

EARTHDAWN[®]

BARSAIVE AT WAR[™]



A N E A R T H D A W N E P I C

BARSAIVE AT WAR™



Living Room Games



Better Late Than Never

The book you hold in your hands is one I thought would never be published (and while it hasn't actually been published as I write these words, it's close enough for my purposes here). It's been a long time coming, but I think the wait was worth it.

When I was told that Earthdawn was being cancelled in June 1998, it meant that both **Dragons** and **Barsaive At War** would most likely never be published. (As a side note, the **Dragons** book is, in my opinion, among the very best ED supplements FASA ever produced, if not THE best).

That all changed earlier this year when Living Room Games acquired the license to publish Earthdawn products from FASA. I don't know any of the specifics that led to FASA's decision to license Earthdawn to Living Room Games, but I'm not complaining, especially since it will usher in what I hope is a new life for Earthdawn in the gaming market, and has led to the long delayed publication of **Barsaive At War: An Earthdawn Epic** (and will also lead to a printed version of the **Dragons** book too!).

So what's so special about this book?

This book brings the growing tension and conflict in Barsaive as portrayed in the last several published sourcebooks (in particular, **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**, **The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd**, and **Dragons**, but others as well) to a boil and provides a framework for Gamemasters to get their player characters involved in events that will change the face of Barsaive forever. It ties up a number of loose ends while at the same time creating a handful of new ones, and reshapes the landscape and politics of Barsaive in ways that will lead to countless new adventures. And while it differs slightly from the book I would have produced (simply because it's been written by different people), it is a book I'm very proud to be associated with, and I hope you all enjoy it as much as I (and the people at Living Room Games) enjoyed creating it.

I'll leave you with three words that are perhaps the best way I know how to express my feelings concerning the future of Earthdawn. I think they also convey the feelings of the staff of Living Room Games, and most likely those of the many Earthdawn fans I've had the good fortune to meet since 1993. These three words scrolled across my computer screen as a screen saver for nearly the entire time I was at FASA. And while some of you might not use the same three words, I hope few of you would argue with their message:

Earthdawn Forever Baby!

Louis J. Prosperi
July 8, 2000



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 Printed in the USA.

Published by Living Room Games
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 Arlington, TX 76014
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Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

Thousands of years ago there existed the age of **Earthdawn**, a time of magic and adventure. People could draw upon the magic that flowed through the land to perform both common tasks and marvelous feats. However, when the level of magic was at its peak, there came a plague of beings from deep within astral space called the Horrors. Drawn to the Earth by the magic they needed to survive, the Horrors consumed everything within their path. For four hundred years, during a time that was later known as the Scourge, the people of Earth hid from the Horrors. Now, as the levels of magic have started to subside, the people of Earth are coming out of their sealed kaers and citadels to restore their world, yet they must protect themselves from both the Horrors and the oppressive yoke of the Theran Empire. In a land known as Barsaive, heroes strive to explore their world, search for treasures lost long ago, and slay the remaining Horrors that plague the land. Spellcasters weave the Threads of magic to harness the mystical energies of the universe, while Adepts use this same power to enhance their natural abilities. Armed with magic, skill, and courage, the people of Barsaive step out from the shadows left by the Scourge and into the light of the age of **Earthdawn** to rebuild their homeland.

Barsaive at War is a campaign supplement that introduces a series of significant events that will change the face of Barsaive forever. Taken together, the events in **Barsaive at War** form an epic-style **Earthdawn** campaign, one in which the player characters take a central role. The adventures and events in **Barsaive at War** differ from those previously published for **Earthdawn**, except in **Prelude to War**, in a number of ways. Although each section of **Barsaive at War** can stand alone, it also forms part of a much larger picture. As the characters progress through the **Barsaive at War** adventures, they participate in events that can shape the future direction of Barsaive, for better or for worse. More to the point, the adventures in this book place the characters in the center of these events. The characters' success or failure in these adventures can have serious impact on the future. The goal of this product is to place the player characters in the starring roles in an epic tale of heroism and adventure; a tale in which the future of Barsaive is forged by the actions of heroes.

GAMEMASTERING NOTES

As noted above, the events in **Barsaive at War** are designed to take place in a particular order. The Gamemaster should feel free to adjust this order to suit his or her individual campaign. Before incorporating any of these events in his campaign, the Gamemaster should be thoroughly familiar with the contents of this book, and both players and Gamemaster should be familiar with the **Earthdawn** rulebook (ED).

MAKING TESTS

Whenever player characters attempt to take actions such as casting a spell, swinging a sword at an opponent, tracking a Horror, or flirting with a barmaid, the Gamemaster or the player rolls dice against a Difficulty Number to determine the action's outcome. These dice rolls are called Tests. To make a Test, the player or Gamemaster rolls the appropriate Action Dice based on the Step Number of the ability being used (see the Step/Action Dice Table, p. 36, ED). If the dice roll result is equal to or greater than the Difficulty Number, the Test succeeds and the character accomplishes his action. If the result is lower than the Difficulty Number, the Test fails and the character does not accomplish his action. In Tests that deal with magic, the dice roll result often determines the duration of a magical effect as well.

Frequently, a Test result determines not only success or failure, but also the level of success. A Test may have one of five success levels: Poor, Average, Good, Excellent, and Extraordinary. A Poor success level indicates failure that causes unpleasant side effects. An Average success — equal to or barely exceeding the Difficulty Number — means that the character just barely accomplished his action. A somewhat better dice roll yields a Good success, and a result close to double the Difficulty Number means an Excellent success. To achieve Extraordinary successes requires an even better roll. Any success level greater than Average may give the character some gain for his actions or valuable extra information. The amount of gain for each success level is determined by the Gamemaster, unless otherwise noted.

In many cases, when the player characters must make a Test, the required ability is noted, followed by the Difficulty Number of the task in parentheses. For example, a Perception (13) Test means that a player character must use his Perception ability against a Difficulty Number of 13.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the **Earthdawn** rulebook, this book contains everything required to run **Barsaive at War**. However, this product draws fairly heavily on many previously published **Earthdawn** products, and includes references and connections to many of those products. In addition, several loose ends left in previous products are tied up or explained, while new ones are created. There are specific references in this product to **Prelude to War**, **Infected**, the **Sky Point & Vivane Campaign Set**, **The Serpent River**, **Crystal Raiders**, **Cara Fahd**, **Sky Point Adventures**, and **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**. Gamemasters will find it especially useful to have those products available when reading and preparing to use **Barsaive at War**. Gamemasters may also find the **Barsaive Campaign Set**, the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**, the **Earthdawn Companion**, **The Adept's Way**, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**, the **Parlainth: The Forgotten City Campaign Set**, and the **Creatures** and **Horrors** sourcebooks useful.

The Gamemaster should read each of the events carefully to familiarize himself or herself with the backgrounds, characters, and plot lines of each, before beginning to incorporate these events in their **Earthdawn** campaign. As always, be prepared to deal with the unexpected. The **Running Barsaive at War** section which appears later in this **Introduction** offers advice to the Gamemaster on running adventures based on the events in **Barsaive at War**, and incorporating them into an extended **Earthdawn** campaign.

Each of the sections in this book describes one of the events that has taken place, or will soon take place, in Barsaive. Each section begins with a short prologue followed by a section entitled **Background**, which provides the Gamemaster with the background behind the events; who's involved, why the event has happened, and other specifics about the event. After the **Background**, there is a section called **Event Synopsis**. Depending on the type of event, this section describes the situation created by the event, or the story arc that follows the event. In most cases, it is this storyline that the characters will become involved in.

The next section, entitled **Important Characters**, provides descriptions and statistics for all of the major characters that play a part in the event. In many cases, abbreviated statistics are used here. Following **Important Characters** is a section that describes to the Gamemaster how he can introduce the event into his campaign. This includes ways to offer hints and clues about the event before it occurs, and how to arrange for the characters to learn of the event. This section also contains a subsection entitled **Prequels**, which lists some of the places in previous **Earthdawn** products where hints, clues, or other references to the event have



occurred. This allows the Gamemaster to weave adventures and stories based on previous products in with the events in this book, in order to create a holistically dynamic campaign.

Following **Prequels** are a number of **Adventure Frameworks**, a type of shorthand adventure (see below). The adventures presented here either relate to the event in some way, or, when used together, form a story arc based on the event. For instance, the **Adventure Frameworks** in **The Preparations for War** all fit together to form a story arc in which the player characters become involved in Barsaive's efforts to set in motion the plans that will make them victorious in the coming war.



After this section are a number of **Adventure Ideas**. These are short synopses of possible adventures the Gamemaster can run based on the event. Gamemasters can flesh out these adventure ideas using the **Adventure Framework** as described below. In some cases, these adventure ideas relate directly to one or more of the stories in the **Adventure Frameworks**, while in other cases, they are independent stories.

Each event concludes with a section entitled **Loose Ends**, which describes the aftereffects of the event itself, as well as that of the **Adventure Frameworks** or other adventures based on the event. This section, along with the **Loose Ends** sections of the other events, when taken together, describe the state of Barsaive after all the events in this book have occurred.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

As a way of fitting as many adventures into this book as possible, we've used a shorthand type of adventure called **Adventure Frameworks** to present the adventures in this book. This format has appeared in previous **Earthdawn** products, including the **Parlainth: The Forgotten City Campaign Set**, **Legends of Earthdawn Volume I**, the **Sky Point & Vivane Campaign Set**, **Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration**, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**, and **Prelude to War**. The adventure framework format is simply a method of outlining adventures that enables Gamemasters to plan out the events of an adventure while maintaining as much flexibility as they need. Each adventure framework has five parts: **Premise**, **Set-Up**, **Events**, **Climax** and **Sequels**.

The **Premise** briefly summarizes the adventure and describes its major sources of conflict or drama. The **Set-Up** describes how the adventure begins and how the characters become involved in it. This section may also include events that have led to the adventure, and background on other ideas touched on in the **Premise**. This section is often the longest and most detailed in the framework. Following the **Set-Up** are a number of **Events**. These describe encounters and events that occur during the course of the adventure. These may include situations that pose problems for the characters, actions by the adventure's antagonists, creature encounters, or simply unexpected occurrences. In other words, events are the obstacles or problems the player characters must overcome to complete the adventure successfully.

The **Climax** is the conclusion or resolution of the adventure, and describes how the adventure is likely to end. Because the **Climax** is usually the likeliest resolution based on actions that the Gamemaster expects the players to take, it may differ considerably from the way the adventure actu-

ally ends, because player groups often take unexpected actions. Therefore, planning for more than one possible climax is a good idea. After the **Climax**, there is a section called **Sequels**. These are stories that might happen after the adventure or as a result of the adventure. Sequels may be adventures that feature the same non-player characters or include a magical item discovered in the first adventure. Sequels help create a sense of continuity in a campaign.

PREPARING ADVENTURES

Creating published adventures that provide an appropriate opposition level for every diverse group of player characters is impossible, because some groups are inherently more powerful than others. Therefore, Gamemasters may need to adjust the game statistics and capabilities of some of the characters that appear in this book in order to provide his players with an appropriate challenge. If an adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, use it as a blueprint to develop an adventure of your own. Or, if it works well except for a glitch here and there, modify the plot or events to make the adventure a better one.

Keep in mind that as the Gamemaster, you have a unique responsibility to make the adventure exciting, keep the players involved, and keep the story on track. In describing the world of **Earthdawn**, try to answer all the players' questions about what the characters see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. Feel free to go beyond the descriptions provided in this book when evoking places and moods. To keep the players connected to the action, ask, "What do you do?" each time you describe a new scene to them. By describing what they want their characters to do, the players help tell the story and add to their own enjoyment. If the players wander from the story line, nudge them back in the right direction. If the players make choices that interrupt the story or make them miss a vital clue, drop hints to encourage them to do what the adventure requires. Remember, however, to keep it subtle. A good Gamemaster guides the players, he does not tell them what to do.

CIRCLE LEVEL

The adventures in this book vary in difficulty and in levels of threat greatly. As such, there are no hard and fast guidelines for appropriate Circles. The adventures in **Barsaive at War** were designed on the assumption that by the time they get involved with the events in this book, most of the characters are of at least 4th - 5th Circle, or of **Legendary Status 1** (p. 226 - 227, **ED**). Ideally, characters should reach



6th - 7th Circle, or Legendary Status 2, by the time they become involved in the events of **The Siege of Triumph**. Beyond these guidelines, the Gamemaster must make adjustments according to the size and average Circle of the characters in his group.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

In addition to adjusting the threat level of the adventures in this book to best suit his characters, the Gamemaster must also determine the Legend Point awards for the adventures he runs based on the events in **Barsaive at War**. These awards should be based on the characters' average Circle, but also on the relative difficulty and scope of the adventures themselves. For instance, an adventure only peripherally related to one of these events should not earn the characters as many Legend Points as one in which the characters help the dragons enact the ritual to isolate Vivane.

In addition, since these events in this book represent major events in Barsaive, the characters' involvement in these events adds to their legends even moreso. To reflect this, characters who participate in adventures directly related to the events in this book, which includes all the **Adventure Frameworks** in all of the events, earn 1 additional Legend Award.

For example, a group of characters participate in the adventure entitled **Ashes to Ashes** in **The Taking of Jerri**. The average Circle of the characters is 7th, and the Gamemaster has decided on a Legend Award of 750 Legend Points. At the conclusion of this adventure, in addition to the standard Legend Awards for Completing the Adventure Goal, Creative Roleplaying and Heroics, and Defeating Creatures and Opponents, each character would also receive a bonus Legend Award of 750 Legend Points.

RUNNING BARSATIVE AT WAR

Barsaive at War is different from most previously published **Earthdawn** adventures in a number of ways. It is not a single adventure or even a collection of adventures. Instead, it presents Gamemasters with a set of events and circumstances which he can incorporate into his campaign, allowing his characters to participate in shaping the future of Barsaive. There are a number of adventures based on each of the events described in this book, and each can serve as the basis and backstory for a significant portion of a Gamemaster's **Earthdawn** campaign. But where previous adventures represented single stories or events, the adventures based on the events in **Barsaive at War** are meant to be run in between other stories, and represent on-going

storylines rather than self-contained adventures. The following section offers advice to Gamemasters for incorporating the events in **Barsaive at War** into their campaign.

THE EVENTS OF PRELUDE TO WAR

There were four major events that made up the **Prelude to War**. First, the Theran Behemoth, the *Triumph*, landed on the Ayodhya Liferock, symbolizing the long-feared return of the Theran Empire to Barsaive. Shortly after the landing of the behemoth, Throal's King Varulus III died at the hands of an assassin. Amid the turmoil in the Kingdom of Throal, Neden assumed the throne and launched a near-disastrous assault on *Triumph*, which is known as the Battle of Prajor's Field. Only after the battle was it discovered that the assassin was of the Denairastas clan of Iopos. Next, a Theran magician, Hefera, kidnapped Aardelea, a young child who was actually a unique drake-human hybrid. Though he paid for meddling in the affairs of dragons with his life, Aardelea was spirited into Theran lands. And finally, Krathis Gron returned to Barsaive from afar and forged anew the orkish nation and homeland, Cara Fahd.

THE EVENTS OF BARSATIVE AT WAR

There are eight major events that make up **Barsaive at War**. The War begins with Neden commissioning Merrox, the Master of the Hall of Records, to write a **Declaration of Separation and War**, a declaration that is signed by nearly all of the major powers of Barsaive and delivered to Thera. Amidst the upheaval caused by the Declaration, a rescue mission is finally completed with the **Return of Aardelea** to Barsaive. Once have the characters safely delivered Aardelea, they become involved in the Barsaivan **Preparations for War**, preparations that include the capture of Theran vessels, the uniting of the trolls, and the blockading of *Triumph*. As tensions escalate, the dragons engineer **The Theft of the Everliving Flower** in such a manner as to implicate the Therans, and draw the blood elves into the war. The first large-scale battle of the war is the **Siege of Triumph**, a siege in which the characters play a crucial role. While all of Barsaive's attention is focused on Thera, Iopos engages in **The Taking of Jerri**, a plan that is discovered by the characters while they are on a mission critical for the next phase of the war. The dragons plan to remove the assistance that Vivane may provide the Theran forces by entrapping it within a dome of air, and their ritual has disastrous consequences in the **Fall of Vivane**. Finally, the forces of Barsaive engage the last Theran stronghold in Barsaive in the **Assault on Sky Point**.





Chronology of Events

The precise chronology of the events described in this book is left up to each individual Gamemaster in order to allow him to best fit the adventures in **Barsaive at War** into his campaign. What follows is a rough chronology of how the events are most likely to occur, and it is the order in which published **Earthdawn** products (including this book) will reference these events. Like the order of events, the timeline of each event is also left open for Gamemasters to fit into their campaigns. The timeline below also shows the approximate length of time it will take a group of characters to become involved in and complete the adventures for each event.

Start	The writing of the Declaration of Separation and War
+3 weeks	Declaration of Separation and War delivered to Thera
+4 weeks	The Return of Aardelea. Preparations for the Ground War begin.
+6 weeks	Preparation for the River Front begins.
+8 weeks	Preparation for the Air War begins.
+11 weeks	Theft of the Everliving Flower
+14 weeks	Siege of Triumph and Taking of Jerris
+15 weeks	Fall of Vivane
+16 weeks	Assault on Sky Point

USING THE EVENTS IN CAMPAIGNS

There are two primary methods of incorporating the events of **Barsaive at War** into a campaign. The first is to use each event as the basis for a series of adventures, or a mini-campaign. The second, and the one we recommend, is to integrate the events and adventures in this book with other events and adventures in a preexisting campaign and with one another. Suggestions for using each of these two options is offered below, but before that, we need to first discuss how the events can be introduced into a campaign.

Introducing the Events

The first step in incorporating the events of **Barsaive at War** into an **Earthdawn** campaign is to introduce the events to the player characters. This can be done as simply as allowing the characters to learn firsthand of the event, or by providing hints and clues that relate to one or more of the events. Exactly how the characters learn of the events is up to the Gamemaster. As described in **How to Use this Book** (p. 8), each of the events includes a section offering specific suggestions for how to introduce the event into your campaign. These sections also include a number of **Prequels**,

which are references to other **Earthdawn** products in which hints or clues pertaining to the event appear. For example, Aardelea, the young girl who figures prominently in **The Return of Aardelea**, is first introduced in the **Earthdawn** adventure **Infected**, and is an important figure in **Prelude to War**. These prequels allow the Gamemaster to link elements from previous **Earthdawn** products to those in **Barsaive at War**, creating a campaign that is dynamic and changes and grows over time.

Mini-Campaigns

One of the ways Gamemasters can use the events in this book in their campaigns is to use each as the basis for a mini-campaign, or series of linked adventures, all connected to the given event. For instance, the characters might be summoned to act as messengers for the Declaration of Separation and War, and participate in all the adventures based on that event before Aardelea returns. Then, they might participate in all the adventures related to that event, and so on. In this case, the events should most likely occur in the same order that they appear in this book; that is, **The Declaration of Independence and War**, followed by **The Return of Aardelea**, followed by **Preparations for War**, followed by **The Theft of the Everliving Flower**, followed by **The Siege of Triumph**, followed by **The Taking of Jerris**, followed by the **Fall of Vivane**, and finally, ending with **The Assault on Sky Point**. Though the Gamemaster is, of course, free to alter this, the event sections in this book have been written based on the preceding order. If the Gamemaster changes the order of events, he will need to make alterations to text accordingly.

Using the events in this way allows the characters to move from one event to the next, participating in a number of large-scale happenings in Barsaive, one after the next. This is a fairly linear way of using these events, but some Gamemasters may prefer this.

EPIC-STYLE CAMPAIGN

The second way a Gamemaster can use Barsaive at War in his campaign is to integrate the events with other adventures, and with each other. For example, after the Declaration of Separation and War is written, the characters may participate in one of the **Adventure Frameworks** in that section, or in an adventure based on one of the adventure ideas related to that event. The characters might next learn of the **Preparations for War**, and participate in one or more of the adventures that appear in that section. In between adventures based on the **Preparations for War**, the characters might get involved in **The Return of Aardelea** storyline, followed by one of the adventures based on **The Fall of Vivane**. They





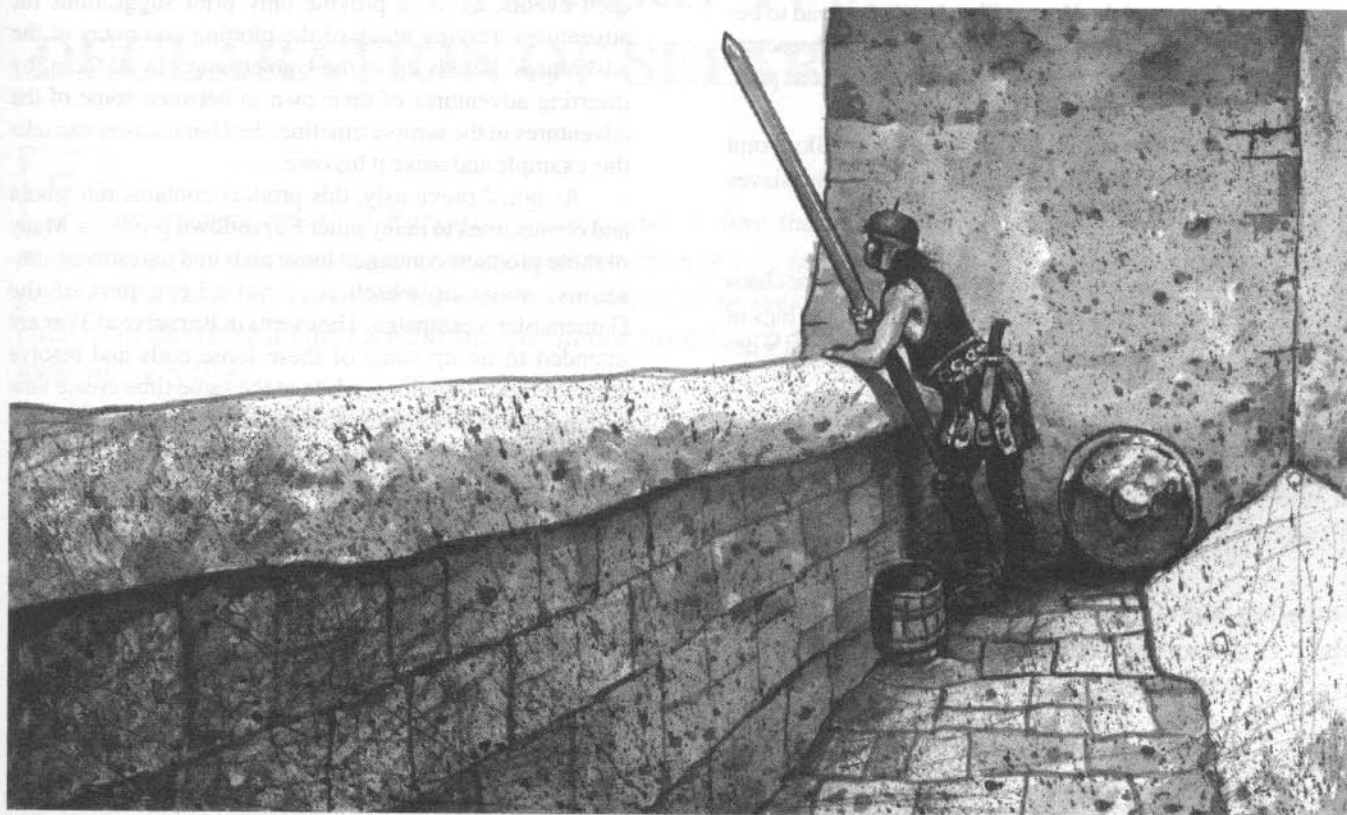
might next participate in another adventure based on **The Preparations for War** or **The Theft of the Everliving Flower**, before returning to the Vivane storyline. The idea here is that the characters move between the storylines, each of which is a small part of a truly epic-scale campaign, one with the characters at the center of the action.

Timeline of Barsaive at War

The following is a possible timeline for the events of **Barsaive at War**. Of course, a Gamemaster may choose which of these events to use in his campaign. Some of the entries in the timeline are events (such as the writing of the Declaration of Separation and War), while most are the names of **Adventure Frameworks** or **Adventure Ideas** in the sections of this book pertaining to each of the events.

- **The Writing of the Declaration of Separation and War:** Neden commissions Merrox to write the Declaration
- **At The King's Request:** The characters bring the Declaration to the leaders of Barsaive, seeking their signatures.
- **Uninvited Guests:** In this adventure idea, the character's diplomatic mission is taken on an unexpected course by the dragon Charcoalgrin and Twiceborn, Queen of the Dead.
- **Torgak's Irregulars:** The characters must deal with the unruly volunteers Torgak has sent to assist with the war effort.
- **From Neden with Love:** The characters deliver the signed Declaration of Separation and War to General Nikar and Overgovernor Kypros.
- **Morning Fire:** This adventure foreshadows some of the events to come as the characters are hired to help in a study of the ash that falls on Jerris.
- **The Return of Aardelea:** The characters fend off Therans and Iopans to deliver the much changed Aardelea to Icewing.
- **Catching Two K'tenshin Fish:** This framework allows the characters to play a pivotal role in the capture of two K'tenshin boats, boats that play an important role in the war against Thera.
- **Scavian Smuggling Run:** The characters get involved with the mission that will make the Syrtisian dreadnought a formidable war machine.
- **Harassing the K'tenshin:** This adventure idea allows the characters to take part in the skirmishes between the t'skrang Houses.
- **Jungle Fight:** The characters get involved with stemming the flow of slaves towards *Triumph*.
- **Crystal Raiders Attack:** The characters join with a group of Stoneclaws Trolls to raid Theran airships.
- **Teamwork:** The characters learn first hand the difficulties involved when different trollmoots work towards the same goal.
- **The Tides Turn:** This framework details the Theran response to the increased raider activity, placing the characters in a perilous situation.
- **Engines of War:** The characters transport the unique power sources for the vedettes that the Barsaivan forces have managed to capture to the Mist Swamp.
- **Summit at the Crystal Span:** The characters play a crucial role in bringing together the trolls of the Crystal Mountains.
- **Raiding the Therans:** Krathis Gron, High Chief of Cara Fahd, contacts the characters for a daring raid on a Theran caravan.
- **The Theft of the Everliving Flower:** Agents of the dragons steal the Everliving Flower from the Blood Wood, implicating the Therans.
- **The Hand Off:** The characters are hired by Mountainshadow, in the guise of Dark Tooth, to retrieve the Everliving Flower from the agents of the dragons.
- **To the Dragon's Maw:** This framework details the characters' trip across Barsaive with the Everliving Flower, pursued by the forces of the Blood Wood.





- **Setting Up the Blockade:** This adventure idea allows the characters to get involved with the blockade of the Serpent River.
- **Negotiations:** The characters are brought in by the Houses of the t'skrang to act as messengers and provide security for a meeting that will end the K'tenshin alliance with Thera.
- **Capturing the Defiant:** Once the characters capture this kila, the way is paved for the siege of *Triumph* to begin.
- **Liferock Rites:** The characters bring the final ally in the Barsaivan forces into play against the *Triumph*.
- **Let Slip the Dogs of War:** The siege of *Triumph* begins, and the characters must succeed in their mission for the behemoth to fall.
- **City of Ash:** The dragons send the characters to Jerris to gather components for a ritual, a mission made more difficult by the new masters of the city.
- **Ashes to Ashes:** A Theran spy and a group of pirates may bring the dragon's ritual to an end before it even begins, unless the characters can stop them.
- **Rescue the Phaeton:** The last component for the ritual is lost to the Therans, and the characters must recover it before the ritual can begin.
- **Thera's Finest:** A Nethermancer in Vivane may pose a threat to the dragons' ritual, and the characters must overcome her dark powers.
- **The Heart of the Enemy:** The characters must get sympathetic parties out of Vivane before the dragons' ritual begins.



- **Eye of the Storm:** The dragons' ritual has inadvertently caused the Horror Cloud at Stormhead to begin to rumble towards Vivane, and the characters must evacuate the Name-givers who are in its path.
- **Warning Vrontok:** Soon the assault on Sky Point will begin, and the characters must free the slaves in Vrontok.
- **Sabotaging Sky Point:** The characters use the chaos in Vrontok to place magical devices on the legs of Sky Point, devices that will lower Sky Point's defenses.
- **A Weapon Too Powerful:** The final battle in the War against Thera for Barsaive begins, and Thera unleashes a weapon of terrible might. Can the characters save the day?
- **Jerris Wants You:** After the end of the War, a resistance movement against Iopos begins to take shape in Jerris.
- **Heartfelt Chase:** The characters were instrumental to stealing the Everliving Flower from the Blood Wood, one of the few artifacts that might be able to heal its heart. Are the characters up to the task of stealing it back?

Barsaive at War and your campaign

Because each Gamemaster approaches adventure design and campaign management differently, the significance and impact of the events **Barsaive at War** in a campaign can vary greatly from Gamemaster to Gamemaster. Below are some guidelines for introducing **Barsaive at War** into campaigns.

Barsaive at War has been designed to fit easily into a variety of campaigns. Each of the events is divided into a series of short adventures that Gamemasters may run between other planned adventures. The Gamemaster can simply work the events described in **Barsaive at War** around the rest of his campaign. The timeline and campaign framework above offers just one possibility for integrating the events in this book with those of other **Earthdawn** products into a long-term campaign.

Keep in mind that while the **Adventure Frameworks** describe the overall plot for the adventures in this book, the Gamemaster is responsible for fleshing those adventures out. This allows him to tailor the details of any of these adventures to best fit the needs of his own campaign. This

is especially true for the various **Adventure Ideas** related to each event, as these provide only brief suggestions for adventures, leaving much of the plotting and many of the adventures' details up to the Gamemaster. In addition, by inserting adventures of their own in between some of the adventures in the sample timeline, the Gamemaster can take this example and make it his own.

As noted previously, this product contains references and connections to many other **Earthdawn** products. Many of these products contained loose ends and unresolved situations, many of which may have been part of the Gamemaster's campaign. The events in **Barsaive at War** are intended to tie up some of these loose ends and resolve some of these situations, while at the same time create new situations and dangle new loose ends. By picking up loose plot threads and weaving new ones, we hope to help Gamemasters in making their **Earthdawn** campaigns ever changing and dynamic. It also helps create a sense of continuity to a campaign, where the characters and their world change over time, based not only the actions of others, but also based on their own actions. Pages 15 - 17 of the **Gamemastering Earthdawn** book in the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack** offer more information about creating **Earthdawn** campaigns and maintaining campaign continuity.

The Gamemaster must also consider the impact **Barsaive at War** has on their campaigns. Developments from **Barsaive at War** can have considerable impact on the rest of the campaign, as the events in this book represent significant and major changes to Barsaive. These changes are real, and future **Earthdawn** products will reflect these changes, and the situations brought about by them. Barsaive is facing very turbulent times; times in which the characters of your campaign have an opportunity to help shape the future of the province.

As noted earlier in this **Introduction**, the adventures and events in this book are structured in such a way that the characters take a central role in shaping the outcome of these events. This is intentional on Living Room Games' part. We intended that the characters' actions play a large role in determining the future of Barsaive. It is adventures and situations like those described in this book which breed new heroes; the player characters are the heroes of Barsaive's future. In the immortal words of the late King Varulus, "The Heroes of Today are the Legends of Tomorrow!"





Chapter Two:

DECLARATION OF SEPARATION AND WAR

Sor the betterment of Barsaive, there comes a time that necessitates a change that will result in progress; any institution of government without change will fail to develop or prosper as a nation or as a people. The time has come for the citizens of Barsaive to seek a resolution to the Thera occupation. The citizens of Barsaive do declare our independence from Thera and our intention to defend this independence with our very lives.

There are rights that are inalienable to all peoples native to Barsaive. These rights are that all Name-givers are born free and equal in dignity and privileges. That they are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. That all Name-givers have the right to freedom, no one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

That to guarantee these rights, Governments are formed among Name-givers, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the First Governor of Thera is that of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over Barsaive.

Evidence shows that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly, all experience has shown that Barsaivans are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.

Therefore, the good people of Barsaive solemnly publish and declare, That these Nations of Barsaive are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the Empire of Thera, and that all political connection between them and the Empire of Thera, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent Nations, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts which Independent Nations may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives and our sacred Honor. For the Safety and Security of Barsaive and her people, we declare War on the Empire of Thera. For, as long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be brought under Thera rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honor that we are fighting, but for freedom, for that alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself.



Background

This section describes King Neden's attempt to gather the support of the leaders of Barsaive's other nations. He commissions Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records, to write a Declaration of Separation and War, which he then sends to the various rulers and leaders of Barsaive, asking each to sign it in support.

This provides adventure possibilities for the characters to act as messengers for the Kingdom of Throal, delivering Neden's Declaration in hopes of having each leader sign a copy of it.

The Declaration contains two parts; the first is a declaration to the Theran Empire that Barsaive is a free land, and is not a territory of the Theran Empire. The second part is a declaration of intent to go to war against the Therans should they choose to ignore the first part. Neden is young and idealistic enough to hope that the Therans will see a unified Barsaive in support of this separation, and yield to their wishes. However, he also knows he has to be willing to back up his words with actions, thus the inclusion of the Declaration of War.

Restless Sleep

It has been weeks since King Neden has had a good night's sleep, though only those most trusted by him know the reason for this behavior. Even the members of his court still don't know if this is a recurring nightmare, or if the King is just a dwarf with a lot on his mind. Either way, it is the source of a great deal of rumors about the court, and eventually in the streets of Throal.

The Visions

Thousands lay dead and the only smell is that of blood, sweat, and crisping flesh. Neden doesn't know those that are dead, just that this is the ground of an epic battle ... the likes of which history and legends are made of. Neden has never seen the beginning or the end of whatever conflict wrought this scene, just bits and pieces of the horror. One thing that does remain constant is the bright flash right before he awakes in sweat and tears. The King has talked to the trusted advisors about this dream and they have worked hard to keep this secret.

It finally came to a head as the guards on the night watch outside the King's chambers were shaken from their boredom to a scream mixed between sheer terror and overwhelming joy. When those guards rushed into the Neden's room, they found him wide awake. Immediately Neden barked orders at them to find Merrox, Ajmar, Wishten and the rest of his most trusted advisors.

Emergency meeting

King Neden and his advisors remained in chambers for hours, and the guards outside the great doors could tell this was a heated argument. Only a few times were the doors opened, and only then for a select group of advisors and servants. When opening the doors, the guards got a glimpse of a frazzled King and company. They looked like they had been arguing for days, though it had only been since early that morning. Merrox left early - he never left in mid-argument with the king - and on his face was a look of determination and purpose that they had never seen before. It was a little before dark when the doors opened to reveal a satisfied king and some haggard counselors. Neden wasn't a masterful politician — the battlefield was his preferred venue — but today he had fought such a battle in these halls that his father would have been proud. He had learned from his father, and he had the signs of a great King in the making. Still, many doubted if he was cast from the same mold as the wise King Varulus III.

Dance of Freedom

As Merrox left the castle, he hurried to fetch some supplies and grab an all-too-brief meal before he made it back to his abode. Hours later, a crackling fire was roaring and a pot of tea was brewing on the stove. The fire would burst with flame every so often, as a piece of paper was thrown into it, and any who could have seen Merrox could testify that he bore the expression of a dwarf under a great deal of pressure. He was a man of words, and it was rare for him to find so many impedances to his writing. As he took a deep breath and sipped his tea, he leaned back and looked at the ceiling as if to find his inspiration in the cracks in the roof and shadows on the wall. He watched as the shadows darted about and, suddenly, he noticed that they almost took on the form of an ancient dance, the Dance of Freedom.

Envoys of the Declaration

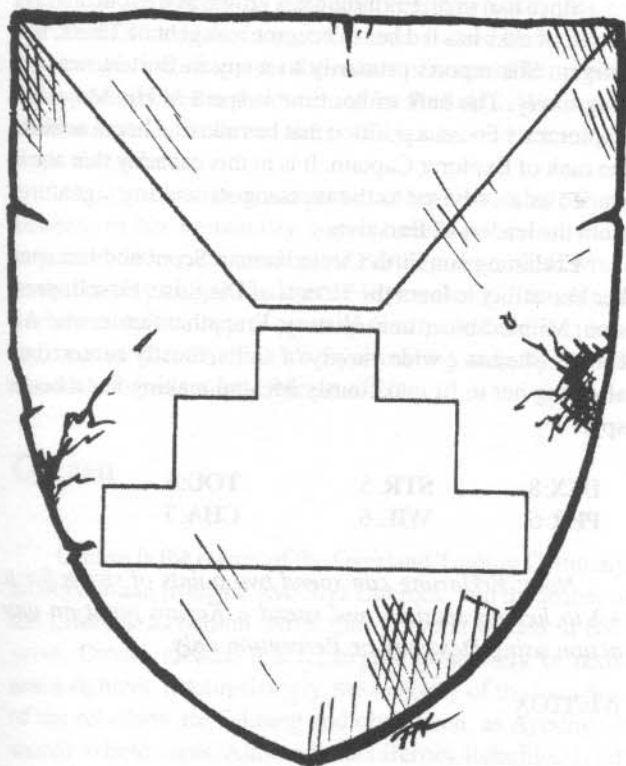
The next afternoon Merrox met with a pleased King Neden. The King knew he could not have trusted a more loyal Name-giver to write the Declaration of Separation and War. At the behest of the King, there was another meeting to be held before any further action would be taken. This meeting was called to determine the order of signing. There was great secrecy involved with this meeting, as the King wished to keep it as quiet as possible, for as long as possible.

Who of the advisors should go along on the mission, so there would be a representative of the King present? After a brief talk about available resources, it was determined that five groups of about twenty Name-givers each should go on five different missions to seek signatures for the Declaration of Separation and War from the leaders of





Barsaive. It was decided that each of these groups should have six guards, four advisors, four servants, and several messengers. Everybody in the group, save for the messengers, would be from the halls of the palace of Throal. For the messengers, Neden wished to give the appearance of more than just the involvement of Throal. Thus, he chose five groups of heroes from all parts of Barsaive. The player characters are one of these groups.



Important Characters

King Neden

Although he has been on the throne of the Kingdom of Throal only a short time, King Neden has faced many trials. When his father, King Varulus III, was cruelly murdered, Neden launched an ill-fated attack against the apparent assassins, the Theran Empire. Shortly thereafter, it was revealed that the Denairastas Clan of Iopos was actually behind the assassination plot.

Neden has difficulty admitting his mistakes. Although he attacked Thera for the wrong reasons, he still firmly believes that the Therans must be driven from Barsaive. To that end he has pursued alliances with the other factions in the province and declared Barsaive independent from the Theran Empire.

Never one to retire from battle, Neden will help lead the assault personally, on board his flagship, the *Varulus*. Named for his father and the three previous generations of Throalic kings. In truth, Neden still feels he has much to do in order to prove himself a great king and, in true Warrior fashion, has focused his goals on military success. For a more complete description of Neden, see **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom** (p. 50) Neden is a Ninth Circle Dwarf Warrior.

DEX: 6	STR: 6	TOU: 7
PER: 5	WIL: 6	CHA: 7

Wishten

As Chancellor of Throal, Wishten is the kingdom's highest ranking advisor and officially the king's closest aide. An affable former athlete, Wishten has common sense and a personal touch that makes him indispensable to the royal family. He feels that he more than succeeded in his personal project to instill confidence in Neden. Wishten opposed war with Thera, however, King Neden would not be swayed. Wishten was chosen as one of the King's advisors to lead one of the expeditions to get the signatures of the other leaders of Barsaive. Wishten is a non-Adept Dwarf.

DEX: 4	STR: 6	TOU: 5
PER: 5	WIL: 6	CHA: 7

Glolin

Ambassador Glolin has long served Throal's Diplomatic Corps as a trade negotiator with the t'skrang. On one such diplomatic mission, he was beset by pirates, and it was only due to the actions of Erklarung that he is alive today. He feels he owes her quite a debt, and it was upon his insistence that she was included among the advisors. Glolin is a non-Adept Dwarf.

DEX: 5	STR: 5	TOU: 6
PER: 5	WIL: 6	CHA: 6

Miraria

Miraria is a female courtier from House Ueraven, who, unlike Wishten, will make no secret of the fact that she thinks war with Thera will be disastrous for Throal. Of course, she is a good enough politician to know to not make any such claims when she is in the domain of any of the leaders of Barsaive that the group is seeking out. Miraria is a non-Adept Dwarf.

DEX: 4	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 6	WIL: 7	CHA: 5

Erklarung

Raised in a small village between Bartertown and Haven, Erklarung's family was killed in a raid by orks. She was found wandering out in the woods a week later by an elderly gentleman named Loigan, a human Scout who worked as an agent for Thera. He took her out of the woods and started to train her in the ways of his Discipline. She didn't remember the whole incident of her family's death, only flashes here and there. Still, night terrors were a constant problem during her childhood. She would wake with her sheets shredded and her bedclothes torn. Loigan helped her with her dreams, but as she got older she started having breakdowns because of the walls she built around her past.

Some years later the memories came flooding back, during an attack by some raiders in which she saved Loigan's life. Shortly after that, she disappeared for a few days. When she came back to the town, she was covered in blood - some of it hers but mostly orks'. When Loigan saw her, he came running up to her, asking about where she had been and what had happened. She didn't reply. Later that evening, when she asked why he never told her the truth, he told her, "I only thought it would be too hard on you. I knew where you had been; I found the village and tracked you out to the woods." She turned away from him. "I could have told you the truth a long time ago, but it was easier to live the lie."

Loigan began to weep as he continued, "That day, instead of looking for survivors of the raid, I was looking for my daughter. I lost her in a battle. I was hoping she had run away and hidden in the woods where I told her to, but when I got there, there was no sign of her. But, I did find your footprints. I raced to find her ... when I saw you weren't her, I was destroyed." Loigan sighed and said, "I had a wife and a little girl before I found you. I lost them to a Horror when it attacked my village. She looked similar to you ... very pretty."

The comment did little to help ease the pain Erklarung was feeling. "But you lied to me! Why lie all those years?"

Loigan replied, "I tried to make the best out of it for you and me. I admit to being selfish for not telling you earlier, but people make mistakes." After a pause, he said, "I think we should continue this in the morning. I am tired, and you need rest as well." The next morning when Loigan awoke, she was gone. A note left behind only said, "I forgive you, but I need to find out who I am." Loigan never saw her again.

Since that time, Erklarung has grown as a Scout, and her hatred of orks has led her to become an agent of Thera, like Loigan. She reports primarily to a spy in Bartertown, but only rarely. The bulk of her time is spent in His Majesty's Exploratory Force, a position that has allowed her to achieve the rank of Explorer Captain. It is in this capacity that she is named as an advisor to the messengers seeking signatures from the leaders of Barsaive.

Erklarung is a Fifth Circle Human Scout and has used her Versatility to learn the Talents of Disguise, First Impression, Mimic Voice, Item History, Empathic Sense, and Air Dance. She has a wide variety of skills, mostly centered on allowing her to fit into courtly life and making her a better spy.

DEX: 8	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 6	WIL: 6	CHA: 7

Note: Erklarung can spend two points of strain for a +2 to her perception, and spend a Karma point on any action using Dexterity or Perception only.

Merrox

Though Merrox is a stalwart supporter of the reforms of the Council Compact and the author of the Declaration of Separation and War, the Master of the Hall of Records has a deeply conservative frame of mind. He distrusts most new ideas and any action undertaken without long, slow deliberation. Varulus III often disregarded Merrox's overly cautious advice, but the late king encouraged Neden to treat Merrox as a wise counselor in the hope that his caution would temper Neden's inherent impulsiveness. King Neden regards Merrox with great affection - as an honorary "uncle", in fact. But because Merrox's standard response to every problem is to proceed carefully, Neden has already begun to take the librarian's advice for granted.

For a more complete description of Merrox, see **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom** (p. 89).





Shivalahala Syrtis

The Shivalahala Syrtis, also known as the Prophetess, is revered by every race in Barsaive for her exceptionally long memory and her incredible insight into the future. Several years ago, the Shivalahala passed on her powers and memories, as well as the memories of every past shivalahala of the Syrtis arapogoi, to a seven-year-old successor. This child has demonstrated a down-to-earth wisdom that the shivalahala had lacked for generations. Indeed, the concerns that her advisors had over the nature of some of her predictions were quelled as the events of the Prelude to War proved them accurate. However, she is still young, and her mind is unpredictable.

No game statistics are provided for Shivalahala Syrtis because of her immaturity, nascent madness, innate clairvoyant abilities, and incomplete development, all of which make her very difficult to describe in game terms. However, if any character attempts to cast a spell in her immediate vicinity, reduce the Character's Spellcasting step by 9. The shivalahala has a Spell Defense of 20.

Omasu

Omasu is the owner of the Overland Trading Company, an obsidiman from the Ayodhya Liferock, and the leader of the Liferock Rebellion. After the *Triumph* landed in Barsaive, Omasu created this underground network of resistance fighters. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the members of the rebellion are t'skrang and obsidimen, as Ayodhya is sacred to both races. Although the Liferock Rebellion is not especially large, Omasu's vast wealth assisted it in becoming a serious thorn in the side of Thera's Barsaivan forces. The Liferock Rebellion uses the resources of Omasu's Overland Trading Company to move people, supplies, and information throughout Barsaive virtually unopposed.

Fellidra Jer

Fellidra Jer is a human Troubadour Adept and representative from the Zenicce sector to the city council of Urupa. For the last decade, she has served as the city's chief councilor. Although her hair has turned steely gray and her face has grown wizened with age, she retains all of the beauty and charm that once made her the most acclaimed actress ever to walk across the stage of the Aulcroft Amphitheater.

The key to Jer's continuing popularity is her ability to balance the abiding antifoiegn concerns of Urupa's citizenry with the relatively recent explosive growth of trade and foreign influence. Jer wants to keep Urupa prospering, but she also wants control of Urupa to reside in its democratic institutions.

Torgak

The mayor of Haven is getting on in years, but his mind is as sharp as ever. This broad-shouldered troll walks with a rolling, swaggering gait. He's gruff and canny; similar to the grizzled sheriff portrayed in countless Westerns. He cares little for idle chat. His priorities are to keep Haven safe, squeeze more profit from his store, and to nap whenever he feels like it. His store, Torgak's Supplies and Goods, is a marble hall almost as impressive as any of the structures of Parlainth. Torgak enforces the law of Haven against those who would threaten its peace and order. Of course, in Haven, "peace and order" are relative terms.

Running Declaration of Separation and War

Introducing the Event

The first hints of this event are the rumors that will begin travelling around Throal about the restlessness of their King. As the rumors build, the characters may be requested by a member of Neden's Court to remain in Throal for a short time, because they may be called upon for a mission. This is especially the case if the players took part in the events of Prelude to War or have otherwise acquired strong contacts with the Kingdom of Throal.

Adventure Framework

At The King's Request

Setup

The King Neden sends word to five groups of adventures that can be trusted to carry out this mission as quietly as possible, and who have shown a great deal of loyalty to Barsaive in the past. The player characters will receive this



message as an invitation to see the King about important matters of the Kingdom. When the characters meet with the King he will let them know that this is an important mission, and that they were chosen in a special meeting several days ago. They are the bearers of a document that will change the face of Barsaive. The advisors that will be with the player characters' group are Chancellor Wishten, Ambassador Golin, Explorer Captain Erklarung, and Miraria of the House of Ueraven. The Barsaivan powers from whom the group is to get signatures from are House Syrtis, the City of Urupa, the Liferock Rebellion, and the Forgotten City of Parlainth.



Event 1

The group of adventurers should leave shortly after getting supplies, as time is critical for this mission. Throal will supply the party with horses and equipment. The quality and quantity of the equipment is up to the Gamemaster.

Currently, the standard weapon of the Arm of Throal is a Forge 5 broadsword, and if a Gamemaster so desires, one could be granted to each of the characters. It is also likely that they will be given plenty of healing supplies, both magical and mundane.

Before the group leaves, Neden speaks to them of the importance of this mission. "Failure is not an option; you will succeed!" Neden commands.

Neden says, "Thera will try their best to disrupt your mission; you cannot let them. The delivery of this message is the most important duty you can do to help Barsaive to freedom. You will face adversity, from even places where you do not expect it. Be ready, and careful; you are all important to my plans. Rest assured that I have complete confidence in your abilities to serve our nation."

King Neden will continue, "Now, you may be tempted to take to war as soon as you see the enemy, but you cannot, for that would jeopardize the mission and lives of your charges. I promise, the Therans will pay for what they have done, but when the time is right."

After the speech, the counselors all applaud the enthusiastically. "Mount up!" Wishten shouts as he springs onto his mount, obviously looking forward to this adventurous undertaking. The rest of the advisors will look a little more refined and elegant as they get into wagons and mount their horses. As the guards and servants fall into position and the group starts to move, a very satisfied King Neden watches their progress until the group is out of sight. If the party looks back, they will see Merrox pat his hand on the King's shoulder as if to reassure him in his decision.

Event 2

When the group arrives at the Cliff City of House Syrtis, they are tired and need rest, but Wishten will still request an audience with the Shivalahala. Sensing the urgency of the mission, she will set the time of the meeting as soon as possible, while still providing for the comfort of her honored guests. Thus, at sunrise the group will be scheduled to meet with Shivalahala Syrtis to talk about King Neden's plans and discuss the Declaration. The young Shivalahala will not be surprised by what the characters have to say, and she will immediately agree to sign without requiring negotiations. After Shivalahala Syrtis has signed, she will ask if there is anything that she can do to help them, going so far as to suggest that she might be able to facilitate a meeting with Omasu and provide more swift travel to Urupa. The Prophetess offers to send a messenger to the local chapter of the Liferock Rebellion and to loan them a ship to get to Urupa, if the party grants her a favor to be called at some time in the future.

If they accept, then the local representative of the Liferock Rebellion, an ork Named Mesur, asks them to wait a couple of days so that Omasu himself might travel to the Cliff City. This isn't much of an inconvenience, since the boat to Urupa will not be available for at least a day and a half. Two days later, Mesur gets in touch with the party and tells them that Omasu can meet them on a barge before they get to Lake Ban.

The favor that Shivalahala Syrtis asks of the characters will occur after they have completed their mission for Throal, and will involve the characters in the **Scavian Smuggling Run** (p 52).

Event 3

As the party is boarding the riverboat provided by the Shivalahala Syrtis, the *Red Eel*, Mesur finds them and tells them the code phrase for them to use to meet with Omasu. When the captain of the barge asks, "Are you looking to buy?" the response should be, "No, but do you want some Scavian leather?" Then, and only then, will the barge dock with the riverboat. Mesur will warn that there is a limited amount of time available for the rendezvous, because Theran vedettes patrol the area.

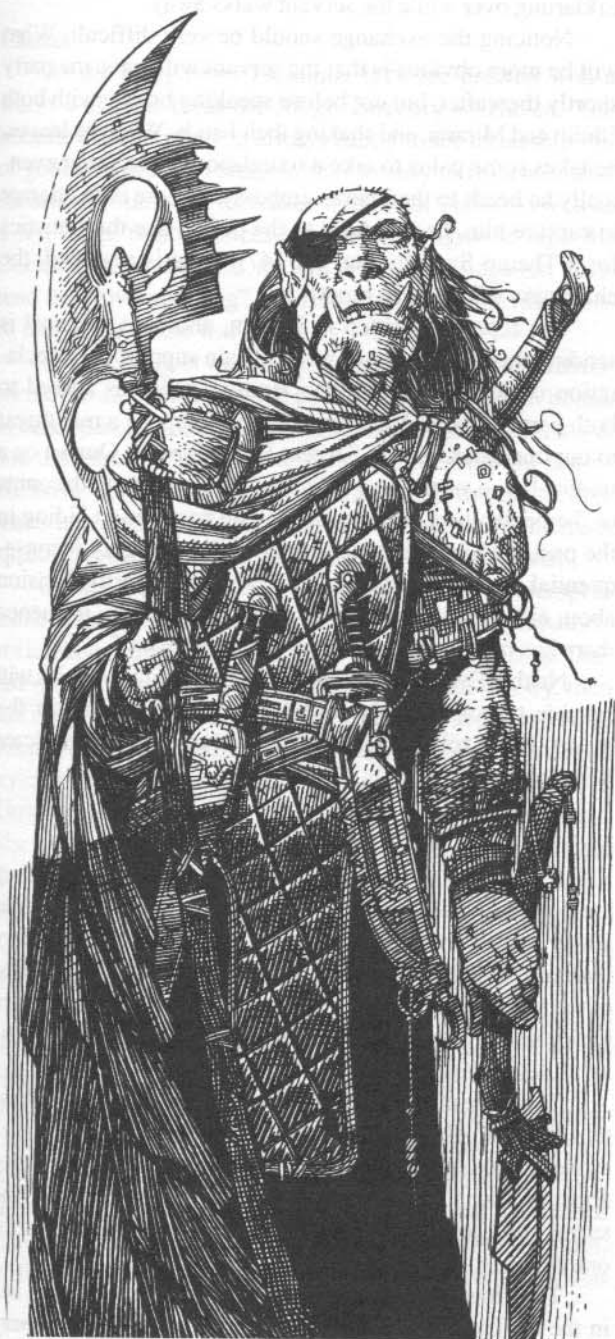
Meeting the barge should offer no real difficulties, and Omasu will have some specific questions about the forces he is expected to offer in a war should one erupt, but he will agree to sign. About fifteen minutes into the negotiations, a Theran vedette spots the two docked boats, and decides to inspect them. Neither riverboat is carrying anything objectionable to the Therans, except for, of course, Omasu, Wishten, the uniformed Throalic Guards, and a copy of the Declaration.

It will be easy enough to hide a few people and a document, and aside from a few tense moments, there should not be much of a problem. If the characters begin a fight, however, a pitched battle between the crew of the barge, the riverboat, and a vedette could be costly. Erklarung will, if the opportunity presents itself, try to be as suspicious as possible, in order to give the Therans the idea that something important is happening here. She won't, however, take any chances that might reveal her as a Theran spy. Use the statistics on p. 147 for the Theran Air Sailors.

Event 4

As the party arrives at Urupa, they see a crowd being broken up by the local Watch. For those of the characters that haven't traveled much, this city is very impressive. Located on a peninsula that shelters one of the finest harbors on the Aras Sea, Urupa is separated from the mainland by 1,500 foot cliffs. Additionally, the city is divided by a twenty-foot wall with seventy-foot watchtowers. From the riverboat, the characters can also see the fifteen-story tall Theran embassy, a little over a mile from the docks. Urupa may also very well be the character's first chance to see the Aras Sea, the largest body of water known to most Barsaivans.

Some of the advisors did not fare well traveling on the riverboat, so they decide they will wait to deliver the Declaration until tomorrow. Furthermore, they want to visit the





Throalic embassy, where they can bathe, acquire accommodations, and make travel plans for the journey to Parlainth. After the party arrives at the embassy and cleans up, they will receive a letter from the Throalic chief ambassador, asking them to report about their progress thus far. They are instructed to give the report as soon as possible, and to make sure that it is complete.

The next morning the group gathers at the Throal embassy to meet with the Council of Urupa. During the meeting, each advisor is given a short period to give their arguments for signing the Declaration. Chancellor Wishten speaks of the Council Compact and of freedom for all in Barsaive. Ambassador Glogin speaks of the military threat presented by the presence of the *Triumph*, and Miraria builds on that, detailing the restrictions of trade that the Theran forces have invoked. Captain Erklarung declines to speak. As the messengers, the player characters are expected to speak on behalf of signing the document, as well.

The session is closed to the public, as requested by the Throalic embassy. Once the player characters have given their address to the council, they are escorted out. Not even Chancellor Wishten is allowed to stay in the council chambers. The council will invite the diplomatic team to take in the sights of the city and tells them that they will send a messenger once they have reached a decision. The characters will have most of the day to do what they want. If they use this time to find out about the crowd that they saw being dispersed on their arrival, they will learn that it was a group of rabble-rousers Named Free Barsaive, led by a questor of Lochost. That afternoon, a messenger arrives to tell them that a decision has been made and that they are requested to report at once to the council chambers.

The council tells the characters that they unfortunately feel that, given the state of current events, they should remain neutral. If pressed, they will say that it is not in the best interest of the people of Urupa to join either side in this war. The advisors seem obviously disappointed, but upon their return to the Throalic embassy, they discover that it has scheduled a ball to celebrate their presence in Urupa.

Event 5

Regardless of the disappointments at the meeting with the Council of Urupa, the advisors and characters are all expected to put their best faces forward at the ball. While at the party, the characters will find out that Neden has requested the Throalic embassy provide the group with an airship to expedite their trip to Parlainth, so the party will get a break and be able to travel the great distance in a single day. However, they will not be able to leave until morning because the airship needs to load supplies and trade goods.

During the party, Erklarung finally gets the chance to report back to the Therans without risking her cover. She will pass the reports off right in front of the characters, and everybody else at the ball, in an obvious but clever fashion. Handing a note to a servant to deliver to a handsome man across the room, she will slide a second, smaller note to that servant, whom she has recognized as a fellow Theran infiltrator. The servant palms the report and hands the note to the intended party, who will, of course, smile and invite Erklarung over while the servant walks away.

Noticing the exchange should be very difficult. What will be more obvious is that the servant will leave the party shortly thereafter, but not before speaking briefly with both Glogin and Miraria, and shaking their hands. When he leaves, he takes some pains to take a roundabout course, but eventually he heads to the Theran embassy. If there is an attempt to capture him, he will fight to the death. Use the statistics for a Theran Swordmaster (p. 147). If he is searched, the characters will find the report.

The report is written in Theran, and says, "Throal is sending this diplomatic mission to gain support for a declaration of separation and war. House Syrtis has agreed to both parts of the declaration. They might pose a real threat to our operations on the Serpent River. We met Omasu on a trading barge, on the way to Urupa. He agreed to both counts of the declaration, but considering he has been in hiding in the past, I believe that his support will be largely inconsequential. Urupa's council failed to reach a majority decision about either part; they are not going to help. Our influence there has had a major effect on their decisions."

Neither Evidence Analysis nor Nethermantic magics will be able to conclusively reveal who gave the servant the report. If his spirit is pressed, he will attempt to implicate Miraria.

Event 6

If the party did not intercept the servant, then as they are boarding the *Gilded Peryton*, the galley taking them to Haven, the Throalic embassy will inform them that they learned through their sources that the Therans have learned of the mission, and that the leak came from within the group. Unfortunately, it is not known who the leak is, and the mission must continue.

There are many benefits to the airship. Certainly, it hastens their travel to Parlainth, but there are other advantages as well. If aboard, the spy will be unable to get away. Being aboard a Throalic vessel means that the Theran agent will be surrounded, and may allow the problem to be handled without violence.

The view of the city of Urupa from above, with the sea in the background, is breathtaking. However, this scenery





only distracts the advisors for a moment before they start arguing over who the spy is. The ship is full of statements like "It can't be me, I was with you all night at the party!" and "How do we know you both aren't in on it?" The guards and Air Sailors will make sure nothing get out of hand, but, unfortunately, there really isn't enough evidence to implicate anyone. However, Erklarung knows that if she completes the journey and comes under close scrutiny from the Eye of Throal, then her identity as a spy will eventually come out.

Climax

As the party nears Parlainth, they are greeted with a warm welcome from the rough citizenry of Haven. The boomtown's populace is always happy to see an airship full of goods from afar. Torgak is easy to find, and after securing promises of increased trade with Throal as well as a few other minor concessions, he will agree to sign the Declaration. In addition, he will invite the delegation to attend the "town meeting" where he will assemble his forces to contribute to the war effort.

The meeting is more like a frontier town celebration, where the alcohol flows free and the air is filled with boasts of deeds past and future. Eventually, Torgak quiets the crowd, and announces, "Haven intends to, along with the rest of Barsaive, go to war against Thera if they do not forever leave our lands!" His short speech is met by thunderous approval, and his call for volunteer soldiers is well met.

During this entire commotion, Erklarung will attempt to make herself scarce, meet up with some Theran sympathizers in Haven, and make her escape to the first available Theran ship. If the characters are caught up in the revelry, then she may well succeed. However, if the characters are at all attentive, they should be able to catch Erklarung as she is trying to sneak away, at which time she will attempt to bolt. This should lead to a chase through the alleys of Haven. She is more intent on trying to escape than trying to fight the characters, but if cornered, she will fight rather than willingly go back.

Sequels

Both of the other Adventure Ideas in this section can be immediate sequels to *At the King's Request*. And, of course, there is Erklarung. If the characters captured Erklarung, then she will face trial in Throal, and be imprisoned for quite a long time. If they killed Erklarung, then they have some problems. Torgak will make a big fuss about the entire matter, seeking proof of any claims that they make against her. He does not consider running proof of her guilt. In fact, considering that she's dead, he will comment that

most of Haven would probably try and run if they thought they were going to be killed without good reason. Eventually Wishten will grant Torgak further concessions from Throal to ease the situation. Unfortunately, Wishten will now think somewhat less of the characters because of the troubles that they have caused. If Erklarung gets away, the characters will have little time to follow her trail and capture her. Should they be able to track her down, they may capture her, as well as a handful of other Theran sympathizers. If the characters choose to go after her, Wishten will make a point of instructing them to capture Erklarung so that she may be brought to trial.

Other Adventure Ideas

Uninvited Guests

There are other powers in Parlainth that might feel that they are more deserving than Torgak of receiving the diplomatic envoy from Throal for the purpose of getting Parlainth's support. Topping the list are Charcoalgrin the Dragon, and Twiceborn, the Queen of the Dead. It is possible that members of the Unforgivables, Charcoalgrin's mercenary army, will approach the characters during Torgak's town meeting, and inform them that Charcoalgrin would like to meet with the diplomats.

Charcoalgrin has been slighted by the other dragons by being excluded from the Dragon's Network, and she wishes to show them up by, on her own, becoming an influential part of the effort against Thera. Unfortunately, a trip to northern Parlainth where Charcoalgrin lairs will take the characters through the Smalls, beneath which lies the kingdom of Twiceborn. Her cadaver men minions will try to intercept the team, for she too wishes to be addressed as a sovereign. She is not so interested in the effort against Thera — indeed she will refuse to sign the Declaration — but she does desire to be recognized as a leader of a Barsaivan nation.

Torgak's Irregulars

More than fifty Adepts, most of whom are at least Legendary Status 1, will volunteer to represent Haven as Torgak's Irregulars. By the agreements Wishten made with the mayor, they are to travel to Throal on the *Gilded Peryton* where they will begin assisting in the war effort. Unfortunately, this is not a military unit, but rather a group of adventurers and cutthroats without any clear leadership. Characters who

are part of the diplomatic mission will be respected more than the powdered and perfumed advisors from the courts of Throal, and may be able to give the Irregulars some direction.

If the characters did not take part in the events of *Prelude to War*, Torgak's Irregulars is a good way to introduce any group of adventurers into the Barsaive at War campaign, as either appointed or adopted leaders of the group. In either case, the characters should be given the opportunity to mold Torgak's Irregulars into a useful force, by either instilling within them a sense of group identity and *esprit de corps*, or by realizing that unifying them may be nigh impossible and, therefore, breaking them into smaller groups that can each, in their own way, add to the war effort. Players may have to overcome fights and thievery from within the Irregulars, as well as a mutual lack of respect between the Irregulars and the rest of the Throalic forces.

Loose Ends

Neden sends a delegation to almost every political power in Barsaive, and gathers signatures on the Declaration of Separation and War from quite a few of them. Below is a listing of many of the powers of Barsaive, and whether their leaders signed the Declaration of Separation and War. The Blood Wood, Ironmonger Moot, Thundersky Moot, and Skyseeker Moot each signed, but were unwilling to commit forces to the war at the time of the signing.

<u>NATION/CITY (LEADER)</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>
Parlath/Haven (Torgak)	Yes
The Liferock Rebellion (Omasu)	Yes
The Dragons of Barsaive (Mountainshadow)	Yes
Cara Fahd (Krathis Gron)	Yes
Blood Wood (Alachia)	Yes
House V'strimon (Shivalahala)	Yes
House Syrtis (Shivalahala)	Yes
House T'kambras (Shivalahala)	Yes
House Henghyoke	N/A (unable to contact)
House Ishkarat (Shivalahala)	No (allied with Iopos)
House K'tenshin (Shivalahala)	N/A (allied with Thera)
Crystal Raiders/Stoneclaws (Kerththale)	Yes
Crystal Raiders/Swiftwind (Chief)	Yes
Crystal Raiders/Ironmongers (Chief)	Yes
Crystal Raiders/Thundersky (Chief)	Yes

Crystal Raiders/Bloodlores (Chief)	No (refused diplomatic contact)
Crystal Raiders/Blackfangs (Chief)	No (refused diplomatic contact)
Crystal Raiders/Rockhorn (Chief)	Yes
Crystal Raiders/Skyseeker (Chief)	Yes
Iopos (Uhl Denairastas)	N/A (enemies of Throal)
Kratas (Garlthik One-Eye)	Yes
Travar (Magistrates)	Yes
Jerris (Byth Vesten)	Yes
Urupa (Council/Fellidra Jer)	No (pressure from Thera and People From Across the Aras Sea)

The Therans' Reaction

After obtaining all the signatures and support he is likely to get, Neden sends copies of the Declaration to the Therans at the Behemoth, Sky Point and Vivane, and to the island of Thera itself. The Thera response, not surprisingly, is to ignore it. After the Battle of Prajor's Field, the Therans are confident that they can withstand any Throalic military action, and are doubtful of the willingness of the other political powers to get involved.

From Neden With Love

A possible adventure idea would be for the characters to again take the role of messengers, this time delivering a copy of the signed Declaration to General Nikar at *Triumph*, and then Overgovernor Kypros at Vivane. As the characters travel down river to *Triumph*, the main opposition should come from a group of questors of Vestrial, who wish to sow confusion by stopping the Declaration from getting through. Oddly enough, given the current tensions, Thera forces will not be hostile to the characters if they reveal that they are on a diplomatic mission to the Overgovernor and to General Nikar. Indeed, General Nikar will provide airship transportation from *Triumph* to Vivane. When they deliver the message to the Overgovernor, however, he will be amused by the declaration, and comment that he was under the impression that Barsaive had been in rebellion for quite some time now. He will dismiss the characters, and leave them to return to Throal on their own.





Chapter 3:

THE RETURN OF AARDELEA

Krandal called the party to a halt as they neared the top of a series of ridges. Bloodied and bruised, the group following him came to a halt. The troll dropped the human he was carrying onto the ground as the rest of the party sat, exhausted.

"If they're still following, we should be able to see them coming over that last hill," he said, gesturing back the way they came. "So how is Trylen?"

"Dead," came the reply from Jessep, the gangly elven Nethermancer, checking over the body. "Whatever the Therans hit him with, he couldn't shake it off. Even if we had one, I don't think a Last Chance Salve would do him any good. I'm glad Tr'ran was able to shoulder the body this far at least. He might have a few potions left on him." Jessep continued to rifle through pockets and pouches as he talked.

"Not counting the girl, there's four of us left" Tr'ran said, gesturing to Krandal, Jessep, and Marson. "I'm sure I took down at least two of them before we bolted. I saw Marson kill one, what about everyone else?"

"My blade claimed two with that stroke, actually," replied Marson, "when the Obsidiman fell I managed to land him on their Windling."

"I was too busy trying to patch everyone up and keep her out of harm's way," replied Jessep, jerking his head toward the near-comatose girl curled on the ground. "She completely panicked when they ambushed us, almost ran head long into that Blizzard Sphere they landed on Zil. Poor Zil, I'm going to miss her songs...."

"And two for me as well," volunteered Krandal. "By my count that leaves at least eight of them to the four of us. Not good. Not with as far as we have to go."

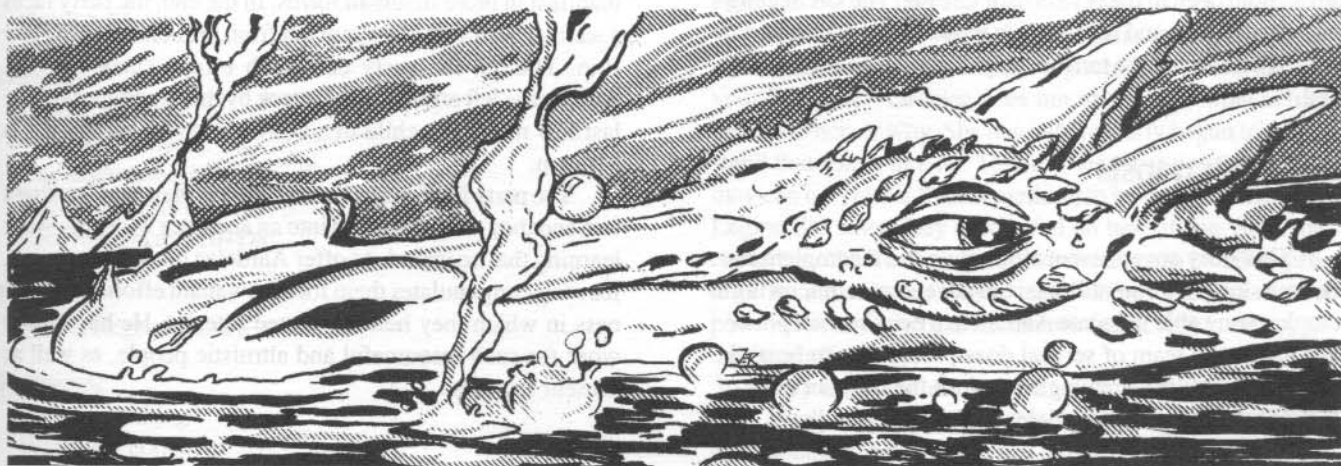
"In the event things could get worse, can anyone tell me why Trylen is carrying Iopan coins?" asked Jessep, holding up a handful of gold. "I knew he was just too conveniently available when Malsar came down with food poisoning ... I knew it."

"At least he took the hit instead of one of us in that last fight," said Tr'ran, just as a ball of fire scorched the rocks behind him.

"Damn! How did they get here so fast?" called Marson, reaching for his weapon.

Jessep was already weaving a new Thread when he called back, "I don't know, but at the range they're at you're useless in this. We'll keep them pinned down while you take the girl. Go! And take this!" He threw a strange looking potion Trylen had been carrying to Marson. "It's some kind of healing," he said, as Krandal lofted exploding flame arrows back at their pursuers and Tr'ran calling out "Tr'ran, Krandal, Jessep, Marson, Aardelea!" The skies poured fourth a sizzling rain that partially obscured them from their pursuers.

Marson had already turned and was picking up the girl to run when an inhuman noise erupted behind him. Whatever Jessep had called up was charging their enemy. As he ran he hoped it was enough.



Background

This section describes the return of Aardelea to Barsaive after being freed from captivity in Creana by agents working for the great dragons Mountainshadow and Icewing. Unfortunately, these agents are pursued by Theran forces, and all but one are killed before reaching Barsaive. The characters encounter the last surviving agent and Aardelea, and must escort the girl to a rendezvous with the Great Dragons in central Barsaive. The way is difficult, and much blood will be spilled on all sides. In the end, with skill, perseverance, and some luck, the players are able to make it to friendly forces. They are brought to an audience with Icewing, and he rewards the Adepts for their efforts and offers them other work more directly related to the war.

A few years ago, a young girl in a small village found an ancient book in a cave that changed her life forever. Aardelea, possessed of the powers to heal with a touch and to move objects by force of will alone, was suspected of Horror-taint by the Grim Legion; see the Adventure **Infected**. The truth was both less and more frightening; she had stumbled across ancient artifacts of dragon magic. Her True Pattern had been altered, overlaid with draconic forms, and she began to change.

The initial problems dealt with, Aardelea and her home village of Hanto were brought under the protection of the Great Dragons of Barsaive, most notably Icewing and Mountainshadow. They arranged for Aardelea to be left alone, but quietly observed, as the effects of the ancient magic continued to develop.

Then, the Therans landed a Behemoth at the Ayodhya Liferock. As told in **Prelude to War**, a Theran magician took far too great an interest in Aardelea. Hefera paid for his meddling in dragon affairs with his life, but Aardelea was spirited away by Theran agents and taken to a Heavenherd stronghold deep in the province of Creana. The Great Dragons were furious and set events in motion to visit their wrath upon Thera in a most terrible way. But, that is another legend.

Event Synopsis

This story covers events following the incomplete rescue mission. A group of Barsaivan adventurers in Icewing's employ were able to locate Aardelea in her Creanan prison, and an assault team of several dozen were able to break in and rescue her, but Icewing's were not the only servants of factions interested in Aardelea and her whereabouts. An



Iopan infiltrator managed to gain the trust of the escorts, and was called upon for backup when a last minute "accident" befell one of their other party members. Fortunately he was killed by Therans pursuing Aardelea before he was able to fully betray the escorts, who suffered mounting casualties as they neared Barsaive's border. By the beginning of the adventure only one desperate escort remains. His final words beg the characters to fulfill his mission and protect Aardelea from the pursuing Theran forces.

Aardelea herself is a prize of great worth to which ever faction is able to fully understand her blossoming powers and the changes the ancient dragon magic have wrought in her Pattern. The Therans wish to study her, and unravel the secrets of the dragon magic. Icewing wants her in order to further the future of the drakes as a race. The Denairastas, secretive rulers of Iopos, want her to further their own struggle against the Great Dragons. Aardelea just wants to go back to a home and a life that no longer exist.

The party is harried, from the outset, by a series of running battles. The Theran pursuit team is closing in. Holders of Trust, tracking their lost spy, have sent a fresh and formidable force of their own to recover the girl. Confusion and madness are slowly overtaking Aardelea as her powers manifest in more inhuman forms. In the end, the party faces a team of Theran Adepts sent out from the behemoth at Lake Ban. Though the party can, with effort, carry the day, Aardelea is left an emotional wreck by the experiences of the last few months, a child in a body she no longer knows as her own.

The party finally encounters allies as they near Icewing's lair, and they are summoned into an audience with him. After learning that he intends to offer Aardelea his full protection, Icewing congratulates them for their valiant efforts in a business in which they held no vested interest. He has further work for such resourceful and altruistic people, as well as present rewards.

Important Characters

AARDELEA

Attributes

Dexterity (23): 9/D8+D6
Strength (23): 9/D8+D6
Toughness (29): 11/D10+D8
Perception (26): 10/D10+D6
Willpower (23): 9/D8+D6
Charisma (17): 7/D12

Talents

Astral Sight (7): 17/D20+D10
Claw Shape (10): 22/D20+D10+D8
Elsewhere Sense (10): 35/D20+D12+2D10+D8
Mind Over Matter (10): 35/D20+D12+2D10+D8
Mystic Healing (10): 35/D20+D12+2D10+D8
Unarmed Combat (7): 16/D20+D8

Karma

Dice: 2D10
Points: 30

Combat

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 13
Social Defense: 9
Physical Armor: 0
Mystic Armor: 5

Initiative

Dice: D10+D6

Movement

Full: 130
Combat: 65

Damage

Death Rating: 56
Wound Threshold: 16
Unconsciousness Rating: 49
Recovery Tests per Day: 5
Recovery Dice: D10+D8

Powers

Fear 7, Regeneration 8

Equipment

Ragged clothing
Worn-out boots



While she looks to be in her mid to late teens, Aardelea is emotionally still a young child, a girl who's going through accelerated puberty and development of strange powers. She's been kidnapped, smuggled, examined, abused, rescued, and nearly killed several times, leaving her highly temperamental and justifiably paranoid. She has seen her entire village, including her mother, rounded up and either killed or enslaved by the Therans. She still experiences dreams, as vivid as waking life, where she transforms into a scaled beast with wings, and soars into the night to hunt, rend, and devour live prey. Aardelea does not understand what is happening to her, or why. She has only recently begun to understand that some, like the Therans, view her powers as tools they can use, rather than something to be feared as the Grim Legion did when they descended on her village. Since her capture by the Therans she has vowed not to be taken prisoner by anyone, ever again, and when forced to use her powers she uses them at maximum force, with ruthless, instinctual efficiency.

She's a slender, attractive human girl with finely-chiseled, nearly elven features, long, curly brown hair down past her shoulders and pale green eyes that flash disconcert-

ingly gold when her ire is aroused. When the party encounters her, her clothing is an ill-fitting mix of styles, ragged and travel-stained. Clean clothes and a hot bath will go a long way toward improving her reactions to the characters.

Like a dragon, she may spend Karma on any of her Powers or Talents, on both the initial Test and the Effect. Also like a dragon, she automatically regenerates one point of Karma per day. Aardelea will always use Karma when forced to invoke her powers.

Elsewhere Sense

Step Number: Rank + Willpower Step + 2

Action: Yes Skill Use: No

Requires Karma: No Strain: None

Discipline Talent Use: None

Elsewhere Sense allows a character to closely observe events occurring some distance away or behind a barrier, using hearing, sight, smell or touch. To use the enhanced sense of his or her choice, the character must specify the area around which the ability centers, up to 20 yards away per rank. The character then makes an Elsewhere Sense Test against a Difficulty Number determined by the distance between the character and the spot being observed. The base Difficulty Number is 5, plus 1 for every 10 yards away from the character. While using this ability, the character cannot use the chosen sense to observe his or her true surroundings. For example, if a character chooses to see an eagle in a nest several yards up a sheer cliff, he can no longer see the desert floor on which he is actually standing. This weakness can render the character susceptible to blindside and surprise attacks (see Combat, p. 202, **ED**).

Living targets can avoid observation by Elsewhere Sense. In this case, the character uses the highest Spell Defense of all beings observable from the selected area as the Difficulty Number for the Elsewhere Sense Test. Each use of Elsewhere Sense lasts for a number of rounds equal to the character's rank in the Talent.

Mind Over Matter

Step Number: Rank + Willpower Step + 2

Action: Yes Skill Use: No

Requires Karma: No Strain: None

Discipline Talent Use: None

This Talent allows a character to move small amounts of solid matter at will. He or she may move the matter or object in any direction or through the air at a maximum speed of yards per round equal to the character's rank in the Talent. To use this ability, the character makes a Mind Over Matter Test against a Difficulty Number based on the weight of the object moved. The base Difficulty Number is 2, plus 1 for every 5 pounds of weight.

Each use of Mind Over Matter lasts for a number of rounds equal to the character's rank in the Talent, or until the character stops concentrating.

Mystic Healing

Step Number: Rank + Willpower Step + 2

Action: Yes Skill Use: No

Requires Karma: No Strain: None

Discipline Talent Use: None

Mystic Healing allows a character to heal damage to another character by using a Recovery Test, substituting his or her Mystic Healing step for the Recovery step. The Difficulty Number is the Spell Defense of the recipient, who may choose to lower his or her defenses temporarily. The mystic healer must touch the subject, and the subject must concentrate fully on receiving the healing power. The subject must also believe in the character's healing ability. A character cannot use Mystic Healing to heal himself.

Zaghawa Marson

A Warrior of the Ninth Circle, Marson is short for an elf, with tanned skin and long hair that falls in tight curls below his shoulders. Marson carries a pair of fine, long, rapier-like blades, worn in a cross over his back. They are base damage 5 and Forged 4, for a total damage step of 9. On his left wrist is a tattoo of some sort of family crest. Characters with Elven Etiquette, Heraldry, or similar skills will be able to recognize that it indicates that he is from a minor noble family with roots in Urupa. From his dress and demeanor, it is clear that once Marson's clothes were quite fashionable in Marac, but the journey that decimated his party has taken its toll upon his appearance. His leather armor, formerly a Thread Item, is all but destroyed. He will be wearing one Thread amulet or ring (Gamemaster's discretion) which provides him minor physical and mystic protection, and a Horror Fend. He carries a Thread dagger and shield, the last mementos of his slain friends, but he has not been able to tie Threads to them. Hidden in an inner pocket is a small, silver-white crystal. His other equipment has either been lost or damaged beyond usefulness in the last few days. He carries a few personal mementos and a final letter to his family bidding them good-bye in case he does not return. Anyone using Astral Sight, healing skills, or similar methods of examination will be able to see that Marson has at least 5 Wounds, and is nearing total collapse due to shock and prolonged exhaustion. An Extraordinary success or the use of Lifesight will reveal that he is out of Recovery Tests for the day, having used the last one up via the Talent Life Check and is



actually *below* his Unconsciousness Rating, having ingested some sort of potion to allow him to keep going. This cannot possibly be healthy, given his condition.

DEX: 8 STR: 6 TOU: 7
PER: 6 WIL: 8 CHA: 5

THERAN ADEPTS

Three groups of Theran Adepts are actually met in the course of the adventure.

The first group, met in Event 1, is what remains of the initial pursuit team. Although they are a mercenary unit, and not regular Theran soldiers, they proudly wear colors marking their allegiance with the Theran Empire. They are all experienced, professional, and highly motivated by the various rewards they each know success will bring. They are also considered expendable by the Theran military, should they learn too much about the nature of their quarry.

Kalam Jadala, Seventh Circle Human Warrior

Kalam is the team leader, a tall, thick-thewed man nearing middle age. He has used Versatility to learn Climbing, Fire Blood, Riposte, and Sprint.

DEX: 7 STR: 8 TOU: 8
PER: 6 WIL: 5 CHA: 5

Sharan al-Tabrisi, Fifth Circle Elf Elemental

Cold-hearted and cruel, Sharan is disliked by even his own team members. Recently several of his healing and food-related spells have brought him into his party's better graces.

DEX: 5 STR: 5 TOU: 6
PER: 9 WIL: 9 CHA: 4

Jaen Deltoria, Fifth Circle Ork Archer

Small and nimble for an Ork woman, Jaen's first priority in combat will be to use Sprint to avoid any possible melee

engagement and remain out of range of most spell casters. She carries an Elven War Bow and uses its long range to the best of her ability.

DEX: 8 STR: 5 TOU: 5
PER: 8 WIL: 6 CHA: 5

Mirsar Anubo, Fifth Circle Elf Scout

Mirsar is an extreme loner and is considered faintly disturbing in a way that his teammates cannot identify. Mirsar is secretly a Questor for Dis and has been using his powers to extort his team to continue on, despite their losses. He will attempt to exert the influence of Dis on Aardelea to reduce her combat ability any time she is in sight of the party.

DEX: 6 STR: 5 TOU: 6
PER: 6 WIL: 8 CHA: 9

Kirin el-Koz, Fifth Circle Troll Nethermancer

Kirin is a fairly typical Nethermancer, however his large form and physical stature have lulled many into thinking him an unsophisticated brute. Few underestimate his ability as a spellcaster more than once. He will always have Shield Mist in one of his Matrices, and has two Spirits circling to protect him as well. Other spells, both on hand and in his grimoire, should be chosen by the Gamemaster.

DEX: 5 STR: 7 TOU: 7
PER: 8 WIL: 8 CHA: 8

All have taken three Wounds and fifteen points of damage, with the exception of the Troll Nethermancer, who has only one Wound. Their Group Pattern was destroyed by the deaths of half their team, and they have not had time to reweave it, so all Group Threads have been lost. They are lightly equipped, preferring the advantages that come with speed. What weapons they do carry are forged, and of good quality. They have expended most their healing magics, and are out of recovery tests. There should be a few thread items, mostly armor and defensive charms, amongst them, at the Gamemaster's discretion.

Pride's Hammer

The second group, an elite unit known as Pride's Hammer, is brought in from *Triumph* and encountered in Event 5. Pride's Hammer has a Group Pattern with no more than two Threads each of no more than Rank 2 woven to Talents and Attributes as determined by the Gamemaster. They all use the Group Pattern to communicate with each other telepathically.

Lomuon Striker, Sixth Circle Elven Swordmaster

Lomuon is the son of an influential Theran merchant, and the group's tactical leader. He has a nasty scar along his cheek from a duel fought many years ago. He usually fights with a sword in his good hand and a hammer in his off hand.

DEX: 8	STR: 6	TOU: 6
PER: 6	WIL: 7	CHA: 5

Rohkkak Davin, Sixth Circle Dwarf Elementalist

Davin is fairly unremarkable, even for a dwarf. He is competent and calm, even under terrible combat conditions. He rarely makes any sort of impulsive decision. He has a Spell Matrix Object in the shape of a small hammer (See **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**, p. 39) with a rank 6 Thread attached. Gamemasters should feel free to divide this as they see fit. Davin prefers large scale spells, and tends not to be very subtle in their use. He will always have his most damaging area-effect spell in one of his Matrices.

DEX: 5	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 8	WIL: 9	CHA: 6

Feld Karkarni, Fifth Circle T'skrang Wizard

Feld is a tall and ugly T'skrang by almost anyone's definition. What she lacks in good looks she makes up in bad manners. She is, however, extremely competent at sizing up an opponent and delivering support magics to her fellow

group members. She has military training in advanced tactics. (Treat as Tactics, the skill, at Rank 5.)

DEX: 5	STR: 5	TOU: 6
PER: 9	WIL: 8	CHA: 4

Trkan Orehand, Seventh Circle Ork Weaponsmith

Trkan is a childhood friend of the team leader. If Lomuon is killed or knocked out, Trkan will give into his *gahad* and attempt to fight whoever took down his friend. Although he is the highest circle member of the group, his racial status has kept him from rising in the Theran ranks, although Trkan is in denial about this fact.

DEX: 5	STR: 7	TOU: 7
PER: 7	WIL: 7	CHA: 4

Speleni Dinum, Circle Elven Scout

Dinum is romantically involved with Tooria. They will fight side by side, and if one is killed or knocked out, the other will fight to the death, using whatever means available.

DEX: 6	STR: 5	TOU: 6
PER: 8	WIL: 5	CHA: 6

Tooria Alndenn, Fifth Circle Human Beastmaster

Tooria is romantically involved with Dinum. They will fight side by side, and if one is killed or knocked out, the other will fight to the death, using whatever means available. Tooria has a mated pair of huttawa (see **Adept's Way**) as companion animals, and has multiple Threads tied to the female. She has used Versatility to learn Air Dance and Steel Thought, both at Rank 4.

DEX: 6	STR: 7	TOU: 6
PER: 8	WIL: 7	CHA: 6



Cyerra Aspect, Sixth Circle Windling Archer

Cyerra is an exile from the Striptrees, and an accomplished poison maker. She will either use Windling arrows tipped with Shadowmant Venom, or Sleep Arrows. She has already discovered that Aardelea has a strange immunity to the Sleep poison and is somewhat reluctant to use the other arrows on her due to the standing orders that they take her alive. She knows full well that punishment for accidentally killing their prize would be both long and ... unpleasant.

DEX: 8	STR: 3	TOU: 5
PER: 8	WIL: 7	CHA: 6

In combat Lomuon is the nominal leader of the group, although if Feld is able to spot an obvious weakness in the opponent's tactics the group will shift and respond to that information. The group uses their link via the group pattern to coordinate attacks, beginning with the largest threat as assessed by Feld. If any of the members are knocked out or killed this coordination ceases for one round while Pride's Hammer adjusts tactics. They should be outfitted with whatever equipment the Gamemaster feels is appropriate, and are rested and ready to fight when they encounter the party. They will be carrying at least 2 Healing Potions and 2 Last Chance Salves. The entire team is aware that accidentally killing Aardelea would be the end not only of their careers, but their lives.

The *Ranseur*

The third group, encountered in Event 6, makes up the remainder of the occupants of the scout Drakkar that was used to transport Pride's Hammer from the *Triumph*. They are the crew of the Drakkar, plus the final member of Pride's Hammer who was kept behind to coordinate in case reinforcements were needed.

The crew is a mix of races, but are all Air Sailors. By circle they are:

- 5 Third Circle Air Sailors (3 elves, 2 humans)
- 5 Fifth Circle Air Sailors (2 dwarves, 1 k'stulaami t'skrang, and 2 humans)
- 3 Seventh Circle Air Sailors (1 k'stulaami t'skrang, 1 windling, and 1 human)
- 1 Eighth Circle Air Sailor (elven, and captain of the ship)



Darrik Talnand is the remaining member of Pride's Hammer, who is nominally in charge of the Drakkar during the mission (although the boat's captain might be inclined to debate this point). He is a human of slight build and sharp features who is a Fifth Circle Archer and a Fourth Circle Sky Raider.

DEX: 7	STR: 6	TOU: 7
PER: 7	WIL: 5	CHA: 4

Darrik is coordinating with the rest of his group, but given the choice between rescuing his group and capturing Aardelea, he will not hesitate to go after the girl. Darrik will move by combining Sprint and Great Leap to out maneuver his opponents and is not shy about using the other crew members as Namegiver shields. Unless he does something to directly endanger the entire ship, however, the captain will follow his lead. The airship captain is aware of the mission to capture the girl, but has not been briefed on her importance. If Darrik is killed, and given enough dissuasion by the party, he will not pursue her at the cost of more than a few crew members.

The scout Drakkar, named the *Ranseur*, is small and built for speed more than durability. The addition of the



eight members of Pride's Hammer has made the boat crowded and the crew somewhat irritable, especially since the crew has no real concept of their current mission. Save for a dozen heavy crossbows carried by various members of the crew there are no ship-to-ship weapons on board to speak of.

HOLDERS OF TRUST

The Iopan contingent met in Event 3 is made up of nine Holders of Trust, six Silver Branch warriors operating in two triads, and a trio of Gold Branch Adepts.

The Silvers are all non-Adepts, with Forge 2 armor, Forge 2 swords, short bows and a single Desperate Blow charm each. Each Silver also has one of the following (Gamemaster's discretion): Healing Potion, Absorb Blow Charm, Blade Poison, or a Targeting Eye.

Gamemasters should feel free to adjust the number of Silvers encountered as needed to provide an appropriate level of challenge to the party.

Silver Branch Warrior

DEX:6	STR:6	TOU:7
PER:5	WIL:5	CHA:5

Melee Weapons 6

Riposte 5 (at the cost of 4 strain per use)

Missile Weapons 4

Kallomar Denairastas, the senior of the Gold triad, is an imposing human male who carries himself with a great deal of pride. Although an accomplished Adepts, he has done nothing to really stand out from the other members of the gold branch of the Holders of Trust. He hopes that this mission will finally bring him to the attention of his distant Great Uncle, the First Minister. Kallomar is a seventh circle Wizard, and a seventh circle Warrior. He tends to use spells which will augment his physical abilities in combat so that he stands out even more from his fellow Golds. He has a unique Thread Item sword which serves to enhance both his combat abilities and his spellcasting. Spells should be chosen at Gamemaster's discretion.

DEX:7	STR:6	TOU:6
PER:8	WIL:7	CHA:5

Rhaine Jalo is a small but wiry human male with dark skin and tiny, darting eyes. He is an eighth circle Thief and resents that Kallomar has been placed in charge of the mission. He suspects (rightfully so) that it is because of

Kallomar's relation to the First Minister, rather than merit or experience, that he was put in charge. Given the change Rhaine will attempt to upstage Kallomar, and barring that he will allow Kallomar to engage more than his fair share of the enemy while he hangs back "looking for an opening". He has also used Versatility to learn the Talents Great Leap and Sprint, both at Rank Four, and Life Check and Deadfall, both at Rank Six. He will attempt to use Sprint and Great Leap to maneuver into a position where he can Surprise Strike at his opponents in combat. If a battle is going poorly he will not hesitate to use Deadfall and then attempt to escape unnoticed. He has a Potion of Life with a Rank 4 Thread tied to it, and threaded armor.

DEX:6	STR:6	TOU:7
INT:5	WIL:5	CHA:5

Pa'thiel Haanium, the final member of the triad, is a female human with long, jet black hair and bright green eyes. Pa'thiel comes from a poor family, and for her it is a great honor to serve amongst the Golds. She alone of the Gold triad believes in this mission for the good of Iopos. While Kallomar and Rhaine vie for heroic deeds and the favor of their superiors, Pa'thiel believes she must do whatever is best for Iopos - in this case that means recovering Aardelea alive, and, where possible, eliminating any who know of her existence. Her case is perhaps the saddest of all of the Golds, for she holds the spirit of true patriotism in her heart, and knows nothing of the savage purposes to which the First Minister will use her devotion. She is a Seventh Circle Archer and a Fifth Circle Elemental. Her bow is a Thread Item, increasing damage, accuracy, and range. Spells should be chosen at Gamemaster's discretion.

DEX:8	STR:5	TOU:5
PER:8	WIL:6	CHA:5

See **Secret Societies of Barsaive**, pp. 34-37, for more information on the Silver and Gold Branches of the Holders of Trust.

ICEWING

One of Barsaive's Great Dragons, and the one most intimately involved with the Kingdom of Throal, Icewing is a manipulator of events far beyond the usual meddlesome nature of dragons. Well-known for hiring teams of Adepts to carry out his plans, usually through multiple intermediaries, he's also known for a fascination with Name-givers, their





nature and their relationship with dragonkind. Aardelea has become a transition between dragons and Name-givers. As such, studying her may solve many of the problems associated with drakes, the traditional servants of the Great Dragons, including their reproduction, a sore point with him. If a Name-giver can be transformed into something resembling a drake more easily than a drake can be created, then an entire new breed of draconic servants could arise. Icewing believes that Aardelea may also hold the key to transforming the drakes from magical creations into a true race of their own right, capable of bearing young. The Gamemaster should see **Secret Societies of Barsaive, The Dragons' Network, Game Information**, pp. 12-13, for expanded details on the crucial part Aardelea has to play in the destiny of the drakes. While Icewing uses Name-givers as pawns, he does not take them into his confidence, and expects payment to be explanation enough for his orders.

Running The Return of Aardelea

Adventure Framework

The Return of Aardelea

Setup

There are many different ways the players might become involved in this adventure. They could be in central Barsaive after any number of the events of Barsaive at War. However, if the Adepts are not in the area on their own, they can be recruited by dragon agents (potentially masquerading as something entirely different, such as a merchant worried about his daughter) to go and assist the rescue mission. Details may or may not be provided, and if given may not be entirely accurate. Icewing wants this issue resolved as quickly and quietly as possible, especially considering how much of a mess has already been made. The characters may also be in the area on unrelated business. They could even be hired by a Theran spy to help "rescue his kidnapped daughter," only to learn the truth of the situation when they encounter Aardelea. Special care should be taken by Gamemasters who have run their players through the Adventure Modules **Infected**, **Prelude to War** or other adventures involving Aardelea and the village of Hanto to adjust the adventures so that continuity is preserved, however Aardelea looks much different than the little girl that they may be expecting.

Event 1

However the characters are brought into this story line, they encounter an male elf and a human woman who can be seen from a short distance fleeing ahead of a small group of Theran pursuers. In a desperate attempt to get help the elf, Zaghawa Marson, runs toward the characters, gesturing back to the approaching Therans. He shouts "Save the girl! I'll hold them off! Get her to Icewing!" and unsheaths his blades. At the same time Mirsar Anubo, the Theran Scout, and Jaan Deltoria, the Theran Archer, appear from the same direction as the player's arrival. Although not surrounded in the traditional sense, the characters are rapidly engulfed in a battle with the Therans coming from all sides. The Theran mercenaries will assume that the characters are backup for Marson, and treat them as such. During the fight Aardelea is struck by an arrow from Jaan's bow, and passes out. Marson, although a brave and skillful warrior, is killed by the Therans in their initial onslaught. The characters, given their unwounded and healthy condition, should carry the day.

Close examination of Marson's body should reveal that he has been in a wounded condition for quite some time, and characters with appropriate skills should be able to pick up on the fact that he fought well beyond the point where he should have been unconscious, and probably dead. Last Chance Salves used on Marson will be totally ineffectual unless the characters first use a spell, item, or other healing method that would counteract the effects of poison. If the characters are clever enough to figure out how to heal Marson, or invent some truly unique way to revive him, let them. Marson, although now a friend for life to all the party, is too wounded to be functional and will show the characters the crystal he carries hidden on his person. Otherwise make sure someone in the party discovers the silver-white crystal he is carrying. Aardelea will recover consciousness when the characters find the crystal. At about that same time one of the characters should spot a Theran airship on the horizon. It is obviously engaged in a ground search and the characters should be motivated to flee at best speeds. If the characters stay for too long at any one location before **Event 5** they should catch sight of the airship as it continues its search.

Event 2

Aardelea will insist that the characters keep moving north until sunset, at which point she stops from sheer exhaustion. Any characters examining the silver-white crystal found on Marson before this time may be able to discover that it is magical, but its true nature is unclear. It is obviously valuable. When the players make camp, or sooner if they are rough with Aardelea and force this event, she will ask to see the crystal. She holds it in her hands and tells the





characters "Marson said to do this if he didn't make it." The characters are suddenly hit with an overwhelming sensation of distress, the mental image of a far off mountain, and another image of a dragon, surrounded by drakes, rising into the night sky. This mental imagery is replaced by the head of a dragon, turning to survey the party. Characters who have dealt with the dragons before may recognize Icewing's imposing stare. Although there are no words uttered by the great dragon, all are left with an impression of a location that they should head to, a sense of great urgency, and a feeling of foreboding. When the trance like feeling ends Aardelea dumps a handful of black dust to the ground, all that remains of the crystal. She will then fall asleep until dawn.

Now that the characters have time to assess their situation they should also be encouraged to read through Marson's letter home. It tells his family about the assault on the Creanan fortress which held Aardelea, and the assault team which remained behind while his party fled north with the stunned girl. His writing tries to explain that the girl is important to the future of all of Barsaive, and that the sacrifices he and the rest of his companions have made are worth it. The letter also covers his fears that, even if they manage to escape the Therans, they may have been betrayed to the Iopans. If Marson somehow survived he will be able to tell the characters more about his mission, and his belief that Aardelea may be able to help the Dragon's turn the tide against Thera.

In the morning, when she awakes, Aardelea is fully healed, although unless the characters have done something about it, she is still dirty and dressed in clothes which are no more than rags. She does not want to interact with the characters, except to ask them to please take her "home". This resonates with the characters as the place they saw in the vision from the previous night, north toward Icewing's mountain lair. If Marson survived she will use Mystic Healing on him. Although this helps, Marson still has his wounds to deal with, rendering him near useless. Aardelea's behavior will seem childish for a girl of her apparent physical age, and if she becomes frustrated she will use Fear on the character who most provoked her ire. The target will be left with a definite perception that they saw something reptilian when she looked at them. She will accept food and briefly interact with characters who treat her very gently, especially if they intimate that they will be helping her get "home". Any characters who have participated in previous adventures involving Aardelea will note that she has aged considerably since the last time they saw her, and that her behavior and personality have altered as well.

Event 3

As the party continues on they encounter a contingent of Iopan Holders of Trust - three Silver branch warriors led by a Gold. Kallomar Denairastas will attempt to engage the party in a parley, demanding that the characters turn over Aardelea to his care, and declaring that her former home village, Hanto, is now a protectorate of Iopos. This is all rubbish, and only serves as a cover for Rhaine Jalo to sneak into a surprise position while Pa'thiel Haanium and the remaining three Silver branch warriors circle behind the characters. When it appears that talking will gain no further advantage, or if the characters attack, Kallomar will give a signal for Pa'thiel and her Silvers to begin launching arrows into the party. Kallomar and his Silvers will melee with the characters. When the fight is well under way Rhaine will strike out at Aardelea in an attempt to knock her unconscious and spirit her away. Unfortunately for him she remains standing after his attack, turns around, and rams her hand deep into his chest. As she pulls it out it has obviously transformed into a giant, reptilian claw. Rhaine slumps to the ground, apparently dead. Aardelea's features take on a fearsome aspect as she begins tearing into any Iopan foolish enough to get near her. She will use Karma on both attack and damage tests, and attacks opponents regardless of whether they're facing her, running away, or cowering in fear on the ground. Only when an Iopan stops moving (dead or unconscious) will she move on to the next opponent. At some point in the fight Rhaine Jalo, who had used deadfall when Aardelea nearly eviscerated him, will try to sneak off and return to report to his masters. Once the combat is finished Aardelea seems to regain her senses, looks around, and begins sobbing. She sits down and begins rocking back and forth, holding her head in her gore spattered hands. She will need a lot of help before she can do much else for the next several hours. If she has a strong connection to one of the party members, she may even reveal (in private, one-on-one conversation only) her fear of the blood lust that is slowly overcoming her. If this scene isn't used, have Aardelea exhibit her Claw Shape power in **Event 5**, and use her panic and horror as justification for her flight into the woods.

Event 4

This event can happen at any point in the adventure arc, although it is best used early, where it will have the most impact. Aardelea will eventually find that she can trust the characters, assuming they have made any attempt at all to comfort her and interact socially. She will begin to tell them bits and pieces of her story and all of the tragedies that have befallen her family and home village. Depending on the character's previous interactions with Aardelea, or lack thereof, she may skip the parts the players are already famil-





iar with, and begin talking about her confinement in Creana. She will relate only the most general details - the pitch dark empty cell she was kept in most of the time, the searing pain from probing (both magical and mundane) whenever she was allowed out, and her total lack of comprehension as to what she ever did to deserve all of it. Given her nightmarish dreams of feasting on living flesh, and inexplicable transformations, Aardelea has come to think that maybe she is a monster, and that is why everyone from the Grim Legion to the Therans want her.

The Gamemaster should be careful to role play this with an emphasis on Aardelea's vulnerability and childlike innocence in the face of forces she can not comprehend. She wants her mother, she wants her home, and she wants desperately to be left alone by the world. Explanations about the side effects of Dragon Magic and the formation of the drakes will only serve to confuse her. Aardelea is looking for someone to tell her that things will be all right, and that someone will protect her. (She will, however, stop anyone who goes as far as attempting to swear a blood oath that they will protect her before they can complete it, stating that she wants nothing more to do with Blood Magic, ever.) It should be clear to the players that Aardelea, for all her powers, will be unable to endure, physically or mentally, much further strain.

Event 5

As the party draws near to the mountains, within a few days travel of Icewing's lair, they face another combat, against another party of Theran Adepts, who have disembarked from the scout Drakkar. The Therans appear ahead of the party and close to meet them with as much stealth and speed as possible. During the fight, Aardelea panics and bolts back off towards the woods (or, if **Event 3** was not used, demonstrates her Claw Shape ability, then flees in horror at what she's done). Cyerra Aspect, the Windling Archer, will attempt to chase Aardelea and harry her into the woods, while the remainder of Pride's Hammer attempts to finish off the party. Depending on the character's actions, this may turn into a running battle that leads into Event 6, or they may dispatch the Therans and then go after Aardelea.

Event 6

As the party follows Aardelea back into the woods they begin to hear her screaming. As they approach the party will burst into a clearing. The *Ranseur* has landed at the far side of the clearing, about 100 years away, and Aardelea is slowly being surrounded by it's crew, dressed in Theran uniforms, many of whom have nets readied. Darrik Talnand is standing at the top of the gangplank, obviously directing the sailors,

(although he wears civilian clothing) and calling for more nets. As the characters take all this in, they notice Cyerra flitting around Aardelea's head trying to tease and disorient her. Aardelea screams out "STOP!" as Cyerra swoops in for another pass. As the Windling freezes momentarily in the air Aardelea makes one swift motion with her hand and the Windling smashes head first into a rock on the forest floor, dead. Now they only have the air ship crew to deal with. Darrik will avoid direct confrontation with the players, throwing navy men at them instead. If the party takes the fight to him and renders him dead or unconscious the ship's captain will likely try to withdraw. Aardelea will fight alongside the players, using every power at her disposal, in an instinctive and bestial manner. If there is no one close to her to use Claw Shape on, she will use Mind Over Matter to disarm distant troops (opposed Strength check against Mind Over Matter), and in the following round fling the lost weapon into another sailor (use Mind Over Matter for both to Hit and Damage). Remember that when fighting like this she will spend Karma on damage each and every time she hits, until she is out of Karma.

If the fight is going too badly for the party have the Drakes from the Climax arrive early. The captain of the *Ranseur* will flee immediately upon seeing them.

Climax

When the fight is over and the Drakkar has either fled or been captured, a pair of large Drakes in their natural form land in the clearing. Aardelea, who has been fighting for her life (literally) for so long, and is now covered in gore and blood from rending Theran sailors, faints. One of the Drakes changes into a tall human as the other picks up Aardelea and flies off with her. As the human Drake silently surveys the area, the players may get a final sense of futility if they fail to remember the rendezvous that Marson was supposed to be making. After a significant assessment of the situation the Drake will hand out healing magics so that wounded members of the party are conscious and able to stand and then finally speak.

"So you are the ones who had the girl. My master will wish to deal with you directly. Follow."

The air around the drake shimmers and a previously unseen path appears. This effect repeats itself several more times as the party walks and the drake turns left and right seemingly randomly. Occasionally the drake will lead the party back in the direction they just came from, but the landscape will be radically different from what they just passed. The trip lasts for several minutes, until even the best Scout would be unsure of where they have actually been going or had been. The drake finally leads the characters into a small cave in the side of a foothill.



If the party is stupid enough to pick a fight with the drake, he will simply depart and return with his partner, and then systematically knock each of the party members unconscious. If the party delays, the pair will return and do the same. In either case, the players wake up in Icewing's lair. Delay or combat with his servants should significantly affect his attitude toward the party members, although he will not kill them since they rescued Aardelea.

When the party reports to Icewing, possibly expecting serious trouble for having intervened in dragon affairs, they should be reminded of what happened to Hefera when he interfered with Aardelea. Instead of a good chewing, however, they receive a reward for having tried to assist the mission. Icewing praises the party, in his reserved, superior way, for involving themselves in the situation, stating that Barsaive needs people with such a heroic bent. He might offer to hire the party to deliver equipment for the war effort; to take ritual materials to Vivane; to sabotage one of the engines at the *Triumph*; or to complete other missions supporting draconic efforts against Thera. He will promise greater rewards in the future if they are as enthusiastic about his new business as they were about the rescue attempt.

If the party asks about what will become of Aardelea now, Icewing will state that she will be cared for by her surviving family members in one of his protected villages. He indicates most of the freed slaves from Hanto have been relocated there. Icewing promises personal protection of the girl, intimating that this is what should have been done from the beginning. He does not reveal that he initially opposed that course of action, and will behave as if he is the Namegiver who should make such a decision. He will not reveal where exactly the village is, or what "personal protection" entails, letting the party know quite firmly that that information is on a need to know basis only. He cuts off this line of questioning if the party persists.

When the party leaves or is finally dismissed they find that when they leave the cave they are, once again, standing where their final fight with the Therans happened. If they search the area carefully there is a small natural cave a few hundred yards away in the side of a hill, but it is completely deserted and leads nowhere.

Sequels

Thera will shortly be far too busy with larger issues to go chasing down Aardelea. The party can go from this adventure to any other that has draconic involvement, as suggested in the Climax.

If Marson died, sending his body or, at least, his personal effects back to Urupa for proper ceremonies would be the right thing to do, as any elf should know. If he somehow managed to live through the adventure, he will need help

returning home for a long period of convalescence. Getting him there poses all sorts of logistical problems involving preservation and transport. Pulling it off, though, would incur a debt on the part of his family. If the Gamemaster has chosen to run this section first, this might be a good hook for sending the characters to Urupa with King Neden's messages. How this plays out is up to the Gamemaster.

If Rhaine Jalo managed to escape in **Event 3** the characters have earned the unmitigated hatred of the Denairastas, who will certainly make their lives difficult whenever possible. If it serves to advance their cause the Denairastas may also make the Therans aware of exactly who aided Aardelea's escape.

If the party actually managed to capture the *Ranseur* and return to its last known location, it will be gone. Some searching of the area will reveal traces of the drakes, who have left the party a small collection of Thread items hidden in the area. Each item should be obviously suited to one party member, and each should contain a note of thanks for the party's contribution to Barsaive's war effort against Thera. If they did not promptly respond to the drake's summons, there is nothing left behind for them to find.

Although the party encounters several dozen enemy troops between the Denairastas and the Therans, due to their flight they should not have been able to carry much loot. If they have a wagon or other vehicle, they may have netted several thousand silver in weapons and armor, however, selling the equipment may prove problematic as it will identify them to the Denairastas and the Therans. Attempting to fence any equipment may be a mini-adventure in and of itself.

Loose Ends

Once the lesser ones were gone, the Great Dragon took himself off deeper into his lair, to a private chamber he allowed no other to enter. There, before the mirror, he chanted the ancient words over the Eye of All-Wings, clearing the fog from the mirror to reveal another with the same markings.

"I see you," the dragon in the mirror began.

"Yuichotol's child has been returned to our care," said Icewing, shifting from the Posture of Formal Greeting to that of Petitioner Requesting Mutual Cooperation.

"We will see that she is watched closely this time?" replied his brother.

"The Impertinent Ones will soon be of no threat to her. If the Outcast interferes with her again, I will end him personally." Icewing rumbled, barely managing to maintain the complex ritual of face to face contact in his anger. "Stand you with me?"





Chapter 4: PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

A knock, meekly polite, announced the arrival of the last part of his plan. "Come," commanded the figure behind the desk. "Here they are, sir. Our current assessment of everything the Barsaivans can throw at us, and our force estimates as well." The secretary left the papers and bowed out quickly, not wishing to tempt the infamous temper of General Ilfaralek, akarenti of Vivane. The General picked up the papers and began writing. It would be a long night at the office, but that could not be helped.

Hours later, he was finished. Collecting the papers into a large bag, he moved the originals to the proper place in the cabinet. A few notes scrawled here and there throughout the margins would show that his long hours tonight had been spent studying the intelligence, not merely copying it. He moved around the office, closing things down for the night, as he was wont to do.

His hand on the doorknob, he took a long look around the office. Here and there his glance stopped, lingering on a memento, a painting, the keepsake items that gather in any office. All this would be left behind. Surprisingly, he found that he would actually miss some of the people he had worked with. Working in this capacity had taught him much about the Therans assigned to this part of Barsaive. They were in many cases good workers, career soldiers and bureaucrats who had fallen out of favor with the central powers and had been shipped out to Barsaive. There were good and bad traits in many of them. Some even sympathized with the people of Barsaive. He had been able to do nothing about that - to do so would be to jeopardize his own position.

Nodding to the soldiers outside his door, he entered his quarters and prepared. The bag was left open next to his bed, half-filled out forms on the nightstand a tribute to his work ethic. Tonight was his finale, the last chapter in the performance of a lifetime. He allowed himself a smile as he considered the chaos that his office would be thrown into with his absence. The guards, he was sure, would be punished for their laxity, bearing the brunt of the blame for his death. This was as it should be - he had spent quite a while skimming the cream of Thera's soldiers in Vivane for his own guard, and they would be too effective if left untainted by the night's affair.

This would not be the only effect of the night's work. Given General Ilfaralek's position, not one would blame him having sureties against his own death. It was certainly a common enough form of insurance, the letters held in safekeeping until one's untimely passing. They would definitely make for interesting reading among the Thera noble houses. It was, in fact, a great lesson on just how little nobility there was among them. Strangely, the weakest and most corrupt leaders would escape with the fewest scratches.

Yet none of this was as valuable as the information he would steal. If knowledge is power, then he held the power of Thera in his hands. He knew almost every agent of Thera employed in Barsaive, and he had suspicions of the identities of the remainder. Troop deployments, strengths, weaknesses, and fears - the Thera military mind was his to know. Of course, it didn't hurt at all that he had helped prepare most of the information in the first place. To General Ilfaralek's credit, his writings were mostly accurate, with only a few omissions here and there. Ilfaralek's writing would serve as a fine guide to his successor. For minutes, he contemplated his handiwork.



His reverie was broken by the sounds of a visitor alighting on the windowsill. He waited patiently while the figure worked at the lock on the window, hands and face illuminated by a pale blue glow. Scant seconds later, the window slid noiselessly open on its well-greased rails. Black-clad arms reached through the window, lowering a human body into the room. The form dropped to the floor, thudding lightly on the plush carpet. After depositing its burden, the visitor followed it into the room, revealing itself to be a female clad wholly in black and moving with the lithe grace of a trained Thief. Without a word, the two conspirators embraced fiercely.

After a moment both overlong and much too short, she broke the embrace. Muttering powerful words under her breath, the lady quickly finished her spell and spoke. "It is quiet without. We must move quickly."

"What, not happy to see me?" was his reply. "I see you brought along our honored guest. He surely isn't dead already?"

"Only in mind. We should move him to the bed before he starts drooling on the carpet. He soaked my shoulder through on the way here already." With that, she walked over to the mindless human, picking him up effortlessly and laying him down in peaceful repose on the bed.

Lying on the bed, General Ilfaralek looked quite comfortable, notwithstanding the blank stare etched on his face. The pretender spoke. "Just think of it, spending that long in our mistress's tender care. She must know even the things he'd forgotten. One thing you can say for him, though — it's a rare man that can be so useful dead."

The visitor glared at the false Ilfaralek, pulled out a dagger, and with a single move, plunged it deep into the real Ilfaralek's chest. A final wheeze marked the passage of the akarenti General who had served Thera so well in his five and a half decades. "It's done," she said. "Do the honors, would you, dear brother?"

"Very well," he replied with a smirk. "I hope you realize how damaging this could be to me on a psychological level," he said as he dipped his fingers into the blood of the dead General. "It's not quite murder, and it's not quite suicide. I fear I shall have to write myself a note and hide it away somewhere." Carefully, he began to draw the symbol of an open eye in the wall over the headboard of the bed. Under the eye, he added some writing in Throalic script.

She finished casting the spells that would muddy their tracks, and looked at the wall. "The King is dead. Long live the king? Hardly inventive ... but I suppose it will do. Let's go."

The night air was bitter as the two made good their escape. It would be hours before the body was found, and all trails would point away from them. Between his sister's

magic and the items that their mistress had so thoughtfully provided, the long mission was over, and had been a success. Their mistress provided nothing but the best for the members of the Hand. The best was also all that she accepted.

BATTLE PLANS AND FORCES

This section outlines the overall battle plan that the Barsaivan forces have devised for the war against the Therans, and also outlines the various forces on both sides of the war. These forces are divided by the three fronts on which the war will be fought; on the Serpent River, in the skies, and on land.

THROAL'S PLAN

Once war with the Thera Empire is inevitable, Throal's plan will be to array the various forces against the Therans in such a way as to isolate the fortress at Lake Ban from support. The t'skrang will do this by blockading House K'tenshin. Cara Fahd will help by cutting off land-based caravans from Vivane and Sky Point. The Crystal Raiders will aid by raiding airships heading into Barsaive from Sky Point. The specifics of these efforts are described in the War Fronts and Preparations for the Coming War sections below.

ALONG THE SERPENT

This section describes the forces involved in the battles along the Serpent River. These forces engage in a number of battles and conflicts along the southern Serpent, all of which are intended to eventually force House K'tenshin to dissolve their alliance with the Therans, isolating the Therans at the behemoth near Lake Ban. This in turn leads to *The Siege of Triumph* (p. 84), the first of the major campaigns of the war against Thera.

BARSAIVAN FORCES

Primary among the Barsaivan-allied forces on the Serpent River are House V'strimon and House Syrtis. In addition to these however, the Barsaivan side also includes House T'kambras and the Scavians from the northern stretches of the Tylon River.

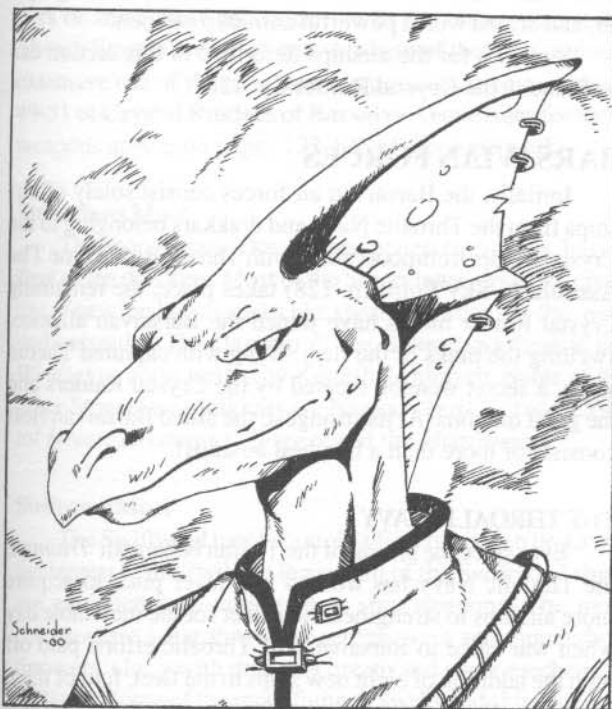
Most of the allied Houses devote portions of their warship fleets to the war against House K'tenshin, keeping their merchant boats out of the battles whenever possible. Even still, the combined ships of the allied Houses total twenty-one ships, far outnumbering the number of warships House K'tenshin can bring to bear against them.





The ships listed below will not participate in every single battle against House K'tenshin. The Barsaivan-allied forces spread their efforts over a period of a few weeks, using as many ships in each conflict as they deem necessary. Descriptions of the individual battles, along with specific numbers and types of ships used in each appear in the **River Fronts** section of **Preparations for War** (p. 48).

(Statistics of these ships appear in the *Ships of the Serpent River* section of **The Serpent River**, p. 90).



HOUSE V'STRIMON

House V'strimon, the House of Reeds, devotes a total of 6 ships to battling K'tenshin, including three of its five warships, as well as three shimorams. The warships that patrol the waters of Lake Ban surrounding the Floating City remain in position, staying on guard against any possible strikes against House V'strimon by forces of House K'tenshin or by their Theran allies.

HOUSE SYRTIS

Of all the allied Houses, the House of the Dragon Moon contributes the largest number of ships to the war against K'tenshin. House Syrtis devotes three of the aropagoi's warships, among them the *Mistral*, captained by Belit Shustal Syrtis (p. 82 - 83, **The Serpent River**). They also send the *Breeton II*, captained by Aemilius Vellunium (p. 81, **The Serpent River**) and the *Syrtisian Dreadnought* (p. 82, **The**

Serpent River) to join the Barsaivan forces allied against House K'tenshin.

HOUSE T'KAMBRAS

The House of The Swift Waters, the smallest of the aropagoi on the Serpent River, devotes a total of 4 warships to the allied fleet, including *Astendar's Desire*, captained by Jedaiyen Westhrall (p. 34, **The Serpent River**). Longtime foes of House K'tenshin, the t'skrang of House T'kambras are more than eager to join their fellow t'skrang against Thera's allies.

SCAVIANS

The Scavians devote a small fleet of three barges (pp. 106-107, **The Serpent River**) to the allied fleet. These barges have been prepared for their role in this military effort, and are populated only by Scavian sailors and soldiers. The three Scavian barges aren't active in the early battles against House K'tenshin, but play a prominent role in the eventual blockade against the ships of House K'tenshin (see **Preparations for War**, p. 55).

Scavian crews consist primarily of non-Adepts, but do include Warrior, Swordmaster, and Scout Adepts, in addition to a pair of Elementalists on each barge. Unlike the rest of the allied forces, the Scavians are human.

THERAN-ALLIED FORCES

The Theran-allied forces along the Serpent River consist only of those of House K'tenshin. Despite their superior ships and combat prowess, the K'tenshin forces are vastly outnumbered by those of the Barsaivan alliance. While before, the t'skrang of the House of the Nine Diamonds were able call on their Theran allies for aerial support, the efforts of the Throalic navy and the Crystal Raiders have preoccupied the Theran airship fleet at *Triumph*, leaving the sailors of House K'tenshin on their own (p. 55, **War in the Skies**). While unable to provide military backup, Thera can provide support to House K'tenshin in the form of magical equipment for the riverboat crews. This aid is usually in the form of Forged weapons and other minor magical items.

HOUSE K'TENSHIN

The ships of House K'tenshin begin on the defensive, as targets of what appear at first to be no more than typical conflicts between their ships and those of the other aropagoi. It is only when the attacks grow in frequency, and when the K'tenshin ships are attacked by V'strimon, Syrtis, and T'kambras ships working together does the Shivalahala K'tenshin begin to realize what is happening.



When the attacks begin to take place more often, K'tenshin ships begin traveling with escort ships. These escorts are warships when possible, but given the limited number of warships in their fleet, House K'tenshin begins using other merchant riverboats as escorts as well. It's only after the capture of a pair of K'tenshin ships (a merchant ship and its warship escort) that House K'tenshin assumes a more aggressive stance, even going as far as attacking ships of Houses V'strimon and Syrtis.

Because they are so outnumbered by the forces of the allied Houses, House K'tenshin has no choice but devote a good number of merchant riverboats to defending themselves. In addition to their entire fleet of seven warships, up to fifteen riverboats of the House of the Nine Diamonds' merchant fleet end up involved in the battles along the southern stretch of the Serpent River. These merchant riverboats have been converted to be more effective in ship-to-ship combat, at the cost of much of their carrying capacity.

The loss of their merchant riverboats to escort duty greatly harms House K'tenshin's profits, leading to the eventual dissolution of their alliance with the Theran Empire. See **The River Front**, p. 55.

HOUSE HENGHYOKE

The Henghyoke are the House least affected by the battles on the River. Choosing neither side, they instead continue their piratical tradition, attacking ships of both sides at seemingly random. They do, however, seem to attack the ships of House K'tenshin more frequently than those of the other houses. Whether this pattern indicates subtle political maneuvering or is merely chance is unknown.

RIVERBOAT CREW

All t'skrang riverboat crewmen are either Boatman or Swordmaster Adepts. Sample statistics for Boatmen Adepts appear on page 110 of **The Serpent River** and on page 152 of the **Appendix**. Each ship also includes up to three Circle 3 Elementalists to assist the engineer. Sample statistics for Elementalist Adepts appear on page 112 of **Prelude to War**.

The average Circle of crewmembers aboard a riverboat equals the Crew Skill Rating listed in the ship's game profile. Additionally, most riverboats have at least three officers - first mate, boatswain, and quartermaster - of Circle 4. T'skrang captains and Elementalist engineers are nearly always at least Circle 7. Boatmen prefer the broadsword and parrying net for melee combat and the javelin for missile combat. Due to their alliance with Thera, the crews of the House K'tenshin riverboats have been supplied with Forge 1 or greater weapons. The captains and Elementalists are likely to have minor magical items as well as the forged weapons.

IN THE SKIES

This section describes the aerial forces available to the Barsaivan and Theran sides of the war in Barsaive. It also contains information regarding Neden's plans to bolster the strength of the Throalic airship fleet, and about the aid that Barsaivan forces receive from the great dragons and the Crystal Raider trollmoots to strengthen the Barsaivan air fleet. Lastly, this section introduces Barsaive's "secret weapon" in the air war, a new type of airship constructed by Swiftwind trollmoot, crafted almost entirely out of living crystal, and armed with a powerful anti-ship weapon.

Statistics for the airships described in this section can be found in the **Crystal Raiders**, p. 128.

BARSAIVIAN FORCES

Initially, the Barsaivan air forces consist solely of airships from the Throalic Navy and drakkars belonging to the Crystal Raider trollmoots allied with Throal. By the time **The Assault on Sky Point** (p. 128) takes place, the remaining Crystal Raider moots have joined the Barsaivan alliance, swelling the ranks of the fleet, along with captured Theran ships, a secret weapon created by the Crystal Raiders and the great dragons. At its strongest, the allied Barsaivan fleet consists of more than a hundred airships!

THE THROALIC NAVY

Ever since the arrival of the Theran behemoth *Triumph*, the Throalic Navy has worked at a fever pitch to acquire more airships to strengthen their fleet for the inevitable day when war came to Barsaive. The Throalic efforts paid off with the addition of eight new ships to the fleet, four of them massive galleons, a type of vessel not seen in Barsaive since before the Scourge.

Two of the galleons are constructed by the shipyards in Jerris and delivered to Throal before Jerris is seized by the forces of Iopos (as described in **The Taking of Jerris**, p. 99). The other two are recovered by Adepts from a hiding place in the Throal Mountains where they weathered the Scourge, as described in **The Air Galleons of Throal** (p. 34, **Prelude to War**).

One of the new galleons, the *Varulus*, is the flagship of the fleet, commanded by General Ilmorian himself. While he is with the fleet, King Neden is generally on board the *Varulus*, protected by royal bodyguards. The remaining galleons are the *Korelsed*, the *Jothan* and the *Braza*. The bulk of the fleet is made up of twenty galleys, medium-sized ships capable of mounting fire cannons and traveling swiftly under sail. The remainder of the Throalic fleet is composed of ten drakkars, smaller ships used for scouting and lightning strikes at the enemy. Although lightly armed compared to





the larger ships (or the massive Theran floating fortresses) the drakkars are swift enough to elude opponents and perform boarding maneuvers. These have the same statistics as the Crystal Raider drakkars below.

CRYSTAL RAIDER SHIPS

At the start of the war, Throal counts the Stoneclaws, Swiftwind and Rockhorn trollmoots as allies. Each of these moots provides airships to attack Theran targets during the **Siege of Triumph** and the **Assault on Sky Point**. The numbers of ships these moots devote to the effort against the Theran Empire are listed below. Many of these ships make extensive use of the new ship weapons described on pages 49-51 of **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**. Game rules for these weapons appear on pages 122-123 of the same book.

Stoneclaws Moot

The Stoneclaws, Throal's staunchest troll allies, have a fleet of ten drakkars. Most of the Stoneclaws' drakkars make use of new airship weapons like spear-throwers, net-throwers and catapults. The flagship of the Stoneclaws fleet is the *Windtalon*, commanded by Kerththale himself. Some of the other Stoneclaws drakkars are Named *Yerrik's Pride*, *Crystal Heart*, *Thystonius' Dagger* and the *Mistrunner*.

Swiftwind Moot

The Swiftwind moot controls a fleet of sixteen drakkars, the largest in the Twilight Peaks. All of the Swiftwind ships are equipped with various new ship weapons. The most common are spear throwers, net throwers and thunderbolt throwers, along with dragon's breath and some mechanical ballistae. Some of the more famous Swiftwind ships include *Nemar's Fire* (commanded by Horr'tan Hammerfist Rockfall), *Galesaber*, *Darkstorm*, *F'Wella's Eyes* and *Cloud Cutter*. The Swiftwind moot also provides the crystal ship *Thera's Bane* (see Other **Barsaivan Forces**).

Rockhorn Moot

The Rockhorn moot from the Delaris Mountains has a fleet of eight drakkars. They make use of catapults and ballistae for the most part. Rockhorn ships work well in groups and often coordinate together to attack an enemy ship and disable it. Some of their ships are the *Golden Eagle*, the *Sharpsail*, *Rockbrother* and the *Whisperwind*.

Other Moots

After the events in the **Summit at the Crystal Span** (p. 62), other trollmoots join the alliance against Thera, adding their ships to strengthen the Barsaivan fleet for the **Assault on Sky Point**.

Ironmonger Moot

The Ironmonger fleet consists of twelve drakkars, most of them outfitted with mechanical ship-weapons like catapults and ballistae, along with some spear-throwers. Swiftwind smith and alchemist Vul'tan Blackhammer has prepared some alchemical munitions for catapult loads able to dissolve the stone hulls of Theran ships. The lead Ironmonger drakkar is the *Bronzeclaw*, Named for the leaders of the moot and captained by Yorvak Bronzeclaw himself. Other ships in the fleet include the *Razor*, the *Sword of Ustrect*, the *Longest Journey*, the *Ironseeker* and the *Skyhammer*.

Thundersky Moot

The Thundersky moot offers eleven drakkars. Thundersky drakkars are armed with weapons that take advantage of the moot's supplies of True Air, mainly spear-throwers and thunderbolt throwers. Some of the Thundersky drakkars include *Erka's Freedom*, *Skytoucher's Legacy*, *Stormcloud*, *Thunderstrike*, *Stormwolf*, *Uprising* and *Span Dancer*.

Bloodlore Moot

The Bloodlores have a fleet of nine drakkars, all battle-worthy ships armed to the teeth with the various primitive ship-weapons the moot uses. Each drakkar generally mounts a forward catapult and side-mounted ballistae to hurl rocks, spears and even casks of flaming oil at targets. The raiders use their weapons only to close with an enemy ship so they can board it, since the Bloodlores have little love for ranged combat. The drakkars often mount powerful ramming spars along their prows as well, allowing them to inflict damage on an opposing ship's hull when they close for a boarding maneuver.

Chorak Bonecracker commands the ship *Bloodlore's Debt*, Prokkuav Tornflesh commands the *Vengeance*. Other drakkars in the fleet include the *Fireblood*, *Windslasher*, *Hullbreaker* and the *Skyfury*.

Skyseeker Moot

The Skyseeker moot offers a small fleet of seven drakkars. Most of them are lightly armed with various small ship weapons. The most famous ship is the *Seeker*, which moot-chief Cho'arras uses as his personal vessel, along with drakkars like *Passion's Claim*, *Wind Arrow* and *Falcon*.

Blackfang Moot

The Blackfang moot owns ten airships. Seven are wooden drakkars while three are stone ships cut from volcanic rock and woven with great quantities of True Air. The stone ships were made by Blackfang spellcasters in the years



before the Scourge and are the only surviving examples of their work. Powerful air spirits were imprisoned in the hulls of the ships by Blackfang spellcasters to provide them with the power to fly. Each new ship captain who wishes to command one of the stone airships must win a Contest of Wills with the spirit to take command (see **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**, p. 94, for more information).

Blackfang ships use elemental weapons like dragon's breath and the fire sheath, along with spear-throwers and occasionally thunderbolt throwers. The stone airships are able to carry several fire cannon as well, making them the equal of some Theran stone vedettes. Each of the stone ships always has an Elementalist of at least Fifth Circle as part of the crew. The three stone ships are Named *Ago'norr*, *Chada'gora*, and *Ker'ago*. The wooden ships of the fleet include the *Dark Omen*, *Gallin's Sword*, the *Burning Cloud* and the *Blood Moon*.

CAPTURED THERAN AIRSHIPS

Throalic agents recovered a Theran vedette from the bottom of Lake Ban, where it lay after being disabled by the Shivalahala V'strimon during the Theran War (as described in **Gone Fishing**, p. 37, **Prelude to War**). Five other military vedettes were captured by the great dragon Aban, either personally or through the machinations of her secret society. Aban turns these ships over to Throal in **Engines of War** (p. 60).

The stone vedettes provide a useful frontline for the Barsaivan forces; stone ships can take considerably more punishment and the Therans are less likely to fire on a ship that looks like one of their own. The captured Theran ships are crewed mostly by troll sky raiders recruited from King Neden's allies among the Crystal Raiders, an irony that is not lost on the trolls, giving them the opportunity to turn the Therans' own ships against them.

While Barsaivan forces have managed to capture some Theran vedettes (with considerable aid from the great dragon Aban), they do not have a means of powering the ships, since they are designed to employ slave labor and Theran blood magic. King Neden will not even consider the Theran methods of powering the airships, nor will his troll allies. Fortunately, the dragons of Barsaive offer a solution in the form of magical engines.

The engines are large obelisks of stone, so black that it seems to absorb light. Tall as a troll, and roughly 5' by 3' at the base, these engines provide enough magical power to run the Theran airships, allowing Barsaivan Air Sailors and sky raiders to pilot them. The great dragon Usun has created one magical engine for each of the captured ships. Agents of the dragons deliver them to Throal in **Engines of War** (p.

60). The dragons provide an additional, somewhat larger, magical engine to drive the captured kila *Defiant* following events in **The Capture of the Defiant** (p. 66).

While these engines represent tremendous sources of magical power, the nature of these items is well beyond the understanding of any player character spellcaster (or any spellcaster with less experience than that of a great dragon for that matter). Only the dragons and their most powerful servants have the understanding and the ability needed to install and control a magical engine. The engines were intended by the dragons only for powering the Theran vedettes. Any attempt by a player character (or even Game-master character) magician to tap the power of one of the engines should either fail outright or result in a painful object lesson, causing great damage to the character making the attempt as raw magical energy courses through his body. Any player character magician who studies a magical engine for even a moment realizes it contains an amazing amount of power. Tampering with the complex matrices harnessing the immense power contained within could easily cause an explosion of pure magic.

THERA'S BANE

The newest and greatest ship in the allied Barsaivan fleet is a massive stone airship carved out of living crystal by master troll craftsmen and Named *Thera's Bane*. The ship was constructed by Ulig Stoneshaper Firewalker, Master Crystalsmith, and Sk'lag Prowjumper Rockfall, Master Shipwright, with the help of Vo'tanna the Gray Woman. (See **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive** for more information about these characters.)

With its crystal structure, *Thera's Bane* is highly resistant to fire cannon attack. It is extremely fast and maneuverable, and contains several weapons of varying types, including fire cannons, thunderbolt throwers and spear throwers.

The ship also carries a large-scale, keel-mounted weapon capable of firing crystalline missiles large enough to destroy small airships (even Theran vedettes). This weapon is similar to a large torpedo tube, carved into the hull of the ship along its spine. The missiles themselves are 10 foot long crystal spikes lined with orichalcum. The ship can only carry 4 of these missiles, so the weapon is used sparingly, but it is devastating when fired.

The ship is crewed by the finest Crystal Raiders of all the moots of the Twilight Peaks. Surprisingly, the honor of serving on board the crystal ship is enough to allow the Crystal Raiders to set aside their differences and work together.



THE FALCONS OF JERRIS

To aid in the fight against the Theran opposition, the city of Jerris commits two drakkars to the war efforts, with a full crew complement for each ship. In addition to these men, ninety Falcons (see **Taking of Jerris**, p. 99) are assigned to each of the completed Throalic galleons to flesh out their skeleton crews to a full compliment. Kos Steelgaze, the Marshal of the Falcons, accompanies one of the galleons, and the Throalic captain gives command over to him.

THERAN FORCES

Theran aerial forces are spread quite thin throughout Barsaive at the beginning of the war. Confident in the power of their massive floating castles, Theran military commanders have not bothered to augment the kilas' compliment of vedettes, despite the loss of several vedettes to attacks by the great dragon Aban. By the time Admiral Tularch begins to realize just how limited Thera's air forces in Barsaive are, the Barsaivan fleet is already bearing down on Sky Point (in **The Assault on Sky Point**, p. 128).

Despite the numerical superiority possessed by Barsaivan forces, the massive stone Theran airships are quite formidable, as the player characters will likely discover in the **Capture of the Defiant** adventure outline on page 66.

As Barsaivan attacks on Theran targets near *Triumph* become more and more frequent, General Nikar Carinci and Admiral Tularch move additional ships to protect *Triumph* (as described in **The Tide Turns**, p. 59). Any Theran airships that escape **The Siege of Triumph** (p. 84) attempt to make their way to *Sky Point* and join with the remainder of the Theran Navy stationed there. As the Therans retreat from *Triumph*, the *Righteous*, commanded by General Carinci, heads out directly for the island of Thera, in order to report directly to the First Governor. It is General Nikar's report that leads the Heavenherds to establish contact with *Sky Point* and *Vivane* during **The Assault on Sky Point** (p. 128).

THERAN FORCES AT TRIUMPH

The Theran fortress of *Triumph*, although formerly a behemoth, is no longer capable of movement. It was permanently rooted to the Hill of Ayodhya by Theran Elementarists shortly after the behemoth landed. Still, the fortress possesses considerable armaments that it can use against airships as well as ground-based targets. It also has the protection of a dome of True Air woven by Theran Elementarists, which the Barsaivan forces must overcome if they are to successfully assault the fortress (see **The Siege of Triumph**, p. 84, for more information).

Triumph has two kilas, the *Righteous* and the *Defiant*, assigned to it. The *Righteous*, commanded by Captain Drak

Windsearcher (a Seventh Circle troll Air Sailor), is generally stationed over the confluence of the South Reach of the Serpent River and Lake Ban. The *Defiant*, commanded by Captain Solen Ogani (a Sixth Circle human Air Sailor), patrols the length of the South Reach, controlled by the Therans' t'skrang allies, House K'tenshin. When the *Righteous* is assigned to other duties, the *Defiant* takes up her post at the mouth of the river.

Each kila carries a crew of at least 170 First and Second Circle Theran Air Sailors. Each also has at least two Fifth Circle Elementarists and a Wizard of Fifth Circle or greater, assigned to provide any needed repairs and additional defense, when necessary.

Vedettes

Only three vedettes protect and patrol the region around *Triumph* at the start of the war: the combat vedettes *Dauntless* and *Ferocious* and the mining vedette *Moonstone*. The other three vedettes originally assigned to *Triumph* were captured by the great dragon Aban, taken into her lair somewhere in the depths of the Mist Swamps. These stolen vedettes are used by the Barsaivan forces as described under **Captured Theran Airships** above (p. 42).

Since the capture of the three vedettes, all air-mining operations at *Triumph* have been suspended, and the remaining vedettes are kept on almost constant duty, returning to the fortress or one of the kilas only to pick up fresh crew, then heading out on patrol again. This lack of airships has also forced *Triumph* to reduce the amount of supplies brought into the fortress by air, resorting instead to overland caravans from *Vivane* and *Sky Point*, which are subsequently harassed and attacked by both Crystal Raiders and ork scorchers from *Cara Fahd*.

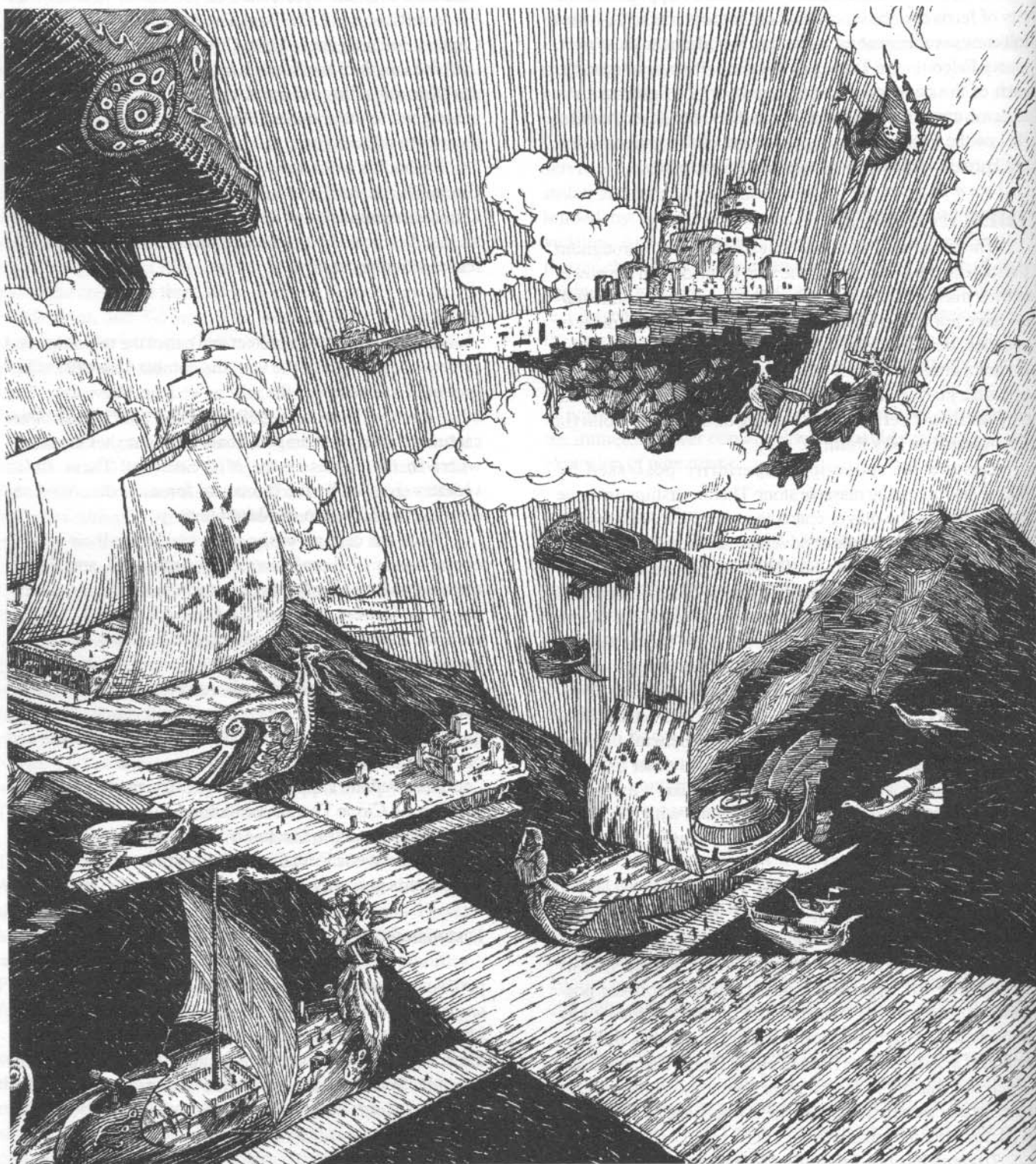
Each vedette carries a crew of forty, made up of First and Second Circle Theran Air Sailor Adepts. The captain of each vedette is a Fifth Circle Air Sailor and each vedette also carries at least one Fifth Circle Elementalist to effect necessary repairs and provide additional defense for the ship.

K'stulaami Griffin Riders

A wing of k'stulaami t'skrang griffin riders, under the personal command of General Nikar, is also assigned to *Triumph*. The griffin riders are all Fifth Circle Cavalrymen, and accompany the remaining vedettes on patrol in groups of three, with the other trio remaining to patrol and protect *Triumph*. While traveling with the vedettes, they function mainly as scouts and lookouts, although they will help defend the vedettes if they are attacked.

The statistics for the griffin riders can be found in the **Appendix** (p. 146)





THERAN FORCES AT SKY POINT AND VIVANE

Sky Point itself is strongly fortified and equipped with various weapons to repel attacking airships. It resembles a massive castle raised high above the ground. Four of its five towers rise twenty-five feet above the platform while the fifth — known as Sky Point Palace — rises some seventy feet above the platform below. Each tower is armed with fire cannons similar to those used on kilas. During an assault, thirty elite sailors from Admiral Tularch's garrison occupy each tower. Half of these are regular troops, while the other half are trained cannon crews. In terms of the airship combat rules, each tower has the following statistics:

Firepower: 25/30
Armor Rating: 30
Damage
Critical: 25
Derelict: 90
Destroyed: 100

Sky Point is also well protected against magical assault; the whole platform and structure has a Spell Defense of 24 against any attempts to damage or attack it magically.

Three kilas, the *Ascendancy*, the *Prestige*, and the *Regal*, patrol the area around Sky Point and Vivane. The *Ascendancy* is Overgovernor Kypros' personal kila. It is commanded by Captain Ruom Korrug (Eighth Circle troll Air Sailor). Although smaller than the *Ascendancy*, the *Prestige* is the flagship of the Theran fleet in Barsaive, commanded by Admiral Tularch herself or the ship's regular captain, a dour troll Named Tulkan. The *Regal* is the smallest of the three kilas at Sky Point, triangular in shape, roughly a hundred feet on each side. Jerran Jeralis, an elf Air Sailor, is captain of the *Regal*.

Sixteen vedettes operate from Sky Point, ten mining vedettes and six military vedettes. Originally, the fortress had more than two-dozen vedettes, but lost some to *Triumph* when the new fortress was established and several others to attacks by Crystal Raiders and the great dragon Aban, who captured several military vedettes on patrol near the Mist Swamps. As soon as the war begins, the Therans suspend all elemental mining operations from Sky Point and begin using the mining vedettes to carry Air Sailors and troops.

The remaining military vedettes are the *Eager*, the *Spirit*, the *Honor*, the *Valor*, the *Pride* and the *Gallant*. The mining vedettes are named for precious stones. They are *Amethyst*, *Carnelian*, *Diamond*, *Emerald*, *Jade*, *Jasper*, *Opal*, *Pearl*, *Ruby* and *Sapphire*.

Admiral Hartmallen arrives with reinforcements from the province of Rugaria consisting of two kilas and eight vedettes once he learns of the fall of *Triumph*. Additionally, there are just under twenty drakkars (some permanently in the service of the Theran military), a half-dozen merchant galleys, and two slaver galleys in Vivane that may be pressed into service by the Theran military.

GROUND FORCES

This section describes the land forces that will participate in the battles between the Barsaivan forces and the Theran Empire. On the Barsaivan side, this includes the Arm of Throal, as well as troops from the Blood Wood and the ork nation of Cara Fahd. These are the land armies that participate in both *The Siege of Triumph* and *The Assault on Sky Point*. The number of soldiers each of these contribute to the war are detailed below.

THROAL

The Arm of Throal devotes roughly eighty percent of its infantry and cavalry, as well as all the mercenary companies they have on retainer to the assembled forces that will attack the Therans at *Triumph* and Sky Point. The remaining 500 infantry of the Throalic army remain on duty, some within the Kingdom of Throal, the rest attending to other duties, such as caravan escorts, patrolling the mountains, etc.

The forces of the Throalic army are divided between the two campaigns against the Therans as detailed below. The Throalic army is nearly 75% non-Adept soldiers. Statistics for the soldiers of the Throalic army can be found in the **Appendix** (p. 145).

Throalic Forces at *Triumph*

The Throalic forces that participate in the siege of *Triumph* consist of five infantry troops of 100 soldiers each, among them two troops which include spellcasters (see **Magicians in the Infantry**, p. 82, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**), five troops of the King's Lancers (100 cavalymen each) (p. 81, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**), and 500 mercenary soldiers, including the entirety of Terath's Chargers (see **Mercenary Units**, p. 83, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**).

The Throalic army assembled at *Triumph* is led in battle by General Quaavami Rockbreaker, commander of the Throalic army (p. 81, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**). Beneath her are two generals (8th Circle dwarf Warriors), each in charge of five troops. Each troop is led by a war consul (6th Circle dwarf Warriors and Cavalryman Adepts), and within each troop, units of 20 soldiers are led by sergeants (3rd Circle Archer, Swordmaster and Warrior Adepts).

Throalic Forces at Sky Point

The Throalic forces that participate in the assault on Sky Point consist of 15 infantry troops (of 100 soldiers each), and a compliment of 45 Fifth Circle spellcaster Adepts (see **Magicians in the Infantry**, p. 82, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**). Among these magicians are 15 Elementalists, 15 Wizards, 10 Nethermancers, and 5 Illusionists.

As in the siege of *Triumph*, General Quaavami Rockbreaker, commander of the Throalic army, leads the Throalic army assembled at Sky Point in battle. Beneath her are three generals, each in charge of five troops. A war consul leads each troop, and within each troop, sergeants lead units of 20 soldiers. These officers are of the same Circles and disciplines as those described under *Triumph*.

In addition to these forces, whatever troops can be airlifted to Sky Point from the siege of *Triumph* will be joining the Throalic army's forces already on-site.

BLOOD WOOD

Though Queen Alachia initially refuses to lend forces to the battle against the Therans, after the events of **The Theft of the Everliving Flower** (p. 71), she decides to send a considerable number of blood elf troops to join the battle against the Therans at *Triumph*. This force consists of roughly one thousand wardens. These are all Adepts, of average 3rd Circle, and are split among Archer, Beastmaster (10% only), Scout, Swordmaster, and Woodsman Adepts, along with a few (perhaps 5%) exolashers (7th Circle Warrior Adepts). In addition, a handful of junior blood warders (average 5th Circle, mostly Elementalists and Nethermancers) compliment this force. The blood elves are led by Elindrel Talshara (a 9th Circle blood elf Warrior, p. 81, **The Blood Wood**). Statistics for Woodsman and Warrior Adepts of the Blood Wood army can be found in the **Appendix** (p. 150).

Though Alachia sends nearly 1000 blood elf troops to join the Barsaivan forces, only roughly half of those gather with the Throalic forces for the siege on *Triumph*. The remainder of the blood elves move into the forests near the western face of the behemoth, near an area Named Willow's Grove. The blood elves' plan is to wait for the Therans' eventual retreat from *Triumph*, at which point they will emerge from the forest and begin a wholesale slaughter of the escaping Therans. This incident, which is complete surprise to the Throalic forces, becomes known as The Slaughter of Willow's Grove (p. 88, **The Siege of Triumph**).

After slaying nearly all the escaping Therans, the blood elves retreat into the forest, where they are joined by the surviving blood elves who took part in the siege itself, and the assembled elves make their way home to the Blood Wood.

CARA FAHD

The forces of Cara Fahd that join the battle against the Therans participate in the assault on Sky Point only. This forces consists of roughly 2,750 cavalry, as well as an additional 50 scouts. These cavalry are mixed between Adepts, mostly Cavalryman and Warriors, as well as a good number of (nearly 50%) non-Adept cavalry. The Cara Fahd forces are drawn from most of the larger tribes loyal to Cara Fahd, as well as a number of the better-known small tribes.



A breakdown showing the number of cavalry from each is shown on the Cara Fahd Cavalry Table. In addition to those listed, 100 cavalry come from the combined armies of the Righteous Vipers, Hankarr's Spears, the Thunderborn Cavalry and the Two Hands Tribe (pp. 85 - 89, **The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd**). Zarass Icethought will only send half of her Chargers, not wanting to appear weak or miss any of the glory, but still wanting to make it clear that she is unhappy with the alliance with Throal. The Elf Eaters tribes (pp. 81 and 88, **Cara Fahd**) refused to serve Cara Fahd in protest of Krathis Gron's alliance with Throal. Also, Asok's Armbreakers (p. 74, **Cara Fahd**) have remained in Cara Fahd, patrolling the borders of the ork nation against any possible incursions from Theran troops or other enemies of Cara Fahd such as the Iron Legacy. In addition to the cavalry, a unit of 50 scouts, all drawn from Rejruk's Foxes (p. 79 - 81, **Cara Fahd**), participate in the assault on Sky Point. Statistics for non-Adept cavalry as well as Cavalryman Adepts from Cara Fahd can be found in the **Appendix** (p. 148).

The assembled Cara Fahd forces are led by Titanstroke Greybeard of the Thunderers. Reporting to him are the leaders of each of the tribes participating. Smaller units within each tribe are led by their respective chiefs.

Cara Fahd Cavalry Table

Tribe	Cavalry
Metal Fist	1,500
Broken Fang	600
Thunderers	400
Zarass' Chargers	100
Combined Small Tribes (see text)	100
Fists of Fahd	50
Total	2,750

THERAN FORCES

The Theran ground forces are comprised almost entirely of soldiers of the Eighth Legion stationed at *Triumph* and Sky Point. Because of the relatively fast speed at which the Barsaivan forces mounts their attacks on *Triumph* and Sky Point, there is little time for the Therans to call in reinforcements from Bukara, or to regroup at all. Sample statistics for the soldiers of the Eighth Legion can be found in the **Appendix** (p. 146). For more information about the Eighth Legion, see p. 14 - 15 of *Barsaivan Vivane in the Sky Point & Vivane Campaign Set*.

THERAN EMPIRE AT TRIUMPH

The Therans have 2 cohorts of 480 soldiers each stationed at *Triumph*. Roughly one-fifth of these troops are Adepts, mostly Warriors, Swordmasters and Archers, averaging 2nd Circle. Each cohort is comprised of 4 divisions of 120 troops. Each division is led by a strategos (divisional commander) and a team of 4 lieutenants. The lieutenants are all Adepts (50% Warriors, 25% Swordmasters, 25% Archers), and average 4th Circle in their respective disciplines, while the strategos is usually a 5th or 6th Circle Adept. Of the 8 strategos stationed at *Triumph*, 4 are Warrior Adepts, 2 are Swordmasters and 2 are Archers. The strategos in turn report to the cohort leaders, known as pole marches. The two pole marches at *Triumph* are both 9th Circle ork Warriors, who in turn report to the commander of *Triumph* General Nikar Carinci (p. 25 - 26, *Prelude to War*). In addition to the soldiers, the Therans at *Triumph* also have a team of 5th Circle Elementalists, Nethermancers, Illusionists, and Wizards, split among the 8 divisions. Though technically assigned to their respective divisions, these magicians all report to Chief Magician Azim Keel (p. 28 - 30, *Prelude to War*). They will support their assigned division in battle, but are often away from the *Triumph*, accompanying kilas and vedettes. These duties are spread out, however, so that no division is ever without all of its magical support at once.

THERAN EMPIRE AT SKY POINT/VIVANE

The Therans have considerably more troops at Sky Point than at *Triumph*. A total of five cohorts, or roughly 2,400 soldiers are stationed at Sky Point, including part of the division formerly stationed at Vivane that was trapped outside it by the Dragon's ritual (see **The Fall of Vivane**, p. 115). These soldiers are of roughly the same Circles and follow the same disciplines as the troops stationed at *Triumph*. The Theran forces use a similar command structure as described above, but there are a total of five pole marches, 20 strategos, and 80 lieutenants. The Theran troops stationed at Sky Point are all under the command of General Crotias (p. 134 of *The Assault On Sky Point*).



OTHER FORCES

THE HAND OF THE WEAVER

At last, Aban has decided to reveal to the leaders of the Barsaivan resistance the existence of her secret intelligence group, The Hand of the Weaver. Previously, Aban had been rumored to be associated with the Hand of Corruption. Some speculate that the Hand of the Weaver and the Hand of Corruption are related; others assume that they are one and the same.

It is not known how extensive The Hand of the Weaver is, but so far Aban has managed to provide amazingly accurate intelligence on Theran forces in Barsaive that could



only have come from high up in the government. She has also made it known to King Neden and his council that she has agents inside the *Triumph*, waiting for a signal upon which they will attempt to open the gates. This has become one of the central points of the plan to assault the *Triumph*. Neden's council hopes that Aban and her 'Hand' can deliver on what she promises.

THE RIVER FRONT

Background

Due to House K'Tenshin's alliance with Thera, the K'tenshin been able to gain control of a large amount of the South Serpent and Lake Pyros. Aided by Thera's air power, they have been able to fully control the South Serpent River, charging tolls to all vessels passing into the Southern Reaches out of Lake Ban. Thera's troops have been sent to accompany many K'tenshin ships to aid in the collection of this toll. The Thera's troops, however, often charge their own tolls in the forms of bribes, the amounts of which have become standardized just as much as the tolls. Along with angering every other house on the river (with the possible exception of the inscrutable Henghoyke), this action has for the most part cut off House T'kambras from the other aropagoi. While smuggling efforts spearheaded by Omasu and the Liferock Rebellion (*Prelude to War*, p. 16) have been somewhat successful, House T'kambras sees that the new strength of House K'tenshin will lead to the fall of House T'kambras. To that end, they are willing to do whatever is necessary to help Throal and the resistance, and are the most fervent of Throal's allies among the aropagoi.

Before Throal and its allies can attack the *Triumph*, it must be blockaded though air and sea, and supplies and troops must be gathered in House K'tenshin-controlled areas near Lake Ban.

Important Characters

Shinn K'stiler Syrtis

Shinn is a favored noble son of House Syrtis, who attained his current position as Sergeant of the Night Watch mainly through sharp dealing and the effective use of brib-

ery. His shipmates know him as one to always be on the lookout for a good deal or a easy take, but even they would be surprised to find out that he is secretly a questor of the Passion Chorrolis.

Shinn does have quite a reputation for avarice, but since it has never been a problem on the ship, the captain has given him the benefit of the doubt. The captain is fond of the exuberant t'skrang, and Shinn's ability to deal well has benefited the ship on a number of times. Shinn's main duty as Sergeant of the Night Watch is to keep the ship and its cargo safe from both external and internal dangers.

Like many Swordmasters, Shinn is somewhat of a dandy, preferring to talk his way out of situations. When the need arises, however, he can be just as dangerous as any other, something he has proved in numerous fights. Shinn is quite charismatic and is well liked by the t'skrang under his command. His love of life and penchant for making light of any occasion cause almost anyone he interacts with to leave smiling.

As symbol of his devotion to Chorrolis, Shinn keeps in his cabin an amazingly intricately carved woodcut of Chorrolis as a t'skrang.

DEX: 7

STR: 6

TOU: 6

PER: 6

WIL: 5

CHA: 7

Captain Jedaiyen Westhral of the *Astendar's Desire*

Captain Westhral, dashing, daring, and ambitious are all good words to describe this captain of House T'kambras. Westhral is arguably the greatest ship captain that House T'kambras has ever known. She raised eyebrows, and indeed some amount of ire, when she left House V'strimon for the then recently-formed House T'kambras. Since then, her repeated displays of prowess have kept any from disputing the fact that Jedaiyen, along with her unusual two-paddlewheel ship, *The Astendar's Desire*, is one of the best. *The Astendar's Desire* was built wholly with money given to her father by the Dwarf Kingdom of Throal, and many suspect that the ties between House T'kambras and Throal are stronger than one would think.

Captain Westhral is a Seventh Circle Boatman, whose full description can be found on p. 34 of *The Serpent River*.

DEX: 7

STR: 5

TOU: 6

PER: 7

WIL: 6

CHA: 8





Captain Terion T'kerani of the *River Runner*

Terion T'kerani is young to be a riverboat captain, but it is definitely in her blood. Her family has always been on a riverboat, usually as Captains or First Mates, and she was working her way up through the ranks, thinking it would take several years before she was ready to command a ship of her own. These plans were accelerated greatly by the capture of her father. He was kidnapped while travelling through the canals of the House of Nine Diamonds on a trade mission shortly before House K'tenshin announced their open alliance with Thera. When her father didn't come back, young Terion, already a Fifth Circle Boatman, was voted by popular acclaim to be the new captain of the ship. She has never forgotten that the K'tenshin helped Therans take her father away from her, and has devoted herself and her ship to helping the growing resistance. Although Terion is constantly worried that she won't live up to her father's image as captain of the *River Runner*, her men adore her, and respect greatly her desire for revenge.

DEX: 7	STR: 5	TOU: 6
PER: 6	WIL: 6	CHA: 7

Running the River Front

This section outlines the manner in which the t'skrang forces will isolate the Theran forces at *Triumph*. This includes a number of riverboat battles and assaults against K'tenshin villages (though not the aropagoi itself). These small attacks are meant to at first divert the K'tenshin forces away from the Therans. Eventually, the battles grow in size, to the point where the allied forces attempt to establish blockades between Lake Pyros and Lake Ban, cutting off the K'tenshin ships from reaching the Theran fortress.

After a number of battles, Houses V'strimon and Syrtis offer to cease hostilities if K'tenshin dissolves their alliance with the Therans. They also offer to renegotiate the Free Trade Compact at a future date, to grant House K'tenshin access to more of the river.

This section describes some of the battles fought for the control of the Serpent River. The Gamemaster is free to expand or embellish on the events of these battles as much as desired. Information is provided here so the events can be run as adventures in the campaign, using the ship combat system and other information from the *Earthdawn Companion* and *The Serpent River* sourcebook. Alternately, you can use the events as a backdrop for other adventures go-

ing on in the campaign. The player characters can hear news and rumors of the various battles and learn about the shifts in fortune of either side.

Introducing the Event

The storyline described in *The Blockade* can involve the characters in a number of ways. If they are allied with or members of the involved houses (mostly V'strimon, T'kambras, and Scavian), then their assistance in the following events may be sought after by the House. Even if they have merely interacted with the Houses in a positive light, their aid will be requested and welcomed if they are known to be in the area around the time of these events. High-circle adventurers are in short supply in this area, as many are already in the employ of the various Houses, and it is likely that the characters will be the recipients of several offers of employment.

Prequels

Apart from the obvious groundwork laid down in *Prelude to War*, there has been much information about the motives and desires of many of the characters and aropagoi described herein. *The Serpent River* contains a good deal of supplementary information about almost everything described here. *Secret Societies of Barsaive* shows just how forewarned the Therans are about the machinations of Aban's Hand of the Weaver.

Adventure Frameworks

Catching Two K'Tenshin Fish

Although the following event assumes the participation of House T'kambras, it is possible that it could be more convenient for this event to use forces of another house instead. The major points of the event should remain the same, but the Gamemaster will have to make the appropriate changes where necessary.

Premise

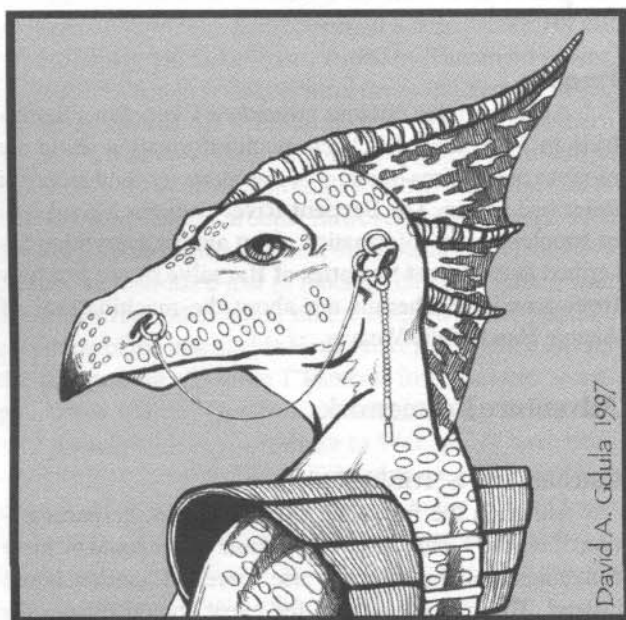
As part of the overall plan to capture a Throalic kila, a decoy is needed. Rather than try to disguise another ship as a K'tenshin riverboat, it would be preferable to just capture two or three K'tenshin ships intact. The characters will assist ships of House T'kambras as they attempt to capture the ships from House K'tenshin.

Setup

The player characters are approached by agents of House T'kambras, and are asked to come to a meeting with Jedaiyen Westhrall, leading light of House T'kambras. Cap-

tain Westhrall wants the Adepts to participate in a daring plan concocted by House T'kambras to provide ships of House K'tenshin to be used as decoys. The targets: A merchant ship operated by House K'tenshin, and the warship escort which is to be guarding it.

The player characters are to be hired so that they can neutralize the Theran troops which have been accompanying K'tenshin warships lately. They should expect to face between 20-40 Theran soldiers of First and Second Circle as well as a Fourth Circle lieutenant and a couple of Third Circle sergeants. The player character's primary targets, however, will be the high-circle Adepts aboard the opposing ship. For this, they will each be paid 500 silver. Captain Westhrall is willing to negotiate, however, and will go as high as 600 apiece.



Event 1

The characters are taken aboard Westhrall's ship, the *Astendar's Desire*. Westhrall has picked out a location where the ambush will take place, and the force moves as stealthily as possible in that direction. There are reports of a merchant ship coming up the river, and Westhrall wishes to get in place without alerting House K'tenshin. The attack force consists of the *Astendar's Desire* as well as three other warships of House T'kambras: the *Floranuus' Providence*, the *Shivoam Ranger*, and the *Duras* (another riverboat constructed with a split-paddle design like the *Desire*). The trip should be extremely tense, with many near-encounters with K'tenshin ships but no real battles taking place.

Astendar's Desire

Speed 7
Maneuverability 10
Firepower 21/21

Crew

Captain 7 (19)
Crew Size 75
Crew Skill 3
Crew Rating 17
Morale 59

Special

Questor of Floranuus, Step 9. Add 2 to Speed and Maneuverability for test result in hours.

Hull

Armor 18
Ramming 28
Cargo 80

Damage

Critical 17
Derelict 54
Destroyed 61

Duras

Speed 8
Maneuverability 8
Firepower 20/20

Crew

Captain 5
Crew Size 75
Crew Skill 3
Crew Rating 15
Morale 50

Hull

Armor 18
Ramming 28
Cargo 80

Damage

Critical 16
Derelict 52
Destroyed 58

The *Duras* is also a split-paddlewheel design like the *Desire*, but the designers chose to sacrifice some maneuverability for slightly greater speed in the straightaway.

T'kambras and K'tenshin Warships

These use the standard aropagoi Warship statistics.

Event 2

Halfway through the third day of the journey, the task force is surprised by a lone K'tenshin warship out on patrol. The ship attempts to flee, and only the *Astendar's Desire* and the *Duras* can move fast enough to engage it in combat. After a pitched fire cannon battle, the K'tenshin warship, the *Serapis*, is boarded and won over, but only after taking a good amount of damage. The player characters are not strictly required by their terms of employment to assist in the battle, but those who do not will be the target of suspicion and private derision among the sailors. The battle is ended when Captain Westhrall, having moved to single combat with the



opposing captain, demands and receives the surrender of the K'tenshin warship. As part of the terms of the surrender, the captain is required to take his warship to the V'strimon base and turn himself in, to be released at the end of the conflict. Although the player characters may be suspicious of the K'tenshin captain, Westhrall seems content to take him at his word. Unfortunately, during the battle one of the *Duras's* paddlewheels was completely destroyed, requiring it to return to T'kambras-controlled areas of the river for repairs. The *Desire* suffers only minor damage, which is repaired underway.

Event 3

Having arrived at the ambush spot, the waiting begins. The K'tenshin merchant ship which was supposed to have shown up in hours is nowhere to be seen. After a day of waiting, tensions are high, and the usually easygoing T'skrang begin to become restless. As night falls, an argument breaks out among the crew in the area near the player characters concerning whether the K'tenshin are going to show up at all. Unless stopped by the player characters (who probably don't have much incentive to intercede in a sailor's argument), the conversation quickly proceeds to shouting, followed by an all-out brawl that encompasses most of the crew of the ship. The combatants are either First circle Adepts or skilled non-Adepts. The player characters are not targeted by any of the participants, but unless they run for cover, they will quickly become swept up in the fight as fists and tails go flying. The t'skrang are careful not to draw weapons, only attacking to stun - this should be obvious to the player characters. If the player characters decide to participate in a lethal manner, the t'skrang are quickly united against them and things begin to turn ugly. No matter the outcome, Captain Westhrall stops the fight after a few rounds. The manner in which the player characters acquitted themselves is likely to greatly influence her opinion of them. Her opinion of the characters will range from high (stopped the fight) to neutral (avoided it, participated non-lethally) to low (caused injury to her men). Her opinion will not have much of an effect on the current mission (as she will use them anyway), but the favor of a high-ranking member of House T'kambras can be a quite valuable asset.

Event 4

Finally! On the morning of the second day of waiting, a lookout spies a K'tenshin merchant ship. Then, two more vessels quickly come into view ... both warships. Not expecting to be evenly matched in numbers, Captain Westhrall quickly revises her plans. The attack begins. All three T'kambras warships speed to the attack, concentrating their fire on a single K'tenshin warship.

At this point, the players will see Milos, the questor of Floranuus begin to chant to his Passion, requesting that Floranuus grant his ship speed and agility. A slight glow begins to infuse the ship, and the ship leaps ahead of the others in a burst of speed. Slowing down a bit so as to not outpace the other ships, Captain Westhrall and the *Desire* lead the attack.

As they draw near, it is quickly obvious that all three ships are carrying Theran troops, and that the merchant ship seems to be carrying more than fifty. The K'tenshin, caught off guard and slow to react, are able to do little in the first moments of the battle and only manage a volley or two before a K'tenshin warship has been turned into a smoking hulk. The K'tenshin forces are surprised and demoralized as they see one of the warships destroyed so quickly. The *Desire* begins to maneuver towards the merchant ship, firing a volley or two at the massed soldiers. The need to keep from causing critical damage hinders the effectiveness of the T'kambras ships.

While taking severe damage, the other T'kambras warships close on the remaining K'tenshin warship, boarding it from both sides at once. The battle is fierce, but the almost two to one advantage of the T'kambras will result in the capture of the K'tenshin warship with little damage done to it. One of the T'kambras warships breaks up during the boarding action, and the other is damaged enough that it must be towed back to T'kambras waters.

The *Astendar's Desire* quickly pulls alongside the K'tenshin merchant ship. With over forty Therans still aboard, including their commanding strategos, the battle for the merchant ship should be difficult. The fight is chaotic, with smoke from the results of the fire cannons impairing the character's sight and attackers coming from all sides and above. The markings on the Theran uniforms, as well as their prowess, make the Theran strategos and his lieutenants quite obvious. The officers and higher-circle Adepts among the crew will focus their attention on the characters as soon as they begin attacking, as they are the obvious "hired guns" among the attackers.

Climax

The fight, while difficult, should end successfully for the T'kambras side. The K'tenshin will surrender, much to the chagrin of the surviving Therans who have been sent to accompany them. In a speech to her crew, Westhrall will praise the efforts of all involved, naming each of the player characters that were especially effective in the battle to the loud cheers of the crew.

Sequels

Under careful watch, the two K'tenshin ships are escorted back to House V'strimon for use in the later capture of a kila. Examining the merchant ship's cargo hold quickly explains why the convoy was so well protected - it contained a shipment of the magical equipment that the Therans were rumored to have been supplying to House K'tenshin. Along with numerous Forge 1 blades, there are barrels of Healing Salve (+3 to a single recovery test) and other minor magical items. Claiming most of the treasure as her spoils, Captain Westhrall may give the characters some items, especially if they proved to be crucial to the victory.

Scavian Smuggling Run

Premise

The *Syrtsian Dreadnought* has never operated at its full capacity since the tragic accident which claimed the life of its creator, Prince Kalieston. Thus, the most powerful vessel on the Serpent River was reduced in effectiveness, as its slow speed and lack of maneuverability keep it from being able to fight effectively in combat without numerous smaller ships to keep it from being destroyed from an advantageous position.

With the newfound alliance between the aropagoi, the Scavians have agreed to provide not only specially tuned Elemental Fire, but will also loan the Syrtsians an Elementalist questor of Upandal who can help them bring the *Dreadnought* up to its full capacity. Of course, the Scavians will be compensated well for their assistance.

The player characters will ride on the riverboat which is carrying House Syrtis' initial payment for the Elemental Fire, and will then accompany the Scavian barges as they attempt to sneak the shipment past the K'tenshin patrols.

Setup

The player characters are contacted about a river escort job, working with an unnamed individual. If they participated in the previous adventure, this can be because Captain Westhrall has been speaking well of them in the tight-knit society of the riverboat captains. Alternatively, they could have been recommended by Throalic interests, or may just be in the right place at the right time. Or, if they owe a favor to the Shivalahala Syrtis, she may use it to get the characters involved.

The player characters meet at the appointed time with the riverboat captain, who is keeping a fairly low profile, especially for the usually flashy river t'skrang. He reveals to them that he is Captain Terion T'kerani Syrtis. He wishes them to travel with him to the Tylon River and back, escort-

ing cargo each way. If he thinks that it will be effective, he intimates (without giving any real details) that it will be damaging to Theran and K'tenshin interests if they succeed in their mission. For their work, he will pay the group 3500 silver pieces. Captain T'kerani is unlikely to want to negotiate that figure, although he will if pressed. If the characters do manage to garner a higher wage, they can be sure that they will hear about it constantly. Every meeting between the Captain and the player characters should start off with a comment such as "You adventurers are just so expensive!" and constant gripes should be made to that effect.

Event 1

Assuming that the characters accept the offer, the Captain will want to cast off as early as possible. The Captain will tell the characters that he will meet them on the shores of the Serpent River not far from the meeting place, where they will be picked up by a rowboat and taken to the riverboat. The spot is carefully described to the characters, who should be able to find it without much difficulty. Unfortunately, the Captain has picked a spot that he has only seen from the river. He has no idea that the waiting area for the characters (near a mangrove tree on the shore) is the home of several Mangrove Eels (*The Serpent River*, p. 113). These so-called 'eels,' actually part of the mangrove's tree structure, will lurk underwater, attacking any heat source that comes into the water within a 10 yard radius of the tree. If successful, they will attempt to draw the target back into the tree's root system with their powerful jaws.

The player characters will likely wait patiently for their rowboat to meet them. The rower, not wanting to run aground on the mangrove roots, will tell the characters to come out to him as he waits about 15 feet off the shore. As they get in the water, the eels wait, biding their time until they can strike in the most effective manner. As the player characters approach, the t'skrang rower (a First Circle Boatman) jumps out of the boat in order to steady it. It is quickly apparent that the player characters are in danger when the rower is quickly pulled beneath the surface by something under the water. The player characters are next to be attacked. If the rower is rescued, he recognizes what is happening, and suggests that the characters get out of the eels' range.

Afterwards, the player characters row (or are rowed) towards the waiting ship, the *River Runner*.

Mangrove Eels

DEX: 8
PER: 4

STR: 6
WIL: 2

TOU: 8
CHA: 2





Event 2

In what may be a surprise for some of the characters, fifty of the members of Captain T'kerani's crew are blood elves! These elves, a result of the close relations between House Syrtis and the Blood Wood, are used as shipboard guards and archers when the ship closes for battle. The close quarters of the ship will quite likely throw the characters into interactions with the blood elves; depending on their actions, life aboard the warship may become quite rough. The t'skrang crewmen of the ship are not especially close to the blood elves, but they do view them as members of the crew, and will speak up, or even fight, in their defense.

What Captain T'kerani didn't tell the characters was that his ship is carrying a small fortune in elemental coin,

which will be used to pay the Scavians for their assistance and Elemental Fire. These coins are kept in the ship's cargo hold, in strongboxes kept under constant elven guard. On the first night of their journey to the Tylon, a commotion breaks out down in the cargo hold. A t'skrang has been found in the cargo hold, one of the strongboxes broken into, with the bodies of several blood elves at his feet. The Captain immediately secures the cargo hold, and begins to look into the situation, locking up the t'skrang sailor.

Surprisingly, the t'skrang found in the hold is the Sergeant of the Night Watch, Shinn K'stiler Syrtis. Shinn is a noble son and before now was quite well respected by the other members of the crew. With his arrest, unrest arises, and the crime quickly takes on a racial polarity. Shinn claims that he heard something untoward from the cargo hold while admiring the night sky, and decided to investigate. Finding the blood elves who were supposed to be guarding the cargo hold instead breaking into the strongboxes, he leapt to the attack, and in a heroic fight, managed to slay the blood elves. The blood elves believe none of his story, thinking it all a lie. It is. Actually, Shinn is secretly a questor of Chorrolis, drawn down to the cargo hold by a dream in which Chorrolis informed him of how much treasure was to be had mere yards from his position in bed. This was actually the Passion Vestrial, never passing up the chance to toy with a fellow Passion's questors. The evidence should be spotty, and the Passion Vestrial may even take a hand, always happy to cloud an issue.

Event 3

Not wanting to be blamed either by the nobility or more importantly, his crew, Captain T'kerani knows any decision he might make could be seen as prejudicial and cause resentment in his crew. So, the Captain decides to put the burden on the Adepts' shoulders. A court will be instated, with the Captain as the judge, one of the Adepts as the representative for the ship, one as the representative of the accused, and the rest serving as jury. Also on the jury will be a t'skrang sailor and a blood elf, each of who will want to support their respective race's side. Luckily, only a majority vote is required. The court will have two hours to decide the guilt or innocence of the accused. If he is determined guilty, Captain T'kerani asks the Adepts what the sentence should be. Captain T'kerani will follow it, within reason, although he will attempt to talk them out of a death sentence, as he privately believes that the blood elves were trying to rob the cargo.

After this night, everybody aboard knows that the cargo is rich indeed, and the guard on the cargo hold is of both t'skrang and blood elves.



Event 4

Halfway up the Tylon River, Captain T'kerani announces that the ship has reached its destination. Turning off the river and heading up a smaller tributary for a mile or so reveals a Scavian barge that has been placed in waiting. T'kerani draws alongside the Scavian barge, and the Scavian bargemaster is invited aboard. T'kerani escorts him down into the cargo hold. After a few minutes, they leave the cargo hold, both smiling widely and obviously pleased with themselves. After a loading party comes and carries the strongboxes off of the ship, it is the boatmen's turn to replace the strongboxes with the cases of Elemental Fire supplied from the Scavian.

Also here, the Ninth Circle Elementalist and questor Ayamar K'tenis comes aboard. He spends most of the trip wandering the ship and proselytizing loudly on the glory of Upandal to any that will listen. Again, the trip back to Syrtis shores should be full of near misses with K'tenshin patrols, but uneventful until Lake Ban. The Elementalist K'tenis casts spells daily, increasing the speed of the *River Runner* [italics] as it travels up the Serpent River.

Event 5

Just as the barge and the *Runner* are about to make it across Lake Ban to the relative safety of the Mid Reach, disaster occurs! Seemingly from nowhere, a K'tenshin warship speeds out onto the lake, drawing along the side of the merchant ship. With no other choice, Captain T'kerani slows down and prepares to be boarded peacefully. Before doing that, however, he barks out an order to the characters, "Quickly! Make sure the cases are well hidden!"

The K'tenshin ship is here seeking bakshevas, their usual bribe for allowing ships to pass on the river. The player characters will have roughly ten minutes to disguise or conceal the cases. There are 20 of them, made of what looks like burnished brass, roughly 3' x 2' x 1' and weighing 25 pounds apiece. In a ship such as this, there are many places to hide them: barrels of fish, the lone cell used to lock up intransigent sailors, or even in the sailor's common areas - these will likely not be searched. After ten minutes, the ship will be boarded, and the K'tenshin captain and his honor guard will come aboard. They will wander the ship as a group, Captain T'kerani and the characters close behind. Play this up. Have the K'tenshin captain come painfully close to finding the cases, even if only by accident. Make the players squirm. Assuming the characters do a decent job of hiding them, the K'tenshin will give up the search, and be satisfied with the usual payment.

If the K'tenshin do find the cases, though, then the jig is up. Having planned for this contingency, T'kerani gives a

single order - and the fire cannon of the ship fire a point-blank volley into the K'tenshin ship. While the Elementalist K'tenis will keep the K'tenshin sailors from overwhelming the *Runner* [italics], the players will be confronted with a much more immediate problem. The visiting captain and his honor guard, no strangers to an ambush, spring to the attack at the sound of roaring cannon. If possible, they will escape and jump into the river. Otherwise, they will fight to the death in an attempt to get out of the ship. The captain is a Seventh Circle Boatman, and his honor guard is an even mix of Third to Fifth Circle Boatmen and Swordmasters. As a result of the Therans' aid, all of them have Forge 3 blades and Booster Potions, and each carries an Avoid Blow charm.

Climax

The fight is nasty, in the close quarters that only a riverboat can provide. There are explosions nearby and smoke pouring in from outside as the riverboats exchange cannon fire. After a close fight, the *River Runner* manages to outrun its pursuer. The K'tenshin ship left behind, the *River Runner* speeds off towards the safety of House Syrtis. The feeling of relief among the crew is palpable as the ship enters the Middle Reaches of the Serpent River. When the ship arrives at the Middle Reaches, it pulls up to the most imposing rivercraft that any of the player characters have ever seen - The *Syrtisian Dreadnought*. This huge vessel, six hundred feet long by two hundred fifty feet wide, is the terminus of the player character's mission. Depending on the player characters contribution (and whether or not they already wheedled more money out of him at the beginning), T'kerani may even be willing to pay them a bonus, complaining about how expensive they are the whole time.

Sequels

With this service performed, the characters will be in good graces with House Syrtis. Word will also get back to the agents who set up the exchange between the Scavians and House Syrtis. Good adventurers being in short supply, the t'skrang are sure to look the adventurers up if they need work done again, giving an easy lead-in to many of the other frameworks contained in this book.

Also, the successful completion of this mission will result in the refitting of the *Syrtisian Dreadnought*, bringing it to within a hair's breadth of its original performance. This will greatly enhance the usefulness of the *Dreadnought*, as well as increasing the power of House Syrtis in the Middle Reaches of the Serpent River. With the *Dreadnought* in battle-worthy shape, House Syrtis will be able to project its aura of control farther along the river than ever before.





Syrtisian Dreadnought

Speed: 8
Maneuverability: 6
Firepower: 20/25

Crew

Captain: 6
Crew Size: 400
Crew Skill: 2
Crew Rating: 19
Morale: 75

Hull

Armor: 20
Ramming: 30
Cargo: 100

Damage

Critical: 22
Derelict: 85
Destroyed: 92

Other Adventure Ideas

Harassing the K'tenshin

As part of the attempt to harass and distract the forces of House K'tenshin, a constant stream of attacks is begun by the various houses against the outlying villages controlled by House K'tenshin. This forces the ships of House K'tenshin to patrol farther out than they normally would, spreading their military might thinly. This also distances them from their Theran allies, as they cannot afford to stay in the area of the *Triumph*.

Setting up the Blockade

When the K'tenshin forces have been widely spread, a feint is made, giving the impression of another round of attacks against the outlying villages. When the K'tenshin send their ships out to the areas where they expect attack, however, they find nothing but small diversionary forces which turn and flee rather than join battle. The curious K'tenshin, suspecting that something is amiss, return just in time to find out about the blockade which has moved in during their absence.

House K'tenshin will not simply allow the other Houses to lock them in, and will of course fight back. Numerous skirmishes arise when the blockade begins, and there is work on both sides of the fence as various merchant captains attempt to cross the blockade and sell their goods on the other side.

The Allied Blockade

After successfully capturing the K'tenshin ships, the allied forces form a blockade at Lake Pyros. This blockade includes the three Scavian barges, the Syrtisian dreadnought, and a number of warships and shimorams.

Negotiations

Once the allied forces have effectively blockaded the ships of K'tenshin, a V'strimon ship carrying a V'strimon diplomat heads to the House of the Nine Diamonds to deliver terms to the Shivalahala K'tenshin. Traveling under a flag of truce, this ship is met and escorted to the Sixteen Towers, where the diplomat is allowed an audience with the Shivalahala. Characters could act as guards, or even diplomats, on this important mission.

The allied forces are asking for a denouncement by the Shivalahala K'tenshin of the aropagoi's alliance with the Theran Empire. In return, the allies will dissolve the blockade, and further agree to renegotiate the Free Trade Compact, granting K'tenshin access to the portions of the Coil River they want.

WAR IN THE SKIES

Isolating *Triumph* — Control of the Skies

This section describes the efforts of the Crystal Raiders to cut off *Triumph* from any and all support arriving via airships from Sky Point and Vivane, in preparation for the events in the *Siege of Triumph* (p. 84). This includes a number of airship battles and assaults against Theran airships. At first, these attacks are conducted primarily by the Stoneclaws, Rockhorn and Swiftwind trollmoots. However, as the frequency of these attacks increases, the Therans respond by increasing the number of ships sent from Sky Point to *Triumph*. The increase in Theran activity prompts some of the other trollmoots to attack as well. This leads to the trollmoot **Summit at the Crystal Span** (see **Adventure Frameworks** p. 62).

This section describes some of the battles fought by Theran and Crystal Raider forces near *Triumph* and other events in the early days of the war. The Gamemaster is free to expand or embellish on the events of these battles as much as desired. Information is provided here so the events can be run as adventures in the campaign, using the airship combat system and other information from the **Earthdawn Companion** and **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**. Alternately, you can use the events as a backdrop for other adventures going on in the campaign. The player characters can hear news and rumors of the various battles and learn about the shifts in fortune of either side.

Background

The first step in King Neden's plan to strike at Theran forces in Barsaive is to isolate the fortress of *Triumph* from support coming in from Sky Point and Vivane. While Throalic allies isolate *Triumph* on land and by water, the fortress' most important connections are by airship. For this reason, Throal has courted allies among the Crystal Raider moots of the Twilight Peaks. The Stoneclaws moot has been allies with Throal for some time. Under the guidance of their chief, Kerththale, the Stoneclaws have managed to persuade two other moots, the neighboring Swiftwind moot and the Rockhorn moot from the Delaris Mountains, to join with them in aiding Throal. In order to defeat the Therans in the air, Throal's alliance needs many more airships, so Kerththale plans to call a historic summit of the troll chieftains to propose an alliance with Throal against the Therans.

Important Characters

Most of the major characters in this section are further detailed in the Crystal Raiders sourcebook.

General Ilmorian

Commander of Throal's Navy, Ilmorian is an elf Air Sailor with years of experience and many tales of his heroic exploits. The only trouble is that Ilmorian listens to his own stories a little too much. The general is dashing, handsome, witty and quite skilled, but he's also a touch arrogant and very self-assured. Ilmorian believes he can handle the Therans without any help from a bunch of troll Sky Raiders, but Neden and his advisors have pushed for the alliance and Ilmorian does the bidding of his king. Neden chooses Ilmorian as his representative to Kerththale's summit because of the general's expertise in naval matters and his experience in dealing with the Crystal Raiders.

DEX: 8
PER: 6

STR: 6
WIL: 5

TOU: 6
CHA: 6

Kerththale Farseer Stoneclaws

Kerththale is a troll with a vision, that of a united Twilight Peaks and the advancement of his own people. Greatly inspired by the works of King Varulus and his predecessors, Kerththale is an admirer of Throalic culture, so much so that he has adopted Throalic-style clothing and manners befitting a courtier to the Royal Court. For all his sophistication, however, Kerththale is a skilled Sky Raider and cunning

leader. He knows that his vision is not popular, even with some of his own people, but he is bound and determined to advance the cause of the troll people, whatever the cost. Kerththale is the prime mover in the formation of the alliance of Crystal Raider moots and the driving force of the events in this section.

DEX: 6
PER: 6

STR: 8
WIL: 5

TOU: 9
CHA: 7



Yorvak Ironwill Bronzeclaw

The chief of the Ironmonger moot is a traditionalist in most ways, save when it comes to his people's fascination with metalwork and metal goods. His primary concern is for the prosperity of his own moot, followed by the good of the trolls as a people.

DEX: 6
PER: 5

STR: 8
WIL: 7

TOU: 8
CHA: 6



Drovka Steelthought Thundersky

Drovka is the young chief of the Thundersky moot. He desires to strengthen his moot and help them regain some of the glory they had before the Scourge. He is aided and advised by his sister Kagola Bondbreaker, a Warrior and questor of Lochost. Drovka does not yet understand the value of an alliance against the Therans, but he strongly desires justice for the wrongs the Empire has done his people. A brilliant tactician, Drovka is quick to see the advantages of an all-out attack against Theran forces in Barsaive.

DEX:6
PER:6

STR:8
WIL:5

TOU:8
CHA:6

Chorak Bonecracker Bloodlore

The leader of the savage Bloodlore moot, Chorak is a fiercely traditionalist troll Sky Raider who is distrustful of all outsiders, disdainful of Kerththale and his "foreign" ways and filled with hatred of the Theran Empire and all it represents. This last factor, along with a traitor in his own moot, is the driving reason for Chorak's involvement in the alliance against Thera. Chorak desires nothing more than to die heroically while slaying as many Therans as he can. In the **Assault on Sky Point** (p. 128), he gets his wish.

DEX:6
PER:5

STR:9
WIL:5

TOU:8
CHA:6



Drolak Irongrip Blackfang

Drolak has been chief of the Blackfang moot for many years and he hopes for an opportunity to rally his people around a cause like a war with the hated Therans. Drolak is quite superstitious, a believer in signs and portents, and has been troubled by the grim omens seen in the Twilight Peaks of late. He needs convincing that Kerththale's alliance is the right path for his moot.

DEX: 6	STR: 9	TOU: 8
PER: 5	WIL: 5	CHA: 7

Cho'arras Brightstone Skyseeker

The chief of the Skyseeker moot is a visionary and dreamer, much like Kerththale. But Cho'arras is also a questor of Mynbruje with a higher purpose; finding the lost monastery where Elianar Messiah studied the Books of Harrow. Unfortunately Cho'arras and his moot are cursed never to find what they seek so, even though the Skyseekers might agree to join the alliance, there may be complications from involving them.

DEX: 6	STR: 8	TOU: 8
PER: 7	WIL: 6	CHA: 7

Prokkuav Tornflesh Firefang

Prokkuav is a Bloodlore sky raider who is a secret follower of the Mad Passion Raggok. On the surface Prokkuav's goals are the same as Chorak's: glory for the Bloodlore moot and vengeance against the Theran Empire, but Prokkuav also wants control of the Bloodlore moot for himself and cares nothing about the good of his people, only for glory and his personal thirst for vengeance. Raggok, a Passion with a personal enmity towards Throal, drives Prokkuav to try and sabotage the alliance and lead the Crystal Raiders against the Therans before Throal is ready.

DEX: 6	STR: 8 (14)	TOU: 8 (20)
PER: 5	WIL: 5	CHA: 5

Notes: The Step Numbers in brackets above are for Prokkuav when he is infused with the power of Raggok at the end of the Summit at the Crystal Span adventure. During the final battle, Prokkuav is very hard to kill. He uses

his Absorb Blow charm, followed by his four Recovery Tests and his Fireblood Talent (boosted by his increased Toughness) to take a lot of damage and keep on fighting.

In his giant form, Prokkuav's armor can only be defeated by an Extraordinary Success. Additionally, he gains an extra attack each round.

Vo'tanna, the Gray Woman

Vo'tanna is a tall, slender figure clothed from head to foot in tattered gray robes, including a veil and hood that covers all of her head save for her eyes (which are the same pale gray as her clothing). Even Vo'tanna's skin is gray, dusted with ash. Whatever her true nature, Vo'tanna is thought to be a powerful sorceress, capable of commanding the forces of the natural world as well as the netherworlds. Vo'tanna has appeared briefly to the various trollmoots to offer cryptic advice, or words of warning. Of late, Vo'tanna has seemed to be appearing more frequently.

Running War in the Skies

Introducing the Events

The beginnings of the isolation of the Theran fortress of *Triumph* can be found in **Prelude to War**, **Secret Societies of Barsaive**, and **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**. **Prelude to War** provides the story of the behemoth's arrival and the events surrounding it, including the reaction of the various powers of Barsaive. **Secret Societies** includes information on organizations opposed to the Theran presence like the Dragons' Network and the Eye of Throal, along with Aban's capture of Theran airships. **Crystal Raiders** provides information on the troll Crystal Raider moots, their attacks on Theran airships and their various views towards an alliance against the Theran Empire.

The isolation of *Triumph* begins when the Stoneclaws, Rockhorn and Swiftwind trollmoots begin attacking and raiding Theran airships near the fortress. The Crystal Raiders use the new ship weapons they have developed to devastating effect against the Therans, and the first attacks are quite successful, catching the Therans off-guard and giving the Barsaivan forces some early victories. The attacks also set off a significant Theran response.



Adventure Frameworks

The Tide Turns

Overgovernor Kypros responds to the attacks on Theran airships by sending eight more ships from Sky Point to reinforce *Triumph*. The passage of the Theran vedettes over the Twilight Peaks causes some of the other trollmoots to launch attacks on them before they even reach *Triumph*. However, the Therans are better prepared for the trolls' new battle tactics, and the raids against the Theran ships become less successful, as the Therans inflict some casualties against the trolls.

Setup

Player characters who participated in **The Crystal Raiders Attack** can move right into this adventure. Non-Crystal Raider characters can get involved at this stage after the initial raids against the Therans. Throal is working to forge an alliance of all the Crystal Raider moots against Thera. The player characters could be representatives of Throal or her other allies (like the Liferock Rebellion or the Dragons' Network) seeking to help and encourage the Crystal Raiders. The characters can also be members of other Crystal Raider moots, drawn into the conflict by the opportunity to attack Theran ships.

Event 1

Four Theran mining vedettes depart Sky Point on a course for *Triumph*. Their course takes them over the Death's Sea towards *Triumph*. The Stoneclaws moot and their allies send out a group of four drakkars to strike against them. Their orders are to damage as many of the vedettes as possible, then withdraw. The Therans are not likely to pursue the drakkars into the Twilight Peaks. If they do, they become easy prey for the Crystal Raiders. If the raiders can damage or even destroy some of the vedettes, they weaken the Theran defenses at *Triumph* further. The player characters are chosen to be on board one of the drakkars in the attack.

Event 2

The drakkars fly out to meet the Theran vedettes, which fly in close formation over the boiling magma of the Death's Sea below. The Crystal Raiders swoop in to attack as they have many times before, firing their ship weapons against the vedettes and closing to board them. The Theran ships return fire and attempt to flee, forcing the drakkars to make Alter Distance maneuvers to close the distance. You can allow the players to make tests for the four drakkars as they fire weapons and attempt to close with the Therans. With

their swift drakkars, the Crystal Raiders should have no great trouble closing with the Theran ships, allowing the sky raiders to begin a boarding maneuver.

Event 3

Only a few combat turns after the boarding maneuver begins, other airships are sighted in the distance, closing fast. Four Theran military vedettes, along with two pirate ships in the pay of the Therans, are closing in on the site of the battle. It's a trap! The Therans sent the mining vedettes on ahead to lure in an Crystal Raider ships before following up with their military vedettes to close the noose and trap the raiders. As soon as they are within range, the Theran ships open fire on the drakkars.



Event 4

During the battle, at least one troll drakkar should go down in flames, crashing into the surface of the Death's Sea and exploding in a massive fireball as the ship's True Air reacts with the burning surface of the molten rock. The battle draws the attention of a magma beast (**Creatures of Barsaive**, p. 56), which appears on the surface of the Sea and



uses its powers to try and down one or more of the other airships so it can feast upon the crew. Both the drakkars and the Theran vedettes must avoid the attacks of the beast, which can provide the heavily outnumbered drakkars an opportunity to flee.

Magma Beast

Dexterity: 7	Strength: 18	Toughness: 11
Perception: 5	Willpower: 8	Charisma: 4
Initiative: 7	Physical Defense: 9	
Number of Attacks: 3	Spell Defense: 10	
Attack: 12	Social Defense: 9	
Damage:	Armor: 6	
Bite: 12	Mystic Armor: 3	
Claws (x2): 18	Knockdown: 18	
Number of Spells: 1	Recovery Tests: 3	
Effect: 50		
Death Rating: 60	Combat Movement: 30	
Wound Threshold: 13	Full Movement: 60	
Unconsciousness Rating: 53		

Rules:

Magma Beasts give off tremendous heat. This heat causes step 12 damage to anyone within one yard of the creature, and tapers off at the rate of two steps per yard.

Metal and wooden weapons are useless against a magma beast. Metal swords and daggers melt; wooden shafts burst into flame.

The Magma Beast can cause molten lava to spurt. To use this ability, they must make a Spellcasting Test against the vessel's Maneuverability rating. If this test is successful, the lava spurt hits the target, inflicting Step 50 damage for 5 consecutive rounds.

Climax

The Crystal Raider drakkars must escape the Theran trap and return to the safety of the Twilight Peaks. This requires several successful Alter Distance maneuvers to keep ahead of the Theran ships (which may be more difficult if the drakkars are seriously damaged). One troll ship may hang back and try to hold the Therans off while the rest try to escape, sacrificing themselves in battle so their comrades can live to fight another day. Make the chase a tense and exciting one, with the drakkars dodging enemy fire and struggling to maintain their lead. Let the players make rolls for the troll airships and allow them to use their Talents and abilities in whatever way might help the drakkars escape.

Once the drakkars are close enough to the Twilight Peaks, the Therans break off their pursuit, unwilling to risk an attack by additional Crystal Raider ships. Still, their message is clear. The Therans are now taking the war quite seriously.

Sequels

Overgovernor Kypros declares the enforced "peace" between the Empire and trollmoots from the Battle of Sky Point before the Scourge null and void. The three trollmoots have declared war against the Empire, and they and their kind will all pay the price. Theran ships are given standing orders to attack any Crystal Raider ship on sight. Any crewmembers captured are to be taken to Vivane in chains as slaves.

Word of the declaration spreads like wildfire through the Twilight Peaks, fanning the anger of the other trollmoots. The Twilight Peaks are a simmering cauldron ready to bubble over into war. Troll leaders are calling for attacks on the Therans, and warmongers are looking to seize power. Cooler heads need to keep the moots under control, or else they may attack *Triumph* and/or Sky Point prematurely and be wiped out in the process. They must be convinced to wait until the time is right.

Engines of War

In order to use the Theran stone ships captured by Aban, the Barsaivan forces need some means of powering them. Fortunately, the great dragons have a solution, provided the player characters can get it to the ships on time without being stopped by Theran forces or agents of the Denairastan Clan of Iopos.

Setup

The player characters are contacted by agents of the Dragons' Network to take a shipment of containers from the Liaj Jungle to a cave in the eastern tip of the Twilight Peaks, very near the Mist Swamps where the captured vedettes are being held. The containers hold the magical engines developed by the dragons. The caves are being used to conceal the Theran vedettes captured by the great dragon Aban.

The characters can be contacted by someone known to them within the Dragons' Network, or they could be contacted by the mysterious Vo'tanna (this option works well if the player are running Crystal Raider characters). They are given a location on the outer edge of the eastern side of the Liaj Jungle where they will meet their contact.





Event 1

When the characters arrive at the Liaj Jungle, they discover their meeting place is a windling village, built up among the trees and concealed in the thick jungle foliage. The jungle windlings greet the visitors cautiously, and sharp-eyed characters can spot windling Archers concealed in the trees with a Perception (11) Test. The windlings take no action against the characters unless they become violent. The characters are asked to wait until their contact arrives.

The contact turns out to be a very tall, muscular elf who is Named Vasgren. He has stony features and a cruel, tight-lipped mouth. Vasgren greets the characters curtly and shows them a set of three wagons equipped with horses to draw them. The wagons contain the materials the characters are to deliver to the edge of the Mist Swamps. Vasgren tells them characters not to open the trunks containing "the goods," only to get them to their destination as quickly as possible. If asked why they are not carrying the goods by airship, Vasgren only tells the character that "a ship would be too exposed."

In truth, Vasgren is the great dragon Usun, the master of the Liaj Jungle, in elven form. The players shouldn't be sure whether Vasgren is a dragon, a drake or merely an eccentric elf.

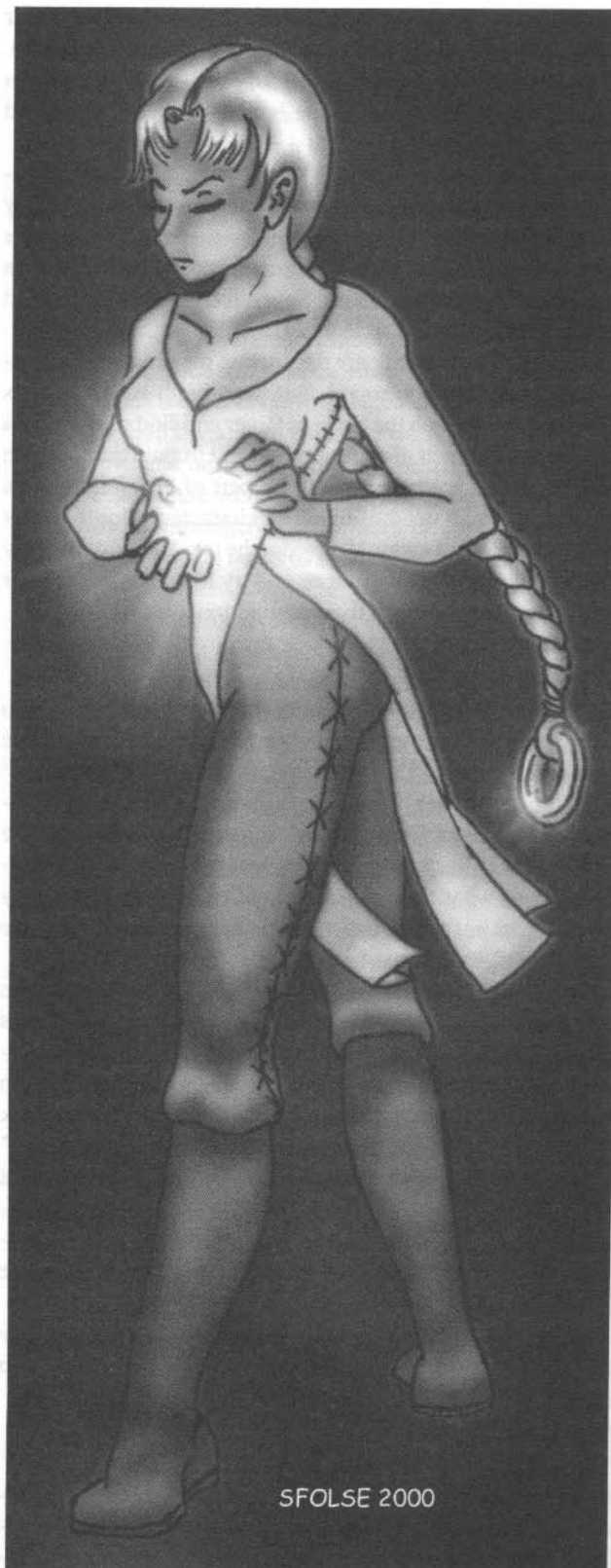
Event 2

The journey to the Mist Swamps takes at least two weeks by wagon. Only a few days after they have left the edge of the jungle, the tiny caravan is encountered by a group of troll raiders from the Firescale moot in the Scol Mountains. The troll raiders are in the process of looting and burning another caravan when they spot the characters and attack. It is unusual to find Firescales so far south, but the raiders' have become increasingly common in recent months.

Allies of Iopos, the raiders were actually sent to intercept the characters. Uhl Denairastas doesn't know what it is the characters are carrying, only that they probably got it from Usun. Anything that the Great Dragons value, Uhl wants. The Firescales ride in on their fire-breathing firescale mounts and try to seize the wagons. There are twice as many raiders as the player characters, all Cavalrymen of half the Circle of the highest Circle character in the group (round down). So, a group of five Fifth Circle Adepts would face a group of ten Second Circle Cavalrymen.

Event 3

The other small caravan consists of four wagons and appears to belong to the Dinganni, a tribe of human wanderers. The Adepts find only two survivors among the many bodies scattered around the wreckage, two human siblings





in their early twenties. The woman is Named Jorella and her bother is Yannik. They both have minor injuries (no Wounds). They thank the characters profusely for saving them from the raiders and weep over the bodies of their friends and family members.

In truth, both Jorella and Yannik are agents of the Holders of Trust of Iopos. The "friends and family" supposedly killed by the trolls were Dinganni slaves chosen for their resemblance to the two agents and the pair's minor injuries are self-inflicted. Jorella is a Seventh Circle Illusionist and Yannik is a Seventh Circle Thief.

Jorella and Yannik are the backup plan in case the raiders fail. They ask to travel southward with the characters until they can reach the Serpent River and find passage on a riverboat, to reach distant relatives in Urupa. Both of them are masterful actors and play the part of earnest, helpless Name-givers in need of aid. The characters should find it hard to turn them away. If they do, the two "siblings" follow the characters from a distance and try to lay an ambush for them before they reach their destination.

Event 4

Along the trip south, Jorella and Yannik do their best to make themselves useful and ingratiate themselves with the player characters. They love to hear tales of the characters' exploits (the better to learn more about them and their abilities). They may even try making romantic advances to some characters to get into their confidence. They are very curious about what they characters are transporting, but they are careful not to ask too many probing questions, lest the characters' suspicions be aroused.

The pair of agents also carefully begins to sabotage the characters' equipment and supplies. Jorella regularly uses an Innocent Activity spell (p. 168, **ED**) to cover his activities, while Yannik uses Silent Walk. They weaken straps on armor and shields (causing them to fall apart when struck with an Excellent or better success) and dose the characters' food and drink with the first part of a two-part toxin (Jorella is an excellent cook and offers to cook meals for the group). None of this sabotage is immediately fatal, but causes complications for the characters when the pair reveals their true nature.

If the agents are simply following the characters, they spy on them and take opportunities to slip into their camp and steal or sabotage some items.

Climax

On the night before the small caravan reaches the Serpent River, the Holders of Trust make their move. Yannik offers to make a fire for the evening and introduces the sec-

ond part of the toxin into it. The poison makes the characters dizzy; each Combat Turn the character must make a Willpower (11) Test or suffer a -3 step penalty on all actions.

Yannik uses Surprise Strike against the most dangerous (in her opinion) player character, while Jorella casts Monstrous Mantle to make herself appear to be a brithan (p. 287, **ED**). The pair attacks and tries to disable the characters. They do not go out of their way to kill characters who fall unconscious. They take the wagons and head for a rendezvous with a House Ishkarat ship along the banks of the Serpent. There they will ferry the magical engines upriver to Lake Vors and then overland to Iopos.

If the characters are defeated by the spies, then the pair is intercepted by agents of Aban near the Serpent River, who recover the magical engines. Alternately, you can send the player characters chasing after the Holders to recover their cargo. If the characters defeat Jorella and Yannik, they can complete their mission successfully.

Sequels

The characters are met on the edge of the Mist Swamps by agents of the great dragon Aban, who guide them to a cave complex in the Eastern Spur of the Twilight Peaks. There the characters meet Vo'tanna, the Gray Woman.

She oversees the unloading of the cargo and the characters get to see the magical engines being loaded onto the Theran airships. Vo'tanna explains to them that the engines will allow the airships to fly without the use of slaves, allowing Throal to use them against Thera. "Everything is nearly in place," she says.

Summit at Crystal Span

Throal has to be strong enough to face Thera in the sky or all the other gains during the war will be for naught. To this end, King Neden pursues an alliance with the Crystal Raiders of the Twilight Peaks. Both the Therans and the Iopans want to see the alliance sabotaged, and the general distrust and hostility between many trollmoots makes forging them into an alliance willing to aid Throal a difficult task. The Stoneclaws moot is Throal's willing ally, but they do not have the support of the other trollmoots yet. Gamemasters may wish to have access to the information in **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive** for this adventure.

Setup

After the increasing numbers of battles against Theran airships in the skies of the Twilight Peaks have brought some of the other trollmoots into the struggle against the Therans, Kerththale, the chief of the Stoneclaws moot, calls for a summit at the Crystal Span in the Central Twilight Peaks,





a sacred place to all the Crystal Raider moots (see **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**, p. 85, for more information). He is supported by the chiefs of the Swiftwind and Rockhorn moots.

The player characters can be involved in this adventure as representatives of the Throalic forces, or as escorts for General Ilmorian, who represents Throal at the summit. They can also be supporters of the alliance from the various trollmoots of the Twilight Peaks, or friends of the trollmoots called upon to offer their advice and expertise in dealing with outsiders to the delicate negotiations of the summit. This framework assumes the player characters are working for or with Throal. If they are with one of the trollmoots, adjust the events accordingly.

Event 1

The player character arrive in the Eastern Twilight Peaks by airship along with General Ilmorian of the Throalic Navy and some of his officers to meet with Kerththale, the Chief of the Stoneclaws trollmoot. Kerththale has called a historic meeting of all the trollmoots of the Twilight Peaks at the Crystal Span bordering on Bloodlore, Blackfang, and Thundersky territory. He wants to convince the moots to unite against Thera and assist Throal in driving the Therans out of Barsaive rather than randomly attacking Theran ships and inviting possible reprisal against the Twilight Peaks should Throal's efforts fail. Kerththale already has the support of the Swiftwind and Rockhorn moots, but that leaves five other trollmoots to convince.

Kerththale receives the characters in his home, surrounded by his wives and husbands (the Crystal Raiders practice line marriage). After a ritual of greeting, the troll chief quickly gets down to business, outlining for Ilmorian and the player characters what he expects of the other chiefs and their moots at the summit.

In order to gather the chieftains at the Crystal Span, Kerththale must send out word to them, but he cannot use his own ships or people to do so, since all the trollmoots are on their guard and some (like the Bloodlores) are openly hostile to the Stoneclaws. Instead, Kerththale proposes the following plan.

Throal cannot be seen as the instigator of this alliance; no Crystal Raider would acknowledge Throal as a superior, and Kerththale would be seen as a weak collaborator. Instead, it must look like Throal wants and needs the Crystal Raiders' help. So Kerththale asks the player characters to be his envoys to carry the message of the summit to all the chiefs of the various trollmoots.

The message the characters are to give is that Kerththale, with the support of the Swiftwind and Rockhorn moots, is forming a powerful troll alliance to attack the Therans. Throal is planning to join the alliance and Kerththale invites any of

the other trollmoots who wish to strike against Thera to meet with him at the Crystal Span at sunrise five days hence.

Kerththale will provide the characters with a small airship to travel to the other trollmoots. It is vital that they carry the message as quickly as possible. Throal's allies must be in place when the attack against Theran forces begins. It is easiest for the characters to travel to the trollmoots closest to the Stoneclaws first, then to the more distant moots.

Event 2

The closest unallied trollmoot to the Stoneclaws is the Ironmonger moot in the Central Twilight Peaks. The Ironmongers are conservative and their chief, Yorvak Ironwill, does not desire war. Yorvak wants to secure prosperity for his people, and he also wants some valuable mineral rights that are in dispute with the Swiftwind moot. Kerththale believes the Ironmongers can be lured into the alliance with the promise of rich hauls of metals from the Therans and a trading agreement with the Swiftwind moot and the Rocktapper clan from Kerththale's own moot, to provide the Ironmongers with the metals they so strongly desire.

The player characters are received cautiously by the Ironmongers and taken to see Yorvak. The chief listens to what the characters have to say with a stony expression, then asks them to wait while he considers his answer. It is clear that this "request" is not to be refused. While the characters wait, they are visited by Fergis Earthsinger, a troll Elementalist and member of a living legend cult called the Raisers of Ustrect. Fergis tells them that Yorvak is very reluctant to involve his moot in open warfare with the Therans. However, Fergis may be able to sway his opinion, if the characters are willing to make a bargain.

The Raisers of Ustrect want to rebuild the ancient troll kingdom of Ustrect, near the Twilight Peaks. If the characters promise to speak to King Neden or another representative of Throal about offering aid and recognition to a new Ustrect, the Raisers will spread word of Kerththale's alliance, which should fire the raiders of the clan. Then Yorvak will be unable to refuse without looking like a coward. If he does, he is likely to find his authority challenged. Either way, the Raisers benefit.

If the character agree to plead Ustrect's case with Throal, Fergis is as good as his word. News of the alliance and the summit spread quickly and the Ironmongers demand their fair share of the battle (and the booty) from Yorvak. The chieftain agrees to come to the summit and support Kerththale's alliance.

If the characters refuse Fergis' help, Yorvak still agrees to come to the summit, but he is far more reluctant and needs more convincing that this alliance is a good idea for his people.

Event 3

The Thundersky moot, on the other hand, thirsts for war against Thera to avenge ancient crimes against their ancestors. Drovka Steelthought, the chieftain of the moot, wants an alliance against Thera, but his position is too weak to allow him to call for it. Kerththale believes Drovka will support him, so long as the young chief's own honor is not impinged upon by the offer. Drovka's sister and advisor, Kagola Bondbreaker, is a questor of Lochost and strongly antislavery, so Kerththale believes that playing up the freeing of Thera slaves will win her (and her brother) over to his side.

The Thundersky trolls accept the arrival of the player characters with considerable caution. They distrust outsiders. The characters are brought to speak with Drovka Steelthought and his sister. Both are intrigued by the idea of the alliance, but they are also cautious. Drovka's support is not strong enough for him to convince his people to agree to the alliance and, although Kagola's people would follow her into the Death's Sea itself, they are vastly in the minority. The Thundersky moot needs a sign, some kind of proof that their destiny lies with Kerththale's alliance. As a questor, Kagola suggests that they call upon the Passions to guide them. Drovka agrees.

The characters are asked to participate in a series of games in honor of Thystonius, designed to test physical prowess. They include things like foot races over dangerous mountain terrain, rock climbing, crossing a narrow tree-trunk over a dangerous waterfall, and similar tests. The characters are pitted against a group of troll champions of roughly equal ability to theirs.

At some point during the tests, the trolls suffer a disastrous setback that threatens their lives. It might be a rockslide, the attack of a monster or a slip that leaves one or more of them dangling over a precipice. The true test is whether or not the characters are willing to abandon their competition and risk themselves to help the trolls. If they successfully aid the trolls, Drovka declares the competition ended and claims the intervention of the player characters as a sign of favor from the Passions. If they are willing to risk themselves to aid the Thundersky moot, how can the moot be willing to do less? Drovka agrees to come to the summit and to support Kerththale.

Event 4

The Bloodlore moot is likely to be the greatest challenge, according to Kerththale. The Bloodlores are the most violent and savage of all the trollmoots and their chief, Chorak Bone-Cracker, is no exception. Chorak hates the Therans with a burning passion, but he is loath to ally himself or his moot with anyone. He particularly hates Kerththale's fasci-

nation with Throalic ways and customs, so an overture from the chief of the Stoneclaws is not likely to be met with an open mind.

Kerththale's opinion of Chorak isn't much better, but he's willing to try and put aside their differences for the cause of his people. The trick will be convincing Chorak to do the same.

Chorak has problems of his own. An upstart Named Prokkuav Tornflesh, a hideously scarred troll Sky Raider and secret questor of Raggok, threatens his rule. Prokkuav wants war with the Therans and he wants control of the Bloodlore moot. He plans to use the player characters as a means to get what he wants.

The Bloodlore trolls allow the characters to approach their territory under a flag of peace, but they try several times to pick a fight with the envoys. Prokkuav Tornflesh is among the trolls who go out to "greet" the characters. Once he discovers why the characters are there, Prokkuav drops several hints that the characters must defeat Chorak in combat in order to convince him of anything. He says things like, "You *va'a'uli* could never win a challenge against Chorak, and that is the only way you will change his mind."

If the characters remain calm despite the insults and threats of the Bloodlore raiders, they are taken to see Chorak. The Bloodlore chief laughs in their face at the idea of allying his moot with the Stoneclaws. The Bloodlores will attack the Therans, he says, but they will do so on their own terms, not alongside weaklings like Throal and her Stoneclaws lapdogs.

Prokkuav hopes the characters will challenge Chorak to single combat. If they injure Chorak, Prokkuav has a chance to defeat the chief himself. If the characters manage to defeat or even kill Chorak, Prokkuav can seize power and lead the Bloodlore moot into battle against Thera. As outsiders, the characters cannot claim leadership of the moot themselves, allowing Prokkuav to step in.

The characters might be able to convince Chorak to attend the summit with a sufficiently impassioned plea. Appealing to the Bloodlore chieftain's pride and sense of honor is the most effective, especially if it is implied that Kerththale will get all of the glory for leading the Crystal Raiders against Thera (Chorak will want to show up just to prevent that). This should be a feat of roleplaying rather than dice rolling. Judge the characters' efforts based on how strong their argument is and how much it appeals to Chorak's motivations.

If the characters do challenge Chorak to single combat and defeat him, without killing him, the troll chief agrees to attend the summit. If the characters kill Chorak, Prokkuav steps in to claim leadership of the Bloodlore moot and surprises everyone by agreeing to attend the summit (supposedly to honor the might of the player characters). Prokkuav prepares to make his move at the summit itself.





Event 5

Drolak Irongrip, the chief of the Blackfang moot, is considerably easier to win over. The Blackfangs are in need of a cause to rally them around their chief, and Kerththale believes Drolak will embrace the idea of a war against Thera, provided it is presented to him properly. That's where the player characters come in. The Blackfangs are important because they control the only stone airships in the Twilight Peaks, valuable additions to the alliance.

Unfortunately, the Blackfangs have problems of their own. Their ships have recently been attacked by a ghost ship (**Crystal Raiders**, p. 144). Although none of the Blackfang ships have been destroyed, several have been damaged and Drolak cannot leave the moot until he is certain his people are safe. The characters can volunteer to aid the Blackfang raiders in fighting the ghost ship. If they can destroy it or drive it off, Drolak gratefully agrees to attend the summit. The ship statistics of the ghost ship are given here. The ship is crewed by undead trolls with the abilities of demi-wraiths (p. 290, **ED**). If the characters defeat the ghost ship, it vanishes into astral space. The characters have 2D4+1 Combat Turns to get off the ship before it disappears, taking them with it.

Speed: 12

Maneuverability: 11

Firepower: 16/16

Hull:

Armor Rating: 15

Ramming: 25

Cargo: NA

Damage:

Critical: 18

Derelict: 62

Destroyed: 70

Crew:

Captain: NA

Crew Size: 30

Crew Skill: NA

Crew Rating: 20

Morale: 62

aiding them in locating the monastery. If the **Crystal Raiders** book is not available, or if you prefer not to use that adventure hook, then Cho'arras requires a test of judgment or compassion from the characters as a sign that Mynbruje favors the alliance. For example, the troll chieftain might ask the characters to judge a dispute between different conflicting parties in the trollmoot. This can foreshadow the characters' involvement in the summit in the next scene.

Event 7

The characters return to Stoneclaws territory and update Kerththale and General Ilmorian on their progress. Shortly thereafter, they, Kerththale, Ilmorian, and an honor guard of **Crystal Raiders** travel to the Crystal Span in the depths of the Twilight Peaks for the summit.

When they arrive, the characters see airships from all the trollmoots attending the summit anchored near the great arch of crystal at the end of the Great Sword Valley. Kerththale greets the gathered troll chieftains and tells them they will meet to discuss the alliance at sundown in a few hours. The chieftains return to their airships to wait, but not all of them are pleased with the delay (particularly Chorak Bonecracker and Drovka Thundersky). Kerththale excuses himself to meditate, commune with the Passions and prepare himself for the summit.

Sunset arrives, and Kerththale still has not returned. When the characters go looking for him, they find the Stoneclaws chieftain lying in a pool of his own blood, stabbed in the back. Kerththale isn't dead, but he is critically injured. The characters have to act quickly to save his life. The application of a Healing or Booster Potion is sufficient, as is any healing spell or the abilities of a questor of Garlen. Kerththale remains unconscious, even if a multitude of healing magics are applied, unable to tell the characters who attacked him, but clearly it has to be one of the delegates to the summit or a member of their honor guard. Clutched in Kerththale's hand is a scrap of dark red cloth, stained with blood.

Event 8

With Kerththale incapacitated, it looks like the alliance might end before it begins. General Ilmorian cannot conduct the negotiations, because he is seen as a representative of Throal. Already accusations are beginning to fly regarding the attack on Kerththale. It is only a matter of time before one of the troll chiefs takes offense and violence breaks out. Everyone is suspicious of everyone, and the members of Kerththale's honor guard are looking for a culprit.

The player characters need to do some fast-talking to keep the troll representatives together and prevent the alliance from breaking up. They can also investigate the attack

Event 6

The last trollmoot is the Skyseekers, from the Delaris Mountains. Chief Cho'arras Brightstone is a questor of Mynbruje, and Kerththale believes he can appeal to the chief's sense of justice and compassion to bring the Skyseekers into the alliance. The only difficulty is Cho'arras' devotion to his moot's quest for the lost monastery of Elianar Messiah and the curse the Skyseeker moot is under, never to find what they seek.

If desired, this event can use **The Lost Monastery** adventure hook from **Crystal Raiders** (p. 110), allowing the characters to help the Skyseekers overcome their curse by



on Kerththale. The scrap of cloth was torn from a corner of Chorak Bonecracker's red cloak. When this information gets out, suspicion immediately falls on Chorak, who is well known as a blood enemy of Kerththale and his moot.

The true assassin is actually Prokkuav Tornflesh, who is a member of Chorak's honor guard (Chorak brought him along to satisfy Prokkuav's followers in the Bloodlore moot and to keep an eye on him). Prokkuav tries to make the evidence point towards Chorak hoping he will be blamed, or else lose his temper over the accusations and be killed in the ensuing fight. Prokkuav hopes to seize control of the Bloodlore moot and inspire the gathered moots to follow him rather than Kerththale in attacking Sky Point directly, ignoring *Triumph* altogether.

Climax

When Prokkuav's true involvement is exposed, the scarred troll is filled with rage and a desire for vengeance against the characters. Raggok grants Prokkuav great power, causing the troll raider to become a twenty-foot giant, who tries to kill the gathered trolls and the player characters. Use the abilities listed in brackets on page 58 for Prokkuav in giant form. Prokkuav fights savagely until he is killed, whereupon his body bursts into flames and is consumed by the fires of his own hatred.

The remaining trolls quickly rally around the player characters, especially if they fought well against the traitorous Prokkuav. A still-wounded, but now conscious, Kerththale makes his way out under the Crystal Span. He calls for the trollmoots to join in the battle against the Therans and help drive them from Barsaive forever. A cheer goes up from the gathered chieftain and their followers (even Chorak and his Bloodlore trolls). The alliance is forged.

Capturing the Defiant

With the Crystal Raiders ready to help Throal and the captured Theran vedettes powered by the dragons' magical engines, Barsaivan forces are ready for their first strike against *Triumph*, the capture of the kila *Defiant*, weakening the defenses of the fortress and making ready for the aerial assault in the *Siege of Triumph*.

Setup

The trollmoots provide Sky Raiders to crew the stolen Theran ships, while the dragons' magical engines power them. One extra engine, the largest, is loaded onto one of the stone airships for the attack on the kila. This engine can be installed to run the kila once it has been captured. Once the stone-ships are ready to go, word is sent to Throal's t'skrang allies along the Serpent to make ready for the attack (possi-

bly another task for the player characters). Vo'tanna does will not directly aid in the attack, even if the characters ask her to. She says only that she has "other tasks to complete."



Event 1

The target is the *Defiant*, the kila most often found patrolling the Southern Reach of the Serpent River. Using a stolen K'tenshin ship as a decoy, t'skrang from House V'strimon and House T'kambras stage an "attack" against the K'tenshin ship, in order to draw the kila in. As it approaches, all the t'skrang ships turn their weapons on the kila and a combined fleet of Crystal Raider drakkars and captured Theran vedettes move to attack. There are eight drakkars, one from each of the eight trollmoots in the alliance, along with four of the Theran vedettes (the remaining two are being moved to Throal as quickly as possible). The player characters can be aboard any of the ships, and you may want to scatter the player character between a few different ships to allow them all to get involved in the battle.

Event 2

The drakkars attack the kila. Allow each player to run at least one ship during the attack, deciding the captain's actions each turn. The player characters can also take actions to aid the attacking ships. Keep in mind that ship-combat turns are longer than normal combat turns, so player characters may be able to take multiple actions in a single turn of maneuvering or attacking.





Although the Barsaivan forces have twelve airships on their side, the kila is still very powerful. At least one or two drakkars should be crippled or destroyed during the battle. The kila has tremendous firepower and at least two Fifth Circle Theran Elementalists on board who hurl spells like Blizzard Sphere and Fireball at the attackers. The Therans keep the attacking airships at bay, preventing them from beginning boarding maneuvers.

Climax

Suddenly, a giant crystalline ship comes soaring out of the clouds to attack the Defiant. The ship is the Thera's Bane, described on page 42. It engages the kila's defenses, allowing the other ships to begin boarding maneuvers. The battle is joined with the Theran crew of the airship. Don't bother with all the details of the crew vs. crew battle unless the players are interested in playing it out. Focus on the actions of the player characters as they help board the ship and fight the crew. The characters can fight along the high walls of the kila, hovering hundreds of feet above the surface of the river, with fireballs and lightning bolts roaring all around them. Make the battle epic and dramatic as the characters fight their way into the main tower and confront Captain Solen Ogani and his officers (p. 43).

Sequels

Once the characters defeat the captain of the kila, a cheer goes up from the sky raiders. The Theran ship is theirs! The crystal ship docks alongside the kila, revealing its crew to be Swiftwind sky raiders, accompanied by Ulig Stoneshaper and Sk'lag Prowjumper of the Swiftwind moot, the crystalsmith and shipwright who created Thera's Bane under Aban's guidance. They present the airship as a gift and a sign of unity to the Crystal Raiders, to be crewed by trolls for all of the different moots. Kerththale is offered command of the ship, but he asks Chorak Bonecracker to take his place. The Bloodlore chief is clearly honored by the offer and clasps Kerththale's arm as a true fellow warrior, their differences forgotten for the moment.

Other Adventure Ideas

Crystal Raiders Attack

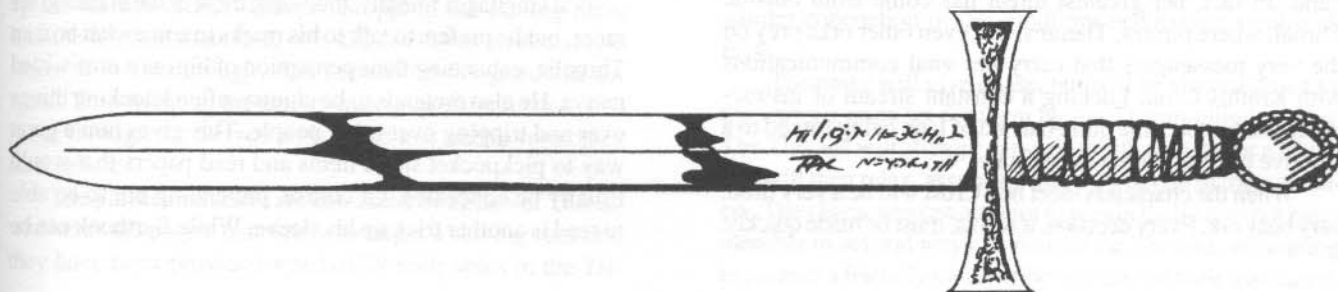
Most of the early Crystal Raider attacks consist of at least two drakkars lying in wait for a Theran vedette along the South Reach of the Serpent River. The drakkars use the steam of the Mist Swamps or the foliage of the Servos Jungle as cover. When a vedette is sighted, the ships attack, using their ship weapons to soften up the vedette, then closing and trying to board the ship to attack the crew in hand-to-hand combat.

Run the initial attack as fast-paced and action-packed, with fireballs bursting all around the drakkars as they charge towards the vedette, firing their own ship-weapons against it. The raiders do their best to close with the vedette and initiate boarding maneuvers, with the Sky Raiders using Great Leap to cross the span of distance between the two ships. The player characters can do the same, or swing across the distance using ropes from the ship's mast with a Dexterity (8) Test. They can also use spells or missile weapons from the deck of the drakkar.

The Theran Air Sailors fight fiercely against the Crystal Raiders. The melee on board the vedette has all the characteristics of a fight scene from a swashbuckling pirate story: characters swinging from the rigging, the clash of weapons, and perilous drops over the side of the ship. Play up the action for all its worth and give the player characters opportunities to prove their skill and valor in combat to the Crystal Raiders.

Teamwork

In one of the air battles between airships of the trollmoots and Theran vedettes, the troll-crewed airships (of different moots) actually hinder each other's effectiveness! Attempting to get the lion's share of the victory causes the airships to block one another from being able to shoot at the vedettes. After a battle with the vedettes that should have been easily won but was instead hard-fought, the airship





crews land their ships so that they can "talk it over." It is up to the player characters to keep this disagreement from turning into a full-blown clan war that could threaten the fragile alliance currently in place.

FIGHTING ON THE LAND

Background

King Neden has two critical strategies that must come to fruition for the war on land to succeed. First, the Throalic infantry must be moved into position near the *Triumph*, and must start cutting off the flow of slaves which is allowing the Therans in the *Triumph* to improve their fortifications. Second, the orks of Cara Fahd must isolate the *Triumph* from the supply caravans that would normally support it in place of its airships. In the course of these offensives, many minor battles will be waged. It is possible for the player characters to get caught up in many of these battles - or avoid them entirely if they so wish. Should they choose to participate, there will be many an opportunity for a ready sword and a quick tongue.

Important Characters

Crosi Halftusk

The ork ambassador to Throal from Cara Fahd is well-learned in the arts of political intrigue. Having cut her tusks on the murderous politics of the ork tribes, where differences of opinion often resulted in a winner and a corpse, she finds the ponderous pace of dwarf decision-making quite tiresome. However, Crosi is a good politician, and an even better organizer, who excels at marshaling her resources when the timing is right to get a decision made in favor of Cara Fahd. In fact, her greatest threat has come from outside Throal, where pirates, Therans, and even other orks prey on the very messengers that carry her vital communications with Krathis Gron. Lacking a constant stream of instructions, she has become quite harried of late, being forced to a reactive position in the dwarf state.

When the characters meet her, Crosi will be a very tired, very busy ork. Every decision, it seems, must be made quickly,

and large stacks of papers cover her desk. Despite this, it is obvious that she truly cares about other people, and is willing to make time for almost anyone in need. If they remember the largesse of Cara Fahd, so much the better, but she is in truth motivated only out of kindness.

Krathis Gron

Krathis Gron is the leader of the new ork nation, Cara Fahd. A descendent of the legendary Hrak Gron, she has become a questor of Upandal with her determination to build a new nation for the orks out of the ancient nation of Cara Fahd. Anyone is welcome to approach her, as she forgoes the buffers that so many leaders put in between themselves and the common folk, but only those who are acting on behalf of Cara Fahd will be truly welcomed into her presence. A busy woman, she must keep the fractious ork tribes together, working hard on cementing the tribes into a single nation while still preserving the basic precepts of freedom and independence that the nation was founded upon. More complete descriptions of Krathis Gron can be found in **Prelude to War**, p. 92, and **The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd**. Krathis Gron is a Seventh Circle Warrior and Ninth Circle Troubadour.

DEX: 7	STR: 8	TOU: 7
PER: 8	WIL: 6	CHA: 9

Barthook

Barthook is a cunning Cathan, well known among the other Cathan of the jungle for his skill at tricking and manipulating other Name-givers, especially those who feel that they are more intelligent just because they come from the city. Barthook was especially delighted when the Therans came, offering him money and goods to play his tricks on the player characters.

Barthook is an extremely likable young human, tattooed and pierced in the way of the natives. He is able to speak several languages fluently, including most of the Name-giver races, but he prefers to talk to his marks in somewhat broken Throalic, enhancing their perception of him as a dim-witted native. He also pretends to be clumsy, often knocking things over and tripping over other people. This gives him a great way to pickpocket small items and read papers that would usually be concealed. Of course, pretending not to be able to read is another trick up his sleeve. While Barthook can be





an important source of comic relief, he should never be mistaken for anything but a cool, calculating manipulator of people. Barthook is a non-Adept.

DEX: 7	STR: 4	TOU: 6
PER: 7	WIL: 6	CHA: 7

Barthook wears Hide Armor, and carries a simple but well-weighted club (Step 4 damage). He also carries several Cathan Healing Salves, which allow him to heal damage at a Step 15 rating.

Running Fighting on the Land

Introducing the Event

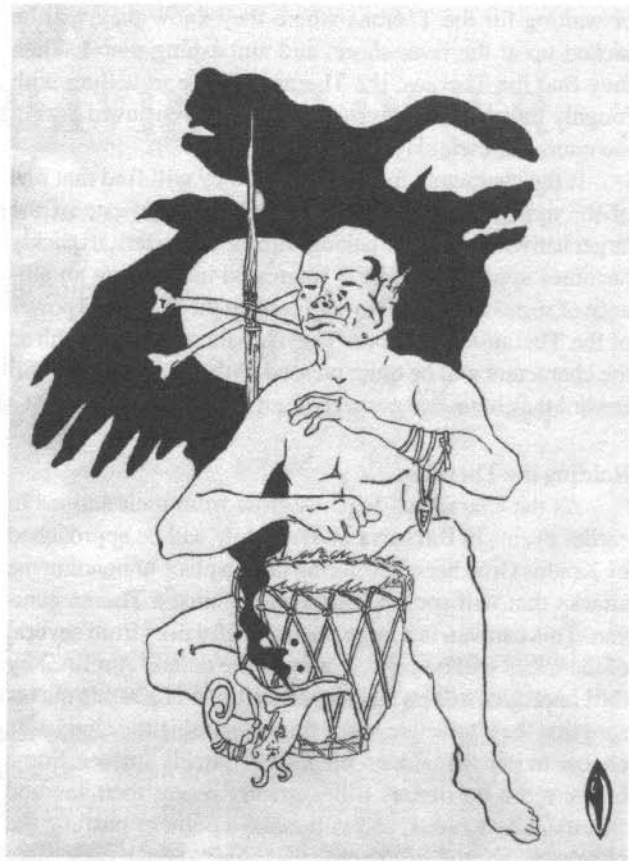
Both of the adventure ideas in this section start out with the characters being approached by a high-level member of the government of either Throal or Cara Fahd. This could easily be because of prior service, or perhaps because of their legendary status. Any former ties that the characters have with the governments of either Cara Fahd or Throal can also be put to good use here. This is especially true if the characters have successfully completed some of the adventures in **Prelude to War** and earned the respect of the major players as a result.

Adventure Ideas

Jungle Fight

One of the main supplies needed by the Therans in *Triumph* is that which Throal and its allies find most distasteful — slaves. The *Triumph* has been sending slaving expeditions into the Servos Jungle with the aid of the K'tenshin (and in some case, the natives), which have been providing the Therans with a multitude of fresh slaves. These slaves are then used to increase the fortifications and build up the insides of the *Triumph*. Stopping the slaving raids into the Servos, therefore, will kill two birds with a single stone. It is also thought that increasing the goodwill towards Throal among the natives may help Throalic troops to move through the Servos with much less native resistance than before.

The player characters are contacted by agents of Throal, who wish the player characters to target a slaving raid that they have been provided word of by their spies in the *Tri-*



umph. A merchant ship will drop off the characters under cover of darkness on the shores of the Servos Jungle. They know where the K'tenshin ship will drop off the Therans, returning to pick them up in a week.

The characters are dropped off in the Servos Jungle, where they meet up with their Throal-hired native guide. The guide, Barthook, is amusing, if very primitive (he even has a bone through his nose), and should be played for comic relief - right up to the moment he leads the characters into the ambush of his real employers, the Theran slavers. The Therans will attempt to subdue the characters, but failing that will try to capture an unconscious party member and escape with them. This can probably be accomplished through the use of Theran sleep poison, based in part on the similar concoction of the windlings and having similar effects.

The party will give chase, but will be slowed down by the various traps set for them by the Theran-allied natives. The Therans will attempt to evade the characters for a while, and will then relax, assuming that they have lost their pursuers. The characters can attempt to regain their captured party member in several ways: pursuit of the Therans, attempting to contact a friendly native tribe and ask for their assistance,

or waiting for the Therans where they know they will be picked up at the river shore, and ambushing them. When they find the Therans, the Therans will be travelling with roughly thirty or so natives that they have enslaved during the course of their slave raid.

If the characters free the slaves, they will find that one of the natives captured was the high priest of one of the larger native tribes. After talking with the characters, it quickly becomes apparent that he is interested in pursuing an alliance of sorts with Throal to help combat the newfound power of the Theran-allied tribes. The Throalic agents who hired the characters will be quite pleased with this news, and will reward the characters properly for their excellent service.

Raiding the Therans

As the characters' legends grow from their actions in earlier events in **Barsaive at War**, they will be approached by Krathis Gron herself, offering them a place of honor in the attacks that will soon be occurring against a Theran caravan. This caravan is a large one, and fifty orks from several of the tribes will be participating in the attack. A refusal by the characters will be taken as an insult, and Krathis makes sure that the characters know this. Assuming the characters choose to join the raid, problems will quickly surface. Some of the more boisterous tribes greatly resent their favored treatment by Krathis, and will make a point of pushing the characters around. If the characters fail to push back, they will be seen from then on as weaklings who are not worthy of honor. Pushing back, however, will result in their strongest warrior being challenged to single combat by the local hothead. Whether he loses or not, this will at least gain some grudging respect from the orks.

The attack on the caravan is a difficult one, but the raiders emerge victorious. The characters are given the task of protecting the slaves, who the Therans often use as human shields. The characters will be quite surprised to find out that several of the so-called 'slaves' they are guarding are actually Theran Adepts in false chains. Having suspected that the caravan would be attacked, the Therans put rings in the slave train to surprise the orks they were sure would try to free them. The Therans in disguise are a mixture of Warriors and Beastmasters who will not be impaired by their lack of weapons when the time comes to attack. The disguised Therans will wait for the most opportune time to attack, probably when the characters are attempting to free the other slaves. The orks will likely be too busy to aid the characters, so it is up to them to defeat the Theran attackers.

Sequels

After the characters defeat the Theran "slaves," they can assist the orks in defeating the rest of the Therans. The orks will have newfound respect for their battle-tested allies, and word of the characters' prowess will quickly get out once they return to the orkish encampment. Crosi Halftusk will see to it that the character's legends are spread around Throal, and it is sure that in the future, if the orks need adventurers, the player characters will be among the first people they turn to.





Chapter Five:

THEFT OF THE EVERLIVING FLOWER

The elf bowed before the massive shape that reclined in the mist-shrouded shadows of the great chamber. "We are ready to depart, Mistress," he said.

"You understand the task and its importance?" A rumbling voice asked.

"We do, Mistress," the elf replied.

"Then go forth, and do," said the voice. "Far Scholar will await your success."

The elf bowed again, and then turned and left. Outside the misty chamber, and beyond the swamps that surrounded it, his mission waited.

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"What are your findings, Takaris?"

So quietly had the Queen entered the room, that none of the elves within had perceived her presence until she spoke. Not her usual manner of entrance, but the recent events were anything but usual. To a Name-giver, the collection of blood warders and exolashers turned to face their queen and dropped to one knee. Alachia made a small motion, acknowledging their fealty, and repeated the question, "What are your findings, Takaris?"

Takaris Talshara, blood warder, turned and gestured to a pedestal in the center of the room with one horned hand. A beautiful piece of living crystal, in the shape of a large pink rose, was displayed in a glass case upon it. "As Your Majesty can see, the Everliving Flower has been taken. In its place, the thieves have left what we believe to be the—"

"The Rose Crystal," interrupted the Queen, finishing her warder's sentence. "It is. We know it well. You said 'thieves;' have they been caught and disposed of?"

"Wardens are tracking them as we speak, Your Majesty," he replied, "and, if the evidence here is accurate, I believe them to be Theran."

Creases appeared in the corners of Alachia's mouth, the smallest of frowns. In any other monarch, such an expression might convey simple annoyance. With the Queen of the Blood Wood, it meant that she was displeased, and many had suffered in the past because of her displeasure. She dismissed the junior warder with a glance and then asked, "How did they get in?"

"They were among the merchants who came three days ago, Your Majesty," said Takaris. "It appears that they entered this part of the palace by stealth and illusion, and killed several guards by ambush when those methods failed them. Perhaps knowing that the deaths would not allow them to leave quietly, they chose to use haste to leave the Wood. The Charms of Passage issued to the merchants would have allowed them to leave by one of the more conventional paths."

Motion at the door caught the warder's attention, and the Queen slowly turned to see one of her blood wardens standing in the door. Alachia made a small gesture, and the exolashers guarding the chamber allowed the warden to enter. She stepped into the room, knelt, and said, "Your Majesty, we have found one of the thieves."



"One?" The Queen's tone was mild, but Takaris and the others could hear her displeasure. "What of the others? And the Flower?"

The warden kept her eyes on the floor, and swallowed hard before answering. "They have escaped the Wood, Your Majesty. The one fell prey to a witherfang, and was crippled. His fellows left him behind." She paused again, and then added, "He was Theran, Your Majesty."

Alachia nodded. "What is your Name?"

"Susallia, Your Majesty."

"We thank you, Susallia, for bringing us this news. Warder Takaris will take your report and give you your new orders. Takaris?"

"Your Majesty?"

"Find these ... rude guests of ours. Retrieve the Flower."

"Yes, Your Majesty." The warden bowed at her command.

The Queen turned to leave the room, stepping past the kneeling warden. She paused at the doorway, and, without turning, said, "Takaris?"

"Your Majesty?"

"The Theran merchants. Dispose of them, and send their remains back to the Empire."

"As Your Majesty commands."

Background

The Everliving Flower is an ancient magical artifact from a previous age. It is a perfectly formed, living red rose suspended in a magically sealed crystal box that cannot be opened by any known force. Legend has it that the Flower is linked to the elves of Blood Wood and that those pricked by its thorns gain immortality. How someone would open the crystal to be pricked by the thorns is a subject left to speculation.

Created by the great dragons long ago, the Flower is sensitive to the presence of dragon-kin (see the **Dragons** sourcebook for more information). In the presence of those with dragon blood, the flower turns a bright blood-red color, otherwise it remains dark red, almost black. Within the Blood Wood, the Everliving Flower remains bright red almost constantly, due to the presence of many dragon-kin within the Elven Court.

The Everliving Flower was taken from the dragons long, long ago. For years it resided in Shosara until, as a gesture of loyalty and reconciliation, the elves who held it sought to deliver it to Alachia, the Elven Queen at Blood Wood. Somehow, the Everliving Flower was lost en route, and disappeared for a time. It later turned up in the ruins of Parlainth,

having been found by a group of Adept adventures. It was later returned to Queen Alachia, as portrayed in the **Earthdawn** adventure **Mists of Betrayal**, and in the **Explorer's Guide to Barsaive** (pp. 27-8). It has remained in Alachia's care ever since.

Alachia is reluctant to commit the forces of Blood Wood to war against the Theran Empire. She prefers to remain aloof and apart from the conflict, maintaining the isolationist policies with which she has ruled Blood Wood. The great dragons of Barsaive want the blood elves to aid Throal and her allies against Thera for reasons of their own, so they engineer a way of drawing Blood Wood into the war.

The great dragons have "sleeper" agents among the Theran military forces in Barsaive. The sleepers are Name-givers secretly loyal to the great dragon, Aban, and are known as the Hand of the Weaver. These Therans have been instrumental in the apprehension of airships by Aban, taking control of the ships as she attacks them, minimizing the resistance, and keeping them from opening fire with their cannon, while the dragon grabs them and pulls them down into the Mist Swamps.

The dragons call on these agents to help in the theft of the Everliving Flower. Using one of the stolen Theran vedettes (powered by a magical engine from **Engines of War**, p. 60), and operating in the guise of Theran merchants, the sleeper agents sneak into the Elf Queen's Palace and steal the Everliving Flower, leaving in its place a magical item Named the Rose Crystal. This is another ancient magical artifact, also of importance to the Elven Court. Leaving the Rose Crystal in place of the Everliving Flower is part of an elaborate ritual, a ritual that the elves of the Wood and the Theran Empire have followed for centuries. It is also clear sign that the Therans have stolen the Everliving Flower, and that they plan to include the Blood Wood in their conquest of Barsaive. This is all the prompting Alachia needs to commit her forces to the battle against the Therans.

Once the Everliving Flower has been taken, it must be safely carried to Mountainshadow, who will protect it and ensure that Alachia does not discover the truth, or, if she does, that it will be too late to change her plans. This is where the characters come into the story.

Event Synopsis

After escaping from the Blood Wood through the Southern Fringe, the Theran agents use their vedette to cross Lake Vors at night. They make a short trip from the Wood to the Tylon Mountains, a few days north of Kratas. There, they wait for the dragons' agents to contact them. Under other circumstances, Aban would simply have her agents





fly directly to the Dragon Mountains and give the Everliving Flower to Mountainshadow. However, since the aim is to convince the blood elves that Thera intends to include them among their enemies, such a direct route would counteract this plan by revealing the true natures of the thieves far too soon. In addition, the heightened activity of the Arm of Throal and their allied forces would make flying a Theran vedette across Barsaive hazardous. So, the dragons choose to bring the Flower to Mountainshadow by more circum-spect means.

The player characters get involved by being hired as couriers. They are told to meet with a group (the Therans of the Hand of the Weaver), and deliver a strongbox (the Everliving Flower) to another group in Travar. Unknown to the party, pursuers from the Blood Wood — originally tracking the Theran agents — take up their trail in an attempt to retrieve the Flower. The exact sequence of events will depend on which route the party decides to take, but it will climax with an encounter between the characters and a group of elves led by the blood warder Takaris. Informed of their likely destination by agents of the Songbirds, Alachia's spy network, he will be waiting for them in Travar. Combat will ensue, and only a timely intervention by Mountainshadow's drake, Rosper, will prevent the badly outnumbered characters from being defeated. If the party is defeated before Rosper can arrive, it will be revealed that they were merely decoys, and that the Flower was, in fact, delivered by another group, who managed to succeed because of the characters drew the blood elves away.

Important Characters

Mountainshadow

The director of this event, Mountainshadow is one of the eldest great dragons of Barsaive and a master plotter and manipulator. Known to other dragons as Far Scholar, Mountainshadow takes a long view of things (befitting a creature that has already lived for thousands of years). He hoped to avoid outright war with the Theran Empire, but the actions of the Therans in kidnapping the girl Aardelea (in **Prelude to War**) and their continued military aggression against Throal and other kingdoms in Barsaive leaves Mountainshadow and his fellow dragons with little choice.

Although he is fascinated with Name-givers, Mountainshadow does not allow his interest to interfere with his judgment. Like other dragons, he still considers the "young races" to be little more than children. Given the his-

tory between the Elven Court and the dragons of Barsaive, Mountainshadow has no qualms about using deception to bring the Blood Wood into the war against Thera. The individuals involved in the war are no more than chess pieces to him, to be used in gambits and discarded as necessary, so long as the overall goal is achieved.

Aban

Another great dragon, Aban resides in the Mist Swamps near Death's Sea. Up until recently, her participation in the war with Thera has primarily been the capture of Theran warships that have passed over the Mist Swamps on their way to the city of the K'tenshin aropagoi or to the former behemoth *Triumph*, on the shores of Lake Ban. It has been assumed, by those who worry about such matters, that she was overcoming the ships by sheer force. She is, after all, a great dragon.

What has not been known (and still isn't) is that Aban's capture of the ships has been a result of carefully planned mutinies among the crews. A number of Theran crewmembers have allied themselves with Aban. At a prearranged point, when contacted by the great dragon, these Name-givers, Adepts all, subdued the other crewmembers of the airships and kept them from putting up more than a token resistance to her capture of the ships. Without their actions, many more of the Theran warships would have been destroyed, rather than captured. These agents have been dispatched by Aban to steal the Everliving Flower and get it to Mountainshadow.

Queen Alachia

The Queen of the Elven Court is no stranger to the plots of dragons, or other elves for that matter. Alachia has spun no few plots in her day, but she does not immediately realize that the Therans are not responsible for the theft of the Everliving Flower. Mountainshadow's plan is enough to convince Alachia of the Therans' guilt, so much so that she has only two goals following the disappearance of the Flower: recovering it and punishing Thera for its theft. To that end she dispatches Takaris to recover the Flower and sends elven troops to aid Barsaivan forces preparing to attack the Theran fortress of *Triumph*. Alachia's anger over the actions of the "Therans" comes to the fore in **The Slaughter of Willow's Grove** (p. 88).

The Hand of the Weaver

The Hand of the Weaver agents tasked to steal the Everliving Flower are all members of the Theran military and Adepts of some skill. They have been prepared for this task by Aban and are completely loyal to the great dragon. It is almost certain that any agents discovered by the Therans would be interrogated for all they know before being executed as traitors to the Empire. Aban knows this, which is why she does not use her sleeper agents casually. They represent a considerable expenditure of time and effort on her part, and they are too valuable to simply throw away. As a result, only those that were present on the captured Theran airships have been dispatched on this mission.

The leader of the sleepers is Amadan, an elf male warrior. The other four sleeper agents of note are Nochos (a human male warrior), Obyera (an elf female Archer), Gromma (an ork female air sailor) and Kallen (an elf male Archer). They all have the Air Sailing skill or Talent at rank 4 or greater, allowing them to serve as the command crew of a small vedette by themselves (with the aid of the magical engine). Other agents are present in this adventure, but will only be seen crewing the vedette from distance.

When the player characters encounter the members of the Hand of the Weaver, they find them to be typical Therans, noble and arrogant of bearing, which may lead the characters to believe they are dealing with Therans loyal to the Empire. The agents do nothing to convince the characters otherwise, nor do they reveal where their true loyalties lie (they are conditioned not to do so, even under torture). They do their job as quickly and efficiently as possible, then leave to return to the Mist Swamps and await another call from their dragon mistress. If the player characters took part in the **Engines of War** adventure (p. 60), they may have caught a glimpse of the sleeper agents after the stolen Theran vedettes were outfitted with the magical engines, giving them another hint of who the Theran agents actually serve.

Rosper

The drake Rosper is a servant of the great dragon Mountainshadow, entrusted with some of the dragon's most sensitive tasks. Rosper is a fairly young drake, saddled with a great deal of responsibility, but he serves his master with complete devotion and works hard to accomplish whatever task Mountainshadow gives him. Rosper's current task is helping to ensure that the Everliving Flower reaches its destination. In Rosper's view, anyone and anything else is expendable to achieve that goal. Rosper appears towards the

end of the adventure to aid the player characters against the blood elves who are pursuing them.

In Name-giver form, Rosper generally appears as a young-ish human male and carries weapons and armor as needed for the situation. He is still somewhat unfamiliar with the nuances of Name-giver culture and mannerisms, and may give his true nature away by his speech and actions.



Takaris Talshara

Takaris is an experienced Blood Warder whose star is rising in the Elven Court. He was involved in the original recovery of the Everliving Flower in **Mists of Betrayal** and considers it a personal point of honor to find the thieves



who stole it and see it returned to the Elven Court once again. Takaris is courtly, charming and rather dashing. He is also skilled in the art of intrigue and nobody's fool. Unlike most Blood Warders, Takaris has been trained as a warrior as well as a magician. He is also knowledgeable about the world outside Blood Wood and the Elven Court, making him well suited to lead the mission to recover the Everliving Flower. The player characters will have to work hard to overcome Takaris and deliver the Flower to Mountainshadow as planned. Takaris is a Eighth Circle Wizard and Seventh Circle Warrior.

DEX: 7 STR: 7 TOU: 6
PER: 6 WIL: 7 CHA: 7

Notes: Takaris knows most First through Eight Circle Wizard spells. The spells he normally keeps in his matrices are: Delay Blow and Razor Orb (Enhanced Matrices), Counterspell, Seeking Sight and Thorny Retreat (Spell Matrices). His most common tactics are to cast Counterspell on himself and his companions and hurl a Razor Orb at the most dangerous-looking opponent. He will cast Seeking Sight on another opponent to aid his companions, then wade into combat using Delay Blow to enhance his attacks. If retreat is called for, Takaris uses his Thorny Retreat spell to enable his escape.

Thread Weaving Notes

On his foray out of the Blood Wood, Takaris wears a set of Forest Robes (**Arcane Mysteries of Barsaive**, p. 71) with a Rank 4 Thread. The robes grant Takaris +1 step to his Spellcasting, +2 to his Spell Defense and Mystic Armor, and allow him to hide automatically as if using an Earth Blend spell (p. 158, **ED**) by making a Willforce Test in place of the normal Effect Test for the spell. Under the robes, Takaris wears Thread chain mail specially adapted to be worn by blood elves, with a Rank 3 Thread, providing Armor 8, Mystic Armor +1 and an Initiative Penalty of only -1.

Takaris also carries a Thread broadsword with a Rank 4 Thread that does (STR +9) damage.

Susallia Carithasca

Susallia is the leader of a group of blood wardens dispatched by Takaris to track the Therans to their vedette. An accomplished Beastmaster, she is one of the best trackers in the Southern Reaches of the Blood Wood. She is a young elf, barely older than a century, and is fanatically loyal to the Elven Court. She is never seen without Pryxas, her ethandrilite familiar. She has chosen her team of wardens based not only

on their tracking ability, but also their endurance. All of them will be moving at a hard pace, seeking to catch up with the Therans before they reach their airship and get away with the Everliving Flower.

Susallia is familiar with the world outside of the Wood, but not comfortable dealing with outsiders. Several Unprotected elves join her group at Kaer Eidolon, and it is they who enter any villages when supplies or information is needed. Agents of Takaris, these elves are also members of the Songbirds, and know what agents to contact for information on the progress of the Therans and, later, of the characters.

Susallia's team consists of Trajjan, a Fifth Circle Beastmaster and his blood raven familiar, Haaken and Beiken, brothers who are both Fifth Circle Woodsmen, and Alynia, a Seventh Circle Archer. The two Unprotected elves that join her at Eidolon are Barra and Nicos, and both are Sixth Circle Scouts. Susallia is an Eighth Circle Beastmaster.

DEX: 6 STR: 6 TOU: 7
PER: 7 WIL: 7 CHA: 6

Thread Weaving Notes

Susallia has woven a Rank 3 Thread to Pryxas, her ethandrilite familiar. Pryxas benefits from this by gaining a +3 to his physical defense.

Pryxas

Ethandrilite Familiar

DEX: 7 STR: 7 TOU: 5
PER: 5 WIL: 8 CHA: 4

Initiative: 9	Physical Defense: 7 (10)
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 8
Attack: 10	Social Defense: 7
Damage: 12	Armor: 3
Number of Spells: 1	Mystic Armor: 4
Spellcasting: 9	Knockdown: 11
Effect: Lightning 8	Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 40	Combat Movement: 50
Wound Threshold: 10	Full Movement: 100
Unconsciousness Rating: 33	

Legend Points: 200
Equipment: None
Loot: None



Air Tracking

Discipline: Beastmaster
Rank: 7

Talent: Tracking
Cost: 100

The Air Tracking Talent knack allows a Beastmaster to track a flying creature by its scent, much like the Windscout Talent of the same name (see p. 113 of **Denizens of Earthdawn, Volume One**). To use this knack, the Beastmaster makes a Tracking roll against the Spell Defense of the creature that they are attempting to track. If the trail is more than 12 hours old, add +3 to the target's Spell Defense. If it has rained in the past hour, add +7. A successful result allows the Beastmaster to see what looks like a trail of glowing pollen. The effect lasts for a number of hours equal to the Adept's rank in Tracking, and requires 1 point of Strain to activate.

Running the Theft of the Everliving Flower

While this mission is hardly as glorious as participating in the blockade of the Serpent River, the siege of *Triumph*, or the climactic assault on Sky Point, it is equally important. The theft of the Everliving Flower is crucial to getting the elves of the Blood Wood to commit their forces to the war. Without the powerful spellcasters and well-trained guerrilla warriors of Alachia's army, the allied forces of Barsaive may face a futile conflict, destined to fail when they attack the near-impenetrable fortress of *Triumph*.

Introducing the Event

As mentioned below, in **The Hand-off**, the characters become involved in the events of the **Theft of the Everliving Flower** when they are contacted regarding an important mission. They are told to rendezvous with a group carrying an important package, and that they will be told where to take it at the rendezvous. Once they arrive, they discover that the group consists of Therans and that they are to take the package to the Dragon Mountains. After leaving the rendezvous, their route can take a number of directions, each with its own merits and hazards.

Prequels

The Everliving Flower is introduced in the adventure **Mists of Betrayal**, and player characters may have been involved in returning it to the Blood Wood in the first place

(allowing them to meet Takaris and even Queen Alachia). The Flower is also mentioned in the **Blood Wood** sourcebook, and player characters will certainly have heard tales and legends about it. If they have visited Blood Wood before, they may have even seen the Flower, and may have met some of the characters involved in this story, like the Blood Warde Takaris.

The Dragons' Network is introduced in **Prelude to War** and **Secret Societies of Barsaive**. Player characters may have served the great dragons before (particularly Mountainshadow or Icewing), making them especially well suited for this important mission. In addition, characters in the employ of the Eye of Throal (also detailed in **Secret Societies of Barsaive**, as well as the **Throal** sourcebook) can be sent to retrieve the Flower, with a message from J'role himself telling them of its importance.

Adventure Frameworks

The Hand-off

Premise

The adventurers are subcontracted into a job by one of their trusted, regular employers. They have a clandestine meeting with a mysterious man Named Dark Tooth, who sends them into the Tylon Mountains to retrieve a certain strongbox. They are paid a healthy sum, with promise of equal compensation upon delivery. When they get to the meeting place, they discover that the Name-givers that they are supposed to meet are, in fact, Therans. The Therans give them the strongbox, and reveal where they are supposed to take it. They do not reveal that there are blood elves in pursuit of the box, although the party has the opportunity to see or meet them from this point on.

Setup

The characters are hired by agents they may or may not know to be working with the dragons to meet with an employer about an important task. If the characters have worked with the Dragons' Network before, they are contacted by someone known to them from that organization. Characters in service to Throal may be assigned the task by J'role, the head of the Eye of Throal, who received word of the plan from the great dragon Icewing. J'role will not reveal any affiliation with the dragons at this point.

The party should be contacted somewhere close to the Tylon Mountains. Kratas is an excellent location, but the intrigue in the city leaves little in the way of security. It is





likely that the Songbirds will learn of their mission sooner if they start in Kratas. Kratas' satellite port, Daiche, on the Tylon River (see p. 32 of **The Serpent River**), or a large town called Vorstown, on the south edge of Lake Vors, would be good choices. Both are approximately three days' walk to the rendezvous with the Therans in the Tylon Mountains.

If the characters seem less than willing to take the job, the agents stress to them that it is an important task, requiring skill and speed. They will also hint at the necessity of this mission, making implied connections between it and the much-anticipated attack on the Theran occupational forces. J'roln will point out, to relevant characters, that it is the duty of every citizen of Throal to serve the kingdom. None of the agents will say in exact words what the mission is or what it will accomplish. If the party cannot be swayed by the more patriotic arguments, then they will mention that their contact is well known for compensating willing employees with appreciable sums. If they are still not interested, then have the agents sigh and shake their heads, make some reference to another adventuring group (preferably a rival of the characters' group), and tell them that they will not bother them again.

In truth, if the players' refuse the job, they have missed out on an opportunity to get in good with the more covert forces in Barsaive. The agents' promise is good; they won't bother the characters again. Instead, the party will be left to handle the more overt tasks involved in the war. The only jobs that they should be offered are those involving open battles and unpleasant mercenary actions. After a few battles on the front line with the rest of the soldiers or sailors, working for bad food and bad pay in dangerous situations, many of the characters may wish they had accepted the job.

Event 1

After accepting the mission, the party is given directions to a tavern known as the Salmon's Rest. A moderately affluent business, it is known for its fresh fish and its view of the shore (if the meeting is in Kratas, then there is no view, but rather an interior courtyard with an impressive fishpond). There they will meet Dark Tooth, their employer. They will not be told how to recognize Dark Tooth, only given his Name. The agents will give them a time for the meeting, and advise not to be late.

Dark Tooth appears to be a human male with dark hair, wearing a hooded cloak that conceals his features. He will know the characters on sight, and identify by their Names. Dark Tooth will not be for much smalltalk, but he will offer to buy the characters their choice of drinks. After everyone has settled, he will get straight to the task. He wants the Adepts to pick up an item at a location no more than a few days travel from where they are and deliver it to a specific

tavern in Travar. If the characters complete the job, they will be handsomely compensated. Offer them a large enough sum of money to make it clear that Dark Tooth has considerable resources and that the task is a very important one. A good benchmark sum is one True Air coin per character in the party (that's 1000 silver each). Have him offer half upon acceptance of the mission, and half upon completion. If the characters want to negotiate, he is more than willing to. As long as the amount they demand is not too outrageous (Gamemaster's discretion), he will agree to it.

Dark Tooth will not reveal anything more about the task until the characters agree to perform it. He cannot be convinced otherwise. If the characters choose to threaten him, he will smile mildly, and indicate a number of hired "protectors" about tavern. Feel free to create these bodyguards, but there should be at least two trolls or obsidimen, and they should all look competent. This is not to say that Dark Tooth cannot protect himself, but he simply chooses to let others do so, to prevent revealing any more about himself than he has to. If you, as Gamemaster, have been blessed with one of *those* parties, and combat ensues, Dark Tooth will step away from the fight and calmly leave the characters to get the stuffing knocked out of them. Afterwards, they will be treated much in the same way that they would have if they refused the original agents' offer.

When the characters agree to the task, Dark Tooth tells them the item they will be carrying is a small strongbox. They are not to open it or tamper with it in any way. They will take the box from a contact they will meet and carry it to a tavern in Travar called the Dragon's Maw. There they will deliver it into the hands of another contact. In each case the characters must give the contact the pass phrase "the rose is beautiful," to which the contact will reply, "but beware its thorns."

In addition to the first part of their pay, Dark Tooth will provide them with a map of the Tylon Mountains. On it is marked the directions and location for the rendezvous point to pick up the strongbox. After briefing and paying them, Dark Tooth will take his leave of them. He will wish them luck, and tell them that they will not meet again. Should anyone try and follow Dark Tooth, they fail.

Event 2

Journeying across Barsaive is never safe. A journey into the mountains, even mountains as close to civilization as the Tylon Mountains, has its own perils. This section should be short, but the Gamemaster is free to put in any creature encounters that he or she feels are necessary, just to keep the characters on their toes. The Tylons have a high treeline, so any number of creatures could lurk in their for-



ests, including brithans and cave trolls. In addition, the high peaks may be the homes of airborne predators, such as griffins and wyverns. Keep the number of encounters to a minimum, though. The players should get an impression of Barsaive's continuing wildness, not get killed before the adventure has a chance to get off the ground.

Climax

The members of the Hand of the Weaver have chosen a small valley, relatively high up in the Tylons. It is below the treeline, providing them with cover, but not close to any regularly traveled path. After about two days' journey, the characters should reach the rendezvous. When they arrive at the pickup spot, they are met by soldiers wearing Theran military uniforms. The characters also see a Theran vedette grounded on the opposite side of the valley from the meeting site.

Since they were not told to expect Therans, the characters may assume they've been set up or that the Therans have captured their intended contacts. Let the players wonder for a moment as the Therans approach, but tell them that the Therans do not draw their weapons and they make no hostile moves towards the characters. If the characters offer the pass phrase, after a tense moment or two, Amadan, the elf Warrior in charge of the agents, gives the characters the countersign. The Therans give them a small metal strongbox about two feet long by one foot wide and deep.

The characters are not told what is in the box except that it is "something vital to the survival of Barsaive." They are admonished again not to open the box. It is magically sealed and warded against any attempts to open it (difficulty 28 to open the box with brute force or to affect it with spells), just in case it falls into the wrong hands or the characters choose to ignore their instructions. If the characters succeed in opening the box, they find a crystal casket inside, containing a perfectly formed rose with dark red petals, the Everliving Flower.

Unless treated with great civility and openness (unlikely with the upcoming war), the Therans will be aloof and terse. They will offer no real information concerning the strongbox, and will not part with any supplies. If asked why they do not simply fly the box to the mountains themselves, Amadan will say, "It is necessary that this item arrive at its destination by a circumspect route. Airships are easy to track, and that would defeat the purpose of this mission." He will pause, look pointedly at the characters, and add, in commanding tones, "Do not travel by airship, under any circumstances."

If the characters show unusual tolerance and acceptance of the Therans (perhaps offering to share a meal or

trading stories), Amadan and his teammates may open up a bit and share a little information. They will inform the party that there will be Name-givers pursuing them, and that they may follow the party's trail after reaching this point. Amadan will conjecture that, at the time of the meeting, they have something close to two days before pursuit reaches the valley. He does not intend to be there when they do, and suggests that the Adepts do the same. Take note; the Therans will not reveal this information unless the party sets aside any prejudice and treats them as equals. Any anti-Theran sentiments or commentary will prevent them from sharing.

After delivering the strongbox, the Therans will retreat to their vedette and make preparations for departure. At nightfall, they will take off and head west for half a night, to throw any trackers, and then turn south to report back to Aban. Then it is up to the characters to decide how to get from the Tylon Mountains to Travar and the Dragon's Maw.

To the Dragon's Maw

Premise

This framework deals with travel between the meeting with the Therans and the characters' final destination, the Dragon's Maw, where they will give the Everliving Flower to Rosper. Depending on whether the party travels over land or along the river, a variety of events may occur. Neither route is mutually exclusive, and both have their share of hazards.

A stubborn group may choose to try for an airship, despite the warnings otherwise. A charitable Gamemaster may wish to drop hints that this would be a bad idea (tales of Theran blockades and overly excitable Throalic marines circulating around the tavern, for example) or even simply state that all airships that would be interested in going south are currently being used in the war.

Forces in Pursuit

As mentioned in **The Hand-off**, there are a number of blood elves currently in pursuit of the Theran thieves. They are led by Susallia Carithasca, a Beastmaster who has developed a Talent knack that duplicates the Windscout Talent of Air Tracking. She has chosen her team of Adepts for their endurance, and, when the Therans hand over the Flower, they are two days behind the thieves, just leaving the area south of Lake Vors. Once they reach the rendezvous point in the mountains, Susallia will have to make a Creature Analysis roll, using her Creature Remains Talent knack to determine who was there. If successful, she will know that the Therans probably handed off the Flower to another group





(the characters) and have an approximate idea of the party's size, races, and, after a Tracking roll, where they are headed. The Gamemaster will need to keep careful track how fast the party is traveling, and how far behind them the blood elves are. The elves travel 19 out of every 24 hours at a steady pace, effectively more than halving their travel time, and they are accompanied by two Unprotected elf Scouts who know the hinterlands of Barsaive well enough to avoid most dangers. They are, however, not mounted (blood elves have trouble riding horses).

In addition to their hard pace set by Susallia, the elves have the benefit of Alachia's information network, the Songbirds. After getting the trail, Susallia will send one of the Unprotected Scouts to Kratas, to check in with Vistrosh. Vistrosh will, in turn, check his sources, and provide the pursuers with a list of contacts along the most probable route, allowing the blood elves to keep a good assessment of the party and its activities.

Should the blood elves catch up with the party, they will seek to use surprise, rather than open force. There are only seven of them, including the two Scouts, and they have no spellcasters with them. They will survey the group from a distance and from cover, trying to assess their strengths and weaknesses. Under the cover of darkness, the elves will take advantage of their low-light vision and attack from ambush, with their Archer providing sniper fire. They will fight to do as much damage as possible, with Susallia using Pryxas' ability to throw lightning to target spellcasters or Cavalrymen. A more prudent blood warden would seek to grab the Everliving Flower and get it back to the Wood, but Susallia is relatively young, wants to do good in the eyes of the Queen, and is angry at the affront that this theft signifies.

Setup

The party should be headed towards Travar with some speed now, the Flower on their persons. They should consider their best route from the Tylon Mountains south. The two options available are either overland, or by river. For the first part of the journey, out of the Tylons directly, they will be overland. The Gamemaster shouldn't be too hard on them at this point, since the adventure is just getting rolling, but it is his or her discretion as to what the mountains hold that they might run into.

Event 1

Once out of the Tylon Mountains, the party will, most likely, head for civilization to get supplies for the trip. Their choice of civilization may affect how fast the opposition finds them.

The obvious choices as stepping-off points for this journey would be either Kratas, or Daiche. Kratas is well known as the place where you can get anything, and enterprising Adepts may seek supplies, information, or even transport. Daiche is a smugglers' port, full of t'skrang of House T'kambras and other boatmen. Both are fraught with dangers.

Should the party go to Kratas, information on them will reach Vistrosh much faster. In fact, it is likely that he has knowledge of them even before he is aware of what they carry. When Susallia's envoy reaches him, he will be able to tell him exactly who the party was, where they were headed, and when they left (if they have left). This will, effectively, take a day of travel off of the blood elves' pursuit, allowing them to get closer to the party.

In addition, Kratas is not known as the City of Thieves for nothing. A collection of Adepts guarding a mysterious box might draw the attention of an intrigued Thief, from either Brocher's Brood, or even from the Force of the Eye. If the party is careless, such a Thief might be successful, costing them valuable time while they retrieve the box from whoever ends up with it, either by force or negotiation. A generous Gamemaster may wish to have a representative of Garlthik One-Eye, a smug human Thief by the name of Finnian, show up at their inn with the box, bringing a chastising message from the magistrate of Kratas and a warning to "keep a better watch on such valuable property."

Going to Daiche, to prepare for a trip down the Tylon River, shares many of the same dangers that going to Kratas has. Daiche is full of cutthroats that would sell their own mothers for a handful of silver, much less complete strangers like the characters. However, House T'kambras controls the river, and they will be able to provide the Adepts with transportation downriver for a good price, even with the current escalation in conflicts with House K'tenshin. Alternately, the lower reaches of the Serpent are the home of the Scavians, who have adapted to increased resistance to their presence by the K'tenshin by getting sneakier and tougher. They, too, could smuggle the party downriver from Daiche. In addition, what Songbirds are in Daiche are no where as organized as they are in Kratas, since T'kambras controls the town, and the aropagoi is allied with the Force of the Eye. Susallia's group will have little advantage there, and will gain no time on the party.

Event 2

Running the Tylon River is by far the fastest route. From Daiche to the Serpent is no more than six days. However, it is a dangerous six days. K'tenshin patrols move up the Tylon as far as three days towards Daiche with regular-



ity, and small raiding vessels come even farther north. Whether on a T'kambras riverboat, or a Scavian barge, the party is likely to come under attack by K'tenshin patrols after about three or four days travel. Despite the hostilities between the t'skrang aropagoi, their sense of honor still prevails. The K'tenshin will demand baksheva, or toll, and the T'kambras will refuse. The ritualistic combat will occur, but the desire to preserve mutual life and property has waned. Just how far it has waned is up to the Gamemaster, but it is likely that the K'tenshin will attempt a boarding action.

Gamemasters are welcome to run river combat (as detailed in **The Serpent River**) or not, but it is suggested that the party get some action during this time. The attackers will be in either modified merchant ships or picket ships (use the statistics for the t'skrang merchant boats or freelance pirates listed in **The Serpent River**, but raise the merchant ships firepower to 15/15 and lower the speed to 6). The ship carrying the party will be a modified shimoram, built off of the V'strimon schematics, with no ram, or a Scavian barge. The captains will seek to either avoid encountering the K'tenshin altogether, or try and outrun them. Should boarding occur, use the statistics featured in the Appendix for the K'tenshin Boatmen.

Should the party choose another route, feel free to allow it. Obvious river routes are journeying overland to the Servos River and taking it through the jungle, or following the Serpent all the way around from Lake Vors. The former is much more dangerous, and the latter is much, much longer. While the Tylon is swarming with enemy t'skrang, the Servos leads straight through the middle of the untamed jungle. There is only one town large enough to have anything but fishing boats in it; the town of Servon lies on the eastern side of the Servos River, where it enters the main body of the jungle. Jungle beasts and tribes may feel that such a trip is an intrusion, and very few Boatmen, even t'skrang, will take the journey. In fact, only one, a half-crazed old t'skrang Boatman Named Allnoot will do it, but will want the cash up front. Allnoot is a Fifth Circle Boatman, and has a small crew on his river ferry; all of which are "civilized" jungle t'skrang. He drinks, he swears, and his boat is filthy, but he will, barring accidents, get the party where the need to be. His ferry has no fire cannon, and with its small crew, it must stop at night. It will take ten days to get through the jungle and to the Serpent. The Gamemaster is welcome to throw any number of jungle encounters at party, including beasts, minor Horrors, and the perils of the environment (see **Earthdawn Survival Guide**).

Allnoot, Fifth Circle T'skrang Boatman

DEX: 7
PER: 6

STR: 6
WIL: 5

TOU: 7
CHA: 5

Any travel on the river has the advantage of effectively stymieing pursuit. The blood elves will be unable to directly follow the characters, and will have to journey overland. They will follow the most direct route, once they find which way the Adepts have gone, but they will lose time since they are on foot. However, the Songbirds will continue to keep them appraised, and they will not lose the trail. Add a day of investigation, after they get to whatever port the party leaves from, and then map out the most direct route for them to take to the next available civilization. They will follow the river, if they can, and take the quickest route around the jungle if they cannot.

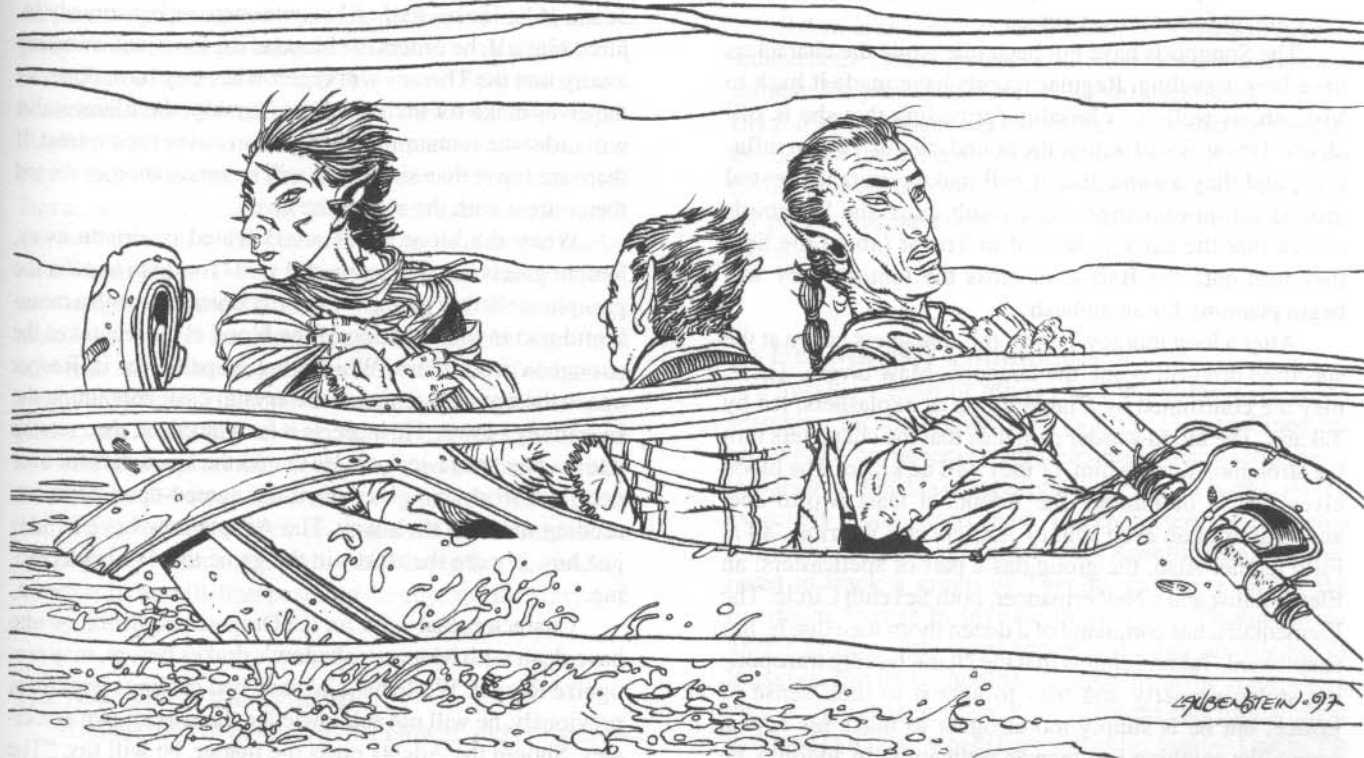
Event 3

The characters will eventually reach the part of the Serpent River that is controlled exclusively by House K'tenshin. Between Lake Pyros and the Mist Swamps, almost all boats belong to the nialls of the House of Nine Diamonds, and given the current events, they are on the lookout for people who fit the general profile of spies. In other words, the characters.

Adepts will have to be careful traveling this area. K'tenshin ships are still taking passengers, but they are demanding exact details of the reasons for traveling the Serpent, especially to Travar (a city with such a high concentration of Adepts, and particularly spellcasters, makes them nervous). In addition, they will demand a search of the party's belongings, probably discovering the strongbox, which would result in capture and interrogation, and a lengthy stay in the dungeons of the Sixteen Towers. Should the party pass inspection, the price will be exorbitantly high, and they will not be permitted to wear weapons while on board. However, since the K'tenshin control this section of the river, there will be no interruptions in the party's journey, which will take 4 days from the Servos, 6 days from the Tylon, and 12 days from Lake Pyros.

There are other boats that will run them to Travar, or at least close to Travar. Scavians can be found in Portage, at the mouth of the Tylon, and their barges can get the party as close as one day from the mouth of the Byrose River. The Sixteen Towers of House K'tenshin are located where the Byrose and the Servos join the Serpent, and they will not dare get any closer. Neither will T'kambras or V'strimon smugglers; it's just not safe. However, a few freelance river pirates





may be willing to make the run, seeing it as a challenge to their skill. The Gamemaster may wish to introduce Allnoot at this point, if they have not already. He will be thrilled to make the run, but will demand his pay in advance.

Any boats other than K'tenshin will not be welcome on the Serpent's Southern Reaches without papers or some other sort of authorization. There should be the possibility of being stopped at any time by K'tenshin picket ships. On the Serpent itself, and for about a day's journey up any tributary, these boats will be warships, and any near Lake Pyros will have a Theran war vedette running escort. Farther down the Byrose towards Travar, they will be patrol boats, like the ones mentioned in **Event 2** above. Should combat ensue, use the statistics in the **Appendix** for the K'tenshin boatmen.

Event 4

Susallia and her group will not pursue the party if they go overland into the Badlands, but will follow the river on their own chartered ferry that they will be able to board in K'tenshin waters. Trajian, the other Beastmaster in her group, will send his blood raven to spy on the characters. Any Scout, Beastmaster, or other Adept with a pertinent Knowledge Skill (Wild Animals, Birds, Barsaivan Fauna, etc.) should

make a roll (including Half-Magic for the appropriate Disciplines) against a Target Number of 10 to notice that the bird is not indigenous to the area. Another roll on the next day, also at 10, will spot the bird again, and an Excellent Success will warn them that it is watching them. The fact that they are being spied on by a bird that should be in the Blood Wood should at least make the party nervous. At all times the blood raven will remain out of spell and arrow range.

Whether the characters are on land or on Allnoot's ferry, if they have not already, Susallia and her group will make their attack. If the characters are on land, they will attack using the cover of darkness to gain as much surprise as possible. If they are on Allnoot's ferry, they will attack using arrows, and only have their own ferry close if it looks like the characters will escape, or they are no longer capable of repelling boarders.

Climax

Once the party has reached Travar, they may feel that they have succeeded in their mission. The city is independent of the K'tenshin and Theran control, so they won't be interrogated about their mission, and plenty of the inhabitants can tell them where the Dragon's Maw is located. If they have fought off Susallia and her band, they may be-



lieve that they have weathered the worst of the pursuit. They are, unfortunately, wrong.

The Songbirds have not been idle while the characters have been traveling. Regular reports have made it back to Vistrosh, as well as to Susallia (providing that she is still alive). Travar is still within the boundaries of Theran influence, and they assume that it will make a suitable neutral ground for an exchange. As a result, once the Songbirds realize that the party is headed to Travar (about the time they turn onto the Byrose or cross the Iontos), they will begin planning for an ambush.

After a long journey Travar, the characters arrive at the specified drop-off point, the Dragon's Maw tavern. There, they are confronted by a large group of exolashers, led by Takaris. The blood warder demands that the characters turn the strongbox over to him, or they will be killed. The blood elves should outnumber the Adepts at least two-to-one, and consist of an even split of Archers and Warriors, all at Fifth Circle. Also, the group has a pair of spellcasters; an Elementalist and a Nethermancer, both Seventh Circle. The Elementalist has command of a dozen thorn men that he has summoned. Takaris claims that the characters are transporting stolen property and tries to appeal to their sense of justice, but he is simply too arrogant to make his appeal sound like anything less than an ultimatum. In addition, he has appealed to the magistrates of Travar, and they have agreed to let the blood elves handle their own affairs. No Town Watch will involve themselves in this fight.

If the characters try to offer Takaris the pass phrase "the rose is beautiful," thinking he is their contact, it will only convince the blood warder they are guilty. "Yes," he says, "the rose is beautiful. Did you really think you could get away with taking it from us? You and your so-called 'Empire' will pay for this." Naturally the characters have no idea what Takaris is talking about, but the blood warder won't believe them. He assures the characters that the blood elves have ways of forcing the truth out of them, very painful ways.

When the characters are about to surrender to the blood elves or a fight is about to break out (with the characters at a distinct disadvantage), Name-giver agents of Mountainshadow, including the drake Rosper in human form, appear from around the corner, dressed as Theran soldiers. The agents are Third Circle human Warriors. There are at least as many of them as there are player characters, making the sides about even. The "Therans" command the blood elves to leave to area.

When Takaris refuses, the "Therans" attack and engage the blood elves in battle. A big melee ensues between the characters, the blood elves and the dragon's agents. With their help, the characters should be able to defeat the

blood elves or drive them away. Takaris doesn't fight to the death. If he loses half of his own men, or is seriously injured himself, he orders the blood elves to retreat, swearing loudly that the Therans will regret what they have done. As the elves make for their borrowed airship, the Elementalist will order the remaining thorn men to cover their retreat. If there are fewer than six left, he will summon another six and then retreat with the rest of the elves.

When the blood elves are defeated or driven away, Rosper greets the characters and waits for them to offer the pass phrase before giving them the countersign, with a meaningful nod in the direction of the blood elves. He takes the strongbox from them. Whispering a spell over it, Rosper opens the box and removes the crystal cask containing the Everliving Flower. He inspects it for a moment, then returns it to the box and re-locks it. He thanks the characters for their excellent work and gives them the agreed-upon payment, sending them on their way. The Adepts now have an idea just how big are the stakes in the game they've been playing.

Characters that work for the Dragons' Network, or who have dealt with Mountainshadow's drakes before, may recognize Rosper. While he may have had dealings with them previously, he will not acknowledge them as known associates. Should the Adepts press the matter, he will say, "The thorns have been blunted, but they are still present," meaning that the blood elves are still nearby. He will demand, in his best Theran accent, that they leave the area immediately. As he does so, the Warriors accompanying him will step into formation behind him and finger their weapons meaningfully. The party should get the hint.

Loose Ends

Shortly after the characters hand the Everliving Flower to Rosper, he will take it into the Dragon Mountains. Leaving his companions to journey back to the village under Mountainshadow's protection on their own, he will transform to his drake form and quickly fly back to his master. With the Flower in the possession of the dragons, the Blood Wood will ally with Throal for the attack on *Triumph*.

What if the Characters Fail?

Should the party be defeated while on the road to the Dragon's Maw, then the blood elves will still commit their forces at the battle of *Triumph*. Realizing the pursuit that would follow the theft of the Everliving Flower, the dragons prepared a number of decoys to draw the elves away from the actual target. Aban instructed her agents to meet with





five separate groups, and to give each group a strongbox. All the strongboxes were locked in the same manner, and all groups were given the same instructions, with slightly different routes for them to travel. However, only one strongbox contained the Everliving Flower. The others were empty. Should the party be defeated by their pursuers, the box that they carried was one of the empty ones. If they make it to Travar, or near to it, and are left by their attackers for dead, they will awaken to find themselves in an olzim to Garlen somewhere in the Travar. The questors there are friendly, and have seen to their wounds, but will tell them nothing, aside from the fact that they brought to Travar by a group of travelers. A few hours after the last member of the group awakens, Rosper will come to them. He will give the pass phrase, and when they answer, he will thank them for their services, and explain that they performed a valuable job by drawing pursuit away from the true package. He will pay them the remainder of their price and tell them to rest for a few days, and then suggest that they leave Travar quickly. Afterwards, he will disappear into the city, and the party will not see him again.

The Assault on the Triumph

With the theft of the Everliving Flower, and its replacement by the Rose Crystal, the Blood Wood will be enraged at the Theran Empire. They will immediately send word to Throal, informing King Neden of their intentions to commit forces against the Theran invaders. Geverian Half-Smile, the ambassador from the Blood Wood to Throal, will deliver the message to Neden, and a force of blood wardens and exolashers will begin mustering at Kaer Eidolon to ship out on Syrtis riverboats for the staging point of the Arm of Throal.

However, Takaris is not finished with his investigation. Now that the pressure to retrieve the Flower has diminished, he will reconsider his original suppositions that the thieves were Theran. He will consider the rendezvous point (especially its name) and the absence of Therans in the party, and will come to the conclusion that another group meant for the blood elves to believe that the Therans stole the Everliving Flower. A few discreet inquiries to the Songbirds will reveal that the Dragons' Network was the actual culprit. He will learn this information shortly after the siege of *Triumph*, and will inform the Queen as soon as he can. Alachia will be livid, and will immediately order the withdrawal of her forces from the combined armies. However, the damage will have already been done. After the Slaughter of Willow's Grove, the Theran Empire will consider the Blood Wood an enemy, and nothing will convince them otherwise.

Other Adventure Ideas

Below is an idea for Gamemasters who wish to run this section of the campaign from a different viewpoint. It is more suitable for parties that are not closely affiliated with the Dragon's Network or the Eye of Throal. Rather than acting as couriers for the dragons, they will be employed by the Court of the Blood Wood. This adventure idea will work well for parties that have a number of elves in them, especially blood elves.

As Her Majesty Commands

Susallia's team of blood elves is not the only group searching for the thieves who took the Flower. Since the blood elves are generally not welcome in many settlements in Barsaive, Alachia often contracts groups of Name-givers, especially Unprotected elves. The characters are contacted by Susallia in or around Lake Vors or Kaer Eidolon. They are hired to track a group of Therans that have stolen the Everliving Flower. In this case, however, the Therans do not have a airship, only good horses and a fair knowledge of Barsaive. The party should track them from the point where they were last seen (near Kaer Eidolon) and follow them overland to Kratas, where they will either head to Daiche for a trip downriver, or go across the countryside towards the Serpent. Once they get to Kratas, Vistrosh's agents will inform them that the thieves are headed to Travar, to meet with a contact at the Dragon's Maw. The rest is a race against time.

The party will not know that the Therans are, in actuality, agents of the dragons, and will have to deal with whatever they and the other members of the Dragons' Network throw at them. In addition, members of the Eye of Throal may try to dissuade the party from pursuing. Should the party get to the Therans and retrieve the box, they will find that it is empty, a decoy. The elves will still have to commit their forces to the war.

A Heartfelt Chase

After the events of **Barsaive at War**, word reaches the ears of Monus Byre, leader of the Seekers of the Heart, a living-legend cult who seeks to heal the Blood Wood, of the theft of the Everliving Flower. She contacts the party and tasks them to retrieve the Flower. Once the Seekers have the Flower, they can perhaps offer it to Queen Alachia to convince her to listen to their cause, and allow them to help heal the Heart of the Wood. Stealing the Flower from the lair of a dragon should be an adventure suitably challenging for characters made legendary by **Barsaive at War**.



Chapter Six:

THE SEIGE OF THE TRIUMPH

The peal of trumpets greeted the dawning sun on this fateful morning, drowning the cries of songbirds as they fled from these heralds of war. Over the horizon from every direction, dark shapes filled the skies, appearing more and more menacing as time went on. Upon the ground, thousands of tiny figures marched relentlessly across the rocky plains towards Ayodhya from the north and east. T'skrang warships approached from both directions on the Serpent River, patrolling the waters, yet maintaining their distance from the fortress. And from atop their lofty towers, safe under the protection of their indestructible dome of Air, the Therans watched from the *Triumph* ... and waited.

Staggered blasts from fire cannons battered the countryside, the combatants still much too distant for these attacks to be effectual. Zealous engineers loosed catapults and ballistae as well, filling the air with deadly projectiles as the allied infantry continued to march forward. As the morning wore on, hundreds of Throalic troops gathered en masse to prepare themselves for the impending charge. Siege weapons were moved into range to begin pounding at the Theran fortress. The effort appeared to be futile as pitch and fire splashed harmlessly, while boulders and missiles shattered upon impact against the shield of Air. The Allies of Barsaive suffered minor casualties as return-fire from the behemoth found its mark.

As the sun reached its apex in the sky, the attack began in earnest as Barsaive's combined naval power poured forth in a concerted attack against the *Triumph*. T'skrang warships along the Serpent River maneuvered closer as the galleys and drakkar swarmed in from the air, each loosing what weapons they had against the Air dome. It looked hopeless for the allied forces as there was little visible effect. Therans returned fire in moderation, conserving their limited supplies, though it appeared more like they were mocking the Barsaivans with their counterattack, or lack thereof. Still, a number of drakkar were lost, and a warship was forced to beach or sink from the damage. The Theran airships remained inside the dome — there was no reason for them to deploy and risk being lost.

Meanwhile, the troops on the ground marched forward, within the midst of storm of artillery fire coming from the *Triumph*. From time to time, the ground erupted into flame under the feet of the soldiers, hurling broken and charred bodies across the landscape. Many of the siege weaponry suffered the same fate from the Therans' counterattack. Dozens of Name-givers perished, yet the infantry and cavalry continued their march.

The battle continued on in this fashion for an eternal quarter-hour. Then, at that moment, much to the Barsaivans' dismay, a half-dozen new shapes swept in from over the treetops of the Servos Jungle — Theran vedettes. All at once, the forward fire cannons of these new ships shot into the midst of the Barsaivan air forces, their shots slamming into the sides of Throal's most heavily armored galleons. The allied airships scattered as the vedettes approached, and there was a break in the fighting as the Therans let forth a cheer. Victory would be theirs!

As the vedettes passed effortlessly through the dome of Air and began to take up defensive positions around the Behemoth, the scattered drakkar landed behind the Barsaivan troops, and started to pick up soldiers. *They must be preparing to evacuate*, mused Theran observers. All remained quiet during this impasse as ships moved out of range and the infantry halted their advance. Before long, one of the vedettes had descended towards the ground and was preparing to dock at one of the airship piers in the heart of the Theran fortress. From afar, the forces of Barsaive paused and watched....





Suddenly, the *Triumph* exploded into activity once again, this time from the inside. A single horn blared from one of the newly arrived vedettes and, as one, every weapon on the ships unleashed against the now-vulnerable fortress. Through the resulting smoke and fire, dozens of figures appeared as Sky Raiders of the allied forces leapt down from the ships and onto the battlements of the behemoth to engage the Therans in combat. On the ground, several small parties exited the tethered vedette, and scattered away in separate directions.

Having unloaded their troop compliment, and while they still had the element of surprise on their side, the Barsaivan vedettes, save for the moored ship, lifted into the skies once again, uncontested, firing one last salvo of fire cannons at the behemoth. The grounded ship, unable to move as quickly, was hammered by the retaliatory fire from the Theran fire cannons as it tore free of its moorings. With the ship heavily damaged, and knowing they could not withstand another volley, the surviving crew rammed the vessel into one of the *Triumph*'s towers, collapsing the structure over them. As the ship broke apart under the tons of stone, there was an

enormous crackle of energy as a magical discharge rippled through the vessel, disintegrating it and some of the falling rocks around it, turning them all into ash.

With their little present to the Therans dispatched, the Barsaivan forces went into motion again. The drakkar and galleys approached the *Triumph* once more, to reinforce the fleeing vedettes, and this time they were joined by three of Throal's massive galleons. The Theran airships left their protective lair to engage the allied navy, now that their perimeter had been breached. The T'skrang warships joined in the battle as well, firing at the Theran aircraft from the river. In the ensuing battle, more drakkar and a galley were shot down, but two of the *Triumph*'s remaining vedettes also fell to the combined firepower of Barsaive's forces.

As the air battle raged on, several forks of blue lightning suddenly arced across the surface of the dome of Air in rapid succession. A stray shot from one of the galleons phased through the once-invulnerable shield, and impacted against the *Triumph*'s walls. As if that were a signal, there was a cry from the forces on the ground as the various cavalries charged against the fortifications. From the Ser-



pent River, the warships redirected the fury of their fire cannons against the *Triumph*. The drakkar moved away from the air battle, to unload their compliment of Sky Raiders onto the Theran base.

The Theran Kila, the *Righteous*, had been holding admirably against the overwhelming numbers of Barsaive's forces, though it was still taking a beating from all the fire-power coming to bear against it. Suddenly, and without warning, it pulled away from the battle to return to the *Triumph*, leaving the remaining Theran vedettes hopelessly outnumbered. In a single, merciful stroke, a simultaneous broadside from Throal's galleons obliterated them.

Meanwhile, a dozen Theran griffin riders methodically encircled one drakkar after another, devastating the crew on deck, and bringing down a fair share of ships. Unfortunately, the drakkar fared poorly against these smaller, swifter opponents. As the griffin riders moved in for the kill against another drakkar, over two hundred windlings appeared on the scene to intercept them. With ruthlessness unbecoming of their race, they swiftly mobbed the griffin riders, which fell from the skies, bristling with dozens of small arrows.

As the *Righteous* docked at the *Triumph*, another surprise from the Barsaivans greeted the Therans. From deep within its slave pits, there was another flash of magic, and, in an instant, a company of obsidimen Warriors stepped out of the Ayodhya Liferock. From within the fortress, the obsidimen tore through Theran ranks, their numbers bolstered by the hundreds of freed slaves. From without, Sky Raiders continued their attack against Therans posted upon the battlements. The windlings, having disposed of the griffin riders, followed the Sky Raiders' attack, taking out remaining fire cannon crews and other Theran soldiers still on the walls of the *Triumph*. The battle was soon joined by the cavalry, which poured through unexpectedly open gates, routing the demoralized Theran soldiers arriving at the scene to engage them. Before long, the Throalic infantry were also coming in through the gates. It wasn't long before the Theran forces found themselves hopelessly outnumbered.

The *Righteous* sounded a strategic retreat and pulled away from the behemoth with most of its officers and top staff aboard. A few that did not make it fell from the planks as the supports slid away from under them. The *Triumph* was lost to them, and they would now return to Thera with this news. Inside, the battle began to dwindle as the last vestiges of Therans either surrendered or fled. From the western gate, several Theran soldiers made haste to escape, followed by a large number of civilian and support personnel that were stationed at the *Triumph*, and even a few slaves. From the south, a dozen windlings hauled an unconscious, Theran windling with them. A cheer rose from the allied forces, as it was obvious now that victory was theirs.

Some of those cheers were cut short, however, at a scene that was witnessed below. As the fleeing Therans reached a place known as Willow's Grove, hundreds of shadowy forms stepped out from behind the trees. A contingent of blood elves had been waiting for this moment, and in cold blood, they slew each and every one of the Name-givers that fled the *Triumph* to this place. Pleas for mercy fell on deaf ears as the slaughter of adults and children, soldiers and slaves alike, continued. They went so far as to chase down those that attempted to run back to the *Triumph*, to strike them down. Then, nearly as quickly as it had begun, the killing was over. Silently, the blood elves left the bloodied grove to join their surviving brethren from the ground assault, and departed from the battlefield to return to the Blood Wood.

The battle is won, but the war continues. The Barsaivan forces have little time to rest. In spite of the losses suffered, and the atrocities endured, they make haste to prepare for the next stage in their efforts to drive the Therans from their beloved homeland.

Background

Information

This section outlines the events immediately leading up to and including Barsaive's siege of the Theran behemoth, *Triumph*. It has been around six weeks since the *Triumph*'s supply routes have been staved off by raids, as described in **Preparations for War**, and the time for the assault is rapidly approaching. The ground troops from Throal were deployed over a month ago, and are currently en route to the staging grounds at Prajor's Field. Any and all Theran scouting parties and supply trains that these forces run across are intercepted.

There are still several stages to this campaign that must be completed before the assault can begin, however. The *Triumph* is surrounded by a near-impenetrable shield in the form of a dome of Air, and a feasible strategy to infiltrate the shield has yet to be devised. After infiltration, the shield will need to be disabled somehow. Once the shield is down, the number of troops that can enter the fortress at any one time is still a limiting factor.

There are only seven days remaining before the siege of the *Triumph* is to begin. As the events leading up to the assault unfold, the Allies must make haste to ensure that everything is ready. There is no time to delay.

The Therans, on the other hand, are just starting to feel the effects of having had their supplies cut off. They effectively have about two weeks of supplies remaining. They have rationed the slaves' meals to almost nothing, and civil-





ian meals have been reduced by half. There have been a number of desertions, though many of those caught were enslaved or killed to discourage others from doing so. Their morale is wavering, and an attack by the Barsaivans now would be especially devastating.

Event Synopsis

The Barsaive War Council has already been meeting constantly on board the *Varulus* for several days. Amongst those in attendance are King Neden, Ajmar, Terath, Kerththale Farseer Stoneclaws, Ner'al Skybolt Swiftwind, Cern Stonefriend Rockhorn, Omasu, representatives of the dragons, and military advisors from House V'strimon, Syrtis and T'kambras. It is during this time that Omasu introduces his plan for the Liferock Ritual.

A group of Adepts, the player characters, is called on to deliver a vital component for the ritual to the Fellowship of Night. On their way to the War Room, the player characters encounter a Theran infiltrator who is attempting to sabotage the meeting. The attempt is thwarted, giving more credit to the characters to perform the job at hand.

Omasu takes the characters aside for a moment, and entrusts with them a fragment of the Ayodhya Liferock that he has been carrying with him for all of his life. He will lend them the use of one of his merchant ships to travel to the base of the Delaris Mountains, where they must then search for the Fellowship of Night on foot. The fragment is in a fine silk pouch, which also contains a detailed map embroidered neatly onto a silk handkerchief and a sealed letter addressed to Tana Lunnar, the current Grandmaster of the Fellowship. The characters are to depart right away, as there is no time to spare.

On their way to the Delaris Mountains, the merchant ship carrying the characters is approached by a Theran patrol vedette and ordered to stop. The captain, knowing the importance of her mission and not wanting to have the characters fall into Theran custody, ignores the Therans and attempts to outrun them. In response, the vedette opens fire. With help from the characters, they manage to drive the vedette away. The merchant ship continues on its journey.

When the merchant ship sets down at the foot of the Delaris Mountains and unloads the characters, the captain tells the characters that she cannot wait for them. Because of the increased Theran patrol activity in the areas, the ship cannot stay and risk another confrontation while it is aground. The captain promises to return after one full day to pick the characters up. From here on in, the characters are on their own.

A Theran exploration party, with the aid of a magic talisman, manages to stumble across the characters. They shadow

the characters throughout the course of the trek through the mountains. When a Rockhorn Sky Raider scouting party encounters the characters, the Therans antagonize the situation by attacking the trolls from their hiding place, forcing the characters into battle. Only when the trolls have been defeated can the characters continue on their way.

The journey is wrought with other dangers as well, with wandering creatures and natural hazards. The characters press forward over these trials. At long last, they finally come to a narrow passage between two cliffs. There, they are greeted by a hooded Name-giver in dark robes flanked by Black Guards. They have found the Fellowship of Night.

The characters are led through the valley, to the Fellowship's citadel. As they approach the leader of the Fellowship of Night, a drakkar appears over the ridge and sets down to unload a dozen angry Rockhorn Trolls. They demand an explanation for the deaths of the fellows, but before the characters can explain, the Therans attack the Trolls once again, in the same manner as before. This time, the characters may be expecting this, and can manage to spot the attackers. The combined might of the trolls, the Fellowship, and the characters can crush the Theran party.

It takes some explaining, but when it is said and done, the characters have newfound, albeit reluctant, allies in the Rockhorn trolls and the Fellowship of Night. The players present the Liferock fragment to the leader of the Fellowship, and they are led to the Liferock chamber, where a part of an elaborate ritual will take place.

When the ritual completes, the characters are given a different Liferock fragment, and are instructed to return this to Omasu right away. One of the Fellowship is instructed to accompany them back to Prajor's field.

As the characters' airship arrives at Prajor's field, they are greeted by a runner that escorts them back to the *Varulus*. There, other adventurers and military officers have already been assembled before the war council. With the characters' arrival, the meeting begins.

King Neden announces that the time has come to march forward and reclaim Barsaive's lands from the Therans. The plans are laid out before those gathered, and after many hours, the strategy is set. The characters are part of a mercenary force that will travel to the western reaches of the Servos Jungle tomorrow. The fate of hundreds of soldiers rests in their hands.

The camp is abuzz with activity right from the start of the morning, with officers debriefing their units with their orders. At the break of dawn of the next day, the soldiers will begin their march. The characters are ushered to a waiting airship where other mercenary parties already wait. There are four parties total going on this particular mission — The



First Star Company, The Valor of Barsaive, Berthyl's Legionnaires, and the characters' group.

The ship lifts off in the mid-afternoon, once everything has been prepared. They fly towards the western edge of the Servos Jungle, where there awaits a nice surprise. Six captured Theran Vedettes are moored here, the key for the Barsaivans' tactical advantage over *Triumph's* forces. As the characters disembark from the merchant ship that brought them here, a stately t'skrang approaches the parties.

The t'skrang explains the purpose of the ships, and what has been altered to make it possible to use them, and to allow them to pass through the dome of Air that surrounds the fortress. All of the parties will be riding on the *Groundbreaker*. Once this ship has docked at the *Triumph*, at the signal, the groups must rush four of the eight Air dome elemental engines, and destroy or put them out of commission them as quickly as possible. This should disrupt the Air dome and shatter the Theran defenses.

Once the dome is down, the characters have been entrusted with the task of completing the Liferock Ritual, and to free the slaves deep in the heart of the *Triumph*. The other parties must see to it that the north and east gates are opened, and then they may join in the melee against the Theran forces as they see fit.

The parties are instructed to rest and meditate at this time. They have one and a half days before they must move into action. These final moments are tense, but the excitement in the air is thick. It would not be long now, before the siege will begin....

As the sun is still just rising over the horizon, the combined forces of Barsaive begin their march towards the *Triumph*. The airships follow overhead as soldiers march in scattered ranks across the plains. As the day passes, the troops pause briefly to eat and rest, but they press on. It won't be long now.... Elsewhere, t'skrang warships also set sail. Everything has been timed precisely. Everyone should arrive at the *Triumph* as the sun rises on the next day. All the characters can really do now is wait.

The Siege

It is the dawn of a new day, and the Allied Forces of Barsaive can be seen appearing just over the horizons from the *Triumph*. Safe under the protection of their dome of True Air, the Therans wait, with their weapons primed and ready. The supply raids in the past weeks have hit them particularly hard, and they must conserve their supplies as best they can, but so long as the shield stands, they believe that have nothing to fear.

The Barsaivans wait only long enough for some of the troops to assemble, and then the attack commences. Air-

ships and warships approach the *Triumph* and begin firing their weapons upon it. From the field, artillery and siege weapons add to the assault, and the soldiers and cavalry begin their march forward. Airships fall from the sky and warships become grounded, siege weapons are destroyed and soldiers die by the dozens, but there seems to be little effect on the Theran fortification.

The characters and the other mercenary forces aboard the *Groundbreaker* prepare for departure. With the other vedettes flanking them, they lift off and head for the *Triumph*.

The vedettes swoop in from over the Servos Jungle, shooting their fire cannons into the swarm of Barsaivan airships, and scattering them. They pass through the shield of Air, and like saviors to the Therans, they stand vigil over the towers, guarding them from the Barsaivans, while the *Groundbreaker* sets down at one of the *Triumph's* piers.

At that point, the signal sounds, and chaos takes over. With weapons firing in all directions, and Sky Raiders leaping from the airborne vedettes, most of the *Triumph* is stunned into confusion. The parties aboard the *Groundbreaker* run from the ship towards their first goal — the Air dome elemental engines. With a series of attacks and spells, these elemental engines are taken out of commission quickly. The characters then proceed deep into the heart of the *Triumph*, fighting off the Therans that they come across.

When they reach the liferock chamber, the blood-red crystal glows in the center of the room, illuminating the entire place with its deathly colors. Surrounding the liferock are hundreds of slaves, held in cages, or chained to the walls. The characters complete the Liferock ritual by placing the crystal fragment they received from the Fellowship of Night into the proper place. In an instant, a dozen obsidimen Warriors emerge from the Liferock and spread out through the chamber. With their help, the characters proceed to free all the slaves, and in a moment the allied forces inside the *Triumph* numbers into the hundreds.

It does not take long after the slaves have been freed for the forces of Barsaive to rout the Therans. Those Therans soldiers that were not killed or did not surrender fled from the fortress through the western gate. Many civilians and some of the slaves follow them as well. As they reach Willow's Grove, a small wooded area between the *Triumph* and the Servos Jungle, hundreds of blood elves step out from their hiding places and mercilessly slaughter every one of the Name-givers fleeing from the behemoth. Before anyone can react, the deed has been done, and the blood elves join their brethren that participated in the siege, and return on their own to the Blood Wood. The Pattern of the grove changes permanently as a result of the slaughter that occurred there.





The siege is done, but the characters' roles are not. There isn't much time for celebration as the focus is now shifted to the other Theran stronghold on Barsaivan lands ... Sky Point.



Running the Seige of the Triumph

Introducing the Event

By this point in the war, events have already been set into motion. There is very little, if anything at all, that the characters can do to halt them at this point. However, as legendary characters that have presumably offered their services to the allied forces of Barsaive, they will be called upon often to assist in accomplishing several key tasks. This is how the characters are expected to become involved in the war.

Everywhere people look, everything is in constant motion. Soldiers can be seen training, drilling, or patrolling at all times. Runners, scouts and supply wagons come and go at a steady rush. It is expected that the characters will be amongst the forces that are gathering at Prajor's Field by this point. They may be singled out because of their accomplishments from previous missions, or because of their legends, or perhaps because they are the only ones available. Proactive characters are more likely to garner attention from their actions, while those sitting and watching the tides of war pass by would be those who are picked because they have nothing else to do. The war council cannot afford to spread their mercenary forces too thin, but there is still a lot that needs to be done.

Early in the planning stages, unless the characters manage to convince the leaders of the nations otherwise, they will not be privy to the information on the full extent of the plans for the siege of the *Triumph*. There may be rumors abound, but what the characters hear should be taken with a grain of salt. The war council has been very careful about preventing information from leaking out. As time goes on, however, the characters will learn more, and they may find themselves much deeper into the events of the war than they ever hoped to be.

Adventure framework

Liferock Rites

Premise

No matter how hard they try, the people of Barsaive can't hide the fact that they are gathering for war against Thera now — more to the point, against the *Triumph*. However, Thera doesn't know much about the specifics of their plans. As such, Thera has dispatched dozens of spies in hopes to gather as much information as possible, or, as in this case, sabotage events to delay them, or crush morale.

Setup

A single Theran agent has managed to sneak aboard the *Varulus*. While she was unable to gather useful strategic data, she did find out that the nations' leaders are meeting regularly on board the ship. With True Fire and True Water kept in orichalcum vessels, she plans to get as close to the meeting room as possible, and combine the elements to explode them. The agent expects to die, but the chance to wound or possibly kill a number of the combined nations'



leaders is one that is too tempting to let pass. Unfortunately for her, the time she chose to strike is the time the characters are called in to be given their orders.

Event 1

The characters have been summoned by a War Council of the leaders of Barsaive. As they are approaching the chamber, they will have the opportunity to notice the Theran spy attempting to set off her explosion. The characters should have the opportunity to stop her plan from succeeding. She will use the True Fire to attempt to escape, but the resultant search will either have the characters finding the agent, or the Throalic guards will chase the agent towards them. In the end, the characters should be given the opportunity to apprehend or dispose of the spy. Their actions can be easily justified and they will be commended for their efforts, regardless.

If the characters somehow manage to miss this opportunity, they will of course miss out on their chance to impress the leaders of Barsaive. The agent will escape, and the search for her will commence. She will eventually be found, but the characters should be well on their way towards their next destination by that time. In either case, security will be heightened greatly in and around the ship. If and when the agent is caught, everything she was carrying will be confiscated by the guards. She will be imprisoned and will likely be executed as a spy.

For the statistics of the Theran agent, use the Theran Swordmaster from the **Appendix** (p. 146)

Event 2

Any hype surrounding the Theran infiltrator should quickly dissipate.

There is no ceremony, no celebration. All the players will get are thanks and nods of approval. With a couple of quick orders, guards in the area will be tripled and that will be that.

The players are called into the room and asked to approach the table where the War Council has gathered. There, they will see dozens of maps laid out across the surface, and figurines representing the allied forces placed on areas all across Barsaive. This reveals very little to the players, unless they have Tactics or other war-related Knowledge Skill. Gathered around the table are some of Barsaive's most influential Name-givers: King Neden, Ajmar, Terath, Kerththale Farseer Stoneclaws, Ner'ral Skybolt Swiftwind, Cern Stonefriend Rockhorn, Omasu, Rosper, and military advisors from House V'strimon, Syrtis and T'kambras. It is Omasu who speaks, once the players have settled down.

"Revered friends, thank you for coming so quickly. There is a mission of great importance, which must be performed right away. Would you be the heroes to accept this glorious honor?"

After letting the players preen their feathers for a moment, interrupt them. Remember that time is short, and every minute counts. Omasu will motion for the characters to follow him. As he leads them to the far corner of the room, the others will begin discussing plans again. Anyone who tries to listen in on the conversation at the table will find that it is somehow shielded to prevent eavesdropping. They might also find themselves missing out on important details that Omasu tries to convey.

"As time is of the essence, I will be brief. To guarantee our victory at *Triumph*, we must have as much help as we can possibly gather to bolster our forces. One such group has offered their assistance, but we must prove our commitment to this war. They would like a delegation to seek them out, and once they are contacted in person, they will aid us."

Omasu pauses for a moment to reach behind his head to untie the cord that is dangling from his neck. He holds the object in his hand out towards the character, revealing it to be a small crystal shard. Obsidimen and characters with the appropriate Knowledge Skills (Obsidimen Lore, for example) will recognize it as a shard of a liferock. While the characters examine the shard, which he will not allow them to take yet, he takes a small silk pouch from his belt as well, and continues his speech.

"This crystal is proof of our commitment. It is essential this gets to them. In this pouch is a map of the Delaris Mountains, to which you must go to find the Fellowship of Night. There is also a sealed letter that is to be delivered to their leader, Tana Lunnar. The letter will be destroyed if anyone other than her tries to open it. Do not jeopardize this war with your curiosity."

The obsidiman will glance at each character with a steely gaze, to drive that point home, before he places the shard into the pouch and tugs the drawstring closed. Then he will offer the pouch to either the team leader, or to the character with the highest Legendary Status. The characters are bound to have questions, but Omasu will not answer them, and he will not give any reasons why. The only thing he will say further is, "Tana Lunnar will fill you in on the rest of the details once you have found her. I will have one of my personal galleys transport you to the Delaris Mountains."

Omasu will send the characters away before they waste too much time asking questions. If the characters balk for any reason, or they refuse to go without having their questions answered, Omasu will take the pouch back and call for another group of Adepts to fulfill the mission. The characters are important, but not indispensable.





Once their meeting with Omasu has finished, assuming they still have their mission, the characters will notice that the others of the war council are watching them. Characters with any knowledge concerning the trollmoots may remember that the Rockhorn Moot is located within the Delaris Mountains. They are welcome to ask Cern Stonefriend Rockhorn some questions about the area, and even for a symbol or letter to show to the Trolls of the Rockhorn moot should it become necessary. This could save them a lot of grief later on. If the characters attempt to ask questions directly relating to the mission, however, not only Omasu, but also the others of the war council, will encourage the characters to leave right away.

As the characters are escorted from the ship, they will be greeted by a young dwarf, who will introduce himself as a sailor aboard the *Cloud Jumper*, and clarifies that he is from the Overland Trading Company. It is aboard this ship that the characters will be traveling to the Delaris Mountains. If it is necessary, he will produce a writ from under his tunic, which is signed by Omasu, as proof of his identity. True to his mercantile nature, he will mention that there are currently a few healing items for sale onboard the ship, so if the characters need to, they can buy them there at a slightly reduced price.

Within minutes of the characters boarding the ship, it will lift off and head straight for its destination. Most of the sailors will be busy throughout the majority of the journey, putting all their effort into making the ship sail at best possible speed. Characters who have no knowledge of air sailing will be asked to stay out of the way, if they try to interfere, though those that do have experience are welcome to assist in whatever way possible. Even though the ship appears to be operating at just above a skeleton crew, the characters are encouraged to rest, as they may not have the chance to once at the mountains.

Event 3

With the attacks against Theran ships increasing and the trollmoots of the Twilight Peaks massing for war, Theran patrols have stepped up their vigilance and they are coming down hard on all air traffic in Barsaive, particularly ships passing anywhere near the Twilight Peaks. During the flight, a patrol vedette comes alongside the *Cloud Jumper* and orders it to stand down so the Therans can board and inspect the ship. The captain is all too familiar with the importance of her mission, and refuses to comply by attempting escape the vedette. In response, the vedette opens fire on the merchant ship.

The merchant ship is armed with a few fire cannons of its own, though its sailors will be concentrating more on

moving the ship, than on fighting back. The characters can, if they have the ability to, put their effort into fighting the Theran vedette off. The characters can either man the ship's fire cannons, or use whatever skills and Talents they have to assist in getting away. Since the Theran captains have standing orders not to lose any more airships to the Barsaivan forces, the vedette will break off its pursuit once it has suffered half its Derelict Rating or more in damage.

Event 4

The *Cloud Jumper* drops the characters off at the foot of the Delaris Mountains without any further incident. The captain informs the characters that she cannot afford to leave the ship here where they will be vulnerable to Theran attack. They will go off somewhere to hide for the time being, and will return in exactly one day's time to pick up the characters. If they have not returned by that time, they will go into hiding once again and return once another day has passed. If on the second day the characters are not there, the captain will assume the mission has failed and will return to Prajor's field.

When the ship lifts off, the characters should start the treacherous climb into the Delaris Mountains. The map they have with them is fairly well detailed with landmarks and direction. It requires a Tracking (5) Test to successfully follow its directions.

The characters are not alone on their trek through the Delaris Mountains. The Therans have had an interest in the Fellowship of Night as well, ever since they learned of their existence. Several Theran Adept squads under the command of Azim Keel have been dispatched to this area over the past several months to try to find and contact the Fellowship of Night, but they have never had much success. The dangers of the mountains and the trolls and obsidimen that inhabit them often prevented these parties from getting very far. Each of the groups had in their possession a talisman with its magic attuned to the Ayodhya Liferock, since that was the only liferock Azim Keel had access to at the time. The talisman's purpose is to act as a beacon for locating a liferock, which is where Keel believes the Fellowship to be headquartered. One such party locates the characters in this way, because of the crystal fragment that the characters carry. They begin to track the characters using this talisman, staying well out of sight. The Theran Adepts correctly believe that the players also here to find the Fellowship of Night. Their thought is to follow the characters until they have found the headquarters of the Fellowship of Night, then to neutralize them. They can then send word back to the *Triumph* of the Fellowship's location so that additional forces can be dispatched.



Spotting the Adepts following the characters requires a Perception (12) Test. An Average Success provides only a feeling of being watched. A Good Success allows the character to spot a hint of movement. An Excellent Success allows the character to determine they are being followed, while an Extraordinary Success means the character spots one of the Theran Adepts before he or she disappears out of sight.

The hike to the citadel is expected to take roughly eight hours, barring unforeseen difficulties. That is to say, it will take at least ten hours for the characters to reach their destination. Hopefully they got their sleep aboard the airship!

Event 5

After about four hours into their journey, the characters will encounter a scouting party of trolls from the Rockhorn moot. The party consists of as many Third Circle Sky Raiders equal to the number of player characters. While the moot is allied with the forces of Barsaive, including the Liferock Rebellion, these trolls are not aware of the characters' mission into their territory. As expected, the trolls are suspicious of the characters, and before the characters have a chance to explain themselves, one of the Theran Adepts hiding nearby strikes. The Theran attacks the trolls from cover, using missile weapons. The trolls assume that it is the characters that have set an ambush for them. A pair of the trolls run back in the direction from which they came, while the others attack the characters.

The characters can try to talk to the trolls, but they are in no mood to be reasonable. Any character that tries to track where the missile fire came from will find that the ambushers have vanished from that area. Note that these particular actions will be very difficult to accomplish while there are raging troll Sky Raiders attacking them. The Theran will have retreated quite some distance away after their initial attack and will wait for the outcome of the battle. The characters must incapacitate the trolls in some way in order to move on. After the battle, the Theran scout will be leaving the Delaris mountains at his best possible speed, and tracking him will take the characters quite some distance from their desired destination. Any trolls that the characters leave unconscious or unable to fend for themselves will be killed by the rest of the Therans, once the characters have moved on.

Use the statistics for Sky Raiders in the **Appendix** (p. 148) for the Rockhorn Trolls.

Climax

The characters will find the citadel of the Fellowship of Night without any more interruption. They are greeted at the mouth of the valley by a Fellowship Nethermancer, accom-

panied by a pair of Black Guards, undead obsidimen animated by nethermantic magic (See pp. 56-61 of **Secret Societies of Barsaive**). He takes them to meet Tana Lunnar, the leader of the Fellowship. She is a mature human woman and a Thirteenth Circle Nethermancer who is also guarded by a pair of Black Guards.

Before any pleasantries can take place, a drakkar full of Rockhorn Sky Raiders appears over the vale, having tracked the characters there. The airship lands on the outskirts and some two-dozen heavily armed trolls emerge. The Rockhorn trolls, because of their close ties with the obsidimen of the Delaris Mountains, were not made aware of the involvement of the Fellowship in the alliance because the Nethermancers of the Fellowship tap the power of a "dead" Liferock at the center of their citadel. The trolls demand an explanation, and it is up to the players to defuse this potentially disastrous situation.

Of course, before the characters have the chance to say very much at all, the Therans make their existence known once again by attacking from hiding places. These concealed Therans, two Elementalists, one Nethermancer, one Wizard, one Illusionist, one Scout, two Archers, and two Warriors - each Fifth Circle - use spells and missile weapons to provoke an attack. The characters, who should realize that this





is probably the same group that attacked earlier, can make a Perception (8) Test to spot the Therans before they do too much damage. If the characters can expose the Therans, they can rally the trolls and Nethermancers against them. The Therans will attempt to flee, but the Fellowship will want them killed, since this now compromises their location to the Therans.

The characters can attempt to use their mutual opposition to the Therans to try to convince the trolls and the Fellowship to unite. The crystal that the characters carry will be suitable in helping support what little they have to tell the trolls. Any of the trolls have the appropriate Knowledge Skills to recognize the crystal for what it is. If the characters had the foresight to speak with Cern Stonefriend Rockhorn beforehand, that will lend even more weight to their explanation. The trolls will grudgingly accept the Fellowship's involvement. The characters can now present the letter and the crystal shard to Tana Lunnar.

Sequels

Tana will glance over the letter and then burn it with a conjured, ghostly flame. If the letter was lost or opened prematurely and destroyed, she will appear to be annoyed, and her subsequent responses to the characters will be curt and none too friendly. She already suspects what the contents of the letter are already, regardless. She will gesture with a frail hand for the characters to follow her, and she will lead them into the heart of the citadel, where the Liferock lies. Along the way, she will start her explanation.

"Many years ago, a Nethermancer Named Sovic Nightwalker came across this liferock, dead and Horrortainted. He destroyed the Horror and soon thereafter founded the Fellowship of Night, to study the properties of the liferock. Throughout this time, we have discovered secrets that non-obsidimen have never known. We also have knowledge that not even our rock brothers have ever conceived. It is for this that our aid was enlisted for the war."

As Tana brings the characters to the liferock chamber, about a dozen obsidimen Warriors stand at attention, the insignias upon their uniforms representing the various powers that be across Barsaive. Tana takes out the crystal shard that the characters gave to her earlier, and holds it up to the enormous grayish-black crystal that stands prominently at the center of the room, uttering a short phrase in an arcane tongue (Characters who speak Obsidiman will recognize the language, but will not understand it). The shard glows briefly for a moment, eliciting a nod of approval from Tana. She will then continue her explanation.

"At Omasu's request, we have devised a way to transport a number of obsidimen between different liferocks. This

fragment of the Ayodhya Liferock will serve as the conduit on this end. We will need to bring a similar shard from this Liferock to Ayodhya to complete the circle. Please stand aside. We will finish the ceremony now."

As the characters step aside, should they look around at the others in the room, they will notice that the otherwise stoic and patient Obsidimen appear agitated, almost restless. Tana's ritual does not take very long, and it is mostly silent contemplation upon the liferock, but from the perspiration on her brow and the sudden look of exhaustion on her face, it is obviously a taxing spell. She presses the fragment against the crystal, and it slides effortlessly into the surface of the Liferock, until all that is left is the silken cord, dangling from the side. As Tana lifts her hand away, another crystal of the same color as the liferock emerges. She grasps this new fragment, and with obvious effort, wrenches it away from the liferock. Both the liferock and the fragment now throb with a dull gray glow.

She returns her attention to the characters, placing the fragment into the same pouch that was given to her earlier. She also inserts a small scroll case that had been secreted within her sleeve. She offers the pouch back to the characters, snapping her fingers sharply at one of the many archways leading into the chamber. A hooded elf steps out from the shadows in response.

"Quickly, take this back to Omasu. This fragment must be placed in the same crevice from which the original fragment came in order for this ritual to be complete. One of the Fellowship will return with you."

She will return her vigil at the Liferock then, and no longer respond to the characters' inquiries. The Black Guard that hover about her like shadows will prevent them from approaching her at this time. The elf Nethermancer will interrupt with a clearing of his throat, and hold his hand out towards the archway that the characters entered from. It's obviously time to go.

When the characters return outside, only three hours have passed. The Rockhorn trolls and their ship will still be there, as they were waiting to see the outcome of the ritual. As the characters emerge, there will be some laughter from the trolls, and at closer inspection, some money will change hands. There is still plenty of time to return to the foot of the mountains to await the return of the merchant ship. If the characters have not completely destroyed their relationship with the Rockhorn trolls, they may actually ask them for transport back to Prajor's field. A party of Trolls will return in their place to the rendezvous point to inform the merchant ship captain of the arrangement. This will save the characters more than a half day.

In the two days it takes to return to Prajor's field, the trip is relatively uneventful. The Nethermancer that accom-



panies the characters back to Prajor's Field is perfectly willing to expound on the wonders of nethermancy, but knows little of what is being done with the Liferock Ritual. His purpose is just to collect something from Omasu. He's not certain what this item is, but he has heard rumors that it could be the Chain of Skulls, which he speaks of in awed and reverent tones.

The characters' arrival elicits little response. There are scattered cheers from those that believe they have more allies arriving to support the forces, but none come to congratulate the characters. There are very few people outside the war council that knew of their mission. Of course, word may spread now of the characters' accomplishments, which helps to raise morale.

Let Slip the Dogs of War

Setup

As the characters are disembarking from their journey, they are ordered to come before the War Council. There are many more people in here than there was the last time. Anyone can make a Knowledge Skill (4) roll on anything relating to legendary people, and they will note that many of the people in the room besides the war council are adventuring Adepts from across Barsaive, and others are high-ranking military officers. With the characters' arrival, the din dies down to hushed whispers. King Neden steps forward to address the crowd.

Event 1

"Fellow Name-givers, the time has come for us to march forth and oust these accursed Therans from our lands!" Neden pauses to allow for the resulting cheers to die down. "Tomorrow marks the start of our siege of the *Triumph*. Step forward as I call your Name, to receive your orders."

The military officers are called forward first, each of their briefings taking as long as a half an hour, before they are dismissed and they leave the room. Then all the mercenary leaders are called, and they too receive their orders and are dismissed. Several hours pass, and the characters have still not been called. If the characters become impatient and leave, they are free to do so, though they might miss out on important matters. The characters are among the last ones to be called forward, and they are called for by the group Name, rather than by individual Names.

The characters are commended for their work concerning the Fellowship of Night. The elf Nethermancer that accompanied them steps forward to introduce himself as a

member of the Fellowship, and Omasu takes him aside for a moment while the others in the War Council discuss the characters' orders. A character who makes a Perception (4) Test will notice Omasu handing the elf a fairly sizeable sack. The elf opens the bag to look at its contents, and on a Perception (9) Test, the character will see that it contains one or more skulls. The elf makes an elaborate arm gesture to Omasu, bows, and leaves the room after that.

All this time that Omasu's dealings go on, Neden is speaking to the players about their tasks during the siege, pointing to maps and diagrams for reference as necessary. "We speak to you as the room has nearly cleared because your missions are perhaps the most sensitive when compared to the others. Our alliance with the dragons has presented us with opportunities that we never thought were possible. They have provided us with several Theran vedettes that have Air spells anchored into them to allow them to pass through the *Triumph's* Air dome. You will be one of the infiltration teams riding in on the Vedettes"

"Once you are inside the *Triumph*, a horn will sound, which is your signal to disembark and head for your first target. Your goal will be the northernmost dome elemental engine, which must be eliminated as quickly as possible. The elemental engines are all but invulnerable from the outside, but from the inside, they are rather fragile. A potent enough Dispel Magic spell, or significant physical damage to it will cause it to deactivate. You will know it has been deactivated when its glow dims."

"When the elemental engine has been destroyed, you are to proceed directly south towards the main gates into *Triumph*. You will undoubtedly encounter some opposition, but we are counting on the confusion of the moment to be enough to make it easier for you. From the gate, you will see an archway leading to a chamber with a half-dozen doors. Take the second doorway on the left, which leads down a long stairwell, which is the most direct route to the slave chambers. When you reach the bottom, there will be a long corridor on the other side of the only exit, and at the end of that corridor, is your destination. There may be guards posted there, but we expect their numbers to be few."

"This is the most important part of your mission now. The fragment that you obtained from the Fellowship of Night will remain in your care. You are to complete the ritual that the Fellowship started. Once the ritual is complete, try to free as many of the slaves as you can. You should have help by that point. When that is done, lead everyone back to the surface, and do what you can to help defeat the Therans from there."

"You have three secondary objectives once your primary missions are complete. One is to make certain that the north and east gates are opened. Two is to make certain the



Air dome has been collapsed. Finally, you will likely be forced to engage the Theran enemy. When you do so, hit them hard. Are there any questions?"

The characters will be travelling on the same vedette as three other Adept parties. They are to depart for the Servos Jungle tonight, and there is an airship already waiting for them to take them there. They are expected not to tell anyone else about their particular orders. The characters must ask Omasu where the slot to put the liferock fragment into is; otherwise, they will have to search it out for themselves.

The characters are welcome to decline these missions, though this would put them in a rather awkward situation. They might end up being assigned on one of the drakkar that are going to assault the *Triumph* head on, or be part of the ground forces. Both of those are very dangerous, and the characters might not even have a chance to fight back at whatever could kill them. In other words, refusing their mission is not recommended.

The characters are dismissed after all questions have been answered. If they forget about the scroll that Tana Lunnar included in the pouch with the liferock fragment, Omasu will clear his throat before the characters can leave the room, and ask for it. The scroll is a contract between Omasu's Overland Trading Company and the Fellowship of Night, as part of an agreement to further relations after the war is over.

Once the characters leave the room, they will be escorted from the ship by a pair of honor guards. Outside, there is another one of Omasu's merchant galleys, the *Windskipper*, waiting for them. They have an hour or two before the ship takes off, but there isn't a whole lot that the characters can do here now. Everyone is making preparations for the upcoming battle.

Event 2

If the characters are not on the *Windskipper* by the time it is scheduled to leave, runners will be sent out to find them. On board the ship, they are introduced to the other parties that they will be working with for the first portion of their mission: the First Star Company, the Valor of Barsaive, and Berthyl's Legionnaires. Each of the parties is of approximately the same Circles as the characters. Most of them are pretty quiet about their missions, as is expected, though they enjoy joking about what they're going to do to the Therans. With the tension in the air though, this is going to be a long journey. It's probably best if the characters took this time to rest and meditate.

They arrive at their rendezvous point late in the night, at the western edge of the Servos Jungle. As the parties leave the ship, they are greeted by a t'skrang dressed in



finery. The t'skrang does not identify herself to anyone, but assures everyone that she is an ally. In a lilting voice, she correctly identifies each of the parties, and the members by Name, and then asks everyone to follow her.

The t'skrang leads the group slightly into the jungle, and into a canopied clearing. There are six vedettes here, five of which are teeming with troll Sky Raiders. She points towards the sixth one, Named the *Groundbreaker* and begins to reiterate what King Neden said during the mission briefing.

"The Great Dragons have acquired these Vedettes for use in Barsaive's battle against the Therans. They are powered by devices that have been specifically created to eliminate the need for slave labor to run these ships. Spells have been anchored into the hulls to allow these ships to pass through the behemoth's Air dome. You are expected to ride in on the *Groundbreaker*. I believe each of you have your

orders. Do not destroy any more of the elemental engines than you have been assigned to attack. The others will be required at a later time. Do what you need to prepare yourselves during this time. You will have one and a half days before the siege begins. Be ready."

After she has finished her explanation, she will excuse herself to take care of other business. Any questions directed to her after that point will be answered with a shrug of her shoulders. The characters are free to board their assigned ship at this time, but if anyone tries to wander out of the clearing, the t'skrang will appear out of the darkness and ask them not to wander out of the area. If pressed why, she will answer, "This place is a sanctuary. Your safety is not guaranteed outside this clearing."

Once more, the characters have an opportunity to rest, heal, or meditate. It won't be for another 36 hours that they are called upon again, and that will be for the start of the siege. During this time, the other forces will have started their advance, though the characters may not be aware of this.

Event 3

On the day that the siege is to commence, ominous rumbles can be heard in the distance. It can be theorized that the attack has begun, and that this is the sound of explosions from the fire cannons. The characters are told to prepare themselves as the special forces are about to depart. Give the players five minutes to be on the ship, if they are not already there. If they miss the call, they will be left behind.

The vedettes fly swiftly towards the *Triumph*, floating just over the treetops. In the distance, the tiny specks that are the Barsaivan forces' airships can be seen flying around the *Triumph*. As the vedettes get closer, the view of the *Triumph* grows clearer. The characters will witness an unusual sight — a large Light Crystal is being constructed at the top of one of the towers. At this time, anyone on the decks is instructed to go below, so as to not give away the ruse when they reach the *Triumph*.

Down in the holds of the ship, the parties await the signal. They can hear the blasts of fire cannons and the screams of dying Name-givers, even through the hull of the ship. Then, there is silence. A muted cheer breaks the silence briefly, before it goes quiet once again. The parties are then informed that the ship is descending.

The ship shudders slightly as it touches upon the ground, and the sound of ropes as they are thrown onto the deck of the ship to help moor it down can be heard through the hatches. There are some muffled voices from outside the ship when the clear tone of a horn rings out. As the Adepts

leap to their feet, the blasts of a dozen fire cannons rocks the ship. The air compresses slightly, and the characters can feel their ears pop. As the hatches are thrown open and the Adepts rush out, the full extent of the chaos outside can be seen.

Smoke and ash fill the air, as the disconcerted cries of Theran officers fill the air as they try to rally their scattered troops. Some troops will flee when they see the Adepts appear, but there will be several groups that will confront the characters from here until they have freed the slaves. The players can expect several fights to slow them down during the course of this battle.

Refer to the table below for the frequency and chance of these battles.

For every 100 yards of movement or 5 rounds roll D6

Result:	Event:
1	A Theran group that the characters encounter flees.
2	A Theran officer and 1-4 soldiers attack the characters.
3	A Theran officer and 1-6 soldiers attack the characters.
4	A Theran group that the characters meet surrenders to them.
5	A random character is struck by an arrow. Roll as normal attack from a longbow. (Step 10 damage)
6	A lone Theran officer faces the characters hoping to inspire his soldiers.

The characters must leave the ship immediately. Any that stay onboard for more than one minute for whatever reason will be carried away as the ship tears free of its moorings and attempts to lift off. The ship will be attacked by about fifteen fire cannons at once. While not destroyed, the ship is severely crippled. Anyone who looks back towards the explosion from that attack will see the ship careening into one of the towers, knocking it and dozens of soldiers down. The ship then proceeds to disintegrate into ash, as an obvious magical surge erupts through it.

The characters' first goal is the dome elemental engine. The ship landed within 200 yards of their target, and it is now a matter of overcoming whatever opposition they come across, and taking the elemental engine out. To shut down the elemental engine is a matter of delivering more than 50 points of physical damage to it (it has an effective physical defense of 9), or to cast a successful Dispel Magic against a Spell Defense of 23. The characters should not wait to see if the dome goes down once they have taken care of their elemental engine. Within ten rounds of the characters completing their task, the others should go down as well.





Climax

The next part of their mission is the rush to the slave chamber, where the Ayodhya Liferock is located. This is a 300 yard trek to the designated entrance, a 100 yard rush to the door leading to the stairwell, and a 500 yard run down the stairs. At the foot of the stairs, there is a 100 yard long hallway to the slave chambers. Instead of standard soldiers, there are only a pair of guards and a slave master watching over this door. Once the characters are inside fortress, reduce the chance of an encounter to every 200 yards, and treat a result of '5' as encountering a lone Theran soldier who is willing to fight the characters. Feel free to roll the dice as often as you'd like, however, just to keep the players on their toes.

Once they manage to get into the slave chamber, they will be greeted by a heart-wrenching scene. Hundreds of Name-givers are chained, caged, or otherwise bound in whatever manner to minimize movement and maximize suffering. Many look up in fear as the door opens, and cringe at the sight of the armed Adepts. In the very center of the room is a large crystal that pulses with a blood-red color. Keep track of time at this point, as there are other entrances into the slave chambers, and there is a chance that something alerts one of the other sets of guards to look in on what's going on. Every three combat rounds, roll a D6. If the result is a 6, a Theran officer and D6 soldiers will enter the room and engage the characters.

The characters must complete the Liferock Ritual. This will make things easier for them as time passes. If they have the location of the crevice to put the fragment into, they must succeed on a Perception (6) Test to locate the correct slot. If they did not get the location from Omasu, it will take a Perception (15) Test to successfully find the right place. All they are required to do is to place the crystal fragment. The Threads that Omasu and Tana have tied to the crystal, and the ritual that Tana performed already will complete the rest. Within moments, a dozen obsidimen Warriors step out of the Liferock.

Sequels

Cheers erupt from some of the slaves closest to the Liferock, as they realize what is going on. This will elicit some response from any of the remaining guards outside the doors. The obsidimen will dispatch with those guards easily enough, and the characters are welcome to take on a group or two themselves, or they can begin freeing the slaves. The freed slaves will help free others, and once the guards are dispatched, the obsidimen will help as well. It will take but five minutes after the first slaves are freed for the rest to be.

At this point, any battles that the characters might face are insignificant. With around a dozen obsidimen Warriors and two hundred slaves backing them up, most Therans will either run or surrender once they spot the group. They must still go out and make certain that their secondary objectives have been taken care of already, and the obsidimen and slaves gladly follow.

The success of the other parties in destroying the elemental engines and opening the gates should be up to the Gamemaster. If it seems like the characters are trouncing through the opposition too easily, give them another task or two to complete. Once outside, the slaves will storm the rest of the fortress, with the obsidimen to back them up and give them courage. This will leave the characters alone once again to face whatever other challenges are thrown at them. Use the table from above. The Therans are too disorganized now to assemble a sizeable opposing force.

Should they look around, the characters will see that the Sky Raiders have taken most of the towers and battlements above. The cavalry and infantry are pouring in through the open gates to the north and east, taking care of the rest of the ground troops within *Triumph*. The air battle has mostly calmed down, as the Kila, *Righteous* is retreating. A small army of windlings flies down towards the ground, many of them dragging an unconscious member of their race with



them. Anyone with the proper lore knowledge will recognize that him to be Azim Keel.

About four hours after the initial march began, the fight is mostly over. Turn the characters' attention to the western gate, where it is obvious many of the Therans are fleeing. There are only a few soldiers, as most of those running appear to be civilians, apprentices, and pages. They are also followed by some of the freed slaves, though whether the slaves are chasing after them, or they are fleeing as well is not very clear. A group of the allied forces starts to gather at the west gate, cheering. Encourage the players to go there as well.

About 500 yards from the fortress is a small, wooded area called Willow's Grove. That is the direction to which the Therans are fleeing, hoping to be lost amongst the tall, thick foliage. As they reach the edge of the forest, however, hundreds of shadowy figures step out from behind the trees. From this distance, it is difficult to make out whom those figures are, but someone shouts out "Blood Elves!" and soon, those words are passed throughout the crowd. They watch in horror as the blood elves attack all of the Therans with sword and bow, killing them all mercilessly. They even chase after those that attempt to flee back towards the *Triumph*. Within mere moments, all of the Therans that fled are dead, or dying.

It is too late for anyone back at *Triumph* to do anything. As silently as they appeared, the blood elves melt back into the woods. They reemerge a distance from the grove, to join their fellows that participated in the siege, and leave for the Blood Wood on their own. Anyone else that stops one of the blood elves to ask why that was done will get the answer, "Because the Queen commanded it so."

As a result of the slaughter, Willow's Grove undergoes a significant change. The branches of the trees, once reaching towards the sky, now wilt and bend. The bark pales to a sickly pallor, and the leaves turn to narrow shapes that fall like teardrops. It is as if that whole area is saddened by the tragedy and unnecessary death, and all the trees are now weeping.

Loose Ends

It takes the rest of the day to gather up the survivors and the wounded. The dead are still being accounted for. There is only a handful of Therans are captured, those who did not retreat through Willow's Grove. More than a dozen Barsaivan drakkar have been lost, as well as three galleys and one of the captured vedettes. The t'skrang were not without their losses, though in comparison the loss of



riverboats is slight. Hundreds of Throalic dead and wounded litter the battlefield. The carrion birds crowd the sky.

Many of Thera's top officers were able to escape on the *Righteous* when it was obvious that *Triumph* would fall. The only one that was not able to get away is Azim Keel, the windling Elementalist who was responsible for the deaths of thousands of slaves that rooted the *Triumph* onto the Ayodhya Liferock. The windlings that suddenly joined in on the middle the battle have taken him into custody, and a small squad has taken him away. No one is really certain where he was taken, or what his fate will be.

Again, the characters will not have too much time to rest. With this assault done, the allied forces must move quickly before the Therans are able to reinforce their numbers at Sky Point and Vivane.

Other Adventure Ideas

If the characters have somehow avoided the most legendary path, they can still get involved in this war in other ways. Supply caravans will need guards to protect them as they bring their cargoes to the Barsaivan forces. They can be aboard one of the drakkars that drops off Sky Raiders on top of the *Triumph* after the Air Dome goes down. They can be amongst the ground forces that charge at the *Triumph*. Any of these forces have more than enough room for heroes ... and casualties.



Chapter Seven: THE TAKING OF JERRIS

Obakavim, the Throalic Ambassador to Jerris, rubbed his tired eyes. He lifted his empty mug to peer at in some confusion, before setting it back down. Even after several mugs of this eye-watering batch of hurlg, he could not rid himself of his restless thoughts. He longed to go with them, had been struggling to justify to himself reasons for going with them since the messengers had arrived within the walls of Jerris, and showed the Declaration before the Assembly.

The Throalic crewmen that had been waiting for the finishing touches to be put on the galleons would be loading up with the Falcons in the morning, and heading towards Throal and the maelstrom that would shape legends. Obakavim wanted to be in that number, wanted to fight again. He was old for a troll, now in his forty-ninth year, and he could feel his age weighing down on him. To be able to rage in combat one last time ... ah, it would have been glorious.

Unfortunately, he had a pragmatic streak in him too large to get around. It was the reason that King Varulus III had given him this position; it was the reason that he had become grudgingly accepted and respected by the Assembly here, in Jerris; and it was the reason he was still alive. His time to carve a Name for himself in blood and fire had long since past. Peering at the patient dwarf behind the bar one more time, he realized his time to get to bed had long since past, as well.

"Here's coin for your trouble, Erinth." The old troll rose, placing a Throalic gold on the bar. "Thanks for listening to the ramblings of an old troll. I had best find my way to my bed, to see the troops off in the morning."

The barkeep grunted. "Watch yourself on the streets goin' home, friend. Night fell two hours ago. You might be best served to wait until Lieutenant Pravov comes by to see why my light's still on."

Obakavim shook his head. He hadn't noticed the passing time, so wrapped up as he had been in his internal debate. The hurlg probably hadn't helped. "No. It could be another half-hour before he shows, and I need to get what sleep I can get. Good night."

Erinth nodded, opening the door for the troll, and giving a wary glance at the gloomy, ash-swept streets. "Good night, Obakavim. Chorrolis watch your path."

Obakavim made his way into the dark streets. The ash swirled about him, as if it could sense the presence of something living, moving through the quiet of the night. Light quartzes glowed at set intervals in the street, but their light was hardly sufficient to fend off the darkness, and the constant ash fall seemed to cloak everything with dark shadows.

That was probably the reason he wasn't aware of the figure that slid out from the shadows in front of him, until it spoke in a familiar voice.

"Ambassador Obakavim. It is good to hear you will be leaving with the Throalic forces in the morning. I am sure *your country will appreciate your zeal and loyalty to their cause.*"

The old troll looked up, eyes narrowed. Even through the dullness the hurlg had shrouded his brain with, he still recognized the voice of Mara Coravan, the Iopan Ambassador.

"I'm not going anywhere, Coravan. I'll be here, keeping my eyes on you, and performing my duties."



Growling, he took a step forward, to brush her aside, and continue on his way. Then there was agonizing pain, paralyzing him where he stood.

Mara purred. "But, Ambassador, you're already packed, and ready to go. Your services are certainly no longer needed here. Everyone in the tavern has been aware of your desire to go, since you've been willing to tell anyone with half of a moment about your longing to return to the battle."

Obakavim couldn't speak. Indeed, the pain continued to blaze its way through his brain, until he felt metal pierce him from behind, through his heart.

As the darkness closed around him, words followed him into oblivion, "... so no one will think twice about your absence, my dear friend. No one at all..."

Background

On the western outskirts of Barsaive lies the city of Jerris, a capable producer of airships well within the long reach of the ambitious Iopans. For many years, they have considered ways to bring the city under their heel, so that the Jerrisian shipyards can be used to further the Denairastas plots against both Barsaive and Thera. Their largest deterrent to this plan has been the people of Jerris themselves. While it would be possible for Iopos to take the city in military conquest, this would get the attention of not only Thera and Throal, but it would also inspire the troll raiders that usually plague Jerris' elemental mining to take advantage of the chaos.

The ambassador of Iopos in Jerris, Mara Coravan, is a third cousin of the Denairastas, and a member of the Gold Branch of the Holders of Trust (**Secret Societies of Barsaive**, p. 36) sent to find a way to gain Jerris for Iopos. Her efforts at stirring the merchant houses of Jerris into some unified power seeking the aid of the Iopans has unilaterally failed — their constant squabbles and bickering never allow for any great majority to get power. Her main obstacle has been Pihgram Tor, the *de facto* leader of the faction of merchant houses sympathetic to Throal. Somehow, the windling woman has been able to avoid the assassination attempts that Mara has ordered, as well as others from factions in the merchant houses.

Then came the Declaration of War. The Magistrate, Byth Vesten, and the people of Jerris were for supporting Throal in its attempt to cast Thera out of Barsaive. The merchant houses were somewhat divided on the matter, but the majority followed Pihgram Tor's backing of the Magistrate. A group of Falcons (see **The Falcons**, p. 105), accounting for almost half of the native Jerrisian police force, were sent along with the Throalic galleons back to Throal to participate in the

siege of the *Triumph*. It was also believed that the Throalic ambassador returned with the forces, joining them at dawn, just before their departure. With this commitment of forces, and the possibility of war with Thera hanging heavy in the air, the city fell under an uneasy tension.

At this point, Uhl Denairastas sees his opportunity, and has Mara approach the Assembly (see **The Magistrate and the Merchants**, p. 103) with the following proposal: now that their home force had been quartered, Iopos would offer a small contingent of airships to bolster Jerris' navy, in case forces from Thera decided that the shipyards were a viable military target. Since Uhl knows that would not be sufficient enough reason to the Jerrisians to allow a small military force of Iopans in their city, he sweetened the deal — in addition to the troop reinforcements, a small 'academic' group of Iopan Wizards, Elementalists, and Nethermancers would join the reinforcements to study the ash, and see if Iopos could find a way to rid their neighbors of its constant, oppressive presence. In exchange, the Iopans would get first bid on the next galleon class ships to be constructed by the city, and would be allowed, through Mara, to bring some new trade contracts to the attention of the merchant houses. The agreement is outlined to be a "peaceful alliance of mutual protection and benefit" for both sides, since the Denairastas would most obviously be getting a bolstering of their relations with Jerris and possibly their airship fleet, and the Jerrisians would have some extra protection for the incoming war along with a possible solution for the ash.

Though reluctant, Byth agrees to the contract under pressure from two-thirds of the merchant houses, led by Ferrin Avric and Chardis Morningfall. Pihgram Tor and her following of merchants speak out openly against it. With the announcement of the agreement to the city, the work of the Holders of Trust becomes easier. The people of Jerris begin to welcome the Iopans, and the hope that their city could someday be cleansed of the constant presence of the Wasteland ash. Mara and the others in the Holders of Trust waste no time in securing trade agreements and alliances behind closed doors, wooing the heads of the smaller merchant houses with dreams of wealth and power substantial trade contracts with Iopos. Not only would the merchants be hailed by their people as sound businessmen, but by linking themselves with Iopos, they would be cheered as the ones who helped cleanse the city of the ash — or so they choose to believe.

Then, the second phase of the Iopan plan goes into effect. Gellad Denairastas has convinced his uncle that he is the one best suited and most capable of claiming Jerris and holding it. Using the Denairastas' connection with the Firescale trollmoot, a nighttime raid is planned, not two days after the Jerris forces are sent towards Throal, and a day





before the Iopan reinforcements are to be dispatched. The Firescale use several drakkars disguised as Theran vessels and, with the inside aid of the Holders of Trust, disable eight of the drakkars in the shipyards, and kill well over thirty Falcons. They then make their escape back to the mountains, where they are to serve as a screen between Jerris and Throal, making sure to raid any ships that happen to be heading towards Jerris until the Iopan hold is secure.

The people of Jerris are outraged by the 'Theran' assault, and the Iopan ambassador makes the magnanimous gesture of asking for more reinforcements from her people, to further bolster Jerris' defense. With the fires still being fought in the areas surrounding the shipyards, most of the citizens of the city, as well as a majority of the merchant houses, are in agreement with this. Byth begins to realize the noose that Iopos has fit around their city, but seeing no way around at the time, accepts the offer.

The Iopan forces arrive, led by Gellad Denairastas, who assumes position as the Iopan ambassador, with Mara becoming his aide. The Iopan troops number as many as the remaining Falcons. Good to their word, their spellcasters begin studying the ash, while the Iopan forces take command over the remaining Falcons in the absence of their Marshal. The people are content, and the noose closes. More reinforcements arrive in the guise of the Firescale moot, allies to the Denairastas. It is claimed that their support will be invaluable, should Thera try another sabotage attempt or all out attack.

If the Denairastas can seize the Jerris shipyards reasonably intact, they stand to increase their own airship-building capabilities, allowing them to strengthen the Iopan air fleet. Uhl Denairastas is gambling (correctly) that Neden won't devote Throalic forces to laying siege to Jerris while engaged in a war with the Therans, even if he should learn of the events in time. Thera has no interest in Iopos, since the loss of Jerris hurts Throal far more than it does them, allowing Iopos to annex the city and the surrounding territory virtually unopposed.

The City of Jerris

Your majesty, as your ambassador who has spent considerable time among the choking streets of this bleak city, I have provided updated numbers and information on the city of Jerris for Merrox to include in his records. I ask that you read it, as well, since I believe it offers some insight into the nature of these people, should we ever have need of them beyond their shipbuilding capabilities.

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The city of Jerris lies on the far western edge of the Barsaivan province, surrounded by the Poison forest to the west and the Liaj jungle to the east. Because of that, along with the fact that the city is barely over a day's ride from the Wasteland, many people consider Jerris to mark the border of Horror-infested lands, if it is not within them. Bitter ash from the Wasteland is blown in from the west, over the Poison Forest, to constantly blanket the city streets. Many consider this the primary reason that the citizens of Jerris are so grim, as well as prone to sudden acts of passion. Most think the entire city to be under the influence of Horrors, or tainted by the same magical devastation that must have made the Wasteland. Some consider the city to be cursed, possibly by an unknown, horrible act committed by the Jerrisians during the Scourge. I find this to be highly unlikely. While the city does not lend itself to good cheer, it is far from being a place infested with Horrors, or cursed by atrocious acts. The explanation I find most plausible is the presence of the constant, nose-deadening, eye-watering ash, and its ability to ruin the best of moods.

The people of Jerris, however, are a resilient and stubborn lot. Despite the constant ash fall that blows through the streets of their city, the citizens continue to work, live, and prosper. Jerris is one of the largest cities in Barsaive still capable of producing the massive airships that were available before the Scourge. Because of these shipyards, and the strong air currents above the city that make ideal mining grounds for elemental Air, the city's economy thrives, allowing the merchant houses to attract more labor and help. Their primary source for lumber comes from the Liaj jungle, despite the fact that roaming packs of Tamers watch its borders, and it being the hunting grounds of the Great Dragon Usun. All of the Jerrisians are aware of the stories and rumors of their city, but could care less what outsiders think. Do not be fooled by their apathetic postures and their dour moods: they are a passionate people when stirred, and most that live in this bleak city consider it home. While it is true that most are drawn to the city initially by the promise of wealth, that fact does nothing to lessen their pride as a people.

Life in the city draws few parallels to life in other cities — during the day, people gather in the streets, selling goods, and making their living. However, in Jerris, everything seems dulled, except for the occasional emotional outbursts, or incidents that require the attention of the patrolling Falcons. The architecture of the city is extremely functional, and may have been beautiful as well at one point in time. I think that was a time long before the constant ash fall — now all the walls are stained a permanent gray, and the ash covers everything. There is nothing worse than being

on the streets of Jerris when it rains - that infernal ash makes for thick mud that clings to everything for days.

The sounds of shipbuilding can be heard throughout the city during the day through some strange trick of the wind and the acoustics of the winding streets. During the night, the only sound is that of the wind: the only ones that go out into the dark streets of Jerris at night are the Falcons, or those that have activities that can't be done during the light of day. Things are rumored to hunt the city at



night, though the large patrols of Falcons that move through the city have never encountered anything other than Name-givers. People do disappear, however, and there is not a building in Jerris that does not have locks for the windows and doors.

— An excerpt from a report by Obakavim, Throalic Ambassador to Jerris

Something that Obakavim has not mentioned in his report, but that I think pertinent to note, is Jerris' lack of joviality. When he and I had time to converse, during one of his personal reports to King Varulus III, he mentioned something that struck me as particularly odd. He commented that it took living in Jerris sometime before he could place

a finger on what it was about the streets that disconcerted him, aside from the ash fall and sullenness of the people. In the taverns, the only laughter heard is bitter, or sardonic. In the streets of Jerris, no children play, and when their laughter can be heard, it also seems dulled. Even wandering Troubadours seem effected by the mood of the city, and it is a rare occasion to hear a complete set from a Talented musician without a dirge or other somber tune making its way into the lineup.

I know most may consider me to be harping on frivolous aspects of the city — I still have to defend my earlier comments on Jerris, and the significance of the taste left by the ash — but I consider this to be of great import in the mind-set of the people. I am certain that my friend was exaggerating on several points, but there is truth at the heart of it; one I can verify from some exposure to Jerrisians. A people that have forgotten how to laugh for the pure joy of it is, in my eyes, another harsh reminder of what the Scourge has done to us, as well as our land.

— Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

The Populace of Jerris

The city of Jerris, when it was closed away during the Scourge, was made up of only around 30,000 Name-givers. When it reopened, around 50,000 Name-givers emerged to reestablish the city. Now, with the swelling of its mercantile power, shipbuilding, and elemental mining, the city of Jerris boasts a population of 80,000 Name-givers.

Racial Breakdown of Jerris

Race	Percent of Population
Human	33
Dwarf	27
Ork	25
Troll	10
Elf	5
Obsidiman	handful
Windling	handful
T'skrang	handful

The original population of Jerris was made mostly of humans, dwarves, and orks, with generous handfuls of the other races. Since their return, the Human population has maintained a majority, seeming to be the ones with the smallest concern and greatest willingness to put up with the constant ash fall. The original orks hold the same attitude, and many Scorchers castoffs or pariahs from other cities have found solace in the dark streets of Jerris, as well as profit working for the guilds and merchant houses of the city.





Since returning to the surface, and finding their old common resources blasted or blighted, Jerris has had to become a strong city of trade and mercantilism. With trade came the influx of elven and dwarf merchants, to bolster the original numbers. Along with the Elemental Air mining and ship building came groups of trolls willing to settle down and take a share of the profits. The trade is also what had attracted most of the handful of windlings that live in the city, since the ash and dark environs tend to be most trying on this small race.

The t'skrang used to have a higher showing, as well, but there are few t'skrang willing to put up with the constant irritation and skin-drying ash. It does not help that there are no large bodies of water for miles around the city. There are bathhouses, installed by Morningfall's Engineers (see **Engineer's Guild**, p. 103), that serve well enough for the t'skrang that remain in the city.

The obsidian number less than ten, though one obsidian Purifier and questor of Jaspree — Orin Draneth — is attempting to rally more of his brothers in an attempt to find the cure for the Poison forest.

The Magistrate and the Merchants

The government of Jerris has undergone some cosmetic changes since its return to the surface, but for the most part their structure has remained the same. The matters and laws of the city are discussed in a bimonthly forum known simply as the Assembly, which is presided over by the Magistrate. After an issue has been discussed to the satisfaction of a majority of the Assembly, the Magistrate makes the decree to pass the discussion into action or into written law.

Originally, the elders of the city guilds attended the Assembly. Since Jerris' growth was mainly due to the merchant houses, it is now the heads of those houses that are allowed to attend as a member of the Assembly. Ideally, this would allow for equal say among the merchants. However, in practice, most of the houses are bound to each other through ever-changing contracts, alliances, and deals. Constant backstabbing and double-dealing tends to make the political currents of Jerris rather difficult to predict, and alliances sometimes even change mid-meeting. Usually, the houses rally around the strongest, and most charismatic, creating factions within the Assembly.

In addition to the heads of the merchant houses, the Falcons (see **The Falcons**, p. 105) are allowed to send one member, usually the Marshal, and each ambassador in the city is invited to represent their government during the Assembly. Neither the Falcons nor the ambassadors are allowed a vote, though they can speak their concerns and arguments freely.

The Magistrate presides over the Assembly, and his say is final. The Magistrate serves until he chooses to retire, dies, or is cast down by a three-fourths majority during an Assembly. The new Magistrate is chosen by the Assembly, again with a three-fourths majority, and usually is chosen in the same meeting where it is made known that the old one has stepped down. Since the Scourge, the tradition has held that the Magistrate is selected from those who have served with the Falcons. If judged simply by the power he holds, the Magistrate is the *de facto* leader of Jerris. However, his job is not that simple or clear cut. The position exists to have the final say between the other members of the Assembly. If his decree does not have popular support, then he will not maintain his position long. Therefore, the Magistrate walks a fine line, balancing the needs of the city and its people, and the political agendas of the merchant houses as they struggle for power and wealth. Because of this reason, it is rather ironic that the Assembly's choice is usually someone who makes fair-minded decisions when mediating between the Assembly and the people of Jerris.

The effective counterbalances to the Magistrate's power are those merchant houses that unite or rise above their peers, either by wealth, politics, or popularity. At present time, the three merchant houses that the others gravitate to are the North Star Company, the Engineer's Guild, and the Silver Cloud Shipwrights.

North Star Company

The North Star Company started as one of the first over-land traders to reemerge from the fallen kaer. Galion Avric started the merchant house with the simple methods of an honest merchant. As more trade routes were established, and his house began to gain power, he was among the first to bring the idea of the updated Assembly to the attention of the Magistrate. Once this institution was established, the Avric family began a more ruthless form of business, squeezing out their smaller competition when able. Rumors hold that they often times raided other caravans for supplies, and to secure their trading routes. While this was never proven, Galion's son, Ferrin, followed in his father's footsteps. Through the thorough use of connections, supplies, and blackmail, when necessary, Ferrin carved a larger place for the North Star Company, until it became one of the three major houses in Jerris.

While their methods are oftentimes questionable, the Avric family never rescinds a contract. The goods they provide are always on time and always of good quality. Of the Jerrisian merchant houses, they are the only ones that have maintained powerful trade contracts with not only Iopos, but with Vivane as well. Any Jerris merchant that wishes to



see goods arrive at these cities is best served by cutting a deal with the North Star. Since the reestablishment of the shipyards, the North Star Company has also purchased a small trading fleet for itself. While as of the moment it does not control any section of the shipyards, Ferrin is always looking for a way to change that.

Engineer's Guild

The Engineer's Guild is a holdover from the days of the Scourge. The engineers were responsible for the more necessary repairs to the kaer; the maintenance of the water supply, the removal of waste and trash, as well as checking the internal spells and wards for the kaer. It was made up of whomever would be willing to do the work, but it required Elementalists and Wizards for the important tasks of upkeep, and so their position became prestigious ones among the community. The current head of the guild, Chardis Morningfall, is the same Elementalist that has been in charge for the last one-hundred fifty years.

The guild became recognized as a merchant house due to their many duties and services that they provided around the city. When first emerging into the desolate place that was their home, Chardis wanted Jerris to relocate. The citizens refused, stubbornly holding to their land. Acquiescing to their wishes, the Engineer's moved the water supply of the kaer to under the building that would become the Town Hall, so that they might have a constant water supply without relying on two-day treks to the Liaj jungle. Since then, they also established the bathhouses and waterways that make living in Jerris bearable for the citizens, and provide one of the few ways to cleanse oneself from the constant ash. Because of their extensive services, Chardis was forced to begin collecting payment via a tax, passed by the Assembly. Once this step was made, the guild became a merchant house in the eyes of the city, and a constant and powerful one, at that.

Silver Cloud Shipwrights

Pihgram Tor was an Air Sailor lured to Jerris by the promise of a good supply of Elemental Air and the ability to make her own vessel. Once she had made her home in Jerris, despite the belief that a windling couldn't thrive in the oppressive city, she went on to head what is now the most influential section of the shipyards. The Silver Cloud provides a good portion of the merchants of Jerris with their ships, and the two recently constructed galleons for Throal came from their ship beds. Despite the fact that they are new, the Silver Cloud has made their home in Jerris, and most of their best shipbuilders are natives of the city. Because of their talent and skills, as well as the pull that comes from

owning a controlling portion of the shipyards, the Silver Cloud is the third of the major players in Jerris.

Though the name would suggest it, shipping is not all that the Silver Cloud deals in. They man most of the expeditions into the Liaj jungle for lumber, and are now one of the more prominent suppliers of lumber in Jerris, though most of their wood goes straight into the shipyards.

Diplomatic Relations

It is important to understand the position that Jerris considers itself to be in-between the major players of Barsaive at the moment. Jerris does maintain merchant ties with Kratas, Urupa, and Travar, but their diplomatic relations are limited to numbers and trade.

Throal

From Jerris' point of view, the relationship that it shares with Throal is a sound alliance. Both powers provide a good source of income for one another, and important items of trade. With a mutual enemy in the Therans, they have found common ground on which to further cement their relationship. Throal does not believe Jerris is as important as Jerris believes itself to be, but this opinion might need rapid reassessment.

While the city does favor Throal, it is mainly because Throal can always be counted on as a customer. Their loyalty truly lies only with themselves, and no long-standing pacts, aside from trade agreements, exist between them.

Iopos

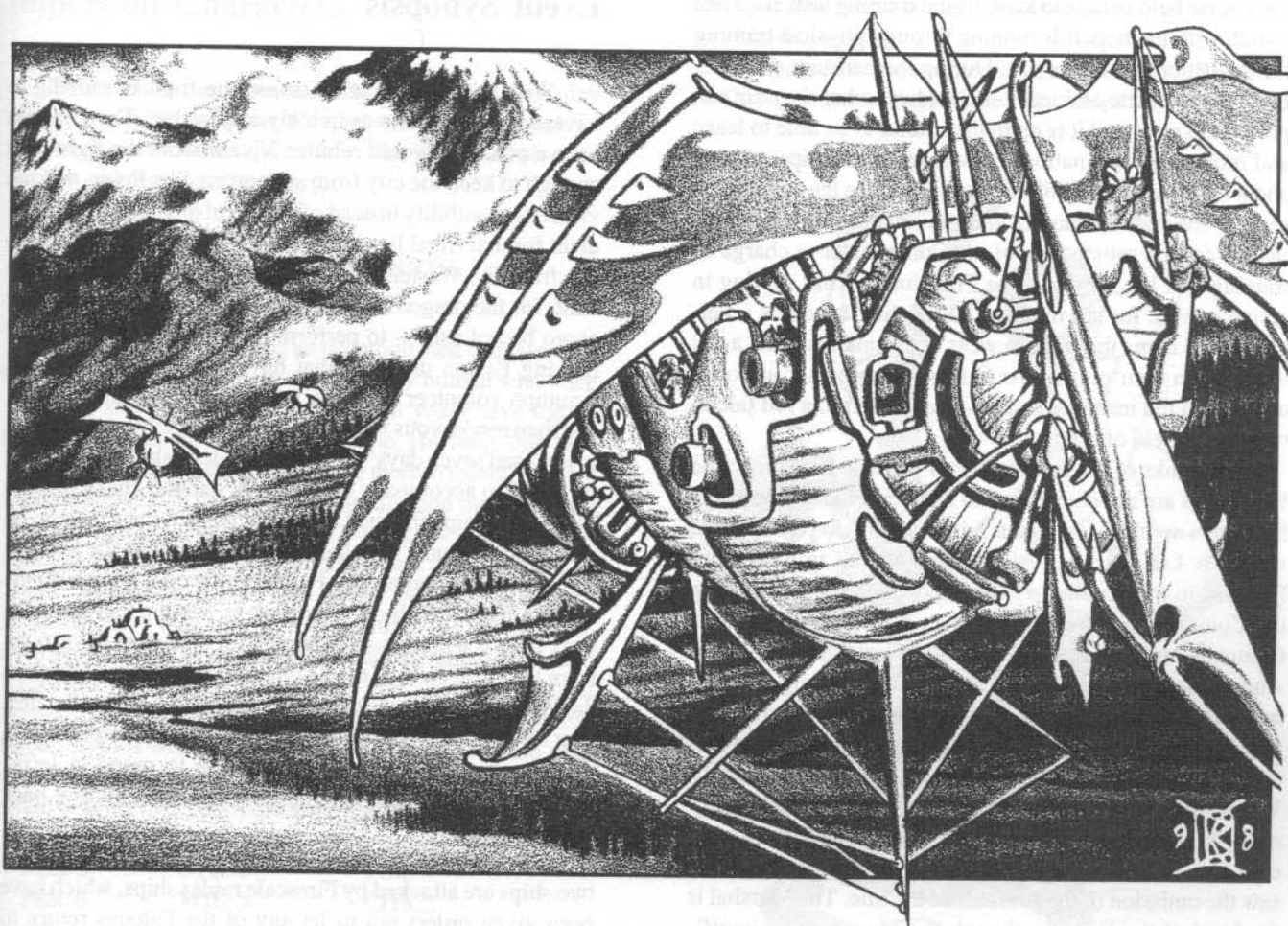
Jerris shares many trade routes and alliances with the city of Iopos, and both cities earn a good deal of money from each other. The merchants of Jerris, however, know better than to enter the city of Iopos itself, and therefore most of their trade only goes to the outskirts of the Denairastas controlled lands, where it is paid for and handed over to native Iopans.

On occasion, Iopos offers goodwill gestures and magnanimous gifts to Jerris, to maintain good relations. The offer of aid in cleaning of the ash, while by far the most intriguing and generous of these, is not entirely unexpected or suspect anymore by the city at large; a fact that Uhl Denairastas has been waiting to exploit.

Thera

There is much blood shed between Jerris and Thera. In their first reemergence, Jerris was happy to trade with Vivane, and accept a Theran ambassador within their city. After the first Theran raid on their shipyards, the ambassador was





executed, and Thera has been unwelcome within the bounds of the city since.

Trade does still exist with Vivane, but most of it goes through old ties with the North Star Company.

Military

Jerris' military might is mainly composed of their local police force and navy, the Falcons, which number roughly 520 strong. In addition to the Falcons, the city can call on about 200 trained militiamen and retired adventurers to aid in the defense of the city. Jerris' fleet has taken something of a beating during the years, between the Thera and Sky Raider attacks, and only fields at the moment one galleon and four drakkars.

In addition to these forces, the Magistrate has the right to employ the merchant fleets in defense of the city. Be-

tween the various merchant houses, there are fifteen merchant drakkars that can be conscripted, as well as around 360 crewmen and guards.

The Falcons

Before the Scourge, the elite of the Jerris Navy were known as the Falcons. To keep the tradition alive while in the underground kaers, the highest-ranking Falcon, the Air Marshal, knew that his men needed another way of keeping their knowledge and prowess intact. He went before the Assembly and asked if the Falcons could take on the assignment of policing for the kaer, until they could return to the surface. The request was granted, and the Falcons became a respected institution within the kaer, maintaining their militaristic training, and naval knowledge, as well as keeping the peace.

Falcon training is a rigorous ordeal that tests the soldier's body and mind. Each hopeful is put through a train-



ing course held in the old kaer. Initial training lasts for a full month with the hopefuls running through physical training for the better part of the day. During the constant exercise, Lieutenants recite and teach the soldiers what they are expected to know, and it is up to the soldier to be able to learn and retain the information: knowledge of airships, tactics, and a small smattering of other topics. Once the trainee has made it through the month, and has retained enough information for the satisfaction of the Commander in charge of training that lot, they become Fledglings. After serving in active service for six months, a Fledgling becomes a Falconer, and earns the right to wear their rank insignia, a red wing, upon their outfit. The Falcons have no set uniform, aside from the insignia, and the crest of Jerris: a red falcon rising on a field of gray.

The ranks of the Falcons begin with the Falconers; the Fledglings are not considered to have true rank. Above the Falconers are the Lieutenants, signified by two crossed red wings. A Lieutenant usually commands up to nine other Falcons, in a unit called a Cast. Above the Lieutenants are the Commanders, designated by a set of red talon marks. Commanders are assigned five Casts in a unit called a Talon. Above the Commanders are the Captains, designated by two sets of red talon marks. Captains are the members of the Falcons that are assigned to be a ship's captain, and can command anywhere from one to five Talons in a unit called a Wing. Above the Captains there is only the Marshal, designated by the red profile of a falcon's head. The Marshal was once the Air Marshal, but years of ground service as police saw the omission of the first half of the title. The Marshal is the head of the Falcons, though the Magistrate is unofficially considered to be a position higher than Marshal, and is treated accordingly by the Falcons.

With their emergence back into Barsaive, the Falcons have taken back to the air, though they still maintain their duty as the police of Jerris. Most of the Falcons stay on land, patrolling the city and the surrounding environs, and are generally the only ones foolish enough to keep patrol on the city at night. The Captains of the Falcons usually rely on mercenaries and militia to make up a good half of the crew of their airships. The military might of Jerris lives in its Falcons, bolstered by what support the militia of the city can muster. The Magistrate also has the power to command the merchant fleet to aid the city, when the need arises.

Event Synopsis

With the success at *Triumph*, the fight is moving to Vivane and Sky Point as quickly as possible. The Dragons have a plan that would remove Vivane from the fight long enough to keep the city from supporting Sky Point, making victory a possibility instead of a hopeful dream. A key ingredient for that ritual lies in the city of Jerris in abundance — ash from the Wasteland. It is a good thing that it is abundant, for the dragons need a large amount — almost a full cargo bed of ash — to perform their ritual. The two, fast-moving Falcon drakkars that have survived the Siege of Triumph volunteer to go back to Jerris to retrieve the ash, and then rendezvous with the Throalic forces near Sky Point in less than seven days' time. King Neden asks for a Throalic presence to accompany the mission, and the characters are asked to accompany the faster ship, Named the *Coranth*, on this crucial mission. Marshal Steelgaze stays with the Throalic forces and flies on to Sky Point, to offer his advice on the coming battle. With only six days to accomplish this mission, time is a precious commodity. It takes two days to get from the battlefield of the *Triumph* to Jerris, and will take a day's travel from Jerris to rendezvous with the Throalic fleet near Sky Point, given favorable winds and no complications. That leaves three days for the mission to spend in Jerris, getting repairs, resupplied, and the ash, then getting back into the air.

On their way into the city, just over the Liaj jungles, the two ships are attacked by Firescale raider ships, which have been given orders not to let any of the Falcons return to their city. In an attempt to make sure the mission is completed, the Falcon ships split up, forcing the trolls to divide their forces and give chase. The plan is to reunite over the city of Jerris, where they believe they will receive aid. The *Coranth* is grounded well shy of the city, taking substantial losses, and then must fend off the remaining raiders. The other ship is not even that lucky, though they die valiantly, ramming one of their pursuers, and taking it down with them.

Expecting to get a replacement ship, and with only two days left to do so, the few surviving Falcons and the characters go to Jerris to collect the ash, get supplies, and make a report. They find a less than welcome reception from the Iopan controlled Jerris. The only hope that the characters have for completing their mission on time, as well as being able to escape the net that the Iopan forces begin to draw around them, is to capture an airship, and get out of the city. In the Wasteland lies their best route of escape, as well as plenty of ash to fill the cargo bed of any airship.



Important Characters

This section describes the major characters that play roles in the Taking of Jerris. Combat statistics are not given for the characters, since it is unlikely that will be involved in combat with the character party.

Byth Vesten, Magistrate of Jerris

Retired from a career as an accomplished Captain with the Falcons, Byth Vesten is a tall, gangly human who once stood tall and proud, though the recent years have forced the man to walk with a perpetual stoop. His long, thin face wears a look of constant worry, all the moreso recently. Faced with the Herculean task of administrating and running a city that is always shrouded in despair, Vesten does a commendable job as Magistrate. When the chance to strike back at Thera came to his city by way of the Declaration of War, Byth was more than happy to give Throal the aid of Jerris, even going so far as to circumvent the merchant houses to insure that it could be done on time. This action, while well meaning, is what has put the hand of Iopos directly at Jerris' throat. Byth is well aware that it is his fault, and also very aware that the options he has for keeping his city together while defying the Iopans are almost nonexistent.

DEX: 6	STR: 6	TOU: 6
PER: 6	WIL: 5	CHA: 5

Pihgram Tor, Owner of the Silver Cloud Shipwrights

The owner of the Silver Cloud shipwrights' association, Pihgram Tor is one of the wealthiest and most influential shipbuilders in Jerris as well as a skilled Air Sailor. She is well known for two things, aside from the fact that she is windling female thriving in the oppressive atmosphere of Jerris. The first is her beautiful silver and blue wings that she maintains, even in the drab city of Jerris, through a room in her house dedicated to the dewdrop flower (a small, five-petalled blue flower that has a silver tear shape at the base of each petal), the symbol adopted by her shipwrights. The second thing is her sharp business acumen, proven by her rise of power in the shark-infested merchant waters of Jerris. Pihgram was the first shipwright in Jerris to begin selling her ships directly to the highest bidders, cutting out the middlemen. She has ably avoided all attempts to pressure her into

giving up her business and even the assassins her competitors hired to stop her.

Pihgram's best customer of late has been the Kingdom of Throal, which commissioned new ships for the Throalic



Navy. She is very concerned about the Iopan presence in her city, and like Byth, is aware that it means Jerris is now practically under the control of Uhl Denairastas. She is also (rightly) concerned about spies and saboteurs lurking around Silver Cloud facilities, and fears a time when the Iopans will simply claim the shipyards as their own. Pihgram pays handsomely for information about the activities of the Denairastas Clan and any intelligence regarding the war.

DEX: 8	STR: 3	TOU: 5
PER: 6	WIL: 5	CHA: 6

Briana Wind-Rider, Airship Captain

A native Jerrisian, Briana Wind-Rider is a competent Air Sailor, and captains the *Thrush*, one of the drakkar in the Silver Cloud fleet. She's a levelheaded ork, and one of Pihgram's most trusted friends. Like her employer and friend, she has little love for the Iopans and some of the more unscrupulous members of the Jerris Assembly, and is just as nervous about the events as they are unfolding.

DEX: 7	STR: 6	TOU: 8
PER: 6	WIL: 6	CHA: 5

Chardis Morningfall, Head of the Engineers Guild

Chardis Morningfall is a tall, willowy, and handsome elf, whose movements and manner are very methodical and graceful. He is very good at setting people at ease and making people he has just met feel comfortable in his presence. As head of the Engineers, he is also a powerful Elementalist, a learned scholar, and very much interested in what is best for the city and its people. While he does hold the ears of a portion of the merchant houses, his decisions are based on what he believes to be best for Jerris, as opposed to what he believes will further the power of the Engineers.

In the Iopans, Chardis sees a chance to find a way to rid the city of the oppressive ash that he has watched sap the vitality and joy from his people. Among one of the oldest citizens in the city, and one of the few that can remember exactly what life in the kaer was like before coming back to rebuild their city, Chardis feels that allowing Iopos to take control for a time is an acceptable sacrifice to rid the city of the ash. In the Iopans, he sees a threat that he knows how to deal with, as opposed to the ash, which has defied him ever since he first began to study it.

DEX: 8	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 6	WIL: 7	CHA: 6

Ferrin Avric, Owner of the North Star Company

Ferrin Avric is a charismatic leader, and an able merchant. A Troubadour by calling, he has used the influential powers of his Discipline to his advantage, spreading the

influence and power of his family's company until it is the most powerful in Jerris, rivaled only by the Engineer's and the upstart Silver Cloud. Ferris is a pragmatic, but aggressive merchant, and is more than willing to bend the rules or break bones to insure that his family's legacy is secure.

Ferrin is directly responsible for Jerris being able to maintain trade with Thera, and has connections throughout Barsaive. While he does not entirely trust the Iopans, he also doesn't believe they can truly claim the city, as long as his house is still able to thrive. In the Denairastas, he sees a chance to ruin the shipwrights, and tilt the balance of power in Jerris back to him, confident that the people would only be willing to put up with being ruled by Iopan insanity for so long.

DEX: 5	STR: 6	TOU: 7
PER: 7	WIL: 6	CHA: 8

Kos Steelgaze, Marshal of the Falcons

Kos Steelgaze is a tall, imposing human, with flame-red hair, now liberally salted with gray. His eyes are also steel gray in color and earned him his Name long ago. While in his early fifties, Kos is still a formidable Air Sailor and an excellent tactician.

Born and raised in the city of Jerris, Kos still remains a Jerris loyalist. He was in the Falcons for a time as a Lieutenant before he left the city, to seek a life as an adventurer. When he returned, several years later, older, wiser, and scarred, he was welcomed back into the fold, and quickly rose through the ranks to become the Marshal of the Falcons. He has held the position for nearly twenty years now, and holds the respect of not only his troops, but also most of the citizenry of Jerris.

At the reading of the Declaration of War, Kos was in complete agreement with his old friend, Byth, that Jerris should commit troops to the action. The recent raids from Thera on their ship yards, and the constant raiding Jerris endures from Thera vessels that see refitting in Sky Point were only part of the reason — in this war, Kos saw his chance to ride with legends once again. When the Falcons were selected to go, Kos went with them, leaving one of his most competent Captains to watch over the Falcons in his absence.

DEX: 7	STR: 6	TOU: 7
PER: 6	WIL: 6	CHA: 7





Mara Coravan, Iopan Ambassador to Jerris

Mara Coravan is a cousin of the Denairastas, and it is obvious that their blood flows through her veins. Though she is common in appearance, she is an Illusionist of no small skill, and her abilities continue to grow. On the surface, she is friendly, charming, and soothing, and suspected of being too gentle to stay within the walls of Iopos. Beneath that veneer, however, is a woman who belongs to the Gold Branch of the Holders of Trust (**Secret Societies of Barsaive**, p. 36), and who is a calculating diplomat. Her assignment to Jerris was no punishment, but an assignment directly from Uhl Denairastas.

Mara was assigned to feel out Jerris, and to find a way to bring the city under Iopos' heel, without having to commit a full military force to capturing the city. She also holds the network of Holders of Trust within the city together, and coordinates their efforts to subvert the city and gather information.

DEX:6 STR:5 TOU:5
PER:7 WIL:8 CHA:6

Gellad Denairastas

A scion of the ruling family of Iopos, Gellad is a nephew of Uhl Denairastas and in charge of overseeing the new 'alliance' with Jerris with the aid of his ties with the Firescale trollmoot (**Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**, p. 113). Gellad, like most of his family, is a man with ambitions, and this new operation is providing him with an opportunity to impress his uncle, or to fail and fall from grace. Gellad has every intention of being successful, no matter what the cost. For the moment, Gellad is content to simply keep his hand at Jerris' throat, while the members of the Holders of Trust (**Secret Societies of Barsaive**, p. 30) infiltrate the city, and win over the majority of the city's citizens. Once that happens, he can claim power with a smooth transition, and claim the shipyards in the name of Iopos without losing a single soldier.

On the surface, Gellad Denairastas is what one would expect from a scion of a noble family. He is charming, witty and urbane. He delights in intellectual conversation, and is a skilled diplomat. Beneath the surface, Gellad is calculating and cunning, carefully weighing his every word and deed to bring him the maximum advantage. He is a member of the Gold Branch of the Holders of Trust, like most members of

the Denairastas family. He is an Eighth Circle Illusionist and a Sixth Circle Wizard.

DEX:5 STR:5 TOU:6
PER:8 WIL:7 CHA:7

Mar'tok Man-Slayer

Mar'tok Man-Slayer is the chief of the Firescale trollmoot (**Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**, p. 111). He is a fierce warrior and skilled tactician, as well as a staunch ally of Iopos and the Denairastas Clan. A believer in leading by example, Mar'tok commands the Firescale raiders who go to Jerris to assist in taking control of the city. While he does not like the subterfuge involved in the disabling of the Jerrisian ships, he is willing to go along with Gellad's plan in exchange for the promises of future glory. Mar'tok is an Eighth Circle Warrior and makes use of many blood charms to enhance his abilities, including Blood Pebble armor, a Targeting Eye, a Desperate Blow charm and Blood Knuckles (**Arcane Mysteries**, p. 67).

DEX:6 STR:8 TOU:8
PER:5 WIL:5 CHA:6

N'rela Hardeyes

One of Mar'tok's younger wives, N'rela is his most favored. She is the chief questor of Thystonius for the Firescale moot and a Seventh Circle Sky Raider. She is Mar'tok's strongest supporter and believes in him without question. N'rela knows her husband can lead the Firescale moot to glory over all other trollmoots in Barsaive, and she believes the alliance with the Denairastas and the taking of Jerris are only the first steps towards that glorious future. As a questor of Thystonius, N'rela always prefers to be in the thick of any battle or physical conflict, so she accompanies Mar'tok to Jerris to help inspire the Firescale raiders and aid her husband whenever possible.

DEX:6 STR:8 TOU:8
PER:6 WIL:6 CHA:8

IOPAN SOLDIERS/FALCON GUARDS

Fourth Circle Warriors

DEX: 7 STR: 6 TOU: 6
PER: 6 WIL: 5 CHA: 5

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 11 Social Defense: 7
Damage: Armor: 6
Broadsword: 11 Mystic Armor: 1
Spear: 10 Knockdown: 7
Number of Spells: N/A Recovery Tests: 2
Spellcasting: N/A
Effect: N/A
Death Rating: 71 Combat Move: 85
Wound Threshold: 9 Full Move: 42
Unconsciousness Rating: 55

Talents:

Acrobatic Strike 4/11, Air Dance 4/11, Melee Weapon 4/11, Unarmed Combat* 4/11, Wood Skin* 4/10, Anticipate Blow* 4/10, Throwing Weapons 4/11, Avoid Blow* 4/11, Tiger Spring 4, Down Strike* 4/13

Karma Dice: D8

Karma Points: 15

Legend Points: 200

Equipment:

Broadsword
Hardened Leather
Buckler

Loot:

10 silver

Notes:

Fourth Circle: The Warrior may spend a Karma Point on any action using Willpower only.

Running the Taking of Jerris

This chapter includes the Iopan occupation of the city of Jerris and the acquiring of the ingredient needed for the dragon ritual. This section outlines a way for the characters to get into the city, learn of the events that have come to pass within the city, as well as fulfilling their mission in retrieving the ash, and returning to the city of Vivane. It also provides some future adventure ideas, as well as some prequel adventures for running before the advent of War, to familiarize the characters with the city of Jerris.

Introducing the Event

Rumors of Iopan interest of Jerris exist long before War begins, and the first signs that foreshadow the events that take place in this section happen sometime before War, when a few merchant family heads disappear on the same night. Rumors begin to stir that the Holders of Trust are active in the city, mainly instigated by Pihgram Tor, who believes one of the merchants was a member of the Copper Branch who got sloppy, and he and his associate were killed by Mara.

There is also increased activity in the Firescale moot, and signs point towards the alliance that they are rumored to have with Iopos. Several Theran drakkars are taken during a raid on the Jerris Elemental Air fields a month before the events of War begin.

If the characters are ever in Jerris before the Taking, they will probably be felt out by Mara, weighed for their usefulness, and questioned about events in Throal. From this, the characters may gather that there is more to her than appears, and that her interest in Throalic activity could bode poorly for Jerris.

Adventure Frameworks

City of Ash

Premise

With the fall of *Triumph*, Throal turns its collective eyes to Vivane and Sky Point, the last Theran strongholds in Barsaive. As things stand, it is unlikely that the Barsaivan forces could conquer both at the same time, since their combined fortifications are too powerful. The dragons offer a way to divide their power through the use of a draconic ritual built off of the magic engines used to power the air



shield around the *Triumph*. One crucial ingredient to this ritual is the ash from the Wasteland. A place that has this ash in abundance is the city of Jerris. King Neden and his advisors agree to send a pair of ships to Jerris to retrieve the ash, and then rendezvous with the Throalic forces near Sky Point.



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Setup

The characters are contacted by an officer of the Throalic army, to meet with King Neden and Dvilgaynon, leader of Krathis Gron's advisors from Cathay, shortly after the fall of *Triumph*. The importance of the mission is explained to them, and the characters are asked to accompany the mission to provide a Throalic presence, as well as insure the mission's success. They are provided with some Healing Potions to use to recover from the battle of the *Triumph*, since the mission needs to leave immediately if it hopes to maintain the strict time schedule. Their mission goal is simple:

get to Jerris, fill the cargo hold with ash, and then return to the rendezvous point near Sky Point as quickly as possible, so the dragon ritual can take place.

Dvilgaynon is very secretive and mysterious at this first meeting. With her strange yellow-bronze eyes and Cathay appearance, she has an exotic and almost unearthly quality to her. It should be clear from the onset that she is no ordinary human spellcaster. She will emphasize that it is important that this mission remain a tightly guarded secret. Both she and King Neden refuse to divulge details on what the ash is actually for at this point. She will merely say that she needs the ash for an important mission "against Thera". She also needs a lot of it. She charges the characters to acquire no less than thirty man-weights of the ash, and more would not be unwelcome.

Event 1

The journey to Jerris should not be uneventful. This is a good time to remind the party of the extent of the war. Have them fly over groups of orks massing for combat. Have them fly past battle groups of troll drakkars headed for the front. Perhaps they are stopped by Barsaivan loyalists who demand to know their destination and purpose. What do they respond? Their orders say that they are to keep their mission a strict secret. But if they are not careful, they may find well-meaning Barsaivans trying to press their airship into service for the coming Assault on Sky Point.

As the airship is moving through Barsaive this is also a good opportunity to remind the characters exactly what they are fighting for. Although the increased military activity has great curtailed the Thera slaver raids into "Free Barsaive," they have not stopped entirely. The player characters could witness the small township of Grestling under attack by a Thera slaver vedette. Grestling is putting up an unusually good fight thanks to their town militia, but a fully armed airship coming into the fray with a pack of anti-Thera Adepts could make for an exciting and heroic rescue.

Event 2

While over the Liaj jungles as the drakkars approach Jerris, the ships are spotted by a Firescale raiding party, who has been set to patrol the area and make sure that no ships get to Jerris while the Denairastas are still establishing their power base. The ships' captains decide to split off from each other and attempt to make it to the city separately. The ship that the characters are in, the *Coranth*, is boarded by one of the Raider crews, and fighting ensues. The *Coranth* is forced to the ground, and suffers damages incompatible with flight when its hull is torn apart on the treetops of the jungle.

During the fighting, the *Coranth* should bring down the raider vessel. If the characters manage to capture the



ship's captain, they may be able to get from him that Iopos has moved into Jerris, and that they will find no sanctuary there. In the wreckage of the troll raider vessel, the characters can also find Iopan coins, and written orders from Mar'tok Man-Slayer to destroy any Falcon ships that are seen returning to Jerris.

Event 3

The characters now have to get to Jerris, and find a replacement ship, or else the mission is lost — and they only have three days in which to do it. The characters meet up with a lumber caravan from the Silver Cloud shipwrights heading back into the city, led by Captain Wind-Rider, after a successful mission into the Liaj. Crossing from the outskirts of the Liaj to Jerris takes the better part of a day of constant travel, and the crossing is often a dangerous one. For this reason, the characters would be offered some payment to help serve as guards, and allowed to accompany the caravan back to Jerris.

Briana Wind-Rider is an invaluable source of information, and if befriended, will inform the characters of the presence of the Iopans, and how it bodes poorly for all of Barsaive. If the characters confide in her about their mission, she will introduce them to her employer, Pihgram Tor, after sneaking the characters into the city through routes guarded by native Falcons, as opposed to the Iopan Guard. The party does not get in completely unnoticed, however, and a member of the Copper Branch of the Holders of Trust reports the unusual party to Mara, who dispatches the Iopan Guard to seek them out.

Event 4

Soon after entering the city, the characters and their allies will be stopped by a group of Iopan guards. Upon seeing the returning Falcons, they agree to hear the characters story - if the characters agree to stay in their custody for a brief period, while they verify the story. The guards have been given orders by Mara Coravan, with Gellad Denairastas' support, to make sure that no Falcons return to the city. If the characters agree, their Falcon escort is separated from them as they are led away to the holding cells.

If the characters choose to fight instead, the city becomes alerted to their presence, and the Iopans convince the city that the characters are saboteurs from Thera. The Falcons and the Iopan Guard now both hunt the characters in the streets, going on whatever information they have to find them. Their ship is also discovered, and the Falcons that remained with it are killed. The news is spread through the streets that the characters are also in league with a group of troll Sky Raiders (the Firescale ship is torched, so that it

can't be linked back to the Iopan allies) who have an alliance with Thera.

Either way, the characters draw the attention of Pihgram Tor, who believes this to be part of some larger Iopan machination. She has Briana Wind-Rider discretely approach the party and help the characters escape, as well as provide sanctuary for them while they think of a way to secure an airship.

Event 5

The Iopans are now after the characters in force, and they have dragged the Falcons into the chase through misinformation. Pihgram now knows the importance of the characters mission, and knows they need to get to an airship, get ash, and get out. However, she can't simply hand a ship over to them, or she won't have any defense before the Iopans and her competitors that want to see her removed.

Pihgram helps the characters stage an 'assault' on one of her merchant vessels that happens to be captained by Briana. In exchange for this assistance, Pihgram asks that the characters take some documents about the recent events in Jerris to show the Jerrisian diplomat to Throal, as well as Kos Steelgaze, should he survive the war.

Climax

A dusk 'raid' is planned on the Silver Cloud shipyards, while Briana and her crew are finishing a series of scheduled maintenance on the fleet's fastest drakkar, the *Thrush*. The Iopan guards have been watching the shipyards carefully, expecting the characters to make a break for it, and respond, with some magical support, soon after the characters board the ship. Briana takes the ship up, and leads the Iopan and Jerrisian fleet into a wild chase into the Wastelands at night, where they manage to elude their pursuers. While over the Wasteland, the small crew and the characters help fill the cargo hold with ash, and the ship proceeds on its way to Vivane for the ceremony.

Sequels

The immediate sequel to *City of Ash* is detailed in the Adventure Idea "*Ashes to Ashes*" (p. 113)

The adventure comes to an end when the players arrive at the secret base about five miles away from Vivane itself. The secret base is a small cave complex where Dvilgaynon and her associates have set up operations. Also here is Rosper, a young drake in service to Mountainshadow, who is in human form. If the player characters have had dealing with Rosper before (for example in *The Dragon's Daughter*) this may be an early clue that the dragons are involved in all this.





Dvilgaynon is glad to see them, but as enigmatic as ever. She also is very deep in thought on something and seems deeply troubled as much as she is glad at the player characters' success. The players, having gained her trust at this point, will be told what the ash is for more or less. She will not mention that she is one of the dragons involved in the ritual. She will also make no mention of the Horror Cloud, but is clearly bothered by some unspoken detail of this whole operation.

This can lead the characters right into the framework, **The Heart of the Enemy** in the **Fall of Vivane** section (p. 122), where in the players will be sent into Vivane to warn the Barsaivan resistance to flee the city before the Air Shield is erected. If the characters are successful in acquiring the ash, they will have gained Dvilgaynon's respect and she will continue to employ them as her trusted agents.

Other Adventure Ideas

Ashes to Ashes

Theran spies within Cara Fahd have done their work all too well. Dvilgaynon's true purpose and identity may be unknown to them, but they have gotten wind that a powerful human Wizard is gathering components for some sort of great spell to be used against Thera.

A Theran agent, an ork Named Hiuko Scrag, has hired a band of orkish sky pirates to intercept the player character's vessel as it flies over Cara Fahd on vague promises of it hauling some sort of great treasure. This gives an opportunity for a great battle in the sky between two sky ships.

Hiuko Scrag is really just a pawn in all this. He has no idea of the importance of the player character's mission or any idea that the dragons are even involved. He himself has even been lied to, because he thinks that there is something



very valuable aboard the characters' ship. Even if the pirates were successful, he would likely be in great trouble when the treasure turns up to be nothing but ash. If Hiuko Scrag is captured, he will spill all he knows at the first mention of torture or death. He is able to finger several other orkish traitors within Cara Fahd who are working as spies for the Therans. He himself doesn't care about politics and is only in the spy business for the money.

Hiuko Scrag and the band of pirates should be tailored to be a good fight for the player characters. If for some reason, the party was unable to acquire an airship, these individuals could just as well be a ground-based raider band.

Morning Fire

The leader of the Engineers Guild, Chardis Morningfall, is interested in learning more about the nature of the ash that plagues the city of Jerris. He seeks to hire adventures to journey forth into the Wasteland to acquire some of the ash that is found there, so that he can determine if there is a difference between the source, and that ash which finds its way through the Poison Jungle to rain across the city. The ash itself, he believes, holds some innate magic that could shed some light as to its origins, and a way to be rid of it. The characters are hired to make this pilgrimage, and gain allies among the Jerrisians.

Jerris Wants You

Carrying a resistance to Iopos openly in the streets of Jerris would lead to war, and a war that Jerris can't win with the serpent so close to its heart. Pihgram Tor, Briana Wind-Rider, and Kos Steelgaze realize this, and hire the characters to find a place that they could establish a safe haven for those in Jerris seeking asylum, outside of the influence of the assassinating Holders of Trust. They hire the characters to seek out a kaer that is still intact within the Wasteland that could serve as a base of operations, and is defensible enough to keep it free of Horrors.

Characters allied with Throal or the Dragons' Network may be called upon to travel to Jerris to aid the underground rebel movement there, or to gather intelligence of Iopan operations and activities in the city. Characters may also be asked to smuggle messages, contraband, or even Name-givers in or out of the occupied city.

Loose Ends

The players may also find other things that later can lead to adventures in Jerris and during the travel there and back. If the characters are loyal to Cara Fahd and managed

to capture Hiuko Scrag, they may be very interested in breaking up a Thera spy ring inside the orkish kingdom. However, the Gamemaster should be careful not to distract the player characters too much from the important events soon to be going on in and around Vivane.

Even if the characters find enough evidence to prove to themselves what Iopos has done, and that it is a grave threat to Jerris, as well as the rest of Barsaive, they will not have the time to convince enough of the city to act on it. The following outlines the progression of the Iopan occupation of Jerris.

Occupied Jerris

True to their word, the Denairastas Clan begins studying the ash falling over Jerris and mounting expeditions into the Wastes to learn more about it, in an effort to neutralize it and clean up the city. Jerris is far more useful to Iopos as a safe and healthy city, so it is in their interest to stop the ash from falling.

Iopan troops and some Firescale trolls remain in Jerris. Initially, their presence is purely as a "peacekeeping force," but it quickly becomes obvious that the Holders of Trust and the Denairastas Clan are the real powers at work in the city. Over time, the Holders begin recruiting native Jerrisians for the Copper Branch of their organization (**Secret Societies of Barsaive**, p. 33). These informants help to enforce the rule of the Denairastas on the city, and make it even more difficult for rebel groups to form and plan action against the occupation.

Those merchant families loyal to Iopos are left largely alone to continue about their business. Trade with Iopos is brisk, and the shipyards in Jerris begin constructing new airships for sale to Iopos and her allies, strengthening the city's naval and trading fleets. Those merchants and other citizens who oppose Iopos are forced to flee, or else arrested and imprisoned. Some, like Pihgram Tor, manage to maintain their positions by virtue of their importance to the city and their involvement in the construction of airships.

For the remainder of the short and brutal war, attention is drawn away from Jerris, which is just as Uhl Denairastas prefers it. While Iopos strengthens its hold on the city and draws up plans for further expansion, Throal and Thera continue to fight it out.

Pihgram Tor becomes the leader of the largest resistance group in the city, dedicated to driving out the Iopans. In addition to that, the surviving Falcons from the war take brief asylum in Throal, to recoup from their losses during the war, and to digest the information that Pihgram sent them via the characters.



CHAPTER EIGHT: THE FALL OF VIVANE

The wind never dies at Stormhead.
Never.

It rages relentless night and day. It is one of the very few things that Old Hathor Rockgrubber could always count on. That and, of course, bad luck.

A full week of prospecting had turned up nothing. *So much for easy money*, thought Old Hathor. The rumor had been that the peaks of Stormhead were rich in pure Elemental Earth. One vein of that — one large strike — and Old Hathor would be set for life. And it was true enough that Stormhead had been home to more than a few Therans eager to harvest the wealth of this haunted hunk of rock. But now, with all this war foolery, they were hiding in their fortresses, waiting for their just rewards.

The craggy faced old t'skrang leaned over and picked up a likely looking rock and inspected it carefully. After a few seconds of close inspection, he tossed it aside, satisfied that it was nothing but worthless stone. He slung his pack and sat on a convenient rock, taking a deep swig from his canteen.

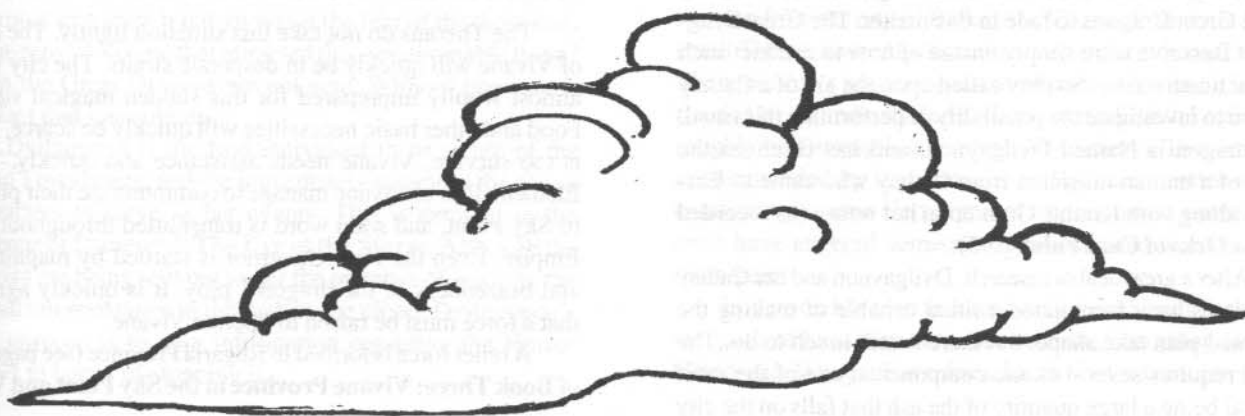
He heard a familiar rumble and paused for a moment to watch as from the center column of Stormhead, a great geyser of water erupted hundreds of feet into the air. The water thrashed and foamed and boiled as it hurled itself into the air. It was an awesome display of nature's fury. It was made all the more mysterious, thought Old Hathor, by the fact that no one knew why it happened. Probably just some sort of weird magic.

And then there came louder rumble, unlike anything Old Hathor had ever heard out of Stormhead. It knocked him to the ground and he got solid crack on head as he slammed into the unforgiving earth. He looked up, touching his small, but painful wound and stared toward the black storm cloud in utter amazement.

The impenetrable cloud was streaked with veins of lightning and seething with swirling anger. It boiled and turned like he had never seen it do before. But most amazing of all, it moved.

The storm cloud slowly floated across the sky headed south, and drifted to the ground, making contact with it. The winds howled furiously as it scraped along the surface of the earth, ripping up stone and anything unfortunate enough to be in its way. The storm cloud roared louder and cut a swath of destruction into the land itself as it headed towards some unseen destination.

And then it was gone, but the wind was still at Stormhead.





Background

The events of the Fall of Vivane detail the complete destruction of the Thera provincial capital city. The implications for this event will have lasting effects across the entire face of Barsaive. The forces that are involved in this section are most impressive, for they involve actual direct conflict between the Great Dragons of Barsaive and the Empire of Thera. Where these two great powers meet, the struggle will always be epic.

The central challenge of this chapter from start to finish for the Gamemaster is making sure that the player characters are involved and feel that they are making a difference. It will be easy enough for the players to feel completely helpless in the face of the Great Dragons and a kila taskforce and the like. The idea is for the player characters to have the opportunity to become key figures in the events that lead to the fall of Vivane.

The Dragon's Plan

Realizing that driving the Therans from both Vivane and Sky Point is likely beyond the resources and capabilities of even the formidable Barsaivan alliance, the Great Dragons plan to take care of Vivane, allowing the Barsaivan forces to concentrate their efforts on Sky Point. The dragons' plan is staggering in its magnitude. Using their combined magical might, the dragons shall cast a powerful ritual to entrap the entire city of Vivane in a great dome of air. The city will be isolated from Sky Point, and all the forces therein kept from the field of battle.

This is a decision that is not taken lightly by the dragons, as the use of ritual magic amongst them has been forbidden since the mythic Age of Dragons. But in their estimation it is the best hope for victory. The task is, even for the Great Dragons, not a simple one. The banning of ritual magic for so long has allowed even the seemingly endless memory of the Great Dragons to fade in this matter. The Great Dragons of Barsaive were simply unsure of how to conduct such a great undertaking. So they called upon the aid of a Cathay dragon to investigate the possibility of performing this ritual. The dragon is Named Dvilgaynon, and has taken on the form of a human magician from Cathay who came to Barsaive along with Krathis Gron upon her return (as recorded in *The Orks of Cara Fahd*, p.93).

After a great deal of research, Dvilgaynon and her Cathay associates have formulated a ritual capable of making the dragons' plan take shape, but there is still much to do. The ritual requires several exotic components, one of the most critical being a large quantity of the ash that falls on the city

of Jerris (See *A City of Ash* p. 110). This is not the only item involved, but it is the only one that the dragons will not personally transport to the site of the ritual.

Event Synopsis

The first event that will occur which will involve the characters is the gathering of the ash from Jerris. Dvilgaynon will personally summon them to entrust them with this great task. This is detailed in the adventure framework *A City of Ash*. When the ash is delivered to Dvilgaynon, then it will be time for the actual casting. Only at this time will Dvilgaynon's draconic nature be revealed.

At the moment of casting, five Great Dragons will gather to enact the ritual to encase Vivane. This impressive conclave includes Dvilgaynon, Mountainshadow, Usun, Icewing, and Vasdenjas. They will trace a circle of ash around the great city and use a vast quantity of Elemental Air to encapsulate the city in a great Air Shield.

The ritual itself is an impressive event. From a crest south of the Flamewalk River that is forever after this event Named Dragons' Rock, the five Great Dragons touch down in the dead of midnight. Five Great Dragons chanting and roaring in unison in an ancient and mystic language fill the streets of Vivane with an awesome cacophony.

The five dragons circle around a massive glowing blue column of Elemental Air that dances with a life of its own. The defenders of Vivane can only watch the great beasts at work. Panic grips the city, and officials from the watch-captains all the way up to Assembly Leader Oathstone himself are roused awake by frightened servants.

In moments it is finished and a great dome of Elemental Air imprisons the entire city of Vivane. No man or beast can leave the city. And five Great Dragons circle the city surveying the mighty Imperial City of Vivane that now lays helpless before them.

Thera's response

The Therans do not take this situation lightly. The city of Vivane will quickly be in desperate straits. The city was almost wholly unprepared for this sudden magical siege. Food and other basic necessities will quickly be scarce. If it is to survive, Vivane needs assistance and quickly. The Elementarists of Vivane manage to communicate their plight to Sky Point, and soon word is transmitted throughout the Empire. Even the First Governor is startled by magnitude and brazenness of the dragons' ploy. It is quickly agreed that a force must be raised to liberate Vivane.

A relief force is formed in Rugaria Province (see page 44 of *Book Three: Vivane Province in the Sky Point and Viv-*





ane Campaign Set) to both reinforce Sky Point and to rescue Vivane. The task force is lead personally by Admiral Radgund Hartmallen, commander of the Sixth Fleet. The relief force meets up with two kilas from Sky Point. The vedettes of the task force remain in Sky Point to fend off the inevitable Barsaivan attack.

The task force of four kilas departs Sky Point immediately. They head straight towards Vivane in hopes of using their barrages of fire cannons to blast apart the Air Shield and liberate the trapped city. The mighty squadron of floating citadels moves at best speed towards the city of Vivane.

Even the Great Dragons are not anxious to meet this imposing force head on. Suddenly, it is in doubt whether the Air Shield can hold off this great display of Theran might.

The Dragon's Folly

Soon, however, the kilas are the least of the dragons' worries. Dvilgaynon warned the other dragons early in the formulation of the ritual to encase Vivane that there might be a problem with casting so great a ritual at Vivane. That problem is called Stormhead.

Within the Vivane province squats Stormhead, a mountain whose peak is eternally overcast by a huge swirling cloud that has been the site of frequent Horror activity and has Tainted the Astral space all around the area (p. 39-40, **Vivane Province book in the Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**).

Dvilgaynon, after her long observations of the cloud, was concerned that such a great outpouring of magic on an urban center, such as Vivane, might cause some reaction in the cloud, and her worst fears are confirmed. With the casting of the ritual, the Horror Cloud begins to move. It moves like a force five tornado ripping across the landscape leaving a swath of destruction a mile wide... and it is headed straight for Vivane.

Why was it attracted to Vivane? Who can say? Certainly the ritual must have been a factor. Was it the magic of the ritual that drew it out, or was it the fear of the thousands of citizens of Vivane that attracted this unfathomable thing? Even the Great Dragons are not sure. Without question is the fact that it is coming.

Dvilgaynon is the first individual to be aware of the cloud's movement, and she immediately summons the player characters to serve as her agents. This is detailed in the adventurer framework **The Eye of the Storm**. Although the players are being sent out under the pretense of warning the Barsaivan resistance in the path of the cloud, Dvilgaynon's true purpose is to gain information regarding the Horror Cloud in hopes of stopping it.

What is the Horror Cloud?

So, what is the mysterious astral tainting Horror cloud that squats above Stormhead? Why is it there? What lurks within its depths? There are three leading theories on what exactly it is.

The first theory is that the tumultuous cloud is actually a small portion of the Scourge that was never cleared away. For some reason, the Horrors were able to keep this foothold intact even as the rest of their influence receded with the ending of the Scourge. Perhaps there is something intensely magical about this locale that allows the Horrors to more easily bridge their native netherworlds. Perhaps something so terrible happened here that its black stain upon astral space still sustains the Horror's hunger for suffering. This theory holds that the Horror Cloud is in fact a city of Horrors still active in this world.

The second theory is that it is a permanent open gate into the astral plane that leads to one of the netherworlds, perhaps even the homeworld of the Horrors. The astral space that corresponds to this netherworld is particularly corrupt and therefore particularly attractive to the Horrors.

The third theory, however, is the most monstrous and for some too terrible to even contemplate. This theory holds that this cloud is actually a single Horror, a monster that once roamed the Earth devouring cities. The Horror is too powerful to be completely dispelled, but because of the lessened magic is unable to fully manifest. So now it lies waiting for a time when it can resume its former glory. One Throalic scholar has even gone so far as to refer to Stormhead as the Egg of Verjigorm, the Slayer of Dragons and the greatest of the Horrors. This Horror Cloud may be the nascent form of that legendary entity that at this point lacks the intense magical energy and raw fear it needs to manifest.

The Destruction of Ironcrook

The Village of Ironcrook sits on the banks of the Flamewalk River between Stormhead and Vivane. It is a small village that primarily functions as a midpoint between goods flowing from the city of Ballaize to Vivane downriver. It is a small Theran township that caters to rough river tradesmen. The township's primary point of importance is that it is garrisoned by an understaffed division of the Eighth Legion (at roughly half strength with about 60 soldiers). The division is commanded by the strategos and *de facto* leader of the community Jonnar Kert, a minor Theran dwarf noble who must have angered someone to get assigned to such a remote post.

Ironcrook has also unfortunately found itself in the direct path of least resistance between the oncoming Horror Cloud and Vivane. Save for a handful of adventurers and



prospectors at Stormhead itself, the populace of Ironcreek has the dubious distinction of being the first Name-givers to see the Horror Cloud in person.

Jonnar Kert's primary advisor and magical aide is a low Circle Theran human Nethermancer by the Name of Lithia Tothe. Lithia is the first to sense the Horror Cloud approaching and, using a magical signaling device, is the first to warn the city of Vivane of its approach. She, however, is not able to save herself from being consumed when this destructive force arrives at Ironcreek.

After the cloud passes over the small township, Ironcreek is barely even a ruin. No one who didn't manage to flee the path of the cloud remains alive.

Charge of the Kilas

When the magicians of Vivane learn from Ironcreek that a large magical cloud is moving towards the city and destroying everything in its path, they send a magical communication to Admiral Hartmallen to break off his so far futile attempt to break the ritual and to move immediately to intercept the cloud.

Although the Admiral does not fully understand the instructions or the magnitude of the enemy he faces, he complies and the four kilas move into position to intercept the cloud. Admiral Hartmallen is stunned by what he sees. Ironcreek is already completely destroyed by the time the kilas arrive. The Horror Cloud is unimaginably huge; rivaling, and perhaps exceeding in size, a Theran behemoth.

The four kilas take up position around the cloud and pour in concentrated barrages of fire cannons and magical artillery. The cloud seems utterly unaffected by the attacks but does react. It moves like a living beast, responding to the attackers and diverts its path to come straight at the kilas.

They veer away, trying to avoid the cloud, but it is too late. The four Theran kilas are drawn into the black mass and are suddenly and inexplicably gone. Nothing more is heard of Admiral Hartmallen or any of his men. They are all presumed dead, or worse.

The Arrival of Vestrivan

By this time the player characters should have returned from their mission to Ironcreek. They have delivered the information about the cloud to Dvilgaynon. After analyzing the information, the news is not good. If there is a way to stop this Horror-tainted cloud of magical energy from moving across the landscape, even Dvilgaynon is not sure what it is.

Just as it seems that all hope is lost, a new dragon appears, dropping down from the clouds to the dragons' camp. It is Vestrivan, the Horror-tainted dragon and brother to

Vasdenjas. Vestrivan's long association with the Despoiler of the Land has provided him vast knowledge of the Horrors, knowledge that can perhaps prove instrumental in the destruction of the Horror Cloud. He had seen the cloud moving in a vision and has come to offer his assistance. There is now a sixth Great Dragon involved.

The Great Dragons hold a conclave to decide what can be done. Vestrivan makes a terrible suggestion. He believes that he may be able to disrupt or even destroy the cloud but it must be done at the cloud's center, or its "Eye". Even the Great Dragons are uncertain if they can survive within the cloud. Vestrivan believes that he can, because of his unique relationship with the Despoiler of the Land. Regardless, he is willing to try. His brother Vasdenjas tries to convince him otherwise, but Vestrivan will hear nothing of it.

The Horror Cloud draws closer to Vivane as Vestrivan flies toward it. He pierces the inky blackness of the cloud and disappears from sight. There is a tremendous noise, like an immense thunderclap, shortly thereafter. The Horror Cloud stops moving. From its center is an explosion that shakes the land. The Horror Cloud briefly wanes, its winds thinning. Individuals nearby can see strange and twisting inhuman figures dancing in and amongst its black surface, perhaps even picking up a glimpse of four ruined stone kilas.

For a moment, it looks like maybe the Horror Cloud is dispersing. But on the verge of triumph, it reforms. Dvilgaynon can only watch in mute horror. The Cloud is soon again moving towards Vivane, and now there is no time to stop it.

The Death of Vivane

Nothing has worked against the Horror Cloud. A squadron of Theran kilas could not stay its course, or even a Great Dragon. It is still coming.

It moves triumphantly across the landscape from Stormhead to Vivane, decimating everything in its path. A trench of blasted terrain now connects the two locales, but the defenders of Vivane have not given up hope. They are ready to defend their city to the last even in the face of this monstrosity.

The Theran Elementalists in Vivane have charged a great magical lens with tremendous energy. The magical lens is at the peak of its strength as the Horror Cloud arrives and slams against the Air Shield. The Horror Cloud breaks the circle of ash and the Air Shield falls.

The mighty Theran weapon only fires once. It cuts a swath into the inky cloud. For a moment, the sky above Vivane is lit with unimaginable light as a beam as bright as the sun cuts through the night sky.





There is a tremendous explosion above Vivane and the Horror Cloud literally ignites. It breaks up from one mass and its strange substance literally rains down upon the city of Vivane. Some say that in and amidst the falling debris can be seen strange and twisted stone sculptures vaguely reminiscent of Theran kilas.

As the cloud falls upon Vivane, it slowly encompasses the city. The conclave of dragons and their allies can only watch from the crest at Dragons' Rock as Vivane dies. The falling cloud wreaks havoc on the physical structure of the city, melting buildings, burning holes in the ground leading to the underground catacombs. Even the magical defenses built by the Therans are no match for the cloud. Instead of withstanding the effects of the cloud, the magical energy held in the walls and defenses strengthen the effects of the cloud, wreaking the worst damage on the Theran Quarter.

The remains of the cloud fall upon Vivane and settles. The only sound that comes from Vivane is the desperate screams of its doomed inhabitants.

Soon, even their screams are silent.

Important Characters

This section describes in brief the major characters in **The Fall of Vivane**. Complete game statistics are only supplied for characters that the player characters are likely to conflict with face to face in this adventure.

THE GREAT DRAGONS

Dvilgaynon

Dvilgaynon appears for the most part in her human form, an attractive and tall Cathayan human with jet-black hair and bronze-yellow eyes. She is always dressed in bright silk and brocade robes covered with ornate decorative patterns. Her entire appearance gives her an otherworldly and arcane presence, and it is clear to everyone that she is something more than a "mere" human. She often speaks in a whisper and is usually frustratingly cryptic. When Dvilgaynon gives you a straight answer, it must be something tremendously important to her.

Dvilgaynon is perhaps the greatest dragon ritualist and spellcaster currently alive. Her magical powers are beyond easy categorization. Although her powers are somewhat restricted in human form, she still can very easily play the role of a powerful human Wizard.

Her relations with the Barsaivan Great Dragons is somewhat strained at the moment. She was sent here to create a

ritual for a specific purpose. She fulfilled the task admirably. But since then, she has been pestering the other Great Dragons about the possible consequences of the ritual and the effect it could have on the nearby Horror Cloud at Stormhead. Icewing in particular has grown tired of her ramblings on the subject.

Dvilgaynon was planning to return to Cathay after the ritual was over, but with the moving of the Horror Cloud has decided instead to return to Cara Fahd where she can keep an eye on this development. Dvilgaynon and her relationship with the orks of Cara Fahd is mentioned in more detail in **The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd** (p. 93).

DEX: 20

STR: 34

TOU: 27

PER: 31

WIL: 31

CHA: 22

Icewing

The Great Dragon Icewing is detailed in both **Prelude to War** (p. 70) and in **Dragons**. His information is reprinted here for the sake of convenience.

Icewing is known as the only Great Dragon of Barsaive willing to meet with other Name-givers on a regular basis, though normally he demands tribute worth at least 1,000 silver pieces for such meetings. The dragon's lair lies at the top of Mount Vapor, in the Throal Mountains about day's travel from Bartertown. From time to time, Icewing has aided the Kingdom of Throal, most recently when he provided Varulus I, Varulus II, and Varulus III with life-prolonging potions to help stabilize the dwarf nation during the Scourge. The other dragons of Barsaive, few of whom are interested in Name-giver affairs, tend to defer to Icewing in political matters. Referred to as Doll-Maker by his fellow dragons, Icewing is the most aggressively anti-Theran of Barsaive's dragons; considering the Theran attempts to kill Icewing, the dragon's sentiments are understandable.

Icewing was more than willing to go to war with the Therans, and was one of the most vocal advocates for the ritual. He was also the first one to brush aside Dvilgaynon's concerns about the Horror Cloud. Some of the other Great Dragons (Mountainshadow in particular) aren't so sure that Icewing isn't relishing the prospect of the destruction of Vivane by the Horror Cloud.

DEX: 21

STR: 34

TOU: 29

PER: 27

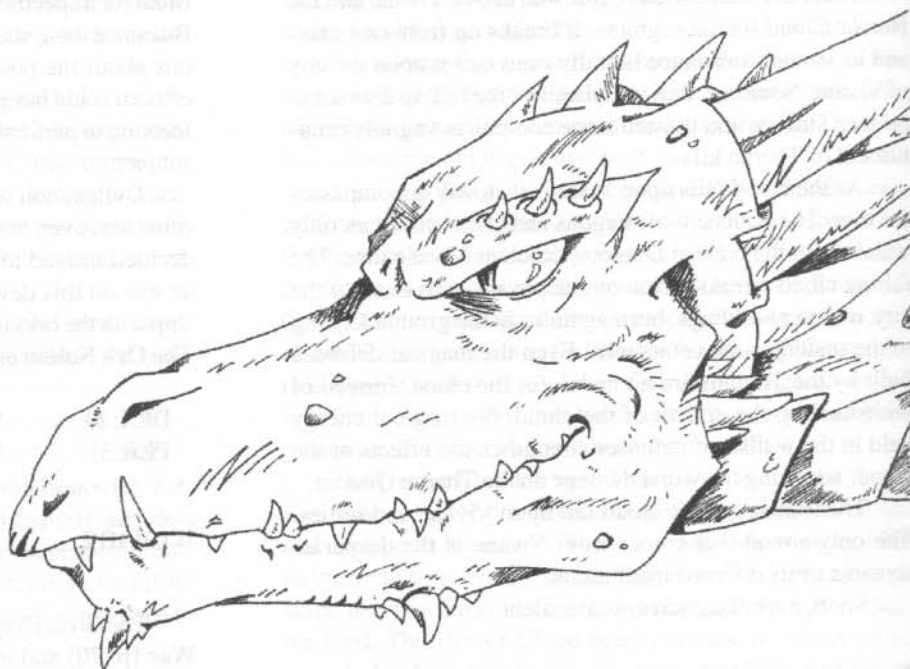
WIL: 29

CHA: 27





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Mountainshadow

The Great Dragon Mountainshadow is detailed in both **Prelude to War** (p. 70) and in **Dragons**. His information is reprinted here for the sake of convenience.

This Great Dragon maintains an interest in the affairs of Name-givers, though he is more removed from their politics than Icewing. In contrast to Icewing, who sees Name-givers as either useful pawns or annoying adversaries, Mountainshadow finds Name-givers interesting as individuals. He lives in a small hidden lair in the Dragon Mountains, along with a small community of orks and humans he has raised to serve him. Though he too bears an ancient grudge against the Therans, he is more cautious about the prospects of war than Icewing. Called the Far Scholar by his fellow dragons, he exemplifies the draconian tendency to take an extremely long view of history. Like most Great Dragons, Mountainshadow is secure in his superiority over others, extremely articulate and utterly ruthless when his self-interest is threatened. He is also known for his obscure sense of humor and musical laugh.

It was Mountainshadow who contacted Dvilgaynon in the first place to receive her aid in formulating the ritual. Although Mountainshadow is interested in seeing Thera

driven from Barsaive, he is far more concerned about the Horror Cloud once it starts moving. He is concerned that the victory over the Therans may have come with a painfully high price.

DEX: 19

STR: 34

TOU: 28

PER: 29

WIL: 29

CHA: 26

Usun

The Great Dragon Usun is detailed in **Dragons**. Usun is strictly here for the ritual and is unconcerned with dealing with "lesser" Name-givers, so it very unlikely that he will have anything to say to the player characters. Of the Great Dragons involved in the ritual, he is easily the most aloof.

Vasdenjas

The Great Dragon Vasdenjas is also here strictly for the ritual although the actions of his brother, Vestrivan in fighting the Horror Cloud, cause him to make a heroic sacrifice in the **Assault on Sky Point**. He is described in full detail in that chapter on page 135.





Vestrivan

The Great Dragon Vestrivan is detailed in **Creatures of Barsaive** (p. 96) and in **Dragons**. Vestrivan is tainted by the powerful horror known as the Despoiler of the Land. It was this connection that allowed him to sense the movements of the Horror Cloud and the effect that the Great Dragon ritual would have on it. He came straight away from his lair to try and prevent thousands of other Name-givers from suffering his fate. Because of this, he sacrifices his own life to stop the Horror Cloud, and even though he is ultimately unsuccessful, it is his heroism that inspires his brother to make a monumental sacrifice later on.

DEX: 18	STR: 23	TOU: 26
PER: 22	WIL: 22	CHA: 34

Admiral Radgund Hartmallen

"So, you Vivaners are entrapped by the peasants of Barsaive? Typical. Fear no longer, my brothers-at-arms. My boys should be able to sweep them aside without too much difficulty."

Admiral Hartmallen was introduced in brief in **The Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set, book three: Vivane Province** (p. 44). His information is presented here for convenience and expanded upon.

Admiral Hartmallen is the commander of the Sixth Fleet usually stationed in the province of Rugaria. A dwarf of house Thaloss, he is a Seventh Circle Air Sailor and an accomplished tactician. His service record is impeccable, with very few ships lost under his command. And when the First Governor learned of the Great Dragons' involvement in the capturing of Vivane, the decision was made to have him lead the fleet personally to liberate the besieged city.

The Admiral is an arrogant dwarf. He wears his claim to nobility openly, and is disdainful of those who will not show him the proper respect. He considers Barsaivans to be little more than beasts who, if not properly controlled, will just resort to barbarism. He feels that Thera is only hope for civilization in these wayward border provinces.

The Admiral is utterly confident of his success. He knows that he will face great opposition, but he is prepared for whatever may come. The idea of Thera being defeated is utterly unthinkable.

DEX: 6	STR: 6	TOU: 7
PER: 6	WIL: 5	CHA: 7

Thomalas Janrud

Thomalas Janrud was first detailed in **Sky Point Adventures** (p. 28). His information is repeated here for convenience. Note that he is now a Fourth Circle, rather than Third Circle, Wizard.

Janrud is a thirty-nine year old human and tall and sal-low. Born in Landis, he is a Resistance veteran of some years' standing — in fact, surviving for four years makes him positively venerable. Suspicious by nature, Janrud escaped the Theran airship on the fringes of Landis that took his family into slavery. This experience has made him hate the Therans. However, his hatred is tempered with years of experience. Still, though capable of a cool head and careful planning, he still occasionally loses these abilities when dealing with Theran enemies.

Janrud is brave, loyal to his immediate fellows and friends, and genuinely concerned with the welfare of Vivane's oppressed inhabitants. He has given away almost all the money he's acquired over the years to the poor, and so Barsaivans in Vivane think well of him. He is extremely popular with the "foot soldiers" of the Resistance, which probably accounts for his longevity in this dangerous profession.

Janrud has heard rumors of the coming war, but only rumors and is desperate for news and will be intensely interested in anyone who claims to have such information.

DEX: 5	STR: 5	TOU: 6
PER: 8	WIL: 6	CHA: 5

Wermer Kildare

Wermer is a t'skrang merchant who runs the Snake's Tail Inn in Ironcrook. He is a gregarious fellow who loves a good time and openly disdains any interest in politics. Secretly he is a member of the Barsaivan Resistance and has been instrumental in more than a hundred slaves escaping from Theran captivity. His hatred of the Therans stems not from any personal slight, but a deep seated hatred of slavery and his personal repulsion at the idea of his own freedom being taken away.

Wermer has turned the Snake's Tail into a very profitable business. Unfortunately, his clandestine operations are also a great financial drag, and so, Wermer is barely staying ahead of some debts. It was these very debts that attracted the attention of Ironcrook's military commander, Jonnar Kert. Simply put, Jonnar became suspicious of exactly where the



money was going. Wermer knows that it is only a matter of time at this point before Jonnar puts things together and that he will be inside a Thera prison barge headed down river. As a result, Wermer is not a tough sell on the idea of fleeing the city.

Running the Fall of Vivane

The Great Dragons attempt to neutralize the city of Vivane, clearing the way for the Barsaivan alliance's assault on Sky Point. Unfortunately, their scheme has unimagined and horrible consequences that even they cannot ignore. This section provides three adventure frameworks, presents a number of short adventure ideas, and presents guidelines for tying everything together.

Introducing the Events

The first adventure framework, **A City of Ash** found in **The Taking of Jerris**, details how the players can be drawn into the events of the Fall of Vivane. Dvilgaynon herself will personally employ the characters to journey to the city of Jerris to fetch for her a needed component in an unspecified effort against Thera. Their participation in this draws them into the events that precede and follow the dragons' great ritual.

The following adventure assumes that the players have already been caught up in the events of **Barsaive at War** and are sympathetic to the Barsaivan cause. If this is not true, the Gamemaster may have to come up with some other way to get the players involved in this adventure.

Prequels

Of course, as might be expected, the most prominent prequel to the events of this chapter is found in **Prelude to War** in particular in the chapter, **The Dragon's Daughter** (pp. 64-84) and **Rise of the Ork Nation** (pp. 85-109). If the players have completed those chapters of **Prelude**, the events in this chapter will make more sense, as they will more fully understand the ancient enmity between the Dragons and Thera.

But other products have also foreshadowed the events of this chapter. **The Orks of Carafahd** (p. 93) introduced the character of Dvilgaynon. The players could have easily met this character before and this insures that when her draconic nature is revealed, there will be much greater impact made upon them.

Additionally, if the characters have been to Vivane before for one the adventures in **Sky Point Adventures** then the city may have a familiar feel. In particular the adventure, **Chasing the Snakeskin Boots** can introduce the party to the Barsaivan Resistance in Vivane. Indeed, if the players have made prior contact, it will be far easier to find the resistance and warn them of the Horror Cloud in the adventure framework **Heart of the Enemy**.

Player characters that have played any of the adventures above will be prepared to take part in the momentous events portrayed in this chapter and will find the motivations of the factions involved easier to fathom. Playing through the story line of this chapter enables them to see the culmination of this epic conflict between Thera and the Great Dragons.

Adventure Frameworks

The following adventure ideas and frameworks follow the events described in the Event Synopsis. The events describe in the Synopsis will occur as the player characters are busily accomplishing their set tasks. Some of them will happen only if the players are successful, but many of them will happen regardless of what the players do. This reflects the fact that so many titanic forces are at play here. Still, if played correctly, the players still have a chance to be an instrumental part in the scheme of things.

The adventure frameworks are presented in the format described in the Introduction. These frameworks and adventure ideas serve as adventure "blueprints" that Gamemasters can flesh out as desired.

The Heart of the Enemy

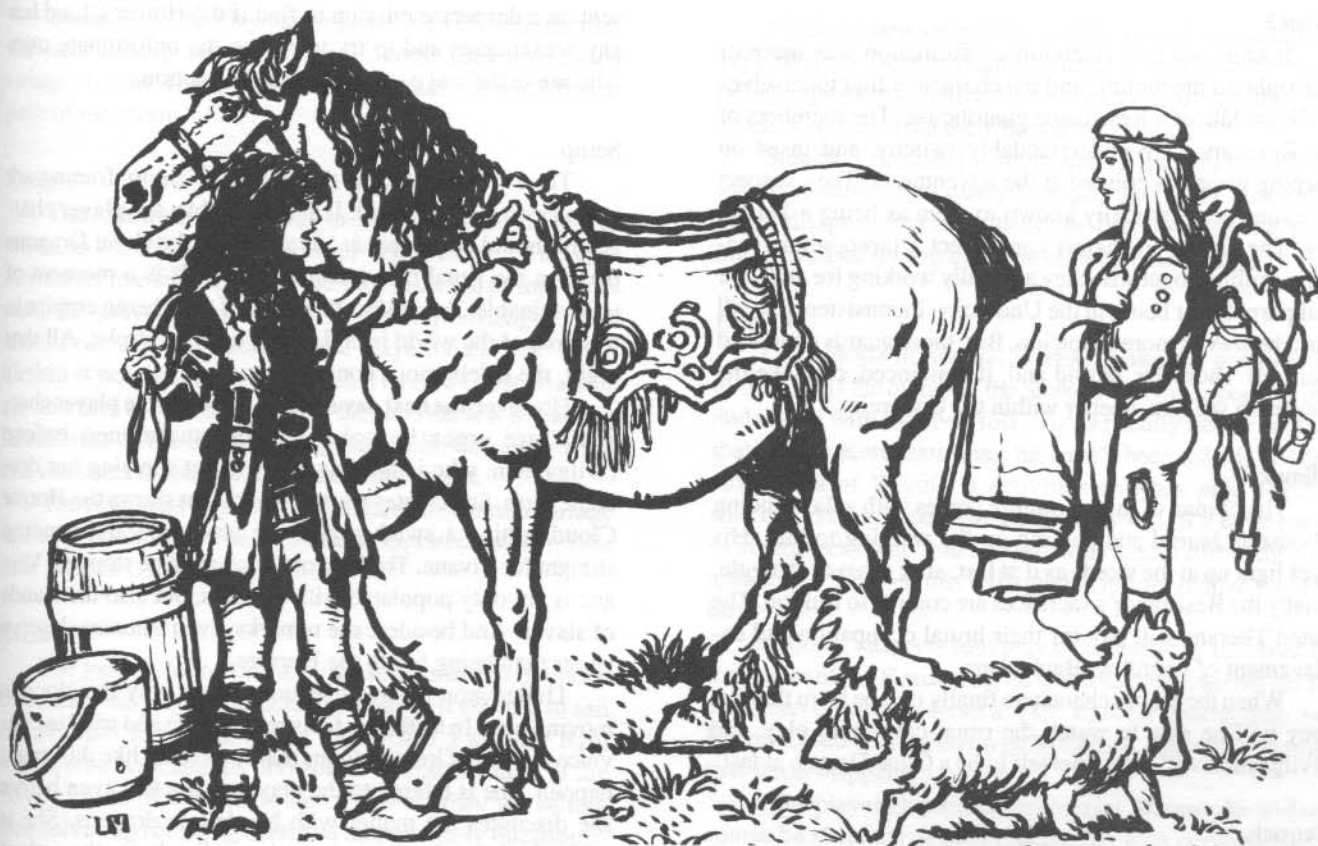
Premise

The player characters are hired by the Great Dragon Dvilgaynon to infiltrate into Vivane and to contact the Barsaivan resistance and warn them of the coming siege. The player characters must elude the forces of Thera and get word to the resistance before it is too late.

Setup

The perfect setup happens if the players have just finished delivering the ash to Dvilgaynon. She can then immediately issue them this second mission. Otherwise, the party has to be summoned to the secret base near Vivane where Dvilgaynon and her consorts are hiding and preparing for the ritual.





Dvilgaynon explains during the briefing that she is already deep in preparation for a ritual to encase Vivane in a magical Air Shield. The ritual will be enacted upon the stroke of midnight seventy-two hours from that very moment. Nothing will delay the casting. However, she is sympathetic to the freedom fighters inside the city. She does not wish to see them suffer unduly, so she is dispatching a number of groups to contact the resistance and warn them. The party has been chosen to contact one cell in particular, a veteran cell led by Thomalas Janrud in the Undercity. If he can be contacted with enough warning, he should be able to spread the word to many of the other cells.

Event 1

The characters enter into the Broken Quarter of Vivane in search of the Resistance. The Broken Quarter is a dangerous part of town, full of thieves and scum. It stands in stark contrast to the opulence of the nearby Theran quarter of Vivane. The characters must maneuver through this dangerous world to find the Resistance that headquarters in the Undercity beneath the Broken Quarter.

While in the Broken Quarter, there exists an excellent opportunity to have the players run afoul of a local gang of thugs or get taken in by a sly con-man. Eventually though,

the characters will be able to find a genuinely informative contact, such as Hazbolin One-Eye, a mangy human who still manages to see a lot out of his good eye. For a few silver, Hazbolin will be willing to show the player characters to an entrance into the Undercity near an area that Resistance is alleged to frequent. He is adamant however about not actually entering the Undercity. "They's gots rats down there big as dragons, they does," is the only explanation he will give for this behavior.

Event 2

The Undercity beneath the Broken Quarter is nothing less than a stinking sewage pit. Rats of unusual size, wild dogs, and the occasional snake are not uncommon. Furthermore, the Resistance has booby-trapped this area to keep Theran spies out. There are pit snares, spike traps, and similar devices scattered about. A loose coin seen on the ground might actually be a trigger for a hidden trap.

The characters must make their way through this dangerous maze to the area that Hazbolin claimed the Resistance could be found. Of course, cautious characters may bring up how someone who refused to go underground would really know this sort of information.



Event 3

It turns out that Hazbolin's information was more or less right on the money, and the characters find themselves in the middle of a Resistance guardhouse. The members of the Resistance are understandably twitchy, and insist on keeping weapons pointed at the adventurers. They suspect everyone not personally known to them as being a Theran spy. The player characters can expect a thorough and intense grilling about who they are really working for and their real purpose for being in the Undercity. Inconsistencies will earn them even more suspicion. But, these guards do indeed work for Thomalas Janrud and, if convinced, can take the players to see him, deeper within the Undercity.

Climax

The climax of this adventure comes with at last finding Thomalas Janrud and passing on the warning to him. His eyes light up at the words as if at last, after years of struggle, finally the Resistance's sacrifices are coming to fruition. The hated Therans will pay for their brutal occupation and enslavement of countless Barsaivans.

When the player characters finally escape from the city, they will be able to watch the ritual come into play, and Dvilgaynon will reveal herself to be a Great Dragon at last.

Sequels

The immediate sequel to this adventure framework is **The Eye of the Storm**, presented below. With so many major events so close at hand with the ending of this adventure sequence, it is ill-advised to divert the players. However, there are some loose ends that could be turned into later adventures.

If the players were late in delivering the message or failed to deliver it all together, there could serious consequences. A vengeful brother or other relative who holds them responsible for a member of the Resistance who did not make it out and comes looking for vengeance.

Another possibility is that Thomalas Janrud may come and seek out the party for aid or for work. Imagine if Thomalas, after all these years of living in the Undercity and fighting against the Therans, managed to uncover a nest of Theran activity in, for example, Haven. He would likely seek out the heroes who delivered him from the destroyed city of Vivane.

The Eye of the Storm

Premise

The ritual is cast, and Vivane is enclosed inside the Air Shield. The Horror Cloud begins to move, and Dvilgaynon is the first to sense its eminent approach. The players are

sent on a desperate mission to find if the Horror Cloud has any weaknesses and to try to rescue the unfortunate ones who are in the wake of its coming destruction.

Setup

The event that sets up this entire adventure framework is the casting of the ritual. If at all possible, the player characters should be present at Vivane when the Great Dragons perform the ritual that entraps the city. It is a moment of unimaginable *Triumph* as the jewel of the Theran empire in this area of the world is laid low in a single stroke. All that night, the celebrations continue.

However, the next day at mid-afternoon, the player characters are urgently woken up and summoned before Dvilgaynon, who is no longer shy about showing her draconic form. She creates a scrying pool that shows the Horror Cloud cutting a swath across the landscape and heading straight for Vivane. The Horror Cloud must be stopped. Vivane is not only populated with Therans, but also thousands of slaves. And besides, she remarks, even Therans deserve better than being fed to the Horrors.

Dvilgaynon dodges questions about why the cloud is moving now. In truth, she feels responsible and tried to convince the other Great Dragons that something like this might happen. She is talking to the player characters even before she discusses the matter with her fellow dragons. She is telling because they must leave immediately for the path of the storm. Their mission is two fold.

First, there is a community directly in the path between Vivane and Stormhead. That is the town of Ironcreek. There is a cell of the Resistance located inside Ironcreek that has worked over the years to free slaves being transported down the Flamewalk River. They are led by the owner of an Inn in Ironcreek, a t'skrang Named Wermer Kildare. Dvilgaynon knows about the Resistance because of her conversations with escaped member of the Vivane chapter.

The first mission is, in truth, merely a ploy to make Dvilgaynon's aims seem more noble and to make sure the characters move with utmost speed. The second mission is what she truly needs. She gives them a strange carved bone rod called The Spire of Knowing. The Spire is a potent magic item capable of analyzing the capabilities of anything it has touched. Dvilgaynon wants the players to thrust the Spire of Knowing into the Horror Cloud so that Dvilgaynon may study it. Dvilgaynon would do this task herself, but she has rationalized that the cloud is likely to ignore a few small Name-Givers on the ground, but will certainly react to a Great Dragon.





Regardless, the players are dispatched immediately on the same airship that took them to Jerris. They are headed straight for the Theran settlement of Ironcreek and into the path of the storm.

Event 1

The kila taskforce arrives in Vivane just as the player characters are leaving. This is an opportunity for an epic airship escape sequence. As the four kilas move into position, the players must avoid the Theran onslaught. This should not be too difficult as the player characters' small airship is not their intended target. The five Great Dragons are nowhere to be seen during all this, and the few remaining inhabitants of the camp at Dragons' Rock flee away from this awesome display of Theran military might.

The four kilas begin a concentrated fire cannon barrage upon the Air Shield. The wall of concentrated magic resists their attacks ... for now.

Event 2

The journey to Ironcreek by airship is a matter of hours. Of course, the player characters would be ill advised to sail directly into Ironcreek unless they relish a straight fight with Jonnar Kert and his division of Theran soldiers. If the players try to pass through the city gates, they are setting themselves up for being searched and intensely questioned by the Therans. Even Ironcreek has received word of the Battle of Triumph and the entrapment of Vivane, so they are on heightened alert. Sneaking into Ironcreek is not an easy matter either. The entire town is surrounded by a crude wooden palisade that is manned with double the usual regiment. There are two Theran soldiers at each corner, four soldiers at the gate, and two men pacing each wall. This guard detail is on duty twenty-four hours a day. All the gates and corner towers are equipped with gongs that will be struck at the first sign of combat. Another twenty Theran legionaries will arrive to reinforce their companions, about two minutes after the gong is struck. In about another five, the other third of the division will arrive.

The division of Ironcreek consists of:

39 Second Circle Warrior Adepts
6 Second Circle Swordmaster Adepts
10 Second Circle Archer Adepts
4 Fourth Circle Warrior Adepts (Lieutenants)
Jonnar Kert, a Sixth Circle Swordmaster Adept
Lithia Tothe, a Third Circle Nethermancer Adept

All these men are members of the Eight Legion and are very likely to fight to death if facing Barsaivans. They all believe (probably rightly) that they can expect nothing but death or torture from their Barsaivan captors.

Stealth is probably a better option than direct assault, although some particularly bloodthirsty player characters might disagree. But regardless, the first obstacle is getting into Ironcreek during this time of heightened alarm.

Event 3

Once inside Ironcreek, Wermer Kildare is not difficult to find. He is the owner of the Snake's Tail Inn, a popular inn and tavern with the river folk. The difficulty lies in the fact that Jonnar Kert (assuming he hasn't been killed) is very suspicious of Wermer's activities and has paid several snitches to hang around in the Snake's Tail. If a large party of foreigners come into town down frantically demanding to speak with Wermer, this will quickly attract Jonnar's attention.

If Jonnar suspects foul play or that anyone involved is a member of the Resistance, he will toss them into his jail in the center of town to await a "fair" trial. Of course, with the Horror Cloud bearing down on Ironcreek, this will be a trial that never happens.

If the player characters can contact Wermer, he will of course be skeptical of their claims. But with persuasion, or even persistence, he can be convinced. He is not the only member of the Resistance in town, however. There are four others:

Grolthis, a curmudgeonly ork bouncer who has been in and out of the Theran jail for various charges of disorderly conduct.

Iarn Heldenmore, a young human Archer Adept currently working as bartender at the Inn.

Moran Shaad, an older human merchant in town who is actually an escaped slave.

The challenge of this event is contacting the Resistance and arranging their escape without tipping off Jonnar. Of course, all of this becomes irrelevant as soon as the Horror Cloud comes into sight.

Event 4

With the first mission taken care of, the second item of business remains to be done. Getting close enough to the Horror Cloud to touch it with the Spire of Knowing. Although this event should be dramatic and tense, Dvilgaynon was correct. The Horror Cloud can respond to threats, but it simply ignores a small airship or a few Name-givers on the ground.





Ultimately, this event merely involves walking up and sticking the Spire in, and then getting away. This is more difficult than it sounds. Getting close to the cloud is like engaging an F5 tornado in melee! The cloud has an Attack Step of 9 at 50 yards, and an Attack Step of 12 at 20 yards. This attack is made against a character's spell defense, and if it is successful then the character is hurled off their feet and thrown a distance in yards equal to twice the Attack Test result. In addition, characters take damage, and other harmful effects, as if they had cast raw magic of equivalent Circle to the Attack Step in a Corrupt area (ED, p.156)

Event 5

The Horror Cloud arrives at Ironcreek and annihilates the city. Most of the citizens will flee the city immediately at the sight of the Horror Cloud and those foolish enough to seek shelter inside its flimsy walls will find only death. However, fleeing the city and actually escaping are two different things. The Horror Cloud moves faster than a fast horse, and most of the citizens and soldiers of Ironcreek will be doomed. If they are still in Ironcreek, the players' only hope is to get to their airship.

It is just after the destruction of Ironcreek that the kila task force from Vivane intercepts the Horror Cloud and engages it as detailed in **The Charge of the Kilas**. If possible, it would be best if the Gamemaster could time the events so that the players actually get to see this disastrous battle.

Event 6

The player characters return to Vivane. They are greeted midair by the Great Dragon Dvilgaynon. She changes into human form and lands on the deck of their airship and directs the players to a new camp some distance farther from city of Vivane. At that camp are gathered all five of the Great Dragons, many drakes, her Cathayan assistants, and many members of the Resistance who escaped from Vivane. Their minds are all on one thing — the approaching Horror Cloud. The player characters' return with the Spire is greeted with a cheer.

Dvilgaynon takes the Spire and retreats to a private tent to study it. She remains there for several hours. She eventually emerges and returns to dragon form, moving to where the four other dragons are waiting. The dragons hold a great conclave held entirely in the ancient language of the dragons. Since this will be in dragonspeech, their gathering should be eerily quiet. Until Dvilgaynon gives them the bad news. She has no idea how to stop the Horror Cloud. This is not pleasing the other four. Accusations fly about whose fault this actually is, and the silent dragonspeech is accompanied by loud rumbles and roars. The conclave of dragons

is quite evenly split between deciding to blame Dvilgaynon for formulating a "faulty" ritual or Icewing for rushing the other Great Dragons into this.

Then, swooping down from the clouds, a sixth Great Dragon arrives, Vestrivan. Speaking aloud, Vestrivan then proposes to the assembled dragon his plan for disrupting the Horror Cloud. Vasdenjas tries to talk his brother out of this foolish and seemingly suicidal action, but Vestrivan will have none of it. "This is not something I will debate. You are all welcome to help, or to not." The five Great Dragons decide to help. Only Usun is reluctant to go, and Vasdenjas snaps angrily at him. Usun snaps back, but finally agrees to go.

The six Great Dragons take wing, and soon the sky is full of flying dragons moving in a tight formation. In the distance, just above the Horizon, the Horror Cloud can be seen. It is almost to Vivane.

The dragons lend magical aid to Vestrivan as he flies directly into the Eye of the Storm. He disappears into the dark cloud and then there is a noise like a thousand thunderclaps. The storm briefly breaks and stumbles, and, for a moment, even scatters. Then it reforms and moves on towards doomed Vivane.

Climax

This adventure sequence climaxes and concludes with the destruction of Vivane by the Horror Cloud. If at all possible, Gamemasters should try to arrange for the player characters to be in the vicinity of Vivane for this momentous and terrible event.

With the Horror Cloud disrupting the Air Shield and the firing of the Theran magical weapon, this adventure comes to a sudden and explosive end.

Other Adventure Ideas

Thera's Finest

Dvilgaynon and the other Great Dragons are concerned that the powerful elven Nethermancer at Vivane, General Elkanshara, might be capable of disrupting the ritual. The player characters are sent in to neutralize the threat — to assassinate Elkanshara.

Elkanshara is mentioned in **The Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set: Book Two Theran Vivane** (p.6). She is a Tenth Circle Nethermancer and the Eighth Legion's resident expert on Horrors and astral phenomenon.

She makes her quarters in the Southern Barracks of the city and lives a reclusive life style. She is also a despicable





individual who even noble player characters will have no trouble in seeing dead. If it is necessary for Elkanshara to be deeply evil for the characters to justify assassinating her, it could also turn out that she has in the past conducted nethermantic experiments on slaves.

Regardless, Elkanshara is a difficult target. She is guarded by potent magical defenses, has a considerable spell and magic item repertoire, and even though reclusive, still able to call upon guards from the Eighth Legion as well as her students and aides.

Rescue the Phaeron!

A drakkar Named the *Phaeron* was intercepted and overtaken by a Theran vedette on patrol out of Vivane, while it was traveling to Dvilgaynon's secret camp. The patrol has captured an item vital to the ritual that the dragons are performing, one of the magical engines the dragons created to power captured vedettes. The player characters are employed as part of a strike force intended to ambush the vedette and recover the stolen magical engine.

The Therans have no idea that what they have captured is so important, but still they will fight to the death to defend it. This gives an opportunity for player characters to partake in an aerial battle. If the battle goes poorly, a Great Dragon such as Vasdenjas could show up and lend a hand at the last minute, saving the player characters from defeat and enslavement.

Loose Ends

With the destruction of Vivane and the Rugarian kila task force, the Barsaivans have scored a major victory in the war against Thera. The way is now cleared for the final assault on Sky Point. But the victory is also a pyrrhic one. A new threat perhaps far worse than the Therans has presented itself. The Horror Cloud squatting amidst the warped ruins of Vivane represents a sinister and unknown quantity within the landscape of Barsaive, and it has cast an ominous shadow over the whole matter of the War. Perhaps the Barsaivans will find themselves wondering if they are fighting the real enemy. Perhaps the true foes, the Horrors, are using the War as an opportunity to gain ground. Perhaps, the War against Thera is only the beginning of the darker days to come.

What's Left at Stormhead?

When the whirling cloud atop Stormhead departed from its roost, it revealed some strange and unearthly ruins floating above the geyser. These ruins hang in the sky like a

Theran airship, but resemble no known style of architecture. The buildings are warped and bent, as if the stone itself had grown like a living thing.

A number of adventurers and prospectors around the base of Stormhead when the cloud clears are the first to enter the ruins. Many of them do not return. Those that do report finding many strange creatures and artifacts unlike anything ever excavated throughout Barsaive.

One survivor reports finding a large gateway inscribed with an ancient language vaguely similar to Sperethiel. Supposed the inscription declared the ruins to be "The Magical College of El-Aethor". The truth of this report or the meaning of this inscription cannot be confirmed at this time.

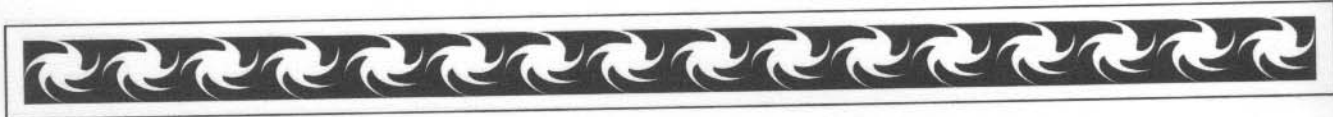
What Became of Vivane?

Surely the greatest question remaining after the events of this chapter is what is happening inside Vivane. The remains of the Horror Cloud hang above the city. The astral space around Vivane is Tainted and the home of a great many Horrors. No one who enters the ruins survives to given an accurate report.

What can be learned is that Vivane has been transformed from a city of the living into a city of the dead. Undead of all types roam the streets of the city, wailing in anguish. Packs of cadaver men begin attacking the curious and the opportunistic who wish to plunder the wealth of the fallen Theran capital.

The simple truth is that the fate of Vivane is not known at this point. Is the city irrevocably given over to the Horrors, or can Vivane be cleansed? What became of Vestrivan? What became of the four kilas that disappeared into the horror cloud during Admiral Hartmallen's fateful defense of the city? What became of the kila that was moored at the Overgovernor's palace when the city was trapped beneath the Air Shield? What is the reaction of the governments and factions of Barsaive to this new necropolis on their southern borders? Are there heroes willing to risk their lives to find out what truly happened to Vivane on that fateful day that the Horror Cloud came?

For now, this must remain a loose end. There is simply too much to know about the new Vivane and it is beyond the scope of this book. Suffice it to say that this pressing issue will be dealt with fully in time.



Chapter Nine:

THE ASSAULT ON SKY POINT

The captain sat in the map room. What had started out as a single box of scrolls had grown into a cartographer's dream. The ship and its crew had been through every trial and obstacle imaginable to make it back to Throal. Now they were home and the journey was over. Part of her was sad that they would now be trapped into relatively boring pursuits of day to day life. Relieved of their responsibilities. A gift for 'a job well done.'

She looked over the maps she'd pulled out. One of the Barsaivan landscape, circa 1418 TH. The other of the Barsaivan landscape of present day. She marveled at how things had changed over the years. The maps were almost identical, but to her, they were nothing like each other. One was the land of the past. Her grandmother's Barsaive. The other was something else. Something she would have to live in herself.

She had taken the Name Vaare because of her respect for her grandmother. Her mother had no intentions of being Captain, but Vaare Hardfist had taken to it with an enthusiasm unlike anything else. It had been a hard life growing up on an airship. The dangers that had been so commonplace had forged her into someone who needed adventure. It let her know that she was alive. Now she would probably be forced into some office, doomed to spend the rest of her days reliving past glories for those who didn't want to go where she had, but still wanted to know what it was like.

She was so engrossed that she didn't hear her first mate enter. "Captain?" the elf bent to try and make eye contact.

"Huh? Oh, yes, what is it?" The captain said without looking up.

The first mate, realizing that he wasn't going to get acknowledgment, stood up straight again. "You were right to have the ship wait in the mountains while we went in on foot. The King isn't here."

The captain was still looking at the maps. It was possible that she hadn't heard him, he thought. It was also a strong possibility that she was ignoring him. The captain had been rather moody for the past week and the first mate wasn't sure why. "Um, he's gone, ma'am. He's heading up an attack. We're at war."

This finally got the captain's attention. She looked up at the elf. "What? With who?"

"With Thera, ma'am. Apparently while we were gone, Thera has resumed its conflicts with Throal. They've landed a behemoth at Lake Ban. The King has gone to head an attack against the Therans and has pushed on to Sky Point."

The captain stood. She smiled as only a troll can. "I never knew Varulus had it in him to outright attack Thera."

The elf looked off to the right. He had wanted eye contact and now that the captain was looking at him, he was uncomfortable. "Uh, ma'am? Varulus isn't king anymore."

"What? I don't understand. He was supposedly young and vibrant when we left. Were the records wrong?"

"No ma'am. He was killed. His son, Neden, is king now. He's evidently more of a warrior than his father."

The captain sat down hard in her chair. She was counting on Varulus greeting her upon arrival. Her mother had passed down stories from her grandmother about the great Varulus III. It was the one constant that she had hoped for and now it was gone. "I see," she sighed.





There was a silence that hung in the air of the map room for some time before the first mate finally spoke. "Ma'am? What should we do?"

"What?" The captain was looking at the maps again, but now she was looking at them with the listlessness of someone who has no where else to look.

"What should we do, ma'am? Should we move to Throal now, or wait for the King to return?"

Finally, her troll nature kicked in. There was no time to feel sorry for herself. They were at war. There would be plenty of time for mourning and self abuse later. They had a job to do and a place to be.

Vaare stood up and rolled up the maps. "Right. Tell the crew to make ready. We're headed to Sky Point!"

"What?!" the first mate stepped forward. "Ma'am, I must protest. We are in no condition to head into battle. The ship has been through too much to be able to stand it. We need repairs, supplies and about a year of time off!"

If it had been anyone else, Vaare would have dealt very harshly with such impudence, but Nalus had been more than her first mate. In fact, he had been Vaare Longfang's first mate and had taken command when she was killed in battle. He had been her mentor and her friend, and when she expressed desires to take the mantle of leadership, he had agreed to stay on as her first mate and advisor. Vaare almost expected him to challenge her on this. That was why she was ready for it.

She turned to Nalus with grim determination on her face. "We are one of the King's ships and we will aid the King even if it kills us."

"It will kill us and we will be of no use to him!" He was used to her arguments by now and knew how to counter them. "Besides," he continued, "King Varulus was our king. Not this boy. There's no way to tell how he'll react to our showing up."

"Then there's only one way to find out, isn't there? Besides, we've been in worse situations before and I will not have my final log entry as captain of this boat to read 'stood by while our King battled our enemies.' Now get out there and tell everyone that we are to make best speed to Sky Point."

Nalus considered this for a moment while the captain turned and placed the maps back into their racks. When she turned to look at him, he was saluting her with pride in his eyes "Aye aye, Captain" he said.

When, Vaare returned the salute, smiled and said "Go on. I'll be up in a moment to let the crew know what's going on." As she watched Nalus leave, she muttered "Home sweet home."

Background

Unwilling to just send the Therans at the *Triumph* packing, Neden has begun the next phase of the war and pushed on to Sky Point. It is his intention to make his enemies think twice before ever setting foot on Barsaivan soil again. In his eyes, the best show of force that he can make is to attack the one base that has symbolized the Theran presence in Barsaive.

The retreating forces of the *Triumph* have warned Sky Point and the surrounding bases, however in their arrogance the Therans at Sky Point believe that the armies that took the *Triumph* would never be able to withstand the massive defenses of the platform. Even when the kilas leave for Vivane (see **The Fall of Vivane** p. 116) the forces at Sky Point still remain confident in their ability to repel an attack.

Event Synopsis

Unlike the events in **Prelude to War**, which were separate and distinct, those of **Barsaive at War** have led up to this battle. The main character involvement, however, will be before the battle. During the main action in this chapter, the characters should be mostly interested in staying alive, although there are always opportunities.

There are a number of ways that the characters can become involved in the events of this chapter, but once the hostilities have started, it is important for the characters to be in a position to take in the entire scope of the battle.

This battle is the climax of **Barsaive at War**, so pull out all the stops to make it the most dramatic and epic event possible. This should be part of the player characters' legends that will be spoken and sung about for years to come.

This section provides an overview of the battle plans and distribution of forces on either side as well as the events that occur before and during the battle. It covers how to include the player characters in the larger events of the battle and the major events that shape the outcome. There are hints and suggestions throughout this section on things the player characters can do during the battle.

Before the Battle

After the defeat of the Therans at *Triumph* (see **The Siege of Triumph**, p. 84), Barsaivan forces under the command of King Neden and General Ilmorian gather and make their way towards Sky Point. En route, they are joined by soldiers from the ork nation of Cara Fahd and additional airships from the crystal raider trollmoots of the Twilight Peaks. A massive Barsaivan army, backed by the largest



fleet of airships ever assembled in Barsaive, marches on Sky Point, where the Therans seek to make their last stand.

Therans who escaped the fall of *Triumph* at the end of **The Siege of Triumph** have already warned Overgovernor Kypros and the military commanders at Sky Point, so the Therans believe they are ready for the Barsaivan army, although they do not fully understand its scope until it arrives. Some important Therans have been evacuated by airship, traveling to the nearby Theran stronghold of Bukara, or to the isle of Thera itself. Any other Gamemaster characters that you want to be sure survive the battle can be among those evacuated from Sky Point and Vivane, allowing them to return sometime in the future.

The Barsaivans try to minimize collateral damage at this point by sending covert teams into Vrontok to help evacuate the innocent, as well as Throalic operatives who could be caught in the hostilities that are about to ensue. The secondary mission (or primary one depending on who is asked) of these operatives is to sabotage the defenses of Sky Point, thus weakening the pillars of the platform.

THE AIRSHIP ASSAULT

The airship assault against Sky Point is the main focus of the siege, and the Barsaivan fleet takes advantage of the vast number and variety of ships at their disposal (for numbers and types of vessels see **Battle Plans and Forces**, p. 38). Under the command of King Neden and General Ilmorian, each portion of the allied fleet takes a different role in the assault.

Captured Theran Airships

The captured Theran ships, including the kila *Defiant*, make the first approach towards Sky Point and establish a perimeter around the platform, with the aim of intercepting any Theran airships launching from Sky Point. When the Throalic fleet begins its assault on the towers and palace, the crystal raiders on board the captured Theran ships begin to attack the pillars and platform of Sky Point using the ships' fire cannon. This comes as a surprise to the rest of the Barsaivan forces, as they believe the goal of the battle is to capture Sky Point. The crystal raiders wish to destroy Sky Point and avenge themselves against Thera for the humiliation suffered by the crystal raiders at the end of the Orichalcum Wars (as described in **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**, p. 22). This assault is only the first step.

Crystal Raider Drakkars

Once a perimeter is established around Sky Point, dozens of crystal raider drakkars from all the trollmoots of the

Twilight Peaks and Thunderaxe's Cleavers from Cara Fahd (see **The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd**, p. 87), launch a raiding-style attack, swooping down towards the platform and dropping Sky Raiders to battle Theran troops on the platform, as well as attacking the platform directly with various antipersonnel ship weapons (see **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**, p. 122).

The Throalic Navy

The remainder of the Barsaivan fleet, consisting mostly of the Throalic navy's galleons and galleys, assumes a position just beyond the perimeter established by the captured Theran ships, and begins an attack on the towers and Sky Point Palace using their fire cannons. By this time, the magical defenses of Sky Point are weakened by the sabotage committed by the player characters or other agents of the Vivane Resistance (see **Sabotaging Sky Point**, p. 139). The Throalic ships also engage any Theran airships that manage to break through the perimeter around Sky Point.

Thera's Bane

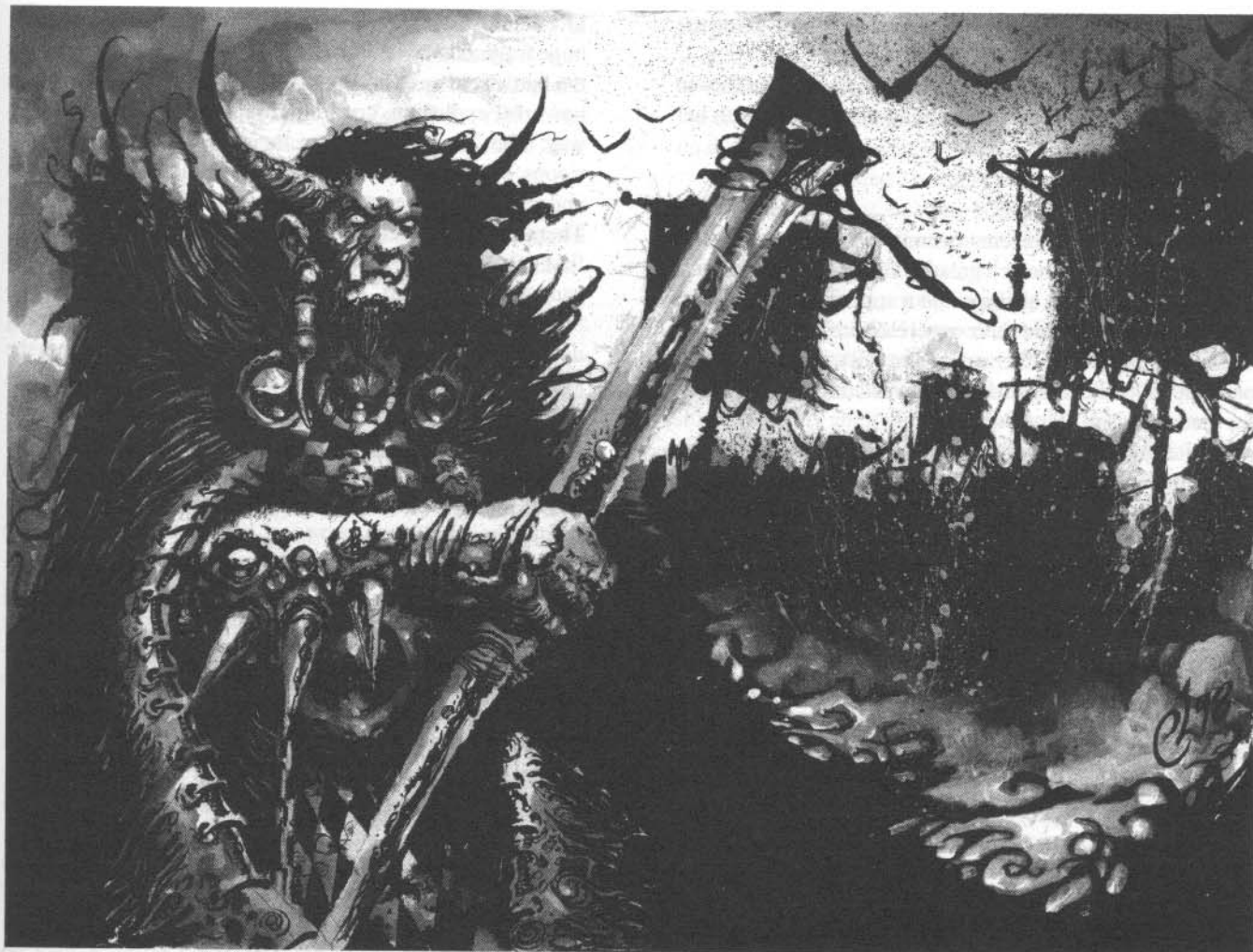
The crystal ship, the newest addition to the Swiftwind trollmoot's fleet, remains in position with the Throalic navy ships outside the perimeter, since its size and maneuverability are not suited for the raiding-like strikes of the crystal raider drakkars. It joins with the Throalic ships in attacking the towers and Sky Point Palace until Theran ships make it past the blockade, at which point it engages the Theran ships in battle. The crystal ship is devastating in battle, resistant to most of the Theran's firepower, and using its spine-mounted cannon to shatter and crack Theran vedettes in half.

This weapon shoots massive crystal missiles that shatter on impact, raining shards of living crystal on the area below. The ship can only fire this weapon four times, but the amount of living crystal scattered around the area of Sky Point is considerable, and might very well draw adventurers and merchants to the area, hoping to claim as much of this material as possible (see **The End of the Battle**, p. 133).

Dragons

The dragons allow the Barsaivan fleet to lead the assault and hang back, ready to aid their allies as needed. The dragons are here to help the Barsaivan forces, not fight the battle for them. When the Theran ground troops emerge to confront the Barsaivan ground troops, Greissval and Lotiara swoop down and use their Dragon Breath to cut a swath through the Therans. When the Therans from Grimeye's Crossing attack from the north, Aban moves to aid the Barsaivan forces there.





THE GROUND ASSAULT

The ground assault against Sky Point is largely a secondary measure, intended to augment the airship assault, and to act as a stopgap against any Theran ground troops moving North into Barsaive and preventing the few remaining Theran troops originally stationed in Vivane from coming to aid Sky Point. The main Barsaivan ground forces consist of Throalic troops and ork cavalry mounted on thundra beasts. The Theran ground forces are made up of elements of the Theran Eighth Legion, foot soldiers and Archers. A few Barsaivan units advance closer to Sky Point, using fire cannon and other siege weapons to attack the Theran soldiers on the ground beneath Sky Point, specifically the troops in Vrontok.

Battle in the Shadow of Sky Point

Eventually, the approach of the combined armies of Throal and Cara Fahd prompts the Therans to send out troops

to confront the advancing soldiers. This takes place after the airship battle has already begun, with the overwhelming numbers of the Barsaivan ships wearing down the crews of the Theran ships.

The two armies clash in the shadow of Sky Point, with the airship battle raging overhead. Describe to the players the clash of the two armies as Theran legionnaires clad in shining silver and gold armor meet grim-faced dwarf soldiers and ork cavalry shouting war cries. The din of clashing weapons, battle cries and the screams of the dying fill the air as the battle is joined.

The Attack from Grimeye's Crossing

When word of the gathering of Barsaivan armies reaches the Theran outpost at Grimeye's Crossing, the troops there join with other Therans forces to mount an attack against the Barsaivans, striking from the north, behind them. This attack draws the attention of a significant portion of the





ground forces, but is little more than a distraction, given the massive numbers of Barsaivan troops.

When the attack comes, the Great Dragon Aban flies to help the Barsaivan troops devastating the Therans with her fiery breath.

DESPERATE MEASURES

At first, the battle seems strongly weighted in favor of the Barsaivan forces, which greatly outnumber the Therans. They also have more airships and a superior position. The Therans are not without their own resources, however. The Theran Empire has another weapon to call upon in the battle, one that will have significant and devastating consequences for the region and all of Barsaive.

After his retreat from *Triumph* at the end of **The Siege of Triumph**, General Nikar Carinci traveled directly to the isle of Thera, so that he could alert his superiors and the First Governor of the attacks made by Barsaivan forces. Realizing that the allied forces of Barsaive are making good on their **Declaration of War** (p. 15), the Therans correctly assume that Neden is now concentrating his efforts against Sky Point and/or Vivane.

In order to understand better the tactical situation, the Heavenherds, a cabal of powerful Theran magicians, perform a ritual version of the Viewpoint spell (p. 179, **ED**), hoping to establish viewing "windows" with Vivane and Sky Point. The spell connecting to Vivane doesn't work, since the Theran magicians are unaware of the Air Dome and subsequent arrival of the Horror Cloud there (p. 118). The spell connecting to Sky Point, however, does work. The Heavenherds look out on the plains to the north of Sky Point and see the amassed forces of Barsaive, including a vast fleet of airships and no less than six dragons!

Believing that the Barsaivan forces may not stop at Sky Point, but might continue to press the assault against the Empire, the Heavenherds decide they must act now to put down this rebellion. The Heavenherds use powerful ritual magic to direct a focused "pulse" of magical energy towards Vivane and Sky Point that will strengthen the magic of the Therans there as well as their defenses and weapons, allowing them to overcome their enemies. The Theran magicians at Sky Point take the powerful flow of energy directed to them by the Heavenherds and use it to turn one of the large light-crystals mounted atop the northernmost tower of Sky Point into a powerful magical "cannon" capable of delivering a blazing blast of magical force that can destroy even an airship.

The Therans turn their new weapon on the Barsaivan forces, firing a magical blast each turn of airship combat, which devastates its target. The first target is the captured

kila *Defiant*, which is crippled by the energy blast, sending huge fragments of its stone walls and towers scattering over the battlefield and causing the kila to fall to the ground in a powerful explosion, crushing troops or anyone else in the way. The Therans then turn their weapon on the ground troops, cutting a flaming swath through the Barsaivan forces and rallying the remaining Theran troops. After that, the Therans target the Throalic galleons and other airships. The first of these ships to take the devastating damage of the cannon is the *Braza*. Due to its weakened state (see **The Siege of Triumph** p. 84), it is completely destroyed raining debris down on the field. The beam then passes across the sky striking the *Crystal Heart*, the *Mistrunner*, the *Golden Eagle*, the *Rockbrother*, the *Galesaber*, the *Razor*, the *Thunderstrike*, the *Stormwolf*, the *Hullbreaker*, the *Falcon*, the *Gallin's Sword* and the *Chada'gora*. All of these ships except for the *Chada'gora* are destroyed as the beam hits them. Their hulls are carved in half as their crews either escape to other ships, use the Wind Catcher Talent, or die from the fall when the ships drop out of the sky. The *Chada'gora*, while not destroyed, is severely damaged, due to its air spirit taking the brunt of the hit. It slides sideways and descends out of the battle, but remains intact. The characters can try and save members of the crews of these vessels, but they won't be able to save them all. Be sure to play up the courage in the face of death of the crews of these ships. Maybe a Sky Raider with the Wind Catcher Talent tries to carry a fellow crewmember down and fails. It should be the general consensus of the characters that this might not have been a good idea.

THE RETURN OF THE EARTHDAWN

With a portion of the Barsaivan fleet decimated by the Theran's magical cannon, things look grim. Suddenly, dropping into view out of the clouds and smoke, there appears a large airship. Its hull is a complex patchwork of different types of wood and different styles of carving and decoration. Mismatched parts put in place to repair a ship that has sailed the skies for a more than one hundred years. Although the ship itself is not entirely familiar, the symbol blazing brightly on its patchwork sails is known to every Name-giver in Barsaive as that of the legendary Throalic airship *Earthdawn*! The *Earthdawn* was lost only a few short years after Throal opened her gates to the outside world following the Scourge. Although many Name-givers claimed to have seen it, there was no proof that the *Earthdawn* still existed, until now.

The appearance of the *Earthdawn* sends a wave of shock through the troops, Barsaivan and Theran alike. As the airship drops into range, two objects rise to meet it. The





first is the *Varulus*, the flagship of the Throalic forces. The other is the Great Dragon Vasdenjas, who flanks the airship opposite the *Varulus*. The sight of the King's flagship and one of the dragons along with the *Earthdawn* rallies the Barsaivan troops and war cries blanket the battlefield. The tide turns once again.

Sensing this, the Theran magicians move the cannon into position and begin to raise it toward the *Earthdawn* itself! The beam climbs straight towards the already damaged airship.

THE DEATH OF A DRAGON

"NO!" cries a thunderous voice. Unwilling to allow the *Earthdawn* to be destroyed, the Great Dragon Vasdenjas lunges forward, throwing himself in front of the devastating beam. When the blast strikes the Great Dragon, it produces a massive explosion of energy, momentarily blinding everyone within a radius of several miles. As the flash clears, the burned and blackened body of the Great Dragon falls to the ground, crushing dozens of Theran troops under its massive weight. The death of their sire and master enrages Greissval and Lotiara, and the pair of dragons attack the Theran vessels involved in the airship battle and Sky Point itself in a towering fury, slaying hundreds of Theran soldiers on the platform, as well as several on the airships.

Moments after Vasdenjas' body hits the ground, a massive, shadowy form arises from the corpse and attacks any and all targets nearby, Theran and Throalic alike. The shadow being towers several dozen feet tall and strikes with claw-like hands that cause living creatures to wither and die at a touch, turning into little mummified skeletons scattered on the battlefield. The shadow form attacks twice, then disappears.

THE FALL OF SKY POINT

Chorak Bonecracker, the captain of *Thera's Bane*, calls out to his Crystal Raider crew, "The dragon has shown us the way! If we must die so that we can be free of the Therans, so be it!"

Chorak sets his ship on a collision course with the northernmost pillar of Sky Point. As the *Thera's Bane* moves toward Sky Point, the Theran magicians aim the beam of the magical cannon. It hits the airship full force in the bow. The energy of the beam is drawn into the ship killing everyone on board and scattering the beam like a prism. Magic rays shoot out in all directions. Less powerful than the original beam, these refractions are still enough to kill a normal Name-giver and seriously damage ships.

Thera's Bane, having no one at the helm begins to drift as it falls, but due to its momentum, it continues under the

platform and strikes the center pillar which cracks. The airship shatters, raining living crystal down onto the city of Vrontok. Everyone on the platform of Sky Point, including the characters will need to roll Dexterity (8) Tests to remain on their feet as the entire platform shakes from the impact.

Then the captured Theran vedettes commanded by Crystal raider follow suit, heading straight for the central northern pillar and the two flanking it. The massive stone pillars have been weakened by the loss of most of the True Earth reinforcing them as a result of magical sabotage (in **Sabotaging Sky Point**, p. 139). However, the captains of the vedettes decide to strengthen their punch. As the majority of their crews escape, the captains and Elementalists aboard the ships stand by their posts, and, as the ships contact the pillars, the Elementalists use their thread weaving Talents to cause the magical engines to overload. The resulting explosions send a wave of magical energy through the pillars, up into the light quartz. The magical cannon disintegrates as the platform is again rocked by a massive shock, requiring Dexterity (14) Tests for the characters to remain standing. The destruction of the magical cannon causes a wave of corrupt magical energy to sweep across the battlefield, causing all Adepts within two miles of Sky Point to suffer damage equal to two steps for every point of blood magic they have at the time of the explosion. The Theran magicians on the platform of Sky Point burst into flames and are completely consumed by the blast, leaving only charred bones behind.

The platform begins to fall, forcing everyone on it to either escape to the southernmost area, which stays upright, or find some other way to escape.

The platform topples, leaving the center and two southern pillars and a portion of the platform, including Sky Point Palace, still standing. The northern part of the platform collapses and plunges 800 feet to the ground, crushing the slave-city of Vrontok and all its remaining inhabitants (those who were not evacuated in **Warning Vrontok**, p. 137). Most of the crystal raiders that were on board the ships that collided with the pillars are killed, unable to escape before the falling platform crushes them. The center pillar remains intact but it is severely damaged and the rest of the platform could fall eventually.

The End of the Battle

As the platform of Sky Point crumbles, the fight goes out of the remaining Therans. The few remaining Theran airships regroup and head west for Bukara (where they meet with an unpleasant surprise when they discover that Bukara has had some significant problems of its own). The surviving Theran ground troops retreat or surrender.





A cheer goes up from the Barsaivan forces at the destruction of Sky Point. The last stronghold of the Theran Empire in Barsaive has fallen! The *Varulus* descends to the battlefield where King Neden disembarks to survey the aftermath. If the characters are not present for this, they will hear later how the king looked out over the battlefield to the dead and dying and began to weep.

The war is over, and Barsaive has won, but the price of victory is a high one indeed: Sky Point and Vivane lie in ruins. Thousands of Name-givers have died on both sides. Many Barsaivan airships have been lost, including the crystal ship. The Great Dragon Vadsenjas lies dead, and the shadow of death lurks over the plains surrounding Sky Point.

Important Characters

General Ilmorian and the chiefs of the crystal raider moots are described in **Preparations for War** (p. 56). In addition to those characters, the following major Gamemaster characters are involved, directly or indirectly, in the battle of Sky Point.

Overgovernor Kypros

Kypros has been Overgovernor of the Province of Barsaive ever since the ignominious defeat of Admiral Tularch and her forces during the last Theran War. A middle-aged human and an accomplished Troubadour Adept, Kypros has worked for years to regain control of Barsaive through subtler means than outright military action.

His methods proved too slow for the First Governor and the other powers that be in the Empire, who sent General Nikar and the behemoth *Triumph* to teach the Barsaivans a lesson. That decision touched off a series of events leading up to the current war and a massive Barsaivan army bearing down on Sky Point. Kypros knows that events are out of his control, and he is also aware that he will likely bear the blame for whatever happens, despite the fact that he has done everything possible to stem the tide of war and reestablish Theran control over Barsaive through other means.

Still, Kypros is no fool. He knows that Thera's time in Barsaive is done, for now. Rather than staying behind and most likely dying or being captured and killed by barbarians, Kypros decided to flee the province with his personal guard and a few handpicked allies, leaving his military commanders behind to fight and die. Kypros harbors a burning desire

for revenge against Barsaive and all those who cost him his position.

DEX: 6	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 6	WIL: 5	CHA: 7

Admiral Tularch

Admiral Tularch is a tall, beautiful elven woman with bronze skin and silvery hair. She is a Tenth Circle Air Sailor and has more than fifty years of experience as a soldier in service to the Empire, and a strong desire to see Theran triumph over Barsaive, whatever the cost.

Years ago, Tularch assisted Overgovernor Povelis in his administration of Barsaive. When Povelis was killed by Barsaivan rebels, Tularch became Overgovernor in his place and used her position to exact bloody vengeance for Povelis' death. Her reign of terror only succeeded in stirring up further rebellion against Theran authority, until the First Governor appointed Kypros as Overgovernor of Barsaive. Kypros was an old friend of Tularch's, and pulled strings on her behalf to allow her to remain as Admiral of the Theran naval forces in the province. In return, Tularch is extraordinarily devoted to Kypros, and dedicated to crushing Barsaivan resistance.

Although Tularch is aware that Theran forces are at a serious disadvantage, she would never surrender Sky Point to Barsaivan forces. She is willing to fight to the last to see Theran interests protected, and to ensure that Kypros and his allies escape to safety, where they can plan to retake Barsaive at some future date. Tularch very much wishes to expunge her record of previous mistakes and die a hero for the Empire.

DEX: 7	STR: 5	TOU: 5
PER: 6	WIL: 5	CHA: 6

General Crotias

General Crotias is more pragmatic than Admiral Tularch, and clearly understands the gravity of the situation faced by Theran forces in Barsaive. A Ninth Circle ork Warrior, who has led campaigns throughout the Empire, Crotias blames Kypros and others in the Theran government who sought to coddle the upstart forces in Barsaive, rather than crushing them. Crotias always believed the day would come when matters in Barsaive would be settled on the battlefield. Now that she is proven right, there is little comfort in it.





Crotias is renowned for her flaming red hair and silver battle armor. She is beloved by her soldiers and they would willingly follow her into the Death's Sea, if she ordered it. Crotias has done as much as possible to fortify Sky Point, moving Theran legionnaires there for a last stand against Barsaivan forces. She considers Admiral Tularch a fool, but she is bound to obey Tularch's orders. Crotias is not a fanatic like Tularch, and she knows there is no dishonor in retreat, no matter how much the idea galls her.

DEX: 6	STR: 7	TOU: 6
PER: 5	WIL: 5	CHA: 6



THE DRAGONS

Among Barsaive's greatest allies against the Theran Empire are the dragons. The Great Dragons are ancient enemies of the Therans, and have their own quarrels with the Empire. The Therans' kidnapping of the human girl Aardelea inspired the Great Dragons of Barsaive to begin working actively against the Therans. They formed the Dragon's Network and gathered information for Throal and her allies. The dragons also provided captured Theran ships and the means to run them (see **Preparations for War**, p. 42).

In the final assault on Sky Point, the dragons of Barsaive provide additional help in the form of several of their own number. Two Great Dragons, Aban and Vasdenjas, along with four adult dragons (Greissval, Lotiara, Firedancer and Smokeweaver) join the Barsaivan fleet in the assault on the Theran fortress. Aban is described in **Theft of the Everliving Flower** (p. 73). The other dragons are described below.

The dragons meet up with the Barsavian fleet after the battle of *Triumph*, while the fleet is en route to Sky Point. Vasdenjas and his two "children" fly down from the Scythan Mountains, while Firedancer and Smokeweaver fly across the Death's Sea, with the dragons meeting the fleet near the Twilight Peaks. The appearance of the six powerful dragons throws the fleet momentarily into disarray, until Vasdenjas explains why they have come. You can insert the arrival of the dragons between **The Fall of Vivane** and the events in this chapter.

Vasdenjas

Known as "the Master of Secrets" and "the Eater of Cities," the Great Dragon Vasdenjas is one of the best-known of his kind in Barsaive. Vasdenjas is the author of several scholarly works, including **Creatures of Barsaive** and a tome on dragonkind, which he donated to the Great Library of Throal (for more information see **Creatures of Barsaive and Dragons**). Vasdenjas has always been more of a thinker than a dragon of action, but recent events have inspired him to aid Barsavian forces against the Theran Empire, fighting alongside his fellow Great Dragon, Aban (described in **Theft of the Everliving Flower**, p. 73). Vasdenjas becomes a casualty of the war in **Death of a Dragon** (p. 133).

DEX: 19	STR: 33	TOU: 28
PER: 29	WIL: 26	CHA: 26

Greissval

Greissval is an adult dragon raised by Vasdenjas. He is an oddity, a dragon albino of sorts, with pale white scales and reddish eyes. He is known as the "Phantom Dragon" and the "Ghost of Scythia" to some Name-givers who have seen his pale form flying high above the Scythia Mountains. Greissval studies the history of the lost Kingdom of Scythia and has a strong interest in other Name-givers. He has the spellcasting abilities of an Eighth Circle Nethermancer.

DEX: 18	STR: 25	TOU: 27
PER: 19	WIL: 22	CHA: 20

Lotiara

Lotiara is another of Vasdenjas' wards, a female adult dragon who lives in a valley in the southern Scythian peaks. She follows her guardian's example by speaking often with Name-givers, although more to exchange information and to listen to the stories that travelers are able to tell her. Lotiara has a knack for understanding Patterns, so some Adepts seek her out for aid in unraveling the secrets of powerful or puzzling thread items. Like Greissval, she has joined her mentor in aiding the Barsaivans against Thera. Lotiara has the spellcasting abilities of an Eighth Circle Wizard.

DEX: 18	STR: 25	TOU: 27
PER: 19	WIL: 22	CHA: 20

Firedancer and Smokeweaver

Firedancer and Smokeweaver are dragon siblings raised by Mountainshadow in the Dragon Mountains. At the behest of their mentor, they have joined with the Barsaivan forces moving on Sky Point to offer their assistance. Firedancer has dark scales with reddish highlights that make it appear as if flames were dancing across his hide. Smokeweaver has dark gray scales darker towards her spine and lighter towards her belly, which is almost white. Both are fairly young adult dragons, filled with curiosity about other Name-givers and eager to become involved in the events of the war.

DEX: 17	STR: 23	TOU: 26
PER: 19	WIL: 21	CHA: 19

THE EARTHDAWN CAPTAIN AND FIRST MATE

The return of the *Earthdawn* is a powerful event in the land of Barsaive and the characters will undoubtedly meet its captain, first mate, or others of its crew. The crew who are long lived enough to have been with the ship when it departed will show slight culture shock at the changes that have occurred in their absence. The crew who are descendants will be overjoyed to see the land that their parents and grandparents have talked so much about.

The captain and her first mate are no exception to this. However their reactions to the people and places will play off each other. This will spark sedate arguments between the two of them over courses of action, often in front of others.

Vaare Hardfist

Granddaughter of the original captain, Vaare Longfang, the captain of the *Earthdawn* is a headstrong troll named Vaare Hardfist. Her one true love is to captain an airship into unknown adventures. This prompts her to bring the *Earthdawn* and its crew into the hostilities surrounding Sky Point. However, she is also mindful of the abilities of her crew and her vessel. Thus, upon reaching Sky Point, she orders her crew to stand down. She understands that just by being in the skies over the battle, the *Earthdawn* will help the Throalic forces by boosting morale.

Vaare chose to take her name during her Right of Passage (p. 35 **Crystal Raiders of Barsaive**) because of her undying respect for her grandmother. Vaare is a Eighth Circle Sky Raider

DEX: 6	STR: 8	TOU: 7
PER: 5	WIL: 7	CHA: 6

Nalus Freefall

Nalus is the first mate of the airship *Earthdawn*. Actually, Nalus is one of a handful of the original crew of the *Earthdawn* and was the first mate under Vaare Longfang. Nalus is a reserved elf and has become thoughtful in his old age. He views everything like a game of strategy and wits, choosing his moves carefully.

He is opposed to taking chances that he sees as having little hope of succeeding. Therefore, he is against taking the *Earthdawn* into combat. However, he respects the chain of





command, having become captain when Vaare Longfang was killed. He will try and talk his captain out of risky decisions, but if she shows that she's made up her mind, he will do as she says with a fierce loyalty rivaling a king's champion. Nalus is an Eighth Circle Archer and a 6th circle Air Sailor

DEX: 8	STR: 7	TOU: 7
PER: 6	WIL: 7	CHA: 5

Running Assault on Sky Point

The battle of Sky Point is the apex of the war between Barsaive and Thera. It is likely to assume that the characters will be involved in one way or another. This section offers ways to introduce the event, suggested adventure frameworks, and guidelines for tying up loose ends.

Introducing the Event

It has always been Neden's plan to attack Sky Point. If the characters have been brought near to Neden through the events in **Prelude to War** they will undoubtedly hear his plans either from him directly or through his generals. They should be made to understand that this is going to be the battle that will be sung about for decades to come.

If the characters have just started out, they may answer the call that goes up throughout the land of Barsaive for Adepts willing to fight for their country. They may have heard of the **Declaration of Separation and War** as well as the responses from the leaders of Barsaive. They may have even been the messengers of the Declaration or the responses.

For the most part, the previous chapters of **Barsaive at War** are the introduction to this battle.

Prequels

Several adventures can lead into the **Assault on Sky Point**. One of which is to have participated in the adventure **A Message To Vivane** (see **Sky Point Adventures** p. 32) and thus retrieved the information on the defenses of Sky Point.

If the characters have been instrumental in **The Ork Nation Of Cara Fahd**, they may have also come to the battle with the ork cavalry. It is important, however, that the characters not be in the ground battle because they will not be able to see the entire scope of the events that unfold.

Adventure Framework

Warning Vrontok

One important consideration in the attack on Sky Point is the people of Vrontok, the slave city that lies under Sky Point. More than ten thousand Name-givers (see **Sky Point and Vrontok: Vivane Province**, p. 17) live in Sky Point's shadow. While many of the inhabitants of Vrontok are slavers working for the Therans, many more are Name-givers simply trying to survive as best they can or, worse yet, Barsaivans and other Name-givers that have been taken as slaves by the Therans.

In an all-out assault on Sky Point, anyone who remains in Vrontok is almost certain to be killed. The Therans have no interest in the people of Vrontok, and have not even bothered to warn them about the approaching Barsavian army. Admiral Tularch figures that the rabble might provide some additional bodies to slow the Barsavian soldiers, and if slaves and criminal die in the defense of the Empire, what of it?

Setup

The player characters should realize that the people of Vrontok need to be warned and given the chance to evacuate. Someone should also see to freeing the slaves in the city, since they may be able to help the Barsavian forces. If the characters bring these issues to the attention of King Neden, General Ilmorian, or another leader of the Barsavian forces, they empower the characters to do what is needed to warn Vrontok. No one else can be spared to do the job.

It is quite possible that the player characters will spare no thought for the people of Vrontok. If that is the case, you may wish to have a Gamemaster character bring up the matter, giving the characters a chance to volunteer to help. If they don't, then someone like Neden or even one of the Great Dragons can request that the characters warn Vrontok. Player characters who quest for Lochost should definitely be interested in freeing the slaves from Vrontok. If they don't think of it, the Passion of Freedom can always send them a dream or other omen to nudge them in the right direction.

Event 1

The first challenge the characters must overcome is getting into Vrontok, which lies behind a sixteen-foot stone wall build by the Therans to protect the support pillars of Sky Point. Fortified towers, twenty-two feet tall, rise from the wall at regular intervals, patrolled by soldiers under the

command of the Mayor of Vrontok, Lorgo T'rask. Ringing the walls are deep trenches, lined with sharpened stakes. Three gates outfitted with drawbridges provided entry into the city.

Fortunately for the characters, Vrontok is where many Name-givers loyal to Thera have chosen to flee, seeking shelter in the shadow of Sky Point. The city gates are thronged with refugees and opportunists seeking entry, so it should not be too difficult for the characters to disguise themselves and pass into the city unnoticed. The gate guards can be bribed at a cost of ten silver per character to look the other way and allow them entrance. Once the characters are through the gate, they can see about contacting some potential allies.

Event 2

Shortly after they enter Vrontok and begin scouting out the situation, the characters are spotted by Kron, an ork Thief and member of the Vivane chapter of the Barsaivan Resistance. If the characters took part in the adventure **Message to Vivane** in Sky Point Adventures, they may already know Kron. Otherwise, Kron recognizes them because of their Legendary Status (p. 226, **ED**) or information he has heard about the war from his own contacts, especially if they took part in **The Heart of the Enemy**.

In any event, Kron discretely contacts the player characters, offering them his assistance. He and a few other members of the Resistance left Vivane not long after the beginning of the war and came to Vrontok, in hopes of sabotaging Sky Point in some way. The Therans have proven too vigilant for them to do so, but the news of an impending Barsavian attack may provide just the sort of distraction the Resistance is looking for. Kron tells the characters their best bet for spreading news of the attack is in the Slave Market district, where most of the Barsaivans in Vrontok can be found.

Event 3

Mere moments after speaking with the characters, Kron is spotted by a group of Theran legionnaires. The ork runs to evade capture, leaving the player characters on their own. If they try to help Kron they are almost certain to be captured themselves. If they lay low they can avoid the attention of the Therans and work towards spreading word of the coming attack. The atmosphere should be one of considerable tension as the characters work behind enemy lines to pass on information to Barsaivans in the Slave Market without slipping and revealing their presence to the Therans.

In the Slave Market, the first group of slaves the characters encounter includes a young human boy, no more than



eight years old, who looks up at the characters with wide, dark eyes as they talk about the coming attack. He doesn't speak to them, he only looks at them with trusting eyes, and none of the other slaves seem to know his name.

Event 4

After the characters have begun to tell people about the impending Barsavian assault, the information spreads through Vrontok like wildfire. Name-givers begin leaving the city in droves, and the Theran legionnaires are hard-pressed to keep control of the situation as Lorgo T'rask and his followers secretly begin to withdraw themselves.

Eventually, the player characters can either attempt to stage a slave revolt and lead the slaves in Vrontok to freedom, or they are spotted by Theran soldiers and attacked, inspiring the slaves to revolt on their own and come to the characters' defense. When the slaves revolt, a figure steps forward from the Theran ranks, a tall elf with gaunt, pale features, dressed in plain gray robes and wielding a black whip. It is, in actuality, a Harbinger of the Mad Passion Dis, who cracks her whip, and commands the slaves to obey their masters.



Harbinger

DEX: 15 STR: 20 TOU: 22
PER: 12 WIL: 15 CHA: 12

A full description of Harbingers of the Passions can be found in **Creatures of Barsaive** (p. 38).

Climax

In the face of the overwhelming power of the Passion of Slavery, the will of the slaves begins to break. The player characters have to inspire them to rise up and resist the Therans, or all is lost. Characters can use Talents like Emotion Song, Battle Shout, First Impression, and even Taunt to inspire the slaves. They can also provide inspiration by attacking the Theran soldiers, or even the Harbinger of Dis herself, even though they know doing so alone is virtual suicide. Questors of Lochost can use the Inspire Rebellion ability here (**ED Companion**, p. 100).

When the player characters do something suitably inspiring, the young boy they saw earlier steps out of the ranks of the slaves, looking up at the Harbinger of Dis with no fear in his eyes. He raises his chained fists above his head and cries out, "These heroes have shown us the way! Let the power of Dis bind you no more!" The boy, who is actually a Harbinger of the Passion Lochost, jerks his arms apart, shattering his chains, and suddenly the chains of the other slaves fall away, allowing them to attack the Therans.

The characters can lead the former slaves to freedom outside the city walls after forcing the Theran soldiers to flee back into the fortified Theran quarter of Vrontok. The rebellion catches on quickly and soon all of Vrontok is consumed in a massive riot as people try to flee the city. Followers of Lochost gain 100 Devotion Points for helping lead the slave rebellion (**ED Companion**, p. 89).

Sabotaging Sky Point

This adventure can take place immediately after the events in Warning Vrontok, or it can happen with characters who did not take part in the earlier adventure. Barsavian forces hope to sabotage some of the defenses at Sky Point to make their assault on the fortress more likely to succeed. To that end, the Barsavian Resistance has acquired spells especially prepared to weaken some of the fortress' defenses. It is up to the player characters to put them in place.

Setup

The Barsavian Resistance in Vrontok has a set of talismans created using blood magic and anchored spells (see **Magic: Manual of Mystic Secrets**, p. 32). When attached to the pillars of Sky Point's platform, the talismans will leech away the True Elements helping reinforce the pillars, bleeding them away into astral space. This will make the fortress more vulnerable to attack. The only problem is that the talismans must be placed and activated simultaneously. Kron doesn't have enough people to pull it off. He needs help from the characters.

If the characters were involved in Warning Vrontok, then Kron contacts them shortly after the climax of that adventure. He was able to evade the Theran authorities and the presence of the player characters has given him and his friends in the Resistance time to make their move.

If the characters did not take part in the previous adventure, they are sent into Vrontok shortly after the Resistance sparks the slave revolt in order to assist Kron and his people with their plan.

Event 1

The pillars themselves are well guarded by Theran soldiers. The characters will have to find a way to sneak past them in order to reach the pillar itself and put the talismans in place. The player characters can work as a group or (if desired) split up into smaller groups, each taking one of the talismans. Kron's people take the remaining talismans to place them on the other pillars. At least two of the pillars (the two southernmost) should be handled by Kron's people, who end up being captured or killed by the Therans.

Allow the players to come up with their own plan to sneak past the Theran guards, using whatever methods of stealth and distraction they might have. Keep in mind that the Therans are quite busy trying to keep control over the situation in Vrontok, so the security on the pillars may have holes for the characters to exploit.

Event 2

The moment of activation has to be precisely timed, so Kron gives each team a small, enchanted crystal as a time-keeper. The crystal slowly fades from deep red to white. When it turns completely white, all the talismans must be activated. Once the talisman is in place, activating it requires a small drop of blood (1 point of Permanent Damage) from a character and a successful Thread Weaving (12) test. The two actions do not need to be performed by the same character. If they are successful, the small crystalline talisman melds with the stone of the pillar, becoming nearly invisible to the naked eye.



The talismans do their work and begin draining the True Elements from the pillars of Sky Point. The elemental elevators within those pillars cease to function, and most of the True Earth reinforcing the pillars is drained away before Theran Elementalists discover and disable the talismans. Any character observing astral space around the pillars can see a fountain of True Earth and Air pouring out of the spot where the talisman was placed, like air escaping from a balloon. The three northernmost pillars as well as the center pillar are weakened for the climatic **Fall of Sky Point** (p. 133).

Climax

The characters must escape from Vrontok themselves and rendezvous with the Barsavian army before the battle begins. If desired, you can add a chase involving some Theran soldiers or other encounters en route to meeting the Barsavian army.

A Weapon Too Powerful

The return of the *Earthdawn* and subsequent death of Vasdenjas has turned the tide in favor of Barsaive again, but the Theran magical cannon is still a serious threat. One of the crystal raider captains has a plan to take out the cannon but he needs a group of Adepts to carry it out. He brings his plan to the attention of the characters just as Vasdenjas is killed. The time to act is now.

Setup

After the events of Sabotaging Sky Point, the characters should be able to regroup with the Barsaivan forces preparing to attack Sky Point. They are given a position of honor on a Throalic drakkar, the *Zephyr*, that is spearheading the attack by the naval forces of the crystal raiders.

Event 1

The *Zephyr* closes with the Theran vedette, the *Sentinel*, and the characters lead the boarding action. The player characters should be far more powerful than the crew of a vedette, though they are greatly outnumbered. The Theran crewmen will fight bravely, and the early events of the Assault on Sky Point should be the background upon which the characters' own struggle is fought. Just as the characters are victorious over the forces on the Vedette, the *Earthdawn* should descend through the clouds.

Event 2

When Vasdenjas is hit by the magical cannon, it becomes evident that the weapon must be destroyed if the Barsaivans are to obtain a decisive victory. The captain of the *Zephyr* comes to the characters with a daring plan. With

Greissval and Lotiara diverting the attention of the Therans, the captain proposes to drop the characters off on the platform where they can take out the cannon directly because no airship can get close enough to fire on it. This is the chance for the characters to save the day.

The airship is able to get over the platform without too much trouble (a few fire cannon blasts will be drawn but not enough to severely damage the ship). The ship is able to pass over the platform to drop the characters off, but it won't be able to land because of the chance it might be boarded. The characters will have to rappel on ropes onto the platform and will have to fight off a small number of Theran infantry who have followed the ship as it has glided in (stats for Theran infantry can be found in the **Appendix** p. 146).

Event 3

If the characters have an archenemy in the Theran ranks, they will run into him on their way to the cannon. If not, this is the perfect time to create one. Possibly someone who the characters have unwittingly (or maybe intentionally) wronged. Five Theran infantrymen will accompany the individual. The leader sends the infantry in to attack the characters, but if any of the characters attack directly, he will retaliate. When it looks like the characters have almost won, over the shoulder of their foe the characters see *Thera's Bane* descending toward the platform and being struck by the beam of the cannon. The resulting light display should stop the combat for a second as the characters witness the result of their being delayed. When the prism effect takes place (see **The Fall of Sky Point**) one of the beams that comes from the *Thera's Bane* strikes the platform just feet from the party's foe who taunts the characters' failure and jumps through the hole. If the characters look through the hole, they will not be able to see their foe. He has escaped to plague them in the future.

Event 4

The characters are now free to attack the cannon, but before they can rush up, the *Thera's Bane* strikes the center pillar of the platform (see **The Fall of Sky Point**). The platform shakes, causing many people to lose their footing (have the characters make Dexterity (8) tests). The Therans on the platform now turn their attention to escape and any opponents who are left and not manning fire cannons (including the seven Theran Wizards manning the magical cannon) ignore the characters and scramble to the southernmost part of the platform. This leaves the characters and the Wizards. This will be a difficult battle and the characters should not be able to destroy the cannon before the climax. As they battle the Wizards, they will be able to see the captured





Theran vedettes descending as the Thera's Bane did and their crews abandoning ship as they go. Before the battle can end (either in favor of the characters or the Therans) a massive shock rocks the platform and the magical cannon explodes for reasons unknown to the characters at the time (they will find out later that it was the energy from the engines of the vedettes being released that caused the explosion). The Theran Wizards burst into flames leaving the characters alone on their area of the platform.

Theran Wizards

DEX: 7	STR: 5	TOU: 7
PER: 6	WIL: 7	CHA: 5
Initiative: 6	Physical Defense: 9	
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 9	
Attack: 5	Social Defense: 8	
Damage:	Physical Armor: 5	
Broadsword: 10	Mystic Armor: 6	
Knockdown: 5		
Number of Spells: 4	Recovery Tests: 3	
Spellcasting: 7		
Effect: See Powers		
Death Rating: 60	Combat Movement: 38	
Wound Threshold: 11	Full Movement: 75	
Unconsciousness Rating: 46		
Karma Points: 35	Karma Step: 5	

Powers: Crushing Will, Flame Flash, Astral Shield, Dodge Boost, Counterspell, Mage Armor, Solo Flight, Karma Cancel, Razor Orb, Blood Boil, Lightning Cloud, Spell Cage
Legend Points: 107,000
Equipment: Broadsword (Damage Step 5), Blood Pebble armor, Desperate Spell charm
Loot: D10 gold pieces, D12 silver pieces

Climax

With the Wizards dead and the magical cannon destroyed, the characters have one last thing to accomplish. They must run for their lives!

The platform begins to shift and the characters should be aware that if they don't find a way off the platform, they will fall to their death and/or be crushed by several hundred tons of falling debris. Their only option is to run for the southernmost area of the platform to the elemental elevators. They make their way towards Overgovernor Kypros' Palace but it looks like they will not be able to make it.

As they continue to run for the safety of the Southern section, the airship that dropped them onto the platform lowers into view dropping ropes for the characters. They grab the ropes as the platform breaks up and falls to the ground beneath them crushing the city of Vrontok leaving the characters to think of all the people who were just killed while they live.

Loose Ends

This section wraps up the adventure's loose ends, suggesting ways to use characters and story elements from **Assault on Sky Point** in future **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns.

Dance for the Fallen

After the battle, Lotiara flies off towards the northwest, to find Mountainshadow and inform him of Vasdenjas' death. Within hours of the Great Dragon's death, dozens of dragons from all across Barsaive, including all the Great Dragons described in the *Dragons* sourcebook descend on the area to perform the Dance for the Fallen.

The dragons soar and wheel in the air above Vasdenjas' fallen body, performing a complex and beautiful dance accompanied by deep-throated cries and bursts of dragonfire. Towards the end of the Dance, the flying dragons direct their fire towards Vasdenjas' blackened corpse, burning it to ash, which is then scattered to the winds by their wings. All during the Dance, the Barsaivan forces stand in awe of the display, fearing a possible attack from the gathered dragons. Instead, their Dance complete, the dragons depart to their various lairs and domains throughout Barsaive.

In the weeks following Vasdenjas' death, the Great Dragons of Barsaive engage in the Rite of Succession, contesting ownership of Vasdenjas' lair and possessions. They also need to appoint a new Loremaster, a role held by Vasdenjas. The contests of the Rite of Succession are often subtle and complex games, in which the dragons may use agents like the player characters as pawns.

An adventure or an entire series of adventures could be based off the player characters acting as agents for a particular Great Dragon, like Icewing or Mountainshadow, and working to further their patron's cause in the Rite. Information in the **Dragons** sourcebook can prove most helpful in running adventures based around the complex political maneuverings of the Great Dragons.



The Shadow of Death

For a period of three days after **Assault on Sky Point**, no dead character can be brought back to life via means such as Last Chance Salves or Death Cheat charms. The Journey to Life spell (p. 86, **Earthdawn Companion**) still works, but no lesser means of resurrection can restore life to the dead during this time. Those who fell in the battle are lost forever. Throalic scholars and magicians cannot explain the mysterious phenomenon, but suspect it has something to do with the wave of corrupt magic spread over the region by the explosion of the magic engines or the plague that befell Vivane (see page 115).

Player characters who lost a comrade during the battle may seek extraordinary measure to bring him or her back to the land of the living. You can run a special adventure where the characters seek a unique magical item or Gamemaster character for aid, or perhaps journey into the land of Death himself looking for their lost friend.

The Ruins of Sky Point

Most of Sky Point is destroyed when the platform collapses. However, the two southernmost pillars still stand, along with a portion of the platform that includes Sky Point palace. The majority of Vrontok is crushed under the fallen platform, but there are rumors of deep underground tunnels and warrens untouched by the disaster.

The ruins of Sky Point quickly become a focus for thieves and opportunists seeking to loot any treasures left behind by the Therans that might be found in Sky Point Palace, the fallen ruins or the remains of Vrontok. Stories claim that Overgovernor Kypros left behind much wealth and many magical items and that Lorgo T'rask, the Mayor of Vrontok, has a vast personal treasure horde that was never found, and lies buried with him in the ruins. In addition to rumors of fabled wealth, there is also the lure of the True Elements and other materials that made up Sky Point; True Elements stored in the mining stores that rested atop the platform; the remains of Theran airships; and living crystal scattered by the destruction of *Thera's Bane*.

The ruins are a source of adventures and treasures for any characters who wish to explore them. They also serve as a useful jumping-off point for exploring the death-haunted ruins of Vivane. The characters might help to claim the ruins for one faction of Barsaive or another (like Throal, Cara Fahd, or the trollmoots of the Twilight Peaks) or they might work for merchants or spellcasters looking for valuable True Elements and treasure in the ruins.

The Earthdawn

The return of the legendary airship *Earthdawn* from its long journey across the world can serve as another source of adventures for the player characters. Although the *Earthdawn* was believed lost by most Barsaivans, in truth the airship traveled far beyond the borders of Barsaive and even the Theran Empire, into lands on distant continents. The current crew is made up of descendants of the original *Earthdawn* crew, who intermarried with many of the native peoples they discovered on their long journey. They have returned to the ancient homeland of their ancestors bringing strange ideas and stories from far away lands.

You can use the crew of the *Earthdawn* as Gamemaster characters in your own game, allowing you to introduce the idea of lands far beyond Barsaive and the Theran Empire to the player characters and the rest of Barsaive. Perhaps the *Earthdawn* plans to travel onward from Barsaive and continue its journey across the world, or perhaps the appearance of the legendary ship and the tales it brings inspires Throal or another faction in Barsaive to outfit an airship for a journey around the world. Such a voyage could form the basis for a long-term campaign, with the player characters visiting distant lands, meeting strange new people and having adventures in the world outside Barsaive.

The King

When Neden begins to weep on the battlefield, General Ilmorian steps forward and ushers the king back to his airship. The *Varulus* takes off and heads back to Throal followed by the Throalic forces. When he arrives, King Neden retreats to his chambers. He does not emerge for days afterwards. While the dwarves celebrate their victory over the Therans, they can't help wonder what is wrong with their king.

Rumors abound on why the king is not celebrating with the rest of Throal. Some of which are that the king has taken ill from a Theran booby trap, or that the king regrets what he has brought Throal to. There are a number of families who have lost loved ones who condemn the war (and in some way, the king as well). The characters will probably be caught in the middle of these rumors when they return to Throal or Bartertown.





Chapter Ten: AFTERMATH

WHAT DOES BARSAlVE LOOK LIKE AFTER ALL THIS?

So, after all these events have played out, how has Barsaive changed? What follows is listing of some of the changes wrought by the events described above. Note that these are not all the possible outcomes, just the most obvious and expected.

THE THERAN EMPIRE

The Thera Empire has effectively been driven from Barsaive and the Vivane Province. In addition, the next closest Thera stronghold at Bukara was wracked by a slave uprising when much of its naval forces were engaged at Sky Point and Vivane. Given the tremendous loss of resources, and the struggles they're having elsewhere in their Empire, the Therans choose to abandon Barsaive, militarily speaking, for now while they shore up their strength elsewhere. They will continue to send spies to monitor activities in Barsaive, planning to strike back when the time is right.

THE KINGDOM OF THROAL

Throal has lost much of its military. Although Neden can truly be said to be the General who led the Barsaivans to drive out Thera, he is not a great statesman. Many powerful forces are vying for control of Throal, some possibly even willing to plunge the weakened nation into a civil war. This could eventually lead to a splintering of the dwarves as some of the noble houses leave Throal with hopes to rebuild the ancient Kingdom of Scythia. Of course, since that ancient kingdom is Horror-infested (or at least thought to be Horror-infested), the rebuilding of Scythia will not be an easy task.

CARA FAHD

The military strength of Cara Fahd is significantly weakened, as thousands of orks were killed in the siege of Sky Point, most of them at the hands of the Thera's magical cannon. Those most seriously hurt are the Broken Fang and Metal Fist tribes, who had been the two strongest tribes up to that time. This forces these two tribes to further unite, a trend that spreads throughout the ork nation, as the tribes' leaders realize that the only chance for survival is unity.

THE CRYSTAL RAIDERS

Between the sieges of *Triumph* and Sky Point, the crystal raiders have lost a significant number of ships and raiders. Despite their losses, however, the crystal raiders view the battles as successful, as they have finally had their vengeance against the Thera Empire for the Battle of Sky Point. The war also helps smooth some the conflicts between the trollmoots. Though no formal alliances result, the building tension between the various moots lowers to a mild simmer.

THE T'SKRANG AROPAGOI

The t'skrang aropagoi of the Serpent River are virtually unchanged, and their stability results in them supplanting Throal's role as a unifying force in Barsaive.

Also, the Free Trade Compact is renegotiated, granting House K'tenshin access to more the river, specifically the western shore of the southern stretch of the Coil River.

IOPOS

Iopos and the Denairastas remain virtually untouched by these events, with the notable exception of their claiming of Jerris. If anything, their position is stronger than ever. Though not responsible for any of these events, things have progressed just as they had hoped and planned; the Thera Empire has been driven out of Barsaive and the Kingdom of Throal is at its weakest since the end of the Scourge.

THE DRAGONS

Having achieved their goal of driving the Impertinent Ones from Barsaive, the dragons return to their more isolated behavior, and begin plans for dealing with the children of the Outcast and their plans for conquering Barsaive. As the Dragons begin the Rite of Succession for Vasdenjas, their cooperation becomes strained, at best.

TRIUMPH

The behemoth, while free of Thera occupation, cannot be removed from the Ayodhya Liferock. However, with the removal of the Therans, the elemental energy of the liferock is no longer being drained, and it may eventually recover, albeit beneath the fortress.

The *Triumph* is the location of the signing of the T'skrang Free Trade Compact. In an agreement between the



t'skrang and the obsidimen of the Ayodhya Liferock, Omasu is named Overseer of the Triumph Free Port. Additionally, Omasu makes the fortress the base of operations for the Overland Trading Company. The Liferock Rebellion, its primary mission accomplished, largely dissolves. However, at the request of Icewing and Mountainshadow, Omasu maintains a small network of spies and operatives to monitor and observe the actions of the Denairastas.

SKY POINT AND VIVANE

Sky Point has been toppled, and is now a massive ruin of stonework and rubble. It is also a source of vast amounts of True elements and living crystal, and becomes a haven for adventurers, magicians and merchants.

Vivane has been reduced to a smoking, corrupt ruins, occupied by all manner of undead creatures, brought to a state of undeath by the Horror Cloud explosion. Like Sky Point, the ruins of Vivane become a popular adventuring site, as countless treasure, both magical and monetary, lie in the corrupt ruins.

THE HORROR CLOUDS

As a result of the Horror Cloud explosion over Vivane, a small number of smaller Horror Clouds now move across Barsaive, killing those unlucky enough to be caught in their path. Over time, some of these clouds may very well grow in size and power, to the point where they could be a serious threat to one or more of the larger cities of Barsaive, such as Travar or Urupa, or even to the Kingdom of Throal.





APPENDIX I: ADEPT STATISTICS

THROAL MILITARY

The following profiles provide statistics for the most common foot soldiers in the Barsaivan army.

Average Soldier

Attributes

Dexterity: 7 Strength: 7 Toughness: 7
Perception: 4 Willpower: 6 Charisma: 4

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 5
Attack: 15 Social Defense: 5
Damage: Armor: 8
Forged Broadsword: 17 Mystic Armor: 0
Sling: 9 Knockdown: 7
Number of Spells: NA Recovery Tests: 3
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Death Rating: 42 Combat Movement: 38
Wound Threshold: 12 Full Movement: 75
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Legend Points: 1,500

Equipment

Broadsword (Forge 5, Damage Step 10), hardened leather armor, footman's shield, sling

Loot

D12 silver pieces, 3D12 copper pieces

Average Ork Mercenary

Attributes

Dexterity: 6 Strength: 7 Toughness: 8
Perception: 5 Willpower: 4 Charisma: 4

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 15 Social Defense: 5
Damage: Armor: 8
Longbow: 11 Mystic Armor: 2
Lance: 12 Knockdown: 7
Battle-axe: 13 Recovery Tests: 3
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Death Rating: 46 Combat Movement: 40
Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 80
Unconsciousness Rating: 39

Legend Points: 275

Equipment

Battle-axe (cannot be used with shield) hide armor, lance, longbow w/ 30 arrows, rider's shield, thundra beast (p. 310, ED)

Loot

5D10 in coins, jewelry and semiprecious stones

THERAN MILITARY

The following profiles provide statistics for Theran soldiers of various classes.

Griffin Rider (K'stulaami)

DEX: 7 **STR:** 7 **TOU:** 6
PER: 5 **WIL:** 7 **CHA:** 7

Talents

Animal Bond (5): 12/2D10
Avoid Blow (4): 11/D10 + D8
Blood Share (4): 10/D10 + D6
Charge (5): 12/2D10
Durability (5)
Empathic Command (5): 12/2D10
Karma Ritual (4)
Melee Weapons (5): 12/2D10
Rider Weaving (5): 10/D10 + D6
Sure Mount (3): 10/D10 + D6
Trick Riding (5): 12/2D10
Wheeling Attack (4): 11/D10 + D8

Skills

Artisan/Leather Working (1): 8/2D6
Knowledge/Barsaive History (1): 6/D10
Knowledge/T'skrang Lore (1): 6/D10

Initiative

Dice: 5/D8

Karma

Dice: D6
Points: 15

Movement

Running: 75
Combat: 38

Damage

Death Rating: 70
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 57
Recovery Tests per Day: 2
Recovery Dice: D10

Equipment

Booster Potion
Broadsword (Forge +5) (Damage 16/D20 + D10)
Flail (Damage 12/2D10)
Griffin Mount (see p. 296, ED)
Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 3 Thread Attached)
Rider's Shield
Absorb Blow Blood Charm
Death Cheat Blood Charm
Desperate Blow Blood Charm

Average Theran Swordmaster

Attributes

Dexterity: 8 **Strength:** 5 **Toughness:** 6
Perception: 6 **Willpower:** 6 **Charisma:** 7

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 15

Damage:

Forged Broadsword: 12

Longbow: 9

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 39

Wound Threshold: 12

Unconsciousness Rating: 30

Combat Movement: 45

Full Movement: 90

Legend Points: 1,500

Equipment

Broadsword (Forge 3, Damage Step 7), hardened leather armor, footman's shield, longbow, 20 arrows, Absorb Blow Blood Charm, Dexterity Boost Blood Tattoo

Note

Riposte (3): 11/D10+D8

Loot

D12 silver pieces, 3D12 copper pieces

Average Theran Warrior

Attributes

Dexterity: 8 **Strength:** 7 **Toughness:** 6
Perception: 6 **Willpower:** 6 **Charisma:** 5

Initiative: 9

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 15

Damage:

Forged Broadsword: 14

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 42

Wound Threshold: 12

Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Physical Defense: 12

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 8

Mystic Armor: 0

Knockdown: 7

Recovery Tests: 3

Combat Movement: 45

Full Movement: 90

Legend Points: 1,500

Equipment

Broadsword (Forge 3, Damage Step 7), hardened leather armor, footman's shield, longbow, 20 arrows, Absorb Blow Blood Charm, Dexterity Boost Blood Tattoo

Loot

D12 silver pieces, 3D12 copper pieces



CRYSTAL RAIDERS AND AIRSHIP CREWS

The following profiles provide statistics for sky raiders and air sailors of various Circles. Each Talent listing includes two values separated by a slash mark; the first value is the average Talent rank for the Circle and the second value is the average Talent step. Discipline Talents are listed in bold-face type; Talents that require Karma are listed in italics.

Damage Ratings and Karma Points are listed according to Circle as well. Characteristic bonuses for each Discipline, such as bonuses to Defense Ratings and Karma, are listed in the notes at the end of each profile.



HUMAN AIR SAILOR

(pp. 148-149, *Earthdawn Companion*)

Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12

Strength (15): 6/D10

Toughness (13): 6/D10

Perception (13): 6/D10

Willpower (12): 5/D8

Charisma (11): 5/D8

Circle

Talents	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Acrobatic Strike	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Air Sailing	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	7/12
Avoid Blow	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14
Unarmed Combat	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Durability (6/5)	-	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Great Leap	-	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Maneuver	-	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
<i>Riposte</i>	-	-	3/13	5/15	7/17
Wind Catcher	-	-	3/8	5/10	7/12
Thread Weaving	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Throwing Weapons	-	-	-	5/12	7/14
Air Dance	-	-	-	5/12	7/14
Second Weapon	-	-	-	5/12	7/14
Momentum Attack	-	-	-	-	7/14
Taunt	-	-	-	-	7/12
Missile Weapons	-	-	-	-	7/14
<i>Speak Language</i>	-	-	-	-	7/13

Circle

Damage	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	35	41	53	65	77
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	27	32	42	52	62
Recovery Tests:	3				
Recovery Dice:	6/D10				

Circle

Karma	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	10	12	15	20	27
Karma Dice:	D8				

Initiative

Dice: D10

Movement

Full: 85

Combat: 42

Combat

Physical Defense: 10

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 6

Mystic Armor: 1

Weapons/Armor

Hardened Leather Armor

Dagger [Damage: 8/2D6]

Broadsword [Damage: 11/D10 + D8]

Buckler

Short Sword [Damage: 10/D10 + D6]

Notes

Theran Air Sailors Add: Absorb Blow Blood Charm, Desperate Blow Blood Charm

Versatility Talent (up to Gamemaster discretion)

Fourth Circle: The air sailor can spend Karma on Dexterity Tests.

Fifth Circle: +1 to Physical Defense

Sixth Circle: +1 to Spell Defense

Seventh Circle: The air sailor can spend Karma on Damage Tests made with a weapon.

TROLL SKY RAIDER

(p. 78, ED)

Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10 Perception (11): 5/D8
Strength (19): 8/2D6 Willpower (12): 5/D8
Toughness (20): 8/2D6 Charisma (13): 6/D10

	Circle				
Talents	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Air Sailing	1/6	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Avoid Blow	1/7	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Battle Shout	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	7/13
Fireblood	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	2/8	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Durability (8/6)	-	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Great Leap	-	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Shield Charge	-	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Swift Kick	-	-	3/9	5/11	7/13
Wind Catcher	-	-	3/8	5/10	7/12
Thread Weaving	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Throwing Weapons	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Battle Bellow	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Fence	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Momentum Attack	-	-	-	-	7/13
Steely Stare	-	-	-	-	7/13
Missile Weapons	-	-	-	-	7/13
Speak Language	-	-	-	-	7/12

	Circle				
Damage	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	44	52	68	84	100
Wound Threshold:	13	13	13	13	13
Unconsciousness Rating:	36	42	54	66	78
Recovery Tests:	4				
Recovery Dice:	8/2D6				

	Circle				
Karma	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	6	8	11	16	20
Karma Dice:	D4				

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8	Full: 60
	Combat: 30

Combat

Physical Defense: 7 Armor: 5
Spell Defense: 7 Mystic Armor: 1
Social Defense: 7

Weapons/Armor

Broadsword [Damage: 13/D12 + D10]
Hardened Leather Armor
Troll Sling [Damage: 10/D10 + D6]

Notes

Trolls have Heat Sight.

Fourth Circle: The sky raider can spend a Karma Point on Strength Tests.

Fifth Circle: +1 to Social Defense

Sixth Circle: +1 to Physical Defense

Seventh Circle: The sky raider can spend a Karma Point on Damage Tests made with a melee weapon.

CARA FAHD

Below are statistics for non-Adept ork cavalymen of four different experience levels and average Liberators of several Circles. Adept Cavalryman statistics may be found on page 112 of *Prelude to War*. Discipline Talents are listed in bold type; Talents that require Karma are in italics.

Ork Cavalryman

(p 70, ED)

Attributes

Dexterity (13) 6/D10 Perception (11) 5/D8
Strength (19) 8/2D6 Willpower (11) 5/D8
Toughness (16) 7/D12 Charisma (11) 5/D8

Skills	Green	Seasoned	Veteran	Commander
Animal Bond	1/6	3/8	4/9	5/10
Avoid Blow	1/6	2/7	4/9	5/10
Charge	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Melee Weapons	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Trick Riding	1/7	3/9	5/11	7/13
Blood Share	-	2/13	5/16	7/18
Maneuver	-	2/8	4/10	6/12
Unarmed Combat	-	1/7	3/9	5/11
Sure Mount	-	2/10	4/12	7/15
Wheeling Defense	-	1/7	3/9	7/13
Riposte	-	-	2/11	4/13
Second Attack	-	-	3/9	4/10
Shield Charge	-	-	2/10	4/12
Wheeling Attack	-	-	3/9	6/12
Anticipate Blow	-	-	-	3/8
Heartening Laugh	-	-	-	3/8

Damage

Death Rating: 39
Wound Threshold: 11
Unconsciousness Rating: 31
Recovery Tests: 3
Recovery Dice: 7/D12

Movement

Full: 70
Combat: 35

Combat

Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7

Initiative Dice and Physical/Mystic Armor by Type

Padded Leather: D10 (4/1)
Padded Leather and Rider's Shield: D8 (7/1)
Hide Armor and Rider's Shield: D6 (8/2)
Ring Mail and Rider's Shield: D4 (9/1)
Chain Mail and Rider's Shield: D4+1 (10/1)
Plate Mail and Rider's Shield: D4-2 (12/1)

Weapon Damage by Type

When charging, use the weapon step below plus the Charge Rank plus the mount's Strength step for damage.

Dagger (10/D10+D6)
Mace or Spear (12/2D10)
Broadsword (13/D12+D10)
Lance

Riding Horse 20/D20+D8+D6
War Horse 22/D20+D10+D8
Stajian 23/D20+2D10
Thundra 24/D20+D12+D10
Dyre 27/D20+D10+2D8



Ork Liberator

(p. 106, *Denizens of Earthdawn Volume 2*)

Attributes

Dexterity (12) 5/D8 Perception (13) 6/D10
Strength (13) 6/D10 Willpower (16) 7/D12
Toughness (14) 6/D10 Charisma (14) 6/D10

Talents	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Freedom Search	1/7	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	2/7	2/7	4/9	5/10	7/12
Mind Armor	2/9	3/10	3/10	5/12	7/14
Mind Blade	1/1	3/3	4/4	5/5	7/7
Ritual of Atone.	1/8	2/9	3/10	4/11	7/14
Durability (7/6)	-	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Free Mind	-	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Unarmed Combat	-	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Heart of Freedom	-	-	3/10	5/12	7/14
Shackle Shrug	-	-	3/8	5/10	7/12
False Shackles	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Thread Weaving	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Lion Spirit	-	-	-	5/5	7/7
Lock Pick	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Dead Fall	-	-	-	-	7/14
Freedom Song	-	-	-	-	7/13
Power Mask	-	-	-	-	7/14
Shout of Justice	-	-	-	-	7/13

Damage	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	36	43	57	71	85
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	28	34	46	58	70

Karma	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points	10	12	15	20	27
Dice: D8					

Initiative

Dice: D8

Movement

Full: 65

Combat: 33

Combat

Physical Defense: 7

Armor: 2

Spell Defense: 9

Mystic Armor: 2

Social Defense: 8

Weapons/Armor

Padded cloth armor

2 daggers (Damage 8/2D6)

Miner's pick or sledgehammer (Damage 12/2D10)

Notes

Fourth Circle: The liberator can spend Karma on actions using Willpower only.

Fifth Circle: Increase Physical Defense by 1.

Sixth Circle: Increase Social Defense by 1.

Seventh Circle: Increase Spell Defense by 1.



BLOOD WOOD

The following profiles provide statistics for warden and exolasher Adepts of various Circles. The warden statistics are based on the Woodsman Discipline and the exolasher statistics are based on the Warrior Discipline. Each Talent listing includes two values separated by a slash mark; the first value is the average Talent rank for the Circle and the second value is the average Talent step. Discipline Talents are listed in boldface type, and Talents that require Karma are listed in italics.

Damage Ratings and Karma Points are listed according to Circle as well. Bonuses for each Discipline, such as bonuses to Defense Ratings and Karma, are listed in the notes at the end of each profile.



Warden

(Woodsman, *Denizens of Earthdawn*, Volume I, p. 112)

Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6

Strength (13): 6/D10

Toughness (13): 6/D10

Perception (13): 6/D10

Willpower (12): 5/D8

Charisma (15): 6/D10

Talents	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Avoid Blow	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Missile Weapons	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13	7/15
Silent Walk	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Tracking	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	7/13
Animal Training	-	1/7	3/9	5/11	7/13
Climbing	-	1/9	3/11	5/13	7/15
Durability (6/5)	-	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Borrow Sense	-	-	3/8	5/10	7/12
Sprint	-	-	3/3	5/5	7/7
Thread Weaving	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Throwing Weapons	-	-	-	5/13	7/15
Air Dance	-	-	-	5/13	7/15
Claw Shape	-	-	-	5/14	7/16
Endure Cold	-	-	-	-	7/13
Lizard Leap	-	-	-	-	7/13
Wood Skin	-	-	-	-	7/13
Second Attack	-	-	-	-	7/15

Damage	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	35	41	53	65	77
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	27	32	42	52	62
Recovery Tests:	1				
Recovery Dice:	6/D10				

Karma	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	5	10	15	20	25
Karma Dice:	D6				

Initiative	Movement				
	Full: 100				
Dice: D12	Combat: 50				

Combat	Armor: 5				
	Mystic Armor: 1				
Physical Defense: 10					
Spell Defense: 8					
Social Defense: 9					

Weapons/Armor
 Hardened Leather Armor (enchanted to not pull at thorns)
 Broadsword (Forge +2 steps) [Damage: 13/D12 + D10]
 Dagger [Damage: 8/2D6]
 Huntsman's Boots (p. 126, *Blood Wood*)

Notes
Fourth Circle: The scout can spend Karma on Dexterity Tests.
Fifth Circle: Initiative Step +1
Sixth Circle: Physical Defense + 1
Seventh Circle: Enhanced Senses (*Denizens of Earthdawn*, Volume I, p.112)

Exolasher

(Warrior Discipline, p. 86, ED)

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10
Strength (15): 6/D10
Toughness (16): 7/D12
Perception (12): 5/D8
Willpower (13): 6/D10
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Talents	Circle				
	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Acrobatic Strike	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Air Dance	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Karma Ritual	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Melee Weapons	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Unarmed Combat	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Wood Skin	3/10	5/12	7/14	9/16	11/17
Anticipate Blow	3/8	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Durability (9/7)	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Throwing Weapons	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Avoid Blow	3/9	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Tiger Spring	3/3	5/5	7/7	9/9	11/11
Down Strike	-	5/14	7/16	9/18	11/20
Thread Weaving	-	5/10	7/12	9/14	11/16
Gliding Stride	-	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Swift Kick	-	5/11	7/13	9/15	11/17
Life Check	-	-	7/14	9/16	11/18
Missile Weapons	-	-	7/13	9/15	11/17
Earth Skin	-	-	7/7	9/9	11/11
Second Attack	-	-	7/13	9/15	11/17
Cobra Strike	-	-	-	9/15	11/17
Spirit Strike	-	-	-	9/15	11/17
Cat's Paw	-	-	-	9/15	11/17
Missile Twister	-	-	-	9/15	11/17
Second Weapon	-	-	-	9/15	11/17
Body Blade	-	-	-	-	11/17
Matrix Strike	-	-	-	-	11/17
Elemental Tongues	-	-	-	-	11/16
Vitality	-	-	-	-	11/18

Damage	Circle				
	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Death Rating:	66	84	102	120	138
Wound Threshold	11	11	11	11	11
Unconsciousness Rating:	52	66	80	94	108
Recovery Tests: 2					
Recovery Dice: 7/D12					

Karma	Circle				
	3rd	5th	7th	9th	11th
Karma Points:	15	20	25	25	25
Karma Dice: D6					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8 (D10*)	Full: 70
	Combat: 35

Combat	
Physical Defense: 8	Armor: 5 (10*)
Spell Defense: 8	Mystic Armor: 1 (3*)
Social Defense: 9	

*When wearing thread chain mail



Weapons/Armor

Hardened Leather Armor (enchanted to not pull at thorns)

Broadsword (Forge +5) [Damage: 16/D20 + D8]

Dagger (Forge +2) [Damage: 10/D10 + D6]

*Thorn Sword (p. 128, **Blood Wood**)

*Thorn Bow (p. 127, **Blood Wood**)

*Thread Chain Mail (p. 62, **ED Companion**)

* Exolashers of Fourth Circle and higher use Thread weapons and armor, with Thread ranks equal to their Circle (or maximum Thread rank based on the item). These are marked with an asterisk.

Notes

Fourth Circle: The warrior can spend a Karma Point on Willpower Tests.

Fifth Circle: Spell Defense +1

Sixth Circle: +1 Recovery Test per day

Seventh Circle: Physical Defense +1

Eighth Circle: Spell Defense +1

Ninth Circle: The warrior can spend a Karma Point on Dexterity and Strength Tests.

Tenth Circle: The warrior can spend a Karma Point on Damage Tests of melee or unarmed combat attacks.

Eleventh Circle: Physical Defense +1, Social Defense +1

T'SKRANG AROPAGOI

The following statistics reflect a typical riverboat crewmember. The values listed after each Talent represent the average Talent rank and Talent step at a particular Circle. The first figure is the Talent rank, while the second number is the Talent step. Damage Ratings and Karma Points are listed according to Circle as well.

The average Circle of crewmembers aboard a riverboat equals the Crew Skill Rating listed in the ship's game profile. Additionally, most riverboats have at least four officers — first mate, boatswain, quartermaster and engineer — of Circle 4. T'skrang captains are nearly always at least Circle 7. Boatmen prefer the broadsword and parrying net for melee combat and the javelin for missile combat.



RIVERBOAT CREW

(Boatman Adepts, p. 106, *Denizens of Earthdawn*, Volume I)

Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10 Strength (14): 6/D10
Toughness (14): 6/D10 Perception (12): 5/D8
Willpower (13): 6/D10 Charisma (12): 5/D8

	Circle				
Talents	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Melee Weapon	2/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Throwing Weapon	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Unarmed Combat	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Avoid Blow	1/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Pilot Boat	2/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4	7/7
Durability	-	1/1	2/2	4/4	5/5
Read River	-	1/6	3/8	4/9	7/12
Acrobatic Strike	-	1/7	2/8	2/8	3/9
Cast Net	-	-	2/8	4/10	7/13
Haggle	-	-	1/6	2/7	3/8
Thread Weaving	-	-	-	1/6	7/12
Mystic Aim	-	-	-	1/7	2/8
Engaging Banter	-	-	-	-	2/7
Evaluate	-	-	-	-	7/12
Speak Language	-	-	-	-	7/12
Lizard Leap	-	-	-	-	3/9
First Impression	-	-	-	-	2/7
Great Leap	-	-	-	-	2/8

	Circle				
Damage	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Death Rating	36	42	48	54	60
Wound Threshold	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating	28	33	38	43	48
Recovery Tests 3*					
Recovery Dice: 6/D10					

	Circle				
Karma	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	7th
Karma Points	5	7	10	12	15
Karma Dice: D6					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8 (D10*)	Full: 70
	Combat: 35

Combat	Armor 3
Physical Defense 8*	Mystic Armor 1
Spell Defense 7	
Social Defense 7	

Weapons

Tail Attack (Damage: 9/D6 + D8)
Broadsword (Damage: 11/D10 + D8)
Javelin (Damage: 9/D6 + D8)
Parrying Net (see Cast Net, p. 113, *Denizens of Earthdawn*, Volume I)

Notes

All officers (Circle 4 and above) may use Karma when making Dexterity Tests.

Captains may use Karma on Damage Test made for melee weapon attacks.

Captains also receive +1 to their Physical Defense Rating and 1 additional Recovery Test per day.



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A CALL TO ARMS

The landing of the Theran behemoth atop the Ayodhya Liferock was like a thrown gauntlet to the nations of Barsaive. Now, the Dwarf kingdom of Throal picks up that gauntlet, and attempts to gather the forces of Barsaive in a climatic struggle for independence from Thera.



- The Dwarf nation of Throal attempts to gather the political and military support of the peoples of Barsaive with a Declaration of War....
- A young, battered girl with strange powers is found on the edges of Barsaive, and her last, dying guardian asks for her safe return to his master....
- In preparation for the coming war, the forces of Barsaive and Thera begin to plan and move. Raids and skirmishes dot the land, as resources are gathered or lost, and new alliances are formed...
- A mysterious mission, on behalf of a mysterious employer, that involves the transport of the legendary Everliving Flower... without the knowledge of the Blood Wood....
- The war rapidly escalates as Barsaive begins the siege of the Theran Behemoth. Triumph...
- A small force is dispatched from the Triumph to Jerris, only to discover that lopos has not been idle during this war....
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- The armies collide at the last Theran stronghold in the land of Barsaive, Sky Point, in a cataclysmic battle that alters the very future of the world....

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ISBN 0-9704191-0-4 \$18.00



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