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33 years have passed. Year 16,029 Dark Cities Aftermath: (background info) It is now well known that Broden, the Elder Vampire who caused the fall of Celendil and the first of the Dark Cities in Roekron, survived the destruction of both Celendil et Necrenef and Krodigros et Necrenef, and was not destroyed completely until the year 15,996 when a mysterious old woman battled him with a Morganti glave on the plains of Illionass. He as defeated in that battle, but not completely. Many of the Dark Cities around the region were rocked by his defeat and lost vampires in the hundreds, but part of him remained- a haunt, still giving power to his minions. Several influential leaders were aware of this effect and sought out the only known hero with the skill to perhaps unravel a haunt of this magnitude, The Spirit of Sorikonja, the Master formerly known as Chen Kaminari. In

a deeply emotional experience, Kaminari (as he will be referred to herein) deconstructed a legendary Pathfinder weapon known as Ravenwing, the only known weapon to be Morganti only to undead, which was the locus of Broden's haunt. It had become known to Kaminari and a few others who Broden truly was- an ancient prince from the second age. He was known then as Illion Eden and has rescued by the Waning Moon Warriors and joined their group, becoming the sixth member of their team. He too carried a Pathfinder like item, a sword known as the Northern Star, which gave him a place within the ranks of the item seeking group. He fell in love with their leader, Penelope Ravenblade, a powerful Knight and Ranger who feel in love with him as well, but was afraid to reveal this due to the jealous nature of her sentient sword, the now unmade Ravenwing. Fearing the sword would kill the young prince, she convinced him she felt nothing for him, and heartbroken, he went north, first in search of solitude, and then in search of revenge at a world he felt had betrayed him. It was there that he encountered Sorrowveil, one of the Three Demons that ruled Dagdeath at



the time and they used his betrayal, hate, and tremendous passion to power his transformation into a vampire, all of which are powered by a rejection of their previous beliefs. Such was the strength of his love, that the power of his hate was tenfold, and he became an Elder Vampire of legendary status. It was from Broden that all the know Dark Cities arose. But because of this nexus of power, it also was

their undoing, as once Broden was defeated the cities sundered, and with his release they cracked and heroes rushed in to deliver the final blow. Dealing with Broden alone would not have been enough to topple the new Elders such as Wall, Frost, and Belladonna. Each would have recovered were it not for the decisive action of heroes across the realms who swept in at the crucial moment to strike down these overloads before they could regain their strength. It is because of actions like this, and the selfless sacrifice of many who died in the process, some who may have died that we will never know about, that we have had an era of peace in much of Roekron unlike any other, a long steady recovery.

Embaracrious the Wondrous: It has long been known that the tiny hobbit wizard in Pinnacle on the isle of Hostor is far more powerful than his unassuming stature suggests. The list of magical feats and accomplishments the gentle mage has managed over the last hundred years is impressive to say the least, from thwarting invasions by Dagdeoth and the Wizards Trade Order, discovering, bypassing, and slowly unmaking the infamous Rastkuru demon spell that threatened to kill mages across the land, to diplomacy with the Dwarves, Dsesnorian royalty, and even Dagdeoth and Temnor, managing to secure odd alliances within their groups none expected. With such an impressive history, it would be hard to imagine doing any better, but in a unparalleled run of brilliantly executed projects, the name Embaracrious is now known across the land of Roekron, in every home, often with the added affix of “the Wondrous” used in praise, respect, and even a little fear.

His first feat was successfully dis-empowering the Rastkuru and removing it from what mages refer to as “The Overlay” a field of magic which spans the nation, and allows mages to cast powerful spells without the need for tremendous amount of mana usually required. While the Rastkuru still exists as an entity, it has no power over the overlay itself anymore, and no longer causes any problems for the mages of the region.



Once removed, Embaracrious set about increasing the efficiency of the overlay, reportedly sighting ancient studies done by numerous mage schools that “mana doesn't come from nowhere” and if the overlay was not improved we could find ourselves running out of mana to use. These improvements had a profound effect on the daily life of citizens everywhere! First off, the amount of force behind many standard spells was increase dramatically, and monsters that were once a major threat to towns and villages, could be dropped with a single shot from a simple mage or cast of a spell from a magic item.

Mana efficiency was also noticed, as items which before could only be used once a day, suddenly became usable in every encounter. At first people were no use to needing so little energy to operate their devices and overloaded them or spent themselves of all their energy quickly. But over the years, people began to get use to the careful measuring of their mental powers and now can accomplish in a single encounter what they would have need an entire days mana to do.

As if this was not enough, Embaracrious then took up a long lost project originally started by King Obimi long ago, the Public Teleportation System. Noting that one of the most challenging parts of a unified Free Republics was the ability to quickly and efficiently travel from region to region, King Obimi originally began, but never finished a system of protected teleportation points that were meant to be used to allow people quick and easy access across regions. Embaracrious completed the project by solving the problem of effectively guarding so many way-points and the need for many mages to run the system by using the now clean overlay as a carrier for a wave spell. First, he managed to send signals through the overlay at amazing speeds by creating waves in it that could be received by others across the nation almost instantly. These waves could be decoded into messages and then spells were created to translate those images into pictures. What once required a crystal ball of immense power to

do, the mutual scrying of individuals across the entire land is now quite common among nobles, who all have personal scrying orbs or mirrors for such purposes. Sensitive to any movement, these orbs and mirrors are usually secured in guilds and or wealth persons houses, and cannot be moved once set up. From there, it was a simple step to improve the process to carry spell waves, specifically the teleportation kind. This proved very tricky indeed and required immense amounts of mana. It is known that in the process Embaracrious blew out the mana stores of three of the five mage towers in Pinnacle, which is still recovering, but he has managed to, only this year, complete the Public Teleportation System which allows efficient travel between all the major cities of Roekron, if not as fast as a normal teleport, at least safer and far less haphazard as boat or caravan. People are now able to get from Pinnacle to the mainland, a distance of 100 miles, in just two hours by PTS Way-points. One flaw of the system is that it cannot transport objects, only what a single person has on them, not even what they are holding. Many military organizations were upset at this development, having invested heavily in the system anticipating using it to move division of troops all at once, and war machines, gear, and supplies. Embaracrious reportedly said he was “very sorry, but unfortunately the overlay must not have been as clean as I thought and there was an aberration in the spell and it just shuts down when items or military are targeted.”

How Embaracrious has managed all of this is beyond any reasoned scholars hope to explain, though Electra Bosium who was nonplussed about the situation was quoted as saying, “The little devil built a gyroscope, it's only a matter of time before someone blows that up too...”

Elder Goddess Expansion: Easily the most powerful and influential religion in Roekron at this time, The Elder Goddess Faith has swept the nation, rebuilding ancient shrines and temples across the land. Led by a fierce group of Priestesses and Sorceresses in the city where their high temple resides, Randwin, these devout and politically savvy people have ties to everyone and everything. At first experiencing some major opposition by many predominantly male run organizations who objected to the matriarchal structure of the religion, the group had a tough time in initially overcoming prejudices. Kuni Synthrea herself came under political attack for her support of the group, and careful not to directly side with them, as they are a religious organization and not a political one and therefore not a member of the Free Republics as such. Her personal advocacy and private encouragement was still noted by many of the most influential clans of Dsesnor who, not wanting to be left behind of current fashion, quickly followed suit. With powerful supporters and devoted followers, the religion began a series of projects designed to protect refugees and families, from war, hunger, and disease. Following in the footsteps of a very enlightened centaur saint, the priestesses set up free healing guilds across the land, only open to the poor and destitute. These guilds help keep the land free of pestilence, keep the common folk healthy, and thus has assured a quality of life that has before been unknown.

The Seer's Plague: But the ultimate goal still seems to elude this powerful giant among faiths. Not long after Brodens destruction, the faith experienced a relapse of the Oracles Darkness from years before, striking suddenly and without warning, priestess became blind permanently, and some, almost more alarmingly retained their sight, but appear lost, confused, and mad, their eyes fully functional, but the mind behind them blind to their use. It has been a troubling time for those with the gift of prophecy, many sickening, going mad, and being found simply dead, a huge black lesion having been found inside their brains which appears to be Morganti, though how this wound was inflicted, as there are no marks outside to indicate its presence are as yet unknown and ominous.

These events have not been isolated to the Elder Goddess faith alone, but are a phenomenon across all



pantheons and beliefs. Those with what is now called the Seer's Plague have been spreading the disease rapidly, if it is indeed a disease, as known know cure spell seems to effect it. Many schools bane the teaching of Oracle and the use of it in some areas is punishable by death (in at least one case, Morganti). Even those with the natural ability of prophecy have been persecuted, many fearing the effect will not remain among those with foresight but will transfer to others and wipe out whole regions. So far, this is only speculation and there is no evidence that this could happen.

The Collapse of Svoldun: For the first twenty years after the destruction of Broden everything was wonderful for the dwarven nation of the north and income flooded in and their war with Dagdeoth in the north seemed to keep them very busy. But then, thirteen years ago several Orks, working undercover for various political organizations uncovered a dark secret the nation had been keeping for decades- ork slave labor! When faced with economic hardship due to the loss of mine slaves years ago, and confronted with harsh consequences should they again attempt to use members of the Free Republics in their mines, Queen Thresa Svod found a cunning way to bypass the law and maintain maximum production. Since the dwarves were at war with many orkish nations, and many peoples had a long standing prejudice against orks in general, the Queen ordered orks captured and taken deep into the undercities of Svodlun, places many other nations remained oblivious too until recently. Here, they isolated not only the orks, but the dwarves themselves from any outside contact, insuring no chance of anyone finding out. But due to a series of cave in's and sink holes, heroes began to encounter these encampments deep underground and rumors began to spread. Apparently, it was old Lord Eric Stonehammer who recruited a group of brave Uruaki and Orks from the Cloudhammers Men of Blackspire to become captured and risk their eternal imprisonment for a chance to free their people. It was a long and deadly road for most of them, and took far longer than many would have wished. In the end, the royal family was exposed as having connections to the slave trade and the Free Republics moved on them with a vengeance, imposing heavy sanctions, bans, and military opposition. Many nations were surprised at this response, as Blackspire is not a member of the Free Republics formally, nor are any Orkish nations. The comment, "they're only orks..." was a common comment in many inns, to which Melissa the Scald of Pinnacle issued a public retort, "Yes, they are only orks... and when it was us, you said 'they're only hobbits.' If you're so sure there is a species that is lesser than the rest, please raise up your hand now so that I may see for myself which species that is." When several members of the assembly raised their hands, she reportedly continued, "Excellent. Please note everyone, these three ignorant wretches volunteer themselves as lesser than the rest, take them to the mines..." It was years before they returned home, rather changed individuals.

The collapse of the slave trade caused a cascade effect in the Svodlun empire, and an almost complete stagnation of their former production. Staggering under the sudden halt, their war in the north fell apart, and their forges grew silent. No new magic items have come out of Svodlun in the last ten years. Their armies are all but gone, and their cultures dwindling. A tenuous civil war between the Svods and the Stonehammers was narrowly averted, as Lady Gramion and Lord



Stonehammer were saddled with the blame for the complete destruction of the nation. Miraculously, a costly and devastating war was avoided, some say by divine forces, but those more observant attribute to the clever and cunning work of the two rising stars of the Stonehammers, their daughters, Shanetill and Windsward who managed to stave off the impending malice of the Svodes, and maintained an uneasy truce. Recognizing that Lady Gramion and Lord Stonehammer have little time remaining to them, the crown, it is suspected, saw an advantage in sparing the parents of the fledgling nobles, in the

hopes of winning their support of these two very accomplished ladies. Other individuals close to the crown, namely the young Prince himself, Norino Fin, and his adviser, Molimo Glimmereye both backed the Stonehammers and instead of being completely in ruins, Svodlun now creeps towards a new life, but what that might be is yet to be forged.

Illionass Thwarted: Illionass attempted to retake their home land over the past three decades and in every attempt they fell short of the mark. Their culture itself has recovered and with a new King on the throne, the late Peter Nonas's grandson, Worshal Nonas, son of Theleni, the nation is doing well. Yet their age old homeland still eludes them, as every attempt to recolonize the region has been met with disaster. Only a handful of new colonies have been able to reclaim any ground at all on the plateau, Johannisburg beings the only to survive through the entire three decades, due in part to an odd null magic field around the town that made invasions unpredictable. Many attribute failures to superstition surrounding the Beacon of Dragon Fire, a monument to the death of Broden, set alight by the Red Dragon that lives in the ruins of the old capital city of Menonass. The Beacon is said to draw in undead and other beings and cleanses them of their impurities... in many cases destroying them completely. Others attribute the bad luck and disastrous missions to divine forces working against them, or on the side of Dagdeath who has taken a sudden and decisive interest in the entire north of Roekron.

Dagdeath and the Dark Wilds: At first taking heavy losses from the battle with Svodlun in the north and other unknown forces they seemed to be dealing with of an unknown origin, Dagdeath rallied about twenty years ago and began to reorganize, animate, and mobilize. Like a huge beast long sleeping, the dark power reared up, casting aside many members of it's long held Dark Council and even it's notorious Dark Guard Skyknights, and organizing a new battle force of Knight of the Dagdemar and a wide range of living troops which were sent into the northern nations with a vengeance and a determined system of destruction and infiltration. While the undead were often the most feared legions of Dagdeath for generations, Dagdeath appears almost more dangerous without them, revealing a lithe and cunning battle strategy capitalizing on the living troops own self preservation as a tool, and first the Illionass Plateau, and then Blackspire, and finally Svodlun, all have seen heavy losses.

Perhaps related to this sudden burst of energy from Dagdeath, the Dagmeneth Forest has also exploded with growth, doubling in size many times over the last few decades, and while most find that Dagdeath does not seem in league with the forest, the correlation seems too much to be coincidence. Whatever the cause, many things are changing in the north, not the least of which is the very geography of the landscape. New and terrifying creatures lurk the Dark Wilds as they are now called, and only the most brave venture into those gruesome woods and ever return.

Other strange storms are common across the north of Roekron, believed to be a new weapon of Dagdoeth. They neutralize most flame spells in their vicinity, and some report wraiths of blue ice within them. These storms pile huge drifts of snow for



miles around them before moving on, and persist through every season, even in the height of summer, making most food production impossible in the north. Fortunately, these storms appear to not venture below Randwin, and this gives the people of the south hope.

Blackspire Crumbles: One of the most effected by the invasions of Dagdeoth was Blackspire which had recovered from their war with The Grim and retaliated with force. Having freed themselves of the tyranny of the vampire lords, they returned quickly to their old ways of raiding and preying on neighboring nations. This was met with great resistance on many fronts and many attempts to make peace with Blackspire where attempted, but most lasted only a year or two. Finally, as Dagdeoth turned it's new living troops on Odilathen and norther Blackspire, they found a target for the war they were seeking and attacked Dagdeoth in mass. Many nations attempted to first stop them, and then aid them, but it was clear from the beginning that Blackspire, barely recovered as they were, didn't stand a chance. The new living troops from Dagdeoth blended in seamlessly with Blackspire, many of them having been recruited from that region itself, and it was painfully simple to seed first doubt, and then suspicion, and finally outright civil war within the ranks. Many orks fled the region, seeking refuge in many lands that would never in the past have helped them, but times have changed, and old enemies are new found allies. Many unknown pieces of the orkish culture were uncovered, revealing far less distinction between many of the types of orks than had previously been believed. Orks have long been a misunderstood people, and it is only now that the nature of the Urukai and the Orks is beginning to be understood.

This insight into Orkish life has come at a tremendous cost to the people themselves. There many clans and families that fought for generations to hold their mountain homeland are now nomads in a world that hates and fears them.

Temnor Exposed: Lastly, the building power of Temnor and it's growing government of undead was exposed to the common people by a hobbit noble of the region, currently a teacher at Pinnacle. Lady Nelion Echoes, returned to her home city and agitated politically in the region, joined by her mysterious and silent lover, Sen a Demdil. Together, the two managed to undo much of the magic veil that was being used to deceive the locals about the nature of the government and its undead leaders. The Litch Rhysic, was not defeated, but has lost the direct control over the nation he formerly held. It also became clear that a vampire still aides Rhysic, whether a survivor of Brodens spawn, or of a different line completely, he is known in the region simply as Medallion, due to a heavy wheel like amulet he always wears. It also became clear that many of the new Undead Dark Hero groups that had been turning up all across Roekron and thwarting the aims of local adventurers originated with this team of Undead, still safe within the secret halls of this stormy nation. Many fear the plans they are no doubt brewing and their pension for targeting adventures directly.

It is a changed world in Roekron, fraught with an awakened enemy to the north, but with wondrous new developments all across. It is a time of change, or new alliances, and new battles. It is a time of heroes who can help a north poised on the edge of a precipice. Who will rise to this challenge? What heroes will venture into the wounded lands of the north and rebuild a floundering people. We shall see if anyone is up to the challenge, to walk blind into the night, or perhaps, to find a light within themselves.

