

TIME AND MAGIK™



FOR ALL ETERNITY

Datascsoft®

TIME AND MAGIK

This adventure is a trilogy of episodes from the struggles of the Guardians to protect Time and Magik. The three parts are played as separate games.

In Part 1, **Lords of Time**, the evil Timelords are fighting to change world history. Their aims are to gain permanent control over Time and to warp eternity according to their wishes. You must bring together nine crucial objects from different time periods in order to defeat the Timelords.

In Part 2, **Red Moon**, the Red Moon Crystal, the last source of magikal power, is lost. You, the lone adventurer selected by the Guardians, must recover it.

In Part 3, **The Price of Magik**, you discover that Myglar, driven mad by the intensity of magikal radiance from the Red Moon Crystal he had protected for many years, stole the magik rock in a vain attempt to misuse its power and live forever. You, a magician of great skill, must avoid Myglar's traps, recover the Crystal, and ensure that magik survives as long as there is need for it.

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GETTING STARTED

Time & Magik is designed for Amiga 500/1000/2000; Atari ST (520 or 1040); Commodore 64/128; Macintosh (256K minimum memory) and Macintosh Plus; and MS-DOS machines (IBM PC and compatibles, 256K minimum memory).

Before loading the game, format a blank disk to use as a Save-Game disk (consult your computer users' manual for disk-formatting instructions).

Amiga **500:** Insert game disk into drive and turn on computer. The game loads.

1000/2000: Insert Kickstart™ disk and turn on computer. When you're prompted for Workbench™, insert game disk. The game loads.

Drag the picture up (to uncover the text) or down (to see the graphics) using the left Mouse button. You can do this at any time during the game.

Atari ST Insert game disk into drive Ø; turn on computer. The game loads.

You can change the size of the on-screen text. Experiment by typing a line or two of text; *don't* press RETURN. Now, press F1 and F2 until you get the size of text you like.

Drag the picture up (to uncover the text) or down (to see the graphics) using the left Mouse button. You can do this at any time during the game.

There is a self-running demonstration game. To see it, press Alternate R when you see the "What now?" prompt. To escape the demo, reboot the game.

Commodore Turn on TV or monitor, disk drive, and computer (with C-128, hold down Commodore key while turning on the computer). Insert game disk into drive and close the door. Type **LOAD "*" ,8,1** and press RETURN. The game loads.

All the graphics (except the clock) are on Side 2 of the game disk. If you want to play a text-only game, just start playing. If you want pictures, turn the disk over after the game has loaded and is waiting for your first command.

Drag the picture up (to uncover the text) or down (to see the graphics) using the ↑ and ↓ cursor keys. You can do this at any time during the game.

**Macintosh/
Mac Plus**

Insert your Mac operating system into the drive and turn on the computer. Insert game disk; double click on the TIME & MAGIK icon.

Drag the picture up (to uncover the text) or down (to see the graphics). You can do this at any time during the game.

MS-DOS Machines

Insert DOS 2.1 (or later) into drive A; turn on computer. When you see the **A>** prompt, remove DOS and replace it with the game disk. Type **MENU** and press ↵. Select one of the 23 screen display formats from the menu and press ↵.

Note: To use the EGA mode, you must have a 128k EGA board. Not all these formats will work on all computers. If a format you've selected doesn't allow the game to run on your machine, reboot and make another selection.

To see a self-running demonstration game, press ALT R after selecting the screen display format and before pressing ↵. To escape the demo, reboot the game.

SAVING GAMES

These instructions for saving and loading games apply to all computers.

SaveTo Disk Use a separate save-game disk to save your games. Do not save games on your game disk. Anytime during gameplay, type **SAVE** and press RETURN. Follow the prompts. To reload a saved game, type **RESTORE** (press RETURN), then **YES** (press RETURN), and follow the prompts.

RAM Save To save your game in the computer's memory while playing, type **RAM SAVE**. To reload a RAM-saved game, type **RAM RESTORE** and press RETURN.

Remember that saving in memory is quick and convenient -- it's an ideal way of saving your position before trying something risky.

Caution: A RAM-saved position will be lost if your computer is turned off, so save to disk occasionally.

GAME COMMANDS

The prompt (**more**) or (**shift**) (depending on your computer) lets you know when there's more text to display than will fit on the screen. Read what's visible, then press any key to continue.

When you see **WHAT NOW?** or **>**, you can type commands. After typing, press RETURN.

You can abbreviate commands (NORTH to N, SOUTHEAST to SE, INVENTORY to INV, etc.) and even type several commands on one line (EAST, TAKE ALL, WEST, etc.).

There are four kinds of commands in Time & Magik: Movement, Action, Spell, and System.

Movement

Type the name of the direction you want to go: NORTH, NORTHEAST, EAST (and the other compass directions), IN, OUT, UP, DOWN, ACROSS, etc.

Note: The game doesn't know the words GO and RUN.

Action

Type the name of the action you want to accomplish: LOOK, WIND THE CLOCK, GET THE HOURGLASS, DROP IT, LOOK AT THE PICTURE, WEAR THE RUCKSACK, GIVE COIN TO THE INNKEEPER, etc.

Spell

Type CAST, then the spell-name, then the target (optional): CAST ESCAPE, CAST SNOOP NORTH, etc.

The HYPNOSIS spell (in Part 3) lets you control one creature at a time. Type a creature's name, followed by a command: BAT, NORTH.

System

Type these commands to get information: EXITS (tells you where all possible exits are from your current location); INVENTORY (tells you the names of all items you're carrying); and SCORE (tells you how many points you've earned out of the number of possible points).

Type these commands to control how the game reacts to you: WORDS (turns off the graphics and gives you a text-only game); PICTURES (turns the graphics back on); BRIEF (gives short descriptions of locations); VERBOSE (gives complete details about locations); EXITS ON (gives the locations of all possible exits automatically); and EXITS OFF (gives the locations of exits only if you ask for them).

Type these commands to save and load games: SAVE (to disk), RESTORE (from disk), RAM SAVE; RAM RESTORE.

Type UNDO to go back a step to your previous action. Type this command over and over to go back several steps.

Type QUIT to end the game in progress and start over again.

HINTS

Below are hints for all three games, plus hints for the games in general. If you're really stuck, use the clue booklet included with this game.

Lords of Time

- Enter the clock, from which 9 time zones can be reached.
- Tackle the time zones in numeric order.
- You can always get back to the clock from the first 8 zones.
- You score points for each of the 9 ingredients and each of the 18 treasures collected. There are some bonuses.

Red Moon

- If you must attack something, wear armour and carry a weapon.
- You score points for making progress toward regaining the Red Moon Crystal. You get 50 bonus points for each of the nine treasures collected.

Price of Magik

- Tackle the outdoor locations before entering the house.
- You score points for learning and using spells, and for finding some hard-to-locate places.

General Hints

- To make gameplay simpler, the objects that matter in a location are normally listed in a descriptive sentence, like, "You can see a shopkeeper and a bottle of plague antidote pills." The rest of the surroundings are probably scenery, but make sure by trying actions like, GET TREE, LOOK AT FLOWERS, etc.
- Examine all the objects that you see, and take everything you can. Most objects are useful – either as treasure or in solving later puzzles.
- If you make a mistake and get "killed" or lose a vital object, use the UNDO command; it takes you back in time – hopefully to before the fatal mistake. You can use UNDO many times in succession to step backwards a long way through the game.
- Even weird or dangerous actions sometimes provide clues. Be sure to RAM-Save the game before trying a potentially fatal move.
- You can word a command in many ways. For example, if there were an axe and a ball on the ground, you could take the axe by typing any of the following:
 - > GET THE AXE
 - > TAKE AXE
 - > GET ALL BUT THE BALL
 - > LOOK AT THE AXE AND TAKE IT
- For more game background, read the *Time & Magik* short story that follows.

TIME & MAGIK

A short story by Peter McBride

It was a still, chill night. The moon was high and full, making the village almost as bright as day, though drained of color. I walked home across the silver sea that was the village green and there in the centre I saw an old man. He wore a hooded cape and was hunched over a strange device that reminded me of a sundial.

I stopped, overcome with curiosity, and stared. What was that device, and who was the man who stayed as still as death?

"'Tis a Moondial," he said at length, in answer to my unspoken question. "Have ye not seen one ere now?"

"No indeed. I mean, I've seen one for the sun, but never one for the moon. Does it tell time?"

"Time!" He gave a dry cackle. "Aye, it tells the time. And time will tell of it."

He raised his head, and a grey face, deeply lined, looked into me from out of the blackness of his hood. "Time! Aye, 'tis time. If ye have time, sit with me!" He laughed at some irony only he understood and waved a withered hand to the ground opposite him.

I sat cross-legged on the silver grass and watched the Moondial tell the time and listened to the old man tell of Time - and Magik.

And this was what he said.....

THE LORDS OF TIME

"Time was when Time was not, nor Death, nor Life as you would know it. And the Red Moon lay high above, bathing the world in its ruby glow. Magik there was in that moonlight and in all upon which it fell.

"But the Red Moon did not enjoy sole sovereignty of the skies. The Sun shone then as it does now, and when it seared across the heavens, its fire overlay the Moon's cold crimson light. Only when the Sun passed below the land did the Moon reign unchallenged. For long ages the world grew and lived in harmony, the sun's coarse vigour tempered by the pure magik of the Moon.

"We were young then. No, not young. Ageless. Since there was no Time, there was no aging—but we had the strength and impudence of youth. We had being, but no form. We called ourselves the Ten that were One, the Guardians of Timelessness.

"And the world was reflected in the thoughts of we Ten, and our thoughts were reflected in the world. Each took an worldly aspect as his own; one delved into the mysteries of the oceans' depths; another allied his powers with the birds of the air; a third found fascination in rocks and rivers; and there was one who contemplated the Heavens above.

"Yet did we study the world or though we were its designers? Who could tell? The question was of little import then, when what was, what could be and what should be, was all one. Neither did we question our right to lordship. We knew no limit to our powers, and we set no limits. Ha! So wise and yet so ignorant.

"Throughout the Timelessness, for that was how we named it when Time came upon the world, the Yellow Sun and the Red Moon circled, each in its chosen path, high above the world. Then the Astronomer began to speak of Change and the passing of Time.

"'Observe the Sun and the Moon,' the Astronomer said. 'See how their paths cut across each other as they trek the Heavens. I have marked the junctions in our mind. Look within and you will see that a collision must come. The Gods are set on courses that must lead them to do battle.'

"So we looked and saw, then shied with horror and said, 'Don't think that thought! This must not be!' Ah! The meddling fool! He should have known that some things are best left unknown. But the thought had been made and could not be unmade.

"And so it passed that the Sun and the Moon met in the skies. The Moon standing before the majesty of the Sun, striving to make the world its own, letting only its red light shine upon the world. The Sun in its fury hurled its fires into the Heavens, dragons of flame lashing angrily around the Moon, until that lesser god gave way and slipped aside, paled and weakened by the contest.

"They parted and the Moon seemed to regain its former strength and cold glory, but at length its path drew once more close to the Sun and again they did battle in the Heavens above, and again the Moon withdrew, its light less brilliant than before. And throughout the Timelessness-that-was-ending, the Moon would return to do battle ever and anon, and each time it gave way, its light grew paler and less bright.

"Mayhaps if we had joined our powers we could have guided those heavenly bodies into new and safer courses. But we did nothing, only stood by like helpless maids, wringing our hands from horror, while the Astronomer observed the conjunctions and measured the Ages. He chronicled the cycles of the Sun and called them years. He observed the cycles of the Moon and called them months. And with the fading of the Moon came that alternation of light and dark that he called Day and Night. Thus, Time was born, and Time passed.

"Magik faded in the crude vigour of the Sun's light, and thrived only at night when the Moon still held sway. Men walked upon the earth and turned their faces against magik. They built machines and fortresses, and through them fought for mastery over the world.

"We, that had been the Ten that were One and had existed only in mind and magik, were One no more. Now we were truly ten, and thereafter, as Time crept upon us, we often took human form. Thus, we went among the world and strove to restore and rebuild the magik that was fading.

"We breathed our powers into the mantle of the earth, wove charms into the fibres of the plants that grew in the wilds. We entered the cities and installed ourselves on the Councils of men and sought to lead them from merchandise and machinery back to magik.

"Ah, what vain effort went into our attempt to staunch the flow of Time and magik. Yet not all of the Ten mourned the passing of the Timelessness. He who had measured and named Time, he who was named Father of Time, looked upon the new world and was glad, for in Time he had found Death, and in Death he had mastery of Life.

We Nine were deeply troubled and met in council to debate amongst ourselves how best to return our world to the Timelessness. For with the passing of time and the fading of magik, our dominion over creation was fast slipping away. But there was no return, for Time was, and all things must end with the passing of Time, except Time itself.

"We Nine came to know this, and sought other ways to reclaim our mastery. Long we wrestled with the mysteries of Time and Change, then one who had steeped himself in the science of Physics spoke up in that council and said, 'Fellow lord, we treat Time as an enemy to be beaten, as the Moon treated the Sun. Can we not learn from that lesson? In battling against that which is the stronger, will we not merely weaken ourselves? Look now through the eyes of Science. Time is a force that can be measured. If it can be measured it can be understood. And if understood, it can be controlled. We should not seek to defeat Time, but should learn to ride it and thus bend the world to our will.'

"He spoke true. Thenceforth, we turned our energies and our minds to the study of Time; and the fruit of our labors was the Moondial - that which you see before you."

"Thus we travelled through Time. Past, Present, and Future were as one to us. We saw what had been, what is, and what will be; and if we saw a thing which worked against magik, we created what should have been, what ought to be, and what shall be. And the empires of men began to crumble and fall, and magik came forth from the darkness once more. 'Twas not easy, that re-writing of History, you understand. But we made progress. Ha! I should say we unmade Progress! And we called ourselves the Lord of Time and we were pleased with our work, but the Timekeeper railed against us.

He would have no part of our interventions. While we other nine had labored over the making of the Moondial, the Timekeeper had compiled a History of the World, and he foreswore any re-writing of it. When he saw that his Present was changing constantly, and realized what we were doing, he chafed and raged and sought to stop us. But we were nine, and he was one.

"We protected the secrets of the Moondial from him, and kept him from our councils and our private towers. Yet so engrossed were we in our labors that we failed to keep observation on him. He turned from his History, that which had become an account of what might have been, and not of what was; then wrapped himself in a shroud of secrecy and began to investigate Time for himself.

"It took him time to master Time; but he did, and he built himself a Timepiece - or did he build it? I have met many a paradox on my travels through time, but this was the one above all. The Timekeeper told me of it in latter days when we had made our peace once more.

"He discovered, as we had, that Time is a stream that winds relentlessly through the landscape of life, carrying us on its current. 'Tis a deep, strong current. Fight it, and you may hold still for a brief while but you can never swim upstream. Strive to get ahead, and you may gain on it for a few short moments before the current drags you down. Aye, there were those of us that tried it and near perished in the attempt. But there is another and better way to travel through Time.

"There are many places in the course of Time's passage where it forms loops that bring Past, Present, and Future close together. If you can but reach the bank, and step out of Time, then can you cross over to the Future or back to the Past. This is what he had found. But having found this, he did not set out, as we had done, to create a device that would allow him passage in all directions. No, he could have done so, but our success in reworking History to our design was nearing completion and he felt the need for haste.

"He built only the simplest device. One that would give him transit across to the next loop of Time. It was a bold move, as the device lacked the means of taking him back. If his plan had failed, then he would have been stranded in a future that he would have already reached by other means—he would be in the same place twice at one time! That was a terrible prospect. You must understand, the Timekeeper was not an easy soul to spend time with. He could never have shared the rest of Time with another of himself.

"But his boldness was justified. He reached the future, handed himself the Timepiece that he would otherwise have had to build, and returned to his Present. He knew, of course, that he would have to hand the device back to his Past self when he reached that future point with it, unless he created an alternative future - and his scruples as a Historian would not allow him to do that. Nevertheless, his move had won him the use of his Timepiece during the time that would otherwise have been spent in the making of it.

"Ha! A brilliant ploy, yet with a fatal flaw. He, who lacked our experience in these matters, did not know that any movement through Time sends ripples across its surface. We Nine detected them, saw that they had not been stirred by our activities, and traced them back to the Timekeeper. We could not see his Timepiece anymore than we could see him, for it too was enclosed in the shroud of secrecy; but we could sense his presence...and his movements.

"We followed him wherever he went, back and forth through Time. And wherever he went, one of us would be there to forestall any action. Yet in the end it was a close-run race, and he nearly had the better of us, for his Timepiece had a greater power than those we used. His was not a Moondial, to be used only when the Moon rose in the Heavens. He had captured Time in a machine, while we relied on the magik of the Red Moon, and the Red Moon was fading.

"But nine hounds and one stag, we wore him down, until he abandoned his attempts to pervert that course of Time that we had set. He retired to his tower and sat in solitary contemplation for many a long day. We watched and waited, but he made no move against us. At length, we approached and entered into his citadel.

"He had lain aside the shroud of secrecy and sat, as if waiting for us, in his great oak chair at the head of a massive table hewn from a single tree. His History lay open on the table before him, a fresh-cut quill close at hand. As we came close he gestured to us to take the chairs ranged along each side. 'Welcome, fellow lords,' he said, 'I am honored by your presence. Please be seated. There is much to talk over.' He seemed philosophical and accepting of his defeat, and said that his interest then was only to correct the History that he had written. He offered us a bargain and exchange of secrets. He would expose to us the mysteries of his Timepiece, if we would but tell him what we had done, so that he may rewrite his book.

"'But let us treat the History first,' he said. 'That was my great Work, and my first love and duty.' Ha! He was ever the sly one! And we believed him. We went through his History with him, pointed out the interventions we had made, the inventions we had unmade, the meetings we had arranged, the matings we had prevented - all in Magik's favor. We told him, and he wrote it all down.

"'Now come,' we said, 'Time it is for you to show us the working of your Timepiece.' 'Indeed,' he replied, 'I shall do so.' He stood and walked across towards the hearth. There beside it stood a device in the shape of a grandfather clock, a beautifully decorated and innocent looking thing. 'I set the Time so,' he explained, opening the glass face and moving the hands. He closed the face, and spoke again. 'Then begin its motion thus...' Before we could stop him, he had opened the lower door and set the pendulum swinging, and the clock disappeared.

The Timekeeper turned to us and smiled, and I knew why. For when he had reached into the case of the clock he had dropped within a slip of paper. I saw it as it fell and with my powers, I had time to read the paper's words:

Into the cauldron you must throw -
an olive branch, make friendship grow.
A dragon's wing, a sign of flight,
An ivory tusk, a sign of might.
Mix in the teardrop, a touch of sadness,
And the evil eye, a sign of badness.
Add a dinosaur egg, a sign of birth,
With the jester's cap, a symbol of mirth,
Plus the silicon chip, a vital invention,
And the golden buckle, a bone of contention.
If you do all this, before time runs out,
A winner you'll be - there is no doubt.
But take care when you find the lord,
Or you'll not gain your just rewards,
Your quest will all have been in vain,
And you will have to start again.

"Where has the Timepiece gone?" I asked, "To whom did you direct it?"

"It has gone I know not where, nor to whom," he replied. "I know only that my fellow lords will prevent me from using it, so I must hope that some adventurous human will take up the challenge and restore the corruptions that you have made. Let Time take care of itself."

We slumped back into our chairs, angered that the Timepiece had been spirited away from us, but not unduly troubled by the thought that it might fall into the hands of Man. Ha! Was there ever a human born that could match the Lord of Time?"

The old man had sat in contemplation at the end of this tale. He watched the shadow creep slowly around the Moondial until the next hour was reached, then he began to speak once more...

RED MOON

"Time had been locked in its course, and closed to us. And the Red Moon was now dull and ashen white. Magik was lost to the world and lived on only in Baskalos. To Baskalos we had repaired when our cloud castles fell from the sky that noontide, their fragile foundations of magik having crumbled with the dying of the Moon. Only seven of us were there now, for three had

perished with their towers. Living among men, we took human names: Cazab, Golitsin, Hagelin, Hollis, Skardon, Venona, and Volkov.

"We came together in Cazab's tower, within the city of Baskalos, and there we turned our magiks to the rekindling of the Red Moon. Ha! What vanity! As if we, whose powers stemmed from the light of the Moon, could muster sufficient magik to set that orb glowing once more. Yet we tried. For nine days we rehearsed our charms and incantations, summoning up a lightning storm the like of which had never before been seen on this Earth, nor ever will be again.

On the tenth night we set a vortex of wind spinning madly up from the tower, forcing apart the thick black clouds above so that the Moon was revealed directly over us, full but wan. We called bolts of lightning down into that vortex and stood poised with spears of magik ready to hurl them at the Moon, to carry the tumultuous power up to it and thrust new fire into its ashen body. A thousand bolts of lightning were drawn from the four corners of the sky and coalesced into one solid pillar of blinding, crackling, blue-hot power in that vortex..."

"...and every jot of it went straight down into Cazab's tower! The shock of it flung us into the air and left us strewn throughout Baskalos. The tower was burst asunder, its stones found as much as ten leagues beyond the city walls; and of Cazab himself—for it was he that stood at the centre of the vortex—we found nothing but a single smoking boot.

"We six that remained came together in council some months later, when our bodies and our powers had healed enough for us to move.

"Venona had thought much about our problem during that time, as had we all, and it was his suggestion that we should construct an alternative focus and source of magik, that we should recreate the Red Moon, but smaller, in the form of a crystal. We were loathe to abandon our intention to rekindle the Moon, but knew that it was not possible at that time or place. Likewise we knew that we must have some focus if magik was not to be dispersed and lost for ever; and so Venona's idea was accepted.

"In the city of Baskalos, in the castle of Xax, we caused to be built a high tower. There within it we installed the Red Moon Crystal, and on Mid-Winter's night, when the new Moon rose over the distant hills, we joined our powers to infuse the Crystal with the cold fires of magik. And a pure crimson light shone from it and illuminated the city and the lands of the Kingdom of Baskalos.

"So Baskalos stood as an island of light and magik when all around the world fell into the darkness of mechanics. The gardens of Baskalos sparkled with colorful arrays of fragrant flowers through all seasons of the year; the buildings were triumphs of inspirational architecture; the people grew tall and healthy, and lived long, fruitful lives; and the Kings of Baskalos were ever wise and noble rulers, their armies unconquerable, yet never sent forth in conquest. Peace and prosperity, music, magik and the carefree laughter of children. What else could the heart desire?"

"Know you, there were those of us that were bored to distraction before the end of the first century. Baskalos was a small kingdom, its boundaries defined by the range of the Crystal in the Tower of Xax. Those of us who shunned domesticity and the narrow delights of urban life were soon chafing for new challenges and the view beyond distant horizons.

"We travelled far through the realms of darkness, and the sights that met our eyes filled us with deep sorrow. There was so much pain and anguish, so much empty greed and degradation of the soul in those lands of merchants and machines. We took our wisdom and our lesser magiks with us, and did what we could to bring some light into the dark places, but to little avail.

"Kings would welcome and honor us, should we but put ourselves and our powers into their service, so they might tighten their grip upon rebellious subjects, or extend their sway over lesser lords. And there were those of us who would do just that, in the vain hope that thus we might influence their rule for the better. But if we sought to uplift their downtrodden subjects, enslaved by armed might, or by the power of money or false religions, then we were called Warlocks and Necromancers and hounded from the lands.

"Ah, if only the Red Moon shone still upon those unhappy realms. Or if the King of Baskalos would extend his dominion. Surely the lands beyond would be better places beneath his wise and just rule. Perhaps it would be possible to take the Red Moon Crystal through the outerlands. How much light would it take to penetrate the darkness? These questions ran through my mind constantly as I travelled in the world beyond Baskalos.

"I returned one winter's day to the city determined to take magik to the relief of the outer darkness, and went to entreat the King that he should set forth on a conquest of mercy at the first thaw of Spring. I was stopped by Skardon, ere I reached the Palace.

"'Volkov! At last!' he cried. 'Come at once for we have need of your wisdom in our council. 'He explained to me breathlessly as we hurried through the snow across the city to Skardon's tower. It seemed that he and Hollis had essayed to build a new and greater Crystal so that magik could be spread beyond the limits of Baskalos. I was surprised and impressed, for they had ever been the ones to stay content within the city while the rest of us had been driven far afield by our desire to bring enlightenment to the world. So Hollis and Skardon too had laboured in Magik's service, though in their own way.

"'But why the haste? Does the time to illuminate this new crystal fast approach? Or has magik been focussed within the crystal and does Hollis have it for his own private gain?' I questioned Skardon as we trudged through the thick drifts.

"'No, no!' he replied. 'Tis...why look, you can see for yourself.' We'd rounded a corner and stood in sight of Skardon's tower. He pointed up, and I followed the line of his finger and exclaimed in surprise. 'Why, Skardon! You have added a new pinnacle to your tower.'

"'Pinnacle! 'Tis no pinnacle. That which you see is the new crystal; and look within.' 'I cast my sight aloft. 'Twas not magik within that crystal, but Hollis himself!

"Skardon spread his hands in apology. 'I did not see that he was standing within the hexagon as I made the final incantation,' he explained. 'The crystal formed around him even as I stood and watched. I have gathered together our fellow magicians and we are now meeting to decide what to do.'

"'Twas a difficult decision. Should we attempt to illuminate the crystal with magik, even though Hollis was within? Could we indeed succeed to do so without his contributions? Or should we shatter the crystal to free him? And could we accomplish that without shattering Hollis? We sat in deep thought in Skardon's study, gathered round his great log fire, but could not settle upon a course of action.

"At length, I suggested that we bring Hollis down to join our deliberations. He might have been able to signal to us his wishes if he were with us. They had been unable to bring the crystal down by physical means - it was too cold and slippery to be held, and in any case too large to pass through the stairwell - but I was able to use my special facilities to transpose it from the roof down to the study.

"There it stood in front of the fire, sparkling and gleaming in the light of the flickering flames, casting shafts of multi-hued brightness throughout the room. Hollis stood, statue-stiff within, showing no sign of life, as much cut off from our deliberations as he had been when on the tower's top. We repaired below to Skardon's hall to dine and continue our discussions, and there, over his well-laden board, we decided that the new crystal could not be illuminated while Hollis stood within, but that it was a thing of beauty and not to be destroyed. We therefore determined that it should be transposed to the roof of Hollis's tower to stand forever as a tribute to his memory.

"'Twas at this moment that water began to drip through the ceiling and Hollis, teeth chattering and soaked to the skin, appeared at the door. The crystal had been formed of ice, and had melted in front of the roaring fire in Skardon's study. Of course, we then felt a bit foolish for not seeing this simple solution.

"This experience did little to dampen Hollis' enthusiasm for the project, and he and Skardon began to plan a second attempt at a greater crystal. I was invited to add my skills, but having looked through their designs and assessed the import of their incantations, I had little faith in their eventual success.

"Instead, I turned my attention back to the King of Baskalos and sought to persuade him to extend his domains and to carry the Red Moon Crystal into the new lands to spread the light of magik. But he was old and set in his ways, and fearful of moving the Crystal from the Tower of Xax. My fellow magicians too opposed the plan, believing that the only hope for the future lay in cherishing magik within the confines of Baskalos.

"Ha! I was impatient for change and chafed beneath this attitude. I had done too little for too long, and knew that the time for action had come. If the King of Baskalos would not use the Crystal to bring the darkness under his rule, then would I make it my own and set out to impose my own enlightened dominion upon the world entire. And why not? There was no being more fitted than I to take such a heavy burden.

"But determining to take possession of the Crystal, and actually laying my hands on it and removing it from the Moon Tower, were matters of two different hues. The magik inherent in the Crystal of Xax would resist any attempts to take it by means of lesser magiks, and all magiks were lesser than that of the Crystal. Thus I would be forced to resort to physical methods, and that presented numerous difficulties.

"In the three centuries or more since the creation of the Red Moon Crystal, certain traditions and conventions had grown up around it, as much in reverence as in defence of its powers. Foremost among these was that we true Magicians should have contact with it but once a year on Mid-Winter's Night, when a ceremony was held to reconsecrate it to the Kingdom of Baskalos. This ceremony also afforded us the opportunity to examine it for signs of aging or imperfection, though I am pleased to say that such was its quality that we never found any cause for concern.

"Lesser magicians, the King and his lords, and all military men were always denied access to the Crystal, for it was held that its power would prove too great a temptation for them. The Castle of Xax was therefore handed to the care of those two Guilds whose members were believed to be the most trustworthy in respect of the Crystal - the Blacksmiths and the Pastrycooks. An unlikely cooperation, but one that worked well. They were all deeply practical men, whose sole ambitions were in the perfection of their crafts. The Blacksmiths provided physical strength and force of arms, should such be necessary in defence of the Castle; and the Pastrycooks contributed intelligence and sensitivity.

"This Castle was in the midst of a small lake, and could be reached only by a guarded causeway that ended in a drawbridge. This latter was lowered twice a day, to send produce to the city markets, and to receive fresh supplies.

"Entry into the Castle was therefore difficult, but this was only the first stage. Any intruder would then have to pass through the inhabited rooms and workplaces to reach the inner courtyard where stood the Moon Tower. Narrow windows let onto this court-yard, but there was only one door and the key to that hung on the belt of the Chief Pastrycook.

"These obstacles were problematic, but not insurmountable. Was I not, after all, a Magician of the highest degree? Had I not studied men and all their crafts for millenia, and at close hand for the past three hundred years? A simple disguise, a little subter-fuge and the judicious use of some lesser magiks would take me thus far. The true difficulty lay beyond.

"That locked door did not merely keep the inhabitants of the castle out of the courtyard; it equally kept the inhabitants of the courtyard out of the castle. Seven gryphons lived there, ever restless and hungry, patrolling constantly and sleeping never. They, and the four great falcons that nested above, were the incorruptible guardians of the Moon Tower. Infused with magik themselves, and living so close to the Crystal, they could resist all my spells, withstand all my potions, and sense my nature and purposes through the deepest disguise. How thento pass them?

"Though I pondered long and hard within my tower, the answer came not. And then, one autumn evening, eating pastries by my fire, I had an inspiration.

"The following morn, I went straight to the market, lighted on a pastrycook who stood momentarily apart from the rest, and in a trice had magiked him to a distant city, where I knew his skills would be in great demand; donned his shape and his memories, and took his place.

"That eventide, I returned to the Castle of Xax with his fellow cooks and took up residence there, the better to learn its secrets.

"They were a happy band of brothers, those men of Xax, delighting in their crafts and comradeship. And it was a pleasant life, one I could have endured for many years. I had a cell close by the inner courtyard, and through its slit window I kept watch on the gryphons. They sensed my closeness, of that I am sure, and for some while the men of the castle wondered what made the beasts so restless. But men will ever seek to explain the unknown as simply as they can, and so the cooks and smiths decided that it was merely the onset of winter that disturbed the gryphons.

"My opportunity came at last, as I should have realized it would, on Mid-Winter's Day. That night was the ceremony of reconsecration; therefore, the gryphons and falcons must be removed from the courtyard so that the magicians and the King could have access to the Moon Tower.

"That day there was no delivery to the market place, but the entire morning's bake of sweetmeats and delicate pastries was laid out on great tables within a high chamber close by the door to the inner courtyard. When all was ready, the cooks retired to the perimeter of the antechamber beyond and watched as the Chief Pastrycook walked resolutely through and unlocked the courtyard door.

"Then he swung open the doors, and stood aside, armed only with his strength of purpose and his rolling pin, and watched as those terrifying beasts swarmed in for their yearly feast. As they set upon the food, he closed the chamber doors behind them and locked them fast. The way through the antechamber to the courtyard and the Tower lay open!

"A number of cooks were detailed to go out into the courtyard and make it clean for the King's passage that night. I went with them, and made myself busy while seeking an opportunity to approach the Tower unseen.

A besom broom in my hand, I swept a circuitous path towards the Tower door, then, when no eyes were upon me, I slipped the catch and eased myself inside.

"There were no rooms in that tower save the one at the top where the Crystal lay. Below that was nought but the stone stairway that spiralled upwards, steep and narrow. It was dark in there, with only the faintest glimmer of red light filtering down from on high. I walked up steadily, keeping close to the tower wall, tense with anticipation at being so near my prize.

"Yet even then I had doubts. Once, twice, I stopped and almost turned back down. Not that I feared discovery; or the wrath of men or of my fellow Magicians; but that deep in my heart I could not be sure that I could resist the awesome temptations of the power that the Crystal held. I shook off my doubts and pressed on upwards. The light grew brighter and the thrill of magik grew ever stronger as I approached the top, until I was at last there!

"I stood on the topmost stair, almost blinded by the light of the Red Moon Crystal, now but two steps away, when I heard a sudden rush in the air. Hagelin, dressed in blacksmith's garb, came in through the window and swept up the Crystal into his arms. I gasped in surprise. He turned and saw me and laughed. 'You look tired, Volkov!' he cried, 'Did no-one tell you that flying is easier?'

"With that he launched himself through the window and was gone, and the Crystal with him. I had been but two paces from possession of it!

"Where now was that wonderful Crystal of the Red Moon?"

A small cloud drifted across the Moon, throwing the Moondial into darkness. The old man gestured towards it and spoke wryly. "See. I am lost in Time without the Moon. Was it not ever thus!"

His huddled figure seemed to have become even more bowed and fragile than it had been when I had first encountered him, yet his voice was still firm and strong as he started upon his third tale...

THE PRICE OF MAGIK

"Time takes its toll on all who live within it. And even we who were there at its beginning, must reach an end. Magik, too, makes its adherents pay a price.

"When it became known that one of our number had stolen the Red Moon Crystal, the people of Baskalos grew suspicious of the Elder Magicians. And in the absence of the Crystal, there was little to hold us to that place.

"Therefore, our company departed in our several ways; Skardon and Hollis made off for the Far North to experiment further with their crystals of ice; Venona set out for the East; and Golitsin and I turned our faces to the West, and thence travelled singly. And Hagelin? I heard no more of him, and must judge that he was lost when the Moon Crystal was found - as it was some time after.

"We never again gathered in Baskalos, even after the Crystal was restored to the safekeeping of that city. Nor shall we all meet again anywhere in this world.

"I yet had much strength and vigour, and though distance from the Moon Crystal robbed me of my greater powers, still I possessed my wisdom and a whole host of lesser magiks. These qualities were sufficient, in those days of ignorance and barbarism, to ensure my leadership of men wherever I went.

"I amused myself for many centuries in the pursuit of architecture, erecting great monuments of stone, knowing full well that mortals would look upon them afterwards and marvel how they came to be built.

"Even now I smile to myself as I walk the world and see men wondering at my pyramids and temples, saying, 'How could Men make such things?' Ha! Men! They could never equal my constructions for all their technology.

"Meantime, while I made my entertainment in the realms of darkness, a Golden Age had been born in Baskalos. When the Moon Crystal was recovered, it was given to the safekeeping of the Guild of Scholars and Wizards, and they had decreed that the one of their number who was most wise and least worldly should take responsibility as the guardian of the Crystal. The guild always did well in its choosing, and over the years a long succession of guardians had cherished and nurtured the Crystal, so that it gained steadily in power, until, at the time of which I am speaking, its light shone out far beyond the limits of the Kingdom of Baskalos.

"Then Satyr, that had been the guardian, passed away, and the time was come for another election, and they chose from their number the one who was called Myglar. He had travelled far, and had learnt much wisdom and magik upon his travels. I had myself initiated him in many of those ancient mysteries that had been lost to Baskalos, for he had sojourned with me for some time in the outerlands of the West. On his return to the city, he had freely shared his new-found lore with his fellow guildsmen, and by this action had won much gratitude.

"Myglar had protested against his election, saying how unworthy he was of the honour, and how little he could be trusted, and how greatly he feared the temptation of power. His electors had smiled when they heard this, and congratulated themselves that the choice was good, for surely only he who knew his limits and his weaknesses could rise above them. And Myglar had smiled secretly to himself as he bowed to their urgings and took up the guardianship of the Crystal, for he had known that his protestations would but make his position the stronger.

"Myglar's election came as no surprise to me. Had I not shared my life and my lodgings with him? Had I not watched as he politely devoured my secrets, and seen the way that, with obvious self-effacement, he could thrust himself to the fore? Were not his gifts so freely given that the receiver stood forever in his debt? Aye, Myglar was ever ambitious for power, though he hid it well from mortal eyes. But mayhaps it was a good thing that the guardian of the Crystal should be ambitious, for would he not be more diligent in its care, that its magik might grow and his power with it?

"He must surely have served his office well at first; for, when I moved to Aranstan, beyond the mountains that stood to the west of Baskalos, I felt the touch of the Crystal that had never reached that far. Indeed, I began to make use of that power for the first time in many years, and set upon the greatest and most elaborate design that I had ever attempted, a magnificent, soaring bridge of stone that would arch across a vast chasm.

"That chasm was so wide and so deep that it could not be spanned with a temp-orary framework of wood such as we would normally use, and without the closeness of the Crystal even my powers would have been unequal to the task. But as it was, I was able to create a rainbow of moonlight of such strength and solidity, that the stone arch of the bridge could be assembled upon it. We had almost completed the task — indeed, the keystone stood ready at one side of the chasm, waiting to be carried out to the centre - when the rainbow trembled for one brief moment. And in that moment all was lost. The stones of the bridge fell tumbling down, down into the depths of that great chasm, falling for an eternity before at last they reached the river far below. So far below that the sounds of their impact never reached us.

"I knew then that things fared ill with the Red Moon Crystal, and set forth for Baskalos. It was a long journey, for I had been on the wrong side of the chasm when the rainbow gave way, and, though it had re-formed, I no longer trusted it.

"Thus, I walked the length of Aranstan before I could cross the river and turn my face towards Baskalos. By then, winter had taken its grip upon the land and the mountain range before me was impassable. Mayhaps I should have tried crossing despite the snows. I had felt the flickerings and falterings of the Crystal's magik and knew time was short, but that very failing held me back. For as the magik of the Red Moon weakened, so did mine, and to have crossed the range meant certain death.

"Through the long winter, the longest and hardest in all memories, I kicked my heels restlessly in the village of Langley in the foothills. At last, when spring brought forth a rush of bright flowers and the streams were in full spate with the melting of snow on the mountains, I made ready to start the final stage of my journey.

"It was then that I felt the presence of another Elder Magician not far off. I sent my thoughts to him and received his response.

"Again I waited, fretful at the delay, but eager for the company and assistance of a fellow on a difficult and dangerous journey towards I knew not what. On the second day I spotted Golitsin hurrying up the valley towards the inn where I made my lodgings. We embraced like long-lost brothers.

"When did you feel the faltering of the Magik?' I asked, for I knew it was that which had brought him there.

"I was in battle,' he replied. 'I had gone to the assistance of a weak but goodly lord who faced a mighty foe. The enemy had fallen upon us in great numbers and the fight had gone badly against us. I had rallied our forces round me for one last valiant stand when suddenly I felt a fracturing in my Moonshield.

"And all was lost!' I broke in upon him.

"Nay,' he said with a wry smile. 'The shield disintegrated with such outward force that the enemy was laid flat and we won a famous victory! But the shield was no more, and I knew that I must return yonder to Baskalos. And you,' he continued, 'what were you doing when the Crystal first failed?'

"Let us say that I was playing bridge and lost a trick,' I replied, and he laughed for he had heard, as I knew he would have, of my calamity at the chasm. We debated much on the fate of the Crystal during our journey over the mountain range. I held that Myglar's successor had been badly chosen, or perhaps the scholarship of the Guild had decayed so far that there were none fit for the stewardship of the Crystal. For Myglar must have been dead by then. He would have been long past the span of human years, and it was known that the Crystal took its toll of its guardians.

"Golitsin, who had spent most of the previous century on military pursuits, was inclined to the belief that Baskalos had fallen under barbarian rule, and that the Crystal itself was under attack.

"We were both wrong, as we discovered when we entered the realm of Baskalos. The kingdom yet enjoyed peace and prosperity, though even here the falterings of magik could be seen. The early crops did not have the luster and fullness of the past, and I saw the first stirrings of diseases that, though common in the outerlands, had never troubled the people of Baskalos. And Myglar was yet alive! We heard thus from the peasants and could scarce believe it, yet 'twas true enough. On our second day in Baskalos, we were met on the road by a body of Myglar's guards and courtiers.

"O wise ones of the Elder Days!' their leader greeted us. 'My Lord Myglar bids you welcome to Baskalos in its time of need, and entreats you to allow us to escort you to his castle.'

"Fair words, but I trust them not,' muttered Golitsin as we mounted the horses they had brought for us. 'Myglar is yet alive. That can only mean that he has been drawing life from the Crystal itself.'

"Aye, he was ever the smooth one,' I agreed. 'But he is cunning. He will not hope to hide his corruption from us. This is no guard of honour that surrounds us. Ha! Did you sense it?' There had been a shimmering in the veil of magik that lay over Baskalos, and I had felt a sudden chill deep within myself.

"Golitsin nodded, then started as the shimmering came again. Myglar was draining the Crystal's power while his vassals delayed us on the road.

"We must make haste, said Golitsin. 'But how to rid ourselves of these guards?'

"By boldness,' I replied, then cried out loud, 'Ho! I hear your master summoning us! Ride hard, men of Myglar.' I spurred my horse on savagely, Golitsin at my side.

"The guards knew not what to do. They could not attack us on the open road, but could only try to keep up with us, hoping to forstall us ere we reached Xax. But this they could not do. Golitsin and I had the form of men, but not the substance. We rode our steeds as light as thistledown, while the guards weighed heavy on theirs. By the time we passed through the city gates, we were nigh on half a league ahead. The city guards too were taken unawares by our sudden rush. On we galloped to the castle, across the drawbridge, and through to inner chambers.

"The doors were locked that led to the courtyard wherein stood the tower of the Moon Crystal. Golitsin tried a spell of unlocking, but the door had been proofed against that. I called down a thunderbolt to blast our way through; yet in vain. Myglar had placed a magik on that door that resisted all our efforts.

"In desperation, we took the form of owls, that we might fly through the windows and thence to the top of the tower. 'Twas desperation indeed, for as owls our own powers would be much reduced. Our hope was to gain access to the tower room and return to human form before Myglar could intervene.

"'Twould appear that Myglar had found some way to view the future, for certainly he seemed to anticipate our every move. As we rose into the courtyard together, we were met by a massive black falcon. We dodged and dived, but that great bird, for all its size, was every bit as agile as we two. We parted, and flew either side of the tower. The falcon, closer to Golitsin than to me and smelling blood, rushed after my companion. Below, I heard a shrill cry and a flurry of feathers, then great wings began to beat the air in pursuit of me.

"With moments to spare, I reached the sanctuary of the narrow windows of the tower room, flew in and alighted in human form once more.

"The Crystal was yet there on its pedestal, and for an instant I was lost in wonderment of it. For though it was pale and wan, it yet had such beauty, such symmetry; its light, though sadly dimmed, remained so pure and clear. How well it had fulfilled its task in those long centuries since the setting of the Red Moon!

"That moment of reverence was my undoing. Myglar hopped down from the windowsill and stepped between me and the Crystal.

"Meddling Magician!' he hissed. 'What ill wind brought you back to take my Crystal from me?'

"Myglar, that Crystal belongs not to you, but to Magik itself. No man can ever own it. Its power is too great to be borne by one.' I reasoned with him to gain time, while I felt for the limits of his magik with questing fingers of thought.

"Seventy years I have tended this Crystal,' he replied, raising a cloaked arm to encompass it. 'I know it well. It is in my power. Mine alone!'

"I launched shackles and chains of moonsilver at his hands and feet to hold him still. But, alas, as they touched him, they turned into wisps of moonlight and disappeared. Myglar laughed, and with a flick of his fingers threw up a wall of glass between us. I made it into a curtain, pulled it aside and set to rush upon him. He grasped the Crystal and held it aloft, poised to dash it against the floor.

"Stand back!' he cried, 'Or you shall be responsible for its destruction!'

"Ah! The Crystal of the Red Moon! Would it be better broken into pieces than left whole in the power of that madman? I knew not, and while I hesitated, Myglar made the decision for me. He enfolded the Crystal within his cloak and as its red light disappeared, so did he.

"Oh, the pride and the folly of it! The Crystal would do Myglar no good. True, it would stave off death for as long as he clung to it, but what life would he have? Such selfish ownership of such terrible power must lead him fast to madness. He would pay the price, the price of magik."

The old man sighed heavily and was silent for some time before speaking again.

"The Crystal was at length rescued from Myglar's grip, and restored to Baskalos, but magik was never the same in after years. The end of the Age had come, and true magik was disappearing from this world.

"Now there is but little, and that only when the full Moon shines bright and time can be measured on a Moondial once more."

I gazed down at the Moondial that lay between us. The setting Moon had pushed the shadow of the gnomon to the very end of the scale, and even as I looked, a new shadow, cast by the first rays of the rising sun, fell starkly across the face.

Then the Moondial was gone, and the old man with it.

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