

### **EIRMONT 1, AC 1015: Secrets Found.**

**Location:** Puerto Morillos, Narvaez. SC

**Description:** Baran Hugo's spies report their findings on the bombard in Torrean. Hugo makes a deal with Baronesa Isabel, using his knowledge of the cannons as leverage.

Torrean smuggles smokepowder and cannons to Narvaez, going against the sanctions placed by the Signatory Council. Narvaez, in return, promises to help the Baronesa in her conquest of Terra Vermelha. Narvaez also sends soldiers to help maintain order at Las Guajacas in Torrean. (See Fy. 7.)

**What This Means:** Working together, these baronies probably can conquer Terra Vermelha; unless of course the other baronies unite together to stop them.

As for the soldiers sent to keep the peace in Las Guajacas, they tend to side more with the "normal" people than the Afflicted they are suppose to help protect. Las Guajacas becomes a veritable prison city for the Afflicted.

### **EIRMONT 2, AC 1015: Ironclad Back Home.**

**Location:** Thyatis City, Thyatis. OW

**Description:** The Ironclad arrives back in Thyatis City, where the captain immediately drops off his smokepowder and wheellock cargo at the Zendrolium. The military commanders begin their testing of the new weapons: and nothing happens. The smokepowder fails to ignite. (See Ya. 11, Fy. 12.)

**What This Means:** Thyatis has just discovered what Minrothad has known for a while, hence the reason they don't bother trying importing smokepowder themselves. Smokepowder doesn't work away from the Savage Coast.

What most alchemists know is that the main components of smokepowder are vermeil and steel seed, both elements found on the Savage Coast. Unknown to even those that create smokepowder is that a third element is involved. The vermeil-steel seed mix must be in contact with atmospheric vermeil, which is only found in the Cursed Lands and the regions of the Haze. Because of this, smokepowder fails to work once you leave the Savage Coast area.

This is just more bad news for the Thyatians. First of all, their "war" against the Twaelar isn't going all too well. In fact, they haven't yet managed to actually confront their water-breathing enemies but still lost over 20 ships to them. So far, the war has been limited to recalling all ships in the Alphatian Sea to patrol in the Sea of Dread and protect their merchant ships from the mermen. They're still waiting for a breakthrough by the School of Magecraft for underwater magical items.

Now their hopes of improving their ground forces with firearms have just been shattered. The morale of their military is definitely not improving.

### **EIRMONT 3, AC 1015: Renewed Free Jennites Attacks.**

**Location:** Eastern Verdan, Esterhold Peninsula. AS

**Description:** The Jennite tribesmen renew their attacks on the Verdan well-manned fort, throwing their stone spears against the defensive walls. The Alphatian captain soon realizes that these cannot possibly be the same Jennites that attacked Faraway or harassed them on their way, as they are using the primitive weapons they are familiar with, not steel weapons. He sends an emissary to parlay with their leader, and is harshly answered that the tribe's herd has been decimated by a magical, Alphatian plague. (See Fy. 25, Am. 4; Ei. 22.)

### **EIRMONT 3, AC 1015: The Price for Freedom.**

**Location:** Drax Tallen, Denagoth. NW

**Description:** After discovering the disappearance of Beasthunter and his wife, the elves manage to learn that they're held captive in Drax Tallen.

Gilfronden devises a plan to rescue the couple and after choosing a team of expert and trusted elves, he leads them into the keep descending from the high trees above. After many clashes with guards, the rescue team finds and manages to free the rulers of the Longrunners and escapes using one of the Shadowlord's secret tunnels they stumble upon.

Unfortunately however, Gilfronden does not make it safely back to the camp. He is captured while covering the party's retreat. [DMs should replace Gilfronden with their beloved elven general in campaigns where Gilfronden is already gone.] (See Sv. 21, Sv. 28; Ei. 5, Ei. 9.)

**What This Means:** The elves have managed to locate and free their leaders after a difficult and dangerous research at the heart of the enemy lines, but the price is high: General Gilfronden is now prisoner of the Shadowlord.

Moreover, Beasthunter has been seriously mauled and doesn't seem to be in full possession of his mind at the moment. Coolhands temporarily assumes the leadership of the Longrunners and the position of General: she and Durifern are now the only two remaining leaders of the Crusaders.

The Shadowlord has once again played with the elves and has won. He has seriously injured Beasthunter, including casting a feeblemind on him. Afterwards, he successfully charmed Coolhands (after discovering her true name with ESP and similar magic). Thanks to a magical link, she's now the Shadowlord's eyes and ears among the Crusaders. Gilfronden's capture came as an unexpected pleasant surprise, and the Shadowlord now wants to use him to demonstrate his power and ruthlessness.

**What The PCs Can Do:** They can participate in the attempt to rescue the Clanleaders of Longrunners but cannot change the fate of Gilfronden. They also won't have the chance to fight against the Shadowlord: they will only get a glimpse of him during the final run out of Drax Tallen, seeing how he alone incapacitates and captures Gilfronden.

#### **EIRMONT 4, AC 1015: Al-Kalim Has Arrived!**

**Location:** Ylaruam. OW

**Description:** Throughout the entire ranks of the Ylari forces, and even the citizens and children who remain at home, word spreads that Khalid 'Tale-Teller' is none other than Al-Kalim come to save his righteous people.

And this has tremendous impact on the war against the fiends. The religious fever raised by the belief that their Immortal is indeed among them causes most warriors to perform acts of extreme courage and bravery (or stupidity, depending on one's point of view). The tide is slowly starting to turn against the fiends. (See Sv. 15, Sv. 24; Ei. 7, Ka. 12.)

**What This Means:** Last year, Patricia Fortunatus predicted that Al-Kalim would return to his people. The people of Ylari have come to believe that Khalid must be Al-Kalim since it is his military leadership that is saving them from the tanar'ri [D&D: fiends]. Khalid 'Tale-Teller' has neither confirmed nor denied the allegations, but the Ylari believe it anyway.

Is Khalid 'Tale-Teller' truly Al-Kalim performing one of the tasks on his path to Immortality (where during his mortal life in the past He must go into the future [that is, now] and help the descendants of His people in times of great trouble)? This is up to the individual DM. If He is, one must remember that as Khalid, He is still mortal, and should He die, Al-Kalim would never have become an Immortal. Of course, with the amount of fanatical bodyguards he now has, harming Khalid is easier said than done.

**What The PCs Can Do:** If Khalid is indeed Al-Kalim, then any PCs who help him during his desperate moments are bound to become favorites of the Immortal Al-Kalim. In fact, because of the difference in time here, they probably already are favorites of Al-Kalim as He remembers them from his adventures in the past as a mortal. DMs desiring their PCs to get involved in this manner should foreshadow this by having them be well respected by the priests of Al-Kalim the past couple of years without them (or the priests) really knowing why except that it is the will of Al-Kalim.

#### **EIRMONT 4, AC 1015: Hockstein Surrenders.**

**Location:** Hockstein, Heldannic Territories. OW

**Description:** Having come to the conclusion that there is no way the people of Hockstein can hold off the Heldannic Knights, Sir Geoffrey and Reinhard Madelhari believe the best solution would be to surrender now.

The former Heldannic Knight along with several of the rebel leaders head out to announce the surrender of Hockstein. The group is locked up while the several divisions of Knights march into town.

Many of the townsfolk are surprised to see that Herr Wulf von Klagendorf himself was leading the attack. He announces that the citizens of Hockstein will be spared the usual death penalty for their revolt. In fact, several proclamations are made by the Oberherr.

The Inquisition is declared over. No longer shall people be forced to worship the glorious Vanya. However, all other religions may only be followed in the privacy of home. Any religious gathering other than those of Vanya will be considered heresy and punishable by death. The same goes for publicly announcing the doctrines of other faiths.

Second, officials no longer need be Heldannic Knights. They must, however, be true worshipers of Vanya (not necessarily priest, thought). The positions of the Heldannic Knights are to be the warriors and conquerors of Vanya, not the leaders; the true Vision of Vanya is conquest, and that is what the Heldannic Knights shall do.

Much later, during the darkness of night, Sir Geoffrey sneaks out of Hockstein and flees into the wilderness. (See Sv. 8, Sv. 20; Ei. 10.)

**What This Means:** Sir Geoffrey was ready to accept his death if it would save the people of Hockstein. But Reinhard convinced him to flee instead. He says that Geoffrey is the hero of the people, and only he can lead them to freedom. It would be better for him to flee and try again another time. Reinhard says he will take full responsibility for this revolt and will suffer the punishment in his place. Geoffrey reluctantly agreed when the other leaders in Hockstein suggested the same thing.

Despite Herr Wulf's proclamation that officials no longer need to be Heldannic Knights, most of them will be. After all, try and find a worshiper of Vanya that has leadership abilities and who is not already a Heldannic Knight.

#### **EIRMONT 5, AC 1015: Thar and Psa'gh's Horde Grows.**

**Location:** Triangle of Ash, Makkres Mountains, Rockhome. OW

**Description:** Various goblinoid clans of the Makkres, Altan Tepes, and Hardanger Mountains join their forces into Thar and Psa'gh's horde. For the first time in over a year, they are actually beginning to look like a fearsome goblinoid horde again. (See Sv. 14, Sv. 20; Ei. 8, Ei. 22.)

**What This Means:** The success Thar and Psa'gh have been having against Rockhome has convinced other tribes to join their horde, causing their forces to grow rather rapidly.

Among those who join there are Mokamet-Qadi, a gnoll from Ylaruam. His band of gnollish raiders fled the Alasiyan Desert to avoid the fiends and Ylari forces that have been rampaging across the countryside the past couple of months. He has already lost too many gnolls to the powerful forces, and is now moving to safer ground. The rumors of success he has heard in Rockhome have therefore attracted his attention.

#### **EIRMONT 5, AC 1015: Gilfronden's Fate.**

**Location:** Drax Tallen, Denagoth. NW

**Description:** Using a powered spell of ventriloquism, the Shadowlord's voice echoes in the camp of the elves, demanding their immediate surrender. If they obey, he promises to let them live as his new slaves. If they don't, he will annihilate them all, beginning with General Gilfronden.

Durifern is shocked, but he firmly states that the elves will fight against the evil embodied by the Shadowlord and Idris. Grinning, the Shadowlord announces that they have just sentenced Gilfronden to death.

The Shadowlord then appears on the battlements of Drax Tallen with Gilfronden and beheads him with a single slash. The elf's head is subsequently impaled on the pinnacle of his keep.

The elves mourn the loss of their leader, still unaware that he was a shadow elf. (See Sv. 26, Ei. 3; Ei. 17, Ei. 21.)

**What This Means:** Durifern and the other officers were preparing a new rescue mission to save Gilfronden. The Shadowlord anticipated the move and killed the General to show the elves a fraction of his real power. The elves are now low on morale and Durifern will have a hard time trying to motivate the Crusaders against a seemingly unstoppable foe.

**What The PCs Can Do:** The PCs cannot avoid Gilfronden's death.

#### **EIRMONT 6, AC 1015: Traldar Learn of Deception.**

**Location:** Southern Azcan Empire, Azca. HW

**Description:** The Traldar learn from a captured Azcan priest that they never took their artifact, and that they never understood why the Traldar were attacking them. The Traldar then realize that they were tricked by the deceiving Shattenalfen into attacking their enemies for them. They vow to fight the elves until they retrieve their artifact. (See Va. 17, Am. 9; Ei. 12, Ka. 8.)

#### **EIRMONT 7, AC 1015: Goblin Skirmishes.**

**Location:** El Grande Carrascal. SC

**Description:** Goblins from various tribes make forays into the new gnollish Baronia del Grande Carrascal. (See Am. 24, Am. 27.)

**What This Means:** The goblins from the Badlands resent the gnolls' new attitude, which they now nickname humans' dogs. The gnolls have often refused in the previous weeks to let goblin parties use their land as a staging point for raids into human lands and ferociously defended their ground when the goblins tried to trespass anyway.

#### **EIRMONT 7, AC 1015: A Grand Quest.**

**Location:** Ylaruam. OW

**Description:** Having determined that the fiends come from the Dead Place, Khalid sends out the best Ylari warriors to obtain a magical item: The Sacred Book of the Sea. (See Sv. 24, Ei. 4; Ka. 12.)

**What This Means:** From the reports of scouts, it has become obvious that the tanar'ri [D&D: fiends] are coming from the Dead Place. Whenever it seems like the Ylari will win and kill off all the remaining fiends, more pour through the portal, removing all gains the Ylari have previously won. The logical solution is to therefore close the portal found at the Dead Place.

Khalid knows he cannot close the Dead Place on his own. He is therefore hoping to beseech the help of the Old Man of the Sea to close it for him. The Sacred Book of the Sea is a holy script which contains a divine ritual allowing one to communicate directly with Protius.

He therefore sends the most powerful Ylari adventurers to obtain this book. Its location is somewhere in the Sea of Dawn. DMs are free to fill in this quest with whatever dangers they want. This trek should mirror somewhat Al-Kalim's holy crusade to meet the Old Man of the Sea several centuries ago.

**What The PCs Can Do:** Well, they're obviously the most powerful adventurers of the land. If not, they're probably the most handy. Either way, they are given the task of acquiring the Holy Relic.

#### **EIRMONT 8, AC 1015: Scouts Have Interesting Report.**

**Location:** Triangle of Ash, Makkres Mountains, Rockhome. OW

**Description:** Goblin scouts report to Psa'gh, Duric, and Bifia about the discovery of the city of Jotunheim (Thar is still out raiding the dwarves). This is apparently a city being constructed by giants in the Makkres Mountains.

Duric Hurwarf gets an idea and decides to head out for this giant city. But first, he will stop back at the Modrigswerg caverns to pick up a few items from the Rot Dwarves. (See Sv. 20, Ei. 5; Ei 22, Ka. 1.)

**What This Means:** Jotunheim is a frost giant city being built in the Makkres, as previously mentioned in GAZ 6 - The Dwarves of Rockhome. They have stone and hill giant servants, as well as all the lesser servants that these giants normally have... perhaps even a subdued white dragon or two.

The frost giants have noticed how well the humans and other smaller races deal with them, despite their size, mainly because they are well organized and work together. A band of frost giants who recently raided King's Road Keep in Karameikos have decided that they will unite their people into their own kingdom so they can squash once and for all the lesser races. These giants failed when a Frockson, a jarl of another local group of giants, killed them when they tried to usurp his throne. Still, Frockson liked the idea and has since united ALL the frost giants himself. They are now building themselves a city in the Makkres Mountains.

This project includes almost all the frost giants of the Old World (from the known glaciers in the Glantrian Alps, the Altan Tepes, and the Makkres Mountains), about 500 in number, which means that encounters with frost giants throughout the rest of the Old World should be extremely rare.

Duric is planning nothing less than to force the Frost Giants to ally with "his" goblinoids to take over Rockhome. How he intends to do so still remains a mystery to both Psa'gh and Bifia.

#### **EIRMONT 9, AC 1015: The Shadowlord Quits.**

**Location:** Drax Tallen, Denagoth. NW

**Description:** The sentinels and lookouts of the elves report a decrease in the movements of the enemy troops inside Drax Tallen. Fewer soldiers are seen patrolling the battlements each day but there is no sign of forces leaving the keep in any way. Durifern is troubled by the news and suspects the Shadowlord wants to outflank them, so he tries to anticipate his moves by taking the keep before the enemy can act. Coolhands gives him her support and the invasion plan is finally completed. (See Ei. 3, Ei. 5; Ei. 17, Ei. 21.)

What This Means: The Shadowlord is just evacuating the keep to let it fall to the elves. He's using his underground network of tunnels and caves that the elves are not aware of. Thanks to Coolhands' unwitting help, he can arrange the evacuation in time to avoid losing too many troops.

#### **EIRMONT 10, AC 1015: Reinhard Receives His Sentence.**

**Location:** Freiburg, Heldannic Territories. OW

**Description:** In the famous Star Chamber, Herr Wulf von Klagendorf sentences the leaders of the rebellion of Hockstein.

Much to his surprise, Reinhard Madelhari is forgiven for his crimes. The Oberherr states that Reinhard was accused of treachery for opposing the Inquisition and Vanya. But in reality, he was the only Knight who truly followed the Vision of Vanya. The fact that Reinhard never lost Vanya's grace is proof enough of this. Wulf von Klagendorf then announces that Reinhard shall be the new Chancellor-General of Hockstein, to lead the town as he sees fit in Vanya's name.

The other rebel leaders, however, are sentenced to death and executed within the next few hours. They were not Heldannic Knights or even worshippers of Vanya. They were therefore acting against Her, even though their actions unwittingly proved to be supporting Vanya. Their intentions were to take down the church of Vanya, and hence were heretical. Death is the punishment they deserve. (See Sv. 20, Ei. 4.)

**What This Means:** Although not entirely happy with the sentences of his fellow rebel leaders, Reinhard knows there is nothing he can do about it. But as Chancellor-General of Hockstein, he can make sure the people of that town are never again mistreated by the Knights. He is also happy to once more belong to the Heldannic Knights, as he truly loves Vanya and is proud to worship Her.

With Hockstein back under control, the Heldannic Territories are again firmly in the grip of the Heldannic Knights of Freiburg. There is still much trouble in the New Heldannic Territories in Norwold. Herr Wulf is now planning on how to reclaim the lost lands, but doesn't expect any military action until next spring.

#### **EIRMONT 10, AC 1015: Wastoure's Help Enlisted.**

**Location:** Pittston, Aegos, Alatian Islands. AS

**Description:** An itinerant wizard from Soderfjord, Wastoure, encounters the commander of the forces from Minrothad at The Pit. He offers his help in exchange for free travel to the Hollow World once the Pit is reopened. Impressed by the wizard's knowledge, the commander agrees. The dwarven team, however, is suspicious about him and his magics and leaves him on his own devices. (See Ya. 8, Fe. 23.)

**What This Means:** Wastoure is in fact the evil Antalian wizard, who has been scheming in Azca and Thyatis and elsewhere to release a powerful Burrower from the imprisoning effects of the Spell of Preservation.

#### **EIRMONT 12, AC 1015: Traldar Turn on Schattenalfen.**

**Location:** Northern and eastern Schattenalfen lands, Schattenalfheim. HW

**Description:** Many Traldar bands attack the Schattenalfen from their positions in southern Azca or from their homeland. Their attacks are fierce, as they are furious about the elves' treachery. While they will do not get a crushing victory against the unprepared Schattenalfen, they still manage to cripple them rather badly. (See Am. 9, Ei. 6; Ka. 8.)

**What This Means:** Most of the Schattenalfen forces are in the outer world fighting the Shadow Elves. The remaining Schattenalfen are set in defense though, and it is hard to defeat their fortified troops. This turn of event is not good for them, though.

#### **EIRMONT 13: Ostland Demands Concessions.**

**Location:** Thyatis City, Thyatis. OW

**Description:** Diplomats sent to Thyatis by King Hordson of Ostland request that the Empire recognize certain colonies in Westourke (Isle of Dawn) as under the dominion of Ostland. They point to treaties signed by Emperor Thincol and King Hord Dark-Eye years ago, allowing Ostlanders to colonize the area.

The Thyatians are torn. They don't want to alienate their Ostland allies, and cannot simply disregard the treaties, yet they don't want to alienate the Grand Duchy of Westrourke either (an independent nation, even though it technically claims allegiance to Thyatis). They promise to consider it during the next meeting of the Thyatian Senate.

**What This Means:** There is still much discontent in Ostland, and King Hordson hopes to divert his people's attentions outwards with promises of expanding the kingdom. Eusebius, too, is eager to gain more mainland allies, what with the Western Defense League keeping a close watch on Empire activities. He will have to play this hand carefully.

The situation is debated over from all sides within the Senate of Thyatis, yet the senators are unable to find an agreement on how best to handle the situation. The debate rages on without much change until next year.

#### **EIRMONT 14, AC 1015: Neathar Raid on Atacoatli.**

**Location:** Atacoatli, Azca. HW

**Description:** A force of Neathar attack the city of Atacoatli, while many Azcan troops are away having little success in their own lands, therefore avoiding the bulk of the Azcan regular might. They disperse when the Azcan troops return from their lame campaign. (See Sv. 19, Sv. 26; Ka. 1, Ka. 28.)

**What This Means:** Not only do the Azcans have no success in their campaign against the Neathar tribes, but the Neathar even retaliate, inspired by Diulanna. The Azcans go from military disaster to disaster, and the warlike people now wonders if they have finally reached the bottom. The priesthood of Atzanteotl is more and more pointed as the source of the problems, and many voice their opinion despite the risks of sacrifice.

#### **EIRMONT 14, AC 1015: Negotiations Begin.**

**Location:** Haldemar, Alphatian Neatharum. HW

**Description:** Commander Ezreilla has Chief Zorok brought before her. She announces to him that Empress Eriadna has authorized her to initiate negotiations to end hostilities between the Alphatian and Neathar peoples. Zorok states that he will listen to the Alphatians' proposals, but will not commit to talks until the Neathar prisoners are released. Ezreilla compromises and offers to release half of the prisoners for now. Zorok agrees and the negotiations begin.

Ezreilla and Zorok spend the day in intense negotiation. By day's end, they have made little progress beyond establishing each other's position on matters. With that in mind, they recess for the day. Negotiations will begin again tomorrow. (See Sv. 21, Sv. 26; Ei. 15.)

**What This Means:** Zorok is well aware that a war between the Alphatians and Neathar would be disastrous for his people. With negotiations, he can at least get the best deal for his people. The first day of negotiations involves the two sides establishing their position and probing the other for possible angles. Zorok wants assurances that the Alphatians will uphold any peace agreement. Ezreilla counters that there are not any material assurances, just mutual trust.

#### **EIRMONT 15, AC 1015: NACE Diplomats in Alphatia.**

**Location:** Andaire, Jafilia, Alphatia. HW

**Description:** The diplomats sent by the Council to meet Empress Eriadna arrive at the palace in the recently-renamed capital of Alphatia after their passing through the Sundsvall Maelstrom. They bring news from the outer world, especially from the NACE itself, from friendly Karameikos and the return of the polar expedition, and from the situation in the Heldannic Territories and Thyatis.

Eriadna also learns of the existence of the gate the diplomats used, and is confirmed the fact that the world now knows the existence of the Hollow World and the survival of Alphatia.

The diplomats are surprised to learn that the Joint Polar Expedition still hasn't shown up. (See Sv. 9, Sv. 13; Ei. 20, Ei. 27.)

#### **EIRMONT 15, AC 1015: An Unexpected Resolution.**

**Location:** Haldemar, Alphatian Neatharum. HW

**Description:** Once again, Zorok and Ezreilla begin their talks on a peace between the Neathar and Alphatians. The negotiations proceed at a similar pace as the previous day and little progress is made.

The negotiations are interrupted by outside disturbances. A servant comes in and informs Ezreilla that visitors have arrived and wish an audience with the Alphetian leader here. The servant adds that the visitors are elves. With the midday meal upon them, Ezreilla suggests that the negotiations recess early and asks Zorok to dine with her while she meets with these visitors.

The visitors enter and are offered food and drink. They politely decline the offer. The elves pronounce that they come from a bordering land. They speak of the recent visit by the clerics pursuing the man that had slain several of their people. They relate how the clerics and their companions drove the man away from their lands.

The elves declare that they had wanted to see these people who had spawned those that had aided them. So the elves organized a party to travel, here to Neatharum, and witness for themselves the Alphetian people. The elves add that the Immortals, Alphetia and Koryis, have always acted as their benefactors. They express their hopes that the elves and the Alphetian people can have a similar relationship.

The elves then offer their thanks for being allowed to speak. Commander Ezreilla offers the elves the opportunity to travel to the Floating Continent, telling them that Neatharum pales in comparison to Alphetia itself. The elves thank her for the offer and accept it. Ezreilla summons an aide to make the preparations for the transit and to inform the Imperial Court of the impending arrival.

Ezreilla and Zorok finish their meal and return to the negotiations. Surprisingly, his demeanor is changed and an agreement is quickly resolved. Under the agreement, the Neathar recognize Neatharum as a kingdom and the Alphetians and Neatharum recognize the Neathar Lands as sovereign kingdoms. An agreement of non-aggression is established preventing Neatharum expansion; likewise, Neathar expansions into Neatharum are prevented. Both peoples will be given free passage back and forth between Neatharum and Neathar Lands without fear. Visitors will respect and be held in accordance of the laws of that land.

Satisfied, both negotiators shake hands and exchange gifts to seal the agreement. They do agree to meet later to discuss possible trade and defense talks. Ezreilla orders the release of all prisoners, then conveys the news of the agreement to the Empress. Later, she has the agreement announced to the people of Haldemar. (See Sv. 26, Ei. 14; Ei. 18, Ka. 24.)

**What This Means:** The negotiations are deadlocked until the elves visit. Zorok recognizes that the elves are those known as the Gentle Folk. Familiar with the awe in which the Neathar hold for these elves, he is impressed that they had not only been aided by Alphetians, but also had sought out the Alphetians. In his opinion, if the elves trust the Alphetians then so can he.

Besides, the agreement is not too much different than the earlier one between the Alphetians and Neathar. Dogrel had broken that agreement, but with him removed, the chances are less likely for future troubles. The appearance of the Gentle Folk acts as a sign that the Alphetians can be trusted.

For their part, the Gentle Folk are eager to see the lands and people that produced their patrons, Alphetia and Koryis. This anxiousness has intensified as the elves pondered the matter, drawing symbolic conclusions of Immortal patronage and extending that to mortal patronage.

#### **EIRMONT 17, AC 1015: The Haunted Woods.**

**Location:** Bosque de las Sombras, Sarag^n. SC

**Description:** The forest of la Bosque de las Sombras at the borders of Sarag^n begins to lose its vitality. Both animals and plants of the area seem sick and are slowly dying away.

**What This Means:** An evil necromancer has entered the haunted forests of Sarag^n and began controlling the undead found within. His experiments started twisting the forest to a point where Kalil, the archdruid (13<sup>th</sup> level) of the Savage Baronies, decides to put a stop to it.

**What The PCs Can Do:** Kalil obviously needs the help of a group of adventurers. This can earn them a very powerful contact in the region.

#### **EIRMONT 17, AC 1015: Drax Tallen Falls.**

**Location:** Drax Tallen, Denagoth. NW

**Description:** Durifern orders the final attack on Drax Tallen.

In a matter of hours, the elves overcome the soldiers inside the keep, taking Drax Tallen. However, they are greatly surprised when they discover that no more than two hundred spearmen and a dozen humanoids were the only ones defending the keep!

After a thorough search and some interrogations, the elves discover an incredible network of tunnels that stretch from the keep in every direction: some of them are only a hundred meters long, but others seem literally endless.

In the dungeons, they free several captives: about forty Geffronell elves and three surviving members of the former expedition. General Durifern arranges for the keep to be searched thoroughly to find any information on the enemy's new location. The elves set about fixing the defenses of the keep. (See Ei. 5, Ei. 9; Ei. 21, Ei. 26.)

**What This Means:** Drax Tallen has finally been taken by the elves after an exhausting military campaign. Durifern plans to pass the winter inside the keep with his army and to send some messengers to report the situation back in Wendar.

The Shadowlord's plan has finally been set into motion. He has arranged for the elves to conquer Drax Tallen without losing his best troops. Now, he prepares to strike back with his "secret weapon" coming from the north.

He is following the plan of his master to the letter and has also incorporated in it his plan to retrieve the Black Staff without the master noticing it. If things work out as planned, the Alfheimers will be only a memory by the end of the winter and he will finally have the weapon to use against his hated master. And then nobody will stop him from attaining his deserved victory.

#### **EIRMONT 18, AC 1015: Gentle Folk Arrive in Alphatia.**

**Location:** Andaire, Jafilia, Alphatia. HW

**Description:** A skyship from Haldemar lands at a berth at the Imperial Palace. From it emerge the elven delegation. A representative of the Empress and clerics of Alphatia, Koryis, and Razud meet them. Also present is a representative of the Shiye-Lawr Elves.

The Gentle Folk are greeted by the representatives and shown to guest quarters where they will stay. The elves request to be shown the land of Alphatia. The Imperial representative offers them the freedom to tour Alphatia; later, the Empress will speak with them. The clerics offer to act as their guides. (See Am. 12, Ei. 15; Ka. 14.)

**What This Means:** The party of Gentle Folk have arrived at the Floating Continent. Their visit is placed in the hands of the clergy of Alphatia and Koryis. The clerics of Razud are present out of curiosity and to offer a presence of their Immortal, while the Shiye representative is present to evaluate these Hollow World Elves.

The Gentle Folk want to tour Alphatia, not exchange pleasantries with the ruling elite. As elves, they are considered visiting nobles and deserving respect. Their request to see Alphatia is granted on the condition that they are escorted by Alphatians.

**What The PCs Can Do:** Any PCs involved with the tracking of Zandor into Gentle Folk Lands may be present at the behest of the Empress and clergy; this presence should provide the Gentle Folk with familiar faces. These PCs will also be of invaluable service to the folk meeting them: prior to their touch down, the officials will be interested in any information or observations the PCs may have had while in the lands of the Gentle Folk.

#### **EIRMONT 20, AC 1015: Alphatia Sends Rescue Mission.**

**Location:** Andaire, Jafilia, Alphatia. HW

**Description:** Empress Eriadna decides to send a skyship to the North Pole in case the Joint Polar Expedition has got problems. (See Sv. 13, Ei. 15; Ei. 27, Ka. 6.)

**What This Means:** The awaited expedition has not shown up yet, and this is becoming worrying.

#### **EIRMONT 21, AC 1015: Shady Secrets.**

**Location:** Drax Tallen, Denagoth. NW

**Description:** In one of the most secluded and protected chambers of the keep, some elves find an old parchment and a strangely carved monolith upon which a map is drawn. Somebody has clearly tried to burn the parchments and to ruin the glyphs and the signs on the monolith, but with patience and the use of magic, the elves manage to recover many scrolls and to interpret the monolith.



The map details a route to an unknown place called the Guardian Mesa [The exact location is up to the DM - canon material suggests the Broken Lands]. The expert linguistics and interpreters begin to study immediately the scrolls to unveil their mystery. (See Ei. 9, Ei. 17; Ei. 26, Ka. 2.)

**What This Means:** The elves have discovered what the Shadowlord has left them. All the false clues point to the Septahenge because he wants to use them to retrieve his precious Black Staff: that's part of his secret plan.

**What The PCs Can Do:** The PCs can try to decipher the runes and glyphs using magic, but they will also need a good deal of intelligence, since most of them are very well encrypted. The Shadowlord wanted the elves think that he was trying to destroy this information, so he left the scrolls and runes in a mess: difficult but not impossible for the elves to decode.

#### **EIRMONT 22, AC 1015: A Meeting in Jotunheim.**

**Location:** Jotunheim, Makkres Mountains, Rockhome. OW

**Description:** Duric and an entourage of goblinoids arrive at the gates of Jotunheim and demand to speak to the leader of the frost giants.

Once received in an audience with the frost giant Jarl, Duric proposes an alliance with the giants against the dwarves of Rockhome. Frockson laughs at the request of the lesser races and orders his guards to place Duric and the goblinoids in the pens with the other slaves.

But the frost giants are unable to perform the orders of Jarl Frockson, as the smaller races easily slay all those who approach with their spears. Duric announces that they are all armed with Spears of Giant Slaying created by the Modrigswerg Dwarves, and that they will kill every giant here unless Frockson bows down to their new leader.

Not seeing much of a choice, Frockson agrees to serve Duric and help destroy the dwarves of Rockhome. (See Ei. 5, Ei. 8; Ka. 1.)

**What This Means:** Duric's trip to the Rot Dwarves' cavern was to acquire about a dozen Spears of Giant Slaying. Every giant of the Old World, if not Mystara, has heard of these dreaded magical items created by the Dark Dwarves (Modrigswerg). And they all fear them immensely. Because of this fear, Frockson and all his giants will gladly do whatever it is the dwarves ask of them. This of course means that almost all the frost giants of the Old World are at the command of the exiled dwarf.

The Spear of Giant Slaying is described on p.28 of GAZ 7 - The Northern Reaches.

#### **EIRMONT 22, AC 1015: Free Jennites Leave Verdan.**

**Location:** Eastern Verdan, Esterhold Peninsula. AS

**Description:** After many negotiations by the Alphatians and much of mistrust from the Jennites' part, the Jennites stop their attacks on the forts in exchange for enough food for the winter and a portable light (actually a Continual Light spell cast within a box) the shaman will use to keep the evil spirits at bay. (See Am. 4, Ei. 3.)

#### **EIRMONT 24, AC 1015: Arrival of Schattenalfen Troops.**

**Location:** The Warrens and Cave of Continual Rain, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

**Description:** Schattenalfen troops emerge today in the Shadow Elves' Territories in two different locations. The first group, without flapsails, emerges in the Warrens and then heads north toward the Great Cavern; the second one, with flapsails, emerges in the Cavern of Continual Rain and then moves upstream until it reaches West Gate.

A few araneas from the Forest of Spiders join the Schattenalfen in the Warrens. (See Sv. 25; Ei.27)

**What This Means:** This is really bad news for the shadow elves. After long preparation Atzanteotl's troops are finally ready to strike on the hapless shadow elves. Schattenalfen armies will now move toward the Great Cavern attacking it from two different positions: West Gate (the less defended of the 4 gates) and Qedain Road (the only entrance without a gate, except the two waterways).

#### **EIRMONT 26, AC 1015: Beasthunter Returns Home.**

**Location:** Drax Tallen, Denagoth. NW

**Description:** After many useless attempts to bring Beasthunter back to normal, Coolhands and Durifern decide that he must be sent back to Wendar to receive the proper treatment. So Coolhands teleports him back to the Longrunners' stronghold with a message explaining the situation, hoping to have him back as soon as possible. (See Ei. 17, Ei. 21; Ka. 2.)

**What This Means:** Coolhands is sincerely worried about the condition of her husband, and so is Durifern. Despite being telepathically connected with the Shadowlord, Coolhands still retains her feelings and thoughts and so there is nothing evil behind this decision.

#### **EIRMONT 27, AC 1015: Spiders on Rampage.**

**Location:** Losetrel, Shadow Elves' Territories. OW

**Description:** Hundreds of spiders (shroud spiders, crab spiders, albino cave spiders and rhagodessae) from the Forest of Spiders wisely led by araneas suddenly attack Losetrel and the nearby Tower of Bathadia. The shadow elves are caught by surprise and quickly defeated by the, unusually co-operative, spiders.

Shadow elves immediately (i.e. as soon as possible) send reinforcements from the Fortress of Sylaros and Desrii Castle to drive away the spiders. (See Ei. 24; Ka. 2)

**What This Means:** This is part of the big plot intended to divert the shadow elves' attention from the City of the Stars. Spiders easily conquered Losetrel because of surprise and overwhelming number, but obviously they can't keep the town for a long time.

**What PCs Can Do:** If they're in Losetrel they can try to defend the town and help evacuate the population when they realize they're being defeated, all of this while trying not to be killed by the deadly spiders.

#### **EIRMONT 27, AC 1015: Rescue Mission Discovers Clues.**

**Location:** Limit of the stormy region. HW

**Description:** The crew of the Alpathian skyship sent after the polar expedition spots an Alpathian flag battling in the wind. They are puzzled by this sight since to their knowledge they haven't claimed any territory anywhere near or within the anti-magic zone. After further investigation, they discover a similar Karameikan flag lying nearby, probably knocked down by the wind.

Footprints in the snow are hard to decipher as they have been partially recovered, but they seem to be leading farther north. The Alpathians decide to press farther north despite the expected lack of magic. (See Ei. 15, Ei. 20; Ka. 6, Ka. 23.)

## TOPIC OF THE MONTH:

### *THE SIEGE OF DRAX TALLEN*

This is the first time I take part in a siege, and if Fate permits it, I swear by all I have most sacred that it will also be the last one. A military campaign is something completely different from the heroic tales told by the fire by most bards and storytellers. I can state this because I am living it first hand. There is no beauty in war, no epics and no honor whatsoever. Only death, filth and fear surround us: these are the Three Dark Ladies that accompany a soldier in every war. And the siege of a fortress, often being the highest climax of a military campaign, is even more ruthless and taxing than the common battles.

The siege of Drax Tallen began on Swiftmont 21<sup>st</sup> and ended on Eirmont 17<sup>th</sup>. This is what the historians in their chronicles will record. As a matter of fact, it was neither one of the longest sieges nor one of the bloodiest, as the military experts tell me. But it was terrifying nonetheless, and I am writing this report with the sole purpose to pass on you, Dear Reader, the knowledge and feelings that I have experienced during this extreme situation, so that the next generations may learn and never repeat the mistakes of their ancestors.

During our first night of camp around Drax Tallen we immediately sent out scouting parties to examine the defenses of the keep. Our camp was about a mile distant from the looming citadel, hidden inside the forest, and we could clearly see the torches and braziers burning inside the main buildings and the battlements. The lookouts also reported signs of soldiers patrolling the walls regularly, though it was difficult to understand what kind of creatures they were. Only three of the dozen scouts sent to inspect the keep's perimeter returned: one was unscathed, the other two bore signs of fight. They reported to have tried spying on the citadel from the highest branches of the pines near the exterior walls, but they were suddenly attacked by plantlike creatures and even by shadows! The unfortunate scouts that did not return either fell lifelessly to the ground or were eaten by the attackers.

Drax Tallen, the almost impenetrable fortress. Bensarian told me that it fell only once, when the unified tribes of Den, lead by a mighty warrior named Henadin, besieged and conquered it, thus ending the reign of the Essurian kings on the region. The Generals knew they had to proceed with caution, and so they prepared the all-out attack with gnomish precision, collecting strategic information bit by bit, day after day. Yet each day, more lives were lost. Not only scouts, but also soldiers stationed at our perimeter, who either disappeared or were found horribly mutilated (Elven Skull Unit's work probably). A couple of times a horde of dead soldiers marched into our camp. They came from the south and we had to battle undead for over half a day, hoping not to contract some fatal disease. Bad dreams started to upset the soldiers, and I myself experienced a couple of hallucinations which nearly caused me to kill myself.

After the unexpected kidnapping of Clanmaster Beasthunter and his lovely wife, Coolhands, the Generals tried an open invasion of the keep, which cost many lives and proved useless. And still the days passed. The two were rescued a couple of days after, but at what price... General Gilfronden, one of the most loved by the Alfheimers, was captured and later executed without reason by the Shadowlord. That demon did it for sheer pleasure of ending a life, I swear it! And he kept tantalizing us with his menaces all the following days.

The morale among the Crusaders was low and the situation worsened with each passing day. Winter was arriving and we were still unable to breach that damned keep. Ever tried to walk in the snow when the temperature is way below the freezing point of water? You have to keep moving, else your feet could freeze and you could get stuck in a place: I've seen many untrained or exhausted Alfheimers die this way. I have risked hypothermia on a couple of occasions, and I've always been saved by Wendar elves accompanying me.

During the nights the soldiers prayed a lot... and cursed a lot. Not believing in the Immortals, I didn't join the first ones, but was more than willing to say my share of curses to the Shadowlord. Then one day everything changed. Who knows, maybe all those curses worked after all, for the scouts reported no sign of the monsters patrolling the woods near Drax Tallen. True, many had been killed by the elves, but we were sure many others remained. Yet now they had vanished and the soldiers inside the keep seemed to be far less than what was reported in the previous days. General Durifern took his chance and ordered the all-out assault that had been planned in the past month. Protected by volleys of arrows, the Assault Force One climbed down from the trees immediately above the first line of the enemy and fought its way inside the inner perimeter of the keep, followed by two waves of expert magic wielders. The gates of Drax Tallen literally swung open to the first knock thanks to the Assault Force and the rest of the elves swarmed the courtyard and the main buildings of Drax Tallen like a huge ocean of tiny insects (this was the feeling I got by seeing the invasion from the rear lines). In a matter of hours all the resistant forces inside Drax Tallen were either dead or incapacitated. The keep

had fallen for the second time in its history. The elves celebrated with a collective cry of joy, followed by a moment of dead silence (the elves later explained me that each one was thanking a special Immortal Protector for being still alive, usually Ilsundal). Alas, the Shadowlord was neither among the fallen enemies nor among the captured ones, who later revealed that the rest of the garrison had left the citadel using secret underground passages.

Winter is now becoming harsher and bitter, but fortunately we have a roof on our heads and a fireplace to warm us. I have heard rumors about strange scrolls bearing stranger inscriptions found in a secret chamber inside the main tower of the complex. The elves are now working to decipher it. I fear the worst is not over however. This place is alive: it pulses with the evil

that has been committed here in all these centuries. I saw a ghost last night: it was an elf and he begged me to kill him once and for all... to free him from this prison... Is the Shadowlord so powerful to control even the souls of the departed and bind them to his will? Because, if he is so powerful, I wonder why did he leave Drax Tallen in such a haste? Does he know something we ignore? Why am I so frightened to dwell inside this building?... I fear... and nothing more...

*Christopher Dove*