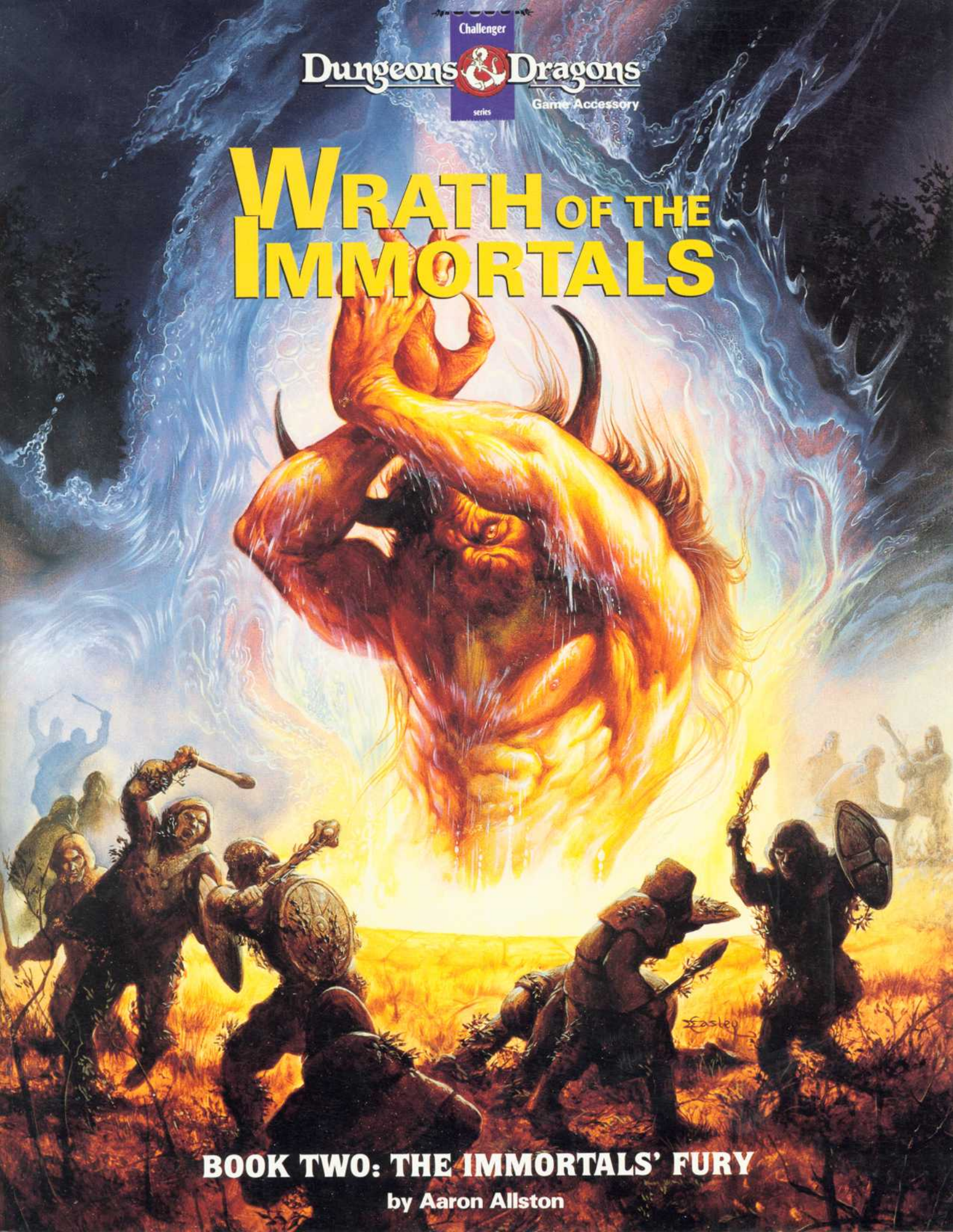


Challenger
Dungeons & Dragons

series

Game Accessory

WRATH OF THE IMMORTALS



BOOK TWO: THE IMMORTALS' FURY

by Aaron Allston

Book II: The Immortals' Fury

by Aaron Allston

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This adventure, *The Immortals' Fury*, turns the campaign world upside-down, making planet-wide changes which will alter the Known World forevermore.

But before we continue with this discussion:

This entire book is for the eyes of the DM™ only. Persons intending to play in this adventure, rather than referee it, should read no further!

DMs who haven't already read *Book I: Codex of the Immortals* should at least skim it now, especially the first two chapters, before digging too deeply into the adventure. Please note that players can read the *Codex*; it is only the details of the adventure which follow that should be off-limits.

What It's All About

In *The Immortals' Fury*, one set of the all-powerful Immortals has made important discoveries about an ancient and bizarre artifact. This group's continued investigation of the artifact threatens to challenge the rules by which the Immortals govern themselves, and other Immortals have sworn to stop them. The struggle between these two groups, modified by the interference of other Immortals and the efforts of heroic mortals, will result in mortal nations destroying one another in bloody warfare. When the dust has settled, the status quo will have been altered forever, and the Known World will never be the same.

Where Things Happen

This adventure takes place in the Known World and *HOLLOW WORLD*® game settings, which have been extensively described in previous publications (the *GAZ* and *HWR* series of supplements, the *Dawn of the Emperors* and *HOLLOW WORLD* boxed sets, the *D&D*® *Rules Cyclopedia* hardback, the *Trail Maps* series, and many, many adventure modules). This adventure can be played without owning any of these supplements (aside from the *D&D*® *Rules Cyclopedia*, which is essential), but the DM will be able to throw in more "local color," and his or her job will be a whole lot easier, if he or she draws on the following supplements for their descriptions of the nations where the most crucial portions of the adventure take place:

GAZ 3: The Principalities of Glantri
GAZ 11: The Republic of Darokin
Dawn of the Emperors Boxed Set
HOLLOW WORLD® Boxed Set

Time of the Adventure

Up until now, most supplements and adventures written for this setting have presumed a starting date around the year 1,000 AC in the Thyatian calendar, and none has postulated major changes to the setting. With *The Immortals' Fury*, the situation changes dramatically. The efforts of the Immortals will result in catastrophic alterations to the world's surface... and to its interior surface, the *HOLLOW WORLD* setting, as well.

The episodes of this adventure begin in the year 1004 AC, to give individual DMs time to arrange a seamless transition from their current campaigns to the starting point. Thereafter, the phases of the adventure should be interspersed with events from the timeline in the back to take the Known World setting up to the year 1010 AC. Future

D&D® game supplements and adventure modules will be set in Year 1,010 and afterwards to reflect the changes brought about by this adventure.

DMs who don't run a campaign set in the Known World or *HOLLOW WORLD* can adapt this adventure to their own campaign worlds by substituting the most appropriate nations, NPCs, and Immortals from their home campaigns for the ones described in this adventure. This will take a fair amount of work but should be worth the reward. Alternatively, any DM not wanting to disturb his or her home campaign to quite this extent is free to run some but not all of the scenarios included in this book as stand-alone adventures.

How It's Arranged

The Immortals' Fury is arranged this way:

About This Adventure gives a brief overview of the whole adventure and describes a variety of ways a DM can integrate this adventure into his or her ongoing campaign.

What Has Come Before fills in the background and relates events in the past which have a direct bearing on the course of events in the adventure. This section is particularly important for explaining the motivations and goals of the Immortals involved.

Phase One: The Prelude is the first part of the *Fury* epic. It is a complete adventure for characters of experience level 1-5, so only the entry-level *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® game boxed set is needed to play it. The DM should not feel obliged to have the characters jump into the next phase of the adventure immediately; in fact, they may not know for quite some time that there is even going to be a "next phase."

Phase Two: The Build-Up is the second part of the epic. This adventure for mid-level characters—heroes in the prime of their careers, 6th level and up—requires the new *D&D*® *Rules Cyclopedia* or the older *Expert* and *Companion* boxed sets. In this stage, the characters' actions may begin to influence the fate of nations and bring them to the attention of the Immortals.

Phase Three: The Great War is the third and final part of the epic. It is a complete adventure for high-level characters—those who rule their own dominions, interact on an equal basis with princes and kings, and tackle the most powerful menaces the world has to offer. Here, players will need either the *D&D*® *Rules Cyclopedia* or the older *Companion* and *Masters* boxed sets. It is during the course of this adventure that the world will see its most profound changes.

Timeline of the Years 1,004-1,009 AC describes the political events which parallel the course of the adventure, as well as providing many suggestions of other scenarios that can be used to lengthen the main adventure.

When Things Go Wrong describes ways the adventure can go astray, and ways the DM can set it right again.

Monsters describes new monsters introduced in *The Immortals' Fury*.

Before Play Begins

Considering the scope of events which take place within these pages, DMs are strongly recommended to take time to become thoroughly familiar with the adventure before running it for their players.

Also, DMs not yet familiar with the Known World and *HOLLOW WORLD* settings who have access to the supplements which describe them should read up on these settings. DMs intending to set this adventure in their own, unique campaign-worlds should preview the adventure and think about all the setting substitutions needed to custom-fit this adventure to their worlds.

For now, turn the page... and watch the world start to come apart at the seams.

The Immortals' Fury is an adventure which involves, in one way or another, most of the nations of the Known World. In this chapter, we'll discuss ways a DM can run the adventure so as to put the PCs through as much excitement and danger as possible.

Synopsis of the Adventure

Phase I: The Prelude

In the first phase of the adventure, the player characters are low-level heroes who come across a castle tucked away deep in the mountains between the trading-republic of Darokin and the wizard-ruled lands of Glantri. There, they find hitherto-unknown monsters and an artifact—an artifact which contains the life-force of a being who has existed since the time of Mystara's first human civilizations.

If the characters defeat the dangers of the castle, they can help the being escape the artifact, gaining an extremely useful (and powerful) ally.

Phase II: The Build-Up

At adventure's start, it has been some time since the adventure at the castle where the artifact was retrieved; the player characters will very likely have gained several levels in other adventures over the intervening weeks or years.

The being they freed from the artifact reappears to enlist the PCs in an investigation. He draws the characters' attention to the fact that the world appears to be going mad. Armies everywhere are growing in numbers and strength, spies are perpetrating acts of sabotage and mur-

der on an unprecedented scale, and normally diplomatic kings and queens are bringing their nations to the brink of war on matters of little consequence. Their friend fears that some powerful force is behind these events... but lacks the kind of details that would constitute solid proof. He asks the PCs' help in securing that evidence.

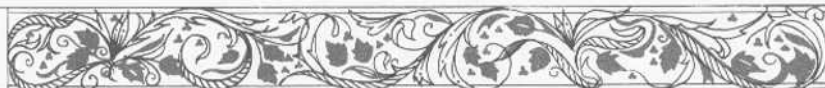
Travelling to an island dominion of the Empire of Alphatia, the heroes will discover evidence of a massive colonization program being undertaken by the Alphanian government. This will tempt them to travel to regions they've probably never seen before... and will allow them to uncover evidence of the conspiracies of Immortals, as well as the identity of a mortal dupe in those conspiracies.

Phase Three: The Great War

By now, the Known World is one great battlefield, as nation after nation joins in the Glantri/Alphanian war. Glantri, Alphatia, Thyatis, the Heldannic Knights, Darokin, the Orcs of Thar, Vestland, the Ethengarian Khanate, Soderfjord, Alfheim, the Emirates of Ylaruam, and Hule are all either locked in battle with one another or wracked by internal dissension; great changes also rock Rockhome and Karameikos. In a pair of adventures set against the background of this war, the player characters, knowingly or not, decide the fate of Mystara.

Having identified a mortal who holds a valuable key to the Immortals' plans, the player characters must follow his trail across a war-torn continent. Only by running him to earth can they find the information that they and their mysterious patron need. Finally, in the last and most dangerous stage of their whole mission, they travel to the secret location of the ancient artifact the Immortals are fighting over and must find a way to stop it from draining all the magic from Mystara—in the face of direct interference from angry Immortals!





Coordinating Adventure and Timeline

At the end of this adventure is a list of events entitled "Timeline of Years 1,004-1,009 AC." This Timeline details what is taking place in the rest of the Known World while the adventurers are concentrating on their quest.

These events form the backdrop to the adventure; it is very important that the characters become aware of them as they happen. These events not only suggest the passage of time to the PCs but should increase their sense of urgency as the situation grows increasingly out of control. In many cases, knowing of these events will force the characters to revise their plans—for example, travel between Darokin and Glantri will be easy at the adventure's onset but almost impossible during the period of the humanoid invasion of 1007-1008. Similarly, it would be prudent of them to avoid areas where there are major outbreaks of plague, if only they can find out about them well enough in advance, or to go secretly through lands which are at war with the PC's home country. It is therefore important for DMs to keep careful track of exactly how long the player characters take to complete each stage of the adventure, as well as travel time spent in getting from place to place.

Each time the PCs advance through the calendar to a new season, the DM should check the Timeline entry for that season. The PCs won't necessarily hear of these events until long afterwards, and thus may be in for one or two nasty surprises ("Disappeared? How could all the dwarves in Rockhome just disappear? I'm a dwarf, and nobody told me anything about it!"). However, once the players begin to realize how wide-sweeping the changes taking place are, the DM can rest assured that their characters will take pains to keep up on the latest news, especially as it relates to their home and families. The cumulative weight of events will eventually work to convince the PCs of the serious nature of the changes taking place on their world.

Many of the events described will provide the PCs with adventure opportunities. If the PCs are near one of the areas affected by an event, or have properties or loved ones in those areas, they may feel obliged to intervene to the best of their ability—to try to hold back an invading army, to help victims of the plague, to lead a band of refugees to safety...whatever is in their power and fits their individual personalities.

Timeline Record Sheet

The *Wrath of the Immortals* Timeline Record Sheet at the end of this chapter is designed to help the DM keep track of where the players and most important NPCs go and what they do over the six-year span covered by the adventure. The DM should make at least six copies of this sheet—one for each year from 1,004 through 1,009—and fill them in as the adventure progresses.

The Calendar

The Known World calendar is made up of twelve months, each consisting of four weeks of seven days each. There are therefore 28 days in each month and a total of 336 days in the year; there are no leap-days. DMs wishing to make a one-on-one equivalence with the Gregorian calendar in modern use in our world should assume that the Mystaran day is slightly longer than Earth's, just over 26 of our hours. DMs using some calendar system of their own should translate according to the appropriate season (spring, summer, fall, and winter).

The first month of the year is Nuwmont, which together with Vatermont and Thaumont make up the Spring months. Officially the first day of Spring is Thaumont 1, but in reality the first warm day can come earlier or later, depending on how far north the characters are and how cold that year's winter was. Consequently, when a Timeline event is listed as taking place in Spring of 1,006, the DM should set it anywhere from Nuwmont 1 to Thaumont 28, wherever it best fits the campaign as he or she is running it. Even when it is specified that a certain event

will take place in "late summer" or "early winter", the DM has considerable flexibility in fixing the exact date.

The other three seasons are Summer (Flaurmont, Yarthmont, and Klarmont), with Klarmont 1 the traditional first day of summer; Fall (Felmont, Fyrmont, and Ambyrmont), with Ambyrmont 1 as the official first day of fall; and Winter (Sviftmont, Eirmont, and Kaldmont), with Kaldmont 1 the official first day of winter.

All these names of the months and days on the calendar are from the Thyatian calendar used throughout the Empire of Thyatis and neighboring Karamaikos; it is also popular throughout the Known World. The Alpathian calendar is similar, with the following differences:

First, the Alpathians date their calendar from exactly 1,000 years earlier than do the Thyatians. Thus, the year 1,004 AC (After Crowning of the first Thyatian Emperor) on the timeline is the equivalent of 2,004 AY (Alpathian Year).

Second, the Alpathians start their year with a different month. Thyatians start their year with Nuwmont 1; Alpathians start it with Thaumont 1. Consequently, for the Alpathians Vatermont 1,004 AC is near the beginning of the year, while for the Alpathians the same month is Vatermont 2003 AY, near the end of their year.

Third, the Alpathians have different names for the months of the year and for the days of the week; see the Timeline Record Sheet on page 5.

Adjusting the Adventure to Character Level

The *Immortals' Fury* is a very flexible adventure which, with a little creativity on the DM's part, can be adapted for use in almost any ongoing campaign. Virtually any of the scenarios included in this book can be adjusted to become appropriate challenges for characters of higher or lower levels. For example, Phase I is written with low-level characters (1st through 5th level) in mind. A party of four 1st level characters would find it difficult to survive, while a group of eight 5th-level characters would breeze through it unscathed.

To modify an encounter for lower-level characters, reduce the number of opponents the PCs face, or break them into smaller groups so they don't have to fight as many at once. The DM can also reduce the amount of damage the opponents' attacks do, or change it from permanent damage that would kill a character to temporary damage that would knock him or her out (so that lethal poisons become sleep toxins and the like). Also, the DM can adjust the opponents' motivation to give them a reason to take the characters alive rather than trying to kill them, giving the PCs either a chance to negotiate or to escape later on.

To modify an encounter for higher-level characters, the DM should simply reverse all the suggestions in the preceding paragraph, so that the PCs face more opponents with more Hit Dice and deadlier abilities. Simple traps and ambushes become lethal. Enemy NPCs fight with better organization and more guile, making them much harder to defeat.

Thus, if Phase I of this adventure were being run for a party consisting entirely of 1st-level character, the DM should arrange for there to be fewer monsters present at each encounter to give the PCs a fighting chance. If the party is largely 2nd and 3rd-level characters, the adventure should be run as printed. If the characters are 4th and 5th-level, their foes should have more Hit Dice and hit points. If the DM wishes to send a group of characters higher than 5th-level through this dungeon, he or she should substitute vampires or some other powerful creatures for the lightning zombies. In every case, the important thing is to adjust whatever factors are necessary to keep the *challenge* the player characters face about the same.

* * *

With all that out of the way, it's time to look at the events which led up to the adventure... and at the adventure itself.

Wrath of the Immortals Timeline Record Sheet

Year: _____ DUNGEON MASTER™: _____

Events and Notes:

[illegible]

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|----|----|----|-----------------------------|---|----|----|----|-----------------------------|------|----|----|----|
| NUWMONT / NYXMIR | | | | | VATERMONT / AMPHIMIR | | | | | THAUMONT / ALPHAMIR | | | | |
| Lunadain / Majhur | 1 * | 8 | 15 | 22 | Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | Lunadain / Majhur | 1 ** | 8 | 15 | 22 |
| Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 |
| Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 |
| Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 |
| Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 |
| Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 |
| Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 |
| FLAURMONT / SULAMIR | | | | | YARTHMONT / SUDMIR | | | | | KLARMONT / VERTMIR | | | | |
| Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 |
| Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 |
| Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 |
| Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 |
| Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 |
| Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 |
| Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 |
| FELMONT / TSLAMIR | | | | | FYRMONT / ANDRUMIR | | | | | AMBYRMONT / CYPRIMIR | | | | |
| Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 |
| Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 |
| Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 |
| Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 |
| Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 |
| Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 |
| Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 |
| SVIFTMONT / HASTMIR | | | | | EIRMONT / EIMIR | | | | | KALDMONT / BURYMIR | | | | |
| Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 | Lunadain / Majhur | 1 | 8 | 15 | 22 |
| Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 | Gromdain / Tijhur | 2 | 9 | 16 | 23 |
| Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 | Tserdain / Wojhur | 3 | 10 | 17 | 24 |
| Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 | Moldain / Thajhur | 4 | 11 | 18 | 25 |
| Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 | Nytdain / Flajhur | 5 | 12 | 19 | 26 |
| Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 | Loshdain / Sejhur | 6 | 13 | 20 | 27 |
| Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 | Soladain / Lajhur | 7 | 14 | 21 | 28 |

MAIN CALENDAR KEY

- * First day of the Thyatian new year
** First day of the Alphatian new year



This adventure takes place because the Immortal named Rad is in possession of a mysterious artifact—one which he studies to learn new secrets of the multiverse, but which drains power from the Sphere of Energy on the world of Mystara each time it is used.

This object, unlike most artifacts, was not created by the Immortals. It started out as a technological device, the power generator of a spacecraft which crashed on the world of Mystara long ago. But over the millennia it has become something far more powerful and dangerous.

Year 4,000 BC

Five thousand years ago, the world of Mystara was very different. Its continents and coastlines would be unfamiliar to modern eyes; it even rotated upon a different axis. At that time the region now known as the Known World was part of the polar icecap. This was the age of Blackmoor, Mystara's first human civilization.

Originally Blackmoor was a small and beleaguered kingdom, until its history was forever changed by a freak accident. Far away in another dimension, a highly-technological civilization developed a star-drive capable of crossing the void between the planets. Over a period of centuries, they colonized new worlds and allied themselves with other races on inhabited planets they came across.

One of their survey ships, the *Beagle*, was on a mission to explore and map an unknown area of their galaxy when it was caught in a freak energy vortex. The disabled ship was whirled through the dimensional barriers, where the crew managed a crash-landing on the surface of the planet Mystara. Most of the people on board survived, but it was clear that the ship would never move again. The captain set up a distress beacon and waited for rescue, not knowing that they were in a whole other dimension whose boundaries their signal could not penetrate.

As time passed and no rescue came, the crew became divided over whether to wait in suspended animation until the inexplicably-delayed rescue ship finally arrived or to colonize this planet. One faction argued they should use their technology to enslave the native population. Tension between the two groups grew until a mutiny broke out, with the "colonizers" seeking to overthrow the captain and those who supported his "sleeper" solution. After a bloody struggle, the mutineers were defeated and fled, hiding in a distant swamp, where they eventually put their ideas into practice. Using their science to breed a race of semi-intelligent frog-men, they so terrorized the local human population that dark legends about "the Order of the Frog" are still used to frighten children today, five thousand years later.

Back at the ship, the captain and surviving crew went into suspended animation, leaving behind automated defenses (electronic traps and killer robots) to prevent either the mutineers or the planet's natives from gaining access to the ship. Nevertheless, it was only a matter of time before King Uther of Blackmoor learned of the ship's existence and heard rumors of the strange treasures inside. He dispatched adventurers to explore the ship and bring back whatever marvels they could. Eventually

the sages and mages of Blackmoor learned enough about the items recovered from the *Beagle* to create a technological culture of their own.

Many years—perhaps centuries—later, Ogdoban Treel, one of the ship's crewmen in suspended animation, awoke as part of a routine maintenance schedule. He discovered that some of the crew had disappeared, including the captain, and noted the continued intrusion by men of Blackmoor despite the dogged defense of the ship's robots—and decided to sell out. He greeted the next group of adventurers to enter the ship and offered them a bargain; in return for a life of luxury and wealth, he would voluntarily hand over the greatest technological secrets of the ship to the men of Blackmoor, secrets they would never be able to unravel without his help. Since he knew the other men and women of the crew would stop him if they ever became aware of his actions, he sabotaged all the other life-support modules to kill them while they slept.

At first the plan worked well, and under Treel's direction the systematic looting the ship's core began. Then something Treel hadn't counted on happened; one of the other crew members interfered. Unknown to Treel, First Assistant Engineer Rheddrian Benekander, a compulsive tinkerer, had made modifications to his own life-support capsule. When power was cut to the capsule, his modifications switched it to backup power and initiated its thawing procedure. Rheddrian awoke to find his fellows murdered and a traitor handing over to natives technology which would catastrophically alter their culture.

Unsure what one person alone could do to stop Treel and his allies, Rheddrian used his familiarity with the ship's maintenance ducts to spy out the situation thoroughly before acting. He then improvised a plan to put a halt to Treel's activities and undo as much of the damage as possible. First he reprogrammed the defense robots to attack and repel the intruders, defeating them handily, then he planned to assess the damage to the ship itself—but it was already too late.

Treel was a linguist and diplomat, not a physicist, and he had unwittingly allowed the men of Blackmoor to detach crucial elements that stabilized the core of the ship's power system. Rheddrian was horrified to find that a chain reaction capable of setting off an explosion big enough to vaporize the entire planet was already underway. It was too late to stop the core from going critical, so he focused all the escaping energy inward, turning the explosion into an *implosion*.

The resulting energy pulses vaporized all of the starship except the engine core itself, which melted through the very rock it rested on and sank hundreds of feet into the earth. Rheddrian, working to the last minute in a final effort to stave off as much of the disaster as possible, was utterly disintegrated. What little energy did escape warped reality in all directions, causing animals, people, and plants exposed to it to mutate into strange monster races. By the time investigators from Blackmoor came to investigate, all that was left was a smoking crater with a smooth, glassy bottom; they could only conclude that somehow the ship had taken off, never to return.



Years 4,000 BC-1,000 AC: The Mirror-Shield

Several centuries later, a red dragon flying over the crater saw a strange shiny object exposed by erosion of the fused sand. This brightly-glowing disk two feet across looked valuable, so the dragon carried it off to become part of her treasure.

A thousand years after Rheddrian's sacrifice, Blackmoor's scientists rediscovered the principles upon which the *Beagle's* engines had operated—only to find that the highly magical nature of Mystara made such objects volatile. Before they could learn how to control the new-found energy, their prototypes exploded with such force that Blackmoor was obliterated in The Great Rain of Fire, an explosion so powerful it shift the planetary axis. Thirteen hundred years later (1700 years before the start of the Thyatian calendar), a second, smaller explosion turned an elven homeland into the Broken Lands.

Meanwhile, the mirror-disk had become a sort of dragon heirloom, passing from one hoard to another, its powers unknown and its origin forgotten. Eventually it came into the possession of a great dragon-slayer named Balthac, who slew its owner and carried the disk away with him to his mountainside home. After Balthac himself died fighting Calor the Great, the most powerful dragon of his day, his abandoned fortress slowly crumbled into ruin. About 200 years ago, a small keep was constructed on the same site by a Darokin noble named Baron Alexander Corran.

Unknown to everybody, the mirror-disk is an artifact created by the bizarre energies that destroyed the *Beagle*. Once a small

two-inch disk used as a security access device by the ship's engineers, it absorbed an enormous amount of power in the implosion and expanded into a shield-like disk two feet in diameter. It had also absorbed something else: the life-force of 1st Assistant Engineer Rheddrian Benekander.

After being unconscious for millennia, Rheddrian awoke a few decades ago to find himself trapped within the disk, which was lying in a forgotten cave beneath the ruined castle. Upon his awaking, the disk began emitting traces of strange energy, with unexpected effects on all creatures, living and dead, in the vicinity... as described in the chapter entitled "Phase I."

The First Alteration of the Engines

When the *Beagle* was destroyed, the engine compartment of the starship burrowed its way several hundred feet into the ground in the resulting meltdown. The intense energy field of the implosion altered the engine to create an incredibly powerful artifact, now known as the Nucleus of the Spheres.

At some point, an Old One discovered the device and became intrigued with it. He or she realized that the strange magical energies emanating from the device, the Radiance, had the potential to enable mortals to achieve Immortality in the Sphere of Energy without help from an Immortal sponsor. As an experiment in creating a whole new kind of Immortal, he or she moved the artifact to its current location and changed it to make it capable of granting Immortality to those who fully mastered its secrets.



Satisfied with the results, he or she left the device to do its work; to this day, no one knows who, or what, he or she was.

The Second Alteration of the Engines

Thousands of years passed before anyone else noticed the artifact, but eventually Noumena, a Hierarch of the Sphere of Time, deduced its existence. Disturbed to learn of its ability to create Immortals that were not controlled by the current Immortal hierarchy, he took counsel with his fellow Hierarchs. Meeting secretly, a full council of Hierarchs agreed that, left unchecked, the artifact would create an imbalance between the Five Spheres, as well as undercutting their own authority. They therefore altered the device so that every time it was used, it leached power from the Sphere of Energy, diminishing the sum total of magic available to the world of Mystara. It thus became the responsibility of the senior Immortals of that Sphere to restrict the Radiance's use.

Year 845 AC: Rad

One hundred and fifty-five years ago, a brilliant and eccentric wizard named Etienne d'Ambreville, one of the princes of Glantri, discovered the Radiance and used it to achieve Immortality. He founded an order of mortal sorcerers called the Brotherhood of the Radiance to study it. D'Ambreville was the first to achieve Immortality through its use... and it is he who is now known as Rad.

Year 1000 AC

"My lords and ladies, Immortals and Exalted servants, we face no less than the destruction of the world of Mystara... and of our own society."

The speaker—tall and elegant, with skin the color of bronze gleaming in firelight, and flaming eye sockets—took the center of the Central Dome's main chamber as if it were a stage reserved for his use. His gaze swept the crowd, Immortals all, and looked for opponents to quell, doubters to sway, and supporters from whom to draw encouragement.

He spun and pointed an accusing finger up at the raised judges' bench, where five Hierarchs sat. "It is your responsibility to pass sentence on Rad, to end his studies before they destroy everything we know. In his greed for knowledge, he will sacrifice anything, from an entire world to the very future of our kind."

The object of his tirade, standing quietly a few yards away stroking his beard, coughed up a little laugh. "Eh, monsieur, you credit me with far too much influence and far too little sense. Would I endanger the world of my birth, the world where my descendants still live? No. The object I am studying, the artifact which causes you so much consternation, it is no threat to Mystara. It is a source for understanding. It shapes energies in ways which no one has ever seen before. It ignores the known laws of magic and yet achieves magical results. There is nothing like it in any of our records. By studying it, I may discover a whole new kind of magic previously unknown to us—perhaps I may even unlock the secrets of those who went before, the Old Ones."

Ixion glowered, and the fire in his eye sockets burned brighter. "Each time you use this device, this *thing*, it draws magical energy, the source of *our* power, from the world. We have no way to replace that lost energy. And the rate of consumption is increasing. In a few centuries, perhaps a few decades, your irresponsible experiments will have robbed the world of Mystara of all magic."

Rad shrugged, the delicate fabric of his crimson robe rustling. "So?"

After a second of stunned silence, Ixion whirled to face the audience. "You see? His own words condemn him. No other place in the multiverse has produced as many candidates for Immortality as Mystara, the very world this madman threatens. Many of you called it home during your mortal lives. Steal away its magic, and you turn it into a wasteland of squabbling warriors. You doom all the wonderful races of magical creatures who cannot survive without it to slow and lingering extinction."

"Nor is this all," Ixion said, turning his attention to the five Immortals who sat in judgement. "Rad has violated one of the most ancient laws of our kind. By leeching magic from the world, he is directly interfering with the lives of mortals. Unless we stop..."

Rad's voice interrupted him: "That is a lie."

Ixion whipped around to glare at him in angry disbelief. The crowd stirred and began to mutter: no Immortal, even one as knowledgeable as Rad, had ever dared to speak like that to a higher-ranking Immortal before, especially not to a Hierarch as powerful as Ixion.

Before Ixion could answer, Rad continued: "The 'law,' good monsieur, states that we are not to take direct action against mortals. Travelling to Mystara and forcing a mortal to do your will, that is direct action. Dropping thunderbolts on a city you despise, or sinking an island into the sea, that is direct action. What I do is indirect. I study; I encourage; I inspire. I take no direct action."

Ixion laughed bitterly. "Your 'inaction' will change the world more completely than any thunderbolt from an angry Immortal on an erring mortal. I congratulate you on the sheer power of your inaction. I've never seen any inactivity so powerful... or so dangerous." Ignoring Rad's mocking bow at the compliment, Ixion turned again to the judges before them. "You have seen, and you have heard. I have proved conclusively that Rad's research is draining energy from Mystara. Unless he is stopped, his work will eliminate the influence of the Sphere of Energy there, and perhaps elsewhere in the Prime Plane. Not even Rad could contest my findings. Now I demand a vote. I demand by my right as a Hierarch that he be stopped."

On the bench, Djaea, speaker for the Council of Mystara, nodded. "So be it. We shall decide." She turned to confer in whispers with her fellow judges.

Ixion took a moment to relax. He shouldn't have let Rad get him so angry; he knew he'd won his case. Rad was clever—too clever—but he had only been an Immortal for less than two centuries, while Ixion had known the judges for eons; he knew how each would vote.

Djaea, a Hierarch of Matter, was sure to vote his way. As concerned as she was with the preservation of worlds and species,



she would never allow harm to come to the exotic races of Mystara.

Ilsundal, a fellow Hierarch of Energy, was Ixion's friend and shared his fears about their Sphere losing influence on Mystara. He, too, was a sure vote.

Korotiku, Hierarch of Thought, was another friend whose frivolous manner hid a deep wisdom. A co-founder of the HOLLOW WORLD®, he too would act to protect his charges from the danger Rad's experiments posed. His vote would go with Ixion.

Khoronus, Hierarch of Time, was a cipher; Ixion could never tell how he might vote on any issue. He might find some precedent for Rad's actions in the deeds of some madman of centuries past, in which case he would vote for Rad, or he might accept Ixion's charge that Rad's refusal to stop at his Hierarch's command was a defiance of tradition, in which case he would vote with the others.

Hel, a Hierarch of Entropy, in keeping with her nature would probably vote whichever way would cause the most trouble.

But it didn't matter: with Djaea, Ilsundal, and Korotiku on his side, Ixion's victory was assured. He stood savoring the moment, thinking of how he would discipline Rad once the verdict was announced.

Yet, when the votes were counted, it was Djaea and Ilsundal for Ixion, Korotiku and Khoronus for Rad, and Hel abstaining.

Ixion stared in surprise at Korotiku while the crowd buzzed at the unexpected outcome. The ebon-skinned Immortal stared back, sympathy but not the slightest trace of remorse on his face. "Knowledge and growth do not come from stagnation, my friend," he told the solar Immortal. "This was nothing personal."

"We have a tie," Djaea announced; she, too, looked surprised. "As speaker for the Council, it is my right to break the tie. I decide in favor of Ixion. Rad will abandon his studies of the device. This meeting is at an end."

There were unhappy mutterings from the crowd as Djaea and the others rose to depart, but they stopped when Rad quietly said: "No. I do not accept your ruling."

In the shocked silence which followed, Rad's calm voice continued: "I came here to answer the charges against me and to explain the importance of my work for us all. Even had the vote gone against me, I would not have abandoned my research. But your council is **deadlocked**: two for my humble self, two for good Monsieur Ixion, with Madame Hel keeping her own counsel, as is her right. No verdict has been reached, and your own attempt to vote twice is, how you say, below the board? My studies will continue."

It took the outraged Hierarch a moment to find her voice, during which time the background noise slowly grew to a low roar as Immortals in the crowd began arguing among themselves. When she did speak, it was clear from her tone that she was trying hard to keep her temper. "By rights, the Council should not even have had to intervene in this matter. Ixion is the reigning Hierarch of your Sphere; once he ordered you to stop your lunatic scheme, you should have obeyed him without question. I offer you one last chance to obey your superior, to do the right thing, to honor our traditions."

There was dead silence as they all waited for Rad's reply. "I defy your tradition," he said at last, his quiet voice carrying to every corner of the great chamber. "Traditions are only laws when all accept them. I do not. Our 'traditions' are not laws but regulations made up by the Hierarchs to keep all power in their own hands. Ixion is older and stronger than I, but he is not my superior, and I will not obey his orders."

"Have you all forgotten?" cried Rad, turning from Djaea to the crowd. "The Hierarchs command such subservience because they sponsored so many of you to Immortality. No one can become Immortal without serving an Immortal sponsor—or so we are told. Most of you have never outgrown the habit of deferring to them; that is the hallowed tradition which Madame Djaea evokes."

"But I achieved my Immortality without benefit of your ancient traditions. I owe my allegiance to no sponsor. I myself am proof that the old ways can change, thanks to the very studies these Hierarchs wish to suppress. Who is to say that those who went before, the Old Ones, are not responsible for guiding me to this new path now opening up before us? I will not, I cannot stop now because one world might lose its flying carpets and crystal balls!"

"For the sake of us all, for the sake of the future, I must continue my studies. And I **will**, to the last of my strength, even if I must defy you all to achieve my goal."

Ixion clinched his fists and took a threatening step forward. "I should destroy you here and now, before you cause any more damage," he hissed.

Suddenly two figures stepped out of the crowd up to Rad's side: Rafiel and Rathanos, fellow Emyreals of Energy. "Rad does not stand alone," Rafiel said to the fiery Hierarch. "I too became Immortal without a patron; I, too, would like to see what his experiments bring." Rathanos merely nodded.

"Traitors!" shouted Ixion. "There may be three of you, but you are merely Emyreals; do you seriously think you can stand against a Hierarch in his fury?"

"Two Hierarchs," said Valerias, sliding up to Ixion's side. "Say the word, my love, and we will stop this rebellion before it spreads any farther." Ixion smiled and raised his weapon, but before he could strike a huge figure moved between the antagonists.

"No," said Ka the Wise, "That is not the way. Rad is right in one thing at least: he and Rafiel are the first of a new kind of Immortal. I have devoted all the millions of years of my existence to protecting endangered species from harm; I cannot allow you to destroy them. Come, my friends, can we not talk this over before it is too late?"

"It is already too late," said Ixion, gesturing to the crowd, which had degenerated into small groups shouting and shoving at one another. "Much as it pains me to count you among my enemies, my duty is clear; I must not allow Rad to destroy my Sphere and rob Mystara of its magic. If I cannot fight him here in Pandius, then I will fight him in the mortal world below."

"Look to your followers, rebel," he said, turning to Rad a final time. "An Immortal without mortal followers quickly loses his power. Unless you halt your research **now**, I will unleash my followers against yours in a war that will wipe your precious Glantri



from the map. And I won't stop until all knowledge of you and your 'Radiance' has vanished from Mystara."

For the first time, Rad hesitated. "You condemn hundreds of thousands of mortals to death—many of them your own followers, or innocents who will get caught up in the struggle."

"No, rebel, it is *you* who condemn them." Ixion snapped back. "I do not desire any of their deaths, but if that is the price I must pay to prevent the doom of every magical creature on the planet, then so be it. Give up your work, submit to the Council and myself, and the war need never take place. Refuse, and their blood is on your hands."

Rad shook his head. "I cannot."

"Then it's war—and such a war as that world has never seen before. Look to your defenses, traitor. Gather what allies you may; nothing will save you from my wrath." And with that, Ixion and Valerias vanished in a blinding flash.

Rad's shoulders sagged. "So be it," he sighed before turning to his supporters. "My friends, we had best take counsel together. If my dream is to survive, I will need all the help I can get." Then they too vanished.

Djaca sat in the rapidly-emptying hall with her face in her hands and said, "What have we done?" Khoronus put a comforting hand on her shoulder and quoted an old rhyme softly to himself: "The old order changeth, giving place to the new/Lest one good custom should corrupt the world...."

Years 1000-1,004 AC

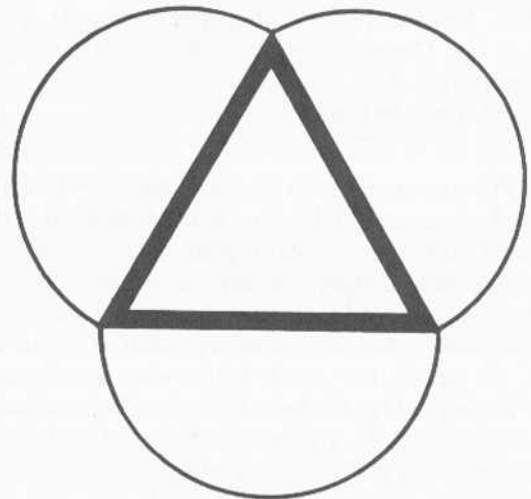
In the years immediately following this fateful exchange between Ixion and Rad, all the Immortals involved assemble their allies to prepare themselves for the conflict to come.

Ixion and Valerias are joined by another Hierarch, Ilsundal, who fears for the elves if Rad's work continues, and by Alpatia, who knows that the disappearance of magic would doom her own followers on the Alpatian continent. These four organize themselves into a band called **The Ring of Fire**. Their goal is to protect magic and the status quo by forcing Rad to end his studies; Ixion and Valerias seek Rad's personal destruction as well. They encourage their followers—clerics and non-clerics alike—to become unusually active so that they will advance in level and be more powerful for the events to come. They also do their best to gain their followers a role in influencing the governments of these and other nations. Finally, they subtly stir up anti-Glantri sentiments so that Rad's followers will be isolated when the war finally comes.

Meanwhile, Rad's cause continued to attract supporters. Soon he, Rafiel, Rathanos, and Ka were joined by Korotiku, Eiryn-dul, Vanya, and Asterius; together, they form **The Fellowship of the Star**. While Rad, Rafiel, and Rathanos work to find ways to use the Radiance defensively, Korotiku and Ka continue to present his case in Pandius. Between Ka's prestige and Korotiku's wiliness, they prevent Ixion from gaining any more allies. Asterius roams the Known World in Mortal Identities to spy out Ixion's plans so Rad will know what to expect. Eiryndul devotes himself to stirring up so much trouble in Norwold that civil war breaks out there, preventing this Alpatian colony from helping the mother country in the war against Glantri. Vanya, mean-

while, fans anti-Alpatian sentiment among her own followers in Thyatis and the Heldann Freeholds so that these nations will be likely to side with Glantri when hostilities begin.

By the year 1004 AC, the Known World is a powder keg ready to explode—and an angry Ixion is ready to light its fuse.





This is an adventure for low-level player characters—those from 1st to 5th experience levels, averaging around 3rd level. DMs starting a new campaign will probably want to adjust the strength of the NPC forces downward; those introducing experienced characters to this scenario may want to toughen up the monsters proportionately.

Also, this adventure begins four years after the time in which the D&D® Gazetteers are set; this four-year gap is designed to allow the DM time to prepare his or her campaign for the changes *The Immortals' Fury* will bring.

How the PCs Get Involved

This adventure takes place in the Silver Sierras Mountains on the border between the nations of Glantri and Darokin, not far from the northernmost tip of Lake Amsorak.

It is the Spring of the year AC 1,004, and the player characters are at home or at whatever place is their usual hangout, when they are approached by a man named Jeddarin Corran.

Jeddarin Corran

History: Born 40 years ago to a Lake Amsorak fisherman, Corran became a good businessman and gradually acquired a fleet of cargo ships and fishing boats; they conduct trade across Lake Amsorak and in the open seas south of Darokin.

Personality: Shrewd; good judge of character. Has no tolerance for laziness or incompetence. Gets the most use out of every gold piece he spends, but isn't stingy—just careful. Family man; doesn't care for violence.

Appearance: Average height; black hair, mustache, and beard going to grey; blue eyes, intelligent; lean build. In spite of good income, dresses in average workers' clothing.

Combat Notes: 1st level Fighter; AC 9; hp 8; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 sword; Dmg 1d8 + 1; Save F1; ML7; AL L. S13 I15 W13 D9 Co10 Ch10. Languages: Darokin (common), Thyatian. General Skills: Labor/Fisherman (I), Profession/Manager (I), Detect Deception (W), Piloting/Small Boats (D), Bargaining (Ch).

Magical Items In Possession: None.

If the PCs are currently in Darokin and have had at least one publicized adventure, Jeddarin has made this short trip to hire them based on what he's heard about them.

If the PCs are farther away or are not yet known as adventurers, the DM needs to establish how Jeddarin would know of them—perhaps Jeddarin's wife is the sister or cousin of one of the PCs. In this case, she would have met Jeddarin when he was on a business trip and moved to Darokin with him after they married.

If at all possible, it's a good idea to bring up his name in an adventure prior to this one; this will make his sudden appearance in the story line seem more natural.

However he gets introduced, Jeddarin will treat the player characters to a round of drinks and dinner. As the meal gets under way, he explains his situation:

"My cousin Teodor, a horse-trader, died recently. Good man. Had no children, so I inherited all his material possessions. One of them was a box with a lot of parchments in it, apparently something that had been passed along in his side of the family for generations. Had charts showing our family trees, histories, old letters, that sort of thing.

"One of the papers was a deed. Turns out that a couple of centuries back one of our ancestors earned himself a little dominion in the mountains up north. Built himself a castle, called it Corran Keep.

"Well, he and his family died in some sort of bandit raid. Since he had no descendants still living, his title was revoked. But apparently some clerk forgot to reclaim the castle. When I presented the deed to the government offices, they were as surprised as I was to find out that I owned a castle none of us had ever heard of! Not a bad inheritance from poor Teodor, I say.

"Anyway, I sent Noriad, one of my boys, up to Corran Keep to see what sort of shape it was in. It was up in the mountains, far from the roads.

"He got close enough to watch the place, but didn't go in, because he saw activity. The Keep was still standing and in pretty good shape... and there were men moving around in the castle.

"And what was strange was that these men, and a lot of birds which lived in the area, *glowed in the dark*. My boy was attacked by one of the birds, said that it gave off sparks. He got out of the area the next day.

"Now, I have clear title to the castle. No one else should be there.

"So what I need is a band of trusty souls to go in there and clear the place out. You wouldn't have to kill everything you see; I mean, if you can *persuade* the men to leave, you get the same amount of money for less work. But if they don't want to leave... well, I'm paying for results. That could mean fighting.

"I'm offering you fifty pieces of gold each, one-third now, two-thirds on delivery. Delivery means my men can move in and start repairs.

"I'll throw in a couple of bonuses with that. The Corran who built that place was far from rich, but he might have had a little gold tucked around here and there. If you find it, you can keep it. Same goes for goblets, jewels, that sort of thing, but show 'em to me when you come out in case I want to buy 'em from you. Family heirlooms, and all that. Papers, furniture, draperies, paintings, those *aren't* fair game; they're mine.

"Also, while you're in my employ, you get all the fish you can eat, free of charge.

"What do you say? Is it a deal?"

If the PCs want to haggle, Jeddarin will bargain with them. He'll go as high as 100 gp per player character and will pay up to 50% in advance, with the remaining 50% "on delivery." He'll also throw in free two-way passage from here to the area of the castle anywhere his boats go—which means anywhere along the

coast north of the Sea of Dread and anywhere on Lake Amsorak. The passage won't be luxurious, but it'll be decent, fast, and free.

Assuming the PCs accept the offer, he'll settle down to make the travel arrangements.

Getting to Corran Keep

Using the New Boxed D&D® Game

DMs using the new D&D® boxed game, which provides rules for characters of 1st through 5th level of experience, should tell the characters that Jeddarin will make all their travel plans. Either simply tell them that the trip to Darokin was uneventful, or throw in one or two details (bad weather, a chance meeting with an old friend) to make the journey more interesting.

To calculate the amount of time it took the PCs to get from their starting point to the city of Darokin, use the folded map included in this boxed set. Assume that in an average day the characters will cross one 24-mile hex when travelling overland and *three* 24-mile hexes when travelling by boat.

Be sure to mark off the amount of time the trip took on the **Wrath of the Immortals Timeline Record Sheet** (see page 5) for the current year, since keeping accurate track of the amount of time the characters spend on each stage of this adventure is important.

Using the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia

DMs running this game with the D&D® Rules Cyclopedia or one of the older boxed sets of the D&D® game should treat the PCs' trip to Darokin like any other travel adventure. Each DM should choose whether to introduce wandering-monster encounters and allow the PCs to have sideline adventures as they travel toward Darokin or to simply gloss over the details of the trip to get them there more quickly.

In either case, the DM should still keep scrupulous track of the time spent on the journey in order to make full use of the **Timeline** given on pages 72-92.

From Darokin City

When the characters reach the city of Darokin, read them the following text:

From Darokin, the capital of the republic, you make a five-day overland trip through grasslands and hills to the city of Akorros, a major trade town on the shore of Lake Amsorak.

At Akorros, you board a trading-boat belonging to Jeddarin. It's large enough to have a couple of cabins and you're the only passengers, so you're comfortable enough during the two days it takes to get to the northern tip of Lake Amsorak. During those two days, you see the snow-capped mountains to the north getting bigger and bigger as they grow closer and closer.

In the evening of the second sailing day, you're rowed to shore at a Darokin fortress community, Fort Lakeside. Jeddarin goes with you into Fort Lakeside and to one of the community's inns, where his son is staying. At the inn, he introduces you to a strapping young man by the name of Noriad. It was Noriad, Jeddarin's eldest son, who visited Corran Keep earlier and will be your guide to and from the site. Jeddarin says, "He'll get you there and back, but I've ordered him not to go within a half-mile of the place until you've made it safe. My boy's a merchant, not a fighter."

Jeddarin rows back to his ship that evening, and after a good night's sleep at the same inn, you set out for Corran Keep.

Your trip takes you due north along a game trail into the Silver Sierras. The mountains are steep and rugged, and the going is slow. At the end of the first day, you've travelled only a dozen miles. You're hundreds of feet above sea level now, and the air is getting thin and cold.

The next morning, you turn off the game-trail, and the going is even worse. Young Noriad says that there was once a trail here, and shows you occasional crumbled trail markers to prove it, but decades of rockslides and weathering have all but obliterated it. You camp that night in a rock cleft which protects you from the cold mountain winds. Noriad says it's not much further.

He's right. The next morning, you walk for another hour... and come within sight of the walls of Corran Keep.

The Keep consists of a large donjon (a circular defensive building made of stone) built flush up against the upper slope of a mountain and surrounded by a single curtain wall.

Amazingly, the Keep seems to be in very good shape. The walls are standing, and there are signs that they have been recently repaired. The wooden gate is new, and closed.

Mark off ten more days on the calendar on the **Wrath of the Immortals Timeline Record Sheet**.

The PCs can ask Noriad whatever they like, but he doesn't know much more about the Keep than what has already been detailed. He can describe the bird which attacked him in more detail than his father did; see the description of the sprackles on page 96 for those details.

Noriad Corran

Personality: Cheerful, more interested in seeing the world than managing a trade company.

Appearance: A tall, lean teenager with black hair and brown eyes; bony.

Combat Notes: Normal Man; AC 9; hp 5; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 dagger; Dmg 1d4; Save F1-1; ML6; AL N. S12 I12 W10 D11 Co9 Ch13. Languages: Darokin (common).

Jeddarin has ordered Noriad not to go into the Keep, and, though he might like a little adventure, Noriad will obey his father.



The Keep

The map on page 15 shows Corran Keep—all the areas which are visible from outside, plus the interior of the donjon.

The walls are steep and the gate closed, but there is no one defending the walls. Any character who is a thief or mystic can climb the walls with a successful ability check. *Levitate* and *fly* spells can get a character safely to the top of the walls. In campaigns using the optional General Skills rule given in the *D&D® Rules Cyclopedia*, a character with Mountaineering Skill can climb the walls with a successful roll. Once one character is atop the walls, it's easy for him or her to climb down and open the gate or to lower a rope for the others to climb.

Exploring the Courtyard and Donjon

Once the sprackles have been defeated or chased away, the characters can begin their exploration of the Keep. The following details are keyed to the map on page 15:

1. Walls

The walls are 30' tall and quite thick; their foundations appear to be much older than the centuries-old upper regions, which indicates that this site was probably a walled fort in the distant past. The walls appear to have been repaired recently; fresh-cut stones have been placed in some areas, and toppled courses have been rebuilt.

Wooden ladders and stone staircases inside the walls provide access from the courtyard up to the gate. The ladders are all new; the staircases have recently been repaired.

2. Gate

The gate is made of wood and is new, constructed within the last year. It consists of a single gate of heavy, reinforced wood; there is no gatehouse over it or portcullis behind it. The gate is held closed by a simple, heavy bar (made from a single massive piece of oak) on the inside. When the PCs arrive, the bar is in place. Two characters with Strength ability scores of 13 or better can lift the bar free if they wish.

3. Courtyard

The area between the outer wall and the tower itself is cobblestoned courtyard open to the sky. The courtyard looks clean and well-maintained—the stones are all in place, and a few early flowers bloom along the tower's base.

Directly ahead of you is the tower itself. It looks to be about four or five stories high with a flat roof. You can see one large doorway, as well as several windows in the upper stories. On your left is a pile of rocks left by a small landslide. Behind the tower, the mountainside rises as a sheer cliff hundreds of feet high.

There are four ways for the player characters to get inside the donjon building: by the front door (#6), through one of the windows on the fourth floor (#15), through one of the windows on the top floor (#17), or through the trapdoor in the roof

(#18). Climbing the outside of the tower, or trying to climb the cliff to get to the roof, requires a successful Climb Sheer Surfaces ability check by the thief or mystic attempting it.

As soon as you enter the courtyard, you see a small flock of reddish-brown birds come swooping down off the mountain-slope in your direction.

These sprackles are disturbed by the PCs' intrusion into their territory. In addition to the normal beak attack, they deliver an additional 1-3 points of electrical damage to anyone they touch or who touches them (a full description of these creatures appears in Appendix B: Monsters on page 96). Player characters who are substantially above the 1st to 5th experience level range recommended for this adventure should encounter **Greater Sprackles** instead.

There will be one sprackle per PC. The sprackles will keep fighting until at least half of them are killed or injured, at which point they will flee.

Sprackles (Lesser): NA 1 per PC; AC 9; HD 1½; #AT 1 beak or special; Dmg 1d3 or special; MV 180' (60'); Save F1; ML 8; TT Nil; Int 1; AL C; SA 1d3 lightning blast from beak; XPV 6.

4. Boulder Nest

Here a small rockslide has come tumbling down the mountain and poured a pile of rocks against the mountain slope. Unknown to the player characters, three snakes have made a nest for themselves among the rocks. If the player characters go digging through the pile, they'll disturb the snakes, which will attack to defend their home. The brownish-striped serpents are not poisonous and have the following statistics:

Snakes: NA 3; AC 5; HD 2; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1d6; MV 120' (40'); Save F1; ML 7; TT Nil; Int 2; AL N; XPV 20.

5. Mountain Slope

This is an almost vertical slab of stone stretching hundreds of feet straight up to the summit of this low mountain. Though adventuring-parties including thieves could, with difficulty, climb up to the mountain summit, there are no large rocks there which could be dropped upon the Keep, so the fortress is quite secure.

6. Donjon Door

The only doorway you can find into the donjon is blocked by a single door. The wood in this sturdy door looks new, but the strips of discolored bronze that band it look centuries old; the bronze hinges also look ancient but newly-greased.

The door is bolted from the inside. Any effort to open or damage it will alert the sleeping Lightning Zombies on the other side; see #7 below for details.

To break the door down, characters must make their Open Doors roll at a -2 penalty. If the roll is successful, they break the door off its hinges.



Characters who prefer to use weapons rather than their shoulders must use a blunt weapon such as a club or mace. These will do one-half normal damage against the door; sharp weapons like arrows or swords will not damage it at all because of the metal bands. The door will shatter after receiving 40 hit points in damage.

7. Donjon First Floor (Ground Level)

The ground floor of the building is a couple of feet higher than the courtyard, presumably so that water will not seep in. It looks like this was once a common area used to stable animals or shelter refugees in times of trouble.

Today, the stone floor of the donjon is covered with dirt and wooden wreckage fills the room. There are no windows, leaving the room dark except for what light comes in through the now-opened door. You can dimly see a door in the back of the room and an enclosed stone staircase along the right wall winding its way up to the next level.

The room's desolate appearance does not mean it is unoccupied. A half-dozen lesser Lightning Zombies sleep here on piles of makeshift bedding among the wooden wreckage. If player characters pound on the door to knock it down, the Lightning Zombies will awaken, exchange a few whispered words, and then hide underneath and behind all the junk in the room until the characters have entered the chamber. When most of the PCs are in the chamber, the Lightning Zombies will spring from their resting-places and attack.

Ambushed! As you are picking your way through the room, half a dozen men and women jump from behind the rubbish and attack you, shouting "Stop them! Stop the invaders from reaching Lord Kazakk!" They wield a variety of weapons—swords, pitchforks, and kitchen knives, but all are dressed in tattered clothing and all glow with the same eerie light.

The Lightning Zombies will shout orders and warnings to each other as they fight, and may even trade a few words with the player characters as they exchange blows, praising them for clever strokes and saying what a pity it is that they have to kill them. They can't be convinced not to fight, happily confessing that their master, Lord Kazakk, has ordered them to stop anyone who tries to enter the Keep. They won't say who, where, or what Lord Kazakk is.

The defenders will fight the PCs until half or more of their number fall, at which point the rest will flee up the stairs, yelling "retreat!" and "run away!" One will try to hold the stairs to give the others a chance to escape through the secret door on the third floor (area #12 on the map). The brave soul who stayed behind will surrender after two full rounds of combat, since by that time he will have delayed the PCs long enough for his fellows to get through the secret door unseen. If the PCs manage to kill or incapacitate him in only one round, they will be able to get up to the third floor in time to see the secret door swinging shut.

If the PCs do end up with a Lightning Zombie prisoner on their hands, their captive will be helpfully unhelpful. He says his name is Zarrek, a woodworker in service to Lord Kazakk. He will say he cannot answer any questions about the Keep, since Lord Kazakk said not to. If asked where his cohorts fled to, he will cheerfully lie that they have probably retreated to the roof to get as far away from the PCs as possible. If the PCs reach the roof and discover there's nobody there, Zarrek will act as surprised as anybody.

Lightning Zombies (Lesser): NA 6; AC 8; HD 2; #AT 1 fist, weapon, or special; Dmg 1d3, by weapon, or special; MV 90' (30'); Save F2; ML 7; TT A; Int 11; AL N; SA *lightning touch*: 1d6 electrical jolt each round after victim grabbed (Open Doors roll to break grip); XPV 25.

Full descriptions and details of the Lightning Zombies are found on page 94. Parties of higher than 1st-5th level should encounter 1-8 Greater Lightning Zombies instead.

8. Ground Level Storeroom

This dusty chamber is full of strongboxes and wooden chests. You see no doors other than the one you entered by.

Characters who imagine that they've just walked into the Keep's treasure chamber will be sadly disappointed; the chests and boxes contain only rotted clothing.

9. Staircases

The donjon's staircases are built against the curved walls of the donjon. Each is enclosed, with stone walls on either side and a roof. At the top of each staircase is a landing and a closed door; characters must open the door to enter the next level.

The letters on the map indicate where each of the five staircases begins and ends. Staircase a-b goes from the 1st floor (ground level) to the 2nd floor; b-c goes from the 2nd floor to the 3rd, and so forth. Staircase e-f leads from the 5th floor to a trapdoor in the roof.

10. Donjon Second Floor

The single room that makes up this floor looks like it might once have been used as an audience chamber for the lord of the Keep. The frayed tatters of once-glorious tapestries still hang from the walls, and a ruined heap of carved ebony, ivory, and gold leaf at the far end of the room is all that remains of an old baronial throne. A large fireplace near the stairs has obviously not been used in centuries; it is choked with cinders, ash, birds' nests, and other rubbish. Elsewhere in the room, ruined desks, benches, spinning wheels, and other furniture lie strewn about. There is no sign of any movement.

If the player characters look for tracks, they can see from the trail through the dust that the Lightning Zombies do not use this room much except to get to the stairs to the next level. Unfortunately, this means they have not rooted out or killed the

strange creatures which infest the level, the Ploppéds (pronounced PLOP-eds).

Ploppéds are big, hairy black spiders with too many legs. They are territorial but not particularly aggressive, which means they will not attack if the PCs merely pass through to the next level. If the PCs decide to search the room thoroughly, they will be attacked by a Ploppéd each time a character comes within 5' of its hiding place. These will be individual encounters, not a concerted attack, and the Ploppéd concerned will break off its attack if the character retreats.

Ploppéds: NA 4; AC 9; HD 1½; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1 point + special; MV 120' (40'); Save F1; ML 3; TT Nil; Int 1; AL N; SA leap 10' (for character's face); poison (Save vs. Poison or paralyzed for 1d6 turns); XPV 6.

For more on Ploppéds, see page 95 in Appendix B: Monsters.

In and of themselves, the Ploppéds are not dangerous to the player characters; they're more like a momentary fright (not many people like to see sixteen-legged one-pound spiders leaping for their faces!). The main danger is if too many characters become paralyzed, leaving the party weakened when they run into the Lightning Zombies again.

11. Donjon Third Floor

Unlike the two levels below, this floor of the donjon is divided in a T-shaped corridor and six small rooms, three on each side of the hallway.

This level of the tower was once the residential hall. It is divided into several bed-chambers for groups of men-at-arms. If the player characters enter any of the rooms, read them the following description:

This room looks as if it might once have been a bed-chamber. The bed itself has collapsed into a heap of broken wood and bedding; a broken table and smashed chest also litter the place. An armoire, or wardrobe, still stands intact in one corner.

Each time the characters search one of these chambers, the DM should roll 1d6. On a result of 1, the characters find a Lightning Zombie curled up asleep among the ruins of the bed. On a result of 6, the characters find treasure worth 1d6 × 10 gold pieces—either a rotting pouch of coins or gems hidden among the remains of the bed or chest or a piece of jewelry still attached to a ruined piece of clothing.

Lightning Zombies (Lesser): NA 1; AC 8; HD 2; #AT 1 fist, weapon, or special; Dmg 1d3, by weapon, or special; MV 90' (30'); Save F2; ML 7; TT A; Int 11; AL N; SA *lightning touch*: 1d6 electrical jolt each round after victim grabbed (Open Doors roll to break grip); XPV 25.

The Lightning Zombie will be unarmed.

If the characters think to check, they will find that while the floors of the rooms are dusty, the corridor itself shows signs of



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heavy traffic. Because the dust is a giveaway, any character searching for a secret door at location #12 should receive a +1 bonus.

12. Secret Door

The wall at the end of this corridor looks exactly the same as the other outer walls in this fortress: dressed stones fitted closely together, with two brass sconces to hold torches. The footsteps in the dust lead directly up to the wall and then stop.

The secret door to #19 is actually a heavy wood-and-metal door with a thinner stone facing mounted on the outside; it is triggered by pulling on both torch-sconces at the same time. If the characters think to look, they will notice that this door, like so much else in the fortress, has recently been rebuilt.

Beyond the secret door lies the cliff wall of the mountain itself; a dark opening in it seems to lead into a natural cave within.

This is the entrance to the cave complex; see the map on page 19.

13. Antechamber

This area looks like an antechamber. There is no furniture whatsoever, and the door beyond has not been repaired; it lies in splinters on the floor.

14. Baron's Chamber

This large chamber look as if it might have once been the master bedchamber. The room is filled by the remains of two large four-poster beds, several armoires, rugs, and tapestries. Two windows look out over the courtyard, with a large fireplace between them. Over the mantelpiece are the remains of a weapons rack, a jumble of rusted and broken weapons still dangling from it.

Characters who do a thorough search of this chamber will find several things of interest here:

A small, secret drawer in one of the wrecked armoires (standard Find Secret Doors roll to find) hides a mouldy leather pouch containing 100 gold pieces, three gems (garnets) worth 100 gp each, and a finely-wrought ring. The ring has a crystal stone carved with a mountain-goat in a rampant heraldic pose; on the inner surface is carved the motto "A Corran!" The ring's value is 30 gp, but since it's a treasured family heirloom Jeddarin Corran will reward the characters with 50 gp for recovering it.

In the rubbish on the mantelpiece is a dagger on which there is not one trace of rust. It is a *dagger* +2 with no extraordinary abilities.

There is a blank space on one of the walls. From the darkness of the surrounding wall, it looks as if a circular picture or some

similar object once hung here and has been recently pried away. No trace of the missing object can be found in the chamber.

If the characters bypassed the third floor and did not discover the secret door to #12, the inhabitants of the Keep choose this opportunity to launch a second ambush on them. A group of Lightning Zombies, one for every member of the PC party, will creep up the stairs from the third floor and attack them from behind.

Lightning Zombies (Lesser): NA 1 per PC; AC 8; HD 2; #AT 1 fist, weapon, or special; Dmg 1d3, by weapon, or special; MV 90' (30'); Save F2; ML 7; TT A; Int 11; AL N; SA *lightning touch*: 1d6 electrical jolt each round after victim grabbed (Open Doors roll to break grip); XPV 25.

Once again, these Lightning Zombies carry assorted weapons they have scavenged from the ruins: a mix of normal swords (1d8 damage), meat choppers (1d6), and bows (1d6 damage). If they are clearly getting the worst of the battle, they will turn and run. However, this time no one will volunteer to stay behind as a rear-guard to delay pursuit, so if the PCs act quickly they will be able to see their retreating foes entering the secret door at #12.

As before, Greater Lightning Zombies can be substituted if the PCs need a greater challenge.

15. Windows

On either side of the fireplace in the old master bedroom are windows large enough for a thin human (or any halfling or elf) to enter. The remains of shutters still hang from hinges, and iron bars are still firm in the stones of the wall; it takes a normal Open Doors roll to pull enough bars free to allow someone to pass through the window. Evidently, these two windows were to be used for sniping down on any enemies who might have reached the courtyard.

16. Kitchen and Food Stores

This large chamber was clearly the donjon's kitchen and main food storage area. It is currently littered with the remains of hardwood kitchen tables, rusted knives and other implements, and large bins which once held many types of food. There are not one but two large fireplaces here, at either end of the room; both look equally disused. The ceiling here is made of heavy wooden planks; holes in it have allowed birds to enter and nest here; several squawk in annoyance at you as you enter.

These birds are not sprackles and, while a nuisance, are not dangerous. Any character entering the chamber will become an object of interest to them; several birds will settle on the character and begin pecking his or her hair for nesting material. After three rounds of this, they will flee through the holes in the ceiling.

Ordinary Birds: NA 6; AC 9; HD 1 point; #AT 1; Dmg Nil; MV 120' (40') flying; Save F1-1; ML 3; TT Nil; Int 1; AL N; XPV Nil.

17. Windows

The windows of the kitchen level are identical to the windows at #15.

18. Roof (Not Shown On Map)

The donjon's roof provides a breathtaking view not just of the courtyard below but of the whole valley and the mountains to the south as well. Chimneys stand to the north and south, while the rotted remains of what was once a water-tank lies in the center. The heavy wooden beams that make up the roof sag dangerously; you can see several holes where it has begun to give way. An intact trapdoor leads to the level below.

There is no sign of any activity anywhere on the roof.

The Lightning Zombies never come up here, largely because the roof is rotted and dangerous to walk upon. Every turn a character walks on this roof, the DM should roll 1d6. On a result of 1 or 2, the character will fall through the ceiling and crash into the kitchen, taking 1d6 damage; if the character is smaller than a normal human (a halfling, an elf, or a child) or a mystic, he or she will only fall through on a roll of 1.

The Caves

19. Cave Access

The chamber behind the secret door leads to a small natural cave in the mountain's side. The cave is dark, but full of sooty air that smells as though torches burned here until mere moments ago.

If characters light their own torches or lamps, they'll see where the cave narrows at the north end to form a tunnel leading further into the mountain.

However, it takes more than torchlight to see the trap set up by the occupants of these caves. At the tunnel out of this cave are wooden stairs leading down into the next chamber. The stairs are of recent construction, like much of the woodwork elsewhere in the Keep and environs.

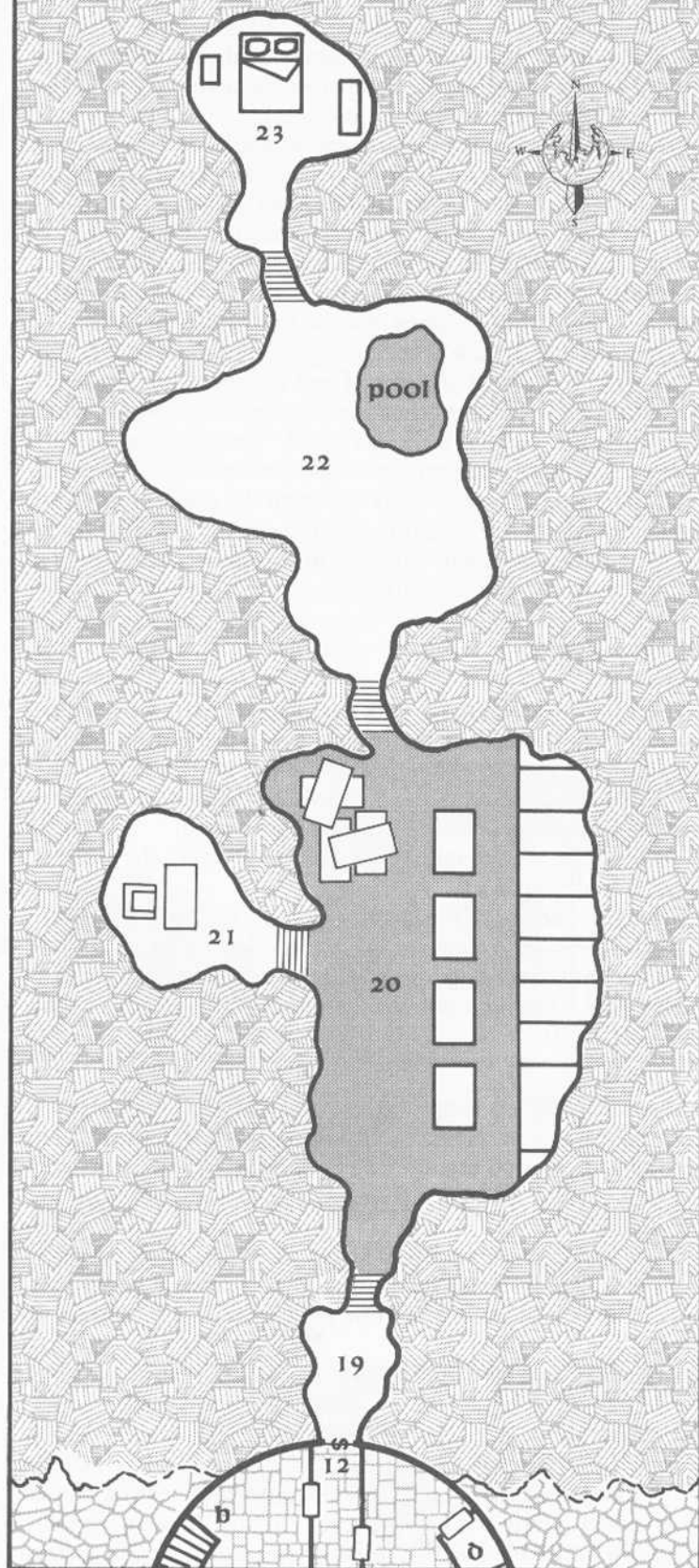
The next-to-the-bottom stair is a pressure-plate; when any weight of more than 1,000 cn (100 lbs) is placed upon it, the trap will be set off. Naturally, the Lightning Zombies know the trap is here and will not set it off however disorganized their retreat.

When the trap is triggered, the bolt holding the top of the stairs to the stone gives way but the hinge holding the bottom of the stairs to the stone doesn't. Characters standing on the stairwell will fall into a water-filled pit unless they can make a Saving Throw vs. Death Ray to leap clear. Then a bronze grate slides across the top of the pit, sealing characters within.

The really nasty thing about the trap is that since the grate is just under water level, anyone trapped in the pit will drown unless the grate can be removed, and quickly.

CORRAN KEEP: CAVE COMPLEX

Scale: half-inch equals 10'





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Character can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their Constitution score if they remain calm. Characters who try to attack the grate or thrash about can only hold their breath for *half* as many rounds as their Constitution score (rounded up).

Once that time is up, characters must start making Constitution ability checks by rolling a number equal to or higher than their Constitution on 1d20. Each subsequent round, add a cumulative +1 penalty to the die roll.

Once a character fails a roll, he or she begins drowning. The character falls unconscious and can no longer act. He or she will die unless he or she receives aid within a number of rounds equal to $\frac{1}{3}$ his or her Constitution score. This aid can be in the form of any sort of healing spell from a cleric or resuscitation from a character with the Healing General Skill. Revived characters will recover consciousness at once but not be able to move or fight for three turns.

A normal Find Traps roll or *find traps* spell will allow a character to avoid setting off the trap. Once it has been triggered, a successful Remove Traps attempt will trigger the switch which slides the grate back into the pit's wall. The grate can be torn loose on a successful Open Doors roll (-2 modifier); a *knock* spell will reverse the trap's gears and open the grate. Note that a magic-user who is not caught in the trap can cast a *water breathing* spell on one who is to win time and help the victim survive until the trap can be opened.

20. The Crypt

The floor of this large, dark chamber is covered by water several inches deep. The entire right wall is made up of burial vaults stacked one atop another all the way up to the 12' ceiling. The vaults are made of crumbling brick and mortar; most are open and clearly have never been used.

Four stone sarcophagi lie along the wall before the vaults, their lids all in place.

Near the far end of the chamber, on the left, are what look like the jumbled remains of rotting wooden coffins.

Wooden stairs rise up toward exits in the left and back walls of the cave. Dim light can be seen trickling in from the opening on the left.

The exit to the left leads to the library, #21; that in the rear to #22, the pool room. Neither of these stairways is trapped; both are new and in good repair. Water trickles down the rear stairway. The room is dark aside from what little light makes its way in from #21.

The floor of this chamber is about six inches deep in water; characters walking through it will make splashing noises as they go (a successful Move Silently roll will negate this for a thief or monk).

Characters investigating the vaults will find that only one of them shows signs of ever having been used, and it is now empty. Not enough remains of the coffins to tell if they were occupied or not, but they are all empty now. As for the sarcophagi, all are empty except one. The exception is the only one with a nameplate carved (crudely carved to read "Barron Aleyxandre Corraigne, In Vayne He Died"); inside is an empty wooden coffin.

If any character passes the entrance to the cave at #21, a voice from inside that chamber will call out, "Who's there? Is somebody out there?" The voice is high-pitched, perhaps that of a young woman or a child (this is the voice of Crackle; see the description of chamber #21 below).

21. The Library

This room must once have been some sort of hall of records. Several feet higher (and therefore drier) than the crypt outside, it has shelves cut into the stone of the walls. Each shelf holds the remains of baskets, each basket containing tatters of parchments.

A new desk has been built for this chamber, and behind it, reading by candle-light, is a boy. He looks to be about nine years old, and, like all the other people you have encountered in the Keep, his skin is grey and his clothes in tatters. But unlike them, he seems inquisitive and friendly. As the first character enters, he looks up and says: "Hello. I'm Crackle. You must be the ones everyone's been so worried about."

Assuming the player characters don't attack and kill him immediately—which would be quite a waste of a valuable resource—this young Lightning Zombie will gladly tell the characters everything he knows. Below are answers to some of the questions player characters might ask. If the players want the answer to some other question, the DM should make up a reasonable reply (including "I don't know").

Who and what are you?

He says his name is Crackle. All the Lightning Zombies have chosen names for themselves. He thinks that, in life, the body he wears must have belonged to young Edgar Corran, son of Baron Alexander Corran. But he doesn't know for sure; none of the Lightning Zombies remembers anything of the history his or her body lived through.

He says he's not strong enough to fight, so he's been learning what he could from the ancient archives of the Corran family stored in this chamber.

How many Lightning Zombies are there?

Fourteen: six on guard out in the Keep, six more who sleep in the Pool Chamber, Lord Kazakk, and young Crackle.

What has he learned about the Corrans?

Around the year 821 AC, Baron Alexander Corran brought his wife Lillian, their son Edgar, and a dozen guards and servants to this bleak area of the mountains to establish his new dominion. All he had to do was wipe out the most dangerous monsters in the area and his baronial status would be confirmed; his family would send more guards and settlers.

Unfortunately, he failed completely. Local monsters proved more familiar with the terrain and slowly wore down his fighters. Lillian Corran was carried off by some evil thing from the north; the records suggest that it might have been a vampire. One-by-one the guards were killed in minor skirmishes, until

finally there were not enough left to protect the Keep from a final full-scale onslaught. The remaining guards, the servants, and young Edgar all died before Baron Corran was able to repel the attackers, receiving a mortal wound in the process. The sole surviving guard buried the bodies here in the Keep's crypt before leaving to return to the safer lands to the south.

Where did the Lightning Zombies come from?

Crackle doesn't know. All he knows is that he woke up one day in one of the wall vaults, and all the bodies in the ruined coffins were waking up too. The body in the sarcophagus also emerged. It was much stronger than the rest of them, and for some reason when it commanded the others they found they felt compelled to obey.

They all chose names; the leader called himself Kazakk and gave himself the title Lord to indicate that he ruled over them. Under his orders, the Lightning Zombies have been rebuilding the Keep to be their permanent home.

Crackle thinks that maybe the talking shield had something to do with the Lightning Zombies.

"The Talking Shield?"

Yes, in one of the rooms of the donjon they found a mirror-like round shield. Lord Kazakk had them carry it to his treasury. Sometimes a face appears in the mirror and tries to talk to them, but Lord Kazakk refuses to speak with it or let anyone else do so, either. Crackle has noticed that the shield glows just like the Lightning Zombies; sometimes its energy spreads out through the whole Keep area.

"Treasury?"

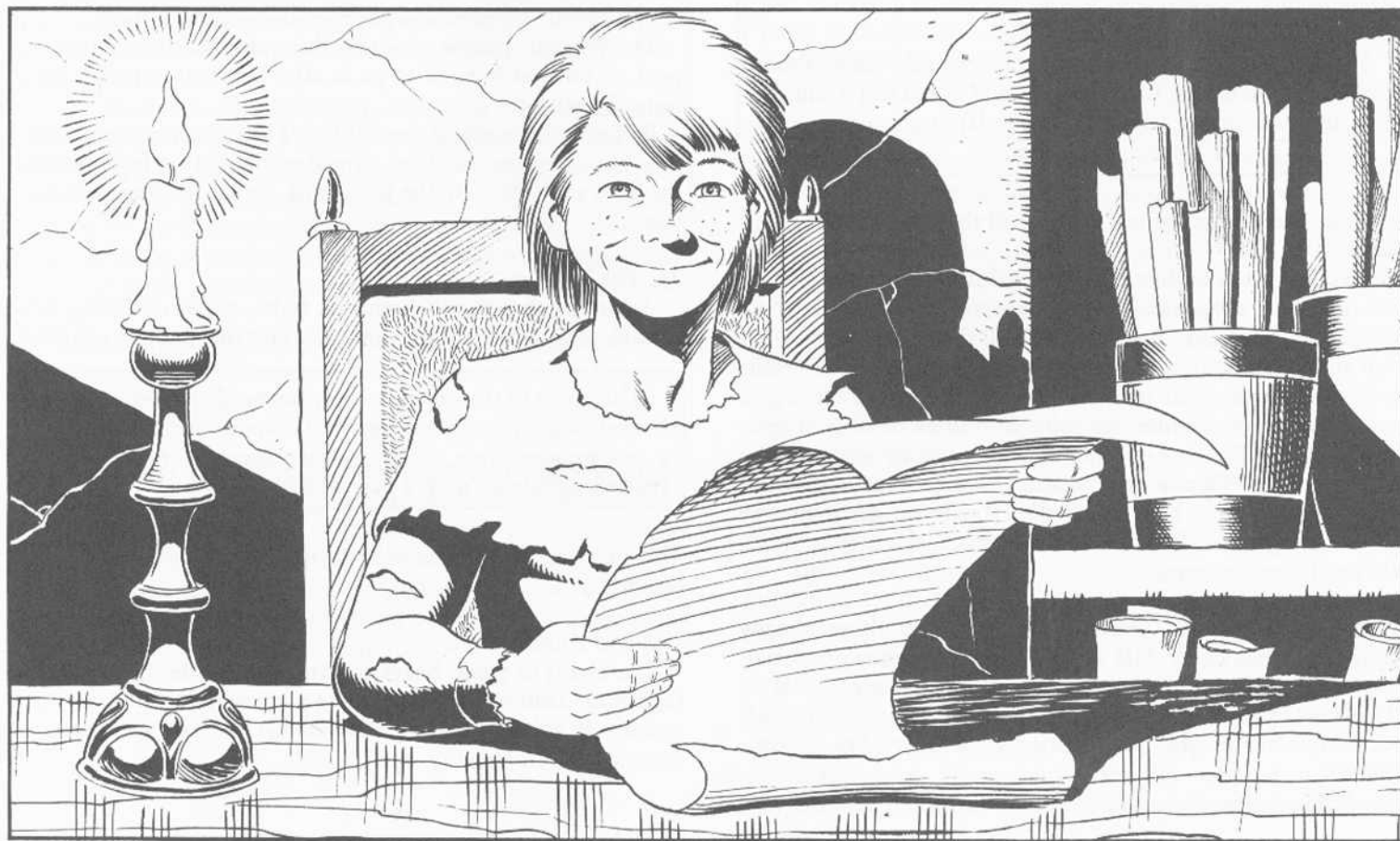
The last chamber of this cave system, beyond the chamber with the pool, has a chest filled with money. Baron Corran's journal says that Corran Keep was built on the ruins of an older fort, the home of some famous dragon-killer. Crackle was the one who discovered the journal entry that said the old treasure was sunk at the bottom of the pool. Lord Kazakk had his Lightning Zombies retrieve it and store it in the Treasury chamber, and now won't let anyone else see it. Crackle is miffed at this, because if it hadn't been for him no one would have even known about the treasure.

Why is Crackle being so helpful?

Crackle doesn't like Lord Kazakk. He wants to leave, but Kazakk won't let him. Crackle would like the player characters to destroy or drive away Kazakk and perhaps help Crackle get back to civilization, where he can "grow up." Crackle obviously doesn't understand that he's undead, but since he's not evil it's up to the PCs to decide whether or not to help him.

On the other hand, if the PCs *do* attack Crackle, he won't defend himself other than by cowering and crying out for them not to hurt him.

Crackle: NA 1; AC 9; HD 1; #AT 1 fist or special; Dmg 1d2 or special; MV 90' (30'); Save F1; ML 4; TT Nil; Int 13; AL N; SA *lightning touch*: 1d3 electrical jolt each round after victim grabbed (Open Doors roll with +2 bonus to break grip); XPV 13.





22. The Pool

Another set of stairs, with water dripping down them, leads up into this chamber. Water welling up from cracks deep in the earth makes a freshwater pool here. Someone once encircled the pool with a stone wall, turning it into a natural cistern, but the base of the wall collapsed long ago and water now trickles out freely.

When characters start to climb the stairs up to the pool chamber, the surviving Lightning Zombies—minus Crackle and Lord Kazakk—bar their way at the top of the stairs. The number of remaining Lightning Zombies is determined by the player characters' earlier success against them; the PCs are faced by twelve Lightning Zombies minus the number they killed or captured earlier in the adventure. Wounds they inflicted on surviving foes have not been healed.

A speaker for the Lightning Zombies addresses the PCs; as she does, a harsh voice from much further back in that room constantly amends and corrects what she is saying:

Speaker: "Mortals, we order you..."
 Voice In Back: "Mortal fools!"
 Speaker: "Mortal fools, we order you to depart this place. This is the keep of Lord Kazakk..."
 Voice: "The great, glorious, and indestructible Lord Kazakk!"
 Speaker (pauses and sighs before continuing): "This is the keep of the great, glorious, and *indestructible* Lord Kazakk, slayer of men, ruler of continents..."
 Voice: "Do not overdo it."
 Speaker: "...who requires that you drop all your weapons and money before us, turn and flee, and either leap from the mountainside or run screaming to the lands of men."
 Voice: "That is correct. Well done."

The second voice, the one making all the corrections, is Lord Kazakk.

The Lightning Zombies do not particularly want to fight but have no choice; they must obey the orders of Lord Kazakk. If the PCs wish to negotiate, Lord Kazakk will shout his conversation from an unseen point at the rear of the chamber (from the stairs up to the treasury, that is) but will not come closer. He'll give ground on his negotiations far enough to allow the PCs to leave the Keep with all their equipment and possessions intact, but he will not let the PCs enter the treasury. If they want to do that, they'll have to do so by force. If the PCs ascend the steps, the remaining Lightning Zombies (aside from Crackle and Lord Kazakk) will have to attack.

Lightning Zombies (Lesser): NA 12 minus those already killed/captured; AC 8; HD 2; #AT 1 fist, weapon, or special; Dmg 1d3, by weapon, or special; MV 90' (30'); Save F2; ML 7; TT A; Int 11; AL N; SA *lightning touch*: 1d6 electrical jolt each round after victim grabbed (Open Doors roll to break grip); XPV 25.

As before, these Lightning Zombies have a variety of equip-

ment. The spokeswoman has a mace (1d6 damage); others carry anything from a hammer and chisel (1d6) to a rolling pin (1d4 damage). Note that PCs standing in water will automatically receive the Lightning Zombies' *lightning touch* attack each round they and a Lightning Zombie are standing in the same water.

This time, the Lightning Zombies cannot retreat. They will fight until it is clear they are losing, at which point they will either flee down the stairs past the PCs out of the Keep if possible, or else surrender and hope for the best.

Once the PCs defeat or break through the line of Lightning Zombies defenders, Lord Kazakk will finally enter the fray. He looks like a tall, handsome, brown-haired, grey-skinned human with noble features and an arrogant, annoyed expression.

Lord Kazakk (Greater Lightning Zombie): NA 1; AC 6; HD 4; #AT 2 fist, weapon, or special; Dmg 1d6, by weapon, or special; MV 120' (40'); Save F4; ML 7; TT Special; Int 11; AL C; SA *lightning touch*: 2d6 electrical jolt each round after victim grabbed (Open Doors roll to break grip); XPV 125.

Kazakk carries a magical *normal sword* +1.

Kazakk will fight the heroes for four combat rounds. If he has not inflicted more damage than he has received by the end of that time, he will try to flee. If the way is open for him to run out through the caves, he will; otherwise, he will leap into the pool and swim down to the bottom, waiting there for a full day (the amount of time he figures it will take the humans to sack the place and leave). Since he doesn't need to breathe, he figures this is a safe place to hide. At the end of that time, he will sneak out of the Keep, leaving it forever as a place too dangerous for him!

The PCs can choose to ignore him after he jumps into the pool, to outwait him, or to go in after him using spells such as *water breathing*.

If after four rounds of combat Kazakk has hurt the party more than the party has hurt him, he will conclude that he is winning the fight and stay on to the bitter end, convinced that he cannot lose.

23. The Treasury

Assuming that the PCs win the fight, either defeating Lord Kazakk or driving him off, they can enter the Treasury chamber.

This room of the cave has been arranged as a bedchamber. In it are a new, sturdy wooden bed draped with animal skins, a new wooden chest, a new wooden chest of drawers, and a framed picture set atop a new wooden table.

The PCs can investigate all the items in this room at their leisure.

Bed and Animal Skins

The bed is of good, heavy construction; evidently one of the Lightning Zombies retained some carpentry skills. It is worth perhaps 10 gold pieces if the PCs care to carry it on their backs all the way to Darokin City.



Wooden Chest

This box contains 500 pieces of silver—ancient coins bearing unreadable symbols on one side and a sphinx on the other. The PCs can spend these in Darokin as standard silver pieces. But if they take the time to look for a collector of rarities, they'll discover that these coins seem to belong to the long-lost and nearly forgotten Nithian culture and are actually worth *ten times* their face value (i.e., 500 gp not 50 gp).

Chest of Drawers

Inside the drawers are the remains of fine clothing, once carefully and lovingly folded for storage but now faded and brittle.

Atop the chest is a mirror-frame made of two vertical wooden bars. The mirror itself is a silvery disk 2' in diameter; it can easily be lifted out of its makeshift frame. Curiously enough, on the back of the mirror are straps that allow the thing to be used as a shield!

If the PCs know from Crackle that there is someone *inside* the shield, they may choose to speak to the shield ("mirror, mirror, on the wall..."). If so, the spirit inside the shield will come to the surface and answer; see "The Mirror-Shield of Rheddrian" below. The same will occur if the PCs start to leave the chamber without taking it along.

Framed Picture

The picture is an oil painting of a dark-haired, noble young man, a fair-haired, delicate-looking young woman, and a dark-haired male child.

The man is the spitting image of Lord Kazakk, except that his expression is gallant and his skin is not gray. He wears a velvet doublet of a style which was popular two centuries years ago.

The woman is very beautiful, with long blonde hair and green eyes, but she has a slightly melancholy expression. She looks more like a debutante than a pioneer and wears an elegant green gown of the same period.

The boy looks exactly like Crackle, with dark hair and eyes; his expression is an idealized adult look of determination. He wears an outfit identical in style and color to the one the man wears.

A brass plaque affixed to the frame of the picture identifies this trio as Baron Alexander Corran, Baroness Lillian Corran, and young Edgar Corran.

If the player characters ask, tell them that this painting is about the same size as the object removed from the wall of room #14 of the tower. It is worth a modest 100 gold pieces, but under their agreement the PCs are not supposed to claim family heirlooms such as this. Nonetheless, Jeddarin Corran will be so pleased at its recovery that he will pay a reward equal to its worth if they bring it back safely to him.

The Mirror-Shield of Rheddrian

The characters have now accomplished their mission; they've gotten rid of the significant dangers of Corran Keep. Oh, yes, there are still some sprackles around, and some ploppeds to help make the PCs' lives interesting for as long as they remain in the vicinity of Corran Keep, but Jeddarin Corran's men-at-arms should be able to cope with these minor nuisances.

Up to this point, the adventure will appear to have been fairly straightforward. However, the characters' liberation of the Mirror-Shield of Rheddrian will complicate matters, eventually having an enormous impact on the fate of the world.

At some point, the being inside the Mirror-Shield will attempt to communicate with the PCs. This will first happen under any of these circumstances:

- When a PC addresses the being in the mirror,
- When the PCs attempt to leave the mirror behind, or
- When the PCs discuss (in the mirror's presence) how much they can get for the mirror if they sell it.

When the being in the mirror decides to address the PCs, the following will happen: the mirror-like surface will become cloudy and cease to reflect whatever is before it. Then, the face of a man—black-haired, with a short beard and mustache, intelligent eyes, creases of worry in the brow, and light green skin—will "swim" to the surface. The mirrorlike sheen of the disk's surface will return and the background of the mirror will reflect whatever is before the mirror, but the face will remain. It speaks:

Greetings. Please don't be startled; I won't hurt you. In fact, I need your help... help to get free of this prison. My name is Rheddrian... and unless I am freed, I fear that this world of yours may be destroyed.

After an introductory statement like that, the PCs will doubtless want to ask this fellow a few questions. Here are the questions they are most likely to ask, with his answers; DMs can improvise his answers to other questions. Even if they don't ask all these questions, he'll eventually provide most of these answers anyway—except for the "Why should we help you?" answer, which he will not volunteer unless asked.

What are you?

Rheddrian will attempt to explain the events described on pages 6-7 in terms the player characters will understand.

Long ago, he says, he traveled on a great ship that sailed between the worlds. Something happened to the magics that kept the ship aloft, and it fell from the skies onto this world. The ship's magics would not work properly here, so they were stranded. The ship's captain had to put down a mutiny of those who wanted to use their powers to enslave the planet's pink-skinned primitives.

After sending out a message for help, the captain put all the remaining crew to sleep so they would not grow old while awaiting rescue. Only one at a time would stay awake to keep watch over the others and to protect the ship from intruders, aided by mechanical men. These armored knights were golem-like creatures who would obey the orders of the crewmember on watch,



help defend the ship, and make what repairs they could. They agreed that each crewmember would stand a watch of two years before waking his or her replacement.

Rheddrian slept for what he assumes were many years, only to awaken to treachery. Most of his fellow crewmembers had vanished, while the rest had been murdered by the man on watch; Rheddrian himself survived because of a spell of protection that the murderer didn't know about. The traitor had sold his services as an alien wizard to one of the groups of pink-skins, people from a place they called Blackmoor. He had let these men plunder the ship, not understanding that this would remove the protective wards that prevented the ship from exploding.

Rheddrian managed to regain control of the metal men and used them to defeat the traitor and drive away the thieves, but he was unable to stop the explosion. He doesn't know what happened after that, but assumes that the explosion destroyed the ship. He knows he slept a long, long time after the explosion, and finally woke up to find himself here in Lord Kazakk's treasury. Kazakk would never talk to him and ignored everything he said. He learned the PCs' language by talking to the small creature called Crackle—he adds that it was easier to learn than he would have expected.

Crackle described the object Rheddrian is trapped in, and Rheddrian says it seems to be a larger version of the object he once used to communicate with his ship (if the player characters ask, he will explain that the ship had many areas that thought and spoke on their own). He does not know how he came to be trapped within it, but assumes this must have been a fortuitous side effect of the explosion.

If the player characters ask, Rheddrian will know nothing about the nations of the modern world (they didn't even exist when he and his crew landed!). Nor will he recognize the local landscape if they describe or show it to him; it's simply changed too much in the intervening millennia.

What's This About the World Being Destroyed?

Rheddrian says that the mirror-shield, the device which holds him, is leaking dangerous energy. He believes that it was this excess energy which created the Lightning Zombies; if the PCs tell him about the other strange creatures of Corran Keep (the sprackles and the ploppéds), he will theorize that the shield is responsible for them as well. He thinks this energy could be quite dangerous to the health of living people exposed to it, and wants out so he can cast the proper spells to stop the energy from escaping.

More importantly, Rheddrian says that he can still distantly sense that some of the devices from his ship are still in operation; he can feel them radiating energy. Somehow this energy has been altered in ways he does not yet understand—perhaps combined with other forces native to this world. He strongly suspects that the missing devices will have effects on their surrounds similar to those of the mirror-shield, but far more deadly. It's almost, he says, as if they're draining the life-force out of this world... and the process is accelerating. But he has no idea where the devices are, can't feel a direction... and he can't even begin to look for them while he's trapped in this thing.

How can we free you?

That's the tricky thing. He has an incomplete but intuitive understanding of the way this device works (he's had a very long time to think on it, after all). He thinks he can only be freed if one of the characters will willingly trade places with him. It's only for a short time, he assures them; if he cannot find someone to take the PC's place inside the shield within three days of their reaching civilization, he will trade places back with the PC and resume his imprisonment here. The PC has nothing to lose, he says.

Why should we help you?

Rheddrian has no gold or treasure to offer them; he says that he only had his jumpsuit and personal possessions with him when the energy blast trapped him in this device. He says he has a timepiece they could have which is probably like nothing the PCs have ever seen (he's right! it's a space chronometer worth 200 gp; a curious wizard might give as much as four times that for it). He also has some coins of his people; he has no idea what they would be worth here (nothing, except for curiosity value).

But, he says, they will earn his friendship, and he will owe each of them a favor, especially the PC who temporarily takes his place. If he ever achieves power or fortune, he will not forget the people to whom he owes his freedom. He says he is a man of his word, and that he wants only to eliminate the danger of his ship's devices and then return to the existence of a normal man.

Other PC Lines of Inquiry

The PCs have practically no way to prove or disprove Rheddrian's story. The most learned scholars will recognize the name of Blackmoor but know almost nothing about it except that its knowledge of science was very great and that it blew itself up in the ancient past. The idea that Rheddrian has been trapped in the mirror for some 4,000 years should surprise the PCs, while the hint that his ship's devices are capable of such mass destruction should give them pause for thought.

The PCs can use *detect magic* to discover that the mirror-shield really is a magical item, but are unlikely to discover that it is actually an artifact.

If the PCs Agree to Help

If the PCs agree to help Rheddrian, and one of their number volunteers to trade places with him, the following events will take place.

The volunteer must hold the shield facing him or her, speak Rheddrian's name, and concentrate on drawing him from the shield. There will be a crackle of energy and bright light from the shield. When it clears, the PC has vanished and Rheddrian stands in his or her place; the PC's face is now reflected in the mirror.

Rheddrian in the flesh is a man of average height who looks just as he did in the mirror. He wears a smudged and oil-encrusted garment that, to the PCs, looks like a one-piece

combination of trousers and long-sleeved shirt. He also wears black boots and a black belt. His skin is a light, pleasant green in color.

He sways a little on his feet, then smiles, checks to see if he's real, and turns to you. "Thank you, friends," he begins. "You will see that I am true to my word..." Then he looks startled and folds over, collapsing as if someone just hit him in the stomach. He's suddenly surrounded by a bright, radiant golden light.

The strange aura is so glorious that it affects the PCs' minds. All PCs within 60' must make Saving Throws vs. Spells (with no bonuses from Wisdom scores, spells, or magical equipment). Those who fail are *paralyzed* with awe for a total of three full turns; those who make their rolls are unaffected. It's important for the DM to note that Rheddrian has no idea what's happening to him; he'll say so if asked. Finally, after two combat rounds, the fit seems to pass.

After lying helplessly in agony on the ground for a minute or two, Rheddrian seems to regain control of his arms and legs and staggers to his feet. He's grown about a foot, shredded his jumpsuit and bursting his boots. He's still surrounded by that wonderful golden glow and looks confused.

"Something's happening," he says dully, and vanishes—taking the Mirror-Shield with your friend trapped in it with him!

He'll be gone for several hours; once the other PCs have recovered from their *paralysis*, let them do as they wish during this time. No amount of shouting or spell-casting will let them figure out what has happened to Rheddrian and their comrade.

What Happened to Their Friend

Take the player of the trapped character aside and explain to him or her what the character sees. A moment after Rheddrian's disappearance, the PC finds himself or herself looking down on the mountains from an altitude of what seems like miles. Rheddrian then clutches the shield to his chest with the mirror-face against his skin, so the trapped PC can't see anything except Rheddrian's dirty garment. Rheddrian won't answer his or her attempts to communicate.

The PC sees several changes of light-intensity, as though Rheddrian were moving from lighted rooms to darkened ones. Then, after several minutes, the mirror is pulled away from Rheddrian's chest and wrapped in a blanket. After that, nothing happens for many hours.

Finally, the blanket is unwrapped. Rheddrian, looking haggard and still a little confounded, has the Shield; he is in a rat-infested jail cell, and standing beside him is a weak, stooped old man. The cell is illuminated by the light that continues to pour off Rheddrian.

Rheddrian addresses the PC, saying that he isn't exactly sure what's happened, but can't talk about it now. He says, "It's time to free you, as I promised. I'm sorry for the delay; it took me a while to learn how. This poor wretch has agreed to take your place for the time being, for it will earn him his freedom





and prolong his life.”

Rheddrian will hold the shield before the old man and speak his own name, and a moment later the PC finds himself or herself standing in this stinking cell with Rheddrian.

In the unlikely event that the PC refuses to cooperate, then he or she will remain trapped in a mirror and out of the campaign until such time as he or she agrees to be freed. Whenever this occurs, Rheddrian will return with the mirror to the cell described above and perform the same ceremony.

Back With the Other PCs

Seconds after freeing the PC from the mirror, Rheddrian will *teleport* the two of them to wherever the other player characters are at the time. Note that it may startle the other PCs to be awakened out of a sound sleep by the sudden reappearance of their friend and the glowing Rheddrian in the middle of the night.

Rheddrian is a being of few words right now. He shoulders his shield and says: “I apologize for what has just happened. Some day, perhaps, when I understand it all better myself, I can tell you what it meant. For now, accept this as partial thanks... and know that I do remember the favors I owe you.” He gestures; a medium-sized wooden chest appears at his feet; and then he disappears again.

The PC is reunited with his or her friends... and the chest, when opened, proves to be full of gold—exactly 500 gp per PC. Oddly enough, the gold pieces all seem to be brand-new and are smooth, featureless disks; none of them bears the stamp of any nation or mint. Point this out to the player characters, since it is unusual.

What Just Happened, Really?

It will be some time, if ever, before the PCs discover what just happened here. The following information is for the DM only; player characters should not learn these details until the adventure is over (see page 70).

Rheddrian was a mortal when the engines’ energies fused his life-force into the Mirror-Shield, but these energies didn’t leave him a mortal. Through accidental means, he became an Immortal. While trapped within the shield, he did not realize that he had been changed.

When Rheddrian was freed by the PCs and emerged from the Mirror, his Immortality immediately caught up with him. His mortal body was replaced by a similar Manifestation Form body (see *Codex of the Immortals*, Book One in this boxed set, for details). Awash with energy and with vast knowledge of magic spells crawling through his head, he was confused. Instinctively, he fled through use of his spells... which is good, because just before he *teleported* away, the Immortal monitors of the city of Pandius noticed him and sent a pursuit party to find him and bring him in. They appeared far over the PCs’ position seconds after Rheddrian left and began a systematic search for him.

It wasn’t too long before Rheddrian discovered that someone was chasing him, someone with powers similar to his. Managing to throw off his pursuers, he used his magic to analyze the Mirror-Shield and determine that the method he used to escape the device would work for others. He teleported from city to city until he found a prisoner dying of old age and abuse. He appeared and offered the prisoner a way of escape if he would

agree to be bound in the device; the old man readily agreed.

With his new-found Immortal powers, Rheddrian created a considerable quantity of gold from thin air, and gave half to the PCs. He kept the other half, under the impression that it would be useful to him; he still did not know his true abilities as an Immortal.

Then, knowing that the pursuing Immortal might catch up to him at any time, Rheddrian fled... heading out into space in the hope that it will throw off his pursuer and give him time to learn what has happened to him.

If the PCs Won’t Help

If the PCs refuse to free Rheddrian, whether it’s because they don’t trust him, he’s not offering enough, or some other reason, all is not lost.

If they decide to sell the Mirror-Shield upon returning to civilization, they will be able to find a magic user who’ll gladly give them 1,000 gold pieces for it; he can be bargained up to a steep 2,000 gp if they work at it. The events described above will occur to that magic-user instead of the PCs, though the characters will not know this.

If the PCs decide to keep the Mirror-Shield without freeing its prisoner, let them cart it around for awhile; it will eventually be stolen by a thief. The PCs will wake up one night in their camp or their inn rooms and find that their packs have been ransacked; most of their gold and (as an afterthought) the Mirror-Shield will be gone. The events of Rheddrian’s release will occur to the thief instead of to the PCs, but the characters will not know this.

Final Notes

Jeddarin Corran

If the PCs succeed in their mission of clearing out the Keep, and young Noriad Corran is not killed in the process, then Jeddarin will pay them the agreed-upon amount and transport them back where they came from. Jeddarin’s stone masons and carpenters will soon be on their way to the Keep, where they will make it livable again. As an added bonus, word of the player characters’ efficiency will spread as Jeddarin recommends them to other patrons in the Darokin/Glantri area.

If Characters Die Here

If characters die in the course of this adventure, they will probably become Lightning Zombies under the control of the DM. If a character dies and is not *raised* within an hour, he or she will reawaken at the end of that hour as a Lightning Zombie with no knowledge of his or her previous life. The only way to prevent this is to carry the body more than one hundred yards away from the mirror-shield before the hour elapsed.

A Lightning Zombie must obey another Lightning Zombie if the latter wears the body of someone who commanded him or her in life; otherwise he or she will be free-willed.

Crackle and Captured Zombies

The fates of Crackle and any captured Lightning Zombies are up to the PCs. Naturally, it is a bad thing to kill someone who has surrendered, but PCs may feel justified in doing so because the Lightning Zombies are undead.

If the PCs do not kill all the Lightning Zombies, the surviving Lightning Zombies will agree to leave the Keep and seek their fates elsewhere. In all probability, they will travel north through the mountains and reach Glantri, where they may end up in the guard of some eccentric wizard-prince. Should the Immortal

Nyx, patron of the undead, learn of their existence she will be very interested and will look out for their welfare thereafter.

Crackle, on the other hand, wants to accompany the PCs back as far as civilization, where he will go his own way. The PCs may bump into him during some future adventure; he will still look like a gray-skinned nine-year-old. Future appearances by Crackle are at the discretion of the DM; he might make an interesting NPC who pops up occasionally every few years.





The adventures in this chapter are for medium-level player characters—those from 6th to 15th experience levels, averaging around 11th level.

Since it is unlikely that the party used in Phase I will be of high enough level to proceed directly into Phase II, a DM who wishes to use the same group of player characters in both should run them through several other adventures before Phase II begins to give them a chance to earn the levels needed to survive. Alternatively, the DM could adjust the characteristics and abilities of all their opponents in these adventures downward.

The two adventures in this chapter assume that the DM has some knowledge of the Known World setting. At the very least, the DM should be familiar with "Appendix 1: The D&D® Game World" in the *D&D® Rules Cyclopedia*. It would also help the DM to be familiar with the *Dawn of the Emperors* boxed set and the *HOLLOW WORLD®* boxed set, but this not absolutely necessary to running this adventure; the background information provided here should be enough.

Background Information

As revealed in the section entitled "About This Adventure," for the last several years, three groups of Immortals have been forming up sides and deciding how to eliminate one another. Their interactions had no effect on the adventure for Phase I, but their activities begin to be very important to the PCs starting now.

One group, the **Fellowship of the Star**, is led by Rad. They are determined that Rad be able to continue his work with the magic-sapping artifact The Nucleus of the Spheres (the altered engines of Rheddrian's ancient starship). Their mortal followers are concentrated in Glantri, Thyatis, and the Heldann Freeholds.

Opposed to this group is Ixion's **Ring of Fire**, which is just as determined that Rad should be deprived of his dangerous toy. Mortal followers of these Immortals are concentrated in the empire of Alphonatia.

Unknown to the other two, there is yet a third group whose existence has so far gone unsuspected: the **Brotherhood of the Shadow**. These Immortals of the Sphere of Entropy want to keep the Fellowship of the Star and Ring of Fire at each other's throats for as long as possible so that both will exhaust themselves in the struggle.

Tactics of the Fellowship of the Star

Rad, in his Mortal Identity of Etienne d'Ambreville, continues to study the dangerous artifact known as the Nucleus of the Spheres and the strange energy it emits, the Radiance.

It's obvious to him that his enemies in the Ring of Fire plan to use the vast magical might of the Empire of Alphonatia against him. The Nucleus of the Spheres is currently buried deep beneath Glantri City, the capital of the Principalities of Glantri, a nation that has more magic-users for its size than any other in the Known World—except Alphonatia.

Rad anticipates an Alphonatian assault on Glantri to decimate his mortal followers and seize possession of the artifact. His re-

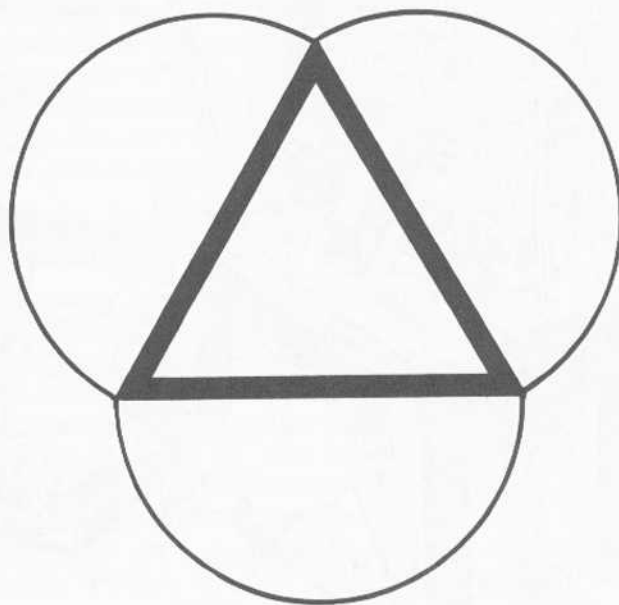
sponse is to intensify his study of the Radiance in hopes that he will learn enough to protect his followers and defeat his enemies when the time comes.

Rad's most important ally in his efforts to buy time is **Vanya**, who is secretly setting up the Thyatian Empire, traditional enemies of Alphonatia, to blunt Alphonatia's anticipated assault against Glantri. Vanya is influencing the emperor of Thyatis to be more reactionary and less tolerant, so that the empire will denounce and oppose any action that Alphonatia takes. Simultaneously, she is urging her devoted followers in the Heldann Freeholds to forge an alliance with Thyatis, so that Alphonatia will have an unexpected enemy in the north if war should actually erupt. Vanya's actions are secret; currently, no one knows she is on Rad's side.

Rafiel and **Rathanos**, Energy Immortals whose main interests lie in the acquisition of knowledge, are spending most of their time studying the Radiance with Rad. However, Rafiel is also the patron of the Shadow Elves; as such, he has been urging them that the time has come at last for them to seize power in the land of Alfheim. If his plan is successful, Glantri will gain an ally in the troubles ahead.

Ka is not active at all on the Known World. He remains in the Immortal city of Pandius, where he and **Korotiku** argue on behalf of Rad's cause and make sure that Ixion does not gain any more support for his group. So far, popular opinion remains mixed, with most Immortals waiting to see how things come out on Mystara before committing to either side.

Finally, there are **Asterius** and **Eiryndul**, both of whom are having the time of their Immortal lives. Eiryndul, a renown troublemaker, divides his time between Alfheim and Norwold, stirring up mischief in both to prevent their being used effectively against Glantri. Asterius, meanwhile, has returned to his mortal skills as a thief and acts as Rad's eyes and ears. He travels the Known World watching for signs of the interference from the Ring of Fire.



Tactics of the Ring of Fire

The Ring of Fire has only four members, but since three of them are Hierarchs, it is still a most potent group.

Ixion, the ringleader, spends most of his time in Pandius, pressing for formal action to be taken against Rad and trying to gain more members for his clique. Without Ixion's continual presence, Ka and Korotiku between them might gain yet more allies for the rebellion, delaying what Ixion sees as certain victory.

Rad is greatly relieved to thus hold the enemy "king" in check. However, the truth is that Ixion's plans are more subtle than Rad guesses. Ixion may be "in check," but what Ixion knows and Rad does not is that Ixion is not the most dangerous member of the Ring of Fire.

Rad assumes **Valerias**, Ixion's mate, is of little strategic use in any intrigue which does not involve passion and romance. He's wrong. For the last several years, Valerias has been setting up Mortal Identities in all the important nations of the Known World and Hollow World and gaining influence there.

For instance, realizing that the Empire of Thyatis could be used as a shield between Alphatia and Glantri, Valerias has spent much of her attention in Thyatis City. In her Mortal Identity of Helen Ledamiades, she has become a popular figure in society, hosting wild parties and frequently acting as patron for the city's lavish gladiatorial games.

She has sparked romances between the most capable of the Thyatian military officers and mortal women of her choice (often Alphatians)—romances which have led officers to defect to

foreign lands, to form strong bonds with Alphatian families, or to lose all interest in military matters. She has introduced new types of decadence and self-indulgence into the courts of Thyatis and allies such as Karamaikos, and the habits she is introducing are becoming very popular. The worst of these is her popularization of the use of *zzonga*-fruit, an Alphatian fruit which causes its users to become drowsy, unambitious, and eventually inept; she has particularly pressed it on the military officers among her guests.

In short, while Vanya influences the rulers of Thyatis to become more reactionary and aggressive, Valerias is deftly removing the very backbone of Thyatis' military might and bureaucratic efficiency... with neither aware of the other's activity. And this is only the most successful of the many plots Valerias has been conducting under the noses of the Fellowship of the Star.

Isundal, patron of the elves of Alfheim, is regretfully influencing his followers to gird themselves for war. The immediate pretext is increased activity among the humanoids of the Broken Lands, but once Alfheim is ready for conflict he plans to sabotage their alliance with the Glantrians and ally them with the Alphatians. He's not aware that Rafiel is doing something similar with the Shadow Elves, far below, nor is Rafiel aware of *his* activities.

Ironically, Ixion's least powerful ally is also the most important for his success. **Alphatia**, a patron of the Alphatians, has been working directly to bring the Alphatians to bear on the Glantrians. Normally a gentle Immortal, she realizes that Al-



phatia cannot survive without its magic, magic which Rad's studies are leeching away. The desperation which this realization causes her has made her the most vehement of Rad's opponents.

Using a variety of Mortal Identities, she has been spreading a lot of propaganda. In the wake of Alphetia's 2000th anniversary, she has been inspiring writers and poets to remember the origins of their people in their works. Since Glantri was founded by ancestral enemies of the Alphetians, this helps stir up old hatreds that had long been nearly forgotten.

In addition to supposed past sins, there is plenty about modern-day Glantri to upset the Alphetians, and she takes pains to see they are reminded of them all. First, the Glantrians forbid clerics within their borders, which infuriates clerics everywhere and gives her a pretext to have her own clerics speak out directly against them. Second, the Glantrians claim that their School of Magic is the premier source of magical wisdom in the world... a claim which everyone in the nation of Alphetia believes to be a dirty lie. Third, she circulates disturbing rumors that the Glantrians have discovered some sort of new magic which enables them to actually steal away the power of Alphetian wizards—a highly-disturbing thought for a nation which depends on its magic as much as does Alphetia.

The clerics of Alphetia are surprised to hear such a litany of hatred and intolerance from their normally mild and temperate Immortal. A few refuse to spread the calumny, but most believe that she knows best. So, slowly, she poisons the minds of the nation of Alphetia—the nation with more magic-users than any other on (or in) the world—against Glantri. The thoughts she sets into motion will continue of their own accord... and it will not be long before the average Alphetian spits at the mere mention of Glantri.



Tactics of the Brotherhood of the Shadow

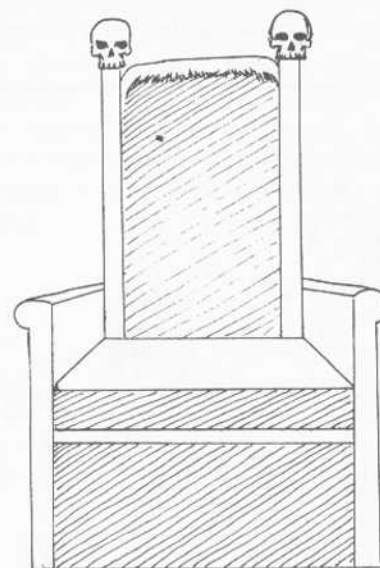
The Brotherhood of the Shadows is made up of Entropic Immortals who see a lot of opportunity in the upcoming conflict: the more the war spreads and the longer it lasts, the more death and suffering it will bring. Their plan, then, is to help whichever side seems to be weaker at the time. By helping to maintain a balance of power, they will ensure that the war will be longer,

bloodier, and more devastating to all concerned.

The Brotherhood's leader, *Atzanteotl*, negotiates with "Bozdogan" (Loki) to borrow some of his followers, the Desert Nomads of Hule, and have them gear up for a massive invasion of the Known World from the west.

Alphaks, with his lust for mass destruction, waits impatiently for the empire of Alphetia to take the upper hand so that he can work against it; he makes no secret of his desire to destroy it and its people utterly. However, he hates the Glantrians with equal vehemence, so he plans to destroy all of them as well. Until then, he contents himself with stirring up the humanoids of the Broken Lands.

Hel, the third member of the group, really is neutral on the subject and doesn't care which side wins the war in the end. She enjoys seeing the changes that these events are producing, especially seeing dignified fellow Immortals at one another's throats. *Hel* has taken a novel approach to the situation: she has established Manifestation Form identities with the names and appearances of long-dead heroes of various cultures. She then pretends to be these heroes after they have achieved Immortality. She's even been recruiting new clerics for these false Immortals. Not only is this great fun (won't they be surprised when they eventually discover that the Immortal they thought they were following doesn't even exist and they've been helping the cause of Entropy all this time), it's useful, as she is having these brave young clerics attack the enemies of whichever side the Brotherhood of the Shadow is helping at the time.



Tactics of All Three Groups

All three Immortal groups share one tactic in common.

As described in Chapter Five of *Codex of the Immortals*, Immortals lose power when they lose followers. Therefore, if the Immortals engaged in this struggle can deprive their enemies of followers, they reduce the power of those enemies. In addition to simply having their followers try to kill all of the other Immortal's followers, they also try to have their clerics convert their enemies' followers; they also try to discredit and embarrass their enemies so that mortals will not want to be associated with those Immortals.



What Does All This Mean?

From the perspective of mortal player characters, all this means that the world seems to be going slowly but inexorably mad.

The years prior to AC 1,000 were rich with adventure and confusion; the fearless habits of adventurers guaranteed it. But now, things are changing ominously. The efforts of the Immortals described above are edging the whole Known World toward war and confusion. To most folks, the hand of the Immortals in these activities is invisible; all they know is that pressure is building up and the world as they know it is teetering on the brink of disaster.

Between Phase I and Phase II

After the Corran Keep adventure of Phase I and before Phase II's "Mystery in Aegos," a year or two passes. It's up to the DM to determine the exact timing, but allow enough time for the PCs to reach high enough levels to be able to handle all that this adventure throws at them. In most campaigns, "Mystery in Aegos" should begin no earlier than the Spring of 1,005 AC, when war breaks out, and no later than Spring 1,006 AC, when Alphatia seals its borders (see Timeline).

Once again, it's important to keep track of the passage of time so the DM when know where the player characters are when the events in the Timeline occur and how long it will take them to hear about them. Whenever possible, the characters should have a chance to play through some of the situations described in the Timeline. These events are all adventure opportunities, and PCs who live them will feel and understand first-hand the changes taking place in the world. Once the PCs are ready, in the DM's estimation, it's time to reintroduce Rheddrian and get the Phase II adventure going.

How the PCs Get Involved

If any player introduces a new cleric character after the events of Phase I, the DM should suggest Benekander as a good Immortal for that character to follow. Describe Benekander's "no Immortal interference" philosophy and alignment preferences to the player (see his description in Chapter Two: Immortals of the Known World in *Codex of the Immortals*). Don't let the character know that Benekander is the Immortal name of Rheddrian. If the player doesn't want to run a cleric of Benekander, don't force the issue; the adventure will work fine without this added touch.

The Return of Rheddrian

On any occasion when the PCs are all together and between adventures, they'll be sent an anonymous note. The tone of the note should be appropriate to their current professions and social standings; if they're mercenaries, it will arrange a meeting to discuss "employment opportunities"; if they're heroes known for their good works, it will request their help on a matter of some urgency; if they're nobles, it will suggest that their lands and families are in some danger and that the letter-writer

can help them eliminate this threat. If the characters are a mixture of the above types (or others), the note will take the tone which the DM feels will interest them most.

The note has arranged the meeting for the private dining room of a local tavern called the Knight's Rivets. This tavern has a reputation for excellent food, and the note specifies that dinner is at the note-writer's expense.

The PCs will reach the inn before the note-writer (in fact, if they're paranoid and decide to arrive early, they could be there *long* before the note-writer). The inn's staff is hard at work cooking for their private party; if the PCs check by stealth or spell, there is no sign of tampering with the food or drink.

At the appointed hour, the food (which lives up to its reputation) is served by the tavern keeper and his helpers. They serve plates for every PC and retainer present, plus one additional plate for their absent host. Shortly after the tavern keeper and staff have left, the door into the private dining room will open and a man will walk in. He looks to be about 30; he's of average height and a lean but muscular build; his black hair is worn rather long, and he has a short black beard and mustache. He wears a matched black velvet hat and doublet sewn with red roses also made of velvet, black hose and boots, and a red belt and full-length cloak. He wears only a knife at his side and has no other weapons or pouches. He looks like a well-to-do merchant with a flair for colorful clothing.

Invite all the PCs who were on the Corran Keep adventure to make an Intelligence check. Those who successfully make the roll will recognize the man: he's Rheddrian, the being they freed for inside the Mirror-Shield. But, unlike the last time they saw him, he isn't green-skinned, massive, or glowing with bizarre energy; now, he seems to be an ordinary man.

Following are his words to the PCs. Make it as conversational as possible, allowing interruptions or questions by the PCs; don't just read it straight through like a speech. His speech and manner are those of an intelligent man. When he arrives he'll shake hands all around if the PCs aren't suspicious and standoffish, seat himself, eat and drink, and generally behave in a civilized and relaxed manner.

"My friends! It's good to see you again. Please, sit. I hope the food here is up to its reputation.

"I've asked you to come here to discuss a matter of great importance—to you, to me, to everyone. You might guess that it involves the matters we discussed when first we met—and you'd be right.

"Forgive me, though: first, I must cast a spell or two in order to insure that we are not being spied upon by magical means. Those of you who are knowledgeable in the ways of magic" (he bows towards any magic-users in the party) "please observe that the spells I invoke are no threat to you."

He's telling the truth; he casts well-known versions of *detect magic*, *detect evil*, *detect invisible*, and then a *wizard lock* on the door.

Phase II: The Build-Up

"There: that will assure us of a certain amount of privacy. Now, we can get to business.

"First, a word or two of explanation. You will remember, from when last we met, that I was trapped within that remarkable mirror-like shield, and you were kind enough to free me from that prison—a good deed for which I am quite grateful.

"My stay inside the shield changed me, friends. I emerged with all my abilities and mental faculties intact... and, thanks to energy I absorbed while trapped, I acquired other abilities as well—the ability to work magical spells, for example.

"In the time since we last saw one another, I've been learning about this world of yours—Mystara, I think you call it. I am convinced that it is the same as the one my ship crashed upon, lo these many centuries ago, but dozens of centuries of age and catastrophe have changed it; it is very, very different from the way I remember it.

"Still, it's a nice place. And since I don't suppose I'll ever find my way back home after all these centuries, I've adopted it as my new home. Also since we last met, I've used my new abilities to become quite wealthy, fairly powerful, and very well informed in certain areas."

At this point, he becomes quite serious, looking between the PCs to try to gauge their reactions.

"Now... I have asked you here because I need your help. I told you last time we met that I thought dangerous forces were doing harm to the magical energy of this world. Now I'm certain of it.

"I've also seen strange changes in the activities of whole nations. Clans and countries seem to be jumping and jerking in strange, unpredictable directions, like chickens freshly beheaded. I'm sure you've seen these changes as well.

"I sense that these political events are the result of powerful manipulators. People who are making entire nations dance on their puppets' strings, people who don't care how many *thousands* of people suffer and die.

"I think these two sets of events may be related. And I'll tell you why.

"Through my researches, I've come to the conclusion that only beings of a certain level of power—you call them *Immortals*—can utilize the remaining devices of my old ship. In doing so, they are draining magical energy from the world, as I told you. If it continues, your world could be utterly drained of magic.

"Think of it: a whole world with no spells, no magical healing, no magical weapons or protection, and no magical creatures either.

"Now, I don't know why the Immortals are doing this. Not all Immortals are good, as you know; perhaps you've already had the opportunity to observe the damage which an



evil Immortal can cause with only casual attention. Others, not necessarily evil, are indifferent and careless, and through their negligence they can destroy us as easily as the evil ones.

"Too much is happening in this part of the world too quickly for it to be natural; only Immortals could wreak so much havoc in so short a time. But I don't know which Immortals are doing this, or why. All I know is that I want to see them stopped. I don't know if that's possible, but I've decided to use all my abilities and fortunes to find out what's going on, to see if there's a way. Maybe if we could find out *why* they're doing this we could find a way to convince them to stop it.

"I cannot do it all myself. I cannot be everywhere at once. I need allies—men and women like yourselves. So I am here to persuade you to join me. I need adventurers who can travel the world, observe events in places where I think the Immortals are most active, and accumulate evidence to prove or disprove my theory.

"If you accept, I must ask you not to speak of this mission to your rulers... or even the Immortals you serve... until we know who is doing what to whom. I do not ask you to swear to a permanent oath of secrecy! But *please*... for now... until we are certain who is the enemy, who is the friend... keep this association to yourself."

At this point, if not before, the PCs are likely to want some answers. Have Rheddrian provide those answers from the information immediately below; if the PCs ask questions not anticipated here, the DM should answer them based on Rheddrian's knowledge and motives.

Rheddrian actually doesn't know any more about the Immortals than a well-educated mortal does; though he is technically one of them, he is not part of their community and does not know any of them.

Rheddrian's motives are sincere; he wants to save the world and to counter the actions of the Immortals who are so callous about endangering mortals.

He will not let the PCs know that he is an Immortal. He is in a Mortal Identity body here and so is indistinguishable from true mortals. This form is that of a 36th level magic-user.

Here are answers to questions the PCs are likely to ask:

What if one of the Immortals you oppose turns out to be one I follow? "I will not ask you to follow anything but your heart on such a matter. Perhaps we will end up as enemies. I sincerely hope not. If this happens, and I cannot convince you that my cause is still just, we will part ways peaceably and not oppose one another for at least a full day—I believe you call such arrangements a 'head start.'"

Why do you think there is danger to our families or properties? "Now that war has broken out between the great empires of Alphatia and Thyatis, more and more nations will become involved. It's inevitable that innocent people will die by the thousands, including perhaps those of your dominions and your home towns. And the more out of control things become, the greater the likelihood that no place will be safe."

What happened when you were tall and glowing? "I was assimilating the energy which the Mirror-Shield had bequeathed to me. As you recall, it had some rather dramatic effects upon me. But I am well recovered now, as you can see; I've even managed to change my coloration to look like yours. Do you like it?"

That last answer, of course, side-steps the truth so that he will not have to admit that he's an Immortal. But it is not a lie.

What Does He Offer?

As for money... Rheddrian will provide the PCs an "expense account" of 1,000 gp apiece, in advance, per investigation. This should, he says, cover purchases of equipment, travelling expenses, and living expenses; they're free to keep whatever's left over. He can provide it in the form of money or gems, or any combination of the two; they have only to ask. If they act surprised at his willingness to give them all this in advance, he'll remark that he trusts them. After all, they're trusting him by agreeing to go on the missions, so it's the least he can do to return the favor.

He has no interest in other treasures they might find in the course of their adventures, taking the attitude that they're the ones going through the risks to gain them and so should be able to keep them.

If the PCs haggle for more money, it will be obvious that Rheddrian is perplexed. He says, "The more money *you* demand, the fewer additional agents I can employ to help us save the world. Must you let greed stand between you and this most important goal?"

If the PCs persist, he will raise his offer as high as 2,000 gp per PC, sadly remarking that the people of this planet were not as noble as he thought them. If that still isn't enough, he will coldly state that he was looking for heroes to help save the world, not greedy treasure-seekers; he was obviously mistaken in choosing the PCs and apologizes for wasting their time—whereupon he vanishes. If this event takes place, the PCs have blown it. The DM can still run adventures taking place in the changing Known World, but the PCs will not benefit from Rheddrian's guidance, and it will not be they who save the world from losing all its magic. In fact, it is possible that because of their greed the world will not be saved.

Clerics of Benekander

If any character is a cleric of Benekander, he or she will receive an omen a day or two before the preceding meeting. Benekander will appear in his or her dreams and instruct the character to take the course of action offered by "the man wearing the hat of red roses." Later, when Rheddrian shows up for the dinner, be sure to describe his clothing as mentioned above—particularly the velvet cap with the velvet roses.



On Toward the First Mission

If the PCs accept, Rheddrian will give them three days to get their lives in order. He asks them to meet him back at this tavern's private dining room at the end of that time.

Mystery in Aegos

On the appointed day, Rheddrian meets the PCs back at the tavern. He brings along the expense money, in whatever form the PCs wanted. In addition, he brings with him an interesting object—a heavy black quarterstaff which he places in the party's care.

Rheddrian's Staff

He says that any character who can use a quarterstaff may use it, but he wants it to accompany the PCs on all their missions; the PCs must decide among themselves who carries the staff. If, however, one of the PCs is a cleric of Benekander, Rheddrian will give the staff to that character (the one who had the dream) instead of asking the PCs to decide who will carry it.

It is, he explains, an artifact—something created by the Immortals. It is part of a matching set; he has the other staff. He says he doesn't know which Immortal created it, but he does know that it can be used to communicate between the current possessors of the two staves. Therefore, the PCs can use it to communicate with him at intervals.

To use it, he says, the wielder must meditate and then call Rheddrian's name. Instantly, Rheddrian will hear and be able to hear what he has to say.

Information Power: Can be used to *commune* with the artifact's creator. Cost: 30 TP.

Activation of Powers: All that is needed to activate *commune* is to meditate for a minute and then call "Rheddrian." To activate *protection from normal missiles*, the wielder simply says "Shield me!"

Handicap: Saving Throw Penalty. The character suffers a -2 penalty whenever attacked by fire magic.

Penalty: Forgetfulness. When the *commune* power is used, the invoker suffers a 20% chance to forget one spell from memory; the *protection from normal missiles* power causes a 10% chance to forget one spell from memory. Only mortals are affected by these penalties.

Total Cost: 60 PP.

Naturally, the PCs do not know about the artifact's adverse effects (and if the DM plays things carefully enough, they might suffer those effects yet *never* learn about them). Rheddrian, being an Immortal, has never experienced them and so doesn't know about them himself.

Rheddrian will warn the PCs not to use the staff's special powers too often to avoid drawing unwanted attention from the Immortals; he will not tell them that each such usage costs Temporary Power. PCs who ignore his advice will find that the staff's powers stop functioning after a certain point if used repeatedly in a single day; the DM must keep track of the artifact's TP usage. In such cases, its power will be fully restored two hours later.

Finally, of course, the PCs do not know that the artifact was crafted by Rheddrian/Benekander himself, and that there is no

"Third: watch out for unusual and unprecedented magical spell abilities. The devices pillaged from my ship may interact with the magic native to this world to provide them and their mortal followers with strange, hitherto-unknown spells.

"Fourth: listen for the names of Immortals unknown to you. When you hear of Immortals you do not know, ask for their stories and philosophies. In many cases, these will turn out to be local names for well-known Immortals you are already familiar with; those you can safely ignore. In other cases, the Immortals you hear of may be completely unknown to you. This could mean that the unknown Immortal has been drawn here to participate in the new activities of the Immortals, or it may mean something more sinister than that.

"Other than that, I have no guidance for you. Act as the heroes you are in all ways and I can have no complaint of your behavior.

"For your first investigation, I'd like you to travel to an island called Aegos. It is one of the four Alatian Islands off to the southeast of the Isle of Dawn. The Alatians are properties of Alpathia, so for goodness sakes try not to look like Glantrians, Thyatians, or Heldannic Knights while you're there!

"The reason you're going is that one of my agents reported to me that Aegos has recently lost the majority of its workforce... and yet these men and women were not seen sailing off to join the Alpathian armed forces. She wasn't able to find out anything more, but I want to know what happened to all those people. It may be something entirely innocent, and yet it may not.

"Remember that your mission is one of intelligence and stealth. Please do not kill everything that offends you... at least until you understand what it *means*."

About Aegos

Aegos is a large island, about 500 miles long, running west-southwest to east-northeast; it is about 240 miles across at its widest north-south measurement.

The island has one area with fairly rich soil, to the southwest; this area is thick with farmlands and pasturage for sheep and cattle. The larger central and eastern regions are very hilly, with one large central body of water, Lake Aegos; they are nowhere so friendly to farms or cattle, though sheep and especially goats do well. The hills north of Lake Aegos have fair deposits of lead and silver, so there are many mines there.

There are only two communities on the island—at least, according to most maps of Aegos.

The town of Aegopoli, population 5,000, is on the southwest tip of the island. It serves the shipping and trading needs of the island's farmers. It is the island's capital and has many warehouses, shops, and taverns; there are a couple of inns here, and there is even a small school for the teaching of children in both magic and academic matters.

The village of Selenion, population 200, is on the northern shore of Lake Aegos, between the lake and hills to the north. It's the sole example of civilization for the miners of the area; it is in most ways a bawdy, rough-and-tumble frontier town. No magic-

users live in this small community; the only spellcasters there are a couple of clerics.

Long ago, wizards of Aegos tried to make the island into a haven for the breeding and creation of magical beasts and monsters and eventually a zoo for the exhibition of such creatures. But the effort was sabotaged by unknown parties (legend has it that the saboteurs were rival wizards of the Alpathian monster nation of Trollhattan). The breeding pens and zoo were opened and the monsters fell upon one another; the few surviving monsters fled into the island's hills, and the Aegos economy was ruined.

Later, the island became a very dull and typical farming and fishing island, though sometimes monsters still do wander out of the island's hills to fall upon the human inhabitants.

The king is Heldeberan No-Man's-Fool.

Heldeberan No-Man's-Fool, King of Aegos

History: Born in Alpathia, Heldeberan chose Aegos to be his home—and later took the kingship because he was the highest-ranking resident of the island—because it was far away from the intrigues of the Alpathian court.

Personality: Heldeberan is smart and witty. He hates being king, and so delegates almost all the king's duties to his administrators and children; he prefers to spend his time doing his magical researches. But he's not a misanthropist: he likes people and is a charming conversationalist who enjoys meeting strangers from foreign lands.

Unlike most Alpathian wizards, Heldeberan does not hold himself to be superior to non-spellcasters, and in his island fighters and other non-magical people have the same rights as magic-users and clerics.

Heldeberan claims to be a coward and always has an escape spell or route handy, even when in places he considers safe. He likes employing foreign mercenaries to undertake dangerous assignments, such as cleaning out monster nests from Aegos' central hills.

Appearance: 6'3" tall, skinny; common (copper-skinned) Alpathian coloration; red hair and beard; likes colorful Alpathian silk robes in wild patterns, with yellow dominating; appears to be 35 (actual age: 70).

Combat Notes: 36th level MU; AC 9; hp 50; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 dagger or by spell; Dmg 1d4 or by spell; Save MU36; ML4; AL N. S9 I18 W18 D11 Co13 Ch15.

His son and heir is Prince Dromedon.

Dromedon, Prince of Aegos

History: Prince Dromedon was born and reared on Aegos. Born without the gift of magic, he became a formidable fighter. Though fighting and danger are his first loves, he is a responsible nobleman and will be a much better ruler than his father is.

Personality: For the most part, Dromedon is a thrill-seeker; he likes riding, chariot-racing, and jumping off high-flying sky-ships (only activating his *boots of levitation* when he is dangerously close to the ground). Like his father, he has no

prejudice against non-magical character classes.

Appearance: 6'2", strongly built; common (copper-skinned) Alpathian coloration; red-haired and red-bearded; craggy features, thick eyebrows. He likes to wear practical commoners' clothes but wears a diadem to indicate his rank. He appears to be age about 35 (his actual age), which confuses some people, since his father seems to be the same age.

Combat Notes: 10th level Fighter; AC 2 (*leather armor +2* and *Dexterity bonus*); hp 40; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 *normal sword +2*; Dmg 1d8 +4; Save F10; ML9; AL N. S17 I12 W13 D18 Co13 Ch10.

Magical Items In Possession: *normal sword +2*, *leather armor +2*, *boots of levitation*.

The two of them, Dromedon's younger brothers and sisters, and a number of servants occupy the King's Mansion in the center of Aegopoli. The Mansion is a two-story building made up of green veined marble; its ground floor serves as the administrative building for the island government, while the upper story is the living quarters of the family.

Aegopoli

This adventure does not detail the player characters' journey from wherever they met Rheddrian to Aegos; the DM is free to make it as exciting or uneventful as he or she chooses. Remember that there's a war going on, which might make it difficult for the PCs to cross some areas—if their home is in one of the areas at war with Alpathia, for instance, they may need to adopt disguises.

However they get there, once they arrive in Aegopoli they find the town gates are open. Out in the bay, a fleet of small fishing boats is plying its trade. The town itself, though, looks tired and empty; many of the shops are closed, and there are signs nailed to their doors. The signs read "Closed for the Season" or, more often, "Closed for the Duration." If the PCs take some time to make calculations, it looks as though half or two-thirds of the town's population is missing.

The few people the PCs see are mostly of copper-skinned Alpathian coloration, though a few have been pale like the Thyatians (and, in all probability, like most of the PCs); a very few are dark like the Pearl Islanders. In addition to the farmers and shepherds outside of town, there are a couple of tavern keepers to be found in town, plus messengers (always on the run between the grand house in the center of town and other buildings in town), town guards (mostly too old or too young to be effective guards), and a fair number of soldiers. The number of elderly people and children is all out of proportion to the number of youthful adults; in fact, it seems that the elderly outnumber the young and vigorous by three or four to one.

Most of the natives do not appear to be curious about the PCs. The people here speak both Alpathian and Thyatian, but are careful not to use the latter since the outbreak of the war. If a PC addresses an islander (on the street, in tavern conversation, or wherever) in Thyatian, he or she will look startled, glance around to see if anyone is listening, and then advise the stranger to use Alpathian "for the duration." If asked about what's happening on this dreary island, the locals will be downright chatty:

"Newcomers, eh? Good to see some new blood about. If you stay, that is.

"Not for me to talk about things here, you understand, but I can tell you this: plenty of businesses have had to close down, what with all the able-bodied hereabouts going off to join the Army of Aegos, you understand. You might be able to negotiate to open one of them closed businesses, as a temporary worker don't y'known, while the owner's away. Or, you can go where the big money is, in the Army, like most everyone else.

"Either way, you'll need to talk to Prince Dromedon at the King's Mansion. He's in charge of the work-force. Not for me to talk about it."

Eventually, if the PCs do not go looking for Prince Dromedon, he will seek them out; news of a group of hardy-looking adventurers travels fast in this town. Dromedon, described above, will confront the PCs, his attitude friendly, his gaze analytical:

"So, foreigners, eh? Looking for work? There's work to be had here. Two types of work.

"The town needs workers, as I'm sure you've seen. We need temporary shopkeepers, town guards, fish-cleaners, warehouse folk, that sort of thing. Payment is one gold piece a month plus room and board, or three a month for town guards, and we'll keep you on a *minimum* of six months if you work out.

"But if you're inclined toward work that's more interesting... maybe a little more dangerous... but *certainly* a lot more rewarding... I can offer you local work in the Army of Aegos. Now, it's hard work, and you'll be off at a site I can't talk about for a minimum of six months, during which you can't send mail off to your families or friends, but the pay is good, a minimum of ten gold pieces per month, plus room and board... perhaps *much* more, depending on your skills."

If pressed, Prince Dromedon will not reveal any more details about where the Army of Aegos is or what it is doing. He says that the characters, if they want that work, must accept it sight unseen. They would then be sworn into the Army of Aegos and transported to the work-site, at which time their duties would be explained to them.

If the PCs refuse the work, the Prince will coolly wish them well during their stay on the island, and that conversation will be over.

But if the PCs accept, the Prince will swear them in.

Joining the Armed Forces

The Oath of the Army of Aegos merely states that the person taking the oath promises to protect the island and its people to the best of his or her ability. Lawful PCs should consider this oath binding and try to fulfill it as best they can while pursuing the mission they came here for. And all the player characters should understand that desertion under fire is considered an act

of treason and likely to result in their being condemned to death *in absentia*.

Prince Dromedon will ask each character what the character's abilities are and ask the character to demonstrate. Then, he'll set the PC's pay rate as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Base Rate of Pay: | 10 gp/month |
| Each Experience Level Above 1st: | + 10 gp/month |
| Spell Use: | + 100 gp/month |
| Weapon Master: | + 100 gp/month |
| Character Has General Skills: | |
| Engineering | + 25 gp/month |
| Healing | + 25 gp/month |
| Intimidation | + 10 gp/month |
| Leadership | + 50 gp/month |
| Military Tactics | + 25 gp/month |
| Tracking | + 10 gp/month |

The pay rate is on a take-it-or-leave-it basis and not subject to negotiation.

Never one to believe in wasting time, Dromedon tells the PCs the name of an inn where they can put up for the night (at no expense, of course) and that they're to be ready and waiting at the town's northeast gate at dawn for transportation to the work-site.

Army PCs: On to the Work-Site

At dawn the next morning, a small caravan of horses and wagons is arrayed within the northeast gate. Prince Dromedon isn't there, but the caravan-master, a gray-bearded but hale man called Scupper, has the PCs' names on a list, shouting them out one by one and checking them off when the PCs arrive. PCs who can ride will be assigned one of the small, tough caravan horses; other PCs will have to ride on the wagons.

In addition to Scupper and the PCs, there are three other new Army of Aegos recruits: a copper-skinned male fighter named Stryl, a dark-skinned female fighter named Torkia Nuar, and a light-skinned male cleric named Kelter Zerben.

Scupper is garrulous, but won't discuss what waits at the end of the caravan trip. He's an old Alphantian Navy man, an ex-cook who brags about the quality of his cooking but complains that everyone else thought it was terrible. He'll insist on cooking each night for the caravan, and the PCs will learn that he is terrible.

Stryl and Torkia Nuar are not very talkative about themselves; Stryl is from Archport in southeast Alphantia, Torkia is from Seagirt on Nuar, one of the Pearl Islands. The two of them have been partners and travelling companions for the past few years, adventuring mainly in Norwold. That's about all they say.

Kelter Zerben is friendly, talkative, and charismatic. He's a fighter-turned-cleric from Darokin who'll gladly swap stories with the PCs; for more on his personality and past, see the description below.

The caravan trip takes the PCs and their companions to Pittstown; see the accompanying fold-out map for directions. The trip itself takes twelve days of easy travel along a dirt road,

passing through farmland, pasturage, light forest, and hills. The DM can gloss over details of most of the trip, so that these twelve days will not stretch into an eternity for the players.

At some point about half-way to Pittstown, the caravan (and PCs) will be attacked by wandering monsters: three trolls, descendants of those who escaped from the old Aegos zoo. These marauders will leap out from all sides at once, ensuring that all the PCs and NPCs get to see some action.

This combat serves two purposes: it provides a little action to break up the monotony, and gives the PCs a chance to see their new comrades in action. Scupper's only concern will be to protect the wagons. Stryl and Torkia will take a defensive position back-to-back, leaving alone any trolls that don't come near them and only fighting those that attack them first. Kelter will charge into melee, interposing himself between the nearest troll and whichever of the player characters he thinks the least able to defend himself or herself. This gallantry is both instinctive and sincere, and will probably result in the PCs coming to think of him as a trusted ally.

Trolls: NA 3; AC 4; HD 6 + 3; #AT 2 claws/1 bite; Dmg 1d6 (×2)/1d10; MV 120' (40'); Save F6; ML 10 or 8; TT D; Int 6; Al C; SD regenerates 3 hit points per round; XPV 650.

Sneaky PCs: On to the Work-Site

If the PCs did not join the Army of Aegos, they should still be able to find out about the caravan leaving for the east. Since the tactics taken by the PCs to figure out what's happening in Aegopolis can vary widely, details of the PCs' discovery are necessarily up to the DM. In any case, the PCs will have no difficulty trailing and tracking the caravan to Pittstown.

Kelter Zerben

If the PCs are part of the caravan, they will not be able to avoid seeing Kelter Zerben. It's easy to think of this tall, strapping man from Darokin as a fighter, because he carries a two-handed sword and practices with it every morning. But he also makes offerings and prayers to an Immortal at regular intervals and meditates for spells each morning as well, making it obvious that he's in fact a cleric.

Whether the PCs ask about his faith or not, he'll volunteer the information that he's a cleric of Balthac. The PCs will have never heard of an Immortal named Balthac, which should set off alarm bells in their minds if they paid any attention at all to what Rheddrian told them.

Kelter will happily talk about Balthac and his philosophies, as well as about Kelter's own history and attitudes; see the boxed description of Kelter, below.

If the PCs are following the caravan instead of being part of it, Kelter is doing just the same thing from a little further off. He notices the PCs before they notice him; the first they will see of him is when he rushes to their defense during the troll attack, which in this scenario will occur to the PCs instead of the caravan. Once the dust from the battle has cleared and introductions been made, he and the players should compare notes, discover that they're here for similar reasons, and join forces.



The Story of Balthac

PCs who are from Darokin or who are elves from Alfheim will have heard the story of Balthac at some point in their lives and can corroborate parts of the following tale.

According to legend, Balthac was a great hero of the region that was later to become Darokin, famed as a dragon-slayer. He lived in the time between the fall of Blackmoor and the rise of modern nations. He and his companion, Sinan (a female elf), fought many great evils in the ancient world. His career ended when he and his companion went up against a gigantic red dragon called Calor, who was ravaging the area that is now north-central Darokin. Both Balthac and the dragon died in the battle that followed their meeting, but Sinan survived. She buried Balthac in a large cairn, leaving another over the bones of Calor whose skull still had Camb, Balthac's elvish sword, imbedded in it.

Sinan went on to become a great hero in her own right, eventually perishing centuries later defending Alfheim from an evil lich. Both she and Balthac are revered as great heroes who died defending their people.

That's the legend as most people know it. Balthac's battle with the dragon is a favorite folktale in Darokin which every child born there grows up knowing; elves of Alfheim keep Sinan's memory alive in honor of her sacrifice. But the cleric Kelter Zerben has additional details, details which the PCs have never heard before.

Kelter says that not long ago an adventurer found an artifact that enabled her to travel back in time. A great admirer of Balthac, she journeyed back to just after Balthac's fatal battle with the dragon, raised him from the dead, and brought him back to the future with her. Uneasy with the idea of being treated like a legend, Balthac changed his name and continued his dragon-hunting career. He recently gained Immortality as the patron of warriors who travel about defending those who cannot defend themselves; the adventurer who brought him back from the past, Lady Lillith, is now the head of his new clerical order. His symbol is a sword cleaving a dragon's skull.

The cruel truth, which neither Kelter nor the PCs know at present, is that there *is* no Immortal named Balthac. Lady Lillith (Lillian Corran) is a servant of the evil Immortal Hel, a member of the Brotherhood of the Shadow. Hel fabricated the spurious end to Balthac's story and created this clerical order so that she would have a corps of mortal minions who would do her bidding without realizing they were serving Entropy. Clerics of Balthac are actually clerics of Hel, although they are not aware of this; Lady Lillith is careful to send them on missions that appear to help people at the time but which actually have side effects that in the long run leave them worse off than they were to begin with.

Kelter Zerben, Cleric of "Balthac"

History: Kelter, who is in his mid-twenties, was born in Corunglain, a city of Darokin near the Broken Lands. When he was 18, he joined the army of Darokin and was assigned to Fort Nell, a dangerous fortress situated between Alfheim and the humanoid-inhabited Broken Lands.

On a mission to repel orcish raids into Darokin, Kelter was the sole survivor of a hard-fought clash between soldiers and orcs. As he lay wounded, he heard the voice of Balthac commanding him to travel northeast into the mountains and hear Balthac's word.

Kelter travelled for weeks into the mountains, suffering near-starvation and continuous attacks from orcs, before finally finding his way to the site from whence the voice beckoned—Balthac's cairn. The voice told him to rejoice; that he had been found worthy and chosen to serve as one of Balthac's clerics; that he, Kelter Zerban, would be sent around the world to right wrongs beyond the concerns of the army of Darokin.

Weeks later, the starving Kelter found his way back to Fort Nell and made his report. His commander looked at his depleted physical condition and listened to his story of becoming a cleric of a figure out of old fairy tales—a story Kelter couldn't corroborate because, as a 1st level cleric, he didn't have any spells yet—and kindly gave him an honorable discharge.

Since that time, Kelter has wandered the world: fighting monsters, protecting the innocent, and promoting honorable conduct wherever he goes.

If Kelter is with the PCs as part of the caravan, he'll tell them that he has come here to find out what's happening to the people of this island; if they're the victims of some monster, he intends to slay it.

If Kelter is following the caravan and discovers the PCs doing the same, he'll tell them the truth (as he knows it): Balthac commanded that he come here and find out what strangeness is afoot, because if there is evil here, it must be destroyed.

Personality: Kelter is brave, strong, heroic, gallant, and naive. In some ways, he's probably the nicest person the PCs are ever likely to meet; it's a pity he and they are going to wind up on opposite sides. His goal is to making the world a better place for everyone. He takes pride in the fact that, though a cleric, he can wield swords, and seeks to learn swordsmanship from every fighter he meets. Though he has given no thought to romance, he is certainly not immune to it, and may be attracted to female adventurers who are courageous and resourceful.

Appearance: Just over 6' tall, clean-shaven, with black hair and brown eyes. He has a compact and muscular build and is tanned from being outdoors in all kinds of weather. He wears dark brown and black clothing; on the tabard he wears over his armor and on his belt buckle are the sword-shearing-a-dragon-head symbol of his order.

Combat Notes: 7th level Cleric; AC 1 (plate mail, shield, and Dexterity bonus); hp 25; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 two-handed sword or by spell; Dmg 1d10+2 or by spell; Save C7; ML10; AL N. S17 I13 W15 D14 Co12 Ch16.

Clerics of Balthac have the special ability that they can use swords and daggers; they receive a +1 bonus to their attack rolls when using two-handed swords. However, they do not gain

spells until they reach third level. Clerics of Balthac must be Neutral or Lawful.

At the Work-Site

On midday of the twelfth day of travel, the caravan comes in sight of their destination. Scupper announces, "Welcome to Pittstown. Hope you enjoy it. You'll be here awhile."

This small town at the base of Aegos' central range of hills is surrounded by a stout stone wall. It doesn't look as if the town has been here long; all the buildings are new. Most of them are unexceptional single-story dwellings and warehouses, but one stands out and will catch any newcomer's eye.

The strange building in the center of town is circular and at least five stories in height and a hundred yards in diameter; it is built all of white stone. Large entrances can be seen at the four cardinal points of the compass; a steady line of basket-laden donkeys led by men issues from the east entrance. The donkeys head out the town's east gate and off into the hills. There is also a line of returning donkeys with empty baskets.

The arriving caravan from Aegopolis is greeted with enthusiasm. Oddly enough, there are no old people or children here; everyone is youthful and hardy. The workers here are of both sexes and of every human race. There are also many dwarves and *gnomes* (a race the PCs may not have seen before) in the town; they and the humans seem to be getting along marvelously.

The arriving caravan is greeted with enthusiasm by bypassers as it heads through town towards the large circular building.

If the PCs are not part of the caravan, they will be able to see the preceding from the distance. They (and Kelter) will have to sneak into town (probably at night) to find out what's going on in the giant building.

The Giant Building

The giant disk-shaped building turns out to be a single huge room inside, the roof held up by tall columns at regular intervals. Your first thought upon entering is that you've never been in such a noisy place in your life: donkeys bray, machinery clanks and whines, and workers shout to be heard above all the din.

In the center of the unpaved floor is a pit, or shaft, heading straight down into the earth. The shaft is big (about 30 yards in diameter) and surrounded by a chest-high railing punctuated with metal gates.

Above the shaft, a series of enormous pulleys hangs from the ceiling, trailing a taut metal chain down into the depths of the pit. The pulleys seem to be powered by machinery up in the ceiling, for some of them are rotating, sending chain down and bringing chain up.

Around the perimeter of the pit lie three large machines on

Phase II: The Build-Up

the bare rocky floor. They are shaped like rigid centipedes with legs on four sides instead of just underneath and with a conical drilling device where the insect's head would be. They are about ten yards (30') long and have hatches and windows on the sides.

Near the eastern doorway of the building there is a small corral where many donkeys carrying baskets, and their human handlers, wait patiently.

As the PCs watch, the following strange events take place.

A grinding and rumbling noise comes from the pit, slowly getting closer and closer; nobody seems to be alarmed by this. Eventually one of those centipede machines clambors its way up out of the pit and rumbles over until it is beside the donkey corral. Hatches open and hot, sweating gnomes spill out, running over to where other workers have cool drinks and food waiting for them on tables. A big hatch on the side of the centipede machine opens up, and rocks and ore come spilling out. Donkeys are brought over and their baskets loaded with the stoney rubbish. When a donkey's baskets are full, the donkey is led out of the building. Eventually the entire load is cleared away.

Then something occurs which does cause a stir among the whole crowd. Something comes into view at the end of the chain down in the pit; it looks like a round-ended cylinder with windows. As people hop to and push a drawbridge-like device over the pit's edge, the cylinder reaches the top and halts. A hatch opens in the side and five people, Alphasians by the look of them, emerge and walk along the drawbridge to the pit's edge. They look a little dizzy and stretch their legs as if they've been confined for a long time.

If the PCs were not with the caravan and therefore have no business being here, it will not much matter; all this activity takes place through the day and night; there is no "still time." Furthermore, so many people come and go through this place that they won't question new faces suddenly showing up, making it easy for the PCs to sneak in and investigate.

PC Assignments

If the PCs are part of the caravan, read out the following text:

No sooner have the people riding in the cylinder gotten clear than a burly fellow who seems to be a foreman wanders over and confers with Scupper. Then Scupper calls out all your names as well as those of the three who came on the caravan with you. "You lot will be going down to the Site in Car #4, which just came up," he announces, pointing to the cylinder which just arrived. "It leaves in just a few minutes, so you'd better go ahead and get your gear stowed aboard. I'll be going along with you... and maybe then you'll get answers to some of your questions."

The inside of the cylinder has weighted chairs mounted within spherical frameworks; no matter which way the cylinder is oriented, the chairs remain upright. Along the walls of the cylinder are rigidly-mounted boxes, one per person, in which the PCs can stow their gear.

Sneaky PCs

If the PCs aren't part of the caravan, their best bet to see where the cylinders go is to pretend to be an official group. The foreman will take them at their word and pack them off in the next available cylinder; it'll take a week or so before the officials in Pittstown compare notes enough to realize that someone went below who shouldn't have, giving the PCs that much lead time to investigate.

The Descent

Once the PCs are in the cylinder and ready, give them the following description.

Several minutes pass. Nothing happening. Then suddenly the cylinder begins its descent with a jerk. Stryl jumps and lets out an oath; Torkia Nuair laughs at his discomfort; Kelter admonishes him for his language.

The cylinder sways as it descends, but then the swaying gradually ceases and the ride becomes smoother.

Through the windows, you can see that the pit darkens; there are no lights outside to see how fast you're sinking. From his pack, Scupper pulls out an oil lamp and lights it before you are plunged into complete darkness. Then he grins and says, "Now we have quite a long ride. About a day's worth, in fact. Hope you brought some cards or dice. We're well stocked with food and drink, and there's a strange gnome device in the back of the car that'll serve us as an outhouse—or *in*house, in this case." He laughs at his feeble joke, as you resign yourself to a dreary journey.

Player character who got aboard under false pretenses will have the cylinder entirely to themselves; the DM should have some fun describing the devices they find inside and play up their fears concerning their destination as the hours interminably pass.

The descent will continue downward hour after hour. The temperature increases, until it is barely tolerable; Scupper and the other NPCs will shed themselves of all clothes except garments constituting the bare minimum of decency.

From time to time, through the windows, the PCs will see one of those gnomish caterpillar-machines. Lighted from within so that their glowing front-windows look like shining eyes, these devices crawl along the shaft's walls. From time to time they stop to grind away rocky projections with their nose-cone drills, catching the debris in nets.

Every hour or so, the chain—and the PCs' cylinder—passes through a short metal tunnel attached by metal posts to the sides of the shaft. Scupper, if asked, says that these tunnels stabilize the chain so that it does not swing wildly and crash into the sides of the shaft.

Scupper's Answers

If the PCs ask questions of Scupper, he'll answer most of them. If the PCs don't ask all the right questions, have one of the three NPCs ask them instead.

Scupper's answers to questions the PCs are likely to ask are as follows:

Where are we going?

"Down," Scupper answers, grinning. "Way, way down. A few years back, an Alphantian sky-ship skipper named Haldemar found a place beneath the earth—a *big* place; bigger than Alphantia itself. Where people lived. And Alphantia's going to own it. All of it.

"For the last several years, we've been digging this shaft down to the new world. One day, not too far in the future, we'll have cars on cables roaring up and down, carrying troops and treasures up to Alphantia, carrying colonists and governors down to the new world. Alphantia's already the richest empire on Mystara; with our new colonies, we're going to be *twice* as rich.

"And folk like you, soldiers and retainers who get in before the truth is revealed to the world, will have a good deal coming. You'll have early choice on land to colonize, for instance. The Empire won't forget your efforts."

What's this new world like?

"Oh, no. Better if you wait and see it for yourself. Words can't do justice to it."

If the PCs have already been to the HOLLOW WORLD® setting in a previous adventure, it should already be obvious to them where they're headed.

Also, if the existence of the Hollow World has already become public knowledge, then Scupper won't be so secretive about what the "new world" looks like.

What are we going to do there?

"Lots of things. Some of you will be guards and warriors. We need guards for the town and warriors to conquer the savages who surround it.

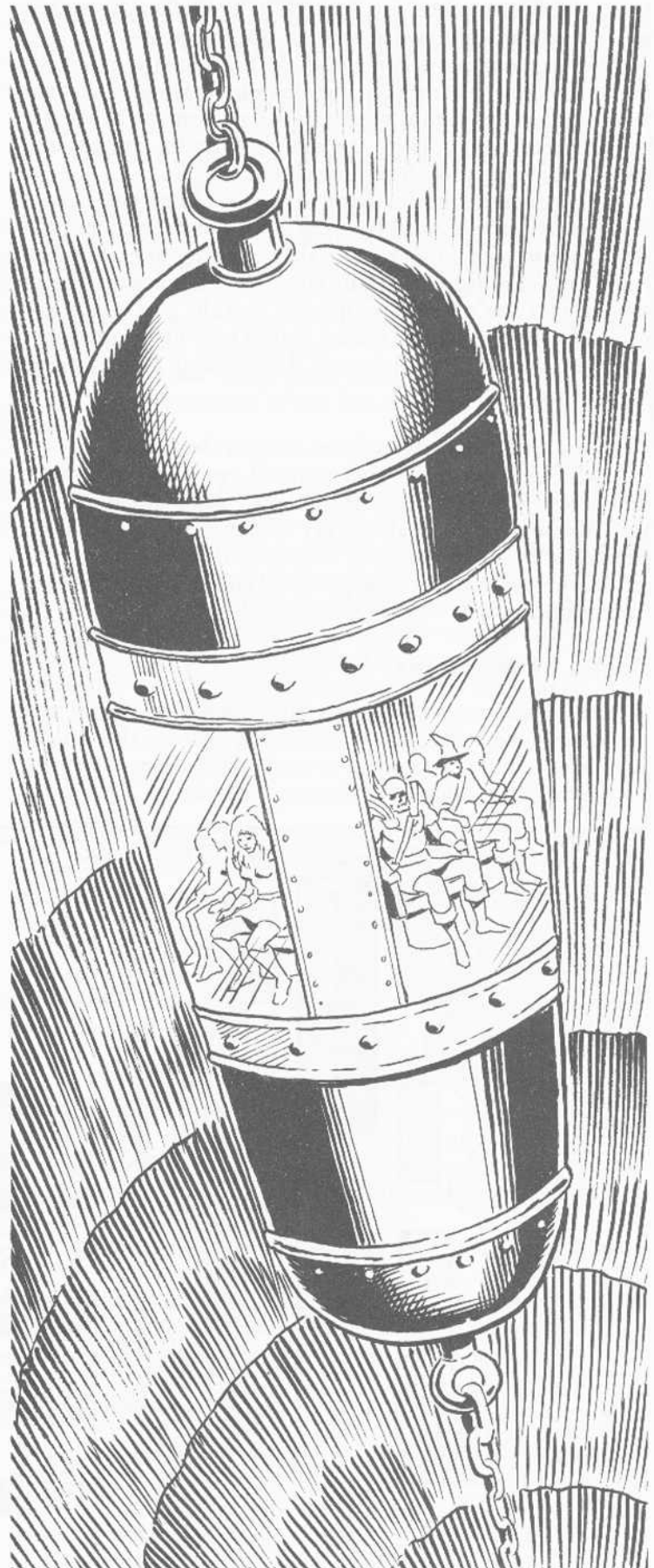
"Some of you will be sailors. We have a growing sky-ship navy down below... but we aren't the only ones. Those evil, treacherous Heldannic Knights are down there, too, curse them. They have their own sky-ships, and plans to conquer all the primitive tribes of this world and make them slaves. Naturally, we're trying to enslave them first, for the glory of Alphantia and empire!

"Some of you will be teachers. If you're skilled with weapons and tactics, you'll be teaching the savages how to do things the Alphantian way. They're citizens of the empire now, and they're going to have to fight to protect it along with everybody else.

"Don't worry, young 'uns. If there's something you know how to do, we'll find you someone to do it to down below."

Who built this thing we're riding in?

"Dwarves and gnomes, mostly. The dwarves are from Denwarf-Hurgon, the dwarf capital of Stoutfellow, in Alphantia. The gnomes are from an interesting place called Serraine, a gnome city of no fixed address." He chuckles to himself, but won't make any explanations about Serraine (if the PCs have encountered Ser-





Phase II: The Build-Up



rairie, the flying gnome city from *PC2: Top Ballista*, then they won't need any additional answers on that subject).

"We have four chains going now. Each one has two cars on it, one at each end. A car will go from the surface world to the new world, and its mate at the other end will go from the new world to the surface world. Then, the chain's direction reverses, and the cars come back to where they started.

"Those gnomes, they're trying to engineer a new type of conveyance. This one'll go all the time in the same direction. Each car'll have to pass through some kind of thingy at each end to help it stay attached to the chain when the chain passes through the pulley. I don't know how it works, but the gnomes say it'll work all right. When that's done, we can have bigger cars arriving every hour or so... and then we'll *really* begin moving troops in and treasure out."

Why don't Alaphatian wizards just teleport there?

"Don't they wish! Ha! They would if they could, but magic don't work the same down there. Some spells just won't go. And no one seems to be able to get from the world above to the new world below by means of magic. Something between the two worlds keeps it from happenin'... and I'll describe that a little further down."

Break at Midpoint

After about sixteen hours of travel—and card-games, and dice-games, and sleeping, and singing led by the off-key Scupper—a faint red glow can be seen coming from below.

"Coming in to Midpoint," Scupper announces. "A chance to

stretch your legs."

Through the windows, the PCs can see what looks like an enormous pool of lava filling the entire shaft below. Just as they begin to worry, the cylinder begins shuddering as it starts to slow. Finally, about 100 feet above the lava it descends to a stop beside a large platform which leads to a large lighted cavern cut into the rock beside it. The following details of this strange way station are keyed to the map on page 42.

1. Platform

This broad shelf was cut into the stone by means of *disintegrate* spells, a fact which will be apparent to any experienced magic-user in the party who looks carefully at the surrounding stone. The edge overlooking the lava-filled shaft has a high, sturdy railing to keep people from falling in accidentally.

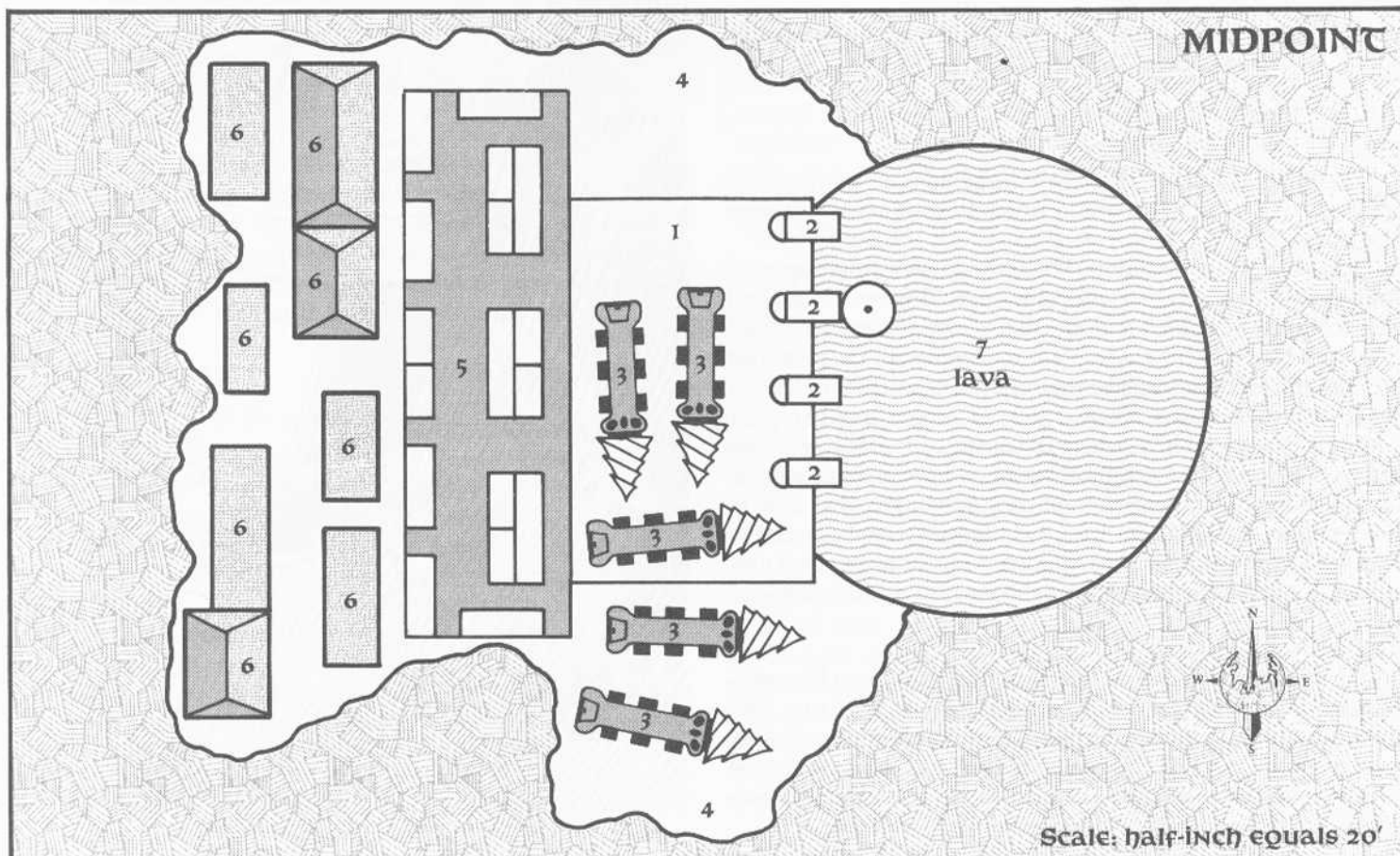
2. Drawbridges

At each of these four points an extendable drawbridge (like the one the player characters saw at the top of the pit) extends out to enable passengers from the cylinders to disembark without falling into the lava below.

Once the PCs are safely on solid ground again, Scupper tells them they have an hour or so to stretch their legs, enjoy the cool air, get something fresh to eat and drink, and have a look about.

3. Caterpillar-Tunnellers

Several gnomish caterpillar-tunneller devices are at rest on the platform, and the PCs will see others come and go during their stay, crawling all over the shaft walls grinding away at the rock.



4. Cavern

The cavern houses a village-sized community, one which is obviously set up to provide services to people travelling from the Known World above to the Hollow World below and to serve as a base for gnomish caterpillar-tunnellers stationed here.

The air in the cavern is cool and refreshing, very different from the hot air the PCs suffered through during the trip down; it is obvious that the cavern is made more comfortable through magic.

5. The Plaza

The area of the cavern closest to the platform is the Plaza, an open area filled with chairs, benches, and tables, surrounded by vendors of juices, wines, and food. Despite the exotic location, the goods are all very inexpensive (the vendors are government-supported). For a few copper pieces, the PCs can refresh themselves with the local goods.

6. Dwellings

Behind the Plaza are small buildings and tenements which serve as the homes of the humans, gnomes, and dwarves which operate Midpoint.

7. Lava

Over the edge of the platform, about 100' below, is a lava lake entirely filling the shaft. It might provide the PCs with food for thought if they happen to notice that the chain which carries their travel cylinder heads straight down into the lava.

The Rest of the Trip

All too soon, it's time for you and your fellow travellers to load back into the cylinder and recommence the descent. Scupper asks everyone to shut and fasten down their windows, and then checks to make sure they're all shut correctly. He then hands out cheap leather bags, one per person. He won't say what they're for, but announces, "If they become necessary, you'll know what to do with them."

Finally, he sits down in a chair, muttering to himself "I hate this part." To the rest of you, his only advice is "Hold on tight!"

Suddenly, the cylinder jerks into motion and plummets 100 feet, bringing your heart into your mouth. You hit the lava pool seconds later at high speed and immediately sink into the fiery depths. The temperature inside the cylinder begins to rise rapidly and the air becomes very hot and stuffy.

The cylinder continues to sink in the lava for what seems like an eternity, downward and downward. Then something very strange happens. You begin to feel dizzy and have an odd sensation of weightlessness. You actually begin to float free unless you hold on to your chairs, which isn't easy, considering that all the chairs are rotating at random in their spherical housings! You begin to wish you hadn't eaten that snack at Midpoint as your stomach rebels...

At this point, all the PCs (and NPCs) must roll less than or equal to their Constitution score on a twenty-sided die or else

they'll need to use those bags Scupper passed out just before they left. What's more, no spells or magic items will work to ease their discomfort—they are now in the World-Shield, which completely negates all magic of any type.

After only a few minutes, the queasiness eases. Oh good; perhaps you'll all have time to get comfortable before you roast to death or suffocate. You begin to feel your weight again, and your chairs gradually swivel around until they all face the same way. Oddly enough, the cylinder seems to have reversed its direction during all this; it's now rising instead of falling. Your speed is also slowing down; perhaps the cylinder is beginning to reach bottom.

Then, the last thing you'd expect to happen, happens. The cylinder pops out of the lava, and you're back at Midpoint!

Actually, although this is Midpoint it is not the Midpoint the characters have just visited, as Scupper will helpfully explain to them: "The one we stopped at on the way down is Midpoint Up, on the other side of the lava. It may feel like we're going up, but then everything's turned around down here—in fact, we're still going in the exact same direction we were before."

After a short stop at Midpoint Down to grab some fresh air and let the cylinder cool off, Scupper shoos everybody on board one last time. The rest of the trip is another sixteen hours of travel, this time "upwards." The PCs will have plenty of time to sleep during this final stretch of the trip.

Emergence

At the end of the long, wearying trip, the travellers in the cylinder will see light far above; gradually, this rather reddish light will become brighter and brighter.

Finally, the PCs' cylinder is hauled up out of the shaft, to the top of a set of pulley machinery identical to that which they saw on the island of Aegos... but these are standing in the open air, not in a building.

The PCs, looking out through the windows, will see that they are in a small walled town surrounded by what looks like jungle or tropical rain forest. The sun overhead is at high noon; it's a funny blood-red color, not yellow like the sun they're used to.

They've come to a land that is new to them...

Within minutes, the PCs, their NPC companions, and their gear will be off-loaded.

Scupper will lead the PCs and the NPCs to the barracks which will be their new home; here he'll introduce them to their new commanding officer (Lt. Stolarer) and they'll be assigned bunks and shown where to stow their gear. They'll also meet their messmates and generally be shown the ropes.

Haldemar and Alphantian Neatharum

For DMs who own the **HOLLOW WORLD®** boxed set, this would be a good time to review the information given there about the Neathar Tribes and the Azcan Empire. DMs who don't have access to the boxed set can make do with the information given here and in Appendix 1 of the **D&D® Rules Cyclo-**

pedia. The maps on page 42 and 45 show the town of Haldemar (the PC's current location) and Alphatian Neatharum (the area of jungle under Alphatian control). The PCs will probably be in this area for some time and will be able to learn the following facts about the place through talking with NPCs and from experimentation of their own.

History of the Region

In the year 2,000 AY (1,000 AC in the Thyatian calendar), Prince Haldemar of Haaken, an Alphatian adventurer and explorer who had been missing for several decades, reappeared in the skies above Alphatia, still commanding his flying ship, the *Princess Ark*.

Haldemar had been famous for his voyages to little-known places, but his final voyage was clearly his greatest discovery. While attempting to fly over the south pole, he had inadvertently flown inside one of the two great polar openings in Mystara's crust. His sky-ship had crashed when it passed through the anti-magic aura which protects the Hollow World, but Haldemar managed to have it towed and sledged to a region where magic worked again.

Flying around in the Hollow World, Haldemar learned that he was not the first human of the Known World to discover this place. The Heldannic Knights, a group the Alphatians had paid little attention to in the past, were already here, conquering lands and making alliances as fast as they could.

When he eventually returned to Alphatia, Haldemar told Empress Eriadna of the Hollow World and was commanded to remain quiet about his discovery. The Empress then set about to exploit Haldemar's discovery for Alphatia's benefit. She discovered soon enough that some force—an anti-magical barrier of lava located at the exact center of Mystara's crust, soon termed the *World-Shield*—prevented magic-users from using *teleport* spells to reach the Hollow World. Those who tried either failed altogether (if they were lucky) or tended to wind up half-way (i.e., in the lava).

Knowing of the difficulty involved in sending sky-ships through the polar openings, she decided that Alphatia's access to the Hollow World should be from Alphatian soil. She contracted dwarves from Denwarf-Hurgon in Alphatia and gnomes from the flying city of Serraine to burrow a hole from Alphatian territory straight down into the mainland of the Hollow World. Over a period of a very few years, they designed the devices and provided the labor necessary to make a shaft 1,200 miles deep... stretching from the island of Aegos to the jungle lands of the Neathar.

The first drilling mechanisms of the Alphatians emerged in the lightly-forested area of the Nogai Neathar tribe. The Nogai are a tribe of Stone Age men, similar to our own world's Cro-Magnons; they are accomplished hunters, trappers, and furrers who live in small forest villages and trade with the mountain elves to the north and the other Neathar tribes in the other directions. They treated the newcomers with suspicion but not hostility, and the first tunnelling explorers from Alphatia had quite a tale to take home.

Soon after, more tunnelling devices arrived; Alphatian wizards emerged, and the subjugation of the Nogai villages began.

In the time since then, the Alphatians have built a town to house and protect the mechanisms which soon will be carrying more and more people and resources between the Known World and the Hollow World. The town was named Haldemar in honor of the Alphatian "discoverer" of the Hollow World; it promises to be a big city some day.

The expanding nation under Alphatian domination is named Alphatian Neatharum. Since the area's initial conquest, the Alphatian rulers and their reluctant Nogai subjects have been under attack by their neighbors, including the Valgrai Neathar and the Azcan Empire.

Rules for the HOLLOW WORLD® Setting

There are many differences between the Known World and the Hollow World; some obvious, some so subtle the PCs may not even notice them.

First, of course, the sun never goes down. It hangs, red and even a little malevolent, at high noon forever and forever. The little town of Haldemar has many porches and awnings to provide its residents with as much shade as possible.

Second, magic doesn't work quite right. Many spells do not work here at all. Whenever a PC tries to cast one of the following spells, the spell vanishes from memory as if it had been cast but produces no effect:

Spells of Holding, such as *hold person* and *hold monster*.

Spells of Charming and Commanding, such as *quest*, *geas*, and all the *charm* spells.

Spells of Divination and Communication, such as *know alignment*, *speak with dead*, *commune*, *ESP*, and *contact outer plane*.

Spells of Summoning, including any spell which summons up any sort of monster.

Spells of Immortality, including *raise dead*, *raise dead fully*, and *reincarnation*.

Spells of Instantaneous Transportation, including *word of recall*, *travel*, *dimension door*, *teleport*, *summon object*, *teleport any object*, *travel*, and *gate*.

Magic items which simulate these spell effects also do not work.

Generally speaking, the only way for PCs to find out which spells do not work is by trial and error. Of course, they could always befriend an Alphatian spellcaster who has been down here a while and can give them useful advice.

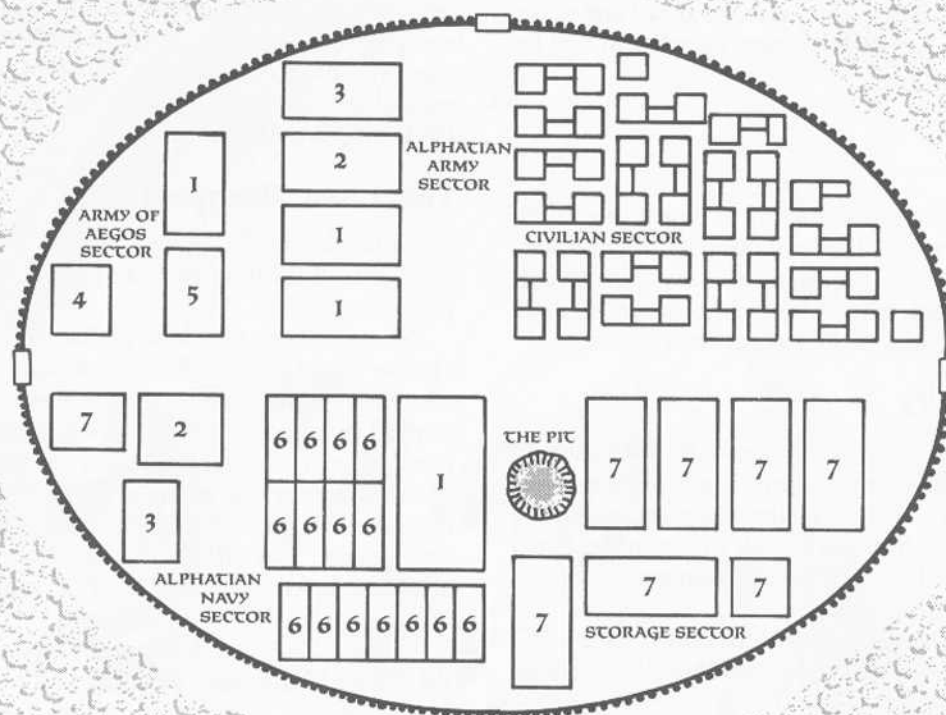
There is absolutely *no* way for them to know that these prohibitions do not affect spells cast by Immortals; Rheddrian's staff functions normally throughout their stay.

Third, the directions of east and west are reversed on maps of the Hollow World; this can be very confusing to newcomers until they get the hang of it.

PC Assignments

The PCs are assigned to the Army of Aegos, one of the five military groups stationed here; its prime responsibility is the security of the town of Haldemar and conquest of surrounding tribal areas. The Army of Alphatia, by contrast, is made up largely of Nogai conscripts with Alphatian officers; their job is to

HALDEMAR



Scale: half-inch equals 200'

guard against attacks by the Azcans. The Navy of Alphatia flies the sky-ships which fend off the occasional attack by the warbirds of the Heldannic Knights; they also do most of the exploring for other areas to conquer. The Dwarven Corps of Engineers (nicknamed "The Pliers") hail from Denwarf-Hurgon and are in charge both of new construction and of maintaining the shaft. Finally, The Yardarms ("Two Arms and One Yard High") are gnome engineers from Serraine who keep the wall crawlers and cylinder-transport system in good repair.

The PCs' immediate commander in the Army of Aegos is Lieutenant Stolander. Stolander is probably lower in experience levels than they are, but he's been with the Army longer and is an Alphatian magic-user.

Stolander

History: Born in the Alphatian capital of Sundsvall, Stolander is a minor nobleman and the fifth son of a moderately wealthy family; this means that none of the family's wealth was likely to settle upon him, so he determined to make his career in the military.

Personality: Loud, fond of complaining, and short-tempered. However, in spite of his annoying manner he is fair in his orders and arbitration and will stand by his men when they have done right and someone of higher rank thinks they've done wrong.

Appearance: Tall, lean, bony; common (copper-skinned) Alphatian coloration, with brown hair and hard-looking brown eyes.

Combat Notes: 5th level MU; AC 7; hp 15; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 dagger or spell; Dmg 1d4+1 or by spell; Save MU5; ML6; AL C. S14 I13 W10 D15 Co10 Ch12.

Spells Carried: 1st level: *magic missile*, *shield*. 2nd level: *invisibility*, *levitate*. 3rd level: *create air*.

Magical Items In Possession: *wand of lightning bolts*, 20 charges.

The NPCs they arrived with—Stryl, Torkia Nuar, and Kelter Zerben—are assigned to the Army of Alphatia, where they teach the natives how to fight with Alphatian weapons in the Alphatian fashion.

If the PCs sneaked down to the city, they'll arrive without proper papers and will be temporarily assigned to work with the Nogai. It will take about a week and a half for the officers down here to learn that there are possible spies in their midst, giving the PCs that much lead time to accomplish their mission.

Communication With Rheddrian

If the PCs use the Staff of Rheddrian to contact their patron, he will be amazed and gratified to hear of their adventures.

He says, "The mere fact of the existence of the Hollow World makes your mission worthwhile. I never suspected that such a vast place could exist beneath our very feet. I will have to look into it further... especially since the presence of troops from an unknown world might have a big effect on the war. But I don't see that any of this reflects the activities of any



specific Immortals. Stay with this assignment for another week or two and keep your eyes open for Immortal interference; if you don't find any by the end of that time, then go ahead and make your return to the surface; perhaps my next assignment will be more fruitful."

Events

While the PCs are assigned to the Army of Aegos, they'll be involved in a number of events which will exercise their abilities. These events are optional; the DM should run the PCs through those he or she thinks will prove interesting. Some of these events will take place whether the PCs are present or not.

Conquest of Nogai-Ta

On a routine exploration mission to the south of Haldemar, the PCs' squadron, led by Stolander, comes across a riverside village of the Nogai, the local Neathar tribe. Standing orders are that units of the army should capture such communities when and where the units find them, so Stolander orders the PCs to spread out, then charge the village.

The idea is to capture Nogai for "re-education," so the PCs will be encouraged to defeat as many as possible without killing them.

The Army of Aegos squadron consists of Stolander, the PCs, and four low-level soldiers:

Soldiers (Army of Aegos) (4). **Combat Notes:** 1st level Fighter; AC 4 (chain mail and shield); hp 8; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 normal sword or crossbow; Dmg 1d8 (sword), 1d6 (crossbow); Save F1; ML8; AL N.

The Nogai forces include thirty warriors carrying stone-headed weapons; twenty are male, ten are female. When half of them have fallen in combat (dead, immobilized by magic, or knocked out using Non-Lethal Combat rules from the *D&D® Rules Cyclopedica*), the rest will surrender, as will the remaining 20 or so Nogai non-fighters in the village.

Nogai Warriors (30). **Combat Notes:** 1st level Fighter; AC 9; hp 8; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 spear or short bow; Dmg 1d6 (spear or short bow); Save F1; ML10; AL N; XPV 10.

If the PCs are defeated, the Nogai will stake the survivors out on ground where they know great lizards frequently wander. The PCs will have time enough to work on their bonds... but before they have had a chance to flee the area, they will be assaulted by a dinosaur. This creature, a large carnivore that moves on two legs, is not the fiercest reptile to stalk the jungles of the Neathar, but the Nogai will have taken all the party's weapons and armor, which considerably evens the odds.

Dinosaur (Land Carnivore, Large) NA 1; AC 6; HD 6; #AT 2 claws/1 bite; Dmg 1d3/1d3/2d4; MV 120' (40'); Save F3; ML 9; TT Nil; Int 1; AL N; XPV 275.

The Nogai will have abandoned their village by the time the PCs return to it, taking the PCs' gear with them. If the characters want to recover the Staff of Rheddrian and their other equipment, they will have to go looking for the vanished Neathar, who have fled far away. The DM can, if he or she wishes, expand this into a major quest set against the backdrop of the *HOLLOW WORLD®* setting.

Theft and Disappearance

Within a "week" (seven sleeps) after the PCs' arrival in Haldemar, a startling theft and set of disappearances will take place.

Kelter Zerben, the cleric of Balthac who came down to the Hollow World with the PCs, has disappeared. The PCs will have seen little of him since arriving in Haldemar, but they may have noticed that he seemed very troubled by the Alphatians' treatment of their Neathar "subjects." Still, he does not seem at all like the deserter type to them. Even more curious, three gnomes have also disappeared, and four of the centipede-shaped tunneling devices. The officers in charge question everybody associated with Kelter, including the PCs, since they arrived here with him.

Though the PCs will be assigned to search in the area around the town of Haldemar, they will find no trace of Kelter.

Attack of the Heldanners

About a week (another seven sleeps) after the odd disappearances, the town of Haldemar is attacked by Heldannic Knights.

The Heldanners arrive in a flotilla of a half-dozen flying ships. A bare three rounds before they arrive, Lieutenant Stolander, who spotted them while out on patrol, comes running in from the forest, shouting "Heldanner alert! Attack on the way! Everybody to battle stations! Get those sky-ships aloft! Prepare to repel invaders!"

If the DM prefers, it can be the PCs who spot the attack force on its way and have to rush back to town in time to give warning.

In the last-minute scramble before the Knights arrive, the PCs will find themselves closest to one of the town's flying ships struggling to cast off; its captain will yell for them to get aboard as her crew weighs anchor. This ship, the *Tipsy Tyrant*, is the first (and only) defending ship to get aloft before the first of the Heldannic warbirds clears the walls... and it's up to the PCs and the ship's crew to defeat as many enemy vessels as possible, lest the town of Haldemar be destroyed.

The Tipsy Tyrant. Small sailing (flying) ship. Officers: 3 (Captain, 1st Mate, Pilot). Sailors: 10. Marines: 25. Cargo Capacity: 100,000 cn. Move: 360' (120') Flying, 90' (30') Sailing (Cruising Speed = 24 mph flying, Max Speed = 72 mph flying). Hull Points: 180. AC 8. Weapons: Two ballistae, one catapult. This cargo ship has been converted for troop transport but still retains its full cargo capacity.

Marakaz (Captain). **Combat Notes:** 10th level MU; AC 9; hp 30; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 spell; Dmg by spell; Save



MU10; ML10; AL N. S10 I16 W13 D12 Co13 Ch14. **Spells Carried:** 1st level— *charm person*, *magic missile*, *sleep*. 2nd level— *detect invisible*, *levitate*, *web*. 3rd level— *fly*, *fireball*, *protection from normal missiles*. 4th level— *dimension door*, *ice storm*. 5th level— *telekinesis*, *teleport*. **Magical Items In Possession:** wand of lightning bolts, 20 charges.

Marines (25). **Combat Notes:** 1st level Fighter or Elf; AC 4 (chain mail and shield); hp 8 (6 if Elf); MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 normal sword or crossbow (humans) or spell (Elf); Dmg 1d8 (sword), 1d6 (crossbow), or by spell (if Elf); Save F1 or E1; ML8; AL N. **Spells Carried (if Elf):** 1st level— *magic missile*.

Sailors (10). **Combat Notes:** Normal Man; AC 9; hp 4; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 dagger; Dmg 1d4; Save F1-1; ML5; AL N. **And the Player Characters.**

cure light wounds ($\times 2$), *light*, *cause fear* (reverse of *remove fear*); 2nd level: *bless*, *blight* (reverse form of *bless*), *silence* 15' radius, *resist fire*; 3rd level: *cause disease* (reverse of *cure disease*), *curse* (reverse of *remove curse*), *striking*; 4th level: *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*; 5th level *cure critical wounds*. XPV 4000.

Marines (Heldannic Knights) (22). **Combat Notes:** 2nd level Clerics; AC 2 (plate armor and shield); hp 10; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword or spell; Dmg 1d8 + 1 (bonus from Strength) or by spell; Save C2; ML11; AL C. **Equipment Carried:** plate armor; normal sword; burning oil (4). **Spells Carried:** 1st level— *cure light wounds* (often cast reversed) or *cause fear* (*remove fear* reversed); 50% chance of each. XPV 30.

Sailors (9). **Combat Notes:** Normal Man; AC 9; hp 4; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 dagger; Dmg 1d4; Save F1-1; ML3; AL N. **Equipment Carried:** dagger; burning oil (2).

Heldannic Warbirds NA: 6. Small (flying) galley. Officers: 1 (Captain). Rowers: None. Sailors: 9. Marines: 22. Cargo Capacity: 40,000 cn. Move: 360' (120') Flying, 90' (30') Sailing (Flying Speed = 24 mph). Hull Points: 90. AC 8. Weapons: Two catapults (one bow, one stern). This galley has been refitted for flying use; it has no rowers or rowing oars, carrying extra marines instead.

Captain (Heldannic Knight) (1). **Combat Notes:** 10th level Cleric; AC -1 (suit armor and shield); hp 45; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 sword or spell; Dmg 1d8 + 1 (bonus from Strength) or by spell; Save C10; ML11; AL C. **Spells Carried:** 1st level:

The Heldannic forces are heavily armed with kegs of burning oil; they are under orders to set fire to the entire town.

Five unengaged Heldannic ships can drop enough burning oil to torch the entire town. Unfortunately, the dry-docks are the warbirds' first target, and only the PCs' ship gets off the ground in one piece. This means that if one Heldannic ship can keep the *Tipsy Tyrant* engaged, the rest can destroy Haldemar. Or, looked at from the player characters' point of view, if the crew of the *Tipsy Tyrant* can engage more than one enemy ship at a time, some of Haldemar can be saved.

Captain Marakaz is no fool; she will quickly assess the situa-



tion and suggest that anyone capable of bringing an attack to bear on one of the other ships should do so without delay. She will turn over command of the *Tyrant* to whichever PC has struck her as the most competent (the DM should choose one who could not engage a ship by himself or herself) and fly forth to attack one of the warbirds in single combat. For every one of the Heldannic ships the PCs and Marakaz can engage, 20% of the town will be spared. Eventually the Knights will be routed as Alphatian sky-ships out on patrol at the time of the attack see the flames and come hastening back.

If any of the Knights are taken prisoner after the fight, they will boast that they were able to inflict so much damage because of a traitor in the Alphatian ranks. If the PCs question them further, they will learn that some time ago the Knights received omens from their Immortal patron, Vanya, that they should believe everything they heard from a man dressed in black bearing as his symbol a sheared dragon's head. Sure enough, only a few days ago such a man wandered out of the jungle up to a Heldannic encampment (if the PCs ask, his description fits Kelter Zerben's).

To their delight, the stranger told them everything they needed to know to launch this attack against the hated Alphatian interlopers, including the town's layout, patrol schedules, and troop strength. To their amusement, he asked them to promise not to hurt any of the Neathar, only their Alphatian overlords; they readily agreed, since they have plans to subject the tribespeople themselves once the Alphatians are destroyed.

Only now will the full extent of the damage from Kelter's plan become apparent. Not only is the outpost badly damaged, but during the fighting all the Nogai conscripts deserted. The few Alphatian warriors who noticed their flight assumed they were merely getting out of the way of the burning oil, but in retrospect it becomes clear this was a premeditated mass desertion; reconnaissance flights show they have completely left the area, and the remaining tribes seem to have gone with them.

There is worse yet to come.

The Disaster

The town of Haldemar is in serious need of help and reinforcement right now, after all the damage it suffered during the attack. A few hours after the flying galleon attack, what feels like an earthquake shakes what's left of the town. To the horror of all watching, the Pit collapses shut, sealing their only link with the world above.

The PCs, and all the other surviving folk of Haldemar, are now trapped. The Heldannic Knights can be counted on to renew their attack, and Alphatian Neatharum is surrounded by the now-hostile Neathar on one side and Azcan Empire (ever-vigilant to increase its territory) on the other. It is therefore vital to get word to the surface of what has happened below, to let them know there are survivors in need of reinforcement or rescue.

The PCs will be assigned to one of the two parties sent out to try to reach the upper world. One group will use one of the few remaining centipede-crawlers to try to burrow its way through 1200 miles of rock. This approach is recommended for DMs who do not have access to the HOLLOW WORLD® boxed set

or those who want to wrap up this stage of the adventure quickly. The journey will be as grueling as it is tedious, but after months of work they should be able to emerge somewhere near Pittstown.

Gnomish Centipede-Shaped Tunneller. Small Mechanical Vehicle. Normal Crew: 4 (Pilot, Co-Pilot, Drill Operator, Rock-Catcher). Cargo Capacity: 50,000 cn (cargo is normally rock shaved away by the tunneller's drill mechanism; the cargo bay can be converted into passenger or food storage space). Move: 90' (30') while tunnelling, 120' (40') otherwise. Hull Points: 80. AC 4. Drill does 2d8 damage to living targets.

The other group will be dispatched in a sky-ship (perhaps under the command of Captain Marakaz, if she survived) in a desperate attempt to use Captain Haldemar's escape route via the hole in Mystara's south pole. DMs who have the HOLLOW WORLD set are encouraged to develop suitable adventures along the way. Eventually the ship will either have to land or it will crash as it enters the pole's anti-magic field; from here the PCs and their comrades will have to abandon ship and walk through the icy wastes until they reach the outer world. Eventually, after many adventures, they should be able to make their way back to Alphatia with considerably more experience than when they left.

Catching Up on the News

Once the PCs reach the surface again, by whichever route, their first priority should be to deliver their message to the Alphatians (after all, the survivors of Haldemar are counting on them). They will be taken to Sundsvall for a personal audience with Empress Eriadna herself. She will commend them for their heroism, even if they originally reached the Hollow World by subterfuge; player characters who are citizens of the nations with which Alphatia is currently at war will be given safe passage wherever they choose.

From one of the Empress's advisors, they will learn more about what caused the shaft's collapse and the fate of their ex-friend, Kelter Zerban.

Several weeks after the shaft suddenly collapsed, construction workers clearing away the ruins of the disk-shaped building in Pittstown were startled when a lone centipede-tunneller emerged from the rubble-filled pit. While they watched in wonder, its hatch opened and an exhausted Kelter Zerben climbed out. He shouted for them to help as he began to drag survivors from Midpoint Up—sixteen in all—from the cargo bay. In the resulting confusion of dealing with the dehydrated survivors, many of whom were in bad shape, Kelter slipped away.

The story, as authorities questioning the survivors later pieced it together, seemed to indicate that Kelter believed that Balthac, his Immortal patron, had ordered him to travel to the Hollow World in order to rescue the Neathar from being enslaved and exploited by the Alphatian colonists. He had therefore arranged an attack on the outpost by Heldannic Knights—an attack designed to cover the captive Neathars' escape and prevent the Alphatians from being able to give pursuit. He had also convinced

three gnomes to help him by stealing centipede-crawlers and using them to honey-comb the walls of the shaft along its weakest points, the idea apparently being to prevent Alphatia from reinforcing its colony.

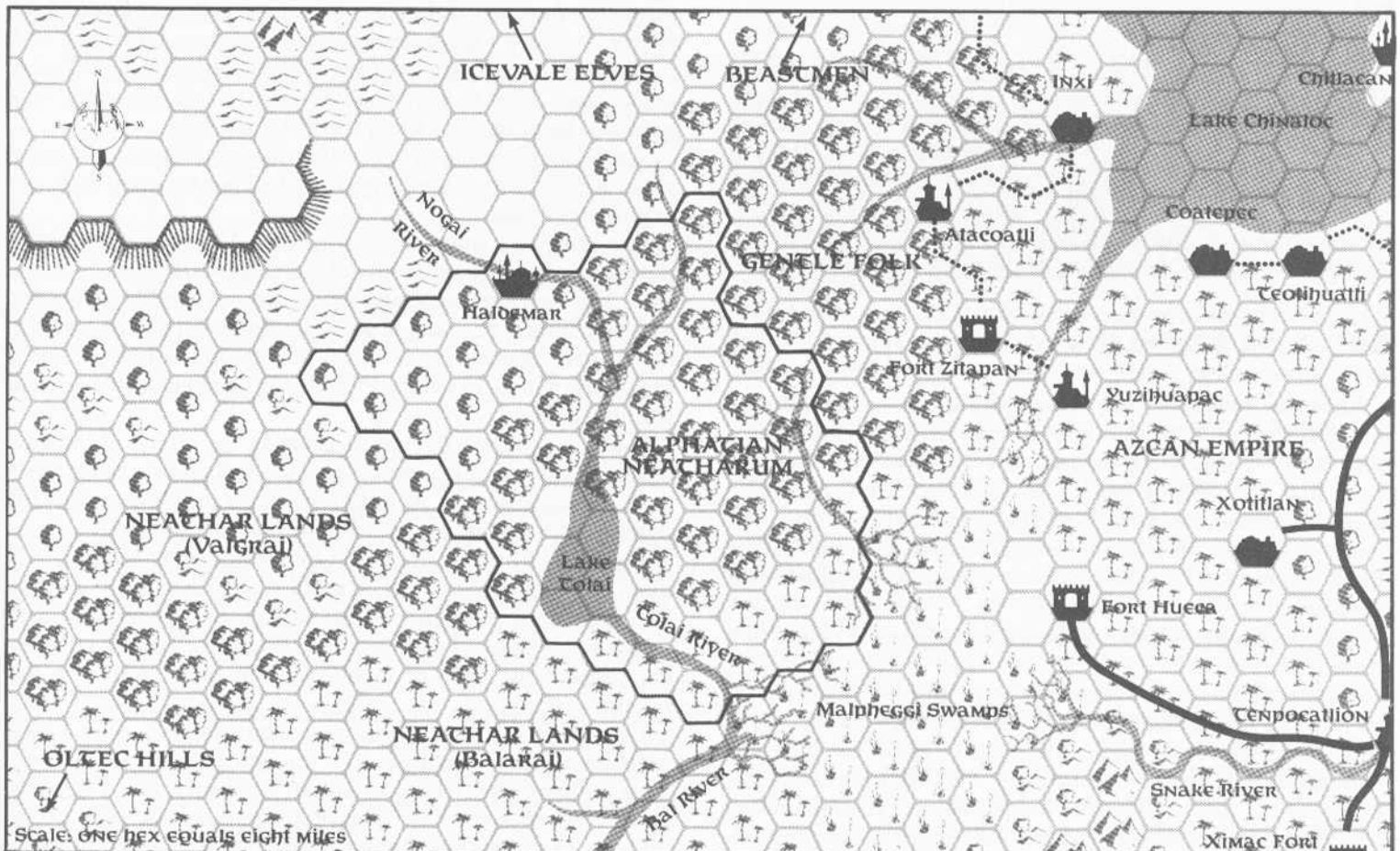
However, as far as the survivors could gather from his babblings, Kelter sincerely believed that when the shaft collapsed Balthac would prevent anybody in Midpoint Up or Midpoint Down from being harmed by magically transporting them to the surface. When he saw the caverns collapse and his accomplices crushed to death along with hundreds of innocent people, he was horrified. His Immortal appeared before him, mocked him for a fool, and revealed that he (or she; Kelter's mutterings were not very clear on this point) was a minion of Entropy and that all Kelter's deeds had been unwittingly done in the service of evil.

Apparently the shock was more than Kelter's mind could take. In a frenzy, he searched through Midpoint Up and rescued, often at great personal risk, the pitiful handful of people still alive. He then managed somehow to keep them alive all through the 600-mile journey up the ruined shaft. The whole way, they said, he alternately cried out for forgiveness or cursed the name of his false patron and swore revenge. Upon reaching Pittstown he slipped away, and has not been seen or heard from since, despite the best efforts of the Empress's intensive network of spies.

Once the PCs communicate again with Rheddrian after hearing this story, he will be very excited by their news. He says, "Clearly Kelter was a pawn used by some Entropic Immortal interested in foiling Alphatia's plan to add new resources to the war. We must find Kelter if at all possible and find out exactly what 'Balthac'—clearly a false name—revealed to him. If you hear any word of your ex-associate, you should let me know at once."

Final Notes

Remember to record all the time the PCs spent in the Hollow World, checking it off on the calendar. When the PCs return to the outer world, they'll have the opportunity to learn which Timeline events took place while they were below-ground. Rheddrian will congratulate the PCs on their good work so far, pay them whatever he owes them (probably adding a healthy bonus, considering all they've been through), and advise them to go about their normal activities while he ponders the import of what they've just told him. He tells them to keep his staff for now so that they can communicate with him if they hear news they think he should know.





This is an adventure for mid- to high-level player characters—those from 16th experience level on up.

DMs wishing to run the player characters from Phase II through this adventure should first run many of the sideline adventures outlined in the Timeline (pp.72-92) to give them the chance to gain the extra levels they will need to face the challenges of this adventure's climax. Alternatively, he or she could adjust the numbers appearing and Hit Dice of their opponents, although this is *not* recommended for the climax of this adventure.

As with Phase I and II, knowledge of the nations of the Known World setting will be helpful to the DM in fleshing out the background. Since the two main encounters of this phase take place in Darokin and Glantri, *GAZ 3: The Principalities of Glantri* and *GAZ 11: The Republic of Darokin* will be useful. At the very least, the DM should be familiar with the descriptions of these countries appearing in Appendix 1 of the *D&D® Rules Cyclopedia*.

Background Information

By the time Phase III actually begins, the following events should be in place:

First, the war between Almathia and Glantri (and their respective allies) should be well advanced, and it should be clear to any casual observer that Almathia is winning. Phase III can commence at just about any point in the Timeline that suits the DM's campaign. In most cases, it will begin sometime between Spring AC 1,007 and Winter 1,008.

Second, by now the PCs should either be dominion rulers or on the verge of acquiring dominions. In the course of the adventures they play in between the end of Phase II and the start of Phase III, the PCs should have the opportunities normally given to heroes as they reach higher levels—the opportunity to become more involved in the politics and grand events of nations, the opportunity to impress and ally themselves with great rulers, the opportunity to rule dominions and found dynasties.

Between Phase II and Phase III

After the events of the "Mystery in Aegos" adventure in Phase II, Rheddrian will not have sent the PCs on a mission for some time—possibly for months or even years. That doesn't mean that he is out of touch with them, merely that they've been busy with more immediate affairs, such as protecting their homes or families from harm. He tells them to keep the Staff of Rheddrian for now, and to keep their eyes open for evidence on the unusual activities of Immortals.

Meanwhile, the PCs should be living the lives of heroes in a world of war.

It's impossible for this adventure to predict all their individual interests and goals. PCs tend to come from different countries, have different alignments, and decide on different objectives in the course of their careers; the adventure can't foresee what all of them will be. We *can* predict that the PCs will be adventuring to check up on things for Rheddrian and (especially) to reduce the damage being done to their homelands by the

war. Remember that even in campaigns that do not play out all the events in the Timeline as adventures, those events still take place, as the Immortals' war marches inexorably toward a conclusion.

How the PCs Get Involved

Rheddrian does not launch the PCs into the finale of this adventure. That's something for them to do themselves.

Rheddrian will periodically ask the PCs if they have heard anything about Kelter Zerben, the cleric they met in the "Mystery in Aegos" adventure. He thinks Kelter is the key to discovering which Immortal(s) are behind the war, and without that information he and the player characters have no chance of stopping it.

The First Clue

The PCs *will* hear word of Kelter Zerben. The first rumor they hear of him marks the date of the start of this adventure.

At some point when two or more of the PCs are together in a market or fair, the characters will pass a stand where a struggling artist sells quick charcoal portraits and tries to drum up business for full-color portrait work.

Several of her sketches and paintings are up on small frames on her stand, so that passersby can gauge her skill, which is considerable. And one of the pieces of art is a full-color painting of Kelter Zerben. In the painting, Kelter's expression is dark and somber; his face is lined, his eyes shadowed by pain. His clothes are all black, head to toe. Most importantly, he's noticeably *older* in this painting than when the PCs knew him.

The PCs will see the painting and undoubtedly want to know more about the man they have been looking for since their adventure on Aegos.

The artist is a young woman named Akatrina. She's Traladaran, from the Grand Duchy of Karamikos. For the past few years, she's been traveling all over the Known World, paying her way by painting portraits of local dominion rulers and wealthy merchants. Akatrina is that rarest of creatures, a helpful NPC; she's quite willing to tell the PCs what little she knows about the man she painted.

A few months ago she was in Thyatis City, capital of the Empire of Thyatis, doing a commission for Anaxibius, the empire's most famous gladiator. Anaxibius has been running a school for fighters since the war began, a kind of training ground to toughen up young Thyatian nobles for field command. Akatrina was hired to paint a portrait of Anaxibius's partner, Demetria (in fact, his fiancée the Princess Stephania, the emperor's eldest daughter and second in line to the throne). Between sessions, the young artist liked to spend her "off time" watching the fighters practice.

One day a burly drunk staggered into the school and told Anaxibius, "They tell me you're the best fighter in this whole empire. Teach me. I have to kill an Immortal, and I need to know every trick there is." Anaxibius gestured for some of his students to throw this impious drunk out, and to everybody's surprise the fellow easily defeated the lot of them in seconds.



Turning the episode into a training exercise, Anaxibius ordered his best students to expel the intruder, only to see them beaten one by one. Finally Anaxibius himself duelled with the stranger, disarming him with an old arena trick. Everyone present expected the ex-gladiator to kill the man on the spot, but to their surprise he offered to teach the stranger if he in turn would help train others at the school. The stranger, who said his name was Fortnell, accepted.

Fortnell became Anaxibius' student and the school's most demanding trainer. Respected for his ability with the two-handed sword, he was nonetheless unpopular with the staff and students. He would never talk about his past and was too dark and driven; whereas the other trainers would unwind and fraternize at the end of the day, Fortnell would head for the nearest tavern and get drunk every night. To his credit, he never drank during the day and was dead sober during his lessons, but his nightly binges quickly earned him the nickname of "Drunken Fortnell."

If Fortnell was a taskmaster at his work, he was absolutely obsessed with mastering his own lessons from Anaxibius. A very good fighter when he arrived, he quickly became even better, until he was capable of holding his own against the great Anaxibius himself. After that he thanked the gladiator for his training, turned down all offers of a permanent position, and left the city.

If the PCs ask the right questions to elicit them, Akatrina does have a few more odds and ends of information. She once overheard Fortnell talking to Anaxibius about his need to "kill them all in order to stop them spreading the same kind of lies I once did"—whatever that meant. She also doesn't think Fortnell was his real name, since it sometimes took him a minute to recognize it, especially when drunk. From his accent, she'd guess he was Darokinian, not Thyatian; she's sure from his training that he was once in some army. Finally, if asked why she painted his portrait, she says he had an interesting face and she thought it'd be a challenge to capture that haunted expression. If they're clever enough to ask, she's willing to sell them the painting for 300 gp; it'll be an invaluable tool for tracing his steps (by showing it to people and asking "Have you seen this man?").

More News of Fortnell

The PCs now have the critical clue they need to find Kelter Zerben's trail. How they choose to follow up on the clue, however, is up to them. If they share their discovery with Rheddrian, he'll be quite excited and promise to find out all he can. Within a short time—perhaps a week or two—they'll hear about isolated attacks on wandering clerics and paladins, all of whom follow a Darokinian Immortal named Balthac. With Rheddrian's help, they can sort out a pattern and trace "Fortnell's" movements; it soon becomes evident that he's launched a one-man war on the Order of Balthac. In each case, according to witnesses, he challenged the cleric(s) bearing the sword-shearing-a-dragon's-head symbol to either abandon the faith of their false Immortal or face him in mortal combat; to a man they refused and died in the ensuing fight.

Just two weeks ago he burned down a new temple to Balthac

in Selenica, a town in the south-east corner of Darokin. If the PCs travel there and ask around, they will gain the following information. After Kelter/Fortnell had fought and slain all the clerics, he told the temple servants that their faith was in a false Immortal who would cause them to do evil deeds and then abandon them. He also told them that he himself was doomed for the evil he's unknowingly done in Balthac's name, and that he was going "to end it where it had all began." The last any of them saw of him, he left Selenica heading north-west along Aengmor's northern border.

Finding Kelter Zerben

Kelter Zerben, also known as Drunken Fortnell, is headed for the Cairn of Balthac, the site where he first became a cleric of Balthac. The PCs have several clues to help them figure this out. One is the pseudonym "Fortnell": attentive players may recall that he told them he was a soldier stationed at Fort Nell, an outpost in north-central Darokin, just before his conversion to Balthac's service. Another is the remark he made in Selenica about returning to "where it all began" and the story he told them on Aegos about becoming a cleric at Balthac's cairn. Or, if they wish, they can simply follow his trail and should be able to overtake him before he reaches his destination. Once they have at least an approximate idea of where he's going, the means and method they use to catch up with him are up to the players.

If the player characters have access to magical means of transportation, such as a *teleport* spell or handy *flying carpet*, then they should be able to get to Fort Nell or the Cairn of Balthac before him. They might even warn the high priestess, Lady Lillith, of his approach; if so, she will do her best to ease any suspicions they may have about her and her order and attempt to recruit their aid in defending Balthac's shrine against this "madman." There is a slight chance (Intelligence check) that any character who saw the portrait of the Corran family in room 23 of Corran Keep will recognize her as Lillian Corran (see the character description on p. 55).

If the player characters do not race ahead of Kelter but instead follow his trail using normal means (i.e., on foot or by horseback), they will overtake him shortly before he reaches the Cairn (assume that he was badly injured in the fight at Selenica and holed up for a while until his wounds healed). He makes no attempt to conceal his tracks, so finding which way he went will be easy, even for those without the Tracking ability.

It is important, however, that the DM takes into account the events of the Timeline as Kelter and the PCs transverse this territory. Northern Darokin is in chaos, as Alfheim comes under the control of the Shadow Elves and Thar's humanoids raid across the countryside. The PCs are likely to encounter many wandering bands, some of them hostile and others desperate. Suggested encounters include:

- a war party of Broken Lands humanoids, who will attack (these attacks may take the form of ambushes, raids on campsites, or even setting off avalanches or forest fires if the party seems too tough to assault directly);
- a badly-mauled Darokin patrol from Ft. Nell, who will warn them of danger on the road ahead;

Phase III: The Great War

- refugees from Alfheim, who might beg them for help;
- Shadow Elves from Aengmor, who are hunting down Alfheim refugees.

If the PCs have the chance to question members of any of these groups as to whether they saw anyone answering Kelter's description pass this way recently, they each have the following information:

- the humanoids say that such a man slew one of their war-particles on this road only three days ago.
- the Darokin patrol say that they saw him and warned him of the trouble ahead, only to have him reply he expected to die anyway and only wanted it to be in the right place and for the right cause.
- the elven refugees say he gave them almost all of his food and his only blanket but would not let them accompany him, saying he was cursed and would only bring them bad luck.
- the Shadow Elves saw such a man but ignored him, since he was clearly not an elf and hence none of their concern.

Confronting Kelter Zerben

When the PCs do catch up to Kelter Zerben, how he reacts to them depends largely on how they act toward him. If they attack, he will defend himself. If they accuse him, he will confess to being responsible for the disaster at Haldemar and Midpoint and say he is now trying to atone for what he did. If they ask him what he's up to, he'll explain.

Even the densest of characters should remember that killing Kelter isn't their goal; their goal is to get the information only he has. If they provoke a fight with him and kill him, they lose their only chance to gain that critical information.

Assuming they don't kill him, he'll tell them what they want to know. His words and tone are anguished, and he'll insist on drinking the PCs' wine or his own while he tells his tale.

"You want to know what happened to me, in the great shaft between Aegos and the world below? You shouldn't. You should leave me now. What I know is going to kill me. If you hear it, it might kill you, too.

"Thought you were ghosts at first. I see a lot of ghosts, these days... all the people who died because I betrayed them: Scupper, Torkia Nuar, Stryl, Lt. Stolerander, all of you... I see them in my dreams every night.

"Why did I do it? Because I was a fool, that's why. Balthac told me to, and like a good little soldier I obeyed. I mean, if you can't trust your own Immortal, who can you trust? At least that's what I thought then....

"Anyway, Balthac told me strange tidings about Aegos and commanded that I investigate. I did... I joined the army there, as you did, and went down into the world below, the world of the eternal sun... I told Balthac what I'd found, and he said the Alphasians were doing an evil thing by enslaving the Neathar. He told me to arrange a raid by their enemies, the Heldannic Knights, as a distraction while the Neathar es-





caped and fled far away, where the Alphas would never find them. Then I was to weaken the shaft so that it would collapse, cutting off Haldemar from reinforcements. Balthac told me that at the moment of collapse, the men and women of the two Midpoint stations would be magically teleported to safety....

"So I did as I was told. Gave the Knights the information they needed to launch a small raid. Picked a time for it when most of the Neathar would be outside the city and the rest could easily slip away in the confusion. Warned the Neathar when to make their break for freedom. Recruited Doblan, Popolor, and Agnesia, three gnomes, to help me destroy the shaft. We each took one of those tunnelling machines and used them to honeycomb the rock on all sides of the shaft, weakening it for hundreds of yards in all directions....

"When we thought it was ready, I prayed to Balthac, and he came. He appeared before me as a ball of light and told me that I had done well; that all of Haldemar's people were already dead and that when the shaft collapsed the folk of the Midpoints would join them. When I protested in horror, he laughed and told me that there was no Immortal Balthac, that he was just an avatar for an Immortal of Entropy. I'd been serving the cause of Entropy all those years, and I never knew it. I'd killed all those poor people, and for no good reason...."

Kelter breaks down at this point and buries his face in his hands. Presently, he will get his grief under control and continue.

"The false Balthac promised me great rewards if I would willingly serve her. Her? Yes; her form changed after that laugh—and I hope I never hear a laugh like that again—and became that of a beautiful woman, jet-black on one side and snow-white on the other. She told me that since I had left, the Order had built a great temple at Balthac's Cairn, where a whole new generation of Clerics of Balthac were being trained, fools like me who would run about the world believing they were doing good when in fact all their deeds only advanced the cause of Entropy. If I joined her, she'd see that I replaced Lady Lillith as the head of the Order.

"There's more. She said I should join the cause of Entropy because the other Immortals were locked in a war over an artifact—a thing that had the power to destroy all the magic in the world. She and other Entropic Immortals were working behind the scenes to prolong the war, secretly helping their foes to destroy one another... and that when the war was over, Entropy would be the most powerful force among the Immortals, ushering in a new era of death and corruption. And I and my fellow clerics of Balthac were blindly helping to bring this about....

"I could stand no more. I refused her offer, and waited to die. Instead, she whispered in my ear, 'You have served me well. I will let you live to see the sun again. You will die as Balthac himself died, in the same place and in the same way.' Then she was gone.

"I raced for Midpoint to try to warn the people there, but seconds later there was a tremendous explosion. I don't know how I survived, but somehow I did. I spent a day searching through the ruins of both Midpoint Down and Midpoint Up until I was sure I'd found everybody still alive. Then I got them up to the surface; I don't remember that part too clearly.

"I knew what I had to do. I had to destroy the clerical order of Balthac. To do that, I had to be able to slay any cleric of Balthac who opposed me... so I learned to fight, better than I ever had before. I keep offering them the chance to renounce Balthac or die, but they won't believe me that there is no Balthac and all choose death before dishonor. They seem to think I'm mad. I guess maybe I am, a little.

"It's almost over now, though. I'm on my way to the Cairn of Balthac itself, where I intend to challenge and slay the clerics, then burn the temple down. Balthac died cutting off the head of an evil dragon, and the way I see it the Order of Balthac is like a dragon; if I can cut off its head it'll die. I don't expect to survive, but if I can stop others being corrupted like I was, it'll be worth it. At least I'll have that honorable death she promised me, so that I might atone for all the terrible things I've done."

Kelter's new statistics are as follows:

"Drunken Fortnell" (Kelter Zerben)

History: Kelter's history since he last saw the PCs is given in his story, above. He is no longer a cleric; he abandoned "Balthac's" service once he learned that Balthac was really evil. He started over against as a fighter and has done a great deal of adventuring to reach his current experience level; he also continues to train hard to improve his combat abilities and is now a Grand Master with the two-handed sword.

Personality: Kelter a bitter, angry man who cannot forgive himself for believing "Balthac" and bringing about the deaths of innocent people in Midpoint. He is driven to avenge his honor and to destroy the temple of Balthac. He wants to die, but not until he has achieved his mission; until then he will defend himself vigorously if threatened.

Appearance: Kelter is now in his late 20s or early 30s. He is still about 6' tall, with thick black hair; his face is ill-shaven, showing several days' stubble. His skin is still tanned but his brown eyes are now surrounded by shadows and haunted thoughts. He was in good shape before; he is now in excellent shape. He wears black garments not adorned with any other color; the surcoat he wears over his chain mail is black, and even the chain mail has been washed with black, so that it is the duller of dark grays. He carries a normal sword and two daggers in addition to a well-used two-handed sword.

Combat Notes: 15th level Fighter; AC 1 (*chain mail* +3 and *Dexterity* bonus); hp 72; MV 90' (30'); #AT 1 *two-handed sword* +2 or *normal sword* +1, +5 vs. *undead*; Dmg 3d6+7 or 1d8+3/+7; Save F15; ML11; AL N. S17 I13 W15 D14 Co12 Ch11. His Weapon Mastery skills given him a bonus of +8 to hit and enable him to deflect up to three blows aimed at him per round OR stun victims he hits.



Kelter's plan of action at this point is simple: he intends to go to the temple at the Cairn of Balthac and burn it to the ground. The PCs will probably want to join him, now that his story has made it clear that the Order of Balthac needs to be stopped. They should also be alert to the possibility of learning more about the artifact the false Balthac mentioned; perhaps temple records will give some clue to its location (if the PCs do not think of this, Kelter will suggest it).

If the PCs foolishly kill Kelter before he was able to tell his story, they will have no idea that information about the artifact is located at the temple. Kind-hearted DMs might decide that Kelter wrote down the preceding story to explain the reasons behind his vendetta and carried it with him so that if he lost one of his duels the cleric of Balthac who killed him might find it, read it, and be inspired to carry on his quest. The document will provide enough details of his first visit to the Cairn for them to have a good idea of its location.

The Temple of Balthac

Assuming that the PCs and Kelter Zerben join forces, they will have no trouble reaching the Temple, especially since humanoids give it a wide berth (the clerics there consider them target practice and react with enthusiasm to their rare forays into the area). If the PCs sneak up on and reconnoitering the site, they will be able to see the general layout of the temple grounds and will be able to figure out the purpose of each building. The absence of regular patrols means that the party will have no trouble sneaking into the main temple.

The Temple of Balthac is nestled in a small dale in the mountains. The temple itself is a large rectangular building made of stone, built in archaic fashion with a colonnade all around. The windowless exterior walls are decorated with bas-relief carvings representing the heroic feats of Balthac's mortal life. There is only one door, which is closed: a great bronze valve depicting Balthac's nemesis, the great dragon Calor. The doorway faces a large heap of stones, an artificial mound about 30' high—according to legend, Calor's burial place. Three wooden buildings stand on the eastern end of the dale; two which seem to be barracks or dormitories and one large one which, judging from the smells and noises that issue from it, contains a kitchen, mess hall, and practice room for the clerics-in-training to learn weapon skills.

The following descriptions are keyed to the map on p. 55 of the Temple of Balthac and its outbuildings.

1. The Temple

The main chamber of this temple is simplicity itself: a large, bare room with a high ceiling. Airholes in the roof are cunningly placed to provide fresh air without allowing rainwater to drip in. In the center of the room is Balthac's tomb, an altar-like marble sarcophagus 4' high and 7' long. Carved

on its lid is the image of Balthac, lying as if asleep, his hands resting on the hilt of his two-handed sword.

There are always two clerics of Balthac in attendance here at all times:

Clerics of Balthac: NA 2; AC 5; 5th level Clerics; hp 20; #AT 1 two-handed sword or spells; Dmg 1d10; MV 90' (30'); Save C5; ML10; TT Nil; Int 10; AL L; XPV 300. **Spells Carried:** 1st level: *cure light wounds*, *protection from evil*. 2nd level: *bless*, *hold person*.

These two will attack Kelter on sight (he has become something of a legend in their order), drawing their weapons and moving to interpose themselves between him and whichever room the high priestess is in at the time (see below). They are among the highest-ranking members of the Order, since (a) the cult is very new and (b) Kelter has been killing its most active members. They have no quarrel with the player characters and will warn them not to interfere with their attempts to deal with the Apostate.

2. Temple Office

This room is as cluttered as the one outside is empty. Shelves piled with scrolls in neat piles line the walls; in the center of the room is a large desk with a comfortable chair. A delicate stained-glass lamp with a *continual light* spell on it rests on the desk, filling the room with gentle rainbow-colored lights.

This is where Lady Lillith, the high priestess, spends most of her time; there is a 50% chance she will be here when the PCs enter the temple. She is a very orderly person and keeps good records, so it will only take them a few minutes to locate any specific item they want. The scrolls of greatest interest are recruitment records listing all current members of the order of Balthac (Kelter will want this to see if he's missed anybody), a map showing the location of all branch-temples (ditto), "The Legend of Balthac" (the version Kelter told them in Phase II; see p. 37), and, in a locked drawer of the desk, a scroll with three *read magic* spells on it and Lillian Corran's diary.

This last and most valuable find contains entries from the year 822 to the present, neatly written in the same handwriting. If the characters take the time to read through all of it, they will learn that "Lady Lillith" and Lillian Corran are the same person and that she has been a *nosferatu* (Glantrian vampire) for most of the past two centuries. For more on the diary's contents, see the "history" section under her character description and the section entitled "What Lillian Corran Knows" below.

3. High Priestess's Chambers

Unlike the sparse main room, this chamber is cozy and comfortable. Beeswax candles in sconces illuminate the beautiful tapestries of city scenes which cover the walls. A large poster-bed with closed drapes rests in the center of the room, and an ornately-carved wardrobe stands in one corner.

Phase III: The Great War

The three tapestries are of very fine workmanship and are worth 300 gp apiece. Any character who has been in Darokin City has a chance (Intelligence check) of recognizing them as scenes of how the city would have looked a few hundred years ago. The wardrobe is full of dresses made to fit a tall, thin woman; they are modern in style, made of fine fabrics, and worth about 20-50 gp each. Clearly, whoever wears them prefers cool colors, as they are all shades of blue, green, and yellow. The bed is both elegant, with red velvet privacy curtains, and comfortable, with goose down mattress and pillows. The bed functions as the nosferatu's coffin; beneath the mattress the frame is filled with dirt. The entrance to the secret escape tunnel (#4) is hidden in the floor panel of the wardrobe.

If the high priestess is not in the temple office when the adventurers enter the temple, she will be here (50% chance of either). Since she is a nosferatu, she can be active day or night; although she dislikes sunlight it will not destroy her as it would an ordinary vampire.

Lady Lillith (Lillian Corran)

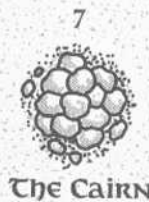
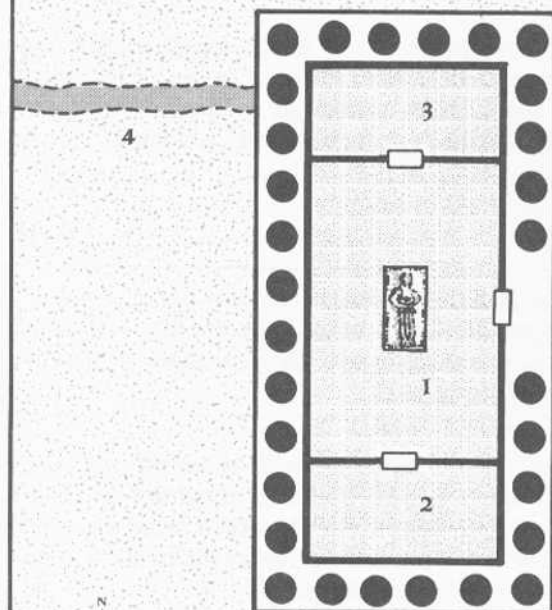
History: Born in the year 795 AC, Lillian was a society belle who at age 17 fell in love with and married a young Darokin noble named Alexander Corran. When he achieved his baronial status in 821, he took his wife and their 9-year-old son with him into the rugged mountains of northern Darokin where he was building his own castle—Corran Keep. The city-born Lillian was not cut out to be a pioneer and slowly wilted in this desolate spot. The grief of seeing her husband

inexorably losing his war with the local humanoids and her son's sudden death in a skirmish caused her to withdraw into herself and begin to waste away. She would undoubtedly have died with her husband in the final sack of Corran Keep, but shortly before that event she was spotted by a vampire-like creature from neighboring Glantri. Struck by her now-ethereal beauty, the creature swooped down upon her as she walked the parapets and carried her off to his home, where he transformed her into a creature like himself.

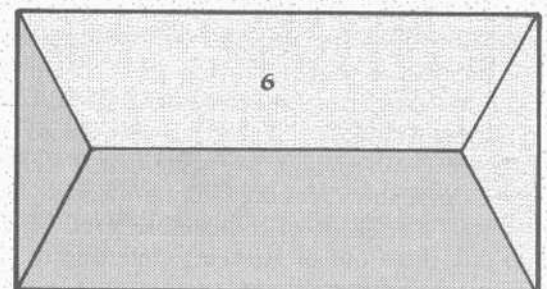
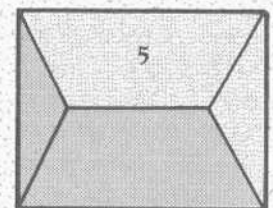
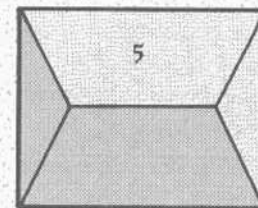
Forced to serve her murderer, Lillian became a palace servant in the vampire-haunted Glantrian principality of Boldavia. Eventually, about thirty years later, her master discovered that a rival prince, Etienne d'Ambreville, had gained control of an artifact of great power. He decided to wrest control of the artifact from him, but proved no match for d'Ambreville's magic and was destroyed.

Free at last, Lillian stayed on in Glantri, establishing herself in Glantri City. She watched the Great School of Magic being built over the site her former captor had said hid d'Ambreville's artifact. Over the years, she patiently gathered information about the artifact and its powers. She studied in the Great School to learn about the nature of magic and the multiverse. Increasingly, she found herself fascinated by Entropy, the Power which animates all the undead races. A century ago, she became a cleric of Hel, one of the Entropic Immortals. In Glantri, where clerics of any type are forbidden, she had to keep her new vocation a secret.

TEMPLE OF BALTHAC



The Cairn



Scale: half-inch equals 10'



In the years since, she has served Hel faithfully. Her most recent task was to organize the false cult of Balthac. As high priestess of the order, she alone knows that there is no Immortal named Balthac and that his clerics are really unsuspecting minions of Hel.

Personality: Lillian is fascinated with Entropy, the force to which she owes her continued existence. She sees it not as evil and destructive but as a cleansing force which calms and quiets the chaos of life. She is cultured, intelligent, and gentle; an odd combination for an undead cleric of Entropy. She is quite dangerous, since she seeks to spread what she sees as Entropy's "gifts" (i.e., the peace of death) in any way possible. Even after all these years she has a soft spot in her heart for her long-dead family, especially her son.

Still a city dweller at heart, she is looking forward to the time when she finishes this assignment and can return to Glantri City or Darokin Town.

Appearance: Lillian is a tall, thin woman, with very beautiful features and long blonde hair. Her skin is pale, but it is not clear from either her appearance or her manner than she is undead; she looks like an elegant courtly lady rather than a creature of the night. She has green eyes.

Combat Notes: 9-HD *nosferatu* and 9th-level cleric; AC -3 (base AC 2, Dexterity bonus, magical bonus); hp 36; MV 120' (40'), flying MV 180' (60'); #AT 1 bite, weapon, or special; Dmg 1d4 (bite), 1d10+2 (two-handed sword), or by spell; Save C9; ML11; AL N; XPV 2,300. Immune to normal non-silver weapons, *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*; regenerates 1 point per round; animal-form abilities like vampire. S10 I16 W17 D16 Co9 Ch17 Languages: Darokin, Alignment (Neutral), Glantrian, Elvish.

Unlike vampires, *nosferatu* drain blood, not levels; they are unharmed by sunlight, although they find it painful and avoid it when possible.

Spells Carried: 1st level: *cause light wounds*, *darkness*, *fear*. 2nd level: *bless*, *hold person*, *resist fire*. 3rd level: *continual darkness*, *cure disease*, *speak with the dead*. 4th level: *animate dead*, *cause serious wounds*.

Magical Items In Possession: *two-handed sword +2*, *ring of protection +3*.

Whatever the PCs do, if they enter the temple they will confront Lady Lillith at some point. Unless they deal with the two clerics guarding Balthac's tomb quickly and quietly, she will hear the scuffling of melee and come to investigate. She will appear in the doorway of whichever room she is currently in, order her guards to stop fighting, and demand to know who the intruders are and why they are profaning this holy place.

Lillian is clever enough to realize that if Kelter got this far, then he's probably capable of killing them all, especially if his new-found friends are of comparable level. Therefore she will try to talk them out of attacking, referring to Kelter as "this poor, misguided man" in an attempt to convince the PCs that his story is the deranged hallucinations of a madman. She will bargain with them: restrain Kelter, leave this site without doing it or its inhabitants any further harm, and she will tell them any-

thing they want to know.

If the PCs attack her, she will flee through the escape tunnel; she has not survived 200 years by sticking around to defend lost causes.

If at least one of the player characters recognizes her from the portrait in Corran Keep and addresses her by her real name, she will be caught off-guard and lose her composure. She will be thoroughly distracted if they tell her about Crackle, the Lightning Zombie youth who animates the body of her dead son; the PCs may be surprised at her desperate urgency to know where she can find him. If they are clever enough to use this as a bargaining chip, she will tell them all she knows. If they negotiate shrewdly enough, they may even be able to blackmail her into calling the whole congregation together, admitting the truth of Kelter's charges, and disbanding the Order forever.

What Lillian Corran Knows:

Two groups of Immortals from the Sphere of Energy and their allies and mortal followers are currently locked in a struggle over an artifact which has the power to change the way magic works. There is no Immortal named Balthac; Lillian set up the church of Balthac at the orders of her Immortal patron so that Hel would have a way to manipulate well-intentioned people into furthering the cause of Entropy. In her decades of sifting rumors concerning the Radiance, Lillian has learned that it is hidden somewhere under Glantri City; that it seems to be under the control of Etienne d'Ambreville, the most powerful magician in Glantri; that Etienne and his friends are sometimes able to cast highly unusual spells, presumably as a result of their work with the object. She believes its exact hiding place is known only to Prince Etienne and that it can only be reached through *teleport* spells. She suspects it to be somewhere under Glantri City, probably directly beneath the Great School of Magic.

4. The Tunnel

Only Lillian knows of this secret escape route; it leads from the wardrobe in her bedchamber to a cave in one of the nearby hills. She has a spare coffin, along with a change of clothes, a good book, and a 200 gp "emergency fund" hidden in the exit-cave.

5. The Barracks

Each of these buildings is sparse and functional, containing 40 simple wooden bunk beds. Each bed has a wooden chest at its foot. A few tables with chairs around them complete the room's furnishings.

In the daytime, these buildings will be empty. At night, about 30 people sleep in each building (there are more beds than people due to the losses Kelter has been inflicting on the organization). The chests provide a place for the trainees to store their armor and weapons while sleeping.



Balthac's Clerics-in-Training (normal men and women): NA 1d6 (daytime), 30 (nighttime); AC 5 (daytime, chain mail) or 9 (nighttime); HD 1-1; #AT 1 two-handed sword; Dmg 1d10; MV 90' (30') (daytime, in armor) or 120' (40') (night); Save F1-1; ML 7; TT Nil; Int 10; AL N; XPV 5.

6. The School

This large two-story building serves as a school for clerics; its ground floor is divided between a kitchen and mess room, while the upper floor is a single huge room used for weapon-training and theological lectures. During the day 50 clerics-in-training will be here with three instructors, while five more trainees will be doing kitchen duty. At night this building will be unoccupied.

Instructors (Clerics of Balthac): NA 3; AC 5 (chain mail); 5th level clerics; 20 hit points; #AT 1 two-handed sword or spell; Dmg 1d10 or by spell; MV 90' (30'); Save C5; ML 9; TT Nil; Int 12; AL N; XPV 300. **Spells Carried:** 1st level: *cure light wounds* × 2. 2nd level: *bless*, *hold person*.

Balthac's Clerics-in-Training (normal men and women): NA 55; AC 5 (chain mail); HD 1-1; 5 hit points; #AT 1 two-handed sword; Dmg 1d10; MV 90' (30'); Save F1-1; ML 7; TT Nil; Int 10; AL N; XPV 5.

Note that these are the residents of the barracks described above; they will either be encountered in the barracks at night or in the training hall during the night, but not both.

7. Calor's Cairn

This rocky mound stands about 30' high; it is made up of small boulders, probably weighing about 20-30 lbs each, piled one atop another. Legend says that the bones of Calor the dragon lie buried within.

Hel's Revenge

Once the PCs have gained the information or records they want—either through stealth, combat, or negotiation—they'll be ready to leave the complex. As they are leaving, or as Kelter begins setting fires to the complex, they'll have an encounter they would probably rather have missed.

A glow appears before you; in the center is a beautiful woman, half-black, half-white—the Immortal Hel. As you stand speechless, she addresses you in a mocking, amused voice: "So, little mortals. Once again you interfere in my plans. You call yourselves heroes; let's see how you fare against a *real* challenge." With that, she gestures, and *things* start to appear—winged men 8' tall with storklike legs, bird-like faces, and sharp, wicked-looking talons. Hel smiles and adds "If you manage to defeat my little pets, I have another treat for you—after all, I promised Kelter, and it wouldn't do to go back on my word now, would it?" With that she disappears, and you find you can move again—just as the creatures let out horrid screams and move to attack.

These are Screaming Fiends; there is one for each of the player character plus one for Kelter, if he is still with them. Naturally, if they're still alive the clerics and clerics-in-training will come charging out from the barracks or training hall to see what's causing all the ruckus. The trainees will move to join the PCs, but the older and wiser clerics will order them to keep clear; this is the PCs' fight.

Screaming Fiends: NA varies; AC 0; HD 10*****; hp 50; #AT 2 claws/2 talons/1 bite; Dmg 1d4 (×2)/1d8 (×2)/1d6; MV 120' (40'), flying 180' (60'); A-M 25%; Save IM1 or MU 36; ML 10; TT B; Int 1d6+14; AL C; SA Call Other (15% chance of success), Control Undead, Enhanced Reflexes (+2 to surprise and individual initiative), and Swoop (double damage when swooping down on a target from above, useable once every three rounds); XPV 8,500.

Considering these monsters' ability to call up others of their kind, the PCs could well have a protracted, bloody battle on their hands.

There's worse to come: if and when the PCs gain the upper hand over the Screaming Fiends, a far more deadly foe claws its way up out of the ground into their midst. The dragon Calor has heard Hel's call and risen from the dead to wreak havoc again, sending the stones of its cairn flying like pebbles (Dexterity check to avoid being hit; those who fail take 2d10 points of damage from the boulders).

The creature which erupts from the ground is a skeleton... the skeleton of the largest dragon you've ever seen: Calor, Balthac's Bane. Its bones are the brown of things long buried in the ground. Buried in its forehead nearly up to the hilt is the two-handed sword that originally killed the beast. Although it has no internal organs left, you can see flames roar to life in its throat as it prepares to breathe on you.

If Kelter is still alive, he will abandon whatever he is doing and charge the skeleton-dragon, seeing it as his last chance for a heroic death. Should the player characters use magical means to flee (for example, *teleport*), they will elude the Screaming Fiends, but Calor will track them unerringly, catching up with them an hour, a day, a week later (whenever Hel thinks would be least convenient).

The skeleton-dragon's statistics are similar to those of a giant red dragon, except that Calor can turn *invisible* at will (reappearing when it attacks), cannot be hurt by normal or silver weapons or by fire damage, and gains hit points when hit by *lightning bolts* (at the rate of 1 hp per point of damage the spell would normally have inflicted). The first time the creature is hit by such an attack, it will be obvious that the healing is taking place as broken bones re-form and severed pieces regenerate.



Phase III: The Great War



Skeleton-Dragon of Calor: NA 1; AC -8; HD 20****; hp 160; #AT 2 claws/1 bite or breath; Dmg 1d12+2 (×2)/4d8 or fire damage equal to monster's remaining hp; MV 150' (50') ground or 360' (120') flying; Save F36; ML 12; TT special (sword Camb); Int 12; AL C; SA *invisibility* (as ring), unhurt by normal and silver weapons or fire attacks, lightning heals damage; XPV 9,575.

Camb: Elven *two-handed sword* +3, +5 vs. *Dragonkind*, intelligent (no communication), talent of *extinguishing*. Even undead, Calor is still a dragon, so Camb's full +5 bonus does apply if a PC can wrench it loose somehow (this takes a successful Open Doors roll and will cause Calor to focus its attacks on the character attempting it).

Balthac to the Rescue

It's highly likely that the PCs, weakened by a tussle with the clerics and a protracted struggle with the Screaming Fiends, will be in a very bad way once the dragon arrives on the scene. Fortunately for them, help is on the way.

Unknown to Hel, Balthac was a candidate for Immortality at the time of his death centuries ago. His sponsor, the Immortal Terra, was saddened by his death and decided to reward his self-sacrifice by making him a titan; he has served her ever since. Terra's attention has been drawn by Hel's appearance at the shrine, and she is very, very angry to see the mockery Hel has made of Balthac's legacy. Accordingly, she sends the real Balthac to aid the PCs by battling the dragon once again. He will arrive three rounds after the dragon claws its way up out of the cairn.

Above the sounds of battle, you hear a loud, hollow "boom!" from inside the temple, the sound of stone hitting stone. The great bronze door slowly swings open, and a giant of a man wearing antique armor stands in the doorway, lightly carrying a familiar-looking two-handed sword. Balthac has risen from the tomb to join the battle!

Balthac. Combat Notes: Titan; AC -3; HD 15*****; hp 100; MV 150' (50'); #AT 1 two-handed sword; Dmg 1d10+8 (vs. Calor) or 1d10+6 (vs. non-dragon enemies); A-M 25%; Save IM1; ML12; AL L. S18 I12 W13 D16 Co17 Ch16. **Magical Items in Possession:** Sword "Camb" (artifact-strength replica of original)—Elven *two-handed sword* +3, +5 vs. *Dragonkind*, intelligent (no communication), talent of *extinguishing*.

With the arrival of Balthac, the tide should turn in the player characters' favor. He will fearlessly attack Calor until one or the other of them is dead; any of the Screaming Fiends that remain alive when the skeleton-dragon falls will prudently flee by *teleporting* away. If Balthac is slain in the fight, his body and all his equipment vanish. If Balthac and the PCs triumph, then he will praise them for their courage and fighting ability before turning to give a short address to his erstwhile clerics. These poor souls meekly submit to the rebuke he gives them for not being able to tell good from evil and promise to disband the cult of Balthac forever. If Kelter has been slain in the fight with the dragon, Balthac will pick up his body and lay it to rest in the tomb before

vanishing in a blinding flash of light. If Kelter is still alive, the ex-clerics will ask him to lead them in battle against the humanoid hordes overrunning Darokin as a way of making up for their mistakes. In any case, the PCs have won an important victory, gained a vital clue, and are now ready to move on to the adventure's climax.

The Finale

The PCs now know that the war devastating the Known World is the result of several groups of Immortals struggling over control of a dangerous artifact. They know that Immortals of Entropy are taking advantage of this quarrel to wreak havoc on hapless mortals. They also know that the artifact is hidden somewhere in, or under, Glantri City. They should be able to reason that if they could destroy the artifact, the reason for the war would disappear. If they communicate their discoveries to Rheddrian, he will be delighted and arrange to meet them in Glantri City.

Getting to Glantri City

Getting to Glantri City from Darokin would normally be a straightforward and relatively easy journey... but these are not normal times. The Darokin-Glantri border has suffered more from the war than any other area; consequentially, the trip is likely to be full of dangers.

From the Temple of Balthac, the PCs have several routes they might follow. They could take the direct approach and head straight across the Broken Lands, fighting their way through the humanoids they would encounter. They could try to skirt the Broken Lands' eastern border by heading north up into Ethengarian lands and then cutting westward toward Glantri. Or they could head south and west and try to make their way through the area surrounding the Darokin Crater. In any case, they will have a long, hard journey with many encounters along the way; the DM should see the Timeline to know who they can expect to find where.

If the PCs have been in Glantri before, they will find that it has been greatly changed by the war. The countryside is crisscrossed by humanoid raiders, refugees from the south, army patrols, and wandering monsters conjured up by Alphatian commandos. The war has caused a lot of old prejudices to break down as well. Clerics are now not only legal but in great demand as the aftereffects of plague continue across the land. Mercenaries of all kinds are being hired in anticipation of an invasion from Alphatia; even dwarves are welcomed. The PCs will have no difficulty in getting by border guards and patrols if they announce their intention of signing on once they reach the capitol (if they announce they're Alphatian spies here to carry out some sabotage, that's a different story).

Glantri City, once they reach it, has the look of an armed camp. Its walls are manned by vigilant guards, its inns full of soldiers. Most of the gondolas that once plied its picturesque canals have been pressed into service as the city stockpiles food in anticipation of a siege. Refugees are everywhere; some of the grand houses have been converted into shelters for survivors of the southern principalities destroyed by the meteor and human-





oid invasion. The PCs will be challenged as they approach the gates, but will be admitted if they say they are here on "war business."

The School of Magic And Surrounding Sites

The map on pp. 61 shows the area of Glantri City in the vicinity of the Great School of Magic. Places marked on the map include:

1. Citadel

This is a red stone fortress with three bronze doors; the central tower is covered with shiny brass plates engraved with dragons. About 400 Glantrian soldiers are stationed here, along with high-ranking officers, their families, servants, and guests.

2. Tower of Sighs

This black, sinister tower acts as the prison of Glantri City; it is also the headquarters for the City Watch (police) and Glantri's spy network.

3. House of Ministers

This blue stone building is headquarters for all government officials and home to the Glantrian bureaucracy. The Glantrian national treasury is also located here; a site reputed to be so well-guarded that it is virtually thief-proof (i.e., it would be beyond the ability of any of the player-character thieves to break into it).

4. Parliament

This elegant building made of white marble is decorated with decorative turrets, gargoyle rainspouts, and statues of noted Glantrian heroes and statesmen. Its roof is covered with thin sheets of silver and gold. This is where the Glantrian House of Lords meets and holds their votes.

5. Amberhouse

This building is made entirely of amber-colored stone. It is the townhouse of the d'Ambreville family, and the permanent residence of Charles and Isabelle d'Ambreville (Etienne's brother and sister-in-law), the family's representatives in Parliament.

6. The Gorevitch-Woszlany's Manor

This stylish if slightly sinister-looking manor house is the personal dwelling of Sir Boris, brother of Prince Morphail of Boldavia, Glantri's vampire-haunted principality.

7. Great School of Magic

This complex is made of dark grey stone covered with bronze plates chased with silver; the bronze has long since turned green with age. Atop the school are several towers, the highest of which is home to Prince Etienne d'Ambreville, founder of the Great School and the most powerful mage in all of Glantri.

This place is the center of magical learning of the western world; it's where all Glantrian children with any magical ability go to learn the craft. Unknown to anyone but the Grand Master himself (or so he believes), it was built directly above the resting place of the Nucleus of the Spheres, the artifact the player characters have come here to destroy or deactivate.

8. Alexander Platz

This is a broad open area paved with black marble. In the exact center is the Belfry, a tower made of pink marble. This tower contains a crypt holding the remains of Alexander Glantri, the hero who gave his name to the nation. Also in the tower is a device which chimes the time on the hour. At the top of the tower, statues appear hourly; they wear clothes corresponding to the weather expected that day. There is no doorway into the tower. Covered bridges link the plaza to the Parliament Building and the Great School of Magic; guards check passes at both sites. Stairs rise up from the water level to make it easier for passengers to get on board or disembark from gondolas.

The plaza is usually crowded with important Glantrians getting their exercise or orating about current affairs. Around the edges are numerous stairs leading down to the canals for easy access to gondolas.

See GAZ 3: The Principalities of Glantri for more information about these and other sites of Glantri City.

Rheddrian Arrives

Once the player characters are safely in Glantri City, it's time for them to summon Rheddrian. He will ask them to meet him in Alexander Platz, arriving via *teleport* a few minutes after they do. He is wearing Glantrian clothing and carries the Mirror-Shield in a large felt bag. He will be positively beaming with pleasure:

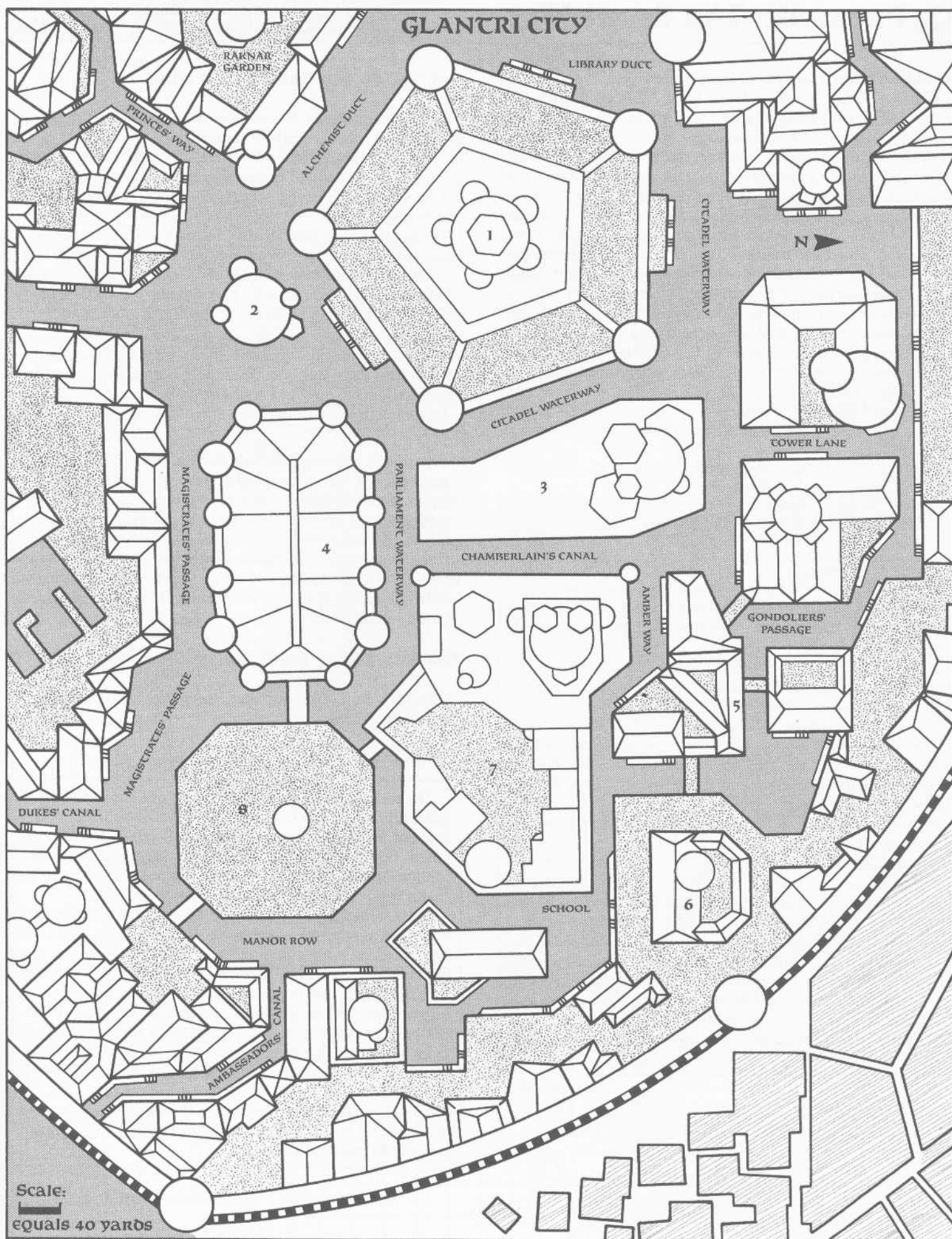
"My friends, you've done it. Before I came here, I doubted that we could be so close to our goal, but now that I'm here I can *feel* the part stolen from my ship so long ago. It's definitely somewhere in or near the city. Now all that remains is the final part of our mission.

"I suspect d'Ambreville has cast powerful spells over the artifact to keep it hidden for so long. But my shield is actually a part of the same 'magic' as his artifact; like calls to like, and with it we can find what we are seeking.

"First, we must find exactly where the device is hidden. I will use my shield to focus on the pull of its energy. Then, I will try to open up a *gate* from here to there. Once we arrive, it should be a simple matter to adjust the magics of the artifact to stop it draining off the energy on which this world's magic depends. Then we can all go home.

"So now we come to your part in all this. Simply put, I want you to keep me alive long enough for me to complete the work. Remember that we're dealing with enough energy here to annihilate this planet and everything on it several times over, so it'd be bad if I were interrupted half-way through.

"Still, it's best to be prepared for the worst. If I'm knocked out or killed, you'll have to carry on without me. I've cast a spell on my shield so that it can help you alter the artifact if anything happens to me. So listen, this is very important—*whatever happens in there, you mustn't stop or turn back.* We'll only get this one chance, and if we fail—well, it's been nice to have known you."





Rheddrian (Mortal Identity of Benekander)

Combat Notes: 36th level Magic-User; AC 9; hp 60; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1 spell; Dmg by spell; Save MU36; ML8; AL L. S17 I18 W15 D10 Co13 Ch14. Languages: All.

Spells Carried: 1st level—*analyze, charm person, detect magic, magic missile, protection from evil, read languages, read magic, shield, sleep*. 2nd level—*continual light, detect evil, detect invisible, ESP, invisibility, knock, locate object* (× 2), *wizard lock*. 3rd level—*clairvoyance, create air, dispel magic, fly, haste, infravision, protection from evil 10' radius, protection from normal missiles, water breathing*. 4th level—*charm monster, confusion, dimension door* (× 3), *remove curse, wizard eye* (× 3). 5th level—*conjure elemental, dissolve, feeblemind, passwall, telekinesis, teleport* (× 3), *wall of stone*. 6th level—*anti-magic shell* (× 3), *lower water, move earth* (× 3), *projected image, stone to flesh*. 7th level—*lore* (× 3), *magic door, power word stun, summon object* (× 2), *sword* (× 2). 8th level—*clone, force field* (× 2), *mind barrier, permanence, symbol, travel* (× 3). 9th level—*gate, heal* (× 3), *immunity, shapechange* (× 2), *survival, wish*.

Magical Items in Possession: Mirror-Shield of Rheddrian.

The Mirror-Shield of Rheddrian (Artifact)

Sphere of Energy

Major Artifact: 750 Power Points. Four Powers (one Attack power, two Information or Movement powers, one Transformation power). Recharges at a rate of 30 TP per turn (180 TP per hour).

Vessel: A bright, mirror-shiny disk-shaped shield 2' in diameter; the straps attached to back are not artifact-quality.

Armor Characteristics: -6 to AC

Powers: Immortal Life-Trapping (Cost: 500 TP; note that unwilling victims are not affected), Teleport (Cost: 50 TP; users can teleport to any scene projected onto the mirror), Lore (Cost: 70 TP; information gained is restricted to *Beagle*-type technology), and Create Any Monster (Cost: 100 TP; may be used to create sprackles, ploppeds, and lightning zombies).

Handicaps and Penalties: Mortal users of the Mirror-Shield will begin to glow the first time they evoke one of the artifact's powers. The second time the same mortal uses the artifact, he or she loses one-quarter of his or her Constitution and begin to suffer amnesia; roughly a fourth of his or her memory will be gone. A third usage reduces the Constitution score and memory by another quarter and gives a distinct grey pallor to the wielder's skin. A fourth use turns the character into a Lesser Lightning Zombie; a fifth into a Greater Lightning Zombie. These effects can only be reversed by Immortal-level magics.

Getting to the Nucleus Chamber

Rheddrian gives the PCs metallic bracers designed to protect them against what he calls noxious magical emanations of the Nucleus (lethal radiation). Once the PCs have made any last-minute preparations and are ready to begin, Rheddrian will pull out the shield, set it facing outward against the side of the tower, and begin.

In any other place but Glantri City, such an obvious display of magic would be a cause for concern, but here onlookers will simply assume that an instructor for the Great School of Magic is conducting a demonstration for his students. If the PCs try to be discrete, the DM should let them; it will not much matter.

Slowly an image of a cavern forms on the surface of the shield. Just then, from the bystanders, a wizard with a spider tattooed on his forehead walks up to Rheddrian. "You've done enough as it is, stranger... leave this place. Now!"

The wizard is a mortal form of the Immortal Korotiku. Rheddrian, realizing he's been caught, instantly uses the artifact to teleport the whole party through the gate (no save) before soaring through the air with Korotiku in hot pursuit, as bystanders applaud this wonderful display of magic. Meanwhile, the party appears in the artifact's chamber with Rheddrian's shield, and alone. From there on, they're on their own. Rheddrian has his hands full leading Korotiku away and will no longer be able to respond to their calls.

The Nucleus of the Spheres Chamber

The map on p. 63 shows the chamber where the Nucleus of the Spheres is kept.

1. The Chamber Itself

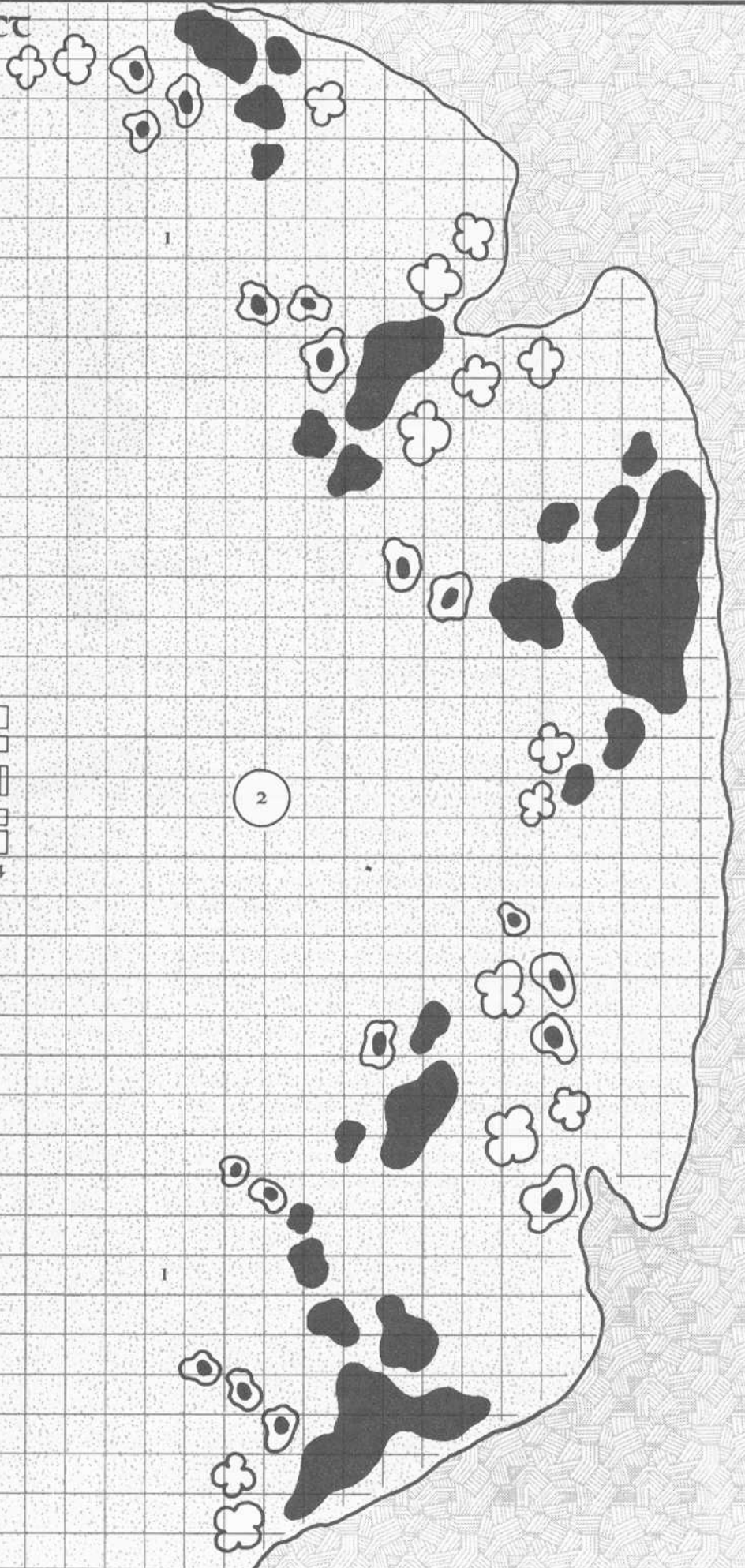
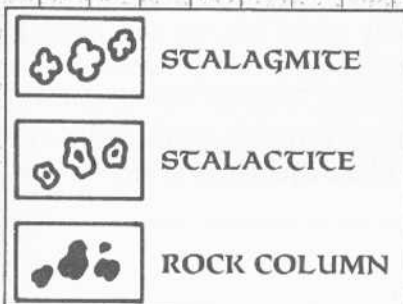
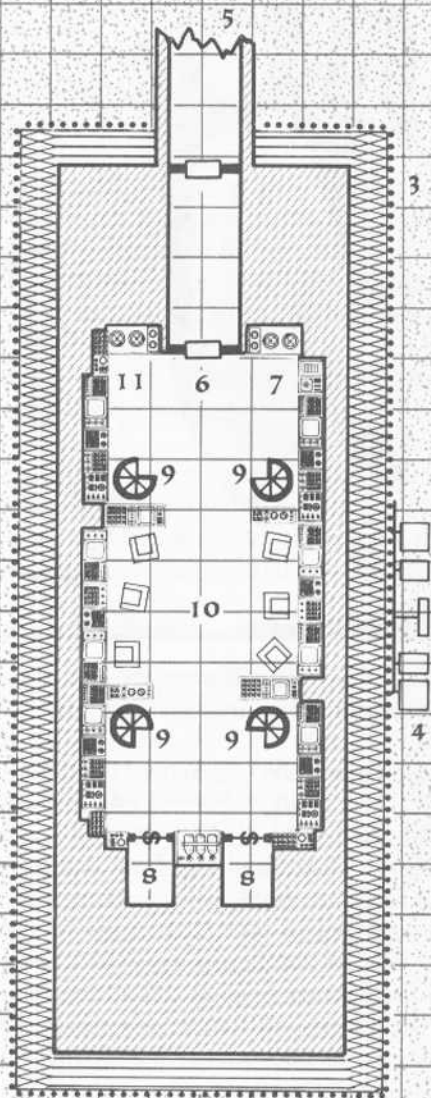
The wall of this huge cavern appear to be made of black stone which has been fused by great heat. The chamber itself is about 500' in diameter and spherical except for the flattened floor. Stalagmites, stalactites, and natural stone columns are illuminated by glowing globes which hang by chains from the ceiling, filling the cave with light.

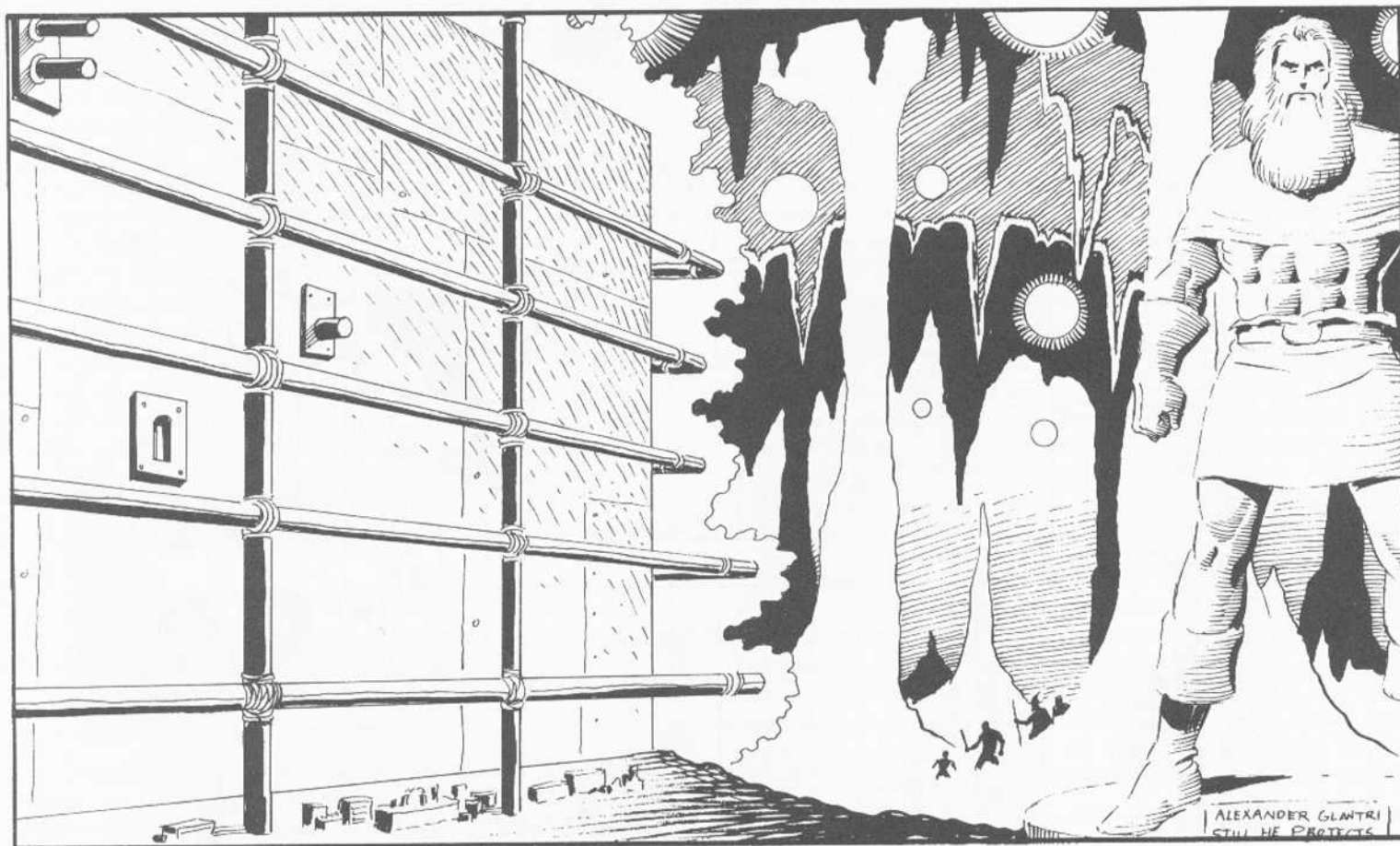
In the center of the chamber is a huge object unlike anything you've ever seen—a box 60' long, 60' high, and 180' long, made of some dull pitted gray metal. It looks very, very old. Snapped-off ends of metal spars and rivets stick out in all directions, as if this thing had once been torn from an even bigger object. A strange gridwork seems to surround the entire box, as does a glow which pulses and fades, pulses and fades in regular five-second cycles. The air in this chamber hums with energy, even at the low end of the cycle, causing the hair on the back of your neck to stand up.

There are a few other items in the chamber as well: a statue on a pedestal and a cluster of tables with what look like magical paraphernalia on them.

CHAMBER OF THE ARTIFACT

Scale: 1 square equals 5'





This object is the Nucleus of the Spheres—the main engine compartment of the *Beagle*. Originally a highly advanced technological device, it has become an artifact through the absorption of enormous amounts of this dimension's energies and the meddling of Immortals. The Nucleus of the Spheres cannot be harmed by any mortal attacks because it continuously draws magical power from the Sphere of Energy, giving it a theoretically infinite number of hit points.

2. Giant Bronze Golem

On a pedestal stands a tall (24') bronze statue of a stern, determined-looking man in archaic Glantrian dress. His eyes gaze off into the future. Inscribed on the pedestal are the words "Alexander Glantri / Still He Protects Us."

This statue is actually a giant bronze golem Rad placed here to guard the artifact. It will seem to be nothing more than a statue until the characters touch any of the items in area 4 or try to enter the Nucleus (area 5). Three rounds later it will animate, announce "The words of safety are not spoken. The intruders must die," and attack. There is no password: this is just Etienne's little joke to distract trespassers long enough for the golem to win initiative in the opening round of combat.

Experienced characters will probably be made suspicious by the lack of any obvious guards and the fact that wizards traditionally love to hide surprises in statues. If they attack the statue

in a preemptive strike, it will animate and attack in response even if they have not yet approached the artifact.

Giant Bronze Golem: NA 1; AC 0; HD 40**; hp 300; #AT 1 fist + Special; Dmg 6d10 + Special; MV 240' (80'); Save F20; ML 12; TT Nil; Int 13; AL N; XPV 20,750.

Special Abilities: Takes no harm from normal or silver weapons. Immune to *sleep*, *hold*, *charm*, gases, fire-based attacks. Anyone hit by the golem takes 1d10 additional points of damage from the heat of the liquid fire which serves it as blood; immunity to fire damage negates this additional damage. Anyone hitting the golem with an edged weapon must Save vs. Death Ray or take an additional 2d6 damage from spurting "blood."

3. The Grid

This metal framework completely surrounds the box; it looks like the sort of grid the engineers build around towers and large buildings they are repairing. It seems to be made of copper tubing. Occasionally sparks run up and down its lengths.

This grid captures and channels the energy the artifact radiates. It is attached by wires to the equipment at area 4 below.



4. Rad's Lab

This cluster of tables, cabinets, and equipment is clearly a wizard's laboratory—a rather strange wizard's lab. Among the more unusual items are a crystal ball attached to the metal grid with a wire, two poles with electricity constantly sparking between them, a 5' square cube of black lacquered wood, and a multi-colored globe suspended in mid-air over a long table.

Touching any of this equipment will cause the giant bronze golem to attack, as noted earlier. The PCs should be able to dispatch the guardian. Unfortunately, its destruction alerts Rad, who will arrive within a few rounds. He will be cloaked by an Immortal-level *invisibility* spell, so they will not be aware of his presence. He will watch them silently to discover their purpose in coming here, only appearing if they start destroying his laboratory or enter the Nucleus (see area 5 below). Of course, there are no "wandering monsters," so PC spell-casters can spend all the time they need to regain new spells.

The PCs will discover the following if they examine the items mentioned above more closely:

Inside the 5'-square open-faced cube whirls a miniature tornado descending from a miniature rain-storm; if you listen closely, you can hear the wind whistling and the sound of rain. On the side of the box is a dial pointing to one of four runes.

The runes are magical; they can easily be deciphered with the help of a *read magic* spell. The four runes read "Fire," "Storm," "Flood," and "Earthquake." The dial is currently set at "Storm." If the setting of the dial is changed, the appropriate conditions appear within the black box.

The weatherbox is Rad's attempt to find ways to put to good use some of the energy the artifact is soaking up. He hopes to be able to spend all that energy in the form of natural disasters over unpopulated areas—or if things go wrong, as a way to protect himself and his allies against more powerful Immortals.

Hanging suspended in space directly above one of the empty tables is a multicolored globe—mostly blue, brown, and green. For such a small thing (it is only about a foot in diameter) it has an impressive amount of detail. You can see that the globe is hollow, with openings at the top and bottom; you can even catch a glimpse of what looks like a tiny red sun within. Even more impressive is the fact that you can see motion—tiny wisps like clouds drift slowly across its surface, and the whole globe slowly, almost imperceptibly rotates.

Only one detail seems out of place. A small red disk hovers over one spot on the globe, casting a ruby shadow on the surface below. As the globe slowly rotates, the disk moves with it to stay in exactly the same position in relation to the globe's surface.

Characters who have some experience with maps will recognize this as a three-dimensional representation of the world of Mystara as it might appear from far, far above its surface. The red circle is directly above the city of Sundsvall, capital of Alphatia. The globe is not solid; if they try to touch it their hands will pass right through it without doing any harm. The whole thing is similar to an incredibly complex illusion, but they will not be able to dispel it.

The crystal ball affixed to the adjacent table has a similar, but much smaller, disk attached to its surface. Unlike the disk on the globe, however, the disk on the crystal ball can be touched. If a PC moves it, the disk on the globe will move as well. By experimenting, the PCs will discover that they can move the disk anywhere they wish on the globe by moving the disk on the crystal ball.

This strange device is the "Doomsday Weapon" responsible for the destructive storm on Sundsvall in Winter 1,009 (see Timeline). If the PCs moved through this adventure before Fall of the Year 1,008, then the DM should presume that Rad became desperate even earlier than the Timeline indicates and consequently began building the Doomsday Weapon earlier. In any case, the PCs will find the Doomsday Weapon ready to use whatever the date they reach the chamber; if it is not yet Winter of 1,009, it has not yet been used.

The Doomsday Weapon does not glow the way the Nucleus of the Spheres does, but it is an artifact assembled by Rad, Rafiel, and Rathanos working together. It has an Armor Class of -20 and 750 hit points. It can only be damaged by weapons with a +5 "to hit" bonus or spells of 5th level and higher. It makes its saving throws against all attack forms as a 36th level magic-user.

Since the greatest danger to Glantri is the magical might of Alphatia, Rad and his colleagues came up with this device in an attempt to drain Alphatia's magical energies while leaving those of his allies and followers intact. The globe shows the world; the red disk is the pointer which shows where the effect will take place. The crystal ball allows the user to move the pointer to the place he or she wants drained of all magic.

When it became clear that Thyatis would have to withdraw from the war and Glantri was doomed, Rad put his device into operation, positioning it right over the Alphetian capital of Sundsvall. To his horror, it did not work in the way he expected. Instead of simply draining away all Sundsvall's magic, the artifact absorbed all the magical energy in the area and then released it again; the release took the form of a violent storm which laid the city to waste, killing thousands of people—the Empress Eriadna among them.

Although Glantri's situation is becoming desperate, Rad is unwilling to use the device again until he finds a way to avoid this unwanted side effect. He recently attempted to contact Ixion and the Alphetians to negotiate an end to their quarrel... only to be rejected by both. Ixion interpreted Rad's offer as a sign that victory was near and ordered his followers to redouble their efforts, while Zandor, the new emperor, seeks revenge for the attack on Sundsvall.

If the PCs ignore the Doomsday Weapon or handle it carefully, proceed to the next encounter (area 5) when they resume their explorations. If they tamper with the device or attempt to



Phase III: The Great War



damage it, their actions cause Rad to appear in his Manifestation Form to stop the PCs, which provokes Ixion's immediate intervention. In this case, go to the section called **Immortal Showdown** on page 69.

Should the PCs return later during the **Immortal Showdown** and damage the Doomsday Weapon, read the following to the players:

A huge surge of energy pulses from the Nucleus down the grid and into the crystal ball, shattering it. The miniature globe flickers, and the tiny red dot hovering over Sundsvall suddenly expands to cover the whole continent of Alphonatia. As all present, including the two Immortals, watch in horror, cracks appear across the surface of the continent and water washes over the edges of the land. Alphonatia is breaking up and sinking.

This event immediately halts the battle between Ixion and Rad. With horror the two Immortals realize what is happening. Proceed with **Alternative Event #1** below.

Alternative Event #1

Ixion shouts at Rad "You fool! Look what you've done!" and disappears. As you watch, there is a second surge of energy, even more powerful than the last. It appears to magnet-

ize the Nucleus in some way; everything attached to the grid is pulled up against the huge grey box and slowly crushed. Rad is slammed up against the side of the Nucleus of the Spheres, where he lies pinned to the wall as if by a great weight. You can see him being slowly drawn *into* the device, absorbed like a sponge soaks up water. He cries out in agony:

"What have you done to the Radiance? Don't you know that my life-force is bound up in it? What have you done to me?"

With a final wail, Rad vanishes from sight as he and the Doomsday Weapon are sucked into the Nucleus of the Spheres.

Rad's frightening disappearance into the Nucleus provoked the permanent destruction of the Doomsday Weapon. All Immortals with an interest vested in Alphonatia rush to the help of the sinking continent to save whatever can be saved. The PCs are now alone with the Nucleus of the Spheres.

As if it had suddenly swallowed too much energy, the Nucleus pulses even more ominously. Amber lights begin to flash at various part of the chamber as an all too suave woman's voice rises from everywhere: "Ten time-units before critical overload. Please activate emergency reroute sequence on Master Console. Repeat: ten time-units before critical overload. Countdown begins: 600... 599... 598..." The voice





continues to slowly counts off numbers as loud metallic screeches echo throughout the Nucleus's chamber.

The Nucleus has reached magical overload. The PCs must find the Master Console (room #10) and alter the artifact. If they do, the countdown stops and Rheddrian finally appears. See the section called **Wrap-up** on page 70.

If the PCs fail to reach that goal before the countdown reaches zero, the whole chamber is flooded with radiation. All PCs immediately suffer 6d6 points of damage and lose consciousness (no save; Rheddrian's bracelets will protect them from the damage but not the shock). Alternation of the Nucleus happens automatically at the end of the countdown. Go to the **Wrap-up** section.

5. The Tube Entrance

A metal tube 20' in diameter and 30' long sticks out of the box at this end. The entrance to the tube is jagged and mangled, but looking down its length you can see it ends in a circular door.

This is the only way into the heart of the Nucleus. Since the engines were delicate and dangerous machines, only the ship's engineers had security clearance to enter this area. Even Rad has not been able to find a way inside. However, Rheddrian's Mirror-Shield was once Benekander's security disk: holding it up to the portal will cause the portal to dilate, allowing passage inside.

If Rad has already appeared to the PCs before this point, go to the next encounter (area #6, the Engineering Chamber). If Rad has not yet made his presence known, he chooses this moment to do so; read the following boxed entry to the players:

As you step into the tube, you bump into something that feels like an invisible wall. You can't feel any sort of door in it; it seems to completely seal the entrance. As you are trying to figure out how to get by this unexpected obstacle, the air next to you begins to shimmer, then coalesce into the form of an old man wearing crimson robes and an elaborate-looking wizard's hat. He has a long white beard, sharp, piercing eyes, and a halo. He grins at you and says, "Going somewhere?"

Despite his light tone, Rad has judged the situation serious enough to appear in his Manifestation Form—a serious mistake, as will shortly become evident. The wall blocking the doorway is an Immortal-level *force field*; although they cannot see it, it completely surrounds the whole player-character party. No mortal spell can pass through or harm the *force field*, leaving them effectively trapped. They can only escape if Rad releases them.

Fortunately for them, Rad is mainly curious to know who they are, how they found this place, and where they learned how to open the portal. He'll wait until the PCs have calmed down a bit and ask them to explain. Eventually he should be able to get the truth or a near facsimile thereof out of them. If so, at this point

he'll release them from the *force field* and say "Let's talk."

Rad is, by this point, desperate. The war is going against him, the Nucleus is beyond his control, and his people are in danger of annihilation. He will therefore propose an alliance: if the party can alter the Nucleus to stop it from leeching power from the Sphere of Energy, Ixion's main complaint against Rad would vanish. Rad's allies Ka and Korotiku should then be able to negotiate an end to the quarrel that started the war.

If the party accepts, Rad lets the player characters enter the artifact and carry on with their mission; in return they will help him find a way to defuse the Doomsday Weapon and bring the Nucleus under control. Proceed to encounter 6, the Engineering Chamber. If the party rejects his offer or acts in a belligerent fashion, Rad prepares to evict the party from the artifact chamber but will be prevented from doing so by the arrival of another Immortal: Ixion himself. Rad's appearance here in Manifestation Form (as opposed to his Mortal Identity form of Etienne d'Ambreville), his use of Immortal-level magic in casting the *invisibility* and *force field*, and his intent to meddle directly with mortals, have given Ixion the excuse he's been waiting for to intervene directly; see **Immortal Showdown** (p. 69) for what happens next.

6. Engineering Chamber

The circular door opens into a circular passageway which runs 40', ending in another circular door. As the last of you step inside, the first door closes behind you, cutting out all noise from outside.

The second door opens as the party approaches it. Beyond lies a huge room 100' long, 40' wide, and 40' tall. The walls, floor, and ceiling are all made up of solid machinery. The room is dark, but arrays of blinking lights and glowing panels flash messages in incomprehensible languages that seem to be made up mostly of numbers.

As the player characters enter the main chamber, a humming noise fills the air as 1' square panels set in the walls at 10' intervals begin to illuminate the interior of the giant box. The PCs will not be able to make sense of any of the messages flashing on the screens without access to a *read languages* spell (if the party does not have this spell, the DM should arrange for Rad to have left a scroll with one lying around in area #4).

According to dials, this chamber is filled with enough magical energy to kill anyone who stays in it more than a few minutes, and it's getting stronger all the time. The energy focused on this chamber is so intense that it will cause 5 points of radiation damage for each round characters remains inside the Nucleus. The bracelets Rheddrian gave them will absorb 50 hp each before burning out, buying them a little time. Still, this should serve as added incentive for the PCs to accomplish their task as quickly as possible and get out.



Phase III: The Great War



7. Bones

Fused to the floor at this spot are a pile of blue, glowing bones. Although they look almost human, subtle differences in their contours reveal they actually belonged to some human-like creature.

These are the bones of Ogdoban Treel, the crewman who betrayed the crew of the *Beagle*. He was slain millennia ago by Rheddrian's Dbots (see next encounter). The energy which pervades this place has affected his remains, turning them into something with the weight and consistency of steel.

8. Dbots

Panels in the wall silently slide open to reveal two niches, each of which contains a 7'-tall suit of armor. The armor is made of some strange black metal without joints. As you watch, they come to life and step from their hiding places. They don't look friendly.

These are Dbots (Defensive Robots). Four thousand years ago Rheddrian/Benekander programmed them to kill all intruders in the ship. That program is still running.

Dbots: NA 4; AC -2; HD 24****; hp 150 each; #AT 2; Dmg varies (any two of the effects listed below); MV 120' (40') ground, 480' (160') flying; Save F16; ML 12; TT Nil; Int 9; AL L; XPV 14,250.

Weapon Systems: Each of these weapons is an internal mechanism, not an external object which the PCs could take away.

Needler: Range 60'. This object shoots a poisoned needle; a victim hit with a needle must Save vs. Poisons or be *paralyzed* for one hour. The needle itself does 1d2 damage whether the character makes his or her saving throw or not. *Neutralize poison* spells will negate the paralysis but not the damage.

Heavy Blaster: Range 360'. This object works like a *staff of fireballs*, doing 8d6 damage; it holds 5d4 charges.

Hand Blaster: Range 240'. This object works like a *wand of fireballs*, doing 6d6 damage; it holds 5d4 charges.

Light Grenades (Yellow) (3): Range 60'. Creates a 60'-diameter effect like *continual light* but lasting only one turn. Characters within range of effect when it first goes off must make Saving Throws vs. Spells or be blinded for one round.

Smoke Grenades (Black) (3): Range 60'. Creates a 60'-diameter effect like a *continual darkness* spell (*continual light* reversed) but lasting only one turn.

Gamma Grenades (Red) (6): Range 60'. Targets within 30' of explosion must Save vs. Death or die; if they make their saving throws, they take 8d6 radiation damage. Only organic tissues take damage from these explosions; they have no effect on inanimate objects. Note that the bracelets Rheddrian gave the characters, if still functioning, may absorb some or all of this damage.

Sonic Grenades (Blue) (6): Range 60'. Emits a damaging blast of sound against all targets within 5' of explosion. Those within range must make Saving Throws vs. Paralysis or sustain 1d4 × 12 damage

and be paralyzed for 12 turns. They do full damage to doors and wooden structures.

Neuron Grenades (Green) (3): Range 60'. This emits a cloud of gas; characters within 30' of the explosion must Save vs. Dragon Breath or sustain 1d4 damage and become paralyzed for 6 turns. This gas doesn't affect constructs, machines, undead, or inanimate objects. It attacks through the skin, so characters won't avoid its effects by holding their breath.

Tangler Grenades (Gray) (3): Range 60'. This grenade blows up to create an effect much like the *web* spell. Targets within 10' of the explosion must Save vs. Wands or be webbed and take 1d4 damage.

The two Dbots will attack any and all intruders. They attack until disabled or destroyed, even pursuing outside the Nucleus if necessary. The DM should note that attacks on or by the Dbots which miss will hit somewhere else, blasting screens or shorting out instruments. The extra energy released in this melee inside the artifact itself might trigger the Doomsday Weapon (cumulative 10% chance per round that a random spell or spell-like effect is triggered in this room).

9. Stairs

Narrow circular metal stairways rise from four points in the room to catwalks 10', 20', and 30' above the floor.

These stairways and catwalks provided the ship's engineers with access to the wall machinery at every point in this room. All these years later they may prove handy in providing ways for characters to temporarily escape or sneak up on the Dbots.

10. Master Console

In this area, six chairs with controls set in their armrests face a battery of large screens, one in front of each seat. All six screens are black.

If anyone sits down in one of these chairs, the screen before that seat will flicker into life. Any one of these screens can be used to alter the Nucleus to stop it from draining magical power from Mystara. If the PCs touch any of the screens with their bare hands, mysterious icons and runes will appear. If the PCs have access to a *read languages* spell, they will be able to understand that the ship's computer is offering them five options: 1) Shut Down, 2) Restart, 3) Hyper Mode, 4) Emergency Reroute, 5) Self-Destruct.

If PCs select entry #1, the computer voice indicate the shut-down sequence cannot be initiated; the energy level is reaching critical level; emergency reroute procedure must be initiated first.

If the PCs select entry #2, the screen beeps and the voice says "Error—invalid choice. Please select another option."

If they select #3, the Nucleus goes into Hyper-Mode and drains energy twice as fast. As it pulses faster, all mortal magic is drained from the chamber of the Nucleus and magical items become totally inert for a whole week. This event sets off the destruction of Alphatia and absorption of Rad; see the "Ending the Duel" section below.

If the PCs select entry #4, a red light begins to flash near one



Phase III: The Great War



of the screens. The voice says "Please display security disk now." The PCs must hold Rheddrian's shield up to the screen. The shield's *Lore* power can then be used to complete the Nucleus's reprogramming. If the PCs don't have the shield, the Nucleus responds as in entry #5 below.

If the PCs select entry #5, the screens show an image of Bene-kander with his name and rank; the voice requests his security code (which the characters don't have). Three rounds later an alarm goes off and, at the rate of one per round, energy blasters hidden in the walls start shooting lazer beams into the room to destroy the "intruder"; each beam does 6d6 damage. They will stop when the PCs select entry #4 and display the Mirror-Shield or when they exit the room.

If the PCs complete sequence #4, they will have successfully stopped the power drain from the Sphere of Energy. The Nucleus will still draw its power from an outside source, but now that source will be the negative energy on which Entropy feeds.

If the PCs activated the countdown by damaging the Doomsday Weapon at area 4, their success with the alteration of the Nucleus halts the countdown, and Rheddrian appears to take them to a place of safety. If they fail, they suffer the damage indicated in area 4 (6d6) and lose consciousness. In both cases, go to the section called **Wrap-up** (p. 70).

If Rad and Ixion appeared and are still fighting their battle and the PCs succeed in altering the Nucleus, then Rad is drawn into the Nucleus of the Spheres, as described in Alternate Event #1 (p. 66). If they fail the alternation during the Immortals' battle, then run Alternate Event #2 (below) instead.

11. Repair Bay

This corner of the room holds several large metal cabinets, all of which are closed. These supply cabinets are where the ship's engineers stored tools and spare parts. Each is crammed full of instruments and high-tech components. The magical energy which pervades the whole compartment has preserved them, so they are all in working order. Some are of no use to PCs (they can't even begin to guess at the functions of things like solid-state circuits, voltage-meters, software-integrity checkers, and the like). There is, however, one device here which the PCs are likely to find useful:

Laser Welders: These 18" crystal and metal rods operate like a *wand of magic missiles* with 20 charges remaining; each *magic missile* is actually a destructive laser beam. There are three of these devices on the shelves; they can only be recharged by someone who understands the scientific principles involved in their construction.

At this point, Ixion shows up. Rad has taken Manifestation Form on the Prime Plane and cast Immortal-level magic at mortals; this is all the excuse Ixion needs to intervene directly. Whether Rad has reached an agreement with the PCs or decided to oust them, read the following to the players:

The air flickers, and a 7'-tall man with flamelike hair and fire where his eyes should be appears, brandishing a huge flaming sword. Glaring at Rad, he shouts in a deep, booming voice that shakes the stalactites "You have broken the Law of Immortals once again, Rad. I'll tolerate no more of this. Prepare to meet your end, renegade!"

The PCs' Choices

If the party had made a deal with Rad, the latter shouts "Hurry! Inside with you, while there's still a chance! I'll hold him off as long as I can to give you more time!" If, on the other hand, they oppose Rad, then he will ignore them to concentrate on the battle with Ixion. Either way, the two Immortals are locked in a deadly struggle and cannot spare much time or attention for mere mortals, leaving the PCs free to take any action they wish.

The PCs now have a number of options. They can enter the Nucleus and attempt to carry out Rheddrian's mission. They can take cover and wait to see the outcome of the duel, although this will expose them to the occasional stray Immortal spell. Or they can join in the battle on either side. Should an Immortal attempt to strike a mortal for any reason, his Immortal opponent will denounce the attack as "shameless and cowardly" and block it as best he can; thus it is possible for exceptionally brave PCs to join in the duel without being instantly destroyed. No mortal intervening in this battle should come out in any kind of good shape, but opportunities for legendary heroism and Immortal gratitude for their selfless sacrifice should be within the PCs' reach.

Normally, a medium-level Immortal such as Rad would stand no chance against a Hierarch as powerful as Ixion; Rad is able to hold his own because he is drawing energy directly from the Nucleus via the Doomsday Weapon. Some of Ixion's attacks are absorbed by the Nucleus, from which Rad in turn draws power to return just as deadly a blow. The result is a standoff between two more-or-less evenly matched opponents (unless unbalanced by the PCs actions). During the duel, the Doomsday weapon progressively suffers from magical overload and threatens to strike Alpathia or the Known World.

If the PCs either damage the Doomsday Weapon or succeed in altering the nature of the Nucleus during the two Immortals' battle, Rad is drawn into the artifact as described in Alternate Event #1 (p. 66). Otherwise the duel continues until one of the two Immortals begins to emerge as the eventual winner, at which point Alternate Event #2 intervenes.

Alternate Event #2

Suddenly all magic ceases in the chamber, including that of the Immortals. A tall, dark figure steps out of the Nucleus of the Spheres, near Rad. It is the shadowy silhouette of a robed creature. Within its darkness, the twinkle of stars can be seen. Two brighter ones mark the location of its eyes.

It says in low voice "Cease."

Rad falls to his knees in absolute awe, while Ixion steps back, his fiery brightness somewhat dulled.



If PCs are present at this time, they all make a Wisdom check at -5. Those who fail instantly lose consciousness; those who remain are totally paralyzed by awe and, at the DM's option, may age 20 years or more as well.

The mysterious creature then adds in a voice that seems to come from the other end of the universe "You've failed to understand the nature of your privilege, Immortals. You should take better care of those from whom you've risen, and from whom you draw that which allows you to exist. Only then will you know who We are."

Then pointing at Ixion, the being says "Leave and learn." Ixion disappears and the creature turns toward Rad. It utters a single word—"Come."

Totally mesmerized, Rad stands up, and silently enters the Nucleus. As Rad becomes one with the artifact, a surge of energy pulses from the Nucleus, down the grid, and into the crystal ball, which shatters.

The miniature globe flickers, and the tiny red dot hovering over Sundsvall suddenly expands to cover the whole continent of Alphatia. As you watch in horror, cracks appear across the surface of the continent and water washes over the edges of the land; Alphatia is breaking up and sinking.

The creature then follows Rad into the Nucleus, and a second surge of energy, even more powerful than the last, magnetizes the whole artifact. The Doomsday Weapon is drawn up against the huge grey box, crushing it completely.

The Doomsday Weapon is forever destroyed. The creature's return into the Nucleus alters it permanently to draw negative energy, the source of Entropy's power. Rheddrian, having shaken off Korotiku, makes a belated appearance just when everything is over; go to the **Wrap-up**.

Wrap-up

Rheddrian returns the PCs, awake or unconscious, to whatever place they call home. He casts powerful Immortal-level healing spells to cure any injuries and radiation damage they may have suffered, recovers his shield, and quickly departs.

The week following the events described above will be totally without magic; no spells or magical items will work (except Immortal-level magics, of course), and magical creatures will feel drained and unable to move. The day that things return to normal, all of the PCs will have the same dream, wherever they are at the time.

In this dream, the PCs are sitting around a banquet table eating dinner; the food and drink are the best they ever remember tasting. Their fellow diners are six Immortals: Ixion and Valerias; Vanya, Asterius, and Rafiel; and Benekander. Benekander/Rheddrian has resumed his original form, which they have only seen once before, when they first rescued him from the Mirror; he looks the same as Benekander as he did as Rheddrian, except that he is a foot taller and his skin is a pale but not unpleasant green. A seventh Immortal, Thanatos, sits at the table but does not eat, drink, or speak.

The Immortals have come to reward the adventurers for their role in saving Mystara. Part of the reward is information; they have decided the PCs deserve to know what has been going on and what was at stake, and so are willing to answer their questions (within reason!).

Play this encounter as naturally as possible, having the most appropriate Immortal respond to particular questions. Ixion can fill them in on the background of his quarrel with Rad (which he now very much regrets), Rafiel on Rad's work with the Nucleus, Vanya on the progress of the war and the part various Immortals played in it, and so forth. Asterius will explain the Brotherhood of the Shadow's role. Now that the Nucleus of the Spheres is drawing its power from the Sphere of Entropy, the three members of the Brotherhood have suffered a serious loss of face (a *Major Stroke*; see Chapter Five of the *Codex* for details), resulting in Thanatos replacing Hel as Entropy's reigning Hierarch. Thanatos, for his part, will merely silently nod in response. If asked what has become of Rad, Rafiel will answer that he has been absorbed by the Radiance but not destroyed; he thinks they have not heard the last of his absent friend.

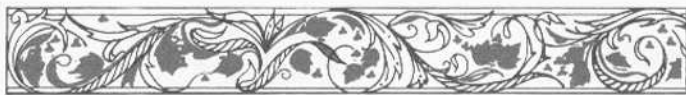
If Ixion is questioned about the dark creature which appeared during his duel with Rad, he will admit that he suspects it was an *Old One*. Perhaps Rad was indeed close to discovering their secret. There is no way to know now exactly what Rad's true fate is. Perhaps he will return some day. Perhaps not.

If any of the Immortals are questioned about the fate of any of the dead heroes, the answer may come in the form of a question: "Are you ready to give up your chance to Immortality, mortal?" If the PC agrees, then the Immortals praise his or her wisdom and worthiness and will wish one companion back to life for each PC willing to make this "sacrifice" (they will allow the PC to pick which deceased character is to be revived). In fact, none of these self-sacrificing PCs will lose their chance at Immortality. If they disagree, the Immortals will be disappointed and unimpressed, and the dead companions will not be returned to life.

And as to the rightfulness of the whole war, they'll answer that both sides had legitimate reasons, but alas the Immortals were not able to solve their quarrel without harming many mortals. They vow to find better ways to settle their disagreements in the future. If the Old One appeared in the final encounter, it will be clear from its words that this lack of concern with mortals was the source of its displeasure with both Rad and Ixion and the reason why the secret of the Old Ones remains undiscovered.

The Immortals will not sit and answer questions forever, and there are some questions they may refuse to answer (for example, "How can I become Immortal" will receive an evasive answer at best). Allow each PC to ask at least one question, and continue the conversation as long as the questions remain pertinent. They will not reveal any more about the fate of Alphatia than that it will never see the light of day again.

Once the conversation begins to wind down, it's time for the characters' rewards.



Wishes and Rewards

Valerias will ask each player character to name one reward he or she truly desires. The seven Immortals will listen carefully and choose a reward based on what each character requests. This doesn't mean that a PC will receive exactly what he or she asks for, merely that the Immortals will use the request as a guideline.

A PC who asks for an excessive amount of wealth will be rewarded by Asterius, who says, "So much wealth could corrupt a noble spirit; already you show signs of greed. Besides, there must always be some treasure left for the taking, or the world would be a dull place. But I will grant you some wealth, that you know comfort and pleasure from it." And he will give the PC a pouch full of exquisite gems worth 50,000 gp.

If a PC asks for a dominion, Ixion will tell him or her, "So be it: I set your feet on the path to rule." In the near future, that PC will be placed in a position to earn the rule of a strong dominion. He or she will still have to *earn* the dominion, but the value or beauty of the dominion may be greater than one he or she would have been able to earn otherwise.

Other reasonable requests will be similarly interpreted and granted by the most appropriate of the Immortals present—Vanya will grant fighting abilities or magical weapons, Rafiel knowledge of spellcraft or magical items, Valerias any wishes relating to personal characteristics or relationships. Hopefully no one will ask for a wish appropriate for The Grim Reaper to grant, but if someone does Thanatos will grant it (although with long-term repercussions the recipient might find disturbing).

Once the giving of gifts is over and the Immortals feel it is time for the conversation to end, Rheddrian/Benekander will say, "My mortal life, illusory as it was these last years, is at an end; I am pleased to have spent some of it with heroes. Fare well, my friends."

Then he and his fellow Immortals will disappear, and the PCs, collectively and individually, will wake up to a new world they helped make possible.

Special experience point rewards should be given to the PCs for what they accomplished during the final encounter:

- Damaging the Doomsday Weapon: 100,000 XP for the party
- Altering the Nucleus of the Spheres: 200,000 XP for the party
- Remaining conscious before the Old One: 10,000 XP per PC
- Heroic intervention on an Immortal's side: 20,000 XP per PC intervening

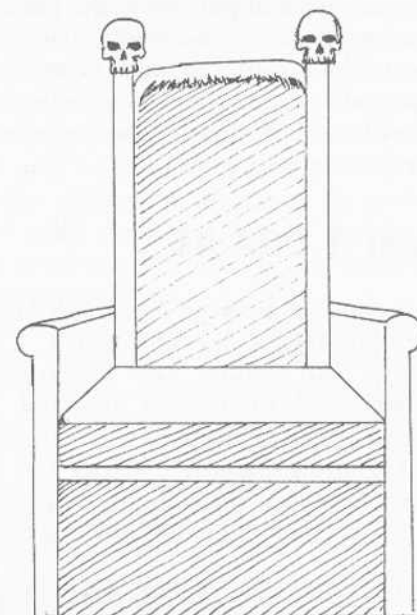
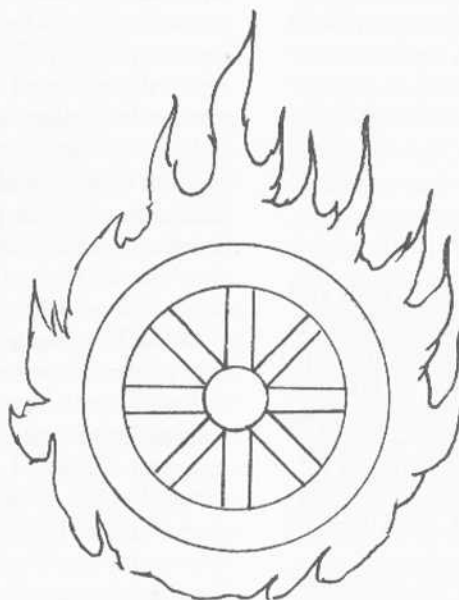
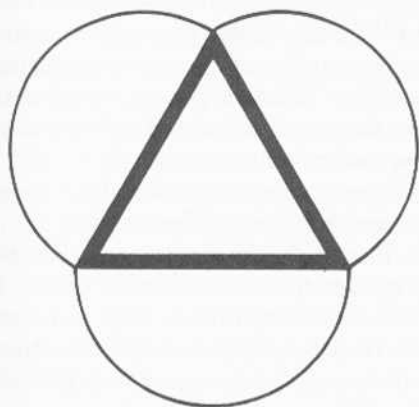
The End... and the Future

The PCs who asked for and received material objects in the dream will find those treasures beside them when they awaken. The others, who asked for less tangible rewards, will discover them in the days and weeks to come.

PCs who later try to undertake one of the Paths of Immortality (see Chapter Three of the *Codex of the Immortals*) will receive a +5 bonus to their Arrival Modifier and Petition Modifier if they seek the sponsorship of Benekander. PCs who sided with one of the two Immortals in the final encounter will gain the same benefit from any Immortal belonging to the appropriate faction. Those PCs who actually saw the Old One without losing consciousness gain an extra +5 with *any* Immortal.

PCs will receive the enmity of Atzanteotl, Alphaks, and especially Hel for their role in those Immortals' humiliation and loss of status, as well as the blow they helped deal Entropy. Thanatos is well-disposed to them for helping him displace Hel, but that should be considered a mixed blessing at best.

And in the upcoming years, the PCs will have a much-changed world to explore and conquer.





While the events of Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III of this adventure are taking place, the world of Mystara is undergoing important changes as a result of Immortal interference.

The following timeline reflects those changes. When running the adventure, it's important to keep track of how much time the player characters spend at each stage and the time that passes between adventures to know what's happening in the world around them.

Not all of these events will touch the PCs' lives; indeed, the PCs may never hear about some of them. In other cases, however, the PCs will find themselves right in the midst of the events described; DMs should feel free to improvise new adventures around their responses.

The timing of these events has been deliberately left vague ("Spring," "Summer," "Fall," "Winter") in order to give the DM more freedom to work them into his or her campaign. Events that the DM thinks would not appeal to his or her players may be deleted and new ones substituted to fit the feel of the individual campaign world.

Getting the PCs to the right place at the right time will be crucial for those mini-adventures the DM wants to run. There are a multitude of devices the DM could use to achieve this end. Clerics, druids, paladins, and the like could receive missions from their superiors or dreams and omens from their Immortal patrons directing them where to go or what to do; this would put them in the path of greater world events. Likewise, other PCs could hire on as body-guards for some travelling merchant or potentate, become spies-for-hire for either or both sides of the conflict, take up the life of bounty-hunters, be professional investigators, become top military commanders or strategists, sign on as mercenaries, or even continue their careers as unaligned free agents. An ambitious DM could even run through this campaign for freshly created rookie Immortal PCs.

The point of all these mini-adventures is to allow time to pass so greater events can happen. They also help the PCs gain experience levels and find bits and pieces of mysterious information they can put together as months go by, slowly unveiling the whereabouts and purpose of the Nucleus of the Spheres. Bene-kander should only be used to bail out a party that has gotten lost in the inextricable mess of world events, PCs who cannot figure what to do next. A long-lasting campaign such as this one should also include adventure opportunities not necessarily related to the main plot.

Year 1,004 AC

In the years between Rad and Ixion's quarrel (AC 1,000) and the beginning of this timeline (AC 1,004), the various Immortals of both factions have mainly worked at recruiting supporters, both mortal and Immortal. Ixion's Ring of Fire has gained control of Alphatia and Alfheim; Rad's Fellowship of the Star controls Glantri, Thyatis, and the Heldann Freeholds. These four years mark an uneasy peace as the two factions maneuver their mortal followers along the paths they want them to take.

Now Ixion orders his followers to begin instigating the war he believes Rad cannot win. Rad, who wants to gain more time to

find ways to use the Nucleus of the Spheres defensively, tries to delay the outbreak of war as long as possible. The bottom line is that the interference of the Immortals is finally coming to a head and resulting in dramatic events.

Spring, Year 1,004: Thyatis's Revolt

News Events: Things have been very busy in Thyatis lately. In recent months, the soldiers and sailors of the Thyatian army and navy, who are *normally* pushy and arrogant, have been outdoing themselves. On the Isle of Dawn, half of which is controlled by Thyatis and half by Alphatia in an uncomfortable state of near-peace, off-duty Thyatian soldiers have been more-than-commonly aggressive toward off-duty Alphatian soldiers.

At the same time, Thyatian warships have been very confrontational toward ships of non-allied nations and have been accused of piracy against trade-ships from Norwold and other Alphatian territories.

Meanwhile, in Thyatis City, the gladiatorial festivities are more lavish than ever, the parties and festivals are being thrown more often and with wilder abandon; all in all, it's a very entertaining place to be... until one spring day when everything goes wrong.

On that date, an enormous riot takes place in Thyatis City. The lower classes have for months seen a steady decline in the quality of the free bread passed out every morning in the city, bread which sustains the life of thousands of poorer Thyatians. While the size of a typical loaf of bread has shrunk in half, the loaves handed out have been only half-cooked and usually swimming with maggots. Finally the city's lower classes revolt, storming the Coliseum during one of the gladiatorial games.

Significantly, the Thyatian legions inside the city are poorly-trained and badly-led; they are unable to put down the rebellion. Far too many legions from other Thyatian cities have to be brought in to quell the insurrection, but quell it they finally do.

Over the next few weeks, the scandal continues to worsen as it is discovered that funds which were to be spent on the free bread were being diverted to fund several senators' nightly festivities, notoriously decadent affairs. Additionally, many Thyatian officers are charged with dereliction of duty or with incompetence, especially those who appear to be addicted to the dangerous *zzonga* fruit; they are executed.

Many of those convicted for embezzlement, bribery, and corruption break out of jail and leave for foreign parts, often in the company of their paramours, women of foreign nationality. Subsequent investigations of the Thyatian prisons reveal that they are rife with corruption; dozens of jailers and military officers involved with the prison system are executed.

What This Means: Most of these events are results of the activities of the Immortals Vanya and Valerias in Thyatis City.

Several years ago, Vanya, in the Mortal Identity of a Keren-dian fighter named Anya, became the lover and then advisor of Emperor Thincol I of Thyatis, a self-made man after her own heart. He has since come to trust her shrewd judgment above that of any of his other counselors. Anya has convinced Thincol that a new age is at hand for Thyatis, when the empire can defeat its long-standing foes like Alphatia if only it can recapture



the warrior-spirit and ideals of its founders. Hence, Thincol and his officers are taking a very hard-line, militant stance against Alpathia and that empire's allies. As a supporter of Rad, she's done this to maneuver Thyatis between Alpathia and Glantri; if Alpathia attacks Glantri, Thyatis will be in the way.

Meanwhile, Valerias has taken on a Mortal Identity of her own. Some time ago, one of her clerics named Helena Ledamiades was killed by a jealous lover. Valerias has taken Helena's form and has made Helena's estate outside Thyatis City the social center of the empire. She has used seduction to set the empire's leading families at one another's throats and inspired many of the younger generation's most promising men and women to throw away their careers for lives of passion. Through the skillful use of blackmail, she has covered her tracks well; no one suspects her to be anything other than the empire's most fashionable hostess.

Helena's activities have led to the disintegration of the Thyatian military's moral fiber, the increased corruption of the public officials, and the increasing decadence of the city. As a supporter of Ixion, she's doing this to weaken Thyatis. Recogn-

looking into the matter, spying around Alpathian-controlled cities, they will be able to discover that it is the clerics of the Immortal Alpathia stirring up all this resentment. However, these clerics will not discuss this matter outside their order. Even if forced to reveal their motives, all they can say is that this is the will of the Immortal they serve. However, this information is significant to Rheddrian if the PCs relay it to him; it helps him draw up his chart of which Immortal is helping whom.

Note that this event continues on far past its Spring 1,004 date, so the PCs can run across these clerical activities and investigate them up to the point that Alpathia declares war on Glantri.

Spring, Year 1,004: A Spy Perishes

News Events: Decades ago, an Alpathian elf named Troikithus, loyal to Empress Eriadna, travelled to Glantri as her spy. Pretending to be an elf from the Grand Duchy of Karameikos, he ingratiated himself with the elven Clan of Ellerovyn and established his identity as an vigorous, intelligent student of



Summer, Year 1,004: Alpathian Proclamation

News Events: The Alpathian Council of Wizards issues a document written and countersigned by Empress Eriadna. In it, the Alpathian wizards accuse the Glantrian Great School of Magic of harboring followers of the Entropic Immortals and using forbidden, evil varieties of magic.

An amused Prince Etienne d'Ambreville, speaking for the other Glantrian princes, replies that there are no followers of Entropic Immortals, or any Immortals, in Glantri, since the nation bans clerics of all philosophies.

Also, d'Ambreville points out, Glantri does not forbid the study of *any* variety of magic; therefore there's no such thing in his country as "forbidden magic." Even if there was, what Glantri's wizards study is their own business; certainly the wizards of Alpathia have no right to dictate to them what they can and can't do.

Lastly, the Glantrians say, will the Alpathians please explain what they're talking about?

What This Means: The Immortals are scarcely involved at all in this incident.

Eriadna and her councils of wizards have heard enough clues and hints over the years to be certain that there are strange, dangerous types of magic being studied in Glantri which might someday prove a threat to Alpathia's superiority. The death of the elf Troikithus just serves to confirm this in their minds. Unfortunately, they don't have enough evidence to stir Alpathia's Thousand Wizards into action or to turn Glantri's neighbors against the principalities.

So Eriadna and her counselors have issued this statement, partly as a bluff (it alludes to sources of information the Alpathians really don't have in the hopes of making the Glantrians nervous) and partly as insult (increasing the tension between the two nations, as the Alpathian wizards begin to worry that if not stopped the Glantrian magic-users might some day outmatch them in wizardry). Unfortunately, the cool response of d'Ambreville (Rad) means that the Glantrians aren't falling for the bait.

What the PCs Can Do: The exchange between the Empress of Alpathia and the Princes of Glantri is public knowledge, so the PCs could investigate matters if they were in Glantri this season (a full overview of the nation and all its notable figures is included in *GAZ 3: The Principalities of Glantri*). Backtracking the late Troikithus's activities would prove beyond doubt that he was a spy. It might also reveal to the PCs the elf's interest in strange magical researches and in Prince Brannart. Unfortunately, this would alert Prince Brannart that more investigators were on to him. Brannart is powerful, influential, and canny, so at some point the PCs will probably have to make a run for it the way Troikithus did in order to survive.

Summer, Year 1,004: Death of Torenal

News Events: A party of Glantrian heroes travels to Sundsvall, the capital of Alpathia, with another letter from Prince Etienne d'Ambreville to the Empress Eriadna. This is a follow-up to the

letter wherein the Glantrians claimed not to know who murdered Troikithus, the Alpathian spy in Glantri City. In this new letter, Prince Etienne provides the Empress with more information proving that Troikithus was an Alpathian spy; his intent is to further embarrass and inconvenience Eriadna.

While waiting for their audience with the Empress, these adventurers meet General Torenal, who is the leader of the Alpathian Empress's elite guard and the father of some of Eriadna's children. When last seen, the Glantrians and Torenal are chatting amicably in a waiting chamber near Eriadna's throne room. What happens afterwards is in dispute.

Torenal and the Glantrians disappear. A day later, Alpathian investigators find the Glantrians, all drunk to unconsciousness, in a tenement in the Alpathian capital. Based on evidence in the tenement hideout — dust which turns out to be human remains, spell damage in the walls, and the use of a *wish* spell to extract memories from the Glantrians' minds — the Alpathians conclude that the Glantrian emissaries *teleported* Torenal to their place of hiding, then murdered him with magical spells, burned his body, and scattered his ashes to the winds. Then, according to the officials, the Glantrian assassins got drunk to celebrate. Eriadna's efforts to use a *wish* spell to resurrect Torenal fails for unknown reasons; the best guess is that the assassins used some sort of unknown magic to prevent his resurrection.

Naturally, the Empress is enraged. Her father, the former Emperor Tylion IV, takes charge of the investigation, and learns some interesting things with his magic.

The Glantrian assassins say they did not perform the murder, but have conflicting memories about the events. One set of memories has them speaking briefly with Torenal, who tells them to return tomorrow, as Eriadna cannot see them until then; in this memory, the Glantrians returned to the inn where they were staying, fell asleep, and did not awaken until the Alpathian investigators found them in another place entirely (the tenement). In the second set of memories, Torenal told them to return tomorrow, and they were so offended by his presumption that they took him away to the tenement and murdered him out of petty revenge.

The Glantrians are confused by these twin sets of memories, but do not think of themselves as callous murderers and do not believe they killed Torenal. Eriadna, on the other hand, believes that the memories where the Glantrians are innocent have been planted somehow, in an attempt to hide the truth of the murder so they can escape justice. Tylion is sufficiently intrigued by the discrepancy that he hasn't allowed Eriadna to kill the Glantrians yet.

Eriadna breaks off formal relations with Glantri, pending further information.

What This Means: This is a trap set by the Brotherhood of the Shadow, the Entropic Immortals who want this Immortal struggle to be long and bloody. They are afraid that if the war does not break out soon, Ixion and Rad might find some other way to settle their quarrel; this murder is their way of helping things along to a more violent path.

Consequently, the Immortal Atzanteotl appeared before the Glantrians in the guise of General Torenal and politely told them to return to their inn, that the Empress would see them



the next day. When they did return to the inn, he used his Immortal magic to put them to sleep. Meanwhile, some of his followers kidnapped the real General Torenal and took him to the tenement, then killed him. Atzanteotl transported the hapless Gланtrians to the same place, then, at the permanent cost of some of his own energy, used a powerful Immortal-level spell (*transform*) to give them a second set of memories about the event, one he was sure would convict them in the Empress's eyes, which it has. He let the Gланtrians keep their genuine memories as well, so that they might be tortured by knowing the truth about their innocence. He also performed an Immortal-level *wish* to ensure that Torenal remained dead in spite of Eriadna's best efforts.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs shouldn't have the opportunity to prevent this event; the murder of General Torenal is pivotal to the commencement of the war.

However, the PCs certainly can be involved in this episode. If they are in the Gланtri area before the event begins and are known as reliable adventurers, they might actually be the "Gланtrians" who took the message to Eriadna and were framed for murder. In this case, you would need to role-play the encounter between Torenal and the PCs, wait until they're in a position when Atzanteotl can cast his Immortal *sleep* spells upon them and put them in his trap. They won't awaken until they're being clapped in chains for Torenal's murder, will doubtless protest all the way to the dungeons of the Imperial palace... and then it's up to them to escape if they're to avoid execution.

Summer, Year 1,004: Heldannic Clerics Killed

News Events: Clerical missionaries of the Immortal Vanya from the Heldann Territories are slaughtered while travelling through the Ethengar Khanates. The Ethengarians deny any involvement, though the bodies are demonstrably riddled with Ethengarian arrows and lances.

What This Means: This event actually has little to do with the activities of the Immortals. The clerics from the Heldann Territories were rude, arrogant, and insulting to the Ethengarians and their beliefs all during their trip. Ultimately, a group of youthful Ethengarian horsemen decided to avenge themselves of the insult in secret; they ambushed and killed the clerics.

In actuality, few of the involved Immortals appreciate the importance of this incident, aside from Vanya, who is naturally outraged. The Brotherhood of the Shadow is alarmed by it, since they want both groups of nations (Alphatia and its followers vs. Gланtri and its allies) to be roughly equal in strength; a Heldannic-Ethengarian war would distract one of Gланtri's most important potential allies away from Alphatia. However, Vanya's grip over the Heldannic Knights is such that the Brotherhood is unable to divert them from turning their attention to the Khanates.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are in the Ethengar Khanate, they could walk into this situation and react... either on behalf of the clerics or the Ethengarians. Whatever the outcome of the event, it is sure to enrage the Immortal Vanya and the Heldannic Knights.

Summer, Year 1,004: "Assassins" Escape

News Events: The Gланtrians who were supposed to have assassinated General Torenal break out of the Imperial Palace's dungeons and escape.

What This Means, and What the PCs Can Do: This event can have any number of different meanings and resolutions.

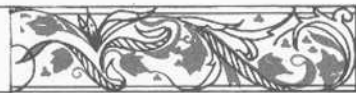
If the Gланtrians who were framed for Torenal's murder are NPCs and the player-characters are unconcerned with their future, then the Gланtrians break out from prison with the help of unknown parties; the investigators of ex-Emperor Tylion can find no clues to how they managed it. The truth is that Tylion himself, becoming convinced of their innocence, organized their escape in his *persona* of Master Terari in order to prevent their unjust execution.

If the framed emissaries were NPCs and the PCs are interested in seeing that justice is served—or just in finding out what the emissaries have to say—then the PCs might wish to free the jailed Gланtrians. Once the PCs are in the city of Sundsvall, a little investigation on their part will reveal that a woman of the imperial court, Galatia Allatrian by name, is passionately protesting the Gланtrians' imprisonment and imminent execution. This isn't because she has any particular love of Gланtrians, but she has recognized from Tylion's analysis that some sophisticated frame has occurred and that the true murderers are still at large... perhaps still within the palace. The empress is not listening to her, because Galatia is not Alphatian; she's an Alphatian-descended Thyatian citizen from the Isle of Dawn. For years she has served as lady-in-waiting to Asteriela Torion, daughter of the Thyatian Emperor and a hostage in Eriadna's court. If the PCs talk to Galatia, they can work out a deal with her whereby she will sneak them into the top level of the dungeons beneath the Palace the night before the prisoners are to be executed; it will then be up to the PCs to reach the prisoners and rescue them. She will be able to provide them with a map of some sections of the dungeons, but only of the upper level; she has never been to the lower level, where the "assassins" are kept. Details of the Imperial Palace's dungeons and defenses are up to the DM, but remember that they should be very sophisticated and difficult to escape from.

Galatia Allatrian

History: Galatia is a cousin of Countess Julia Kendasius, the ruler of Kendach on the Isle of Dawn. Presented to the court of Emperor Thincol of Thyatis, she became lady-in-waiting to his daughter Asteriela. When Asteriela was sent to Alphatia to be a hostage in exchange for Empress Eriadna's son Tredorian, Galatia came with her. Initially somewhat at a loss at the Alphatian court, Galatia found her feet while studying magic under Master Terari, one of Eriadna's chief advisors (in fact, an alternative identity of Tylion). She is a popular designer of stylish clothes.

Personality: Clever and energetic. She has now seen so much of imperial politics that she does not feel loyal to any king or emperor; she's too familiar with their frailties. She directs her efforts toward helping people, not governments.



Her work as a clothes designer is very important to her; she has the traditional artist's temperament, including a short temper, a highly variable attention span, and unpredictable mood swings, often toward broodiness.

Appearance: 5'3", 100 lbs; red hair and brown eyes; copyer Alpathian coloration; designs and wears very stylish robes and gowns; age 25.

Combat Notes: 5th-level magic-user; AC 9; hp 17; MV 120' (40'); #AT 1; D 1-4 (dagger) or by spell type; Save MU 5; ML 7; AL N; S9 I18 W11 D12 Co 10 Ch15. Languages: Thyatian, Alpathian, Thothian, Elvish (Shiye-Lawr dialect), Alignment (Neutral). General Skills: Artisan (Clothes Design) (I+1), Artisan (Color Sketch Artist) (I), Knowledge of the Isle of Dawn (I), Mapping (I), Knowledge of Sundsvall (I), Knowledge of Thyatis City (I), Knowledge of the Imperial Palace (I).

If the framed emissaries were the PCs themselves, then they will have to escape or be executed. Again, the DM has to design the dungeons and their defenses. If the PCs cannot find a way to escape, they'll be given a little help; either Tylion or Galatia will sneak them a key to get them out of their immediate chains and cells. From that point, they'll have to sneak and battle their way up through the dungeon's levels, hopefully to reach one of the dungeon's exits which opens onto palace grounds instead of into the palace itself.

Fall, Year 1,004: Glantrians Assassinated

News Events: Not long after the escape of the Glantrian emissaries, more treachery breaks out, this time in Glantri. Several Glantrian nobles having dinner together, including at least one representative of each noble family, are assassinated by a bombardment of *lightning bolts*, *fire balls*, *death* spells, and other powerful magics. The assassins, obviously very high-level magic-users, escape clean away, their identities unrevealed, though the only surviving diner (Prince Innocenti di Malapietra) can testify that the killers were wearing Alpathian-style clothing.

What This Means: This is another effort by the Brotherhood of the Shadow to begin war between Alpathia and Glantri. The Immortal Alphaks took on the Mortal Identity of a high-level magic-user and assembled several of his chaotic followers to perform this mass murder. Naturally, they wore Alpathian garments and arranged for at least one mortal to survive as a witness in order to pin the blame on Alpathia. The attack drives Innocenti, already the most paranoid of Glantri's rulers, into a frenzy of accusations against enemies of Glantri (real and imagined).

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs, if they are in Glantri at the time the incident begins, could spot the "Alpathian assassins" massing for the murder, and interfere... though they would be facing Alphaks's Mortal Identity (a 36th-level magic-user) and several other spellcasters of 20th-32nd level, and could be seriously harmed or even killed for their pains. However, if the PCs warn the victims or attack the killers before the ambush is sprung, some or all of the victims will survive and return fire, helping the PCs chase off the assassins. The PCs will earn the

gratitude from the victims, and will be marked down by Alphaks for future revenge. They will have saved lives... but the outrage of the Glantrians will be the same.

Fall, Year 1,004: Thyatis Intrudes

News Events: The united Princes of Glantri send word to Empress Eriadna of Alpathia, instructing her to surrender the assassins to Glantrian justice. Everyone expects that.

But it's a surprise when Thincol I, Emperor of Thyatis, sends Alpathia a stern warning, saying that it is obvious the assassinations were performed by Alpathia in retribution for the death of General Torenal, and informing Eriadna that Alpathia *will not be allowed* to extend her territorial holdings through these treacherous means.

Eriadna of Alpathia replies that it was not involved in the deaths and that Thyatis had best keep its attention to its own territories. It is obvious from this event that Glantri and Thyatis have secretly achieved some sort of alliance.

What This Means: Glantri's message is a natural repercussion of the assassination. Thyatis's is not, however: an Immortal is responsible for that. The Immortal Vanya, in her Mortal Identity of Anya, has persuaded Emperor Thincol that Alpathia intends to conquer all of the Known World and that Glantri is merely their first target in a plan to encircle Thyatis. Thincol therefore plans to align with Glantri in order to prevent the rival empire from becoming too powerful.

What the PCs Can Do: This is not an incident for PCs to become involved with; it really consists only of threats passed between rulers. However, these threats are not secret; they become news and gossip in every corner of the Known World.

Fall, Year 1,004: Heldanners Attack

News Events: Without benefit of a declaration of war, the Heldannic Knights send several punitive raids into Ethengar, launching deadly lance-cavalry attacks against Ethengarian encampments and slaughtering every last man, woman, and child encountered.

What This Means: This is in retaliation for the summertime deaths of the Heldannic missionaries. Immortals are not involved; as before, members of both the Brotherhood of the Shadow and the Fellowship of the Star hope that Vanya will not devote too much of her attention to petty revenge.

What the PCs Can Do: If in Ethengar, the PCs could be caught at an Ethengarian campsite during one of the Heldannic attacks. With luck, they could repel the attacking forces and stop one of the massacres from taking place. For once, the Ethengarians really are innocent parties, while the Heldanners are simply brutal knights bent on the most savage sort of revenge.



Fall, Year 1,004: Asterius's Temples Burned

News Events: In Alpathia, dozens of temples of the Immortal Asterius are burned to the ground over a period of days. The Alpathian authorities capture the arsonists—a band of Glantrians.

These Glantrians, elves of the Erewan clan, claim to have been envoys from Glantri to Darokin. They say that they were magically put to sleep and awakened within a burning temple of Asterius. However, magical probing with a *wish* spell reveals that they, too, have two sets of memories about the event. One set clearly shows the elves accepting a mysterious cloaked man's commission to destroy the temples of Asterius.

Empress Eriadna rushes the investigation through the judicial system; the Glantrian elves are quickly tried and sentenced to death.

The Princes of Glantri protest the trial but make no direct attempt to rescue their envoys.

What This Means: This event involved Immortal intervention but was not terribly well-organized. The Immortal Alphaks, anxious for war to begin and always eager to hurt Alpathians, burned the temples down and framed the Glantrians in crude imitation of Atzanteotl's earlier efforts. However, the Immortal whose temples have been destroyed, Asterius (an ally of Rad), is able to determine that the Glantrians are innocent and instructs his surviving Alpathian clerics to intervene on their behalf. Asterius begins to suspect the existence of a third faction. He warns Rad and the rest of the Fellowship of the Stars' members and starts looking for evidence to back up his hunch.

What the PCs Can Do: If present in Glantri during this time, the PCs can stake out Asterius's temples (during the days when the burnings are still taking place); later, once the Glantrians are captured, PCs can investigate the Glantrian elves. A thorough investigation by the PCs will reveal that the elves were seen by many witnesses on the road between Glantri and Darokin during the time when the temples were being burned; they were even at a meeting with members of the Darokin government at the time of one burning. If the PCs are willing to speak for the elves at the trial and produce witnesses to attest to the elves' alibi, they might even win the elves a verdict of not guilty. However, Empress Eriadna will continue to believe that the Glantrian elves burned the temples and will keep them imprisoned for the time being.

Winter, Year 1,004: Alpathian Armada Burns

News Events: If the Erewan elves were convicted of burning the temples of Asterius, then the Glantrian adventurers who were accused of killing General Torenal break into the Imperial Palace's dungeons and rescue the Erewan elves.

Later, escaping from the continent of Alpathia, they stop in at the city of Aasla, which is the main port of the Alpathian navy's sky-ship armada. They steal a naval sky-ship and make their escape, starting a fire among several other ships to conceal their departure and delay pursuit.

Unfortunately, before the mages of Aasla can put out the fire,

it grows into a firestorm. Amazing amounts of heated air from the sky-ship fire rises from the city; more air rushes in from the surrounding countryside. The fire spreads and the cycle continues, turning the city into an inferno. When all is done, days later, the city is a crumbling acropolis of ash; half its population, especially the non-spellcasting citizens, are dead.

What This Means: The Glantrian adventurers simply returned to Sundsvall to keep the Alpathians from executing the Erewan elves. Firing the sky-ships was a natural distraction... and the fire-storm was natural, not magical at all. Unfortunately, Ixion and his allies will believe Rad's ally Rathanos, an Immortal obsessed with fire, is responsible.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs were the ones who rescued the Glantrian adventurers from the dungeons, or were themselves imprisoned there and escaped, then they can mount a rescue attempt on the hapless Erewan elves as well. Either Rheddrian or the Princes of Glantri (especially Etienne d'Ambreville or Princess Carlolina Erewan, who sent the envoys in the first place) would be happy to hire someone with experience in those dungeons to accomplish the rescue. The PCs can use the contact who helped them before, either Galatia or Terari, to find them a way into the dungeon. Terari or Galatia will tell them that their best mode of escape is via Aasla and a stolen sky-ship, and if the PCs take that route, then the elves they rescue will suggest the burning of other ships as a distraction. If, however, the PCs and escapees leave by another route, the firestorm can occur anyway: Alphaks, with his hatred of the Alpathians, will be happy to set the fire, knowing that the arson will be blamed on the escapees.

Year 1,005 AC

Spring, Year 1,005: War Is Declared

News Events: Empress Eriadna of Alpathia, having sorted through the ruins of the city of Aasla and determined what has happened, issues a proclamation of war against Glantri.

Immediately thereafter, the Principalities of Glantri declare war upon the Empire of Alpathia. Considering Glantri's much smaller size, this sounds like a joke—until the next day, when the Empire of Thyatis and the Heldannic Knights both declare war on Alpathia as well.

This is a grim day for Rad, who has been trying to delay the outbreak of war as long as possible, and a victory for the Ring of Fire. Alpathia and Thyatis, the two greatest political powers of the Known World, are now at war.

What This Means: This is the event the Ring of Fire has been preparing for since AC 1,000; the Brotherhood of the Shadow has also been doing its bit for the past several months.

Most of the members of the Fellowship of the Star wanted to avoid war altogether if possible (Vanya was the main exception); they now take up a defensive position and hope the countries they control can stand up to Alpathia's might long enough for Rad to find a way to use the Radiance to help them.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs will have to cope with the situation wherever they are. If they are within lands controlled by the Thyatian Empire or Alpathian Empire when war is de-



clared, they will have to cope with the empire's sudden mobilization for war. They might even find themselves drafted by one of the empires' armed services, forcing them to choose between serving their empire's interest or Rheddrian's. If they happen to be citizens of one empire and are in the other's territory when the declaration is made, they will have to sneak, negotiate, or fight their way out.

Spring, Year 1,005: The Master Seizes Sind

News Events: The Master of the Desert Nomads, ruler of Hule (a vast land far to the west of the Known World region), seizes control of Sind, a nation on the western border of Darokin and Glantri. While no one knows whether he is an enemy or ally for Glantri, about Darokin there can be no mistake, as he has wanted to conquer the Republic for some time.

What This Means: This event is a combination of mortal and Immortal actions, but not by any member of the three groups of Immortals mentioned so far. The Master of the Desert Nomads is a servant of the Immortal Bozdogan (Loki); his takeover of Sind is the culmination of a long, carefully-planned campaign of subversion and treachery.

The opportunity offered by having the Desert Nomads' armies positioned on Darokin's borders, however, gives Atzanteotl an idea. He promises Loki a favor if Loki will allow him to "borrow" the Desert Nomads for awhile; intrigued, Loki agrees. Atzanteotl begins visiting the Master in Incorporeal Form and subtly urging him that the time is right to invade Darokin before it can get its defenses in order. The idea of controlling Hule, Sind, and Darokin is pleasing to the Master's personal ambitions; the attraction for Atzanteotl is that Darokin's central location would put the Desert Nomads in a very good position to strike against Glantri, Alfheim, the Broken Lands, the Five Shires, Rockhome, the Emirates of Ylaruam, the Ethengarian Khanate, or Karameikos. Atzanteotl could then encourage the Master's forces to attack any of these nations, depending on what side the Brotherhood of the Shadow is supporting at that point in the war.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs are unlikely to be in Sind when the invasion takes place. If they are, they will not be able to stop the vast armies of the Desert Nomads from seizing the land; at best, they can rescue innocents from marauders, then escape to be the first to warn the border forts and government of Darokin about the Master's activities.

A nervous Darokin will begin rounding up promises of assistance from neighboring countries. The PCs may be sent as diplomats to try to arrange formal alliances with the other Known World nations—a task made more difficult by the need of those nations to protect their own borders as the Glantri-Alphatia war continues to spread.

This is a good opportunity for the DM to dig out his or her old copy of X10: Red Arrow, Black Shield and play it out. With some adjustments, the whole module could be run without too much trouble. The best time for the main invasion to start would be right after the fall of West Portage (Fall/Winter 1,005). The invasion would probably end sometime around Spring-Summer 1,006.

Summer, Year 1,005: Empires Build Forces

News Events: The Empire of Alphatia, caught off-guard by Thyatis's declaration of war, finds that it cannot immediately send conventional invasion forces against Glantri; Thyatis and the Heldannic Knights can interfere along every approach to Glantri. Also, the largest available sky-fleet was the one destroyed at Aasla, further limiting Alphatia's mobility with normal troops. So they decide on a longer, more grueling plan for the conquest of Glantri. First, they must eliminate the Empire of Thyatis as an obstacle, and the first step in this plan is to take over the Isle of Dawn.

What This Means: Alphatia must begin building up its armies and sea-navy, particularly on the eastern half of the Isle of Dawn, the large island that lies between the two empires.

Naturally, the Empire of Thyatis also begins building up its armed forces, particularly on the western half of the Isle of Dawn.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are in a position to advise or help any of the nations now gearing up for war, keep track of the advice and support they provide; it could make a difference in any of the wartime engagements to come. Always let the PCs know what effects their individual recommendations or support had on a battle or situation, even when they're not present for the action; it will help them understand how much a part they can play in the adventure and the campaign.

Summer, Year 1,005: Alphatia Sends Monsters

News Events: Since Alphatia can not yet attack Glantri directly, they decide on a stop-gap attack: a reign of terror which they can set into motion without having to monitor.

Many Alphatian wizards travel secretly to Glantri and conjure hordes of monsters—many of them from other planes—and release them in Glantri. The monsters rampage across the civilian population of Glantri, and the Glantrian wizards have a hard time keeping the monsters in line.

Unfortunately, many of the monsters spill over the borders into Sind, Wendar, Darokin, the Broken Lands, the Ethengar Khanate, and even into Alfheim.

What This Means: This is a mortal event, not part of any Immortal's plan. It is a great inconvenience to the Immortal Rad, since he must take time from his work with the artifact to coordinate the anti-monster activities in his Mortal Identity as Etienne d'Ambreville.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are in Glantri or any of its neighboring countries, they will be attacked by rampaging monsters, often of types not normally found in those surroundings. Learning the truth about what's behind this sudden rash of out-of-place monsters can easily be made into a mini-campaign, the culmination of which would be to figure out where the monsters are coming from, correlating that information on a map, and discovering the sites where the Alphatian wizards are conjuring and releasing the monsters. If all goes well, the characters might be able to ambush these wizards and put a halt to their activity.



Fall, Year 1,005: West Portage Falls

News Events: The Alphatians on the Isle of Dawn begin the ground war by assaulting the Fortress of Kendach and the Hold of Fenswatch, the fortifications which defend the critical town of West Portage, where elements of the Thyatian Fleet are still being prepared for war in West Portage's shipyards.

Over a period of a few weeks, the Alphatians box in the two citadels and then send troops directly against West Portage. The garrison at West Portage puts up a spirited defense... but eventually falls before the Alphatians. Soon afterward, Kendach and Fenswatch also fall.

What This Means: This is a mortal event; the Immortals did not have any direct effect on it, although one Immortal did have an important indirect effect.

It's a tremendous shock to the citizens of the Thyatian Empire that West Portage and its two defensive citadels fall as fast as they do. The reason they cave in so quickly is because their garrisons, especially the officer corps, are badly-trained and dissipated. This is a result of the general decay of the empire's officers due to the activities of Helena Ledamiades, a Mortal Identity of Valerias (see the Spring 1,004 entry above, as well as the "Tactics of the Ring of Fire" section at the beginning of Phase II).

What the PCs Can Do: PCs fighting for the Alphatians at West Portage could hasten the city's fall by acts of infiltration and sabotage, especially any sabotage which can damage or destroy the city's walls or gate or which further diminish the fighting ability of the city's garrison. PCs fighting for the Thyatians at West Portage could perform espionage missions or rear guard actions against the Alphatian forces. This will buy time for the Thyatians to finish outfitting some of the ships currently in drydock; every ship that launches before West Portage falls is another ship which escapes to fight the Alphatians another day.

Winter, Year 1,005: Nomads Invade Darokin

News Events: The Master of the Desert Nomads launches a lightning-swift attack into Darokin, overwhelming the western defenders and driving the armies of Darokin back before it. Within weeks, the great cities of Akesoli and Akorros have fallen. The tattered remnants of the Legions of the Republic fall back through the hills east of Akorros to defend Darokin City. In those hills, units of the defending army try to dig in their heels and make a last stand so that the other forces can get to the capital safely.

What This Means: This event would have occurred on its own because the Master sees Darokin as a rich prize for the taking; Atzanteotl has simply sped up the process. The Desert Nomads are now in a good position for later use against any force Atzanteotl chooses to oppose. In the meantime, they will be able to exercise their savagery against the citizens of Darokin and will hone their fighting skills against Darokin's military. Best of all, in keeping with the Brotherhood's goal of spreading the war to as many nations as possible, he has brought chaos and misery to a prosperous and neutral nation.

What the PCs Can Do: PCs in Darokin at this time might be

able to slow or stop the Desert Nomads' advance by reinforcing the Darokin units making their stand in the hills, leading reinforcements from the Five Shires or Alfheim, or conducting raids against Desert Nomad positions.

Year 1,006 AC

Spring, Year 1,006: Sabotage in Alphatia

News Events: Glantrian wizard-adventurers travel to Sundsvall, capital of Alphatia, and harass Alphatian nobles there—fire-bombing noble estates, launching hit-and-run attacks on wizards and military officers, releasing conjured monsters in the streets, and the like.

The actual damage they do is negligible, but these incidents polarize opinions about the war in Alphatia—some are outraged and demand Glantri be punished, while others wistfully recall the old days when this sort of thing didn't happen in Alphatia. The latter group begin to speak out in favor of isolationist policies that would enable them to just be left alone with their studies.

What This Means: This is Glantri's revenge for the monster hordes which the Alphatians unleashed on the Principalities. Rad had something to do with the instigation of this response, but in his capacity as a Prince of Glantri, not as an Immortal.

The Glantrians who were accused of killing General Torenal could be among the adventurers causing trouble in Sundsvall.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are helping Alphatia, they could stay in Sundsvall during this season and help counter the effects of the Glantrian intruders. They'd have to anticipate Glantrian attacks and be there ahead of time to ambush the Glantrians.

If the PCs are helping Glantri, they could well be among the adventurers causing trouble in Sundsvall. If so, they will have to be intelligent and plan carefully to keep at least one step ahead of the Alphatian heroes looking for them.

The Princes of Glantri will keep their saboteur-magicians in Alphatia for at least a year but are willing to rotate in new, fresh magicians for PCs who are tired of the duty in Sundsvall.

Spring, Year 1,006: Karameikos Sells Out

News Events: Teldon, head of the Magicians' Guild in the Grand Duchy of Karameikos, makes a secret diplomatic mission to Sundsvall. On his return, Duke Stefan announces that henceforth his country will no longer be a "Grand Duchy" but the Kingdom of Karameikos, with himself as King Stefan I.

The terms of the treaty of mutual peace and neutrality Teldon has just negotiated with Alphatia soon become public knowledge. The newly-established Kingdom of Karameikos agrees not to help Thyatis in this war—in effect, selling out their longtime allies. In return, Alphatia agrees to recognize Karameikos's independence and to set up a school of magic in the Karameikan capital of Specularum.

This treaty is one of the major events of the war. Duke (now King) Stefan has long desired his own throne, completely free of any allegiance to his old friend, Emperor Thincol. With Thy-



atis's troops committed to the war with Alphatia, Stefan has chosen this moment to declare his independence, when Thincol can hardly spare the men to re-take Karameikos (which has been autonomous for the last three-and-a-half decades anyway).

Stefan has received Empress Eriadna's assurance that Alphatia does not perceive Karameikos to be Thincol's ally. He believes that Thyatis is doomed and rationalizes his betrayal of his homeland by saying that the steps he has taken will insure that Thyatian culture survives even if the Empire is destroyed. He also recognizes the very real danger posed by the Master of the Desert Nomads. Finally, by establishing a school of magic, he is looking to the future, hoping to increase his nation's magical ability in upcoming years.

Within weeks of the treaty's being made public, the best units of Karameikos's military forces march and sail west to relieve the pressure on Darokin. En route, they join halfling forces from the Five Shires and a small number of elven units from Alfheim.

What This Means: This is a mortal event, not directly influenced by the Immortals; it reflects Duke Stefan's analysis of the situation and his efforts to ensure his country's welfare.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are citizens or allies of Karameikos, they could conduct the wizard Teldon to and from Alphatia.

Since the treaty helps Alphatia, which currently has the upper hand in the war, the Brotherhood of the Shadow will oppose it if they hear of it. If the PCs are escorting Teldon, assume that the Brotherhood of the Shadow does catch wind of the treaty and that Hel dispatches assassins to kill Teldon. The PCs must keep him alive long enough to negotiate the treaty and return home.

Spring, Year 1,006: The Master is Hammered

News Events: The forces of Karameikos, allied with military units from the Five Shires and Alfheim, march to Darokin City, which is now besieged by the Desert Nomads. They lift the siege on the city, reinforce the legions there, and then begin taking the war back to the Master. Over the next few weeks, the over-extended Desert Nomads are slowly driven back.

What This Means: This is a mortal event, not one set into motion by the Immortals. It's inconvenient to Atzanteotl, who led the Desert Nomads into Darokin for a reason, so he will do what he can to support the Desert Nomads. Examples of actions Atzanteotl might take include sending monster allies (such as manscorpions) to aid the Desert Nomads and attempting to corrupt officers of the forces of Darokin and her allies to turn traitor for various fabulous rewards (alternatively, he could blackmail important NPCs for the same effect).

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are allied with one of the nations listed above, they can help the allied forces lift the siege on Darokin City and push back the Desert Nomads. Even if they are from some other part of the Known World, experienced adventurers always make welcome mercenaries. As an elite force or an unpredictable group of adventurers, the PCs could fight the manscorpions and other monster forces unleashed by Atzanteotl or spot the early signs of an allied officer contemplating treachery.

Summer, Year 1,006: The Master's Revenge

News Events: The Master of the Desert Nomads has been defeated. His forces retreat into Sind and tighten their grip on that unfortunate country. Atzanteotl, disgusted by the Desert Nomads' inability to get the job done, washes his hands of the whole affair. As a final defiant gesture, the Master formally curses those who have defeated him.

To everyone's surprise, the curse has an immediate and deadly effect. Only a few days later, an enormous meteor smashes through the sky and slams into northern Darokin. Ironically, its point of impact is directly upon Corran Keep, on the Darokin/Glantri border.

The impact destroys an entire range of mountains, creating a crater dozens of miles in diameter. The resulting earthquake knocks down buildings as far south as Akesoli and can be felt as far north as Glantri City. In Glantri, the Principalities of Blackstone and Caurenze are devastated, as is most of Darokin north of Lake Amsorak. The cloud rising from the impact is larger than some countries. Stretched by the last western winds of the season, the cloud covers all of southern Glantri and northern Darokin out as far east as the middle of Alfheim.

The immediate loss of life is tragic, but Glantri survives. However, the impenetrable cloud stays in the air for days, blocking out the sun. When it finally starts to settle, ash covers everything, killing plants and fouling drinking water. Together the cloud and ash have a catastrophic result on the crops of both countries, ruining the harvest and threatening famine for the upcoming winter. Popular opinion in Glantri credits the attack to Alphatia; the Glantrians vow to make the Alphatians pay if they have to fight to the last wizard.

What This Means: This event surprises the Master as much as it does everybody else. The Immortal to blame is not Loki, who knows better than to risk the punishment sure to follow such a blatant act of direct Immortal interference once the Council of Intrusions tracks down the perpetrators. Instead, it is Alphaks, whose love of big explosions and mass destruction has finally gotten the better of him. He diverted the meteor from its regular orbit and aimed it toward Darokin; the only reason it did not do even more damage was his desire to make the Glantrians (descendants, like the Alphatians, of some of his ex-followers) suffer as much as possible.

What the PCs Can Do: DMs who want to run a strange adventure for mortal PCs or apprentice Immortals can give them the chance to try to avert this disaster. Assume that the giant meteor is not aimed for northern Darokin but directly at Darokin City itself.

An astronomer has spotted the meteor and been puzzled by its unusual behavior—its sudden change of course, and the fact it has grown steadily brighter while not altering its position in the sky (this is because it is heading directly toward Mystara). He mentions it as an oddity at a party and is overheard by Rhedrian, who sends the player characters to investigate (they may demand a bonus for this one!).

Upon their arrival, they learn that the meteor has an atmosphere, so they do not need any special spells to survive there. Furthermore, it is inhabited by monsters of all sorts. They will



soon note that the world below them is rapidly getting bigger; it shouldn't take too long for them to realize they're on a collision course with the planet. The DM should be creative in devising a way for them to divert the meteor from striking Darokin City. If they don't have sufficient spellpower, the DM can let them discover that rocks from opposite sides of the meteor are highly explosive when banged together. They then only have to decide the direction they want to try to make the meteor go, gather the necessary materials (the local monsters will prove uncooperative), and devise a way to set off a big explosion without being blown up in the process.

If they do their job well and get lucky, the meteor will be diverted far enough off course to land in the relatively unpopulated Darokin/Glantri border region, rather than over a major city. Alternatively, they could cause the meteor to hit somewhere else—in the middle of Lake Amsorak or the Broken Lands—or miss the planet altogether, becoming Mystara's third moon.

The rest of **The Immortals' Fury** presumes that the meteor hits and creates its crater at the location shown on the map; if the meteor does hit somewhere else, the destruction will occur at that point, and the DM will have to modify the adventure to accommodate those differences.

Fall, Year 1,006: Twisted Trees of Alfheim

News Events: With the coming of autumn, the trees of the forest of Canolbarth begin to darken, twist, and mutate into sinister things. The elves of Alfheim are at a loss to explain the

mutation, other than to guess that something in the fallout from the ash is causing it. Whatever its origin, they are helpless to halt it. The forest becomes increasingly inhospitable to the elves.

What This Means: In reality, the mutation is being caused by wizards of the Shadow Elves who live in caverns below Alfheim, who are altering the forest to their liking. They are using those changes and the darkness caused by the cloud to conceal their infiltration of Alfheim. Rafiel, Immortal patron of the Shadow Elves, is helping them achieve this goal, for two reasons. First, he has long wanted them to be able to live on the surface again, as is their birthright. Second, if the Shadow Elves can take Alfheim, it means that another nation led by the Fellowship of the Star is poised to strike at Glantri's enemies.

What the PCs Can Do: There's nothing the PCs can do to stop the mutation of Alfheim's trees. However, if the PCs are in Alfheim and decide to investigate, they might detect the small bands of Shadow Elves creeping out of holes in the ground and might thwart some of the Shadow Elves' attempts to murder Alfheim elves or isolate Alfheim communities.

Fall, Year 1,006: The Abandoned Nation

News Events: The dwarves of Rockhome have had enough. It is evident to them that the world has gone mad... and they do not wish to be driven mad with it.

King Everast declares a state of emergency and commands his entire population to "go deep." Within weeks, every dwarf in





Rockhome is locked up securely in a deep cave, a cavernous city, or some other subterranean community; all the surface dwellings of the nation are stripped bare, their furnishings and treasures safely hidden underground. The nation of Rockhome literally disappears from the face of Mystara.

What This Means: The Immortal Kagyar has told the dwarf-clerics of Rockhome that the war between the empires will get worse before it gets better. He did not tell them to retreat like turtles into shells, but this is their natural response, and something they do well. Therefore, they will sensibly retreated into their caves to wait out the tumult.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can't change the minds of Rockhome's king; the abandonment of Rockhome's surface will take place as planned. However, the PCs could persuade isolated bands of dwarves to stay topside and participate in the war or the investigation of the Immortals.

Winter, Year 1,006: Ethengar vs. Heldann

News Events: The Great Khan of Ethengar, whose people have suffered from several savage raids by the Heldannic Knights and have been pushed eastward by the choking black clouds from Darokin, invades the Heldann Territories. His forces march straight to the capital, Freiburg, and lay siege to it.

What This Means: This is a mortal event, not directly influenced by the Immortals.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are with the Ethengarians, they can participate in the sacking and pillaging of Heldann communities on the road to Freiburg. If they are with the Heldanners, they can assist in the defense.

Winter, Year 1,006: Redstone Besieged

News Events: On the Isle of Dawn, the Alpathian army attempts to secure the center of the island, turning its attention to Redstone Castle.

What This Means: This is a mortal event, not directly influenced by the Immortals; it is a natural progression of the Alpathian plan for the conquest of the Isle of Dawn.

What the PCs Can Do: If fighting for the Thyatians, the PCs can act as an elite force to harry the Alpathian besiegers; if fighting for the Alpathians, they can try to figure out more effective ways of cracking the nearly-impregnable Redstone Castle.

Winter, Year 1,006: Ylari Raid Thyatis

News Events: Since Thyatis has committed most of its military forces to the Isle of Dawn, a bold young emir decides to take advantage of Thyatis's distraction.

Zealot followers of the "Desert Garden" philosophy of al-Kalim execute a brilliant nighttime crossing of the Altan Tepes mountains into northern Thyatis. The wholly-unexpected attack takes the Thyatians at Fort Nikos off guard. Convinced that they are hopelessly outnumbered, the Thyatian commander surrenders without a single life being lost on either side. The next day, the Ylari seize the town of Biazzan, capital of the Barony of Biazzan; the civilian authorities in Biazzan also promptly sur-

render rather than face massacre.

Thyatis now has a new enemy to face: the forces of Ylaruam, who are already on Thyatian soil. Thyatis must summon up reserves forming in Thyatis and recall units from the Isle of Dawn to cope with the new threat.

What This Means: There is an interfering Immortal at work here, though it is not al-Kalim. Valerias's efforts to undermine the fighting-spirit of the Thyatians has been firmly checked by Vanya's efforts and the Thyatians's improving wartime discipline. Valerias therefore gives up on Thyatis for the time being and takes on another Mortal Identity in Ylaruam, that of a desert prophet. As someone who promotes strong passion of any kind, it proves easy for her to fire the Ylari with the idea of using Thyatis's distraction with the overseas war to recapturing Tel Akbir and Biazzan, territories lost to the Thyatians generations ago.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are Ylari heroes who are well-known to the population, they could conceivably persuade the Ylari not to launch this attack—but *would* they? It is far more likely that they would support the invasion wholeheartedly and want to join in. If the PCs are Thyatian heroes or allies, they might be at Fort Nikos or Biazzan and be able to organize the defense which the Thyatian leaders were incapable of. The presence of the PCs could delay the conquest of these sites and allow many civilians to escape south; they may even be able to prevent the fall of Fort Nikos and Biazzan.

Year 1,007 AC

Spring, Year 1,007: Ethengarians Swarm

News Events: In the Heldann Territories, the city of Freiburg is still under siege. The armies of the Golden Khan continue to pour into Heldann Territories, and then spill across the borders into Vestland and Soderfjord, looking for more places to sack.

What This Means: This is a continuation of the Ethengarian revenge against the Heldanners; the Immortals are not directly involved. It will, however, have the effect of forcing Vanya to visit her clerics more frequently in Incorporeal Form in order to stiffen their resolve and inspire the beleaguered Heldanners to drive the invaders back, led by her Heldannic Knights.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can perform guerilla activities, either on behalf of or against the Golden Khan of Ethengar. Both the Heldannic and Ethengar armies are more than willing to perform atrocities upon one another or anyone in their way, so the PCs will have ample opportunities to save innocent people from horrible fates.

Spring, Year 1,007: Heldann/Thyatis Treaty

News Events: Though the Heldannic Knights and Empire of Thyatis were both defenders of Glantri, they had no formal alliance before now. This season, they sign a treaty of alliance. This alerts the Ylari that the Emirates may have enemies attacking by sea from both north and south if they do not leave Thyatis alone; it alerts the Ethengarians that they may face an additional enemy in Thyatis once the war with Alpathia ends.

What This Means: This is a strategic ploy on the part of the



Thyatian and Heldannic leaders, just a way of bringing some uncertainty to their enemies. Vanya, using her Mortal Identity as Anya and the prestige of her clerics in the Heldann Territories, is the moving spirit responsible.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are Thyatians or allies of the Thyatians, they could be asked to conduct the Thyatian emissary to the Heldann Territories... and *into* the besieged city of Freiburg (a difficult task, as they have to find a way through the encampments of Ethengarians). PCs who are clerics of Vanya will find themselves called upon by their patron, who will visit their dreams in Incorporeal Form and order them to rally the Heldann people and lead them into battle.

Summer, Year 1,007: Thar Looks to Glantri

News Events: Thar, the famous humanoid leader of the Broken Lands, analyzes the confusion in the human nations and decides that his humanoids can reap great rewards by acting now. He calls for more humanoid hordes from the Altan Tepes range and the Wendar Ranges to join him, and leads the largest humanoid horde assembled in living memory from his Broken Lands to the Darokin Crater. His strategy is to side-step the well-guarded paths and passes that separate the Broken Lands from its neighbors by launching his invasion from an unexpected direction.

From the harsh, forbidding landscape of the crater, Thar unleashes his hordes into northern Darokin and southern Glantri. These forces sack and pillage what remain of the southern principalities. The Glantrians fight ferociously to keep their lives and properties, but fall back before the seemingly numberless humanoids pouring across the border.

Within a few weeks, Glantri City is an armed camp, besieged by thousands of humanoids under Thar's command. The capital has so many wizards that the city escapes being overrun or starved out. However, Thar has so many thousands of humanoids that the Glantrian wizards just can't kill enough to get rid of them... and the humanoids are sacking, pillaging, and destroying the countryside for miles around. It is a stand-off.

What This Means: This is yet another ploy by the ever-resourceful Valerias, acting on behalf of Ixion and the Ring of Fire. In the guise of a captured Glantrian sorceress, one of her Mortal Identities babbled to Thar about Glantri's defenseless southern border, firing him up with greed and ambition. He needed very little persuasion.

This was done behind the back of the Immortal Atzanteotl, one of the humanoids' many patrons. Since Atzanteotl's Brotherhood of the Shadow currently supports Glantri, Atzanteotl would not have wanted the hordes of Thar to attack it at this time. However, the humanoids' other Immortal patrons are so enthusiastic about the attack that Atzanteotl cannot effect an immediate withdrawal of the humanoids.

In any case, Atzanteotl is currently lying low since he is under suspicion of being behind the meteor strike on Darokin (Loki and others know that Atzanteotl was responsible for urging the Master to attack that country). Until his name is cleared (which he cannot do without implicating Alphaks, and thus revealing the Brotherhood's existence), Atzanteotl will be carefully watched at all times.

Also about this time, Asterius finds evidence that Alphaks was involved in the Darokin meteor incident; Ka and Korotiku accuse Ixion of plotting with the Entropics and directly interfering with the mortal world, which Ixion hotly denies. Alphaks goes into hiding, leaving Hel (whose involvement with Alphaks and Atzanteotl has gone undetected) the Brotherhood's sole active member at present.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are helping the Glantrians, they can station themselves near the crater's rim in southern Glantri and help repel the humanoids. If they prefer a far more dangerous occupation, they can launch expeditions deep into the crater, to harass, attack, or even capture King Thar or his best advisors and lieutenants.

Summer, Year 1,007: Newkirk, Redstone Fall

News Events: On the Isle of Dawn, the Alphasians have still not been able to take Redstone Castle, so they keep their forces in place there and send reinforcements further north to Newkirk in a surprise attack. They smash through the city's defenses and occupy the city. Heroic defense by units of the Eastern Thyatian Legion allow the majority of Thyatian troops to evacuate the city and take ship for home, landing in the town of Dawnpoint in the Duchy of Tel Akbir.

Within a couple of weeks, Redstone Castle's commanders realize that their situation is hopeless and surrender. Alphasia now owns the central parts of the Isle of Dawn from West Portage up to Redstone.

On mainland Thyatis, the Thyatian troops are becoming depressed as they lose battle after battle after battle.

What This Means: Redstone's valiant resistance is evidence that the Thyatians are learning how to fight again; however, the Alphasians are able to bring more and more forces to bear on the Isle of Dawn, which is evidence that they currently have a greater pool of manpower to draw on.

What the PCs Can Do: If they're on the Isle of Dawn, the PCs can fight either for the Thyatians or Alphasians. If they fight for the Thyatians, they can delay the fall of Newkirk and Redstone... or, if they're powerful and effective enough, even keep these places from falling. If they fight for the Alphasians, they might be able to speed up Newkirk's fall to the point that few if any Thyatian soldiers are able to withdraw to Dawnpoint.

Fall, Year 1,007: Ylari Withdrawal

News Events: The Ylari forces in Biazzan, seeing that they cannot continue to hold the Duchy against all the returning armies the Thyatians can throw at them, decide to withdraw. The entire force slips away before the approaching Thyatians are aware, getting all their people away as well as the greater part of Biazzan's wealth. By the time the Thyatian generals realize what has happened, the Ylari are across the mountains and well out of range of pursuit.

What This Means: This event is motivated only by mortal strategy; no Immortals are involved.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are among the occupying



Ylari forces holding Biazzan, they might be put in command of units and be responsible for getting the people they are in charge of safely away. If they are with the Thyatian forces, they might be able to detect their enemies slipping away and give the alarm.

Fall, Year 1,007: Alfheim Is No More

News Events: In Alfheim, invasions by the Shadow Elves have grown overt. The Shadow Elves come springing out of tunnels in the ground, attacking from within community boundaries. Canolbarth forest continues to mutate into something horrid to the eyes of the Alfheim elves, and their *trees of life*, living artifacts bound to the fates of the elves, are now dying.

In a move that shocks Alfheim's friends in Darokin, the elves of Alfheim flee their country, bearing with them healthy cuttings from the *trees of life*. Half head north through Ethengar toward the elven kingdom of Wendar in the north. The other half, with the permission and cooperation of King Stefan, head toward Karameikos.

The Shadow Elves occupy the completely mutated Canolbarth forest. They rename their new nation Aengmor, after a near-legendary city they built and lost more than two thousand years ago.

What This Means: This is a continuation of Rafiel's efforts in Alfheim. With the Shadow Elves in place, the Fellowship of the Star has another nation which can come to Glantri's defense.

What the PCs Can Do: The elves fleeing Alfheim need all the help they can get in their travels to Wendar and Karameikos. Thousands of elves head in each direction, with Shadow Elves attempting to exterminate them as they flee. The elves heading south have to pass through the Cruth Mountains and predatory humanoid populations there on their way to Karameikos. Those heading north must pass through or around the humanoid-thick Broken Lands, then cross unfriendly Ethengarian territory before reaching Wendar. Both directions are dangerous.

Winter, Year 1,007: Plague Hits Freiburg

News Events: In the Heldann Territories, the besieged city of Freiburg is ravaged by a sudden and swift-spreading plague. The Khan immediately mobilizes all his forces and retreats into Ethengar, but he's too late: once he's there, plague breaks out among his own troops and spreads through his own population.

What This Means: The truth is that the plague was a completely natural one, spawned by the terrible sanitary conditions which occur in wartime. The living may curse the Immortals, but they are not responsible for the appearance of this plague. The Fellowship of the Star, and their temporary allies the Brotherhood of the Shadow, would not have created this plague; it hurts Heldann, one of Glantri's few allies. And the members of the Ring of Fire, who see steady progress in their war, had no reason to start it.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are in the area and have medical knowledge or clerical spells, they could combat the horrors of the plague, trying to save as many lives as possible. This would make them heroes among the populations they try to save, even if they otherwise oppose those populations' goals.

Winter, Year 1,007: Possessions Revolt

News Events: Meanwhile, the Thyatian-controlled nations of Ochalea and the Pearl Islands seize the opportunity to regain their independence, which they lost a thousand years ago. They declare their independence from Thyatis and prepare their own military forces for a Thyatian reprisal which they hope will not come.

What This Means: This is an effort by the Immortal Ilsundal of the Ring of Fire to further diminish the strength of the Thyatian Empire. He has helped spread a desire for independence through these nations, which were once free but which have been properties of Thyatis for a thousand years. Now Thyatis is faced with the decision of attacking these two nations to reacquire them (which would weaken their military forces in other theaters of operation) or ignore the situation for now (and lose any additional troops they might have called up from the two nations).

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are allies of Thyatis, they might decide to take action against the Pearl Islands or Ochalea (which would take them away from the more important events occurring elsewhere). Or they might instead try to persuade the Pearl Islanders or Ochaleans to lend troops to Thyatian's efforts in return for Emperor Thincol's formal recognition of their independence.

Winter, Year 1,007: Elves Winter in Cruth

News Events: The elves fleeing southward from Alfheim are trapped by a harsh winter in the icy foothills north of the Cruth mountains. Early winter snowfalls and some unfortunate avalanches blocked the passes into Karameikos, pinning the elves between the rocky Cruth mountains and the hard place that Alfheim has become.

What This Means: This event was brought on by mortal actions and nature; no Immortal has deliberately trapped the elves here.

What the PCs Can Do: Ilsundal, patron of the elves, will be anxious for his elvish followers to survive the winter. He might contact PCs (either personally or through his clerics) to persuade them to lead an expedition to the elves—an expedition carrying food and cold-weather gear, leading clerics of Ilsundal who can provide food to the elves through the winter months. Getting the supplies and clerics to the elves means crossing through snow-blocked terrain, or coming in from the north through the road leading from Ylaruam through Selenica (and facing Shadow Elf ambushes).

Year 1,008 AC

Spring, Year 1,008: The Stalemate is Broken

News Events: What may be the pivotal event in the war between Alphatia and Thyatis takes place... and no one knows exactly what happens until weeks later.

Seeing her military forces stalled on the Isle of Dawn and fac-



ing ever-increasing opposition to the war at home, especially from the Shiye-Lawr elves (followers of Eiryndul), Empress Eriadna returns to the diplomatic skills at which she has such great prowess.

Helskir, a nominally independent city on the northern tip of the Isle of Dawn, sided with Thyatis when the war broke out but has played no great role in the conflict so far.

This winter, Helskir is suddenly overrun by Alphetians who occupy the city and seize the Thyatian troops and ships there but do not interfere with the civilian population in any perceptible way. The Alphetian forces immediately move south, crushing the Thyatians between them and the Alphetian-occupied central island. Within days, the entire northern two-thirds of the Isle of Dawn—more significantly, the most heavily-occupied and militarily important two-thirds of the island—are under Alphetian control.

Within a few days, Eruul Zaar, the powerful fighter who ruled Helskir, is crowned *king* of Helskir and the northern third of the Isle of Dawn by Empress Eriadna herself; shortly thereafter he marries Asteriela Torion. Asteriela, third child of the Emperor of Thyatis, had been held in Alphetia as a hostage since she was a teenager (Empress Eriadna's son Tredorian was the counter-hostage held in Thyatis).

This is quite a coup for Zaar: if Alphetia wins the war, he retains all of his new power, and if Thyatis wins the war, he retains most or all of his new power. Amazingly, the marriage also appears to be a love match rather than just a political arrangement.

What This Means: The Isle of Dawn no longer exists as a barrier between Alphetia and Thyatis. The Alphetian forces can now move against the mainland of Thyatis; with Ochalea and the Pearl Islands now independent, the Alphetians don't even have to worry about naval attacks from those directions.

What the PCs Can Do: The PCs can't anticipate King Eruul's side-switching tactic. If they're allied with the Alphetians and are on the Isle of Dawn, they can be part of the force which overruns Helskir. If they're Thyatian allies in Helskir, they can help as many loyal Thyatians as possible to escape the sudden invasion.

Spring, Year 1,008: Shires Reinforce Darokin

News Events: Military forces from the Five Shires join the army of Darokin to help keep order there and defend Darokin from the humanoids occupying the crater in North Darokin.

What This Means: This event simply means that the Five Shires halflings recognize that Darokin is endangered by Thar's humanoids, and that if Darokin falls, the Five Shires is next. The Five Shires have in the past been occupied more than once by humanoid invaders; they don't want it to happen again. Also, the halflings want to keep the men of Darokin as their allies in case the strange new Shadow Elves of Aengmor turn out to be hostile.

What the PCs Can Do: If they're allies of Darokin or the Five Shires, the PCs can perform actions against the humanoids in the Darokin Crater.

Spring, Year 1,008: The Plague Intensifies

News Events: The plague in the Heldann Territories worsens; it has now killed 20% of the Heldannic population. It also spreads into Vestland, Soderfjord, and northern Ylaruam.

What This Means: This is a natural spread of the plague.

What the PCs Can Do: As before, PCs with clerical skills can combat the spread of the plague through the use of healing spells.

Spring, Year 1,008: Elves Reach Karameikos

News Events: As melting ice opens the mountain passes, many of the elvish clans of Alfheim finally reach Karameikos. King Stefan, who had indicated that they would be welcome in Karameikos, tells them they can settle wherever local elf-clans and communities will let them integrate. He adds that if they wish to have elvish *dominions*, he'll cede them land in the eastern forests, near the borders to Thyatis. The lands he has in mind are near lands occupied by the Calarii elves; more significantly, they are lands *currently* occupied by the Dymrak Goblins. In other words, Stefan is happy to give them dominions... but only if they are willing to forge those dominions out of wild lands currently occupied by hostile humanoids.

Most of the Alfheim elves choose the eastern dominions.

What This Means: The new elves of Karameikos know that Stefan has placed them in the path of possible future retaliation from Thyatis. Thus the Alfheim elves may have to earn their dominions twice—first by displacing the goblins, second by resisting Thyatian intrusion in years to come. This will not endear their new ruler to the weary refugees.

What the PCs Can Do: This is a diplomatic event; the PCs, if interested, might be able to negotiate a better deal for the elves (the "better deal" could include having the Karameikan government provide the elves with supplies, weapons, tools, and even troops to help them take and settle their new lands).

Summer, Year 1,008: Plague Reaches Glantri

News Events: The plague, which has spread west from the Heldann Territories through Ethengar, now reaches eastern Glantri. It might have been spread into Glantri by people fleeing from the Ethengarian Khanate, or might have been passed from Ethengar into the humanoids of the Broken Lands, and then from those humanoids into Glantri by way of the Darokin Crater.

The Glantrians, who have long banned the practice of clerical magic in their country, have reason to regret their decision. They have only medicine to rely on to combat the plague; consequently, the disease spreads like wildfire through Glantri.

In emergency session of the council of Princes of Glantri, they decide to temporarily suspend regulations about clerics and appeal to Darokin for clerical help.

What This Means: The temporary suspension of the laws against clerics are an indication of how desperate the Glantrians are... but it does not mean that they won't try to regulate or restrict them again once the crisis is past.



What the PCs Can Do: PCs who are allies of Glantri or Darokin might be tempted to come to Glantri and help combat the plague, or at least conduct clerics from Darokin into Glantri. This is a very dangerous task, since northern Darokin and southern Glantri are crawling with the hordes of King Thar, not to mention the remnants and offspring of the monsters conjured here by Alphatian magicians a few years ago.

Summer, Year 1,008: Massacre at Tromso

News Events: Increasingly, the many clerics of Heldann are winning the war against the plague. Now, healthy combined forces from the Heldannic Knights and Ostland penetrate into the Ethengar Khanates and, at the community of Tromso, massacre some of the armies which attacked their territories.

What This Means: This is another instance of mortal interests getting in the way of Immortal interests; the Heldanners should be fighting the Alphatians, not concerning themselves with the Ethengarians. They and their patron, Vanya, have become more interested in exacting revenge than in the overall struggle.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs have not yet realized that the Heldann/Ethengar war is a futile exercise, they can get involved and hamper or thwart the efforts of whichever army they consider their enemies.

Summer, Year 1,008: Imperial Navies Clash

News Events: In naval action, the Alphatian fleet sails around the northern end of the Isle of Dawn and approaches the mainland coast. Thyatian naval units stationed at Dawnpoint in the Thyatian duchy of Tel Akbir head north to intercept them, as do elements of the Retebius Air Fleet, the elite flying corps of the Thyatian military.

The years of warfare have now all but eliminated the effects of Valerias's earlier efforts; the weak officers have been eliminated by execution or have died in battle, and the common troops have been whipped into shape and weaned from the debilitating effects of the *zzonga* fruit. So this promises to be a mighty clash of naval forces, and it is. The two sea-navies inflict great harm upon one another, and the Retebius Air Fleet and the Alphatian sky-ship navy lose many of their heroes in bloody fighting.

The engagement is a qualified victory for the Thyatians. The Alphatians are unable to make landfall on Thyatian soil; the Alphatian navy retreats to the Isle of Dawn.

What This Means: Though the engagement was a victory for Thyatis, it's obvious that the Thyatian Empire cannot hold out forever against the Alphatians. It's obvious, that is, to everyone but Anya and Emperor Thincol, who still hold out hope for eventual victory.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are helping the Alphatians, they might be able to turn the tide of the battle against the Thyatian Navy and allow the Alphatians to make landfall on Thyatian soil. This would move up the event described below as "Alphatians Enter Thyatis"—speeding up the conclusion of the Alphatia/Thyatis war by about a year.

If the PCs are helping the Thyatians, they might make the

Thyatian victory even greater, sinking more Alphatian troop transports and slowing down the event described below as "Alphatians Reach Ylaruam" by a season or more.

Fall, Year 1,008: Ethengarians Ambush Elves

News Events: Ethengarians attack Alfheim elves crossing their territory to reach Wendar in the north.

The elves are chased out of Ethengar lands and into the Glantrian mountains instead of Wendar, suffering heavy losses. Additionally, from their brief contact with the Ethengarians, some of the elves contract the plague which continues to sweep through the Khanates.

What This Means: This event has no effect on the war; it's just a result of the baffled fury of the Ethengarians, who cannot halt the Heldannic advance.

What the PCs Can Do: It's not likely that the PCs will be among the elves headed to Wendar when this happens; if they are, they should be able to diminish the damage the Ethengarians would otherwise have done and might even be able to keep the elves from having to move into the Glantrian mountains.

Fall, Year 1,008: Rad Grows Desperate

News Events: The Immortal Rad—also known as Prince Etienne d'Ambreville of Glantri—is growing desperate. Even though the Thyatian fleet temporarily beat back the Alphatians, he knows it's only a matter of time before Thyatis is knocked out of the war, leaving the road to Glantri open.

With the help of Rathanos and Rafiel, d'Ambreville begins constructing a Doomsday Weapon powered by the Radiance. His goal is to create a device which will drain magic from anywhere on Mystara that he wants, neutralizing the magical advantage Alphatia currently has over Glantri.

What This Means: The Doomsday Weapon is Rad's mean of evening the odds; as we will see, it will not work in quite the way he expected.

What the PCs Can Do: This is not something the PCs can know about ahead of time or prevent. It will occur about a year before the time when the PCs finally locate the hiding place of the Nucleus of the Spheres (see Phase III, Finale); if they are on the verge of locating it long before Fall of 1,008, then this event takes place earlier.

Winter, Year 1,008: Thar Moves South

News Events: Glantrian perseverance finally begins to pay off. Recovering from the plague, they are able to bring their armed forces to bear and drive most of the humanoid followers of King Thar out of Glantri and back into the Crater.

Thar's hordes now decide that Darokin to the south looks like easier pickings. They're wrong.

Allied units of the Darokin legions and armies of the Five Shires, reinforced by supplies and other aid from Karameikos, hit the invaders hard and hold them in northern Darokin, not far from the Great Crater. Thar's hordes now find that they can't



move south or north, and, with winter now hard upon them, they stand a good chance of freezing to death in Northern Darokin.

What This Means: With Atzanteotl still unable to help them, the humanoids are on their own, just as their enemies get their counter-attacks underway.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are fighting alongside the men of Darokin and their allies, they can make life even harder for the orcs of Thar. The harder and more devastating their assaults on Thar are, the closer to the Crater the humanoids have to stay. If the PCs are particularly deadly and effective, the humanoids of Thar may find themselves wintering in the Crater itself, far away from anything resembling food. This will, naturally, result in massive cannibalism among the humanoids trapped there, further reducing the humanoids' military strength.

Winter, Year 1,008: Alphasians Reach Ylaruam

News Events: The Alphasian navies decide to make an end run around the still-powerful Thyatian navy. They make landfall further north, in Ylaruam, at the town of Cubia, which is two days sailing time from the border with Thyatis. Despite local resistance, thousands of Alphasian troops disembark and march south.

At the same time, elements of the Alphasian navy begin making probing attacks near the town of Dawnpoint, which the Thyatian military believes is the first sign of an impending naval attack on Dawnpoint. This is, of course, a ruse to occupy the Thyatians' attention while the Alphasian land forces march in from the north.

What This Means: This event is one of the last nails in Thyatis's coffin.

What the PCs Can Do: If they're allies of the Alphasians, the PCs can be the vanguard of the expeditionary force that lands in Cubia or could be asked to monitor the road leading south from Cubia to make sure that no Thyatian spies fleeing that city can reach Thyatis. If the PCs are allies of the Thyatians, they're not likely to be able to help matters here at all... unless they just *happen* to be in or near Cubia when it is attacked. If they are, they might be able to flee the city and get south to Thyatis, but they'll have to defeat the ambushers that the Alphasians have sent on ahead.

Year 1,009 AC

Spring, Year 1,009: Heldanners Hit Thar

News Events: The Heldannic Knights launch an expeditionary force to come, somewhat belatedly, to Glantri's rescue. An army of Heldannic Knights make an epic ride, crossing deserted Rockhome, making the difficult passage across the westernmost part of the Ylari desert, taking the long road from Selenica to Darokin City (skirmishing with Shadow Elf patrols along the way), to finally join the Darokin army in time to push Thar's

remaining forces down into the Crater. Thar digs in and fortifies the site, which is now the only land he controls; overnight, the Crater becomes the biggest dungeon in the Known World.

Thincol I, Emperor of Thyatis, is furious at Heldann for occupying itself with this diversion when the Alphasian navy is about to launch another attack at the Thyatian homeland (or so he thinks). However, the Heldannic Knights claim to be obeying the word of their Immortal patron, Vanya.

What This Means: The Heldannic Knights are telling the truth. Vanya believes Thar's orcs are the immediate problem. Now that they've been dealt with, her Knights are in a good position to block any route the Alphasians might try to take into Glantri.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are part of the Darokin/Five Shires/Karamaikos force attacking the humanoids in North Darokin, they may be surprised to find themselves being helped by advance forces of the Heldannic Knights. These unexpected (if arrogant) reinforcements will be glad to help the PCs with further actions against Thar's forces—especially if these actions are bold, daring, and bloody.

Spring, Year 1,009: Thyatis Gets No Aid

News Events: Thincol of Thyatis, knowing that the situation is desperate, requests help from his old friend Stefan Karamaikos. Stefan politely refuses, claiming that the majority of his forces are helping Darokin and shoring up the western front in case the Master of the Desert Nomads attacks again. That Stefan would go to the aid of his Darokin allies and yet abandon his old homeland to its fate is particularly bitter to the disillusioned emperor.

Ierendi, the Five Shires, and the Minrothad Guilds likewise decline to become involved in Thyatis's imperial war. Toughened survivors of the Heldannic Knights' expeditionary forces are on the way, but between the plague and the battles with the Ethengarians and humanoids, there are not likely to be enough of them to make an appreciable difference. Thincol is forced to face the oncoming Alphasian navy solely with his own naval forces. Unfortunately for him, there is no oncoming Alphasian navy.

The Alphasian forces marching in by land bypass the city of Tameronikas and slam into the Thyatian defenses of Fort Zendrol, scattering them to the winds and capturing the fort. For the first time in decades, Alphasian forces march across the border into mainland Thyatis.

What This Means: Thincol has been caught out of position and must scramble to maneuver his forces between Thyatis City and the Alphasian invaders. He won't be able to, entirely; this event is a serious blow for Thyatis. Victory is very close now for Alphasia and the Ring of Fire against Glantri, her allies, and the Fellowship of the Star.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are helping the Alphasians, they would serve best by performing acts of sabotage on Thyatian soil, by keeping soldiers escaping Fort Zendrol from getting the word to other Thyatians, etc. If the PCs are helping the Thyatians, they can help organize the last-ditch defenses or might perform strikes and raids to slow the progress of the oncoming Alphasians.



Summer, Year 1,009: Alphasians Enter Thyatis

News Events: The Alphasian military machine rolls through the Thyatian duchy of Tel Akbir, seizing the entire duchy and preparing for the push into central Thyatis.

Meanwhile, Thincol of Thyatis summons up all his reserves from the duchies of Retebius, Kantrium, and Kerendas, the counties of Hattias, Halathius, and Lucinius, and the Protectorate of Carytion into position to intercept the invaders at the town of Kantridae. He maneuvers his navy around the duchy of Tel Akbir, bringing them back to Thyatis City to become the main units of the armed forces' fall-back position.

What This Means: Thyatis is in dire straits. With the exception of a few Heldannic Knights, a handful of Glantrian mages, and some Northern Reaches mercenaries, he receives no support from his allies in the face of the inexorable Alphasian advance.

What the PCs Can Do: If fighting for the Thyatians, the PCs can perform their own raids and secret missions to stall the Alphasian advance. Unfortunately, there are too many paths of approach for the PCs to be able to stall all of them, and too many Alphasians for the PCs to be able to kill.

If fighting for the Alphasians, the PCs can perform similar actions to undermine the Thyatian defenses; this will speed up the Alphasian march across Thyatis.

Fall, Year 1,009: Elves Reach Wendar

News Events: In more distant news, the second group of Alheim elves leaves the northern Glantrian mountains and enters the nation of Wendar. The Glantrian plague follows them there.

What This Means: This event has no effect on the war between Thyatis and Alphasia, but the fact that the plague accompanies the elves means that the people of Wendar will not initially welcome the elves.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are accompanying the elves on their trek north, and there are clerics among the PCs—or, alternatively, if the PCs saw to it that these elves had cleric allies accompany them—then the elves could be free of plague by the time they reach Wendar, which means they stand a greater chance of being welcomed by their new neighbors.

Fall, Year 1,009: Alphasians In Thyatis

News Events: Closer to home, the Alphasian military juggernaut continues onward toward Thyatis City. Many bitter battles are fought as the weeks draw by, the bloodiest being the Battle of Kantridae in the Duchy of Kantrium and the Battle of Retebius in the Duchy of Retebius. Casualties on both sides are so horrid in the latter fight that the Alphasian armies are momentarily stalled again.

However, the Alphasians continue to be reinforced from Alphasia, while the Thyatian reinforcements are mostly civilians, old men, youths, and others, none of them trained fighters. Alphasia now controls the Sea of Dawn, preventing the Heldannic Knights from sending troops other than by a long and difficult overland route through hostile territory; Glantri is still too ex-

hausted from its own troubles to offer more than token aid.

What This Means: Thyatis City appears to be doomed, and the Immortals of the Ring of Fire can now start thinking about sending the Alphasian armies against Glantri.

What the PCs Can Do: The Alphasian juggernaut is too strong and well-reinforced for PCs to thwart, assuming that the PCs are fighting for the Thyatians. The PCs would have to content themselves with picking off Alphasian elite forces and helping the surviving Thyatians make an orderly retreat toward Thyatis City.

If the PCs are allied with the Alphasians, they can help crack the defenses of Kantridae and Retebius. Depending on their personalities, they can also help keep the Alphasian armed forces from brutalizing citizens of the captured cities, can hit Thyatian forces so hard and fast that the Thyatians surrender before they are utterly destroyed, etc.

Fall, Year 1,009: Thyatis Quits the Field?

News Events: In Thyatis City, the Emperor, Thincol I Torion considers the wreckage of his empire and makes a momentous choice. He dismisses his favorite advisor and mistress, Anya, who has been urging him to fight on until the spring, when the Heldannic Knights can send reinforcements. Thincol has taken her advice for years and seen his empire torn to pieces as a result. A broken man, Thincol tells Anya that he will save his empire even at the cost of his own pride. Unable to persuade him otherwise, she curses him and leaves.

In the days which follow, Thincol's health worsens, but he acts swiftly and decisively. He sends his magist, Demetrios Karagenteropolus, to see Empress Eriadna. He does not surrender, but sues for peace.

His deal is this: he will withdraw from the battlefield and no longer oppose Alphasia's war on Glantri. Alphasian forces will make a staged withdrawal from Thyatis but may travel across Thyatis en route to Glantri.

Eriadna's son Tredorian will no longer be a hostage; Thincol reluctantly admits that he could not bring himself to kill Tredorian when the war upon Thyatis first began, so Tredorian is really not a hostage any longer anyway.

Since completing the conquest of Thyatis and sending in an occupational force would tie up too many of her troops, Eriadna agrees. She is already under great pressure from the Shiye-Law elves, isolationists, and pacifist elements back home who oppose the war; therefore anything that cuts the carnage and prevents the conflict from dragging on is to her advantage. She adds one important provision, however: Thyatis will take no action against King Eruul and Queen Asteriela of Helskir on the Isle of Dawn, nor will it challenge the independence of Ochalea or the Pearl Islands; she wants some buffer nations between Alphasia and Thyatis in the future. Thincol agrees, and the deal is signed.

What This Means: Anya is a Mortal Identity of Vanya. Consequently, the curse she lays upon Thincol is not one which mortal spellcasters will be able to dispel. He suddenly looks his age (71) and will only live a few years longer, in ever-worsening health.

The pressure on Eriadna to bring the war to a speedy conclusion is courtesy of Eiryndul, who continues to stir up trouble



back in Alpathia. An unexpected side effect of his efforts is that the Thyatian Empire survives; if Eriadna had the time, she would take advantage of this opportunity to destroy the rival empire for good and seize all its territories. Buoyed up by the victory over Thyatis, the Alpathians vow to pursue the war to the bitter end.

Thincol's treaty with Eriadna means that the Alpathian armed forces now have a clear shot at Glantri. They can march across or sail around Thyatis, then Karamaikos (owing to the current treaty between the Grand Duchy and Alpathia). Neither the Five Shires nor Darokin have the means or will to prevent Alpathia's full armed might marching on to Glantri.

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs locate and tamper with the Nucleus of the Spheres at this time (as described in the adventure's Finale), then Alpathia is destroyed and the Alpathian Expeditionary Army surrenders at the gates of Thyatis City! This would be a complete reversal for Thyatis.

As an alternative, the *Week Without Magic* (see next event) could take place before Alpathia forces Thyatis to sue for peace. Both the death of Eriadna and the absence of magic cause major political upheavals in Alpathia, temporarily bringing the Alpathian advance to a halt, giving the PCs more time to accomplish their goal with the Nucleus. Pro-Thyatian clerics in the party could receive omens urging them to "go to Glantri and save the empire!"

Otherwise, the PCs' actions might have led to Anya being cast out even earlier.

Fall, Year 1,009: The Week Without Magic

News Events: Rad, Rafiel, and Rathanos finish the construction of the Doomsday Weapon in Glantri. Immediately after hearing that Thyatis has conducted a peace treaty with Alpathia (or that the Alpathian forces besiege and blockade Thyatis), Rad activates the device. Minutes later, a storm forms over the city of Sundsvall.

The storm is like nothing the Alpathians have ever seen. Lightning falls on the city as thick as rain, utterly destroying the Imperial Palace and most of the center of the city. Hail the size of war-horses crashes down upon the entire city, destroying 50% of the dwellings in Sundsvall. Rain floods whole areas of the city.

Worst of all, starting the moment the storm appears over Sundsvall, spellcasters all over the world of Mystara, both outside and inside, discover that *magic no longer works*.

All across the world, sky-ships falter and sink to the ground; the more savvy captains are able to make safe landings, while inexperienced crews crash and perish.

Members of magical races, such as elves, grow ill and lose their strength. People whose lives had been magically extended age and die, including the Empress Eriadna (some of these characters, like Master Terari, could be wished back to life later on).

Magical wards and barriers which long kept powerful fiends and other monsters imprisoned fail, and the captives run free.

Clerics cannot commune with their Immortals.

The Sun of the HOLLOW WORLD® grows dark and millions of HOLLOW WORLD residents are convinced that the end of the world has come.

Immortals who are on the world of Mystara in Mortal Identities find that they are trapped; they are unable to return to their true forms without using the desperate method of killing their mortal bodies.

Then, after hours of this meteorological abuse, the storm vanishes. However, magic does not return to the world for a full week.

What This Means: This event has drastic consequences for the war and the attitudes of the Immortals.

The Doomsday Weapon was supposed to drain all the magic from the site Rad pinpointed—in this case, Sundsvall. What its creators had not predicted was that it then immediately released all that energy again in the form of violent weather. Rad is horrified by the realization that, instead of rendering Eriadna's court helpless, he's caused the deaths of thousands of innocent people. Furthermore, at the same time he activated the Doomsday Weapon, the Nucleus activated itself and drained massive amounts of energy from the entire planet.

Rad realizes that the Nucleus is out of control. He immediately sends messages to Ixion and Eriadna asking for a meeting to negotiate an end to the war. Unfortunately, Eriadna is missing and Ixion misinterprets the offer as a threat, coming as it does just after a demonstration of the artifact's power. He rejects the offer and uses the incident to turn Immortal opinion strongly against the Ring of Fire. Across the Known World, clerics asking their Immortals the cause of the disaster receive the answer "Rad, the Immortal patron of Glantri" or "Glantri's Doomsday Weapon."

What the PCs Can Do: If the PCs are able to locate the Nucleus of the Spheres before this point in the story, they might be able to destroy it before Sundsvall is destroyed; see Phase III for details. However, that event precipitates the destruction of the rest of Alpathia, as the adventure relates.

Winter, Year 1,009: Thousand Wizards Convene

News Events: Empress Eriadna and Prince Zandor, her son and heir-apparent, were in the Imperial Palace of Sundsvall when the storm destroyed it. During the following days, servicemen digging through the rubble under the command of Eriadna's daughter, Queen Eldrethila of Theranderol, are unable to find them.

After a week, magic returns and Eldrethila is able to find Eriadna and Zandor within minutes by casting a *locate object* spell to find a jewel her mother was wearing. When found, Zandor is trapped and near death from starvation and dehydration; Eriadna died of old age, her magically enhanced youth having been dispelled.

Zandor is returned to health within days. He "temporarily postpones" any *wish* spell that could revive the Empress and immediately seizes the Imperial Throne. Despite this coup, his mood remains as grim as Thanatos, the Immortal of Death. From his new headquarters in Aquas, his father's undersea city-kingdom, he convenes the council known as the Thousand Wizards of Alpathia, which consists of the most powerful magic-users of the empire. Many of its members perished in the Week



Without Magic, torn apart by conjured monsters, hunted down by old enemies, or lynched by angry mobs who blamed them for the disaster; the survivors come prepared to hear Zandor announce his intention to accept d'Ambreville's offer to end the war.

Instead, he shocks them all by ordering them to prepare for an all-out assault against Glantri. Some accept his argument that they must destroy Glantri before d'Ambreville can use his weapon against them again; others, including Master Terari (a secret identity of his grandfather, ex-Emperor Tylion), think he is simply inviting disaster. The new Emperor is in no mood for discussion, and gives the dissenters an ultimatum: obey him or face immediate exile or imprisonment. Most cave in, but others, including Terari and many Shiye-Lawr elves, accept exile instead. Terari and those who are like-minded leave for Kara-meikos to establish the School of Magic there, while the Shiye-Lawr set out for Wendar by way of Norwold.

What This Means: Zandor's thirst for vengeance means that now either Alpatia or Glantri is doomed. As strong as Glantri's mages are, they cannot stand before the might of a whole continent's top-level magic-users. Rad is now faced with the choice of either activating his Doomsday Weapon again and destroying Alpatia—in effect, murdering millions of men, women, and children—or allowing his own people to be exterminated by the Thousand Wizards.

What the PCs Can Do: This is not an event the PCs can thwart unless they find and destroy the Nucleus of the Spheres before the Thousand Wizards are launched against Glantri. If the PCs are close to that objective, their patron, Rheddrian, might be able to tell them what Zandor plans; Rheddrian could have found a new agent in the level-headed Terari, Zandor's grandfather. Otherwise, the PCs will remain completely ignorant of Zandor's objective.

Winter, Year 1,009: The War Ends

News Events: If the PCs have still not found the Nucleus of the Spheres, the war ends now in an excess of destruction and savagery.

Rheddrian has concluded mathematical calculations which convince him that the artifact must be near the Great School of Magic. Either the PCs have already come to that conclusion and he meets them in Glantri City, or he transports the PCs to Glantri and launches them into the "Finale" adventure described in Phase III.

The next day, the "Thousand Wizards" *teleport* to the skies over Glantri City and begin to bombard the city with fire, lightning, and death. Either Rad regretfully activates the Doomsday Weapon, or the artifact automatically activates in response to the energy being released by the attacking Alpatians. In either case, Alpatia will be destroyed. Zandor remains untouched in his father's undersea kingdom, the City of Aquas, where he bitterly mourns the destruction of his great empire. He conspires to regain a new one, somehow, someday...

What This Means: This event marks the end of both the war and the adventure; see the "Finale" section of Phase III.

What the PCs Can Do: See the "Finale" section of Phase III.

Winter, Year 1,009: Alpatia Sinks

News Events: Immediately after the activation of the Nucleus of the Spheres, earthquakes begin rumbling across the continent of Alpatia; volcanoes emerge; cities topple. Within the span of a few hours, most of the continent sinks beneath the cold waters of the Sea of Dawn.

What This Means: Alpatia's destruction is the result of the Nucleus of the Spheres. Most people will believe that the continent has been destroyed by the Immortals. In actuality, the Immortals struggled to save what they could, and Alpatia is not completely destroyed.

The Immortals cannot stop the sinking of Alpatia... so, instead, they use their magic to transfer it into the Hollow World. There, it becomes the largest of the Floating Continents. Although the population is devastated, most of them survive and begin to adapt to their strange new environment.

What the PCs Can Do: There's nothing the PCs can do to predict or prevent this event.

Year 1,010 And Afterwards

Once the war is done, the PCs will return to a world that is vastly changed from the world of ten years ago. Many of its peoples will be busy rebuilding what was destroyed for years to come. Others will compete to fill the vacuum left by Alpatia's departure. Here are some of the changes:

Aengmor: The land that was once Alfheim is now a nation of dark and twisted trees ruled by the pale, xenophobic Shadow Elves.

Alpatia: With the exception of some of the most mountainous regions, the underwater city of Aquas, and the Flying Islands of Ar, the continent of Alpatia is *gone*, sunk beneath the ocean.

Bellissaria: Alpatia's greatest colony is independent for now; whether it can retain its independence in the face of future expansion by the Thyatian Empire and the Heldannic Knights remains to be seen.

The Broken Lands: Many humanoids who lived above ground died under the Heldannic Knights' mighty blades; in fact, the words "Heldannic Knight" become a phrase to frighten young orcs with for generations to come. Those humanoids who remain cower in their lairs. King Thar remains in control of the Crater, but little else. Many small groups raid or forage across the borders of the greatly-expanded Broken Lands into northern Darokin.

Darokin: Exhausted by repeated invasions, the Republic tries to rebuild its shattered economy. Its northern and western territories have been ravaged by the humanoid and Desert Nomad armies, while the presence of the unfriendly Shadow Elves in what used to be Alfheim weakens Darokin's control over all the land bordering on Aengmor, including the important eastern trade route through Selenica. With Thar dug in to the north, Hule to the west, and the Shadow Elves (still an unknown quali-

ty) smack in the center of their country, the Darokinians attempt to attract as many allies as they can as they look nervously to the future.

Ethengarian Khanates: The Great Khan and his armies are disgraced by the failure of the invasion of Heldann Territory and the Northern Reaches and by his inability to stop the counter-invasions. A challenger to his rule would be welcomed by many discontented warriors, but so far none has stepped forward.

Glantri: Although triumphant in the end, Glantri has been devastated by the lengthy war. One principality (Blackhill) has been completely destroyed. A second (Caurenze) has shrunk to one heavily-fortified castle occupied by a single person, Prince Innocenti, whose paranoia after the meteor crash reaches such heights that he assumes anyone who approaches is trying to kill him and *disintegrates* them on the spot.

Many refugees settle in western Glantri, where new principalities start to form. Rumors abound that werewolves are attempting to create their own state. In addition, one of the humanoid leaders of the forces occupying Blackhill and part of Caurenze breaks with King Thar and begins to petition to become the head of a new principality.

Prince Etienne's disappearance threatens to throw the government into chaos, but his youngest brother, Prince Henri d'Ambreville, steps into his brother's post as head of the d'Ambrevilles and Catherine d'Ambreville, Etienne's estranged wife, takes over his role as Grand Master of the Great School of Magic. Of the current whereabouts or status of Etienne d'Ambreville, the Immortal Rad, there is not a clue.

Heldann Territories. Though depopulated by plague and warfare, this nation emerges victorious from the war. The Heldannic Knights are war heroes, having cured the plague and led the fight to repel the invaders. The Knights who made the epic journeys to relieve Glantri and fought in the final battles in Thyatis are treated as legends in their own lifetime.

With Alpathia gone and Thyatis licking its wounds, the Heldanners look to an undefended Norwold as a site for future expansion, having already annexed some land near Landfall. As soon as they have regrouped and rested their forces, a major northward push to seize new territory can be expected. Their next goal: Oceansend.

The Hollow World. Alpathia is now a floating continent of the Hollow World, retaining some of the most interesting aspects of old Alpathia concentrated on a smaller land. Once Hollow World Alpathians adjust to their new environment (especially to the changes in the way magic works here), they will begin exerting considerable influence here. The Immortal Alpathia *wishes* Empress Eriadna back to life, to rule her Hollow World empire.

Isle of Dawn. Emperor Thincol of Thyatis remains true to his word and respects the sovereignty of the new nation of Helskir in the north of the island. He does dispatch forces under the joint command of his daughter, Princess Stephania, and her husband, General Anaxibius, to re-take control of Newkirk, Redstone, and West Portage.

Most of the surviving Alpathians in the surface world return to the eastern portion of the Isle of Dawn and settle there; their





main centers are Dunadale, Trikelios, and East Portage. The Thothians on the southernmost portions of the isle re-assert their independence.

Karameikos: King Stefan sets about making Karameikos an important and prosperous nation in the new, post-war world. He has new elvish dominions in the east, where once there were goblin-infested forests. Many Alpathian wizards, led by Master Terari, settle in Specularum and establish a school of magic. Many wartime refugees from Darokin and Thyatis decide to stay on and become part of this still-young and still-changing nation.

Norwold: The chaos and infighting in this region continues unabated. Now that Norwold no longer enjoys the protection of mighty Alpathia, the disorganized area is likely to be invaded by land-hungry Heldannic Knights in the months ahead.

Ochalea: This clerical nation remains independent of the Empire of Thyatis for the time being.

The Pearl Islands: This nation remains independent of the Empire of Thyatis for the time being.

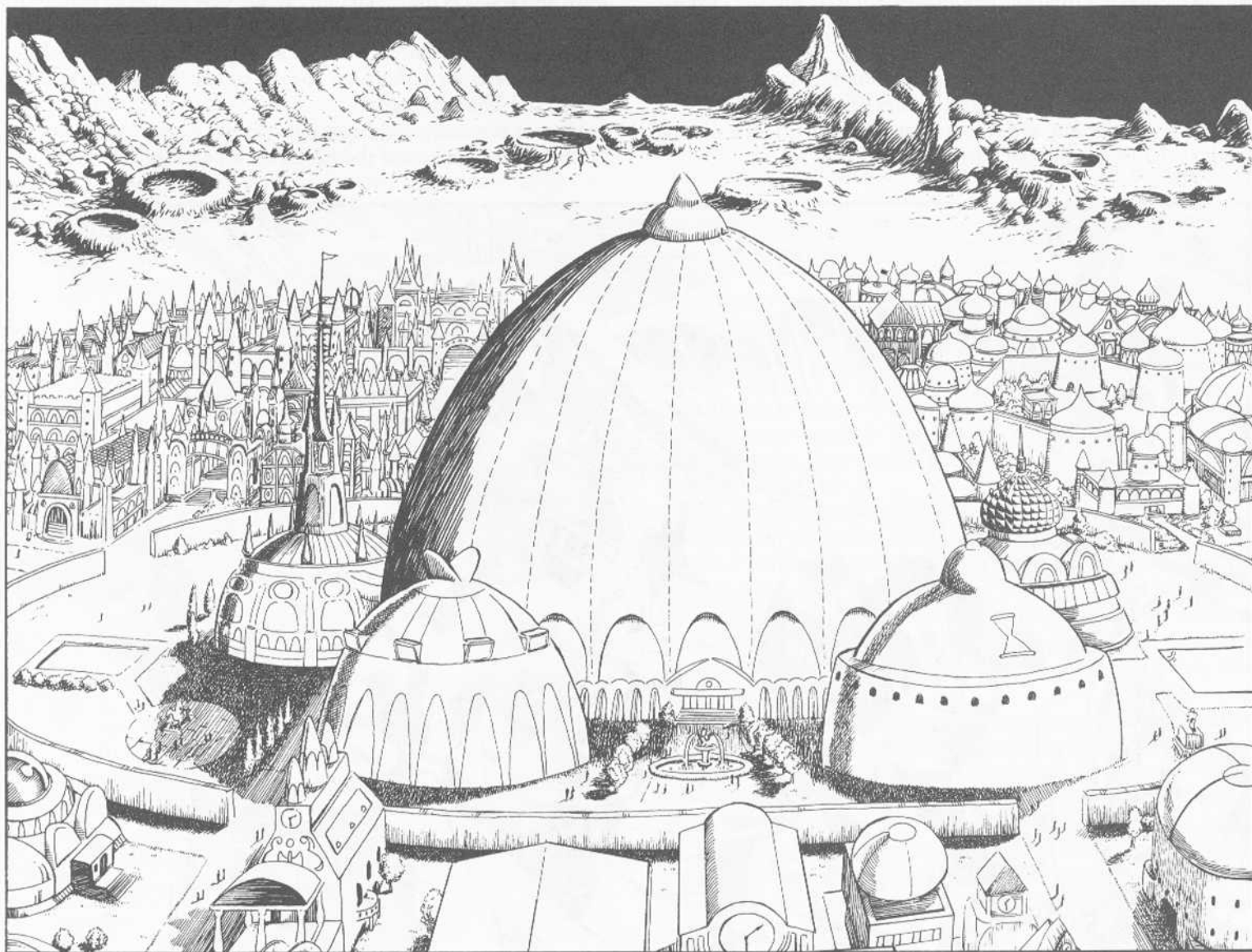
Rockhome: With the war over, the dwarves of Rockhome

emerge from the caverns, sweep up a bit, and return to life as normal.

Thyatis: Bled dry by the years of war, Thyatis begins its slow recovery. The Empire regains full control of all its mainland territories and of loyal areas on the Isle of Dawn. All of the areas it formerly held by force, such as Ochalea and the Pearl Islands, have become independent. Much reduced in manpower, territory, and prestige, Thyatis will be a long time rebuilding itself, even without competition from Alpathia. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Empire will survive. Emperor Thincol's health continues to fail, and he begins to consider whether his son Eusebius or his daughter Stephania should be his successor.

Ylaruam: This nation continues to promote the ideals of the Immortal al-Kalim. It becomes even more warlike than before, especially in view of Thyatis's current weak state and the stunning victories the Ylari carried off at Biazzan.

The post-Wrath world is a different and still-changing place, and upcoming supplements such as *The Poor Wizard's Almanac* will reveal what directions the world's history will take in the years to come.



Appendix A: When Things Go Wrong

In this chapter, we'll discuss things that can go wrong during this adventure... and what the DM can do to set them right.

What if PCs Uncover Rheddrian's Secret?

The PCs might guess early that Rheddrian is an Immortal. If they do, and ask him about this, he will confess his new state, ask them to continue with their mission, and assign them a mortal—a cleric of Benekander, his Immortal form—to keep in contact with them. Rheddrian will no longer communicate with them directly; instead his cleric will be the one who assigns missions, delivers their expense money, and passes along news.

This cleric can be a player character who is a servant of Benekander, or he or she can actually *be* Benekander in yet another Mortal Identity.

What if PCs Refuse or Betray Rheddrian?

Early in the adventure, the PCs could decide that they don't trust Rheddrian or simply don't want to work for him. That's okay; they can still go through most of the adventures in this book, including the mini-adventures of the Timeline. They will find out on their own that Rheddrian was telling them the truth and see for themselves how much trouble the world is in. They may eventually realize that they need all the help they can get and re-establish contact with him or one of the other major Immortals involved.

What if the PCs are Followers of One of the Other Immortals?

If one of the PCs is a cleric or paladin who follows one of the other Immortals involved in this adventure, he or she will probably want to contact his or her patron at some point and let that Immortal know what the player character has discovered. The Immortal's reaction will depend on his or her personality. For example, a follower of Vanya might be ordered to assist in the war; a follower of Rad or Rafiel to aid Glantri in any way possible. Both Asterius and Ixion would send their followers on missions similar to the ones Benekander originated: Asterius to uncover evidence of the existence of the Brotherhood of the Shadow and Ixion to ferret out what Rad and his cohorts are up to.

It's even possible that the PC might be a cleric of Balthac, and hence an unwitting follower of Hel. In this case, the party would be entrusted with Kelter Zerban's mission and would only find out, too late, that they had been betrayed into doing evil; Kelter's quest for vengeance could then become their own.

If a PC is a cleric who follows an Immortal not involved in this adventure, the DM could give the character a personal stake in

the outcome by adding his or her Immortal to one of the groups—either the Fellowship of the Star or the Ring of Fire, whichever would be more appropriate.

What if PCs Kill Kelter?

In Phase II, Zerban could die—either at the hands of the PCs or in some other fashion—long before he gets to the Hollow World and begins undertaking his mission for Balthac/Hel.

In this case, "Balthac" has heard some of Kelter's prayers up to the point when Kelter dies. Hel is vitally interested in what Kelter has to find out. If the PCs or trolls kill Kelter, Hel will notice that Kelter doesn't make prayers the next morning; she will investigate using an *Immortal eye* spell (see *Codex* for details), then send a mortal follower to cast *raise dead fully* on Kelter's corpse, after which Kelter will continue his mission.

What if the PCs Decide to Call It Quits?

At any point in the adventure, the PCs might decide that they are in way over their heads and that a hasty retreat is in order. Even as late as the Finale, PCs intimidated by the arrival of not one but two Immortals might want to try to escape the Cavern of the Artifact using Rheddrian's Shield. If so, the DM should let them. IN NO CASE should the DM try to force the players to continue in this or any other adventure if they decide not to; this is a sure recipe for disaster. Instead, let the PCs emerge themselves in the events in the Timeline or depart to explore more peaceful parts of the Known World. They may want to rejoin the main adventure after some "time off," or they may continue with a new series of adventures; in either case, the DM should make sure his or her main goal is to ensure that everybody has a good time.

What if the PCs Fail to Save the World?

The PCs could foul up in the final adventure. They might switch sides, stab Rheddrian in the back, or simply get distracted by the war. They might all die in the battle with Calor, the golem, or the Dbots before completing the reprogramming of the Nucleus.

In such a case, either the world can be saved some other way (Benekander and Rad make an alliance; Khoronus, Odin, Terra, and Thanatos intervene and order the squabbling Immortals to cease; the Old Ones take matters into their own hands; the Nucleus becomes sentient and refuses to hurt people), OR the events will proceed as described, except without the PCs' intervention.

Appendix B: Monsters

Lightning Zombies

| | Lesser | Greater |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Armor Class: | 8 | 6 |
| Hit Dice: | 2* (M) | 4* (M) |
| Move: | 90' (30') | 120' (40') |
| Attacks: | 1 fist, weapon, or special | 2 fists, weapons, or special |
| Damage: | 1d3, by weapon, or special | 1d6, by weapon, or special |
| No. Appearing: | 2d6 (2d6) | 1 (1) |
| Save As: | F2 | F4 |
| Morale: | 7 | 7 |
| Treasure Type: | A | A × 2 |
| Intelligence: | 11 | 11 |
| Alignment: | N | C |
| XP Value: | 25 | 125 |

Monster Type: Undead (very rare).

Lightning Zombies are the reanimated bodies of men and women who have died within a few hundred yards of the Mirror-Shield of Rheddrian.

They look like people, except that their skins are a uniform light grey. Their features are quite animated; they can speak and otherwise seem alive. In fact, many of them appear hyperactive.

Lightning Zombies look normal in daylight, but glow dimly in the dark.

They resemble other types of undead in several ways. They are not affected by poisons, or by *charm person* or other mind-affecting spells. Lightning Zombies have an infravision ability like elves and dwarves.

They are unlike other undead in other ways, however. Successful Turn Undead attempts do not destroy them or make them flee; such attacks only hold them at bay, affecting them as per the *protection from evil*, 10' radius spell. In addition to using weapons, they're bright enough to use combat tactics, available terrain, and the like, just as characters do. In short, they should be treated as NPCs rather than as "monsters."

They have a special combat ability called the *lightning touch*. They can grab victims and have great grip strength; it takes a successful Open Doors roll to break free from their grip.

On the first round after they grab a victim, and on each round thereafter, they can discharge an electrical jolt into their victims. Each jolt does 1d6 damage and does not require an Attack Roll to hit. A Lightning Zombie can only discharge a jolt after he has held his victim for at least one full combat round; he cannot, for instance, hit a target with his fist and discharge lightning at the same time. Lightning Zombies cannot take any other combat action when discharging energy.

Greater Lightning Zombies are faster, have more Hit Dice, have two attacks per round (but can only use their *lightning touch* once per round), do more damage with their fists (1d6), and do more damage with their *lightning touch* (2d6).

The spirits which once inhabited their bodies have already fled, and Lightning Zombies have no memories or character class abilities of their previous lives. However, unlike true zombies, they are intelligent. They pick new names for themselves

and try to perform mighty deeds of combat and adventure so that they can have something to boast about. At the DM's option, they may even be capable of level advancement.

All the Lightning Zombies encountered in this adventure are under the control of Lord Kazakk, who is a Greater Lightning Zombie.

Victims slain by these creatures will only turn into Lightning Zombies themselves if their bodies remain within one hundred yards of the Mirror-Shield of Rheddrian for one hour after their deaths.

Terrain: Mountains; specific area of Silver Sierras, Darokin/Glantri border.



Appendix B: Monsters

Ploppéds

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Armor Class: | 9 |
| Hit Dice: | 1½* (S) |
| Move: | 120' (40') |
| Attacks: | 1 bite |
| Damage: | 1 point + special |
| No. Appearing: | 2d6 (1d6) |
| Save As: | F1 |
| Morale: | 3 |
| Treasure Type: | Nil |
| Intelligence: | 1 |
| Alignment: | N |
| XP Value: | 6 |

Monster Type: Lowlife (very rare).

Ploppéds were once spiders haunting the shadowy corners of Corran Keep. Subjected to the occasional energy pulses from the Mirror-Shield of Rheddrian, they grew quite large—their bodies are the size of oranges—and ended up with many more legs than spiders. Ploppéds have different numbers of legs, from six to twenty (roll 1d8, add 2, and multiply by 2 to get the number of legs an individual ploppéd has). Regardless of the number of legs they possess, they are black and hairy.

The creatures were named by the learned Lord Kazakk, who called them “polytpeps” (many-legged); the other Lightning Zombies simply call them “ploppéds” for the sound they make when they land (“plop!”).

Ploppéds are very sneaky. They have the following abilities of a fifth-level thief character: Move Silently (40%), Climb Sheer Surfaces (91%), Hide In Shadows (28%).

These creatures do not prey on creatures bigger than rats; they prefer to hide in shadowy areas when something large is in the immediate area. However, if startled, they will attack and then run away.

Ploppéds attack by leaping (up to 20'!) at their prey; when attacking medium- or large-sized creatures, they leap for the neck or face. If they hit (on an ordinary Attack Roll), they sting, injecting a paralytic poison. The victim must make a Saving Throw vs. Poisons or be paralyzed for 1d6 turns. Small creatures must save with a -4 penalty and will be paralyzed for 1d6 × 10 turns.

Terrain: Mountains; specific area of Silver Sierras, Darokin/Glantri border.



Appendix B: Monsters

Sprackles

| | Lesser | Greater |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Armor Class: | 9 | 6 |
| Hit Dice: | 1 1/2* (S) | 2* (S) |
| Move: | 30' (10') | 30' (10') |
| Flying: | 180' (60') | 180' (60') |
| Attacks: | 1 beak or special | 1 beak or special |
| Damage: | 1d3 or special | 1d8 or special |
| No. Appearing: | 1d6 (2d6) | 1d6 (2d6) |
| Save As: | F1-1 | F2 |
| Morale: | 8 | 8 |
| Treasure Type: | Nil | Nil |
| Intelligence: | 1 | 1 |
| Alignment: | C | C |
| XP Value: | 6 | 25 |

Monster Type: Monster (Very Rare).

These creatures look very similar to grackles, the common blackbirds from whom they are descended.

However, these birds are larger than grackles and colored differently: they are a coppery reddish-brown and constantly shed little electrical sparks. Because of these sparks, the birds glow in the dark, and so do most of their hunting in the daytime, when they are slightly less obvious.

The birds' beaks are very long and sharp and can penetrate armor, giving them a +2 "to hit" bonus on their attack rolls. In addition, sprackles can launch little lightning attacks within 30' of a target; a small charge of electricity shoots out from their beaks and, if the attack roll is successful, hits their prey, doing 1d3 damage (1d6 up to 60', in the case of Greater Sprackles).

Sprackles are fearless and very territorial. They avoid undead creatures and creatures which are larger than man-sized but will attack other creatures to drive them out of their territory. They fly directly toward their prey, shooting their little lightning-blasts until they get within melee range, at which time they attack with their beaks. They continue fighting until half the flock is killed or wounded, at which time they flee.

Sprackles have infravision.

These creatures are currently unknown to the world outside the immediate area of Corran Keep. "Sprackles" is the name young Noriad Corran has given them, a coinage which combines "sparks" and "grackles."

Terrain: Mountains; specific area of Silver Sierras, Darokin/Glantri border.



Metropolitan Alphatia—AC.1004







To Denagoth

Woodgate

City of Wendar

Bengarian
Hermitage

Sylvair

Oakwall

Hockstein

Graenberg

Wendarian Range

Rymskigrad

Vladimirov

Noroling

Leenz

Tchernovodsk

Glenmoorloch

Kopstar

Braastan

Giantri

New Alvar

Monteleone

Khanates of
Ethengar

Street River

Krandai

River

Lizzien

Enladna

ERENOVI

Broken Lands

The Canon

Nell

Thymad

Siah

Dengar

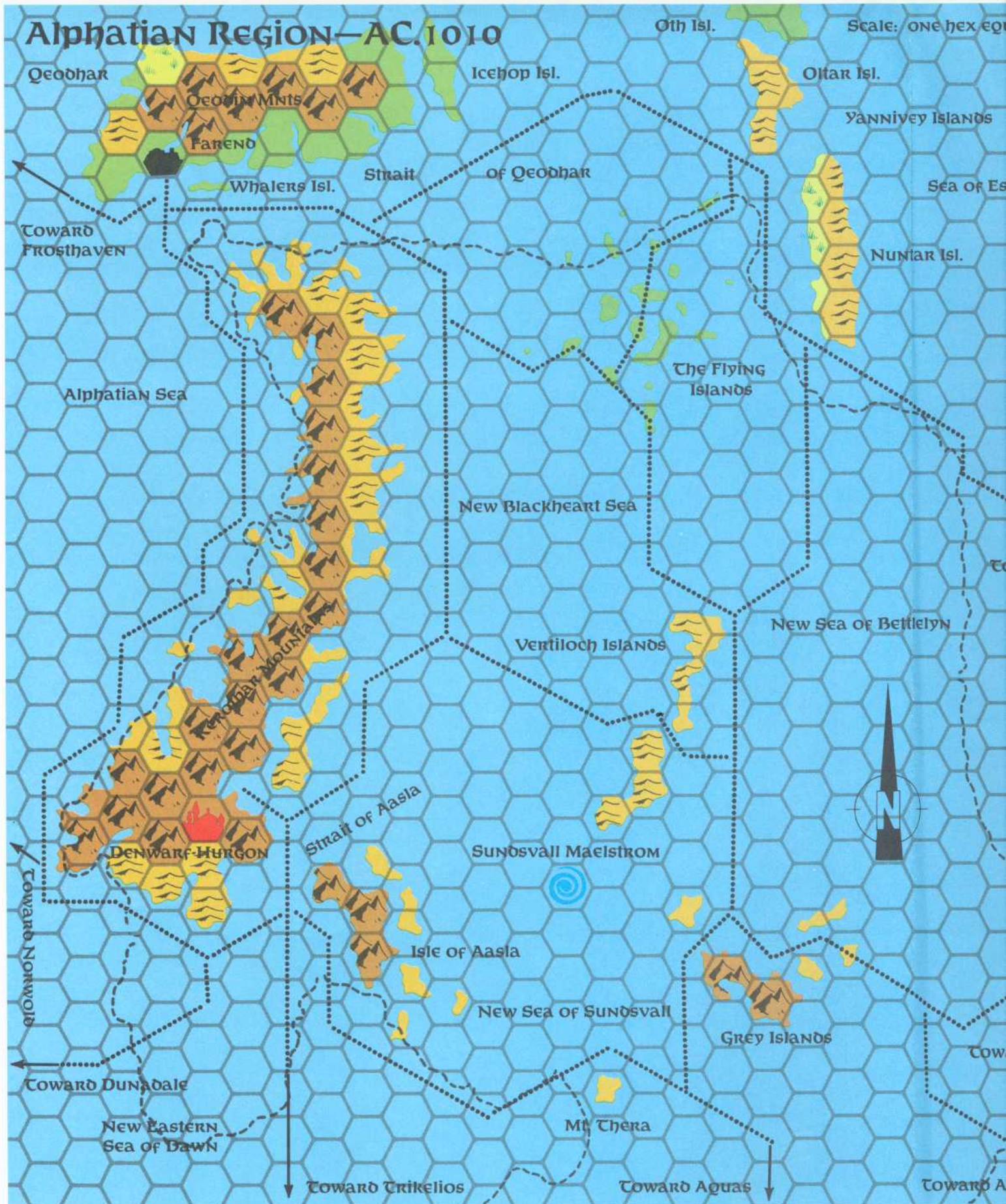
Evenmur

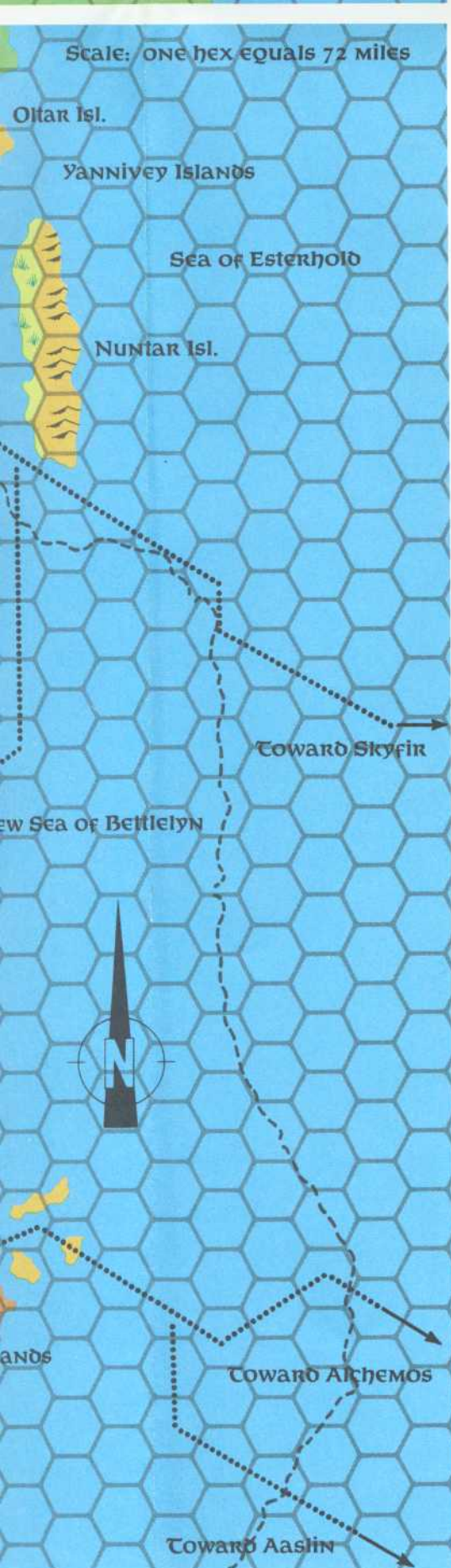
Greenston

Karak



Alphatian Region—AC 1010









Scale: One hex equals 24 miles



Gereth Minar

Denagoth

Wendar

Freiburg

Ethengar

Glantri City

Lanorall

Heidannic
Pre-War
Territories

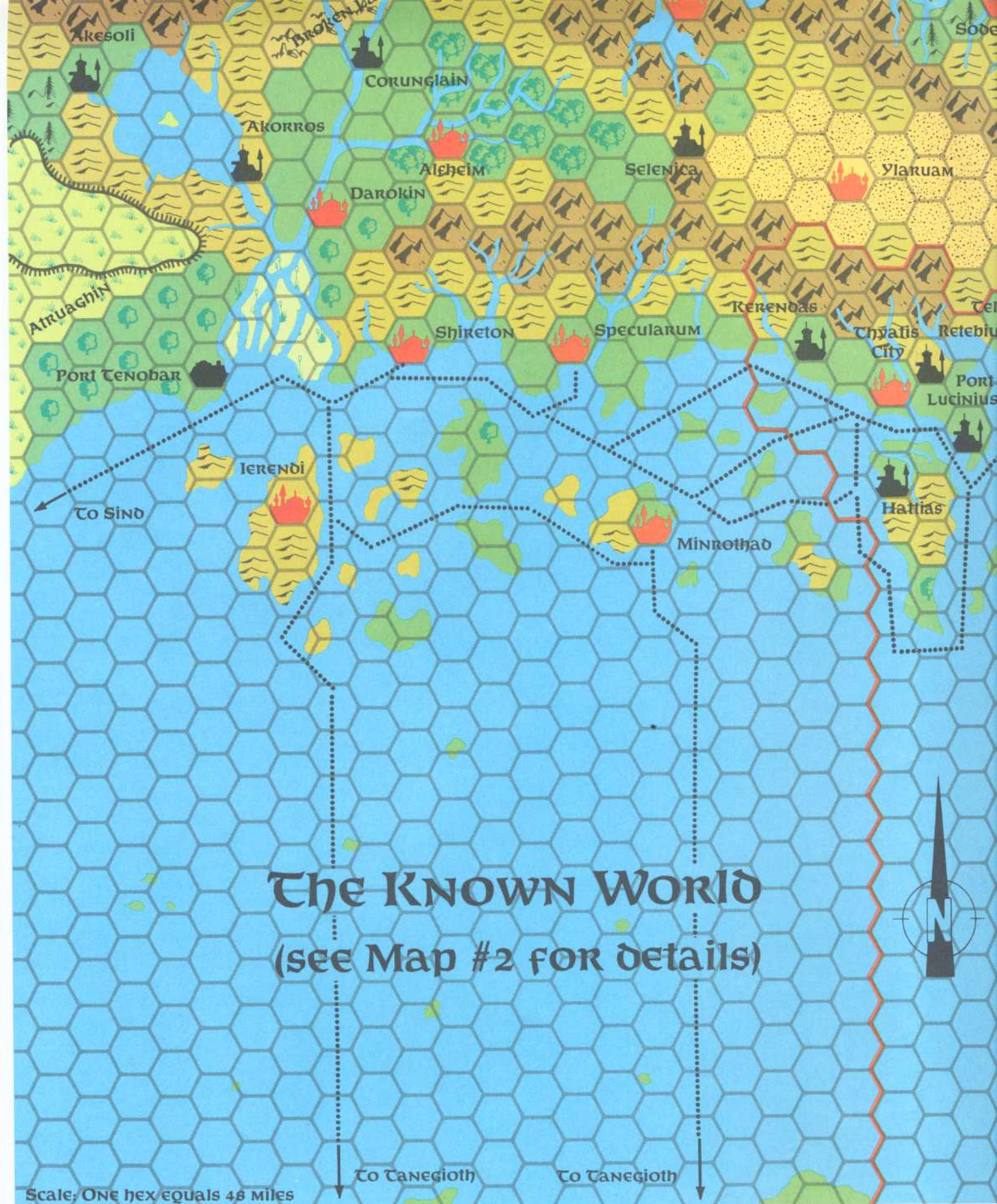
Norkvik

Denger









The Known World

(see Map #2 for details)

Scale: One hex equals 48 miles

To Tanegioth

To Tanegioth







| | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------------|
| | PALACE | | BARREN OR BROKEN LAND | | LIGHT CACTUS |
| | CASTLE | | PLATEAU OR CLIFF | | HEAVY CACTUS |
| | FORT | | LIGHT FOREST | | BADLANDS |
| | TOWER OR KEEP | | HEAVY FOREST | | DEAD FOREST |
| | RUINS | | HILLS WITH FOREST | | REEF |
| | CAPITAL | | LIGHT FOREST | | COAST LINE |
| | CITY | | HEAVY FOREST | | RIVER |
| | TOWN | | HILLS WITH FOREST | | WATER FALL |
| | VILLAGE | | JUNGLE | | GREATER CATARACT (RAPIDS) |
| | CAMP | | GRASSLAND OR STEPPE SAVANNA VELDT | | MEDIUM CATARACT (RAPIDS) |
| | LIGHTHOUSE | | SWAMP OR MARSH | | LESSER CATARACT (RAPIDS) |
| | VOLCANO | | MOOR OR BOG | | CANAL |
| | MOUNTAINS | | DESERT OR SEA SAND | | ROAD |
| | CLEAR PASTURELAND FARMLAND | | ROCKY DESERT | | TRAIL OR SHIPPING LANES |
| | HILLS | | OASIS | | BORDER |



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