



DRAGONLANCE® CAMPAIGN SETTING COMPANION AGE OF MORTALS

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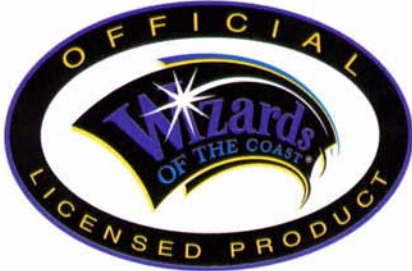
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INTRODUCTION

An Age of Mortals

“Now is begun what will be known on Krynn as the Age of Mortals. It will be the final age, I think. The final, the longest, and, perhaps, the best.”

—Image of Fizban to Palin and Usha
Dragons of Summer Flame
by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman

FOREWORD

BY MARGARET WEIS

If ever there was a time when the people of Krynn are crying out for heroes, that time is now—the Fifth Age, the Age of Mortals.

Depending on what part of the Fifth Age you choose for adventure, you may find a world whose gods have vanished, leaving the people to the mercy of terrifying Dragon Overlords. You may find a world embroiled in a war that pits the living against the spirits of the dead. Or you may find a world whose gods have returned and are now working to regain lost followers, even as they vie with each other to see who will emerge as leader of the pantheon in this new age.

The opportunities for glory and gain are many in this age. New magic has been found in the world; magic that allows sorcerers and mystics to operate freely and independently without the need to appease the gods. For those who adhere to the old, traditional methods of performing magic, the returning gods have brought with them the magic of the three moons, as well as clerical magic. Now, the users of both types of magic eye each other warily, neither trusting the other, both wondering if they can work together or if they will be enemies.

Heroes are needed to reclaim the land and end the curse of those who sought to destroy all who dwelt there. The face of the world itself has changed with the advent of the Fifth Age. Much of the landscape of Ansalon has been altered by the foul magic of the Dragon Overlords. The beautiful elven city of Qualinost is sunk beneath the Lake of Death. Lush forests have been burned to desert wasteland. Prosperous farms are now loathsome swamp.

The dragons who have long dwelt on Krynn are deeply involved in this new age and with its people. Good and evil dragons fought the Dragon Overlords during the infamous Dragon Purge. And while some evil chromatic dragons appeared to serve the Dragon Overlords, most of the time they were serving themselves. A few neutral dragons did what they could to help the people of Ansalon, while others chose to join with the side of darkness. Many good dragons left upon a daring venture to seek the lost gods, while others remained behind, often in disguise, in order to do what they could to ease the suffering of the people. Traveling anywhere in Ansalon means meeting up with dragons, especially now that the gods have returned. All dragons are left wondering which gods to support, for the two gods to whom the dragons paid allegiance—Paladine and Takhisis—have fallen from the heavens.

The people of Ansalon have faced many challenges in this age and new challenges present themselves daily. The minotaur race at last sees that their manifest destiny is within their grasp. The elven race has witnessed the destruction of their lands and nations. The ogres have discovered power in a new race of beings—the titans. The Solamnics have been forced to relax their rigid structure in order to adapt to a changing world. The dwarves fight among themselves in their deep caverns, their trials known only to a few in the realms above. Draconians are a new race in the world with a city of their own. The souls of the dead of all races battle the living at the command of the One God.

The Fifth Age is in its infancy. Much of the future of this age has yet to be written. Whether those mortals for whom the age is named will enter an age of peace and prosperity or will embark upon an age of darkness and turmoil is yet unknown. You can help make the decisions, for you are one of those mortals. You have the chance to leave your mark upon this age. You have the chance to be one of its heroes.

May the gods walk with you. Or not, as you choose.

AGE OF MORTALS

Chaos, the Father of All and Nothing, has been driven from Krynn at great cost. The continent of Ansalon was so badly scarred that many called the end of the Chaos War "The Second Cataclysm." Countless thousands died at the hands of the minions of Chaos—the fire dragons, the daemon warriors, the frost wights. The three moons of silver, red, and black are gone, replaced by a single, pale orb that does not radiate magical energy onto the world. The stars have changed as well, the familiar constellations no longer adorn the night sky. The Wizards of High Sorcery have lost all magical power, and even the most devout clerics can no longer find communion with their gods.

The world is changed. Ripped from its former place in the heavens, Krynn has been removed to a far distant side of the universe and hidden from the gods who acted as its guardians. The people of Ansalon, weak and weary from war and bereft of their gods, now face dangerous alien dragons and a new god with the power to use the dead to conquer the living.

So begins the Age of Mortals.

KRYNN IN THE FIFTH AGE

The world of Krynn underwent significant changes during and after the Summer of Chaos. Some land masses were drastically altered, as new lands rose and seas receded. The three moons disappeared, replaced by a single moon. The patterns of the stars changed. The gods were gone.

There was speculation as to why the gods departed Krynn at the beginning of the Age of Mortals. Some claimed that the gods had fled in fear of Chaos. Others maintained that the gods left the world in order to save it from Chaos. Years would pass before anyone discovered the truth—Krynn is a world that was stolen from its creators.

Takhisis, Queen of Darkness, discovered the means to move the world of Krynn through the ethers to another place in the cosmos. She was elated with this discovery, for it meant that if she could snatch away the world, she would be its sole ruler. Takhisis was unable to act on her plans for millennia, however, as the other gods were always present—ready to react quickly to counter the powerful magic she would need to cast in order to steal the world. The unexpected release of Chaos into the world provided the Dark Queen her opportunity.

While the other gods joined with mortals to fight against the forces of Chaos, Takhisis kept out of the battle, biding her time, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. When the other gods were weakened and distracted, she used energies she had saved for countless centuries to tear Krynn from its place in the heavens, flinging it to the secret location she had long ago prepared to receive it. The other gods of Krynn were unable

to stop Takhisis. Some, such as Sargonnas, had been so wounded by Chaos that they barely had strength left to survive. The gods could only stare in bewildered amazement at the empty place in the heavens where once had shone their lovely blue world. They searched for it, but they could not sense the world or its people. Even Zivilyn, who can see all times and all places, was unable to see anything except Krynn's stolen, phantom future.

ANSALON IN THE AGE OF MORTALS

As the previous age was largely characterized by the people of Ansalon rediscovering their past, the Age of Mortals is about the people of Ansalon discovering their future. With the gods separated from the world and terrible new threats arriving in the form of the Dragon Overlords, the people must learn to fight for their own destinies.

Terrible tragedies occurred during the early years, calling upon some of Ansalon's races to deal with hardships they had never before had to face. The child-like and carefree kender were massacred by the thousands in Kendermore when it came under attack by the great red dragon, Malystrix. The survivors were "afflicted"—scarred in mind and soul by the horrors they had witnessed, forced to trek to the west to find sanctuary. The elven kingdom of Qualinesti was seized by the green overlord, Beryl, who made her genocidal hatred of the elves known to those under her rule. The Silvanesti, acting out of fear that their recently restored kingdom might also be seized by the Dragon Overlords, encased their lands in a magical, impenetrable Shield. Believing themselves safe from the world and its problems, they came to the horrifying discovery that the Shield was slowly killing them.

Yet, in the midst of tragedy, the mortals of Ansalon demonstrated strength and innovation. The long-forgotten ambient magics of sorcery and mysticism were rediscovered, giving the people new weapons to use in the fight against their oppressors. The Legion of Steel, a new organization to champion the liberty of people ruled by the Dragon Overlords, was founded and its numbers grew, even while its membership remained secret. Just when hope was once returning to the world, a strange and powerful storm swept across the continent. Out of the storm came a voice, proclaiming the arrival of a new god.

THE WAR OF SOULS

Years after the discovering the "new magic" of the Fifth Age, sorcerers and mystics began to find their spellcasting powers diminishing. No amount of study revealed the true cause of this drain, though spiritualists began to suspect that it had some connection with the growing legions of



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spirits who were remaining on Krynn; spirits who were either unwilling or unable to move on to the next stage of the soul's journey.

On the night of the Great Storm, a young girl named Mina emerged from the thunder and the lightning, speaking of a new god—the One God—and wielding miraculous powers not seen since the mightiest clerics of old. Taking control of the Knights of Neraka, Mina waged war that conquered cities, nations, and brought down several of the mighty Dragon Overlords. The war was to end in Sanction, with the One God absorbing the powers of the Dragon Overlords and using it to enter the world. The work of heroes foiled the One God's plans and revealed her identity to be that of Takhisis, the Queen of Darkness, who had stolen away the world from her fellow immortals so that she might truly become the one true god of Krynn.

A NEW ERA

The end of the War of Souls brings about the restoration of the gods to Krynn, though the pantheon is now missing the two leaders of Light and Darkness. The focused magic of wizards and clerics works again after nearly forty years of absence. The ambient powers of sorcery and mysticism function unhindered by the souls that have now continued on their journey.

The lives of many on Ansalon have been changed, perhaps forever, by the tumultuous events of the war. Some of the villains of the Fifth Age have been defeated, but others remain and new powers for evil are rising. Now is a time when new heroes are going to be in demand to help shape the future of the world of Krynn.