It has been several days since I awoke in the desert, along the banks of the great river. I knew little of where I came from, or who I was, only that I was… *needed.* I was lost, without direction, with no indication of where I should go, until I saw it floating in the distance: The Diamond. I knew it was the Diamond. I knew that it was *home*. I tried to fly, but only managed to kick up a burst of dust. Why did I try to fly? Pondering this, I began to walk. Hours turned to days. The river kept me alive, although the sun made sure I was far from comfortable. Eventually, I crossed paths with a traveling merchant caravan, also heading to the Diamond. They took pity on me, giving me some rags to wear, and allowed me to accompany them on their journey.

When we finally reached the city, I knew I was home, but everything felt *wrong*. The people in the streets were wrong. The signs on the buildings were wrong. Even the air itself felt wrong, like something had diluted it… or tainted it. As I walked aimlessly down the streets, I began to have flashes of memory, visions of what used to be. The streets should be full of others like me, and the Celestials. I don’t know how I know they are Celestials, but I do.

Weak with hunger, I eventually found my way to a place called The Beehive, although I knew that it, too, was not what it once was. I was fed and given a few more layers of clothing, then I overheard the proprietor, one named Paschur, describing a place called the “Adventurer’s Guild” where I could find a job, a purpose. Is this where I am needed? I’m not sure. I will go there tomorrow and observe.

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I observed the so-called “Adventurer’s Guild” today. They seem to be quite busy, with large numbers of patrons and guild members coming and going at all hours of the day, and well into the night. I asked a few passersby about the guild, and the variety of answers I received was… enlightening, if a bit confusing.

Some say they are insane; a bunch of thrill seekers with little concern for their own self preservation. Others say they are a noble organization with a long and storied history of making the region a better place. Others say they are evil; worshippers of a pair of vile gods known simply as “The Twins.” I find this odd, as I am certain that Paschur of The Beehive specifically, and openly, dedicates his business and outreach efforts in their name. It seems odd that a follower of such a “vile and evil” deity would be running such a charitable endeavor… but looks can often be deceiving. Perhaps that will be something to follow up on at another time.

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I have spent a few more weeks observing the guild, and have noted a few more interesting facts:

1. They are affluent enough to command an airship.
2. The captain of said airship is like me, and is *familiar*. I have observed him enter and leave the guildhall several times, and each time I feel like I know him, though I cannot remember a name, or anything about him.
3. The guild’s reputation for… *shenanigans*… appears to be well earned. In the short time I have observed the guild hall, I have witnessed numerous instances of questionable behavior, to which none of them seem to blink an eye. One group came back to the guildhall completely covered in some sort of sewage, another group returned covered with some kind of ink or ooze, talking about the size of a sultan’s genitals, and yet another group brought some kind of fire elemental creature directly into the guild hall, proclaiming that “Rahlee will love it!” and “It’s so cute, we have to keep it!”

(No fire in the guild hall yet, though I suspect it will only be a matter of time)

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I think I have learned all I can from the outside, so it is time to take the next step and actually enlist. I’m told the guild takes anyone who can swear the oath, regardless of their skills or other affiliations. Personally, I question this sort of open door policy for a mercenary company, yet they seem to make it work… somehow.

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The gods have seen fit to pull a cruel joke on me. No sooner had I sworn the oath and was about to ask to peruse the guild records, than we were all called out into the Great Wastes to defend some sort of ancient portal. Instead of defending the portal, we were all forcibly sucked through it, after a bolt of green energy fell from the sky nearby. When we awoke, we were in a freezing, snowy, and altogether inhospitable place. The others of the guild call this land Cyrillia, though seem to have no idea where we are, having apparently landed far from where the portal usually deposits those who travel through it.

As we collected ourselves and took stock of our situation, it became very clear that we were in dire straits. We lacked clothing for the environment, and we had precious few supplies for the journey back. As if on cue, a strange woman approached us, offering help if we would leave the region of her vampire lord, and travel back across the portal. She only asked that we take a magical mirror with us through the portal and return it to its original owner.

I was certain that a guild with such a storied history as this one would immediately be suspicious and ask questions, discuss it amongst themselves, or do something other than simply take the offer at face value… yet that is what Nadir did. (Our captain, the one that is like me, although we’ve had precious little time to speak, so focused are we on surviving and getting everyone home.) I worry we will get taken advantage of in some way.

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Much has happened in the days since we arrived in Cyrillia. Vampires. Shadow creatures that bring silence and death. Werewolves and their offspring. Diseases. Storms. Not the least of these is that my fears were confirmed regarding the agreement we made with the woman we met when we first arrived. Through a series of rituals and deduction, we determined that it was likely a greatly feared Cyrillian demigod named Baba Yaga who had given us the quest, intending to use the mirror to travel back through the portal with us, thus unleashing her on our world. Thankfully, another guild, known as the Guild of Wind and Flame, was able to force Baba Yaga’s hand before her scheme could be fulfilled. Although our guilds thwarted her attempt to sneak through the portal, they have made an extremely powerful enemy in the process. I do not think it wise to return to Cyrillia any time soon, if ever.

One good thing did come from our visit to this accursed plane: We discovered an ancient mausoleum, inscribed with decorative Sah’mat. Inside, we found an equally ancient scroll, also written in Sah’mat and heavily encoded. As several of us spent time attempting to decode the message it contained, several other members of the guild decided that the best course of action would be to completely destroy the thick stone floor of the mausoleum. I continue to question the sanity of those in this guild more and more as the days go by.

However, the effort did actually produce fruit: Beneath the floor we found an ancient construct. One I know I have seen before. She is important. She and all her siblings. I cannot remember more, even though I know I should be able to. The rest of the guild explained that she is a member of the Quintessence Forge, a group of constructs responsible for keeping the Diamond operational.

Finally decoding the scroll, we were able to learn her activation phrase and she now travels with us back to the Diamond. We are only a short distance from the portal now, I am told. We should be there on the morrow.

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After a difficult fight to gain control of the portal site, while also rebalancing the elemental energies of the area, we were finally able to make it home to our plane, and then back to the Diamond.

Once back in the city, Nadir and I were finally able to sit down and have a few words. He informed me that, like me, he suffered from visions and flashbacks. It is all but confirmed that we were Djinn, once, imprisoned for centuries, until our essence was needed to deal a critical blow to the Flame Lord. He also spoke of another like us, one who had a way to help me remember more. I hope to see her soon.

Our conversation was interrupted by our Guildmaster, Rahlee, delivering an important letter to Nadir, saying it had been on her desk for weeks, waiting for him to return. Upon opening it, he read aloud a full pardon for a ward of his, another of the adventurer’s guild, Magdalene. I never did figure out exactly what her crimes were, but they were serious enough that this seemed to come as a complete surprise to everyone present.

Hours later, after she was long gone, we found out the truth. The entire thing was a ruse by Magdalene and her criminal associates, meant to pull the wool over Nadir’s eyes and allow Magdalene to escape custody. Honestly, it was quite the brilliant con job, and even had Nadir been more skeptical of the whole thing, I doubt he would have uncovered the truth. Well played, Magdalene, well played. Perhaps our paths will cross again.