

Jani Heino

The Quest For Humanity



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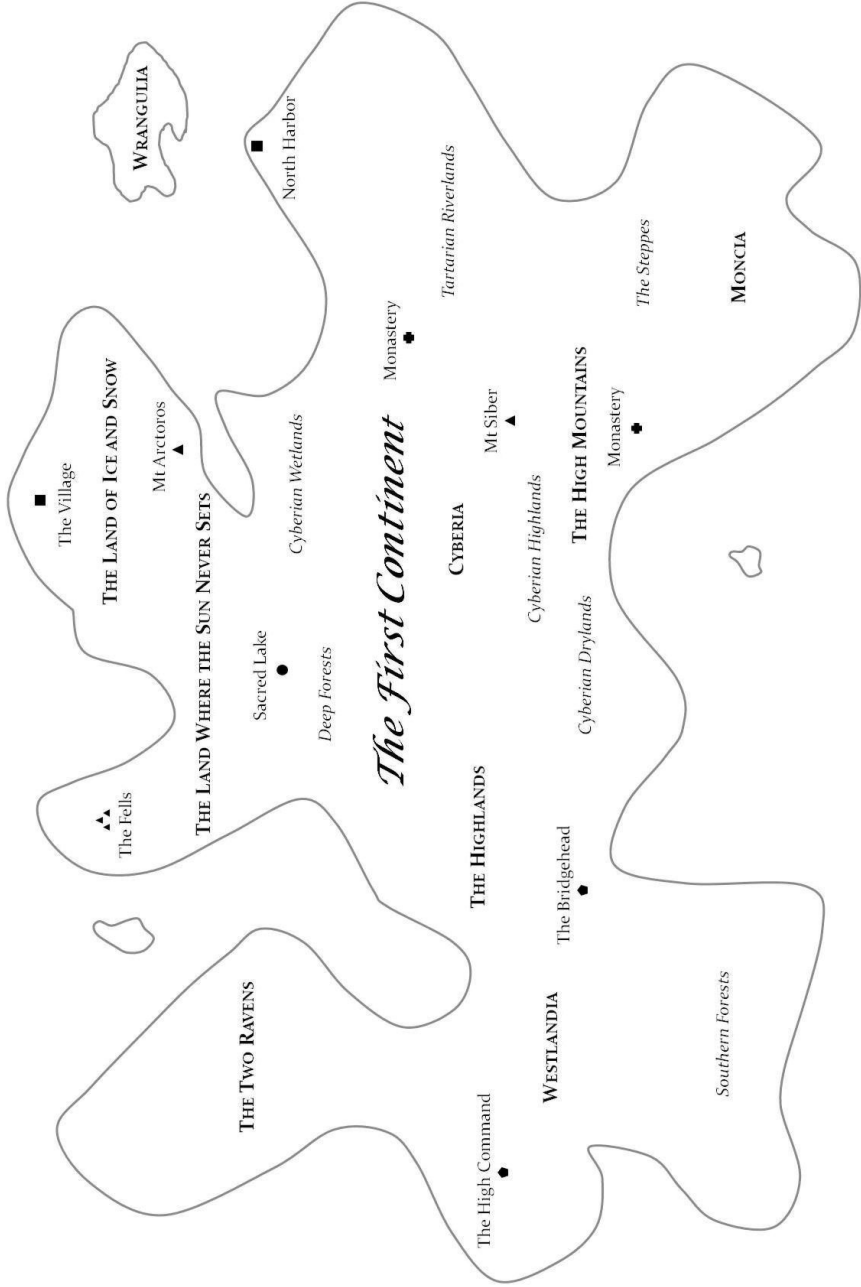
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Part I:
The War To End All Wars

Prologue

No stones will be left unturned

When will the tide turn

When will the fog of war disappear

Draining the endless swamp

More stones to turn around emerge

Horrible creatures surface

Chimeras were revealed

Skeletons in the abyss came into the light

Revealing their crimes

Their crimes I see now

Now I recall

And I will never forget

It all started from the Seer's warning...

One | The Seer's Warning



In the midst of the misty mountains of The Highlands, a small gathering of people was noticed by a lone raven that was flying across a small opening hidden within the mountain forest. The raven saw that they were but men who obviously had some personal things to settle. Perhaps it was a family meeting, or perhaps the gathering was for a notification that the autumn equinox meant shorter days and longer nights, as well as preparation for a long winter arriving soon. The raven thought it

was not of his business to interfere, and he flew up toward the treeless mountain top.

The Spruce Clan's stronghold was built at the highest mountain of all the castles of The Highlands. Robert Spruce, the leader of the Spruce clan, was a righteous man who had resisted all forms of evil, both evil men and different evil entities, for his entire life, just like his ancestors had done before him. Today, he had summoned the elders and the swordmasters of the Spruce Clan to hear the Seer's forecasts. The Seer herself had left The Highlands one day before because the sights had been too much to bear. No soul knew where the Seer had gone.

"Aye", Robert Spruce began, "The Seer felt her stream of consciousness severely disturbed. Her sights were horrible, beyond what she could stand for long. She fled, sadly, and no one knows where she went. Poor sister of mine. She saw that the enemy was within our borders, those hideous creatures, beasts and half-men, were wreaking havoc everywhere. Shields were smashed, swords were broken, and blood was shed. Many good men fell, along with countless beasts and half-men, whose blood was no longer red but had turned something different, something that could not be described. Women and children were horribly tortured and brutally killed. Yet the enemy kept amassing their armies...".

With sadness in his eyes Robert Spruce continued: "The Seer has always been right; her visions have always been more than mere hints only. Yet, she had never seen anything like this before. I must

hence ask you not only listen to me carefully but also hear me clearly. Must we defend our lands and save our souls, fight we must. United must we stand. No soul can lose heart in what is to come. This means that we must be prepared for war, a war that will be nothing we have witnessed during our life and times on the Earth's Plane”.

Remaining quiet, the three elders of the Spruce Clan nodded admittingly, while the swordmasters seemed worried, despite them having been participating in numerous battles and larger campaigns before. None of them had seen anything like what was to come. They started preparing the warriors under their command to face the worst that could be expected, yet they silently hoped deep inside that the Seer would have been wrong this time, even if it would be the only time ever. Messengers and ambassadors were sent to all clans and tribes across the Earth's Plane. The White Wizards, those beings whose whereabouts were unknown, were also informed by mystical messenger crows. The War to End All Wars had begun.

Two | The Bridgehead



The War to End All Wars had already ruined most of the Earth's Plane, leaving scorched ground, burnt forests, and lakes and rivers that stink horribly because of rotten corpses of not only men but also beasts and half-men killed during the battles. It was a sad sight, not for the eyes of most women and children, only bearable for the most fearsome of all warriors.

More than twenty Earth years later, fierce battles continued near The Bridgehead. The Bridgehead was just like its name implied, both literally and metaphorically. It was a strategically important castle located on the other side of the River Styx (*) in Westlandia. The Bridgehead was one of many other bridgeheads that were assumed to lead to the final battle and, eventually, conquering the enemy's last remaining stronghold. Little did they know then, for this was just the beginning of the long-lasting end.

Leaders of all clans and tribes were summoned to the command post of the Allied Forces led by Robert Spruce.

“Brothers and sisters”, Robert Spruce began his speech, “We have defended this bridgehead for a long time. Some say, literally or figuratively, for eons. Torn and tattered. Frustrated and exhausted. We have survived countless horrible attacks by the enemy hordes. Yet, here we are, holding the line this very day. Defending the last bastions of freedom... And all that is good and virtuous... And ourselves”.

Robert Spruce showed the map of the battlefield surrounding The Bridgehead to the battalion commanders and three ambassadors of the White Wizards advising the Allied Forces in the war against the Forces of Darkness. He then continued: “Here, close to the River Styx, lies the enemy's final line of defense. As far as we know, beyond the line of defense lies their last remaining stronghold. Our Western White Allies have been fighting behind the enemy lines, here and here. After years and years of fierce fighting, they are

close to a breakpoint. The enemy is retreating in mass. The White Wizards have cast counter-spells that vaporized the demonic chants of the enemy's Dark Warlocks. Brothers and sisters, fear not, for their chants harm you no more...".

The commanders present at the meeting looked at each other, some worried because of the thought that many young men would perish during the battle to come, some excited because of honor the battle would bring to them on the battlefield against the Forces of Darkness. One of the commanders was Oleg Pinetov, representing the Eastern Marksmen of Cyberia.

"Robert, let me continue from here", said Oleg Pinetov, "Our archers are well positioned on both banks along the River Styx, here and here, ready to fire a shadow of deadly arrows blackening the skies. The enemy does not know what is coming. Though, they are cunning and disguised. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish between our noble warriors and their demonic creatures, those half-men and beasts. Yet, the snaky blinks in their eyes and the hellish odor of their skins reveal who and what they really are".

"Good", nodded Robert Spruce at Oleg Pinetov, "Now we know the enemy, know of their evil plans, know of their every move in advance, thanks to our hidden spies and forward recon forces. All that we must do is wait for the messenger from the North".

At the very same moment, Øyvind, commander of the Seafarers from The Land of The Two Ravens, rushed in the command tent and uttered in all his excitement:

“It has arrived... The omen has arrived. Huginn and Muninn (**) entered the eye of the storm. It can only mean that the time is nigh. We must attack now, and we must hurry, for time is short”.

“I greet you and your timely news, Øyvind”, Robert Spruce responded and then voiced loudly to all men and women warriors present: “Brothers and sisters, the time has come. The day of reckoning. The final decisive battle is here and now. Some of us may not see a new day nor the New Dawn that was predicted a long time ago. Yet, those of us destined to fall will always be remembered, for they were among the noblest and bravest warriors who have ever walked on the Earth’s Plane. Their good deeds will be remembered into eternity. And remember, brothers and sisters, fighting this common enemy brought our clans and tribes together. Forgetting our differences is our strength, for united we stand, divided we fall”.

And so began the final decisive battle to free the Earth’s Plane of all evil that has roamed this realm, the Realm of War and Chaos, for eons. Yet, neither Robert Spruce nor the other commanders knew what was to come, as the Forces of Darkness had also been preparing carefully and painstakingly for this very battle at The Bridgehead, and they had been doing so for a long time.

(*) The River Styx was one of the rivers of the Underworld in Greek Mythology.

(**) Huginn and Muninn are the two ravens of Odin, one of the gods in Norse mythology.

The Quest For Humanity begins...

What if the quest for humanity is deciphering the battles small, or battles within us, and the battles large, or battles beyond us? This epic story deals with the madness of war and the eternal clash between good and evil, examining the very question of what makes us human beings.

Situated in a fantasy world called the Earth's Plane, the story begins with a great war that was supposed to end all wars, followed by exploration of the secrets hidden in this strange world and beyond. This is also a story of a few heroines and heroes who face tests and challenges, overcoming of which facilitates understanding of their own humanness, who and what they are, and which role they play in the Grand Game of Source.

The story comprises five parts:

Part I: The War To End All Wars

Part II: The New Dawn Approaching

Part III: The Secret Mystical Code

Part IV: The Threat From The Netherworld

Part V: The Three Who Should Not Exist

