

WARD HISTORY

CHAPTER 1 – QUESTIONS IN THE DARK



Before there was something, there was Nothing. An unconceivable emptiness and from the emptiness a consciousness began to form.

The consciousness existed without substance, forming and unforming again and again, and then, a thought. The first thought, consisting of a very simple question, “what?” This thought then began to grow into an idea, and from that idea sprang a plan. A plan to create something. Something in which he could live with others. Something maybe like him, or others not like him. He desired anything but the emptiness of The Nothing he currently resided in.

Eons passed as the consciousness drifted through the endlessness of The Nothing thinking about the idea. Suddenly! An object began to form. A simple object, but an object formed from mere thought. The object was irregular at first, something that resembled a sphere. The irregular sphere was not alive, did not move, and could not interact with him. This did not bother the consciousness. It did not care what the sphere was. He was exhilarated that there was now something in The Nothing. It was at this point that the consciousness became The Creator.

As time passed on, The Creator began to form other simple objects. He created more spheres, and other variations of that sphere. As he concentrated harder, one of his spheres began to erupt in a bright light. This did not frighten The Creator, as fear was not yet a concept. He was intrigued by this discovery. The empty Nothingness that he loomed in for so long, now had light, and from that light, came shadow. And from that shadow something began to form.

WARD HISTORY

The shadow formed a physical being of darkness. It had no name, and no words, but The Creator could sense that this being was conscious, like him. The Creator felt the first feeling of excitement in the universe. He tried to interact with this new being, but he was not sure how to perform such an act. The Creator then thought hard about the form this new being took. In his concentration, he created himself a physical form like the creature.



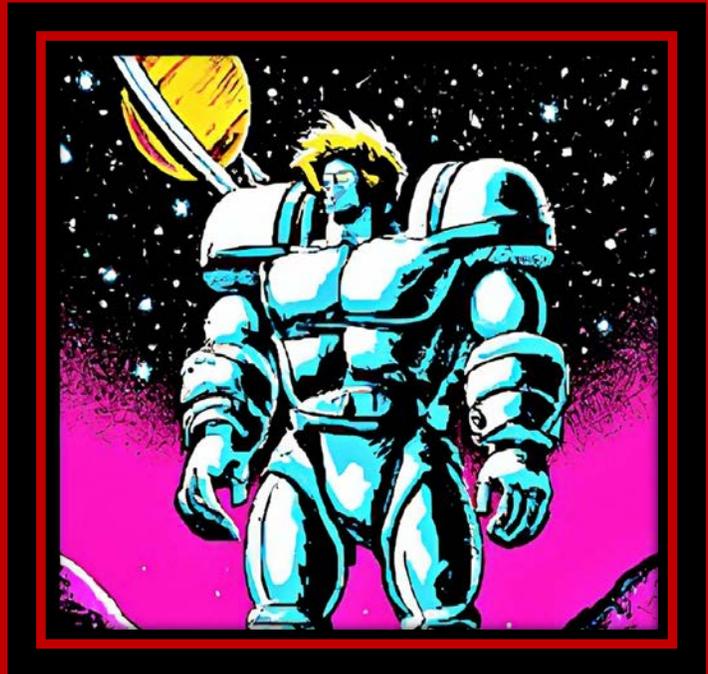
Using the only understanding he knew The Creator reached out towards the being and formed a pyramid in his hand. The being hesitated for a moment, and then took the pyramid from The Creator and held it out in front of himself. The being then clenched his horrible, clawed hand into a fist and destroyed the pyramid. The Creator was in shock at this act. As he did not understand what destruction was or why anyone would destroy anything.

The being let out a horrific cry that reverberated throughout creation. The following shockwaves began causing the various objects The Creator had formed to crumble. Many of the objects were destroyed by the horrific cry, but not all of them. Then suddenly the being stopped shrieking and began willfully shifting its form from object to object tearing them apart. The Creator had never before fathomed the idea of destruction.

It was at this moment that The Creator felt a new feeling that had not yet existed, rage. In The Creators rage he manifested a new being, a colossal titan. The Titan saw the destruction the evil being was causing and the anguish it was causing his creator. Within moments of his manifestation The Titan lunged toward the being and seized it by the throat. The being clawed at the Titan forcing him to loosen his grip. A reality splintering battle erupted between the two apocalyptic beings. The Creator sat and watched as the battle resulted in devastating eruptions of raw power and destruction.

WARD HISTORY

Seeing that the titan was not able to subdue the shadow being and protect his precious creations, The Creator manifested himself into a size that words cannot explain and imprisoned the shadow being in his mighty grasp. Entombed in his mighty grip The Creator tore open a rift in his newly created universe and expelled the shadow being into this pocket prison dimension, adjacent to his new universe. Forever sealing it away. He named this other universe Utralll or later to be commonly known as Hell.



For the titans failure in stopping the shadow being The Creator charged him with protecting all of creation, and would act as the eternal jailor to the shadow being who would later adopt the moniker of the Cosmic Demon. The titan would be his jailor and spend eternity seeking a means to destroy it. The titan then looked to The Creator in shame and fled off into the blackness of the void becoming, The Eternal Titan.

CHAPTER 2- PLANS OF THE LIGHT

With the knowledge of creation now available to him The Creator buried himself in creating his perfect idea of a universe where he was not alone. He would spend several hundred million years constructing what he called The Cosmos, an Infinite space of stars, planets, and dust. Seeing his creations filled him with joy but there was something missing. He did not want a stagnant universe but an ever-changing place of wonder and excitement. So, he manifest something that would make his universe cycle and live, he created Time. With time, his universe began to take shape and flow.

WARD HISTORY



As Time began to flow The Creator implemented 6 additional fundamental forces along with Light and Darkness, to help shape The natural evolution of The Cosmos: Fire, Air, Water, Earth, Life, and Death.

The Creator watched as stars came and went. Planets collided and formed, and life began to sprout from his worlds. These creatures were simple, only surviving on basic instinct. He traveled the endless expanse of his universe, examining the new life that was forming. Every world with unique life forms that existed in all sorts of different fashions. But of all the

endless planets that he visited one seemed to hold his interest above all else.

A small seemingly unimportant planet in one of his lesser galaxies. The life was different, it seemed must more advanced. Colossal and scaly, the beasts roamed with the sound of thunder as they moved. The creatures feasted on the plant life and drank from the streams. They seemed to enjoy the warm climate and thick moist air that covered large portions of the planet. A peaceful utopia at first glance, all of the creatures living in harmony. But balance is not always peaceful. A larger creature sprang from the thick jungle and killed the peaceful one with a strong bite of its razor tooth filled jaw. He watched as the beast ate this creature to sustain its own life. The creature was as large as a tree and a Tyrant amongst the other creatures.



WARD HISTORY

The Creator saw promise in this prospering new world and wanted to protect its natural balance. So he fashioned beings of pure light that them called Angels. The Angels were charged with the protection of Ward, but strictly instructed not to interfere with the natural order of the world itself. He named it WARD in honor of the personal protection he would bestow upon it. After creating the angels, The Creator left. He moved on to create many more Worlds like Ward in hopes to fill his universe with life.

CHAPTER 3- WAR OF THE JUNGLE

For hundreds of millions of years the dinosaurs ruled Ward unopposed. Small tribes of primitive Humans and other creatures existed but in small numbers. Sticking to mostly the caves and other areas where the threat of the dinosaurs was less, these other creatures struggled to meek out a living.



From the cycle of fierce competition, a new creature emerged. It is not fully known if these beasts were created or evolved naturally from the dinosaurs. But the emergence of the Dragons would end the era of the dinosaurs.

Fearsome flying machines of destruction, the Red Dragons were the first of the dragons to emerge. Although not able to withstand the sheer strength and power of the largest dinosaurs, the dragons possessed a sharp intellect, wings to soar though the skies, and

flames that could melt stone and turn flesh to dust the dragons. With these abilities they would spell the doom of the dinosaurs.

WARD HISTORY

For centuries the dragons systematically hunted the dinosaurs. Through this War of Extinction, some of the dragons evolved to better suit themselves to the various environments they were in. Species began to emerge: Swamp Dragons, Blue Dragons, and even Dragons that were so intelligent, they developed psychic powers.

Even with all of the advantages and intellect of the dragons, there were several dinosaurs they could not master. The Tyrannosaurus Rex, with their colossal frame seemed to not fear the dragons, but instead seemed to prefer the challenge the new dragons presented. They would catch ones that ventured to close to the ground and feed on them. Although smaller and weaker Raptors would move in large packs and ambush dragons that were sleeping or caught off guard. The Allosaurus, with their serrated teeth and claws would often engage the dragons in combat only to wound the dragons, then return later to the weakened or dead dragon. But of all the dinosaurs, there was one that the dragons dare not



engage, the Giganotosaurus. These creatures were taller than the trees in the forest, and stronger than a hurricane. Their hides so thick and robust they could withstand the flames of the Red Dragons. Though they were not intelligent like the dragons, but an incredibly cunning predator. He was so large that he could catch dragons flying by at lower altitudes and kill them before they even knew he was there.

WARD HISTORY

CHAPTER 4- SCALES AND FIRE

With the near extinction of the dinosaurs, the dragons flourished and spread across all of Ward. But with their common enemy defeated the different dragon species began to grow apart and control their own territories. But the nature of the dragons is not peaceful and eventually that hostility turned inward amongst the different dragon species. Although mighty and terrible the Swamp Dragons could not match the strength of the Red Dragons. With nearly being driven to extinction the Swamp Dragons escaped and hide in the plague filled swamps and marshes. Between the Blues and Reds, a great many skirmishes erupted over large swaths of territory. Ice and fire destroyed entire continents. But in the end the Red Dragons beat back the Blue Dragons. Defeated and knowing the Red Dragons could not survive in the frozen north, the Blue Dragons with their natural resistance to the frozen ice lands of the north, retreated knowing the Red Dragons couldn't follow. The smallest and physically weakest of the different dragons took a different approach. Using the knowledge of how their Swamp and Blue brethren survived they elected to flee into the deep underground caves where the Reds could not follow due to their enormous size.

Deep underground beneath the plague swamps the Dragon Fox toiled. They honed their psychic abilities in the attempts to one day return to the surface and take back their territory and push the Red Dragons into the miserable existence they now faced. They pushed their abilities to their very limits seeking the source of their abilities. Then after hundreds of years, they pushed through the unknown fog of their abilities and found the font of their abilities. It was connected to a pocket dimension adjacent to their own. They knew by tapping to the source of their abilities they could take back the surface. The Dragons Fox did it. They pushed through to this dimension and forced a small incision into it to boost their powers. But through this small crack something looked back.

The Dragons Fox living beneath the Plague swamps were the first to fall. Hundreds of thousands of Demons from Utrall poured through the crack before it could be closed again. But one amongst them radiated with malice above all the others. The creature known as the Demon King led this terrible host, nearly destroying the Dragon Fox overnight.

WARD HISTORY

The Swamp Dragons were the next to fall. With their low numbers the Swamp Dragons put up a mounted resistance killing many demons, but their power was no match for the Demon King and his endless horde of Demons. When the fighting was nearly over, he commanded his Demons to stop fighting and began capturing the remaining Swamp Dragons. A few escaped but many more were captured. One by one he challenged them to single combat. The strongest he would defeat and then infect. Converting them to join his army. The other weaker ones he gleefully slaughtered for amusement.



The demon army flooded across Ward killing and tainting anything in their path. There were many species that were destroyed or converted by the endless sea of demons. The early Human tribes were no exception. Many of the different tribes of Humans were destroyed. But there was one in particular that survived one of these attacks. Many members of the tribe were tainted by the demonic corruption turning them into serpents, but before they had fully succumbed to the evil, they escaped their captivity and fled into the sea. Free of the focus of the demons and dragons the corrupted Humans thrived and built a thriving underwater city. These Humans were no longer, but a hybrid, half serpent-half Human, and so the Naga civilization was born.

However, the Red Dragons, the strongest and most territorial of all the dragons were not about to let their hold on the world go without a fight. As the Demon Host passed through the great open plains at the foot of their mountain roost an opportunity presented itself to them, for the great plains were not as peaceful as they seemed for it was the hunting grounds for something far more terrible than the dragons or demons. Hundreds of Red Dragons lay in wait behind the Mountains waiting to strike. Then without warning the Red Dragons responded in full. Hundreds of dragons ascended into the sky launching an assault on the main Host of Demons. Hundreds of thousands of Demons were immediately incinerated as a massive wall of dragon fire turning everything in its wake to ash. A great battle followed and tens of thousands more demons fell but the Demons

WARD HISTORY

were cunning and learned quickly. They countered the dragons' second attack and turned the tides of battle taking with them thousands of dragons as well. The dragons attempted to rally but the Demon King was powerful beyond anything they could throw at him. Slowly the dragons were losing.

As the battle reached its crescendo and the destruction rang out for miles across the great blackened fields, the dragon's gamble seemed to pay off. The battle seemed to be in the favor of the Demon King, until a loud thunder was heard from the thick southern jungle. The dragons knew immediately what the sound meant and retreated. The dragons took to the skies fleeing back to the safety of the mountains to the north. Unorganized savagery took hold of the demon host as they began cheering and feasting on the corpses of dead who littered the battlefield. The demon king stood in disbelief, but only for a moment. Louder and louder the thunderous noise grew. Then from over the horizon a massive shape began to grow. The Demon King attempted to reorganize his army, but it was too late. The massive Giganotosaurus's speed put it on top of them before they could properly reorganize. The Giganotosaurus tore through the weakest and strongest of demons as if they were but playthings. Stomping, shredding, and swiping scores of demons with every movement. The futile resistance the demon put up only enraged the beast more, driving it into a blood frenzy. The reorganized dragons saw their opportunity and flew in close and scorched the entire battlefield with red flame. The Demon King was in a losing position, but had a plan. At this moment, he cast a spell unleashing all the collected souls from the Swamp Dragons and the Dragon Fox. Using the raw power of soul energy, the Demon King ripped open a new yet unstable portal for but a brief moment, much larger than the first, and from the depth came the great enemy of the Cosmos, The Cosmic Demon.



The Cosmic Demon laid waste to the remaining dragons, forcing them to retreat. He then turned his attention to the Giga that was still wreaking havoc on the lesser demons, and engaged with the creature. The ground shook and the shock waves from the might clashes flattened mountains and dried up rivers. The Giga with its incredible raw strength was able to outmatch the beast. But the Cosmic demon was a being of the infinite and used its control of negative energy to subdue the Giga and bind it in a prison of negative energy.

WARD HISTORY

CHAPTER 5- CLASH OF GODS

After the defeat in the great plains, the Red Dragons retreated to the mountains to regroup and formulate a plan to oppose the Cosmic Demon. There were many ideas, and harsh words, but no plan they could devise seemed to help. As tensions rose within the craggy realm of the Red Dragons the demon army continued for months to rampage across Ward. But little did they know that at the sight of the great battle on the plains corruption, blood, and fire spread. The Raw pure fire magic and life-giving blood of the dragons was mixed with the corruption magic of the demons. From the bloody flames of corruption, birthed a being. A God like being made of fire turning the once great and beautiful grassy plains into the area now known Great Black Fire Sea.

The Fire God showed no love for the demons or dragons that birthed him. He swept through the armies of crude weapons and gnashing teeth. Nothing could seem to stop him. He commanded the very essence of fire as if he was the embodiment of all flame to ever exist.

The Cosmic Demon engaged with the Fire God. This conflict caused volcanos to erupt, the skies to blacken, and the ground to splinter. This battle threatened to break apart the entirety of the planet if not stopped. With the impending doom of Ward at stake, a flash of purest light

exploded from the sky, and from that light came the Angels. The Angels used their holy power bestowed upon them by The Creator to interject. The dragons watched from the distant mountains. Fire, corruption, and light engulfed the horizon. They had never felt anything like this before. A power terrible enough to frighten dragons. The dragon elders decided they would stay away from the battle until one of the beings was destroyed. But many of Red Dragons betrayed the commands of their elders and flew into the battle.



WARD HISTORY

The renegade dragons entered the battle and began scorching the demon army. Many died to the might of the Demon King, but with every breath of fire, The Fire God grew more powerful. The Angels used their angelic power to cleanse the demons. The battle waged on for 2 days and 2



nights. No victory could be achieved by any faction. Finally, many of the Angels combined the small bits of The Creators raw power that resides in all of them, sacrificing themselves to rip open a portal to Hell. With the portal opened, the renegade dragons, remaining angels, and the Fire God combined their power to drive the Cosmic Demon and his army into Hell. The remaining demons that managed to avoid being driven into the portal, fled from the battle and into hiding. Now leaderless and scattered, the demonic threat was quelled.

Although resistant to flames, the renegade dragons who helped the Fire God in battle against the Cosmic Demon were horribly disfigured from the pure fire magic of the Fire God. This left their scales charred black. But not only were they burnt externally but the raw fire magic changed them internally as well forever tainting their lineage as the first Black Dragons. Knowing they would never be accepted back into the Red Dragon society for their betrayal to the elder council, the Black Dragon flew off on their own. Never truly regaining their former glory this would signal the fall of the dragon's control over Ward.

After the defeat of the demon army, the Fire God was weakened and vulnerable. He fled deep into Char Rock Volcano where he slumbered regaining his strength until Ward would burn again.

WARD HISTORY

CHAPTER 6- HELL'S END

The Angels had protected Ward, as they had been charged to do, but with so many of their kind killed by the demons or sacrificed in the opening of the Hell Gate they were unable to fully close the Hell Gate that they had opened. To protect Ward from the terrors of Utralll they erected a mighty citadel around the rift. Before departing the Angels tasked an elite group of Angels to guard the gleaming white citadel and for a time the evil of Utralll was contained. But over time many of the Angels fell to incursions. With only a few of the elite guards remaining they used what remained of their angelic power to create powerful wards around the citadel blocking any creature born of Utralll from leaving the citadel. The citadel had changed with the abandonment of the Angels. This marvel of Light and a beacon of hope now was tainted in permanent shadow eventually earning the title of The Citadel of Agony.



With the sealing of the Citadel of Agony the threat of the demons had come to an end on Ward. The Red Dragons continued to rule from their high mountain tops and the Black Dragons settled near Char Rock Volcano to live amongst the heat of the Fire God. Small skirmishes occurred between different dragon factions, and the occasional dinosaur, but for a time Ward was at peace.

WARD HISTORY

CHAPTER 7- A WORLD COMETH

The Angels that had sacrificed their angelic powers and were now mortal. Stuck on Ward and disconnected from the Light. The fallen angels spread across Ward eventually naming themselves the Elves, or the fallen ones. But life was hard for the Elves. Although they retained their immortality and other heightened natural abilities, being cut off entirely from the light was not natural for them. They began searching for new sources of magic to fill the void. Some elves



turned to nature and harnessed the power of life and the natural world. But others did not accept this change as graciously. A large portion of the Elves attempted to regain their light magics in the hopes they could return to Anela or heaven in the Common tongue. In part they did regain a very small portion of their light. But this light was not pure. It had been tainted by the corruption oozing out of the Hell Gate. The skin of these Elves turned dark and grey and made the Elves susceptible to light. To escape the scolding rays of the sun the tainted elves fled to the smoke-filled region surrounding Char Rock Volcano. The Dark Elves as they would be called, resented their kin for their ability to

remain in the light of the sun. The darkness of the fiery mountains offered little hospitality. So the Dark Elves used some of their regained strength to spread the darkness of Char Rock and put the entire continent in a state of permanent twilight. This did not sit well with the Elves for they may have lost their connection to the light. But they still believed in the original mission bestowed upon them by The Creator to protect Ward, even if was from themselves. These would begin the ever-lasting push and pull between the Elves and Dark Elves. Back and forth they would exchange land. The Dark elves began to tame the scurrying spiders of the forest to aid them, where as the Elves allied themselves with the Giant Eagles that streaked through the skies.

WARD HISTORY

Conflict was never absent from Ward. But for Millenia a natural balance again took shape and the natural flow of creation and destruction poured across the planet. Although locked away behind the protective wards of the Citadel of Agony, small amounts of corruption seeped into the world. This corruption mixed with the ambient Light magic from Anela the flowed across all of Ward had an unexpected effect, it brought life.

During this time, other creatures began to evolve into the world. Birds that took to the skies, crawling things that scurried across the earth, animals that drank from the rivers, and beasts that hunted.

One species that had existed since the early days of Ward but was always too weak to challenge the mightier species were the Humans. But as corruption and light blanked Ward they seemed to be especially susceptible to both magical forces. They showed great promise wielding both forms of magic. They used their newly found abilities to cause terrible pain and suffering, but at the same time showed mercy and healing. It was the duality of man that showed the true nature of opposing forces working together in perfect harmony. But with the emergence of Humans, also came the need to worship and that attracted attention from beyond the stars.



A being from the stars felt the calling of the Humans and traveled through space and Time. Its arrival near one of the Human tribes caused the tribe to praise it and erect statues in its likeness.



The Old God in return taught the tribe how to control their new found powers and wield them to great effect. But in return The Old God told the tribe to go forth and force all those who do not worship it to bend to its will or die upon the sword. Some tribes accepted worship of The Old God outright after seeing its might, but most resisted. After nearly three decades of war the last remaining Human tribe was converted. In return for his loyalty, The Old God crowned the chieftain as king of the Humans.

WARD HISTORY

CHAPTER 8- THE EMPIRE OF MAN

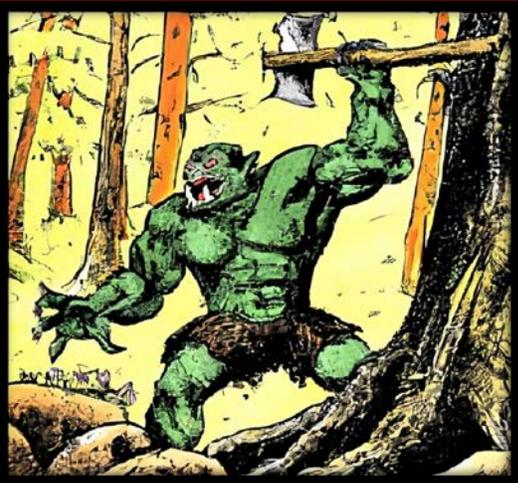
For a generation, Humans spread their influence across Ward. Through diplomacy or force, the Human empire was unstoppable and all the while the power and influence of The Old God grew. The Order of the Old God trained Knights from an early age. These knights acted as the right hand of the King. Whilst Great academies of knowledge were erected where new forms of magical disciplines were discovered. The eight disciplines of magic were based on the eight fundamental forces of creation. They were the foundation of discovery within the academy's great halls. Developed in secret under the orders of the king another discipline was discovered, and it violated the very tenants of creation, Necromancy.



With the Human populations subdued, The Old God commanded the Humans to invade the lands of the Elves and spread its influence further. The Elves were secretive, keeping to their forest homes. The Humans began to send armies into the forests to force the Elves to bow to the King. This did not sit kindly with the Elves. For as peaceful as they seemed they were equally as arrogant, for they were once Angels and they would not bow to any god other than the one true god, The Creator. The Elves resisted and war broke out. The Elves were powerful. They had extraordinary physical skills beyond and normal Human, and in the long millennia since their fall they had become powerful users of nature and life magic. But for all the strength the Elves possessed the Humans had seemingly endless numbers. The kings army pushed the Elves deep into the woods, and eventually launched a siege on the elvan city of Evergreen.

WARD HISTORY

The siege lasted for months. Sickness and starvation began to take hold within the sacred elven city. It was at this time the Human king brought forth his secret weapon. He unleashed his necromancers to begin raising the dead of the Humans and Elves. Thousands of dead soldiers assaulted the gates while hundreds of dead Elves began to sow chaos within the wall of the city. Stunned by this heresy the generals of men stood by and could only watch as their comrades came back to life as stinking, rotting ghouls and zombies. The tide of battle had turned in their favor but they could not help but feel uneasy about this new sorcery.



Their walls were crumbling, and the dead were everywhere. So, the leadership of the Elves had to take drastic measures. With the distraction and chaos caused by the necromancers during the siege, a Dark Elf managed to sneak his way into the elvan city. A reluctant deal was made between the eternal rivals of Elves and Dark Elves for the threat of the Human empire was too great to be ignored.

Three nights passed and it seemed as if all hope was lost. But on the fourth night a loud war horn was heard in the blackness of night. Suddenly, the Human lines were being bombarded by catapult fire and then they came. A massive, bloodthirsty, savage horde of huge green skinned creatures called Orcs. They were not as refined as the Elves or even the Humans and carried crude axes and wooden clubs. But they flooded out of the darkness with a ferocity that would have put a Red Dragon to shame. With their massive, muscled bodies and thick skin these creatures seemed to be bred for battle.

WARD HISTORY



For years prior to the invasion of the woodland realm by the Humans, the Dark Elves had been experimenting with the dark arcane arts to create a super soldier to crush their woodland kin. They captured and experimented on many different creatures from all over Ward. Combining their strengths and eliminating their weaknesses. Some were too powerful to be controlled and escaped into the world, whilst others were strong but faltered at the first sign of taking damage. But eventually after brutal and painful experimentation they created the Orc. The Orc was the perfect super soldier to fill out their armies ranks. They were strong, fast and

durable. But most importantly they were bloodthirsty. So, the Dark Elves poured their hate and resentment of the Elves into the very fiber of the Orcs being so they might finally wipe out the Elves. But history had different plans.

The savage Orc legion engaged the Human army chopping a bloody path through their lines towards the Necromantic sorcerers. The Human battle lines had been shattered as the Orcs had hit them from the rear. The sound of metal and screams could be heard from the darkness. Vulnerable, the necromancers fled from the battle, and with them, their undead army crumpled and fell apart. The Human army was in complete disarray as commanders fled from the battle, and out of the Elven woods. The battle was over, and the empire was finally stopped.

CHAPTER 9- FALLEN KING

With the defeat of the empire at Evergreen, the Human King turned to a power he did not fully understand. He began to work alongside with the necromancers about their studies. Taking to the discipline with an unnatural vigor he formulated plans to build a large undead army that could wipe out the Orcs, and finally take the City of Evergreen. The king started small launching attacks on Orcish war posts that were now erected outside of the forests. With every fallen Orc and Human, the king raised them back to live as his servants. Eventually, he became far more proficient with the summoning of the dead than even the necromancers under his command. But with this power, madness soon followed.

WARD HISTORY

The King saw how quickly he could amass an army to assault Evergreen again, but he needed more. He began to see that his undead soldiers were completely obedient to his orders, and more effective than the living.



The King began an assault of the Orc war compound of Dur'Grob. The battle was short but extremely brutal. The Orcs were still far too strong and bloodthirsty for his soldiers. For every Orc that fell in battle, a dozen undead and men would fall. The King brought as many soldiers back to life as he could, but the battle was lost, and he was forced to flee again. With the humiliating defeat at Dur'Grob Orcs grew confident and began to attack

Human settlements, killing all and leaving nothing but burning wreckage in their wake. The King could do nothing but watch as all he worked for began to crumble to the might of the Orc Legion. The Orcs rampaged across the countryside putting dozens of settlements to the sword. The king and his advisors threw everything they had at the Orc host, but nothing was slowing them down. Day by day the Orcs grew closer to the capital of Westgard. Defenses were set and traps were laid, and then the day the king feared had arrived. From over the rolling plains a tide of stinking green skinned Orcs descended on this once proud city. The Orc Legion began to assault the Human capital of Westgard. With the capitol's armies emptied from all of the skirmishes, the city would not hold, and the empire would fall.

WARD HISTORY

The King toiled in his high tower for days. No one had seen him since the siege. Pacing back and forth the king cursed the Elves for their arrogance, he cursed the Dark Elves for creating the unnatural Orcs, he cursed the Orcs for destroying his empire, but most of all he cursed his own people of being stupid and weak. He had gone mad with anger over the idea of losing everything that the Old God had charged him with. All of the long years and work gone in but an instant. He devised a plan if his own people can't handle the Orcs then he will just have make them. He gathered a small group of his generals and lieutenants and slipped out of Westgard in the dead of night. He knew the city could hold off the Orcs for a while. He traveled from town to town and tried to build a new army to repel the Orcs and save Westgard. But the fear of the green skins had infected the minds of his people. Growing more and more frustrated he did the unthinkable. He ordered his generals to put his own people to the sword. One way or another he would save his city. The King's own commanders refused the order to kill their own people. Disgusted by the order his men began turning on him. But the king had been blessed by the power of the Old God and infused with the death magic of necromancy. He started with his traitorous generals. He tore away their flesh and turned them into hulking skeletal knights. With his now loyal knights he unleashed them on the town. Murdering every man, women and child. Many tried to surrender and offer themselves to the cause but there was no reasoning with the king for the madness had truly taken over his mind. Months passed as the king crossed the country converting every village, town, and city he came across. Entire regions were left void of life as the king gorged his army on the very people he sought to protect. Knowing he must return to Westgard soon the king looked at his army. There was nothing but silence and creaking bones. Tens of thousands of skeletons, zombies, ghouls, and patchwork abominations stood silent. Months had passed and the siege of the Orcs had taken its toll on Westgard. With an overwhelming number of dead and rotting creatures the king unleashed his army in a pincer maneuver on the Orcs. The Orcs were strong, but their over confidence had left them vulnerable. Many undead were destroyed, but their numbers were too great for the Orcs to stop. The capital had been saved.



WARD HISTORY

The King marched into the city with his army. Rather than cheers of a savior, the citizens of the capitol watched in horrible silence as hundreds of ghouls, zombies, and undead knights entered into the city. The King marched to his keep and locked himself away, alone with his madness.



It did not take long for fear to set in. Any who opposed the king were turned into one of his undead servants. The constant fear radiated throughout Westgard. Thousands more died in the years to follow, and the rest left to far off lands to escape the terror of the newly appointed Undead king. With the capital now void of Humans to worship the Old God he abandoned the king. The fury and madness of the king reached its peak after the Old God left. To spite the Old God the king sent out his undead legions to eradicate every living creature in the former Human empire. This further aided the Undead Kings madness. As now he had no subjects, no society, and no

God he decided that he would be the new god of Ward and began plans to end all life so no living creature would ever worship the Old God again. The empire of man had fallen and in its place the Kingdom of the undead king now ruled.

WARD HISTORY

CHAPTER 10- EMPIRE OF THE DAMNED

Centuries past, the scattered and broken Humans had lost much of their former glory and knowledge with the fall of the empire. The darkness of the undead king seemed to loom in every corner of the continent. Roaming bands of undead traveled the countryside attacking unsuspecting villages, ever bolstering the ranks of the undead king. But all hope was not lost, for where there is darkness, there is also light. The constant threat of the undead king made infighting amongst the various human city states nearly non-existent,



for no one was willing to waste the warriors on each other when the undead could show up at any time. The Humans began to understand the weaknesses of the undead and from that understanding a Holy Order devoted to the Old God grew. Their mission was to spread the word of the Old God and cleanse all demonic, undead, and any other creature they felt was a plague to society. They were completely devoted to the teachings of the Old God and rejected the authority of the nobility. One by one the influence of the Holy Order spread to the various city states. Civil wars broke out within many of the city states, ending with the removal of their ruling classes by force. The Holy Order would then lead these cities through the teachings of the Old God. In the beginning the Holy Order consisted of mostly human devotees. But the Holy Order spread far amongst Ward. They purged lands and converted new followers of many different races to the faith. The Old God directly spoke to the High Priest and issued him commands. These orders ranged from new settlements to convert, or even entire kingdoms to wipe out. All was done in his name, and his word was final.

WARD HISTORY

For years the Holy Order grew in power and influence spreading like wildfire in direct opposition to the spread of the undead and for years the Holy Order only defeated small bands of roaming undead. But this changed when a proclamation was sent out across the lands. "Heed the call of the Old God and take up arms to remake the fabled empire of the Humans". Thousands of warriors answered the call. Knights, squires, and common folk took up arms and gathered into a mighty host of Holy Warriors. They were tasked with retaking the Humans original seat of power, Westgard, and destroy the undead scrouge and traitorous Undead King.

Unknown to the Humans, the Undead King had fallen into a dreamless sleep upon his throne of black stone. His thoughts had been scattered by madness centuries earlier. It was only his sheer aura of death magic that kept his undead legions moving. But the suddenness of hundreds of undead being destroyed by the Holy Orders crusade had sent a ripple through the winds of magic and awakened his mind.

The Undead King began mobilizing his armies. His long-awaited conquest of Ward had begun. He amassed every dead and unholy thing under his control and set forth from Westgard as the Empire of The Damned. Knowing the Holy Order intended to attack Westgard the Undead King set a trap. He sent a token resistance to engage the holy crusaders. Due to their piety and need to appease the Old God they chased down every last undead. But in doing so had separated their army from their supply wagons and support equipment. The Undead King attacked the supply wagons destroying everything. When the holy army returned, they found they had nothing. With nothing to eat or drink they began searching the local wilderness, but no scouts ever came back for the army of the damned was everywhere. The crusaders had no choice but to return and resupply. Sickness was the first to set in. The undead had gotten ahead of the crusaders and poisoned a natural spring with rotting plague infested corpses. Next was the hunger. The Undead needed no sleep or rest and instead of combat they hunted the forests clean of animals. For weeks the crusaders were harassed by the army of the damned, never engaging them in open combat; the holy army could do nothing but push on. Starving, dehydrated and sleep deprived, the crusader army was falling apart. Infighting began and some even resorted to cannibalism. By the time the crusaders arrived back only 1/3rd of the original army remained, and of those that remained they were all starved and malnourished.

WARD HISTORY



The Damned moved across the land like a horde of locusts destroying everything. One by one every living thing in sight was killed and added to the Undead King's army. Every sort of creature now called the Undead King master: Humans, Orcs, Elves, Dragons, and even Dinosaurs were now under control of the Damned.

The Holy Order continued to battle against the undead, but for every battle they won they lost three more. The undead seemed unstoppable. In an attempt to rally the general populous to the cause the High Priest even declared the Undead King the god of death. He claimed

that they were not fighting to resort the greatness of the former Human empire. But for the very survival of the Human race and Ward itself.

Frustration began to set in with the Old God. His crusaders had been crushed and the influence of the Holy Order was beginning to wain with every loss. He could not understand how a mortal man, a man he lifted up to power, a man he appointed as king could attain so much power as to threaten his world. Furious, the Old God raged. Lightning cracked across the skies and the ground shook. He could not imagine the idea of another one of his great cultures falling to the madness of the Old King.

WARD HISTORY



Seething with anger the Old God reached out across Ward. He searched for something, anything that he could use to put a stop to the Undead King and his Empire of the Damned. He searched the deepest depths of the ocean to the highest peaks, and it was there in the far off reaches of the craggy spires of the Visek Mountains laid the remaining Red Dragons. He appeared before them and promised to restore them to their former glory if they would but help him destroy the Undead King. A shadow of their former selves the Red Dragons of old agreed. For days the most powerful of the dragons and the Old God performed a ritual on the eldest of

the Red Dragons. Arcane and fire magic swirled and combined together in a torrent of cosmic infused Arcane fire. The torrent hardened and the dragon inside screamed and thrashed. The wild torrents of the magical arcane fire solidified into a crystal of amber that glimmered with star light. For weeks there was no movement. The Old God and the dragons continued to pour their power into the crystal. But there was no change, the dragons became angry and threatened the Old God with killing their most powerful and wise elder. But just as things seemed to get out of hand the amber crystal cracked and then shattered to the ground, and what emerged was not the elder dragon who entered the crystal, but a draconic being who radiated with so much power it nearly drove the nearest of the dragons mad. From the cosmic ash of the flame, the eldest of the dragons was reborn with a power so great, that he rivaled the Old God himself and The Eternal Dragon was born.

WARD HISTORY

CHAPTER 11 - THE EDICT AND THE PACT

The Holy Order was crumbling, and the Old God had not been answering the High Priests prayers for weeks. The Empire of the Damned was devastating everything in their path and the doom of the Holy Order seemed to be at hand. The Holy Order had some small victories as the undead assaulted some of the larger cities. The undead were everywhere but they continued to break upon the strong walled cities of the Holy Order. Believing the Old God had abandoned his people the High Priest called a summit of the other mortal races at the Holy Orders most sacred place, the Cathedral of Dawn. Leaders from many different races traveled great distances to the Holy Orders capital city of High Rock. Tensions boiled and old rivalries erupted. It seemed as if nothing but animosity existed between these great leaders. But in the end the unlikely of leaders stood forth. The Elven king, a proud and arrogant man who deemed all other races below the Elves, for they were of The Creator, made a harrowing speech. That Though the Elves were fallen they are still descended from the one true god, The Creator, and their mission to safeguard Ward was still their obligation. Putting his ego aside he strode to the High Priest and declared for all to see to come to the aid of the Holy Order. For they were of the living, and this was a fight not between races, but between life and the slavery of undeath. The Elven king bore great weight amongst the leaders as he had the most reason to leave the Holy kingdom of men to their own fate, as the Undead King was of their own making. One by one the other great leaders of Dwarves, Gnomes, and Halflings all swore an oath to come to the aid of the Holy Order and end the Undead invasion of Ward, thus forming the alliance, The Edict of Dawn.

The scourge of the undead was everywhere. Some places had been hit harder than others, but no one was left untouched. Hooded figures in black robes riding undead black steeds traveled across Ward serving as missionaries to the Undead King. The message was simple convert or die. Seeing the growing threat of the undead was not only a Human problem, and the new alliance the Elves had made, the Dark Elves enemies were growing in strength. Knowing it was only a matter of time before their longtime nemesis the Elves turned the Edict of Dawns attention towards them. The Dark Elves were strong but they were few in number. Their solution to bolster their army with the



WARD HISTORY

bloodthirsty Orcs had failed miserably. The Orcs were uncontrollable, but fortunately for them they did not need to control the Orcs, only direct their aggression in the right direction. The Dark Elves staged attacks on a few smaller of the Orc tribes and made it look like both Elves and Undead were attacking them. Convinced, the Orcs were under attack on two fronts they reached out to their progenitors for support. In this the Dark Elves convinced the Orcs that they must rally around a single banner. Although reluctant the Orcs valued strength above all else calling together other races they deemed strong enough to be in their army they came together. However, this meeting did not go as the Dark Elves had planned. In their minds they were the obvious choice to lead the coalition. But the Orcs had a different idea. They called for representatives of the Dark Elves, Goblins, Trolls, and Minotaur to a meeting at the Orcish stronghold and capital, Thul. But this was no ordinary gathering for it was a contest of strength and blood to determine who would lead the great army.

Mighty champions of the different races were elected to represent them in this gathering of strength. Mighty warriors and horrific magic casters all showed up to claim the Blood throne. For a month contestants performed in feats of strength and cunning to prove their worth. Tricker goblins, Burly Minotaur, Graceful Dark Elves, Ferocious Troll, and Blood thirsty Orcs all competed in gladiatorial combat. Amazing and terrifying at the same time the heroes competed, but in the end only one could prevail. First to fall was the tricker goblin Hero. Their misdirection and wild boom power was overshadowed by the beautiful and deadly sorcerer of the Dark Elves. Next, to fall was the resilient Troll champion. Although blessed with the ability to heal deadly wounds and regenerate lost limbs eventually the power of the Mighty Minotaur overcame the restorative powers of the Troll champion. A show of raw strength against blood thirsty rage determined the next winner. The powerful Minotaur champion pitted its strength against the relentless assault of the Orc Chieftain. Blades were broken and blood soaked the field of battle but in the end the indomitable rage of the Orc won out. With only two left the picturesque Dark Elf squared up against the monstrous Orc. Might vs magic, wit vs brawn the two clashed. But in the end only one could ascend to the title of Blood King. Back and forth they went, blasts of darkness and corruption lashed out at the Orc inflicting grievous wounds. But there was a reason the Orcs were unbound by the Dark Elves, for the brutality of the Orcs could not be contained and the Dark Elf buckled under the skull crushing grip of the new Blood King.

WARD HISTORY

Following the tournament of strength, the newly crowned Blood King and the representative kings and leaders of the other races signed the Blood Pact. This was signed in the blood of the fallen heroes and champions to commemorate their sacrifice and commitment to the cause of a strong leader and the alliance between the different races. Each member of The Blood Pact had their own reasons for joining. Stolen lands, old rivalries, honor, blood lust, curiosity, and a slew of other reasons. The Edict of Dawn was their true enemy, but the immediate concern had to be focused on the Empire of the Damned.

CHAPTER 12- A MAN AGAINST GODS

Although equals and ruled by council The Edict of Dawn looked to the Holy Order for its leadership. It had been fighting the undead for the longest and knew many of their tricks. The Holy Order taught the rest of the Edict Council many way to fight the undead. With the combined might of the Edict and the knowledge of the Holy Order the second crusade to purge the Undead King from Westgard set out.

The Edict of Dawn was efficient and moved quickly, knowing to linger would allow the undead to regroup. The crusaders penetrated deep into the decayed lands of the old empire before a proper counter force could be established. The crusading army quickly pressed the undead back to Westgard. Trapped behind their ancient stone walls the undead regrouped. There was debate amongst the crusaders' leadership on how to take down the walls of the old capital. The Holy Order knew all too well how crafty the old king could be if left to his own devices and they advocated for a full-on assault rather than an extended siege. But the crusaders were tired from the lightning-fast assault to the capital. The plan to assault the capital was a risky plan, as many would die in the assault, providing soldiers for the Undead King to bring back against them. Reluctantly the Holy Orders leadership agreed to siege preparations, but they knew this was a foreboding idea.

Preparations to invade the decayed lands had only begun when the word came to the Blood King. The Edict had organized a second crusade and was moving with haste to get to the Undead King. Anger took over the Blood King, he grabbed the messenger by the throat and with his other hand tore the messenger's spine from his body, dropping the limp corpse to the ground. His war council had concluded weeks ago that with their mighty host they could shatter the undead army and capture the Undead King, forcing him to reveal his secrets so they might use his power of the undeath against the Edict, crushing their both foe in one fell swoop. Convinced the Edict

WARD HISTORY

must have heard of their plan he pressed his mighty army into service before fully gathering their full strength. At only half of its strength the Blood King set out with his mighty host to reach the Undead King before the Edict could capture his for themselves.

It wasn't long after entering the Decaying Lands that The Pact met their first resistance. It was only a token force of shambling bones and nearly decayed zombies. The Pact hit the lines of the undead with such force the undead never stood a chance. As they continued their march towards Westgard the roaming bands of undead began to grow larger and larger. It was as if every undead within a hundred leagues of Westgard was being recalled. This did not sit well with the Blood King. He knew his forces at full strength could have handled the full strength of the undead army, but his host was not at full strength. They continued on despite the mounting resistance, but it wasn't until they ascended the hills surrounding Westgard that they truly understood what they were up against.

The undead were everywhere and kept coming in an unending stream of shambling bones and rotting flesh. The Edict had been able to handle the occasional pack of undead as the siege had begun. But over the last few days the frequency of these encounters had become so common that it was more uncommon when they weren't actively engaged in combat. Dozens then hundreds of undead kept appearing over the rolling hills that surrounded the siege camp. Soon the crusaders were unable to keep up on their siege works and had to focus on the undead attacking from their rear. This created the opportunity the Undead King was looking for. The massive metal gates that guarded the main entrance to the city opened. Thousands of undead began pouring out of the city. The crusaders were being attacked on both fronts and it seemed as if the end of all life would be snuffed.

From beyond the hills a distant rumbling could be heard. The crusaders feared what new monstrosity could be coming next. Already, they were trapped between two massive undead armies. The noise grew louder and took on a rhythmic beat of a drum. Monstrous battle cries erupted and drowned out the fighting. Then from the hill a horde of green skinned Orcs smashed into the side of the undead army streaming out of the city's gates. The Blood King had seen his great enemies struggle and saw his opportunity to attack. With the massive metal door to the city opened wide he ordered his army to smash into the undead and capture the city's gates before they could close the doors.

WARD HISTORY

The Edict did not like the idea of being saved by the Pact. But in their moment of ruination even the barbarism of the Orcish horde brought back a sliver of hope to the crusaders. The combined forces of the Edict of Dawn and the Blood Pact races threw the Empire of the Damned into disarray. The Undead King had not expected the different races to put aside their centuries old feuds to form a unified fighting force.

Victory was at hand. The undead were failing under the combined might of the two unlikely allies. Orcs had entered the city. Then it came, a thick green cloud spewed forth from the city's gates. All of the blood thirsty battle cries from within Westgard turned into symphony of choking and then silence. From the thick green cloud a figure emerged, the Undead King. He let out a loud and terrible scream before raising both arms into the sky. Suddenly, the sounds of shrieking roars echoed across the skies. The sky darkened and hundreds of undead dragons flew out of the caverns below the city. The dragons spewed out unholy green flames onto the battlefield, engulfing both living and dead alike. The Edict returned fire, sending 4ft bolts infused with holy magic into the skies but the dead dragons scaled has been bound with thick metal plates that deflected the holy bolt. The Blood Pact fired dark arcane magic into the air. The dragons answered by drenching the sorcerers in the scalding flames of undeath. Nothing seemed to slow down the armored engines of death that now roamed the skies above the battlefield. Defeat was inevitable. The Edict of Dawn and the Blood Pact were losing too many troops to the Damned and the Undead King was raising the fallen soldiers to tip the scales even further.



From across the sky a burst of beautiful cosmic energy streaked. It radiated and swirled with every color and some that had no name. In an instant the beam of energy exploded into hundreds of smaller light beams. The beams of light struck the undead dragons and the cold light of the dead left their eyes. After striking the dragon the beam reformed into one large orb of light in the sky and slammed into the ground. Hundreds of undead were incinerated in an instant. The orb of cosmic energy lingered for but a moment and then began to take shape. The shape was massive, and from the cosmic energy emerged the Eternal Dragon, a colossal Humanoid dragon covered in golden armor and long sprawling wings.

WARD HISTORY

Enraged by the disgrace the Undead King had exhibited by daring to resurrect his mighty kin the Eternal dragon launched an assault against the Undead King. But the Undead King barred his path by commanding hundreds of skeletons to create a massive bone wall in the Eternal Dragons bath. The Eternal Dragon smashed into the bone wall as if it were made of nothing but twigs. Taken back by the monstrous power of the Eternal Dragon the Undead King commanded every undead on the battlefield to attack it. Tens of thousands of undead surged towards the Eternal Dragon but the clamoring bones and other unholy abominations were nothing for the might the elder dragon now possessed. Whilst the dragon was busy with his legions the Undead King drew his sword. An item not of this world, for it radiated pure corruption, the kind of corruption that had once been wielded by the Demon King before he and the rest of the demons were banished back through the Hell Gate. The Undead King lunged at the beast and ripples of energy erupted as the Undead Kings sword clashed with the claws of the cosmic being. Cosmic energy and unholy power swarmed the area surrounding the two powerful entities.

Terrified and amazed by the two mighty beings the High Priest of the Holy Order could not help but admire the former King. For once he had been only a mortal man like himself and now, he was contending with the will of a beast created by the combined cosmic magic of Gods and dragons. Until now he had never doubted his faith. But after seeing the power men can possess he began to question the power of his own worship. However, as strong as the Undead King had become, the Eternal Dragon was still too powerful and ripped the Hell Sword from his grip and crushing him into the ground. With his body broken and his sword gone, the Eternal Dragon bound the Undead King in chains of cosmic energy. Knowing the sword must never fall into the hands of another the Eternal Dragon left Ward seeking the riddles of the sword that almost killed him.

Bound and broken the Undead King was taken into the custody of the Edict of Dawn. This did not sit well with the Blood Pact. They wanted the Undead King for themselves and were convinced the Edict of Dawn would use the power of the Undead King against them. But the battle had left the Blood Pact much worse off than the remaining crusaders. Vowing they will get what is rightfully theirs, the remaining members of the Pact retreated to Thul. Knowing the power of the Undead King is too much to resist the Edict determined to not return to Cathedral of Dawn with the Undead King, but instead headed into the icy wastelands of the north. They



WARD HISTORY

traveled to the edge of the map and then more. For months the crusaders toiled and dug deep into the hard frozen earth. There they dug a hole so deep nothing would ever be able to find the remains of the Undead king. The High Priest then created a sword of pure light and pierced the Undead Kings heart, blocking his ability to control the undead for as long as the sword pierced him. Chained, pierced, broken and sealed away in a thick iron tomb enchanted with the most powerful sigils known to the Holy Order the Undead King was gone. Near death themselves, in the frozen wasteland of the Everfrost the remaining crusaders set off for home.

Aimless and with no master to keep them bound together many of the weaker undead began to collapse and fall apart. But the stronger undead creatures were not unbound and were free to seek their own destinies for good or for ill and live a second life in undeath.

CHAPTER 13- RUMORS OF WAR

The defeat of the Undead King did little to calm the tensions between the Blood Pact and the Edict of Dawn. Orcish skirmishes at the borders and raids on caravans were an ever-constant source of contempt between the Holy Order and the Orcs. The Orcs saw the Holy Order as an easy target and would often venture into the Holy Orders kingdom raiding villages and taking slaves. In response the Holy Order declared the Orcs as creatures born of darkness and evil and vowed to eradicate their kind. The Holy Order saw it as their righteous duty to rid Ward of the creatures of darkness. This tenant of the Holy Order would often lead to conflict and outright war between them and many of the different factions of the Blood Pact.

The Elves and Dark Elves were different from the other races. They were never truly in open combat with each other. The Elves and Dark Elves seemed ever content in their ever-constant bickering. The Elves saw the devastation that spread from the Dark Elves desolate kingdom of perpetual twilight as an affront to The Creator and his grand design. Whereas the Dark Elves could only survive in the darkness and saw it as their right to live and grow though the darkening of the skies in and around their territory. It wasn't until a young charismatic leader had risen through the ranks of the Dark Elf nobility that this changed. The young man was destined for greatness, as he was the heir to the Dark Elf throne. He had trained his whole life to eventually lead his people and on his coronation day everything changed.

The pride of the Dark Elves was The Eternal Flame. It was a holy relic bestowed upon the Angels by The Creator during their early days. Upon accepting their charge as the elite defenders

WARD HISTORY

of the Great Citadel following the first demonic invasion the Eternal Flame was bestowed upon the citadel as a source of power and a connection to the will of The Creator. However, with the fall of the great citadel the Eternal Flame had been removed and now serves as the most holy relic of both Elf and Dark Elf kind on Ward. On the day of the crown prince's coronation, he was to step into the Eternal Flame to accept his birthright and be blessed as king of the mighty dark Elven kingdom. However, the kingship was not an inherited title, but a title voted on by the Council of Nine whom the king led. As the time came one-by-one the nine cast their votes and the crown prince was not to be the next leader, but rather his brother. Rage boiled inside the prince as he watched his brother step into the Eternal Flame and accept its blessing and his birthright. He had been cast aside.



Rejected and disgraced, the former crown prince rejected the notion that we would not rule the Dark Elven kingdom, and if they would not appoint him as the next king, he would make himself the next king by force. The fallen prince traveled the Dark Elf kingdom gathering all those would support his cause. He amassed a large following and began the Dark Elf civil war. For two years the civil war raged across the Dark Elf kingdom. At first the fallen prince had been met with very little resistance, but the Council of Nine commanded great power within the Nine districts of the Dark Elf kingdom. They rallied their armies and struck back against the prince crushing his forces at every turn. Losing the war and unwilling to

accept his defeat, the fallen prince did the unthinkable. The prince gathered his remaining armies and fled the Dark Elf lands to the Citadel of Agony. With the secrets that locked away the Citadel of Agony, the fallen prince and his cabal of dark sorcerers slowly and systematically removed the protective sigils trapping in the forces of Utrall.

Corruption swept over the fallen prince as the doors to the citadel flung open. Wild Demons of all shapes and sizes poured out of the citadel. But the prince was a master sorcerer himself and easily cut down the rampaging demons. Not impressed with the strength he had witnessed, the prince captured and tormented some of the remaining demons. They revealed their secrets that only a small portion of the Hell Gate still remained open. Determined to recruit a force that this world had not seen in a Millenia and retake his throne, the fallen prince commanded his followers to go to the surrounding towns and villages and gather slaves. Over the weeks

WARD HISTORY

hundreds of slaves poured through the great citadel doors to never be seen again. Choking columns of smoke could be seen for miles as massive forges were kept stoked by the countless remains of emaciated corpses. Rivers of blood now poured from the torture chambers into great cauldrons. Infusing the corruption magic, they had learned from the few remaining lesser demons, the Dark Elves performed rituals to imbue the massive cauldrons of blood. All at once the great cauldrons were poured into the Hell Gate. Instantly the rift began to grow as if feeding on the imbued blood. Larger and larger the Hell Gate grew, and the flow of demons began streaming out of the gate. Then it stopped, the gate had grown to dozens of feet across and twice as tall. From the sickly green glow of the gate, it appeared. Spiked and horrid in appearance, the largest demon the prince had ever seen now stood before him. The Demon King had returned.

CHAPTER 14- THE KING RETURNS

Terror washed over the Dark Elves as the monstrous demon appeared. The fallen prince held his ground but inside he wanted to flee. The Demon King stepped forth and commanded who had opened the portal. The prince stepped forward and commanded "I have summoned you demon". The Demon King let out a horrific deep laugh and then grabbed the nearest Dark Elf and ripped his body in half, laughing the whole time. Just in time the prince threw up a protective shield around himself as the Demon King spewed out a cloud of black and green smoke. The prince retreated as many of his retinue lay on the floor choking as their skin boiled and cracked apart. The prince fled as fast as he could but the black iron doors to the Citadel of Agony closed, trapping him inside.

The Citadel was sealed again, but now from the inside. Secure, the Demon King was not going to make the same mistakes as last time. He would move slowly and methodically. He began by building up the fortifications around the citadel. He would use the citadel as his base of operations as he launched his assault against Ward.

WARD HISTORY

Months passed and the world was none the wiser that the demons had returned, for deep under the ground the demons dug. They created enormous underground passageways that connected all across Ward. Hundreds of thousands of demons clawed and scraped at earth and stone. Huge underground tunnels, labyrinth, and cities were constructed as the Demon King prepared for war and enact his final solution.



The Hell Gate was open, and demons of every kind poured through the Hell gate. But one notable Demon was not present, for the power of the Dark Elves was not enough to allow the Cosmic Demon to pass through. Though it was within his power to do so, the Demon King hated the Cosmic Demon and was unwilling to expand the Hell Gate. Long ago the Cosmic Demon was the final authority within Utrall. But he cared not for the trivialities of spreading corruption and inflicting pain upon the physical universe. He only cared about getting revenge on The Creator for rejecting him and locking him away. This allowed the Demon King to rise to power and rule over the demons. But the Demon King was never strong enough to control the Cosmic Demon which led to a rift within Utrall on who the lesser demons would follow, the self-declared Demon King, or the original and strongest demon, the Cosmic Demon. But the Demon King had a plan to change that.

During the First Demonic Invasion the Demon King had discovered that the souls of sentient beings from the physical universe contained large amounts of untapped raw power. At first, he thought this power could only be used to power spells and rituals. But through the refinement of the raw soul energy, he found it could also be consumed and increase his own natural power. So he devised a plan that would funnel the souls of the dead to Utrall once their physical bodies had lost the ability to contain the raw power upon their deaths. For centuries the Demon King had been bolstering his strength by consuming the souls of the many living creatures from the physical universe. Soon he would become the strongest Demon and solidify his rule over Utrall and bring the Cosmic Demon under heel. But something went wrong with his plan. The souls flowing from the Physical universe were lessening and he could not understand why and without the ability to return to the Physical universe there was little he could do to reverse the issue. His brilliant plan was falling apart, but then an opportunity presented itself, the small rift to the physical universe that still remained was ripped wide open and he was able to step through.

WARD HISTORY

It was a late autumn day when it began. A cool wind had blown across Zorn, a city on the coast near the outskirts of the Holy Order. It was not unaccustomed to the slight tremor from time to time. The tremors began as any other they have had in recent history. Small and a minor inconvenience, it began to shake the city. But then a second, and a third. But it wasn't until the fourth one hit that everyone truly knew something was wrong. Tremor after tremor the ground began to heave and then in the Center square, where a large statue of a once great hero stood proud, a massive sink hole nearly 50ft across and dark as the eye could see swallowed the once great hero. From the crack could be heard ominous shrieks and yelps. Then in a flurry of chaos, hundreds of winged horrors shot out of the crevasse. They began tearing apart do anyone in the immediate vicinity. Then came the invasion. A sea of never-ending monstrous demons came pouring out from the crevasse. Within hours the once seaport city of Zorn had become a corrupt wasteland filled with nothing but demons and the dead.

All over Ward this scene played out again and again. The coordinated attack by the demons left no time for The Edict of Dawn or The Blood Pact to respond in any notable measure. But something had occurred that the Demon King did not expect. He had purposefully had his demon's tunnel underneath notable cities as to take them by surprise. But there was one city that as his demons erupted from the ground they were met by an abandoned city. It was massive, but it was completely abandoned. Nothing but old dead and decaying corpses littered the ground everywhere. The demons poured out of the sink holes and were met by nothing but silence and the ominous sounds of creaking. Caught unaware, the dead bodies began to move. The bones of decades old dead bodies began to reform and take shape. Skeletons of men, orcs, elves, and dragons began to assault the demon army. The undead were no match for the power the demons wielded. But hundreds and thousands of the undead kept coming. The demons were losing. Being driven back into the underground labyrinth the Demon King decided to personally step in. The Demon King crushed dozens of the undead with every blow. But they would reform and come back to life soon after he struck them down. Frustration was growing in the Demon King. With his rage he unleashed a massive burst of corruption all around him. Fully expecting the undead to come back, but they didn't.

Among the piles of bones, he noticed one creature that looked different from the others. It was a skeleton like the others, but it stunk of a form of magic he was not familiar with. The magic smelled of both life and death, but also not either. He surmised that this creature was resurrecting the other lesser undead creatures. It then all fell together in his mind; the lessening of souls flowing into Utall, the living dead, and why his grand plan had been failing. Furious the Demon King reached out to all his demonic generals, these creatures were to be considered high priority target and kill them on sight for they dare to steal from the Mighty Demon King. The Demon

WARD HISTORY

King dashed through the shambling bone men and rotting corpses, tearing apart the Necromancers that were hiding amongst the other undead. Hundreds of undead collapsed with each Necromancer that the Demon King killed. Within minutes the losing battle turned into a complete victory.

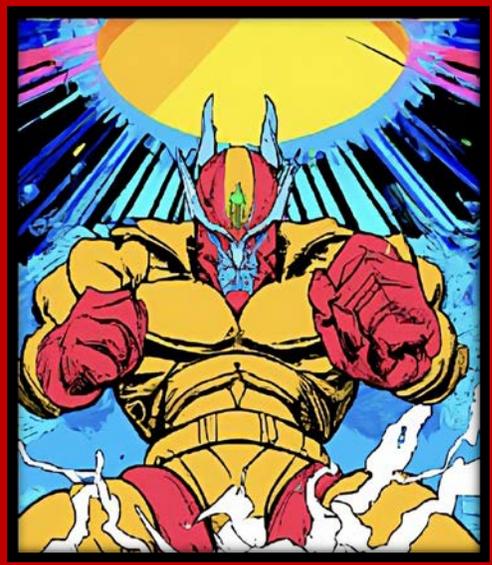
The demons sneak attack decimated entire civilizations. The preparations had taken years, but the results paid off for the Demon King. Nearly every major city was in ruins and overrun by demons. But one city still stood. It was uniquely positioned, so as hard as the Demons might try, the incredibly dense bedrock that the capital of the Holy Order High Rock stood upon could not be penetrated from beneath. This forced the demons to appear miles away from the city walls where the ground was soft enough to burrow through.

There wasn't much time, but there was some. The tower guard to the city rang the high watch tower bells, warning of an incoming attack. The Men of the Holy Order were fast. They had been defending themselves from Orc attacks for as long as anyone could remember. The city sprang to life in an instant. Archers were on the walls, Sorcerers were high in the towers, and the catapults were stocked with dozens of stones for ammunition.

The Demon King stood at the forefront of his army. The Men of the Holy Order had seen demons in their time, but nothing that compared to anything that stood outside of their walls now. The army that stood before them seemed like a pack of ravenous hounds. They had no organization; larger demons crushed the smaller ones that got in their way without a second thought. Some small groups even seemed to be fighting within the larger host. But it mattered not, for the demon army that poured out of the massive sink holes seemed to be never ending. The entirety of the vast open field that once contained farms and a small village that lay just outside of the capital was now covered from the horizon with an ocean of baying demons.

The Demon King and his army approached the city with near reckless abandon. But at the last moment before his army got within catapult range he made a soul-rending roar, and the demon army stopped dead in their tracks. Something was amiss about this city. He had felt something like this earlier in some of the other cities that called themselves the Holy Order, but here it was much more potent. It was something old, very old. He could not place the source of the feeling, but it was a cold spot that he could feel. It was as if an icy shard had pierced into the very core of his corrupted being. Putting the feeling aside, the Demon King ordered the attack, and the ground rumbled with the stampeding charge of the demonic host.

WARD HISTORY



The Demon King had begun the assault of High Rock. The Holy Order's crown jewel was an imposing fortress. It has sheer rock cliffs on three of the sides, and on the front was a sloping ramp that passed through two cliffs overlooking the ascending ramparts. There was a reason the Orcish hordes smashed against the city's defenses again and again and never made it to the gates, and the demonic army was no different. Wave after wave the demons came and were cut down with arcane, Light, Dark, and all the magics known to this world. For High Rock was home to some of the most powerful sorcerers this world has ever seen.

For several days the city managed to thwart the demons. However, the armies of Hell seemed never ending. Exhaustion and resources began to become the enemy now. Arrows were getting low, swords were getting dull, and the catapults had not had ammunition for two days. The sorcerers who at one point were casting magics that would kill dozens of demons with each spell were now nearly passing out from exhaustion. Eventually the demons got closer and closer to the city gates and walls. Demons with mighty claws had started scaling the rock faces, and sky demons continually harassed the men on the city walls and towers. There was no way out and it seemed as if the world would be snuffed out under the mangled claw and hoof of the demons.

High in the Cathedral of Dawn, the Height Priest sat watching the battle continue. He had been directing the battle from his high vantage point to better assess the field of battle. He did everything he could but there was little he could do to stop what seemed inevitable. Then after all other hope had seemed lost, he did what had no High Priest had truly done since the early day of the Holy Order, he prayed to the Old God to save their people. For minutes he begged and prayed to the Old God. The High Priest for all of his rhetoric and showmanship never truly believed in the Old God. Then deep within his mind he heard a voice. "Believe in me and worship me and I will save your people". The High Priest was taken back. He did not truly believe what he was hearing. Again, the voice in his head repeated "Believe in me and worship me and I will save your people". The High Priest agreed. He will spread the name of the Old God across all the lands of Ward if he would but save him.

WARD HISTORY

It was at this time a beam of light erupted from the tip of the tallest tower of the Citadel of Dawn. It pierced the stinking green clouds that had formed over the city since the beginning of the siege. The cloud separated away, and beam of light came down for the sky and struck the heart of the demonic army. From that bright light came the Old God. With one flap of his mighty wing hundreds of shards of light came out struck down as many demons. Over and over the mighty beast flapped his wings sending out more and more shards. Thousands of demons exploded into nothing as the shard of light struck them. At this same moment the men of High Rock found themselves bolstered with swords that were as bright as pure sunlight. The Men were reinvigorated and charged out of their castle gates and thrust into the demonic host with the power of their god flowing through them.

The Demon King charged the Old God killing dozens of his own demons as they were trampled, but he cared little for these lesser demons. A cataclysmic battle erupted between the two godly beings. But as strong as the Demon King had become gorging himself on the souls of the dead, the Old God too had been feeding, but on the souls of the living through their worship. The battle began with both beings being nearly equal in power. But the Old God seemed to continue to gain the upper hand. The Demon King was losing his strength as he consumed the reserve of soul energy he had been building up for millennia. This angered him greatly, for this invasion was supposed to bolster his strength, not sap it. Again, and again the Demon King was forced to consume his energy reserves to keep pace with the Old God. But instead of the Old God too getting weaker he seemed to be gaining strength. Then he noticed, the Old God had been sapping the soul energy from the Demon King everytime he tapped into his reserve of soul energy. The Demon King was stuck. On the one hand he couldn't use his soul energy or risk the Old God getting stronger. But on the other hand, he was already losing this right and needed to tap into his reserves to help turn the tides of the battle. There was only one thing left he could do, and it nearly drove him into a frenzy of rage. Using the remaining soul energy, he connected with the Hell Gate and forced it open large enough to bring the Cosmic Demon back to Ward.

The moment the Cosmic Demon stepped through the Hell Gate he could feel the waves of power being emitted between the two godly beings. He shifted himself through the shadows that existed in both locations and appeared near instantly to the battlefield. With a near animalistic cry the Cosmic Demon attacked, but it was not the Old God the Cosmic Demon struck, but the Demon King. The Cosmic Demon pulverized the Demon King into the ground causing the ground to splinter and crack. Thousands of Demons fell into these near bottomless pits and were killed.

WARD HISTORY

Near death the Demon King lay on the ground bleeding and broken. It turned its attention to the Old God. But the rage of the Cosmic Demon did not stop there. It lunged itself at the Old God. The Old God attempted to use his old trick of sapping the energy from the Cosmic Demon. But as he tried to tap into the Cosmic Demons power it found nothing, as if it were nothing more than a simple blade of grass. It had no power. It was as if the Cosmic Demon did not contain any power but was a fundamental force of the universe. In its confusion the Cosmic Demon had struck. The Old God was crushed under the mighty assault from the Cosmic Demon. The Cosmic Demon then grabbed the Old Gods head with both hand and began to squeeze. The force of the Cosmic Demon was crushing the Old Gods skull. It tried everything to get away. But the power of the Cosmic Demon kept it from escaping. The end was drawing near and the Old God knew it. There was only one thing left the Old God knew to do. It left out a shriek. But this was no ordinary shriek, it was a call, a call into The Cosmos.

It had felt something. Something it had not felt in longer than it could recount. But the feeling was unmistakable, for it was his sworn duty and he made a promise. The Eternal Titan had sensed the Cosmic Demons' entrance into the physical Universe. The Cosmic Demon had not been on this plane for very long but in that time The Eternal Titan covered godly amounts of the universe searching for it. But the Universe was still too large for even a being such as he to search everything. Then he heard it, a call that rang out across the universe to where the Cosmic Demon was. In an instant the Eternal Titan closed the distance and found the great beast. It had desimated the world it was currently on and was killing very peculiar creature the Eternal Titan had not encountered before.

Seeing his eternal jailor, the Cosmic Demon dropped the Old God. For a moment the Eternal Titan and Cosmic Demon stared at each other. Dead locked on each other, the two seemed to be fighting a battle within their minds even though their physical bodies had not moved an inch. Suddenly, their bodies flickered, and it seemed as if they had been moving all along but it was not perceptible to the naked eye of anyone else who watched. After several minutes of this the two broke their concentration and the Eternal Titan fell to a knee panting. The Cosmic Demon took a few steps towards the Eternal Titan but then it too began to grow sluggish and hundreds of small slashes appeared all over the Cosmic Demons body. The Cosmic Demon howled in pain and the deep gashes continued to grow. But still the Cosmic Demon kept going. It moved at the Eternal Titan and another battle imperceptible to the naked eye erupted. Mountains were flattened, seas dried up, and fissures to the Core of the planet opened up. The whole of Ward was coming apart with the conflict between the two celestial beings. Volcanoes erupted all around the planet, oceans drained into the planet wide cracks, and the atmosphere of the planet was blown away. The battle had killed or destroyed everything on Ward except for the Cosmic Demon,

WARD HISTORY

Eternal Titan, Old God, and Demon King. The fighting rippled out into the other nearby planets and star systems as well causing catastrophic damage. Then as the sun was about to go supernova everything stopped. Explosions were stopped in the middle of detonating and nothing moved. The darkness of the universe began to move and shimmer, The Creator had appeared.

It was as if everything was frozen in place when The Creator showed himself. He was so large that he could hold the entire planet in his hand. He let out a loud thundering shout "All Shall Cease". In that moment everyone was blown away from each other, and The Creator was now on the planet. He was no longer a titanic God looking down on the battle, but a normal sized man with glowing yellow eyes. The Cosmic Demon lunged for The Creator with a horrible scream. The Creator turned toward the Cosmic Demon. With a single wave of his hand and the terrible monster was gone. The Creator then snapped his fingers and every single demon in the battle was sucked back across the land, and shoved into the Hell Gate. The Citadel of Agony was then sealed back up as if it were never opened. The Creator commanded the Eternal Titan to return to the cosmos, as his mortal enemy is gone for now. The Creator then forced his hands together, as if pushing to repelling magnetic forces together, and all that had happened prior to the Demonic invasion had been reversed. Men, Orcs, Elves, Dark Elves, Goblins, and even undead were all again alive and retained the full knowledge with what had happened. The soldiers on the battlefield began to weep in both fear and amazement at what they were witnessing. They had met the true God of the universe.



The Old God, now filled with rage, could feel his followers slipping from his grasp. He approached The Creator and told him that Ward belonged to him and he needed to leave his world. The Creator looked the Old God up and down and simply said "No". This was new to the Old God; he had never met anything that would defy him. He then let out the strongest energy blast that he had ever mustered. The Creator took the blast directly to his chest, and it was enough to push him back several feet. "How interesting" The Creator said out loud. He then waved his hand at the Old God which caused him to be hurled into a nearby mountain causing it to break and boulders to crumble. The Old God collected himself and lunged after The Creator again connecting several powerful strikes on him. The Creator then grabbed the Old God tore

WARD HISTORY

open a pocket dimension not unlike Utrall and tossed the Old God into the empty space known as Ebornac. The time of The Old God was over.



The Creator then returned to Ward and spoke in the mind of all creatures. He stated that they are free to worship and do whatever they like, but he will not interfere again with Ward, and will not come to their aid again for that is the benefit and folly of free will. He then flew up high into the heavens and disappeared.

CHAPTER 15- WARLORDS

With the end of the 2nd demonic invasion, and the banishment of the Old God, Ward was left without gods, leaders, or purpose. As is with all things, war is inevitable. Throughout the land,

WARD HISTORY

warlords, and commanders rise and fall. All laying claim to small sections of the world and battling for power. These warlords amass armies to battle each other. They recruit all races, creatures, beasts, undead, and even demons to use in their armies.

Now as a fledgling new leader how will you lead? Will you be a blood thirsty Orc Warlord or a noble Elf commander. The choice is yours!! Who will be the next to conquer:

WARD

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WARD HISTORY