

Kastali's Diary – Late Fall, 434 Tz

Wall-Castles - Late Fall, Day 1

Under the heart of one of the greatest mountain ranges in the Land, my band of Heroes discovers a giant castle. Built into the wall of a cavern sizable enough to contain the entire floating city of Atlantis, the castle stands as a silent sentry of a race long-past. After crossing a wide ravine filled with gushing, black water, the three remaining Heroes were confronted by a giant, gated castle – abandoned save for a horde of loathsome Mage Spawn. While the Heroes managed to enter the structure by levitating themselves up to a lofty parapet, the maze of lofty rooms and arching corridors may take more time to unravel than they expect.

On a related note, a new book has appeared in my bookshelf. Titled "A Man's Home is His Castle", it details the story of an interesting Half-Orc rogue named Patchwork. It appears only half complete, I await the end of Patchwork's story with interest.

Dragon's Gate - Late Fall, Day 2

The blast of sunlight at the end of the tunnel took me by surprise, even more so than the two Heroes remaining out of the original band of four. After killing the last of the highly intelligent Lizard people that slaughtered their Thief, the Heroes stepped through an ancient gate in the shape of a coiling Dragon – the “Dragon’s Gate” as they called it - and found themselves looking down upon a vast tropical valley.

While the human and the Dwarf make camp upon the first of the stair-ledges overlooking the valley, and prepare themselves for tomorrow’s descent into danger, I spent some time examining the corpses of the dead lizard-folk. Even in death, these Lizard Men seem far more intelligent than the ones I’ve caught and dissected along the shores of the Black Lake. I would like the chance to see more of these creatures, and to learn something of their society – as they would make excellent additions to the Sect’s unstoppable armies.

Dragon City - Late Fall, Day 3

Abandoning the group of Heroes to their fate, I’ve explored deeper into the tropical valley, and discovered conclusive signs that the crumbling structures at its heart once formed the heart of a Draconum city long abandoned to the elements and time. Set within a circle of vast mountain peaks, the city is situated on an island in the middle of a vast, steaming caldera lake. For as far as the eye can see, the whole valley is filled with a tropical forest of lush vegetation – flowers and plants that I’ve never seen before, even amongst the books liberated by my Sect predecessors from the libraries of Atlantis.

Even more shocking than this monumental discovery, is that amidst the buildings, columns, watchtowers and ivy-tangled halls, lope more of the lizard-folk, vile Orc-things with hammers, and an amazing variety of Mage Spawn the likes I’ve never seen or read of before.

The Awakening – Late Fall, Day 4

I have dire news to report this morning. An ancient power has awakened deep within the depths of the Dragon City. Whether this is the work of the two Heroes that I abandoned some days ago I cannot say. In an amazing spectacle, hundreds of Mage Spawn have stopped trying to kill one another, and instead are scurrying madly throughout the complex, working to repair buildings damaged by weather and time.

I am both worried and curious about what the Heroes might have unleashed beneath the city, as seeing so many Mage Spawn working in close concert with one another is both amazing and deeply disturbing. Even the Shyft, with their empathic ability to control the monsters of the Blasted Lands, have never achieved anything on a scale as this.

Masters of the Valley – Late Fall, Day 5

On no less than three separate occasions, I have seen a Draconum stalking through the halls of the Dragon City, overseeing the reconstruction of the ancient buildings and halls by obedient Mage Spawn. While I am keeping my distance, as I have no idea whether the creature can sense the Solonavi relic that allows me to spy upon her. I am already astonished about what I have seen.

While the Mage Spawn's leader is obviously Draconum, she looks much different than any Draconum I've seen before. She radiates a level of magical power that only the most powerful of Deathspeakers match, and she calls out her orders to her Mage Spawn workers in a crude and barbaric sounding speech. At any sign of disloyalty or slowing of work, she rips the faulty Mage Spawn to shreds with her teeth and claws, then forcefully promotes another to take its place.

While the Necropolis Sect has little information about the origins of the Draconum, and we are largely guessing about even such simple facts as habitation and social order, I want to say that these Draconum are very different from the warrior-monks we've fought against so often over the last two hundred years. I will observe more over the next few days, but I fear what may happen if the female Draconum discovers me spying upon her efforts to rebuild her city.

A New Species – Late Fall, Day 6

By using a language-translation spell given to me by my Solonavi masters, I have been unable to unravel the mystery of the dragon-woman's speech. This powerful being calls herself Drakona, and appears to be amongst the first of her kind to awaken from some kind of long, magically-induced slumber. Whether these Drakona were placed into this state by a curse or some other kind of spell is unknown to me. But the idea that she numbers amongst the first – and perchance, the weakest – to awaken within the crypts beneath the Dragon City is a startling revelation!

The conclusion to "A Man's Home is His Castle" has become available to me. I was very curious to see the mention of another amulet piece. I wonder if this is connected to my own quest which obtained this position for me. If they are connected, it would appear that the Solonavi are willing to risk much to gain these artifacts.

Interrogations – Late Fall, Day 7

I have discovered the fate of the two Heroes I followed from the Kuttar Depths, and it is not at all what I expected. Amidst a sizable marble temple ringed by spiring columns and littered with stone benches worn by centuries of wind and weather, the female Drakona spent part of the morning interrogating her prisoners.

The first warrior, a Dwarf covered with burns and festering wounds, sat grimly upon the bench, answering her questions one after the other. Who is he? Where did he come from? Who was his master? What was the purpose of the strange pistol he'd brought with him into Dragon's Gate? Through all of these questions the Dwarf sat numbly, almost like a Zombie, obediently answering her questions. But when she asked about the origin of the black powder, he balked at her question – and was decapitated for his hesitation.

The second warrior, an Atlantean mage from Caero by his dress and bald-shaved head, had to answer a similar stream of questions, and lasted far longer than his counterpart. What are the crystals set into his head? What magics is he capable of with the crystals? How is it that humans are using magic, when they are typically a magic-weak race? And lastly, what is this 'Tezla' that he venerates as his master? While he answered these questions honestly, when he truthfully stated that Tezla, a human, is the greatest wizard to have ever lived in the Land, the Drakona hissed at him – and then savagely tore out his heart with her claws.

A Deadly Raid – Late Fall, Day 8

Five bands of Heroes fought their way into the valley this morning, having traversed the length of the underground passages to reach the Dragon's Gate. Within minutes of their arrival on the stairs, bands of lizard-folk, vile Orcs and other creatures charged forth to engage them in the leafy jungles. Then, to aid against the invaders, the Drakona used a powerful magic to summon forth other strange, powerful creatures out of thin air – beasts made entirely of fiery Magestone, or four-armed Slag Trolls armed with clubs and whips. Setting these beasts to defend the beaches of the isle, the Drakona then stalked into the depths of the Dragon City, and organized the defense with the chieftains of the varied Mage Spawn tribes.

Kzar Rabahan – Late Fall, Day 9

One of the most feared Orcs in the history of the Land is Kzar Rabahn. Throughout the summer of 424 Tz, Rabahn burned and looted cities along a five hundred mile march, and went out of his way to poison wells and burn fields along his route. While the Orc war-leader was eventually killed by the Elemental champion Kossak Mageslayer, Rabahn's

name spoken aloud is still enough to make the inhabitants of Khamsin, Rokos and Prieska shudder in horror.

After months of raiding, Rabahn's horde ended up in the heart of Atlantean territory. Just as Rabahn was about to lay siege to the Citadel of Luxor, Galeshi riders managed to lead Kossak into a position where Rabahn would be forced to engage him in single-combat. In the end, Kossak killed Rabahn, dispersed his horde, and collected and hid the Kzar's remains to ensure that he could never be brought back from the dead.

The Broken Tusk – Late Fall, Day 10

While the Black Grasses tribe number amongst the groups of Orc Raiders best known to the inhabitants of the Empire, few know that the Black Grasses are merely part of a larger tribe called the Broken Tusk. The newest leader of the Orc Raiders, Kzar Nabar, is a member of the Broken Tusk, and leads one of the most powerful and traditional castes of Orc society.

Years ago, a number of upstart tribes attempted to stand up against the Broken Tusk. The members of the Broken Tusk responded in two ways – first to soundly defeat them in the yearly dominance challenges, and then drove them out of the Fist homeland with violence and fire. The homeless Orcs eventually settled in caves north of the Blasted Lands, and became the Cave Orcs. While the Cave Orcs have recently made an appearance within Raider society, the Broken Tusk works hard to ensure that the upstarts have no chance to gain any stature or station in Orc culture.

The Rules of Raiding – Late Fall, Day 11

Although a way of life, raiding is a privilege in Orc society. Every year at the tribal gathers in the southern Fist, all of the Raider tribes come together to determine if one warrior is powerful enough to defeat all comers and be named the Kzar.

Once the festival is done, and the corpses buried or burned, tribes of Orc warriors then head south into the civilized territories, raiding and taking everything that isn't nailed down. By the end of the summer the survivors return to the Fist with their loot, and participate in another age-old ritual – a series of bloody dominance battles that determines which Orc tribe gets the best share of the spoils. While every tribe ends up with something, traditionally members of the Broken Tusk tribe gets better loot than everyone else, purely because their warriors are better equipped and better trained to win the bloody challenges.

Another book has appeared in my shelves titled "The Price of Freedom". This is a story of a dwarf named Sig Eightfingers, his involvement with the construction of a powerful Golem and his fight for freedom.

Clurch Players – Late Fall, Day 12

The Clurch Drum is an extremely important part of Orc society. As all Orcs have an intuitive sense for music, and Orc children are trained from an early age to recognize the “language” of Clurch music, drum-playing is found at nearly every level of Orc society. Clurch players are treated like bards by the Orc folk, as they are able to verbally tell the tale of a famous Orc Raider, while drumming out the background “scenery” of the battle the Orc is fighting in.

On the open plains of the Fist, Clurch players can relay messages quickly and easily with their drums, including the location, strength and fighting capacity of an enemy tribe or army. Within human cities, to avoid the problem of echoes, Clurch players switch to shrill bagpipe-like instruments, and communicate with key pitches and squeals to get information to their warriors.

Orc Warlords – Late Fall, Day 13

Hoping to increase their own power and prestige, some Orcs break away entirely from Orc culture, taking their warbands south to seek gold and power. While fighting for the Human, Elven and Dwarf warlords may not be seen as a most honorable path by Orc society, the battle, strategy and command experience that an Orc gains in fighting through dozens of southlander battles often allows an Orc to win dominance challenges when he returns home again. More than a few Orc Warlords have returned home to become Khans of their home tribes.

Kzar Nabar, who went missing for almost five years after a failed battle near Venetia, returned home stronger than any other challenger in 434 Tz. After only one season of trials, he became the Khan of the Broken Tusk tribe, and then won the right to be Kzar over a nearly uncountable horde of Orc warriors.

Rivvenheim Mountains – Late Fall, Day 14

Moving away from the throngs of noisy Orcs filling the borders of Prieska, I then moved my scrying sight to a place that few have ever laid eyes upon and lived – the homeland of the Knights Immortal. While my masters have advised that I do not spy upon the High Elves, I must find a way to see even one of their famous cities, even if just for a short time.

Viewing the mountains from a distance, from even as far away as the flowing waters of the Roa Galtor, they are a series of impossibly high peaks forming a wall between the Land and all points east. These peaks have been defended by the Knights Immortal for all of recorded history, and they have fought back hordes of Orcs, brash mercenary warparties and even Atlantean armies armed with the best weapons early Technomancy could create. From here, the mountains seem almost unreal in their height, and the five-hundred foot high Wylden plateau is only a single footstep before the mass of the unscalable wall.

Vurgra Divide – Late Fall, Day 15

The Vurgra Divide has been controlled by the Sect for decades, and is filled with loyal humans wanting their chance at fortune, power and immortality. Originally rumored by many Sect tongue-waggers to be a gift or a bribe from the Knights Immortal, the huge glacial mountain valley is beautiful, pristine, and contains some of the best farmland in this part of the world. As the Divide stands at the northern edge of the Rivvenehims, it is a territory patrolled by Sect and Knights Immortal troops alike.

Twin Passes – Late Fall, Day 16

While the Rivvenheim Mountains have long stood as the border between the lowlands and the vaunted heights of High Elven society, North Pass and South Pass mark the only two direct highways leading into the well-defended realm. While South Pass has Stonekeep at its bottom, and North Pass bears the Wellkeep at its foot, at the top of both passes are a series of impenetrable High Elven fortresses that no army has ever broken.

While the Wellkeep – set on the edge of an apparently bottomless mountain chasm - has forever stood as the property of the Knights Immortal, South Pass currently stands in the control of the Elemental League, as the League and the High Elves have constantly captured and recaptured the contested keep for hundreds of years. With the recent Sect invasion of the Wylden homeland, it may be a matter of time before the Bone Legion turns to capture Stonekeep from the tree-lovers.

Sturnmounts – Late Fall, Day 17

To the south of the Rivvenheims lie the Sturnmount peaks, traditionally owned by the surly and hateful Mountain Trolls. While the Mountain Trolls have long been involved with the Elemental League, their long-term feud with their Forest Troll cousins has existed for far longer.

While the Sturnmounts are not even remotely as high as the Rivvenheims, and access to the east is cut off by the peaks, these low, rocky mountains do provide a backdrop to the southeastern edge of the Land. Believed to be uplifted at the same time that the Wylden Plateau was raised in a cataclysmic earthquake, the Sturnmounts are largely barren, with little usable metal or resources within. The Forest Trolls largely avoid the area, not just because of their angry cousins, but because the forested lands of the Wylden far better suit their way of life and diet.

Freyhaven, City of Trees – Late Fall, Day 18

I attempted to push my sight into the heart of the Rivvenheims today, and even had a few moments where I saw trees, cliffs and watchtowers set amongst the beautiful setting. But as soon as I reached an invisible line, my sight grew cloudy, and it felt as if lightning were about to strike within my scrying chamber.

Just as I managed to break my link with the pool, a flash of lightning and thunder tore through the scrying room. With the wail of ice-cold wind, books flew from their shelves, candle-sticks overturned, and I was tossed about the space like a discarded puppet. When the storm faded, I received a visit from my Solonavi master, who advised me to never spy again on the affairs of Rivvenheim...

Darq the Corrupt – Late Fall, Day 19

In the depths of my scrying pool, I've discovered something completely unexpected today. The war-leader of the Order of Vladd, the Vampire-General Darq the Corrupt, rode into the heart of the Kzar Nabar's camp this morning. His only companions were his four "mistresses" – a group of female Heroes who have long performed deeds of murder and theft in his service. Oddly enough, Kzar Nabar was not surprised to see him, and welcomed Darq and his 'ladies' into his tents as if Darq were an old and honored friend.

It turns out that Darq was visiting to negotiate a deal. In exchange for Nabar leading a major Orc attack against the Atlantean-held Citadel of Luxor, Darq would have his women sneak into the impregnable tower during the attack, and steal the bones of the famous Kzar Rabahn. Once the bones were spirited out of Luxor, Darq himself would reanimate the dead Kzar and offer him into Nabar's service. Apparently, Darq's newest Vampire – Kossak Mageslayer, once a master of the Elemental League and now merely a puppet servant of the Order of Vladd – disclosed the secret location of Rabahn's bones. If Darq can accomplish such a thing, he would gain major status within the Sect by unleashing one of the greatest scourges the western Land has ever known back into the world of the living.

Preparing the Siege – Late Fall, Day 20

With the kingdom of Prieska now firmly under Orc control, Nabar quickly rallies his troops for the assault against the Atlantean-held Citadel of Luxor. As the massive castle is only a day's run from here, every Orc in the entire army – whether warrior, cook, taskmaster or campfollower - is preparing for the trek. Nabar has whipped his khans into a frenzy with promises and threats. By the time the first wave of mounted troops reaches the Citadel this evening, Nabar's eager armies will be ready to do nearly anything he commands.

To the point of view of the Atlanteans at Luxor, this must be seen as an unconventional strategy. In the thousand years that the Citadel has stood, no army has ever taken the gates – and the Orcs must be suicidal to throw their army away against such a well-entrenched enemy. But with my secret knowledge, whether Darq's Ladies succeed in their mission will be the real test, as the resurrection of the greatest Orc warleader in memory will surely turn the Orcs from a deadly horde to an unstoppable tide of destruction.

The Battle of Luxor Part One – Late Fall, Day 21

Thousands of Orcs began the siege of Luxor this morning, surging forth in disorganized lines towards the waiting defenders. While the Atlanteans, brave in their conceit, opened the battle by sending waves of mounted lancers into the ranks of the Orcs, Half-Trolls and Goblins. While the tactic that has historically worked well against the Hordes in the past, Nabar's Orcs used a barrage of fuser shots, black-tipped arrows and flaming Ankhar dung to drive back the mounted charge. While hundreds of Raiders died in the mounted assault, Nabar's fearless front-line command style inspired the Orcs even more.

The next trick shocked the Atlanteans even more, as their best mages were thwarted at the heart of the battle. Before the Orc's first main charge, by Nabar's command, sleds of raw Magestone – collected by Goblin slaves through the long trip in the Blasted Lands – were cracked open and dispersed to Goblin Runners spread throughout the front lines of the Raider army. While the magical radiation quickly sickened the Goblin slaves, the energy from the raw stones created a huge magical disruption field, protecting the front lines from magical assault. Behind the lines, the spell-crazy Chaos Mages gorged themselves on extra Magestone, breaking crystal and cracking teeth in an orgy of preparation for enacting their primitive magics.

Then the Horde struck the walls of Rokos, like giant waves smashing repeatedly into a sea-wall, and the entire battlefield dissolved into chaos.

The Battle of Luxor Part Two – Late Fall, Day 22

For a day, a night, and the following day the Orcs attacked the Citadel of Luxor, throwing everything they had into breaching the six gates, catapulting members over the walls, or using explosives or Ankhar charges to crack the stone. But as the sun began to set beyond the western hills, Kzar Nabar abruptly gave the order for the Orcs to withdraw. As the battle had largely been even, with thousands of casualties on both sides, many Orcs were relieved to be beyond the range of the crossbows and war-Golems.

That night, on the open plains to the west of Luxor, I watched as the Orcs held a huge victory feast. Many were confused about why they were drinking celebratory grog when the castle still stood. But when Kzar Nabar told his armies about the true nature of the battle – about successfully stealing the Kzar Rabahn's bones from within Luxor – the slow-witted Orcs were stupefied. But once he held up the sack of bones for all to see, and then presented his Necropolis ally, Darq the Corrupt, the camp erupted into an impatient fury. Every Orc there knew that if Rabahn was there to fight alongside them, the Horde could never fail, and crowded around the ritual circle for a chance to see history happen.

Bloody Rituals – Late Fall, Day 23

In the darkness of a new moon, Darq the Corrupt and his four Sect mistresses conducted a dangerous ceremony. While I have been part of many such rituals during my training, resurrecting someone that has been fifteen years dead is beyond the scope of even the most powerful Necromancers. But with the aid of an ancient book stolen from the depths of an ancient Dungeon near Cainus Mons, Darq cast the spell, drenched the corpse in the

blood of a hundred human prisoners, and then called upon the power of Dark Tezla to bring the Orc warleader back from the dead.

When the corpse stirred, and stood, not an Orc within a mile made a noise; many believed at first that it was nothing more than a mindless Zombie. Then, when Rabahn stood, raised his arms skyward and howled his legendary war-cry to the assembled horde, the Orcs went crazy with battle-lust and fear, and began a bloody revel the likes has not been seen south of the Fist since the time of Rabahn's first death!

Kzar Rabahn's Army – Late Fall, Day 24

Rabahn's first desire, upon being brought back from the dead, was to personally avenge his own death – by personally confronting and slaughtering the Elemental Champion, Kossak Mageslayer in single combat. When Darq revealed to Rabahn that Kossak was already dead, transformed into a Vampire, and was being used to lead a massive attack against his own Elemental peoples, Rabahn was satisfied. He still wanted the chance to fight him again, which Darq – as one of the leaders of the Order of Vladd - agreed to arrange in the near future.

Rabahn's second desire was to avenge the tricky Galeshi that played a key part in his death before the gates of Luxor. By towing the Troll champion behind their horses on wooden sleds, the Galeshi were able to force a battle between Rabahn and Kossak before he was fully prepared. He demanded that Nabar's horde turn and attack the Galeshi territories immediately, or that Rabahn himself would take leadership and do it himself. Respectfully, Nabar explained that he had bartered with the Galeshi – and that in exchange for their scouts and black powder, that Nabar himself would never lead an attack against the Galeshi territories for as long as he lived. Rabahn stood as if to attack, and Nabar was within seconds of facing the greatest warrior in Orc history in single-combat.

But when Darq mentioned offhand that Rabahn himself had made no such promise, and that if he were to take a small war-horde of elite Orc warriors into the deserts led by Zombified Galeshi Scouts, it would likely be little more than a few days work to hunt down and punish the people responsible for his death. Nabar, pleased with this turn of events, offered to Rabahn five hundred warriors of his choice from the Horde. Rabahn eagerly accepted this, wished Nabar luck in his attack against the Atlanteans – and then left the tent to choose the members of his new Horde!

Three Hordes – Late Fall, Day 25

This morning, I watched as the two main Orc armies divided, and headed in the directions of their new conquest. Kzar Rabahn, taking five hundred Ankhar and Cave Lizard riders, rode north and west towards the Galeshi deserts. Kzar Nabar, skirting around to the eastern edge of the Citadel of Luxor, fanned out his war-horde across a five-mile stretch to catch any and all Atlantean scouts and spies in a massive net of swords and riders.

In Prieska, many of the more unfavored tribes – those not deemed worthy to fight at Luxor by Nabar, or not invited to join in Rabahn’s private Horde – began the process of intensive raiding throughout the countryside. Moving quickly, this “third army” began collecting all of the food, supplies, gold, jewels, weapons, armor and Technomantic devices they could find within the borders of the barbarian country.

Khamsin and Atlantis – Late Fall, Day 26

As the Orcs will take some time to get to their destinations, I spent the day scrying in two places – first within the besieged Rebel capitol of Khamsin, and then in Emperor Nujarek’s Imperial Throneroom.

The combined Knights Immortal and Atlantean armies have pursued their war plans to a devastating effect. While the Rebel city of Khamsin still stands, virtually all of the rest of countryside is under control of the invaders. While the city of Wolfsgate overlooking the River Khamita still holds its own, the troops within the city are few enough to act as little more than a hindrance against the might of the Atlantean invasion. While I expect the walls of Khamsin to fall in time, the real battle will be for Castle Khamita itself, which should be an extremely tough nut to crack.

In Atlantis, word of the Orcs marching on Rokos has already been received by a mage-writ message. For the history of the city of Rokos, whenever an Orc horde has reached within range to strike, the citizens have always fled to the safety of the Citadel of Luxor. Now, with the Orcs fanned out between Luxor and Rokos, many of the citizens of Rokos are fleeing to Atlantis, cramming the roads with carts and wagons filled with people seeking shelter from the coming war.

Shortly before midnight, Emperor Nujarek and Prophet-Magus Osiras publicly exchanged heated words during an Imperial gala, bringing on a storm of controversy amidst both the Imperial Courts and the chambers of the Atlantis Guild. While I was not close enough to overhear the brief dispute, it is clear that their squabble has already had an effect on the nobles of Atlantis.

The Raider Tide – Late Fall, Day 27

As Kzar Nabar’s Orc horde marches within view of the city of Rokos, their victory seems certain. While the Atlantean military within Rokos seems to be exceptionally well-trained, and more units and golems were being flown into the city every day by a massive Atlantean sky-castle, the sight of the screaming Orc Horde set the remaining inhabitants of the city into a panic. Kzar Nabar, confident in his victory, ordered the Orc Khans to set up camp and to prepare for the weeks of battle to come.

To my point of view, so well versed in the ways of military tactics, the Orcs are guaranteed to take Rokos, and will then be able to turn their wrath upon the capitol city of Atlantis itself. While the leaders of Rokos already put out the call for the members of the

Order of the Griffin & Cross, and the warriors of the Order of the Sable Obelisk to return to the city they had sworn to defend, a few hundred extra warriors and Heroes will not be enough to slow Nabar's undefeatable horde.

Moving my scrying eye back to Emperor Nujarek's throne room, I caught the entire length of an intriguing conversation. Finishing their argument from the previous evening, in the name of Tezla, Prophet-Magus Osiras ordered – against the wishes of Emperor Nujarek – that the Atlantean armies attacking Khamsin to immediately withdraw. The Emperor is furious, but must obey Tezla's commands. This act will certainly leave their High Elven allies high and dry in Khamsin, and may doom the campaign against the Rebels!

Rebel Vengeance – Late Fall, Day 28

With the Atlanteans suddenly pulling out of the battle in Khamsin, double-timing back to the capitol city of Atlantis as fast as they can march, the Knights Immortal are faced with a situation unlike any they've been before. Betrayed by their allies at the hour of triumph, the Knights Immortal suddenly found themselves outnumbered more than ten to one by the vengeful Rebels. Having already ordered the destruction of every Rebel city in town for fifty miles, and having singled out most of the older city buildings with fire attacks out of pure spite, the Knights Immortal find themselves with a peculiar choice: withdraw to save their lives at the cost of their honor, or stand and fight and be destroyed to the last warrior.

In time, the High Elves made their choice, and I watched all night with fascination as the Knights Immortal armies at Khamsin prepared to fight and die with honor.

Rise of the Phoenix – Late Fall, Day 29

The Knights Immortal armies lay broken and smashed. While it cost the lives of thousands of Rebel and Elemental warriors to finish the battle, the Rivvenheim warriors have been defeated and cut down to the last warrior. From my vantage, the Knights Immortal's honor is intact; they fought with all their might against insurmountable odds, and died without fear in an alien land. For the Rebels, a new era has dawned on their cause. While they are still facing incredible opposition by the Atlanteans, they have proved that nothing will keep them from the path of freedom.

Now, the Rebels are working together to drive out any Atlantean stragglers, and establishing a firm border around the edges of their Khamsin homeland. This third assault against Khamsin may well be the Empire's last, as with this great defeat the era of the Rebellion is past – and the Black Powder Revolution arises from the ashes like a fiery phoenix.

Observing the Black Powder Revolutionaries over the last few days has allowed me to compile notes of their leadership, philosophies and strategies. These have been compiled into a new scroll with the other factions.

Rabahn's Revenge – Late Fall, Day 30

While finding Kzar Rabahn's horde at first was difficult, as the shifting sea of sand that covers the Galeshi homelands is difficult to navigate, the plumes of black smoke rising over a distant horizon soon gave me a good idea of where to look. Upon moving my magical sight to the location of the fires, I found that the Orcs had indeed found the seven Ringed Cities of the Galeshi, and had already put a number of them to the torch.

While Rabahn's Orcs made quick work of the unprepared Galeshi – who had foolishly believed that their deal with Nabar would protect them for years to come - by nightfall, the Galeshi were fleeing in all directions, leaving behind their homes and their riches. Their valiant warriors were cut down by the score, all in the hope of creating a defensive screen to prevent their families from being slaughtered by Rabahn's vengeful Orc Raiders.