

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

Companion Game Adventure

Test of the Warlords

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TABLE OF CONTENTS



The Setting



Nonplayer Characters



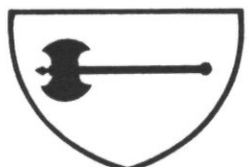
Land Grab



Major Events



Norwold Encounters



War of the Crown



Epilogue

PROLOGUE: HOW TO RUN THIS ADVENTURE	
What is a campaign adventure	2
How to use this adventure	2
THE SETTING: OUTLINING NORWOLD AND THE EMPIRES	
Competing empires	4
Norwold terrain types	4
Norwold climate	6
Trade routes and resources	6
Norwold cities	6
Special geographical features	7
NONPLAYER CHARACTERS: INTRODUCING KINGS & LORDS	
Established characters	9
Competing characters	10
LAND GRAB: BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE	
Setting the stage	12
Getting the characters to Norwold	12
The spring festival	12
Establishing dominions	12
Campaign time scale	13
MAJOR EVENTS: BRINGING DOMINIONS TOGETHER	
The royal wedding	14
Raiders in the snow	16
NORWOLD ENCOUNTERS: EXPANDING THE CAMPAIGN	
Encounter 1: The ruins of Alinor	18
Encounter 2: The dungeon of Kwyll	20
Encounter 3: Revenge of the mountain clan	22
Encounter 4: Barbarians' battle	23
Encounter 5: The crones of Crystykk	24
WAR OF THE CROWN: RUNNING CAMPAIGN BATTLES	
The battle forces	28
Events of the Thyatian invasion	28
Running the war of the crown	28
EPILOGUE: CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN	
Scenario 1: Dominion conflicts	30
Scenario 2: Dragons of the Wurmsteeth	30
Scenario 3: The giants of Frosthaven	30
Scenario 4: Test of the crones	30
Scenario 5: Beyond Norwold	30
Random encounters	31

LIST OF PLAYING AIDS

Players' Map: Norwold	inside cover
DM Map 1: World Area	3
DM Map 2: Norwold	5
DM Map 3: Ruins of Alinor	18
DM Map 4: Dungeon of Kwyll	20
DM Map 5: Home of the Mountain Clan	23
Random Encounters Table	31
Blank hex-grid sheet	32
Prerolled Characters	outside cover

PROLOGUE: HOW TO RUN THIS ADVENTURE

With the fall of the Black Eagle Barony and its allied forces, the settled lands of the continent are now peaceful. Most of the land's dungeons have been plundered, and monsters have been driven from all but a few of the civilized dominions. Prosperity reigns throughout the land now, which is just how the rulers want it. The government is stable, and day-to-day life is routine. Prospects for adventure, however, are minimal.

Then comes word from the north: the empire of Alphatia has claimed the vast lands of Norwold, and has appointed a king to rule over those lands. This monarch is in need of steadfast characters to administer the many dominions that may be carved from the wilderness of Norwold!

TEST OF THE WARLORDS is a campaign adventure designed for use with the D&D® Companion Set rules. Two to ten player characters of level 15 or higher may participate in the "land grab" as Norwold is partitioned into dominions. For those characters who do not wish to claim a dominion for themselves, plenty of other adventures await in the fledgling states of the new kingdom, as Alphatia is not the only empire casting a covetous eye toward the potentially wealthy lands of Norwold. Secret emissaries have arrived from the southern lands of Thyatis, and are moving among the folk of Norwold, gaining a sizable following of their own.

The fate of this sprawling land, and of the people who make it their home, will be decided by those who succeed at the Test of the Warlords.

What is a campaign adventure?

This adventure may be a little different from others you and your players have used. Test of the Warlords does not concentrate on a single scenario. Rather, this adventure should serve as a framework for a D&D® Companion-level game.

Several dungeon and wilderness encounters are featured in this adventure, but much of the adventure's development depends on the characters' actions, such as claiming dominions, establishing strongholds, and interacting with other characters and non-player characters.

If you run only the encounters detailed in the Norwold Encounters section, this adventure should last 5 to 7 game sessions. If, however, you use this adventure to develop a campaign in which characters may claim

dominions, the adventure should provide enough excitement to last 12 to 15 game sessions.

No less than an entire kingdom is at stake in this adventure. Although Norwold is little more than wilderness when the adventure begins, its value becomes apparent when explorers return to tell of its sheer vastness and its valuable natural resources. The wide open spaces of Norwold become even more valuable as the population of the civilized lands to the south explodes.

Characters in this adventure compete with several high-level NPCs, who are also interested in claiming dominions in Norwold. As choice pieces of land are taken, much of the adventure's conflict should come from the interaction between the characters and these NPCs.

Several events and encounters occur during this adventure's time frame. Some of these events require characters to work together to reach a common goal or defeat a common enemy. Of course, this strange, new land is home to more than a few monsters!

Finally, characters must help to determine the very fate of Norwold. If characters claim dominions in Norwold, they must swear fealty to the land's king, who has been appointed by the empire of Alphatia. To the south, the empire of Thyatis plots to take the rich lands of Norwold for itself. Thus, the mighty forces of two great empires are drawn together in a bloody war to determine who will rule Norwold.

How to use this adventure

This adventure is divided into several major sections. Unlike most adventures, you cannot simply progress from one section to the next as the characters run the course of the adventure. Each section contains important information that should be used throughout the various events and encounters. Also, you may use the settings and characters in this adventure to expand your D&D® campaign world.

Adventure sections

The setting: This section outlines the lands of Norwold, its terrain types, climate, economics, and major cities. This section also details the empires of Alphatia and Thyatis, and explains the nature of the empires' relations.

Nonplayer characters: This section details the adventure's major nonplayer characters. Statistics and a brief personality profile are given for each.

Land grab: This section outlines how you

may bring the characters into the campaign. Details on how to set up character dominions are also given.

Major events: This section describes two major events that take place in Norwold during the adventure.

Norwold encounters: This section outlines five major scenarios that may take place during the adventure.

War of the crown: This section lists the war machine statistics for all forces involved in the war for control of Norwold. Major events of the war and key strategies are also given.

Epilogue: This section lists possible scenarios for continuing your campaign in Norwold. A list of random encounters is also included.

Adventure maps

Players' Map: Norwold is shown on the inside booklet cover. Show this map to the players when their characters begin claiming their dominions. You may draw the characters' dominions on this map, but be sure to use pencil. The borders could change for any number of reasons!

DM Map 1: World Area shows the relationship of the empire of Alphatia to the empire of Thyatis. If you compare this map to the large area map in the D&D® Companion rules, you will be able to place the two empires into their proper positions relative to the maps provided in the D&D® Expert rules.

DM Map 2: Norwold is your copy of the players' map of Norwold. This map shows areas that the characters may learn about only by exploring.

DM Maps 3-5 coincide with three of the Norwold encounters.

A blank hex-grid sheet is also provided on p. 32 of this booklet. Make photocopies of this page and give each player several copies. Each player should map out his character's dominion on these sheets. You may also want to use extra hex-grid sheets to make detailed maps of Norwold where specific battles are taking place.

Player characters

This adventure is designed so that you may run virtually any number of characters through its encounters and events. You may have a great deal of trouble running one character through the adventure, although it is possible. Running 10 to 15 characters might prove difficult as well. Ideally, you should try to have from three to eight characters for this adventure.

A list of eight prerolled Companion (high) level characters is provided on the outside booklet cover. Your players do not have to use these characters if they don't want to. They are given as options for players whose character level is not yet high enough for a Companion level adventure, or for players whose characters may have had an "unfortunate accident."

If you have a small number of player char-

acters for this adventure, you should use at least one of the prerolled characters as an NPC aligned with the characters.

Random encounters

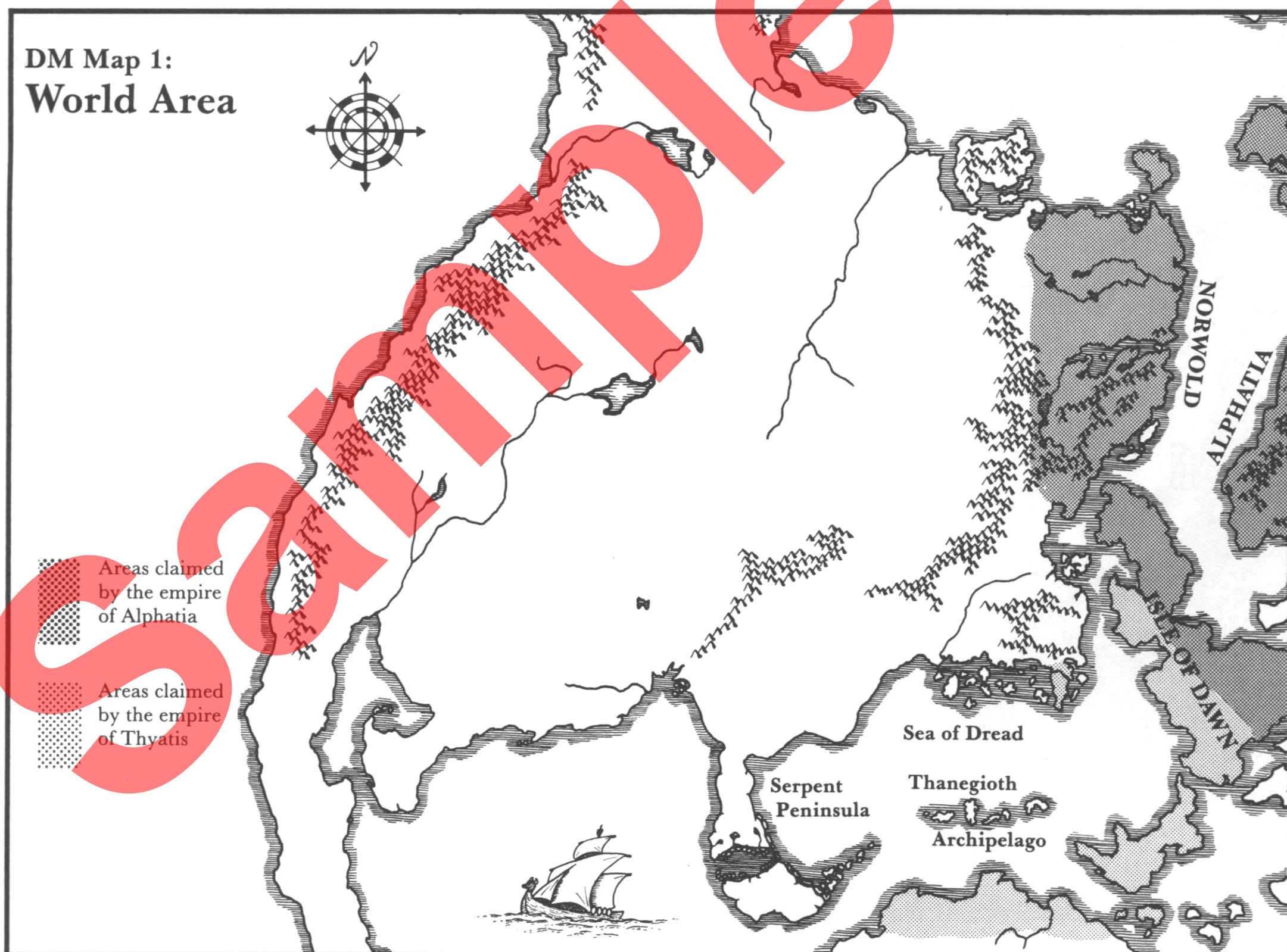
A list of random encounters that might occur at different points during the adventure is given on p. 31. Obviously, checking once per hour or even several times per day would be inappropriate for this type of campaign adventure.

The timing of the random encounters is left entirely up to you, based on your sense of drama. If the adventure is moving along rapidly, and if the characters are keeping busy, you may not need to introduce a random encounter for many "months." On the other hand, you may wish to inhabit the characters' dominions with challenging monsters or NPCs, or you may wish to throw in a surprise

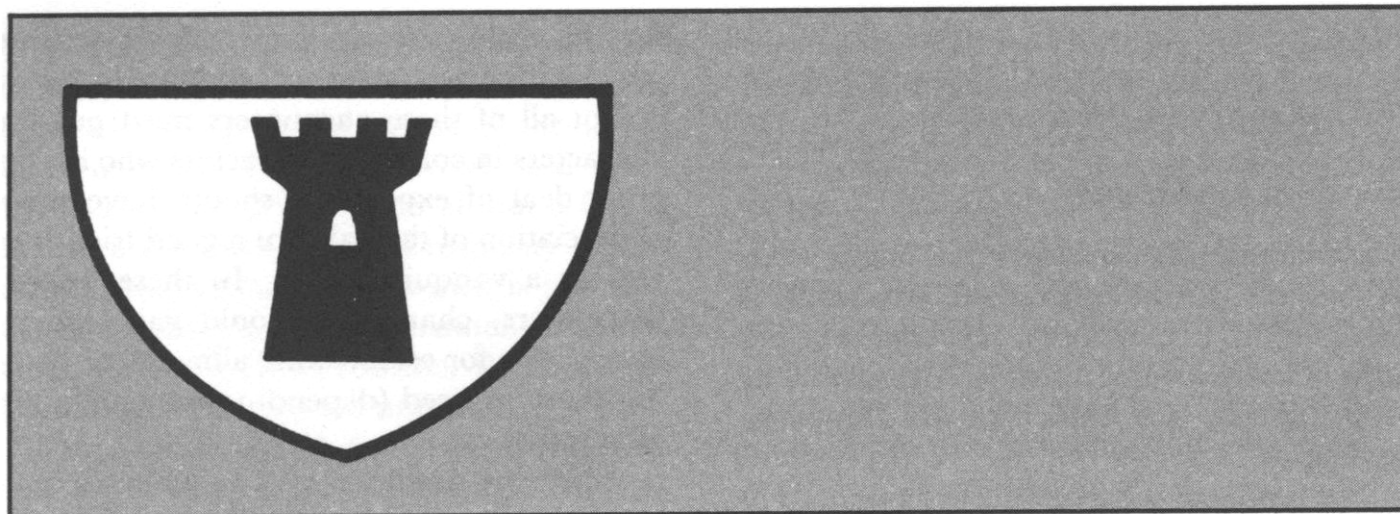
for the characters as they make a routine journey through some area of Norwold.

Not all of these encounters need put the characters in combat. Characters who have a great deal of experience should have some appreciation of the value of a good friend, as well as a vanquished foe. In these "easy" encounters, characters should gain experience points for establishing alliances or helping those in need (depending, of course, on alignment).

When you decide to use a random encounter, determine the type of terrain in which the encounter will occur. A modified die roll is given at the top of the Random Encounters Table for each terrain type. Find the die roll result and the corresponding encounter on the table.



THE SETTING: OUTLINING NORWOLD AND THE EMPIRES



A large continent lies in the northern hemisphere of the D&D® world. The largest single region on this continent is Norwold.

Norwold lies to the north of the land shown on p. 33 of the D&D® Expert rule book. To see how the Expert map relates to Norwold, line up the coastline near the bottom left corner of the map shown on this adventure's inside booklet cover with the coastline at the top of the Expert map (near the Heldann Freeholds). If you want to see more of the Expert/Companion world, you may line up the players' map with the map shown on p. 16-17 of adventure X1, "The Isle of Dread."

Competing empires

Two major empires are competing for power in Norwold. The empire of Alphatia has already established a kingdom in the area, and is actively seeking to develop firm control over the region. The empire of Thyatis is alarmed by this development, and is determined to disrupt the expansion of the Alphatian empire.

These two empires have come into conflict over territory in the past. DM Map 1 shows each empire's areas of control. The areas where the two empires overlap are currently being contested.

Alphatia background

Alphatia is the oldest empire in the world. It is located on a massive island off the eastern coast of Norwold. The empire built its power on a solid foundation of magic. No fewer than 1,000 36th level magic-users make up this empire's ruling council. Reliance on magical abilities, and complete confidence in the overwhelming superiority of these abilities, are the hallmarks of Alphatian power.

King Ericall is the second son of the current Empress of Alphatia, Eriadna the Wise. Eriadna has granted Ericall all of Norwold as his dominion, and has given him the freedom to develop and rule the kingdom as he sees fit. After a decade or so, Eriadna expects Ericall to begin making substantial tax payments from Norwold into Alphatia's coffers.

Thyatis background

This empire is much younger than Alphatia. Actually, it is little more than a century old. The empire has spread rapidly outward from Thyatis, its capital city. It now encompasses several large islands off the southern coast of the continent.

Unlike Alphatia, Thyatis has developed upon a triad of powers. The theocratic, magical, and military elements of the empire all share the responsibilities of problem solving and policy development.

Thincol the Brave is currently the emperor of Thyatis. He is a 36th level fighter who has been known on many occasions to be cruel and merciless. He does, however, possess a keen soldier's mind that has allowed his empire to hold its own against the mighty legions of Alphatia.

Many historians attribute Thyatis' rapid growth to its leaders' fabled capacity for greed and trickery. Although several of Thyatis' territorial battles appear to have been fought on the field of honor, many more, historians agree, were won through treachery and deceit.

Relations between the two empires

Alphatia and Thyatis have rarely met to discuss their territorial differences. More often, the two empires clash in minor wars, fought chiefly in outlying areas (the two empires consider Norwold an outlying area). Neither empire has made a concerted effort to wipe the other out, since the resources and risks involved in such an undertaking would severely restrict the possibility of victory for either side.

Alphatia has won most of the skirmishes between the two empires, because of its potent magical abilities. Thyatis has, however, prevailed on occasion.

Each empire places active spies and agents in all of its rival's lands. Agents from the empires have even penetrated each other's ruling councils.

Overall, these two empires have achieved a delicate balance of power. The weight of this balance may gradually shift from decade to decade, but it is unlikely that either of the empires will be able to destroy its foe for a long time to come.

Norwold terrain types

A variety of terrain types covers the land of Norwold. Most of these types are shown on the players' map. Consider unmarked hexes to be forest, as this is Norwold's most common terrain type.

Mountains

Two huge mountain ranges make up the spine of the subcontinent. The Final Range runs parallel to the southeastern coast of Norwold. It is situated about 200 miles inland. The range took its name from ancient explorers who thought it represented the far edge of the world.

The other range in Norwold is even greater than the Final Range. It runs north and south along the kingdom's western border. Barbarians and savages refer to it as the Icereach Range or White Range, but the new government has not officially explored and named the range.

The mountains of Norwold are towering pinnacles of rock that dwarf the summits of the renowned Altan Tepe Range, which lies far to the south. A number of peaks in the central regions of the Final Range reach 18,000 feet above sea level, while at least a dozen peaks in the Icereach tower over 24,000 feet high.

Many peaks in both ranges are snow-covered all year long. In the upper reaches of both ranges, huge glaciers sprawl outward. The ice in these areas has not melted for thousands of years.

Trees grow in the lower mountain valleys as far north as the Great Bay. Mountainous areas north of the bay are barren of trees. No trees grow at altitudes higher than 8,000 feet.

Where a mountain hex on the players' map is adjacent to a clear hex, assume that half of the mountain hex is made up of "foothills"—long, gradually rising ridges of rock that lead to the mountains.

Hills

Dense forests cover most of the hilly areas in Norwold. Pines and other evergreens are the predominant forms of trees. Lakes and clearings dot the hills, and flowers and herbs are common in the thick meadows.

Bogs and marshes fill some of the low spots on the hilly terrain. If characters drain these areas, they have ideal farmland. Any druids in the area take grave exception to such ecological tampering, however!

Marshes

These areas are simply wet lowlands, and are unsuitable for development. No permanent structures could stand in these areas. There is a 20% chance, however, that a marsh hex contains small areas of higher ground large enough to hold a small village. Nevertheless, marsh areas are definitely not prime real estate.

The nearby rivers and lakes flood the



THE SETTING

marsh areas each spring, covering all but the highest ground in 2-8 feet of water. The marshes freeze in winter, and characters may cross them during this time. Consider all frozen marshes as plains.

Forests

Forests cover most of the land in Norwold. Evergreens are the only types of trees that grow in the northern forests, while broad stretches of oak, hickory, maple, elm, ash, fruit, and other hardwood trees mix with the evergreens in the southern forests.

Many different types of woodlands may be found in a single forest hex. In many places, old and giant trees stretch toward the sun. These trees are incredibly wide, and stand several yards apart. The underbrush in these areas is sparse, so characters may travel through the areas easily. In other areas, the trees are younger and weaker. They do not screen sunlight from the forest floor, so the underbrush in these areas is dense. Travel through these areas is difficult. You may alternate between the two types of forest terrain, depending on the pace of the adventure. When characters move through thick underbrush, you may cut their movement rate in half.

Several meadows may break the growth in a forest hex. These meadows may actually seem more like prairies, since some of them stretch for 5-10 miles.

Gently rolling dirt makes up much of the land in these forest areas. Low hills are fairly common.

Tundra

This flat, wet land exists only at the extreme northern end of Norwold. The tundra is a region of terrifyingly severe winters and soggy, muddy summers.

Herd of grazing animals cross the tundra during the pleasant months, stalked by an occasional predator. All but the cold-loving creatures abandon the tundra in winter, however.

During the summer, 10-40% (1d4x10) of a tundra hex is covered by ponds, and wide, shallow lakes. Fish are not common in these bodies of water, but huge swarms of insects usually are.

Rivers

Only the largest of Norwold's many rivers are shown on the players' map. Those rivers that are shown may be 1-4 miles wide at any given spot. For the most part, these rivers are too deep for wading.

Assume that at least one river (50-200 feet

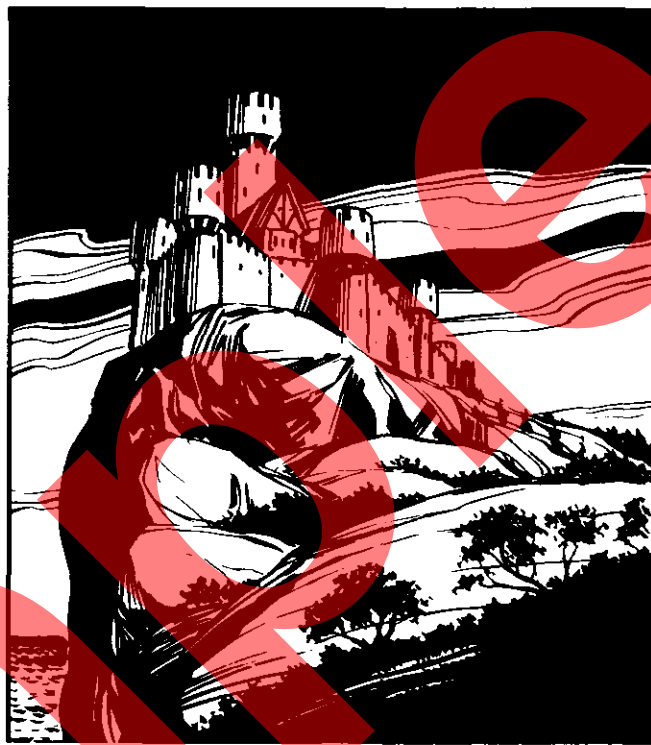
wide) and several streams drain each hex on the map.

Feel free to add to the waterways marked on the Norwold maps. Rivers may make useful boundaries when characters establish or contest the size of their dominions.

Lakes

As with rivers, only the major lakes are shown on the Norwold maps. Since so much of the land of Norwold is wooded and rainy, small lakes dot much of the land (at least one per hex in the south, as many as a dozen per hex in the north).

All of the inland lakes are freshwater lakes. The mountain lakes are very deep, while the flatland lakes are shallow.



Norwold climate

Norwold is a northern temperate region having four distinct seasons. Each of these seasons lasts approximately three months. Seasons in the southern part of Norwold are less severe than the seasons in the north.

Precipitation is common in Norwold, and comes in the form of snow in winter, and rain in summer. During the spring and fall, the precipitation may come as either rain or snow (50% chance, modified plus or minus 30% based on the location of the specific region, and the time of the season—late spring, late fall, etc.).

Some form of precipitation falls every four days. Of course, a thunderstorm or snowstorm may last much longer than one day. Also, a dry spell might last for weeks. Use the four-day figure as a rough average when you

run your campaign. You may want to use severe weather (torrential rains, droughts) as plot twists.

Trade routes and resources

DM Map 2 shows several Norwold trade routes. Characters may discover and mark these routes on their own map, but they should not be aware of these routes at the start of the adventure.

The only civilized areas in Norwold when the adventure begins are Alpha and the five hexes that surround that city; the demihuman strongholds; Landfall; Oceansend, and the coastal hexes on each side of that port city.

Dominion resources are explained in detail in the Companion rules, although some suggestions for calculating resources are given below:

Most mountain resources are mineral in nature.

The most common mineral resources in hilly areas are tar, clay, coal, and stone.

Besides the obvious wood and timber resources in forest areas, the main resources in these areas are animal or vegetable in nature.

Tundra areas have only a 30% chance of holding a resource. A tundra hex never holds more than one resource, and that resource is never animal in nature.

Norwold cities

Alpha, the king's city

This sprawling community numbers some 30,000 residents. More than 60,000 farmers live and work in the civilized regions nearby.

Blessed with a splendid deep-water port, Alpha boasts a bustling waterfront. Ships carrying imports from other parts of the continent, as well as from the empire of Alphatia, arrive at least once per day. Ships carrying goods from all of Norwold sail from this port almost as frequently. A large fishing industry based here provides food for much of the city and jobs for many of those living on the waterfront.

The farms that surround Alpha are very prosperous. The soil, deposited by a glacier, is rich loam, and the farmers are a hardy, industrious folk. Many of them have lived on and farmed this land for generations. As a group, the farmers have welcomed the arrival of King Ericall and are happy to be members of an established form of government.

Alpha was erected on the ruins of an ancient fortress, utilizing some of the old fortifications in its construction. All areas of the