

became the Dove, one who had a myriad assortment of Life spells to protect the town. Manx became the Bat, whose magical cloak could absorb necromantic spells, thus protecting others from harm.

Fangthorn, meanwhile, had reopened his long dormant laboratories and began his breeding of the mutant creatures he called "thrulls." Using his own people in his desperate attempt to breed stronger and more powerful servants, he created these abominations which possessed miraculous abilities — and devastating weaknesses.

A being called Lord Krell came to Ashbury then and convinced the Bat, Hammer, and Dove into journeying 'to the front' to give added support to the Ducal armies as they fought Fangthorn's host from reaching the city. Rightly sensing it to be a trap, Duchess Mara forbade the three Heroes from undertaking the journey. She instead allowed a recon force to investigate the progress at the front.

The recon group, led by Baron Bretton Nordenn, unwittingly sprung the trap, and Fangthorn's elite guard chose to flank the strongest fighters of Ashbury and attack an apparently vulnerable city. In a running fight, the trap actually backfired on the trolls when they ran into the Bat, the Hammer, and the Dove.

The fight was grand. Lord Krell and his followers linked with the trolls and did tremendous damage to the people of Ashbury, but the aid of the Bat, Hammer and Dove helped to turn the tide of the battle.

As night fell, pairs of Amani Rangers stealthily slipped through the war lines and enemy camps to inform Baroness Laurelin of the situation outside of Ashbury. With the information given to her from these guardians of the Forest, two strike forces were organized to assault command posts in an effort to learn more of the attack to come.

With precision and teamwork, they crushed the command posts and recovered pieces of a map that led to the laboratory of the Master of Trolls, Fangthorn. The Bat, Hammer and Dove led a brigade that crushed the laboratory and created a turning point in the war.

After leaving Fangthorn's laboratory, the Heroes returned to Ashbury city to discover it under serious attack by Fangthorn's army. Wave after wave were brought down by the adventurers of Ashbury but more trolls and undead continued to pour in. The citizens' resources were quickly diminishing. The onslaught continued, and Ashbury appeared doomed. The Duchess herself fell and died before help could reach her.

Fangthorn's confidence grew to the point where he toyed with the children of Ashbury with a mocking form of honor combat. Brave individuals like Baron Bretton and Sheriff Radric were allowed to strike his immense form many times before he beat them into the ground itself.

The adventurers then rallied around the Hammer and plunged into Fangthorn's guard like a battering ram. This force enabled the Hammer to attack Fangthorn, and after an eternal battle, bring him down.

As required by the Prophecy, the Bat covered Fangthorn with her cloak, the Dove sang the proscribed funeral dirge, and the Hammer shattered the Troll King's bones into dust. Thus completing their task, the three returned to their normal state, although their lives would never again be the same.

The Way Station

This time of war was also the first appearance of a Story-weaver, who traveled the land seeking those willing to learn the art of storytelling. It was not the last time Ashbury would interact with these strange beings.

Soon after, Duchess Mara and Duke Bryan were wed in a very simple ceremony. True to her word, she named him Duke. Then, on a summer day in 595, a number of multicolored



Baron Bretton, Elias Triphammer, Manx Deserett, Thengor the dwarf, Kittery Holindarn, Killian the jester