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LEGENDS of EARTHDAWN

EARTHDAWN

LEGENDS of EARTHDAWN®



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SUBJECT GUIDE



The categories in this subject guide highlight the primary elements of each legend. Race of Origin refers to the race that most commonly tells the story.

CATEGORIES

Race of Origin
 Legendary Name-givers
 Magical Treasure
 Horrors
 Creatures
 Passions
 Discipline
 Place

LEGENDS

The Passion's Dance

Race of Origin (Human)
 Passions (Jaspree)
 Place (Servos Jungle)

The Bloody Coin

Race of Origin (Troll)
 Magical Treasure
 Horrors

The Bravery of Nelsen Long-Ears

Race of Origin (Ork)
 Legendary Name-givers
 Magical Treasure

How Thystonius Gave Us His Spear

Race of Origin (Ork)
 Magical Treasure
 Passions (Thystonius)

Baby, Baby, Anointed in Sand

Race of Origin (T'skrang)
 Horrors

Valvidius, King of Thieves

Legendary Name-givers
 Magical Treasure
 Passions (Vestrial)
 Discipline (Thief)
 Place (Kratas)

The Shackled Feet of Friendship

Race of Origin (T'skrang)
 Magical Treasure
 Place (Thera)

The Questor and the Magician

Legendary Name-givers
 Magical Treasure

Ciarra Shy-Ru

Race of Origin (Dwarf)
 Legendary Name-givers
 Magical Treasure
 Horrors

Parliament of Mermaids

Race of Origin (T'skrang)
 Creatures
 Place (Serpent River)

T'selas Vriimon and the Vrykanogen

Race of Origin (T'skrang)
 Creatures

The King Who Ruled the Passions

Race of Origin (Any)
 Passions (All)
 Place (Thamos)

The Way of the Beasts

Race of Origin (Any)
 Discipline (Beastmaster)

The Grass Bridge

Race of Origin (Human)
 Horrors
 Passions (Jaspree)

Astendar's Devotion

Race of Origin (Any)
 Passions (Astendar)

Lyllaria's Mirror

Race of Origin (Human)
 Magical Treasure
 Horrors

The Dance of Korrencia

Race of Origin (Elf)
 Legendary Name-givers
 Discipline (Troubadour)
 Place (Thera)

The Fire Pool

Race of Origin (Any)
 Place (Mountains)

Lisar's Wondrous Pack of Tales

Race of Origin (Troll)
 Legendary Name-givers
 Magical Treasure

The Nameless Lad

Race of Origin (Human)
 Legendary Name-givers
 Horrors

The Lost Dream of Wyrn Wood

Race of Origin (Elf)
 Place (Wyrn/Blood Wood)

How Lor'jak Bonetusk Found His Passion

Race of Origin (Troll)
 Legendary Name-givers
 Passions (Garlen)

The Love of Tonlaa and Enard

Race of Origin (Any)
 Legendary Name-givers

Justice of Horrors

Race of Origin (Any)
 Horrors

The Heart of Heroes

Race of Origin (Any)
 Magical Treasure

The Horror Storm

Race of Origin (Any)
 Magical Treasure
 Horrors
 Place (Tisoara)

The Brightest Star in the Sky

Race of Origin (Any)
 Place (Thera)

The Pipes of Wrongness

Race of Origin (Any)
 Magical Treasure
 Horrors

New Sun in the Sky

Race of Origin (T'skrang)
 Magical Treasure

The Book of Scales

Race of Origin (Any)
 Magical Treasure
 Horrors
 Dragons



INTRODUCTION



Legends unite the people of Barsaive with their past and point the way toward their future. Inspired by legends, the heroes of Barsaive fight to reclaim their world from the devastation of the Scourge and to free it from the remaining Horrors. These heroes, in turn, spawn the legends that will inspire Barsaive's future generations.

Legends of Earthdawn, Volume I, presents thirty of Barsaive's legends recounted in the form of stories, songs and poems told or sung by troubadours and storytellers. The legends give players and gamemasters insight into the cultures and history of Barsaive, and can add atmosphere to any **Earthdawn** adventure or campaign.

Most importantly, these stories provide a rich source of adventure ideas. The second half of the book, titled **Game Information**, provides suggestions for incorporating legends of **Earthdawn** in adventures and campaigns. These suggestions, however, merely scratch the surface of the countless possibilities these stories present. You, the gamemaster, determine the truth behind each legend and you decide how much or little of a legend to use and how to introduce it in your game.



THE PASSION'S DANCE



Fourteen generations past, before the gitta devoured the world and forced us under the earth, my foremother saw strangers come to the Servos Jungle. The strangers were beloved of Jaspree, whom we call the God of the Tree. They came to build a home among the wild things, whom they called sisters and brothers, and the God blessed them, helping them to raise a great temple. This temple grew like a great tree from the heart of the jungle, and all the living things of the land, water and sky found a haven there. Pleased with his servants, the God of the Tree gave them the power to raise green life from barren earth, as well as many other gifts. Soon the people came from the lands all around the Servos, seeking the blessings of Jaspree's beloved and bringing gifts to them.

As word of the great temple spread farther away from our jungle, those whose hearts were tainted began to whisper about the wondrous gifts it contained. What were these gifts? Gold and silver? Rich jewels? Precious things made by Name-givers' hands? And as these evil voices whispered and wondered, tales of great riches hidden at the temple were told again and again and again.

In time, such tales reached the ears of Barlok the Cruel, headman of a fierce tribe of orks that we call the Irontusks. The more Barlok heard of Jaspree's temple, the more he desired the wealth he believed it held. The Passion Chorrolis entered Barlok's heart and soul, inflaming his desire until Barlok led his people into the jungle to claim Jaspree's treasures for his own.

Barlok and his people fell upon the temple like a storm, destroying everything they touched as a hurricane uproots and shatters even the mightiest trees. The kind strangers called upon all the powers of the God of the Tree, but greedy Chorrolis gave heart to the destroyers and they triumphed over Jaspree's servants. When the battle-madness left the orks, not one part of the great temple still stood. The peaceful home of the god's beloved was a ruin of blood and trampled earth, shrouded with smoke and carrion-eating birds. No living creature moved within the bounds of the temple, save for the last survivor among Jaspree's slaughtered faithful.

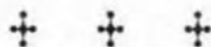
As Barlok walked among the ruins in search of gold and jewels, the last of Jaspree's beloved struggled to rise from the blood-soaked earth. Even as her life bled from her wounds, she called upon the God of the Tree with the last of her strength. "This curse I lay upon you," she said to Barlok. "You came in search of riches, though we had none that you could take. Your search will never end; you will seek endlessly through the jungle for a prize you will never find. From now until the day you die, you will not leave this place." As the last word left her mouth, she fell to the earth and died. And Barlok laughed, for he believed in sharper weapons than words. But he did not laugh for long.

Though he searched all day and night for the riches of the temple, Barlok the Cruel found nothing. Grumbling, he led his followers out of the depths of the Servos Jungle, only to find himself wandering down a path that had not been there before. Barlok turned another way, but he and his men soon lost their way again. Everywhere, strange trails appeared before them, and all the paths they traveled down vanished behind them. The trees seemed to shift and move, the leaves overhead hid the sky so they could not see the sun nor the stars. No matter which way the destroyers went, they found themselves still in the jungle's dark heart. At the bidding of the slain questor's curse, even the gentlest jungle beasts became fierce and vicious. And the God of the Tree sent driving rain to drown the orks in misery and hardened the earth so they would find no rest.

My foremother told me that the killers of Jaspree's servants died within the jungle of injury, starvation, and at each other's hands. From the days of my foremother, who saw these things happen, to this telling of the tale, we have called the ruined temple the Passion's Dance, because the jungle dances around the ruins to bewilder those who wander too close. The trees move and paths disappear, dancing the dance of confusion to keep strange folk away from the sacred ground where Jaspree's beloved died.



THE BLOODY COIN



Centuries ago, as the Long Night drew close to Barsaive, the trolls of the village of Chkrak made ready to enter their kaer. They built it well and filled it with every needful thing, and only one worry troubled them: what to do with the silver pieces that belonged to every family. After many nights of talking around the Gathering Fire, the people and the elders agreed to put all the silver together and keep it in one place, to safeguard it for each family's descendants when the Long Night finally ended.

When the people of Chkrak emerged from the kaer hundreds of years later, they could all talk of nothing except the claiming of each family's silver. Some wanted the silver given out immediately; others wanted to rebuild the village and their lives before taking back their coin. After much often quarrelsome discussion, the elders declared that they would give out the silver after a week of celebration giving thanks to the Passions for deliverance from the Scourge.

Beikadt, a young troll impatient for a life of adventure, disagreed. He wanted his family's silver immediately. He had waited all his life to hold a fortune in his hands and did not want that glorious moment delayed for any reason. As all the other villagers made ready for the Passion-feast, Beikadt went to the chief elder and spoke his mind. The chief elder sharply refused Beikadt's demand, and the young troll stormed off in a seething rage.

To the village's misfortune, a Horror lurked nearby, watching and waiting for the right moment to attack the people. Seeing Beikadt walk off in anger, the Horror disguised itself as one of Beikadt's fellow villagers—another young troll, Named Terrin—and followed him. The Horror fed Beikadt's anger, claiming that he had overheard some of the elders saying they would not give out the silver at the end of the feast. Instead, they would keep it all in its safe place, supposedly for the good of the village. The elders were stalling, it said, looking for a way to keep all the silver for themselves. But why should they have it all? Why shouldn't Beikadt have it? He deserved it! Wasn't he the only troll in the whole village with any sense? All night, the disguised Horror whispered these lies in Beikadt's ears until the Horror's evil influence and his own anger drove Beikadt insane. As the first rays of dawn turned the black sky gray, Beikadt proposed to the Horror that they steal the silver and split it between them. When the Horror eagerly agreed, Beikadt crept back to the village and silently killed every one of his people as they slept.

Covered in gore, Beikadt moved through the kaer as if in a trance. He could think only of the silver and the wondrous new life of adventure that he and Terrin would share. Terrin was waiting for him outside the chamber where the silver was kept, and the two of them smiled at each other as if they had done a hero's deed. Then Beikadt said the words to open the chamber's magical seals. With a rush of air and a puff of dust, the door opened just enough to let the two of them walk inside.

Silver coins lay everywhere, covered with dust. The trolls had also put other treasures in the chamber for safekeeping, including a beautiful silver mirror. Beikadt saw himself in it, and came out of his trance. His face was spattered with blood, and his eyes gleamed with the light of madness. At the sight of what sat on a heap of silver behind him, Beikadt's eyes nearly sprang from his head. With a hungry grin, Terrin's skin peeled back to reveal the Horror beneath. As Beikadt reeled with the knowledge of the evil he had done, the Horror watched him and laughed.

The Horror's laughter roused the one troll left alive, a strong young warrior Named Eyebright. Despite the pain of a terrible gut wound, Eyebright struggled to the doorway of the treasure room and saw the Horror within. Eyebright summoned all his strength and began to push the door shut. The effort turned the world black around him and made the blood flow faster from his wound, but he did not falter. Beikadt screamed and turned to stop him, but too late. Eyebright slammed the door shut and gasped out the words to seal the treasure room with Beikadt, the Horror, and all the silver inside—save a single coin that had rolled out onto the floor of the kaer.

As Eyebright listened to Beikadt's despairing screams, he clutched the coin in one bloody hand. In the depths of his anguish for his slaughtered kin, Eyebright Named the piece of silver the Bloody Coin. From that day to this, the coin oozes small drops of blood whenever it is touched by those who have had dealings with Horrors.

THE BRAVERY OF NELSEN LONG-EARS



Every ork child can recite the bands of Herok's Lancers. First came Herok's Pride, led by Herok Shatterbone the First; next came Susano's Scorchers, led by Herok's sister, Susano; third came Kandor's Heroes, led by Herok's brother, Kandor; and last came Nelsen's Falcons, led by Nelsen Long-Ears.

Nelsen Long-Ears was a foundling, sent to Herok's mother by the Passion Garlen, who takes pity on the weak. And weak poor Nelsen surely was. When Herok's mother found him on the shores of Lake Ban, he was naked and bawling, frightened of everything that moved. He was thin and pale, with no flesh on his little bones to speak of and not even the stubs of tusks that might grow into something respectable. He had a long, narrow, ugly face, and long, narrow ugly ears. Still, Herok's mother had a kind heart, and she took the shivering baby home to raise as her own child.

Nelsen's foster mother fed him well, but he never grew as big and strong as any of her other children. He grew taller and put a little meat on his bones, but remained far too thin for a proper ork. And he stayed just as ugly as he had ever been and as fearful of everything around him. He had more of one thing, however, than his foster brothers

Legends of Earthdawn • The Bravery of Nelsen Long-Ears

and sister: intelligence. All of them were bright enough, but Nelsen was the cleverest of all. Herok's mother loved her strange, small, weak, awkward, clever foundling. In fact, Nelsen soon became his mother's favorite.

When Herok Shatterbone (the first of that Name) came of age, the Therans (excuse me while I spit) had just returned to Barsaive, and the dwarfs of Throal were calling for all Name-givers to fight with them against the Theran dogs. Herok wanted to fight the Therans, but he knew that the best he could offer was his own sword. And one sword, however bravely wielded, was not much to set against the evil people who had enslaved the orks and all Barsaive. Herok wanted to do more, but could not think what. So Herok went to Nelsen and asked his advice. Now Nelsen was clever, but he was not brave. He hated the Therans as much as anybody, but he did not want to fight them. He wanted the Therans to go away, so that he could spend all his days quietly at home with his foster mother. Nelsen thought and thought about how to help Herok, and at last an idea came to him that would not only help his foster brother, but would let Nelsen stay home as his mother's only comfort. Nelsen Long-Ears suggested that Herok create a cavalry and name it Herok's Lancers, with one division each for Herok, their brother Kandor, and their sister Susano.

Well, Herok liked Nelsen's idea so much that when he talked the tribe into it, he suggested that they add a fourth division for Nelsen. After all, Nelsen had come up with the idea. If not for him, there would be no ork cavalry called Herok's Lancers! It seemed only fair to include Nelsen and to give him a chance to win honor and glory in battle. To do anything less would have insulted Herok's foster brother, and that Herok refused to do. So Herok went about the business of forming four divisions of the Lancers, while the drums of war beat louder and louder.

At last, when everything was ready for the new cavalry to march to Throal and fight the Therans, Herok went to Nelsen and revealed his wonderful surprise—Nelsen would lead an entire division of Herok's Lancers into glorious combat! Well, Nelsen was surprised, all right—but he was nowhere near as delighted and grateful as Herok had thought he would be. Poor Nelsen was terrified. He cringed and cried and claimed he would die of fright even before he reached the gates of Throal. But Herok clapped him on the shoulder and said kindly, "We all feel a little fear before riding out to war. Don't worry, little brother—Thystonius will give you a brave heart."

Then Herok rode off to lead his cavalymen in maneuvers, leaving Nelsen crying in his tent. Herok's mother heard Nelsen sobbing and asked him what troubled him. Nelsen clung to her like a baby and cried harder, saying that he was afraid to go to war. Now Herok's mother was sorry to see her beloved foster son so upset, and she dearly wished that he could somehow show courage to match his cleverness. She thought for a moment, then said to Nelsen, "Wait here until I return."

Herok's mother went to the bird-house, where all the groak birds lived and laid their tasty eggs for the tribe. She picked up the largest one with the most brilliant purple-black feathers, and plucked a single feather from its back. Then she took the feather to Nelsen and said, "I have a gift for you, my son. This feather is a magical treasure; whoever holds it can come to no harm on the battlefield. In the years before the Scourge, my forebears wore this feather into combat, and they all died of old age, snug and warm in their own beds. I was saving this treasure for Herok because he is my eldest child, but because you are my favorite son, I will give it to you."

And she put the groak feather in his hand. When the cavalry rode off toward Throal the next day, Nelsen wore the feather in his helmet. All during the ride to Throal, whenever Nelsen thought of the battles to come and felt afraid, he looked at the feather and remembered what his foster mother had told him.

Well, Herok's Lancers reached the gates of Throal less than a day before the Therans attacked. The battle was bloody and terrible, and many a good Barsaivian lost his life. The first, brutal clash of armies frightened Nelsen so badly that he could only sit on his thundra beast as if paralyzed, too terrified even to move out of harm's way. Two arrows from a Theran volley flew toward him, and Nelsen closed his eyes and waited for them to pierce him. When nothing happened, he opened his eyes and saw that the arrows had sunk deep into the ground an inch from his mount's feet. Then Nelsen believed that his foster mother had truly given him magical protection, and he cast his fear away like a threadbare cloak. He led a daring charge onto the field, striking out boldly against every foe in his path. And the warriors of his division followed him, amazed that Nelsen the coward had found a lion's heart at last.

All that day the cavalry fought, none harder or braver than Nelsen Long-Ears. The soldiers of Barsaive died by the hundreds—but the soldiers of Thera died by the thousands. Through it all, the magic feather waved like a banner in Nelsen's helmet, and no weapon touched him.



HOW THYSTONIUS GAVE US HIS SPEAR



Long ago, before the Scourge ravaged our land, a fierce war raged across all of Barsaive. Inspired by greed and treachery, it engulfed every city, town and village—including the hamlet of Torbant in the foothills of the Delaris Mountains. Now the orks of Torbant were farmers and miners; they worked hard and lived well, but could not boast of riches or power. They had only the fruits of their labor: sturdy houses, plentiful food, strong and healthy children, and the everyday joys of life. Of such things was their wealth made, and so they remained untouched by the Orichalcum Wars.

Then one day a band of human soldiers, threescore or better and hardened by constant strife, came to the village of Torbant and demanded food, supplies, and money. Even worse, they demanded Torbant's children to be their slaves and Torbant's young women for their entertainment. They swore that unless their demands were met by morning, they would level the village, taking what they wanted and killing every living thing that remained.

The village elders despaired. To make their children slaves and their women chattel was an evil they could not face. Yet they could not fight off the well-armed and armored marauders with farming tools and hunting bows. All night they debated, and after several hours they decided to surrender to the intruders' demands in the hope that those things would be enough. No sooner had the elders declared this, than one voice rose against them—the voice of Kourba, an aging warrior and questor of Thystonius.

Kourba stood before the council, dressed in full armor with an axe in one hand and a sword in the other. "Have none of you an ork's true heart, that you talk of giving in?" she said to the elders. "Give me a chance to resist our enemies. Even if I fall, I will punish their greed before I die. I will make them pay in blood—or at least sell our lives for a price dearer than meat and coin. I beg you, let me fight them!" And the elders, hearing her brave words, felt fear drop away from them for an instant, and in that moment they agreed to let Kourba do what she could.

At dawn, the entire village went with Kourba to the marauders' camp. She bellowed her challenge and rushed at them. Four men died before they could draw weapons, but all too soon the humans surrounded Kourba. One of them struck a blow that shattered the haft of her axe, and the others drew closer, scenting victory. Kourba raised her sword, prepared to welcome Death if only she could slay her enemies.

As Kourba struck a mighty blow, a second ork leaped into the fray. He stood ten feet tall, dressed in gleaming red armor, and he carried a mighty spear with a tip of the strongest iron. His unexpected charge threw confusion and fear into the marauders, allowing Kourba to slip free from their deadly ring of blades. Back to back, the two orks fought until their weapons were caked with blood, until their backs and shoulders burned with exhaustion, until their legs could scarcely hold them upright. As the sun crawled from east to west they fought, ceasing only when no foe remained alive.

That night, the people of Torbant held a feast to honor Kourba and the mysterious warrior. The two of them sat in the place of honor, and the people gave them the choicest morsels of food and sang songs of their courage. As the last of the singing died away, Kourba turned to the giant sitting beside her. "I owe you my life," she said. "Tell me your name, that I may honor you with a toast."

"You have already honored me, my daughter," he answered, his booming voice echoing through the hall. All fell silent at the sound, and Kourba's heart told her that she looked upon the Passion Thystonius.

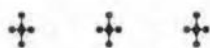
"I could not let such a faithful servant die at the hands of unworthy foes," Thystonius said. "Today you have shown the world true courage. Your willingness to spend every drop of your blood rather than see a single ork enslaved has greatly honored me."

Then Thystonius lifted his iron-tipped spear and gave it to Kourba. "This is for you, for your children and your people. May it always serve those who struggle, even in the face of almost-certain defeat." So saying, the Passion vanished.

Kourba died from her wounds three days later, but the spear of Thystonius has never left ork hands.



BABY, BABY, ANOINTED IN SAND



On a beautiful day in late summer, not long after the Great Emergence from the kaers, a t'skrang chaida and two hatchlings went down to a rocky beach at the edge of the Serpent River to play in the sand. The sun shone warm and the strong wind from the south whistled along the river, bouncing off the water onto the beach and sending leaves and bits of dried river plants tumbling along the shore.

The youngest child and her chaida, sheltered from the wind amid a group of boulders on the beach, were building a sand castle together. They dug down to where the sand felt wet; then they scooped up great handfuls, piled them on the dry sand and patted the wet earth flat to make the castle's base. Around the edge of the square of wet sand, the hatchling carefully arranged shells and rocks, making a pattern pleasing to its eye.

All this while, the older child wandered the beach at will. Now the hatchling called to the chaida from out of sight. The chaida told the youngest one, "Stay here and build our sand castle. I will be right back." Then she went in search of the older child. The youngest child watched as the chaida disappeared around one of the gigantic rocks. For a moment, all was silent. Then the child heard a scream, and its heart caught in its throat. The chaida came back into sight, stumbling backward away from something, carrying the older child. Chaida and child fell, then struggled up and staggered toward the river's edge, crying, begging, trying to reach the water. In their wake followed a Horror, its aspect so fearful that terror drove all the breath from the little t'skrang's body.

The wind blew harder, throwing sand into the little t'skrang's face. The child put an arm over its eyes until the wind died down. When the hatchling opened its eyes again, it saw that the chaida had fallen to her knees and was holding the older child behind her. The chaida tried to push the child toward the river, but the older hatchling was too frightened to leave the chaida's side.

The little t'skrang watched the Horror tear apart and devour them both. It took them a long time to die. Even as the little hatchling watched in shock, its hands moved of their own accord. Using a shovel and bucket, the hatchling continued to build the sand castle. And as the hatchling built the castle, it seemed to take on a purpose, a Name. The little t'skrang made the walls straight and solid, stitched a pattern of tiny shells across the ramparts, traced green lines in the brown sand with pieces of water plants. The main tower grew and grew as the child built it higher and higher, until the castle stood nearly as tall as the hatchling did.

The Horror turned its evil gaze on the youngest child just as the hatchling finished the main tower. The Horror loomed over the t'skrang, delighting in the child's sweetness and innocence, soon to be defiled. Then the child looked up at the Horror, anger written across the baby face. The child said one word: "No." In that word was all the powerful magic of the child's innocent rage. The Horror screamed, and its skin collapsed like an empty husk as the magic of the sand castle entrapped it.

To this day, the sand castle stands, untouched by the rages of the most violent storms. No one dares go near it, but to this day we honor its builder by sprinkling every child with sand at birth to invoke the power with which that little hatchling banished a Horror.

Some days and nights, when the wind blows across Sand Castle Beach as it did on that fateful day, you can hear the wailing of a small child ... or is it the cry of a captured Horror?

VALVIDIUS, KING OF THIEVES



You've never heard that expression before—to pull a Valvidius? You've not spent much time in Kratas, have you? A Valvidius is a glorious swindle—but also one that could leave you dead because you made the wrong folk angry. I'll tell you the tale, and then you'll understand. (Buy me a cup of ale first, friend—storytelling's thirsty work.)

It all happened centuries before the Scourge, of course. Valvidius was a dwarf thief, and even his bitterest rivals called him the greatest thief of all time. For it was Valvidius who stole the Three Rings of Harpfast from under the noses of a thousand guardsmen; and it was Valvidius who stole the Egg of Lost Desire from the private treasure vaults of Barsaive's first Theran Overgovernor. Yes, Valvidius was truly a great thief, and he knew it. But by the time he reached middle age, he'd pulled off so many wondrous exploits with so little difficulty that he was beginning to get bored. Even the thought of robbing the Theran treasury at Parlainth left him cold—it wasn't worth his talents. (Lucky for the Theran rats in Parlainth, that's all I can say.) Valvidius racked his brains for some piece of thieving that would give him a real challenge, and finally he came up with a truly fantastic swindle.

Legends of Earthdawn • Valvidius, King of Thieves

On one dark night, hidden from all eyes in his private study, Valvidius scribbled a piece of verse on a parchment scroll. When the ink was dry, he dipped the parchment in tea to make it look weathered, then frayed the edges and folded it to make cracks in the middle. When he was finished with the scroll, he took a common metal crown—the kind metalsmiths usually begin with to make duplicates of precious treasures—and painted it all over with some gold leaf he'd stolen from the famous Banchus Jewel House. Then he hid the crown and the scroll in his traveling bag beneath a couple of dirty jerkins and went to bed. The next day, he went off to the capital city of Landis, letting it be known that he expected rich pickings.

About a month later, he came back to Kratas in a state of high excitement. Knowing the word would spread through the Thieves' City faster than fire in a dry hayfield, Valvidius went to the Heart's Ease Tavern and announced that he'd found an ancient scroll that spoke of a sure way to win the Passion Vestrial's favor. (In those days, of course, Vestrial was sane, and most thieves had a soft spot for the trickster Passion.) Valvidius read the scroll out loud to all assembled: it said that to earn Vestrial's undying love, all the greatest thieves in Barsaive must meet and crown a King of Thieves. In the next year, everyone who wanted to be king must perform their most audacious thefts and then gather in the old fortress of Florque—near Kratas—to show off their booty in a grand Thieves' Festival. The best theft would win the crown of the Thief King.

So all the thieves went off in search of treasures to steal, for each one wanted to be the Thief King. And while they were gone, Valvidius went to their guards and servants and retainers. He spoke soft words to them and passed out gold and silver here, there, and everywhere. When the year was almost up, Valvidius took the crown he'd made and went to Florque to wait for his fellow thieves.

The Thieves' Festival was a rousing success. The thieves of Barsaive showed off precious objects by the dozens: magical javelins from Thera, rare orichalcum coins bearing the faces of kings dead for centuries, the diary of the great dragon Usun, and many other wonders that few Name-givers had ever looked upon. Of course, each thief had brought bodyguards and retainers to protect what he'd brought. They all wanted to be king, and not one of them was taking the slightest chance of having his treasure stolen from him. The thieves and their bodyguards talked and argued endlessly over which theft deserved the crowning glory, until Valvidius mounted the great stone dais in the middle of Florque's Great Hall.

Into the sudden silence, he said, "Now comes the time to crown the greatest thief of all. Look with favor upon me, O Vestrial!"

And he pulled a beautiful golden crown from behind his back and placed it on his own head. The other thieves, furious, called to their bodyguards to fight, but the bodyguards all fell to their knees and hailed Valvidius, King of Thieves! Then they took the precious things that the other thieves had stolen and placed them in a huge pile at Valvidius' feet. Valvidius had pulled off the greatest theft of all time—he had stolen the loyalty of the master thieves' henchmen, along with all the booty his rivals had stolen from others.

For many years Valvidius ruled Kratas from his stronghold in Florque, and those who served him prospered. Then one dark night, when Valvidius was in his treasure vault savoring the fruits of his long-ago victory, the stone walls grew bright with a strangely colored, shimmering light. A strong wind began to blow through the windowless treasury. Valvidius stood firm, clutching his crown to his chest and muttering, "Never. I will never leave my treasures!" The wind blew harder, and the light grew blinding. A look of fear crossed Valvidius' face, and he cried out, "Vestrial! I meant it as a jest. I thought only to please you!"

"Betrayal does not please me," said a voice that shook the earth. "You have stolen that which you had no right to steal—the sworn word of common men. There is only one punishment for such effrontery." With a sound like a thousand thunderclaps, the light exploded—then fell a terrible silence.

The next day, Valvidius' vaults stood empty. No one could find a trace of the wonderful treasures, the coffers full of coin, or any trace of Valvidius himself—save for his crown, bent and half-melted into a long oval shape. Funny thing, though—the tin crown Valvidius had gilded to fool people had turned to real, solid gold. They say the Crown of Thieves still exists, and that it's worth several fortunes. But no one knows where it is, of course. Me, I don't know what to believe. I've shared a flagon of ale with plenty of folk who've gone looking for it. But I've not seen any of them come back ...

THE SHACKLED FEET OF FRIENDSHIP



In the days before the Scourge, when the Therans ruled Barsaive with an iron fist, our ancestor Tchi traveled far down the Serpent River in search of new villages with which to trade, despite the warnings of some elders of our foundation who advised her against a journey so deep into unknown lands. Her trading prospered, and soon she began the long voyage home again; but scarcely a day after setting sail she fell into the hands of slavers. Tchi fought bravely, but the slavers overwhelmed her. They took all her goods as plunder and branded her with the iron mark of ownership.

When Tchi regained her senses, she saw iron bands around her ankles and felt burning agony in one foot. Her captors had shackled her to a human woman. Through her own foot and the human's, the slavers had driven an iron pin, piercing the flesh behind their ankle bones so that they could scarcely walk. Tchi spoke to the woman, but the woman would only say that her Name was Mara.

Legends of Earthdawn • The Shackled Feet of Friendship

Tchi and Mara spent many weeks shackled together, forced by the slavers to walk across Barsaive. Because of the shackle, they could only move without agony by leaning on each other so that they would put no weight upon their shackled legs. As they made their long, slow march toward the city of Vivane, Tchi and Mara shared their fear and pain and grew from strangers into the dearest of friends.

In Vivane, their captors sold them to Theran slavers. The Therans chained the two women to a wall in a dark, dank dungeon beneath the stables of an inn where slavers trading in town or nearby would often go for a meal or a few nights' lodging. The basement had been specially made to store the Name-givers bought and sold; it had a heavy wooden door locked with a thick iron bolt, and large metal rings set into the stone walls to which slaves were bound. It was cold, and it stank of manure and other rotting things. Even the hay in the stable above was rotten and fetid; the owners of the inn replaced it only when the stench grew so strong that paying customers began to notice it above the smell of horses. As the horses moved around above Mara and Tchi, bits of hay, mud, and manure fell on them through the cracks in the stable floor.

Mara and Tchi crouched together in misery. As they clung to each other for warmth, they whispered of what they would do if they saw a chance to escape. Though all true hope of such a chance had faded from their minds, it eased their pain a little to think of killing their evil masters and running free into the hills.

One day, as Tchi spun a tale of returning in triumph to the banks of the Serpent, a small knife used to clean horses' hooves fell through a crack in the ceiling and landed near the two slaves. Mara and Tchi looked first at the knife, then at each other. As one, they reached for the tiny blade. For hours they worked, first trying to break the lock on their chains, then trying to pry the ring out of the wall, then trying to force the shackles off their legs. Finally, exhausted and desperate, Mara jabbed hard at one iron band. The knife slipped off the metal and tore into her ankle. Mara screamed, and the sound of her own voice drove her into a frenzy of anger and pain. Again and again, she cut at her bleeding foot. Tchi cried out for her to stop, but then saw in Mara's madness a clear way of escape—the only way left to them. As the knife cleaved through Mara's muscle and bone, Tchi tore a strip of leather from her jerkin and tied it around her friend's ankle to staunch the bleeding. Then Tchi took the knife, and Mara held her as Tchi began to cut off her own foot. Leaning on each other, they escaped into the night.

They walked for two days, holding each other up whenever either faltered. Scavenging for food and water, constantly watching for pursuers, they traveled north toward the mountains. Once, as they huddled in an ice-cold stream behind a few sheltering bushes, the slavers passed within feet of where they hid. As they struggled through the mountain passes, Mara caught a fever; and Tchi, rather than leave her friend behind, tended Mara lovingly and saved her from Death's embrace. And all the while the slavers hunted them, wild beasts beset them, and no safe haven from the Scourge awaited them, for they were both too far from home. All they had was each other.

It is said that they hid in the mountains for weeks before finding a kaer whose people welcomed them. Until their deaths, these two women remained the closest of friends, living together and helping one another with every daily task. No one else could understand the pain they had shared, or their love and need for each other.

When the Scourge ended hundreds of years later, one of our foundation discovered the severed feet of Tchi and Mara, still bound by the shackles and strangely well-preserved. As long as friendship and trust remain in the world, the feet will not decay.



THE QUESTOR AND THE MAGICIAN



Once there was a brother, a great questor of Astendar, and a sister, a wielder of powerful magic. The brother was Named Eaconn; the sister, Tassia. Together with their allies Braloth the Rock, Ambaras the Wave, and the Countess of Nevermore, they vanquished many Horrors and wicked Name-givers. They overturned the Plateau of Umnor to crush the Choir of Madness. They shattered the Tower of False Regrets. They delved deep into the Chasm of a Thousand Throats and came back alive. And in all these and other mighty deeds, Tassia and Eaconn worked together like hand and glove, like lock and key, like river and riverbed.

But as they celebrated each victory in their keep in forgotten Seremor, they always disagreed about which powers were superior—those bestowed by the Passions, or those discovered through Name-giver magic alone. No matter what the talk over ale and food, whatever Eaconn said Tassia would dispute. And when Tassia voiced an opinion, Eaconn contradicted it. On the rare occasions when one convinced the other, the victor would switch positions merely to continue the debate. One day, either Tassia or Eaconn—no one remembers which—proposed a wager to settle the question. To test which powers were superior, the questor and the magician agreed that each would forge a bell of purest metal. The other members of their legendary adventuring party would judge the contest, and whoever produced the bell with the most beautiful tone would be the victor.

So Eaconn and Tassia retreated to their own private workshops, while their friends pursued other matters. A month later, the three judges returned to the keep at Seremor, only to discover that neither the questor nor the magician had emerged from their sequester. After another month the three returned again, but Eaconn and Tassia still refused to come out. The three returned a third time, a year later, and still the questor and the magician had not finished their work. The three adventurers pleaded with Eaconn and Tassia to abandon their wager, but they would not, and so the legendary friends parted ways.

Seven years later, Braloth the Rock was slain by a child bearing a silver tray, as had been prophesied years ago by Braloth's mother. Thirteen years later, the Countess of Nevermore was caught in a spirit maze, and her body withered and died. And thirteen years after that, Ambaras the Wave was turned to sand by the Barsaive Snake and scattered by the winds.

Another twenty years later, on a bright Raquas morning, Eaconn and Tassia emerged simultaneously from their workshops in the keep. Aged and crippled both, they came together, each to admit defeat—for each had a fine-looking bell that made no sound.

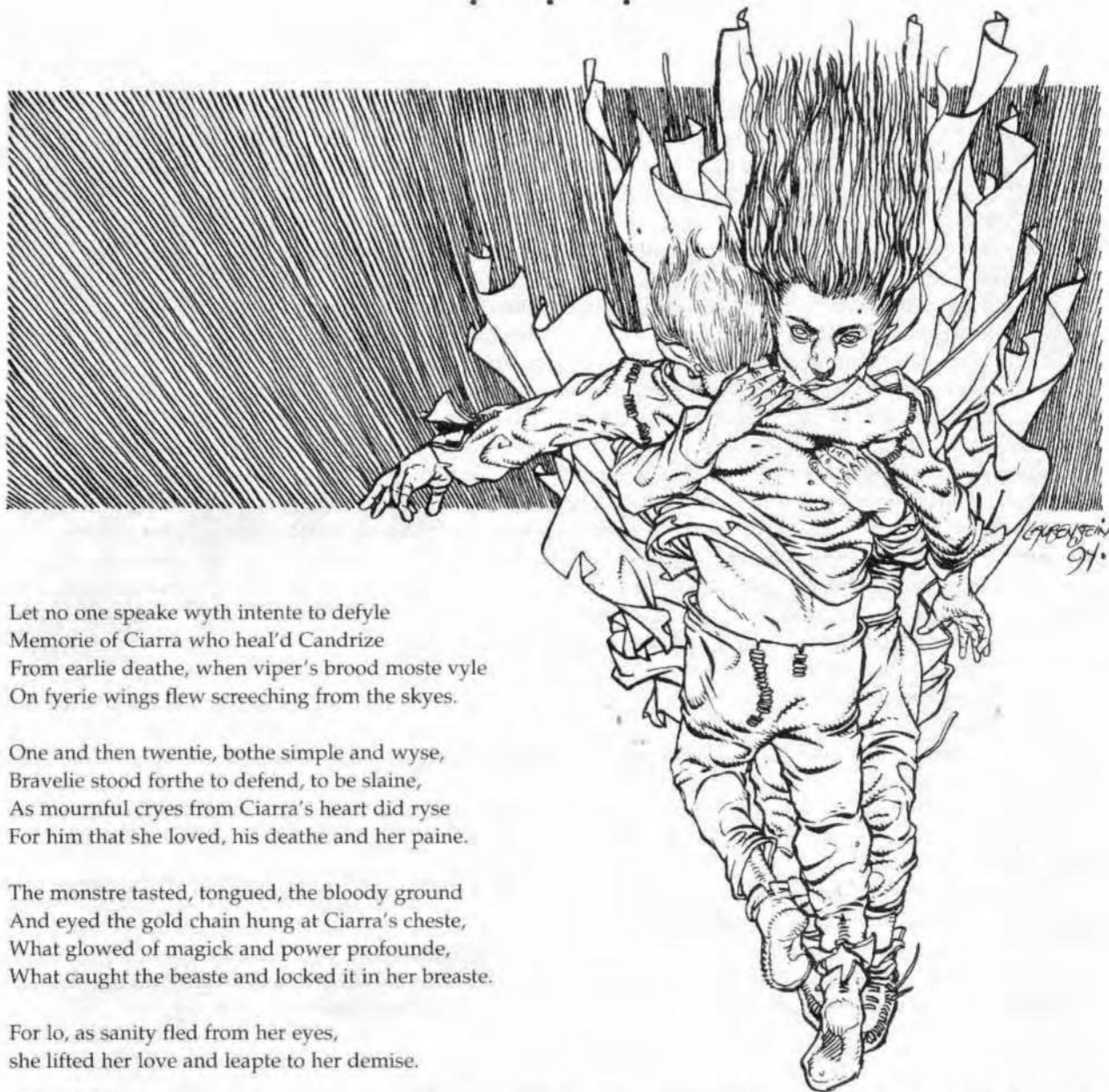
"We have wasted our lives on a foolish wager," Eaconn said. "And we have lost many years we could have spent with our great companions, who are now forever lost to us."

"Though I find the irony of it painful, I am forced to agree, my brother," said Tassia.

Carelessly, they threw the bells down onto the floor. The bells rolled together and touched. To the surprise of both brother and sister, the two bells became one, making the most lovely peal heard before or since. The sound of the bell rejuvenated the questor and the magician, and brought their comrades back to life from their various graves. Surprised to be alive, at Seremor and at the height of their powers, Braloth, Ambaras and the Countess of Nevermore quickly pronounced the bell contest a draw. Reunited in a miraculous second youth, the five adventurers accomplished many more heroic exploits.

Realizing, however, that their bell was too beautiful and powerful to be hung from any tower, Eaconn and Tassia split it in two and hid its pieces. It is said that miracles will happen when the bell rings again.

CIARRA SHY-RU



Let no one speake wyth intente to defyle
Memorie of Ciarra who heal'd Candrize
From earlie deathe, when viper's brood moste vyle
On fyerie wings flew screeching from the skyes.

One and then twentie, bothe simple and wyse,
Bravelie stood forthe to defend, to be slaine,
As mournful cryes from Ciarra's heart did ryse
For him that she loved, his deathe and her paine.

The monstre tasted, tongued, the bloody ground
And eyed the gold chain hung at Ciarra's cheste,
What glowed of magick and power profounde,
What caught the beastie and locked it in her breaste.

For lo, as sanity fled from her eyes,
she lifted her love and leapte to her demise.

This is the tale of Ciarra Shy-Ru, who teaches us the true meaning of courage. Long ago did Candrize live, a village built on a high ledge on the side of Mount Tyrock. Tall were its houses and every building within it, and deep was the crevasse below. Only by mounting the steep, winding path up the mountain's flank could any reach Candrize. And long ago did Ciarra Shy-Ru live, Candrize's truest daughter.

Ciarra was the child of Ciar'h Rhan, respected Elder of Candrize. From her earliest days, Ciarra learned the ways of a leader, for all knew that she must lead Candrize upon her father's death. For many a long year had Ciar'h Rhan led the people, and he commanded all their respect and love—partly for his own good

Legends of Earthdawn • Ciarra Shy-Ru

qualities, and partly because of the Chain of Capturing. Since the days of Ciar'h Rhan's great-grandsire, who had made the magical chain, all the leaders of Candrize wore it to help hold the people together against fear in the face of the coming Scourge. And so, too, would Ciarra Shy-Ru wear it in her time.

Now Ciarra had grown from child to young woman, and had plighted her troth to Marat Bhen, a fine strong man with a clear eye and a noble heart. All the village loved them both, and Ciarra's thoughts dwelled dreamily on the children she would bear as she helped the village folk make the last day's preparations to enter their kaer. All the people of Candrize talked of the coming marriage, the first to be celebrated in their new home under the earth. And all felt relieved (though none spoke of it) that they would surely escape the ravages of the Horrors. At the end of that very day, they would enter their kaer and seal themselves away from the outside world. After that was done, they need fear nothing anymore.

The villagers bustled about, carrying crates, barrels, and trunks into the cavern that they had made their kaer. They packed up their possessions and brought them down the narrow path to the kaer entrance, a crack in the cliff wall. Artisans made the last, finishing touches to the symbols of protection around the doorway, and the village elementalist spoke softly to the clumps of ivy that he would cause to grow over the sealed doorway to hide it. The people were eager to enter their kaer, built as it was within the cave of crystal that they had long held sacred. The folk whispered to each other that the crystals of Candrize held special magical powers, for did not shards of these same crystals hang from their own Elder's magic chain? With so much magic to protect them, how could the people help but survive through the Long Darkness?

As the sun moved farther westward toward its resting place, Ciarra and Marat Bhen rested from their labors on a sun-warmed rock and talked quietly of the house they would share. A vast shadow fell across the rock, blotting out the light. Someone screamed, and Ciarra looked up to see a monster before them.

The Horror hovered between Candrize and the sun. Three snake heads twisted and hissed atop the disfigured body of a man. It descended slowly toward them, its huge wings spread wide. The sun shone suddenly through the wings, nearly blinding the brave souls who rushed toward it with weapons in their hands: a scythe, a haying hook, an axe. Ciar'h Rhan led Candrize's bold defenders, his white hair shining in the sun like a banner of war. The Chain of Capturing gleamed around his neck. As the fighters passed by, Marat Bhen slipped off the rock and joined them.

Many men and women fell that day. Their blood poured from the cliff like a waterfall. One of the Horror's heads ripped Marat Bhen's throat out. A single blow from the Horror's clawed hand unseamed Ciar'h Rhan from the nape to the chops and flung his corpse high over the heads of those who watched in dread. As the fighters died with anguished screams and shouts, mothers grabbed their children and ran for the kaer. The Horror pursued them, its snake heads dripping gore.

In a daze, Ciarra knelt by her father's body and drew the Chain over his head. Slowly she placed it around her neck, then stood and advanced toward the Horror. She carried no weapon; she had no plan of action. All that filled her mind was shock and grief, and a burning rage at the thing that had slain both father and lover before her eyes.

Ciarra stepped in front of the Horror. It ceased its pursuit and gazed at her. Ciarra walked slowly toward the monster, her eyes open and unblinking. With every step, her rage and anguish grew. Then a spark of fire flew between the Chain and the Horror, and the abomination collapsed to the ground. The surviving village folk watched in silence. Then, when the Horror remained unmoving, they began to cheer and cry and kiss each other.

Ciarra knelt beside Marat Bhen, gently caressing his bloody cheek. Taking him in her arms, she lifted him up and faced her people. She looked upon them without speaking for several moments, making them fall silent. For her eyes seemed to flicker as they watched—now the eyes of Ciarra Shy-Ru, now the eyes of the Horror. As her eyes once again became those of Ciarra Shy-Ru, she turned away and leaped off the edge of the cliff.

The dwarfs of Candrize went immediately into the kaer and sealed it shut, and in the earth's embrace they mourned their dead. They dared not delay to recover Ciarra's body, lest some other fearful calamity befall them. To this day, it is said that the bones of Ciarra Shy-Ru and Marat Bhen, and the Chain of Capturing, lie somewhere at the bottom of the great crevasse.

PARLIAMENT OF MERMAIDS



In the early days, when the t'skrang first swam the Serpent River, we shared the Great Water with a race of strange creatures called mermaids. The mermaids caused us many troubles, but not because mermaids are evil or terrible, like H'orrors or Theran slavers. It is true the elves feared them, for sometimes they took an elf child and made it a mermaid. But we had no fear of the mermaids, because they were like us. They talked and sang and told stories, they built houses to live in, they loved their children and wanted peace with their neighbors. Just because you mean well, though, doesn't make you a good neighbor—and the mermaids were not. They thought they were more beautiful to behold than a fine sunrise, that their jokes were cleverer than any others, that their voices were a greater blessing to hear than the sound of a good sailing wind.

Because they believed that they could do no wrong, they did not understand why we did not love them. They made friends with the fish we ate, warning the fish away from our boats so that we could catch no dinner.

Legends of Earthdawn • Parliament of Mermaids

They frolicked and played in the river without paying any attention to where our boats were going, and often tipped over our vessels—sometimes by accident, sometimes on purpose. (Now, these things happened long before Upandal helped us discover the secret of the fire engine, so the boats we used in those days were flimsy and easy to tip over compared to the ones your mothers and fathers use today.) And so when the mermaids tipped over our boats, we would lose our catches. Also, because the mermaids were made of elemental water, they could slip under the doors of our houses and make themselves at home any time they wanted to. And when their pranks and doings made us angry, the mermaids would not apologize. Instead, they laughed at us, because they thought the wrongs they did us were funny.

One day, we t'skrang had simply had enough. Determined to make the mermaids stop their foolishness and leave us alone, wise Rossaruss and her daring mate, T'Chakru, went to the Parliament of the mermaids to plead our case. The Parliament was to the mermaids what our aropagoi are to us, though their Parliament was loud and disorderly compared to the way we t'skrang run our affairs. The Parliament met in a huge palace underwater, a building of great grandeur but little use. Its halls twisted and turned and led to nothing. Its rooms were of strange shapes that confused the eye. Its staircases led nowhere, and one could not see out of many of its windows. And the only room in the whole grand, foolish place that anyone ever used for anything was the Great Argument Hall, where the mermaids gathered to quarrel with each other and play practical jokes on whoever happened to be present.

Rossaruss and T'Chakru swam to the Parliament and made their way to the Great Argument Hall, where Rossaruss spoke to the assembled mermaids. But the proud mermaids rebuffed her. They claimed that the Great River was theirs and said we should be honored to have them bursting into our homes and tipping over our boats. They then began to sing and play their lyres for Rossaruss, thinking that their performance would be sufficient payment to make up for their wrongs.

Now Rossaruss was very clever, and she knew that the mermaids would say these foolish things. As the mermaids played and sang, Rossaruss whispered to T'Chakru to study certain fish that attended the mermaids' Parliament. T'Chakru saw the fish and memorized their appearance—there was a fat bass with a pattern like a wheel on its left side, two carp with glowing green eyes, three pike with long fins like arms, and an eel as long as seven riverboats.

Bold, brave T'Chakru spent many a year hunting for these fish, until he had caught each and every one of them. Then he imprisoned them in underwater cages, hiding them well from all eyes. Soon afterward, the haughty mermaids called Rossaruss to their Parliament and demanded the return of their attendants. The bass was their Bailiff, they said. The two carp kept all their Thoughts and Memories. The three Pike were their chief Child-Stealers, and the eel was their representative to the Passions. Rossaruss refused to give the fish back, and the mermaids became so angry that they threatened to leave the Serpent River—and this world—unless Rossaruss gave in to their demands. This threat was exactly what Rossaruss had been waiting for. Politely but firmly, she refused the mermaids one last time and wished them a safe journey to the other world.

Now these words took the mermaids aback. They could not believe that Rossaruss would risk losing their delightful company. But the mermaids were too proud to take back what they had said, and so they made preparations to go to another world. Up until the very last moment, even as they stepped over the gate from this world to the new one they had chosen, the proud mermaids expected Rossaruss to relent, to promise to return the fish and beg them to stay. But Rossaruss merely bid them farewell, smiling all the while.

Ever since that time, the river has been free of mermaids. And if you ever find a cage in which a strange bass and eel swim with two carp and three pikes, leave them be—we don't want those pests to come back.

T'SELAS VRIIMON AND THE VRYKANØGEN



Sit by me, child, and I'll tell you the tale of T'Selas Vriimon and the Spirits of Shadow, those we call vrykanogen. Everyone knows about the Scourge, of course—even a youngling like you knows very well that man and dwarf and troll and elf and ork and even windling retreated underground to escape the Horrors that tore the world above to pieces. Even we t'skrang hid during that time, going into our Long Sleep rather than face the Horrors; for this enemy was so strong and so evil that not even the bravest heart could stand against them. But do you know of the great heroes of the time just after the Scourge ended, when we first began to wake and the other races first began to come out of their dark burrows? That time is the time of T'Selas Vriimon, a great swordmaster whose equal has yet to come again. T'Selas lived on the banks of the Serpent River, in a place that had been a great trading town before the Scourge. The swordmaster and his fellow t'skrang were

Legends of Earthdawn • T'Selas Vriimon and the Vrykanogen

determined to make their town great again and help rebuild poor Barsaive by reviving the river trade. And so T'Selas Vriimon declared that he would take the first step. He would go to every village and town in that region of Barsaive and bring them word that the Scourge was over and the time had come to take up the threads of life again.

So T'Selas embarked on his great journey, spreading the news of the Scourge's end far and wide. Some kaers refused to listen, fearing that T'Selas might be a disguised Horror or other evil being. But most folk welcomed him with embraces and tears of joy. Often, the people asked him for news of kin from other kaers and rejoiced when T'Selas told them of relations he had found. He also fed the hunger of isolated villages for word of how the rest of Barsaive had fared during the Scourge. Because he did these things, T'Selas Vriimon was treated like a dear friend wherever he went.

Then one day, T'Selas traveled to a kaer whose people had treated him with the utmost kindness. The villagers had been rebuilding their homes above the ground, and the village elders had asked T'Selas to help them trade for needed supplies with their neighbors. To the swordmaster's great surprise and dismay, the folk of this village refused him hospitality on this visit. When he asked what he had done to offend them, they gave him no answer but told him roughly to move on. Rather than prolong a quarrel with people who had suffered so much so recently, T'Selas went on his way and soon put the villagers' rudeness out of his mind.

But when the swordmaster journeyed back the same way a few weeks later, he found that the rudeness had spread to other villages nearby. Indeed, the rudeness had grown to a festering anger, and when T'Selas spoke to the people of the first village, they threatened to do him harm. And so T'Selas once again politely left the folk alone. This time, however, he waited nearby and watched them.

T'Selas soon saw that no children played in the village streets, and no old folk sat dreaming in the sun. Their absence greatly disturbed the mighty t'skrang hero, and so he continued to watch. As the twilight drew closer, he saw people sneaking out of their half-built houses carrying bundles in their arms, which they dumped into the village well. No one's eyes met anyone else's, and no one spoke a single word. One by one, the people snuck to the well and threw their bundles into its inky depths. Curious, T'Selas prowled close enough to catch a glimpse of the bundles. The wrapping came loose on one of them, and T'Selas saw that it was a bundle of bones.

And T'Selas thought of the missing children and old ones, and he grew afraid. And as more and more people threw their little bony packages into the well, T'Selas was seized by a great, hot rage. He leaped from his hiding place and struck out at the villagers, howling in righteous fury. The villagers hissed like snakes and fled into the shadows. The swordmaster hunted these unnatural folk from house to house, stalked them even down the darkest tunnels and destroyed all he found. When he could find no more of the corrupted villagers, T'Selas made preparations for the proper burial of the children slaughtered by their parents, the aged killed by their own sons and daughters.

As he worked, T'Selas Vriimon heard the dry rasping of dead leaves and the scuttling of clawed feet on stone. He looked up and saw what had once been the people of the village, risen from the dead and revealed as vrykanogen. They walked in the skin of Name-givers, but their teeth were fangs and their nails were claws. And a darkness surrounded them, the darkness of a sealed grave.

T'Selas drew his sword just as the vrykanogen attacked. He fought with all the skill at his command, but the mighty hero was weary from his earlier labors. He killed many of the Horror-tainted villagers, slashing with his sword and breaking bones with the lash of his tail, but in the end the nightmare creatures overwhelmed him. He died bleeding from a thousand wounds, swinging his sword to his last breath. And the monsters feasted on his corpse.

THE KING WHO RULED THE PASSIONS



Once more the land of Thamos lay in peace.
Startled by a cruel and sudden eagle,
Queen Uurnolia fared North¹ in that year.
To Maxton was the jewel'd throne passed;
To him of wide girth, bright eye, but dim thought.
To Maxton was the young Releel betrothed:
She of quick laugh, swift heel, but brief life lived.

Came many Kings and Queens from lands afar
To hear Maxton and Releel pledge their vows.
Quoth Maxton at the bride feast, "I am Joy.
Thamos lies peaceful; in Releel's fair eyes
I drown. Such drowning ne'er tasted sweeter."
Quoth Releel in turn, "My gracious king,
Of all that you survey, you are the lord."

Then stood from humblest seat, far from the Throne,
In shabby robes where rainbow colors danced,
A laughing Questor of wild Vestrial.
The Questor spake: "Of much you may be lord.
Yet far above you ever stand the Passions."
Quoth Maxton, as the flame burned in his cheeks,
"No shabby jester shall so shame me here."

To kings and queens assembled, Maxton said,
"I know not of your realms; here, I rule all."
Fires of shame and rage in Maxton swelled
As Releel gazed upon him, puffed with pride.
To royal heralds Maxton gave decree:
All Questors were to bow to him or die.

Legends of Earthdawn • The King Who Ruled the Passions

First came the one who shamed him as he wed.
"Unsay your words," quoth Maxton, "lest you die."
The jester answered, "My words I'll withdraw;
Their truth, great King, not you nor I can alter."
Then Maxton said, "Your kind speaks
double-tongued!"
"All truths are double," quoth the jester, smiling.
And smiled he still as sharp blades pierced his heart.

Some questors gave their pride as poor tribute,
Bobbing shameless at their new lord's feet.
Some tied the Passions' words in twists and turns;
Once true to One, these served two masters false.
Others gave their lives as lesser price
Than to betray the Passions pledg'd to serve;
These bloodied the blades of Maxton's loyal men.

Maxton grew white of hair and short of tooth,
Releel's once-fragrant flower wither'd,
When o'er the Questors victory was declared.
Fierce, fearsome, king and queen exulted;
Until upon the inner palace door
A dozen knocks disturbed the air like thunder.

Quoth Maxton, "Who is't that would enter here?"
Spake one unseen, "Those who accept your rule."
Swung wide the door; twelve Passions stood beyond it.
Thystonius, warrior lord, cast down his weapon;
Lochost, the rebel, said, "Our cause is lost."
We bow to you, we call you Overlord."
And Vestrial, clown Vestrial, he smiled.

The Passions' fealty Maxton did accept;
He made them servants in his castle keep.
Gardens glorious did Jaspree grow,
Garments fabulous did Floranuus sew,
Cures miraculous did Garlen make,
Gold from empty air did Chorrolis take.

Lochost and Thystonius fought for sport
Upon a stage for Maxton and Releel;
A labyrinthine palace Dis design'd,
And proud Upandal built it up with ease.
Raggok to distant courts as envoy went;
In halls of justice did Mynbruje labor,
Weighing arguments of lesser men.

Astendar from his lute plucked songs of sorrow
As on mutton king and queen did sup;

And Vestrial, clown Vestrial, he smiled.
For on the day Maxton took Passions' service,
That very day his doom was promis'd;
His doom and that of his fair realm, proud Thamos.

Thystonius' blows and Lochost's went astray,
Felling the kingdom's finest warriors;
Raggok forged too-strong bonds with ally nations
So wily Maxton could not betray them.
Mynbruje's justice gave too much to many;
Not all Chorrolis' gold could pay the cost.
And Vestrial, clown Vestrial, he smiled.

Floranuus' robes enchanted every eye
That saw them; hypnotized, the people died,
For Garlen's healing could not restore them.
One by one, great Thamos lost its treasure—
The subjects of the prideful king and queen—
Until alone stood Maxton and Releel,
Wandering lost through echoing palace halls.

Conceived by Dis, too strange for mortal minds;
Built by Upandal, too strong to fall
Until Jaspree's wild garden choked its stones.
Then Astendar's sad songs rang too true;
King Maxton and Queen Releel were maddened,
Ruin'd Thamos by the Passions left abandoned.

And Vestrial, clown Vestrial, he smiled.
The lesson needs no poet to explain.
Of this sad tale, the meaning's all too plain.
Thamos is long dead, its beauties gone,
Yet still the words its dead folk speak ring strong.
Passions rule Name-givers, not the reverse;
This truth refus'd invites Vestrial's curse.

1. To "fare North" in ancient times meant *to die*.

THE WAY OF THE BEASTS



When the world was young, there lived a troll Named Ysang. He was the strongest troll in his village and showed true *jik'harra*. He was fierce in battle, and gentler than a baby bird to those he loved. Above all things, Ysang loved to learn about the world. He flew airships far and wide to see everything there was to see.

One day, he flew his airship into the fierce mountain winds. The winds snapped the mast and the rudder, and Ysang could not steer. He climbed the broken mast to see if he could affix the sail elsewhere, but just then the wind struck hard at the ship. It bucked like a wild thundra beast, throwing him into the air, and Ysang began to fall.

The branches of a young pine broke his fall, and so he landed without hurt. But as soon as he looked around him, Ysang saw that he was in trouble. For he had landed in the mountains to the southeast of his moothome, in the lands claimed by scorchers. No sooner did he recognize this danger than he heard the tread of thundra beasts

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below. A scorcher band was passing, and Ysang hid among the cool, green pine fronds. When the orks had gone, he climbed out of the tree and began the long walk toward home.

He walked for half a day through the bracken, uphill and down as the mountain trail led him. He did not stop to break his fast, lest the scorchers catch up with him. Around him, he saw only bracken and bare rock. No bushes grew to give him berries, nor trees to drop their fruit for him. His feet began to hurt and his belly to ache with hunger, but still he walked on under the bright, merciless sun. He looked up at the blue sky and saw an eagle soaring across it. Oh, how he wished to be an eagle, flying among the clouds! Just then the eagle flew closer to Ysang, its golden eyes meeting his own. The eagle dropped a fish from its beak at Ysang's feet.

Ysang took up the fish and bowed his head. "Thank you, my brother, for my first meal," Ysang said.

When Ysang had satisfied his hunger, he walked on and soon saw a great black bear trapped under a fallen pine. Ysang looked at the bear and felt pity for the beast's pain and fear, for was not he himself in pain from his fall and fearful of death at the hands of the orks? Ysang grasped the trunk of the pine tree in his strong arms and pulled, ignoring the new pain it caused him. Harder and harder he pulled, until he had freed the bear. The bear looked at him, bowed its shaggy head, and lumbered away into the woods. "Farewell, my brother," said Ysang.

Ysang began to walk again, but stopped when he saw a deadly viper in his path. Slowly, Ysang bent down and picked up a rock to crush the snake. He dared not take his eyes off of it for a moment, lest it strike and poison him. But as he gazed at it, the pattern of its red, black, brown and white scales mesmerized him with its beauty. "I cannot kill anything so lovely," he said as he put the rock down. And so he waited, as still as a hot night, until the snake crawled away. "Thank you for letting me pass, my brother," Ysang said and continued on his way.

For days Ysang walked, but his cracked ribs and bruises pained him and the hard journey tired him. He had little to eat and could not build up his strength. He knew that it would take him many weeks to get home and wondered if he could survive so long. Then he came to the edge of a mountain stream, where he washed his face in the cool, clear water. As he rested, he spied a clan of beavers by the water's edge. The beavers were building their home, and Ysang paid close attention to everything they did. It came to him that he too could build a home in these mountains, where he might live while he recovered his strength and health. "Thank you for your example, my brothers," he said.

So Ysang did as the beavers did and built himself a shelter. He followed the bear and learned what roots and berries to eat. He followed the eagle and learned where to fish. He followed the viper and learned how to strike quickly at those who threatened his peace. For many weeks Ysang learned from the creatures of the mountains.

Then one day while Ysang was gathering talo berries, a band of ten ork scorchers found him. Eager to kill the young troll for sport, the orks gave chase, but Ysang disappeared into his shelter. The orks saw only a heap of twigs and branches, and they quarreled with each other over where Ysang had gone. As they passed Ysang's shelter, quarreling as loudly as a flock of crows, Ysang struck with the speed of the viper and killed two scorchers who had straggled behind. Then Ysang climbed a nearby tree. When the other orks came back to look for their comrades, Ysang swooped down on the first of them like an eagle, knocking him from his thundra beast. Then Ysang fought the ork like a bear, crushing him in his powerful arms.

The remaining seven orks closed in to kill Ysang, but his secret heart cried out, "Help me, brothers and sisters!" The bear ran from the woods, and the eagle flew down from the sky to help him. The viper crawled out from the ground, and the beaver came from the water to help him. Together, Ysang and his brothers and sisters defeated the orks.

Ysang never forgot the courage and kindness of the beasts and always called them his true kindred. And so do all who follow the way of Ysang, even to this day.

THE GRASS BRIDGE



Three hundred years before the Scourge, certain questors of the Passion Jaspree traveled to the Dragon Mountains to live. On a steep plateau high among the rocky slopes, these children of Jaspree found rich soil made of the fire-rock and knew that they would make their new home in this place that Jaspree had blessed. And so they built a village and they called it Taozana, or "Place of Peace and Abundance." And Jaspree blessed their efforts, and the earth yielded more to them than their numbers could eat or store. And so the people of Taozana packed up all that they did not need, and the strongest and nimblest of the young men and women climbed down the steep side of the plateau carrying the fruits and vegetables. They traveled to the nearby city of Jerris and gave away their bounty to feed the city's poor.

The people of Taozana lived this way for year upon year upon year, growing what they could, using what they needed and giving away what they did not. Children were born to them, grew up, married, and had more children,

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until eight generations had been born and lived in Taozana. Jaspree smiled on them, and they found life good—except for the far-off whispers of the calamity that we know as the Scourge.

As time passed, the weather grew changeable, and the crops did not grow as well as they once had. The men and women of Taozana no longer traveled to Jerris with foodstuffs, for they could scarcely grow enough to feed themselves. Then a few crops succumbed to blight, which had never happened before. The people of Taozana still trusted Jaspree, but they could not help being afraid. Day and night, they implored the Passion to give them a sign; should they stay or find a new home? What was happening to the world, and what should they do to help heal it?

Then one day, a wooden airship appeared in the skies over Taozana. The people welcomed it with cheers and cries, believing that their Passion had at last sent them a sign. The ship landed in the center of the little village, and a dwarf in the livery of Throal stepped out. She carried a book in her hands, and her face was grave as she spoke. She told the gathered folk of Taozana that the Scourge was almost upon them, and that they must make haste to build a kaer to protect themselves from the evil ravages of the Horrors. When she finished speaking, she gave the book to the elders of Taozana, and departed. The people watched her go, amazed and afraid at the tidings she had brought them.

All that night, the elders listened as the folk of Taozana debated whether to leave their home, build a kaer, or trust in Jaspree to keep them safe from the coming catastrophe. Not until the sun rose the next morning did the elders and the people reach their decision: they would stay in Taozana, and they would build no kaer. Jaspree would shield them from the Horrors, if she willed; if not, the people would accept the fate their Passion decreed for them.

Harvest time drew near, and the people of Taozana went to the fields to gather pumpkins for the harvest festival. Just as they reached the fields, the ripening orange spheres burst open; each pumpkin hid a wormskull in its heart. With screams of terror at the sight of the masses of writhing maggots, the people fled to the village, pursued by the army of grinning Horrors. Mothers and fathers snatched up the children and those too frail to run, and all fled to the edge of the plateau. There they stopped and despaired, for the sides of the plateau were too steep for any but the most agile to climb down. Some of the people could save themselves from the Horrors, but only if they left their children and old folk behind.

With a single mind and a single heart, the people of Taozana chose to stay and face death together rather than leave behind a single one of their number. At the edge of the plateau, parents and children and grandchildren held each other and sang a song of thanks to Jaspree for the many happy years they had known at Taozana.

Touched by their love and faith, Jaspree bent her will to the plateau. Sprigs of grass, pumpkin vines, and fallen autumn leaves rose in the air, whirled around in mad dances and wove themselves together into grassy mats. Then the mats joined each-to-each, forming a wide bridge from the plateau to the gentle slope across the way. Seeing it, the people marveled, but they did not move toward it for it looked too flimsy to hold even the smallest child's weight. Then Jaspree whispered to them in the breeze that the Grass Bridge was the road of escape. Hearing their Passion's words, mothers took up their children and fathers held their aged parents, and all ran from the Horrors. And every single one of them crossed safely over the thin grass matting, as if they weighed nothing at all. But when the wormskulls reached the bridge, it refused to support their weight. Every one of the loathsome Horrors crashed through the grasses to die on the rocks two hundred feet below.

To this day the Grass Bridge stands, preserved by birds who repair it as they would their own nests.

ASTENDAR'S DEVOTION



In the years before the Scourge, when the races of Barsaive struggled to carve shelters against the Horrors from the living rock of the earth, the elven village of Golden Moon lay where the River Shiel meets the shores of Lake Ban. Golden Moon was so Named because the crystal waters of the lake turned the moon's reflection into a beautiful golden orb, and the elementalists in the village had a special gift for water magic. In times so ancient that the Scourge itself was no more than a passing, uneasy thought in the mind of the world, magicians from across Barsaive and the lands beyond had sought out Golden Moon's wizards and learned from them. Princes of Thera, ragged magicians from crystal raider clans, and countless others came to Golden Moon to learn the ways of water magic. And as the dark night of the Scourge drew near, still more came to learn the secrets that might save their peoples.

One such seeker was Anthros Lukan, a young and headstrong questor of Garlen from a village of humans deep in the Delaris Mountains. On his long journey to Golden Moon, Anthros had faced and conquered many perils; yet he carried in his heart a terrible fear, for he knew that the Horrors were drawing ever closer to his village's kaer. He knew also that his people needed certain knowledge that only Golden Moon's wizards might grant: the knowledge of how to draw water from stones in order to slake the thirst of those dwelling beneath the earth. He alone of all the villagers could learn the necessary enchantments, and so he made his lonely journey, not knowing what might await him upon his return.

In Golden Moon, Anthros devoured his lessons like a ravenous thundra beast. No others who studied along with him rose from their beds as early, nor retired as late. When other young men and women walked by the lake shore or talked of pleasant nonsense over a cup of wine, Anthros read his magical books and peppered the wizards with questions. Of all the eager strangers learning magic in Golden Moon, Anthros alone made no friends. He noticed no living being who was not a wizard—except for the lovely elf maiden, Kai R'Mai. Though he kept his regard a secret deep within his heart, he looked upon her beauty and grace and fell in love.

Now Kai R'Mai knew much of her people's magic, but little of the world beyond the village. She looked upon

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the serious young human from the far West and marveled, for of all the young men she knew he alone seemed impervious to her charms. Kind words, friendly jests, gifts of fruit and wine to make his studies less burdensome—nothing Kai did earned her more than swiftly mumbled thanks from the somber youth. Not even her beauty could make him put aside his books and speak with her. And the less he seemed to notice her, the more Kai desired his attention. By the end of seven days, Kai's interest in Anthros had warmed to love, and after much thought she devised a playful way to attract his attention.

Back in those days, as now, folk ended the evening meal with a honey-filled sweet bread. Just before the village sat down to eat one night, Kai took up Anthros's sweet and cast over it a subtle enchantment to make the honey form itself into amusing pictographs. By this jest, Kai hoped to pierce Anthros's aloof veneer. To her surprise, Anthros broke open the enchanted pastry and ate it in two gulps without even seeing the pictures beneath his nose.

Not one to be easily discouraged, Kai R'Mai enchanted sweet bread after sweet bread every night, changing the honey-shapes from playful notes to loving poems to bawdy couplets and randy jokes. All these Anthros devoured in seeming ignorance, while the rest of the village laughed at the spectacle. Though the young man's heart burned within him to see his beloved become the object of others' jests, he dared not speak lest love distract him from his learning. And Kai went from a merry maiden to a sad, pale shadow of herself, convinced that all her efforts to win Anthros's love had failed.

After three months had passed in this way, Kai sought solace in a grove of trees where the Passion Astendar often walked. Astendar took pity on the lovely maiden and the handsome youth, and bade Kai R'Mai to make the evening's sweet bread with her own hands. The Passion told her to think of her love for Anthros while she shaped the pastry, to Name the sweet bread after him, and to serve the sweet to Anthros herself. "Do all these things," said Astendar, in a voice like the sweetest music, "and I will open the gate of your love's hidden heart."

Kai did as the Passion bade her, and when evening came she served Anthros every course of the meal. Not with the meat, nor the bread, nor the fruits of the earth did the youth even gaze at the maiden who tended him so lovingly. But Kai was not saddened, for she remembered Astendar's promise. As the meal drew to a close, Kai placed Anthros's sweet bread on a plate and set it down before him.

Anthros bit into the pastry, and a look of wonder came over his face. Slowly, as if its taste was a marvel to his tongue, the young man ate the small mouthful of sweet bread. Then he looked at Kai R'Mai, and adoration shone in his eyes. The flood of feeling he had kept hidden in his heart surged forth. Anthros clasped Kai's hands in his own and professed his undying love for her. The sound of her voice, the delicate scent of her skin as she passed him, the music of her laughter, all these things and more he had loved since he first saw her and would love until the day he died. At Anthros's declaration, all the village wept for joy; even the Passions wiped tears from their eyes. So moved were Kai's mother and father that they called Anthros "beloved son" and gave their blessing on a marriage if Anthros and Kai desired it. And at these words, the village shouted Astendar's Name in praise.

But then Anthros spoke softly to Kai, and the maiden bowed her head in sorrow. The village fell silent as Anthros told them that he could not marry Kai. Though to stay with her forever was the dearest wish of his heart, he must go back to his village. The water magic he had learned at Golden Moon was his people's only hope. He must return to them with his hard-won knowledge, even though the Horrors stalking the land to the west might already have destroyed his home. To risk his own life meant nothing as long as any hope remained of saving his village, but he would not submit Kai to such an uncertain fate.

Then Kai pleaded with him, declaring that she did not wish to live except by his side. Still he refused her, and Kai, in despair, called Astendar's Name. The Passion appeared before them all, and added Her pleas to Kai's. But Anthros was adamant. Not for anything would he risk exposing his beloved to one moment of a Horror's attentions. Hearing the wisdom in his words, the Passion blessed the young couple, softening their bitter anguish to a gentle, wistful longing such as we often feel for departed joys. To honor their loving courage, Astendar declared that any two lovers who consecrate their sweet breads to each other in honor of Kai R'Mai and Anthros Lukar will know each other's hearts in ways that others never can.

And so to this day, lovers bless their pastries, Naming them for distant mates in the hope that when they break open the sweet bread, the honey inside will form a message from their beloved. And to this day, Astendar's Devotion gives us all hope for the safety of those nearest our hearts.



LYLLARIA'S MIRROR



In the last years before the Scourge, the people of a small village Named Landsborne built a kaer as others did in preparation for the Long Night. As the world grew darker and more dangerous, the village folk worked harder and harder, faster and faster, fearing that they might not finish their kaer before catastrophe befell them. But despite all their effort the work went slowly, for Landsborne was only a small village. The headman of Landsborne set guards at the approaches to the village, and the guards slew many smaller Horrors. Yet still, the village folk did not finish the kaer. Soon messengers arrived to say that Throal was closing its great doors, yet still the village folk had not finished their kaer. And as the world grew darker and more dangerous still, the village folk could only work on the kaer and pray.

On the very day that the kaer's last stone was laid in place and the last symbol of protection engraved upon its doors, a ragged band of elves came to the village. They said they had fled from Wyrn Wood, preferring to take their chances in the wild world rather than agree to the mad schemes of their Queen. Many of them, they said, had died in the Horror-infested land through which they had traveled. Unable to endure any more hardship and danger and with nowhere else to go, they begged the headman to let them stay. In return for the gift of shelter, the elves offered Landsborne a treasure of great power: Lyllaria's Mirror. They said the mirror would warn the kaer of approaching danger by showing all who looked in it the nature and whereabouts of their enemies. They said they had carried this mirror with them from Wyrn Wood, and that only its power had enabled them to survive their journey. They said that the power of the mirror, wedded to their own magic, would give Kaer Landsborne even greater protection against the Horrors. All these things they said, and so the headman and the people let them in.

Ten years passed, and in those years the Horrors attacked Kaer Landsborne again and again and again. But the kaer's walls stood strong, and the village folk said that Lyllaria's Mirror had saved them. And the elves whispered in the people's ears that gazing into the magical mirror would make them powerful. And so the people went to gaze into it, one by one. And as each of them looked into the smooth glass, the Horror hidden within it trapped their minds and enslaved them to its will. And thus by an act of kindness to strangers, by heeding the artful plea of the wily elves, the village headman had brought Kaer Landsborne's doom upon it.

The Horror, called Mindrender by those who at first escaped it, projected its evil powers through the mirror. The villagers' minds turned to violence, and their magicians ceased to keep up the kaer's defenses, pursuing their own petty quarrels instead. For twenty years Kaer Landsborne ate away at itself, until the protective wards collapsed. But by that time there was nothing left for the Horrors outside to claim. Mindrender had destroyed everyone in the kaer, save a few slaves it kept alive for its awful amusement. When the Scourge ended, some of those slaves escaped Mindrender's weakening grasp and fled into the wilderness. My grandsire was one, and it is for his sake that I tell this dark tale.

No one knows for certain what became of Lyllaria's Mirror ... whether it still lies in the empty rooms of Kaer Landsborne, or whether some benighted soul took it from that resting place. For the sake of our world, I pray that it remains within the lost kaer, where the Horror within it can trap no more unwary souls.



THE DANCE OF KORRENCIA



You who know nothing of the power of dance, let me tell you of the Dance of Korrencia. The dancer pure in heart who performs these graceful movements will experience the true magic of dance and know power beyond the dreams of ordinary folk.

The first steps you must take are those of Korrencia, the brave elven troubadour, when she first fell into the hands of the Therans. The steps of slavery that she trod, you must tread to feel her pain, anguish and humiliation. Three times you must perform this step, for the three years she lived in the foul Theran slave pits.

During those nights, those long nights chained, Korrencia plotted and schemed. Never once did she allow her captors to chain her mind as they had chained her body. Never once must you allow your steps to falter as you stamp out the elven Rhythm of the Stars.

After time upon time had passed, Korrencia hit upon a way to free the slaves of the palace. So too must you hit your mark at the beginning of the step called abellia.

Allowing the rage hidden in her mind to teach her body what it must know to succeed, Korrencia bent her graceful neck to her Theran masters and pretended obedience. Drinking in Korrencia's worship and fear as Korrencia wished to drink of their blood, the Therans swayed to the music of her hatred. Let Korrencia's hate sweep upward like flames as your feet reach higher and faster and flow with the Music of the Fire as you dance with Korrencia the greedy round of the Therans. Then, as Korrencia did in the darkness of her cell, let your muscles flicker through the steps of a Dance of Power.

For months, Korrencia practiced her dance, perfecting every movement. The slightest mistake would render it more useless and base than any Theran amusement. So must you dance the Dance of Time as the long months pass by.

When she had perfected her dance, Korrencia prepared her fellow slaves for escape. An ocean of whispers filled the nights in the underbelly of the Theran palace; now you must dance the Whispers.

Bowing before the bloated Lord and Master of the Therans, cunning Korrencia told him of a dance she had created in his honor. Curling against him and arching as the Great Dancer Ephelia taught us so well in bygone days, Korrencia convinced the prideful Theran of the innocent merit of her intent. Be certain to play both parts, for only by both sets of steps is the Posturing of Thera exposed.

A message went out to all the Therans of the palace and surrounding town, to attend on the lord that very night. The calls of the bugle, the busy preparation for the evening's feast, the scents of sweat, wine and perfumes filled the air and swirled together in the closeness of the palace. As each Theran took his place, the tension mounted. Three times the Pacing pattern must touch the earth and move the air, until the water of sweat mingles with the fire of your body. Then you are ready, as Korrencia was, to face her Theran master in a combat of her own choosing.

To the accompaniment of the subdued clapping of the slaves, Korrencia began her dance. No words could describe her honeyed movements, the tilt of her head, the twirl of her skirts. Her leaps were breathtaking, her spins superb. Nothing can compare to it, nor should you make the attempt. Instead, make the ancient Movements of Honor and Battle.

As Korrencia danced, her Theran captors grew slackjawed. Glasses crashed to the floor in time to the beat of the music, and not a single Theran eye could turn from Korrencia's commanding form. Majesty was hers that night; make it yours as well.

On and on Korrencia danced, as the slaves freed themselves and fled the palace that had been the tomb of so many before them. Even when the echoes of the final slave's footsteps (the final slave but one) faded into the night, still Korrencia danced. On into the night Korrencia danced, every foot and finger ever in place, for one mistake could cost the lives of all. Hours upon hours after her fellows had fled, the brave and beautiful Korrencia slipped to the cold marble floor in the Spiral of the Dying Rose, dead before the first of the enraged Therans could reach her. She, too, had escaped her captors' grasp.

And the slaves were free. As are we.

THE FIRE POOL



In the fertile river valley lived a brother and a sister,
A brave and noble family
Wrought through honor and through strife.
"Let us journey," said the sister, "to the high and
crystal mountains,
To the mountains that can teach us
To be strong and win at life."
"I will go with you, dear sister," said the brave and
noble brother.
"We can journey to the caverns,
We can bring great honor home."
"Beg our father to consent," pleaded his wise and
cunning sister,
"I'll tell mother not to worry,
Not to cry when we leave them."

So the two began their journey, through the wild
and untamed mountains,
To the mythic endless cavern
From which beasts and creatures came.
There they went to face the challenge of the deep
and blinding darkness,
To transform their simple family,
To bring home an honored Name.
They brought with them only water and a sacred
text to pray on,
Loaves of bread to nourish them,

Bow and arrow and a blade.
Though the expedition taxed them, they met
every danger bravely,
Ceasing not their splendid journey
Until by the cave they laid.

Then the sister, gazing toward the black and
yawning cavern mouth,
Heard a voice speak deep within her,
Urging calm and contemplation.
"Let us stop to fast, my brother. Let us fast
and meditate."
So with purpose pure as water,
She began her meditation.
Brother tried to follow sister on the path of
pure intention,
But his pride arose and spoke
Louder than his inmost soul.
Swelled with pride, his heart said to him,
"I am bravest, I am purest,
I can find my way alone;
I need no aid to reach our goal."

With her meditations ended, noble sister
ventured forward,
Following her favorite brother
Who had jumped into the lead.

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"Follow closely, little sister, stay behind me,"
said the brother,
Said the bold and prideful brother,
Striding forward with great speed.
So the two explored the passage, keeping close,
though never trembling.
Brother walked with blade unsheathed,
And sister nocked her arrow straight.
Through the darkened cave they ventured,
toward a distant, glowing circle,
Never caring what might lie there,
Sworn to make their family great.

Drawing near the tunnel's ending, what they
saw gave them a fright;
At the end of their dark journey
Lay a boiling pool of fire.
Now the brother halted, gaping silent at the
flaming shoreline,
Awestruck at the conflagration,
Fearing death within the pyre.
"Brother!" called his braver sister, eyes alight
with flames of courage,
"Let us take our weapons closer
And immerse them if we can."
Clear-eyed, brave and clever sister realized
this haunting fire
Could not be Name-givers' magic,
Nor the work of Nature's hand.

"I agree," the brother said, but soft lest sister
hear his fears.
His sister stepped toward the fire,
Eager for a hero's deed.
Down the cavern wall she climbed, bruised
by stones and singed by heat;
"Forward," said her brave heart, "arms of flame
Are yours, should you succeed."
Suddenly the rock beneath her feet betrayed
her; down she fell,
Sliding, crashing down the cavern
Toward the hotly burning fires!
"Brother, help me!" sister cried, reaching
toward where he stood staring,
But he pulled away in fear,
Sprang for safety higher, higher.

From the blaze the sister screamed,
shaming brother to his bones;

Yet he watched and did not aid her,
Only watched her drown below.
Soon he could no longer see her body through
the crimson flashes;
Soon the heat took all his breath.
His eyes saw only fire's glow.
The ground beneath him shook like thunder;
flame shot to the cavern's roof.
Deep within the fearsome rumbling,
Brother heard his sister's voice.
"Wicked brother, coward brother!"
boomed the voice out of the pit,
"Would you leave me here forever?
Will you make that awful choice?"

Then the brother, weeping, fell onto his
knees and begged for grace.
"Pity me!" he cried before her,
"I was weak and cowardly!"
To join his sister's fiery doom was all that
his shamed soul desired,
But his body would not obey him;
So he stayed there on his knees.
Suddenly a graceful hand reached toward
him from the fire's heart;
A hand no longer of this world,
Reaching through the skin of flame.
His sister touched his forehead lightly, searing
flesh; he bore the pain
With courage; flinching not, repentant,
As she said, "This is your fame."

Brother fled from his dead sister through
the dark and winding passage,
Through the cave to sunlit surface
With the scar of her touch on him.
"Come back for me! Help me!" cried the
soul that once lived as his sister.
In his head, her dying screams
Echoed until his spirit left him.
Through the centuries of the Scourge,
we have kept this tale alive.
Still lies the sister in the pool,
Alive in flames she cannot die.
Though the brother died a madman,
for her sake he told her story.
Somewhere in the oldest mountains,
A fire pool holds her sad cries.

LISAR'S WONDROUS PACK OF TALES



When the world was young and clean, when we could travel the land without fear of Horrors, the folk of Barsaive told wonderful stories. Troubadours were more common in those days, and many had great skill. But none were as skilled as the two trolls Lisar and Hakeba. These two went from town to town, village to village, spinning tales to catch the heart and mind as well as the ear and eye. And every story they invented or heard, they wrote down and placed in Lisar's wondrous Pack of Tales.

Life had not always been so easy for them, however. Before Lisar and Hakeba came to tell tales together, not many folk would listen to either of them alone. And even though Lisar had the Pack of Tales, by herself she could not draw stories from it that would keep the people's attention. Only the stories she told with Hakeba made the people laugh and cry and clamor for more.

After many years, Hakeba (who was the elder) died. Lisar missed him greatly, and her stories became mere shadows of themselves. Finally, after mourning Hakeba for the proper time, Lisar set off in search of someone new to tell tales with. She wandered high and low, near and far, telling tales for coin (though not doing very well). But nowhere could she find the partner she sought. Nowhere could she find the one who could lend true inspiration to her Pack of Tales.

Legends of Earthdawn • Lisar's Wondrous Pack of Tales

One day, Lisar came to the town of Kis-roath, just off the King's Road to Throal. She saw the folk all gathering in the town square and asked a passing dwarf-child where they were going. "To see the troubadour, of course," said the child. "He is a windling, and we have never seen him before. I hope he will tell tales as funny as the last troubadour did." Lisar, curious to see the windling, followed the child to the square and settled down for a good listen.

Well, it turned out the "great windling bard, Marek," as he called himself, had little skill at his craft. In fact, he was worse than any troubadour Lisar had ever heard. His eyes were flat; he did not see deeply and so could not discern what the people wanted to hear. His gestures were ill-timed, his voice thin, and once he even forgot the thread of the tale he was weaving! All around Lisar, folk muttered and groused, heaping scorn on Marek for his terrible tale-telling. But Lisar felt sorry for the poor, hapless windling, for she remembered what it felt like to lose an eager crowd.

Poor Marek went on spinning his tale, trying to ignore the folk who left one by one. As he spoke the last few words, he looked around and saw that the few who remained were slouched back, comfortably sleeping. In the windling's face, as he gazed around the square, Lisar saw anger and a heartbreaking loneliness. But before Lisar could speak a word of comfort to him, Marek sprang from the ground and fluttered away. As he flitted past a fat human who was snoring as loudly as three thundra beasts, Marek stopped, hovered, and then reached toward the human's dangling purse.

Marek loosened the fat purse with quick and nimble fingers, but it was so heavy that it fell from his arms and spilled a heap of jingling coins all over the ground. The sound woke the fat human, who grabbed Marek and shook him, crying, "Thief! Windling thief!"

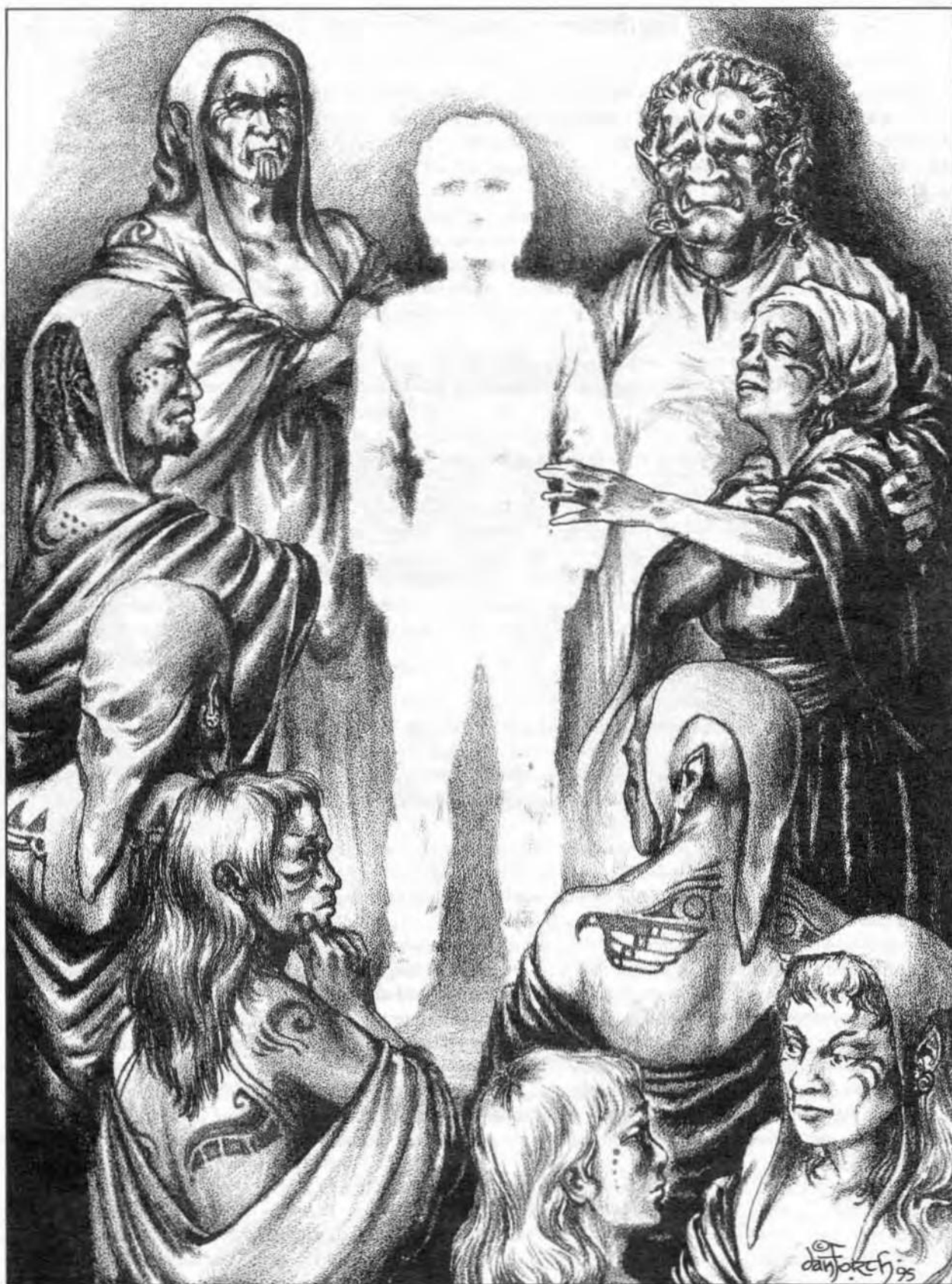
Just then Lisar said, "I saw it all. Your purse fell open, and the little fellow was gathering up your coin for you." The human looked at Lisar, disbelief plain on his fat face—but at the sight of her strong arms and determined expression, he decided he had no wish to quarrel. He let the windling go with a curt nod of thanks and took to his heels.

And from that day on, Lisar stayed at Marek's side.

The two of them traveled to the next town, where a crowd gathered in the square to hear the "great windling bard" tell stories. Before the people came, Lisar took a story from the Pack of Tales for Marek—and the windling told it so well that the whole town clapped and cheered. His thin voice gained new strength, his gestures came at just the right time, and he made the people laugh until tears ran down their faces. And from that day onward, Marek was a proud and happy windling. But he never thanked Lisar, who had given him such success with her wondrous Pack of Tales.

Lisar helped Marek in other ways as well. She knew all the best inns to eat and sleep at, and all the important folk of every town to whom Marek should speak in order to build his fame far and wide. And he did build his fame far and wide, but never did he tell anyone that he owed his fame to Lisar and her wondrous Pack of Tales. Now some of you may wonder why Lisar did not slay this proud and petty windling for his dishonorable ingratitude—or at least why she did not leave him and find someone else with whom to share her Pack of Tales. But Lisar was a true troubadour, and for her nothing satisfied honor as much as seeing a good tale well told. She knew that it was her stories that made Marek great—she did not need the adulation of the world to tell her so.

After many years, when Marek reached one hundred and fifty-seven years, the noble Lisar died. Suddenly, the "great Marek" stopped traveling and stopped telling stories. For a time people came to him and begged for stories, but he turned everyone away. Some said Marek's age had made him weak in the head so that he couldn't remember his stories any more, but the truth was that without Lisar, the windling could not use the Pack of Tales. Lisar left it to him as a gift, but he was too soft-headed to learn its secrets. The "great bard Marek" died in his hundred and sixty-first year, and his own story is now bound into the pack. And no one knows what has become of Lisar's wondrous Pack of Tales.



THE NAMELESS LAD



Barsaive is an empty land still, echoing with the faint cries of the Horrors' countless victims. Even the plants and animals that have begun to reclaim their places seem to feel still the injuries done to their kind during the Horrors' long, unchallenged reign. Throughout this lonely wilderness wanders one among us who is lonelier still—the one Name-givers call the Nameless Lad.

Each of us, both great and small, is a Name-giver. We pride ourselves on our Names. With them, we carve out our unique lives in this vast universe to which we all belong. Without our Names, what would we be? How would we know who we truly are? None of us knows—except the Nameless Lad.

During the last years of the Scourge, a human boy was born to a kaer in the south of Barsaive. Strong and healthy and wailing he was born, like many other babes—but he was also different. His mother and father Named him, as all parents name their young. Yet the first name they chose was soon forgotten by the folk of the kaer, and so the boy's parents chose another. This second Name somehow sounded wrong, and so they chose a third. But no one in the kaer, not even the boy's father and mother, could say the third Name right. No matter what Name the parents chose for their son, something always went wrong with it. It seemed as if Names did not wish to be tied to the boy, as if no Name wanted him. The boy's parents wept and called on the Passions to aid them, but still they could find no Name right for their son. Soon, the folk of the kaer began to mutter that the lad must have been born Horror-marked, for all Names to refuse him.

As the boy grew older, the other children shunned him as if he carried an invisible plague. Mothers and fathers snatched their sons and daughters from his path; questors of Garlen refused to heal his ills. None except his mother would give him food; she sometimes saved him scraps meant for the pigs. And all this time, the Nameless Lad uttered no word of complaint or anger. He accepted every slight as his due and spent his time exploring the tunnels and caverns out of sight of other people.

As the time of the boy's adult Name-taking neared, the folk of the kaer murmured again that the lad must be Horror-tainted. On the eve of the Naming ritual, the lad's mother and father came to him dressed in the white of mourning and told him that the kaer's people planned to sacrifice him at dawn in hopes of appeasing the Horrors that drew ever nearer to their frail sanctuary. This news saddened the boy but did not surprise him. Gathering together his few possessions, the Nameless Lad slipped away and hid in the kaer's depths.

A year and a day passed, and still the boy remained hidden. The folk of the kaer searched for him, growing ever more certain that they must destroy the Nameless Lad to save their kaer from the Horrors. Finally, the kaer's leaders discovered an old rockfall in the farthest reaches of the kaer's tunnels. Suddenly convinced that the boy was hiding behind the boulders, the leaders ordered laborers to remove them.

As the last of the boulders fell away, the leaders gave a cry of triumph that suddenly turned to cries of terror and anguish as the oozing, rot-ridden shape of a Horror emerged from the newly uncovered hole in the kaer wall. Soon all that remained of the kaer's people were scraps of flesh, mindless bodies, and the echoes of their dying screams. None survived the Horrors' onslaughts, except the Nameless Lad.

Again and again, invading Horrors left the boy untouched, as if he did not exist. When the lad realized that the Horrors would not destroy him, he steeled his heart and walked out among them, watching and remembering the dreadful fate of his people at the hands of the Horrors and their own irrational fears.

It is said the Nameless Lad spent years within the dead kaer before leaving it to wander Barsaive, his only companions the tomes he filled with his thoughts and observations. It is said that when he first came out of the cold ground, he was the only Name-giver wandering the surface of Barsaive—he was the only witness to sights so terrible that the greatest hero might shrink from them in fear. And still he wanders across Barsaive, seeing and remembering all that happens under the wide sky. But in all his wanderings, the Nameless Lad has never seen or known anything so terrible as the eagerness of his own people to kill him simply to ease their fear of what they did not understand.

THE LOST DREAM OF WYRM WOOD



Strong you grew in ancient days
When green and living heart you bore.
Soft, your flowers kissed our feet;
Alas, that Wyrn Wood lives no more!
Your gentle breeze a lover's kiss,
Your stars like bright eyes gazing down.
These you gave and more than this,
Alas, for Wyrn Wood's fallen crown!
Each green leaf a lover's touch,
Each bird's song a lullaby;
Beauty's home and heart were yours,
Alas for Wyrn Wood, doomed to die!
Still do your beloved seek you,
Though your beauty's turned to gall.
Still you draw us ever toward you,
Seeking comfort, risking all.
Though your love is bitter ashes,
Though the sharp thorns tear your heart,
While you bleed red tears of anguish
We will come, and ne'er depart.
In the Wood we'll meet with Death,
And speak your Name with our last breath.



I sing sad songs in honor of my friend Uthar, who left us scarcely a year ago. He was a maker of jewels and a singer of songs so beautiful that the saddest heart grew lighter at the sound of his voice. His eyes were as bright as the gems he cut, and he moved with the grace of a slender young tree in the wind. I knew him well and loved him as a brother.

He first began to change in the Raining Time before last. Where once he had sung songs about Nature's beauty and the wonder of life, he began to sing mournful ballads. Songs of lost love, of hope betrayed, of joy turned to ashes, all these he sang. He worked more slowly and often put down his jeweler's tools to stand by the window and gaze out at the gray rain. Everyone said it was the rain that oppressed him—that when the Dry Time came and the sun shone again, Uthar would sing glad songs once more. But on the first clear night of the Dry Time, I saw Uthar standing in the doorway of his house, gazing up at the stars with the longing look of a rejected lover. When I went to share the joy of the sight with him, I saw tears rolling down his cheeks. I spoke his Name, but he did not answer me—he simply stood there, gazing at the stars and crying without a sound.

Four days after that, Uthar stopped working in the middle of the day and started to walk out of the village. I went after him and asked where he was going, unweaponed and with no clothing or provisions packed.

"To Wyrn Wood," he told me, his eyes clouded with dreams—Uthar, whose eyes had always shone so clear.

I put a gentle hand upon his arm and told him he must not go—not yet. "Your father will return from the market town tomorrow. Stay until then, Uthar, so that you may bid him good-bye." Garlen be praised, he listened to me, though his footsteps dragged all the way home. At the village gate, he stopped and looked toward the far horizon. The purple haze of heather on the far-off hills seemed to call to him, as if it was playing some music that he couldn't quite hear. His eyes seemed to pierce the distance, and every line of his body was tense with longing.

Legends of Earthdawn • The Lost Dream of Wyrms Wood

After his father's return, Uthar tried again to leave. His parents and brothers followed him, arguing and pleading with him to stay, but he shook them off angrily—even his mother, to whom he had never spoken a single angry word. As he began to stride out of the village gate, his brother Anthyr struck him, and he fell senseless to the ground. They picked him up gently and carried him inside. And all around me, I heard the voices of the village folk whispering with dread, "Wood longing ... wood longing."

He tried to leave the village many more times, growing more frenzied with every failed effort. He ceased to sing at all; indeed, music angered him because the sound of it drowned out the bird song from Wyrms Wood. His family had to tie him to his pallet to keep him from wandering off at night. Soon he ceased to eat and grew so weak that he could scarcely stand. Yet still he kept trying to get up, to leave the village and go to Wyrms Wood. Everyone told him Wyrms Wood was no more, that the Scourge and the Elf Queen had corrupted it beyond recognition. But Uthar would not listen. He lay on his pallet, dazed and weak, plucking feebly at the coverlet and muttering of the beauties of Wyrms Wood. Once, after a night of evil dreams, he sat upright and shouted, "I am coming! I swear it! Wait for me—don't abandon me!" Nothing eased his pain and anguish, and we feared that he would die. And so, when the Raining Time drew near again, I said that I would accompany him to Wyrms Wood.

For the first time in many months, Uthar got up from his sickbed and ate and seemed to see the world around him. We knew the wood longing still had him in its grip, because Wyrms Wood was all he talked of. I reminded him of Blood Wood's perils, but he seemed not to hear me.

As we made ready for our journey, a faint glimmer of Uthar's old happiness came back to him. As he helped me pack our saddlebags (with gentle patience, as if humoring a child), he talked of how beautiful the Wood was, and how glad he was to share it with me. His words made me turn away, lest he see the tears I could no longer hold back.

At dawn, in a chill rain, we left the village. By the time we had traveled a scant few miles, I was shivering with cold inside my woolen cloak. But Uthar rode singing, as if the sun shone as bright as fire. The downpour did not vex him, he hardly seemed to notice it. All through our journey, it rained, and Uthar's body shivered in the damp just as mine did; but his body's discomfort could not pierce the dream of Wyrms Wood that veiled his mind. With every step he grew stronger, and more of his old joy shone in his face. Even the perils of the road, which you all know only too well, could not turn his thoughts from the happiness of returning to Wyrms Wood.

At long last, we rode to the top of a grassy ridge and saw our destination. Below us, like a dazzling pool of dark green water, lay Blood Wood. Even I gasped at the beauty of it, and for a wild moment wondered if Uthar had been right after all. Had Wyrms Wood somehow returned? But then I felt the coldness of it, as if the voice of Death had whispered a warning in my ear. Begone, said the wind rustling through the trees. I know you not. Leave me to my pain ... leave me ...

Beside me, Uthar gave a glad shout and spurred his horse to a gallop. As if paralyzed, I watched him reach the shadows of the trees before I thought to set my own mount to running. Terrible foreboding rose in my throat, choking me so that I could not even scream. But even if I could have, it would have been too late, for a huge gray wolf galloped out of the forest and hurled itself at Uthar, knocking him from his horse. He had laughed with sheer joy as he watched it come, but his laughter turned to screams as the creature bit and tore at his flesh. Over Uthar's screams, I heard the howling of the rest of its pack.

Even as I slid off my horse and drew my long knife, the thorn-pierced wolf sank its teeth into Uthar's throat. His body went rigid, then limp. The distant howls grew louder, filling the awful silence. I mounted my horse and galloped away, terrified that I might hear the sounds of pursuit. Thank the Passions my horse found its way back up the slope, for my tears for Uthar blinded me and to this day I do not remember how I reached the top of the ridge.

Like many an elf before him, Uthar had returned to Wyrms Wood—but Blood Wood killed him. As, in a way, it has killed us all.



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HOW LOR'JAK BONETUSK FOUND HIS PASSION



Some years ago, not long after the end of the Scourge, a Bonetusk drakkar met the Therans in battle over the Twilight Peaks. The crew of the drakkar fought well and bravely—remembered be their Names!—but could not win against five Theran ships. The drakkar went down in flames and crashed against the frozen side of a mountain. Only the lowliest shipmate, Lor'jak Bonetusk, survived—and even he was badly wounded. Alone, injured, freezing and without food, Lor'jak had not long to live unless he could find shelter. So Lor'jak crawled along the steep mountainside, ignoring pain and his growing fear that he was lost in the Peaks. He could have been a mere drakkar-length from a troll village and not have known it, so dark was the frozen night. Growing weaker and weaker with every passing moment, Lor'jak pushed on, driven by his will to survive and his thirst for vengeance.

Just as his strength began to fail, Lor'jak saw a golden light shining from the mountainside ahead. He made his way toward it and discovered a cave, its entrance covered by hanging moss through which the warm light spilled. With the last of his strength, Lor'jak dragged his battered body inside the cave. Instead of bare rock, he found a fantastical garden of plants growing in the golden light. A gentle spring bubbled and sang nearby, and small birds hopped from branch to branch among the flowering bushes. Scattered on the ground amid the soft grass were gleaming gold coins and glowing gems. Wondering if he had gone to the realm of departed spirits, Lor'jak collapsed on the grass. Just before he fell asleep, he saw a troll woman, tall and beautiful, who knelt beside him and placed his aching head upon her lap. All night, Lor'jak dreamed of the woman tending him and healing his wounds, giving him the loving comfort of a mother.

When he awoke the next morning, the cave was gone. Instead of soft grass beneath him, Lor'jak felt hard rock and saw that he was nestled in a rocky crag that had shielded him from the wind. His injuries had disappeared, and his stomach felt as full as if he had eaten a hearty breakfast. Healed and refreshed, Lor'jak made his way back to his moot. Upon his safe arrival home, he gave honor to the Passion Garlen, whom he knew had saved his life that night—even though he had never served her.

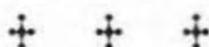
Lor'jak told his tale to his wife and children and to all others who would listen. Many of the mootfolk searched the Twilight Peaks for the cave Lor'jak spoke of, but none could find it. The wondrous cave remained hidden, even from adepts whose Disciplines should have assured their success in finding it. The cave belongs to Garlen, and she will only reveal it to those in dire need of its healing.

And Lor'jak? He lived to a great age because Garlen blessed him. One day, he gathered his few possessions and set off alone into the Peaks in search of the healing Passion. His great-grandsons, fearing that their beloved grandsire would die on the mountain, followed him up the narrow, winding trails. But all traces of Lor'jak's passing vanished long before his kin approached the highest slopes.

Some say Lor'jak died that day and was eaten by wild beasts, but we Bonetusks know better. Lor'jak returned to Garlen's magical cave, where he lives in peace and contentment with the Passion who saved his life.



THE LOVE OF TONLAA AND ENARD



Long ago, there lived a great warrior Named Tonlaa. He fought in many great wars that destroyed many kingdoms and saw many other realms rise from the blood he helped spill on the battlefield. He fought and killed creatures so terrible that we can no longer imagine them—the venomous kriskrata, the ravening dargomand, the hissing vandrake. His Name became feared throughout the land, and all knew him as a man of terrible temper who grabbed what he wanted and made no apologies to those weaker than he.

Tonlaa had known many women in his day, but none had won his heart. Then one day, as the great warrior traveled to the city of Uajnul to fight a duel against the city's twin sorcerer-kings, he happened to pass a great estate on the outskirts of a town called Barhurst. Through the gates of the plantation, he saw several young women playing a game of vrastee on the lawn. The youngest of these women looked at Tonlaa as he passed, and in that instant he was wracked by love. Setting aside his planned vengeance against the sorcerer-kings, Tonlaa sent a letter of introduction to the owner of the estate—a wealthy nobleman, Brandor by Name. Brandor, fearing Tonlaa's reputation, admitted him immediately to his estate and fawned over him as a lap dog fawns on its master. Whatever Tonlaa wanted, Brandor would give him, even if Tonlaa happened to desire one of Brandor's lovely daughters. Indeed, Brandor was ready to give Tonlaa all of them, if such a gift meant that he need not fear the great warrior's anger.

But the young woman Tonlaa loved, whose Name was Enard, was not so easily persuaded. Though she loved him the moment she looked on him and knew she would gladly live by his side forever, she saw no reason to give up her only chance to be extravagantly courted. Indeed, many young men other than Tonlaa were seeking Enard's hand, and she wished to see how well the handsome warrior would do against all the others. If Tonlaa wished to win her, he would have to woo her. Now Enard was a witty young girl and wanted to be wooed by a man of subtle words. But Tonlaa was a man of actions and expected to sweep Enard away. Enard refused to be swept, and Tonlaa grew impatient and angry.

Raising a company of ferociously loyal mercenaries and bandits, Tonlaa laid seige to Barhurst and slew many of its defenders. But Enard did not give in. Instead, she sent messages to her many other princely suitors, asking them to send their own armies against Tonlaa. Like the great warrior he was, Tonlaa beat back the first of these armies, but the struggle to defeat this foe cost Tonlaa half his men. So Tonlaa demanded—and received—new soldiers from the many barons and princelings who owed him favors for destroying threats to their realms. He led this larger army against all who came against him, and after much death and suffering on both sides, the armies of Enard's suitors fell back. But once again, Enard did not give in. She had grown to like the smell of blood, and so she trained her own people as mighty fighters and led them herself onto the field of battle.

Meanwhile, the barons and princelings that Tonlaa had once aided saw their finest fighters dying like dogs and grew reluctant to give him more. No longer able to demand what he wanted from them, Tonlaa learned to persuade. The great warrior became witty and wise, learning to wield the weapons of blackmail, intrigue, and a quick tongue in the same way that Enard had learned the catapult and the arbalest. As Tonlaa fought to retain his army, troops of romantic men from all around the world flocked to Enard's side, ready to die to defend her honor.

The siege of Barhurst continued for twelve years, three months, and four days until the last few bedraggled fighters on each side slew one another, leaving Tonlaa and Enard alone on the field of battle. Their fighting done, the two lovers fell into one another's arms and lived in bliss forever. Indeed, it is said their passions ran so strong that Tonlaa and Enard never died, but live and love even to this day.

JUSTICE OF HORRORS



It was a busy day at the bazaar. Hawkers' cries filled the air, along with a thousand heady smells, from rare perfumes to grilled meats. Behind one of a dozen snack stalls stood a pair of ragged fellows—a grimy dwarf with a wandering eye and a young human with a peg leg. The human reached forward to flip the greasy-looking fish cakes on their sizzling grill.

"What d'you mean, Berelica, there's worse things to be than lousy fish cake sellers?" the human complained. "I can't think of nothin'—"

"Y'isn't thinkin' hard enough then, Gwando," said the dwarf, settling back onto a stool. "There's justicers, isn't there?"

"Justicers? I'd give anything to be—you know how rich they is, Berelica?"

"Sure, they's rich." Berelica leaned forward to whisper in Gwando's ear. "But they's evil. Most of them is monsters in disguise. Horrors."

"You's pullin' my leg again, Berelica."

"You's got no leg to pull. I tells you truth. 'Tall goes back to long-ago times, Gwando. See, there was this elf queen, her name was—"

"Elf queen? They's all real fine, isn't they?"

Legends of Earthdawn • Justice of Horrors

"Shuddup and listen to this story, Gwando. Maybe you learn something. This elf queen, Minelius, she was smarter and stronger than anybody. She united all the races together—us dwarfs, you humans, orks—even all them squabbling trolls she united together. So all Barsaive was all together, one big kingdom, everybody happy, everybody got food to eat, right? So everybody happy for years, till finally even Minelius has to die. So she be lying on her deathbed, wondering which of her children to give Barsaive to.

"Trouble is, all of 'em's good choices. Her oldest son, Roductil, he's a mighty archer—he protect Barsaive from its enemies. Her oldest daughter, Fectivia, very smart—she know all the best ways to win wars. The middle son, Truitemel, everybody love him and want to follow him. The youngest daughter, Falschidil, she got real good magics. And the youngest son, I forget his name, he know all the secrets of the olden times that happened even back before the olden times.

"So she lies there dying and worrying, and along comes this elf, tall and fine with this real smart look in her eyes. And the elf says, 'Never fear, Queen Minelius. I know the answer, because I am a justicer.' Minelius says, 'Justicer? What's that?' Because this was the olden times, before justicers even were invented. This woman—Laroid, that's her name—was the first one. She says, 'I will devise a just solution for your problem.' So Laroid tells Minelius to chop Barsaive up into five pieces, give one part to each child so each gets to be king or queen of their piece of the land.

"Now, this don't sound too bad because Barsaive pretty big place, right? So Minelius agrees and she dies and the children get a piece of the land and they all get along fine—well, there's a few little wars between Roductil and Fectivia, few people killed, but nothin' too big—mostly there's happiness all around still.

"But then the new kings and queens get old and die, and they have same problem. They all got bunches of heirs to decide from, and even though some of them kids not so smart this time, they all wants to take over their parents' kingdoms. And one by one, as the kings and queens die off, Laroid shows up at each one's deathbed, saying, 'Never fear; I have the answer, because I am a justicer.' And she tells each queen and king to divide their kingdoms up between their children, so pretty soon Barsaive goes from one kingdom to five kingdoms to twenty-three kingdoms.

"So this keeps on going for many years. Each time a ruler dies, all the children divide up the land, so there's more and more kingdoms getting smaller and smaller. One king, great-great grandson of Fectivia, he think Laroid's idea stinks. He has a contest between his children over who gets to keep his kingdom, and makes them all promise never to split their kingdom up into bits like all the others are doing. So finally, after many, many years, there's this one big kingdom left—well, big compared to the other ones now—this kingdom of Lesser Fectivia. And all the other kingdoms in Barsaive got just one person in 'em, everybody a king and nobody a subject. So everything gets all confused, and since everybody's a ruler, even the smallest argument turns into wars. So there's smiting and killing all over, and nobody has an army or nothin' except for the queen of Lesser Fectivia.

"Then the justicer, Laroid, shows up to the queen of Lesser Fectivia, and queen says, 'You can't make me change to your ways. You see the ruin you brought to Barsaive, which was once united all together and full of peace and happiness?'

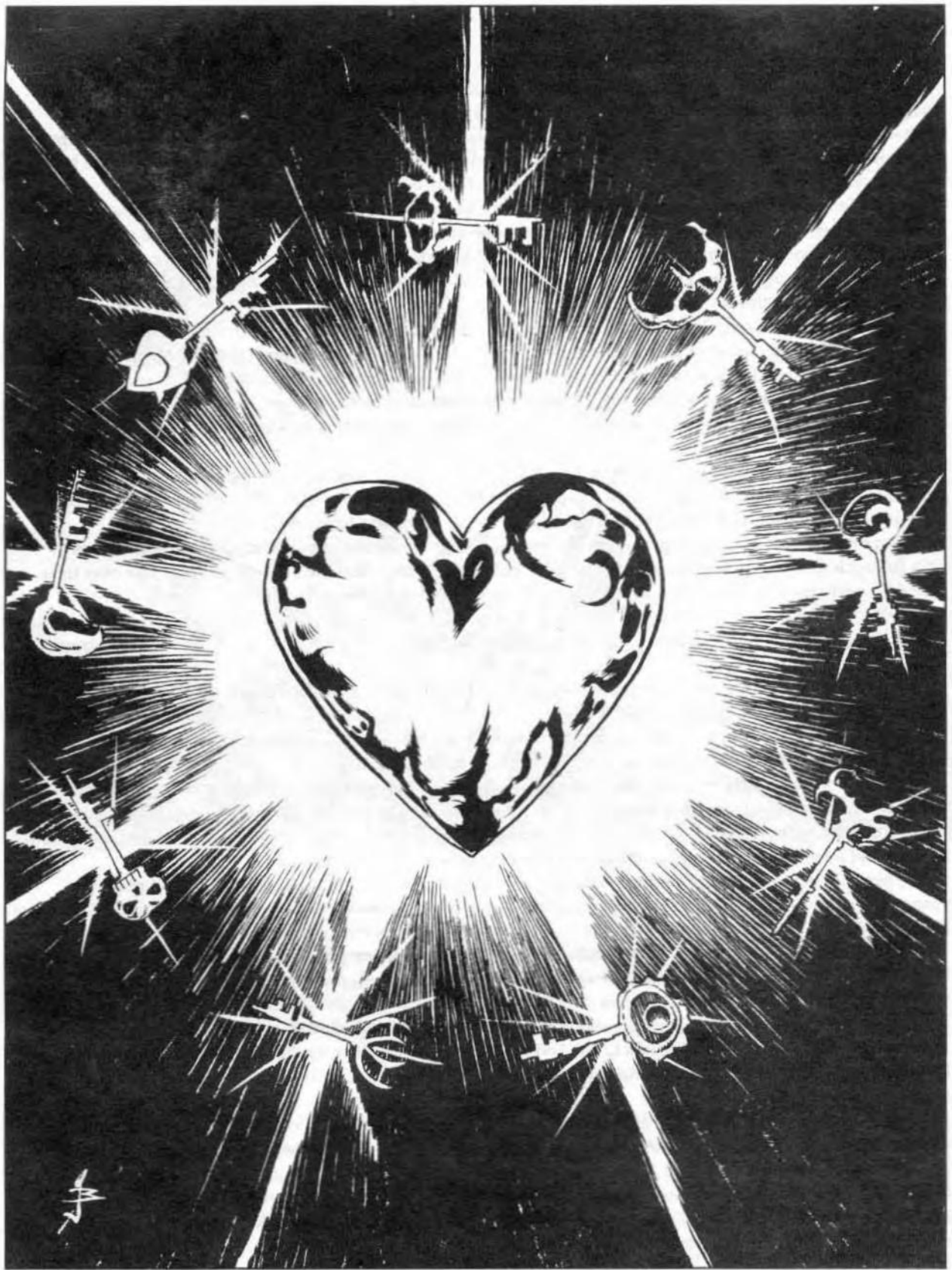
"And Laroid says, 'Of course I see the ruin I brought, for that was my plan. I'm not an elf, I'm a Horror. My kin from beyond this world sent me ahead to sow discord and disaster among you before they come to lay waste to your world. That's why I invented justicers. And now you die.'

"And so Laroid shucked off her skin, and she looked like a giant crayfish with a thousand slurping mouths, and she cut the Queen of Lesser Fectivia to bits and devoured her right there on the spot, while her courtiers all looked on with their jaws hanging all out. And the Horrors came and killed everyone easy, with no armies to put up a fight and no unity to inspire courage.

"And that's why you should never trust justicers, Gwando. The first one of 'em was a Horror, and we all know there's still Horrors about, so any justicer you meet might be a monster in disguise."

The human frowned, scratched his head and pulled at his lower lip as if these gestures would set his slow brain to working. After a long few minutes, he turned to his dwarf companion. "I just got one question, Berelica. If the Horrors ate everybody in Lesser Fectivia, who was left for that story to be remembered?"

"Shuddup, Gwando. You don't understand nothing about legends."



THE HEART OF HEROES



Gaze up at the night sky, my gracious friends, and marvel at the constellations hanging there. The Hunter, the Mountain, the Great Oak, the Air Dancer, the Butterfly, the Horse, the Ship, the Sleeping Warrior, and the Winged Snake. All familiar, yet all wondrous, these gems of the sky each point the way toward the Heart of Heroes.

The Heart of Heroes holds within it the Nine True Names, each Name the essence of a noble Name-giver race. Without our Names, we would be as the animals, ephemeral as soap bubbles, unable to make a mark upon our world! Only by the shaping of our own patterns, our own destinies, can we forge the destiny of our people and our world. And among all the true Names of our Universe, the Nine True Names of the Heart of Heroes are shining beacons to light the dim path of destiny, shimmering swords to cut to the heart of the Universe's secrets, miraculous healing balms to right the greatest wrongs.

In times long past, eons before the terrors of the Scourge, nine heroes placed the secrets of their Names within a magical treasure greater and more powerful than any the world has seen before or since. This magical treasure is the Heart of Heroes, forged of purest orichalcum and imbued with the essences of the nine adventurers who created it. These heroes embodied the truest, best qualities of each of the Name-giver races. Indeed, it is said that the exploits of these nine adventurers shaped the natures of each Name-giver race for all time to come. The Nine True Names are the first Names of us all, and therein lies their tremendous power.

The Heart of Heroes is beautiful beyond anything else in existence. The smile of an innocent child, the strains of the sweetest love song, the brilliant grace of the rising sun on the clearest day—all these things are as withered leaves beside the beauty of the Heart. The Heart of Heroes fits within a troll's palm, and in it the adventurers carved nine filigreed keyholes. Each one of the nine keys to the Heart holds the secret of one of the Nine True Names, and can release that secret to the holder of that key.

When these great heroes created the Heart and its keys, each of them swore to hide their key in a place known only to them. They left us clues to the hiding places in ancient poems and songs, so that we, their descendants, may uncover and use the power of the Nine Names in our hour of need. No one knows where the keys are now, nor where the Heart lies hidden. But the Universe itself gave us the most valuable clue of all—the very stars above our heads. Ninety-nine days after the Heart of Heroes was forged, each of the nine adventurers vanished from Barsaive. On that same night, sages and wizards saw for the first time the nine constellations that to our eyes are so dear: the Hunter, stars of the humans; the Mountain, stars of the dwarfs; the Ship, stars of the t'skrang; the Great Oak, stars of the elves; the Air Dancer, stars of the trolls; the Butterfly, stars of the windlings; the Horse, stars of the orks; the Sleeping Warrior, stars of the obsidimen; and the Winged Snake, that some call the stars of the dragons.



THE HORROR STORM



The great city of Tisoara, in the ancient kingdom of Landis, was once renowned for its magic. Elementalists, wizards, and magicians of all kinds came to Tisoara to learn and teach, and the city grew and prospered. And when the Scourge drew nigh, and all the world cowered in terror of what was to come, the folk of Tisoara said, "We are not afraid. The greatest magicians in all Barsaive live within our walls. We will build a citadel so mighty that no Horror can breach it." And so they did. The Citadel of Tisoara was a marvel to behold. Its stone towers reached high into the sky, and its walls stood a mile thick. A huge, shimmering dome of elemental air enclosed it, and the people within felt as safe and comforted as a child wrapped in its mother's arms.

The first hundred years of the Scourge passed without incident for Tisoara. The few Horrors that tried to breach the dome and the walls all failed and died. And the people of Tisoara smiled, because these attempts proved they had nothing to fear. Only one magician said otherwise—Varena, the most learned elementalist in the citadel. Varena warned the people to be ever vigilant and not to forget that Horrors might come in many guises.

A year and a day passed by, and then one day the sky above the citadel began to darken. Storm clouds gathered, black and threatening. Then the sky opened with a searing flash of light and a crack as if the very earth had split in two and the rain came pouring down upon the dome of elemental air—a dark and foul rain that burned the dome wherever it fell. Storm winds shrieked and howled and tore at the dome, and lightning bolts sizzled and cracked against the citadel's defenses. And the people of Tisoara saw that this was no ordinary tempest, but a storm of Horrors. And for the first time, many of them knew fear.

Only Varena was not afraid. She had raised the dome to protect the citadel, and she knew a way to use the same magic to end the storm of Horrors. Taking a piece of purest crystal the size of a troll's fist, Varena performed a dangerous rite of blood magic and trapped the Horror storm within the stone. When the last word was spoken and the last gesture made, the clear crystal had turned the color of smoke, lit from within by occasional flashes of lightning.

The people of Tisoara rejoiced and praised Varena as their savior, but Varena knew she had won only a temporary victory. In secret, she performed the same rite of blood magic once every year to keep the Horror storm within the crystal. She grew weaker and weaker each time. When she grew too weak to keep the storm bound, she passed the crystal to her apprentice, who likewise performed blood magic to bind the Horror storm. And so down all the years of the Scourge, those who followed in Varena's footsteps guarded the crystal and kept the Horror storm trapped within it.

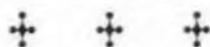
In the final century of the Scourge, the guardian of the crystal discovered a way to use its magic to strengthen the dome of elemental air. The mage used the power of the Horror storm itself to protect Tisoara from the other Horrors that threatened it. And though the Horror storm tried mightily to taint the minds and hearts of the guardians who used its power, not one of them succumbed to the Horrors' touch. Not one of them ever turned aside from the true path of the protector.

At long last, the Scourge ended, and the magicians of Tisoara opened the dome for the first time in four hundred years. And the people wept for joy, because they need not fear the Horrors any more. No one was more joyful than Tigana, guardian of the crystal.

With the ending of the Scourge, Tisoara no longer needed the power of the Horror storm to protect it—and so Tigana sought a way to destroy the Horror storm forever. For many months she studied, always alone. Then one day, Tigana and the crystal disappeared from Tisoara. Some say the Horror storm corrupted the last guardian. Others say Tigana destroyed the crystal and herself. But no one has seen them since, and no one knows their fate.



THE BRIGHTEST STAR IN THE SKY



Look up at the stars, wheeling and turning in their endless dance in the skies of Barsaive. Look at them and marvel, in memory of the time not so long ago when the peoples of the world could see nothing overhead but the blackness of rock and soil. Most of all, look into the sky and see the brightest star of all. This star is Named Findas's Flight, and the story of its birth is full of wonder.

Nonan Findas was an elemental, among the greatest magicians of his time. He was a Theran, but a good and decent man for all that. It was Findas who studied the magics of elemental earth and gave the world the knowledge of how to build kaers as protection against the Horrors. Yet Findas himself forswore this protection, fearing that it would not be enough.

Findas knew that a shield of elemental earth would keep the Horrors at bay, but he also saw that all the kaers and citadels built on or under the earth had one weakness: such shelters shared the world with the Horrors. And though the magic could repel them, it was possible that over many years the Horrors could simply batter down the kaer walls as a thief batters down the locked door of a house. Findas's fears were well-founded, as every Name-giver in Barsaive knows. So even as the peoples of the world rushed to build kaers and citadels, Findas turned to his studies and sought a way to build a kaer high above the earth, where the Horrors that roamed the land could not touch it.

Before too long, Findas found a way to make the heavy stone and earth of a kaer float high above the ground, as if it was as light as a feather in the wind. He spoke to many Theran nobles, seeking funds with which to build and found many ears willing to listen to his words. Together, Findas and the nobles built their stone kaer, racing against the dwindling sands of time. For the Horrors were coming in greater and greater numbers, and the dawning of the Scourge was drawing near.

At last, the kaer was finished, and those who had built it moved their families and possessions inside. And Findas went to the Theran noble who had first agreed to aid him, and said, "After you have gone in, I will seal the kaer shut. Then I will perform the magic that will send it into the sky."

The noble thanked Findas and walked toward the kaer, then stopped as he realized that Findas was not behind him. He turned to look at the magician, saying, "Why are you still standing there? Make haste, and come inside!"

"I am not coming with you," said Findas, his voice serene and his eyes full of sadness. "To perform the magic that will launch the kaer above the earth, I must stand upon the soil and draw its magic into my body. I cannot do it from behind the kaer's walls."

The noble bowed before Findas, saying, "All our generations will remember that we owe our lives to your sacrifice. By all the Passions, this I swear." And he went into the kaer, his heart heavy with sorrow.

As soon as the noble had gone inside, Findas spoke the words of power to seal the kaer. Then he raised his arms, and began to chant the Song of Power to raise the kaer above the earth. The song raised a great storm, and the sky above turned dark. And Findas stood in the midst of the tempest, working his magic, watching the kaer rise higher and higher.

The song that Findas sang has been lost to the mists of time, and no one knows if any Horrors ever touched the floating kaer. But if you look into the night skies of western Barsaive, by the shores of the Selestrean Sea, the brightest star that shines is said to be the kaer that Findas built.

THE PIPES OF WRONGNESS



Barsaive has survived the Scourge, but the Horrors left their evil mark all across the land and on all of its people. Harken to the tale of Elena and the Pipes of Wrongness and know that the battle against the Horrors has only just begun.

Elena was a windling troubadour of great skill who traveled the land with her human partner and friend, Delphina. Delphina had a sweet voice, and Elena could play any musical instrument as if she had been born with it in her hand. They performed together at many a gathering and shared all their hardships, joys, and secrets. Sometimes they told stories, sometimes they danced, and sometimes they sang.

During their travels one year, they came to a village deep in Barsaive's wilds. The village folk greeted them warily, and only with great difficulty did Elena persuade them to shelter her and Delphina for the night. Elena would have passed the village by, but Delphina was weary, both of them were hungry, and neither wished to dare the uncertain perils of a dark night in the open.

So the two troubadours entered the village and ate with its people around the evening fire. As payment for their food, Elena and Delphina began to sing an ancient song of Throal, giving thanks for a bountiful harvest. But their simple song, rather than putting the villagers at ease, only seemed to frighten them. At the end of the song, the village headwoman hustled the troubadours to their beds in her own barn, and no one spoke a word to them as they left the fireside.

When Elena and Delphina woke the next morning, all the villagers had gone to their fields. Not one had remained to bid them a courteous farewell. The troubadours walked away from the village, and as they walked Elena's uneasiness grew. They rested beside a stream, and when Elena opened her pack to remove a piece of bread, she knew what had caused her feeling. There, on top of her clothing and provisions, lay a set of pipes, beautifully wrought of pewter and covered with delicate runes. Elena picked them up, and they felt cold to her touch.

Legends of Earthdawn • The Pipes of Wrongness

Suddenly she wanted to blow them, to hear their melody. This desire frightened her, for she had felt a Horror-taint in the chill metal and knew that such an act could only bring evil upon them.

Elena brought out the food, saying nothing of the pipes. Later, while Delphina washed her face in the stream, Elena hid the pipes under a small rock.

Many days later, while journeying between two towns in the hinterlands, Elena and Delphina met three rough orks. All rode fine horses and led a dozen more that bore saddle and tackle worthy of a prince. Their leader, a large ork with battered plate armor and a broken tusk, called to the two troubadours, saying, "Buy a fine steed and rest your weary feet! Only a hundred silver pieces—a bargain!"

Delphina answered, "I am very fond of the ork delicacy of roasted horse hearts with hazelnut sauce. It seems to me your horses are hot enough to serve."

This answer angered the orks, for it showed that Delphina knew the horses were stolen. As one, the orks rushed upon the troubadours with drawn swords. Delphina drew her own sword, and Elena readied her dagger. Then she reached into her pack for the second dagger she always carried, and her fingers closed around the cold pewter pipes.

Before Elena could throw the pipes away, the orks were upon them. The troubadours fought fiercely and slew one of the orks, but the two others wore them down. Elena saw that Delphina was bleeding from a dozen small wounds, and she knew that her friend's strength would not last much longer. Suddenly, she felt an overwhelming desire to blow on the pipes. A voice seemed to whisper in Elena's ear that only the magic of the pipes could save Delphina. As if in a trance, Elena raised the pipes to her lips.

The shriek of the pipes split the air, yet it seemed that only Elena could hear it. Delphina and the two orks fought on, unheeding. Suddenly, a Horror the size of an ox appeared, bloated and gray, with blood-red tentacles that dripped green ichor. It seized both orks and thrust them into its gaping mouth. Elena shouted to Delphina to run, but Delphina was transfixed with terror. Too late, she took a step away; the Horror flicked its tentacles around her and dragged her, screaming and struggling, into its dreadful maw.

Sick with fear and shame, Elena dropped the pipes and flew away. She did not stop until sunset, and only then because weariness forced her. Desperate for a crumb of food, she opened her pack—and saw the pipes nestled inside.

No matter how hard she tried, Elena could not rid herself of the pipes. She threw them to the bottom of a deep ravine, dropped them over the side of a t'skrang river boat in the deepest part of the Serpent River, hurled them from the deck of an airship and dashed them to pieces on the teeth of the Dragon Mountains; but still they reappeared in her pack, gleaming and cold and beautiful. In despair, Elena traveled deep into the wilderness where no Name-giver lived, and there she blew on the pipes. She closed her eyes, expecting to feel the hot breath of the Horror as it came to devour her, just as it had devoured Delphina. The shriek of the pipes died away, but nothing happened. Elena opened her eyes. No Horror lurked nearby, and all seemed tranquil. Elena buried her head in her hands, and sat still for a long time. When she looked up, she saw a man before her.

He was old and thin, with sunken cheeks and lank white hair. His skin hung on his body as if there were no flesh between it and his bones. Graveyard earth covered his tattered clothes. Too deep in despair to feel any fear of this apparition, Elena asked him his Name.

"I am Jamis," he said. "I am a gift from Fla Tra Lys, the Eater of Music. I will serve you faithfully for a year and a day. For that time, I am your slave. You may beat me or starve me, but I must serve you. You may drive me away, but I will return to serve you. If you slay me, my body will rise from the dead and as it rots it will serve you.

"After a year and a day, Fla Tra Lys will claim me. The Horror will sweep over us both like the fall of night. You will sink into the ground, sleeping as though dead. And in that sleep, dreams will come, dreams of the Eater of Music. You will not awaken until the Pipes of Wrongness summon you. Then you will be as I am, the slave of the fool who made the Horror's music. So it shall be until the end of Time."

With a strangled cry, Elena hurled the Pipes of Wrongness as far from her as she could. Then she unsheathed her dagger and buried it in her own heart. No soul has seen the Pipes of Wrongness since that day, though some have heard their cold scream in the depths of the darkest nights.

NEW SUN IN A NEW SKY



In the days when the Spirit Mother made all things, a child was born to Tschlome the Sun and Syrtis the Moon. This child was Named Hurrn, and for many years she lived all alone, enclosed in a milk-white shell. Hurrn did not know her parents, or the Spirit Mother, or her uncle Shivos the Earth, or her aunt Shivoam, the Serpent River. Hurrn knew only herself, and the shell that surrounded her. In time, the loneliness made Hurrn sick with belly-gas. Hurrn's body grew larger and larger, until the milk-white shell burst. Then Hurrn's body became the sky, shaped like the milk-white shell and enclosing all the world within it.

The world lived in darkness under Hurrn, the Skyshell. All the grandchildren of the Spirit Mother lived in darkness: the dragons, the windlings, the t'skrang, the obsidimen, and the other races who came later. They could not see the Sun nor the Moon, for the Skyshell hid these things from them.

Legends of Earthdawn • New Sun in a New Sky

Now the river of Time flowed onward, as all rivers do whether we wish them to or not. And in time, the clever Rossaruss was hatched and grew to become a great merchant. Rossaruss traded with everyone who lived on the banks of the Serpent River, and her travels brought her knowledge of many wondrous things—but she never saw or heard of anything so wondrous as the ancient tales of the Sun and Moon. Well, before very long Rossaruss had traded with every single soul near the Serpent River, and she needed new customers. In search of them, Rossaruss sailed her trading boat to the very edge of the world. There, the prow of her boat bumped against the Skyshell. The Skyshell shrieked in pain and a platter-sized chip of black shell as thin as paper fell on the ship's deck.

"Ten thousand pardons," said Rossaruss. "May I express my inestimable regret at the injury I have caused you? By the honor of my Name, Rossaruss of the Trade Winds, I swear to you that my offense was inadvertent."

"I do not care to know your Name," grumbled the Skyshell. "You are the first being other than myself that I have spoken to for millennia, and you have hurt me: If you wish to make up for it, you will go away. Begone!"

This rudeness angered Rossaruss, and she ceased to feel sorry for having harmed the Skyshell. Her pride told her to leave in silence, but through the hole in the Skyshell she saw a patch of bright blue. Rossaruss loved all new and amazing things, and her curiosity overwhelmed her. Rossaruss wanted very much to see the blueness beyond the shell, for perhaps the Sun and Moon lay within it! At once she began to think of some scheme that would let her see more.

"I shall depart with a fair wind," Rossaruss said, bowing, "if you will first permit me to make some gesture of amends for my clumsiness. I have an ointment that seamlessly mends all breaks, dries quickly without odor and costs but a pittance when purchased in quantity. By way of demonstration, allow me to repair the breach I made."

The Skyshell thought for a time, then said, "That sounds fair. Proceed with haste."

Rossaruss picked through her cargo and took up the first bottle to hand, a pewter flask of merthion liquor. She smeared a few drops of merthion around the edges of the fallen shard, then climbed on the rim of her boat and fitted the shard back into place. Of course it fell straight back onto the deck.

"Wretched word-weasel!" the Skyshell snapped. "Can you do no better than that?!"

"Patience, patience," said Rossaruss smoothly. "I had forgotten the necessity of applying a base coat to your other side first. The base coat will anchor the broken piece, you see." And before the Skyshell could say another word, Rossaruss leaped nimbly through the hole. Clinging to the jagged break in the vast white dome, she looked and gasped in amazement at the blue sky, the clouds, and the burning golden glory of the Sun.

"Lay your base coat and return inside!" said the Skyshell, sounding petulant and uneasy.

"Certainly," said Rossaruss. Swiftly, she poured a thin stream of merthion around the edges of the hole and smeared the liquor around. Then, drawing her dagger, she said, "Now I must reshape the hole to allow an easier fit." Rossaruss placed her blade against one edge of the hole and slashed downward. The Skyshell screeched and shook, nearly throwing Rossaruss off into the air. Quickly, Rossaruss climbed back through the hole, clinging to the edges with both feet and one hand. With her other hand, she turned the blade of her dagger to just the right angle. Then she slid slantwise down the Skyshell, cutting a line through it as she fell. The shell's agonized shrieks followed Rossaruss all the way down, until she landed with a splash on the shore of the Endless Ocean. Rossaruss looked up and saw a million cracks spreading across the Skyshell; the air echoed with the Skyshell's fading death scream. Then, in a finger-snap, the black shell shattered into shards and the shards became dust, falling as grains of sand across the world.



THE BOOK OF SCALES



Those who know much of the Horrors recognize the most fearsome of them as Verjigorm, the Hunter of Great Dragons. But few know that Verjigorm the Terrible walked the Earth in ancient eras and accomplished a dark and terrible deed during a Scourge that preceded the one of which we speak.

In that time, Verjigorm and certain allies captured a great dragon, whose Name has been lost to history. The Horrors tortured their poor captive, twisting its mind and body with their dark magics until they drove the dragon insane. Then, using still more dreadful spells, Verjigorm bound the poor creature to the Horrors' evil will. As Verjigorm looked on and laughed, the dragon tore out its own scales and threw them, bleeding, at the feet of its dark master. It ripped out its own claws to use as pens and dipped their tips in its own blood for ink. Compelled by Verjigorm and the Great Hunter's terrible allies, the dragon inscribed onto its scales the entire corrupt and evil history of the Horrors.

In time that Scourge ended, and the world's dwindling magic forced the Horrors back to the hell that spawned them. The dragon, in its last act before dying, scattered its scales across the land so that none could ever read the book that Horror-magic had written.

None nowadays can say what the Horrors meant to accomplish by the dragon's dreadful suffering. Many magicians believe Verjigorm intended the Book of Scales to hold powerful blood magic, to tie the Horrors' patterns to that of this world. Or the book's creation may have served as a perverted rite of Naming, or perhaps the Horrors simply wished to prolong the dragon's agony. For many years, we believed that the Horrors failed to accomplish their purpose because they retreated back to their own astral realm. It seems, however, that we may have been too complacent.

For in the year 1504 TH, a certain windling of Kratas—Uloox by Name—left his employment as a messenger and set out in search of ancient dragon scales. He went to the Twilight Peaks, among other places, and came back horribly changed. Where once he had done his work well and cheerfully, now he raged around Kratas to no apparent purpose, muttering to himself about pages of a book made from dragon scales. Those who knew him said he had gone mad. They soon discovered how right they were—two days after his return to the Thieves' City, Uloox flew into an orphanage by night and slit the throats of six children. When the screams of the other children woke the workers, they found Uloox flying up and down the rows of beds with a bloody dagger in each hand. And all the while he talked of voices in his head telling him to kill the children so that he could finish his book.

If the unfortunate windling indeed found pages from the Book of Scales, then we can only wonder if the Horrors who made it succeeded in their dark intent: not to tie themselves to this world beyond their appointed time, but to sow a seed of blood and pain that in time would bear dreadful fruit. Some say that the history written in the Book of Scales might give us invaluable clues to defeating our terrible adversaries—but at what cost to the adventurous souls who find those long-lost pages? And at what cost to Barsaive, if all who see the Book of Scales go mad?

GAME INFORMATION



This section provides guidelines for creating adventures or even entire campaigns based on the thirty legends presented in the first half of this book. Incorporating these stories into an adventure can be as simple as introducing a magical item described in one of the legends or as involved as basing an epic-scale quest on the legend that takes the characters from one side of Barsaive to the other. The choice of how to use the tales is entirely yours.

The first part of this section provides some general notes on using the legends and awarding Legend Points in your adventures. It also describes the Adventure Framework format, an easy-to-use template for creating your own adventures. The second part of this section offers suggestions and guidelines for incorporating each legend in this book into your **Earthdawn** game.

USING THE LEGENDS

When using the legends in this book, keep the following points in mind. First, not all the legends in this book are necessarily true. The gamemaster decides which are true in his campaign and which are merely folklore. In fact, tracking down the supposed truth behind a fanciful legend offers an excellent way for characters to encounter some

Legends of Earthdawn • Game Information

strange event or phenomenon that leads to an entirely different and new adventure. Second, remember that not every legend must lead directly to an adventure. They can also be used to add atmosphere to or set the mood for an adventure or campaign. Most important, keep in mind that the game information presented in this section (including creature statistics, treasure statistics, and the like) is merely suggested. Feel free to alter the game information to suit your adventures.

Creating adventures based on the legends involves two major steps—presenting the legend to the characters and preparing the adventure itself. You may present the legend to your players in several ways. For example, the characters may hear a legend from a storyteller or troubadour in a small village, or they may find a scrap of parchment that contains the text of a legend. The characters may learn certain elements of the legend early on in an adventure and gradually discover the complete story as the adventure progresses. The game notes given for some of the legends include suggestions for presenting them to the players—use these as models if you need presentation ideas.

To prepare adventures based on the legends, use the adventure framework described below.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORK

No two gamemasters design adventures in the same way. Some prefer to plan for every possibility they can foresee in advance, leaving as little as possible to chance. Others prefer a looser style, where they plan the most significant events in the adventure but improvise the rest. To aid gamemasters in preparing adventures, we have devised the following adventure framework format. The adventure framework 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.

The adventure framework has five parts: **Premise, Setup, Events, Climax** and **Sequels**.

Premise

The **Premise** briefly summarizes the adventure and describes its major sources of conflict or drama.

Setup

The **Setup** 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.

Events

Events describes 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.

Climax

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 actually ends because player groups often take unexpected actions. Therefore, planning for more than one possible climax is a good idea.

Sequels

Sequels 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. See pp. 15–17 of the **Gamemastering Earthdawn** book in the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack** for more information about creating **Earthdawn** campaigns and maintaining campaign continuity.

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AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

As characters take part in adventures based on the legends in this book, they associate themselves with the subjects of these legends. This association lends extra significance to the characters' actions during these legend-inspired adventures. Thus, as the characters find legendary items, visit legendary places or search for the truth about legendary heroes, they are forging their own legends.

This means that adventures based on the legends in this book, as well as other legends devised by the gamemaster, should earn characters more Legend Points than relatively "mundane" adventures not based on legends. The number of bonus Legend Points that players may earn in legend-based adventures should be based on the Legend Award the gamemaster assigns to the adventure. Refer to **Awarding Legend Points** (pp. 241–243, *Earthdawn* rulebook) for guidelines on determining Legend Awards. The bonus should range from 50 to 100 percent of the Legend Award. This bonus is awarded to each character at the successful completion of the adventure, not at the end of each game session.

A gamemaster creates an adventure based on the legend of Thystonius's Spear. The player characters range from Fourth to Sixth Circle. Using the Legend Award Table (p. 242, ED), the gamemaster sets the Legend Award for the adventure at 300 Legend Points and sets a bonus Legend Award of 300 Legend Points. This means that at the end of the adventure, each character who successfully completes it receives a bonus of 300 Legend Points.

SPECIFIC ADVENTURE IDEAS

The following text provides ideas and suggestions for incorporating the legends in this book into your *Earthdawn* adventure or campaign. These suggestions are presented in the same order as the legends in the first half of this book.



THE PASSION'S DANCE

With the coming of the Scourge, the famous legend of the Temple of Jaspree and the Passion's Dance was all but forgotten by most inhabitants of Barsaive. But the people who live in and around the Servos Jungle recall the tale and still avoid the area around the fabled site of the temple.

Characters may hear the tale from a local storyteller and decide to see for themselves if Barlok the Cruel discovered the treasure of the jungle questors. If he did, it would lie with the restless spirits of the raiders deep within the heart of Jaspree's curse. However, vengeful spirits and a hostile jungle await heroes who set out looking for the ork raiders' final resting place.

The ruins of the temple might also hold interest for player characters. Few people know the true nature of Jaspree's treasure, and so characters might explore the site looking for material riches. The gamemaster may determine the exact nature of the treasure: gold coins from grateful pilgrims, a collection of powerful magic items, ancient wisdom and lore, magical knowledge, all or none of the above. If material treasure remains in the ruins of the temple, however, it should be well hidden so that finding it presents a challenge to characters who come looking.

The ruins may also have become a shelter for a Horror or similar creature. If so, the Horror may still control the Temple of Jaspree, animating the bodies of dead questors and worshippers to carry out a kind of parody of the life they once led.

The characters may also become involved with the Passion's Dance and the Temple of Jaspree by aiding a questor of Jaspree. Questors of Jaspree might choose to seek out the temple as an act of devotion. This type of act would qualify as a zealous act and would be appropriate for a questor seeking to appease Jaspree with a significant act of devotion (see pp. 89–90, *Earthdawn Companion*).



THE BLOODY COIN

This Bloody Coin is one of the few remaining clues to the location of Kaer Chkrak and its legendary vault of silver, and so may provide the basis for an adventure. If characters can find the coin and study its runes, they may discover the kaer's whereabouts. Or the characters might simply search through pre-Scourge records (in the Great Library of Throal) for some mention of the troll village of Chkrak.

The silver itself is hidden in a cavern in the peaks of the Caucavik Mountains. Treacherous and steep, these mountains are nearly impossible to traverse without a troll or obsidiman guide. After nearly a week of travel in the mountains, the adventurers come to a crack in the cliff that they happen to be climbing. The crack widens into a cavern decorated with carved magical runes. Two doorways have been cut into the rock, and though they appear to be mere illustrations of doors, they are real. The right-hand door leads to the kaer; the bones of the victims of Beikadt cover the floor inside. The left-hand door leads to the vault full of silver. Low, agonized wailing can be heard from inside.

Beikadt has been dead for a long time; the Horror disguises itself as the dead troll if the characters attempt to speak with it through the door to the vault. Once the door is open, the disguised Horror attempts to rush out.

The Bloody Coin's capacity to detect Horrors and their minions can also lead to a second type of adventure. While most magical items and treasures require that a thread be woven to them in order for their powers to function, the Bloody Coin drips blood from its runes whenever the coin's holder is in close proximity to a Horror or Horror construct. Normally, the coin cannot detect people who have been Horror-marked. If the holder of the coin is within range of a Horror-marked character while the Horror is using its powers on the marked victim, however, the coin bleeds.



THE BRAVERY OF NELSEN LONG-EARS

The tale of Nelsen Long-Ears is a favorite of ork tribes, especially the various bands of Herok's Lancers. It shows that bravery cannot be gained from magic, but instead must come from inside a person. Though the feather was not magical in any way when Nelsen's mother gave it to him, his belief in the feather's power and his subsequent performance on the battlefield caused the feather to become one of Nelsen's pattern items.

Gamemasters can create adventures based on the actual events of this legend or the ideal it embodies. Player characters may encounter Herok's Lancers, or perhaps find the helm worn by Nelsen in the battle with the Therans. Alternatively, a gamemaster may create adventures that embody the ideas of belief and magical thought in the legend. For example, a player character may cause a mundane item to become one of his pattern items by using it in a significant event of heroism.

Gamemasters may also design adventures in which characters find the helmet worn by Nelson Long-Ears, now a magical treasure of great power. The helmet would most likely still have the feather in it, and its key knowledges and deeds would likely involve learning of or emulating some of Nelsen Long-Ears's exploits.



HOW THYSTONIUS GAVE US HIS SPEAR

The legend of Thystonius's Spear is told often among ork tribes, and by ork troubadours. It tells of the true nature of orks, and of their affinity for the Passion Thystonius. Perhaps the best way to introduce the spear into a campaign is to let the characters witness the spear in use or have it come into their possession. For example, the characters might find the spear after arriving at the site of a recent battle in which ork raiders or cavalry fought. The spear might have been wielded by one who died in battle, and the characters find it lying beside his corpse. Or the characters might obtain the spear by coming to the aid of an ork tribe, family or warrior who owned

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the spear at the time. If the characters' actions are worthy of Thystonius, the saved orks might entrust the spear to the characters (in particular, an ork character) in acknowledgment of their actions. Finally, if a character acts in a particularly brave manner—similar to the way Kourba acted in the legend—Thystonius himself might grant the spear to the character. Indeed, perhaps the Passion has granted more than one of these spears to his faithful in Barsaive.

Thystonius's Spear

Maximum Threads: 1

Spell Defense: 12

This item is a four-foot oak spear tipped with a foot-long iron blade. Because of the extra length and weight, it is a size 5 weapon and requires a minimum Strength of 8 to throw. The wielder must be able to use the spear in battle to gain these bonuses.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost:** 200

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the spear.

Effect: The spear adds +6 steps to the wielder's Strength for Damage Tests.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 300

Effect: The spear's Throwing range is increased to S (2–20), M (21–60), L (61–150).

Rank 3 **Cost:** 500

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn Kourba's Name and her story.

Effect: The spear adds +7 steps to the wielder's Strength for Damage Tests. Increase the wielder's Physical Defense by 1.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 800

Deed: The wielder must use the spear in a battle in which he or his party is outnumbered at least 3 to 1. This deed is worth 800 legend points.

Effect: Increases the range of the spear to S (2–30), M (31–80), L (81–200).

Rank 5 **Cost:** 1,300

Effect: The spear adds +8 steps to the wielder's Strength for Damage Tests. Increase the wielder's Physical Defense by 2.

Rank 6 **Cost:** 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of the spear's past five owners and why the spear passed to new hands.

Effect: The spear adds +9 steps to the wielder's Strength for Damage Tests.

Rank 7 **Cost:** 3,400

Effect: Increases the wielder's Physical Defense by 3 and his Spell Defense by 1.

Rank 8 **Cost:** 5,400

Key Knowledge: The wielder must learn the Name of everyone who has died in combat while wielding Thystonius's Spear.

Effect: Damage increases to STR + 10. Increases the wielder's Physical Defense by 4 and Spell Defense by 2.

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BABY, BABY, ANointed IN SAND

Adventures based on this legend will most likely involve the sand castle and the t'skrang villages nearest to it. In one possible scenario, the Horror is still alive and the ghost of the child who defeated it remains near the sand castle. In this case, the characters may become involved after hearing reports of ghostly sightings near Sand Castle Beach. Rumor has it that the sand castle is beginning to crumble, but what does that mean? Has the child's ghost at last gone on to its final resting place? Is the Horror dying? Or is it breaking free?

The Horror may be chipping away at the sand from the inside and be on the verge of breaking free. Every day brings it closer to freedom and adds to its strength.

The ghost of the child may be agitated as well, which may cause different problems; for example, anyone who nears the sand castle may be seized with such fear that he cannot breathe. The child's ghost may still be protecting the site, aware that the Horror is close to escaping. Or the ghost may hope to keep potential future victims from getting too near the sand castle, lest they fall prey to the Horror.

Whatever the case, a feeling of panic grows at Sand Castle Beach and the nearby communities. News of the sand castle's crumbling has attracted a wide variety of weirdoes and thrill-seekers. The crowds are growing daily as people come in the hope of seeing a real Horror, and no one seems aware of the danger.

The gamemaster may also decide that this legend is simply a fanciful tale that explains the tradition of sprinkling newborn t'skrang babies with sand. In this case, the legend may be used simply to add flavor to a campaign.



VALVIDIUS, KING OF THIEVES

The Crown of Valvidius can draw players into adventures among Barsaive's shadier inhabitants. The crown's owner gains prestige and impressive power among thieves if he shows knowledge of and commitment to thief practices. Such an item would be of particular interest to the residents of Kratas, the Thieves' City.

The Crown of Valvidius

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 8

The Crown of Valvidius is said to be made of misshapen, untarnished gold. Actually, the crown is made of a golden-colored metal that resists tarnishing for unknown reasons.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 Cost: 100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the crown.

Effect: The wearer receives a +1 step bonus to his Charisma step for Charisma (or Charisma-related talent) Tests against a thief adept.

Rank 2 Cost: 200

Effect: The wearer receives +2 steps to his Charisma step for Charisma (or Charisma-related talent) Tests against a thief adept. At a cost of 2 points of Strain, the wearer may make the crown invisible until he removes it.

Rank 3 Cost: 300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn how Valvidius got the crown, then gain the blessing of a questor of Vestral. This may entail a simple donation or a part in the questor's current bizarre scheme.

Effect: The wearer receives +3 steps to his Charisma step for Charisma (or Charisma-related talent) Tests against a thief adept. The wearer can understand, but not speak to, a thief speaking a language the wearer does not know.

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Rank 4 Cost: 500

Effect: As for Rank 3, but thieves who do not speak the wearer's language can nevertheless understand the wearer. The thief seems to hear the wearer's speech in the thief's own language.

Rank 5 Cost: 800

Key Knowledge: The wearer must speak the words "I claim this crown in the Name of Valvidius" in any language. The crown then changes shape to fit the wearer's head.

Effect: The wearer receives +4 steps to his Charisma step for Charisma (or Charisma-related talent) Tests against a thief adept. The wearer may speak and understand any Name-giver language, as per the Speak Language talent (p. 115, ED).

Rank 6 Cost: 1,300

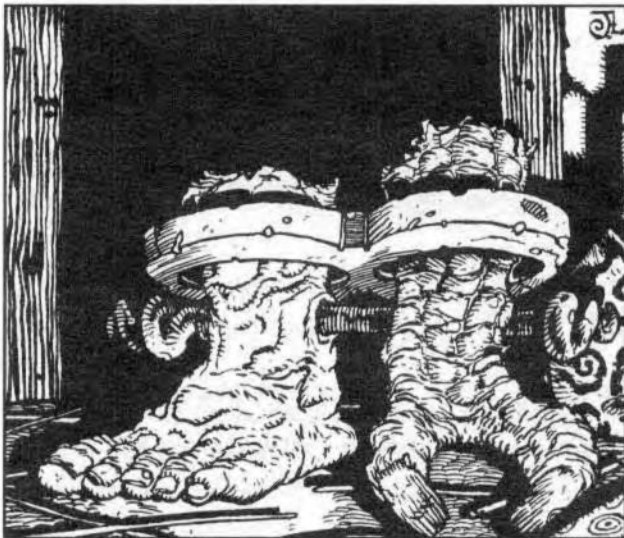
Effect: The wearer receives +5 steps to his Charisma step for Charisma (or Charisma-related talents) Tests against a thief adept. At this rank, the crown begins to relay the wearer's thoughts to Vestrial, and the Passion enlists the wearer in its schemes. The crown works like a Horror mark, except that it attracts Vestrial instead of a Horror. The scheme involving the wearer begins with minor hazards. Escalate these to major perils when the wearer undertakes the deed for Rank 7.

Rank 7 Cost: 2,100

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the magical ritual to fire the forge that created the crown.

Deed: The wearer must persuade at least four thieves of Sixth Circle or higher to follow him on a quest to the site of the crown's forging, where they must fire the forge and re-cast the crown. The wearer and all four thieves must participate in the re-casting, which takes eight hours. The re-cast crown takes the name of the wearer—or of any thief who steals it before the wearer can put it on.

Effect: The wearer receives +6 steps to his Charisma step for Charisma (or Charisma-related talent) Tests against a thief adept, and becomes free from Vestrial's influence. At the gamemaster's discretion, the crown may also grant the wearer the powers of a First Circle thief adept. A wearer who is already a thief adept gains a +1 step bonus in all thief talent and skill ranks while wearing the crown.



SHACKLED FEET OF FRIENDSHIP

Since the time of Mara and Tchi, the Shackled Feet of Friendship has become a powerful magical treasure. Although nearly everyone has heard of the legend associated with the feet, few in Barsaive have ever actually seen the artifact. Characters may come into possession of the feet in any number of ways. They may find them in an old kaer or citadel, or encounter travelers or adventurers who currently possess them. For example, the Shackled Feet of Friendship might be in the possession of a small band of nomads who have put together a traveling show and are moving slowly across Barsaive looking for quick ways to make or steal money. Aside from the Shackled Feet, the gypsies also display a two-headed goat, a hairy little crazy man (a monkey), the supposedly shrunken head of a dragon, and other oddities.

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The Shackled Feet

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 12

The Shackled Feet of Friendship is one of the oddest artifacts in Barsaive. It consists of two shriveled feet, one human and one t'skrang, hanging on chained-together shackles. Though shriveled, the feet are surprisingly well preserved, given their age.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost:** 500

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the item—the Shackled Feet of Friendship.

Effect: The feet can be used only by a pair of characters who have sworn a blood magic oath with one another.

If the oath is ever broken, the threads the users have woven to the feet are destroyed. The feet grant the users a +1 step bonus to Interaction Tests.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 800

Effect: The feet grant the users a +2 step bonus to Interaction Tests.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 1,300

Key Knowledge: The users must learn the Names of the two whose feet are in the shackles—Mara and Tchi.

Effect: The feet grant the users a +1 step bonus to their Charisma step numbers.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 2,100

Effect: The users gain the benefits of the blood oath from Rank 1 (p. 49, *Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack*).

If the oath is ever broken, the characters suffer the appropriate penalties.



THE QUESTOR AND THE MAGICIAN

This legend lends itself best to a classic type of fantasy adventure: the quest for the magical item. In this case, characters can search across all of Barsaive for clues regarding the whereabouts of the two bell-halves left by Eaconn and Tassia. In one scenario, the adventurers are preparing to set out for some other mighty quest of the gamemaster's choice. When they are almost ready to depart, they hear that the government of Throal has found Eaconn's half of the bell in a dusty closet full of ancient junk in the king's palace, which was being inventoried by Throalic librarians. After a lengthy debate and examination, Throalic scholars have concluded that the

half bell is the genuine article. Alone, it is an invaluable historical artifact; with Tassia's half, it would be a magical item of unimaginable power, perhaps of great use against the Therans. Accordingly, the Throalic government offers a huge reward for the recovery of Tassia's half bell. The adventurers hear of this and abandon their previously planned exploit to search for the remaining half of the bell.

Another scenario might involve a living legend cult based on the exploits of Eaconn and Tassia and their companions, or the bell itself. Perhaps this cult has one of the bell halves and is seeking the other when its members encounter the characters. The cult's goal may be to join the bell halves, because they believe that the miracle spoken of in the legend is the banishment of all Horrors from the world.

If you decide the bell exists in your game, determine its specific magical properties. For example, the bell may be endowed with the power of Astendar, who was so impressed by Eaconn's devotion that she bestowed her powers upon those who hear the bell's peal. Alternatively, the bell may possess magical properties similar to those wielded by Tassia, and cast spells on those who ring it.

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CIARRA SHY-RU

Possible adventures stemming from the legend of Ciarra Shy-Ru may involve the characters searching for the Chain of Capturing or encountering someone who has already found the Chain. Either of these possibilities may be introduced in a number of ways.

The adventurers may learn of the Chain from survivors of Candrize, or they may become interested in the Chain after hearing an account of the legend. In the latter case, they may have to learn where Candrize is and how to get there. Their research may be as simple as asking the storyteller questions or as difficult as sorting through huge volumes written before the Scourge.

Once they make it to Candrize, they may encounter a myriad of monsters awaiting them at the base of the great crevasse. Some dreadful thing may have found the pretty chain and pulled it into its lair, leaving a trail for the adventurers to follow.

Alternatively, an overconfident magician may possess the Chain. The mage believes he is strong enough to capture a Horror, use the Chain to overpower it, and possess its powers for himself. He hires the characters to help him find a Horror, but discovers the hard way that he cannot control it, putting them all in extreme danger.

Chain of Capturing

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 13

The Chain of Capturing was created by one of the early leaders of Candrize. The village was in danger of falling apart, as dissent and distrust began to wear at its people. The leader, a troubadour adept, created the chain to serve as a symbol of leadership and used his talents to encourage the people of Candrize to band together to build their kaer so that the village might survive the Scourge.

Over time, the chain gained magical properties that enhanced the leadership abilities of its wearer.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost:** 200

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the chain.

Effect: The chain temporarily mesmerizes anyone who sees it by "capturing" their attention. The wearer makes a Charisma (or related talent/skill) Test. If the result is higher than the Social Defense of anyone who can see the chain, they are mesmerized. The chain works against both friend and foe. An affected character must make a Willpower Test against the wearer's Charisma Test result to resist the effects of the chain.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 300

Effect: The chain increases the wearer's Social Defense by +1.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 500

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the Name of the chain's creator.

Effect: The chain adds +1 step to the wearer's Charisma step number.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 800

Effect: Increases the wearer's Social Defense by +2 and adds +2 steps to the wearer's Charisma step number.

Rank 5 **Cost:** 1,300

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn the chain's true purpose.

Effect: As above, but affected characters must achieve a Good success or better to resist the effects of the chain.

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Rank 6 **Cost:** 2,100

Effect: The Chain of Capturing increases the wearer's Social Defense by +3 and adds +3 Steps to the wearer's Charisma step number.

Rank 7 **Cost:** 3,400

Key Knowledge: The wearer must learn what really happened when Ciarra "killed" the Horror.

Effect: As above, but affected characters must achieve an Excellent success or better to resist the effects of the chain.

Rank 8 **Cost:** 5,500

Deed: The wearer must pledge to sacrifice himself for the sake of any others who are in danger from a Horror.

Effect: If the wearer makes a successful Charisma Test against a Horror, the chain "mindlocks" the Horror, "captures" its soul and draws it into the chain. This ability is powered by blood magic and causes 4 points of permanent damage to the wearer. This effect works on Horrors only.



PARLIAMENT OF MERMAIDS

The gamemaster may introduce this legend as a story told in t'skrang villages. A sample introduction is provided below.

In their stone house on the bed of the Serpent River, the children of foundation Sr-k-k-jreel form a circle on the floor around the old woman for whom their clan is Named. Their tails curl and flap against each other in excitement, and their voices are hushed, expectant. Tonight they have been promised a story.

Sr-k-k-jreel leans forward on her stool and widens her toothy smile. When all the young ones' yellow eyes are upon her, she speaks.

Are there really mermaids? Well, maybe.

As is the case with all the legends in this book, each gamemaster determines if this legend is true in his game. One possible truth about these "mermaids" is that they are really elemental water spirits that assumed the form of mermaids. The attendant fish from the legend—those T'Chakru used to trick the mermaids into leaving—are the key to these spirits being able to remain in the physical world.

Gamemasters looking for a curve to throw player characters who love exploring dangerous underground complexes can use the legend of the Parliament of Mermaids to present them with interesting logistical challenges. One such adventure might involve a patron who hears of the characters' expertise at kaer-diving and hires them to investigate a cavern network he's identified in the course of some serious research in the Library of Throal. He thinks he's found the site where the t'skrang hero T'Chakru hid the immortal attendants of the mermaid parliament. He offers the adventurers a hefty reward if they manage to find the fish and put them back in the Serpent River. Unfortunately, this will indeed bring the mermaids back to Barsaive from the elemental plane of water. The patron may be acting out of a grudge against the t'skrang, hoping to bedevil them by restocking their river with these ancient troublemakers. Or he might be an ambitious merchant hoping to make a trade connection with the mermaids, who he figures can provide lots of elemental water for him.

Though making their way through the caverns in one piece is as difficult as usual, the real challenge for the player characters is successfully transporting a bunch of living fish (one of them gigantic) across the wilds of Barsaive to the river. At least one cracked aquarium episode should punctuate this leg of their journey. Slavers or bandits might think the party easy prey if the characters are distracted by the difficulties of transporting giant aquariums across the dangerous countryside. To complicate matters further, any t'skrang who sees these particular fish immediately recognizes them and does anything he can to keep them out of the river. And any elf who's up on her mythology will also do her best to stop the adventurers if she figures out what they're doing. The elves, after all, remember the mermaids not as proud pests, but as remorseless child-nappers.

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T'SELAS VRIIMON AND THE VRYKANOGEN

This legend describes the fall of a community to bizarre magical creatures called vrykanogen, insidious humanoid monsters able to infiltrate societies almost at will. Fortunately, they are quite rare and more arrogant than intelligent. Vrykanogen most often target smaller settlements or places that have little contact with the outside world. This isolation enables them to infiltrate an entire settlement without outside interference. Once the settlement has been taken over, the vrykanogen become bolder and less interested in subterfuge. Rumors begin to leak out about the strange people in the village over the hill, or the sudden change in relatives in distant places. Such talk provides an excellent way to introduce the characters to vrykanogen.

Once word of strange people and or events reaches them, characters may decide (or may be hired) to investigate the changes in once-good people. Characters need to be very careful not to reveal their true intentions, as vrykanogen are quite suspicious of outsiders and likely to react violently to intruders. As characters realize what has happened, they must determine a way to destroy the vrykanogen without getting killed. Build up the creeping terror of the situation, creating more of a "haunted house" feel than a hack-and-slash through the middle of town. If nothing else, superior numbers will give the vrykanogen an advantage, and characters will have to be very resourceful to escape with their lives and minds intact.

The Vrykanogen

Attributes

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

Initiative: */8 Physical Defense: */7
Number of Attacks: */1 Spell Defense: */9
Attack: */7 Social Defense: */12
Damage: */8 Armor: */3
Number of Spells: */1 Mystic Armor: */4
Spellcasting: */13 Knockdown: */7
Effect: */Corruption Recovery Tests: */1

Death Rating: */25 Combat Movement: */70
Wound Threshold: */10 Full Movement: */140
Unconsciousness Rating: */Immune

Powers: Corruption 9 (see Commentary)

Legend Points: 180

Equipment: */None

Loot: */None

*Denotes Rating of host victim.

Commentary

Sages theorize that vrykanogen are actually psychic creatures with no physical form of their own. While they do not seem to have any alliance with, or allegiance to, the Horrors, the vrykanogen do appear to be natives of astral space. Vrykanogen come through to Barsaive alone or in small groups and immediately seek out hosts. The host is always very near to death, unable to resist the power of the vrykanogen. Once the host has died, the vrykanogen takes over the host body, giving it enhanced power.

The vrykanogen then begins approaching the loved ones of the host, trying to use its Corruption ability on these new targets. This magical effect requires the vrykanogen to make a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the intended victim. If the test is successful, the affected target becomes a host for another vrykanogen. The vrykanogen then makes a Corruption Test and the gamemaster records the result. The host may attempt to resist the vrykanogen 24 hours after the Corruption power is used by making a successful Willpower Test against the result of the vrykanogen's Corruption Test. Failure indicates that the host has become fully corrupted and has become a vrykanogen. Success repels the vrykanogen, sending it back to astral space. Targets who have repelled vrykanogen are not immune to future attacks.

Note that a vrykanogen must fully corrupt its host before it can use its Corruption ability to create more vrykanogen hosts. And until the vrykanogen fully corrupts its host, it can use only the natural abilities of the host's body.

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Once a vrykanogen has been slain, it cannot rise again. Note that vrykanogen are not truly undead and are unaffected by any spell intended to work specifically on the undead.



THE KING WHO RULED THE PASSIONS

The poem presented in the legend is Canto XIV of the epic poem *Of Rulers Long Past Gone*, attributed to the dwarf poet Pericad. Most current Barsaive scholars agree that her name was attached to the work of many early poets through the centuries. They believe she may not have actually existed and that this poem is most likely composed of many originally unconnected poems.

Like all legends, this one may or may not be true. In any event, this legend has a definite moral—the Passions rule Name-givers, not the reverse (as noted in the last stanza). If the legend is not true in fact and told only for its moral, the gamemaster may use the legend as a prelude to any type of adventure that involves Passions or questors. Likewise, if the characters should venture to a remote area of Barsaive where worship of the Passions has been lost to the Scourge, this legend might be used to remind the denizens of the area of the Passions and their relationship to Name-giver society.

If the gamemaster determines that the legend is true, a number of adventure possibilities might arise from it. One suggested adventure is outlined below.

If the characters are among the more respectable members of their profession, the kingdom of Throal may ask them to investigate the murder of a prominent scholar at the Library of Throal—Algemicor of Throal, the editor of the new edition of *Of Rulers Long Past Gone*. Algemicor was killed in the library after hours, which means that the killing may well have been carried out by one of his colleagues. Since many of the high-ranking officers of the library are well-connected to the royal family, the investigation must be seen to be absolutely impartial, which is why outsiders have been hired.

After finding and deciphering Algemicor's notes, the adventurers discover that he was obsessed with the particular passage quoted in the legend. In other documents, he had found reports of a particular set of ancient ruins, buried under layers of later structures, that may have been the second palace of Maxton and Releel—the one built by Upandal and designed by Dis. Legend has it that the residue of the Passions has left a curse there, for too much of their bounty can become a bad thing. But since three of the Passions have gone mad, Algemicor realized that the only traces of their original, uncorrupted essences linger in the remains of Maxton's palace. He believed that if these essences could somehow be retrieved, the Mad Passions could be restored to sanity.

Unfortunately for Algemicor, the library staff had been infiltrated by secret questors of Dis. When he revealed his theories to one of them, she became horrified at the thought of a restored Dis and had him killed. Once the adventurers break up the cell of mad questors in the library, they can attempt to complete Algemicor's mission by seeking the palace of Maxton. Of course, other questors of Dis have been alerted and will try to divert the party every step of the way.

If the adventurers manage to reach the palace and drag away some artifacts imprinted with the original essences of Dis, Vestrial and Raggok, that achievement is just the beginning. Next, they must figure out how to use the artifacts to restore the Mad Passions, if such a thing is possible. This mission could serve as the backdrop for a whole series of scholarly intrigues and quests into the unknown, as the characters pursue this metaphysical puzzle one piece at a time.



THE WAY OF THE BEASTS

Most adepts enter their Disciplines as recruits of some member of that Discipline. For instance, the first *Earthdawn* novel, *The Longing Ring*, tells how the thief Garlthik One-Eye taught J'role the rudiments of thief magic. Four Disciplines in the *Earthdawn* rulebook require such rigorous instruction that practically all their adepts enter by recruitment. These are the cavalryman, sky raider, warrior, and weaponsmith Disciplines. Other Disciplines may be entered without the aid of a teacher. These

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include the archer, swordmaster, troubadour and all four magician Disciplines—as well as the beastmaster Discipline, as shown in the legend.

Generally, such “spontaneous initiation” into a Discipline occurs in rare, life-or-death situations. In these instances, magic unexpectedly reaches out and seizes a character, transforming his life and view of the world.

Spontaneous initiation enables gamemasters to introduce new player adepts into the campaign in dramatic ways or give existing characters new leases on life. Non-adept characters prone to spontaneous initiation generally lack direction in life, have few strong or developed opinions, and may have poor morale. The transforming circumstances involve obvious but not immediate danger. The imperiled character should have time to reflect and arrive at a mental breakthrough. This may take hours or, more often, days. That breakthrough marks the spontaneous initiation. The character’s thoughts change, perhaps subtly at first, but drastically at a dramatic moment.

Spontaneous initiations in player characters already practicing Disciplines are usually preceded by discomfort with the strictures of the current Discipline. This may manifest as tension, persistent questioning of goals, step penalties, or even the loss of high-Circle abilities. But once the character is initiated into the new Discipline, his conflicts vanish. He retains all the benefits of the old Discipline and starts at First Circle in the new one. See *Learning New Disciplines* (p. 226, ED), but ignore the training time requirement for the new Discipline.

If the gamemaster and player want to stage the transition as a campaign event, they can have the character’s ideas evolve plausibly in the context of one or more adventures. For example, a Metal Fist ork scorcher might grow disillusioned with his clan’s savage, wasteful hunting trips. The ork’s internal conflict can then culminate in a sudden transformation from high-Circle warrior to First Circle beastmaster.



GRASS BRIDGE

In recent decades many scholars have journeyed across Barsaive collecting legends of pre-Scourge pilgrimage sites. These stories help re-establish the old culture and ease modern minds still weathering the effects of the Scourge. One scholar, Cornelius Arcanum, has collected such legends in a work called *Places with a Heart*. One of the places described in this work is the grass bridge near the village of Taozana.

The grass bridge can be incorporated into play in a number of ways. For example, authorities may bring a gamemaster character suspected of being Horror marked to the bridge to test him. Likewise, characters who believe themselves to be Horror marked may search for the bridge to determine if they are marked or not. Alternatively, the ruins of Taozana and the bridge may attract questors of Jaspree. Taozana itself was left to the Horrors and is infested with them, as well as with their minions and constructs.

The grass bridge is one of the few places in Barsaive able to detect a Horror mark, because the bridge will not support any Horror, Horror-marked character, character carrying a Horror-cursed item, or character possessed by a Horror. Whenever any of these attempt to cross the bridge, it opens beneath them and sends them plunging 200 feet to the rocks below. For any characters who fall, the gamemaster makes three step 25 Damage Tests (p. 206, ED). Characters without Horror items or influence use the bridge as though it were made of stone. However, the bridge has no rail or curb, and so they can fall off or get thrown off in any conventional fashion.



ASTENDAR'S DEVOTION

Astendar’s Devotion can lead to many adventures. For example, the beloved spouse of one of the players may be in trouble. Imagine the consternation of the player as he finishes the blessing of the sweet bread and breaks it open to find the Throal pictogram for death inside. Other adventure options might include a Horror that has corrupted the local honey sources and is manipulating young men and women throughout the land, twisting and perverting their affection into something evil and depraved. Or a local cult may discover a way to twist Astendar’s Devotion by consecrating it to Raggok, creating pastries filled with a vile poisonous substance.

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LYLLARIA'S MIRROR

The legend of Lyllaria's Mirror is heard often in Barsaive's hinterlands, where it serves as a reminder of the wisdom of suspicion. The mirror and the Horror that resides in it offer many adventure possibilities. Finding the mirror itself can provide a challenge. If the mirror is still in the remains of Kaer Landsborne, the characters have the opportunity to explore a Horror-ruined kaer. Aside from Mindrender, other Horrors and Horror constructs may have made their home in the kaer and they may be using the cadavers of its dead residents as playing pieces in grotesque games such as cadaver chess. If the mirror has been found and removed with Mindrender still in

it, the characters may encounter a village or town under the Horror's influence. The problem becomes apparent only as the village slowly destroys itself, all for the twisted pleasure of the Horror.

Lyllaria's Mirror

Maximum Threads: 2 (Mindrender uses 1 thread at Rank 3)

Spell Defense: 14

Lyllaria's Mirror is six feet tall and four feet wide. The mirror rests in a large, finely crafted silver frame that resembles delicate ivy vines growing around the mirror and spilling out onto the floor. While the glass is somewhat resistant to harm, it is not unbreakable. Breaking the mirror destroys all of its magical abilities.

When a viewer stares past the mirror's surface, his reflection is slowly replaced by images of his desires. Though only one person can control the mirror at a time, everyone watching the mirror can see the images it presents.

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost:** 500

Key Knowledge: The mirror was built for Queen Lyllaria of the elven land of Shosara. The user must learn the Name of the mirror.

Effect: The mirror allows the user to view any area he is familiar with and has visited within the past two weeks. This area must be within 2 days' walk of the mirror. This ability causes 2 points of Strain damage to the user.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 800

Effect: The range of the mirror extends to 5 days' walk. Using the mirror costs 3 points of Strain.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 1,300

Key Knowledge: The user must learn the Name of the craftsman who honored Lyllaria by building the mirror.

Effect: The user may view any area within 5 days' walk that he has visited within the past 2 months. The Strain of using the mirror rises to 4 points.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 2,100

Effect: The user may view any area within 10 days' walk that he has visited within the past 2 months. Using the mirror costs 5 points of Strain.

Rank 5 **Cost:** 3,400

Deed: The user must travel to Queen Lyllaria's grave and build a monument in her honor. Constructing this monument must cost no less than 20,000 silver pieces. This deed is worth 2,100 Legend Points.

Effect: The mirror allows the user to create a Viewpoint (like the Circle 4 nethermancer spell) to the elven land of Shosara. The Strain damage of this ability causes 1 Wound to the user. This Wound can be healed as normal.

Note: The mirror's powers do not function while Mindrender is in the mirror. Instead, the user sees images known

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to Mindrender. These images are from before the Scourge. Gamemasters may use this property as a way of fooling the players' characters into believing that the mirror allows users to view the past.

Because Mindrender is trapped within the mirror, the Horror can use any of its own powers against any character who weaves a thread to the mirror. This includes Horror Mark as well as its other powers. Likewise, the Horror can use many of its powers on Name-givers who stare into the mirror, as it did to the doomed folk of Kaer Landsborne.

If Mindrender is removed from the mirror, the powers of the mirror function as normal.

Mindrender

Attributes

DEX: 6 STR: 15 TOU: 15
PER: 15 WIL: 18 CHA: 18

Initiative: 8 Physical Defense: 10 (20)
Number of Attacks: 2 Spell Defense: 25
Attack: 10 (none) Social Defense: 25
Damage: 20 (none) Armor: 30 (none)
Number of Spells: 3 Mystic Armor: 30
Spellcasting: 20 Knockdown: 20
Effect: See below Recovery Tests: 10

Death Rating: 100 (50) Combat Movement: 15 (50)
Wound Threshold: 20 Full Movement: 30 (100)
Unconsciousness Rating: 75

Karma Points: 25 Karma Step: 15

Powers: Animate Dead 15, Horror Mark 20, Karma Tap 22, Thought Worm 25, Spells (Circle 8 illusionist)

Legend Points: 75,000

Equipment: None

Loot: None, but the Kaer Landsborne ruins contain great wealth.

Commentary

In its physical form, Mindrender is a giant, bloated quadruped covered with thick, spiked plates. Its head extends on a fifteen-foot flexible neck and consists of little more than four razor-like mandibles surrounding a single, dripping maw. Though it is physically powerful, Mindrender prefers to corrupt its victims rather than physically assaulting them. Mindrender has the additional power to leave its body and travel through astral space. During this time its body becomes entirely inert, and Mindrender has only the vaguest awareness of its body's surroundings. Mindrender's astral body is highly resistant to attack, but is unable to harm people physically. The numbers in parentheses represent the changes to its statistics while in astral space.

Mindrender has contemplated shattering the mirror to escape. But such measures would definitely injure the Horror, and might even kill it—risks that Mindrender has not yet become desperate enough to accept.

THE DANCE OF KORRENCIA

This legend tells of Korrencia, an elven troubadour enslaved by the Therans. The story recounts how she managed to free a number of her fellow slaves at the cost of her own life. The dance described in the legend is performed in the style of the Torrelia troubadours who once traveled

Barsaive, dancing magnificent, epic tales that apparently created patterns of power and gave them special abilities. Unfortunately, the Torrelia always transcribed their dances using their own, colorful terms that read more like stories than dance instructions. No known codex of these terms exists, yet scattered bits and pieces of the knowledge and specialized skills of the Torrelia still survive.

This legend gives gamemasters an opportunity to create a new variation on the troubadour adept—the Torrelia. The exact talents and abilities of the Torrelia are left up to the gamemaster, but in the course of dancing, Torrelia troubadours always wove a thread to an anklet or bracelet made with one of the four pure elements. Finding such an anklet may be the initial step (equivalent to the first key knowledge) in learning about the movements of the Dance of Korrencia.

Though this legend describes a single dance, the Torrelia created many different types of dances which they used for all manner of purposes. Some dances were meant solely to entertain, while others, like Korrencia's Dance, were intended to manipulate an audience in some way.

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Though this legend might not inspire adventures directly, the history of the Torrelians and the manner in which they created their dances can be used as the backdrop for many different adventures.



THE FIRE POOL

The gamemaster may introduce this legend as a story told in t'skrang villages. A sample introduction is provided below.

As twilight falls along the Serpent River, the sound of drumming echoes through the village of Nahariki. Slowly, the t'skrang gather for the highlight of the festival: the telling of heroic tales and ancient epics. When all have arrived in the village's central dome, the drumming ceases as the storyteller takes her place of honor. In her hands she holds a small drum and a double-headed stick.

The storyteller steps into the center of the circle of gathered t'skrang. Raising her arms and lowering them in a graceful, ritual gesture, she begins to beat the drum. With the downbeat, she begins to dance and chant, performing the evening's first tale.

If characters wish to track down the fire pool of this legend, they must first find the kaer from which the story emerged. After doing this, they can probably find the fire pool by consulting old maps of the area around the kaer.

Tracing descendants of the family in the legend is more difficult. This is an important step if the characters want to accomplish anything once they find the fire pool, however, because the sister is still bound to it after all these hundreds of years. Treat her as a spectral dancer (p. 308, ED) with the following variations. First, the sister—Kimira—can no longer speak or move away from the fire pool. Second, she does not dance, but instead makes elaborate gestures and shapes the fire into images. She has the ability to turn any weapon into a flaming version that cannot be extinguished except through enchantments. These flaming versions of weapons do 4 steps more damage than the normal versions. For example, a flaming broadsword adds +9 steps to the wielder's Strength when making Damage Tests.

Kimira has been trapped in the fire pool for hundreds of years and is desperate to rejoin her family. If a group of men and women approach her, she relives the day of her doom and becomes enraged, punishing the men for her brother's betrayal and driving the women away from the pool (to "safety").

In order to free her, the characters must soothe Kimira by talking with her. This is similar to dancing with a spectral dancer, but can be done from the edge of the fire pool. Use the procedure outlined in the spectral dancer description (p. 308, ED) when characters attempt to soothe Kimira's pain. Kimira's gesturing causes a number of steps of damage to the characters talking to her equal to the number of rounds the interaction has lasted. For example, Kimira does Step 5 damage in Round 5 of the interaction, Step 6 damage in Round 6, and so on.

If Kimira draws a male victim into the fire pool with her, she ceases her attacks and is freed from the pool—but the male character becomes bound to the pool in her place.



LISAR'S WONDROUS PACK OF TALES

The pack is the secret of this legend. Neither Lisar nor Marek were spectacular on their own, but the pack enabled them to draw crowds. It contains the stories of many generations of trolls (and the sad story of one unfortunate windling). This unique treasure item looks like a simple leather pack, with a shoulder strap and a flap that fastens with two well-worn buckles. It maintains its shape when empty, though the leather is quite soft and flexible. After the death of Marek, the windlings who attended to his possessions abandoned it (it was too large and unwieldy to be useful to any of them). Eventually it was discovered and picked up by a cavalryman who never realized its true worth and simply used it to store things.

The gamemaster determines how the characters come into possession of the pack. A troubadour character may perform poorly until he meets someone carrying the pack. The pack carrier could be a gamemaster character or a new player character.

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Alternatively, the characters might find the pack in an abandoned kaer or citadel, or even in some small town or village in the hinterlands of Barsaive.

Lisar's Pack of Tales

Maximum Threads: 2

Spell Defense: 12

Thread Ranks

Rank 1 **Cost:** 200

Key Knowledge: This soft leather pack is known as Lisar's Pack of Tales and "holds" the stories of those who have carried it. It came from a line of troll troubadours who worked in pairs, and Lisar was the last of the line. As the Horrors began to occupy the attention of Barsaive's people, Lisar was left without a partner until she found Marek. The user must know the pack is Lisar's Pack of Tales.

Deed: The user must find a partner to share the burden of carrying the pack and telling the tales. The partner must be willing and cannot be tricked into agreeing. The partner need not be a troubadour, but the person who carries the pack cannot be the one who tells the tales. The two partners must make an oath to stay together for at least a year and a day. Though using blood magic to seal the oath is implied, it is not necessary. This deed is worth 300 Legend Points.

Effect: At the cost of 1 point of Strain to the carrier, the pack can send the teller one of the stories inside it or a story that the carrier knows. The teller can edit the story he receives from the pack for brevity, style, or effect. If the carrier sends one of his or her own stories, however, the teller receives the whole truth of it and cannot edit or change the story as he goes along.

Rank 2 **Cost:** 300

Effect: The pack increases the teller's Charisma step by +1 step. It also increases the Social Defense ratings of both of the pair by +1.

Rank 3 **Cost:** 500

Key Knowledge: The characters must learn the Names of the pair that possessed the pack before Marek and Lisar.

Effect: The pack increases the teller's Charisma step by +2 steps. It also increases the Social Defense ratings of both of the pair by +2.

Rank 4 **Cost:** 800

Effect: At the cost of 1 additional point of Strain, either member of the pair may draw on the pack and gain +2 steps for any Charisma (or related talent) Test.

Rank 5 **Cost:** 1,300

Key Knowledge: The characters must learn the Name of the troll who made the pack.

Effect: The pack increases the Social Defense ratings of both of the pair by +3.



THE NAMELESS LAD

The Nameless Lad still wanders Barsaive. He is of indeterminate age, and indeed has apparently not aged for several decades. (Perhaps even time has trouble keeping track of him?) During the final years of the Scourge the Nameless Lad traveled Barsaive, drawing numerous maps with notations on the location of kaers, both intact and destroyed, and on the ravages of the Horrors. Because the Nameless Lad has traveled across Barsaive and recorded all he has witnessed, he can be an excellent source of information for characters.

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However, the Nameless Lad's motives remain unknown. In fact, his near-immortality may have left him insane and dangerous to those who do not share his fate of being Nameless.



THE LOST DREAM OF WYRM WOOD

In times before the Scourge, the Elven Court at Wyrms Wood held a special place in the hearts of all elves. Often, intense loyalty toward the elven court would compel a young elf to visit Wyrms Wood. This overpowering sensation was known as "wood longing."

Since the Scourge and the corruption of Wyrms Wood, the loyalty felt by most elves has given way to shame. Yet despite the corruption of the Elven Court, the phenomenon of wood longing still occurs from time to time among elves. Now, however, it usually leads to the death or corruption of the affected elf.

The most unusual aspect of wood longing is that affected victims seem to forget the corruption of the Elven Court and become convinced that the beloved Wyrms Wood of ancient times still exists. No amount of persuasion or discussion can convince one affected with wood longing that the object of his day-dreams and homesickness has been irretrievably tainted.

In adventures or campaigns, player characters or friendly gamemaster characters may fall victim to wood longing. In either case, characters hopefully choose to accompany the affected elf to Blood Wood. Once the characters arrive at Blood Wood, the fate of the affected elf may remain uncertain. The elf may be killed upon entry to the wood, either by the vile creatures that inhabit the place or by the thorn men guards. A few elves actually get into the wood and leave, fully cured of their longing. In some instances, the affected elf is only cured upon visiting the Elven Court itself.

An affected elf may even choose to join the corrupt court and undergo the Ritual of the Thorns. This is not a common occurrence, but has been known to happen to more than one elf who made the journey to Blood Wood. Some people imply that severe cases of wood longing are only curable by joining the Elven Court, while others insist that Queen Alachia imposes the ritual on any elf who enters the Blood Wood under the influence of wood longing.



HOW LOR'JAK BONETUSK FOUND HIS PASSION

Any attempt to locate Lor'Jak's Cave requires a lengthy journey into the hazardous Twilight Peaks, which are fraught with dangerous animals, hostile conditions, and numerous crags and narrow mountain passes where Horrors lurk. Anyone who wants to search the area must negotiate with the local trollmoot for permission or face hostile trolls.

Characters may stumble on the cave by accident, as Lor'Jak himself did. Downed in the Twilight Peaks after airship combat (either with the Therans or the skyraiders themselves), the characters might wander in the cold and darkness until they discover the mysterious cave of comfort.

The cave may also be the lair of a Horror that uses magic and illusion to trick its victims. The Horror may grant shelter and aid to lost travelers so that it can place a Horror mark on them. It can then track its victims once they leave, and renew its mark until it chooses to draw them back to its lair. Adventurers would gain great renown among the trolls of the Twilight Peaks for exposing such a cruel trick.

Alternatively, the cave may actually be one of Garlen's homes which the Passion keeps hidden from those who do not need it or whom she deems unworthy. In this case, questors of Garlen might try to find the cave as an act of devotion. Such a task would be a zealous act, as finding the cave involves a treacherous climb into the Twilight Peaks (see pp. 89-90, *Earthdawn Companion*).

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THE LOVE OF TONLAA AND ENARD

Adventures based on this legend can take many forms. In the most obvious, Tonlaa and Enard are still alive, sleeping in the proverbial ancient cavern, until a party of devoted kaer explorers stumbles upon the hiding place of the two legendary lovers. Once awakened, Tonlaa and Enard immediately seek to resume the love games that excite them so much. In other words, they look for armies to pit against one another in savage warfare. Their roles as stars of an often-told legend have made the sleeping Tonlaa and Enard repositories of mystic energy; they have been drawing in stray magical power for centuries. They expend this in the form of auras that make others want to follow them to pointless battlefield glory.

Characters must make Willpower (15) Tests to avoid being swept along by either of the lovers. Whenever their magically induced loyalty to Tonlaa or Enard puts them into danger, characters get to make another test. Some members of the party may end up with Tonlaa, others with Enard, and still others may remain clear-headed enough to try to neutralize the upcoming disaster.

After the player characters awaken them, the two lovers immediately head to the surface and enlist fighters from the nearest village to their causes, creating a miniature civil war. If the characters don't come up with some way of either counteracting the lovers' legendary charisma or getting them back in hibernation, this snowballs into a huge conflict involving thousands on each side.

Gamemasters who need a solution to the dilemma can decide that Tonlaa and Enard didn't just fall asleep together. Instead, they were captured by ordinary mortals tired of the deaths caused by their constant warring and placed in a magical chamber that put them into hibernation. The characters must then either lure the lovers back into their sleep chamber or somehow excavate the magical chamber and push them into it.

Alternatively, the bodies of the two lovers may have died, while their spirits survived. The spirits possess hapless victims, whom they use as vehicles to enact their war games.

Lastly, the heroes of this legend might have given rise to living legend cults devoted to both Tonlaa and Enard. These may include a single cult devoted to both, or two cults each devoted to one of the lovers. Each of these cults may act against the others, much as the lovers acted against each other.



JUSTICE OF HORRORS

Stray Horrors still stalk the lands of Barsaive, and fear is contagious. When bad things happen, communities are prone to hysteria. As a result, innocent people are sometimes singled out as scapegoats, accused of being Horrors in disguise. After all, there are Horrors who can assume false forms. This old legend—which might be true but is more likely a fanciful tale inspired by some real events of ancient history—is an example of such scapegoating.

Gamemasters can use this phenomenon to set up encounters where characters find themselves rescuing a falsely accused justicer from a hostile mob which may blame him for anything from mysterious deaths to crop failure. This could be the lead-in for an adventure, as the grateful (and no doubt wealthy) justicer rewards them with a lucrative mission. Or it could be the basis of the entire adventure, as relatives of a falsely-convicted justicer hire the player characters to break him out of a rough country prison before he's executed by suspicious rustics.

Alternatively, characters can take clever advantage of this legend if they happen to be facing a justicer as an adversary. Open this variant of the adventure by having the characters stop near Gwando and Berelica's fish stall, where they can learn of the legend. Then start an adventure with an evil justicer as the villain. He may be a leader of a slaver ring in an area that doesn't see slavery as wrong, for example. Anti-slaving adventurers might then try to take advantage of the legend by convincing the locals that the sinister barrister is a Horror in disguise, thereby turning the local folk against him.

If players have already rescued a falsely-accused justicer, consider having them meet another accused justicer. But this time—especially if they've gotten complacent—have the justicer turn out to be a Horror in disguise after all.

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Once the justicer gets them in private, ready to fork over his reward, he can doff his false flesh and attack with his crayfish claws and thousand slurping mouths.



THE HEART OF HEROES

The Heart of Heroes can provide the basis for a campaign of truly epic scale. The specifics of such a campaign are best left up to individual gamemasters, but general ideas concerning such an adventure and suggestions for the possible location of the nine keys are provided in the following passage.

The Heart of Heroes itself is an item of incalculable value, and so undoubtedly is well hidden. The Heart functions differently than most magical items in **Earthdawn**. Instead of searching for levels of knowledge, the characters search for the nine associated keys. They may attempt to learn more of the possible locations of certain keys through research, but they gain additional keys instead of learning a magical ability of the Heart.

The keys are each located in a holding or territory of one of the nine Name-giver races—human, dwarf, elf, troll, ork, windling, t'skrang, obsidiman and dragon. Each key unlocks the particular section of the Heart containing the True Name of the hero of that race. If a member of the same race uses the key to unlock the Name, he may take on the Name by binding a thread to the key. This is not something to be done lightly, for taking on the True Name actually changes the character's pattern, abilities, and even his nature to some extent. The character may choose to hold onto the activated key and not take the Name for as long as he wishes, but once he accepts the Name he cannot easily return to what he was before. The exact effects of the transformation are left to the gamemaster, but they will undoubtedly involve some increase in power and personality, and perhaps even a change in Disciplines.

If characters manage to locate the Heart and all nine of the keys, the resulting power should enable them to accomplish a truly awesome feat. Such feats might include casting the Thera threat out of Barsaive, or even discovering a way to bar the Horrors from Barsaive (at least temporarily). Base the exact nature of the deed on the needs of your campaign. And make the player characters earn their success—after all, the characters could end up with their essences written in the stars at the completion of the task!

The constellations mentioned in the legend may provide a variety of clues. Most likely, they point to the location of the nine keys. The gamemaster determines the exact locations, but a few suggestions are given below.

The Winged Snake may refer to the dragon's key and suggest the key is in the possession of a dragon or in an ancient lair.

The Hunter may refer to humans and point directly to the key's location during the spring equinox in Thera, perhaps, or in the Wastes near Jerris, or even in the ancient kingdom of Landis.

The Mountain may refer to the dwarfs and indicate that the dwarf key rests within the depths of one of the great mountain ranges—perhaps the Throal or Scythia mountains.

The Great Oak may refer to the elves and may indicate that the elf key is located near one of the great trees in Blood Wood.

The Air Dancer may refer to the trolls and may indicate the Twilight Peaks as the location of the troll key.

The Butterfly may indicate the race of windlings and refer to the large butterflies that are rumored to reside in the Liaj Jungle.

The Horse may refer to the orks and indicate that the ork key is hidden in the plains between the Throal and Tylon mountains.

The Ship may refer to the t'skrang and indicate that the t'skrang key is located beneath the waters of the Aras Sea or the Serpent River.

Finally, the Sleeping Warrior may refer to the obsidimen and indicate that the obsidimen key is in the care of an ancient obsidiman who has remained attached to his Liferock for centuries.



THE HORROR STORM

Before using the crystal in adventures, the gamemaster must decide whether or not Tigana, the last elementalist spoken of in the legend, is still alive and still possesses the crystal. If not, perhaps an apprentice of Tigana's has kept the vigil, using blood magic to keep the Horror storm trapped in the crystal. Alternatively, the crystal may have found its way into the hands of others, such as a group of thieves, a collector of rare and strange items in one of the great cities of Barsaive, or a living legend cult devoted to the Horrors.

If Tigana still lives, she may want to recover the crystal before the blood magic binding the Horror storm can weaken enough for the Horrors to escape. An escape would spell certain disaster for the area where it occurs. She may seek the help of a party of adepts to regain the crystal and perform the ritual to keep the Horrors bound. This raises the question of Tigana's own motives. Is she seeking to keep a danger to the Name-giver races imprisoned, or does she want the power of the crystal for her own purposes?

A player character elementalist who comes into possession of the storm crystal may experiment with it in an attempt to discover its powers. Such experimentation may yield tremendous power to the elementalist, but may also enable the Horrors bound within to corrupt the character.

In another scenario, the crystal does not hold Horrors at all, but rather one or more elemental air spirits, corrupted and twisted during the early part of the Scourge by the Horrors and the polluted nature of astral space. This solution makes the crystal no less dangerous, but does offer other avenues for possible adventures.



THE BRIGHTEST STAR IN THE SKY

If characters want to investigate the floating kaer, they first need to hire an airship and crew, for only an experienced airship crew will have the skill necessary to locate the kaer and reach it. The gamemaster determines if the kaer survived the Scourge, or if astral or airborne Horrors infiltrated it. Keep in mind that the kaer's citizens were Theran, and their descendants most likely remain loyal to Thera. These descendants will be ignorant of the events of the Theran War and of Barsaive's independence.

In another scenario, the floating kaer may pose a threat to Barsaive. In this type of adventure, the elemental magic that holds the kaer above the ground has grown weak with time, and the kaer is slowly sinking. The legend makes mention of the kaer being seen as a dark spot in the daytime sky. This would be a recent occurrence, as the kaer has come closer and closer to the ground. Gamemasters can use this option to instill a sense of urgency in the characters.

Returning the kaer safely to the ground can provide a major challenge to the characters. If Findas devised a method to return the kaer to the earth, clues to or explanations of that method will be hidden in the kaer. If the kaer is still populated, the kaer leaders hold this knowledge. But if the kaer has been lost to the Horrors, the characters will have to search for it.



THE PIPES OF WRONGNESS

The Pipes of Wrongness are an unusual and very powerful Horror-cursed item. They were forged by an unknown craftsman, most likely a Horror-marked victim of Fla Tra Lys. Player characters may come across the pipes themselves, meet a victim of the pipes, or even confront the Horror Fla Tra Lys.

The Pipes

A character who blows on the pipes hears a high, unpleasant, piercing whistle. The sound of the pipes may summon a Horror—most often Fla Tra Lys—or an undead servant of a Horror as described in the legend.

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Undead servants appear as unimaginably haggard, haunted men. They look more than half dead, with thin, white hair, sunken cheeks, and skeletal bodies. Their clothes are filthy, as though recently dug from the earth. These undead servants are animated by a variant version of the Horror power Unnatural Life (p. 299, ED).

Undead servants appear a few days after the pipes are blown. In deep voices, usually dull but at times shrill with desperation, the servants tell the character the same story told by Jamis in the legend. As in the legend, undead servants serve a character for a year and a day, at which time the Horror appears to claim both victim and servant.

Injuries to undead servants are temporary. For a year and a day, servants inevitably rise from injury or death to return to their torment. If the character who blew the pipes dies, the servant remains with the character's surviving fellow adventurers, but Fla Tra Lys soon shows up to devour the servant. Blowing on the pipes again before the servant's time is up has no effect.

Characters may compel or bargain with Fla Tra Lys to take back the pipes and remove its curse from a player character. However, they must first summon the Horror (if it is not already present) by some means, such as the Circle 8 nethermancer spell Horror Call. The pipes can be destroyed by tossing them into the lava of Death's Sea, but the Horror will try to prevent this. Dragon flame also destroys the pipes, but persuading a dragon to use its breath in this manner may prove difficult. A generous gamemaster may decide that the act of destroying the pipes also weakens Fla Tra Lys, so that characters may more easily destroy the Horror. A powerful questor of Garlen, Lochost, or Mynbruje can remove the enslaving curse from a victim but cannot destroy the pipes.

Fla Tra Lys

Use the statistics for bloatforms (p. 299, ED) but reduce the Combat Movement to 10 and Full Movement to 20. Fla Tra Lys has Circle 7 nethermancer spells instead of wizard spells, and cannot fly.

This slow, globular-shaped Horror has six short, thick tentacles. When it moves, bulky masses shift and rotate beneath its scabby hide. A shimmering haze rises from it, and it emits a cool, sterile smell like rubbing alcohol.

Survivors of Fla Tra Lys's attacks named the Horror "the Eater of Music" for its horrible effect on music. The Horror uses a unique magical effect to turn music played in its vicinity into wretched, grating pipings. Apparently the Horror delights in the disquiet this causes and often manifests in situations involving music.

Fla Tra Lys has ambitions beyond a steady supply of human pain. Less bluntly manipulative than some other Horrors, Fla Tra Lys seeks to corrupt Name-givers' artistic impulses. It offers easy wealth to talented creators (especially musicians), if they merely "take its suggestions" in creating their art. If an artist gives a performance or showing that embodies the Horror's advice—an unsettling experience for any audience, inasmuch as the Horror has no sense of beauty—then Fla Tra Lys tells the corrupted creator how to reach some long-hidden treasure. This usually involves hardships far beyond the treasure's intrinsic worth. Inevitably, the artist's resulting wealth and guilty conscience bring corruption of a different kind, and Fla Tra Lys feeds well on that, too.



NEW SUN IN THE SKY

Characters are likely to hear the story of the New Sun in the Sky in t'skrang villages or from t'skrang troubadours. The legend offers the characters an epic-scale quest, much like the legend of the Heart of Heroes. In this case, however, the quest involves finding fragments of Rossaruss's birth shell. One version of such an adventure begins with a living legend cult, the Shell Breakers, that hopes to resurrect Rossaruss. The cult has members in several t'skrang crew covenants along the Serpent River and in most of the five aropagoi. The cult was founded by a one-time covenant captain, now a nethermancer, named Vrant.

Vrant had just finished a trading run that, like too many of her runs, left her covenant more in debt than before. Walking off her frustration one night on the docks of Vivane, she noticed several figures standing on a raft in the river. Floating above the figures, as she tells her followers, she saw a black egg, eight feet from end to end, outlined in a dim yellow glow against the night. In a brilliant fireball the egg exploded and the figures vanished, and Vrant herself fainted. She awoke hours later with a splitting snout-ache, and dark visions of "the spirit realm, a shoreless gray river," in her head. She grew obsessed with the visions and sold her

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interest in the crew covenant, left Vivane and became an apprentice to an itinerant nethermancer.

Now, years later, Vrant is convinced that the spirit of Rossaruss sent her the vision of the egg. She has not located the ancient t'skrang's spirit to confirm this, and so she plans to find the shards of Rossaruss's birth egg and reassemble them. Then she will summon Rossaruss's spirit to the egg and thereby return the great merchant to life.

The gamemaster is free to determine the actual effects of restoring the egg shell, if in fact it really exists. It might be anything from a fantastically powerful artifact to an elaborate piece of t'skrang art.



THE BOOK OF SCALES

When creating adventures involving the Book of Scales, gamemasters should consider two important elements—the difficulty of finding the scales and the effects of recovering them. Finding the scales is a very dangerous task, which should span several adventures. The book is composed of several hundred scales, all unique and *all* Horror-marked. Fortunately, the dragon that scattered them was unable to spread them as far as it would have liked. The majority of the scales lie in the dragon's still-undiscovered lair, while a few (probably no fewer than five and no more than ten) key scales lie hidden far and wide.

Additionally, half of these key scales have already been claimed by Horror-marked Name-givers. These servitors of the Horrors have been transporting the scales to the dragon's lair, where a Horror waits to re-assemble the Book of Scales. Progress has been somewhat slow, as Name-givers can carry the scales for only a limited time before violent insanity overtakes them. Inevitably, the servants of the Horrors become hopelessly insane, and other servants must retrieve each scale and continue the trek to the dragon's lair. Meanwhile, the insane individuals wreak all manner of havoc. Early on, the scale-carriers will be Horror-marked humans. As the characters acquire more and more of the scales, however, the Horrors send more powerful foes to carry the scales and stop the characters. The last scales are carried by Horror-marked adepts, driven insane by the powers of the Horrors they now serve.

If the characters survive long enough to retrieve all of the key scales, they must still find the dragon's ancient lair and gather up the rest of the scales. This task requires them to defeat the Horror that lurks within the lair.

Finding the lair can be as difficult or simple as the gamemaster desires. One of the more powerful scale-carriers may have a map showing the location of the lair, or the characters may discover the answer through research. The simplest option may be that the scales resonate when in proximity to one another and seem to pull toward the lair as if eager to reunite with the rest of the scales. Characters would then only have to follow the lead of the scales to find the lair.

What the characters do with the scales once they find them is up to the gamemaster and the players. According to rumors, the Library of Throal has been creating a document that describes the Horrors and their minions. If this is true, the scholars would likely wish to use the Book of Scales in their research, though the Kingdom of Throal may not want such information existing for any length of time.

Unfortunately, putting the Book of Scales back together can produce some nasty effects. For example, from time to time researchers who study the book go insane. It will most likely fall to the characters to find and execute these unfortunates. Also, the Horrors may grow stronger as the book strengthens their patterns, and eventually the characters may have to destroy the book.

If the characters take the Book of Scales to the Library of Throal or a learned sage somewhere else, they earn a sizable Legend Award. The exact size of this award is left to individual gamemasters, but it should be well above average to reflect the fact that the recovery of the Book of Scales is a truly legendary feat.

Keep in mind also that at least five Horrors helped create the Book of Scales. Each Horror marked the book, so characters carting around the book (or a portion of it) may come under attack by Horrors at any time. This alone could convince many characters to destroy the book by dumping it into the Death's Sea, a plan that just might work.

Whatever the gamemaster decides, the Book of Scales should remain a mixed blessing. While it is an important repository of information about Barsaive's greatest enemy, it also carries a dark taint that affects all who come into contact with it. And reassembling the book may actually strengthen the Horrors.



AN AGE OF LEGEND

Horrors and Heroes, kings and common folk, all have their place in the colorful legends of Barsaive. From the tale of a magic mirror that ensnares the souls of all who gaze into it, to the hero Ciarra Shy-Ru, who captured a Horror with a magical chain and sacrificed her life to slay it, the legends

shared among the people of Barsaive form a tapestry that is the living history of the province and its people.

LEGENDS OF EARTHDAWN VOLUME I offers players and gamemasters 30 legends told among the people of Barsaive, involving heroes, Horrors, and legendary magical treasures. This book also provides suggestions for creating adventures based on each of the legends, including selected game statistics for Horrors and magical items.

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