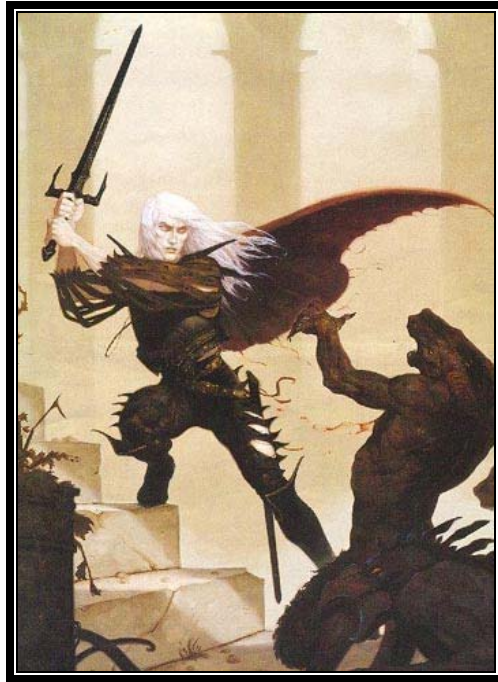


The Eternal Champion

--in--

The War on Chaos



--A Game Proposal--

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"But what is the meaning of it all?" Elric said. "That I have never fully understood."

"Who can? ... Perhaps even the gods seek meaning and pattern..."

--Michael Moorcock, Stormbringer

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❁ Synopsis

"The Eternal Champion in The War on Chaos" (hereafter, The War on Chaos) will be an epic fantasy-themed, highly accessible third-person-perspective action adventure game for one or two players, featuring a moving storyline, an unforgettable protagonist, addictive role-playing features, and especially a thrilling and innovative combat system. Players will assume the role of the brooding, doom-driven sorcerer-emperor, Elric, who wields the legendary runeblade, Stormbringer--a semi-sentient sword that drinks its victims' souls, imparting its wielder with some of the deceased's strength. In The War on Chaos, Elric first must rescue his kidnapped wife, but in so doing, he will uncover a far greater plot which will have him crossing paths with ancient gods, entire armies of unimaginably horrible foes, and even the Lords of Chaos themselves. Fate hangs in the balance, and Chaos seeks to undo it. Only the Eternal Champion can set history on its proper course....

❁ What is the Appeal of *Stormbringer* & The War on Chaos?

The War on Chaos is based on and primarily inspired by *Stormbringer*, the climactic sixth episode of Michael Moorcock's *Elric of Melniboné* series of fantasy stories. It would be the perfect spoil in the wake of the massive popularity of *The Lord of the Rings*, with its optimistic conclusion and straightforwardly heroic characters. This story, on the other hand, is much more cynical, edgy, and "realistic," insofar as major characters are not spared, and the main character has noticeable weaknesses--in fact, he's the quintessential antihero. As such, many readers believe that Moorcock's Elric stories are more dramatic and more exciting than Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. The game would certainly not assume players' familiarity with the source material, nor would it obviously show its roots. The source material just happens to be very well suited, especially at this particular point in time, as the basis for a game.

Who is the target audience for this game? Anyone who is interested in action adventure games or fantasy-themed epics such as *The Lord of the Rings* would be greatly interested in The War on Chaos. Furthermore, just as audiences drew connections between *The Lord of the Rings* movies and current events, so too will The War on Chaos loosely appeal to audiences' core fears and insecurities about the world today, despite the game's far-flung characters and settings. As such, The War on Chaos can potentially have a very large following, and in fact, it has been envisioned to have far-reaching appeal.

Of further note, The War on Chaos will be the first game in what could possibly be a franchise, based on the Eternal Champion character, whose exploits can be unlimited since they span space and time.

❁ Ten Key Features

These are all referred to and extrapolated on elsewhere in this document, but may be seen as The War on Chaos' main features.

Seamless, fully 3D environments; all loading times "transparent." Consistently smooth frame rate. The technology behind this game is extremely important and shall not be compromised. The game should feature highly detailed character models, with realistic facial expressions and full lip-synching during dialogue. This game would likely be best suited for next-generation platforms, or as an Xbox title designed to fully harness the system's power; a PC version would be feasible, as well.

Unique "battle frenzy" and "chaos control" systems; as the wielder of the semi-sentient soul-stealing blade, Stormbringer, Elric grows faster and more and more powerful--but less and less in control of himself--the more enemies he slays in succession. The sword is his greatest ally and worst enemy. The gameplay itself undulates like the forces of Chaos that Elric stands against. From a visual standpoint, when Elric is seriously injured, it will become clear that that sword is actually in control of him rather than the other way around; thusly, the game will justify how Elric can maintain his combat prowess even on the brink of death.

Interactive cutscenes. Most games take players out of the experience during cutscenes, while others, such as Half-Life, let players directly participate in cutscenes, but do not restrict their abilities in any way, leading to potentially silly moments such as Gordon Freeman circle-strafting and jumping around whoever is speaking, and so forth. In *The War on Chaos*, players will have *some* control over Elric during cutscenes, but they will be limited to actions contextually relevant to that cutscene. For example, the brooding emperor may pace back and forth, at players' command, while delivering a speech; or may tap his foot impatiently while listening to an enemy's threats. All cutscenes in the game will be skippable after the initial viewing.

A unique opponent: Chaos itself. Enemies dynamically shapeshift and morph as they fight and as they are struck, lending depth, surprise, variety, and challenge to the combat. Limbs sprout from wounds, foes severed in half split into two smaller enemies, horrific fiends rip at each other as well as their "enemies," and so forth. Think of *Akira's* Tetsuo as representative of the standard Chaotic opponent in *The War on Chaos*--only, Chaos will arise from all things here, and not just from corrupted humans. Additionally, a series of challenging boss battles will ensure that a number of highly memorable encounters punctuate the frenetic gameplay. Slightly-less-intimidating enemies will also be faced nearer to the beginning of the game.

Epic scale. During the course of the game, the world will visibly change and become corrupted. Lakes, forests, and valleys will be swallowed. The ocean will boil. Unsettling, breathing organic masses will stretch across the Earth like a snail's trail. The entire world will heave, bend, and even cry out beneath Elric's feet. The souls of the dead will clutch at his legs. The forces of chaos will expand as far as the eye can see and as high as the tallest mountain. The action will be viewed from a third-person perspective, but during key sequences, it will be tilted upwards from slightly above ground level, to give a sense of the vastness of the world and the enemy.

Deep, moody orchestral musical score, with Gothic-style choral vocals and heavy bass and percussion. The score should be composed expressly for the game, and the composer should be familiar with the source material--themes should be arranged from all the main characters and types of events. There should be full speech and quality voice acting; large variety of **visceral in-game audio**; and Dolby Digital 5.1 support.

Two-player warfare. Single-player game focused on Elric, who will fight alongside three other main companions. One of these may be controlled by a second player, while the first player, as Elric, may continue to give basic orders to the other two AI-controlled characters.

Epic scope. Fast-paced, no-nonsense, action-oriented gameplay will thrust players into the middle of a conflict that threatens to destroy the entire world. Flashbacks and dramatic changes of scenery will punctuate gameplay that is primarily focused on combat. Variety will include powerful, literally Earth-shattering spells, rides on horseback and dragonback, interdimensional travel, profound decision-making, and more. Additionally, this game will show uncompromising depictions of graphic (though stylistic and fantastical) violence. Elric's foes will be flayed into bloody ribbons. His own person will become cut, bruised, and weakened, only to be restored again by the soul-stealing blade. The experience of playing the game should be almost exhausting, like a fantasy-themed *Saving Private Ryan*.

Multiple difficulty settings; infinite possibilities. History will repeat itself in this game; each instance of playing the game is an alternate reality. Upon finishing The War on Chaos the first time, the opportunity to begin again will present itself, only this time, the going will be harder. Actually, each time players restart their progress (whether after dying or when resuming a play session at a later time), he or she will notice that things are slightly different than before. Each time The War on Chaos rages is just one of an infinite number of parallel realities in which the war is raging on. This should prove to be a unique storyline element, as well as an innovative gameplay twist that justifies exactly why players have the "mundane" ability to revisit the game as often as they wish.

"Sword flurries", and more, yield surprising depth, significant replay value. Deep, open-ended, innovative combat system, cooperative multiplayer, multiple difficulty settings, and a dynamic world and enemy mean that The War on Chaos will never play out the same way twice.

⌘ **Notes on the Engine & Technology**

The dynamic nature of the enemies and environments in The War on Chaos will require skillful programming and artistry, and considerable research and development; since enemies (and terrain) will morph in real-time in not-entirely-scripted ways--rather, depending on exactly where they are struck--it will be a challenge to render all of this on-the-fly while maintaining the game's frame rate and an epic-sized field of vision of a raging battlefield. But, the dynamic nature of the battlefield, the smooth frame rate, and the "transparent" loading times should remain key design principles throughout the

project, and therefore should be achievable above and beyond all else, especially with the power of next generation of consoles.

Elric is the star of the show and needs to look extremely lifelike in action. He will have a full range of motion and several unique combat stances, and his hundreds of moves must look different depending on how injured he is and/or depending on how frenzied he is due to Stormbringer's bloodlust. Animators will have a field day with this character, but it would take some of the best animators in the business a considerably long time to bring this character to life as he's been envisioned.

Complex artificial intelligence will not be the main attraction of The War on Chaos, though some foes will exhibit plausible pack behavior and will try to save themselves from Elric's wrath. Meanwhile, Elric's companions should be able to fight capably and autonomously, and respond to some basic orders as needed. The forces of Chaos, however, need not act in any sensible manner. The more erratically Chaos acts, the better, as long as players remain convinced that it is trying to consume *everything*.

❁ **Five Main Characters (In Order of Appearance)**

These are brief descriptions of Elric and his main allies--the heroes of the game, such as they are--and the main villain deserves mention here, as well. Please refer to the appendix for descriptions of the supporting characters in the game.

Elric of Melniboné

Elric is the main character of the game. From the novel *Elric of Melniboné*:

It is the color of a bleached skull, his flesh; and the long hair which flows below his shoulders is milk-white. From the tapering, beautiful head stare two slanting eyes, crimson and moody, and from the loose sleeves of his yellow gown emerge two slender hands, also the color of bone.

Elric is brooding and even cynical. He is extremely powerful, even arrogant. He is merciless, even cruel, to his enemies. Yet he is a slave to his fate, and to his sword, Stormbringer. Elric is not devoid of love and compassion; he journeys to the ends of the Earth to find his kidnapped wife, Zarozinia, and he regards his few friends dearly. Ultimately, Elric is melancholy; he knows that his sword is what gives him life, just as it will one day lead to his death. But Elric is stalwart, tireless, and relentless--he would never allow his enemies to have the last laugh.

Elric will be seen in different outfits and wielding different weapons during the game, but will mostly fight in his signature black armor and using Stormbringer. Later, he will acquire the mighty Chaos Shield, a huge, round silvery-green shield from which the orange eight-pointed sign of Chaos radiates. For the most part, in the role of Elric, players will feel tremendously powerful--yet, at times, less than in control of those powers.

Elric's cursed berserker sword should have a personality of its own, much like the Monolith from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Cutscenes will often focus on the hilt or the

pommel of the sword, as though to give it a likeness. The sword will sometimes shudder slightly and emit a low moaning...as though it is impatient and hungry. When Stormbringer is fully charged, it burns in black fire.

Dragon Master Dyvim Slorm

In a two-player game, player two controls Dyvim Slorm, else he's computer-controlled. Dyvim Slorm is Elric's cousin, and a dragonmaster. Wields Mournblade, the identical twin of Stormbringer. Fights alongside Elric and is his faithful companion to the bitter end. Quiet, proud, and loyal. Gameplay-wise, plays similarly to Elric (since Mournblade is functionally identical to Stormbringer). Has a few unique sword flurries and other properties, however. Dyvim Slorm is not an albino like Elric; he has long, honey-colored hair and, in battle, wears yellow-and-black enameled armor, with dragonlike features.

Moonglum of Elwher

Computer-controlled. Elric's dearest friend; a wise and sympathetic, though slightly pessimistic, companion who is forced to make the ultimate sacrifice. Moonglum certainly isn't as strong as Elric, but is very quick and can hold his own--he's managed to survive many adventures with Elric in the past. Fights with a saber and dagger, and has knowledge of a few defensive spells. As an Eastlander, Moonglum has thick, red hair and favors loose-fitting, utilitarian garb rather than the resplendent outfits of his friend Elric.

Rackhir the Red Archer

Computer-controlled. A warrior-priest of Phum and a legendary warrior. Another of Elric's trusted friends, who fights at his side throughout his dangerous adventures in The War on Chaos. His magically imbued Arrows of Law are effective in situations when even Stormbringer is ineffectual. Wields a sword for close-quarters battles.

Jagreen Lern, Theocrat of Pan Tang

The villain and ultimate foe in The War on Chaos. A thin, ruthless man with aquiline features, who, in battle, can be seen wearing scarlet armor that looks as though it's intensely hot; likewise, Jagreen Lern's similarly enchanted buckler can deflect even the most powerful weapons, including Stormbringer. He favors battle axes and swords (or both at once), and is fond of torture. He is the one responsible for Chaos' overwhelming presence on Earth, not to mention the kidnapping of Zarozenia. He is the human face of evil, and made a pact with the Lords of Chaos, summoning them into the world.

Elric will face Jagreen Lern on several occasions: On the first occasion, Jagreen Lern's ability to resist Stormbringer will be made clear. In the second, a "distraction" in the form of three Dukes of Hell will prevent Elric from killing his enemy, and Jagreen Lern will end up turning the tables and capturing Elric and his comrades. Elric will fortunately escape the clutches of the overzealous villain who seeks to torture him to death. The next time Elric attempts to face Jagreen Lern will be in his ghostly flagship, but the villain will escape yet again. At last, though, the two of them will meet in open battle at the End of Time.

❁ **Play Mechanics**

This section concerns the specific gameplay mechanics of The War on Chaos, and explains in detail how the player will actually be performing actions in the game, and what those actions are. In turn, this section implies how the game mechanics introduce depth and complexity but not at the expense of accessibility, and how the difficulty will scale up.

Basic Movement

The War on Chaos is designed to be played using an eight-button dual-analog game pad, though the controls could translate well to a keyboard-and-mouse setup for the PC. Most of the action will take place when Elric is on foot. In all these sequences, the left analog stick is used to make Elric run in any direction; the more charged Stormbringer is / the more vitality Elric has, the faster he runs. Elric will automatically do such things as climb ladders, grab ledges and pull himself up, manipulate objects such as open doors, and more, as players guide him in the appropriate direction.

Concentration

Pressing and holding the left trigger causes Elric to "concentrate," or lock his facing in a given direction or on the most powerful assailant in that general direction. This state allows him to execute stronger attacks, link attacks together into "sword flurries" (see below), and better defend himself. When concentrating, Elric cannot move as quickly; he'll advance forward in fighting stance, and sidestep and/or move backwards cautiously.

Leaping Charges

Using the left analog stick in conjunction with one of the face buttons causes Elric to perform a leaping charge, either shoulder-first or, if he has the Chaos Shield (see below), shield-first, at enemies in any direction. The more charged Stormbringer is / the more vitality Elric has, the farther and higher he will leap, and the fiercer the ensuing attack will be. Enemies struck by leaping charges will be staggered, opening themselves up for a sword flurry. However, if the attack is successfully defended (if Elric is either too weak or his enemy is too powerful), Elric will need a moment to recover from the charge, so the enemy may counterattack. Leaping charges may also be used to clear chasms or other hazards. Leaping charges are physically tiring, so Elric's vitality will decrease slightly whenever he attempts them.

Evasive Maneuvers

When concentrating, Elric may execute evasive maneuvers in the same way as he would normally execute leaping charges. These can be used to avoid enemy attacks by dodging sideways or backwards. Elric may still execute a forward leaping charge while concentrating. Like leaping charges, evasive maneuvers become less effective (i.e., slower and more ungainly) if Elric's vitality is low.

Attacks and Power Attacks

The right analog stick controls Elric's attacks. When he is not concentrating, he may attack quickly in any direction, independently of his facing--players simply needs to use quick linear motions with the right stick to make Elric can stab at foes coming from any

angle. Allowing the right stick to return to the neutral position prepares Elric for his next attack, or players can move the stick along its circumference after a thrusting attack to make Elric perform follow-through slices, potentially damaging multiple nearby foes.

When Elric is concentrating, he can only attack in a 180-degree diameter in front of him... but he may also execute tremendously strong "power attacks" from this posture. Now, the bottom portion of the right analog stick's range of motion is not for attacking backwards, but for winding up to perform killing moves. Such moves are tangibly stronger but slower, since players will be moving the right analog stick further along to execute these devastating moves. Power attacks can penetrate some enemy defenses.

Finishing Attacks

Clicking down on the right stick as Stormbringer makes contact with a foe causes Elric to "finish" his attack. For instance, as a thrust impales an enemy, Elric will twist Stormbringer, visibly inflicting even more pain on his hapless foe; or, as a slash connects, Elric may shove the sword deeper into the wound to inflict grievous damage. This also leads to a dramatic pause and a flash (an effect reminiscent of how fierce slashes connect in the fighting game Samurai Shodown), and more vitality gained than from a normal attack. Every type of attack can be finished, and again, this gives a very hands-on feel to the action as players will practically feel the might of Elric's attacks. Some enemies will be shielded, but by finishing an attack, Elric may penetrate their defenses.

Fighting Stances

Initially, Elric will have access to one fighting stance. As he gains experience during the course of his adventures, he will learn two more, so that eventually, he will have three different combat styles, which are the following:

- one-handed: this conventional style focuses on thrusts and horizontal slashes.
- two-handed: the strongest stance, but leave Elric most vulnerable.
- reverse one-handed: this "ninja-style" stance features vertically oriented chops and slashes, which are well suited against flying opponents or against single targets.

Elric will be able to switch between these at any time by cycling through them with the right trigger--as well, he will be able to switch seamlessly in the midst of a sword flurry (see below), using the same timing-based system as the attack finishing described above. As players toggle through the stances while otherwise idle, they'll see Elric go from brandishing Stormbringer one-handed, to clasping it with both hands, to turning it upside down and letting go one hand, to flipping it back right-side up.

Sword Flurries

As suggested above, The War on Chaos will reward precision control and will feature a combat system that encourages experimentation and offers plenty of depth, yet has a very intuitive learning curve. The "sword flurry" system (a.k.a., combo system) is where most of the combat system's true depth lies.

To recap:

- Elric has three different fighting stances, and unique moves in eight directions from each style.
- Elric may concentrate for stronger attacks, or retain his mobility for faster attacks. Each fighting stances offers a completely different set of moves depending on whether Elric is concentrating or not.
- Elric may finish his attacks by executing a variety of critical hits just as the attacks connect.
- Instead of finishing an attack as it connects, Elric may change stances, and then link an additional attack from the next stance. This is called a sword flurry.

Bearing all this in mind, here is an example of a simple two-stroke sword flurry, which would be highly effective against a pack of shield-bearing foes:

- From the two-handed stance, while concentrating, players execute a monstrous 180-degree slash in front of Elric to smash through enemies' defenses; they switch to reverse-one-handed stance at the apex of the slash; then chop downwards at the closest enemy, finishing that slash to cause Stormbringer to cleave the foe in half.

Elric may execute sword flurries whether he is concentrating or not, but as suggested by the example above, his opening attack will vary depending on whether he is concentrating or not. Sword flurry potential will be governed by Elric's vitality level, or rather, by how intense his "battle frenzy" is (see below). If Stormbringer has not taken hold of him (i.e., Elric hasn't killed anything in a little while), Elric will be capable of seamless two-stroke sword flurries as described above. After several foes have been killed in close succession and the sword begins to exert its power over him, he will move quickly enough to be able to string three moves together. As his battle frenzy peaks, four-stroke flurries will be possible. In relatively rare instances when Elric is completely consumed by the sword, five-stroke flurries will be possible, though players will have no control over them.

Chaos Control

If Elric flies into a frenzy after slaying multiple enemies in rapid succession (see below for details), players, at this point, will have to actively move and attempt to slash in the opposite direction of what Stormbringer is compelling Elric to do. Through animation as well as speech, it will be apparent when players are attempting to regain control over Elric. If players make no effort or otherwise do not regain control of Stormbringer after a set period of time, one of two things can happen:

- If all enemies in the vicinity are killed, Elric will cool down on his own, doubling over in exhaustion for a while, as though he'd just ran a marathon.
- If there is no shortage of enemies nearby (i.e., in the late stages of the game), Elric may actually end up killing himself, ending the game.

This will be a fine balance. On the one hand, the battle frenzy effect can cause extreme damage to any enemies nearby (though, unlike when manually concentrating, Elric will prioritize closest friends or foes rather than strongest enemies in the area). In the early

game, this is a self-balancing system that should allow players of any skill level to make progress and to see what sorts of combos are possible. In the late-game, when there is no end to the enemies' numbers, not regaining control over Stormbringer can be disastrous. Stormbringer is not a normal sword, and requires a special talent to be wielded properly.

The Chaos Shield

The Chaos Shield is that which allows Elric to resist being transformed into a misshapen Chaos creature. He acquires it about two-thirds of the way through the game. When he is equipped with this huge, round shield, players will notice how the infested terrain in Elric's vicinity will actually revert back to its natural, uncorrupted state... only to be warped back into hideousness as Elric moves on.

When Elric is holding the Chaos Shield, he will no longer be able to use two-handed-style slashes. This ultimately limits the number of sword flurries he may use, but allows him to execute a few new ones, since he can now transition directly from one-handed to reverse-one-handed sword stances.

However, by pressing "down" on the directional pad, players will be able to deftly sling the shield onto Elric's back in one swift motion, so that he may optionally fight two-handed once again. This has the added benefit of protecting Elric from getting attacked from behind. He may quickly reequip the shield by pressing "left" on the D-pad (he carries it left-handed).

When the shield is equipped and Elric is not attacking, he will automatically hold the shield out in front of him, and will block all blows that would otherwise injure him from that direction. However, the strength of the enemy attacks may cause Elric to stagger backwards, unless Elric actively parries the attacks (see below). Also, as he blocks attacks, Elric's vitality will naturally drop faster than usual, due to the physical exertion required; he'll need to feed Stormbringer before long.

The Chaos Shield is a powerful weapon. Any chaotic creature that so much as touches the shield will be horribly damaged. Elric can use this to his advantage by executing leaping charges with the shield equipped. The shield may also reflect certain ranged attacks back at the foes who launched them. Positioning and restraint therefore becomes especially important late in the game when the shield is available. However, the nature of Chaos is such that Elric will never be able to simply "turtle up" behind the shield; Chaos will find a way to bypass his defenses, and he will weaken if he keeps blocking.

Parrying

Players can make Elric parry most incoming attacks with his sword or with the Chaos Shield by pressing a certain button on the controller just as the attack is about to hit. This will cause Elric to deflect the blow and the enemy to drop its guard, allowing Elric to counterattack. Against some enemies and in some situations, parrying will be very useful, but The War on Chaos generally promotes an aggressive gameplay style; parrying will be effective in combat against individual foes, but usually, the odds won't be that favorable. Furthermore, parrying is physically tiring, and will cause Elric to lose vitality faster than

usual (though, when equipped with the Chaos Shield, it is more exhausting for Elric to passively block attacks than to parry them).

Issuing Orders

When Elric is not enthralled in battle frenzy, he may issue basic orders to his allies-- "attack/move" or "fall back", in a simple manner reminiscent of Freedom Fighters. All he need do is look in a general direction to issue an attack or move order with one button, while another button issues the "fall back" command. Many different speech samples will be used to represent these orders, to lend variety. Elric's allies will automatically help him stave off his enemies, but giving them orders may be tactically useful.

Sheathing/Unsheathing, Throwing Stormbringer

All the above commands are possible at the press of a specific controller button, but their availability depends on the context. Elric may sheathe and unsheathe the sword when he is in no immediate danger and when he is not frenzied. He will be unable to grab ledges, climb ladders, etc., when the sword is drawn (or when the Chaos Shield is equipped). When the sword is sheathed, though, Elric will lose vitality faster than usual (since physical contact is broken).

When frenzied, attempting to sheath the sword will instead cause Elric to hurl the blade at the nearest foe. The blade will then return to his hand much like how, in Star Wars, Jedi may retrieve their lightsabers. Throwing the blade can be a good way of decreasing Elric's vitality / dissipating Stormbringer's influence over Elric more quickly, since the physical contact is broken for a while. The sword will automatically return to Elric's hand after it is thrown, no matter what.

Recovery from the Brink of Death

Even when Elric is seemingly killed, he may have a chance of regaining his feet. Imagine that one of Jagreen Lern's agents delivers a crushing blow to Elric, causing him to collapse. The foe may either approach to inspect the body, to gloat in victory, or to attempt a coup-de-grace... but the listless Elric may still have some fight left in him thanks to his sword. Players may attempt one or two last, desperate thrusts after Elric has been defeated--only his sword arm will move.

If players succeed at running the foe through, a surge of energy will course into Elric and Stormbringer will seem to pull him to his feet. Just as someone can "lend someone a hand" as they're trying to stand up, it will look as though Elric pulls himself together using Stormbringer for support.

Some enemies will be so powerful that a finishing blow from them will knock Elric back so forcefully that he'll lose his grip on Stormbringer--then, he's done for. Luckily, since the sword is bound to him, only in very rare circumstances (bosses, specific late-game foes) will he be in danger of losing his grip. This is another way of introducing challenge into the gameplay.

The Horn of Fate

Elric acquires the Horn of Fate very late in the game, and it is the ultimate weapon against Chaos. By sounding the horn for the first time, Elric will awaken the dragons of Melnibonéa to aid in his desperate battle. The second time the horn is blown, the omnipotent Lords of Law will appear to aid in the war on Chaos. And the third and final time, the horn will usher in the birth of the new world. Players will have finished The War on Chaos when they sound the horn all three times.

The horn will be useable only in specific situations in the climactic sequences of the game. Elric may attempt to sound the horn when players press and hold "up" on the D-pad. However, he will have to sheath Stormbringer first, and naturally, he'll need to be sure that no danger is in the immediate vicinity... a difficult task, since Chaos is seething all around by this time. As well, he'll need to be fully vitalized to successfully sound the horn. This is a physically exhausting process, which will bring Elric to his knees. He will need to feed Stormbringer again without delay.

Minigame 1: Spellcasting Sequences

At certain, key points in the game, Elric will draw upon his powers as a sorcerer to summon otherworldly aid. These casting sequences will be rhythm and timing-based affairs involving both analog sticks and triggers, and akin to the physical process of attempting to pat your head while simultaneously rubbing your belly. Players will need to sustain certain incongruous actions, using dual-analog control by following colorful patterns on the screen, for a duration of time before Elric's spell can succeed. The incantation will visually grow or lessen in power, based on players' performance during these sequences. Essentially, the spellcasting will be an endurance test--much like how spellcasting is described in the Elric stories. The first spellcasting sequence will prolong until players succeed. Later such sequences will afford players with a limited amount of time in which to succeed, lest the forces of Chaos overwhelm them (and the game end in a scripted cutscene showing this).

Minigame 2: Riding Sequences

Elric and his companions will travel on horseback into and through battle during certain key scenes, which will be fairly easy and therefore mostly for "color", and possibly for masking loading times. These will be "rail" sequences, in which players will not be able to move in any direction at will, but still may move about the screen, avoiding obstacles and positioning themselves to best slay any foes in the vicinity. Players will be able to attack left or right by moving the right stick in the respective direction. Later, Elric will get to witness the destruction that Chaos has sown while riding a Nihrain steed, a mystical beast that may ethereally traverse any surface at great speeds.

Minigame 3: Sailing Sequence

Elric will get to commandeer the *Timber-tearer*, Korgan's flagship and the mightiest human vessel standing against Chaos. Like the riding sequences, this will mostly be a scripted cinematic sequence "on rails," but will allow players some degree of ability to maneuver the ship into ramming position; fire the ship's catapult against Jagreen Lern's fleets; and launch boarding cables and planks. Once the boarding mechanisms are in

place, gameplay seamlessly transitions into a core action sequence in which Elric will assault Jagreen Lern's flagship. This occurs about halfway through the game.

Minigame 4: Flying Sequence

Late in the game, Elric will sound the Horn of Fate, summoning a fleet of nearly 100 red and gold and green dragons to his aid. His own is Flamefang, the largest and strongest among its brethren. Flying on dragonback is a bit like the horseback sequences, meaning players will be able to move about the screen but their course will be locked "on rails." In the flying sequence, players will have to avoid airborne forces of Chaos as well as ground-to-air attacks while returning fire with Flamefang's devastating acid breath. Players will be able to look all around using the right analog stick, and speed up and slow down to avoid danger. The bird's-eye-view provided during this late-game flying sequence will give players the most awe-inspiring look at the sheer Chaos that has been wrought throughout the world, and should be a surprising and entertaining change of pace before the final battle.

❁ **Gameplay Details**

This section further explains key elements of The War on Chaos, which do not specifically pertain to the core mechanics of the game described below, but work together with the mechanics to affect, enhance, and enrich the overall gameplay experience.

Camera & Aesthetics

As mentioned, The War on Chaos is a third-person-perspective game, which means players will always be able to see Elric onscreen from a perspective that suitably shows off the character as well as his surroundings. Specifically, the game will primarily use a fixed, roving camera as in games such as The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King. However, when players make Elric "concentrate" by pressing and holding the left trigger, the camera will smoothly pivot to a 3/4 behind-the-back angle, much like during combat in Final Fantasy XI. There will be no other options to manually control the camera angle.

The game should primarily use soft focus and diffuse ambient lighting, reminiscent of the recent Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time. Players will initially interpret this as a design decision, but when Elric travels to a future era and after Chaos is swept clean and the End of the Beginning of Things occurs at the conclusion of the game, the picture will come into sharp focus, creating a surprising contrast to the rest of the game. Players will eventually come to realize that Elric's dreamlike and mystical era had a distinctive appearance unlike that of any of Earth's known history.

Elric's Vitality vs. Stormbringer's Strength

In The War on Chaos, players' abilities will be governed by Elric's vitality as well as the strength of his sword, Stormbringer. Elric's albinism means that he loses vitality much faster than an average man, but Stormbringer fills him with strength... as long as it has feasted on souls recently. Consider the following, and please try to bear with all the numbers, which are provided for purposes of explanation:

- The War on Chaos tracks Elric's vitality, and Stormbringer's strength (which, in fact, is the sword's *excess* strength). A third statistic, experience, is a ratio of vitality and strength earned when enemies are killed by Stormbringer, which depends on Stormbringer's current strength rating.

- Elric's vitality can be between 0 and 201 units. From 76 to 100 units, Elric is feeling healthy. At 75 units or less, Elric is tired and moves slightly slower. At 50 units or less, Elric is exhausted and moves even more slowly. At 25 units or less, Elric is barely able to keep his feet. At 0 units, Elric collapses. From 101 to 125 units, Elric is charged--stronger and faster than usual. From 126 to 150 units, Elric is enraged--stronger and much faster than usual. From 151 to 175 units, Elric is frenzied--much stronger and much faster than usual. From 176 to 200 units, Elric is possessed--much stronger and much, much faster than usual. At 201 units, Elric's sword wrests all control from him and kills him.

- Elric's health will naturally dissipate twice as quickly when it is between 150 and 101 than when it is between 100 and 0; and it will dissipate three times as quickly when it is between 200 and 151 than when it is between 100 and 0.

- Stormbringer's strength can be between 0 and 105 units. Its strength slowly dissipates over time, though at a rate slower than the rate at which Elric's vitality drains from him. As long as it has strength remaining, Stormbringer will maintain Elric's vitality at 100 or up to 100; Stormbringer will transfer its strength to regenerate Elric's vitality if he falls below 100. The more strength Stormbringer has, the faster Elric's vitality will be restored. Players will learn to get a feel for how much strength Stormbringer has from the rate at which the controller is vibrating.

- Assuming it has strength remaining, if Stormbringer is sheathed, then Elric will slowly lose vitality, one point at a time, though Stormbringer will not lose its own strength as quickly. If Stormbringer runs out of strength, Elric will slowly lose vitality whether or not the sword is sheathed.

- Elric loses vitality from being struck by enemies. Most enemies will hit him for about 25 points of vitality, though some will pester him for fewer points, while very strong foes may hit for as much as 100 points or so. Physical exertions such as parrying enemy attacks or leaping charges cause his vitality to drain faster than usual.

- Elric and Stormbringer earn experience as they kills foes, some of which instantly adds to Elric's vitality, and some of which adds to Stormbringer's strength. The stronger the foe that's killed is, the more experience is gained. The average amount of experience gained from a kill is 12 points. How these experience points are distributed depends on how much strength Stormbringer already has. If Stormbringer's strength is 25 points or less, then 3/4 of the experience will go to Stormbringer and 1/4 will instantly be added to Elric's vitality. If Stormbringer's strength is between 26 and 50 points, then 3/5 of the experience will go to Stormbringer and 2/5 will instantly be added to Elric's vitality. If Stormbringer's strength is between 50 and 75 points, then 3/5 of the experience earned will go to Elric's vitality and 2/5 will go to Stormbringer's strength. And if Stormbringer's strength is 76 points or higher, then 3/4 will go to Elric's vitality and 1/4 will go to Stormbringer's strength.

- When Stormbringer's strength is 100 or greater, it bursts into black fire and deals additional damage. However, the sword is never "weak" regardless of its strength rating, as it always maintains a reserve of souls to sustain itself.

· When Elric is frenzied or possessed, players can use "chaos control" mechanics to make his vitality rapidly drain back down to controllable levels.

In summary, there is a tug-of-war constantly at work between Elric and Stormbringer. Both need victims to sustain themselves, but Elric needs to be careful about Stormbringer "pushing" too much vitality into him too quickly. Visually as well as in gameplay terms, players will notice how the strength of the sword is independent but usually closely proportional to Elric's vitality. This will lead to some occasional surprises and interesting layers of subtlety to the gameplay. For instance, when Elric is at death's door and limping along, the sword will quite literally drag him around. The sentience of the sword is what justifies the fact that Elric remains a very powerful fighter even when his vitality is dwindling and his movement is physically slowed.

A note about Dyvim Storm, the second playable character: He does not have Elric's health condition, and as such, his strength does not naturally drain. However, his sword, Mournblade, is slightly less powerful than Stormbringer. It does not regenerate his health gradually, so Dyvim Storm can only recover vitality by slaying enemies. On the other hand, he is less susceptible to becoming possessed by his blade. As such, this character should have a different gameplay feel to him than Elric, promoting a slightly less reckless style of play.

Interface

There will generally be no onscreen user interface in The War on Chaos; as for how to gauge Elric's vitality and Stormbringer's strength, players will just have to get a feel for it both from observing Elric and literally from feeling the controller's vibrations. The numbers cited above will be kept hidden from the player.

All other pertinent gameplay information will likewise be contextually discernible in some fashion. For example, players will know where to run to because their artificially intelligent allies will be moving in that direction, imploring them to follow should they fall behind. Alternately, a large landmark of some sort--Jagreen Lern's temple-palace, for instance--will be visible on the horizon, and players will be compelled to approach it.

Battle Frenzy

As previously suggested, as Elric slays many foes in rapid succession using Stormbringer, it invokes a "battle frenzy" effect, allowing Elric to move faster and faster, hit harder, and execute even deadlier, longer sword flurries. However, this benefit comes at a price: As battle frenzy sets in, Elric will begin to move about and attack wantonly. When stricken with battle frenzy, Elric will automatically concentrate on (lock onto) the closest living creature in the vicinity, friend or foe. And he will automatically approach and strike out at that creature if the player doesn't stop him using the "chaos control" mechanics described previously.

Casualties of War

Gameplay sequences will often include defenseless characters that Elric can accidentally cut down; they will shriek out in disbelief, and when the dust eventually settles, Elric will

curse his fate, or maybe laugh cynically at his folly. Such systems will be in place to discourage players from killing non-enemy characters (pausing to mourn the loss of an innocent in the middle of a battle would be a bad idea), though the action sequences will be set up to make such acts difficult to avoid.

Enemy Behavior

Some more-intelligent enemies (and bosses) later in the game will be familiar with Elric's battle frenzy, and may flee from him, so that he can cool off... they know they could not defeat him when the sword is having its way. Fortunately for Elric, he can move so quickly in these situations that he should be able to outrun any most any given foe. This should make for a compelling cat-and-mouse game amidst all the carnage.

"Tightrope Walking with a Huge Can of Bugspray in a Swarm of Angry Hornets"

This quotation is an analogy for the feel of the gameplay in The War on Chaos. The gameplay should ultimately be a fine balance; think of attempting to continuously grind or trick in Tony Hawk. The more precisely players play, the more efficiently Elric kills... but the more Elric loses control; then players have to frantically wrest control back from the sword. That will be the ebb and the flow of the game's combat. Elric's power over the sword will constantly shift to some extent (again, much like the balance meter in Tony Hawk), ensuring that the feel of the gameplay can never be simply memorized.

Meanwhile, chaotic enemies are morphing and changing depending on how they are struck. Certain types of slashes--for example, a clean horizontal slash--might lead to undesirable consequences against certain enemies, i.e., two tougher monsters are born. Hence, players will need to learn strategies on how to precisely slay multiple opponents. Chaotic enemies will indeed have limited health--not all will morph, either. The intent is for there to truly be a bewildering feel to the fight. Elric is being attacked from all sides, but can easily attack in all directions. He is constantly being struck from all directions, but very little can actually slow him down or knock him down. He will have to cut a bloody swath through the enemy ranks to reach his objectives. He will never be able to slay *all* his opponents, at least not when he's facing Chaos.

Experience System

Elric will noticeably grow stronger as the game goes on--his powers are directly proportional to how many enemies he is fighting at a time, and only in the climactic third of the game will he be facing such overwhelming numbers in such rapid sequence that his powers will become fully apparent. So, players will naturally discover new ways of playing the game as the game goes on, yet without such contrivances as power-ups or backpacks full of armor, swords, and health potions.

As mentioned, Elric gains experience points as he fights. These instantly refuel him and his sword, and, in between scenarios, he will be able to spend the sum total of these points towards new skills, either to better himself as a swordsman (by learning new fighting stances, and thus new moves and combos) or to steady his will against Stormbringer (allowing himself to better resist battle frenzy and/or to more quickly gain chaos control); or to gain other advantages against chaos, such as improved parrying.

This process will not just be menu-based, but will take the form of cutscenes involving Elric having to make a choice of learning new strategies from one of his various comrades.

Save System

There is no manual ability to save one's progress in The War on Chaos. Saving happens automatically and invisibly when players complete certain sequences. Should Elric fall in battle, he should utter one of dozens of different sets of dying words, and the screen should fade to black; after some interesting graphical effect (a fade out, followed by a shimmer of some sort), gameplay should begin again from the last "level", only, as mentioned, things will be different. The idea is, in an alternate reality, Elric did not perish at the point at which players just got him killed. A key plot sequence 4/5 of the way through the game will lead to a moment of revelation in which players realize what it means for Elric to be the Eternal Champion.

Ranking System

Players will be given a numerical and verbal ranking at the conclusion of the game, based on their performance, i.e., their ability to efficiently slay enemies and avoid friendly casualties, along with factors like how quickly they finished the game, number of times they died in the process, recoveries from the brink of death, variety and power of sword flurries used, number of times recovered from battle frenzy, and so forth. This will be a well-implemented system, and not an afterthought, so as to encourage players to try harder the next time and genuinely get into playing through the game to get a better score. The system can be fully fleshed out in hindsight of observation of testers' behavior experimenting with the game's combat system. Expert performance in the game should unlock additional outfits, artwork, outtakes, and so on.

Multiplayer

The entire game will be playable in multiplayer. Two-player cooperative multiplayer allows players to take control of both Elric and his cousin, Dyvim Slorm. The game will switch to a horizontal split-screen when the two are apart, but the splitscreen will vanish when the two are in each other's vicinity. Just as in the single-player game, "friendly fire" will always be enabled, discouraging Elric and Dyvim Slorm from getting too close to each other or their comrades. If one player "dies," the other may stop to revive him, lending the fallen player some strength--just be sure the coast is clear, because enemies will take this opportunity to attack. If both players die, the sequence starts over as in the single-player game. If a player accidentally kills his comrade, he will momentarily pause to curse the world and/or the gods and grieve the loss... thusly, inviting his own disaster. Hence, strategically, it will not be a good idea to kill one's comrades, though it'll probably be somewhat entertaining. After the game has been finished cooperatively, an arena mode is unlocked, allowing two players to duke it out.

Story & Cutscenes

The entire game's script will, in fact, be scripted and storyboarded before development begins in earnest; ideally, this can all be approved by Mr. Moorcock. Intermittent in-engine 3D cutscenes will move the story along, using a letterboxed format and the same

character models as seen during gameplay. As previously mentioned, players will be able to retain some control over Elric during cutscenes; he will be able to pace back and forth, rub his face in concern, and perform other contextual actions that put the player in the scene but without disrupting the continuity of the scene. Scripted dialogue will occur during battle and during key plot points. The game's script should be huge, and alternate readings of the lines should be provided, to encourage replay value and accentuate the "parallel universe" concept underpinning the game.

Game Length & Replay Value

The game should take approximately 10 hours from beginning to end on the first play-through; then, the game will invite you to begin again--only against even greater odds. As previously suggested, the gameplay should be self-balancing so that it grows progressively more challenging yet without any obvious contrivances to make it so.

Certain scenes, character appearances, boss battles, and other plot points will change each time players goes through the game. Again, the idea is, each instance of the game being played is one of an infinite number of alternate realities occurring; perhaps, in one, Elric is having a bad hair day. Perhaps on the third time through, Elric will comment that he is experiencing déjà vu. Players should start to notice such subtle differences in the game, encouraging them to keep playing indefinitely. As many of these optional, subtle differences should be incorporated into the game as humanly possible.

Stormbringer always wins. The credits roll as Chaos is utterly defeated, the world is finally at peace, and prehistory as we know it begins.

❖ **Game Flow & Scenario Description**

The War on Chaos consists of 20 sequences spread across four main parts. It must be said that there will be no discreet "levels" in The War on Chaos, nor will there be any sequences that take players out of the experience of the game. This section describes the specific sequence of events that will transpire in The War on Chaos, which will be a linear game, meaning players will need to successfully get through the following sequences in the following order.

NOTE: The following descriptions spoil the plot of *Stormbringer* the novel, so read at your own risk. Also, the author of this document admits to taking some creative liberties with the storyline in order to facilitate the game's structure, though in this author's opinion, these changes are quite insignificant.

Part I: Dead God's Homecoming

Scene I: Karlaak by the Weeping Waste, the Palace home of Elric and Zarozinia.

Cutscene shows a magical storm drift across the land. Savages emerge--aided by Chaos, they are able to slip past Elric's guards. Meanwhile, Elric has portentous dreams; brief exposition mentions how he found but later gave up Stormbringer to live peacefully with his wife. He reminisces about his old friend and advisor, Dyvim Tvar, who taught him the ways of combat when he knew only books and sorcery. Interactive sequence allows

players to practice sparring against Dyvim Tvar. A woman's scream interrupts this process. Elric rouses to confront a group of savages. He clasps his sword (not Stormbringer), and players engage in their first confrontation. Once the savages are killed, a cutscene explains that Zarozinia has been kidnapped. Elric decided to interrogate the soul of the dead leader of the savages to discover the nature of this problem. This is the first casting minigame.

Scene II: The Road to Jharkor. In a cutscene, Elric gleans that he must travel to Jharkor to find answers. He knows his cousin, Dyvim Slorm, is serving as a mercenary to Queen Yishana, and intends to meet up with him there. Before he leaves, he enters his ancient vault and retrieves Stormbringer, knowing that the two of them will never be parted again. In a horse riding sequence, Elric races to Jharkor, where he is beset upon by Dharijorians--armed warriors of King Sarosto. He realizes the rumors must be true--that King Sarosto and Jagreen Lern aim to attack Jharkor. After defeating his enemies, he encounters Dyvim Slorm and his small band of mercenaries. Dyvim Slorm is already committed to helping Queen Yishana and Elric agrees to aid them.

Scene III: The Battle of Jharkor. In a cutscene, Elric and Dyvim Slorm review the battle plan with Queen Yishana, who, despite having war on her hands, flirts a little with Elric. Soon, Elric and Dyvim Slorm ride into battle, with Queen Yishana's warriors, white leopards, and Men of Myrrhn on one side, and King Sarosto and Jagreen Lern's Dharijorians, warrior-priests, devil riders, hunting tigers, and--later on in the battle--giant owls on the other side. In this pitched battle, Elric confronts Jagreen Lern for the first time, who manages to deflect all of Elric's attacks. Jagreen Lern laughs and rejoins his main forces, leaving Elric to have to try to save what's left of Yishana's forces. Elric sounds the retreat, while desperately fighting off any and all enemies with precious little support to back him up. He realizes Jagreen Lern is a brilliant tactician; a regiment of his forces is waiting to cut off most of those attempting to flee. Still, he and Dyvim Slorm and a few others manage to break through and escape with their lives. The battle, though, is lost.

Scene IV: The Chasm of Nihrain. In a cutscene, it is clear that Elric and company have traveled for days in their retreat. One of the surly survivors of his group is cut off and leads them into a trap. Surrounded by Jagreen Lern's warrior-priests, Elric and company are forced to fight; for Elric's part, he's been weakened, and begins the battle quite raw. When the dust settles, Sepiriz appears, claiming to be an agent of Fate. He is compelling enough to where Elric and Dyvim Slorm agree to follow him; there are no other survivors from their group. Sepiriz explains Jagreen Lern's scheme and mentions that, among other things, he has revived Darnizhaan the Dead God. It is Darnizhaan who holds Zarozinia captive and will exchange her for Stormbringer and Mournblade. Elric is faced with a difficult choice....

Scene V: The Vale of Xanyaw in Myrrhn. In a horse riding sequence atop the fast-moving, ethereal Nihrain steeds, Elric and Dyvim Slorm travel to the residence of the Dead God. They are waylaid by a throng of Dharijorians, who are ill equipped to deal with the two's runeswords. Eventually they reach Darnizhaan's domain. Elric volunteers his swords in

exchange for Zarozenia... but after Elric's queen is returned, he invokes a hidden power that wrenches the blades from the Dead God, seriously injuring him in the process. Another difficult battle ensues. Darnizhaan is eventually defeated, and as he is banished, he curses Elric, calling him a puppet of Fate. These words trouble Elric, who again finds Sepiriz waiting for him. Sepiriz explains that the Dead God was not entirely incorrect.... For the time being, though, Elric and Zarozenia enjoy a brief, sentimental reunion.

Part II: Black Sword's Brothers

Scene I: A treacherous sea journey from Karlaak. In a cutscene, Elric discusses strategy with high-ranking officials from the Young Kingdoms. He is joined by Dyvim Slorm, Moonglum of Elwher, and Rackhir the Red Archer, as well as the Sealord Kargan. These comrades believe in Elric when he explains that, soon, Jagreen Lern will attack their borders. Some of the Sealords are not convinced, though, and ultimately Elric's attempts to rally the nations together are not successful. Elric, Dyvim Slorm, and Moonglum decide they must sail north and attempt to reach the Sorcerer's Isle, whose mystics may help them contact the Lords of Law. With Zarozenia safely returned to Karlaak, they set forth in a small skifflike vessel... and soon find themselves in a Chaotic storm. Volcanoes rise from the depths, and suddenly, the surface of the ocean is all dead sealife, even as ferocious sea serpents lash out at them, boiling (quite literally) in anger. The three defend their position as best as they can--the ship must hold. The storm worsens, and then the heroes find themselves in a very strange place, as if floating in nothingness. Clearly, the skiff is off course.

Scene II: Crash-landed on Pan Tang. The Chaotic storm was apparently no accident. The trio awakes only to crash-land upon a rocky shore... the coast of Pan Tang, their enemy's nation. Not their intended destination. Soon enough, they meet a legion of foes and must fight for their survival. Expecting to be beset by more enemies, the three instead happen upon a ragtag group of survivors who fought for Yishana. A seer among them explains that Jagreen Lern's reign is growing stronger... he has already usurped King Sarosto. The seer also bears a message from Sepiriz, who anticipated this turn of events. They are informed that Sepiriz is awaiting them nearby with updated plans. They ride, on horseback, to meet him. Sepiriz provides the trio with a place to rest, but bears ill news: Now, the Dukes of Hell are on Jagreen Lern's side. However, Elric's black sword has the power to defeat them.

Scene III: On the way to Hwamgaarl, Jagreen Lern's temple-palace in Pan Tang. Swiftly riding on Nihrain steeds, the trio seeks to confront Jagreen Lern in his own lair, where they--and Sepiriz--hope they can cut off the head of the source of evil. The Nihrain steeds allow the trio to bypass most of Jagreen Lern's defenses, including legions of his warrior-priests... but they can only take them so far due to Jagreen Lern's wards, and a battle against the warrior-priests ensues.

Scene IV: Inside Hwamgaarl. The trio continues on foot, and enters Jagreen Lern's fortress stronghold... only to be confronted by griffons, the most terrible foes yet. In the second casting sequence of the game, Elric is able to banish most of these creatures, if he succeeds; failure means having to face greater numbers of these terrible foes. Beyond,

Elric and company confront more than 100 of Jagreen Lern's warrior-priests, none of whom survive the encounter. Now Elric calls forth to his patron demon, Arioch, who he knows is sided with Jagreen Lern. Arioch and his brothers show themselves, in human guise, and Jagreen Lern is there with them. After a heated exchange, the most challenging battle yet ensues. Elric reverses the spell from earlier and unleashes the griffons upon the dukes of hell, then races after Jagreen Lern... but the Theocrat shuts himself off, and by then, the Dukes have defeated the griffons. Elric is trapped, but after a desperate battle, he unleashes a hidden power by summoning the black swords' brothers. He swoons amidst a horrifying storm of Stormbringer look-alikes, slashing away at the Dukes of Hell....

Scene V: On Jagreen Lern's flagship amidst the defeat of the Southern Kingdoms. Elric and his friends awaken to find themselves shackled. A sneering Jagreen Lern spits that, somehow, the albino succeeded in banishing the dukes of hell... most inconvenient, and for that, Elric will suffer greatly. Barely alive, the trio next awakens aboard Jagreen Lern's massive black flagship on its way with a tremendous armada to battle against the Southern Kingdoms, whom Elric hoped to rally together. The Sealords' numbers are divided, and some of them traitorously join Jagreen Lern's side in their lust for power. Jagreen Lern wishes for Elric to witness the crushing defeat of his friends, and so ties him to the mast of his ship, and casts a charm on him to prevent a stray arrow from ending his life prematurely. Meanwhile, Stormbringer is nowhere to be found. The battle begins and goes about as expected. When Kargan's fleet shows up, he knows he must try to stop his truest ally. In a casting sequence, he tries with all his might to summon Stormbringer. One of Jagreen Lern's commanders hears this and attempts to kill him, but the charm saves his life as the spell is completed. Stormbringer drinks a soul, imparting great strength unto Elric. He and his companions fight their way across the ship, but have no time to fight Jagreen Lern--they must stop Kargan before it's too late. In a cutscene, Elric leaps overboard and is so empowered that he reaches Kargan's fleet in time. They manage to escape to the Isle of the Purple Towns.

Part III: Sad Giant's Shield

Scene I: The Last Refuge of Humanity. Chaos has swept the Earth. Elric has spent the intervening months gathering all remaining forces to protect the remaining kingdoms from Chaos' advances. He tries, in vain, to summon the White Lords to their aid. An enemy attack seems incumbent when a golden globe screams across the night sky into the Isle. But it is Sepiriz who, once again, has valuable information--as well as more bad news. He explains that Elric will need the Chaos Shield if he hopes to confront Jagreen Lern again, who now has the almighty Ships of Hell in his fleet. Unfortunately, the Chaos Shield quest would take him to a mountain pass far to the north, whereas Chaos looms south. Elric decides that he cannot abandon his post. The Chaos Shield would just have to wait. He races on horseback to the Isle of the Purple Towns and, where Kargan, Dyvim Slorm, Moonglum, and Rackhir await. There, they meet a survivor of the last sea battle, who has been horribly disfigured by chaos. Soon, more chaotic forces beset them, and this is Elric's first encounter with the misshapen fiends. Shaken, they nevertheless resolve to attack the Chaos fleet head-on, to break through the ranks and kill Jagreen Lern on his flagship. Before they depart, Elric finds Zarozenia waiting for him--she does not want to

be away from him at a time like this. For the sake of her safety, he demands her safe return to Karlaak, promising that he will be back for her.

Scene II: Aboard the Timber-tearer. This is the game's sailing sequence, in which players will steer the *Timber-tearer* towards Jagreen Lern's armada, and will witness the Ships of Hell for the first time. The *Timber-tearer's* catapult can destroy or damage some enemy vessels, but the goal is to smash through the enemy ranks while trying to avoid enemy attacks, putting out any fires that are caused. Elric eventually boards Jagreen Lern's flagship and a terrible melee ensues. Amidst the chaos, Elric loses control, and one of his victims ends up being his friend Kargan--though Elric is so frenzied that he does not even realize. He finds the captain of the vessel, but no sign of Jagreen Lern. He's been thwarted, says the captain, who then dies painfully. It seems Jagreen Lern is on board a Ship of Hell with Lord Pyaray, so Elric's one chance had failed... again. In a summoning sequence, he implores Straasha, the Elemental Lord of Water, to aid him and his comrades. They jump ship and Straasha pulls them to the briny deep, out of harm's way.

Scene III: To the Chaos Shield. In his undersea kingdom, Straasha explains that his powers have grown too weak to have helped them any more than he did. Still, he saved their lives, and he offers some useful information: those Ships of Hell are commanded by the Lord of Chaos, Pyaray, whose weakness is the crystal on his forehead. Straasha confirms that the Chaos Shield is likely Elric's only chance, at this point, and transports the albino and his friends to the shore near the Isle of the Purple Towns. Sepiriz is perhaps slightly surprised to find them still alive, and they quickly agree to ride off in search of the Chaos Shield. Granted Nihrain steeds, they swiftly fly across the Weeping Waste and then the Sighing Desert in search of the Sad Giant Mordaga's lair. Leading to the lair is a monstrous staircase up a craggy mountainside... a craggy staircase fit for a giant and filled with his guardians.

Scene IV: Mordaga's Castle. Rushing up the stairs, the heroes must do battle with Mordaga's elder trees, and then, a legion of his guardsmen. As he slays these foes, Elric flies into a frenzied rage that appalls his more-peaceful comrades. Rackhir tries to stay Elric's hand, and Stormbringer viciously and tragically strikes him down. The remaining comrades grieve the loss, and presently Mordaga appears. He readily relinquishes the shield, not wishing to die, but Moonglum, not wanting to defy Fate, slays the sad Giant in an uncharacteristically vengeful moment--after all, were it not for Mordaga's guardsmen, Rackhir would yet live. At any rate, Elric gains the Chaos Shield.

Scene V: In the Mouth of Chaos. As they travel back, the companions discover a small group of those who apparently fled from Karlaak... chaos has encroached much faster than Elric expected, and he presumes Zarozenia dead. The survivors inform Elric that Chaos is boldly headquartered near to where the remaining human refuge used to be, and the emboldened and embittered Elric sets off for the evil place. Here, he faces Chaos for the first time, in earnest. The earth gradually transforms into a mass that does not seem solid or liquid, and legions of hellspawn are everywhere. Only the Chaos Shield protects Elric and his friends from that ignoble fate. Still they ferociously fight their way into the heart of the camp, into the prime Ship of Hell, where Jagreen Lern and Lord Pyaray

celebrate their victory over the world. Elric attacks Lord Pyaray, who is immensely powerful but unprepared for the combination of the Chaos Shield and Stormbringer. Jagreen Lern escapes Elric's clutches, however, by distracting him with an awful vision: His wife, Zarozenia, has been warped by Chaos. She thrusts herself upon Stormbringer, even as the Ship of Hell begins to collapse. The grieving Elric desperately escapes... he's won a great victory, but at a great cost.

Part IV: Doomed Lord's Passing

Part I: The Dreaming City of Imrryr. Elric, born of Chaos himself, assumes that the reason his homeland is the last place uncorrupted by Chaos is due to its origins. Time seems to stand still. Elric and Moonglum visit Dyvim Slorm in the Dragon Caves, where Dyvim Slorm is desperately trying to wake the creatures to aid in their struggle... but in vain. There seems to be little hope. Frustrated and exhausted, Elric returns to his quarters and falls into a deep slumber. Sepiriz visits him in a dream and explains that the White Lords have finally discovered their breach, and may now be contacted--apparently the destruction of Lord Pyaray caused a great enough rift. Elric swoops through strange, dreamlike lands and finds himself confronting Lord Donblas and his brothers. Lord Donblas explains the significance of the Horn of Fate, and tells Elric that he may reach the plane in which it resides from a tower in his city. Elric awakens and heads for the tower of D'a'ruptna (with Dyvim Slorm in a two-player game). He has lost some of his strength already since his arrival in Imrryr, so it is a difficult climb to the top, and a fearsome leap at the end of it all....

Part II: The Quest for the Horn of Fate. Elric travels through space and time and arrives in a strange place. There his eyes are more focused, painfully so, as when one squints at the sun. Time seems to stand still; a river is nearby but does not flow. Elric is beset by strange men in crude armor, crying at him in a bizarre tongue. Fighting for his life, Elric realizes that Stormbringer's power is weaker on this plane, much like the White Lords suggested. Eventually he reaches the tomb of Roland, the guardian whom the White Lords said would rise from his grave to defend the stolen horn. A confrontation with this future manifestation of the Eternal Champion ends with Elric gaining the Horn of Fate. He works his way back to the river and sinks into what seems like shallow water....

Part III: The War on Chaos, from the Sky. Elric, Moonglum, and Dyvim Slorm return to the Dragon Caves, where Elric sounds the horn for the first time. The dragons awake! Thus begins the dragon riding sequence, in which the last three men alive lay siege on Chaos, along with nearly 100 immortal dragons. Not entirely immortal, it seems... Chaos has devised weapons powerful enough to stop even these creatures, though the dragons are able to wreak tremendous destruction of Chaos' encampments. The battle in mid-air rages on until Elric, severely weakened from sounding the horn of fate, is forced to land.

Part IV: The War on Chaos Continues on Earth. Elric, nearly dead, is beset by Chaos creatures, whose deaths soon restore his strength. A brutal fight ensues. Legions of creatures are slain by Stormbringer even as the remaining dragons continue to do battle from the sky. Elric eventually confronts the Dark Lord Xiombarg, for another climactic battle. The eventual defeat of this incredibly powerful Chaos Lord grants Elric the

strength to sound the Horn of Fate for the second time, summoning the White Lords to the earthly plane.

Part V: The End of the Beginning of Things. Now, the White Lords wage open battle against Chaos. Still, legions of Chaos creatures remain, and Elric--weakened once again from sounding the horn--must restore himself to health by feeding Stormbringer. The most vicious and powerful of the Chaos creatures confront him, but eventually, Elric reaches Jagreen Lern. The climactic battle ensues... and Jagreen Lern is finally defeated. The villain has no regrets and haughtily stares death in the face, but Elric stays his hand, instead opting to kill the villain slowly, in the manner of Elric's cruel ancestors. At the end of it all, Elric is spent, and the world is at peace... yet time is at a standstill. Sepiriz appears and extends the White Lords' thanks, and vanishes. One task remains: The horn must sound one final time, but where will Elric find the strength? Courageously, Moonglum offers his life to his friend. Stormbringer happily obliges, leaving Elric griefstricken once again. Still, he is empowered, and sounds the Horn of Fate for the third and last time. Stormbringer (and Mournblade, in a two-player game) seizes this opportunity to clean up the last bit of mess... Elric himself. The End of the Beginning of Things thus has occurred, and prehistory quietly begins. All has been forgotten, until the Eternal Champion is called upon for the same challenge yet again.

❖ **Development Timeline and Notes**

The War on Chaos would make an ideal candidate for a launch title for next-generation platforms, or a late-generation Xbox title. Ideally, the game should be developed in less than two years, to ship by the end of 2005. The development team should consist of approximately 50 people (or more), all of whom should be required to read the original *Elric of Melniboné* as well as *Stormbringer* before all else (they're short novels; the other Elric novels will be encouraged reading).

Not all members of the team would need to be present for the duration of development. The first year of development should be spent researching and working on the proprietary technology for the game, as well as producing and honing the mechanics. Placeholder art and audio should be used during this period. In the second year, audiovisual production should begin in earnest, so that the presentation is as cutting-edge as possible. The last six months should be spent polishing the game. The game should be in a playable state by the end of the first six months--the combat system should be implemented by that time. Player-group focus tests should routinely happen in three-month increments thereafter. Above all else: The game should be fun. It can and should already be fun to play after the first six months.

❖ **Licensing and Publishing Issues**

It is possible that licensing issues could preclude this project from becoming a reality, though there is a contingency for that case. Michael Moorcock, creator of Elric and the stories in which he appears, is alive and well, and owns the intellectual property rights to the character and stories. (He also frequents a site devoted to his work,

www.multiverse.org.) There have been previous attempts to develop computer or video games based on Elric, though all have failed (i.e., they have been canceled or put on indefinite hiatus); this proves that the idea of an Elric-based game is at least in the realm of possibility. The War on Chaos is certainly the most ambitious Elric-based game concept to date, and one that seeks to truly and genuinely evoke the same feel of Moorcock's *Stormbringer*. As such, licensing negotiations seem feasible.

Currently, Universal Pictures has the rights to produce a movie based on Elric, and Universal (presumably Vivendi Universal, to be precise) apparently has the rights to any games based on the character or his stories. Negotiations are certainly in order.

Should negotiations fail, though, the contingency is to base The War on Chaos not on Elric in particular but instead on Moorcock's Eternal Champion character (who, currently, is unlicensed), of whom Elric is actually but one "instance" according to Moorcock's mythology. Finally: Perhaps Mr. Moorcock would be willing to serve as the game's narrator? He is quite the orator.

✿ **Afterward: Primary Influences**

Obviously, the classic fantasy novel *Stormbringer* is the main influence on this design; its epic battle sequences (which comprise the majority of the novel) and memorable characters are representative of the vision behind this game proposal. Additionally, the scale of the action found in the last two *Lord of the Rings* films is suggestive of the sorts of action sequences that The War on Chaos will attempt to deliver to players. Actually, the *Lord of the Rings* films are also influential just in terms of how well they adapted fantasy fiction to a visual medium; the ultimate goal of The War on Chaos, the game, would be to do to *Stormbringer*, the novel, what the *Lord of the Rings* movies did to the novels on which they were based.

As far as video game influences are concerned, games such as the later Dynasty Warriors titles, *Sword of the Berserk: Guts' Rage*, *Otogi: Myth of Demons*, and *The Lord of the Ring: The Return of the King* have succeeded on some levels in delivering the sort of hectic action that The War on Chaos is intended to have--but without the intended level of depth. Meanwhile, games such as *Die by the Sword* have attempted to incorporate analog-based hack-and-slash action, as The War on Chaos will, but with limited success and less than the intended visual flourish. Furthermore, the manic, cooperative gameplay modes of the Serious Sam games--which are much more lighthearted in tone than The War of Chaos--also reflect the sort of gameplay experience this game is intended to provide for pairs of players.

Also, the quality and quantity of character animation and the integrated storytelling style of *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* should be cited as an influence; the hero of The War on Chaos must move with lifelike fluidity, yet with supernatural speed, strength, and grace.

Other video games, such as Samurai Shodown, Freedom Fighters, and the Tony Hawk's Pro Skater series are referenced in this document and therefore must also be acknowledged as influences.

❖ **Omissions**

It must be acknowledged that this document, while believed to be mostly complete in and of itself, does not necessarily represent all the components needed to begin a game development project in earnest (assuming the resources are available). What remains to be done is the following:

- Specific enemy and location behavior descriptions. While the foes of The War on Chaos are described in Appendices A and B (see below), these descriptions do not go into specific detail about how these enemies attack, exactly how many of them attack at a time, whether they are intelligent or move in patterns, and so on. The enemy behavior, in general, will be patterned around the main character's abilities, and will attempt to exploit and challenge them. Also, while the Game Flow section basically outlines the structure of the game, it provides little specific detail about how, exactly, the locales should look. Since the novel *Stormbringer* is not terribly specific about the appearances of most locations, artists would have license to come up with creative, cohesive ideas for these.

- Storyboarding. Though the author of this document has made an effort to describe in considerable detail the various characters, the specific play mechanics, and the various sequences in The War on Chaos, physical drawings of these would have to be available as a guideline for artists, animators, publishers, and others. To that end, the author has purchased *Drawing & Painting Fantasy Figures* by Finlay Cowan, which was deemed to be the best available guide to illustrating fantasy-themed storyboards. The author of this document is not entirely inexperienced as an illustrator and ends to visualize the ideas expressed here.

- Flow Diagrams. The author of this document is experienced with Microsoft Visio, a program commonly used for workflow diagrams and such; it is also useful for clearly representing sequences of events, such as the menu system of a proposed video game, or an innovative, open-ended combat system. Flow diagrams will be created to complement some of the more-complex aspects of this document.

❖ **Appendix A: Supporting Cast (In Order of Appearance)**

These are brief descriptions of the key nonplayer characters, both friend and foe, in The War on Chaos. At a glance, it is mentioned whether they are allies or "bosses", as in, major opponents whom Elric will have to fight. Elric's ultimate foe is Jagreen Lern, mentioned previously.

Zarozinia

Ally. Elric's beautiful wife, in whose arms the troubled emperor finally found solace... until the events of The War on Chaos, of course. At the beginning of the game, she is kidnapped by unknown assailants. Elric spends the first chapter of the game rescuing her. Their reunion is brief; Elric orders his wife to remain the relative peace of Karlaak while

he deals with the situation. Later, she surprises him when she appears at his side at the Isle of the Purple Towns. As pleased as he is to see her, Elric fears for her life, and again implores her to return home. Reluctantly, she agrees... but her return journey meets with ill fortune, and the forces of Chaos recapture her.

Elric does find her again--but she is horribly warped by Chaos. She implores Elric to end her life; the black sword happily complies. Players will feel motivated to rescue Zarozinia, will grow to appreciate her for the strength she clearly gives her husband, and then will then mourn her loss--and share Elric's vengeance.

Sepiriz

Ally. One of a legendary faction called the Ten. An imposing, gigantic dark-skinned, sharp-toothed charioteer who is an agent of Fate. Fortunately, he is on Elric's side, and serves as a key informant and companion throughout Elric's journey.

Queen Yishana of Jharkor

Ally. A sultry woman with whom Elric shares some past history, and to whose aid he arrives early in his adventures as she prepares to face Jagreen Lern's and King Sarosto's combined forces with her own. She is confident, for her white leopards and armies of legionnaires know no equal. However, she is ill prepared for the forces of Chaos. Elric barely escapes this first skirmish with Jagreen Lern alive, but Queen Yishana is not so fortunate.

King Sarosto

Boss... seemingly. Dictator of Dharijor and ally of Jagreen Lern; commandant of vast armies of horrific creatures. A brutish, imposing man with evil and madness in his eyes. Far more fearsome in appearance than Jagreen Lern, and seemingly the most powerful of Chaos' forces on Earth... however, Elric never actually confronts King Sarosto, for he is assassinated by Jagreen Lern, who is evidently not interested in sharing his partnership with Chaos with any other mortal.

Darnizhaan, the Dead God

Boss. A bizarre and ancient creature, and an agent of Chaos. Darnizhaan's shimmering, bright form shifts between that of a humanoid, that of an ape, and that of a completely alien creature. Elric will need to hurl Stormbringer at the dead god in order to damage him, for his multiple arms will smash aside those foolish enough to approach. Darnizhaan promises to return Zarozinia to Elric in exchange for the black swords--the only weapons capable of defeating him and chaos--but Elric tricks the dead god into handing over his wife, and vanquishes him thereafter.

Arioch

Boss. Elric's and his ancestors' patron demon, and one of the dukes of hell. Prior to his discovery of Stormbringer, as a young emperor, Elric was weak. Rather than learn the ways of the warrior like his predecessors, he was deeply intrigued by the arcane arts, and spent many late hours in his kingdom's vast libraries. His research culminated in the

summoning of Arioch, who, in exchange for Elric's fealty, promised the ailing man his continued health.

In The War on Chaos, Elric's calls to Arioch go unheeded, for he and the other dukes have sided with Jagreen Lern. When Elric finally confronts Arioch, the demon and his brothers Balan and Maluk have assumed human form, albeit impossibly perfect, like mannequins. They attempt to charm Elric into siding with them, but Elric resists and attacks. Soon the dukes show their true, shimmering, demonic form, and lash out at Elric with fiery bolts. Only a powerful incantation, which summons Stormbringer's otherworldly equivalents in a torrential storm of blades, allows Elric to survive the dukes' wrath and forever banish them from Earth.

Kargan

Ally. One of the Sea Lords of the Purple Towns. A respected and brave leader and a talented mariner. Kargan and his kin represent some of Elric's last human allies against Chaos, and together, they meet Jagreen Lern's vast, unholy fleets on the high seas in a desperate battle.

Straasha

Ally. Elemental Lord of the Sea. One of four elemental lords governing the Earth and faced with great peril at the "hands" of Chaos. As such, Straasha turns out to be one of Elric's allies during his perilous quest. Though Straasha is weakened due to Chaos' influence, he saves Elric and his companions after their desperate, failed attempt to defeat Jagreen Lern's fleets of warships by killing their leader.

Mordaga, the Sad Giant

Boss... of sorts. Bearer of the Chaos Shield, Mordaga was once an immortal god, whose failed attempt at revolution cursed him to a long life of mortality by his fellow gods... who, in turn, assured him that one day, Mordaga would be slain by a mortal blade. Now the giant spends an eternity hiding, waiting for the inevitable, in sadness and contempt. Elric must face the enormous and embittered Mordaga and his guardians before he can claim his shield--the only known defense against the otherwise-irresistible contamination of Chaos.

Lord Pyaray

Boss. A Lord of Chaos, manifested on Earth in a form resembling a many-tentacled, octopuslike monstrosity, with a gleaming jewel on what might pass for its forehead--sure enough, this is its one weak point. Jagreen Lern's ability to summon a Lord of Chaos to serve alongside him is demonstrative of the conjurer's exceptional ability and his sinister intent. It is Lord Pyaray who commands Jagreen Lern's navy's trump card, a fleet of ghostly Ships of Hell, each as imposing and as big as a castle. After retrieving the Chaos Shield, Elric happens upon Jagreen Lern and Lord Pyaray's encampment and ventures forth inside, once again to try to cut Chaos down at the source. Yet Jagreen Lern eludes Elric once more, but the immobile Lord Pyaray meets Elric's wrath, despite countless flailing tentacles. The Lord of Chaos is banished, and with him, so are the Ships of Hell.

Lord Donblas

Ally. One of the White Lords--the counterparts to the Lords of Chaos. Lord Donblas appears impossibly perfect, as a pure manifestation of Law. Clad in decorative armor emblazoned with the Arrow of Law, and armed with a slim and perfect sword, Lord Donblas has awaited the time when Chaos' defenses on earth could be breached, and he and his brothers could enter and show Chaos a real fight. He needs Elric to accomplish this intention.

Roland

Boss. A future manifestation of the Eternal Champion, apparently from medieval times. Once a hero, now the undead guardian of the Horn of Fate--a powerful artifact Elric needs to rid the world of Chaos. Roland is a late-game boss, who awaits all those who seek to claim his horn, and defends it mercilessly with his gigantic sword, Durandana. Elric will face Roland in single combat, a test that will require superior control and expert parrying and evasive ability. However, the fight will be complicated by the fact that it takes place at a time with which Elric is unfamiliar and unsuited... Stormbringer and he along with it will be weaker here, so Elric will need to find a weakness in Roland's defenses as soon as he can before his strength runs out.

The Dark Lord Xiombarg

Boss. Another Chaos Lord, whom Elric faces shortly before he finally confronts Jagreen Lern. Xiombarg takes the form of an attractive female, though his hellish nature sometimes seeps through. He is armed with a tremendous axe and rides atop a creature that has a bull's body and the head of a lion. Xiombarg is protected by unholy defenses, but as Elric manages to penetrate them, his demonic nature begins to show as the feminine skin is shed....

❁ **Appendix B: Foes of Fate (In Order of Appearance)**

These are brief descriptions of the various enemies, excluding key villains, whom Elric will encounter in The War on Chaos.

Savages

Jagreen Lern summons these apelike monstrosities to do his bidding. They are the first forces of Chaos he brings to bear, and their first order of business in The War on Chaos is to kidnap Elric's wife.

Dharijorians

Heavily armed, well-trained warriors and mercenaries loyal to their King Sarosto and his ally, Jagreen Lern. These brutish men show no mercy and expect none themselves. They come in many varieties; archers, swordsmen, cavaliers, and more.

Warrior-Priests of Pan Tang

Jagreen Lern's once-human retinue of loyalists wield heavy maces and axes, even as sinister spells play across their lips. These are versatile, extremely skilled warriors that need no support in battle against conventional enemies.

Devil Riders of Pan Tang

Pike-wielding riders atop huge, six-legged lizardlike creatures, which are known as "devils" with good reason. These are Jagreen Lern's most elite fighting forces, and a symbol of his pact with Chaos.

Hunting Tigers of Pan Tang

These beasts are "tame" only in the loosest sense of the word. They follow the command of Jagreen Lern's lieutenants, and are far more dangerous and much larger than even the most stalwart cavalier, what with their tusks and claws sharper than the finest sword. Defeating the hunting tigers' masters may cause them to turn their aggression toward anything nearby, even Elric's other foes... but getting past the tigers is much more easily said than done.

Giant Owls

Ancient foes of the Men of Myrrhn, these beasts are kept concealed in cages by Jagreen Lern, and then unleashed on unsuspecting foes. Even if they are struck from out of the sky, they are so massive that any creatures unfortunate enough to be standing underneath would be crushed.

Griffins

Not your average griffin, these Melnibonéan monstrosities stand 15' tall, have the bodies of lions, and the heads of vultures. Once tamed by Elric's race, these savage creatures now serve Chaos, and literally spring forth from the depths of the earth to tear asunder anything their masters wish.

Ships of Hell

Gigantic seaborne fortresses, which normally scour the depths of the ocean, raising dead mariners to be their crew. These castle-sized vessels are indestructible by any known means, and sow the seeds of Chaos in their wake, even as their shimmering forms evoke terror and awe from all mortal eyes that should fix on them.

Men of Myrrhn

Winged humans, armed with razor-sharp spears, and highly experienced in how to use them. Though the Men of Myrrhn are allies to Queen Yishana in the initial battle against Jagreen Lern and King Sarosto's forces, most of them are killed here, and the rest are transformed into forces of Chaos, whom Elric will face later, both on foot and on dragonback.

Elder Trees

A grove of sentient trees guards the foreboding rock-hewn stairwell leading to Mordaga the sad giant's lair. When approached by trespassers, these trees send forth their countless leaves, which adhere to a creature's flesh and drain it of its life force. Should a creature be resilient enough to get close to the trees, they then lash out with sharp, sturdy branches. Yet these powerful, not-quite-natural defenses may not be sufficient to stay Elric from his course.

Mordaga's Guardsmen

The sad giant was once a god, and he commands a retinue of 140 soldiers who still believe him to be sacred. They patiently await the day when they will be needed to defend their liege from those who seek to claim his shield.

Chaos Spawn

The ultimate foe comprising the ultimate army in The War on Chaos. Here is a taste of what they might look like:

"It was as if the whole of one side of the spy's body had become at one stage viscous, had flowed, and then coiled in a random shape. Side of head, shoulder, arm, torso, leg, all were replaced by streamers of flesh like rat's tails, lumps of matter like swollen boils, weirdly mottled." -- Michael Moorcock, *Stormbringer*

It is misleading to suggest that Chaos spawn are but one type of foe. In the last third of the game, these horrifying creatures will be practically all that Elric and his companions will face, though there will be no shortage of variety to them. Some will be small, like rodents. Others will be huge--like flying whales with voracious jaws. They all will writhe and twist. Chaos spawn, as previously mentioned, can take any shape or form (for instance, Chaotic versions of any and all of the other foes listed above), and it is unclear as to what, exactly, is accomplished when they are struck with conventional weapons. Stormbringer can seriously injure Chaos spawn, but even then, creatures struck may simply transform into new shapes or forms. Chaos seethes and flows, like a wave of disease, and poses a never-ending threat to Elric.

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