



New Atkinos: It's Getting Hot In Here!

Scientists knew something like this was about to happen. Reports of rumblings and strange, smelly clouds have been coming in for months. Some feared a collapse of the mountain towering over the town of New Atkinos, but it seems as if activity is centered on the mainland between the town and Schulmericho. Seismic activity, to some extent, was known to Schulminion scientists. But, volcanism was something not ever seen before. Until now. Reports of strange, smelly cloud formations, rumblings and the occasional dusting of soot around New Atkinos have led to the conclusion that something novel and perhaps dangerous was imminent. The 12 member Council of New Atkinos began to consider the possibility that the partially collapses caldera which towers over their town might indeed become active again. As it turned out, though, the much-awaited activity centered on the mainland, between Schulmericho and the coast.

Steam continued to rise from the caldera on New Atkinos, but intense rumbling and smoke was detected in the uninhabited lands on the way to Schulmericho. An expedition of 12 (3 scientists, 3 journalists, 3 geographers and 3 nosy busybodies) from New Atkinos was nearby when the land split open. It did not split open in one place. Rather, it was a long line where the ground simply cracked apart. Smoke and ash poured out.



After that, things got ugly.

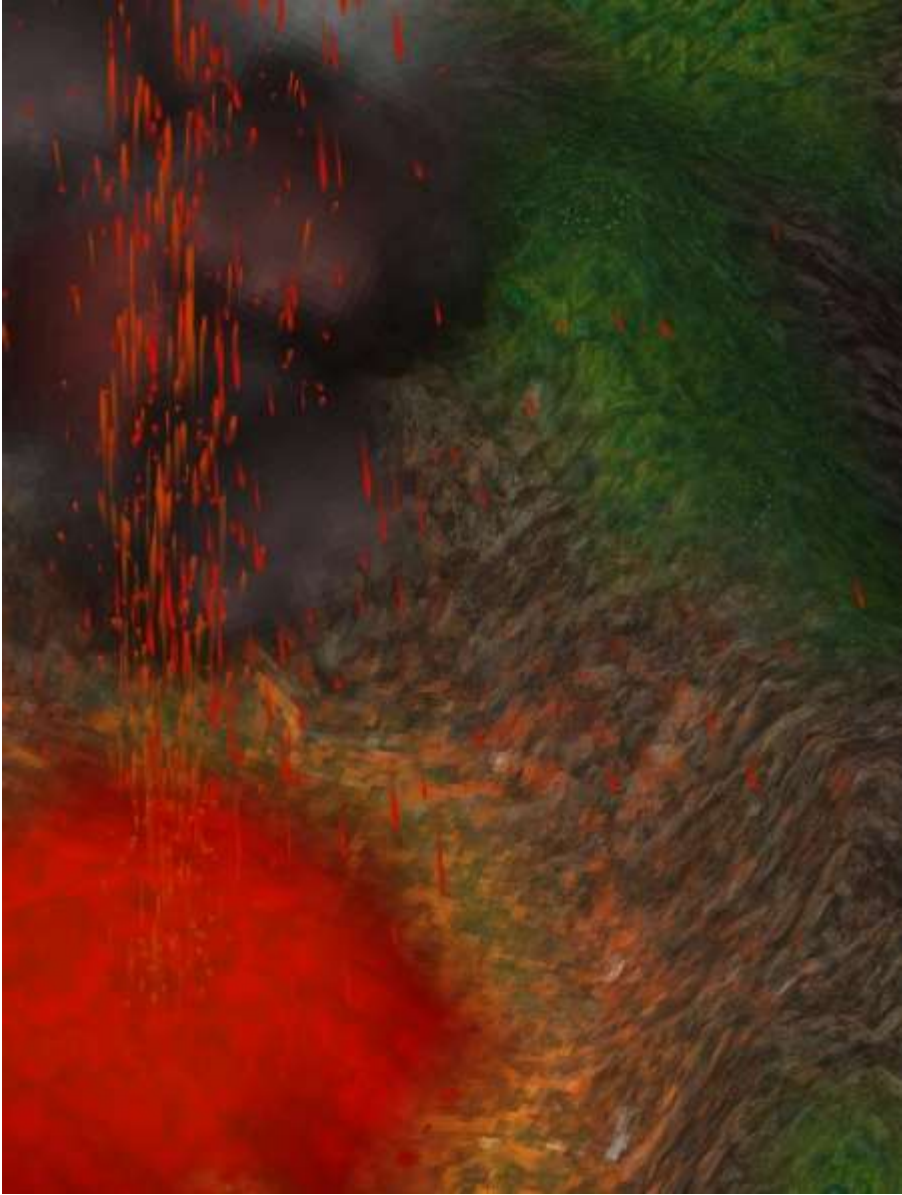
Hotter and hotter, ash got thicker and thicker until molten lava started pouring out. The observers were horrified. There was no escape. This was an impending disaster.

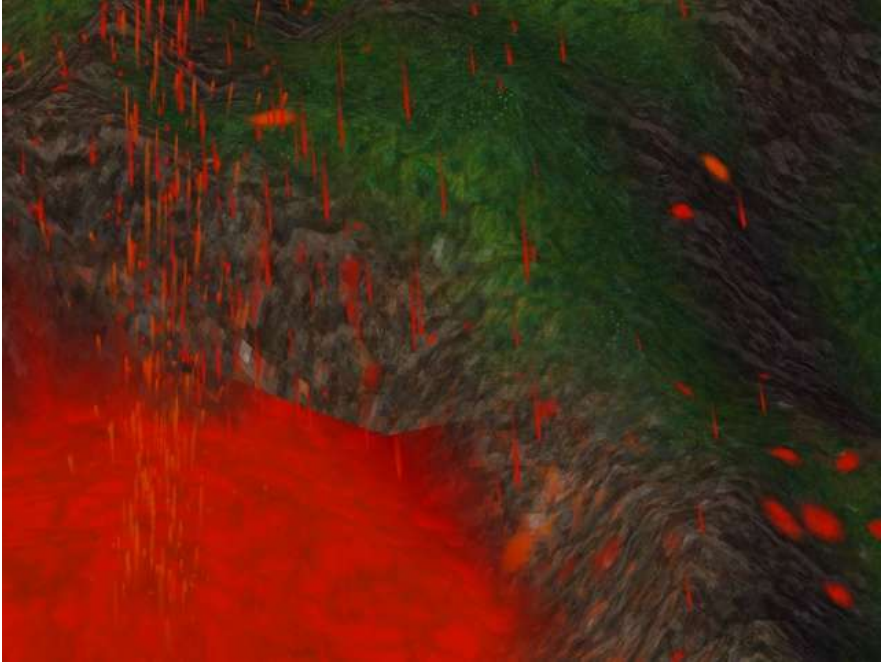




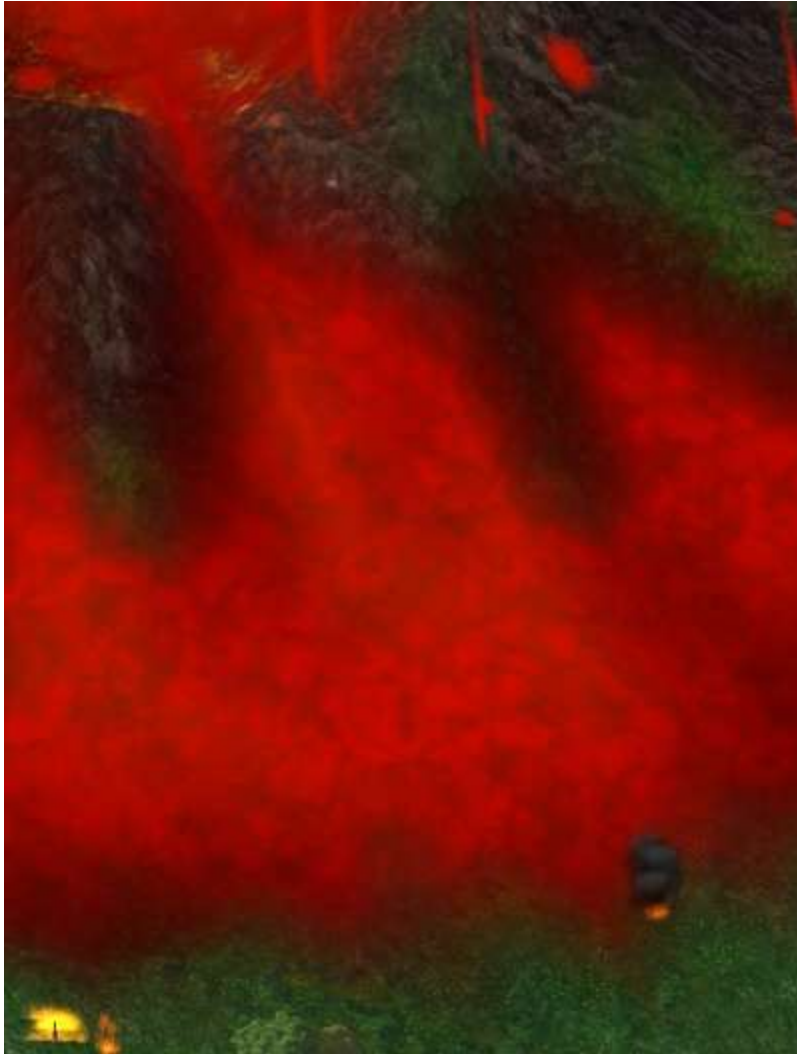
Much of the lava was falling back into the cracks in the ground, but large pools began to form in several locations.







Volcanic cones began to rise and fall. None gained great altitude, as they seemed to compete for magma.



After 43 horrifying minutes, the eruptions stopped. Much of the lava fell back into the ground, but several peaks remained as the molten rock cooled. The peaks formed a jagged diagonal line from near the coast northward toward the southern Devonshire border. The rock cooled quickly – quicker than one would expect lava to harden. Perhaps it was the qualities of minerals in the rocks or perhaps it was an author seeking to further the plot, but, the mountains sure did take final form surprisingly quick. The small mountain chain left behind was named “The Gates of Schulmericho” since they blocked the way from points southeast to the port town. Let’s see how the Gates look now.







It remains to be seen how the discovery of volcanism will impact Schulmania. And, it also remains to be seen how this new fault line will impact development. Is New Atkinos at risk? Or Schulmericho? Both? Only time will tell.