

Bal-sagoth

"The Splendour Of A Thousand Swords Gleaming Beneath The Bla"

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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
ravaging 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
empyrean 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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