

**Baker Anita****"The Splendour Of A Thousand Swords Gleaming Beneath The Blazon Of The Hyperborean Empire"**

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[THE ANTEDILUVIAN ORACLE:]

Behold glorious Hyperborea, gleaming jewel of the  
north; an eon-veiled kingdom forever steeped in  
ancient legendry and the renown  
of its martial splendour... but of late, an ill wind  
whispers malignly through  
its opulent labyrinth of marbled citadels...

[WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE:]

[Episode I:]

THE SPLENDOUR OF A THOUSAND SWORDS GLEAMING  
BENEATH THE BLAZON OF THE HYPERBOREAN EMPIRE

[To be found on the second Bal-Sagoth album;

"Starfire Burning Upon The Ice-Veiled Throne of Ultima  
Thule"]

[Episode II:]

THE DARK LIEGE OF CHAOS IS UNLEASHED AT THE  
ENSORCELLED SHRINE OF A'ZURA-KAI

(THE SPLENDOUR OF A THOUSAND SWORDS GLEAMING  
BENEATH THE BLAZON OF THE HYPERBOREAN EMPIRE:

Part: II)

[To be found on the third Bal-Sagoth album; "Battle  
Magic"]

NOW...

[Episode III:]

CRY HAVOC FOR GLORY, AND THE ANNIHILATION OF  
THE TITANS OF CHAOS!

(THE SPLENDOUR OF A THOUSAND SWORDS GLEAMING  
BENEATH THE BLAZON OF THE HYPERBOREAN EMPIRE:

Part: III)

[ALTARUS:]

And so, it ends. You have learned much, young Xerxes.  
Your training is nigh on complete.

The years which you have spent here at the Praxeum  
have been difficult ones,  
but the reward of elucidation you have gained far  
outweighs the hardship you  
have endured. Many lessons have you learned, not  
least of which is that

knowledge is never without its price, my neophyte.

[XERXES:]

Yes, master Altarus. I have heeded your tutelage well,  
and your wisdom  
has been a great balm to me during the many trials I  
have undergone. I can now  
command the Mists of the Oracle, and the Great Eye of  
the Universe opens at my  
bidding. And yet, before I am placed before the final  
scrutiny of the Elders,  
I ask that I be allowed to gaze into the sidereal vista  
once more, to witness  
the final outcome of that great struggle which has so  
captivated me during my  
studies at the Praxeum.

[ALTARUS:]

Ah yes... the epic conflict between the Dark Liege of  
Chaos and the  
royal Scion of proud Hyperborea. Very well, my young  
apprentice. Command the  
starscape to divulge its mysteries... look deep into the  
fathomless mists, and  
the ruinous carnage of A'zura-Kai shall once again be  
arrayed before thine  
curious gaze. Aye Xerxes, thrice you have summoned  
the besieged and benighted  
vista of Hyperborea... now pay heed, for the final battle  
is at hand!

[Chapter 7: The Last Stand Against Chaos.]

[ALTARUS:]

And a crimson sun rose slowly over the Field of Blood...  
and such  
were the corpse-mounds of the dead that they aspired  
to touch that ireful orb.  
Slithering shadows nuzzled the massed bodies of the  
slain, as the King rallied  
the survivors of the battle against Chaos to one final  
act of defiance...

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

Impertinent mortal wormcast! Do you truly aspire to  
prevail  
against me? I am the Bane of the Atlantean Kings, the  
Scourge of Lemuria,  
Arch-Foe of the Immortals of Ultima Thule! Long before  
man hurled himself  
squamously from the primordial ooze, I waged war  
with gods and thwarted  
eternity!

[ALTARUS:]

Lord Angsaar, the Dark Liege of Chaos, was poised on  
the brink of

ultimate victory. By insidious manipulation, he had carefully drawn the forces of Hyperborea to battle at the Shrine of A'zura-Kai, pitting his legions of ravening wraiths against the stalwart forces of the Hyperborean Empire, and during the fray his agents of evil had seized the Ninth Crystal of Mera from the grasp of the King. With the cosmic energies of the Shrine magnifying the empyreal power of the Ninth Crystal, Angsaar triumphantly performed the arcane rite that would sunder the sorcerous fetters which had hitherto kept his physical incarnation confined within the ancient Chamber of Slumber. Summoning the interdimensional portal which the mystic power of the Shrine allied with the sorceries of the Crystal could generate, Angsaar channelled his fiendish presence from his darksome prison directly to the death-gorged Field of Blood.

Thus was the spell of confinement woven countless aeons ago by Angsaar's immortal nemesis broken, and on that fateful day the dread Chaos-Liege strode the world of mortal men once more. The King, flanked by the few valiant survivors of the ruinous Wraith-onslaught, stood defiant before the withering glare of Chaos...

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

Ah, great King of Hyperborea! My mystic shackles are at last

broken... I am free once more! Your army is lost, your realm is mine...

it shall be blessed with the honour of being the first to fall before my

renewed onslaught! Bow to me in obeisance!

[THE KING:]

Never! For too long your diseased machinations have hung like a

black pall over glorious Hyperborea... you have invaded my very dreams and

sown the virulent seeds of base treachery within my court. It ends here,

arch-fiend!

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

Feh! Yield to me, throw down your sword! Obey and I promise

that your death shall be swift, if not entirely devoid of

suffering!

[THE KING:]

I defy you!

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

Hyperborea shall fall! Your court shall become the heart of my new imperium! Your people shall become my lackeys, bearing the glorious burden of my sovereignty with sweet praise upon their lips!

[THE KING:]

I shall always defy you!

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

Then your pain shall etch a new legend of suffering in the benighted obelisks of the Outer Darkness, and not even that cursed blade of adamantine black steel shall preserve thee! Die!

[THE KING:]

So, the final battle begins! Into the fray we ride! For the eternal glory of Hyperborea!

[ALTARUS:]

And the Chaos-Liege summoned the remnants of his cackling wraith-horde, commanding the unholy brood to once more hurl itself like a black tide against the now bloodied but still razor edged steel of the grim survivors of Hyperborea. With the enchantments of the Ninth Crystal still crackling in the air about the Shrine, the incorporeal frames of the wraiths were once more transmogrified into squamous pseudo-flesh, and thus vulnerable to the biting blades of the King's depleted war-host. Rallying his forces once more, the Royal Scion of Hyperborea clove into the massed hordes of nethermost horror, his ensorcelled ebon blade hewing five-score left and five-score right, leaving a viscous and noxious trail of sundered fiends in his wake. The Arch-Wraith of Lord Angsaar, that same bestial horror which had smitten the King and seized the Crystal of Mera from his gauntleted fist, swooped screaming from the crimson sky in a bid to extinguish the life-force of the Hyperborean monarch, but the benighted blade of the King was swifter, and with a flash of noisome green light and smoke, the Arch-Wraith's

head rolled to the  
blood-slaked earth, its leering countenance forever  
frozen in a grotesque  
parody of un-death. And once more, like a purifying  
storm of righteous fury  
the heroes of Hyperborea dealt steel-cold and martial  
discipline unto the  
baying hounds of Chaos.

[XERXES:]

And yet I perceive that the wraith-horde's number was  
being ever  
bolstered by the sorceries of the reborn Chaos-Liege...  
for every keening  
horror hacked down by a Hyperborean blade, three  
more were summoned from the  
Outer Darkness by the machinations of Angsaar. Even  
the courage and the grim  
determination of the King's valiant force could not  
hope to prevail against  
such an overwhelming foe. But the last, best hope still  
remained, clutched  
tightly within the King's fist! The Shadow-Sword!

[ALTARUS:]

Your perceptions are clear, young Xerxes. The life-  
essence of  
Angsaar's arch-foe was still encased within the stygian  
sword following their  
last cataclysmic encounter many aeons past, and that  
yard of fearsome black  
steel spoke once more to the King in the same long  
dead tongue it had burned  
upon his mind deep within the Mountains of the Dead.  
One hope remained to  
defeat Angsaar, but it would carry with it a most  
terrible price for the King.

[Chapter 8: The Return of the Immortal]

[THE ECHOES OF THE IMMORTAL:]

Hearken, noble King of Hyperborea. Long ago,  
before life evolved from the boiling oceans of the  
primordial sphere, I waged  
furious and slaughterous battle with the Chaos-Liege  
over the possession of  
the sacred Crystals of Mera, shards of such incredible  
sorcerous potency that  
even the Empyrean Lexicon itself was no greater a  
prize. Although I succeeded  
in smiting the dark one and imprisoning him within his  
Chamber of Slumber, I  
was hammered to the brink of dissolution by the  
abominations of Chaos, and I  
thus transferred my life-essence into my Sword, that

same blade which you now  
hold in your grasp. I committed my fading energies to  
concealing the blade  
from the sight of man until such time as it would once  
more be needed to bring  
to bear against Chaos... aye, until such time as Angsaar  
reawakened. It was I  
who guided you to the mountainous resting place of  
the blade when my arch-foe  
marked you as central protagonist in his scheme to  
recover the  
Prime Crystal, o' King of the North. To utterly destroy  
the Dark Liege of  
Chaos, you must join your essence with mine... we must  
fuse our life-forces  
and become one so that my full power may be  
unleashed against Angsaar once  
more. But this final deed demands the most severe of  
tolls, o' noble monarch...

To become as one with the immortal essence of the  
Shadow-Sword is to sacrifice  
forever your own mortality, and to forsake eternally the  
world of man. Are you  
prepared to pay this price, King of Hyperborea?

[THE KING:]

To preserve the sovereignty of my realm and  
safeguard my people  
from the forces of darkness? Aye! For my kingship  
demands no less a commitment!  
So be it... let this final deed be done!

[THE WARRIORS OF HYPERBOREA:]

Imperius Rex!

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

What futile gesture is this? Curse you, manling! Can  
you not  
accept the inevitability of your defeat?

[THE KING:]

Begone, servitor of Chaos! Your nemesis awaits thee!  
Return to the  
Outer Darkness!

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

You fool! You cannot comprehend your actions! I  
offered you  
sweet oblivion, and instead you have chosen tortuous  
damnation!

[THE KING:]

I would sooner suffer damnation a thousand times than  
bend the knee  
to Chaos!

[ALTARUS:]

And a great stillness descended over the Field of

Blood. Grimly,  
slowly, the King held aloft the Shadow-Sword and  
spoke those baleful words of  
power which had been forever branded indelibly upon  
his soul. Writhing tendrils  
of night-dark, coruscating energy lanced from the  
surface of the blade,  
entwining the King in a pulsating chrysalis of searing  
sorcerous power. His  
eyes shone deep crimson with an illuminatory radiance  
not born of this world,  
and forces which had lain dormant since before the fall  
of the Third Moon  
stirred at last from their aeons-old slumber...

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

No... my eternal nemesis, you will not thwart me!

Abominations

rise! Destroy these mortals who vex me as the buzzing  
of gnats vexes a titan!

Drag their impudent souls to the abyss!

[THE WARRIORS OF HYPERBOREA:]

Havoc is the cry! Come, fiends of the nether-void...

face righteous pattern-welded death!

[LORD ANGSAAR:]

Praise Chaos! By the crystal heart of Mera I shall stand  
deified!

[THE WARRIORS OF HYPERBOREA:]

Glory eternal! For our King and sacred Hyperborea!

[THE KING:]

Noble warriors of Hyperborea... I salute your steadfast  
courage.

This will be my final command to you. Now come...

follow your King into battle

one last time. Into the fray we ride... For the eternal  
glory of Hyperborea!

[ANGSAAR:]

The circle closes... you cannot resist the unparalleled  
might of Chaos and the exquisite majesty of the  
Z'xulth! I shall unleash all the terrors of the Outer  
Darkness against thee! Behold the true extent of my  
power... My flesh is a shrine wherein all demons dwell!

[THE WARRIORS OF HYPERBOREA:]

Stand fast! Cry havoc for glory and the annihilation of  
the titans of Chaos! We fight to the last man!

[THE KING:]

By all the gods of Hyperborea... a legacy shall be  
wrought by our blades... our legend shall live forever!  
Hear me, Angsaar! My humanity fades... my mortality  
dissipates as does the darkness before the glimmering  
kiss of the dawn! Let us finish it... Let this be our final  
battle!

[ALTARUS:]

And thus was etched into the eternal codex of the  
heavens the  
immortal legend of the Hyperborean Empire.

[XERXES:]

But master Altarus... what was the outcome of the final  
clash? What  
effect did the power of the Immortal have upon the  
King? Did he ultimately  
defeat Angsaar and the horrors spawned from the  
Outer Darkness?

[ALTARUS:]

Alas Xerxes, no one knows the final outcome of the  
battle. Even the  
Great Eye of the Universe and the Mists of the Oracle  
are unable to ascertain  
the fate of the King and his army on that fate-steeped  
dawn. So much  
unparalleled and polarized arcane power was  
unleashed upon the Field of Blood  
at that instant that it has forever obscured the oracular  
vista and shielded  
the truth from the eyes of even the most talented and  
presentient master of  
the Praxeum. Today, Hyperborea is but a memory, a  
glorious legend which rests  
forever within the same fathomless shark-haunted  
grave as do mythic Lemuria  
and fabled Atlantis..

[XERXES:]

I shall make it a priority to ascertain the truth, master. I  
vow I  
shall channel all the skills I have learned here at the  
Praxeum into  
discovering the final fate of the King of Hyperborea!

[ALTARUS:]

And I believe that you may well succeed, my young  
apprentice. But  
whatever the case, one thing is certain. As long as  
legends endure in the  
cosmos and the deeds of heroes are celebrated in the  
annals of eternity, none  
who gaze in awe beyond the mists and are blessed to  
behold it shall ever forget  
the splendour of a thousand swords gleaming beneath  
the blazon of the  
Hyperborean Empire.

[THE END...?]

[15 October: 1893]

After a sleepless and oppressively feverish night spent  
pondering the truths



which I exhumed amongst The Ghosts Of Angkor Wat, I  
have concluded that these  
perceived parallels and their possible significance  
carry me ever closer to  
the centre of this great global web, the strands of  
which I have been  
traversing in my long quest for enlightenment, and yet  
I now fear that the  
owner of this web has surely felt the tremblings I have  
caused along its  
delicate filaments, and may well feel compelled to  
investigate the  
disturbance...

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