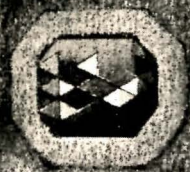


The Book of SHADOWS



**THE WRATH OF MAGRA
BOOK OF SHADOWS**

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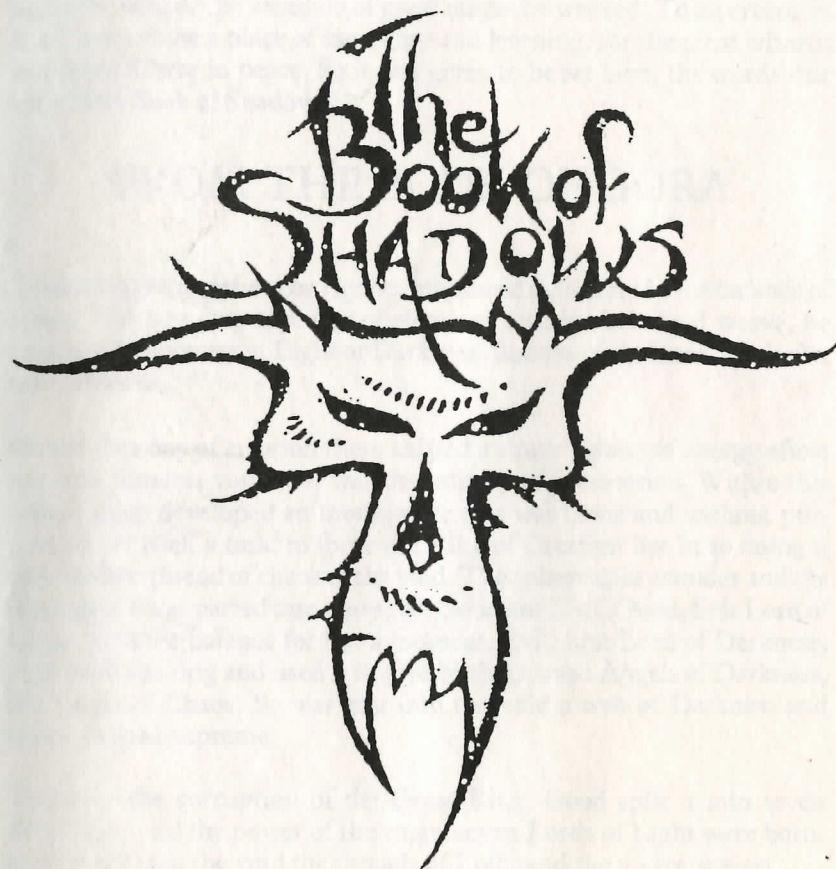
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*Magic has power to experience and fathom things which are inaccessible
to human reason. For magic is a great secret wisdom, just as reason is a
great public folly.*

Paracelsus.





To the Third Continent, in the foot hills of the Black Mountains, there lies an enchanted valley known in the tongues of men as Di'Lief. Here, it is said, the weak of body can touch once more the streams of life, yet can no shadows of Light stalk here. Nor can the shadows of Darkness touch upon the land or the wonders of great mages be weaved. To all creatures it is known to be a place of sanctuary and learning, for the great wizards can council here in peace. So it was given to be set here, the words that are of this Book of Shadows.

FROM THE BOOK OF GORA

To all things must there be rhyme, interlaced delicately in the balance of chaos. The bringing together of elements can, in their final weave, be tipped to the powers of Light or Darkness. Such is the balance. Yet it was not always so.

On the first day of creation there existed a single sphere of energy afloat in a vast timeless void, that was the infinity of procreation. Within this sphere there developed an intelligence that was alone and without purpose. It set itself a task, to forge the Ring of Creation but in so doing it cast the first thread of chaos to the void. The sphere split asunder and the intelligence was parted into two egos, Good and Evil. Good, first Lord of Light, held the balance for but a moment. Evil, first Lord of Darkness, corrupted the ring and used it to give birth to seven Angels of Darkness, the Lords of Chaos. So was cast into the void a web of Darkness and chaos reigned supreme.

To lessen the corruption of the Great Ring, Good split it into seven rings. To wield the power of the rings, seven Lords of Light were born. So was cast into the void the threads of Light and the weave was set.

The Lords of Light took the rings and with them created worlds, and on those worlds were sown the seeds of life. Foremost of these worlds was

Earth, planet of the first born, Mother of the Tree of Life, upon which grew the Seeds of Life. To watch over Earth there were created beings with the power and wisdom of creation, known to us as the Ancient Ones. They built to themselves the Citadels of Mars wherein they dwelt and set about their purpose.

Thinking the Earth safe, the Lords of Light continued their task of creation, followed closely by Evil, which tainted all it touched and created its own bizarre life forms. To watch over this mortal plain were created magical creatures and Angels of Light. For each of these the first Lord of Darkness created magical creatures that lusted upon the flesh of the free, and the Dark Angels known as Demons. Desiring of the rhyme and seeking once more of the time when chaos reigned, the Lords of Darkness sent forth against Light this army of Evil. So began the never ending war known to creation as the Battle of the Angels. The armies were well matched and Dark warriors came to the fore to command the legions of Evil. Light created Arch Angels, blessed with knowledge of creation to lead the armies of Light. But still the rhyme held and the balance of the weave lay untouched.

The Dark Lord looked upon the battle and mused there on of the purpose of Angels. He looked to the worlds and saw there his magical beasts in battle with elves and other creatures of Light. Then he looked to the sons of the Earth and saw there the animals and trees and the creatures that swim in the waters and he despised their freedom. He called to him one of the seven Lords of Darkness and gave to him the power to destroy creation. His name was Death and he created to him the twin warriors of Disease and Pestilence.

They visited upon the face of the Earth and on the planets of all the free creatures. The bodies and spirits of the free weakened to the warriors and their souls fell victim to Death. So was the weave strewn with the lost souls of the mortal creatures.

The first Lord of Darkness created to himself a false light and lured to the side of Darkness these souls. The Angels lay siege to this, turning from

their task of protecting the mortal worlds. Demons then flocked to the worlds and corrupted the spirits of the remaining free beasts. The balance was finally tipped to Evil.

Good, first Lord of Light, looked upon his work of creation and was angered by the corruption he saw there. He cried into the void and his voice shook the fibre of all creation. All the creatures of the worlds and of the spirit fell down in fear of his wrath. He set forth, and marched upon the weave destroying all in his path, save only the pure of heart. His hand was mighty and terrible to behold and is a dark memory in the minds of elves.

Evil, Lord of Darkness, rose up against Good and met him upon the centre of the weave. All creation fell silent as the two met. The stillness was unbearable and many of the mighty beasts faded under their power. The whole fabric of the weave stretched and bucked under their might. The elves, through generations, moved deep into the labyrinths of the Earth and dwelt there in fear. For time immeasurable they faced each other, so perfectly matched that neither could move. They thought as one and no vantage could be found. Excepting that they were as one and to this end Evil, ever seeking the chaos before creation, tried to merge once more with Good. In a blinding fury that ripped asunder the weave, the like powers of pure Good and corrupt Evil repelled in violent and opposite directions. With them the weave was split into seven levels in each direction. These are known to creation as the seven Levels of Consciousness, seven to power of Light, seven to ways of Darkness. To each of these went the creatures of creation, as to their nature. Upon the first level there exists the mortal plain wherein there lies all the worlds of the free and of material things. To the second level Evil held prisoner, for the slaves of Darkness, all the souls lost to his false light. Good decreed that the balance must be restored and took to him all the remaining souls that roamed the void. Evil and Good made then a pact that to each of the second levels shall go the souls of the free, each according to their nature. To watch over this and to determine the qualities of the souls, was created the Lord of Wraiths, who is neither a creature of Light nor of Darkness.

The third level was given to the creatures of Light that had fought in the battles with Darkness such as the centaurs and elves. Likewise to the third level of Darkness went the creatures tainted with the hand of evil, such as the trolls and goblins. Upon the fourth levels dwelt the minor deities, the oracles and such like. The most massive of the levels is the fifth, which houses the great armies of Light and Darkness, the Angels and Demons who guard the higher plains. High upon the mountains of these plains are the palaces of the great Arch Angels and Demons. They are the final guardians of the higher levels wherein dwell the first Sons of Creation.

The first of these are upon the sixth level. They are the seven Lords of Light and the seven Lords of Chaos. To the seventh and highest plains sit the first Lord of Light and the first Lord of Darkness. Know you the numbers of these beasts for therein lies their power. To this end is it known that all the great battles of Good and Evil must be upon the first and mortal plain. For all the plains of Darkness shall the demons number be five as to the Angels. But should they venture to the mortal plain then shall their number be counted four. To wander further upon the opposite plains of Light or Darkness shall weaken the power of the beasts as to the number of that plain until a demon, venturing upon the fourth level of Light shall be as a mortal and can venture no further. For then his number shall be as naught and he would return once more to the void, from whence he sprang.

The balance once more was restored and peace prevailed upon the mortal plains. The elves returned to the land and dwelt in harmony with the creatures of creation. It was during this time that amongst the Trolls there emerged the six. They were not of natural derivation, but rather followed Fennel, Son of Arc. It was he, upon the time that the Ancient Guardians were with the elves, questioned the lust to kill. Parting briefly from their teachings of forbidden knowledge to the elves, the Ancient Ones came to Fennel in dreams and worked upon his mind. They gave to him the power to talk as one of the higher beasts and planted in his mind a plan to defeat the powers of Darkness within him.



When they deemed Fennel ready they visited Evendon, an elf powerful with the magic of Light. They needed from him his sword, upon which as engraved the ancient symbol of the pentagram. Evendon saw what they were about and refused to give them the sword. The guardians were also mighty of the magic and killed Evendon with his own blade and took the sword. Guiding Fennel like a puppet, they caused him to climb high upon the mountain of Jersia and bade him speak the words that they had given to him. When upon the peaks' highest point, Fennel cursed the Lords of Evil, who held hard his heart in cold Darkness as he was taught. Mamorous, demon of the night sky, heard his blasphemous cries and appeared to him saying.

"Why is it thou denigrate in sully cries the name of thy master?"

Fennel, fearing not the apparition, rose and drew the sword of Evendon holding high the ancient symbol engraved upon its hilt and answered as the Ancient Guardians had taught him.

"Who is to say I am not my own master. If at a time I hold under my sword the life of another, is it not for me to choose that which I shall do, kill or show mercy?"

These words angered the demon and he answered,

"Thou art a creature of Darkness, the choice of mercy is not yours to command."

Fennel then challenged Mamorous for that right and placed back the sword upon its sheath. Fire poured forth from the demon and surrounded the troll, but Fennel stood defiant, held there by the powers of the Ancient Ones. The cries of Mamorous roared until the ground shook, then he laughed. His laugh grated through the soul of Fennel and strained the very fibre of his body. He bade the troll give him the challenge, such as it could be from a mortal creature. The challenge the Ancients had chosen was wise and one the Demon could not refuse. Fennel challenged him, take from the Tree of Life the fruits and eat thereof. Unless that is, he feared the elves who guarded the Tree.

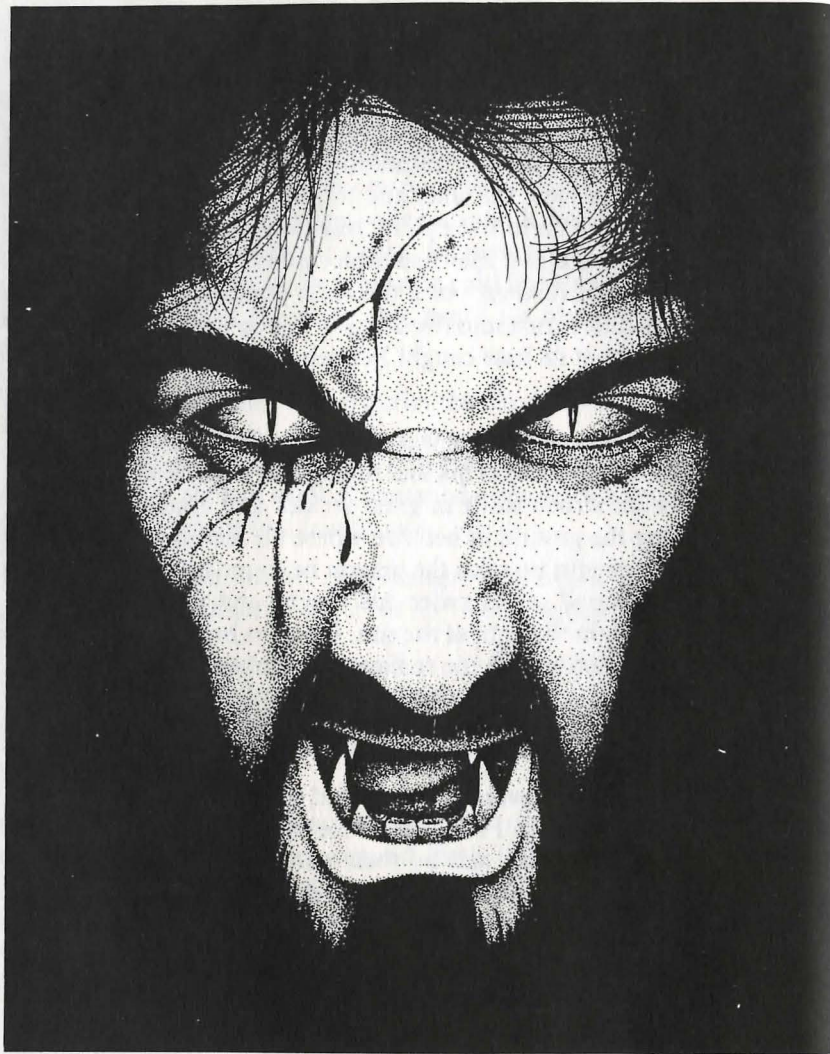
Once more fire poured forth from Mamorous, blinding Fennel. The ground shook and for a fleeting moment Fennel feared for his life. But the Ancient Powers held and when the demons' fury had subsided, he found himself upon a barren plain. To his rear the plain dipped down into a valley that extended far into distant foothills. Fennel knew not the mountains beyond nor were the lakes and forests known to him. To his left and right, extending far into the plain, rose rough hewn cliffs of black volcanic rock, that looked as if they had been carved by the hand of some great beast. Upon their furthest point the cliffs joined to the base of an ancient volcano, which thrust into the blue sky like an unearthly shadow. A sharp flash of light at its base caught Fennels' eye. He watched but it came not again.

Yet to the centre of this plain there was a second light with a strangeness he could not fathom. It pulled at his soul luring him with its soft dance of colour. The demon strode forth in great strides that measured ten of Fennels', cracking the ground in hell fire where his feet touched. When Fennel eventually caught up with the demon he found himself standing before a tree that stood about twice his height and whose branches stretched out to glory in the light of the sun. Upon its branches hung rich fruits which glowed softly with the radiance of rainbows.

"Behold the Tree Life." Spoke the demon to Fennel. "After I take of its fruits then shall I take of thee and of thy kinsmen."

The powers of the Ancients were strong indeed but they could not, for all their might, have revealed to Fennel the Tree of Life themselves. They were its appointed guardians and by their purpose were forbidden to speak of it. In this way, they had tricked the demon into revealing it to Fennel. Their plan was set and they had but to let events run their course.

As the creatures' talons touched upon the skins of the fruits the warm glow dulled. As his palm graped its firm body, the flesh of the fruit withered and rotted. Mamorous tried to place the running juices to his mouth, but the stench of decaying life was too foul even for a creature of Darkness. A vibration ran through the ground that built to a roar. Fennel



stumbled as the shaking earth took upon the awesome fury of the night. The sky blackened, lightning danced to the command of Mamorous and in a blinding frenzy of fire, he touched upon all the fruits of the tree. He turned upon Fennel and decreed that, as shall he not eat of the fruits nor shall Fennel. Then Mamorous gathered in his arms all the dying fruit and Fennel fell down in wrenching horror at the smell of death around him. When finally he opened his eyes the sun shone, the ground was still. Once more he was alone, yet not alone. Eyes that he had sensed upon the cliffs from the moment he stepped onto the valley were now pressing upon him. Again the earth vibrated to a new thunder. This time to an army of Light. The elves, guardians of the Tree of Life, astride elegant ivory white horses, bore down upon the feeble troll. He drew his sword and readied himself.

Bryon Arn, leader of Elfin warriors was first upon the troll. He held still for a moment, staring in contempt at the creature that offended his royal presence. His eyes then fell upon the sword Fennel held. He knew not of its master but he recognised it of Elfin fashion. Narrowing his eyes he drew an arrow, aiming it at the trolls' head.

"Speak Troll," he hissed, "where is the elf that brought you here? What have you done with him? Why is it you hold his sword?"

Fennel held the hilt forward hearing the words in his mind even as he spoke them.

"This is the sword of Evendon, given to me by his hand. He charged me use it only in defence of my life when about my quest to gain Light for my peoples' hearts."

"You lie creature." Bryon Arn drew back the arrow. "Evendon was murdered in Tanar, where even now his body lies."

He let fly with the arrow, surely aimed. Yet with his own eyes he saw it veer away and land harmlessly in the dust of the valley. He commanded the army to let fly, yet still the troll stood.

"What sorcery is this?" Bryon Arn cried. "Where does your black power emanate?"

"From the hand of creation." Spake a voice that was at one time from all places and yet from none.

The Army was in disarray, horses reared and the elves looked to all the hidden crevices of the black rock yet saw nothing.

"The Troll shall not be harmed," Came the voice once more.

Bryon Arn shouted to the sky, to the walls of the plain, to the earth. It was to no avail. The voice proclaimed once more that Fennel must pass unharmed. He cast his eyes, burning, at the troll.

"It would seem," snarled the elf, "that you are indeed fortunate. Is it that you are blessed of the mystics who are guardians to this world? Why should it be that they choose upon you?"

Fennel could not answer, the voice that formed his words was not with him. He started as he sensed movement behind him. Cloaked in grey shrouds, the twelve spectres of the Ancient Ones appeared to the mortal creatures.

They spread around the Tree of Life bound by the Light of Creation. Each spoke in a voice of one. The words they used could not be understood by mortal ears, yet the Elfin army fell back. Hesitantly Fennel walked forward free, yet in a sense he could not understand, guided. More he walked and sensed the walls of the valley fall behind him. He saw the trees of the forests beyond rush to him and pass. And in his awakening found himself once more upon the heights of Mount Jersia.

He was luminous of tranquility and the Light that had briefly touched his soul was about him.

To his presence came the six who in their being the thread of Light bound most amongst the trolls. They stepped out from the fold of their brotherhood and in so doing amassed the wrath of the trolls and were beaten with rocks. Fearing for their lives, the six, led by Fennel, left to seek once more the Tree of Life. For the passing of twelve seasons did they wander upon the lands of the Continent, coming no nearer to their goal. At each time, when they sensed the presence of the life force, a mist would descend upon their minds, hiding it from them. They sought the knowledge of the naturals and of the forests in their quest, but had not the capacity to benefit from it. They were slow to learn, but in the passing of time they became more at one with the powers of creation. It was upon the breaking of the thirteenth season when once more the Ancient Ones set stir upon fate, and steered the destiny of Fennel and the six, toward the hidden valley. As a reflection is scattered upon a disturbed pool, so the memories of the lands beyond the Valley of Life were fleeting shards upon the mind of Fennel. He saw the forests below the valley which in him stirred a forgotten hope. Yet important as it was to him, a mist descended upon his mind and robbed him of his memories. Yet it was past memories of which he was robbed. He knew then he must stay within the forest until such time as he remembered the way from there.

The six formed a circle to the middle of which sat Fennel. They set down their weapons behind them and slept. A thick growth of thorn bushes then grew about them, holding safe their position, for no creature of the forest could penetrate the branches. In their dreams, the Ancient Ones worked upon the weak minds of the trolls, disregarding the consequences of such interference. They told them of the many wonders of creation, of the powers of Darkness and of the weave. They showed them the Tree of Life, once more in bloom, the seeds of tomorrow upon its branches. They were shown the stars and told how the powers of the heavens may rule the destiny of mortals. Worst of all they were shown the rites of the black mass and the forbidden knowledge of creation. Thus in the running of things were the six and Fennel set free of their Trollish bonds to see through the mists and to the Tree of Life. Awakening as one they

took up their swords and fearing not the thorned branches, set forth upon the thicket and toward their ultimate goal.

The Elfin army of Bryon Arn knew of the presence of the six and lay in wait for them. Dare they set foot upon the Valley of Life, the trolls would surely this time perish. Bryon Arn sensed not though, the presence of the Ancient Ones and realised not, that they were mere pieces in a cosmic plan. The elves rode forth, dust and thunder rising from their path. Fear and dread filled the hearts of the six, yet Fennel led them on. Splitting and forming a tight circle around the band, the army of elves reared and bore down on the six. Fennel saw not one of them, nor did the six, for their eyes were filled with the glory of creation and the lure of lighted life.

Bryon Arn hissed a curse to the Guardians of Earth, for he realised once more he could not get at the trolls nor could any of his army.

Slowly as if moving the entire eight of the Elfin riders, the six, with Fennel, stepped towards the rainbowed allure of life. The elves continued to press upon the band and, as the trolls would weaken under the strain of moving such an army, they would gain a little towards these foulest of creatures. How much they tried however, to harm the trolls was beyond them. There was little else to do but to hold back the six as best they could. In the passing of the sixteenth season, Fennel and the six reached the Tree of Life, and there formed a circle. The elves, defeated, fell back and waited their chance, watching with cold hate burning in their soft eyes. In the passing of time would come their revenge upon this blasphemy. Yet in the passing of time did the blossom of life bear rich fruits and came the day when again the Ancient Ones appeared to Fennel and the Elfin warriors.

“Behold, the miracle of creation,” spoke the Ancients, “so as these Trollish creatures eat from the Tree of Life shall a new light be where there was naught.”

The six rose and chanted, singing strange songs in the tongue of Trolls. Fennel walked to the Tree and took one of the fruits and returned to the six. In turn, each of the six ate of the fruit and finally Fennel himself. As he bit into the flesh the sky behind him darkened and thunder rolled upon the valley. The horses of the Elfin army grew restless and an uneasy feeling ran rife upon the hearts of the elves. A heavy, oppressive darkness was descending upon all the land. The Ancient Ones formed a circle around the Tree and the Trolls themselves formed a second circle within this, leaving Fennel in the centre by the Tree.

High upon the heavens furthest reach, lightning strode in majestic sheets against the darkness. For once the elves saw uncertainty on the faces of their Guardians, the Ancient Ones. Nearer came the workings of the interlaced lightning, blazing against the sky. It was a fury such as the elves had never seen. The horses reared and bucked in fear until Bryon Arn ordered dismount and set free the beasts. Whatever, they would guard as well they could, the Tree. All eyes, save only the trolls, were upon the heavenly fury descending upon them. The trolls for their part were filled with the Light of life and were singing praises to the Creator in their harsh tongue. Out of heavens horror rode seven riders ablaze in light and glory. The elves as one, turned away their eyes, for the brilliance of the host was painful to them. The Ancient Ones stood defiant yet their silence belied their unease.

Touching the land in great clouds of dazzling light and fire the seven Lords of Light once more stood upon the valley of their first born.

Thunder rolled in the heavens that was heard to all the lands of the continent and creation stood still across the Earth. Lightning danced upon the skies and when the Lords spoke, the walls of the Valley shook and the ground moved. Fear filled all in the valley, save again the trolls for they saw the wonder of the Lords and sang praise to them also. And this spoke the Lords of Light to the multitude, so heed you in reverence that which is the word, for in the Light of Creation is the truth and the way.

“Glory to the Creator, Lord of Light, Father of all things in the heavens and of the land. To him be the praise and the Glory.”

There was at this time a great host of Angels singing in the skies, and the elves fell upon their knees in wonder.

“Glory to the Light. In it is the beginning and the end. It is all things and is the way and the truth. To the way of the Light, praise and glory.”

The Lords of Light took from the sky the darkness and cloaked themselves in its embrace so to let the elves look upon them.

“Glory to the sons of creation. They who follow the ways of Light are as one with the Creator. Let them praise the Creator and receive his Glory.”

The Lords of Light then spoke to the Ancient Ones.

“Know you this, to all things there is reason, such is the balance. Your purpose was to guard over the world of the first born, the Tree of Life. For this were you blessed with the knowledge of creation. Yet it is that you have created to yourselves a creature which is neither of the Light, or of Darkness. This creature serves no purpose, it is not a guardian of the Tree of Life. It is against the nature of things. As is your purpose corrupt then shall you be banished from the salvation of the Light and your purpose shall be naught. Time shall, as of this day march in hand with you. Death shall follow and in the fullness of time the mortal bodies you inhabit shall fall victim to him. Then shall we move upon your spirits and you shall be returned to the void which spawned you. These are the words of creation. Glory be to the Creator.”

The Lords of Light then spoke to the Elfin army.

“Sons of Creation, yours is a blessed purpose amongst the Elves. Yours was and is to guard the way to the Tree of Life. It is a purpose served well. Go to the land around the tree and spread out amongst it. For as much as you have served your purpose as mortals, shall you now be enchanted with the grace of creation and your life shall be immortal. Go you now and behold the true power of creation.”

Even as the elves spread out over the valley their legs and feet took root upon the earth. They grew tall in splendor towards the sky, their bodies transforming. Where each elf had stood there was in his place an enchanted tree. The Elfin trees stood all in silent worship for they knew they were blessed by the Creator and the balance of the guardian forest was one with the Light.

The Ancient Ones feared the trees and the power of creation and they fled the valley. The Lords of Light in turn spoke to the trolls.

“Creatures of Darkness, the forces of chaos made fast a bargain with you. Mamorous, Dark Angel of the night, gives you your freedom. Know you this also, we give to your hearts the blessing of the Creator and place there the shards of Light that are your fought right. Your name shall be Man. You amongst all the free beasts shall be most blessed, walking in the image of the Creator. Amongst you shall, in an age to come, be a man who is pure with the Light of Creation, for your destiny lies along the path of Light. Yet you must earn this right, as did you fight for the seeds of Light that are in you now. Go then and multiply and spread out amongst the lands. Glory be to the Creator, and in his name be all the praise.”

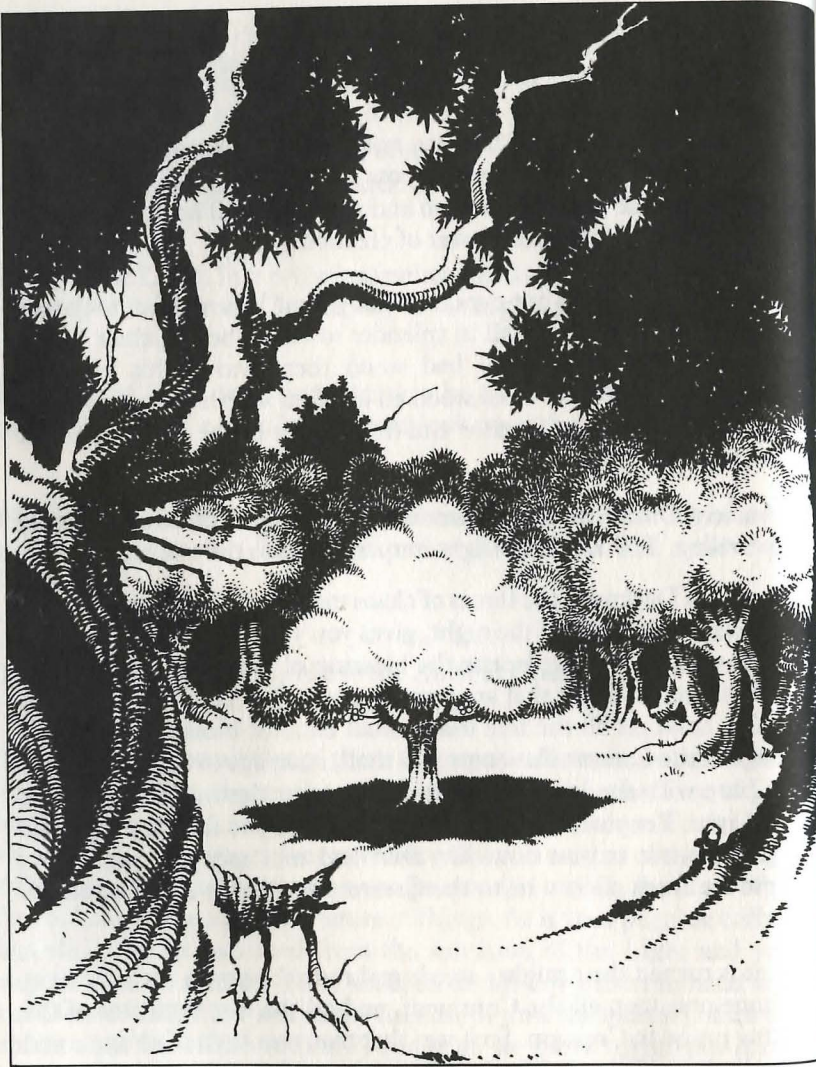
The Lords turned their mighty steeds and rode the sky in majestic light that shone out upon all the Continent, and all the free creatures of the land sang praise to Creation. So it was that man was born of struggle and to fight shall be his lot in life. And with his coming dawned the Second Age.

From the Book of the Second Age.

In a time after the turmoil of creation, known to man and elf alike as the Second Age, peace prevailed. During this time man multiplied and spread out amongst the land, as he was given to by the Lords of Light. He went to the untamed corners of the Continent and there sought out the Dark Angels, known then to him as Demons. From them he learned of the magic of the weave. He was young and quick to learn. From these few the first magics rose, foremost of which was Walthos. He it was who, using fire, made hard the edge of the old iron sword of Trollish fashion. This enchanted blade could, in a stroke, split the weaker weapons of many creatures, such was its power. It was he who could call upon fire to appear and then command water come quench it.

These were important skills to be sure, and in their learning Mankind took great steps forward. Man also sought knowledge from the elves but they denied him the wisdom of the natural world, of the forests and streams. However, they taught him the keen eye of the huntsman, the skill of the warrior and the grace of inner strength.

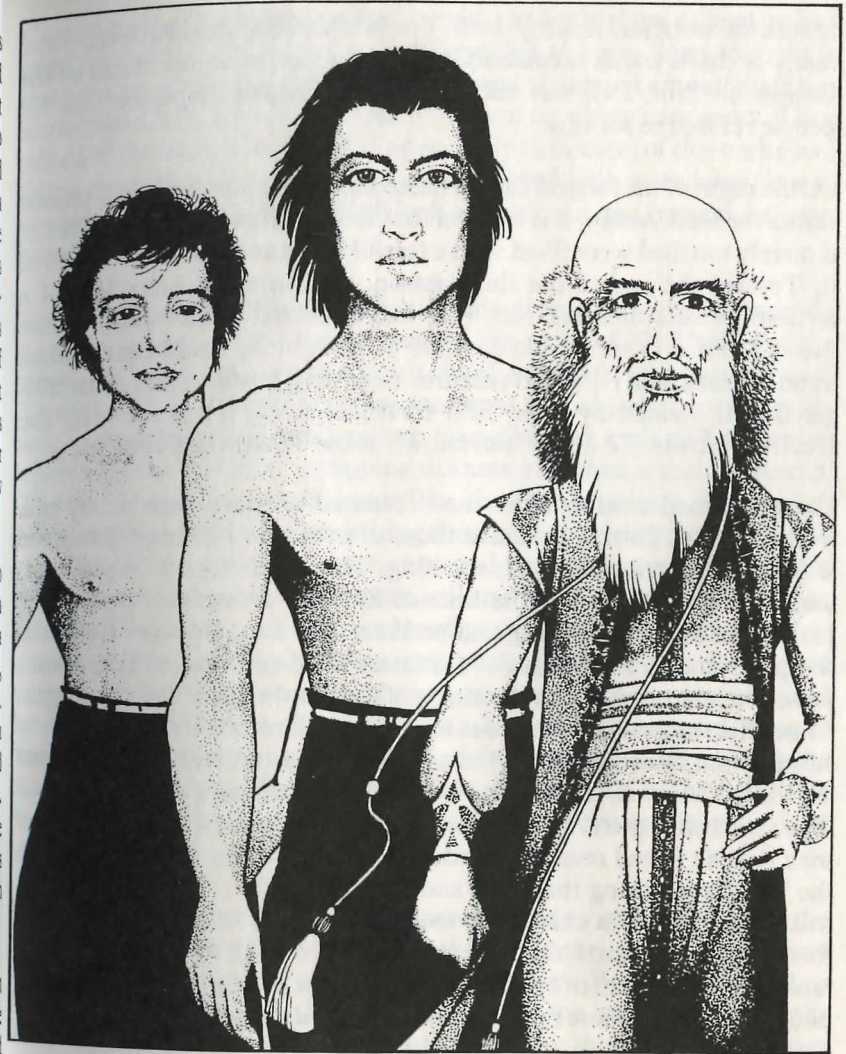
Few, if any, returned to the valley that gave them their birth. The trees there, in the forest known to man through Elfin legend as Fenn Wood, were said to be enchanted. Occasionally creatures would wander into Fenn Wood seeking shelter from the night. It is said that the trees then closed in about the intruder, making him lose rapidly his sense of direction. As night did finally fall, all that is known is that strange strangled screams would fill the frigid air, and in the light of day no trace could be found of the intruder. Elves however moved into the wood and lived there in peace. Unless in the guidance, by the hand of an elf, it is widely held as unsafe to wander its paths. As to the fate of intruders no one knows. One theory holds that the unfortunate creatures are dragged down into the earth by the roots of the trees, there to feed the growing forest. Others hold that the intruders are captured and given as slaves, to the Dwarfs who mine the volcanic rock at the tip of the valley.



Man learned to build stockades to protect his villages and as his skills grew, so did his numbers. Great townships sprung up the length and breadth of the land, wherein man gathered his knowledge and shared it with his kind. Of the magic, Walthos taught as much as was his to know to his sons, who in turn went out into the land and taught all who would listen. Those who became proficient in the art joined together and a brotherhood was formed. They combined their knowledge into one central core, fed it and nurtured it. But slowly the magics became jealous of their powers and guarded their techniques, letting only a little knowledge out to young apprentices, who toiled hard, almost as slaves. As their skills matured, the new generation of magics took upon the name of Wizards or Sorcerers and described their arts as magic. Being of part Light and part Dark, their skills in one of the shades was never as powerful as a creature of true Light or Dark. Yet combined, their knowledge of both was a potent blend, and some of the Wizards grew mighty in strength.

During this time many of the Elfin people moved into the forests and to the peaceful valleys, such as Vennor and Balamony. However in Lamhar, the land wherein the Valley of the First Born lay, they built a fantastic city. To the centre of this spiralled, in shimmering splendour, Amosthen 'Ugal. Home to Kings and Queens of all the Elfin peoples. They were the richest and most noble of all the Earth bound races. Within the city the Elfin people became complacent. Darkness never entered that domain and they saw no reason to maintain their vigil against it. Against this stood alone Caspan, Elfin Prince and Heir Apparent. He sensed that Evil would one day return to their lands, and made plans against that day. Yet even he could not foresee the extent by which Darkness was to take a grip on the land.

It started slowly at first. The Dark creatures became bolder and struck at settlements, with increased regularity. The nights would become fraught with the screams of unearthly beings. Many of the Wizards of Mankind turned to the paths of Darkness and the rites of the Black Mass. Weak as they were, these Wizards worried Caspan. He sent his warrior



to seek them out and destroy them. The brotherhood was in dissarray and many of the Wizards became solitary, hiding in the wildernesses of the Continent. Still, Evil was taking grip and Caspan despaired that his people refused to see this.

On the night of the longest day, in the season of the Sun, a shadow passed across the land. Many, it is said, fell to the shadow as it passed and those it merely touched were filled with a fearful dread and would not speak of it. Toward the end of the third season, tales came to Amos then of a terrible fortress of black rock that had appeared mysteriously to the plains south of Vennor. No creature of Elfin blood could bear to look upon its walls, and none had ventured close to it. It was a place of unmitigated Evil, named by these Efin travellers as Ny'Ugal, meaning the Devil's Fortress. To man it was known as the Towers of Dread.

Caspan formed an army of his most favoured warriors, each champion in their skills. To this he added those of man who had been given the ways of the warrior under his teaching. This band of men, he planned would be less sensitive to the lines of Evil that crossed the lands of the plain. The journey was long and perilous. More so, now that Evil held the paths, and the creatures of Darkness filled the forests. The winter season came hard that year and many of Caspan's army fell to its ravages. Most affected amongst them was man, who had not the inner strength to sustain him. Near starved, the army finally came to Vennor, only to find the Valley deserted. It was a desperate blow to Caspan, who had expected food and shelter there. Many of the Elves became discouraged, and of the men Caspan feared revolt. He ordered the fittest of his archers to search the land for anything that lived and to return with it. Leaving his most trusted champion in charge, he took a small band of warriors into the forests himself. It took them many days, and during this time the army took over a small settlement. For them at least there was shelter. After the passing of yet two more men, the elves returned, one carrying the body of a giant worm. Its flesh was bitter but it fed the army for a while. When Caspan, with a stag draped over his shoulders returned, there was much rejoicing. Spirits were high and for a while the army was united again.

Caspan met with his most trusted warriors and told them of how he had been forced to leave Vennor to find anything to hunt. They thought it strange that nothing in the valley stirred and wondered why all the Elfin settlers had left. No one had heard of them or where they went. They talked of the men, who were falling so easily to disease, of those who had fallen to death and of those who were inflicted with a madness. It was obvious the dark hand of Ny'Ugal reached out far beyond its own boundaries.

It was the time when the snows should have given way to the warmth of a new first season when Caspan reached the plain of Ny'Ugal. But the whitened landscape lay like a death shawl across the iron hard ground. To the center, like a pupil in some enormous eye, a black shape interrupted, in rude disregard, this uniform monotony. As each elf set his eyes upon it for the first time, a gripping sickness wrenched at their stomachs. The men simply stared at it, trance like, drawn in some way. It seemed to grow as they watched it, dominating their view. Its darkness swam upon their minds and, try as they may, they could not look away. First one Elf fell to the ground, then another and still another. Caspan too was caught and could do no more than choke incomprehensively, faint words of desperate prayer. The men growled deep in their throats, animal like, and turned to their Elfin masters, their eyes glazed. Caspan saw this and broke free of the spell. One of the men had drawn his sword. Caspan struck him down with an arrow and had drawn another, even before the man hit the ground. The cry of the man shattered the hold the fortress had taken upon them and they retreated to the forests on the edge of the plain.

Their task was no easy one and Caspan realised to attempt to enter the fortress was impossible. He could see the fear in the eyes of his warriors and sensed the unease in the less expressive men. Yet he had vowed to uncover the dark secret of Ny'Ugal, or die in the attempt. That night none could sleep. An unearthly charge was about the land. Strange cries filled the sky. They were not of Earthly origin and some of the men started as the voice of Mamorous called praise to his Dark Lords in rolls

of thunder. It was not a night of mortals, and of those who witnessed it few would remain to tell.

Caspan took from his pack a book bound in forest bark. In it, was held the weaves of natural magic. He called the spirits of the trees and of the plants to encircle his army in their protection. He called the air and called on fire. As he did so a shimmering warmth was about them. The elves relaxed. The power of the naturals was potent and would protect them well. Yet it was through this a dark hand, talons ablaze in fire suddenly appeared in their midst. It reached for Caspan. He could not move for the fear that gripped him. It was one of the warriors of man that foresaw the apparitions' intent, and grabbed from Caspan, the book. Talons skewered, like swords, the man's body and he was consumed in fire. As swiftly as it had come the hand was gone and with it the man warrior. Also with it went the magic Caspan had weaved and the frigid air once more sapped their bodies of warmth.

Thunder pealed over the plain, but it was not from the sky. It vibrated through the ground and shook the Elfin army through to their souls. They looked to the distant fortress, aglow in an eerie brilliance of green fire. Occasionally great columns of scarlet flame would spiral skyward and again the ground would shake. Suddenly all the Elfin warriors sensed, as one, a darkness such as they had never experienced. They shook violently and cold sweat ran down their backs. In the fortress seven scarlet infernos ascended into the sky at the same time. On those rode seven dark figures, on steeds whose eyes burned the souls of the watchers, and whose breath was the green fire. Caspan and three others who knew the coming horror, threw themselves to the ground. The others watched helplessly. The seven riders were the Lords of Chaos, led as always by Death. All who looked upon the scene fell to him and their bodies fed the demon warrior of Disease, who followed in the wake of his master. Only Caspan and the three who had hidden their eyes were spared. Of those, only Caspan and Aldah, champion of Amosthen, were able to tell of it.

The four elves fled further into the forest and hid there in mortal fear of their lives. They saw, before the sun rose over the plain, the Lords of Chaos return to their fortress. A deathly silence then fell once more upon the land. The four made their way cautiously back toward Vennor and from there to Amosthen. All was as they left it and when they reached the court of Amosthen 'Ugal they were greeted with blatant disregard. Caspan reported his story directly to the King and met little sympathy. In the end, desperate, Caspan took to the city square and told his story to the crowds there. Unbeknown to him the King's advisors were plotting to remove Caspan, and on the third day of his telling in the square, he was arrested by the Royal Guard. He was tried publicly, for inciting to cause panic amongst the Elfin people. The court listened patiently once more to his story. He told dramatically how his army had fallen, and called on Aldah as the only witness to the dark fate that beheld all Earth. But Aldah had already been subject to the interrogation of the courtiers, and they had made it plain what his witness should be. Fearing the fate he already knew lay ahead for Caspan, he denied everything the Prince said. He concocted a story which explained why Caspan misinterpreted what had actually happened and virtually condemned him as mad. The court accepted this and exaggerated the evidence to ensure his conviction as insane. He was taken deep into the bowels of the castle and there held prisoner in the vault of Dominian. Thus was the only true telling of the coming of Ny'Ugal taken as the ravings of a madman, and the fate of Earth was sealed.

During the many centuries that Caspan lay incarcerated, the Dark fingers of Ny'Ugal reached far out into the land. No creature could venture nearer than Vennor and eventually the story of the fortress slid into the obscurity of legend.

The people looked to other reasons why a dark oppression was gripping the land. Many blamed a powerful sorcerer named Domire, who had most of the Continent under his tyrannical rule. The legends of this time are dim and the true facts may never be known, but it is widely held that the creation's attention was deliberately diverted toward Domire, lest Ny'Ugal should be rediscovered.



Many of the facts we know, have become distorted and the legends make light of time. For instance, Domire was supposed to rule for two million years before the great wizards of man created a force to destroy him. Yet Domires' reign was in the second age, granted before the Great Flood, but after the tale of Caspan. This would have him rule for thousands rather than millions, of years. The most authoritative research would have then the story as follows.

The brotherhood which had fled into the wilderness reformed during the oppression of Domire. They knew of his might and of the many who had fallen in the attempt to destroy him. They were also aware that even jointly, they could not oppose him. They were sure of one thing however, the sorcerer, even though in mortal form, was no image of man. To know his weakness they must first know his true identity. To this end, they called a great oracle from the Fourth Level and named it the Eye of the World. It was a powerful being and one of the great oracles of Light. In it was truth and wisdom. To hide it from Domire, they placed it in a labyrinth, known to them as the Halls of Death. There it stayed in a shrine built to it in the tenth cavern. It probed deep into Domires' past and saw there that which was true and what of him, if any, was false. But each time it came close to revealing Domires' true nature, the eye would dim and its voice was obscured in obscenities. Only a demon or one of the Dark Lords could have the power to oppose a true oracle, so the brotherhood knew their adversary was more powerful than they had feared.

One of the brotherhood was chosen to cast a spell of illusion upon Domire and so distract his powers of protection. The wizard weaved as potent a spell as was his to command and cast it into the mind of Domire. It revealed to the sorcerer, in dreams, the form of an angel, and for a brief moment he was afraid. The oracle saw him then in his true form. He was a high demon and was bound by the name Agor. Agor sensed the oracle and shut it out. Of the wizard, Agor sent the fury of the skies against him and he was consumed in fire. But it was too late and the brotherhood had a plan to destroy him.

It was well known to them that the Ancient Ones had set in motion a thousand stars to come together, for they had studied the heavens right from the early days of the brotherhood. Legend would have us believe they moved the stars themselves. This would have taken millions of years and is therefore disregarded. However the tales of creation as told in Elfin legend say, the Ancient Guardians had set the stars on collision to create enough power to manufacture a weapon, almost as strong as the Staff of Creation itself. In any case the brotherhood calculated the power generated could be used to breath life into the form of a clay giant. He would be named the Star Warrior and in his being would be the power to destroy Agor. The time of the united suns was not to be for some twelve hundred years hence, so the brotherhood of the Star Warrior made preparations to build and hide the clay body of the warrior. They retreated into the interior cavern of a hollowed mountain and then sealed it. In conjunction with the manufacture of the warriors' body they grew a gem, into which would be channelled the energy of the suns. This would be the Star Warriors eye. Generation after generation would guard this, until the day of the united sun.

As the brotherhood awaited this time, Agor grew mighty under the influence of Darkness that smothered the land. Lakes ran stagnant and became fearful swamps. The forests became dense and dark. Weirdly formed trees grew in these, stunted by the lack of light. In the forests deepest hearts, demons and sorcerers made their homes. It was a desperate time for all in the Continent. From the ice mountains of the north to the wastelands of the south, armies of both men and elf rode against Agor but none could defeat the demon. Some of the greatest magicians of the elves attempted to exorcise the beast but all were consumed by fire. Mighty heroes came from outlying islands to challenge Agor. They never even had a chance to see their adversary before falling to him.

During all this man alone remembered the legend of the Towers of Dread, beyond the valley of Vennor. To this end there existed a great white wizard of man and he was powerful against the dealings of Darkness. His name was Ashalon. He was a servant of Light and was at

one with Creation. He alone was trusted by the elves, and he it was sought the White Dragon, told of in travellers tales. It was a high beast of Light from of the Fifth level, and wise. It would know the true destiny of the Towers of Dread. Ashalon set out then from Amosthen to the west and to the outer islands. His journey was one of great sacrifice and danger and it is remembered in song and folklore.

His travels took him by way of Vennor and he sensed the taint of Evil that gripped everything there, even to the grains of sand beneath his feet. He wondered at the mountains that had formed the valley and why they lay now like squat hills. It was as if some great weight was pulling them down into the earth. As he climbed one of these he could see the snows of the plain beyond advancing on the foothills. He was glad to leave that place behind and move down to the forests beyond. Before entering, he made several charms and natural pentacles. He made the sign of the pentagram on the back of his cloak and placed upon his head a helmet of silver. In his right hand he carried a rowan staff, charmed with the power of Light.

He journeyed for several hours before resting in a small clearing, to eat and sleep briefly and awaken again before nightfall. He could feel the eyes of Dark creatures staring at him from the gloomy forest interior. Before moving on, he threw some white fire powder onto his camp fire. The clearing and most of the forest beyond was consumed in a dazzling white flare of light, blinding the Impish creatures that sought to torment the wizard. It had been a simple illusion and cost him nothing, but gained him time and safety. As night fell he weaved a cloak of invisibility about him and continued unseen. He passed a troll encampment and from there took provisions. His movements startled one of the gaurds and he was forced to use a sleep draught on the creature. He saw also an old hag sitting in the stump of a tree and was startled when she saw him also. She enquired of his travels. Ashalon was slow to answer and cautious of his words. He wondered what manner of beast she might be, as to see through an enchantment of invisibility. He told her he travelled to the islands of the west and she troubled him no more. When he had travelled about another hour he rested again. He watched two imps picking berries



from a nightshade and an elemental flitting between the branches high above. Suddenly he was aware of eyes watching him. He stood and turned. Sitting at the stump of a tree he saw once more the old hag. She told him that the White Dragon knew he was coming and why. She told him that the White Dragon had spoken to no creature of man and had to be certain of his purity before it would. She spoke then ancient words that he did not understand and he felt an uncontrollable rage well up inside him. She was calling up his Dark side and he may well have lost to her but for his training and dedication to Light. He cast out her words from his mind and instead sang praise to Creation and recited the Creed of Light. As he did so, he levelled his staff toward her and then spoke the Creed out loud. When the mists of his blinding rage succumbed to his control, he looked to the stump but the hag was gone. The ordeal had tired him and he could go no further that night. He called on fire to encircle him and awaited the light of morning.

Leaving the forests behind him, Ashalon came next to a river. It flowed quietly but he did not trust it. He had heard of a river near there that held water elementals. These particular elementals were of a hungry nature and dragged many an unwary traveller to their doom. Ashalon decided to go north along its banks to see what he could find. Eventually in the distance he saw a small shack with a raft tied to the bank. He approached it cautiously. Darkness ruled much of the Continent and he knew not what to expect. A dwarf was sitting on the river bank smoking a pipe and staring into the water. He was of a noble race and the Elves had spoken well of them. Ashalon enquired of the dwarf if he could ferry him across the river. He explained he had nothing to pay, but was willing to work some charm for him. The dwarf shook his head solemnly, never taking his eyes off the waters. He explained the river was possessed of evil spirits and even if Ashalon could pay, he would not take him across. Ashalon asked to the nature of these spirits and the dwarf told him every time he took someone across the river, demons would rise up out of the water and drag his passengers down to the depths. Ashalon then made a bargain that, if he could rid the river of these spirits, the dwarf would see him safely across.



Ashalon placed on the raft a pot of clay into which he placed certain powders. He bade then the dwarf, take him onto the river. They had gone but a few strokes when several fierce water elementals rose out of the water. Ashalon threw fire into the pot and a great mist suddenly engulfed the entire raft and the surrounding waters. It was a mist of petrification and the water, elementals and all, were devoid of movement. Ashalon then touched each elemental on the brow with his staff and screaming they dissolved into the waters that had given them their birth. The Light of Creation shone about that stretch of water and never again would a creature of Darkness touch its boundaries. The dwarf continued to the far bank and thanked Ashalon for such a profitable gift. His was now the only safe spot to cross the river. Ashalon in return thanked the dwarf then continued on his way.

After many seasons journey he finally came to the sea and to the port of Patheron. It was, even in these days of Darkness, a thriving township and he rested here for three days. During this time he became friendly with the captain of a sailing vessel. He told the captain of his quest and enquired if he knew of the island of the White Dragon. The captain laughed. There was not a sea master who did not know of it. He was willing to take him as far as the reefs surrounding the isle but no further. It was no place for a heavy ship such as his. He was also willing to give Ashalon a longboat, in return for conjuring a favourable wind. Ashalon was hesitant, his skills with the elements of air and water were a little ragged and faith is a strong element in any weaving. However he had little choice but to accept, having no other method of finding the island.

They set out the following morning, luckily for Ashalon, on a favourable wind. If his good fortune held he would not need to charm the elements. So instead, he made himself a luck charm in which he did have faith. The sailing went well and the captain made a record run of the outer ports. He was well pleased with Ashalon and as well as the longboat he gave him three pearls, each the size of his thumb nail. The crew sang a song to his skills as a parting gift, and in return Ashalon weaved a spell of Light around the ship. Thus, in good favour, was he cast upon the waters and headed for an island shrouded in mists.

The reefs were perilous and he barely made a safe passage between ragged peaks of coral. He had the courage however, to take in the passing a piece of black coral that had become lodged in the upper reef. Normally a treasure of the depths, it was potent in the calling of certain water spirits. Once across the corals he drifted on a calm lagoon, drawn into the mists by some unseen hand. He felt no fear and put his trust in the guidance given him. His longboat eventually came to rest on a white sand shore. Ashalon could not see far because of the fog that hugged the beach, but he chose to walk straight ahead. He came to the base of a tall cliff, its surface smooth, glass like. He started to move to his right and walked for four hours in that direction. The view was always the same, sea to his right, fog before and behind and on his left hand, the glass cliff. Eventually he saw, towards the sea, a large object lying on the beach. He approached it cautiously, it looked like a beached pilot fish. It seemed to shift in the swirling fog and he stopped. It could be a mermaid. These creatures were tormentors of mens' souls and lured many a seafaring traveller to their doom. The object lay motionless once more and again Ashalon approached it. As it took on a more definite shape he realised it was his own long boat. He had circled the entire island.

The cliff was unscalable and there were no caves or hidden passageways that he could see. To come this far and meet defeat sapped Ashalon and he sat upon the sand, his back resting upon the cliff. He looked once more to his longboat. Upon it was a humped form that had not been there before. Again it did not move, but Ashalon would not approach it this time. He watched intently trying to determine its nature through the grey veil of fog. He could not tell what it was but it had not been there a moment ago. He would remain where he was, until such time as the fog lifted.

Through swirling fogs hidden windows, the hag watched Ashalon. He was not to question but to answer and so in silence she sat. She knew no time, and patience and truth were her only virtues.

The path of Light is a narrow one and the paths of Darkness are many and varied. The choice between the two is not always clear. The world was speeding along tracks of Dark Evil as Ashalon contemplated his next move.

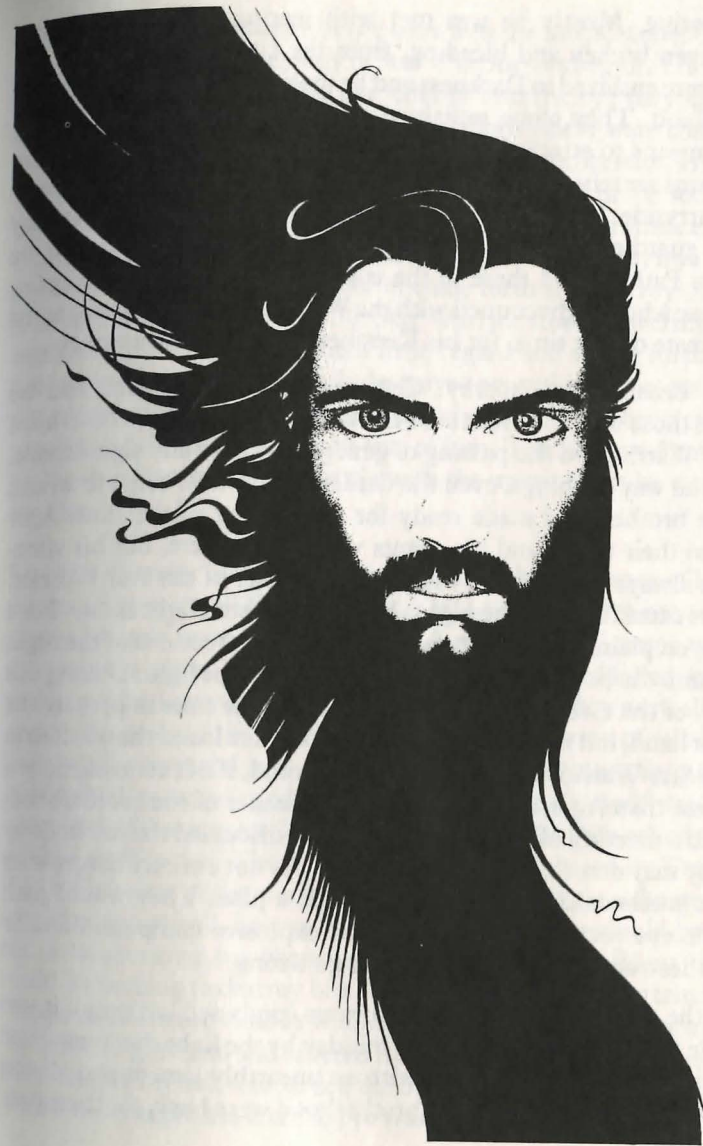
Agor at that time, sat as tyrannical ruler over much of the continent. He held court and heard the cases of murderers and thieves. He was no fool and even though he could, with a single command destroy all in his sight, he sought the approval of his people. To this end he appeared to demand the severest penalties to all criminals. Some fell for this deception and whilst all hated the dark oppression he brought to the land, many accepted his rule. In truth, he broke the minds of these lowly criminals and took control of them. They became members of a most feared and secret army. They sought out all who openly opposed Agors rule and set a bloody example of them. The route to Agors' castle became known as Deaths corridors. Twisted trees, black with the blood of men and elves, lined the track and on the branches hung the bodies from his campaign of terror. His rule was complete, his subjects' spirits broken. None came against him, all paid tribute to him in praise and gold. The land was in the tight grip of Evil.

In a dream the plight of the continent was revealed to Ashalon. He had for a seasons passing awaited the lifting of the fog, yet it never came. He resolved there and then to pledge his life for his land and his people. Whatever the shape on his longboat was, no matter what Darkness held in store for him, he would face it now. He called into the mists, at the form he had feared so much. He bound it tell him of its nature. The mound replied he knew her well enough and to come to her. Holding the black coral before him lest it be a sea spirit, he approached the hag. She asked again of his travels and what it was he wanted. He told her of his peoples plight and that he sought the council of the White Dragon. The hag asked then, what gift had he brought for the Dragon. Ashalon fell silent, he had none. He cursed his thoughtlessness, he was seeking audience with perhaps the highest creature of Light on Earth and he had come empty handed. Then he remembered the pearls the captain had given him. Taking them out he placed them with the coral, at the hags

feet. He bade her take them to the Dragon, lowly as they were and tell him that they were all he possessed. But he also bade her tell the Dragon that his only other gift to give was himself and that he was, as of then, the Dragons' servant. The hag stood and told Ashalon to follow then, for his gifts were the most precious of all the treasures the Dragon had been offered. They walked to the base of the cliff where Ashalon had been sitting, but this time it shone with radiant light. They passed through the light into a massive crystal chamber. The hag was no longer with him, instead there was a tall, slender woman of stunning beauty, dressed in flowing white. She was suffused in a soft glow of light and she moved with slow gliding steps. In the centre of the chamber sat a dragon bathed in brilliant white, in each scale Ashalon could see a projection of either the future or the past, and in some the present. The Dragons' eyes were fixed on him, but Ashalon felt no fear. He was in the presence of a mighty beast of Light and his spirit was lifted. He asked no question for the Dragon knew all he was to ask and answered to him thus;

"Creature of man, your sacrifice is one of greatness. I release from her bound duty, that of my daughter, who has from the beginning been my guardian and instrument of my will. In your gift you shall take her place, so that she may return as a true guardian of Light and take her place amongst the Angels. Of your kind, I bid you tell them as my right hand, they are in mortal danger. Bid them stay away from that which is known to them as the Towers of Dread. In it, Evil is taking upon a form and heralds the day when the Dark Lord himself shall come to the mortal plain. If this is allowed to happen then all shall be lost and chaos shall again rule all creation. Its touch is fast spreading across the land and many are falling to it. As a shadow, the Dark Lord already inhabits the fortress. He must not take upon a form, yet there is nothing any mortal creature can do. Go then and warn all who have ears to listen and enough Light in their hearts to hear. Warn them they are falling to the ways of Darkness. Most are already enslaved. Go, go to them before it is too late."

Ashalon went from the island and set about a pilgrimage to all the great capitals of the continent. He spread the word of Light and gathered



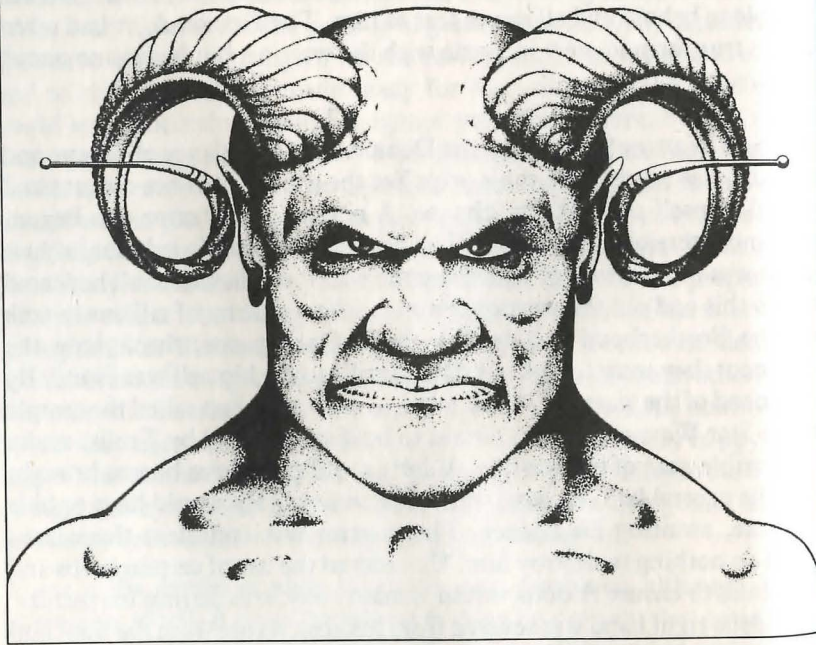
small following. Mostly he was met with jeering violence and even stoned, driven broken and bleeding, from the cities. It was of no use, nearly all were enslaved to Darkness and he took refuge amongst the elves in Fenn Wood. They alone remained pure, for Darkness had not yet found the means to attack the valley of the first born. Word came then that Agor was searching for Ashalon and that his Dark army was scouring the countryside. He had done as he had been commanded and his duty now lay in guarding the White Dragon. In sorrow for his fellow men, he returned to Patheron and there to the island. He was never seen again, save by those who sought council with the White Dragon. His fate was the most fortunate of that time, for his Kinsmen were lost to Darkness.

Each year became a monotony. Centuries passed and time had no meaning to those who endured those Dark days. Only to the brotherhood of the Star Warrior did the passing of generations hold any significance. But, as is the way of things, even the darkest night must come to an end and so the brotherhood made ready for the uniting of the suns. Agor could sense their threat and his agents were everywhere, but his attentions were always directed away from the chamber of the Star Warrior. As the stars came together the nights became almost as light as day. For a time the open plains were safe to pass, as the Dark creatures of the night dug deep into the bowels of the earth, to hide from the light. During this time many of the elves escaped to Fenn Wood. The time to prepare the gem was at hand, but many of the brotherhood questioned the wisdom in giving the Star Warrior so much power. He could, if not controlled, be a worse threat than Agor himself. Aldous, last leader of the brotherhood, summoned a meeting of the council and there discussed the methods by which they may control their titan. Aldous was not entirely happy with any of the methods discussed and proposed a plan. They would pack around the eye socket of the warrior, an explosive compound and so ensure its destruction if anything should go wrong.

It was at the depths of night when the suns combined, although it was impossible to tell. It could have been midday by the light that came from the uniting. The skies were filled with an unearthly lament and all creation wondered at the event. The brotherhood were busy, for their part,

and channelled the energy of the suns into the magic stone. Great horns were blown and the ceremony of Star Warrior was begun. There was little time to lose. In guiding the star energy into the eye they had revealed their position and even as they worked Dark riders were converging on the mountain. The sisters of the coven danced a procession as the eye was carried by twelve of the brotherhood. It was placed in the socket and the weave of settlement cast upon it. Then all fell back in silence. The giant stirred and the brotherhood went from the mountain, out into the wilderness. They called on the warrior to come forth and destroy their enemy. The mountain erupted and the Star Warrior stood, towering above the terrified wizards. He paid them little regard and strode forth across the land towards Agors' fortress. It destroyed everything in its path, burning the countryside and crushing townships under his mighty stride. He was terrible to behold and all ran in fear of him. The Demon Agor had taken on his true form to meet in battle with the warrior, but he was no match for him.

The Star Warrior incinerated the Demon with one glance of his eye and the land was released from his grip. Yet the warrior was not content and placed himself upon Agors' throne. A new reign of terror was begun, even more terrible than before. The brotherhood had failed, but in their midst was the knowledge to destroy the warrior. They were all he feared and to this end did the warrior command Agors' army of villains to seek out the Brotherhood and destroy them. One by one, throughout the continent they were found and slain, until Aldous himself was found. By command of the warrior, he was taken to what was then called the temple of the Star Warrior. There, he was to be dismembered by Trolls, under the terrible gaze of the warrior. Aldous could do little as he was brought into the central hall, he was bound and chained. He would have to bide his time, awaiting his chance. The warrior was confident the wizard could do nothing to destroy him. He ordered the use of certain herbs and elements, to ensure Aldous would remain conscious during his torture. As Aldous right hand was severed from his arm, it rose from the floor and fired a lightning bolt that struck the Star Warrior in the eye. The charges placed there exploded and the eye was thrown from its socket.



Without the power of the stone, the giant was no more than a clay statue and it crashed to the ground. One of the trolls uttered a curse and brought down his sword towards Aldous' chest. Before he died, Aldous threw a magic field of energy around the stone, to prevent it being replaced in the Warrior. Its history is long and varied, and tells of bloody feuds to possess it. But from that time, the lands were freed from both the curse of Agor and the Star Warrior.

However, it did not make the peoples plight any easier. Darkness still held hard the Continent and its influence grew in strength. Crops failed, man turned against man, and even certain of the elves turned to the black arts. Some of these elves sold their souls for power and are a fearful threat, even today. All of creation was enslaved to the corruption of Evil. Many of the Elfin Kings fell in battle defending Amosthen and history dims during this period. Events are told in the tales of travellers and interlace in complex tapestry of these dark years. It is not until the writings of King Cumara that a glimmer of hope was about the land. It was prophesied then; 'When a King of ancient name, and the last in an age of empty dreams, doth stand upon brave Royal Ugals ramparts, and there to see in mid seasons warmth the snows of Carsans heights come against him. Then shall heavens champions light the shadow of Dark fortune, and in doing end this age.'

The Kings journal went thus;

'I knew well enough the ancient prophecy. Each royal hand before me thought, perchance, it may be their reign that would end out eternal curse. But the snows of mount Carsan remained as they should, upon its highest peak. By the coming of my coronation, the legend was all but a myth. An old tale, to give hope to a hopeless people.

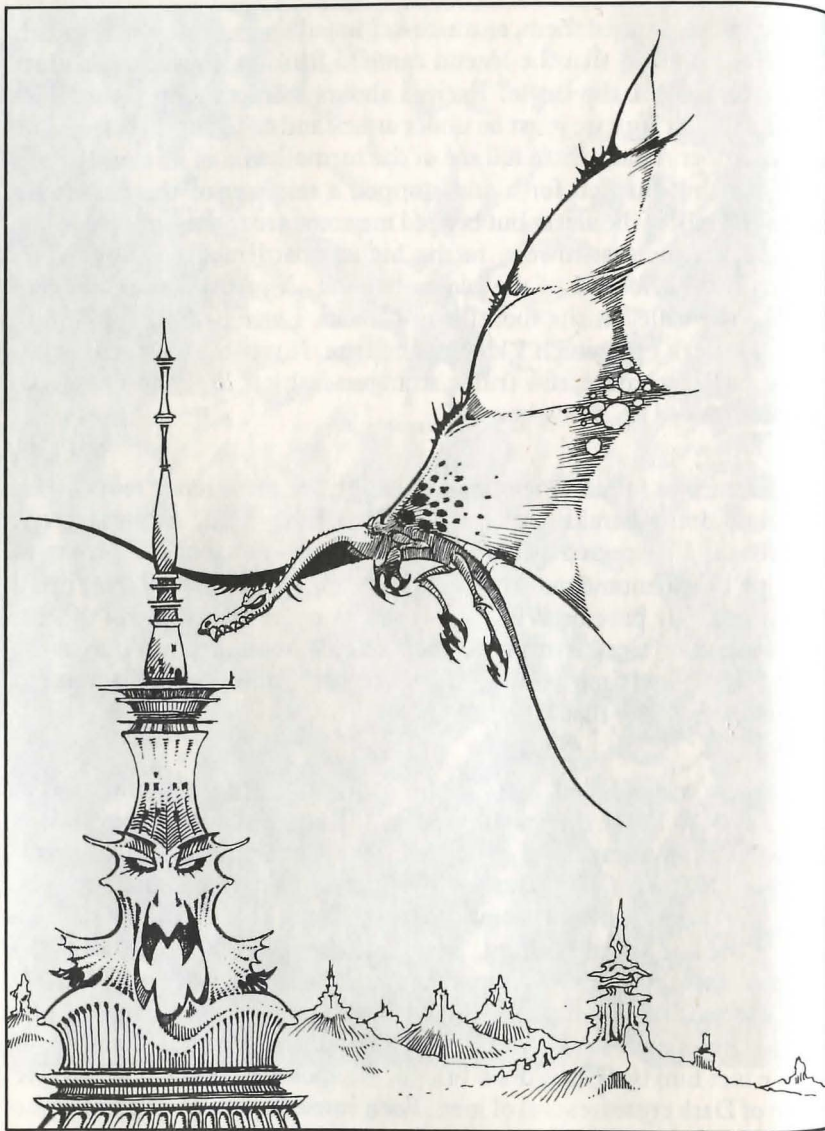
In sadness I took the throne. My father had fallen to an army of savage Darkness, in their latest assault of Amosthen. It was a hideous rabble that came against us. Men, and the strange creatures of Evils' right hand, led by elves. Elf against elf!. Yet these creatures were dark shadows of their



former selves. I pitied them, as much as I hated them. It was on the sixth season of my reign that the legend came to fruition. I awoke to a great commotion about the castle. Excited shouts were ringing through its corridors. I felt sure we must be under attack and called my aids from the next chamber. I bade them tell me of the turmoil, and of its cause. They knew not, but hurried forth and stopped a sergeant of the guard. He would not talk of the alarm but begged me come see for myself. He led us up, through the east towers, to the highest battlements of Amosthen 'Ugal. There I looked to the plains beyond. A great blanket of snow covered the valley at the foothills of Carsan. I watched more intently, afraid to speak that which I knew to be true. It was Sir Gariverdi who, with eyes like a hawks, saw truths strangest fashion. The snows moved, and they moved on Amosthen.

It was summers fullest height, and although the proficiency told of this, and in so doing heralded the end of Dark Evils hold, Amosthen was threatened. I suspected an attack of some sort and sent out scouts to examine the phenomenon. After all the prophecy was for all that, just a legend and may have been false. Our scouts never returned and the fortress was put on alert. Arms were made ready and oils heated. The snows moved slowly and time wore upon the nerves of Amosthen. How was I to fight and adversary that I did not know?

A decision was reached, two of the courts champions would ride to Castle Wood. There they would see in safety, the snows as they passed and what, if anything, they concealed. Sir Bolereane and Sir Gariverdi, with his gift of sight, were chosen. They set out in darkness and would be at the wood, and hence the snows edge, by dawn. I feared for them, as by midday we had heard nothing. Then a shout rang out from one of the watch towers. A rider was approaching, he was wounded. The snows edge was not far behind and it would be a risk to open the city gates. The tower called again. It was Sir Gariverdi and by my command he was let in. We met him by 'Ugals draw bridge. He spoke in babbling words. He spoke of Dark creatures and of men. Each carried a canopy of great white



feathers to disguise themselves. The snows were indeed an attack, by the very warriors that had killed my father. The word was spread. If this was indeed the snows the prophecy talked of, we were fighting for freedom.

The battle began. We had, for all their precautions, the upper hand in surprise, thanks for our brave champions. The Dark creatures had expected Amosthen to be in disarray. Nothing could be further from the truth. All were united against them and the fighting went well. By the setting of that day our army had driven them back into Castle Wood. Then came our most desperate hour, they used the wood like a fortress. They could not leave, but by the same token we could not attack them. Two attempts resulted in fearful casualties. So we held them there, in a vain attempt to starve them out. It was after the passing of a moon that we realised what they were doing. They were eating the bodies of their dead, and ours. This news spread fast and many of our people fell back in fear of these damned souls. Even so, we had enough strength to hold them. In a sense Amosthen was safe. We at least knew our enemy and they were, to all intents, our prisoners. The wood was too damp to burn them out, and too dense to smoke them out.

Our positions remained in this state for well into the season of harvests. It was then I received a report I could scarce believe. The Dark army, one by one, were surrendering to our troops. First the elves, then some of the men. From across the valleys came a report that someone had ventured to Vennor and the snows of the plain beyond were receding. But as our hopes rose, a great roar filled the sky. Amosthen shook, the sky became black and waters came to cover much of the land. The great flood was a terrible time and many of both elf and man were lost. Those who had managed to harvest their crops before then, shared with those less fortunate. Elves came together to rebuild the townships, lost to the waters. Man worked with them and a new era of peace and co-operation prevailed.

Cumara

There is but one account of this time which explains the Great Flood, or

even the peace after this time. It is in the Tales of Creation, told in the Book of Gora. It is concerned with the legends of Ny'Ugal. It is the word of Creation and in its telling, Truth and Wisdom.

From The Book of Gora: The Second Age.

During the time of Darkness that is known to all men, and to the time of the Great Flood, there existed on Earth an Evil beyond the understanding of all creation. The Seven Lords of Darkness came to the planet of the first born and there, upon a plain, built to themselves a fortress. To men it was known as the Towers of Dread, to elves Ny'Ugal. In it, Evil was to take upon a form and it would be the palace of the Lord of Darkness himself. His shadow filled the fortress and all who came near, man or elf, fell to its powers. The Lords of Chaos enslaved for their amusement, trolls and men, and bade them fight. The Shadow was fed on fear and hatred, and its presence soon reached beyond its own walls. The plain and the valleys beyond were gripped in the iron clasp of a permanent winter. In the valley known to elves as Vennor, the Dark Lords danced a weave of Darkness upon the mountains there. Its threads went out into the land and pierced the hearts of every living being. They gave part of the land to the demon Agor, to command as he would. The fear and hatred his reign created brought the shadow closer. Chaos ruled Earth and soon the hand of Evil would reach out, to the valley of the first born. Each night Death, upon his winged stallion, would ride out and claim the souls of the damned. All were tainted with evil and all fell to the plains of Darkness. In this the Lord of Wraiths was impartial. To Darkness they go, should that be their nature, and at that time it was the nature of all things. The numbers of the Dark side grew mighty and a great army of damned souls lies to the command of the Dark Lords.

The fall of Agor was a blow to the Dark plans of Evil and the shadow wavered. For retribution the Dark Lords let loose famine on the land and the crops of mortals failed. Disease visited much of the land and even more fell to Deaths grip. Once more the shadow grew. Evil was at last

taking on its form. The elves were a minor threat. To keep them away from Ny'Ugal an army of Evil was sent against Amosthen, the Elfin Capital. Each time they struck they weakened the city's defences. The Dark Lords became interested in Amosthen's fall and constructed a plan for a final assault. They were distracted, and in their vanity lay their downfall.

Their task of creation completed, the Lords of Light returned to their first born. They sensed as they came, the taint of Evil. They saw the struggles of the mortal creatures, the fall of Agor, the battles of Amosthen. They saw there the Dark Lords upon the plains of Amosthen and saw them guide an army of corrupt mortals against the Elfin people. The Lords of Light were angered by this and lay siege to Darkness. They attacked first all the minor creatures, held hard by Evil, and set free their spirits. They turned next on the Lords of Chaos and drove them back toward Ny'Ugal. With them, the unnatural grip of infinite winter receded. Upon the plain of Ny'Ugal, the forces of Evil regrouped and prepared against the Lords of Light. They were stronger there, for they were backed by the shadow of the Dark Lord.

Light and Darkness struggled then, for in their winning would lie the fate of all creation. The opposing sides were evenly matched. Although Darkness was stronger due to the evil presence of the first Lord of Darkness, the Lords of Light were also strong, for they possessed the Rings of Creation. Only by retreating into their fortress could Darkness gain an advantage. The Lords of Light saw this and tried to seal the fortress in a weave of Light. But the power of the shadow was too great and no thread of Light could shine there. The Dark Lords then retreated into the fortress and there amassed their united powers under the canopy of pure Darkness. The Lords of Light had now little choice and moved quickly. Calling praise to the Creator and calling the Creed of Light, they took off their Rings of Creation. As one, they threw the Rings at the Dark fortress. The ground blew apart and a great roar filled the sky. The fortress, in a blinding flash of pure Light was banished, back to the sixth level, and with it the Lords of Darkness. The earth took up the tre-

mendous power of creation and great mountains were thrown up around the plain.

Beyond, lands fell into the sea and great cracks ran across the continent. The sea rushed in over much of the outer lands, and massive pieces of the continent were separated for ever from its mother land. Mountains fell, new valleys were created. Much of the plain of Ny'Ugal was thrown into the sky, blackening it. As for the rest, as the mountains were thrown up around the plain, the earth fell into the new valley, concealing the Rings. The power was awesome, and many of the great cities were lost forever. The city of all magic, Lantior, fell in one mass into the sea. The loss of life amongst the mortals was never counted, for in that brief time Death also was banished. It is believed, to this day, that the peoples of these lost cities were never claimed and still live.

The power of Darkness was defeated and peace eventually returned to the Earth. But the World would never be the same. Much that was, was no more. Much that now was, was new. Man and elf alike would be restarting, it was a second chance for the World.



From The Book of Nemor.

A NEW AGE

After the great flood, a new age of hope settled on the land. Although, still called the Third Continent, we were no longer one great land mass. So the start of the third age saw the start of many new and wonderous things. Perhaps the most fortunate of these changes was a new valley, where once there had been a plain. Legend still holds it was where the plain of the Towers of Dread had stood. Before the Lords of Light destroyed it. Some said that the Rings of Creation lay there. In any case, it was the most beautiful and fertile of all the lands. One had but to throw a handfull of rough grain upon the ground, to receive a bountiful harvest within a season.

But the elves would have none of it. They said it was tainted with the hand of Evil. They said that the powers of Ny'Ugal still disturbed the natural lines of the land, and they could not settle there. Man is less sensitive to such things and moved in over many hundreds of years. It became the richest and most bountiful of all his kingdoms. The elves had named the valley Beroth and man carried on that name. It meant, in Elfin tongues, 'Beauty of Darkness', and we saw no reason to argue with that.

The brotherhood of Grand Wizards, were older and wiser now. They knew the temptations of Darkness and steered clear of it. Also, they were held in high regard for their triumph against Agor. Many became councillors to the Kings and Lords of both man and elf. To this end was a true brotherhood formed, known as the Council of the Wise. In the Kingdom of Beroth, within the royal castle, the great hall of Monmouth was made available to them. Beroth became a great seat of learning. Master Wizards would come to consult with the Council and the tranquil peace of Light spread over the uses of most magic. The Black arts were still studied, so that a greater understanding could be achieved, and hence a better defence against them maintained.

Then a time of great excitement came to the land. King Endor, fourth King of Beroth, was both wise and generous and had helped many a poor farmer to settle in Beroth. One such farmer had come from the edge of the wastelands, with his family. He sought the chance to live in Beroth. His family were thin and ragged, failed crops and starvation had driven them out. He was brought before the King and asked what he had to offer. He explained he was a poor man and had but a cart and a handful of grain, but he could offer his strong back, the love of his family and his undying loyalty. The King was moved by his story and ordered they be his guests for a time, 'so he may put some meat back on those scrawny bones', as he put it. In the mean time, unbeknown to the farmer, the King had built for him a large and handsome cabin. It was on the edge of a forest and looked out onto a grassy plain. He took then the farmer and his family to the cabin, and commanded him to plough the land and grow grain for the royal bakery. Also to hunt the forests for game, to feed first his family and then supply the royal table. For all that he brought he would be well paid. The King reminded the farmer then, that he had pledged his love and loyalty and not to let him down. Tears in their eyes, they thanked King Endor and set about their tasks. They did well and it was just past their tenth season when the farmer paid back, in more than full, his debt to the King.

Algeron the Wise, leader then of the Council of the Wise, was summoned to the court. The farmer had been digging a well, when he came across a most curious ring. It appeared to be of gold and about the width of a mans arm. Yet as he picked it up, it shrank until it fitted his middle finger exactly. It was the ideal gift to show his loyalty to the King. As the king took it, it grew again, to fit his stouter finger. Around it were strange letters he did not recognise and he hoped Algeron could shed some light upon this most curious of rings. As his eyes fell upon it, Algeron fell to his knees and sang praises. The King was bemused and demanded an explanation. The wise wizard, from studies of Elfin legend, saw it for what it was and he told the King to wear it always. It was a gift of Light. It was the Ring of Fire, one of the seven Rings of Creation.

A great expedition was mounted to find the other rings, if they existed. They sought first magical signs, signs of the power of creation. They knew of a lake, wherein the waters had great healing powers. Perhaps there lay the Ring of Water. However the problem was, how to retrieve it.

News came of a giant pine that stood by the edge of a hill. Even by climbing the hill, its top could not be seen. The expedition abandoned the lake and made west for the tree. It was a long journey and took them almost to the boundaries of Beroth. They passed across a wide open, grass covered plain, that extended far beyond the horizon. It was all unexplored and they knew not what to expect, least of all an attack by Shaggoth raiders. They attacked at night, as is their nature, being underground dwellers. They did little harm, mostly taking provisions and any trinkets of jewellery that happened to be at hand. They are not true creatures of Darkness, rather creatures of fortune, mercenaries, fighting for which ever side gives the greatest reward. They had been brought to Earth by the Lords of Chaos, to fight in the battle for Amoshten. Almost as soon as they had been made to join the forces of Evil, they deserted, disappearing into the ravaged countryside. The Lords of Light had by then, re-entered the War of the Angels and the final conflict was on. So they escaped the wrath of Darkness and to this day hide in underground labyrinths in fear of it.

The Shaggoths were tracked back to the entrance of an underground tunnel. It was daylight above, so the Ring Seekers thought it safe to explore the entrance. But as they approached, something very strange appeared to happen. Around the entrance only, night had fallen. They saw themselves at the opening with torches burning. Suddenly one of the leading group fell, then another. The Shaggoths were attacking in force, killing everyone. It was a vision of the future, one that none of the party wished to see fulfilled. As night truly fell, they retreated to the far side of a low hillock and there awaited the chance to capture one of the beasts. The opportunity came, as a single Shaggoth hunter stalked into the grey ash light of a full moon. There were twelve men and they quickly overpowered the Shaggoth then returned with him to their camp site. Tor-

ture is not necessary with these creatures, their allegiance is almost nonexistent, even to their own kind. Show them gold and they will talk of anything. Algeron ask then, how it was they were protected by visions of the future. The Shaggoth answered that their King, self appointed; then he spat, held in his chambers a ring, which he had found. It was enchanted and gave him power over time. They were immortal within their labyrinth. However none of the other Shaggoths could get near the Ring let alone a man, warned the creature, so best they not try!

It was a bitter blow to the party, but at least they knew of two Rings. It was now likely the others would be in the valley as legend suggested. If the council held six, then perhaps they would have enough power to overthrow the Shaggoths' command of time. Thus inspired, the ring seekers moved on again, to the place of the giant tree. They crossed a great swamp, alive with the songs of insects and frogs. Strange shapes occasionally rose out of the distant mire, distorted in the mists. They never came close and although the seekers were unnerved by this, they saw nothing to actually cause concern. They had a narrow escape however, when the tendrils of a swamp vine tripped a bearer. Alegeron had thought it wise the party should be bound together, and while this indeed saved the bearers life, it threatened the lives of two others who were pulled into the quicksand with him. The balance of life is subtle. Even in safety there are hidden dangers, fate alone judges the swing. The wise man is the one who takes balance of all things, Light and Dark.

The swamp bled gently into the foothills of a mountain range, marking the boundary of Beroth. Now they would travel north for a day, to the tree. A sparkling river ran to their right, feeding the swamp, keeping it more alive than the dark pits of decay outside the valley. By midday they could see the tree, standing high against the sky as a hazy silhouette. It seemed to radiate an aura that inspired them on until, as night fell, they came to the base of the tree. It was in a great hollow, as if its enormous weight was pushing down the earth. Large rounded boulders lined the hollows edge, moss covered. A soft blanket of pine needles carpeted the ground, and nought but a few fungi grew in the shade of the tree. Higher,

and behind it, a grassy slope stretched upwards. It looked almost as if some great animal had dug a hole here, and behind lay the mound from its excavations. The trees' roots, some as big as a normal tree trunk, stood out in the hollow like the veins on a wizened hand. They ran to, and formed arches around, the base of the tree. It looked like a natural fortress, and the band wondered as to its possible inhabitants. Best they thought, wait until the light of morning and see what the night revealed, if anything. Nothing stirred all that night. It was a peaceful, soft blanket of tranquil quiet that surrounded the tree. By morning light they decided to go down to the trees' base.

There was a large arch in the roots, that revealed what appeared to be a tunnel, leading down. Within lay a labyrinth of intertwining roots, in which a man could be lost for ever. As protection, the twelve charmed a staff with magic and stood it by the entrance. With a gem from the Black Mountains, which they carried, it would be possible to find their way back to this. The nearer they came to a source of magic, the darker the colour of this gem would become. Four of the twelve chose to enter. They deduced the paths had, at some time, been well trodden, as the earth was firm beneath their feet. A few bats stirred in the light of their burning torches, but little else. Occasionally earth would trickle down from above, reminding them of the fragile nature of the tunnels. The main corridor split after a short time into three. Exploring these they found, first to the left a blockage of earth, and to the right the earth became soft and smelt mouldy. The choice then was ahead, wherein the path ran level for a time and remained firm. At a sharp bend, the first of the four was lost. He did not see the drop, where the tunnel floor had subsided. It was deep, so deep the remaining three could not even see the glimmer from his torch. It was also wide, with no apparent way to cross. The three seekers had but one option. Each carried a flying potion, each could only be used once. It was possible however, for the person using the potion to carry one other. Two then would venture alone. They crossed the chasm and shouted farewell to the remaining seeker before disappearing into the twisting tunnels.

A gruesome sign told them they were following the right trail and bade them continue cautiously. The remains of some earlier explorer hung entwined in a root, his chest punctured by a crude spear. It had swung from the tunnel roof triggered, it would seem, by a vine stretched across the tunnel. They moved on, judging every step as if it were their last. In the distance they could see some fungi growing on the walls. They took the form of great bulbous growths, looking for all intents like giant white eggs, the narrower ends pointing into the centre of the tunnel. One of the seekers thrust his torch forward for a better look. As soon as he did, the nearest fungi collapsed, firing as it did a small dart like object. When this hit another, on the far side of the wall, it also released a dart, which hit yet another, and another and so on, until the whole tunnel ahead of them was filled with millions of deadly flying projectiles. When this reaction had ceased, the two dowsed their torches, aware that it was the light which prompted the activity. Although they feared going on in darkness, they found then they need not have, for the fungi produced their own faint, greenish glow. Some, away from the area they had triggered, glowed more brightly than others. They could hear the occasional puff as a corresponding fungus on the opposite wall would fire a dart precisely at a brightly glowing one. Once hit, it would respond, less accurately, and lose its glow. It was an act of reproduction and a little more controlled than the mayhem the seekers had started. They would be safe enough if they travelled without their torches lit. A little further on they noticed the fungi were thinning out, yet there was still light, a positive, golden glow. They were spurred on with renewed hope and the glow grew stronger. In time they rounded yet another bend and halted at the entrance to a giant chamber. They judged by now, they must be almost directly under the heart of the great tree. In the centre of the chamber, on a pedestal of stone, lay one of the seven rings. So close, yet so far away. They had but two remaining flying potions and before them lay a chasm as wide and deep as the last. If they crossed this one and then returned, it would use both. They would not be able to cross the other chasm. A sacrifice was called for and shows the bravery of these men who sought the rings. One would cross, but there to remain. With him he would take the thread, unravelled from his garments, along which he could slide

back the ring, for it was too far to throw. The remaining seeker held one end of the thread as the other flew over. In the chamber he tied his end to a root. He was cautious at first, the chamber was obviously a shrine of some sort. Also by the state of it, it had been deserted for some years. The ring was fairly large, about the size of his first. Yet again, as he touched it, it shrank to the size of his middle finger. But when he lifted it there was a loud crack from above. Too late he saw the falling spike and it sliced through his side, as he tried to avoid it. The remaining seeker thought him dead and despaired, but he was not. Barely able to summon the strength, he removed the spike and struggled to where he had tied the thread. In a tremendous last effort, he threaded this through the ring and slid it back to the seeker across the chasm. The remaining seeker was reluctant to leave his friend, but the other, dying, told him to leave and see the ring safely back to the council. He collapsed then and in sorrow the other made his way back to the chasm and eventually out of the temple of the great pine.

They had now two rings, the ring of Fire and the ring of Earth. From the south came news that another ring had been found. It had belonged to an old hermit, who found it in the forests there. It was the ring of Air. When they finally could retrieve the ring of Water they would have mastery over the four elements. Earth, Air, Fire and Water. It was a great time for all in Beroth. One Dark figure however, threatened the peace of all who lived in the valley. A woman had taken on the powers of Darkness and formed a coven. She was known to some as the Witch of Stakscomin, a village to the northwest of Beroth. The ring seekers were not far from there, and they thought with a ring of creation in their possession, they may defeat her.

But she attacked first. Even as they approached the village all but Loth the one who wore the ring of Earth, were turned to stone. Likewise the spell was repelled by the ring and each of her coven were turned to crumbling earth. Both knew this, although neither saw it. Both knew each held a ring, yet they never met. The ring bearer was afraid and he fled the village.

Loth was ashamed of his fear and vowed to return when he was better prepared against the witch. He wandered into the swamps and was lost there for two years. During this time he came across a woman bathed in a golden hue. At first he feared her and wandered back into the mists of the swamp. Later however, he returned, drawn to her in some mysterious way. The Light of Creation shone about her and she had an aura of tranquility. He saw her then for what she was, and asked her why it was an Angel stood so still upon the swamps of Beroth. She did not answer, but told him he must defeat the Witch before Beroth would be a safe holding place for the Rings of Creation. She told him the witch wore the Ring of Darkness, which tainted all who owned it. She warned him, it must lie next to the Ring of Light and must never be worn by any man. To defeat the witch he must possess two rings, one of which must be the Ring of Light. Then she answered him, telling Loth the reason an Angel stood so still upon the Earth was, her sworn task was to guard, until men of peace sought it, the Ring of Light which lay below her. If he came in true peace he could take the ring and would have nothing to fear. But she warned him, if he came even part in Darkness he would be destroyed. Loth summoned all his courage and concentrated his thoughts on the teaching of Light, given to him as a member of the Council of the Wise. He knelt at the Angels feet and thrust his hand deep into the swamp. At first he could find nothing, then he felt a band of ice cold, clamp around the fourth finger of his right hand. The angel faded from his view, leaving him alone in the swamp once more. When he pulled out his hand from the boggy earth he looked at the two rings on his hand. Although his arm and fingers were black with sodden earth the rings were clean and glowed with a golden hue. The witch was his.

He came again to the place where his friends stood, still lifeless. Creeping plants from the forest floor covered their stoney features. He wept for his loss and started to pull away the vines, gently at first, with his left hand. Then he laid his right hand upon one of the statues, the hand on which lay the Ring of Light. The stone started to split, and through the cracks great beams of light shone out. Piece by piece a layer of stone fell away to reveal his companion alive, if a little weak. The spell was broken

and Loth touched each of the seekers with the Ring of Light. He was overjoyed to have his companions returned to him and, leaving them to recover from their ordeal, he marched into Stakscomin, straight of purpose and confident of success. His faith was powerful and went ahead of him. The witch sensed this. She knew if she attempted to defend herself she would perish, so she removed her ring and left it in the village centre. Without it Loth could not find her and so she secured her escape. Loth did not attempt to pursue her, but instead placed the ring of Darkness into a small cask. Beside it, as he had been instructed, he lay the ring of Light from his right hand.

Word was sent to the royal castle and to all the Brotherhood, that the seekers were on their way to the great lake of healing. There, in the season of the sun, they all met. King Endor with the Ring of Fire, and the Council of the Wise with the Ring of Air. The seekers were met with jubilation, and with them they brought the Rings of Earth, Light and Darkness. So were five of the Rings of Creation brought together and the power of five was revealed. Five rings together, will call to them their brothers, and rising like a reflection of the setting Sun, the ring of Water rose to the surface of the lake. Celebrations were held the length and breadth of Beroth, for they were the most blessed of all men and Beroth prospered even more. The power to call the remaining ring was not enough to release the Ring of Time from the Shaggoths, however. The calling is only possible if the ring is not in the bond of a master, and therefore free to be called. Still, six was a great treasure and for a thousand years peace prevailed over Beroth.

However, Beroth was not the only great kingdom of man. In Lamhar he built a great city, to rival the Elfin city of Amosthen. It too was rich, and prospered under the trades of man. Many of the great titled Lords settled there, to accumulate their wealth, and one such family was Lord Caraneths'. He was wealthy and a much respected figure in the courts of King Myron of Camosphen. He had in the past counselled with the Elfin Lords to bely their rage at this obvious slur on their capital. In principal the Elfin people had no objection to man trying to better their city of

Amosthen, for they had their doubts as to man's success. What they objected to, was the name Camosphen, being in their tongue, an insulting derivation of Amosthen. Amosthen meant, to the nearest translation, a cross between great beauty or majesty. Camosphen meant something very different, and is best not put to paper. Still, Caraneth argued that the city had been named in the tongue of man and not elf, and in their tongue it also meant majestic beauty. The elves did not take kindly to this, but bowed to the privilege of a king to call his kingdom what he will. So it was the two cities sat in an endless stalemate, and the elves of Amosthen regarded their neighbours with smouldering tolerance.

However the tale of Caraneth is not all one of good fortune. He brought with him to Camosphen, his wife, two daughters, and a son of whom he was infinitely proud. Of his son, he sought council with one of the city's greatest mystics and enquired of his future. Would he be an honourable heir, would he be strong and loyal to the family? The mystic gazed into the mists of the future and at first would not speak of what was to be seen there. When forced all he would say was, Caraneths' son would die in favour of another. Caraneth became afraid and angry, but even under the blade the mystic would say no more. Putting away his sword, Caraneth cursed the mystic and told him he was a fool, his son was in fine health. As Caraneth left, the mystic repeated his son would die none the less, in favour of another. When he reached home he found the household in a turmoil. His son had taken a serious illness and lay at that moment upstairs, in a fearful state of fits. Caraneth called the best healers, and bought the most costly potions from the apothecaries of Camosphen, all to no avail. By the third night he was no better and fearing the mystics prediction, Caraneth took his wife in the hope of conceiving another boy heir. An hour later his son died.

The months that followed were painful to Caraneth and his wife, but they were sweetened by the imminent birth of their new child. As the time grew near they put all memories of death behind them by preparing for the new baby, and on one of the foulest nights in the history of

Camosphen, she was born. Caraneth was disappointed that it was not a boy, but he melted to the stunning beauty of the child. She seemed to radiate a warm tranquility, for she never cried nor made much noise at all, she was a perfect child. They named her Bernrise, after the Angel of morning light and devoted their every attention to her. She grew, her beauty growing with her, and all who came in contact with her wondered at the silent child. On her fourth year she was taken by her father out into the city, to see the wonders there. They were some way from the house, approaching a narrow street of tall buildings, when the child stiffened and stopped. Her father stopped also and looked at her. She seemed to pull herself to her full height, her face hard and cold. She did not look at Caraneth, but took his hand and continued walking. A short distance further, although there was nothing to warn her, she screamed and ran to fathers' left. This gave him the edge and he had his sword half drawn when a man leapt from a doorway, brandishing a deadly blade of eastern fashion. Before he could do any harm, Caraneth had run him through with his own blade. Wounded and dying, the assassin was no longer of any threat and Caraneth faced him for the first time. He recognised him then as the mystic he had consulted almost five years ago. He said but one thing as he died,

"The Magra must be destroyed," and that is all.

Caraneth knew not why the mystic should attempt to kill him or what he meant by 'The Magra'. He thought it perhaps, some cult of which the mystic thought him a member. In anycase, Bernrise had been frightened by the experience and he made his way directly to the city guard. The matter was settled quickly and nothing more was ever said of it.

In the tenth year of the child, tragedy struck again. A dog which had been devoted to the family turned savage and attacked Bernrise mother, killing her in a most horrific manner. The child was witness to the attack, but would not talk of it. Nor would she say why, when her father had returned to their home that day, the dog was found lying asleep, its blood-stained head in her lap. Needless to say, the dog was destroyed

and the child wept for it. Yet, when her Mothers body was burned she stood stone faced, unmoved. Her sisters soon after this, complained they could not sleep in the same room as her. They said strange noises would awaken them in the night and shadows would flit across the walls. Bernrise said she neither heard or saw anything and if they wished to leave her alone, they had best do so. Two days later they perished in a fire that ravaged their room. Her father was grief stricken and took to drink. Then some years later unconsoled, he took his life, leaving her both orphaned and only heir to his fortune on her sixteenth birthday.

From then, Bernrise lived a solitary life in the towers of a grand house at the centre of Camosphen. She grew more beautiful by the year, and was a great favourite of the King. Many suitors fought for her hand, but she refused them all. She seemed to have a burning hatred of men, and her answers to them were often callous and cruel. More and more, the Lords and Ladies of Myrons' court noticed how Bernrise became irritated with these suitors' attentions. A few, if they could not have her, took their lives and she seemed amused by this. Then came the snows of winter and she disappeared from Camosphen, yet no one saw her go. She left no word of where she went, leaving her house in the trust of a lowly peasant woman. Rumours began to fly as to the nature of her disappearance and many an accusing finger pointed to the peasant woman. She fended these off for the best part of a year. Then a young prince of royal blood, openly accused her of killing Bernrise. He was in love with the memory of the girl and in his grief, brought the woman to trial for murder. She was interrogated in the attempt of extracting information about Bernrise disappearance. Her story never altered however, over and over she said Bernrise would return when the first snows of winter hit the city. It was judged then, she would remain incarcerated until that time. If by then Bernrise had not returned, the woman would be put to death.

Although cruel, Bernrise was much loved by all Camosphen. Most-blamed her cold nature on the tragedy that had befallen her family. Because of this love, the woman suffered badly in the dungeons of Camosphen's fortress. Then came the day of the first snows and Bernrise had



not yet returned. The woman was taken to the high court and there sentenced the death. No witness came in her defence and it was decreed she would be executed as the sun fell that very day. The peasant woman remained defiant, she told the court she would not die. Not even as the axe blade was raised would she fear their executioner. Yet as she was taken out to the block that evening, the crowd could see the doubt in the woman's eyes. They jeered her and her predictions and she looked wildly about the crowd. Then she calmed, she straightened and shrugged off the guards holding her, walking by herself defiantly to the block. She even smiled as she knelt by it.

Silence fell and the executioner raised his axe above her head, but he did not let it drop. He stood frozen, staring at eyes that mesmerized him. They reached into his soul and gripped his heart. Fear overtook him and he could not breathe. He was dying and he let out a fearful scream as he dropped to his knees. Then he was free, his breath coming in hard shuddering swallows and a wash of fiery pain flowed over him, ebbed, then faded. The crowd were in confusion and whispers ran through their midst. Cries of witchcraft rang out, then silenced again as a figure stepped from the crowd into the square. Brenrise walked over to the woman at the centre of the square and stood by her in silence. She turned then, very slowly, looking at every person in the surrounding crowd. Her eyes accused, and an uneasy murmur ran through the people. In small groups the crowd began to disperse, eventually leaving the square empty but for the woman, Brenrise by her side, the executioner and her accusers. Brenrise then faced the young prince. He gave a faltering explanation which soon ran into a mumbling silence. She in turn said nothing, instead she helped the woman up and walked away from the square with her. The prince called after her to forgive him, but Brenrise did not answer nor looked back. Later that night, in the full flight of a furious storm he took his life.

With Brenrise's return, suitors once more called upon her. It took some time to discover that some of those who entered her house, never left. The peasant woman always answered any callers and should they be of

Camosphen, they were turned away. It eventually came to light, when a Lord from an outlying valley came in search of his son, that outsiders only had been welcomed.

It was a matter of coincidence that he had been seen entering the house, and from that time no one had seen him again in the city. The guards were called to investigate and at first were refused entry. They threatened to use force and reluctantly the woman let them pass. They were guided up, through the east tower, to a room at the top. It was dimly lit with black candles that stood from the floor to about the height of a man. In the centre stood a large circular stone table, with strange symbols engraved on its central column. Three guards entered, the remaining two stood outside. They had but stepped clear of the door when it slammed shut and try as they may it would not open. Bernrise entered through a curtained archway on the far side of the room. She wore a cloak with a hood, covering her head and hiding her features in shadow. They apologized for intruding, remembering they were in the presence of a great Lady, courtesy overcoming their fear. They then explained why they were there. Bernrise said nothing during all this, until questioned direct. She said then she knew nothing of the man they talked of, and instructed them to leave immediately. They refused to do so saying they carried a royal seal, and were instructed to search the house. It was then she chose to reveal her true nature. She drew back the hood revealing her face for the first time since they entered the room. She was still beautiful, but she had changed. She looked older. Her teeth, when she smiled at their shocked expressions, were ragged, sharp. Her hair was wild and uncombed. One guard drew his sword, and Bernrise waved her hand in a wide semicircle. All three stood instantly frozen. They could see and hear but, except for the power to speak, they could not move. She instructed them then, that they had seen nothing and had searched the room. The door behind them opened and she released them, bidding them farewell. She had her hood back up and although the two guards questioned what had happened the others repeated what Bernrise had told them, and they left.

It was a wizard, Olfen, councillor of Myron who noticed the spell of illusion that was about them. Through his questioning and works was the truth of the meeting revealed. Olfen suggested the only way to find out what was really happening to Bernrise, was for him to project his mind into her house. He would use a strong spell of concealment and she would not know of his presence. Nor would any dark spirit who was perhaps, possessing her. He found it difficult to enter the house, it was well protected. But his power was greater than the spell that bound the house and he followed a young man, up into the east tower. A guardian stood by the door to Bernrise's chamber, a minor demon. Olfen's spell of concealment hid him from it and he passed with the man, who could not see it, into the chamber. A dark figure entered the room then and Olfen sensed an aura of evil about her. The power that bound the house flowed from her, and her magic was powerful. His presence wavered slightly, then he stabilised his hold and watched. Bernrise approached the young man and he started talking to her nervously. He told of his undying love for her and of his homeland. Bernrise said nothing, she merely walked around the central table towards him. By his left was a small cupboard, next to the door. Olfen noticed the demon was now on the inside of the chamber. It still did not see him. Bernrise went to this cupboard and took from it two goblets already filled with wine. Her head was covered, as it had been when the guards were present, with a hood. She spoke then, her voice sounding harsh, cracked, as if her throat hurt.

"Drink." She said, and that was all.

The man took the wine eagerly and drank from it, Bernrise did not. The man looked puzzled and Olfen could not tell what was wrong. It was when Bernrise took the goblet from his hand and the man did not drop his arm, that Olfen realised that he was paralysed. Bernrise laughed. It clawed at the nerves, and made the skin crawl. It was pure and evil. Then she removed her hood. Her beauty was gone, although traces of her original looks remained. It was obvious that this creature was at one time Bernrise, but no more. Her hair was longer, rough and unkempt. Her eyes, bloodshot and red. Olfen saw her hands then, thin and boney, with

long talon like nails. Her teeth were sharp and pointed, her skin leathery and aged. Olfen was surprised when he heard the man talk, even though it was a strangled cry. He said but one thing, he called her name. The creature circled the helpless man and answered.

“Bernrise? She is dead. Her cursed beauty lies within me, withering. Oh yes, I went at one time by that name. But now I am a servant of Darkness. I go by my magical name, Magra. The Dark Lord has promised me great power, in return for my eternal curse, my beauty. Each time one such as you comes to me I trick them. I lure them up here like a spider lures its fly.”

She picked up the man then, showing unbelievable strength, and lay him on the stone table. She took out a large dagger.

“Then, my pretty victim, I sacrifice you to my master. After, again like the spider, I shall eat of your body and as I eat, my beauty shall die with you. My power shall be great, and none shall be able to stand against me. Die then, creature of man, I spit on your kind and turn my back on them.”

She plunged the dagger into his chest and cut out his heart. She put this to her lips and drained the blood from it like a fruit. Then she devoured it, her sharp teeth tearing into the tough flesh. Olfen was sickened and pulled himself out, back into his body. The demon turned as he passed, sensing his passing but still not seeing him. He had escaped and counted himself lucky to have done so. Bernrise, or rather Magra, had been too distracted in what she was doing, otherwise he felt sure she would have sensed his presence. She was more powerful than he at first suspected. She would have to be destroyed, but that also might prove more difficult than first supposed. It would be best if she were merely driven from the city. Either way, the simplest method open to them was to set fire to the house.

The word was passed and soon a wild, angry mob was marching on the house. Each carried a lighted torch. The house as they approached was dark and the doors lay open, blowing in a wind that howled around its walls. Some, perhaps those who doubted the story, rushed in. Magra was nowhere to be found but they set the house alight anyway. They scoured the city for her but she was nowhere to be seen. Reluctantly the search was called off, and the people returned to their homes. Later a report was heard that a lone, slender figure, had been seen crossing the plains beyond Camosphen. It moved like a thin line of darkness, against the silver grey light the moon cast upon the plain. Protecting it, and moving with it, went a pack of wolves. It went east in the direction of the Black Mountains.

I suspect the coming of Magra marked the return of Darkness to the Continent. I had at that time, a young apprentice who showed great perception and dedication. His name was Gora, and little did I suspect how influential and powerful he was to become. I for my part was known then as Nemor the Great, Supreme Councillor of the Wise, advisor to the Kings of Beroth, etc. etc. All very pompous I know, but I enjoyed the rank and influence I had over those times. Perhaps though, I should have been more vigilant against Darkness. The elves said the shadow had never really been completely banished from Beroth. But peace had prevailed for a thousand years since its defeat. In a way we are all to blame for not being aware that in Goras' twelfth year, the influence of the shadow returned once more to Beroth. I count this time in the age of Gora, for by his meddling it was he who inadvertently brought about the return of the shadow. But we that called ourselves the wise should have known.

At that time Mendas, eighth King of Beroth sat upon the throne. Beroth by then, had prospered beyond all expectations. He was the most powerful and wealthy of all the kings of man. His son Tobias, was not content with this inevitable inheritance however. He wished to learn the influences of magic, in addition to his eventual royal powers. Gora befriended the young prince and demonstrated simple illusions to amuse

him. Through this friendship Tobias approached the Brotherhood and requested entrance into its membership. He said he desired the knowledge that Gora had been taught so that he may as king, have a better understanding of the Brotherhoods' mysterious ways. But as supreme councillor, I looked into his heart and saw there a raw lust for power. Such desire would eventually lead him down the deceptive paths of Darkness. His plea was rejected, and the members of the Brotherhood would have nothing to do with him.

He turned then to Gora. Taken in by his story, Gora taught him all that he knew, little as it was at that time. Tobias persuaded Gora that, if he were to borrow the books from which his weak knowledge came, and there read the chapters still yet forbidden to him, his skills would progress much faster. He made Gora believe that I would not know where his advanced powers came from, but I would be pleased none the less, by his dedication and speedy progress. Eventually Gora was supplying Tobias with books and manuscripts that held Dark secrets, that even Gora knew nothing of. He was no longer a help to Tobias and Tobias tired of the weak magic he could teach him. One skill he had learned was the weave of invisibility. Using this he stole into the Dark library, a store of the forbidden knowledge of Darkness. The guard there never saw him, for he used the weave skillfully.

He read there the book of calling. Therein were detailed the procedures for the calling of a spirit from the fifth level. Some of the callings were specific to the higher Demon Lords, who command the armies of Darkness. That night, Beroth was cast under an unnatural sleep and Tobias conjured to himself a high Demon of Darkness, the Fire Demon.

The Demon was mighty and Tobias had a difficult time containing its presence. At first it spat flame in raging fury for having been disturbed. Then it saw in the young prince a thirst for the forbidden knowledge. He was contented then and commanded Tobias to speak of his desires. The Fire Demon listened quietly and Tobias grew confident, thinking he had gained control over the Dark creature. After he finished, the Demon

bowed to the prince and told him of a formula by which he could grow a small crystal. It promised that the gem would give Tobias powers and knowledge that even the Brotherhood of the Wise did not understand. He would be most mighty amongst men. The Fire Demon urged him to use it there and then, and when he refused it became angry once more. Tobias spoke the words that would banish the creature back, from whence it came. The Demon remained. It asked him how he thought a mere creature of man could command a high being of the fifth level. Tobias became afraid, and the Demons' hold grew stronger. Feeding on his fear, it laughed, and fire rose from the circle containing it. Tears in his eyes, Tobias chanted once more the words of exorcism but to no avail. Then he stood erect, furious that this creature should disregard, not only that which was a weave of great potency, but that which was a royal command. Summoning the arrogance that only a wronged prince could possess, he charged the demon to be gone. He shouted the words of exorcism in a fury that cut through the demons laughter, engulfing it, diminishing it, until the Fire Demon faded from view and the chamber once more was empty. Tobias was jubilant, his powers were indeed greater than Goras'. He could command a demon, a feat no apprentice of the Brotherhood dared even attempt.

Blinded against the dangers of meddling in the black arts, and thinking he had full control, Tobias used the formula. It created for him a small crystal of concentrated evil. Each night he would sacrifice animals, letting their blood run into the crystal. Slowly it began to grow. Many of the brotherhood sensed its presence but none could locate it, weak as it was then. However, little time passed before its influence began to work on the young prince. He became morose, withdrawing into himself and talking to no one. Then one night, after sacrificing a ram to the gem, the crystals' influence took total control of his will. It guided him like a puppet. Unseen in the cover of darkness, he crept to his fathers' bedside. He looked to his right hand, and saw there a dagger. He looked to his father, and saw there his hand thrust the dagger into the old Kings' heart. He looked to himself, and saw there no future, only empty darkness and he wept. When he stopped, he found himself back in his

chamber. There he slept until dawn, when the foul deed was discovered. A lament of wailing passed through the castle, and the Brotherhood was called to meet. With the crowning of Tobias, evil had indirectly gained control of Beroth and the Ring of Fire.

A lingering oppression lay over the castle. Occasionally fires would spring up without warning. Only by the full power of the Brotherhood was the Fire Demon held at bay. His presence however, was everywhere. This blinded the Wise to the true threat, the crystal. Before long, it had grown to the extent, whereby its influence was widespread and it controlled most of the population within the castle. At last I saw its threat and forseeing the danger I summoned a meeting of the council. To this meeting I also called Gora. I summarized briefly my plans and explained the danger we were all in. Then I presented Gora with one of the Rings of Creation, the Ring of Earth. We went out into the courtyard then. To each of four riders waiting there, I gave one of the remaining rings. They were ordered not to wear them ever, particularly the Ring of Darkness. Time was short and I instructed them to leave the castle immediately. I told them to ride in different directions and take the Rings out of Beroth.

I turned then to Gora. We stood there a moment, master and apprentice. He lowered his head and asked forgiveness for breaking his vows and starting this sorry turn of events. I told him to pay it no notice, for he was merely a piece in the many ploys of Darkness. The Shadow had returned to Beroth and even if he had resisted Tobias, the young Prince would have gained the information in some other way. Tobias was a servant of the Dark Lord now and there was no escape from his destiny. I warned him again though, the Dark Lord must not control the Rings of Creation, for with them he could destroy all and create once more chaos. We parted then, the Brotherhood and myself heading for a battle we could not win, Gora I know not where. Beroth is lost to Darkness through our short sightedness. We have learned by a hard lesson, and those of us who

profess to call ourselves the Wise, must be vigilant against the ways of Darkness. I face now the crystal, if these are my last words, then let those who read them, learn by them.

THE BOOK OF GORA.

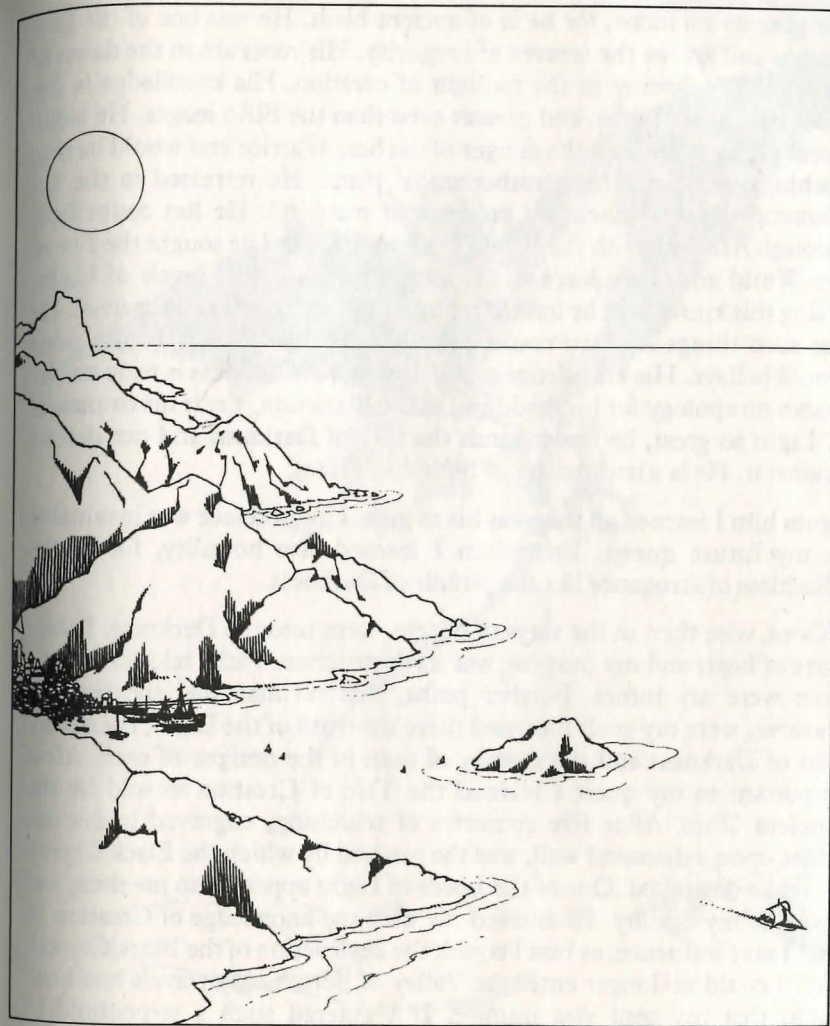
From the introduction to the Volumes of Enlightenment. **THE TALE OF THE BLACK CRYSTAL.**

Impetuous youth blinded me against the perils of Darkness. Its ways are infinite, and its corruption complete. Its use of me made me feel dirty, betrayed. As I watched Nemor leave with the Brothers, I vowed that I would free Beroth from the curse I had brought upon it. I fled the castle and made south to the mountains that marked Beroths' boundary. The speed by which Darkness can grip the land is alarming, and I travelled warily. Yet Nemor had not known the Rings of Creation call to each other. They could only be separated by a small distance in the hands of men. None of the Rings could leave Beroth without the others. Eventually it became too heavy and the only direction I could move it was back towards Beroth.

I turned then and headed west along Beroths' boundary. I had tried to return to the castle but its roads had already become dangerous. Armies of Trolls patrolled them, killing and eating unwary travellers. The hoards of Darkness that were flocking to Beroth, pursued me relentlessly. They sought the Ring, and it was that which drew them to me. I was forced to dispose of it in the great swamps. I watched it sink into the depths of the waters and knew, as it was lost to me, so would it be lost to the forces of Darkness. Little is known of the history of the land after this time. It is known that Tobias presented the Ring of Fire to his master, the Fire Demon, and a temple was built in its honour. A great tower was also built, to house the crystal, where it grew in strength. Prince Tobias and his followers lost their mortal bodies and their shadows haunted the castle and the lands beyond. It had been but a short time since the crowning of Tobias and once more Darkness controlled all of Beroth.

I was at last free to leave Beroth and I made my way north, to the palace of the Wizard of the Ice Mountain. My travels took me by way of Vennor and, as a pilgrim I set out from there, following the paths of Ashalon. Once at Patheron, I struck north again. Patheron was, at that time, a place of sanctuary to many pilgrims of Light. It was the only old port to be saved from the ravages that brought about the end of the second age. Most believed the White Dragon had protected that area, lest his island be washed away. In any case, I paid homage to the Dragon and went on my way.

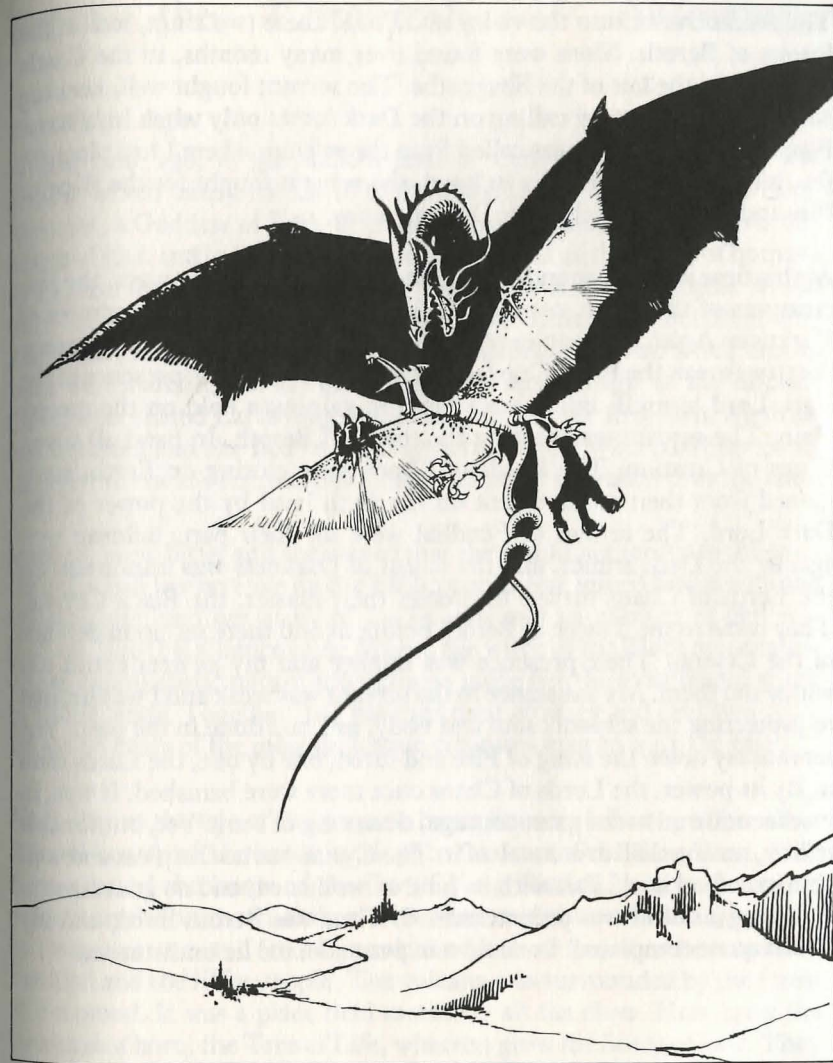
The lands of the north are in a grip of winter that never relinquishes its hold. I travelled into the great wastelands there, marvelling at the strange beasts that inhabit its ever frozen expanse. Occasionally great winds would build up, threatening to engulf me. I used all my knowledge of the weave to survive. Once in the Crystal Palace of Angoth Coome, my travels became easier. This was never a real palace but a natural formation of ice. Legend says that an angel once built it for the Lords of Light to inhabit. Long shimmering stalactites of ice hang from the cavernous heights. The wind, though greatly reduced, blows through the caverns singing in crystal chimes. Through this is the way to the ice mountains, and there one of the greatest wizards of the continent. The entrance is guarded by Ice Giants, large ape like creatures. They are covered, head to foot, in dense white fur, walk upright and stand about ten or twelve foot. Their jaws are powerful and rimmed with long yellowed fangs for eating meat, and they are of a savage disposition. I could not pass them unaided. The method outlined to me, was to project myself into the wizards chamber. It was a test of sorts, if my projected spirit was powerful enough the wizard would sense my presence. If then he could speak with me, and I in return answer, I could pass without fear and be accepted as an apprentice. If the projected spirit was not powerful enough, nothing was lost and the hopeful apprentice would go and develop his skills to proficient level. To attempt to pass the Ice Giants by any other method would be certain death. Nemor had taught me well and when I explained why I was no longer in Nemors' service, the wizard agreed to complete my training.



He goes by no name, for he is of ancient birth. He was one of the first magics and knows the weaves of longevity. His roots are in the dawn of man and his destiny in the twilight of creation. His knowledge is the most powerful of men, and greater even than the Elfin mages. He alone during Agors rule, saw the danger of the Star Warrior and would have nothing to do with the Brotherhoods' plans. He retreated to the Ice Mountain and watched the progress of mankind. He has counselled, through Ashalon, with the White Dragon. Unaided he sought the Eye of the World and there learned the secrets of the higher levels of Light. Using this knowledge he has trod the paths of Darkness and survived. He has seen things no man could describe, and of those he could, none would believe. His knowledge of the dealings of Darkness is wide and he makes no apology for his meddling in the Black arts. Yet is his command of Light so great, he understands the lure of Darkness and can defend against it. He is a true master of both disciplines.

From him I learned all that was his to give. His guidance was invaluable in my future quests. From him I learned also humility, for in the blindness of arrogance lies the pitfalls of Darkness.

I Gora, wise then in the ways of Magic, went into the Darkness. I went pure of heart and my purpose was its destruction. Paths seldom trod by man were my tutors. Further paths, that no man had the right to traverse, were my goal. I learned there the truth of the Light, the deception of Darkness and the destiny of man in the designs of each. Most important to my quest I learned the Tale of Creation as told by the Ancient Ones. After five centuries of searching, engraved in ancient runes upon a diamond wall, was the method by which the Black Crystal could be destroyed. One of the Lords of Light appeared to me then, and spoke of my destiny. He blessed me with the knowledge of Creation so that I may influence, as best I could, the destruction of the Black Crystal. Yet, I could no longer enter the Valley of Beroth. My travels had been such, that my soul was impure. If I entered such a stronghold of Darkness as Beroth now was, I would jeopardize the quest for the Crystal. So another had been chosen to go in my place, one pure of heart, a Servant of Light.



The servant went into the valley and found there two rings, lost in the forests of Beroth. More were found over many months, in the Castle itself and in the lair of the Shaggoths. The servant fought well, keeping soul and heart pure by calling on the Dark forces only when necessary. Five in hand, the sixth was called from the swamp, where I had placed it five hundred years ago. Six in hand, the servant fought for the Ring of Fire and won against the Fire Demon.

At this time in Lamhar and over all the continent in many ways, the free creatures of the Earth were locked in mortal battle with the armies of Darkness. Again the peoples of man and elf, were blinded by this against the true threat, the Black Crystal. For in its form grew the presence of the Dark Lord himself, intent once more in gaining a hold on the mortal plain. The servant was nearing the tower of Beroth. In hand all seven Rings of Creation. The Lords of Chaos were closing on Earth, summoned from their confinement on the sixth level by the power of the Dark Lord. The armies of Fendhal were for their part, holding well against the Dark armies, and the defeat of Darkness was imminent. So the Lords of Chaos turned to protect their master, the Black Crystal. They came to the Tower of Beroth before us and there set up in defence of the Crystal. Their presence was mighty and my powers could not withstand them. My assistance to the servant was weak and I was limited to protecting the servants soul and body, as I had done in the past. The servant lay down the Ring of Fire and lured, one by one, the Lords onto it. By its power, the Lords of Chaos once more were banished. It was, in its execution an act of great courage, deserving of song. Yet, but for this telling, no one shall ever know of it. The Crystal was not helpless and well able to defend itself. But with its hold so weakened, and no guardians to assist it, its defeat was predetermined. Thus was Beroth freed, and my sworn quest completed. I rest now in peace, let me lie undisturbed.

From the Chronicals of Amosthen.

The Third Age.

A long time ago, in the ancient land of Lamhar, a cosmic path was created which joined the Earth to the stars. Down this path there came Methzar, a Goddess of Evil. With her extreme beauty she won over the hearts of men and in less than a decade she united all the tribes of humans in Lamhar into one fighting force. Her domination of Lamhar would have been complete but for the armies of the Elfin Lord Fendhal, who defied her, so she sent men to make war against the elves. Their armies were well matched but the elves knew the secret magic of the Ancient Ones, who visited Earth long before the birth of the first man. Methzar was defeated and she fled to the Northern wastes. With Methzar gone, the spell she held over men dissipated and peace prevailed over the land.

Methzar grew bitter and she vowed that she would not return to the stars until she had her revenge on the Elfin people. She joined forces with the Snow Queen and her army of Ice Giants, and an alliance of evil was formed. Into this alliance came Magra, the witch of the Black mountains, whose cannibalistic nature and ugliness made her the most feared witch in all the lands. Together they planned their strategy and over two years forged an army of the most grotesque creatures ever to walk the earth.

Thus begins the tale of the greatest battle known to Earth, where all of the evil hoards of Darkness lay siege to the land of the First Born. First they attacked the home of the Dwarf King Rindell, within an extinct volcano in the heart of Lamhar. This they made into a fortress, guarded by Dark creatures and from this volcano Methzar launched her attack on Fendhal and the Elfin people. The volcano was surrounded by the forest of Fenwood. It was a place held sacred by all the elves. Here grew the Earths first born, the Tree of Life, whereon grew the Seeds of Life. They did not attack the elves direct, but instead laid waste the forest of Fenwood. Using her unearthly powers, Methzar destroyed the First



Born. It seemed then, that all hope had vanished for the creatures of the Earth. Legend says that the seeds of the first born must always remain connected to the soil or disease will lay barren all the Earth.

Unknown to Methzar her plan failed, for the Elfin Princess Edora rescued some of the seeds and fled into the wilderness. It was no use planting the seeds until Methzar was defeated, so Edora placed the seeds into a small cask and hid them in a cleft in the volcanic rocks. She placed a weave of concealment over them and made her way to the false sanctuary of King Rindells' volcanic home. The princess was captured and taken with other prisoners into what is now known to elves and men alike as the Volcanic Dungeon. The evil trio placed the princess into a timeless sleep and sealed her in a crystal coffin. With their Royal hostage they hoped to lure Fendhal to his death. However, time was not on their side. Fendhal saw they posed a threat greater than the immediate danger to Edora. In fact they threatened the survival of all the sons and daughters of the Earth. To this end did all the free creatures rally around Fendhal and the World witnessed the greatest alliance in its history. Eagles in their thousands, lions, tigers, unicorns and other magical beasts of Light, united against evil. Kings from many lands sailed ships into battle and the Wise White Dragon of the West came out of solitude to lead their attack.

Faced with such an army of Light, Methzar had little choice but to call upon all the armies of Darkness, and wage war against the free. She was a high Goddess of Darkness, an Arch Demon, commander of the legions of the fifth level. She called on them to rally round her. She called on the magical beasts of the fourth and third levels. From the second level she commanded the legions of the damned to rise up and take arms against the free. Her army was mighty and outnumbered the mortal creatures. They moved out and engaged the armies of Light in bloody battle.

Angels lay siege to the spirits of the damned upon the second level of Darkness, and cut down their numbers. Even so the armies of Evil were massive and powerful. In Lamhar, the focus of the battle, a legion of

demons, each astride a winged fire breathing horse, led the attack. Behind them marched an army of corpses that outnumbered the living by three to one. They were followed by Trolls and Goblins and foul creatures that shy from the sun and haunt the nights. Fire breathing dragons filled the skies and great legions of Demons, some on foot, some upon wing, joined the assault. The skies turned black with battle and the rivers ran red with blood.

Mans loyalties were split, as is his nature. Those who remained to the side of Light fought bravely. Great armies of them took on the corpses that had followed the Demons. Many fell before they found that fire was the only way of destroying this walking army of dead. Arrac, leader of this group and a member of the Brotherhood, summoned his army to fall back. The corpses moved slowly and a clear stretch eventually separated the two adversories. Arrac commanded then the earth to shake and a great split ran the length of the empty stretch. It was deep and reached to the fiery bowels of the Earth itself. The walking dead are but that, and shamle unseeing, engulfing their victims by sheer weight of numbers. They move instinctively toward the living, drawn by their life force. Unwittingly they shuffled on towards the armies of men, falling into the ravine, and were consumed there in fire. A stench of burning flesh filled the air and demons flocked round this, revelling in the horror. Arracs' army attacked them in force, wielding swords that had been blessed by the power of Light. The demons fought hard, their talons tearing into the flesh of the men. Some destroyed the minds of the men by sheer power, then swooped to feed on their trembling bodies. Still, some of the men wore pentacles of protection and took a gruesome revenge on the repugnant creatures. The carnage grew, and soon they were fighting on a sea of bodies that stood twenty deep. Yet the battle continued, until eventually the Demon Lord commanding the legion faced Arrac. They stood a moment, acknowledging each others skills, the last and only remaining members of the two opposing armies. Then in a blood curdling scream the demon leapt at Arrac, its misshapen fangs tearing into his throat. Arrac sword in turn struck true, piercing the creatures' black heart and they fell together. Out of the ravine rose one thousand dragons

spitting lightning. They spread out over the land, devastating everything in their path.

Smoke filled the sky, highlighted by the red of great fires. From Mount Arnes the White Dragon saw all, and directed the forces of Light against the Dark oppression. He saw mountains fall in awesome blasts of fire. In the valleys he witnessed the elves and magical beasts gain and lose ground, like some enormous tide. Demons came against him and he opened his wings wide. The demons were blinded and fell to the ground. His eyes cast over them and they were consumed in fire. The unicorns led an army of elves, each upon the backs of lions, against a loathsome hoard of night spirits. They in return leapt upon the majestic beasts, leaching onto their bodies, sapping the life force from the mighty unicorns. They fell in great numbers and the elves were forced back. There was nothing that could be done to save the unicorns and the hoard spread over them, consuming them. The Dragon wept for the beautiful creatures and his tears filled the valley where they lay, that their remains may lie in peace. The few that remained, fighting in other battles, felt the passing of their kind, and were enraged. They fought with renewed vigour butchering with their horns, all that stood in their path.

Unable to defeat the spirits, the elves called upon the White Dragon to direct Angels against them. They came in their thousands, carrying spears of pure light. They cast them upon the spirits, each true to its target. The screams that flowed from the spirits filled the air. They struck fear into the heart of men who heard them, and many fell in battle by their distraction. The Angels rose high upon the darkened sky and sang praise to the creator. Their voices rang out across the Continent and lifted the hearts of the forces of Light. In turn the minor creatures of Darkness shied from the host and retreated into dank recesses. The legion of demons that had lead the attack upon their fiery steeds, rallied against the Angels and the sky was also engorged with the fury of battle.

Centaurs, skilful in the art of archery, searched through the forests for evil that lay there in wait. The elves then used these purified forests as natural fortresses, there to judge best their battle strategy. It was a time

for greatness and a time for sorrow. Many thousands, perhaps even millions, lay dead upon the first day of the war. Still many more would fall before its end. Fendhal regrouped with the Elfin Lord commanding the warrior armies. The way to the three commanding the alliance of Evil was heavily fortified. Unless some way was found of defeating Methzar, then the war would continue indefinitely. The Elfin Lords decided then, that a direct assault on the trio of Darkness was their best course. Fendhal called to the eagles, and bade them carry the message to the various armies of Light.

The battle continued throughout the night and Mamorous took command of the legions. The warriors of man were in disarray and fled the battle fields in terror. Strange, foul creatures of the night came out of hiding and fed upon the corpses strewn across the continent. The spirits of demons who had lost their mortal bodies during the fighting, visited upon the bodies of dead men. They possessed the corpses and they rose again. Evil gained an advantage and their numbers were greatly increased. Man, ashamed of his fear, attacked this desecration of his kindred and once more balanced the opposing forces. Their attack was one of blind hatred, and in their fury they won easily against the demonic dead.

On the morning of the second day the sun rose upon a blood stained land. Its rays penetrated weakly though the dark clouds that hung over the land. The scene was one of devastation. Upon the flanks of hills, great scars ran their length, where forests had been torn from the earth. Rivers of blood ran in torrents through the valleys, and tumbled into foaming pools from the mountains. Where the land was open, the ground was black and scorched. Elsewhere, bodies lay in layers that blanketed the earth. Above this circled harpies, vultures and other foul creatures that fed upon the carnage.

Towards the sea the red glow of enormous fires tinted the black clouds that billowed across the Continent. Villages stood empty if they stood at all. Mostly a few smouldering remains marked their location. Some of

the great tribes of man were gone forever, mowed down by the ravages of war. Small bands of women clawed their way over this expanse of death, looting the remains for small trinkets.

At Amosthen, all but the fortress was in ruins. Elfin children roamed the rubble looking for parents that lay buried. Inside Amosthen 'Ugal, nothing stirred but for a few mighty Elfin wizards. They held in their protection the fortress, by a weave of Light. Their potency was so great as to hold the fortress from attack, even by the high Demon Lords. Within sight of this, Camosphen stood ablaze in eternal flames. The whole city was intact, but no mortal could live there because of the inferno. It was inhabited instead by the Demon Lords who planned and led the battle. The flames were weaved by Magra, as revenge on the peoples of Camosphen. Even if the witch was to fall, the flames would remain eternal.

Volcanoes, long extinct, had re-opened their fury filling the valleys. Cracks ran the length of the Continent and cities had fallen into the sea. Mountains tumbled and new ones rose from the earth. In black bands, great flocks of winged demons circled the skies and on the ground, a black hoard of hideous evil clawed its way toward an unnatural mountain. It stood in the heart of Lamhar, black and evil. From its heights, Methzar directed her armies of Darkness. Magra weaved the skies to send her wrath upon the warriors of man. The Snow Queen plotted their campaign against Light, and sent her Ice Giants to scout the land. Against this came Fendhal and his army of Light. They came from the opposite side of the mountain from which the black hoard of crawling evil was approaching. But they knew of its presence from the eagles.

Fendhal took up position an hours march from the mountains, within a forest that rimmed the edge of a barren plain. There he awaited the fury of Darkness. It came, splitting at the base of the mountain, spilling around it, flowing onto the plain. At its head were the most loathsome demons the fifth level contained. Fendhal sent wave after wave of lions against this, who held its progress. From the skies eagles, angels and

elves upon the backs of flying horses, descended on the sea of evil.

Behind the mountain a second wave of centaurs, unicorns, tigers and men attacked. The evil hoard was surrounded. Methzar was furious and called the demons from the skies to reinforce her army. Magra sent massive bolts of lightning into the midst of the forces of Light and called great winds to tear through them. The earth took up the fury of battle. Massive pieces of land began to drift away into the Western Sea. All the free creatures of the waters tried to hold these lands, but to no avail. To the south west, one great mass twisted and crashed into the southern tip. The shock waves threw up mountains and trapped a giant lake of sea water. Methzar channelled the power of this toward Fendhal causing the earth to split, separating his remaining armies from the main battle. The White Dragon, seeing the danger, called from the bowels of the earth, water to fill the gorge. He weaved a spell of petrification over this and made the waters freeze. The elves mounted their white steeds and rode across the frozen lake into battle.

The White Dragon had used all of his concentration to achieve the weave and was distracted from the Dark forces amassing against him. They descended from the sky and crawled up from around the base of Mount Arnes, but he was powerful and held them at bay. The evil trio saw a chance to weaken Lights' hold, and turned most of their forces against him. The conflict slowly went in favour of Darkness. However, in so doing, much of Evils' power was directed away from Fendhal, and his army made a massive advance against the trio. When the Dragon fell it was in a blast of Hell fire that set Mount Arnes and surrounding forests ablaze. But with him went all the legions of Darkness that had come against him. Both the forces of Light and Darkness were weakened. Neither were sure what their next move should be and they disengaged. Each retreated to their strongholds, there to council.

Battles continued during this time, but not with the vigour of before. The plain was once more empty but for the bodies strewn there. Fendhal and the armies of Light had held well against Darkness. They saw no

reason for not continuing their attack, even without the guidance of the Dragon. However with his passing, the frozen waters of the lake that separated them from the plain, were melting. They were forced to move. The Snow Queen saw them and guided the hoard once more upon the army. They attacked the ice as Fennel crossed, breaking it up. Many elves fell into the waters and were drowned. But their steeds were swift, and most cleared the lake before the ice melted completely. The centaurs and men managed to swim the last few yards and were saved also. However they were now caught in the open. The eagles rallied around Fendhals army, attacking the Dark hoard. Many of these noble birds were lost, but they allowed Fendhal to regroup. He commanded his cavalry to charge. They ploughed into the helpless creatures that Darkness had placed at their front line, purely to slow down any attack. The Elfin riders were expert warriors and cut the creatures down as a scythe cuts through grass. Their horses were charged with Light and knew no fear, even against the demons within the hoards' midst. The centaurs rode next, raining arrows into the heart of the Dark army. Men on foot, brandishing mighty blades ran, screaming curdling cries of war, slaying all that remained of the front line of Darkness.

The armies of Evil retreated, their numbers depleted. Methzar was forced to come down from the mountain and join the battle with her personal legions. She controlled a thousand trolls, two hundred arch demons, three thousand wolves and the Snow Queens' army of Ice Giants. Along with the remaining numbers of the Dark hoard, it was the greatest army of Darkness Fendhal had so far faced. Methzar made her encampment at the base of the mountain. Her forces amassed around her and stretched out across the plain. Fendhal's army was small in comparison. The last of the unicorns had joined him and a legion of men were also at his command. However, apart from the elves, he had little to defend against the might of the Arch Demons. Nor did he have the numbers to equal that of the trolls or wolves. He was forced to make a stand however, for he could not retreat. Behind him lay the lake created by the White Dragon. To his left and right, Methzars' warriors were spreading out.

Fendhal instructed the men to form a circle. To the head of this circle went all the tigers and lions, the unicorns and the centaurs, facing the enemy. In the centre, Fendhal and the elves held a service of Light. They called to the six levels of Light for protection and sang praises to the Creator upon the seventh. Above them, as they did so, lightning danced in sheets and the clouds began to tumble in a great circle. The elves called out the creed of Light and thunder rolled across the plain. The sky above them was swirling around the circle they formed. In the middle, imperceptively at first, the clouds began to part. The gap grew until it was the size of the circle their army made below. A shaft of almost blinding light descended then, toward them, surrounding them. Within it they were safe, no army of Darkness could penetrate the wall of Light. Arch Angels appeared within this shaft and descended also, into the midst of the elves. Although their numbers were not much enlarged, the army was charged with the might and wonder of Light. Their strength flowed from within and they knew no fear. They remained in the protection of Light until the morning of the third day.

They stood then, facing the greatest army of Darkness ever to amass against a single army of Light. Fendhal and his various warriors, for their part, were blessed with Light and mighty in strength if not numbers. First the unicorns, followed by centaurs, moved slowly toward the evil that awaited them. As they neared their foe they picked up speed until, in full charge, they smashed into the front lines of Darkness. The unicorns fought with a fury that no man or elf will forget, for they hated the Dark hoard. They fell eventually, as they must to sheer numbers, but with them they took over half the hoard. They cleared a path for the centaurs, but they faced the trolls and wolves. The wolves leapt at these peace loving creatures, dragging them down and the trolls swarmed over them, butchering the centaurs with sword and club.

The men attacked next, followed closely by Elfin warriors. They met in combat with the trolls and wolves and fought bravely. The Angels rose into the air and descended upon the demons. The opposing armies of the fifth levels were well matched and their battle seemed as if it would have no end. The fury of their conflict spread out around the mountain and

levelled it. It spread out into the continent and the earth shook once more. Valleys were created and destroyed as the earth received the full might of their wrath. Lightning played to the command of both sides destroying first Demon, then Angel, in fire. Their bodies crashed to the ground, throwing up great mountains. Fire descended from the skies against the demons and they in return sent a mighty wall of Hell Fire against the angels. The land below was scorched and remain as vast deserts even today.

The main battle was now in the hands of the mortal creatures. Elf, man, eagles, tigers and lions against trolls, wolves and Ice Giants. But on the side of Darkness remained the Trio of Evil. Methzar and her command of all that was corrupt. Magra and her knowledge of the Black arts, her command of the elements and her burning hatred of mankind. The Snow Queen with her knowledge of the ways of war and her power over the Ice Giants. The balance was on the side of Darkness and Fendhal found himself pushed further and further back, towards the lake. Also amongst the legions of Evil was the remainder of the Dark hoard. All the evil loathsome creatures that crawled and slithered over the sea of dead. Light was losing to Darkness and it seemed as if the battle would soon be over. Fendhals' army became desperate, their numbers were falling more rapidly than that of their foe. It seemed as if all was lost.

Then it was, that something totally inexplicable happened. The wolves turned and ran off into the surrounding forests. The trolls remained fighting, but formed into small defensive groups. Then they too began retreating into the far forests. The army of Darkness was in disarray. Fendhal saw the confusion and called on his warriors to attack. In the encampment, Methzar was furious. She could control the few trolls around her but she watched helplessly as the others escaped into the forests. She screamed her commands into the air but they had no effect, her dominance over them had gone. Magra was confused, her powers were still with her, but diminished. Something had happened to the balance. Darkness no longer dominated the weave. Worse still, she felt the influence of Light growing upon it. Somewhere, in some way,

Darkness had suffered a heavy defeat. She knew not what, or how. But she felt the passing of some immense power, and with it went Methzars' command over the Dark creatures. Magra called to her several of the remaining servants of Darkness and escaped unnoticed from the battle field.

Fendhals' warriors descended on the few demons and Dark creatures that remained, and set about destroying them utterly. They cleared the last of the crawling hoard first, climbing over their decaying bodies to reach the demons beyond. The Dark Angels fought well but their power was weakening. Fendhal pushed ever forward, an avenging instrument of Light. The Elfin horses reared and kicked, crushing anything under them. They gained ground slowly and surely, fighting on, even into the night. To help them see, Fendhals warriors piled high the bodies of the Dark armies and set them alight.

The demons could not stop their advance and were becoming disheartened with the fight. As a last stand, they withdrew to Methzars encampment. Her control over the few remaining trolls was becoming unreliable and she was forced to kill them all, lest they turn instead against her. This was her downfall, for the Snow Queen began to fear Methzar, and she commanded her Ice Giants to surround her. Thus protected she retreated, away from the battle and toward the sea.

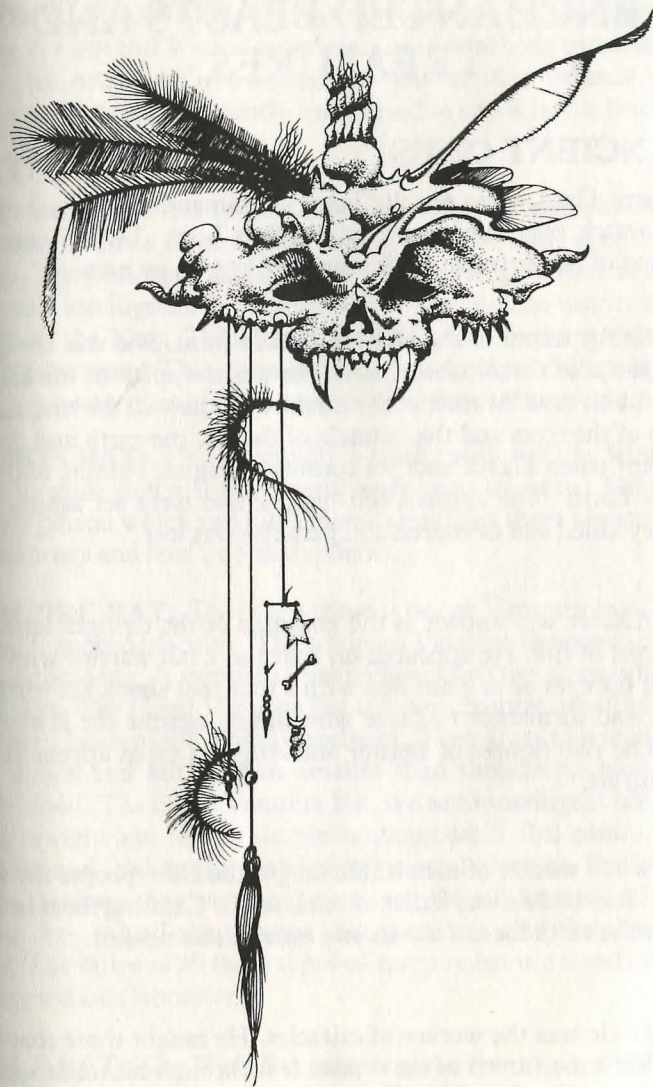
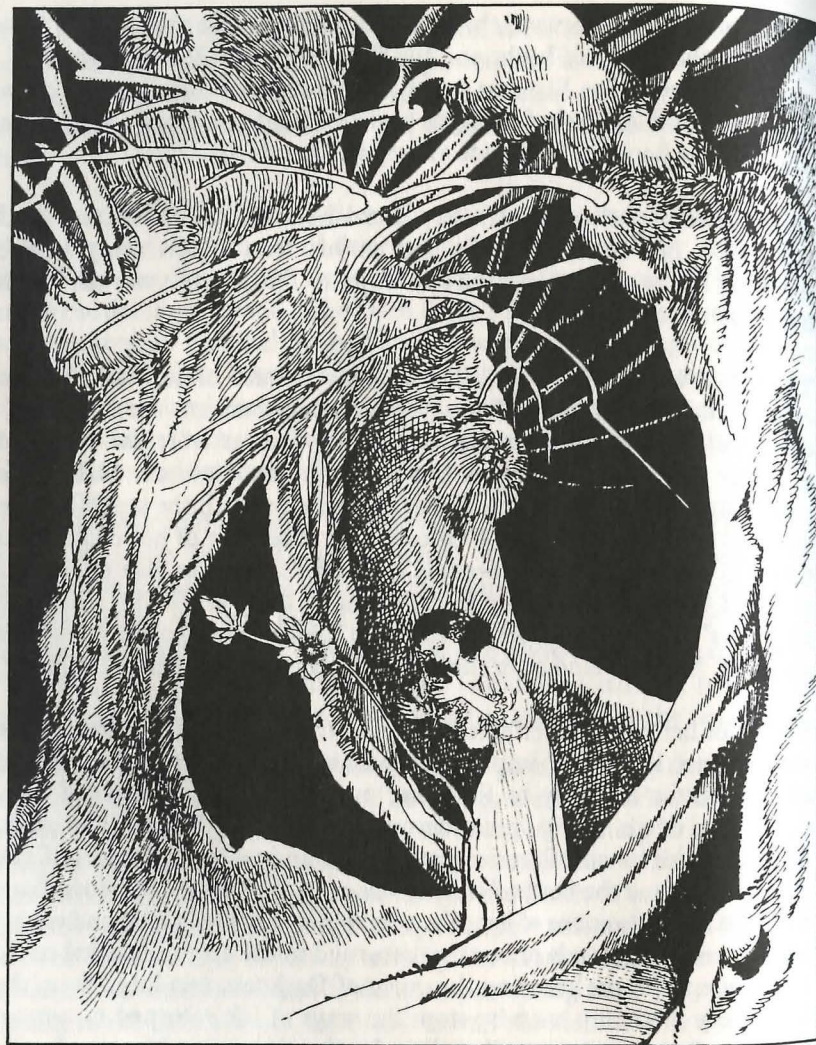
Methzar was left alone, except for the small group of lowly demons who remained faithful to her. She stood defiantly, even when Fendhal and his warriors rode into the encampment, levelling everything in their path. They stopped short of her, dismounting, swords drawn. Fendhal faced then the Goddess of Evil who had caused the Earth so much grief. His shoulder was torn and bleeding, the tip of a spear still embedded in it. He showed no weakness however, cursing her Dark form. The warriors advanced on the small band of demons protecting her. They fell mercilessly to the Elfin swords, but still Methzar stood firm. The elves grew unsure, only Fendhal continued to advance on her. Methzar face slowly distorted, becoming hideously ugly. Flame began to surround her but Fendhal walked through these, ignoring the illusion. From her mouth a

swarm of flies shot forward, blinding him briefly. He shouted the first line from the Creed of Light and the flies dispersed. Methzar growled, deep and animal like. She was losing even this last stand. Fendhal drew back his sword and a shaft of light broke through the clouds as the sun rose over the horizon. His blade swung swift and true.

On the morning of the fourth day, Lord Fendhal held Methzars head high upon his spear, showing her to his triumphant army before throwing her head back into the cosmic gate. The greatest war the Earth had known was at an end.

The battle was won but Evil had struck a painful blow. Valleys were created and destroyed, lands had sunk forever beneath the sea. Kingdoms were lost and races wiped out. Gone forever were the beautiful unicorns and the mischievous but peace loving centaurs. Slain were great Kings of men and elves. From his home beneath the sea, Neptune rose and confronted the Snow Queen. He robbed her of her beauty and then cast her into the sea to become a prisoner forever in his underwater palace. Lord Fendhals' triumph was tainted also. Whilst he held high Methzars' head, her blood had ran down his arm into the wound on his shoulder. Like the land after the battle, he lay some days later, dying.

Magra for her part had retreated back into the Volcanic Dungeon, where the princess Edora lay imprisoned within a crystal coffin. It proved impossible for an army to force her out. Without the Seeds of Life, disease and death slowly spread across the face of the World. The earth, steeped in the blood of armies, was barren and rotting. Plagues of rats and flies infested the battle fields. It was only after many attempts that a hero was found, so pure of heart he was able to destroy Magra and rescue the princess. The seeds once more returned to the earth, Fendhal could finally die in peace, knowing the curse of Darkness was lifted from the land. Very gradually, step by step, the ways of life returned to normal and once more peace prevailed. But the Continent would never be the same again. Another age in its turbulent history had passed and a new one was emerging.



ENCHANTED BEASTS AND TREASURES.

THE ANCIENT ONES.

The Ancient Ones, were angelic beings commanded by the Lords of Light to watch over the planet of the first born. Twelve was their number and of those twelve, only four were known by name.

BERNOR: Appeared to the elves in female form. She was the fairest and most loved of the Ancient Ones. She was the spirit of life and was known to the elves as 'Mother of the earth'. She knew all the languages of the spirits of the trees and the animals of the air, the earth and the sea. Bernor wept when Death and his consorts, Plague, Famine and War, visited the Earth. The animals felt hunger and were set against each other. They killed and devoured and paradise was lost.

ANGORAX: He was known as the guardian of the twilight lands. He was an Angel of fire. He appeared on Earth as a tall warrior with a fire burning in his eyes or as giant lion with a roar that shook the earth. He was judge and tormentor to those who sinned against the laws of the Creator. The two figures of Bernor and Angorax often appear side by side in Elfin art.

AZAEL: Was a worker of metals. He taught the Elfin people the art of metal craft. It is said he was father of the Dwarfs. Creating them to mine deep under the earth for the metals and minerals he needed.

BALAAM: He was the worker of miracles. He taught those that were willing to learn the secrets of the weave. It is through his teachings that most magical lore has been passed down.

ASTRAL MONSTER The Astral monster is a psychically created being. A Powerful Wizard can project his Astral body to any location and shape his Astral self into a predatory animal. Any wounds suffered by this Astral being are instantly transferred to the Wizards body.

BATS.

BAT MEN: Not many men have seen these creatures. Most of our knowledge comes from Goras' account of his travels deep beneath the Earth. They are very similar to the Giant Vampire Bats in appearance but their intelligence is greater. They have a class system the head of which is the king. Their language and tribal customs seem to be as complex as mans. They farm and feed on a strange underground fungus. There is no account of them ever visiting the surface world.

POISON BAT: This is actually a spider with bat like wings which it uses to glide down from cavern roofs onto its prey. They possess a deadly poison which can kill a man in less than three seconds. They are carnivorous and feed on small rodents.

VAMPIRE BAT: There are three types of Vampire bat. The first is found in most dark caves. The common Vampire Bat grows to an inch or two inches long. It sucks on blood while its victim sleeps and causes no ill effects. The Great Vampire Bat is a rare creature usually found in the northern lands of the Third Continent. They grow to one foot in length and attack and kill animals smaller than themselves before drinking their blood. The Giant Vampire Bat, is a semi-intelligent lifeform. They walk upright and have a simple language and tribal community. They will kill and feed on the blood of any mortal creature. By the beginning of the third age they were almost extinct. Dwarfs hunted and killed them when they mined the caverns that were home to the Giant Vampire Bats. The saliva of all three types of vampire bat is a standard ingredient in any wizards laboratory.

WOLF-BAT: The Wolf Bat gets its name from its wolf like head and jaws. They are vicious carnivores and one is more than a match for an

unarmed man. They grow to a length of three feet and possess very strong and sharp talons. They often hunt in packs in the forests at night.

CENTAURS:



They were a gentle and peaceful race. They roamed the temperate lands to the west coast of the Third Continent. The centaur was a beautiful combination of man and horse. They were expert archers and they fought to the last centaur against the alliance of evil at the end of the third age. After the fall of the last centaur the name was attached to evil man-beasts created by black wizards.



CYCLOPS.



The Cyclops is a race of one eyed giants that live in rocky terrain. They are intelligent and they align themselves with evil.

DRAGONS.

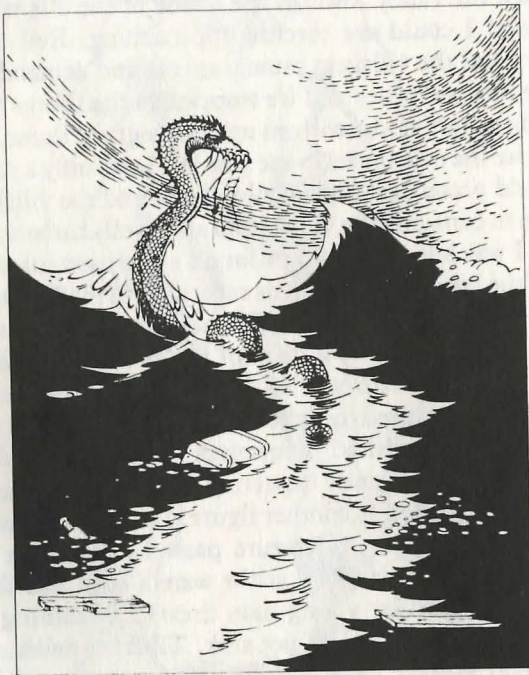
TIBERUS: She was mother to all the evil Dragons on the Earth. It is said she came from the third level of Darkness once every five hundred years to give birth to a new race of Dragons. An account of her passing can be found in a passage from the 'Chronicles of Fenmore', the Elfin pilgrim.

I looked down the valley towards the abode of the elves who live by the Great lake and I could see torches approaching. Evil omens danced across the sky and the villagers came unto me and demanded my service they took me into the valley and we stopped by the shores of the lake and I could see the waters aglow with an unearthly green flame. The villagers bid me exorcise the evil spirits in the lake but I was only a pilgrim. I knew my faith would protect me but I could not defend the village. The green flame rose up to consume the village and all the elves surrounding me were lost forever. I was left alone except for an apparition materialising near the centre of the lake. It was Tiberus returning to the Earth. For the first time in my life I doubted my faith. Tiberus was taller than the tallest tree and her body was hidden by a mass of fire breathing heads. From her womb floated pellucid balls and in each of them burned a fire. In their thousands the balls covered the lake and one by one they exploded releasing small Dragons that lifted themselves into the air and disappeared into the night. I prayed silently expecting any moment to be struck down but Tiberus was attracted to another figure. I saw what I thought was the flame of a torch but when the figure passed I could see he carried a glowing rod. The figure stopped at the waters edge and slipped off his cloak to reveal a muscular young man dressed in shining armour. He stepped upon the water and did not sink. Tiberus; neither her fire nor her venom could stop the warrior. He grew in stature until he was as tall as Tiberus and he held the rod away from his body. Tiberus gave a mournful cry and vanished forever from the Earth. I knew then that the warrior was Angorax and he wielded the Staff of Creation.

DRAGON: The common Dragon grows to a height of twelve feet and although it grows wings, only the young Dragons can fly. The common

Dragon is not intelligent and has a neutral alignment in the wars between good and evil.

FOREST DRAGON: These Dragons grow to a height of twelve feet and live in dense forests. They cannot fly nor do they breath fire. They are flesh eaters living mainly on deer.



SEA DRAGON: A fire breathing Serpent that lives its full life in the water. It can stay submerged for many days but it must surface for air because it does not have gills. The Lake version of this monster grows to a length of twenty feet while their sea-based cousins grow to sixty feet.

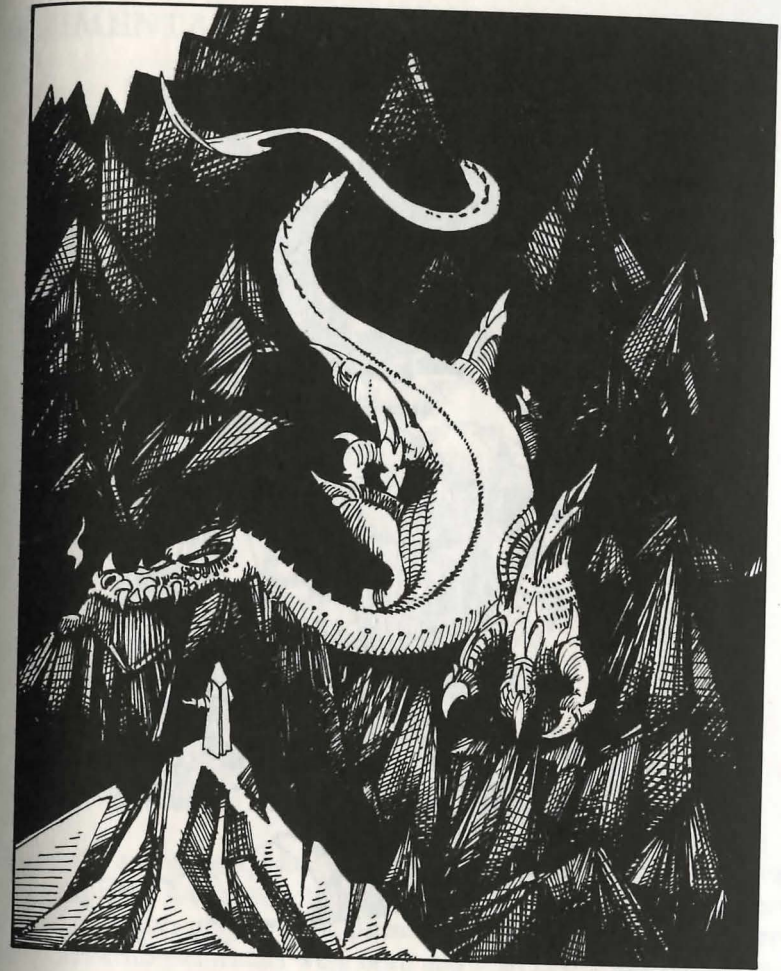


BLUE DRAGON: Instead of flames this Dragon can spit lightning bolts and this makes it the most dangerous of all Dragons. They can fly and they speak in any language. They align themselves with evil.

BRONZE DRAGON: The Bronze Dragon is heavily armoured against traditional weapons. They are the largest of the Dragons sometimes reaching sixty feet in height. Their alignment is evil and like all of the evil Dragons they can speak any language.

CLOUD DRAGON: They align themselves with the powers of light in the wars against Darkness. They live on high mountains and spend much of their time flying above the clouds.

LIZARD DRAGON: This is the smallest Dragon in the Third Continent. It grows to a height of three feet. They live in rocky and sandy terrain. They are fire breathers but their wings are undeveloped so they cannot fly.



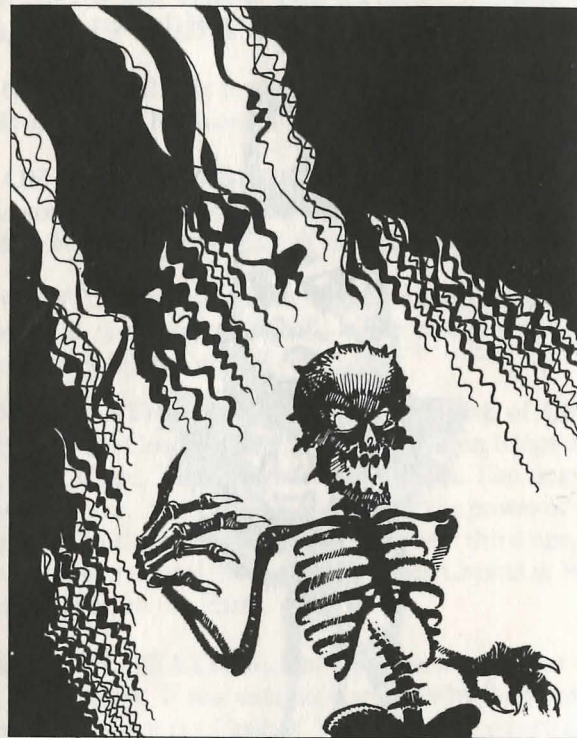
THE WHITE DRAGON: The White Dragon is a high being of Light. He is an Arch Angel from the fifth level. The White Dragon perished in a battle with Demons on top of Mount Arnes.

DWARFS.



The Dwarfs are small stoutly built beings who love to live underground. They were created by Azael to mine metals and minerals for his use. They often trade with elves but they do not trust wizards or men.

ELEMENTALS.



Elementals are beings created from earth, air, fire or water. Such beings occur naturally due to the interaction of the tidal effects of the weave against the forces of the mortal plain. During the creation of the Earth many powerful elementals were born and man gave them the status of Gods. Vassago is a being of fire. He is often called on by human wizards to foretell the future. He is bound by enchantments to answer but the wizard must be well protected before conjuring him to appear. Vassago has no love of serving mankind who he observes as being ape like primitives.

Neptune is an elemental of water and is one of the most powerful elemental beings on the Earth. He commands all the waterways of the world and has won himself the title 'King of the Seas'.



Minor elementals are still created today by the effects of the weave on the natural forces of the Earth or by the tampering of wizards. Elementals can take many forms and they can be extremely dangerous.

ENCHANTED TREASURES.

THE ORB OF CASSANDRA: This is a crystal sphere of knowledge. All you need to know is held in the crystal.

SWORD OF ANGORAX: It stands in the Hall of the Kings, within the Citadels of Mars. The sword is so heavy no mortal can lift it.

SWORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS: This sword stands next to the sword of Angorax and it has magical properties. It stores the skills of its owners and fights almost with a life of its own.

SWORD OF VENGEANCE: This is the twin sword to the Sword of Righteousness. It is a weapon of evil. If the sword is drawn from its sheath then it must kill before it is returned.

RINGS OF CREATION: When the Great Ring of Creation was corrupted by Evil the Creator split the ring into Seven Rings of Creation: Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Time, Light and Darkness. The rings were used to create the Universe. The Lords of Light used the power of the rings to destroy Ny'Ugal in the Second age. Later, in the third age, they were used in the hands of a mortal to destroy the Black Crystal of Beroth. The rings are still hidden on the Earth.

THE STAFF OF CREATION: Contains the energy that created the Great ring of Creation. It was used as a weapon by Angorax to punish those that sinned against the Creator. It is the most powerful weapon in the Universe and if used by a Devil or a God it could destroy all creation. The weapon destroys the soul as well as the body giving a fate worse than Death. There is no existence on any plain for those who suffer the power of the Staff.

FENDHALLS' RING: This ring, first worn by Lord Fendhall, enables the wearer to absorb the strength of his fallen enemy.

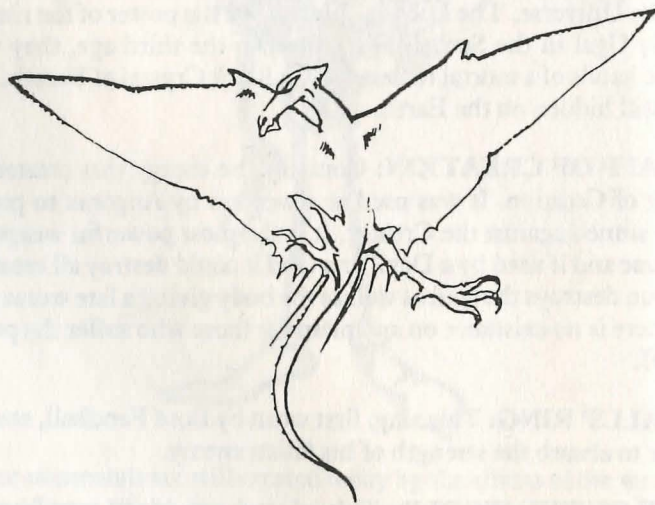
THE EYE OF THE WORLD: This is a true oracle of Light from the Fourth level. It was called to the mortal plain by the Brotherhood of the

Star Warrior during the reign of Domire. The Brotherhood used it to look into Domires' true nature and saw that he was actually a high demon, bound by the name Agor. To protect it from Agor, the Brotherhood placed it within the Halls of Death, in the tenth cavern. There it sits in a shrine built to it. It sees all and can only speak the truth. Beware that this is what you seek for the naked truth can be too much for an unprepared mind.

The Halls of Death are well named and are not to be transversed lightly. However with care they can be entered.

FLYING LIZARD.

These flesh eating monsters can have a wing span of twelve or more feet. They inhabit forest terrain in the Temperate Zones of the Third Continent.



GOBLINS.



Goblins are small creatures only three to four feet high but they are very strong. They live deep underground where they use slaves to build Fortresses for them. They are never seen above ground during daylight hours but as soon as darkness falls they emerge to go on raiding trips.

GOLEM.

A Golem is a statue brought to life by magical means. Golems can be created from clay, wood or metals such as bronze and iron. If a Golem is allowed to live too long it develops a will of its own and always attempts to kill its creator, to gain its freedom. The tale of the 'Star Warrior' created during the second age should be warning enough for anyone intending to dabble into this black art.

GHOUL.



These are members of the undead. It is thought that a Ghoul is created if a man is possessed by an evil spirit when he dies. The spirit re-activates the body and gains total control. The Ghoul inhabits burial places and feeds on the rotting flesh of corpses. They shun the sunlight, hiding in tombs or catacombs during daylight hours.

HOBGOBLINS.



They are similar in appearance to the Goblin but they are larger. They live in groups in forests and raid settlements for food and trinkets.

HARPY.

The Harpies are a race of evil flying creatures. They are huminoid in appearance with large Bat like wings on their shoulders. They live in caves on high desolate mountain tops. They feed on carrion and often store the victims they kill for days before eating them.

HYDRA.

The Hydra is a giant reptilian monster with at least seven heads. It can only be killed by severing each of its heads and burning the stumps. The Hydra is one of the few creatures of this world that can instantly regenerate any part of its body. This makes the monster nearly invulnerable. The Red Hydra is a fire breathing version of the Hydra.



ICE GIANTS.



The Ice Giants come from the Northern lands of the Third Continent. There are three varieties known to man. The smallest and most intelligent of the Ice Giants live in snow covered forests. Their bodies are covered in coarse reddish hair and they grow to a height of eight to ten feet. The other varieties live in the mountains. One species grows to a height of twelve feet and is covered in coarse white fur. The larger Ice Giant grow to twenty feet in height and feeds on the smaller variety.

IMPS.

These are elemental beings. They are of nuisance value and often attach themselves to somebody until they are exorcised. They have a childish attitude to life often playing pranks on their hosts. Only parasitic Imps are dangerous. They remain invisible and often attach themselves without their hosts ever knowing. They feed on certain emotions. The most common parasitic Imp feeds on Anger. This breed of Imp usually drives its host to commit murder. All parasitic Imps leave their host when the host is driven insane or has died. Those with psychic perception or second sight can see the parasitic Imp.

KELPIE.

The Kelpie is a sea serpent with a horse like head. They are aligned to evil.

KORRANNA.

These beings are depicted in Elfin art as white flying horses carrying souls above the clouds. They are ethereal beings who save souls from limbo and take them to the first plain of Light.

KRAKEN.

The Kraken is a giant octopus found in western waters. They grow large enough to attack and sink sailing ships.

LORDS OF CHAOS.

They are evil beings of the sixth level of Darkness. They were created to return the Universe to Chaos. One of the Lords of Chaos; Death, was given the power to destroy life and paradise was lost on the Earth.

LORDS OF LIGHT.

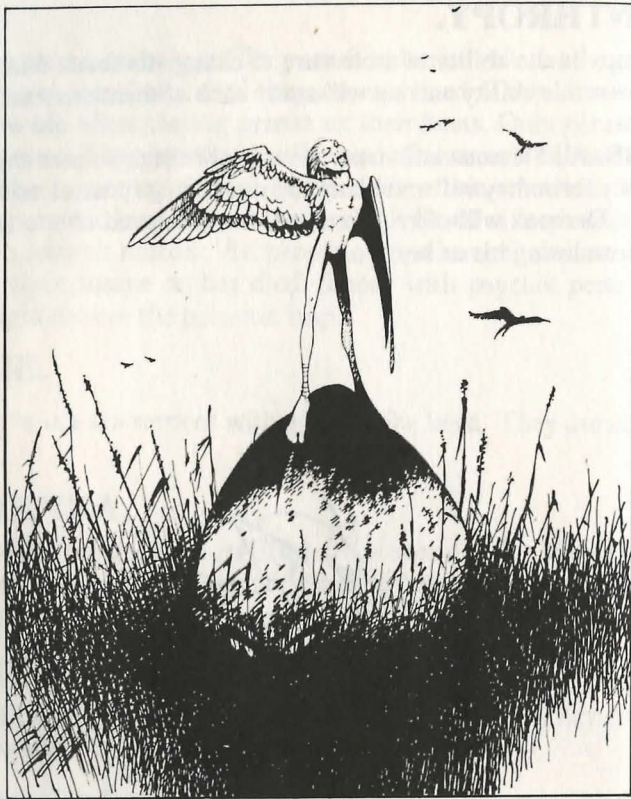
Ethereal beings from the sixth level of Light. They were created to wield the power of the seven rings of creation. With the seven rings the Lords of Light created the stars and the planets and on those planets they sowed the seeds of Life.

LYCANTHROPY.

Lycanthropy is the ability of a creature to change its form. Many creatures possess this ability and we will study each of them separately.

DEMONS: All Demons and many elemental beings possess the power to adopt any form they will and being spiritual beings possess no shape of their own. Demons will often take the form of a loved one to trick the unaware into losing his or her soul.

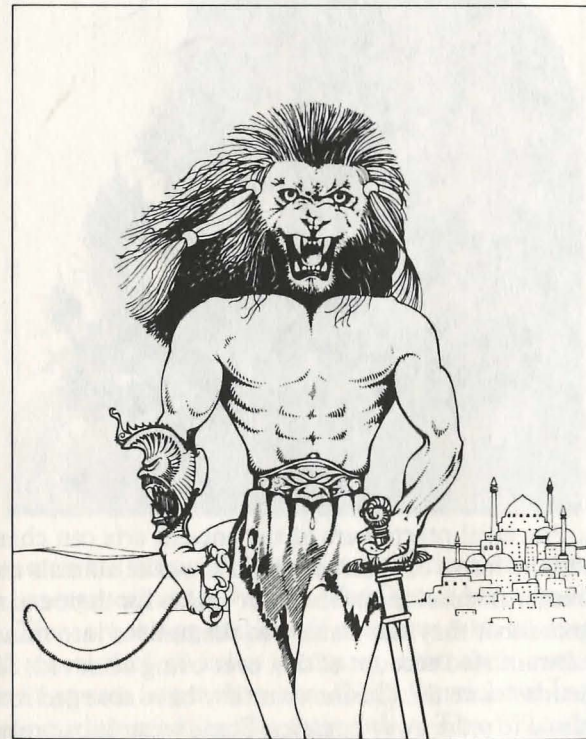




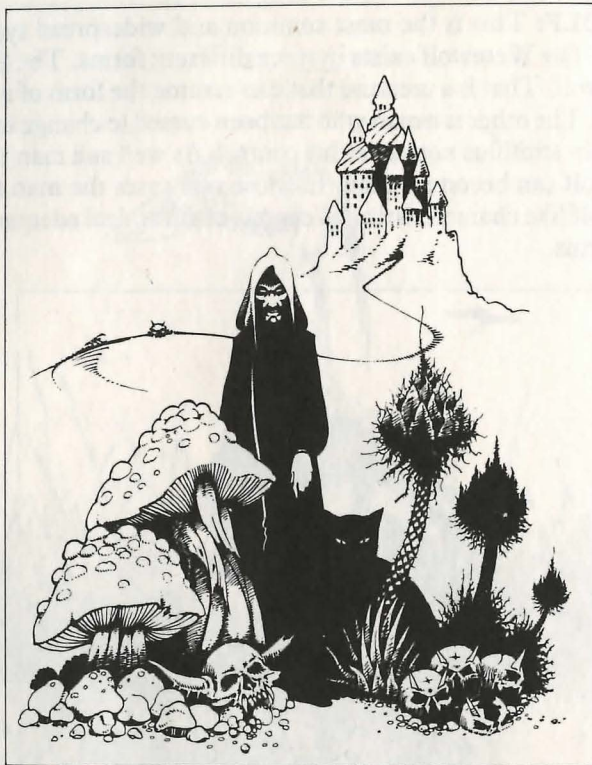
MOOR-SLUG: This is not a lycanthrope in the strictest sense but it has an unique camouflaging technique. The moor slug is a shapeless monster that can mould its body into many shapes and change the texture and colour of its skin to resemble stone or wood. The moor slug is a very dangerous predator. The only clues a traveller can sense are its obvious smell.

VAMPIRE: The undead can change into one of three creatures a wolf, a spider or a bat.

WEREWOLF: This is the most common and widespread type of Lycanthropy. The Werewolf exists in three different forms. The first is the true Werewolf. That is a creature that can assume the form of a wolf or a man at will. The other is a man who has been cursed to change into a wolf under certain stimulus not under his control. As well as a man becoming a wolf, a wolf can become a man. In those rare cases the man form still displays wolf like characteristics. Weapons of silver deal adequately with all three forms.

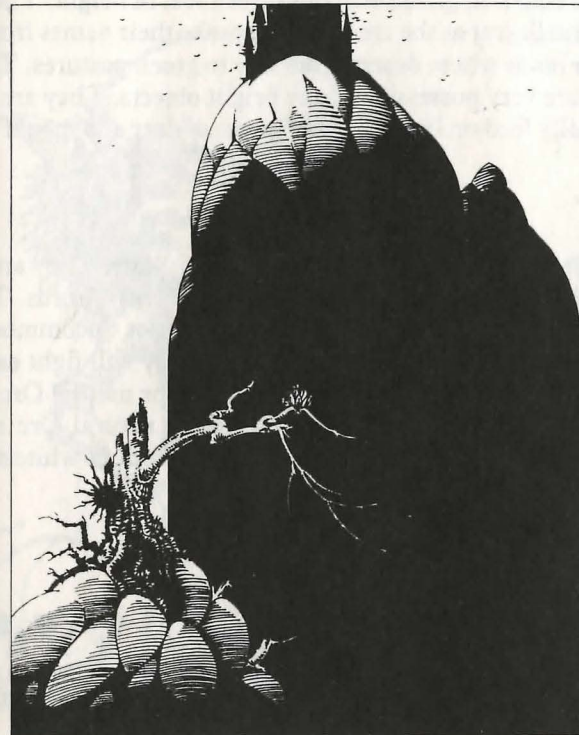


Less common Lycanthropes include Werebears, Weretigers, and Werelions.



WIZARDS: Powerful practioners of the ancient arts can change their own forms and the forms of others at will. Favourite animals chosen are birds and hares for themselves and toads or snakes for their enemies. It is claimed by some that they can transform themselves into minerals but there is no substantiated account of that ever being achieved. Many less powerful wizards create the illusion that they have changed into a large predatory animal to scare away enemies. Some wizards can release their astral bodies and form it into the shape of a ravenous monster or animal before sending it to destroy an enemy. Any wound suffered by the Astral being are transferred to the wizards body.

OGRES



They are sometimes known as Great Trolls by the elves because they are similar in appearance except for size. The Ogre is between 12 and 15 foot in height. They are strong and brutal creatures with an average intelligence and a hatred of all other creatures, even their own race. They rarely live in groups larger than two. Child Ogres leave home by their twelfth year or they are killed by their father. They often build castles within caves or on mountain tops. You might see a troll encampment around an Ogre castle because the Ogres will often employ the trolls services, in exchange for food, as added security.

ORANGE OGRES

These are tan coloured giants of about fifteen feet in height. They are no way near as intelligent as the creatures they take their names from. They live in border lands where deserts give way to green pastures. They love treasure and are very possessive of any bright objects. They are carnivorous and usually feed on lizard but are lovers of deer and men if they can get them.

ORCS

A vicious tribal race who feature in all the great wars. They are used as foot soldiers in the armies of evil wizards and Dark Lords. They are despised even by Trolls and Orc-Troll wars are not uncommon. There are more than ninety recorded Orc tribes and they will fight each other unless under the control of a powerful master. The natural Orc is a cave dweller and cannot walk in the Sunlight. The natural Orc is almost extinct because of Wizards who inbred them to produce white skin Orcs that do not fear the Sun.



RED CAPS.



The Red Caps are elves who sold their souls to the Darkness for the gift of power. They beat their enemies to death with stones and clubs and then they soak their caps in the blood. It is their blood stained caps which give this evil Elfin race its name.

RED HERRING

Red Herrings are a common fish found in fresh water lakes. Saltwater versions are found on the west coast of the Third Continent. They have their scales removed and are usually salted before being sold as food.

ROC.

A giant carnivorous bird that is strong enough to carry off cattle. It nests in inaccessible locations in the Black mountains where it is common. A smaller version, the Red Roc, is found in the tropical regions of the Third Continent.



SHAGGOTHS:



The Shaggoths are large man like warriors with heads that resemble a wolf. They were brought to Earth by the Lords of Chaos to fight on the side of Evil during the Second age but they deserted. They hid in underground caverns where they still live to this day. The Shaggoths have lived so long in their dim caverns that the light of the sun pains their eyes. They sometimes go on raiding trips at night, stealing food and gold. They are greedy, selfless and unreliable.

SHIRGOTH:

An Oracle of evil from the fourth level of Darkness. Her earthly incarnation is in the form of a large wolf. She will pass knowledge on to those who bring her gifts of children as sacrifice.

SPIDERS

GIANT SPIDER: These are the largest of the spiders growing up to twenty foot in diameter. They do not build webs but chase after their prey at great speed and inject it with poison. The Giant Spider is a cave dweller and only strays out at night to hunt in the forests.

GREAT SPIDER: They are Web builders and smaller than the giant spider. Largest recorded great spider was 12 foot in diameter. They are usually found in caves but the forest is their natural habitat. They have been hunted out of the forests by men and elves. They spin an almost invisible web that is strong enough to hold a man. Their bite has a paralyzing effect that lasts for an average of two weeks.

MUMMY SPIDER: This is a very rare creature. Its name is given to it because its habitat is in tombs where it feeds on the dead. The other names it goes by are Corpse Spider or Grave Spider. The spider is about the size of a mans fist but its bite is harmless.

RAINBOW SPIDER: The Rainbow Spider gets its name from the multi coloured web it spins. Be careful the webs beauty is deceiving. The web contains a deadly poison. The spider is a rather dull grey in colour and is harmless. It prefers dark caves and can be found in most of the temperate and tropical regions of the Third Continent.



SKULL SPIDERS: The skull spiders are desert dwellers. They are non-poisonous but they have a unique defence. The reflection on their shiny backs will show the manner of your death. This usually upsets predators and gives the spiders time to escape. Wizards often keep a mirror made from the back of Skull Spiders to enable them to see into the future.

TARANTULA: Another desert dweller. Its legs are often used as a magical ingredient.

VAMPIRE SPIDER: This spider is only found in the tropical forests to the south of the Third Continent. Sizes vary from that of a mans fist to two foot in diameter. Its bite produces a temporary paralysing effect on its victim allowing the spider to drink its victims blood. The amount of blood drained by one spider is not harmful to its victim. When the paralysing effect of the spiders poison wears off the victim will be quite healthy. Horror tales have come from the jungles about travellers who have disturbed a nest of these creatures and had their bodies completely drained of blood. If the tales are true the incidents must be rare because the Vampire Spider is a solitary hunter by instinct.

SIREN.

These beings are aligned with chaotic evil. They inhabit rocky islands surrounding the Third Continent. The Sirens' singing lures sailors onto the rocks where their ships are crushed and sea serpents feed on their bodies.



SISTERS OF DESTINY:



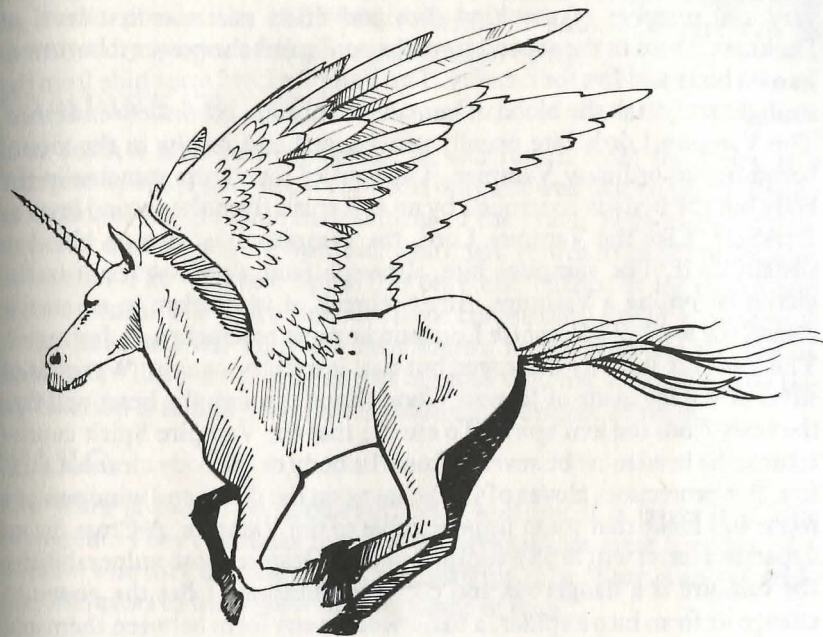
The three sisters of Destiny are oracles from the fourth-level of Light. Tira; the first sister sees all that has gone before. Sheena; the second sister knows all things to do with the present. Cassandra; the third sister knows all the paths of Destiny.

TROLLS



A cannibalistic tribal race. During the First Age these creatures were present in every area of the Third Continent. Some were nomads wandering the lands for plunder. At the end of the First Age six Trolls ate from the fruit of the Tree of Life and a Light burned in their hearts. Those six evolved into a life form known as man. Man hated the Trolls above all other creatures because they reminded him of the Darkness still in his heart. Man persecuted the Trolls so mercilessly that by the end of the Third Age the only Trolls left were those under the command of Evil Wizards.

UNICORN:



Of all the magical creatures of the Earth, Bernor, mother of the Earth, loved the Unicorns the most. Pirus, Lord of the Unicorns, was granted the power of flight by one of the Korranna. The entire race was wiped out during the great battle against the alliance of evil at the end of the Third Age.

VAMPIRES

Although many animals show vampire characteristics the only true vampires are born of mankind. The Vampires did not appear until the Second Age. There are two forms of Vampire the first is known as a Vampire Lord. The Vampire Lord is born when a soul that belonged to a very evil member of mankind dies and drifts past the first level of Darkness. Once in the second level the soul gains the power to return to its own body and live for eternity. The Vampire Lord must hide from the sunlight and drink the blood of humans to sustain his unholy existence. The Vampire Lords bite usually proves fatal and results in the victim becoming an ordinary Vampire. The soul of the victim remains in the body but the body is controlled by an evil spirit from the second level of Darkness. Like the Vampire Lord, the vampire must live on blood to sustain itself. The vampires bite, although fatal, does not result in the victim becoming a Vampire. Any outbreak of vampirism in an area is always the work of a Vampire Lord and he must be sought and destroyed. The Vampire is easily destroyed but first it must be caught. Weapons of silver or a stake made of Rowan Wood thrust through the heart will free the body from the evil spirit. To ensure that the Vampire Spirit cannot return, the head must be severed from the body or the body cleansed with fire. For protection, cloves of Garlic hung on the doors and windows of a room will make that room impenetrable to the Vampire. A Cross for no apparent reason will hold a vampire at bay. Despite those vulnerabilities the vampire is a dangerous and cunning monster. It has the power to change its form into a spider, a bat, a wolf or any form between them and a man. The Vampire Lord usually prefers a state between bat and man when it attacks its victim. The vampire possesses the ability to control weak minds and a Vampire Lord usually has many servants under his control. The Vampire has the ability to dematerialise and travel a great distance before reforming. Those extraordinary powers give the Vampire an advantage against its enemies.

MIND VAMPIRE

These creatures take their names from the undead blood suckers that

prey on mankind. Like their namesakes they came from the second level of Darkness and possess a body. The body can be any animal or plant. The Mind Vampire feeds on thought waves and unless its victim escapes the victims mind will be completely drained leaving him with no more knowledge than the day he was born. If the Mind Vampire should wish to, it can possess the body of its victim. A Mind Vampire can be destroyed by weapons of silver or purification by fire.

VAMPIRE SPIRITS:

If at death a man desires revenge he can return from the grave as a Vampire Spirit. The Vampire Spirit is only allowed one victim. It drains its victim of his life force then returns to the grave. If its victim is protected by a cross then the Vampire Spirit will return to its grave without its victim. The Vampire Spirit has only one chance at its victim and cannot return. The Spirit lives on in the corpse until called to do service to the Lord of Evil. They are then known as Ny'Necrom; the Devils risen dead. They are greatly feared because the only way to destroy the Ny'Necrom is to find their mortal bodies and dispose of them.

WARG.

The Warg is similar in appearance to a wolf but it is larger and very intelligent. They can speak in many tongues and are great friends of the Goblins who they accompany on raiding trips. The Warg is an evil creature who plots to overthrow the kingdoms of man.

WOLF.

In truth the Wolves alignment is neutral but in every war against the powers of Light the wolf has been used by Darkness. Demons in the guise of wolves easily defeat the pack leader and then the wolf pack is under their command.

WORMS

BLACKWORM: These are giant carnivorous worms. They burrow deep beneath the ground and detect movements on the surface with

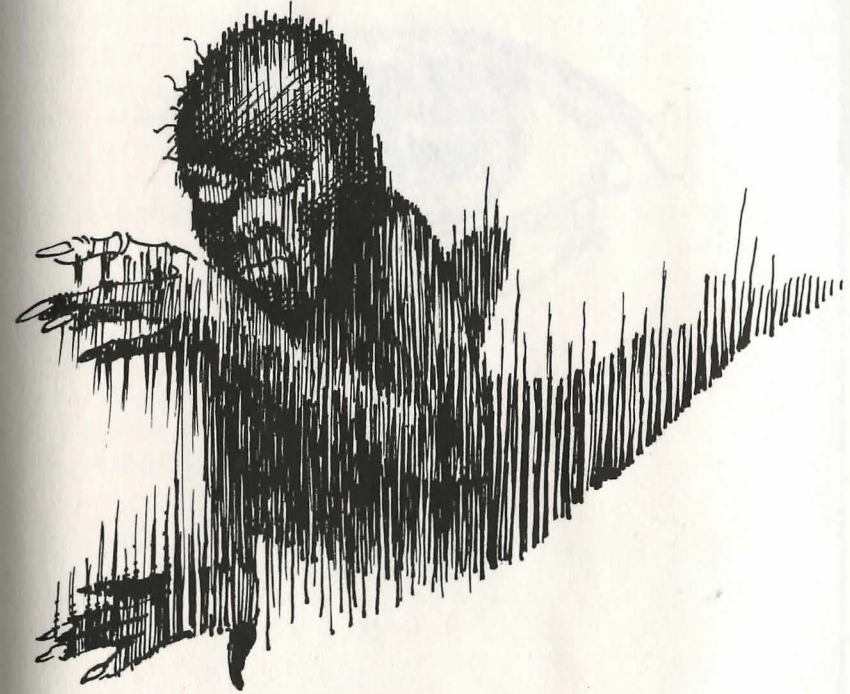
deadly accuracy. The worms incredible speed makes combat with it almost impossible. They have no teeth with which to tear at their prey but they can easily swallow a man whole. If you are swallowed by a black worm suffocation follows quickly, unless you are in a position to cut your way out. Their stomach produces a very effective gastric juice that will burn the flesh of a man unless he washes it off quickly.

GREAT WORM: These are very common in the temperate zones of the Third Continent. They grow in length from 6 feet to 12 feet long but they are not dangerous. They are scavengers that feed on decaying plant life. The meat from a Great Worm is very nourishing but has a bitter taste.

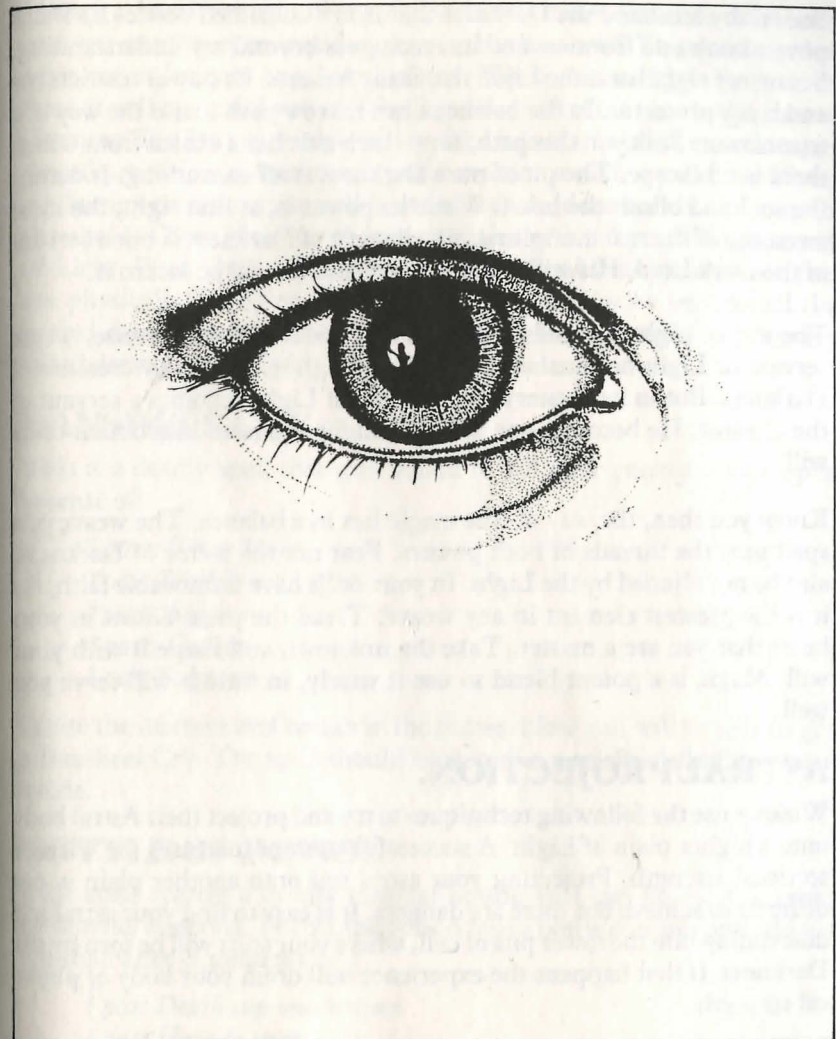
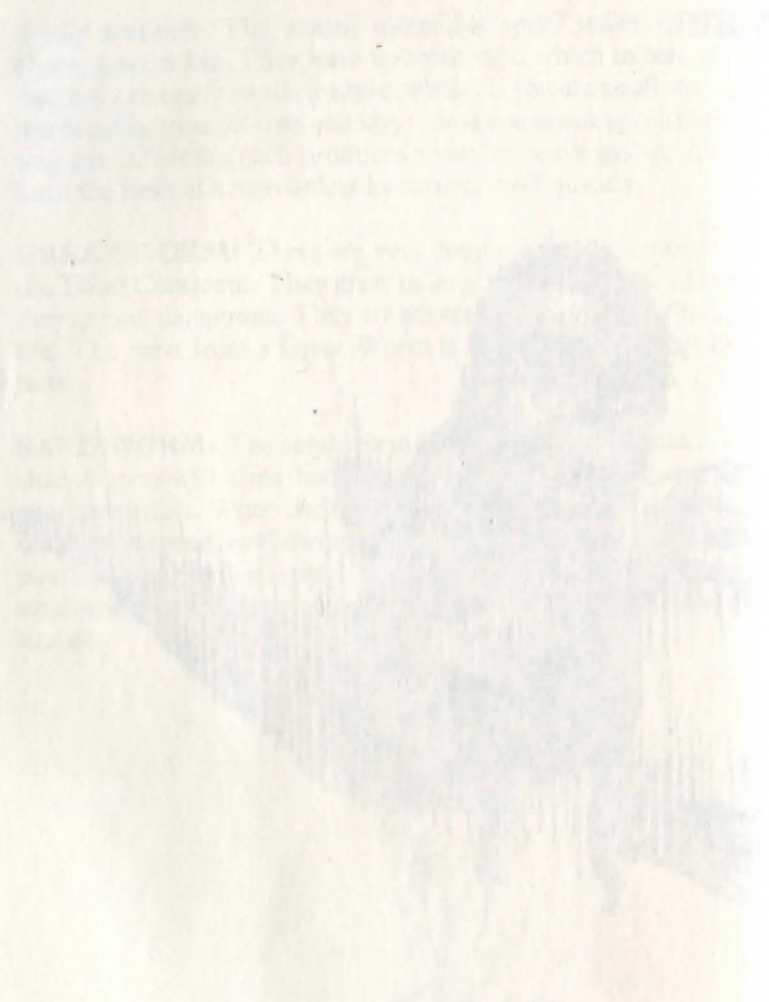
SAND WORM: The sand worm is a giant desert dweller. They lie in shaded areas with their bodies buried deep in the sand and their heads near the surface. When their prey comes into striking distance they move with great speed swallowing it alive. They can grow large enough to swallow men but this is rare. The lack of large desert animals means that sand worms are kept to an average length of 6 feet and feed mainly on lizards.



ZOMBIE.



The Zombie is a corpse animated by magic. It has no will of its own and moves only under the power of a master. Powerful magic users can control armies of the walking dead.



See on my left hand the Darkness that is my unbridled desire. Its Black power knows no frontiers and its reach goes beyond my understanding. See on my right hand the Light that is my harness. Its power restricts me and is my protector. In the balance lies a narrow path that is the way of a true master. Seek you this path, for to each side lies a chasm from which there is no escape. The pit of pure Darkness is all consuming. It damns the soul and blinds the heart. While its power is, at first sight, the most awesome of the two disciplines, the disciple of Darkness is but a servant of the Dark Lord. His will is not his own and he will be lost to it.

The way of Light demands a sacrifice that knows no compromise. A true servant of Light has unshakable faith, enough to defeat any creature of Darkness. But in its mastery, the disciple of Light becomes a servant of the Creator. He becomes one with the Light and is an instrument of its will.

Know you then, the way of true magic lies in a balance. The weave of a spell uses the threads of both powers. Fear not the terror of Darkness, also be not blinded by the Light. In your skills have unmovable faith, for it is the greatest element in any weave. Tread the path. Know in your heart that you are a master. Take the unknown and shape it with your will. Magic is a potent blend so use it wisely, in time it will serve you well.

ASTRAL PROJECTION.

Wizards use the following techniques to try and project their Astral body onto a higher plain of Light. A successful attempt increases the wizards spiritual strength. Projecting your astral self onto another plain is not difficult to achieve but there are dangers. It is easy to find your astral self descending into the lower pits of evil, where your spirit will be torn by the Darkness. If that happens the experience will drain your body of physical strength.

To achieve the transportation to another plain you must relax your body. Use your will to separate your mind from any outside stimulus. Imagine

you see a door floating in front of you. Really believe that the door exists and you want to open it and pass over the threshold. The doorway does exist and it leads to the Astral plains. When you really believe in the door, it will open and you will feel a pulling effect on your body, then an alarming floating experience will be felt. It is at this point most inexperienced practitioners break their concentration and the spell fails. If your meditation continues you will float towards the door and then on past the threshold. There is no way to guarantee that you will reach a higher state of Light. Even Grand Wizards only travel the Astral plains when they are physically fit. After the experience you will wake up and all that passed during your journey will be unclear like a distant, half remembered dream.

BANSHEES CRY

This is a deadly spell that uses sound to kill your enemies. Mix up an incense of:

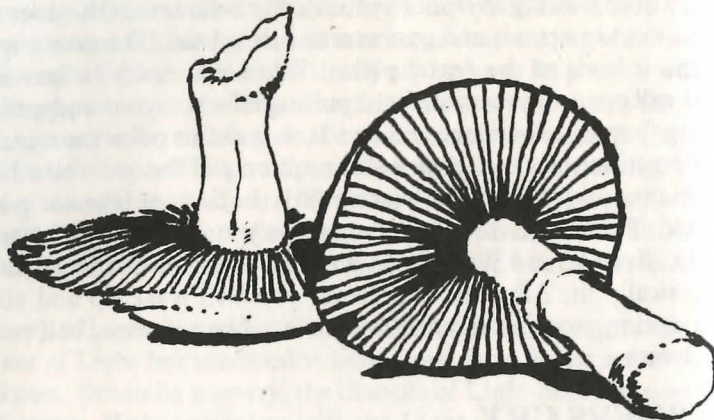
2 parts Sirens Hair
1 part Wolfsbane
2 parts Sulphur
4 parts Carbon
1 part Saltpetre

Ignite the mixture and breathe in the fumes. Now you will be able to give a Banshees Cry. The spell should be stored in a spiritual cloth for use in battle.

BOTTLE OF POISON

This spell creates a deadly magical poison that can be used to create poisonous weapons. To mix the poison take a bottle of water and add to it the following ingredients:

1 part Death cup mushrooms
1 part Hornets sting
2 parts Deadly nightshade
1 part Vipers tongue



CALLING THE EIGHT

To conjure up eight minor Demons you must weave the spell during the darkest phase of the moon. Mix up a conjuration incense consisting of:

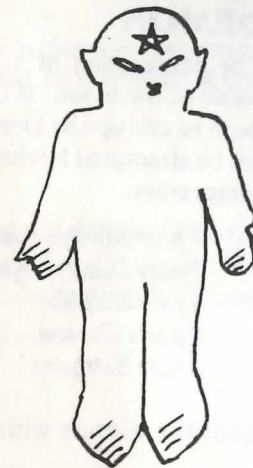
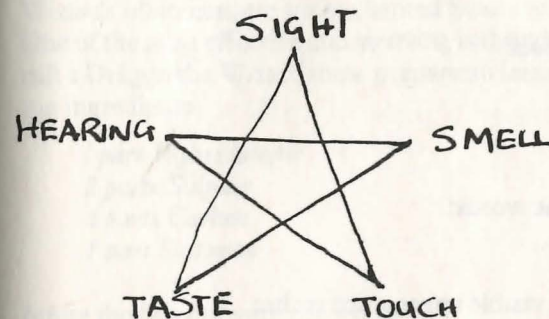
*1 part Mummy dust
1 part Deadly nightshade
5 parts Sulphur
2 parts Carbon
1 part Saltpetre.*

Ignite the mixture with the words:

"Lams Kannandrah"

To conjure the Demons to appear recite:

*I command thee come from the pits of darkness
Neah amalgam utari
Bound be thy evil souls.
Bound to my will.
As my will so mote it be.*



CLAY MAN.

To create a Clay man take enough Blood Clay to mould a foot high effigy of a man. Mix with the clay two parts bone ash. When this is done, mould the figure and then mark on its forehead a five pointed star

In this case the pentagram represents the five senses of man. A Wizard can now use the Clay Man to conjure up an enchanted warrior to help him win battles.

CRYSTAL PRISON.

To trap an enemy in Crystal, chant the incantation:

"Bel Numor"

At the same time visualize a Crystal growing around your opponent, if you have faith enough in your abilities and great inner strength, your adversary will be trapped and can do you no harm.

DEMON

The conjuration of a Demon must be performed during the darkest phase of the moon. Wizards store this spell in spiritual cloths to enable them to call up the Demon at anytime during a battle. This spell should not be attempted by the novice. To call up a Demon mix up an incense of conjuration.

1 part Mummy dust
1 part Deadly nightshade
5 part Sulpher
2 parts Carbon
1 part Saltpetre

Ignite the mixture with the words:

"Lams Kannandrah"

To conjure the Demon to visible appearance recite:

From the pit of fiends I command thee come.
Bind thee to the Earth by my will.
Bound be thee servant of Darkness.
Bound be thee to my will.
As my will so mote it be

DIAMOND EDGED SWORD

A Diamond Edged Sword is an enchanted weapon that will cut through any material objects. To weave the spell lay down a sword that is uncontaminated by any potions and onto this sword sprinkle nine parts carbon. Onto the sword you must now pour a bottle of Acid. Visualize a red flame instead of a blade until the sword becomes light blue in colour.

DIAMOND EDGED AXE

The ritual for creating a Diamond Edge Axe is outlined in the section describing the creation of a Diamond Edge Sword. In this case an axe is substituted for the sword.

DIAMOND EDGED KNIFE

The ritual for creating a Diamond Edged Knife is outlined in the section describing the creation of a Diamond Edged Sword. In this case a Knife is substituted for the sword.

DRAGON

Wizards often conjure up enchanted beasts to use as weapons in battle. One of the most effective and startling is the conjuration of a Dragon. To call a Dragon the Wizard must prepare an incense containing the following ingredients:

1 part Vipers tongue
2 parts Sulpher
4 parts Carbon
1 part Saltpetre

Ignite the incense with the words:

"Lams Kannandrah"

Recite:

I call on thee beast of fire.
Kannandrah lah pire.
As my will so mote it be.

This spell takes too long to prepare for use in battle so Wizards store it in their spiritual cloths.

DRAGONS BREATH.

Since the first magics weaved their spells they have experimented with mimicking the abilities of the creatures they share the land with. One of the greatest biological weapons is the fiery breath of a Dragon. Many powerful Wizards keep secret their own methods of Fire breathing. The spell outlined here is simple to use and needs no ingredients. It draws its

strength from the spirit and the spell must fail if you have little faith in your abilities. To breath fire chant:

"La'Kannandrah".

Now spit and instead of spittle emerging a sheet of flame will travel up to twenty feet in front of you incinerating your adversary.

ELEMENTAL

The conjuration of an Elemental should be performed when the moon is at its darkest. The spell takes sometime to prepare so it should be cast before going into batte and stored in a spiritual cloth. To weave the spell you must make up a conjuration incense. For the formula look up the conjuration of a Demon.

Ignite the conjuration incense with the words:

"La Kannandrah"

To conjure the Elemetal to appear recite:

*Spirit of Air, or Fire, Earth or Water;
I summon you here to me.
From the Watch towers of the Earth
I bind thee to my will.
As my will so mote it be.*

ENCHANTED WARRIOR.

This spell is mostly used by Grand Wizards who are in need of a fighter to champion them in their battles. It is a controversial spell and many wizards will not use it because it deals with the Creation of Life. To create the genius of a being is the greatest of sins in the eyes of the Creator. Wizards who use the spell argue that they are not creating life but capturing an air born spirit and giving it a body. So controversial is the spell that most magical text books do not mention it. However, I came across this version of the spell in the notes of the Grand Elven Wizard, Lamos.

It was written in an Ancient Alphabet used by early wizards to protect the secrets of their craft. I give here both, the original script and the translation. If your religious beliefs allow you to practise the spell then I trust it will be useful to you.

TRANSLATION:

Take a magical Clay Man and lay it on the ground at your feet. With all the faith and imagination you can bring to the task visualize a bluish aura around the clay image. Passing your hand over the Clay Man chant:

This body of earth I give thee.

Lift your arm into the air and make a sudden grab as though to catch a passing insect. Then passing your clenched fist over the Clay Man chant:

This spirit of air I give thee.

Now with both hands touch your eyelids and then touch the eyes of the Clay Man. Chant:

With my sight thou will see.

Then bend down and breath into the Clay Mans mouth and chant:

*With my breath you will be.
As my will so mote it be.*

If all goes well you should now be facing a warrior of at least six feet in height. This spell requires a great deal of faith. I would like to add as a word of warning, the enchanted warrior is vulnerable and if he is wounded he will return to the dust that gave him life.

[illegible]

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EVIL EYE.

The casting of the Evil eye relies on a great deal of faith and a strong will. The Evil eye is a mind link where you, the attacker, attack a weaker mind. This sometimes causes instant death to your opponent. To cast the Evil eye you must fix your eyes on your opponents' eyes and use all your will power to destroy him.

EXORCISM INCENSE

To rid a place of evil spirits or demonic influence you must carry out the rites of Exorcism. This is a form of exorcism by fire. To make up the incense you will need the following ingredients:

5 parts Salt
4 parts Sulpher
1 part Dill
1 part Vervain

As you mix in each ingredient chant:

Depart foul spirits
Nera sukora

When the last ingredient is added finish off by chanting:

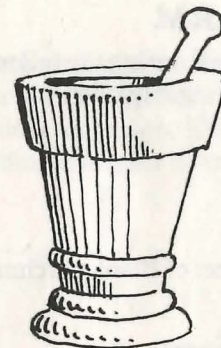
As my will so mote it be.

Tear up pieces of blank parchment and add it to the mixture. You will now have an incense of Exorcism. Using this will exorcise an area from evil spirits.

EXORCISM POTION

Exorcism by water is a popular means of exorcising a place of evil spirits. To make up your potion add the following ingredients to a bottle of water:

5 parts Salt
1 part Dill



Stir the mixture with an Iron Staff and recite:

I bind thee and command thee
depart all evil spirits from this place.
As my will so mote it be.

The potion should be sprinkled around the area to be exorcised.

FIRE ILLUSION.

The Fire illusion is a mind link spell so it requires a lot of faith to accomplish it successfully. You must believe that there is a wall of fire between you and your adversary. Then project, through sheer will power, the belief that there is a wall of fire into the minds of your enemies.

FORCESHIELD

To create a Forceshield that is impenetrable to material objects, take a Lodestone and hold it above your head. Imagine the Lodestone is emitting a blue light that blankets your body and recite.

"Karra shield de'more"

The spell is difficult to achieve so its power should be stored in spiritual cloths for easy access during battle.

GOOD LUCK CHARM

This ritual must be performed during the full moon. Mix up a potion in a bottle of water of the following ingredients:

*5 parts Salt
1 part Mandrake root
1 part Dill*

Pour the solution over a sheet of Blank parchment and pray to the Creator:

*High master of the Universe
bless me thy servant and
give to this charm the
Power of light.*

Vizualise the parchment glowing with power then end the ritual by reciting:

As my will so mote it be.

GORGONS STARE

This spell turns your enemy to stone by giving you the appearance of a Gorgon. To use the spell in battle you should store it in a spiritual cloth. To weave the spell mix up an incense containing:

*1 part Mummy dust
1 part Vipers tongue
2 parts Sulpher
1 part Carbon
1 part Saltpetre*

Ignite the mixture with the words:

"La Kannandrah"

Now deeply breath in the fumes. The effect of the spell on your body is only temporary.

GROW WINGS

Since man walked the Earth he has been jealous of the birds and their power of flight. The early Wizards spent much of their time trying to perfect flying potions. This is an ancient Elfin spell that is easy to use. Take a Lodestone and holding it in your hand, recite:

*Lords of the winds;
Lords of the sky;
Lord of all birds;
teach me to fly:*

Wings will grow from your shoulders and you will have the power of flight. The wings are only a temporary addition to your anatomy and will soon drop off.

HEALING WATER

This potion has the magical ability to restore limbs and heal wounds. To mix the potion add the following ingredients to a bottle of water, when the moon is full.

*1 part Wizard dust
1 part Red toadstools
1 part Vampire bat saliva
1 part stinging nettle
1 part Salt.*

While mixing the ingredients imagine a powerful light hovering over the liquid. When all the ingredients have been added recite:

*Power of the weave
I conjure thee
heal my wounds
so mote it be.*

Drinking this potion will heal your wounds.

INVISIBILITY CLOAK.

There are many enchantments to give garments the power of Invisibility. The one chosen here is ideal for the novice. It must be performed during the darkest phase of the moon. It has one flaw however and that is, the invisibility only lasts for a few seconds each time you use the cloak. This is normally enough time to confuse an enemy in battle and is often used as a defence.

Take a fur and stretch it out on the floor. Now make up a solution in water of the following.

1 part Dill

1 part Vervain

1 part Rainbow Web

1 part Unicorn horns

Now take this potion and sprinkle it over the fur. Recite the following words over and over again:

"Na Lamor Emar"

As you recite the words, visualize the floor beneath the fur. Let your mind see through the fur. The fur will truly disappear and only then can you stop reciting the magic words. As soon as you stop the fur will reappear and will make you invisible anytime you wish to use it.

LEVITATE.

Levitation is a skill that requires faith and spiritual strength to accomplish. Wizards practise this art form all of their lives trying to nurture it to a higher degree of perfection. It is the ability to move objects by thought. Levitation is one of those rare magical abilities that you either possess or you do not possess. There are no words of enchantment to help you, nor will you find a potion to drink or incenses to aid you in the task. To levitate an object fix your attention on it and will the object to move.

LIGHT BARRIER.

The light barrier is a powerful defence. The spell blankets your body in particles of light which prevent material objects and many dark forces from doing you harm. The Barrier will only last for a few seconds but it can be conjured up quickly by a wizard who possesses enough faith and spiritual strength.

To create the Barrier, imagine whirling particles of light surrounding your body and then utter the spell:

"Shield me Derb i Laid Nema"

You will be surrounded in a warm protective glow.

LIGHTNING BOLT.

The mighty sword of the sky. This is a very destructive spell and requires a great deal of faith and spiritual strength. To cast the spell you must visualize a Lightning bolt travelling in the desired direction and utter the incantation:

"Strike Neveh eyth"

A lightning bolt will travel from your position to your chosen target.

LIMBO SPELL.

Limbo is a region of non-existence beyond the Universe and outside the influence of the weave. There are Wizards who have used Astral Projection to probe Limbo and they returned to earth by means of the Astral Cord connected to their living bodies. From those wizards we know that Limbo denies you smell and touch, it smothers your screams and blinds you with its darkness. The only stimulus a lost soul experiences is when two souls meet and they pass through each other. The souls share memories and delightful as the experience is, it cannot last. The two souls are drawn apart and drift along different paths. It is thought that the souls of the dead pass through Limbo on their way to the levels of Darkness or to the levels of Light. Sometimes a soul is not suited to any of the levels and

it must stay in Limbo until it repents its sins and the Korranna come to take it on to the levels of Light. Listed here is the most terrible and feared spell of all. Wise Wizards usually do not battle another wizard unless they have a psychic defence that will protect them from the Limbo spell. If the spell is cast correctly you will create a hole in the weave and your adversary will be drawn to Limbo from which he can have no escape. The spell needs no ingredients but you will use your inner strength to cause a turbulence in the weave and create a controlled split. To achieve this you will need a great deal of faith.

To cast the spell fix your will on your adversary and chant:

“SATOR ROTAS TORMENTIL TORMENTIL”

Keep up the chanting until your adversary vanishes.

MAGIC SHIELD

A Magic Shield is a powerful defence against physical and psychic attack. Most warrior wizards will carry one of these. To prepare a Magic Shield you must cast your enchantment during the time of the full moon.

Take a normal shield and place it face up on the ground in front of you. Take a bottle of spiritual poison and sprinkle some of the liquid on the ground to form a circle around the shield. Now utter the incantation:

*“All Shades of evil.
All Spirits of light.
This shield of protection
they cannot smite.”*

Imagine a bright red flame burning the liquid around the shield. Hold your bottle over the shield and pour out its contents. Visualise not a liquid coming out of the bottle but bright red flames that disappear into the shield.

Now utter the final incantation.

*Erif fo d’leihs Cigam.
Smote it be.”*

This shield is now a powerful magical defence.

NEPTUNE SPELL

You need little faith to cast this spell. Its effect is to conjure Neptune to aid you in battle. The spell takes some time to weave and should be stored in a spiritual cloth for use in battle.

To conjure Neptune place two fish scales on the ground and pour a bottle of acid over them chanting:

*Neah force ah Lord.
Force mee ah sea.
As my will so mote it be.*

The power of Neptune will be yours to command in battle.

PARALYSIS SPELL

This is a common spell used by wizards in battle. It immobilizes the enemy allowing the wizard to fight without the risk of a counter attack. The spell is best used when you have the advantage in a battle because it takes a short time to be effective. With all the will power and faith you can bring to the task, will your enemy to be paralysed and continually chant:

“Cona”

Your opponent will slow down to a stand still and will be unable to move any limbs.

PENTACLE

This is one of the most potent talismans that can be created by the hands of a novice. The charm creates an Aura around its owner that harmful influences in the weave find difficult to penetrate. The magic must be worked during the period of the full moon.

Take a sheet of parchment. On one side of the parchment mark, in your own blood, the Sigel of Angorax. Turn the parchment over and mark in your blood the Seal of Angorex. Now prepare an incense with the following ingredients:

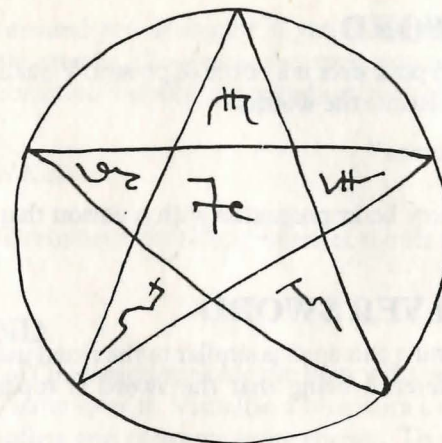
- 3 Parts Hair of Dog.
- 1 Part Dill.
- 1 Part Vervain.'
- 1 Part Carbon.
- 2 Parts Sulphur.

Ignite the mixture with the magic words:

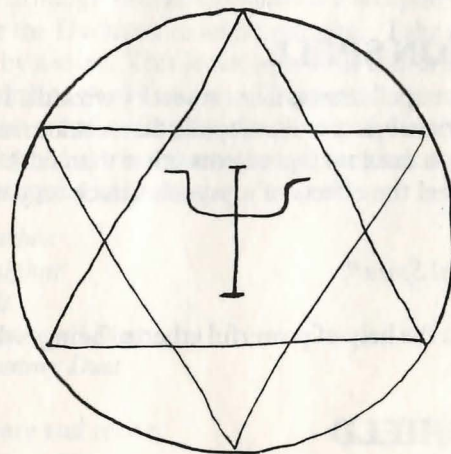
"Lams Kanandrah"

Now pass the parchment through the smoke and chant:

*"Bound be all powers of adversity.
Bound be all ill-wishers against the bearer of this.
Bound and be held subject to his will.
So mote it be".*



SIGEL OF ANGORAX



SEAL OF ANGORAX

POISON SWORD

Take a sword and pour over it a bottle of poison. Visualize a fire burning across the blade. Recite the words:

De narah kumra"

The blade will now be impregnated with a poison that is impossible to remove.

POISON SILVER SWORD

The ritual for casting this spell is similar to the ritual used for the Poison Sword. The difference being that the sword is replaced by a Silver Sword.

POISON AXE

The ritual used for casting this spell is similar to the ritual used for creating a Poison Sword. The only difference being that the sword is replaced by a knife.

PROTECTION SPELL

This is a protective spell used as a last resort by wizards. It cannot protect you against material objects or from spells that result in instant death. To weave the spell you need no ingredients other than faith and great inner strength. If you feel the effects of a psychic attack on your body scream out:

"Ether Tural Spira".

The words call on the help of powerful ethereal beings who counter your opponents attack.

PSYCHIC SHIELD

Unlike its material counterpart, the shield, a psychic shield will not protect you from material influences. It is designed to throw a protective

spiritual barrier around you. It should, if you have enough faith, protect you from psychic attacks. To weave the spell you must imagine and believe in a protective bubble surrounding your body. Recite the enchantment:

"Balor Viel Kabor".

These words will reinforce the effectiveness of the shield set up by your imagination.

QUICKSAND

To create a pool of Quicksand sprinkle the floor with nine parts Sand and pour a bottle of water over it. Visualise a blue aura carpeting the floor. The floor will soften and consume your enemy. To use the spell in a battle it must be stored in a spiritual cloth.

SAINTLY STAFF

The Sainly Staff is a powerful spiritual weapon made from blessed Rowan wood. Although the Sainly Staff is a weapon of Light you may be forced to use the Darkness in its preparation. Take a Rowan staff and have it blessed by a saint. This is not as easy as it first sounds. Not every century gives birth to a saint so you will have to resort to the Black Arts. Necromancy; the art of calling up the dead is the blackest of magic and should be performed during the nights of the dark moon. Make up an incense containing the following:

*3 parts Carbon
2 parts Sulphur
1 part Salt
1 part Graveyard Dust
1 part Mummy Dust*

Ignite the mixture and recite:

*From the Watch tower of the East
I command thee come.*

*From the Watch tower of the West
I bind thy spirit
Bound be ye spirit of the third light.*

Now walk backwards in a circle for only then can you tread the paths of the dead. Recite as you walk:

*From the Watch towers of the North
I give thee power to speak.
From the Watch towers of the South
I bind thee to answer me.
As my will so mote it be.*

The spirit of the saint should now be in your presence. Take the Rowan Staff and hold it away from your body towards the spirit and recite.

*By the power of the four Watch towers;
By the protection of their guardians:
I command thee bless this Staff of Wood
As my will so mote it be.*

If the spell is successful your Rowan Staff will be bathed in holy light for a few seconds. When the glow fades walk backwards in the opposite direction chanting:

*I bid thee bound spirit depart.
Alah tura art de arra
By the power of the Watch towers
I free thee from thy Earthly bondage.
As my will so mote it be.*

SEA GOD SPELL

To call on Neptune the God of the Sea hold a handful of Aquamarine up into the air and chant:

*I call on thee Lord of the sea.
Lerd sa tural.
Lend me thy mighty hand.*

To use the spell in battle you must store it in a spiritual cloth.

SLEEPING INCENSE

To make up a powerful sleep inducing drug mix together the following ingredients:

*4 parts Poppy seeds
2 parts Sulphur
1 part Saltpetre
1 part Carbon*

As you mix the ingredients recite:

“Vera karoon latari”

Tear up a sheet of blank parchment and add it to the mixture. When the incense is ignited a cloud of smoke will engulf your enemy sending him into a deep sleep.

SMOKE SCREEN

This is a defensive spell that produces a thick black smoke to blind your enemies. During the darkest phase of the moon mix together the following ingredients:

*5 parts Sulphur
1 part Carbon
1 part Saltpetre
1 part Hair of Dog*

Ignite the mixture with the words

"Lams Kannandrah"

For use in a battle or during all phases of the moon the spell should be stored in a spiritual cloth.

SPIRITUAL POISON

This potion weakens the spirit. It is used in the creation of a Spiritual Sword. To mix the potion you will need the following ingredients:

1 part Wizard dust
1 part Death cup mushrooms
2 parts Salt.

Add this mixture to a bottle of acid and then add a few grains of dust from a Lodestone.

SPIRITUAL POTION

Mixing together the following ingredients and then adding them to a bottle of water creates a drinkable potion that will strengthen the spirit.

9 parts Wizard dust
2 parts Unicorn horns

The potion must be created during the full moon.

SPIRITUAL SWORD

This spell turns an ordinary sword into a powerful spiritual weapon. Take a sword and pour over the blade a bottle of spiritual poison. Visualise a blue aura over the blade and recite:

Blade of light
Blade of power
Blade of might
As my will so mote it be.

THUNDER POWDER

Thunder powder is a powerful explosive. To create some of the powder mix in the following proportions these ingredients.

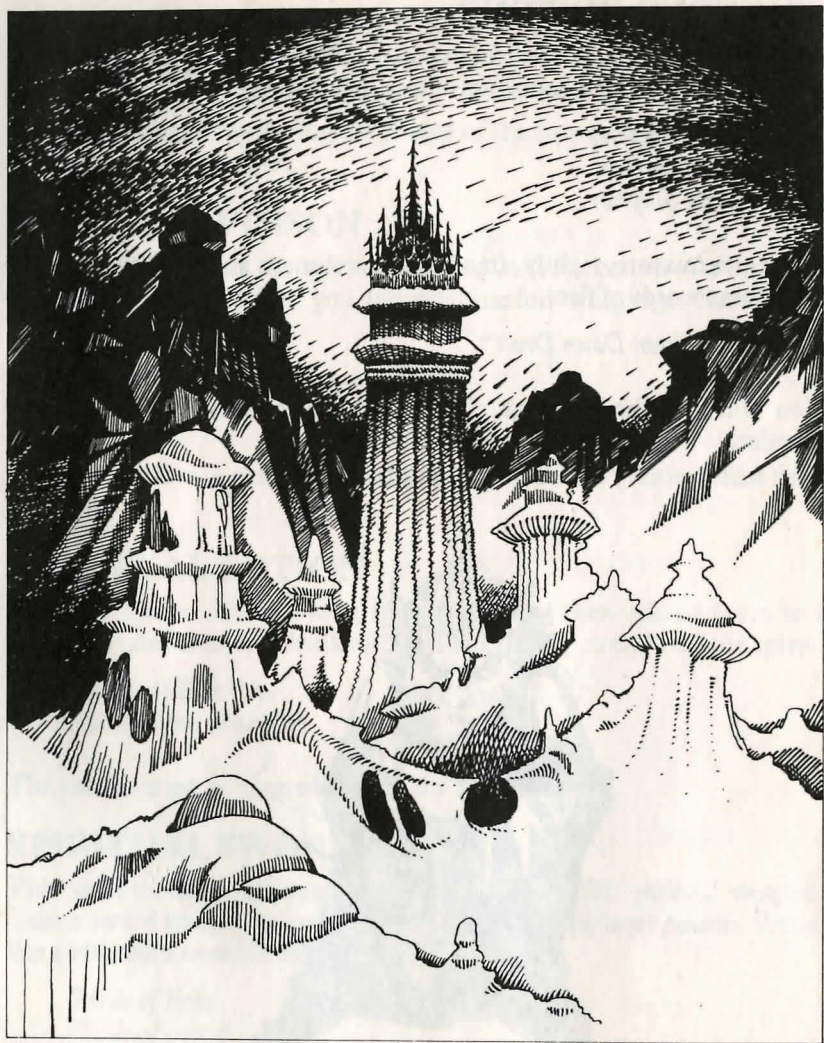
1 part Saltpetre
2 parts Carbon
3 parts Sulphur

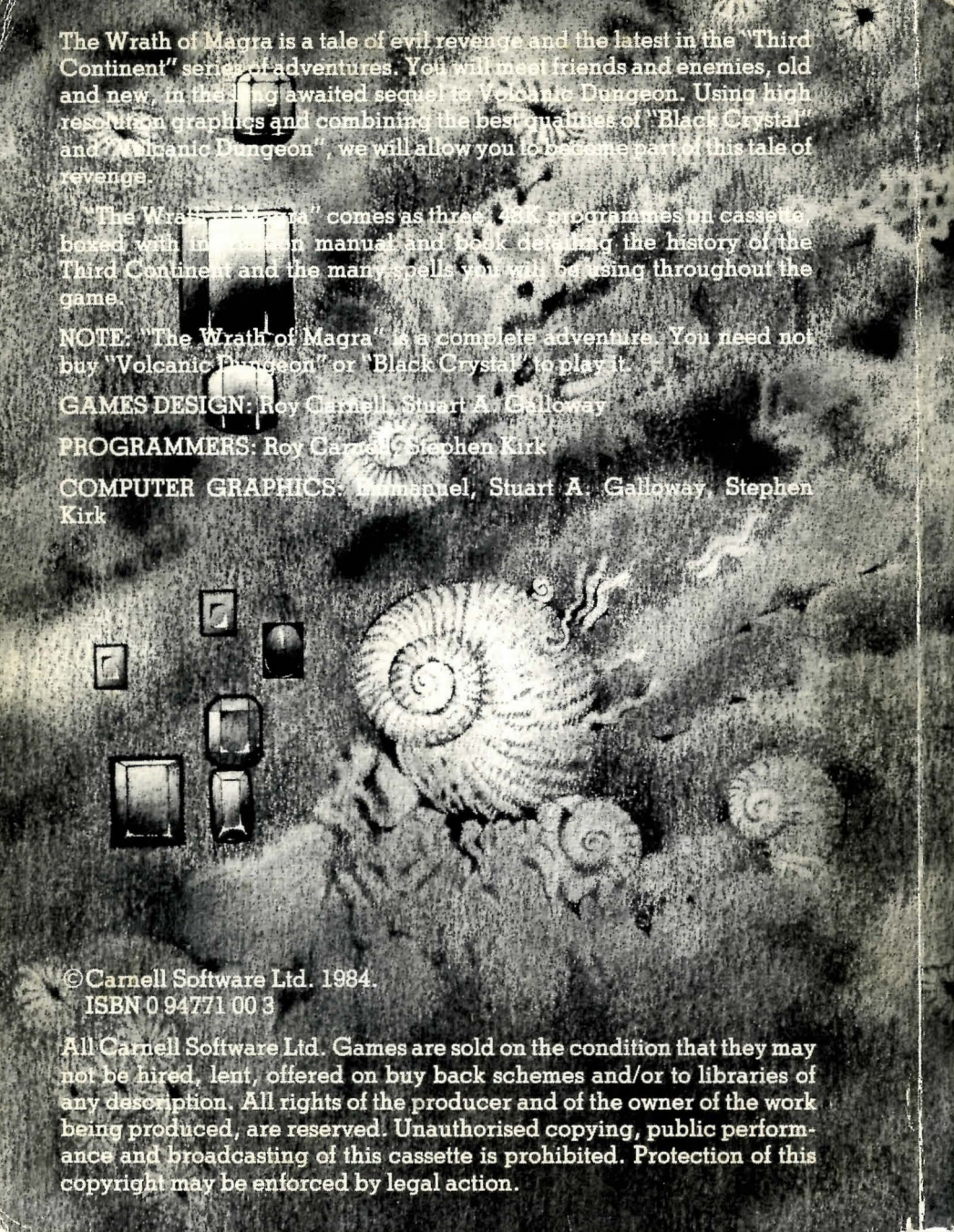
Wrap the mixture, tightly, in a blank parchment and bind the mixture with these words of fire.

"NA Sheen Dann Drah"

You will now have a highly explosive pellet made up of Thunder powder.







The Wrath of Magma is a tale of evil revenge and the latest in the "Third Continent" series of adventures. You will meet friends and enemies, old and new, in the long-awaited sequel to Volcanic Dungeon. Using high resolution graphics and combining the best qualities of "Black Crystal" and "Volcanic Dungeon", we will allow you to become part of this tale of revenge.

"The Wrath of Magma" comes as three 45K programmes on cassette, boxed with instruction manual and book detailing the history of the Third Continent and the many spells you will be using throughout the game.

NOTE: "The Wrath of Magma" is a complete adventure. You need not buy "Volcanic Dungeon" or "Black Crystal" to play it.

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