

A Note to the Judges:

I know you've already spotted the page count of this document and groaned.

The good news: you don't actually have to read all of it (or even most of it)!

This is a sample storyline, to help you better understand the kinds of quests Heroes would find in the HJ app, and how the story and workouts are integrated. Storytelling is one of the pillars of Hero's Journey, and it was important to me to share a story with you.

Of course, this is not a novella, it is interactive! If you've read choose-your-own-adventure books, this concept will feel very familiar. This document aims to simulate the experience Heroes would have in the app.

Three more things to consider before you start:

- I know that different people will want to engage with these stories differently. Some people will want the full length storylines to motivate them—and that's great!--but sometimes you're not in the mood for a lot of reading. That's why at the end of every page, you'll find the "Short and Sweet" section: a quick summary of what happened for anyone who prefers the abridged version.
- These stories are designed to be experienced and uncovered with a group. In the app, you would be making progress towards new decisions and discussing each revelation with a team of 2-3 other people. If you have someone to read this story with, it will make the experience better!
- The story progresses through workouts. You are obviously not required to do any of the workouts while judging (but hey, who am I to stop you!). If you are interested in how the quantity of the workouts is determined, see Appendix A. For many exercises, you'll also see modifications listed. Modifications are automatically applied for anyone with limitations, or for gym locations that don't have a given room or machine.

Alright, I'm going to go hide back behind the 4th wall... enjoy the show!

A Miner Issue

Workout Type: Mixed

Story Type: Mystery, Adventure

For 3-4 Heroes

Trigger Warning: depictions of violence, graphic depictions of fire

Director Gideon Felix is an imposing man on a good day. Like, picture Felix, puppies in his lap in a field of rainbows, and *maybe* he’s got a gruff acceptance of a smile on his face.

Judging by the jagged eyebrows currently in front of you, today is *not* a good day.

“This is a mission of utmost importance”. He leans forward, his brow furrowing even deeper, panning across your team as if evaluating you for the task. “Also, of incredible urgency. Which I trust you will handle as such”.

He relaxes back into his chair with a rough sigh, some of the gravitas in his speech and body leaving with it. “Okay, look. Here’s the deal. My glowroot coffee shipment has been delayed”.

You exchange a worried look with each other, but clearly not worried enough. “This is a big deal!” Felix slams a hand down on the desk. “Do you know how much you Phoenix Guild Members drive me up the wall! Never filling in your paperwork correctly! Causing twice as many headaches as you fix! My one guarantee of peace and sanity in this job is my coffee. My sweet, sweet, glowroot coffee.”

He cracks a smile at you, and you’re pretty sure he’s joking about that headache thing.

Probably.

“Okay, I know it’s a dumb thing to care about. But seriously, I’m on my last bag, and I will lose my sanity. So in the interest of the agency, or the kingdom, or whatever... Just see if you can figure out what’s up with that shipment, will ya?”

It’s phrased as a question, but he’s not asking.

Short and Sweet: Director Gideon Felix asks you to investigate why his latest shipment of glowroot coffee wasn’t delivered.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Go to the Docks and see if you can track down the shipment ⇒ Squats with Weight & Box Lifts	Go to Page 4
Go to City Hall and look for any news that might explain the disruption ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times ⇒ <i>Modification: XX Stair Climbs</i>	Go to Page 5

The dock supervisor takes a look at your guild badge and then answers your question with a shrug. “Look, I haven’t seen any boxes from Gemswick yet this morning, but I’ll check my logs. In the meantime, that whole pile needs to get brought down to the yard—if you’re gonna be hanging around anyway, you could always look for that container while actually making yourself useful....”

You catch the hint, and spend the morning moving crates to no avail. At lunchtime, the supervisor comes back with a ledger full of papers.

“It’s odd. You’re right. We haven’t seen any shipments from Gemswick—of glowroot or anything else—in about a week or so.”

As you walk off and consider this news, something catches your eye: a raven swooping around you, a ribbon with the Phoenix Guild emblem and a tiny scroll tied to its leg.

Short and Sweet: The guys at the docks tell you that glowroot normally comes from Gemswick, but they haven’t seen any shipments of it recently—or of anything else from Gemswick, really. As you’re going to leave, a bird carrying a message swoops by, marked with the Phoenix Guild emblem.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Go to City Hall and look for any news that might explain the disruption ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times ⇒ <i>Modification: XX Stair Climbs</i>	Go to Page 5
Try to Catch the Bird and read the message ⇒ Complete X Hidden Temple Challenges ⇒ <i>Modification: XX Box Jumps</i>	Go to Page 6
Return to Director Felix and tell him what you’ve learned ⇒ Travel XX Miles	Go to Page 7

The archives are housed in a small room on the 4th floor of city hall. By the time you reach them, you’ve already broken a sweat.

“Well if it isn’t my favorite Phoenixes! Come in, come in. Tea? I just made some chamomile, hold on, I set it down around here somewhere...”

Linda, the always welcoming and always frazzled archivist, begins bustling around looking for the mysteriously vanishing teapot. Interrupting her search, you explain your predicament. Linda may not know where the tea is, but she points you exactly to the shelf where the newspaper you need is.

It takes balancing on two different ladders and a long stick, but you manage to climb up and grab it. According to this paper, one of the mining towns that grows glowroot, Gemswick, has had several mine fires in the past few weeks. That must be what’s going on here.

Waving goodbye to Linda, you’re all set to head off when something catches your eye: a raven swooping around you, a ribbon with the Phoenix Guild emblem and a tiny scroll tied to its leg.

Short and Sweet: You find a news article that Gemswick, an area where glowroot is grown, had a number of fires recently. As you’re going to leave, a bird carrying a message swoops by, marked with the Phoenix Guild logo.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Go to the Docks and see if you can track down the shipment ⇒ Squats with Weight & Box Lifts	Go to Page 4
Try to Catch the Bird and read the message ⇒ Complete X Hidden Temple Challenges ⇒ <i>Modification: XX Box Jumps</i>	Go to Page 6
Return to Director Felix and tell him what you’ve learned ⇒ Travel XX Miles	Go to Page 7

After finally catching that damned bird, you open the letter to hear Samira's joyous voice echoing out from the page.

"Hi friends! This is one of my first times using these transponder scrolls, so hopefully you can hear me okay.... Um, hi!

"So, fun story, I sorta messed up on a mission a month ago. It wasn't like a big deal! Nobody died! But like a bunch of Razerbulls got out and it was this whole thing—anyway, Felix was pissed, and he put me on temporary leave, so I'm back home in Gemswick. And I'm totally not supposed to be doing any guild work or anything. Which I definitely have not been....

"...but like, there's totally something weird going on here! There've been a bunch of fires in the mines recently, and I think something fishy is going on.

"So anyway—I don't have a badge right now, so nobody here takes me seriously, and I was thinking... maybe you guys could come help out? And like not tell Felix? And you could like meet my family and everything while you're here!

"Oh, right. This is Samira! Okay love you bye!"

Short and Sweet: The message is from Samira, a dwarf who's also part of the Phoenix Guild. She's on leave in her hometown, Gemswick, and wants your help looking into some recent fires in the mines.

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Return to Director Felix and tell him what you've learned ⇒ Travel XX Miles	Go to Page 7
Travel to Gemswick and meet up with Samira ⇒ Travel XX Miles	Go to Page 8

"Well, this is unfortunate". Felix reviews the news you brought him, then utters a sigh. "You know, I really thought when I asked you all to... this may be a bigger deal than we thought. So much for a minor issue."

"Alright, you folks know the drill. Take the first train to Gemswick, see what you can find out and fix. Keep me informed as you do".

He's about to stand to go, but then turns back. "One more thing. You guys have worked with Samira before, right? I've been having some... difficulty with her work lately. Not thinking before she leaps sort of thing. I've put her on temporary leave while I sort some of the issues she created out, but she's from Gemswick, so you may cross paths with her while she's there. Right now, she is not a Phoenix, she's just a civilian. So don't trust her with anything that she could screw up? I don't need one more issue to add to my list".

Short and Sweet: What seemed at first like a minor issue now seems like it may be a bigger deal. Felix wants you to go to Gemswick and investigate. He warns you not to count on Samira, another Phoenix who's in Gemswick on leave, since she's been unpredictable recently.

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Try to Catch the Bird and read the message ⇒ Complete X Hidden Temple Challenges ⇒ <i>Modification: XX Box Jumps</i>	Go to Page 6
Travel to Gemswick and meet up with Samira ⇒ Travel XX Miles	Go to Page 8

Samira hits you with a bear hug as soon as you step off the train. “You guys got my message! I’m so glad you’re here! This is great! Okay so I’ve been staying with my sister—did you guys ever meet my sister Anika? She’s super cool you’ll love her except I think she might be mad at me...but anyway—so I’ve been staying with Anika right and she owns a mine which good for her. Anyway there have been a couple crazy fires recently which it’s not unusual for there to be fires in the mine, but *totally* not ones this big! Okay come on I’ll show you guys around I’m so glad you’re here!

The dwarf bounces around you, her words the signature Samira-tornado of energy. You’ve barely picked up your luggage when she grabs your hand and starts dragging you off towards the mines.

Short and Sweet: After arriving in Gemswick, Samira greets you. There have been several fires in the mines recently. Her sister owns a mine, and she drags you off to go see more.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Follow Samira to the mines ⇒ Travel XX Miles	Go to Page 9
Ask Samira to stop and explain things more clearly first. ⇒ XX Sled Pulls	Go to Page 10

At the entrance to Anika's mine, a man appears. Unlike almost everyone you've seen in Gemswick, he's not a dwarf—maybe a half-elf of some kind.

"I'm so sorry," he peers over his glasses at you, "but the mine is closed for inspection."

You try to introduce yourselves to him, but he waves your explanations aside. "I'm sure whatever job you do is very important, but I am a mine inspector. Melvin Finley? It's my job to make sure the mines are safe, and quite frankly, it's a very challenging job. Just because you people are from the city does not make you at all qualified to investigate these fires. I must insist that you leave".

You go to grab your badge and papers to show him, but realize they must be somewhere in your pile of luggage still. Crap.

Short and Sweet: You follow Samira to the mines, where a man named Melvin Finley stops you. He's the mine safety investigator, and he refuses to let you pass.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Apologize to Melvin and look for your Phoenix Guild Badge to show him. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 11
Argue with Melvin and push past him. ⇒ XX Battleground or Sparring Wins	Go to Page 12

"Oh, right. Sorry guys. I guess I'm just excited that you're here. I love being with my family, but all dwarves want to talk about is mining *all the time*. I missed being with my Phoenixes, you know?"

She wraps you in a slightly less crushing hug, and then sets off for the mines at a more reasonable pace as she explains:

"Okay, here's what I've learned so far: glowroot—you know that nasty stuff that Felix puts in his coffee?—grows in the gem mines around here. Some people like it, so they grow it as a crop, but it's also crazy flammable. So everyone in the mines is super paranoid about fires, because they can spread really fast. There've been 4 big fires in the past couple of weeks, in 3 different mines, and it's got everybody spooked."

You've just about reached the entrance to Anika's mine when a man approaches you. Unlike almost everyone you've seen in Gemswick, he's not a dwarf—maybe a half-elf of some kind.

"I'm so sorry," he peers over his glasses at you, "but the mine is closed for inspection."

You try to introduce yourselves to him, but he waves your explanations aside. "I'm sure whatever job you do is very important, but I am a mine inspector. Melvin Finley? It's my job to make sure the mines are safe, and quite frankly, it's a very challenging job. Just because you people are from the city does not make you at all qualified to investigate these fires. I must insist that you leave".

You go to grab your badge and papers to show him, but realize they must be somewhere in your pile of luggage still. Crap.

Short and Sweet: You manage to slow Samira down enough to get a few more details: apparently there've been 4 fires in 3 different mines over the past few weeks, and they were significantly bigger than most mine fires. She's supposed to not be working, but she's secretly been investigating the fires. Samira leads you to her sister's mine, where a man named Melvin Finley stops you. He's the mine safety investigator, and he refuses to let you pass.

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You have to sort through almost all of your luggage—why did you pack so damn heavy?—but you finally fish the badge and papers out of your suitcase and show it to him. You can tell he doesn't like it, but he begrudgingly lets you pass.

You turn around to let Samira know you can enter now, but find her gone. She must have slipped around Melvin while you were searching and gone down ahead of you.

You're at least 10 minutes into the mines when you start to smell smoke. Rushing ahead, you hear a strangled yell. You duck through an open doorway to find a wall of flame in between you and Samira.

The smoke in the room is so thick and cloying that you can barely make out any light, and the heat presses at you from all sides, oppressive as the thunderous roar of the flames. You drop to the floor as every animal instinct inside you tells you to turn and run, but you make out a glimpse of Samira's bright tunic across the room. She won't make it out of here alive if you don't help.

Short and Sweet: By the time you finally fish out your badge and present it to a begrudging Melvin, Samira has already slipped past you and into the mine. You head down to the mines, trying to catch up to her, when you start to smell smoke. Running ahead, you spot Samira behind a wall of flame.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Rescue Samira and try to figure out <i>how</i> the fire started. ⇒ Complete X Hidden Temple Challenges ⇒ <i>Modification: XX Box Jumps, XX Army Crawls</i>	Go to Page 13
Rescue Samira and try to figure out <i>where</i> the fire started. ⇒ Complete X Hidden Temple Challenges ⇒ <i>Modification: XX Box Jumps, XX Army Crawls</i>	Go to Page 14

You give Melvin a piece of your mind: after all, you're *Phoenixes*. Sure, you're not mine inspectors, but you put your lives on the line time and time again in situations like this, to protect people. Besides, if he's such a damn good mine inspector, why hasn't he stopped all of these fires himself?

His face wrinkles into an ugly expression at your diatribe—you suspect he's not often on the receiving end of being told off—but finally his nose flares and he spits a "fine, go into the mine then. Don't let me stop you" out before stomping off.

You turn around to grab Samira before you start heading down, but find her gone. She must have slipped around Melvin while you were searching and gone in ahead of you.

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Short and Sweet: By the time you finally push past a begrudging Melvin, Samira has already slipped past you and into the mine. You head down to the mines, trying to catch up to her, when you start to smell smoke. Running ahead, you spot Samira behind a wall of flame.

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You've been in many tricky situations, but never one as terrifying as this. Every step is a fight between all of your training telling you to keep going and everything in your brain screaming at you to leave, but you keep your eyes focused on the spot where you last saw Samira. It is only through acrobatics and pure willpower that you're able to successfully navigate around all of the hottest parts of the flame and rocks collapsing from the ceiling and make it to Samira in time.

On your way out, you pass by an electrical panel and see the flicker of a spark. That's probably what caused the fire—not that anything can be done about it now. The way out is more challenging than the way in—with the unconscious dwarf in your arms and the ceiling rapidly caving in around you—but at least you can finally listen to the instinct inside of you and fight towards the exit.

Finally, you glimpse the entrance of the mine up ahead, the fresh air pulling both you and the smoke towards it. You collapse in the daylight, coughing and taking in sharp gasps of air.

Melvin is still standing there. "My god". He's not even trying to hide his anger or disgust. "I thought I smelled smoke. This is what happens when plebeians disrespect the authority of someone with my level of expertise and knowledge". He turns to go get—help, you're hoping—although god, would it hurt him to walk any faster?

You turn your attention back to Samira. She hasn't woken up, although a quick check confirms she still has a pulse. You're not about to count on whatever help might eventually show up.

Short and Sweet: The fire catches incredibly quickly and breathing through the smoke is a challenge. You manage to get to the collapsed Samira. On your way out, you pass by an electrical panel that's sparking—but there's nothing that can be done now. You carry Samira out of the mine, where you all collapse in the fresh air. Over Melvin's condescending "I told you not to go in there...", you struggle to catch your breath.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Go to town and find someone to help Samira ⇒ XX Distance	Go to Page 15
Carry Samira yourself to get help. ⇒ XX Fireman Carry / Farmer's Carry	Go to Page 16

You've been in many tricky situations, but never one as terrifying as this. Every step is a fight between all of your training telling you to keep going and everything in your brain screaming at you to leave, but you keep your eyes focused on the spot where you last saw Samira. It is only through acrobatics and pure willpower that you're able to successfully navigate around all of the hottest parts of the flame and rocks collapsing from the ceiling and make it to Samira in time.

The way out is even more challenging than the way in—with the unconscious dwarf in your arms and the ceiling rapidly caving in around you—but at least you can finally listen to the instinct inside of you and fight towards the exit. You head towards the doorway—it seems like you're in some sort of enclosed control room with a bunch of electronics now, separate from the main tunnels of the cave. When you finally stumble through the door, the fire still rages, although not as hot as before. It must've started in the control room behind you, and is now rapidly spreading through the rest of the mine.

Finally, you glimpse the exit up ahead, the fresh air pulling both you and the smoke towards it. You collapse in the daylight, coughing and taking in sharp gasps of air.

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You turn your attention back to Samira. She still hasn't woken up, although a quick check confirms she still has a pulse. You're not about to count on whatever help might eventually show up.

Short and Sweet: The fire catches incredibly quickly and breathing through the smoke is a challenge. You manage to get to the collapsed Samira. You seem to be in some sort of enclosed electrical room—not in the main tunnels of the mine. Judging from the strength of the flames, this is where the fire started. You carry Samira out of the mine, where you all collapse in the fresh air. Over Melvin's condescending "I told you not to go in there...", you struggle to catch your breath.

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Luckily, you don't spend too long staggering along before a group of dwarves notice your obviously-singed tunic and run to alert their emergency teams. A kindly dwarven man whose name you forget to ask listens as you recount what happened, and assures you that someone will make sure Samira is taken care of. Sure enough, a few seconds later, a medical wagon speed by, the team of dwarves out front shouting at everyone to move out of the way.

"We'll take her to the hospital. You definitely need some rest, too." He shushes your protest and pulls a small bottle from his hip. "I know you're worried about your friend, but you can't do anything more for her than we can do. You're not from around here, are you? Well, if you don't have somewhere to sleep, I've got a couple spare beds. Come on. Drink that, first. It'll help".

Too tired to argue, you take a sip of the nasty smelling liquid and follow the man back to his home. The beds are definitely meant for dwarves, but you're too worn out to mind. As you finish the last of the medicine—now that you think about it, the ache in your whole body is definitely starting to fade—your mind begins to consider possible theories for the fire before you are pulled into a deep sleep.

Taeron—the name of the dwarf you're staying with, you learn—wakes you the next morning with breakfast. "Went to check on your friend already this morning. She'll be alright, but she's still unconscious and no visitors allowed. By this afternoon you should be okay to visit".

He and his husband tell you you're welcome to stay and rest at their home, but you're already dressed and ready to tackle a new day.

Short and Sweet: Some dwarves from the nearby hospital load Samira onto a stretcher and take her off. You try to go with her, but they insist you go home with them and get some rest yourselves. The following morning your host Taeron tells you that Samira is okay, but still unconscious, and not accepting visitors till the afternoon.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Return to the mines to further investigate the cause of the fire. ⇒ XX Stair Climbs	Go to Page 17
Go visit Anika , Samira's sister. ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 18

You cradle Samira once more and head off into town. Luckily you aren't walking for long before a group of dwarves notice you and Samira and run to alert their emergency teams. A gruff dwarven man whose name you forget to ask rushes over, listens to your hurried recounting, and then admonishes you for carrying her into town yourself. "Good gods, why would you do that? We have stretchers and emergency wagons for this! Bless you, but you all aren't looking too good yourselves, either."

"We'll take her to the hospital. You definitely need some rest, too." He shushes your protest and pulls a small bottle from his hip. "I know you're worried about your friend, but you can't do anything more for her than we can do. You're not from around here, are you? Well, if you don't have somewhere to sleep, I've got a couple spare beds. Come on. Drink that, first. It'll help".

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He and his husband tell you you're welcome to stay and rest at their home, but you're already dressed and ready to tackle a new day.

Short and Sweet: You carry Samira to town, where they're able to give her some meds and take her to the nearby hospital. You try to go with her, but one dwarf insist you stay at his home and get some rest yourselves. The following morning your host, Taeron, tells you that Samira is okay, but still unconscious, and not accepting visitors till the afternoon.

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Revisiting the mines is surreal, and you can still hear the roar of the fire in your head despite the eerie silence of the shut down mine.

You head back down the passageway, noting just how far the fire spread before it was able to be contained, even up here near the surface where there shouldn't be much in the way of explosive gas. Finally you come upon the room from yesterday—it looks like an electrical control room, sealed off and separate from the main tunnels of the mine. Or at least it was, before the fire swept through and destroyed so much of it.

You confirm your hunch from yesterday: the fire started somewhere in here, judging by the severity of the aftermath. It's difficult to tell over the smell of smoke and char, but you think you smell some sort of oil or gasoline, too, possibly for the maintenance of all of this equipment. You poke around the electrical panels on the wall until you find one with a loose wire singed almost beyond recognition. Yep, that's probably the culprit.

You're tempted to poke around more, but the air is still oppressive down here, and Taeron's warning to take it easy rings in your ears. Time to return to the surface for some fresh air.

Back above ground, you find yourselves emerging into the middle of a worker's strike. Looks like last night's activities have escalated things from a boycott to a full-on picket fence barricade.

Short and Sweet: You confirm what you saw yesterday and get some new information: it looks like the fire started in the mine control room, where all the electrics live, due to a frayed wire in one of the panels. You think you also smell gasoline, although it's hard to tell over the lingering smell of smoke. You emerge from the mine to find yourself in the middle of a workers strike.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Go visit Anika , Samira's sister. ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 18
Join the striking workers and hear their complaints. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 19
Talk to the mine owners present at the strike. ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times.	Go to Page 20

Anika's offices—chipped away into the mountain near the entrance to her mine—are clearly meant for dwarves and not people of your height. You find yourselves doing a lot of squatting and crouching to navigate through doorways and get to see her.

It's immediately obvious who Anika is—she bears a close resemblance to her sister, although she wears a practical brown-and-gray ensemble that fits in much better in Gemswick than Samira's brightly colored tunics, and her face is devoid of the signature Samira grin.

"Delaney, I told you, I'll be right—oh". She turns to you, her sentence trailing off. "No, you cannot be here. You have to leave".

Taken aback by her reception, you start to press forward, but she continues: "Look, I understand that you saved my sister last night, but you also need to understand that she would not have been in that situation in the first place were you not here. I am in mourning, not to mention dealing with the very real consequences of a fire in my mines last night, so if you will excuse me, you must all leave."

She shuts the door without waiting for a response. So much for that. Out of options, you turn and head back outside.

Outside of the mines, you find yourselves emerging into the middle of a worker's strike. Looks like last night's activities have escalated things from a boycott to a full-on picket fence barricade.

Short and Sweet: Anika seems rightly upset about what happened to her sister, but she also really doesn't want to talk to you. She urges you to leave quickly. Leaving her office, you find yourself in the middle of a workers strike.

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Talk to the mine owners present at the strike. ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times.	Go to Page 20

"We're not mad about the fires, ya understand," a dwarven woman with soot stained goggles explains. "Yer gonna be in a mine, fires are gonna happen. The key is not preventin' fires—it's keepin em from spreading". She tosses you another sack, and you hoist it onto the top of the pile. The dwarves are escalating their strike: not just striking, but now actively picketing and building barricades, and you're happy to lend their cause a hand.

"See, glowroot—you know that nasty gunk that some folks like to put in their coffee or chocolate n' all that—it grows 'n the mine. And because they can sell it as a 'luxury' good, even though it taste like gasoline tar, the mine owners leave it to grow n' take over all the tunnels. Problem is, that stuff burns like a mother'. So you gotta keep all your electrics and anythin' that might cause some kinda spark or whatever real far away from where the glowroot grows. An' I don't think them mine owners are keepin' up with that as good as they need to".

Your conversation is interrupted by an announcement coming from a megaphone down below. "Hello, people of Gemswick." Melvin Finley—his suit out of place amongst the rough-clad workers—squints up at the barricade. "Excellent news. I have apprehended the perpetrator responsible for the recent outburst of arson attacks. I was leading an investigation when I uncovered that Samira, the former Phoenix member who left our community many years ago, was responsible for these fires. She will be apprehended by my team and everyone can return to work as normal".

There are mixed reactions among the workers—some relieved, others skeptical. You get the sense Samira has a mixed reputation in her hometown, surrounded by people who never left home.

Short and Sweet: The mine workers explain that fires happen from time to time, but these past few fires have been spreading far more than usual, probably since the glowroot that grows in the mines is so flammable. While at the strike, Melvin showed up with a megaphone and a declaration: Samira was the one who started the fires. She's been caught, and so everyone can return to work.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Talk to the mine owners present at the strike. ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times.	Go to Page 20
Go visit Samira and see if she's woken up yet. ⇒ Travel XX miles.	Go to Page 21
Send a report to Director Felix when you have a hunch about what's going on.	Go to Page 22

You would've expected your presence at the strike to be welcomed by the mine owners. Not that you would've necessarily interfered if anything happened—your job is not to stand against the will of the people—but authority often feels comforted by the Phoenixes, however misguided that may actually be.

This group, though, seems wary of your presence.

After trying to make some conversation, most of which is abruptly shut down with an “sorry, I need to go”, you settle for just watching the scene. Most of the mine owners have gathered up on one of the ledges of the mountain. They're not really engaging with the picketers—more talking amongst themselves in hushed whispers. A few even have banners of their own, indicating support for their teams, but it's hard to tell how genuine that is.

Your observations are interrupted by an announcement coming from a megaphone down below. “Hello, people of Gemswick.” Melvin Finley—his suit out of place amongst the rough-clad workers—squints up at the barricade. “Excellent news. I have apprehended the perpetrator responsible for the recent outburst of arson attacks. I was leading an investigation when I uncovered that Samira, the former Phoenix member who left our community many years ago, was responsible for these fires. She will be apprehended by my team and everyone can return to work as normal”.

There are mixed reactions among the crowd—some relieved, others skeptical. You get the sense Samira has a mixed reputation in her hometown, surrounded by people who never left home.

Short and Sweet: You thought the mine owners would be happy to have guild presence at the strike, but they seem uncomfortable that you're here. While at the strike, Melvin showed up with a megaphone and a declaration: Samira was the one who started the fires. She's been caught, and so everyone can return to work.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Join the striking workers and hear their complaints. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 19
Go visit Samira and see if she's woken up yet. ⇒ Travel XX miles.	Go to Page 21
Send a report to Director Felix when you have a hunch about what's going on.	Go to Page 22

You wander into the hotel—Samira is drowsy but awake. She gives you a tired version of that signature Samira grin and welcomes you in.

"I'd get up and hug you guys, but the docs said I'm not allowed to do any vigorous activity for another few days." She smiles at her own joke. "Seriously, I owe you guys. Scary to think what would've happened if you weren't there."

After a few more minutes of lighthearted conversation, you bring up Melvin's accusation to Samira. Instantly her face clouds with confusion, then anger.

"That is absolutely insane. I just walked into the control room—I wanted to show you guys how the mines work, I swear!--and I was just booting up the system when I turned around and there was a line of fire in between me and the door."

She looks at you pleadingly. "You guys were there! You know I didn't do this... right?"

Short and Sweet: Samira is drowsy but awake when you arrive. When she hears the news about Melvin's announcement, she's outraged. She says all she did was walk into the control room, and when she turned around the fire was already blazing.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Return to the mines to further investigate the cause of the fire. ⇒ XX Stair Climbs	Go to Page 17
Go visit Anika , Samira's sister. ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 18
Join the striking workers and hear their complaints. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 19
Talk to the mine owners present at the strike. ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times.	Go to Page 20
Send a report to Director Felix when you have a hunch about what's going on.	Go to Page 22

When you feel ready to send Director Felix an update, select one of the following options:

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Tell Felix that Samira set the fires. ⇒ XX Minutes of Yoga/Stretching	Go to Page 23
Tell Felix that Samira is accused of setting the fire—but you don't think she did. ⇒ XX Minutes of Yoga/Stretching	Go to Page 24

Or, if you don't feel confident yet, return to one of the previous options (and then back to this page):

Return to the mines to further investigate the cause of the fire. ⇒ XX Stair Climbs	Go to Page 17
Go visit Anika , Samira's sister. ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 18
Join the striking workers and hear their complaints. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 19
Talk to the mine owners present at the strike. ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times.	Go to Page 20
Go visit Samira and see if she's woken up yet. ⇒ Travel XX miles.	Go to Page 21

You pull up the transponder portal and give Felix the rundown on everything you've learned so far. When he hears that Samira is responsible for the fires, he pauses for a moment to rub at his temples.

"Are you sure about this? I'm not saying it's not true, but it is a hell of a claim. Then again, with her behavior recently..." He pauses again to think.

"Tell you what, here's what we'll do. Head back to the mines again. If you're certain about this, we need some surefire proof. I don't want us operating on any hunches here."

Well, you heard the man. Back to work!

Short and Sweet: Despite Felix's recent issues with Samira, he still wants hard proof. He asks you to travel back to the mines and find evidence it was definitely her.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Go back to the mines and look for proof. ⇒ Travel XX Distance	Go to Page 25

You pull up the transponder portal and give Felix the rundown on everything you've learned so far. When he hears that someone has accused Samira of starting the fires, he pauses for a moment to rub at his temples.

"Look, you're out there in the field and I'm not, so I'll trust your instincts... but Samira has been having a rough go of it recently. I'm not saying she's necessarily a bad person, but... just don't let your friendship with her cloud your judgment on this."

Felix mulls it over for another minute. "Okay, here's what I'll ask. Go back to the mines. If Samira didn't do it, it's because somebody else did, because this whole thing is too big to just be coincidence. And keep an open mind going forward, no matter what your hunch is telling you".

You shut down the portal and are about to head off when Samira hobbles over to you hurriedly. She's still injured, but she's moving with an urgency that disregards that.

"Oh gods, there you guys are, thank goodness. I've been looking all over. I need to talk to you." She pulls you into a small huddle, making sure no passersby are within earshot, and then continues. "I made a mistake. I messed up so badly, you guys have to help. I just finished talking with Melvin—you know, that mine inspector guy—and he said he went back to the mines and found that the energy room door was left open. Like, before the fire started. Like, I forgot to close the door to the energy room, even though that's like Being A Dwarf 101, the thing that everybody learns before they can even walk is that you always close the energy room door but I must've forgotten and that's why the fire spread and now the mines are damaged and you guys got hurt and it could've been even worse and I just don't know what to do this is all my fault."

You take a moment to calm Samira down—as much as you can, anyway. This is serious. You definitely need to go revisit the mines now.

Short and Sweet: You just finish updating Felix when Samira runs over to you. She explains that she made a huge mistake. She was just talking to Melvin, and he said he went back to the mine and the energy room door was left open during the fire. She can't believe she would make such an obvious mistake, but that must've been what caused the fire. She's so ashamed.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Go back to the mines and look for proof. ⇒ Travel XX Distance	Go to Page 26

You're almost back at the entrance to the mines when Samira hobbles over to you hurriedly. She's still injured, but she's moving with an urgency that disregards that.

"Oh gods, there you guys are, thank goodness. I've been looking all over. I need to talk to you." She pulls you into a small huddle, making sure no passerby are within earshot, and then continues. "I made a mistake. I messed up so badly, you guys have to help. I just finished talking with Melvin—you know, that mine inspector guy—and he said he went back to the mines and found that the energy room door was left open. Like, before the fire started. Like, I forgot to close the door to the energy room, even though that's like Being A Dwarf 101, the thing that everybody learns before they can even walk is that you always close the energy room door but I must've forgotten and that's why the fire spread and now the mines are damaged and you guys got hurt and it could've been even worse and I just don't know what to do this is all my fault."

You take a moment to calm Samira down—as much as you can, anyway. You reassure her that whatever happened, you're going to look into it and get the real answers. You leave her sitting outside the entrance of the mine, steeping in her concern, and descend once more into the depths.

Short and Sweet: You're about to head down into the mine when Samira runs over to you. She explains that she made a huge mistake. She was just talking to Melvin, and he said he went back to the mine and the energy room door was left open during the fire. She can't believe she would make such an obvious mistake, but that must've been what caused the fire. She's so ashamed. You leave her to mull over her actions and head down into the mines to look for proof.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look for evidence that Samira was there. ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 27
Check the status of the energy room door. ⇒ XX Sled Push	Go to Page 28

Samira tags along with you to the entrance of the mine, but then hesitates. "I'll stay out here and wait for you guys. I don't want anyone to think I'm in there tampering with any evidence."

"Plus..." you see the fear flash behind her eyes, "I'm not sure I can go back down there again. Not just yet".

You reassure Samira that whatever happened, you're going to look into it and get the real answers. You leave her sitting outside the entrance of the mine, taking deep breaths in an effort to calm down, and descend once more into the depths.

Short and Sweet: You make your way back to the charred mine scene, leaving Samira safely outside, to look for some kind of clarity on what really happened here.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look for evidence that Samira was there. ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 27
Check the status of the energy room door. ⇒ XX Sled Push	Go to Page 28

You take stock of the items in the room that you can find. It's hard, with everything being so damaged and covered in soot, but you're not Phoenixes for nothing. Sure enough, you find a piece of fabric with enough of the pattern recognizable to ID—this is definitely Samira's scarf.

There's not much else you find, although you're able to pick out the energy panel where the fire started. It looks like the coating on one of the wires got stripped off—everything else is wrapped in a thick magical sealant, but this one is just bare copper, and you suspect if the energy got flipped back on it would start sparking again. It looks like there was some debris in the panel, too—maybe a rat's nest, or some kind of lint—which is now almost all ash.

Picking anything more out in the rubble is tricky—the room seems to have been kept pretty sparse, and if there are any other items of note, you don't find them.

Short and Sweet: Back in the energy room, you go back to the source of the fire. You find the energy panel with a sparking wire, which is now shut off. It looks like the coating on the wire had gotten stripped away, and the smoldering remains of some kind of debris—maybe a rat's nest or some collection of lint—in the energy panel, which must've ignited the spark. On the far wall of the room you find a scarf you recognize—this is definitely Samira's.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Check the status of the energy room door. ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 28
Leave the mines: you've gotten what you came here for. ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times.	Go to Page 29

Heading back along the mine passages, the smell of smoke with which you are now uncomfortably familiar hits you again. You stop outside the energy room: and sure enough, the door is open. Looking at the soot pattern on the floor, it looks like it was open the whole time, too: not just left open during your escape. You don't remember the door being closed when you first saw the fire either, now that you think about it.

Well, that settles it, then. A sinking feeling in your stomach, you turn to go tell Samira the news.

Remembering her words about the dangers of leaving the control room open, you bolt the door shut on your way out. Sure, the power is shut off now, but it can't hurt to be careful. You head back up the passageway when you hear a slow creak behind you.

Turning back, you see the door has drifted open. You go back and slam it shut again, harder this time, and then slide the bolt mechanism into place.

And then it drifts open again.

You get down on your knees to investigate and find out that the latch mechanism on the door is missing a vital bolt—that's why it won't stay closed. Regardless of whether or not Samira did close the door, it wouldn't have mattered: it was going to swing open again anyway.

Short and Sweet: You return to the energy room door and find it open—and judging from the soot pattern on the floor, it was open the whole time. You don't remember it being closed when you showed up, either. So that settles it, then. You decide to close the door—if it is such a fire hazard, rather safe than sorry—but discover that the door won't stay bolted shut. It looks like a bolt is missing, and the door swings open no matter what you do to try to close it.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look for evidence that Samira was there. ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 27
Leave the mines: you've gotten what you came here for. ⇒ Reach the top of the Climbing Wall XX Times.	Go to Page 29

You're almost back up to the surface when you hear a man's voice echo down the tunnel.

"Well, well. Figured I might find you here. The boss told me he saw you chatting with that Phoenix filth that's been lurking around town. Which is odd, because I'm pretty sure we told you when we stopped by last week what the consequences of that would be."

You hear a scream that you're pretty sure came from Samira.

"What's wrong, Anika? One fire not enough for you? You're just too slow to learn your damn lesson..."

It's at this point, having broken into a run, that you reach the top of the tunnel. A large dwarf, wielding a large stone maul hoisted onto his shoulder, has Samira cornered up against the rock. She's got a rock in hand, ready to fight back, but you saw the way she was walking earlier—she's not up for a fight.

Good thing you're here, then.

When he hears you, the thug spins around, clearly not expecting the intimidating sight that appears before him. Still, he grips his weapon with resolve, then takes a few steps forward and starts to swing.

Short and Sweet: A few meters from the cave entrance, you start to overhear a conversation happening outside. A man's voice: "Boss told me you were seen chatting with those Phoenix filth. Come on Anika—one fire not enough? You know what happens when you step out of line...". You emerge from the cave to find Samira being cornered by a large dwarf with a large stone maul. When he sees you, he spins, mutters a few choice curses, but still steps forward to attack.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Defend Yourself! ⇒ XX Battleground / Sparring Wins	Go to Page 30

You know this guy is attacking you, but he's still a civilian, so you do what you can to keep from hurting him too badly. Circling around him, you take turns drawing him towards you, only to sweep in and knock him off his feet or sidestep his attack to run him out of breath.

Even with all your training and coordination, this guy is strong, and surprisingly fast. Still, you fall into a natural rhythm with your team, ducking and weaving almost without words, striking only when necessary. It doesn't take long for him to realize that he's outmatched here. Seeing an opening when you sidestep a blow, he takes his chance and tries to run.

Short and Sweet: This guy is strong, but it's clear you have him outmatched in skill. After a few minutes of rough combat, he turns to try to run.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Let him go and follow him to see where he goes next. ⇒ Travel XX Distance	Go to Page 31
Stop him from running off and interrogate him for answers. ⇒ XX Wagon Pulls	Go to Page 32

Before you run off after him, you take a minute to check in with Samira. Better to let the guy think he got away, anyway—they're always sloppier when they don't think they're being chased. Samira smiles up at you.

"Man, I really owe you people. Saving my bacon twice in a week. We'll have to throw a party or something!" Getting only slightly more serious, she waves you off. "Seriously, I'm fine. Not in any condition to run, but fine. Go get 'em, you guys."

With a nod, you take off after the dwarf, who sure enough had slowed his run to a walk after assuming he was in the clear. You stay just behind him, carefully concealed behind trees and in the shadow of boulders, watching every footstep for anything that would crack or crunch and give your position away.

Eventually he reaches his destination: a natural cave tucked into the side of the mountain. The entrance is fully obstructed with bushes—you're not sure you would've caught it without seeing him disappear, and you're more observant than most. Weapons at the ready, you slip into the cave.

The thug hears you and turns around with his weapon up, but he knows it's pointless. "Good gods... look, I'll give you what you want. I'm not willing to die for this shit."

You take a look around the cave you're in. On first glance, you'd suspect it was abandoned, but there are clear signs someone's been here recently. The floor is littered with mining tools, and a stack of boxes at the desk in the corner are likely full of papers.

Short and Sweet: You follow the man back to a natural cave tucked behind some bushes in the side of the mountain—you never would've noticed it if you hadn't been following him. He only notices you following him by the time you follow him into the cave, and at this point, there's nowhere else for him to run. You begin to explore this hidden cave for any more information.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look through several boxes full of paperwork. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 33
Look through the tools and supplies littered around the ground ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 34
Interrogate the thug for more information ⇒ XX Sparring/Battleground Wins	Go to Page 35

He tries to make a break for it, but a well-timed tackle takes him down to the ground, and after a tussle you're able to get the weapon out of his hands. "Alright, alright!" The thug throws his hands into the air. "Good gods... look, I don't know what you people want, but you can have it. I'm not willing to die for this shit."

You press him with all the usual interrogation questions, but it seems he doesn't know all that much. He gets paid by somebody—he's never met the guy, just knows where to find notes and payment—to intimidate people who go back on their promises. Late payments, that sort of thing. It takes a couple of threats, but he offers to take you to the drop spot.

Before you leave, you take a minute to check in with Samira. "Man, I really owe you people. Saving my bacon twice in a week. We'll have to throw a party or something!" Getting only slightly more serious, she waves you off. "Seriously, I'm fine. Not in any condition to go hike to this 'drop spot' or whatever—which, ominous, by the way—but fine. Go get 'em, you guys."

Letting the thug lead the way, you set off along the side of the mountain until you reach your destination: a natural cave tucked into the side of the mountain. The entrance is fully obstructed with bushes—you're not sure you would've caught it without seeing him disappear into the crack, and you're more observant than most.

You take a look around the cave you're in. On first glance, you'd suspect it was abandoned, but there are clear signs someone's been here recently.

Short and Sweet: You surround the thug, and when he sees there's no sign of escape, defeatedly admits that some guy pays him to intimidate and rough up people that go back on their promises. He's never actually met this boss, but after a few threats he offers to show you the drop spot his boss leaves him notes. He takes you to this cave tucked behind some bushes, really challenging to see if you don't know it's there.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look through several boxes full of paperwork. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 33
Look through the tools and supplies littered around the ground ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 34
Interrogate the thug even further for more information ⇒ XX Sparring/Battleground Wins	Go to Page 35

You comb through some of the papers, which at first glance just look like—well, a bunch of numbers. Man, do you not envy the Phoenix accountants.

Eventually, though, you start being able to make sense of what you’re seeing. Abbreviated initials that you’re pretty sure correspond to different mine owners are listed, along with dates, amounts of money, and some circled ‘missing payments’.

At the bottom of the pile, you find a box with handwritten notes. They read things like: “You’re two payments behind. Rectify this, or it won’t just be a failed safety check you need to worry about”, and “I need you to pay our friend at YM’s mine another visit. Tell him that next time, things are only going to get worse.”

Short and Sweet: At first these just look like mine financial records, but it doesn’t take long before you stumble upon some things that don’t add up. There’s a list of all the mine owners and how frequently they’ve paid, along with a note that reads “You’re two payments behind. Rectify this, or it won’t just be a failed safety check you need to worry about”.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look through the tools and supplies littered around the ground ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 34
Interrogate the thug even further for more information ⇒ XX Sparring/Battleground Wins	Go to Page 35
When you know who set the fires: You will not be able to continue investigating after selecting this option.	Go to Page 37

It's tempting to just start picking up tools randomly, but instead you spend a moment just looking at the ground, the way Delphi taught you back in academy. Running the details over in your head, a pattern emerges: most of the tools are coated with a thin layer of dust, but the work bag over in the corner is looking surprisingly clean, as is a carton of gasoline near the door.

Cracking open the bag, you find it contains only a few tools: wire strippers, a hammer, a few wrenches, and some loose bolts.

You make sure to put everything back exactly as you found it, just in case.

Short and Sweet: There's a bunch of tools lying on the ground, like you'd expect to see in a mining area, but you're able to pick out which ones have been used recently from the lack of dust: a workers bag containing wire strippers, a hammer, a few wrenches, and some loose bolts. A carton of gasoline in the corner is also notably dust-free.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look through several boxes full of paperwork. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 33
Interrogate the thug even further for more information ⇒ XX Sparring/Battleground Wins	Go to Page 35
When you know who set the fires: You will not be able to continue investigating after selecting this option.	Go to Page 37

Now that he's seen you at work, somebody is feeling a lot more cooperative. He sits on one of the crates lying around.

"I mean, I feel like I already told you everything I know, but fine, I'll tell it to you again if you really want."

"So a buddy of mine started working for this guy before I did. She's a real handy type, always makin' stuff, and I guess she was doing electrical work or something for him. Well, she told me he was lookin' for a bit of muscle, and that it wasn't good work but he paid well, and I thought 'what the hell'". He looks up at you. "And now I'm here talking to the lot of you. Now you know everything I know. Again".

You press him more about this friend, and he goes to roll his eyes but stops when the grip on your weapons tightens.

"Oh, yeah. Laney. We don't talk much about work stuff, so I can't really tell you all that much, but I can tell ya the pub she likes to drink at. Especially if it'll get you all to leave me be".

Short and Sweet: Now that he's seen you at work, the thug is a lot more forthcoming with answers. He explains that he only ever got paid to rough up some of the mine owners for missing payments. When pressed for more information, he insists he doesn't know, but says a buddy of his got him this job. This friend does electrical work for the same guy, and she might know more.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look through several boxes full of paperwork. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 33
Look through the tools and supplies littered around the ground ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 34
Find the thug's friend and ask for more information. ⇒ Travel XX Distance	Go to Page 36
When you know who set the fires: You will not be able to continue investigating after selecting this option.	Go to Page 37

As promised, Laney is sitting at the bar nursing some deep colored concoction when you arrive. You barely get the chance to introduce yourself when she pales.

“Oh. Oh, no. I knew this day would come. I’m so sorry, I’ll tell you whatever you want”.

You walk with her outside to a quiet bench and ask her to continue—she already knows what you’re here about.

“Well, I always knew something not quite right was going on. I mean, I should’ve said no. I’ve just never had a job that paid that good before, and you know... Right, sorry, from the beginning. Well this tall fella approached me one day, said he saw me doing work in the mines and asked if I wanted to be making a little extra money. Here’s a fun fact about me, I *do* want to be making a little extra money, so I said so. He explained the job was real easy—just go into the mines, do a little real work and a little shitty work. You know, fray some wires, make some dents, that sorta thing. I guess this guy works findin’ problems in mines, and he wanted a little extra job security. Whatever, maybe he sucks at his job. But I was always so careful about it! Left him these real detailed notes whenever I’d go: took out this exact bolt or mangled this exact wire, so he’d know exactly where all the problems were. I’m so sorry, I knew it wasn’t right, but I had no idea it was bad enough to send the Phoenixes...”

You take pity on Lacey, and tell her if she won’t do it again, you’ll buy her next drink.

Short and Sweet: You manage to track down this guy’s friend, and her face pales when she sees you. You almost don’t need to explain why you’re here before she cracks. She explains that she knew something shady was going on, but she didn’t think it was bad enough for the Phoenixes to get involved! I mean sure, she took the guy’s money to go into the mines and do some of the work kinda shitty—fray a couple wires, remove some bolts—but she made sure to give the inspector a real thorough list of everything she did so that he could catch all of it in his inspections. Sure, it’s a little crooked, but if this tall fella wanted to pay her for some job security, she wasn’t going to say no.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look through several boxes full of paperwork. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 33
Look through the tools and supplies littered around the ground ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 34
When you know who set the fires: You will not be able to continue investigating after selecting this option.	Go to Page 37

You know who's responsible for all of this. Time to do your damn job.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Confront Samira about setting the fires ⇒ Travel XX Miles	Go to Page 38
Confront Melvin Finley about setting the fires ⇒ Travel XX Miles	Go to Page 39

Samira's still collapsed by the entrance to the mines—you suspect that Taeron did not know she was leaving the hospital, or she wouldn't be here now. You march up to her and accuse her of having set the fires, and she looks more hurt by that than the residual burns.

"Look, even if I was responsible for this fire... and I really hope I wasn't... I wasn't around for the first 3 fires. Like anywhere near the mines."

"I know you've made up your mind about this, but I swear it wasn't me. There has to be somebody else responsible! Can you just... reconsider? Please? Maybe there's some piece of evidence you haven't found yet!"

Short and Sweet: Samira looks hurt when you accuse her of setting the fires. She asks you to think about it again: even if she did set that last fire—which she didn't!--she wasn't at the mines during the other fires. There has to be someone else responsible.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Look through several boxes full of paperwork. ⇒ XX Box Lifts	Go to Page 33
Look through the tools and supplies littered around the ground ⇒ XX Squats	Go to Page 34
Interrogate the thug even further for more information ⇒ XX Sparring/Battleground Wins	Go to Page 35

The goggles-wearing dwarf still camped out on top of the barricade gives you a wave when you pass by. On an off chance, you ask her if she's seen Melvin Finley.

"Yeah, actually! Saw 'im takin' off down into that mine there on the left. Had a big importan' lookin' bag, and was in a real hurry. Has he got a meetin' with you? That would make sense—I wouldn' want to be late to meet up with y'all either! On account of how lovely folks you are and also yer swords!"

You thank her for the info and head down the mine, pressing close against one wall to keep from being spotted. Descending lower and lower, you spot the final control room up ahead, just as you hear the subtle but unmistakable sound of footsteps. You leap into the doorway and shine your flashlight on Melvin, carton of gasoline in hand. His surprise lasts only a moment before he grins and reaches for the large power switch onto the wall. He gives it a yank, then takes the carton of gasoline in his hand and splashes it out towards you.

Around you, the machinery hums to life, and an open electrical panel begins to spit sparks.

Short and Sweet: The goggles-wearing dwarf tells you she saw Melvin Finley going into one of the other mines, so you follow the lead down into the dark. In the final control room, carton of gasoline in his hand, stands Melvin Finley. He sees you and panics for a moment, but then grins and flips the switch on the wall. The machinery flickers on, sparks igniting from an open electrical panel, and Melvin splashes the gasoline out towards you.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Beat up Melvin Finley ⇒ XX Sparring/Battleground Wins	Go to Page 40
Shut off the power generator ⇒ XX Weighted Pulley Lifts	Go to Page 41

Melvin Finley is a man who has spent his whole life calculating. Calculating potential error and dangers. Calculating how far he can push somebody, asking for one more little payment, before they'll snap. Calculating how to always stay just on the right side of the law.

For all of that calculating he does, you're a little surprised he doesn't see your fist coming.

Melvin's face catches your fist beautifully. He collides with the wall behind him, but with a personality like that, you're pretty sure this is not his first time in this situation. He recovers quickly, stumbling to his feet and stumbling towards the escape.

Thinking for a moment with your brain instead of your fists, you pause to shut the power supply down before the room can catch fire again. Then you turn to the tunnels, where Melvin is making every effort to get as far away from you as is possible.

Time to make that challenging.

Short and Sweet: For all his many irritants, Melvin seems remarkably unprepared to catch a fist to the face. It doesn't take long before he turns from what is clearly going to be a wildly uneven fight and runs down the tunnel. You take a moment to shut off the power before turning to chase.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Catch Melvin Finley! ⇒ XX Sprints	Go to Page 42

You leap over the spray of gasoline on the floor and make it to the power lever. It's rusted, and significantly harder to turn off than on, but you throw your shoulder up against it and bring the vibrating machinery to a still.

Fire no longer a pressing issue, you turn back to Melvin, only to find that he has run out of the room as quickly as possible. Very well—two can play this game.

Short and Sweet: You leap over the line of gasoline and manage to pull the lever to off before the room catches fire. Out of the corner of your eye, you see Melvin turn to run down the tunnel.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Catch Melvin Finley! ⇒ XX Sprints	Go to Page 42

You're definitely in better shape than the pale mine inspector, but he clearly knows these mines better than you, so you struggle to keep pace with him. You follow him down into the mines, deeper than you've ever been. There start to be fewer lights and well cleared paths, and you have to watch your footing as you work to keep Melvin in sight.

Finally, you chase him to the edge of a dark ravine, spanned only by a rickety rope bridge. Melvin darts across it, gripping to the sides with white knuckles. You pause for only a moment to look at the rope—it's clearly been here for ages, and you suspect the damp air has weathered away much of its strength. And yet, there Melvin stands on the other side—so you take a deep breath and begin to cross.

You're halfway across when you see that Melvin has stopped running. He's at a dead end. There's nowhere else for him to go.

Just as you have that minor thought of success, you hear the rope behind you twinge, then snap, and the bridge underneath gives way.

You cling tightly to the rope, saying a silent prayer of thanks when the other end of the rope holds firm. Still, you're now hanging from the rope with only the strength of your hands, and there's a long way up.

Short and Sweet: You chase Melvin deep down into the mines, deeper than you've ever been. Finally, you chase him to the edge of a dark ravine. A bridge crosses over it, but then the path dead ends. You've got him caught... and he knows it. You scramble to cross the bridge in time, but the unstable rope snaps behind you, and it's all you can do to cling to the bridge as it swings to rest against the side of the ravine.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Climb to safety ⇒ XX:XX Dead Hangs or XX Pull-ups	Go to Page 43

You dig deep for a strength that you know is deep within you, and then begin to climb—one hand over the other, pulling yourself up slowly but surely. Your arms shake from the exhaustion and the nerves, but you can do nothing but keep going.

You can hear Melvin up above you, gasping for air. One final surge of energy, and somehow, impossibly, you make it up onto the ledge, where you pull your dagger despite your exhaustion.

Judging from Melvin's expression, he had not expected you to survive the drop of the bridge. His face clouds over in anger: he knows it's over.

Short and Sweet: Hauling yourself hand-over-hand, your arms trembling from nerves and exhaustion, you manage to get yourself to the top of the pathway. Melvin is waiting for you: he knows it's over.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Wrestle Melvin into handcuffs ⇒ XX Sparring/Battleground Wins	Go to Page 44
Push Melvin off the ledge ⇒ XX Sleigh Push	Go to Page 45

When you finally hear that satisfying ‘click’ of Melvin’s new metal bracelets, you spin him around to look you in the eyes. You ask him why he did it, and he laughs.

“I wouldn’t expect you to understand. See, my job is about spotting things. Errors. Dangers. But also... opportunities. You wouldn’t understand this, because you are paid to follow orders. But I am paid to create them. And when the orders are not to my liking, I am the kind of man who would do something about it. So I started demanding appropriate payment for my services. It was laughably easy, really. Too easy not to. If the owners wanted their mines to be marked as safe, they made sure my pockets were filled. And if my pockets were not filled, well, it was all too easy to get their mines shut down until I had my way.”

“The first fire was an accident, to be fair, but it gave me a terrific idea. There was so much more revenue to be extracted from Gemswick than I initially suspected, and all I had to do was—well, as a figure of speech—*light the match*.”

Furious at his smugness, you decide to ask one more question: why frame Samira for all of this.

He turns and looks at you with a wicked grin. “Foolish child. That fire wasn’t set because I was trying to frame her. I was trying to kill her”.

Short and Sweet: Handcuffs snapped on, you ask Melvin why he did it, and he laughs. “It was too easy not to. At first, it was just payment in exchange for a successful safety review, but it quickly became evident that there was so much more potential revenue to be made”. You ask him why he decided to frame Samira for the fires. He looks at you with a wicked grin. “I wasn’t trying to frame her for it. I was trying to kill her”.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Report back to Director Felix ⇒ Travel XX Distance	Go to Page 46

Before you send him off the edge, you look him in the eye. You ask him why he did it, and he laughs.

"I wouldn't expect you to understand. See, my job is about spotting things. Errors. Dangers. But also... opportunities. You wouldn't understand this, because you are paid to follow orders. But I am paid to create them. And when the orders are not to my liking, I am the kind of man who would do something about it. So I started demanding appropriate payment for my services. It was laughably easy, really. Too easy not to. If the owners wanted their mines to be marked as safe, they made sure my pockets were filled. And if my pockets were not filled, well, it was all too easy to get their mines shut down until I had my way."

"The first fire was an accident, to be fair, but it gave me a terrific idea. There was so much more revenue to be extracted from Gemswick than I initially suspected, and all I had to do was—well, as a figure of speech—*light the match*."

Furious at his smugness, you decide to ask one more question: why frame Samira for all of this.

He turns and looks at you with a wicked grin. "Foolish child. That fire wasn't set because I was trying to frame her. I was trying to kill her".

Your blood boiling, you place a hand in the center of Milton Finley's chest and push. You see, for just a moment, the smug look on his face turns to fear, and it stays that way until he disappears from view at the bottom of the ravine.

Short and Sweet: Before you send him off the edge, you ask him why he did it, and he laughs. "It was too easy not to. At first, it was just payment in exchange for a successful safety review, but it quickly became evident that there was so much more potential revenue to be made". You ask him why he decided to frame Samira for the fires. He looks at you with a wicked grin. "I wasn't trying to frame her for it. I was trying to kill her". You place a hand on his chest and push, and the smugness on his face turns to fear, and it stays that way until he disappears from view at the bottom of the ravine.

<u>CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP:</u>	
Report back to Director Felix ⇒ Travel XX Distance	Go to Page 46

After a few days to more fully recover, you and Samira get back on the train and report back to Director Felix. He takes in your story, his face giving away very little. When you finish, he stands, then turns to Samira.

"I owe you an apology. You are a Phoenix. You always have been, and you always will be". He takes Samira's Guild Badge out of his desk and hands it back to her. "I should not have doubted your instincts, even if you were having a string of bad luck. Had I not lost my faith in you, Melvin would not have been able to frame you as he did. I am very sorry."

Samira nods, trying to match the Director's solemn energy, but beaming anyway. He lets go of her hands, and she knocks into you with another bear hug. "You guys! I got my badge back! You know what that means—you guys are never getting rid of me again!"

Felix turns to you next. "Excellent job with this mission. And for saving Samira's life... multiple times, if I am counting correctly, not to mention your own."

You shake the director's hand, and then turn to leave, before you remember one more thing—a souvenir. You place the bag of glowroot coffee down on the Director's desk: sent to him as a thank you gift from the people of Gemswick, at your request.

It's buried under his mustache, but you swear as you walk out the door you see the man smile.

Short and Sweet: Director Felix takes in all your story in silence. At the end, he turns to Samira and apologizes: he should not have doubted her. Then, he turns to you and congratulates you on a job well done. You're about to leave the room when you remember one more thing—a souvenir. You place the bag of glowroot coffee down on the Director's desk—a thank you from the people of Gemswick—and you swear you see the man smile.

The End

Appendix A

The Hero's Journey App uses an algorithm to scale the quantity of each workout to best fit the needs of the individual user. To start, the following factors are considered in order to determine the group requirements. The following factors are taken into consideration:

- **Frequency:** How often is each user visiting the gym? Users that frequent the gym less often receive shorter stretch goals for two reasons: (1) this does not burden their other teammates with 'picking up the slack', allowing them to function more like a 2-3 person team with an occasional assist than a 3-4 person team, and (2) this increases the likelihood of a sporadic gym user achieving goals while in the gym, rewarding and hopefully increasing their frequency.

A team with users X, Y, and Z, where users X and Y visit the gym an average 2.5 hours a week and user Z visits the gym an average of 0.5 hours per week has a cumulative 1.8 hours per person, per week average. Stories should aim to unlock a new chapter 4-6 times a week, meaning for this group, each story should be unlocked after approximately 70 minutes in the gym.

- **Story Pacing:** Certain beats of the story are more engaging than others, while others read better when done in more rapid succession.

For instance, in the Miner Issue storyline, the challenges at the end (Catch Melvin Finley, Climb to Safety) should take longer to complete than many of the investigatory beats earlier in the story.

Once the group goals have been determined, the displayed exercises are modified for each user's ability level and modifications.

- **Modifications:** Any user that has logged a modification, along with any users at a gym lacking the necessary components, automatically has their exercise modified to a different form of workout.

For instance, a user who cannot perform overhead lifts would have a Pulley task replaced with a different form of weightlifting, or a user at a Hero's Journey location without a Wizard's Tower would have their Climbing task replaced with stair climbs.

- **Benchmarks:** Based on the user's previous workouts, the algorithm calculates the expected amount of time in the gym (not necessarily working out) for the user to complete the team goal. That goal is displayed. While it appears to the user they are contributing a set amount of exercise (ie. 3 miles ran), what they are actually contributing is a percentage of the team goal. This allows users of differing athletic ability to still complete quests together, eliminating an ability hierarchy among users.

For example, if user X can run a mile in 10 minutes, and user Y can run a mile in 15 minutes, their goals would display differently (User X would see "Run 7 miles" and User Y would see "Run 4.5 miles" as their end goal). If user Z prefers the bike machine over running, their display might read "Bike 12 miles" instead—but all three would be earning progress towards the same goal of 100% completion.