**Fantasy Saga**

**D-Type**

A story

By Walter B. Gress

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# Introduction

The ancestors built twelve doorways to the spirit world in our world, the land of Terra. Filled with dark arcane spirits known as demons, these passageways were sealed away eons ago. Neither man nor woman knows for certain what purpose these portals were meant to serve. However, it is rumored that behind the frame of each doorway exists a guardian demon, one for each doorway, held back by a guardian angel, one for each doorway. All of these so called “demon doors” hold the key to the power that holds back hell on earth, the power that prevails.

According to the sages of the Holy Republic of Damon, ten thousand years ago the stellar object known as Wormwood struck our planet, the world of Terra. It struck the planet in what was to be the peak of our civilization, rending the flesh and souls from the bodies of those who were close to the impact. But far worse was the fate for those who were distant. The radiation emitted by the entity transformed man and woman into something more, something no longer human, but not quite monster. This, to we historians, is known as the Time of the Comet.

The age to follow was nearly as horrific as the age passed. As humanity began to recover, civilizations rose and civilizations fell in this time of flux, humanity and mutations battling against each other for supremacy over the planet. This to the historians is known as the Time of the Worm. For the magical creatures known as the wyrm that had been given birth by the comet in this time ruled over the world.

As time passed and the oceans rose, the people of Terra fled further and further inland. Around five thousand A.W. (After Wormwood), the planet and its inhabitants had finally reached a sort of equilibrium. Many ages passed between the Time of Equilibrium and now.

Eventually two sister cities assumed rule over the land, their names: Damon and Domon. Domon was an industrial empire, and Damon was the center of the world’s religion. The powers released by the comet that had torn apart of the land and its people had been quenched and those that could not be calmed were sealed away with the power of mystical rites handed down to the Damonians by their God.

# Act I

## Scene I

Seren Clef is the captain of an elite group of knights, the Royal Knights of the Dark Talisman, under the command of “The Lord of Swords”, known among his subjects simply as “Blade” or “Emperor Blade”, and his empire, Domon. Seren was training when a messenger burst into the hall.

Messenger: “Seren! Seren!” the messenger cried into the hall, causing all of the knights to cease sparring and turn their heads.

Seren: “Yes? What does our Lord request of me so urgently?”

Messenger: “Something terrible has happened in the mountains to the west. The Emperor seeks your counsel immediately. You are to report to the throne.”

Seren: “Yes, certainly. Return with the message that I will depart immediately.

# Act I

## Scene II

Seren arrived at the throne of the Emperor of Swords. The Emperor strolled about the unusually decorated room, filled with several magical opals among other devices. He floated from one opal to the other. Each opal consisted of a large gem, several feet in diameter, encased in a base made of wires and silicon. Somehow, the electronic base and mysterious stone worked together to create a powerful device capable of a clairvoyant power. The Emperor’s throne room was a mix of old world relics and modern day technology. Nearby was the war room where all of his strategic planning was conducted. The throne room contained his many advanced devices created by the ministry of science, some involving arcane technologies that had been lost and now rediscovered by the archaeologists of the ministry of science, the opals being an example of such.

Blade: “Ahhh…. Seren. You have arrived.”

Seren nods his head.

Blade: “Do you know what power these devices hold?””

Seren: “No, I do not milord.”

Blade: “They are called opals. Once, there were thousands of them, each with a different power infused within them. With their power I can see all about our world, from continent to continent, to every nook and cranny.”

Seren nods.

Blade waved his hand and the guards exit.

Blade: “Seren, Seren. I am deeply worried. Along the border of the mountains, to the south of the capital, was a frontier town called Levix.”

Seren: “I know of Levix. And what do you mean ‘was’. What happened?”

Blade: “Our outpost established there lost touch with us about a day ago. I cannot see their souls through any of my opals. The same goes for the soldiers we sent to investigate. They have not returned; well that is except for one…Simon.”

Seren: “Simon?”

Blade waved his hand and a hologram of Simon’s remains appeared before Seren. Nauseated and sickened by the image, Seren ran to the balcony and hangs his head over it, ill.

Seren: “Who is our foe?”

Blade: “Not who but what. Our foe is a demon door.”

Seren: “A demon door? It sounds like something out of mythology. Some story to scare children that our sister city would have spun.”

Blade: “I believed it to be fiction as well. In our mythological records it and its location were spoken of, both demon and door.”

Seren: “But you are saying it is real? How would one even go about fighting such a thing?”

Blade: “I do not know. I have sent for a Damonian Priestess to journey along with you. Her name is Ariel and you are to treat her with the utmost respect since she acts is with the authority of an ambassador the Holy Empire of Damon.”

Seren mumbled under his breath, clearly annoyed and aggravated to have to work with a priestess from a land filled with, to him, superstition.

Blade: “She shall be awaiting you in the city, beyond the castle gates. No matter what manner of beast you encounter in Levix, show it no mercy.”

Blade finished and with a snap of his fingers, the guards returned to the throne room.

Blade: “Oh, and Seren?”

Seren: “Yes?”

Blade: “I suggest you take both Vyral and Vale.”

Seren: “Yes milord.”

# Act I

## Scene III

Seren was seated within his chambers. Before him, hung upon the stone wall adjacent to his bed were his two closest allies and his two closest friends: Vale and Vyral. Vale is his symbiotic living armor, forged from the shard of an unclassified organic ore that exists plentifully deep beneath the mines of Domon Castle. And the other: Vyral, his sword, forged in the never-ending flames of what was once an uncharted island to the northwest of Domon, molded with barbs of an indestructible ore, causing a single swing of it to shred its opponent into slivers of flesh and organs. When both Vyral and Vale were wielded together by Seren, their combined power along with Seren’s strength were unmatched.

Seren approached Vyral upon the wall, reaching his hand outwards to greet it.

Seren: “How are you old friend?” He asked solemnly to the sword.

Seren rested his palm upon Vale, hanging upon a hook in the stone next to Vyral. Vale responded, springing to life, latching on to Seren’s hand, growing, expanding, and slithering upwards along his arm, flowing upwards like an oil slick, defying gravity and nature. It crept up his skin, joining its life to his flesh, covering his left shoulder, then spanning his left collar bone, then his right, and then downwards, along his torso and right arm. It slithered around his chest and abdomen, downwards along his shoulder blades and finally grew to a halt, bubbling and breathing, penetrating the depths of sinew and bone within Seren: two in one, one in two.

Seren called to Vyral, whisking it from thin air as it jettisoned itself towards him. It held a faint orange glow now, which quickly changed to a searing hot flame of white sparks and fire, its hilt finding its own way into Seren’s right hand. Seren was ready to travel. He was ready for anything.

# Act I

## Scene IV: Domon City

Domon City was peculiar. A mix of some of the most advanced technology in the world, but at the same time carrying an old fashioned colonial charm. Cars roared past along the cobblestone streets that wormed in and out of skyscrapers and city blocks. The enormous buildings were made of white obsidian and soared into the sky. The city was laid out as one gigantic circle, with concentric circles inward forming its main thoroughfares and rays coming from the center of the city and heading outwards forming the secondary streets, like the rays of the sun. In the center of the city, a single, large cobblestone circle acted like its town square and was filled with fountains and ponds and trees and the like. Seren arrived at one of the classiest hotels in the city, the Ruby, along Main Ring and Broad Street in center city. While seated in the smoky bar inside, sipping on a cocktail, he heard the door swing open to the outside and standing in the rolling smoke was Ariel, the Damonian Priestess.

Ariel, the Priestess was a beautiful brunette. Her eyes were an emerald green with flakes of gold dancing about each iris; her hair was long and flowed along with the breeze; and each movement she made was mystical and full of grace. As she entered the bar the smoke divided, parting for her path.

Ariel wore the royal robes of the Damonian Priesthood: long silver robes, bejeweled with a crown made of cloth inset with a single, fiery sapphire.

The sleeves of her robes were sewn with diamond dust and gold lace. Her priestly stave was bound to her back by golden ceremonial ropes. Her jeweled eyes turned to Seren and began to speak.

Ariel: “Greetings. You must be Seren.”

Seren: “Greetings indeed.” Seren was annoyed that there was no acknowledgement of his fame, his high title in the Empire by Ariel, just a simple hello. However, Ariel felt the same and the words to support these facts were left unsaid. A small tension between them began and would grow as the journey progressed.

Ariel turned to face the bartender. Seren raised his voice to interrupt.

“Follow me. We must gather supplies and set out immediately; there is no time for delay. The journey to Levix is long and arduous. It is a distant settlement, on the far west end of the continent.”

Ariel looked to the side and rolled her eyes at the eager and demanding leader of Domon’s Black Knights. Already he was treating her as a weakling and second class. Seren paid the tab and the two of them left the bar.

# Act I

## Scene V: Levix

Ariel and Seren had arrived at the outskirts of the settlement of Levix.

Seren: “Hmm…nobody around?” He playfully nudged Ariel’s side.

Ariel: “Indeed. It seems the town is deserted.” She spoke with a cold seriousness.

They progressed further into Levix, to find the remains of what had once been a thriving community but was now nothing more than dilapidated buildings and rotting corpses. As they passed, a large rat scurried by. Seren turned to see where it had come from and found a small pack of rats picking away at the flesh of the face of a Domonian guard.

Seren: “I do not like this. What has happened to all the people?”

Ariel: “I do not know exactly. But I sense a powerful dark aura.”

Seren: “We should move forward, but with caution. The trail of bodies seems to lead towards the mines.”

Ariel and Seren climbed the grade moving upwards toward the mouth of the mountain where the mines had been quarried. As they did so, they passed a rickety wooden watchtower, built to warn against enemy armies, invasions, and other such things.

As they passed the tower, two silhouettes appeared emerging from the shadows of the mines. They moved slowly, and stumbled over the rail tracks that led into the depths.

Seren called out a greeting.

Seren: “Hail! We have come from-.” Suddenly Ariel shoved Seren and the two dove towards the ground, Ariel screaming, “duck”.

A villager materialized behind Seren, and leapt forward, gnashing its teeth, looking to find a meal in Seren’s triceps where his armor was exposed. Seren’s armor, Vale, quickly took a shape resembling a porcupine, firing its needles in all directions, narrowly missing Ariel but achieving its target: the two dozen undead villagers who had come into view. Vale left only shredded flesh to remain. All was calm for the moment.

Ariel: “Seren, the men have been possessed. Some, the dead, have been brought back to life. But what is worse is those who were living and whose spirits were swallowed by demons as hosts.”

Seren: “Very well. How do we free them?”

Ariel: “I do not think we can. There is a powerful force from hell at work here.”

Ariel had been speaking in a soft, somber voice now. Her experience as a priestess had taken over and she now was silently mourning the hundreds of men and women in this settlement who had lost their lives.

Seren: “…”

Ariel: “The demon is within the mines. We need to exorcise him and send him back.”

Seren: “Back where?”

Ariel: “The demon world. We must send him back to from whatever dimension of hell he came from, through his portal that allowed him to enter this world from the underworld.”

Seren: “….”

Ariel: “Come now, we must hurry.” As Ariel spoke, the tiniest tear, almost invisible, rolled down her right cheek as they went on their way.

# Act I

## Scene VI: Planes of Reality

The two, Ariel and Seren, completed their sanctification of the town. The outpost was now free of demons, undead, and blessed by the priestess Ariel. Now it was time to approach the mine and close its unholy gateway. From outside the entrance the inner caverns cast a deep, amber glow. They passed through the mind, finding more corpses, however, lifeless and not animated unlike earlier. Around the corner was the source of the amber light.

Ariel: “Around this corner is the gateway. A gateway that bridges through the barrier that divides our world and the next level.”

Seren: “Next level?”

Ariel: “Come now, we must descend. I will explain on the way…”

They climbed down the tunnel, grabbing on hand and foot, down the red, freshly born lava rock, feeling the heat pounding on them, sweat rolling down the backs of their necks.

Ariel: “My people believe there many different levels of reality that all exist in the same physical space. The reality we see and occupy depends on our level of consciousness. Each reality, or “plane” as some call them, has a different purpose and is occupied by different beings. They are many planes, some are like the people and creatures we know and experience every day, some like the world of dreams. Others, such as the realm of Hell or Purgatory we do not often experience – at least while we live.”

Seren: “Interesting, go on…”

Ariel: “All these planes exist in the same place and the same time. It is simply a matter of the observer. The observer’s mind determines whether he is asleep, in heaven, in hell, in purgatory, dead or alive. Take the villagers for example. Had the entrance to the demon world not been open, and overflowing its demonic energy, its plane, into this world, the villagers would never had been harmed.”

Seren: “That’s an amazing theory and but a bit confusing I think.”

Ariel: “The presence of the plane of the demon world poured out of the Demon Door into this town, lowering the villagers minds from the plane of mortals where we usually reside, into the regions of hell. Once that occurred it was easy to possess and kill them. Luckily for us the door hasn’t taken on full effect. If it had, the entire town would have sunk into the abyss and literally, gone straight to hell.”

Ariel: “There are many levels to hell also, just as there many to heaven, many different planes. There are other worlds as well, trial worlds like purgatories, and some of these planes are as small as a room, some as large as Terra, some even larger.”

Ariel: “As for the demon world, even casual strangers who wander into this town will be taken ahold of by demons.”

Seren: “Why were we not affected?”

Ariel: “My power preserved our bodies, minds, and souls. It kept us from being taken over by the dark spirits.”

Seren: “Thank you…. Then I guess you saved my life.”

Ariel: “Don’t mention it. It is why I am here.”

Seren: “So what can we do? How do we close the portal?”

Ariel: “The only way to close a demon portal is from the inside. We have to kill the demon who has opened the portal.”

Seren: “What if it is opened again, by another demon?”

Ariel turned away from the mine and Seren and lowered her head in prayer.

Ariel: “If all 12 demon doors are opened, our world we love so dearly, Terra, will be plummeted into the darkness of the demon world, piece by piece. Our world would cease in this universe, replaced by a terrible hole in the cosmos. We would become a demon world, infested with their thoughts and spirits. It would truly be a hell on earth.”

Seren: “I think we’ve talked enough now. It is imperative that we close this gateway before others are opened.”

# Act I

## Scene VII: SACRIFICE

Seren and Ariel had made their way through the mines below Levix. The deeper they went, the less the mines looked like a tool of industry and more like a device of torture.

Soon the rocks turned into the many faces of hell’s demons and lost souls, some mouthing chants, some insulting them, cursing them, telling them that once they had entered they could never leave. The lost souls wailed in the distance. Grisly skulls, some with the flesh stuck to the bones, stood on pikes lining the tunnel walls. A light breeze passed through and flaps of skin on a nearby stray limb flapped in the wind.

Eventually they arrived at a pit of magma deep underground, far past the demon door.

Ariel stopped and pointed at a stony, pitch black island in the center of the magma pool. On the island stood a black pewter statue of a soldier. Seren turned to look at it and it began to speak.

Statue: “Don’t trust that Damonian woman, Seren.”

Ariel: “Seren, do not look and do not listen. Ignore what the statue says.”

Statue: “Come with me to open the demon doors. Just think Seren, I can give you anything you want.”

Seren’s arm started to reach out in the direction of the statue but once again Ariel shoved him to the ground. A blue light burst from the statue and rocketed towards both Seren and Ariel, engulfing them in its sorcery. Seren began to lose consciousness but Ariel was able to keep awake.

Ariel: “You may not control me mimic”. Ariel drew her stave from the golden chords on her back, and swinging it in a wide circle, shattered the pewter idol. Where the statue had stood, a red haired creature materialized, with the horns of a goat, a long black beard-pointing arrow like down from his chin, and with spikes protruding from his spine beneath his hair back.

Ariel: “Seren! Wake up!”

Ariel shook Seren but with no response. Upon falling asleep he had collapsed, striking his head against a rock during his fall. A stream of blood was trickling down from the puddle that surrounded his skull.

The red demon clambered towards Ariel, licking its lips and rubbing its hands together like a fly before a meal.

Demon: “I shall eat your soul. It smells so clean and fresh…” His eyes lit up with an unholy blue and red, and as he did so, a blue light appeared in Ariel’s eyes to match.

Ariel groaned in pain and forced her unresponsive body to the ground to pray. The demon danced around making all sorts of cheerful noise.

Demon: “Ha! Pray to *me* worthless priest!”

Ariel prayed not to the demon nor was she about to bow down to him. Around her a blue circle of light had etched its way into the obsidian floor, forming a magical sigil beneath her. As the seconds passed, armor, made of beautiful, silver crystal with a hint of sky blue grew upwards from the circle and encased Ariel. She laid her forefinger upon the sapphire on her head and in a flash she, with the power of her magic, had become frozen within the armor of crystal. And it was from this day onwards that the people of Damon who could wield magic were known as Sapphires, named for the gem used during the great ritual of sacrifice that they were capable of in time of great urgency.

The voice of Ariel rang in the sleepy mind of Seren…

Ariel: “Second time I saved your ass.”

Meanwhile, Seren was still unconscious. The guardian of the demon door had been pacing about and was proceeding backwards towards the shattered idol from which he had emerged.

Suddenly, the demon world began to recede, pulling itself inwards from its extremities in the mining outpost, into the mines, and then back across the portal, leaving the world beyond the portal, as it should be. Seren awoke with a gasp, and immediately looked around the cavern, wild-eyed, searching for Ariel.

Seren: “No!!! Ariel!!” He had found her frozen within the crystalline armor. Finally, the remainder of the demon world vanished. From within the demon’s idol fell a skeleton key onto the dusty cavern surface. The idol finished its collapse, and became nothing but a pile of dust, swiftly carried away and scattered by gust of the cavern’s breeze.

Standing before him within the cave, glistening with refracted moonlight was the frozen crystal of the Sapphire, Ariel the priestess of the Holy Republic of Damon.

Within the crystal, upon Ariel’s face, once again was the tiniest of tears, frozen along with her in time and upon Seren’s face was one to match, trickling down his cheekbones, along his cheek, down his jaw and unto the stone floor.

The voice of Ariel spoke into the mind of Seren again….

Ariel: “Seren, the voice you are hearing is I, Ariel. I have sacrificed my body and time in our world so that you may save both Damon and Domon from utter destruction, as well as yourself. Take that key, and use it to find the evildoer who, with it, opened this demon door. Seren, there are eleven more doors that must be secured, I beseech you, find the keys and the nefarious one using them and destroy them, key and evildoer alike.”

Seren: “How can I do this alone? This is too much for only me to accomplish!”

Ariel: “Touch the crystal armor that protects me and sanctifies my remains. Pray and I will always be there with you…”

Seren reached towards the crystal with which Ariel had entombed herself. Where Seren’s forefinger met the crystal an orb of winding purple and yellow light swirled about and expanded. Sparks flew from the orb, and then a flash of blinding white light. For an instant nothing could be seen but white light, and then Seren heard Ariel speak again.

Ariel: “Now you know the Rite of Sealing. A people, who called themselves The Knights of Technology, for they combined magic, spirit, and technology to save our world long ago, used this same Rite. Now Seren, go do the same…go save the world.”

Seren could feel a tingling in his fingers, a new power had been given to him and awoken his spirit. He felt as if he could do anything…. even save the world.

**END ACT I**

# Act II

## Scene I: Damon Castle and the Tree of Life

High Priestess Lerai: “How may I assist you young one?”

Lerai was tending to the shrubbery in the sanctuary, along with the felling the off shoots and collecting fallen branches of the Yggdrasil. She stood upon a high platform with a sharp precipice, overlooking the castle below. The castle, Damon Castle, had been purposely built around the Tree of Life, and those in the castle court, like her, put in its charge.

Now, as Lerai was finishing up her gardening, a stranger had entered the sanctuary. He was a young warrior and carried a worried expression on his face.

Warrior: “Madame, I have brought terrible news, that I pray is not true. Our city, holy as she is, seeks to develop a machine of war and great destruction. And along with it…. well I have heard much more unsettling stories- should they be true.”

Lerai: “Come close child.” The warrior sword mage was much younger than Lerai. She had seen many summers gone past was grey and wise.

The warrior stepped up onto the outcropping near the trees branches. Lerai reached towards the warrior’s forehead and rested her palm upon it.

The warrior, Deonis’ eyes suddenly clenched shut. Before him, and all around him, were the sacred waters of the void. A golden beam pulsated upwards, dividing the waters and rocketing high into the heavens.

Deonis opened his eyes.

Deonis: “What does it mean?”

Lerai: “It means flee. Make haste. Travel down the branches of the Yggdrasil. It is the safest way to leave Damon, no other would ever dare escape the castle in that way out of respect, however, I am the caretaker and I grant you permission. At the Yggdrasil’s base is a pool of sacred water. Enter it in and swim downwards. When you reach far down enough you will find yourself in sanctuary.”

Deonis: “And then?”

Lerai: “Be kind to those you find. Now hurry!”

The door to the inner sanctum swung open. Inward came a company of sword-mages and priests. Lerai engaged them in combat, guarding against the blades of the sword-mages while dodging balls of fire and daggers of ice from the priests, stalling to make time for Deonis to flee. While he made his escape, climbing down the Yggdrasil, he was halfway down the trunk of the massive tree when a stray fireball aimed at Lerai struck the branch he was braced against causing him to lose his footing.

The branch became dust. Deonis lost his balance, slipped and found himself tumbling downwards, plummeting tens of stories, towards the sacred pool at the base of the tree beneath.

# Act II

## Scene II: POOL OF LIVING WATERS

A stray scribe wandering through the library halls in Damon castle was heard humming an old rune from time to time…

The pool of living water runs deep

Many have tasted its waters

Yet few have truly drunk from it

Patrols of newly commissioned Damonian soldiers, former priests and other such holy people were still scouting the area for Deonis, despite the fact he had long left the country.

The Yggdrasil moved, shivering as if it was a human with a chill, many of its leaves falling with no holy man or woman to tend to it. Its death had already begun.

# Act II

## Scene III: SANCTUARY: TEMPLE OF THE LIVING WATERS

Deonis awoke to find himself without a scrape or bruise, on a makeshift straw bed in a room within an prehistoric temple, built with stones cut from both ordinary flat limestone and glistening marble. Suddenly a light burst into his presence and then quickly buzzed past him. He swatted at the annoying winged creature, made contact, and laughed as it jetted across the room, propelled further by the swat from Deonis hand. The light came back towards Deonis, now moving slowly, angrily, darting to the left and right like some sort of drunken humming bird.

Faery: “I would appreciate it if when it comes to time wake you that you don’t bat at me like a cat! I do not like to be assaulted as such.”

Deonis: “I am sorry. What is your name faery?”

Faery: “I am Shiver. I come from the country of ice, hence the name. I am here to assist you with your mission and the protection of the Yggdrasil. I am at your service!”

Deonis: “What is wrong with the Yggdrasil other than those foolish soldiers chasing me and burning up the branch I was clutching?”

Shiver: “Some unknown foe has been trying to transform our world into a haven for demons. Across the world they have been opening ancient portals that act like gravities, pulling us faery, and well your people also, from the earthly plane of existence into the hellish underworld of theirs. They are opening these portals with demonic energy, using keys infused with powerful magic, which as a side effect, is slowly poisoning the tree of life, the Yggdrasil, and we the Faery, its fruit.”

Deonis: “And the minds of the Damonians seemed to be poisoned as well it seems.”

Shiver: “Indeed. This temple will have to be your sanctuary for now, Deonis. You will be safe here and can rest until the Damonians have finished their pursuit.”

Deonis: “What or exactly where is *here,* anyway*?”*

Shiver: “The Yggdrasil itself, sensing your plight, sent you through a portal using the power of the living waters. Here is not really any kind of here to which you are accustomed. We are outside of the planet Terra where you live. In fact, we are outside of your universe entirely.”

Deonis: “Universe?”

Shiver: “We are in the void waters. When something is destroyed or when the last memory of something fades away, it comes here. It’s sort of like an attic or crawlspace for all of time and space. When time, space, and life has no use for something or when it has a *secret* it must desperately keep, it puts it here: a place that is not a place, a time that is not a time, in between the fabric that builds and binds universes.”

Deonis: “How do I get back home to Terra?”

Shiver: “Take this crystal fragment. It is a chip of an energy form called Bimia Crystal that can control space-time. It will allow you to come and go as you please. Now that you are awake and rested, I have other duties to attend.”

Shiver begins to fade away and Deonis called after him.

Shiver, fading into the fog responded.

Shiver: “You’ll be fine. Use the crystal to travel to the outskirts of Damon. There you will find a young, skilled knight from Domon named Seren. He needs your assistance! Go!”

Deonis: “Great….”

# Act II

## Scene IV: DAMON TOWER CONSTRUCTION

Priest after priest, collars torn and rugged, smudged and spotted with earth and mud, marched one after the other, chanting, singing, as they entered the depths of the mines in eastern Damon where a tower was being constructed. The Kingdom of Damon was building a tower, but not just any tower, a Tower to Heaven, so that they might live in the stars.

As the priests marched along, they chanted in unison, “the saints are marching, hurrah! A tower in heaven, hurrah!”

The first section of the tower had almost reached completion, although portions of its outside were still exposed. At the center point of the tower a golden pillar surrounded by a wiry silver metal coil stretched upwards from the base of the tower, through the unfinished exterior, into the clouds.

Seren had come to pay his respects to the High Lord of Damon for the death of Ariel, taking a short hiatus from his search for the next demon door. Unfortunately the only ships running at present were to and from the construction site. Seren decided to take the ship to the construction site and then find another means of transportation from the shore to the capital on the mainland.

When the cargo barge had arrived to take him to the mainland, Seren took a shortcut through the construction site and accidently bumped into one of the site’s workers.

Worker: “Hey! Who are you and what are you doing here? This is a restricted area.”

Seren: “I am an ambassador of his Lordship, the Emperor of the Empire of Domon. What is being built here upon the shore?”

Worker: “I’m not sure. Nobody knows for sure. We just follow instructions. Truth is, I think only the Holy Lord of Damon himself knows what the final product will be.”

Seren: “Interesting…”

Seren continued on his way as the construction worker shook his head in confusion, mumbling to himself. While at the site he was informed that if he followed the coastline he would come to a village called Seal. From there he could take the ferry up the Indigo River to Glaw, the city that surrounds Damon Castle. He would save time taking the ferry, as it was faster and lighter than the cargo barge.

Seren left the site and after a few days he reached at what was not a bustling coastal village, but a smoldering crypt.

Seren: “Could this be Seal? What could have happened?”

Seren sat down upon a rock, peering upon the ashen ruins of Seal. It was certain in his mind; this was somehow connected to the demon doors. He heard a crinkling in the dry hay behind him and turned around, sword drawn, to look.

It was the construction worker who had given him the directions for the short cut.

The irises of the eyes of the worker had turned from a pale blue to a deep red.

Worker: “Ha! This village is no more. I know who you are…Seren of Serenity!”

Seren was confused. No man had ever called him that name before. “Seren” yes, but Seren of Serenity? What meaning did that hold? What was Serenity?

Seren: “Who are you? Did you do this to these innocent villages?”

The worker’s bones in his forehead began to protrude forward until the crown of his head made the shape of a T. His hair grew wild and unwieldy, colored in scarlets and obsidians. More bones protruded around his body, exoskeletons growing around his arms and chest and legs like armor. Finally, from his back grew two enormous wings like that of a bat. He flickered his snake-like tongue, using it to taste the ash and blood in the air. The worker had clearly taken his natural form, that of a demon.

Baal-R**é**l: “I am Baal-R**é**l, Lord of the Damon Demon Door.” The demon announced his presence.

Seren said to himself: “I can’t fight him alone. What should I do?” The demon drew a poisoned serpentine scimitar and pointed it at Seren.

Seren closed his eyes and thought of the sacrifice that Ariel had made for him. A blue light began to flicker and filter through his eyelids. Thinking it was his death by some wild magic of the demon he opened his eyes to witness his final demise…

The blue magic was far from his demise. It was from a magical portal that leads here from the place that is not a place, the void that Deonis had been in. Deonis looked to his left to see Seren, and then ahead to see the demon.

Deonis: “Vile demon!”

The demon, seeing both Deonis and Seren against him cried out in fear and vanished. Deonis turned to greet Seren and introduce himself.

Deonis: “Greetings. Are you Seren? I have been searching for you.”

Seren: “Thank you. Your arrival was perfect timing. Indeed, I am Seren, and you are?”

Deonis: “I am Deonis, a defected knight of the Holy Republic of Damon. I’ve come to help.”

Seren: “Help with what? You know of my quest to seal the demon doors?”

Deonis: “Indeed. I was told by one of the faery kind while in another realm. She asked me to assist you…she said the world was at stake.”

Seren: “Very well. An extra blade couldn’t hurt.”

Deonis: “Ok. Well, first let us close the Damon Demon Door. It is closest, to the north within the marsh ruins. Our mission is more urgent than you may believe, I will explain along the way.”

# Act II

## Scene V: CURSED MARSHLAND RUINS

The Demon Door of the Marshland Ruins was three quarters open and because of it the ruins were overrun with more powerful denizens of Hades than the Levix Door. The closer to the doorway, the more dangerous it became. Close enough and some of the most powerful demons, rarely scene by living mortals, would make face, such as the ancient ones known as the “Lords of the Pit” or others who were simply called “The Old Ones.” Many of the denizens were as old as Terra itself. As for the marshland, its ruins abound. Granite monoliths and tombstones were scattered everywhere, carved with runes of a lost, unspeakable language. Deonis and Seren treaded slowly through the marsh, wading through its thigh-high waters, through leeches and other unpleasant fauna. Deonis had lent Seren a pair of watertight boots, which they used along with long lasting silver-wood torches to keep the evil natives of the swamp at bay.

The marshes putrid waters were teeming with the undead - the long undead - those pitched further in black magic and stronger than those of Levix. Horrid banshees and lichs populated the marshland, the ranks of the most powerful of the undead. Occasionally a banshee would brush by, whispering into Seren’s ear in the voice of Ariel, stabbing into his soul with its heartless words. Seren and Deonis soon found themselves in hand-to-hand combat against the undead of the marsh and were being drained of energy with each step by the parasitic waters. Eventually they found the biggest monolith in the ruins. Covered in moss, with arcane writing all around, it stood high above all other stones in the ruins.

Deonis stopped and Seren came to a halt behind him.

Seren: “What is it?”

Deonis: “I think this may be our doorway.”

Deonis placed his hand upon the cold, damp surface of the monolith. The stone face melted away, revealing a gaping opening in disguise. Beyond the mouth seemed to be a chasm of never ending darkness. Deonis threw his torch down to measure the distance, and judging it safe, the two of them entered the cavern.

As they walked through the stone tunnel they felt the air around them changing.

Deonis: “Something is wrong…”

Seren: “We are changing planes of reality. This has happened to me before, when I was at the demon door in Levix. I can feel it. It means we are getting closer to the door.”

Suddenly they found themselves in a high-ceilinged cavern walking along a rocky bridge in its center. Seren tugged at Deonis and whispered to keep moving.

Light and heat flared up as the pit around them filled with flames, along with their denizens.

Deonis: “What is this? Hell?”

Seren: “I am not certain if that is exactly where we are at but what I do know is we don’t have time to rest. We have to find and kill Baal-Rél.”

Deonis and Seren continued searching the demon world of Baal-Rél. They found horned, demon-like creatures, “mutants”, until, in the very center of a pit of liquid rock, they found another monolith. This monolith was made of obsidian however, not granite, but made with the same markings. Deonis tried placing his hand upon the pillar but to no effect. He then tried touching the Bimia Shard he had kept in his pocket and touching the pillar with his other hand. Luckily, the obsidian pillar began to glow and a gateway with a trail of energy ran through it like ethereal breadcrumbs. Deonis and Seren entered to find themselves in a small laboratory that was built upon the flat surface of an asteroid, out in the middle of the place that is not a place, where Deonis had been before.

And, inside the laboratory, seated in front of a computer in a very human like pose, sat Baal-Rél wearing horn-rimmed glasses with his black and scarlet hair parted and a pencil in his hand. He turned to Seren and Deonis.

Baal-Rél: “Why and how have you followed me?”

Seren: “We were sent to destroy you and your demon gate.”

Baal-Rél: “I’m not- -ugh you’ll never get it and time is precious.”

Seren: “Explain it.”

Baal-Rél: “I’m not a spirit. I’m alive, just like you. I have flesh along with all of its consequences.”

Seren: “Why are you releasing demons and the undead into our world?”

Baal-Rél: “Forget it. I’ll shut my door. I can experiment somewhere else, some other world. But that isn’t saying the other demons will be so kind with theirs.”

There was a surge of light that went through the closed, clenched, eyelids of both Deonis and Seren and they found themselves awake, outside the marsh ruins. Baal-Rél had lifted the curse of his own accord, apparently not wanting to waste time interfering with his experiment in battle. Both the swamp and the village of Seal had been reversed back to their living and sanctified, selves.

Deonis: “We should go to Seal and pick up supplies now that things are as before. I’ll buy if you go around and speak with the townsfolk and see if you can find any clues to the locations of the other doors.”

Seren: “Ok. Let’s go.”

# Act II

## Scene VI: SEAL VILLAGE, INDIGO CANAL, and the TIMESPACE RUINS

The marketplace of Seal Village was bustling with people, crowds streaming from vendor to vendor, all of the villagers going about their lives as if nothing had ever happened. They had no idea that if it weren’t for the efforts of Seren and Deonis, they would be lifeless ash, burned by the flames of hell, blowing through the wind. Deonis and Seren had decided to divide their efforts and split up. They were hoping to discover who was behind the unlocking of the demon doors. They had no idea how many more were open or even on what continent they might find their mystery antagonist. After exhausting their searches, they gathered their supplies and met up in the town square.

Deonis: “It looks like we have arrived at an impasse. There is a ferry that will take us up the river to Glaw. I negotiated a reasonable price with the ship master, so I suggest we move on to the city.”

Seren: “Agreed. I haven’t had any luck either. Let’s go.”

The two boarded the ferry and they began their trip along the Indigo River, a sparkling blue, slow current, body of fresh water that ran from the great springs deep in the catacombs below Damon Castle in the roots of the Yggdrasil, through Glaw, and south east, cutting through the wilderness until it reached the coast at Seal and emptied itself into the bay. They had left Seal and were an hour or two into the wilderness when the ferry ground to a halt.

As the ferry halted, the sky opened up before them. A brilliant beam of light shown upon on the boat from the sky above. Deonis had been kneeling in prayer and as the light spread out over the surface of the ferry he jumped to his feet and ran to summon Seren. When Seren had arrived, a voice spoke to them from above.

Voice: “The path that you, Seren Clef, and you Deonis Troy, take is one that pleases me. Since the demon at Levix took one of your soldiers in your quest, I will give you one of my people to join your fight.”

From within the brilliant light emerged a winged being, eyes like diamonds, and wings like those of a white dove. The angel descended and the sky closed up.

Angel: “Hello. My name is Amon. I am here to help you put away the demons that are running rampant in your world from the open hell portals. And please, arise, for you two are my equals in His eyes.”

Seren and Deonis stood from their kneeled postures and greeted Amon.

Time passed and it was the third day of their travel along the Indigo River. They had almost reached Glaw and although Seren and Deonis were filled with questions to ask Amon, they remained silent yet apprehensive. Late, one night, Amon stood, glowing at the stern of the boat. Deonis was fast asleep and Seren came out of the lower deck and stood beside Amon. The two of them both looked down at the rushing waters.

Amon: “How can I help you, Seren?”

Seren: “My people. They don’t believe in any sort of higher being. Not a ‘Master’ like the people of Damon worship, or a ‘Lord’ like the ancients were said to have worshipped. They have no one to turn to when they feel hopeless.”

Amon: “Seren, look down into the water. Do you see anything?”

Seren: “No.”

Amon: “Now close your eyes.”

Seren closed his eyes tightly.

Amon: “Now open them.”

Seren opened his eyes.

Amon: “Now, with your eyes closed as before, reach down into the water. There is a great and powerful sword down there. Do you believe me?”

Seren: “Yes, sort of. But I see nothing.”

Seren closed his eyes and reached into the rushing waters. Out of the quickening waters of the Indigo River he withdrew a powerful sword. He opened his eyes to gaze upon it.

Seren: “Was that some sort of trick?”

Amon: “No. It was there the entire time. Just as He is there, watching over you, though you may not sense Him. Sometimes believing must be more than seeing.”

Seren: “I understand.”

Amon: “That is what your people require and it is something you can give them. Faith.”

Seren nodded.

Amon: “Give the sword to Deonis. Tell him its name: Vorpal.”

Seren: “Thank you.”

Amon: “Do not thank me, thank God.”

Seren nodded again and carried the sword along with him into the cabin and to the lower deck.

The ferry continued along, moving once again through the calm waters of the Indigo River. They were half a day from Glaw and could see the jewel-like spires of Damon Castle in the distance. Evening had arrived again and in the morning they would have arrived at their destination. Both Deonis and Seren were fast asleep again, and Amon was perched upon the bow of the ship, wide-eyed and vigilant for any who would try to thwart their plans. He checked the stars and calculated how long it would be until they arrived at the mouth of the river at Glaw.

While keeping watch, Amon noticed something peculiar in the distance. The amount of time that had passed for the distance they had traveled along the river seemed to be growing more and more so, yet the current of the river had not changed. In fact, it was growing at an extraordinary rate and soon they would be essentially as still. Alarmed, he awoke Deonis.

Emerging from the lower deck, Deonis clambered out onto the uppermost deck of ferry and looked on horrified to the distance, where he saw naught but a maw of massive, black, emptiness; a tear in space and time, extending all around and slowly enveloping the ship.

Deonis: “Amon! It is an unworldly portal and it seeks to ensnare us in its grasp. We must flee!”

Amon: “It is too late. There is no escape from its pull.”

Amon ran to the lower deck to awake Seren.

Amon: “Seren! Wake!”

Deonis: “Full power to reverse! Direct all power to the retro propellers!”

Deonis yelled to the crew but to no avail.

Seren still drowsy stumbled onto the deck.

Seren: “What IS that?”

Amon: “No time to explain. Everyone join hands and hold on together. We do not want to become separated.”

Amon, Deonis, and Seren took a triangular formation, hands clasped tight, as the ferry slipped into the endless shadows of the tear.

They had been enveloped by the cold, frigid darkness without sight of anything of any sorts, even themselves for a few minutes. Seren was the first to speak, teeth chattering and arms shaking in shiver.

Seren: “It is very dark.”

Deonis: “I cannot see a thing.”

Amon: “My comrades, not even my inner light can penetrate this darkness. Seren?”

Seren: “Yes?”

Amon: “Hand the sword over to Deonis. Now is the time.”

Deonis: “I already have a weapon.”

Amon: “This is a different sort of weapon. It will be a light to you in times of darkness.”

Seren handed over the sword in scabbard to Deonis. Deonis withdrew the weapon from its sheath, and a brilliant golden light burst from its edge, piercing the shadows and penetrating, illuminating the world around them.

Amon: “As I said.”

Deonis: “Amazing…”

Seren: “It is called Vorpal.”

Amon nodded and waved the sword around them, casting light on their surroundings.

Amon: “I know of our location…it is a place called the time-space ruins.”

Seren: “The what?”

Amon: “Ahem.”

Amon: “Long ago, there was another universe not unlike your own, just as there are many other universes not unlike your own now. However, this universe was so horrid, filled with so much wrong-doing and hatred, that the master, M’sra, Lord of all things good and pure, was forced to utterly destroy and take the life of every bit of this universe, sparing none for there was not a single bit of good he could salvage. This place we are in now, is the remains of that universe, kept as a reminder to all heavenly beings of what tainted evil can be birthed from even something born good…”

Seren: “That is terrible. I cannot believe a people could be that evil that their creator would not even want to save the smallest bit of them from destruction…

Deonis: “Let him continue….”

Amon: “The peoples of this universe and all their belongings were destroyed in hellfire by the choirs of my people, the angels. What remains of their universe is hell-ash, the torn and charred fabric of a dead universe, a dead “space-time”. Floating masses of debris and lifeless asteroids left over from dead, imploded planets; shredded dimensions and renegade particles. Why that shadowy portal exists now on Terra and why we were trapped and brought beyond its event horizon to here I know not, but it cannot be for a virtuous cause. For whatever purpose the wormhole we are traveling through was created, its virtue cannot be for good.”

Seren: “Wormhole?”

Amon: “Yes. A sort of tunnel through space. Like the demon doors but different. Usually wormholes lead from one place in a universe to another, sort of like a short cut. Like if the universe is an apple, the wormhole is like the hole from one end of the apple to the other, a tunnel cut out by a worm. This one however, was created to lead from your universe into this dead universe. We do not know its creator and should tread carefully.”

Seren turned to the side of the ship’s deck and made his way backwards toward the stern, thinking to himself out loud.

Seren: “An entire universe and not one soul worth saving…” He mustered a breath and looked over the edge of the ship, watching as it slowly floated forward on, magically suspended in space by the translucent walls of the wormhole.

**END ACT II**

# Act III

## Scene I: A FLOATING CONTINENT

High above the oceans and continents of Terra, a mass of earth, stone, and metal drifted amongst the clouds. It sailed to the left, to the right, upwards and downwards, maintaining its subtle balance directly over the oceans east of Domon, adjusting as the world below turned along its axis. It is the floating continent that has existed over Terra for eons and will exist for eons to come. In the future it shall be a place of refuge and safe haven for a rebellion, in the past as a place of learning and study, keepers of the knowledge of magic, science, and religion. In this age it is called by its people the Kingdom of Strattas, to those on the surface of Terra it is simply called, “The Summer Land”, for it spends no winters and is forever bathed in the light of the sun. In the distant future it is known as “Serenity.”

High atop Strattas, a soldier clad in a white uniform that clung closely to his figure, with a light-energy pistol on a holster around his waist, approaches another like-clothed gentlemen. They salute each other.

Silus: “We are hovering over the temporal triangle sir. Are you still considering the jump?”

Sylvanias: “Yes. How bad is the situation?”

Silus: “Twelve of the thirteen dimensional doorways are open, I’m afraid. The last one, here on Strattas, is closed thank God.”

Sylvanias: “Yes. Well, then proceed with protocol. We will never reach the dragon king in time, and even if we do, there is no guarantee that he alone can stop them. Baal Zé Bub will soon be freed if we do not go ahead immediately with the drop. I’m sad to say that it is definite: this time line must be erased. Goodbye friend, I will see you in another life.”

Silus: “I will see you again too my friend. Even if, as another me. It is ok, do not fret, we are all one soul in heaven.”

Silus and Sylvanias shook hands and Sylvanias departed through a door to his left.

The Aleph Device, was a unit built on the flying continent that allowed the people of Strattas to open a portal for time travel. The portal was a natural occurring anomaly known to them as the “Temporal Triangle”. Sylvanias stood upon a platform constructed on the edge of the continent, far below the temporal triangle had opened, with its rushing energies of blue and purple swirling light.

Silus ran out to the edge of the platform after Sylvanias.

Silus: “Make this jump a good one.”

Sylvanias: “Sure thing friend.”

Silus: “One for the order!”

Sylvanias: “Two for the spirit!”

Silus: “Three for the king!”

Sylvanias and Silus together: “Four for the Master!”

Sylvanias: “Yahoooooo”.

Silus cheered and Sylvanias cried out as he plummeted downwards through the sky towards the portal. He changed the form of his dive and angled downwards, aerodynamic with the form of an Olympic diver, rocketing like a bullet into the triangle. The temporal triangle snapped him up like snapdragon, and vanished. Silus looked about and watched as the world around him began to fade away in scattered patches. His presence in this alternate history, along with the history itself, was now ending.

Silus stuck out his hand and watched his self fade away. Finally, he closed his eyes then opened them to find his self in a different history, joined to another copy of him in a different time line. Memories rushed into his mind from the alternate version of himself, rushing in and intertwining with his memories from the erased world.

Meanwhile, Sylvanias was rushing through a wormhole outside of space-times at break neck speed, watching floating worlds that had died pass swiftly by him, seeing dead and living aliens and creatures he never knew of race past his speeding body. Finally, his dive began to slow and he then found himself suspended in time in the middle of a well-lit nebula. Before him was a junction in the tunnel.

In the junction, in front of him, materialized a monolithic white crystal. From the crystal resonated a voice.

Crystal: “What is your destination, traveller?”

The crystal spoke to Sylvanias through the deepest recesses of his mind. As it spoke it resonated through a rainbow of colors. He hadn’t been prepared for having to cross a junction such as this. His mind flashed back to the reports he had read on the demon door outbreak, and as he did so, the crystal read from him his purpose and resonated a “yes, I understand,” back to him.

The crystal dematerialized and Sylvanias was suddenly propelled through the left hand side of the junction, moving again at staggering rates.

# Act III

## Scene II: THE OAKEN KEY OF THE YGGDRASIL

Deonis, Amon, and Seren were still stumbling their way through the darkness of the space-time ruins, through the black gate from which they had arrived. As they moved onwards, a flicker of bright light raced past them, like a rapid falling star.

Amon grabbed ahold of Seren and Deonis by the backs of their tunics and cried, “Hurry! Follow that light! It will lead us out of here!”

Amon spread his majestic wings, and grasping the other two by the collar, took off and flew through the outer limits of the ruins in the direction of the falling star, catching up to it bit by bit.

Finally, they burst through into space, through the invisible wall of the wormhole, and all four of them, including the falling star, landed abruptly in a pile of people upon the shores of Domon’s south port.

Seren looked up to the mountains lining the northern horizon and remarked.

Seren: “I’m home.”

Deonis peered at the oddly dressed stranger that had burst through into the world with them.

Deonis: “What is that person doing here? Is that the falling star we saw in the ruins?”

Amon: “I believe it is. We should thank it for showing us the way home. Let us introduce ourselves.”

The falling star was in reality Sylvanias, as he travelled from his home universe into the past.

Sylvanias: “I’m not here to make friends. This world will perish if I do not act swiftly.”

Seren: “What is the situation?”

Sylvanias: “There is something called a demon door…”

Seren: “Don’t bother. We know what they are. We are trying to close them as well.”

Sylvanias: “I don’t think you know the entire story behind what you are trying to prevent. But that matters not. At this place in time six doors are open, six remain closed. We are running short on time.”

Seren: ‘We closed the one at Levix and the one at the Marshland Ruins.”

Sylvanias: “I am aware those two are closed. Six remain open: The Dwarves Mines of Rochshire is open. The Island of Mystics is open. Doom Island’s is open. Glaw City’s is open…”

Seren: “Where are the closed?”

Sylvanias: “Levix and the Marshland Ruins are closed because of you. The mines of the Village of Zig south of Domon City are closed. The Summerland’s on Mt Destiny remains closed thanks to my people. The door at the roots of the base of the holy tree Yggdrasil is closed as well…”

Seren: “That is a lot. Who closed the ones that are closed now?”

Sylvanias: “It does not matter. They can be reopened.

Deonis: “Not good. But you missed one of the doors. You only listed five that are closed.”

Sylvanias: “Urgh…which did I miss?”

Amon: “Sand City Navidia’s door is open.”

Seren: “Two more…”

Amon: “One in the underwater Coral reef is closed.”

Deonis: “And?”

Sylvanias: “Damn. The last one is in the sunken city-state of Diligence and it is open as well.”

Sylvanias: “That means we have at least six to close and seal.”

Seren: “How?”

Sylvanias: “We will ask the elves that once lived upon the Yggdrasil. They are the only ones at this point who can help us.”

Amon: “Agreed.”

Deonis: “The elves live on the forest covered continent to the south west of this continent. We should find a ship and set sail for there.”

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# Act III

## Scene III: DOMON CITY SHIPYARD

Sylvanias: “The island continent to the south-west is home to a race of elusive elves. Long ago they dwelled within the Yggdrasil, before the people of Damon agreed to taking on the burden of protecting the tree for all of eternity. In fact, if you trace the Damonian Priesthood’s blood line back far enough, you will find it intertwines with the elves.”

Seren: “Wow…I would have never thought the Damonian’s were part elf.”

Amon: “We can sire a ship for transport to the island here. We should gather as many supplies as possible before we leave; it will be a while before we are able to do so again.”

After spreading out through the city to gather as many supplies as possible, the party met up once again in the town square and made their way to the shipyard to secure passage.

Seren: “Excuse me sir.”

Seren addressed the nearby shipmaster.

Seren: “My three companions and I seek a boat for passage to the island of Freya, to the south west of the Domon coast.”

Shipmaster: “I would be glad to take you the way, but that island has no place to moor one of my vessels. It is surrounded on all sides by steep cliffs. You would need many more a hand to scale those cliffs and reach the forest.”

Seren turned to the others.

Seren: “That means we will not be able to reach the isle by ourselves. We should speak with the Emperor, he may be able to fix us transport. I will arrange an audience. This should not be a problem as I am under instruction by him to close these demon doors.”

# Act III

## Scene IV: HALL OF MINISTERS

Blade: “Seren, along with his companions, has brought to my attention that is will be necessary to send a small armament to the island of the tree-folk, to the south west our continent.”

Theron, Captain of the Ninja Guard arose and spoke.

Theron: “I and my squad of assassins are at your service noble Seren.”

Blade: “I want all of you to understand this **not** to be an offensive mission, and I do not want any natives harmed without my direct order. Theron, you and your men are there only to act as personal protection for Seren in his quest.”

Seren: “Theron and his men shall accompany me to the island. Amon, Sylvanias, and Deonis shall remain here and research the history of the gates in Levix and Zig and find a way to either destroy them or keep them sealed permanently. There is always the chance they could be reopened, and if so it befits us to have them with their experience ready.”

Theron: “Very well, we leave at dawn.”

# Act III

## Scene V: THE ZAHARI

Deonis, Sylvanias, and Amon were travelling down a dusty trail through the flat lands of Domon. The mountain range, which held the Levix settlement at its base, was in the far distant horizon. Deonis was gazing into the sky, watching the stars and enumerating the constellations, when he noticed several out of place lights appear, growing in size, taking on shape.

Deonis: “What is that?”

The new stars were approaching the earth rapidly.

Sylvanias: “Take cover!”

Suddenly explosions riddled the mountains in the distance.

Deonis: “What is happening?”

Sylvanias: “Our world is under attack.”

Deonis: “Our world? Under attack? What do you mean?”

Amon began to speak in slow, methodic tone.

Amon: “High above the air, beyond your atmosphere, in orbit around your planet is a relic.”

Sylvanias: “A machine in the sky, beyond the planet and close to your moons.”

Amon: “It is a fortress and a space station. Its name is Machina. It was put there as a defense by the ancients who dwelled on this planet, long before the comet struck it and made it like it is today. It seems that someone has come to invade…. and the machine is defending your world.”

Sylvanias gazed upwards.

Sylvanias: “Whoever it is, its someone with a powerful enough arsenal of weapons to be causing that much return fire from Machina. My best bet would be...”

All of them gazed upwards and down again.

Amon and Sylvanias said simultaneously: “The Zahari.”

High, high above the surface of Terra, Machina’s artificial intelligence activated its cloaking device as the station went into panic mode, saving itself from its own destruction and preparing its self-repair process before its next strike.

The Zahari mother ship landed in the Eastern Domon Flats first, east of Zig, boding ill luck for the three travelers. Domon prepared an offensive, dragons stretching on their perches and airship engines roaring, warming up on their launch platforms. The riflemen were adjusting Domon’s massive intercontinental cannons: turning them away from Damon and towards the landing mother ship. The Republic of Damon to the north had also seen the landing and was preparing their army as well. Sword mages and warrior priests had boarded their airships, great falcons along with their riders warmed themselves in the sky perches and small auto-mail robotic suits the Damonian’s called ‘gears” were being serviced and readied.

Meanwhile, Seren, Theron, and several ninja guard and three dragons were on their way by boat to the large island of Freya in the southwest.

Sylvanias, seeing the imminent emergency, realized that it was absolutely necessary for him to consult with his king, the King of Strattas. Sylvanias opened a gravity door and the three of them entered, arriving on the other side in the Summerland, high up in the clouds, before the Castle Strattas’ doors. There, they petitioned for an emergency audience with the king.

# Act III

## Scene VI Part 1: OPEN SEA

Seren stood, leaning over the deck of the boat, eyeing a small necklace that rested in his palm. A figure entered the deck from below and Seren quickly pocketed the necklace. The figure was Theron, who had also, feeling uneasy, come to the upper deck of the boat.

Theron: “So, you too huh…?”

Seren: “Me what?”

Theron: “I guess we both needed some air.”

Seren: “Its not just that. Its...”

Seren was hesitant.

Theron: “Let me tell you a story…Don’t worry, I’ll make it short.”

Theron: “I lost someone…god… it was years and years ago now. She was more beautiful than any girl I can remember. She was kind, with a warm smile and blue eyes like the ocean. She…well she passed in a dust storm, when I lived on the island of Kal’Ma’Tik -South Easter as its also known-actually now that I think about it, it is directly east of where we are travelling now, but I digress…. We were living in a city called Navidia. The dust storm took her…took everyone, them all, away from me. Today there is nothing left of Navidia and my life there but me…I am the sole survivor of the people of Sand City Navidia.”

Seren and Ariel were camping, huddled over a campfire, halfway between Domon City and Levix Settlement.

Ariel: “I see the proud Emperor of Domon could not even put forth enough gold for more than one tent….” Ariel was in an irritable, sarcastic mood.

Seren sat down next to her upon a damp moss-covered log.

Seren: “I will sleep out here tonight. Look, you are already getting bit by mosquitos…. milady”

Ariel: “You know Seren, both of us will not make it through this excursion….”

Seren: “That’s absurd! Why would you say such a thing?”

Ariel: “Because I know so. I can see some things. Sometimes my visions are murky but not always. This time it is clear. Come into the tent with me, I don’t want to spend tonight alone. Anyway I have something I wish to give you.”

Seren smirked and Ariel laughed out loud.

Ariel: “I have a necklace I want to give you so I’ll never be forgotten. They say if you pass on a part of yourself to someone you love, they will always remember you and then your life in this world will never fade away.”

Theron: “I’m sorry…I didn’t know.”

Seren: “I want to….”

Theron: “Huh?”

Seren: “I want to resurrect her. If a sorcerer can open the doors of the world of malevolent spirits, they should be able to open the doorway to the world of the benevolent.”

Theron: “Seren, that is wrong…. those are powers best left alone.”

Seren: “I know…but she was…. she was the one…perfect.”

Theron: “I’m going to get some rest. I suggest you do the same. “

Theron left and returned to his quarters and Seren stared into the stars.

# Act III

## Scene VI Part 2: FOREST FOLK

The ship was moored alongside the eastern cliff face of the island Freya, where both elves and other forest folk called their home. The anchors were tossed to the shallows below, and ropes launched up to the tops of the cliff face, secured by massive mechanical grappling hooks. Various lift apparatuses were connected to carry Seren and the others up the ropes to the surface and then back down to the ropes to the ship for their departure.

They entered the jungles of the island, hacking away at vines and new sprouts with machetes until they reached an inner clearing. There they were before a massive, ancient tree, of the same species as the Yggdrasil, but clearly younger and smaller. The natives called it the Lifa Tree, the child sprout born of a seed of the Yggdrasil. Surrounding the tree, armed with both bow and sword, were a faction of young elven fighters. One of the elven fighters was of the ‘light dwellers’, an ancient and powerful race of elves nearly extinct, and the others were forest elves, the most common race in this era of Terran History.

Light Dweller: “At ease men, they are of Domon, they have come in peace.”

The light dweller was clearly the leader of this faction.

Sanka: “Greetings. I am the light elf Sanka. We anticipated an attack by Damon any day now, hence our high guard.”

Seren: “Damon? Why them?”

Sanka: “The tower you saw under construction, that is why. To explain everything would take much too much time. In short, certain people of Damon have sacrificed their belief in what is good and holy and have begun the work to fell the tree of life. With its timber they hope to build a tower that reaches into the heavens and beyond to where the heavenly castle floats. The fortress built to guard all of Terra.”

Seren: “For what reason?”

Sanka: “Its technology is far beyond anything on the surface of this world and would yield great military benefits. Gaining its knowledge would make them indestructible and to them the destruction of the tree of life is a small price to pay.”

Seren: “But why attack here?”

Sanka; “They will very soon find that the Yggdrasil is not quite enough, and they will need the wood of its sapling, the Lifa tree as well.”

Theron: “Excuse me, does this have anything to do with the opening of the demon doors?”

Sanka: “I feel there is a connection but I cannot say for certain. However, you, Theron, one of our elder’s wishes to speak with you in private.”

An elderly woman clothed in a green robe decorated with a bright red berry ink approached Theron and took him by the arm into the thicket beyond the clearing.

Sanka: “So, Seren, what shall you do while here. Damon will attack soon while Domon is otherwise occupied. The assault will be too much for the few elves that live here… We are a dying race. Of my kind only twelve are left, of the forest folk less than a hundred. There is nothing we can do. Our race will certainly be erased from this world.”

Seren: “You know something, don’t you? It is Damon, isn’t it? They are opening the Demon Doors as well. I can read it in your eyes.”

Sanka: “Yes. Ariel came to Domon hoping for sanctuary as well as to close the doors. She knew far too much and the high priests of Damon knew when they sent her she would not return from her mission. And she knew this too the same. She gave her life for you Seren, could you have done the same?”

Seren’s gaze drifted to the ground.

Sanka: “I know you seek the forbidden knowledge.”

Seren: “Who opened the door at Levix?”

Sanka: “That killed Ariel…”

Seren: “And….”

Sanka: “The knowledge that can bring her back…”

Seren’s eyes rose to meet Sanka’s with a sudden lust for power.

Sanka: “I will not bring her back. But you Seren….You will search and search nevertheless, and succeed whether I tell you the secret or not. So let me ease your foreseen pain. It all must happen. All of these things must occur so that in the future that will be now, the Sore Upon The Face of Terra is destroyed once and for all.”

Seren: “Damn you and your riddles! Just shut the hell up and tell me how to bring her back!”

Sanka: “When Damon arrives, join with them and kill every light elf you see. Then the way of the world will lead you down the path to resurrect Ariel.”

Seren: “What is wrong with you old man? You are sick!”

Sanka: “Or you can join us and fight Damon. If you choose this path you will never see her again.”

In a flash of anger, Seren grabbed Sanka by the throat.

Sanka: “Who opened the Demon Door in Levix?” The elf said laughing viciously. Then he said, heartless as Seren’s sword was thrust through his chest and emerged out of the elf’s back. “And killed Ariel?”

Seren: “All of you. You elves!”

Sanka smiled, falling to his knees, and spat blood on the ground.

Sanka: “No. Not all of us. Just me.”

Tears welled in Seren’s eyes.

Seren: “Why?”

Sanka: ‘So that the sore upon the face of Terra. The one that we elves foolishly put there so many hundreds of years ago might finally be healed.”

Seren turned to the side and raised his hand to dry his eye.

Seren: “Bastard…Why do you speak in riddles and rhymes?”

Sanka: “Spare only one of us, elves of the light. My son. He is in my hut on the south end of the island, in the village. You will know him for he has the power to change into pure light, a gift only my race is blessed with. He is in a cradle that glows, filled with that light. His name is Sinko. You will know him when you see him.”

Seren: “Why should I?”

Sanka: “Spare him and the future you desire shall come to be. Go through the Demon Door on Mt. Destiny and speak with Baal-Rél again. He will tell you how to resurrect your lover. I’ve kept the door key just for you.”

The blood dripped from Sanka’s wound. Drip. Drip. The puddle began to glow and each droplet of blood turned to fire and was extinguished, a tiny puff of smoke on its way to the earth. His wound sparked, then his body, bathed in glittering golden light, vanished in the same way, a puff of smoke, carried seaward by the wind.

Meanwhile, Theron had been escorted up a hill and into a deep patch of pines. He and his escorts had entered a small grove of silver pines planted in a semi-circle, with a crystal ball orb mounted upon a stump in the center, decorated ornately with magic runes.

The high elf that had escorted him along the way spoke.

High Elf: “Come Theron, you are to look into the crystal.”

Theron approached it.

High Elf: “This is why all of these things have had to come to pass.”

In the deep blue of the crystal orb vaporous shapes began to take form. Theron saw Seren approaching Baal-Rél, asking Baal-Rél to resurrect Ariel, and in turn losing the purity within his heart, leaving only lust, hate, and regret.

High Elf: “Look further…”

A distant future is shown. Domon is covered in pollution, black putrid clouds burst from factories. An arsenal of machines is driven by magic and they fight alongside dragon riders. Along with the riders: riding atop black, nefarious dragons. Seren is no longer a soulless dark knight but a virtuous paladin fighting along side of the Republic of Damon, born holy and new. Seren fights alongside a small army of mysterious companions, against an evil empire that Domon has become, against wicked creations from the minds of corrupted scientists and magicians. Overhead, in the far distance and a tower pierces the sky of the horizon.”

High Elf: “The tower you see is the sore that once was and will be again upon the face of Terra. Not the tower that is in Damon now, like it but older, much older – thought to be gone from this world. Now, take your troops and go home. Seren has betrayed you already and will do so again. Tell no person what you have seen here. Do not speak of it to your men, or even to your Emperor.”

Theron: “I understand.”

# Act III

## Scene VII Part 1: THE SUMMER LAND, NAVINE, AND THE ZAHARI

King Strattas had summoned Deonis, Amon, and Sylvanias into his chambers immediately. He knew that any use of the seldom-used Gravity Door spelled danger.

King Strattas: “Strangers, and enlightened citizen of my kingdom, please, enter!”

King Strattas was an elderly man of tall stature and god-like appearance.

Sylvanias: “I thank thee for the audience. It is a privilege to be before such high royalty. As I am sure you know, our situation is urgent. We are here to beg assistance as well as assist you in any means possible.”

To the kings right side stood a heavily armored man with long, dark hair and almond eyes. His skin was a rich tan and his muscles rippled beneath his armor along his lengthy frame. The armored man’s name was Kalir.

Kalir: “I am Kalir, general of the troops of the Summerland in this time slice.”

Deonis turned to Amon and whispered a question.

Deonis: “Time slice?”

Amon whispered back to Deonis.

Amon: “The people of this kingdom were the first and few to master time travel without paradox or conflict. They refer to certain segments in time, certain eras, as time slices.”

Amon: “Milord, in a time such as this I would consider requesting assistance. Have you spoken with the Navine?”

Kalir: “We have been unable to contact the Navine. And what makes matters even worse, besides the appearance of the Zahari and the opening of the demon doors, your sheep Amon- the Damonians- are attempting to construct a device to transport them into Machina.”

Strattas: “You, sir are from Damon are you not? What do you know of this?”

Deonis: “All, I am certain what Kalir speaks is true. To the east of the city Glaw that surrounds our capital lays a village named Seal. Not far from Seal a tower is being constructed using the wood harvested directly from the Yggdrasil, the tree of life itself. “

Kalir: “ Indeed. This tower device they seek to build has been causing disruptions in the world around the tower, causing resonance worm holes to appear every few time slices and disrupting the natural order of time.”

Amon: “The situation is not good. I was speaking with some of your engineer’s milord, and they have informed me that some of the Damonians have already been able to gain partial control of Machina’s systems. The artificial intelligence software on Machina was experiencing down time because of this, creating a perfect opening in our planet’s defenses for the Zahari.”

Strattas: “Yes. We have been observing the Zahari ships laying at wait outside our atmosphere for quite a few years now, waiting for the perfect moment to invade. They have dried up the oceans on their own planet and hope to deplete ours as well.”

Kalir: “I see no other way than to launch an offensive.”

King Strattas grumbled and curse in a deep tone.

Strattas: “Damn…”

Amon: “Deonis, have you held on to the Vorpal Sword given to you?”

Deonis: “Yes I have.”

**END ACT III**

# Act IV

## Scene I: MT. DESTINY

Seren stumbled and was near exhaustion climbing up through the gravel and stone, wading through the mists and smoke of Mt. Destiny. The steep paths ascending the mountain were made of grey gravel and polished carved granite, littered with runes carved eons ago.

A voice cried out from behind Seren as he climbed. He turned, still on the edge of a rock face with his hands and feet wedged into the holes of the rock so he could ascend higher to a steeper path. The voice was Theron. Seren cursed to himself, he thought he had left all the others behind when they left to secure lodgings in town.

Theron: “Seren, don’t do this! You do not know what the consequences will be!”

Seren tossed a rock downwards from his perch that struck Theron square in the forehead. Theron cursed and spat on the ground.

Theron: “You damn fool!”

Theron grabbed a hold of the rock face in front of him and began to climb rapidly and quickly met up with Seren.

Seren: “This is none of your concern!”

Theron reached Seren’s perch.

Theron: “Come, give me your hand. You must let her go. We need you, without you there can be no assault on the Zahari or Damon.”

Seren said nothing. With passion in his blood-red eyes he reached to his thigh and in a flash of light formed from the sun’s reflection on his blade, he had buried his knife into the abdomen of Theron.

Theron looked deep into Seren’s eyes asking for mercy from this betrayal, but it was too late. Seren watched as the lifeless eyes of Theron dropped away, his grip on the rock face loosened, his body plummeting into the misty clouds of the abyss below.

Seren reached a plateau upon the mountain. Happy to be on two feet again, but still feverishly mad, he strolled forward to a massive, granite outcropping, into which the shape of a door had been carved. He reached for the twelve iron keys of the demon doors, which had been entrusted to him in secret by the light elf Sanka.

With a wave of the key ring, the carving took to life and the face of an ancient one, guardian of the gateway, bound to stone, grew from its home in the mountain wall, its face taking shape and greeting Seren.

Demon Door: “I am Agrothk: A Demon of the Door to the twelfth region of the underworld. What seek ye holder of my key?”

Seren: “Open, for I am to meet with your master.”

The face molded back into the flat face, vanishing as the doorway opened. The blue light of the ethereal realm, home to ghosts and poltergeists among others, spilled out on to the mountain before him. The archway grew from the ethereal blue to a dark purple and finally a blood red. Mt. Destiny itself grew dark, under an unnatural, evil shadow.

The smell of death hung in the air. Strattas observed the great shadow creeping along the surface of the floating island, rippling and expanding outwards from Mt. Destiny.

Strattas: “There will be no assault on the Zahari or Damon. Theron has failed us. Seren has opened the demon door here in the Summerland in his madness. We have little time.”

Deonis: “No…. It cannot be…”

Seren had entered the doorway, negotiated his way through the jackknifed stony cliffs and bridges of lava stone and obsidian, downwards through the world of demons. Once again he found a portal to the laboratory of Baal Rél. Baal spoke.

Baal Rél: “So Seren, you have returned to my lab. I assume then you know it is time.”

Seren: “What do you do within this laboratory?”

Baal Rél: “I assist in opening the doors for my lord and master, Beélzebub. He wishes to annex your world. However, this occupation of mine has also allowed me to further a bit of my own research.”

Seren: “I have been told you have the power to fully resurrect the dead and buried so that they have life as before.”

Baal Rél: “Indeed. Thanks to my research here I can. I see in your eyes – worry not for your planet. Even if you were to close the demon doors, the Zahari, a race of other worldly beings clearly superior to you, have already begun the process of invading the land of the greedy people you call Damonians and their sister Domon. Soon they will easily take your world. You were just too weak Seren; all of you Terrans are weak. There was and is now nothing you can do. It was written by fate.”

Seren: “The Damonians, they were helping you open the demon doors and the elves as well. Why?”

Baal Rél: “I possessed some of the high priests of Damon to bend them towards my wishes. Seeing our power, they hoped they could use some of us in defense of their land, to serve as their soldiers. They did not know the Zahari would come to their weakened world. And as for the elves, they had their own agenda. Ha Ha!”

Seren: “I have heard enough. It is all sickening to me. What do you want in return for Ariel’s life?”

Baal Rél: “Yours.”

Seren: “My life?”

Baal Rél: “Do you love her enough that you would sacrifice your own life for hers, as she did for you?”

# Act IV

## Scene II: THE SUMMER LAND

Kalir: “I will prepare it. We are running out of time. The umbra of the demon door approaches.”

Deonis: “Lord Strattas, of what do you speak?”

Sylvanias: “I, actually, can answer for him. Of our people, the people of the eternal summer, exists a powerful tool, a device created by an ancient order of my people formed long ago. The tribe of the Navine have been the caretakers of it for generations, since its creation over four thousand years ago.”

Kalir: “And the Vorpal Sword is the sign of the covenant between our people, the Navine, and God. When the Vorpal Sword appears it shows we have been given permission to and must use it. The sword is the key to the device.”

Strattas: “Now is time. The D-Type Machine. With it we can destroy the demon doors and send the Zahari running as well.”

Deonis: “D-Type machine….”

Kalir: “The D-Type machine. Similar in nature to the Aleph Triangle, our time travel device that opens the Temporal Triangle. It is a fantastic piece of engineering.”

A man in a flowing silver robe matching his flowing silver hair entered the king’s hall.

Man: “I am Lohar, of the Navine tribe. I have heard you have made a request to use D-Type.’

Kalir: “Yes Lohar, we must. Our world is in a terrible crisis and we are in a situation of the utmost urgency. The people of Terra are on the verge of extinction, should this timeline be destroyed by the Zahari weapons.”

Lohar: “Very well. The backwards resonance by either the Zahari weapons or absorption by the Demon Doors could completely erase us not just from this planet and this world but as you said, it could remove us entirely from the multiverse. It must be used. Should it occur, the destruction in the present would reach far into the past and cause great damage.”

Amon: “Ms’ra has spoken to me. The Master grants you permission.”

Stattas: “I, as king of the Summerland, grant permission.”

Lohar: “I, leader of the tribe of caretakers grant my permission as well. Who bears the Vorpal Sword?”

Deonis: “I do.”

Lohar: “Than you act as representative of the surface. Do you grant your permission to use D-Type?”

Amon: “It is the only way Deonis….”

Deonis: “I do.

# Act IV

## Scene III: ARIEL

Seren’s soul was in the possession of Baal Rél. Ariel sat in front of the demon door of Mt. Destiny, the door sealed beyond any power possible, even hers. Lying next to her was the corpse of Seren.

There was a flicker. A moment of oddness. Hardly noticeable but existent. Seren’s corpse sat propped against the mountainside. Ariel sat next to it.

Another flicker. A cool wind rushed by, over the grassy earth outside the demon door. It brushed a strand of red hair across Ariel’s face. Amon, the beautiful angel with his golden glow and pure white wings folded around him sat next to her. Seren is alive, standing in the D-Type room, taken the place of Amon. He is standing behind Lohar, the operator.

Lohar: “Shazerei!”

Lohar cursed. The machine was only warming up.

Sylvanias: “Somebody didn’t calibrate the shields properly.

Seren punches Lohar in the back, at the base of his skull.

Another flicker. And another.

The tower being constructed in Damon is there, fully built. A flicker and it is gone, removed forever. Seren reaches for the controls like a madman. Amon is here again and grasps Seren. Another flicker. The seas and the skies are a choking yellow of pollution and waste. Another flicker. And another.

Seren is gone again, his soul in possession of Baal Rél once more, but all of the demon doors have been removed, erased from the history of time. Baal Rél’s realm is inaccessible to any who would try and reach it.

Lohar stands and turns to those behind him.

Lohar: “Is everyone ready. D-Type is our anti-Armageddon machine. In the case of the most extreme of urgencies, such as this, we can re-arrange and reconstruct our universe in the space-time of the multiverse . Using it we can correct the mistakes and change the plot of our lives’ stories. With it we fix the mistakes of the past!”

Lohar cried his last sentence over the powerful winds swirling around the chamber that held D-Type. The sheath that covered the machine separated and split open, the red, pulsating eye laser fired a beam that doused the room. As the light grew brighter, time flickered as before, more and more as the machine accelerated.

Deonis: “Amazing!”

“She’s all powered up, everyone ready?”

Deonis, Amon, Sylvanias: “We’re ready!”

Lohar: “I’ll see all of you in another, better life.”

Lohar pulled the switch. The red light turned green. And then white.

And it was all… white.

**THE END**