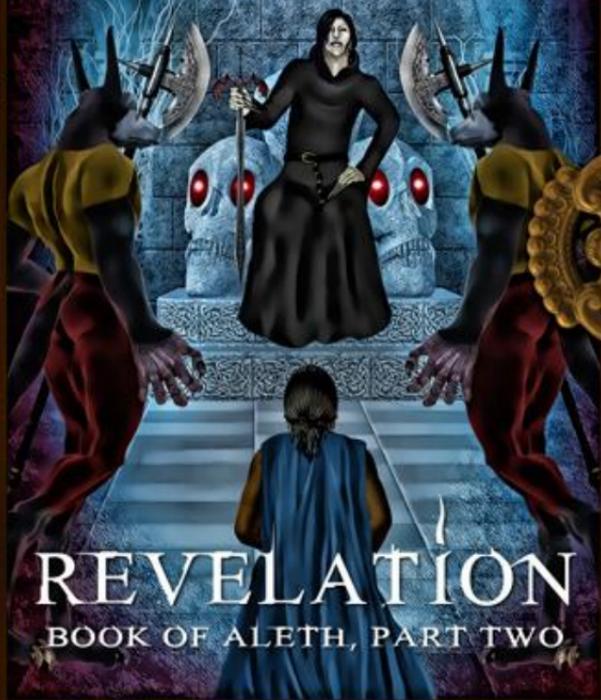


# MICHAEL DUNCAN



Revelation:  
Book of Aleth  
Part 2

Michael Duncan

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**Revelation: Book of Aleth Part 2**

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## Dedication

This book is dedicated to my faithful friends, my companions on the quest through life to know the truth--and to all who with courage and conviction have never given up the adventure to walk by faith and not by sight. Let us hold fast our hope until the day of Christ.

Your fellow adventurer,  
Michael

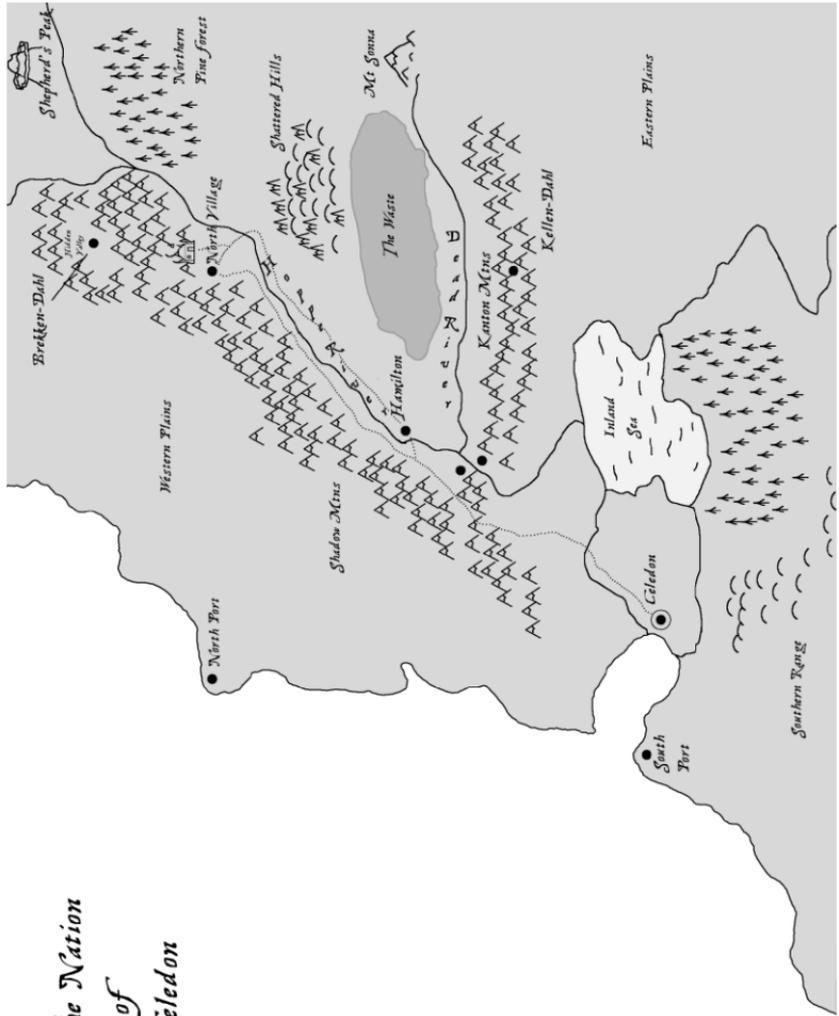
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# The Nation of Celedon

Kingsman  
Island  
(Isle of Finst)





Praise for  
*Shadows: Book of Aleth Part One*

*SHADOWS* is a fantasy tale, full of wilderness places and strange creatures, fighting against and fighting for things, and even legendary races of people that you can either believe in, or not, depending on how you were raised. All wrapped up in the age old struggle between good and evil. If you like this kind of story, you will not be disappointed. ~Author Lily Maytree

Michael Duncan writes an attention grabbing novel full of twists and turns that carries the reader to a world filled with mystery and intrigue. From the opening chapter detailing personal sacrifice on the battlefield, to the closing page of determination against overwhelming odds, readers will be unable to put this book down. The story has just the right number of twists and turns to keep the reader wanting to turn the page and find out what happens next. ~ Author Dr. Terry W. Dorsett

Vivid descriptions pull you deep into the amazing world Rev. Duncan weaves on the pages. Sword fights, dwarves, elves, demons, and horrors. A gripping tale of good and evil where you never know who the good guys are and when you think you know what's happening, another twist takes you by surprise. My only complaint is having to wait for book two. ~ Author Clare Revell



Also Available

Shadows: Book of Aleth, Part One





# Prologue

## *In the Hall of Therion*

Cold air permeated the room. Oil-filled, bronze cauldrons, one in each corner of the hall, belched thick smoke as flames danced upon the surface. Twelve large, marble pillars supported a vaulted ceiling over twenty-feet high, and the smoke from the cauldrons escaped through a central vent in the roof. Despite the fires, the room remained entombed in cold.

Torches protruded from iron sconces mounted on the pillars and cast flickering shadows upon the walls. Massive double doors provided the only entrance to the chamber and a golden throne, set in the shadows of the opposite wall, reflected the light of the torches. Upon the throne sat a man, cloaked in the darkness of the chamber. He sat back, rested his hands on the arm of the throne, and gazed down upon the deladrin that knelt before him.

“What do you mean you’ve lost it?” Pale and gaunt, the enthroned man spoke with such power that the air seemed to shudder. The torchlight quivered at the deep voice that resonated through the hall.

The deladrin knelt with its large, leathery wings folded behind its back, head bowed before the throne. Razor sharp claws gripped a black sword that boasted a wide, serrated blade. “Master—” The deladrin’s voice rolled from its throat like thunder. “—it was stolen by

a soldier." Its breath rushed forth like steam as it spoke.

Therion stood from the throne, his steel eyes flashed with anger. "What soldier?"

"Master, I don't know." The deladrin trembled. "I found the soldier in the northern forest and killed him, but I did not find the book."

Therion stepped closer. "You lie!"

"No, master, the book is lost."

"What else do you know? You and your horde will pay if you try to deceive me." Therion raised his hand and with a sound like a violent wind, the creature was thrown across the room and crashed against a burning cauldron. Oil splashed the wall and flames danced along the stone.

The deladrin quivered as it regained its feet. It towered over Therion but cowered under the emperor's wrath. "Master," the creature continued with slow, deliberate words. "I gave up the search when a battalion of dwarves entered the forest." The deladrin's eyes burned red as he looked down upon the emperor. "I left before they saw me."

"Dwarves!" Therion shouted and moved toward the massive creature. The emperor raised his hand, and the double doors swung open. "If the dwarves have the book," he said, "I will have your hide hanging like a tapestry."

"Master, what is your command?"

"We have one chance," Therion spoke to himself. "If the dwarves possess the book, then we must destroy them before they have the opportunity to use it." Therion paced with his hands behind his back and slowly moved toward the door. "My command to you is simple...die." Without looking at the creature,

Therion lifted his head and the deladrin stiffened. He listened as the creature gasped and choked for air. When he turned and released the creature from his power, it fell to the floor in a heap. With patient steps, he walked through the door. "Dwarves," he said, "I hate dwarves."

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Snow covered the ground as a young man pressed through the forest. The sweet aroma of pine hung in the air but he found no enjoyment in the scent. His mind raced with fever and delirium as he stumbled through the woods. The noonday sun shed its warming influence upon the earth but proved powerless to thaw winter's chill. Exhausted and half-starved, the man limped through the brush and fell out of the trees upon a road.

Several hundred paces up the road stood a wooden gate, closed. He had no notion of his whereabouts, but forced his legs to work as he tripped along the path. Lips cracked and eyes dim with exhaustion, the man tried to focus on one goal—the gate.

A thin mist rose from the ground as the sunlight shimmered like a thousand diamonds off the snow. His bones ached and his muscles trembled in the cold, but he stumbled along until he reached his destination. Exhausted, he raised his hand and pounded on the barrier until he heard someone approach. The gate creaked as it opened outward. An older man stepped out, his sword drawn.

The young man fell to his knees and shook violently with the cold as he struggled to speak. Then

his strength gave out and he collapsed upon the snow, eyes wide with fever. He tried to speak, raised his hand toward the man who opened the gate, but his words stuck in his parched throat.

"Get in here, lad!" The gatekeeper wrapped his cloak around the young man, hoisted him to his feet and pulled him into a small shack beside the gate. The man collapsed on a narrow cot.

He looked up and reached with his hand. "There's no time," he whispered then passed out.

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Therion sat upon his throne at the head of a massive, rectangular, oak table placed in the center of the hall. Around the table, twelve others sat in anxious observation as they waited for the emperor to speak. Cauldrons burned in the corners and smoke drifted up through a hole in the ceiling. Nervous silence filled the hall.

"The book of our ancient enemy may be in the hands of the dwarves." Therion broke the silence, and an audible gasp echoed in the hall from each man at the table.

Then, they began to talk at once, each man giving voice to his fear.

The governor of the eastern plains, a dark-skinned man with a perpetual scowl, shook his head in despair. "This is the end!"

"Don't be a fool," said another man who wore a deep blue cloak and hood. "We still have our power."

"This is Lord Therion's doing!" a rotund, short man offered.

The clamorous complaints rose to a cacophonous

noise when one man, who had remained silent, stood. The man was tall, dressed all in black. His angular nose and jaw accentuated his narrow face and bushy brows grew over eyes as black as obsidian. He spoke, and his voice echoed in deep, resonant tones.

“Governors,” he said, “I was in North Village at the time of the thief’s demise. I will tell you plainly, the governor of the North Provence did not survive his betrayal of our most excellent Therion. He thought to gain the accursed book for himself and turn its power against our emperor. I caution you, do not think to make the same mistake.”

The man in the blue cloak stood. “Do you think to intimidate us? You, spawn of darkness, have no authority in this chamber. You speak of things that took place months ago and do you believe that it has any bearing on our trouble now?”

“Authority?” he questioned. “Authority, ha! You have dwelt too long on the peaceful shores of the ocean.” The tall, shrouded man continued. “There is no other authority in this chamber than Lord Therion.”

“Indeed?” the man in the blue cloak said. “In my capital you might find that I do have authority and power.”

“You verbose fool. You are not in your capital.” The man cloaked in black took his seat. His eyes narrowed as he fixed his gaze at the other.

As the murmurs died, Therion stood and walked around the table, hands folded behind his back. “You dominate in your own region because you are allowed to do so.” His voice was cold and calculated. “Remember, I am emperor. If any of you try to gain the book for yourself, with the foolish notion to overthrow my rule, you will suffer the same fate as the governor

of the Northern Provence.”

Therion continued to walk with slow, deliberate steps around the table. “If the dwarves do have the book, they will try to use it to bring down my dominion.” He paused, thoughtful. “The last reported location of this book was in the north. Those accursed dwarves have hidden too well and too long in the mountains beyond our borders, and we must find the means to rout them from their holes.”

“My lord, Emperor,” asked the governor from the east, “how are we to find the dwarves? Our ancient adversary provided for them too well.”

The emperor stopped. He brought his hands to his face in thoughtful musing, “I do have one man who might prove useful. He is the captain of the Third Order. I sent him to North Village and have yet to receive word concerning his mission.” Then Therion looked toward the emissary in black. “Did you give him my orders?”

“As you required my lord,” the emissary said.

Therion smiled a thin, patient smile. “Our enemy has blinded our kind from finding those accursed dwarves. But I suspect that men can breach the hidden domain of those cave-diggers.” He rubbed his hands together as if expecting a treasure. “If anyone can find the dwarves, it is that captain.”

As Therion talked, two servants, pale and gaunt, entered. They carried trays piled high with roasted beef and venison. With their eyes fixed downward, they set the trays upon the table. The governors remained silent as the nervous workers performed their task then quickly left.

“Governors,” Therion said, “you may eat.”

The gathered assembly ripped and pulled at the

piles of food like a pack of voracious hounds, devouring the meal as if they had failed to eat for a month. Therion, now seated again on his throne, watched; his thin, bony fingers folded in front of his face.

After the governors had eaten, servants entered again and distributed several large chalices filled with a red, almost luminescent liquid.

"What's this?" asked the portly governor as he gazed upon the cup before him.

Therion's emissary stood and moved to stand beside the emperor. He picked up the extra cup that waited for him and held it aloft. "This, gentlemen, is a pledge of loyalty to Lord Therion. Let me encourage you to drink to your master's continued rule." The words fell from his lips like venom, and the governors watched, many trembling with apprehension.

The blue-cloaked governor again spoke up. "You stand there to cast fear into us? Without us, Therion has no power!" He looked around at the other governors, anticipation in his eyes.

"And do the rest of you hold to the same position?" the emissary asked. His eyes moved back and forth, gazing upon the gathered men. "Therion has ruled for a thousand years. Do not think that your limited life has any impact on him. So, I ask you again, will you pledge your loyalty to the emperor of Celedon?" One by one, around the table, the governors stood and hoisted their cups to Therion.

The governor from the coast, blue cloak draped across his shoulders, stood and slammed his cup upon the table. "I will not!" he declared. He faced Therion who sat motionless upon the throne. "You sit there and expect us to pledge our loyalty to you? What have you

done to benefit Celedon? What have you done to win the hearts of men, and how have you been more than a leech upon the hard lives of the people?"

Before Therion responded, a clamor outside the meeting hall took his attention. With large, hollow reverberations, someone beyond the door pounded on the chamber's entryway. The emissary moved away from the throne and opened the door. Just beyond, a guardsman waited, shaking and clearly agitated. The emissary motioned for him to step away from the door into the hallway beyond, and then closed it behind them.

Several minutes later the emissary re-entered the meeting hall. He quietly walked to the throne and whispered into Therion's ear.

"What!" the emperor demanded. "Betrayed!" Therion looked toward the coastal governor and regained his cool disposition. "You asked what I have done for Celedon," his voice seethed with anger. "I have not killed all those who would betray me!" Therion stood and moved toward the blue-clad man. "But I will make that correction with you."

The governor scrambled from his seat and made his way toward the entrance. As he reached it, the door closed in front of him, barring his way. He turned; his eyes widened with panic as he began to shake uncontrollably. He clutched his chest and screamed then collapsed to the ground, lifeless.

Therion turned to face the remaining leaders around the table. "The rest of you take notice," he said. "Return to your regions and be advised that rebellion is not tolerated." The door opened and the governors made a hasty exit from the chamber.

"Master," the emissary said, "what is your

command?"

"I want that man listed as the most dangerous man in Celedon. Put a bounty on his head so high that even the most loyal will think twice about helping him."

"You don't think that he might be the one?"

Therion lifted his eyes to look at the emissary. "No, we destroyed that family years ago." He returned to his throne and sat in contemplation. "Tell me about the source of this information. I need to know if it is reliable."

"Yes, Your Majesty. But I can do better than that. By your leave, the source is waiting in the hall beyond." The emissary moved toward the door.

"Very well," Therion said. "Show him in and then I want you to prepare to do away with those who have set their plans against me. I will not be overthrown." He paused as he thought. "I also want you to put a trusted advisor in each of the governor's regions so that I might keep closer watch on them. If one is willing to defy me..." He let the thought trail off as his eyes fixated on the door. "I will not allow any others to do the same."

"As you will," the emissary said. He opened the door. "Guard," he commanded, "bring in your charge." Then he left the room as two others entered.

Therion looked up; a sly grin crossed his face when he gazed at the man who walked through the door.