

Light Never Dies

by
T. James Belich

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Light Never Dies was first performed as a play reading on April 5th, 1997, in the Bethel College Black Box Theatre with the following cast:

NARRATOR	Katherine Juul
THE WEIRD SISTERS	Tessa Raisanen, Kim Treague, and Beth Eiserloh
QUEEN CALINA	Dayna Anderson
RAYASEI WHITE	Randy "Caz" Miller
TORAL WHITE	Oliver Grudem
VOLAKAR CRIMSON	Aaron Rendahl
KING WELSCIAN	Patrick Pelham
BEURAKI SKY	Dave Olson
ALTERRAN SEA CAPTAIN	Doug Durnick
TROVALI GRAY	Patrick Weber
NIRIMAY GREEN	Joy McClain
BA'RAK SORCERER	Laura McDonnell
DUKE CROLLARO	Josh Holm
MIRIKAY SHADOW	Carrie Oleson
BA'RAK EMPEROR	Nadine Grant
AMBASSADOR OF TRIZERA	Patrick Weber
LADY OHAIRNA	Joy McClain
ANKARTI WHITE	Patrick Weber
FIRST MATE	Doug Durnick
NUMORI WHITE	Joy McClain
CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD	Joy McClain
WATCHER OF THE LIGHT	Doug Durnick
BRAWYN WHITE	Patrick Weber
A WHITE WIZARD	Doug Durnick

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE WEIRD SISTERS (3) (F)

Known also as the Sisters Three or the Hands of Fate. They are Watchers of the mortal play and of the Gray.

QUEEN CALINA (F)

The Queen of Alterra during the War with the Ba'arak.

RAYASEI WHITE (M)

A White Wizard of Alterra who unlocks the secrets of time in Toral's Book. Rayasei is given the task of stopping the Second Darkness.

TORAL WHITE (M)

The greatest of all White Wizards who is cast into shadow by the First Darkness. It is he who crafted the **Tor'syl'wyv** (often referred to as the Book), the greatest vessel of the White Magic. In his Book, Toral set down the secrets of time travel along with many other spells of great Magic.

VOLAKAR CRIMSON (M)

Close friend and Apprentice to Rayasei.

KING WELSCIAN (M)

The King of Alterra during the War with the Ba'arak.

BEURAKI SKY (M)

A White Magician and close advisor to Welscian and Calina.

ALTERRAN SEA CAPTAIN

Captain of the first vessel to encounter the Ba'arak.

TROVALI GRAY (M)

The White Magician on board the first vessel to encounter the Ba'arak.

NIRIMAY GREEN (F)

Former Apprentice to Trovali, also on board the first vessel to encounter the Ba'arak.

BA'RAK SORCERER

A Sorcerer and advisor to the Ba'arak Emperor.

DUKE CROLLARO (M)

An Alterran Duke who betrays Alterra to the Ba'arak.

MIRIKAY SHADOW (F)

A Dark Sorceress who allies herself with Crollaro, and later the Ba'arak.

BA'RAK EMPEROR

Leader of the Ba'arak people.

AMBASSADOR OF TRIZERA

LADY OHAIRNA (F)

The High Seaman of Alterra who leads the Alterran fleet against the Ba'arak.

ANKARTI WHITE (M)

The White Wizard on board the Alterran flagship during the sea battle with the Ba'arak.

FIRST MATE

NUMORI WHITE (F)

A White Wizard on the battlefield with Welscian.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

WATCHER OF THE LIGHT (M)

Of the Gray.

BRAWYN WHITE (M)

A White Wizard of Trizera during the time of the Trizeran Civil War.

A WHITE WIZARD (M)

A Wizard who resembles Rayasei.

Total: 25 (11 Male, 8 Female, 6 Male or Female)

NOTE: Many of the smaller characters appear only briefly and could easily be double or triple cast.

EXAMPLE: ACTOR 1 (M)

SEA CAPTAIN, THE WATCHER, WHITE WIZARD

ACTOR 2 (F)

NIRIMAY, OHAIRNA, NUMORI

ACTOR 3 (M)

TROVALI, ANKARTI, BRAWYN

ACTOR 4 (M/F)

AMBASSADOR, FIRST MATE, CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

This would reduce the cast to 17: 8 Male, 6 Female, 3 Male or Female

ACT I - BEGINNINGS

(The lights fade up to reveal the presence of the WEIRD SISTERS.)

FIRST SISTER: Now, Sisters, does it begin

SECOND SISTER: Light or Darkness, which shall win?

THIRD SISTER: In the future do both wait

FIRST SISTER: Mirrored reflections of their fate *(RAYASEI is revealed in a pool of light, leaning on his staff, his eyes closed. He wears white robes and has a long white beard.)*

SECOND SISTER: In the center stands the One

THIRD SISTER: Now the circle has begun *(The future CALINA enters. She carries the Book of Toral, the **Tor'syl'wyy**¹, which is open. She stands in RAYASEI's shadow.)*

CALINA: In the ruins of the present I see the hope of the past, and the shadow of the one in whom the future lies.

FIRST SISTER: Only one can change this ending

SECOND SISTER: Only one with understanding

CALINA: *(To RAYASEI)* You had the power to save us, Rayasei, but you would not save yourself. If you will not, then I will. I know what I must do.

THIRD SISTER: All must do as they must do

FIRST SISTER: His choice more fateful than you knew

RAYASEI: *(In despair)* The Enemy comes to destroy all I have worked for, all my efforts have been for naught. Whatever choice was granted me has surely come and gone. My life's travels have yielded nothing in the end. *(RAYASEI leans heavily on his Wizard's staff, his eyes closed.)*

CALINA: Despair not, Rayasei White

SECOND SISTER: In the end, wrong shall come to right

RAYASEI: Who calls to me?

CALINA: I do, Lady Calina of Alterra.

THIRD SISTER: Who bears a gift from future's past *(CALINA holds the Book out to RAYASEI, but he does not yet take it.)*

¹Great'White'Magic

CALINA: The Book of Toral. Take it, and renew your strength to fight our Enemy.

FIRST SISTER: Who pays the price should Alterra last?

CALINA: At great cost has your second charge been fulfilled. Take the Book, it is yours.

SECOND SISTER: Shall you claim a tool of Fate?

THIRD SISTER: Make your choice

FIRST SISTER: But first to wait

SECOND SISTER: For yet another matter here

THIRD SISTER: Which shall cost the world dear *(TORAL enters and watches RAYASEI and CALINA, who now are frozen. TORAL also wears white robes and has a white beard.)*

TORAL: Does he know what burden you have laid upon him?

FIRST SISTER: All he needs he has been told

TORAL: But he does not understand.

SECOND SISTER: To question us, you are bold

TORAL: He will fail.

THIRD SISTER: So will he once, but not at all

FIRST SISTER: For he is not the one to fall *(RAYASEI takes the Book from CALINA.)*

RAYASEI: I accept the gift you bring me. Now the scales are balanced, Book against Book, White against White. The Enemy uses the Book to destroy Alterra, now shall I turn it back against them.

CALINA: Do so. *(CALINA exits. A great storm, the Darkness, begins to grow.)*

TORAL: *(Sadly)* Foolish Rayasei, you do not see the Darkness that comes upon you.

RAYASEI: *(Not speaking directly to TORAL)* Do not speak so to me, Toral. With the power of your own Book shall I rid Alterra of those who defile it.

TORAL: The Darkness comes, Rayasei, it comes at your own bidding. Beware.

RAYASEI: If we must combat each other, Toral, then so be it. Let your Book be your death! *(The Darkness grows and the lights on RAYASEI abruptly go out.)*

TORAL: (*Angry*) Why did you send him to battle the Darkness? Why was I not awakened to do so?

SECOND SISTER: Battle Darkness so you will

THIRD SISTER: Be it for your good or ill

TORAL: My patience with your riddles grows short, Sisters Three, when shall this battle be? Darkness has already come.

FIRST SISTER: Darkness comes not once but twice

TORAL: Then bring me to its first occurrence. Perhaps I shall also prevent its second and alter your error. Rayasei was a foolish choice, he still had much to learn.

SECOND SISTER: Beware, or pride shall pay the price

THIRD SISTER: Do no more than play your part

FIRST SISTER: Or evil shall yet mar your heart (*TORAL lies down on a slab of stone and closes his eyes.*)

TORAL: I shall do what I need to do. I am ready.

SECOND SISTER: Prepared or no

THIRD SISTER: Not yours to tell

FIRST SISTER: On dark thoughts your mind does dwell

WEIRD SISTERS: Back a hundred years ago
The seeds of Darkness shall they sow
In Trizera's shattered land
Broken by Alterra's hand
In this day Toral shall wake
His part in Fate 'tis time to take
To stand against the growing night
First to be the herald of light
Failure in Darkness he shall meet
And yet there will be no repeat
Enlightened now by time and space
The One shall rise to take his place

SECOND SISTER: Now, Toral

THIRD SISTER: Awake

FIRST SISTER: And rise

SECOND SISTER: And let not Darkness blind your eyes (TORAL rises.)

TORAL: I awake, Sisters Three, and await my part. To what end shall my Magic work?

THIRD SISTER: Magic here does dig a grave

FIRST SISTER: Wisdom yet alone can save (*The Darkness has again begun to grow.*)

TORAL: A great Darkness is upon the land, shall I not use my powers to combat it?

SECOND SISTER: Use your powers but to teach

THIRD SISTER: Else fall within the Dark's cold reach (TORAL extends a hand towards the Darkness.)

TORAL: **Wry'wv'vli'thi**² (*To the SISTERS*) There is no other here with the power to fight this Darkness. I must, whether meant to or no.

FIRST SISTER: Do you dare to challenge Fate?

SECOND SISTER: Do and Dark shall know your hate

TORAL: So it shall. Trizera has twisted the White Arts and so brought chaos down upon their heads. But I shall see that it does not destroy them, let it end here! (*To the Darkness*) **Rho'nua!**
Ser'arl'lyi'nli'pha, syl'lyi'rho³... (*TORAL cuts off with a cry as the Darkness overwhelms him. He collapses onto the stone slab.*)

THIRD SISTER: Fate speaks not without a plan

FIRST SISTER: All should listen

SECOND SISTER: If they can

WEIRD SISTERS: Once White Wizard now brought to Dark
Heed us well

THIRD SISTER: Listen!

FIRST SISTER: Hark!

WEIRD SISTERS: Though you descend into night
Your final moment serves the Light

²"Good'magic'grow'life!"

³"Dark'listen! Go'far'forever'speak'me, white'forever'dark..."

SECOND SISTER: For in the end Toral shall be

THIRD SISTER: Key to other's victory

FIRST SISTER: Other players shall arrive

SECOND SISTER: Here to find Toral alive

THIRD SISTER: Light and Dark take willing bait

FIRST SISTER: To fulfill this story's Fate *(The lights fade up onto RAYASEI's chambers where RAYASEI studies the **Tor'syl'wyv**, the ancient magic Book of Toral, which contains the world's most powerful magic. The Book is therefore closely guarded by the White Magicians. RAYASEI is assisted by his apprentice, VOLAKAR CRIMSON, who wears robes of crimson red. RAYASEI reads from the **Tor'syl'wyv**.)*

RAYASEI: "Within these pages lies the passage through time and the corridor into all ages, past and future. I, Toral, seal these spells with mine own hand to prevent their wrongful use, as my time for sleep draws near. These spells shall wait until the day of need when he who shall wield them wisely shall reopen them. Yet let the wielder beware, for the mastery of time brings both great Light and great Darkness. Some chapters are best left unread." *(To VOLAKAR) My staff, Volakar. (VOLAKAR hands RAYASEI his staff.)*

VOLAKAR: You mean to break the seal, Master Rayasei?

RAYASEI: I mean to try, no more. For a thousand years the greatest secrets of Toral have remained locked. Their hour grows nigh. *(Never ask a Wizard how he knows such things, he simply does. Don't ask the playwright either, for he will simply reply "Do not meddle in the affairs of Wizards, for they are subtle and quick to anger" and then tell you to go read Tolkien.)* I, Rayasei White, of the Order of White Magicians, command this seal to open so that I may learn its secrets. The time has come for such magic to be wielded again. **Myl'tra'ilv!**⁴ *(RAYASEI touches the seal with his staff and it falls away.)*

VOLAKAR: *(Amazed)* You have broken the seal! In all these centuries no Wizard has been able to open what Toral had closed.

RAYASEI: It was not time until now.

VOLAKAR: Why now?

RAYASEI: I do not know, but no event occurs without reason. All shall become clear in time. *(RAYASEI closes the Book.)*

VOLAKAR: You do not wish to read it?

⁴"Open'time'near!"

RAYASEI: In time, first we must attend to other matters.

VOLAKAR: What could take precedence over this?

RAYASEI: The expedition sent across the sea nears its destination. There will soon be much to do.

VOLAKAR: What have they found?

RAYASEI: We shall soon see. *(RAYASEI extends a hand towards the Great Hall.)* **Sah'myl'arl.**⁵ *(The lights fade up onto the Great Hall of Castle Dorian, Capital of the Kingdom of Alterra. Seated in their thrones are KING WELSCIAN and QUEEN CALINA of Alterra. Also present is BEURAKI SKY, the court Magician. BEURAKI, like all White Magicians, carries a magic staff. His sky blue robes show him to be a Magician of high status, but still some steps away from the status of White Wizard.)*

BEURAKI: Your Majesties, Trovali is ready. We may open the sight link at any time.

WELSCIAN: Proceed.

RAYASEI: Watch, Volakar. *(BEURAKI extends a hand.)*

BEURAKI: **My!**⁶ *(The lights fade up onto the deck of a sailing ship. The CAPTAIN is at the wheel, and next to him stands the ship's Magician, TROVALI GRAY. TROVALI's gray robes signify that he is close to the status of White Wizard. Also present is NIRIMAY GREEN. She stands not far from RAYASEI and VOLAKAR. The lights on RAYASEI's chambers and the lights on the Great Hall dim slightly, as they are only watching shadows. Only NIRIMAY can see and hear RAYASEI and VOLAKAR. The CAPTAIN looks ahead with a telescope.)*

CAPTAIN: It seems that the old legends are true, Trovali, there is land beyond the sea.

TROVALI: It would seem so, Captain, but I must remind you that the old legends speak of more than just land.

CAPTAIN: You have studied the ancient texts yourself, have you not?

TROVALI: All my life, that is why I chose to accompany you on this voyage.

CAPTAIN: We are grateful for your presence, Trovali. It is a high honor indeed for a Magician of your status to join us on this historic voyage. *(TROVALI bows to the CAPTAIN.)*

TROVALI: The honor is mine, good Captain. I am at the service of you and your ship, as always.

CAPTAIN: Tell me, what else do the old legends speak of?

TROVALI: An ancient race that dwells on that land, evil creatures who care nothing for our kind.

⁵"Sight'open'far."

⁶"Open."

CAPTAIN: Men have been known to weave such tales about the unknown when they possess more fear than facts. Such creatures are only stories, I suspect.

TROVALI: Perhaps.

CAPTAIN: You do not sound convinced.

TROVALI: Our duty is to learn the truth behind the legends. For now, I will not discount any possibility.

CAPTAIN: By Alterra! Are all Magicians as suspicious as you?

TROVALI: A good Magician always suspects the unknown. This world contains both good and evil in abundance, but it holds precious little in safety. *(TROVALI studies the direction ahead.)* Take heed, good Captain, on that land lies far more than you realize.

CAPTAIN: My crew has tackled the unknown many times, but I shall heed your warning. We shall be ready for what lies ahead.

TROVALI: Perhaps. *(He walks to the fore of the ship and watches ahead.)*

CAPTAIN: *(To WELSCIAN)* Prophetic words from a Magician always make me uneasy, they rarely bode well. I feel a great shadow in the air, and fear that whatever waits ahead would be better left alone.

WELSCIAN: You will proceed, Captain.

CALINA: Have you come this far just to turn around?

CAPTAIN: No, Your Majesty, of course not.

RAYASEI: *(To NIRIMAY)* The storm approaches.

NIRIMAY: So it does, my old friend. Were it within my power I would halt this voyage here and now.

RAYASEI: Loyalty bears a high price.

NIRIMAY: Sometimes too high, methinks.

RAYASEI: Take courage, NIRIMAY, for the play has just begun.

NIRIMAY: And it will end in fire.

RAYASEI: That can still be avoided.

NIRIMAY: I am not so sure. *(TROVALI reacts as if something has suddenly made itself known to him.)*

TROVALI: Captain! A vessel approaches!

CAPTAIN: Where did it come from?

TROVALI: Their dark magic hid it from us until they chose to reveal themselves.

WELSCIEN: Who are "They," Trovali?

TROVALI: Our coming enemy. *(The BA'RAK SORCERER walks onto the ship and faces TROVALI. The BA'RAK are an androgynous, reptilian, humanoid race. They are, on average, taller than humans. They all wear long cloaks and hoods which hide all of their body, except for their clawed hands. Their faces will not be seen at all until much later. The BA'RAK SORCERER wears blood red robes, signifying its place in Ba'rak society.)*

CAPTAIN: By Alterra, what is that?

TROVALI: A harbinger of Darkness.

SORCERER: **Zal zakot baovik? Vovot bavik.**⁷

TROVALI: **Nli!**⁸ *(From this point on, the SORCERER will speak English.)*

SORCERER: The land you approach is under my protection, advance no further.

CAPTAIN: What land is it that lies ahead?

SORCERER: You are the invader here, not I. It is not your place to ask such questions. Turn back, now, if you value your worthless lives. I do not.

NIRIMAY: *(To RAYASEI)* My part grows short, Rayasei, I regret that I could not have done more.

WELSCIEN: We take no orders from creatures such as you.

CAPTAIN: We are on a mission of exploration.

SORCERER: That mission ends here. *(It extends a hand towards TROVALI)* **Ihr'ord'vli!**⁹ *(Very slowly, the lights begin to fade. TROVALI and NIRIMAY act as if a force is slowly draining their strength.)*
You are a foolish race.

VOLAKAR: *(To RAYASEI)* Can we do nothing?

RAYASEI: This scene belongs not to us. Learn.

SORCERER: *(To WELSCIEN)* Your people will leave our waters, or they shall die. Depart now, and perhaps we shall overlook this transgression.

⁷"Who are you? Identify yourself."

⁸"Speak!"

⁹"Darkness'strength'grow!"

CALINA: My Lord, I think this is one land which should be left alone. I fear there will be nothing but war between us.

BEURAKI: The Queen is right, what have we to fight for here? *(The CAPTAIN draws his sword.)*

CAPTAIN: Our honor, if nothing else. Shall this attack go unpunished? *(TROVALI raises his staff.)*

TROVALI: **Thi'pha!**¹⁰ *(The SORCERER's power, for the moment, is broken. WELSCIAN stands and walks to the border between settings.)*

WELSCIAN: *(To the SORCERER)* I have not sent my people this far to come back empty handed.

RAYASEI: Nirimay, they must not come here.

NIRIMAY: Your Majesty, please, I beg of you, leave them in peace. Trouble them no more.

TROVALI: Silence, Nirimay, remember your place. Shall you order your own King?

WELSCIAN: None attack one of my vessels and live to tell.

CALINA: My Lord, do not let the desire for revenge cloud your mind.

RAYASEI: *(To himself)* Do not start a fire you cannot quench, King Welscian of Alterra.

SORCERER: Remain here and we shall do far more than attack one vessel.

TROVALI: Do not yield to them, Your Majesty.

WELSCIAN: I do not intend to.

SORCERER: Your White Arts cannot stand against the protection placed around my land, do not challenge my power here. **Rho'vho'nym'thi!**¹¹ *(The intensity of the light on the ship drops suddenly.)*

CAPTAIN: Enough of this, be gone from my ship! *(The CAPTAIN attempts to attack the SORCERER, but it extends a hands towards him.)*

SORCERER: **Thr.**¹² *(The CAPTAIN drops dead instantly.)*

VOLAKAR: Master!

RAYASEI: There is nothing for us to do, we may only watch.

¹⁰"Life'us!"

¹¹"Dark'evil'take'life!"

¹²"Death!"

TROVALI: For his death you shall pay dearly! *(He raises his staff to attack, but as he is about to speak the SORCERER points a finger at TROVALI.)*

SORCERER: **Thi'oyr**.¹³ *(TROVALI stops, frozen.)* I think not. **Nih'yhr!**¹⁴ *(TROVALI falls to the ground, dead. To TROVALI)* Your knowledge is mine. What you knew, I know. *(To WELSCIEN)* You have exceeded my patience. Make your choice, now.

WELSCIEN: You are an evil creature that deserves no mercy. *(WELSCIEN sits back in his throne.)* Kill it.

SORCERER: Try and your entire Kingdom shall suffer, King of Alterra.

NIRIMAY: Rayasei?

RAYASEI: *(Sadly)* A high price indeed, my friend.

WELSCIEN: I said slay it, Nirimay. Do not allow it to return with what it knows.

CALINA: My Lord!

WELSCIEN: The score must be settled.

NIRIMAY: *(To RAYASEI)* I find myself wishing you were not so often right, Rayasei.

RAYASEI: As do I, but it is a burden I must bear.

NIRIMAY: Farewell, White Wizard, I grant you the stage. *(To SORCERER)* **Vho'uhl'whr, vyr'rov!**¹⁵ *(The SORCERER reacts with pain, but close to its home it is the stronger.)*

SORCERER: Fate is on my side. **Ihr'myr'uhl, ser'lth!**¹⁶ *(NIRIMAY collapses. To WELSCIEN)* I know where you are, King of Alterra, and shall remember well what has happened here this day. We shall meet again, that I promise you.

NIRIMAY: *(To VOLAKAR, weakly)* Stay close to the White, you are needed.

SORCERER: **Rho.**¹⁷ *(The lights on both the ship and RAYASEI's chambers go out. Silence in the Great Hall.)*

WELSCIEN: In the name of Alterra, what have I done?

SECOND SISTER: You have made a choice foretold

¹³"Life's stop."

¹⁴"Knowledge empty!"

¹⁵"Evil enemy destruction, fire you!"

¹⁶"Darkness weaken enemy, go non-existence!"

¹⁷"Dark!"

THIRD SISTER: To fell your Kingdom ere 'tis old

CALINA: Can they find us, Beuraki?

BEURAKI: What Trovali knew, they now know. I fear the worst.

WELSCIAN: The worst shall come, that much they told us. *(Pause)* Crollaro, have you nothing to say? *(CROLLARO steps forward into the light. He has been standing behind the thrones, hidden in the shadows, watching.)*

CROLLARO: What is there to say, My Lord? Revenge has made itself your master. Will you listen to any other counsel?

CALINA: Crollaro! Such harsh words are not for your King.

WELSCIAN: Peace, My Queen. His words are well deserved.

CROLLARO: Indeed.

WELSCIAN: An error in judgment has been made, for the sake of revenge, and I will confess to it. But the blame is not yours to place, Crollaro, see that you do so with greater reservation in the future.

CROLLARO: *(Stiffly)* Of course, Your Majesty.

WELSCIAN: Now, I shall hear your counsel, if you have any of profit to give.

CROLLARO: I can think of little counsel that would be of use to us now. *(To BEURAKI)* Unless your Magic can undo the choice that has been made this day.

BEURAKI: It cannot.

CROLLARO: Then I have no words left to say.

WELSCIAN: I see. *(CROLLARO draws his sword.)*

CROLLARO: Save these: You have made your last mistake, Welscian. It is time someone put you in your place. *(WELSCIAN rises and draws his sword.)*

WELSCIAN: Do you challenge my throne?

CROLLARO: I do.

WELSCIAN: Then this day comes at last, as I feared it would. It's high time we settled matters.

CROLLARO: Indeed it is. *(They begin to fight.)*

BEURAKI: *(To CALINA)* Your Highness, shall I...

CALINA: No, do not interfere. The King must defend his own honor. *(At the end of the fight WELSCIEN deprives CROLLARO of his sword and places the point of his own sword on CROLLARO's chest. Pause.)*

BEURAKI: Finish him, Your Majesty!

CROLLARO: Have you not the courage to kill me?

WELSCIEN: *(To CROLLARO)* You do not deserve an honorable death. *(He lowers his sword.)* Be gone from my kingdom and trouble the good people of Alterra no more. If you ever cross the borders of my land again, Crollaro, my men shall deal with you in whatever manner they see fit. Do not exceed the limits of my mercy. Go.

CROLLARO: I shall, but know this: It is not over between us. You have led these Creatures to us, and I shall see that you pay for your actions. You do not deserve that throne. *(He exits. Pause.)*

BEURAKI: He will return.

WELSCIEN: We shall deal with the future when it comes. *(WELSCIEN returns to his throne.)* Indeed, it makes great haste towards us. Where shall we confront it?

CALINA: How long will it take the Enemy to reach us, Beuraki?

BEURAKI: We have some months to prepare. It took our vessel over a year to arrive at its ill fated destination.

CALINA: We shall need every moment of that time, I suspect.

WELSCIEN: As do I, but I wonder if we may not be better to make haste and meet the Enemy before they draw too near to our shores. Or shall we wait for them to come to us?

BEURAKI: The Enemy drew power from its native land, but that power shall weaken as they travel here. It may thus be to our advantage to hold the battle closer to our shores, at a point of our choosing. Perhaps near the Isle of Kentari, it is well fortified.

CALINA: That sounds wise.

WELSCIEN: Yes, speed in action has cost us enough for one day. What else do you propose? *(RAYASEI enters, staff in hand.)*

RAYASEI: That you listen to what I have to say. *(WELSCIEN and CALINA rise as RAYASEI bows before them.)*

CALINA: Rayasei! What is the meaning of this intrusion?

FIRST SISTER: If you turn a willing ear

SECOND SISTER: Wise words are you like to hear

WELSCIEN: Rayasei, your presence was not asked for. When we desire your advice, we shall send for it.

RAYASEI: I give my counsel to whom I choose, always at the proper time. I choose you at this time. You will leave us, Beuraki.

BEURAKI: Your Majesties...

RAYASEI: **Ser.**¹⁸ *(BEURAKI leaves at once.)* Now we may talk in peace. Beuraki asks too many questions.

WELSCIEN: I value Beuraki's counsel greatly.

RAYASEI: You value your own counsel above all others. If that were not so, the Enemy would not be coming and I would not be here.

CALINA: How is it you know of the Enemy?

RAYASEI: I am Rayasei White. *(Pause as WELSCIEN and CALINA realize that is his answer.)*

WELSCIEN: Not even the White may enter this Hall without our consent. *(RAYASEI turns to go.)*

RAYASEI: Then you may tell the Enemy that when they arrive. Good day. *(RAYASEI begins to leave.)*

WELSCIEN: Very well, Rayasei, speak of what brought you here.

RAYASEI: Thank you, Your Majesties. *(He bows.)* My errand here is one of grave importance, hence my unannounced visit. As we both know, the Enemy makes great haste to this place.

CALINA: You disturbed our council to bring news of what we already know?

RAYASEI: Patience, Your Highness, all shall be revealed. To stop the Enemy, we must confront them at the soonest possible time. Delay will cost us dear. You will assemble a fleet of our strongest vessels and depart immediately to meet the Enemy halfway across the sea. I shall gather the White Wizards from every corner of Alterra to accompany you. We are small in number, but great in power. Heed my words and all shall go well.

WELSCIEN: And heed my words, Rayasei White, should your loyalty still rest with the Crown of Alterra.

RAYASEI: I assure you, it does.

¹⁸"Go."

WELSCIAN: Then know this: Our fleet shall confront the Enemy at the Isle of Kentari where the Enemy's power shall be weakened.

RAYASEI: A plan well founded...

CALINA: We are glad you agree.

RAYASEI: ...but incorrect. *(To WELSCIAN)* I give you a chance to correct your mistake. Be forewarned: Such a chance will not come again.

WELSCIAN: The mistake was mine to make, do not forget that. Shall you also challenge my authority?

RAYASEI: I shall not.

WELSCIAN: Then put your plan out of mind, Rayasei.

CALINA: Do you deny that the power of the Enemy will weaken as they travel further from their land?

RAYASEI: I do not, as it now stands, but things may yet still change. I have consulted with the other Wizards on this matter, and they agree with my course of action. If you will not confront the Enemy at the proper time and place, I shall, alone if need be.

WELSCIAN: By the Crown of Alterra, you shall not.

RAYASEI: If that Crown still exists when I return, I shall surrender myself to it. *(RAYASEI begins to leave.)*

WELSCIAN: *(Angry)* Rayasei! *(RAYASEI stops.)* I have withstood enough insolence for one day. If you wish to throw away your life on this foolish errand, then so be it. But no other member of the White shall accompany you, upon pain of death. If you must go, then you must go alone.

CALINA: Rayasei, please, listen to us, you cannot stand against the Enemy alone.

RAYASEI: It is your choice, not mine, that forces this errand upon myself alone. I will go, regardless of who does and who does not accompany me. But know this: The Book of Toral holds no secrets from me. It has allied itself with my destiny for a time. The Enemy shall feel the full power of the White! *(WELSCIAN and CALINA look at each other in surprise.)*

WELSCIAN: Do you mean to say you have broken Toral's seal?

RAYASEI: Yes, and the time for such magic lies close at hand. The hand of Fate knocks at your door, King Welscian of Alterra, and you do not answer. You have forged your own destiny. Farewell, King Welscian, your eyes shall never again behold Rayasei White.

CALINA: Shall mine?

RAYASEI: At the end, but what that end may be not even I can say for certain.

WELSCIEN: Farewell, Rayasei White.

CALINA: Until the end. (RAYASEI *exits.*) I am uneasy, my Lord. We need hope in these times, and I feel as if it just walked out our doors.

WELSCIEN: Do you find my decision unwise?

CALINA: I do not know. A troubled time begins, and it is difficult to say which course is the wisest. Not even the Magicians can agree anymore, a grave sign indeed.

WELSCIEN: We have forged a deep understanding with Beuraki over the years, am I wrong to trust his judgment over that of a Wizard's?

CALINA: Rayasei is a Wizard, that much is certain, but he has often estranged himself from the affairs of the Kingdom. In this situation he may not know best. As for the rest of the White, when have they not followed Rayasei? I cannot advise you here, my Lord, as I do not know the path to take any more than you.

WELSCIEN: We shall reap the results of our choices soon enough. In the meantime, let future events unfold as they may. Come, we must prepare our defense. (WELSCIEN *and* CALINA *stand and exit.*)

THIRD SISTER: In the center stand the Gray

FIRST SISTER: Watching both the night and day

SECOND SISTER: Mortal wills the play do write

THIRD SISTER: And shall until the end of Night

FIRST SISTER: But start and end they do not see

SECOND SISTER: The Story of Eternity

THIRD SISTER: First Beginning far above

FIRST SISTER: Where all colors first are of

WEIRD SISTERS: Guardians of Fate are we
Us the watching Sisters three
Players mortal of the play
Bring the curtain down on day
Colors twain shall meet in night
Warrior black and shining white
The beginning act now is done
Finished with the setting sun
When again the Dawn does rise

It shall not fall upon your eyes
(The lights go out. Finis d'Acte I.)

ACT II - PREPARATIONS

(CROLLARO and the DARK SORCERESS MIRIKAY are present on the lower half of the stage. They are sailing across the sea to meet the Ba'rak fleet. MIRIKAY carries a magic staff and wears dark robes of sorcery.)

SECOND SISTER: Storm winds grow upon the sea

THIRD SISTER: More betrayal still to be

FIRST SISTER: Wishing yet to be a King

SECOND SISTER: Daytime's death toll shall you ring

MIRIKAY: Behold, Crollaro, they come: Our future allies.

CROLLARO: That is not yet certain, Mirikay. Unless we can sway them to our cause, they are our enemy as well as Alterra's. It may not be wise to make such haste to meet these Creatures on the open seas. If we cannot prove they have need of us, I doubt either of us shall live to see Alterra again.

MIRIKAY: Fear not, they will find us valuable allies. I shall see to that.

CROLLARO: Lay your plan well, for if you do not we shall pay for our betrayal in full.

MIRIKAY: The deed shall be done, that I promise you. You shall not lose your life at the hands of this Enemy, that much I know.

CROLLARO: Then I leave this matter for you to deal with.

MIRIKAY: As you wish. *(Short pause)* They arrive. *(MIRIKAY raises her staff and calls out.)* **Nua**,¹⁹ travelers from beyond the sea! I, Mirikay Shadow, call out to you, and ask that you hear my words. Come forth and speak! *(The BA'RAK SORCERER appears, but not on the deck of the ship.)*

SORCERER: **Vik bikazathar**.²⁰ I hear you, Mirikay Shadow. What is it you want?

MIRIKAY: An alliance with your people.

SORCERER: The Ba'rak do not ally themselves with the lands of weaklings.

MIRIKAY: Nor do we ask you to, for we are also enemies of Alterra.

SORCERER: What, then?

CROLLARO: We wish to join you in your quest to conquer the Kingdom of Alterra.

¹⁹"Listen"

²⁰"I will listen."

SORCERER: Defection? Interesting. Never before has such a request been made of the Ba'rak. The possibility exists, perhaps, if you could prove your worth to our Emperor. If you are weak, you will die. If you are not, we shall see. Draw your vessel from its shadow and I shall bring you to our Emperor.

CROLLARO: What assurance do you give that we will not be killed or made captive?

SORCERER: I give none. *(Pause. MIRIKAY raises one hand.)*

CROLLARO: Caution, Mirikay.

MIRIKAY: Faith, Future King. **Myl!**²¹

SORCERER: I see it now. You are brave to face us in such a small vessel, and wise to hide yourselves until we agreed to give you hearing. Perhaps not all in your land are weak and foolish. Come, **ser'yiv!**²² *(The SORCERER walks upstage past MIRIKAY and CROLLARO who then follow it to the Chamber of the EMPEROR aboard the Ba'rak Flagship. On the upper half of the stage the BA'RAK EMPEROR sits in a dark throne. The EMPEROR is also cloaked.)* Kneel before Its Majesty, the Mighty Emperor of Ba'rak! *(The SORCERER, MIRIKAY, and CROLLARO kneel.)* **Bovoka, Bokozak.**²³

EMPEROR: **Voka.**²⁴

SORCERER: I bring you these defectors from the land of Alterra: The Sorceress Mirikay Shadow and her companion. They ask to join us.

CROLLARO: My name is Crollaro, formerly a Duke of Alterra.

EMPEROR: You will speak only when asked to, Alterran, and your titles, former or otherwise, mean nothing here.

CROLLARO: *(Angry, but restrained)* Apologies, Emperor.

EMPEROR: *(To SORCERER)* You are bold to bring such lesser creatures into my presence, defectors they may be. Yet I shall hear them. Speak, Mirikay and Crollaro of Alterra, and prove your strength. Do so, and I shall consider your request. Do not, and you become the next casualties in the war between our peoples. Speak, what do you offer us?

MIRIKAY: Honored Emperor, it is true that our people are not as strong as the Ba'rak, but we possess greater strength than you realize. We offer you the chance to capture yourself a Magic of great and tremendous power. With it, no land shall be able to turn back the tide of your people.

EMPEROR: This interests me, tell me of this great Power. How may I obtain it?

²¹"Open!"

²²"Go'space!"

²³"Honored greetings, Emperor."

²⁴"Greetings."

MIRIKAY: I shall harness it and put it at your command once the terms of our alliance are agreed upon.

EMPEROR: Bold are you and brave. You do not foolishly hand over this Power and thus end your usefulness. I admire your skill in words, Mirikay Shadow, and will hear your terms after Crollaro has spoken. *(To CROLLARO)* Mirikay commands magic, what do you command?

CROLLARO: I, Emperor, command knowledge. Well do I know the land of Alterra, for long was I in counsel with the King. Allow us to join you, and when we reach Alterra you shall know that land and its people better than they know themselves.

EMPEROR: A tempting advantage. The Ba'arak are not accustomed to receiving assistance from inferior creatures, but it is difficult to turn away such willing aid. *(Pause)* Very well, you may speak your terms, but keep your wisdom in asking them. What is it you seek from us?

CROLLARO: I seek dominion over Alterra as your appointed ruler of that kingdom.

EMPEROR: You ask a high price indeed! Such a position would be second only to myself. Yet with an Empire on two sides of the sea I would need someone to watch over the affairs of Alterra. Perhaps your people would better accept one of their own kind as the new King under the Ba'arak rule.

SORCERER: Emperor, that would place an inferior creature above the rest of our own people. Such an event is without precedent!

EMPEROR: Silence! I asked not for your opinion on the matter. Times will change, and I will do the changing as I please. I cannot reside in both lands at once, and weaker wills are better bent to mine. Do not question me again. And you, Mirikay, what do you desire?

MIRIKAY: If Crollaro is to be your second, I am content to be his. I seek only to bend the Power of which I speak to dark wills.

EMPEROR: Then I agree to your terms. I shall formalize this arrangement once the Power has reached our hands. Tell me more of this Power. What is it and who wields it now?

MIRIKAY: The Power I speak of is the ancient magic Book of Toral, the greatest tool of the White Magicians. When the great Empire of Trizera was shattered by civil war, the White Wizards of Alterra claimed the Book for their own. They wield it to this day.

EMPEROR: It is a tool of the White Magic?

MIRIKAY: It is, now, but it shall not remain so.

SORCERER: How is it you know so much about a tool of the Light?

MIRIKAY: The Dark Sorcerers of Alterra are not unlearned in such matters. We cannot bring a shadow over the tools of the Light without first understanding them. Only because I know so much about Toral's Book can I hope to bend it to our purposes. I even know its proper name, a name the White guard with their lives.

EMPEROR: And how shall we capture this Book?

MIRIKAY: It comes to us, willingly brought here by Rayasei White, the greatest Wizard in Alterra. He intends to use its power to destroy you, but now that Crollaro and I have betrayed his arrival, we shall capture both Rayasei and the Book. Two blows will we thus strike against Alterra before we even reach its shores.

SORCERER: How shall we capture this Rayasei? If he wields this Power, will he not have the might to resist us?

MIRIKAY: Even Rayasei is human and thus not invulnerable. We shall break his might before he has the chance to resist us. I know where to strike.

EMPEROR: *(To SORCERER)* Rayasei is not Ba'rak, do you fear this inferior?

SORCERER: No, my Emperor.

EMPEROR: Then set not your mind to defeat. We shall conceal ourselves and wait for Rayasei to come to us. Then we will claim the Book for our own. You, Mirikay, shall capture Rayasei yourself. Consider it a test of your power, and your loyalty. I do not tolerate failure.

MIRIKAY: Understood. *(MIRIKAY steps forward and faces the audience. She raises her staff and prepares to speak.)*

THIRD SISTER: Capture Light and you shall find

FIRST SISTER: With your hand yourself you bind

MIRIKAY: **Nua'wth!**²⁵ Let the storm winds hear my call: Bring forth your fury! Rouse up the waves to attack our enemy, let the sea mists rise up and shroud this vessel in darkness. Let no light shine through the clouds of destruction. **Sth'hyr'ih, wth'vli'whr. Rho'lir'syl!**²⁶ *(During MIRIKAY's speech, the lights on the Ba'rak ship grow dim as it is shrouded in darkness. The sound of the wind and waves increases as a wild sea storm grows.)* Let them come.

RAYASEI: **Syl!**²⁷ *(The lights come up on the lower half of the stage to reveal RAYASEI and VOLAKAR. They are sailing towards the Ba'rak fleet. RAYASEI holds the Book, which is closed, and surveys the sea around him. The lights upon RAYASEI and VOLAKAR are all but overwhelmed by the darkness of the storm around them.)* All is wrong. We should have met the fleet by now, yet I feel only emptiness and shadow around us. Strange indeed.

VOLAKAR: I feel the shadows too, like a wall enclosing us. I can see nothing past their unnatural boundary.

²⁵"Listen'water!"

²⁶"Air'bring'darkness, water'grow'destruction. Dark'capture'light!"

²⁷"Light!"

RAYASEI: An enchantment lies upon these waters, that much is certain.

VOLAKAR: It is like a cage.

RAYASEI: Indeed. *(Pause)*

VOLAKAR: Cannot we use the Book to penetrate this storm? Its Light could shine through even this wild darkness.

RAYASEI: It could. It can shine brighter than the sun itself when called to do so, but the Light would also act as a beacon to our Enemy. They would know our location at once, and their fury would be upon us. Our hope lies in surprise, for the storm of the White shall fall on the Enemy without warning and sweep them away. If our presence is betrayed, the battle will be over before it begins. *(The lighting flashes and the thunder rolls.)*

VOLAKAR: This storm threatens to sink our vessel.

RAYASEI: A great malevolence lurks behind it, that much becomes clear. *(Pause as the storm grows.)*

VOLAKAR: Whatever power lies behind this storm grows with each passing moment, we cannot hold out much longer. If we do not use the Book to fight these shadows, we shall perish in this frightful storm.

SECOND SISTER: Wisdom comes from other's voice

RAYASEI: No, we must weather the storm with all the power we can muster. Open the Book now and all is lost.

THIRD SISTER: Yet in this scene you have no choice

VOLAKAR: We die and all is lost. This ship is weaker than we are, and has no power of its own to protect it.

RAYASEI: *(Thoughtfully)* Yes, that is it. The storm attacks not us, but our vessel. That is the point of our vulnerability. *(The ship creaks dangerously.)* We shall go down with it. *(With realization)* They knew! We are betrayed!

VOLAKAR: By whom?

MIRIKAY: Your shadow.

RAYASEI: Unknown. Quickly, we must defend ourselves. Surprise is lost. *(RAYASEI prepares to open the Book as the ship is torn asunder. RAYASEI manages to keep hold of the Book, and both MAGICIANS keep hold of their staffs. RAYASEI and VOLAKAR attempt to swim but the storm overwhelms them and they soon lie still on the stage. The storm begins to decline.)*

MIRIKAY: **Phl'pha!**²⁸ *(The lower half of the stage, with RAYASEI and VOLAKAR, becomes part of the Ba'rak Flagship. It is now a cell. MIRIKAY takes the Book from RAYASEI and raises it triumphantly.)*
The Book of Toral, in the hands of the Dark at last. There it shall forever stay once I have cast it down into eternal shadow

EMPEROR: Hand me the Book. *(MIRIKAY does.)*

MIRIKAY: I warn you, do not attempt to open it. The Book carries strong protection which shall take time to remove. *(The EMPEROR studies the Book.)*

EMPEROR: This is the Power that shall win the Ba'rak many lands?

MIRIKAY: Do not be deceived by its appearance. Had Crollaro and I not warned you of Rayasei's arrival, I do not doubt that he could have defeated you with it. *(The EMPEROR hands the Book back to MIRIKAY.)*

CROLLARO: She speaks the truth, and Rayasei is only one. If all the White had accompanied him, not even your mightiest tempest could have turned them back. Mark these words: We have won the first battle in the Last War of Alterra. *(MIRIKAY laughs at RAYASEI.)*

MIRIKAY: The great Rayasei! What foolishness brings you here only to find defeat?

FIRST SISTER: Foolishness can often hide

SECOND SISTER: Light's true wisdom from thine eye

SORCERER: So this is he, the greatest of your land's Wizards.

MIRIKAY: Awake Rayasei, and see the Fate you have brought upon yourself. **Hil.**²⁹ *(RAYASEI awakens.)*

RAYASEI: Mirikay, I should have known that you played a part in this. But how and why is it that you find yourself among companions darker and lower than thyself?

EMPEROR: Impudence does not become you, Rayasei White.

RAYASEI: We shall see. And Crollaro, it does not surprise me to find you here as well, imprisoned by your own quest for power.

CROLLARO: Well met, Rayasei.

MIRIKAY: *(To RAYASEI)* The how does not concern you, but the why should be obvious to the great Rayasei White, one who claims such great sight.

²⁸"Come'me!"

²⁹"Awake."

RAYASEI: I see that you condemn yourself to a dark path which shall control your destiny and lead you into shadows even deeper than you wish to tread. (*MIRIKAY stiffens.*)

MIRIKAY: And I see that you, at the end of your own path, still have not lost your insufferable arrogance.

EMPEROR: It would serve you well to speak with a civil tongue, Rayasei White, should you wish to be treated with honor and respect.

RAYASEI: No honor is in those who attack a vessel sent in peace, nor in those who welcome traitors into their midst.

CROLLARO: Traitor am I? The hand of King Crollaro shall soon bring a new beginning to Alterra.

RAYASEI: And who will guide your hand? Whose watchful eye will be over you? A new beginning comes to Alterra, Crollaro, but not the one you desire. You betray Alterra to these creatures and so become their puppet. May the hand of Fate deal justly with you.

EMPEROR: Your arrogance does you little credit. None have ever dared to treat the Emperor of the Ba'rak in this manner!

RAYASEI: Do not complain to me about the treatment you have earned.

EMPEROR: And nor should you, enemy and captive of the Ba'rak.

RAYASEI: The White know not of captivity, you have not the power to capture one of us. We are more free in the Light than you shall ever be in the shadows.

MIRIKAY: We shall see. Your own Light shall bind you, for we have taken the Book of Toral for our own.

RAYASEI: You are mistaken.

MIRIKAY: Mistaken? Fool! I hold the Book in my hands and you will be hard pressed to remove it.

SORCERER: It belongs to the Dark Magic and Ba'rak now.

RAYASEI: The Book goes where it will, none can take it. It chooses whose destiny it follows for however long it wishes. I had thought it would follow mine longer, but there it appears I was mistaken. I cannot imagine what it sees in you, Mirikay Shadow, but its choice was not without purpose.

MIRIKAY: (*Angry*) Very well then! The Book thinks and you are not our captive! Whatever pleases you. (*The EMPEROR gestures to the unconscious VOLAKAR.*)

EMPEROR: But what of him? Is he yet our prisoner? Or does he join you in your illusion of freedom? (*RAYASEI says nothing.*) Perhaps his imprisonment will increase your willingness to remain here. (*To*

the SORCERER) Place his apprentice in our most secure cell, and keep him unconscious. Do not allow him to awake. **Kiket.**³⁰ (*The SORCERER picks up VOLAKAR and exits.*)

RAYASEI: If you dare to harm him this vessel shall shake and crumble with my wrath!

EMPEROR: Do you desire his safety? Then know this: It comes at a price. Join us.

RAYASEI: You may tempt Crollaro with such ploys, but not I. It would take a Darkness greater than you to corrupt one of the White. No member of the White would ever aid dark creatures such as yourself, unless it was to raise them towards the Light. That offer I gladly make.

EMPEROR: Do not mock me. I offer you the chance to gain power and dominion by becoming my ally, not my teacher. You are proud, Rayasei, but do not let that pride destroy you.

RAYASEI: The sun will fall to earth and consume both our peoples in fire before I aid thee.

ROLLARO: He will never yield, Emperor. Kill him now and end the threat of his power.

EMPEROR: Rayasei cannot escape from here, weakened and so far removed from the White Magic which empowers him.

MIRIKAY: He will be fortunate if he can shake loose his own chains. (RAYASEI *nods.*)

RAYASEI: It is true, no White Magic can pass through the black shadows surrounding this vessel.

EMPEROR: Then here you shall remain, alive and helpless, until the day of our victory so that your last sight may be of the smoldering ruins of your once fair land. May you enjoy your stay here, Rayasei. I assure you that your apprentice shall not.

RAYASEI: You plan well, but beware that which slips pass your watchful eye. The road ahead is forever uncertain.

MIRIKAY: (*Sarcastic*) How touching, Rayasei departs his great wisdom even to his enemies.

RAYASEI: I share wisdom with those in need, so as to prevent them from falling further into darkness. You are certainly all in great need.

EMPEROR: Enough! I shall not endure this mockery from the lips of an accursed inferior! Your wise words do not interest me, Rayasei White. The Ba'rak have survived countless ages without them and shall exist for countless more.

RAYASEI: Then live in your deceptions, if it so pleases you. Not even I can force deaf ears to listen. But beware what you let in your gates, wrath enters with the lamb.

EMPEROR: I will hear no more of this. I have a kingdom to conquer.

³⁰"Go."

RAYASEI: We shall have no further audience you and I, though our Fates have come together. May you enjoy the fruits of your labors, be they sweet or bitter.

EMPEROR: And may you find a more courteous tongue, Rayasei White, ere your days come to an end. *(To MIRIKAY)* Pray this Book is worth the plague you have brought aboard this ship. *(The EMPEROR exits.)*

MIRIKAY: *(To RAYASEI, as she bows mockingly)* Enjoy your stay, oh honored guest. *(MIRIKAY laughs and exits. CROLLARO begins to exit.)*

RAYASEI: A moment with you, Crollaro. *(CROLLARO stops, facing away from RAYASEI.)*

CROLLARO: Say what you must, Rayasei.

RAYASEI: We have known each other long, Crollaro. Once you were loyal to the Crown of Alterra and you listened to my counsel. Though those days be far gone, listen to me one last time: Aid not these creatures in their quest. Your desire is to rule Alterra, but theirs is to destroy it. Do you truly wish to be a master of smoke and ruins? Turn from this path and join me in the defense of Alterra. Perhaps then, one day, shall you find what you seek. *(CROLLARO turns to face RAYASEI.)*

CROLLARO: I do not deny that your advice steered me true for many years, but our paths were sundered long ago and only chance crosses them this day. *(RAYASEI shakes his head.)*

RAYASEI: Nay, we meet here because our Fates too are linked. All our roads join together at the end. What waits beyond that no man can tell, not even the Wizards. Your part becomes more important than you know, so I have come here to give you this final counsel, ere the road is chosen. Will you heed me once more, as you often did? *(Pause)*

CROLLARO: Were it not for the days we've known, I would not have even listened to your counsel. Yet I must sunder our paths again. I did not expect you to join me in this shadow, indeed I did not wish it. In payment for days gone by, I give my word that Volakar will live to see Alterra again. I will speak with him myself to ensure that he is not tortured needlessly.

RAYASEI: I thank you, Crollaro, there is good left in you yet. Though you do not follow my advice, it may yet prove useful to you. Remember well what I have said.

CROLLARO: I shall. I expect to encounter you again, Rayasei White, in other settings.

RAYASEI: That is assured, 'til then we both shall do what we must. *(CROLLARO nods and exits. When CROLLARO is gone, RAYASEI sits and closes his eyes in deep concentration.)* **Tor'syl'wyv'ord'pha.**³¹ *(RAYASEI continues to ponder some matter deeply. The lights fade, save for a faint light which rests upon RAYASEI, as if it emanates from him.)*

THIRD SISTER: Rest before the coming fight

³¹"Great'white'magic'strengthen'me."

FIRST SISTER: To prepare for coming night

SECOND SISTER: Darkness born of other's hands

THIRD SISTER: Waits to fall upon your land

FIRST SISTER: But greater Darkness yet to come

SECOND SISTER: May obscure the shining sun

THIRD SISTER: At the end we shall see

FIRST SISTER: If Darkness is the end to be

WEIRD SISTERS: War 'tween light and dark shant pass
So long as time itself does last
Armies on the field muster
To save the prize lost its luster
Underneath the stars swords ring
Singing songs of Fate they bring
Mighty Kings the act prepare
Choose their counsel and beware
Marching off into the night
Some no more shall see the Light
(The lights go out. Finis d'Acte II.)

ACT III - ENCOUNTERS

(The Great Hall of Castle Dorian. WELSCIAN and CALINA are sitting in their thrones. Also present are BEURAKI and the AMBASSADOR OF TRIZERA.)

SECOND SISTER: Follow the One where he has gone

THIRD SISTER: And this war may yet be won

FIRST SISTER: Or make a deal with brothers lost

SECOND SISTER: And your kingdom pays the cost

WELSCIAN: Welcome, honored Ambassador, to our fair kingdom. *(The AMBASSADOR bows and sits.)*

AMBASSADOR: Your welcome is most gracious, honored Rulers. It has been long since any of my people have been welcome in this court.

CALINA: That is as much to our sorrow as it is to yours.

AMBASSADOR: Trizera feels no sorrow on the subject, nor do I. I suspect that I am not here to trade words of peace or friendship.

WELSCIAN: Peace, no, but friendship... For a hundred years our two Kingdoms have lived as enemies, but now we have a new Enemy.

AMBASSADOR: I know the old legends, Your Majesty. You have awakened an ancient evil which threatens Trizera and Alterra alike. Shall the people of Trizera pay for your folly?

WELSCIAN: I regret the choice which brings this Enemy to us, but it cannot now be undone. We have a mutual Enemy, and we are stronger together than apart. If we fall, Ambassador, you will be next.

AMBASSADOR: That may be true, but an alliance between our peoples? Such has not even been considered since the Great Rebellion tore our peoples apart one hundred years ago.

CALINA: The Freedom War, we call it.

AMBASSADOR: Yes, I am sure you do. You must remember that the Crown of Trizera still sees Alterra as its rightful inheritance. No alliance will erase that.

WELSCIAN: Nor would we expect it to. But we share a common ground, and if there was ever a time to remember that, it is now.

AMBASSADOR: Are you sure you understand what you are asking?

CALINA: What do you mean? *(The AMBASSADOR gives BEURAKI a look.)*

AMBASSADOR: Trizerans do not fight alongside Magicians, and we never shall.

BEURAKI: (*Coldly*) The feeling is mutual.

CALINA: Beuraki! You will show our guest more respect.

BEURAKI: Apologies, Your Majesties, Ambassador.

AMBASSADOR: As you know, the Magic Arts, White or otherwise, are forbidden in Trizera. Their use brought great Darkness upon the world during the Great Rebellion. Trizera shall not allow that to happen again, not if we have our way. We fight against the Magic Arts, never with them.

WELSCIEN: To gain your assistance we would have to abstain from the White Magic, is that so?

AMBASSADOR: It is.

CALINA: And how shall we match the magical forces of our Enemy without Magicians of our own?

BEURAKI: We cannot.

AMBASSADOR: We have managed without them for a hundred years. Bring your Magicians with, if you deem them of such value, but they shall have to fight with steel as other men do.

BEURAKI: (*Outraged*) We are Magicians, not warriors!

AMBASSADOR: Defenseless without your Magic, are you? (*BEURAKI stands with his staff in hand.*)

BEURAKI: Defenseless against my Magic are you! Shall I give you a taste of it?

WELSCIEN: Beuraki, you are dismissed! I will deal with you later. (*BEURAKI exits.*)

AMBASSADOR: Magicians are an impulsive breed, are they not, Majesties?

WELSCIEN: So it seems.

CALINA: You offer us a difficult choice, Ambassador. We may have the aid of the White Magic or Trizera, but not both.

AMBASSADOR: The choice is yours. It matters little to Trizera either way. If you agree to forswear the Magic Arts, I will present your request to my King.

WELSCIEN: What do you say, My Queen? Which of these actions shall we take? Strength in magic or force in numbers?

CALINA: I think numbers will prove the greater advantage. Rayasei's strength in magic did not appear to aid him in his quest.

WELSCIEN: True. *(To the AMBASSADOR)* Our Magicians shall remain on our vessels to provide a means of communication through their sight links. Beyond that, they shall neither attack nor defend. However, if the Enemy reaches these shores, we will fight them with whatever means are necessary, Magic or otherwise. If you choose to withdraw your support then, so be it. Tell that to your King.

AMBASSADOR: I shall.

WELSCIEN: We await his response. *(The AMBASSADOR stands.)*

AMBASSADOR: You shall get it. Where should we send our vessels?

WELSCIEN: To the Isle of Kentari. We shall make our stand there.

AMBASSADOR: Prepare your Magicians, you may still need them. Good day, Your Majesties.

WELSCIEN: Good day, Ambassador. May your journey home be swift.

CALINA: Farewell, Ambassador. *(The AMBASSADOR bows and exits. Pause.)*

WELSCIEN: I do not trust them.

CALINA: Nor do I, and they do not trust us. Only our common ancestry overcomes that distrust in the shadow of our Enemy. Friendship must start somewhere, My Lord.

WELSCIEN: I wonder how our people shall take fighting alongside Trizerans.

CALINA: They will do so because you ask them to. They trust their King.

WELSCIEN: Let us hope I deserve that loyalty. *(BEURAKI enters.)* Speak briefly, Beuraki, I am in no mood for your tongue today.

BEURAKI: Lady Ohairna and the fleet have reached Kentari. She desires to speak with thee.

WELSCIEN: Open the link. *(BEURAKI raises a hand towards the lower half of the stage.)*

BEURAKI: **Myl.**³² *(The lights fade up onto the deck of a sailing ship, as in Act I. LADY OHAIRNA, the High Seaman of Alterra, her FIRST MATE, and ANKARTI WHITE are present. ANKARTI stands off to the side, as does the FIRST MATE.)*

OHAIRNA: Greetings, Your Majesties. *(She bows to them.)*

WELSCIEN: Greetings, Lady Ohairna, High Seaman of Alterra.

CALINA: Greetings, Lady. What have you to report?

³²"Open."

OHAIRNA: The fleet stands ready, Your Majesties, at the Isle of Kentari. We have left part of our forces behind the isle in the event the first battle does not go our way. As they pursue the Enemy towards Alterra, the remainder of our fleet will depart from Port Marsia and so surround the Enemy.

WELSCIEN: Well conceived, Lady Ohairna.

OHAIRNA: Thank you, Your Majesty.

CALINA: Let us hope all goes as planned.

WELSCIEN: It shall, my Lady, have no fear of that.

CALINA: I do not, but I wonder if we should.

WELSCIEN: Ankarti.

ANKARTI: Yes, Your Majesty?

WELSCIEN: What say the White?

ANKARTI: The White are gathered, and we pledge ourselves wholly to the defense of your banner, so long as it may last.

WELSCIEN: Do you give counsel on our plans of battle?

ANKARTI: Our only counsel was to heed the words of Rayasei White. These you scorned, so now our counsel means naught. Take whatever road you wish to follow, and we shall be there 'til the end.

WELSCIEN: Poor counsel from those who claim so much wisdom.

ANKARTI: Heed it or do not, it is yours to do with as you please.

WELSCIEN: At least you grant my right to choose in this matter. Rayasei did not.

CALINA: He gave you such right, My Lord, and you took it.

ANKARTI: Rayasei saw a different path and felt strongly of it. You, King Welscian, have chosen yours, be prepared to follow it.

OHAIRNA: And what of Rayasei? Has any word been heard from him these long months since his departure?

BEURAKI: None, I fear his errand has taken him beyond our reach.

OHAIRNA: That is a heavy blow for a time when we need him most.

ANKARTI: Without Rayasei and the Book, the White's power is severely diminished. Indeed, the power of all White Magicians shall suffer. Not that such power the Trizerans would allow us to use.

CALINA: Do not count Rayasei lost yet, for he said that he and I should meet once more come the end, whatever that end shall be. I think then, Lady Ohairna, will be when Alterra shall want him most. We should not expect Rayasei's arrival until that moment comes.

WELSCIAN: Quite true, My Lady, yet his errand has clearly failed. The Enemy fleet journeys ever closer. *(To ANKARTI)* Have you heard from the Magicians on the more distant isles?

ANKARTI: Yes, and I fear that the Enemy grows stronger as it approaches. It is known among the White that Rayasei broke Toral's seal before he departed and opened the Doors of Time. We fear the Enemy has captured the Book and somehow turned it to their dark purposes. Black and twisted is the magic they wield, terrible and deadly. Great powers of destruction did our Magicians report... ere they perished.

FIRST MATE: These are grave tidings indeed! If the Enemy possesses Toral's greatest magic, how can we hope to stand against them?

BEURAKI: It will take time for the Enemy to learn all the Book contains. We must not give them that time.

OHAIRNA: Agreed. We shall be ready when the Enemy arrives.

CALINA: I hope so, for all our sakes.

WELSCIAN: Ankarti, have our Magicians learned anything else about the Enemy?

ANKARTI: Manara Sky sent Your Majesties these words: On the prow of the Enemy flagship, among the Enemy creatures, stood two Alterrans. "They did not appear as prisoners," said Manara, "and one was clothed in the dark robes of a Sorcerer. The other was a kingly figure, clad in mail black as coal." That image was the last Manara Sky was ever to see.

CALINA: The nameless Enemy has allies from our land.

WELSCIAN: Yes, allies who shall pay dearly for their treachery should I ever lay my hands upon them. Lady Ohairna, I charge thee to hold the Isle of Kentari 'til your strength is no more. The traitors I want alive. They are mine.

OHAIRNA: The Enemy shall not reach Alterra so long as I live. I bid thee farewell, King Welscian and Queen Calina of Alterra. *(OHAIRNA bows to WELSCIAN and CALINA.)* Farewell, Beuraki Sky. *(She bows to BEURAKI.)* I take my leave of you all in the hope that we shall meet again in times of peace.

WELSCIAN: Farewell, Lady Ohairna, may the winds be with thee.

CALINA: Farewell, Lady, I wish thee well.

BEURAKI: Farewell, Lady Ohairna. (ANKARTI *raises a hand towards the Great Hall.*)

ANKARTI: **Phv.**³³ (*The lights on the Great Hall fade out.*) The encounter is nigh.

OHAIRNA: Yes.

THIRD SISTER: Encounter comes and all shall wait

FIRST SISTER: To see Alterra's sealed Fate

FIRST MATE: Lady Ohairna, all ships are in position and prepared for battle.

OHAIRNA: Any sign of the Enemy fleet?

FIRST MATE: None, sir.

OHAIRNA: What do you make of it, Ankarti?

ANKARTI: I can tell little without violating the terms of our agreement with the Trizerans, but I can tell you this: They are here, somewhere, watching us. The strike will come.

OHAIRNA: But when and where?

ANKARTI: Unknown. We can do nothing until they choose to reveal themselves.

OHAIRNA: Still, to reach Alterra, they must come through us, and we shall force a high price upon that passing! (*A storm begins to grow.*) Ankarti, the Trizerans forbid your magic, but not your wisdom. Tell me, do you foresee victory in this encounter?

ANKARTI: I see a victory, but whose it is I do not know.

OHAIRNA: What times are these that blind even the sight of Wizards?

ANKARTI: Our Age is soon to depart, and I fear the Magic of the White may decline with its passing. Alas that we should see such days!

FIRST MATE: Vessel ahead! (*The storm continues to grow.*)

OHAIRNA: To arms! (*They prepare to fight.*) Let us pledge ourselves to hold this Isle and defend the path to Alterra with our very lives. Our people shall not perish so long as we remain strong! (*The lights fade out on the Alterran ship and fade up on the Ba'rak Flagship. The EMPEROR, CROLLARO, and MIRIKAY are present. MIRIKAY carries the Book.*)

MIRIKAY: **Tor'ih'r'wth'vli!**³⁴ (*The storm increases towards hurricane strength.*)

³³"Close."

³⁴"Great'dark'water'growth!"

EMPEROR: How long until the storm reaches its full strength?

MIRIKAY: Soon. The storm needs time to grow, but soon. (*The SORCERER enters.*)

SORCERER: As you suspected, Crollaro, more vessels wait behind the island to surround us as we head towards Alterra. (*CROLLARO nods.*)

MIRIKAY: No matter. The hurricane will go before us and scatter the fleet.

EMPEROR: Leaving them in chaos while we take care of those not dispatched by the wind and waves. (*To SORCERER.*) How goes the battle?

SORCERER: The Alterrans resist us with a fury I have never seen before in an inferior people.

EMPEROR: Is that admiration? For these **razoks**?³⁵

SORCERER: Not admiration, surprise.

CROLLARO: My people will not submit easily, Emperor, their will shall prove difficult to break.

EMPEROR: Then we shall use all the more strength to break their will.

MIRIKAY: The Alterrans cannot weather the storm and fight forever. Eventually, they must yield or die. (*She raises the Book.*) **Whr'ord!**³⁶ (*The storm suddenly jumps in intensity.*)

CROLLARO: They will not yield.

EMPEROR: Then let the sea be their grave.

SORCERER: I fear they shall take many of our people with them to that grave.

EMPEROR: See that they do not.

MIRIKAY: The Alterrans fight as they do because of great leadership, for great leadership may spur men to conquer tasks they believed unconquerable. We shall steal that leadership.

EMPEROR: I am listening.

MIRIKAY: Crollaro, I will take you backwards in time to before the battle begins. There you shall assassinate the Lady Ohairna and so deprive the Alterran fleet of their leader.

SORCERER: This is true power indeed, to undo what already has been!

³⁵creatures

³⁶"Destruction'sstrength!"

EMPEROR: Yes it is, I am pleased. Proceed, Mirikay. Crollaro, I wish you a successful hunt.

CROLLARO: That it shall be. Mirikay, can you shield me from view when we arrive?

MIRIKAY: Not for more than a few moments with a Wizard present.

CROLLARO: It shall be enough. *(He draws his sword.)* I do not anticipate this taking long. *(CROLLARO and MIRIKAY walk to a point between the two ships. MIRIKAY raises the Book.)*

SECOND SISTER: Open time and be forewarned

THIRD SISTER: More then Light waits through this door

MIRIKAY: **Pha'myl'tra!**³⁷ *(The lights go out and a great rushing noise, like wind, is heard. MIRIKAY must speak loudly in order to be heard over the noise.)* Currents of time, take us back into what has been, to the dawn of this battle. **Zyl'nng'yhi!**³⁸ *(The lights come up onto the Alterran flagship as the rushing noise ceases.)*

ANKARTI: They are here, somewhere, watching us. The strike will come.

OHAIRNA: But when and where? *(MIRIKAY waits in the background as CROLLARO approaches OHAIRNA. ANKARTI feels their presence, but cannot see them.)*

ANKARTI: Here, they are here now!

OHAIRNA: I see nothing, where are they? *(CROLLARO raises his sword to strike.)*

CROLLARO: I am here. *(CROLLARO fells OHAIRNA with one swift stroke. MIRIKAY raises one hand.)*

MIRIKAY: **Zyl'zhi'cai!**³⁹ *(The lights all go out for a few moments as the rushing noise is heard. The lights then come up on both the Alterran and Ba'rak Flagships. The time is the altered present. The FIRST MATE now commands the Alterran Flagship. CROLLARO and MIRIKAY rejoin the others on the Ba'rak Flagship.)*

ANKARTI: *(To FIRST MATE)* Their flagship is gaining on us.

EMPEROR: Keep on them, prepare to overtake and invade that vessel!

FIRST MATE: Full speed, we must regroup the fleet!

ANKARTI: Our sails are being torn apart by the storm, we cannot go any faster!

SORCERER: We almost have them.

³⁷"I'open'time!"

³⁸Untranslatable. The key into time.

³⁹Untranslatable. The word of recall.

ANKARTI: We must retreat. The fleet is in shambles, our ships cannot hold out much longer.

FIRST MATE: Then we must stand our ground! *(He draws his sword.)* Let us face our Enemy and run no more!

CROLLARO: *(To EMPEROR)* Shall we attack?

EMPEROR: Wait. *(The Alterrann Flagship begins to collapse.)*

ANKARTI: Captain, our vessel is collapsing, we must abandon ship.

FIRST MATE: No, we cannot! *(ANKARTI lays a hand on the FIRST MATE's shoulder.)*

ANKARTI: We can do no more. *(The lights on the Alterrann Flagship fade.)*

EMPEROR: The Alterrans scatter like ashes in the wind.

CROLLARO: So they do. The war goes better than I ever could have imagined.

EMPEROR: *(To SORCERER)* Signal the fleet to move on, the remaining forces here pose no further threat. Our way is clear.

SORCERER: At once, Emperor. *(It exits.)*

EMPEROR: Crollaro, Mirikay, you serve me well. You shall receive all promised you and more. Best speed to Alterra! *(The lights fade on the Ba'rak flagship and fade up on the Great Hall.)*

BEURAKI: Kentari has fallen, Your Majesties. Our fleet lies in ruin.

WELSCIEN: What of the Great Storm proceeding towards Marsia?

BEURAKI: The White confirm that it did not originate through natural means, but through the Dark Arts of the Enemy.

CALINA: A cunning tactic. They attack us with forces that cannot be conquered by swords or spears.

WELSCIEN: Their sea storm can only take them as far as Marsia, from there they shall need to go through us. Our foes will find a strong people waiting for them on these shores.

CALINA: And then we shall not be bound by our promise to forgo the use of the White Magic.

BEURAKI: The White shall be ready. The Enemy will find it difficult to turn the Book against its native land.

WELSCIEN: We shall have Magic, but shall we have the aid of Trizera? What says their King?

BEURAKI: King Carno has recalled all of his forces in order to strengthen his own defenses. We are on our own.

WELSCIEN: As I knew we would be. Have you anything else to report?

BEURAKI: Yes. The Enemy has learned how to open doors in time. Ankarti felt such a door open just before the assassination of Lady Ohairna, but knew not what it was until too late.

CALINA: Who was the assassin, Beuraki?

BEURAKI: Crollaro.

CALINA: The kingly figure seen by Manara.

BEURAKI: Without a doubt. I suspect the Alterran who stood by him was the Sorceress Mirikay, Crollaro's close ally since his betrayal.

WELSCIEN: It appears my mercy carries a high price. To think that he, once so trusted, should become my bane.

CALINA: Do not begrudge the mercy you showed Crollaro, it may prove well in the end. Such justice will surely be rewarded. At the very least, we have uncovered the identities of our traitors.

WELSCIEN: Yes, some hope lies in Crollaro's defection. I know his mind. Crollaro desires to rule Alterra, not destroy it. In that, we have him as an ally. Beuraki, inform Duchess Melana that I will be departing for Castle Marsia shortly. When the battle begins on my shores, I shall be there to lead my people into the fray.

BEURAKI: I shall do so, Your Majesty.

WELSCIEN: My Lady, I take my leave of you.

CALINA: Farewell, My Lord, may this road bring you victory. Promise to return.

WELSCIEN: I do. I leave all matters here in your hands. Farewell.

BEURAKI: Farewell, Your Majesty. *(CALINA and BEURAKI exit. WELSCIEN draws his sword and watches. The sound of a battle is heard. The lights fade up onto the field of battle where the EMPEROR and CROLLARO rest and await the next attack. MIRIKAY and the SORCERER also watch from the shadows.)*

CROLLARO: The tide turns against us, Emperor, even I did not know Alterra could boast men of such valor.

EMPEROR: Your pride in your own people does you credit, Crollaro, but we are not here to praise our enemies. The White's skill in magic proves a difficult defense to break, even with the Book. My

Sorcerer tells me that Mirikay finds the Book difficult to control here in Alterra where the White battle for its mastery.

CROLLARO: We must give her time. Mirikay has never failed me before.

EMPEROR: Mirikay has never before attempted a task of this magnitude, I suspect. We cannot count on her aid any longer. If you desire to rule this Kingdom under me, now is the time to prove your resolve.

CROLLARO: I shall, or perish in the trying. *(WELSCIEN enters the field of battle with NUMORI WHITE.)*

WELSCIEN: Perish you shall, Crollaro! I have little patience for traitors in my Kingdom, and that patience you have exceeded. *(To the EMPEROR)* You are the leader of the vermin who infest my land? *(The EMPEROR draws its sword.)*

EMPEROR: I am.

WELSCIEN: Numori, dispatch this Creature. *(NUMORI points her staff at the EMPEROR.)*

NUMORI: **Oh!lyi!**⁴⁰ *(The EMPEROR falls dead. WELSCIEN draws his sword.)*

WELSCIEN: The traitor is mine. *(WELSCIEN and CROLLARO begin to fight. NUMORI crosses to the EMPEROR and stabs it with its sword.)* It seems we have been in this position before, Crollaro.

CROLLARO: So we have, but this time the ending shall differ. Know this: My mercy flows not as generously as yours.

WELSCIEN: More's the pity for you.

CROLLARO: No, for you! *(The fight continues.)*

WELSCIEN: Your allies are dead, Crollaro. Soon you shall join them.

CROLLARO: If I must die, then I shall at least take you with me.

NUMORI: You have lost, Crollaro, it is over.

CROLLARO: Not yet.

WELSCIEN: Crollaro, I give you this one last chance to rejoin your people.

CROLLARO: Consider your offer rejected. *(With a strong blow CROLLARO forces WELSCIEN's sword arm down, leaving WELSCIEN open to attack. CROLLARO lifts his sword to attack, but WELSCIEN moves faster and slashes CROLLARO across the chest.)*

⁴⁰"Sleep'forever!"

WELSCIAN: Then I hereby condemn thee to death for crimes of high treason against the Crown of Alterra. *(CROLLARO falls dead at WELSCIAN's feet.)* Sentence is carried out.

NUMORI: They are defeated, Your Majesty, you have won. *(WELSCIAN sheathes his sword and looks at CROLLARO. He has killed one who once was his friend.)*

WELSCIAN: Yes. *(He exits, followed by NUMORI. The lights fade out on the battlefield and up on MIRIKAY and the SORCERER. For a few moments there is only silence.)*

FIRST SISTER: Not all happens just one time

SECOND SISTER: In Dark hands shall time rewind

SORCERER: *(Shocked)* The Ba'rak have been defeated. We have never been defeated.

MIRIKAY: *(Viciously)* No! We are not defeated!

SORCERER: The Emperor is dead, Crollaro is dead, and our army has been vanquished. What is left?

MIRIKAY: I live, and until that changes the war continues. Have you forgotten that we can still journey into the past? I shall rewrite time a thousand times if I must. Let Alterra revel in its victory, I shall erase it soon enough.

SORCERER: What do you hope to do in the past that we have not already done?

MIRIKAY: Watch. *(MIRIKAY raises her staff.)* Stream of time, open all ages to the eyes of Darkness. Let my sight extend to all times, past and future. **Pha'sah'tra!**⁴¹ *(The lights dim as all ages of time are opened to MIRIKAY. MIRIKAY looks over both past and future.)*

SORCERER: What do you see?

MIRIKAY: Everything. *(A light fades up onto TORAL who lies asleep on a slab of stone. He is now dressed in robes of pale gray.)* In the past, great Darkness covered the land. Great Darkness and great power, it shall serve us well.

SORCERER: And what is to come? Shall we win this war? *(MIRIKAY lowers her staff as the lights return to normal and fade out on TORAL. An odd look is upon MIRIKAY's face.)*

MIRIKAY: I have seen it before.

SORCERER: What?

MIRIKAY: The future.

SORCERER: I do not understand.

⁴¹"I see time!"

MIRIKAY: Nor I. *(Pause)* What we seek is in the past. We shall investigate this Dark Power, and take it if we can.

SORCERER: We took the Book, greatest power of the White, and bent it to our purposes. What can we not take?

MIRIKAY: Only a fool assumes to be stronger than all foes. As Alterra roused your people into wrath, so may we wake a power greater than ourselves. I urge caution. We do not wish to bring back a force that will destroy us from within. *(MIRIKAY takes center stage.)* Come, let us depart. *(The SORCERER stands next to MIRIKAY who raises her staff.)* **Pha'myl'tra!** *(The lights go out and the rushing noise is heard.)* Heed me, currents of time, and bring us to a time gone by when Darkness covered the Earth. Open the door, **zyl'nng'yhi!** *(The lights come up. The WEIRD SISTERS are now visible to MIRIKAY and the SORCERER.)*

THIRD SISTER: *(To MIRIKAY)* Well met long lost Shadowed One

FIRST SISTER: *(To the SORCERER)* Well met other known by Blood

SECOND SISTER: Well met travelers not unknown

THIRD SISTER: Here to take Light for thine own

MIRIKAY: *(Urgently)* We must leave. I did not know it was them. *(She begins to raise her staff, but the SORCERER stops her.)*

SORCERER: We cannot leave until we have found the Darkness you saw. And I wish to know who these **bireks**⁴² are.

MIRIKAY: Has your land no tales of the Weïrd Sisters, the Hands of Fate?

SORCERER: No.

FIRST SISTER: Those tales lost in ages past

SECOND SISTER: Still we watch unto the Last

MIRIKAY: *(To SORCERER)* They belong neither to the Light nor Dark, they simply are. It is best not to interfere with them. They are Gray, and if they are behind the Darkness, we want no part of it.

THIRD SISTER: It is not us you came to see

FIRST SISTER: But he who sleeps and waits for thee *(She gestures to the stone upon which TORAL sleeps. MIRIKAY and the SORCERER turn to see TORAL.)*

⁴²A Ba'rak insult which translates roughly to "Unknown inferior"

SORCERER: Another Wizard?

MIRIKAY: Not just any Wizard. That is Toral himself, the greatest White Wizard who ever lived.

SORCERER: We already have Toral's Book, what further use would Toral be?

MIRIKAY: The Book is but a shadow of Toral's power. Alas! Toral is of the White. If we could not bend Rayasei, we could not hope to bend Toral.

SECOND SISTER: Toral cast down into the night

THIRD SISTER: No more shall we call him White

MIRIKAY: Toral cast into shadow? How is this possible?

FIRST SISTER: In Dark's eye he did dare look

SECOND SISTER: Now no stronger than his Book

THIRD SISTER: Listened he to his own plan

FIRST SISTER: Banish Darkness?

SECOND SISTER: Wisdom can

MIRIKAY: (*Suspicious*) What brings you to this time and place to meet us?

THIRD SISTER: You came to us

FIRST SISTER: Not we to you

SECOND SISTER: As you always knew you'd do

THIRD SISTER: Your free will and fate combined

FIRST SISTER: With all results are intertwined

SORCERER: What results?

WEIRD SISTERS: As a moth unto a flame
Shall be he, Mirikay's bane
In the darkness end him not
For he must do all that he ought

SORCERER: What mean you by this riddle?

SECOND SISTER: Riddles heard are often so

THIRD SISTER: For those in Shadows dare to go

MIRIKAY: You shall understand what they say at the time of their choosing, not yours. And then I doubt you shall enjoy the meaning of their words.

SORCERER: Their meaning interests me less than the Wizard Toral. If he has now fallen into shadow, he may serve us well. Let us take him and go.

MIRIKAY: I do not trust the Sisters, it feels as if they mean for us to take Toral.

FIRST SISTER: You are meant

SECOND SISTER: As we well know

THIRD SISTER: For good, for evil, may it be so

MIRIKAY: (*Angrily*) What does it matter, all our choices lead to ruin in the end. Let us do what we came to do and be gone. Fate will follow us no matter where we go.

FIRST SISTER: Much are you in the Eye of Fate

SECOND SISTER: Where your path leads you must but wait

THIRD SISTER: For all are bound by Fate and will

FIRST SISTER: Your visit here both good and ill (*MIRIKAY and the SORCERER stand next to TORAL.*)

MIRIKAY: I take my leave of you, Sisters. May we never meet again.

WEIRD SISTERS: We and you forever bound

SECOND SISTER: From you shall Light in Dark be found (*MIRIKAY stares at the WEIRD SISTERS, attempting to understand. She raises her staff.*)

MIRIKAY: **Zyl'zhi'cai!** (*The lights go out for a few moments and the rushing noise is heard again. When the lights return we are back in the present time. TORAL and the stone slab have come with MIRIKAY and the SORCERER to the present.*) Now shall the Alterrans learn the price of defying me. The White were able to challenge my control of the Book in its native land, but not even they can win the Book from Toral, its true master.

SORCERER: Then you had best wake him immediately.

MIRIKAY: Hear me, Toral, once White, now Shadowed One: The Dark calls to you! Awake and aid us in bringing Darkness once again upon the world. **Rho'yal'hil!**⁴³ (TORAL awakens.)

TORAL: Who is it that awakens me?

MIRIKAY: I, Mirikay Shadow, Guardian of the Book. (TORAL sits up. *It should be noted that now that TORAL has fallen, he is not fully sane.*)

TORAL: You seek Darkness?

MIRIKAY: Yes.

TORAL: Then I shall aid you. To what end shall my Magic work?

MIRIKAY: We ask that you rewrite time in favor of the Dark. A battle has been recently won by the Light. See that it is won by us.

TORAL: A simple matter. (MIRIKAY hands TORAL the Book.)

MIRIKAY: In your hands this belongs, bear it well against our enemy.

TORAL: I shall, Mirikay Shadow. Never before has anyone stood against my power, or prevented what I set out to accomplish. When all is done I name my price.

MIRIKAY: Agreed, but remember that I loan the Book to you, not give.

TORAL: We shall see. Leave me now, this task I will accomplish alone. (MIRIKAY and the SORCERER exit.) If it is Darkness they seek, then Darkness it shall be. I shall bring greater Darkness upon the world than they can imagine, or survive. The First Great Darkness I survived, and only I shall survive the Second. **Tor'syl'wyv** and I united once more, together shall we rewrite this war and the destiny of the world. (He raises his hood to hide his face.) **Zyl'nng'yhi!** (The lights fade up onto the field of battle and dim on TORAL who watches from the shadows.)

THIRD SISTER: Toral we send upon the stage

FIRST SISTER: Begin the end of the First Age (WELSCIAN and NUMORI WHITE enter. *They take a rest from battle and await the next attack.*)

NUMORI: The tide turns against us, Your Majesty, I had no idea the Enemy could boast Sorcerers of such great power and strength. The Shadowed One wields the Book as none save Toral could.

WELSCIAN: I understand your admiration of this Sorcerer, but I do not share it. His skill in magic proves a formidable weapon. Can you do nothing to combat the Book? The White have never failed me before.

⁴³"Dark'friend'awake!"

NUMORI: It brings me sorrow that we should fail you now, but we can find no defense against the Shadowed One. With the Book, his force will outmatch ours every time. *(WELSCIAN is silent.)* I am sorry, Your Majesty, we are out of time. *(WELSCIAN draws his sword.)*

WELSCIAN: Then we fight for more. If we desire our freedom, we must exert all of our strength to keep it, or perish in the trying. *(The EMPEROR and CROLLARO enter.)*

CROLLARO: Perish you shall, Welscian! I have no more patience for you or your Crown. You judged me not when you had the chance, but now I shall judge you. I warn you, Welscian, my justice is swifter than yours.

EMPEROR: *(To NUMORI)* You are one of the White?

NUMORI: I am. *(Before NUMORI has a chance to act, the EMPEROR slays her.)*

EMPEROR: The King is yours, Crollaro. *(CROLLARO and WELSCIAN begin to fight.)*

WELSCIAN: It seems we've been in this position before, Crollaro.

CROLLARO: So we have, but this time the ending shall differ. Know this: My mercy flows not as generously as yours.

WELSCIAN: More's the pity for you.

CROLLARO: No, for you! *(The fight continues.)* Your men are dead, Welscian. Soon you shall join them.

WELSCIAN: If I must die, then I shall at least take you with me.

EMPEROR: You have lost, King of Alterra, it is over.

WELSCIAN: Not yet. Crollaro, I give you this one last chance to rejoin your people and defend our land from these evil Creatures.

CROLLARO: Consider your offer rejected.

WELSCIAN: Then I take my leave of you. *(WELSCIAN relieves CROLLARO of his sword and quickly exits. CROLLARO picks up his sword and gives chase. The EMPEROR follows.)*

EMPEROR: Pursue him, Crollaro, do not allow him escape! *(The EMPEROR exits. The lights on the field of battle fade out, and the lights on TORAL return to normal as MIRIKAY enters.)*

TORAL: It is done.

MIRIKAY: I know. *(MIRIKAY holds out one hand towards the Book.)*

TORAL: You forget who crafted this Book ages ago.

MIRIKAY: When the war is won, then we shall discuss your price. Until then, the Book is mine.

TORAL: Do not forget who I am.

MIRIKAY: Do not forget who awoke you. (TORAL gives MIRIKAY the Book and exits.) And now, another matter to attend to. **My!**⁴⁴ (The lights fade up onto a cell where VOLAKAR lies motionless. It is clear that he has not been treated well. RAYASEI enters, his power renewed, and lifts VOLAKAR. They do not see MIRIKAY.)

RAYASEI: Awaken, Volakar, our stay here comes to an end. (VOLAKAR awakens.)

VOLAKAR: (Weakly) I told them nothing, Rayasei.

RAYASEI: You are fortunate to have survived.

VOLAKAR: Crollaro would not let them kill me, despite my silence.

RAYASEI: So he promised.

VOLAKAR: How did you escape? I could see no Light through these shadows, so stifling...

RAYASEI: Mirikay willingly let in a Light, and from that I drew power.

MIRIKAY: You lie, Rayasei, no Light did I allow to reach you! (Determined) You will not leave here, you cannot, you have no power to do so.

RAYASEI: Twice mistaken are you, Mirikay, for you allowed the Book into this dark domain. From it I drew power, and from it did I learn the secrets of time. I go where and when I choose.

MIRIKAY: I still have the Book, and you shall not wrest it from me. Will you leave without it?

RAYASEI: My battle does not lie here any longer. Not with you, not with the power of the Book. Another challenge waits for me and I shall not need the Book to face it. Volakar and I shall take our leave of you now. The Book I leave in your care. (MIRIKAY laughs.)

MIRIKAY: The great Rayasei runs from his foes! You may have regained your power, but you have lost your courage. (Behind MIRIKAY, the EMPEROR enters followed by CROLLARO, the SORCERER, and TORAL. TORAL's hood still hides his face to keep his identity hidden from the ALTERRANS.) Go then, leave your people to defeat. Even now we march unhindered towards Castle Dorian.

RAYASEI: The victor in this war has yet to be determined. I will play no part in that decision, for I must move on to another task.

MIRIKAY: Then may we never meet again.

⁴⁴"Open."

RAYASEI: Yes, so it shall be. *(RAYASEI exits with VOLAKAR. The EMPEROR advances to center stage with CROLLARO.)*

CROLLARO: There it is, Emperor, Castle Dorian, Capital of Alterra.

EMPEROR: Soon it shall be dust. *(The CAPTAIN OF THE DORIAN CASTLE GUARD enters carrying a flag of truce. The SORCERER moves to attack, but CROLLARO stops it.)*

CROLLARO: He carries a flag of truce, let him approach.

EMPEROR: Mercy, Crollaro?

CROLLARO: Respect, Emperor. I will attack no man who comes alone and unarmed. Grant him safe passage.

EMPEROR: It is done. *(The SORCERER steps back and the CAPTAIN approaches.)* What errand brings you here?

CAPTAIN: I bear a message from the King of Alterra to the Leader of the Nameless Enemy.

EMPEROR: I am the Emperor of the Ba'rak, soon to be your Emperor as well. State your message.

CAPTAIN: King Welscian asks that you meet with him to discuss an end to this war.

EMPEROR: Your King is a coward who runs from battle. Shall I speak with a King who lacks the courage to die defending his Kingdom?

CAPTAIN: It would be difficult to speak with a King who has died in battle.

EMPEROR: So it would, but he I would respect.

CAPTAIN: The actions of King Welscian are not mine to explain. If you desire a reckoning of them, you had best agree to a meeting.

EMPEROR: You speak bravely for one alone. Nothing prevents me from slaying you here and now. Or do you rely on the mercy of one who has turned against your land? *(The CAPTAIN spits at CROLLARO's feet.)*

CAPTAIN: I do not rely on traitors. *(CROLLARO reaches for his sword but is stopped by the EMPEROR.)*

EMPEROR: Remember your own words, Crollaro.

CAPTAIN: Kill me if you must, but then you shall have to deliver your own reply.

EMPEROR: You may return to your King and tell him what I think of his cowardice. Then you may inform him that I agree to a meeting.

CAPTAIN: When and where?

EMPEROR: At once, in this place. He, like you, must approach unarmed if I am to give him audience.

CAPTAIN: King Welscian will not come alone.

EMPEROR: Then you are either braver or more foolish than he. You alone may accompany him. I respect your courage, not his.

CAPTAIN: I will tell him all that you have said, Emperor of the Ba'rak. *(The CAPTAIN exits.)*

CROLLARO: That one I hope to meet in battle.

EMPEROR: You shall get your chance.

SORCERER: Emperor, why grant the Alterran King audience? He will only wish to speak words of peace.

EMPEROR: King Welscian may speak all he wants, it will change nothing. Peace will only come to Alterra when I rule over it.

MIRIKAY: Do not rely on that as the only path, the future rarely unfolds as we expect.

EMPEROR: I expect this war to continue, and I doubt I shall be disappointed.

SORCERER: Do you fear the future of this war, Mirikay?

MIRIKAY: No, I do not need to.

EMPEROR: Do I?

MIRIKAY: Perhaps.

TORAL: Your destiny, Emperor, is to achieve victory and be defeated.

EMPEROR: Spare me your riddles and speak plain, or speak not at all. *(MIRIKAY and TORAL say nothing.)* When I seek opinions, I shall ask for them. *(The CAPTAIN re-enters, now armed.)*

CAPTAIN: King Welscian of Alterra approaches under a banner of peace to speak with the Emperor of the Ba'rak.

EMPEROR: I bid him come. *(WELSCIEN enters, armed, and approaches the EMPEROR. The CAPTAIN stays at WELSCIEN's right side.)* I instructed you to come unarmed.

WELSCIEN: None give me orders in my own land, especially not those who enter it in battle.

EMPEROR: You requested an audience, not I, and therefore the terms are mine to dictate.

WELSCIAN: I shall remove my sword, and if you do not wish me to use you as its scabbard, you shall do the same. *(WELSCIAN removes his sword. The EMPEROR does the same. WELSCIAN then hands his sword to the CAPTAIN as the EMPEROR hands its sword to CROLLARO.)*

EMPEROR: Speak, if you must do so, else prepare for battle.

WELSCIAN: I come to ask what might end this struggle.

EMPEROR: Your destruction. No more, no less.

WELSCIAN: Is there no way to end this in peace? We are not a violent people.

EMPEROR: We are. Peace is not part of our nature.

WELSCIAN: We had no quarrel with you until you attacked an innocent Alterran vessel.

SORCERER: If you had heeded my warning and left immediately, we would not be here. Do not blame us for your actions.

EMPEROR: Do not send your people into the unknown if you wish to guarantee their safety. None may approach Ba'rak without our consent. You dared to challenge us, and now that challenge has been answered.

WELSCIAN: Is one incident enough to start a war? *(CROLLARO laughs.)*

CROLLARO: You still do not understand, Welscian, they need no reason to attack! The Ba'rak invade Alterra simply because it exists. Once they knew where to find your Kingdom, its doom was sealed. Conquest is their nature. *(During its next line the EMPEROR slowly walks closer to WELSCIAN until, at the end of its line, it is but an inch away from WELSCIAN and stares down into his face.)*

EMPEROR: All you need to understand, King Welscian of Alterra, is this: It is over, you are dead. Your Kingdom, your people, your future, your entire way of life, it all ended the moment you encountered us. We kill inferiors, that is what we do. We do not talk, we do not make peace, and we do not go away. Can you understand this, Dead King? *(Pause)*

WELSCIAN: You have doomed us all, Crollaro, may you die with us.

CROLLARO: You brought this upon your own head, Welscian.

EMPEROR: Your fate is sealed. I sentence this Kingdom to death. *(WELSCIAN takes back his sword.)*

WELSCIAN: First you must take it. *(The EMPEROR takes back its sword.)*

EMPEROR: It is already mine.

WELSCIAN: To conquer us you must break us, and that shall not be an easy task!

TORAL: Ignore not all he says, Emperor. You strive to dominate a determined people.

WELSCIAN: Who is this Shadowed One beside you? Not one of your people by the sound.

TORAL: No, one born in ages past, ere Alterra was, who also seeks its end.

WELSCIAN: Do the Fates themselves conspire against me?

TORAL: They do, for it was they who sent me here, and only at their bidding shall I depart.

CROLLARO: You have lost, Welscian. We shall take Alterra stone by stone.

WELSCIAN: If stones are all you desire, then take some and be gone. Advance no further or you shall pay for those stones with your own blood. You, Crollaro, will I deal with personally when I get the chance. *(CROLLARO draws his sword.)*

CROLLARO: Shall we have at it then? I long to finish this once and for all.

WELSCIAN: Would you be so cowardly as to attack one under a flag of truce?

CROLLARO: Run then, run from me. Run back to Castle Dorian and wait to die! You can run no farther than that. I shall smash Dorian to dust with my own hands if that is what it takes to get to you!

WELSCIAN: Then I shall see you there. *(To the EMPEROR)* If there be no chance for peace here, then I shall not stay to talk of it any longer. Prepare yourselves for battle, for it seems that is all any of us will get. *(WELSCIAN draws a line between him and the EMPEROR with his sword.)* Go beyond this point and you shall not return so long as I live. *(WELSCIAN exits, followed by the CAPTAIN.)*

EMPEROR: Crollaro, make ready our forces. We attack when the sun next rises. Ere it sets, Alterra shall be no more. *(The EMPEROR exits, followed by CROLLARO, MIRIKAY, the SORCERER and TORAL.)*

SECOND SISTER: Night has come, that will not change

THIRD SISTER: Light and Dark their war do wage

FIRST SISTER: The battle now to see the morn

SECOND SISTER: Shall they listen when we warn?

THIRD SISTER: In the end, the final fight

FIRST SISTER: Shall defeat both White and White

WEIRD SISTERS: On the field brave warriors lay
Victims of the death of day

Some fight for what will not be
Others towards their victory
Waiting shallow as a grave
A self born Fate they cannot waive
The act of encounters now complete
Soon in the fire all shall meet
Where this decision we then give
Whether or not the world shall live
(The lights fade to black. Finis d'Acte III.)

(In the humble opinion of the playwright, this would be the most strategic point for an intermission, if one is desired. RAYASEI agrees with me.)

ACT IV - CONFRONTATIONS

(The Chambers of RAYASEI WHITE. RAYASEI and VOLAKAR are studying old scrolls of lore. VOLAKAR is now dressed in robes of purple.)

SECOND SISTER: Darkness waits before the land

THIRD SISTER: Waiting for Light's final stand

VOLAKAR: Rayasei, may I not journey with you?

RAYASEI: No, this time I go alone. You must stay here to fight the Enemy.

VOLAKAR: What can I accomplish here that the White cannot?

RAYASEI: Have faith in yourself, Volakar, and you will discover the answer to that question. I shall take no other with me into the heart of the storm, be he willing or no. I am sorry, Volakar.

VOLAKAR: Do not be. I will trust your judgment in this matter, though I am loathe to follow it.

RAYASEI: Great Darkness is approaching, Volakar, and only the power of the White is enough to even hope to challenge it. It came once before, during the Freedom War, and almost brought with it the death of the world. We shall not be so fortunate a second time.

VOLAKAR: How shall you stop it?

RAYASEI: I am not yet certain, but I know the answers lay hidden in time. While on board the Enemy vessel, I had time to learn the final chapter of Toral's Book. That knowledge will I use to follow the trail, wherever it leads, until the solution is laid bare. Then the end shall be upon us at last.

VOLAKAR: What path shall I take towards the end? How should I fight the Enemy in the here and now?

RAYASEI: You are my apprentice no longer. I cannot tell you where to go. That you must learn for yourself. As for myself, I shall first journey into the future to see what Fate waits before us if this course remains unaltered. I bid you farewell, Volakar Purple, our paths at last diverge.

VOLAKAR: Farewell, Rayasei White, I pray we shall meet again.

RAYASEI: As do I. **Pha'myl'tra!** *(The lights go out and the rushing noise is heard.)* Stream of time, hear my request! Show me that which still could be if the future remains unchanged. **Zyl'nng'yi!** *(The lights come up, faintly, onto a bare stage. What little light there is emanates from RAYASEI. RAYASEI surveys the dead world he has entered.)* What dead, empty place is this? Does nothing remain of Alterra but this hollow shell? *(The VOICE OF THE WATCHER OF THE LIGHT (Male) answers.)*

WATCHER: No, Rayasei White, naught else. *(RAYASEI looks in the direction of the WATCHER.)*

RAYASEI: Who answers me from the shadows of this dead world?

WATCHER: I, who watches. I am glad to once again have one to watch, though I know you cannot stay. I would ask how you came to be here, Rayasei White, when all else have perished, but I already know the answer.

RAYASEI: Then more do you know about me than I know about you.

WATCHER: You know more about me than you realize.

RAYASEI: Might I ask how you survive into this time? Are you a traveler through time like I?

WATCHER: No, I travel no longer, I only watch. The Darkness claimed the Light and Dark, but not the Gray. We Gray exist to watch, though sometimes we appear to mortal men such as thee, as I do now.

RAYASEI: Why?

WATCHER: Because it is my part to do so. All must play their part, Light, Dark, and Gray. Tell me, Rayasei, what errand brings you outside of your proper time?

RAYASEI: I wished to see what might be.

WATCHER: Nothing remains to be seen, the world has passed away.

RAYASEI: I had hoped for more than this emptiness to survive.

WATCHER: The Darkness took everything. Its second coming brought naught but death.

RAYASEI: I seek to prevent the coming of the Darkness.

WATCHER: A noble endeavor.

RAYASEI: Can you tell me what caused it?

WATCHER: Yes, but you do not want to know the answer.

RAYASEI: Perhaps not, but I must know.

WATCHER: You caused it, Rayasei White. *(Silence)*

RAYASEI: All this, my doing?

WATCHER: Yes.

RAYASEI: But how?

WATCHER: The how is not mine to tell. I only watch. To learn the how you must seek out those who guide the play.

RAYASEI: Tell me this at least: Can I prevent what I might cause? Or is this what must be?

WATCHER: You may yet change this ending. No one else will.

RAYASEI: Then I must. I thank thee, Watcher, for your words.

WATCHER: Thou art welcome, Rayasei White, I have helped you more than you understand. To when shall you travel next?

RAYASEI: To when I may learn of the First Darkness. Farewell. **Pha'myl'tra!** *(The lights go out. The voices of the WEIRD SISTERS are heard talking with the VOICE OF THE WATCHER.)*

FIRST SISTER: Great service done by Watcher Light

SECOND SISTER: Evening star in Rayasei's night

WATCHER: Long have I followed Rayasei White's destiny. I could not leave him now.

THIRD SISTER: Truly spoken fellow Gray

FIRST SISTER: Your part to watch the course of Day

SECOND SISTER: Though Watchers once may yet do more

THIRD SISTER: Light and Dark, an even score

WATCHER: That time has long been finished, though Rayasei has known us both.

FIRST SISTER: In his time Fate's circle ends

SECOND SISTER: Midnight and noon around the bend

WATCHER: The end of the Age. When it comes the Watchers too shall depart. 'Til then, we watch.

THIRD SISTER: Then watch well the coming scene

FIRST SISTER: Where One may learn of what he needs *(RAYASEI calls out in the darkness.)*

RAYASEI: **Zyl'nng'yhi!** *(The rushing noise ceases as the lights fade up onto an empty battlefield in Trizera. The WATCHER has gone. The Trizeran Civil War can be heard in the distance. The First Darkness is in its beginning stages.)* And so it begins. The Darkness comes for the first time upon those unaware. But surely among these warring peoples one notices what I have seen, or do none realize the danger that approaches? *(BRAWYN WHITE, an aged Trizeran Wizard, enters.)*

BRAWYN: No, none I fear, save perhaps myself. I have watched the growing Darkness, but know not what can be done to stop it. Who art thou and in what manner do you arrive? I have studied the White Magic long, but never have I seen the likes of the magic you wield.

RAYASEI: I am Rayasei White of the Order of White Magicians.

BRAWYN: Welcome, White Wizard, if you are what you say. I know all the White of Trizera's great Empire, but I know not you.

RAYASEI: You know me not for I shall not be born for some years hence in a land that has yet to be named. It is the **Tor'syl'wyv**, the Book of Toral, that has brought me hither. My journeys bring me into times past on an errand of great importance. You have seen no magic such as that which brought me here, for it has not been wielded since the day Toral walked the Earth.

BRAWYN: You have dared to unlock magic Toral himself feared to use?

RAYASEI: I have, for it was necessary.

BRAWYN: Then a worthy Wizard you must be! Welcome, Rayasei White, traveler from times yet to be. I am Brawyn White of the Trizeran Order of White Magicians.

RAYASEI: Well met, Brawyn White. I perceive you also are a worthy Wizard. The Book has left its mark upon you.

BRAWYN: And upon you, I noticed that when you first arrived, but did not know for certain if you be friend or foe. You choose strange times to visit. Trizera finds itself deep in war and Darkness.

RAYASEI: I know. It is of Darkness that I wish to speak, and Darkness which brings me hither on my quest.

BRAWYN: Then ask the questions that trouble thou so, and I will answer if I can.

RAYASEI: The Darkness you see threatens the world again in my own time, but I do not even know its cause.

BRAWYN: Alas! That I wish I did not know, for that knowledge alone will haunt me to my grave. (BRAWYN *leans heavily upon his staff.*) I fear we have doomed ourselves to destruction. I have counseled His Highness, the Prince Trazeal, to forbid our Arts once he restores peace to Trizera. The Magic Arts we study are the cause you seek.

RAYASEI: How can this be? It makes my mind shudder to think the White Arts could be capable of such a feat!

BRAWYN: For some the Magic Arts are White no longer. This war turns Magician against Magician, and the spells some weave have become dark and terrible. Never before have I witnessed Magic so twisted. A great shadow falls upon our Order, Rayasei.

RAYASEI: Yes, the Order of Shadows, the Dark Sorcerers.

BRAWYN: It is they you must watch. They control the Book in this time, and I doubt not that they sit at the center of the Darkness, present and future.

RAYASEI: I believe you are correct. In my time, a Dark Sorceress named Mirikay has allied herself with an evil Enemy. Together they attack the land of Alterra with Dark Magic. I had little doubt that Mirikay and the Darkness were somehow linked. What do you ponder, Brawyn?

BRAWYN: A troubling piece of the matter. Never before in recorded lore have any witnessed this great Darkness. Only in our two times does it appear, although the Dark Arts have surfaced many times throughout history. What links our two times in this matter?

RAYASEI: A question I had not yet considered. It takes great power indeed to wreak such havoc. Some great Magic must focus the shadows of our times into this Darkness.

BRAWYN: But what can that Magic be? The Shadowed Ones have never wrought great tools. They only twist that which is of the Light. *(RAYASEI thinks for a few moments and then nods.)*

RAYASEI: Yes, that is what they have done. The White's greatest tool has been brought to evil, in this time and in my own.

BRAWYN: The Book of Toral, of course. The Book contains the greatest Magic of all, bound to react violently when used for ill. Taken in my time...

RAYASEI: ...and in mine. And so a great backlash of Magic results, culminating in the Darkness. The First results in great death, but the world will recover. The Second time, however, shall bring complete destruction.

BRAWYN: I too have an errand then, I must reclaim the Book for the White. I cannot prevent this Darkness, that I now know, but I shall see that it becomes no greater than it need be. Though it almost feels futile to know that one day the Book shall again fall into shadow.

RAYASEI: Such must be. The Book goes where it will, that we both know well. It sees farther than we, and shall come back to the White in its own time. My counsel for you is to follow it and the Prince Alterra. When the Book returns to you, Brawyn, use its power to heal the wounds of this land. There shall be many.

BRAWYN: Do the same in your own time after you banish the Darkness.

RAYASEI: I shall, if I am able.

BRAWYN: You will succeed in your errand, Rayasei White, that I am sure of. Where next shall you travel?

RAYASEI: Of that I am not yet certain. A Watcher from times hence, one familiar but yet unknown, told me to seek the ones who guide the play.

BRAWYN: Has the Darkness already begun to grow in your time?

RAYASEI: It has.

BRAWYN: Then little time remains before you reach the point of no return. Make haste.

RAYASEI: But to whom shall I go? *(He leans on his staff.)* Already I grow weary.

BRAWYN: Remain strong, Rayasei, 'til your journey is complete. You forget your lore if you know not who to seek. Fate has its eye heavily upon you, that I can see. Methinks you are bid to visit the Sisters Three, and that I marvel at.

RAYASEI: I thank you for your advice. But who is this Watcher that he sends me to them? Akin to them, perhaps?

BRAWYN: It could be.

RAYASEI: Then I shall seek out the Fates, in the hope that they shall give me the final answers that I need.

BRAWYN: I would not desire to stand in your place, Rayasei, I would be loathe to confront the Fates myself.

RAYASEI: The prospect does not please me, but I do what must be done. I will follow this errand to its end, be it bitter or sweet.

BRAWYN: Then I will waste no more of thy time and leave you to thy task. Our talk has not altered thy past, I hope.

RAYASEI: No, instead I believe it has fulfilled it. Time is a complex entity, and I still do not understand all its workings. My time grows short, so I must bid thee farewell, Brawyn White. I wish thee success in all thy endeavors.

BRAWYN: I wish the same to thee, Rayasei White, and bid thee farewell. May the Fates be kind to thee.

RAYASEI: Thank you. *(He raises his staff and BRAWYN steps back.)* **Pha'myl'tra!** *(The lights go to black. The rushing noise is heard.)*

SECOND SISTER: Bring him where he needs to be

RAYASEI: Bring me to the Sisters Three *(The lights come up on RAYASEI.)*

THIRD SISTER: Magic White has heard your call

FIRST SISTER: Ask your questions one and all *(RAYASEI looks around.)*

RAYASEI: Mirikay has been here.

SECOND SISTER: Mirikay sought power great

THIRD SISTER: And so fulfilled Toral's fixed fate

RAYASEI: She has brought him to my time? (*The SISTERS nod.*) But why? Toral is of the Light, Mirikay would want no part of him.

FIRST SISTER: What Toral once was, he is no more

RAYASEI: The Darkness has sent him into shadow. Could it be that even Toral, greatest of all White Wizards, could fall?

SECOND SISTER: Tell us, White, what you come for

RAYASEI: I seek wisdom. There are plans at work here I do not understand.

THIRD SISTER: Darkness grows when wisdom lacks

FIRST SISTER: Shall you go on?

SECOND SISTER: And ne'er turn back?

RAYASEI: I have little choice. My Fate is before me, and I shall not turn from it.

THIRD SISTER: None can turn from what they choose

FIRST SISTER: If you try the Light shall lose

WEIRD SISTERS: All (*Silence*)

RAYASEI: (*To himself*) What shall I choose? Can I succeed where Toral has failed? The First Darkness brought even him to his ruin. And if Mirikay has brought Toral to the present, he shall be the catalyst for the Second Darkness. Why did you allow this?

SECOND SISTER: Toral must go to future time

THIRD SISTER: Else Rayasei here we would not find

RAYASEI: You have called me here, Hands of Fate, and I have answered. Teach me so that I may not follow Toral down the path he now walks.

FIRST SISTER: We place a choice into your hands

SECOND SISTER: Greater than all Kings and lands

THIRD SISTER: Make it well or world die

FIRST SISTER: This fate we give you shant deny

RAYASEI: Why has such a Fate been placed into my hands? I do not wish to control the Fate of the world. I have seen the future, and it seems my choice leads to nothing more than death.

SECOND SISTER: What we give we give to thee

THIRD SISTER: No reason mortal for thou to see

RAYASEI: I cannot turn away this choice, that much I understand, but how can I choose otherwise than the future says I shall?

FIRST SISTER: What you have seen was shown to you

SECOND SISTER: That you might know what you must do

THIRD SISTER: The future seen is certain not

FIRST SISTER: What you have seen is what thou ought

SECOND SISTER: What else did you think we would show?

RAYASEI: To my mortal mind it makes no sense how one can see what may not be. Forgive me, Sisters, for my lack of understanding. I know not the ways of time as well as I would like.

THIRD SISTER: None blamed for what they do not know

FIRST SISTER: Save those who do not seek to find

SECOND SISTER: What wisdom lacks within their mind

RAYASEI: Sisters, tell me this, what is the choice I shall make that leads to never-ending Darkness?

THIRD SISTER: Your choice to make is yours alone

FIRST SISTER: Not ours to say else not your own

RAYASEI: Then at least tell me this much: Is my task to ensure that the Darkness never comes again?

SECOND SISTER: No other task shall be so great

THIRD SISTER: Life or death, the world at stake

RAYASEI: Then, so long as it remains in my power, it shall be prevented.

FIRST SISTER: Victory and defeat are one

SECOND SISTER: You shall know when your choice comes

RAYASEI: Your words hold hidden meanings, I am sure, but they fall like riddles upon my ears.

THIRD SISTER: So it seems they still may be

FIRST SISTER: But keep them for thy hour of need

SECOND SISTER: Wisdom shall be Light's lone shield

THIRD SISTER: To strength in power you must not yield

RAYASEI: But what of Toral? He poses a dark threat to Alterra, and all the world. Is he not linked to the Darkness? Shall he not be stopped?

FIRST SISTER: Shadows gather around the flames

SECOND SISTER: Thou to be Toral's one bane

RAYASEI: The shadows follow Toral now, and so must I. The path leads to him, where the fire burns and all our paths shall meet. He must be stopped.

THIRD SISTER: Fire shall come in final wrath

FIRST SISTER: Plant the seed to rise from ash

RAYASEI: I shall try. May I make the wise choice and rescue Alterra from the flames.

SECOND SISTER: Heed thou not thy own desire

THIRD SISTER: Lest it be Light's funeral pyre

RAYASEI: I shall heed your words, Sisters, and wield them as best I can. But there is one last matter I must ask of, ere I depart. When I met the Watcher, I felt as if I somehow knew him.

FIRST SISTER: Did you believe this was not so?

RAYASEI: I do not see how such could be possible.

SECOND SISTER: You know it not, but he you know

THIRD SISTER: No more to say, the time has come

FIRST SISTER: To see your errand finally done

RAYASEI: Then I shall depart. I thank thee, Sisters Three, for every word spoken here. May I understand them when the time is right. Farewell, I have a promise to keep. (RAYASEI *exits.*)

SECOND SISTER: Rayasei sent where needed most

THIRD SISTER: To defend his final post

FIRST SISTER: There between two paths decide

SECOND SISTER: For truth within the shadow hides

WEIRD SISTERS: Final journeys have begun
The focus now on but One
Who travels far answer seeking
Heading towards the final meeting
Where the fire kindled high
Sentences the doomed to die
Confrontations act as bait
To bring the players where they wait
For the much expected end
When every mortal hope shall rend
(*The lights go out on the WEIRD SISTERS. Finis d'Acte IV.*)

ACT V - ENLIGHTENINGS

(The Great Hall of Castle Dorian. CALINA sits in her throne. The sounds of battle can be heard nearby. WELSCIAN enters, followed by BEURAKI. Both have been in the thick of battle. When they enter, CALINA rises.)

THIRD SISTER: Now the final act begins

FIRST SISTER: Light and Dark about to win

CALINA: My Lord!

WELSCIAN: My Lady, I told you to leave the Castle!

CALINA: I will not abandon you so long as this Kingdom stands.

WELSCIAN: I fear it shall not stand much longer, our last defenses crumble before the Enemy. Alterra will soon fall.

CALINA: Speak not such words, My Lord! I know we can yet be saved from this Fate.

WELSCIAN: I admire your hope, My Lady, but we need more than hope to achieve victory. *(He takes CALINA's hand.)* It makes me glad to know you shall be with me at the end. *(CALINA lets go of WELSCIAN's hand.)*

CALINA: The end has not yet come. What say you, Beuraki? Do you share my hope, or the King's lack thereof?

BEURAKI: The Enemy controls most of the Castle, and will not take long to reach us here. Unless we can find some new weapon to use against them, the Enemy will soon overwhelm us. What remains in which to have hope?

CALINA: Rayasei's promise to return come the very end. There lies my last hope.

WELSCIAN: Rayasei promised such, that I remember well, but he also said that he and I should never meet again. Little hope does that give me. And if Rayasei does return, could even his power be enough to save us now?

BEURAKI: If Rayasei regained the Book, then perhaps could he match the Enemy. Without it, I think not. *(To CALINA)* I am sorry, Your Highness, but even the abilities of Rayasei are finite. *(WELSCIAN sits on his throne and lays his sword across his lap.)*

WELSCIAN: Then the days of Alterra are over.

CALINA: So shall you just sit there and wait to die? Is there not still an Enemy to fight? Do you not wish to die honorably at the Last Stand of Alterra?

WELSCIEN: My Fate is sealed. I will fight what must be no longer. They will soon come. *(Enraged, CALINA takes WELSCIEN's sword.)*

CALINA: Then I shall fight in your stead! If I cannot die before my eyes behold Rayasei White once more, then I shall fight for Alterra until that moment comes. And I will continue to fight with every last drop of my blood.

WELSCIEN: Go then, My Queen, and do what thou must. May Rayasei return to fight by your side. Farewell, Calina, bring back the honor to my sword.

CALINA: I shall. Farewell, Welscian. *(CALINA exits.)*

WELSCIEN: You may also go, Beuraki. Spend your last few moments however you see fit. *(BEURAKI kneels before WELSCIEN.)*

BEURAKI: I have pledged myself to your service so long as I live. I will not forsake you now.

WELSCIEN: Then remain here, and let us dream of happier times, for dreams are all we have left. *(Pause)*

BEURAKI: I am sorry, Your Highness.

WELSCIEN: For what?

BEURAKI: For giving such poor counsel.

WELSCIEN: Think no more of that, all is done. *(Silence. CALINA enters, unarmed, with her hands tied. Behind her come the EMPEROR, CROLLARO, and TORAL. TORAL's hood still hides his face. To the EMPEROR)* I have been waiting for you. I will trouble you to release your prisoner. *(The EMPEROR shoves CALINA roughly towards WELSCIEN.)*

EMPEROR: You may take her. I spared her life so that you may die together. Stand.

WELSCIEN: Why should I?

EMPEROR: The rest of my forces shall soon be here. *(The EMPEROR draws its sword.)* I intend for you to be dead when they arrive. *(CROLLARO draws his sword.)*

CROLLARO: No! He is mine, that you promised me!

EMPEROR: You had your chance in battle and failed. Now I shall smite him down.

CROLLARO: You shall not rob me of my revenge. *(CROLLARO takes a step towards WELSCIEN, but the EMPEROR blocks him with its sword.)*

EMPEROR: Remember your place, Crollaro. *(CROLLARO sheathes his sword.)*

CROLLARO: Very well.

WELSCIEN: What has this Creature promised you, Crollaro, that you submit so easily to it?

CROLLARO: Your throne.

CALINA: You are a fool to believe it. *(WELSCIEN stands.)*

WELSCIEN: If it is my throne you desire, then take it. But give me a sword so I might take this accursed Creature with me to my grave. *(WELSCIEN removes his Crown and places it on CROLLARO's head.*

CROLLARO then gives his sword to WELSCIEN and sits in WELSCIEN's throne.)

BEURAKI: *(To CROLLARO)* You do not deserve that Crown. *(He spits at CROLLARO who jumps to his feet.)*

EMPEROR: Let him be, Crollaro, you may deal with him later.

WELSCIEN: Peace, Beuraki, and respect your new King. We knew this was coming. *(WELSCIEN turns to face the EMPEROR.)* Now, before I fight my final battle, grant me but one request.

EMPEROR: Within reason.

WELSCIEN: When first I learned of you, your people were a nameless, faceless Enemy. I now know your name, but you remain faceless to me. I ask to see the face of my conquerors ere I die.

EMPEROR: You shall have your wish. *(Standing face to face with WELSCIEN, the EMPEROR slowly lowers its hood to reveal its head. The head is very reptilian with large evil eyes and a cruel mouth. The Ba'rak appearance, while not grotesque, is very shocking and alien. Upon its head the EMPEROR wears the Ba'rak crown.)*

BEURAKI: By Alterra...

CALINA: What have you unleashed upon us, Crollaro?

EMPEROR: Death and destruction. I shall wipe the Alterran people off the face of the earth.

CROLLARO: *(Suspiciously)* Then who shall I rule?

EMPEROR: Whoever remains. I shall give you subjects. *(WELSCIEN prepares to fight.)*

WELSCIEN: Enough, let us finish this.

EMPEROR: Agreed. *(The EMPEROR and WELSCIEN begin to fight. TORAL walks silently over to CROLLARO and whispers something in his ear. CROLLARO nods and responds in a voice only TORAL, and the audience, can hear.)*

CROLLARO: Yes, the time will soon come. First, we shall see the outcome of this battle. (TORAL *nods and takes a few steps in the direction of CALINA and BEURAKI. The fight continues.*)

CALINA: Fight, My Lord, and change this ending.

TORAL: He cannot, for the Fates have etched this ending in stone. (WELSCIEN *prepares to deliver a strong blow to the EMPEROR, but leaves himself too open. The EMPEROR takes advantage of this and places the tip of its sword on WELSCIEN's neck. WELSCIEN freezes.*)

EMPEROR: A noble effort... (The EMPEROR *lowers its sword and quickly slashes WELSCIEN across the stomach. WELSCIEN sinks to the ground.*) ...but not enough.

CALINA: Welscian! (She *attempts to cross to WELSCIEN, but is stopped by TORAL.*)

WELSCIEN: Farewell, Calina, give my respects to Rayasei. (WELSCIEN *dies.*)

BEURAKI: Alas that my service to the Crown should end like this. (He *lowers his head.*)

CALINA: (To the EMPEROR) You have slain my King, and for that you shall suffer.

EMPEROR: It is your people who will suffer, former Queen. (The EMPEROR *takes a few steps downstage, its back to the others. As the EMPEROR speaks, TORAL frees CALINA's hands and gives her a small dagger which TORAL has concealed in his cloak. CALINA walks up behind the EMPEROR. All else are silent as it speaks.*) The land of Alterra now belongs to the Ba'rak Empire. The war is over, and the victory is mine.

CROLLARO: No, Emperor, it is mine. (The EMPEROR *turns around to face CROLLARO. When it does so, CALINA stabs it.*)

CALINA: As you killed my King, so I kill you. (She *removes the dagger.*)

EMPEROR: Crollaro, you have betrayed me!

CROLLARO: Yes. (As it *falls to its knees, the EMPEROR raises a hand to strike CALINA.*)

EMPEROR: You shall still die. (Before it *can strike, CALINA kicks the EMPEROR in the face.*)

CALINA: But not before you. (CALINA *again thrusts the dagger into the EMPEROR's chest and removes it. The EMPEROR dies.*)

TORAL: Well done, Calina, you have rid us of a great nuisance.

CROLLARO: Yes, well done indeed. With the Emperor dead, the Ba'rak come under my command. (CALINA *turns to face CROLLARO, dagger in hand.*)

CALINA: And when you are dead? (CROLLARO *laughs.*)

CROLLARO: You will find me harder to slay than your last victim. We allowed you to slay that Creature to get it out of our way. *(CALINA takes a few steps towards CROLLARO. TORAL raises a hand towards her.)*

TORAL: **Oh!**⁴⁵ *(CALINA drops the dagger and sinks to the ground, asleep.)*

CROLLARO: Thank you.

BEURAKI: What are you going to do with her?

CROLLARO: She shall be executed for assassinating the Ba'rak Emperor. Such a crime must not go unpunished.

BEURAKI: A deed you lacked the courage to commit yourself!

CROLLARO: Silence, Beuraki, do not forget where you stand. I rule Alterra now.

BEURAKI: We Magicians shall resist that rule, Crollaro, so long as we have life. *(TORAL laughs.)*

TORAL: Your resistance posed no threat to my power before, why should it now?

BEURAKI: Who is this Shadowed One, Crollaro?

CROLLARO: Do you not recognize the great Toral?

BEURAKI: What? He is not Toral, Toral is of the White!

TORAL: But Toral I am. *(He lowers his hood.)* For centuries I slept, now I walk the earth again. You look surprised, Beuraki.

BEURAKI: How can this be? Has the great Toral White fallen into shadow?

TORAL: The White are weak, the Dark are weak. It is the Gray, those in the twilight shadow between night and day, who are strong.

BEURAKI: We shall not yield to you. The White shall fight you with every last shred of their power!

TORAL: The White are finished, as are you all. Crollaro, you will return the Book to me, I am its rightful owner.

CROLLARO: You will have to speak to Mirikay about that. She claims the Book for her own, and I doubt you will find her willing to give it up.

TORAL: Fool! Do you know with whom it is you speak?

⁴⁵"Sleep."

CROLLARO: Yes, one subject to me. Do not forget that. Do you challenge my rule?

TORAL: I do. I subject myself to no man. You too will perish in the coming of the Darkness. It grows even now, waiting to consume the weak. I shall take my Book by force, if I must, and use it to destroy you all! *(With contempt)* You can die with your precious Ba'rak, King Crollaro. Nothing shall remain of your Kingdom but ashes! *(Pause)*

CROLLARO: I see now, Rayasei, what you tried to tell me. You were right. Through the Ba'rak I have gained only the rising smoke of a dying Kingdom. *(CROLLARO stands and picks up his sword.)* Beuraki, as King of Alterra I ask for your assistance in ridding my castle of this menace.

BEURAKI: I come to your aid, Your Majesty, and in this deed may we both be redeemed.

CROLLARO: *(To TORAL)* Will you fight with sword or no?

TORAL: You would challenge me to single combat?

CROLLARO: I would, and I have. *(TORAL hands BEURAKI his staff and picks up a sword.)*

TORAL: Your foolishness amuses me. Very well, let us settle this matter your way. By my Arts I could slay you with a word, but that would not give me the satisfaction of striking you down with cold steel.

CROLLARO: Beuraki, prepare yourself. If Toral should utter one word of Magic, attack with all the force you can muster. Attack, Toral, and pray your skill in arms matches your skill in Magic.

TORAL: It does. *(They begin to fight.)*

CROLLARO: Yield yourself to me, Toral, and together we shall build a vast empire. Alterra and Ba'rak will be but the first of our conquests.

TORAL: I care not for mere conquests, but rather the cleansing of the world. With the Book, I shall spur on the Second Great Darkness and purge the world of the weak. Then I alone shall rule. *(He laughs.)*

CROLLARO: Have I not made myself any sane allies? You are mad, and Mirikay is mad to have woken you.

RAYASEI: *(Offstage)* Perhaps, but perhaps not. *(RAYASEI enters.)* It seems Mirikay was meant to wake Toral. Fault her not for that, Crollaro. *(The fighting pauses.)*

CROLLARO: Well met, Rayasei, for once I find myself glad at your coming.

BEURAKI: Rayasei, you live!

RAYASEI: So I do.

TORAL: This, then, is the great Rayasei White? Last hope of Alterra?

RAYASEI: Last hope against the Darkness, rather.

TORAL: (*Mockingly*) Do you fear the Darkness, great Rayasei?

RAYASEI: All should fear the Darkness, for if it comes none shall survive, not even you, Toral.

CROLLARO: (*To TORAL*) Then you are mad indeed to seek it! I shall smite you down with my own hand before I allow you to destroy us all.

TORAL: Fool, you cannot win this battle. I shall fight with steel only so long as it suits me. When it does not, you die.

CROLLARO: Then may your arrogance prove your undoing! (*The fight resumes. RAYASEI crosses to BEURAKI, looking at WELSCIAN and CALINA.*)

RAYASEI: Beuraki, what has happened here? The King and Queen, both slain?

BEURAKI: No, the Queen only sleeps. His Majesty was slain by the hand of that foul creature. (*BEURAKI points to the body of the EMPEROR.*) It, in turn, was slain by the Queen. A worthy stroke indeed!

RAYASEI: Let us hope it shall not be the last to fall. (*RAYASEI begins to extend his staff towards TORAL, but then falls and is caught by BEURAKI.*)

BEURAKI: Rayasei, what ails you?

RAYASEI: My travels have weakened me and diminished my power. I cannot match Toral with sheer force, be it Magic or otherwise.

BEURAKI: We need your power, what can restore it?

RAYASEI: Nothing, save time or the Book, neither of which do we have. (*BEURAKI helps RAYASEI to his feet.*)

BEURAKI: Then we must find something else ere Toral emerges victorious. He shall not hold to honorable combat for long.

RAYASEI: Time grows short, yes. I have been sent here to stop the Darkness and shall not abandon that errand until it is finished.

BEURAKI: I shall aid thee, if I can. I have learned to trust your wisdom, Rayasei, and will doubt you no more.

RAYASEI: I thank thee, Beuraki. Strange alliances do we find ourselves in, we even side with one who betrayed Alterra.

CROLLARO: Of that deed I now repent and make you this promise: Should I keep this Crown today, I shall yield it to thee, Rayasei, and trust your judgment in crowning the right and proper King.

TORAL: Only my hand will do the crowning in the coming Age.

BEURAKI: Rayasei, the Ba'rak forces will soon arrive in great numbers.

RAYASEI: I know. We must finish here before they arrive. Sisters, why have you sent me into the fire when naught can be done? Armed am I with wisdom and understanding, but little can I find to attack with it. The choice, I must wait for the choice.

BEURAKI: What choice?

RAYASEI: I know not, save it is the choice I must make wisely or we all are doomed. *(The sound of the approaching BA'RAK SOLDIERS becomes louder.)*

TORAL: Sit there and ponder your worthless choice, Rayasei, whatever it might be. You can do nothing. The flames claim Alterra. *(RAYASEI musters up a great effort. On his next line, RAYASEI extends one hand towards TORAL and then pulls it back towards himself, making a fist. It is as if RAYASEI is taking hold of TORAL, even though they are some distance apart.)*

RAYASEI: **Nua**,⁴⁶ Toral! *(TORAL jerks towards RAYASEI, captured for the moment. CROLLARO stops in surprise.)* My power draws to a close, but until it is gone I shall not sit idly by! *(TORAL struggles against RAYASEI's power, but for the moment he is held fast.)*

TORAL: You have not the strength to do this, my power is far greater!

RAYASEI: Have you forgotten, Toral, that the White hold a power over the Dark? Such is the power that I now wield over thee, the power which you once held in vast quantities. Rejoin the White and come back into your full power. Take this opportunity to redeem yourself, for it shall not come again. Do not let your Fate control you. *(TORAL breaks free of RAYASEI's grasp and RAYASEI falls to the ground.)*

TORAL: I am beyond the White, and I am beyond Fate. No power controls me any longer. When the Darkness arrives my transition shall be complete. I shall be Gray, immortal and unmatched in power.

RAYASEI: I pity you, Toral Shadow, for you have descended from the ranks of the wise into the companionship of fools. It seems your fall has done great damage to your senses. *(TORAL makes a gesture to strike RAYASEI who reels with the magical impact.)*

TORAL: **Uhl!**⁴⁷ Do not mock me, Rayasei, the price of that is death. Do you consider yourself greater in power than I? I fought the White of Alterra and emerged victorious. You are but one who runs out of time. *(TORAL extends a hand towards RAYASEI.)* Die now, weak and helpless. *(CROLLARO attacks TORAL before he can kill RAYASEI, but TORAL blocks the blow.)*

⁴⁶"Listen"

⁴⁷"Enemy!"

CROLLARO: We still have business to attend to, or had you forgotten? Finish it before you deal with Rayasei.

TORAL: If you desire to fall before he, then so be it! *(The fight continues.)*

BEURAKI: Rayasei, are you all right?

RAYASEI: Go.

BEURAKI: I cannot.

RAYASEI: Take the Queen and go, bring her to safety.

BEURAKI: I will not leave you here alone.

RAYASEI: You must. Hurry, before it is too late. *(BEURAKI picks up the unconscious CALINA.)* I may only leave once I conclude my errand. Your errand now begins. Two charges I make of you, fulfill them both, if you can.

BEURAKI: I shall.

RAYASEI: See that Queen Calina, rightful ruler of Alterra, lives to reclaim her throne.

BEURAKI: I will not leave her side until that day comes.

RAYASEI: Also, see that the Book comes back into the hands of the White where it rightfully belongs. It must not be allowed to further the shadows of Darkness. The Book has one final task for the Light.

BEURAKI: I accept your charges.

RAYASEI: Then make haste. Farewell, Beuraki Sky.

BEURAKI: Farewell, Rayasei White. *(BEURAKI exits with CALINA. RAYASEI slowly climbs to his feet and watches the battle.)*

RAYASEI: *(To himself)* What choice have I left in this matter? I can do nothing more but watch, and watching changes nothing. *(The sound of the approaching BA'RAK grows still louder.)* The Enemy comes to destroy all I have worked for, all my efforts have been for naught. Whatever choice was granted me has surely come and gone. My life's travels have yielded nothing in the end. *(RAYASEI leans heavily on his wizard's staff, his eyes closed.)*

CALINA: *(Off-stage)* Despair not, Rayasei White. *(RAYASEI looks up.)*

RAYASEI: Who calls to me? *(The CALINA of the future enters with the Book, which is open.)*

CALINA: I do, Lady Calina of Alterra. I bring to thee that which belongs most in your hands, the Book of Toral. Take it, and renew your strength to fight our Enemy. Receive the power to prevent the Fall of Alterra. *(She holds the Book out to RAYASEI, but he does not take it.)*

RAYASEI: Alterra, it is no more?

CALINA: We are now a people oppressed who must fight for our freedom. At great cost has your second charge been fulfilled. Take the Book, it is yours. *(As RAYASEI takes the Book from CALINA, TORAL loses patience with the battle and knocks CROLLARO to his knees. CROLLARO loses his sword. As TORAL raises his sword high, preparing to deliver the final blow to CROLLARO, RAYASEI looks at the Book and ponders his choice. RAYASEI makes his decision and says his next line as TORAL kills CROLLARO.)*

RAYASEI: **Syl'pha**.⁴⁸ *(RAYASEI gives the Book back to CALINA.)* Not this way. The Book belongs with you in your time, not with me in mine. Return to your own time, here I must end. **Ser!**⁴⁹ *(CALINA exits with the Book. RAYASEI and TORAL face each other.)*

TORAL: Now, Rayasei, only we remain.

RAYASEI: Yes, but now I have been empowered and enlightened. My vision returns and I see the end with clarity. The war must end, now, and we must end with it.

TORAL: Must you rely on visitors out of time to make your decisions? *(RAYASEI extends his staff towards TORAL.)*

RAYASEI: **Ryn!**⁵⁰ *(TORAL falls to the ground.)* Do not speak so to me, Toral, for now your power draws to a close. You relied too much on the Darkness which I have banished with a choice. Never again shall it threaten the world, for I shall forever end its possibility. Bid farewell to this world, Toral, it bids farewell to we. The world cannot survive so long as we combat each other with the Book between us. Two Books in one time would mean the world's death. *(RAYASEI raises his staff high.)* Sisters Three, I now understand what you have told me. I call upon the White Magic to hear my words one last time: Let the power of my being forever end the Darkness, and rid this castle of those who defile it. So do I end my days of service to Alterra. *(RAYASEI is about to strike the ground with his staff when TORAL cries out to him.)*

TORAL: Do not do this, Rayasei, we can still survive. We can both gain great power!

RAYASEI: What true power means, Toral, you have forgotten. Hinder me not from striking this final blow and thus fulfilling the errand Fate has given me. **Syl'way'thr!**⁵¹ *(RAYASEI strikes the ground with his staff. There is a large burst of light and the roar of a mighty explosion. The lights go out. So ends RAYASEI WHITE of the White Wizards of Alterra. The lights suddenly come up on VOLAKAR. He is alone. He staggers backwards as RAYASEI's death reaches him.)*

⁴⁸"Light'me."

⁴⁹"Go!"

⁵⁰"Silence!"

⁵¹"Light'never'dies!"

VOLAKAR: No! Rayasei! *(VOLAKAR sinks to the ground.)* It cannot be... What shall we do now?

THIRD SISTER: Rayasei his errand done

FIRST SISTER: No more to walk beneath the sun *(VOLAKAR turns to face the WEIRD SISTERS. For a few moments he is speechless from fear.)*

VOLAKAR: The Weird Sisters... Why do you appear to me?

SECOND SISTER: What is it you wish to know?

VOLAKAR: Why did Rayasei have to die?

THIRD SISTER: For the world to live

FIRST SISTER: It must be so

VOLAKAR: Was there no other way? Rayasei's death shall mean Alterra's Fall.

SECOND SISTER: To late to stop Alterra's Fall

THIRD SISTER: But he prevented death for all

FIRST SISTER: Rayasei's task he did succeed

SECOND SISTER: Of more to do he has no need

VOLAKAR: Then it is over. *(VOLAKAR closes his head.)* Let the Enemy find me here, no more can be done.

THIRD SISTER: Darkness Great forever gone

FIRST SISTER: The story shall continue on

SECOND SISTER: Light has still a task to win

THIRD SISTER: Ere the next Age can begin *(VOLAKAR looks up.)*

VOLAKAR: What task is that? *(Silence. VOLAKAR bows his head in despair. A few moments later BEURAKI enters carrying CALINA. VOLAKAR does not hear them, nor do they see him. Weary, BEURAKI sets CALINA down and rests. As he does so, she awakens.)*

CALINA: Beuraki, where are we?

BEURAKI: Too near the Enemy. We should not stay here, but I needed to rest. *(CALINA sits up.)*

CALINA: We have left Dorian, why? What has happened? *(BEURAKI pauses before answering.)*

BEURAKI: Your Majesty, Castle Dorian is no more.

CALINA: Then what of Crollaro and Toral, do they now rule our people?

BEURAKI: They are dead, all are dead.

CALINA: Then why grieve you so, Beuraki? The Enemy has lost its leaders! Rayasei and I have yet to meet. Perhaps he could still turn the tide of battle.

BEURAKI: All are dead, Your Majesty, friend and enemy, every last hope lies dead. Our King is dead, the Enemy leaders are dead, and Rayasei is dead. No more can he help us, though I deem he has done all he could.

CALINA: Rayasei, gone? (BEURAKI *nods.*) How?

BEURAKI: By his own will. As I brought you from Dorian, Rayasei spoke two words into my mind: "I must." At first I did not understand what he meant, but then Castle Dorian was destroyed in the death throes of a White Magician, and I knew.

CALINA: Then none from Dorian survived?

BEURAKI: None but we. All who stood in Castle Dorian at the moment of Rayasei's end, Alterran or Enemy, are dead. I am sorry, Your Majesty, to bear such ill tidings.

CALINA: They come through no fault of your own. The fault lies with those who once ruled Alterra. (CALINA *lifts an imaginary crown from her head, hers was left in Dorian, and lets it vanish into thin air.*) No crown rests upon my head, as it should be. With my Kingdom gone, I am Queen no longer. Now I am only Calina.

BEURAKI: You shall rule again, Lady Calina, I promised Rayasei not to leave your side until that day dawns.

CALINA: For that, I thank you. I will need dedicated companions if we are to see Alterra rise again. A great task lies before us. (By this point VOLAKAR has become aware of BEURAKI and CALINA's presence.)

BEURAKI: Rayasei gave me a second charge: To reclaim the Book from the hands of Mirikay Shadow. The Book's light will reveal the path towards the Dawn.

CALINA: We place far too much importance on that Book.

BEURAKI: Not on the Book, but what it teaches. Knowledge holds a greater power than any sword and a greater defense than any armor. It will prove itself a better ally than force and numbers. Our numbers will be few.

CALINA: Few in freedom, that is certain. I fear slavery waits for my people. (Pause)

VOLAKAR: *(Softly)* Lady Calina, you live.

BEURAKI: Volakar!

CALINA: Well met, Volakar Purple, we feared you had been slain.

VOLAKAR: Not I, but my Master.

BEURAKI: You know of Rayasei's death?

VOLAKAR: I felt it, I saw the end. My sorrows, Lady.

CALINA: Of sorrows we have plenty, but they do us little good. It is Rayasei's presence that we need, but that, alas, has been taken from us.

BEURAKI: Volakar, can you tell us of Rayasei's errand?

VOLAKAR: I know little of where he went, or what he did. All I know is that he found success in his errand.

CALINA: Success? What success do you find in Rayasei's death? It did little to stop the Fall of Alterra.

VOLAKAR: Rayasei's errand was not to prevent Alterra's Fall. Rayasei took a greater task upon him, and in that he achieved victory. The Darkness that crept upon our land is no more.

CALINA: Rayasei could have saved this Kingdom.

VOLAKAR: He did, more so than you realize. Rayasei had no desire to see this Fate befall Alterra, but only he could prevent the Darkness. That task took precedent. I am sorry, Lady.

CALINA: As am I. I took hope in Rayasei's words, and that hope has brought me nothing but the loss of my kingdom.

VOLAKAR: I do not fully understand what led Rayasei to his final decision, but I trust he has done what is best for us all. If you have no more hope, then have faith instead. The story is not yet finished.

CALINA: I apologize for my harsh words, Volakar. Little in this war has given me hope, save the words of Rayasei White. Now I find that some of them fail to come to pass.

VOLAKAR: All of Rayasei's words come to pass, but not always in the way we expect, or towards the outcome we desire.

CALINA: But we shall never meet again.

VOLAKAR: If he said you shall, then you shall.

BEURAKI: But it is too late now, Rayasei is gone.

CALINA: Yes, now.

BEURAKI: Lady?

CALINA: Volakar, if we regained the Book, we would also gain the ability to travel through time, would we not?

VOLAKAR: We would.

CALINA: Could such skills be taught to one not of your Order?

BEURAKI: Lady, you are not thinking of attempting such travel yourself, are you?

CALINA: I am, for a plan now occurs to me.

VOLAKAR: *(Thinking)* The Book should not waste in shadow. So long as it remains in Mirikay's hands, it is the darkest threat against us.

BEURAKI: Agreed, and Rayasei did charge me to regain the Book for Alterra, but would it wise for us to attempt to alter past events?

VOLAKAR: If Lady Calina and Rayasei must meet again, then again they must meet. *(To CALINA)* To when do you plan to travel?

CALINA: I shall bring the Book back to Rayasei, just before his end. With its power he would be able to stop the Enemy and prevent Alterra's Fall.

VOLAKAR: That may not be true, but when we regain the Book, I shall teach you enough to make this one journey. I can think of no reason why you should not try. But grant me this, Lady: Rayasei's goal in the past was to gain understanding, let yours be the same.

CALINA: I shall try.

BEURAKI: But before you make this journey, we must devise a way of taking the Book from Mirikay.

VOLAKAR: That shall not be as difficult as you imagine, Beuraki. She knew where to strike in order to take the Book from Rayasei, but I know where strike to take it from her. Come, we must find one of the White. *(VOLAKAR exits, followed by CALINA and BEURAKI.)*

FIRST SISTER: Its Fate in Dark the Book did act

SECOND SISTER: Now in night shall it turn back *(MIRIKAY enters, alone, holding the Book.)*

MIRIKAY: Twice slain Emperor, twice slain Crollaro, this time thou shalt remain so, for no more will I alter time in your favor. The victory is won! Better you ended as you did, Crollaro. Whoever

destroyed Dorian has done me many a favor. The obstacles to my own rise to power remove themselves, and Toral can challenge my claim to the Book no longer. But Rayasei, what of you? *(The SORCERER enters. It carries the Ba'rak Crown, such as the EMPEROR wore.)* What news have you?

SORCERER: The Emperor is dead.

MIRIKAY: I know.

SORCERER: That does not appear to concern you.

MIRIKAY: It does not.

SORCERER: Would it trouble you to know that Crollaro, the Emperor's chosen successor, is also dead?

MIRIKAY: It would not.

SORCERER: You knew this was coming.

MIRIKAY: I did. This does not please you.

SORCERER: You are inferior, but our laws must be obeyed. Crollaro chose you to succeed him.

MIRIKAY: He did.

SORCERER: Kneel, Infidel. *(MIRIKAY kneels.)* Mirikay, as the chosen successor to the Throne of Ba'rak, I crown you Empress Mirikay of the Ba'rak, Protector of That People. *(The SORCERER crowns MIRIKAY.)* In this day of our victory, we also confer upon thee this title: Queen and Ruler of Alterra. *(MIRIKAY rises as the SORCERER bows to her.)*

MIRIKAY: Whether it pleases you or not, I am now your leader. Where are your loyalties?

SORCERER: With the Crown of Ba'rak and whoever wears it. The law binds me to your service, inferior you may be.

MIRIKAY: So long as I have your loyalty, I care not what you think of me.

SORCERER: Ba'rak loyalty is absolute. None have challenged the Throne of Ba'rak since time began. I shall not be the first. *(Two cloaked FIGURES enter. They are dressed in Ba'rak robes, but no part of them is visible, not even their hands. They are BEURAKI and VOLAKAR who, by their Arts, sound as Ba'rak and conceal their true identities from MIRIKAY and the SORCERER.)*

MIRIKAY: Speak, my subjects, what news have you?

BEURAKI: *(As a Ba'rak)* Grave news, Empress, the Alterran Queen still lives. She gathers the White for a final assault against us.

MIRIKAY: Calina lives? *(To herself)* Some survived Dorian, it seems, but no matter. *(To all)* Let Calina attack, and for every Ba'rak they kill slay ten Alterrans.

VOLAKAR: *(As a Ba'rak)* There is more, Empress. The Alterran Wizard Rayasei stands at the side of the Alterran Queen.

MIRIKAY: Then he lives still, the only one who could yet challenge my power. Bid the former Queen to come and speak with me, and tell her to bring Rayasei. *(BEURAKI and VOLAKAR exit.)*

SORCERER: What do you plan, Empress?

MIRIKAY: We do not want to face Rayasei in battle, not if we can avoid it. We must instead lure him to his destruction. For that the Book shall be our tool and bait.

SORCERER: Is it wise to allow Rayasei to come to us? His wisdom will not lead him to a fool's death.

MIRIKAY: Nor did I have such in mind for him! I will weave a trap Rayasei will walk into willingly. I shall force him to sacrifice himself for the sake of Alterra. Rayasei's own power shall work against him. Indeed, it shall take the power of a Wizard to destroy the Book.

SORCERER: You wish to destroy the Book?

MIRIKAY: It is the trade we must make for the death of Rayasei, lest the Book fall back into the hands of the White. I shall see that it never strengthens them again. Rayasei and the Book shall die together, and their deaths shall feed the Darkness of our cause. **Thr'ilv'pha. Syl'whr'syl'hli'tor'rho!**⁵² I have shrouded myself in death, do not come too near. *(The SORCERER steps back.)* We have set the trap, soon it shall be sprung. Let them approach! *(BEURAKI and VOLAKAR enter, followed by CALINA and a WHITE WIZARD who sounds like RAYASEI. His hood hides his face. BEURAKI and VOLAKAR stand next to the SORCERER and MIRIKAY respectively.)*

SORCERER: Bow before Her Royal Highness, Empress Mirikay of the Ba'rak and Queen of Alterra. *(CALINA and the WIZARD do not.)*

CALINA: We shall stand. We are no subjects of Mirikay. *(To MIRIKAY)* If you wish to speak, speak, else we have other matters to attend to.

MIRIKAY: You speak highly, Calina, for one who has lost her throne.

WIZARD: And you speak with an arrogant tongue, Mirikay, as one often does in the wake of newly acquired power.

MIRIKAY: Rayasei, I knew it would not take long for you to find your tongue. I have not missed it, nor you.

CALINA: Did you summon us here only to trade unkindly words? Or do you truly wish to talk?

⁵²"Death'hear'me. Light'destroy'light'grow'great'darkness!"

MIRIKAY: I have no desire to speak with you, Calina, you are here as a witness.

CALINA: A witness to what?

MIRIKAY: To an unresolved matter between Rayasei and I.

WIZARD: Of what matter do you speak? *(MIRIKAY holds out the Book.)*

MIRIKAY: The Book of Toral, the item we both value above the outcome of this war.

WIZARD: Am I here so that you may taunt me with it? *(MIRIKAY smiles.)*

MIRIKAY: No, you are here to take it.

WIZARD: What is your device, Mirikay?

MIRIKAY: You are no fool, Rayasei. As you suspect, the Book carries with it a high price.

WIZARD: What price is that?

MIRIKAY: Step forward and find out. *(The WIZARD hesitates.)* You hesitate, Rayasei, do you not wish to reclaim the Book?

WIZARD: I do.

MIRIKAY: Then take it. What do you fear?

WIZARD: I am not so blind that I do not see a trap when one is laid for me. I ask again, what is your device?

MIRIKAY: Take the Book or do not, but ask no questions. *(Silence. No one moves.)* Why do you tarry so long, Rayasei? My patience grows short. This shall be your only chance to reclaim the Book, do not waste it.

CALINA: We shall not fall for your trick, Mirikay, whatever it may be.

MIRIKAY: This is no trick, it is a trade. I want Rayasei dead, and you want the Book. Take it, now.

WIZARD: No. *(A pause as MIRIKAY scrutinizes the WIZARD carefully.)*

MIRIKAY: You are not Rayasei. Cast back your hood, Pretender! *(The WIZARD does so, revealing him not to be RAYASEI.)* Did you think I would not see through this masquerade? Your errand becomes painfully obvious, but you will not gain the Book so easily! *(To the SORCERER, BEURAKI, and VOLAKAR)* Seize them! *(BEURAKI takes out a dagger and stabs the SORCERER in the back. It falls to the ground, dead, as BEURAKI and VOLAKAR lower their hoods. BEURAKI, VOLAKAR, CALINA, and the WIZARD form a circle around MIRIKAY.)* It seems I have underestimated your cunning. You have set

your trap well, but you shall not capture me or the Book. *(MIRIKAY holds the Book high.)* Come, take it if you dare! With the Book I have woven a cloak of death around myself. Touch me or the Book, and you shall meet death. Who will step forward to claim Toral's Book? *(None do. MIRIKAY laughs.)* I thought not! From Rayasei alone would I expect such noble self-sacrifice.

VOLAKAR: You would give us the Book just to get at Rayasei?

MIRIKAY: I would give nothing! Rayasei's power would have destroyed the Book and kept it out of your hands. But now, all falls better than I planned. There would be no need for this fraud if Rayasei still lived. *(MIRIKAY laughs triumphantly.)* Farewell, Fools, you have rejected the only chance you will ever have to take this Book from me. *(MIRIKAY turns to leave and walks out of the circle. Just before she exits, VOLAKAR calls out to her.)*

VOLAKAR: Mirikay! *(MIRIKAY stops and turns.)* I am not Rayasei, but what you found in him you will find in his former apprentice. *(VOLAKAR crosses to MIRIKAY and takes the Book from her hands. When he does so, a great pain strikes him. With a great effort, VOLAKAR crosses to BEURAKI and places the Book into his hands.)* Use this well in the cause of Light. *(VOLAKAR dies. CALINA draws her sword and approaches the astonished MIRIKAY, who backs away.)*

CALINA: This death will I revenge upon you, Mirikay, along with the death of every Alterran whom you have slain through this Enemy. Never again will you have one moment's peace until you are dead! For every drop of Alterran blood spilled, I shall make you pay with yours. Your dream is finished, Mirikay, and now the nightmare begins. *(Slight pause)* Run. *(After a brief pause, MIRIKAY does so and exits. CALINA shouts after her.)* Run! May you run the rest of your life from my vengeance! I shall hunt you down until the end of time if I must! *(BEURAKI lays a hand on CALINA's shoulder.)*

BEURAKI: *(Calmly)* Lady, we must go, the Enemy Soldiers will soon be sent after us. *(CALINA nods.)*

CALINA: Yes, Beuraki, we must leave and you must teach me.

BEURAKI: I shall.

CALINA: *(To the WIZARD)* Bear the body of our fallen comrade. *(The WIZARD picks up the body of VOLAKAR.)* Volakar Purple will be laid to rest with the highest honors. His sacrifice will never be forgotten. *(The three exit, led by the WIZARD, in a solemn funeral procession. The lights fade out, and in the darkness we hear the voice of CALINA.)* In the ruins of the present I see the hope of the past, and the shadow of the one in whom the future lies. You had the power to save us, Rayasei, but you would not save yourself. If you will not, then I will. I know what I must do. *(The lights fade up as CALINA enters, having just returned from her attempt to give RAYASEI the Book. She slowly walks to center stage, carrying the Book as if it was a great burden to her. Once there, she sinks to the ground in despair. BEURAKI enters and watches for a moment before speaking. This scene should be played slowly and pensively.)*

BEURAKI: *(Quietly)* Lady. *(Pause)*

CALINA: Nothing has changed, has it?

BEURAKI: No, nothing. I am sorry.

CALINA: As am I, for it seems that none may alter this nightmare.

BEURAKI: Perhaps not, but at the very least you tried. None will blame you for that.

CALINA: I blame myself for whatever I did not do that I could have done. I blame Rayasei for rejecting the help I offered.

BEURAKI: He would not take the Book?

CALINA: No, he denied it and sent me back to this time of chaos and sorrow. "Not this way," Rayasei said. What other way is there? Must the war end with our defeat? Oh, Rayasei, could you not have found another way?

THIRD SISTER: Be glad he chose no other way

FIRST SISTER: No other path shall lead to day

BEURAKI: The battle does not belong to Rayasei any longer, it is ours now. We must carry on without him. Perhaps it is best that we allow time to unfold as it may. The Book belongs here, not in the past.

CALINA: Too many have died, Beuraki, and I fear all their sacrifices have been for naught.

BEURAKI: They died defending our freedom. Our duty is to reclaim it. Have faith, Lady, we shall live to see a new day.

CALINA: You have faith in me, but what am I to have faith in? If I cannot see the road ahead with clarity, how can I lead my people down it? The shadow of defeat falls upon my heart, and it is a dark, deep shadow indeed.

BEURAKI: I cannot give you what you need to lead your remaining people, that you must find within yourself, but I can offer my service and my loyalty. You shall not walk this road alone.

CALINA: Thank you, Beuraki. *(CALINA holds the Book out to BEURAKI.)* Take the Book. I have no need of it any longer. The sight of it only brings me pain. *(BEURAKI accepts the Book.)*

BEURAKI: Well did you wield the White Arts, Lady, in time you would make a worthy Magician.

CALINA: No more will I attempt the White Arts, for they work against me.

BEURAKI: Not so. The White Arts only work against the Dark, never will they fight against that which is good. It is the Dark Arts that strive to destroy us, but in time we shall overcome them with the Light. In doing so we shall pass through pain and sorrow, but so must it be if we are to again know joy and peace. *(At this point CALINA looks directly at BEURAKI.)*

CALINA: You do not sound like yourself, Beuraki, you speak with a wisdom I have never before heard you utter. Rayasei's voice echoes in your words. It lifts my spirits to know that his wisdom has not fully departed from the world.

BEURAKI: I cannot replace Rayasei, nor can any other, but I shall do my best to learn from his example.

CALINA: If you can do that, then nothing more need I ask of you. I have never known any other whose wisdom matched Rayasei's. Our greatest folly was that we did not listen to him from the beginning.

BEURAKI: The past is lost to us, Lady, set your eyes on the future. In its unwritten pages we shall correct our past mistakes.

CALINA: I hope so. *(Pause)* Leave me alone for awhile, Beuraki.

BEURAKI: As you wish, Lady, I can see your need for peace. *(BEURAKI exits as CALINA sits in thought.)*

CALINA: And so, Rayasei, you end this war with a choice. I shall never understand why you chose as you did, and you will never know the depth of the sorrow your choice shall cause. To think that the choice between freedom and slavery for an entire people was given to one man! You chose death for yourself, and so handed over our people to the Enemy. How can I carry on in the shadow of such a choice? How do I tell my banished people that the one they thought so highly of allowed this devastation to occur? How can I lead when wisdom I cannot find? Difficult choices do I face amidst the confusion which confronts me. Like Beuraki, I wish to learn from your example, but I cannot decide if doing so means choosing life or death. *(Pause)* No peace. No peace waits for me down the empty road, so far as I know. No dreams. No dreams wait for me in the cold night. Only war and nightmares accompany me on the road to my grave. This chapter ends and I fear it is the final page. If it is not, then may the author of all have mercy upon our souls. *(CALINA remains seated on the ground and bows her head. The weary weight of sadness rests upon her shoulders. She remains motionless for the remainder of the scene. After a few moments, the WATCHER OF THE LIGHT enters from upstage. He is fully cloaked in gray, and no feature of his can be seen. CALINA cannot hear or see the WATCHER.)*

WATCHER: This chapter does end, Lady Calina, but it is not the last. We shall both play a part in the one to follow, though mine will be different than it has been.

SECOND SISTER: Well played your part, Watcher Light

THIRD SISTER: The circle drawn through day and night

FIRST SISTER: Alterra prepared for that ahead

SECOND SISTER: Ready are those who shall be led

THIRD SISTER: In the next Age, night to fell

FIRST SISTER: Where Light and Dark alone shall dwell

WATCHER: The time of departure has arrived. Your task ends, and so does your presence in the world.

SECOND SISTER: But mirrored Gray must still remain

THIRD SISTER: The line is drawn 'tween joy and pain

WATCHER: Our errand has only begun, and it will not end until the sun rises on the Second Age. When it does, we too shall depart and leave the mortals to the play.

Farewell, Sisters, until the day

WEIRD SISTERS: Farewell, Watcher, watch well the play

WATCHER: I shall. (*The WATCHER OF THE LIGHT exits.*)

WEIRD SISTERS: Now we bid you all farewell
For this ends what we shall tell
Of the story you have seen
And of what our words might mean
So ends the circle we did start
In which each have played their part
Act now enlightened by this tale
Players, watchers, do not fail
To remember of all stories told
For wisdom is the purest gold
(*The lights fade out. Finis d'Acte V.*)

So ends here the story of the Great Fall of Alterra, and the many casualties thereof.
May all remember that Light Never Dies.

FINIS

Pronunciation Guide

ALTERRA: All - **tear** - ah
ANKARTI: Ann - **car** - tea
BA'RAK: **Bah** - rock
BEURAKI: **Beoor** - ah - kie
BRAWYN: **Brah** - win
CALINA: Call - **e** - nah
CROLLARO: Crow - **lahr** - oh
DORIAN: **Door** - e - ann
KENTARI: Ken - **tar** - e
MANARA: Man - **are** - ah
MARSIA: **Mar** - see - ah
MELANA: Mel - **a** - nah
MIRIKAY: **Mere** - ih - kay
NIRIMAY: **Near** - ih - may
NUMORI: New - **more** - ee
OHAIRNA: Oh - **hair** - nah
RAYASEI: **Ray** - ah - say
TORAL: Tore - **al**
TRAZEAL: Trah - **zeal**
TRIZERA: Trih - **zer** - ah
TROVALI: Troh - **val** - ee
VOLAKAR: **Vol** - ah - car
WEIRD: **Weyard**
WELSCIAN: **Well** - see - in