

## **Anatomy of an Apocalypse: Toril's Divided Future**

The events of 1385 DR reverberated across the planes that touched the world of Toril. It has been noted that the old world ended that year and the new world began. This was more true than some sages realize, due to the events that happened beyond the sight of most sages. Even as the Spellplague and the events leading up to it unfolded, eyes looked across time to see what had led to this event, and how to stop it.

### **The Codex Apocrypha: The Book of Malyk**

Since the Time of Troubles various powers have sought out the Codex Apocrypha, a tome written by the dead god of wild magic, Malyk. Rumors abound regarding the secrets within, and the churches of both Talos and Velsharoon tried for years to locate the tome. In the end, neither church was successful, but rather a group of apprentices from an organization known as the Forbidden Enclave and their adventurer allies found the book. Eventually this book is taken to the Demiplane of the Enclave, the plane created by the founders of the organization.

### **The Forbidden Enclave**

The Forbidden Enclave was founded by various powerful mages whose studies placed them outside of the acceptable boundaries of the societies they hailed from. Though they studied a wide variety of magics, many were not forbidden, but most of the magics within the Enclave have at one time or another been considered dangerous or undesirable, or at least unseemly for a mage to pursue.

Baen Fallenden, the founder of the Enclave, had for years worried about the more nefarious elements that had taken hold of more and more of the Enclave, practicing magic that was not simply dangerous or undesirable, but truly depraved and evil. Thus Baen was thrilled when his apprentices returned with the Codex Apocrypha. His hope was that the magnitude of the discovery, and the potential sorceries within, could promote Wild Magic to the most favored form of magic within the Enclave.

Unfortunately, but this point in time, Baen's Enclave was well and truly infested with spies and operatives from various other power groups, not the least of which was the Master of the Shadow Weave, the drow Saaktaanith Ur'kleddivar, a follower of Shar. For years Saaktaanith had been planning the complete control of the Enclave, and after the portents sent to him by Shar, Saaktaanith believed the time was now.

### **The Alliance of Shadows and Madness**

Shar had, for years, been trying to subvert other gods to her control. Cyric had been a prime target for her since his ascension to godhood. Shar could see the pain and loss in the remnants of the human Cyric was, and she slowly, over the course of years, tried to win him to her cause.

In 1373 DR Shar received the prayers of her servant Saaktaanith, and learned of the Book of Malyk in the Demiplane of the Enclave. Shar went to Cyric and proposed an alliance to destroy Mystra and split her power. Shar would gain sole command over the shadowy powers she could now grant through the Shadow Weave, and she would grant Wild Magic to Cyric as her ally. Picturing both the destruction of

Mystra and another portfolio with which to influence the inhabitants of Toril, Cyric began to work with the Lady of Loss.

In 1374 DR, Saaktaanith moved against the other members of the Enclave and he and his apprentices seized the demiplane, its artifacts and magic items, and its vast library of spells from various traditions across Toril. He also gained the Codex Apocrypha, and passed it to agents of his goddess, who then conveyed the book to Cyric.

### **The Power of Madness**

Cyric read through the Codex, and realized that Malyk was a deity interested in drawing power from across the multiverse. He was not content to simply use the malleable nature of the Outer Planes to utilize his magic, nor to draw upon Toril's Weave. He wanted to find other ways to create true Wild Magic, beyond what had been conceived before.

Malyk had gazed into another universe, one of madness, composed of the stuff of nightmares and that which cannot be in this universe. The names given to this place over the years varied, from the Place of Madness, to the Other Worlds, but the one most often whispered was the name of the Far Realm.

While mortal spellcasters could tap into the Far Realm, so too could a god use the Far Realm to augment his powers. This particularly intrigued Cyric, as powers augmented by the Far Realm would be difficult for Ao and Cyric's fellow gods to notice. Cyric believed that Shar had given him a gift far more useful than she could ever imagine.

Eventually Cyric came up with a plan to present to Shar, and shared just enough with the Lady of Loss to interest her. Eventually Shar agreed to his plot, and the two continued to work together, first in unravelling the Weave on Toril, and then in planting seeds of destruction in the planes themselves.

Finally, the Codex allowed Cyric to do one more thing that he had not previously been able to do. Cyric pierced the view of illusion that Leira wove around her secret library, and now he had access to all of the tomes that the goddess of illusion and lies had once called her own.

### **Planting the Seeds**

With Shar helping to shield him, Cyric planted seeds of Place of Madness throughout the Weave, so as to very slowly rot through Toril's magic and to begin to seep into Mystra herself. While the Weave did not extend into the Outer Planes, it was a part of Mystra, and if Mystra herself could be corrupted, even subtly, this corruption could seep into her domain as well.

Cyric also used the knowledge he gained from Leira's library, and the power of Malyk's Codex, to create a mask. This mask would allow him to appear to be anyone, even a god, and to speak words nearly impossible to find false.

### **Opportunity**

Abbathor had, for years, hoped to find some way to bend the hearts of the dwarves to him, to wrest patronage of the Shield Dwarves from Dumathoin, and to supplant his father Moradin in Dwarfhome.

With Moradin's agents looking in on him, Abbathor had become increasingly paranoid and worried about being permanently exiled from Dwarfhome. He hatched many plots, but feared to enact them for Moradin's eyes upon him.

Then chaos seemed to erupt across the plans, and Moradin's spies, easy though they were to spot, no longer were watching. Abbathor quickly set into motion a plan that he had been planning for centuries. The first part of this plan involved his nominal ally, the dragon god Task. Abbathor gambled the worship of his Wyrms Cult followers for the chance to use the Heart of Avarice, a gem mined in the lower planes that could elicit feelings of greed in any that set eyes upon it.

Task took the bet, and gave Abbathor the gem, but warned him not to look upon it with his own eyes, for his own greedy soul could not resist the gem. Abbathor longed to gaze upon the gem, but heeded Task's warning, and did not gaze upon it. He then set about to call together the gods exiled to Hammergrim, Laudaguer, Deep Duerra, and even the mad gods Diirinka and Diinkarazan. To these he showed the Heart of Avarice, and unveiled his plan.

Abbathor told Laudaguer that he tired of Moradin's rulership, and that he wished to rule over Morndinsammin, and would aid the gods of Hammergrim if they went to war with Moradin. Abbathor would stay near Moradin, and when the time was right, turn on the All-Father, allowing the forces of Hammergrim to destroy the rest of the dwarven gods if they did not submit.

Laudaguer, while fascinated with the Heart of Avarice, did not know why he should risk his realm on this plan, but Duerra was intrigued. Abbathor told them that they need only show Moradin the gem, and even though he was a good and noble deity, at his heart he was a dwarf, and would be drawn to the gem, and would follow the forces of Hammergrim even into their own domains. And if he did not, the gods of Hammergrim still had the Heart of Avarice as a gift from Abbathor.

The evil dwarven gods agreed, and Laudaguer and Duerra, as members of the Morndinsammin, claimed the right to appear in Moradin's court to address him. Although exiled, Moradin recognized their rights to appear before the All-Father's throne, and they were admitted. There, Laudaguer and Duerra accused Moradin of ignoring his own children, the dwarves of Clan Duergar, and of negligence. They challenged his right to rule over the dwarves at all, and finally, they showed him the Heart of Avarice and vowed that if he could take the gem from them, they would turn over stewardship of the duergar to Moradin and his fellows.

Moradin's mind was clouded by the gem, and he accepted the challenge, but being honorable, he allowed Duerra and Laudaguer to retreat to Hammergrim as per the agreement. Moradin rallied the dwarven gods to war, and invaded Hammergrim, though his forces were surprised by the attacks of the derro gods. Several of the second generation dwarven gods perished in the surprise attack, and then Laudaguer and Duerra took the field. Laudaguer and Duerra did indeed see Abbathor at Moradin's side, and expected him to betray the All-Father, but instead, he slid a dagger between the ribs of the Grey Protector, and he buried his weapon in Duerra's back as well.

The pair, surprised by Abbathor's betrayal, had no recourse but to press on. Wounded and poisoned by divine dragon bile purchased from Task, Laudaguer and Duerra sought Abbathor, but he quickly disappeared after his assault, and Moradin and Claggedin, enraged over the deaths of the younger dwarven gods, demanded blood, and Moradin slew Laudaguer while Claggedin dispatched the legendary duergar War Queen.

Abbathor claimed the right to steward the duergar in this new era, and proclaimed the Heart of Avarice an evil thing, and warned Moradin about its influence. He cautioned that Moradin should leave it in Hammergrim and destroy the entire plane, and he and the other dwarven gods set about to do just that. Abbathor returned to Task, having won his bet, but promised to ally his Wyrms Cultists with Task's bid to subvert the Cult of the Dragon and Tiamat's cult as well. Task then plucked the Heart of Avarice from amidst the dead bodies of the evil dwarven gods floating in the Astral.

### **The Final Strokes**

Cyric appeared to Siamorphe as Tyr, and insulted her. He then appeared to Tyr as Siamorphe, and again, worked mischief between them. Eventually he created a rift between Tyr and Siamorphe, and set Tyr up to wed Tymora at Sune's suggestion, only to have Helm interpose himself.

In the end, Tyr had killed Helm, and Ilmater and Siamorphe had left the House of the Triad. Cyric was greatly amused, and believed this was a successful test of his new toy. He then wore it to speak with Shar herself to present his plan to act against Mystra.

Cyric told Shar that if she would cloak him, he could enter Dweomerheart and slay Mystra, since he had corrupted her connection to the Weave. He then promised her that she could expand the Shadow Weave, turn it inside out, and take control of the Weave itself. In truth, Cyric's plan would destroy the Weave and replace it with a Weave of Madness, created from the strands of the Far Realm itself.

Finally, Cyric realized that Ao could at any time intervene, and Cyric planned on stopping this. He would go to the far reaches of Toril's Sea of Night and open a huge rift into the Far Realm, the likes of which had never been seen. Such a tear would take Ao's attention away from managing the planes connected to Toril long enough for Cyric's plan to come to fruition.

Eventually, while Ao was distracted by the ensuing degradation of reality because of the rift he had opened, and while chaos reigned among the gods, Cyric finally told Shar he was ready for his infiltration of Dweomerheart, and Shar cloaked Cyric in shadows and darkness that even the eyes of the gods would have difficulty piercing. Cyric infiltrated Mystra's sanctum, killed Savras, and then proceeded to slay the weakened Goddess of Magic. Mystra did not notice the degradation of her power, the corruption that had spread through her from the Weave and into Dweomerheart. She could do little to defend herself.

But Cyric's masterstroke was yet to come. Mystra had died, and the weave had been corrupted with the power of the Far Realm. Shar was about to take the Weave and make it her own, but then she realized that it was corrupted, to the point to which it might consume her if she were to try to connect herself to it. She cursed Cyric, realizing what had happened.

At this moment, however, Ao took the most drastic measure he could to repair the reality of the Realms. Ao tore the Weave free of Toril itself, hurled it into the rift into the Far Realm, and watched as the rift imploded from the Weave being thrown through it. Ao then set about rebuilding the damage caused by the Far Realm's encroachment into reality.

Shar whispered to Tyr and Sune what had happened with Cyric, and the gods that had survived this conflagration bound Cyric and imprisoned Cyric in the Supreme Throne, then cut off all portals and connections to the plane, for 1000 years.

The Far Realm rift had caused such intrinsic damage to Toril that Ao had to rest after he had stabilized reality, and the resulting backlash from Ao's stripping of the Weave from Toril created the backlash known as the Spellplague.

### **Eyes Across Time**

Within Arvandor, Labelas Enoreth saw what had happened, and immediately went to Corellon, pleading with him to allow him to try to do something. Though she had not used it in some time, Mystra was the only other deity with an interest in the concept of Time, so Labelas thought that he might use this sphere of influence to repair what had happened.

Corellon informed Labelas that he could not allow him to interfere. Too much godly intervention had resulted in the catastrophe that had just happened, and as Corellon told Labelas this, they both watched as the domains of lesser gods were destroyed in the waves of power emanating from the destruction of Dweomerheart.

Labelas asked if a mortal's intervention could be tolerated. He suggested that one of his servants, an elf that had been called home to Arvandor a decade ago, knew the secrets of Chronomancy, nearly a lost branch of the Art. He could set her to this task, and if she succeeded, then the gods would not have caused yet more changes to reality.

Corellon was skeptical, but he also pointed out to Labelas that Mystra had altered magic so as to keep any change to time wrought by magic from occurring. Either the timeline would conspire to happen the way it was intended with minor alterations, or an alternate timeline would be created that would eventually collapse back into the original timeline.

Labelas knew that this would be difficult, but he also said that if his servant, an elf, not a god, came up with a solution, that this should be far less devastating than any divine purpose. Corellon, unsure that any good would come of the situation, allowed Labelas to send his servant back in time, before the Weave was destroyed, to where her Chronomancy would still work.

### **The Chronomancer and Her Mission**

Kaeldarra Sethdreniil was a moon elf wizard who lived in Myth Drannor. She also managed to retrieve some texts of Chronomancy after being attacked by a cabal of wizards that had happened upon the texts of the Chronomancer of Netheril. When Myth Drannor was destroyed, Kaeldarra dove into her studies and spent years trying to alter history to save Myth Drannor. Finally, in 1373 DR she was called home to Arvandor upon receiving a vision of Myth Drannor restored by Labelas.

Kaeldarra was a member of the Forbidden Enclave during her studies, and Labelas sent her back to Toril at the exact moment that she was called home to Arvandor. She did not remember having been to Arvandor, but she did know that she now had a new mission, as she had a vision of the future, the Spellplague, and what had happened.

Kaeldarra found the Enclave destroyed, and did her best to gather the surviving members of it, including the illithid Vhleastitis, Keiredis, a wizard specializing in altering fate, and Kaeldarra's apprentice, a gold elf wizard schooled in Chronomancy and the rudiments of High Magic, the gold elf

Saerlaestis Teirkannaleir.

From the illithid Vhleastistis Kaeldarra learned that time had already been altered. The illithid knew of the far future that the illithids came from originally, and in that future the illithid empire was split by a schism between the illithids by followers of an entity from the Far Realm known as Thoon.

Vhleastsistis reported to Kaeldarra that his contacts mentioned that the Thoon flayers have already begun their crusade, thousands of years early, which can only mean that some rift has opened to the Far Realm to allow influence from the Thoon that divided the illithid empire.

### **Allies and Information**

Kaeldarra and her allies spent the next year trying to find any information that they could about impending doom and alterations of the nature of the universe. Eventually they found information that led them to Laeral Silverhand Arunsun, and Laeral relates to them what she knows of Khelben's visions of the future. She also lets Kaeldarra know that Khelben believed that Halaster Blackcloak also knew something of this impending disaster.

Unfortunately, Kaeldarra and her allies failed to find Halaster before his demise, but they did find some of his notes, and compiled with the information found in Khelben's visions, they are led to believe that there is a race of beings that might be able to aid them in their quest to alter the timeline. The enigmatic creatures known as spellweavers were known by the ancient Imaskari as being able to shatter time and space, and were capable of magic greater even than elven High Magic, though they had not performed such magic within the course of recorded history.

### **The Spellweaver's Resistance**

Kaeldarra and her allies managed to find a spellweaver enclave, but the creatures there were unwilling to aid them. From the spellweavers they learned that all realities were once one, and that the gods began to divide reality into domains, and from that point reality became weaker and weaker with each division. After much prodding, spellweaves even admit that the Prime Material Plane was once one plane, but a massive mistake by the spellweavers caused a sundering on a massive scale.

While some of Kaeldarra's agents wish to take the secrets from the spellweavers, she does not give in, but Vhleastistis manages to glean some information from the minds of the spellweavers to follow up on. The illithid finds out that although the spellweaves do not trust the gods, one of their number sought godhood for himself, and that god was Jergal, the former God of the Dead.

In an effort to get Jergal's attention, Kaeldarra's allies travel to Godswalk Keep in the Barony of Great Oak. The god's avatar appears there at certain times of year, and when Kaeldarra and her allies arrive, they encounter the Dancing Lady Sharess, and barely survive an encounter with the raging avatar of Garagos the Reaver. Eventually they find the wandering avatar of the Scribe of the Dead, and the avatar ignores them until they mention the Spellplague and the destruction of the Weave, and their encounter with the spellweaves.

Jergal tells the cabal of spellcasters that reality is moving towards oblivion, but that oblivion should advance in an orderly, peaceful fashion. He also says that his old species is deluded in thinking that reality can be repaired, and that the fading away of reality is a natural thing. Reality can either fade away slowly, in an orderly fashion, or it can rupture in gouts of chaos and pain. He prefers slow, orderly oblivion. Jergal tells the spellcasters of a spellweaver tablet encoded with node hieroglyphs

that might be helpful. He also warns them that eventually Cyric will find out that they are working against him. He tells them that there may be one that is a living Weave Tap, a being that singularly can use both the Weave and the Shadow Weave, and he can help to shield their efforts.

Jergal also suggests that ancient Netheril might still have some secrets to lend the future, but also mentions that Netheril was more than mere shadows.

After leaving Godswalk Keep, the spellcasters are set upon by a mass of Cyricists, but manage to survive. Eventually they track down this “living Weave Tap,” the elven sorcerer Galaeron Nihmedu. He is unaware that he can still use Weave magic, but after surviving another attack from Cyricists, Galaeron is convinced of his new ability.

### **Splitting Time**

Cloaking all of them in alternating spells of the Weave and Shadow Weave, Galaeron conceals the cabal from Cyric's gaze as they hunt down the spellweaver hieroglyphs and attempt to decipher them. It takes them years of practice to realize that the hieroglyphs can be used to outline a High Magic ritual, and Galaeron and Saerlaestis begin to detail this ritual.

The cabal cannot muster the amount of power to actually perform this ritual, and they do not have the time to train more apprentices, nor do they trust that they can recruit others of established power to help them either. Keiredis, being of Netherese descent due to his Halruaan origin, has a dream of ancient Netheril where he contacts Rhauligath the Ageless, Scribe of Larloch. Rauligath invites the cabal to the Warlock's Crypt.

Larloch greets them, but they are wary of that most famous of liches. He reveals that he knows most of what they have tried to hide, as he was watching members of the Forbidden Enclave for some time. Larloch volunteers to loan them several of his lich servants to aid in the High Magic ritual, so long as he is allowed access to all of the magics used in the ritual.

Kaeldarra is hesitant, but Vhleastistis reminds her of the future she saw, and she agrees, and provides Larloch with the research they have done. He makes some suggestions, and then assigns some of his liches to study with the cabal at their hidden headquarters.

### **The Time of Troubles—Again**

Kaeldarra transports the entire cabal, including Larloch's liches, back in time to the hours before the gods fell to Toril. Keiredis works a ritual with the help of a few others to stabilize magic in the region in preparation of the coming Wild Magic. The cabal discuss the ramifications of the ritual.

At the end of the ritual, Kaeldarra will be flung back to the “fulcrum point,” the moment in 1373 DR when she was taken to Arvandor and returned. Galaeron will act as the fulcrum of the ritual, alternating the power sources between the Weave and the Shadow Weave, and the living spellcasters and the liches. Everyone in the ritual, except for Kaeldarra, will be consumed.

Saddened by the reality of the situation, Kaeldarra and her cabal begin the ritual as the gods begin to fall from the sky like shooting stars. One by one they are consumed by the magic of the ritual, and Kaeldarra is charged with the power to actually create a stable alternate timeline, one that will split from the main timeline and not destabilize and collapse back into the parent reality.

Kaeldarra is flung back into the future, carrying many hopes and dreams with her.

### **The Future Arrives**

Kaeldarra has one chance to change time, to find a way to warn the gods of what will happen, and to turn them from their course. She ponders many elaborate plans, but in the end, she takes the simplest course. Kaeldarra meets with her friend, Meriden Greystag, a priest of Helm, and asks him to pray to his god, and warn him of what is to come. She touches his mind, and shows him the future, and then she returns to Arvador.

Meriden prays to Helm, and Helm sees the plans of Cyric. Helm points out to Mystra the corruption in the Weave before it spreads too far, and he warns Tyr and Siamorphe of Cyric's coming deception. All of the gods are forewarned, though they cannot tell exactly where and when Cyric will strike.

Cyric fails to sow dissension between Tyr and his followers, and in turn, Tyr speaks with his friend and ally Moradin, warning him of the deception of Abbathor. Moradin is so enraged with Abbathor's deception that he strikes Abbathor's realm of Glitterhell with his hammer, breaking it off of Dwarfhome and driving it into Hammergrim, and Moradin names Abbathor an exile from the Morndinsammin.

Cyric attempts to follow through on his plan to assassinate Mystra, but he is undone because she is forewarned. Unknown to any of the gods or mortals dabbling in time though, Cyric hates Mystra so badly that he created a second plan. Using the information in Leira's hidden library, Cyric researched Mystra's truename based on what he knew of her in her mortal life. Mystra is nearly helpless before him, but she expels the last of her mortal being, fully embracing all of what the previous Mystra left her, calling back much of her connection to her old self from her Chosen. Mystra is changed, but she is no longer Midnight of Deepingdale, and Cyric's truenaming fails.

### **The Final Change**

Mystra channels all of the Far Realm corruption into the Supreme Throne, then cuts the plane off from the rest of the planes. Only Cyric can travel to and from the plane, but if he does so, he risks being drawn into the Far Realm and consumed by its alien energies, since he has opened himself up to them.

Cyric is still a greater deity, for now, due to his worshipers, but he must constantly shunt corrupted power back to the Supreme Throne, and thus he is effectively no more powerful than a demigod. He constantly wanders Toril, an exile from the planes and unable to go to his home beyond.

### **The State of The Multiverse**

After this ordeal, there now stands two Torils. One has been through the trials of the Spellplague, and one has narrowly escaped this fate. If the High Magic ritual holds, there truly are now two Torils, one born of the strife and pain of the other, both truly separate from one another, developing along their own destinies.

Only time will tell if the ritual holds though, and if Kaeldarra and Labelas truly have given at least one Toril a brighter future.