These are the products and where they fit into the big picture of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting. Look for these items at your favorite store for TSR games and books, or for locations nearest you call toll-free 1-800-384-4TSR.
Well met! Know, O reader, that I am Alundo of Candlekeep.

It has been given to me to see glimpses of the future, moments of the measureless time that lies ahead for this world of Toril, called by some the Forgotten Realms. I sit here among halls upon halls and chambers upon chambers crammed with books—books that capture something of our great past. All too often, folk want to know where the bones of great kings or legendary dragons lie...or more precisely where their treasure may be found, if the truth be told. There are a few questers, however, whose eyes hold the light of wonder, and who want to know more of this vast, glorious, historical world...

And to them I speak first of the shining past—of the glory that was Netheril. These Realms were once home to folk whose mighty magic could change the very sky, trees, and land around us, humans who would seem as gods to us if they walked the world today: the sorcerer-king of Netheril.

They were the first humans to rise to power from the Dawn Days when men were devoured like cattle by dragons who swooped down from the skies, ruling all the Realms—and spending their days fighting with each other like great cats for dominion over the lands.

Netherese tamed those awesome dragons, crafted castles that flew high in the air, and created glowing gates that took the brave, the curious—and the foolhardy—with but a step into other, stranger worlds that sages call the planes of existence. Many mighty and terrible things the sorcerer-kings did, created, and became, and in time grew proud in their power, and decadent. In the end they were swept away by their folly and the spells of the evil creatures called the Phaerimmm.

Only fragments of the splendor that was their sorceries remain to us now—but despite the lack of that world-taming magic (or, some say, because humankind has flourished down the years since fall of Netheril...) Bards tell rich tales of valor, love, and high achievements...and those tales are both marvel-endoing. Come to Candlekeep if you would hear them, or seek out a true bard, and listen well. For the time you read this, my chair will surely sit empty as my bones crumble in the crypts beneath us.

I set down these words out of love—love of the world, called "Faerûn" or "home" by folk hereabout, for it shall endure when you in turn have passed as it has bustled and sparked and roared out the dreams of its storms and earthshakings and eruptions, from below, while its beauty has been entranced and dwarves and men alike these thousand years...If you are but newly come to the Realms, or are setting out for the first time from the place of your birth, rearing to taste its beauties and peril, I envy you much glory awaits your eyes. Hearken to some of the things I have observed in Toril...

I have seen deep green glens where the Danegeld Folk gambol among the ferns, scudding mists, arid ancient gnarled trees—using magic to sink into every stone beneath their hooves when danger is too close. Some of them dwell in forests so vast an elf straying not from a chosen straight route or walk for a summer and not cross through from one tressedge to the other. I have seen dragons erupt out of the sea and into the air to strike with breath, fang, and claw rival wyrm, aloft—while terrified sailors strung their ships intact through the raging heart of such a battle.

I have seen knights—lords and ladies both, their armor bright—riding along forest paths with pennants fluttering from their lances, as they turned down to jousting fields where crowds wait, king envys among the press of excited bodies, alert which of these fair combatants will make good...
The undo of Candlekeep.

To see glimpses of the unmeasurable time that lies ahead of some of the Forgotten Halls upon halls and halls of books—nothing of our great past. All too well the bones of great men lie...more precisely be found, if the truth be known, however, whose eyes and who want to know is, questioned world...first of the shining past—of these realms were once mighty magic changed the regime to the end. Humans and they walk the world of Netheril. Humans rise to power from men were devoured like who swooped down from the realms—and spending things with each other like or dominion of the lands. These tamed those awesome and crafted castles that flew high in the air, and created glowing gates took the brave, the curious—the foolish—that with but a step to another, stranger worlds it sages call the planes of existence. Many mighty and terrible things the sorcerers did, created, and became, and in time grew proud in their power, and decadent. In the end they were swept away by their folly and the spells of the evil creatures called the Phaerimm.

Only fragments of the splendor that was their lost sorceries remain to us now—but despite the lack of that world-taming magic (or, some say, because of it) humankind has flourished down the years since the fall of Netheril. Bardic tales of valor, love, and high achievements...and those tales are both many and never-ending. Come to Candlekeep if you would hear them, or seek out a true bard, and listen well. For by the time you read this, my chair will surely sit empty as my bones crumble in the crypt beneath us.

I set down these words out of love—love of this my world, called Faerûn 'or home' by folk heretofore—for it shall endure when you in turn have passed away, as it has burned and sparked and roared out the fury of its storms and earthshakings and eruptions of fire from below, while its beauties have entranced elves and dwarves and men alike these thousand years. If you are but newly come to the realms, or are setting out for the first time from the place of your rearing to taste its beauties and perils, I envy you. So much glory awaits your eyes. Hearken to some few of the things I have observed in Toril.

I have seen deep green glens where the Dancing Folk gambol among the ferns, scudding mists, and ancient gnarled trees—using magic to sink into the very stones beneath their hooves when danger comes too close. Some of them dwell in forests so vast that an elf straying not from a chosen straight route could walk for a summer and not cross through from one tressage to the other.

I have seen dragons erupt out of the sea and surge into the air to strike with breath, flame, and claw at rival wyrmis, aloft—while terrified sailors strain to sail their ships intact through the raging heart of such a battle.

I have seen knights—lords and ladies both, their armor bright—riding along forest paths with proud pennants fluttering from their lances, as they thunder down to jousting fields where crowds wait. Kings' envoys among the press of excited bodies, alert to see which of these fair combatants will make good agents for the crowns they serve.

I have seen forgotten castles crumble to ruin amid choking brambles, sprouting trees, and the claws of winter. Towers crash to the ground, stones larger than men cracking and rolling...and when the dust settles, monsters slither in to lie in the shadowed, inner chambers. Chests of gold and coffers of gems stand in some of these hidden rooms—and in others, old magic lurks, flickering feebly over scrolls and wands and enchanted things as it awaits those brave enough to intrude.

I have seen ghosts and worse things rising from graves to menace the living. In dark cellars and desolate places skulls fly about at night, and in some crypts skeleton hands chill intruders with their bony clutches. Not all of the fallen lie peacefully in the earth.

I have seen men in the crowded cities of Faerûn whose fingers have gained great skill over long, painfull years of labor, so that they can set a gem scarce large enough to see into the eyeball of a carved statue no taller than my hand...or fine-tall a lock so intricate that nine keys must be turned to make it yield.

I have seen close-beamed and smoky taverns where women dance in the light of the singing men with sad and sweet among harping or pipers that hardened dwarves bowl in grief and proud elves weep silent tears that glisten back the leaping flames, as all folk under those roofs are briefly brethren, close-knit and moved by the same stirrings.

I have seen villages where heavy-laden haycarts groan along lanes that road almost lazily across rolling hills framed by halflings, gnomes, men, and half-elves alike, and folk come out at dusk to sit and smoke pipes or sing softly and toast the setting sun with vintage of their own making, while their barns and byres fill up with food to feed realms they've never seen...and gentle brooks shackle endlessly past the hooves of lowing cattle at night comes softly down again.
The splendor that was their lost
home by folk hereabouts—
for it would see the lack of
the rich titles of valor, love,
and those tales are both many and
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and listen well. For by
and chairs will surely sit empty
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idden and roared out the fiery
akings and eruptions of fire
uaries have entombed elves
like these thousand years.
me to the Realms, or are you
from the place of your
es and perils, I envy you. So
eye: Heathen to some few of
ed in Toril...
ngs where the Dancing
oms, scudding mists, and
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elves when danger comes
dwell in forests so vast that
chosen straight route could
cross through from one
rupt out of the sea and surge
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garrified sailors strain to sail
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even elves alike, and folk come out at dusk to sit and smoke
pipes or sing softly and wait the setting sun with
vintage of their own making, while their barns and
byres fill up with food to feed realms they’ve never
seen... and gentle brooks chuckle endlessly past the
hooves of lowing cattle as night comes
softly down again.

I have seen proud men striving to seize such
verdant lands by the sword, or defend them against
such reavers or the grunting orcs of the
mountains... and I have seen adventurers ride laughing
to their doom because to dare dire perils is
to truly live.
I have seen gatherings of sorcerers known as
Magelords, where hundreds of spells flash and sparkle
as beings of all races strive to impress each other with
their powers: masts, masts, employment or to strike
down thrones and feuding families and for half a
world away, and sell their magics or teaching to those
who would grow more mighty in the Art. And I have
observed what such magic has wrought...
I have seen ships that sail the skies, bridges that
float forever in the air, and gleaming spell-driven metal
monsters that walk or dig or climb until their
enchantment fails or they are rent by rival constructs
or struck silent by the deaths of the artificers who
dreamed of them.

In the end, all dreamers die, and it is the proud task
of those scribes around me, here in Candlekeep, to
see that the dreams don’t die with them. For it is
the doom of men that they rush about, consumed by the
curses of the moment, and forget the splendid and
heroic deeds they witness along with the wisdom they
have earned... and should have learned. Wherefore
here in Candlekeep we keep many thick tomes—halls
upon halls of them, spell-guarded against rot and
fire—those preserve the proud sagas of the greatest
world I know. A world that lies before thee, waiting.
I have seen the glories of the Realms in my day,
and glimpsed something of what lies ahead. Perils that
shake the very world, and dark days for Faerûn, lurk
among the shining sights: bold and brave adventurers
will be needed.
If you are stirred at the thought of wielding sword
or spell in this most splendid of worlds, hearken, I am
Alaundo of Candlekeep, called by some Alaundo the
Seer, and I say to thee: the Realms wait for thee.

- By Ed Greenwood
My decision to remain in Maleth Hall tonight makes me realize my family and forced to face my past and the consequences of my actions. The army that marched to Maleth Hall was a source of pride, but it also brought me great pain. My heart and my whole being were consumed by the thought of the destruction that would follow. Yet, I knew that I had no choice but to go through with it. The destroyers of Maleth Hall were my closest friends, and I couldn't bear the thought of them suffering.

I am not alone in this. My second-in-command, Warcio, understands my motives and is prepared to aid me in any way possible. The weight of responsibility rests on our shoulders, and we must face it head-on. The fate of Maleth Hall is in our hands, and we must do our best to ensure that justice is served.

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Blowhards, all of them! I am Volo, and have traveled more of these Realms than any other. To hear the truth listen to me.

ELMINSTER

Many have asked what possessed an old mage like myself to retire to the sleepy village of Shadowdale. In my defense I can only claim that it must have been the clear nights, frothing ale, and warm laughter in the company of good friends that finally swayed me. Shadowdale offers freely what all of the magic of Faerun cannot.

From the pond near my tower I smell the honey-mead that Jhaele brews for the Old Skull Inn. I hear the labored breaths of Durman as he chops wood for the inn’s hearth followed shortly thereafter by a pounding hammer as he performs some minor maintenance on a shutter or door. And from time to time, Jhaele brings up a mug of fresh mead or ale and talks to me about the rumors she’s heard at the Old Skull.

Not all of the time spent in Shadowdale is filled with such contemplation, however. Shandril Shessar’s appearance in the dale sparked the match of danger, forcing me to spend time in the Twisted Tower with Mourngrym and the Knights of Myth Drannor—a worse fate I cannot imagine—as we turned back tide after tide of Zhentarim that sought to control the young spellfire-wielder. Many innocents died in the resulting battles, and all involved in the battles learned the extent to which others stoop to possess that which they cannot have.

Aye, ’tis true that I possess spellfire, but only a spark when compared to Shandril. The lass’s mastery of the fire is truly remarkable; ask any mage that crossed spells with her: if any is yet alive, that is. I remember the blackened corridors of the Twisted Tower after Shandril defeated a Zhentarim mageling intent on possessing her power and the smell of burned flesh that wafted through the halls; I can also taste her tears as she cried over the death that she caused.

Shadowdale has its history; no chronomancer of Zhentarim can take that away, but it also has its present. It will need both to remember how to get along with Daggerdale now that Randal Morn is back in power, and it will have to keep on the lookout for the rise of Zhentil Keep from the ashes of its fall. Such tasks are hardly my responsibility; I’m retired.
the Realms

As I compare my two lives—the current life I share with Bruenor, Catti-brie, Regis, and Guenhwyvar and my darker past living in Menzoberranzan—I can't help but reflect on the decisions I have made and the price they have exacted. From the very first moment I vowed to leave the dark and twisting caverns of the Underdark, every turn I made has had unforeseen costs.

My leaving Menzoberranzan cost my family their lives, cast down by my actions of leaving the evil city. That my sisters and mother were evil there can be no doubt, but what right do I have to make such life-and-death decisions for others?

I am hardly responsible for the actions of an entire society, nor did I establish the penalties to which my family answered. I did, however, realize that my leaving Menzoberranzan would place my family's lives in danger. Yet I still left.

My decision to remain in Mithril Hall brought the entire might of Matron Baenre down upon me. The army that marched to the dwarven halls sought not just simple conquest—they sought my capture for the glory of Lloth. Wulfgar, betrothed of Catti-brie, lost his life in that battle. His absence is an emptiness that pulses with an absent heartbeat.

And yet, my own heartbeat goes against my judgment, betraying both my heart and the memory of Wulfgar. I love Catti-brie, and yet the pain in my own heart—and in the eyes of Catti-brie and Bruenor—over his death prevents me from acting upon my desires.

Even through all of this emptiness I have found a place to live where I can be respected for who I am. I am no longer looked upon as a "dark elf" by the dwarves of Mithril Hall. I am finally just Drizzt, ranger and friend to King Bruenor. In that regard, Mithril Hall is a comfortable place.

With Matron Baenre dead and the political power of Menzoberranzan in flux, perhaps I can at last cease worrying about Lloth's watchful gaze. Yet I don't trust my evil sisters and brothers of the Underdark, and I fear that they are hatching yet further plots that will involve both Mithril Hall and myself.
KHLEBEN ARUNSUN

I have walked these Realms for an untoward number of decades, and I have seen many wondrous and chilling things. I have seen civilizations rise to spectacular heights, only to fall due to the arrogance of their power-mad rulers. I have seen them rise again from the ashes by a simple labor of a good man. I have seen the death of gods and the birth of new divinity sharing the same sunrise. Suffice it to say that I am a learned and well-traveled mage.

The Realms, “forgotten” though they may be in your reality, are not only a place of wonder and delight, but also a place of chaos and danger. Take care to embrace the wonders and phenomena and avoid disturbing the peace with thoughts of furthering your own power at the expense of others. I am but one denizen of this place who wishes his home to remain orderly and full of light and laughter; do not make me an enemy, and you too shall see an untoward number of decades here upon the Realms.

Many believe that Waterdeep is “my city,” but I take no untoward credit for its rise and fall. I am merely an archmage who desires Waterdeep to remain the haven that it is, free of the taint of a thief’s guild and free of the rotting hand of the Zhentilmi. Thieves operate in the city—and the Zhentilmi are undoubtedly hiding somewhere as well—but their actions are severely limited when compared to other cities. When either group sticks its head out of the sewers, I’ll make sure to limit their actions even more.

If you’re looking to come to Waterdeep and inflicts a great change upon it, begin by venturing into Undermountain. In those winding halls, an adventuring can find lost magical lore, countless monsters, and—for the truly fortunate—perhaps Halaster himself. Of course, more often than not the only thing an adventurer finds in those long halls is death.

Oh, and if you find a spell down there that can turn a large amount of air into stone, please bring it up here for me. I’ve been meaning to fill up Undermountain for some time now...
they are hatching yet further plots that will involve both Mithril Hall and myself. 13

THE SIMBUL

There are those who are content to keep the Realms as it is, forever resisting change that is demanded by nature. But as one of Mystra's Chosen and Queen of Aglarond, it is my duty to let loose the reins of change and effect a better world for all of us. 14

But the change that the Red Wizards of Thay would inflict upon Aglarond is not a good thing, so I resist with every ounce of resolve and magical might at my command. They have already proven that they will do anything to achieve their goals, and victory at any price is hardly a healthy element of change.

The Realms change; seldom at the speed desired of those who strive, but far too quickly for those who resist. The fall of Zhentil Keep—and its eventual rebuilding—as well as the return to power of Randal Morn are all elements of change. Such changes will undoubtedly tilt the balance of power in the region, and I will be on the lookout for changes that affect Aglarond. 15

If you wish to thank me for your protection, I honor your faith in me with great joy. With that joy comes a warning, however: Do not try and deceive me with kind words and promises for my revenge is quick and deadly. 16

There are those who think that I am uncaring, but nothing could be further from the truth. While I freely admit to being blunt in my views, I work only for the betterment of Aglarond; I care not what others think or say. I merely do what must be done. If doing what must be done places me in the path of others who have different goals, then I accept what Tymora and Mystra have in store for me. 17

There have been a few times when I feared that my resolve in doing what is best for my people would place me in opposition to Elminster of Shadowdale, my sisters, or others I respect in the Realms. Such a confrontation has never occurred, yet I fear that one day it must. When that day comes, I will be ready. 18

Nature, time, and the gods are unfathomable in such regards. History is the only true reflection. I fear that Alundo of Candlekeep has already seen my future but decided not to write about it. 19

14. Ever notice how kings and queens, who after all can do just what they want to do, use the word "duty" or some blare about the good of their people, just when they're about to let loose war, devastation, and life-shattering changes on us all? Is honesty still in such short supply? Why don't they just face the guilt, or responsibility, and say: "I changed the world last month because I damned well felt like it?"

15. Her duty is to "let loose the reins of change? I thought the duty of a ruler was to grab the reins of change, hold on tight, and try a little steering

16. Ever notice how wizards think all life in the Realms dances on their hands, and lasts from day to day only because they work constantly to keep us all alive? How do they think we survive when they're in the bathroom?

17. I would like to go on record here and now, as never having tried to deceive the Queen of Aglarond with kind words and promises. I meant every one of them, and still do. I'm not stupid enough to try to trick a woman who can tame the Red Wizards of Thay, Elminster of Shadowdale, and a whole host of other beholders! (Who does she think she is?)

18. The Simbul may be ready for the day when she'll take on Elminster, the rest of the Seven Sisters, and the other Chosen...but I don't think the rest of us will be. I don't think there are enough gravediggers in all the Realms to make our kingdoms ready for that day, either. I hope it isn't tomorrow.

19. Do all wizards grow so grumpily and sorrowfully paranoid about their fates? Or do they just get depressed that for all their power to destroy the world as they know it, some sort of Realms will stagger along after they've gone...and all too soon forget them?