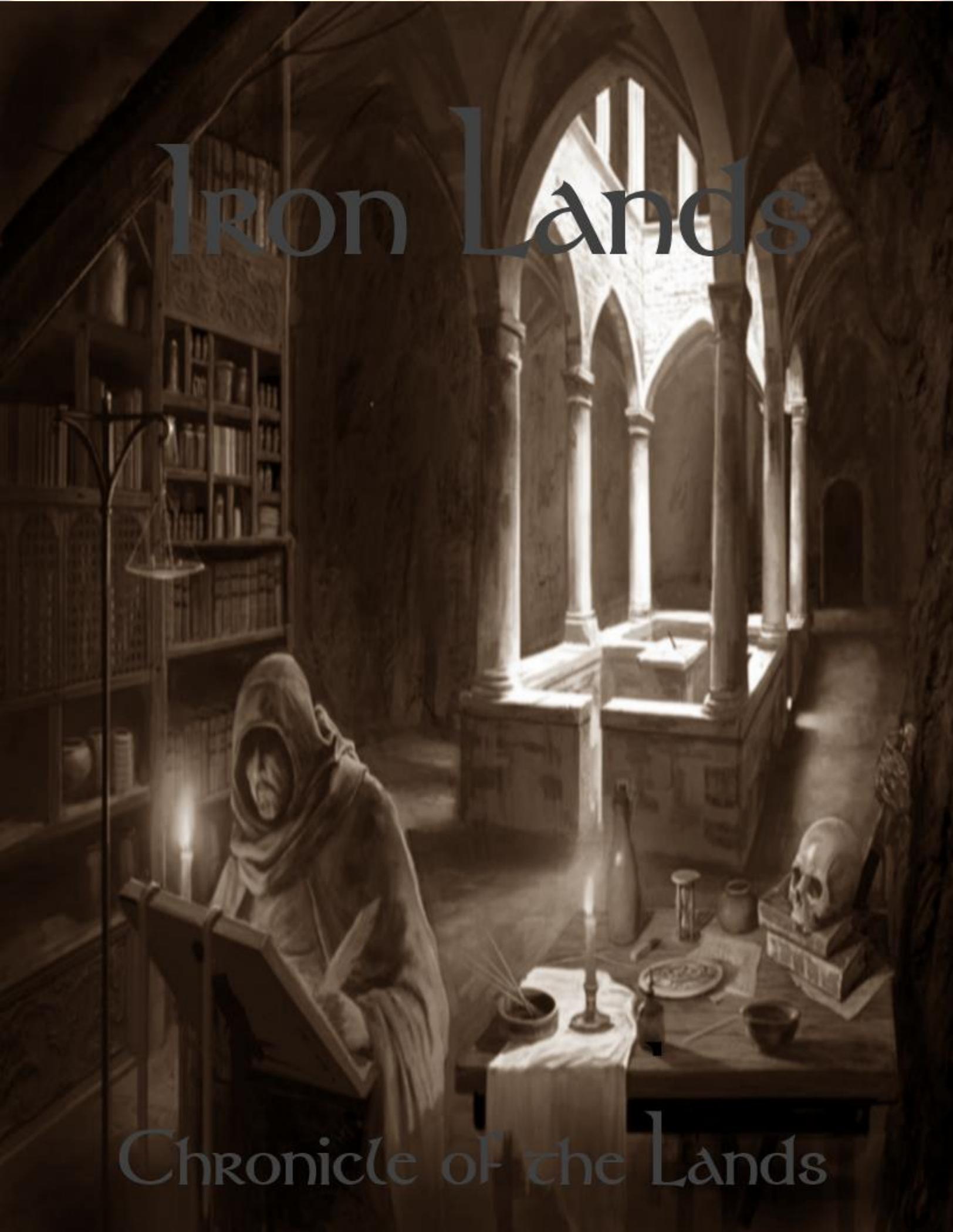


Iron Lands

A dark, atmospheric illustration of a medieval library or study. A hooded figure sits at a desk reading a book, illuminated by a candle. The room features high Gothic arches, stone columns, and bookshelves. A skull and various writing tools are on the desk.

Chronicle of the Lands

Chapter 1: Chronicle of the Lands

Ancient Times

- c. -3000:** The Golem-Kings of the Scaelarii Empire hold dominion over all the Lands
- c. -2107:** Saurget the Wicked releases the Unhallowed upon the Lands; the true intent of the ritual performed in the bowels of Gul’Gora is never known
- c. -2094:** To abate the Unhallowed’s reign of terror, Tarrgoth the Bloodhand summons his greatest necromancer’s and the *Viirguul’infernalum* is wrought and given to the Confessors
- c. -2030:** With the eye of the Golem-Kings drawn by the Unhallowed, the dark Badu men cast off their shackles in open revolt across the southron lands
- c. -2017:** The last of the Unhallowed is driven from the Lands by the Confessors and *Viirguul’infernalum* is sealed in the warded vaults beneath Castle Black
- c. -2013:** Having driven the Scaelarii from southron lands, a holy man known only as Toth the Speaker founds the holy city of Jassus and begins the *Book of Truths*
- c. -2000:** In their hubris, the Golem-Kings sought eternity, and the Scaelarii Empire fell consumed by their hubris

History of the Lands

- 0:** Led by Prince Morngil, the sun elves lead the slaves of Lunaris to freedom and the elves are sundered; confronted by a captain of the Obsidian Guard, he does the unthinkable and strikes him down with Ithilreg, the *Moon Thorn*, which he then casts into the Myst in anguish
- 13:** Upon a burnt and blasted isle, Sillith Mael’for seizes control of the half-elven refugees of Lunaris forging the Dragon Throne of Taeloss
- 441:** Having wandered the Plains of Ash in their sorrow for centuries, the pale elves turn north into the Lowlands, but are unwelcome
- 544:** After generations of war with the pale elves, many clans amongst the north men strike south crossing the Myst to southron lands
- 548:** Faced with the incursion of north men, the Badu rally around Jassus and the foundation of the Tothian Empire is laid
- 613:** Weary of war and man, the pale elves withdraw across the Shattered Fjord to Sjorn
- 618:** Trusted with the sacred charge of protecting Jorlund from the pale elves, the first Runewarden takes the throne
- 737:** The Tothian Empire invades the petty kingdoms that have grown in the wake of north man’s settlements around the Dawn Peaks
- 749:** Having conquered all the lands around the Dawn Peaks, the Tothian advance is halted by the first king of Dunsinor
- 1002:** Revolt erupts across conquered Tothian lands

- 1011:** The Tothian Empire is pushed back across the channel by the united kings of Saldaen and Dunsinor
- 1108:** After generations of petty wars with the kings of Saldaen and Ameraine, Dunsinor loses the city of Vargaine to mad king Tyran Bloodfist who founds the Galainite Kingdom
- 1109:** Saldaen conquers Dunsinor
- 1113:** Tyran Bloodfist’s armies drive the Saldaenians from Dunsinor annexing the Dunn Hills to Galaine, but bloody revolt never stops and within a year, Bloodfist is forced to withdraw when civil war erupts across Galaine
- 1158:** The Dragon Army of Dracon invades Dunsinor
- 1167:** The Dragon Army suppresses the Dunnish people and installs a puppet-king on their throne
- 1223:** The Dragon Army invades Saldaen and, after taking the cities there advances on Galaine, but is halted at White Horse Ford
- 1376:** Sorn Tanor’Thal, known as Blackheart, is exiled from the House of Ember. Learning of his fate, he steals away with the *Scriptuum’infernalis* and his sentence becomes death
- 1397:** After wandering in dark pursuits, Blackheart builds a tower in the Twilight Peaks in the south of The Dreaming Land
- 1457:** A trapping party from Fool’s Moon is lost in the Twilight Peaks. Only one, Breen, survives and is found near the Moonkill Pass; now mad, he mutters of a wicked crone among standing stones and mutters the name “Blackheart”
- 1492:** Fal’Gir son of Y’taro departs the Lowlander gathering bound for the Pool of Yashni
- 1493:** A large goblin war band from the Blackwood Vale is slaughtered at the Battle of Bremen Ford by horsemen out of Castle Cairn; Yraen of Elkar serving among them; the surviving goblins are hunted by Kur’Kai led by the Zn’Kaan Fal’Gir
- 1494:** Revolt at Swale
- 1495:** Lord Kristaan Galador, an heir to the throne of Saldaen, raises a loyalist army and defeats the puppet-king at the Battle of One Tree Hill; Yraen of Elkar is knighted for his actions
- 1496:** Sorrow’s child is born to the witch, Baabd in the Salt Flats near Swale
- 1496:** A goblin horde, flamed to war by the Gar’Garush, lays siege to Castle Greymourn; Zn’Kaan Fal’Gir of the Kur’Kai falls amongst the corpses of his foes
- 1497:** The Gaelru, Wu’Taan Va’Shuul, lays the sword Mankiller beneath a cairn in Balewind Hollow
- 1498:** Sir Yraen is wed to the Lady Galswinth and raised to the County Eastguard by King Galador; the Dunnish rebels are broken at Taren and late in the year, the Dragon Army crosses the Mistval River into Galaine, but through guile and statecraft, the Queen maintains a stalemate until the army withdraws to winter quarters in Dunsinor
- 1499:** The Drowning of Chalise; delayed no longer, the Dragon Army crosses into Galaine, but Duke Yngvar of

Gruun's army drives them off in the Battle of Jarro's Fall; Yngvar then seizes Dunisor and Vargaine

1500: King Galador of Saldaen suddenly falls ill and dies; Driven his father, the Duke of Trienne, Marquis Petro du Sulaine seizes the throne of Saldaen annexing Sulaine and Ameraine; Galaine ceases to exist as a nation and her people are lost

1632: Among the ice elves of Sjorn, El'sana Aradiel is born

1645: Valën is born to House Kal'kairn descended from the line of Sir Yraen or Elkar

1646: The bard is born to a tribe of gypsies camped in the Gloom Wood near Dead Fall

1647: Liath, who would come to be known as the Wanderer, is born in the village of Balmoral in the Dunn Hills; his mother dies giving birth

1648: A son Nathan, untouched by the Faed, is born to House d'Arq in Sygium

1649: Drach Sin Drazar, Fang of Lolth, and Dragomir Khazakh, Acolyte of Ferrod, follow an old map they found in the Gloom Wood to the ruined tower of Blackheart in the Dreaming Land; they slay an ancient crone in the environs of the tower and the Fang finds the *Baleful Eye*

1650: A dark plague of shadow falls upon Junction; made a Hammer of Ferrod, Dragomir Khazakh and his companions slay the Desecrat of Thourne from whom the shadow issues

1652: Dragomir of the clan Khazakh is made a Magnus of Ferrod

1653: Lost in an unending storm of ice in the crags of Sjorn, El'sana Aradiel and his love Illisera are set upon by ice wyrms; only he survives

1654: After wandering in torpid fevered madness, El'sana Aradiel succumbs at the foot of Gurth-Ring and is saved

1659: Valën enters the service of the Temple of Azuriel at Kal'kairn

1660: King Harald of Dunsinor dies in a hunting accident without a male heir; arranged by the true power behind the Dunnish throne, Duke Torstein of Gruun, marries his second son, Valdemar, to Harald's oldest daughter making him King of the Dunns

1662: Drust, Liath's father, is unable to pay the crushing taxes levied by the new king and his freehold at Balmoral is seized; he is indentured to the mines of Taren while his son is indentured to a wealth landholder; within a season, Liath flees and takes to wandering

1663: After running afoul of the Earl of Hedgeford's men, Liath takes on with a tothian caravan travelling Dunsinor

1664: On the night of the Sorrowing, the gypsy tribe's sacred ritual goes horribly awry and the Unhallowed once again are released upon the Lands; their sacred ritual relic is stolen away; a fortnight later, the Confessor, Jaggur F'Aine, comes to the tribe and bids six of them to hunt the daemons; the bard is one of the chosen

1665: After years of brutal taxation to fund his father's war in the Frozen Isles, the Dunns at Taren revolt against King Valdemar; dissent spreads through the Dunn Hill

The Year 1666 after the Sundering

Prelude

Spring 1: Through the Resurrection of Fire, Nathan d'Arq is reborn a warlock.

Spring 50: Charged by his master, El'sana Aradiel departs Sjorn bearing a gift for the master of House d'Arq.

Book I: The Dreaming Land

Chapter I: The Witches of Black Hollow

Spring 63: El'sana Aradiel arrives at House d'Arq seeking its master, but only its youngest son, Nathan, is in residence. While they dine, a wretch, Creb, comes to report that the scribe of Dark Hollow has been stricken by a gypsy witch. Swift by carriage, Nathan, bringing the ice elf with him, after slaying spiders in the Witch Wood, reaches Dark Hollow ignoring smoke rising from the gypsy camp. Wielding dark power, Nathan rests a death spirit from the stricken scribe, Marik. Binding the spirit to him, he follows it to its master, but this leads not to the gypsies, but to goblins lairing in a nearby ancient ruin. With the aid of El'sana, the goblins and their shaman, Tooth Cutter, are slain. Descending from the ruin, they pass though the gypsy camp finding their wagons put to the torch and, Yiselda, their queen, burned at the stake.

Chapter II: Dark Justice

Spring 64: In the early hours after midnight, Nathan and El'sana return to Dark Hollow where they find a crowd gathered outside the public house. Inside, the scribe and villagers argue over the fate of the gypsies they have taken prisoner. Seizing control of the crowd, Nathan learns the camp was burned by the villagers led by the scribe's son, Zoram, compelled by his mother, Shebat. Before Nathan can decide their fate, the horribly burned corpse of the gypsy queen, Yiselda, possessed by a daemon host, enters the public house. Stuck by terror, all except Nathan are helpless as the public house and villagers are consumed by hellfire. Nathan is able to rescue a handful of the villagers from the conflagration.

Spring 65: The carriage is attacked by highwaymen in the Witch Wood as Nathan and El'sana return to House d'Arq in Sygium. Disturbed by the ice elves pale, fevered repose, the servants of House d'Arq begin calling him Wraith.

Chapter III: Unremembered Secrets

Spring 73: While Nathan takes his pleasure with a serving girl, she is possessed by the spirit of the daemon host whispering dark missives. Badly shaken, he seeks out his uncle, Mortimer, who tells him of the *Scriptuum infernalis* that may contain the secret to banishing the daemon host.

Spring 74: Bearing a Writ of Passage secured by Mortimer, Nathan and Wraith depart aboard a longship from the Frozen Isles captained by Arngrim Shieldbreaker.

Spring 79: While sailing along the Wailing Cliffs, Arngrim's boat is attacked by harpies.

Spring 81: Arngrim's boat arrives in Maernum and after their writ is inspected, makes its way north by oar up the Green River towards Fool's Moon.

Spring 83: Arngrim's boat arrives at Fool's Moon and Nathan finds the trapper Mortimer sent him to find at the Blood Moon Tavern. The trapper, Novez, speaks of finding a circle of standing stones to the south. Mortimer believed the standing stones would lead to the ancient tower of Blackheart.

Chapter IV: Blood Among the Stones

Spring 84: Led by Novez, Nathan and Wraith depart Fool's Moon in search of the tower.

Spring 86: Nathan's band is attacked by goblins in the wood.

Spring 87: Leaving the trapper behind, Nathan and Wraith push forward blundering into the standing stones where an ogre magi, Grulat, has made himself lord over a band of goblins. After Nathan is struck down, Wraith is forced to surrender.

Chapter V: Bloodeye

Spring 87: Captured by Grulat, Nathan bargains for their lives and agrees, secretly true to his own purpose, to continue to Blackheart's tower and return with the head of the goblin chief Bloodeye who now rules there.

Spring 88: Battling worgs in the Blood Vine Canyon, Nathan and Wraith push on to the ruined tower where they murder Bloodeye and well over a dozen goblins.

Chapter VI: Blackheart's Fate

Spring 88: Nathan and Wraith push further into the chambers beneath the ruined tower and, fighting past spiders, win through to the Sanctuary of the Flesh Carver. There they find the long desiccated corpse of Blackheart whose wraith stills haunts the chamber. They defeat the wraith send Blackheart to his final doom and Nathan breaks the wards protecting the *Scriptum infernalis*. In a final search around the tunnels surrounding the tower, Wraith recovers the *Ring of Bloodlust* from the lair of a spider queen.

Chapter VII: Of Wolves & Magi

Spring 90: Returning to the standing stones, Nathan fulfills their debt to Grulat and delivers the goblin chiefs head, but he and Wraith they take their vengeance slaying Grulat, the last of his ogre guards and the few remaining goblins. Nathan recovers the *Blade of Sacrifice* and a number of scrolls from the slain ogre magi.

Summer 3: Having found the trapper waiting for them as promised near the standing stones, he leads them back to Fool's Moon. There they find a band of Arngrim's north men have gone of hunting with the men of the trading post and they are invited by the scribe, Kern, to wait for them until moon, Bael's Eye, is full.

Summer 8: In celebration of their success, Nathan plans a feast to be held for all beneath bloody eye of Bael. The people of Fool's Moon slowly leave the feast that is being held in the north men's camp along the Moonkill. Kern is the last to leave just before the feast is disrupted as the men of the trading

post return from hunting to reveal their true nature as werewolves. Fifteen of Arngrim's men are slain before Nathan and Wraith drive off the werewolves. Enraged by the betrayal, before Nathan can stop them, the north men burn Fool's Moon and Arngrim himself murders the scribe.

Chapter VIII: Betrayal's Hand

Summer 9: Leaving the smoldering ruin of Fool's Moon and the pyres of the slain north men behind, Arngrim's boat runs swiftly with the current down to Maernum. There they are boarded Inquisitor, Jediah b'Lud, who accuses them of bearing a forged Writ of Passage. On his oath, Nathan and the rest are allowed to remain armed as Jediah's warship leads Arngrim's boat to Malvenor.

Summer 10: While sailing along the Isles of Strife, the ships are attacked by a pair of Zonnite war galleys. Arngrim, whose ship was trailing, drives his boat forward and, together with Jediah's warship, they fight a desperate battle against one of the war galleys and manage to set it afire as the other galley closes. In jeopardy of losing one of their ships, the Zonnites withdraw.

Summer 14: The ships led by Jediah take on navigators at the fort at the mouth of the River of Blood to speed their passage against the current.

Summer 16: The ships arrive in Malvenor where they are met at the docks by the magi, Gideon d'Arq, who takes custody of his son. The north men, however, are imprisoned and Arngrim's boat is seized by order of Jediah b'Lud. Near midnight, the arch-magi, Bartholomaeus d'Arq, is murdered by the assassin known only as the black elf who steals away with his victim's amulet.

Chapter IX: A House Divided

Summer 17: Near dawn, Nathan and Wraith are summoned by Gideon to the northern military gate where the guards have been slain by the black elf. A dozen of the north men, on their oath to Nathan, are freed and given horses that they might join in the pursuit of the assassin. Led by Nathan, they strike out along the secret military high pass through the Twilight Peaks.

Summer 18: Nathan's war band is attacked by goblin wolf riders hired by the black elf to murder any pursuers.

Summer 19: Riding hard throughout, Nathan's war band arrives in Sygium and reaches House d'Arq only to have the final treachery revealed. Mortimer's hand lies behind the forged Writ of Passage and Bartholomaeus' murder. As a final insult, he convinced the house guards that Nathan was to blame. Struck down by one of the house guards, Nathan lays down his arms and convinces them of Mortimer's betrayal. They swiftly discover that Mortimer has used the amulet, delivered by the black elf, to unseal the vault beneath House d'Arq and steal away with the *Book of Fire*. Exhausted, but undaunted, Nathan's war band drives their horse to near death and reaches Dark Hollow hours after Mortimer has been there. A Miserai of Thourne and a dozen cultist wait in

ambush. While Wraith and the north men drive off the cultists, Nathan slays the Miserai.

Chapter X: The Price of Treachery

Summer 19: Nathan's war band trails Mortimer and a Miserai to a secluded camp in the northern reaches of the Witch Wood, but the exhausted north men fall behind. In a well-crafted ambush, they fall upon the treacherous warlock and the Desecrat of Thourne with whom he has struck his dark bargain. Nathan traps the warlock in a mire, but by his uncle's hand is struck low by hellfire. The one called Wraith puts an arrow through the warlock's eye and throat and the *Book of Fire* is recovered. The Desecrat is allowed to withdraw.

Summer 20: Finding the north men in the wood, Nathan's band returns to House d'Arq in Sygium and the *Book of Fire* is secured in the vault in the crypts beneath the manor.

Summer 51: Summoned by his father Gideon, Nathan, El'sana, Cnut and the two other surviving north men depart for Malvenor by way of the high pass.

Summer 54: Nathan and the Wraith arrive in Malvenor where El'sana dispatches the charge of his master and delivers the strange ice crystal box to Gideon d'Arq; now master of his house. When Gideon takes the box, the lid melts away and a strange mist flows forth. A testament to his power, by conjuration, the three stand before the Frozen Doom far in the north of Sjorn. There, Gideon is bid to fulfill an ancient debt owed to the conjuror by his grandfather, Zekiel, and tasked that his house aid El'sana in a quest to find the fabled blade of the elven prince, Morngil. One of the conjuror's spies, a Taelossii called Pharro-zhi, is said to have learned of Ithilreg, the *Moon Thorn's*, location. The conjuration over, Gideon bids his son, Nathan, fulfill this debt.

Book II: All Roads Lead to Junction

Chapter I: Strange Meetings

Summer 59: With an honor guard of House d'Arq present, Nathan and Wraith depart Malvenor.

Summer 60: Nathan searches the *Scriptuum infernalis* while encamped and finds a passage that describes the *Virgool infernalum*.

Summer 61: Nathan and Wraith arrive at Witches Gallow. The Sergeant of the gate tells them of a strange traveler has come seeking entry to The Dreaming Land at the behest of House d'Arq. They seek out the stranger, the bard using the name Jaquin Zaros, at the Crow's Cage tavern and learn they share common cause with the daemon hunter.

Summer 62: The d'Arq company departs Witches Gallow bound for Harrowdale with the bard as their guide.

Summer 64: The d'Arq company seeks shelter from a violent storm in the Temple of Ferrod in the village of Burkul. They are granted sanctuary by the temple's master, Deacon Wyce, a hill dwarf.

Chapter II: Smoke on the Moors

Summer 64: The goblin chieftain, Muhgrat, comes to Burkul seeking revenge upon Wraith who took the head of his brother, Snahgrat, in the high pass. The goblins flee, lead away

by their shaman, after most of them, including Muhgrat, are slain by the d'Arq company. The Deacon Wyce, the temple guards, and a dozen villagers lay dead.

Summer 66: The d'Arq company departs Burkul and reaches Harrowdale after nightfall.

Summer 67: Nathan requests and is granted an audience with the Earl of Harrowdale, Bidar Lukan, where he shares the fate of Burkul with the wolfish lord. In turn, the Earl speaks of dark troubles, families taken and the walking dead in the ancient graveyard. Nathan vows to put the dead to rest. Calling himself Mandrake Farstrider, the bard bargains for gold.

Chapter III: The Thing in the Crypt

Summer 67: After Wraith is healed by the corrupting touch of Revadak, the Priest of Bael, the d'Arq company forays into the crypt of Harrowdale where they slay a Thing and recover the body the Captain of the guard, Vladri.

Chapter IV: A Road Treacherous

Summer 79: The d'Arq company departs Harrowdale for Bridgeton. That night, while camped along the road in the moors, the company is attacked by gnoll slavers. They take the pack leader, Gryst, alive. Nathan offers the badly wounded tracker his life in exchange for leading the company safely to Bridgeton.

Summer 82: True to his word, Nathan releases Gryst when the company reaches Bridgeton. The bard is approached that night by Shago, a greasy haired, one-eyed, Swamper, as they take dinner at the Black Eel. On the promise of information regarding the Unhallowed, the Swamper leads them down to the wharves of the Underbridge to meet his employer, a Syndarii woman. After whispering dark words to the bard, the trap is sprung and the company is attacked by trolls. The Syndarii and all but one of the trolls are slain, but the bard is badly wounded.

Book III: Ancient Enemies

Prelude

Turning: Valën of Kal'kairn is made an Acolyte of Azuriel in the temple at Aelon during the harvest festival.

Chapter V: A Dark Pact

Autumn 8: The bard's inquires after the Syndarii woman Slyviik draw the attention of the spies of the Baron Stoker von Bram of Nod. After midnight, the Lady Harkness von Bram seeks out the bard and reveals the Deceiver, one of the Unhallowed, is in Nod. The d'Arq company departs Bridgton and races after Harkness to reach Castle von Bram before dawn.

Autumn 9: The d'Arq company is ambushed in the foothills approaching the castle, by Renford, one of Nod's captains, and a pack of thralls turned by the blood plague. Killing the thralls, they reach the castle and come before the Baron who tells them of a rune shard, buried in the tomb of a confessor, Helmar k'ayne, capable of destroying the Deceiver. Later, in

their chambers, the bard and Wraith drink the blood of Harkness healing their wounds.

Chapter VI: The Deceiver

Autumn 11: Lead along a hidden mountain trail by Harkness, the d'Arq company departs Castle von Bram. Harness leaves them before dawn and they strike south to the Thorn Wood.

Autumn 14: The d'Arq company reaches the Hills of Woe and locates the tomb of Helmar k'Ayne. Fighting past dark servants sent by the Deceiver and a powerful ward, they recover the rune shard.

Autumn 16: Near midnight, the Deceiver comes to El'sana in the guise of his lost love Illisera. He resists, but is stricken.

Autumn 17: Returning by way of the hidden mountain trail, the d'Arq company is beset by Staad von Bram and the Deceiver. Refusing to surrender the rune shard, a desperate battle ensues. When Harkness arrives engaging Staad, Nathan stabs the vampire in the back inflicting a grievous wound. He then clammers atop a crop of rock where the bard struggles against the Deceiver. Just as Harkness cuts down her brother, the bard drives the rune shard into the Deceivers chest and they are both dragged screaming into the nether.

Chapter I: Trail of Misery

Autumn 19: Liath the Wanderer arrives is Carrick looking for a place to winter, but finds the people of the village preparing for their exodus from the Earl of Hedgeford's lands. He throws in with them.

Autumn 29: A letter, written earlier in the summer by Brother Calum, arrives at House Kal'kairn. When Lady Galswirth shows Valën the letter it is decided he will travel north to Broggan's Folly to the aid of the Galainites fleeing Carrick.

Autumn 30: Brother Valën, sergeant Urien and four men-at-arms depart Kal'kairn at first light.

Autumn 44: Passing through Neronda, Brother Valën and his men arrive at the drowned ruins of Chalise. He touched by the Lady as he prays and granted a vision.

Autumn 46: Led by the innkeeper, Gareth, and parish deacon, Brother Calum, the people of Carrick leave their homes bound for Broggan's Folly.

Autumn 53: The people of Carrick reach Broggan's Folly camping a few miles out of town. Liath and Brother Calum go to the town in hopes of finding aid sent by the Lady of Valiir. They find a warm heart at the inn and no more.

Autumn 56: Brother Valën and his mean, after a long road, reach Broggan's Folly and make for the inn. There, Liath's melodies draw them together. They quickly decide to make for the camp only to be ambushed by the earl's men who have taken the camp. Most of the earl's men are killed and few driven off. Their leader, Bjark, a Northman, is murdered by Liath in cold revenge. He recovers his father's dirk, stolen from him years ago in Hedgeford.

Autumn 64: Having struck south through the hills towards the Saelva River, the people of Carrick camp near the river. During the night, Svend, one of the men-at-arms, is dragged off by wolves while guarding the livestock. Brother Valën and

Liath drive off the wolves killing two, but it is a distraction. Three of the womenfolk are taken. Valën and Liath are waylaid in the rain by the brigands while in pursuit. One, the leader, escapes, but another is taken alive. In fear, he tells of their dark master and a crypt beneath Kirk Stone Hill that lay across the river.

Chapter II: The Hag of Kirk Stone Hill

Autumn 64: In the dark of night, Brother Valën and Liath cross the Saelva River at a rocky ford. Liath marks a watcher in the forested glen leading to the ruins of Kirk Stone. Valën leads them around the hill north of the glen to the ruin where he finds the lair of a Firbolg in the crumbling remains of what was the village's temple. A secret door at the back of the ruin leads to the crypt below. They cut down half a dozen thugs who guard the stolen womenfolk and rescue them.

Autumn 65: On the way back to the river, in the forested glen, then come across Morlar who, after some discourse, reveals himself as Firbolg. Fighting together, Valën and Liath slay the brute. They reach the Galainite encampment near dawn only to learn that Astrid has been taken. Following her trail, Brother Valën leads them to the haunted hollows where lairs the hag Barabal. Steeling themselves past her wards, they find the hag in the guise of Astrid, but Liath is not fooled and he stabs the crone mercilessly to death.

Chapter III: The Old Ways

Autumn 66: After Svend is laid beneath a cairn, Brother Valën leads the Galainites across the northern ford and then south along the rover towards open country. Meanwhile, Liath creeps back to the ruin of Kirk Stone where he finds Fearghas and two thugs still lurking there. Killing them all, he finds their stash of silver. While the Galainites pitch camp at the edge of the hills, Sergeant Urien reports a great beats of a bear spotted prowling the hilltops across the river. Inspired, Liath weaves a tale for the refugees. As he draws down the tale, he marks a strange shaggy figure among his watchers. This is Skuld son of Hegg, who spins a tale of the dru Saad clan of gypsies and the Unhallowed. He gives Liath and ancinet Scaelarii coin.

Autumn 70: Brother Valën leads the Galainites across the open wilds to the precipice bridge on the east of Chalise where they encounter a strange old woman sitting alone by a fire. She speaks of an evil that has come to the drowned city and a blade that could destroy it. Brother Valën and Liath decide to strike out alone to find the sword and descend the ancient ruined stair to the drowned city. They find the still pool that was once a market and, while Liath watches falling asleep, Brother Valën finds the ancient great sword once borne by Yraen, Count of Eastguard, wresting it from the watery spirit that lurks in the pool. Just as the old woman said, Brother Valën finds confronts the evil, a revenant, in the Plaza of the Sun taking its head. As it falls, the old woman, who is in truth the ghostly Queen of Galaine, appears with all her court giving them her thanks and a magic ring.

Chapter IV: The Slayers Due

Autumn 75: Out of supplies, led by Brother Valën, the Galainites reach Neronda on the eve of the Slayers Due. Met on the road by Constable Dorchin and his men, only Brother Valën and Liath are allowed to enter leaving the refugees to camp outside the town. Liath ensorcells the crowd at the Lonely Lion Inn with haunting melodies while the mysterious Drushara sin Drazar watches. The drow takes the bard to her bed, and when finished with him, shares the truth of the Slayers Due. Liath gathers up Brother Valën and then talks his way past the guard at the town postern gate making off in the dark of night to save a girl to be sacrificed to the dragon, Black Snake. They arrive at the Serpent's Eye interrupting the ritual and find Constable Dorchin in league with the Fangs of Yindrassil. Liath kills two of the fangs while Brother Valën unhorses Dorchin and forces his surrender. As Liath cuts the girl free, Black Snake is upon them, but the wyrmling is driven off by Brother Valën. Now mounted, they make swiftly back for the Galainite camp. At dawn, they enter Neronda to try a get supplies only to be ambushed by the Constable. Blood runs free in the muddy streets and half of the guardsmen are badly wounded before Gloomwing darkens the skies. The constable flees and his men break as Liath is dragged away by Drushara. She leads them through the streets as the dragon rains wrath and ruin upon Neronda. The walls abandoned, Drushara and Brother Valën drop down outside the town, but Liath remains. Unable to rescale the walls, the drow and the acolyte make for the Galainite camp. Meanwhile, Liath makes for the inn, but finds in engulfed in flames. In an outbuilding, he manages to load a number of mules with supplies and then escape through the postern gate.

Autumn 87: Three days before winter and forty-two days since leaving their homes in Carrick, the Galainites arrive at Kal'kairn.

Chapter V: Wintering

Autumn 88: Leaving before dawn, Brother Valën and Liath strike out for the hunting house. Late in the day, they fell a red deer returning to Kal'kairn to feast. Liath performs his masterwork, the Drowning of Chalise for the first time enthralling the guests.

Autumn 89: Liath makes a pact with the Hedger, Korgan, to learn the magic of his trade owing him a debt.

Winter 38: Returning from a hunt, Brother Valën and Liath find the warden, Rolan, with the Lady Galswinth reporting dire news. The men of the northern lumber camp have been butchered. They scout the site, finding evidence of Naruk'kai, but Liath believes something awry.

Chapter VI: The Trouble with Naruk'kai

Winter 39: After a war council at the Griffin, Brother Valën and Liath ride to the watchtower and find that the village boy, Piers, assigned to the watch the day before was captured by a Naruk'kai, but left bound and unharmed. After learning that the Naruk'kai asked about the Innkeeper of Carrick, Brother Valën orders the Galainite refugees moved to the village

square where he prepares their defense. Sister Yseulte rides for the temple to fetch the prioress and lay sisters, but the Naruk'kai strike capturing her and taking the temple. Late that morning, Brother Valën and Liath ride off to the temple when she does not return. They are confronted by the Naruk'kai captain who attempts to broker a trade for the innkeeper, Gareth. Having none of it, Liath lays the captain low with a javelin. Naruk'kai surge from the temple and a bloody fight ensues. The stricken captain bellows for them to halt or his men will murder Yseulte. Brother Valën charges down on the Naruk'kai holding his sister allowing her to win free for a moment as Liath runs a javelin into the captain's throat killing him. With their captain slain, Liath talks down the Naruk'kai and they withdraw.

Chapter VII: Things Cold & Fey

Winter 48: When bear tracks are discovered near the common pasture, Brother Valën and Liath follow them through the snow deep into the Briar.

Winter 49: Near midday, they mark something following them as they draw close to a great tree with a cavernous hole in its trunk that glows with fey light. Confronting the wood troll, Blackthorn, Brother Valën and Liath learn that the old she-bear, One-eye, has been twisted by the fey into a dire thing. They enter the bear's lair in the fey tree and slay in a brutal fight, but Liath is badly clawed by the beast. Pressing on through a tunnel at the back of the beast's lair, they delve deep into the earth below the tree discovering fey caverns and an underground river. They fight past a half dozen troglodytes deeper into the caverns. Worried by fey spirits Liath harvests spirit crystals before they descend to the river and cross to ancient standing stones where the bard finds a blood red stone that glowers with inner light. At last, Brother Valën and Liath find a natural stair that leads to the cold dark of the Briar above.

Chapter VIII: City by the Sea

Winter 50: Breaking camp, Brother Valën and Liath make for Kal'kairn through the Briar arriving at dusk to a grim discovery. Millicent, the girl rescued at Neronda, is found hanging from a tree in the orchard.

Sorrowing: Rendering the Precepts of Faith, Brother Valën is made a Chaplain of Azuriel. After a long and difficult winter, the people of Kal'kairn feast. Lady Galswinth bids Brother Valën to bear letters for Lord Agravaine and the priory to Sulaine. After a heated encounter, the lady also delivers a pair of invitations to Liath.

The Year 1667 after the Sundering

Spring 1: Brother Valën and Liath depart Kal'kairn along the trail to Sulaine.

Spring 3: Seeking shelter from rain, Brother Valën and Liath come upon a half-elven woman, Isilthloki the Moon Snake. The peddler speaks of Gloomwing and the now unguarded Book of Vile Darkness in her lair. Liath trades spirit crystals

for a rune stone and then agrees to steal the Book of Vile Darkness in exchange for a talisman, an exquisite bone necklace set with jet.

Spring 5: Brother Valën and Liath arrive in Sulaine and the chaplain delivers his letter to the prioress at the temple. They then find Kal'kairn's house in the city and deliver the lady's letters to Lord Agravaïne.

Spring 6: Liath, along with Brother Valën, visits the Black Pearl and learns of the Pale Company from Urthrog. The bard then canvasses the city's sword sellers. Late that night he returns making away with a fine blade.

Spring 7: Liath performs before a rapt crowd at the Jade Serpent; his fame spreads. Applause still echoing, the bard is approached by a beauty, Nieve, on behalf of her master. He and Brother Valën accompany her by carriage to her master's home where the former constable, Dorchin, and the wyrm cult seek revenge upon them. In the blood soaked courtyard, only Brother Valën and Liath stand when the butchery is done.

Chapter IX: Pale Company

Spring 7: With no respite, a second wave of the Fangs of Yindrassil attack from the rooftop. Brother Valën and Liath assault the roof and the bloody struggle ends when the last of the assassins lay broken in the courtyard below.

Spring 10: Brother Valën and Liath depart Sulaine bound for White Horse Ford. Late in the day, they are stopped on the road by a lance of outriders from the Pale Company led by a Naruk'kai, Mahlodak. The goblin wolf riders they are hunting, however, wait in ambush and attack. The fierce skirmish leaves three of the outriders dead, but the goblins are broken and driven off. Brother Valën batters the goblin chieftain who escapes with the rest.

Chapter X: Through the Hart

Spring 11: While taking breakfast at Bagger's Charge in White Horse Ford, Brother Valën and Liath are approached by Strangeward of the Pale Company who attempts to recruit them in the company's ranks.

Spring 12: Brother Valën and Liath depart crossing the ford to follow the river east to the Dawn Peaks.

Spring 14: Brother Valën marks the track of a lone wolf rider and that night they are haunted by the howling of the wolf pack that now dogs their trail.

Spring 17: In the early hours after midnight, during Liath's watch, the goblin wolf riders attack. Only one rider survives fleeing into the dark with what remains of the pack. That night, as Brother Valën watches, Skuld son of Hegg comes to their camp bearing the bloodied pelts of the wolf pack.

Spring 18: With their supplies waning, Brother Valën fells a boar in the hunt and they camp to smoke its meat.

Spring 19: Near sunset, Brother Valën and Liath come upon Murk Town beset by orcs bearing axe and fire. Charging down the wharfs over the mire, they cut down half a dozen of the brutal raiders and then dismount to ascend the

ramshackle ramp up the great tree where they rescue a Shike girl killing three more.

Book IV: The Edge of Darkness

Chapter I: Dragon's Desolation

Spring 19: Liath's song of valor is laid low by a wolf shaman's howl rallying the orcs in the moment, but Brother Valën and Liath hack down the shaman and the orcs are routed. That night, taking rum and swamp weed with Murk Town's headman, a swamper named Shoals, they learn that Ninefingers, the Shike, knows of the secret way through the dragon's desolation.

Spring 20: Brother Valën and Liath, following Ninefinger's lead, track along the Murkwind to the root of the Dawn Peaks. That night, dire spiders attack their camp and the Shike is badly wounded and stricken with poison before they are driven off. Only the Lady's touch at Brother Valën's hand allows the girl to continue.

Spring 21: Brother Valën and Liath toil into the mountains thwarting the dragon's will and make camp near a black Scaelarii ruin said to be infested by goblins.

Spring 22: Leaving Ninefingers with the horses, Brother Valën and Liath make for the ruined fortress across an ancient bridge coming under fire by wicked goblin archers hiding on the walls. They reach the ruin and Liath calls up a haze and murk from the bridge's chasm allowing them to surge past the goblins and reach the entry to the keep's dungeon.

Chapter II: Dragon's Lair

Spring 22: Brother Valën and Liath delve deep into the caverns beneath the fortress that have been twisted by Gloomwing's will. While Liath harvests a clutch of spirit crystals in a cave rife with fey spirits, Brother Valën finds a rune-marked leather bracer traced with Moon Silver. He gives it to Liath after the bard drives off the spirits. They slay a pair of worgs that set upon them and then find their way to the lair of a rock troll. The massive brute is laid low by a sling bullet through the eye. Drawn by its call, Liath summons a Moon Silver spear bound to the bracer. Finding their way to the fetid pool deep in the lair, Brother Valën and Liath find Black Snake. The wyrmling tells them that the Book of Vile Darkness is gone stolen away by a she-elf and then attacks. Brother Valën takes the dragon's head. Ascending to an ancient temple overlooking the fetid pool they find the dragons horde. While Liath gathers as much coin as he can carry, Brother Valën discovers the ancient remains of Sergeant Hycon; a stalwart of Count Yraen's warband. Close at the sergeants hand is the blade Shadow's Kiss. Laden with spoils they find their way free to the mountainside and Liath calls up the murk to allow them to pass the chasm bridge reaching Ninefinger's at their camp.

Chapter III: Dragon's Wrath

Spring 22: Brother Valën and Liath divide the loot from the dragon's lair at their camp. Just as they finish, Gnashmar's goblins, made wary by the risen murk, find their camp and attack. With their chief unseated by the silver spear of Liath

and near half their number butchered by Brother Valën, the goblins flee back towards the bridge, but there are caught and only a few escape. Brother Valën, Liath and Ninefingers descend with all speed through the dark of night.

Spring 23: After midnight, Brother Valën spots Gloomwing circling high above the heavy canopy of the mired forest. Under his guidance, with Liath's tune on the wind, they escape the foothills. Far distant, Liath hears the Gloomwing's doom descend upon Murk Town, but he carries on with his tune masking the calamity as the band strikes north.

Spring 24: Late during Liath's watch, Skuld son of Hegg comes again to their camp. He recounts finding the foul trail of the nether thing he has long hunted losing the trail where the mountains become thick with orcs. Liath convinces Skuld to guide them north to Ameraine.

Spring 27: Led by Skuld, the band comes upon a grisly discovery as they approach Ameraine. Two horses festooned by orcish arrows and an Acolyte of Azuriel nailed to a cork oak. Brother Valën leads them after the orcs who they run down after a few hours. Killing half of the warband, they rescue Sister Ishilde who was sent from Ameraine, now besieged by the Blackmoon clan, to Bastion with a plea for help. She mandates Brother Valën to see her to Bastion, but he and the rest of their band refuse and abandon her to her fate.

Chapter IV: On to Trade Town

Spring 27: Swayed by the weight of her circumstance, Brother Valën, Liath and a disgruntled Ninefingers pursue Sister Ishilde intent on seeing her to Bastion. Have led the band to Ameraine as promised, Skuld leaves them to resume his hunt.

Spring 30: Now in the far south of the Dunn Hills, a griffin attacks the horses while encamped at night. The strange and majestic beast is slain.

Spring 36: Having passed the western gatehouse of Bastion three days earlier, Brother Valën leads the band into Trade Town. They immediately make for the Temple of Azuriel where they make their report to the Prioress Sevryn and Preceptor, Sir Kaitur. The preceptor leads Brother Valën and Liath immediately to an audience with the Lord of the Protectorate, Ansgar. Despite the objections of his weasel-tongued advisor, Chancellor Nyrsis, the Lord Protector orders the Protectorate mustered to march in three days.

Spring 37: Liath the Wanderer performs the Battle of Murk Town at The Glim before a rapt and wealthy crowd.

Chapter V: Clutch of Wyrms

Spring 38: Dispatched by the preceptor, Brother Valën seeks out Erlinger the cooper whose daughter disappeared in the night. Edda is one of near a dozen of Trade Town's daughters that have vanished in the last fortnight. In the bedchamber of the cooper's home, Brother Valën finds a torn rag beneath the missing girl's bed; it has a strange pungent odor. After retuning briefly to the preceptor, he makes for the apothecary where he learns that the rag is soaked in a tincture of vandal

root. Fearing his complicity revealed, the apothecary tries to knife the chaplain in the back. This goes poorly and after Brother Valën breaks his arm, the apothecary reveals he has been providing the tincture to the Cult of Yindrassil along with the location of their lair. Brother Valën returns to The Glim to share his findings with Liath. In short order, they strike out for the warehouse where the serpents nest. Searching the small warehouse, Liath finds a secret door leading to a dark earthen tunnel. The sconce that unlocks the door triggers a trap that nearly pinions the Wanderer. He narrowly avoids another trap halfway down the tunnel. Below, the tunnel leads to an ancient torture chamber that lies deep in the dungeons of the ruined fortress above. There they find Trade Town's daughters hung by iron chains from the rafters, pale and bloodless. They are ambushed by a dozen cultist whom they murder including their leader, the merchant Sylvain. Paying no heed to the gruesome infernal sigils writ in blood, Liath tries to pull open an ancient iron bound door on the far side of the chamber. His arm is badly burned by hellfire. After mending Liath with the Lady's light, Brother Valën uses her will to banish the foul magic's protecting the door. In an ancient ritual chamber, they find an infernal sacrificial bowl filled with blood and there on a lectern, warded by an infernal circle scribed on the floor, the *Book of Vile Darkness*. As Brother Valën disrupts the warding, Drushara sin Drazar comes upon them to protect her prize. Liath puts the book to the torch, but it does not burn as the chaplain holds off the dark elf. Using his fated blade, the Wanderer carves the dire tome to ruin and then joins the fray. They are near overmatched by the blackguard's skill, but then Liath plunges his blade into her neck and she falls. In a pool of spreading blood, he kneels to kiss her dead lips. Gathering the tattered remnant of the book, they ascend through the ancient tunnels to the fortress above where Liath's song carries away the flesh-wrought pages scattered in the wind from the ramparts. That night, in honor of their lost daughters and the coming march to war, the best of Trade Town feast in the Hall of the Protectorate. Liath the Wanderer performs the Dragon Slayer ensorcelling the revelers with the tale of the chaplain's deed. So moved by his words is the Lord Protector, he gives over command of the army bound for Ameraine to Brother Valën.

Chapter VI: Mustering of Armies

Spring 39: At dawn, Brother Valën is knighted as Preceptor of Azuriel. The newly made Sir Valën rides out of Trade Town with a small column of riders bound for the west gate of Bastion where the Protectorate musters.

Spring 42: Sir Valën and the riders join the Protectorate army where it is encamped outside the west gate.

Spring 43: The Protectorate army marches south into the Dunn Hills bound for the precipice bridge outside the drowned city.

Spring 54: Near dusk, the Protectorate army arrives at the precipice bridge where the army of Vargaine awaits them under Duke Jalbjorn.

Spring 60: The combined forces of the Protectorate and Vargaine reach the environs of Ameraine only to find that the black shaman's orcish army has taken and now occupies the city. Sister Ishilde reveals the details of the secret passage from the fortress high in the city to the mortuary of Bael in its lowest reaches through which she escaped the siege. Sir Valën leads the riders of Azuriel and Karrok in an attempt to reach the passage through the lower city leaving orders for the army to attack the gate during the night. Liath the Wanderer scouts ahead leading a half a dozen of Karrok's warriors and clears the already broken gate of orcish sentries raising no alarm. Liath warriors push into the lower city and find a score of orcs scattered through the building surrounding a small square where they watch from windows and rooftops. Scouting alone Liath murders a pair of the watchers and returns to the riders who have reached the lower city. The orcs discover the horsemen and attack, but are slain and the lower city is secured.

Chapter VII: Witherhand

Spring 60: In the dark of night, Sir Valën leads the warband into the Mortuary of Bael in the lower city where they find their way to the secret passage in the burial chambers below. They emerge into an ancestral crypt in the bowels of the fortress high in the upper city. A score of orcs, led by one of Witherhand's shaman, waits in ambush. Under a hail of black-feathered arrows, Morkar, Karrok's Warmaster, is crippled by an orcish arrow. Sir Valën stands against the withering barrage of arrows and heals him with the Lady's Light. With a cast of the Moon Silver Spear, Liath pins the shaman to the wall. When the orcs are overcome, half a dozen of the warband lay dead. Sir Valën leads them upward into the fortress where they find most of the orcs gone; drawn to the defense of the walls by the Protectorate's assault. They reach the highest turret of the fortress where Sog Witherhand watches the assault unfold far below. The wanderer leaps up from the stairwell and badly wounds Sog with another cast of the spear before he is hacked down and nearly killed by one of the shaman's bodyguard. Sir Valën cuts his way through the orcs to reach Witherhand and take his head. The orcs fight to that last and over half the warband lay dead amongst their foes before it is done.