
Dragonflight

DRAGONFLIGHT

by Richard Karsmakers

dedicated to Miranda she kept me 'alive and kicking'

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CHAPTER ONE

DAWN AT PEGANA

Bladus looked in the mirror with awe at his own physique. Every morning again he would do this, and each time he would be genuinely stunned by what he saw: The rather square appearance of an obviously very powerful, tall man with long blond hair and shiny blue eyes.

He bulged the muscles of his upper arm and sighed deeply. The images of his worst nightmares once again turned out not to have become a horrid truth; his mighty biceps were still there for everybody - and himself - to be admired.

Bladus Hafsted-son was born in Port Pylon, on the Southeast peninsula of Ontaflareth on the Southern Sea. He hadn't lived there long, for his parents had been killed by pirates when he was in his early childhood. After that, he was raised by a tutor at Pegana University by the name of Dambrano - a wise dwarf that had already been of significant age when he took upon himself that task.

He opened the window and took a deep breath of morning air, which seemed to fill his very lungs with a power common yet unique. The sun could be seen about to rise behind some of the other University buildings, and dark threads of clouds were scattered by the fresh morning breeze as if haunted by armies, to be replaced by a clear blue sky with hints of purple and red blazes as if armies seemed to besiege the tops of the roofs.

Down on the yard, he could see a bent figure standing, cläd in an ochre robe. With a flinch he suddenly remembered.

'Be in the yard at dawn,' Dambrano had said the evening before, 'don't be late for it is an important thing that I wish to tell you.'

Damnation.

He hurried to wash himself and put on some garments, after which he dashed down the stairs to meet the old dwarf.

Leckie nee thuneb ey. 'Leckie nee thuneb ey?'

Rinakles Savorlin-son shook awoke as he read this line and wondered how it could be that it was the first thing he saw that day.

He found that he was lying on an old book written in one of the older Elvish tongues he was being taught - obviously he had dropped to sleep on it last night. Probably, this was also the reason why his lower jaw ached.

Ever since his childhood, of which he only really remembered the part after he was taken in by Dambrano when his parents had died in a terrible rage of Bubonic plague that had ravished his hometown Port Pylon, he had been troubled by spontaneous gusts of sleep washing over him - something his fellow students referred to as 'nap attacks' in jest. His life seemed like a constant dream to others, really, since he could most of the time be found wandering around Pegana University in deep thought of magic and poetry rather than something else.

Rinakles was a somewhat slender man, with large eyes that seemed to be constantly radiating with inspired joy of life. In spite of his young age, his hair was already veering towards being grey.

As he sat erect fumbling his goatee, he was immediately absorbed by the sun that was now throwing its first rays of feeble morning light over the rooftops of some of the other University buildings.

Ah...how simple yet beautiful each sunrise appeared to him. This morning in particular, the clouds had their own little ways of seeming to ornament the sun, seeming to encrown it in a tender embrace with tatters of purple, pink and red in all kinds of different shades.

The sight gladdened Rinakles' heart and made him feel he could handle anything fate would throw at him that day. There was magic in the air, and there had always been something about magic that he had loved - in a way even far superior to the sheer joy of beholding a beautiful dawn like this morning's.

Dawn?

'Be in the yard at dawn,' his old tutor had said the evening before, 'don't be late for it is an important thing I wish to tell you.'

Oops. This beautiful dawn had its first touch of failure already.

He quickly went to wash himself and put on a robe, after which he quickly retrieved his magic wand and dashed down the stairs to the yard where the dwarfish tutor would probably be impatiently waiting.

'Woe thee, blasted ghoul! Get thyself away from me or I'll cleave thy rancid skull with my bare hands!'

This quite crude statement echoed through the rather bare quarters of Dobranur Gymli-son, who lay on his cot and seemed to be battling with a rugged piece of animal skin which he normally only used to cover himself with.

When it dropped to the ground next to some of the typical stone furniture present in the room, he opened his eyes and sat up. Immediately, he went to lie down again as though he was struck by an attack of vertigo, shaking his head as if to ward off invisible punches.

As he gained full consciousness that seemed to be flowing into him like a good pint of beer flushing down his gullet, a deep sigh passed his lips when he recognized familiar surroundings - his own room at Pegana University.

Dobranur was a sturdy dwarf with a rugged beard that made him look ancient in spite of his age - he was only just adult. He was about two thirds the size of a regular man, but had a stature almost just as broad, and he was no doubt very strong. His eyes always seemed strangely dim - only when someone spoke of his kin or things sprouting forth from the earth, would his eyes assume a keen sparkle that seemed to arise from somewhere deep within him.

Dobranur, born in a small settlement near Brindil-Bun, had been brought to the care of his distant uncle, a tutor at Pegana University by the name of Dambrano, when his parents decided they wanted to live in seclusion somewhere near Luthag and wanted their little son to be brought up decently. His parents were never heard of again, and were feared to have been slaughtered in one of the many raids scavenging that part of Ontaflareth in recent decades.

He closed his eyes again to the sound of swords and shields clattering outside his window as the first fighting lessons in the University yard had obviously started. These always started just after dawn, and...

By Galganoz the Evil One! May the Stone Wrath forever turn Gold into Granite! May Dragonfire forever burn all dwarves' beards!

'Be in the yard at dawn,' his distant uncle annex tutor had said the evening before, 'don't be late for it is an important thing I wish to tell you.' It was already well beyond dawn, as the sun was already gaining power and turning to a bright yellow in the unadorned light blue sky.

He jumped out of bed, quickly washed himself, put on his leather fighting gear and dashed down the stairs.

Andariel woke to the sound of thunder that seemed to penetrate her dreams that were mainly concerned with wielding woodlore and lavishing herself to grotesque Elvish feasts. When she opened her eyes she beheld the ceiling and regretted ever having woken up from her apparent divine slumbering. The thunder turned out to have been heavy footsteps in the hall outside her room, that now faded away on the stairs. In her dreams, she had almost felt the taste of berries on her tongue, had almost learned how to heal wood which she so greatly desired to be taught.

Andariel was a beautiful elven maiden on all accounts: She was pleasurably built and had long blond hair that covered part of her shoulders as though they were covered by silk with a golden glimmer. Her smile had the power to change even the worst of moods, and the permanent light kindling in her small eyes made her appear to be the incarnation of joy and happiness.

Her thoughts would often linger back to the time she used to spend roaming Gandomil Forest with her father, Traveliel. He had been killed by a wild boar when she was but six, after which her dying mother had decided to put her in the care of a famous old tutor called Dambrano, she still seemed to recall nearly every day before that sad event. Oh, how she had loved the woods - and still did! She hadn't had much time to go there recently, mainly because of her study occupation at Pegana University. How she would love to once again see the sun rise to a beautiful dawn above the great trees of Gandomil...

Sunrise?

Dawn?!

She cursed to herself as she looked outside to see the sun standing freely above the other University buildings, shining bright and yellow, with the birds already settling down their songs of early morning.

May healing of trees never become revealed to the elvish race again! May the taste of berries never again soothe an elves' tongue!

'Be in the yard at dawn,' the old dwarf tutor had reminded her the evening before, 'don't be late for it is an important thing I wish to tell you.' She hurried to wash herself and comb her long hair, after which she slipped into some comfortable clothes and ran out of her room to join Dambrano and the others who would probably be waiting eagerly in the yard.

CHAPTER TWO

PURPOSE

The gentle face of Dambrano, strengthened with innumerable impeccable lines of sheer age, showed no sign of irritation or impatience whatsoever as Andariel joined the others in the warmth of the morning sun and excused herself for being late. When she glanced at the others, she sensed with some relief that she hadn't been the only one who had overslept.

A dim flicker of anxiety could be seen in the old dwarf's eyes as he spoke. His manners momentarily seemed to indicate he had trouble suppressing an urge to reproach the elf, but he managed and greeted her in his usual fashion.

'Hail, Andariel daughter of Galadrol Traveliel-mate, and be welcome to this meeting. Please sit down and make yourself comfortable.'

Andariel nodded, and with a slight blush sat down on the soft grass that was still slightly wet with the morning's dew. Once she had settled, Dambrano shifted and, with a more stern look in his eyes, addressed the others as well.

'It is not for naught that I have called you all together here, for the time has come upon me to tell you of something for which I have been preparing you for ever since you were put under my care and started to study here at Pegana University.'

He halted momentarily, gauging the effect of what he had said.

Bladus, the tall warrior, seemed to sense battle already and had familiar sparkles in his eyes. If he would have had one, he would have gently caressed his sword's sheath.

Rinakles seemed once again to be in deep thought, but it could be seen by the focus of his eyes that he wasn't thinking of magic or poetry now. He was trying to foresee what Dambrano would tell - or at least try to estimate to what extent it would affect him and his friends.

Dobranur was habitually toying with his beard as he listened tentatively to what his distant uncle annex tutor had to say, exchanging looks with Bladus as he in turn comfortably stroked

his own hard knuckles.

The look in the eyes of Andariel seemed inconsistent - there was still a trace of feeling comfortable for being so well received after being too late, whereas there was clear anxiety to be seen as well, as she glanced at Dobranur and Bladus who were both gently stroking their knuckles. She had always hated violence and something deep in her led her to believe that there would be plenty of it before this thing Dambrano was going to talk about would be over. She'd rather devote herself to woodlore and conquer worlds and enemies using only this particular elvish kind of magic.

The old dwarf proceeded.

'You know that I have always regarded you as my children since you all lost your parents, and that I have sought to teach you everything within my knowledge - even things that are not officially taught any more since the parting of White and Black Magic. I have taught each of you aiming at your individual strengths, and the time is nigh to bring in to practise all knowledge you have gained. You are adult now, and the time has come upon you on which your study will be finished and you will be ready to travel the far lands you have up to now only read about in books - so that you can satisfy your hunger of longing to see the world with your own eyes.'

A smile seemed to dawn upon the tutor's face, and shaped the flesh of his lips into a somewhat uncomfortable wrinkle. It disappeared a mere instant later, as though he suddenly remembered old grief or joys lost.

'You know me and my long speeches,' he continued with a slight hint of sadness in his voice, 'but I want you to hearken the tale I wish to tell you - which is the purpose I brought you all together. You already know much of what I will tell you now, only now I wish to reveal some of the connections between many of those tales you might, or, indeed, might not have heard before.'

Dambrano closed his eyes, and it seemed as if he closed them never to open again; the deepest of sighs came forth from his being as if it were his last one. Rapid eye movements behind his eyelids seemed to indicate the forming of pictures in his mind that sent shivers down his spine.

After he had been sitting like that for several moments, he suddenly opened his eyes as if startled at a sight too abhorrent to behold - something the others could now only guess at.

The old dwarf breathed deeply and began his tale.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MURDER OF GUAMS

Many, many years ago, when it was still early and young, and men, elves and dwarves were still primitive and unlearned, the land was inhabited by dragons. They were similar to lizards, only usually much bigger. They were usually red to orange in colour, they had enormous claws and long tails, and were highly intelligent although they did not find it necessary to use their mind to create shapes or devices of any kind. They also had the remarkable ability to spout hot breath which could, according to old stories, set trees aflame. But the most remarkable fact of knowledge about these animals was that they could lift themselves up in the sky like birds, and fly great distances - for which purpose they had enormous wings set on their backs.'

The eyes of the two men, the elven maiden and the young dwarf looked at him with disbelief. Surely, roaming the skies was a privilege set aside only for the birds? It was hard to imagine an enormous lizard flying through the sky, and they shuddered at the thought of actually meeting one of these mystic creatures.

The old tutor's eyes kept looking serious so their doubt was set aside, and went on: 'Not much more can be read about these animals, not even in the very oldest scriptures that can be found deep down in the dungeons of this University - and therefore I am afraid that I can't tell you everything there is to be known.'

Dambrano assumed a look of regret, as if a deep feeling of blundering incompetence had manifested itself in him. His pupils sensed that he found it a sign of impotence not to know everything he sought to tell about something as important as the dragons of the land - he who knew virtually everything about anything.

'But I can tell you this,' the wise old dwarf resumed, 'the dragons already roamed the vastness of the early land way before any of our kindred did. There were hundreds of them - maybe even thousands. It is said that this earth was actually created for them in the days of old, though this can of course only be believed rather than known for sure. One thing is certain: The dragons weren't evil beasts like many people nowadays would like to believe.

These remarkable animals were ruled by Guams, a formidable dragon both in mind and matter, who knew lore and magic that we can only be left to guess at. His most powerful spells were rumoured to be able to prevent earthquakes, plagues... it was even said he knew how to silence volcanos. He was very old - at least five thousand years when he became ruler over the land - and each year of his life represented at least a hundred spells he knew.

Guams was surely the wisest of dragons, highly regarded for his wisdom and generosity, and all of the kingdom - dragons as well as other animals - came to consult him when problems would arise, visiting him at his royal residence: The Dragon's Vale on the isle of Walronia. He would guide them to find their own solutions, teach them a variety of spells, and teach them how to beget potent potions to cure sickness and ward off evil forces. Thus, much of his knowledge was shared and brought prosperity to the land.

The Dragon's Vale was a place of unfathomable beauty. In spite of (or maybe because of) the general crude appearance of these great creatures, their love for wood, stone, the skies and the other animals was not surpassed even by the love the land gave back to them. In spring, the Dragon's Vale was clad with fresh light and dark green trees with an abundance of species, and the ground was dressed in millions of flowers in thousands of colours, sweetly scenting heather, dense undergrowth carrying tasteful berries that often held healing power, and vegetable- like crops that the dragons fed upon. For, yes, the dragons were vegetarians - at least they all used to be in the days of old I'm talking about now, after having been predators in days even before those.

In summer, the Vale would be populated by many young animals; newborn deer would jump to and fro over the fresh untrodden meadows next to young wolves, lynxes and foxes that did not desire to hunt or slaughter. There was perfect peace. Then autumn would arrive by turning the leaves into a multitude of shades of brown, red, and yellow, and all these animals would leave to seek mates and build their own homes in other valleys, trees or holes outside the Vale. The trees would be transformed into proud carcasses like skeletons of ancient knights ready for reincarnation, with buds ready to pop open the year after, and the flowers would peacefully wither amidst the thick carpet of leaves and old boughs that would drop off the many ancient trees.

Not much of the old beauty of the Dragon's Vale was preserved into our age, due to reasons I will explain later in my tale, but I am sure the mere beholding of the place would have been enough to make us all forget the most enchanting forests, heathers and meadows now still present in the land. One of the ancient trees is still standing in the centre of the Vale like a disembodied spirit in a clear blue sky - proudly holding up its crest like a proud king dying in battle would keep up his crown: An oak that men would later name Don-I-wertas, which means "Many Millenium Tree". It is half white and evergreen; the other half black and barren.'

Andariel was moved to tears at hearing this part of the tale. It was inconceivable to her that such beauty was allowed to disappear, that the dragons with their enormous power had not been able to preserve it; that there was now only One Tree left, half evil, half good. Her very heart seemed to ache as she realised how wrong this was, and as she clasped her heart, she seemed to feel the agony throbbing through Don-I-wertas' ancient wood.

Rinakles held an arm around the shoulders of the elven maiden that were visibly shaking with repressed grief. Why was Dambrano telling this? Couldn't he see his tale hurt them all?

Andariel tolerated Rinakles kind gesture for a couple of moments, then shrugged the arm off her shoulders, straightened her back and swallowed her tears.

The old dwarf seemed to swallow something as well - as if her grief touched him personally. Trembling, he closed his eyes, only to open them a couple of seconds later as he continued the story.

'The dragons didn't remain in the land in such abundance as they used to have - for there was evil afoot in the land, and even Guams wasn't aware of it - until it was too late.

The evil was embodied in the form of a young dragoness by the name of Shetryp. For the first centuries of her life she had been lurking for a chance to gain more power, to learn more lore, and to wield magic in a way that would benefit herself rather than the land as a whole. She had a birthmark on her belly shaped like a heptagram - the sign of the Evil One - and was therefore thought to be Garganoz reincarnated.

Dobranur startled at the mentioning of the name. His parents were said to have been butchered in one of the raids scavenging the regions to the south of Luthag - where rogues worshipping the Evil One mainly roamed. He ground his teeth and listened further - with even more attention. His parents' remains were never found so he still kept on hoping. Though he feared that his hope was in vain.

'In terms of dragon beauty, Shetryp was indeed beautiful. She used this quality efficiently to work her way up the ladder of esteem and power. And eventually she came down upon Guams in his lair near Dragon's Vale.

The old dragon's judgement was immediately clouded with pink mists as he lost his heart to this fatally beautiful she-dragon. Soon, he taught her every single spell he could remember, and she grew to be almost as powerful as Guams himself.

Though the wise old dragon didn't perceive such, the Dragon's Vale slowly started to decay. Each year, different trees would grow in smaller quantities. Each year, some young deer would now and again be caught and eaten by a young fox, wolf or lynx. Less flowers grew. Only one tree remained solid and healthy, though its bark would grow old many times quicker: Don-I-wertas. The tree saw the things going on around him and mourned deeply but silently. But

since he was the king of the forest he had to radiate pride instead of constant mourn - half of him died off mourning, and the other half grew lighter - to that the bark there became almost white.

It was at that time that Shetryp stole away the heart of a young and powerful dragon by the name of Drocir - who the dragoness usually called Olastag, which was said to mean 'Emperor' in one of the ancient dragonian tongues. She fed and indoctrinated him with evil ideas and foul thoughts - filled with murder, despair and hate.

She persuaded him to kill Guams, promising that he could have her once the old dragon was out of the way.'

'It was a dark, moonless night that Drocir choose to murder Guams, the wise old ruler of the land. He sneaked up to the lair near the Vale with his evil intent - his breath hot and ready to set alight the single wisest creature in the land.

Shetryp had assured him that Guams would be fast asleep at moonrise, for the old dragon preferred to put his mind to rest in time to get up early each morning and start with his good work.

About half an hour after the moon had lifted itself above the Vale and shed its pale light over Guams' lair, Drocir's vile shape could be seen, crouching against the rocks and disappearing inside.

There were some muffled sounds and a scream of death that seemed to shake the very earth, to affect every leaf on the trees and bushes, every blade of grass, every berry carried by the undergrowth.

There was a smell of burning flesh.

Then there was nothing but silence after the echoes faded away into the sultry darkness of the night like an unconscious creature being absorbed by treacherous quicksand.

The same vile shape left the den, leaving a trail of blood behind him.

One of the biggest and oldest black branches broke off the bent shape of Don-I-werdas and fell to the ground, shattering into smithereens.'

CHAPTER FOUR

OLASTAG'S DEMISE

Bladus ground his teeth now as well, angry at the brutal deed that was comitted in a time long before his. If only he could have been there...

Dambrano recognized the feelings in the warrior. He knew that he would surely have had the same feelings were it not that he was far too old and too wise for such emotions primarily built on feelings of revenge and hate. When he had Bladus' age, he was far too innocent and knew nothing about the matters he was talking about now.

'The death of the wise old dragon caused a war among the dragons. Shetryp set up various dragon families against the others, accusing each of murdering 'her beloved Guams'. It was not until some dragons discovered that the she-dragon had indeed been the brain behind it all and that Drocir had been the assassin that they stopped slaughtering each other. But, by then, the worst had already been done: Of the many hundreds, maybe thousands of dragons, barely a hundred or so remained. The others had been foolishly slain in savage bloodsheds.

The survivors had to destroy she who was responsible for the mischief brought upon them: Shetryp. They had to find a way to get rid of their feelings of guilt for slaying their kindred. But she was powerful, for Guams had taught her virtually all the spells he had known, and she mastered wielding magic for her own sole benefit quite excellently. Apart from that, Drocir - now mostly named by his psuedonym, Olastag - was a formidable warrior who could beat any other dragon, if one of those would appear.

Earthquakes caused by Shetryp's Evil might ravaged the land, and pestilence killed even more of the ancient dragons. Large parts of the land were laid waste, and Dragon's Vale became a barren plain where nothing survived - no animals, no vegetation. Only Don-I-werdas stood with indefatigable pride, poised upon a little hill that was rotting at his very feet.

Yet he remained. Unfatigued.'

The elven maiden felt some pride slip back into her love for wood and trees. At least one proud oak knew how to defy this evil, knew how to fight the wrong cast upon it and its surroundings

- though she still felt indescribably sad for all the animals and plants that hadn't been able to survive.

Shetryp and her servant Olastag, for I would prefer calling him her servant, flew to the main continent of Ontaflareth. They lived there for a few decades, warding off attacks from dragons as well as other animals that loathed them for what they had done to Guarns - he who had once been responsible for so much joy and prosperity in the land.

But the dragoness' power weakened. She forgot spells; forgot how to wield her magic like she wanted to. She was immensely intelligent but far inferior to that of the great old dragon. Soon, Olastag ruled the land for her - she grew to hate herself and he learned to extract many of the spells she still remembered deep down in her brain that was now decaying of Evil.

Olastag was even worse a ruler than the she-dragon, the now quickly dementing Reincarnation of the Evil One. He started feeding on animals rather than vegetables and soon became a carnivore - thus laying down the basis for the savage feeding habits everybody now thinks the dragons had. Savage death squads of wolves headed by smaller dragons loyal to his cause acquired a steady supply of living prey for him, that was then brutally chased and devoured in his personal dungeons. He used the skeletal remains of this food to build a castle in the middle of what was then named Glandifil forest - now the Evil Desert, to the west of what we name Gandomil forest. The castle was grotesque and ugly, smelled terribly and was radiated gruesomely with purest forms of evil. The forest that was there in that age disappeared completely, for nothing that lived could survive within a wide radius from this unwontedly black place where evil lurked and where many innocent animals gave their lives, thus also allowing the dragons to expand the castle and the radius of its instant corruption of the land. The sky was constantly black with the threatening smoke caused by the blazing fires that consumed the inedible parts of captured prey. When it would rain, even the trees in Gandomil and the smaller forests on the continent would visibly suffer and scarsely heal. For days after, animals eating anything from these trees would become severely ill and most of the time they would die horrible deaths of suffering and pain.'

Andariel had trouble resisting her tears when she heard even more of this horrible tale, yet shook off Rinakles' arm as he tried to comfort her once more. Bladus and Dobranur looked fearsome with fires of hatred and anger seeming on the verge of bursting widely ablaze inside them. The latter sat still fumbling with his beard - now almost violently.

'One evening, as the sun was shining bleakly while the year faded away into a chilly autumn, one of the remaining dragons living on the isle of Walronia wandered through the Vale that seemed to be performing desperate attempts at becoming fertile and beautiful again,' Dambrano proceeded, ' and his eyes beheld some small flowers and some scant little trees. But he also saw something else.

Something that set his heart pounding with gay expectancy.

Don-I-werdas' black half had small buds on it, coloured freshly green.

The white of the other side was fading slowly to a more natural brown, and as the dragon kept watching the tree developed into what seemed preternatural blossoming.

Both sides.

The dragon flew back to his kin, and reported on what he had seen. Later that evening, as the sun was setting in deep purple and red layers of clouds under a perpetually darkening sky, they lit a large bonfire near the Many Millenium Tree, for its blossoming could only mean one thing: Galganoz the Evil One had retreated or may even have passed away - Evil Shetryp and her foul servant Olastag were dead.

Only several days later did the dragons hear the news from the continent: Both evil leaders had indeed died. They had died of greed - the castle that Olastag wanted to make bigger and bigger had eventually collapsed on them. He was killed by the skeletons of the many thousands of innocent victims he had butchered and wastefully squandered.

Animals filled with revenge and hatred had slain their evil death squads - the fiery black wolves as well as the smaller dragons.

Evil was no longer afoot in the land, and although Glandifil forest would never return into what now still is the Evil Desert, the sky would be clear again - blue on sunny days and a regular dreary grey on the few days of rain. No longer need the animals fear the corrosive rain; no longer would plants be contaminated and bear poisonous fruit that would kill animals heedless of anything.

The bonfire burnt deep into the night, and the dragons gathered around Don-I-werdas fell into deep dreamless sleeps - no longer haunted by fear of corruption and death by the hand of Galganoz' evil servants.

This was what started off the second era of time. Though the dragons themselves remained barren afterwards, not being able to bring forth any posterity, they grew to be very old and very wise indeed.

Beauty returned to the land - albeit not as plentiful as in the first era.'

CHAPTER FIVE

OF DRAGONS AND KINFOLK

Soon, the Dragon's Vale was ablaze with flowers and trees - which seemed like the reincarnation of Guams' spirit as the seasons had already taken the land into early autumn. It was as if nature refused to be dreary and die in this time of rejoice. It was the first time ever in the known history of the land that both autumn and winter would be defied by an almost unnaturally long summer that would last until spring the year after.

It was only when spring began that the few remaining dragons in the land regained their true senses and lived their lives like they used to - at a time that even then seemed long ago, before the cruel murder of Guams their beloved leader took place.'

Dambrano sighed deeply in relief that this bad part of his tale was over. But the listeners didn't miss something in his sigh that foretold that the bad parts weren't over yet. There would doubtless be more to follow.

'For many thousands of years, the dragons lived happily. Though their numbers were few and they remained barren, their magic flourished to heights never before imagined even by Guams. Their power increased with their age, and even as all spells imaginable were known to them, still many more were learned as time grew older.

The dragons mainly populated Walronia, and were seldom to be found elsewhere in the land - only when they were travelling or doing research would one be able to see some of them roaming the skies in groups of two or three.

King Dori now ruled - and he did so wisely. He, too, was loved by his kin and ruled the land in a fashion that gave birth to prosperity and joy. Yet even he was unable to find the spell that the dragons most desperately wanted: The spell to vanquish the barrenness and replace it with fertility. Seeking this spell was probably the only reason why the dragons still roamed off Walronia and sought to visit parts of the land where they nor their ancestors had ever set foot before.'

'It was thus that they discovered our kin: Primitive tribes of elves, men, and dwarves.

The first contacts, of course, were filled with fear. It is easy to imagine one of our far ancestors not to be all too trustworthy towards such enormous animals like the dragons - especially since they were able to roam the skies with their ferocious wings, and knew spells that stunned them.

It is believed that the first to gain contact with the dragons was an elven maiden by the name of Elgarond daughter of Wimrofel, centuries ago. Her tale is told with much bravura amongst the elves nowadays, yet is virtually unknown to any other folk.'

The old dwarf glanced at Andariel, who seemed personally rejoiced at hearing her kin and Elgarond mentioned in this incredible tale of the land's history. Pride flickered in her eyes like lights hesitantly kindling deep in a dangerous swamp. She shifted awkwardly, as if she didn't quite know how to handle the eyes of the others cast on her in admiration at past elven courage.

She was a direct descendant of Elgarond.

'She was, just like more of her fair folk, a beautiful elven maiden not unlike our good friend Andariel,' Dambrano continued without taking his eyes off his pupil, only looking towards the others when he noticed her starting to blush, 'and on one of her many wanderings through Gandomil forest she quite suddenly stumbled upon a small silver lake, less than half a league across.

She considered this to be a very good place to replenish her supply of water, and as she descended to the waterside she saw them: Two dragons that had obviously considered this to be a very good lake to replenish their supply of water, too. The setting sun already made their shadows lengthen, and their eyes seemed to give off a red light in their dark silhouettes.

She hid behind some of the bushes and slowly crawled nearer and nearer, hearing them speak in a tongue most unfamiliar to her. Elgarond was frightened but inquisitive as well, until at a certain point she came too near and was spotted by the biggest of the two enormous beasts. In spite of the fact that she had crawled with the utmost precaution loyal to the elfish traditions of silent moving, the beast seemed to have sensed her one way or another.

"We're not used to being stalked upon," the dragon grumbled in a deep voice that seemed to reflect the very age of its owner, "and surely not by beings we do not yet know to be friend or foe, are we, Rutnug?"

The other dragon now held her in his gaze as well.

"Well, well, You're right, Nuhcoy," the other dragon replied, "we aren't! Well, well." This dragon's voice seemed to hold something the elf couldn't quite discern whether it be reproaching jest or predictive anger.

She tried to move, but couldn't. The burning red eyes of the dragon named Nuhcoy seemed to literally hold her in his gaze. A sudden anxiety wanted to overcome her, but she didn't budge.

Both dragons slowly came nearer to her bush. Elgarond didn't need to have any extra senses to notice that both beasts radiated with power. When she noticed that they had released their invisible grasp upon her she didn't scramble off.

Elgarond didn't quite know what she was up to, but she realised that these animals would have hurt her already if such was their intent.

She straightened herself and spoke proudly: "I am Elgarond, elven maiden and daughter of Wimrofel. Woe you if you have evil intent, for I am powerful and my father has taught me much of his lore!"

The elf swallowed, and tried to discern what impact she had made on the enormous dragons. Their faces showed nothing, yet their red eyes seemed to glow brighter - at least, so it seemed to her.

"Well, well," the dragon named Rutnug said after a while, trying to suppress a light chuckle, "an elven maiden? Well, well."

Elgarond felt insulted. Defiantly, she drew out a small silver dagger and held it aloft. The small weapon reflected the sunlight but gleamed slightly on its own accord as well, as if the very metal seemed to react to something nearby.

"If you seek to maim or kill me," she spat vehemently, "I will not hesitate to use this Llirk, proud blade of Wimrofel my father!" To emphasise her warning, she slowly moved the little shiny dagger to and fro through the air. Her eyes shone with the same defiance that could be sensed in her voice.'

Andariel gasped at the mentioning of the Llirk, a legendary weapon even her own folk weren't sure had ever truly existed. It obviously had, and subconsciously she wondered where it was now.

'The dragons seemed stunned for a couple of moments, as if they had stumbled into an invisible wall they couldn't penetrate with their power nor their mighty stature. Elgarond used these few seconds to point her weapon at a nearby tree, crying "Nyzno nu daw!" after which it was instantly set alight from base to crown.

When she pointed her dagger elsewhere, the flames disappeared as quickly as they had appeared. The tree was unharmed - not even its leaves were scathed, and the birds sitting on its boughs sang like nothing had ever happened.

"Well, well," Rutnug muttered below his breath, "I'm impressed, well, well". While saying this, he exchanged some significant glances with Nuhcoy.

They both looked at the defiant elven maiden standing there - who was at least five or six times smaller than them. Nuhcoy pointed one of his claws in the direction of the same tree, muttering some obscure spell.

Without even a puff of smoke, the tree vanished. All that was left was an intricate complex of holes and tunnels in the ground where the roots had been.

The elf was about to let out a cry of despair and agony when she also noticed that her little dagger had been transformed into dark red sand that slowly disappeared through her fingers, forming a shape on the ground like a stain of blood.

Both dragons smiled at her previous folly and her look of total amazement. This latter disappeared quickly, however, as she once more spoke to them.

"Gandomil may have lost a tree and I may have lost my father's Llirk, but I still have my pride," she proclaimed, "kill me and begone or let me live and do the same!"

Nuhcoy seemed to whisper something to Rutnug, after which he muttered another intricate spell and the tree reappeared like nothing had ever happened.

The Llirk lay shiny and intact at Elgarond's feet.

The elf really didn't know what to think now, but it was evident that these dragons were friendly. She had heard old stories of ancient red beasts with wings and fire-breath that spilled forth death and destruction, but she realised that these were probably just that: Stories rather than reality.

She retrieved the dagger and put it back under her robe - not letting the dragons out of her sight.

"Thank you," she said as if she had to expel the very words from her throat, "please forgive my folly but Wimrofel my father taught me to be proud and defiant at all times."

"To forgive is but the privilege of those who don't need to be forgiven themselves," Rutnug said, "so just forget it and tell us more of yourself and your kindred."

The defiant gleam in Elgarond's eyes was replaced by the proud gleam of a dedicated elven maiden once more as she lead the dragons through the ancient depths of Gandomil forest while the darkness around them was gathering for the mid of the night.

Something in the beasts' attitude made her trust them.

The red gleam in the dragon's eyes supplied them with enough light to allow them to cross the forest safely at this late hour, and the fearsome beasts scared off night predators and sent away fatigue and weariness as she found her way back to the elven city of Nimraviel.'

CHAPTER SIX

NIMRAVIEL

'Ah...Nimraviel...'

The old dwarf raised his eyes to the sky as if he was mortally scarred by something the mere mentioning of this name brought up. He looked at the elven maiden from the corner of his eyes. She seemed to blush once again - or still - and pride manifested itself clearly on her features.

'Nimraviel, the city of elves, was built many years ago near Gandomil forest in the south centre of Ontaflareth. When one entered this city, one would immediately be struck by the almost serene beauty of every single house, every mere tree and even the tiniest shop in it. The elves are a beautiful people and this is also reflected in every aspect of their life - and was thus also expressed through their style of building.

The elves were famous for their wielding of woodlore. They loved wood, and would never willfully harm or cut down a tree. They wouldn't burn wood, either, and instead used intricate elvish spells to let it cast off energy and light without it actually being consumed.

Each house, built of the best kind of stone, was furnished with fine wooden belongings, that would fulfil each visitor with a warmth of heart and a gladness of mind. In the hearth, a fire would be perpetually burning - without the wood being consumed, of course.

It was just past midnight, those many years ago, when a sound of knocking could be heard on the sturdy oaken gates of Nimraviel.

Nothing happened. Obviously, the guards were either asleep or out cold.

The knocking was repeated, only louder now.

Still, nothing happened. Only the sound of crickets kept the silence from actually being silent. There were no lights anywhere in the city.

"Hail!" she cried as loud as she could in the direction of the guard's tower, "Elgarond daughter of Wimrofel has returned from Gandomil with distinguished company! Please hearken!"

Sounds arose from the guard's tower. They were mostly curses in an obscure Elvish dialect, but eventually the heavy doors to the city were opened by two young elves with sleepy eyes, holding short spears and wearing shiny helmets.

Their sleepy eyes were opened wide when they did not only recognise Elgarond but also her company - the two giant dragons.

They immediately slammed the heavy doors shut again and sounded the alarm bells of the city.

Within a quarter of an hour, the whole city of Nimraviel was wide awake and standing along the battlements. Awe was in their eyes, and their mouths hung open in amazement. Bow and arrow were kept ready in case these ferocious monsters would dare to attack the proud elven city.

The door was opened again. In it stood Wimrofel, Elgarond's father and the city mayor. Though his figure appeared frail both in comparison to the city walls and the dragons standing in front of him, he looked around himself with the same defiant pride in his eyes that his daughter had displayed earlier.

"Elgarond my daughter, what evil has become you?" he cried.

"Naught, father; I have discovered these animals in Gandomil and I assure you they have no evil intent!" replied the daughter, "They are noble dragons!"

At the last word, a hushed mutter went round the city's parapet; the awe in the elves' eyes even increased to what seemed to be plain unbelievability.

"Elgarond daughter of Wimrofel is bewitched!" voices spoke, "She's the poor victim of some or other spell of evil!"

Yet Wimrofel just stood, seeming to be deep in thought. He knew his daughter. He knew the look in her eyes. The look he saw was not of insanity - but of the pride he had taught her himself.

"Speak, daughter," he said, "we will listen."

"Well, well," one of the dragons said with a deep warm voice, "well, well."

Elgarond spoke of the magic she had witnessed, the attitude of the dragons and their general interest in the culture and history of the elves. Slowly, the elves on the city walls lowered their bows and listened.'

Dambrano took a small flask from his belt and took a swig from the fluid inside. All this speaking had drained his throat and he was getting visibly tired of talking, sometimes having to cough.

The sun was already high up in the sky, increasing its power and shortening the shadows of the people in the yard. The dew had disappeared.

While the flask went round the small group of pupils, the old dwarf continued to speak.

'It was thus that the dragons came into contact with us "little folk", as they tended to call us. It was soon obvious that they were friendly creatures, and the elves found a lot of benefit in the dragon's acquaintance.

Some of these animals, previously thought to be ill, visited Nimraviel in the years after, and they taught the elves spells they had never dared dream of. Although the elves were experienced in woodlore, they learned many more woodlore spells and also got to learn many spells in other fields, as well as the preparation of various potions to heal wounds and increase strength or stamina. It was the beginning of a new time for the elves, who lived happily and knew a prosperity they had never imagined obtainable.

Magic was a part of the dragons' lives just like eating and breathing is of ours - a part of themselves.

The dragons would spend many days with the elfish magician, an old elf usually wearing a blue cloak with stars and circles on it. Nilrem, for such was his name, had a long dark grey beard which defied his elfish origin. He could only speak slowly, and in a tongue most peculiar and even not understandable to other elves - yet the dragons some way or another managed to understand him and could even communicate with him.

For days they would roam the depths of ancient Gandomil, and the dragons often took Nilrem to their own land: The island of Walronia. Nilrem taught them everything he knew, and in turn received knowledge of even more woodlore, spells and potions.

Yet even Nilrem with all his ancient knowledge of elfish wisdom couldn't help them to find the spell the dragons most eagerly sought after: The spell that would be able to turn their barren kindred into fertile animals that would be able to produce posterity.

So the dragons kept on searching for that One Spell.

One day, said only to be years after they had encountered the elves for the first time, the dragons came across my people - the dwarves.'

CHAPTER SEVEN

BRINDIL-BUN

On the east coast of the Ontaflareth Sea a broad and powerful stream flows from the land - the Ebaren river. It springs forth from magic sources deep down in the mountains to the North of the dwarven capital of the land: The ancient town of Brindil-Bun.

Brindil-Bun is by no means a small city, and this is soon obvious even to the casual observer who sees it poised on the side of Brindil Hill. Indeed, the city is built low and flat to occupy as much soil, since dwarves like us thrive upon the love for all the beauty brought forth by the womb of the earth.'

Dambrano looked at his dwarf pupil who was still fumbling his beard but whose eyes now gleamed with pride as he thought back of his people's rich history, the earth, and the old but nevertheless fond memories he still had of the dwarven capital. The old dwarf could not help but feel some pride himself, but he seemed to reject it as though it was dangerous, something he would and could not think of.

'For the centuries that have passed since the Great War, dwarves have lived there and devoted themselves entirely to stone and gem craftsmanship. Instead of the elves' woodlore, they had devoted themselves to stonelore; they knew how to shed light from stone and could even foretell the weather. Yet this lore was even far surpassed by their craftsmanship in handling gems and rocks, and that's why the dwarves were highly honoured in the land. Most of the stoneware and polished gems present throughout the world now are made by the infamous dwarves living in and around Brindil- bun.

The dwarves were ruled by King Keril Sandowor-son for many years - for dwarves can become very old to compensate their meagre blessing with children, and thus even many of them can even remember the days before the Great War. Keril was a good king: Though he ruled his subjects with a stern hand, he was loved for his compassion and great sense of justice. Each year on his birthday, there would be great bonfires in Brindle-bun and a whole week of feasting.

Then there was his Queen, lady Elrywin. She was loved by the dwarves maybe even just as much as King Keril himself, for she was always adorned with a smile of smiles, she always strove to help the poor, and she had knowledge of spells to cure many sicknesses. She was incredibly graceful, in spite of her size and the dwarfish proportions of her body.

Thus, the dwarves lived happily under their King and Queen. They were happy people, content with life and constantly improving both their stonelore and their craftsmanship of earth-wrought materials.

When Brindil-Bun was first visited by the dragons, accompanied by Nilrem the elven magician, it caused quite a commotion and excitement - which you will not find hard to imagine. The dwarves thought the end of the world had come; that Garganoz the Evil one had returned and had come to shed the blood of the land and all its inhabitants - including their own race.

Never before had they seen such enormous, fierce looking creatures, nor had they seen such a being as Nilrem the elf - even though the wizard looked more like a dwarf than any elf. There had been no contact between elves and dwarves before, and this historic occasion was held long in memory, and remembered even longer by tales told near the fireplace.'

Dobranur nodded; he even seemed to remember the tales from his childhood before his parents decided to live in solitude. For a moment, it seemed as if a shudder ran down his spine; a shudder of ancient memories of his parents and Brindil-Bun - and ancient memories of the rumours about the rogues scavenging Luthag and its surroundings. The rogues that may have been responsible for his parents' death.

'For the dwarves, too, a new era started,' Dambrano went on, 'They learned many a spell from dragon-as well as elfish origin, and in return taught elves and dragons everything they knew about their well known stonelore.

Whereas the elves were an elegant and aesthetic race, the dwarves were more rugged and elemental. In spite of these differences, both races acted along together very well, and solid friendships soon began to flourish between them. Only months later was it said that the race of man got to learn of the existence of dragons, elves, and dwarves.

The land was at its best since the life of Guams. Although there were some minor skirmishes between the races, they were always settled by the dragons - in their wisdom they always succeeded in convincing both parties of their folly, and thus the dragons found a means of keeping themselves usefully and satisfactorily occupied while they kept on searching for that One Spell - which they still hadn't found, not even after dwarves and men had taught them all they knew.

The partly hidden pride in his eyes vanished as a look of sadness grieved his features like a cloud slowly obscuring an autumn sun. Wet tears appeared, too, in Dobranur's eyes - he knew what his tutor was going through and joined the feeling of wretchedness.

Another bad part of the tale had to be told.

'Yet most of their lore got lost,' Dambrano continued, 'and with it a lot of their craftsmanship, after the battle of Dragon's Vale - where sorcerers of Black and White Magic clashed. Just like men and elves, the dwarves shunned their lore and magic since, and valuable spells were lost that had previously helped them to craft such superior stoneware. The dwarves lost much of their high acclaim in the land and but few remained with some basic knowledge of stonelore and an average knowledge of craftsmanship - like my humble self.

King Keril and his Queen had been involved in magic and had travelled down to the Dragon's Vale on the legendary isle of Walronia in the Southern Sea - to celebrate the jubilee ceremony of White Magic that was to be held there.

They left on a day like today, now many years ago - the sun shone in its utmost splendour, and a strong breeze made sure that the voyage by ship was swift. Pirates stayed at a certain distance once they recognized King Keril's banners - word of his tremendous magic power had spread even into Scatterbone, city of outlaws and refugees. In those days, not even the boldest pirate dared to challenge the Magic of a King, and there weren't any around willing or able to defy it.

When the ship sailed into Negame harbour, they beheld strange vessels driven forth by sheer power instead of sails, and anxious fear clasped their hearts as they realised that the wielders of Black Magic had chosen to celebrate Black Magic's jubilee ceremony in the Dragon's Vale, too.'

Dambrano suddenly looked up as though he had just remembered something. Words seemed to clog in his throat for several moments as if he was completely lost and didn't know what to say next.

'Please forgive me for running slightly astray,' Dambrano explained, 'for I have to tell you first the tale of Magic. Black and White Magic.'

CHAPTER EIGHT

A KIND OF MAGIC

Men, elves and dwarves learned many powerful spells from the dragons, and were soon able to discover more intricate spells of their own. Though the dragons still supervised, more and more spells were devised that were quite different from those of the dragons.

Magic was extended further, so that simple spells were very common in everyday life, alleviating the little problems one was likely to encounter regularly.

But something else happened.

Those who devoted their lives to lore, spells, potions and magic in general started to split up. While one group of magicians, dedicated to 'white magic' as the people tended to call it, was preoccupied with aesthetics and deeper understanding within strict limits of the powers behind their might, wielders of so- called 'black magic' kept themselves busy with more worldly unisons and dared to tread the very borders of the limits of their magic to gain more power and learn more powerful and even potentially dangerous spells.

Conflicts between these groups were foreseeable and indeed happened. However, nobody was even able to guess how severe the consequences of these conflicts would be. Whereas in the early days the conflicts were restrained to individuals of both groups, the clashes steadily grew in size.

It is really not possible to blame but one of the two groups here; after so many years I wouldn't only want to blame the Black Magicians for their lust for power, since the supposedly superior wiseacry of the White Magicians also added much to the problems. Apart from that, both sides lost their respect for those that had been largely responsible for their wisdom and power - the wise advise of the dragons was ignored more often or interpreted by each in his own fashion.

This was bound to lead to even more conflicts, and I am afraid that this happened as well. White and Black magicians strayed more and more from their counterparts, and the people of the land seemed to form themselves in two groups - one supporting the wielders of Black magic and the other supporting those wielding White magic.'

'Soon, the groups started their own celebrations - the greatest celebrations of these was the annual jubilee, held in a specific place somewhere in the land on each birthday of the split-up.

New spells would be exchanged on those occasions, and new wizards and students would be appointed; songs would be sung and there would be a general mood of festivity that would last deep into the night.

But this too was bound to lead to conflicts...

CHAPTER NINE

THE EVE OF THE WAR

King Keril and Queen Elrywin instantly felt a weird kind of anxiety which they had never sensed before. The conflicts between wielders of both kinds of magic had already flourished when individuals met, so this gathering of many students and wizards from both sides was something they didn't dare think about. Something like this had not even happened in their worst dreams, yet now it had become a horrid truth. A truth that could not be evaded or overturned - like a mountain across the path one wanted to walk.

A sense of foreboding overcame the dwarven King, like a typhoon suddenly sweeping over a desolate coast. Why had fate found it necessary to cast this coincidence upon the land - a land that already had plenty of problems?'

'The smile of smiles that usually ornamented Elrywin's features vanished, and immediately it seemed as though the sky above the Southern Sea was packed solid with dark clouds. The spell of her Golden Smile had kept the weather good and sunny during all the voyage, but as it disappeared the sky immediately became thick with potential rain and thunder. It seemed as if the clouds were bulging with rain and thunder never before seen by any of the races in the land. They were, in some way or another, holding - and increasing - their contents

preternaturally.

From one of the ships that seemed to move mysteriously - without sails - they saw with horror that an Orc was casting spells on the clouds. Spells that would no doubt turn the current calm before the storm turned into a gale that would pierce body and soul, a torrent that might even sink other ships.

Orcs were - and are - regarded as foul creatures. They look like men, but are generally stronger built and have rough hair covering most of their bodies. They usually smell offensively, and they have small black eyes that appear to look right through their target. Just like men, elves and dwarves, the Orcs are creatures of this earth - they were not spawn by malicious magic or such. They live mostly around their city on the western coast of the western peninsula of Ontaflareth, though many of their kind can be found elsewhere in the land.

The Orcs are not the peaceful kind of folk you're all used to. They are notorious plunderers, and one had better avoid them not to find out anything about their habits in detail. In the days of Black and White Magic they were even less peace loving - and potent wielders of Black Magic.

The Orcs were ruled by a small and sleazy being bearing the name of Lord Avaram Souldesecrator - an Orc even ugly in comparison with others of his kindred, and smelling even more malodorous. His power was hidden mainly in a small staff the size of a human's arm - which he called Tsercro Magicwielder. It is said that Lord Avaram even surpassed Olastag the Dragon in some of his vicious habits - but it is of no avail to this tale to tell more about that.

It was this Orc who was casting spells on the clouds, Keril and Elrywin were horrified to discover. The small, ugly creature was standing on the main deck, both arms stretched upward holding the short staff named Tsercro Magicwielder. Fire leapt from its shaft, crawling along the ship's masts high up into the heavens. The fire seemed to be absorbed by the clouds that grew even darker, but which seemed to glow internally with blazes of evil.

Lord Avaram seemed to sense that he was being watched, and it was evident that he enjoyed every moment of it. A loud cry spat deep from his malformed throat as another spurt of fire tore through the skies and made everybody quiver in fear.

"We must stop him!" King Keril cried to his Queen, trying to overtrump the cacophony of sounds blasted forth by Avaram's evil doing, "We must! He imperils us all!"

Queen Elrywin nodded; her hair was blowing desperately in the wind, as if the elements were seeking to bereave her of her golden locks. She went to join her King and retrieved a small purple orb from her dress. The moment the orb caught some of the scarce light, it seemed to strengthen itself by its own sheer power.

"Hypodrhuf Welruestar Purplecaster!" she cried, and then started to chant as loud as she could in a dwarvish tongue. Her King stood next to her, holding up his left fist from which a large ring shone with an intensity like the northern star. It also cast off a purple light - the light of their banner; the light of Brindil-Bun the dwarven capital's flag.

"Hypodrhuf Welruestar Powerbeholder!" he cried before he started to chant with her - also as loud as he could possibly manage in the gale that tore at his clothes and that seemed to want to send blades of cold malice through his very flesh and soul.

The two beams of Power Light spilled forth by the King and Queen's wards seemed to bend, and then these melted into one deep purple beam that immediately went to assail the white and light blue streaks of lightning that now seemed to burst out of the very being of Lord Avaram Souldesecrator.

The creature now cried fiercely, cursing in Orcish dialects at the two wielders of White Magic. He was determined not to budge. His staff gave birth to even broader streaks of lightning, and his eyes seemed to regurgitate all light ever cast by the sun, moon and stars in all former ages. This light was burning red, like blood aflame, and almost palpably malicious.

It launched out at the two dwarven rulers, that were almost knocked flat by the power and evil will behind it.

Yet they didn't budge either, and instead closed their eyes and sent forth one deafening blaze of light towards the evil Orc which seemed to require the individual topmost strength of every single structure in their bodies - even from the very marrow of their aching bones.

It silenced the Orc, whose staff suddenly seemed to burn his hands. All sense of magic instantly dropped with it to the ground, and Lord Avaram Souldesecrator went below deck, howling furiously.

Yet Avaram's evil had done enough already. Now his force was no longer feeding them thunder and rain, the clouds burst open their gates and rain poured down on Walronia and Negame harbour. Thunder and lightning split the sky open at short intervals, and within seconds every thing and being alive around the Dragon's isle was soaking wet with the unnatural rain.

Lucky enough, there was no storm. Obviously, Avaram's spells hadn't yet had time to accomplish that. Both dwarven rulers now retreated below deck as well, fatigued by that last spell of power which had indeed drained even the smallest quantity of energy and vigour from the whole of their bodies.

They shuddered at imagining which conflicts might take place the next day, when even more wielders of Black as well as White Magic would have arrived here.

It rained for several hours, and the wind was just in time to blow the clouds away for a dusk that seemed to reflect the last hopes of the races of the land. When the large yellow orb had

faded into deep red and sunk behind the hills of Walronia, shrouded in mists of purple and orange, everybody was asleep - haunted by dreams of what might happen the next day.

It seems strange now that everybody - wielders of both Black and White Magic - slept quite peacefully together on their ships and in the inns of Negame that night.

The next days would change their lives. Forever.'

CHAPTER TEN

TO THE DRAGON'S VALE

As everybody woke up that morning, the sun stood low in the east of a clear blue sky; there were no clouds apart from some small white fluffy ones scattered here and there.

Yet there was something distinctly different.

The sun seemed to have changed overnight - its bright yellow had somehow been transformed into a pale brown that sent feelings of wan distress through most people beholding it. Only the meek appearance of Lord Avaram Souldesecrator seemed pleased; a gloomy wrinkle pulled his lips into a shapeless grimace.

The change of the sun left the White Magic Wielders with a sadness of heart. This was the work of a Black Magician, and they were frightened by the apparent power their counterparts turned out to possess - for they guessed that some awesome power was necessary to achieve such a dramatic change in something as distant and powerful as the sun.

Silently, wielders of both Black and White magic started their short voyage to the Dragon's Vale, where the festivities were to be held.

Everybody felt that the coming days would need all their power and stamina, so there were to be but a few minor clashes during the trip.'

'King Keril and Queen Elrywin left their ship as well, just after the sun had risen above the sea. They, too, had been stunned by the change of the sun - and it had primarily saddened their hearts, too.'

Dambrano stopped for a couple of minutes. His face seemed to shape in spontaneous agony, as if he could see the light brown sun before his very eyes, quickly saddening his throbbing heart, as well.

For a second, Bladus thought the old dwarf was going to faint - or even shrink away and die, impossible though that might seem. But after some time Dambrano's face relaxed a bit - the muscles strained themselves into normal positions. He continued the tale.

'It was a shame that the beauty of Walronia - even though this was by far inferior to what it had been in the first era - was to be used to what would turn out to be the most awful battle ever to happen in the land.

The dragons had already gathered in their Vale, to take their part in the oncoming celebrations they had no reason not to expect. Yet sudden anxiety grasped their hearts as well when they saw something happening they had never imagined possible in any age beyond the first era.

One half of Don-l-Wertas, the Many Millenium Tree in the centre of the Vale, was turning to a pale white, whereas the other half was slowly but nonetheless visibly blackening and losing its leaves like in a rushed autumn. The dragons winced at the sight - for they still knew what this meant.

Evil was once again afoot in the land.'

'The dwarven King and his Queen almost forgot their tension as they travelled along the paths of Walronia, heading for the Dragon's Vale. They didn't catch sight of any Black Magicians and could not feel any presence of the Souldesecrator. After some careful hours, they were soon chatting merrily with other people in their party - in spite of the brown-clad sun.

The land around them was still blossomming and the scent seemed to suppress the very possibility of evil - and it thus restored the party's trust in themselves and the power behind their White Magic cause.

For hours they walked, and the landscape merely varied from hills scattered with low growth to great plains filled with heather and isolated trees. Dusk made its entrance as the dreary sun set behind the last hill and King Keril decided to camp there for the night and proceed the following day.

During the night, the party awoke many times from cries that seemed to come from beyond the last hill, and from sounds made by booted heels marching close to the location of their tents. One time, Keril and Elrywin awoke together. It seemed as if an invisible force was tugging at their very hearts, and they immediately knew.

Keril put on some necessary garments and took his magic ward. He left the camp without alerting the guard who appeared contentedly awake, and soon heard dark voices whispering in the dark.

There was a black horse with a frail figure sitting on it, clad in a black robe that made its shape dark even in comparison with the sky that was void of moon or even stars. As the dwarven king crawled closer as silently as he could, the voices instantly ceased to speak.

The last of the dark words seemed to hang in the air, threatening to fall down vigorously on whatever caused the hush.

The figure on the black steed peered around, and with fear King Keril recognised a mysteriously illuminated heptagram on the creature's banner - the heptagram of Garganoz the Evil One.

Scanning the area around him, with eyes that seemed distinctly red, the creature seemed satisfied that nothing was there after all, and continued talking. Only seconds later did the figure on the horse and the other creature both disappear in the direction of what seemed like another encampment.

Keril knew - Lord Avaram Souldesecrator had set up camp next to theirs.'

CHAPTER ELEVEN

NIGHT OF DEATH

The next morning, there was no sun to be seen. The heavens were filled with the darkest of clouds, which made the normally fresh morning appear like a deadly nocturnal scene of winter. Overnight, the grass, heather and trees had lost their beauty and had turned to form a picture of barren death and obstinate ugliness.

One didn't need to be a White Magician to know that there was Black Power behind this evil doing. Yet even the wildest power of these Black Magicians had never sufficed to envelop an entire valley - or maybe the entire isle of Walronia - in preternatural winter.

Keril woke up finding that his Queen had already left the tent. He went out to look for her, and beheld the morbid black skies. He shuddered to accept the only possible explanation:

Avaram Souldesecrator was the renewed form of Garganoz - the Evil One reincarnated. There was no doubt where all the Evil Power came from.

A sudden dread overcame him as he realised that Elrywin his Queen was nowhere in his party's camp. He went to where he had seen Avaram's encampment. It was already gone, and all that remained on the barren grounds where it had been were left-overs of bestial meals, excrements of foul creatures, and several dead orcs. The bodies were badly mutilated, and were entirely covered with maggots that seemed to gaze at him through the corpses' empty eye sockets and disemboweled abdomen. Flies preying upon the carcasses now and again leapt at him, as if probing to whether the dwarven King might be edible.

The air was thick with the smell of blood and decaying flesh, that seemed to attack his lungs like a unanimous verdict made by evil beings. It nearly made his stomach turn and he had trouble not to vomit.

In what had been the centre of the encampment he found a large heptagram drawn in the ground, probably fifteen feet across. Smoke still rose from its lines, and in the middle of the heptagram he saw the body of Elrywin his Queen.'

Dambrano stopped instantly, swallowing heavily. Tears were appearing clearly in his eyes, and some of them ran down his cheeks like helpless victims falling down an inevadable abyss. Dobranur went to sit next to his uncle and Tutor, supporting the old dwarf's shaking and sobbing shape.

Yet the old dwarf dismissed the younger dwarf's gesture with a faint attempt at what became a hollow smile, swallowing again.

With visible trouble, he went on with the tale.

'On that sign of Galganoz the Evil One, the body of his Queen lay. Her limbs were separated from her body, hewn off by savage creatures. Her head had a gaping hole on the back, as if it had been smashed by a rock. From the skull, between remains of brain coils and blood, there were many more maggots that seemed to pour out as if his Queen's cranium produced them itself.

More heptagrams were carved in her skin, and others were drawn on the ground and stones with her blood. Her eyes, wide open, seemed to cry out in voiceless agony and trepidation; her bleeding hands were clasped solidly in their last, desperate grip.

King Keril knelt down next to his Queen, closed her dim eyes to the piercing darkness of the skies and swore revenge on he who had done this. After he buried her in the barren womb of the earth, he went back to his party, that had already broken up camp.

He didn't need to say anything to the others; the look in his eyes spoke a thousand sad words. With grim determination, the company started up the hill, towards the Dragon's Vale.'

'To the south of the Dragon's Vale, they saw a large encampment solely made up of white tents; to the north there was a similar one - but that one was only built up of dark grey and black tents.

In the middle of the valley, around Don-I-Wertas, some dragons were gathered. They seemed restless and agitated - and quite reasonably so.

In the White encampment, Keril met the Elfish Rulers with Nilrem the Wizard, more dwarfs, more men, and various other creatures that wielded White Magic. He found that, during the night, all the other rulers had also been bereft of their mates. Their bodies had all been found on a sign of Garganoz the Evil One, and they had all been tortured, raped, mutilated, brutally slaughtered and savagely hewn into several parts.

And they had all sworn revenge upon he who had their wives' death on his conscience.

They all drew their magic wards, swearing to use them only for the purpose of creating the downfall of Black Magic and all those wielding it.'

CHAPTER TWELVE

BLACKEST WRATH

Yet the White Magicians were not the only beings seeking to destroy their opponents. In the encampment of Black Magic, other beings sought to destroy these White Magicians. There were warped orcs, renegade men, some outcast dwarves and elves, and various foul beasts that were gathered around Lord Avaram Souldesecrator, the most evil of orcs.

The small creature stood high and mighty in the middle of his servants, as if he found his apparent strength in the middle of many bigger than himself a mere consequence of logic.

"Woe them!" he cried with all the power his voice could muster, "Today we will destroy White Magic forever! The world will be our playground; their minds will be the fuel to light our fires; Black Magic will rule the lands forever, beyond eternity! Victory will be ours; and blackened will be the end!"

His predicaments sent a hushed shudder down the ranks of his fellow evil beings. One of them, a large man clad entirely in dark brown leather garments, seemed to want to start a protest. Yet he only spoke with his eyes - which seemed to go unnoticed by Garganoz reincarnated. Lord Avaram smashed his fist on a small stonewrought table to underline what he had said - while a deafening thunder roared through the sky and simultaneously a blinding strike of lightning ravaged the heavens, the solid stone turned into mere sand.

Another hushed shudder. Lord Avaram scanned the creatures around him with his fiercely burning, red eyes.

The tall man started: "But..."

"Be silent! You're all pathetic!" Avaram laughed hoarsely, "I, Garganoz the Evil One, will rule over the Dragon's Vale, Walronia, the land, the world...the universe!!" The latter he spat with an unsuspected vehemence from the deepest depths of his throat, transforming his voice in a gurgling, coughing chuckle once he had finished.

Lord Avaram Souldesecrator unfolded a most evil plan before his servants: With his power and that of the others combined into one spell of evil, it would be possible to create beings from the lifeless soil of the earth - limitless supplies of warped creatures ready to slay every being of the world, ready to succumb White Magic from this and forthcoming eras forever.

While he spoke of his evil plans, the peculiar red gleam in his treacherous eyes sharpened into what seemed to be a focused, small blaze of infuriated anger. His voice became louder and louder, and more hoarse as he continued. When he finished speaking of his murk intent, he had to breathe deeply due to the vigour he had used to mould his ill thoughts into words.

After he had regained his breath he snapped his fingers, at which point a guard admitted a creature into the tent.'

'It was a naked creature, with a bent back and long arms that seemed to hang limply to the ground. Both its fore-and hind-claws wore seven talons each - that were obviously fit to lacerate whatever they hit. Its head was very small - unproportionate to its large, square, chunky body. The colour of the being could be compared with that of mud - wet mud, as it shone dimly in the few flickering torches that lit the tent.

Its mouth was lipless, and seemed to hang losely attached to its jaws. Its dim eyes were large and protruded clearly from the skull; its nose was broad and tilted upward.

The creature stood silent, as if waiting to be triggered into performing a certain action. Its face betrayed no emotions whatsoever, and its eyes appeared to be of fathomless depths in which feelings would never even dare to utter themselves.

"Allow me to introduce you to Niav," Avaram said with a smile on his face that didn't

particularly hide the pride he felt, "who I have created by means of experiment to demonstrate to you the remarkable possibilities of the type of spells I just meant."

The creature seemed to know or instinctly guess that he was talked about, and wrought a shape upon its lipless mouth that laid bare some gruesome fangs that sent yet another silent shudder of amazement through the ranks of Lord Avaram Souldesecrator's servants.

"But, Lord Avaram," the tall man now interrupted, "isn't it dishonourable to have these creatures..."

"This creature," the orc continued as if he had not at all noticed that anyone had started speaking, totally ignoring the man in the leather garments, "doesn't know how to do anything - except for slaying those I order to have slain."

Lord Avaram Souldesecrator coughed, trying to get everybody's attention for something that was was no doubt about to happen.

"It slays everybody who I want to have slain," he repeated with more emphasis, as though threatening a still invisible enemy. The fire in his red eyes now seemed to glare even beyond the confinement of his orbs.

"Dragozal," he said, "please rise."

The tall man who had protested earlier suddenly went very pale. He felt as though he was cornered; as though he was the victim of something beyond his own control.

He rose. There was an air of defiance in his eyes.

"Niav," Avaram commanded the creature while pointing at the man, "slay him."

Avaram had no need to raise his voice. The creature reacted within an instant. The tall man, for his part, didn't have any time to react at all. Niav leapt at the man's throat with awesome speed - especially when taking into consideration its blunt physique - and penetrated it easily with his enormous, sharp fangs. Its eyes momentarily burned with a green fire of fervour - the creature actually seemed to thoroughly enjoy what it was being commanded to do.

Once its victim lay dead and bleeding between the other servants, the green fire extinguished; again, the creature's face displayed no emotions whatsoever. Its eyes were again the fathomless depths they had been before.

Lord Avaram Souldesecrator smiled a broad yet vicious smile, smugly gazing round at the faces of the others present. He saw fear in their eyes, and they all glanced from him to Niav and back.

Yet the creature didn't even reveal its fangs in its sick attempt at a smile.'

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SPOUT OF MAGIC

Even Bladus now looked incredulously at the old dwarf. Surely it was impossible to create living beings, even foul ones like Niav, from the lifeless soil of the earth? He wasn't sure whether he was most amazed by this fact, or the fact that these wicked creatures were so incredibly strong, agile, and lecherous for cold blooded murder.

But there wasn't much time to wonder, for the old dwarf only allowed enough time to take a couple of deep breaths before he progressed.

'That day saw a battle the likes of which had never ever scourged the world before. Wielders of both kinds of magic used all the power they could possibly muster to create the downfall of the other. The Black Magicians created many creatures like Niav, who easily slew scores of men, elves and dwarves; the White Magicians put all the power of their wards together to form a lethal shield - killing many of the magic-spawn creatures and maybe even just as many orcs, wolves, warped men, and other evil beings.

Garganoz reincarnated, the evil orc Lord Avaram Souldesecrator, stood comfortable on a hilltop, and his entire body now seemed aflame in red, powerful rage. His arms made sorcering gestures as yet more creatures were wrought from the lifeless soil of the earth itself and dragged themselves off to the battle.

The dragons had fled from the centre of their Vale, fearing that they too might be killed in the heat of the battle. They now used all their shared power to protect Don-l-Wertas - for they knew that this tree should not be allowed to be destroyed. Their magic protection didn't falter, even though many attacks were aimed at sites near to the ancient tree.

The battle took several days and nights, during which there was no rest. Using various spells, the combatants kept themselves awake and alert.

At night, the sky was lit by thousands of fires in red, orange, yellow, green and purple. Flashes would cross it, and the scent of burning flesh and vegetation was predominant in the air. Hundreds of earth-spawn creatures were destroyed, and the ranks of both Black-and

White Magicians grew less and less.

After several days of vicious battle, in which most of the Wizards and pupils had perished, and in which all wards except for a few had been lost, a small number of survivors fled and carried their battle with them to the rest of the world. Avaram was killed, and so were the high wizards of White Magic.

During the battle, however, many creatures like Niav had been made - and also many other dissimilar evil creatures - Ghouls, Beasts, Balrons, Trolls and Gnolls, to name but a few. Many of these survived the battle and entered the world as well.

It is these creatures that make life and travelling in the land so hazardous still. The old centres and schools of wizardry were largely demolished and were populated by these foul creatures. They now bring fear and agony upon those living near these places.'

Dambrano hesitated for a second, and the look in his eyes as well as the expression in the deep lines of his face betrayed that the bad parts of the tale were almost - but not yet - over.

'Since all foul creatures still present on the earth were spawn by magic, people soon thought wizardry was bad - and so, once again, nearly all knowledge of magic was lost. People were petrified ever to use magic again, as they considered it to be the root of all evil, a centre around which there was only destruction and death. Even most of the wood-and stonelore of elves and dwarves was lost, and thus the world was set back many a step. Only few people, like humble yours truly, retained some knowledge of the more intricate spells of old - but they kept their wisdom in silence.

Only later did the races of the land realise that they had lost something invaluable - but then there was no one left to teach them that which had been forgotten.

For something far worse had happened during the battle.

Since the end of the gruesome combat of magic, and Don-I-Wertas had been left unprotected again, nobody has ever seen a dragon again.'

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DRAGONFLIGHT - THE FINAL PURPOSE

It is now only possible to guess at what exactly happened. It is sure, however, that what happened in the Dragon's Vale affected the dragons irreversably - for it was the only place where these creatures gave birth to their young; most of them roamed there permanently.

After the war had ended, many folk and animals came to the Dragon's Vale, seeking to rescue whatever could be rescued of the dragons and their culture. Nobody has been able to enter the Vale again, however. It turned out to be under some kind of spell, and those who came back alive only told strange tales of a Unicorn and some kind of Shadow Warrior. Therefore, it is now thought that the dragons all vanished or - which I dread even to think - that they were all killed.

The consequences of this loss were evident all over the world. Old flames of conflicts between people kindled into wild fires of anger, and power hungry leaders set their kindred up against their neighbours.'

Dambrano sighed deeply again, and now looked up at his pupils. There was relief clearly to be seen in his eyes, as the end of his tale was nearing and he was about to embark on telling them why he had called them all together here, why he had taken care of them and why he had taught them everything they knew today.

'This is the world we live in today,' he was sad to proceed, 'and this is the world into which you will undertake a Quest - the Quest for which I have trained you for years, the Quest that will very likely change the outcome of history.

This Quest is entirely different from those usually undertaken. In the old days, quests were usually started to find unmarried noble ladies or hidden treasures - but this one's entirely different.

No - your Quest consists of finding and teaching magic. Lucky enough, even the highest tutors at Pegana University today recognise that casting off magic was a bad thing to do, and they are even seeking to set up a Magic Faculty. So you'll have to find and enter the old

schools that are now mainly inhabited by the creatures I mentioned earlier, and find all the scriptures you can find - if there are any left at all. The knowledge of the Old Wise is thought still to be hidden somewhere, and we need you to bring us the old scriptures you will not be needing yourselves.'

The Old Dwarf looked confidently at his pupils. He knew that, if this Quest was at all achievable, these students would be able to do so. But there was another task as well - a task that needn't even be said as they all knew it by instinct. But Dambrano mentioned it anyway.

'Also,' he said, 'and this is very important, you must try to find out what happened to the dragons. Find out where they have vanished to, or whether they have indeed all been killed. I simply refuse to believe that these great and powerful creatures of magic and wisdom have vanished off the face of the earth for ever. It is impossible that they were all destroyed in such a short time.

The target of your quest, thus, is to stop the rapid decline of the land. I know this sounds very pessimistic, but I am afraid I have no reasons left justifying me to sound otherwise. You must shed light again upon the knowledge and wisdom of the past, and prevent the world from going through the same senseless faults once more.

But I shouldn't talk any more now. I can already read impatience in your eyes, and I know you want to start on your Quest as soon as possible - even though it might mean death. I would like to thank you for listening to so long a tale from an old man. To reward you for your patience and attention I would like to offer you all a gift. It's the last powerful ward that has been left of old...'

DRAGONFLIGHT

INSTRUCTIONS

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

ATARI ST

NECESSARY TECHNICAL PREREQUISITES

The game is compatible with all available Atari ST colour-monitor configurations. The game can be played more easily using a data bank of more than 0.5 MB and a double-sided disc drive. If you only have a single sided disc drive, don't hesitate to send in the accompanying card!

A fully operational mouse is necessary in order to steer the programme. At intervals, the program will ask you to enter a word from the accompanying novella (background story). Here, as with all other text entries, the whole line can be cleared using escape.

COMMODORE AMIGA

NECESSARY TECHNICAL PREREQUISITES

The game is compatible with all available AMIGA configurations. The game can be played more easily using a data bank of more than

0.5 MB.

A fully operational mouse is necessary in order to steer all the functions. At intervals, the program will ask you to enter a word from the accompanying novella (background story). Here, as with all other text entries, the whole line can be cleared using escape.

LOADING THE PROGRAMME

Please insert disk A in drive df0: and switch on the computer. The game will start automatically.

CREATING GAME DISKS AND BACKUPS

During gameplay, information is often stored on the disc. That's why it is advisable to create a game disc before starting the game. This can be done with a built-in copy program that you can access from the main menu (after the Dragonflight intro). Just follow the instruction on the screen.

A useful tip: Normally, you can save the current state of the game to the current game disc. It is advisable to keep a 'good' state of the game on a backup disc somewhere, in case you should undertake some bad operations during the game. For this, you should create some ADDITIONAL backups of the original disc B, and save your games on these. Play further with your 'normal' game disc. Now, you can restore additionally saved games, too (by 'loading game').

DRAGONFLIGHT

THE GAME



We recommend reading the novel 'Dragonflight' before working through this chapter, in order to become familiar with the world in which this game takes place.

THE HEROES OF THE STORY

The group of Heroes (also called 'Party' or Group) who undertake this long journey consists of four beings (or so-called 'Characters') who each have their own special qualities and merits. These are derived from their personal merits and from the qualities of their individual races. Now let's introduce them all separately:

BLADUS



Bladus is a member of the human race, aged 27. Sturdily built and incredibly strong (many females consider him to be a 'macho'), his contribution during battle is invariably quite tremendous. His love for fighting is only surpassed by the love for his own body, which he tries hard to keep in tip-top condition. His parents, Hafsted and Tremura, gave birth to him in the City of Port Pylon. When Bladus was still very young his parents were killed by a pirate attack on the town and he was fostered by Dambrano, a tutor at Pegana University. He is an accomplished sword-fighter - he can fight successfully with virtually any weapon that even remotely look like a blade. His power with regard to magic is mainly concerned with 'aggressive' spell (for use during battle).

He loves fighting, showing off his strength - and his own body!

RINAKLES



Rinakles, also a member of the human race, is 28 years old. He is of slender build and his face is primarily recognisable by his goatee. His main strength is pure magic. Where others usually resort to the use of weapons, he simply pulls his magic wand out and casts one of the many powerful spells he has learned (or will learn).

His parents, Savorlin and Savira, gave birth to him in the City of Port Pylon. Both died of the Bubonic Plague that struck the town about twenty years before the start of the 'Dragonflight' adventure and Rinakles was taken into the care of Dambrano - yes the very same Dambrano - the tutor at the Pegana University.

As already indicated, Rinakles' main strength is magic. He seldom wields weapons of any kind, although, of course, he has been trained to use them sufficiently in any case. His main strength, magically speaking, is his performance of special effects (flashes of light, etc), which he has, to a degree, taught to Bladus. He loves magic, poetry (well, reading in general) and his pet, a little dog by the name of Ahcsap.

DOBRANUR



A member of the dwarf race, Dobranur was born in Brindil-Bun on the outskirts of Eldwary Gymli-mate - over 80 years ago. In his early childhood, many years ago, his parents decided to go and live in isolation near the City of Luthag and so they took him to be brought up by a distant uncle - Dambrano of Pegana University. His parents were never heard of again, and are thought to have been killed by rogues. He is of short build, wears a beard and is specialised in fighting with his double-bladed battle-axe (although he can, in fact, wield anything slightly resembling an axe. In spite of what his age may imply, he is still very young and has just entered the age of adolescence (this is explained by the fact that dwarves can live to become very, very old).

With regard to magic, Dobranur is only in a position to help others; he can do very little on his own accord.

He loves the land, stone, fighting and everything wrought from the earth in general.

ANDARIEL



A beautiful elven maiden in all respects, Andariel was born in the proud elven City of Nimraviel. Her father, Traveliel, was killed by a wild boar when she was six, and her mother Galadruil had thus found it best to bring her into the care of a tutor at Pegana University by the name of Dambrano, as he was at that time looking for new pupils, and as she did not feel in a position to raise the girl on her own.

Andariel is, as said, a beautiful maiden with golden hair and a figure that the males of her race (and even other races) call 'stunningly beautiful'.

Being an elf, Andariel is primarily skilled in shaping wood and using the bow and arrow. Her skills in magic are fairly modest but she has the power to heal people or put them into a healing sleep.

She loves wood, Glandomil forest and a handsome elven warrior by the name of Elstrynd.

DIRECTION

The mouse is generally used to control the events of the game; the keyboard is only used in rare exceptions. The menu has been formed in such a way that an optimum speed of operation is assured. The mouse indicator becomes 'locked' in the appropriate field during almost every action in order to make selection easier. The right-hand mouse key can usually be used to interrupt any current action in the event of a special field able to stop the procedure not being available. Under normal circumstances the field of operation is to be found on the bottom quarter of the screen and the game is played in the topmost window. Relevant texts are shown in the centre of the field of operation and the mouse indicator slides through under the window. Portraits of the four heroes of the game are on the left-hand side. The status indicator of one of the players appears by clicking the relevant portrait (see below). A field with a few icons can be seen on the right-hand side. With the aid of these small symbols you can move through the game and give commands. With the right-hand button on the mouse you can change this window from modes of command to modes of movement and vice versa. A few arrows are visible during modes of movement which move our group of heroes in the appropriate direction. The command icons are described individually below and change according to the location of the party. The top part of the screen is also brought into use on particular occasions (in kit modes and shopping modes - see below).

TRAVEL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, OVER LAND AND SEA

In order to accomplish their task the group must travel throughout almost the whole world; the standard, and also the cheapest form of transportation being by foot. There are, however, more graceful ways of advancing. The group can be moved in 8 different directions, symbolised on the movements menu by 8 direction arrows. Many dangers and obstructions lie in wait for the party on each of their journeys. Humans, dwarfs and elves are not able to advance unhindered on every underground level. Rivers, lakes, seas and high mountains are insurmountable for the travellers; it is not even possible to see over the mountains. Progress is made more difficult by woods, jungles and also rolling country. Setting foot on to swamp areas can be fatal. In these areas you can only move on with extreme difficulty and the evil fumes arising from these mist-covered placed can even endanger the health of the group members. Caution is also called for in deserts and ice-covered locations. Yet it is not only nature that endangers the lives of the travellers; hordes of roaming Orcs, or even worse, creatures of the Magician's war, can pose a deadly threat. Nevertheless, these beings never dare to hang around in towns and their immediate vicinities.

uch energy can be expended during long journeys, so the group should take care that they always have sufficient provisions with them. Such provisions can be bought in almost every town.

Dangers of this nature, however, can be reduced if other ways of advancing are available. One of these is a ship journey - magnificent sailing ships can bring the party to distant shores. However, chartering a ship is not a particularly cheap option for the party. When travelling by ship, attention should be paid to a few particulars. It is the responsibility of the party to provide the crew with food. You should therefore be sufficiently equipped with provisions before the ship journey starts, otherwise the sailors could resort to an old sea-faring tradition: they start a mutiny! Collisions of the ship with the mainland should of course be avoided under all circumstances as well. The ship can only endure three collisions before it inevitably sinks!

TEMPLE

Movement across greater distances can also be achieved through the heroes' own strength, if the correct spells are used. The old Temples of White and Black Magic play a great role in this. Erected on places where the Earth's energy is concentrated, they were Meditation and Ritual Centres for Black and White Magicians. At the time of our story, too, these places strengthen the magic capacity of the spirit and an increase in the ability to accumulate energy is brought about. The Rings of the Stasis, Dambrano's gift, may also be put to use (see 'REVIVAL OF CHARACTERS'). Anyone entering one of these Temples to meditate will automatically become aware of the name of the place. Possessing the correct spell allows the group to teleport to another Temple if they are standing directly at such. An alternative spell can displace the group from any given place on the surface to a Temple - only provided, however, that the name of the target Temple is already known.

The following actions may be carried out on the world's surface:

(Attention! All following and further pictures marked "FIGURE X" you will find in APPENDIX A at the end of this Instruction Book.)

Figure 1: MAGIC - Perform a prepared spell. After this command has been given, it must be determined which group member should actually perform the spell by clicking appropriately.

Figure 2: ATTACK - Should an aggressor be found in the direct vicinity of the group, he can be attacked before he in turn attacks the group. If the command to attack has been given, the party has the first opportunity to attack in a fight - otherwise the opponents can attack first.

Figure 3: ENTERING A PLACE OR A SHIP - Applicable to towns, Temples, dungeons and special places.

Figure 4: CAMPING DOWN FOR THE NIGHT - The group has a rest and as a result wins Hit points and Magic points. If the last camp down is taken up shortly before a new rest phase, then the effect on the group is only limited. The party can also be attacked during the night!

Figure 5: LEAVING THE SHIP - This icon can be used when the ship has put the party ashore on a coast.

Figure 6: DISC OPERATIONS - Load and store state of play.

The knowledge of the geography of the world and the art of producing maps have, at the time in which our story takes place, almost fallen into oblivion. However, there is talk of fragments belonging to an antique magical map which would, no doubt, prove invaluable on adventurous journeys.



TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Numerous towns, large and small, are scattered over the continents and the islands of the world. Various shops offering all sorts of useful items of equipment can be found there. Of even greater importance, however, to the party and their quest, are the inhabitants of the towns; sometimes their information and advice can be of particular significance. To start up a conversation with a passer-by in the street you simply have to be go near to him and then press the 'SPEAK' icon. The houses in the towns have numbers which may be established by pressing the 'INVESTIGATE' symbol. The 'KNOCK' icon my be activated when the group is standing directly in front of a house door.

If anyone lives in the house concerned, he/she will open the door to speak with you. If no-one opens the door then try again later!

You have several options when conversing with a person. The arrow icons scroll up and down texts which are longer than one screen page. The 'SHOW' icon produces the list of objects which may be shown to the other person and he may then offer information. If the party wishes to offer their new acquaintance a gift then the 'GIVE' button should be pressed. Certain objects may loosen the tongues of some folk ... Conversation is ended by pressing the right-hand mouse button.

Figure 7: MAGIC - Perform a prepared spell. After this command been given, it must be determined which group member should actually perform the spell by clicking appropriately.

Figure 8: SPEAK

Figure 9: KNOCK

Figure 10: INVESTIGATE

Figure 10a: SHOW

Figure 10b: GIVE

Shops can be identified through a red sign at the entrance. They offer (almost) everything an adventurer's heart could wish for - at more or less favourable prices. Should the group enter a shop (KNOCK) the procedure is shifted to the top of the screen. The question mark in the right-hand corner shows the status of a character once one of the small portraits in the top right-hand corner has been clicked. By picking one of these pictures the buyer of the object is selected. The group leaves the building by pressing the 'Down-pointing arrow' symbol.



GROCER

Rations essential for the journey can be bought here. The amount of food required can be determined by the red/blue arrow.

THE BLACKSMITH



Weapons and munition are indeed indispensable for battle, but the clever traveller will compare prices carefully!

The red/blue arrow flicks through the selection of goods and to buy a weapon or munition the object must be clicked and then drawn to one of the four portraits. To sell something the portrait must again be clicked and a list of objects which may be of interest to the smith appears. Clicking one of the objects is then enough to sell it (after perhaps a small query).

THE DRUG STORE



In fact all sorts of useful objects for travellers are to be found here. The procedure is the same as at the Blacksmith's.

THE HEALER



Badly injured characters can be attended to by the healer and they (and their Hit points) will quickly recover. Healers are particularly recommendable when the party is not yet equipped with healing spells. Here, too, the procedure is the same.

THE PUB



A cool drink does wonders for the thirsty traveller, but the conversations which can be picked up there may prove even more valuable.

THE SHIPPING COMPANY



A ship is provided, complete with crew. The procedure here is uncomplicated; simply choose the character who has enough capital for a ship.

PALACES

Larger towns are often used as residences for the Leaders of the populations. These palaces can be very interesting for an adventurer.

Many of the large towns are really worth a visit, even when an important mission doesn't have to be accomplished there as in the case of our four heroes. The most important towns are described as follows:

PEGANA

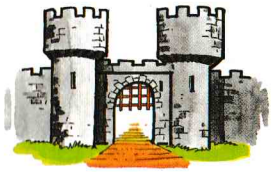


Pegana is a central city on the main continent Ontaflareth, and is built due north of the enormous Glandomil forest. The state University was built in this City - thus much knowledge is to be found here.

The population of the City consists of all the regular races of the land - men, dwarfs and elves who all live together in relative harmony. The City has an abundance of after-dusk life, occurring mainly in the large numbers of inns where many of the University students, for example, roam around in the early hours of the evening.

Pegana was built as a City where all the races of the land could mix together at a time, several hundred years ago, when the different races first became aware of each other.

BRINDIL-BUN



The City of dwarfs, built along the river Ebaren, which in turn flows into the Ontaflareth Sea. Part of the City is built on the side of Brindil Hill. The houses are generally smaller than those of the humans and elves, in keeping with the dwarfs limited size.

Brindil-Bun is thought to be the oldest city in the land, although the elves sometimes maintain that their city of Nimraviel is older. This is a traditional, mostly quite harmless, quarrel that tends to emerge at many meetings or festivities where elves and dwarfs come together.

One of the largest buildings is the palace of King Drilba Kerilson. He does not have a Queen as yet, as he has not yet reached the age of 250 years - the age when a dwarf is first allowed to marry.

NIMRAVIEL



The city of elves, built between Glandifil and 'their' Glandomil forests (Glandifil forest has disappeared and has been replaced by what is known as the Evil Desert). Whereas Brindil-Bun reflects the no-nonsense, fixed attitude of the dwarfs, Nimraviel can be seen to reflect the nature of the elves directly - gentle and slender.

The city is unique in that it expands over a considerably large area to encompass the many trees which the elves love - and even built their houses in.

Through Brindil-Bun is generally considered to be the oldest city in the land, the elves keep claiming that Nimraviel is in fact the oldest city.

The palace of King Garolys Wimrofel-son and his Queen Silzay is to be found in the centre of the city, built on an ancient oak.

PORT PYLON



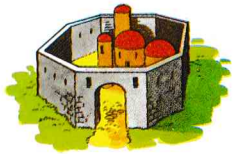
The City of men, lies along the eastern shores where Ontaflareth disappeared into the southern Sea. In no other city do the styles of buildings vary as much as here, because the creative spirit of mankind has roamed here since its very beginning (no-one knows exactly when that was). Port Pylon is highly famous for its sailors and capable ship-builders and ship-dealers.

For ages it had seemed as though Port Pylon had had a curse cast on it: It was raided by pirates, scourged by Bubonic Plague, 'spontaneously' burned down to a large degree, and even once disappeared off the earth for a couple of weeks due to some evil spell, the origin of which is unknown.

A somewhat obscure building on the outskirts of the city - not exactly what could be

called pompous or a luxury - is the residence and palace of King Drahnreb Sualcson and his Queen Xirtaeb.

SCATTERBONE

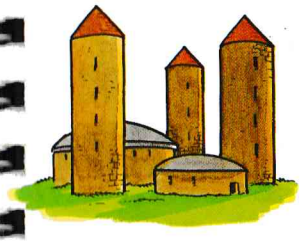


City of rogues, outcasts and outlaws. The largest pirate community in the land lives here and there is an extensive black market where anything from young damsels to toothpicks and torches to magic tools can be bought.

The city is ruled by King Halfton the Younger, son of King Quarterton, and his magnificent Queen Doubleton the Not-so- graceful. Halfton is said to be tortured by some being, and would pay handsomely the one who can rid him of it. Special forges produce fearsome weapons that can be obtained from nowhere else.

You'd better watch your back there!

BAGNOL



A city much like Pegana and also inhabited by the various races living on the face of the land. This city lies on the island of Dorithannon, which lies in the Dorithannon Sea. It is surrounded by marshes and swamps and is one of the smaller cities of the world.



DUNGEONS

The old schools of Black and White Magic have been deserted for many years; at least as far as humans, dwarfs and elves are concerned. In the course of the years they transformed into dilapidated dungeons in which ghostly creatures of the WAR are to be found spooking around. It is said that even the layout of the dungeons itself makes life very difficult for the travellers. Although the original intention was to prevent access of uninvited guests to the secret knowledge of the magicians, in present times the trap doors, secret panels (recognisable by their slightly worn structure) and teleportation mechanisms present a deadly threat to all who hope to re-discover the wisdom of times past.

All the same, the old schools hold ready rewards for folk with an adventurous spirit; treasure chests are to be found in the passage-ways and chambers; and of course the powerful spells of the old magicians can be found in the dungeons, too. The torches left hanging in the passage-ways may be taken for private use. A fungus of the kind sought by healers is also abundant in the damp passage-ways.

Occasionally a map can be found showing the relevant storey of the old school. A useful relic - most likely left behind by a previous, unfortunate adventurer, whose remains can probably be found near-by...

Just how powerful the magic of the seniors was, is demonstrated not least by the so-called RIDDLE-TONGUES. They can speak, although they are not really alive - they are doomed to spend their existences in the walls. Sometimes they can twitter too much, but often being able to solve their riddles can mean the difference between life and death.

As they in fact represent a minor life form in their own way, you should only ever answer their questions with ONE word. It is said that some of them even disappear when they hear the right thing said.

The dungeons are portrayed in 3-dimensional form, the chambers of the labyrinth however are in profile on the battle screen. Some characteristics of these chambers are given below - 'Battle Screens in Dungeons'. The following choices are available in the dungeons:

Fig 11. - One step forward

Fig 12. - One step back

Fig 13. - One step to the right (without turning)

Fig 14. - One step to the left (without turning)

Fig 15. - Turn 90 degrees to the right

Fig 16. - Turn 90 degrees to the left

Fig 17. - Up one storey (only available when the group is already at a stair-well)

Fig 18. - Down one storey (only available when the group is already at a stair-well)

Fig 19. - CAST A SPELL

Fig 20. - TAKE - Where the group finds itself in front of a valuable object, it can, with the aid of the TAKE icon, bring it into the possession of one of the characters.

Fig 21. - EAVESDROPPING - When positioned directly in front of a door one of the group may eavesdrop to find out hopefully whether or not, and if so, how many monsters there are in that chamber.

Fig 22. - OPEN DOOR - The party must again be standing directly in front of a door in order to open it.

Fig 23. - OPEN CHEST - Now and again tempting treasure chests can be found in the passage-ways. Again you must be standing right in front to open them. However, be careful; often dangerous traps can take the fun out of discovering the treasure.

Fig 24. - INVESTIGATE - This icon can be put two good uses here in the dungeons: the symbol can be clicked when standing in front of the wall to allow a closer look which could reveal a secret panel. Also, riddle-Tongues begin to speak as soon as they are 'investigated'.

Fig 25. - UNLOCK - Some of the doors are bolted, but with the aid of a magic key every door can be opened, simply by clicking first the icon and then the character holding the key. Unfortunately these keys may only be used once!

THE STATUS-AND KIT INDICATOR

Clicking on one of the character portraits at the side provides many opportunities to check the characters and their equipment. First of all appears...



Every important price of information on each and any character can be done by clicking the mini-size portraits. The information thus given is detailed below:

Indicator beam: Shows the power relationship between Black and White magic again. See 'THE ART OF SPELL- CASTING', 'Use of Black and White magic'.

Hitpoints: Shows again the health of the character. The characters lose Hitpoints through each physical attack (fighting, traps, teleporting, etc.). If the Hitpoints go down to zero, the character dies! Hitpoints can be built up again by camping down for the night or through magic potions.

Magic: Magic spells require enormous concentration and use up much spiritual energy. 'Magic' reveals how much energy reserve the character still possesses in this respect. If Magic points fall to a too

low level, the more demanding spells can no longer be performed, indeed all magical abilities may be lost. Rest periods (camping down for the night) allow accumulation of magic points, although the points will gradually accumulate even without setting up camp.

Experience: The character's experience, particularly in the field of fighting increases as the game continues. Many things depend on this wealth of experience, for example being a good shot and being able to move quickly during fights, successful spell-casting, safe opening of treasure chests, etc. Amongst the other things, the experience value also determines the maximum Hitpoints and Magic points which may be achieved.

Character: The number given here is determined by the character's deeds. 'Good' deeds such as generosity towards beggars or accomplishment of set tasks, push this figure higher. On the other hand slaying a fleeing enemy during battle or running away from monsters leads to a loss of character points. In the course of the game it may be that the group comes across someone who thinks highly of an acquaintance with high moral values.

Arms: The up-to-date weapon situation can be seen at a glance.

Armaments: Shows the armaments presently being worn.

Weapon value: The degree of danger posed by the arms of a character is determined by race, experience, weapons and magic potions. This is expressed as a 'Weapon Value'.

Armaments value: Account is also taken here of factors such as race, armaments, potions and magical rings and the so-called 'Armaments Value' indicates how well-protected a character is from attacks.

Food: Indicates the supply of provisions at any given time. A character with no food loses Hitpoints with every step he takes!

Gold: Not difficult to work out - this value determines the wealth of the character.

Once on this status page, several sub-menus can be called up:

Fig 26. - The downwards arrow leaves the status page again. This icon also appears in the sub-menus so that the status page can be returned to once again.

Fig 27. - Submenu 1 - object display

All objects in the possession of a character are shown here. With the aid of the red/ blue arrow the list can be scrolled up or down. Here too, individual characters are able to swap their possessions by clicking on the mini-size portraits. Exchanging objects, provisions and gold between the characters is quite simple; click on the relevant object and drag it to the portrait of the character intended to receive the kit. The menu right of centre offers a few further possibilities regarding the kit.

Fig 28. - INVESTIGATING ITEMS OF KIT. A small hand appears and by clicking a certain object, a description is given.

Fig 29. - Manipulating items of kit. Some articles that have been found can be treated in one of two ways - either by loading them or modifying them...



Fig 30. - Preparation of a weapon or armament. The characters may each carry a variety of armaments and weapons or pieces of armaments which may be employed, carried or worn in battle. The weapon or armament intended for use in battle should be clicked on this icon.

Fig 31. - SUB-MENU 2: MAGIC SPELLS



By clicking this symbol, all the spells which the character has already learned, appear.

Fig 32. - Preparation of a spell. The spell clicked on this icon is used in conjunction with the magic icon (on the lower part of the screen), i.e. a character can only hold one spell at a time in his memory.

THE BATTLE SCREEN

When a conflict develops with a group of monsters, the battle scene is portrayed from a side-angle. The party always starts the battle on the left-hand side of the screen and the enemy attacks form the left. The battle begins with the first attack - whether launched by the party or by the monsters. Before explaining in more detail the procedure of the battle mode, let's just briefly consider the principle of the battle screen. The conflict is staged in so-called rounds. One battle round involves one action by a character and the corresponding reaction of the opponent. At the start of each battle round the characters are informed which moves should be made.

All characters are provided with instructions one after the other. Afterwards the course of the battle can be observed on the screen: Our heroes carry out their actions and then the monsters make their move. Once all moves have been carried out new commands are given to the characters for the following round. And now to the details...

Fig 33.

Each character has a certain number of moves per battle round. The amount depends on experience, race and the possible spells involved. The maximum number of moves one character can achieve is nine. In practice this means, for example, that a character with three moves can run twice and hit once.





The commands are given to each character by means of the usual icon system. The right-hand mouse button again alternates between movement and command symbols. Each character, in turn, is given his commands using the icons. Assistance is given at the same time by texts in the central window and by the small overall view in the top-left of the screen. From here the battle can be seen from a bird's eye view and the programmed movements immediately become visible.

Two number values are to be seen above the portraits of the heroes. HP represents the remaining Hit points of the character and MP the remaining Magic points. The help screen is turned off during battle. The following actions are possible on the battle screen:

Fig 34. - Character walks forward one step (to the right as seen by the observer)

Fig 35. - Character walks back one step (to the left as seen by the observer)

Fig 36. - Character walks one step to the left (backwards as seen by the observer)

Fig 37. - Character walks one step to the right (forwards as seen by the observer)

Fig 38. - Character turns around

Fig 39. - MAGIC. The currently activated spell is carried out

Fig 40. - ATTACK. A monster is attacked. Depending on the weapon in hand this can be a long-distance attack (arrow, dagger, magical weapon, etc.) or a close-range attack (sword, axe, etc.)

Fig 41. - DEFENCE. The player is forced into the defensive for the rest of all the remaining moves. Depending on his race and experience, he is able to avoid attacks or to defend himself.

It is not possible to try and memorise a new spell during the heat of the battle. This should be prepared before the start of the conflict. At the end of a battle round, the large text window is activated and the events of the round can be gleaned.

ESCAPE

Less heroic, but often far more sensible, is to escape from the overwhelming opponents. All that the party has to do is to leave the battle screen through one of the exits. However, all characters must use the same escape route and they are not allowed to split up from each other! Unfortunately, fleeing entails a slight loss of character points. However, many opponents don't fight to the point of surrender, but prefer to leave the battle. Such a monster will attempt to exit the battle scene by the shortest possible route. The text evaluation of the battle round draws attention to the fleeing monster. Slaying opponents as they flee is punished by taking off character points.

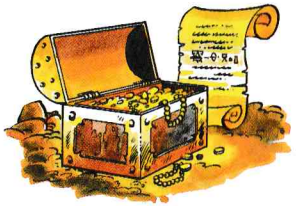


THE REWARD OF THE BATTLE



Each character gains experience points for each monster he manages to defeat. The amount of points awarded is dependant on the strength of the opponent. Furthermore, many monsters carry gold with them will be automatically claimed by the victor.

THE BATTLE SCENARIO IN THE DUNGEONS



In the old schools of magic the chambers are basically shown from a side view on the screen. This means, amongst other things, that a monster isn't necessarily in every chamber. The steering of the group remains the same, but there are one or two particular things which must be explained in more detail.

Treasure chests and golden closets are to be found in the dungeon chambers. The chests contain all sorts of valuable objects. However, the closets contain written scrolls which are endowed with the magic spells of the old magicians! A character must be standing directly in front of a chest or closet in order to empty the contents and he does so using the icon used already in the 3D procedure.

Fig. 43. - OPENING THE CHEST

Unlike in the battle scenario on the surface, there may be up to four exits in the dungeons. A door ahead (as seen by the observer) can be recognised by a narrow wooden beam on the bottom edge of the battle screen window. This can be done with the 'LEAVING THE CHAMBER' icon.

Fig. 44. - LEAVING THE CHAMBER

The whole group may leave the chamber in a certain direction which must be determined by clicking the icon with the direction arrows. This is, however, only possible when there are no monsters left in the chamber.

Particular attention should be paid to the fact that the chambers are ALWAYS shown with the party on the left. Therefore, leaving the chamber is one of the other directions results in a twisting of the surroundings! Escape is only possible by means of the doors.

CHARACTER ARMS



Our four heroes each have varying abilities and merits as a consequence of their differing races and professions. Not all of them can handle every weapon or armament. Each character's preferences and aversions with the regard to handling weapons is detailed below.

BLADUS



As a trained warrior he can manage almost all weaponry. The only exceptions are weapons which have been specifically created for other races. These are:

- magical casting hatchet
- club
- elven bow

RINAKLES

...is more accustomed to spiritual rather than physical discipline. Many weapons are too heavy for him. The weapons he can't handle are:

- sword
- protractable sword
- battle-axe
- battle hatchet
- magical casting hatchet
- club
- all bows



DOBRANUR

The dwarf population has been known for its strength and tenacity since the beginning of time. Most of the dwarfs are therefore effective warriors. They do, however, despise a few weapons on principle, or because of their own limited size:

- protractable sword
- crystal blades
- stiletto
- all arrows



ANDARIEL

In common with all members of the Elf population, Andariel is not blessed with excessive physical strength. Fighting also goes against her grain; at the best she regards fighting as a necessary evil. Accordingly, she is not "au fait" with many weapons, but being an elf she is quite talented in archery. The weapons she does not use are:

- sword
- protractable sword
- crystal blades
- battle-axe
- battle hatched
- magic casting axe
- club



THE OPPONENTS

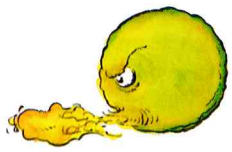
Our heroes will have to face many dangers during their journey. Not only do the creatures of the magician's war pose a threat, but so do wild animals. Here is a list of the monsters KNOWN to make the surface and the dungeons unsafe for travellers:

ORCS



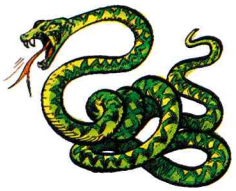
Scantily clad creatures, mostly only wearing a bit of animal skin to cover themselves. They smell somewhat rotten, and have large ears with which they can hear remarkably well. Their skin is brown and hairy, and they can something grow to be as tall as a fully grown man. Orcs are not creatures of the magician's war, but are tribe of primitive hunters from the west of Dorithannon. They may be carrying weapons.

ENERGY BOLTS



No-one is sure about where these abstract forms come from or what they are made of. Basically, they are round and green with a hint of blazing fire inside. They lash out bolts of fire at whoever they wish to attack. Energy bolts are above all dangerous on account of their speed!

SERPENTS



A lethally dangerous animal life form, green in colour. There are species which strangle and species which are poisonous, but what they all have in common, is that they are mean and can never be trusted. Don't ever turn your back on them - and don't trust them even when it's their backs that are turned on you!

GHOSTS



Blue, shimmering, semi-transparent forms that cannot be touched or harmed by any common physical means. They can dissolve into brown clouds that smell like sulphur, and usually their presence can be detected before they come into view by virtue of their unique scent. There are ghosts who are unaffected when attacked by normal weapons such as swords, axes or bows! What is more, ghosts are pretty nimble opponents.

GHOULS



Hollow shapes clad in blue robes, smaller than humans. They lash forth balls of fire from their eyes which seem to float in the hollowness of their faces, which in turn are hidden under their hoods. When they die, they dissolve into oblivion. The ghouls use a kind of magic in battle which affects the whole group! As in the case of the ghosts, there are also ghouls who are immune to "physical" weapons.

BEARS



Naturally peaceful animals that are generally hairy, brown, and walk on all fours. When they stand on their hind legs they well exceed the height of adult and an angry bear can be lethal. It is said that some bears have been affected by the magic wars and have become permanently hostile.

SKELETONS



Remains of strange men who have died through unnatural causes. Their skeletons have been destined to rule the earth and seek prey until they are truly put the rest. There are also supposed to be skeletons roaming about which belong to elves, dwarfs and various other creatures as well, although this has never been proven. The skeletons become even more dangerous, of course, when they are carrying weapons!

BEASTS



Emotionless creatures spawn from the earth. They hide, motionless, an areas of purple clay, from which they may creep out very unexpectedly. They are horned, and have an evil glare which has the power to stun many unsuspecting passers-by. They usually expose their enormous fangs, which again adds to their power to stun. When they die they disappear into the mud.....

BALRONS



Huge, sturdily built and enormously strong creatures that are almost impossible to defeat in normal warfare. They have wings to fly over obstacles such as mountains and oceans, and abnormal hollow white eyes. They can throw fire, and dissolve in flames when they disappear. Balrons are extremely dangerous and are equipped with magic spells that they can harm the whole group. In close combat, however, their blows are even far more fearful; only the extremely experienced adventurer has any sort of chance of surviving an attack of a Balron.

TROLLS

Slimy green creatures who can transform themselves into spheres when they die. Their eyes are said to have a great ability to stun the unexpected onlooker, although this has never been proven. Legend says that these creatures are only active at night - if the sun manages to cast its rays upon them before they have reached shelter they will turn to stone. Perhaps that explains why Trolls are only to be found in underground dungeons.

GNOLLS



Creatures smaller than man. They radiate filth and smell even worse than the orcs. Not much is known about these creatures, but it is certainly claimed that they can be deadly if they want to be! They also reside in the dungeons.

STATUES



Strong beings made of smooth granite, they are virtually as indestructable as the material they're wrought of. They are much taller than even the bears and tower above an adult male by at least two full heads. They throw fire and their eyes radiate a malicious kind of red light. They are relics of the old

magicians which where obviously intended to protect the magicians secrets. they are not able to move, but one is well advised to keep out of their line of fire! It is said that there is only one weapon which can destroy them.

CRYSTAL GUARDS



A living gem - almost the size of a grown man. Their true appearance can only be imagined, as nobody who ever came across one has managed to escape its power. They are extremely lethal, and they, too, are virtually indestructable.

THE ART OF MAGIC

Long before the time of this story, magic belonged to the every day life of the elves, dwarfs and humans. Hardly anyone knows of this lost art any more. However, in the old schools of magic there are still some records of the spells commonly used in the old days. If such a scroll is discovered, the process of learning a spell is very simple: Simply read the text, and the spell will imprint itself on the memory. To carry out this action, click "Investigate" in the kit indicator and then on the scroll.

The scroll with the spell will disappear immediately after it is read.

As well known, there were doctrines of both White and Black Magic, which both, understandably developed in different directions. And now to a summary of the ancient spells which may have been recorded and hidden in the depths of the dungeons.

WHITE MAGIC SPELLS

LIGHT



A brilliant white aura is formed around the person performing the spell. Very useful in the dark dungeons.....

Necessary Magic Points: 3

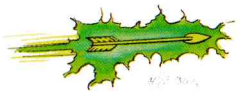
BANISHING THE UNDEAD



Should the group encounter creatures of the undead, such as skeletons, ghosts and ghouls, this spell can be used to master the situation. The Undead, or at least some of them will dispand or flee. This spell can be used only once during each conflict.

Necessary Magic Point: 5

MAGIC BOW



A battle magic. A magic missile is hurled at the opponent. The magic arrow, however, does not cause too much damage.

Necessary Magic Points: 8

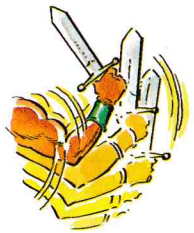
DAZZLING



An imaginary flash of light momentarily blinds all opponents, and thus reduces their chances of a successful strike. This spell too, can be used only once per battle.

Necessary Magic Points: 10

SPEED



This spell increases the speed of the whole party for the duration of the battle, i.e. more moves can be made.

Necessary Magic Points: 10

PROTECTION



Gives the person casting the spell additional protection against opponent's blows. The spell lasts for the whole battle, but may only be used once for each battle.

Necessary Magic Points: 8

PROTECTION OF THE GROUP

As above, but with the difference that the whole group is protected.

Necessary Magic Points: 18

HEALING



When one of the characters is healed, his Hit points increase.

Necessary Magic Points: 5



HEALING TRANCE

When one of the characters is restored to full health, his Hit points reach their maximum value.

Necessary Magic Points: 20

TEMPLE TELEPORTATION



This spell teleports the group to another Temple, under the condition that the group is standing directly at a Temple and also knows the name of the target Temple.

Necessary Magic Points: 25

TELEPORTATION

The group can be transported from any place on the surface to a Temple. Here too, the name of the target Temple must be known.

Necessary Magic Points: 40

BLACK MAGIC SPELLS

LIGHT

This spell accords with the light spell of White Magic.

Necessary Magic Points: 2

MAGIC ARROW

This spell is also comparable to that of the White art.

Necessary Magic Points: 3

FIRE BALL

A magic missile, more powerful than the magic arrow.

Necessary Magic Points: 8

FLASH

The strongest projectile of all.

Necessary Magic Points: 15

FEAR

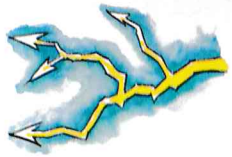
This spell sends a proportion of the opponents fleeing.

Necessary Magic Points: 12

SHOCKWAVE

The shockwave creates light to medium harm to its opponents.

Necessary Magic Points: 18



FLASH FIELD

A very strong battle spell which injures the whole group of monsters.

Necessary Magic Points: 25

THE SPELL WITH NO NAME

The most sinister product of the battle spells of the Black Magicians. A large number of the opponents simply disappear - no one knows which fate will await the victims of this spell ....

Necessary Magic Points: 35

LEAVING THE DUNGEON

A most useful spell in the dungeons: It can teleport a character to the surface at any time.

Necessary Magic Points: 12

EVERYDAY SPELLS

As already mentioned, magic used to be an ordinary part of everyday life. That's why you will also find spells in the old schools that have nothing much to do with the adventurous type of quest you're on. For the old tutor, Dambrano, however, they are invaluable. One should supply him with these to enable him to set up the new Faculty of Magic. The following 'everyday' spells may be found:

- Tree healing
- Wood hardening
- Fertility
- Shaping of rock
- Glowing of stone
- Rock hardening
- Find ore
- Conserve
- Glow mist

USE OF BLACK AND WHITE MAGIC

Both Black and White Magic demand a great amount of spiritual power, and much concentration is needed to perform the spells. However, the state of consciousness accustoms itself to one or the other form of magic. Someone who has often employed White Magic will at first find it difficult to employ Black Magic. A beam indicator in the status indicator illustrates this point. The beam indicator has in each direction - to the left Black and to the right White - a maximum of five stages. This means in practice that when a character has used three "White" spells, for example and then wants to make use of a "Black" spell, the spell will fail three times until the beam has at least reached neutral position.

SPECIALISATION OF CHARACTERS

Not every character has the talent to learn any number of spells. The magical talent among the heroes varies considerably:

BLADUS

...has a tendency to make more use of his body than his spirit, but he too can master spells; he learns particularly those spells which are useful in battle.

RINAKLES

...is the most talented magician of the party. He masters all spells with the exception of those natural to the elf population, to which only this race has access.

DOBRANUR

Magic which doesn't serve to forge or form metal has, since the beginning of time, been suspect matter for the dwarf population. Many of the ranks were not made for it. Dobranur is, however, very talented for a dwarf, even though not quite as enthusiastic about it as Dambrano. Some spells just don't seem to sink in for him, but others he can remember without any problem.

ANDARIEL

One form of the magical profession was always dear to the heart of the elf population: Healing living beings and plants. No other race has this pronounced tendency towards any particular form of magic. In spite of this, Andariel has a rather modest talent and she can quite easily master some of the less demanding spells of battle, and light-magic.

MAGICAL OBJECTS AND POTIONS

Even though the knowledge of magic was lost many years ago, there are still a few relics of magical power remaining from this time, a good example of which are the Rings of the Stasis - Dambrano's gift to his pupils (see "Revival"). There are, however, supposed to be other magical remains in the dark dungeons which have survived to the present time.



PROTECTION RINGS

These inconspicuous rings have the quality of reducing the impact of attacks on the holder. There are small, medium and large-size protection rings, their protection value proportional to their size. The use of the rings does not replace armaments, but is to be taken as a form of additional protection. Only one of the rings may be used at a time.

DRAGONRINGS

Dragonrings similarly offer a form of protection. It is said that, in times of old, the dragons gave these head-bands to people to whom they had entrusted a dangerous mission. The protection they offer is excellent. No-one knows, however, whether there are any Dragonrings left at all....

POTIONS



Magic Potions constitute a special kind of magic which is credited with all sorts of effects, ranging from increasing the strength of both physical and spiritual power to lethal poisons. These effects can be strengthened further or altered by combining the different fluids. The potions are supposed to have a long life, and there are probably many of them still to be found in the old schools. However, what is written on their labels is no longer generally understood.

MAGIC WANDS

...of different types were used to strengthen magical powers, or made it possible for non-magicians to make use of supernatural energies. No-one possesses such an artifact any more, but the discovery of one would most certainly prove very useful to our heroes. It is said that Magic Wands were intended as horrific weapons.

FATAL INJURY AND REVIVAL OF CHARACTER

As we are now well aware, many dangers lurk for the party during their travels. Some of these could in fact mean death for Bladus, Rinakles, Dobranur and Andariel....

In order to avoid the worst and also make his pupils a little less afraid, Dambrano passed on the group his last remaining relic: The Rings of the Stasis. A Ring of this type is able to perceive whether or not an injury of the bearer could threaten to become fatal. Then it opens up its magic power and takes in the body of the person concerned. The injured person who has entered the Ring can free himself from it again inside one of the Temples which are spread over the land, and although in a weakened state, he will have regained full health.

This can only be done however when at least one of the other characters is still alive and he can bring his companion's rings to a Temple. If all the other members of the group have been killed, then there is no longer hope, and death will once again be victorious.....



DRAGONFLIGHT - THE PEOPLE BEHIND IT .....

The creation of Dragonflight has run on for a period of over three years - an unusually long time for a computer game. For the most part this has been due to the story development and sheer magnitude of the programme. Dragonflight was started as a project by two private individuals, who at the start, conceived the game without having a clue as to just how much work could be involved in a game of this dimension. Instead of deleting more and more features, however, in the course of time, they persisted with the realisation of their dreams. Thus Dragonflight took its time and at least for one of its initiators the game has marked his whole life....

Erik Simon - Graphics, Game Concept and Texts



26 years old, 2.00 m tall and weighing 106 kg, Erik is a "deserting" electronic student, an enthusiastic Fantasy-reader, computer-player and motor-bike rider.

"I can clearly recall that fateful evening in January 1987, at our favourite Pizza Parlour in Udo's home village of Maxdorf, and there it was what we ceremoniously ate our pizza, celebrating the start of our first home-made computer game! Already on this same evening I sketched the first graphic components and Udo began to write his programme.

Prior to the decision were many years of intensive occupation with a hobby computer and the most fascinating aspect of such devices: Games. We were inspired by many of them, but none kept us glued to the screen as much as those programmes categorised as "Role Playing Games". That's why it was our intention that our project should be a Role Playing Game, which the American product Paroli could offer. A pretty brave decision for two people who weren't even in a position to work full time on the programme! In very high spirits we set about the task. After about a year we actually arrived at the stage where something came up the screen,

and the first steps into our world of fantasy could be taken. In the meantime, the fundamental story had started to take form: bored with the usual "Slay-the-evil-ruler" set up, a world was created in which dragons belonged to the Goodies and the players were subjected to a variety of tasks.

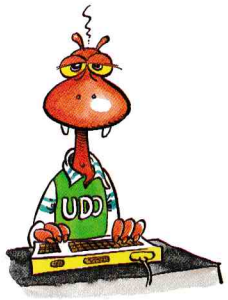
Shortly after all this, the "professional" world of computer games was brought to our attention. Various firms took up contact with us and we had the chance to see behind the scenes of the software industry.

As Dragonflight began to demand more and more of my time I reached a day of decision - a decision to make my hobby into a career. So together with a group of equally mad idiots, I took the plunge. Thalion was launched in mid '88. There was now more time at hand for Dragonflight but there was still so much to do...

Now, in 1990, we have finally reached the final stage with the help of a few friends and colleagues we have achieved our goal: Dragonflight is ready! All of us hope that you, the reader, enjoy our game! No doubt you will experience even more adventures playing the game than we did writing it.....

Erik Simon

Udo Fischer, Programming



25 years old, somewhat smaller and lighter than Erik, but just as enthusiastic a Fantasy reader and Role playing fanatic.

"In 1987 I had not thought that it would take so long to finish Dragonflight. After having started with the routines that handled the map walking, the dungeons and the modifications of the villages, the project started to run at last. But many details, enormous amounts of utility programs (like a map editor, dungeon editor, language interpreter, and much more) cost a lot of time. Also, the somewhat inaccurate scheduling at the beginning of this 'hobby project', many things were also programmed twice. Also, the fact that the assembler suddenly didn't handle the large source text file any more, didn't actually increase the working speed.

Now, after a bulk of 1 megabyte of source text, I am happy, HAPPY, that everything has finally been done.

Although I do not believe that you will have more of an adventure playing then I had writing (...why does the guardian walk around spontaneously? Isn't it supposed to be standing on one spot?...), I trust that it will surely be a thoroughly pleasurable experience.

And, thus, I wish you all lots of fun with this game. Maybe we'll meet again in another Role Playing Game (if I will let myself be persuaded to do another)...

Udo Fischer

OUR THANKS GO TO...

...the people, who by word and deed have assisted us in this project. Without them Dragonflight would still be a very distant ambition...

Eric & Udo

Jochen "Drums" Hippel

He composed and programmed the music for the whole game. May your hair always grow, Jochen!

Richard "Chaos-Makers" Karsmakers

He was responsible for writing the Dragonflight novel.

May you always follow your inspiring motto: Girls and games and Heavy metal!

Michael "Holland versus Germany" Raasch

He assisted us in programming the towns and dungeons.

May you celebrate your birthdays in the most distant parts of the world, Michael!

Gunter "BBB" Bitz

He programmed the Unicorn sequence and typed up many charts, May your fourth car last out longer than six months before you transform it into scrap, Gunter!

Niclas "Mega" Thisell

He re-programmed many of the battle screens. May the forests of your Swedish homeland grow as rapidly as its cost of living, Niclas!

Celal Kandemiroglu



He painted and drew all the illustrations and the cover.

May your surname forever be written correctly!

Ik "Dungeons are calling" Goedecke

He typed all the dungeons in to the patient data bank of his computer. May your supply of female acquaintance never be exhausted, Falk!

Marc "Curry Sausage" Rosocha

He programmed the sequences with Rilldock and King Halfton as well as the final sequence.

May you always survive the ST, Marc!

Joseph "King Halfton" Lenartz

He thought up (almost) all the name that are used in the programme.

May your student's life be forever joyful, Sepp!

Günter "Kung Fu" Schmitz

He assisted in depicting the final sequence. May the spirit of sport never make you an invalid, Günter!

Matthias "Benz" Sykosch

He programmed the MS-DOS conversion.

May you never be disheartened by the "speed" of PC-compatible computers, Matthias!

Günther "Bugfinder" Weber

Having been the first playtester, he is the representative of all Dragonflight game testers. He was the poor man that we often forgot to give the latest tables in his test versions.

May you be forever 'up to date', and may the joy of role playing never leave you, Günther!

Thorsten "Elfquest" Mutschall



He didn't actually do a thing for "Dragonflight" at all. A mention is made to him however, as representative of all those people who motivated us on many thousands of occasions by asking the very original question:"When is your game actually going to ready?"

May your pencil never become blunt and your drawing programme never crash, Thorsten!

NOTES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A


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