

WHEN COSMS COLLIDE

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INTRODUCTION

When *Cosms Collide* takes place in the second half of the first year of the Possibility Wars. The High Lords have had the better of it, and are now abutting one another. A conflagration is coming, and the events herein help provide a spark. Four cosms, Aysle, Core Earth, Nile Empire, and Tharkold, have gotten wind of a Cyberpapal discovery of alien technology somewhere in northern Aysle. All five cosms dispatch teams to secure the find so it may be exploited for their cosm's benefit. They get more than they bargained for. At adventure's end, a new type of reality-rated character is seen, an ancient cosm is perhaps reborn, a sliver of Aysle is twisted toward the fairy tales and legends of Core Earth, and a cosm is discovered which uses Reality Weavers rather than Darkness Devices or stelae. It becomes clear that this time, the Possibility Wars has more potential paths, more endings, than it ever had before in any cosm. This time...this time is different.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Earth has not always been Core Earth. It transcended perhaps two centuries ago and later attracted the attention of the High Lords. However, that does not mean Earth went unnoticed.

Intermittent cosm connections such as the Underground brought exploring Akashans, scheming Nile Empire Khemites and conquering Mechopotamians in contact with each other in ancient Scandinavia. The Mechopotamians vowed to eliminate the other two cosms' explorers. They first moved to attack the Akashan research facility. The Khemites decided to incite the locals to their side, depicting the Mechopotamians as Jotuns, spinning tales of Ragnarok to local Viking clans and getting them to rally alongside the Akashans.

The fierce battle began, but was never finished. For reasons explained in the adventure, the battle has been sealed in bubble of half-reality. Though exposed by Ayslish magic, the battle has not yet been unsealed. Ragnarok awaits the Storm Knights; it shall be fought.

The unresolved battle was considered too large a risk for the Khemites, who noted the presence of the half-reality and returned to their cosm.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Act One opens as the Storm Knights arrive in pursuit of Brother Laplace, the leader of the Cyberpapal team, those with the best guess as to the location of the alien tech they seek. They arrive in Copenhagen, now a city of cities, with Elvish, Core Earth, Sjodrekkar, and trollish factions. Maneuvering through the dangers of the clashing politics, the heroes eventually stumble upon a squad of Churchpolice, and uncover Uthorion's plot to kill the Core Earth mayor of the city. The Act concludes with a fight pitting the heroes against assaulting draugr and Aurora wyverns.

Act Two starts on the road across Østersund Bridge to Malmö, Sweden. Events quickly get more complicated with a tavern brawl against Nile Empire shocktroopers, an Ayslish prisoner-diplomat, an extra-dimensional greeting from an ambitious Tharkoldu executive, and looming menace from Ayslish mercenaries, led by the accomplished Red Raven. Joined by a Core Earth resistance group, the action pivots on the Storm Knights' decisions; as a result, the raiders are driven from their compound, or Malmö falls, or the city burns to ashes.

As the travelers leave those consequences in their wake, they brush against a new threat from Uthorion and meet the leader of the Nile Empire expedition. She has an offer of firearms reputed to work just fine in Aysle. After a chance to establish a rapport with a redoubt of Swedish rangers, the Storm Knights head further into danger.

Act Three embroils the heroes in a variety of encounters on the road: hapless civilian, wolves resistant to modern weapons, Tharkoldu mercenaries, undine, and robber wizards. Eventually they find a farm run by Brother Teodor and Aquila. Here they learn that High Lord cooperation is fraying; Uthorion has been relentless in hunting down the Cyberpapacy's agents, the Tharkoldu support them, and the Nile Empire is willing to attack the Tharkoldu.

Also an independent Barony has arisen. Amid all the carnage, the Baroness is hosting a formal ball for everybody who is anybody. What gives?

After a tense moot with field commander Helmar Corba'alson, Uthorion's top leader in the area, its a

DIFFICULTY

Several scenes in this adventure feature multiple battles, especially during the Dramatic scenes.

Although the Action Pools are emptied and put back into the players' hands after each battle, since the hands are not replenished, it will be important for the players to get more cards by focusing on Approved Actions.

sprint to the finish.

Act Four opens at Demon Town, the Tharkoldu site where mercenaries train Uthorion's Vikings in the use of modern firearms. The Storm Knights have choices to make.

The travelers again meet Dr. Fletcher, who has uncovered an Akashan probe and brain-spiders called Reality Weavers. These Weavers are a new way to manipulate areas of reality created by the Mechopotamians. The Tharkoldu try to take the probe and eliminate the Nile Empire faction. The Storm Knights flee back into Aysle, though here the Reality Weavers have turned into something more akin to Core Earth fairy tales. Our heroes meet their Fairy Godmother, get invited to the Baroness' ball, and finally get to confront Brother Laplace at the battle site, still suspended in a bubble of half-reality.

The act ends with the Baroness inviting the Delphi Council agents to her castle.

Act Five begins steeped in conspiracy. The Baroness and Dr. Fletcher want to kill Helmar. The assassination is negotiated with the factions at the ball, as is tradition. Unfortunately, Helmar is simultaneously negotiating the deaths of the heroes. May the best dancer live.

The next morning is the trip to the bubble, and the shattering of the stasis suspending the battle. Viking heroes, Akashan researchers, and a cosm source named Fenrir. One shall win.

COPENHAGEN

The Delphi Council has sent our travelers to Copenhagen, tracking Cyberpapal agents known to be searching for ancient, and possibly alien, technology. Brother Laplace must be found and the technology retrieved for the Delphi Council. At worst, it must be destroyed to deprive the High Lords of any advantage it might grant.

A CITY OF CITIES

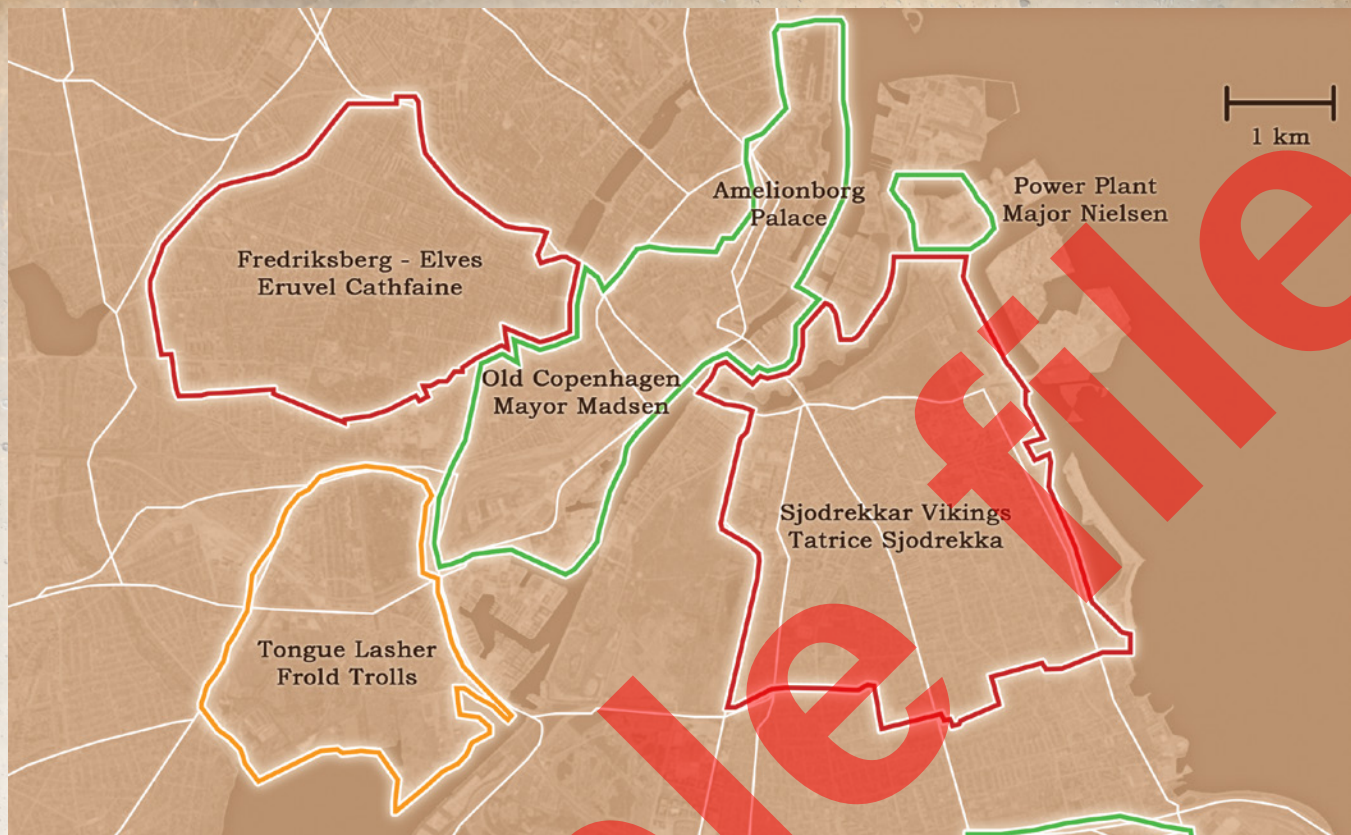
Copenhagen struggled for identity when Ayslish reality overtook Core Earth's. The willingness of the Danes to adapt to their new circumstances has made it difficult to keep the city together. "Old ways wear out their welcome in new times" is an Ayslish expression that has caught on with many of the Core Earthers living in Copenhagen. The political system holding the city together has faded in the Ayslish Social Axiom, and the city has split into three cities, each with their own leadership.

Fredericksberg: Formerly home to the Copenhagen Zoo, now home to dozens of shrines to the Asten, the elven god of secrets and wisdom. Most are not genuine shrines. Those who worship Asten say they can spot the difference right away. But Asten guards her secrets well, so that claim is most probably empty.

Fredericksberg is ruled by Eruvel Cathfaine, elven commander and former intelligence officer for the Army of Light. Their influence is why there are so many shrines to Asten within the rapidly rising walls of the city. Eruvel keeps their gender a secret as a form of worship to Asten. Eruvel is of common blood yet sits in the elven House of Lords, and courtiers whisper that the commander changes their gender in accordance to Asten's needs. That gossip is not repeated within three bowshots of Eruvel. The courtiers are not just prejudiced, but cowards.

Most of the positions of authority in Fredericksberg are elven, but the largest segment of the population is Ayslish human. Some Core Earthers choose to live in Fredericksberg; the clean, elegant elements of elven design now appearing in the city appeal to many of Copenhagen's previous residents.

Old Copenhagen: Centered in the Indre By district, Old Copenhagen is held by Core Earthers,



led by Paulina Madsen. Old Copenhagen extends up in the Osterbro section of the city and across the canal to Christianshavn.

The Kastellet is being restored to a working fortress and armory. The Delphi Council is working to bring some armorers in to bolster production, so far without success.

Paulina Madsen refers to herself as the Lady Mayor of Copenhagen. The Ayslish who reside here call her the Countess of Copenhagen, a title at which Paulina bristles. Yes, she and hers live in the former Royal Palace of Amalienborg. Yes, she sometimes wears Ayslish attire, but it's not like Magasin Du Nord is restocking its shelves. But one of her driving ambitions is to restore the elections for the City Council, including the system for proportional representation. She faces resistance from many Core Earth citizens, summed up in the question, "Lady Mayor, how many council seats do you propose the trolls have?"

Tivoli Gardens is a 19th Century amusement park that still functions. Now part amusement park, part grounds for Ayslish festivals, Tivoli is the social

center of the City of Cities. If the gardens need parts, Paulina Madsen sees they get them. If some enchantment proves useful, Eruvel Cathfaine sees that it's done. If the Gardens is short on gold, Tatrice Sjodrekka sees the coffers are never too empty. This tacit cooperation is a keystone to keeping peace between the cities. So far it is working wonderfully.

Sjodrekkasberg: Centered around Amager East, the Sjodrekka Viking clan have set up a fortified town. Tatrice Sjodrekka uses this base to raid Corsair strongholds to the east, and even Tharkoldu settlements that are not too strongly defended. She steers clear of German settlements out of a personal respect for Paulina Madsen, with whom she feels a kinship. She feels less kinship with Eruvel Cathfaine and the elves. If agents provocateur are looking to drive a rift and shatter the peace between cities, Tatrice would be an excellent place to start.

Trollsport: The trolls separated from Uthorion's army in Sweden for reasons unknown and set up residence in the sports complex at the southwestern edge of the city. The Danish army tried to push them out. After a bloody few days, Major Jouni Nielsen negotiated a truce with Tongue Lasher

THE BATTLE OF TERMINAL A

Not long after the Ayslish reality washed over Copenhagen, the Sjodrekka coveted some of the Danish Army's weaponry. A power outage provided the opportunity. The majority of III/GHR Reconnaissance, including all engineering elements and Major Nielsen, moved to secure and repair HOFOR A/S. Oberstløjtnant Lund remained with 1st Company as airport garrison. Merine Sjodrekka led a surprise attack on the airport and the temporary arms depot in terminal A. Surprise and numbers at first overran superior firepower. Oberstløjtnant Lund and the remaining platoon fell back to defend the depot. Lund radioed Nielsen and ordered him to restore power to the city, then retake the airport once that was accomplished. Desperate Danes unpacked heavy machine guns, setting up an impromptu fortress amid the arms crates. Cramped quarters, grenades, and automatic weapons fire turned the depot into a killing field. The incredible noise of the indoor combat cost the Sjodrekka's any semblance of command and control. As victory slipped away, Merine led her personal guard in a desperate charge against Lund as the Oberstløjtnant hurled grenades. The two combatants fell onto a live grenade. That explosion was one of the last in the depot; the Vikings retreated. A signalman radioed Major Nielsen that he now commands III Reconnaissance. Bloodied axemen informed Tatrici she now leads Sjodrekka, and an enmity is born.

Frold. This truce has grown into almost formal cooperation with the elements of the Danish army who remain to guard two areas of the city, the airport, and the HOFOR A/S power station. Exposure to Core Earth reality and ideas is making the trolls...tolerable to the city as a whole. Still, the local saying is, "A troll with a keg of beer is just trouble waiting to be poured."

Tongue Lasher Frold negotiates with outsiders on behalf of the trolls. She cannot contain her charges,

but she can influence them. She consults with Major Nielsen on how to deal with the Core Earthers. She already has a good understanding of how the elves and Sjodrekka clan operate. She wants to keep her kin alive and out of the reaches of Uthorion.

Danish Army: Most of the Danish Army is regathering and rearming in Germany. Upon the death of the Oberstløjtnant, Major Jouni Nielsen took command of the III/GHR Reconnaissance Battalion. His unit was ordered to help with the "orderly evacuation of Copenhagen, and provide all practical resistance to the invaders." Major Nielsen should have departed months ago, as the invaders occupy most of the city. He stays for Paulina Madsen and the Core Earther's of Old Copenhagen. His battalion occupies two critical pieces of infrastructure: Copenhagen Airport and the HOFOR A/S power station. He knows if those fall, Old Copenhagen gets absorbed as Ayslish territory.

COPENHAGEN IN THE BALANCE

All five factions face each other in an unstable equilibrium. The Storm Knights are entering a powderkeg with five fuses, one of them smoldering.

Mayor Madsen sees value in the Sjodrekka under Tatrici. She tries to broker peace between Major Nielsen and the Vikings, knowing that she cannot afford to alienate the army. She considers the elves to be something out of a surreal Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, and has trouble treating them as equals, although intellectually, she knows she must. For some reason she has less of a problem with the trolls and Tongue Lasher Frold.

Eruvel Cathfaine sees the Core Earthers as hopelessly nostalgic and naive. The world they remember will never return. Eruvel thinks Mayor Madsen is too weak to rule in contentious times, idly speculating if Major Nielsen wouldn't be an improvement. Leaving the on-again, off-again, Uthorion cohort of the Sjodrekka clan a base of operations in the city is foolish. Allowing the trolls to harbor dreams of home and citizenship is folly. Eruvel fears the growing relationship between Tongue Lasher Frold and the Danish Army. They may launch a covert operation against one or both of them if the friendship grows too deep.

Tatrici Sjodrekka is trying to rebuild her clan after the Battle of Terminal A. The skalds blame Merine for the severe losses from that battle, so the political repercussions are slight. Longboats arrive weekly, and the raiding is good, so her leadership is secure. But she hates the Danish Army for the death of her sister and wants vengeance. It is also possible that the longing for her sister has moved her closer to Paulina Madsen than her clansmen think is prudent. She finds the trolls astonishing and has even successfully recruited a few to join Sjodrekka raids. Tatrici admires those who fought in the Army of Light, but finds Eruvel cold, distant, and disdainful. She treats the elf with a strained respect.

Tongue Lasher Frolde is excited by the challenges and opportunities before her. A few months ago, a lifetime of servitude to the Dark One was the only possible future. Now, she can lead her people to a future of their choosing—as long as she can prevent them from choosing stupidly. Frolde thinks Eruvel Cathfaine is the most level-headed of Copenhagen's power brokers and is therefore the most dangerous. She knows Eruvel fears the trolls aligning with the Danish Army, so Frolde flirts with doing so. She is uncertain of Madsen and the other Core Earthers, but any race that can build Tivoli Gardens has something going for them. Frolde loves the straightforward ferocity of the Sjodrekka and thinks it's good some of her flock have joined their crews.

Major Nielsen is broken, but piecing himself back together day by day. So far the war has cost him his country, his home, and the man he loves. Duty and the memory of Oberstløjtnant Lund will keep him here for some months more, or until he can turn over Copenhagen to other Core Earth forces. He is grateful for Tongue Lasher Frolde's conversations. They validate that he still has something valuable to give, and her enthusiasm for the prospects of her people remind him the world isn't as bleak as he currently experiences it. But someday he will leave Copenhagen, put a bullet in the brain of Tatrici Sjodrekka on his way out, and then call it a war.

SCENE ONE: YOUR FLIGHT HAS LANDED

Standard Scene. Core Earth/Aysle Mixed Zone. The flight from Kiel was uneventful, if you don't count the wyvern sizing up the executive jet as it made its descent. Major Jouni Nielsen meets the heroes on the tarmac and quickly briefs them on the situation in Copenhagen.

- The city has a fragile truce between the three major factions, the elves, Sjodrekka, and the Core Earthers.
- There are no Delphi Council contacts in the city of which the Major is aware.
- "Odd" visitors were spotted in Tivoli Gardens. These presumed Cyberpapal agents were last seen in Fredericksberg.
- At some point in their visit, the Major hopes the travelers check in with Mayor Madsen to get a better sense of what might be done to help Copenhagen survive.

The Major provides a HOFOR utility van as transportation. The electric van can be recharged at stations at the airport, power plant, or Old Copenhagen.

WANDERING THROUGH COPENHAGEN

As the Storm Knights travel through the city on their way to Fredericksberg, they may encounter any of the following. These encounters are not required, but provide context and atmosphere, as well as potentially affecting reactions later in the act.

"TWENTY-FOUR GEVAER RIFLES ARE THE BLOOD PRICE FOR MY SISTER, MERINE. DELIVER THEM TO APPEASE AREEL, SECURING PEACE FOR OUR CLANS."

-TATRICI SJODREKKA

"MY APOLOGIES, BUT THOSE ARE ALREADY ALLOCATED TOWARD KILLING YOU."

-MAJOR JOUNI NIELSEN

SOFTPOINTS

Copenhagen is a softpoint, a reality feature similar to a hardpoint that forms during an invasion. Softpoints consist of multiple small Mixed Zones that initially form around important cultural sites and objects. Unlike hardpoints, softpoints have no Pure or Dominant core, and cannot be destroyed, but instead slowly decay, starting from the outermost regions. This decay is relentless, but does fluctuate at the boundaries, so the borders of softpoints expand and contract randomly over a period of several days to a few weeks.

Copenhagen has hundreds of potential hardpoints, and might remain a softpoint for 18–24 months. Softpoints in larger cities could survive for up to five years.

Boy with a String: A 9-year old boy, Nils, is in the middle of the road, blocking the way through. He lowers and raises a piece of string with a piece of taffy on the end, down through an opening in a manhole. On the verge of tears he explains he is trying to get his utility tool back, which fell down the manhole. Okay, it fell down the manhole because he was cutting metal slivers from one of the holes when it dropped. Okay, he was cutting the metal because it was beginning to transform into pilgrims' pewter, a metal local elves use to mint coins. He can sell the metal to Fredericksberg smiths, and he and his Dad need the money.

Retrieving the tool with the string requires a Challenging (DN 12) *Dexterity* or *lockpicking* test, or a *Strength* test, to lift up the manhole cover and climb down and get the tool.

If the test fails, the tool gets washed away, and Nils begins to cry. On a success, Nils tells them of odd goings on city ruins to the north (See "Oradour-Sur-Glane", page 13)

Pilgrimage: A procession of about 25 pilgrims block the van's progress. These humans are on a holy journey to honor Astén, heading for the shrines in Fredericksberg. They keep their holy symbols hidden until they present them at the

shrines, as is custom. If the heroes choose to creep along with them, the pilgrims are more than happy to talk.

- They admire Eruvel Cathfaine for their devotion to the ways of the goddess of *secrecy*. They think the city as a whole would benefit from the leadership of a former officer in the Army of Light.

- They were spooked on the road the previous day by a low-flying craft that seemed to be struggling to stay aloft. They cannot really describe the craft, though when they mimic the noise it made, it resembles more a propeller craft than a jet. *The craft was a distressed DC-3 carrying agents of the Nile Empire to Sweden; they appear in Act Two.*

Troll Rodeo: Bored trolls are known to leap atop vehicles and "skateboard" on them until they lose their balance or bring the vehicle to a halt. Fellow trolls run and holler as close to the vehicle as they can, encouraging their more daring companion.

Powerful and heavy, a troll landing atop a vehicle forces a Hard (DN 14) *land vehicles* test to maintain control of the vehicle. Failure results in a collision. Success, and the driver engages in a *land vehicles* contest against the troll's *unarmed combat* skill.

A success by the driver makes the troll Vulnerable. A success by the troll Stymies the driver.

- A Good Success by the driver dislodges the troll. A Good Success by the troll, and he levers the van so its drive wheels are no longer in contact with the ground. At this point the game is over. The trolls celebrate either way and head back to Trollsport.

If any investigators engage in combat with the trolls, the fight is on. The troll on top, plus one troll per two Storm Knights, attack the vehicle.

- **Trolls (1 + 1 per 2 Storm Knights):** see page 22

- *If the Storm Knights resolve the situation without violence, the trolls view them amicably in Scene 5.*

Vehicle Search: Elven security forces wave the van to a stop; they attack and follow if the van does not stop. They demand to search the van while offering no explanation. A *persuasion* or a *trick* test can get them to tip their hand.