

Bal-sagoth

"Splendour of a Thousand Swords Gleaming Beneath the B; Azon of the Hype"

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[ALTARUS:] Gaze deep into the mists with your spirit-eyes, Xerxes... look far, and tell me what you see.

[XERXES:] I see a land far to the north... a vast empire of dark endless moors and snow-crowned mountains... a land of brooding citadels and warrior-kings who hail to grim gods.

[ALTARUS:] Look well, Xerxes, for enlightenment hides within the fog-swathed vales of Hyperborea...

[The King's Dream:]

By the onyx sceptre of my forefathers, the air is churning with auguries of dethronement... Impending dread thus prophesized! In a dream I was bade ride the argent-eyed unicorn to the Ring of Stones... There a torrent of viscid slime assailed me, as pipes and horns sang the clarion of my dissolution... And the usurpation of my ancient azure throne. Assassins stalk the nighted halls of my palace... poisoned blades and chalices surround me.

I thirsted for a balm, but my thirst was slaked by an envenomed draught. My swordarm shackled by tendrils of sloth... enthralled by the chasmed gloom...

Borne upon wings of labyrinthine dread... I awaken! I shall seek the counsel of the sorcerer, keeper of the ancient scrolls of wisdom, and the Crystals of Power...

[The Words of the Sorcerer:]

My liege, great and regal king... the mists disclose their secrets... you are destined to wield a great dark power. Drink deep of the potions of the

apothecary, for upon thee now I bestow a shard of the
mystic Crystal of
Mera... sacred artefact of the Atlantean mages, won in
battle by our legions.
My liege, the Crystal of Mera shall unveil the truth
lurking hidden in thy
most fever-haunted dreams...

[The Voice of the Harbinger:]
The land awash with spilled blood, and viscera torn
forth from the
sundered dead... Gorge the earth with flesh darkened
with the claw and fang of
war... rent open the ravenous maws of worms...

[The King:]
The Crystal illumines dark secrets, the truth is known...
a dire and
ancient threat is ranged against me. Hearken, the
clarion is upon the winds,
now the call to arms is upon us all, Grim warriors, take
up thy spears and
hone thy gleaming swords. Archers, string thy bows,
brave knights, saddle the
steeds of war, The glory of battle is nigh at last, our
banner shall fly this
day in victory!

My warriors, a legacy shall this day be wrought by our
blades, decreed by
the gods, Blessed by the blood of vanquished foes.
Our destiny beckons...

[Lord Angsaar, Dark Liege of Chaos:]
Come, great king of Hyperboria, march against me
with your splendid
legions and shimmering swords. I, the Bane of the
Atlantean Kings, the Scourge
of Lemuria, Archfoe of the Immortals of Ultima Thule,
shall Crush you! I shall
visit a thousand plagues upon your realm, and wreak
untold havoc and bloody
carnage until I have your throne... and your soul!

[ALTARUS:] And thus, flanked by the splendour of
azure banners, a vast army
marched forth from the great walls of the Imperial City
of Hyperborea, and at
the forefront of the mighty legions, astride an ebon
war-stallion, rode the
king, sunlight glinting up on his splendid armour...

compelled by dreams, and
guided by the Crystal of Mera...
[XERXES:] Where? Where did the king's path take him?
[ALTARUS:] The king was compelled to lead his forces
to the shadow-haunted
Mountains of the Dead, a grim and brooding place
steeped in dark and ancient
legendry. Alone he rode into the gaping maw of a huge
cave hewn into the side
of the tallest mountain countless ages past by
unknown hands. For three full
days and nights he did not emerge from the cave...
until, at last, he rode
forth from the eldritch mountain once more, a terrible
knowledge shadowed in
his icy eyes, and bearing in his gauntleted fist a huge
black sword, a
magnificent ebon blade which no human blacksmith
ever forged. Fearsome
sorcerous power crackled within the yard of black
steel, dancing upon its
searingly honed, glyph-scored blade... and its
bejewelled, dragon-carved hilt
did whisper arcane secrets to the king in a strange,
elder tongue.
[XERXES:] But master, what powers did this blade
possess? What secrets did
it hold?
[ALTARUS:] Many centuries ago, before even were
waged the Great Wars
between the ancient kingdoms of Atlantis and
Hyperborea, Lord Angsaar did rise
from his charnel-tomb and do battle with a powerful
immortal warrior-shaman
over the possession of the elder Crystals of Mera,
mystic gems of unparalleled
magical potency. Angsaar, his power swelled by forces
from the vast Outer
Darkness, did smite his foe to the brink of destruction...
but, with his
fading sorceries, the immortal mystically transferred
his life-essence into
his great black sword, and scattered the magic crystals
across the galaxy,
leaving Angsaar with a hollow victory and forcing him
to return once more to
his dark Chamber of Slumber. The sword was lost for
centuries, as were the
crystals, until the one gem to remain on this world was
discovered deep
beneath the northern seas by an ancient Atlantean

wizard. And the sword...
legends spoke of how its final resting place would be
made known by the
sorceries of the last crystal only when the blade's
power would once again be
needed to battle the Chaos-liege. This was the
immortal's final, most powerful
spell... upon the reawakening of Angsaar, the
sorcerous energies and undying
lifeforce encased within the blade would be
transferred to its wielder...
The one who discovered the Shadow-Sword would
be imbued with the power of
the immortal, and by the art of elder spellcraft, he
would do battle with his
ancient nemesis once more...
[XERXES:] Then there looms such a cataclysmic battle!
[ALTARUS:] And so, from his Black Citadel, the Chaos-
liege did send forth
his Horde of Wraiths to engage the army of the king...

[THE KING:]
Behold, a legion of undead fiends meets us upon the
field of war. Face
me, Scourge of Lemuria, I wield thy bane, the Shadow-
Sword... (and darksome
sorceries now empower me with thunderous might!)
Hearken, the clarion is upon
the winds, now the call to arms is upon us all, The glory
of battle is nigh at
last, into the fray we ride!

[XERXES:] The outcome, master... who left the field
victorious? Did the
king prevail?
[ALTARUS:] The mists begin to disperse... for now, the
images fade. That
tale shall have to wait 'til another day...

[Lyrics: Byron]
[Music: Jonny Maudling]

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