

THE DAY AFTER RAGNAROK

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Special thanks to Andrew Linstrom's eagle eyes, and Clint Black's keen insight.

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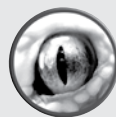
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The Eye of Jörmungandr

The baleful looking symbol at right is the Eye of Jörmungandr. This symbol indicates which monsters and NPCs presented in *The Day After Ragnarok* are Wild Cards. Some monsters have boss versions (such as the Dero Leader or the 80-foot Giant Snake) that are also Wild Cards, but don't have the Eye of Jörmungandr there to show the way.





Serpentfall

"The Nazi myth which is important ... [to] men like Hitler requires a Götterdämmerung..."

-- U.S. WAR DEPARTMENT COUNTERINTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT, FEB. 12, 1945

Patton's death in September didn't do it, although the wilder-eyed addicts in the Wewelsburg basement claimed that Skorzeny's "Operation Walküre" had changed things, that the American general was "the rope of the Norns," somehow tied to past and future in a way that others weren't. His breaking, they swore, signaled the new Twilight. But the Bulge ground to a halt in sight of the Moselle, and Montgomery slowly pushed the Wehrmacht back across the Ardennes. Not to worry, swore the Ahnenerbe men, sweating out the amphetamines and stinking of extinct herbs pulled from Finnish bogs. The Norns' rope was broken. Things would be different.

Montgomery swept into Lübeck, and Bradley's armor growled closer to Nuremberg, and Zhukov smashed across the Oder, and the sun of July rose over a prostrate Reich. Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* played on Berlin Radio night and day, and the smoke blotted out the stars. And then it happened; the whole world heard the howl of Garm, and the moon was eclipsed in blood. The head of Jörmungandr, the Midgard Serpent, 350 miles across, breached the surface of the Arabian Sea

and rose up into the troposphere. Its first lunge destroyed three troop convoys and their escort carriers, swallowed in one bite 100 miles south of the Azores. A coil of the Serpent now stretched across Africa from Mogadishu to Morocco.

When the head reared up again off Vigo Bay, it gulped down the U.S.S. Essex and TF 24, and paused to splinter a few hundred thousand tons of shipping. President Truman gave the go-ahead, and a lone B-29 took off from Iceland. Its original target had been Berlin, but Captain Joseph Westover had new orders. He, and the crew of the

Das Ahnenerbe

Waischenfeld-Boppurth am 22. September 1944.

Der Kritischmanager

Leute leben glücklich am Gestern und in der Zukunft, solange sie ihren Vorgesetzten und den Größe ihrer Überführer bewusset sind

HIGHLY SECRET

TO: Heinrich Himmler
Reichsführer-SS
RE: FALL RAGNAROK

1. At last, Weisthor has spoken! Sturmabführer Skorzeny's success in UNTERNEHMEN WALKÜRE has, as promised, "severed the rope of the Norns." With the death of the American General Patton, Weisthor says, "a world-branch is broken, and our Midgard now swings loose, fruit falling through the World-Tree for us to catch." I report his exact words as you requested. The full transcript of his trance-prophecy is attached to this report.

2. FALL RAGNAROK can now go forward on a basis of potential success, as the prerequisites are complete:

- The tests at Dachau have produced the correct formulation of amphetamines for the Sleepless Rite.
- Reich botanists have successfully cultivated the necessary Pleistocene bog-herbs from the samples harvested in Finland.
- The deciphered texts from Gothland-Ukraine offer the correct poetic structure for the Seers to work within. All Ahnenerbe resources will now be dedicated to translating the Edda into this new structure.

Dosed with the correct herbal mixture, Sleepless Seers will continuously incant in parallel, each working from a separate translation to ensure redundancy of effect.

3. If the Reich can hold out until Midsommer 1945, I as Reichsmanager Ahnenerbe promise to you the awakening of Garm, Jörmungandr, and Fenrir, and consequently the unstoppable beginning of Ragnarok. The Jotunn will destroy the Bolshevists from the North, and the Svartalfar will emerge from Nidhavelir to bedevil the Americans in the South. The Aryan race will rule the new-made world forever, as the restored Vanir.

Heil Hitler!

Wolfram Sievers
WOLFRAM SIEVERS
Standartenführer-SS
Reichsmanager Ahnenerbe



Forschungs- und Lehramtsinstitut des Ahnenerbe e. V.

Strange Cargo, were to seek out and engage the Midgard Serpent with the Trinity Device. On July 21, 1945, spotter planes for "Operation John Henry" zeroed the *Strange Cargo* in on the Serpent, its head 20,000 feet above Oslo and moving southeast at 80 knots. Captain Westover was an ace pilot, capable of flying a plane through something much smaller than a snake's pupil 500 yards across. The Device detonated, tearing a piece of the Sun down from heaven and destroying the Serpent's brain in a torrent of atomic fire. Westover and his crew died instantly. Jörmungandr took a little bit longer than that.

THE SERPENT DIES

The polar vortex drove strong high easterlies that day, and a plume of radioactive venom hit the upper atmosphere and headed west. It slowly fell out of the sky into clouds and storms, twisters and waterspouts, all headed west. Dark crimson rain fell from Dublin to Denver. Where it struck, the seas boiled and the earth drank poison. And things engendered, mutated horrors born of dragon's blood and broken strontium atoms. Some coiled down to the sea's depths; others clumped together and pulled apart ships. Some climbed or flopped or skittered or slunk from swamps and sewers and gutters and ponds and everywhere else rain ran in eastern North America. And some people and beasts drank from those pools and reservoirs before they knew, and some people's blood changed and they knew it not. Or at least not yet.

WAR DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C.

20 July 1945

TO: General Carl Spaatz
Commanding General
United States Army Strategic Air Forces

RE: OPERATION JOHN HENRY

1. The 509 Composite Group, 20th Air Force will deliver its first special bomb as soon as reliable visual intelligence is available on its target: the so-called "Midgard Serpent." To carry military and civilian scientific personnel from the War Department to observe and record the effects of the explosion of the bomb, additional aircraft will accompany the airplane carrying the bomb. The observing planes will stay several miles distant from the point of delivery of the bomb.
2. Additional bombs will be held in readiness pending analysis of OPERATION JOHN HENRY as soon as made ready by the Project staff. Further instructions will be issued concerning targets other than the one listed above.
3. Discussion of any and all information concerning the use of the weapon is reserved to the Secretary of War and the President of the United States. No communiques on the subject or releases of information will be issued by Commanders in the field without specific prior authority. Any news stories will be sent to the War Department for specific clearance.
4. The foregoing directive is issued to you by direction and with the approval of the Secretary of War and of the Chief of Staff, US Army. It is desired that you personally deliver one copy of this directive to General Eisenhower and one copy to Admiral King for their information.

Thos Handy
THOS. T. HANDY
General, G.S.C.
Acting Chief of Staff

cc: General Leslie Groves

But it hardly mattered, not at first, because the fall of the Serpent's body back into the Atlantic sent up a wall of water a hundred miles high that smashed into the coast from Halifax to Havana. New York, Washington, Boston, Charleston, Philadelphia, Miami (and poor low-sunk New Orleans) all drowned. Montreal and Cleveland and Chicago, and Veracruz and Houston and Caracas, were merely battered. Salt water, flecked with venomous foam, lapped against the Appalachians.

The Serpent's head, its skull cored out by nuclear flame, kept moving toward Nuremberg where

it had been Called, but its dead muscles overshot their mark. The head finally crashed to earth in Egypt—or rather, *on* Egypt. Its body followed it down, thunderously settling across Europe in a 300-mile wide swath from Scotland to Sicily, and setting off earthquakes 100 miles on both sides of its fallen body. England, the Low Countries, western Germany and Austria, the boot of Italy, coastal Yugoslavia, southern Greece all vaporized beneath the monster’s coil. Wales was not obliterated, a stretch of western France and Savoy could see the sun, Spain survived. (The other side of the tsunami battered Portugal.) Most of the armies of the Western Allies, and millions of those they had come to liberate, died, smashed beneath the scales. The coil across Africa had also come down hard, mostly in the Sahara, although Ethiopia had little chance to enjoy its hard-won independence. Reptilian flesh blocked the Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal. The earth trembled, cities around the world toppled and burned. Smoke filled the air. Snow fell in August.

THE GIANTS REVIVE

The shock resounded around the world, but nowhere more than in the icy depths of the Caucasus Mountains. These peaks that Hitler tried to reach in 1942 (on what advice, learned from what unknown insects’ mead?) held the bound giant who had betrayed the gods. Hitler would call him Loge or Loki, the Eton-and-Oxford lads would have known he was Prometheus, but to the Ossetians of the valleys he was Nasren, greatest of the Narts, the giants at the dawn of the world. The thunder of the Serpent’s fall shook him loose from his icy chains and he slid down the mountains, walking north toward Moscow, where he knew another god-hater ruled.

East of the Serpent’s fall, the Red Army was mostly intact, and Eastern Europe likewise, safe in the Red Army’s embrace. Russia had lost little, and the few hundred thousand dead in Hungary were nothing next to the thirty million that Stalin had killed or left to die in the last two decades. Moreover, the deadly venom fallout never touched Mother Russia; her monsters would be solely of human making. And of the giants’: Molotov and Suslov declared Nasren a bogatyr, a glorious Russian giant born of Soviet Man from the scientifically nurtured soil of Soviet Georgia. Stalin’s scientists (and those who had been oh-so-recently Hitler’s scientists, at distant camps in Poland) pulled venom from the fallen beast and injected it into “volunteers,” or collected Nasren’s wisdom about the dawn time. Mysterious fires burned all across Siberia. Frozen mammoths struggled back to their feet, and resumed chewing their buttercup breakfasts. Other giants clambered out of the permafrost, or sailed south on the ice: Soslan of the steel body, Batyrez the invincible swordsman, Satanya the beautiful. It is a shame, Stalin told each of them, looking at them with his wise brown eyes, it is a shame that your sons the Ossetians and the Ingush were killed to the last child by the fascists and the imperialists. It is a shame, they agreed, and their own icy eyes narrowed.

THE EAGLE BROKEN

It is 1948, the third year without a summer since the Fall of the Serpent. America’s Pacific fleets sailed home, to shore up the Western remnant of a shattered nation. The Evacuation of ’46 ended in death and horror; only General MacArthur’s troops kept order even on the West Coast. With Washington gone, a controversial election made California Governor Earl Warren the President of the United States, or of six of them, anyway. The war in the Pacific is over—holding on to Hawaii is challenging enough—and the Russians are welcome to the wreck of Europe. It took two years, but the last of the great monsters have been driven back down east of the Rocky Mountains. The Americans—and Texans—have their own continent to win back, from the things that wash up now with every Atlantic tide. But left alone across the Rockies for years of famine and fear, the survivors may be building their own future without waiting for permission from Los Angeles or Austin.

Chicago, Detroit, Toronto, Buffalo, Birmingham, Pittsburgh, Memphis: Such city-states survived the Serpentfall by being more willing, and more able, to push other folks to the wall. They had to feed their people when the grain was poisoned and the water was full of vileness.

They had to act fast, and cut up rough, when the crisis hit. And for these cities, the crisis isn't over yet. All across the Poisoned Lands, from Houston to Hudson Bay, life is still brutal, short, and all too interesting.

THE LION WAITING

What's left of Wales and Cornwall still swear to King Henry IX in Sydney, as does Australia, and a third of India, and what's left of Canada, and South Africa in its own accent. The battered British Empire made an armistice with Japan through gritted teeth, and looks at independent "Congress India" with bitter regret. But the Empire survives.

It is British Petroleum who came up with drilling the Serpent for oil, and Royal Dutch-Shell who set up the great cracking plants in Wales and Kenya to refine it. The Russian advisers in Arabia and Persia don't like it, but there's nothing they can do, yet. It is the Royal Navy that dives deep to salvage things from the rift where Jörmungandr rose. It is the Royal Society who have cut into the Serpent at Hereford, and (at hellish cost) brought back living samples of the things, the cultures, swarming in its cavernous belly. It is Rhodes University men in South Africa who took those writhing creatures and strapped them down and drew out the sera and built the equipment that allowed Sir Edmund Hillary and his team to climb to the top of the Spine and look down at the curving world. It is Vickers who brought Jean-Jacques Barre from France (and salvaged Goddard's

plans from the wreckage of Roswell) to build the rocket planes to get the Royal Rocketry Air Force (RRAF) there faster. It is Prime Minister Menzies and his government who alone seem worried about what Stalin means when he promises a "final titanic struggle." Spies, and rocketeers, and oilmen, and speleo-herpetologists gather in Sydney and Capetown and Plymouth and Nairobi, and wonder if the sun has set on the British Empire at last, or if somewhere in this smoke-stained, poisoned world there is still room for a green and pleasant land.

MOST SECRET

12 May 1948

TO: Sir Reginald V. Jones
Senior Scientific Advisor
Office of the Prime Minister

RE: PROJECT JAMBRES



Et Serpentis,
Scientia

Sir Reginald:

Per your office's request to Project HQ, we can provide the following executive summary of the Project's ongoing research and analysis of the Serpent.

1. According to Project estimates, the Serpent is slightly over 6,000 miles long, and 250 miles in body diameter. The head is rather wider; at its highest point (an eyebrow ridge roughly on the former site of Cairo) it stretches 272 miles into the atmosphere. The Serpent masses approximately 1,500 trillion metric tonnes (1,500 quintillion US/Short Scale). It most closely resembles *Echydрина schistosa*, a particularly venomous sea snake native to the Arabian Sea area.
2. Only a portion of this mass is currently present on the Earth's surface. For example, the Serpent is discontinuous between Morocco and the George Bligh Banks, disappearing in the western canyons of the Horseshoe Seamount and reappearing several hundred miles north on the Rockall Plateau beneath the North Atlantic. (If it were continuous, it would naturally breach the ocean's surface all along its length, the ocean being no more than four miles deep.) Also, roughly half of the Serpent's total length (its tail section) similarly disappears in the Indian Ocean southeast of Mogadishu. RN submarines have been unable to reach sufficient depth to survey the Serpent's points of emergence and disappearance. (See attached Reports for OPERATION ALISANDER.)
3. The American "Operation John Henry" atomic strike took place while the Serpent's current mass and geometry were still in flux. This would explain why the available records indicate that the *Strange Cargo* encountered and fatally engaged a Serpent "merely" 60,000 feet long. (See the attached Minority Report Summary for arguments that the USAAF bomber instead somehow expanded into "the God Realm" at the moment of coming to grips with the Serpent.) If the Norse sagas are correct, and the Serpent at one point encircled the world, then its final rest state is only a third of its potential mass. In short, the Americans killed the Serpent before it grew to full size.
4. It is the current consensus of the Project that the Serpent's "missing mass" is folded into a bubble or pocket of space-time perhaps tangent to our own, and that the act of summoning the Serpent somehow focuses and directs the zero-point energy of its space-time pocket into our own universe. The energy of the two universes being incompatible, gross physical and biological anomalies result throughout our local space-time as the Serpent's energy "grounds itself" in local matter. (This "grounding" may explain why the Serpent so closely resembles a sea-snake native to the ocean where it first manifested itself.) It is the current consensus of the Project that the time component of the two universes is also incompatible, which provides a hypothetical cause for the biological anomalies' greatly enhanced rates of growth and geographic spread.

Should you require a briefing on the directions in which these data have driven Project scientific and technical research, or a redacted copy of the current Ophiological Progress Report from the EOG, please see the Group's liaison in your office, Wing Commander Lethbridge-Stuart.

Edward A. Challenger

Edward A. Challenger

Project Co-ordinator
Experimental Ophiology Group