

The Twelve's Discussion

S: Codex, Quill Scratch

A: Absinthe, Slowstep Watcher

A: Ulrich, Mother Gentle

D: Wile Snakering, Render Crow

S: Blizzard Crookstaff, Buryer Tender

H: Cunning Gold, Loudvoice Mask

Codex: You all know why I've requested this meeting. Absinthe, what in all the Walker's hells did you think you were doing? You sneak Wrathful into Everway without informing anyone, have one of your little soirees that goes horribly wrong, and now he's off in Fourcorner doing the Walker only knows what! You have put the entire city in danger!

Absinthe: Yes, the Dragonlord's actions were unexpected, but I had to invite him. He was coming to Everway anyway. I recently learned from my spies that the spherewalkers that Master Ulrich persuaded him to follow have been in Strangerside for some weeks. At least this way he came on his own and not at the head of an army.

Render Crow: Not on his own. Somehow he managed to sneak his dragon past the Keepers. Quite a security breach.

Codex: (To Ulrich) I knew your plan would get us into trouble! Replacing an avatar was never going to work. We need to find the spell!

Render Crow: Ah yes, the spell from your mythical book.

Codex: It's not mythical! It's in the legend! "Spheremaker took the Pearl of Making, the Edge of Light and Darkness and the Book of Words." Is the Edge mythical? Is the Pearl mythical? (Pointing at the Pearl) It's right there!

Blizzard Crookstaff: I agree, Mistress Codex, but that's not the issue now. Surely the top priority is to get the Dragonlord out of Fourcorner. The spherewalkers are in Strangerside now, you say? Who are they?

Absinthe: Your leader has already met them. They're the adventurers who were accompanying Wormwood Crookstaff. The ones who now call themselves the Black Daggers of the West.

Codex: Them? *They're* the ones Wrathful is following? By the Walker, could this get any worse? (Turning to Ulrich) You! You must have known!

Ulrich: No, I did not. Not at the start, anyway. *My* concern was that Wormwood had told them about his research.

Buryer Tender: So *that's* why you had Wormwood shot on the Imperial Way. So that they would be arrested.

Ulrich: Indeed. I earned the trust of the Outsiders in order to investigate them. I judged that they were harmless to our interests.

Loudvoice Mask: Yes, and you "earned their trust" by getting them to investigate my body doubles! I lost a good man that day!

Ulrich: Your man was careless. He used a traceable poison. I merely arranged for that loose end to be tied up.

Slowstep Watcher: And meanwhile, your "harmless" adventurers have taken over three street gangs and have set up a smuggling base right on our doorstep!

Ulrich: That was nothing to do with me. You'll have to ask Mistress Codex about that.

Codex: I only offered them the job because I wanted to know why *you* were so interested in them! And how could I have known that they would take over the gang rather than fight it?

Slowstep Watcher: Could they be working for the Dragonlord? Wile, you must have spies in their midst.

Wile Snakering: Of course I do. We can't say at present. It's really hard to tell who the brains of their operation is. The Dragonlord insisted on meeting them, but it appears that they fell out rather spectacularly. From a third floor window, in the case of their healer. Of course, it could all have been an act.

Codex: Very reassuring! So what's to be done? Should we have them killed? Persuade them to move on?

Ulrich: We should do nothing. Any action that we take risks exposing us even more, especially with the King indisposed. If the Dragonlord attacks, let the Keepers and the Crows deal with him.

Codex: That's not good enough! What if he allies with Keep in the Wood or the Middlelanders? Centuries of peace, destroyed!

Mother Gentle Perhaps we should try contacting him again. We have a sacrifice ready (she indicates a closed door on the east side of the chamber).

Codex: And say what? "Sorry, those people we said were your destiny actually aren't. You should go somewhere else instead?" Even he won't fall for that.

Blizzard Crookstaff: Then we should get the adventurers out of Everway. Send them on a quest to another sphere. He'll follow them.

Slowstep Watcher: *After* he's tried to conquer us, if his previous behaviour is anything to go by.

Buryer Tender: We should just kill them. Then use the sacrifice to tell the Dragonlord they've gone to another sphere. My Smilers could do it, if your body doubles aren't up to the job.

Loudvoice Mask: Hey, we're supposed to be on the same side now!

Wile Snakering: It's too risky, even for the Smilers. Their fire-witch is formidable. And the healer seems indestructible.

Absinthe Emerald: And in any case, they could be useful. I spoke with Mistress Flame, and she seemed... amenable.

Quill Scratch: Maybe eliminate one of the weaker ones and persuade the others that the assassin has fled to another sphere? Would that get them out?

Wile Snakering: I don't think their bonds are that strong, but it may be worth a try. Perhaps their little illusionist?

Ulrich Crookstaff: He's much more powerful than he seems. And he has a connection to one of our number.

Quill Scratch: What do you mean?

Ulrich Crookstaff: Master Slight has been visiting the Golds. Well, one in particular. Quite regularly. And it seems the adventurers know something of us. They mentioned "the Last of the Twelve" in our most recent conversation.

(All eyes turn to Cunning Gold)

Cunning Gold: What? No!

Ulrich Crookstaff: I've had my eye on you for some time, Master Cunning. I know you are a master of disguise. Don't you think it's time you revealed who you truly are?

Render Crow (drawing his sword): I've never liked you.