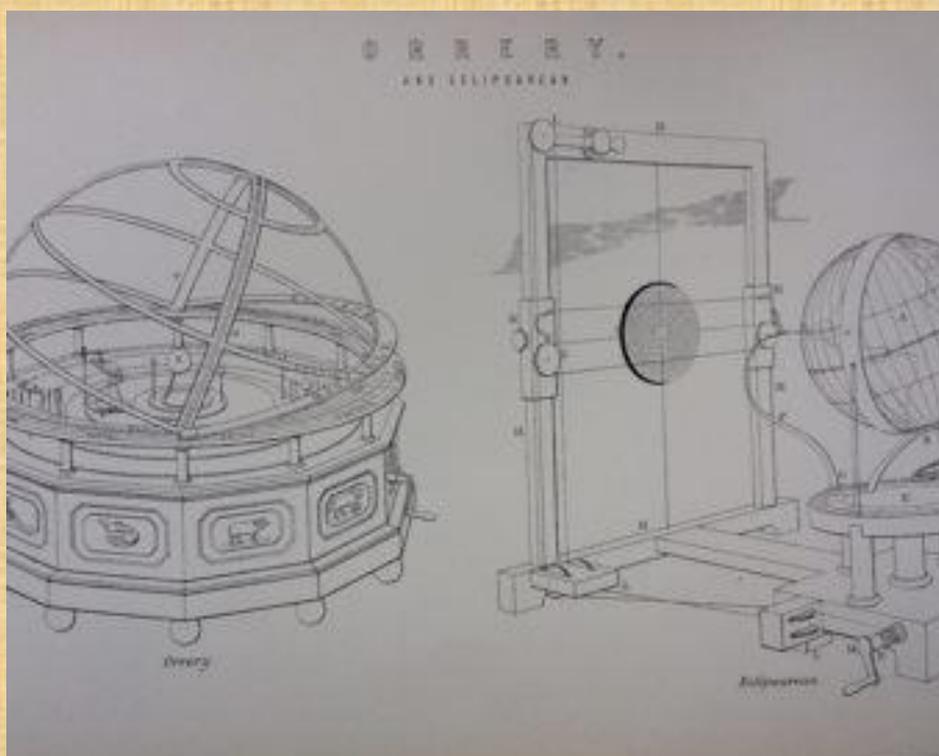


The
Legends
Of
Shadow World
Chapter 1: The Seers of Strok



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Special Contributions:

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Von l'edor, First Secretary to the High Scion hastily adjusted his robes and consulted his schedule book once again. This meeting was high unusual; unscheduled with no information provided to his office. He hoped his last-minute apologies to the Delgaran Trade Delegation would suffice; the Laan merchants were generally insufferable and easy to offend. He made a notation to provide them with a cask of Vermillion House Red—a rare vintage that should appease their egos.

The door to the inner Sanctum open and close with a resounding boom. His master, the Elder Scion of Kuor swept into the hall, followed by two harried looking seers or scholars. The Scion was wearing his most formal attire, robes of gold thread hemmed in black and he carried his Sceptre.

Curious, he thought, perhaps this will be a religious meeting...

Upon closer inspection, the two scholars seemed more noteworthy. Their robes were functional but well-made of fine cloth, sewn with mystical or astronomical symbols.

Probably another obscure sect or cult with more apocalyptic visions—they seemed to be showing up with more frequency.

Despite their subtle finery, they both looked drawn and dusty from travels. He sniffed, hoping they would detect his disapproval of their appearance.

The Elder Scion settled into his chair, the black wood gleaming from hours of polish, but his presence was dwarfed by the towering statue of Kuor that dominated the background, overlooking the pillared hall. The High Temple was the grandest building in Eidolon and the center of power for the Lords of Orhan in Kulthea despite what the Elves in Palia argued. Von looked to his Master for some direction or clue to this meeting, but the Elder Scion seemed focused on the far end of the hall. Finally, he motioned for the scholars to take their place on the lower audience platform.

At the far end of the hall, the burnished doors swung open slowly and a small group assembled for introduction. Even from the distance, Von could hear Scion Oberon clear his throat nervously.

“Elder Lord, may I present Knight-Captain Gorge Kroger, Commander of the Sun Guard and First Protector of the Light Bringers of Phaon.” The tall soldier strode forward, resplendent in his gold and red enameled armor. Kroger was a regular visitor to the High Temple but the unexpected nature of the audience implied a military matter. The Knight-Captain stopped at the foot of the stairs to the Holy Dais and removed his helm. His blond hair spilled out over his shoulders and he bowed his head respectfully to the Elder Scion but was otherwise silent.

Oberon spoke again, “Elder Lord” may I present Chomen Drah, High Builder of Iorak”. My breath caught, and my writing faltered slightly. The Builder-Priests were rarely seen at the Temple and having a High Builder was even more unusual. Like all the Priests of Iorak, Chomen was wearing simple gray tunic and pants, a worn leather tool belt around his waist. Short and squat, he radiated strength and purpose and seemed to study the stone work of the High Temple as he approached the Dais. He stopped. “Elder Scion, I have come as summonsed.” He intoned in a deep baritone voice. A serious man, indeed. Von thought.

Oberon called out again. “Elder Lord” may I present Malim Pelax, of the Order of Loremasters.”

A Loremaster, a Knight of Phaon and a Builder of Iorak? Auspicious company indeed. Von peered down the hall. Who else is present for this meeting? He had met Malim before—a pompous ass to be sure, but supposedly a powerful Mage. He strode down the hall confidently and stopped between the Knight and the Priest.

“High Priest, this summons is highly unusual and inopportune. The Loremasters and Clergy of Orhan work as equals, not as master and servant. I would have you know I was involved in consequential matters to the south. Do the whims of the Priesthood outweigh the work to counter the forces of the Unlife? I demand an explanation!” Malim exclaimed loudly.

The High Scion contemplated the Loremaster as if considering his words. Calmly but forcefully he spoke. "Loremaster, your presence was ordered by the Council at my request. Answers will be forthcoming shortly, but do not presume to question me." The Scion's voice had slowly risen as he spoke, with just a hint of anger underneath. "While the Loremasters and followers of Orhan work together, make no mistake as to primacy. Kuor rules all above AND below and your services and loyalty or required." At the last, the High Scion sat forward in his chair holding the Sceptre before him. With his words, the air had grown heavy, and the very walls of the Temple seems to bend inwards and groan from a great weight or pressure. My pen dropped from my hand and my knees buckled. The High Scion was barely invoking the Wrath of Kuor but those present could feel the force of will. My eyes cleared and I noted that both the Knight Commander and Loremaster had fallen to one knee, but the Builder-Priest still stood straight and was examining the High Scion's Sceptre with open curiosity.

"Enough", the High Scion said, and the pressure disappeared. "We don't have time for foolishness. Malim, your reservations are noted but irrelevant. Oberon, announce our last two guests."

Oberon's voice squeaked once and then settled. "High Priest, may I present Sumendar of the Guides of Vurn-Kye and Jan Jo'drin.." Oberon's voice faltered once again but he continued "...Changramai Warrior of the Tenth Veil".

Both figures walked forward, a contrast in style and appearance. The Navigator, while dignified in his black uniform was pudgy and older and he moved with a bow-legged gait. The Changramai...glided...his movements precise and economical, conveying a coiled deadliness. He wore plain white robes with a gold collar signifying his rank. Tenth Veil! Von thought. Changramai of that skill were only rumored or heard about in legends!

Malim, perhaps exercising caution after Malim's rebuke, bowed deeply to the High Scion. The Changramai matched Malim's bow and added a fist to the heart in the traditional Changramai salute. All five abreast, waiting for the High Priest to begin.

The High Scion inspected each figure below and then nodded to himself. He stood and indicated the Scholars that stood quietly to the side.

"These are the Seers of Strok. They have a crisis and they'll need your help."

Introduction:

Disaster has befallen a group of Seers living in an observatory on a mountain peak in the Spine of Emer. Suddenly, and without any forewarning, an Essence storm formed and the mountain erupted, sending thick clouds of fumes, ash and rocks into the sky while rivers of molten lava poured down the mountain slopes. The Seers were not without defenses, and their observatory was well built with powerful wards inscribed into the walls. A shimmering protective sphere appeared around the structure, but the violence of the eruption cracked the foundation the Seers feared the magical shield would collapse. The Seers fled immediately and reached the safety of Eidolon, where they immediately petitioned the Elder-Scion for aid and assistance at the Temple of Kuor.

The Seers are not just another scholarly organization, they are the caretakers of the *Lense of Strok* (loc. Haestra p. 129 #14), an immensely powerful artifact, perhaps even surpassing even the Illsari Seeing Stones. With the *Lense*, the Seers are able to see over great distances, into alternate realms and perhaps through time as well.

The Scion, understanding the significance of the artifact, immediately dispatched *Messengers of Teris* to the Loremasters, Navigators and High Priests of Orhan asking for their assistance. With the wealth and resources of the Scions, a group was quickly identified to represent many of the powers of Kulthea and safely recover the *Lense of Strok*.

The Task:

The powerful group of adventures will need to safely reach the Observatory through the volcanic hell scape, enter the facility and retrieve the *Lense of Strok* before it's destroyed. They have been told that the protective *Wards* could only last a couple days given the power of the eruption.

The PC Group:

This module is intended as a Tournament style module for high-level player characters using well known and perhaps famous personalities of Kulthea. However, it's possible to swap out the pre-generated characters for your players normal PC's. In general, there are 3 basic group choices: use this module with a current group of PCs (they may need to be leveled up), use the mixed group of 5 pre-generated characters or use a "Conclave"-a group of 4 pre-generated Priests of Orhan.

1. **Using a current group of PCs.** If a GM wants to use his current group of PCs, then a quick read through of the chapters will be necessary to ensure the group has the right mix of abilities to succeed. Certainly, with the backing of the Scions of Kuor, Loremasters and perhaps the Navigators, the group will have access to special resources that could fill in any gaps in their abilities.
2. **Mixed group of pre-generated PCs.** The following is a quick summary of pre-generated characters that can be used for this module. They have been designed to represent key groups of Kulthea and to ensure an interesting mix of abilities and personalities for role-playing. However, subsequent Chapters might require swapping out some of these PCs as circumstances dictate. Full backgrounds, playing notes and stats can be found in the appendix.

Malim Pelax: 43rd lvl Loremaster (Magician)

Sumendar: 46th lvl Navigator –"Guides of Vurn-Kye" (Magician)

Knight-Captain Kroger: 48th lvl Captain of the Sun Guard (Lightbringers of Phaon)

Chomen Drah: 45th lvl Priest of Iorak

Jan Jo'drin: 50th lvl Changramai Warrior

3. **Conclave of Orhanian Priests.** For GMs wanting to run a group of Channelers, a *Conclave* can be formed: a gathering of 4 specific Orhanian Priests:

Jerrel of Cay: 50th lvl Priest of Cay

Sacriel D'esti: 52nd lvl Priest of Eissa

Barellon the Wise: 48th lvl Priest of Jaysek

Chomen Drah: 45th lvl Priest of Iorak

Aids:

- The Seers will provide one of their "younger", less risk adverse, members, Vertogen Otul, to accompany the group. Vertogen will provide the group through the protective shield and help dismount the *Lense* from its frame.
- The Seers will provide a map of the Observatory.
- Malim (if used) will provide transportation to the Observatory on his flying boat!
- The Navigators are allowing Sumendar to accompany the group. His job will be to navigate to the destination (via Malims flying ship) and then Jump the group out of the Observatory once they have the *Lense*. He will try to maintain "normal" Navigator neutrality unless threatened or in danger.

Obstacles & Challenges:

Environmental: The observatory is caught in an extreme environmental disaster. The mountain is covered in molten lava flows, the air unbreathable, and the skies filled with burning ejecta and combustible gasses. Normal organic material will burst into flames quickly and even more robust objects will be easily warped or destroyed. However, the observatory is protected by a powerful energy shield that can only be penetrated by a member of the Seer Order. Getting to the site is the problem!

Essaence Flux: The eruption has created a powerful Essaence & magnetic flux which

makes spellcasting unpredictable and dangerous. It will be immediately clear to the Loremaster and Navigator that extra-dimensional energies with caused the eruption or are a result of the eruption!

Vertogen: While needed to complete the mission, Vertogen, is fairly low level and will need to be kept alive for the mission to succeed. This will take effort by the players!

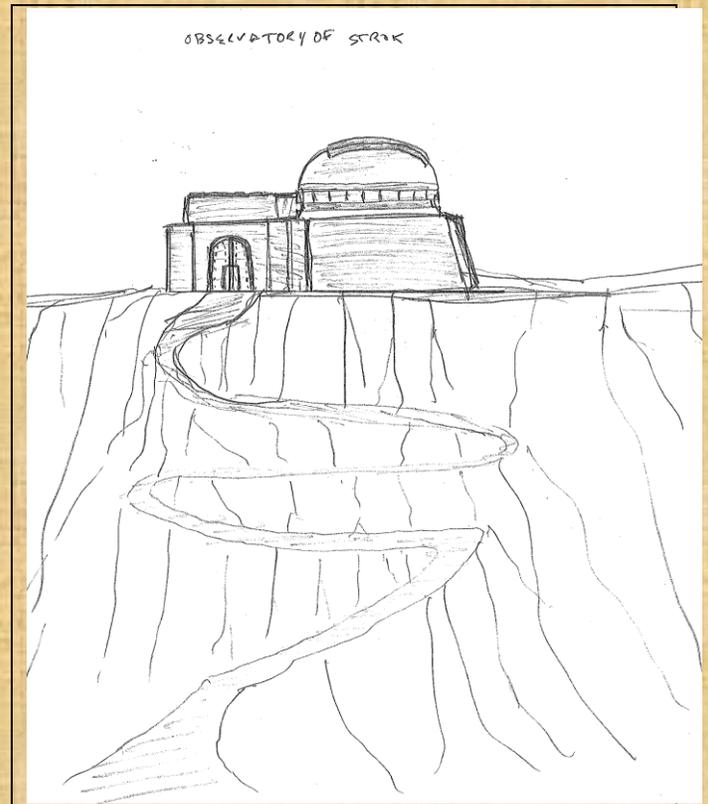
The Lense: The Mirror is 4' in diameter, 1" thick and weighs 185lbs. It has a breakage factor of 40 so it's also quite delicate.

Karax: As will become clear, the eruption is not just natural phenomena. A gateway has been created to the Sixth Pale, and through it, *Karax* are now residing in the lava flows. These beasts live without harm in the lava, lurking just beneath the surface. Directed by their Master, they are waiting for any creature to approach. If a person ventures too close, the serpentine neck shoots up (as far as 50 feet!) and snaps shut on the poor victim.

Time. The protective energy field around the Observatory will only last 25 hours. Between the time of the eruption, the Seers' escape, the gathering of resources etc, there is only 16 hrs left. It is approximately 1500 miles from Eidolon to the Observatory—or close as you can get given the eruption. Travel time from the city to the lower reaches of the Mountain will take a day. That may only leave a handful of hours to retrieve the *Lense* before the Wards fail and the artifact is destroyed.

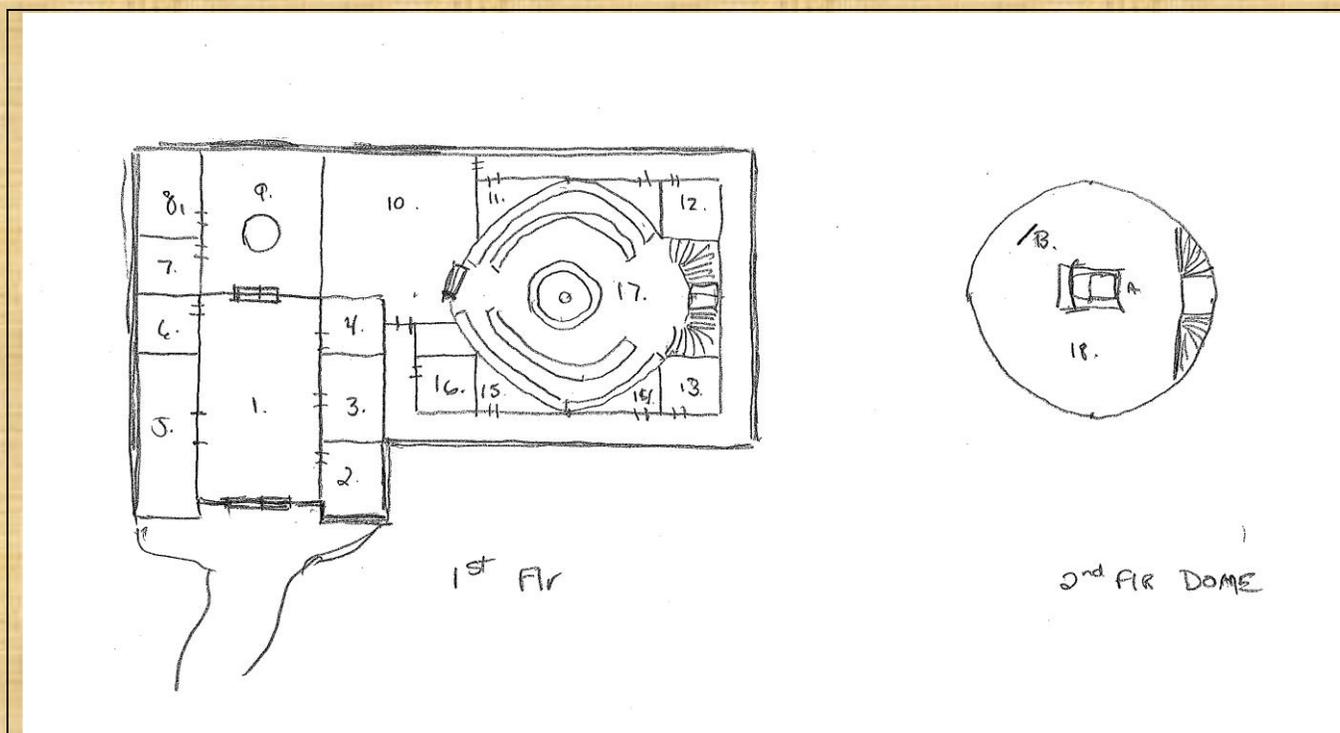
The Opponent: The eruption was not natural. It was purposeful to cause the Seers to flee and abandon the *Lense*. The mastermind behind this plot (but not the true power behind these

actions) is Gorang: A Dyar Thief and Adherent of the Jerak Ahrenrath. Gorang is also known simply as *The Hand*. He has stolen many artifacts of power for the Cult, and is working for a Dark God to obtain the *Lense of Strok*. Gorang has access to many allies and has powerful bodyguards that are protecting him during the heist.



The Observatory:

From a distance the observatory appears as a squat stone building topped with a rounded dome. Perched on the lip of the volcano, the facility is accessed via a long switch back trail from the valley below. The Observatory had been supplied and supported by the Katra of Stroane, but recent political upheavals have left the Seers without a political patron



1. Foyer. The winding road leads to immense 25' high black wooden doors with smaller set of 10' double doors inset. Inside, a 40' x 70' courtyard is covered is a high vaulted ceiling. The floor is dressed with worn and cracked flagstones. Another set of 20' double doors are at the far end of the foyer. These doors are of golden wood and bound with silver gold bands.
2. Servants Quarters.
3. Servants Quarters
4. Storage
5. Stables
6. Carriage Room.
7. Kitchen
8. Dining Hall
9. Orrery Room. An immense mechanical construction of gears, levers, arms and spheres fills the center of this room, while in the background a huge paned glass window overlooks the erupting volcano. The device is an Orrery, and shows the movements of the planets and moons.
10. Day Room. This room also features a large panoramic window of the caldera. The room is filled with comfortable chairs, tables, couches and casual furniture. 8' carved wooden door leads into the library.
- 11.- 16. Quarters.
17. Library. 80' diameter circular room features a sunken oratory and meeting place and flanked by two rows of curving bookshelves. Double curved stairs are at the far end of the room. The room is guarded by 10 *Guardian Monks*. (from Ahrenryak). They are wearing *Verix Silk Cloaks* (chameleon effect) and perched on the wall and ceiling via *Ceiling Running*.
18. The Lense Chamber. The Dome is dominated by a central stone platform that holds a large chair and a framework of glass plates, toothed arms and gears (a.). On the far side of the room a shimmering portal leads to a shadow space (b.). On the central

platform a dark, cloaked figure is dismantling a section of the framework. Next to the figure on the platform, is a roughly humanoid figure of black glossy material. Finally flanking either side of the platform are 2 imposing figures. 10' tall, reddish, humanoid demons. They are wearing smooth gray metal armor and are holding, long, mechanical, circular tubes.

The Adventure

Part I: Planning. Hopefully the players will gather intel on the layout of the observatory, details of the *Lense* and anything else that might be helpful. Of course, high-level players may not feel the need for preparation!

Part II: The Journey. The journey to the observatory via Malim's skyship or a hired skyship will take a day. The route will basically follow the Spine of Emer and east of Votania to avoid some of the more unpredictable Essaence Flows. The trip is a good opportunity for the players to get into character, but may also be a chance to throw them a few small challenges so they can flex their new found 50th level powers! Besides random weather events, a couple of suggestions:

Motar Voorg. The powerful red Dragon will sense the group and may want a closer look.

Krylites. The Krylites have developed larger and more powerful weapons, including a lightning artillery gun that can reach targets several miles away. They could decide to take some pot shots on a passing skyship.

Keep in mind that the purpose of these encounters is to have the players try a few powers/spells w/o exhausting

resources they will definitely need for the coming challenges. While the Krylites may be an easy encounter, Dragons will still be formidable to 50th level characters.

Part III: The Approach to the Observatory. The PC's will need to reach the Observatory. Flying will be difficult—visibility is near zero and airborne particles and debris will do severe damage. Travelling overland will require walking on/through molten rock. Teleporting will not be possible—the Essaence fluctuations will make it too dangerous (even for a Navigator) and the shield around the Observatory will block any teleporting directly inside the structure. Transiting through the lava field on foot will make the group targets of frequent *Karax* attacks.

The safe zone is about 1 mile away from the Observator/eruption. As they approach the observatory the PC's will need to handle 4 zones in increasing deadliness:

1. Low Risk Zone. 5000' to 2500'. (+50 RR vs Heat on all soft/organic objects, 10% chance of suffering an "A" Heat crit per round. Temperatures up to 150F)
2. Medium Risk Zone. 2500' to 1000' (+25 RR vs Heat on all soft/organic objects, 50% chance of "B" Heat crit per round. Temperatures up to 200F)
3. High Risk Zone. 1000' to 500' (-25 RR vs Heat on all soft/organic objects or destroyed, "C" Heat crit per round. Temperatures up to 250F. Air is toxic gas.)
4. Extreme Risk Zone. 500' to Observator. (-50 RR vs Heat on all soft/organic objects or destroyed, "D" Heat crit per round. Temperatures up to 450F)

Essaence Flux. The Essaence flows are wild and fluctuating within 1 mile of the eruption. Spell Failure increases by 25%, +25 to spell failure

rolls, and spell effects have a 10% chance of failing each round. If they ask, the Navigator will be able to determine that the Essaence Flux is “anomalous”, but can’t provide any specific details to the cause.

Part IV: The Observatory. Once the players reach the Shield, Vertogen will use his Seer amulet to pierce the veil (the group will need to be touching to pass through). They will be challenged along the way by Guardians? Between the obvious anomalous nature of the eruption, the trans-dimensional creatures in the lava the PCs should realize that there is more going on than a simple natural disaster. [See Observatory Layout & Key].

Part V: The Thief. If they defeat or bypass the Guardian Monks in the Library (#17) they can access the *Lense* room and Gorang in the process of dismantling the *Lense*. He is close to being done or actually finished. Nearby a coruscating energy portal stands open, showing a dark cave lit by flickering flames beyond. Gorang is being protected by two *Güthüraxx Shock Soldiers* (Pale V Demons in *titanium battle-armor and heavy slug mini-guns*) and is accompanied by Onyx, a Black Eog Golem, an ancient construct of Nynaku that guards his temple in the Muartaar Complex. Onyx is tasked with carrying the *Lense* safely to Nynaku’s High Priests. The *Güthüraxx* will immediately engage the group with their autoguns and then into melee. Gorang will finish unbolting the *Lense* from its frame, and have Onyx carry the *Lense* through the Portal and then follow him.

Part VI: Decisions. Possible results:

1. The group defeats the guards and Gorang and retrieves the Mirror. (not good for the adventure series)
2. If Gorang escapes, the portal will be open for an additional 2 minutes (12 rounds). and the players can follow him through the portal.

3. If Gorang escapes and the party does not, or is unable, to follow him through the portal they’ll need to track him or the *Lense*. The players could use The Navigator to plot/track the residual Portal energies to a nearby Temple Complex (Muartaar) using his Compass. Or, the group can return to the Temple of Kuor and attempt to scry the location of the *Lense*, or scry themselves if they have the right spell.

END CHAPTER 1

GM Notes:

- Group dynamics should be problematic—AND ENCOURAGED! These are all incredibly powerful figures that don’t normally work together. Many are favored by their Gods, are famous or are used to acting alone. Hubris is the point—and the weakness exploited by their opponents.
- At 50th lvl or so, the focus should be on roleplaying and not exploiting rules, skills or spells.
- This adventure includes MANY restrictions to normal abilities: Essaence fluxuations, abnormal physical settings and opponents that have carefully planned (unlike the PCs who are just responding to developments).

Further Chapters

Chapter 2: The Temples of Muartaar. Chapter 2 takes place in the underground complex in the Temples of Muartaar; an abandoned temple complex to the Gods of Charon about 100 miles NW of the Observatory. Via the Portal or other methods, the group will arrive in a temple cave underneath the Temple of Nynaku. Gorang will flee again (with the *Lense*) but the group will have to battle High Priests, Elementals and Onyx to pursue him. Gorang will make for the *Charonic Veil*, an ancient portal that leads directly to Charon in an attempt to lose his pursuers.

Chapter 3: The Caverns of Charon. Chapter 3 follows Gorang to Charon, where he is betrayed and captured by another Dark God who wants the *Lense* for himself. With the inadvertent help of the PCs, Gorang will escape and flee to the

Cavern of Portals to gain access to the Pales and the protection of the gathering forces of Nynaku.

Chapter 4: The Plains of Dread. Chapter 4 The pursuit brings the players to the Fifth Pale. There a formidable host is being marshalled for an attack on Kulthea is being led by a powerful Demon-Lord and the High Priest of Nynaku. Here, with a victory, the players should be able to recover the *Lense*, but will realize that Nynaku is behind the theft.

Chapter 5: The Conclave of Orhan. Chapter 5 Regrouping after Chapter 4, the group is tasked with the final confrontation in the North Pole against Nynaku as he frees himself from his Laen Sphere prison. The players will need for Nynaku to break free of the Laen Sphere before they can re-imprison him. They will need to battle and subdue a Dark God.