

Yet rumour reached the embattled Kislevites of a heroic war-leader from the south. A man called Magnus who was bringing an army north to their salvation. Indeed, over the passing weeks and months, the flock of Magnus of Nuln had grown ever stronger. He had gathered to him an army of all kinds of men: loyal devotees of Sigmar and various other cults, mad-eyed zealots, ordinary citizens, and professional soldiers from the armies of the provinces. Recognising in Magnus a leader they could all follow, or indeed realising that in such dangerous times they had no choice but to follow him, the Elector Counts of the Empire pledged him their unconditional support and led their troops to join him.

THE DESPERATION OF MAGNUS

But still, hope was a rare commodity in those unpleasant days, and despite his great faith in Sigmar's Might and the strength of Imperial unity, desperation crept into Magnus' heart. Every day he read reports carried to him by outriders or untied from the legs of messenger pigeons. Each of these reports told tales of horror and described the sheer scale of the nightmare forces arrayed against him. He wrote in his war journal (now held in the Emperor's private library at the Imperial Palace), that although he knew to the core of his being that the good men and women of the Empire could eventually prevail over any mortal foe, could they do so against the monsters and Daemons of Chaos...?



Magnus knew he needed allies—allies that offered something his own armies lacked.

After countless centuries of avoiding the Old World, in the two thousandth and first year since Sigmar's death, almost exactly three hundred and one years before the Chaos Incursion, the Elves of Ulthuan had returned to the lands of Men, opening relations with the Empire. Over the previous three centuries, the higher ranks of Imperial society came to learn that many of the legends concerning the supposedly mythical Elves were actually true. Amongst them were the stories concerning the magical nature of this elder race. Magnus wrote in his journal that though he was reluctant to do so, he felt he had no choice but to ask the people of Ulthuan for aid.

He kept his doubts secret to all but his oldest friend and closest confidante, Pieter Lazlo, and bade him sail the trade route to Lothorn in Ulthuan, the one city to which the Elves had allowed Humans access. Lazlo was to carry a letter from Magnus informing the Ulthuan's Phoenix King of the dire situation facing the Old World and pleading for aid. Lazlo set sail from Marienburg with a handpicked crew on the ship *Sigmar's Hope* (called by its own crew the *Forlorn Hope*). The ship was imperilled from the outset. The weather was the worst in living memory, and the Marienburg harbourmaster pleaded with them not to set sail, afraid that they would sink before they even reached the sea. But Lazlo and his crew knew if they did not risk death now on the high seas, they would surely die a far more terrible death later when the forces of Chaos overran the Empire. They departed.

INTO THE STORM

Savage storms lashed their vessel as it crossed the Sea of Claws and on into the ominously named Sea of Chaos. Here, a wave as high as the walls of Altdorf fractured their main mast, and while they struggled to repair it, their ship was blown leagues off course. It was a sad, battered ship that eventually limped into Lothorn's harbour, the crew weak with malnutrition and scurvy. The sight that met their eyes did little to lift their flagging spirits. They sailed past the great lighthouse of the Glittering Tower, seeing that the massive white structure had been blackened by smoke with many of its thousand lamps shattered. The Lothorn Straits were crowded with the shattered wreckages of once elegant ships and the bloated bodies of the drowned. The Elven pilot that came on board to guide them through the mightily fortified Emerald Gates told Lazlo that Lothorn had survived a great siege, broken but days before. The Dark Elves, said the grim-faced pilot, had returned to Ulthuan once more and their armies and Daemoniac allies even now ravaged the towns and countryside further inland.

At this news, Lazlo's heart filled with despair. Would the Phoenix King offer aid to the Empire when his own people were under siege? As his ship arrived at Lothorn's mighty docks, he could see Ulthuan's armies gathering to march north. As an official representative from the Empire, Lazlo was escorted to

meet with the emissaries of Ulthuan's monarch. He told them all he could of the situation in the Old World and gave them the sealed letter entrusted to him by Magnus. The emissaries took the news and Lazlo's letter to Finubar, the Phoenix King, as he discussed strategy in his war room with the archmage Teclis and his brother Tyrion, the Everqueen's champion.

A PLEA ANSWERED

Though King Finubar knew the dangers that would face Ulthuan if the Old World fell to the Powers and Dominions of Chaos, he knew he could not spare any troops to send back with Lazlo. The Dark Elves had almost overrun Ulthuan, and if they were not expelled, his people would fall. Hearing the call of destiny, Teclis volunteered himself to go to the Old World with Lazlo and offer what aid he could to Humankind. He knew that should the lands of men fall to the Chaos Gods, then Ulthuan would inevitably follow. So it was that Teclis answered Lazlo's plea, and two of his brother mages, the Loremasters Yrtle and Finreir, threw in their lot with Magnus and the armies of the Humans.

Lazlo took the archmages to the Imperial city-state of Talabheim where Magnus gathered more troops to his cause. Teclis' centuries of experience and sage advice made him invaluable to Magnus from the start. Although Magnus was disappointed that Lazlo had not succeeded in bringing a military force back

with him, Teclis explained that strength of arm alone would never be enough to halt the advance of Chaos. Teclis and his brother Loremasters explained to Magnus the need for Humans to learn how to use magic safely in order to combat the Aethyric enemies they would be facing in the coming weeks and months. A devout Sigmarite, Magnus was filled with doubt at the archmages' words, but he trusted his instincts and believed that there was no evil in the Elves that stood before him. More than this, they had lived for centuries longer than he, and wisdom almost seemed to exude from them as a tangible aura. If they said they could teach those Humans sensitive to magic to use it to defeat the minions of the Dark Gods, then he could not dismiss such an invaluable power, not facing what he faced.

MAGNUS'S CONSENT

So Magnus agreed. He made the Loremasters promise that should any of their Human protégés begin to show even a glimmer of corruption, the archmages would destroy them. In a tone that sent chills through all present, Teclis stated that heedless of such a promise, any tainted creature that came near the Loremasters would be obliterated more completely than any Human could ever truly understand. Magnus did not doubt his words.

So it was that the influence of the archmages changed the course of the Old World's war against Chaos.

— THE GIFT OF SPELLCRAFT —

With the authority and permission of Magnus and the more grudging support of those subordinate to him, the first and perhaps most profound deed of Teclis and his brother mages was to offer amnesty to the hedge wizards and petty magic users that existed in the Empire at that time and to seek out as many as possible. Word was sent by galloping outriders to every part of the Empire they could reach, offering a full pardon and training to any and all that knew or suspected they had an affinity or ability with magic. For some, they experienced strange dreams, compulsions to journey to Altdorf as if some force compelled them. There, if they submitted themselves to Teclis' judgment and training and agreed to fight in the coming war, they would not be harmed by any of the Empire's other powers or agents. They would be under Teclis' protection and the protection of the Great Uniter, Magnus of Nuln.

TECLIS' PURGE

The Elven mages' incredible skills and profound sensitivity to movements of the Aethyr enabled them to sense even the smallest conjurations by the pettiest Human spellcasters for leagues around them, thus allowing them to find potential magic users by themselves. Using their arcane knowledge, the Elves could traverse the lands of the Empire with supernatural speed and uncover many of the primitive or misguided magic users who were forced to live in secrecy. Yet there were others who made

their way to Talabheim of their own accord, handing themselves over to Magnus' authority in desperate hope. With barely a pause, Teclis and his two companions eradicated any witches and warlocks corrupted beyond any hope of redemption.

Teclis left alone the priests and clerics of the Empire's cults, despite his sensing a great aptitude for magic in many. The holy men and women of the Empire were adamant that they had no power or wish to manipulate magic, insisting any miracles their prayers might bring came directly from the deity they worshipped. It is said Loremasters Yrtle and Finreir were amused by these claims, but Teclis merely nodded and allowed the issue to drop. The priests he had approached could already work magic with faith and rituals without learning the arcane spellcraft that Teclis offered. The great archmage saw no reason to inject doubt into their hearts by pressing his point.

Teclis and his brother mages began to instruct their Human students in the ways of spellcraft much to the horror and disapproval of the many templar orders of the Empire, most notably the Witch Hunters. Indeed, many people and long-standing Imperial authorities were aghast that men should be permitted to embrace the sorcerous arts. But Magnus, Voice of Sigmar, Great Uniter of the Empire, and Last Hope against the Chaos Hordes, ordered that it should be so. Magnus had the backing of the Theogonist and Electors, so the witch hunters were held at bay.