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Chapter I

Beginning

Background: The Story of the Stormrider

Over 120 years ago, a lonely man named Fallemon (FALL-uh-mon), son of a local baron, encountered a beautiful and kind woman named Fabía (FAH-bee-uh). Fallemon had spent his life isolated from society due to his burgeoning magical talents; his father had not wanted him to darken the family name by displaying occult abilities. So Fallemon grew to adulthood alone, except for a few servants.

About the Author

JD Wiker started seriously gaming in 1987, and has been playing *Ars Magica* since the second edition was still in print. He helped with *Ars Magica* while it was at *Wizards of the Coast*, and is currently the storyguide for an *Ars Magica 4th Edition* saga set in Mythic Constantinople. His favorite pastime is asking cashiers if they can accept Hawaiian currency. He can be reached by e-mail at CDBALES@WIZARDS.COM.

When Fallemon met Fabía, she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and he instantly fell in love. He courted and wooed her, at first pretending to be his twin brother—heir to their father's lands and titles. But when Fallemon professed his undying love for Fabía, she told him that she had dedicated her life to another. Blinded by his jealousy of his brother, Fallemon immediately assumed that she meant him, and in a rage, struck her down. But Fabía did not love Fallemon *or* his brother; she intended to take holy orders as the one to whom Fabía had dedicated her life was God.

Wandering blindly, Fallemon's rage grew, until a supernatural Steed—a vicious elemental spirit of the air that fed on anger—appeared before him. When Fallemon touched it, it fed him some of its power; Fallemon became the Stormrider.

The Stormrider was a creature of pure rage and immense power. Coupled with Fallemon's own magical talents, the Stormrider was nearly invincible. He rampaged through Val du Bosque (VALL-due-BOSK), eventually attacking Castle d'Uverre (due-VAIR) and slaying his own father. His anger abated, along with the storm, and the Stormrider retreated to dwell in the clouds that wreathed Mount Tierné (TEER-nay).

For years afterward, every particularly violent storm drew the Stormrider out of the sky to devastate the countryside,

inflicting pain and suffering wherever he went. During one such onslaught, he encountered and slew his brother, but Fabía (recovered but scarred from the injuries the Stormrider had caused her previously) prayed over him and a miracle occurred; Fallemon's dead brother was restored to life. Years later, the Stormrider tried to carry Fabía away, but while he battled some peasants a bolt of lightning struck her, slaying her instantly. (This martyrdom eventually led to her canonization.)

The Stormrider ravaged largely unchecked for decades afterward. The wizards of Mistridge (MIST-ridge), led by the mighty Grimgroth, confronted the Stormrider on more than one occasion, and Grimgroth wrote a major treatise based on the assumption that the Stormrider was an air elemental.

Twenty-three years ago, the Stormrider was defeated. Two apprentices studying at Mistridge learned that the Stormrider was actually Fallemon (by now an old man), and they convinced him that he no longer had a reason to be angry. They overcame his Steed, dispersing it back to the air. Fallemon, no longer charged with his overwhelming rage, died peacefully, finally reuniting with Fabía. Fallemon hasn't been seen since.

to the flavor and feel of the Mythic Europe™ setting while teaching them the basic game systems of *Ars Magica*™ (ars MAH-gee-kah). With only minor preparation, the storyguide can present this story to the players within a few minutes of gathering them together, through the use of handouts providing extensive briefings on the characters, the setting, and the game systems. By the end of the play session, all of the players should have a better idea of what *Ars Magica* is all about.

The Return of the Stormrider is also intended to demonstrate to the storyguide how to tell an involving, interactive story. Because *The Return of the Stormrider*, like any good roleplaying game, allows for player involvement, your players are likely to take you in new directions with their own particular cleverness and their unique playing styles. Do not be afraid to ride the wave, but don't let it take you too far from shore, either. You are their guide on this imaginary journey.

Conversely, new players might at first be at a loss for what to do; they may allow themselves to become spectators instead of participants in the adventure. The storyguide should acquaint himself with the character backgrounds, as they provide a number of "buttons" that can be pushed to spur the players to action.



Introduction

The Aims Of This Adventure

This book has a two-fold purpose. Its primary goal is to introduce new players

STOP READING!

If you are not planning to be the storyguide for this story you should read no further. Your enjoyment in playing it, and the enjoyment of the other players, will be lessened if you know what is going to happen.