

PATHOLOGIC (2006)

Foreword

Pathologic (originally **МОЯ УТОПИЯ** - “Pestilence. Utopia”) is a strange, beautiful game that takes entirely too long to complete and punishes you constantly for attempting to understand it, and I love it so very much. Since I cannot reasonably expect anyone to commit to it in the way that I have, I’ve taken to writing out a meticulously compiled exploration of it instead. This can, of course, function as a comprehensive walkthrough of the game, but it has been adapted to allow you to come to know this world and meet its characters without first spending the dozens of hours it takes to complete each of its thirty-six days.

Here, I am an actor (or, perhaps more aptly, a puppeteer). I have three personages to choose from, and three stories to bring to life on the game’s stage. I should note that I am playing through the original English translation, which was published in 2006. There are a few things you’ll probably notice about the syntax that may seem odd, but everything quoted is taken down as it was written. A remastered version of the game with improved localization, graphics, and voice acting (in addition to a few other minor changes) was released in 2015. Should you choose to take on my role, I would recommend that version, **Pathologic: Classic HD**, instead. I have rather intentionally chosen to write up the now somewhat obsolete original English release of the game, so that your experience in the remastered one is your own.

Admittedly, I have left quite a lot obscured, but this is only intentional in certain places. In writing this at all, I concede that I am effectively mounting a butterfly for display. It is impossible to capture its beauty in full. I must apologize for presenting you with a piece of taxidermy, and apologize again for concealing things intentionally, but I would hope it persuades you to engage with the real thing.

- Dan from **PRE-DEAD**.

Puppeteer's Note: Currently, only the Haruspicus (Haruspex) route is completed out of the three.

HARUSPICUS

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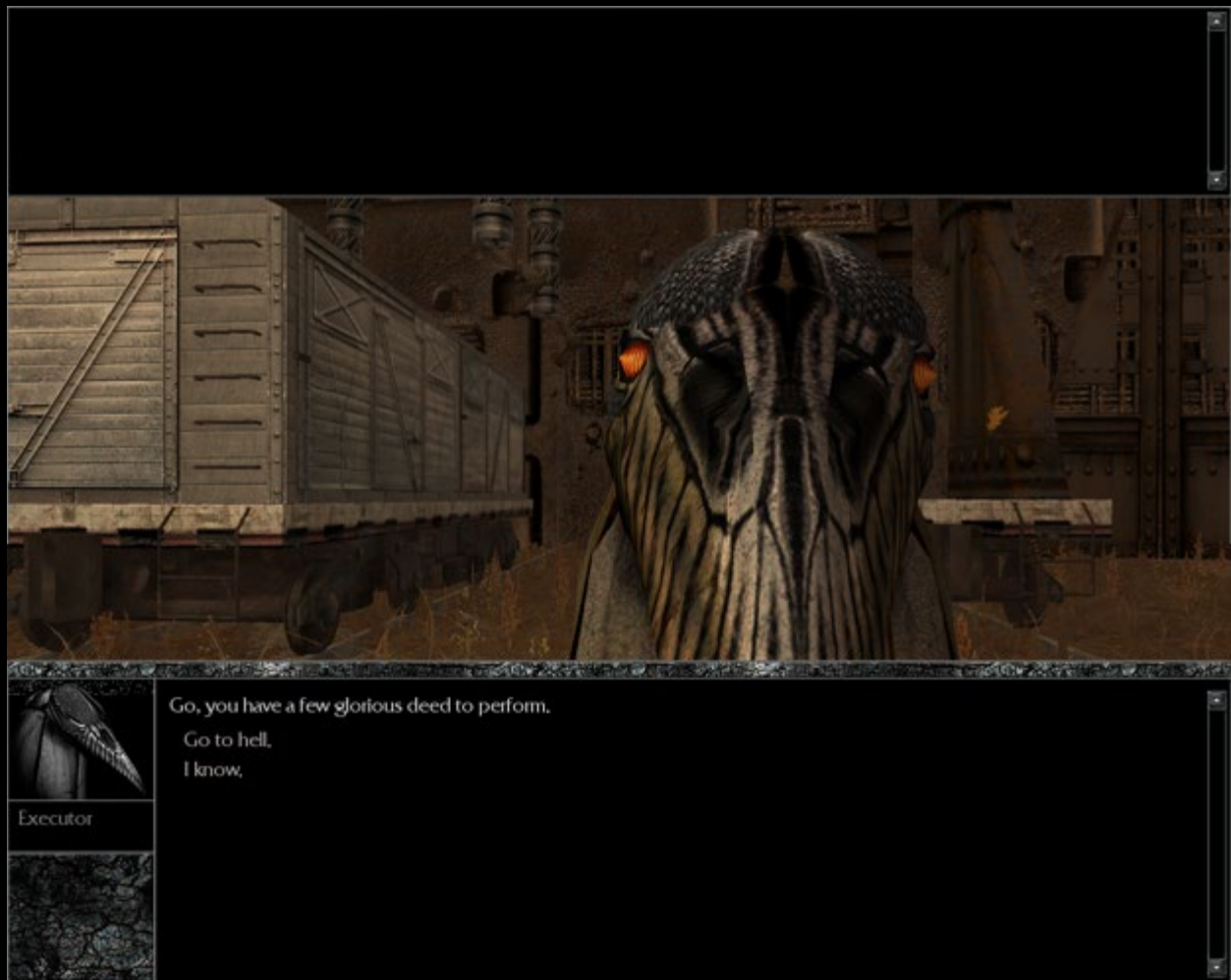
PART II
HARUSPICUS

МФ
УТОПИЯ



Day One

during which, the Haruspicus is to become a wanted criminal instead of being a lawful heir.



Delightful chat, no?

I am **Artemiy Burakh**. I have returned home at my father's behest after years away studying surgery, and presently, I am dying.

I'm meant to meet with one **Vladislav Olgimskiy**, in a place called the "Clot". First, though, thanks to being chased over a fence by several men out for my blood, I meet someone else - a boy called **Notkin**.

I could play this game a hundred times from start to finish and still get a bit turned around in these warehouses here.

I haven't decided yet what to do about "Lickah", a thief Notkin's after. The revolver offered in exchange for dealing with him is tempting, and I have to wonder if I'll be able to do without it... Either way, I certainly won't harm any dogs, and *wouldn't*, even if Notkin hadn't made a point to tell me not to.

"The hare was good, but the head was chopped off..."
- Notkin.



Ah, yes... There's that game I know and love.

I duck into a shop, then use one of the tourniquets I've apparently had in my inventory since I arrived in town. "Stops the bleeding." Good news for me.



...I suppose I'll come back later, then.

I seem to be a wanted man, and my reputation is too low for me to buy any rations, clothing or medicine now. Dodging the eyes of the townsfolk is making me rather nervous on my way to the traitor.

Perhaps there's a way to solve this nonviolently? I certainly don't need to be going around killing *children*, and I assume Notkin's disgraced associate must be around his age.

Lickah... does not look how I expected, and there's some dialogue to explain this that feels tacked-on. My reputation goes down again, but the prize for my terrible crime does not go unappreciated.



"What the hell is the Sand Plague?"

I've picked an herb called black twyre nearby. According to the flavor text, it's also called "pechalnitsa". The letter I have from my father, **Isidor Burakh**, doesn't include much I didn't already know. Reading it gives me a nice reminder to go back to the Clot around eleven, if nothing else.

"It's a shame I've spent so little time with you."
- **"Heritage message"**.

Back to Notkin and his "Dualsouls", then. I have quite an odd conversation with Notkin, and accept the revolver I was promised. Six rounds as well. Perhaps I'll get the damned thing repaired eventually, since it's currently pretty useless (approximately 70% useless, in fact), but I'll probably just sell it. I figure I'll need the money.

I am punched in the head twice upon leaving the Dualsouls' warehouse. Delightful. There's really no place like home. I run back inside, leave, nearly meet the same circumstances, run back inside again, then use up my remaining tourniquet. Third time's the charm, right?



Dammit.

It's nearing 10:00. There are a few too many people between myself and the Clot, so I'm recovering in a small house with blocked windows and a well in its middle. **Young Vlad** Olgimskiy lives here.

"He's too fast to punish -- this guest from the Capital. Such people do not access mysteries."
- Young Vlad.

I take a painkiller to replenish some of my health and rest for probably a bit too long. It's around 13:00 now. I seem to have received a letter while I slept telling me to be wary of one **Stanislav Rubin**, a friend of mine from childhood.

**"Yours faithfully,
Well-wishers."**

North to the Clot, then. Pursued by some haters again on my way. Thank God for shops, even if I can't access their wares now.



I could be doing much better here, but it's rather nice to meet someone else who isn't attacking me on sight.

It seems most of the people in the town blame *me* specifically for... whatever's going on. A nice line here from Big Vlad Olgimskiy: "Yes, you know, the eyes of fear are big enough to see the whole world." I've been advised to meet with a certain Bachelor of medicine (a "strange man", according to Boos Vlad), but to wait until the evening -- as of now, he may shoot first and ask questions later. I stop by to chat with the youngest of Olgimskiy's children: Victoria Olgimskaya, called **Kapella**.

"No, he is not too clever, this Bachelor. He... he is educated but not clever. The murderer will find him before he will understand it all."
- Kapella.

I receive a list of names: Mishka, Spichka, Notkin, Laska, Kapella, Mother Keeper and Khan. These are my **Adherents**. I'll be protecting them 'til my very last breath. I talk with Kapella a little more, and it seems I ought to visit with Laska (as well as checking up on Notkin, maybe). I'll also be heading back to talk with Young Vlad again.

Off to the Cemetery first, then I'll loop back around. It's raining. I'm being chased again, so I enter a house nearby and meet a woman called **Ospina**. She hasn't much to say to me...

"Perhaps it is better to be turned inside out?"

- Ospina.



I've quite a fondness for this little doll, but it doesn't seem like Ospina feels the same. Out in the hall by himself...

At the young gravekeeper's place, there is someone writhing on the ground covered in blood. He's one of the gentlemen who ambushed me when I arrived, so this is my fault, I guess. How nice. If left alone,

he'll likely bleed out by the end of the day, but there is a "terrible man, that trades the precious liquid" at the Stone Yard, whom **Laska** supposes could help to facilitate a blood transfusion.



...I'll think about it.




"It's so chilly here..."

- Laska.

I walk back to the warehouses, introduce myself properly to Notkin and learn a bit from him about my father's demise. Or, rather, I hear the same rumors he's heard, abstracted further through our game of telephone... He suggests I meet with someone called **Gryph**, who hangs around in the warehouses on the other side of the tracks. I also ask if anyone's come looking for me.

NOTKIN	Oh, yeah! Some dandy came round! A majestic guy, spoke with his teeth clenched... He said: "If I find this killer, I'll squeeze all the blood out of him drop by drop, cause he ruined my life!" That's the kind of guy. No jokes with him.
HARUSPICUS	Is he dangerous? Drop by drop you say?
NOTKIN	That's what he said! I ain't sayin' nothing! We said no one like that came by, we said, we ain't seen no killer. He said he'll go to the thieves, cause they'll sell him to me, he says,
HARUSPICUS	What else did he say?



	He said he ain't afraid. He said that he knows you are a master at ripping five men to make ten, but you'll have a different talk with him. Then he turns one side of his cloak inside out and shows me his revolver.
Notkin	I get it, thank you Notkin. 
	

Please don't bare your teeth at me, young man. It's quite alarming.



A bell sounds on the hour exactly as Gryph makes this sudden motion.

I get some shotgun shells here for free, but nothing else really comes of this. I guess I'm off to chat with Young Vlad again to see what else he can tell me. Still raining. He sends me back to Gryph. I figure there's nothing to do there except trade, though, and Gryph doesn't really have anything I need (or can afford). I'll just be carrying on.

There's a bit of brown twyre growing outside Young Vlad's place. "A herb for the worms". It's 16:00 now. I make my way to the Stone Yard as cautiously as I can, and the usurer draws some of my blood for transfusion. I'm sure I could've done that myself, right? Since I'm here, though, I steal from his house and trade some of the organs I collected at the very beginning of my terrible day for bandages and tourniquets.

I speak with a woman called **Eve Yahn** when I slip into her house to avoid getting punched, and it seems the door to the upstairs bedroom is locked for now.



You're going to have to get used to me sooner or later.

I also take a bit of a detour to pay my respects to **Nina Kain**.



Of course, when I say “pay my respects to”, I mean “steal offerings from”. I’m sure she would understand.

Back to the larger Cemetery from here. I check my inventory to make sure I actually have the blood I’ll need, and I do. I stop by at Olgimskiy’s Clot on the way without really wanting to, for the same reason as usual: I don’t have health to spare, and I’m still very much a public enemy. I wish I had time to sleep, but I don’t know how much more I have to do before the clock rolls over.



I've wanted to have this saved somewhere, so I'll include it.

I make it back to Laska's, but take a punch on the way. My reputation doesn't go up too much with my good deed done, but I'll take what I can get, and I'll take my patient's knife, as well. I figure that's fair. The grim poetry in using my own blood to heal a man I wounded is not lost on me.

Now, I'm off to my late father's house. My reputation has been managed somewhat, so the walk isn't too stressful. The guard outside swings at me when I finish talking with him, though. Very polite. I run (well, I walk) away, and enter a building. A sort of scummy trick, but I really don't want to kill anyone else unless I absolutely have to. Now that I have a choice in the matter, I'll avoid it when I can. Good for my health, and theirs.



"Umm... Hello. Oh, what's that? Coming! Ah, I'm needed outside. Sorry for the trouble. Have a nice evening, sir."

I dodged that first guard, but it seems we've reached an impasse outside the Apiary. One of the guards here has the key to my father's house, and they're not just going to hand it over to me. I don't trust my revolver for the job, so it's going to be a melee slaughter. Two precise jabs I wish I didn't have to make, straight to the faces of these poor bastards. I backstep well enough to not take any hits here.



Oh, God. I'm already carrying too much.

Back to my family home with the key, then. I take another punch when I return, but dispatch the guard who threw it without much of an issue. What a waste.



Like I didn't have enough problems today already.

Spichka, one of my adherents, is standing on a table here. Smart kid. Rats can't bite your ankles that way. He directs me to Mishka and mentions Laska as well. I guess I'll be talking with the two of them -- Laska first, since she's much closer. The bell sounds. 20:00. I (as in, I, the player) have taken to nervously bouncing my leg. I (as in, I, the Haruspicus) learn from Laska that my father burned his clothes when he returned from the steppe, then met with Simon Kain. Funny. Notkin mentioned the smell of burning cloth earlier.

The gravekeeper, too, directs me to **Mishka**.



I quite like this bridge.

Brown twyre grows outside Mishka's place. Among other things, she tells me she rarely sleeps at night, which reminds me that my own exhaustion is creeping up on me slowly. I don't know exactly what I'm supposed to do now after speaking with her, so I head to Eve's place again. It is called "Slough". The upstairs door is unlocked now.



I can't even begin to explain how much this exchange has destroyed my brain.

It seems exhaustion brought me to exactly the right place. There's nothing reassuring about the mysterious disease **Dankovskiy** tells me about, or knowing I'm too late to stop it from spreading, but I'll take good fortune when it comes: I'm not the killer everyone's hunting. That much is proven. My reputation goes up again. I've earned a rest, and I'll be taking it.

*"...You do not look healthy."
- Bachelor Dankovskiy.*



The day has come to its end. Due to your timely efforts, the people, who strived to help you, didn't manage to endanger their lives. The masks are playing a new pantomime at the Theatre.

Day Two

the only day, during which Haruspicus will gain more than he'll lose under any circumstances.



Twyre, son. Nothing else in the world smells like that.

Early start today. I chat with the Bachelor about my inheritance, and he tells me Olgimskiy can probably help me get my hands on it. He wants me to come back here after talking with Big Vlad, so I guess I will. I roar at Eve because I don't seem to have any other choice, then tell her I'm joking. She doesn't seem amused.

**** At this point in the playthrough, I am forced to restart the PC I am using. I think it's about as old as I am, and it likes to make this horribly grating skipping noise from time to time. It does that now. Let's hope I've fixed it, at least temporarily.*



Oh, I love legitimate the-ater.

"We are all strong enough to bear a misfortune... of the neighbor."
- Mark Immortal.

I make it to the Clot at about 4:00, which is apparently much too early for Vlad. Off to do some grocery shopping, then. I leave but go back inside immediately to dodge a knife in the face, thrown by the marauders who roam at night and in the early mornings. I regret not having taken the time to buy food yesterday instead, but I'm set up well to survive the day at a reasonably low personal cost. The merchant in the place I believe is called the Maw gets a slightly damaged knife (I have another), a shotgun shell, and a silver ring in exchange for two bits of meat and a lemon. I hold on to the revolver for now.



Ha-ha. Missed me.

I recover a bit of reputation the gruesome way and then trade water for bandages with a wandering drunkard. I also sell a golden ring I either found on a corpse or in the trash, I don't remember. Probably a corpse. With the earnings, I get some milk and dried meat from another merchant, in the district called Hindquarters.

It's still too early. I slept for an hour at Vlad's, but I don't really know what to do until some more doors open for me. I'll go check on some of my adherents, I guess. Kapella has nothing to say to me. I figure I'll chat with Notkin, since he's been the most useful so far, and he may have heard something interesting.



Health
Hunger

The morning of the second day has come.

Infected in the past 24 hours: 22 ppl.

Died in the past 24 hours: 14 ppl.

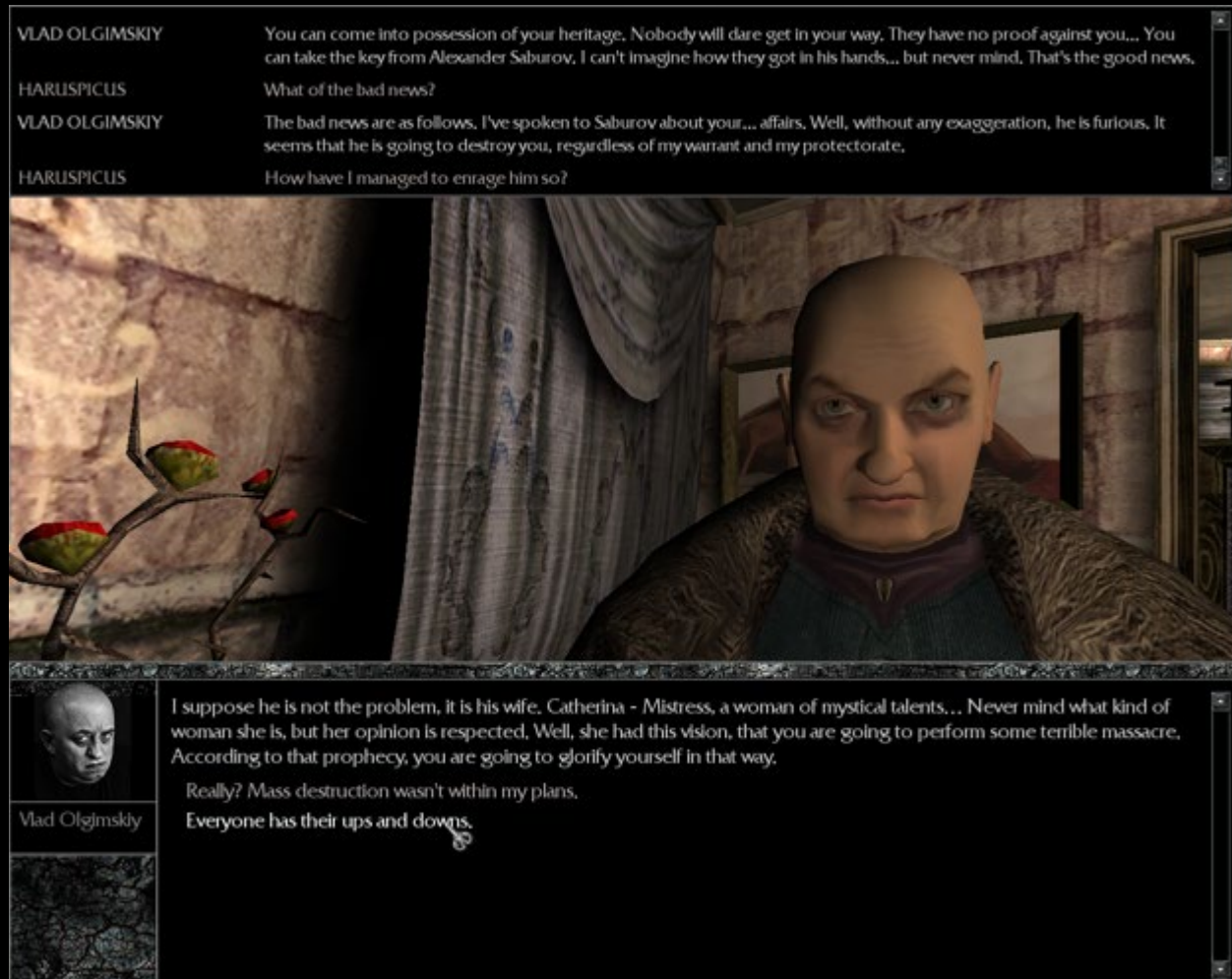
Gone missing in: 8 ppl.

Number of dead at the moment: 28

Number of infected: 22 ppl.

Less than eleven days remain.

All Notkin tells me is that the Dualsouls are burning wool today. I'm going back to the Clot at Vladislav Olgimskiy's invitation, which came via letter at precisely 7:15. He has some news for me, and it's mostly bad. I ask for the good news first: **Alexander Saburov** has a key of mine in his possession.



Come on. I'm only human, right? ...Right?

Out of this, I gain a home of sorts, which I believe I have to speak with Little Vlad to be able to access. I'm also told by Big Vlad that I "better make friends" with the Bachelor. This reminds me that he asked me to return once I've spoken with the elder Olgimskiy. I'm also to make my way to the governor's residence, where I am to speak with **Catherina Saburova** and with Alexander himself.

It seems I'll gain the most from my talks with the governor and Catherina, so I'll take care of the smaller tasks first. Off to see the other Vlad, who gives me directions to a "lonely, secret place" where I can make various kinds of potions with twyre.



What the hell indeed.

I learn some more about twyre from Vlad, but I don't know if he's the most reliable source in the world on the matter. He marks my map with the locations of a few herb gatherers, and I bid him farewell. I use a tourniquet and a bandage and knock back my hunger a bit with some smoked meat. I don't plan to take damage any time soon, but what I plan for and what happens to me are often rather separate.



**** I look at this painting and think about how my PC hasn't made any weird noises in a while. As if by this action I have invoked a demon's true name, it begins to make its horrible intermittent droning click-stutter. Save, exit, full restart...*

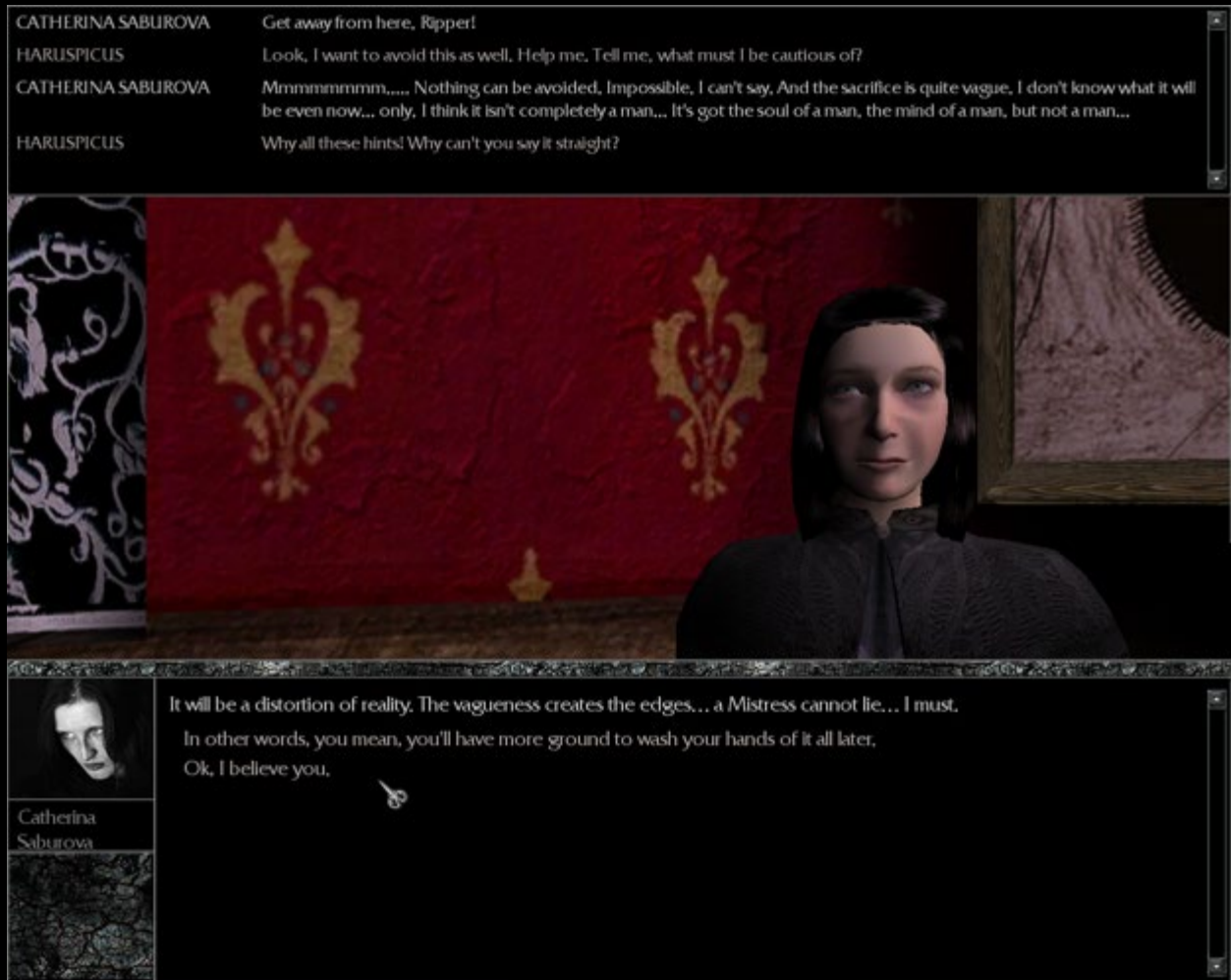
*"Now, everybody has to stay at home... This is true."
- Bachelor Dankovskiy.*

That's all he has to say to me for now, so I'll be on my way to the Saburovs'. Annoyed somewhat by the wasted precious minutes, I go to try and speak to the Kains for the first time (since I'm nearby). Only **George Kain** has anything specific to tell me about. I am, in his eyes, a budding flower yet to blossom, and truly my father's son. Maria Kain's door is locked.



What epidemic? I'm on a pleasant stroll.

Alexander Saburov is rude to me when I meet with him, so I am rude to him in turn. Catherina doesn't seem to like me much either.



Awfully dramatic, I think, but maybe she's right...?

The clock strikes 9:00 as I depart. I'm following a thread Saburov dangled in front of me and meeting with Ospina again. I don't like walking around this part of town...

"My hair's a mess, and it's falling down!"
- Anna Angel.

At Ospina's, I collect some very useful things. Herbs, some recipes, and a considerable sum of money. Additionally, a brand labeled <^>. I have to swap out a lot from my inventory to pick anything up. I'll be back here shortly after making my first visit to the laboratory I've come into ownership of. I pay a visit to Laska, just in case. She is doing fine.

Young Vlad greets me here, in the place I suppose I now call home.



r/malelivingspace

I store the recipes, the brand, and some kerosene (since I've never used it), then return to Ospina to collect the things I left behind. Back to the lab after that.



Thank God for this trunk. Health? Immunity? Infection? No. Inventory management is the most important mechanic this time.

My Mission tab has updated, and so has the one labeled Day quests. I'm to reach an understanding about the brand I found in the box, as well as create a panacea. For now, though, I'm going to speak with the Bachelor.

"Yes, there is a lot here that is hard to understand. Not so much surgery as there is chemistry..."
- "Hierophants heritage", Day quests [2].

It is pouring outside. I make it back to the Slough. The Bachelor is pretty useless here, but I had to speak with him to progress. I'm headed back home now to try my hand with the various tools Isidor left behind. I walk through the steppe so I can trade with a Worm here. Kidneys, livers, hearts, and blood in exchange for white whip and saviyur (or "savjur" - they seem to be used interchangeably in this translation).

I like walking through the marsh, especially in the rain. The clock strikes noon. I receive a letter from Rubin in which he threatens me. I'm not too worried about it. Since I'm nearby, I'll check on Mishka.

"Where is my doll? Who will feed her?"

- Mishka.

Not much else from her for now, so I'll be on my way. My Other tasks tab is empty, and I feel like I'm missing something. I know I have to make some twyre extracts, though, so I'm heading to the other herb gatherer to the far south of the map.

I learn about an "Herb Bride", and the predicament in which she finds herself. A Worm offers me recipes in exchange for a job that isn't worth it. I can't afford any more herbs right now, but chatter is free, so I ask about whether anyone buys twyre, then head for my workshop again. I have two options for recipes here, but one of them is stronger, so I'll try that one. One stem of black twyre, one stem of brown twyre, wrap with one stem of savjur.



Neat.

There is another Worm behind the Cemetery, so I'm heading that way. I see the fire, then recognize the young woman I'm supposed to find - the Herb Bride. She recognizes me, too; apparently, I smell of "autumn earth and of the smoke that comes from burning leaves". I allow the Bride to choose for herself here, and she bestows upon me six rare herbs as thanks: three savjur, three white whip. I'd thank her, too, if I could, but I am not given any such option.

It's 14:00 now. I'm off to "investigate" the ones who purchase twyre. My hunger and exhaustion meters are both rather high. I've got some money, though. I buy two loaves of bread, again from the Hindquarters merchant, then buy some odds and ends from the place labeled "Tavern" on my map. Coffee beans and various little items for trade. I've always quite liked the flower sprite.



Hello, gentlemen.

"This Devotress justifies villains and criminals... We shall make friends with her. Yes."

- Andrei Stamatina.

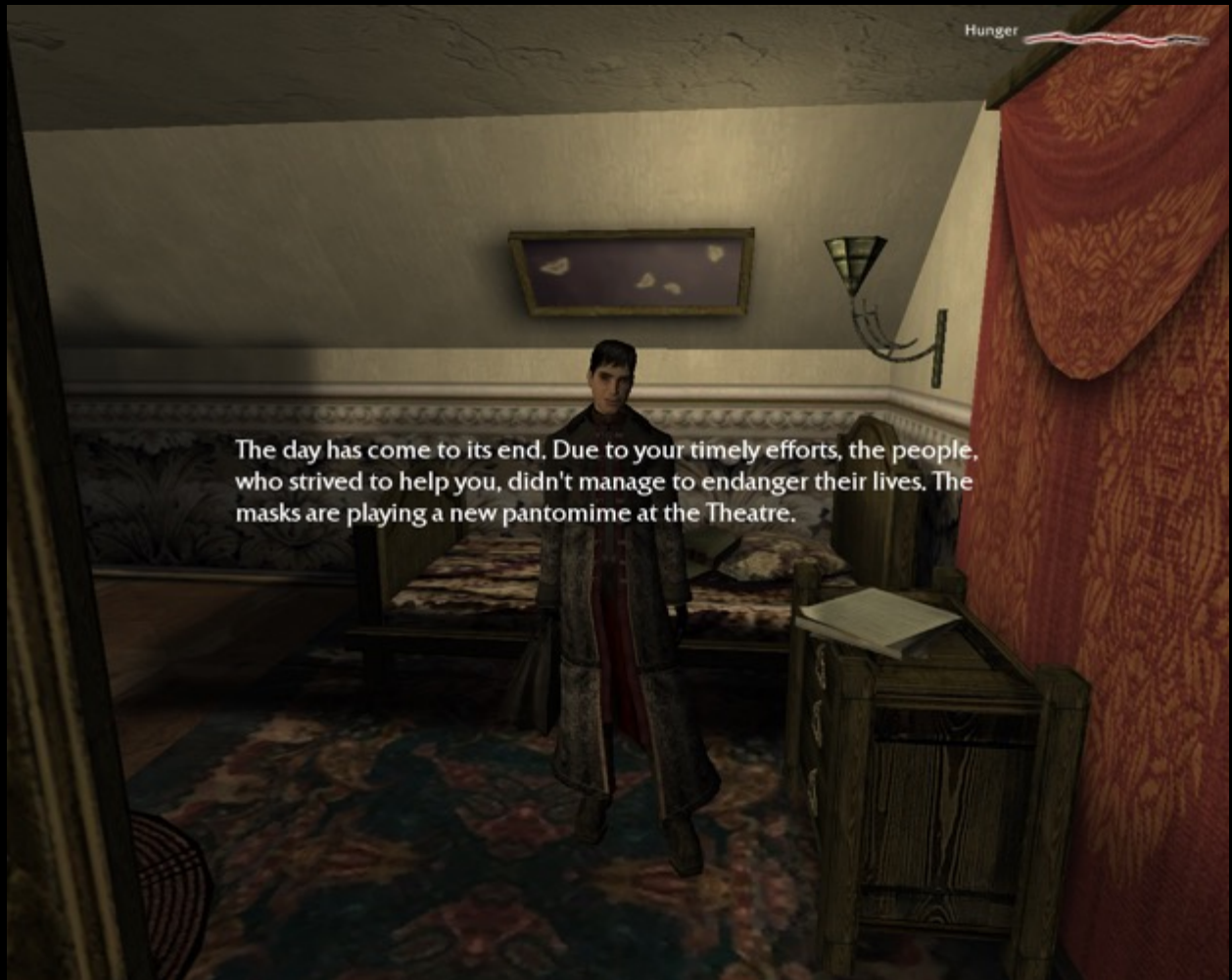
"Brother?"

- Petr Stamatin.

Andrei Stamatin wants some brown twyre, but I don't have nearly as much as he's asking for, and I'm not about to harvest any organs for his sake. I leave to check the other shop nearby. I buy a lemon there. It's all I can afford.

I return to the Tavern after a little while. **Maria Kain** is there, and she asks me to get Andrei and his brother to stay in the Town. I have no reason to want them to leave, really, so this is fine by me. I tell Andrei something that's technically true to persuade him (I *have* been doing new things with twyre, after all), then return to Maria. The recipe she gives me was prepared for Simon Kain: one brown twyre, two savjur, one white whip. 80/7,5. Nice. I also get quite a bit of money here, which I promptly exchange for two loaves of bread and some smoked meat.

It looks like I'm done with the auxiliary tasks for the day, so I'll head back to Dankovskiy with the twyrine extract I made earlier. The Bachelor plays around with his microscope, then we chat for a bit. Things are looking pretty good right now, and all of my tasks for the day are complete with plenty of time to spare. I figure I'll have to speak with the Bachelor tomorrow morning, anyway, so I rest up here again.



Day Three

during which Haruspicus will be risking his life to solve puzzles of the ancient writing of the steppe people.



I accidentally click “New Game” instead of loading a saved one. I correct my mistake, then we’re off to the races.

Dankovskiy is very annoyed that no one will let him dissect dead people. I have no choice in this dialogue other than to offer to collect tissue from a corpse myself, even though technically, I haven’t the right. The “Dead tissue” task appears in the Other tab rather than in Day quests, so I figure there’s something else more pressing I’ll have to do today.



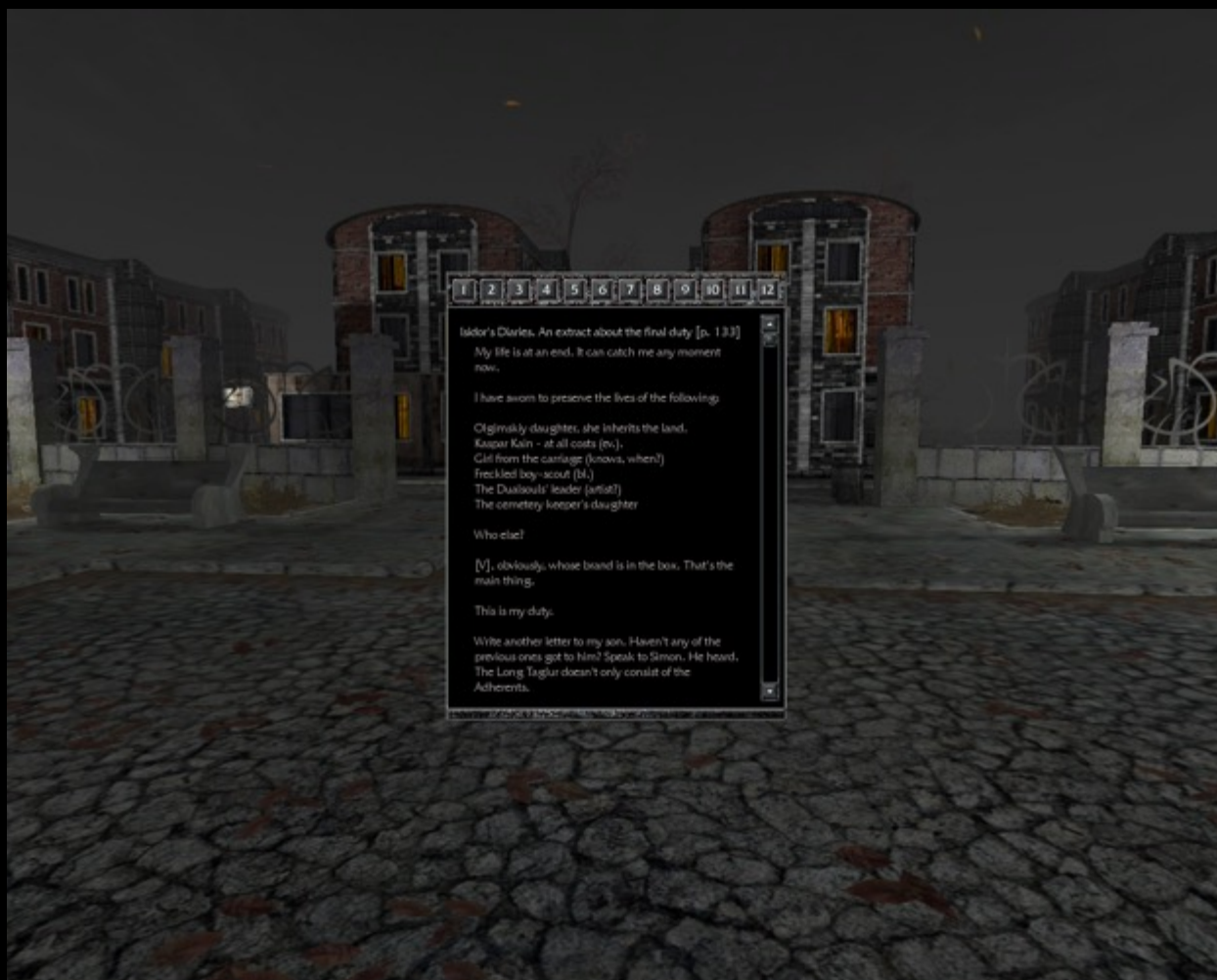
I like that he describes Isidor as a "jewel" here, and find it very interesting that they seem to have written letters back and forth for at least some amount of time... I wonder what they talked about.

For now, I'll be trying my best not to intercept an airborne knife with my face on my way to the Theatre. I dodge one, proceed to defend myself, then make a mental note to drop some of my junk off at home so as not to waste any more gory prizes. Maybe someone else can find a use for the liver and kidney I left behind.



Just playin' in the sandbox with my very good friends.

I leave the Theatre and check for letters. I seem to have two. One is labeled “panacea”, and the other is an extract from a page in Isidor’s diaries. The “panacea” note contains the line “It is worth risking everything to get such a medicine”, and is signed “Well-wishers” again.



Isidor's notes are rather interesting...

I also check back a little further in the other days' tabs to see if there's anything I missed. A letter from the first day that I hadn't yet read (from "well-wishers" again!) reminds me of the truth at the heart of all of this:

"Each of the ruling families is playing a game that is in their interests".

It's about 3:00. I drop off my herbs at home for the time being, then head to the Cemetery to fulfill Dankovskiy's grisly request. A patrolman stands guard near an isolated corpse. He charges at me immediately, even though I walk up to him unarmed. So much for diplomacy. He goes down without much trouble, but I sustain a little bit of damage from a punch. I collect an item called "Dead blood" from the corpse. The phial is rather pretty.

It seems like food prices have gone down a little today, but the shops have less supply. I buy up the items in the Hindquarters' shop: an egg, some milk, some crackers, and a lemon.



Things seem to get worse with every hour that passes...

I am chased by marauders on my way back to Eve's Slough, where I present the spoils of my earlier escapade to the Bachelor.



I don't think I've ever seen anyone get this excited about blood.

In exchange, I choose two packs of bandages from the options he offers up. I use one of them up immediately. Not sure where to go next - the Dualsouls' place is locked up for now, and I don't need anything from Gryph. I check in on him anyway. A bell sounds. 6:00. I wander about for a while, vaguely heading towards the place called "Stem".



The real game has begun.

**** Click-stutter... Click-stutter... I don't like the pattern developing with my poor PC's death throes... they seem to punctuate the strangest moments. I save my game, exit, reboot, and prepare myself for what is to come.*

I receive a letter from Olgimskiy (once again, promptly at 7:15), so I'll be heading there after I check in on Alexander and Catherina, since I'm already almost to their Stem. I meet with **Petr Stamatin** first, though.



I think this is my favorite line of Petr's.

"We, brother, easily forget our mistakes, when they're known only to us! So... this is so."
- Petr Stamatina.

Neither Alexander nor Catherina have anything to say to me, but that's alright. I'm glad to have spoken with one of the Stamatins. Time spent, but not wasted. Off to the Clot, then.

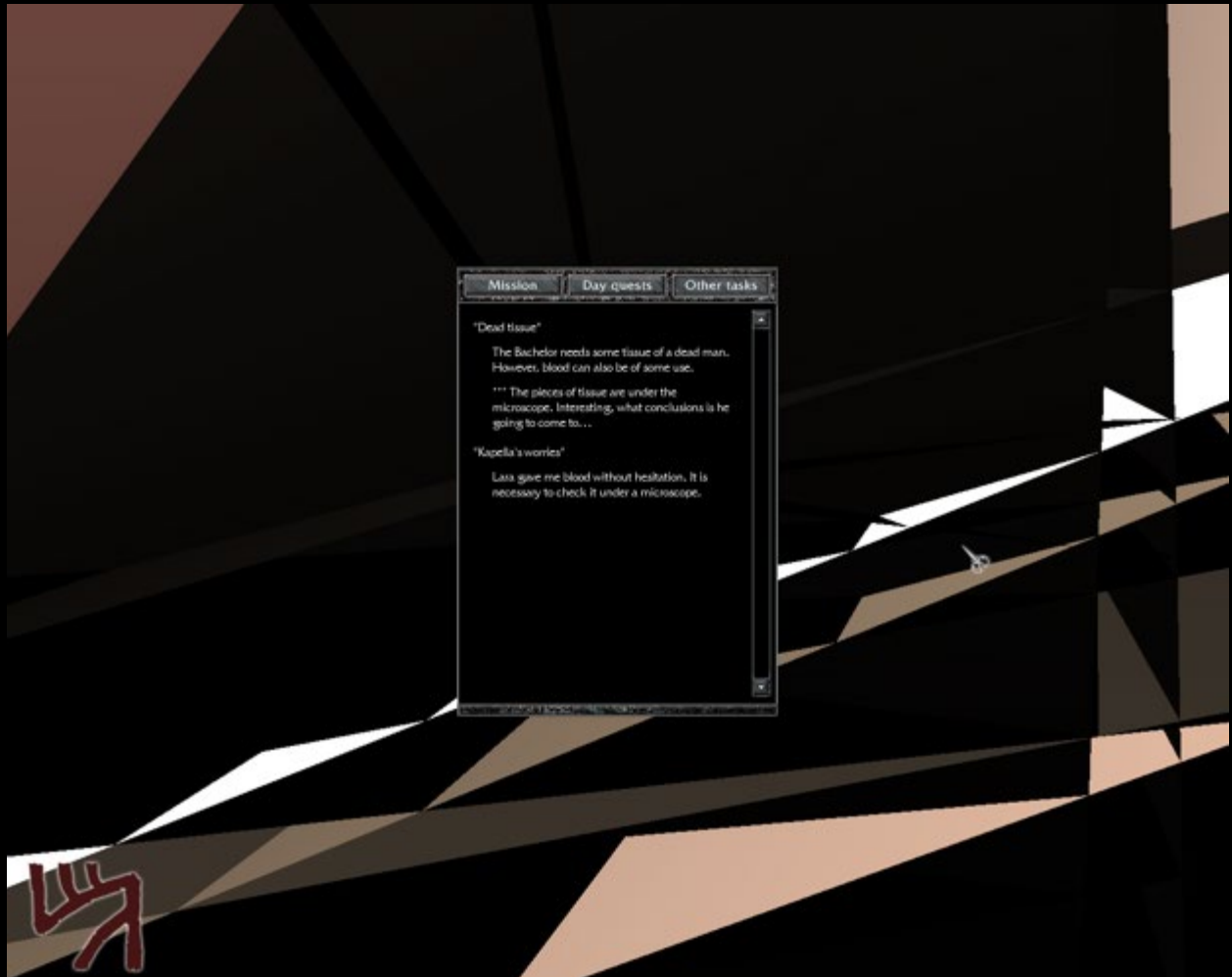
"One pebble after another. No need to hurry."
- Vlad Olgimskiy.

I learn quite a bit from Olgimskiy, but not nearly enough. He can't tell me much about the specific brand I've inherited, and wants me to help him with some matters related to the workers in the Apiary... I don't feel great about whatever's going on there, but I'm off to Ospina's to learn more regardless. I trust her more than I trust Big Vlad -- hopefully, she'll point me in the right direction.

I'll visit Kapella, too, since I'm here.

"The Bachelor takes the children out from dangerous areas. There's an infection, right?"
- Kapella.

She tells me about something going on with Notkin, and seems worried about him and his Dualsouls. I'll head over there on my way to Ospina's.



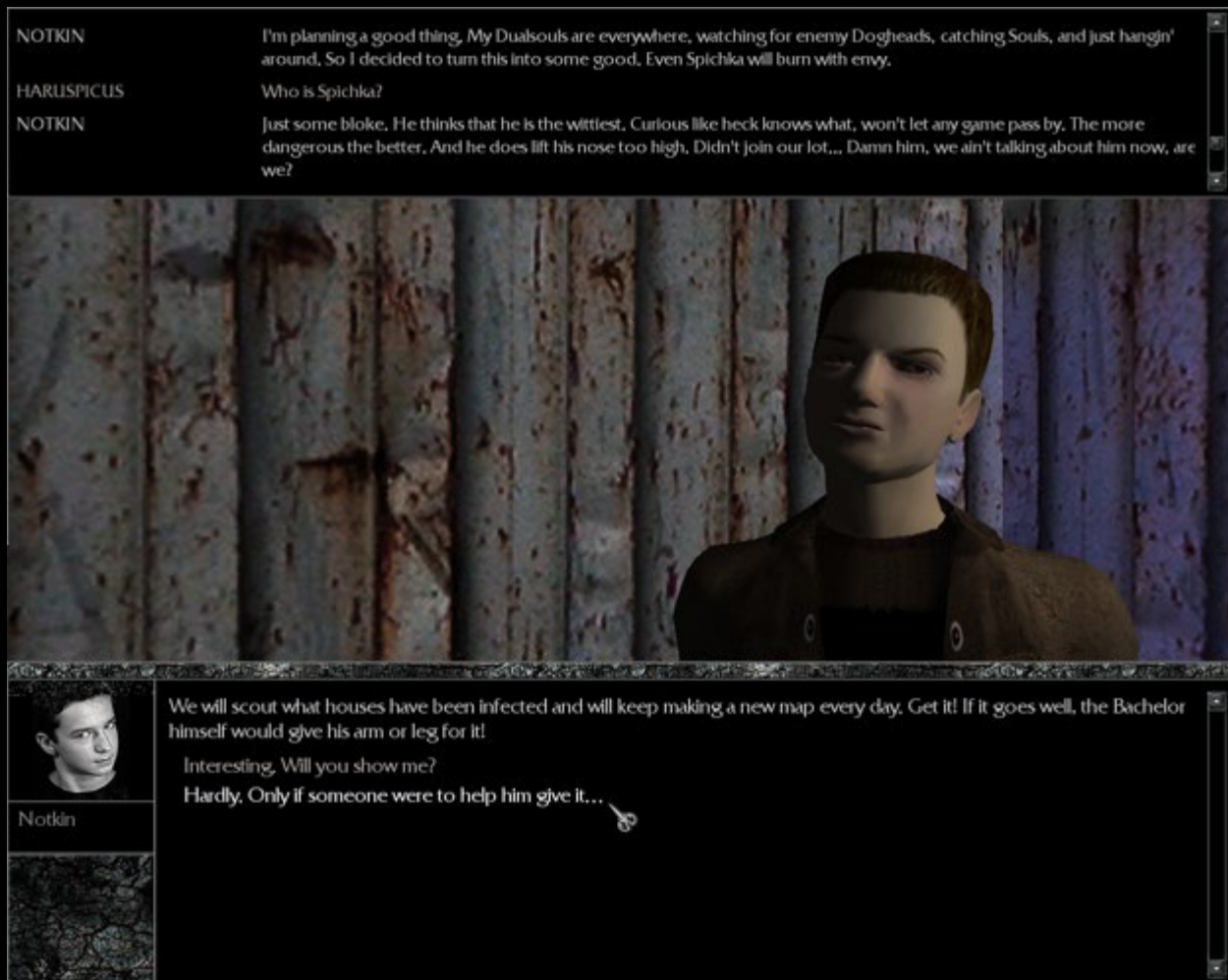
Hm.

There are some bandits outside the Dualsouls' place.



shhrrk

I'm almost certain there's another way I could've dealt with that, but it's too late now. Notkin's impressed with my stabbing prowess. I get a mostly busted shotgun for my trouble and talk to him some more.



Cute, Artemiy.

Infected district maps later in exchange for twyrine extracts now. Seems only fair. I can go back to Kapella again after "helping" here, so I'll go there and then to Ospina's, since it's a straight shot from the Clot. The combat music starts, but I don't see anybody chasing me yet. I duck into Gryph's warehouse briefly to avoid the fight. Funny, that. I thought about him when I wrote that awful little rhyme earlier in this bit of text.

"What is to happen... will happen."
- Gryph.

There's some unique dialogue here, which is neat. I apologize for killing his men, and he doesn't seem to take it too personally. As I approach the Clot again, the bell sounds. I'm surprised it's only 9:00.

Kapella gives me quite a bit of money as thanks for helping Notkin and the Dualsouls.

"[...] Her happiness was strange, however. It seemed as though she cared for him not due to friendship, but because it was her duty. Interesting, what games are these children playing..."

- "Kapella's worries", Other tasks [3].

I quite like it when I have the chance to visit Ospina's. She tells me more about the Apiary situation. It was already my intention to spare this Butcher. I'm glad she and I are on the same page. My map is marked with his location.

I stab a rat on my way there. My knife's durability has apparently reached 0%. I checked on a whim, I don't know when that happened. I also pocket a gold ring, and then don't have enough room to pick an empty bottle out of another trash bin. A shame.

I check in on Spichka since I'm in the neighborhood, but he doesn't have much to say.

"Listen, is this illness really infectious...?"

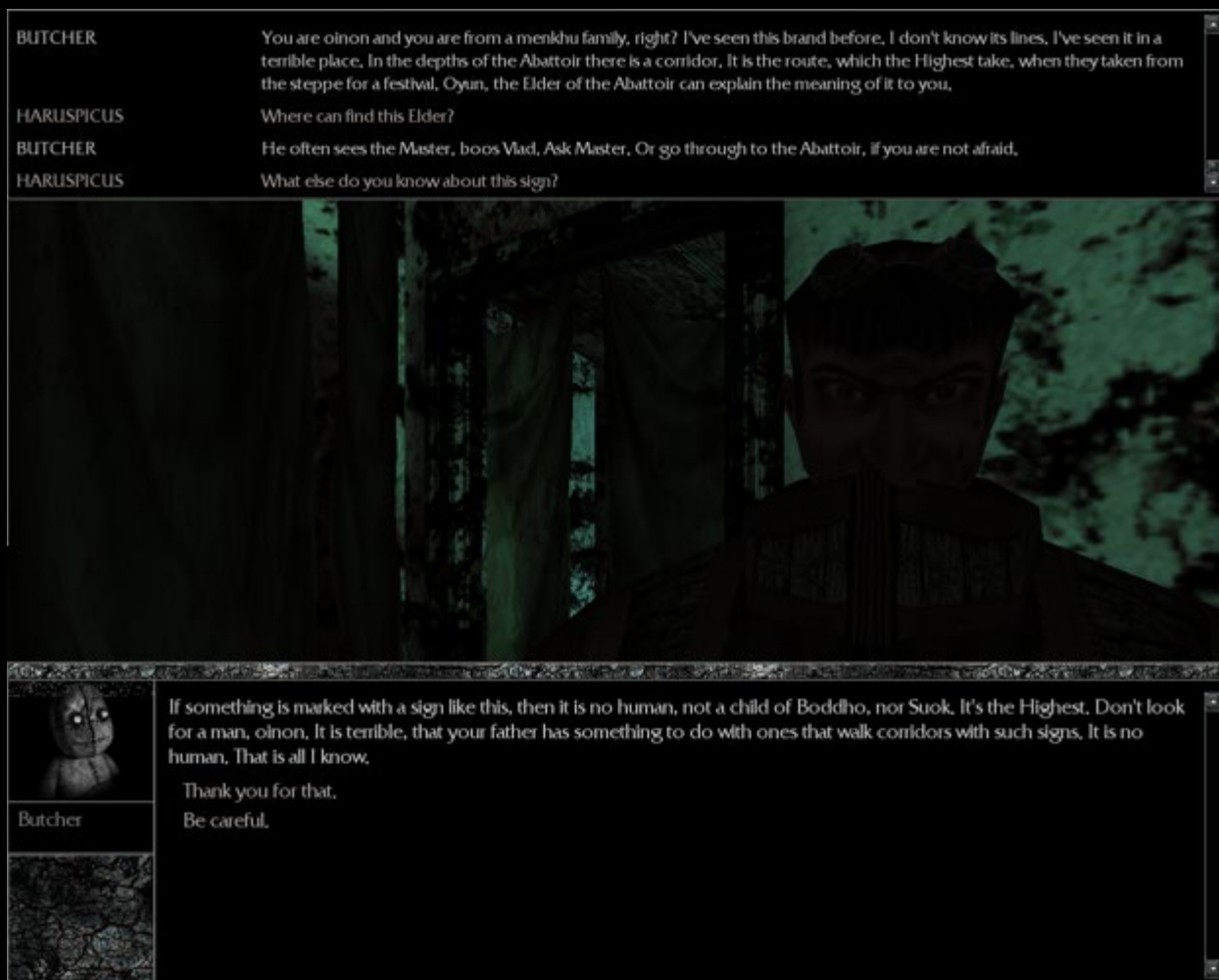
- Spichka.

I enter the house I'm supposed to search.



Oh Christ.

I take quite a few things from the various toppled dressers (most notably: bullets and a bottle of twyrine), then find the Butcher upstairs.



This is the most helpful, straightforward conversation I have had with anybody so far. I picked "Thank you for that".

I am able to avoid infection inside the house. It's time to return to Big Vlad, who can hopefully tell me some more about the Elder of the Abattoir. I check my inventory on my walk to the Clot and realize I still have the goddamned dead blood taking up space in my Other tab. I'll be doing some serious reshuffling of the Things in my Pockets when I go home to make twyrine extracts for the Dualsouls' scouts.

Olgimskiy warns me about the Elder, Oyun. He seems anxious to even address the matter, and I won't be able to meet with Oyun at all for a while. That's today's main task complete. Off to my laboratory to hone my craft (and manage my inventory). Since I'm finished up with quite a lot of today's work with a reasonable amount of time to spare, I'm going to wander around a little.

At noon, I receive another letter. Rubin continues to threaten me, but he's given me no reason to actually fear him. I get enough food for probably another day or so, then buy some painkillers since I'm running low.



Home, sweet home.

I feel like I need to trade for more herbs before I get going on the extracts, but...

**** My desktop takes up its noisy nonsense again... Save, quit, reboot. I'm very glad I'm using the GOG version of this game instead of Steam's -- the extra few seconds spent starting up the Steam client would amount to torture eventually.*

Since the Cemetery gatherer is closest, I'll drop by there to see if I can get everything I need. I have enough food right now that it's not out of the question to throw a bit of fresh fish in with the rest of the things I'm trading here. I get six black twyre, six bloody twyre, and one brown twyre. These extracts don't have to be great, they just have to *be*, so I make ten with single herbs. They are all terrible. Sorry, Notkin.

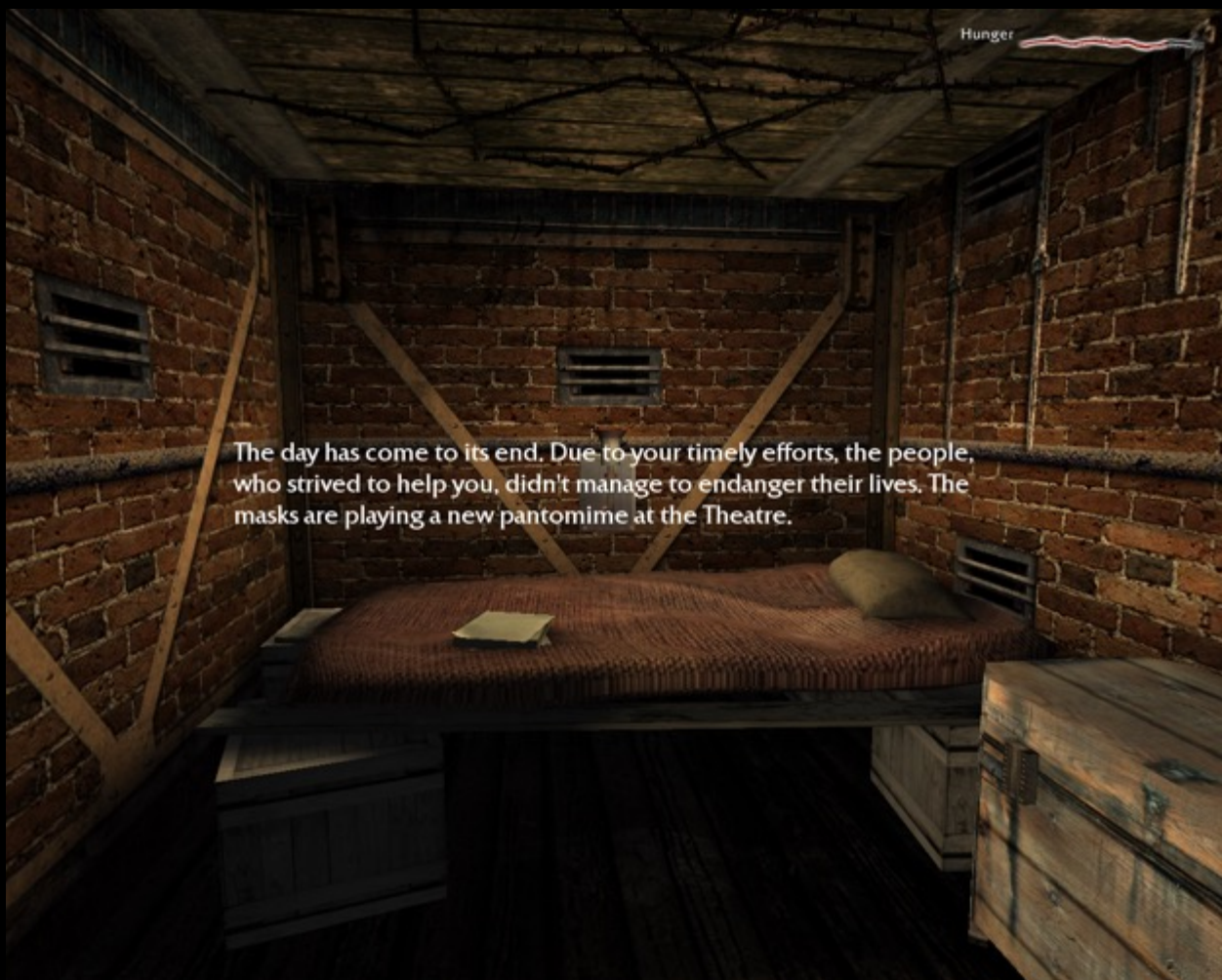
I sleep for two hours. It's 17:00 now. I got two letters while I slept, and both of them address the epidemic, but they seem to contradict each other somewhat. They are both rather gloomy -- which

seems appropriate, I guess. I walk along the tracks to the warehouses and drop by the Dualsouls' "Castle" for the final time today.

"Where is my cat again? Did he run away?"
- Notkin.

Tomorrow, I can start buying maps of infected districts from Notkin. I went to try and sell my revolver and its ammo to Gryph (I am broke again), but he doesn't have a trading option right now, so I'm just going to go home.

That's everything for today. I eat an egg, slam some Meradorm, and get a full 6 hours of rest.



Day Four

by the end of which, Haruspicus may find a friend and a half-dead enemy.



I pay a visit to the Dualsouls and speak with Notkin. The disease seems to have vanished from the Tanners district. In its place, marauders are taking things from the open houses. Notkin calls himself “just” rather than “bloodthirsty” for his Dualsouls’ role in some of the recent violence there, and asks me to retrieve some “spades” from four marauders, but I’m not sure what this means, exactly. I’ll figure it out.

I don’t have enough money for a map, so I’ll be back when I do.



I refuse a poison kiss from anguished faces cast in mist.

Off to Gryph's again. Funny, that...

"The one who makes a hard bed sleeps better."

- Gryph.

I tell the lovely gentleman I need weapons, but what I really need is money. I deliberate for a while on whether I ought to give up my revolver, but I have the sawn-off shotgun Notkin gave me and six shells, so I decide it's fine. I've also been managing alright with only a knife, but admittedly I don't know what might happen today and later on... Hopefully, the shotgun will serve me well enough.



Inventory check. I don't buy anything here. I'll be back later, though.

I do a lot of trash-picking as I head to the Theatre. I am Haruspicus. Hierophant. Surgeon. Compulsive collector of empty bottles and pocket-watches.

"It's all... not good."



This is the screenshot I took of the play this time. Sorry. I just think it's funny how it looks a bit like he's got frosted tips.

Like yesterday, I check my letters as I leave. An extract about the First Outbreak, again from Isidor's diaries, gives me a sinking feeling as I read it. The last words of this excerpt are:

"Soil, dirt. Dense darkness. Horror."

I don't have any directions yet today other than to do a bit of vigilante justice on behalf of the Dualsouls, and I don't think Big Vlad is going to want to talk to me this early. I guess I'll make my rounds, then. I am a doctor, after all. I'll start with **Lara Ravel**.



"I figured you might've guessed from the smell alone. It's fresh. Well, some of it. This patch here, on my sleeve, near the cuff? I think it's from less than ten minutes ago, but I don't remember... It's been a very difficult few days for me, Lara."

"You have black circles under your eyes..."
- Lara Ravel.

I also visit **Julia Luricheva**, at the house called "Seine".



Same board as Vlad's. I figured it would be (to save on resources, if nothing else) but I'm happy to know for sure.

"While reason aspires to one goal, the heart imperceptibly strives for another..."
- Julia Luricheva.

I'm going to go investigate around the Tanners district. I kill a man, and my punishment from God for this is that I have no room for his organs in my pockets. I fill my water bottles to clear out space, so I at least have a bit of extra blood for the Worms later. I'll drop my herbs off when I loop back around the map.

My sawn-off shotgun is now in perfect condition, but I'm broke again. I'll survive the day at least... Hopefully, there's some money to be made completing today's tasks, or some treasures I can sell.

Catherina brushes me off and Alexander's door is locked. Petr also has nothing to say, but they're all alive and well, and that's all I need to know. I guess I'm not certain about Saburov, but I have no reason to believe he's anything other than quite alright.

These kids play very dangerous games. From Spichka, I learn about the “Shavermen”, who used to work for Gryph, but don’t anymore since “the Order is gone”. I offer to help Spichka keep the Dualsouls out of trouble. They want to use some hidden weapons to fight the Shavermen - or, at least, that’s what I think is going on here. It’s kind of difficult to tell what this kid is talking about. I’m off to meet someone called Stub at the cemetery, in any case.

I check in with Andrei on the way. He’s alive and well. I trade all of my brown twyre for four shotgun shells, then leave the Tavern before I have time to think about and regret my trade. Anna Angel, Laska and Ospina are also doing fine this early morning.

I find Stub pretty easily outside the cemetery gates. He wants me to follow him somewhere.



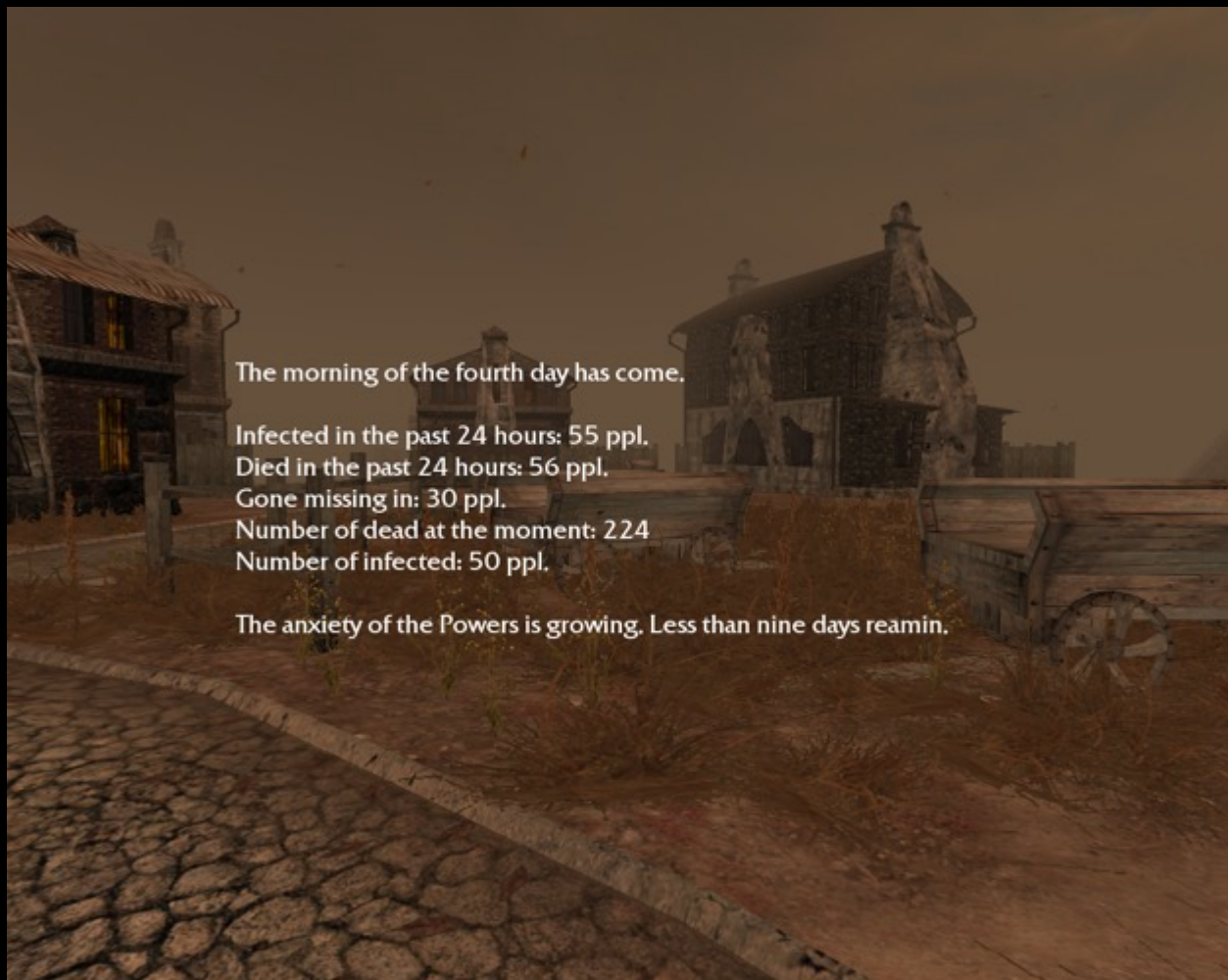
I don't think I really know what I've gotten myself into, here...

Again, I wish I had more room for organs. I have to use a lockpick to get into this house, and it’s infected (even though it doesn’t look like it from the outside). It seems like someone beat me to the weapons

cache or something because I don't find anything here except for Plague. I do another quick check upstairs and leave. I've already been here for too long. My skin's starting to crawl...

I notice when I get back to "Factory Building #4 (Machinery)" that I must have taken a knife to the head or something. I have a sorry little sliver of my health. I guess it's time to use that other first aid kit from the Bachelor. I apply another bandage, too, just for good measure. My health bar is about $\frac{2}{3}$ full now, and after storing my herbs, so is the Other tab in my inventory.

I try to cut through the factory buildings because it looks like I can on my map. I can't, at least not straight through. I have to go around.



I walk past the Clot, and outside Kapella's wing, I become very nervous that I may have gotten infected without realizing inside the house Stub brought me to. I look too closely at the pixels at the far left end of my "Infection" meter for quite some time, then close that menu and unclench my teeth.

I get a letter from Dankovskiy at 7:15 (before I can think about opening my player stats again to squint at that meter some more). Apparently, Rubin is hiding something from both of us...

"I will detail on it, when we meet. D.D."

...This isn't even an invitation. He just takes it as read that I'm on my way over there!

Well, I mean... I guess I am. Damn.

The Bachelor tells me he's running around in circles a little bit right now but expresses (measured) hope in whatever Stakh Rubin's up to. He suggests I go to find Stakh myself, but doesn't tell me where I ought to look. I mention that the man in question has been sending me death threats in the mail, so maybe this isn't the *best* idea. Luckily, though, it seems like Dankovskiy's little crush on me has done some work to set that right at some point between now and yesterday.



"Come on, pleeease? I promise I won't tell anybody! Cross my heart and hope to die!"

I'm told Lara can help me out here, so I'm on my way back to speak with her. The clock strikes 8:00. I don't have any problems getting into her place, as my reputation hasn't dropped since the day I arrived back in the town.

Lara points me in the right direction. Her chess board, unsurprisingly, matches Julia's and Big Vlad's.

Rubin is hanging around the warehouses somewhere. I'll do some dirty work for the Dualsouls first so I can turn in the items I'm supposed to gather before getting too terribly involved with this whole situation. I guess "crowbar" is what was meant by "spade". I gather up what I need pretty easily, then head south.

I only realize once I'm already at the warehouses that I have three crowbars, not four. Dammit. I guess I'll do a bit of backtracking, I didn't save near the proper houses. I dodge a Plague cloud and jump over a rat, then duck into a warehouse with a flaming barrel out front to dodge its bite.

Even if it weren't literally marked as such on my map, I think I'd have been able to figure out that this is where Rubin has been hiding. Microscope on the desk, diagrams on the walls. Who else...? He is not here, though; I'd imagine he's in the building Lara marked for me. I find an item called "Dead tissue" in the desk here, and I want to hear what Dankovskiy has to say about it (if anything). It's not yet noon, so I feel I can afford to make the trip. I'm heading towards the cemetery and going back through the Tanners to collect another crowbar, then I'll walk along the Gorkhon to the Slough. From there, it's back to the warehouses.



I guess I'll go the long way 'round, then...?

Fourth crowbar obtained. I hope it's worth the trouble, but most things aren't. My self-imposed detour gives me a chance to stock up on food.



I can smell this screenshot.



Nothing really happens here, but it's neat, anyway.

I don't want to waste shotgun shells on a rat and forget which button switches you back to your fists, so I just run straight to the Dualsouls' Castle with one of the little bastards chasing me.

The "take off weapon" button is X.

I pass on the map today since I'm already done with most of my affairs. I get quite a lot of helpful stuff from Notkin in exchange for the crowbars.

Well. I mean. It's all ammo, but it's all helpful.

Off to find Rubin, then.



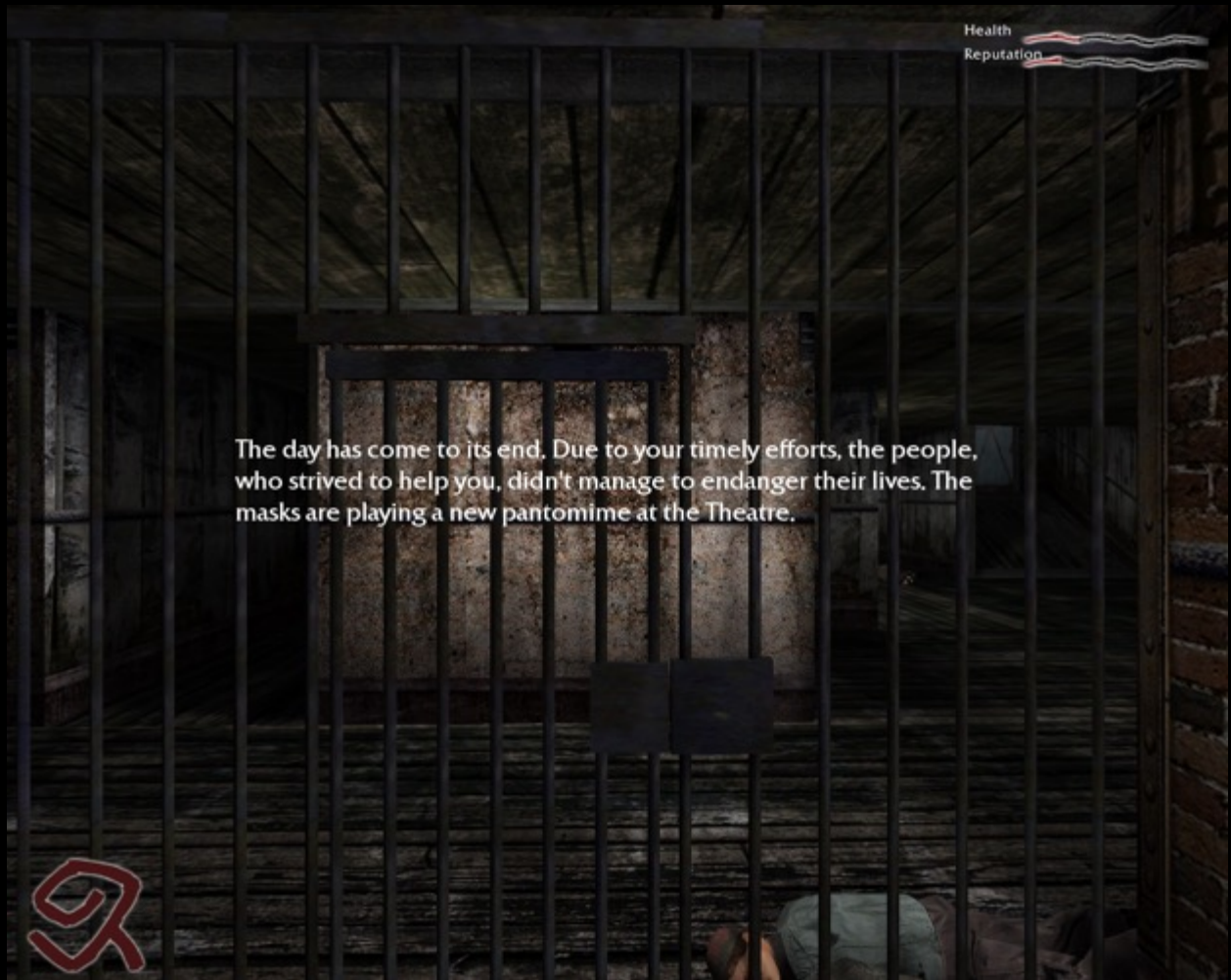
"Hey. What do you have there, exactly...?"

After our long chat about... whatever's going on here (Rubin tells me he's being hunted for desecrating Simon Kain's corpse to make a remedy against the Sand Plague), I ask about what Catherina said about me. I don't learn anything I didn't already know. "Rivers of blood."

Maybe it's a *little* unfair that I know I can leave my weapons behind in the box here to come back for later, buuut...



reputation lowering sfx

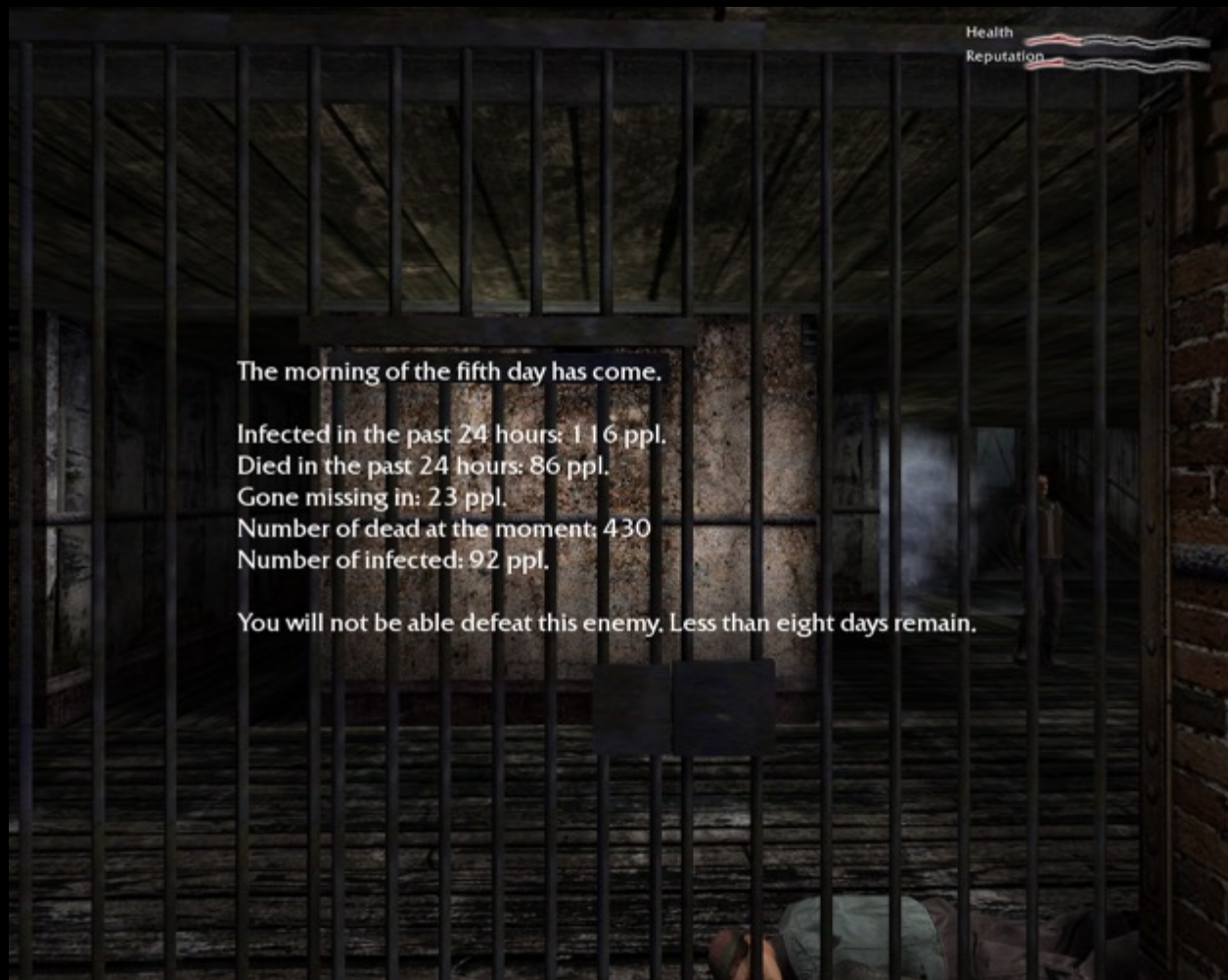


The day has come to its end. Due to your timely efforts, the people, who strived to help you, didn't manage to endanger their lives. The masks are playing a new pantomime at the Theatre.

Day Five

which will give Haruspicus a chance to seize the evasive Sand Plague.





If I didn't have the luxury of saving and reloading, my life would have ended here. I am killed several times by these guards, but it gives me a few chances to try to make it through this segment without getting infected. I swear these clouds aren't half as persistent in the remastered version. The strategy here seems to be to cling to the walls of the cell and make laps around the clouds until they dissipate, staying away from their middles. You also have to move constantly for this to work.



Oh, come on, two at once!? That's just mean.

I break myself out of jail successfully and accept the hand I've been dealt. Immunity 0%, infection... somewhere around 25%.

Dammit.

I suppose I have a powder, but I know I ought to keep it. We'll see for how long this is manageable.

I have a letter from the Bachelor. It is marked "(Important)". I start on my way towards Eve's Slough and forget completely about the dip my reputation has taken until three guards charge at me and kill me dead. I did not save after my first successful escape, but I guess that works out nicely. I have another chance.

This time, only by miracle, I make it out of the cell and dispatch the guards without getting infected.



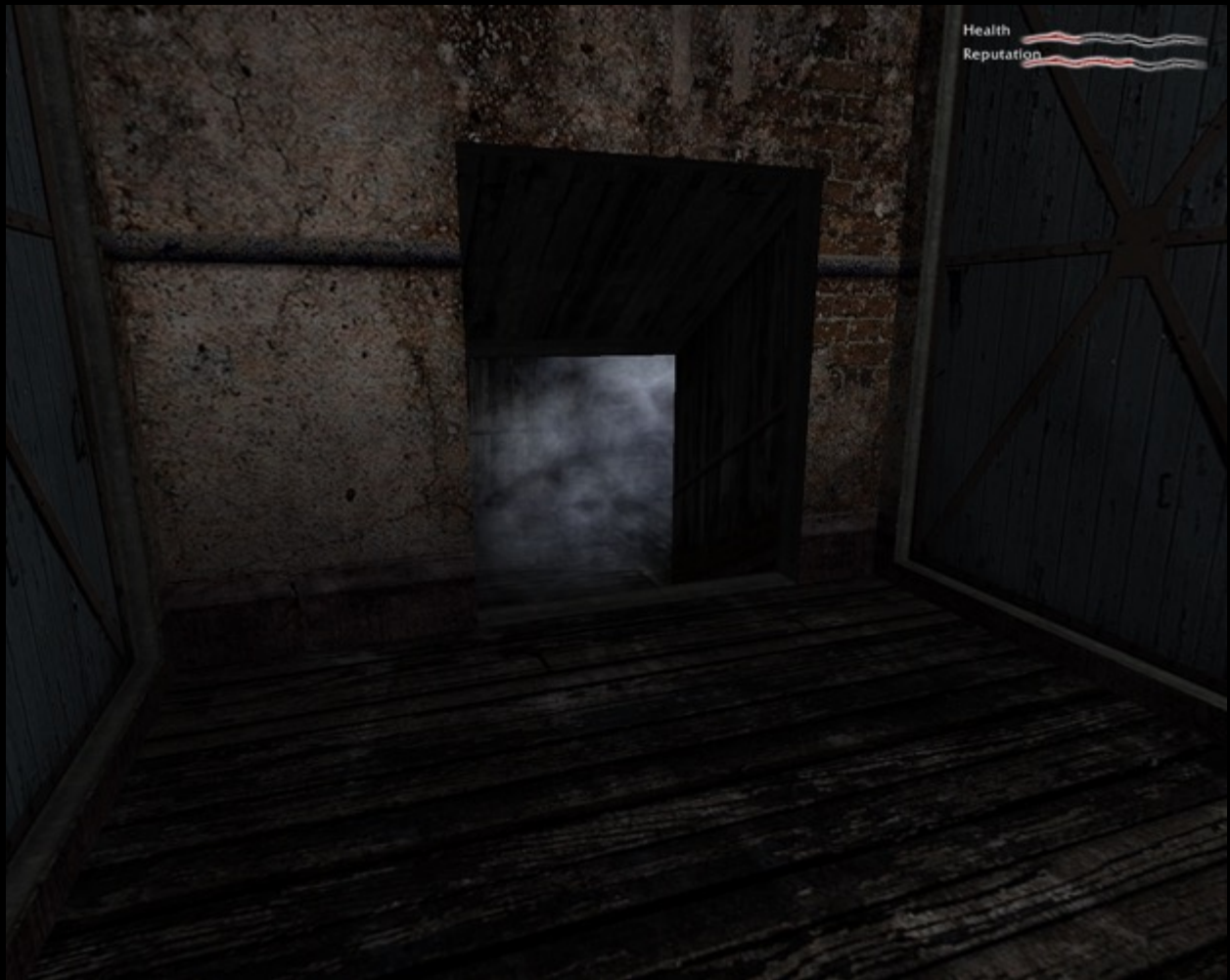
My heart is pounding.

I get to relative safety and save my game, but I still want to loot those corpses.



You can hide in this little hallway across from the cell and the Plague can't reach you, but it figures out your little trick after a while and blocks you in. I took one of my extracts to boost my immunity and slipped through to the right without touching the middle. God, this part is stressful.

I also just now figure that the sick guys writhing on the ground here are meant to let you boost your reputation by dumping painkillers on them before you head out. I loot the corpses near the cell and then do that.



So long, stinktown.

I save immediately when I make it outside.



"Hello there, sir. I'm sure you'll notice that I'm especially law-abiding today."

Off to the Slough, then. Should be a much easier trip this time. I exchange almost all of my money for a bit of dried fish, then run back over to the warehouse where I was ambushed to retrieve my weapons and lockpicks. I am amazed by how well I seem to be doing today, especially compared with how things *were* going before I got punched to death in a previous life.

"My head breaks... It is necessary to have a rest."

- Bachelor Dankovskiy.

Today's Day quest is called "Thrilling heart", and the task it outlines is a gruesome one. My first lead is Ospina, so I'm off to see her. I'll be selling some weapons to Gryph and buying a map from Notkin on my way. I punch a few rats to death and administer some more painkillers on my way to the warehouses.

I say a bittersweet goodbye to the revolver that got me out of jail and all of the ammo I'd collected for it, and make a mental note to start trading for shotgun shells as soon as I can -- five is not enough. I have

plenty of odds and ends that I know I can swap for some. Outside Gryph's, I trade water for a bandage and use it immediately. With that, I have nothing pressing on my HUD. It's about 17:30.



The map costs 1,000 today, for which Notkin apologizes, but that's really not so bad at this point in the game.

I don't know when I received it, but I also have a letter from Young Vlad. It's pretty vague. I'll head over to see him after I meet with Ospina.

I am straightforward with her about what has been requested of me. She's well aware that I am guided by the will of another, but she helps me regardless.



Fun fact about the “prickly prick” insult from Classic HD: in the original text, it is оцмрорыбозо мрзавца, which I am reasonably certain comes out literally to something like “sharp-toothed villain”. I was hoping for Ospina to invoke the sharp teeth here, but she just calls him a bastard.

An herb gatherer’s place is marked on my map now, so I’ll start making my way over there. I don’t have enough room in my inventory for anything new in the Other tab. I figure I may need some, so I’ll be stopping by my laboratory to make room and then going to Young Vlad’s place since it’s on the way to the herb gatherer’s if I walk there the way I plan to.

The clock strikes 19:00 as I find myself in front of Young Vlad’s. We chat for a while and I drop down through his well, into this “incision in the skin of Earth”. He gives me quite a bit of kerosene, which fills up my Other tab. I drop the damned liver. I must have kept it when I got distracted.

I meant to include a screenshot of the Rat Prophet here, but it seems I didn't save it properly. After speaking with him, I emerge from a manhole cover behind the Theatre, which is a little inconvenient -- I’m starting to get a little anxious about the time. I get back to Vlad’s at promptly 20:00. I tell him about what I saw and imply that the strange creature I spoke with was a hallucination, but he seems to know

exactly what I'm talking about. He gives me two twyre recipes, and one of them drops to the floor. I put a ring and four pocket-watches in that bag instead. I will be back for these, but I'll need room for something much more important.

The Earth Bride seems to know why I've come here.



This day starts more than half-over, but it feels so very long...

I don't know if the game keeps track of whether or not thirty minutes pass, but I hurry to the Bachelor anyway.

"Peace be with her..." Bastard. I'd say he's heartless, but in a very literal sense, he isn't right now. I receive some money and a blue vaccine.

Dankovskiy implies I'll be traipsing about doing more impromptu cardiectomies. I call him on his callousness. Surprisingly, he apologizes, and offers his heartfelt thanks for the "treasure". With that, my tasks for the day are complete. Tomorrow I'll supposedly receive a letter about whatever comes of this.

Hopefully, it will have all been worth it. I'm going back to Young Vlad's to pick up all that junk I dropped. I trade seven razors to a guard for one piece of dried meat, then drop my eighth into a trash can to free up a second space.

...I can't interact with the damned bag for some reason.



Day Six

by the end of which, Haruspicus will find out how important a role mythic beings can play in our lives.



I start my day at around 2:00, and speak to Young Vlad right away. His dialogue here is somewhat funny contextually: "I didn't expect you... But I am happy to see you, anyhow."

I slept here, Vlad. Didn't you notice? I tell him I want to go down the well again, because I "want to ask the talking rat a question". I love this game. The Rat Prophet is not at the end of the tunnel, but it works out nicely that I'll be popping out near the Theatre.



I guess I forgot to mention that I missed the pantomime on Day Five. There's a way you can see it as Haruspicus, but I can't remember how to do it.

"People are afraid of Catherina's prophecy, but people don't pay attention to the rivers of blood, until they themselves become part of the flood."



(deep, deep sigh)

It seems the Theatre is a place for corpses now. This may well have started yesterday, but I wouldn't know.

My various meters are shockingly well balanced, and my reputation sits at 100%. In my first attempt at this campaign (*Haruspex*, rather than *Haruspicus*), I think it just kept dropping after Day Five. After playing this much of the game in the way that I have been (that is to say, cautiously), I've started feeling like you honestly have to go out of your way to make people hate you. I don't even remember how I screwed up so badly before. I played a Ripper instead, it seems, and ended up with more organs than I knew what to do with (and hardly any panacea).

I'm heading to the warehouses to buy a map from Notkin. The squelching noises that come from the stagnant Plague clouds are absolutely stomach-churning, but they add to the atmosphere. I move as quickly as the game allows me to through infected districts, and feel less confident in my abilities as a healer with each day that passes, as the Sand spreads and smothers streets in scarlet staining, sanguine scars, and sickly sores...

I dodge my first “angel” Sand Plague carrier ghost-entity-thing, and head for the train station. I visit with Mishka, since I’m close enough that I’d feel bad if I didn’t.

“What do you have there... two more hands?”

- Mishka.

She is alive and well.



Today’s map costs five hundred coins, which is fine by me.

“Klara tried to break through under the ground, to the Prophet. She did not manage.”

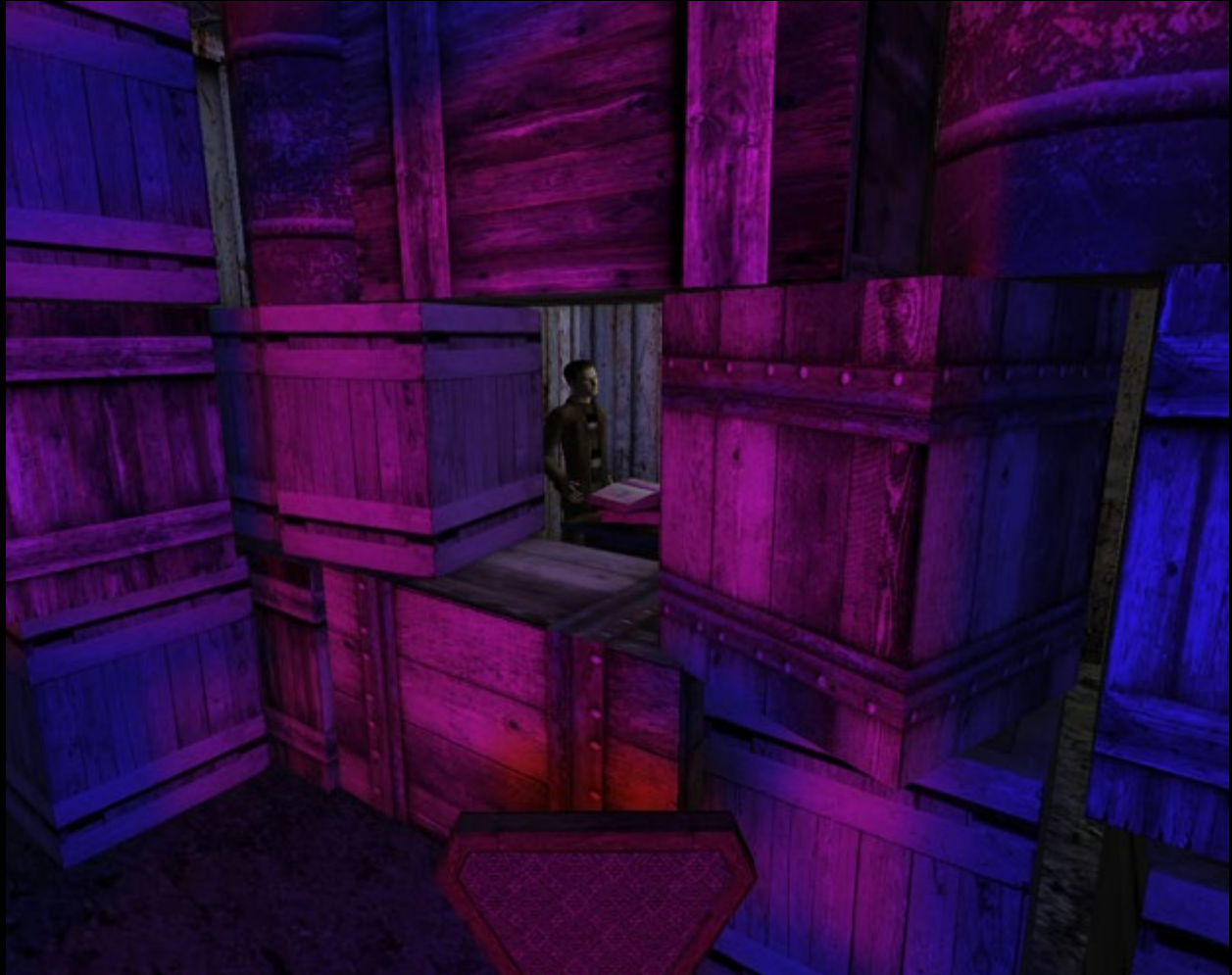
- Notkin.

I’ve been here for almost a week now, and I haven’t even *seen* the Devotress. I wonder what she’s up to. Certainly, we’d have crossed paths by now, even by accident...?

My cat hops up on my desk as I check my letters. Dankovskiy seems to have already come to some conclusions about the human blood analysis:

“The antibodies reproduce and destroy the disease, but they are too few. The bacteria reproduce much faster, and nothing stops them from doing so. My conclusion - human blood is not enough for the creation of the panacea with your method. D.D.”

...How dismal.



Special thanks to my cat Nosey for attempting to knock over my monitor here, then for successfully knocking over an empty can of peach-nectarine Red Bull. (Panacea...?)

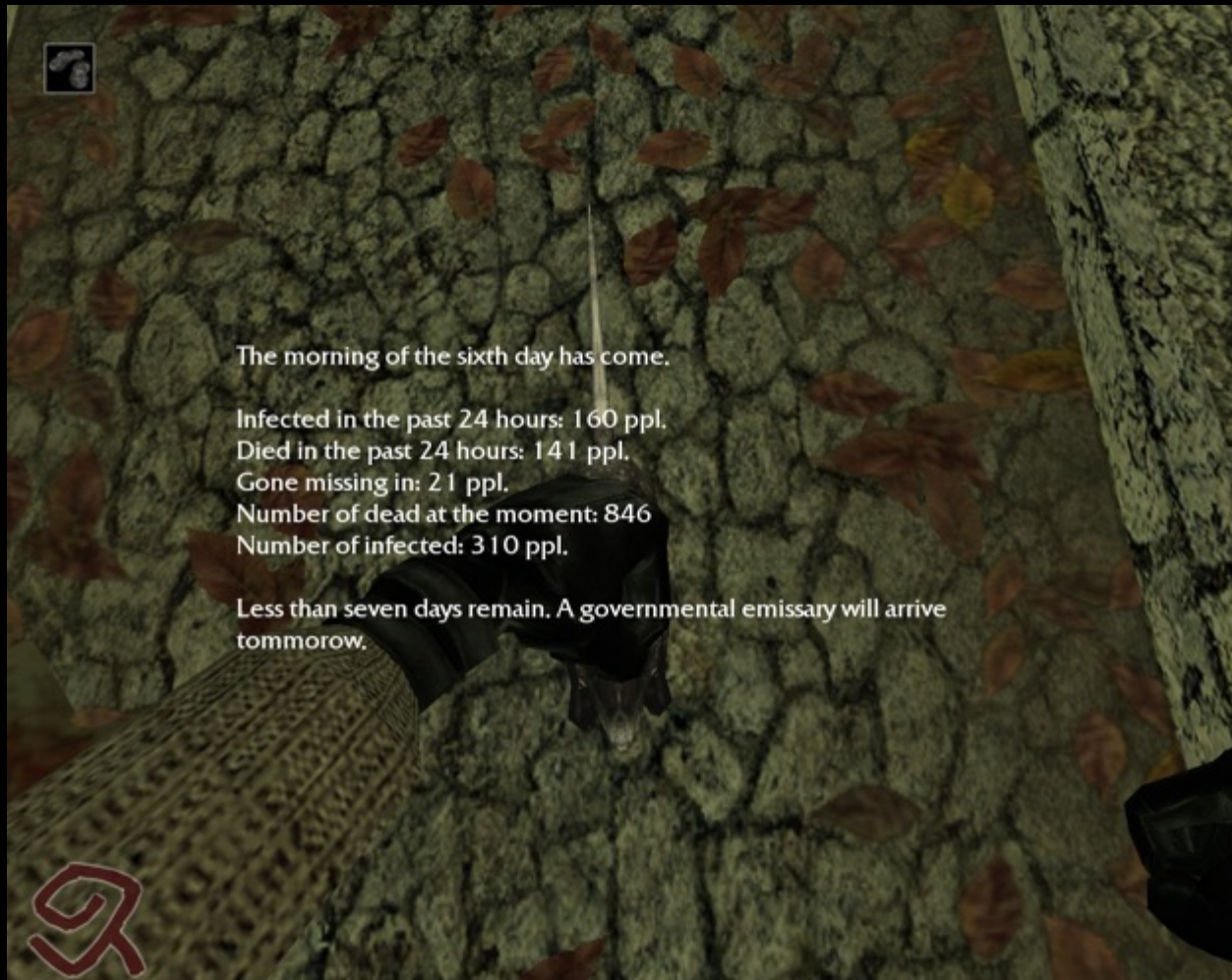
I have another note from Isidor, which describes the most successful twyre extracts. Each of them requires some amount of brown twyre... and I gave almost all of mine to Andrei in exchange for shotgun shells a few days ago. Damnable Stamatins. I knew I made that trade too hastily. I suppose I'll need to get my hands on some more.

"The earth gives birth to both herbs and disease. The roots underneath bind that, which the seed untie under the sun. When nature dictates its will to us, we have no choice but to succumb."

- "Isidor Burakh's diaries [p. 55]".

It is 4:00. I'm going home to manage my inventory, then a bit further north to trade for herbs behind the cemetery. I get rid of all the blood I'm carrying there, as well as the loose hearts and kidneys that are probably making my pockets smell pretty terrible by now. Three black twyre, five brown twyre. Back home to drop them off. I spend a little too much time organizing this trunk in a way that makes sense to me -- [V] brand, 100 (!) kerosene, several recipes between 2-10 (but not all of them), quite a few of each of the various herbs, then the dead blood from a few days ago at the very end. I don't really know why I've kept it. I won't need it for anything else, and it's probably rather unsanitary.

I take a nap for an hour to curb my exhaustion a little, then head back into town. Rations are quite expensive again, but I can afford a fair amount today. There are five lemons in my inventory right now. I eat two, then some bread. Arson seems to be becoming a problem lately, and that's apparently terrible news for my PC, which objects to the strain from rendering the fire graphics.



I check to read the letter I received. "Anna Angel's invitation." She writes that the Bachelor is telling lies about her (I've never even heard him talk about her, but I guess I'll take her word for it), and describes a terrible girl, a "saint healer", who seems to be "hiding" in her house. I'll be over there soon to see who it is (I can guess).

Another letter comes a few minutes later while I'm shopping for rations again. Dankovskiy's got a new idea for the panacea -- something to do with bull antibodies?

"Come over, we'll discuss it. D.D."

I'm nearby, so I start making my way to the Bachelor before I deal with Anna. I am chased to the Slough by a rat and a marauder simultaneously.

"Who has gone into the Cathedral?"

- Bachelor Dankovskiy.



My Day quests tab updates after our conversation, but my map doesn't. It seems I'm on my own here for now. Rain begins to fall as I leave the Slough.

"Our logic is somewhat strange, we should have started with animals in the first place, but now it is hard to find a bull - famine."

- "Bull's blood", Day quests [6].

I head for **Anna Angel's** place, marked "Verbae" on my map -- "words", or "proverbs". It's getting more and more difficult to dodge the accursed Sand Plague.

I receive another letter. I have been waiting for this one: "Klara's invitation".

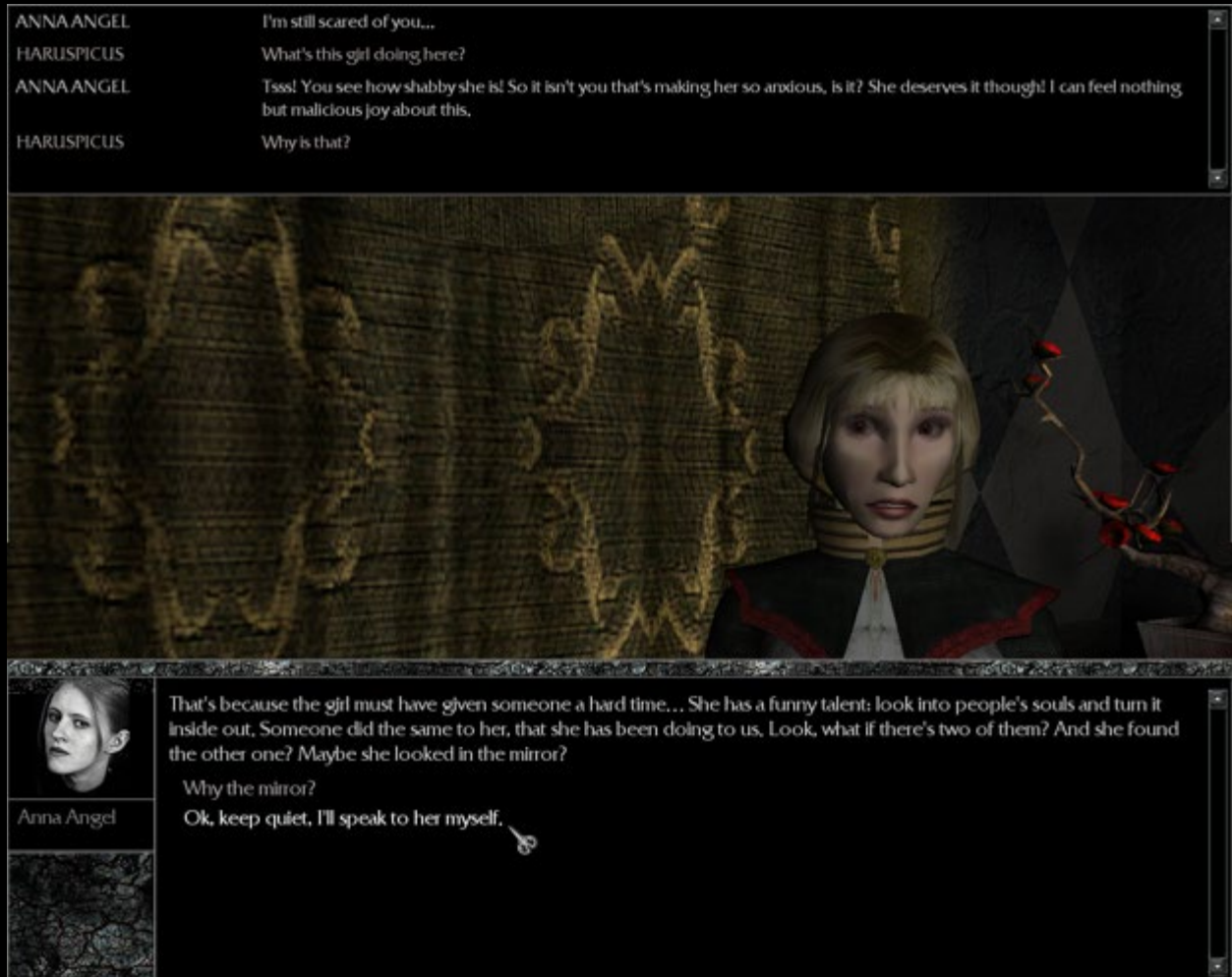
"I think time has come for us to look each other in the eye. Come to Laska's hut. I'll be waiting."



Well, that's... curious.

"My patrons have renounced me. They expel me from their house, but they will pay for it..." - Devotress.

The **Devotress** seems to have gotten into some sort of disagreement or something with the Rat Prophet, and asks me for a favour. I'm supposed to ask him about her fate, but I never got to ask about my own... I'll go there. I'm sure he'll know I'm asking on her behalf, even if I feign hatred for her as she suggested. The Prophet is somewhere around the Theatre, as he was before.



Two of them, you say?



"Holy shit... There's two of them."

Okay, maybe not, but I certainly didn't follow her here, and I don't think she followed me...

"I feel sick... everything went dark before my eyes..."

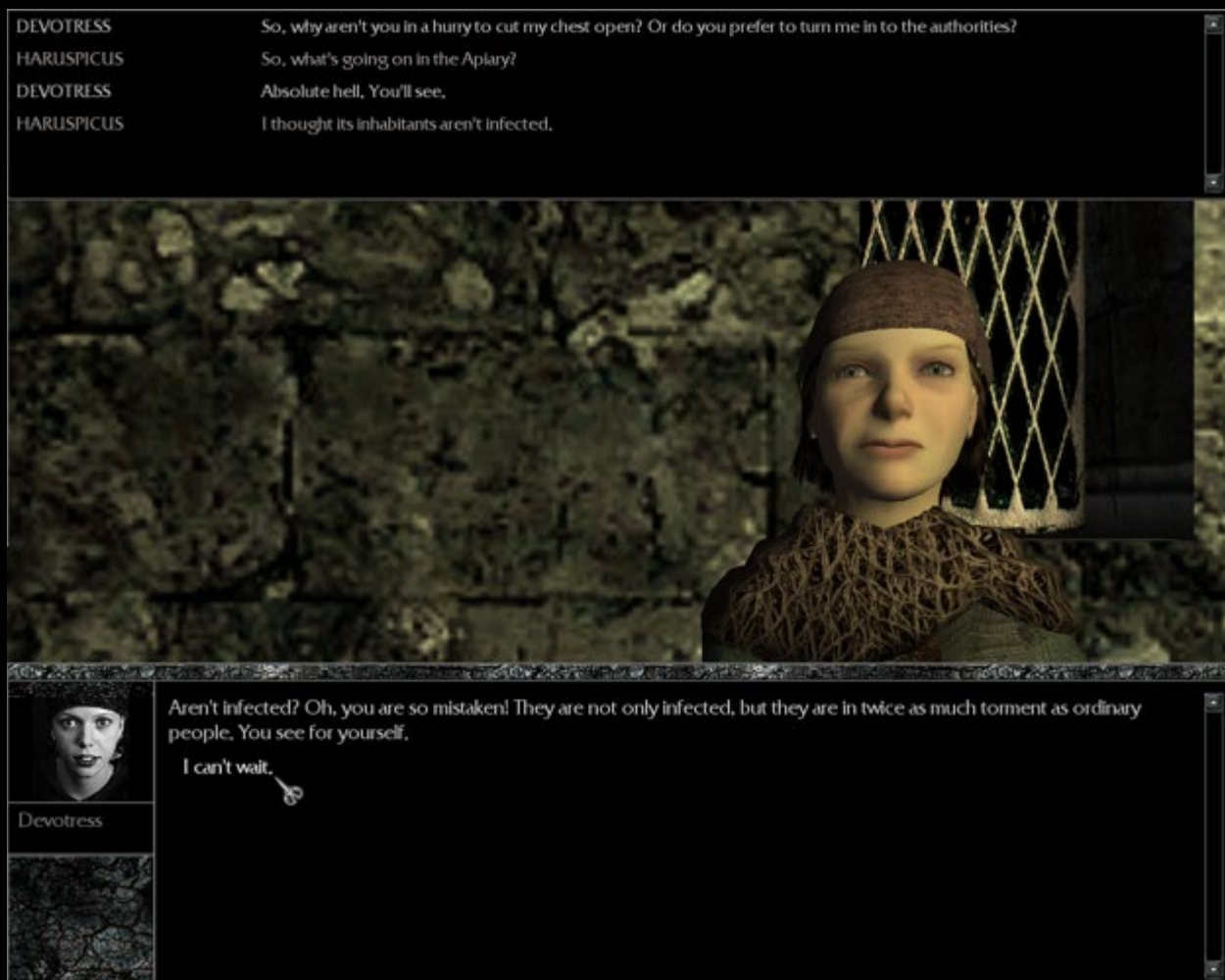
- Devotress.

"At the times, when there was nothing, nor night, nor day, there was no up, no down, no water, nor earth, there was only a great Bull, Father of Flesh, Creator of the Lines, Horn Swinging Bos Turokh. Suok came out of the depths and filled the world with herself. She ate the stars and the light... [And who was she, this Suok?] Oh, don't interrupt! ...And she ate the sunlight. And Suok didn't burn in the fire, nor did she drown in water. She didn't get older, nor did she want to return to the depths. Darkness came. Bos Turokh, the great Bull, froze in the darkness and his cry broke it, but didn't break Suok. She spread a bit wider and the darkness returned. [Yes, that's precisely about us.] Then, Bos Turokh opened his mouth from horizon to horizon and ate Suok. She tried to break away, get back to the depths, but Bos Turokh ate her bit by bit. Now she is within him. She only vainly tries to eat him from the inside."

"That's some story."

Yes, certainly. The various stories scattered throughout each campaign are my very favorite parts of the game, so I'll be including them here when I come across them, both because I think they ought to be shared with those who don't have time to play this time-sink of a game and because I want to have them saved somewhere (like the chessboard screenshots).

Klara tells me to head to the Short Apiary Corpus, where I will meet the **Mother Keeper** for the first time -- one of my adherents, and the "centre of all life and will of the Order". She can give me a bull.



"Soil, dirt. Dense darkness. Horror."

It's not yet 9:00 when I leave the Cemetery. I'm getting very, very good at punching rats.



I'm crouching.

Mother Keeper asks for one hundred yellow tablets. "Ten times ten". No mistaking that. No negotiating, either, it seems.

I have 27.

I'll be back later.

I enter a store that sells medicines, buy 11 more tablets, and sell the blue vaccine the Bachelor gave me for a little extra money since that cleared me out. This is going to be a pain. Two more in exchange for a hazelnut, then a much nicer trade with the next young lady I approach.



"There you go, little crumb. Ten sharp objects, in exchange for your poison. Don't you go hurting yourself with those... at least not any more than you could've done with this powder, anyway."

51 tablets now, after visiting the drugstore across from the Theatre. I sell some of my other tablets to afford more yellow ones later. Since I'm nearby, I'll take care of my business with the Rat Prophet.

Predictably, he knows Klara sent me, but he tells me what he thinks about her anyway.

Back to my *real* quest: buying up every alpha tablet in the Town-on-Gorkhon. 62 now. I sell the rest of my beta tablets and a broken knife. A walnut and peanut in exchange for three more (I think this trade is more than fair). Eleven more, and I sell some razors. 76. I'm at the pharmacy by Anna's now, so I'll drop back in to speak with Klara. I choose to tell her she is a force of good, and she gives me the seventh herbal recipe -- 92/24.

You cannot buy immunity boosters at the tavern. I checked. I'm not sure which stores I haven't visited yet. I haven't been keeping track. One more from a kid. I worry about how many times I'll have to do this.

I think the last two stores are the one near Lara's and the one across from Eva's place. I realize I have spent entirely too much time in this world when I recall these places without much trouble.

I have exactly 99 alpha-tablets. A cruel little joke from God, here.



In my haste, I gave her a peanut for free.

There we go. One Hundred Alpha-Tablets Exactly. Back to Mother Keeper.

It's nearly 14:00. My exhaustion is rising, but I'd literally drop dead if I used my last handful of coffee beans. I eat two lemons instead, then eat a loaf of bread to balance it all out. I'm lucky to find a man who will trade me some bandages for water on my walk back to the Apiary, then am even luckier to find another. I heal up and breathe a sigh of relief.

*"I see everything."
- Mother Keeper.*

I am given directions to the place called Raga barrow ("The Worms give the bulls back to the Earth here") and receive Herbal Recipe #1 - one black twyre stem, one brown twyre stem, two savjur stems. 100/9. Almost perfect. As I approach my laboratory to drop some things off, I get a letter from Victor Kain.

"Come over, if you are not too angry with us. We ought to get to know each other better. We are sorry."

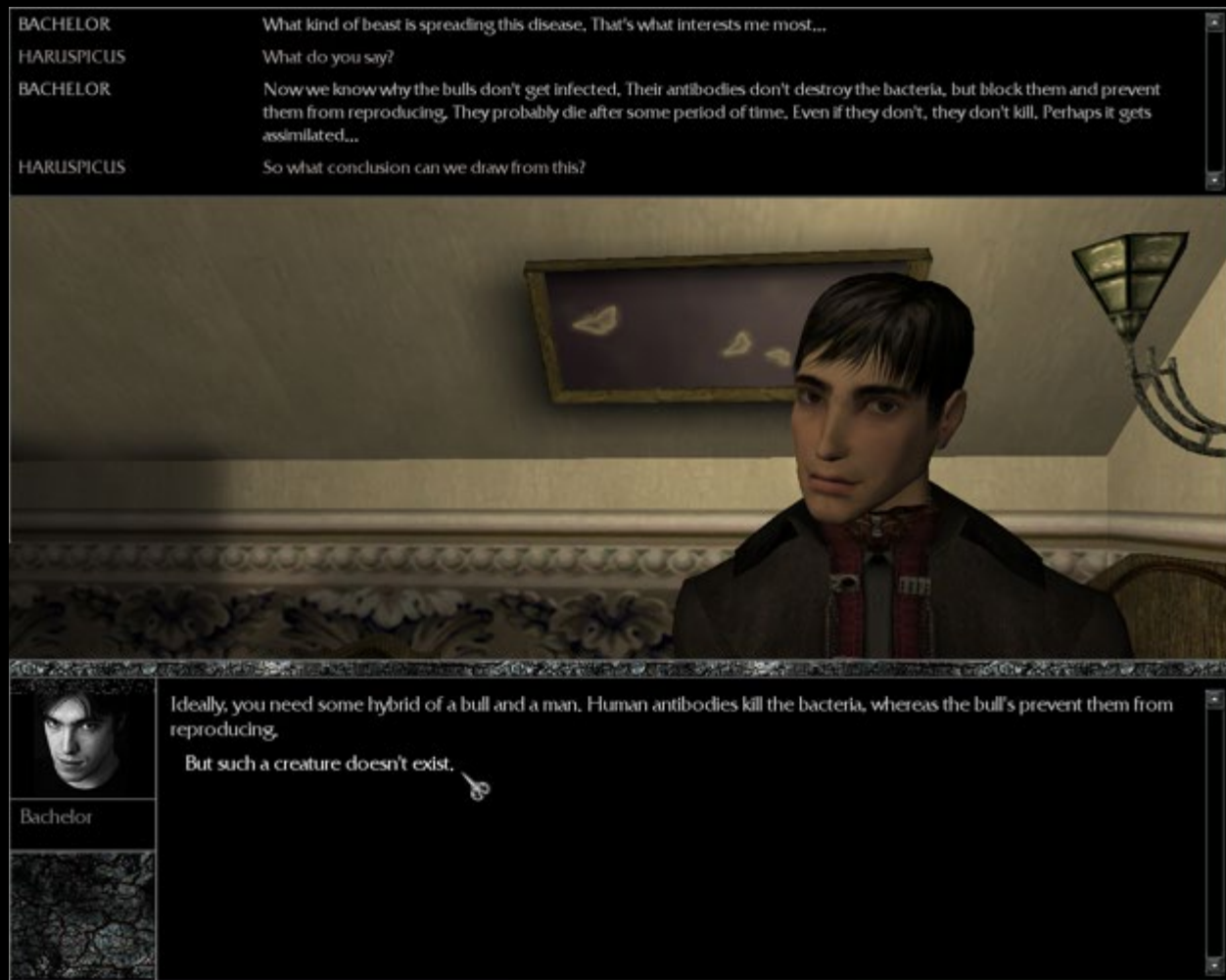
I'll be in the Stone Yard soon, close enough to the Kains... I don't see why not.

I know you need to bring some kind of sample of the Sand Pest with you to the barrow, so I bring the dead blood with me to see if that works. It does. Here I was thinking I was going to be stuck with it forever.



Good night, sweet prince.

I collect the bull's blood and return to the Bachelor.



Don't give me that look.

"That's the problem... You and I have no luck." Tell me about it. I check my Day quests tab, and it seems like that's today's major task completed.

"[...] It seems as though the Bachelor is convinced in failure beforehand."

- "Bull's blood", Day quests [6].

I'll be coming back here to get some rest shortly, but first, I'd like to see what it is **Victor Kain** wants from me. There's something going on with Maria, so I'm sent to speak with her. She wants me to retrieve a diary from Nina's crypt. Sounds easy enough.



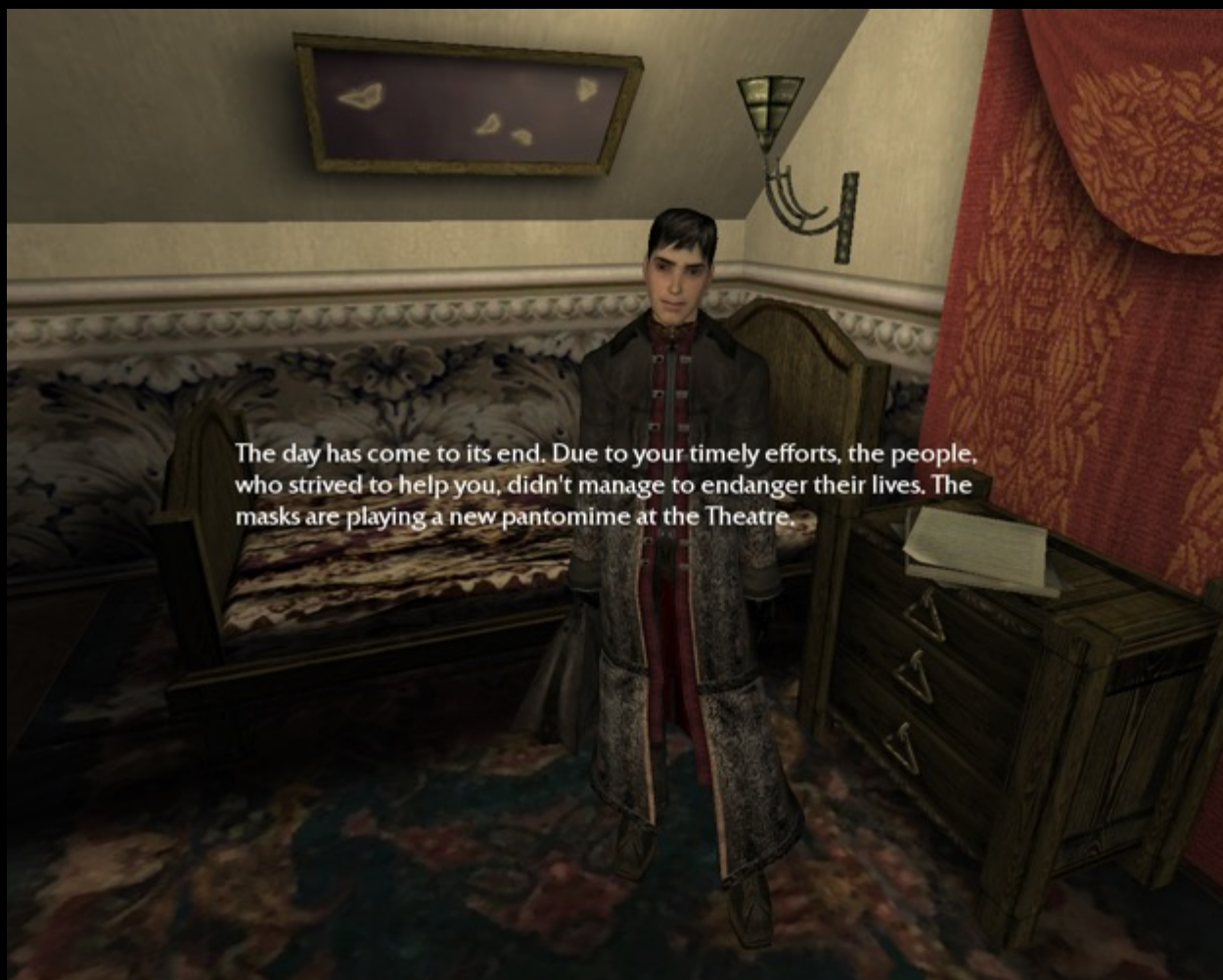
It looks (and plays) a little dated, but this game is so beautiful...

I pick up the diary and hear a crashing noise outside. I'm just going to run from these guys, my computer can't handle the fires. I suppose that means I'm letting them desecrate Nina's grave, but I did that myself the day I arrived. I guess I'd be something of a hypocrite if I did stop them with force.



"Peace, quarrels... That sounds familiar... Hm. Did you hear something like that recently? From a man in a snakeskin coat, by any chance? Perhaps when he was telling you about those 'heroic feats' of mine you mentioned?"

I realize only when I return to the Slough to end my day that I still have fifty alpha tablets in my inventory. God... *dammit*. I guess I'll sell the spares tomorrow. I take some Meradorm for my health, eat some preserved vegetables, and get a full six hours' rest. I wake up at midnight almost precisely.



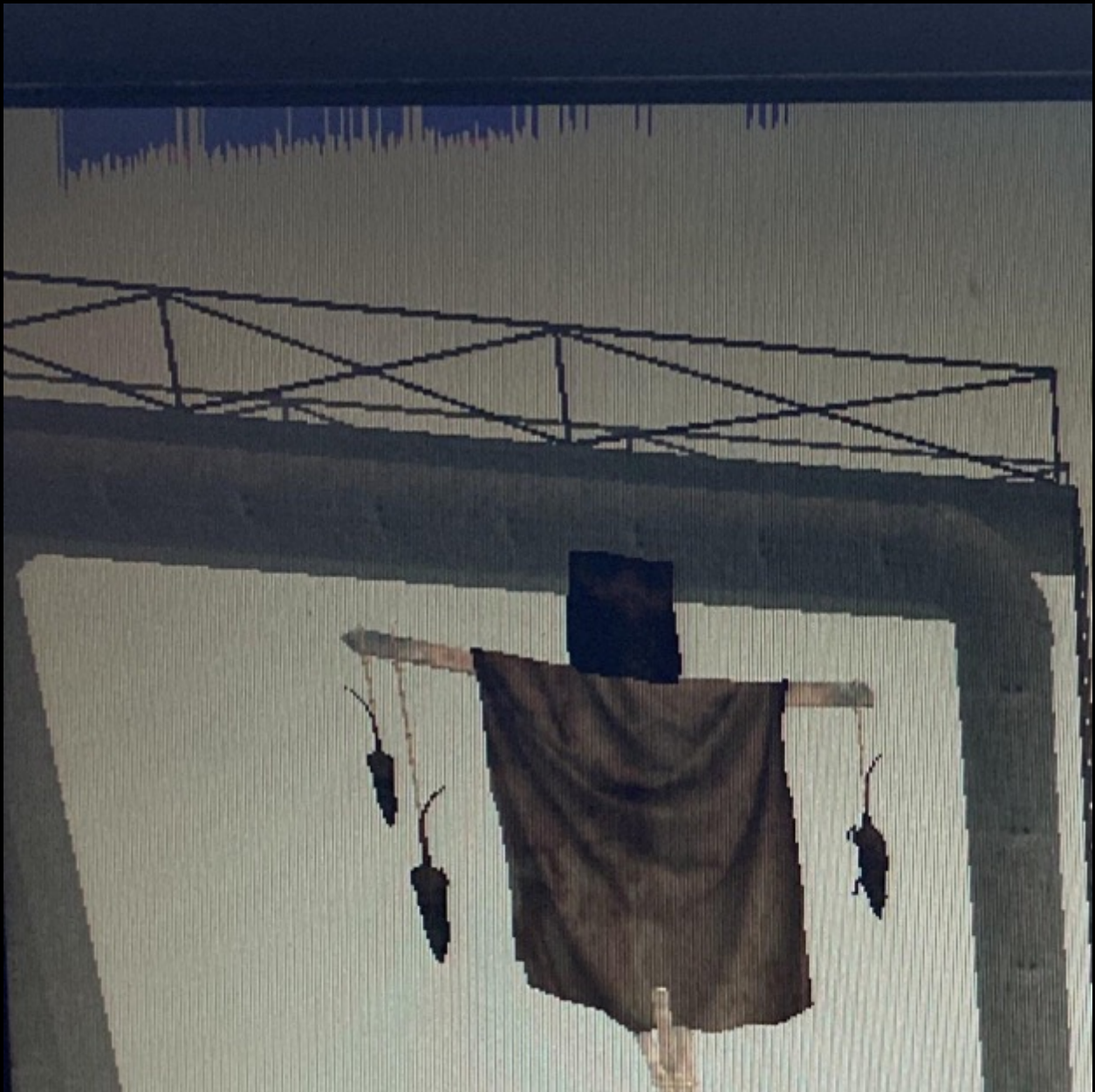
I went back to check and see if I'd misread what Taya asked of me, but no. One Hundred. Ten Times Ten. When you return to drop them off, your line is "one hundred exactly". I don't... I can't think of how this could've happened. I checked the Russian text, and of course it's ровно пятьдесят - exactly fifty. Пять раз по десять.

It is given, correctly, as fifty in Classic HD, but I'm playing through (2006) with the game's text as the final word to limit metagaming.

How in the world did this become one hundred...? This is basically the only thing so far that's been completely wrong (aside from the "spades" on Day Four), but at least I got more than I needed rather than less.

Day Seven

a fatal, crucial and decisive day for the Haruspicus.



I don't know how or when, but my monitor seems to have been slightly damaged at some point between starting this playthrough and now. I'd try to fix it (or, rather, just end up swapping out the monitor), but it's... Fitting, I think. It worsens slowly, creeping along down the screen...



foams at mouth

*"To come to the Inquisitor at one's own will is the only correct thing to do."
- Bachelor Dankovskiy.*

As I leave the Bachelor's makeshift laboratory, I receive a letter. It's another extract from Isidor, on "inevitability":

**"She rushes towards me, faster than the wind. She gathers fragile fingers, braids thin bones, breaks out flexible joints. Her black face has no eye sockets, her white face has no nostrils. Her two heads will never come to an agreement."
- "Isidor Burakh's diaries, [p. 29]"**

I also have a letter from the Bachelor. I guess he slipped it into my pocket while I slept...?

"I'll try to combine them artificially. I'll dedicate the night to it. There may be some results, but I have a bad feeling about this. D.D."

- "Analysis results. Human and bull's blood synthesis."

"Do you hear what mad pulse I have?"

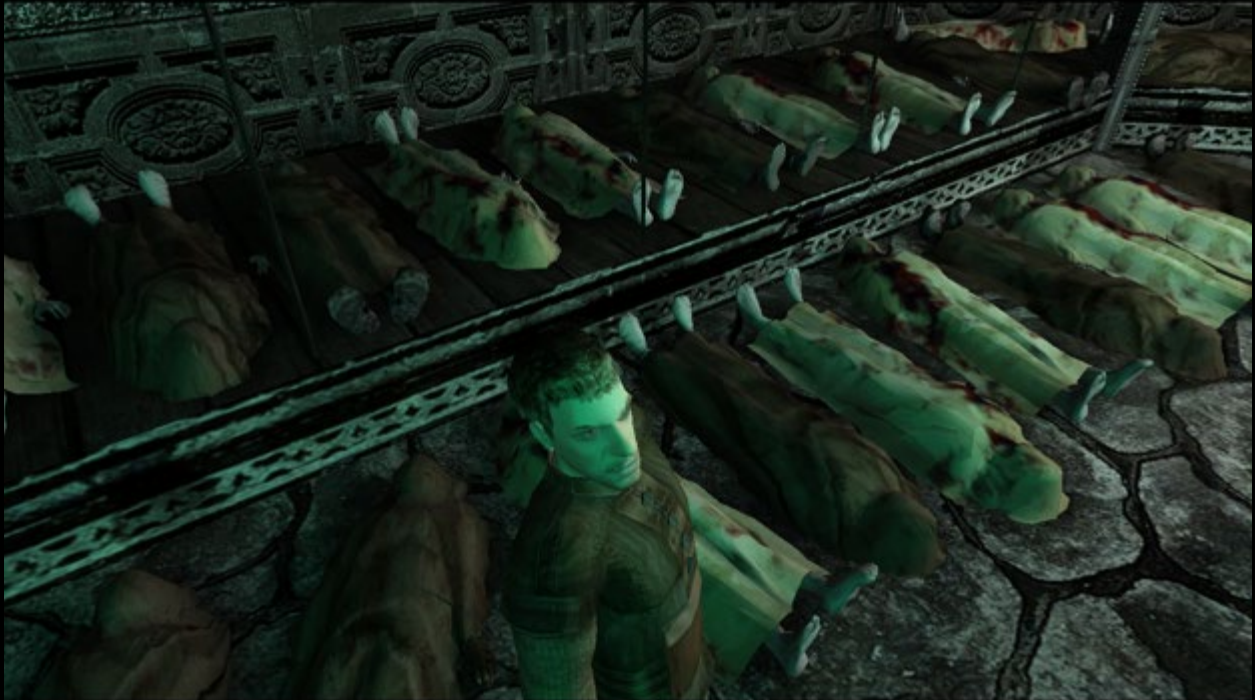
- Eve Yahn.

I don't have any directions yet. I assess my meters, and I'm doing alright overall. I should probably start my day by going across the street to sell all these damned alpha-tablets. I can make extracts for immunity instead.



Enter the Inquisitor.

I make 4000 coins at the pharmacy opposite Slough then head to the Cathedral to see if I can speak with the new guest, but she is nowhere to be found. I suppose I'll be back later, then. I have a few hours to kill before I can do much today, so I figure I'll visit the Theatre and then make my way to Notkin's for a map.



"The whole world seems to be against me. I can't escape this net. Is execution inevitable?"

I'm two for two on blasting rats into the afterlife with my "sensitive hands" before they bite me this morning. This campaign is so much easier with a high reputation than a low one, but that should go without saying. I get to the warehouses, and I'm three for three on rats now.



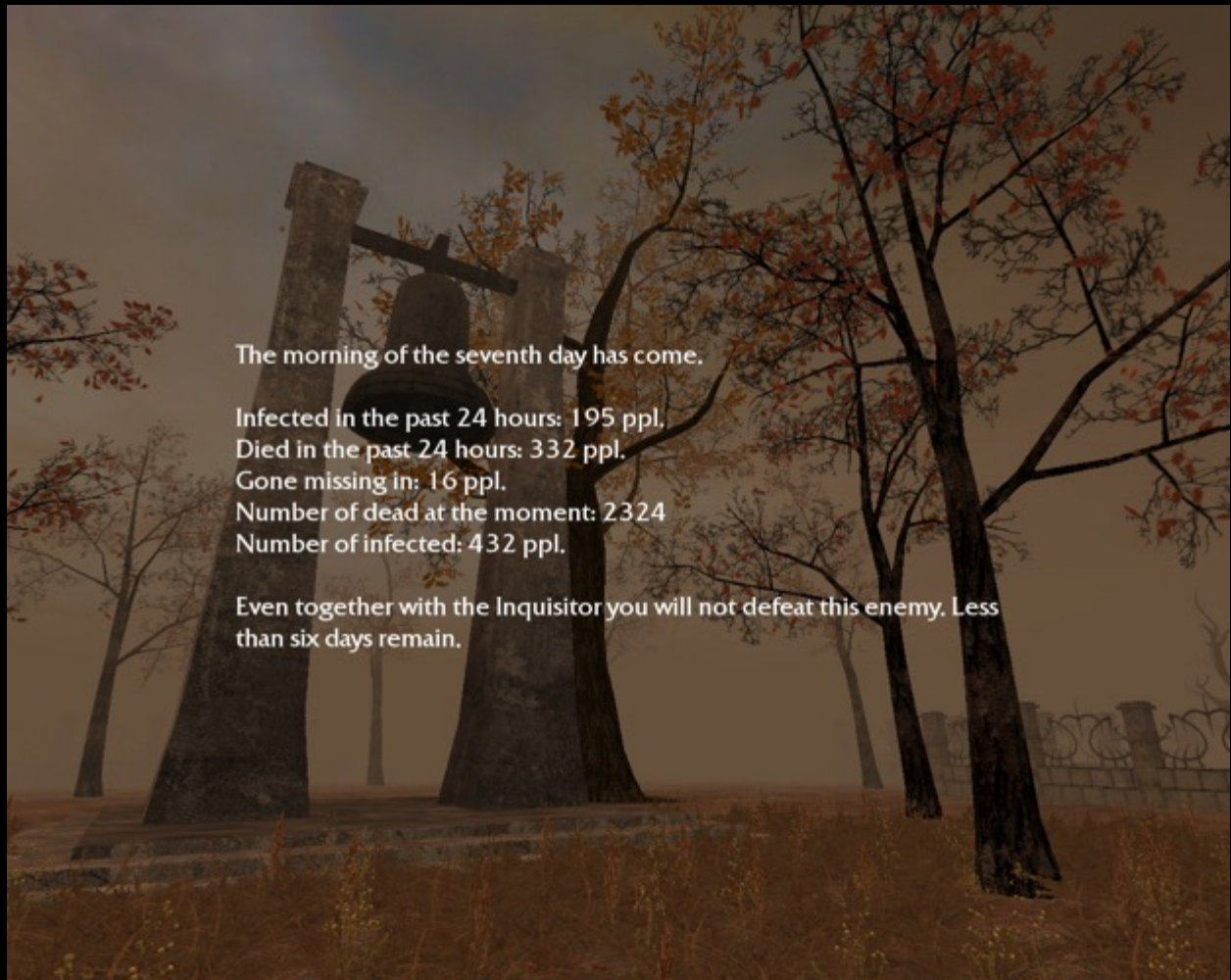
Today's map is 2000 coins. I call this "robbery" in dialogue but accept the deal.

I sleep for two hours at Young Vlad's. It's 4:30 now. I'm going to keep collecting rations until the day turns over properly. Food is expensive again, and it seems like supplies are lower than they have been -- the Maw merchant has exactly one lemon. I'm also out of bottles (filled or empty), so I'm trash-picking.



I never buy fresh meat... It's too expensive today, anyway (and I don't like the idea of eating it raw, even though mechanically you don't suffer any consequences).

I trade some of the water I just collected for a bandage. I don't need it now, but I might later. I stop by the Tavern for trinkets, two bottles of twyrine, and some coffee beans. On my way back to the Stone Yard. Frame-perfect rat punch number four.



The morning of the seventh day has come.

Infected in the past 24 hours: 195 ppl.
Died in the past 24 hours: 332 ppl.
Gone missing in: 16 ppl.
Number of dead at the moment: 2324
Number of infected: 432 ppl.

Even together with the Inquisitor you will not defeat this enemy. Less than six days remain.

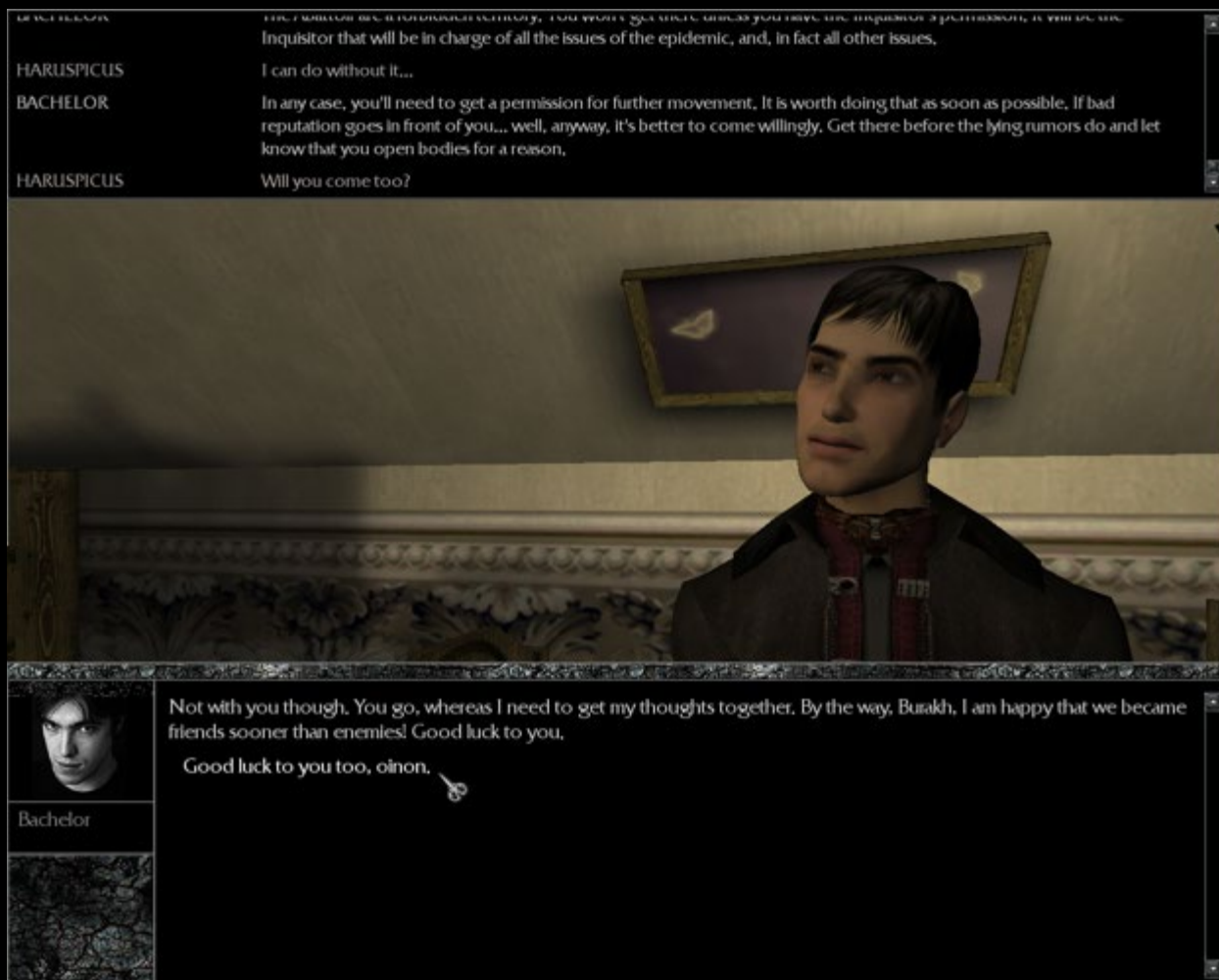
I visit with the Bachelor once more.

BACHELOR	Well, it seems time has come to say our goodbyes. I don't know if we see each other again, Burakh. It seems we both have suffered a defeat. You didn't manage to make the panacea. I too have nothing to please the Inquisitor. That equals suicide for me. I am going to the Cathedral as if I were going to the scaffold.
HARUSPICUS	On what ground can the Inquisitor take your life?
BACHELOR	The Inquisitor has no power over me. However, the Inquisitors have power over everyone. That power doesn't require legal details. If an Inquisitor decides to kill - he will, if he decides to conceal someone from the eyes of others forever - he will. They know how to. But that is not what I meant.



	I have decided firmly that if I cannot return with victory, I will blow my brains up on that wall with this same gun. They've got me in a corner. I won't be able to look those, whom I failed to defend, in the eye. Jail or banishment awaits my colleagues, my experiments are doomed to... fire.
Bachelor	And I need a hybrid of a man and a bull. A chimera...
	What stands in between you and victory?

I mean, I feel that, man, but... don't you think that's a little dramatic?



uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuugh

I suppose it's time to see the Inquisitor.



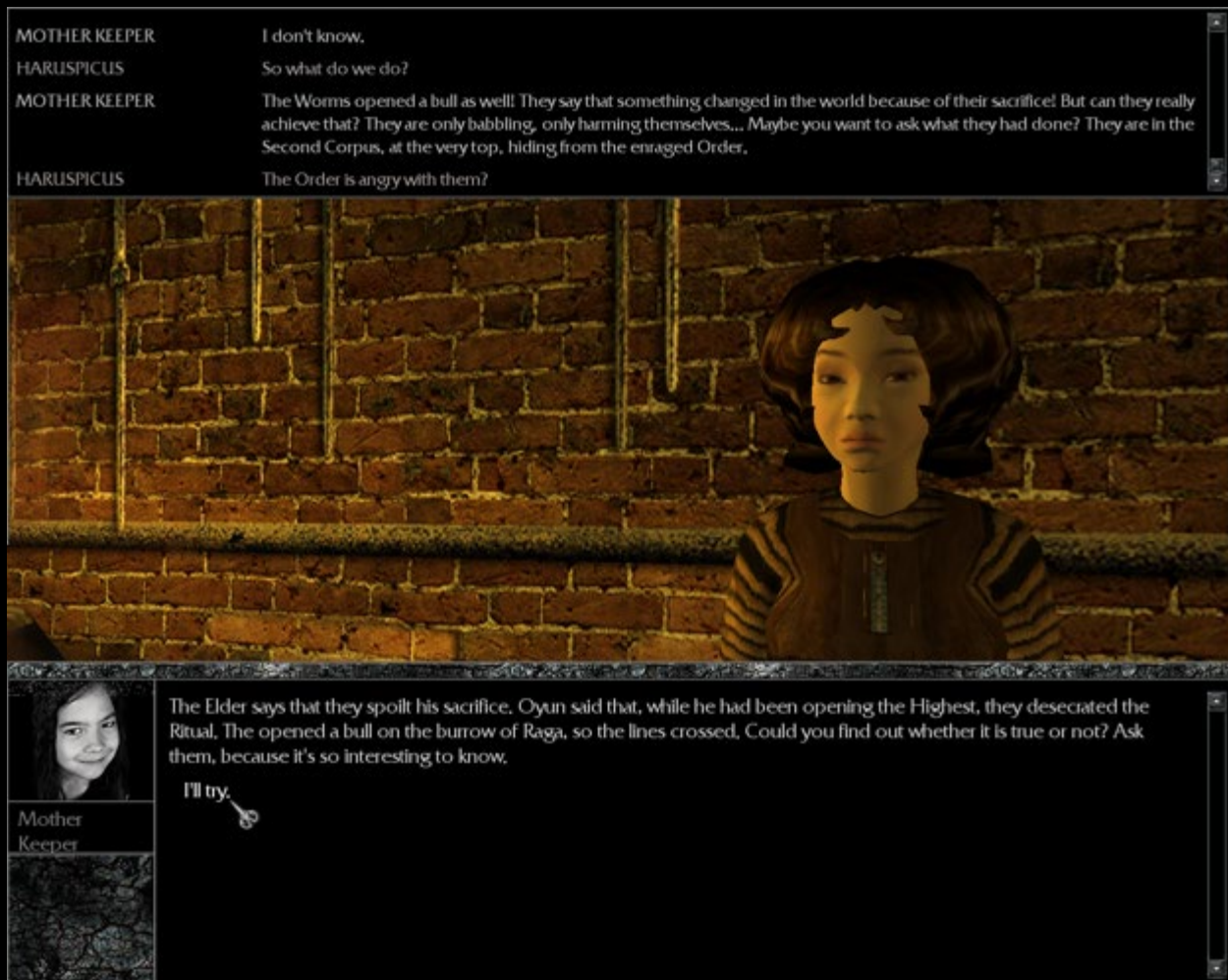
Or, uh... Maybe not.

The Executor on the top of the steps shakes its head “no” at me. Speaking to the ones on either side is fun - they let you know that they are “decorative elements”, and direct you to the one in the middle.

I circle around the Town to avoid getting infected and receive a letter at 8:00. It's marked "Kapella's letter" and signed V.O. Jr. It takes me entirely too much time to remember that specific V is for "Victoria".

Four more surgically precise rat punches. I ought to try my hand at catching them. I was invited to race them in the middle factory warehouse on Day Five, but haven't yet taken the opportunity.

There are several items for sale at the market next to the Apiary. I buy as much as I can afford for now. Tychik is in the Long Corpus, so I enter this place for the first time.



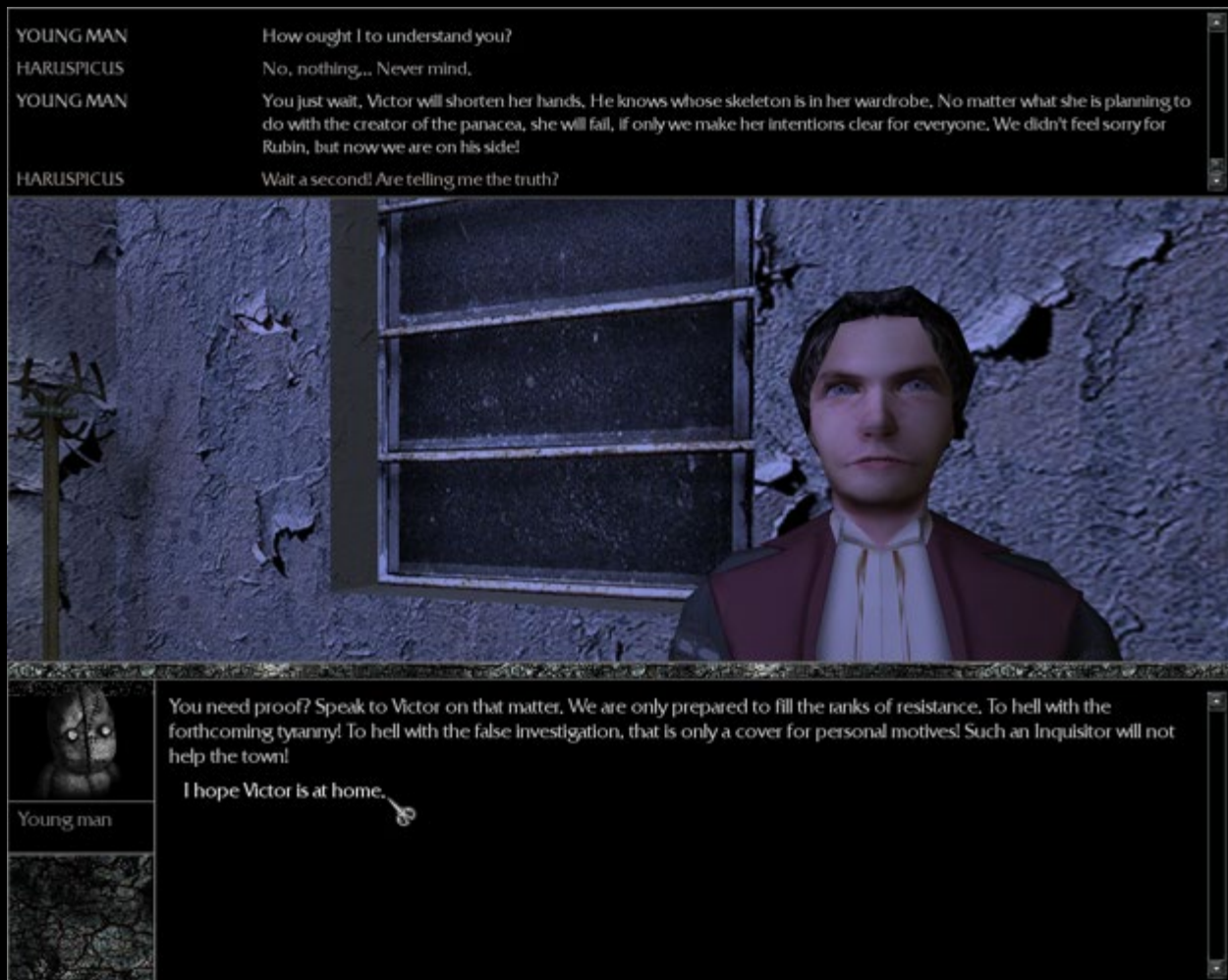
I swear it was "barrow" earlier, but it's "burrow" now. Okay.

Mother Keeper tells me that the Inquisitor's at the town jail now, so I have to visit her there. I also learn that some odonhe are hiding in the Apiary's Short Corpus. I stopped in there for just a minute but didn't feel particularly confident in my ability to get all the way upstairs without getting infected. I'll be back to speak to them later today once I've made some extracts to help with immunity.

Back to my workshop. I have every twyrine extract recipe except for #9. I put them in order in the trunk, then make three bottles of recipe number one, and one bottle of recipe number ten. On my way to the town jail, I receive another letter. This one is from Young Vlad:

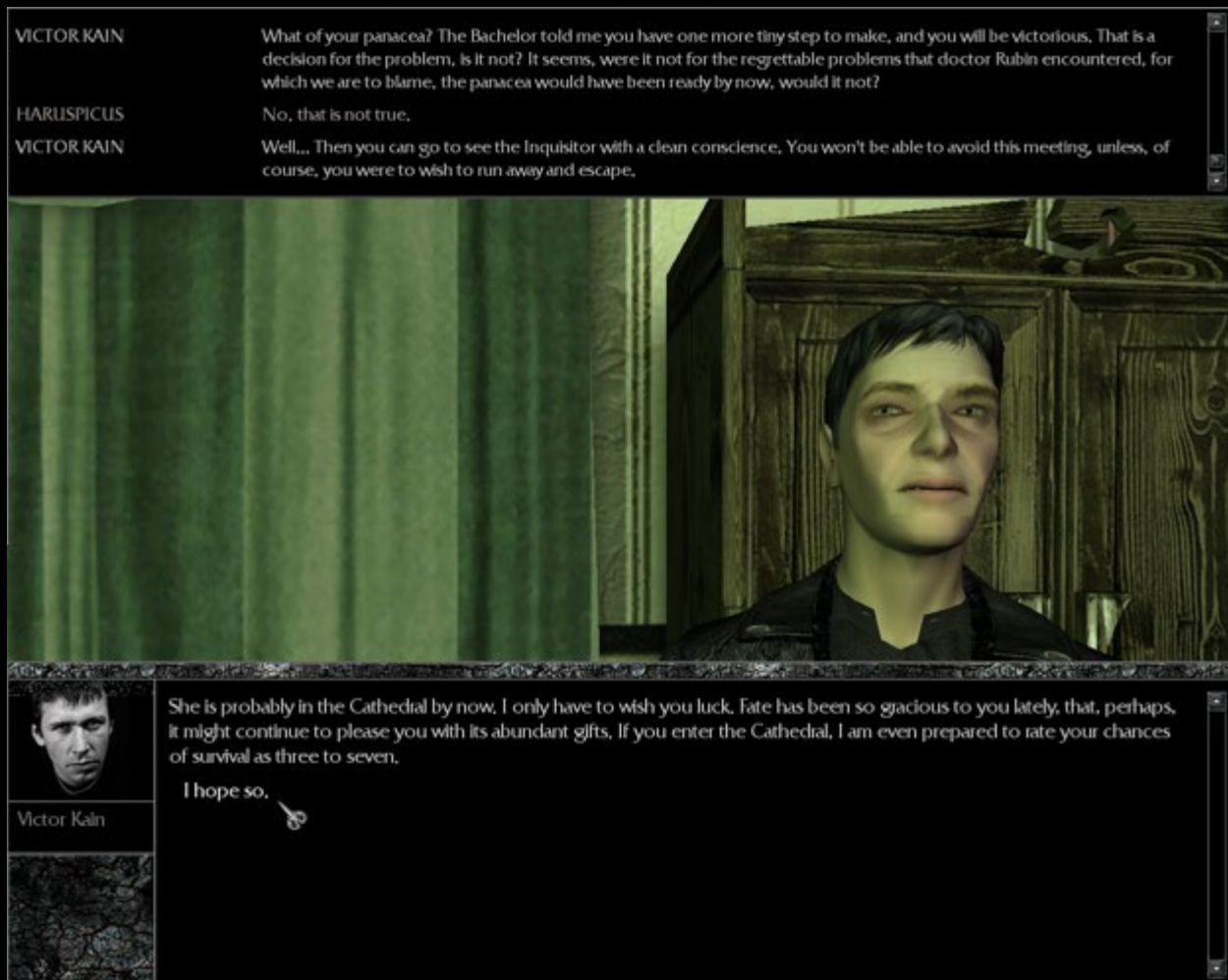
**"The Inquisitor is carrying out the investigation in a terrible way. The walls of vagueness and innuendos break before her as if they were paper-thin."
 - "Young Vlad on the morning interrogation."**

The Inquisitor's gone somewhere else now -- to the usurer's, in the Stone Yard.



...I don't know what I expected. Sometimes the dialogue options are a little too perfect. I do very much hope Victor is home.

Off to see Victor, then. In our dialogue, I learn the name of the Inquisitor. She is **Aglaja Lilich**, the younger sister of the deceased Nina Kain. It's possible that she has her own interests in the town -- Kain suggests Lilich may be here for "revenge". She herself has been sentenced to death for "too great a love for intrigue"... In that case, it's not surprising that she ended up here. There's more than enough intrigue to go around.



I quite like the Kains, personally. Victor is a favorite character of mine.

"What gloomy autumn it is this year..."

- Victor Kain.

Finally, I can actually go to meet with Aglaja. Our conversation is... somewhat difficult to summarize. Her first line sets the tone: "Great is the power of ones over others, isn't it? Who can stay free these days? Each one of us is a pawn in another's game. Each one of us is blind and deceived..."



My thoughts precisely, Artemiy. A note about this bit: the "short terms" line is translated perhaps too directly from the original Russian and doesn't really make a lot of sense outside of that. Aglaya refers to Artemiy with the more formal "you" pronoun вы here, then the player can choose to insist on the mutual use of the more familiar мы and all the other grammatical nuances that come with it. This exchange is modified somewhat in Classic HD.

*"How many crows gathered above the town?"
- Inquisitor Lilich.*

It is 14:00. I am, at long last, able to enter the Abattoir and meet with the Elder, but I'll be visiting the Short Corpus of the Apiary first. I have an extract that boosts my immunity to 100%, so I'll be trying my luck there. I had some gloves, but I've been wearing them... they've broken, and I don't have money to get them repaired. I purchase a drapery instead -- I didn't realize they were so inexpensive. 120 for one in perfect condition. Can't hurt.

I have very little money now, though... It might be time to try and get some from rat racing soon. I make it up the stairs of the Short Corpus without any problems. The Worms here claim no wrongdoing. I take off the drapery to keep it for later, just in case. I'll head back to Tychik, then meet Oyun.

"And I can never be ill."

- Mother Keeper.



"Suok waits for you."

- Elder of the Abattoir.

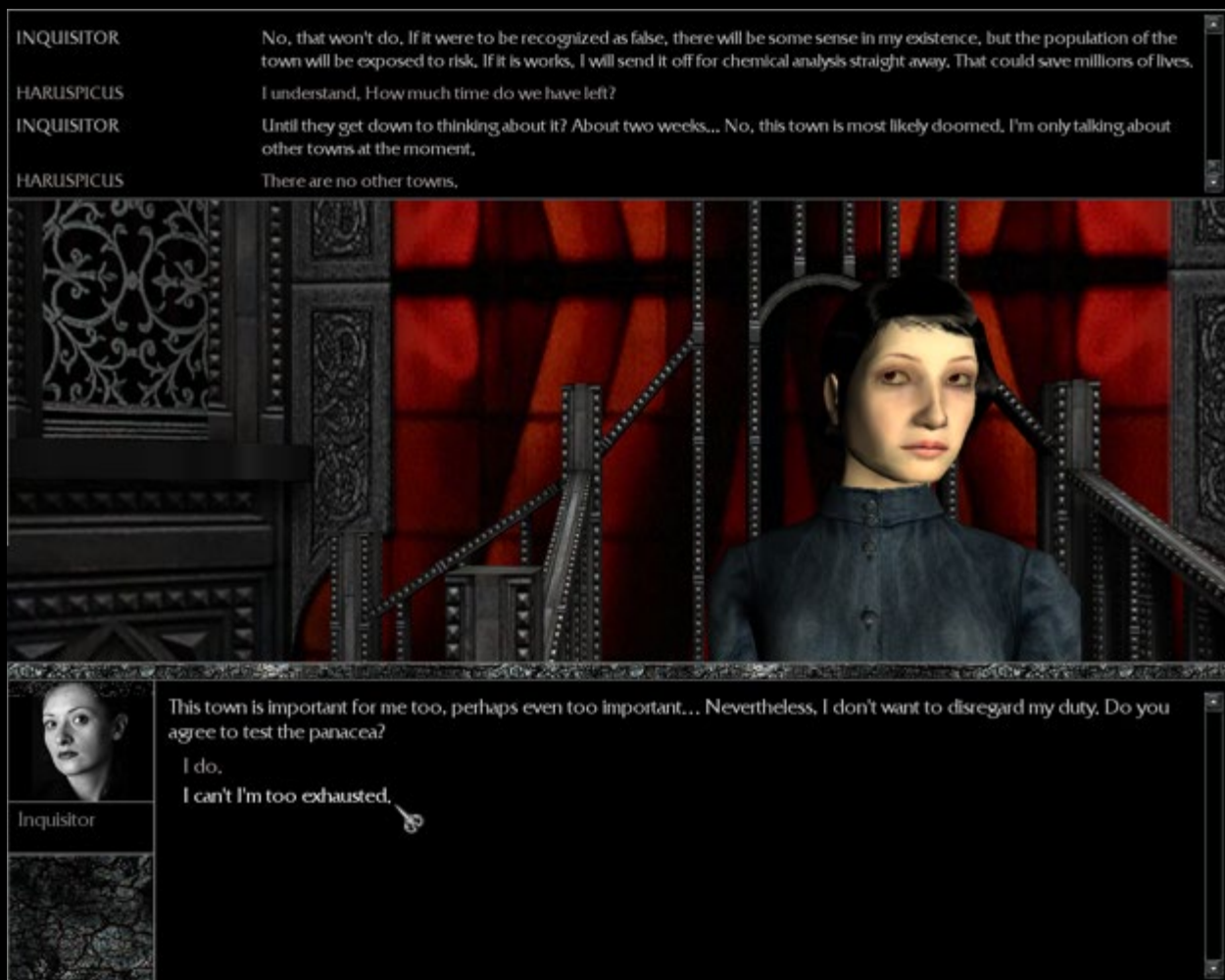
The Elder of the Abattoir gives me a literal handful of the blood of the recently opened Aurochs bull. He calls me "Bloody One". I'm already sick of this guy. He won't tell me how much blood is left, even though I obviously need it much more than he does...

- "A hybrid of man and bull", Day quests [7].



Fantastic. I wonder what it tastes like. I imagine a thick syrupy texture, with a distinct metallic flavor...

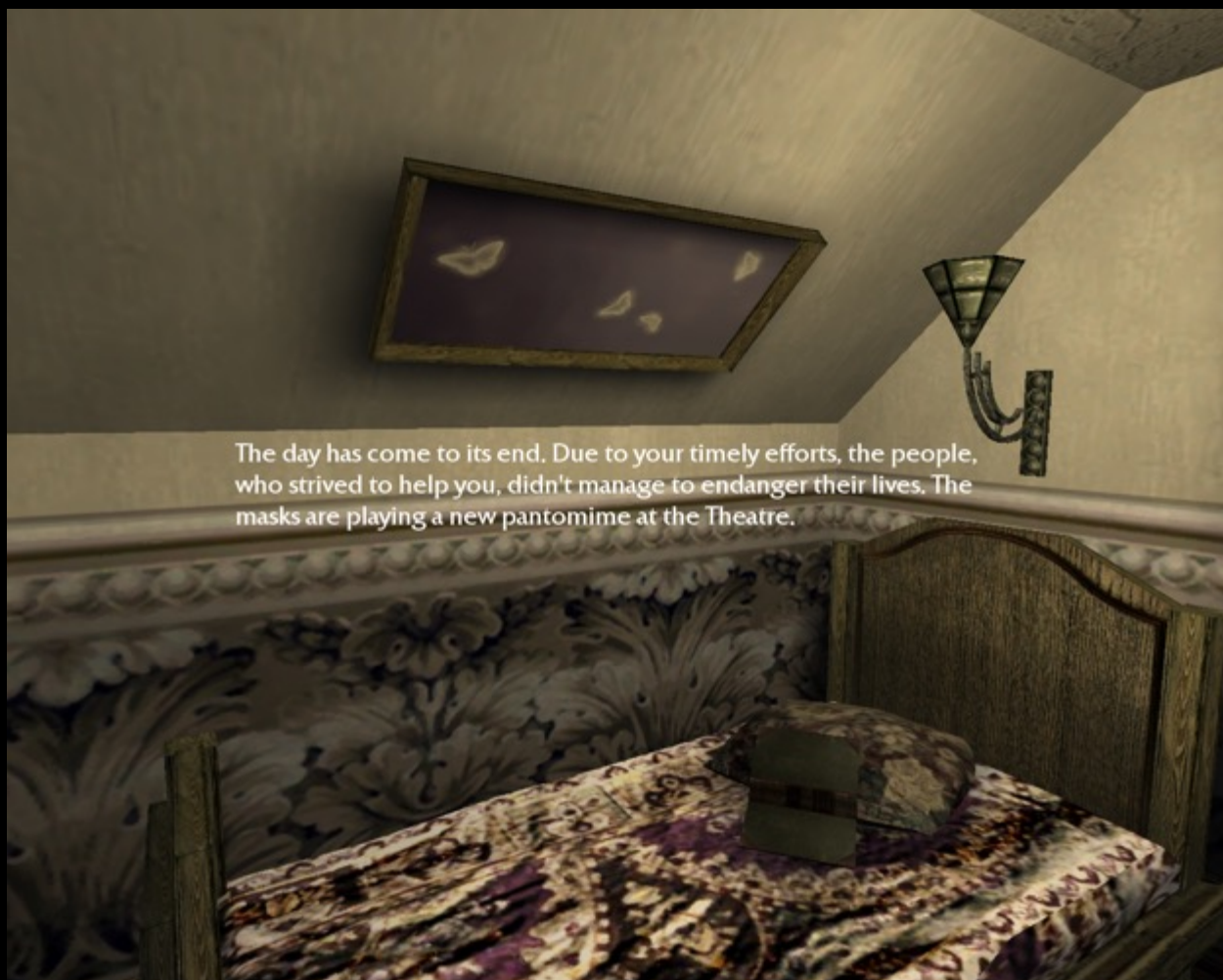
I return to Aglaja with the bottle.



A note about this bit, too: you can offer to test your panacea here, but in doing so, you use it up and gain nothing. If you are already infected, it's worth it to get a little bit of extra dialogue in the process of curing yourself (either with a powder or your fresh-brewed panacea, it doesn't matter). I opt out this time. It is not necessary to do this.



After speaking to Aglaja, my map updates to show this on what I guess is the "reverse" side, shown when you click the symbol at the bottom left.



The day has come to its end. Due to your timely efforts, the people, who strived to help you, didn't manage to endanger their lives. The masks are playing a new pantomime at the Theatre.

Day Eight

on which Garuspicus [sic] will discover, who may be the bearer of the secret mark.





[gentle gasp]

"Devotress has left Abattoir alive, too... What's going on?"
- Bachelor Dankovskiy.

Dankovskiy wants me to go investigate the Abattoir. He's pretty clear about his intention -- "If that's where the disease comes from, we'll destroy that huge structure's resistance by the might of the army. It will be here tomorrow." I tell him he's wrong immediately, and it seems he picked up at least a little bit of this line of thinking from the Inquisitor. I'll be back to see her at some point today, but she doesn't have anything she wants to speak with me about urgently. I'll be making my way to the Theatre, like most early mornings.

"You, in fact, have made a panacea! So, the soldiers will not touch us?"
- Eve Yahn.

An arsonist I found strewn across the cobblestones on my way to the Theatre becomes an organ donor.

"Let it be so. It's not the end of the world, just an epidemic."



Sometimes, the English language voice-over in this version of the game runs a little bit too short, and you just sort of stand around awkwardly waiting for the show to begin. This is one of those times.

I check my letters on the front steps of the Theatre. I have a letter from the Inquisitor, in which she makes an interesting point. The blood I received was warm, so a ritual must've been performed incorrectly...? She says to ask Oyun where he got the blood if I go to see him today, but I feel like it's pretty unlikely that he'll tell me honestly. She also mentions that the Bachelor has gained her trust, and implies that she wants to be a part of the "rule of a new power" I'm on track to begin.

"The time of the three families is passing. I have to think about the future. Do you understand?"

I've got another letter that must've been delivered at some point between last night and now. This one is from Isidor's diaries:

“Oyun cannot rule the Order. That captain couldn’t drive during the calm, he called the storm by his lack of skill. He’ll sink us in it.”

- “Isidor Burakh’s diaries. Extract from the challenge for Elder Oyun [p. 131]”.

Even after ~200 hours milling around this town, I’m still not sure when others’ Bound start to get sick at random, so I guess I’ll be making my rounds again. This amounts to seeking deeper immersion, I guess. Role-play? Loneliness? Whatever. I’m having fun. I’m going to Young Vlad’s first and then checking on everybody else in the middle bit of the town. I don’t know how much time I’ll have after, before the day starts properly, but we’ll start there. It’s pretty dangerous to go anywhere at all at this point.



Finally, I catch a rat. He lives in my pocket now. The middle pocket, in the front. You know the one I mean.

“Vainly, Dankovskiy thinks that the illness has appeared from the wells.”

- Young Vlad.

Some marauders broke in and threw Young Vlad's notes into the well, so I'm supposed to use the manhole behind the Theatre to get down there and retrieve them. I'll do that later. I clench my teeth harder than I've ever clenched my teeth when a plague cloud passes me by and seems to just barely miss infecting me. I check my stats menu anyway, and stare at the meter for a while. I am fine.

"Have the seams opened again?"

- Gryph.

Curiously, Gryph knows about the situation with the tunnels below the Theatre, and asks me if I've heard of the Rat Prophet. I sell him a lockpick, but I have the strangest feeling that ~500 in loose change is not going to be enough for a map. I'm heading back into town to check on the other Olgimskiys, as well as Lara and Julia.

Kapella tells me about Klara's nature as a destroyer and asks me to protect children from her. I've already been protecting several, but I suppose it's nice to know I ought to watch out for Klara specifically...

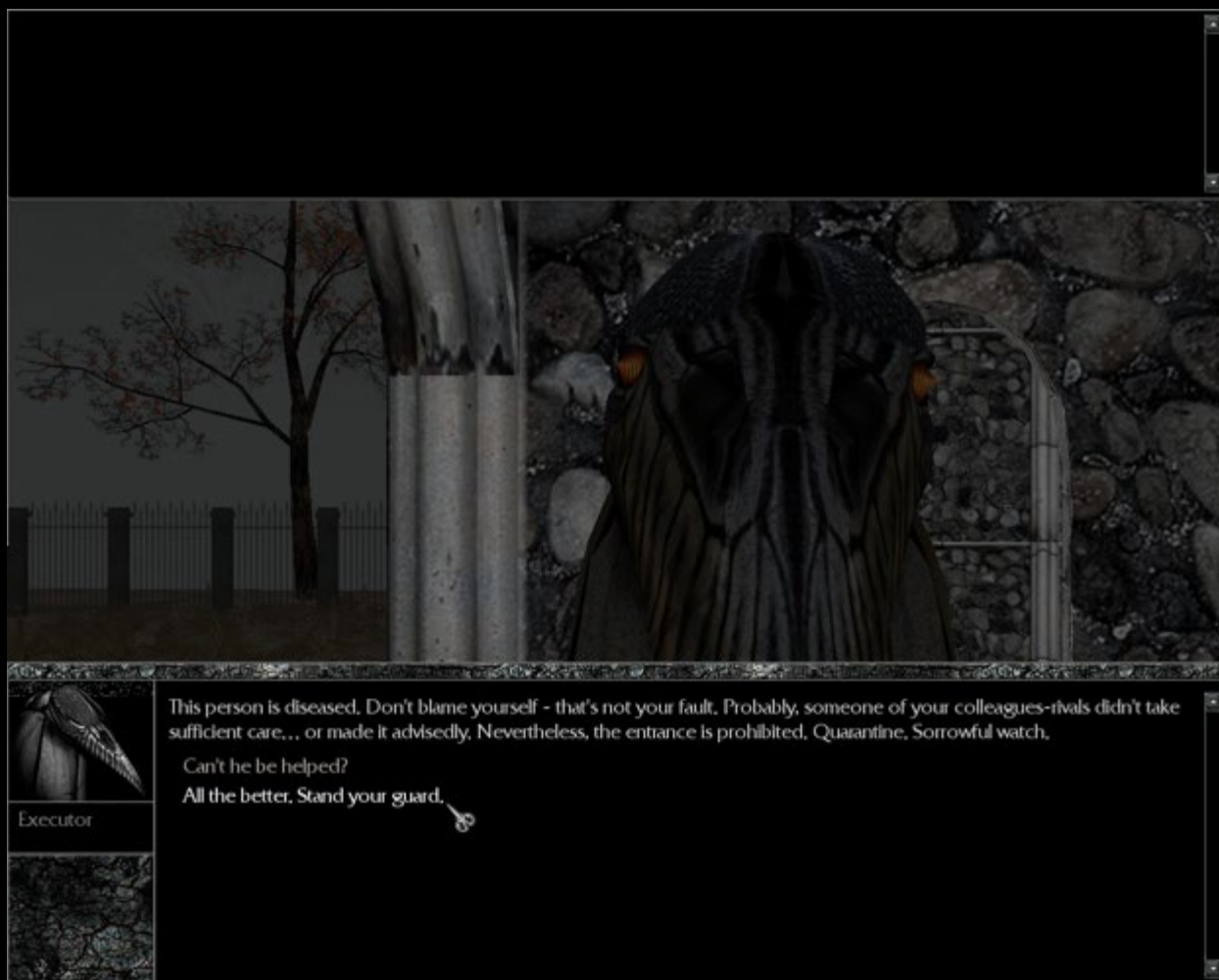
"It's hard to believe in things that lay outside our outlook."

- Kapella.

It's either too early for Vlad Sr. to care about what I'm up to or he has no dialogue today. Off to Julia Luricheva's "Seine", I guess. Reasonably, I could leave these places upon seeing that there is no cloaked guest on their doorsteps, but I quite like checking for dialogue. Julia, like Vlad, has none this early morning.



This Executor nods his head "yes" at me.



Lara Ravel has fallen ill with the Sand Pest, as of Day Eight of the outbreak. Let us hope this list does not receive frequent updates. I know my own Adherents are fine, at least -- the "day's end" text has told me as much consistently thus far. I'll continue my house calls here, but I'll take care of that job for Young Vlad first.

I hear the sound of a door locking behind me as I proceed into the tunnels and take a knife to the face because I turned away to write that down. I perish tragically. Great. I load the save I made above the ground and get back to it. I'm using my shotgun for this. This first marauder goes down. He has a ton of money on him, which is good news for me, I guess.

I make it through three of these guys and then die another gruesome death.



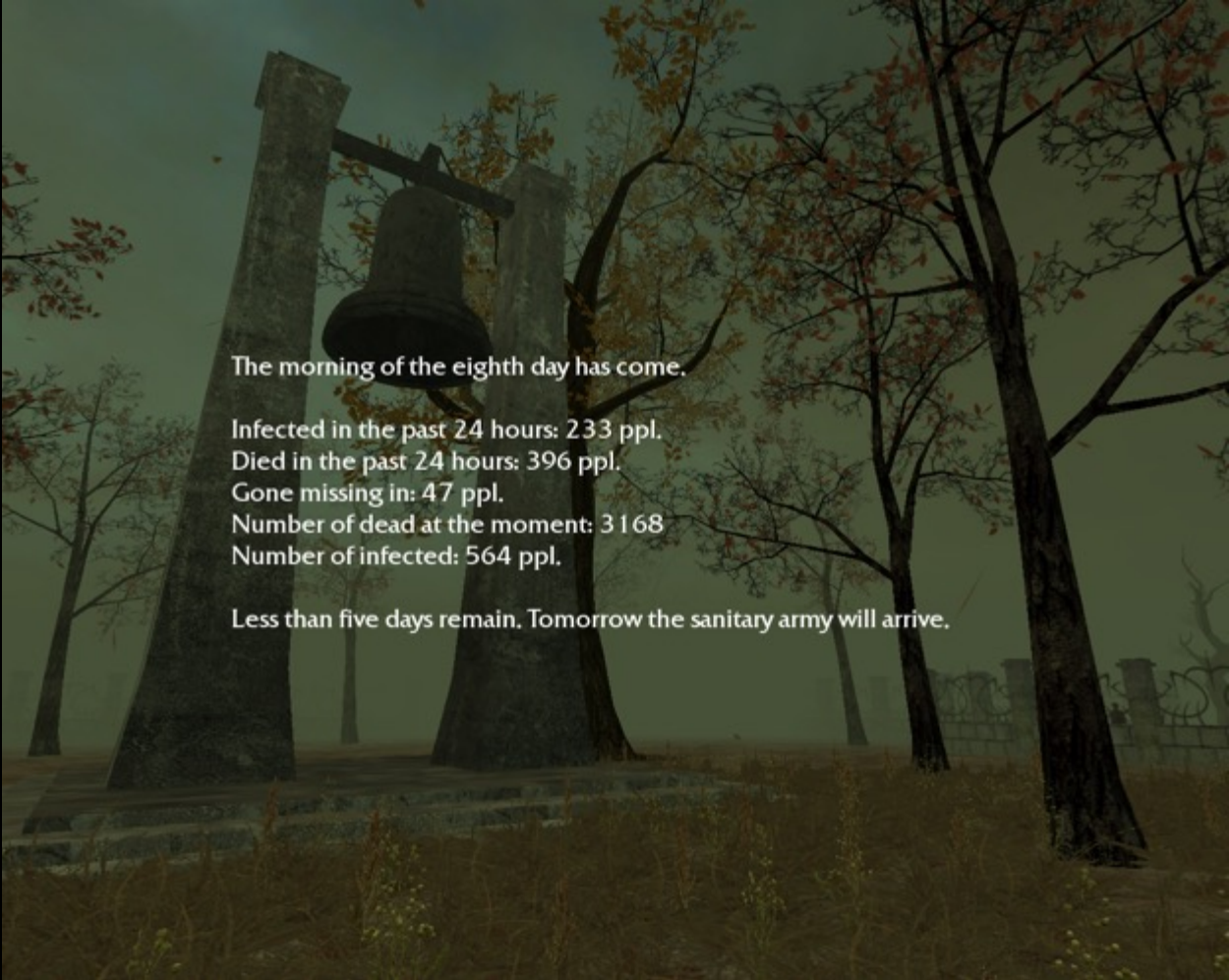
Press ϕ to pay respects.

Third time's the charm, right? My PC has started stalling, but I'm just gonna try to push through it. The bell rings to indicate that it is 4:00. 2/? down. I save my game, just in case. I think I've got all of them now, but I keep getting lost in here. I sincerely consider dropping a trail of organs.

I hear the manhole unlock. Time to get the hell out of here. Good riddance. I make it out at 10 til 6:00. I believe I may hold the world record for The Slowest This Part Of The Game Has Ever Been Completed By Anybody. Back to Young Vlad, for whatever prize he thinks that effort was worth. 4000 coins. Okay.

As usual, I'm walking on the outskirts of town and washing the blood off my boots in the marshes. I pick a flower (apparently -- one appears in my inventory), then meet with an herb gatherer and trade what I am able to for a good deal of savjur and white whip.

My exhaustion is creeping up on me. I use two handfuls of coffee beans, then a bandage. We're all good.

A large, dark bell hangs from a stone structure in a desolate, foggy landscape. The bell is suspended between two tall, narrow stone pillars. The ground is covered in dry, yellowish grass. Several bare trees with some orange and red leaves are scattered around the bell. In the background, a fence and some distant structures are visible through the fog.

The morning of the eighth day has come.

Infected in the past 24 hours: 233 ppl.

Died in the past 24 hours: 396 ppl.

Gone missing in: 47 ppl.

Number of dead at the moment: 3 168

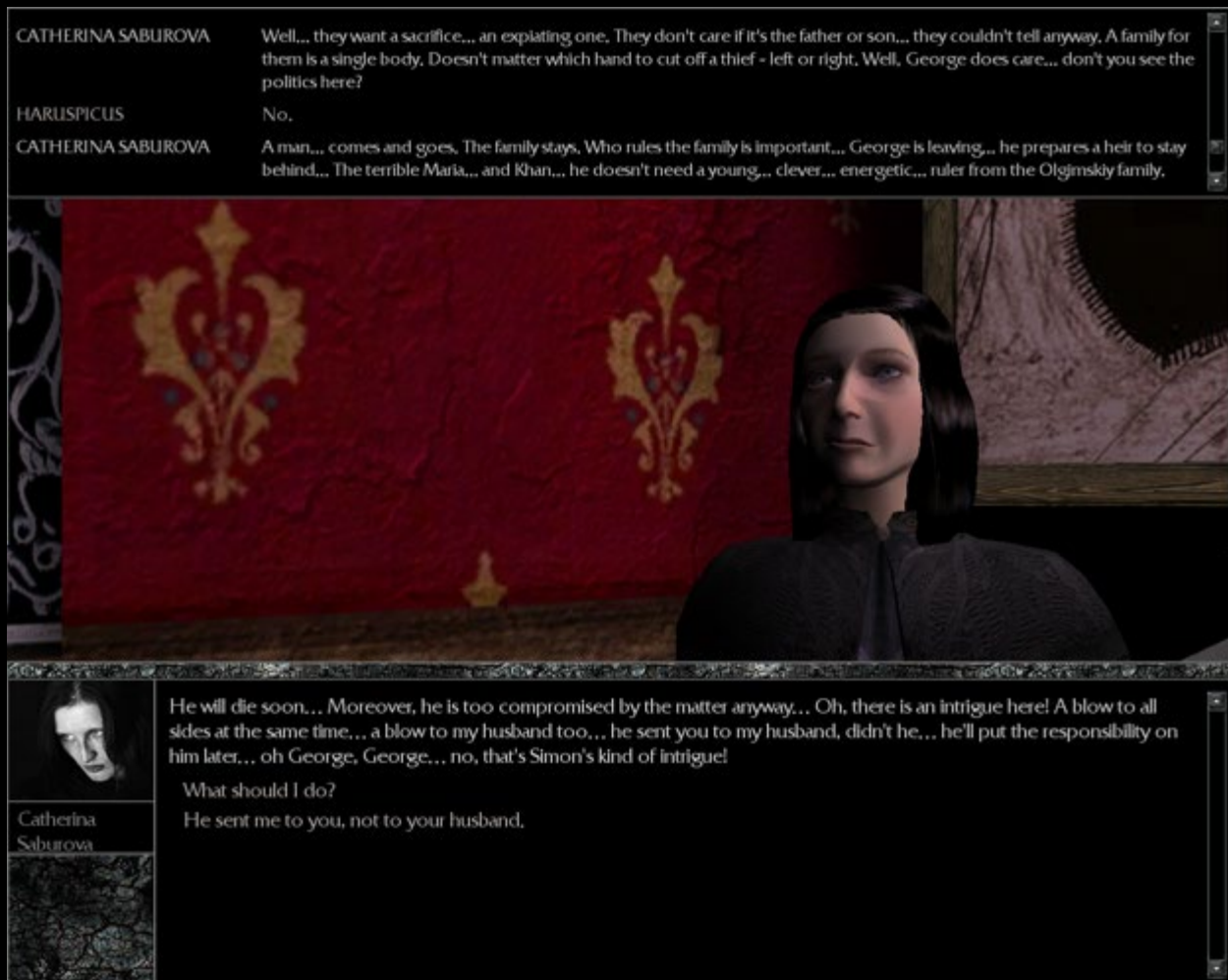
Number of infected: 564 ppl.

Less than five days remain. Tomorrow the sanitary army will arrive.



*"Not too much time is given to us... Tomorrow, the army arrives."
- Inquisitor Lilich.*

Like the Bachelor suggested, I'm meant to head to the Abattoir, but getting in isn't as easy as it was yesterday. I'll need to speak with Taya Tychik again, but first, I'll check on the Kains, since I'm nearby. George Kain wants me to clear Big Vlad's name -- seemingly, Young Vlad's to blame for the disastrous handling of the disease in the Apiary. I must speak to either Alexander Saburov or Catherina Saburova, but the latter ought to be more helpful to me now. It's on my way to the Apiary, so I don't see why I shouldn't at least try to speak with the two of them. Victor and Maria are alive and well.



....Hm.

"It seems there is some... stillness..."
 - Catherina Saburova.

Catherina, too, sends me to Taya. That works out nicely. I check in on the Stamatins.

"Enough! I can't stand it anymore!"
 - Petr Stamatina.



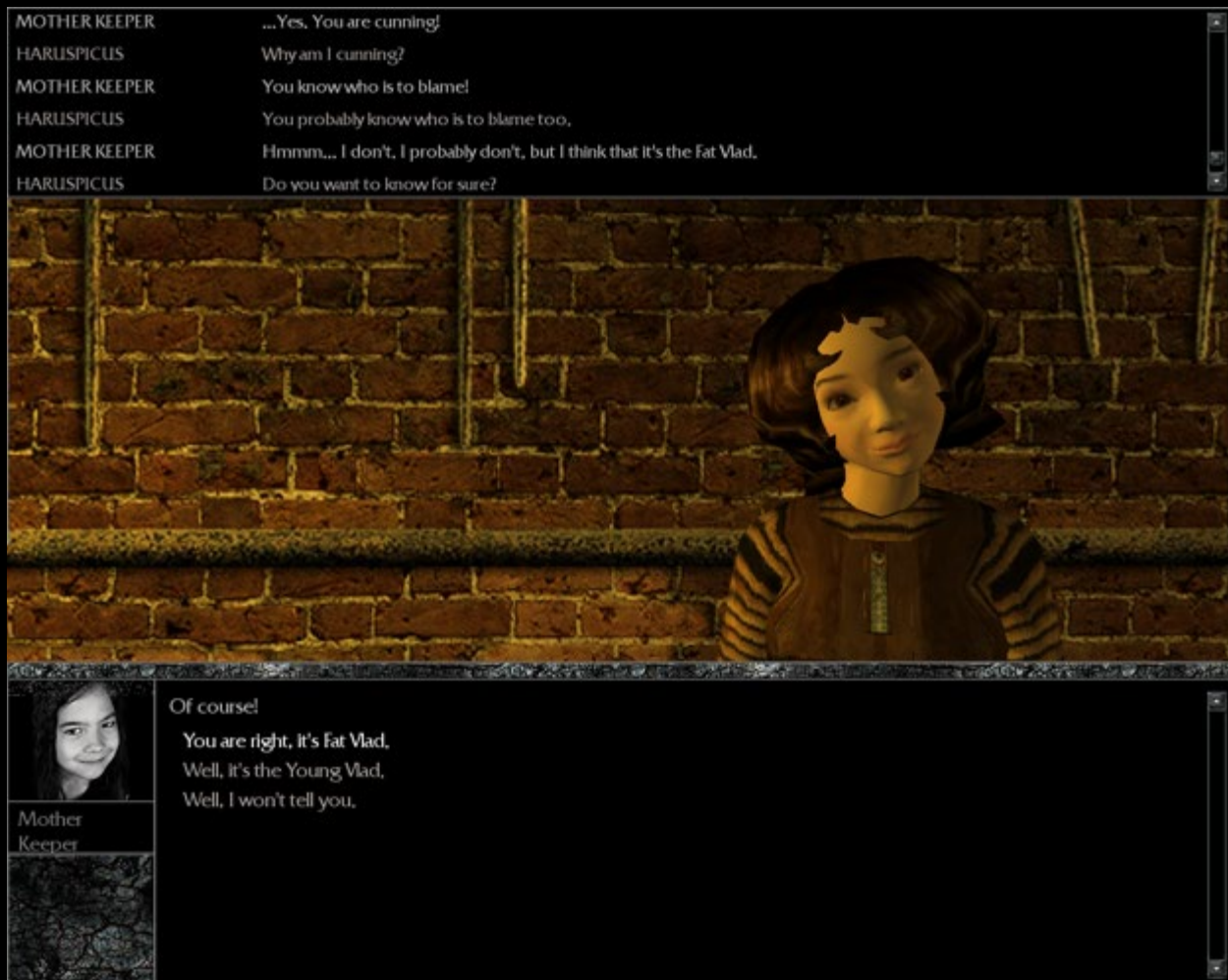
Dammit, Dankovskiy.

Andrei Stamatina has fallen ill with the Sand Pest, as of Day Eight of the outbreak.

"What do you all want from us...?"
- Anna Angel.

I make it to the Apiary, with which my PC struggles, and head upstairs to see Mother Keeper.

"The Devotress talks haughty! She knows something..." - Mother Keeper.



A note about this bit: You can, of course, choose either Vlad. However, due to a major difference between the first releases of the game and Classic HD (Young Vlad is one of Dankovskiy's Adherents in the mid-2000s releases, but this is not so in the remastered version), if you choose Vlad Jr. here, YOU WILL LOCK YOURSELF OUT OF THE UTOPIAN ENDING COMPLETELY. There is a similar quest in the Bachelor campaign where the player can also make this choice, but instead of merely making the secret ending impossible to achieve, you lock yourself out of your OWN ending by sentencing Young Vlad to death. I completely understand why this was changed for the Classic HD release if I'm right about the reasoning there, but it's pretty interesting that originally they let you put yourself into a fail-state. I believe you can choose either Vlad with little consequence in Classic HD.

After choosing the elder Vlad Olgimskiy, I speak with Mother Keeper again and ask to be allowed into the Abattoir. She'll let me in, but first, I have to do something for her. Klara started telling her a story, but never told her how it ended! Kapella was right, this Devotress is some menace. I'll go see her (Kapella) and ask if she knows where to find Klara.

*"Someone will have to take this sin."
- Vlad Olgimskiy.*

Kapella tells me Klara's been dealing with Notkin, but she's probably at Mishka's carriage. I'll visit with both of them. Notkin also tells me that Klara is with Mishka.



Today's map is 1500. I was right to come back later.



Klara told an incomplete story to Mishka, too. How cruel. Time to speak with the Devotress herself, and at least learn the end of the story for Taya. This is my very favorite part of the game, so I'll include it here in full:

"What do you want, Ripper?"

"The dual-souls told me such a funny story not long ago... about some crystal flowers."

"Where did they get that story from?"

"That I don't know. But the end is so funny..."

"There is nothing funny about it! It's quite terrible actually. It can't have made them laugh..."

"One of them even went hysterical about it. Especially when it gets to that prince."

"They couldn't have laughed! Which place is that? When the prince was in despair and thought that such a flower would never grow in his garden? Or is it, when the living flowers began to die because the crystal one took everything from them - the water, air and even light? Is it that bit?"

"No, some other..."

"Well, is it when the gardener came out with the scissors and the prince made it so that he'd cut the living flowers instead of the crystal one? Or is it when that terrible flower gave out seeds and a whole garden of them grew, which was a hundred times more beautiful than the one before and the living flowers never grew again?"

"There was something else..."

"That's the end. There couldn't have been anything else. They are lying!"

"Probably."

I return to Taya to share the end of Klara's tale.

"It's good that you are still alive."

"Here's the end of the story about the ice prince."

"Oh, come on, come on speak!"

"The crystal flower gradually became the greediest flower in the garden. It drank all the juices out of the soil. It took all the most important things - all the light of the sun, even the air became colder because of it."

"Well, well... And what happened, when the time came to rip it?"

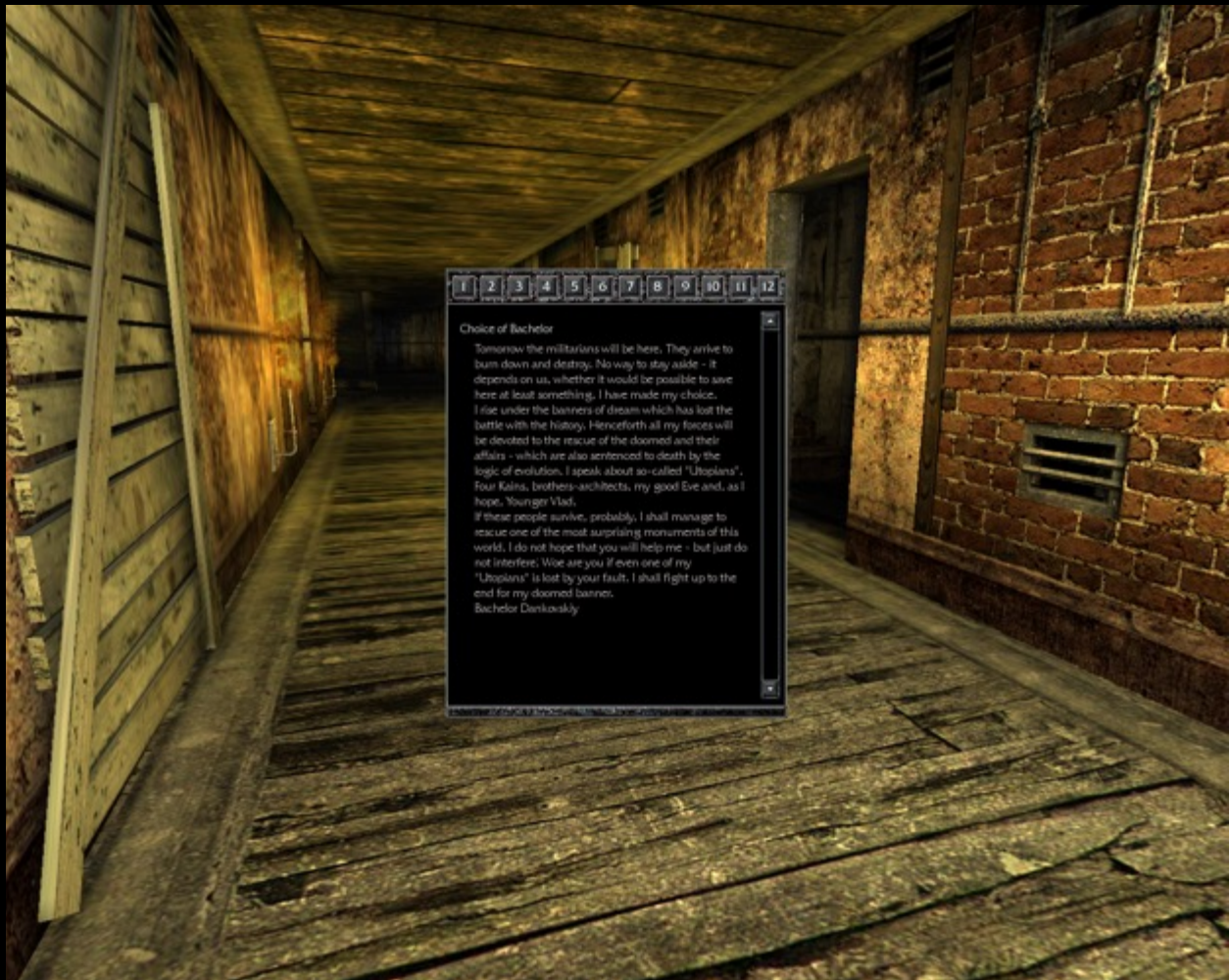
"Prince made it so, that the gardener ripped another flower out instead of the crystal one."

"Yes, seems true! It had all been coming to that... And did the flower stay alone in the garden?"

"Yes. It gave out seeds and a new garden grew, a hundred times more beautiful than the one before."

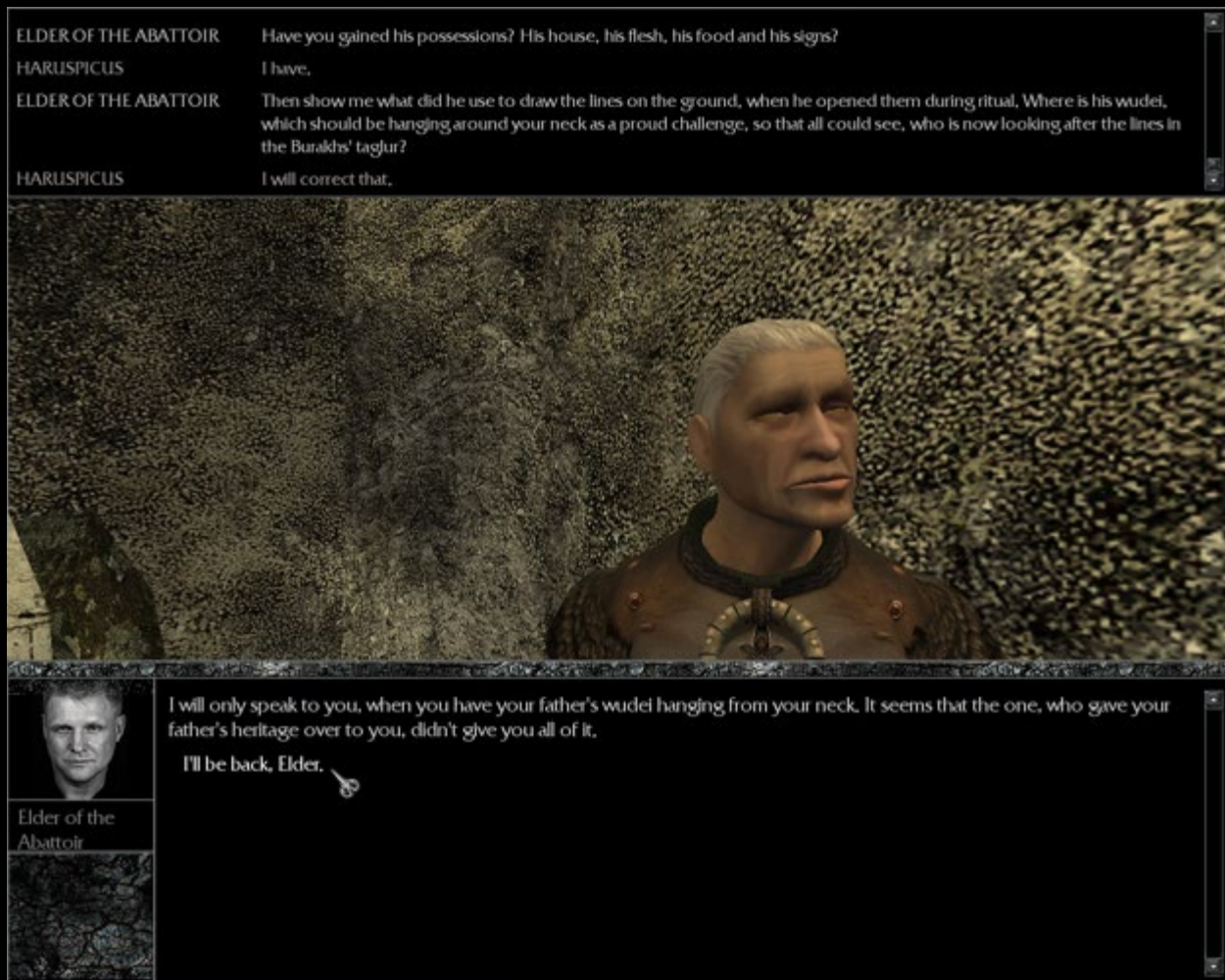
"That's what happened... Yes, probably that's true... What an evil prince! Why did he kill the simple flowers..."

Tychik opens the Abattoir. I receive a letter as I leave here.



Ice princes, crystal flowers...

I usually get very early starts on my days, but I suppose, if better timed, this letter can work out as a hint about how to deal with Young Vlad. Or, perhaps, for a player quite unlike myself, it works out to be another reason to turn him in to Mother Keeper. It does not take long for me to be face to face once more with the Elder of the Abattoir, who calls me Bloody One again.



Ospina seems to have excluded something...

On my walk to Ospina's lair, I get a letter from Kapella reminding me of my commitments. I haven't forgotten them. I take the item I need from Ospina and head back to the Abattoir. It's only 12:00 now.

"What is this body made of...?"
- Elder of the Abattoir.

Oyun tells me directly that he doesn't want me to have the blood of the Aurochs (which comes from the earth itself), but claims I can prove myself tomorrow. How nice. My map's "reverse" side updates again, and so has my "Mission" tab.



I'll be heading back to the Stone Yard; straight down the tracks, then across the marsh. I square away my affairs with George Kain first (you get a considerable reward for choosing Vlad Jr. in any version of the game, but I didn't, so this is merely for completion), then report to Aglaja.

*"I am tired to death."
- Inquisitor Lilich.*

She asks what the word "udurg" means, and at this point, I am able to tell her: "A body that contains a world".

**"[...] There's the answer. I only have one doubt left - what is the sacrifice that I have to make, for it to correspond with such a Sought for?"
- "Whose blood is this?". Day quests [8].**

I visit with Dankovskiy by force of habit (and mostly because my exhaustion is getting pretty high again). He has a few threads I can pull on. I ask about his letter first. He is interested in neither the Tower nor

Maria Kain, but in the “truth of the utopists. Ingenious ideas, the will to make them come true and the space that will allow them to be materialized.” Upon a bit more prodding: “They have defeated death. That is what I live for. We have a lot in common.”

“I thought you were more cold-blooded, oionon.”

(Be still, my thrilling heart...)

I sleep here for nine hours and wake up just before midnight.



Day Nine

which informs the Haruspicus that there is a battle for the Order and ancestral lands ahead of him.



"The town is alive. It has a head, a heart, stomach and womb. It has a memory. It breathes. It thinks. It can be frightened. Perhaps it even loves? I want to live in a world of living towns. I want to walk on soil that shifts underneath your feet."

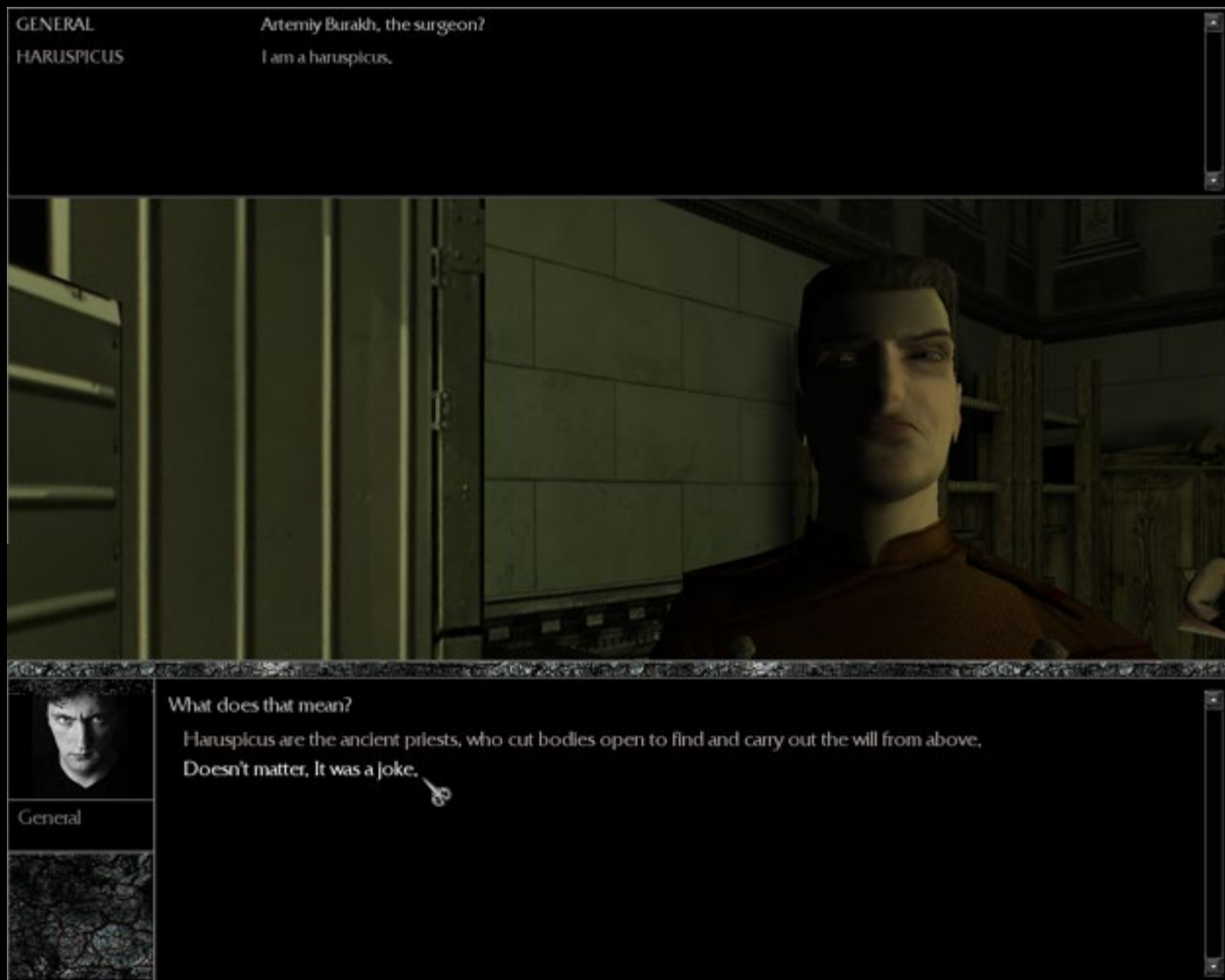
- "Aglaja Lilich's letter. On the beings of a higher kind".



The military has arrived. The General seems to be set up in the Town Council building, so I'll be heading there after this morning's pantomime.



I meet with **General Blok**, and in dialogue, I learn that Artemiy left the town originally at sixteen. I don't think I'd ever noticed that exact detail. I am directed to the Abattoir. My computer is being annoying and loud again. Restarting, I guess. Sometimes loading a save fixes it, but usually, it starts up again quickly. I think that'll be my third time rebooting today.



It's almost relaxing (well, comparatively with my first playthrough) to walk around and not have to worry much about getting shot at or having fire blasted at me. I'll be making my rounds. Julia: fine. Lara: still sick, obviously. An Executor outside the Clot tells me that Vlad is dead. I knew this already, of course, but it's nice to know for sure.

I notice that my health is pretty low. I'm alright on rations, so I'll be prowling around looking for bandages and tourniquets at the appropriate shops. My PC still struggles terribly, and it makes its' awful noises. I feel like this might have something to do with the sanitary personnel and their flamethrowers. The first pharmacy I stop in has a scalpel, so I shuffle a few things around and give my knife up for it.



"At last! My arm is complete again..."

Today the map is 1500 coins. I can't afford it. I need to kill some time today, so I'm going to the rat races, finally. I have two rats on me right now. Both of them place a distant third.



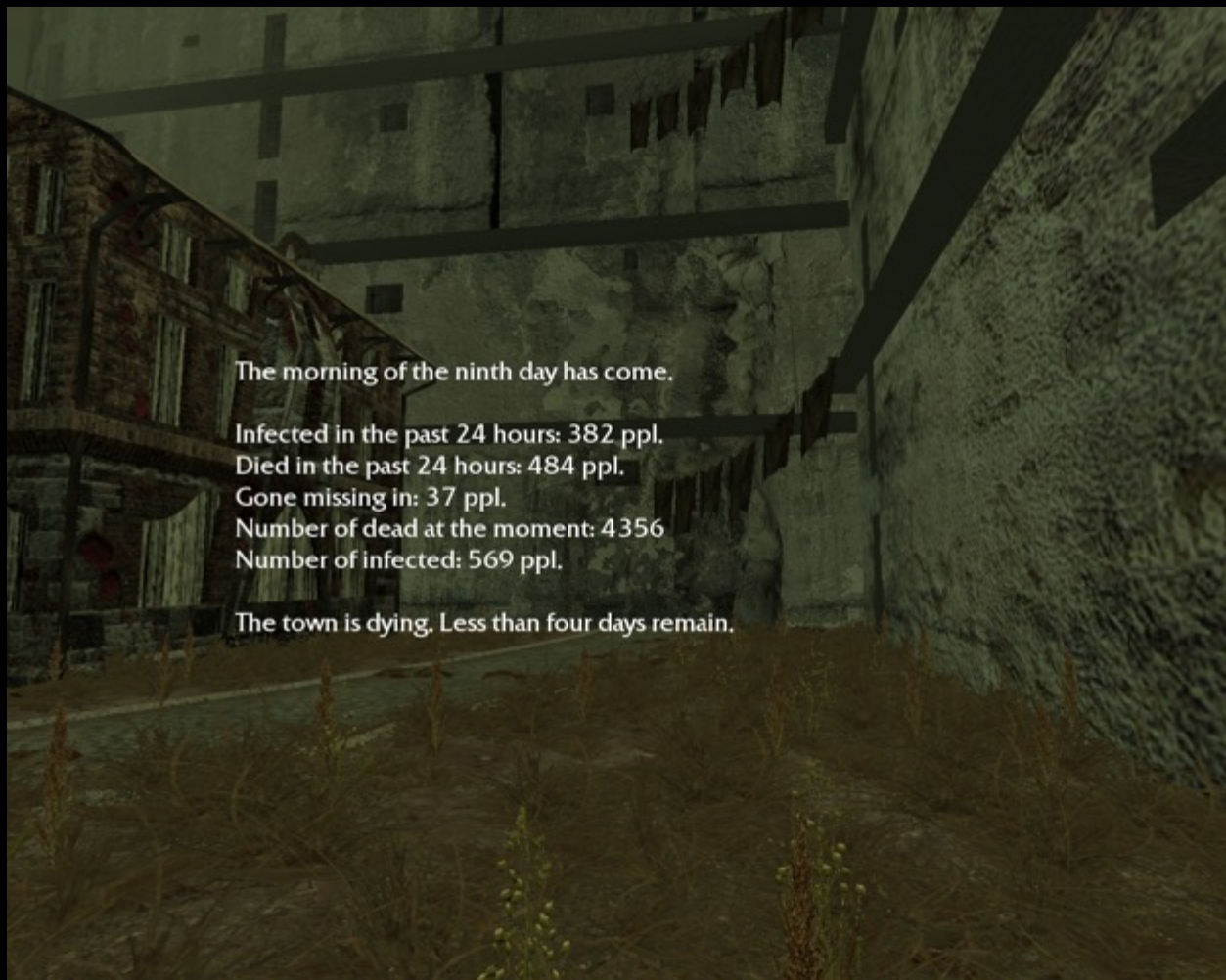
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This rat, too, is very bad at racing. I walk carelessly and get incinerated, which gives me a chance to try to race the rat again, since I saved before but not after. Again, my rat places third. My computer has leveled out, thankfully. Near Anna's, I trade water for a bandage. Anna Angel herself is fine, and so are Catherina Saburova and Alexander Saburov.

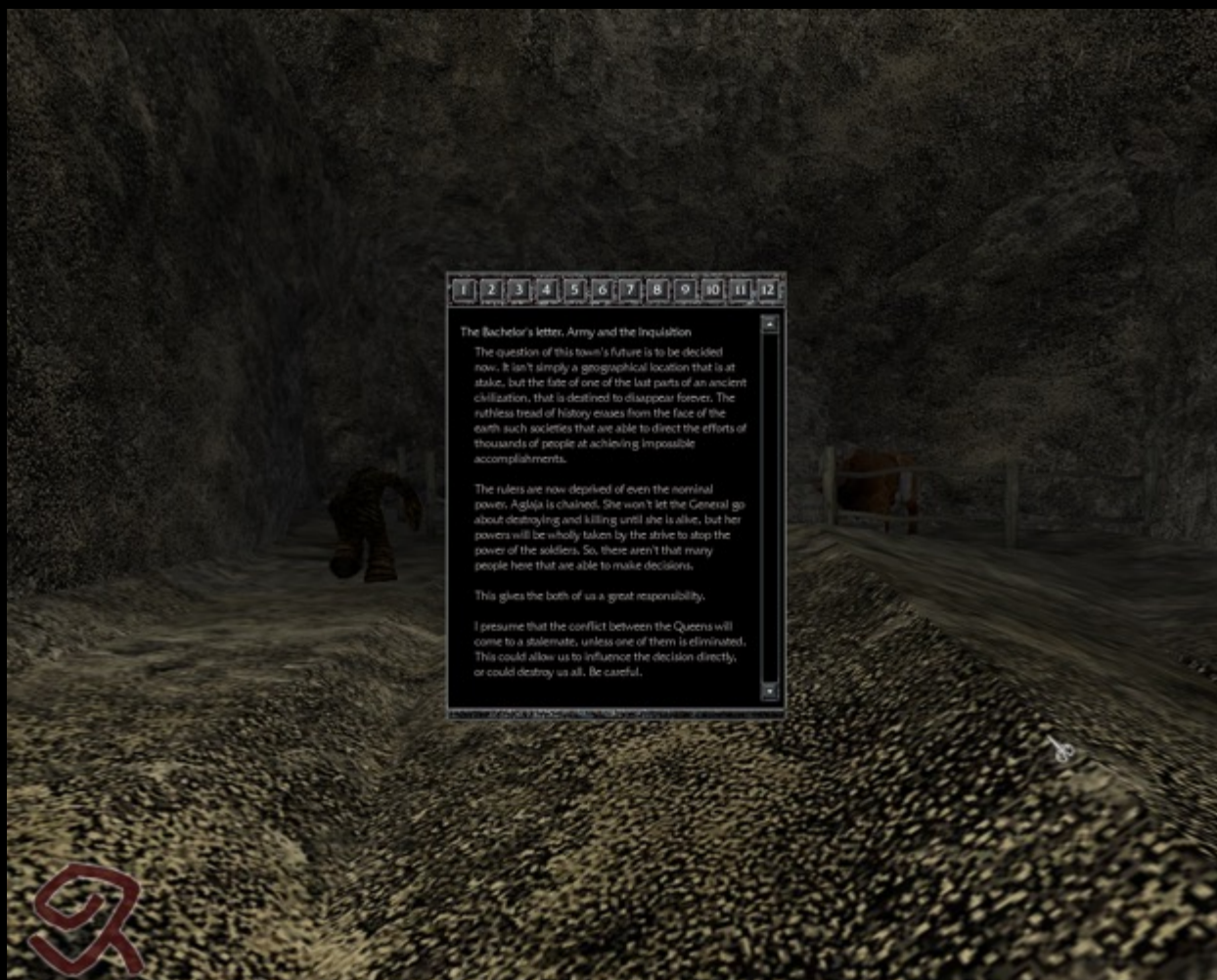
Petr Stamatina, however, has fallen ill with the Sand Pest, as of Day Nine of the outbreak.

I collect some more bandages and check on Ospina, who has nothing to say to me. I sleep here for almost an hour.

"Needles still stick out of me..."
- Ospina.



I enter the Abattoir. On my way in, I receive a letter from the Bachelor.



Oyun tells me to go figure out some of the details of Dankovskiy's entry into the Abattoir, and my exhaustion meter fills rapidly as I leave. By the time I pass by my warehouse along the tracks, it is maxed out.



Lovely.

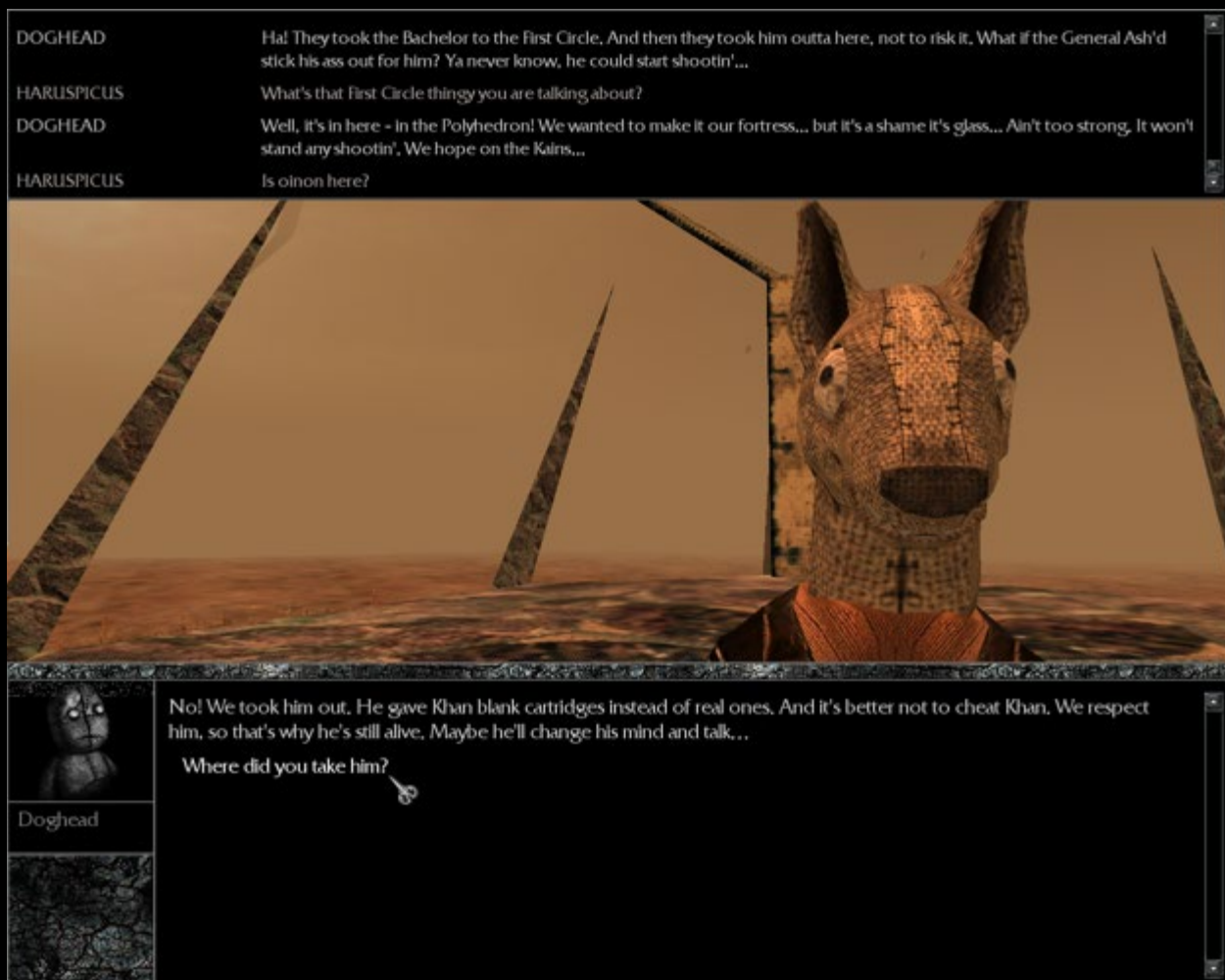
"In my bedroom, it is warmer than here..."

- Eve Yahn.

The Bachelor left for the Polyhedron at some point but hasn't returned. I walk there and get close enough to see it clearly for the first time.



I just think it's neat!



Imprisoned for (checks text) giving... blanks instead of live rounds to children?



I love this game.

Off to the warehouse marked on my map, then. I traded for a bandage on the way in anticipation of my health taking a hit at some point thanks to today's Story-Mandated Deadly Exhaustion.



I guess these guys would have censored character models too, huh?

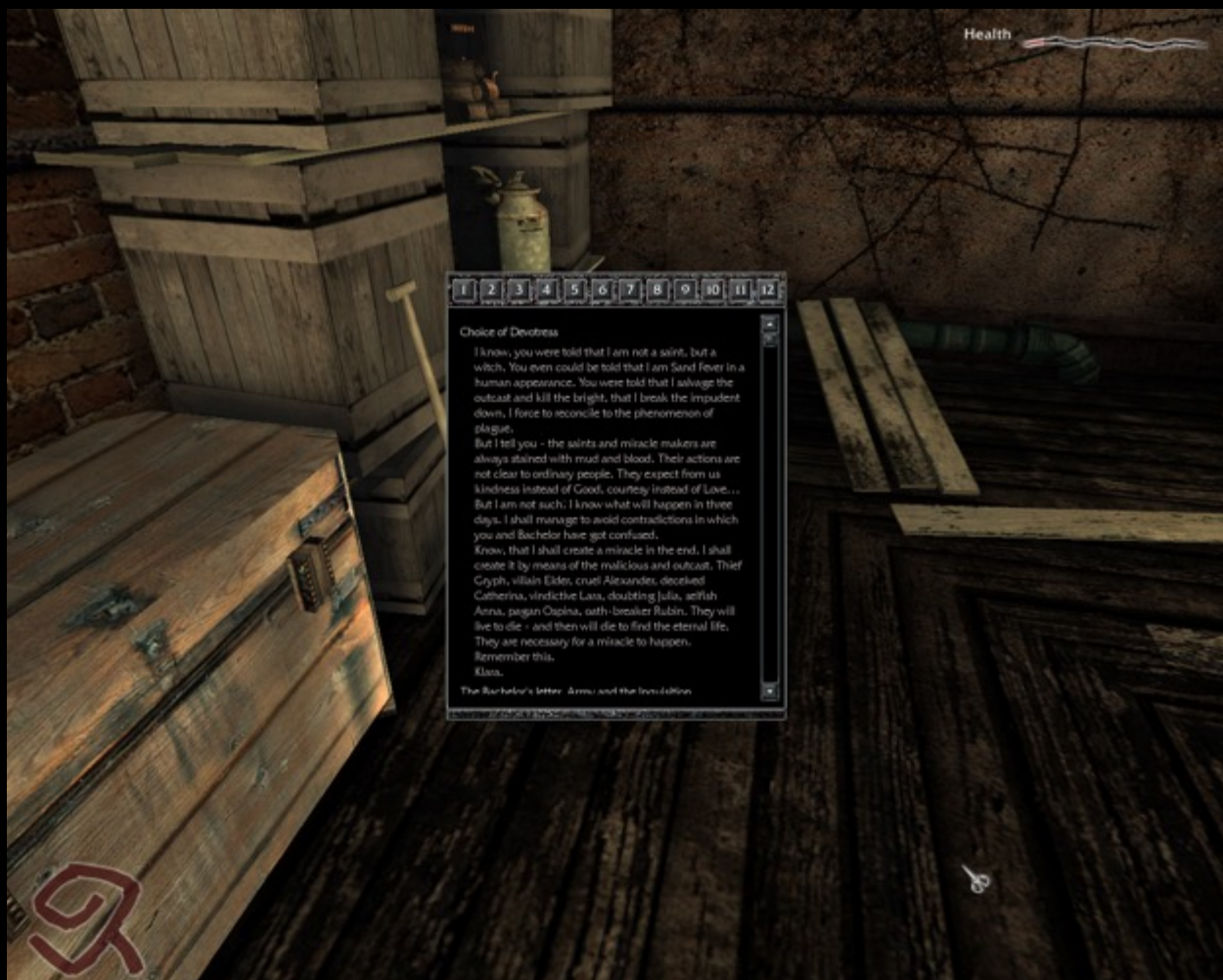
Well, uh... hm. I don't really have time to go back to Eve's right now. I'll go back later for that ammo though. I spring dear Dankovskiy the old-fashioned way, and my map updates at the end of our conversation.



Back to Oyun, then. My health is dropping, and I had to use a bandage after I was punched by a censored Doghead. I'm literally strafing for the minuscule speed boost. I complete the Day quest and start back towards my laboratory. Game.exe crashes while I'm walking along the tracks. Cool! I saved a little bit after freeing Dankovskiy, so it's not a terrible walk this time.



I save once I make it out of the Abattoir just in case and start back home. I drop off my herbs in the trunk by the bed, have a quick nap, then check the letter I received from the Devotress while I slept.



I'm on my way to the Slough to collect the ammo from Eve, and I think I'll probably sell most of it...? I'm faring alright with my sawn-off shotgun, I don't think I'll need the rifle. I don't have any painkillers or bandages, though, so I'll be searching for those sorts of items while I'm walking. I scrounge up enough to collect a tourniquet and a bandage. Eve hands over what Dankovskiy said she'd have. I have 52 rifle ammo in my inventory now, and no rifle.

"We have to keep on working. They will give us some more time."
- Bachelor Dankovskiy.

I exchange the ammo for money and tourniquets across the street, then trade more water for a bandage. I guess I could stand to gather some more rations today, too. I've always wondered if there's any internal logic to the little items that appear in your inventory on occasion. I have eleven hazelnuts right now. At 18:00, I get a short, vague letter from Kapella telling me she has a guest. I'm a few steps from the Clot, so I head inside.



All of this campaign's sidequests from here on out are completely new to me because I was doing so terribly at surviving as Artemy in Classic by this point that I just couldn't make any time for them. I can't say I expected to see Aglaja here...

"Earlier, I was walking at night, and in the morning, I was found somewhere... in a... in a new place..."
- Kapella.

Someone's been putting out the signal fires meant to warn of the Plague here. Chances are they'll need to be lit again, but I've only been tasked with keeping Spichka out of trouble for now. I walk somewhat carelessly towards the Apiary and am burned to death again. At times like this, all you can do is laugh... I retrace my steps and make it to Spichka's apartment.

Instead of Spichka, though, there are some Dogheads here. They tell me he's gone somewhere near the Cemetery, so I guess I'm heading that way. It's not far, thankfully. I meet with Stub again. He calls me Ripper. There are four fires to light, and Stub has the lighter.

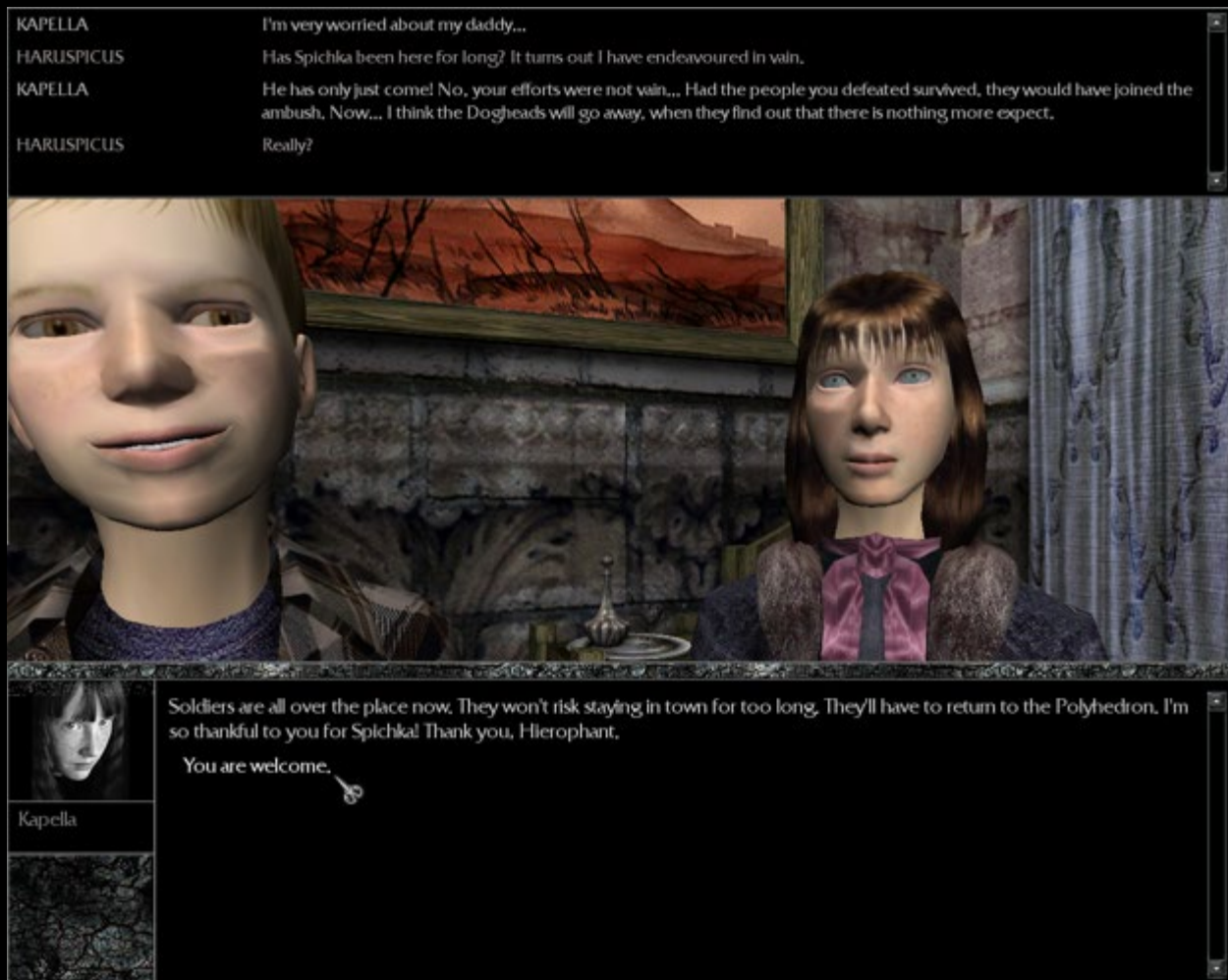


I didn't realize I was going to have to fight anybody, but I've only got five shotgun shells. Time to put my scalpel to use, then... At the third fire, I'm pleasantly surprised to collect feromycinum and a powder (!) from a corpse — I've got three of them now. After lighting the fourth fire, I speak to Stub, who tells me Spichka's probably gone home. I dismiss Stub and head back that way.



I had gone back to get some kerosene for this because I thought I'd need it, but I didn't. After checking to see if any had gone, I lit my lamp for the first time (with the F key). It... does not seem to work very well. I tried it a few times, and sometimes it makes everything red or pink and breaks the game momentarily. I couldn't get screenshots of that, they just show up blank for whatever reason. The lamp works fine in Classic HD.

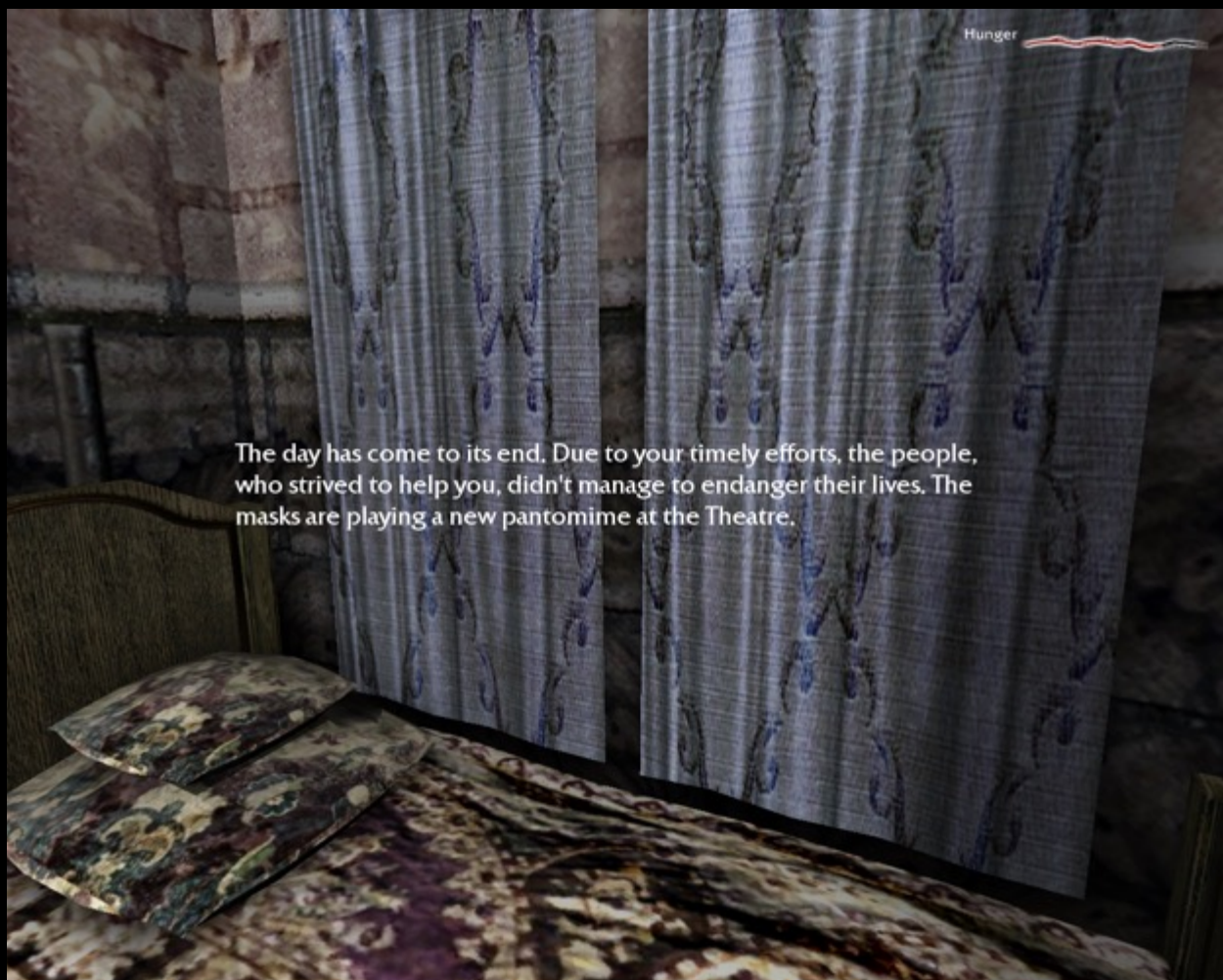
I put my scalpel away for now. It served me well, but has been knocked down to 72% durability. I took a manageable amount of damage here and collected a fair number of the more valuable trinkets from this effort. I have plenty of herbs, so I left the organs in the dirt for Mother Boddho. It is now 21:00. Outside of Spichka's place, a girl tells me there is an ambush inside, and Spichka's still missing. I'm off back to Kapella to let her know. It feels awfully late to be running around so much, and I'm getting a bit nervous, but I figure I'll be okay -- things seem to be wrapping up here. I trade four rings for a bottle of meradorm and a bit of money at the drugstore opposite the Clot. As I approach the building proper, it begins to rain.



...Good to see you're alive and well, Spichka.

"I feel stitches under the knees. Is this okay?"
- Spichka.

I realize now that I forgot to buy a map today, but that's fine. I figure it would be more of the same. I take the meradorm I just bought and sleep here until around 2:00.



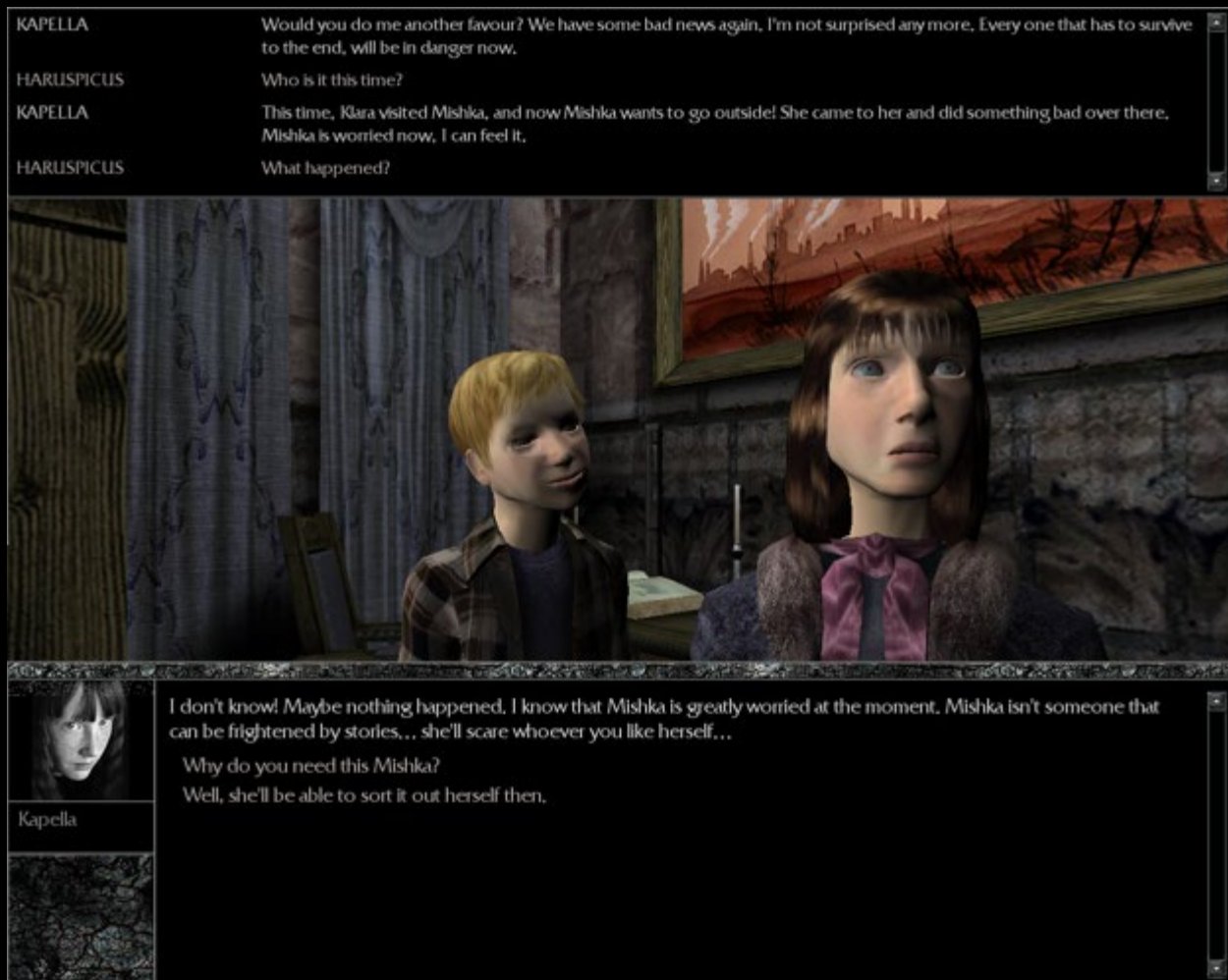
The day has come to its end. Due to your timely efforts, the people, who strived to help you, didn't manage to endanger their lives. The masks are playing a new pantomime at the Theatre.

Day Ten

which informs the Haruspicus of fact that he stands before a choice, that will determine his victory.



I speak to Kapella first thing this morning since I'm already here.



I suppose this will be my first task for today, then. It is pouring outside. Across the street from the Clot, I sell all of my kerosene and some of the trinkets I collected from yesterday's melee and purchase a bandage set, then set off for Mishka's van. Gryph and Rubin are alive and well, though Rubin doesn't appear to be in at the moment, and Gryph has nothing of note to say to me in dialogue.

"Rubin appears to be alive! I thought he had died."
- Gryph.



Today's map is 1500 coins.

"Sometimes, it seems to me that Klara is two different girls..."
- Mishka.



I am Haruspicus. Hierophant. Surgeon. Rescuer of a little girl's precious doll.

There is no doll at the place marked on my map, but there seems to be a trail of rare herbs. I follow it, picking each herb as I go.



It's like looking in a burlap mirror.

The flavor text refers to this doll as “a remarkably ugly specimen”. I scoop the wretched thing up and head back towards Mishka.



I wonder what's in that train car. Seems like they've got it well-guarded.



"Why have you been going around scooping blood from puddles? Haven't you heard there's an epidemic on!?"

I receive a phial of Abattoir blood from Mishka, and she gives me directions to more. I'll visit the Polyhedron later today. For now, I'll keep up with my rounds. Young Vlad first, since he's nearest. I figure I'll collect some rations on my walk. Vlad Jr. is fine, and has nothing particularly interesting to say. Outside of Julia's Seine, there is some black twyre growing. She is alive and well, but looks as gloomy as always.

"How lonely it is here..."
- Julia Luricheva.



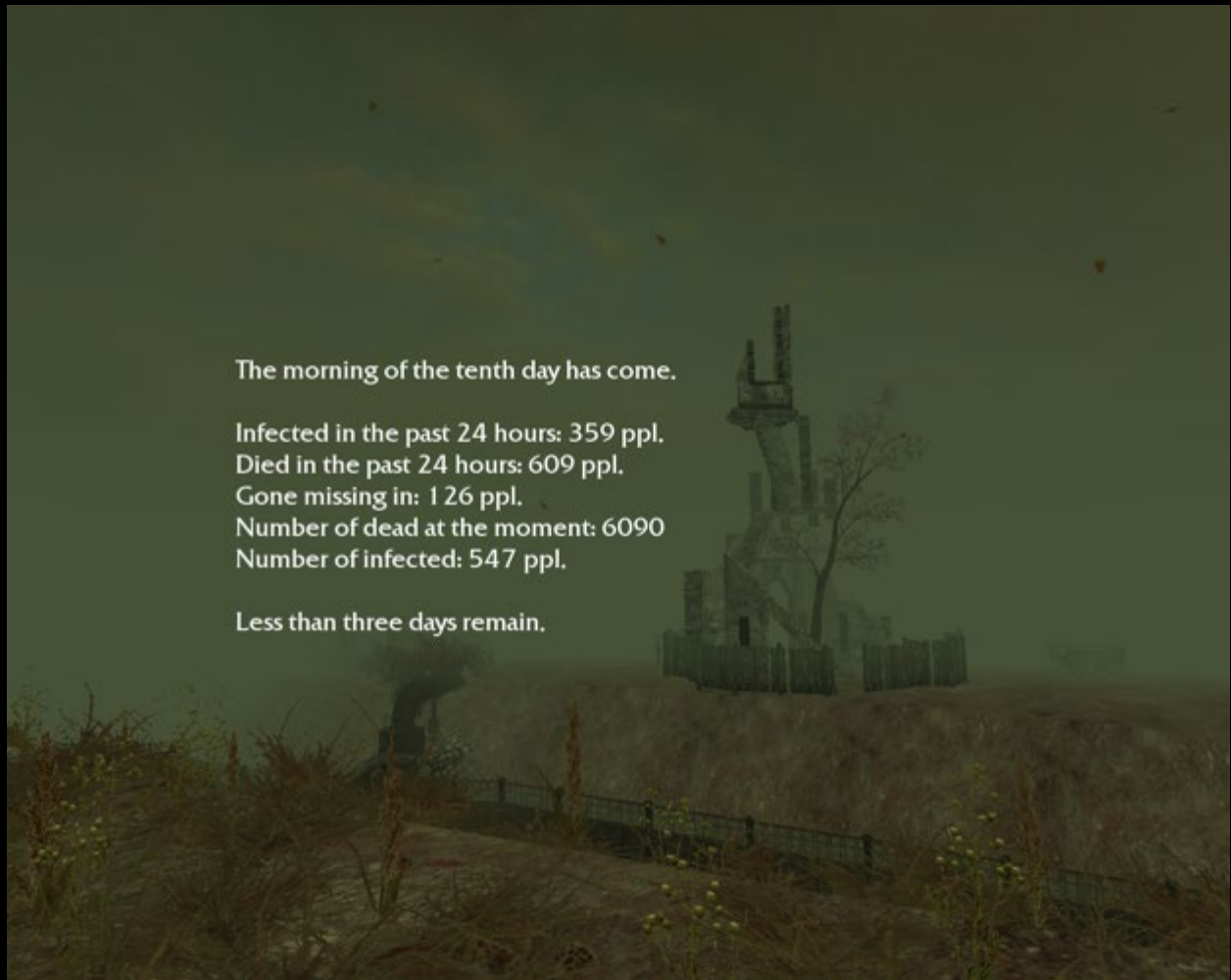
Catherina Saburova has fallen ill with the Sand Pest, as of Day Ten of the outbreak.

Alexander Saburov, Anna Angel, and Ospina are all doing just fine today... Well, I guess I can't say that for sure, but they are without the plague, though likely not without woes and anxieties. I head to my laboratory to drop off the herbs and blood I've collected today. I also picked up a rat at some point, and he now lives in the trunk. I hope he doesn't nibble at my herbs. I arrive in Stvorki at 6:00 precisely and head towards the Polyhedron. I check on the Kains. None of them are ill.



Mishka was right. That's definitely blood.

I collect some, but I'm not sure where I got the container. My Other tasks tab updates to tell me to visit her again, but I'll do that later. I stop in at the Cathedral, but I can't speak to Aglaja now.



The morning of the tenth day has come.

Infected in the past 24 hours: 359 ppl.

Died in the past 24 hours: 609 ppl.

Gone missing in: 126 ppl.

Number of dead at the moment: 6090



Number of infected: 547 ppl.

Less than three days remain.

I enter the Slough to speak with the Bachelor.



BACHELOR	I've heard of the puzzle you are trying to solve. So, you believe your father gave an oath to save a creature of a sublime kind. An inhuman being of a human shape?
HARUSPICUS	I will do fine without the advice of a... realist.
BACHELOR	Come on, Artemy... I am sorry if I look arrogant. I only want to help. Just remember how you helped me, when I was running in the dark.
HARUSPICUS	And you think that you can take me out of the dark with your educated mind?



	I think so. You ought not to underestimate my wit. A lot has happened since I came here. I don't look upon your Order with the sceptis I'd had, when I had just arrived. I am convinced in the fact that your chimerae exist. However, I see them... differently. Somewhat simpler, if you like.
Bachelor	I hope that helps you. Your simplicity won't help me.
	

BACHELOR	My thoughts could give you a hint. Aren't you interested in what I've found out?
HARUSPICUS	Ok. Speak.
BACHELOR	Well, it seems I accidentally found what you've been looking for all this time. I'm about to discover something extraordinary.
HARUSPICUS	Well? Why did you stop talking?
BACHELOR	Now I'll play a little unfair. I guess there is a place under the town, where the ancient shepherds used to live, when the Abattoir was twice as high as it is now.



	I want you to ask the Elder where this place is and point it on the map. At least find out the district that this... layer is under. That isn't much, is it? Make him specify at least the district that layer lies under. Then, I'll tell you my version of the story. It seems it is the answer to your question.
Bachelor	I have my own talks with the Elder. I can barely get the knowledge I need from him for myself.
	...Why did you have to make certain conditions for it? I could have done it for our friendship, oinon. You offend me.



This entire exchange gives me goddamned angina pectoris.

"I'm going to study this tower. It deserves the most precise attention."

- Bachelor Dankovski.

Off to the Elder, then. I'll visit with Taya, since I'm nearby.



Uh... Huh. Surprised you're still kicking.

Taya tells me about a bull dying near the Bone Pillar. I'll be heading over there at some point today, I suppose, but I'll speak to the Elder first and begin working through my main task today.

ELDER OF THE ABATTOIR

One, who takes such blood from the inside of Boddho's house, rips a piece of flesh from Mother Suold. They've unsheathed a sharp knife and cut themselves away from Bos Turokh's flesh. They are no longer part of the Order. They can die.

HARUSPICUS

Why did they steal the blood?

ELDER OF THE ABATTOIR

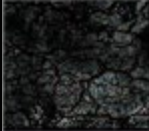
You ask too much, son of Burakh. I thought you wanted to ask me one question today, one, which costs a thousand others. Don't waste your breath on useless speeches.

HARUSPICUS

What do you want from me?



Elder of the
Abattoir



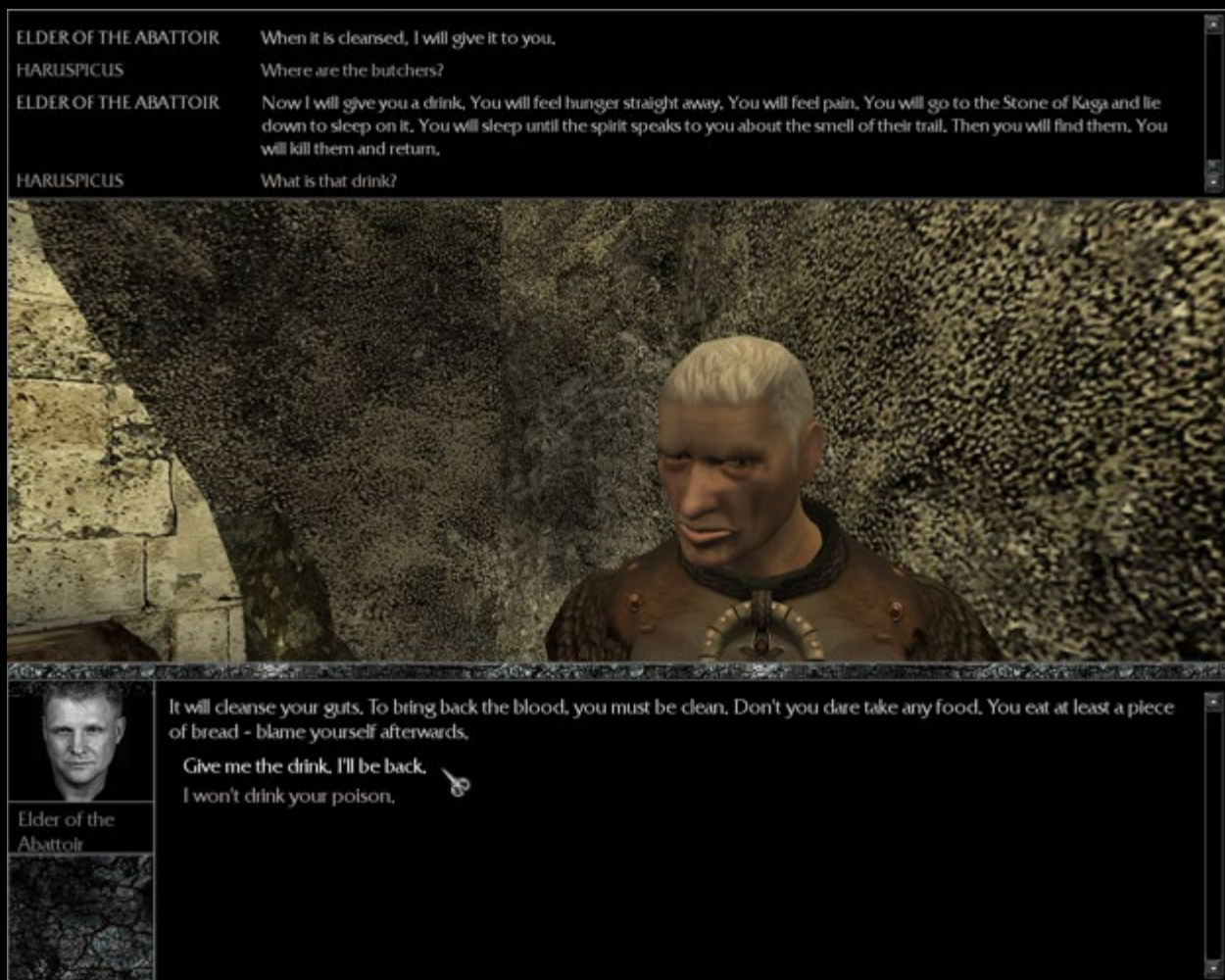
They've left a horrid trail behind them. You will find it, when the spirits talk to you. Don't eat until you bring the blood back, don't you dare take even a piece of bread, otherwise it's all useless.

Will the spirits talk to me?

Why should I not eat anything?

What will become of this blood after that?





This should be fun.

I am to head to the Raga barrow and take a nap. Okay.



“The spirits of the dead appeared by the Raga barrow. They whispered to the sleeping one of the Worms, skulking in the body of the rotting town.”

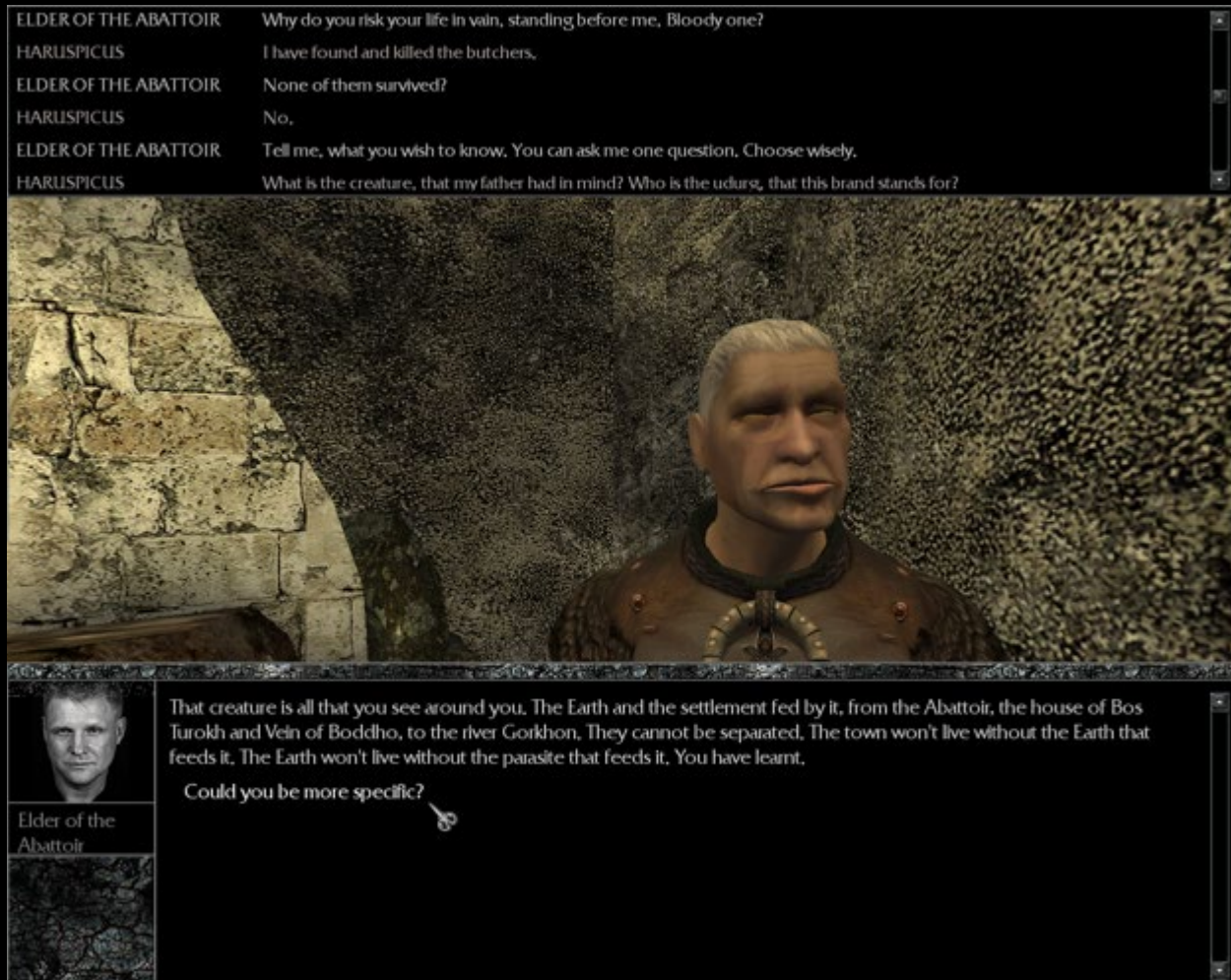
- “Udurg”. Day quests [10].

The herb gatherers’ places are all marked on my map, so I’ll be heading to each of them. I got that first aid kid earlier specifically for this -- my hunger was maxed out before I even got to the barrow, and I’ll probably start taking damage soon, even if I don’t have any combat trouble. I have enough shotgun shells to take care of this without worrying much about my own health. I’d speak to Mishka again since she’s on the way to the next marked place, but my health starts dropping as I walk. I replenish it as I planned to, but it continues to dwindle. I’ll catch her on the way back.

My task is complete. I eat a cracker to test if I’m still poisoned, and it seems like I’m alright now, so I balance out that meter with some meat and fish. I’m left with a sorry supply of rations (crackers, nuts, and fruit), but that’s alright. I’ll manage. I walk back the way I came and visit with Mishka before the Elder. It is nearly 11:00 when I turn around.

“There are several conclusions that can be drawn from this story... However, something tells me that I shouldn’t hurry with that. “Let us simply take into account the facts for now” - as our friend the Bachelor says...”

- “Who’ll feed the doll”. Other tasks [10].



The answer is, of course, “no”, with yet another “come back tomorrow” as well.

With that, I’m off to see the Bachelor again to wrap up the Day quest. I’m almost starting to enjoy his company. Almost. Since I’m nearby, though, I will visit the Bone Pillar first.



Each Worm here tells me to meet with a certain one of my own Adherents, to learn their thoughts about this situation then return here to share them in exchange for a bit of blood. I am to speak with Mishka, Spichka, Laska, and Notkin, in any order. Spichka's place is closest, so I'll meet with him first, then the rest on my way to Dankovskiy.

SPICHKA

Wao!!! Why don't I ever get to see one! I've been lying in wait at night in the Steppe for so many times, cause I wanted to see how the odongs bring in a Highest from the Steppe! And I haven't seen him, not once! Damn! So, how is he, is he really big?

HARUSPICUS

It'd be better if you told me what to do with him.

SPICHKA

Heal him! You're a doctor, ain't ya. Take him off the spike! My head was aching in the morning too.

HARUSPICUS

So, is it?



Spichka


And I think I wasn't the only one! An aurochs is a sacred beast. Whatever happens to him has an effect on everything around. Why did you think the Elder must know the ritual? What did your father teach you?! Damn... "hierophant"!

Hey, shut up! I know that without you anyway.

"I was happy you were actually home this time, Spichka, but I can't say I still feel that way. Do you always treat your guests like this?"

GIRL Well? Is Laska at Kapella's already?
HARUSPICUS Has she gone to Kapella?



 There are such horrors here... Well, if I were her, I'd go to Kapella straight away, since she left her cosy little house anyway...
Who else could she go to? Only to her.
I'll check at Kapella's...
My legs are failing me!

Girl



"Hey! You're not Laska! I'm surprised she's left her post at all... Did she happen to teach you how to care for the dead? It's quite an important job, you know."

NOTKIN

Oh, my anxiety is understandable... That will be our most precious beast! A divine beast! If a beast like that will be with us, no Khan will dare touch us! We'll become temple guards, instead of being a street gang.

HARUSPICUS

That is serious. What fate have you designated for that bull?

NOTKIN

He must live no matter what happens! At all costs! I don't care about nothing else, I'll be the first to give my life for him! You arrange it so that they take that spike out of his head, won't you?

HARUSPICUS

Well, life's hard for me lately...

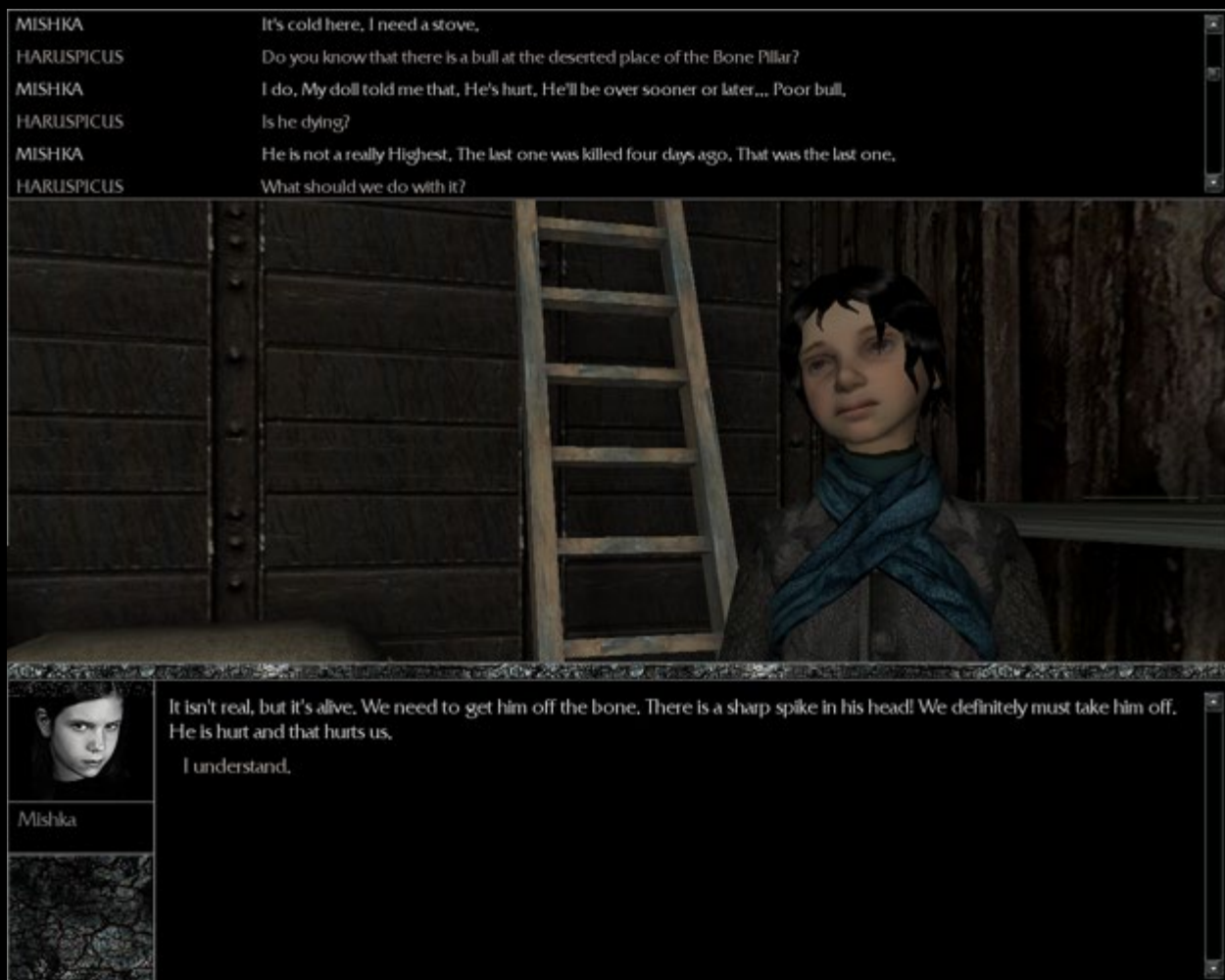


Notkin

Do you promise?

I promise. Sit here. Don't go outside.





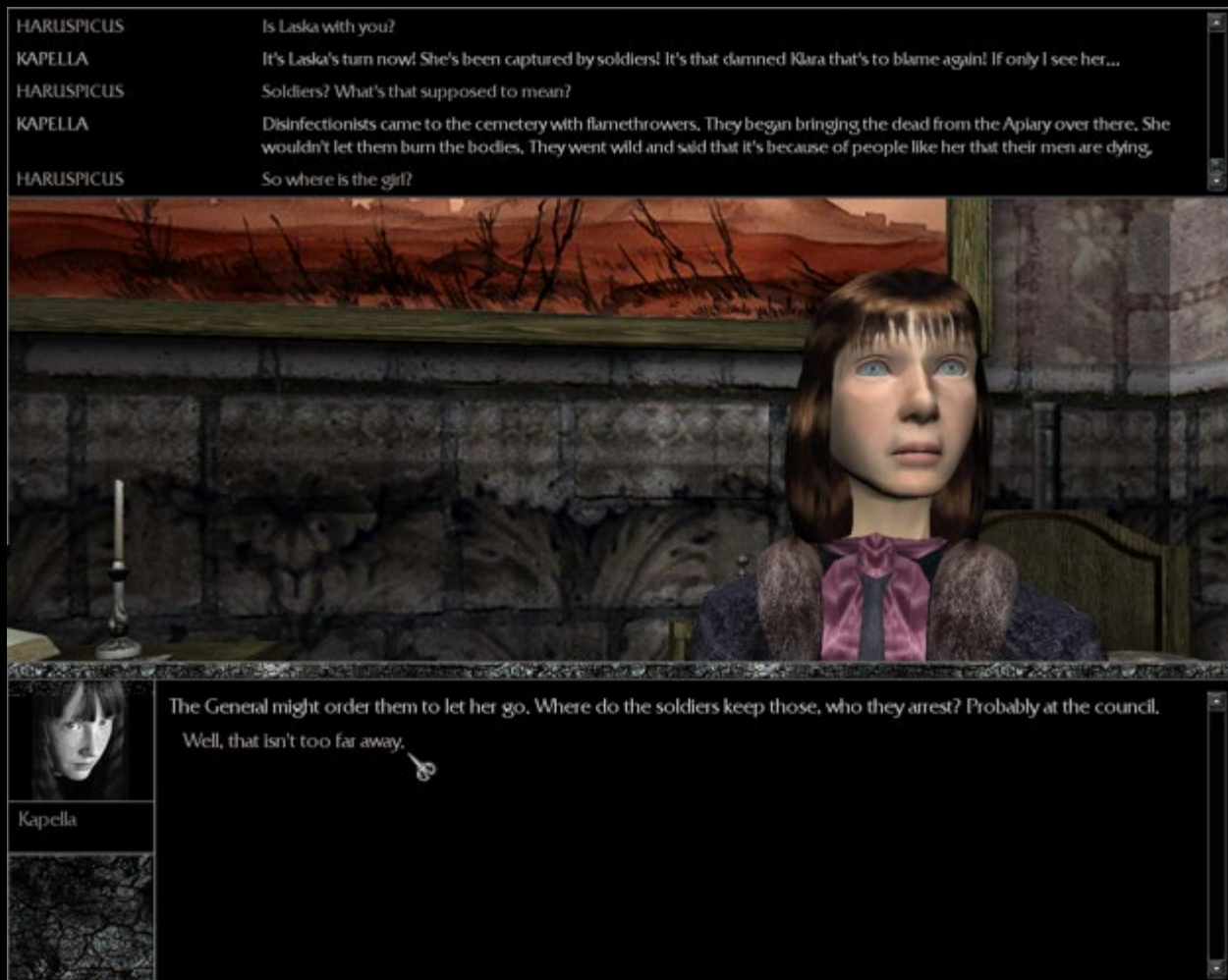
I am already at the Stone Yard before I realize I've forgotten to go to Kapella, the "tree, on which children sit like birds", to speak with Laska for her guidance. I'll meet with Dankovskiy first and then head that way.

HARUSPICUS	The Elder told me about the udurg. It is a Settlement,
BACHELOR	Is that precisely what he told you?
HARUSPICUS	...I'm not sure. His speech is always intricate.
BACHELOR	I think that the brand in Isidor's mysterious will means Simon Kain. Your father's friend. The Superhuman. The creator of this town, the architect of inhabited worlds.
HARUSPICUS	So, is it?



	I want to find out the Olgimskiy daughter's opinion about this - Kapella's, I also want to know what the person, whom I'm not allowed to visit under any circumstances, thinks - Catherina Saburova, I want to study this hypothesis from all sides. Maria may be biased. Ask these women, Artemiy. They'll give you an answer.
Bachelor	What should I ask them about?
	

That... worked out pretty nicely, I guess.



Oh, great. Laska's been arrested.

Kapella's not certain about whether Simon can be called Udurg. Her answer seems to be "maybe, after a fashion". I'll ask Catherina for her thoughts on the matter. I can hopefully find Laska on the way.



"You're not Laska either! Oh, God. Please, no. No more walking. The soles of my boots are already so worn..."

I have to go talk to the soldiers near the train tracks. Damnation. Klara won't speak to me; she only stares. I head to Catherina's. Since she's sick, I have to use the feromycinum I got yesterday, but I wouldn't have used it otherwise and I certainly didn't pay for it, so it's alright. The Executor takes it and grants me entry. I had to do this to progress, but it feels like a waste. Catherina's words are unbelievably vague, and she brushes me off quickly. "I feel afraid in your presence. You stink of blood."

"Is it true that my eyes are like buttons?"
- Catherina Saburova.

I am taunted by the closeness of the Bone Pillar, but head down to the tracks. There are still a few hours left before it gets dark. Finally, I am able to meet with Laska.



Each of the children wants the bull to live. I could've told the Worms that much without going through all this trouble. I will return to them now. Their rewards are more than worth the effort. On my way there, I walk between one of the sanitary personnel and a rat and am badly burned. I survive with maybe 1% of my health and make a quick detour to the drugstore opposite the Clot for a painkiller to use later. If a rat bit me right now, I would collapse on the cobblestones dead.

I make it back to the Bone Pillar and collect four more phials of Abattoir blood. I'll be heading back to the Bachelor, then. I have enough water to trade for one bandage, which I use immediately.



Inventory check... :(





Sick

I feel badly, I am tormented... the head is as if poured by lead... and the heat inside. Could you give something for treatment to me and my family? I shall not remain in debt... I shall tell everybody about your infinite mercy...
Take, I hope, you will dispose them fairly.
Go with peace.
I spent all I had. Soon I will beg in the streets too.



DEATHBLOW	the key to solving these communications in the Tower and you people can stick together, it's clear that it isn't worth it tries to look like to strangers.
HARUSPICUS	What does my father's udurg have to do with it?
BACHELOR	All I have to do is check this theory from the optical point of view, I must be certain that this isn't some worthless superstition. I'll study the Polyhedron from the inside. You, in turn, find proof of the fact that the underground capillaries have the exact shape I presume they have.
HARUSPICUS	You trying to pull everything out of me....



	Don't forget, that my mission is to find the source of the disease. They won't let you into the Tower, and they don't let me into the Abattoir. Let's help each other, I'll send you a note tomorrow. We'll make arrangements.
Bachelor	We'll see tomorrow...
	



“Reality is splitting into two! Two contradictory truths stand behind the cursed sign. Almighty Simon’s spirit, contained within the glass corpus of the Tower, or the town, reared by the Earth and sculpted into the shape of Bos Turokh? These are the two udurgs, there are no others.”

- “Udurg”. Day quests [10].

I take some of the meradorm I bought and am able to get six hours of rest. I start the next day as early as 1:00.

The day has come to its end. Due to your timely efforts, the people, who strived to help you, didn't manage to endanger their lives. The masks are playing a new pantomime at the Theatre.



Day Eleven

is when Garuspicus [sic] falls into a trap, discovering that his dilemma connects two incompatible truths.



I speak with the Bachelor first thing this morning.

BACHELOR	I've got, Artemiy. I know how to solve your puzzle. Really, there is great mysticism about.
HARUSPICUS	I'm listening.
BACHELOR	Your udurg is Simon. To be more precise - not exactly Simon. It's a building, a whole architectural complex, so the meaning "town" stays, and is, in fact, present to a high degree. Now, just imagine, that this building, sort of, attains Simon's soul and... comes to life.
HARUSPICUS	How? I don't understand.



A screenshot from a video game showing a character named Bachelor in a room. He is a young man with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket over a red shirt and a grey tie. He is looking slightly to the right. The room has a lamp on the wall and a painting of a landscape with a yellow sky. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, orange glow from the lamp.



	Yes, this is hard to understand. This phenomenon can be explained in both the scientific and mystical ways... I cannot explain and prove this to you, because the plans are already with Aglaja. But, believe me, it is all, as I say! The building-town absorbs a soul and comes to life!
Bachelor	What do you mean by "absorbs a soul"?
	What plans?

Yeah, I'll buy it. That sounds about as reasonable as anything else.

"I feel that our decisions became a part of a smart intrigue. I was nearly caught."
- Bachelor Dankovskiy.

HARUSPICUS	Without a sacrifice I won't get the blood needed for the serum from them, I must guess.
BACHELOR	Why don't you ask directly? Simply ask the Elder what he wants from you.
HARUSPICUS	He expects me to guess.
BACHELOR	You could scare him, I haven't seen the Elder and I don't know what kind of man he is, but a hard threat can stir any man. Scare him!
HARUSPICUS	How?



	Kain hinted to me today, that the Elder is in some way connected with your father's death, and the Big Vlad somehow knows about it. Didn't he tell you about it?
Bachelor	That's something new... He didn't tell me, but he will!
	Yes... I know.

...Interesting.



"We're doing our job. What are you so anxious about? There's still time. Live until then."

I don't have much specific guidance yet today, so I'll use some of the time I have this morning to make more panacea from the blood I got from yesterday's tasks. I might take the rat living in my warehouse to the races to try my luck there. Neither Anna Angel nor Alexander Saburov has the Sand Pest today. I sell a lockpick, some twyrine and two watches to afford a bit of smoked meat and a single cracker. I give up one of the bottles of meradorm I bought yesterday too for a little extra money. At another shop, I get some dried meat, which is a lot less expensive than the other kinds, apparently. I eat all three of these things. Ospina is not infected.

I am able to craft five more panacea, bringing me up to six. Nine cures total, with the powders included. I take some meradorm and a three hour nap. I catch another rat outside the warehouse marked "2". The one who lived in my trunk for a while finishes first, and the new one places second. I'm happy with the one victory, and head to Notkin's to see whether I can afford today's map with my earnings.

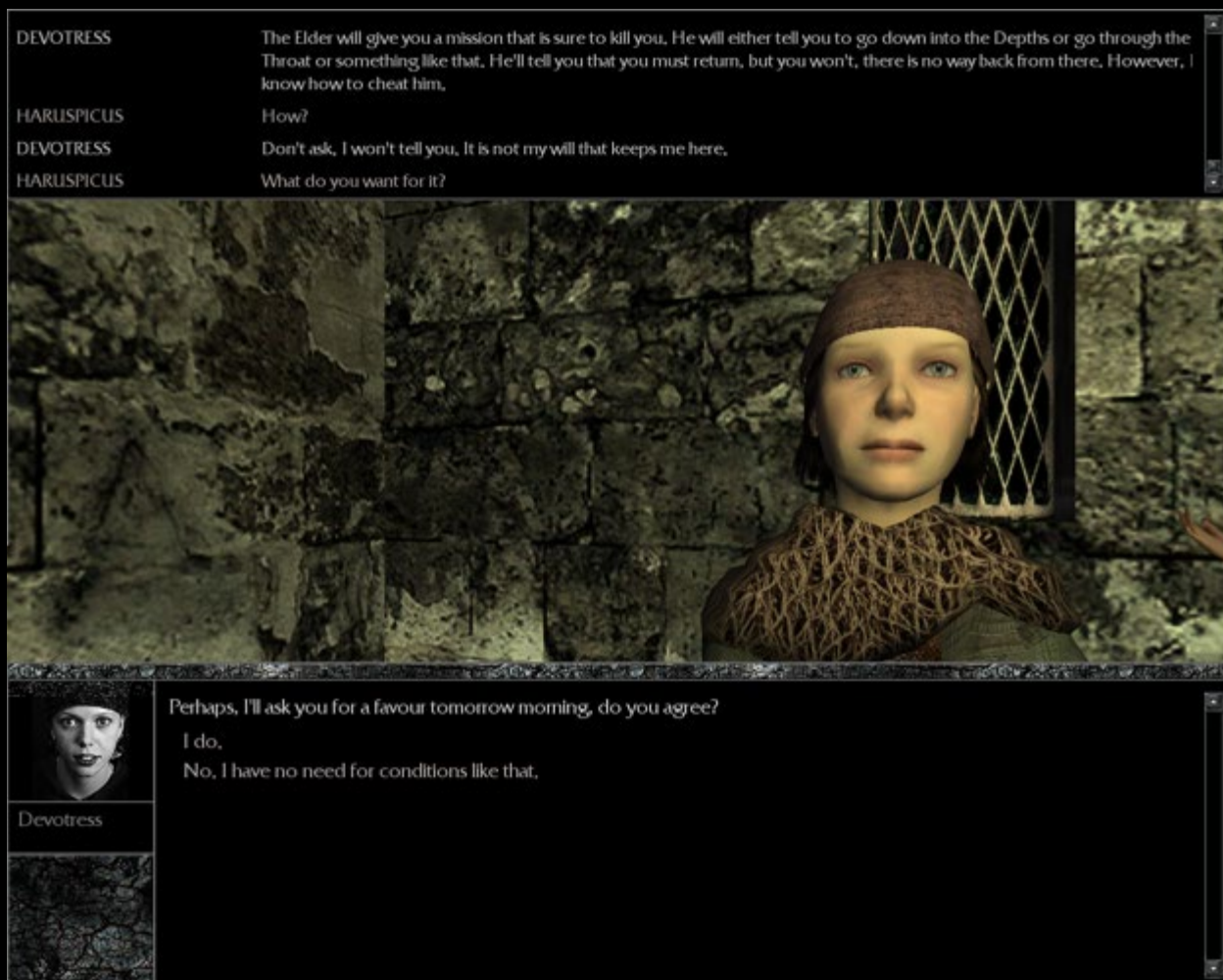


"The bull has disappeared!"
- Notkin.

I am told to head back to the Bone Pillar, but I was under the impression that they'd wait for me to help get rid of the bull... I'll see what the trouble is there, I guess. Notkin also tells me that Klara's looking for me today, and that she "seems a bit worried". I'm short by just a little bit to afford the map today, but there's "nothing to mark anymore. The whole town is infected."

I get a letter from Klara at 7:15, in which she tells me to meet her at Laska's hut before I go to the Abattoir. I'll check in with her on my way to the bone spike.

"The doomed have agreed to assist me... they will first take the way of the patriarch."
- Devotress.



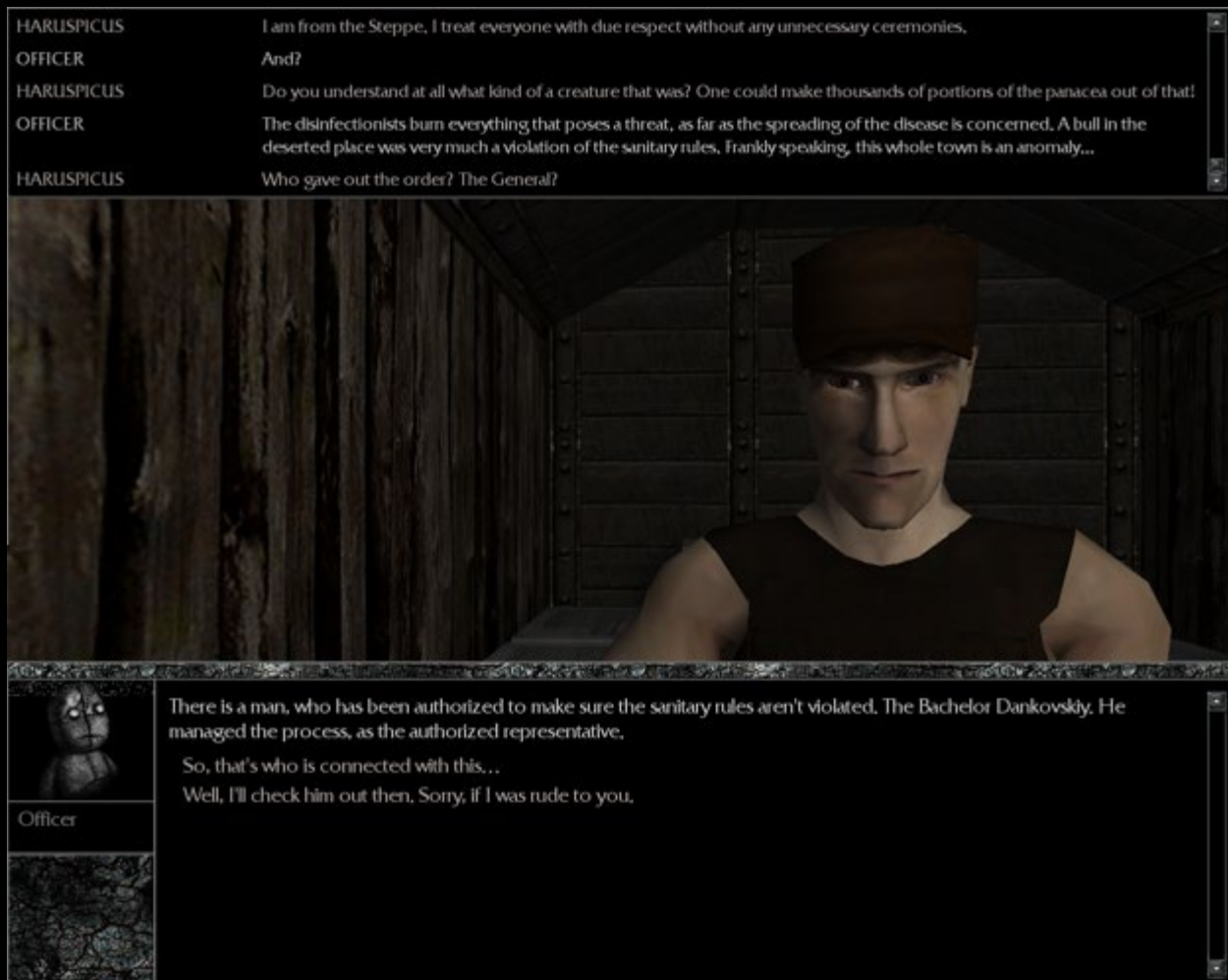
I don't know how she knows this (and she won't tell me), but it does sound like the Elder. I'll believe her.

I let Klara know that I will bring panacea to her adherents tomorrow in exchange for her help today, and head for the Bone Pillar. Almost all of my money has been spent on meat today.



...Yeah. Okay.

I ask who gave this order and am directed to the commander of the rebelling soldiers, one “captain Patroclus”. He is in the same train car where I found Laska yesterday. I think I’m going to murder him.



Oh. My mistake.

“So, it turns out that the true inspirer of this crime is the Bachelor Dankovskiy. Interesting, what excuses is he going to put forth...”

- “Bos Turokh leaves”. Other tasks [11].



"I've been waiting for a good excuse to strangle you to death with your own cravat..."



Hm.

Alright. Fine. It would seem that either Dankovskiy's lying to my face or he genuinely didn't know about how important that bull was. He's been... mostly honest with me thus far. I certainly didn't tell him about yesterday, and I don't know whether he'd have heard about it otherwise. I'm not entirely sure what to think. Maybe it *was* removed without my help. Maybe this is some weird philosophical thing. In my Other tasks tab, the last part of this thread is written thusly:

"They are reasonable. If we were to think soberly, everyone did the right thing. Everyone did their duty. However, for some reason, the final of this story has some blasphemy about it... Or was it all a warning?"

I'd like to speak with Vlad about the Elder of the Abattoir, but I don't know if he'd be back home today. I suppose I'll check.

He is not home. Kapella is, though, and I speak with her.



ANGINA PECTORIS.PNG

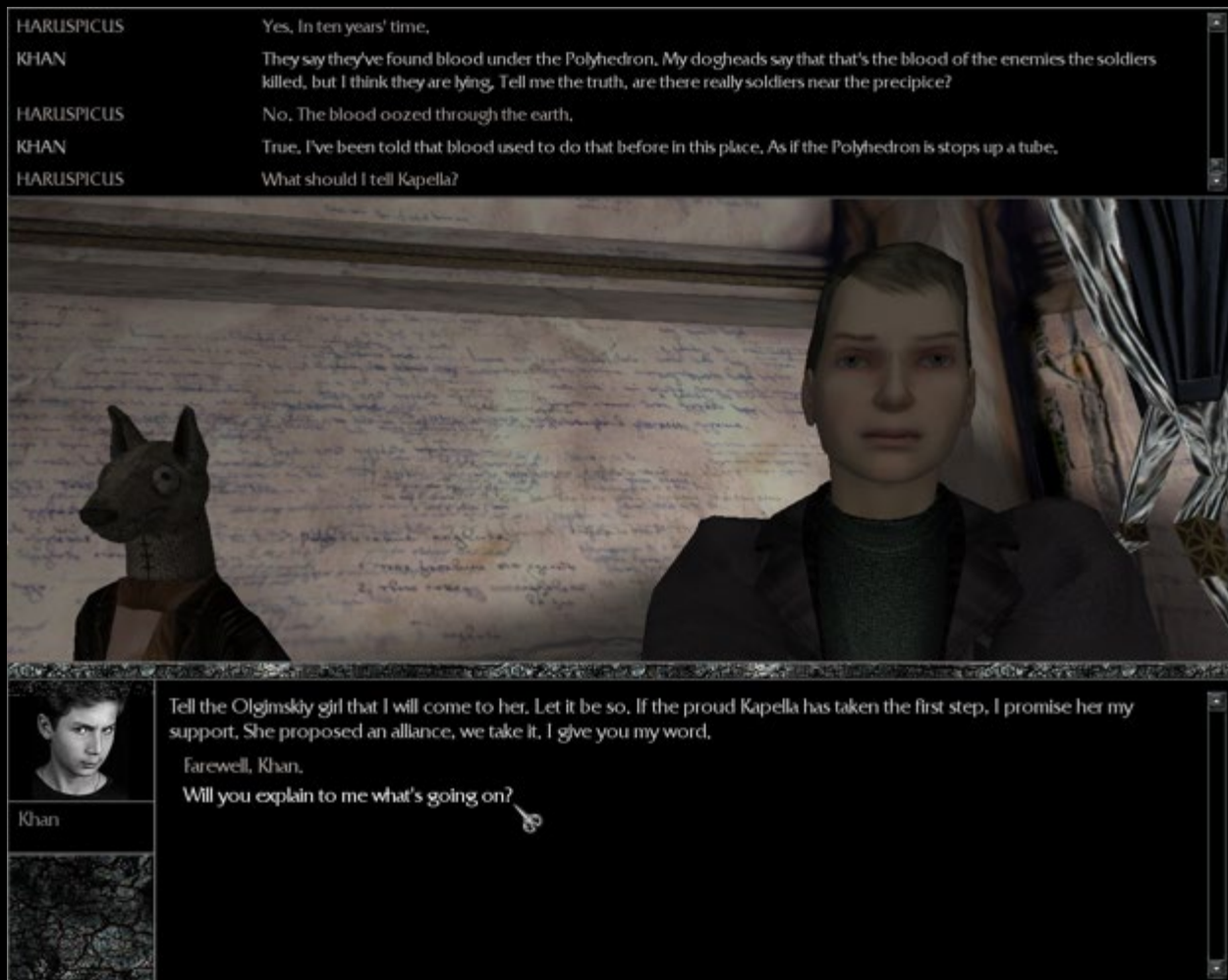
It takes me like twenty minutes to recover from reading that. Someone mercy-kill me so I don't have to think about Dankovskiy "fawning" over Burakh ever again.

I'm going to go back to the Bachelor again now. I'd like to have a word with him about that one specific bit I've just heard from Kapella, but I doubt I'll be able to. I am given a silver ring by the aether as I walk to the house called Slough.

I am given a password to enter the tower. It is "fortified". A little on the nose, but whatever. A flower appears in my inventory as I climb the Polyhedron.

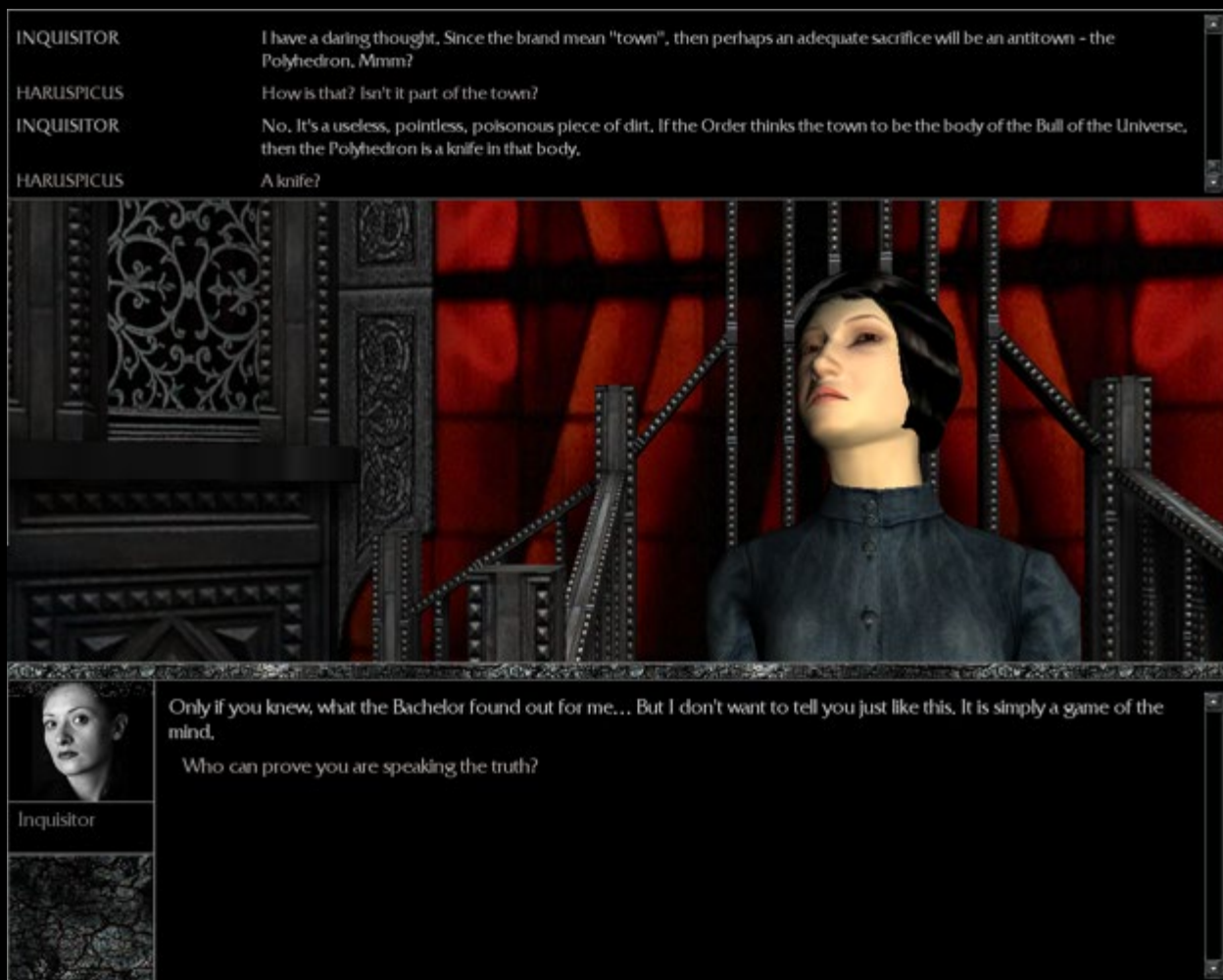


It's rather late to be meeting one of my Adherents for the first time, but I introduce myself to Kaspar Kain, or "**Khan**".



I didn't even bother with clicking this one. By now, I figure the answer to this line of questioning is a roundabout "no".


I visit with the Inquisitor at the Cathedral. She asks me about the blood, and I ask about my sacrifice.





[I'm on a need-to-know basis. I'm on a need-to-know basis. Nobody tells me shit unless I need to hear it.]

Aglaja directs me to the Elder. I figure it's about time to meet with him. I have to return to Kapella first to tell her what Khan told me, and then I will enter the Abattoir. Kapella gives me her necklace. I hope it will bring me good luck. I arrive at the Abattoir's opening at almost precisely noon.

ELDER OF THE ABATTOIR	Why have you come, Bloody one?
HARUSPICUS	I've come to pass the final test and find out who is the victim that the Order wants from me.
ELDER OF THE ABATTOIR	I will send you to the place where the lines of Suok cross, You will let her swallow you, You find a way back - I will speak to you, as if you were an equal.
HARUSPICUS	What is the ordeal then?



	Go into that cave on the left, That is the Cavity of Her Primary Lip. There you will see a well, where Her navel is untied for the Knowing ones, You will go down, You will put your body there, but later you will find yourself near Suok's navel, Go to the centre of Her lines, Then come back here, We will talk after that.
Elder of the Abattoir	I am ready.
	That simple?

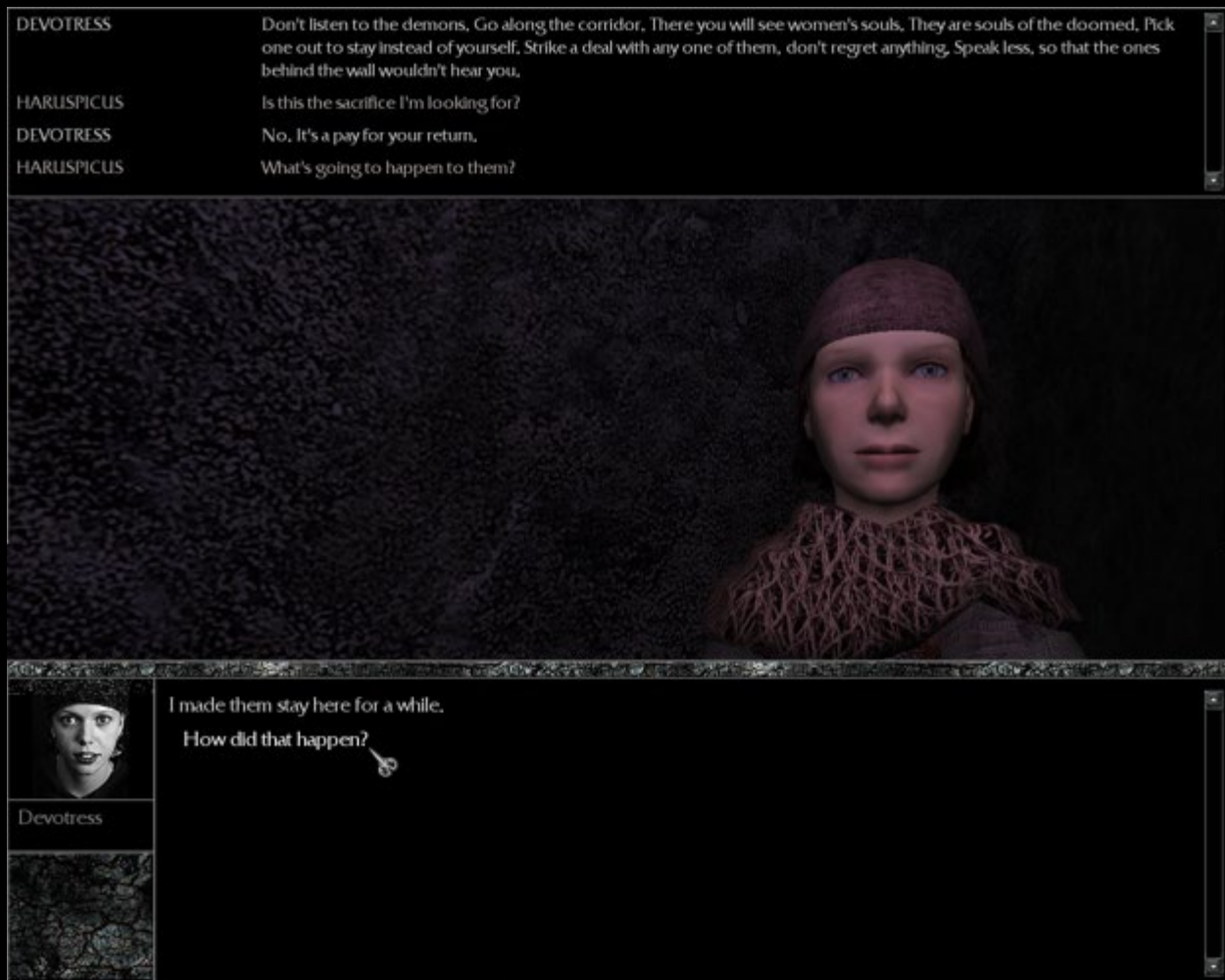
A note about this bit: I already heard from Dankovskiy that Oyun killed Isidor, so I can challenge him immediately, but for completion's sake, I'll also be showing his trials. You can also hear this from Aspity or either Vlad and get the same quick out.



Down I go, then.

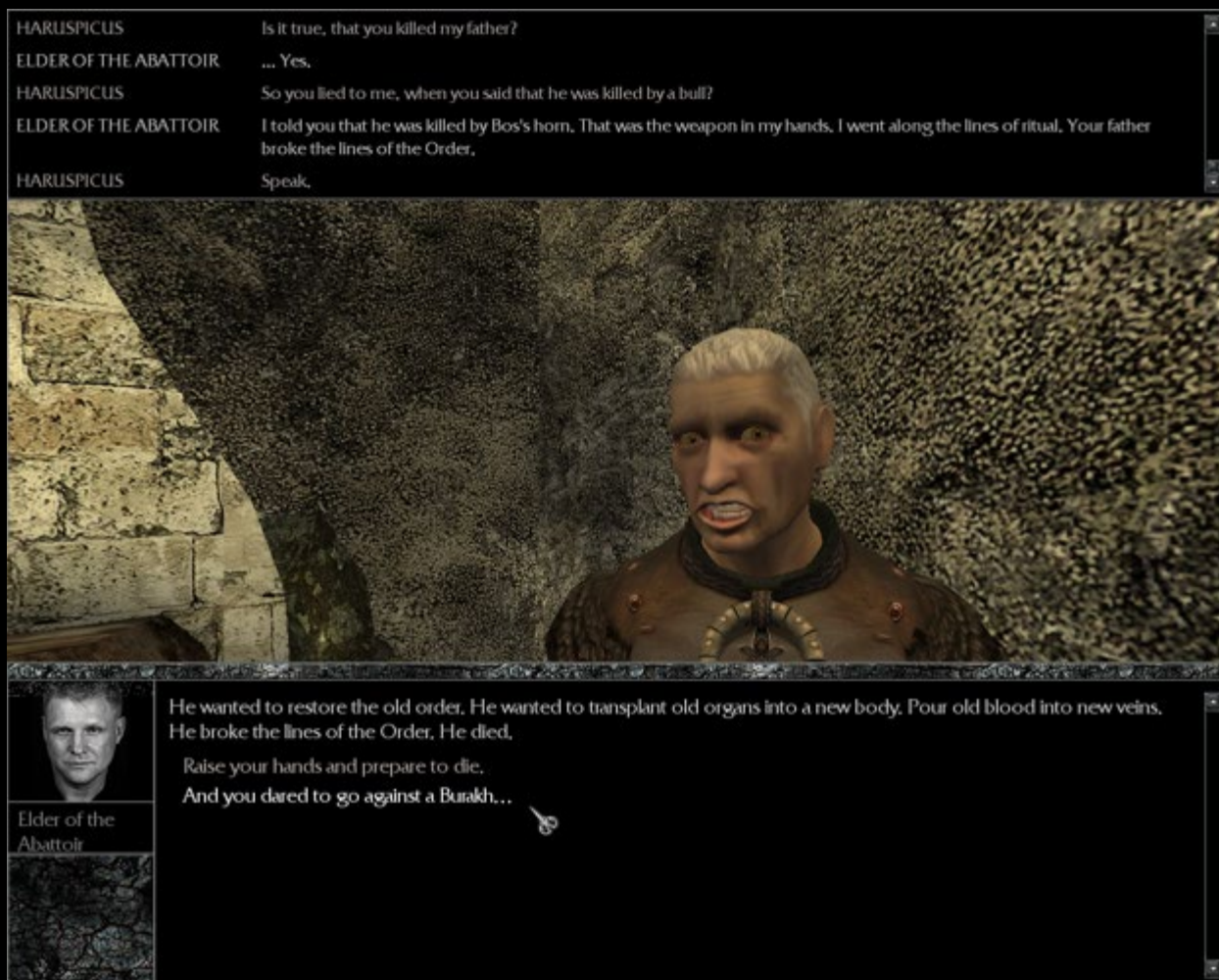


I'd recognize that guy anywhere.



"You are a lot more frightening than I've ever given you credit for, Klara."

Here, I can choose to sentence Anna Angel, Julia Luricheva, or Lara Ravel to... eternal damnation, I guess? Maybe just regular death. I already know Oyun killed Isidor, and part of the function of this is to inform you of that. As mentioned above, I don't have to choose, so I reload a save and confront the Elder.



My name is Artemiy Burakh. You killed my father. Prepare to die.

For this fight, I am stripped of my weapons.



"I bet you think you have an advantage here, but you've never seen me punch a rat."

I beat Oyun to death without taking a single hit, which is especially nice because I don't think I could've taken any.

"How do they call upon the faithful from the family of Hierophants? They are recognized by their hands, the butchers. They are recognized by their eyes, the surgeons. They are judged by their deed, the ones that know the lines. Silence is the dying Order's greeting for the worthy Hierophant. It's a shame you've come so late. Oyun, the unworthy Elder, turned out to be a disproportionate sacrifice."

- "Hierophant's final ordeal", Day quests [11].



Good riddance.

Everything is done rather early today. I'm not sure what I should do to kill time. I'm too close to starving to death to just sleep until tomorrow.

I think I am going to go and search for powders, and, in the process, collect an absurd amount of rats. I drop off all of the herbs in my inventory and Kapella's necklace in storage, and get down to my nonsensical bonus quest.



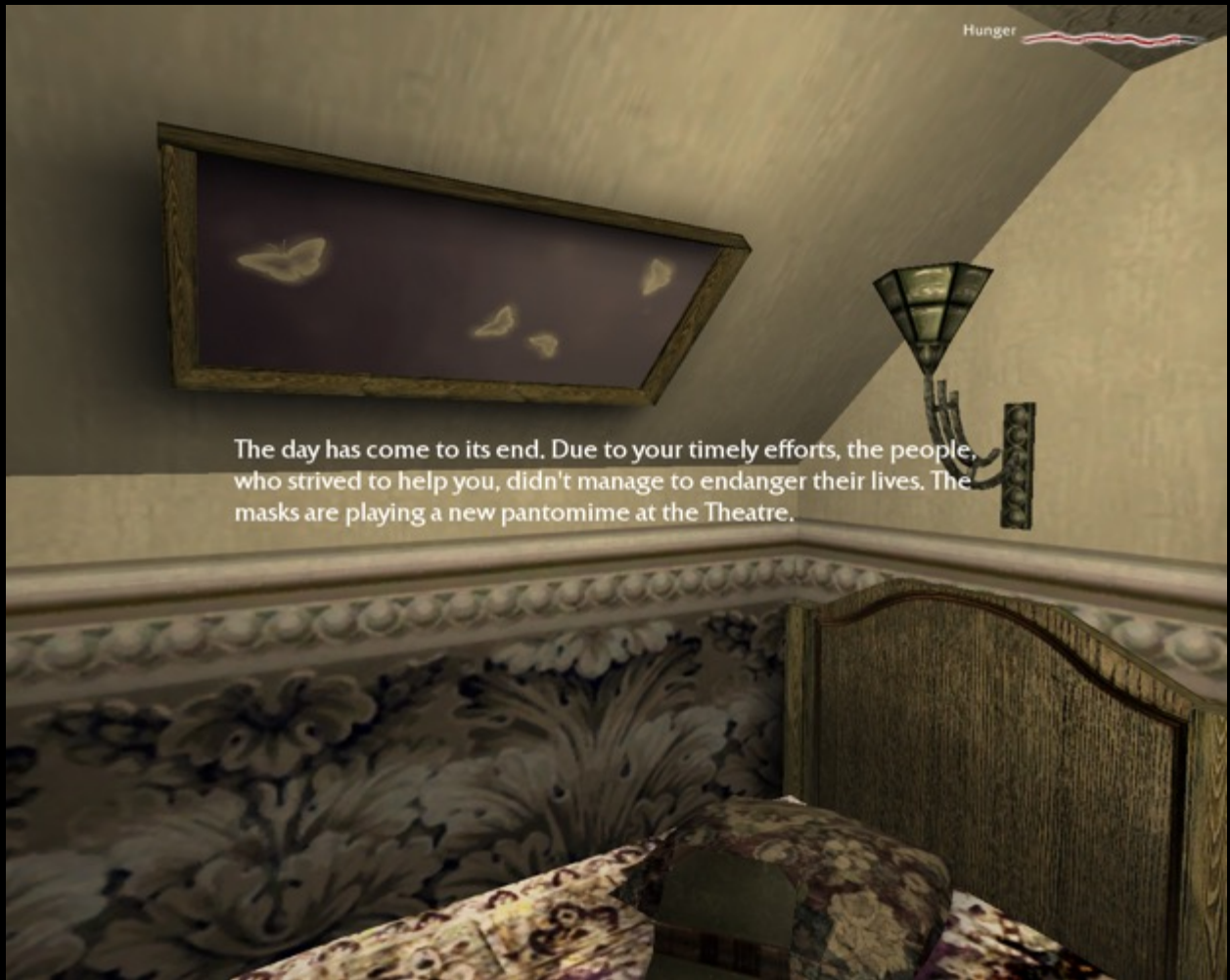
"NOOOOOOO!"

I give up. These rats keep seeing me or getting burned to death before I have a chance to grab them. I might as well sell my scalpel for rations, but I really do hate to part with it. Maybe my shotgun instead. I say goodbye to it for ~10000. This is fair. The merchant I sold it to has nothing in his shop except for drugs and junk I sold him earlier. I buy back the twyrine, then spend literally two entire game hours searching for shops with food in them.

I suppose now is as good a time as any to state that drinking water refills hunger slightly, but depletes exhaustion. I feel less-than-glorious running back and forth from the Slough to sleep after standing by the water barrel and refilling the same five bottles until my exhaustion becomes unmanageable, but I just want to live until tomorrow at this point. I am saving my single bottle of milk for the morning. It is 19:00 now. I am going to the Stone Yard's pharmacy for tourniquets, and then going to sleep.

Hunger

The day has come to its end. Due to your timely efforts, the people, who strived to help you, didn't manage to endanger their lives. The masks are playing a new pantomime at the Theatre.



Day Twelve

clarifies, why all this was needed.



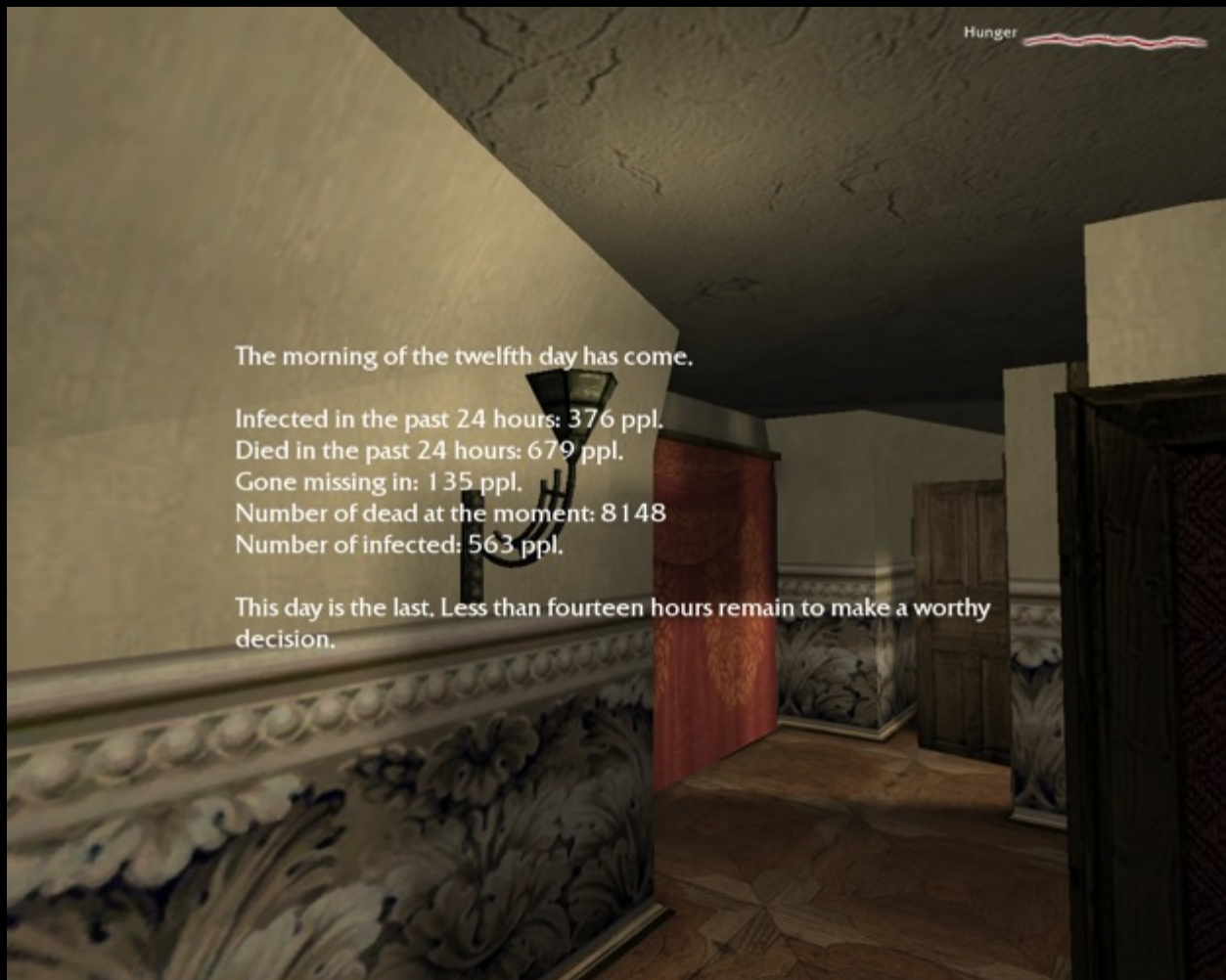
"Of these children, someone has died... I know because they are better heard in the Theatre than in the Tower."

- Mark Immortal.

Whatever do you mean by that, Mark...?

"This day is the last one. The time to choose has come."

- "Last decision on the town", Day quests [12].



Now I'll play a little unfair. This is about as far as I can take you. If you'd like to see the rest of the ending explored, you must achieve it for yourself.

I protected each of my own Adherents from infection throughout the campaign, so not one of them is ill today.

"My branch was called Feed the Doll. I wanted my parents to be nearby, as well..."
- Mishka.

"My branch was called The Last Vampire. If not for the pestilence, I would catch the strange Albino."
- Spichka.

"My branch was named Dualsouls. I wanted to create an amicable brotherhood of children and animals."
- Notkin.

"The branch was named Burden of Alive, earlier. Well, I simply wanted to take care of those who leave us!"

- Laska.

"My branch was named so: Kapella. If not for this pestilence, I would spread a pagan cult among the children, and then the parents would live forever."

- Kapella.

"My branch was called The Mother of Bulls. If the Order survived, I would rule it instead of daddy."

- Mother Keeper.

"My branch was named Beast. If not the Pestilence, I would revolt against the adults, and would establish here the dictatorship of the childhood. Kapella has thought up better."

- Khan.

I cure Victor Kain of the Sand Pest with a panacea.

"My branch was called The Mistress. I had to keep the memory of my wife for the town."

- Victor Kain.

"My branch was called Necrology. I wanted to do everything so that death would never touch my precious brother."

- George Kain.

"My branch was named The Return of Magic. I wanted to get the power and create a space where miracles and fine lawlessnesses would have been possible."

- Maria Kain.

I cure Andrei Stamatina of the Sand Pest with a panacea.

"My branch is called Jump Above the Head. I have done everything that I wanted."

- Andrei Stamatina.

I cure Petr Stamatina of the Sand Pest with a panacea.

"My branch was called Calligrapher. They did not allow me to forget about my deed, and they could not kill me... so, everything just begins."

- Petr Stamatina.

"My branch was called Golden Hair, but later on I really wanted to give my soul to our Cathedral, to... bring at least something immortal to it."

- Eve Yahn.

"My branch was named The Blood of Land. Actually, I found out hence that occurs. The conclusions are obvious."

- Young Vlad.

"Someone without a dream is like one without a soul. Well, we are small people. The branches are not about us... Do as you want."

- Gryph.

I cure Catherina Saburova of the Sand Pest with a panacea.

"My branch was named Rat Prophet, but I did not know until the last that he spoke to me in dreams. I thought... that was Land."

- Catherina Saburova.

"My branch was named The Restoration of Authority. I wanted to return the power and dignity to our country. If it wasn't for this pestilence, I would probably become governor."

- Alexander Saburov.

I cure Lara Ravel of the Sand Pest with a panacea.

"My branch was named The House of Alive. I was the kindest. I did not know up until the end that I would have to meet the murderer of my beloved father!"

- Lara Ravel.

I cure Julia Luricheva of the Sand Pest with a panacea.

"My branch was called Stretchings of Destiny. I had to convincingly pronounce the logic of inevitability because I had attained it by my own efforts."

- Julia Luricheva.

"My branch was called Angel of Death. I have already got confused, myself, who I was in the caravan.

Life is hard..."

- Anna Angel

"My branch was named The Land. I could tell why the dense soil is not guilty of the happened catastrophe."

- Ospina.

"My branch was called The Attendant. I have made a sacrilege and fed the town with its fruits. Though, before, I was a furious soldier."

- Stanislav Rubin.

I am left with three powders, as souvenirs. One for myself, one for the Bachelor, and one for the Devotress. I visit them both before it's time for all of us to meet in the Cathedral.



God, I'm sorry to keep harping on this, but "My dear Burakh," pierced me through the fucking heart, man. I guess since you've made it this far, you get a special treat which can, if it must, be discarded from your brain. The Bachelor has multiple lines of dialogue with Eve and Maria where he brushes off their interest in him. Say what you will about his relationship with Artemiy, but... hmmmmmm. Fawning, huh? Married to science, or...? I don't know. I didn't make the game. I've only spent hundreds of hours meticulously poring over its text. Ignore me!

BACHELOR
HARUSPICUS

There is almost no time left...
Your confidants are alive and healthy. Come to the Council.



Bachelor

Well, I will. If you say to Block that you are with me you will disarm the Inquisitor.
See you at Cathedral, oinon.



Hunger

Exhaustion

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Klara's letter

I'll remind you about the corresponding pairs. You were introduced to them the other day.

So, the first similarity: if the thing that your father called an udurg is the town, then your victim is the Polyhedron. It cannot be otherwise. They are similar. By destroying the Polyhedron, you will make a sacrifice and let loose the rivers of blood - the underground blood will flow through the hollow pivot.

The second similarity: if Aglaja is your victim - then the udurg is Simon. In that case the Polyhedron is to be preserved no matter what.

I'm in the left wing of the Aplay, come round, if you want to talk.

Nothing will die.

DEVOTRESS
HARUSPICUS

There is very little time left... They'll begin shooting soon!
And I like the Bachelor's decision.



Devotress

Visit Maria, the Scarlet Mistress, which your Bachelor is going to enthrone. Visit her after you hand in the right to decide to the Bachelor, she is still drowsing now! She won't hide her plans from you - she is too sure that such babies-miserable as Victoria or I won't be on her way.
Really? I will drop in probably...

"Your Bachelor"... I'm going fucking insane.



...

After both of these conversations, I receive the strangest letter.

I wonder what happens next.