

FREE LEAGUE

Symbaroum



ALBERETOR

The Haunted Waste

THE FIFTH EPISODE IN THE CHRONICLE OF THE THRONE OF THORNS

We are the rock,
the foundation upon which walls shall be built.

We are the thoughtful observer,
who shall watch, understand, and guide
but not construct, not manage, not lead.

You shall build, but also listen –
or the walls you raise around the flame of life
shall be a prison that smothers and darkens.



Sample file

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THE FIFTH EPISODE IN THE CHRONICLE OF THE THRONE OF THORNS

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Onwards to the Lost Land!

FOR ONCE THIS PREFACE is the first thing we write, before the adventure and its locations, challenges, and characters. It is not without trepidation that we now turn our gazes south, to the once flourishing sister realms of Alberetor and Lyastra, now devastated by war and darkened by corruption. Sure, we have an idea of what awaits in the ashen deserts, dead forests, and raging opal storms. But we have not yet been there, not really, so this will be a journey of discovery for us as well – one that we are looking forward to with excitement and dread in equal measure.

You who are reading this should therefore view us as forerunners, an advance unit sent to scout the darkened, corruption-oozing terrain. And the book we are about to put together will hence be based on our observations and analyses, which will inevitably be subjective in nature. While following in our footsteps you may well discover flaws in our report, caused by a lack of perception, clarity, or understanding. Remember, then, that the region south of the Titans, like the one to the north, exists in as many parallel dimensions as there are gaming groups in the world, and that you and your friends should always base adventures on your own experiences and preferences. At the end of the day, what awaits in the Lost Land, and in the ravaged vassal state of the Dark Lord, is something we will have to discover together.

Enjoy!

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Ps. Just got home. Have to rest, lick our wounds, tend to our ravaged souls. Hopefully your journey will be as successful as ours. Best of luck.



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INTO THE STORM

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The South is Calling

... FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS!

Over the past decades, very few have paid much attention to the lost homeland of the Ambrians. It occasionally pops up in the nightmares of war veterans, the imaginations of the young, and the more or less unbearable childhood memories of the elderly. But for all intents and purposes, the Ambrian people have put Alberetor behind them, and with good reason: their once lush and prosperous homeland has been twisted into a region of devastation and death that makes even the depths of Davokar seem welcoming.

YES, IT SHOULD be said here and now: although there are still rare glimpses of light and relative safety south of the mountains, your time there will be marked by darkness, distress, and constant danger. You will experience the repercussions of The Great War on humankind and the world, and be forced to endure both heartrending encounters and acute threats to your lives. And if you ever come to understand why things are as they are, your view of the world and its inhabitants will change forever.

You may be wondering whether it would not be better to stay home? The Ambrian civil war between

Loyalists and Reformists is in full swing, and you and your friends might be able to tip the scales to your benefit. But... sometimes the stakes are so high not even a full-scale war seems like the most pressing concern, even though it is something many people do not understand or refuse to acknowledge. It is still there, in the depths of Davokar, the Throne of Thorns - naked but trembling with power; power many believe could decide the outcome of the war and the future of the entire region; power that, in the wrong hands, would drown the world in the darkness of The Eternal Night. Could you really let that happen?



Rolfo's rolling inn wagons en route to the Cliff of Korinda for supplies.



This book is structured differently than the previous episodes of the *Throne of Thorns*. There is no player's section; instead we head straight into the background and factions of the adventure. The first section also contains a chapter on the civil war, before the adventure itself is introduced and begins with a battle scene set in Ambria. The section concludes with some guidelines for the journey south, as well as a number of scenes set in the caravan camp called the Cliff of Korinda on the border of the Lost Land.

The second section begins with an introduction of Alberetor along with guidelines for traveling through the neighboring countries south of the Titans. After that we present three substantial adventure landscapes, each focusing on different types of challenges: Castle Brigo (diplomacy/social challenges), the Convent School of Luminous Laws (horror mystery), and the Cathedral of Sacred Fire (problem solving/combat). After visiting these places, the player characters will hopefully know

enough to continue their hunt into the corrupted lands of the Dark Lords.

Following a description of Lyastra and its defining features, the third section introduces two legendary adventure landscapes. First the player characters must sneak into the massive fortress known among Ambrians as the Dark Lords' Stronghold – the place where Queen Korinthia was once imprisoned, deep within enemy territory. The journey then continues to Othelia's Arboretum, named after the priestess of Dakothnic who took the thorn plant Rosée from Symbaroum's Throne of Thorns and thereby rendered it unusable.

The third section, and hence the book, ends with a chapter that addresses the journey back to Ambria and looks ahead to the final episode of the adventure chronicle – a module where everything comes to a head, where the future of the Davokar region will be decided; a book which has been given a most appropriate name: *Davokar Awakens*.



~~~~~ ◆ ~~~~~

**HE RIPPLES CAUSED** by the weepers' tears, spreading across the surface, were now only a hair's breadth away from flowing over the smoothly worn edge of the well. The moment drew near, as relentless as a tidal wave.

"There is room, isn't there? For interpretation, I mean."

Prince Elori asked the question out loud, but as expected there was no reply, not from his advisors, not from the four figures that sat leaning over the surface. Deep inside he knew that it did not matter anyway – regardless of whether Ainarā's prophetic whispers were true, regardless of what they actually meant, Davokar's message was loud and clear: the darkness of Symbaroum had nearly eaten through the Iron Pact's fetters.

An echo from the time before the hibernation made him blink: "*Hope for the dream to come true, plan for the nightmare to become reality.*" He could not remember who said it, but probably one of the two human rulers who recently sent their respective followers to war against each other, Ynedar or Korinthia.

*Plan for the nightmare...*

He needed the humans, their capacity for action, their collective strength. But in the nightmare mankind used their advantages to strengthen the darkness even further, unwilling to listen, unable to understand. *The nightmare...*

After a few more blinks it finally dawned on him, something he should have realized long ago: he and his allies were already living the nightmare.

~~~~~ ◆ ~~~~~



SECTION 1:

WAR & BLOOD

Victory at Any Cost

THE KINGDOM OF AMBRIA is barely two decades old, and yet it finds itself on the verge of ruin. Its people, both leaders and subjects, long for peace, rest, and safety. But the wars are never-ending – a fact that has followed the Ambrians from Alberetor: first came centuries of aggressive expansion and violent uprisings, followed by the calamitous war against the Dark Lords; then the annexation of Lindaros, the annihilation of the Jezites, numerous battles against the woodland clans and later the Blood-Daughter. And now, civil war. A bloody, unreasonable war that at best will leave the people divided and hateful.

BEFORE WE CONTINUE, it must be said that the contents of this book are nothing but suggestions and inspirational guidelines. *The Haunted Waste* is the fifth episode of the *Chronicle of the Throne of Thorns*, and by now the situation in the Davokar region may differ greatly from gaming group to gaming group, depending on what alliances the player characters have formed and what different Game Masters have decided to emphasize, alter, and develop. We have done our very best to design and present this adventure in a way that

takes this potential variation into account, but it is obviously impossible for us to cover (or even imagine) all possible variants. For this reason, we would formally like to hand over the power to decide what has actually happened in Davokar, Ambria, and beyond, to respective gaming groups – or more specifically, to you who are reading this: the Game Masters.

Those who have read the previous episodes of the chronicle will recognize the introduction of this first section from what in previous books has always





been the second – the Game Master's Section. This chapter explains the background and historical context of the adventure, describes the situation between and within the factions of the game world, and provides information and adventure set-ups related to the current civil war.

The contents of the second chapter may seem familiar as well – a summary of the whole adventure, along with suggestions regarding the player

characters: how experienced and powerful they should be, and what incentives might motivate them to make the journey to the Lost Land.

Then, in the section's third chapter, the adventure begins. The exact details of the game opening and the lead-up to the player characters' journey south will soon be revealed in full horror. But let us first make one thing clear: the battle for control over the Throne of Thorns' power is far from over!

The Battle at Oralak's Winter Dunes colored the cotton fields red with Loyalist blood.

Background

AMBRIA MAY BE a young nation, but one sprung from layer upon layer of historical soil. Not only do the Ambrians themselves have a long and rich history, rooted in the devastated region they were forced to abandon, but the country they now inhabit has a colorful past as well, which can be understood thanks to writings, images, and remarkable objects left behind by generations of previous inhabitants. The background to the events of *The Haunted Waste*

can largely be found among objects excavated from the remnants of the city state Lindaros.

A considerable number of these artifacts have over time ended up in the possession of the Royal Sekretorium and, indirectly, the Queen. Master of the Order Marbela (see the *Core Rulebook*, page 58) has no formal right to refuse when Sekretorium agents come to claim items of particular interest. Furthermore, a not insignificant amount of material