

The Splendour Of A Thousand Swords

Bal-Sagoth

ALTARUS: Gaze deep into the mists with your spirit-eyes, Xerxes... look far, and tell me
What you see.

XERXES: I see a land far to the north... a vast empire of dark endless moors
and snow-

Crowned mountains... a land of brooding citadels and warrior-
kings who hail to grim gods.

ALTARUS: Look well, Xerxes, for enlightenment hides within the fog-
swathed vales of
Hyperborea...

The King's Dream:

By the onyx sceptre of my forefathers, the air is churning with auguries of
dethronement...

Impending dread thus prophesized!

In a dream I was bade ride the argent-eyed unicorn to the Ring of Stones...
There a torrent of viscid slime assailed me, as pipes and horns sang the cla-
rion of my
Dissolution...

And the usurpation of my ancient azure throne.

Assassins stalk the nighted halls of my palace... poisoned blades and chalic-
es surround
Me.

I thirsted for a balm, but my thirst was slaked by an envenomed draught.
My swordarm shackled by tendrils of sloth... enthralled by the chasmed gloom
...

Borne upon wings of labyrinthine dread... I awaken!

I shall seek the counsel of the sorcerer, keeper of the ancient scrolls of w-
isdom, and the
Crystals of Power...

The Words of the Sorcerer:

My liege, great and regal king... the mists disclose their secrets... you ar-
e destined to

Wield a great dark power. Drink deep of the potions of the apothecary, for u-
pon thee now I

Bestow a shard of the mystic Crystal of Mera... sacred artefact of the Atlan-
tean mages,

Won in battle by our legions. My liege, the Crystal of Mera shall unveil the
truth lurking

Hidden in thy most fever-haunted dreams...

The Voice of the Harbinger:

The land awash with spilled blood, and viscera torn forth from the sundered
dead...

Gorge the earth with flesh darkened with the claw and fang of war... rent op-
en the

Ravenous maws of worms...

The King:

The Crystal illumines dark secrets, the truth is known... a dire and ancient
threat is ranged

Against me.

Hearken, the clarion is upon the winds, now the call to arms is upon us all,
Grim warriors, take up thy spears and hone thy gleaming swords.

Archers, string thy bows, brave knights, saddle the steeds of war,

The glory of battle is nigh at last, our banner shall fly this day in victor-
y!

My warriors, a legacy shall this day be wrought by our blades, decreed by th-
e gods,

Blessed by the blood of vanquished foes. Our destiny beckons...

Lord Angsaar, Dark Liege of Chaos:

Come, great king of Hyperboria, march against me with your splendid legions and shimmering swords. I, the Bane of the Atlantean Kings, the Scourge of Lemuria, Archfoe of the Immortals of Ultima Thule, shall crush you! I shall visit a thousand plagues upon your realm, and wreak untold havoc and bloody carnage until I have your throne... and your soul!

ALTARUS: And thus, flanked by the splendour of azure banners, a vast army marched

forth from the great walls of the Imperial City of Hyperborea, and at the forefront of the

mighty legions, astride an ebon war-

stallion, rode the king, sunlight glinting upon his

splendid armour... compelled by dreams, and guided by the Crystal of Mera...

XERXES: Where? Where did the king's path take him?

ALTARUS: The king was compelled to lead his forces to the shadow-haunted Mountains

of the Dead, a grim and brooding place steeped in dark and ancient legendry. Alone he

rode into the gaping maw of a huge cave hewn into the side of the tallest mountain

countless ages past by unknown hands. For three full days and nights he did not emerge

from the cave... until, at last, he rode forth from the eldritch mountain once more, a terrible

knowledge shadowed in his icy eyes, and bearing in his gauntleted fist a huge black

sword, a magnificent ebon blade which no human blacksmith ever forged. Fearsome

sorcerous power crackled within the yard of black steel, dancing upon its searingly honed,

glyph-scored blade... and its bejewelled, dragon-carved hilt did whisper arcane secrets to

the king in a strange, elder tongue.

XERXES: But master, what powers did this blade possess? What secrets did it hold?

ALTARUS: Many centuries ago, before even were waged the Great Wars between the

ancient kingdoms of Atlantis and Hyperborea, Lord Angsaar did rise from his charnel-tomb

and do battle with a powerful immortal warrior-shaman over the possession of the elder

crystals of Mera, mystic gems of unparalleled magical potency. Angsaar, his power

swelled by forces from the vast Outer Darkness, did smite his foe to the brink of

destruction... but, with his fading sorceries, the immortal mystically transferred his life-

essence into his great black sword, and scattered the magic crystals across the galaxy,

leaving Angsaar with a hollow victory and forcing him to return once more to his dark

chamber of slumber. The sword was lost for centuries, as were the crystals, until the one

gem to remain on this world was discovered deep beneath the northern seas by an

ancient Atlantean wizard. And the sword... legends spoke of how its final resting place

would be made known by the sorceries of the last crystal only when the blade's power

Would once again ne needed to battle the Chaos-
liege. This was the immortal's final, most
Powerful spell... upon the reawakening of Angsaar, the sorcerous energies an
d undying
Lifeforce encased within the blade would be transferred to it's wielder... a
ye, the one who
Discovered the Shadow-
Sword would be imbued with the power of the immortal, and by
The art of elder spellcraft, he would do battle with his ancient nemesis onc
e more...

XERXES: Then there looms such a cataclysmic battle!

ALTARUS: And so, from his Black Citadel, the Chaos-
liege did send forth his Horde of
Wraiths to engage the army of the king...

THE KING:

Behold, a legion of undead fiends meets us upon the field of war.

Face me, Scourge of Lemuria, I wield thy bane, the Shadow-

Sword... (and darksome

Sorceries now empower me with thunderous might!)

Hearken, the clarion is upon the winds, now the call to arms is upon us all,

The glory of battle is nigh at last, into the fray we ride!

XERXES: The outcome, master... who left the field victorious? Did the king p
revail?

ALTARUS: The mists begin to disperse... for now, the images fade. That tale
shall have to

Wait 'til another day...

Lyrics: Byron

Music: Jonny Maudling