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TOME OF DESTINY

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TOME OF DESTINY

THIS adventure takes the Tomorrow Legionnaires on a journey to search for a fabled artifact, once held in the city of Tolkeen. Since the city's destruction by the Coalition military only a few months ago, some of these incredibly powerful relics have travelled elsewhere, occasionally borne by refugees heading south or west. One of these artifacts was the *Meganomicon*, a book said to contain spells of incredible power. Of course, the Coalition distrusts and fears the power of magic — thus, they too seek the *Meganomicon*, intending to destroy the tome lest it fall into the hands of a spellcaster with a vendetta against their nation.

This adventure is for up to six characters of Novice or Seasoned Rank. The characters are all assumed to be members of the Tomorrow Legion as part of the same patrol group.

OVERVIEW

In Act 1, the Tomorrow Legion tasks the legionnaires to check in on Prescott Burch, a rogue scholar investigating rumors of artifacts making their way south from the ruins of Tolkeen.

The legionnaires find a force of Coalition soldiers searching Prescott's camp. After dealing with the threat, the heroes find Prescott slain, but his research remains. According to Burch's notes, someone smuggled an incredibly powerful book of spells known as the *Meganomicon* out of Tolkeen before the city fell. Prescott believed the *Meganomicon* hidden somewhere near the Arkansas border, but Coalition forces closed in on his position and prevented him from investigating further.

Act 2 begins with the legionnaires in a race with the Coalition to find the location of the *Meganomicon*. Following clues from Burch's investigation, the heroes discover a hidden valley, with the Coalition following closely behind. The player characters discover the *Meganomicon* is in the hands of Kyxil, a flame dragon hatchling. Kyxil studied the tome and became enthralled with the secrets within, which is how the heroes find him—busily reading and muttering to himself. Experimenting with the magic in the book has temporarily suppressed some of the dragon's own magical abilities, leaving him weak and relatively defenseless. Kyxil explains to the legionnaires he intends to take the *Meganomicon* far away and hide it until Rifts Earth is ready for the world-shaking secrets held within. The legionnaires must convince Kyxil what he

should do with the book: flee and hide the book elsewhere, or risk using the secrets within to destroy the Coalition searchers.

The end of the adventure features a final battle. Time is not on the legionnaires' side as the Coalition forces catch up with them. Kyxil asks the heroes to engage the Coalition long enough for him to escape.

ACT 1: THE MISSION

The adventure begins as the heroes prepare to go out on another patrol. A messenger runs up to the group just as they are about to leave Castle Refuge and offers a handwritten note. The messenger hands the note to the patrol leader (or a random player if there are multiple characters tied for the highest Charisma bonus).

Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Legionnaires,

We have a situation brewing in the Ozark region to the east. Rumor has it powerful magical artifacts may have been smuggled out of Tolkeen before the Coalition destroyed the city. We sent one of our best — a 'rogue scholar' named Prescott Burch — to investigate, but we've lost contact with him and his team. I need your group to check things out. I marked down the coordinates of Burch's camp. If Burch is still alive, please retrieve him. If not, his research could be vital to the survival of the Tomorrow Legion. Recover whatever you can and bring it back to Castle Refuge.

—Tarn

As mentioned in the note, the message also contains the location of Burch's camp site — far to the east. The journey is likely to take several days; seven if the team is on foot, or four if the group has a ground vehicle. If the legionnaires have access to a flying vehicle, they can reach the campsite in 24 hours.

THE TRUE MEGANOMICON?

The heart of this adventure revolves around the *Meganomicon*; it is the "McGuffin" that drives the story. If the book in question is, in fact, the actual *Meganomicon*, it could easily be the centerpiece of an entire *Savage Rifts*® campaign. Likewise, making the tome merely a lesser (but still important) relic may work better for an individual group's story. The Game Master should use her discretion as to whether or not Kyxil's tome is the real thing.

PREPARING FOR THE TRIP

The Game Master should make sure the players know this trip could take a while, and takes them through the savage wilderness of Rifts North America. Any heroes who possess the Survival skill should be fine with minimal gear — it is mid-summer, after all, and game and water are plentiful. The legionnaires may also pick up a basic supply pack containing a week's worth of dried rations, a bedroll, and a canteen before they leave Castle Refuge.

Any characters who wish to provide food and shelter along the way can make a Survival roll. On a failure, the group must mark off the appropriate number of rations. If the group did not prepare well for the trip and fails the Survival roll, the Game Master should consider imposing a level of Fatigue upon any character who needs to eat (excluding characters such as Combat Cyborgs).

A ROGUE SCHOLAR'S FATE

What happened to Prescott Burch? The answer is simple: the Coalition got to him first. Lieutenant Sebastian Cross of the Coalition military acquired some intelligence from the aftermath of Tolkeen's fall about numerous magical artifacts taken out of the city's ruins. Cross' orders were to track down these relics and either destroy them or bring them back to Chi-town for study.

Another intel report pinpointed the efforts of the Tomorrow Legion—particularly those of Prescott Burch—to locate one of these relics. Acting on that intel, Cross and his men ambushed Burch's team during a night attack and wiped out the defenders. Cross discovered Prescott's journal detailing where the relic—a book called the *Meganomicon*—might be, and left for that location with an advance force. Meanwhile, a Coalition patrol remained behind to secure the campsite during the day and search for any survivors. Cross suspected someone might come looking for Burch; his orders were to shoot to kill.

REACHING THE CAMPSITE

The journey itself is largely uneventful, leading the legionnaires to Burch's camp. The group approaches the camp from the west. As they get closer to the campsite, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Initially, the campsite seems welcoming; a column of smoke rises from the center and all seems peaceful. However, the smoke is suddenly disturbed by the presence of a towering UAR-1 Enforcer robot striding from north to south, its red-lensed sensors scanning the surrounding forest. Soldiers in black spiked armor pace the robot on either flank. The Coalition military beat you here.

Call for a Notice roll. Those who succeed get an accurate count of the Coalition soldiers. There are two Coalition grunts for every player character in the group, plus the UAR-1. On a raise, the hero can tell the campsite looks as if a larger Coalition force was here recently. There are several humanoid figures lying still near the center of camp—directly next to the Coalition forces.

If they wish, the heroes may attempt to get closer to the camp without detection. This requires a Stealth roll against the Coalition soldier's Notice. The Coalition pilot operating the UAR-1 gains a further +2 bonus if he is attempting to spot a vehicle, combat cyborg, power armor, or robot running on a power plant (the energy signature is easier to detect using the UAR-1's sensors). However, the Coalition soldiers are not expecting trouble—a rudimentary distraction, even something as simple as tossing a rock into the woods away from the camp, gives the player characters a +2 bonus to their Stealth roll.

If the Coalition forces detect the legionnaires at any time, combat begins immediately as the Coalition forces open fire.

- **Coalition Grunt (2 per Hero):** See *Savage Foes of North America*.
- **UAR-Enforcer Pilot:** See *Savage Foes of North America*.



LISTENING IN

Any heroes who sneak up on the camp or have the ability to sense what's going on at a distance can overhear the patrol making a report to Lieutenant Sebastian Cross. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

One of the black-armored guards removes his helmet to wipe a sweaty brow. The helmet's commlink crackles with static, then a firm male voice speaks over the line: "Patrol Alpha, status?"

The Coalition soldier taps a key to respond. "No sign of trouble so far, sir."

The voice on the other end sounds pleased. "Good. Cross out."

"The lieutenant is a bit paranoid, isn't he?" mutters the Coalition soldier as he moves to put his helmet back on.

SKIRMISH AND INVESTIGATION

The player characters can't get into the camp without dealing with the Coalition squad. The heroes must either defeat the soldiers and the UAR-1 robot in combat or lead them out of the area with a decoy. In a fight, the UAR-1 robot faces off with the most dangerous-looking opponent while the Coalition grunts try to take cover and flank the enemy.

Once they secure the campsite, the heroes can search the area. The bodies glimpsed earlier are the corpses of Prescott Burch and others in his Tomorrow Legion team. The Coalition forces smashed or looted all Tomorrow Legion gear except for Prescott's journal. This notebook is very obvious, placed on the remnants of a camp table by the firepit (no Notice roll required to find it). There are grimy, blunt fingerprints on the cover that suggest the Coalition soldiers have read through it already.

Any character who reads the journal finds many pages torn out. The remaining entry, presented as a player handout on page xx, explains Prescott's research on the *Meganomicon* and where he believes the book is now. Once the legionnaires have the journal, they know where they need to go next—the Valley of Mist in the Magic Zone. The only complication is that the Coalition military is clearly after the same prize.

ACT 2: RACE TO GLIMMER VALLEY

The journey eastward takes another 24 hours on foot, or six hours if the group has a ground vehicle. If the group can fly, the trip lasts only two hours. During the trip, call for a Notice roll. On a success, the hero spots signs of a large Coalition force paralleling the legionnaires' path. The Coalition column is moving much slower than the heroes thanks to the number of troops involved; a small group like the legionnaires can travel faster through the wilderness, while a Coalition force complete with ground vehicles (such as the Spider-Skull Walker) must move more cautiously. If a player character gets a raise on his Notice roll, he can tell the enemy troops move roughly half as fast as the heroes unless things change (which they will. Once the Psi-Stalker and the Dog Boys sense Kyxil's use of the *Meganomicon*, the Coalition force presses forward recklessly, at much higher speed, in time to arrive for the final battle in Act 3).

HYXIL AND THE MEGANOMICON

The person both the Tomorrow Legion and the Coalition are searching for is Kyxil, an insatiably curious flame wind dragon hatchling. He is responsible for bringing the *Meganomicon* (or what he believes is the relic) out of Tolkeen and down south. Kyxil used his draconic abilities to blend in with the refugees moving away from the war zone, all the while struggling against the temptation to open the book and study it for himself.

Kyxil set out on this journey in an attempt to impress Plato, a great horned dragon and leader of the city of Lazlo. Kyxil heard Plato speak about the need to protect the people of Rifts Earth from irresponsibly using powerful items of magic. Inspired by this, Kyxil set out to acquire the *Meganomicon* and hide it away until the people of Rifts Earth are ready to wield such immense eldritch might. It would displease Plato, a very wise, older dragon, to find he had inspired Kyxil's rash actions.

THE COALITION ADVANCE FORCE

Lieutenant Cross leads a sizable group of Coalition troops into Glimmer Valley to find and destroy the *Meganomicon*. The advance force includes the following:

- ☛ **Lieutenant Cross:** See page 15.
- **1 Spider-Skull Walker:** See *Savage Foes of North America*.
- **6 Coalition grunts:** See *Savage Foes of North America*.
- **4 Dog-Boys:** See *Savage Foes of North America*.
- **1 Psi-Stalker (the handler for the Dog Boys and useful to track the path of the *Meganomicon*):** See *Savage Foes of North America*.

If the heroes' group is particularly strong (i.e., Glitter Boys, Combat Cyborgs, etc.), the Game Master should consider adding in some skelebots to liven things up. Alternatively, if the group is not at full strength or lacks sufficient firepower, the Game Master should consider removing the Spider-Skull Walker. Regardless, the legionnaires must deal with this advance force in **Act 3** (see page 10).

When Kyxil reached Glimmer Valley with his prize, he could no longer restrain himself from taking a peek inside the *Meganomicon*. The contents of the book are extremely complex, and Kyxil spent several hours enthralled by his study of the pages and the magical knowledge therein. Eventually, Kyxil discovered the *Meganomicon* contains at least one unique enchantment of extreme power — a Spell of Legend — and the young dragon hatchling felt compelled to try it out.

The experiment failed. Kyxil, to his horror, found himself stripped of many of

his draconic abilities. He could no longer shapeshift or teleport. The hatchling dragon, knowing he is in trouble, has been desperately searching through the *Meganomicon* for a way to reverse the process. When the heroes reach Kyxil's cave, the dragon has just completed one more experiment that did not quite work out.

THE FALSE WALKER

Journeying through the wilderness of Rifts Earth is never exactly safe. Travelling near the infamous Magic Zone is even less so! This encounter takes place as the heroes journey from Burch's campsite towards the Glimmer Valley. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

You've learned to keep a sharp lookout while on the move; this close to the Magic Zone, there are many dangers to travelers. The first unusual thing you spot is surprisingly mundane — a single humanoid figure, walking across the rolling hills about forty yards to the right of your trail. The armored figure wears the distinctive headgear and cloak of a Ley Line Walker. The figure appears female, based on its slight build, and moves quite smoothly. This mysterious woman raises an arm and waves, coming to a halt.

Call for a Notice roll at -2. Heroes who succeed notice the "Ley Line Walker" is hovering just above the ground; the figure's cloak obscures her limbs, but the unnaturally smooth method of locomotion suggests strange magic at work. Player characters who get a raise also notice the figure's armor looks badly damaged, as if she'd been through a serious battle at some point and has yet to repair her gear.

The figure on the road is actually an evil creature known as a witchling. Her name is Alixia, and the legionnaires have unwittingly entered her territory. The witchling wears Ley Line Walker armor she scavenged from another dead adventurer some months prior. The armor helps conceal her inhuman nature, and she has learned many humans — aside from the Coalition — let down their guard when they think a fellow wanderer approaches them.

Alixia is one of Lord Dunscon's servants in the Federation of Magic, but she is often

left to her own devices. The witchling believes this is because Dunscon respects her cunning and her power, but the truth is more mundane: the leaders of the Federation have simply forgotten about her, and any records dealing with Alixia have just slipped through the cracks. Eventually, some functionary is going to bring Alixia to Lord Dunscon's attention...and the witchling had better hope Dunscon is in a good mood when that happens!

If the heroes approach Alixia or attempt to engage her in conversation, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The environmental mask built into her armor obscures the woman's face, but her eyes are dark and tiny. From what little you can see of her expression, she seems suspicious of you and your group. "What brings you to this part of the Magic Zone?" she asks. Her voice is rough and cracked, sounding much like an old woman's, yet still very high-pitched.

If any of the player characters can sense supernatural evil, Alixia definitely registers as such. She gambles the group does not scan everyone they meet in such a manner. Concealed as she is, Alixia's Horror Factor ability does not come into play (yet).

WHAT ALIXIA KNOWS

The witchling is aware of Kyxil's presence in Glimmer Valley. She can sense the book's immense arcane power, but she doesn't fancy her chances in tangling with a dragon...even a hatchling. Alixia does not know the nature of the relic (i.e., she doesn't know it is the *Meganomicon*, only that it is powerful). She is also aware Kyxil has been experimenting with some truly epic magic — experiments she knows have not gone well. She is more than willing to trade this information in return for her freedom if the heroes get the better of her.

ALIXIA'S PLAN

The witchling engages the heroes in conversation, pretending to be a friendly Ley Line Walker on her way to Magestar — a small settlement in the Federation of Magic. All the while, she intends to lure the

ALIXIA'S TACTICS

The witchling has a plan if her encounter with the heroes goes badly. First, (as a free action) she removes her mask, making the player characters roll a Fear check. Second, she turns invisible and flies away to her full Pace. On subsequent rounds, she uses her *entangle* and *puppet* powers to sow confusion amongst the group, attacking any obvious threats with *bolt*. Thanks to her Improved Extraction Edge, she withdraws from any melee combat as quickly as possible, preferring to stay at range and use her powers.

legionnaires into a false sense of security. If the legionnaires seem comfortable talking to her, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

"My name is Alixia," the woman introduces herself. "It looks like we're all far from home at the moment. Why don't you join me at my campsite? It's not far from here, and it's a good place to rest. Plenty of water, and I'll share what food I have."

The campsite does indeed exist (Alixia maintains it expressly for the purpose of trapping unwary travelers) next to a small stream of fresh water. The witchling intends to ambush the strangers while they sleep, targeting whomever seems the strongest with a use of her *puppet* power. Once under her control, Alixia plans to use her thrall to kill the others!

If the heroes are reluctant to join her at her camp (they are in a hurry, after all), Alixia tries to convince them Kyxil is a dangerous threat. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

"It looks like you're heading for Glimmer Valley." The woman says thoughtfully. "You should know there's a very powerful and very evil creature using it as his lair. It's

some kind of dragon, and he's working some very powerful spells there. If you approach, it's best to try and take him by surprise...if you give him half a chance to prepare, he'll tear you all limb from limb!"

If the interactions with Alixia seem a bit awkward, that's perfectly fine—as a witchling, Alixia does not have a complete handle on normal human socializing. It is, in fact, perfectly fine if the heroes suspect something is wrong or discover Alixia's true nature before she lures them into her camp. If that happens, simply deal cards for Initiative and engage in combat—Alixia is a tricky, if not very robust, opponent. She wears a suit of damaged Ley Line Walker

ALIXIA AND THE FINAL BATTLE

It is possible Alixia and the heroes may simply part ways after speaking. If this occurs, Alixia may show up again during the final battle (see page xx) as a surprise opponent, sneaking up invisibly to try and steal the *Meganomicon* during the chaos of the fight. In this case, deal Alixia into the fight at the most dramatically appropriate moment. When she acts, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, Alixia appears out of nowhere, her hands grasping at the glowing book. "It's mine!" She shrieks, the clearly unnatural movements of her body showing she is definitely not human. "Give it to me at once, fool!" The pleasant demeanor she displayed earlier is entirely absent; you gaze upon a bitter, twisted being of evil. Kyxil looks more surprised than any of you. The dragon hatchling struggles to keep this interloper from snatching the book out of his unwary grasp.

medium armor, granting her Armor value of 5 and a breathing system that provides +4 to Vigor rolls against airborne toxins and diseases.

■ **Alixia:** See page 17.

AN AWHWARD ARRIVAL

As the heroes arrive in Glimmer Valley, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

A high, rocky mountain rises up to the North, sheltering a narrow valley beneath. Without specifically looking for it, this valley would be well-hidden by the mountain's bulk. The location itself is verdant and overgrown. A thin dirt track winds down into the depths of the area and ends at the mouth of what looks to be a large cave opening.

When the group approaches the cavern, add:

A flicker of light gleams from within the cavern entrance, building to a near strobe-like intensity, as if a lightning bolt struck and rebounded from the rocks within. There is no accompanying thunderclap, but the air pressure definitely changes. As the crackling slowly dies down, you all hear a deep, resonant voice speaking from within the cave: "Drat. That...did not go as I expected."

If any of the heroes use the *detect arcana* power, they discover the area is rich with chaotic and undirected magic. With a successful Knowledge (Magic) roll, the character understands someone has been experimenting with an extremely powerful and complex spell—but the spell was not cast correctly.

The result of this failed spell reaches further than the player characters may suspect. The Psi-Stalker and Dog Boys with Lieutenant Cross' advance force sense the eruption of magic. Suspecting someone is trying to use the *Meganomicon's* immense power, Cross orders his men to increase their speed. As a result, the Coalition advance force reaches Glimmer Valley sooner than expected, setting up the final battle in Act 3.

MEETING KYXIL

This part of the adventure is a social encounter, where the legionnaires can try to influence Kyxil's next big decision; whether he should use the *Meganomicon* to escape the valley or stand and fight.

As the heroes enter the cave, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Inside the cavern, a warm fire illuminates the bare rock, revealing a sizeable inner chamber. Taking up most of the room is a 30-foot long dragon! Its scales are a burnished crimson in color, its eyes gleam like emeralds, and it is staring very curiously at a large book resting open atop a boulder.

The book glows with a soft silver light; it is clearly a large tome, as hefty and thick as several regular books placed together, and strange, pulsing symbols shine out from under the cover. Surprisingly, the dragon seems so engrossed in his study of the pages it has not yet noticed your arrival.

Once alerted to the presence of the heroes, Kyxil warily introduces himself and asks what their business is in his cave. As long as the visitors are not aggressive, Kyxil remains polite, yet evasive—he has not encountered (or even heard of) the Tomorrow Legion before. Kyxil soon accepts the legionnaires as allies.

As an ally, Kyxil shares his knowledge of the *Meganomicon*. If any of the heroes ask about the unusual incident at the mouth of the cave, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The dragon's expressive face displays embarrassment. "Ah yes. That...was my attempt to reverse the effects of an earlier failure." Kyxil scratches at the side of his head with a single claw thoughtfully. "You see, the book contains a Spell of Legend—an enchantment beyond any normal sorcery. I tried to cast it, but something went wrong... and now, some of my draconic abilities are gone." Kyxil takes a deep breath. "Perhaps forever."

"So you see," the dragon continues, pointing his claw at the glowing tome, "this is a very dangerous book. Its secrets are

exceptional...but it must be hidden away until Rifts Earth is ready to handle such power." Kyxil looks somewhat proud of himself as he finishes.

If the player characters inform Kyxil the Coalition is also interested in the *Meganomicon*, the dragon hatchling grows alarmed. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

"The Coalition can't get their hands on this book," Kyxil protests. "I have to take it away from here...somehow." The dragon looks thoughtful. "Perhaps...I could use the Spell of Legend. It is such a powerful enchantment it would all but guarantee our escape or the destruction of our foes. But, it would take great concentration from me if it is to succeed." Kyxil looks at the legionnaires with a serious expression. "You would need to defend me long enough to complete the spell." The dragon pauses. "You know more of the Coalition force pursuing us than I... what shall we do, friends?"

USING THE MEGANOMICON

If one of the player characters, who is also a spellcaster, suggests using the *Meganomicon* herself (rather than Kyxil), read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Kyxil looks alarmed. "I don't think that's a good idea," the dragon rumbles. "The book is mesmerizing and extremely complex. A miniscule mistake caused me to lose my draconic abilities, perhaps never to return. I can't in good conscience allow someone else to take that kind of risk."

Kyxil outright refuses to hand over the *Meganomicon* to anyone else. He considers the book his responsibility and would never even consider "letting Plato down" by burdening another being with the dangerous relic.

- **Kyxil:** See page 15.

DECISION TIME

The legionnaires must now make a choice. Either they can stand and fight against the oncoming Coalition force, or they can instead

buy some time for Kyxil to escape. In either case, they must deal with Cross' advance force already moving into the valley. Kyxil's experimentation with the *Meganomicon* has rendered him weak in a fight. He cannot use the following Special Abilities: Fire Breath, Flaming Scales, Invisibility, Metamorphosis, Teleportation. Thus, the hatchling dragon plans to use the Spell of Legend from the *Meganomicon* to even the odds.

The player characters must now make the decision to fight or flee. If the heroes are at all unclear as to what is at stake, Kyxil is there to remind them of the pertinent facts:

- Kyxil cannot do much more than fly in his current state; he will be very vulnerable to Coalition heavy weapons fire.
- Kyxil intends to take the *Meganomicon* far away and hide it (he says he knows a place no one will ever look!). He cites his connection to Lazlo and Plato to back up his claims.
- The Coalition is on their way; they will be in the valley soon. There's not enough time to simply sneak away.
- It is unlikely the group could prevail in a fight with the Coalition forces (particularly the large group of reinforcements, not the smaller advance force) without the Spell of Legend—especially with Kyxil's current debilitated state.

Basically, the choice boils down to two options: they can run, or they can fight. Allow the heroes some time to talk things over, but not too much; the enemy approaches!

SURPRISE ATTACK

If the discussion is bogging down or the game seems to be dragging, the Game Master can have Cross' advance force arrive a bit early and fire some shots into the cave mouth. If you wish to use this option, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

As you debate, there's suddenly a loud explosion near the mouth of the cave. Laser blasts and plasma grenades splash against the rocks, bringing down fine rock dust from the ceiling. The Coalition has caught

up with you, and if you don't do something soon, they could bring the entire cave down on top of you.

At this point, the heroes are on a time limit. At the end of two combat rounds, the ceiling of the cavern collapses and entombs anyone inside under tons of rock.

ACT 3: FIGHT OR FLIGHT

The Coalition advance force has just moved into Glimmer Valley. Once the characters exit the cave, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The black-armored forms of Coalition soldiers swarm down the gentle hills of the valley. A suit of SAMAS power armor soars overhead, its loudspeakers broadcasting a determined male voice. "This is Lieutenant Sebastian Cross of the Coalition Military. This is your one chance to walk away from this alive—give us the book, now!"

Cross does not intend to allow the legionnaires to surrender peacefully. His orders are to recover the book, but he also considers the hatchling dragon a monster and a threat to humanity. Thus, even if the heroes hand over the *Meganomicon*, Cross orders his men to open fire directly afterwards.

THE BATTLE

Cross is a dangerous foe, and not just because he operates a suit of SAMAS power armor. In truth, Cross' best weapon is his disciplined mind and leadership. Cross has been well briefed on magic users, and he can typically identify any obvious spellcaster (a character wearing Ley Line Walker armor, for example). Cross directs his men to fire at targets without Mega Damage Capacity (MDC) armor at first, concentrating on spellcasters above all others. For any "hard targets" (enemies with MDC protection), he orders his men to use their grenades and concentrates his own personal weapons

on the MDC targets until they're down or retreating. Kyxil is one of these "hard targets," but Cross prioritizes any visible spellcasters first, then the dragon, then other threats.

Before dealing cards for Initiative, the heroes should make up their minds whether they wish to fight or flee. If the legionnaires don't reach a decision, the Game Master should make a choice on behalf of Kyxil and continue forward. It is important to remember Cross and his men are an advance force for a much larger Coalition group of reinforcements.

CASTING THE SPELL OF LEGEND

Kyxil requires a minimum of three full rounds to cast the Spell of Legend. At the Game Master's discretion, the time can be shorter or longer, depending on how the group is doing in the battle against the Coalition advance force. If Kyxil has any wounds at the end of a round during the casting, the dragon must make a Vigor roll or the spell fails catastrophically (see page xx), sucking Kyxil and the *Meganomicon* through a Rift. The heroes *must* keep Kyxil safe and engage the Coalition forces in order to protect the dragon.

DEFENDING KYXIL

The dragon hatchling is fairly durable (having a high Toughness and Fast Regeneration), but the weapons on Cross' SAMAS (and the Spider-Skull Walker, if it is present) are a serious threat. The legionnaires can try a number of ploys to keep the Coalition focused on them rather than Kyxil:

- The heroes can use defensive powers such as *barrier*, *armor*, or *deflection* on Kyxil
- The heroes can Taunt or Trick to ensure the heavy weapons turn on them instead of the dragon
- The heroes can use tactics such as a flanking maneuver or attacking from behind to keep the Coalition forces off-balance

Generally speaking, the Game Master should consider any reasonable and creative solution to ensure the dragon gets a chance to cast the Spell of Legend during the climax of the battle.

SPELLS OF LEGEND

Capable of extraordinary feats of magic, Spells of Legend are complex and mighty enchantments. Spells of Legend are extremely difficult to master, even for creatures closely attuned to magic (such as dragons). Any knowledge of these enchantments is very rare, and the number of beings capable of casting them is very few indeed. Thus, there are many stories about what Spells of Legend are capable of, and many rumors say they represent the absolute pinnacle of a spellcaster's craft. The Spell of Legend in this adventure is a unique one, contained only within the pages of the *Meganomicon*.

THE REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE

At the beginning of the third round of combat, the Coalition reinforcements come into view. Paraphrase or read aloud the following:

There's a brief pause in the battle, during which several lights appear on the horizon, growing as they get closer. Sinister, black-armored APCs grind across the landscape, emblazoned with a skull emblem. Another enormous skull perches atop segmented metal legs, heavy cannons jutting from either side. Tiny specks moving next to these vehicles also darkly gleam like metal, most likely armored Coalition soldiers accompanying the oncoming reinforcements in the far distance.

The arrival of the reinforcements should give the players an "oh no!" moment, to heighten the tension and excitement of the final battle. The Game Master should emphasize the reinforcements are not yet in range to open fire. If he is still alive, Cross takes this opportunity to gloat a bit at the legionnaires.

THE SPELL OF LEGEND: FIGHT

At the end of the third round of combat, the Spell of Legend is cast. If the heroes chose to fight rather than flee, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The Meganomicon glows blindingly bright. Kyxil's chanting voice becomes almost thunderously loud, echoing across the battlefield. One by one, the enemy warriors stop fighting, gazing up at the sky as enormous clouds swirl out of nothingness, ominously dark. A split-second later, lightning bolts begin to fall from above like spears, an awesome display of apocalyptic fury — each bolt of lightning striking one of the Coalition soldiers or vehicles. The bolts are so powerful many don't even have a chance to scream, occasionally disintegrating one of the enemy into nothing but a pile of dust quickly dispersed in the wind. Dozens of such bolts rain down upon the battlefield in rapid succession, wiping out any hope of a Coalition victory. Although it lasts only

seconds, it seems like hours pass before the lightning ebbs — leaving only a handful of enemies remaining, struggling to regroup.

HARASSING THE REINFORCEMENTS

The Game Master should ask the player characters if any of them want to try and harass the Coalition reinforcements to ensure a more decisive defeat. The reinforcements are still over fifty yards away, meaning long-range weapons like sniper rifles or the *blast* power are the most optimal. Allow the legionnaires one action each, and to keep things moving quickly, ask only for one roll (such as the Shooting or Spellcasting roll), resolving the effect narratively. Below are three things the legionnaires could do to make things even worse for the Coalition:

- The heroes can attack from long range, as described above
- The heroes can use skills like Intimidation or Trick to sow confusion (this works best when combined with a loudspeaker or radio)



- The heroes can use their abilities creatively (such as a Burster manipulating a burning vehicle's flame into a towering humanoid figure, or a Juicer using his sniper rifle to shoot an officer's weapon out of his hand).

Even if the heroes fail, the Coalition forces are in no mood to continue the fight.

BATTLE'S END

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

Black-armored figures stagger across the battlefield. "Enough! We need to retreat!" This shout comes from one of the open APCs as some of the Coalition soldiers support the others retreating slowly from the fight. Smoldering, wrecked vehicles litter the ground alongside dropped weapons and still corpses. A voice, scratchy and hoarse with pain, calls out the command, "Fall back!" The enemy is in no condition to continue the battle. You've won.

A Coalition officer (this is Lieutenant Cross if he is still alive) again barks out the order to fall back, leaving behind a threat: "This isn't over."

THE SPELL OF LEGEND: FLIGHT

At the end of the third round of combat, the Spell of Legend is cast. If the heroes chose to flee rather than fight, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Kyxil's chanting grows louder, until the very earth seems to tremble with every word. That is not a mere manner of speaking, either—the mountain overlooking the valley is visibly straining. Threads of magic spiral out from the glowing Meganomicon, piercing into the heart of the mountain and pulsing with eldritch energy. With a deafening roar, the top of the mountain explodes upwards, raining down shards of rock with glowing red comet-trails. The rain of debris smashes into the Coalition reinforcements, sowing damage and chaos among the gathered troops. Molten magma spills from the top of the mountain—now seemingly transformed into an active volcano—spewing ash and smoke into the

air. The temperature grows uncomfortably hot as a pyroclastic flow of lava surges down the mountainside, cutting off the Coalition forces from your group. "Now, we run," Kyxil says, the dragon hatchling's voice sounding incredibly weary.

PURSUIT

A pursuit team from the Coalition reinforcements (and any survivors from the advance force) makes up a group identical in composition to the advance force under Lieutenant Cross (see page xx). The heroes and Kyxil attempt to escape the area, greatly assisted by the Spell of Legend's newly-born volcano. Treat this scene as a Standard Chase (see *Savage Worlds*). In this case, the Coalition forces suffer a -4 penalty to their maneuvering Trait rolls on the first round and a -2 terrain penalty every round afterwards. These penalties and the fact that no more than a small group can even try to catch the legionnaires is the very pleasant result of the Spell of Legend. The legionnaires can congratulate themselves that dozens of troops and several vehicles must now figure out how to explain a volcano "just happened" to render them nearly useless.

SLOWING DOWN THE PURSUERS

The player characters have more options than simply attacking the Coalition pursuit force; there are other ways to fend off their foes during the chase. Below are some ideas on options the legionnaires might choose:

- The heroes might try to hit the wheels or legs on a pursuing vehicle to make it swerve or crash; this is a called shot (see *Savage Worlds*), typically at a -2 penalty.
- Clever use of powers such as *barrier*, *entangle*, or *slow* could add a penalty to the Coalition's maneuvering Trait roll during the Chase.
- The heroes might use a Mega Damage weapon or power to strike the ground and kick up an obscuring screen of dust, adding an Obstacle to the Coalition pursuit force's next draw.

If the Coalition pursuit force catches up with the heroes, draw cards for initiative

and fight out a standard combat. No further Coalition reinforcements are able to join in. If the heroes get away, go to **Aftermath**.

AFTERMATH

Once the legionnaires have either escaped the Coalition force or destroyed it in battle, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The threat is over. Kyxil and your group have traveled a significant distance from the Glimmer Valley, and you all take a moment to rest. The dragon hatchling smiles, and his emerald eyes gleam with excitement. "That. Was. Amazing!" he says, shaking his head in wonderment. "I wasn't certain I could cast the Spell of Legend, but, thanks to you, my friends...I had the confidence to do what was necessary."

Kyxil hefts the Meganomicon in one clawed hand. "It is time for me to say farewell. This book is too powerful for the world as it stands now. Perhaps, someday, there will be a place of enlightenment that could use the book's powers for the benefit

of all." The dragon hatchling falls silent for a moment. "I don't know when that day may come, but until then, I must hide the tome away where none can find it. When the time is right, I will make arrangements so someone...perhaps heroes like yourselves... can recover the Meganomicon."

The dragon hatchling grins. "Goodbye, my friends. Remember me, for I shall certainly remember you!" With a powerful leap, Kyxil takes to the air, his wings carrying him far away.

The legionnaires have successfully kept the Meganomicon out of the hands of the Coalition and gained a powerful ally. It is possible the Tomorrow Legion could benefit from a better relationship with Lazlo thanks to the heroes' actions. In addition, the future of the Meganomicon itself is still an open question. A Spell of Legend could certainly be a great moment in a *Savage Rifts*® campaign to spring upon a major villain when he least suspects it!





DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LIEUTENANT SEBASTIAN CROSS

This intense soldier leads the Coalition forces searching for the *Meganomicon*. Cross is a firm believer in the Coalition's stance on magic—it is dangerous, unreliable, and anathema to the Coalition's way of life. His orders are to locate the *Meganomicon* and destroy it. Should that prove impossible, Cross intends to take the tome back to Chi-town where the artifact will reside with other dangerous relics recovered from Tolkeen. Cross is aggressive, stern, and determined—he has no intention of letting anyone (especially the meddling Tomorrow Legion) stand in the way of carrying out his mission.

Note: If the legionnaires are particularly powerful or well-equipped, the Game Master can substitute Captain Jonas Shrike (see *Savage Foes of North America*) for Lieutenant Cross. Shrike is a far more dangerous opponent than Cross, and his involvement raises the stakes even further for the heroes.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d4, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Computers) d4, Notice d6, Piloting d8, Repair d4, Shooting d10, Survival d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 17 (10)

Hindrances: Loyal, Vow (Minor — Serve the Coalition)

Edges: Ace, Combat Ace, Power Armor Jock, Rock and Roll!

Gear: SAMAS (sidebar), C-18 Laser Pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), vibro-knife (Str+d6, AP 4, Mega Damage).

HYXIL

A flame wind dragon hatchling, Kyxil has found a book he believes is the true *Meganomicon*. Kyxil's plan is to take the *Meganomicon* and hide it away from the world. He believes no one on Rifts Earth is truly prepared to wield the awesome power of the *Meganomicon's* spells, so the tome must be kept safe until that changes. Kyxil, however, is not immune to the book's temptations. Simply studying the pages within led him to try one of the more minor enchantments detailed by the tome; this resulted in a temporary loss of his draconic abilities. Until his powers recover, the dragon is with the *Meganomicon* within Glimmer Valley near the Mississippi River.

Kyxil has the same statistics as a flame wind dragon (young adult). See *Savage Foes of North America*. His experimentation with the *Meganomicon* has rendered him weak in a fight. He cannot use the following Special Abilities: Fire Breath, Flaming Scales, Invisibility, Metamorphosis, Teleportation.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12+8, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Arcana) d10, Knowledge (History) d8, Knowledge (Megaverse®) d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d8, Psionics d10, Shooting d10, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d8, Streetwise d6, Taunt d8, Tracking d6

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 44 (20)

Edges: Alertness, Arcane Background (Magic), Arcane Background (Psionics), Brave, Charismatic, Elan, First Strike, Improved Frenzy, Improved Level Headed, Jack-of-All-Trades, Linguist, Master of Magic, Mentalist, Strong Willed, Wizard

Powers (Magic): *Armor, banish, barrier, blast, boost/lower Trait, deflection, dispel, entangle, environmental protection, light/obscure, intangibility, quickness, slumber, speak language.* **PPE:** 30

Powers (Psionic): *Beast friend, confusion, detect/conceal arcana, healing, mind reading, puppet, succor, telekinesis, telepathy.* **ISP:** 20

Special Abilities:

- **Armored Hide:** The dragon has +20 M.D.C. Armor with +8 Toughness.
- **Claws/Bite:** Str+3d8, AP 8, Mega Damage.
- **Fast Regeneration:** Dragons make a natural healing roll every round; +2 to recover from Shaken.
- **Fear (-2):** In his natural form, an adult dragon is a terrifying creature to most folks, who must make a Fear check at -2 when first seeing him.
- **Flight:** The dragon has a Flying Pace of 24" and Climb 0.
- **Huge:** When in his natural form, the dragon is +4 to be hit by attacks.
- **Impervious to Fire:** No fire or heat of any kind—natural or magical, environmental or an attack—harms a Flame Wind Dragon.
- **Low Light Vision:** Dragons can develop strong night vision, which enables them to ignore penalties for Dim and Dark conditions.



- **Nigh-Immortality:** Unless killed through violence or other means, dragons live anywhere from 6,000 to 12,000 years. They require only magical energy to sustain themselves, eating and drinking simply for pleasure. They are also immune to normal poisons and diseases.
- **Size +8:** In their natural forms, adult dragons are 40–50 feet from snout to tail-tip, and weigh up to 15 tons.
- **Tail Lash:** Kyxil can sweep all opponents in his rear facing in a 2" long by 4" wide rectangle. This is a Fighting attack which ignores size penalties, doing Str+d8 (Mega Damage).

THE MEGANOMICON

Little is certain about this ancient tome. Rumor states the *Meganomicon* contains mind-boggling power. The prevailing theory is that it contains numerous spells, including some from across the Megaverse itself. Others believe the book is merely a conduit of power, a totem that focuses the individual's own abilities. At least one school of thought claims the book contains the knowledge to create entirely new forms of magic!

Rumors say the *Meganomicon* was once within Tolkeen, and may have survived the destruction of that city at the hands of the Coalition. Few can agree on any truths regarding its nature and origin; Prescott Burch suspects the book taken from Tolkeen is merely an inferior copy of the true artifact. Kyxil, for his part, is only partially convinced the tome he possesses is the actual *Meganomicon*. Regardless, there is no doubt the book in question contains immense power, making it a target for the Coalition and cementing Kyxil's desire to keep the tome hidden.

ALIXIA

An evil and conniving creature known as a witchling, Alixia's goal is to spoil the plans of the heroes, and cause some problems for Kyxil at the same time. She can present a challenge to the legionnaires, but one more of cunning than of raw strength. The witchling tries to lure the heroes away from their goal and ambush them when they least expect it!

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d10, Knowledge (Arcana) d8, Notice d10, Spellcasting d10, Stealth d10, Streetwise d6, Survival d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 11 (5)

Edges: Arcane Background (Magic), Improved Extraction, Master of Magic, Wizard

Powers: *Bolt, boost/lower Trait, burst, clairvoyance, confusion, darksight, detect/conceal arcana, entangle, greater healing, growth/shrink, healing, light/obscure, pummel, puppet, slumber, telekinesis.* **PPE:** 40

Gear: Damaged Ley Line Walker medium armor (+5).

Special Abilities:

- **Fear:** Terrifying and ugly. Any who encounters Alixia must make a Fear check.
- **Flight:** Witchlings can hover and fly in any direction at their Pace.
- **Immunities:** Witchlings are immune to normal fire, heat, and cold (they suffer normal damage and effects from supernatural sources). They are also immune to poison and disease.
- **Invisibility:** As the *invisibility* power, but at will and for no PPE cost, using Stealth as the skill roll.
- **Ley Line Transmission:** Per the Ley Line Walker's ability (see *The Tomorrow Legion Player's Guide*).
- **Slow Regenerations:** Witchlings make a natural healing roll once per day.
- **Speak Languages:** As the *speak language* power, but an innate ability that only works on themselves.

Journal Entry Seventeen: the Meganomicon

My hunch has paid off. I believe one of the artifacts smuggled out of Tolkeen before the Coalition levelled it is the Meganomicon. There are any number of stories about this book and what it can do. Some say it is a collection of every known spell, while others claim the book can change the very nature of magic itself. I put more faith in the rumors the Meganomicon contains certain enchantments of amazing power called Spells of Legend.

The tome was well-hidden. It had to be to get through the Coalition patrols and make it this far south. Some of the refugees I've spoken with gave us clues something very important was moved down this way, then split off from the rest and headed east into the Magic Zone. Sahil—one of the wilderness scouts in my team—said he knew of a secluded spot not far into the Magic Zone called "the Glimmer Valley," which would be a very likely destination for someone looking to hide. I've marked the location on my map.

We're moving out in the morning, early. Sahil tells me Coalition soldiers have been nosing around asking the same sort of questions about refugees and smuggled relics. If we're lucky, we can avoid the Dead Boys and get to the Meganomicon first.

P.B.