

The valley was named Beroth by the elves. The land was gifted with the most fertile soil on Earth but the memory of Evil was etched into Elfin peoples hearts and none would settle there. Man was less sensitive and Beroth became the richest of his Kingdoms. It was famous as a place of learning and the council of the wise met regularly in the great hall of Monmouth, within the royal castle. In their keeping the council held five of the rings of creation. The sixth ring, the ring of time, was wedged in solid rock deep within an underground labyrinth. It was found by the leader of the Shaggoths, creatures brought to earth by the Lords of Chaos to fight in the battle of the Angels. He promptly claimed it as his and declared himself King Shaggoth and holds the labyrinth as his Kingdom to this day.

The seventh ring, the Ring of Fire, was worn by Mendas eighth King of Beroth.

Gora was twelve years of age when the Shadow returned to Beroth. He was apprentice to the Wizard Nemor, supreme councillor of the wise. Gora befriended Prince Tobias, son of Mendas and heir to the throne of Beroth. Tobias desired the knowledge that Gora had been taught.

He approached the council and requested entrance to the Brotherhood of Wizards but Nemor looked into his heart and saw that it was filled with a lust for power. Rejected, Tobias turned to Gora for help. Gora borrowed for him ancient books and manuscripts that held dark secrets which he knew nothing of. But soon Tobias tired of the weak magic that Gora could teach him and he experimented with ancient spells. One evening, as all creation slept an unnatural sleep, he conjured to himself the Fire Demon. It taught him a formula that promised power and knowledge even the wise did not understand. Tobias, blinded against the dangers of meddling in the black arts, used the formula. It created for him a small crystal of concentrated evil. Tobias made sacrifices of small animals to it and the crystal began to grow. Little time passed before the crystal was large enough to influence the Prince's thoughts and movements. Like a puppet, under the cover of darkness, Tobias crept up to his father's bedside and thrust his dagger deep into the old King's heart. The crystal grew.

With the crowning of Tobias evil had indirectly gained control over Beroth and the ring of fire. Soon the crystal's influence was so widespread that it controlled most of the population of the castle. Foreseeing the danger Nemor summoned Gora to a meeting of the council and presented him with one of the rings of creation. To each of four riders awaiting in the courtyard, Nemor gave also a ring and the instructions to ride in different directions and take the rings from this land. To Gora he bade farewell and departed with the rest of his order. Tearfully Gora mounted his horse and fled the castle. It was a day's ride to the mountains in the south and once there Gora thought he would be safe but Nemor had not known the rings of creation call to each other and can only be separated by a small distance, in the hands of men. None of the rings could leave Beroth without the others.

Gora turned and headed home but the roads to the castle had already become dangerous. Armies of Trolls patrolled the roads killing and eating unwary travellers. Gora was forced to turn east to dispose of his ring in the swamp. The