

CHAPTER 1 of “The Heptagon”

by Jerry Edmunds

Eelinian’s Hope

Ranor and the Horseriders of Eelin rode swiftly across the open plain. They came within sight of a cloud of smoke billowing up to the sky. Ranor raised a hand and the riders came to a well-coordinated halt, their tan cloaks flapping in the breeze. They stared at the smoldering ruins of a burning Outpost. What was once a sanctuary for wandering nomads was now a mass of destruction.

Ranor’s eyes sparked into a shimmering white glow, the only sign on the well-defined, hardened features of his face betraying the anger inside. The thought they were once again too late materialized for a brief moment, but then leapt to the present task. Ranor’s hand rose and lowered in a gradual motion. The riders proceeded at a trot, their senses alert for any signs of the creatures causing such devastation. The broad backed steeds of various hues ranging from tan to golden brown remained steadfast under their rider’s guidance.

Ranor signaled for everyone to come to a halt when the party reached the edge of the ruined Outpost. Smoke rolled across the scorched grass, meandering in all directions. Fragments of the demolished wall, recklessly tossed about the charred ground, sputtered with embers of red flames. The twisted watchtower, sizzling with sparks of red fire, tilted to one side and collapsed in a cloud of burned wooden uselessness.

Ranor looked toward the riders to his right, whose leader tilted his head slightly with acknowledgment. The riders dismounted and unsheathed their swords with a cascade of metallic sounds. They made their way through the smoke with their cloaks flung over their faces, searching for survivors. With a glowing look from Ranor, the riders to his left dismounted and circled around the outer reaches of the destroyed Outpost in a similar pursuit.

Ranor dismounted his burly bronze steed and strode toward a fragment of the wall tossed from the reaches of the meandering smoke. He knelt down, the light from the flames reflecting upon the silver emblem of a warrior's helmet crafted into his armor. Ranor turned his glowing gaze to the East, where barren hills rose up from the edge of the plains, covering the horizon. He thought of the words spoken by the old scholar the

day before he and the other riders set out on their journey to the plains. Ranor thought about the many words spoken in the great Council Hall of the city of Eelin that day.

The sturdy oak doors of Crescent Hall were open wide to allow the few curious spectators to make their way into the Gathering Area. Dozens of rows of wooden benches rose up at a steady angle, circling around to the opposite side of the massive Hall in a crescent shape. The windows above were open halfway, letting in the crisp mountain breeze that fanned the lemon aroma of the mahogany wood throughout the Hall. To the left of the main doorway, in an enclosed Waiting Area, sat a group of well-tanned, bearded, and rugged individuals. It was not often the leaders of the Nomadic Tribes made the long journey to the city of Eelin.

An impressive block arc shaped structure of polished wood stood opposite the rows of benches. The King's throne of golden poplar gleaming in the sunlight rose majestically in the center of the structure. The throne featured an emblem of a polished silver helmet. White diamonds glittered behind the helmet's visor. The Councilor's Seats, constructed of a creamy ash wood, spread out in a semi-circle from the throne, three on each side.

King Holgren, a commanding figure with a distinguished graying beard and attentive eyes, sat upon his throne. Ranor and a handful of the Horseriders of Eelin sat to the left of the Council Seats in a small bleacher area three rows deep and more than a dozen seats wide. Next to them sat several wise men and scholars, their faces intent and observant.

King Holgren leaned forward and motioned toward the Nomads. "Come forth and speak," the king said in a voice unmistakably full of the authority of his position.

One man stood up, opened the gateway leading from the Waiting Area, and stepped in front of the Council Seats. The Nomad bowed toward King Holgren. The sunlight flowing through the windows did not brighten his grim, hardened expression. "Greetings to the King of Eelin," the Nomad said in a deep, booming voice that echoed throughout the Hall. "We wish to speak with you on a matter of great urgency."

"The Nomads who dwell in the plains are always welcome in Crescent Hall," King Holgren said. "You may speak freely."

The Nomad tilted his head toward the King in a gesture of respect. "Our reasons for journeying to your city are twofold," he said. "First, we wish to warn you of a growing threat which rises from the East. Second, we seek protection."

A rustle of nervous voices spread throughout the Hall. The Nomads had not asked for assistance for a countless number of years. The last time was at the beginning of the greatest threat Eelin ever faced.

King Holgren lifted his hand, signaling for those gathered in the Hall to quiet down. "And what is the nature of this threat?"

"They no longer raid our dwellings in small parties, as they have done in the past," the Nomad said. "They now come from their foul land in great numbers, ruthlessly attacking our tribes. Many of the dwellers of the Plains have met their fate at the hands of the Berons who dwell to the East."

A wave of anxious voices cascaded through the Gathering Area. The King once again signaled for everyone to quiet down. The commotion lessened to a dull murmur of restless anticipation.

King Holgren waved a hand toward the scholars. "What do the wise men of Eelin say about the words we have just heard?"

One of the scholars rose to his feet. "I believe it would be wise to assist these Nomadic people," the bearded man said. "They have always provided us with good trade and have

shown friendship toward all of Eelinian. It is also wise to come to their aid so we can determine just how great this threat is, and act accordingly. If what the leaders of the Nomadic tribes say is true, which I do not doubt, the very borders of Eelinian may soon be under attack by the Berons."

King Holgren nodded. "It has always been our duty to come to the aid of anyone who is threatened by the Beron Nation." The King regarded the Nomad who stood before him. "You have traveled many miles to seek aid, and you shall have it. The Horseriders of Eelin shall be sent forth to assist the Nomadic Tribes against this threat."

The Nomadic Leader bowed low toward the King. "We thank you, King of Eelin," the Nomad said. He turned and headed toward the oak doors leading out of Crescent Hall. The other Nomads rose to their feet and followed him. They each bowed toward King Holgren as they passed.

"Ranor of the Moonbeams," the King said as the Nomads left the Hall. Ranor rose to his feet, followed by the other riders. "Gather the Horseriders of Eelin. Though I fear for the safety of the towns along the borders of Eelinian you so thoroughly protect, I feel it is best you lead the riders into the Plains to aid the Nomadic tribes."

"As you command," Ranor said, bowing toward the King. He and the other riders headed toward the main doorway.

A cackling voice burst forth from the Gathering Area. "Go, Horseriders of Eelin!" the grating voice echoed through the Council Hall. "Find out what you can about the Berons!"

A grizzled old man unsteadily rose from his seat. "Find out! Find out!" the old man cackled. "Find out if another Ruler has gathered the tribes of Berons together. Find out if another sorcerer has risen from the midst of these foul creatures. Remember the Scroll! Remember the Scroll! Remember the words of the Prophet Eenol which predict the arrival of the seven from another world!"

The old man took a parchment from inside his robe. With an unsteady gait, he shuffled down the stairs toward Ranor. "These are the very words written on the Scroll of Eenol," the old man cackled. "Here is the final prophecy of the great sage Eenol. Though it is true one side of the Scroll has been torn from the parchment, the words on the other side can be read, and their meaning is clear."

The old man reached the bottom of the stairs and approached Ranor. "The prophecies of Eenol always came true in the past. Need I remind you of the predictions concerning the last

Beron Wars, of how the foul sorcerer Bostack the Hideous banded the Beron tribes together and nearly destroyed our beloved city. Eenol predicted this catastrophe. And now it is time for Eenol's final prophecies to come to pass!" The old man waved the parchment in Ranor's face and then shoved it into his chest.

Ranor took the parchment from the old man. Though he was quite familiar with the prophecies contained on the Scroll of Eenol, he read the last fragment once again...

...once again be

...of great need

...the first Beron Wars

...Beron Nation

...again join together

...one Ruler

...time, seven

...another world

...forth, though

...own will.

...one individual
...shall discover
...of the Heptagon,
...power in the land.
...shall appear
...above the land.
...power shall reign
...the Beron Nation
...deliver the land
...threat forever.

"The meaning is clear," the old man cackled. "In a time of great need for our beloved homeland, when the Beron Nation is once again joined under one Ruler, seven people from another world shall arrive. One of these seven shall [LE1](#) have the power to find and wield the legendary Heptagon, the most powerful weapon in the land. This hero from another world shall use the Heptagon to destroy the Beron Nation forever!"

Ranor glanced toward King Holgren, who leaned heavily on his throne. He handed the parchment back to the old man. Ranor headed toward the open oak door, followed by the other riders.

The shrill voice of the old man followed Ranor and his men as they left Crescent Hall. "This is the beginning of the time of the seven, as the Prophet Eenol foretold! This will be the final confrontation between the Eelinites and the Berons!"

Ranor and half a dozen riders followed the Beron's trail through the barren hills, moving at a cautious pace. The land was sparse of vegetation, and an earthy smell arose when the horse's hooves stealthily caressed the dirt-covered ground. An occasional gust of wind whipped into the rider's faces, forcing them to close their eyes and tilt their heads from the spraying dirt and dust.

Suddenly Ranor signaled for everyone to halt. He paused, his keen senses alert and focused. Grunting sounds lifted up from beyond the hill rising before them. Ranor dismounted his steed and cautiously made his way to the top of the incline. He peered down into a small valley embedded in a ring of barren hills. The sight below increased the nagging sensation tugging

at him ever since he observed the red flames sputtering all around the destroyed Outpost.

Ranor signaled to the others. They silently crawled up the incline and looked over the edge. The steadfast riders exchanged nervous glances of unease at what they observed.

A band of hulking creatures gathered in the valley below. Thick, matted hair covered the bodies of the Beron Warriors. The grunts and growls echoing through the valley betrayed the wild beast inside each of them. The Berons wore shoddily constructed armor, and the crude weapons grasped in their clawed hands displayed a readiness for battle.

A lone, shadowy figure stood upon a ridge at the far end of the valley. The dark figure was quite different from the other Berons. It wore a black, hooded robe that flapped in the wind coming down from the barren hills. Two distinct glowing red eyes peered out from underneath the black hood. The black robe covered the cloaked figure's folded arms.

A huge armored Beron warrior strode forth toward the ridge, its clawed hand resting upon the hilt of its sheathed sword. A dozen other Berons followed behind, howling fiercely and waving spears and cudgels in the air menacingly. The group lumbered closer to the robed figure. The armored warrior abruptly let

out a howl, unsheathed its sword, and charged forward. The rest of the group followed.

The hooded figure whipped gnarled hands out from underneath its robe. A flash of red light burst forth from the figure's outstretched hands. The light blazed toward the huge Beron warrior, engulfing the creature in a circle of searing flames. A bellow of agony filled the valley. The flash of light diminished, revealing charred and smoking flesh. The others in the group skidded to an alarmed halt, their weapons held still.

A stunned silence gripped the valley. The Beron warriors who had followed their unfortunate leader dropped their weapons and fell groveling to the ground. The other Berons let out thunderous howls, raising their weapons to the sky. They marched toward the ridge in a roughly organized line. The robed figure whirled around and glided effortlessly across the ridge and up the hill leading out of the valley.

This sight confirmed Ranor's worst fears. The hooded creature wielded the power of dark sorcery, and it was using this power to gather the Berons together. If the Berons joined under one ruler, it would be logical to assume the coming of the seven as predicted by the prophet Eenol must be near at

hand. There was no alternative but to begin searching for the seven from another world immediately.

If interested in reading the entire manuscript, please check out the link below:

<https://www.amazon.com/author/jerryedmunds>

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