



RAPTURE

THE SECOND COMING

Lucifer, the “Light Bearer,” announced his return in August 1945, with the fire of two new suns. When they flashed into existence over two cities in Japan, the last sight thousands saw before their retinas melted were the compassionate and smoldering eyes of the Fallen One. Nothing remained but the faint shadows of their souls etched into the concrete ruins of buildings and streets. A new age had dawned, for Earth had become the Throne of Hell.

Rapture: The Second Coming is a new d20 System edition of this classic game about the end times. Characters fight to aid the celestial armies and save humanity — or join the infernal horde, paving the way for Lucifer’s conquest. **Rapture: The Second Coming** includes:

- a dozen new advanced classes, including Knight Templar, Kabbalist, Jesuit, Order of the Fly and more;
- new feats and class talents;
- information on the legions of both Heaven and Hell;
- rules for faith, summoning angels and demons, possession and exorcisms;
- updated history for the original game about the Apocalypse;
- a complete, ready-to-play adventure.

Requires the use of a Roleplaying Game Core Book
published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.



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MODERN

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MODERN

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It is impossible to do justice to the rich and varied religions and philosophies that will be employed (or overlooked) as inspirational and background material for this book. No lack of respect is intended. However, it will be necessary to fit said material into a framework that makes for both an interesting and a playable game. In this respect, the treatment of religious views - while touching upon actual theological fact - is in a completely fictitious mode. Where bias, satire or caricature may be perceived, one should see distortion in the service of plot and atmosphere. The world of **Rapture: The Second Coming** is a mixture of real and unreal elements providing a believable context within which the spirit of humanity may be explored via imagination.

This text is presented as a work of fiction. It is only a game. It is not the intention of the authors and designers to degrade or demoralize any religion. As such, it is left to the reader's discretion to ascertain what is and is not fiction.

Submitted for your approval...

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CHAPTER ONE: FOUNDATIONS OF FEAR

My dearest Emily,

How simple those days were, so long ago, when we hid from our tutor, and I desperately sought to avoid any pretense of learning. If only I could hide my head in youthful ignorance again, but I cannot. I have gone too far for that.

A week ago, I took possession of a species of fungus, supposedly with hallucinogenic properties, that had not yet been properly classified. I was told by the merchant who sold me the fungus that it was this very substance that John the Evangelist took to receive his visions of Apocalypse.

How we laughed that night at dinner! My fellows were convinced that I should either burn the stuff or write a paper on it, exposing 800 years of Apocalyptic theology as so much hallucinogenic drivel. I knew, as a man of science, I could not do the former. If this mean plant was the source of mankind's wailing and gnashing, then the truth had to be known.

I used the fungus, Emily. God help me, I ate the fungus. I placed it on my tongue and bit down into its dry tang. At first there seemed to be no effect and, being a young fool, I ate more, and more, until, to my horror, I realized that there was none left. I was angry, for that sample had cost me three day's wages.

And then the world began to change. I watched as a single candle flame caught the air, and blossomed

into a conflagration. Time slowed, then shuddered painfully forward at a greatly accelerated rate. I felt myself moving toward the flame against my volition. Cold, spectral hands clutched my arms and pushed me forward. Soon, my flesh seared, and I screamed violently.

I was no longer in my room. Instead, a vast plain spread out beneath me. Strange metal carriages crawled across the desert toward a city that looked like Jerusalem, though a Jerusalem so alien that it defied my imagination. I could feel the desert's heat, and I could taste the dry death in the air. In that moment, it struck me I was watching the oncoming slaughter of thousands, perhaps millions. Even if I had the courage to do something, the strong hands held me still. I was here to watch, to observe.

And then there was an awful stillness as the heat of the sun – nay, the sun itself – spilled forth from the heavens, and devoured the approaching carriages. The silence was shattered by an awful screaming, as millions of souls hurtled to their fates. I could hear these massless, formless entities, I could feel their singular suffering. I ached.

There was more ... much more. A wasting disease devoured the land, a rot ravaged the animals of the field from within, and constant, bloody wars of hellish savagery tore the people and their homes. Such

suffering did I witness, and none worse than the vast hand that took away the children, one and all.

I still see these things as faint visions that pass before my eyes in the darkness of my room. They seek to remind me of my arrogance. As a man of science, I tried to disprove the utter truth that presented itself to us every day. Now these visions haunt me. I can see now that it is arrogance of this type that allowed the world to slide into that state, to build the machines that perpetrated that great evil, and that left the world defenseless. I see my sin as a palpable thing – a seed that grew rancid fruit.

And now, I, a man who once had the strength to spit in God's watchful eye, must find the strength to oppose my friends, mock my teachers, and repudiate my career. And I cannot do that. The visions grow too intense. I can no longer stay idle, for I see the fiends of Hell beginning to surround us. I will take father's gun and his bible, and I will use both to defy this misery. Though I have long hated violence and feared conflict, I cannot stay, and do nothing.

I love you.

Your Beloved Roger

THE DEATH OF FAITH

We are explicitly told by inspiration that, in later days, there will be some who abandon the faith, listening to false inspirations, and doctrines taught by devils. They will be deceived by the pretensions of impostors, whose conscience is hardened as if by a searing iron.

— St. Paul, The First Epistle to Timothy, 4:13

The West built its modern era on the unstable foundation of secular, religious and philosophical revolt against the rule of the Roman Catholic Church. The Black Death, which ravaged Europe and forced people away from cities and centralized authority, stole much of the Church's hold over the people, while reformers attacked every excess in which the Church had once indulged. The scholastic wisdom of the ages grew stagnant when the Church refused to consider new, more radical ideas. Thus, people readily turned to those who seemed to serve their best spiritual interests. These reformers, who included the best, brightest, and most ambitious of the age's teachers, sects and aristocrats, continued to undermine the once-indomitable power of the Church, often stealing an aspect only to repack-

age and offer it again. They became new figureheads in a new power structure.

However, these dynamic forces did not spring up out of nothing. Within Christendom itself, certain organizations could trace their lineage to the mystery religions of the Hellenistic world and to certain Gnostic sects that thrived in the first three centuries, and these remained hidden in the shadow of their Apostolic brethren. They used the monastic system of the Church to keep alive arcane practices and prophecies, buried under the facade of religious zeal. These sects easily eluded charges of heresy and blasphemy, while they waited for the critical moment to re-emerge from centuries of religious persecution and reclaim the world denied them. Deeper still, however, hid another organization, one that practiced mysteries both occult and forbidden, revealed only to the most gifted and trustworthy of initiates – a Lodge more ancient than any sect.

THE GREAT LODGE

Before the dawn of recorded history, certain men tapped into a realm of dark power, seeking counsel with the foul beings that dwelled within. These men formed themselves into an order, a fraternity that partook of secrets granted by beings incredibly wise and unfathomably evil, paying for such power with sacrifice and blind obedience. In this time before time, secret whispers promised the Great Lodge the godhood denied them and the rest of humanity by a jealous Tyrant. The whispers taught the Lodge that this Tyrant had waged war on the bright and shining ones in a fit of mad rage, and imprisoned them in eternal spiritual darkness. The Lodge was to prepare the world for the Final Battle, when the shining ones, freed from their time in darkness, would rally their forces and reclaim the throne of Heaven from the Tyrant and his minions for the benefit of all.

For centuries, this lie prospered and lingered, changing form as suited its needs. Its power ebbed and flowed through the Middle East, slowly spreading across the Mediterranean, into Africa and across Europe. Tenderly maintained by a handful of initiates, it stayed well concealed save for a few snippets of doctrine intriguing enough to draw in the learned, those who had enough hubris to assume they could control whatever they discovered. These scholars became the