel and some people said he carried his fiancée all the way to Ys where they had a party in the largest inn ever. Or so it goes, you can never be sure with those peasant legends...*

## ~~Epilogue Chapter C~~

### Just Another Day in Berebia

*Somewhere in south-western Berebia, near former Felwerk county  
Four months since the death of Prixima Kesselring*



"...and I have to tell you that we have barely any money left. There's less money in my pockets than letters in your family name, Olison." Matilda let out a sigh, staring at fellow rider.

Olison looked to the sky and sighed. The last few months certainly hadn't been kind, and as Matilda had mentioned, they were dangerously low on funds. He had even hunted on his own for many nights to try and recoup, but at this rate, it wouldn't be enough.



"I know... Perhaps, it may be worth it to travel west a-..." Olison stopped as Matilda continued, scratching his head as he tried to think of more options.



"Maybe we really should do some merc-." Matilda went quiet when sounds of galloping horses could be heard from the west.



"..."

Salvatore listened to the two riders from his perch on Ormm, the golden wyvern trotting along with the horses. The prior months had been hard, the three of them having burned up what they've kept (not that they had much from the foray of Prixi-something at the end anyhow). Feeding three people was a chore, never mind three people, two horses, and a wyvern. Perhaps they could--

Suddenly, a young man in priestly robes, on a brown horse, rode from behind the trees.



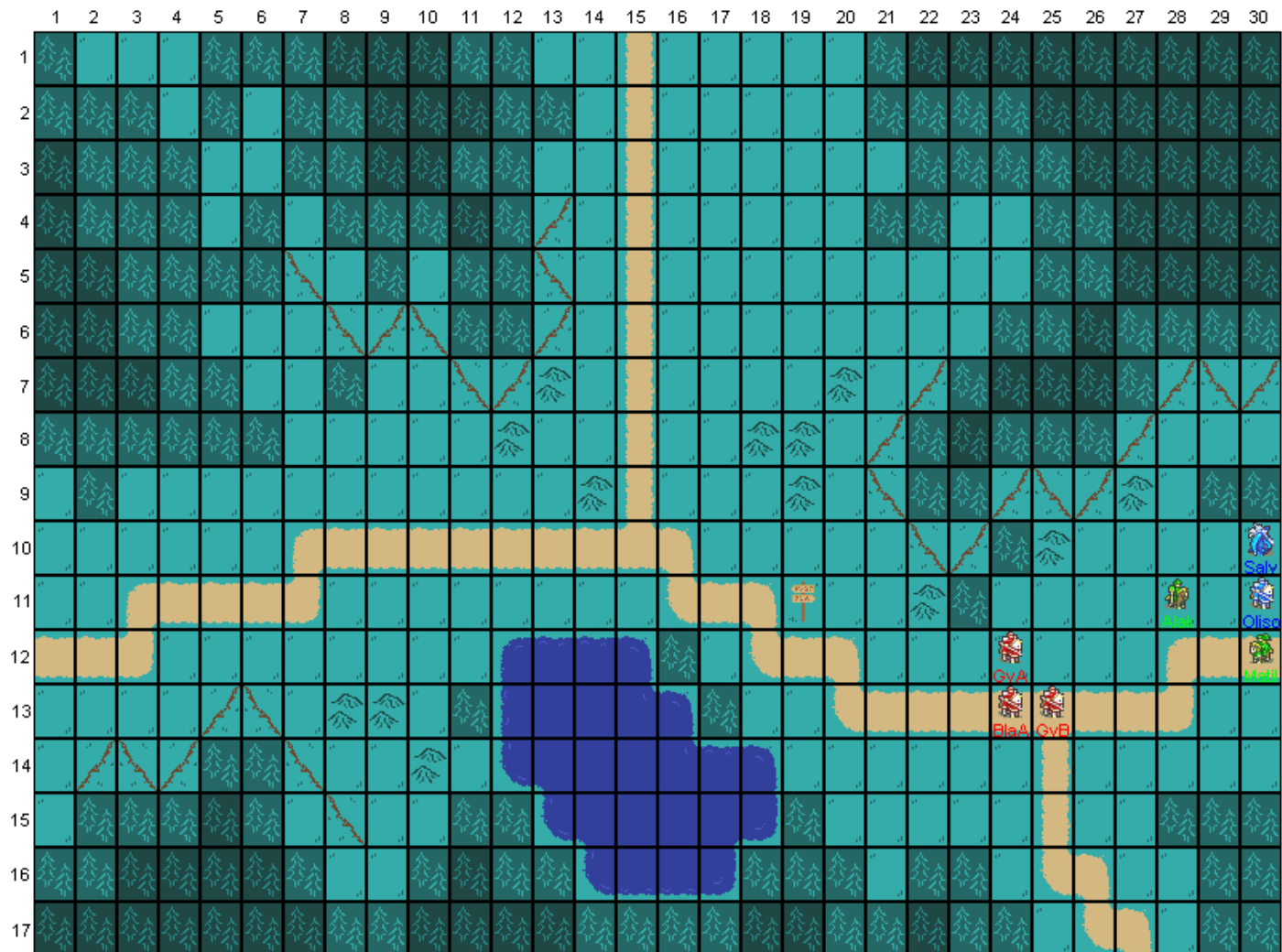
"H-Help! My father, there are assassins, and, and mages, and--" Three more people on horses rode from behind the trees as the youth turned to look at them with fear.

"Dammit, witnesses! Kill them, then get the kid!"



"Ah, no!"

~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	Allies:
Olison Eul: 41/41 Salvatore Vaughan: 45/45	Glaive Paladin A: 38/38 Glaive Paladin B: 38/38 Blade Paladin A: 37/37	Alakrin Yung: 28/28 Matilda: 37/37

The moment the youth's voice reached his ears, Olison's eyes shot to the horsemen behind.



"Hm? Who are you? Stop at once!" He rode ahead, hoping to get between the riders and the youth, but as he approached, he noticed their weapons brandished, and instinctively pulled his own.

## Olison to 26,13. Spear the Blade Paladin.

Sal looked on in confusion as the strange horseman, his words perking the man as the wyvern however looked past the lad with a hiss on its tongue. Their words and weapons was all he needed, the wyvern taking off into a run and them jumping into the air with a few powerful flaps of leathery wings.



"Oy! No yah don', leave tha' kid alone!" The wyvern charged into (25,12) and there was a flash of a wicked axe as Salvatore hacked into Glaive Paladin A.

Olison and Salvatore clashed hard with the pursuing horsemen.

### Olison vs Blade Paladin A

Hit:  $113+15-52 = 76$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $35+1-16 = 20\text{dmg}$

### Salvatore vs Glaive Paladin A

Hit:  $102+15+15+10-52 = 90$   
Hit roll: 60, hit! Crit roll: 17!  
Damage:  $31+1+2-16 = 18 \times 3 = 54\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Ya don't know whom yah fighting against!"

### Blade Paladin A vs Salvatore

Hit:  $109+15-10-26 = 88$   
Hit roll: 34, hit!  
Damage:  $31+1-28 = 4\text{dmg}$

Salvatore retaliates!

$102+10-15-52 = 45$   
Hit roll: 52, miss!

Salvatore counters again!

$102+10-15-52 = 45$   
Hit roll: 67, miss!

Blade Paladin A attacks again!

Hit:  $109+15-10-26 = 88$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $31+1-28 = 4\text{dmg}$

### Glaive Paladin B vs Olison

Hit:  $111-10-59 = 42$   
Hit roll: 61, miss!

Olison counterattacks!

Hit:  $113+10-52 = 51$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

The youth kept his distance while Matilda quickly moved forth and blasted the wounded

sword cavalier from his horse.

Matilda vs Blade Paladin A

Hit: 135-52 = 83  
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage: 31-14 = 17dmg

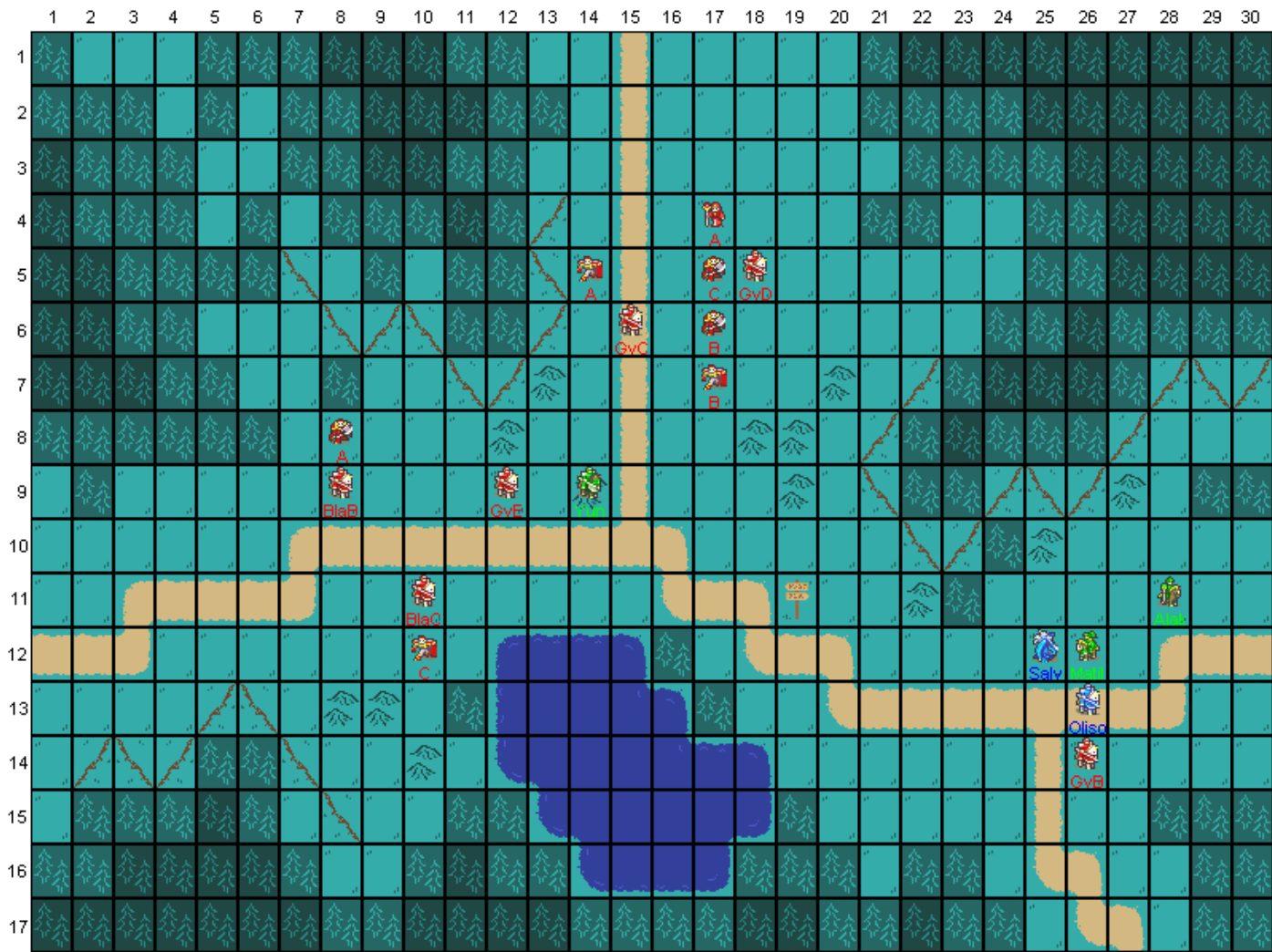
Olison could take a look west, and he could see that...

With a groan of pain and teeth flying out of his shattered mouth, the swordsman smashed against the dirt road as the heavy-set horseman laughed.



"Ha ha hah, come at me, hired mongrels! Yeh will end just like your friend there!" The bearded man swung the flail menacingly as the assassins prepared to swarm him.

~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Olison Eul: 41/41 Salvatore Vaughan: 37/45		Elite Swordman A: 42/42 Elite Swordman B: 42/42 Elite Swordman C: 42/42 Elite Axeman A: 45/45 Elite Axeman B: 45/45	Glaive Paladin B: 38/38 Glaive Paladin C: 38/38 Glaive Paladin D: 38/38 Glaive Paladin E: 38/38 Blade Paladin B: 37/37
Allies:			

Alakrin Yung: 28/28  
Matilda: 37/37  
Vordrakon Yung: 59/59

Elite Axeman C: 45/45  
Elite Axeman D: 45/45

Blade Paladin C: 37/37  
Bishop A: 35/35



"Fraid we can say much 'o the same 'ere. We don' know who yah are, but tha ain' stoppin' us from protectin' the kid. Oi beg o' yah, stop 'his nonsense an' throw yer weapons down, surrender an' we'll let yah breathe free. If'in yer not, Oi wish yah foind yer peace wit' the loight an' the dragon." Salvatore spoke to the remaining enemy rider, a small hope that perhaps the man would see reason, or if not at least intimidation. The wyvern knight brandished his axe at the enemy.

**When (if) the Glaive Paladin still presses on with the fight, Salvatore moves two places south and hacks into the man with his brave axe then cantoed five spaces west. If he surrenders, same action except tie him up and take his weapon away/break his weapon instead of using the axe.**

Sal sighed with the task done, looking to see what Olson was looking at.



"Thanks fer the help Matilda, but Oi think 'here may be more o' 'em. We may need yer staff soon, but Oi hope 'ey see reason. O' Dragon an' the loight, roighter of wrong an' protector o' the weary, may yah forgive us on this day. See our blades an' hearts true 'gainst those 'ho seek ta harm an' corrupt wit' dark machinations an' cruel intentions, an' tha on 'his 'ere day we be on the roight path." The knight prayed to himself as he approached the west, borne by the golden wyvern.

Olson pulled his spear from his last mark, and on looking back up, he could see the Knight further away fighting off multiple assailants.



**"There's another one under attack!"** Olson announced to the rest before rushing off.

**If Sal kills the Paladin, Olson to 19,13. If he doesn't, to 25,13, spear him, then to 19,13.**

#### Salvatore vs Glaive Paladin B

Hit:  $102+15+10+15-52 = 90$   
Hit roll: 18, hit!  
Damage:  $37+2+1-17 = 23\text{dmg}$

Salvatore strikes again!  
Hit:  $102+15+10+15-52 = 90$   
Hit roll: 74, hit!  
Damage:  $37+2+1-17 = 23\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The assailants of course concentrated on their target.

### Glaive Paladin E vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $111-15-5-30-37 = 34$

Hit roll: 96, miss!

Lord Yung counters!

Hit:  $113+15+5-52 = 81$

Hit roll: 87, miss!

Glaive Paladin E attacks again!

Hit:  $111-15-5-30-37 = 34$

Hit roll: 55, miss!

### Blade Paladin B vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $109+15-5-30-37 = 52$

Hit roll: 10, hit!

Damage:  $31+1-29 = 3\text{dmg}$

Lord Yung retaliates!

Hit:  $113+5-15-52 = 56$

Hit roll: 74, miss!

Blade Paladin B attacks once more!

Hit:  $109+15-5-30-37 = 52$

Hit roll: 43, hit!

Damage:  $31+1-29 = 3\text{dmg}$

### Blade Paladin C vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $109+15-5-30-37 = 52$

Hit roll: 39, hit!

Damage:  $31+1-29 = 3\text{dmg}$

Lord Yung retaliates!

Hit:  $113+5-15-52 = 56$

Hit roll: 78, miss!

Blade Paladin C attacks once more!

Hit:  $109+15-5-30-37 = 52$

Hit roll: 76, miss!

### Elite Axeman A vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $108-5-30-37 = 36$

Hit roll: 44, miss!

### Elite Axeman B vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $108-5-30-37 = 36$

Hit roll: 47, miss!

### Elite Axeman C vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $108-5-30-37 = 36$

Hit roll: 41, miss!

### Elite Swordsman B vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $132+15-5-30-37 = 75$

Hit roll: 2, hit!

Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

Lord Yung counterattacks!

Hit:  $113+5-15-43 = 60$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $41-1-17 = 23\text{dmg}$

### Bishop A vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $137-30-37 = 70$



Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage: 30-20 = 10dmg

## ~~Ally Phase~~

The armored horseman swung his flail at the foot soldier, smashing his skull.



"I've told you to keep yeh distance!"

### Lord Yung vs Elite Swordsman B

Hit:  $113+5-15-43 = 60$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

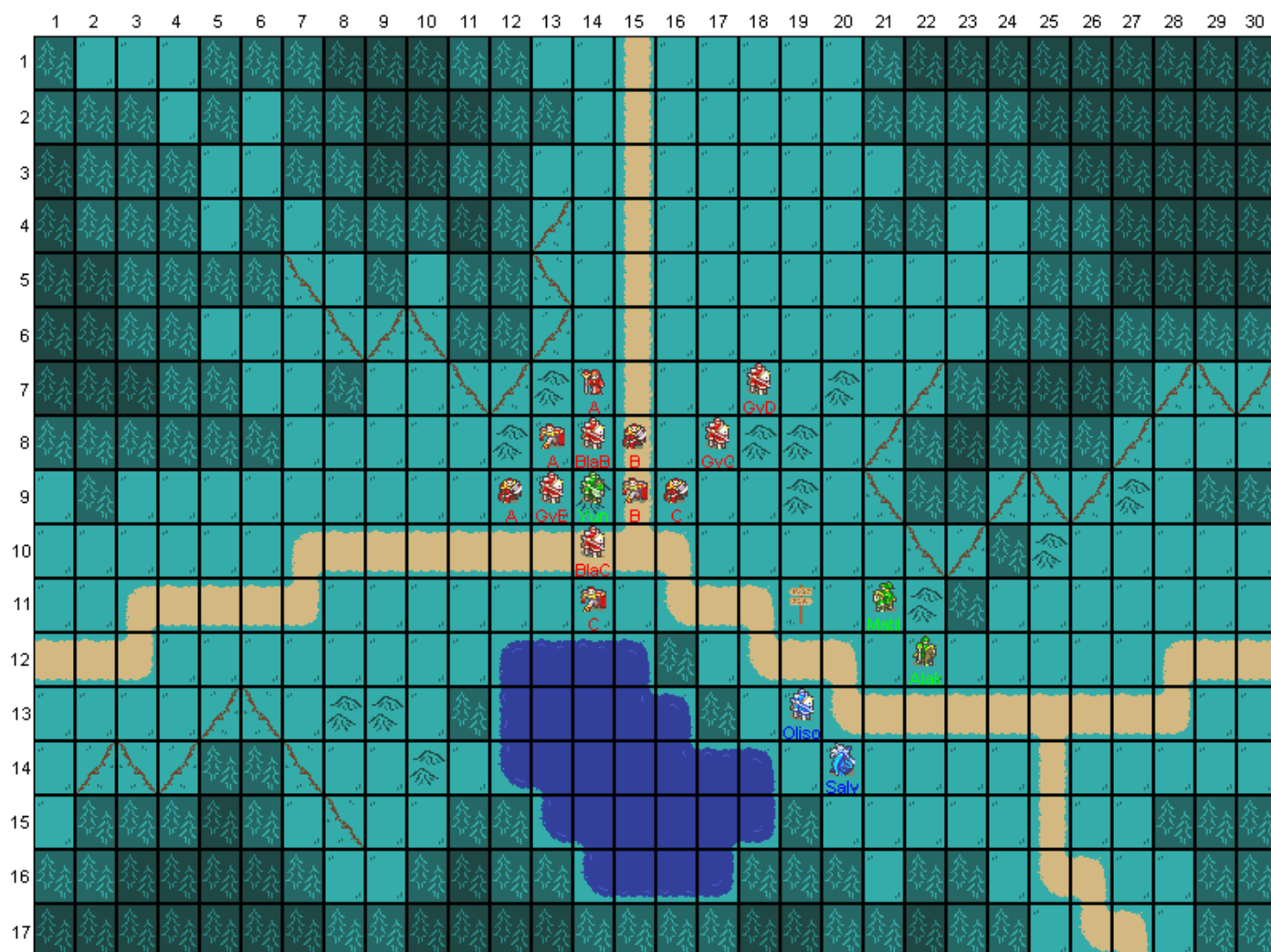
Damage:  $41-1-17 = 23\text{dmg}$

Alakrin and Matilda rushed west.



"That's my father there, please help him!"

## ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather:

**Mercs:**

**Enemies:**



Olison Eul: 41/41 Salvatore Vaughan: 37/45	Elite Swordsman A: 42/42 Elite Swordsman C: 42/42 Elite Axeman A: 45/45 Elite Axeman B: 45/45 Elite Axeman C: 45/45 Elite Axeman D: 45/45	Glaive Paladin C: 38/38 Glaive Paladin D: 38/38 Glaive Paladin E: 38/38 Blade Paladin B: 37/37 Blade Paladin C: 37/37 Bishop A: 35/35
<b>Allies:</b>		
Alakrin Yung: 28/28 Matilda: 37/37 Vordrakon Yung: 36/59		



**"Hrah!"** Olison lobbed off a spear with a galloping start towards the nearest swordsman, just before backpedaling into the forest nearby.

**Olison to 16,11, Spear the Elite Swordsman C. Then to 16,12.**



**"We'll get ta him, don' worry. Looks loike he can 'old his own jus' foine."**  
Salvatore followed Olison from above, the wyvern flying over the pond as the man chucked a javelin at Olison's Target.

**Salvatore to (15,12) and chuck heavy spear at Elite Swordsman C!**

Swordsman was speared to death.

#### Olison vs Elite Swordsman C

Hit:  $113+15+5-43 = 90$   
Hit roll: 37, hit!  
Damage:  $35+1-17 = 19\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $113+15-5-43 = 80$   
Hit roll: 74, hit!  
Damage:  $35+1-17 = 19\text{dmg}$

#### Salvatore vs Elite Swordsman C

Hit:  $107+15+15+5+10-43 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $36+1-17 = 20\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Of course, killing is aggroing!

#### Elite Axeman B vs Salvatore

Hit:  $108+15-5-10-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 42, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

Salvatore retaliates!  
Hit:  $107+15+10+5-15-42 = 80$   
Hit roll: 55, hit! Crit roll: 11!  
Damage:  $36-1-15 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

#### Elite Axeman C vs Salvatore

Hit:  $108+15-5-10-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 73, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

Salvatore retaliates!  
Hit:  $107+15+5+10-15-42 = 80$   
Hit roll: 64, hit!  
Damage:  $36-1-15 = 20\text{dmg}$

Axeman C strikes again!  
Hit:  $108+15-5-10-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 4, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

#### **Glaive Paladin E vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $111+15-5-10-26 = 85$   
Hit roll: 93, miss!

Salvatore counters!  
Hit:  $107+15+5+10-52 = 85$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

Glaive Paladin E attacks again!  
Hit:  $111+15-5-10-26 = 85$   
Hit roll: 100, miss! //what kind of rolls are these

#### **Glaive Paladin C vs Olison**

Hit:  $111-20-10-59 = 26$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

Olison retaliates!  
Hit:  $113+10-52 = 71$   
Hit roll: 78, miss!

But that was only slight part of the assassins; the rest still tried to get rid of Lord Yung.

#### **Bishop A vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $137-30-5-37 = 65$   
Hit roll: 82, miss!

#### **Elite Axeman A vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $108-30-5-37 = 36$   
Hit roll: 76, miss!

#### **Elite Swordsman A vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $132+15-5-30-37 = 75$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

Lord Yung counters!  
Hit:  $113+5-15-43 = 60$   
Hit roll: 27, hit!  
Damage:  $41-1-17 = 23\text{dmg}$

Elite Swordsman A attacks once more!  
Hit:  $132+15-5-30-37 = 75$   
Hit roll: 4, hit!  
Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

#### **Glaive Paladin D vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $111-15-5-30-37 = 24$   
Hit roll: 67, miss!

Lord Yung counters!  
Hit:  $113+15+5-52 = 81$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage:  $41+1-17 = 25\text{dmg}$

Glaive Paladin attacks again!  
Hit:  $111-15-5-30-37 = 24$   
Hit roll: 96, miss!

#### Blade Paladin B vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $109+15-5-30-37 = 52$

Hit roll: 68, miss!

Lord Yung retaliates!

Hit:  $113+5-15-52 = 51$

Hit roll: 84, miss!

Blade Paladin B attacks again!

Hit:  $109+15-5-30-37 = 52$

Hit roll: 19, hit!

Damage:  $31+1-29 = 3\text{dmg}$

#### Blade Paladin C vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $109+15-5-30-37 = 52$

Hit roll: 85, miss!

Lord Yung retaliates!

Hit:  $113+5-15-52 = 51$

Hit roll: 37, hit!

Damage:  $41-1-16 = 24\text{dmg}$

Blade Paladin C strikes once more!

Hit:  $109+15-5-30-37 = 52$

Hit roll: 77, miss!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Lord Yung got rid of another assassin, whilst Matilda hurried near Olison and blasted another of them.

#### Lord Yung vs Glaive Paladin D

Hit:  $113+15+5-52 = 81$

Hit roll: 66, hit!

Damage:  $41+1-17 = 25\text{dmg}$

#### Matilda vs Blade Paladin C

Hit:  $135+5-52 = 88$

Hit roll: 37, hit!

Damage:  $31-14 = 17\text{dmg}$

Young Alakrin then moved near Olison and from behind him, he pointed his sword at the nearby paladin, striking him with some green-ish bolt of energy, rather meager in power...



"O-Oh, it works!"

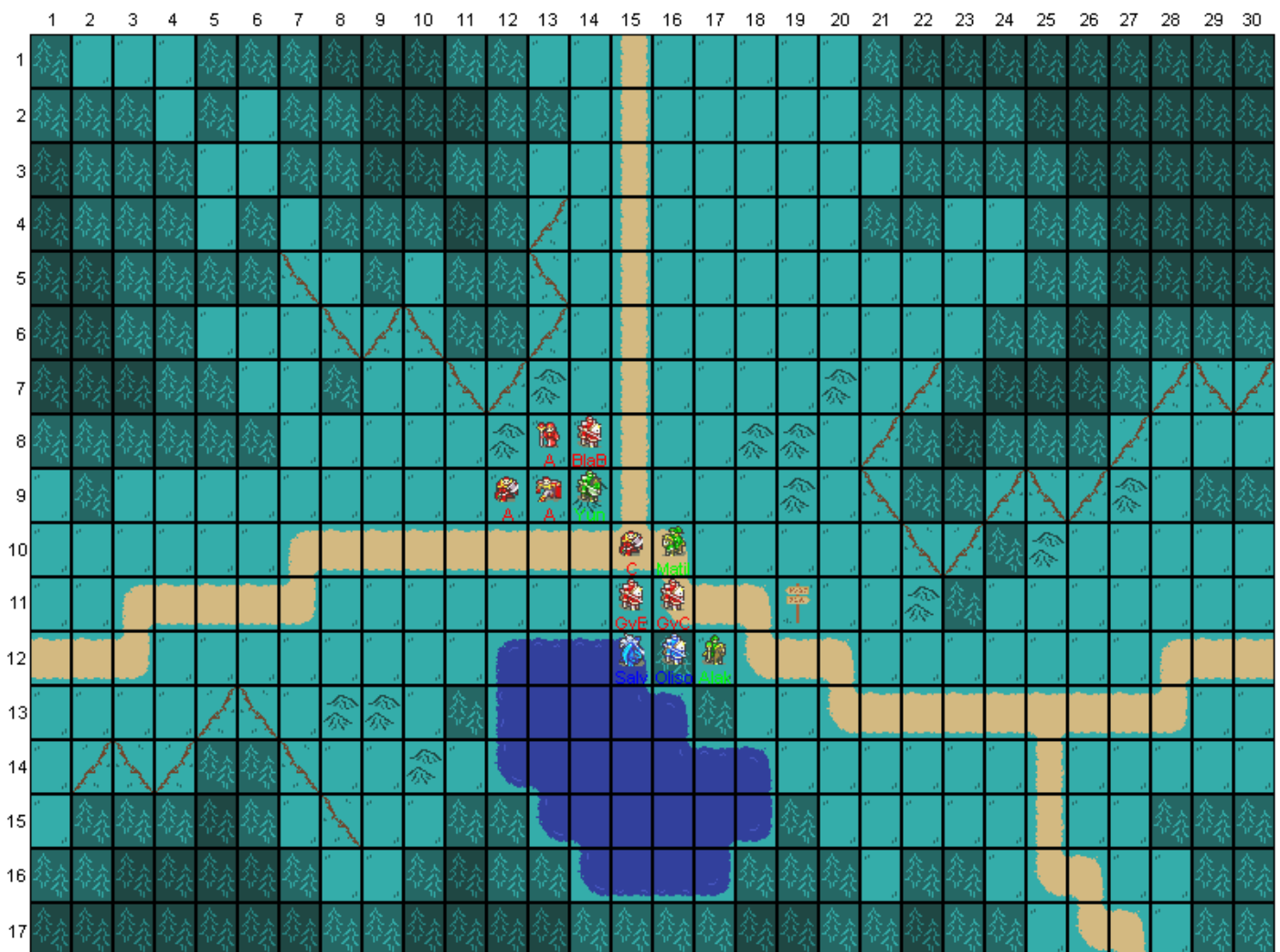
#### Alakrin vs Glaive Paladin C

Hit:  $107-15-52 = 40$

Hit roll: 34, hit!

Damage:  $19-17 = 2\text{dmg}$

# ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	Allies:
Olison Eul: 41/41 Salvatore Vaughan: 16/45	Elite Swordman A: 19/42 Elite Axeman A: 45/45 Elite Axeman C: 25/45 Glaive Paladin C: 36/38 Glaive Paladin E: 38/38 Blade Paladin B: 37/37 Bishop A: 35/35	Alakrin Yung: 28/28 Matilda: 37/37 Vordrakon Yung: 25/59

Salvatore face tightened into a snarl as he gripped an axe that got wedged in his armor, yanking it out and tossing it into the pond below.



"Tha' the best yah got? Yah'll 'ave ta try 'arder ta down me than tha'."

Sal swapped to his Brave Axe and axed Glaive Paladin E a pertinent question! Then he moved to 16,13 on his canto.



"Oy, Oi got ah bit scuffed, think one 'o yah could do ah quick patchjob real

**quick?"** Asked the two riders Matilda and Alakrin. He wasn't sure if Alakrin could, but never hurts to ask.

#### Salvatore vs Glaive Paladin E

Hit:  $102+15+5+15+10-52 = 95$

Hit roll: 57, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-17 = 21\text{dmg}$

Salvatore strikes again!

Hit:  $102+15+5+15+10-52 = 95$

Hit roll: 94, hit!

Damage:  $37+1-17 = 21\text{dmg}$

Olison wastes no time in following up, drawing his sword and engaging the Axeman.

**Olison to 15,11. Killing Edge the Axeman, then canto back to 16,12.**

#### Olison vs Axeman C

Hit:  $118+15+10+5-42 = 106$ , autohit! Crit roll: 20!

Damage:  $32+1-15 = 18 \times 3 = 54\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The horsemen went after Matilda and Alakrin, whilst the others continued grinding down Lord Yung!

#### Glaive Paladin C vs Matilda

Hit:  $111-5-68 = 38$

Hit roll: 8, hit!

Damage:  $53-13 = 40\text{dmg}$

#### Blade Paladin B vs Alakrin

Hit:  $109-53 = 56$

Hit roll: 43, hit!

Damage:  $31-8 = 23\text{dmg}$

Alakrin retaliates!

Hit:  $107-52 = 55$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $19-16 = 3\text{dmg}$

Blade Paladin B attacks again!

Hit:  $109-53 = 56$

Hit roll: 91, miss!

#### Bishop A vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $137-5-30-37 = 65$

Hit roll: 43, hit!

Damage:  $30-20 = 10\text{dmg}$

#### Elite Axeman A vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $108-5-30-37 = 36$

Hit roll: 92, miss!

#### Elite Swordsman A vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $132-5-30-37 = 60$

Hit roll: 17, hit!

Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

Lord Yung retaliates!

Hit:  $113+5-15-43 = 60$

Hit roll: 51, hit!

Damage:  $41-1-17 = 23\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Yung looked around for enemies and then went down from the hill, smashing his flail against the face of nearby paladin,

### Lord Yung vs Glaive Paladin C

Hit:  $113+15+5-52 = 81$

Hit roll: 60, hit!

Damage:  $41+1-17 = 25\text{dmg}$

Glaive Paladin C counters!

Hit:  $111-15-5-37 = 54$

Hit roll: 90, miss!

Glaive Paladin C counters again!

Hit:  $111-15-5-37 = 54$

Hit roll: 62, miss!

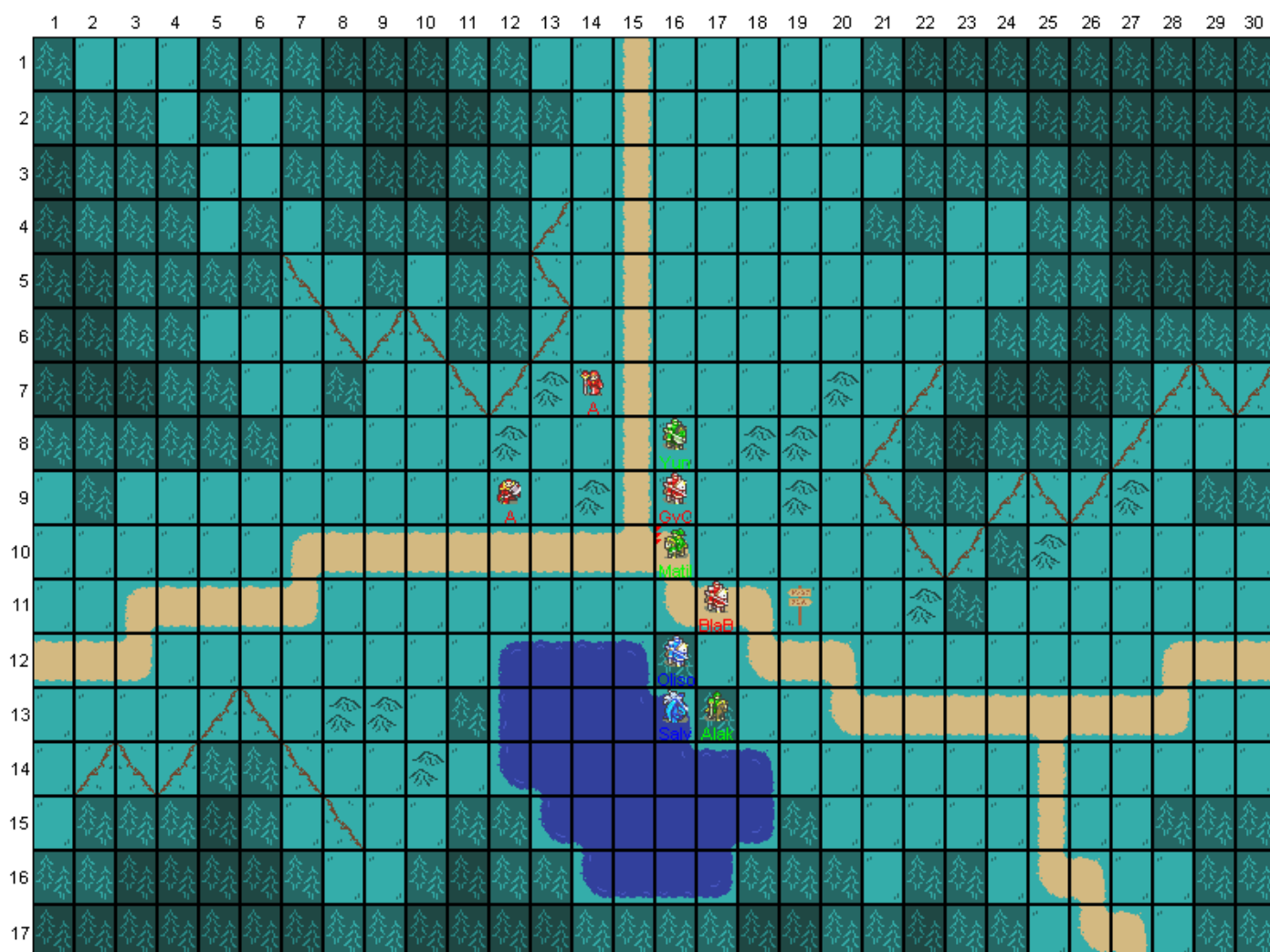
Suddenly a staff peeked from behind the thicket and healed Salvatore's wounds.

### Alakrin mends Salvatore

$20+15 =$  Up to 35HP healed

# ~~Player Turn 5~~

Far to the north, there's a big group of people incoming!



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	Allies:
Olison Eul: 41/41 Salvatore Vaughan: 45/45	Elite Axeman A: 45/45 Glaive Paladin C: 11/38 Blade Paladin B: 37/37 Bishop A: 35/35	Alakrin Yung: 8/28 Matilda: -/37 <b>3/3</b> Vordrakon Yung: 11/59



"Olison, 'elp Matilda, Oi'll get the fink fer tha'. Kid, thanks fer the 'ealin', but stay safe. We'll get yah an' yer father outta 'is."

Sal charged to (17,9) and smacks up the Glaive Paladin with his brave axe before cantoning to 18,10 and swapping to his Heavy Spear if possible.



**"Matilda!"** Olison rushed forward towards the mage knight and quickly applied some healing powder to her wounds.

Olison to 16,11, Vulnerary Matilda. Then canto to 17,9 and ensure Spear is equipped.



"Sir!" Olison shouted to the armored cavalier ahead, just now noticing the large group on the horizon. "There's a large force heading here from the north!"



"I see them! Heal me up so I can be ready to take them, too!"

#### Olison uses Vulnerary on Matilda

Up to 5HP healed

#### Salvatore vs Glaive Paladin C

Hit:  $102+15+15+10+5-52 = 95$

Hit roll: 73, hit! Crit roll: 11!

Damage:  $37+1-17 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The enemies continued their assault relentlessly... but didn't do it well.

#### Blade Paladin B vs Matilda

Hit:  $109-5-68 = 36$

Hit roll: 93, miss!

Matilda counters!

Hit:  $135+5-52 = 88$

Hit roll: 87, hit!

Damage:  $31-14 = 17\text{dmg}$

#### Bishop A vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $137-5-37 = 95$

Hit roll: 68, hit!

Damage:  $30-20 = 10\text{dmg}$

#### Axeman A vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $108-5-37 = 66$

Hit roll: 84, miss!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

Alakrin burst from the forest, trying to reach his father, but Matilda waved at him.



"Huh?"





"I saw your healing power; heal me instead and I will heal your father, I will do better work." Alakrin blushed at the comparison, but then tapped Matilda with his staff.

**Alakrin mends Matilda**

20+15 = Up to 35HP healed



"Thanks!" Matilda then rode to Lord Yung and healed him greatly.

**Matilda mends Lord Yung**

20+22 = Up to 44HP restored

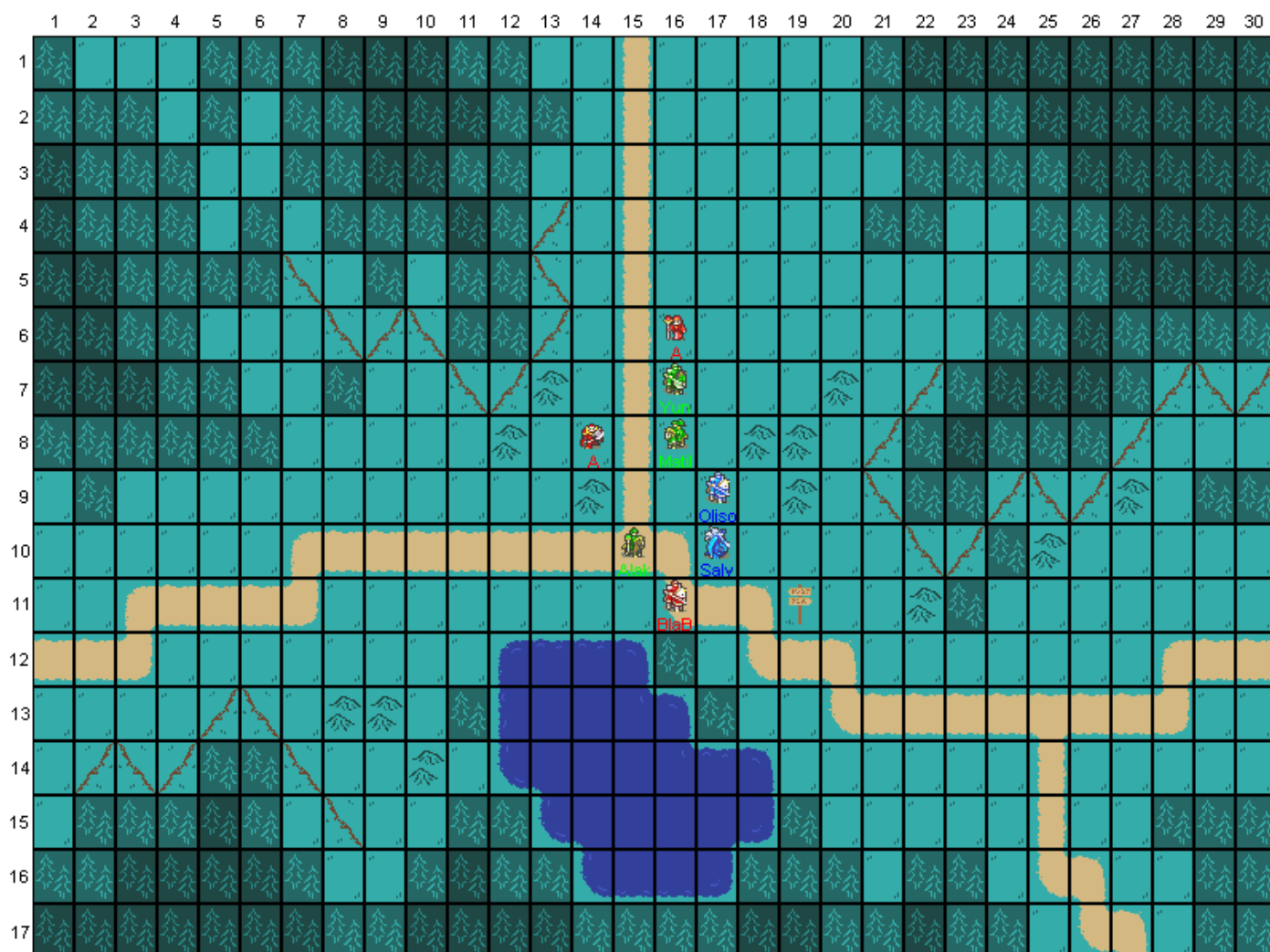


"Thank you, miss. Now, you! With the robes, how dare you call yourself a priest, you mugger!" Lord Yung then smashed the bishop's body a little bit, shrugging off the retaliatory blast of magics.

**Lord Yung vs Bishop A**

Hit:  $113+5-51 = 67$   
Hit roll: 23, hit!  
Damage:  $41-13 = 28\text{dmg}$   
  
Bishop A counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $137-5-37 = 95$   
Hit roll: 6, hit!  
Damage:  $30-20 = 10\text{dmg}$

The group in the north drew their weapons seeing the battle still raging; they will be here in a moment!



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	Allies:
Olson Eul: 41/41 Salvatore Vaughan: 45/45	Elite Axeman A: 45/45 Blade Paladin B: 20/37 Bishop A: 7/35	Alakrin Yung: 8/28 Matilda: 37/37 Vordrakon Yung: 35/59



"Hnyah!" Olson lobbed another spear at full charge towards the Bishop. As he rode around into his retreat, he took notice of the armored cavalier's decor, looking about for any sort of sigil to identify him with...

**Olson to 17,7, Spear the Bishop. Then canto to 18,8.**

Salvatore wrenched the axe out of the Glaive Paladin, grimacing. Why do they always have to fight? But there's no time, not yet. Later, when all this is said and done, they will receive their rites.

**Salvatore flies over to 15,8 and axe duels the axeman! Afterwards he'll move to 16,10 and give the Blade Paladin a nasty glare.**



"Oi suggest yah drop yer weapon an' jus' run. Yah ain' winnin' this foight, an' neither are those comin'."

Spearin' and axin'!

**Olison vs Bishop A**

Hit:  $113+5-51 = 67$   
Hit roll: 79, miss!

Bishop A retaliates!  
Hit:  $137-5-59 = 73$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Olison strikes again!  
Hit:  $113+5-51 = 67$   
Hit roll: 61, hit!  
Damage:  $35-13 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Salvatore vs Elite Axeman A**

Hit:  $102+15+10+5-42 = 90$   
Hit roll: 53, hit! Crit roll: 1!  
Damage:  $37+2-15 = 24 \times 3 = 72\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

"Never I shall surrender!" The paladin exclaimed and attacked Salvatore who was still wielding an ax, but that didn't help.

**Blade Paladin B vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $109+15-5-10-26 = 83$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $31+1-28 = 4\text{dmg}$

Salvatore counters!  
Hit:  $102+15+10+5-15-52 = 65$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

Salvatore counters again!  
Hit:  $102+15+10+5-15-52 = 65$   
Hit roll: 37, hit!  
Damage:  $37-1-16 = 20\text{dmg}$

"I see I should've attacked with full forces from the beginning, you seem to be rather strong." A general spoke, surrounded by horde of soldiers, mounted or footed!



"Or maybe its just your dumb luck!"



"Uncle Bernard!"



"Bernard! So this is all Rasmussen's plot, isn't it!"



"Who else would have anything against someone worthless like you? Your son have raped his only daughter, and you lawlessly took domain over Felwerk and Yacinth counties the moment they became vacant! You think someone vile like you can live and-"



"Lies and slander! My son is chaste man of the cloth! If Rasmussen's daughter suddenly has a kid to look after, maybe she should stop whoring with his own soldiers!"



"That's-"



"Not to mention that of course I wasn't going to let the Felwerk and Yacinth people suffer from your so-called tax collector who seemingly prefer to beat peasants before and after squeezing the last of coin from them!"



"Ho-"



"And for your information Alakrin and I are returning from the Grand Courthouse in Ugral; and I have the document that legally puts both territories under control of mine and my heirs--!"



"ENOUGH! Damn you and your blabbering! Soldiers, five hundred gold for the one who brings me the head of Lord Yung! I do not care how, just do it!"



"Do try! And I will pile up your soldiers into a mountain of Rasmussen's failure and death! I will show you that younger doesn't mean weaker!"

~~Ally Phase~~

Yung moved between uneven terrain, while Alakrin healed his father. Matilda moved closer to them and healed the young troubadour.



"I'm grateful for your help, strangers, but this is family affair and I think you should be going. I can take them all."

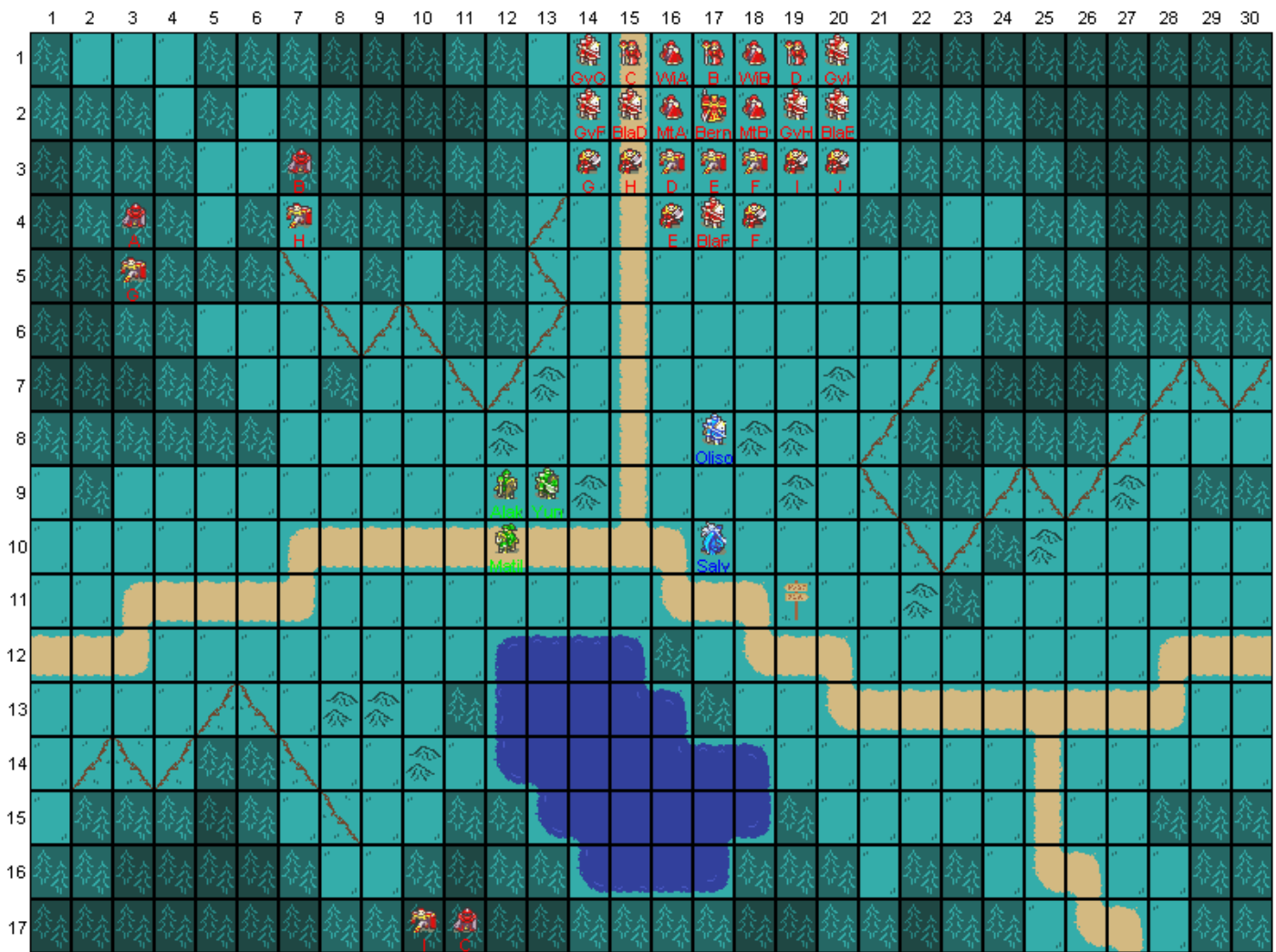
**Alakrin mends Lord Yung**

20+15 = Up to 35HP restored

**Matilda mends Alakrin**

20+22 = Up to 44HP healed

There's another group of riders coming from the west! It's smaller than the northern group and seems to have cloth and armor of different coloration.



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Olison Eul: 41/41 Salvatore Vaughan: 41/45	Elite Swordsman D: 42/42 Elite Swordsman E: 42/42 Elite Swordsman F: 42/42 Elite Swordsman G: 42/42 Elite Swordsman H: 42/42 Elite Swordsman I: 42/42 Elite Axeman E: 45/45 Elite Axeman F: 45/45 Elite Axeman G: 45/45 Elite Axeman H: 45/45 Elite Axeman I: 45/45 Elite Axeman J: 45/45 Glaive Paladin F: 38/38 Glaive Paladin G: 38/38 Glaive Paladin H: 38/38	Glaive Paladin I: 38/38 Blade Paladin D: 37/37 Blade Paladin E: 37/37 Blade Paladin F: 37/37 Bishop B: 35/35 Bishop C: 35/35 Bishop D: 35/35 Meteorologist A: 38/38 Meteorologist B: 38/38 Wind Sage A: 37/37 Wind Sage B: 37/37 Druid A: 35/35 Druid B: 35/35 Druid C: 35/35 Bernard Yung-Hanach: 49/49
Allies:		
Alakrin Yung: 28/28 Matilda: 37/37 Vordrakon Yung: 59/59		

Olison took one more look at the armored cavalier after the exchange.



"I see... Vordrakon Yung. You look different than I expected." Olison mused

as he closed his eyes. "I suppose I'm glad that it's you who is taking Ferwelk lands as opposed to... More unsavory characters." The cavalier shook his head, remembering his corrupt knight superior from long ago.

Looking up, Olison scowled at the sheer numbers in front of them.



"If I may at least offer some advice, there are far too many this time. For any of us. A tactical retreat would be for the best."



"Excuse me as I do not recognize you, sir. But you're right in your advice." The senior Yung turned to his son.



"Alakrin, you and those people will flee toward our holdings. I will join after I deal with this thugs." Alakrin looked at his father, too pale and scared to agree or disagree with the order.



"What..." Olison grit his teeth as he ushered his mount atop the hills. "All due respect, Lord Yung. Do you have a death wish?!"

**Olison to 14,9. Ensure Killing Edge is equipped.**



"These forces are far better armed than the last, and with a fair number of magicians as well, if my eyesight does not betray. If you will not retreat, you will need our help."



"Olison be roight, Lord Yung. There be ta many, yer strong an' yer foightin' the roight foight, but even yah can' take 'em all on by yerself. Yah can' fall 'ere, Lord Yung, if'in yah do yah'll leave yer kid behind. Yah don' want ta do tha', yah know what 'ey'll do if'in tha' comes ta be." The wyvern knight tried to talk sense into the lord. **taking roost at 11,9.**



*Dragon, if'in yah can hear me, 'fraid we may need yer 'elp down 'ere. May yer loight guide us ta the path tha' we must tread 'n our trial o' adversity...* From his perch in the sky and so far west, he caught sight of the band of riders heading their way at the end of his prayer. **"Oy, more comin' from the west. Differen' colorin'; all horse'd."** He reported back to the others.

~~Enemy Phase~~

Fireballs blasted the ground around Olson.

**Meteorologist A vs Olson**

Hit:  $130-30-10-59 = 31$   
Hit roll: 66, miss!

**Meteorologist B vs Olson**

Hit:  $130-30-10-59 = 31$   
Hit roll: 38, miss!

Then poisonous mist engulfed Olson.

**Wind Sage B vs Olson**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-9\} \times 5]+24)-(12 \times 2) = 30+80+24-24 = 110$ , autohit!  
Olson is poisoned!

**Wind Sage A vs Lord Yung**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-20\} \times 5]+24)-(11 \times 2) = 30+25+24-22 = 57$   
Hit roll: 60, miss!

And then the ~~Fire Nation~~ bloodthirsty soldiers attacked.

**Glaive Paladin F vs Olson**

Hit:  $111+15-30-5-10-59 = 22$   
Hit roll: 65, miss!

Olson retaliates!  
Hit:  $118+5+10-15-52 = 66$   
Hit roll: 28, hit! Crit roll: 16!  
Damage:  $32-1-17 = 14 \times 3 = 42\text{dmg}$

**Glaive Paladin G vs Olson**

Hit:  $111+15-30-5-10-59 = 22$   
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage:  $27+1-18 = 10\text{dmg}$

Olson counterattacks!  
Hit:  $118+5+10-15-52 = 66$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $32-1-17 = 14\text{dmg}$

**Blade Paladin D vs Olson**

Hit:  $109-30-5-10-59 = 5$  //omg  
Hit roll: 78, miss!

Olson retaliates!  
Hit:  $118+5+10-52 = 81$   
Hit roll: 73, hit! Crit roll: 30!  
Damage:  $32-16 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$



#### Quote from: Blade Paladin F vs Olson

Hit:  $109 - 30 - 5 - 10 - 59 = 5$

Hit roll: 4, hit! //omg x2

Damage:  $31 - 18 = 13\text{dmg}$

Olison counters!

Hit:  $118 + 5 + 10 - 52 = 81$

Hit roll: 54, hit! Crit roll: 30! //honestly the crit roll is the same as Oli's previous

Damage:  $32 - 16 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

The axemen moved closer but didn't even try their chances against Olson on the hill.

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Listen, young man, I didn't survive fifty-two years by running away from battlefield! And I won't- \*CLONK\*"

#### Lord Yung vs Glaive Paladin G

Hit:  $113 + 15 + 5 - 52 = 81$

Hit roll: 23, hit!

Damage:  $41 + 1 - 17 = 25\text{dmg}$



"And I won't be running away now!" He said, while Matilda brought her horse to Olson's side and healed him.

#### Matilda mends Olson

$20 + 22 =$  Up to 44HP restored

Meanwhile Alakrin heard the galloping horses and looked west.



"Teal cloaks, father! There are our soldiers!"



"Go, tell them what has transcribed here! Be brief and fast!" Alakrin rode west to meet with the cavaliers.



"Erytrea!"



"Alakrin! I mean, sir Yung! Your mother have dispatched us to check if you're on way back and-"



"Later; my father is under attack by uncle's soldiers, there's some people that are helping, but still-"

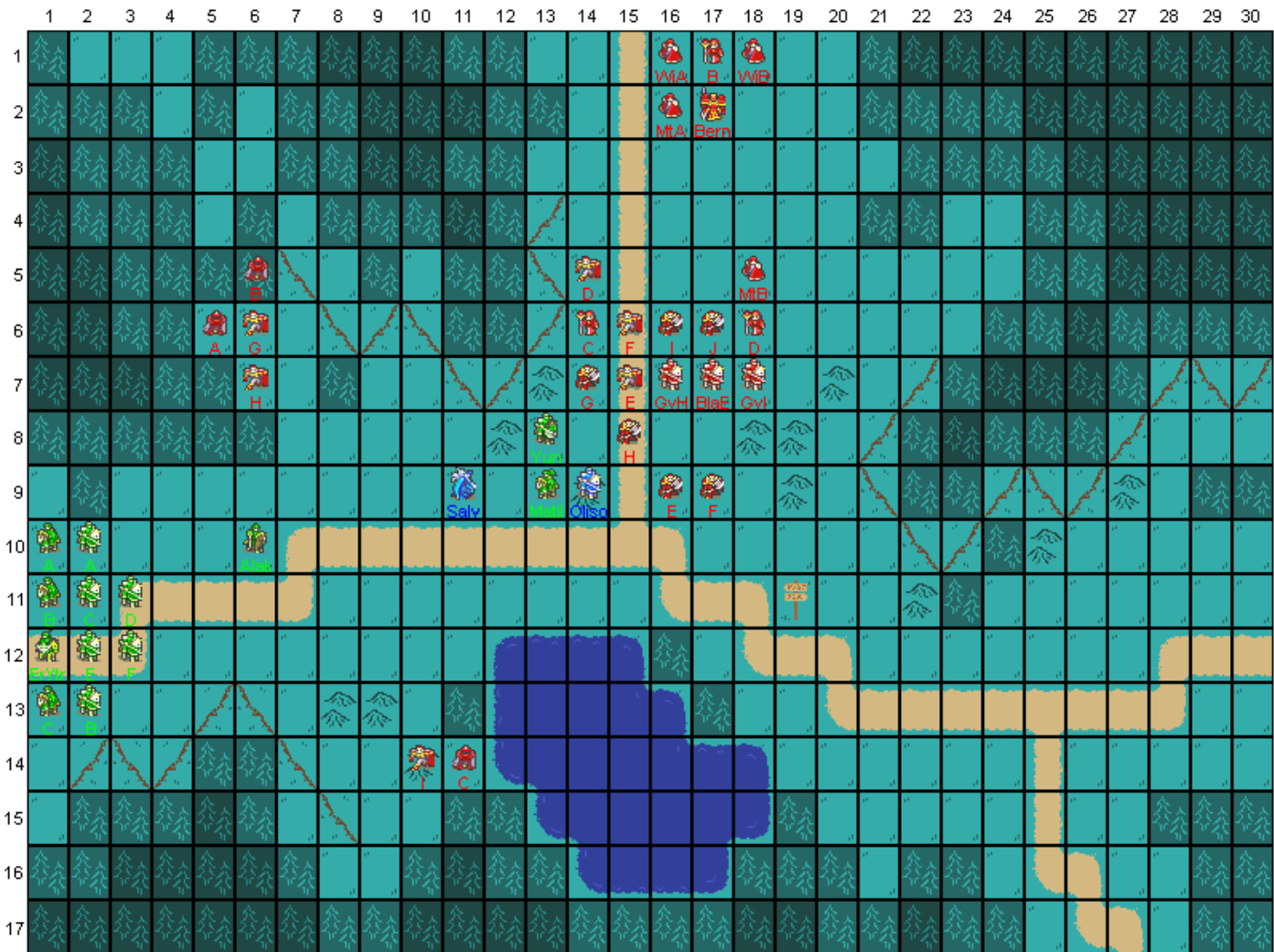


"You heard him, people! Prepare to fight!" A united 'yes sir!' came from the horsemen as their prepared their lances and spelltomes.

~~Player Turn 8~~

Poison rolls

Olison: 4



Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Olison Eul: 37/41 Poison (4/5)		Elite Swordsman D: 42/42	Glaive Paladin H: 38/38

Salvatore Vaughan: 41/45	Elite Swordsman E: 42/42	Blade Paladin E: 37/37
<b>Allies:</b>	Elite Swordsman F: 42/42	Bishop B: 35/35
	Elite Swordsman G: 42/42	Bishop C: 35/35
	Elite Swordsman H: 42/42	Bishop D: 35/35
Alakrin Yung: 28/28	Elite Swordsman I: 42/42	Meteorologist A: 38/38
Erytrea: 35/35	Elite Axeman E: 45/45	Meteorologist B: 38/38
Matilda: 37/37	Elite Axeman F: 45/45	Wind Sage A: 37/37
Vordrakon Yung: 59/59	Elite Axeman G: 45/45	Wind Sage B: 37/37
Paladin A: 38/38	Elite Axeman H: 45/45	Druid A: 35/35
Paladin B: 38/38	Elite Axeman I: 45/45	Druid B: 35/35
Paladin C: 38/38	Elite Axeman J: 45/45	Druid C: 35/35
Paladin D: 38/38	Glaive Paladin F: 38/38	Bernard Yung-Hanach: 49/49
Paladin E: 38/38		
Paladin F: 38/38		
Mage Knight A: 38/38		
Mage Knight B: 38/38		
Mage Knight C: 38/38		



"Oy, kid, look out! Some ta the north an' south o' yah!" Sal called out after the kid as he moved into assault the masses, seeing if the noble won't leave then he guesses they're stuck in for the short of it.

**Salvatore moves to (14,8) and tries to persuade the axeman to relAXE a bit, before moving two south and swapping to his javelin, eying the various enemies.**



"Stand down if you want to live!" Olison yelled out, bitterly knowing full well that they wouldn't.

**If Sal's target dies, to 14,7 and Killing Edge the Bishop. If not, to 14,8 and Killing Edge Axeman H. After either case, canto back to 14,9.**

Numerous murderings were had.

#### Salvatore vs Axeman G

Hit:  $102+15+5+10-42 = 92$

Hit roll: 66, hit! Crit roll: 9!

Damage:  $37+2-15 = 24 \times 3 = 72\text{dmg}$

#### Olison vs Bishop C

Hit:  $118+10+5-51 = 82$

Hit roll: 72, hit! Crit roll: 3!

Damage:  $32-13 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The enemies quickly swarmed as best as they could, with magic as backup.

**Axeman E vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $108+15-10-5-26 = 82$

Hit roll: 5, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

Salvatore retaliates!

Hit:  $107+10+15+5-15-42 = 80$

Hit roll: 64, hit!

Damage:  $36+2-1-15 = 22\text{dmg}$

Axeman E attacks again!

Hit:  $108+15-10-5-26 = 82$

Hit roll: 62, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

**Axeman F vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $108+15-10-26 = 87$

Hit roll: 32, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

Salvatore counters!

Hit:  $107+10+15-15-42 = 75$

Hit roll: 100, miss!

Axeman F strikes once more!

Hit:  $108+15-10-26 = 87$

Hit roll: 12, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

**Axeman H vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $108+15-10-26 = 87$

Hit roll: 24, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

Salvatore retaliates!

Hit:  $107+10+15-15-42 = 75$

Hit roll: 59, hit! Crit roll: 10!

Damage:  $36+2-1-15 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$

**Axeman I vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $108+15-10-26 = 87$

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

**Meteorologist A vs Olson**

Hit:  $130-30-59 = 41$

Hit roll: 84, miss!

**Meteorologist B vs Olson**

Hit:  $130-30-59 = 41$

Hit roll: 66, miss!

**Wind Sage A casts Poison on Lord Yung**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-20\} \times 5]+25)-(10 \times 2) = 30+25+25-20 = 60$

Hit roll: 73, miss!

**Wind Sage B casts Poison on Lord Yung**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-20\} \times 5]+25)-(12 \times 2) = 30+25+25-24 = 56$

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Lord Yung is poisoned!

**Swordsman D vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $132+15-5-37 = 105$ , autohit!

Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

Lord Yung counterattacks!

Hit:  $113+5-15-30-43 = 30$

Hit roll: 16, hit!  
Damage:  $41-1-17 = 23\text{dmg}$

Swordsman D attacks again!  
Hit:  $132+15-5-37 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

#### **Swordsman F vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $132+15-5-37 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

Lord Yung retaliates!  
Hit:  $113+5-15-43 = 60$   
Hit roll: 77, miss!

Swordsman F strikes again!  
Hit:  $132+15-5-37 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

#### **Axeman J vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $108-5-37 = 66$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

#### **Bishop D vs Olison**

Hit:  $137-30-59 = 48$   
Hit roll: 7, hit!  
Damage:  $30-9 = 21\text{dmg}$

#### **Swordsman E vs Olison**

Hit:  $132-30-5-59 = 38$   
Hit roll: 55, miss!

Olison retaliates!  
Hit:  $118+5-43 = 80$   
Hit roll: 75, hit! Crit roll: 5!  
Damage:  $32-17 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$

#### **Glaive Paladin H vs Olison**

Hit:  $111+15-5-30-59 = 42$   
Hit roll: 90, miss!

Olison retaliates!  
Hit:  $118+5-15-52 = 56$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $32-1-17 = 14\text{dmg}$

#### **Blade Paladin E vs Matilda**

Hit:  $109-5-68 = 36$   
Hit roll: 63, miss!

Matilda counters!  
Hit:  $135+5-52 = 88$   
Hit roll: 45, hit!  
Damage:  $31-14 = 17\text{dmg}$

Then, the swordmen backed by dark mages emerged from the forest, harassing both Matilda and Alakrin.

#### **Druid C vs Matilda**

Hit:  $121+15-5-68 = 63$   
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage:  $39+1-19 = 21\text{dmg}$

Matilda retaliates!  
Hit:  $135+5-15-36 = 89$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Damage:  $31-1-18 = 12\text{dmg}$

Matilda counters again!  
Hit:  $135+5-15-36 = 89$   
Hit roll: 57, hit!  
Damage:  $31-1-18 = 12\text{dmg}$

#### Swordsman H vs Alakrin

Hit:  $132-53 = 79$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!

Alakrin counters!  
Hit:  $107-43 = 64$   
Hit roll: 52, hit!  
Damage:  $19-17 = 2\text{dmg}$

#### Swordsman G vs Alakrin

Hit:  $132-53 = 79$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage:  $32-8 = 24\text{dmg}$

Alakrin counters!  
Hit:  $115-43 = 72$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Damage:  $19-17 = 2\text{dmg}$   
Alakrin recovers 2HP!

#### Druid A vs Alakrin

Hit:  $121-69 = 53$   
Hit roll: 65, miss!

Alakrin retaliates!  
Hit:  $115-20-36 = 59$   
Hit roll: 51, hit!  
Damage:  $19-12 = 7\text{dmg}$   
Alakrin recovers 7HP!

Alakrin retaliates!  
Hit:  $115-20-36 = 59$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $19-12 = 7\text{dmg}$   
Alakrin recovers 7HP!

#### Druid B vs Alakrin

Hit:  $121-69 = 53$   
Hit roll: 96, miss!

Alakrin retaliates!  
Hit:  $115-36 = 79$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $19-12 = 7\text{dmg}$   
Alakrin recovers 7HP!

Alakrin retaliates!  
Hit:  $115-36 = 79$   
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage:  $19-12 = 7\text{dmg}$   
Alakrin recovers 7HP!

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"Chaaarge!" And the horsemen charged, blasting and stabbing all those who endangered the son of their lord and master. As bodies fell right and left, Alakrin found a moment to heal one of wounded paladins before Erytrea herself turned the last enemy in vicinity into pincushion.

**Mage Knight A vs Swordsman H**

Hit:  $127-43 = 84$   
Hit roll: 81, hit!  
Damage:  $34-12 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Erytrea's Paladin C vs Swordsman H**

Hit:  $111+15-43 = 83$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $27+1-17 = 11\text{dmg}$

Swordsman H retaliates!  
Hit:  $132-15-52 = 65$   
Hit roll: 84, miss!

Erytrea's Paladin C attacks again!  
Hit:  $111+15-43 = 83$   
Hit roll: 12, hit!  
Damage:  $27+1-17 = 11\text{dmg}$

**Mage Knight B vs Swordsman G**

Hit:  $127-43 = 84$   
Hit roll: 32, hit!  
Damage:  $34-12 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Erytrea's Paladin B vs Swordsman G**

Hit:  $111+15-43 = 83$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $27+1-17 = 11\text{dmg}$

Swordsman G retaliates!  
Hit:  $132-15-52 = 65$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

Erytrea's Paladin B attacks again!  
Hit:  $111+15-43 = 83$   
Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $27+1-17 = 11\text{dmg}$

**Erytrea's Paladin F vs Druid B**

Hit:  $111-36 = 75$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $27-12 = 15\text{dmg}$

Druid B counters!  
Hit:  $121-52 = 69$   
Hit roll: 44, hit!  
Damage:  $39-14 = 25\text{dmg}$

Erytrea's Paladin F attacks once more!  
Hit:  $111-36 = 75$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Damage:  $27-12 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Erytrea's Paladin E vs Druid B**

Hit:  $111-36 = 75$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $27-12 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Alakrin heals Erytrea's Paladin F**

$10+15 = \text{Up to } 25\text{HP healed}$

**Erytrea vs Druid A**

Hit:  $141-20-36 = 85$   
Hit roll: 40, hit!  
Damage:  $28-12 = 16\text{dmg}$

Adept roll: 26!  
Erytrea attacks again!

Hit:  $141-20-36 = 85$

Hit roll: 93, miss!

Druid A counters!

Hit:  $121-53 = 68$

Hit roll: 78, miss!

Erytrea attacks once more!

Hit:  $141-20-36 = 85$

Hit roll: 76, hit!

Damage:  $28-12 = 16\text{dmg}$

Adept roll: 4!

Erytrea strikes again!

Hit:  $141-20-36 = 85$

Hit roll: 55, hit!

Damage:  $28-12 = 16\text{dmg}$

Then Matilda healed Salvatore while Lord Yung casually crushed the skull of nearby dark mage.

#### **Matilda mends Salvatore**

$20+22 / 2 = \text{Up to } 21\text{HP restored}$

#### **Lord Yung vs Druid C**

Hit:  $113+5-36 = 82$

Hit roll: 80, hit!

Damage:  $41-12 = 29\text{dmg}$

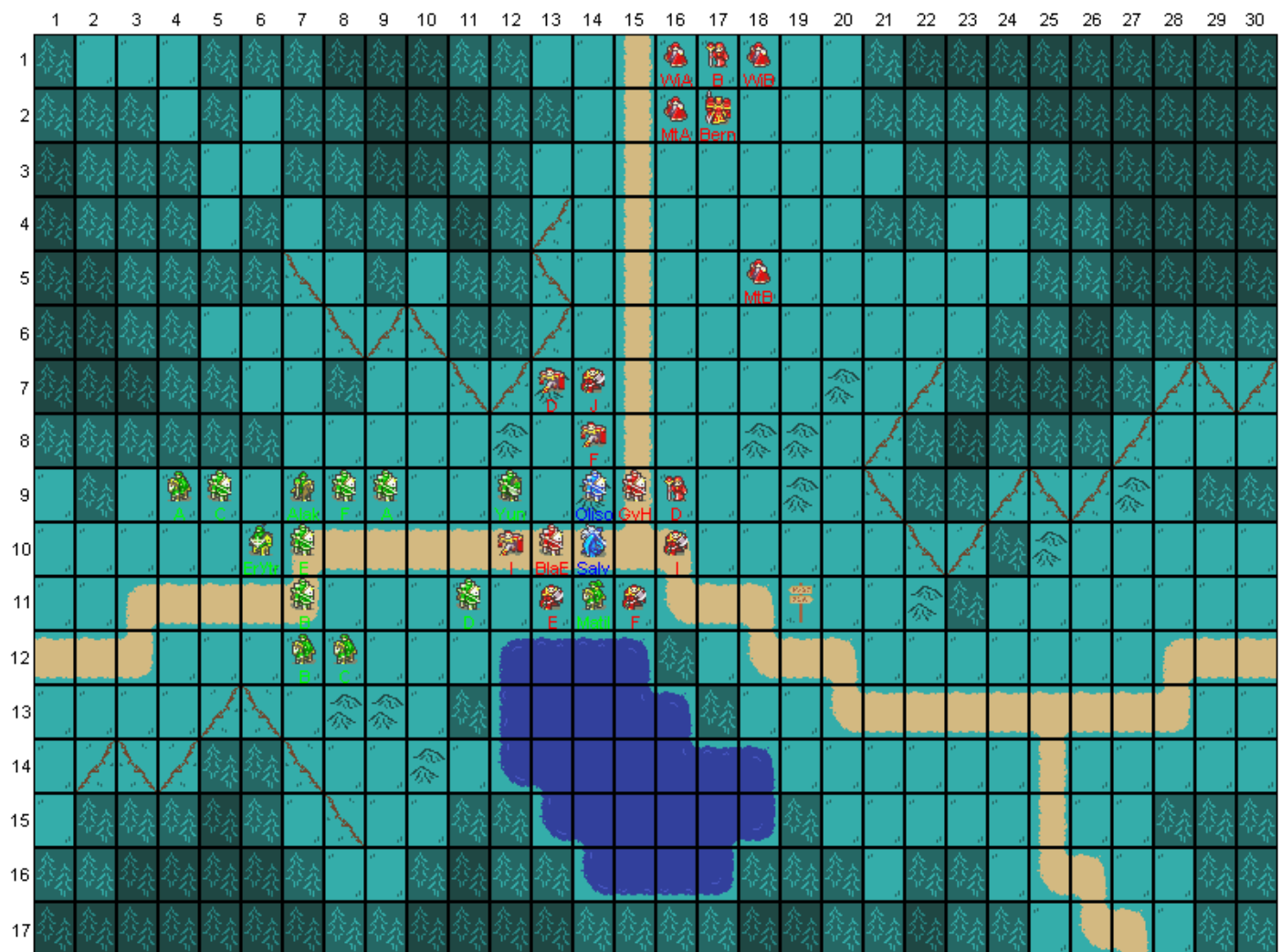


# ~~Player Turn 9~~

## Poison rolls

Olison: 2

Lord Yung: 3



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	Allies:
Olison Eul: 14/41 <b>Poison (3/5)</b> Salvatore Vaughan: 21/45	Elite Swordsman D: 19/42 Elite Swordsman F: 42/42 Elite Swordsman I: 42/42 Elite Axeman E: 23/45 Elite Axeman F: 45/45 Elite Axeman J: 45/45 Glaive Paladin H: 24/38 Blade Paladin E: 20/37 Bishop B: 35/35 Bishop D: 35/35 Meteorologist A: 38/38 Meteorologist B: 38/38 Wind Sage A: 37/37 Wind Sage B: 37/37 Bernard Yung-Hanach: 49/49	Alakrin Yung: 28/28 Erytree: 35/35 Matilda: 16/37 Vordrakon Yung: 40/59 <b>Poison (4/5)</b> Paladin A: 38/38 Paladin B: 38/38 Paladin C: 38/38 Paladin D: 38/38 Paladin E: 38/38 Paladin F: 38/38 Mage Knight A: 38/38 Mage Knight B: 38/38 Mage Knight C: 38/38

Amid the flurry of steel, Olison did his best to remain calm. Dodging and weaving between slashes and thrown axes, a single blast of light managed to seep through to him, singing his armor. The Paladin glared daggers at the offending Bishop, but quickly opted to take a tactical retreat.



"Fall back!"

**Olison to 12,8. Vuln self.**

Salvatore didn't even bother attempting to take the axes embedded in his armor out as he rose into activity again, knowing more would simply take their place.

**Salvatore would rescue Matilda and move to (11,10), then depositing Matilda to the west of him at (10,10). He makes sure his heavy jav is equipped.**

**Olison uses Vulnerary**

Up to 10HP healed

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Choppin' and axin' and tearin' and blastin' and yellin'. This be the sounds of battle.

**Elite Axeman E vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $108+15-10-5-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 86, miss!

Salvatore retaliates!  
Hit:  $107+10+15+5-15-42 = 80$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Damage:  $36+2-1-15 = 22\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $108+15-10-5-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 54, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

**Elite Axeman F vs Erytrea's Paladin D**

Hit:  $108+15-5-52 = 66$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-17 = 18\text{dmg}$

**Blade Paladin E vs Olison**

Hit:  $109-30-10-5-59 = 5$   
Hit roll: 87, miss!

Olison retaliates!  
Hit:  $118+10+5-52 = 81$   
Hit roll: 68, hit!  
Damage:  $32-16 = 16\text{dmg}$

**Elite Swordsman I vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $132+15-5-37 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

Lord Yung counters!  
Hit:  $113+5-15-43 = 60$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Damage:  $41-1-17 = 23\text{dmg}$

Elite Swordsman I attacks once more!  
Hit:  $132+15-5-37 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32+1-29 = 4\text{dmg}$

**Glaive Paladin H vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $111-5-10-26 = 70$

Hit roll: 39, hit!  
Damage:  $27-28 = 0!$

Salvatore retaliates!  
Hit:  $107+10+5+15-52 = 85$   
Hit roll: 56, hit! Crit roll: 15!  
Damage:  $36+2-17 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

**Elite Axeman J vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $108+15-10-5-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 31, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

Salvatore counters!  
Hit:  $107+10+5-15-42 = 65$   
Hit roll: 77, miss!

Elite Axeman J attacks again!  
Hit:  $108+15-10-5-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

**Elite Axeman I vs Salvatore**

Hit:  $108+15-10-5-26 = 82$   
Hit roll: 22, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-28 = 7\text{dmg}$

**Bishop D vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $137-5-37 = 95$   
Hit roll: 45, hit!  
Damage:  $30-20 = 10\text{dmg}$

Carnage of course had to be topped with long-range magical shenanigans.

**Meteorologist A vs Olison**

Hit:  $130-30-10-59 = 31$   
Hit roll: 74, miss!

**Meteorologist B vs Lord Yung**

Hit:  $130-37 = 93$   
Hit roll: 36, hit!  
Damage:  $35-20 = 15\text{dmg}$

**Wind Sage A casts Poison on Erytrea's Paladin A**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-14\} \times 5]+24)-(11 \times 2) = 30+55+24-22 = 87$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Erytrea's Paladin A is Poisoned!

**Wind Sage B casts Poison on Erytrea's Paladin D**

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-14\} \times 5]+24)-(12 \times 2) = 30+55+24-24 = 85$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Erytrea's Paladin D is Poisoned!

**Bishop B physics Blade Paladin E**

$10+22 =$  Up to 32HP restored

**~~Ally Phase~~**

The battle went louder.

**Erytrea's Paladin D vs Elite Axeman E**

Hit:  $111+5-15-42 = 64$   
Hit roll: 16, hit!  
Damage:  $27-1-15 = 11\text{dmg}$

**Mage Knight C vs Elite Axeman F**

Hit:  $127+5-42 = 90$   
Hit roll: 55, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $34-9 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

**Mage Knight A vs Elite Swordsman I**

Hit:  $127+5-43 = 89$   
Hit roll: 28, hit!  
Damage:  $34-12 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Mage Knight B vs Bishop D**

Hit:  $127+15+5-30-51 = 66$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-22 = 13\text{dmg}$   
  
Bishop D counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $137-5-15-49 = 68$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-19 = 10\text{dmg}$

**Erytrea vs Elite Axeman J**

Hit:  $141+5-42 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28-15 = 13\text{dmg}$

Adept roll: 24!  
Erytrea strikes again!  
Hit:  $141+5-42 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28-15 = 13\text{dmg}$

Elite Axeman J retaliates!  
Hit:  $108-5-53 = 50$   
Hit roll: 33, hit!  
Damage:  $34-14 = 20\text{dmg}$

Erytrea attacks again!  
Hit:  $141+5-42 = 104$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $28-15 = 13\text{dmg}$

**Erytrea's Paladin A vs Blade Paladin E**

Hit:  $111+5-15-52 = 49$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $53-1-16 = 36\text{dmg}$

**Erytrea's Paladin F vs Elite Axeman J**

Hit:  $111+5-15-42 = 59$   
Hit roll: 56, hit!  
Damage:  $27-1-16 = 10\text{dmg}$

**Erytrea's Paladin E vs Elite Axeman I**

Hit:  $111+5-15-42 = 59$   
Hit roll: 75, miss!

Elite Axeman I counters!  
Hit:  $108+15-5-52 = 66$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-17 = 18\text{dmg}$

Erytrea's Paladin E attacks again!  
Hit:  $111+5-15-42 = 59$   
Hit roll: 95, miss!

**Erytrea's Paladin B vs Elite Axeman I**

Hit:  $111+5-42 = 74$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $29-15 = 14\text{dmg}$

Elite Axeman I retaliates!  
Hit:  $108-5-52 = 51$   
Hit roll: 64, miss!

Erytrea's Paladin B strikes once more!  
Hit:  $111+5-42 = 74$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

#### Lord Yung vs Elite Axeman I

Hit:  $113+5-42 = 76$   
Hit roll: 55, hit!  
Damage:  $41-15 = 26$  dmg

Elite Axeman I counterattacks!  
Hit:  $108-5-37 = 66$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

#### Alakrin mends Lord Yung

$20+15 =$  Up to 35HP restored

After all this carnage, Matilda healed Salvatore once more.



"Been a while since we were in such large skirmish, wasn't it?" She asked him quietly.

#### Matilda mends Salvatore

$20+22 / 2 =$  Up to 21HP healed

## ~~Player Turn 10~~

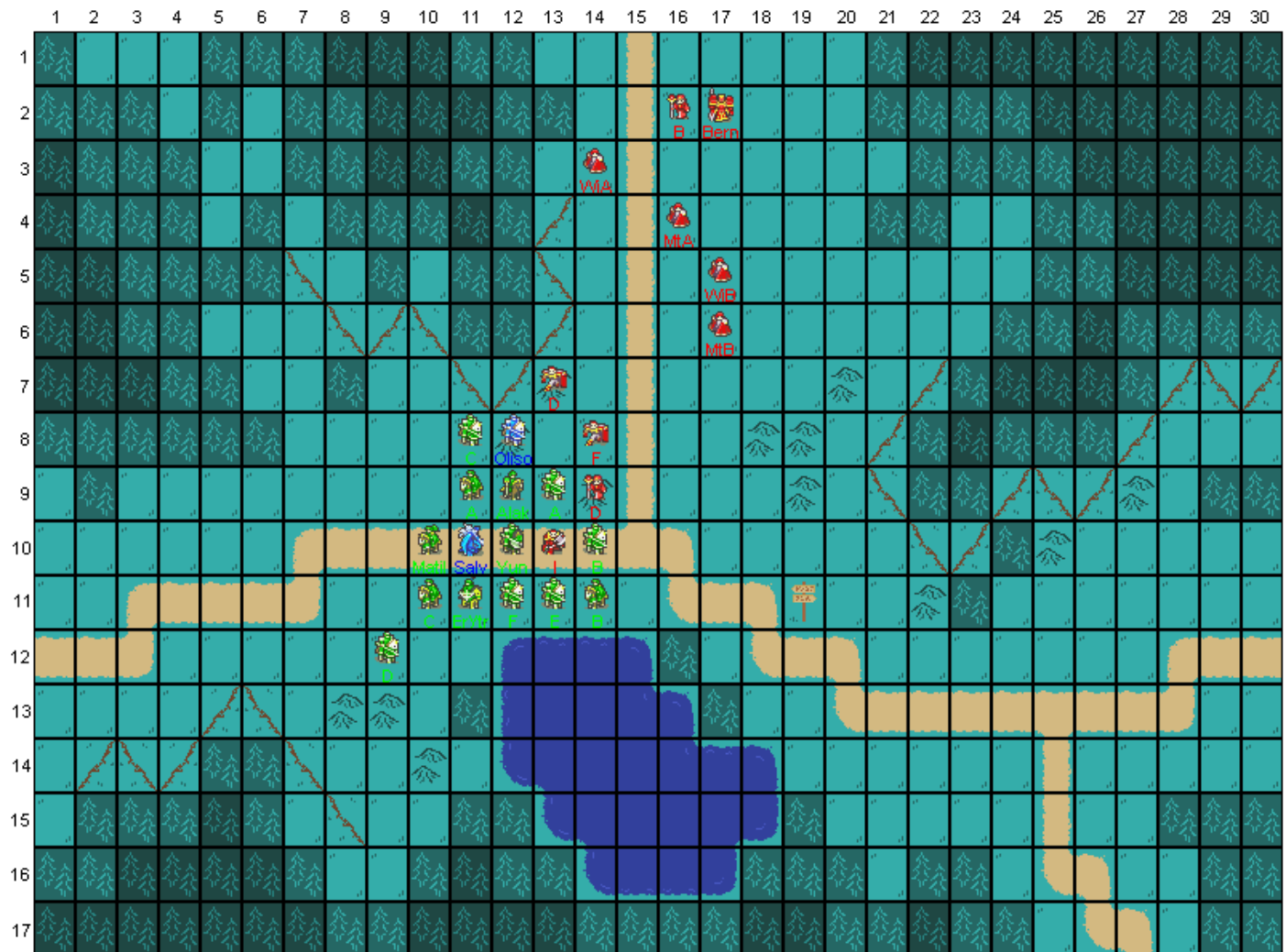
## Poison rolls

Olison: 5

Vordrakon Yung: 4

Erytrea's Paladin A: 2

Erytrea's Paladin D: 2



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	Allies:
Olison Eul: 19/41 <span>Poison (2/5)</span> Salvatore Vaughan: 21/45	Elite Swordsman D: 19/42 Elite Swordsman F: 42/42 Elite Axeman I: 5/45 Bishop B: 35/35 Bishop D: 22/35 Meteorologist A: 38/38 Meteorologist B: 38/38 Wind Sage A: 37/37 Wind Sage B: 37/37 Bernard Yung-Hanach: 49/49	Alakrin Yung: 28/28 Erytree: 15/35 Matilda: 16/37 Vordrakon Yung: 38/59 <span>Poison (3/5)</span> Paladin A: 36/38 <span>Poison (4/5)</span> Paladin B: 38/38 Paladin C: 38/38 Paladin D: 18/38 <span>Poison (4/5)</span> Paladin E: 20/38 Paladin F: 38/38 Mage Knight A: 38/38 Mage Knight B: 28/38 Mage Knight C: 38/38

From his vantage, Olison bares down on the swordsman below before launching a flurry of spears his way.

## Olison Spears Swordsman F.



"Aye, 'as been ah whoile 'asnit? Oi think the Dragon be pushin' us ta ah roight an' proper direction though." The wyvern rider replied, righting himself on the saddle once more, this time actually yanking an axe out of his armor. Its gonna need some tender love and care with a blacksmith after this.

The wyvern rider flew to (11,7) and throws a heavy javelin at Swordsman D, before returning to (11,10).



"May the souls o' those tha' fall be weighed in the end as 'ey should be." The knight muttered to himself in prayer.

**Olison vs Swordsman F**

Hit:  $113+15+10-43 = 95$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $35+1-17 = 19\text{dmg}$   
  
Olison strikes again!  
Hit:  $113+15+10-43 = 95$   
Hit roll: 81, hit!  
Damage:  $35+1-17 = 19\text{dmg}$

**Salvatore vs Swordsman D**

Hit:  $107+15+15+10-30-43 = 74$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
Damage:  $36+1-17 = 20\text{dmg}$

~~Enemy Phase~~

The enemies fought bravely.

**Axeman I vs Paladin B**

Hit:  $108-5-52 = 51$   
Hit roll: 47, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-17 = 18\text{dmg}$   
  
Paladin B counterattacks!  
Hit:  $111+5-42 = 74$   
Hit roll: 76, miss!  
  
Paladin B counters again!  
Hit:  $111+5-42 = 74$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!

**Bishop D vs Paladin A**

Hit:  $137-52 = 85$   
Hit roll: 53, hit! Crit roll: 8!  
Damage:  $30-14 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

**Swordsman F vs Paladin B**

Hit:  $132+15-5-52 = 90$   
Hit roll: 85, hit!  
Damage:  $32+1-17 = 16\text{dmg}$   
  
Paladin B retaliates!  
Hit:  $111+5-15-30-43 = 28$

hit roll: 90, miss!

Paladin B counters once more!

Hit:  $111+5-15-30-43 = 28$

hit roll: 60, miss!

Then, the meteorologists switched their tomes, moved closer, and blasted fiery magic at the riders!

#### Meteorologist A vs Paladin B

Hit:  $140-52 = 88$

Hit roll: 25, hit!

Damage:  $32-14 = 18\text{dmg}$

#### Meteorologist B vs Mageknight B

Hit:  $140-5-49 = 86$

Hit roll: 42, hit!

Damage:  $32-19 = 13\text{dmg}$

Mageknight B retaliates!

Hit:  $127+5-42 = 90$

Hit roll: 41, hit!

Damage:  $34-19 = 15\text{dmg}$

Moar poisonous clouds and long-range healing!

#### Wind Sage A casts Poison on Paladin F

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-14\}\times 5]+24)-(10\times 2) = 30+55+24-20 = 89$

Hit roll: 56, hit!

Paladin F is poisoned!

#### Wind Sage B casts Poison on Paladin E

Staff hit:  $(30+[\{25-14\}\times 5]+24)-(10\times 2) = 30+55+24-20 = 89$

Hit roll: 5, hit!

Paladin F is poisoned!

#### Bishop B physics Axeman I

$10+22 =$  Up to 32HP healed

### ~~Ally Phase~~



"RAAAH!" Lord Yung counted another smashed skull for himself.

#### Lord Yung vs Meteorologist B

Hit:  $113+5-42 = 76$

Hit roll: 26, hit!

Damage:  $41-12 = 29\text{dmg}$

Then his soldiers rushed at the remnats of the enemy group.

#### Paladin F vs Swordsman F

Hit:  $111+15+5-30-43 = 58$

Hit roll: 56, hit!

Damage:  $27+1-17 = 11\text{dmg}$

#### Erytrea vs Axeman I

Hit:  $141+5-42 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $28-17 = 11\text{dmg}$



Axeman I retaliates!

Hit:  $108-5-53 = 50$

Hit roll: 89, miss!

Erytrea strikes again!

Hit:  $141+5-42 = 104$ , autohit!

Damage:  $28-17 = 11$ dmg

#### **Mageknight A vs Bishop D**

Hit:  $127+15-30-51 = 61$

Hit roll: 16, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-22 = 13$ dmg

Bishop D counterattacks!

Hit:  $137-15-49 = 73$

Hit roll: 70, hit!

Damage:  $30-1-19 = 10$ dmg

#### **Mageknight B vs Bishop D**

Hit:  $127+15-30-51 = 61$

Hit roll: 8, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-22 = 13$ dmg

#### **Mageknight C vs Axeman I**

Hit:  $127+5-42 = 90$

Hit roll: 24, hit!

Damage:  $34-9 = 25$ dmg

#### **Paladin C vs Meteorologist A**

Hit:  $111+5-42 = 74$

Hit roll: 29, hit!

Damage:  $27-12 = 15$ dmg

Meteorologist A retaliates!

Hit:  $140-30-52 = 58$

Hit roll: 96, miss!

Paladin C attacks again!

Hit:  $111+5-42 = 74$

Hit roll: 44, hit!

Damage:  $27-12 = 15$ dmg

#### **Paladin E vs Meteorologist A**

Hit:  $111+5-42 = 74$

Hit roll: 56, hit!

Damage:  $27-12 = 15$ dmg

After the enemies were all dead, Alakrin healed one of magic knights whilst Matilda moved up to Olison to heal his wounds.

#### **Alakrin mends Mageknight B**

$20+15 =$  Up to 35HP restored

#### **Matilda mends Olison**

$20+22 =$  Up to 42HP restored

Lord Yung shook his fist at distant relative.



"Bernard! There will be no mercy for you this time - I'm coming for you, bastard!"



## Poison rolls

<b>Mercs:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>	<b>Allies:</b>
Olison Eul: 36/41 <b>Poison (1/5)</b> Salvatore Vaughan: 21/45	Bishop B: 35/35 Wind Sage A: 37/37 Wind Sage B: 37/37 Bernard Yung-Hanach: 49/49	Alakrin Yung: 28/28 Erytree: 15/35 Matilda: 16/37 Vordrakon Yung: 35/59 <b>Poison (2/5)</b> Paladin C: 38/38 Paladin D: 13/38 <b>Poison (3/5)</b> Paladin E: 16/38 <b>Poison (4/5)</b> Paladin F: 37/38 <b>Poison (4/5)</b> Mage Knight A: 28/38 Mage Knight B: 38/38 Mage Knight C: 38/38

Sal moved up to 13,6



"Thank you, Matilda. I'm grateful that you've been with us thus far, despite the circumstances..." Olson bowed as best he could while ahorse before rushing off to spear another enemy.

**Olison to 14,4. Killing Edge the Sage. Canto back to 14,6.**

\*SLASH\*

**Olison vs Wind Sage A**

Hit:  $118+10-43 = 85$   
Hit roll: 36, hit! Crit roll: 34!  
Damage:  $32-11 = 21 \times 3 = 63\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The mages attacked whilst Bernard moved forth, his halberd at ready.

**Wind Sage B vs Paladin E**

Hit:  $133-52 = 81$   
Hit roll: 56, hit!  
Damage:  $36-14 = 22\text{dmg}$

**Bishop B vs Olison**

Hit:  $137-10-59 = 68$   
Hit roll: 17, hit!  
Damage:  $30-9 = 21\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

The horsemen, magic-wielding or otherwise, quickly got rid of the two mages under Bernard.

**Mageknight B vs Bishop B**

Hit:  $127+15-51 = 91$   
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-22 = 13\text{dmg}$

Bishop B retaliates!  
Hit:  $137-15-49 = 73$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $30-1-19 = 10\text{dmg}$

**Mageknight A vs Bishop B**

Hit:  $127+15-51 = 91$   
Hit roll: 7, hit!  
Damage:  $34+1-22 = 13\text{dmg}$

Bishop B retaliates!  
Hit:  $137-15-49 = 73$   
Hit roll: 91, miss!

**Paladin F vs Bishop B**

Hit:  $111-51 = 60$   
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage:  $27-13 = 14\text{dmg}$

### Mageknight C vs Wind Sage B

Hit:  $127-43 = 84$   
Hit roll: 38, hit!  
Damage:  $34-19 = 15\text{dmg}$

Wind Sage B counters!  
Hit:  $133-49 = 84$   
Hit roll: 55, hit!  
Damage:  $36-19 = 17\text{dmg}$

### Erytrea vs Wind Sage B

Hit:  $141-43 = 98$   
Hit roll: 58, hit!  
Damage:  $28-11 = 17\text{dmg}$

Adept roll: 5!  
Erytrea attacks again!  
Hit:  $141-43 = 98$   
Hit roll: 37, hit!  
Damage:  $28-11 = 17\text{dmg}$

Alakrin then healed his father.

### Alakrin mends Lord Yung

$20+15 =$  Up to 35HP restored

Lord Yung swung his flail.



"Listen now, no one shall interrupt our fight, or else!"



"Ha! Duel to the death, then!" And the two Yungs clashed.

### Lord Yung vs Bernard Yung-Henach

Hit:  $113+15-39 = 89$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $41+1-30 = 12\text{dmg}$

Bernard Yung-Henach counters!  
Hit:  $109-15-37 = 57$   
Hit roll: 84, miss!



"DIE, VOR!"

### Bernard Yung-Henach vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $109-15-37 = 57$   
Hit roll: 62, miss!

Lord Yung counters!  
Hit:  $113+15-39 = 89$   
Hit roll: 89, hit!  
Damage:  $41+1-30 = 12\text{dmg}$

Flail struck Bernard in the chest, and his halberd cut through his brother's armor.

#### Lord Yung vs Bernard Yung-Henach

Hit:  $113+15-39 = 89$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
Damage:  $41+1-30 = 12\text{dmg}$

Bernard Yung-Henach counterattacks!  
Hit:  $109-15-37 = 67$   
Hit roll: 15, hit!  
Damage:  $64-1-29 = 34\text{dmg}$

#### Bernard Yung-Henach vs Lord Yung

Hit:  $109-15-37 = 57$   
Hit roll: 76, miss!  
  
Lord Yung counters!  
Hit:  $113+15-39 = 89$   
Hit roll: 82, hit!  
Damage:  $41+1-30 = 12\text{dmg}$



"BernaaaAARD!" With a powerful swing, the flail smashed into the general's neck. An audible snap announced the end of the duel.

#### Lord Yung vs Bernard Yung-Henach

Hit:  $113+15-39 = 89$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
Damage:  $41+1-30 = 12\text{dmg}$

With soft gurgle coming from his mangled throat, the armored man crashed onto his back, dropping the halberd. In unison, Lord Yung's soldiers cheered and shouted in victory!



"...Rest in peace, Bernard." Lord Yung did a holy sign toward his brother's corpse.

### ~~Epilogue Chapter C complete!~~

As Alakrin and Matilda began to patch the wounded, Lord Yung took his horse toward Olison and Salvatore, the latter's wyvern perched on a cliff.



"That was a glorious battle!" He roared in laughter suddenly, and then nodded to himself with a grin on his lips.



"Yes, and I have you three to thank for it! Without you, I admit, I might've been dead by now! I see you have your own mounts and your own weapons of excellent quality - you must be serving a wealthy nobleman, aren't you! Do tell me the name of your master, I shall send him one, no, three letters of gratitude and praise, one per each of you!"

Olison quietly sheathed his killing edge and pulled his cloak back around his body.



"We serve no nobleman, Lord Yung. We are mere travelers looking to keep the peace in these lands." Olison explained before making a brief salute. "I, however, am Olison Eul. Former servitor to the late Lord Ferwelk." The paladin lowered his hand and looked towards his comrades, awaiting their responses.

The golden wyvern visibly relaxed once it realized the fighting was over, sitting on its perch atop the cliff as it looked over the fallen soldiers with what appears to be disgust at the smell.

Salvatore sheathed his weapon followed suit with Olison's salute he could atop the wyvern when Lord Yung approached, as is courtesy to a noble of Berebia.



"Roight, be as Olison say, Lord Yung; we be 'o the road." The man nodded, then followed suit in formally introducing himself. "Oi be Salvatore Vaughan, traveler an' axe o' the dragon an' the loight." There was little more to say, his prior service far behind him.



"Oh." Lord Yung stroked his beard for a moment.



"Underling of Felwerk, hmm? Well, the land is mine now. Say, what would you do if I offered you fifty coins per week? My son's magical prowess and sword arm are both lacking; and recently I lost most of my wyvern knights, along with good Captain Sypreus. There would be plenty of work for all of you at my keep. And of course you would be fed and clothed from my pocket, as well!" Lord Yung stroked his beard.

Suddenly, Olison could feel someone gently elbowing him in the right side - it was Matilda who seemingly overheard the conversation, snuck close and gave Olison a nudge.



"I'm not forcing you, of course."

Olison tensed. He cast a wary glance about to the Yungs, and to their cavalry's captain. He may have heard of the Yungs, but he had no cause to understand their internal politics. Could he trust them?

The paladin felt the nudge at his side, looking over to Matilda for a brief moment. Well, there was one answer.



"Hmm." Olison shifted on his saddle, looking over to Alakrin before turning back to Lord Yung.



"A teacher by heart I am not. But I would still be more than honored to pass my knowledge along, and I am certainly capable of assisting with other work as necessary." Olison glared over to Alakrin again. "Do know, however, I will not be an easy tutor. But, my impressions aside... Salvatore? Matilda? What are your thoughts?"

The pink haired wyvern rider weighed the issue in his mind, looking at Lord Yung, Alakrin, Ormm, then his companions. He thought back to his last words to Matilda.

Finally, Salvatore nodded, having reached a consensus in his head.



"All Oi've learned 'bout wyverns was from experience an' Ormm 'ere; can' claim no fancy formal trainin' 'cept some soldierin' long ago, but yah'd be 'ard-pressed ta foind ah wyvern rider as 'ardy as Oi. Oi've traveled fer most o' me loife, wanderin' from place ta place. Think Oi wouldn' moind ta put tha' behind me."



"I wouldn't mind having a place to return to every night, instead of sleeping at the inn all the time."

Olison nodded to Sal and Matilda in turn.



"Then it is my honor to accept, Lord Yung. Where shall we begin?"

The Paladin fastened the spear to his back tightly and saluted in full. Steil whickered below in acknowledgement, perhaps thinking of the food to be had in castle life again. With a rumble of his stomach, Olison could easily empathize with those thoughts.



"I'm glad you've agreed! For the beginnings, maybe we should get back to my lands first. You see, when Rasmussen goes wild..."

And the rest was history - and politics. Thus ends the tale of Olison Eul, Salvatore Vaughan and Matilda who enjoyed just another day in their lovely motherland of Berebia!



## ~~Epilogue Chapter D~~ Bitter Reunion

*Town of Vox, Eastern Menelea*  
*More than half a year after death of Prixima Kesselring*

The small city of Vox was recently plagued by a group of traveling bandits - or so the rumor went. As Charlotte and Gregor were low on cash - the search for his brother and live on the road having its costs - they decided to visit the town and offer their services as mercenaries, but...

The town mayor sat down behind his desk and then looked at the note that his aide left for him a moment ago; more than half an hour Gregor and Charlotte had to wait for him to arrive, as he was 'finishing his lunch'.

He read the note quietly and then let out an unhappy sigh.

"Ah, that thing. I'm sorry to inform you that the bandits have been dealt with already. Young Sir Hexham and that strange mistress of his brought the bandit leader to the town in shackles, this very morning. I'm afraid that town of Vox isn't interested in your services at all, unless you want to help us with the harvest..."

Gregor's initial sigh of frustration quickly vanished as he realized what the mayor had said.



"Sir Hexham'? Which way did they go?!"

The mayor rubbed his chin for a moment.

"I think they were going to stay at 'The Red Rooster' inn? Yes, I think that's the one. It's the one near the western exit from the town. Why do you ask?"



"Well, it sounds like it might be my brother. I've been looking for him for some time."

Charlotte adjusted her cap. She'd urged Gregor to change into something redder now that they were on her own in the Menelean border, but...



"It's just too perfect. You'll have a happy reunion in the inn, and a big brotherly hug! But... I didn't know your brother was a bounty hunter, Gregor."

Due to their lack of money, Gregor had decided to stick with the Berebian armor as long as it held together. Given the peace settlement between the two nations, he wasn't *too* worried about some soldiers deciding to pick a fight.



"I'm guessing he's in the same boat as us; doing what he can to get by after Prixima destroyed our family. And the mayor said something about a woman...maybe he found someone to fight for as well."



"Mayor, thank you for the information. We'll let you know if we have time to help with the harvest. Might be good practice for when we settle down some day, right, Greg?"

Charlotte stood up and did her quick triple-pat: bows, quiver, pouch of gold. It was all there. You never could be too sure in these foreign lands, everyone just trying to survive.

The mayor grunted in acknowledgement and then turned his attention to some documents.

### **Charlotte heads to the inn with Gregor.**

As it was middle of the day, the inn was mostly empty. Few tables were occupied by people who had to stop here for a lunch. The innkeeper was moderately busy; either he was disappearing into the kitchen, or delivering orders to the tables.

Gregor didn't see any familiar face amongst the people here.

Gregor cursed under his breath before approaching the innkeeper, keeping his face neutral.



"Excuse me sir, but I'm looking for a couple of people who I heard were around here. A man and a woman. The man would look like me, only older. Have you seen them?"

The innkeeper looked at Gregor, mumbled something under his nose, scratched his scalp and then looked at Gregor again, squinting eyes at his face.

"Ah, ye, they're upstairs." He mused and turned to look at small row of hooks embedded in the wall, some of them with keys hanging from them. "Ye, room five, it's the one at the end of th' corridor."

Gregor looked at Charlotte.



"What do you want to do? Wait for them to come down or go there now?"



"Oh, come on, Gregor. Two lovers celebrating a big payday, upstairs at the inn. They'll want privacy."



"So of course we should barge in!"

### **Charlotte led Gregor by the hand!**

The two rushed upstairs and quickly found the door, from behind a soft melody of a lute was coming to their ears. And then they opened the door.

Inside, there was two people; a scantily clad lady with very bright teal hair, with lute in her arms, sitting on a small table. Nearby, a brown-haired man in armor and red cloak was sitting on the edge of the bed, listening to the melody.

When the door opened, he looked toward those who interrupted their private moment. The lady stopped playing, and the knight stood up. It took him a moment to shake the shock off and run toward Gregor.



"...!" The man wrapped his arms around Gregor's shoulders and hugged him tightly. As he was taller and stockier than Gregor, the hug lifted the younger of brother's onto his toes. The older sibling shed some tears and patted Gregor on the back, but strangely, not a single word was coming - in fact, not even quietest of sounds were coming from Charles von Hexham's throat.

The lady inside placed the lute on the table and looked at the two brothers with curiosity and soft smile.



"Charles von Hexham... we've been looking so long I thought he might not be real."

Gregor blinked a few tears out of his eyes, happy beyond words that at least one of his brothers had survived. After they parted from their hug he smiled.



"Charles, I'm so glad you're okay! Where have you been? Didn't you hear that PRIXIMA is gone?"



"...! ..." Charles definitely wanted to say something, but not a sound was coming.

Charlotte turned to the girl with the lute.



"Who are you?"



"My name is too long for you to comfortably pronounce, so just call me Mari."

The lady's voice had some strange 'echo' coming with it, or maybe it was just Gregor's and Charlotte's imagination...



"And you?"



"...Charles? What's wrong?"

He nodded towards "Mari", but kept his attention on his brother. Was he wounded?



"I'm just a wanderer. Gregor, can we talk outside for a moment?"

Charles kept being unable to say anything, while Mari curiously looked at Charlotte.



"Yeah...right behind you. Pardon me a moment, brother."



"I believe that girl is a... hmm, how do you put this? You know that old tale, 'Siren Song?' The ship is lost at sea, and the captain misses his wife. Through the misty veil, he sees the shape of a beautiful woman sitting on an icy rock, playing her flute. He cannot help but steer toward the siren's song, but as the ship approaches, there is no beautiful woman, only a large glacier. The ship is never seen from again..."



"Hmm. I think I do remember reading a story like that years ago. What makes you say she's one of those Sirens?"



"I'm not saying that at all. I just think it's similar. Your brother seems to be under a spell, maybe a binding curse, and she's so otherworldly. Notice the frustration as he tried to talk."

Gregor lowered his voice.



"I agree, there's something strange about her. But I wonder if perhaps...well, there's other possible reasons that he can't talk. A throat injury, perhaps. If he were under some sort of spell or enchantment I would half-expect him to not find his silence frustrating."



"Maybe we should play along for now. We have so little information that we're just wild guessing."

**Charlotte re-enters the room with Gregor.**



"Sorry to interrupt your reunion. Mari, how did you two meet? We've been looking for Charles for months, you must understand our curiosity."



"..." Charles looked at Mari. After a moment, with a sigh, she took her lute and began to play some simple, but lovely melody. She paused her performance seconds later.



"I shall sing you a certain ballad, of sorts." And then she began to strike the strings with her long fingers.



*"Once upon a time, this humble Lady was in battle,  
With a terrible foe, Hasmodai, the lord of the demon cattle,  
But her power was high and his evil magic wasn't,  
It should've ended right there, but it hasn't -  
For a young knight have appeared, at wrong place and moment.*

*Charles von Hexham, savior of damsels, that was his proud name,  
But poor knight didn't know the price of this lethal game,  
Lady lost her concentration, and Hasmodai seized the chance,  
And sent his dark magic, though it was blocked by a lance;  
Thusly Charles has been struck, whilst Hasmodai has escaped."*

Mari stopped playing and placed the lute away as Charles looked away in resignation.



"My foe has escaped, and Charles received a curse. Each moment he tried to say anything, his insides were burnt by hellish flames. So I've struck a deal with the poor darling; in exchange for help with few things, I have magically sealed his voice, so even by accident he wouldn't say anything and thusly hurt himself more. Of course, he agreed." Charles nodded a little.



"The first task was to recover the Schist, which we did. Then he was asked to help my two younger sisters finally have children, a task he performed admirably I must say." Charles' face flared like a lantern, and he scratched his left cheek in embarrassment.



"Third task was to locate a 'Mind', a human in contact with Gingin, a beast that is Hasmodai's right hand. Said human was traveling with the bandits that were ravaging this town, so of course we take the job of ending their banditry. From the human I was seeking, I learned the location of Gingin's hideout."



"Now our task is to catch Gingin and learn where has Hasmodai escaped, so I can finish the battle and also break Charles' curse." Charles looked at Mari, and she looked at him for a moment. They stared at each other for a lengthy moment.



"Gregor, your brother is happy that you're alive, and proud that you've got such beautiful girlfriend." Mari said after turning her eyes back toward the other two.



"WIFE, not girlfriend. Goodness, I guess we really do look young."

Charlotte flashed her wedding ring in the light trailing from the window.



"(Gregor, shouldn't we help them? They lost against this 'Hasmodai' last time, but with our help, maybe they could defeat them.)"



"(Of course we should help. They deserve a happy ending just as much as we do after all.) What can we do? Charlotte's amazing with a bow, and Charles here knows I'm no slouch with a lance."



"You can help us defeat Gingin. But Hasmodai is my, and Charles', business." She struck a chord on her lute.



"We will be leaving in few hours. Rest well." With that, Charles stood up and once again hugged his brother, this time a little more gently and with a pat on head. Mute or not, happiness showed of him anyways.



"Alright, let's get some rest."

Charlotte saw no need in purchasing a room for just a few hours, so she headed down to buy some drinks and wait.

Not even an hour have passed before Mari ordered all to depart; Charles didn't protest for a moment and had his brother and his wife come after her; he rode on his horse, she walked in front of him, and behind them, Gregor and Charlotte.

They didn't take a road, nor ask for directions; Mari kept walking north, north-west, north-east, sometimes stopping and striking a chord on her lute, then standing still for a second or two before resuming her march. From fields surrounding the towns they got into a forest, and then deeper into it. The buzzing of insects started to dissappear; so did the sound of the wind and chirping of the birds. The only sounds left were the breathing of the four travelers and crunching of leaves and grass under their feet.

Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, a ruined castle appeared. The brown stones of bygone area and the size of the construction should make it visible from between the trees at least a minute ago, but no; it's as if someone just plopped the castle here, right in front of their noses.



"A warning, my friends. Whatever you see, be it food, drink, treasure or anything of the kind, do not touch it. Gingin is master of poisons and hexes. A drink that makes you lose your memory, or apple that kills you instantly with otherworldly poison - that kind of dark magic are mere tricks for the entities like Gingin, he can come up with much worse things. Stay calm, and stay close to me and Charles." After that, she took her lute and struck some chords, listening a while after the sounds turned to silence.



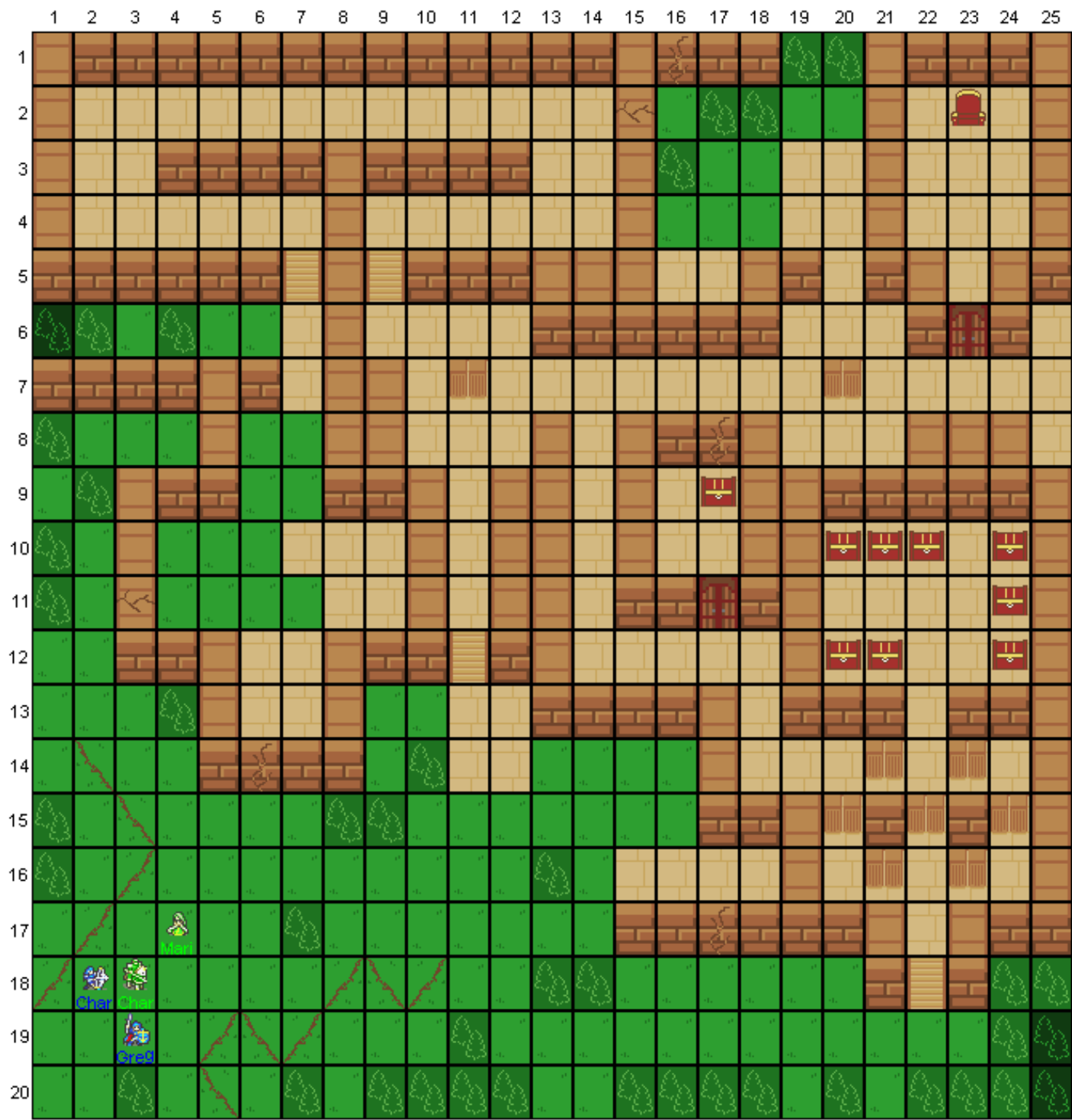
"Gingin, he is north-east of where we stand now. Keep your eyes open."

There was no enemy in sight. No shimmering walls or things out of ordinary (beyond the castle appearing out of nowhere).



And it was completely quiet in here.

~~Player Turn 1~~



Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	Allies:
Charlotte von Hexham: 40/40 Gregor von Hexham: 48/48	-	Charles von Hexham: 44/44 Mari: 35/35

Gregor steeled himself and moved forward, Avalon held high.

**Gregor: Move to (6,16).**

Charlotte nodded to Mari and moved forward.

**Charlotte: (5,16), shoot a hole in the nearby busted wall with the Castle Longbow.**

\*PLINK\*

The arrow bounced off the wall. After closer inspection, Charlotte could notice that it wasn't a cracked wall - someone merely *painted* the crack on the wall!

**~~Ally Phase~~**

"Nyohohohohohh!"

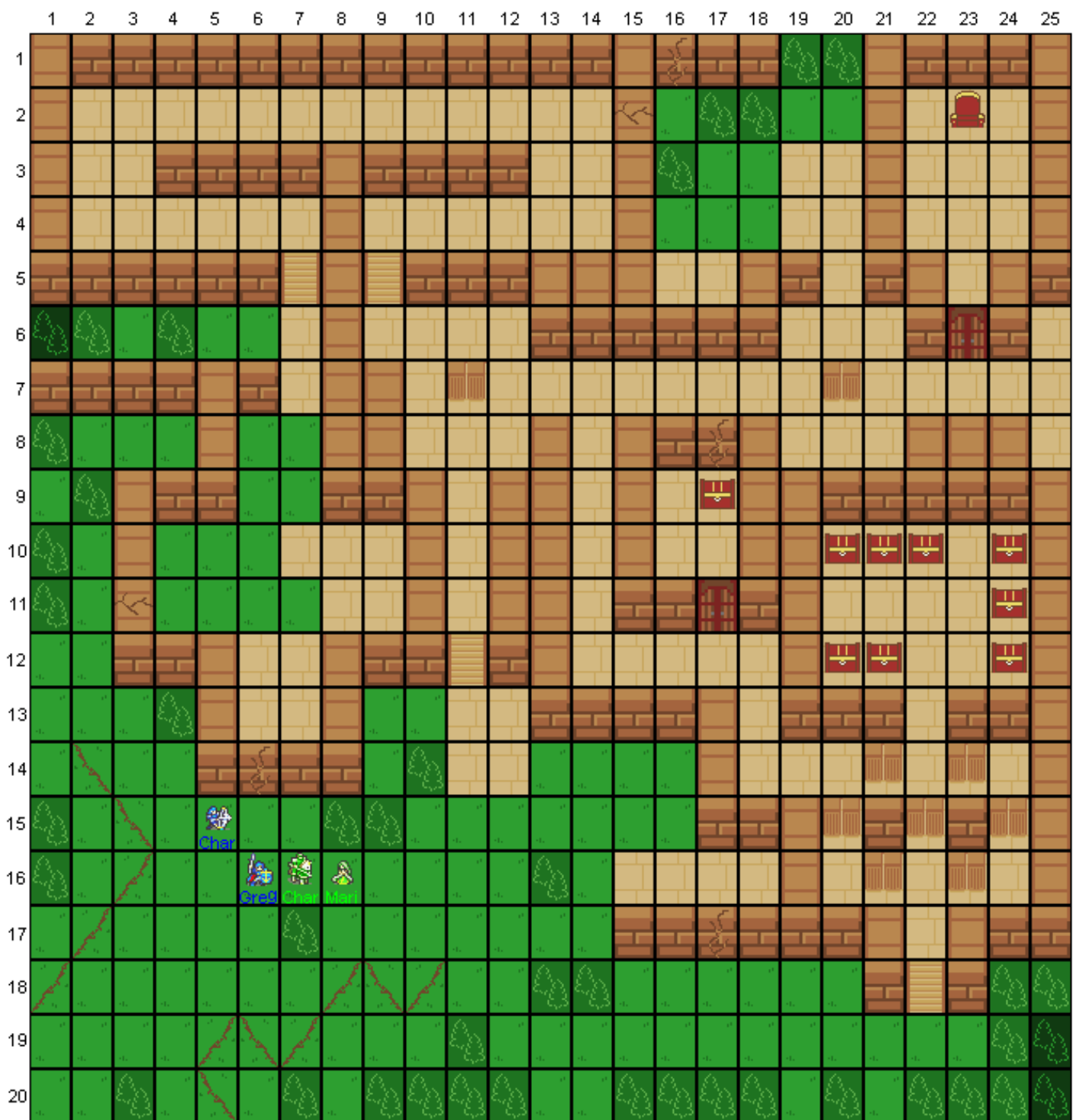


"...!"



"That's Gingin! There's only one creature laughing like so." Mari's voice was a little angry-sounding.

# ~~Player Turn 2~~



Weather:

You think I don't know what game yer playing, hyoomans?  
No numbers for ye, no precious stats!

Nyohohoh! I am Gingin!  
And I will make you more miserable than a female in labor!



"I can see this getting annoying real fast."

**Gregor: (11,15)!**



"That's pretty clever. If we weren't killing Gingin, I'd love to learn a few things from him."

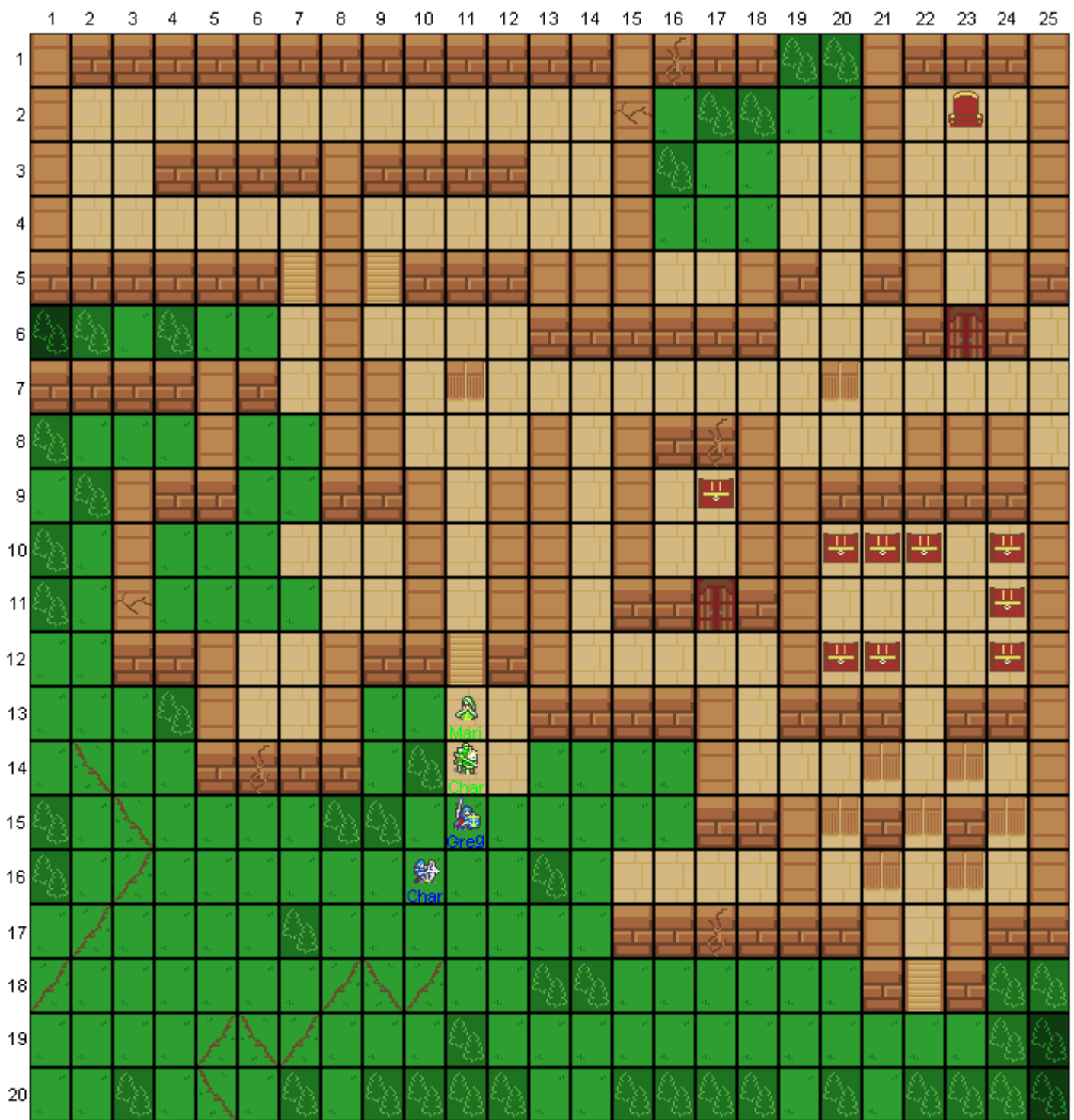
**Charlotte: (10,16)**

**~~Ally Phase~~**



"Trust me, Gingin is much worse than Hashtag, Haspen, and few other minor evils combined." Charles stopped in front of the entrance, looking from side to side just in case.

# ~~Player Turn 3~~



Weather:

Still no precious numbers for you!  
Mark my words, you will grovel in angst later on!

I am Gingin!  
And I will make you more miserable than a man kicked in his groin!



"I don't know. This seems like the main entrance. Do you want to keep circling around the castle or go on in here?"

Charles turned toward the rest and shrugged.



"Neither do I, Charles. It seems that this entrance is free of danger but we better be careful."



"Well, for now, let's line up behind Gregor. His shield is our best defense."

**Charlotte: (11,11)**

**Gregor: 6 squares north.**

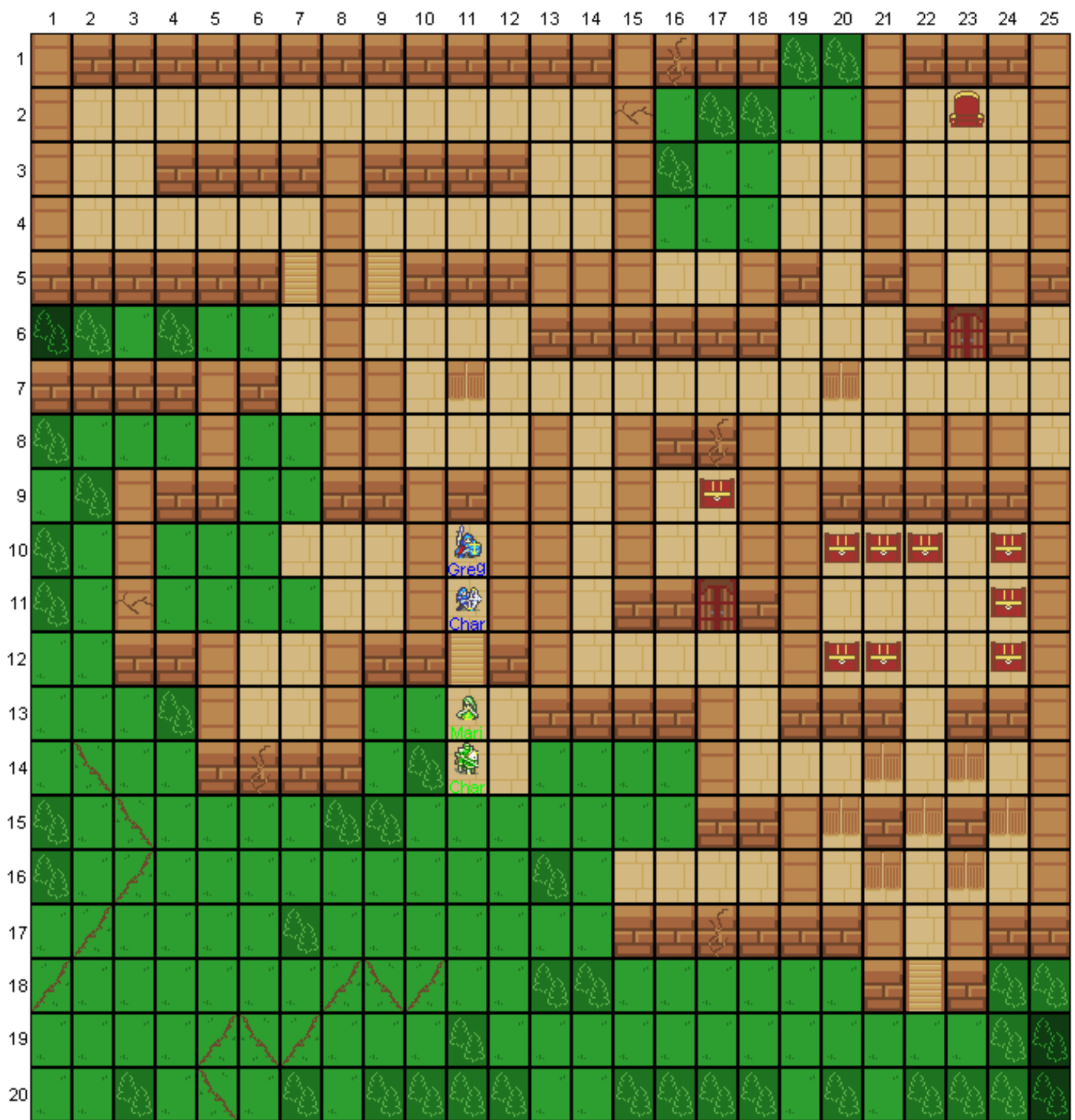
**\*CLUNK\***

Gregor smashed head-first against a wall that popped in his way out of nowhere.

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Mari sighed, Charles facepalmed, his horse neighed sadly.

# ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

Nyohohohoh!

I am Gingin!

And I will make you more miserable than an US student with college loans!



"...Circling around it is."

**Charlotte: (12,16)**



"So, Mari, how did you get caught up in this 'Hasmodai' battle? You left that part out of your song."



"I don't think I should be telling you that at all."



"I see."

Charlotte rocked side to side just to hear her arrows *clink-clink* in the quiver.



"Ow."

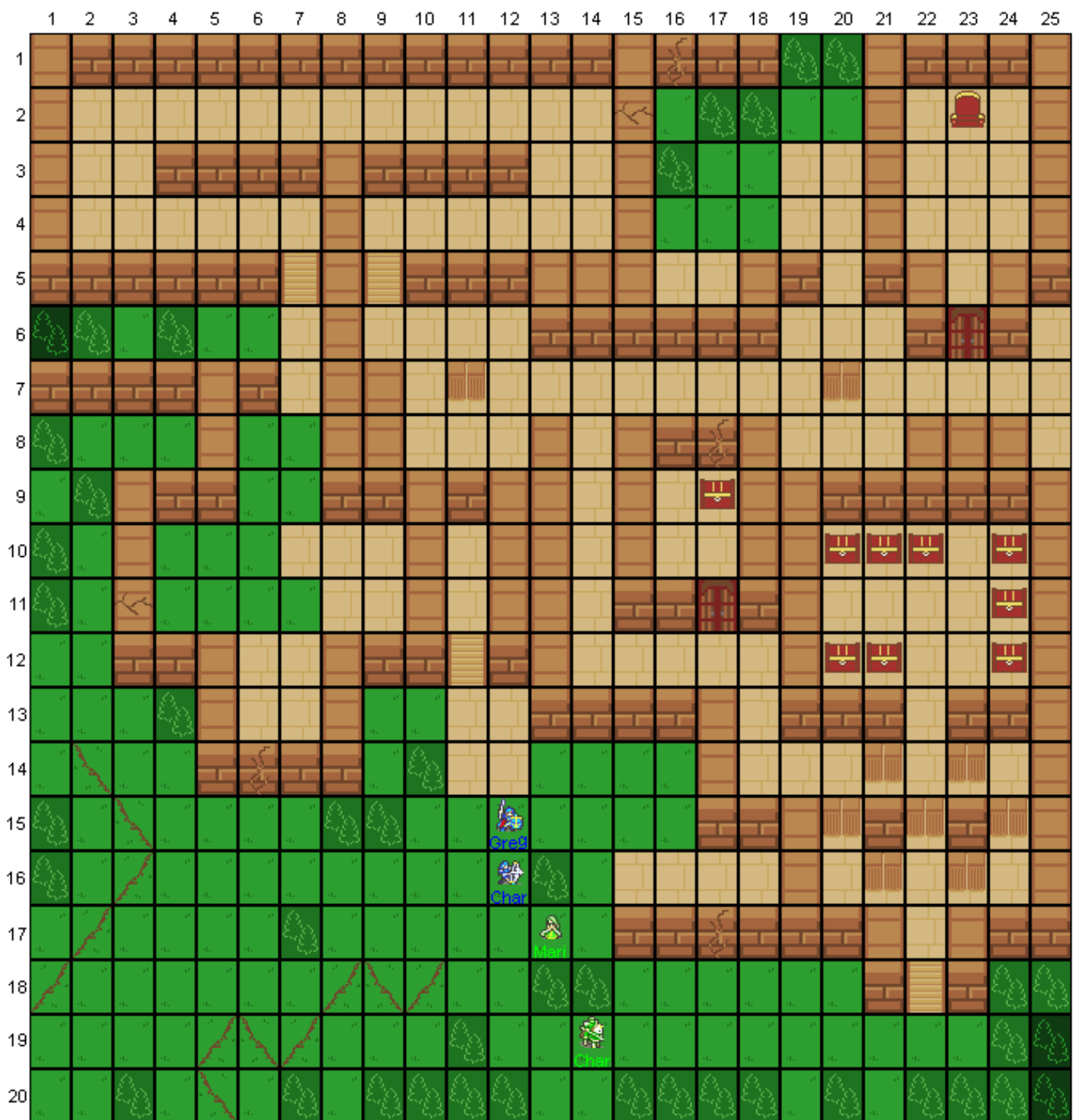
**Gregor: (12,15).**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

A quiet 'nyohohohoh' came from somewhere deeper inside the ruins.



## ~~Player Turn 4~~



Weather:

Nyohohohoh!

I am Gingin!

And I will make you more miserable than a person who've been gifted a durian!

**Gregor moves to (17,16) and tentatively tosses a Spear at the wall at (18,15).**

Gregor pokes the wall.

It crumbles down!



"Excellent work, dear."

**Charlotte: (18,16)**

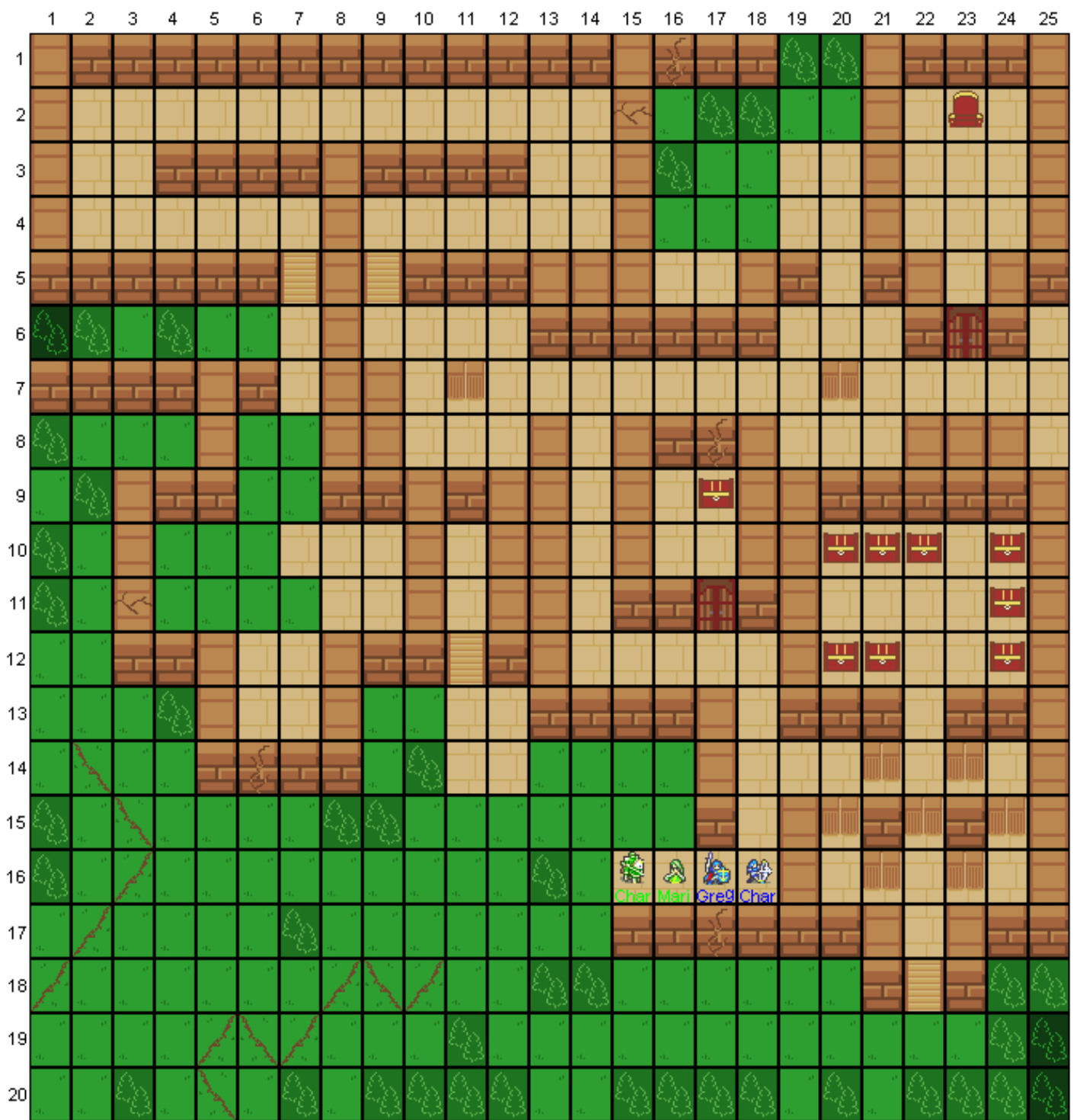
**~~Ally Phase~~**

Mari and soon Charles followed.



"Huh, but... how did you know it was a fake? Even I... my magic... hum."

# ~~Player Turn 6~~



Weather:

Nyohohohoh!

I am Gingin!

And I will make you more miserable than one-legged baby goat!



"We're adventurers. The conspicuous hallway is ALWAYS a secret door. Now, is that treasure I spy...?"

**Charlotte: (21,14)**



"And a second rule of adventuring is that obvious treasure is usually also a trap. We have no keys or lockpicks, so anything unlocked is probably a bomb or some sort of monster."

**Gregor: (20,14)**

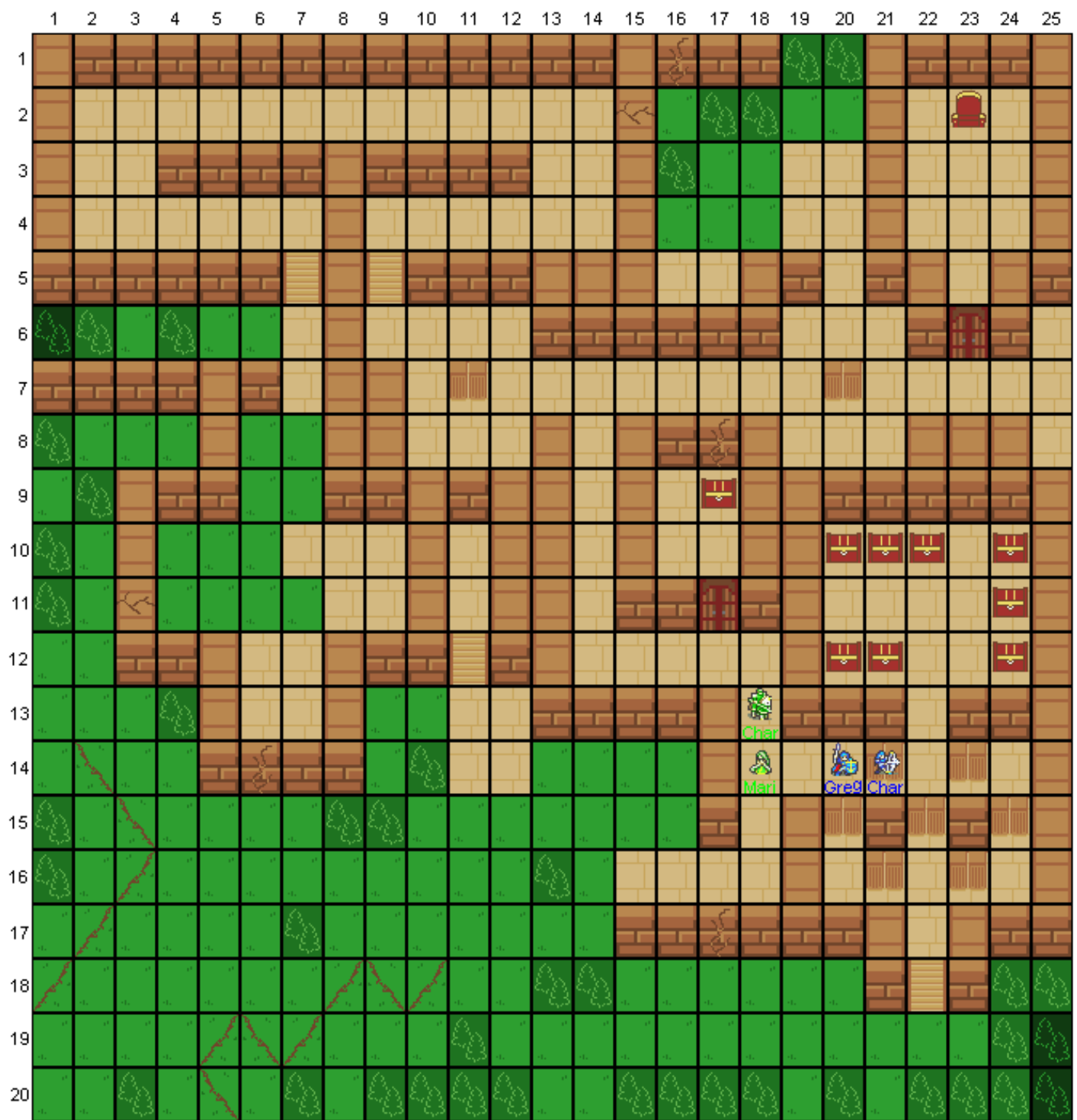
Charlotte could easily see that the chests are open, their lids lifted just a little to show vast amounts of coins and gems were glittering from inside of the chests.

**~~Ally Phase~~**



"You really shouldn't. I've warned you before!"

# ~~Player Turn 6~~



Weather:



"Alright, yeah, that's a trap."

**Charlotte: (17,12)**

**Gregor: (16,12), toss a Spear at the door.**



"Probably a fake door, but might as well be sure."

Charlotte turned and whispered to her husbando.



"(Gregor, I still feel like something's very wrong here. Don't you? We haven't encountered any resistance at all.)"

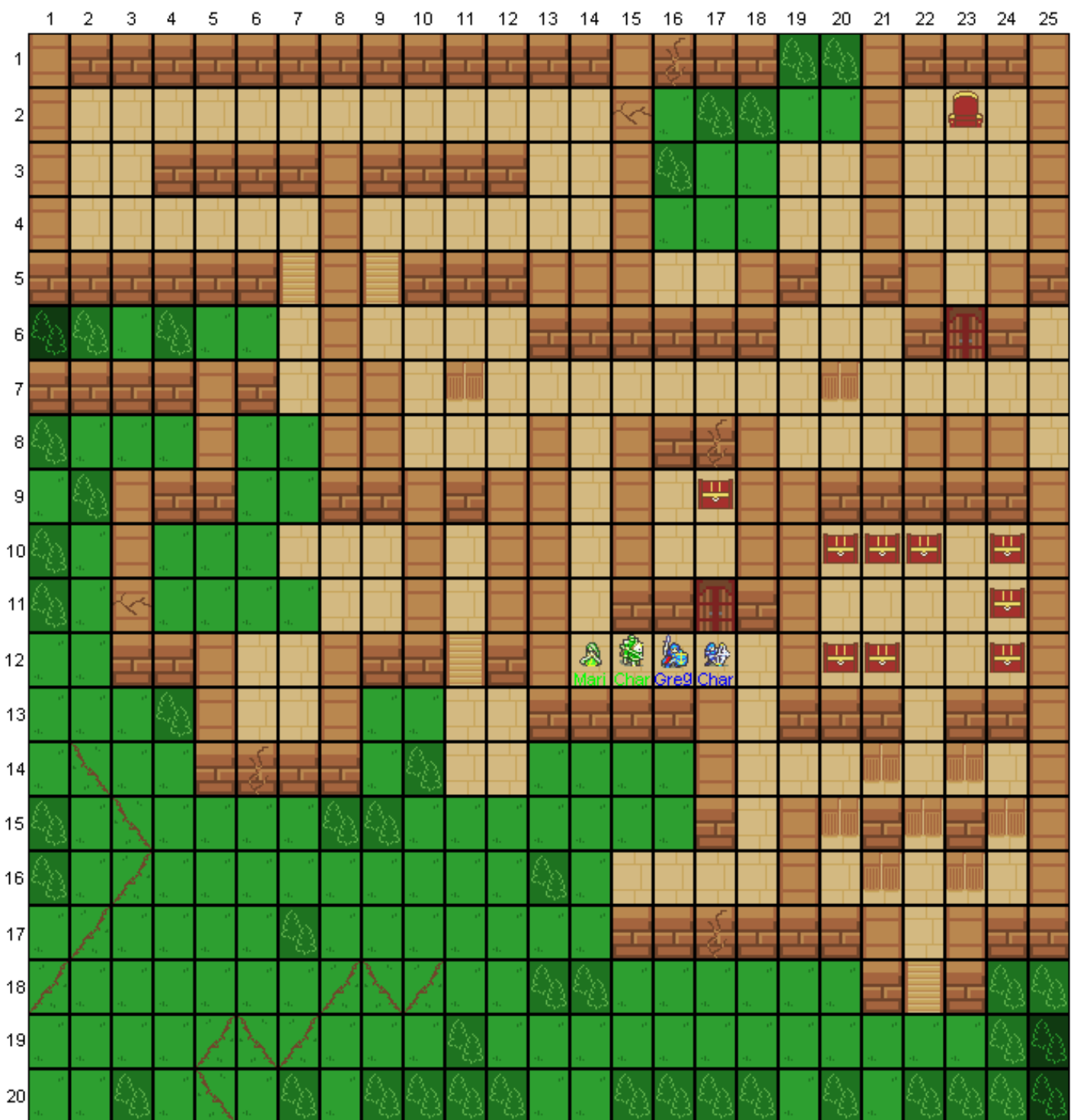
Gregor whispered back.



"(Other than the fake walls? You're right, things have been a little too quiet. I mean, this guy obviously knows we're here, you'd think he'd have some minions to send after us.)"

The spear clunked when it hit the wall and fell onto the floor.

## ~~Player Turn 6~~



Weather:

**Gregor: (14,8)!**

**Charlotte: (14,9)**

**Suddenly darkness have fallen onto the four!**

Charles' horse neighed in the dark as Charlotte bumped against someone wearing armor.

"Stay calm, don't move!" Mari's voice came to the ears of Charlotte and Gregor.

~~Player Turn ??~~

Charlotte felt someone touch her face.

"Here you are." Mari spoke again, grabbing and guiding Charlotte's left hand onto someone's shoulder - Gregor could feel someone touch him on shoulder in the same moment - and her right hand onto someone's leg, suprisingly at the same height as previously mentioned shoulder.

A soft humming could be heard, quiet at first but slowly rising in volume.

Gregor hefted Avalon and stared into the darkness, trying to be alert for possible threats.



"Stay close and listen for any strange sounds."

The humming grew louder and began to oscillate. Suddenly, certain someone began playing on the lute. The lute's sounds quickly overcame the humming and suddenly, cracking and hissing noises began to surround the group.

The lute grew louder.

Suddenly, like a shattered window, the darkness crumbled around them. Immediately loud sounds of partying and dancing came from one direction. The pink walls of the place they were in glowed slightly, and the sickeningly green floor wasn't any better. Through big ocular windows on the ceiling, they could see purple night sky and three moons; yellow, pink, and red, from largest to smallest.

"Excusez moi, madame." A pig, walking on two legs and in a black suit tipped his hat toward Charlotte and then passed near her, heading toward a room which was filled with half-transparent pairs of dancers.



"...\*gasp!\* T-Talk! I can talk! Gregor! Gregor I can talk!" Charles was overjoyed.



"We're in the realm of Hasmodai and Ginging; in realm of demons... Try to dismiss the absurdity-"

"Nyohohohoh, splendid observation you dragon wretch!" A cackling, raspy voice surrounded the four. "You, on the horse - kill your friends there, and I will ask my lord Hasmodai to lift the curse on you even in the real world!"

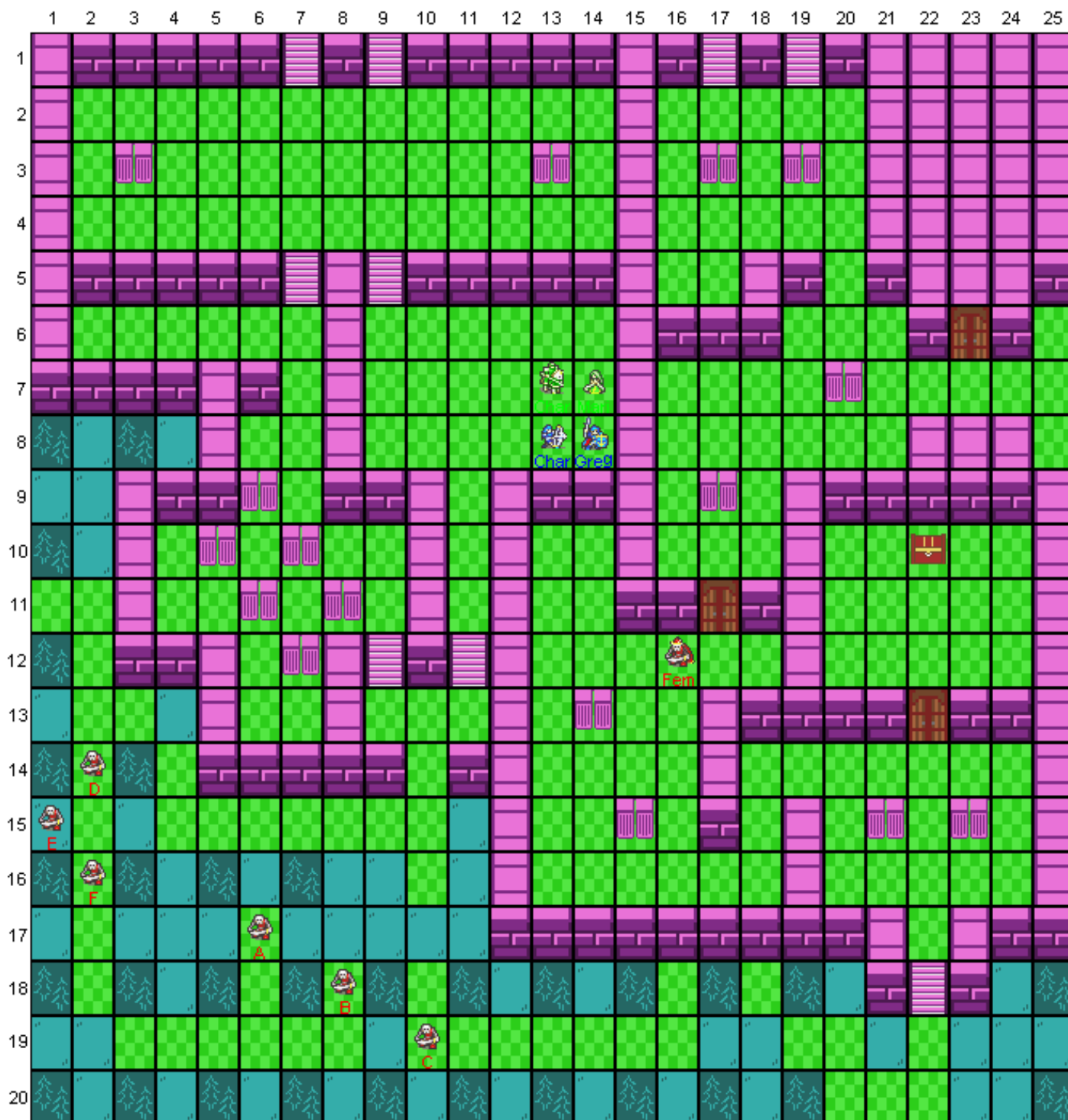




"NEVER!" Charles shouted as loud as he could, lifting his lance.

"Hmph, whatever. Buuuut just in case, I will leave your voice intact - remember, you can always strike a deal with me, nyoh, nyohohohoh!"

### ~~Player Turn 8~~



Weather:

Nyohohoh, forget it!

I've told you! I am Gingin!  
And I will make you miserable!

Gregor knocked at the new wall in front of him. Solid.



"Dammit, we're cut off! Back, back the way we came! Charlotte, stick with me. I think we're about to meet some resistance."

**Gregor: (11,11)!**



"So many pretty colors..."

**Charlotte: (11,12)**

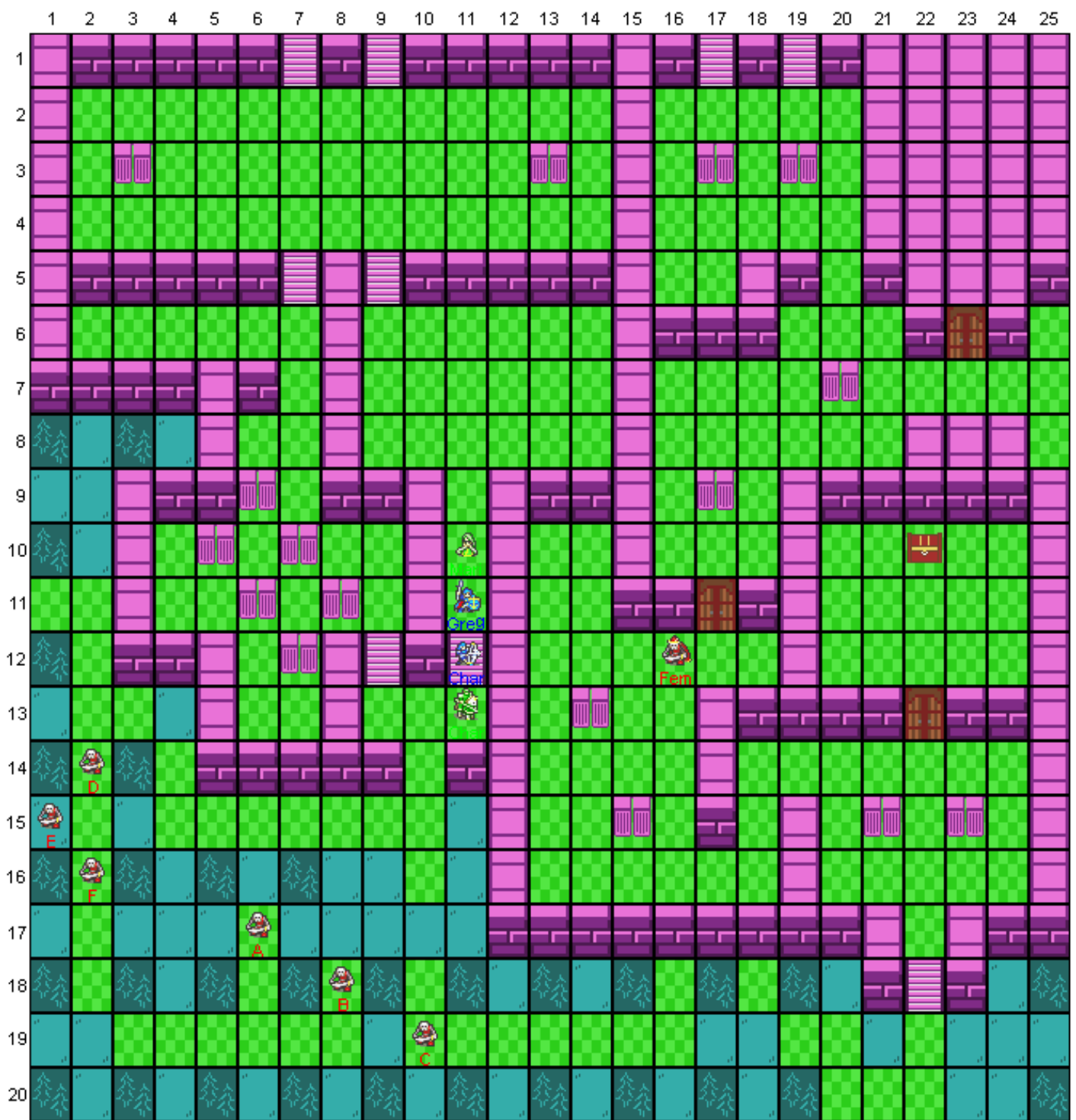
**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The skeletons in the gardens chatted happily about finer points of afterlife.

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Charles rushed forth whilst Mari was right behind Charlotte nad Gregor.

# ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather:

**Gregor moves to (10,14) ((happy birthday to me!)) and stops suddenly.**



"Whoa. Moving skeletons. Think this is what Tantallos was dealing with?"



"Dance, colors, dance!"

**Charlotte: (10,13)**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

The skeletons continued their merry talk.

**~~Ally Phase~~**



"Let's destroy these abominations!" Charles rode outside, then went onto the grass, and dissappeared with flash of light.

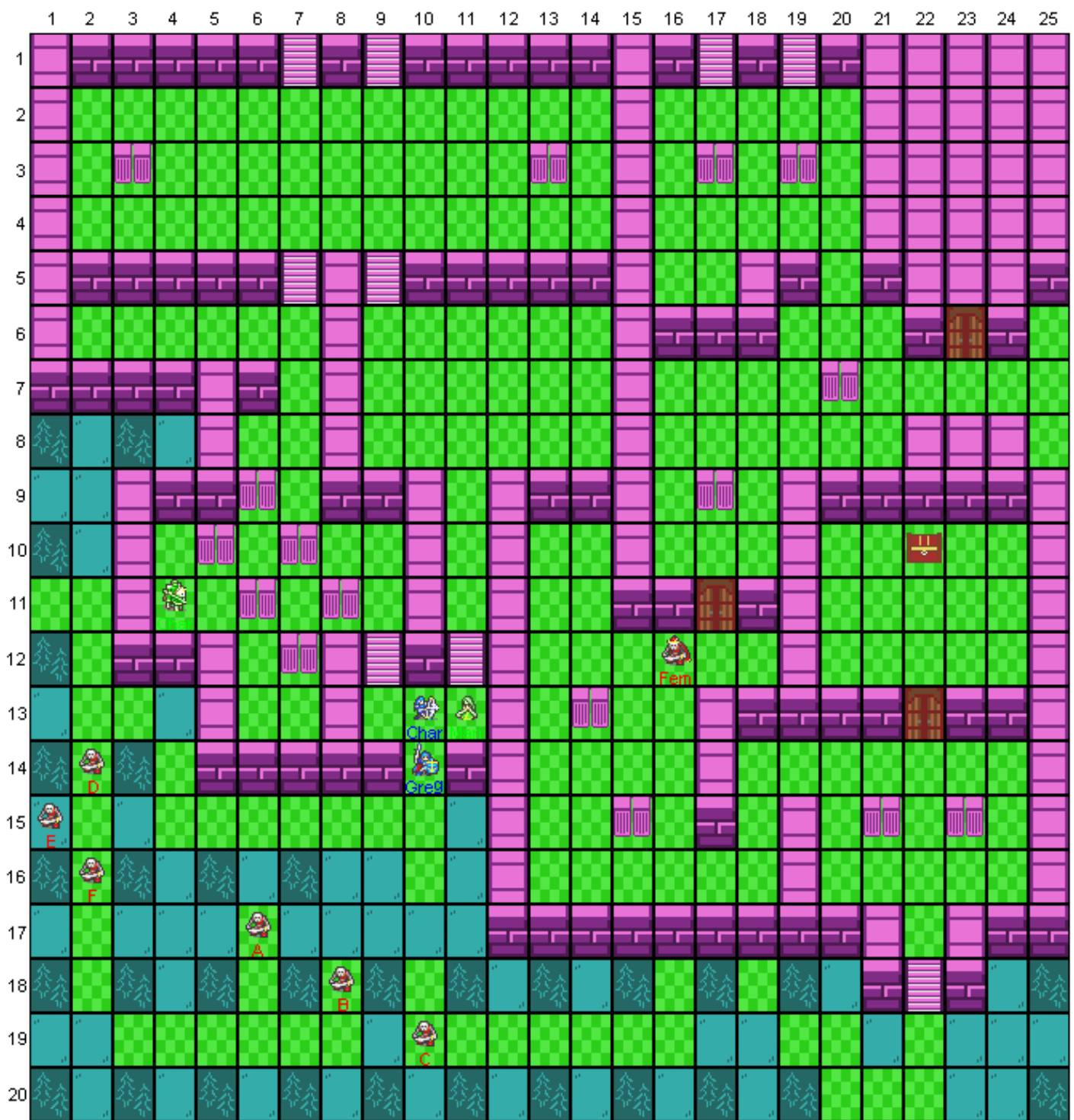
Mari stepped closer to the exit and played a tune.



"Oh. No need to worry, he is in this room." She noddod toward other set of stairs. "It seems that the grass is enchanted by Gingin. Don't step on it."

In the meanwhile, Charles looked around in bewilderment.

## ~~Player Turn 9~~



Weather:

**Gregor: (5,15), ensure Avalon is equipped.**



"Let's not shoot them yet. I know undead tend to be evil in the stories, but they haven't shown any hostility towards us so far."

**Charlotte moves to (6,15).**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

"Hark, a bunch of vagrants sneaking about!"

"Gentlemen! I say we kill them!"

The other skeletons murmur'd in agreement and then all rushed at Gregor and Charlotte, swishing their rapiers about!

It didn't go well for the skeletons who crumbled down with ease from Gregor's counter-attacks.

"Oww! Not the spleen!"

"Alas, thus ends my life! Send my regards to fine Isabelle~!"

#### **Bone E vs Gregor**

Hit:  $122+15-15-5-7-60 = 50$

Hit roll: 89, miss!

Gregor retaliates!

Hit:  $145+15+5+7-43 = 129$ , autohit!

Damage:  $41+1+1-15 = 28\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters again!

Hit:  $145+15+5+7-43 = 129$ , autohit!

Damage:  $41+1+1-15 = 28\text{dmg}$

#### **Bone D vs Gregor**

Hit:  $122+15-15-5-7-60 = 50$

Hit roll: 75, miss!

Gregor retaliates!

Hit:  $145+15+5+7-43 = 129$ , autohit!

Damage:  $41+1+1-15 = 28\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters again!

Hit:  $145+15+5+7-43 = 129$ , autohit!

Damage:  $41+1+1-15 = 28\text{dmg}$

#### **Bone F vs Gregor**

Hit:  $122+15-15-5-7-60 = 50$

Hit roll: 58, miss!

Gregor retaliates!

Hit:  $145+15+5+7-20-43 = 109$ , autohit!

Damage:  $41+1+1-15 = 28\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters again!

Hit:  $145+15+5+7-20-43 = 109$ , autohit!

Damage:  $41+1+1-15 = 28\text{dmg}$

The others stabbed at Charlotte. Or at least tried very hard to stab her.

#### **Bone A vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $122-5-10-7-58 = 42$

Hit roll: 44, miss!

#### **Bone A vs Charlotte**

Hit:  $122-5-10-7-58 = 42$

Hit roll: 60, miss!

~~Ally Phase~~



"Leave Charlotte alone!"

### Mari vs Bone B

Hit:  $121 - 43 = 78$

Hit roll: 65, hit!

Damage:  $32 - 9 = 23\text{dmg}$

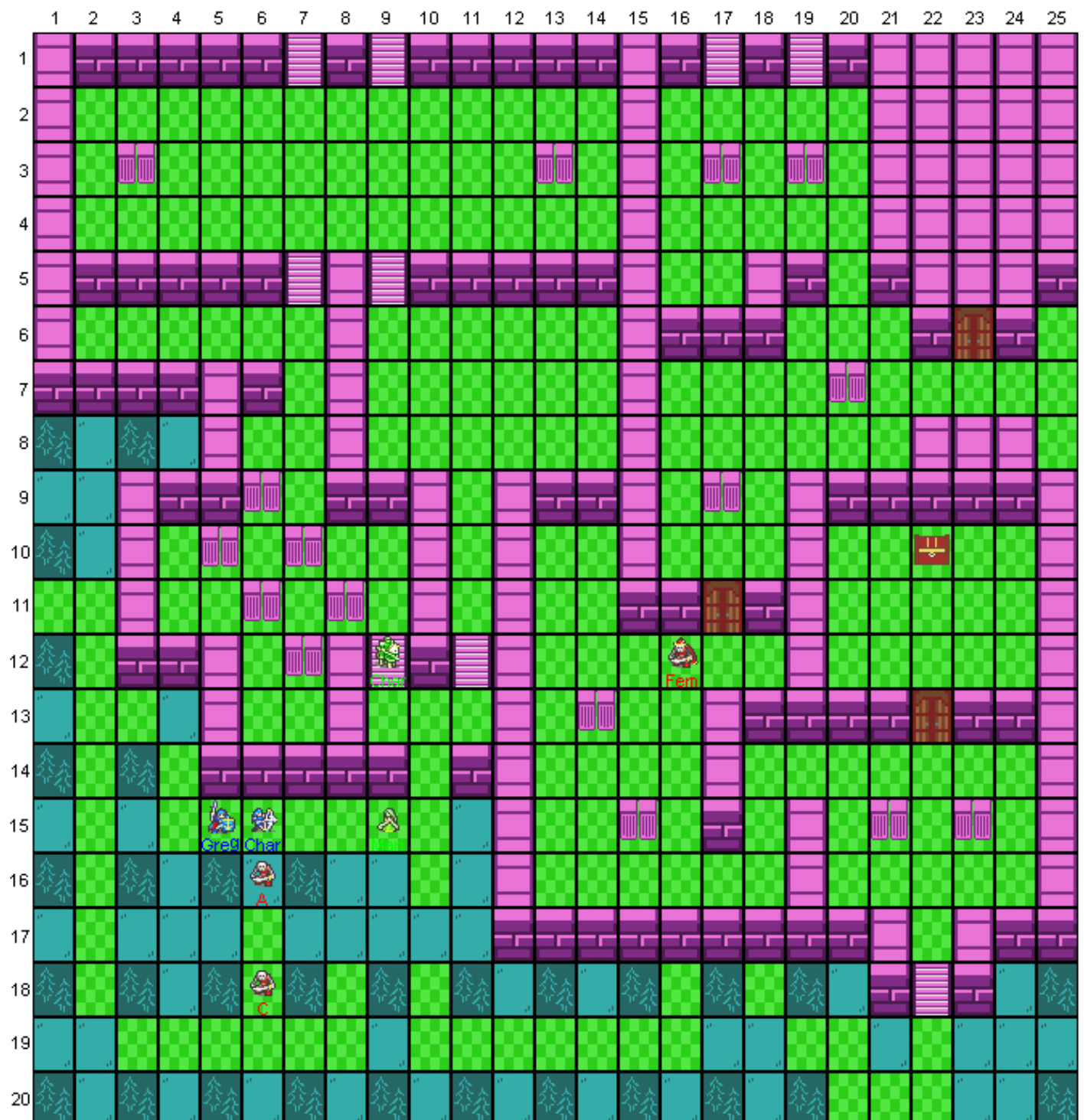
Mari strikes again!

Hit:  $121 - 43 = 78$

Hit roll: 65, hit!

Damage:  $32 - 9 = 23\text{dmg}$

### ~~Player Turn 11~~



Weather:



"Oh sure. THEY can walk on the grass..."

**Gregor: FLING a Spear at Skeleguy A!**

Charlotte fires an arrow at the fourth wall but misses.



"They may walk on the grass, but you're not a skeleton, dear. I believe you still win in the end."

**Charlotte fires a Killer Arrow at Skeleguy C.**

Twanging and swishing and two more bone piles.

**Gregor vs Bone A**

Hit:  $130+7+5-43 = 99$   
Hit roll: 99, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1+1-15 = 24\text{dmg}$

Gregor strikes again!  
Hit:  $130+7+5-43 = 99$   
Hit roll: 99, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1+1-15 = 24\text{dmg}$

**Charlotte vs Bone C**

Hit:  $145+7-43 = 109$ , autohit! Crit roll: 45!  
Damage:  $33+1-15 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

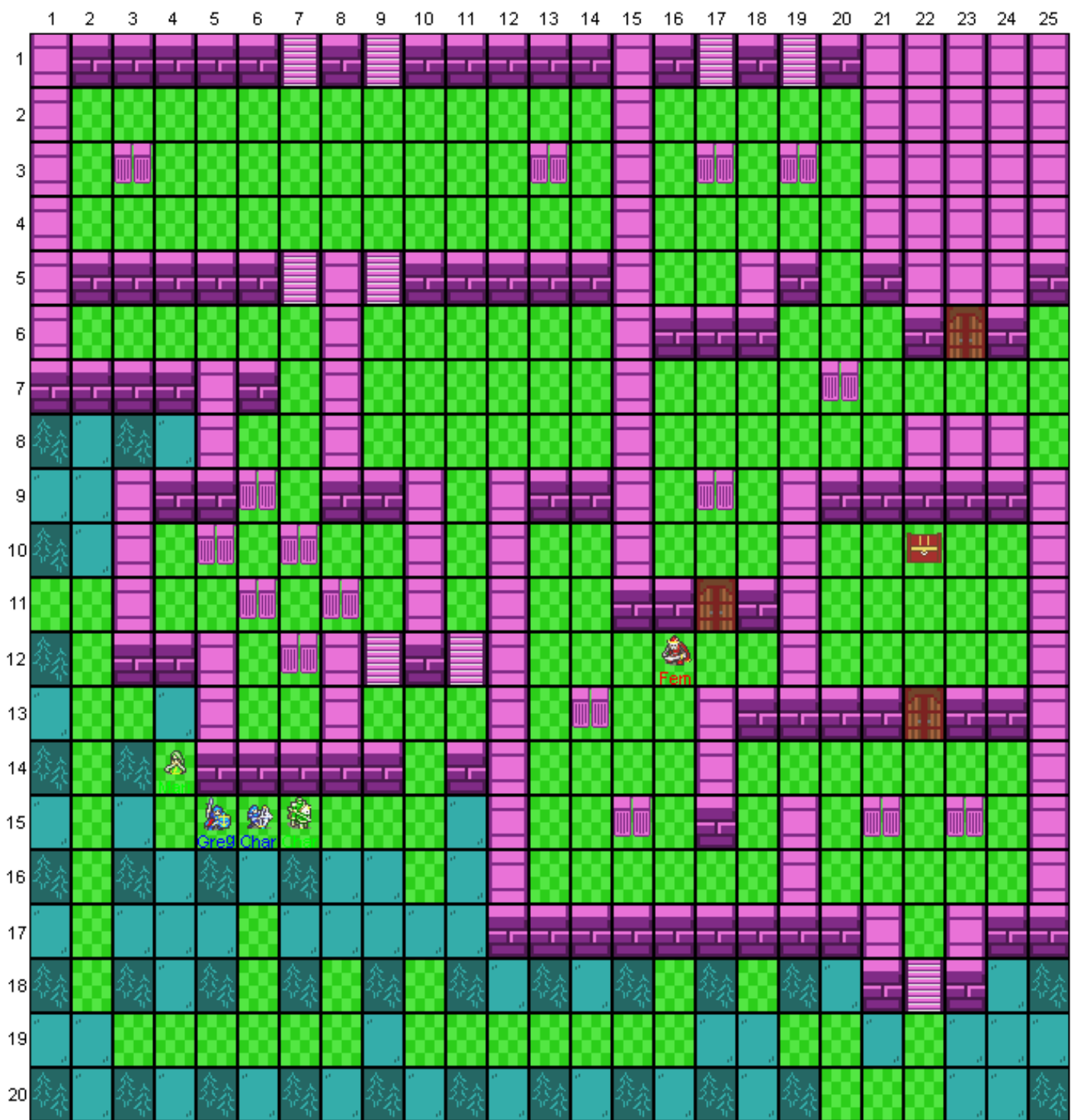
Charles have arrived while Mari paced about.



"Well..."



# ~~Player Turn 12~~



Weather:



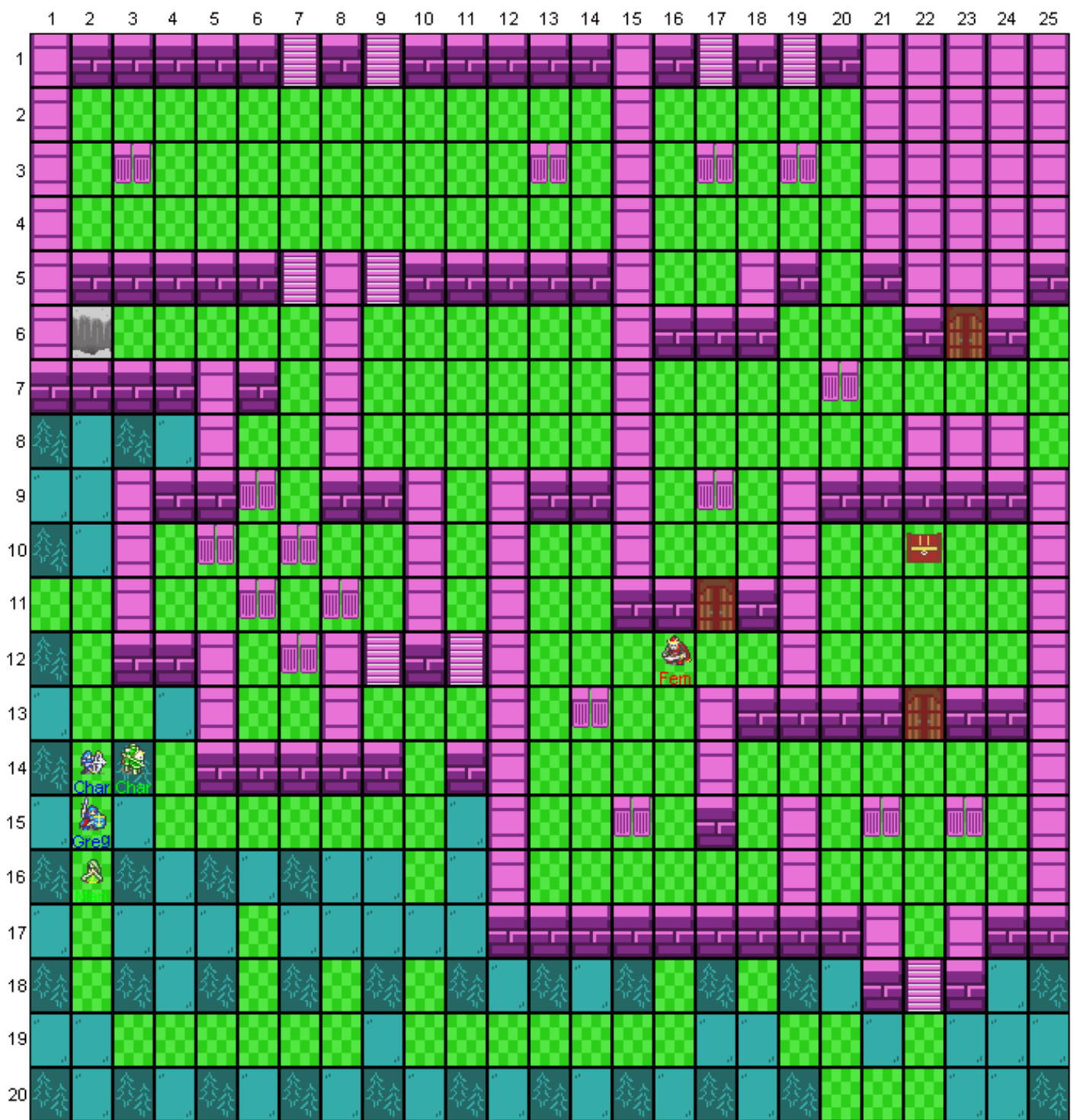
"I sure hope these trees don't count as grass..."

**Gregor: Move to (2,15), following the path and moving through the trees at (3,14).**

**Charlotte: 2,14, same as gregor**

Nothing bad at all have happened.

# ~~Player Turn 0D~~



Weather:

**Gregor: Keep following the path to (3,19).**

**Charlotte: (3,18)**

Once Gregor stepped between the trees....

\*BLOOP!\*

\*BLOOP!\*

\*BLOOP!\*

"Nyohohohoh, impatient are we?" Gregor heard the voice of the demon in his head.  
"Well, good luck with THIS!"

\*BLOOP!\*

And Gregor found himself in totally alien, if not a little bit eye-blasting, well-lit room.  
Place. Thing?

### ~~Ally Phase~~

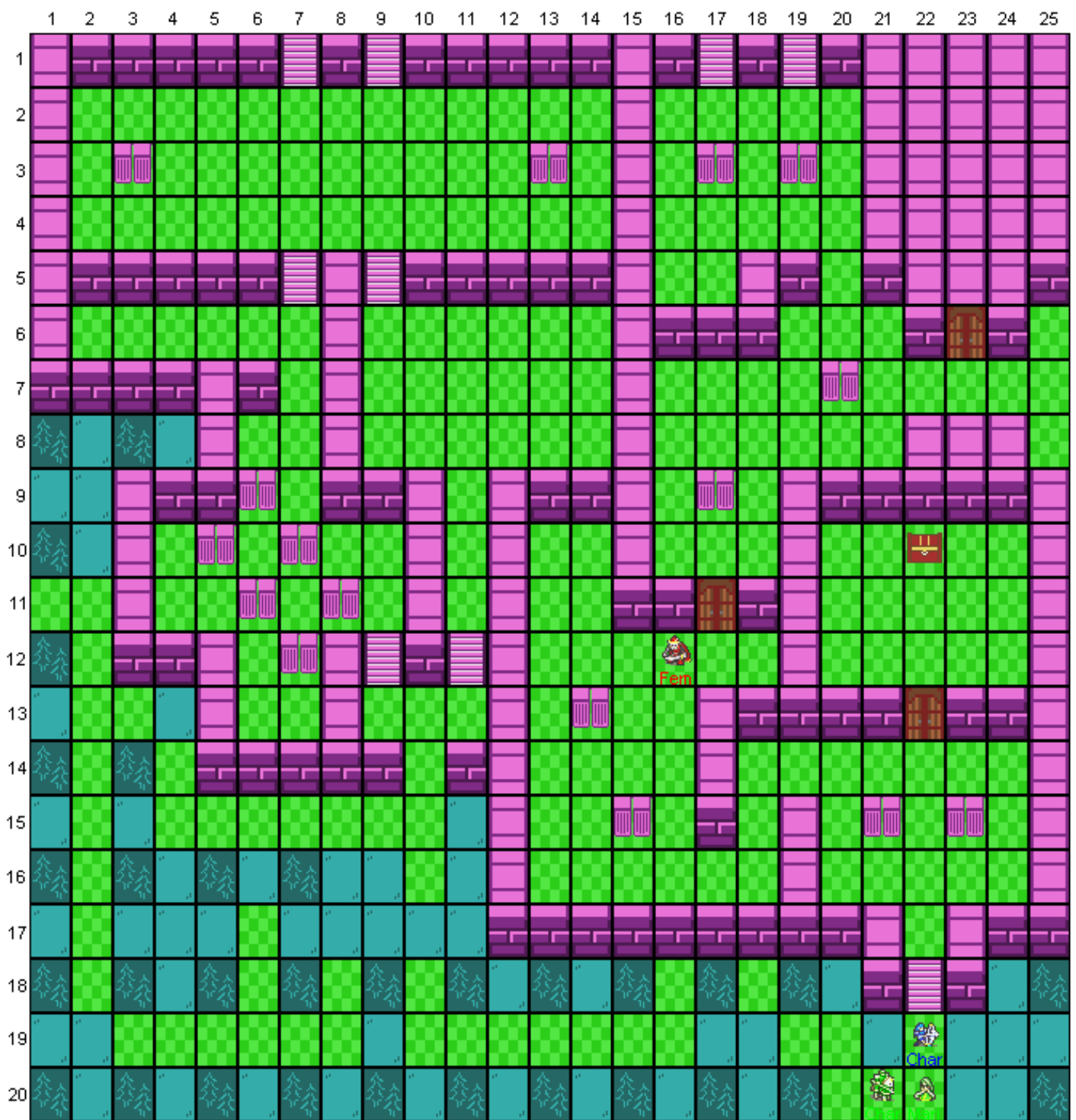


"Huh, where is Gregor?" The question came after Charles looked around and didn't see Charlotte's husbando anywhere.



"This is strange... maybe he is inside already?"

~~Player Turn 0E~~



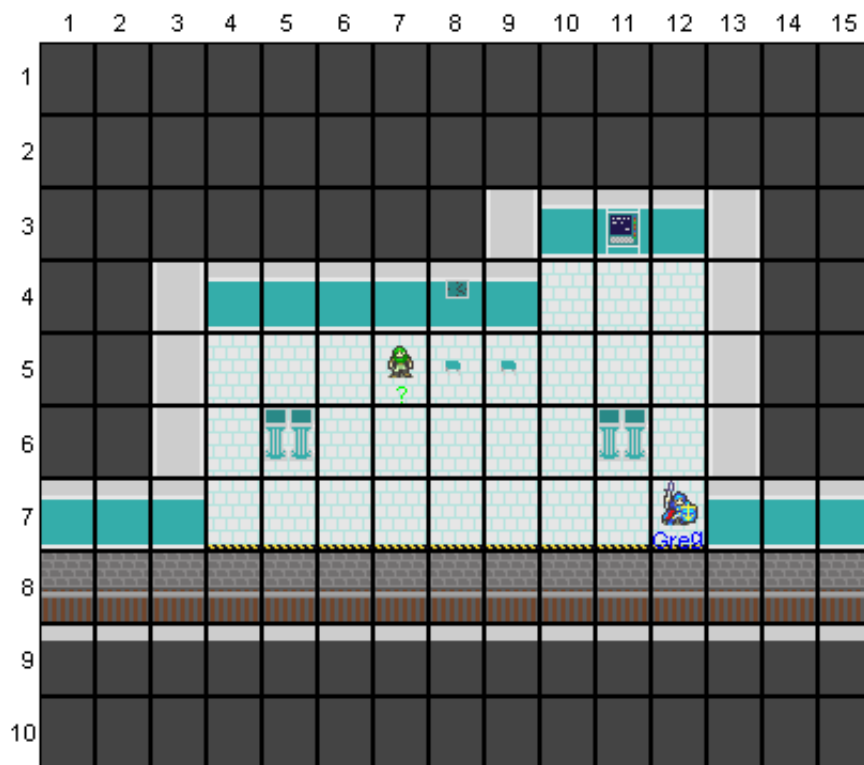
Weather:

.

.

.

...



Weather:



"Wait...where am I?"

**Gregor: Move to (8,5), Talk!**



"Um...Hello."

The man sitting on one of the tiny stools was ancient; his there was not an inch of his face not covered in deep wrinkles, his sparse hair and thin moustache where almost white, and his hands were covered in wrinkled skin, which looked as if it was wrapping bones directly and there was no muscle underneath.

"Hello." He replied in raspy, dry and very quiet voice, his eyes staring at a spot on the ground.



"I don't suppose you could help me? I don't know what this place is, or how I got here...or where the others are, for that matter."

The man tilted his head slightly, his neck cracking quite audibly.

"This is punishment station... I'm waiting for the train to pick me up back to the real world... Gingin said I just have to wait long enough and I will be forgiven... and the train... I will be back... soon... just few more years, I'm sure..." He mumbled under his

nose.



"Y-years?!"



"I can't stay here for years! I have a wife! My brother needs my help! There must be a way out of here..."

The man let out a hum.

"There's this... window thing... and buttons... up there... it has buttons with labels but I cannae read... so I never found out what they do... you can try if you're impatient... but haven't we both got here for being impatient, in the first place? Mhmmm..." The elderly man mumbled under his nose and it looked as if he was ready to doze off.



"What on earth are you talking about--ah, he fell asleep."

**Gregor: (11,4), examine the panel.**

The glass panel was dark blue.

There were numerous, colored buttons, but they were rather dusty. Only three of them had labels; one was labeled 'Hope', the next 'Release' and the third 'Escape'.

Strangely, the one labeled 'Hope' was seemingly lit from inside, giving out much brighter hue than others.

**Gregor: Try pressing Release!**

There was a soft click coming from the panel after the button was pushed, but nothing else happened.

**Escape?**

Same thing as above.

**Well, no help for it. Press Hope.**

The glass panel lit up, becoming blue-ish.

Words and numbers appeared on it, in white font, forming two lines. The lines were:

'Genghis Khan 39y11m13d 08:29:35'

'Gregor von Hexham 10y11m30d 23:58:14'

The numbers were continuously counting downwards, presumably to the time of each person's release or something.

Speaking of Release, it's button lit up as well!

Gregor stared at the display. So many years...

### **Press Release.**

Suddenly, the old man clutched his chest, and slumped to the floor, lifeless.

The entry for 'Genghis Khan' dissappeared from the screen, now leaving only Gregor's countdown there.

'Escape' button lit up after a second.

...Pressing Escape seems like a really bad idea.

### **Look around to see if anything has changed.**

Nothing else have changed.

### **PRESS DA FLASHING BUTTON**

\*BLOOP\*

Gregor found himself in a room with moving floor! Two floors were moving in front of him, one to the left, one to the right. The more bizarre things were going under the ceiling - a trio of mechanical arms were putting small objects onto the moving floors; tiny wooden boats, metal figurines, porcelain dolls and such, and these items then were transported by said floors to the holes in the walls; holes no larger than Gregor's head.

There was other moving floor, going east...

---



"...Gregor? Where is he?"

### **Charlotte: Move to 21,14, and test the door for realness with an arrow.**

The door produced satisfactory thud when struck with an arrow, but failed to open.

#### **Charlotte vs Door**

33-5 = 28dmg
--------------

~~Ally Phase~~



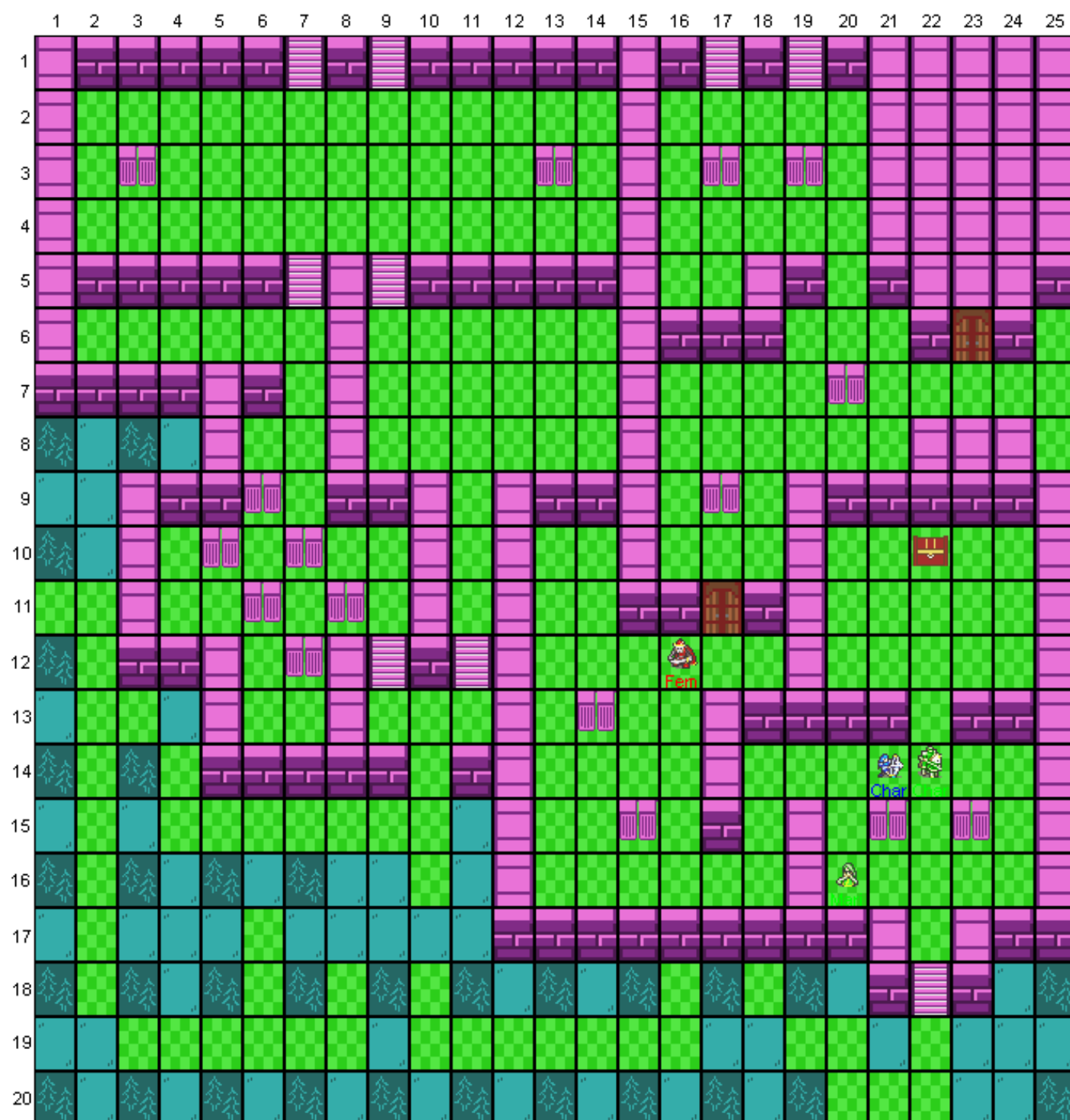
"Make way, Charlotte, I will open it!" With grace of sofa-flopping whale, Charles and his mount smashed the door open, revealing small room with chest on the other end. It's lid was open, showing a bow made from brass-like material and with brightly-shining bow string.

#### Charles vs Door

35-5 = 30dmg

Mari moved inside the castle as well.

### ~~Player Turn 15~~



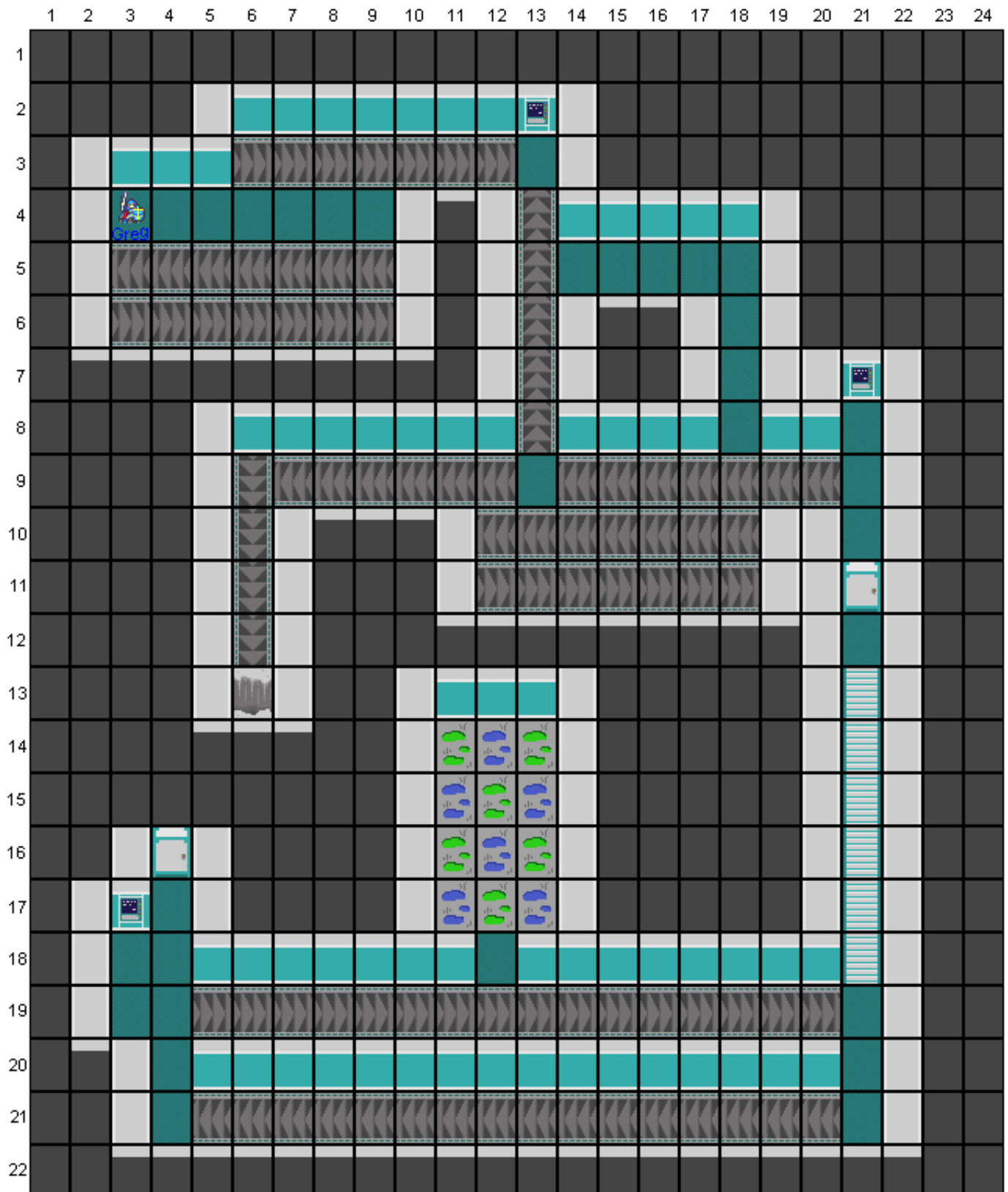
Weather:



...

**It takes 0.5 MOV to move along the conveyor belt, 2 MOV against it, and 1 MOV to 'step away' from it. Operating consoles is treated as an action (but turn won't progress until you finish operating).**

**Also, ending your turn on the conveyor belt will make it move your unit along it's length by 1 tile at the start of new turn. Good luck!**



Weather:

**Gregor: Move 3 east, 1 north, then 4 more east.**

Gregor felt almost like flying with the floor moving in the same direction as him.

---

**Charlotte moved 1E 4N and grabbed the item. Could this be the Solar Longbow of legend?**

Charlotte lifted the bow and immediately felt two things: the power tingling in her hands, as well as how damn heavy the bow was. Only now she noticed an inscription written along the bow: "KVASIR, THE MESSENGER OF SUN AND HEIRLOOM OF RAVADAR FAMILY, CRUSADERS OF DRAGON, MAY PLAGUE DESCEND ON THOSE WHO TOUCH THIS SACRED WEAPON!"

**Charlotte got Kvasir!**

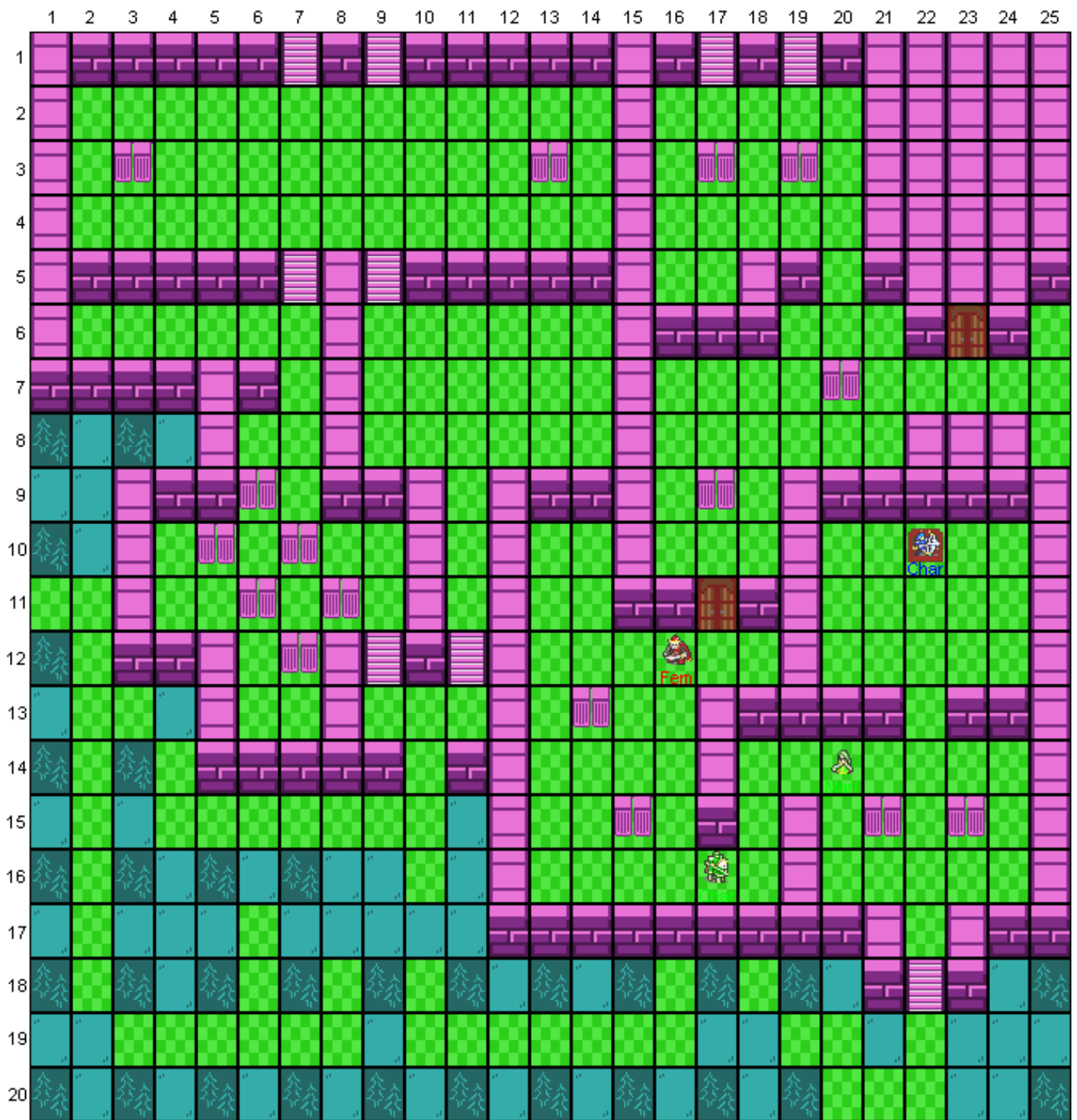
**~~Ally Phase~~**

Charles rushed forth while Mari stopped mid-walk.

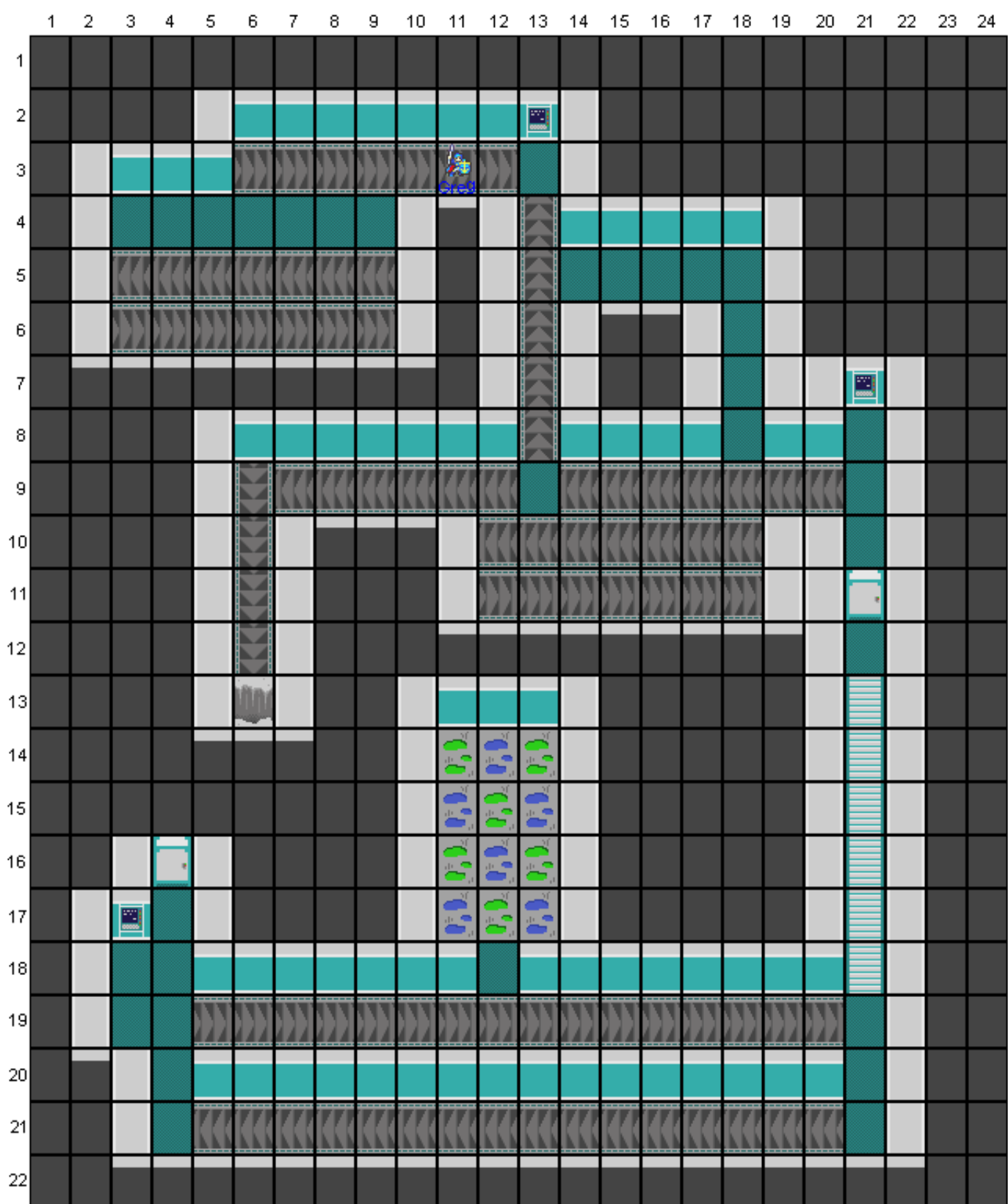


"Charlotte, where did you go?"

# ~~Player Turn 15~~



Weather:



Weather:



"I'm riight... HERE!"

**Charlotte moves 2 S, 2 W, and fired Kvasir at the skeleton.**

Charles peeked around the corner to spy on the undead in the cape - just in time to witness a beam of light blast the skeleton and cause an explosion that left a black, smoldering spot where the skeleton stood.

### Charlotte vs Monsieur Femur

Hit: 135-15-58 = 62

Hit roll: 52, hit!

Damage: 72-17 = 55dmg

**Gregor: Move 2 squares left, activate the console.**

There were several broken and unlit buttons, their labels worn off or, in some cases, blank. Only two buttons were lit up: First was labeled 'Belt' and other 'Garb.Neutr.'. This might have something to do with lines written on the screen:

"Access Line: Console 1 <- Console 2

Garbage Pit #1 Neutralization Pattern: None"

**Gregor: Press Belt**

With series of clicks and clunking, the floor to the south began moving in opposite direction.

The arrow on the screen began to point from 'Console 1' towards 'Console 2' now.

**Try pressing the Garbage button.**

Nothing happened, besides that pattern thing changed from 'None' to 'Contain'.

**Press it again!**

Now 'Contain' changed into 'Eradicate'.

**Agaaaaaaain**

And now it was back to 'None'.

Gregor stepped away from the console.

**~~Ally Phase~~**



"Woah, Mari, what was that?" Charles moved back to the faery woman.



"Huh? What was what?"

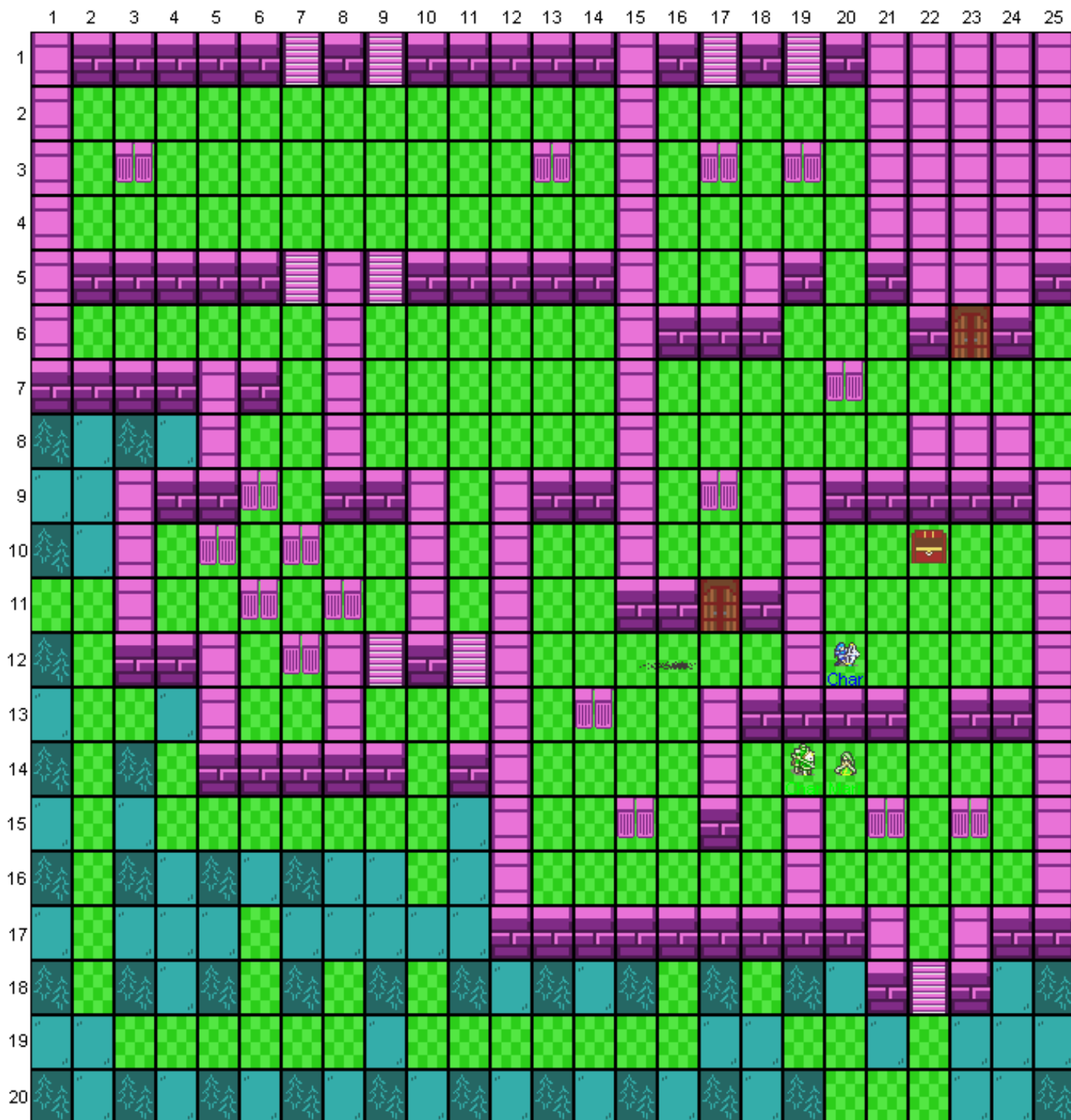


"This explosion, the undead guy just exploded!"

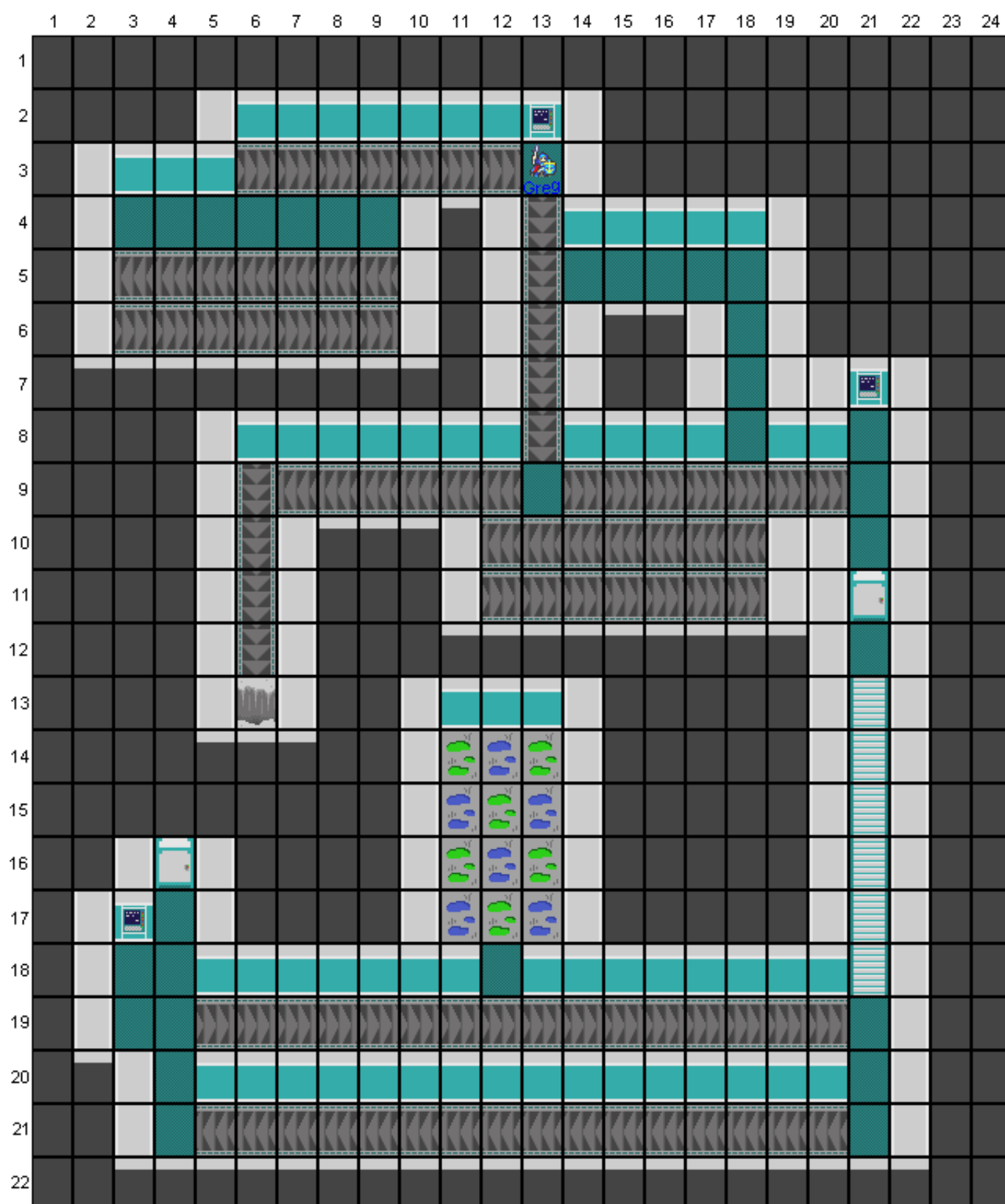


"Wuh? Oh. Charlotte, was that you?"

### ~~Player Turn 17~~



Weather:



Weather:

Nyohohoh, forge-oh shit she got the bow.

Gingin gotta prepare, but Gingin will be BACK!  
Nyohohohoh!



"This place is so strange. I wish Charlotte could see this.."

**Gregor:** Move down to (13,9), then as far right as possible.



"Yep! Let's keep going."

**Charlotte moves to 21, 15.**



"...Charlotte, I think it will be better if you leave this bow. It gives off strange energy. I'm not sure I like-"

**~~Ally Phase~~**



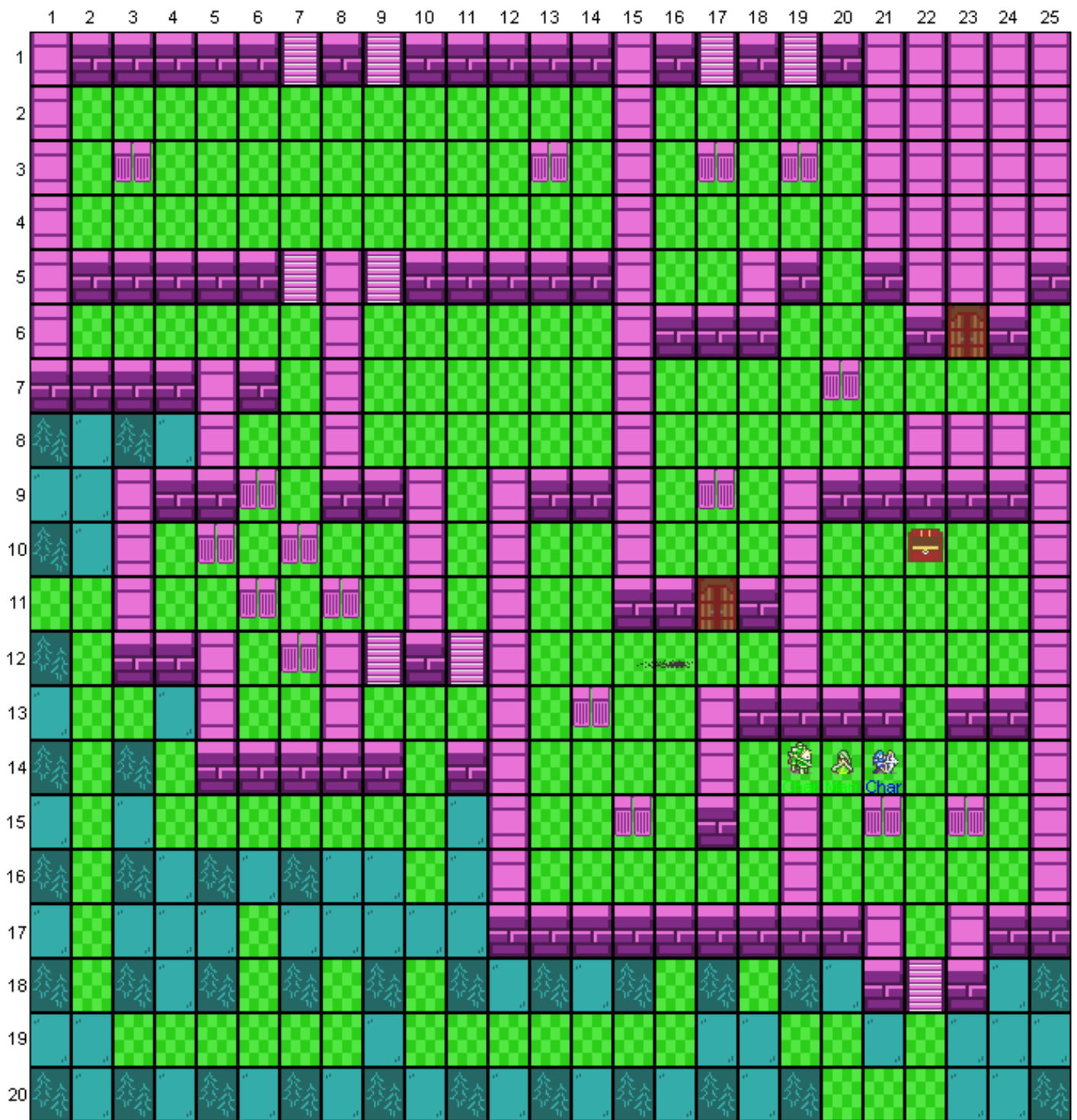
"**There's another door!**" Charles grimaced after riding into the next room, and Mari went after him.



"Well I don't see any other way than to smash it into sticks, hmm?"



~~Player Turn 18~~



Weather:

Weather:

<b>Mercs:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>	<b>Allies:</b>
Charlotte von Hexham: 40/40 Gregor von Hexham: 48/48	Gingin: 80/80	Charles von Hexham: 44/44 Mari: 35/35

**Gregor: 3 right, 1 up, examine console.**

There were much more on the glass panel:

"Access Line: Console 1 -> Console 2"

Access Line: Console 2 - Console 3:

->

<-

Garbage Pit #1 Neutralization Pattern: None

Lower Compartment Door: Closed"

In addition to the two buttons 'Belt' and 'Garb.Neutr' like at previous console, there were two extra lit up: "Access 2" and "Door Configuration".

**Press the Door Configuration button.**

A loud 'thunk' came from the door and the corresponding line on the glass changed to 'Locked'.

Gregor frowned and pressed the button again.

Another thunk came from the door, which then swung widely open, and 'Locked' changed to a satisfactory 'Open' instead.

**Press both access line buttons.**

Clicks from both close and afar came to Gregor's ears.

Lines on the glassy panel changed as follows:

"Access Line: Console 1 <- Console 2

Access Line: Console 2 - Console 3:

<-

->"

**Leave console.**



"Pshaw, strange energies. I think I'm experienced enough to know what I'm doing here."

**Charlotte: Move to (17,16), LITEBEAM the door.**

\*KSS-BLAM!\*

The door almost gave way, the hinges twisting from the sheer force of the shot.

**Charlotte vs Door**

40-5 = 35dmg

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Charles smashed the door open with his lance and rode inside.

### Charles vs Door

35-5 = 30dmg



"Gregor! Gregor, where are you?"



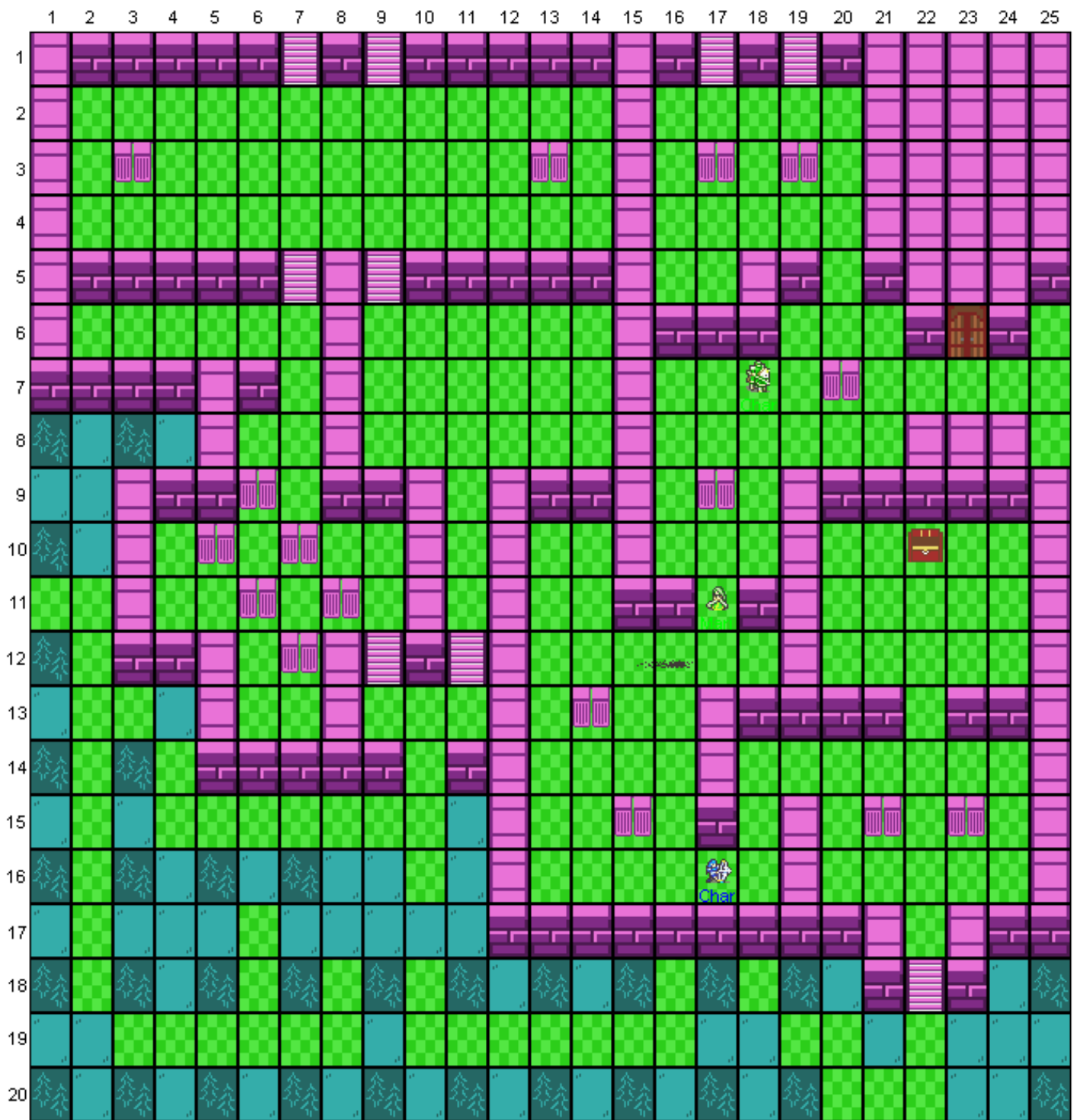
"He must be somewher-"

"NyohohoHOHohohoho!"

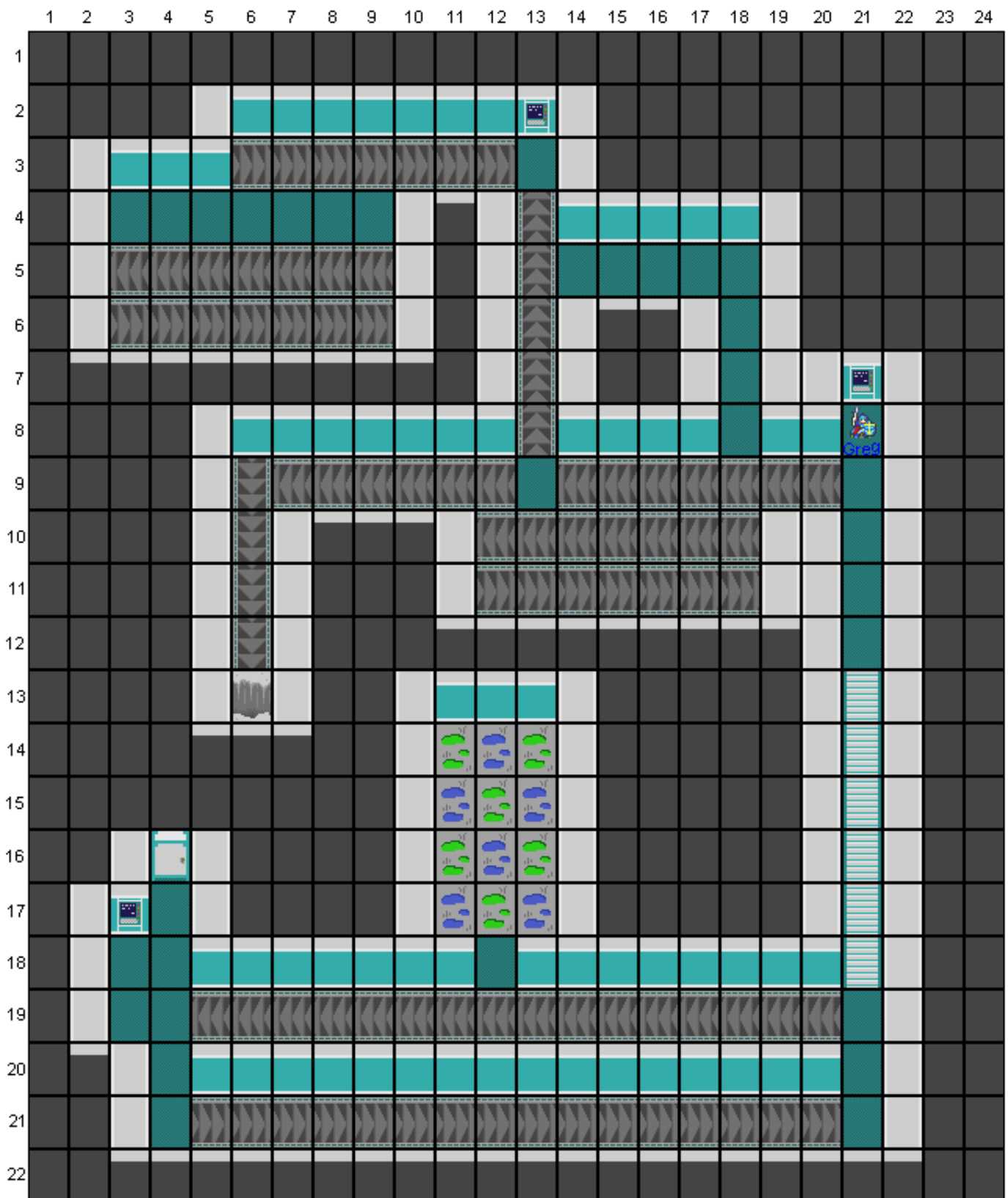


"That's Ginging laughter! The demon is nearby!"

# ~~Player Turn 19~~



Weather:



Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	Allies:
Charlotte von Hexham: 40/40 Gregor von Hexham: 48/48	Gingin: 80/80	Charles von Hexham: 44/44 Mari: 35/35

**Gregor: 6 south.**

**Charlotte: (17,12)**

Charlotte nods toward Mari and readies another arrow.

The moment Gregor went down few steps, the stairs collapsed into a slope! Sudden lack of flat surface under his feet sent Gregor tumbling and bouncing downwards, gaining bruise after bruise, until he crashed on the lower floor.

A distant 'nyohohohoh!' sounded across the strange dungeon.

**Tumblr!**

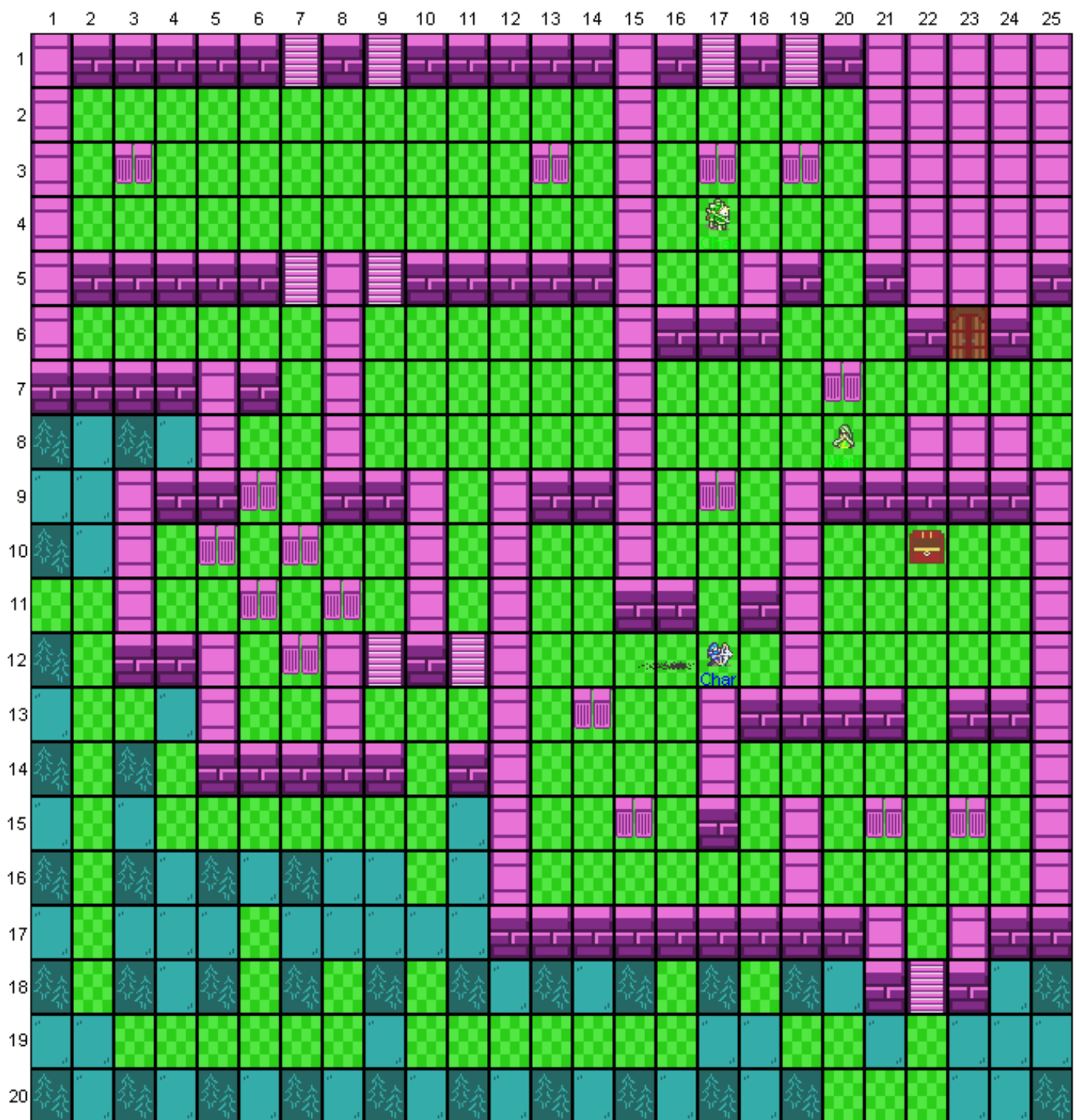
Gregor loses 10HP!

~~Ally Phase~~



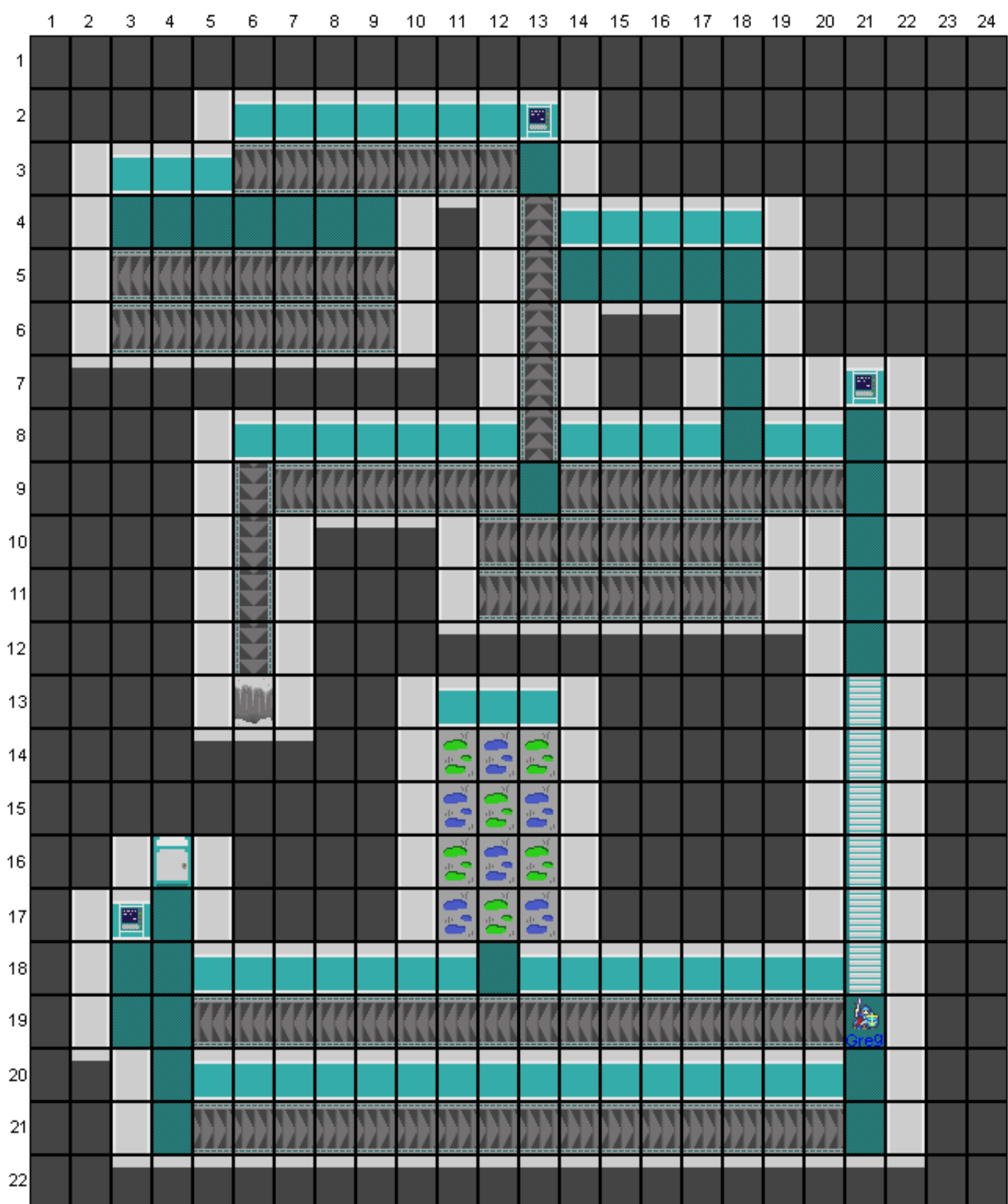
"Gregor? He is not here either..."

## ~~Player Turn 19~~



Weather:





Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	Allies:
Charlotte von Hexham: 40/40 Gregor von Hexham: 38/48	Gingin: 80/80	Charles von Hexham: 44/44 Mari: 35/35

**Gregor: Go 3 MOV's worth of squares to the left.**

Gregor's nostrils have been attacked. It was a putrid smell of rotting plants and worse, maybe even corpses. The stench already had a wrenching effect on his stomach that was hit by a bout of nausea. The smell was coming from a small doorway leading somewhere to the right. There were three orbs set into one side of the doorframe; a

yellow one, a green one, and red one. The yellow one was lit up from inside, not unlike the numerous buttons Gregor saw in the the corridors above.

---



"Gee, I WONDER where he's hiding!"

**Charlotte walks to 19,8**

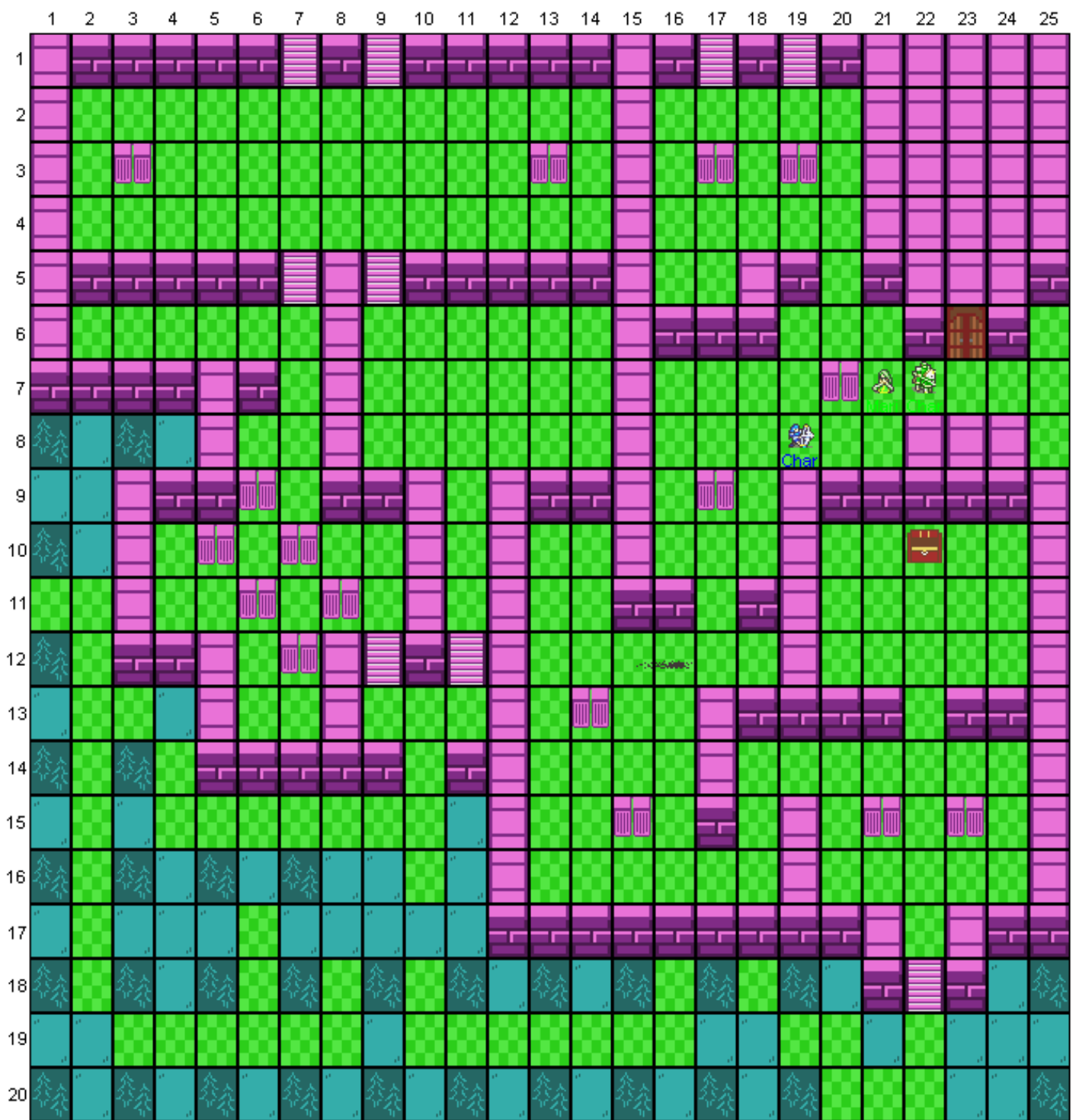
**~~Ally Phase~~**

Charles and Mari moved toward the door.

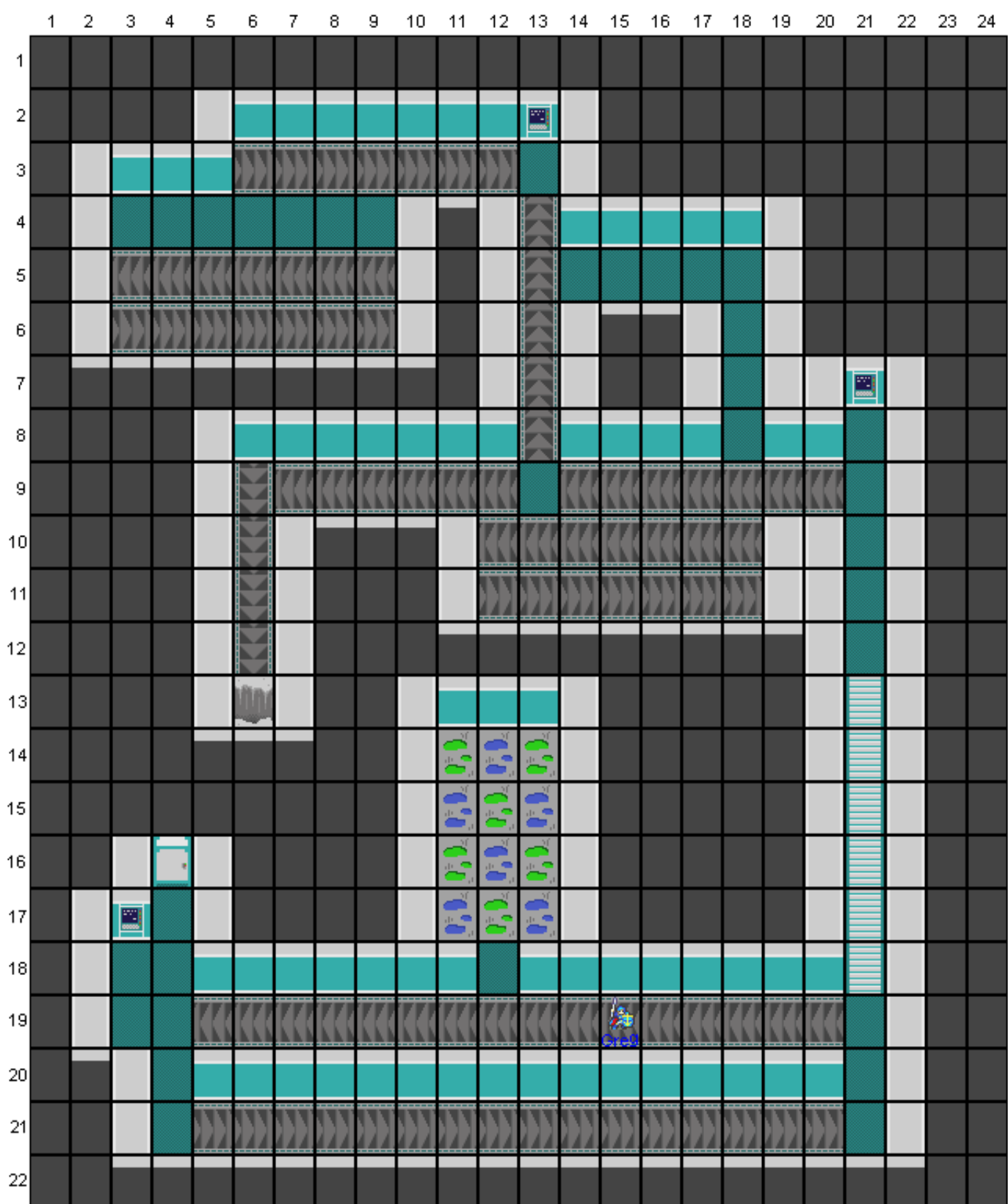


"I would appreciate if you two smash the door. Then I will go and blast him with light."

~~Player Turn 21~~



Weather:



Weather:

<b>Merces:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>	<b>Allies:</b>
Charlotte von Hexham: 40/40 Gregor von Hexham: 38/48	Gingin: 80/80	Charles von Hexham: 44/44 Mari: 35/35



*Just breathe through your mouth and keep going, Gregor. You've smelled worse things before...probably.*

Gregor: (4,19)

---



"Can do!"

**Charlotte: Move to 21,8. LITEBEAM the door.**

\*TWANG\*

\*thud\*

**Charlotte vs Door**

40-5 = 35dmg

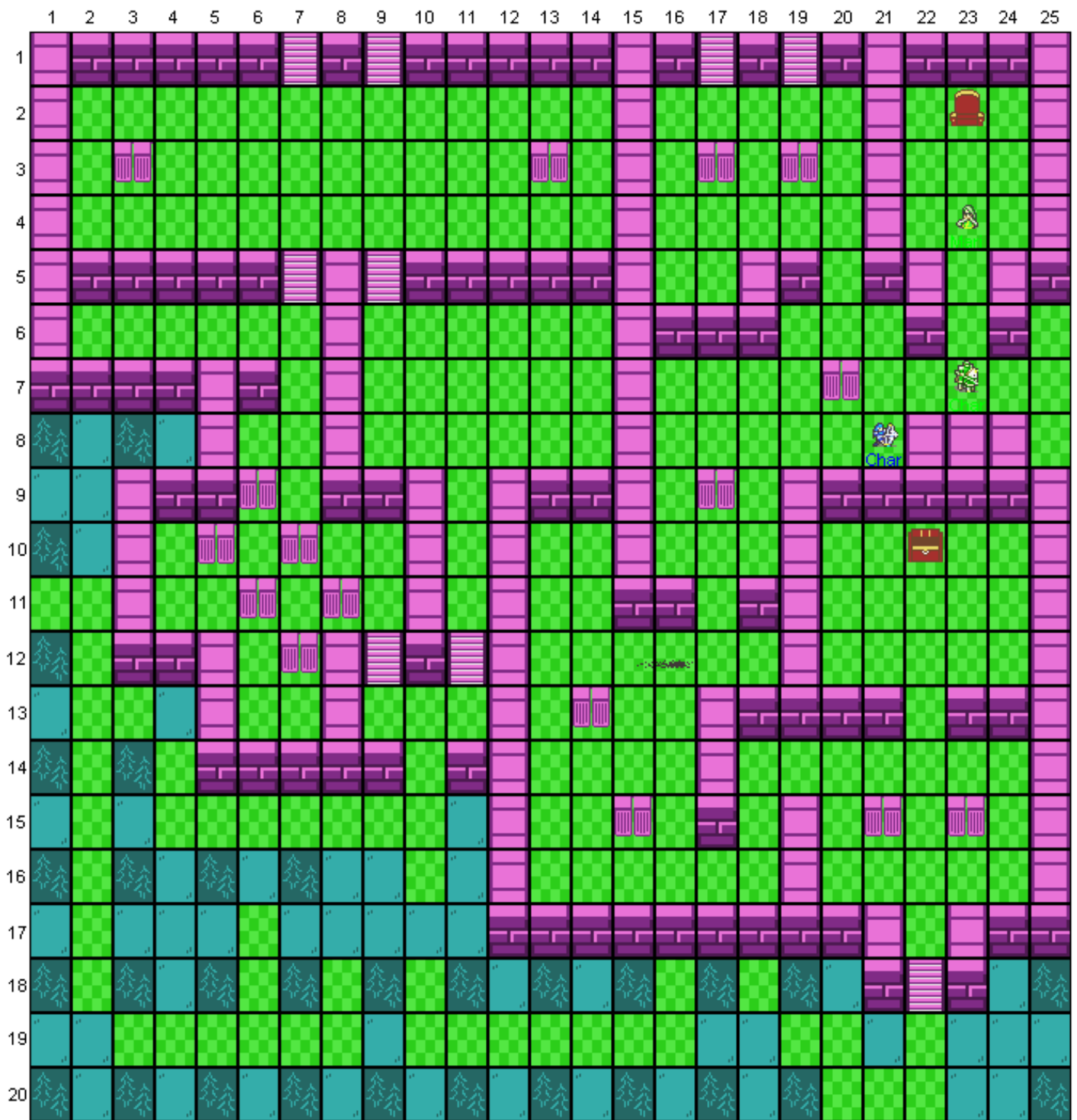
**~~Ally Phase~~**

Charles smashed the door open. Mari ran inside, her hands ready to cast spells...

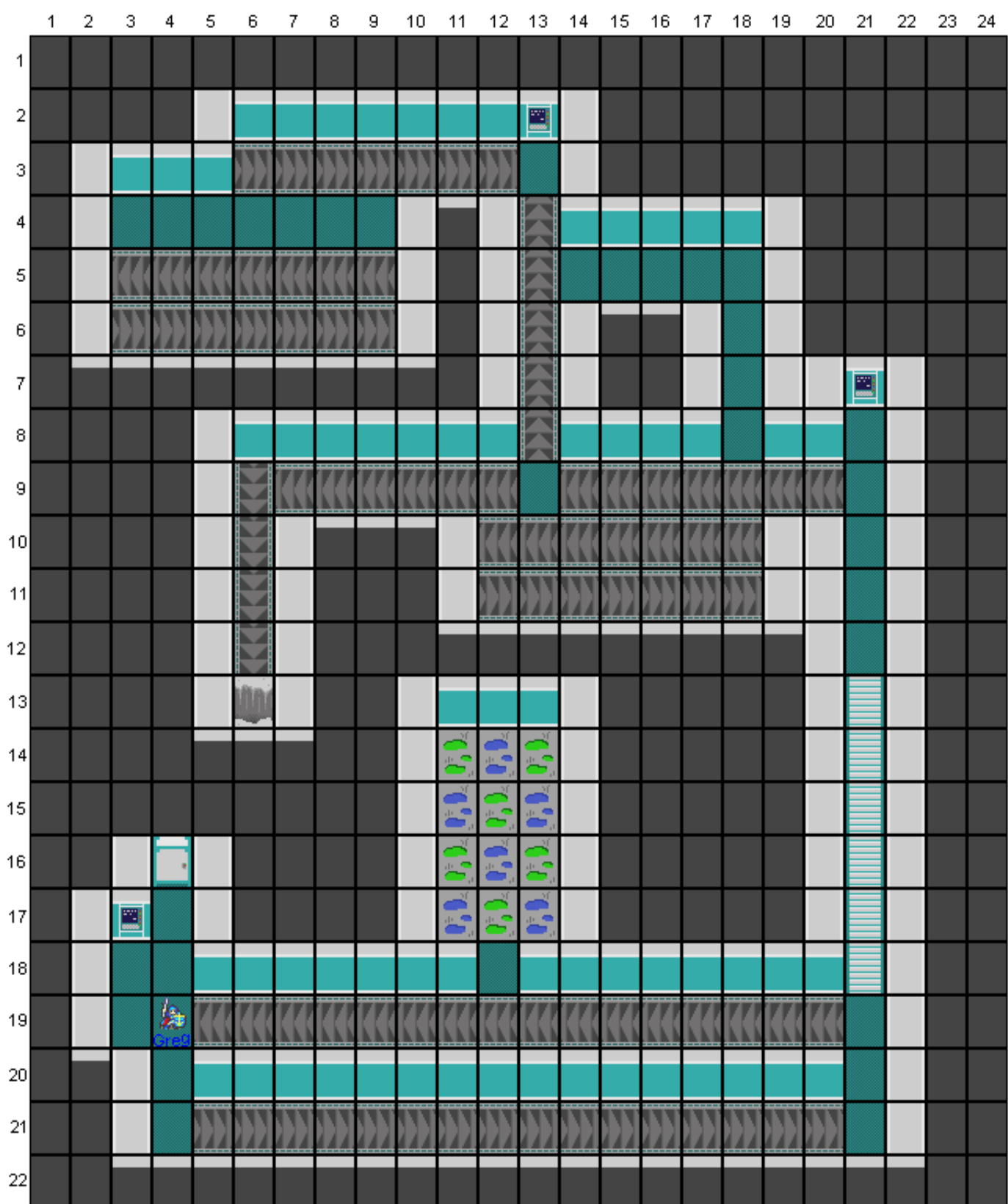


"He isn't here!?"

# ~~Player Turn 21~~



Weather:



Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	Allies:
Charlotte von Hexham: 40/40 Gregor von Hexham: 38/48	Gingin: 80/80	Charles von Hexham: 44/44 Mari: 35/35

**Gregor: (3,18), activate console.**

There were random numbers and letters and strange symbols appearing all over the glass panel.

There was only one, big, red button, labeled 'Do you really really really want to go back

and try your hardest to complete your foolish quest of even scratching the Mighty Lord Gingin?'



"If that's where my family is? Damn right I do."

**PUSH DA BUTTON!**

\*BLOOP\*

---

**Charlotte: Move to 23,6.**



"Mari, move to the throne."

\*BLOOP\*

\*BLOOP\*

\*BLOOP\*

...

Gregor, Charlotte, Charles (along with his horse) and Mari fell downwards for a moment before landing in a big chamber.

"**NYHYOEHYOEHOEHOOHOHEOHYH!** Willkommen in my precious throne room!" A giant demonical entity laughed with high-pitched voice of a fox (or hyena), and it looked like a fox, with tiny bat wings on its back and dark, shaggy fur.



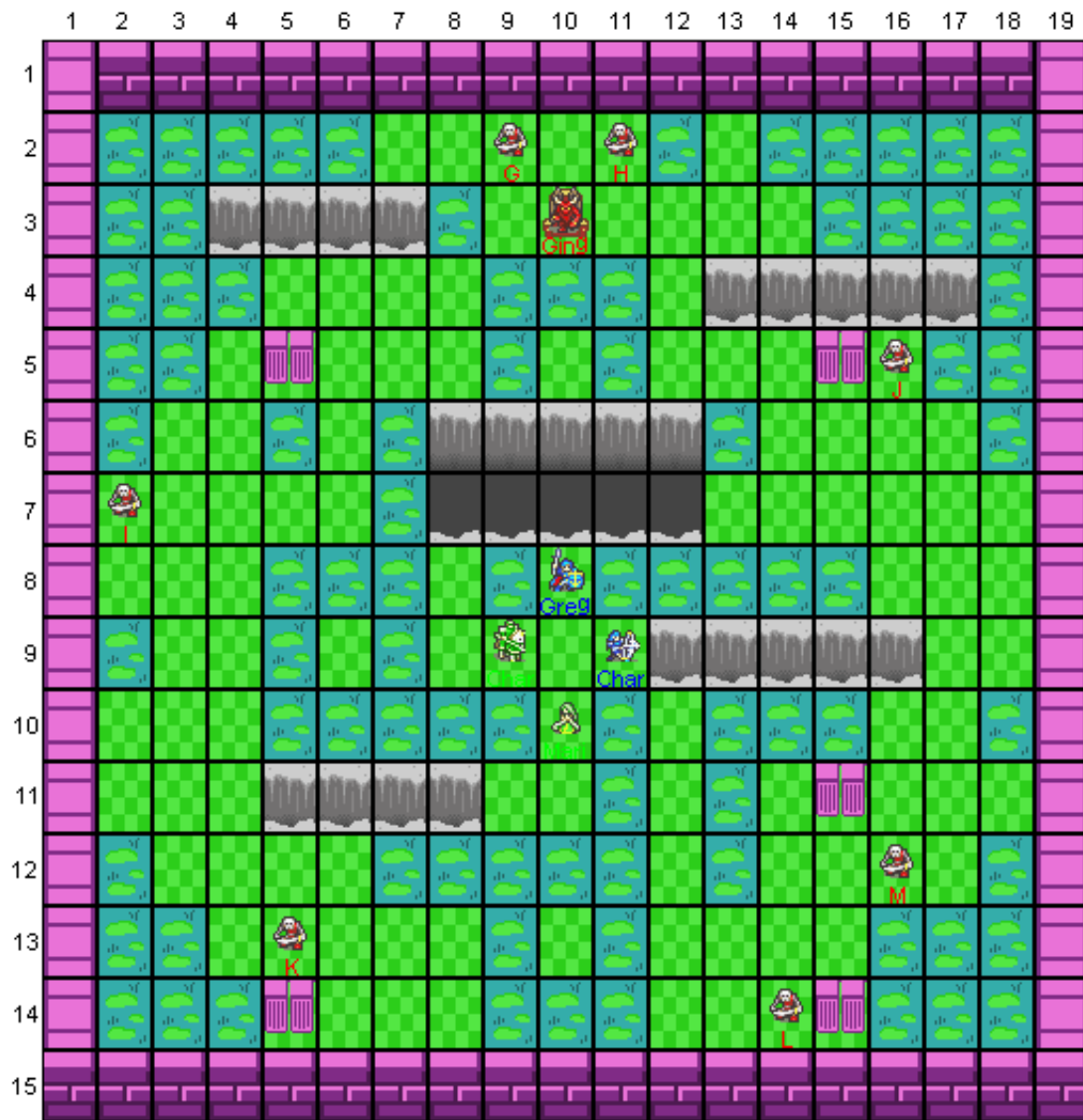
"Gingin! Tell me where is your Master! Or you shall perish!"

The fox laughed as numerous skeletal warriors rose from the floor. Then, he let out a scream, louder than any shriek the four ever heard in their lives. The floor of the chamber has been torn! Several chasms appeared, seemingly bottomless and a wider one appeared in front of Gregor, dividing him and his companions from Gingin.

"**LET'S DANCE FIRST! NYOHYHOHYOHOOH!**"



# ~~Player Turn 23~~



Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	Allies:
Charlotte von Hexham: 40/40 Gregor von Hexham: 38/48	Bone-at-Arms G: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms H: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms I: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms J: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms K: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms L: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms M: 35/35 Gingin: 80/80	Charles von Hexham: 44/44 Mari: 35/35



"Gregor! I knew you'd come back! Now move between Mari and I. I've got a plan."



"I'll have to tell you what happened later. For now, let's give your plan a shot. Umm...here?"

Gregor: Move 1 south. Ensure Avalon is equipped.



"Yes, let's give it a... *shot*."

Charlotte: Move 1W, 1N, and LITEBEAM Gingin.

The arrow sailed across the chamber and struck Gingin in the face.

"Ow! You serpentine mother of pigs, that hurt!" He shrieked.

Charlotte vs Gingin

135+10+7-10-44 = 98  
Hit roll: 53, hit!  
Damage: 40+1-22 = 19dmg

~~Enemy Phase~~

Suddenly, Gingin appeared right near Charlotte! He smashed one of his claws into her stomach, and she barely avoided second blow.

Gingin vs Charlotte

Hit: 121-10-5-7-52 = 47  
Hit roll: 14, hit!  
Damage: 44-1-5-20 = 18dmg  
Charlotte is Poisoned!

Gingin strikes once more!  
Hit: 121-10-5-7-52 = 47  
Hit roll: 67, miss!

Wicked Speed: 16, success!

Next moment, Gingin was away again! He shrieked toward the ceiling; it began to crumble! Chunks of stone fell around Gregor!

16, 11, 21, 23, 22  
Huge stone smashes onto 9.10!  
Huge stone smashes onto 8.9!  
Huge stone smashes onto 9.11!  
Huge stone smashes onto 11.11!  
Huge stone smashes onto 10.11!

His skeletal minions walked toward the heroes.

~~Ally Phase~~



"Watch out for these green waters! It's poison!" Mari warned, running to the side to blast one of the skeletons.

Mari vs Bone I

A small, square portrait of a young man with short, wavy red hair and blue eyes. He is wearing a red scarf and a dark blue jacket with gold trim. The background is a light blue gradient.

## Charles vs Bone M

## Poison rolls

[illegible]

<b>Mercs:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>	<b>Allies:</b>
Charlotte von Hexham: 19/40 <b>Poison (4/5)</b> Gregor von Hexham: 38/48	Bone-at-Arms G: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms H: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms J: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms K: 35/35 Bone-at-Arms L: 35/35	Charles von Hexham: 44/44 Mari: 35/35

**Gregor: (14,7), STAB Skeleton J with Avalon!**

**Charlotte moves to 15,17! If Gregor has slain the skeleton, target Skeleton H. If not, target Skeleton J!**

#### **Gregor vs Skeleton J**

Hit:  $145+5-15-45 = 90$   
 Hit roll: 79, hit! Crit roll: 13!  
 Damage:  $41-1-15 = 25 \times 3 = 75\text{dmg}$

When the arrow launched by Charlotte hit the skeleton, there was explosion of bright light followed by a thunderous wave of sound washing over the chamber, as a mushroom-shaped plume of dust raised from the spot where the skeleton stood once... but now there was a crater in skeleton's spot.

#### **Charlotte vs Skeleton H**

Hit:  $135+10+7+5-45 = 112$ , autohit! Crit roll: 42!  
 Damage:  $72+1-15 = 58 \times 3 = 174\text{dmg}$  //this is scary

### **~~Enemy Phase~~**

The remaining skeletons attacked Mari and Charles. The boney monsters quickly realized the error of this.

#### **Skeleton L vs Charles**

Hit:  $121-15-55 = 51$   
 Hit roll: 63, miss!  
  
 Charles counters!  
 Hit:  $113+15-45 = 83$   
 Hit roll: 41, hit!  
 Damage:  $35+1-15 = 21\text{dmg}$   
  
 Charles counters once more!  
 Hit:  $113+15-45 = 83$   
 Hit roll: 22, hit!  
 Damage:  $35+1-15 = 21\text{dmg}$

#### **Skeleton K vs Charles**

Hit:  $127+15-55 = 87$   
 Hit roll: 68, hit!  
 Damage:  $30+1-17 = 14\text{dmg}$   
  
 Charles retaliates!  
 Hit:  $113-15-45 = 53$   
 Hit roll: 47, hit! Crit roll: 2!  
 Damage:  $35-1-15 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

#### **Quote from: Bone G vs Mari**

Hit:  $122-72 = 50$   
 Hit roll: 93, miss!  
  
 Mari counterattacks!  
 Hit:  $121-45 = 76$   
 Hit roll: 19, hit!  
 Damage:  $32-9 = 23\text{dmg}$   
  
 Mari counters once more!  
 Hit:  $121-45 = 76$   
 Hit roll: 36, hit!

Damage: 32-9 = 23dmg

Gingin blurted something and teleported back to his throne. From there, he sent a bolt of dark magics that smote Gregor.

Gingin vs Gregor

Hit: 101-7-60 = 34  
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage: 31-16 = 15dmg

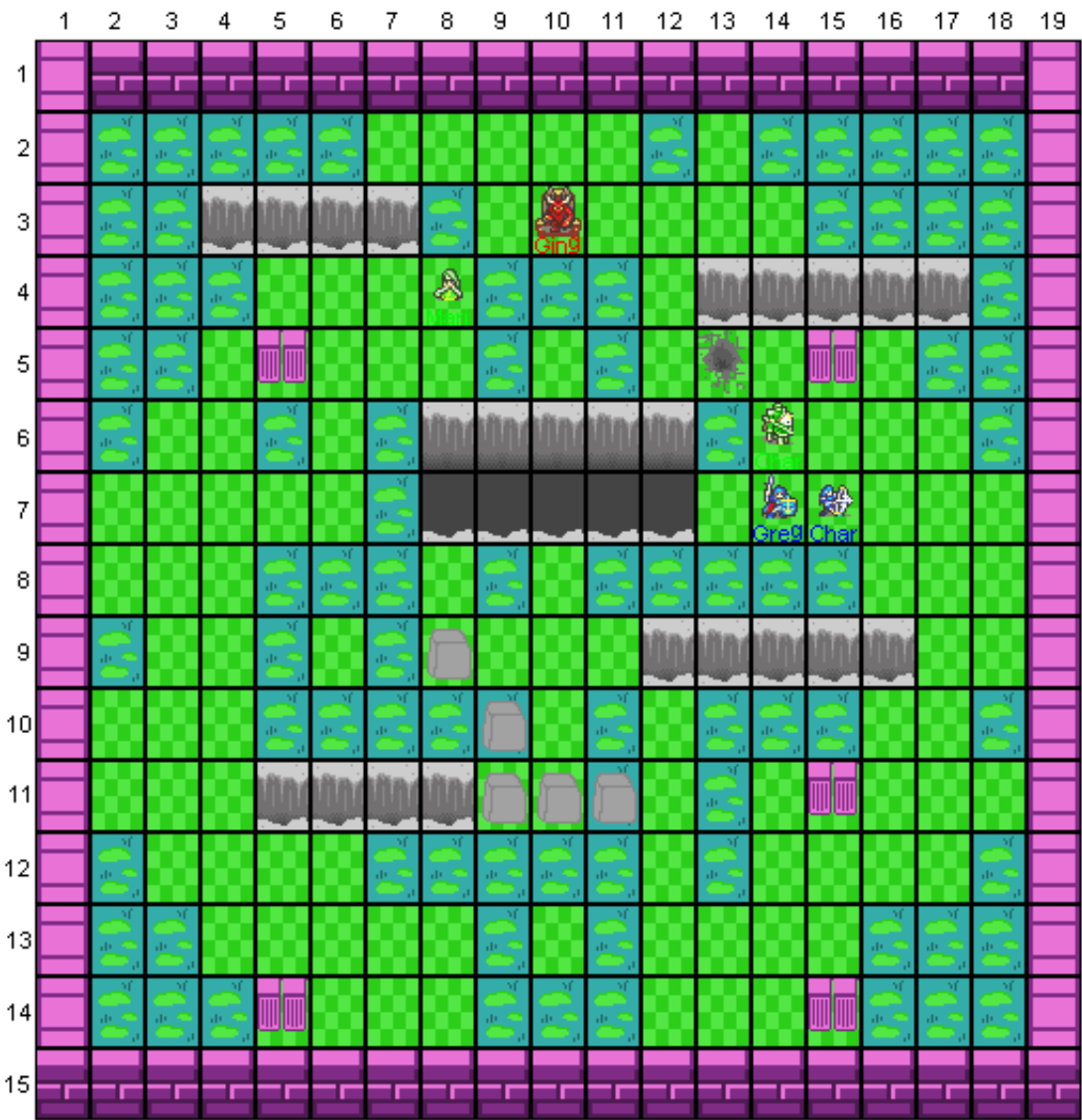
~~Ally Phase~~

Charles and Mari went after Gingin.

~~Player Turn 24~~

Poison rolls

Charlotte: 1



Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	Allies:
Charlotte von Hexham: 18/40 Poison (3/5) Gregor von Hexham: 31/48	Gingin: 77/80	Charles von Hexham: 35/44 Mari: 35/35

Gregor whistled.



"Must be your best shot yet. Where did you get that thing?"

**Gregor: (12,3), toss a spear.**



"I stole it! Don't worry, it'll probably disappear when we leave the place."

**Charlotte moves 2 N and uses her best healing item on herself.**

Gregor's spear poked Gingin in the ribs, making him GIGGLE. All this while Charlotte ~~snorted~~ used some white powder.

**Gregor vs Gingin**

Hit:  $130+5-10-44 = 81$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $37-22 = 15\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

**"DIEEE!"** The demon shrieked before plunging his claws into Gregor's abdomen.

**Gingin vs Gregor**

Hit:  $121+15-5-60 = 71$   
Hit roll: 5, hit!  
Damage:  $44-27 = 17\text{dmg}$

Gregor counters!  
Hit:  $130+5-44 = 91$   
Hit roll: 67, hit!  
Damage:  $37-22 = 15\text{dmg}$

Wicked Speed: 2!

He then blinked away, before launching another dark blast, at Charles.

**Gingin vs Charles**

Hit:  $101-55 = 46$   
Hit roll: 29, hit!  
Damage:  $31-9 = 22\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Charles rode and struck Gingin with his lance.

**Charles vs Gingin**

Hit:  $113-44 = 69$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $35-22 = 13\text{dmg}$



"This is the end of you, Gingin!" Mari ran up to the demon and light flooded the chamber as her magic struck the demon severely!

"AIIEEEEEEEEEE!!"

#### Mari vs Gingin

Hit: 121-44 = 77

Hit roll: 67, hit! Crit roll: 5! //:I

Damage: 32-14 = 18x3 = 54dmg

### ~~Epilogue Chapter D Complete!~~

The chamber began to *melt* away; the purple sky leaked down toward the earth, exposing the well-known blue sky and sun above; the pink stone gave way, exposing ruined and overgrown blocks of the castle that stood here once. Soon, they were back in the real world, with birds happily chirping in the trees around the ruins, warm breeze blowing through the empty corridors.

The only thing that didn't dissappear was Charlotte's bow. It did feel lighter and the strange energy emanating from it was now almost unnoticeable, but the bow remained in her hands as it were.

Mari stood nearby, her foot standing on a tail of small fox. A fox that had dark fur and eyes glowing red.

"Yip yip yip, I'm the great GINGIN! I'm a DEMON, yip! How dare you treat me like that! Yip yip YIP yip! Get off my tail I tell you! GET OOOFF!" It cried, clawing with its tiny feet, trying, in vain, to run away.



"As if."



"...! ...!? ..." Charles looked extra sad now.



"Do not worry. We're closer to getting rid of the curse than before. Gingin! Speak up! Where did Hasmodai hide!" The fox under her foot writhed and hissed.

"Yip yip YIP yip- **NEVER!**"

Gregor kneeled next to the strange fox creature, an easy expression on his face.



"Come on Gingin. Why continue to serve this Hasmodai fellow?"

Gingin bit on Gregor's ankle the moment Gregor got his feet there. The fangs of the little thing actually pierced the armored boot with ease, biting on the flesh.

"I am Gingin! I am DEATH! FEAR ME, yip!"

Gregor shook his foot free of the little monster's grip and stepped back a little.



"Ow. Now really Gingin, be reasonable. Charles and Mari are after the person who stole Charles' voice. That's not you, right?"



"I had enough." With that, Mari pulled her lute and began striking the strings, producing a beautiful, soothing melody.

Well, soothing and beautiful except for one person.

"AieeeeEEEE! Why it must be the MUSIIICCC! ARRGH! YIP YIP! STOOOOP-!" Suddenly, Gingin exploded in a cloud of pink and red dust and smoke, and the air around smelled of sulphur for a moment.



"..."



"I took the secret straight from his mind. We can now go hunt Hasmodai, Charles." Charles smiled a little, and then looked at his brother.

Gregor hesitated a little before asking his next question.



"You sure you two don't want our help defeating this Hasmodai? You saw what Charlotte and I can do."





"But Hasmodai is no mere thrifling like Gingin. I had to be concentrated with my mind all the time and barely avoided getting cursed by Hasmodai when Charles interrupted us. If I had to keep an eye on two more people, I will certainly die along you." She let out a hum.



"Do not worry. I will release Charles as soon as we're done with him."

And so the two pairs departed, each their own way. One to build a happy life, other to hunt down a powerful demon...

Neither of the brothers knew they will never see each other again.

## ~~Epilogue Chapter E: Fierce False Farce~~

*Border City of Fezzan*

*House of Alexander Jorinn*

*Five and half months after death of PRIXIMA Kesselring*

It was a beautiful summer morning. Birds were chirping whilst the sun was heating up the city after yesterday's thunderstorm. The air was exceptionally fresh and the puffy clouds lazily roamed the skies above.

Perfect setting for something terrible to happen.

And it indeed have happened. Shortly after Alexander managed to dress up and go downstairs for a breakfast (Anja, as it turns out, woke up with the sun), someone began to bang onto the door of his house, a lovely two-story building that was located in the Trade District.

"Sir Alexander Jorinn! Are you there, sir? This is an emergency!" An unknown, melodic voice of a young man called from behind. Then, hand banged on the door once more.

Grabbing his hammer and slinging it on his back, as well as hanging his helmet off of his shoulders, Alexander was ready for whatever might happen in a rather fast amount of time. Striding to the door, he yanked it open.



"What?! Who are you? What's going on?"

Alex yanked the door open but then tripped in the same moment - so together with the door, he smashed outside! The man screamed in terror as the god knows how heavy wooden door plus fully armored lil' giant smashed against him.

## ~~Epilogue Chapter E Complete!~~

The moan groaned under the door.

"Whyyy..."

Alexander apologetically lifted the door off of the man, ensured he wasn't especially broken, and helped him up.



"Right, er... The emergency! What was it?"

## ~~Epilogue Chapter E Continues!~~

The man sat at the doorstep leading inside Alexander's house.



"Yes, emergency!"



"My name is Julian, and I'm Scion of Light! And there's this evil mage Votus who have erected a tower in middle of the city! Many have perished tonight trying to fight him!"



"And he kidnapped your wife, too! Will you team up with me to rid the world of his menacing presence? And to rescue Anja, too."

Alexander bolted his helmet on and stood ready to sprint to wherever he may need to go.



"What?! Of course I'll come! Go!"

Julian didn't need further acknowledgment! He took Alexander through the city.



"And here we are!" Indeed, there was a foreboding dark tower that apparently burst from the ground, if the rubble and upturned ground around its edges are to be a proof. Julian stepped toward the entrance, which was open.



"Votus, we're coming for you!" The young mage shook his fist at the tallest of the chambers of the tower.



"Ha ha! Do try!"



"Oh, whatever shall happen to me!"

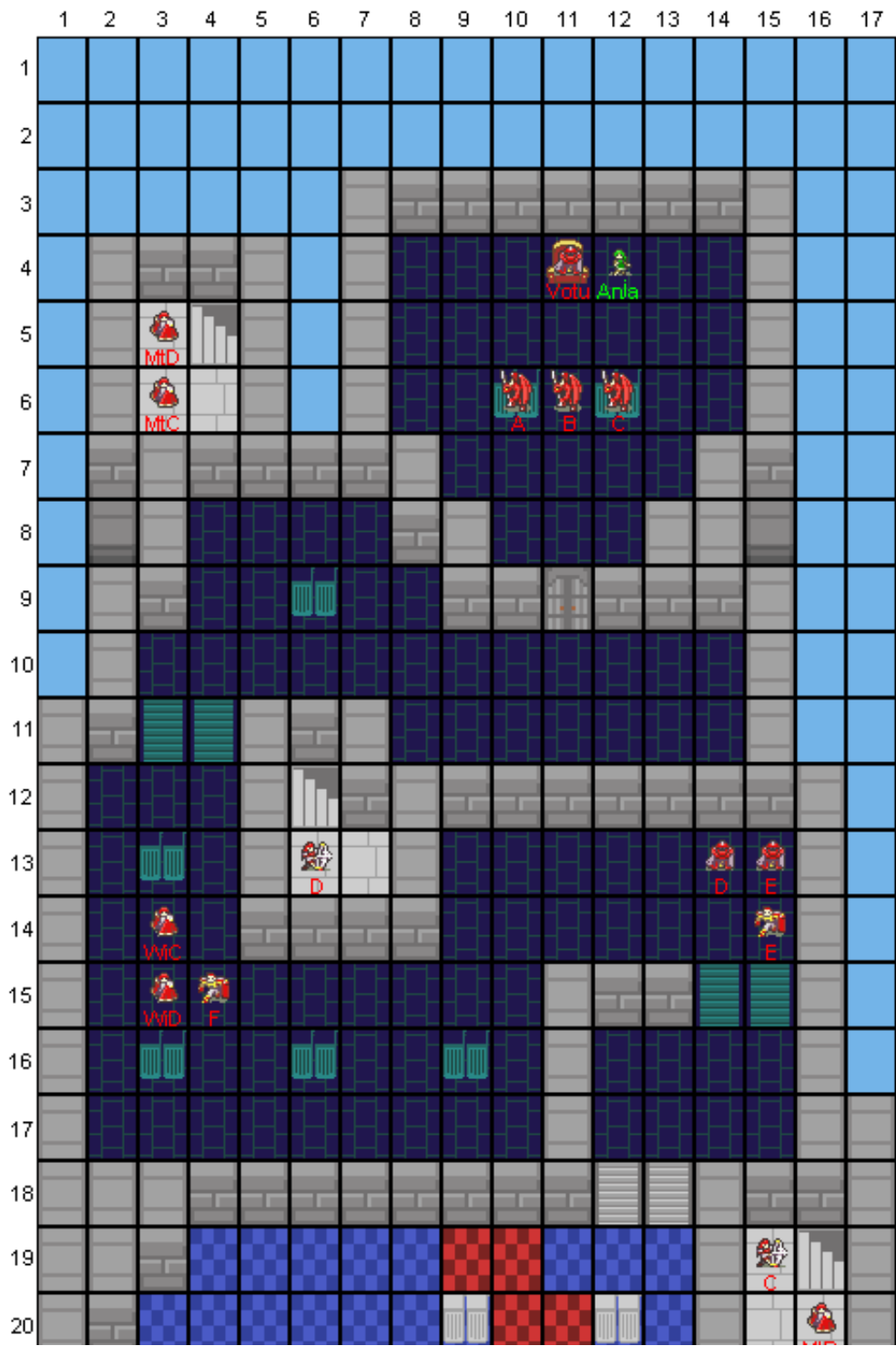


"I will get rid of these two roaches," The hooded mage nodded toward the ground. "And then I will make you my wife!"



"Noo! Oh Alexander, where arst thou?"

~~Player Turn 1~~





"Let her go or you'll feel my lance!"

## Equip Killer Lance, move to 10, 30

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The enemies quickly went after Alex; the swordsman was first to try and first to get mordered.

### Mook A vs Alex

Hit:  $132-15-29 = 88$   
Hit roll: 70, hit!  
Damage:  $43-1-30 = 12\text{dmg}$

Alex retaliates!  
Hit:  $111+15-43 = 85$   
Hit roll: 42, hit! Crit roll: 23!  
Damage:  $32+1-17 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

Then both the axeman and the mage hurt Alex - but he shrugged off the axe!

**Adept A vs Alex**

Hit:  $124-29 = 95$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $34-11 = 23\text{dmg}$   
Alex is poisoned!

**Henchman A vs Alex**

Hit:  $108+15-29 = 94$   
Hit roll: 9, hit!  
Great Shield roll: 8!  
No damage!

Then, as if from boredom, he raised his shield just in time to block a long-range, fiery bolt.

**Meteorologist A vs Alex**

Hit:  $132-29 = 103$ , autohit!  
Great Shield roll: 14!  
No damage!

~~Ally Phase~~



"T'was impressive, sir!" Julian moved up to Alex and healed him.

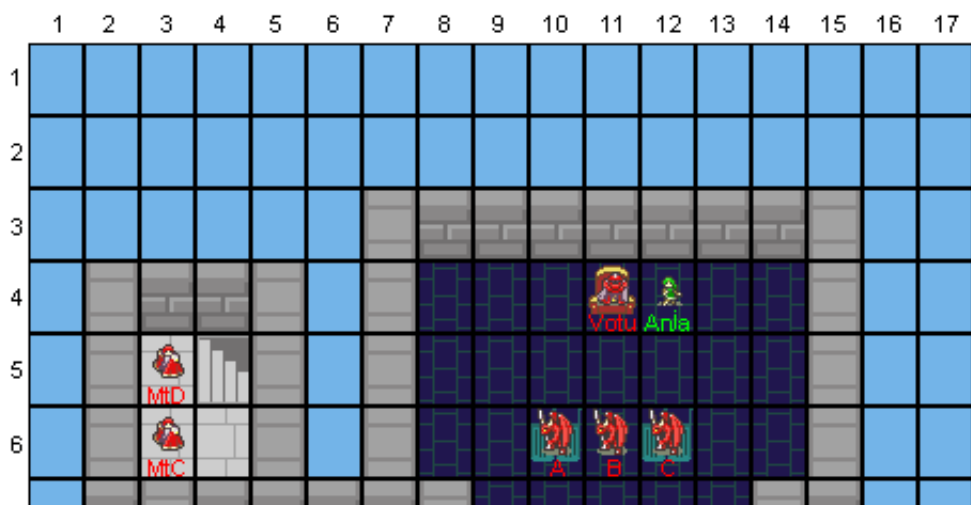
**Julian mends Alex**

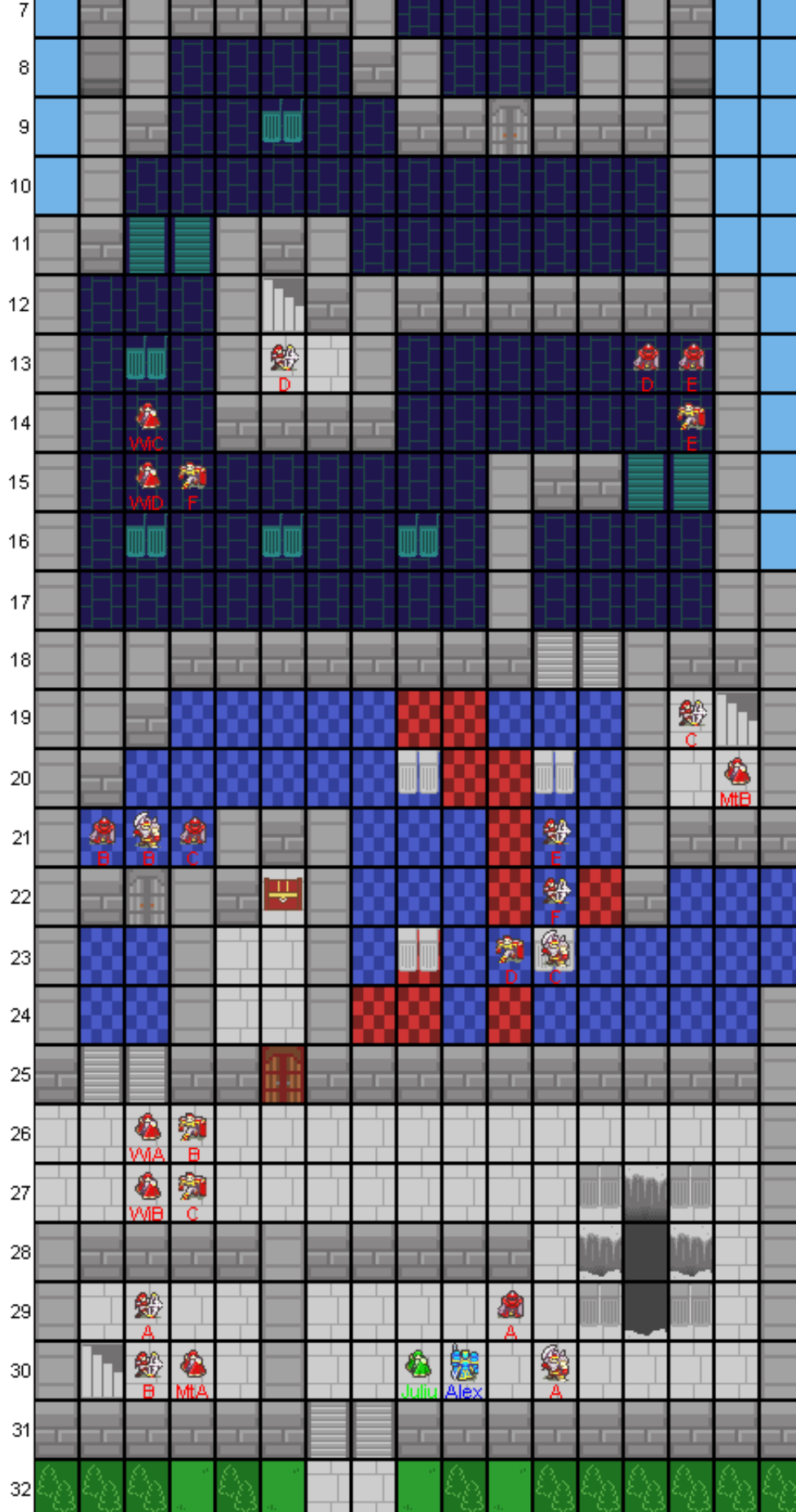
$20+20 =$  Up to 20HP restored

~~Player Turn 2~~

**Poison rolls**

Alex: 2





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 52/54 <span style="color: green;">Poison (4/5)</span>	Mook B: 42/42 Mook C: 42/42 Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept C: 35/35 Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard A: 37/37 Wizzard B: 37/37
<span style="color: green;">Allies:</span>	Henchman A: 45/45	Wizzard C: 37/37

	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept A: 35/35 Adept B: 35/35	Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		



"Hhhyah!"

**Move to 11, 30 and Warhammer the Adept.**

Smashin' was had. And the magicks that Alex shrugged with his shield.

**Alexander vs Adept A**

Hit:  $96 - 36 = 60$   
Hit roll: 20, hit!  
Damage:  $37 - 12 = 25\text{dmg}$

Adept A retaliates!  
Hit:  $124 - 29 = 95$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Great Shield: 3!  
No damage!

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

**Adept A vs Alexander**

Hit:  $124 - 29 = 95$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Great Shield: 15!  
No damage!

**Henchman A vs Alexander**

Hit:  $108 - 29 = 79$   
Hit roll: 94, miss!

Henchman A attacks again!  
Hit:  $108 - 29 = 79$   
Hit roll: 82, miss!

**Meteorologist A vs Alexander**

Hit:  $132 - 29 = 103$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $35 - 2 - 11 = 22\text{dmg}$

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Julian quickly got rid of the dark mage.

**Julian vs Adept A**

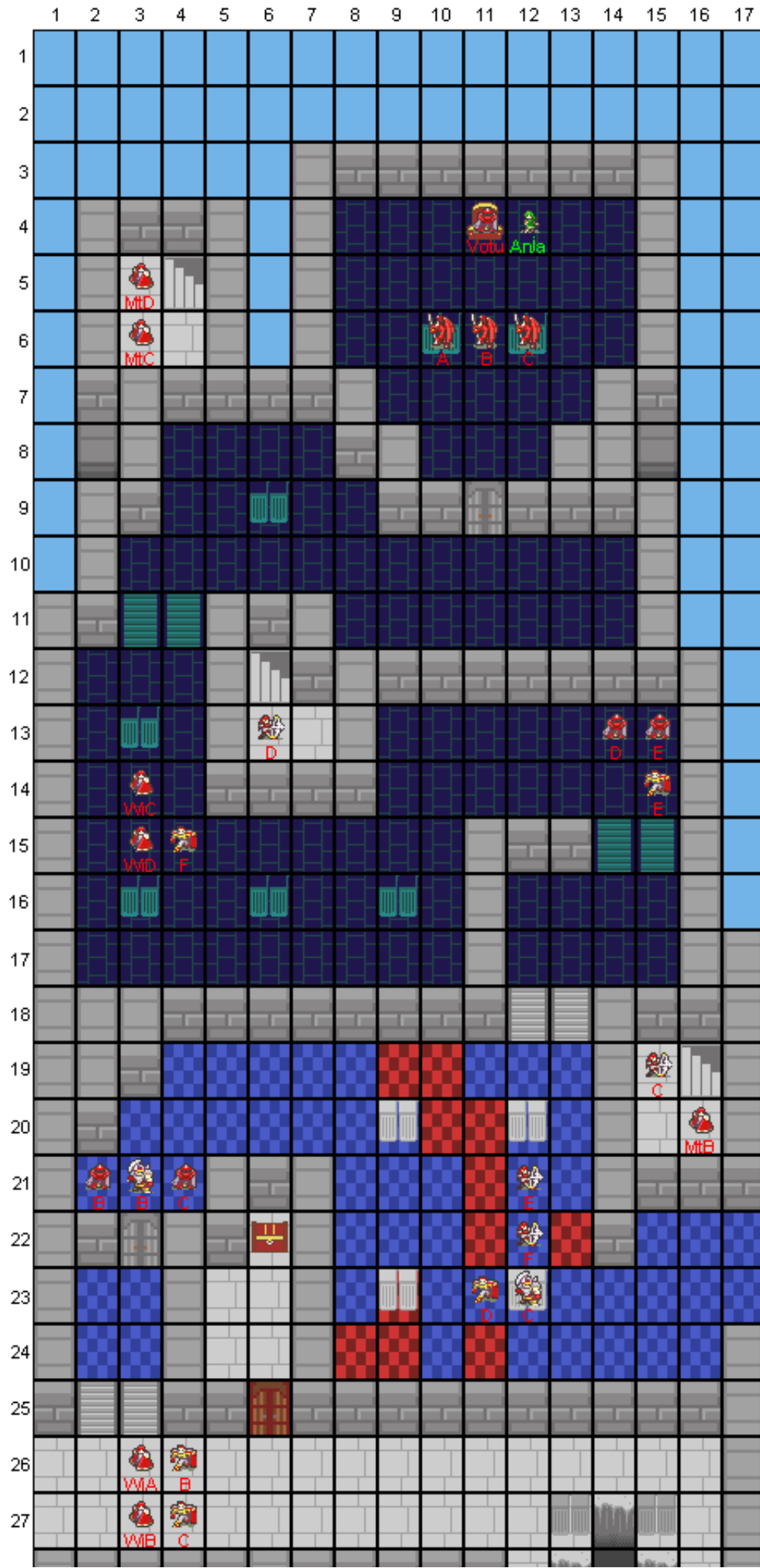
Hit:  $130 - 15 - 36 = 79$   
Hit roll: 66, hit!  
Damage:  $31 - 19 = 12\text{dmg}$



# ~~Player Turn 3~~

## Poison rolls

Alex: 2





Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 28/54 <b>Poison (3/5)</b>	Mook B: 42/42 Mook C: 42/42 Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept C: 35/35 Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard A: 37/37 Wizzard B: 37/37 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Allies:	Henchman A: 45/45 Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept B: 35/35	
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		

**Move to 13, 29 and apply a hammer to the axeguy.**

Alex knocked some dust into the abyss before knocking axeman a bit.

#### Alex vs Henchman A

Hit:  $96-42 = 54$   
Hit roll: 35, hit!  
Damage:  $37-14 = 23\text{dmg}$

Henchman A retaliates!

Hit:  $108-15-29 = 64$   
Hit roll: 10, hit!  
Damage:  $37-2-30 = 5\text{dmg}$

Henchman A counters again!

Hit:  $108-15-29 = 64$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

Axe and meteor struck Alex.

#### Meteorologist A vs Alex

Hit:  $132-15-29 = 88$   
Hit roll: 75, hit!  
Damage:  $35-2-11 = 22\text{dmg}$

#### Henchman A vs Alex

Hit:  $108-15-29 = 64$   
Hit roll: 26, hit!  
Damage:  $37-2-30 = 5\text{dmg}$

Henchman A attacks again!

Hit:  $108 - 15 - 29 = 64$

Hit roll: 69, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~



"Do not falter, Sir Alex!"

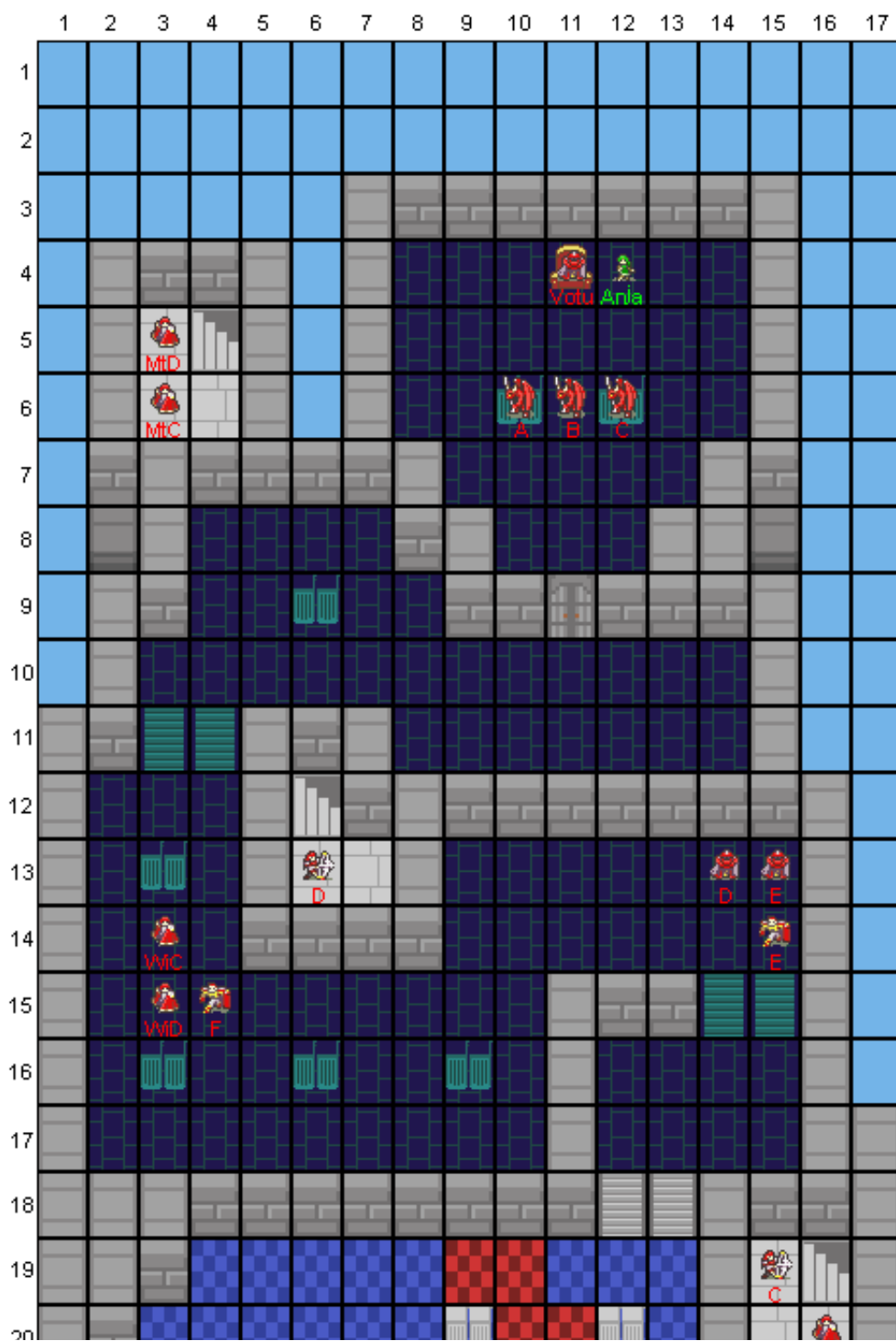
### Julian mends Alex

20+20 = Up to 40HP restored

## ~~Player Turn 4~~

### Poison rolls

Alex: 4





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 50/54 Poison (2/5)		Mook B: 42/42	Adept C: 35/35
Allies:		Mook C: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35
		Mook D: 42/42	Adept E: 35/35
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		Mook E: 42/42	Wizzard A: 37/37
		Mook F: 42/42	Wizzard B: 37/37
		Henchman A: 22/45	Wizzard C: 37/37
		Henchman B: 45/45	Wizzard D: 37/37
		Henchman C: 45/45	Meteorologist A: 37/37
		Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
		Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
		Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
		Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
		Warden E: 38/38	Gargoyle B: 36/36
		Warden F: 38/38	Gargoyle C: 36/36
		Adept B: 35/35	Votus: 66/66

**One down, HAMMER.**

\*CLONK\* The axeman tumbled backwards a few feet.

#### Alex vs Henchman A

Hit: 96-42 = 54

Hit roll: 40, hit!

Damage: 37-14 = 23dmg

~~Enemy Phase~~

The meteor struck Alex.

#### Meteorologist A vs Alex

Hit: 132-29 = 103, autohit!  
Damage: 35-2-11 = 22dmg

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Julian quickly healed Alex's burns and wounds.

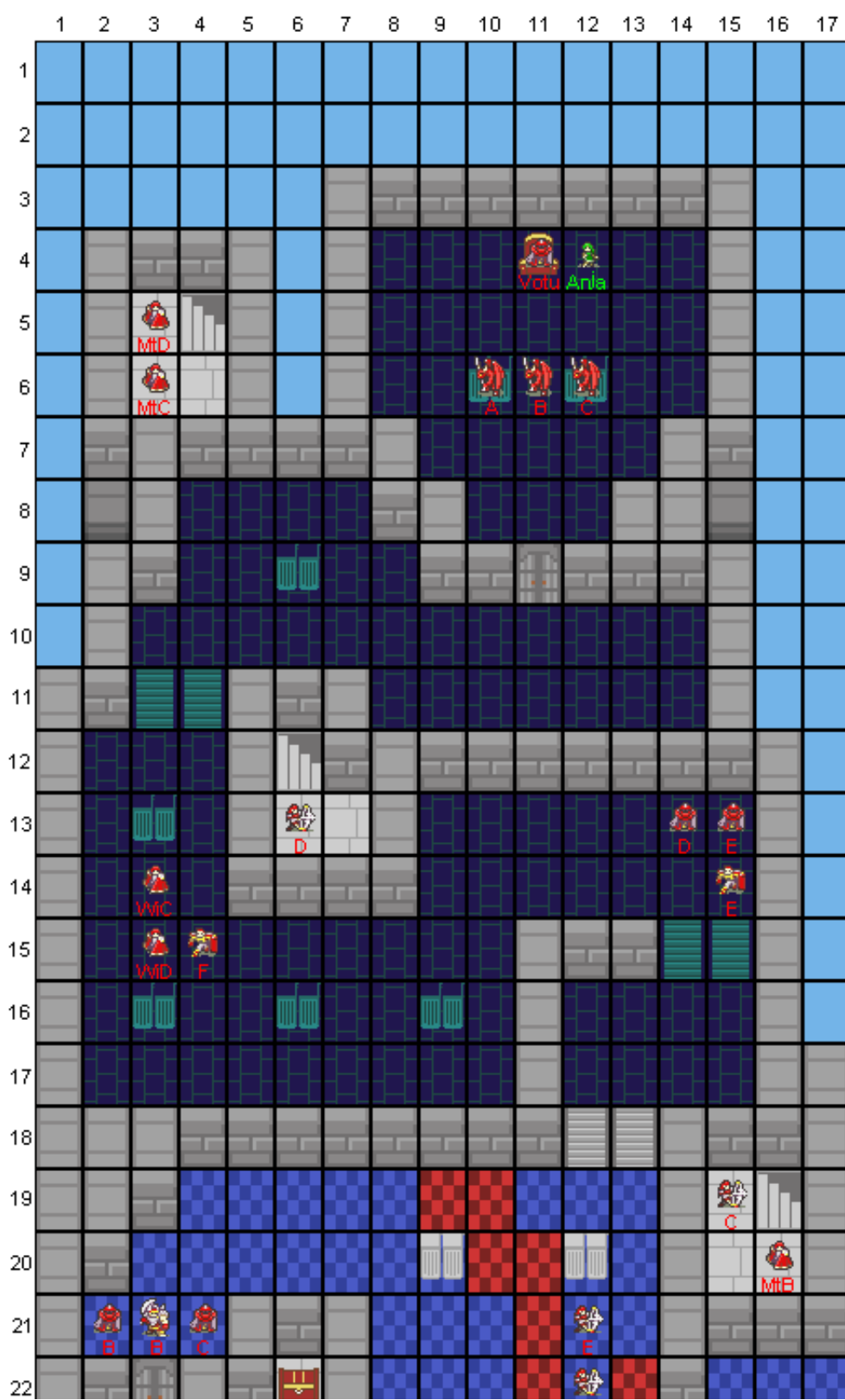
### Julian mends Alex

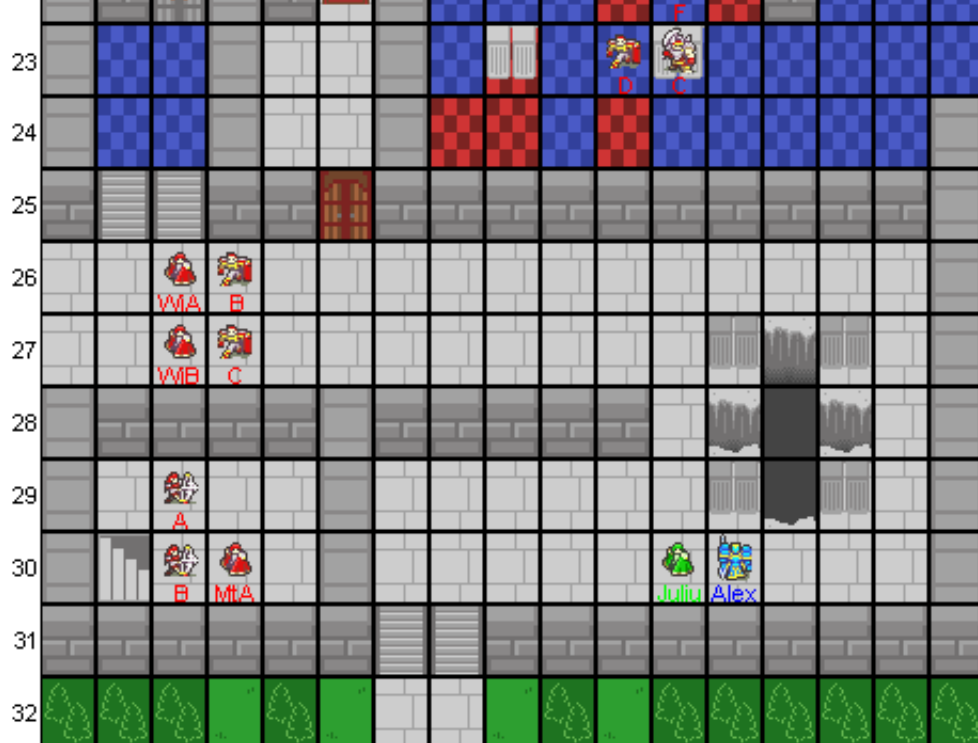
20+20 = Up to 40HP healed

## ~~Player Turn 5~~

### Poison rolls

Alex: 3





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 51/54 Poison (1/5)		Mook B: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35
Allies:		Mook C: 42/42	Adept E: 35/35
		Mook D: 42/42	Wizzard A: 37/37
		Mook E: 42/42	Wizzard B: 37/37
		Mook F: 42/42	Wizzard C: 37/37
		Henchman B: 45/45	Wizzard D: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		Henchman C: 45/45	Meteorologist A: 37/37
		Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
		Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
		Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
		Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
		Warden E: 38/38	Gargoyle B: 36/36
		Warden F: 38/38	Gargoyle C: 36/36
		Adept B: 35/35	Votus: 66/66
		Adept C: 35/35	

Move to 11, 27

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

"GROOOARROOR" A bunch of rotting corpses crawled from the abyss! And a fiery stone bounced off Alex's shield.

#### Meteorologist A vs Alex

Hit:  $132 - 29 = 103$ , autohit!  
Great Shield roll: 14!  
No damage!

### ~~Ally Phase~~

And then the bunch became smaller because Julian.

#### Julian vs Undead A

Hit:  $130 - 21 = 109$ , autohit!

Damage: 31-5 = 26dmg

Julian attacks again!

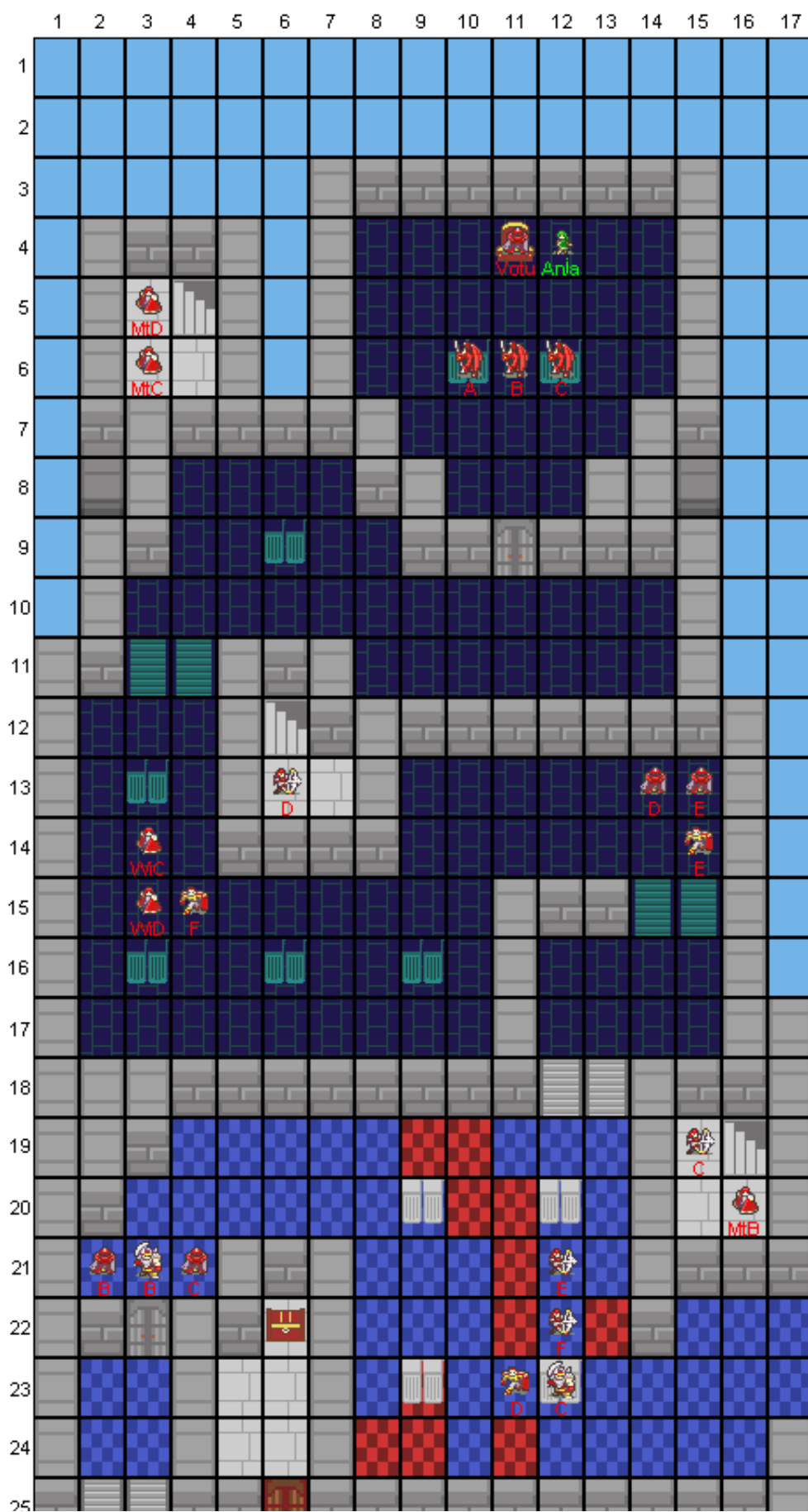
Hit: 130-21 = 109, autohit!

Damage: 31-5 = 26dmg

## ~~Player Turn 6~~

### Poison rolls

Alex gets better!





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 51/54	Mook B: 42/42 Mook C: 42/42 Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Wizzard A: 37/37 Wizzard B: 37/37 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept B: 35/35 Adept C: 35/35 Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35	Undead B: 46/46 Undead C: 46/46 Undead D: 46/46 Undead E: 46/46 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		

## Killer Lance Undead B.



"Julian, this way, if you can make it!"

\*STAB\*

### Alex vs Undead B

Hit:  $111 - 21 = 90$

Hit roll: 83, hit! Crit roll: 34!

Damage:  $32 - 16 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

One of the undead went after Julian, two after Alex; it turned out terrible for poor corpses.



Undead C vs Julian

Hit:  $115-15-51 = 49$   
Hit roll: 66, miss!

Julian counters!  
Hit:  $130-21 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $31-5 = 26\text{dmg}$

Julian counters again!  
Hit:  $130-21 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $31-5 = 26\text{dmg}$

Undead D vs Alex

Hit:  $115-29 = 86$   
Hit roll: 32, hit!  
Great Shield roll: 11!  
No damage!

Alex counters!  
Hit:  $111-21 = 90$   
Hit roll: 89, hit!  
Damage:  $32-16 = 16\text{dmg}$

Undead E vs Alex

Hit:  $115-29 = 86$   
Hit roll: 54, hit!  
Damage:  $33-30 = 3\text{dmg}$

Alex retaliates!  
Hit:  $111-21 = 90$   
Hit roll: 63, hit! Crit roll: 9!  
Damage:  $32-16 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

"They be fighting corpses! Get them!" The two mages and swordmen rushed toward Alex! Whilst the magic singed Alex a little, the swordsman quickly learned what kind of mistake he have made.

Wizzard B vs Alex

Hit:  $130-29 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32-11 = 21\text{dmg}$

Wizzard B attacks once more!  
Hit:  $130-29 = 101$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32-11 = 21\text{dmg}$

Mook C vs Alex

Hit:  $132-15-29 = 88$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

Alex retaliates!  
Hit:  $111+15-43 = 85$   
Hit roll: 56, hit! Crit roll: 19!  
Damage:  $32+1-17 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

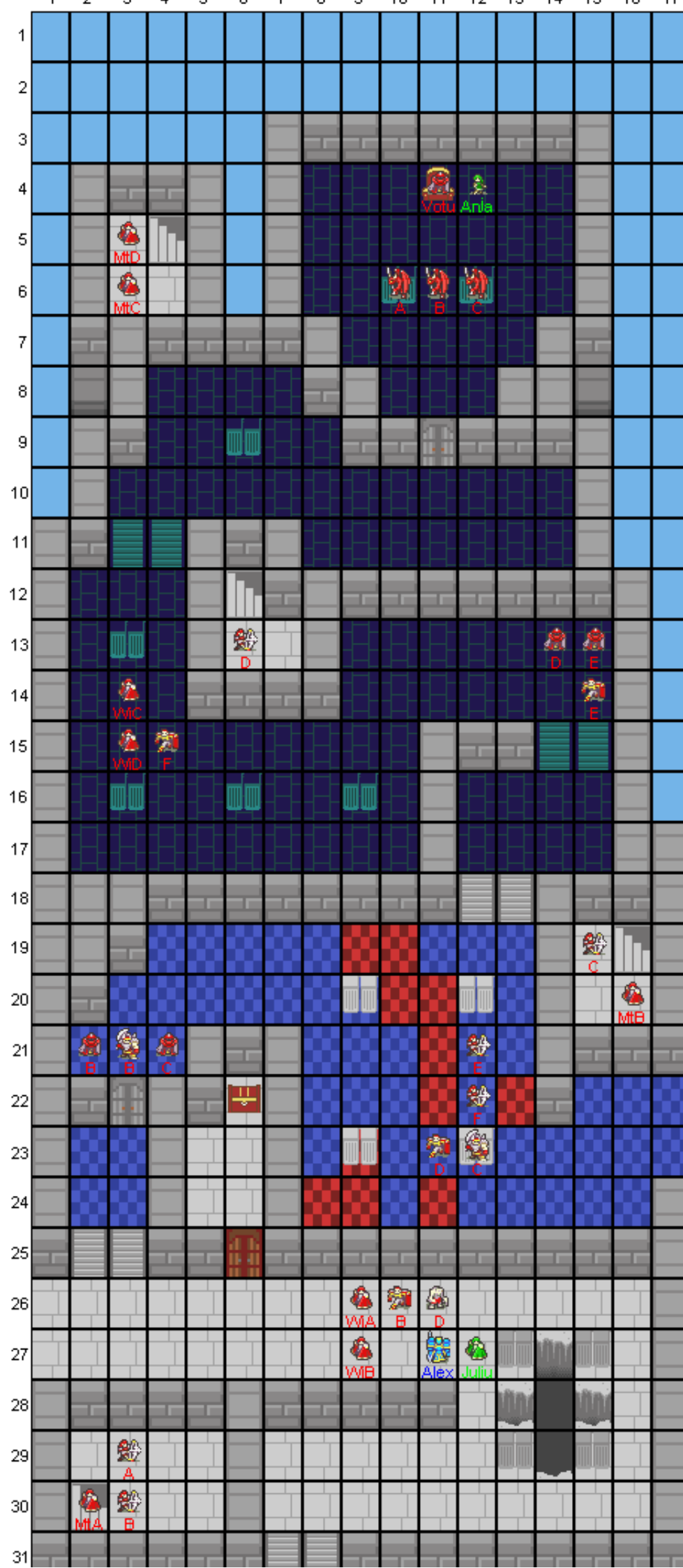
~~Ally Phase~~

Julian rushed to Alex's side and then smashed a bottle on knight's helmet - blueish mist healed his wounds.

Julian uses Elixir on Alex

All HP restored!

~~Player Turn 7~~





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 54/54	Mook B: 42/42 Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard A: 37/37 Wizzard B: 37/37 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept B: 35/35 Adept C: 35/35 Adept D: 35/35	Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Undead D: 30/46 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		

## One left, Killer Lance Wizard B.

Alex used his lance once again for murderstabby purposes.

### Alex vs Wizzard B

Hit:  $111 - 42 = 69$   
Hit roll: 27, hit! Crit roll: 1!  
Damage:  $32 - 13 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The undead thing went after Julian, scratching him some before chunks of ice blasted said walking corpse apart.

### Undead D vs Julian

Hit:  $115 - 51 = 64$   
Hit roll: 21, hit!  
Damage:  $33 - 11 = 22\text{dmg}$   
  
Julian retaliates!  
Hit:  $130 - 21 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $31 - 5 = 26\text{dmg}$   
  
Julian counters again!  
Hit:  $130 - 21 = 109$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $31 - 5 = 26\text{dmg}$

Then the swordsman tried to finish off Julian, but the mage skillfully dodged and blasted the swordsman with magics.

### Mook B vs Julian

Hit:  $132 - 51 = 81$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!  
  
Julian counters!  
Hit:  $130 - 43 = 87$   
Hit roll: 76, hit!  
Damage:  $31 - 12 = 19\text{dmg}$

The nearby wizzard took it upon himself to electrocute Alexander a bit.

## Wizzard A vs Alex

130-29 = 101, autohit!

Damage:  $32 - 2 - 11 = 19\text{dmg}$

Wizzard A strikes once more!

130-29 = 101, autohit!

Damage:  $32 - 2 - 11 = 19\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

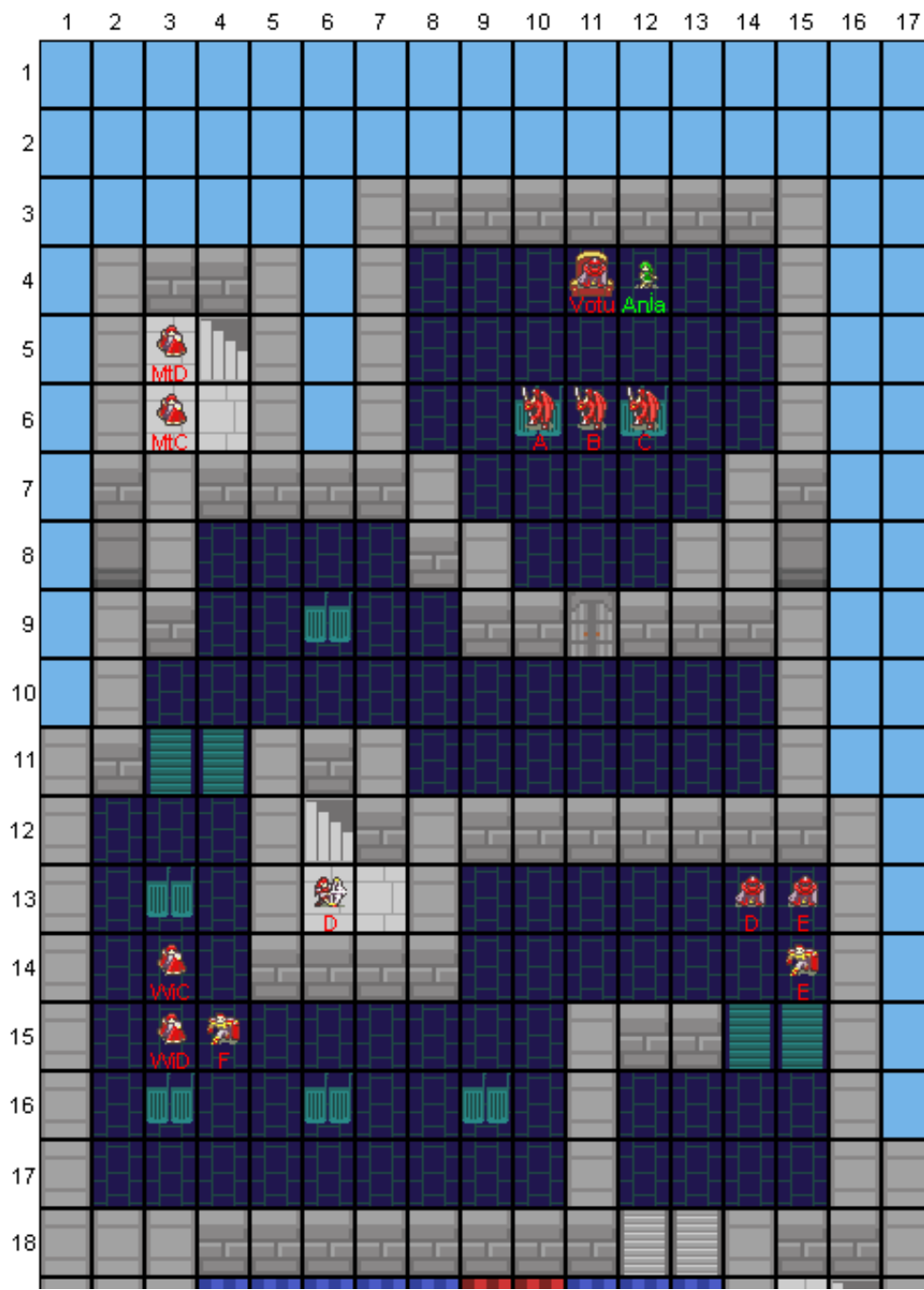


"I'm okay..." Julian grimaced before healing Alex's burns.

## Julian mends Alex

20+20 = Up to 40HP restored

## ~~Player Turn 8~~





Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 54/54	Mook B: 23/42 Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard A: 37/37 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38	Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 13/35	Adept B: 35/35 Adept C: 35/35	Votus: 66/66



"Have you any means of healing yourself?"



"Don't worry, Sir Alex, I have enough medicine."

Move one left an introduce the wizard to my friend Lance Murderton

The stab murdered the wizzard.

Alex vs Wizzard A

Hit: 111-42 = 69  
Hit roll: 8, hit! Crit roll: 7!  
Damage: 32-13 = 19x3 = 57dmg

~~Enemy Phase~~

The sordman attacked Julian who got away and counterblasted the sordman.

Mook B vs Julian

Hit: 132-51 = 81  
Hit roll: 88, miss!  
  
Julian retaliates!  
Hit: 130-43 = 87  
Hit roll: 59, hit!  
Damage: 31-12 = 19dmg

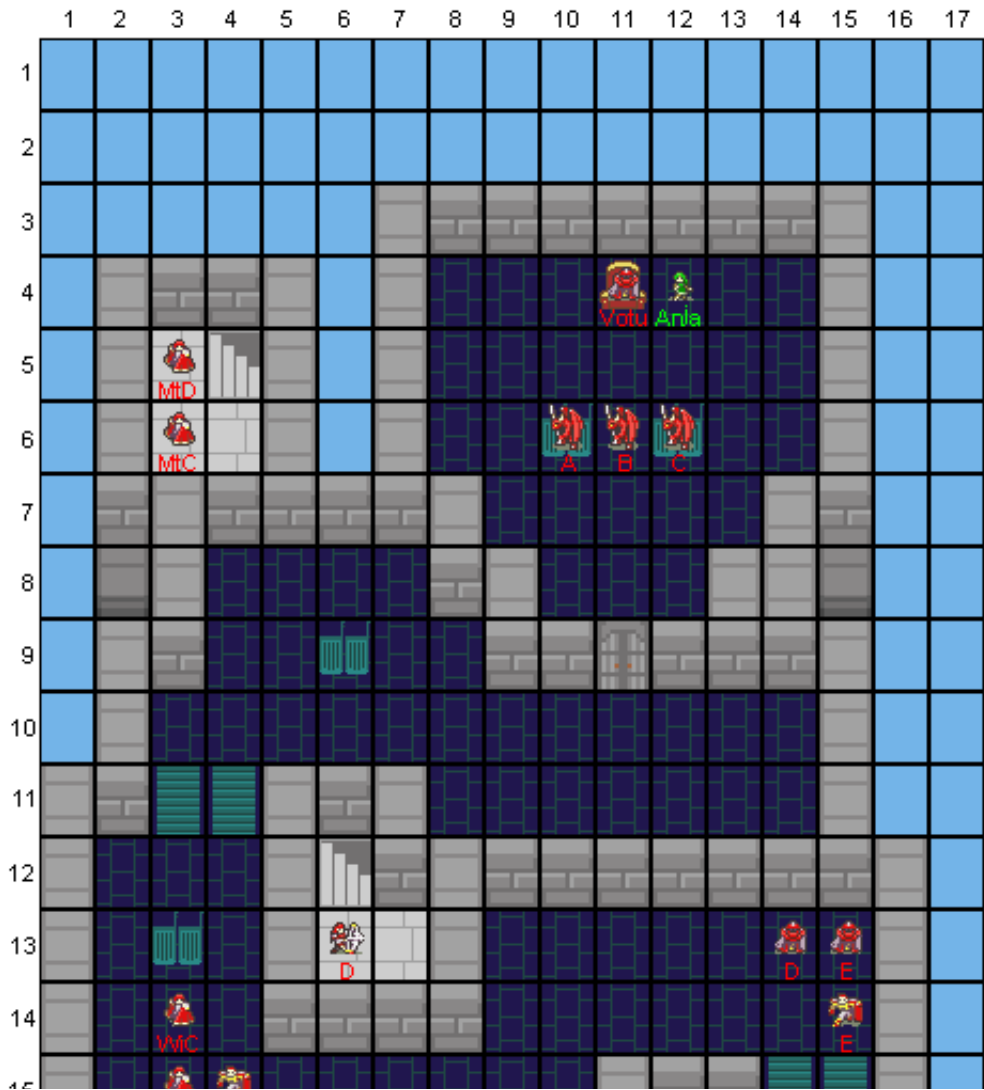
~~Ally Phase~~

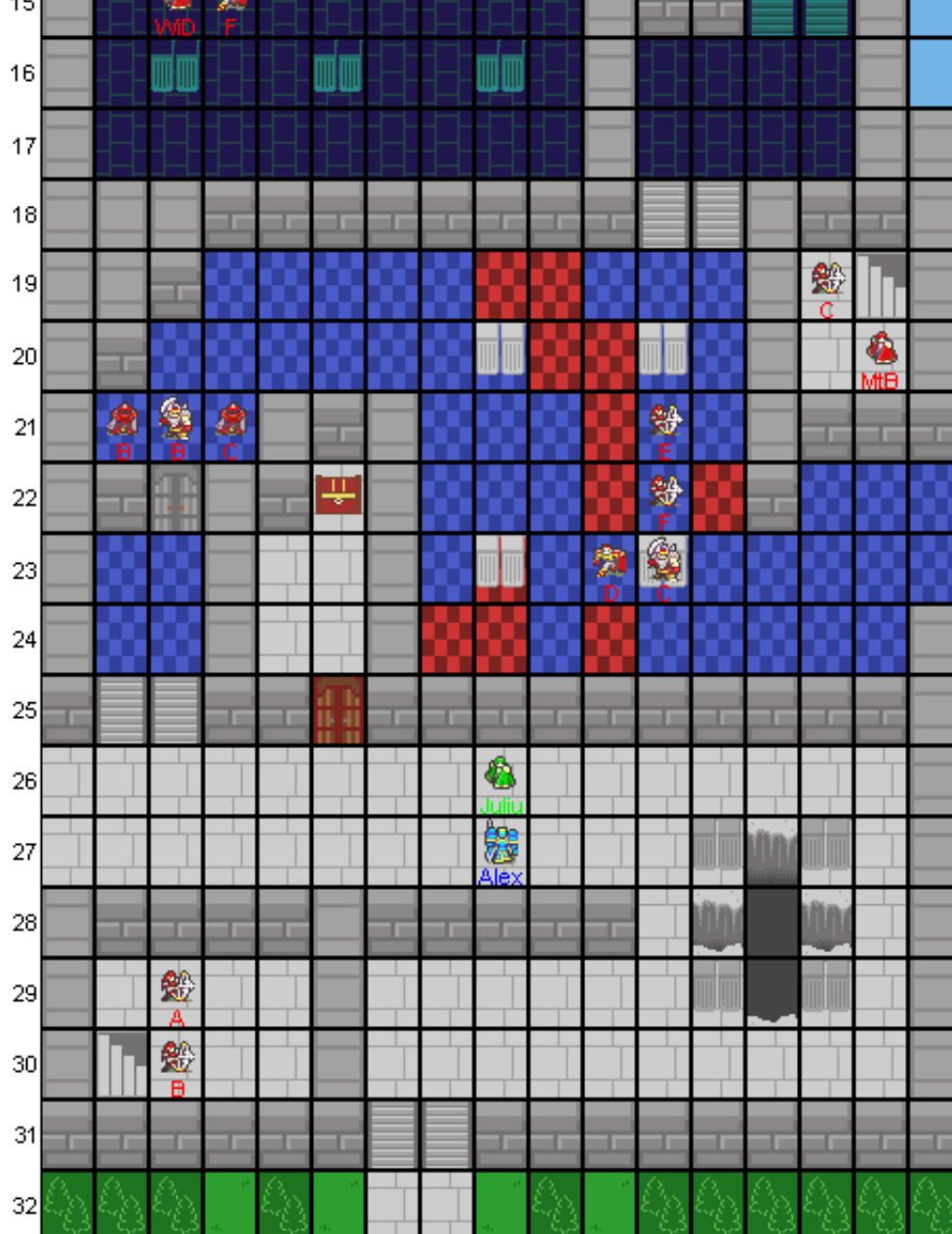
Julian quickly finished the mook.

Julian vs Mook B

Hit: 130-43 = 87  
Hit roll: 24, hit!  
Damage: 31-12 = 19dmg

~~Player Turn 9~~





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 54/54		Mook D: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35
		Mook E: 42/42	Adept E: 35/35
		Mook F: 42/42	Wizzard C: 37/37
		Henchman B: 45/45	Wizzard D: 37/37
		Henchman C: 45/45	Meteorologist A: 37/37
		Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 13/35		Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
		Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
		Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
		Warden E: 38/38	Gargoyle B: 36/36
		Warden F: 38/38	Gargoyle C: 36/36
		Adept B: 35/35	Votus: 66/66
		Adept C: 35/35	

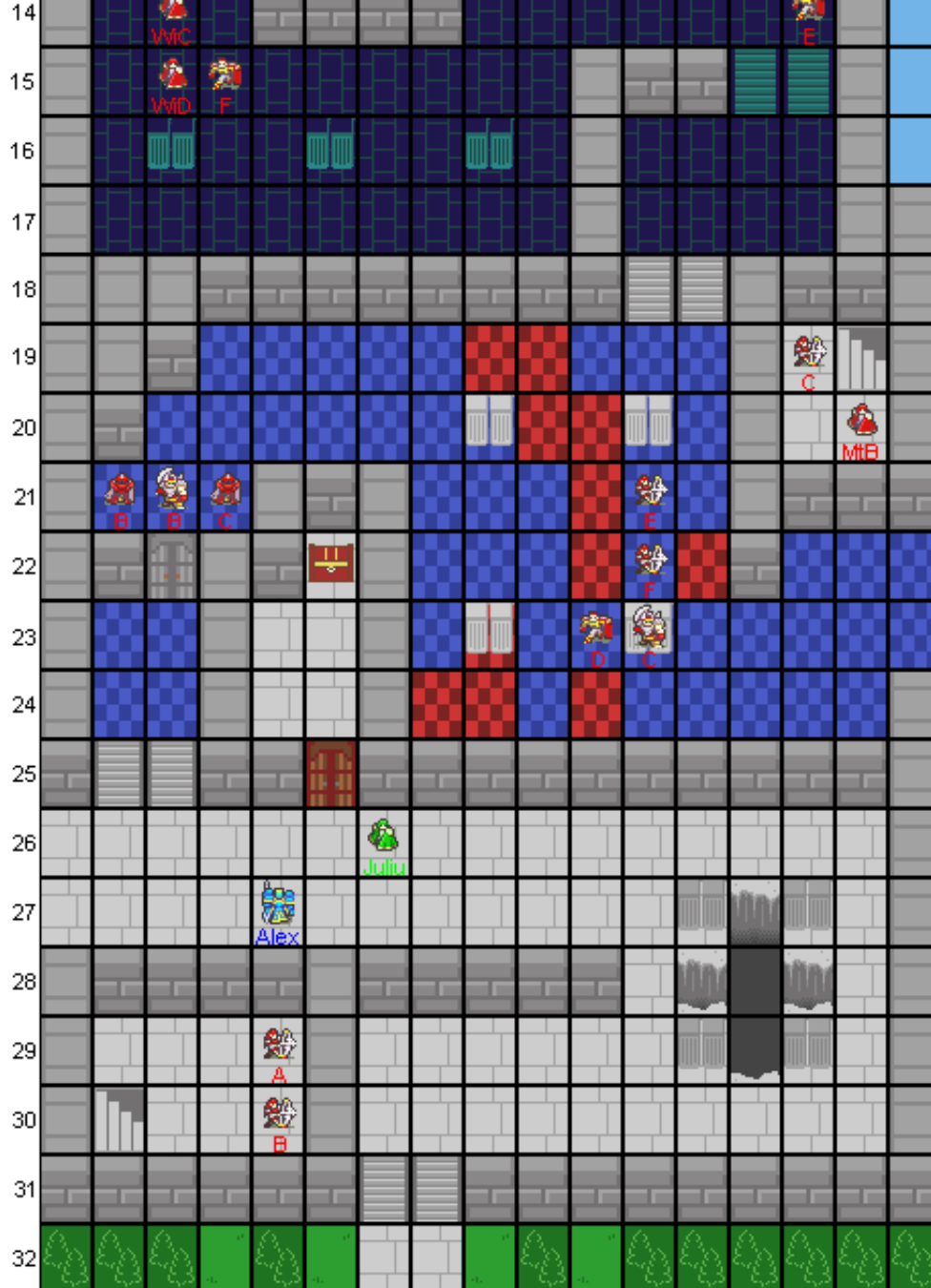
Move 4 left.

~~Enemy Phase~~

Two arrows plinged off Alex's shield, but two struck him.







Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 40/54	Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept B: 35/35 Adept C: 35/35	Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 13/35		

One right, one up, HAMMER ZE DOOR

\*CRASH\*

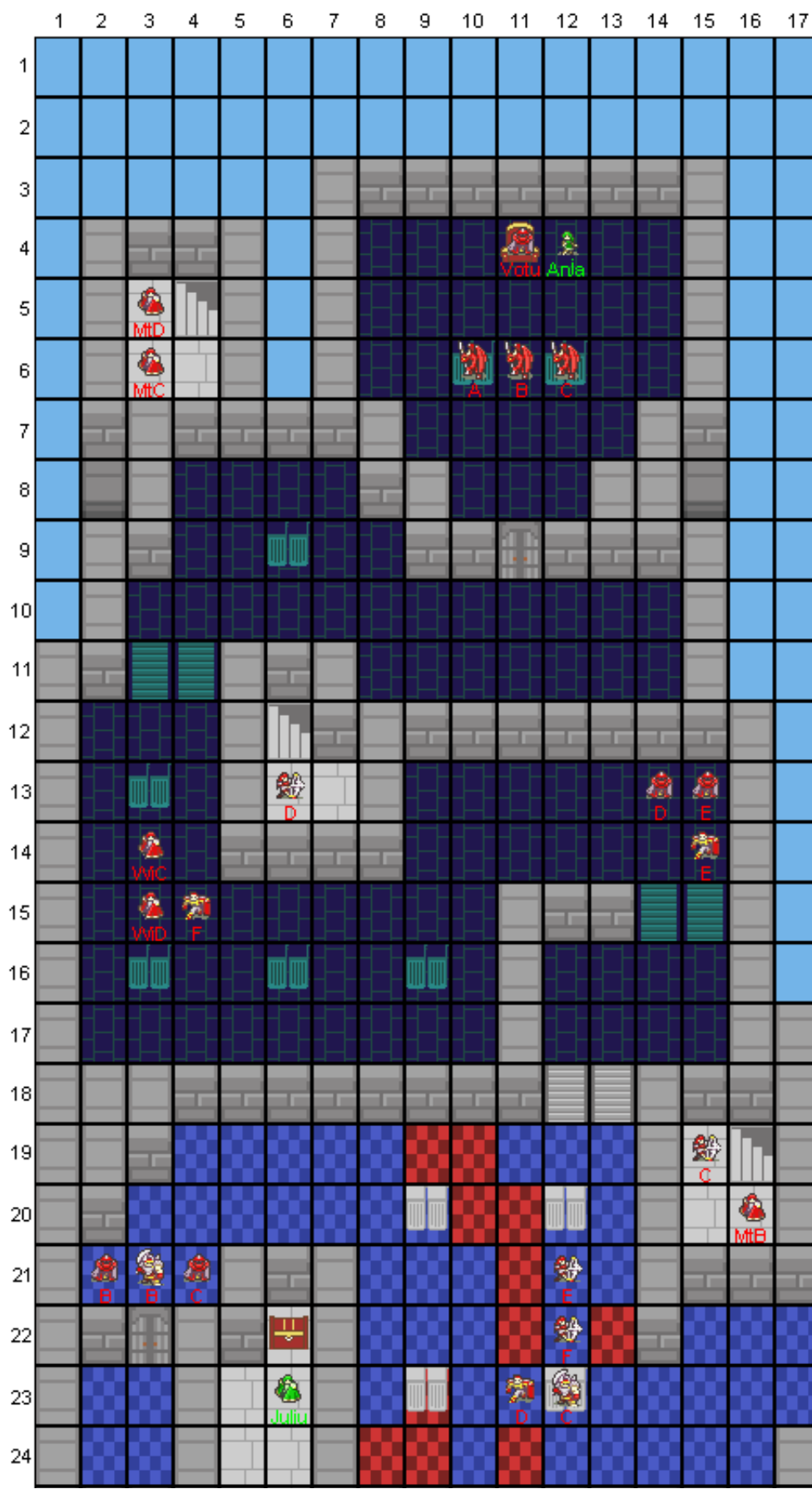
Alex vs Door

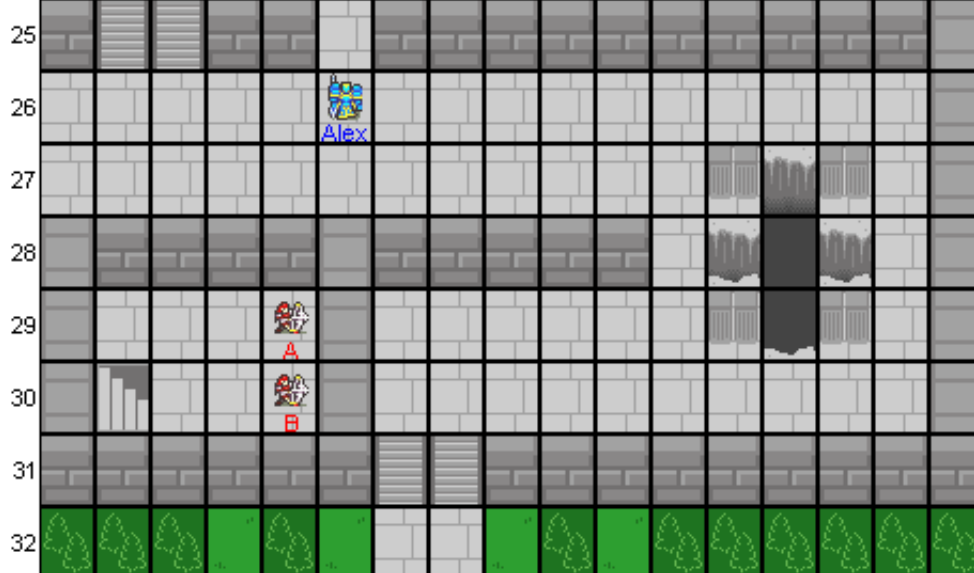
# ~~Ally Phase~~



"This chest... is open! The treasure is yours for taking, Sir Alex."

## ~~Player Turn 11~~





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 40/54	Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept B: 35/35 Adept C: 35/35	Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 13/35		



"Thanks, just grab it for me!"

3, 26

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Flying Arrows, Pierced Armor.

### Warden A vs Alex

Hit:  $128 - 29 = 99$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $37 - 30 = 7\text{dmg}$

Warden A strikes again!

Hit:  $128 - 29 = 99$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $37 - 30 = 7\text{dmg}$

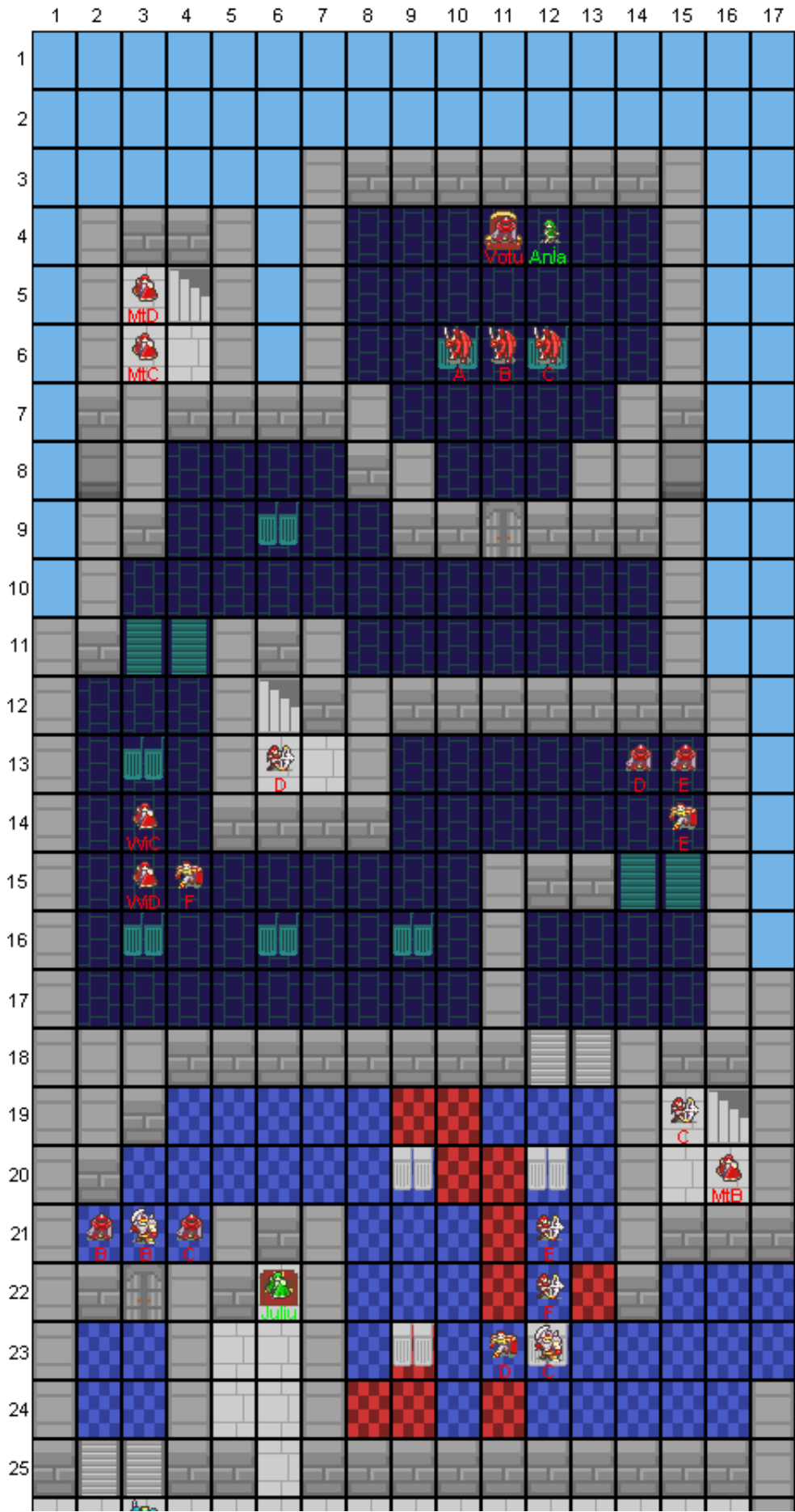
## ~~Ally Phase~~

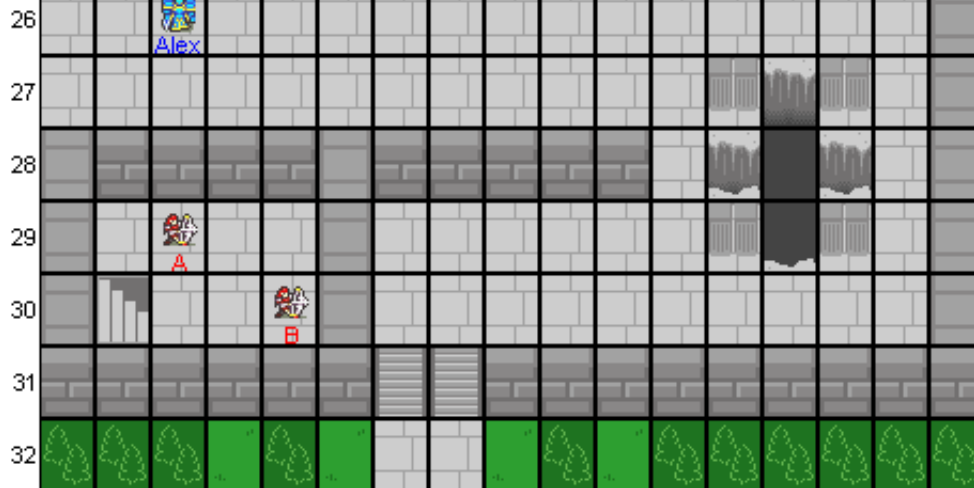


"Sure thing."

Julian gets Hermes Ring!

~~Player Turn 12~~





Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 26/54	Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept B: 35/35 Adept C: 35/35	Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 13/35		

1 up, wait.

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The archers glared at Alex who was standing at the stairs.

## ~~Ally Phase~~

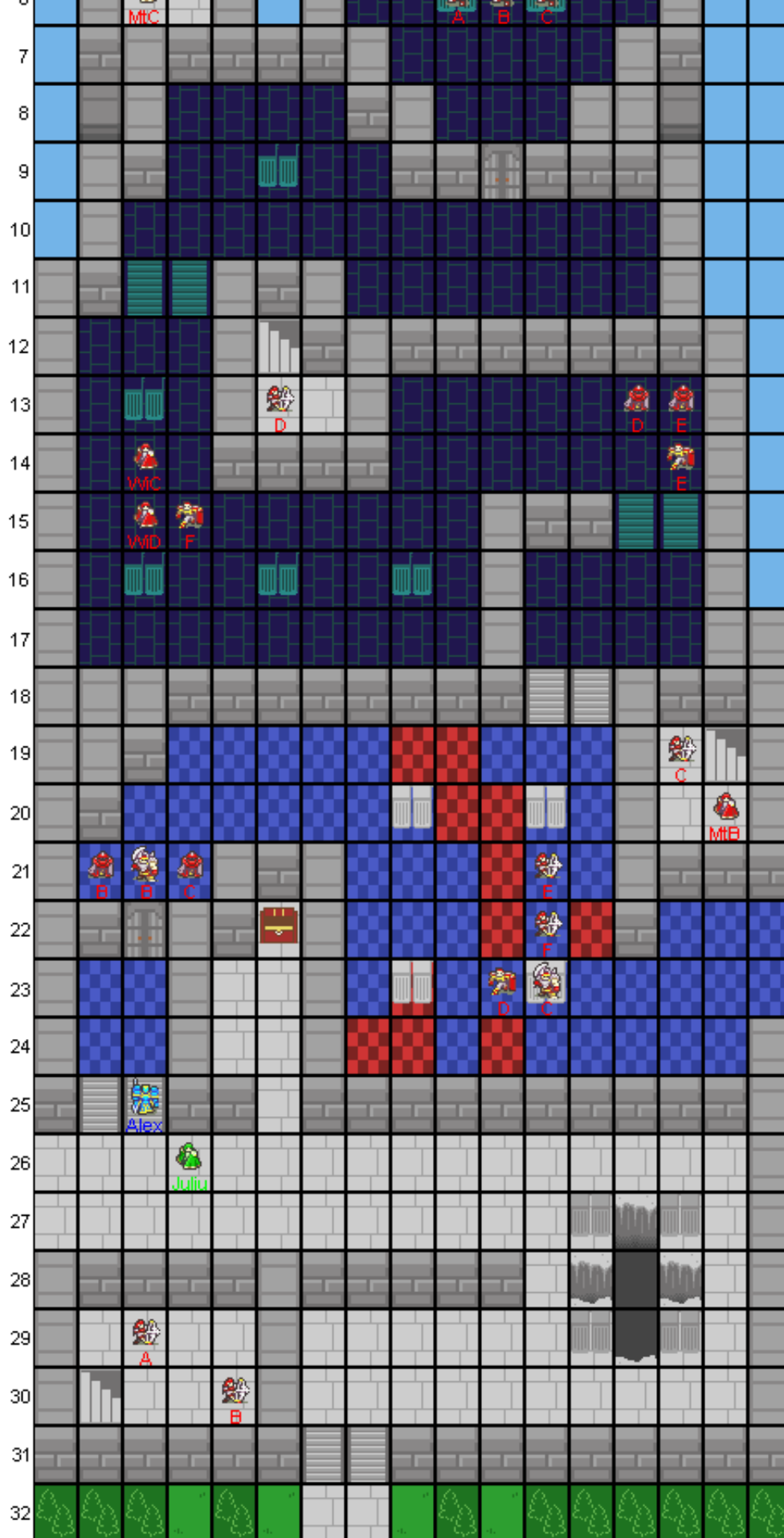
Julian left the room and ingested an elixir.

Julian uses Elixir

All HP healed

## ~~Player Turn 13~~

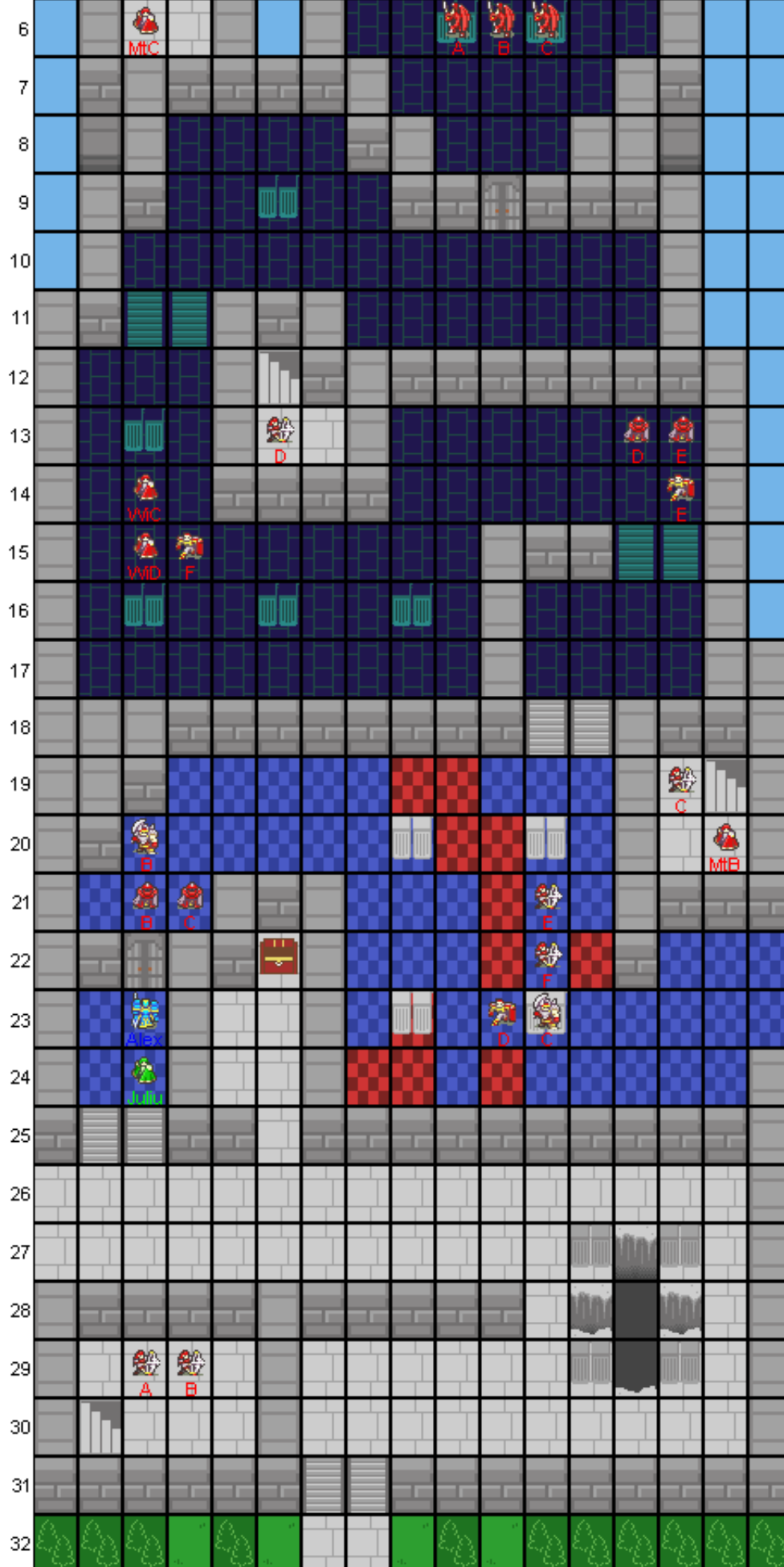




Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 26/54	Mook D: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35
	Mook E: 42/42	Adept E: 35/35
	Mook F: 42/42	Wizzard C: 37/37
	Henchman B: 45/45	Wizzard D: 37/37





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 40/54 4/5	Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37



<b>Allies:</b>	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept B: 35/35 Adept C: 35/35	Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		

Smack that door.

The door asploded as it should.

Alex vs Door

37-10 = 27dmg

~~Enemy Phase~~

One of the black mages blasted Alex with magics. The chokehold wasn't helping them much.

Adept B vs Alex

Hit: 124-39 = 85  
Hit roll: 72, hit!  
Damage: 34-2-11 = 21dmg  
Alex is poisoned!

~~Ally Phase~~

Julian however quickly fixed Alex as best as he could.

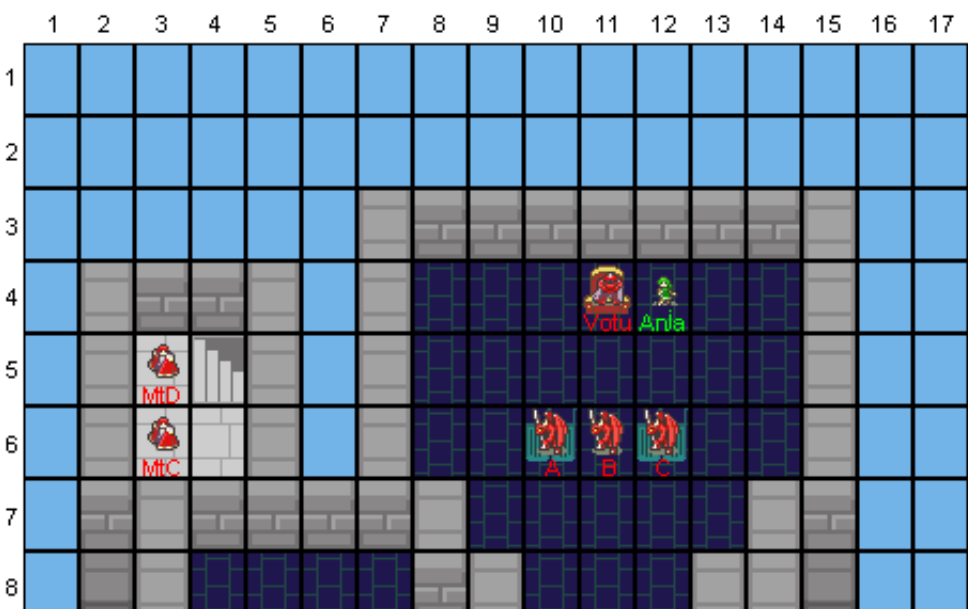
Julian mends Alex

20+20 = Up to 40HP healed

~~Player Turn 15~~

Poison rolls

Alex: 1





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 53/54 4/5		Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:		Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 45/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38	Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36
Anja: 31/31			

Julian: 35/35	Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept B: 35/35 Adept C: 35/35	Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
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"Hhhhyah!"

**Move 1 up and Killer Lance that Dark Mage.**

Alex got stabs. So much stabs.

**Alex vs Adept B**

Hit:  $111 - 36 = 75$   
 Hit roll: 70, hit! Crit roll: 26!  
 Damage:  $32 - 12 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Both the mage and the axeman tried to knock Alex but they hardly accomplished anything.

**Adept C vs Alex**

Hit:  $124 - 39 = 85$   
 Hit roll: 33, hit!  
 Great Shield roll: 10!  
 No damage!

**Henchman B vs Alex**

Hit:  $108 - 39 = 69$   
 Hit roll: 70, miss! //omg

**~~Ally Phase~~**

Julian bravely went forth to do heroics.

**Julian vs Henchman C**

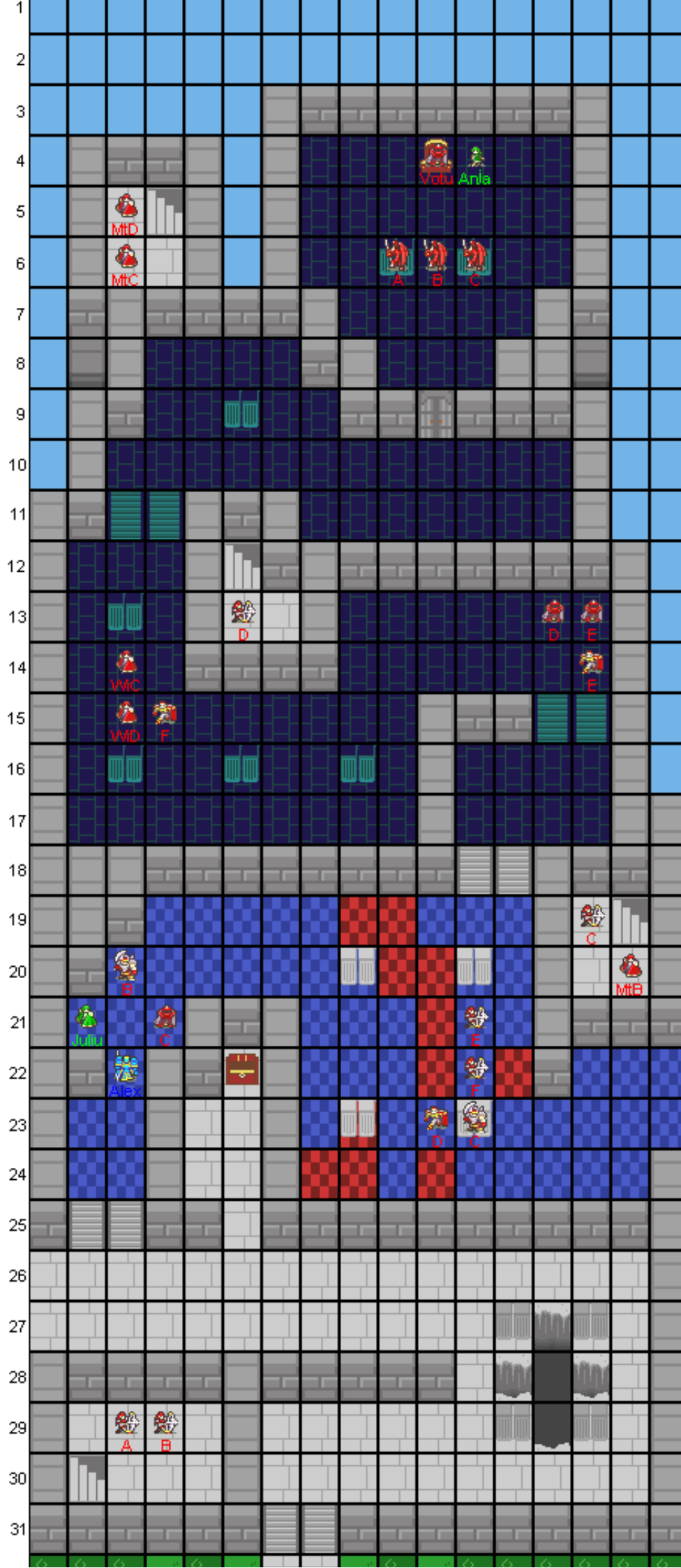
Hit:  $130 - 42 = 88$   
 Hit roll: 68, hit!  
 Damage:  $31 - 10 = 21\text{dmg}$   
  
 Henchman C counterattacks!  
 Hit:  $108 - 51 = 57$   
 Hit roll: 64, miss!  
  
 Julian strikes again!  
 Hit:  $130 - 42 = 88$   
 Hit roll: 26, hit!  
 Damage:  $31 - 10 = 21\text{dmg}$

**~~Player Turn 16~~**

**Poison rolls**

Alex: 5





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 48/54 3/5	Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 4/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38	Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35	Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept C: 35/35	Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66

**Move 1 up, Killer Lance the other dark mage.**

The stabs continued.

## Alex vs Adept C

Hit: 111-36 = 75  
Hit roll: 20, hit! Crit roll: 10!  
Damage: 32-12 = 20x3 = 60dmg //RWRWRWRWRRR

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The henchman threw his axe at Alex, scratching him a lil bit.

### Henchman B vs Alex

Hit:  $108+15-39 = 89$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1-2-30 = 6\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~



"Foosh~"

## Julian vs Henschman C

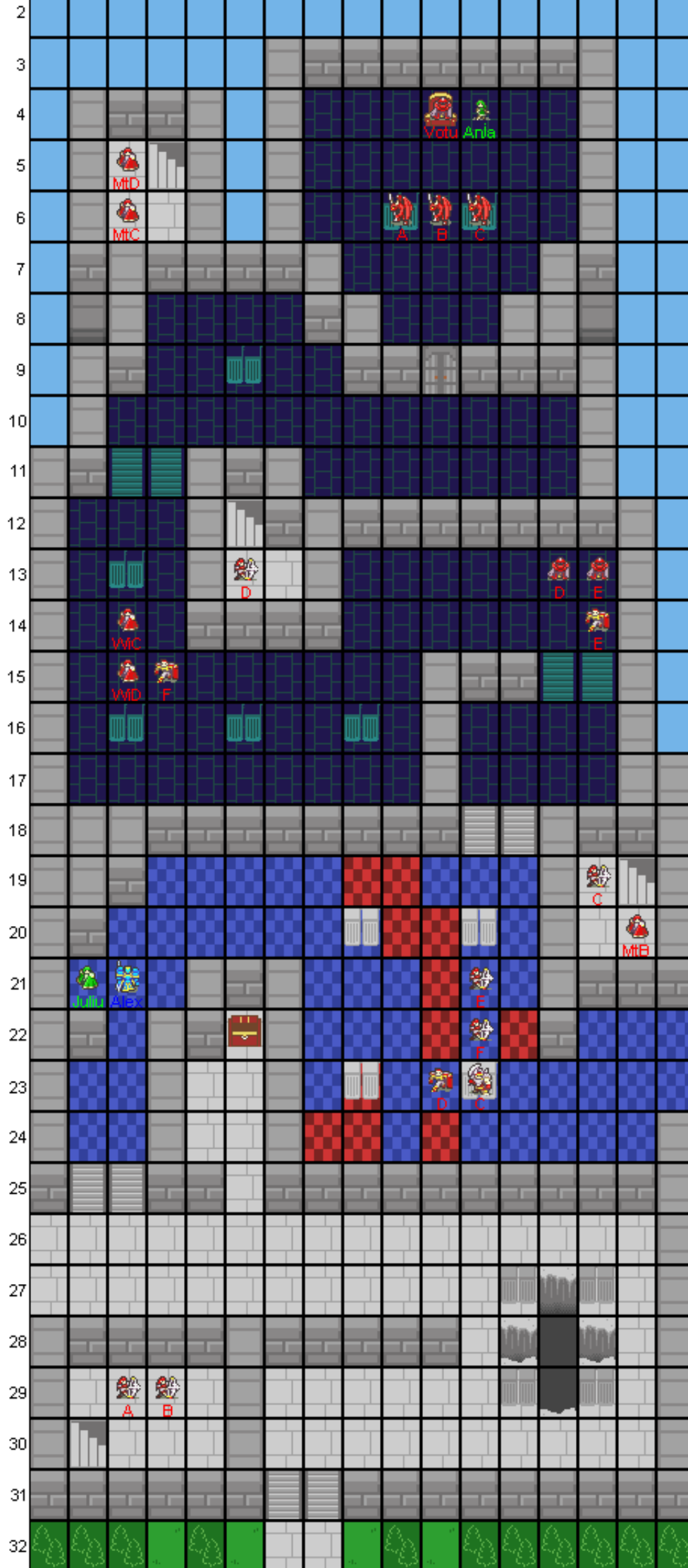
Hit:  $130-42 = 88$   
Hit roll: 68, hit!  
Damage:  $31-10 = 21\text{dmg}$

## ~~Player Turn 17~~

## Poison rolls

Alex: 3

[illegible]



Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 39/54 2/5	Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman B: 45/45 Henchman C: 4/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept D: 35/35	Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		

Clanking noisily in, Alexander bellowed a challenge.



"Come at me! I'll defeat you all!"

6, 20

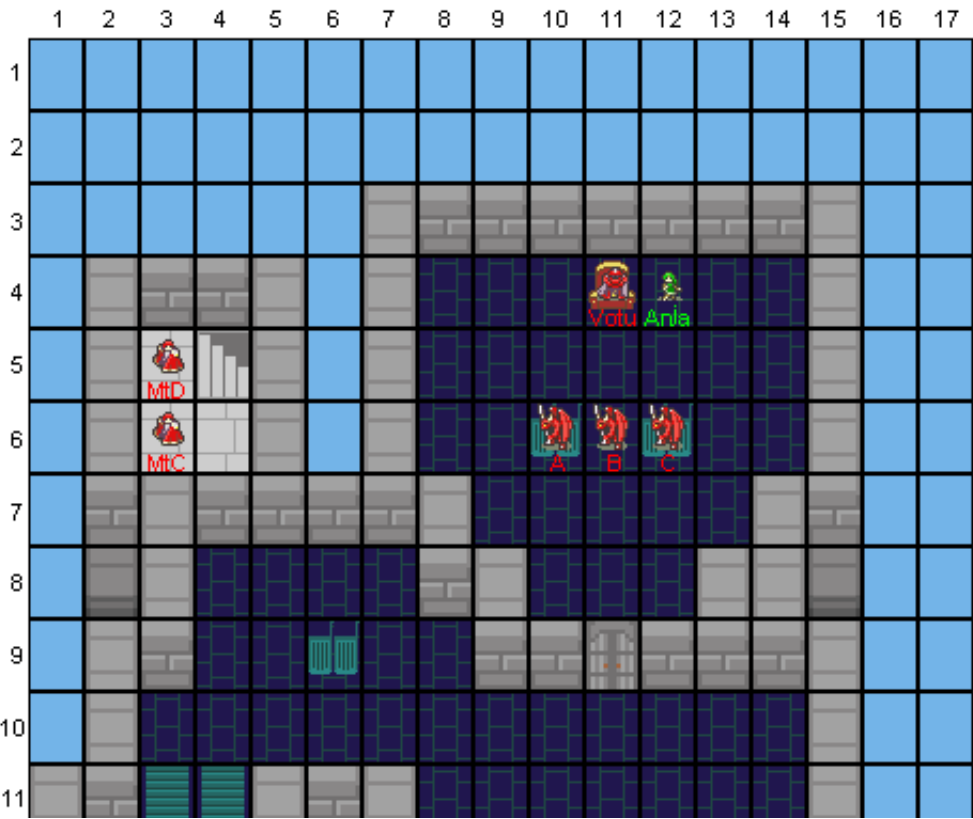
~~Ally Phase~~

Julian went along Alex.

~~Player Turn 18~~

Poison rolls

Alex: 4
---------





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 35/54 1/5		Mook D: 42/42	Adept E: 35/35
Allies:		Mook E: 42/42	Wizzard C: 37/37
		Mook F: 42/42	Wizzard D: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		Henchman B: 45/45	Meteorologist A: 37/37
		Henchman C: 4/45	Meteorologist B: 37/37
		Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
		Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
		Warden C: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
		Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle B: 36/36
		Warden E: 38/38	Gargoyle C: 36/36
		Warden F: 38/38	Votus: 66/66
		Adept D: 35/35	

Move to 8, 22



## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The grunts suprisingly didn't want to wait; they attacked Alex, right after he got smacked by a meteor!

### Meteorologist B vs Alex

Hit:  $132 - 39 = 93$

Hit roll: 72, hit!

Damage:  $35 - 11 = 14\text{dmg}$

### Mook D vs Alex

Hit:  $132 - 15 - 39 = 78$

Hit roll: 17, hit!

Damage:  $43 - 1 - 30 = 12\text{dmg}$

Alex retaliates!

Hit:  $111 + 15 - 43 = 85$

Hit roll: 73, hit!

Damage:  $32 + 1 - 17 = 16\text{dmg}$

### Henchman C vs Alex

Hit:  $108 + 15 - 39 = 84$

Hit roll:  $37 + 1 - 30 = 8\text{dmg}$

### Warden F vs Alex

Hit:  $128 - 39 = 89$

Hit roll: 78, hit!

Great Shield roll: 13!

No damage!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Julian came to Alex's rescue and healed him.

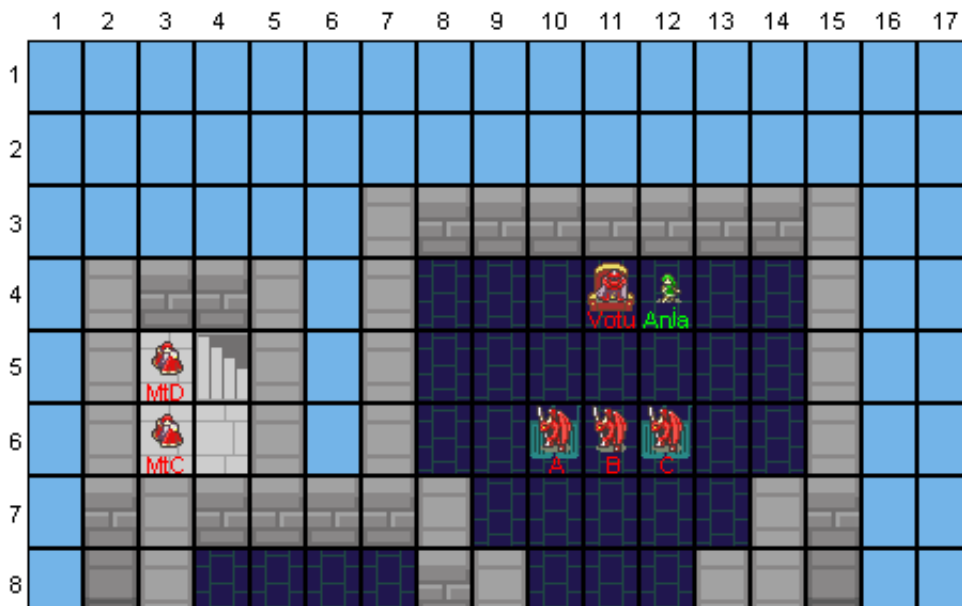
### Julian mends Alex

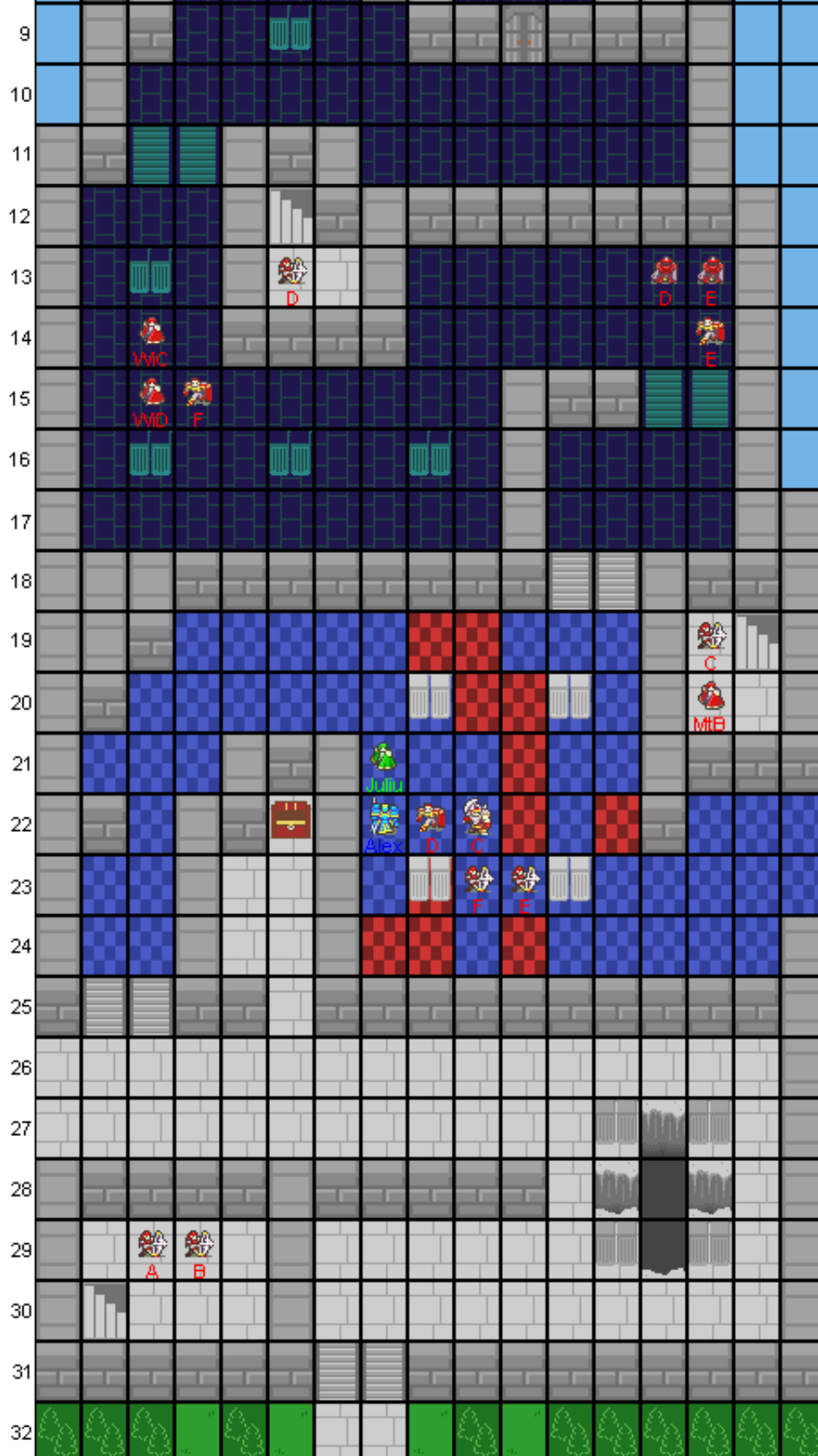
$20 + 20 =$  Up to 40HP healed

## ~~Player Turn 19~~

### Poison rolls

Alex feels better!





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 41/54	Mook D: 42/42 Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42	Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:	Henchman C: 4/45 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35	Warden D: 38/38 Warden E: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36

	Warden F: 38/38 Adept D: 35/35	Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
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**Killer Lance swordsguy.**

Alex hasss the stabs.

## Alex vs Mook D

Hit:  $111+15-43 = 85$   
Hit roll: 77, hit! Crit roll: 13!  
Damage:  $32+1-17 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The remaining enemies continued to gang upon Alex.

### Henchman C vs Alex

Hit:  $108+15-39 = 84$   
Hit roll: 72, hit!  
Damage:  $37+1-2-30 = 6\text{dm}$

### Meteorologist B vs Alex

Hit:  $132 - 39 = 92$   
Hit roll: 49, hit!  
Great Shield roll: 6!  
No damage!

### Warden E vs Alex

Hit:  $128 - 39 = 89$   
Hit roll: 92, miss!

### Warden F vs Alex

Hit:  $128-39 = 89$   
Hit roll: 3, hit!  
Damage:  $37-2-30 = 5\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Julian moved closer and blasted one of the snipers with his windy magics.

## Julian vs Warden E

Hit:  $130-53 = 77$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $31-11 = 20\text{dmg}$



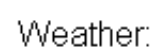
 "Be careful Sir Alexander! I sense some thunder magic enchantments on those red tiles!"

## ~~Player Turn 20~~

[illegible]







Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 20/54	Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Warden F: 38/38 Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37	Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Allies:		
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35		

One right, one down, killer lance the archer.

Alex had stabs once again much to despair of at least one person.

Well, two.

Alex vs Warden F

Hit: $111-53 = 58$ Hit roll: 27, hit! Crit roll: 23! Damage: $32-17 = 15 \times 3 = 45\text{dmg}$
---

~~Enemy Phase~~

Mandatory orbital bombardment.

Meteorologist B vs Alex

Hit: $132-39 = 93$ Hit roll: 86, hit! Damage: $35-2-11 = 22\text{dmg}$
--

~~Ally Phase~~

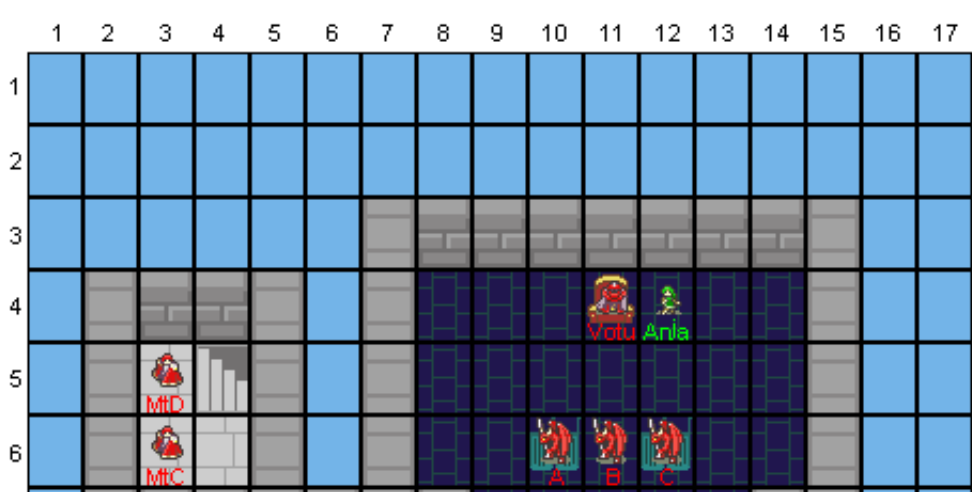
Fortunately Julian was right behind Alex. Breathing slowly. His cheeks red. Whispering things.

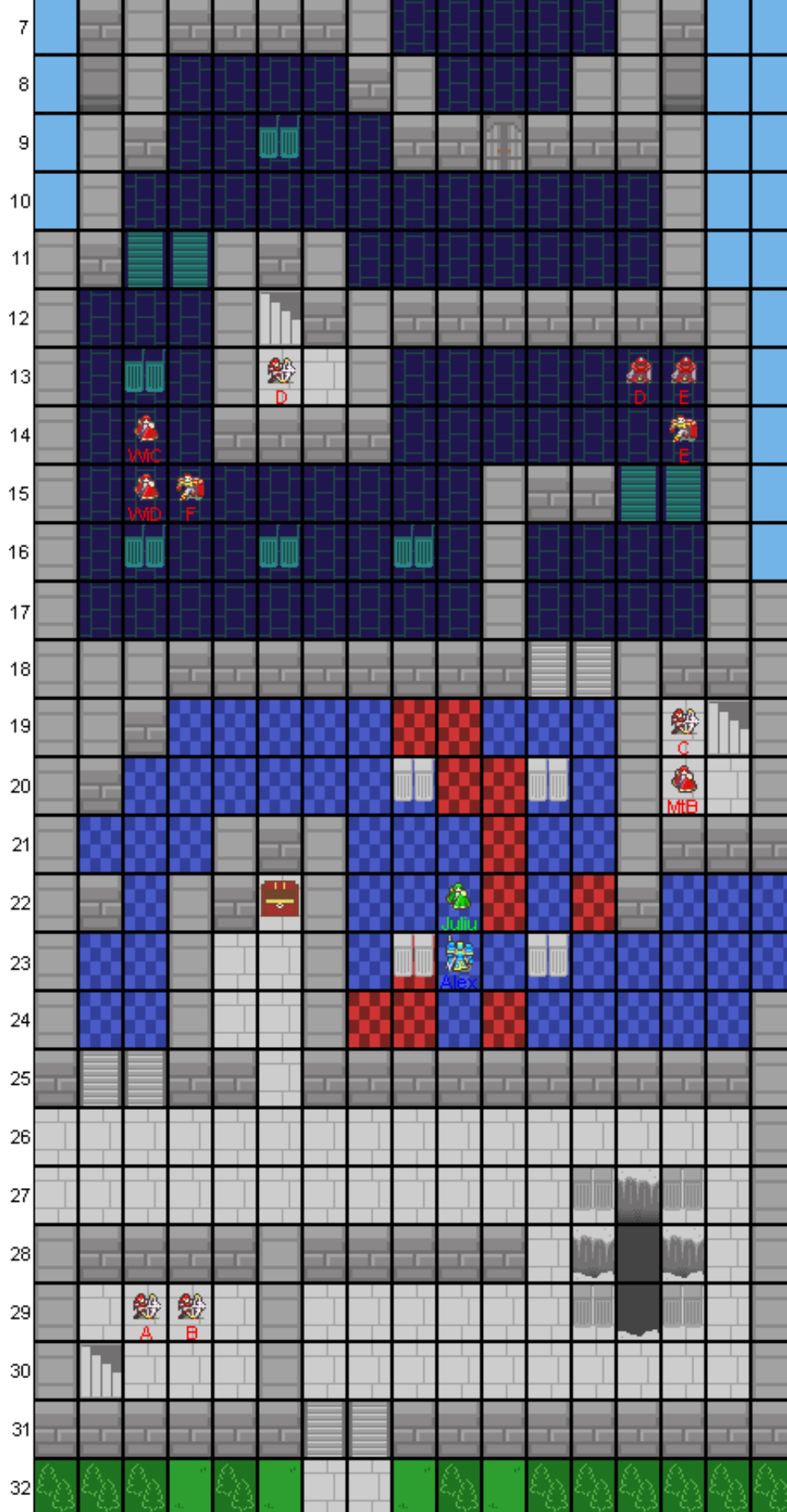
That was spell-casting of course.

Julian heals Alex

20+20 /2 = Up to 20HP healed
------------------------------

~~Player Turn 22~~





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 20/54		Mook E: 42/42	Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:		Mook F: 42/42	Meteorologist A: 37/37
		Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
		Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
		Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37



Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35	Warden D: 38/38 Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37	Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
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Twwooo to the right.

~~Enemy Phase~~

Meterooooorsss!

Meteorologist B vs Alex

Hit: 132-15-39 = 78 Hit roll: 80, miss!
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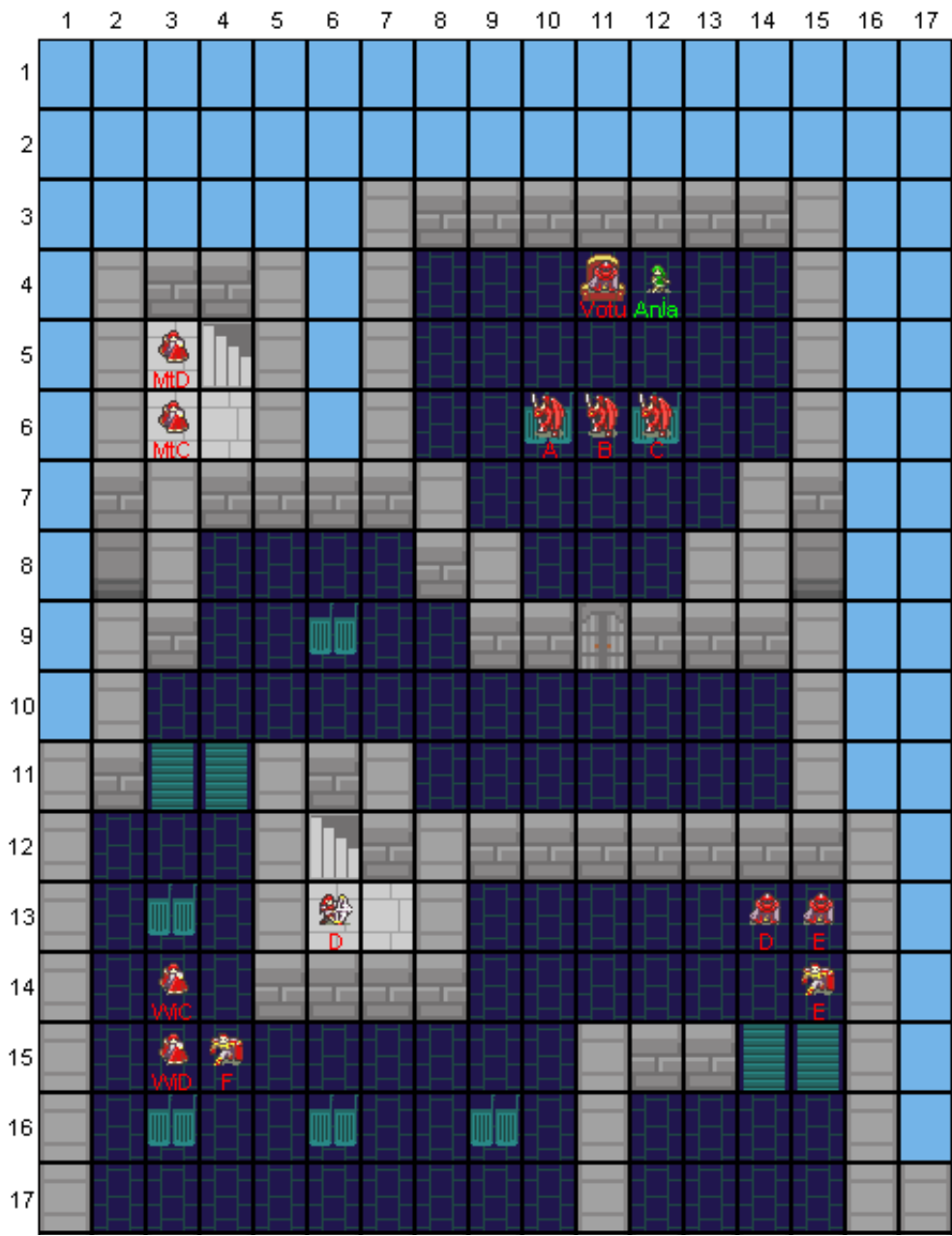
~~Ally Phase~~

Julian cast his healing magics once again.

Julian heals Alex

20+20 = Up to 40HP healed
---------------------------

~~Player Turn 23~~





## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The pillars didn't save Alex from hurt.

### Meteorologist B vs Alex

Hit:  $132 - 15 - 39 = 78$

Hit roll: 22, hit!

Damage:  $35 - 11 = 24\text{dmg}$

### Warden C vs Alex

Hit:  $128-15-39 = 74$

Hit roll: 58, hit!

Damage:  $37 - 30 = 7\text{dmq}$

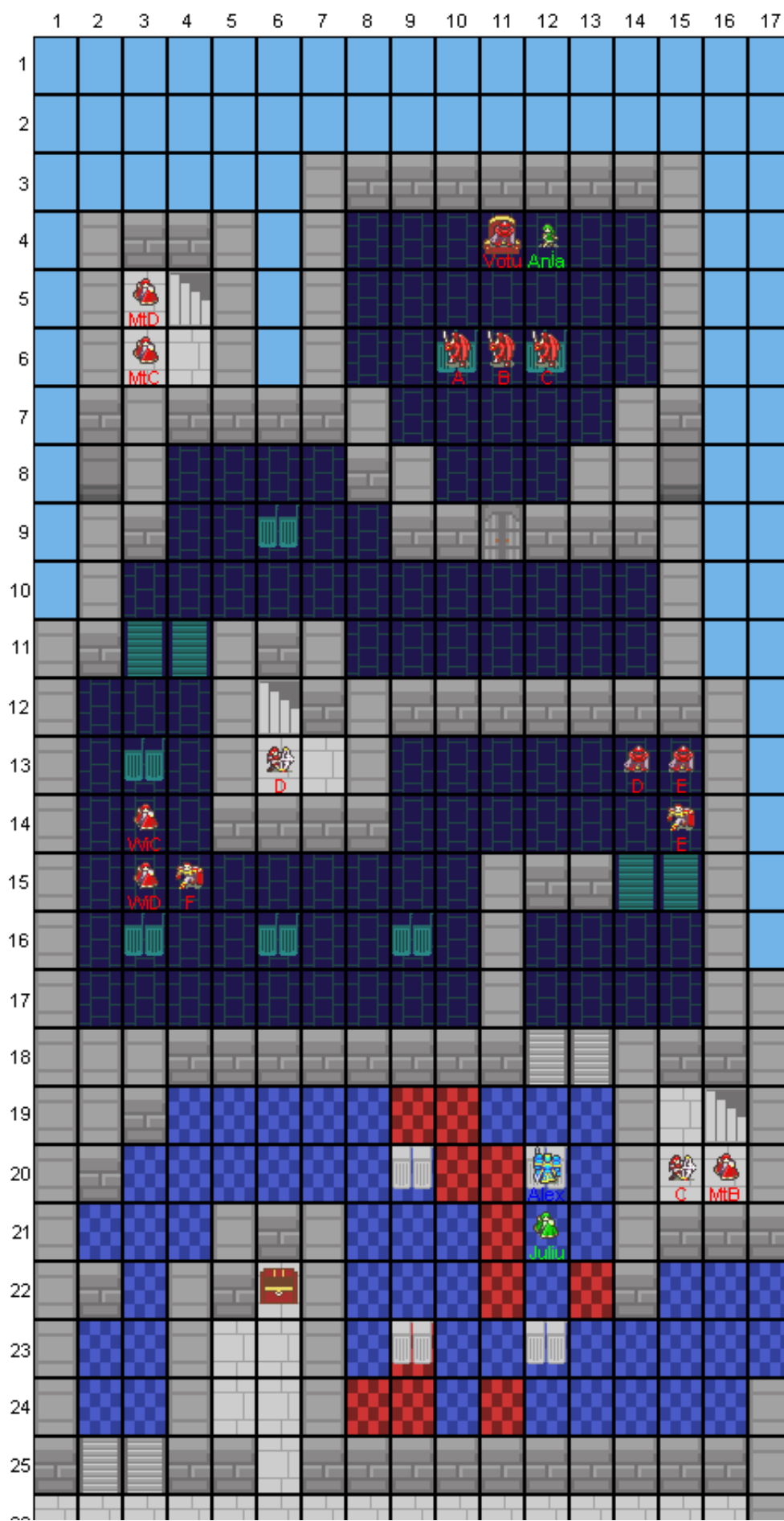
## ~~Ally Phase~~

Of course, Julian quickly healed the knight.

### Julian mends Alex

20+20 = Up to 40HP restored

## ~~Player Turn 24~~





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 20/54		Mook E: 42/42 Mook F: 42/42 Warden A: 38/38 Warden B: 38/38 Warden C: 38/38 Warden D: 38/38 Adept D: 35/35 Adept E: 35/35 Wizzard C: 37/37	Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist A: 37/37 Meteorologist B: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Allies:			
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35			

12, 16

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Safe from the retaliatory strike, the magicians went on blasting poisonous clouds at Alex.

### Adept D vs Alex

Hit:  $124 - 39 = 85$   
Hit roll: 60, hit!  
Damage:  $34 - 11 = 23\text{dmg}$   
Alex is poisoned!

### Adept E vs Alex

Hit:  $124 - 39 = 85$   
Hit roll: 11, hit!  
Damage:  $34 - 11 = 23\text{dmg}$   
Alex is poisoned!

Then the swordsman tried to finish off Alex, but the mook underestimated Alex.

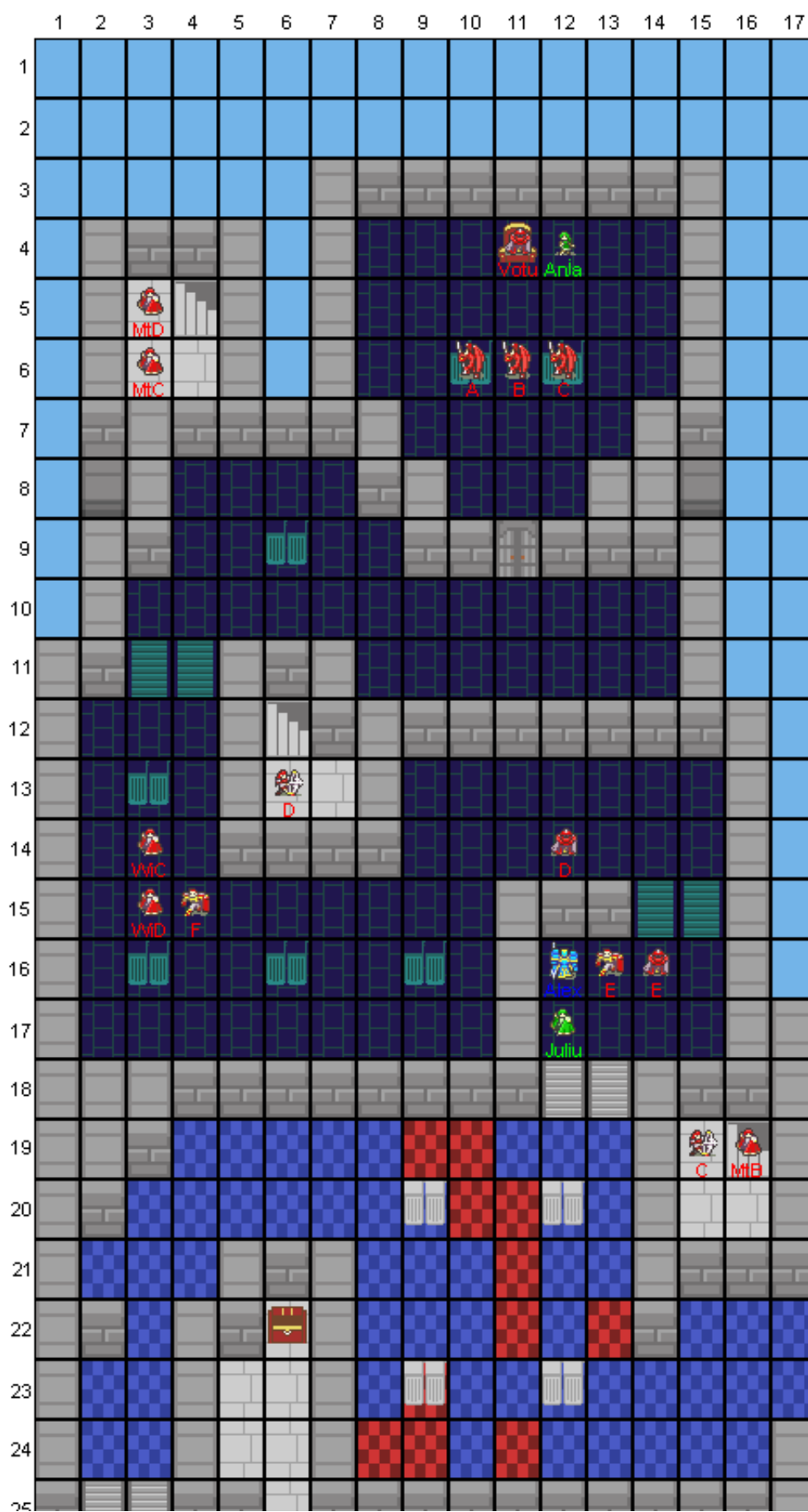
### Mook E vs Alex

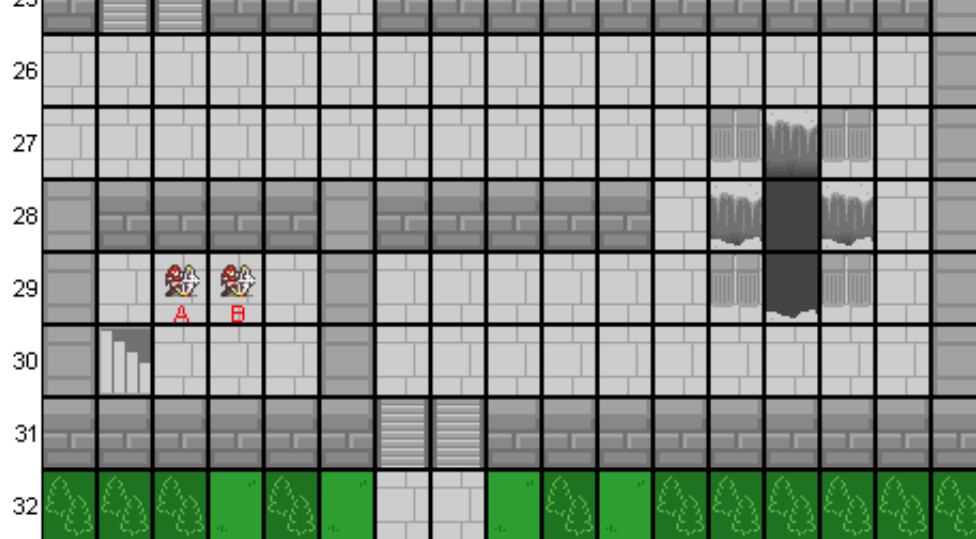
Hit:  $132 - 15 - 39 = 78$   
Hit roll: 2, hit!  
Great Shield roll: 10!  
No damage!  
  
Alex retaliates!  
Hit:  $111 + 15 - 43 = 83$   
Hit roll: 96, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

20+20 = Up to 40HP restored

Alex: 3





Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 45/54 Poison (4/5)	Mook E: 42/42	Wizzard D: 37/37
Allies:	Mook F: 42/42	Meteorologist A: 37/37
	Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35	Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
	Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
	Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
	Adept D: 35/35	Gargoyle B: 36/36
	Adept E: 35/35	Gargoyle C: 36/36
	Wizzard C: 37/37	Votus: 66/66

## Killer Lance the Mook.

There has been stabs.

### Alex vs Mook E

Hit:  $111+15-43 = 83$   
Hit roll: 82, hit!  
Damage:  $32+1-17 = 16\text{dmg}$

Mook E counterattacks!  
Hit:  $132+20-15-39 = 98$  //oh look I noticed your Personal Fault c:  
Damage:  $43-2-30 = 11\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Alex was knocked down.

### Mook E vs Alex

Hit:  $132+20-15-39 = 98$   
Damage:  $43-2-30 = 11\text{dmg}$

Alex retaliates!  
Hit:  $111+15-43 = 83$   
Hit roll: 61, hit! Crit roll: 3!  
Damage:  $32+1-17 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

### Adept D vs Alex

Hit:  $124+20-39 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $34-2-11 = 21\text{dmg}$

### Adept E vs Alex

Hit:  $124+20-39 = 105$ , autohit!

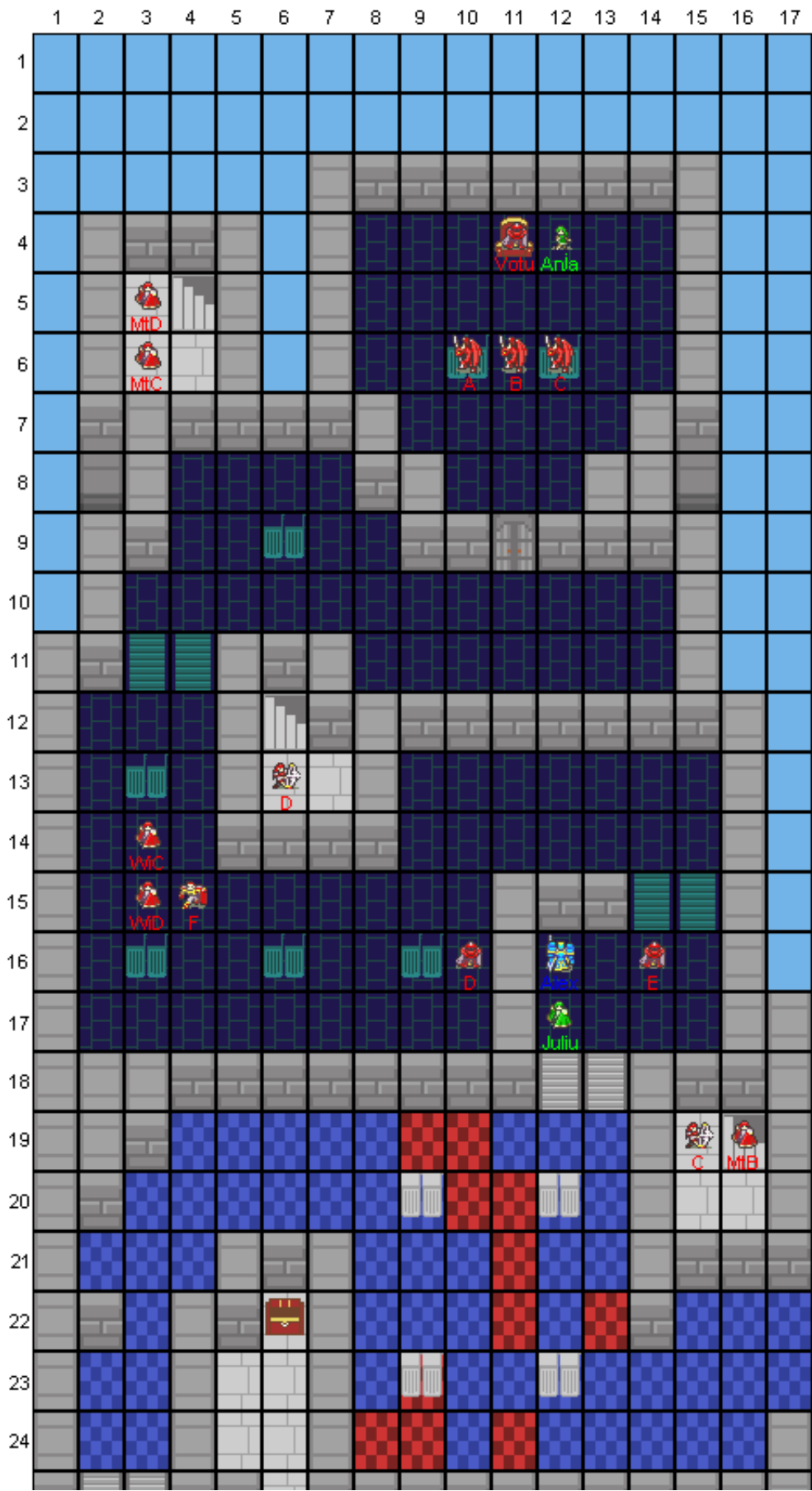
~~Ally Phase~~

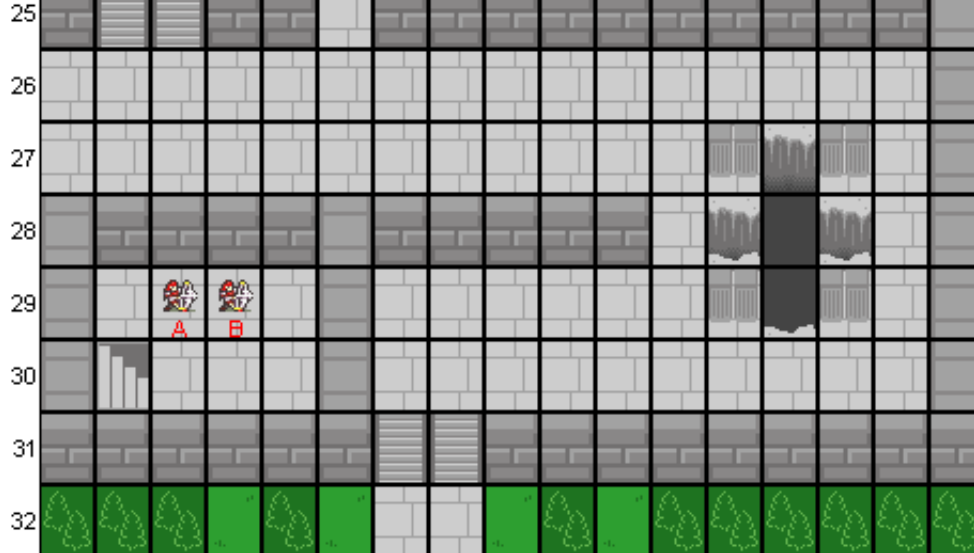
But lo and behold, Julian casts his magics.

Julian mends

20HP healed

~~Player Turn 26~~





Weather:

<b>Merces:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>	
Alexander Jorinn: 20/54	Mook F: 42/42	Meteorologist A: 37/37
<b>Allies:</b>	Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
	Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 35/35	Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
	Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
	Adept D: 35/35	Gargoyle B: 36/36
	Adept E: 35/35	Gargoyle C: 36/36
	Wizzard C: 37/37	Votus: 66/66
	Wizzard D: 37/37	

**One right, toot toot (hopefully) murder.**

The murder was had.

#### Alex vs Adept E

Hit:  $111-36 = 75$

Hit roll: 70, hit! Crit roll: 17!

Damage:  $32-12 = 20 \times 3 = 60\text{dmg}$

### ~~Enemy Phase~~

The other adept blasted Julian! The young mage did retaliatory windy thing.

#### Adept D vs Julian

Hit:  $124+15-51 = 88$

Hit roll: 54, hit!

Damage:  $34+1-18 = 17\text{dmg}$

Julian is poisoned!

Julian retaliates!

Hit:  $130-15-36 = 79$

Hit roll: 92, miss!

Julian counters again!

Hit:  $130-15-36 = 79$

Hit roll: 97, miss!

### ~~Ally Phase~~





"I don't feel too well..." Nonetheless, the brave Julian moved and healed Alex.

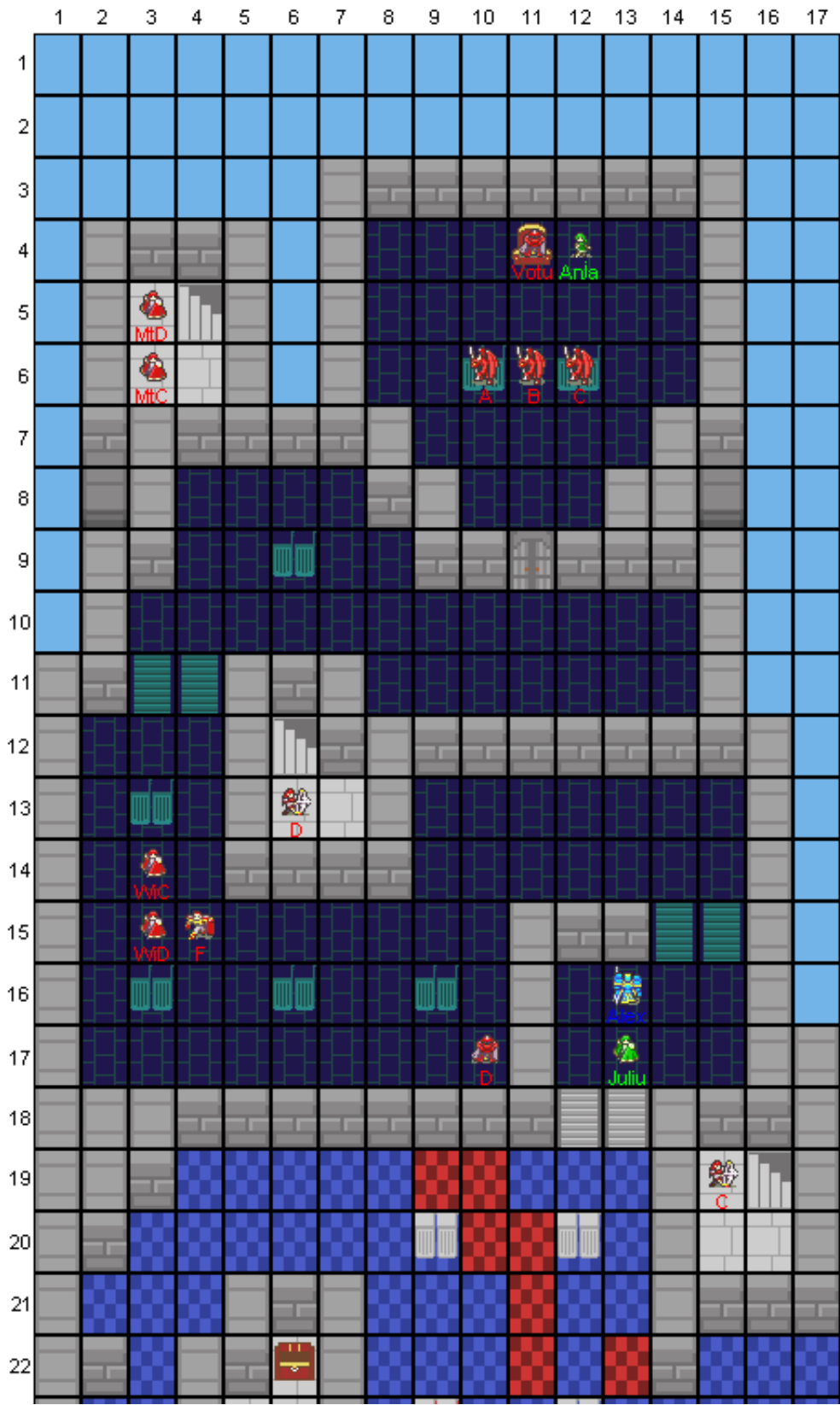
Julian mends

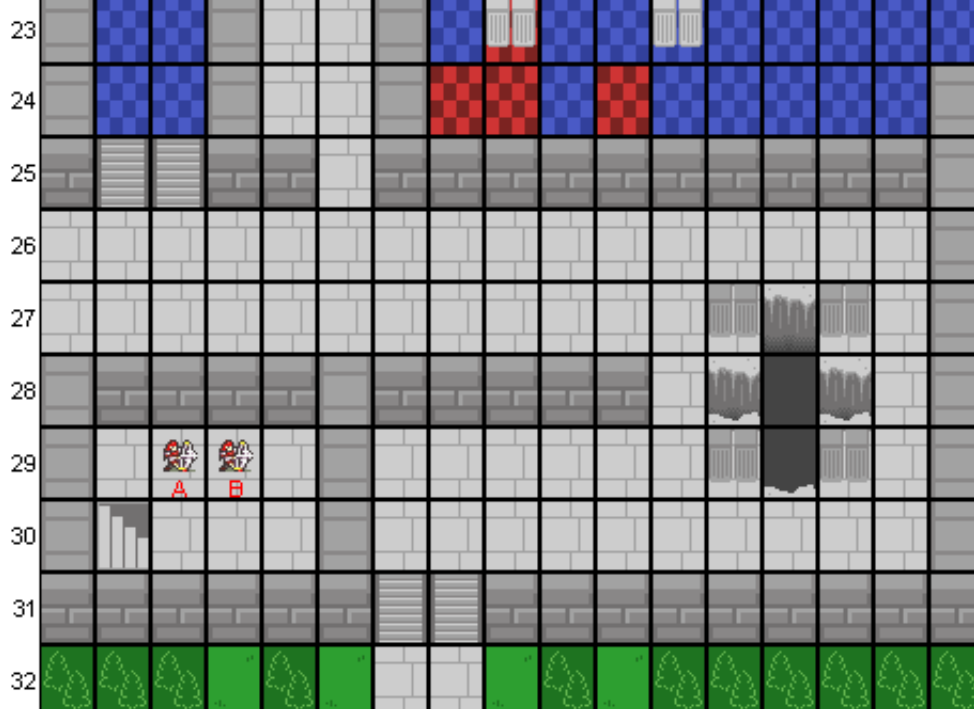
durr 40hp heals durr

~~Player Turn 27~~

Poison rolls

Julian: 4





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 54/54	Mook F: 42/42	Meteorologist A: 37/37
Allies:	Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
	Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 14/35 <span>Poison (4/5)</span>	Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
	Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
	Adept D: 35/35	Gargoyle B: 36/36
	Wizzard C: 37/37	Gargoyle C: 36/36
	Wizzard D: 37/37	Votus: 66/66



Heal yourself if you can, then! I'll be fine for now."

11, 14

~~Enemy Phase~~

The dark mage blasted Alex.

#### Adept D vs Alex

Hit:  $124 - 39 = 85$   
Hit roll: 50, hit!  
Damage:  $34 - 11 = 23\text{dmg}$   
Alex is Poisoned!

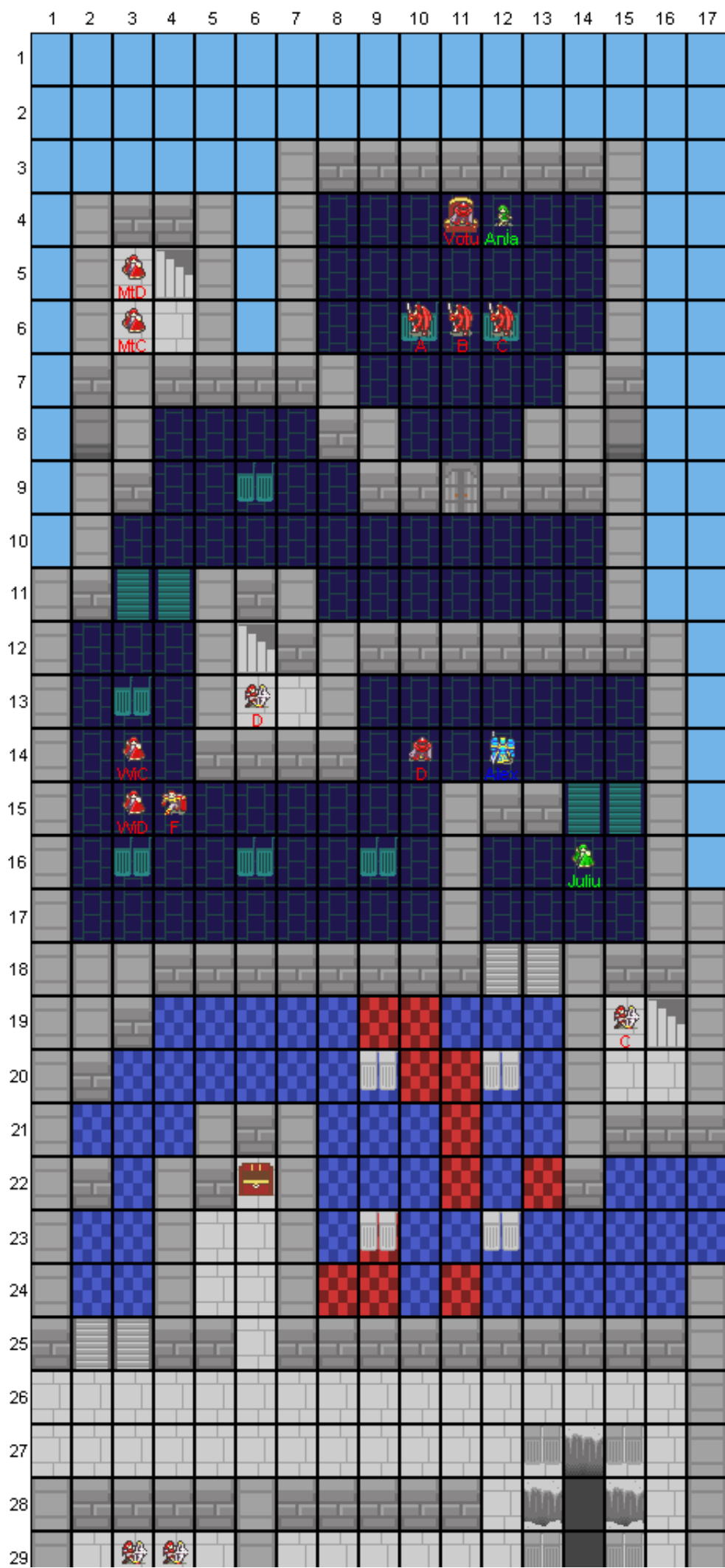
~~Ally Phase~~

Julian lagged behind.

~~Player Turn 28~~

Poison rolls

Alex: 5
Julian: 2





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 26/54 Poison (4/5)		Mook F: 42/42	Meteorologist A: 37/37
Allies:		Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
		Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
Anja: 31/31		Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
		Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
Julian: 12/35 Poison (3/5)		Adept D: 35/35	Gargoyle B: 36/36
		Wizzard C: 37/37	Gargoyle C: 36/36
		Wizzard D: 37/37	Votus: 66/66

## One left and fok em up w/ lance

The stabs were inaccurate! Fortunately, Alex managed to block the blast of dark energy with his shield!

### Alex vs Adept D

Hit:  $111 - 36 = 75$   
Hit roll: 99, miss!

Adept D counterattacks!  
Hit:  $124 + 20 - 39 = 105$ , autohit!  
Great Shield roll: 5!  
No damage!  
Alex is poisoned!

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The adept stepped away and blasted Alex with majjicks!

### Adept D vs Alex

Hit:  $124 + 20 - 39 = 105$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $34 - 11 = 23$  dmg  
Alex is poisoned!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Julian caught up with Alex and seeing in how terrible state he was, mended his wounds.

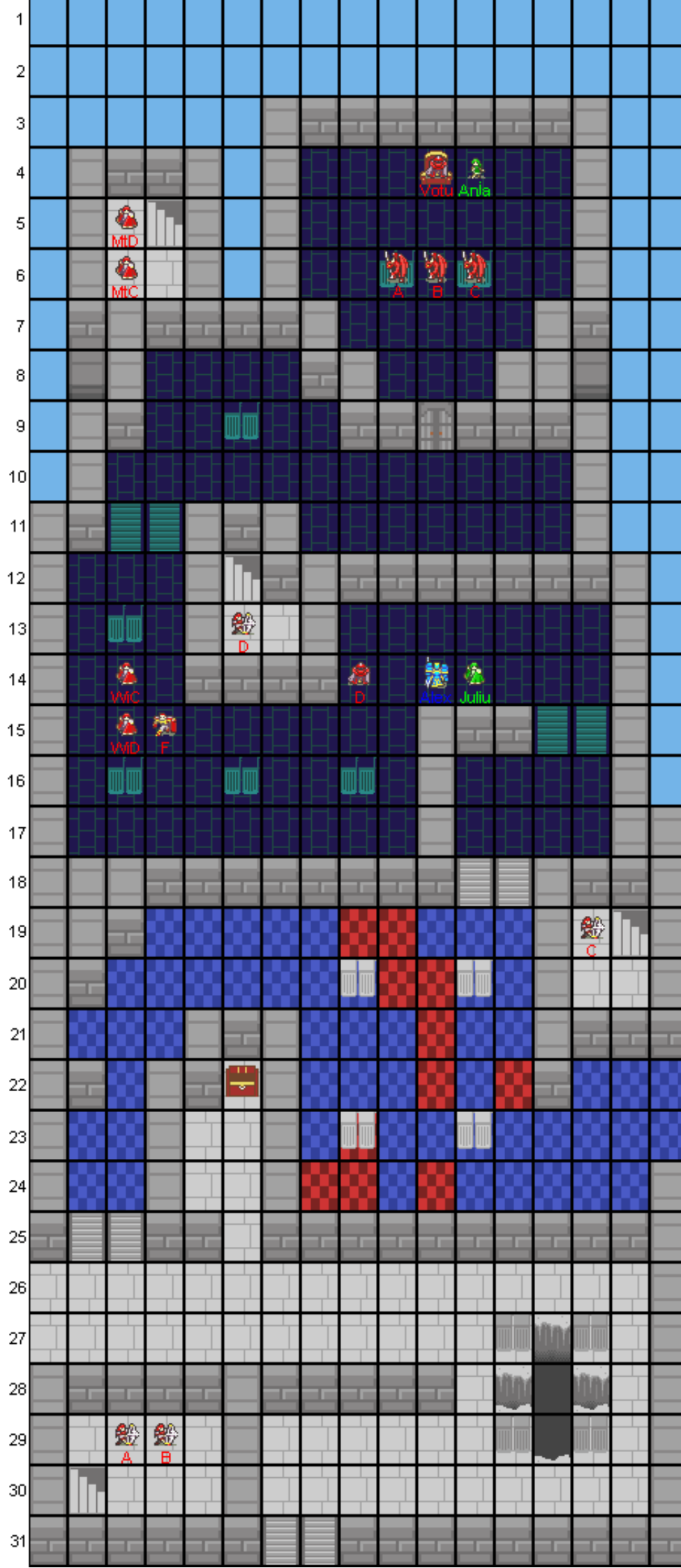
### Julian mends

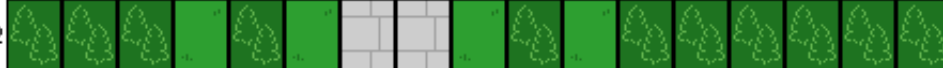
40HP

## ~~Player Turn 29~~

### Poison rolls

Alex: 2  
Julian: 4





Weather:

Mercs:		Enemies:	
Alexander Jorinn: 41/54 Poison (4/5)		Mook F: 42/42	Meteorologist A: 37/37
Allies:		Warden A: 38/38	Meteorologist B: 37/37
		Warden B: 38/38	Meteorologist C: 37/37
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 8/35 Poison (2/5)		Warden C: 38/38	Meteorologist D: 37/37
		Warden D: 38/38	Gargoyle A: 36/36
		Adept D: 35/35	Gargoyle B: 36/36
		Wizzard C: 37/37	Gargoyle C: 36/36
		Wizzard D: 37/37	Votus: 66/66



"Julian, do you not have vulneraries to heal yourself with?"



"Only leftovers in my bottle of medicinal elixir."



"Use them on yourself."

**Uno lefto, Lanceo Druido.**

The stabs were deadly this time.

#### Alex vs Adept D

Hit: 111-36 = 75

Hit roll: 63, hit! Crit roll: 6!

Damage: 32-12 = 20x3 = 60dmg

~~Ally Phase~~



"From now on I will have to bet on my luck."

#### Julian uses Elixir

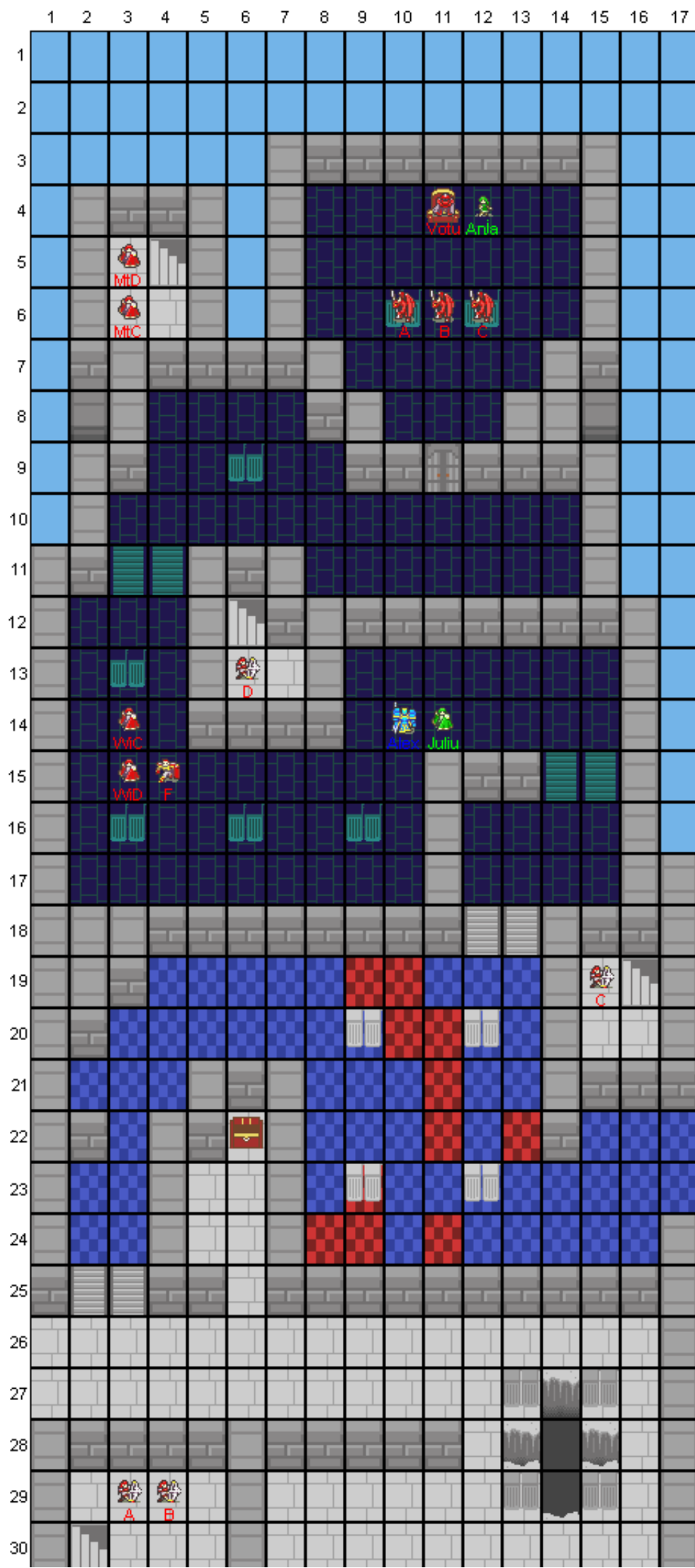
All HP restored!

~~Player Turn 30~~

#### Poison rolls

Alex: 2

Julian: 2





Weather:

<b>Merces:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>
Alexander Jorinn: 39/54 <b>Poison (3/5)</b>	Mook F: 42/42 Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
<b>Allies:</b>	
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 33/35 <b>Poison (1/5)</b>	

**Move to 8, 17!**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Enemies rushed against Alex; first was the swordsman, who got countercritted for his troubles.

### Mook F vs Alex

Hit:  $132+20-15-39 = 98$   
Hit roll: 85, hit!  
Damage:  $43-1-30 = 12\text{dmg}$

Alex retaliates!

Hit:  $111+15-43 = 85$   
Hit roll: 63, hit! Crit roll: 15!  
Damage:  $32+1-17 = 16 \times 3 = 48\text{dmg}$

Then the wizzards attacked Alex; he got fried up!

### Wizzard C vs Alex

Hit:  $130+20-39 = 111$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32-11 = 21\text{dmg}$

### Wizzard D vs Alex

Hit:  $130+20-39 = 111$ , autohit!  
Damage:  $32-11 = 21\text{dmg}$

## ~~Ally Phase~~

Julian came to heal Alex.

### the usual

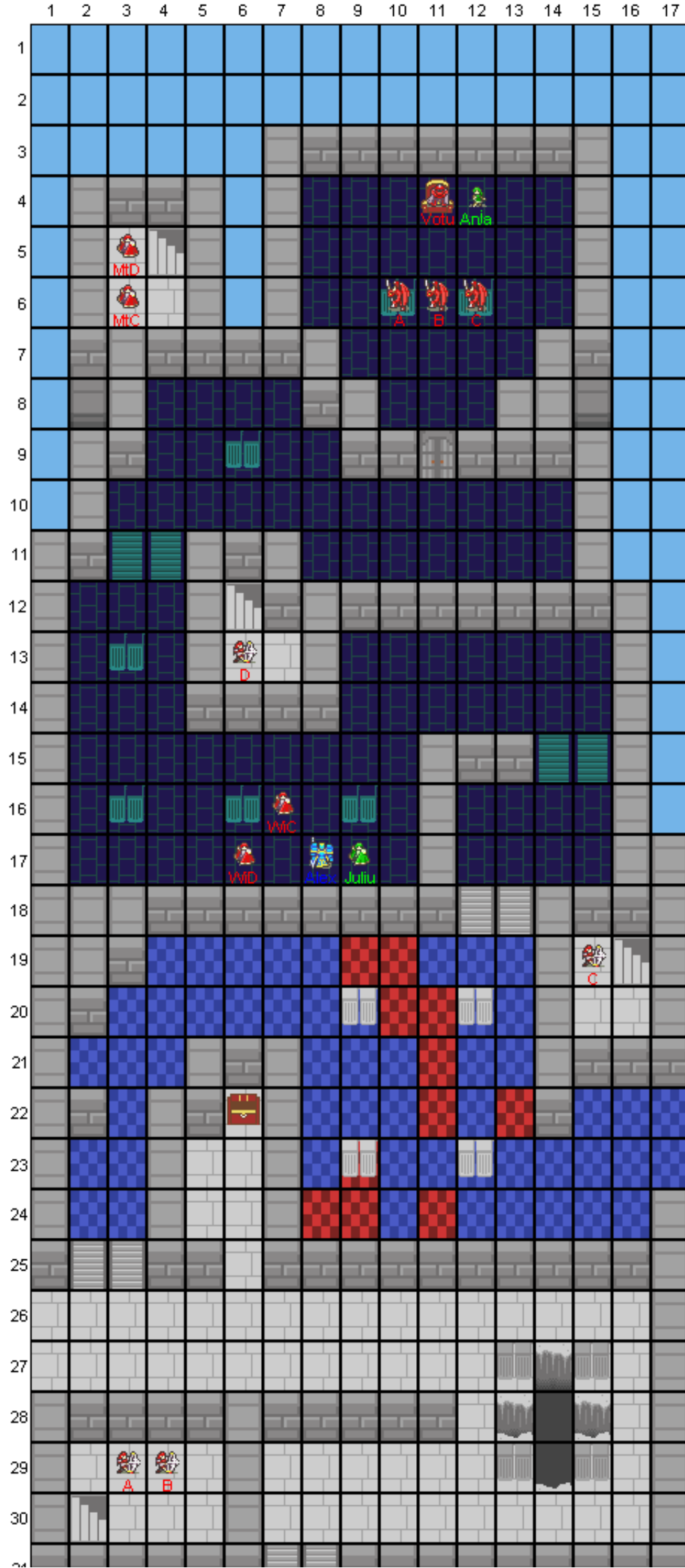
20HP revival

## ~~Player Turn 31~~

### Poison rolls

Julian feels better!







Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Alexander Jorinn: 20/54	Wizzard C: 37/37 Wizzard D: 37/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Allies:	
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 33/35	

## ONE UP, LANCE A WIZZARD (C)

The stabs were destructive.

### Alex vs Wizzard C

Hit:  $111 - 42 = 69$   
Hit roll: 69, hit! Crit roll: 25!  
Damage:  $32 - 13 = 19 \times 3 = 57\text{dmg}$

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

The wizzard zapped Alex. Shield absorbed da majjycks!

### Wizzard D vs Alex

Hit:  $130 - 39 = 91$   
Hit roll: 56, hit!  
Great Shield roll: 3!  
No damage!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

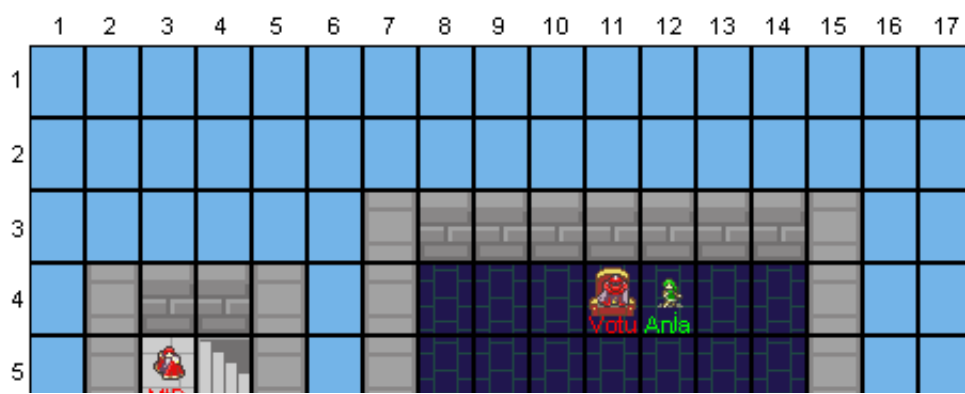


"That was great show of skill, sir Alex!" Julian healed Alex back to full health.

### Julian mends

40HP

## ~~Player Turn 32~~





Wizzard D: 37/37  
Meteorologist C: 37/37

<b>Allies:</b>	Meteorologist D: 37/37
Anja: 31/31	Gargoyle A: 36/36
Julian: 33/35	Gargoyle B: 36/36
	Gargoyle C: 36/36
	Votus: 66/66



"Couldn't have done it without you."

6, 17, apply a lance to the other Wizzard.

Stabs&zaps.

<b>Alex vs Wizzard D</b> Hit: 111-15-42 = 54 Hit roll: 36, hit! Damage: 32-13 = 19dmg  Wizzard D counterattacks! Hit: 130-39 = 91 Hit roll: 42, hit! Damage: 32-2-11 = 19dmg
--

~~Enemy Phase~~

The wizzard went rangey and got another zap on Alex.

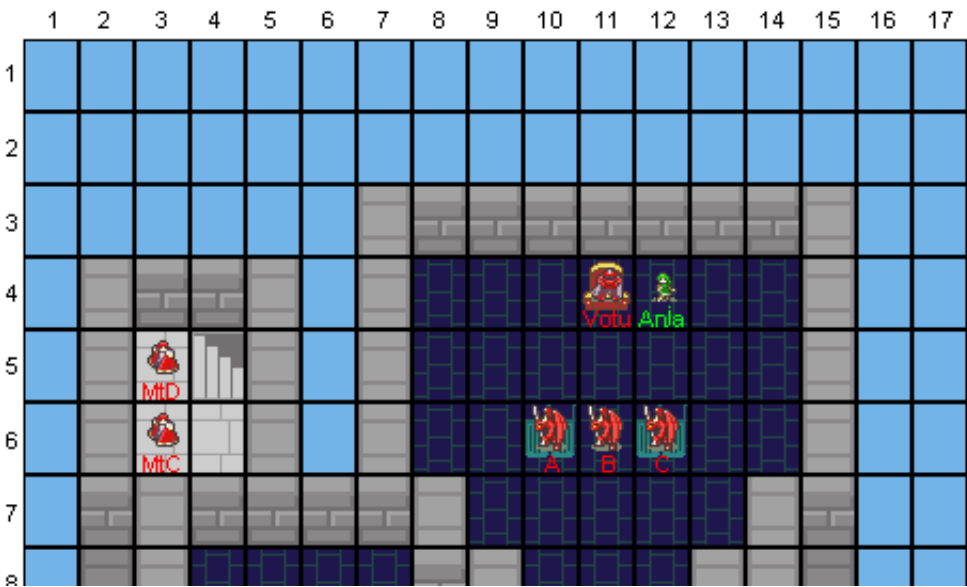
<b>Wizzard D vs Alex</b> Hit: 130-39 = 91 Hit roll: 74, hit! Damage: 32-2-11 = 19dmg
---

~~Ally Phase~~

Julian healed Alex up.

<b>Julian mends</b> 40HP
-----------------------------

~~Player Turn 33~~





Weather:

Mercs:	Enemies:
Alexander Jorinn: 54/54	Wizzard D: 18/37 Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Allies:	
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 33/35	

## One up, Warhammer the mage this time.

The sound of cracking ribs confirmed teh wizzard as dead.

## Alex vs Wizzard D

Hit:  $96 - 42 = 54$

Hit roll: 41, hit!

Damage:  $37 - 13 = 24\text{dmg}$

## Enemy Phase

An arrow struck a pillar behind Alex.

### Warden D vs Alex

Hit:  $128 - 15 - 39 = 74$

Hit roll: 92, miss!

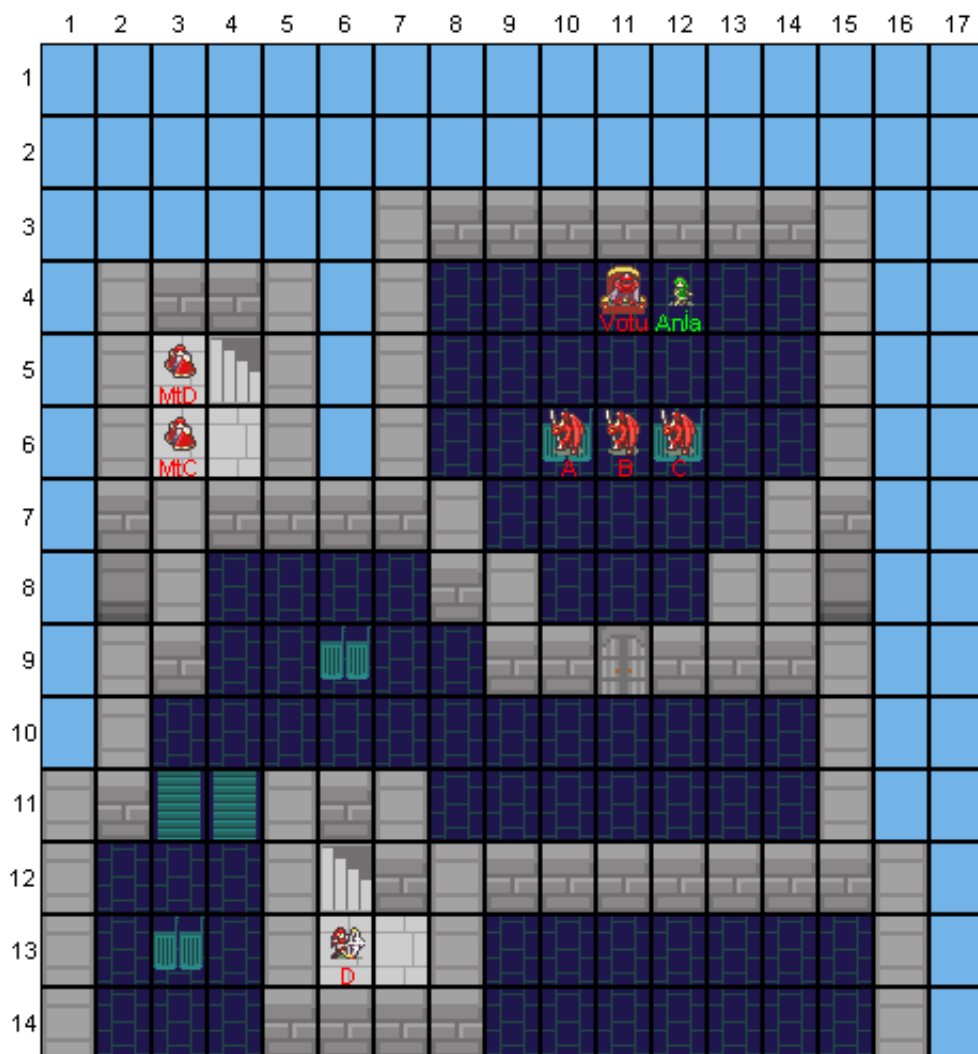
## ~~Ally Phase~~

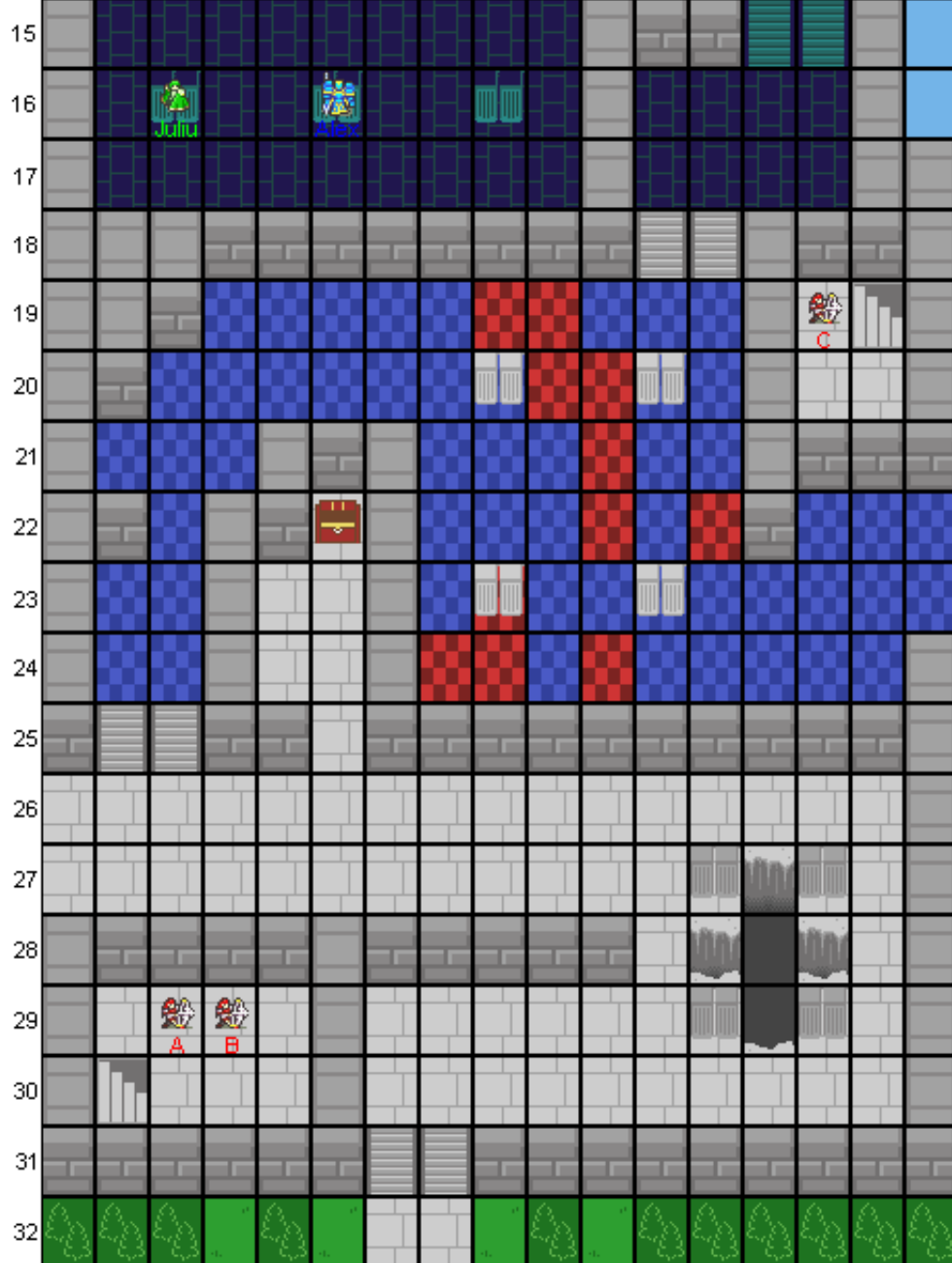
Julian moved near a pillar.



"Sir Alex, we're almost on the top of the tower!"

## ~~Player Turn 34~~





Weather:

Merces:	Enemies:
Alexander Jorinn: 54/54	Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Allies:	
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 33/35	

Wasting no time with words, Alex charged onwards!

**Move to 3, 14!**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Suddenly flaming stones smashed into Alex. Well, one did; the other hit the floor.

#### Meteorologist C vs Alex

Hit:  $132 - 39 = 93$

Hit roll: 17, hit!

Damage:  $35 - 2 - 11 = 23\text{dmg}$

Meteorologist D vs Alex

Hit: 132-39 = 93  
Hit roll: 98, miss!

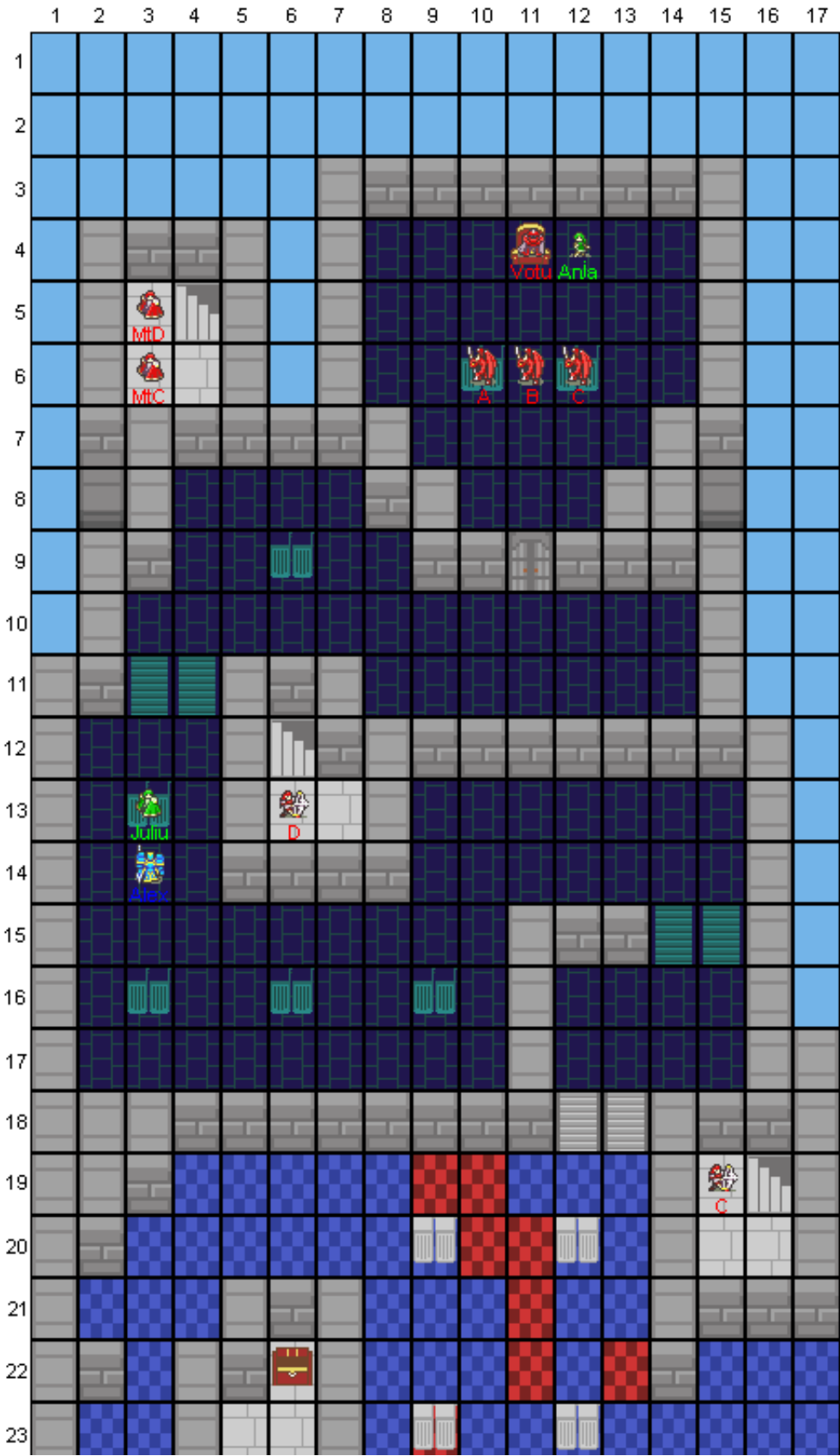
~~Ally Phase~~

Julian did the usual.

Julian mends

40HP

~~Player Turn 35~~







**4, 10**

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

More meteors; both hit Alex this time.

Hit:  $132-39 = 93$   
Hit roll: 41, hit!  
Damage:  $35-2-11 = 24\text{dmg}$

Hit:  $132 - 39 = 93$   
Hit roll: 26, hit!  
Damage:  $35 - 11 = 24\text{dmg}$

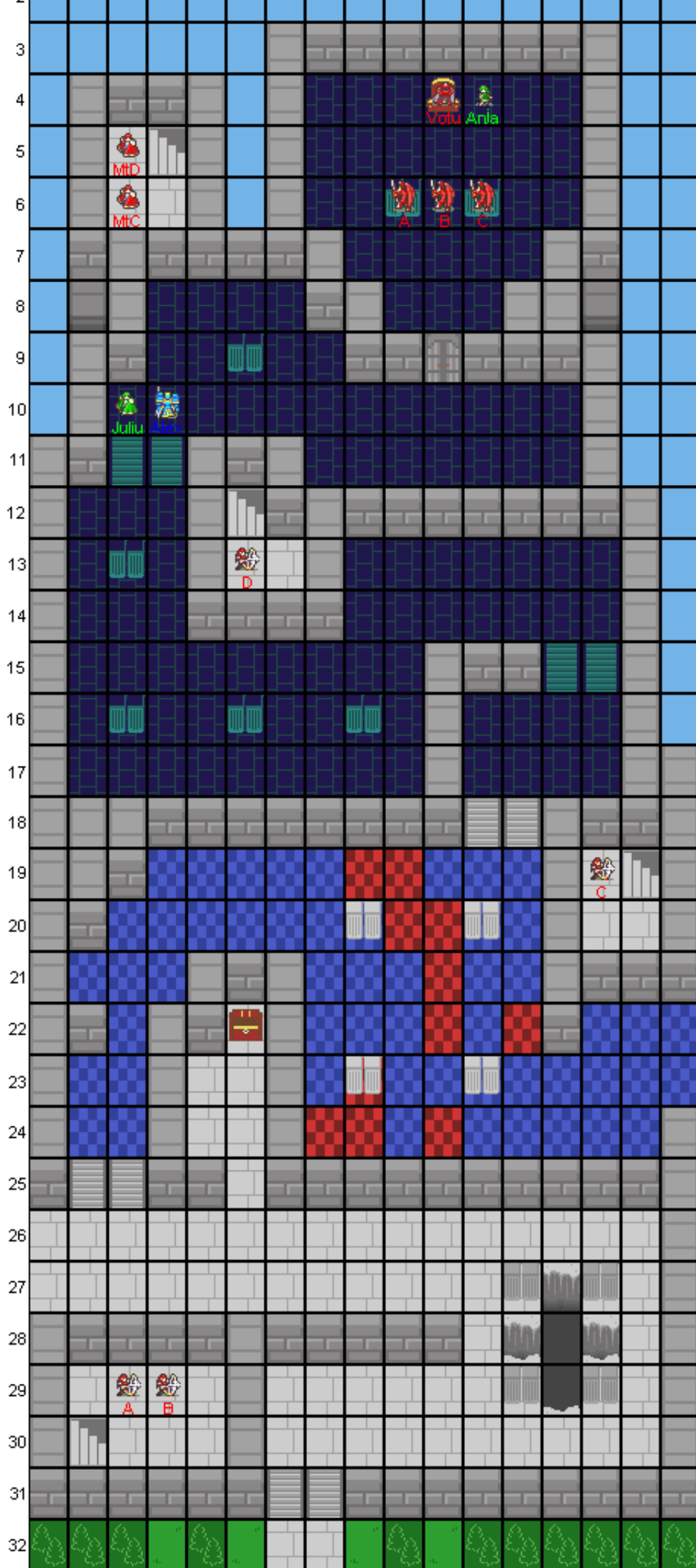
## ~~Ally Phase~~

Julian ran after Alex, and healed him for n-th time.

40HP
------

~~Player Turn 36~~

[illegible]



Mercs:	Enemies:
Alexander Jorinn: 46/54	Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Allies:	
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 33/35	

5 Right.

~~Enemy Phase~~

The duo of meteorologists managed to blast Alex twice.

Meteorologist C vs Alex

Hit: 132-39 = 93  
Hit roll: 55, hit!  
Damage: 35-11 = 24dmg

Meteorologist D vs Alex

Hit: 132-39 = 93  
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage: 35-11 = 24dmg

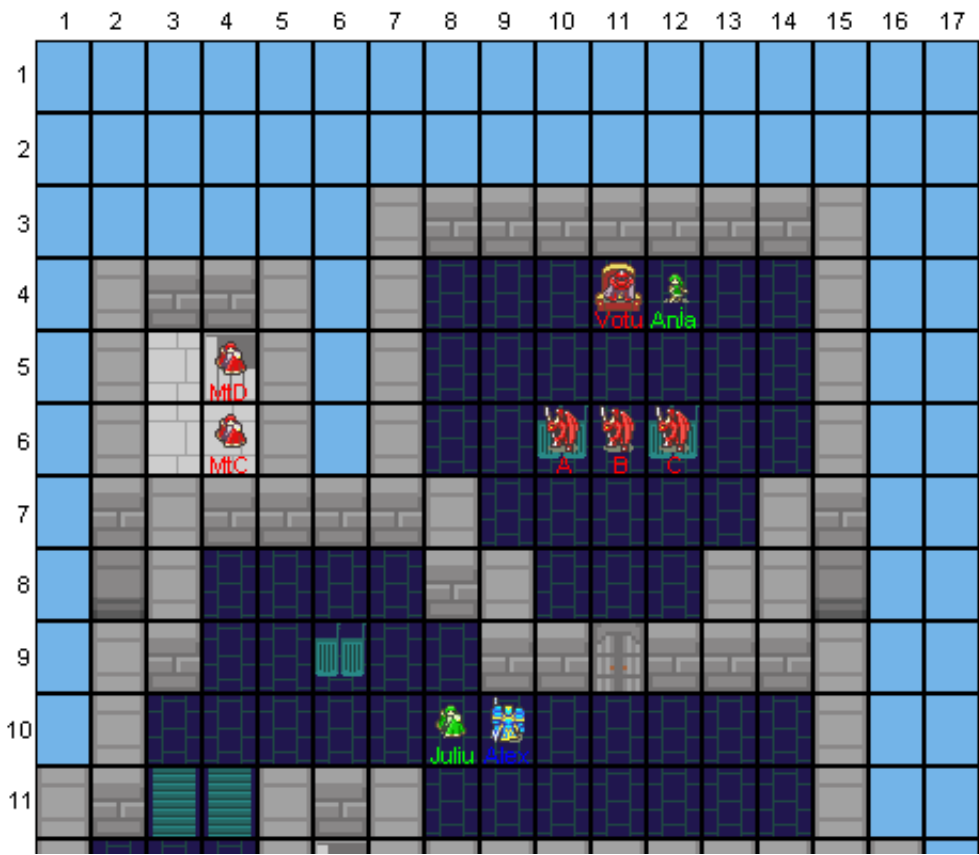
~~Ally Phase~~

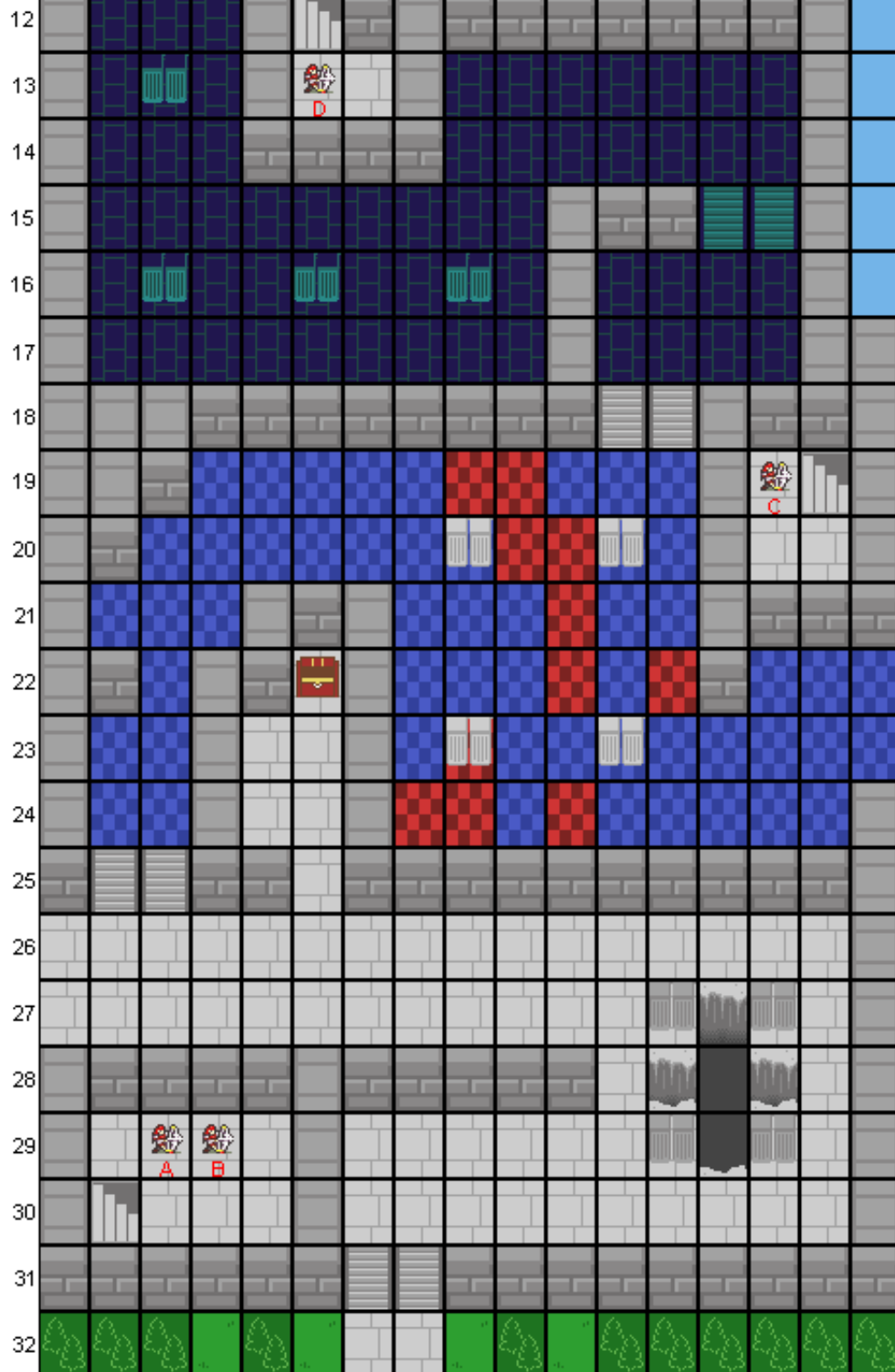
Julian ran after Alex, and healed him for n-th time. Again.

Julian mends

20HP revival

~~Player Turn 37~~





Weather:

<b>Merces:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>
Alexander Jorinn: 20/54	Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
<b>Allies:</b>	
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 33/35	

**Two right, WHUMP!**

The sacred Whump has been sounded.

**Alex vs Reinforced Door**

37-10 = 27dmg

## ~~Enemy Phase~~

Because Alex went out of range, the Meteorologists directed their anger at Julian; he dodged one of the fiery stones, though.

### Meteorologist C vs Julian

Hit:  $132 - 51 = 81$

Hit roll: 53, hit!

Damage:  $35 - 18 = 17\text{dmg}$

### Meteorologist D vs Julian

Hit:  $132 - 51 = 81$

Hit roll: 87, miss!

## ~~Ally Phase~~

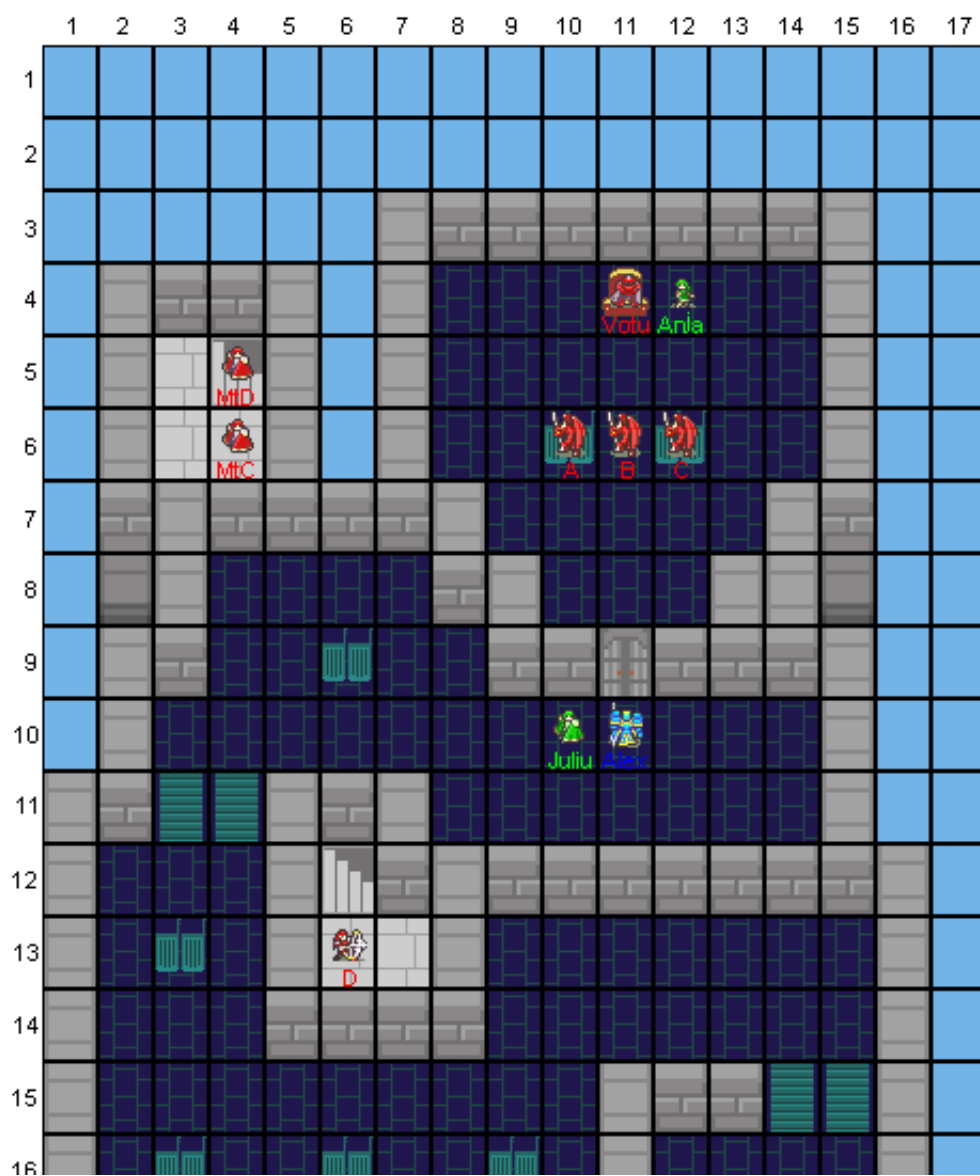


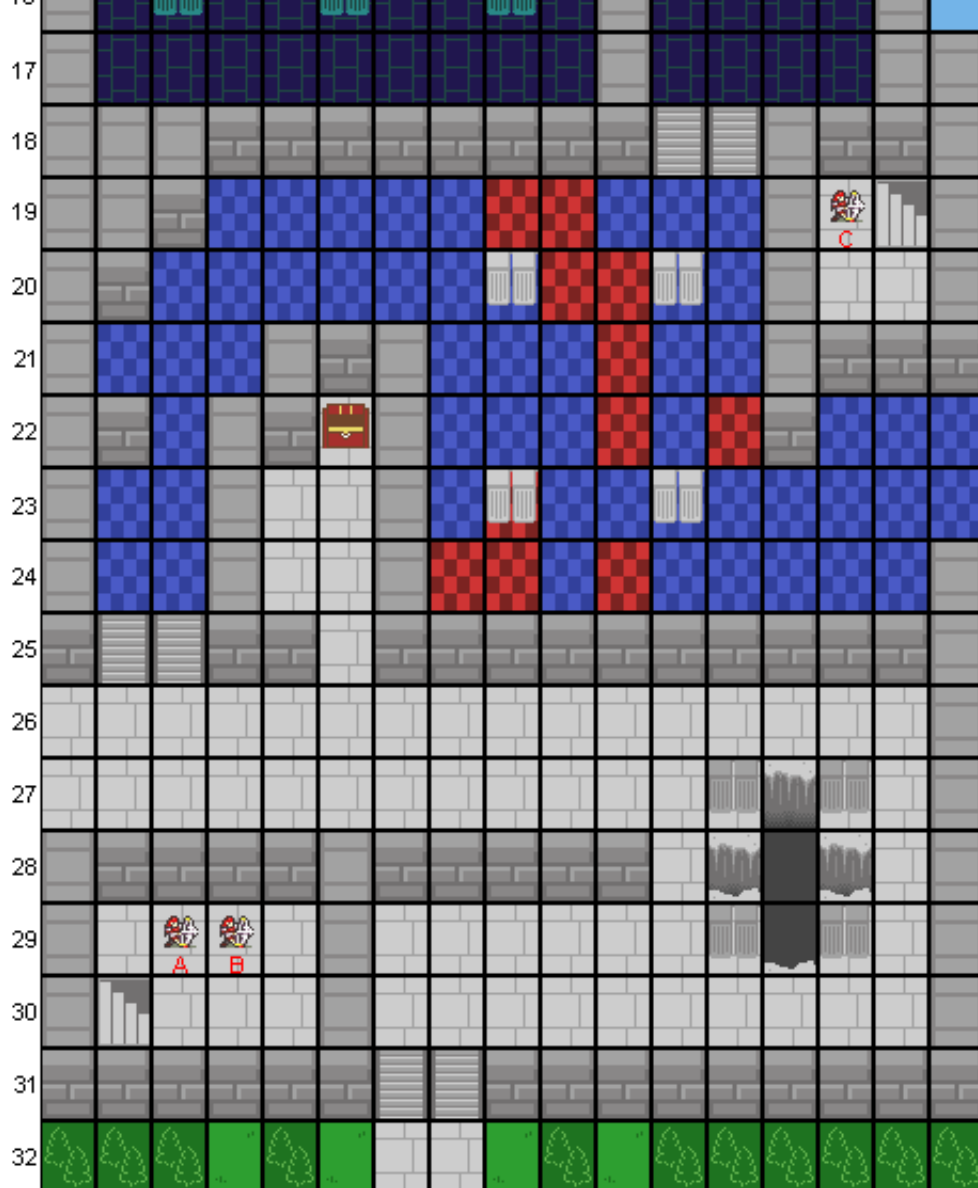
"That hurt... can I have some medicine, sir Alex?"

### Julian mends

40HP

## ~~Player Turn 38~~





Weather:

<b>Merces:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>
Alexander Jorinn: 54/54	Meteorologist C: 37/37
<b>Allies:</b>	Meteorologist D: 37/37
Anja: 31/31	Gargoyle A: 36/36
Julian: 16/35	Gargoyle B: 36/36
	Gargoyle C: 36/36
	Votus: 66/66



"Of course! I'm not going to let you fall."

**Vulneraritate Julian.**

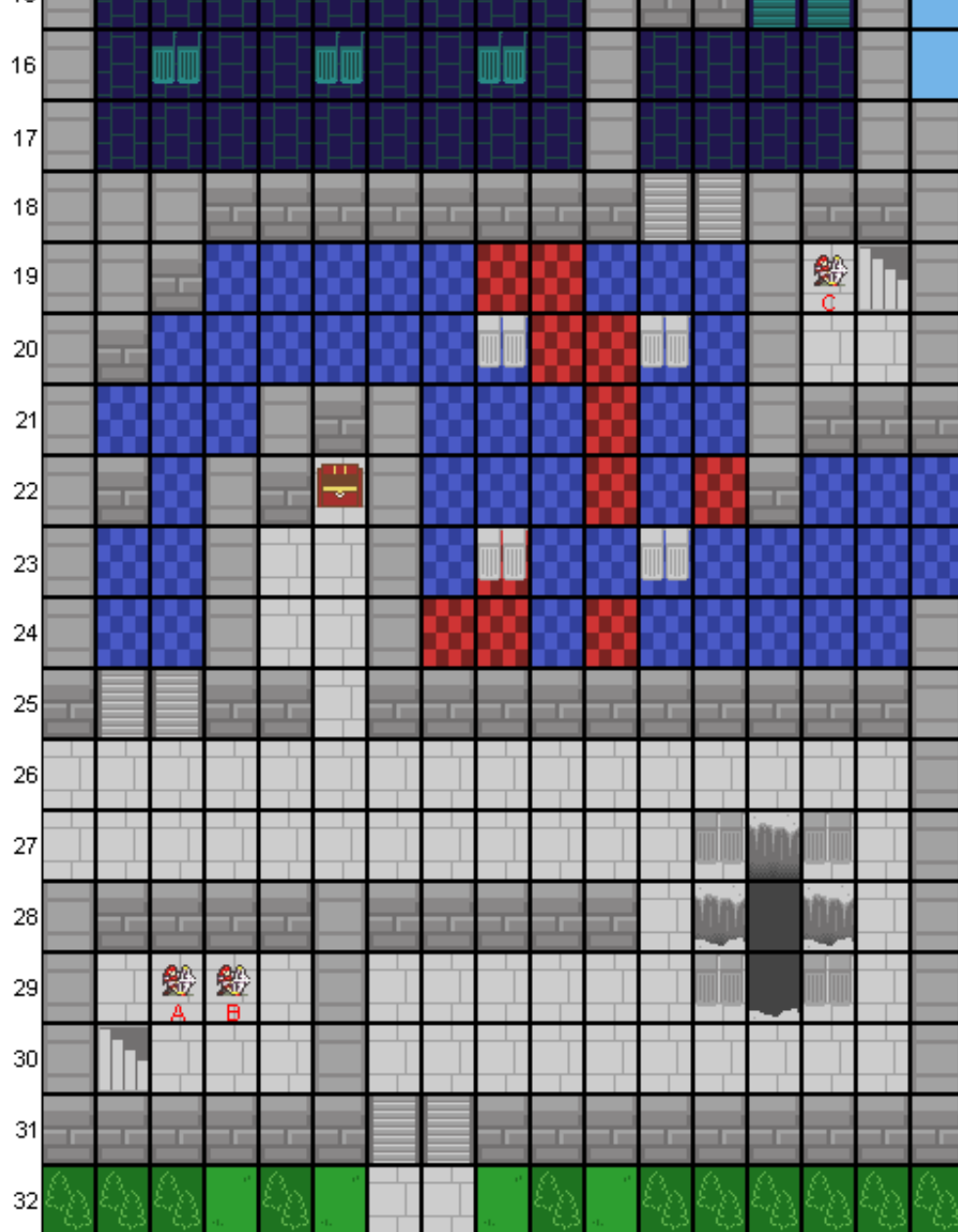
Sprinkleheals.

**Alex uses Vulnerary on Julian**

Up to 10HP restored

~~Ally Phase~~





Weather:

<b>Merces:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>
Alexander Jorinn: 54/54	Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37
<b>Allies:</b>	Gargoyle A: 36/36 Gargoyle B: 36/36 Gargoyle C: 36/36 Votus: 66/66
Anja: 31/31 Julian: 26/35	



"ANJA! Don't worry, I'm coming!"

**Move to 11, 8! Remember, Warhammer is equipped!**

**~~Enemy Phase~~**

Suddenly meteors smashed into Alex, but he managed to block one with his shield! And the other missed!



**Meteorologist C vs Alex**

Hit:  $132 - 39 = 93$   
Hit roll: 63, hit!  
Great Shield roll: 13!  
No damage!

**Meteorologist D vs Alex**

Hit:  $132 - 39 = 93$   
Hit roll: 100, miss!

Then gargoyles rushed at Alex; he fought bravely and managed to kill one!

**Gargoyle A vs Alex**

Hit:  $101 - 39 = 62$   
Hit roll: 77, miss!  
  
Alex counters!  
Hit:  $96 - 35 = 61$   
Hit roll: 43, hit!  
Damage:  $37 - 13 = 24\text{dmg}$

**Gargoyle B vs Alex**

Hit:  $101 - 39 = 62$   
Hit roll: 48, hit!  
Great Shield roll: 17!  
No damage!  
  
Alex counters!  
Hit:  $96 - 35 = 61$   
Hit roll: 50, hit! Crit roll: 4!  
Damage:  $37 - 13 = 24 \times 3 = 72\text{dmg}$

**Gargoyle C vs Alex**

Hit:  $101 - 39 = 62$   
Hit roll: 25, hit!  
Damage:  $48 - 2 - 30 = 16\text{dmg}$   
  
Alex counterstrikes!  
Hit:  $96 - 35 = 61$   
Hit roll: 83, miss!

**~~Ally Phase~~**

"Northwinds will shred you apart, vile beast! And indeed, the gargoyle was murdered.

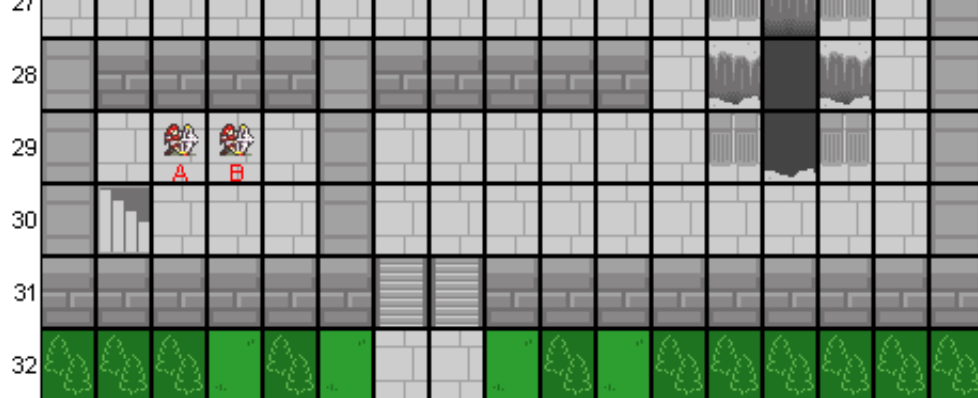
**Julian vs Gargoyle C**

Hit:  $130 - 35 = 95$   
Hit roll: 12, hit!  
Damage:  $52 - 8 = 44\text{dmg}$



"Sir Alex, this your chance!





Weather:

<b>Merces:</b>	<b>Enemies:</b>	<b>Allies:</b>
Alexander Jorinn: 38/54	Meteorologist C: 37/37 Meteorologist D: 37/37 Gargoyle A: 12/36 Votus: 66/66	Anja: 31/31 Julian: 33/35



"YOUR THREATS MEAN NOTHING TO ME! *HRAAAAAH!*"

## 11, 5, and HAMMOR VOTUS

With powerful SMASH, Votus got shoved into the wall!

### Alex vs Votus

Hit:  $96+15-10-38 = 63$   
Hit roll: 53, hit! Crit roll: 7!  
Damage:  $37-15 = 22 \times 3 = 66\text{dmg}$

## ~~Epilogue Chapter E Complete!~~

Suddenly the surroundings wavered and turned into a small stage inside small wooden building with low ceiling. A man in orange shirt was clapping his hands, a bunch of papers tucked under his left armpit.



"Splendid, splendid! **MAGNIFICENT!** This was such natural performance! Such skill!"



"Eeek, Alex, you were wonderful! <3" Anja kissed her luv on the face several times.



"Augh, that hurt... I need a drink. My ribs..."



"Wait for me!"



"See you later, Michael, Thomas!"



"Oh, Sir Alex! I thought Anja was wrong about taking in someone outside the troupe but I see I was mistaken! It was wonderful, simply wonderful! We just need to fix some things, and whole Fezzan will watch our performance! Oh, oh, I need to write a sequel!..." He trailed off to the side.

Anja hugged Alex and showered his face with kisses for several seconds.



"Alex, honestly, you must have a natural drama talent, dear!"

Alex had been hesitant about the whole performance thing, but now that he'd shown his worth (and also jammed an unfortunate other actor into a wall... he may have got a little carried away...) and how that Anja was covering him with kisses, he beamed with pride.

Hey, even if he didn't have any world-saving quest anymore, life was pretty great.

**And thus ends Fire Emblem on Forums 1.**

***~FIN~***

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### Cast

Sterling: Darvi	Daniel: Emral282	Henry: Criptfeind
Adrien: Taricus	Derick: Furtuka	Ami: scapheap
Gregor: Sirus	Charlotte: freeformschooler	Olison: CrimsonEon
Christopher: SeriousConcentrate	Taki: Dwarmin	Valor: Blade Master Model 42
Seyena: Gamerboy4life	Tantallos: Praefectus Sreptum	Alexander: Powder Miner
Raquel: Culise	Riven: IronyOwl	Salvatore: Xanmyral
	Edwin: Zako	

**The almighty GM: Haspen**

**Your humble editor: Solymr**