The War of the Dark God

Scenario description and special rules

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1 Introduction

It is some 300 years after the Mage War, some 200 years after the Troll Wars, and 178 years after the subsequent collapse of the Great Empire of Chard. The scattered pieces of the once glorious empire are now five small human nations, uncoordinated where not outright at war with each other. The other “old” major powers of Chard are the Pirates of Pyr, the Druids, and various nations of non-humans. Then there are the three new powers, but we will come to them later.

Just north of the continent of Chard, in the Cold Sea, lies the Northern Isles where a human king rules what was once the farthest outpost of the Great Empire. In the northern reaches of the continent itself are scattered the castles of the Order of Quama, descendants of the finest order of knighthood of the old empire. Together with the two elven kingdoms and the Druids, these two human nations have hitherto dominated the northern part of the continent, except for the northeast. Here the swamps and deserts are home to the Snakemen, so called because of their scaly skin and their slightly flattened heads and yellow eyes. On the far northeastern tip of the continent, where once one of the great battles of the Mage War were fought, are mountains and harsh wastelands where a few scattered humans struggle to survive. The central part of the northern half of the continent is mostly covered with forests. In the eastern part of the forested lands lies the kingdom of the Elves of Windwood. Otherwise, the forests are home to the scattered human followers of the Druids, an ancient priesthood for the goddess of nature, Wenollin.

On the eastern shores of the southern half of Chard lies the Eastern Kingdom, once the strongest province in the Empire. The fertile lands of the Eastern Kingdom are shielded in the west by the Grey Range, and west of those mountains lie the lands that were once the heart of the Great Empire. Now the old heartland has only a fraction of its original population, concentrated around a few independent walled towns. In the southern part of the Grey Range lies the kingdom of the Dwarves, on good terms with the its human neighbours to the east.

The far southern tip of the continent is the Wey peninsula. This is ruled by a ruthless and powerful queen who is ever at war with her neighbour the Caliph of El-Sha’al, who rules a great populous nation on the plains northwest of Wey. North of Wey and the Caliphate, the great Din’aral jungle stretches in a green belt across the continent from east to west. In the hilly country just north of Din’aral, from the western shore and northeast towards the old heartland of the empire, one finds the kingdom of the Gnomes. Unlike his dwarven counterpart, the gnome king does not care much for humans, a resentment that dates back to the Troll Wars where the Great Empire punished the gnomes for their neutrality.

From the lands of the Gnomes, the Black range stretches northwards as far as the great northern forests where the Druids and the Elves of Windwood reside. In the middle of the Black Range itself, the Trolls have once again begun to gain in power, although they are nowhere near their strength from before the Troll Wars. They have enslaved the nearby tribes of goblins, and with the power vacuum in the old heartland of the empire they are looking to expand their influence towards the east. On the shores west of the Black Range lies the kingdom of the High Elves, ever a thorn in the side of the troll king. The High Elves, together with their cousins the Elves of Windwood, situated further east, have hitherto prevented the trolls from expanding northwards out of the Black Range.

In the great western bay that stretches from the High Elves in the north to the Caliphate in the south lies the islands of the human Pirates of Pyr. They used to raid the shores of the continent until the great battle at South Point where the navy of the Great Empire destroyed most of the pirate fleet. Since then Pyr has built a new though smaller fleet and is now so strong that the trade by sea between the Caliphate and the High Elves has dwindled to almost nothing.

Enter the Dark God.

The Dark God Ozzaxytl is a conqueror of worlds in several planes of existence (or dimensions, if you will). Ozzaxytl has now cast his hungry eyes on the world of Chard. He is currently unable to manifest in Chard but has to work through minions and agents. In order to bring about the manifestation of their master, the agents have to gain control of seven *power spots,* specific locations where the lines of power that bind the world meet, and erect a *dark obelisk* on each power spot. A few obelisks have already been erected, and as more are added, the power that Ozzaxytl can channel to his minions will increase. The Old Gods of the world of Chard were unaware of the threat from Ozzaxytl until the erection of the first obelisks changed the power pattern of their world. They cannot oppose the much stronger Ozzaxytl directly but have to work through their followers to prevent the erection of the obelisks.

Ozzaxytl's influence has introduced three new major powers on Chard: The Vampire Lord, the Sorcerer and the Beast Master, none of which were previously powerful enough to threaten any of the regular nations. The Vampire Lord has his realm in the far north east of the continent, just north of the Snakemen. The Sorcerer's castle is located in the Red Ridge Mountains, a range that runs along the western coast of Chard, from the kingdom of the High Elves in the south to the Cold Sea in the north. The Beast Master lives somewhere in the wilderness of the east, south of the Snakemen and southeast of Windwood. The emergence of these three powers very much threatens the elven kingdoms, the Druids and the Order of Quama.

The War of the Dark God is about to begin. It will end when either all seven dark obelisks are in place or when all existing obelisks have been destroyed and the Old Gods again reign supreme.

2 The Nations

Here follows a description of the sixteen player positions in the War of the Dark God scenario. The military and economic concerns of each nation are described along with a summary of any special powers.

The positions are arranged in two opposing factions: The Minions of the Dark God versus The Alliance. Nations from different factions cannot have more friendly relations than "neutral" while nations from the same faction cannot have relations less friendly than "neutral".

2.1 The Minions of the Dark God

The eight nations or powers following Ozzaxytl have the common goal of establishing the seven obelisks, preferably destroying the nations following the Old Gods in the process. To establish the obelisks they must gain control of the seven power spot hexes.

The Vampire Lord: The Dark God has given the Vampire Lord the power to animate the dead and control them. The Lord rules a bleak and dark country where a few scattered villages contain the only population. A small band of mercenaries is the only regular army, but the nations of the north rightly fear the power of the Vampire Lord and his re-animated dead (or un-dead).

- **Military:** The starting military is just a few mercenaries and a few of the weakest un-dead troops, but the realm of the Vampire Lord is remote and not easily accessible. The Lord and his lieutenants can create armies of the weaker un-dead such as zombies and skeletons. These armies do not require any upkeep, but creating them takes time and finding the necessary death mana can be difficult. The more powerful un-dead creatures such as wraiths or ghostly warriors can only be summoned by the Vampire Lord himself and furthermore they require an upkeep. These un-dead are so dreadful to behold that their mere presence strikes all but the bravest of men with terror. Their only weakness is their vulnerability to certain holy powers.
- **Economy:** The small population and desolate lands mean that only a little gold is available. The main resource needed is not gold, however, but death mana. This mana is found mainly on old battlefields and in ruined cities and it is one of the main tasks of the vampire lieutenants of the Vampire Lord to roam the land for mana.
- **Special powers:** The Vampire Lord can cast various magic spells which can be used to reduce the production of his enemies' countries (population, livestock and food) and to locate death mana, and he and some of his minions can also cast the feared cold strike spell.

Neighbours: The nearest allies are the Snakemen just to the south. The nearest enemies are a little more distant and are the Order of Quama and the Elves of Windwood, both to the west. The Druids are also ever nearby.

The Sorcerer: The Sorcerer has the special favour of the Dark God. He has been given the power to summon minions of the Dark God, so-called demons, from other planes of existence. He also knows many arcane mysteries and can weave complicated spells. He rules a small, thinly populated country in the Red Ridge Mountains. His summoned demons are feared for their toughness and fierceness.

Military: The Sorcerer has a small regular army for defence but for attack he must rely on his ability to quickly summon powerful demon armies. The two difficulties with this are that the demon troops are expensive to maintain for any length of time and that only the Sorcerer himself can summon them.

Economy: The Sorcerer has only a small income in gold from his lands, but gold is not the most important resource to him. For his demons he needs dark mana and for his spells enchantment mana. The first kind of mana he receives directly from the Dark God, and the flow can only be increased as more obelisks are erected by the Sorcerer or his allies. The second kind of mana he can increase by meditation or by gaining possession of certain artefacts.

Special Powers: The Sorcerer has great magical powers and knows a variety of spells, including some strike spells. He has assistant sorcerers who also have magical powers but no power over demons. The Sorcerer can even teleport himself, with or without others, and this makes his armies the most mobile in the world.

Neighbours: The nearest allies are the Trolls, quite a distance to the southwest. The nearest enemies are the Northern Isles to the north (but they are unable to land directly on the rocky shores of the Sorcerer's realm) and the Order of Quama, plus the ever-present Druids.

The Beast Master: The Beast Master is a monster half man and half beast, created by the stray magical energies still lingering from the Mage War in some places. Scorned by civilisation and shunned by natural beasts, he was easily turned to the Dark God in his thirst for revenge. He lives in a wilderness stronghold with his following of other beast-men and monsters.

Military: The Beast Master recruits his armies from the beast-men living in the wilderness. He and his minions can also sometimes ally with the monsters wandering the lands, at least with those which have intelligence. No upkeep or creation cost is paid for this army, but the recruiting base is limited in any one place, and it takes time to find and organise the wary beast-men.

Economy: The Beast Master does not care for the coins of civilisation, nor does he need any mana. However, some of his follower beast-men have special powers that require enchantment mana. They have some inherent mana in them but additional mana can be obtained by gaining certain artefacts.

Special Powers: Some of the Beast Master's followers have minor magical ability. Among their spells are strike spells and knowledge finding spells. The Beast Master "nation" can demolish cities which they gain control of (and score victory points for it). The most important special power of the beast-men is however that all leaders can enter and leave "quest mode" not only in owned hexes but also in neutral hexes and therefore to a large extent move around unseen by the armies and scouts of other nations.

Neighbours: The nearest allies are the Snakemen, some distance north, and the Trolls, a somewhat further distance southwest. The nearest enemies are the Elves of Windwood, not too far northwest, and the Druids.

The Snakemen: The various tribes of snakemen are united under one king. For centuries they have lived in the swamps and deserts, displaced from better lands by the stronger races. The Dark God has promised them dominance over old enemies and vast reaches of fertile land.

Military: The scaly skin of the snakemen is a natural armour and they can fight fiercely with clubs and stones or using their teeth. With proper weapons and training, however, they become comparable to human heavy infantry, only more mobile. Some tribes fight mounted on the large lizard-like "dzareks", two armoured warriors on the back of each beast. Some can quickly make reed boats when needed and thus travel on rivers or lakes or even on the ocean, if they stay near the coast.

Economy: The armies of the snakemen only have to be supplied with food, not gold, which is rather fortunate as the nation is extremely poor. The main problem facing the snakemen is the lack of weapons for their armies. Their lands have little metal ore and except for food they do not have much to trade.

Special Powers: None, other than those listed under *military*.

Neighbours: The nearest are the Vampire Lord to the north and the Beast Master to the south. The nearest enemies are the Order of Quama, the Elves of Windwood and the Druids, all to the west and south west.

The Trolls: The Troll kingdom is in the Black Range and its forested foothills. The trolls are old enemies of the elves and the dwarves; and the Dark God has promised that these races shall become slaves of the trolls. The trolls already dominate the weaker and smaller goblins, who they use for labour and catapult-fodder in their armies.

Military: The trolls can muster hordes of goblin troops, equipped with spears or crude swords, some riding fierce wolves. These goblin troops are weak and cowardly, at lest compared to proper troll soldiers, but there are not that many trolls to recruit quality troops from. Troll soldiers are well known for the extreme rapidity with which their wounds heal; wounds suffered in battle one day will be completely gone the next.

Economy: The trolls mine their mountains for gold and metals for their weapons. They get wood and food from the forested foothills. Their shaman draws his enchantment mana from certain gems occasionally found in the mines.

Special Powers: Trolls are very good at tunnelling and sapping work and thus quite good at bypassing or destroying enemy fortifications. The kingdom has a shaman who knows a few minor spells.

Neighbours: The only really nearby allies are the Gnomes, immediately south. Other than that, the nearest are the Pirates of Pyr, some distance southwest across the ocean. Enemies are the High Elves, very near towards the west, and the Druids and the Elves of Windwood, both fairly near towards the north.

The Pirates of Pyr: The islands of the Pirates of Pyr lie off the west coast of Chard. For centuries the rulers of these isles have been mainly pirates, raiding the coasts of the continent and capturing the merchant vessels that brave the western seas. From time to time the various nations along the coast have attempted to destroy or at least curb the pirates, and in fact the Great Empire managed to destroy most of the pirate fleet and would surely have invaded Pyr had it not been for the timely outbreak of the Troll Wars. The pirate king has been promised great wealth by the agents of the Dark God and is thus a staunch supporter of Ozzaxytl's cause (and if he had joined the Alliance he would have had to forego robbing the shipping of the Caliphate and the High Elves). As a reward the Dark God has given him some magical powers.

Military: The Pirates have a large fleet which they rely on to quickly bring them where the action (and loot) is. They have very few horses and are thus the only human nation without cavalry. Their harbours are guarded by castles and this together with their powerful fleet makes the Pirate islands very difficult to invade.

Economy: The Pirates are very independent people and thus reluctant to pay taxes or work in villeinage (they would rather be villains than villeins). Thus the gold and manpower available to the pirate king is not on par with that available to other nations. Wood for ships is also always in short supply. On the bright side, pirates bring their own weapons and thus the need for metals is limited. Their sorcerer king gets his mana directly from the Dark God and thus the mana available depends on the number of obelisks standing.

Special Powers: The sorcerer-king can magically dominate the giant insects which infect much of the wilderness of Chard and this can boost his armies at least early in the game. He can also cast various minor enchantments and as more obelisks are raised his magical powers become more substantial. The renowned pirate heroes can in a pinch usually recruit some bandits to their cause, even in neutral territory. The pirates can also build ships cheaper than other seafaring nations.

Neighbours: The nearest allies are the Gnomes and the Trolls in the east. The nearest enemies are the High Elves to the north and the Caliph of El-Sha'al to the southeast.

The Gnomes: The Gnomes inhabit the hills immediately south of the Black Range. Besides the large Gnome population, there is a minority of dwarves. During the Troll Wars, the Gnomes maintained neutrality to avoid being overrun by their powerful neighbour to the north. The Great Empire, which paid dearly in the wars, subsequently occupied most of the Gnomes' realm and exacted heavy taxes as "war compensation". The Great Empire is now gone and the Gnomes once again free in their own lands, but the resentment towards the victors of the Troll Wars – humans in particular – is still strong. When the Trolls joined the side of the Dark God, the Gnome king decided that this time around, he might as well truly ally his kingdom to the Trolls and thus get a chance to avenge the humiliations suffered in the last great war.

Military: The military power at start is not great, but the Gnomes can quickly muster a fairly large number of troops (infantry and archers), comparable in quality to light and medium human troops. They can also muster a few high quality dwarven regiments. Gnomes (and dwarves) are generally resistant to magical attacks.

Economy: With an abundance of mines, the Gnomes never lack metals for their weapons nor gold to pay their troops. They are also well supplied with food and can thus be said to have an all round sound economy. Their wizards generate their own mana and can meditate to boost their production.

Special powers: The gnome engineers are effective at sapping work and can thus weaken enemy defences. Gnome wizards know various spells, most importantly powerful strike spells, and any successful campaign is likely to rely heavily on those strikes. The gnome wizards are also skilled in the creation of magical weapons.

Neighbours: The nearest neighbours are the Trolls immediately north and the Pirates of Pyr, across the ocean to the west. The nearest enemies are the Caliph of El-Sha'al whose realm is to the south and their cousins the Dwarves, some distance southeast.

The Queen of Wey: The people of the Wey peninsula have long been ruled by a ruthless and (in the opinion of some) mad queen. She has always coveted the lands of the Caliph and the current war between their two nations is the result. Recently, however, the queen had been more worried about her advanced years and failing health than by her war with the Caliph. Thus when the Dark God approached her and promised her eternal life, she immediately became his servant. The power flowing to her from the Dark god through the obelisks now keeps her strong and healthy and she knows she will become ever stronger as more obelisks are erected.

Military: The Queen of Wey has a large standing army due to the constant state of war of her nation. She is the only one to use war elephants in her armies, the strongest regular units available to human nations. Other than that, her troops are mostly medium and heavy infantry; she has practically no cavalry. If the Queen should be forced to fight a defencive war she has the benefit of having exclusively walled cities and defendable borders.

Economy: The people of Wey are poor and over-taxed. The cost of constant warfare has drained the nation of most resources. But the land is fertile and the slave-worked mines are producing the metals needed to keep the army supplied with weapons.

Special powers: None at start, but as more obelisks are erected the Queen will gain the ability to cast some spells and even summon powerful un-dead.

Neighbours: The biggest problem presently facing the Queen of Wey is that she has no allies nearby. The nearest ones are the Gnomes and the Pirates, both of them north and west beyond the lands of the Caliph. Her nearest enemies are of course the Caliph of El-Sha'al to the northwest, but also too close for comfort are the Dwarves to the northeast. *It is unlikely that both the Queen of Wey and the Caliph of El-Sha'al will be in the game after the first half has been played.*

2.2 The Alliance

The seven nations of the Alliance, aided by the Druids, oppose the minions of the Dark God. Their common goal is to find and destroy any dark obelisks already erected, and to prevent their opponents from gaining control of the power spots (certain hexes). Unfortunately they do not know exactly where the seven power spots are, but have to deduce it from the activities of Ozzaxytl's minions (or through various special spells and powers, or hidden ancient lore).

The Order of Quama: Quama is the god for law and fairness. The templars of Quama were renowned in the Great Empire for their fearlessness and skill in combat. After the collapse of the Empire, most of the knights settled in the northern part of the continent where the Order had built its strongest castles. Today the Order of Quama is the main military power in the north, but it also has widely separated territories to guard.

Military: The Order has quite large armies of heavy troops. Their knights are great leaders in battle and also capable of undertaking perilous quests on their own. The navy is small and consists mainly of transport vessels. Their strong castles guard all their vital territories and a well maintained stretch of the old North Road gives their heavy troops some mobility even over the great distances within their realm.

- **Economy:** The Order rules a well disciplined and prosperous people and thus the tax base is excellent. They are also well supplied with metals for their weapons and armour. Horses is in fact the only commodity which could ever be in short supply, due to the ever present demand for cavalry mounts. The priesthood gain their mana from praying to Quama.
- **Special Powers:** The priests of Quama know various information gathering spells and some spells especially useful for combating un-dead and demons. They can also create golems (giant, strong, humanoid creatures) to aid the questing knights.
- **Neighbours:** The Order of Quama control territories over much of the northern Chard and thus have almost all the nations of the northern half of Chard nearby. In the east, the Snakemen and the Vampire Lord are not too far away, in the west is the Sorcerer. In the south are the Elves of Windwood and in the north, in the Cold Sea, are the Northern Isles. The Druids are like the Order dispersed over much of Northern Chard and thus never far away.

The High Elves: The High Elves are the oldest nation of Chard, predating the Great Empire by several millenia. Their numbers have not yet been fully restored after their losses in the Troll Wars and thus their power is not what it once was. Their wealth and knowledge is considerable however, and their armies, though small, are of excellent quality. They worship Enellior, the elven god, and also Quama, the god of law. The elven lords have some magic skills.

- **Military:** Elven troops are well equipped and fearless in battle. They are inherently resistant to magic and can themselves weave minor enchantments that help them versus opponents who are so tough they can only be damaged by magical means. The High Elven archers are renowned for their skill and range. The navy of the High Elves consists of a few warships, lately used mainly for escorting the few traders who dare the waters of the Western Sea.
- **Economy:** The High Elves are very wealthy and even with moderate taxation the income is usually more than sufficient. They also produce metals, wood and horses in adequate quantities. The High Elven lords draw their mana from the entire elven population while the priesthood obtain their mana by prayer.
- **Special powers:** The elven lords can cast and dispel enchantments and create enchanted weapons. The elven priesthood knows information gathering spells and spells effective against un-dead and demons as well as some strike protection spells.
- **Neighbours:** The nearest enemies are the Trolls a very short distance to the southeast and the Pirates of Pyr in the part of the Western Sea which lies due south. Then there is the Sorcerer, some distance to the north. The nearest allies are the Druids to the northwest and also the Order of Quama in that direction, for even though they are some distance away the old roads are maintained most of the way. The cousins in Windwood are somewhat further away across the Black Range but can travel quickly.

The Elves of Windwood: Like the High Elven nation, the elven presence in Windwood predates the Great Empire. The Elves of Windwood are descendants of elves who left the elven cities in the west for a simpler life in the great forests of northern Chard. Once the elves roamed all of the great forests, but during the Mage War and later the Troll Wars they gravitated to Windwood to seek safety in numbers. They worship Enellior, the elven god, and Wenollin, the goddess of nature. They have no separate priesthood but their lords are versed in the magic of nature as well as some of the old elven enchantments.

- **Military:** The Elves of Windwood have only small standing armies, but every wood-elf is a hunter and the armies are thus quickly mustered. Their powerful and enchanted bows shoot straight and their axes and swords are sharp. Some elves tame the great wolves of the forest and use them as mounts or charm them to fight with them in battle.
- **Economy:** The Elves of Windwood have only little gold and only little do they need it. They do not mine metals but use mostly wood for their weapons. The woods provide plenty of food, wood and wolves. The nature mana is drawn directly from the land and the enchantment mana is drawn from the elven population.
- **Special powers:** Like their civilised cousins in the west, the elven lords of Windwood can cast and dispel enchantments and create magic weapons. They also have some skill with nature magic and can improve their own or their allies' production of food, wood and livestock as well as do some healing.

Neighbours: The nearest enemies are the Snakemen to the northeast and the Beast Master to the east; the most powerful enemies are the Trolls to the south, just slightly further away than the other two. In the far northeast is the Vampire Lord and his un-dead hordes. The nearest allies are the Druids, immediately north and south and also a short distance west. The Order of Quama is not far away to the northwest and north.

The Dwarves: The Dwarves live in strongly fortified cities and castles in the southern end of the Grey Range. Even though the Dwarves are not devout followers of any of the old gods, they have to oppose the Dark God as they do not relish the thought of slavery under their old hated enemies, the Trolls. Their only regret is to be opposed to their cousins the Gnomes because of the old follies of the Great Empire. The Dwarves have recently had an influx of dwarves and gnomes from the Gnome kingdom, refugees who hate the Trolls more than they loved their King.

Military: Dwarves are tough, magically resistant fighters and produce quality weapons. All their troops are heavily armed and armoured and are especially effective against large opponents (such as giants, trolls, elephants and even cavalry). The Dwarves can also recruit a few gnome units, but these are much weaker than the dwarven units and the gnome population is perhaps better utilised to work the mines. Their fortresses are the strongest in Chard, even stronger than the enchanted cities of the High Elves. They have no cavalry nor any navy and thus have no fast-moving troops of any kind. Their starting armies are adequate, but recruiting and outfitting new troops takes a long time.

Economy: The Dwarves are accomplished miners and thus produce great quantities of iron and gold. Their main concern is that their realm produces too little food to support great armies, but luckily dwarves eat less than other races.

Special powers: The dwarven engineers are very good at weakening and bypassing enemy fortifications and can also quickly build temporary fortifications in the field.

Neighbours: The nearest enemy is the Queen of Wey, a small distance to the southwest (although through difficult terrain). The Nearest allies are the Eastern Kingdom, neighbours to the north, and the Caliph of El-Sha'al through the Din'aral to the west.

The Druids: The Druids are the priesthood of Wenollin, the goddess of nature. They do not constitute a nation as such but are nevertheless a major power in the northern half of Chard. They have human followers concentrated in several locations in the great northern forests; men of the woods and hills.

Military: The Druids have small forces of able men in every place they call theirs. Almost wherever you go you in the wilderness you can find worshippers of Wenollin and thus the Druids can recruit units in most neutral hexes. Where men will not suffice the Druids can call upon the creatures of the wild or the huge and powerful Treants to do their bidding.

Economy: The Druids have one important resource: nature mana. They get this from the land they control and from special places of power. They also collect a little gold from their followers and are always able to supply their armies with food.

Special powers: Of all the priesthoods of Chard, Wenollin's priests are closest to the land and thus the best attuned to the lines and points of power which they locate surer and swifter than priests of other gods. They can also improve production of food, wood and livestock and even improve the fertility of the population of the lands they bless. They can if needed call upon the darker forces of nature to strike their enemies. Most unique of their powers is their ability to instantly transport themselves and their followers between the ancient druidic stone circles.

Neighbours: The Druids have holdings quite close to all of Ozzaxytl's minions in the north and also to all the northern members of the Alliance, especially the Order of Quama and the Elves of Windwood.

The Eastern Kingdom: East of the Grey Range lies the Eastern Kingdom, on some of the most fertile land of Chard. The royal family are descendants of the old imperial house as are many of the other noble families. The lands that make up the Kingdom were mostly untouched by the Troll Wars and the people have known only peace for centuries. Much of the priesthood of the Great Empire fled to the province that is now the Eastern Kingdom after the fall of the imperial capital and thus a mix of old gods are worshipped here. Most important is the temple of Duhal, the god of light.

Military: The Eastern Kingdom has always been quite safe behind the Grey Ridge, mountains to the west, ocean to the east and the Dwarves to the south. Only in the north, where the road to the old heartland once ran, does the king keep any significant force. For the coming conflict, the Eastern Kingdom must muster far greater armies than it has ever seen before. The navy is of a respectable size but most of the ships are traders.

Economy: The fertile lands and peaceful past makes for a prosperous people and good tax payers. In view of the many weapons that will be needed, the metal production is insufficient (although respectable compared to other human nations) and the wood production will not support a fast expansion of the navy. The priests get their mana from their temples and from holy rituals.

Special powers: The priests of the Eastern Kingdom know many different spells, including information spells and spells for combating demons and un-dead. They are also capable of making holy weapons and creating golems.

Neighbours: No enemies are nearby; equally distant are the Queen of Wey in the south, the Gnomes and the Trolls in the West and the Beast Master in the north.

The Northern Isles: The isles in the Cold Sea are ruled by a king whose subjects are the most accomplished mariners in the world of Chard. The ships of the Northern Isles are large, oceangoing vessels which are often seen in ports as far south as the High Elves or even (though not quite as often) in the ports of the Eastern Kingdom. Of the Old Gods the most popular and important is of course Requa, god of the seas and the seafarers.

Military: The Northern Isles have a powerful navy and respectable armies, mostly infantry. They can muster all the standard human units and they can build both the large ship types favoured by other human nations and their traditional longboats, the fastest vessels for ocean travel. The main ports are guarded by castles but the fist shield of the Northern Isles should always be their navy.

Economy: The Northern Isles have a good tax base and produce adequate amounts of food, metals and horses. The wood production is larger than normal for human nations allowing quick expansion of the navy. The priests gain their mana from prayers.

Special powers: The priests can cast spells to aid ocean travel and also general spells of information gathering and some other minor spells.

Neighbours: Just across a short stretch of ocean on the northern coast of Chard are the Druids and the Order of Quama, and the latter has several ports on the Cold Sea. The High Elves are not too far by ship along the coast to the south. The nearest enemy is the Sorcerer in the coastal Red Ridge mountains, but even the islanders cannot find any safe place to anchor their ships on that rugged coast. The islanders can never know themselves safe from the threat from the mountains though, as rumour has it that not only can the sorcerer teleport himself but some of his demon lieutenants can also fly, even across open water. The main rival for dominance of the seas and conquest of the small neutral islands is of course the Pirates of Pyr far away to the south and the navies of the two seafaring nations often clash off the western coast of Chard.

The Caliph of El-Sha'al: The Caliph rules a populous but poor nation in the south. From his father he inherited the conflict with his arch-enemy, the Queen of Wey. For many years his armies have been busy repelling the many attacks across the border from Wey. Though his people would wholeheartedly support an invasion of Wey his wise generals advise him that the strong walled cities of the southern neighbour are not lightly taken and that his legendary cavalry is better utilised in the flat country on his side of the border. The most important religions in El-Sha'al are those of Rakatar, the war god, and Onosho, the horse goddess.

Military: The cavalry is by far the most important branch of the armies of the Caliphate, though the infantry is the most numerous. Almost all units mustered are of the lightest variety due to the limited supply of metals compared to the virtually limitless supply of men. The light cavalry is the quality troop type of the Caliphate and blessed by Onosho they are stronger than the light cavalry of other nations. The navy is almost nonexistent due to the loss of many ships to the Pirates and the fact that very little wood is available. The port on the West Sea is guarded by a castle to protect from landings from Pyr.

Economy: All resources except men and horses are in constant short supply. The priests get their mana from rituals.

Special powers: Any cavalry unit mustered by the caliphate will be extra strong in combat. The priests of Rakatar can create weapons of great power for questing and can cast spells that boost the nation's armies.

Neighbours: The nearest enemy is of course the Queen of Wey to the south, but the Pirates of Pyr are just off the coast to the west, and the Gnomes are a short distance through the Din'aral to the north. The nearest allies are the Dwarves to the east and even further east the Eastern Kingdom. Parts of the old southern road linking the western port of the Caliphate to the eastern ports of the East Kingdom is still intact, so reinforcements from those parts can arrive reasonably quickly. *Either the Caliphate or the Queen of Wey will probably be eliminated after half of the game has been played. In fact it could even happen to both nations at the same time.*

2.3 Which nation to choose

The nations of "War of the Dark God" are very different and play very differently. The following table is an attempt to rate the nations for various characteristics which affect the style of play required to do well and enjoy the game. The ratings range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

Dependence is an attempt to rate how much the survival and the success of the nation depends on support from the other players on your team. "War of the Dark God" is a team game (even though an individual winner is found at the end) and the entire team must succeed for its nations to have any chance of winning (see section 3 below), so cooperation is always essential for all nations. This rating therefore does not reflect the general need to cooperate but rather is a measure of the *direct* dependence on other allies supporting your nation either with resources or military actions and on them doing so successfully. So e.g. the Caliph of El-Sha'al is very dependent on help from his allies while the Vampire Lord is more or less self-sufficient. In general, the Alliance nations are more dependent on each other than the Dark God nations and on the whole require closest cooperation between team members.

Importance is how important it is to your team that the nation is played well and fulfils its "role" in the game. All nations are important to the team but some can relax more and afford more mistakes than others without endangering the whole team. The ratings in this category is given without regard to the placement of the seven power spots (obelisk hexes) as this varies from game to game. Any nation close to one or more power spots becomes even more important to its team than indicated by the table. So the table shows that the Sorcerer and Druids are vital to their respective teams and will be "on" most of the time while the island nations of the Pirates of Pyr and the Northern Isles to some extent can sit back and choose how involved they want to be in the going-ons on the mainland. Note that the need for close cooperation among the Alliance nations is also evident from their generally high importance scores - almost all nations must do well for the Alliance to succeed.

Stability is how good the nation is at surviving and recovering from disasters (strategic errors, forgetting to send in orders or just making bad mistakes) in the face of a determined opposition. To some extent the ratings also reflect how likely it is to make a grave mistake with a given nation. So the Queen of Wey and the Caliph must be their toes all the time while the Northern Isles and Snakemen have fairly easily defended positions.

Difficulty is a measure of how difficult in a technical sense it is to play the nation well. Some nations are complex to run and some require rather specialised styles of play while others are straight-forward with perhaps fewer but better tools to do the job. So e.g. the very specialised nations of the Vampire Lord, Sorcerer, Beast Master and Druids are hard to play well while the simpler strong military nations of the Snakemen, Trolls and Dwarves are much more straight-forward. The high score for the Pirates and the Northern Isles are due to the need for much navy movement.

Nation	**VL**	**So**	**BM**	**Sn**	**Tr**	**PP**	**Gn**	**QW**	**OQ**	**HE**	**EW**	**Dw**	**Dr**	**EK**	**NI**	**CE**
Dependence	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	5	3	3	4	2	4	3	2	5
Importance	2	5	2	3	4	1	4	2	4	4	4	4	5	3	1	4
Stability	3	4	4	5	4	4	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	4	5	1
Difficulty	4	4	5	1	2	4	3	4	3	3	3	2	5	3	4	3

3 Winning the game

The game ends after 24 turns or on an earlier turn where the seven dark obelisks are either all standing or all down at the end of the turn.

If all seven obelisks exist at the end of a turn, or if at the end of turn 24 there are six obelisks standing, it is a *Dark God victory* and the Dark God minion with the most points win, the one with second most points places second, etc. If at the end of a turn no obelisks are standing, or if at the end of turn 24 only one obelisk is standing, it is an *Alliance victory* and the Alliance player who has the most points wins, etc. Otherwise the conflict (but not the game) will continue and neither side wins. In this case players of both factions are placed according to their score.

Victory points are awarded for enemies destroyed in combat, for power spot (obelisk) hexes owned and for cities controlled. At the start of the game all nations have zero victory points and as the game progresses points may be added or subtracted (it is possible to have a negative score!).

The points awarded for units destroyed in combat depend mostly on their (theoretical) combat value and range from 1 point per 100 individuals killed for human Light Infantry to 29 points per 100 individuals killed for the un-dead Wraiths. No points are awarded for wounded individuals or for individuals who flee, only kills count.

A power spot hex (i.e. a hex where a dark obelisk can be located) is worth 20 points to any Dark God minion who owns it. Each power spot hex owned by an alliance nation and marked with a marker of light (see section 3.1 below) is worth 20 points to the owner. Some Alliance nations may start the game (unknowingly) owning a power spot hex and if they mark such a hex they will gain 20 points.

A dark obelisk destroyed by an Alliance nation (by taking the hex it is in) is worth 10 points in addition to the 20 points gained for the hex itself (it is automatically marked as the presence of an obelisk reveals it to be a power spot). Similarly, any marker of light destroyed by a Dark God minion is worth an extra 10 points to the player, in addition to the 20 gained for raising an obelisk.

Markers of light each add a permanent bonus of 1 point to the score of *all* Alliance nations at the end of every turn (this is in addition to the points awarded to the nations that own them). Standing dark obelisks are worth 20 points to *all* Dark God minions (in addition to the points awarded to the player that owns them), but unlike the marker of light bonus these points are lost if the obelisk is torn down. The 40 points for the two starting obelisks is already included in the starting scores of the Dark God minions.

Cities are worth two victory points per size increment, except to the Trolls and the Druids who gain only one point per size increment. For the original owner of a city it is worth an extra 10 points in addition to those awarded for its size. This means that if you lose a size 8 starting city of your nation you lose 26 points while if you gain a new size 8 city you gain only 16 points. The Trolls' cave city (Ugrak Da) and the snakeman swamp city (Shebesh Ssash) are only of worth to their original owners, other nations do not get points for these cities (but may of course take them to deprive the Trolls or the Snakemen of their point value and production).

Some nations receive special points for special nation victory conditions (such as controlling certain locations or owning certain items, for owning certain terrain, or for having a large production of a specific resource).

Magical and special items, whether produced by players or found by questing characters, are worth some victory points to their owner. All non-unique magic items are worth 3 victory points to whoever owns them. All non-unique non-magical items (e.g. an Adamantine Axe or a Poisoned Blade) are worth 2 victory points. All unique magical items are worth 10 victory points and all unique non-magical items (e.g. "The Golden Cup of the Elven Queen") are worth 5 victory points.

The different nations must get their points in different ways. Some nations (Trolls, Caliph, Queen) can hardly avoid getting a significant amount of combat points just defending their territory while others may have far to travel for a decent fight (Eastern Kingdom, Pirates, Northern Isles). Some nations (especially the Alliance nations of the North) are very far from the nearest city worth any points to them. A few nations can really never hope to take any cities or kill any large number of enemies but must rely mostly on their special victory points.

3.1 About the power spots, dark obelisks and markers of light

The power spots are seven specific hexes, known to the Dark God players at the start of the game and unknown to the Alliance players. Whenever a Dark God nation gains control of a power spot hex, a dark obelisk is automatically erected in the centre of the hex at the end of the turn. This will be known to all who can see the hex (they may not be able to see the obelisk itself, but they can see the activity in the hex), and the fact that an obelisk has been erected (but not its location) will be communicated to all nations. Furthermore the Dark God will send 100 *Dark Guardians* to guard the obelisk. Even if the alliance does not detect the obelisk as it is erected, their agents will detect the obelisk and report its location 1 to 3 turns later, and there is of course always the chance that it may be spotted by a scout.

When an Alliance nation gains control of a power spot hex containing a dark obelisk, the obelisk is automatically destroyed at the end of the turn and its destruction communicated to all nations.

The alliance nations can place *markers of light* in the hexes they own (only one per hex). When a marker is placed on a power spot it helps the Old Gods and the player is awarded 20 victory points (which will be deducted again if the hex is lost). If the marker is placed in a hex which is *not* a power spot, the marker is immediately destroyed and 10 points is deducted from the player's score *permanently*. A correctly placed marker of light will *sanctify* the hex it is placed in and will start earning all alliance nations 1 victory point per turn. In addition, for every marker placed the priests of the old religions are in closer communion with their gods. The game effect of this is that for every marker of light, alliance nations will receive an amount of *holy mana* equal to the normal production of their religious characters. This extra mana is added to the nation pool rather than as personal mana for each character. Similarly, the two nations worshipping the god of nature, Wenollin, will gain extra *nature mana*. The Druids will gain 5 mana per Minor Druid and 10 per Major Druid while the Elves of Windwood will gain 10 mana per Lord of the Woods. Characters fleeing or retreating at the end of the turn do not generate any extra mana from markers of light.

The power spot hexes lies where the *lines of power* meet, and most of them where two or more such lines end. Lines of power run parallel to the hex grid, so when the Alliance learns the location of a power spot they can search for others along the lines of hexes going from the known power spot hex in the six directions of the COSMOS compass. There are certain magical spells which reveal power lines and power spots, and as more and more obelisks are erected it becomes easier for the Alliance to locate the lines of power and power spots by magical means (but by then it may be too late!).

4 Questing

Two nations rely heavily on using quest mode to move unescorted characters around unmolested by the regular military units of the game: The Vampire Lord must get his vampires to remote hexes containing death mana and the Beast Master must move his characters to places where he can recruit beast-men and monsters. Other than those two nations, the Dark God followers are likely to have less presence in quest mode than the Alliance as they have fewer major characters to spare and many major magical items to be found in quest mode are less useful to the Dark God side than to the Alliance.

Apart from a few wandering monsters, most monsters in quest mode are found in their lairs. Monster lairs are scattered around in the wilderness (hexes not controlled by anyone at the start of the game). Examples of monster lairs are bandits' dens, ruins and caves. When the monster(s) have been cleared out of a lair the lair will in general not be re-populated (unless the lair is really part of an *extended quest*, see below). All lairs will contain treasure of some kind which can be picked up once the monsters are gone, so it is a good idea to *search* for a few phases after clearing out a lair to spot all the treasure there may be (small items such as magical rings are easy to miss).

4.1 Extended quests

Some lairs or other locations found in quest mode may have detailed descriptions which are issued as blurbs. A detailed description is an indication that the location is somehow linked to an *extended quest*. Items found or rumours which questing characters pick up may also be links to extended quests. An extended quest is a small "story quest" which requires more than just monster bashing to complete. The rewards for solving an extended quest are much higher than for clearing a lair of monsters: Usually there will be a major magic item to be found (one which unlike most magic items affects the military side of the game) or other significant gains for your position.

If you opt to try to solve an extended quest you have stumbled upon you should be prepared to seek information from various sources. All nations except the Beast Master have an "advisors" or an "augury" order which can be used to ask for simple information related to extended quests (at a cost) but more information may be obtained by characters visiting certain places. Hints in the blurbs related to the extended quests may indicate that information has to be sought from a certain source, e.g. “The Fat Sage”, and your job is then to find that source (your advisors may know where) and send a character there to get the information.

The advisors/augury orders have the following formats:

advisors *subject*
augury *subject*
The *subject* may be any (short) text. These orders are nation orders used to ask information of the nation’s disembodied advisors. It will usually cost some resources depending on subject if the order is successful and information is gained, but it will cost nothing if it is not.

Example:

```
advisors Fat Sage
```

There are two other orders which may be needed when solving an extended quest: *locate* and *special*.

locate *description*
The *description* may be any short text. This order is used by a character to reveal a “hidden” location which is supposed to be where the character currently is (e.g. in the city where the character is). Locations which can be “found” with the *locate* order are not really hidden but are just not interesting (and thus not “seen” by your characters) unless you know what to look for. If e.g. the wizard you seek lives in a red house with a green door in a certain city suddenly that house becomes interesting to you, but unless you know you should look for it you will pass it by without noticing anything special about it.

Examples:

```
locate Red house with green door
locate Royal Library
```

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special *action*
The *action* may be any short text. This order is used by a character to perform a special quest-related action not covered by the usual orders.

Examples:

```
special Pull green lever
special Ask innkeeper about Rosebud
```

Note that all the special questing orders (*advisors*, *augury*, *locate*, *special* and any other free form text orders) are very sensitive to spelling mistakes in their arguments.