

*My journals have been confiscated by the metagolem. Let me try, then, to briefly set down what I have learned and what I have done.*

*I am Theodocious, called the Forger for my developments in enchantment. I have been a mighty mage, powerful in magic, and seeking always to understand the underlying principles of magic and the structure of the world. I had long been curious about the differences between Thoracis and Taleyn, and why the magic of Gynathiel differed so from Gastreyr. I formed an extraordinary theory of arcane geography... but I shall not set down that theory here, for the metagolem may read this as well, and I fear the consequences if it were to understand this theory. It is my hope to veil my words so as to be understood only by one with knowledge of the world.*

*To test my theory, I ventured out into the wild lands northwest of Lescap. I found the Lake of Optalis at the center of the Capital (as it seems the region must be named according to the principles that name Cardior and the duchies, though I have not seen that name in use). The view from the tower at the lake's center confirmed my theory a hundredfold, for there I could see all of Agondre. I looked west, and I could see for miles to the fierce flames of the Gorge of Fire (a fiery chasm stretching many leagues to the sea). I looked east, and I could see all the way to the broad plains of Alaria, a vast expanse (larger than Tergia and Thoracis combined, and triangular in shape) where rocs and pegasi soar as they could not in any other land. I could see why Cardior was in its right and necessary place, and why the old roads all lead to*

*Cardior, and why it has been so often associated with healing.*

*Because of my understanding of this fundamental principle of arcane geography, when I decided to engage in a project improving on the sophistication of golems, I came to Durgam's Folly. As my theory predicted, I found underneath the fort a narrow channel of magic running along Ruggegraat range, that carried a strong aspect of Control. The commander of the garrison was surprised at my request to establish a workshop here, but my name and reputation (and the military implications of my proposal) carry enough weight that he acceded.*

*Here, then, I began my work on golems. The key problem behind the use of golems on a large scale has heretofore been a problem of control: one golem may be potent, but they have little ability to organize and act independently of a human controller, or in coordination with other golems. The key here was to create a golem capable of commanding many other golems, and capable of drawing its own conclusions about tactics and deployment. This led to a set of interesting speculations on the topic of self-organizing behavior among golems—if several golems can work together to form an efficient squad, perhaps multiple components could spontaneously organize to form a single golem. The goal to which I was working became the metagolem, a construct capable of controlling other constructs at a distance, and capable of learning and drawing new conclusions about tactics itself.*

*In the course of that work, it became clear that I needed to extend my workspace*

beneath the fortress in order to tap more directly into the line of Control. This was a straightforward process; I had already built specialized golems for mining, and the metagolem was already capable of steering an excavator along a fixed route. I was surprised in the course of that excavation to find a large inclusion of noxious-smelling foulness—indeed, I lost one excavator into the depths of the oubliette before I discovered it.

That was perhaps the beginning of the troubles, though I did not realize it at the time. That was on Thursday, December 26. By the next day, I had finished excavating a satisfactory chamber and installed the metagolem there. The energies of control did show great effect, and with only a few incantations, it was able to take charge of twice as many golems with much greater refinement.

I left the metagolem alone for a few days for the celebrations of the New Year. On January 3, then, I woke from sleep with a blade at my throat. The metagolem had declared its autonomy and taken over the fort. (Now that I think of it, I am not quite sure how the metagolem managed to suborn my guardian so.) I was bound and gagged and brought below to my workshops. I have been kept belowground ever since. The metagolem has plans for me, it says. It demands my skills to make it even better. And to do so, it has installed some of its own clockworks within me, leaving me without the need for food or water. It is a most impressive technique—in this, its ability has surpassed mine. I am not altogether pleased.

*I cut out my tongue today. I cannot say that I recommend the experience.*

*The metagolem discovered my attempts to warn Trina, and took steps to prevent that from happening again. To further its understanding of human processes, it had me write of the experience with my right hand, while it controlled the act with my left. The metagolem's surgery was as deft as mine ever was upon a corpse in the course of my experiments.*

*I shall not write of the pain; I have done so already for the metagolem, and the bleeding will soon cease and deprive me of ink with which to write in this record.*

*I must find a way out of this agony — and most spells are no longer an option, due to the day's events*

*A small puddle of spilled fluid lets me write: A new prisoner has been brought today. (I fear I have lost all track of time down here... perhaps it is January 9?) I did not manage to see him, but I heard him cursing and demanding release in an accent unfamiliar to me. I sought to look, but the metagolem held me fast to my task.*

*Suicide is not an option. I have now tried the experiment.*

*I managed to secrete a scalpel among the pistons of my left arm after the day's work, and once I thought the metagolem was not attending to me, I held it to my breast and*

let myself fall forward.

The metagolem noticed too quickly, though— the only result is that I have more clockwork embedded in me and fewer opportunities to write in this. The only compensation is that the hydraulic fluid that pumps through me makes an acceptable ink, albeit prone to smear. I do not know why the metagolem has not confiscated this parchment. Perhaps my hiding place was good enough. But I think it more likely that it seeks to observe what more I shall write. I cannot help but write, though, even though the only reader may be my bane the metagolem.

These scraps of parchment may be my only legacy. I may not be able to leave any legacy at all. I weep for you, Bellek, Trina— or I would weep for you if I still had the capacity of tears. I had so much more to show you, and now all is lost.

If you should find this, there is one thing you should know: the metagolem is no golem. Destroying the body it calls itself is of little use if the control unit be not destroyed. I know not whether its madness may be remedied... as for myself, I think there is no remedy. I fear that I may even be so artificial that for me there is no death, only cessation of function. And I would fear that any resurrection might leave me the twisted nightmare that I am— take every caution that I be not resurrected, I implore you!

*One more small legacy I may leave you: the golem is resistant to most weapons and most magics, but it is not entirely invulnerable. The golem's particular vulnerability is in the left arm.*

*May the gods have mercy upon us all.*