Chapter 1: What Came Before

Being an account of the events, the luminaries and traitors, the victories and defeats, and the external forces that brought the Wizard's Cabal into being, and shaped it into what it is today.

Few organizations or institutions are as vital to the functioning, the history, even the very identity of the North as the Wizard's Cabal. It is, in many ways, a government unto itself, a power that operates in conjunction with King Uther and local communities, rather than being subject to them. It has not always been thus, however, and to truly understand the Cabal and its place in society, one must understand how it obtained that place.

Early Magic in the North (pre-815 on the Blackmoorian Calendar)

Mystical energies inundate the entire region of the North. Arcane magic permeates the land, the air, even many of the creatures that live here. While some modern wizards might not care to acknowledge the fact, the use of that magic was prevalent in the North long before the arrival of the first "civilized" casters. Even before the formation of the Thonian Empire, let alone the colonization of Blackmoor's surroundings, primitive nations of people dwelt in the region. Similar in some ways to the Peshwah or even the Afridhi, they were a tribal culture, worshipping strange spirits rather than familiar gods.

Due to the region's mystical emanations, a relatively large proportion of these tribesmen developed the power to wield magic naturally. Sorcerers lived in every family, and tribal elders watched for signs that a child was gifted with "the spirits' touch," as they called it. When a sorcerer first manifests his abilities in the North, it is accompanied by a great explosion of power, and the tribes knew to send a child into the wild for a brief time as the signs dictated. Some did not survive the hazards of the wilderness, but those who returned were welcomed as emissaries from the spirits themselves. The tribes boasted wokan as well, the strange arcane casters who seem to share a bond with nature itself, and these they considered shamans and witch doctors.

Use of Gemstones amongst the Tribes

While the wizard Skelfer is credited with first creating the "spell focus" through manipulation of the region's gemstones and the mystical energies imbued within them evidence suggests that the early tribes were not wholly unaware of these gems' properties. They had no comprehension of how to use them as foci but they knew that the addition of powdered gemstones to spells and magic items increased their power.

In terms of game-mechanics these benefits can be obtained by crushing a gem of the appropriate type for the spell being cast (see **Table 3–3: Magically Conductive Materials** on page 73 of Dave Arneson's Blackmoor); the gem must have been mined in the North to have these properties. Including the powder as an additional material component while casting a spell of the appropriate school raises the spell's effective caster level and the DC to save against it by 1. Similarly including this powder in the creation of single use items — such as potions or the ink of a scroll — provides the same benefits.

Of course doing so destroys the gem and no modern wizard would sacrifice a potential focus for a bonus to a single casting but this was the means by which the primitive tribes accessed the innate power of the North.

The Thonian Colonization

These tribes would not be left alone forever. Almost immediately after the founding of the Thonian Empire, colonists and military forces moved into the North to create a bastion of the Empire and the port city of Blackmoor.

There was surprisingly little military conflict between the newcomers and the native tribes. The size and strength of the Thonian forces was unmistakable, and in the majority of cases, the tribes — nomadic or semi-nomadic as they were — simply moved farther out, in some cases setting sail across the Black Sea for lands unknown. Many of those who remained behind grew fascinated by Thonian villages, and eventually assimilated into the culture.

Where conflict did arise, however, was between local sorcerers and wokan, and the newcomers. The purported emissaries of the spirits did not take kindly to being forced from their lands, and several Thonian villages and military patrols were laid waste by spells cast from afar, or summoned creatures clearly not native to these lands.

The Thonians, of course, did what they had to do: They sent word back home, offering incentives such as land, riches, and political influence to powerful wizards who would travel north and assist in the colonization efforts. Some wizards had already arrived, with the initial colonists, but after the Emperor's call went out, arcanists

arrived in Blackmoor by the boatload. A brief war, perhaps an omen of the greater struggle to come, erupted on the outskirts of the new communities. On one side were the native sorcerers and wokan, who were woefully outmatched. On the other were Thonian wizards, as well as some sorcerers and wokan who had already begun assimilating to the new culture and wished to prove their loyalty.
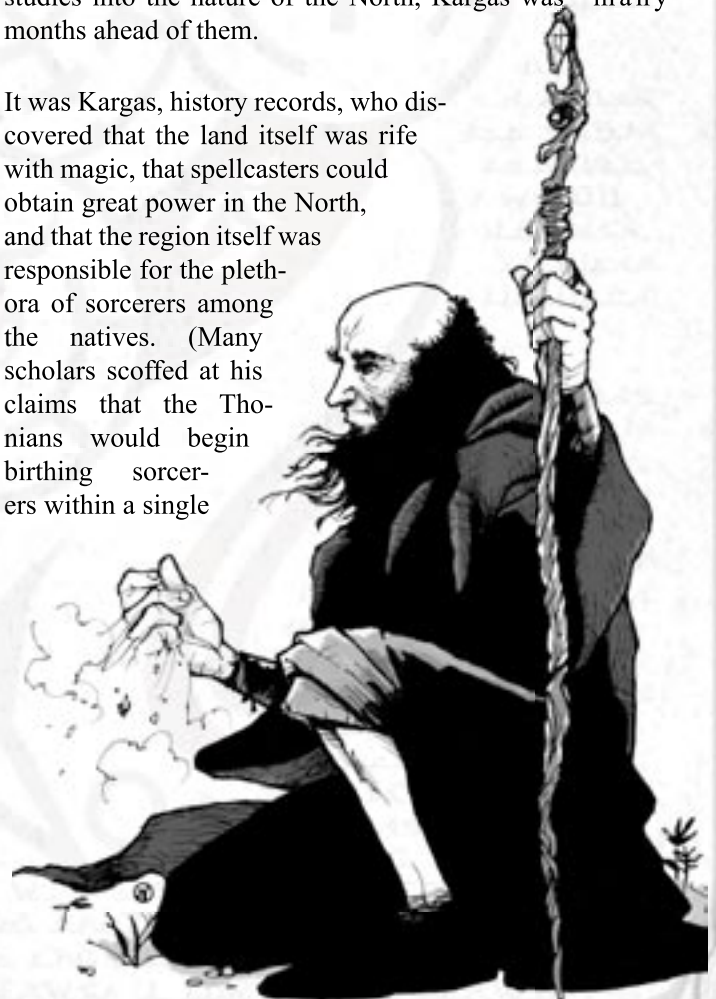
The struggle ended in a matter of months, with the native casters either slain, departing with their retreating countrymen, or fully assimilated. Some of the wizards took their reward in monies and goods and returned home, but many remained in the newly settled north. And slowly, as their lives calmed down, a few began to look into the nature of the land itself.

The Coming of Kargas

Perhaps the wisest of these mages was Kargas Dolunt, distantly related to the Thonian Imperial Family. Kargas was a peaceful man, who engaged in the war against the native sorcerers only as a means of acquiring money and land for his researches, and who preferred to fight with non-lethal spells wherever possible.

He came because he was interested in the land itself. He spent all his free time between engagements in contemplation, and when other wizards were only starting their studies into the nature of the North, Kargas was many months ahead of them.

It was Kargas, history records, who discovered that the land itself was rife with magic, that spellcasters could obtain great power in the North, and that the region itself was responsible for the plethora of sorcerers among the natives. (Many scholars scoffed at his claims that the Thonians would begin birthing sorcerers within a single

generation, but an explosion of magical power that devastated a small fishing village called Gryssburgh proved him right.) Kargas dubbed this power the Wild Magic, a name that would linger for many generations, and he developed techniques for drawing magic directly from the land itself to empower his spells.

Kargas delightedly shared his breakthrough with his colleagues of the time, other wizards who shared his fascination with the nature of the North. Alas, wise as he was, Kargas did not foresee the results of his revelations. Almost immediately, news of the discovery spread from wizard to wizard (and to local sorcerers and wokan as well). Some were fascinated, sensing a new avenue for the study and exploration of magic. Some were disinterested, having their own goals and interests. But many grew covetous, realizing that if they did not act swiftly, others would stake claim to the land, and they would be prevented from harnessing its power.

In the guise of study, claiming that they required privacy and materials from which to work, wizards began declaring portions of the North as their own. It was only a few at first, and they claimed tracts of land on which no one lived. Their numbers grew swiftly, however, and the size of the land each wizard wanted grew as well. More wizards came out of seclusion, seeing what was happening and determined not to be left behind. Word of Kargas' discovery reached the Thonian Empire, and more wizards traveled north. Some claimed land on their own, while others — weaker or more prudent — banded together in small factions, willing to share knowledge and power if it meant also sharing the burden of defense.

Unpopulated land became sparse, as wizards and sorcerers claimed every last foot of territory. Soon casters began claiming populated areas as well. They did not demand the right to rule, nor attempt to eliminate local governments, at least not yet. Rather, they claimed jurisdiction purely over mystical matters, offering to serve as "protector" of the region against other, hostile wizards. Communities that welcomed these arcane defenders prospered. Those local leaders who refused to share power were threatened, charmed, or even in a few rare cases simply disappeared entirely. These territories, initially only meant to be areas of research, swiftly became personal domains, and for one wizard or sorcerer to enter the domain of another uninvited led to reprisals.

At first, this retaliation took political and economic form. One wizard would convince the leader of his community to cease trading with the lands of an offending colleague, while another might summon inclement weather to ravage the crops of another's territory. (Even wizards engaged in study must eat.) As transgressions grew more and more frequent, due to the loss of available land and the fact that every mage's territory now abutted several others, the retribution grew ever more vicious as well.

Finally, that retribution turned violent. Mages engaged in spell-duels, tossing globes of fire and bolts of lightning while swooping through the air over populated areas. Further, these duels were so quick and vicious, when the militia finally arrived to put an end to the carnage, they found nothing but burned-out husks of villages, with no signs of those who had destroyed them.

It was a half-elven (Cumasti) wizard named Raddan Goss who provided the spark that would ignite this conflict into a true war. Stymied in his quest to expand his territory, he wrested completed control of his lands from the local government, proclaiming himself Wizard King of what had been a semi-autonomous barony. Leading their armies into the field, he assaulted the territory of a neighboring wizard, becoming the first mage to use overt violence in this struggle for eldritch territory. Striking with surprise and overwhelming mystical force, he slew the small cadre of wizards who had claimed the neighboring lands and claimed them as his own.

One of those who fell to his assault, however, was a dear friend of Surrinya Vadaley, a sorceress who governed her own territory many leagues away. When news of her companion's death reached her, Surrinya flew into a rage. Following Raddan's example, she too claimed full governmental control of the territory that, to that point, she had simply used as a studying ground and protected from other mages. Unable to march her army across half the North to strike at Raddan directly, she instead invaded the territory of a wizard she knew to be a friend of Raddan's, annexing the land and putting the wizard to the sword.

Other wizards, seeing what had happened, were determined not to be left defenseless. Each attempted to become true ruler of his territory. Some failed, unable to shake the grip of a strong baron, governor, or mayor; others succeeded handily, becoming Wizard Kings like Raddan himself. Now with armies at their beck and call, territory moved against territory, repaying old slights, making preemptive attacks, or simply seeking to expand their domains.

The Mage Wars had begun.

Table 4-9: Academic Specialization

Artificer		Inquisition Doctor		Academic Researcher	
Area of Expertise	**Related Skill**	**Area of Expertise**	**Related Skill**	**Area of Expertise**	**Related Skill**
Item creation	Craft	Biology	Heal	Scroll use	Decipher Script
Scroll use	Decipher Script	Anatomy	Search	Spell sharing	Diplomacy
Magical item discovery	Use Magic Device	Sociology	Sense Motive	Spell creation	Spellcraft

acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic, any time a researcher casts a spell with one of these energy descriptors he may change the energy type to the type chosen (as per the Energy Substitution metamagic feat). The researcher can take this special ability multiple times, each time picking another energy type from those above.

Mental Fortitude (Ex): The researcher who selects this special ability gains a +2 to all Will saves.

Metamagic Feat: A researcher can choose a metamagic feat in place of one of the special abilities described here if desired.

Skill Mastery: The researcher who selects this special ability becomes so certain in the use of certain skills that he can use them reliably even under adverse conditions.

Upon gaining this special ability, he chooses a number of class skills equal to his Intelligence modifier. When making a skill check with one of these skills, he may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

War Wizard

The Cabal's war wizards are the masters of joining combat and magic. They have brought cooperative magic to new heights and use it very effectively on the battlefield. Though they are all business when on the battlefield or in the war room, war wizards have a notorious penchant for elaborate practical jokes (it gets boring sitting around the barracks waiting for a war). Joining the war wizards is not for the feint
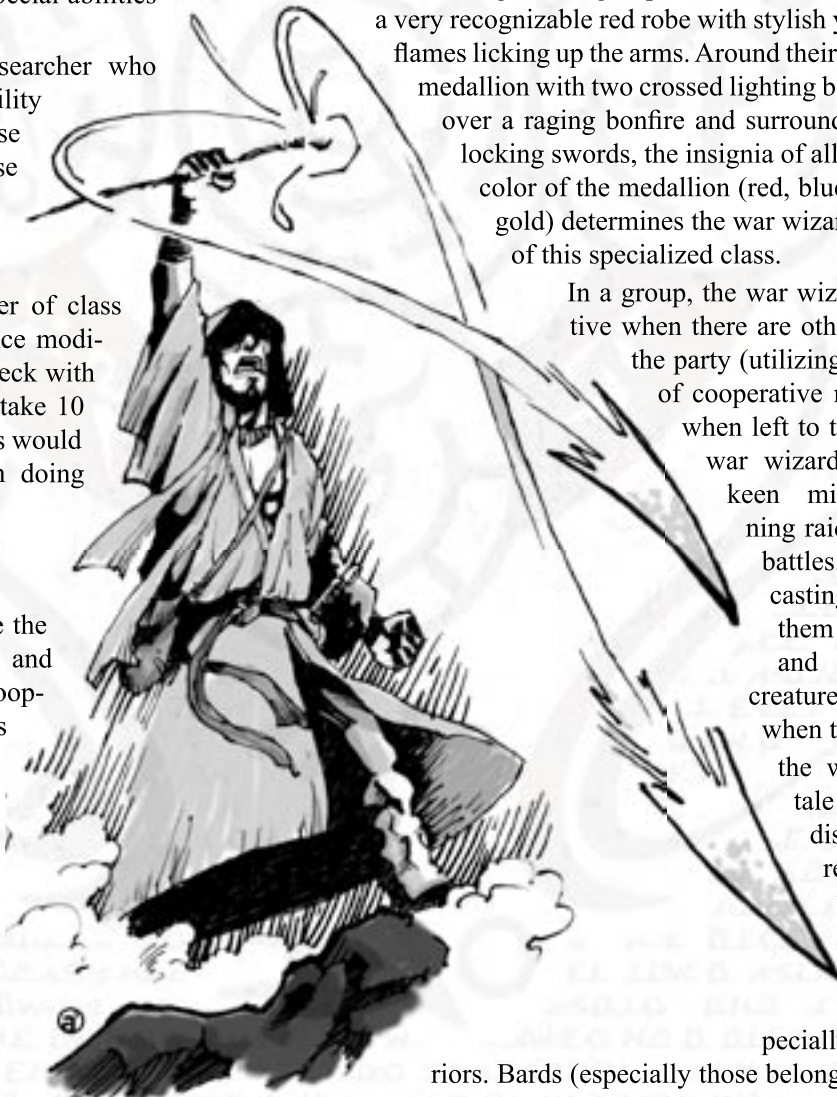
of heart or the brash; the grueling process that leads to the acceptance of a candidate has killed more than one-quarter of its applicants (those that survive fondly recall this testing as "war college").

The war wizards are not called on often, though the few dire times they have been called upon in recent history they have swung victory from the jaws of defeat. These men and women are living weapons, extensions of arcane combat prowess that make their enemies pale. All war wizards wear the same uniform, whether as a part of their unit or when adventuring with a group of mixed classes. The uniform is a very recognizable red robe with stylish yellow and orange flames licking up the arms. Around their necks they wear a medallion with two crossed lighting bolts superimposed over a raging bonfire and surrounded by nine interlocking swords, the insignia of all war wizards. The color of the medallion (red, blue, green, silver, or gold) determines the war wizard's rank to others of this specialized class.

In a group, the war wizard is most effective when there are other war wizards in the party (utilizing the full potential of cooperative magic). However, when left to their own devices, war wizards have shown a keen mind when planning raids and large scale battles. Their enhanced casting abilities make them feared opponents, and many intelligent creatures turn tail and flee when they see the war wizard's telltale insignia proudly displayed over their red robes.

War wizards enjoy the company of the fighting classes, especially arcane warriors. Bards (especially those belonging to the Cabal), rogues, and nobles are their favorite "partners in crime"

Table 4-10: The War Wizard

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Evocation resistance +1, war college, Weapon Focus	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Evasion	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing class
4th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Evocation resistance +2,	+1 level of existing class
5th	+3	+1	+4	+4	Improved Evasion	+1 level of existing class
6th	+4	+2	+5	+5	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing class
7th	+5	+2	+5	+5	Evocation resistance +3,	+1 level of existing class
8th	+6	+2	+6	+6	Improved Critical	+1 level of existing class
9th	+6	+3	+6	+6	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing class
10th	+7	+3	+7	+7	Evocation resistance +4, Ray Extension,	+1 level of existing class

when it comes to playing practical jokes, some of which may have damaging results.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a war wizard, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Skills: Concentration 8 ranks, Spellcraft 8 ranks.

Feats: Any three metamagic feats.

Spellcasting: Able to cast 3rd-level arcane spells using an arcane spell focus.

Special: The war wizard must have been a member in good standing with the Wizard's Cabal for a minimum of six months.

Special: The war wizard must first undergo a series of trials and tests that last for nearly six months. The exact nature of these trials is left up to the GM, but they should include working as a part of a group of war wizard candidates and at least one mission where the character must clear out a known hostile creature nest single-handedly of an Encounter Level of at least equal to the character's level.

Class Skills

The war wizard's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Knowledge (all skills taken separately) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the war wizard prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: War wizards are proficient with all simple and martial weapons. However they gain no additional armor or shield proficiencies.

Spells per Day: At every level gained in the war wizard prestige class, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (hit points beyond those he receives from the prestige class, metamagic or item creation feats, etc.), except for an increased effective level of spellcasting. If the character had more than one arcane spellcasting class before becoming a war wizard, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day.

Evocation Resistance (Ex): At 1st level, a war wizard receives a +1 insight bonus to saving throws and Concentration checks against all evocation spells and spell-like abilities. This bonus increases by an additional +1 every three levels thereafter (+2 at 4th level, +3 at 7th level, and +4 at 10th level).

War College (Ex): A 1st-level war wizard can now be a part of a conjunction to cast cooperative magic, as if he has the Cooperative Magic feat (see Cooperative Magic in Chapter 5).

Weapon Focus: At 1st level, the war wizard gains the Weapon Focus (ray) as a bonus feat.

Evasion (Ex): At 2nd level, a war wizard can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage. Evasion can be used only if the war wizard is wearing light armor or no armor. A helpless war wizard does not gain the benefit of evasion.

Table 5-13: Determining Shard Type

Base GP Value[1]	Shard Type	Shard Size
1 - 25gp	Minor Shard	1 inch diameter
26 - 75gp	Medium Shard	1 1/2 inch diameter
76 - 150gp	Major Shard	2 inch diameter

[1] The base gold piece value of the spell shard does not include the value of the spells contained within the spell shard.

Table 5-14: Number of Spells in a Spell Shard

Shard Type	Number of Spells
Minor Shard	1d2
Medium Shard	1d3
Major Shard	1d4

resonance to track specific spellcasters. Refer to the Resonance Hound feat in Chapter 4 for more information about tracking spell resonance.

There are rumors among the Arcane Inquisition that there are a few sorcerers, Afridhi, and agents of the Egg of Coot that can alter or entirely eliminate their spell resonance (the resonance is actually just hidden when casting certain spells, Hide and Spellcraft check, DC 20 + spell level). Recently, a cabalist near Maus began an investigation into a sorcerer gang with the ability to duplicate others' spell resonance (Hide and Spellcraft check, DC 30 + spell level; characters with at least 5 ranks in Disguise gain a +2 synergy bonus to this check), effectively impersonating other spellcasters (a highly illegal and subversive act, in the Wizards' Cabal's eyes).

Spell Shards

A spell shard is a fragment of a shattered arcane spell focus that still contains one or more intact spell helixes. These helixes can be detected with a detect magic spell or with a successful Appraise or Spellcraft check (DC 25). Shards come in all shapes and sizes, though the larger shards usually contain either more spell helixes or higher-level spells than those that are smaller. The typical number of spells stored on each shard can be found on **Table 5-14: Number of Spells in a Spell Shard**

The size of the shard is based on its base price (see **Table 5-13: Determining Shard Type**). A spell shard has AC 11, 2 hit points, hardness 1, and a break DC of 12.

Once the number of spells in the shard is known., the base price for the spell shard can be determined on **Table 5-15: Shard Spell Levels and Values**

Activation

To activate a spell shard, a spellcaster must activate the spell helix within it. Doing so involves several steps and conditions.

Deciphering the Helix: The spell helix in a spell shard must be deciphered before a character can use it or know exactly what spell it contains. This requires a successful Spellcraft check (DC 20 + spell level).

Deciphering a spell shard to determine its contents does not activate its magic unless it is a cursed spell shard (see below). A character can decipher the spell helixes in a spell shard in advance so that he or she can proceed directly to the next step when the time comes to use the spell shard.

Activate the Spell: Activating a spell shard requires the channeling of arcane energy through the spell helix within the spell shard. The character must be in physical contact with the spell shard. Activating a spell found within a spell shard requires no material components or focus. (The creator of the spell shard provided these when creating the arcane spell focus the shard has come from.) Note that some spells are effective only when cast on an item or items. In such a case, the spell shard user must provide the item when activating the spell. Activating the spell is subject to disruption just as casting a normally prepared spell would be. Using a spell shard is like casting a regular spell for purposes of arcane spell failure chance.

To have any chance of activating the spell within the spell shard, the user must meet the following requirements: