

## **The Doom of Adfah**

I am Shyry of the Ny Huluhn. When historians write of my people, whether in fear, hatred or awe, they call us the Children of Adfah, and they are right to do so. From Adfah has come our glory, our power, and our doom. It was Adfah that took us to our highest peak, and it was Adfah who took us to our lowest shame. Now we live in fear of all those around us, those who might take vengeance against us. Not for the first time do my brethren, fleeing the deadly corsairs of the Droadh, raise their voices in curse against Adfah. But it was our pride that brought us here. It was our pride that has driven us now, in hiding, to a strange world, a savage, primitive world with a strange name: Draconspire. Even as I write the name it seems strange and alien. But here we feel the power of Adfah again. Here is where Bravann came to find him, to resurrect him, to worship him again. Adfah, our God.

The Ny Huluhn were not always his children. Before his coming we were simple folk, much like any other. But Adfah came to us and opened our eyes. He joined us, mind and soul, so that we thought as one. And as we brought him gifts and worshipped him, we found that we had new power. The strength of our minds was enhanced, and those things we did with muscle and hard work were done with merely a thought. For centuries the multitude of my people lived with one mind. They created great works, edifices of impossible height and beauty. Conflict was eradicated almost overnight, and we all worked together to glorify Adfah, who had given us this great gift.

None knew his real name, nor cared to learn it. Adfah was the name we gave him. Adfah; God: a name whispered in reverence, and in fear. While all of us flourished within the protection of the collective mind, a new spirit arose. Slowly, quietly at first, it gradually insinuated itself into the collective mind. Adfah fought it, as well as his children, but it was not easily killed. When we quelled it in one place, it rose stronger in another. Soon this spirit could not be silenced; in darkened hallways where they could not be found, conspirators spoke heresies against Adfah; they spoke of revolution, of revolt, of bloodshed, and though the collective mind could find these miscreants and defeat them, more were ever waiting in the ranks to be revealed. For the spirit that grew was freedom. Though Adfah's gifts were great, though our power and society was vast beyond measure because of his gifts, they came at dire price. No one held secrets within the collective; no one held a thought of their own, for all thoughts were shared. All thoughts came from Adfah, or were given to Adfah.

At first freedom was but a whisper. Delicate and fragile, yet capable of moving mountains with enough time. Whisper grew to murmur, murmur turned to rumbling, until at last the only bulwark against the spirit of freedom was Adfah himself. He fought this movement, but try as he might, he could not withstand all of the Ny Huluhn. We had become strong, feeding from his power and learning from him. Whipped into the frenzy of revolution, the Ny Huluhn brought war and strife to Adfah, and they broke the collective mind. Adfah reeled, and in a panic lashed out against his children. The devastation wrought of his anger was the doom of millions. The shape of our world was changed forever; the very soul of the planet was shriven and corrupted. But in the aftermath of the great battle, Adfah was defeated. They encased him in a prison of amber, the heroes of the revolution, because they knew that Adfah was the source of their power. Having been exposed to the power of

Adfah for so long, we could not live without it, we could not face existence without our beloved power. What fools we were!

In the generations that followed we bridged the gaps between thought, space and time. Neither distance nor time mattered any longer. Our people spread across the open space into many worlds, creating and nurturing some, conquering others. Our world having been broken, we sought new homes, and new wealth. We drew greedily from the power of Adfah, and with it founded a vast empire that spanned across much of our galaxy. Great ships powered by the mind sailed through the empty spaces, and no power could resist us. But in our arrogance we did not feel the danger until it was too late. The same spirit that drove us against our god drove those we had subjugated against us. They infiltrated the very heart of our empire and released our god from his amber prison. His fury had been fueled by long imprisonment, and he lashed out with all of his power. The devastation was worse than before. Ships fell out of the skies, seas boiled, and stars destroyed their planets in their own death throes.

But there were those among us with the strength and virtue to oppose Adfah. Again they imprisoned him, but instead of keeping him, they cast him into the darkest reaches of space, where none could be corrupted by his power. But in the absence of our God, our power diminished. The surviving Ny Huluhn could not command the empire, and it crumbled. We were scattered across the galaxy, hunted by those we had ruled. The vengeance of a thousand worlds was unleashed upon us. So now those few of us who remain hide among those who would kill us merely for who we are. A dying race, we make a living however we may, pretending to be who we are not, moving through the stars hoping to find a place where we can be at peace.

But there are those of us who believe that peace can only be found by regaining what we lost—our power and our God. They search through the stars, looking for Adfah, the yellowed casket of amber from which they hope to rebuild our glory. But they are fools. Though we live long compared to most creatures, there are none of the Ny Huluhn now living that remember the power of Adfah, but the stories remain. How we could command the thoughts of hundreds, or the movement of heavenly bodies with our minds; how we could travel from one distant sun to another with a mere thought. I must admit that such power is enticing, but wisdom is a far greater gift than Adfah's power.

### **From the Memoirs of Ethelras Mindshadow, 4<sup>th</sup> Seat of the Vigilant, Scribe of the Amber Thorn Council**

I know now that my delay was folly, perhaps the greatest of many follies. Elf, man or dwarf, pride can blind the wisest of them all. But now my hope is that these pages will reach the right eyes, eyes belonging to one who will correct the folly of my delay. The caution I have given the council has fallen on deaf ears. Who can blame them? Each year the power from the Amber Thorn grows; each year even the lowliest synapse might discover a new power or a new device for wielding it. When wielding such things, no one wants to hear an old man grumble about invisible dangers or gut feelings. I have fallen to a low station, despite my years, and my long friendship with Demoras Wintermantle. But

since his death none of the old friendships apply. Now epitomes look at me as some crazy old man, though I do not blame them. Eight hundred years ago I might have thought the same thing of someone such as me.

Bah! Even in script I ramble. Perhaps those epitomes are right. Nevertheless, take heed, whoever should read these pages. The power of the Amber Thorn must come at a great price. For four hundred years I have felt a dread growing in my heart. Demoras, wise as he was, did not see the danger I see. The diffusion of power that is to come will tear the Amber Council to pieces, and I fear there will be no one strong enough to hold us together. Beware of Angras Bluehelm. Though an honored council member and advisor, and a good friend of Demoras, I have seen him at work on his true purposes; I have seen him consort with foul creatures and evil men. He or one such as he will no doubt attempt to seize power, but I have no proof to back my accusations, save only the impending future.

I go now to my retirement in lands far away, perhaps to the olive orchards of Dervarn or further if the Eldross Ocean permits. It will take people stronger than I to face the coming danger. And it will have to happen soon. The Thorn sweats! Though none will admit to seeing it, the amber around the figure diminishes with each passing year. I fear what will happen when the creature within breaks free. Perhaps three, maybe four lifetimes of men will tell us for sure.

### **The Thorn of Amber**

Buried in the woods of Locklain, at the foot of Mount Falchion, far into the northern track of the Heman Dal Mountains, one can find the fortress of New Catlathon. Within this stronghold rests an alien device known as the Thorn of Amber. The Thorn, as it is often called, is credited to be the source of all psionic ability on Draconspire. The Thorn of Amber is, much as its name would hint, a spire of amber encircling a vaguely visible humanoid shape. No scholar or traveler has ever seen a being such as that which is encased within the Thorn, its features alien to even the oldest of Tharstelding. All attempts at opening the Thorn, mundane and magical, have failed. Usually with devastating effect due to the amount of psionic power present in the Thorn.

**Symbol:** A Spire of Amber point down, with Battlements on top.

**Background, Goals, and Dreams:** The fortress of New Catlathon was erected over the ruins of Catlathon in 2005 CM. Its location near the border of Castros and Pax Thallos is often ignored by both nations, that is to say that neither calls New Catlathon its territory. New Catlathon was constructed by Demoras Wintermantle, a wood elf from the nearby forest of Locklain. Demoras rediscovered the long forgotten Thorn of Amber, and erected a massive elven stronghold to protect it. The amount of psioic knowledge that has blossomed in the recent years since rediscovering the Thorn is astounding, every year new powers are discovered and new orders formed within the organization.

However not all news from this region is happy. The recent and sudden passing of Demoras Wintermantle has left the leadership of New Catlathon shattered. With no heir

named to the fortress several factions have begun to arise within the formally peaceful organization, each straining for ultimate power.

The Thorn of Amber aspires to learn more about the Thorn itself, by travel both planar and across the face of Draconspire. They dream one day to fully understand the Thorn and unlock the mysteries it holds.

**Members:** Membership into the Thorn of Amber is strictly restricted to those that display psionic ability. What does this translate to in game mechanics? It means that membership is only extended to those that have a power point reserve of at least 1, and know at least 1 psionic power, an exception to this rule is made for Soulnives. Members are expected to take any and all opportunities that could further advance knowledge about the Thorn of Amber, they are also expected to report any strange phenomenon or psionic item they encounter. Demoras knew that not everyone would be available to come and report these things directly to officials at New Catlathon, so he commissioned guild houses to be opened in major cities across Tharstelding where members could meet, discuss and trade.

### **The Vigilant**

A group within the Amber Thorn whose sole purpose is to study the thorn and attempt to answer the primary questions, what lies within? Where does the power come from? Is it safe? The leadership of the vigilant is given to the six seats, representing the six known psionic disciplines. The purpose and governing practices of the Vigilant mirrors the Amber Council in many ways, except that in the Amber Council station is not awarded based on discipline mastery. Many synapses of the Amber Thorn aspire to the Vigilant, but usually the bookish and nerdy types end up landing the job after decades of study. Though not an exciting life of danger and discovery, it is nevertheless an elite group within the whole, and to achieve membership therein is a high honor.

### **The Amber Thorn Council**

The general ruling body that is in danger of becoming defunct in the wake of Demoras' death. It is comprised of 12 elite members, each earns the title of Amber Lord by succession. They typically play the political game, occasionally taking on the mantle of judge to settle disputes between distant guild houses. At this moment, the seat of Grand Lord is vacant due to the recent death of Demoras Wintermantle with no heir apparent. The remaining 11 members spend most of their time when not in session gathering support for the inevitable power struggle that is yet to come.

**Type:** Cabal

**Affiliation Score Criteria:** A member of the Thorn of Amber can essentially be any class so long as they can manifest at least one power or other psionic ability. While some alignments may find it easier to advance within this organization there are no alignment restrictions for joining or maintaining a membership status. The Thorn of Amber isn't very strict in its expectations, but it does nonetheless require its members to be loyal and dedicated to the ideal of discovering more about the Thorn and its origins.

**Criterion:**

**Affiliation Score Modifier:**

***One Time***

Character Level	+½ character levels
Has a Psicrystal	+1
Can Manifest a Mind Blade or similar item	+2
Can manifest a power of at least 3 <sup>rd</sup> level	+1
Can manifest a power of at least 6 <sup>th</sup> level	+2
Has at least one Psionic feat	+1
Has at least 3 Psionic feats	+2
Intelligence 16 or higher	+1
Can cast arcane or divine spells	-5 per category.
Has no ranks in autohypnosis	-2
Has no ranks in knowledge psionics	-5
Has less than 5 ranks in autohypnosis	-1
Has less than 10 ranks in Knowledge psionics.	-1

***Multiple Times***

Destroys a psionic item	-2, per item
Fails to report to a local guild house with Frequency.	-1, per month absent.
Succeeds on an assigned mission	+2, per mission
Donates a psionic item to a local Guild house	+1, per 5,000 GP value
Recruit's a member	+1, per new member
Spends 10 or more years in the organization	+2, per decade.
Attempts to open the Thorn and fails	-10, per failure. Possible expulsion if permission was not granted.

## Titles, Benefits, and Duties:

### Affiliation Score

### Title: Benefits and Duties

**3 or lower**

**None:** Junior member, no benefits.

**4-10**

**Synapse:** Choose one: You gain a +2 competence bonus to Autohypnosis checks. You gain a +2 competence bonus to Psicraft checks. You gain a +2 competence bonus to Knowledge Psionics checks. Once your ability has been chosen it cannot be switched.

**11-15**

**Amber Adept:** Treat your manifester level as though it is one higher if you are within 100 miles of the Thorn of Amber.

**16-22**

**Epitome:** You are awarded a *Shard of Amber*. This is a wondrous item that takes up a head slot. While wearing the *Shard of Amber* you are considered to be within 100 miles of the Thorn of Amber regardless of your actual location.

**23-29**

**Mental Bastion:** Treat your intelligence score as though it were 2 points higher if you are within 100 miles of the Thorn of Amber.

**30 or Higher**

**Apotheosis:** You are awarded an *Amber Cloak*, while wearing this item which takes up a body slot you are surrounded by a field of psionic energy. This has two functions; it provides the wearer with a constant +6 armor bonus to their armor class, this is a force effect. Second, it allows the wearer to use one of their powers as a swift action once per day. They must still be able to manifest the power and pay its power point cost normally. This item has no effect when worn by a character without psionic abilities.