

# EARTHDAWN<sup>®</sup>

## PRELUDE TO WAR<sup>™</sup>



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

# PRELUDE TO WAR™



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## PRELUDE TO WAR: AN EARTHDOWN EPIC

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Published by FASA Corporation  
 1100 W. Cermak Road • Suite B305  
 Chicago, IL 60608

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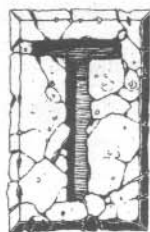
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# INTRODUCTION



Thousands of years ago there existed an age of magic and high adventure—the age of **Earthdawn**. The power of magic flowed freely through the world, and people could draw on magic to perform both wondrous feats and everyday tasks. But the dawn of magic also brought Horrors to Earth, creatures from the depths of astral space that devoured all life in their path. For four centuries, the people of Earth hid from the Horrors that devastated their land during the time that came to be called the Scourge. Now, the people of Barsaive have re-emerged from their sealed kaers and citadels to reclaim their world from the remaining Horrors and the oppressive Theran Empire. From all across Barsaive, bold heroes arise to explore the world, search for magical treasure and slay the Horrors that still exist. Magicians spin the magical energies of the universe into powerful spells, and adepts use the magic to enhance their natural talents. Armed with magic, courage, skill and daring, Barsaive's heroes strive to heal the world of the scars left by the Scourge and to build their own legends.

**Prelude to War** is a campaign supplement that introduces four significant events that will change the face of Barsaive forever. Though each event's story line can be used on its own, the combined story lines form an epic-style **Earthdawn** campaign that places player characters in the forefront of Barsaivian history. The player characters' actions in these adventures shape the future direction of Barsaive. The story lines of **Prelude to War** designed to let players take a starring role in an epic tale of heroism and adventure, a tale in which the player characters themselves can forge the future of Barsaive.

Each of the four major-event story lines in **Prelude to War** is described briefly in the following paragraphs. More information is provided in separate sections of this book devoted to each story line.

The first story line, **The Theran Behemoth**, features the long-feared return of the Theran Empire to Barsaive. Spurred on by a number of recent events in Barsaive, the First Governor has initiated a plan to more firmly establish the Therans' position in the province and undertake a number of operations within Barsaive's borders. The plan involves landing a behemoth, the largest of the Theran airships, in central Barsaive and thereby instantly creating a fortified city.

The Therans land their behemoth atop the Hill of Ayodhya at the juncture of the Serpent and Coil Rivers, near Lake Ban. Upon their arrival, they announce the re-establishment of their historical alliance with the t'skrang House K'tenshin and immediately begin conducting slave raids, elemental-mining expeditions, and other offensive operations with the help of their t'skrang allies. The new Theran presence emboldens the K'tenshin, and soon the region's traditional opponents of the Therans and the K'tenshin are reeling under K'tenshin/Theran attacks. Eventually, a network of anti-Theran and anti-K'tenshin forces begin to stage an ongoing war against the Therans and their t'skrang allies.

Shortly after the landing of the behemoth, Throal's King Varulus dies at the hands of an assassin. This major development triggers a number of events described **The King is Dead!**—Amid tension and turmoil in the Kingdom of Throal, Prince Neden assumes the throne and launches a near-disastrous assault against the Theran behemoth-fortress to avenge his father's death. The player characters, however, can expose Varulus's true killers—the dreaded Denairastas clan of Iopos, which is attempting to trigger a Theran-Throalic war as part of its own bid for power. At the request of King Neden, the characters track down the Denairastas assassin and finally confront the killer on a House Ishkarat riverboat at the Ishkaratan stronghold of Lake Vors.

In **The Dragons' Daughter**, Barsaive's great dragons contact the player characters. A Theran magician based at the new Theran stronghold has captured a young girl who is actually a unique drake-human hybrid; this child represents the best chance for the continued survival of dragonkind. The kidnapping threatens to escalate an ancient feud between the Therans and the great dragons, which could erupt into a major magical conflict at any time. Rather than risk such a conflagration, however, the dragons enlist the characters to recover the girl and capture the Theran magician.

In the final major story line, **Rise of the Ork Nation**, a charismatic ork travels the land issuing a call for a new ork homeland. In reply, orks from all across Barsaive begin migrating to the site of Cara Fahd, the ancient ork kingdom, in southwest Barsaive. Despite Theran treachery and their own internal divisions, the contentious groups of orks manage to forge a new ork nation—with the vital help of the player characters, of course.





## GAMEMASTERING NOTES

Gamemasters should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the contents of **Prelude to War** before incorporating these story lines into ongoing campaigns. Before using this book, both gamemaster and players should be familiar with the standard **Earthdawn** rulebook (ED).

### MAKING TESTS

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

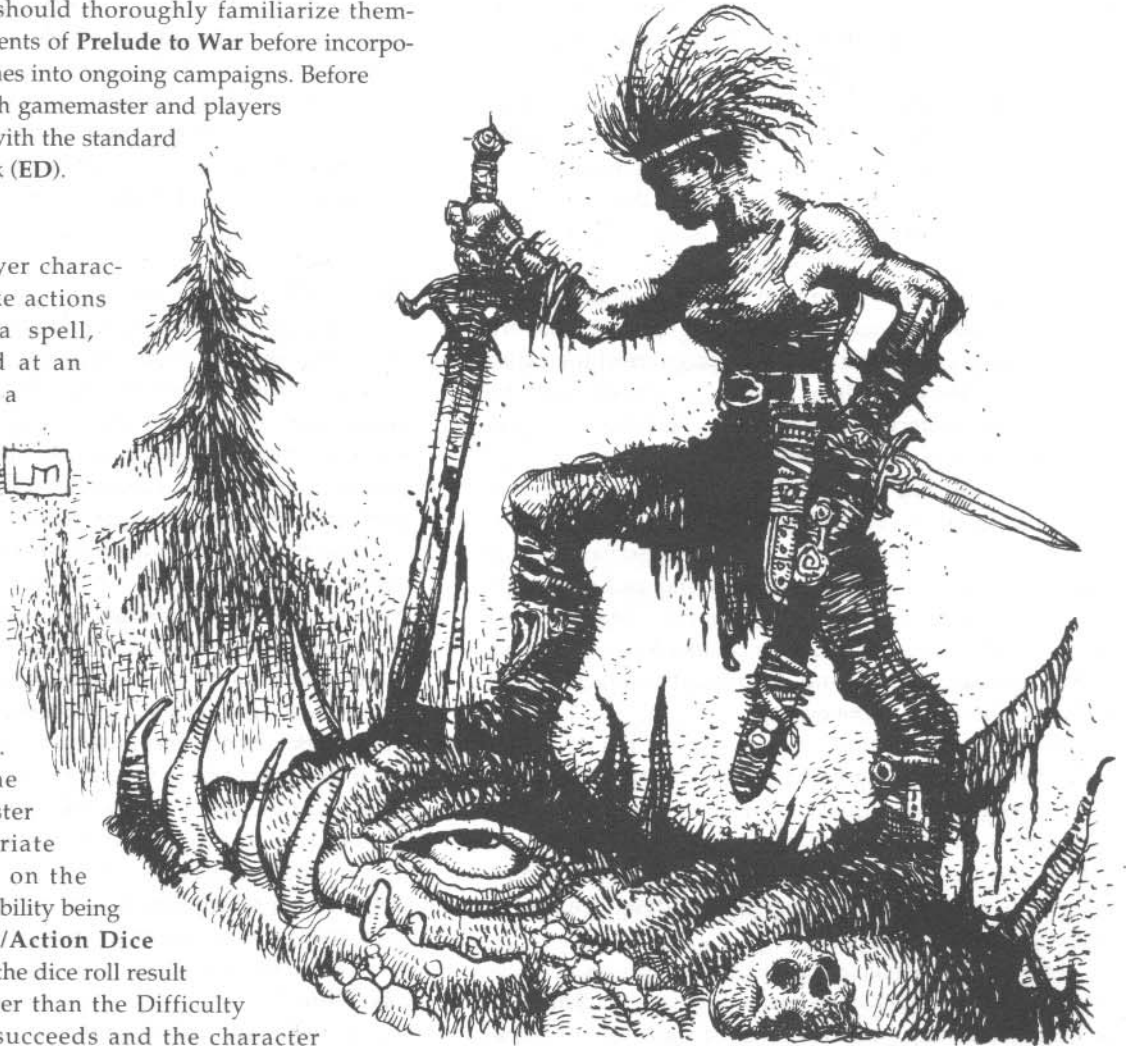
Frequently, a test result determines not only success or failure, but the level of success. A test may have one of five success levels: Poor, Average, Good, Excellent, or Extraordinary. A Poor success level indicates failure that causes unpleasant side effects. An Average success—equal to or barely exceeding the Difficulty Number—means that the character just barely accomplished his action. A somewhat better dice roll yields a Good success, and a result close to double the Difficulty Number means an Excellent success. Achieving an Extraordinary success requires an even better roll. Any success level greater

than Average may give the character some gain for his actions or valuable extra information. The amount of gain for each success level is determined by the gamemaster unless otherwise noted.

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

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the ED rulebook, **Prelude to War** contains everything required to run the adventures contained in the story lines. Additional background for the story lines appears in the following previously published **Earthdawn**





products: **Infected**, the **Sky Point** and **Vivane Campaign Set**, **Shattered Pattern**, **Blades**, **Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration**, **The Serpent River**, and **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**. Gamemasters may also find the **Barsaive Campaign Set**, the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**, the **Earthdawn Companion**, **The Adept's Way**, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**, and the **Creatures of Barsaive** and **Horrors** sourcebooks useful when running the adventures in **Prelude to War**.

**Running Prelude to War**, which appears later in this **Introduction**, offers advice on running adventures based on the story lines of **Prelude to War** and incorporating the story lines into an extended **Earthdawn** campaign. Before incorporating a story line into a campaign, read the entire story-line section carefully to familiarize yourself with the backgrounds, characters and plot lines. As always, be prepared to deal with the unexpected.

Each of the four story-line sections of this book—**The Theran Behemoth**; **The King Is Dead!**—**The Dragons' Daughter**; and **Rise of the Ork Nation**—describes a major event in Barsaive, the event's background and aftermath, and various adventure opportunities that the event presents. The story-line sections each contain four subsections titled **Prologue**, **Background**, **Important Characters**, and **Running [the name of the event]**.

The **Prologue** section gives each story line some fictional flavor. The **Background** section describes the background behind each story line—who's involved, why the events are occurring, and other specifics. Each **Background** section also contains an **Event Synopsis** that summarizes the events covered in the story line's adventure frameworks and ideas.

**Important Characters** provides descriptions and statistics for all of a story line's major gamemaster characters or groups. In some cases, abbreviated statistics are given, especially in the case of characters whom the player characters are not likely to confront directly.

The final section provides information on incorporating the story line into an **Earthdawn** campaign. **Running [the name of the event]** contains the following subsections: **Introducing the Event**, **Adventure Frameworks**, **Other Adventure Ideas** and **Loose Ends**.

**Introducing the Event** contains guidelines and suggestions on foreshadowing the events of the story line and involving player characters in it. This subsection also includes a **Prequels** section, which lists previously published **Earthdawn** products that contain hints, clues or references to the story's events and main characters. This information enables gamemasters to better integrate adventures based on previous products with adventures based on **Prelude to War**.

The **Adventure Frameworks** in each story section present "blueprints" for adventures that re-create the story line. (The adventure framework format is explained in the following section.) The **Adventure Ideas** are short synopses of suggested adventures based on or related to the story line.

The **Loose Ends** section describes the aftermath of each story line's events and adventures. Together, the four **Loose Ends** sections of **Prelude to War** present a picture of Barsaive's political landscape following the events of this book.

## ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The adventure-framework format is an adventure outline that gamemasters can use to plan out the events of an adventure while maintaining as much flexibility as they need. (Gamemasters who are already familiar with the format from previously published **Earthdawn** products may skip this explanation.) Each adventure framework has five parts: **Premise**, **Setup**, **Events**, **Climax** and **Sequels**.

The **Premise** briefly summarizes the adventure and describes its major sources of conflict or drama. 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 mentioned in the **Premise**. The **Events** in each framework describe encounters and events that occur during the course of the adventure. These may include situations that pose problems for the characters, actions by the adventure's antagonists, creature encounters or simply unexpected occurrences. In other words, events are the obstacles or problems the player characters must overcome to complete the adventure successfully.

The **Climax** describes the likely conclusion of the adventure. (If player characters take unexpected actions, the ending of the adventure may differ considerably from the ending described in the **Climax**—therefore, gamemasters may want to plan for more than one possible conclusion.) **Sequels** describes 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. By running sequel adventures, gamemasters can create a sense of continuity in their campaigns.

## ADEPT STATISTICS

The **Adept Statistics** appendix at the end of this book provides sample statistics for adepts of each of the fifteen core Disciplines practiced in Barsaive, for First through Third, Fifth, and Seventh Circles. These statistics are based on the character archetypes that appear on pages 67–91 of the **ED** rulebook.







## PREPARING ADVENTURES

Creating published adventures that provide sufficient and appropriate challenges and opponents for every group of player characters is impossible, simply because the inherent strengths and weaknesses of player groups vary so widely. Therefore, gamemasters may need to adjust the game statistics of gamemaster characters and modify the plots or events of **Prelude to War** in order to provide their players with appropriate opposition. If an adventure is particularly ill-suited to your player group, use it as a blueprint for an adventure of your own invention.

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

### CIRCLE LEVEL

The difficulty and threat levels of the adventures in **Prelude to War** vary greatly. The adventures assume that most player characters have reached at least Fourth or Fifth Circle, or attained Legendary Status 1 (pp. 226–227, ED), by the time they become involved in the events of this book. Ideally, characters should have reached Sixth or Seventh Circle, or Legendary Status 2, before becoming involved in the events of **The King Is Dead!** Beyond these guidelines, gamemasters should adjust the adventures according to the size and average Circle of their group's player characters.

### AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

Additionally, gamemasters must determine appropriate Legend Point awards for the adventures in **Prelude to War**. Base these awards on the average Circle level of your group's player characters and the relative difficulty and scope of each adventure. For example, an adventure only peripherally related to the main events of a story line should not earn the characters as many Legend Points as one that places player characters in the story line's central events.

Because the story lines of **Prelude to War** represent major events in Barsaive, characters who participate in adventures directly related to the story lines also earn an additional Legend Award. For example, a gamemaster might decide on a standard 750-point Legend Award for a group of Seventh Circle characters who participate in the **Message in Bone** adventure in **The Dragons' Daughter**. Because the adventure is central to **The Dragons' Daughter** story line, every character receives a bonus 750-point Legend Award, in addition to any awards they have earned for completing adventure goals, creative roleplaying and heroics, and defeating creatures and opponents.

All of the adventures described in the various **Adventure Frameworks** qualify as bonus Legend-Award adventures.

## RUNNING PRELUDE TO WAR

Unlike previously published **Earthdawn** adventures, which represent single continuous story lines, the story lines in **Prelude to War** are designed to be run simultaneously with each other and with other ongoing story lines in a campaign. This allows gamemasters to intersperse the adventures of **Prelude to War** between other adventures in their campaigns as they desire.

### THE STORY LINES

Each of the four story lines in **Prelude to War** represents a major development that shapes the future of Barsaive. **The Theran Behemoth** recounts the arrival of a Theran behemoth in the heartland of Barsaive, an occurrence that represents a major shift in political power around Lake Ban and the South Reach of the Serpent River. The second story line, **The King Is Dead!**, describes the death of King Varulus, which places the Kingdom of Throal in the hands of the young, inexperienced Prince Neden and throws the kingdom into turmoil. **The Dragons' Daughter** recounts the capture of Aardelea, a young drake-human hybrid, and the subsequent escalation of the ongoing feud between Barsaive's great dragons and the Therans. The final story line, **Rise of the Ork Nation**, traces the formation of a new national power certain to shake up the political scene in Barsaive for years to come. Each of these four story lines describes a development significant enough to have a lasting effect on all of Barsaive. Taken together, they fundamentally alter the status quo and virtually ensure that few aspects of life in the province will remain unchanged.

The scope of each major story line and the adventures contained in it differ. For example, the landing of the behemoth in **The Theran Behemoth** serves as a "trigger" event, a catalyst that can spawn myriad smaller events and





adventures. The adventure frameworks and ideas presented in that story line are triggered by the behemoth landing, but they do not form a single, linear narrative. In contrast, the adventure frameworks and ideas in **The Dragons' Daughter** represent a single, more narrowly defined linear story line based on the capture of Aardelea and the dragons' attempts to retrieve her. These differences illustrate just a few approaches to incorporating events and stories into **Earthdawn** campaigns.

### Chronology of Events

The precise chronology of the events described in this book is up to each individual gamemaster, so that he or she can best fit the adventures in **Prelude to War** into his or her campaign.

The following chronology represents a suggested order and timeline for the pivotal events of **Prelude to War**. It reflects the order in which **Prelude to War** and future **Earthdawn** products will refer to the events, but feel free to arrange the events in whatever way best fits your own campaign.

Start	The Theran behemoth arrives. ( <b>The Theran Behemoth</b> )
+1 Month	King Varulus is found murdered. ( <b>The King Is Dead!</b> ) Krathis Gron returns to Barsaive and begins to call for the founding of a new ork nation. ( <b>Rise of the Ork Nation</b> )
+2 Months	Aardelea is kidnapped from her native village of Hanto. ( <b>The Dragons' Daughter</b> )
+3 Months	Newly crowned King Neden launches an assault against Theran forces. ( <b>The King Is Dead!</b> ) Orks from across Barsaive migrate to the southwest region of the province. ( <b>Rise of the Ork Nation</b> )
+4 Months	Krathis Gron declares the existence of a new ork nation. ( <b>Rise of the Ork Nation</b> )

### USING THE STORY LINES IN CAMPAIGNS

Gamemasters can present the story lines of **Prelude to War** in two ways. First, the story-line events can be interspersed with one another and integrated with events and adventures from other **Earthdawn** products to create an epic-style campaign. Alternatively, the events and adventures of a single story line can be presented consecutively to create a single, self-contained campaign. Suggestions for using both methods are provided in the following sections.

### Introducing the Story Lines

Introducing the story lines of **Prelude to War** to the player characters is the first step in incorporating the stories into an **Earthdawn** campaign. Introducing a story line can be as simple as allowing the player characters to witness a pivotal event—for example, the characters may see the Theran behemoth land. More ambitious gamemasters may also use hints and clues to foreshadow the pivotal events of the story lines. For example, player characters might hear reports of Theran airship activity along the South Reach of the Serpent River weeks or even months before the behemoth lands.

Gamemasters determine exactly how their player characters learn of the story-line events. As described in **How to Use this Book** (p. 5), each of the four story-line sections includes suggestions for introducing the story lines, as well as lists of prequels—other **Earthdawn** products that include hints or allusions to the story line's events.

### EPIC-STYLE CAMPAIGN

In an epic-style campaign, the player characters move back and forth between the different story lines. To create one, simply weave together the events from the different story lines of **Prelude to War**. For example, after the arrival of the Theran behemoth, the player characters may participate in one of the adventure frameworks from that story line. They may next learn of King Varulus's death and participate in one or more of the adventures in **The King Is Dead!** They might then go on to play adventures from other story lines before playing additional adventures from **The Theran Behemoth**.

Gamemasters may add further background and richness to an epic-style campaign by preceding the story-line adventures with related adventures from other **Earthdawn** products. Following is a suggested timeline of adventures and events for an epic-style campaign:

### POTENTIAL PREQUELS

- **Infected:** This adventure introduces Aardelea, the young drake-human hybrid in **The Dragons' Daughter**.
- **Shattered Pattern:** This adventure explains the significance of the small dragon sculpture (a pattern item belonging to the great dragon Icewing) that first appears in **Infected**.
- **A Message to Vivane:** This **Sky Point Adventures** adventure enables player characters to encounter the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane. The player characters may also encounter Resistance members during adventures spawned by **The Theran Behemoth**.





- **Blades:** This adventure collection introduces the Blades of Cara Fahd, a magical item of historical importance to the orks in *Rise of the Ork Nation*.
- **Bond Breaker:** This adventure from the *Blades* adventure collection includes a description of the ancient ork kingdom of Cara Fahd and introduces the ork leader, Moschtug, who plays a prominent role in *Rise of the Ork Nation*.
- **The Vanishing Scholar:** This adventure framework from the *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom* sourcebook introduces player characters to Hanto, the home village of Aardelea—the young drake-human hybrid of *The Dragons' Daughter*.
- **Carrul and the Therans:** In this story from *Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration*, player characters learn of increasing Theran airship activity near the South Reach of the Serpent River—activity that foreshadows the coming of the Therans in *The Theran Behemoth*.
- **The Growing Bones:** In this story from *Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration*, player characters learn of ork tribes uniting in the region of the Tylon Mountains—a development that foreshadows the events of *Rise of the Ork Nation*.
- **An Ancient Mystery:** This adventure from *Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration* enables player characters to learn that the Therans have taken an interest in the Mist Swamps and the Badlands. This interest foreshadows the Theran airship's arrival in *The Theran Behemoth*.
- **Drake Hunting (The Theran Behemoth):** The characters are hired to help free a drake captured by the Therans at the behemoth-fortress.
- **Death to Thera (The King Is Dead!):** The characters take part in an ill-fated Throalic assault against the Therans at the behemoth. During this adventure, the characters learn that operatives of the Denairastas clan of Iopos, not the Therans, killed King Varulus.
- **A Matter of Trust (The King Is Dead!):** The characters hunt down the Iopan agents who assassinated King Varulus.
- **The Theran Kiss (Rise of the Ork Nation):** The Theran agent Palinque, who plays a recurring role in *Rise of the Ork Nation*, marks the characters with a unique Theran spell.
- **The Dragons' Daughter:** The three adventure frameworks in *The Dragons' Daughter* flow directly from one to the next, forming a single story line. Barsaive's great dragons hire the characters to recover Aardelea, who has been captured by Theran agents. The characters fail to free Aardelea, but they manage to capture her kidnapper and turn the culprit over to Icewing.
- **Kidnapped! (Rise of the Ork Nation):** The characters investigate a series of kidnappings of orks from a small town. While doing so, the characters learn of the emerging ork nation.
- **The Air Galleons of Throal (The Theran Behemoth):** Throal hires the characters to search for several of its air galleons that were lost in the Throal Mountains before the Scourge.
- **Imprisoned by the Passions (Rise of the Ork Nation):** The characters enter a village whose leaders are about to try and execute Krathis Gron, the leader of the nascent ork nation. When the trial threatens to touch off a riot, the characters are pressed into service as judge and jury.
- **Night Maneuvers (Rise of the Ork Nation):** The characters help the Metal Fist ork raider tribe travel undetected through Theran-controlled territory near Lake Ban and the South Reach of the Serpent River.
- **Gone Fishing (The Theran Behemoth):** The t'skrang House V'strimon hires the characters to help recover a Theran airship that lies at the bottom of Lake Ban.
- **Betrayal (Rise of the Ork Nation):** The characters work to prevent a potentially disastrous military assault against Theran forces planned by Krathis Gron's rival, Moschtug.

## ADVENTURES

- **The Behemoth Lands (The Theran Behemoth):** The Theran behemoth arrives in Barsaive.
- **Scouting the Fortress (The Theran Behemoth):** The characters perform a reconnaissance mission to learn what they can of the defenses and forces stationed at the Theran behemoth-fortress.
- **The Heart of Triumph (The Theran Behemoth):** The characters must penetrate the Theran behemoth-fortress and make contact with the obsidimen trapped within the Liferock at Ayodhya, which now lies beneath the behemoth.
- **Heir or Usurper? (The King Is Dead!):** The characters learn of King Varulus's assassination and attempt to identify the party responsible for his death.







• **Incident at Claw Ridge (Rise of the Ork Nation):**

The characters help a division of Throalic soldiers track down a force of Therans in the lands of the new ork nation. Just as the two forces are about to begin battle, Krathis Gron and legions of orks surround the two forces and demand that they immediately surrender their arms or die. The player characters must act quickly to save their own lives and avert a potential political disaster for Barsaive.

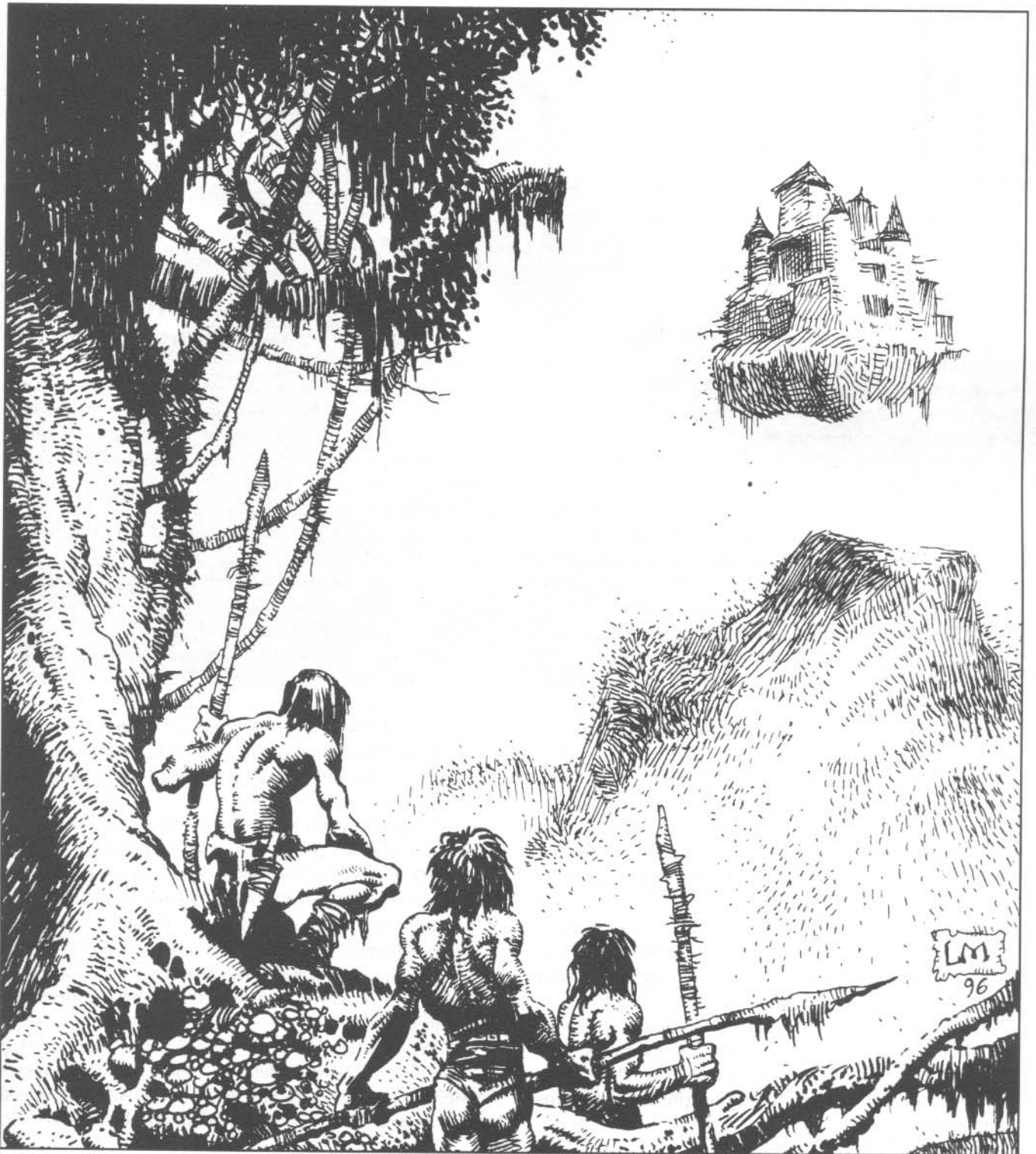
## SELF-CONTAINED CAMPAIGNS

Gamemasters can also present the adventures of each story line in *Prelude to War* as separate, self-contained campaigns. To do so, simply play the adventures in the order suggested in each story-line section. The sections are written in the following order: **The Theran Behemoth; The King Is Dead!; The Dragons' Daughter** and **Rise of the Ork Nation**. Gamemasters who present the story lines in a different order will need to alter certain passages in the story texts accordingly.





# THE THERAN BEHEMOTH

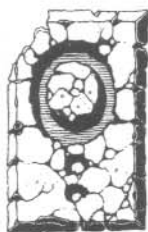


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# DARKNESS OVER VIVANE



Overgovernor Kypros stood with his advisors, aides and a legion of soldiers on the platform of Sky Point, his impatient gaze fixed on the sky. He and the others had gathered there shortly after dawn, and Kypros was feeling the lack of sleep. Protocol demanded that they all be present to greet the arrival of the First Governor's emissary, and Kypros had long ago learned the importance of observing such formalities—even when it led to such irritating inconveniences as a two-hour wait in the early-morning chill.

"There, my lord," Kypros's chief aide said softly, pointing toward the southwest. Kypros squinted, and made out a small gray speck on the distant horizon. As he watched, the speck grew steadily larger until everyone on the platform could identify it as a Thera behemoth. Their guests were finally approaching.

As the massive stone ship slowly moved closer, the observers could see its escort—a pair of kilas and another pair of smaller vedettes. The kilas, immense vessels the size of castles, looked tiny floating next to their mother ship.

As the behemoth began its final approach, it cast a dark shadow that enveloped the outpost and caused the inhabitants of Sky Point and Vivane to look up in awe. Even the Overgovernor could not help feeling amazed at the sight of the city-ship that filled the sky above him. The idea of making such a massive citadel fly could have occurred only to the magicians and engineers of the glorious Thera Empire, who knew that nothing was beyond their power.

As Kypros watched, one of the escort vedettes broke away from the kilas and approached the landing platform in a graceful arc, like a leaf borne on the breeze. As it slid into place at one of the platform's docking columns, Kypros ordered the troops of the Eighth Legion to attention. He looked over the gleaming armor and polished shields of the warriors arrayed in front of the landing point and allowed himself a small smile—everything was in place, in perfect order. With a gesture to his personal honor guard, he moved to greet his honored guest.

The First Governor's emissary descended the gangway of the airship, followed by a pair of trolls. He moved with the swagger typical of t'skrang, taking in the whole of the platform with a single, sweeping glance as Kypros approached.

"Welcome to Sky Point, General Nikar—" the Overgovernor began.

The general held up a gloved hand and silenced him with a look. "I have no time for pleasantries, Kypros. The First Governor has sent me to this backwater on an urgent matter, and I wish to be about it. You may have all the time in the world to while away with long-winded speeches and endless trivialities, but I have a mission to perform for our glorious Empire."

The general passed the shocked Overgovernor with two long strides that carried him onto the platform and down the rows of Thera soldiers. Kypros was forced to move quickly to catch up.

"General, I assure you, you have no idea of the problems—"

The general waved a hand, as if the Overgovernor was no more than a bothersome insect. "I am not interested in your assurances, Kypros. I am here to supply my flotilla, take possession of the vedettes I requested, and gather additional troops. I am pleased to see that you have prepared them to serve the Empire."

Kypros halted in mid-stammer and stared at the general. "Troops? But how—"

"The First Governor feels that we have been too soft with the people of this rebel province. Rumor has reached Thera that the people of Barsaive no longer fear the Empire's might. Little wonder, considering how the rebels have been coddled and humored to date," the general said, fixing Kypros with a disturbing golden glare.

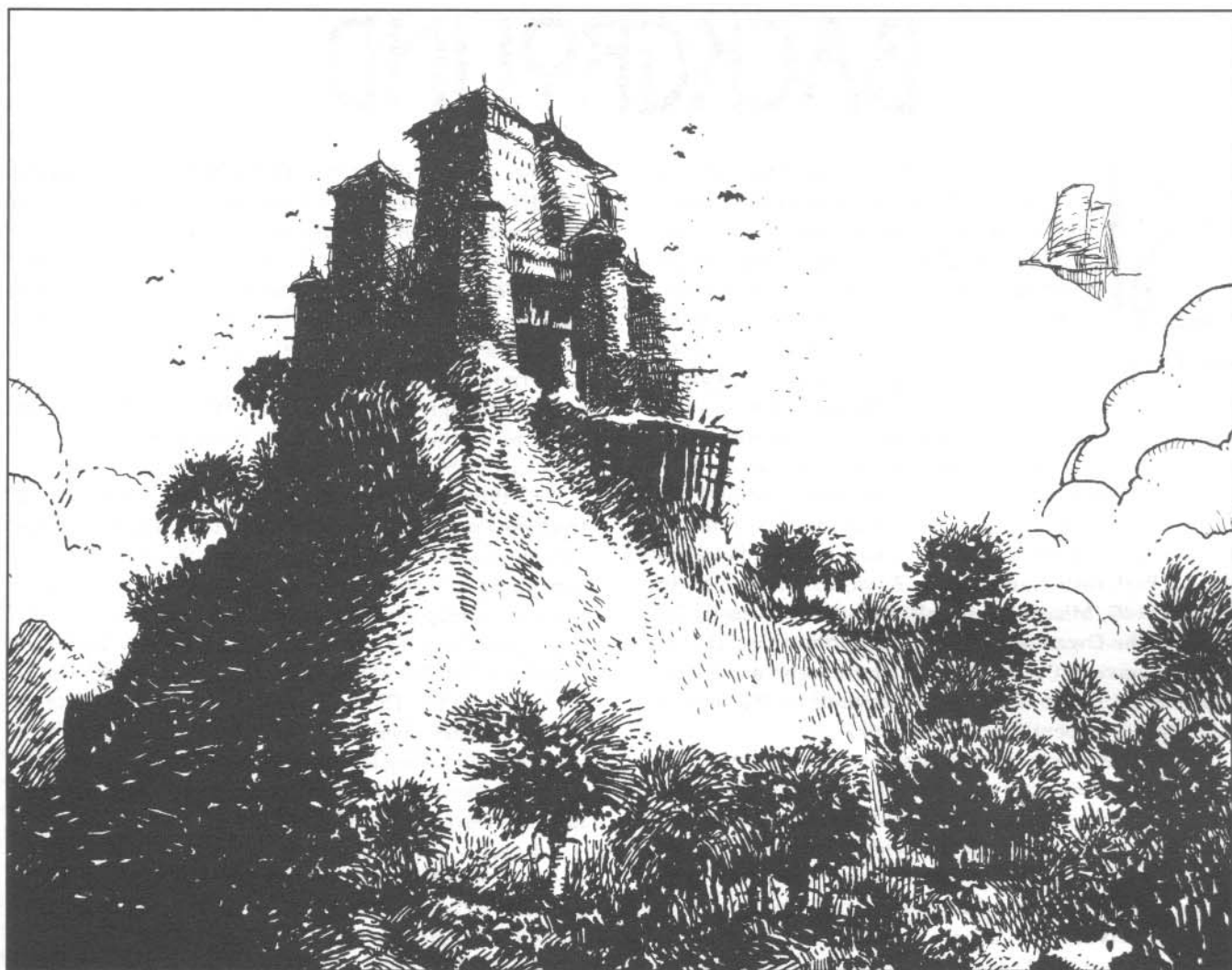
With difficulty, Kypros repressed a shudder. He had never liked reptiles—couldn't abide the coldness of their eyes. Name-giver or not, General Nikar had the same chilly gaze as a python.

"The Barsavians believe that a small military victory over a fraction of Thera's forces means they have won the day," General Nikar continued. "But their celebrations are premature. The First Governor knows that these rebels need a show of strength, a reminder that Thera's power is not something to be ignored. My behemoth and the Eighth Legion will teach them that lesson and strengthen our position in this province. One cohort should be sufficient for my needs."

"You can't be serious!" Kypros said. "That will strip away most of Vivane's defenses." How dare this arrogant popinjay just walk into Sky Point and start giving orders? Had he no respect for the rank of Imperial Overgovernor?







"I am well aware of Vivane's defensive needs, Overgovernor," the general calmly replied. "I will leave a small contingent of my own troops to ensure that matters here remain ... under control."

Kypros gritted his teeth at the implied insult. Nikar didn't trust him, and wanted his men close by to cover his scaly tail. But Kypros could not refuse, because Nikar had the First Governor's approval for this expedition. Silently, Kypros cursed politics.

The general continued as if he had not noticed the Overgovernor's displeasure. "Earlier today I received word from our K'tenshin allies, and they seem eager to welcome us back to their lands. I do not entirely trust their shivalahala—she is a wily one—but their allegiance to their true sovereigns seems genuine enough. They will prove useful in establishing and maintaining our new stronghold, and if we can foment trouble between the aropagoi of the

Serpent, so much the better. Our presence will surely rattle the cage of the Shivalahala V'strimon and her rebellious city." He looked back at his behemoth with a barking laugh. "I'd like to see that old crone and her collection of pet elementalists use their magic to stop *this* vessel. She'll try, of course. Her overconfidence will be her undoing, as will the overconfidence of the upstart dwarf kingdom and its allies. They will soon learn the price of defying the Theran Empire."

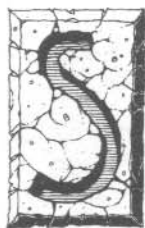
Without waiting for a reply, the general turned to one of his troll companions and began outlining orders for the departure of the Legionnaires.

*Oh, yes, general, Kypros thought, overconfidence will be the undoing of many—including, perhaps, a certain soldier foolish enough to defy me. We shall see how long the First Governor's favor protects you. We shall see.*





# BACKGROUND



ince the end of the Theran War roughly fifty years ago, an uneasy truce has existed between the Theran Empire and the province of Barsaive. The Therans insist that Barsaive is still a part of their empire, while most of Barsaive's people, led by the Kingdom of Throal, claim independence from Thera. Though Theran troops have

engaged small resistance cells and Throalic forces in minor skirmishes, no large-scale battles have occurred during this period. Additionally, the Therans have maintained an extensive network of spies and operatives throughout Barsaive to monitor developments that may be of importance to the Empire. These spies include Omag Bastabus (p. 36, *Parlaint's Gamemaster Book*) and Agramen in Haven (p. 95, *Mists of Betrayal*), Apulian Coriatus (p. 74, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*) in Bartertown, the Theran representative in Urupa, and the Therans who make their home at the House of the Nine Diamonds on the Serpent River (p. 20, *Serpent River* sourcebook).

Recent events in Barsaive, however, have prompted Thera's First Governor and ruling Conclave to take more overt action in the Empire's former province. First, the Shivalahala of House K'tenshin invited Thera to firmly re-establish the military alliance that once existed between the Empire and the t'skrang aropagoi. (As described in the *Serpent River* sourcebook, the House of the Nine Diamonds and the Theran Empire maintained close ties from the time of the Scourge until the recent Theran War.) The Theran withdrawal from most of Barsaive after the war all but severed the alliance, and since that time the Shivalahala K'tenshin has continually tried to re-establish it through increased trade between the two powers. Thera, however, has been reluctant to expand its token military presence in Barsaive—until now.

Second, the Heavenherds—the Empire's elite magicians—have learned of a small Barsaivian girl reputed to possess unusual magical abilities, and they have asked the First Governor for the resources needed to capture her for study. The request was personally handled by a Heavenherd member named Hefera, a protégé of the First Governor and one of the most accomplished magicians in Thera.

Third, and perhaps most important, Thera's leaders believe that Overgovernor Kypros has failed to quell growing anti-Theran resistance activities in Barsaive. For

decades, the lack of a strong Theran military presence has aided Throal's attempts to unite the disparate peoples of Barsaive into an independent nation. Recently, Barsaivian resistance fighters obtained sensitive information about Theran defenses in Vivane and Sky Point—information that these fighters have used to launch a series of attacks against the Theran forces in those settlements. The First Governor and the Conclave believe that Thera must respond strongly to these assaults, lest the attacks embolden more would-be rebels among Barsaive's inhabitants—who seem to be forgetting that they are Theran subjects.

Fortunately for Barsaive, conditions in Thera's other territories prevent the Empire from bringing its full military power to bear on the province. Determined to do something in response, the First Governor has ordered Nikar, a t'skrang general from House Carinci, to establish a large, permanent Theran military installation in Barsaive's heartland. This installation will remind all Barsaivians of the power of the Theran Empire and provide a base for Theran military operations in Barsaive, enabling Thera to begin re-establishing its alliance with House K'tenshin. The base will also make it easier for the Theran military to capture the Heavenherds' target.

To serve as the heart of the new installation, the First Governor selected an ancient Theran behemoth (p. 46, *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*) that had been slated for retirement. Under the First Governor's plan, Thera's magicians would first refit the behemoth, Named the *Triumph*. General Nikar would then fly it to a predetermined landing site in Barsaive and ground it, thereby instantly creating a fortress that could be reinforced and strengthened to resist any attack the Kingdom of Throal or Throal's allies might mount against it. The flying fortress is equipped and manned with a cohort of troops from the Theran Fifth Legion, and escorted by two kilas and a pair of vedettes (pp. 46–48, *An Explorer's Guide To Barsaive*).

Overgovernor Kypros and his advisors, along with the massed troops of the Eighth Legion, meet the *Triumph* at Sky Point, whereupon General Nikar informs Kypros that he will be taking a fourth of the Eighth Legion aboard the behemoth. To help maintain order in Vivane and defend the Theran outpost in the absence of part of its regular forces, the general leaves a token garrison of his own troops at Sky Point. (This heavy-handed act earns the general no points with Kypros, who already resents Nikar's incursion into "his" province, and also the First Governor's





decision to create a new Theran installation in Barsaive rather than reinforcing Sky Point.) Additionally, Nikar requisitions four of the twelve Seventh Fleet vedettes stationed at Sky Point. Nikar's requisitions threaten to undermine the Theran position in Vivane—a matter of great concern to the Overgovernor and his staff, but not to the general or his mission. Restocked with supplies, slaves, troops and vedettes from Sky Point, Nikar's flotilla weighs anchor and sets course for the heart of Barsaive: the Serpent River.

The *Triumph* takes four days to travel to its intended landing site. The appearance of the behemoth in the skies over Barsaive sends a wave of fear and panic rippling through the population. A cloud of dread slowly envelops Barsaive as its inhabitants attempt to ascertain the destination and purpose of the behemoth and its escort. Word barely has time to spread to the aropagoi of the Serpent River and the Kingdom of Throal before the Theran flotilla approaches its destination near the juncture of the Serpent and Coil Rivers.

As the *Triumph* nears the end of its journey, General Nikar sends a vedette full of emissaries to the Sixteen Towers of House K'tenshin. The Shivalahala K'tenshin greets these emissaries personally and welcomes the Therans' return to take their rightful place as the rulers of Barsaive. She pledges the support of her House and her people to Thera's efforts and begins negotiating the future position of the K'tenshin along the Serpent, as well as the concessions she desires in exchange for House K'tenshin's cooperation and renewed pledge of loyalty.

Meanwhile, the behemoth approaches the Hill of Ayodhya just south of Lake Ban. The hill is a sacred spot to the t'skrang of the Serpent River, and an obsidiman Liferock lies atop it. Slowly, the behemoth begins to descend toward the hilltop. The foundation of the refitted *Triumph* contains a vast opening that perfectly matches the size and shape of the Liferock, and the behemoth's skilled crew lowers the ship so that the rock fits inside the heart of the sky-fortress. The speed of the landing traps many obsidimen within the Liferock. Shortly after the ship settles, chief elemental Azim Keel and his fellow Theran magicians perform spells to tap the elemental power of the Liferock and use it to strengthen the *Triumph's* magical defenses.

Within scant hours of the behemoth's landing, witnesses along the Pilgrimage Route outside of Ayodhya, as well as those on the shores of Lake Ban and the nearby Serpent River, describe the stone walls and towers of the behemoth's foundation growing and digging themselves into the ground as if the fortress was sending roots into the earth. The outer walls stretch and expand slightly to encompass the upper portion of the hill, and overnight the

Theran military city of Triumph is established in Barsaive.

With the first part of their work done, Theran elementals begin extracting the elemental air from the grounded behemoth's structure and forming it into a faintly visible dome over the Hill of Ayodhya. The dome will mark the outer perimeter of the fortress and function as a first line of defense against any attacking airships.

Initially caught by surprise, the leaders of Throal, House V'strimon and House Syrtis begin to marshal their forces to reconnoiter the area now claimed by the Therans and to determine the Imperials' purpose and intentions.

## EVENT SYNOPSIS

Unlike some of the other events in this book, which describe more or less self-contained story lines, the arrival of the behemoth is a catalyst, a "trigger." Like a stone thrown into a pond, the *Triumph's* landing and the activities of the Theran force cause ripples that travel throughout Barsaive. The landing significantly alters the balance of military power in the province, which in turn shakes up Barsaive's political climate—especially along the Serpent River. The shakeup triggers a number of other developments, events and situations in Barsaive. Rather than attempting to create a single story-arc for the behemoth landing, the following sections describe the initial responses of Throal, the aropagoi, House K'tenshin, and the Ayodhya Liferock's obsidiman brotherhood, as well as the Theran landing force and its activities. These descriptions provide numerous hooks that gamemasters can use as starting points for encounters and adventures.

### THROAL'S RESPONSE

For the most part, the Kingdom of Throal responds to the arrival of the behemoth by taking a "wait-and-see" attitude. Throal's leaders send scouting and reconnaissance parties to monitor and observe the fortress (see **Scouting Triumph**, p. 38), but otherwise assume a defensive posture, preferring to learn more about the Therans' plans before taking any action that might be considered aggressive. As described in several of the adventure ideas in **Adventure Frameworks** (p. 34), Throal devotes itself primarily to cautious preparations for war, such as attempting to recover lost air galleons (see **The Air Galleons of Throal**, p. 34) and salvaging one of the Theran vedettes from the bottom of Lake Ban (see **Gone Fishing**, p. 37).

Throal cannot afford to overtly antagonize the Therans just at the moment, as the dwarf kingdom is notably ill-equipped to wage war at this time. The death of King Varulus (see **The King Is Dead!**, p. 42) will further hamper Throal's capacity to take offensive action, though these







conditions don't dissuade the newly crowned King Neden from launching an ill-advised assault on the Theran fortress (see *Death to Thera!*, p. 54).

### HOUSE K'TENSHIN'S RESPONSE

House K'tenshin's alliance with the Therans returns the House of the Nine Diamonds to its former position of power among the t'skrang aropagoi. Almost immediately after the behemoth arrives, Theran troops take up residence in the K'tenshin stronghold's Carinci Tower and begin aiding the aropagoi in actions against its enemies.

First, House K'tenshin seizes control of the South Reach of the Serpent River with the aid of its Theran allies. The K'tenshin then declare that all vessels passing through the South Reach out of Lake Ban must pay a toll to the House of the Nine Diamonds. Contingents of Theran troops are posted aboard several K'tenshin riverboats to help House K'tenshin collect the new toll—and to ensure that the Therans receive their cut. Legitimate taxes and additional bribes begin to produce a tidy profit for both House K'tenshin and the Therans.

Shortly after the capture of the South Serpent, House K'tenshin also moves to recapture the "rebel towns" along the shores of Lake Pyros. The Theran presence prevents House V'strimon from blocking this offensive, and House K'tenshin warriors easily seize control of the lake settlements. Some of the townspeople fight back, but most surrender. Others flee into the Servos Jungle, where they begin a resistance movement aimed at ousting the K'tenshin occupiers. (Many of those who flee are adepts, who help their fellow refugees survive the jungle's harsh conditions.)

Theran and K'tenshin troops also begin to conduct joint slaving raids into the Servos Jungle, using the captured slaves to clear additional plantations along the jungle's many rivers or shipping them upriver to Triumph for eventual delivery to Vivane or elsewhere in the Empire. The human and t'skrang jungle tribes attempt to fight back, but the Therans successfully continue the K'tenshin practice of turning the jungle tribes against one another by offering protection to any who cooperate in the capture of other tribes. According to rumors, some tribes take refuge in the jungle's ancient subterranean caves and tunnels, where they join anti-Theran rebels and refugees from the towns along Lake Pyros.

Emboldened by the power of its Theran allies and the lack of response from Throal, House K'tenshin begins to send ships down the Coil River to the city of Urupa in defiance of the Free Trade Compact. Initially, House V'strimon's warships send the K'tenshin vessels fleeing back to the safe waters of the South Serpent River. The K'tenshin vessels return soon afterward, escorted by a pair

of Theran vedettes and occasionally one of the kilas stationed at the fortress city of Triumph. The Theran escorts dissuade the V'strimon ships from confronting House K'tenshin's traders and persuade the Urupan trading companies to reluctantly trade with the K'tenshin ships. These excursions down the Coil River are few and far between, however, as most of House K'tenshin's ships are needed to consolidate the aropagoi's control of the South Serpent and Lake Pyros.

With its position in the South Reach secured by the presence of the behemoth, House K'tenshin is free to turn its attention to other matters—such as dealing with House Henghyoke's raiders and the re-emergent House T'kambras. The raiders and pirates of House Henghyoke have long been a scourge to K'tenshin trade in the South Serpent, and General Nikar responds to Shivalahala K'tenshin's request for Theran aid by posting soldiers from the Eighth Legion aboard K'tenshin ships carrying shipments of particular importance to the Therans. The presence of these troops discourages raids somewhat, but Henghyoke harassment continues. Shivalahala K'tenshin pins her hopes on the Henghyoke eventually angering the Therans enough to provoke a concerted Theran effort to destroy them.

The Theran presence has a much greater impact on House K'tenshin's efforts to destroy House T'kambras. Theran-K'tenshin control of the outlets to the South Reach makes smuggling supplies and weapons to the rebel t'skrang aropagoi increasingly difficult for House V'strimon. Efforts to supply House T'kambras via overland routes prove extremely difficult, but House V'strimon—aided by the obsidian Omasu and the so-called Liferock Rebellion—recruits adepts for such missions. Despite these efforts, the Theran-K'tenshin blockade forces House T'kambras to rely heavily on Kratas and other western settlements for aid and supplies. Kratas's mayor, Garlthik One-Eye, proves willing to aid the rebel house because he does not want to see the K'tenshin establish a stranglehold on the South Serpent and so be in a position to dictate terms to him. The Scavians also aid the anti-K'tenshin cause by supplying elemental fire to the T'kambras riverboats, prompting House K'tenshin to target Scavian settlements for slaving raids in an effort to intimidate them. This effort, however, fails completely.

Theran airship patrols also intercept and inspect all foreign airships passing within sight of the Triumph fortress—including merchant ships. In fact, Theran air crews commonly appropriate any cargo they desire from passing vessels, under a Theran law that authorizes military personnel to requisition any civilian property "deemed necessary for the defense of the Theran Empire." Such practices wreak





havoc with Travar's burgeoning air-shipping industry and enable House K'tenshin to profit handsomely from its trade monopoly along the Byrose River.

### THE OTHER AROPAGOIS' RESPONSE

Like Throal, the other aropagoi of the Serpent River respond with extreme caution—the riverboats of the t'skrang are simply no match for the Therans' airships. Whenever possible, the aropagoi attempt to conduct trade in their normally fashion. However, the imposition of the K'tenshin-Theran toll on the South Serpent River shifts the balance of trade, prompting House V'strimon and House Syrtis to redirect their mercantile efforts to other regions of the river. Trading vessels belonging to all the aropagoi nonetheless continue to ply the waters of the southern Serpent because some goods are not available anywhere else. The Therans' presence also makes smuggling goods and supplies to House T'kambras more difficult, though V'strimon ships still make occasional runs to the renegade t'skrang when possible.

For unknown reasons, sightings of Henghyoke raiders beyond the South Serpent drop after the arrival of the Therans. The mysterious pirate t'skrang seem content to limit their raids to K'tenshin targets, though they mount a few scattered assaults on T'kambrian and Scavian vessels as well. Though this phenomenon seems to suggest that House Henghyoke may be taking an anti-Theran stance, the true loyalties of the pirates remain unknown.

### THE OBSDIMAN RESPONSE: THE LIFEROCK REBELLION

The Therans chose Ayodhya as the landing point for their fortress city for several reasons. First, they hoped that the capture of a site sacred to Barsaive's t'skrang and to obsidimen would demoralize Barsavians with a show of Theran magic and might. Second, the Therans realized that they could use the site's vast stores of life energy to power the magical defenses of the fortress.

Once the Therans landed the behemoth on the Liferock, Azim Keel and his elementalists removed the true air from the *Triumph's* foundations, rendering the former airship an all-but-permanent structure on top of Ayodhya. The Therans' life-draining magic has been depleting the energies of the Liferock and a number of obsidimen trapped inside it since the ship landed. These obsidimen are forever imprisoned, and the spirit of the Liferock is doomed to wither away to nothing.

Unfortunately for the Therans, their actions have not demoralized and intimidated Barsaive's people as much as they hoped. In fact, their actions have had the opposite effect in at least one important case—the obsidiman merchant Omasu, owner of the Overland Trading Company





and a member of the Ayodhya Brotherhood. In the past, Omasu has avoided political activities, but the mistreatment of his Liferock has enraged him. Faced with the impending death of his Liferock and Brotherhood, Omasu has devoted the considerable resources of the Overland Trading Company to avenging the destruction of Ayodhya.

Though he cannot hope to save his brothers trapped in the Liferock, Omasu hopes to somehow make contact with them, as well as with the spirit of the Liferock, and assure his Brotherhood that he will avenge their deaths and fight the Therans. He also hopes that contacting the trapped obsidimen might provide information that will enable Thera's enemies to destabilize the magical defenses of the fortress so that they might destroy it more easily.

To this end, Omasu has created an underground network of resistance fighters known as the Liferock Rebellion. Unsurprisingly, the majority of fighters in the rebellion are t'skrang and obsidiman warriors, as Ayodhya is sacred to both races. Although the Liferock Rebellion is not especially large or well equipped, Omasu's vast wealth gives it the potential to become a serious thorn in the side of Thera's Barsaivian forces. The Liferock Rebellion uses the resources of Omasu's Overland Trading Company to move people, supplies and information throughout Barsaive virtually unopposed. (As the Therans have no wish to harm themselves by strangling trade in the region, they are reluctant to stop trading caravans, and scrutinize only those that pass particularly close to the Therans' fortress city.)

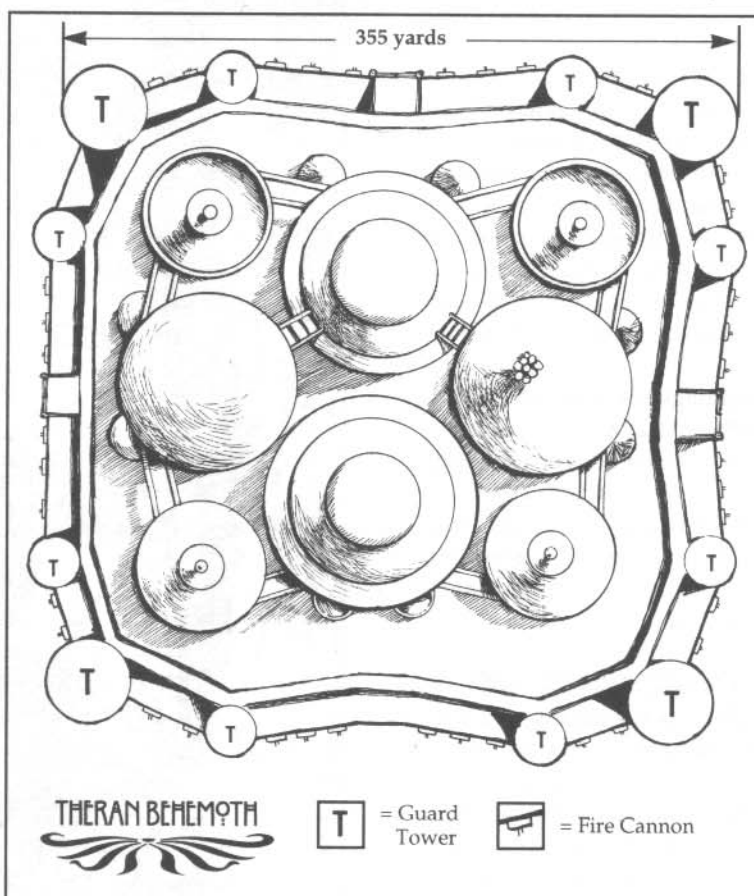
The trading company maintains agents and facilities in all of Barsaive's major cities, including Kratas, Travar, Urupa, and even Iopos, which gives the Liferock Rebellion a nearly unmatched network of contacts and operatives to

draw on. The presence of a large Overland warehouse in Vivane makes Overgovernor Kypros nervous, especially since he has begun hearing rumors that the Liferock Rebellion may be aiding the Vivane Resistance with supplies, hiding places and information. So far, the Overgovernor has taken no action against the Overland company because of the uproar it would inevitably cause among Vivane's wealthy merchants, many of whom

depend on Omasu's shipping and warehouse services for their goods.

Because attacking the Therans outright is beyond the rebellion's capabilities, it has resisted the Therans via indirect measures, such as aiding the Barsaivian resistance in Vivane, aiding the Eye of Throal by gathering intelligence on the behemoth and the forces stationed there, ambushing various Theran patrols and overland caravans, shadowing and sabotaging Theran-K'tenshin patrols in the Servos Jungle and the Mist Swamps, and aiding the t'skrang Houses of V'strimon and T'kambras in their battles against House K'tenshin. In short,

Omasu is willing to aid almost any endeavor that hinders Theran operations in Barsaive.



## THERAN FORCES AT TRIUMPH

Clearly visible from the Serpent River, the grounded behemoth towers over the nearby landscape. The Theran forces stationed at Triumph are described below.

### THE BEHEMOTH

The central part of the behemoth-turned-fortress includes the keep and towers of the former airship. Elemental magic was used to anchor the vessel's walls once it landed to provide additional stability. Also, the founda-







tions of the towers and walls extend deep into the hillside to provide a strong defense and (so rumor has it) numerous secret tunnels and passages under the fortress city. The city contains considerable room for expansion, and slaves are imported daily to work at fortifying the new citadel.

Each of the fortress's perimeter walls is made of solid stone, roughly 335 yards long, 30 yards high and 5 feet thick. Each wall has a Physical Armor Rating of 25 and Damage Rating of 85 (see **Barriers and Structures**, p. 209, ED). Additionally, the walls have been magically reinforced; each has a Spell Defense of 24.

The east, west and north walls each contain a magically enhanced wooden gate with a Spell Defense of 18. Each gate is reinforced with metal bands that provide a Physical Armor Rating of 11 and a Damage Rating of 35 (see **Barriers and Structures**, p. 209, ED). Additionally, each gate is guarded at all times by a patrol of five soldiers that includes two or three adepts (see **Ground Troops**, p. 22). At least ten additional five-man patrols perform guard duty at the fortress at all times, five outside the city's perimeter and five inside the fortress.

Each of the four perimeter walls houses ten fire cannons on pivoting mounts that enable defenders to aim them at individuals as well as at airships. To attack a single character or creature with a fire cannon, the attacker makes a Missile Weapon Test against the target's Physical Defense. The test receives a -5 step penalty to reflect the difficulty of aiming at such targets. Any individual hit by a fire cannon suffers Step 18 damage. If the Missile Weapon Test fails but the result falls between Poor and Average, the fireball strikes within three yards of the target and causes Step 10 damage to the target and anyone else within five yards of the impact point.

Twelve guard towers are located along the city's perimeter—one at each corner and two along each wall. Each tower contains a team of three soldiers and a special light quartz that can shine a focused beam of light onto the ground below or into the air. These lights are used to forestall ground attacks and to help guide airships to the fortress at dusk and during stormy weather. All of these towers are manned at all times.

Finally, the fortress is surrounded by a dome of elemental air that acts as a barrier to airships and any other flying objects larger than the average Name-giver. Airships can enter the dome by using a spell known only to Azim Keel and his elementalists assistants (see **Magical Support**, p. 23). The dome has a Spell Defense of 24, a Physical Armor Rating of 25, and a Damage Rating of 100 (see **Barriers and Structures**, p. 209, ED) against airship attacks.

## AIRSHIP FLEET

The fortress city of Triumph is home to an air fleet composed of two Theran kila and six stone vedettes, all with full crew complements. Most often, the kila known as the *Righteous* is stationed over the confluence of the South Reach of the Serpent River and Lake Ban, and the vedettes transport crewmen and supplies between the kila and the fortress city as needed. The *Righteous* is commanded by Captain Drak Windsearcher. Captain Solen Ogan commands the second kila, the *Defiant*, which typically patrols the length of the south Serpent River. If the *Righteous* is assigned other duties, the *Defiant* takes up the post at Lake Ban. (For kila statistics, see p. 135, **Earthdawn Companion**).

The vedettes stationed at the fortress city include four vessels from the Seventh Fleet at Sky Point: two mining ships, the *Amethyst* and the *Moonstone*; and two combat vedettes, the *Dauntless* and the *Ferocious*. Generally, three vedettes patrol the perimeter of the fortress city, while the other three perform elemental mining and courier duties. From time to time, the vedettes also escort Theran ground forces or K'tenshin riverboats on trips to some of the less hospitable regions of the Serpent River.

Statistics for these ships and their crews appear below.

### COMBAT VEDETTE

**Speed:** 7 (240 yards/turn)

**Maneuverability:** 10

**Firepower:** 16/16

#### Hull

Armor Rating: 20

Ramming: 28

#### Damage

Critical: 20

Derelict: 65

Destroyed: 74

### MINING VEDETTE

**Speed:** 7 (240 yards/turn)

**Maneuverability:** 10

**Firepower:** 8/10

#### Hull

Armor Rating: 20

Ramming: 25

#### Damage

Critical: 18

Derelict: 63

Destroyed: 70





## SEVENTH FLEET AIR SAILOR (HUMAN)

### Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12  
 Strength (13): 6/D10  
 Toughness (13): 6/D10  
 Perception (15): 6/D10  
 Willpower (11): 5/D8  
 Charisma (12): 5/D8

### Talents

Acrobatic Strike (2): 9/D8 + D6  
 Air Sailing (3): 8/2D6  
 Avoid Blow (2): 9/D8 + D6  
 Durability (Air Sailor) (2)  
 Great Leap (2): 9/D8 + D6  
 Karma Ritual (2)  
 Melee Weapons (3): 10/D10 + D6  
 Unarmed Combat (1): 8/2D6

### Skills

Artisan/Sail Embroidery (1): 6/D10  
 Knowledge/Air Sailing History (1): 7/D12  
 Knowledge/Theran History (1): 7/D12

### Initiative

Dice: 7/D12

### Karma

Dice: D8  
 Points: 20

### Movement

Full: 85  
 Combat: 42

### Damage

Death Rating: 47  
 Wound Threshold: 9  
 Unconsciousness Rating: 37  
 Recovery Tests per Day: 2  
 Recovery Dice: D10

### Combat

Physical Defense: 10  
 Spell Defense: 8  
 Social Defense: 7  
 Armor: 3  
 Mystic Armor: 1

### Equipment

Broadsword (Damage  
 11/D10 + D8)  
 Dagger (Damage 8/2D6)  
 Leather Armor





## SEVENTH FLEET WARRIOR (ELF)

### Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10  
 Strength (18): 7/D12  
 Toughness (13): 6/D10  
 Perception (13): 6/D10  
 Willpower (14): 6/D10  
 Charisma (12): 5/D8

### Talents

Acrobatic Strike (2): 8/2D6  
 Air Dance (3): 9/D8 + D6  
 Durability (Warrior) (2)  
 Karma Ritual (2)  
 Melee Weapons (3): 9/D8 + D6  
 Throwing Weapons (1): 7/D12  
 Unarmed Combat (1): 7/D12  
 Woodskin (2): 8/2D6

### Skills

Artisan/Wood Carving (1): 6/D10  
 Knowledge/Elven Lore (1): 7/D12  
 Knowledge/Theran History (1): 7/D12

### Initiative

Dice: 5/D8

### Karma

Dice: D6  
 Points: 15

### Movement

Full: 75  
 Combat: 38

### Damage

Death Rating: 53  
 Wound Threshold: 9  
 Unconsciousness Rating: 41  
 Recovery Tests per Day: 2  
 Recovery Dice: D10

### Combat

Physical Defense: 8  
 Spell Defense: 7  
 Social Defense: 7  
 Armor: 6  
 Mystic Armor: 2

### Equipment

Broadsword (Damage  
 12/2D10)  
 Dagger (Damage 9/  
 D8 + D6)  
 Hardened  
 Leather/Buckler







## GRIFFIN RIDERS

A wing of twelve k'stulaami griffin riders augments the city's airship defenses. Typically, pairs of griffin riders accompany vedette patrols. In addition, each kila carries two pairs of griffin riders when on patrol. The griffin riders are under the personal command of General Nikar and serve as his honor guard, though the wing's regular operations are overseen by the second-in-command, Strategos T'char. The griffin riders are all Fifth Circle cavalrymen equipped with broadswords, hardened leather armor and rider's shields. Their complete statistics appear below.

A group of four beastmasters train and look after the griffins.

### GRIFFIN RIDER (K'STULAAMI)

#### Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12  
Strength (18): 7/D12  
Toughness (13): 6/D10  
Perception (11): 5/D8  
Willpower (16): 7/D12  
Charisma (16): 7/D12

#### Talents

Animal Bond (5): 12/2D10  
Avoid Blow (4): 11/D10 + D8  
Blood Share (4): 10/D10 + D6  
Charge (5): 12/2D10  
Durability (Calvaryman) (5)  
Empathic Command (5): 12/2D10  
Karma Ritual (4)  
Melee Weapons (5): 12/2D10  
Rider Weaving (5): 10/D10 + D6  
Sure Mount (3): 10/D10 + D6  
Trick Riding (5): 12/2D10  
Wheeling Attack (4): 11/D10 + D8

#### Skills

Artisan/Leather Working (1): 8/2D6  
Knowledge/Barsaive History (1): 6/D10  
Knowledge/T'skrang Lore (1): 6/D10

#### Initiative

Dice: 5/D8

#### Karma

Dice: D6  
Points: 15

#### Movement

Full: 75  
Combat: 38

#### Combat

Physical Defense: 10  
Spell Defense: 7  
Social Defense: 9  
Armor: 10  
Mystic Armor: 4

#### Damage

Death Rating: 70  
Wound Threshold: 9  
Unconsciousness Rating: 57  
Recovery Tests per Day: 2  
Recovery Dice: D10

#### Equipment

Booster Potion  
Broadsword (Forged +5) (Damage 16/D20 + D10)  
Flail (Damage 12/2D10)  
Griffin Mount (see p. 296, ED)  
Hardened Leather Armor (Rank 3 thread attached)  
Rider's Shield

## GROUND TROOPS

The fortress city houses two full cohorts of Theran troops, nearly a thousand warriors. Half of these are from the Theran Eighth Legion stationed at Sky Point; the remainder are from the Fifth Legion transported to Barsaive aboard General Nikar's flotilla.

Approximately one-fifth of the troops are adepts of Second Circle or higher. (For statistics, see pp. 16-17 of the **Barsaivian Vivane** book in the **Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**.) The remaining Theran troops comprise an even mix of non-adept human, elf and dwarf infantrymen, along with an occasional ork or troll. The following Theran Soldier statistics apply to human troops. Gamemasters may adjust them as appropriate for non-human soldiers if desired.

### THERAN SOLDIERS

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

Initiative: 5  
Number of Attacks: 1  
Attack: 9  
Damage: 11  
Number of Spells: NA  
Spellcasting: NA  
Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 8  
Spell Defense: 7  
Social Defense: 6  
Armor: 6  
Mystic Armor: 1  
Knockdown: 6  
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 34  
Wound Threshold: 9  
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

Combat Movement: 35  
Full Movement: 70

Legend Points: 100

Equipment: Hardened leather armor, forged broadsword, buckler

Loot: None





## MAGICAL SUPPORT

The city's chief magician, Azim Keel, commands a team of sixteen Fifth Circle elementalists. Two elementalists are assigned to each of the eight troop divisions based at Triumph. One of these usually accompanies each kila and patrol vedette; the other elementalists work on elemental mining operations, augment Triumph's magical defenses and assist Azim Keel in his experiments and summonings as needed.

The fortress also contains several wizards, as well as a pair of nethermancers. Each of these magicians is Third Circle or higher.

## ELITE ADEPT TEAM

The six Fifth Circle adepts of the Elite answer directly to General Nikar. This group undertakes special assignments for the general, such as special-delivery courier services, reconnaissance missions, assassinations and thefts. The group also performs jobs for Azim Keel (p. 28) and Hefera (p. 31) as needed.

The members of the Elite have formed a group true pattern, and each has woven threads to it. More information on these characters appears in **Important Characters**, p. 31.

## SUPPORT PERSONNEL

The fortress is also home to literally hundreds of support personnel, including diplomats, couriers, scribes, scholars and nearly two dozen spies. The spies report to Spymaster Gendel (p. 31). In turn, Gendel reports directly to General Nikar. Most of these spies are Third Circle adepts of the thief and scout Disciplines.

## SLAVE LABOR

The flotilla brought approximately two hundred slaves from Thera and Sky Point to help construct the city and serve the needs of its Theran inhabitants. Additionally, Theran troops perform regular slave raids into the Servos Jungle and the human communities of the South Reach to bolster the city's work force and supply slaves for export to Vivane and other Theran slave markets.

The city's slavemaster is an elf Named Mabon Ardos, a Sixth Circle beastmaster and Rank 7 questor of Dis. Ardos rules the slave pits under the city with an iron hand, treating his charges as if they were animals.

In the deepest part of the slave pits lies the Ayodhya Liferock, in an area the Therans have begun mining for deposits of true earth, living crystal and other valuable minerals. The obsidimen within the Liferock are aware of what is going on above them, but are powerless to stop it.

## THERAN ACTIVITY

The mere presence of the Theran forces at Triumph forcefully reminds Barsaive's people of the Theran Empire's power, but the Therans at the fortress are by no means idle. As noted in **House K'tenshin's Response**, the Therans provide military muscle for House K'tenshin ventures and conduct joint slave raids with them in the surrounding areas. Additionally, Theran forces based at the city are performing elemental mining in the area and searching for the village of Hanto.

## ALLIANCE WITH HOUSE K'TENSHIN

Since their arrival, the Therans have firmly re-established their alliance with House K'tenshin by providing that arpagoi with generous military backing (see **House K'tenshin's Response**, p. 16). Theran troops and airships regularly escort K'tenshin riverboats and maintain watch over the South Serpent River. Additionally, the Therans have begun to conduct more trade with House K'tenshin, and through them with several towns and villages along the Serpent River and on the shores of Lake Ban.

## ELEMENTAL MINING

The Therans have been quick to exploit the rich deposits of true elements in the region surrounding the fortress. The Therans claimed rights to these deposits as soon as they landed and began mining them almost immediately. Theran vedettes skim the surface of Lake Ban and the Serpent River, dredging for true water, while slaves work tunnels into Ayodhya to mine true earth from the roots of the Liferock. Expeditions of Theran troops and elementalists gather kernels of true wood in the Servos Jungle, while vedettes comb the skies over the fortress during storms and high winds to net kernels of true air. Additionally, Theran slaving raids on the Scavian communities in the South Reach and mining expeditions in the area of Death's Sea net small catches of true fire.

The collected elements are stored in the tower of Azim Keel, who uses them to bolster the fortress city's defenses and take care of other magical needs. Surplus elements are shipped back to Vivane and other regions of the Empire for sale to merchants and magicians.

## SEARCHING FOR HANTO AND AARDELEA

In addition to mining and providing military aid to House K'tenshin, the Therans are conducting a systematic search for a young girl Named Aardelea who began to display unusual magical abilities a year or two ago. Initially, Theran magicians believed the girl's reputed abilities resulted from Horror taint. Now, however, Hefera and other influential Theran magicians are con-





vinced that Aardelea's powers and abilities are connected to the great dragons of Barsaive, and they wish to capture the girl for study.

Acting on false information spread by agents of the great dragon Mountainshadow (see *The Vanishing Scholar*, p. 167 in *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*), the Therans are razing villages in the plains northwest of Lake Ban in a systematic search for Aardelea. In truth, however, Aardelea's home village of Hanto is located just south of Lake Vors in Barsaive's hinterlands. For more information about the Therans' efforts to capture Aardelea, see *The Dragons' Daughter*, p. 66. For additional background on Aardelea and the village of Hanto, see the *Earthdawn* adventure *Infected*.

## SEARCHING THE MIST SWAMPS AND THE BADLANDS

Theran exploration parties also venture out into the Mist Swamps and the outskirts of the Badlands near the South Serpent River. These parties are searching for ruins and lost kaers that may contain treasures to be sent back to Thera.

One particular group, under the supervision of Azim Keel, is looking for the ruins of an ancient Theran magical

laboratory that dates to a time before the Scourge. Reports of such a find have made their way to the Great Library of Throal (see *An Ancient Mystery*, p. 29, in *Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration*) and the Therans are determined to locate the laboratory before anyone else does.

Many local inhabitants fear that the Theran intrusions into the Mist Swamps may anger the great dragon Aban, who dwells in the swamps. Even the Shivalahala K'tenshin has warned the Therans that their expeditions may invoke the dragon's wrath, but General Nikar ignores her protests. (As described in *The Dragons' Daughter*, the Therans' relationship with Barsaive's dragons is soon to take a turn for the worse, and recent Theran activities in Aban's backyard will certainly not help things.)

## TRADING OF GOODS AND SLAVES

The fortress city of Triumph also provides a way station and central hub for Theran merchant and slave ships from Vivane and Sky Point. The base enables the Therans to extend their slaving and trade activities deeper into Barsaivian territory, reaching all the way to Parlainth and Urupa. Goods flow from Vivane through Triumph, while slaves, elemental kernels and toll money flows back from Triumph into the Theran Overgovernor's hands.

In fact, the expansion of Theran trade and influence facilitated by the base constitutes as much of a threat as the increased Theran military presence. To counter the economic threat, Throalic and V'strimon merchants have redoubled their efforts to solicit the business of other cities and merchant guilds along the Serpent. Both the Theran-K'tenshin and Throal-V'strimon trading alliances are attempting to negotiate an exclusive arrangement with Urupa to secure that city's rich Aras Sea trade for their ships. So far, Urupa has carefully remained neutral on the issue and stalled the emissaries of both alliances.

## UPGRADED INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

General Nikar and his spymaster, Gendel (see p. 31), are using the rapidly expanding Theran trade network as a cover to create a network of spies to report activities across Barsaive. House K'tenshin's Naxos Foundation has provided invaluable aid in this effort by helping the Therans infiltrate observers and informants into the various merchant ships and caravans that pass through the region controlled by Theran forces.

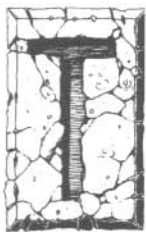
However, the Liferock Rebellion and the Eye of Throal have also begun to infiltrate agents and cultivate informants among the various merchant groups. Thera's enemies use these agents and informants to keep abreast of Theran activities and to feed false intelligence to the Theran spies.







# IMPORTANT CHARACTERS



his section describes the major characters and factions involved in the landing of the *Triumph* and subsequent events. The motivations of these individuals and factions largely shape the activities of the Therans in the area, as well as the reactions of the various Barsaivian groups.

Some of the character descriptions include talent knacks. Rules for talent knacks can be found on pp. 18 – 24 of *Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets*.

## GENERAL NIKAR CARINCI, THERAN COMMANDER AND GOVERNOR OF TRIUMPH

General Nikar Carinci has led a long and glorious career in the service of the Empire. Unlike most of his brethren from House Carinci, Nikar has never displayed interest in matters of trade. Always a warrior at heart, Nikar enlisted in the Theran army at a young age and worked his way up through the ranks of the cavalry to become one of Thera's elite k'stulaami griffin riders. He advanced in his Discipline as he saw combat in many of the Empire's far reaches, eventually receiving command of his own wing of riders and later rising to the command of an entire division.

Though his abrupt and abrasive manner has lost him points in Theran social and political circles, Nikar's daring exploits have earned him the admiration and loyalty of his comrades-in-arms, as well as considerable fame among Thera's general population. These characteristics made the flamboyant Nikar an ideal choice to lead the Theran operation in the rebel province of Barsaive. (The fact that the mission removed the ambitious and restive general to one of the Empire's outermost provinces for an undetermined length of time also contributed to the First Governor's decision.)

General Nikar has taken to his assignment with his usual zeal. Undoubtedly, he views it as an opportunity to earn himself further fame, influence and wealth, but he also wishes to avenge the death of his former comrade and fellow t'skrang Go'lan. Go'lan died when House V'strimon elementalists downed the Theran airship he commanded over Lake Ban. Nikar considers the destruction of the airship treachery against the Empire and has hoped for an opportunity to face the rebels of Barsaive on the field of battle ever since his friend's death.

As military commander of Triumph, Nikar is technically outranked by Overgovernor Kypros. In practice, however, the arrogant Nikar can do whatever he wants in





Barsaive and Kypros must comply, because Nikar enjoys the favor of the First Governor and the Empire. Overgovernor Kypros is fiercely jealous of Nikar's popularity with the First Governor and the citizens of Thera; he anxiously awaits the day that Nikar makes a fatal mistake and falls from grace. Then Kypros can reassert his authority over all of Barsaive.

#### **GENERAL NIKAR CARINCI TENTH CIRCLE T'SKRANG CAVALRYMAN**

"Thera will reclaim this rebel province and re-establish the rule of Imperial law. Your struggles are futile against the power of our glorious army. But by all means fight—your vain attempts to resist the might of the Empire will make our victory all the more glorious."

##### **Attributes**

Dexterity (16): 7/D12  
Strength (16): 7/D12  
Toughness (16): 7/D12  
Perception (18): 7/D12  
Willpower (13): 6/D10  
Charisma (19): 8/2D6

##### **Talents**

Animal Bond (9): 17/D20 + D10  
Avoid Blow (10): 17/D20 + D10  
Blood Share (10): 17/D20 + D10  
Call Mount (6): 12/2D10  
Champion Challenge (6): 14/D20 + D4  
Charge (10): 17/D20 + D10  
Dominate Beast (6): 14/D20 + D4  
Down Strike (7): 17/D20 + D10  
Durability (Calvaryman) (10)  
Durability (Mount) (7)  
Empathic Command (10): 16/D20 + D8  
Fearsome Charge (10): 16/D20 + D8  
Karma Ritual (10)  
Lasting Impression (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Melee Weapons (11): 17/D20 + D10  
Missile Weapons (10): 16/D20 + D8  
Mount Attack (8): 15/D20 + D6  
Rally (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Resist Taunt (9): 15/D20 + D6  
Spirit Mount (11): 18/D20 + D12  
Sure Mount (9): 16/D20 + D8  
Thread Weaving (10): 17/D20 + D10  
Wheeling Attack (9): 16/D20 + D8  
Wheeling Defense (8): 15/D20 + D6

##### **Talent Knacks**

Air Mount (Spirit Mount)

##### **Skills**

Air Sailing (4): 10/D10 + D6  
Artisan/Leatherworking (4): 11/D10 + D8  
Gliding (6): 12/2D10  
Knowledge/Etiquette (3): 10/D10 + D6  
Knowledge/Theran Politics (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Tactics (7): 14/D20 + D4

##### **Initiative**

Dice: 7/D12

##### **Karma**

Dice: D6  
Points: 25

##### **Movement**

Full: 75  
Combat: 38

##### **Damage**

Death Rating: 109  
Wound Threshold: 11  
Unconsciousness Rating: 91  
Recovery Tests per Day: 3  
Recovery Dice: D12

##### **Combat**

Physical Defense: 12 [14]  
Spell Defense: 11 [13]  
Social Defense: 11 [16]  
Armor: 8  
Mystic Armor: 1 [5]

##### **General Notes**

General Nikar is a k'stulaami t'skrang, born with a gliding membrane stretching from each wrist to each hip. This allows him to glide using his Gliding skill (for more information, see p. 122, **Denizens of Earthdawn, Volume I**). In fact, Nikar's love of flight and open spaces initially led him into the cavalry.

The general carries a curved cavalry blade Named Windclaw. Nikar maintains a Rank 4 thread attached to the weapon, which provides it with a STR + 12 base Damage step. In battle, he generally wears threaded, hardened leather armor that gives him an Armor Rating of 8 and a Mystic Armor bonus of +4; this armor does not interfere with his gliding abilities, and carries no Initiative penalty. Nikar also wears a pair of magical bracers with a Rank 3





thread woven to them that provide +2 to his Physical and Spell Defense ratings. The bonuses provided by these items appear in brackets in the preceding statistics.

Nikar's mount is a griffin (p. 296, ED) Named Lightwing. Nikar has used his Durability (Mount) talent to give Lightwing a Death Rating of 85 and an Unconsciousness Rating of 71.

#### Karma Notes

Nikar can spend Karma Points on Dexterity and Recovery Tests. He can also spend Karma for any test made by his current mount.

#### Thread Weaving Notes

In addition to the threads woven to the items described in General Notes, Nikar has woven a Rank 5 thread to the pattern of Triumph. This thread is attached to his Social Defense and is effective while he is within the citadel's walls. He may weave other threads once the new Theran base is firmly established. The general has also discreetly put word out that he would be most interested in acquiring a House V'strimon pattern item.

## CAPTAIN DRAK WINDSEARCHER, NAVAL COMMANDER

Captain Drak Windsearcher and General Nikar are old friends who have served together for many years. When the First Governor chose Nikar to lead a mission to Barsaive, the general wanted his old comrade at his side and chose Windsearcher to command the kilas and vedettes assigned to the fortress.

Windsearcher is originally from Vagothia, a Theran province near Barsaive (p. 8, *Barsaivian Vivane* book in the *Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set*). Raised in that savage, Horror-scarred land, he learned little of the pleasures of the Theran court. His love of travel and a fascination with the airships of the Empire led him to join the Theran navy as a lowly crewman. Determined never to return to Vagothia, he patiently learned the Discipline of the air sailor as taught by his Theran superiors and became a skilled fighter and sailor. Eventually, his faithful service to Thera earned him his present rank.

The troll captain is utterly loyal to General Nikar, whom he respects and considers a friend. Windsearcher is not as pleased about the prospects of this mission as Nikar, but he keeps his opinions to himself. He feels that the rebellious factions of Barsaive should be crushed as quickly as possible, and he believes that the Empire is not taking strong enough measures to that end.







## DRAK WINDSEARCHER SEVENTH CIRCLE TROLL AIR SAILOR

"You think the pirates of this backwater are dangerous, sailor? Obviously, you have never seen a shipful of mad Vasgothian raiders howling for your blood."

### Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12      Perception (13): 6/D10  
Strength (19): 8/2D6      Willpower (13): 6/D10  
Toughness (20): 8/2D6      Charisma (13): 6/D10

### Talents

Acrobatic Strike (8): 15/D20 + D6  
Air Dance (7): 14/D20 + D4  
Air Sailing (8): 14/D20 + D4  
Avoid Blow (7): 14/D20 + D4  
Durability (Air Sailor) (7)  
Great Leap (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Karma Ritual (7)  
Maneuver (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Melee Weapons (7): 14/D20 + D4  
Missile Weapons (5): 12/2D10  
Momentum Attack (7): 14/D20 + D4  
Riposte (7): 14/D20 + D4  
Second Weapon (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Speak Language (2): 7/D12  
Taunt (7): 13/D12 + D10  
Thread Weaving (6): 11/D10 + D8  
Throwing Weapons (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Unarmed Combat (7): 14/D20 + D4  
Wind Catcher (7): 14/D20 + D4

### Skills

Artisan/Wood Carving (2): 8/2D6  
Knowledge/Airships (3): 9/D8 + D6  
Knowledge/Beast Lore (3): 9/D8 + D6  
Tactics (3): 8/2D6

### Initiative

Dice: 6/D10

### Karma

Dice: D4  
Points: 20

### Movement

Full: 75  
Combat: 38

### Damage

Death Rating: 86  
Wound Threshold: 13 [17]  
Unconsciousness Rating: 71  
Recovery Tests per Day : 4  
Recovery Dice: 2D6

### Combat

Physical Defense: 8 [12]  
Spell Defense: 8  
Social Defense: 7  
Armor: 8  
Mystic Armor: 1 [5]

### General Notes

Surprisingly swift and graceful for a troll of his size, Windsearcher wears blood pebble armor implanted in a series of colorful Vasgothian patterns across his skin. He normally enters combat wielding a footman's shield and a curved sword Named Windrazor, the twin of Nikar's Windclaw. The sword is a threaded weapon that does STR + 10 damage in Windsearcher's hands. At the cost of 1 point of Strain, the wielder can cause lightning to crackle along the length of the blade that adds +3 steps to its Damage step. The troll captain also wears a Death Cheat charm.

### Karma Notes

Windsearcher can spend Karma Points on Damage Tests with melee weapons.

### Thread Weaving Notes

Captain Windsearcher has woven three Rank 4 threads to the true pattern of the kila he commands. These threads increase his Mystic Armor, Wound Threshold and Physical Defense ratings while he is aboard the kila. The bonuses appear as bracketed numbers in the above statistics.

## AZIM KEEL, CHIEF MAGICIAN AND ELEMENTALIST

Azim Keel is a ghareez, the corrupted windling race that dwells in the Theran Empire. Also known as "the Ice Magician," Azim is chief magician for Nikar's forces. He commands a small cadre of elementalists that handles the expedition's magical needs and oversees most magical operations in Triumph, as well as elemental mining operations within and outside of the city. He advises Nikar in all matters magical and, when not attending to his other duties, spends his time in seclusion and magical experimentation. He is particularly interested in discovering ways to tap into the elemental powers of the Ayodhya Liferock and extract the potent kernels of true earth that it holds.

As pale as a ghost, with milk-white hair and skin and translucent wings, Azim shuns the light of day. He prefers to remain indoors, and conducts most of his business by night. Some suggest that he keeps his quarters in Triumph cold more to drive away visitors than for his own comfort. Nearly all residents of Triumph fear the ghareez and deal with him as little as possible. No one willingly disturbs the mage's solitude save for General Nikar. Even the general is uneasy around Azim, though he never lets his true feelings show. He allows the elementalists considerable latitude in his experimenting and research but demands obedience from him when important matters arise. Azim has little use for military protocol, but he obeys Nikar's orders out of gratitude for the autonomy Nikar allows him.





The windling mage is the opposite of a typical windling in almost every way. He is dour and humorless, with a solitary and unpleasant disposition. In many ways, however, Azim is fairly pleasant for a ghareez, displaying little interest in interrogations or the subtleties of pain that characterize so many members of his race. Indeed, he has little use for other Name-givers one way or another. He reserves a particular dislike for other windlings, considering them fools and simpletons. He displays no interest in any of the pleasures of life apart from accumulating magical knowledge and performing his duty to the Empire. Toward these ends, Azim has learned a great deal about Barsaivian legends and lore, and is hungry for any valuable kernels of information.

Though Azim is a highly capable magician, he displays what many Barsaivian elementalists would consider a shocking lack of respect for the elemental forces with which he works. The ghareez cares nothing for the feelings or thoughts of the elemental spirits that he routinely enslaves, and the balance of the elements interests him only to the extent that he can exploit it for his own uses.

#### AZIM KEEL

##### NINTH CIRCLE WINDLING ELEMENTALIST

"There must be some way to remove the true earth from the Liferock. Certain legends that I have studied suggest some possibilities, but none of these provide as elegant a solution as I would like. Obviously the matter calls for more careful study."

#### Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12

Strength (7): 4/D6

Toughness (12): 5/D8

Perception (19): 8/2D6

Willpower (19): 8/2D6

Charisma (15): 6/D10

#### Talents

Air Speaking (6): 14/D20 + D4

Armored Matrix (5)

Cold Purify (9): 17/D20 + D10

Durability (Elementalist) (9)

Elemental Hold (6): 14/D20 + D4

Elemental Tongues (7): 15/D20 + D6

Enhanced Matrix (9)

Enhanced Matrix (7)

Fire Heal (6): 14/D20 + D4

Karma Ritual (9)

Metal Ward (4): 17/D20 + D10

Read and Write Language (9): 16/D20 + D8



Read and Write Magic (9): 17/D20 + D10

Reshape Object (6): 16/D20 + D8

Safe Path (5): 13/D12 + D10

Spellcasting (10): 18/D20 + D12 [20/D20 + D8 + D6]

2 x Spell Matrix (9)

Spell Matrix (8)

Spell Matrix (7)

Temperature (7): 15/D20 + D6

Thread Weaving (Elementalism) (10): 18/D20 + D12

Unshakable Earth (9): 17/D20 + D10

Water Dancing (5): 11/D10 + D8

Willforce (10): 18/D20 + D12 [19/D20 + 2D6]

#### Talent Knacks

Spell Design (Thread Weaving)

Talent Linking (Thread Weaving)

Anchored Spell (Spellcasting)

Forced Spellcasting (Spellcasting)

Increased Dispel Difficulty (Spellcasting)





### Skills

Artist/Elemental Sculpting (5): 11/D10 + D8  
Conversation (4): 10/D10 + D6  
Frighten (5): 13/D12 + D10  
Knowledge/Barsaivian Legends (4): 12/2D10  
Knowledge/Magical Lore (6): 14/D20 + D4

### Initiative

Dice: 7/D12

### Karma

Dice: D10  
Points: 60

### Movement

Full: 43/85 (land/air)  
Combat: 22/42 (land/air)

### Damage

Death Rating: 70  
Wound Threshold: 9  
Unconsciousness Rating: 53  
Recovery Tests per Day : 2  
Recovery Dice: D8

### Combat

Physical Defense: 9  
Spell Defense: 12 [13]  
Social Defense: 9  
Armor: 7  
Mystic Armor: 3 [10]

### General Notes

Azim always wears an elaborately decorated chest plate carved from a single piece of sapphire. The chest plate is a thread item, and Azim has woven a thread to it so that it provides 7 Armor Points and a +7 bonus to his Mystic Armor rating.

Additionally, the chest plate contains a Strength 3 water spirit Named Voor'oosh, which Azim has trapped within the plate. The spirit possesses the following powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 11, Detect True Water, Enrage Element 11, Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge and Spear 11. Azim frequently uses the spirit's Share Knowledge ability to keep abreast of events on Lake Ban and the Serpent River, and he uses its Detect True Water power to lead him to sources of the true element in the lake. Azim can also use any of the spirit's other powers.

Generally, Azim keeps the following spells in his matrices: Blizzard Sphere (armored matrix), Storm Manacles and Stone Cage (enhanced matrices), Air Blast, Porter, Puddle Deep and Uneven Ground (spell matrices), Repair and

Sterilize Object (torc matrices; see **Thread Weaving Notes**). He knows all elemental spells concerned with air and water, most earth spells, and a few wood/plant spells. He generally avoids fire spells. In combat, Azim commonly uses his frost pouch and the Spear power of his water spirit, followed by spells such as Blizzard Sphere and Stone Cage to entrap and disable opponents.

### Karma Notes

Azim can spend Karma on Perception, Charisma and Recovery Tests.

### Thread Weaving Notes

In addition to the thread woven to his armor chest plate, Azim has woven threads to several magical items that he uses in his work. These include a carved wooden staff, which would serve as little more than a wand to most Name-givers, set with pale blue gems. Azim has a Rank 4 thread woven to this item, which grants him +2 steps to his Spellcasting talent, +1 step to his Willforce talent, and +1 to his Spell Defense rating. He also has threads woven to a frost pouch (p. 274, **ED**) and a silver torc. The frost pouch has a Rank 5 thread; the torc is a Rank 6 spell-matrix item holding two matrices, each Rank 3. Additionally, he maintains a Rank 4 thread connected to his tower in Triumph; this thread adds to the Disarm Difficulty of the tower's magical wards and traps.

All bonuses provided by Azim's thread magic appear in brackets in the preceding statistics.

## SOLENOGANI, CAPTAIN OF THE DEFIANT

Solen Ogan is the human captain of the *Defiant*, one of the Theran kilas stationed at the Triumph fortress. A Fifth Circle air sailor, Ogan originally hails from the province of Talea (p. 8, **Barsaivian Vivane** in the **Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**). He joined the Theran navy at a young age and quickly established himself as a natural leader, fighting alongside Drak Windsearcher in several battles in recent years. When General Nikar was selecting the officers for his airship fleet, Windsearcher suggested Ogan, who readily accepted the post as captain of the *Defiant*.

Though he doesn't consider Barsaive an important province, Ogan is loyal to both Windsearcher and Nikar and would never question or refuse their orders.

Use the Adept statistics on page 110 for Ogan. The captain has Rank 3 threads woven to magical hardened leather armor and a crystal buckler (pp. 62-63, **Earthdawn Companion**), which give him an Armor Rating of 10 and a +5 Mystic Armor bonus.







## HEFERA

A Tenth Circle wizard/Eighth Circle illusionist, Hefera is one of the few magicians in the Theran fortress who does not answer to Azim Keel. He leads a secretive branch of magicians that answers only to the Heavenherds and the First Governor; the First Governor and the Heavenherds have placed him in charge of the Theran search for the girl named Aardelea (see **The Dragons' Daughter**, p. 66). Hefera's close affiliation to the First Governor gives him a certain amount of freedom that he exploits to his full advantage. Statistics for and a more complete description of Hefera appear on pp. 71–72.

Though Hefera's primary goal is capturing Aardelea, he is also interested in obtaining any artifacts, relics, and other objects that may provide information about Barsaive's great dragons.

See **Drake Hunting**, p. 39, for an example of how the characters might encounter Hefera prior to beginning **The Dragons' Daughter**.

## SPYMASTER GENDEL

Gendel is the akarenti, or spymaster, of the Theran fortress city. As such, he oversees a large network of spies and contacts throughout central and eastern Barsaive. Though Gendel answers first to Nikar, he also reports to General Illfaralek, the Theran spymaster of Vivane. Gendel's contacts in Barsaive include numerous agents in many towns and cities, such as Travar and Urupa, as well as Agramen, a Theran sympathizer and operative in Haven (p. 22, **Mists of Betrayal**).

Gendel is a human Seventh Circle scout adept. Use the Adept statistics on page 114 for Gendel. Gendel has also used his Versatility talent to learn the Item History and Weapon History talents, both at Rank 4. In addition, Gendel has Rank 3 threads woven to magical bracers and Rank 4 threads woven to a pair of magical boots (p. 65, **Earthdawn Companion**). These threads give Gendel a +5 Step bonus to his Physical Defense and a +2 step bonus to his Spell Defense.

## THE ELITE

The Elite are six Fifth Circle adepts who have served as a special task force for the nobles of House Carinci for the past several years. Like most of the forces at the Theran fortress, the Elite were stationed at Triumph at Nikar's personal request.

This group is led by Affern, a human archer who is also a long-time acquaintance of both Nikar and Windsearcher. The rest of the team are Oortaal, an ork

nethermancer from Vagothia; Landrial, an elf scout from the Theran province of Creana; Gradan Sharpaxe and Larm Keenedge, a dwarf warrior and weaponsmith respectively, brothers from southwestern Barsaive; and Praylar Sightshifter, a troll illusionist from the Caralkspur Mountains in Vivane province.

Use the Adept statistics beginning on page 110 for the members of the Elite. Additionally, the members have formed a group true pattern (p. 52, **Earthdawn Companion**), to which each of them has woven two Rank 3 threads. The gamemaster determines the specific talents, characteristics, or abilities to which each member has woven his threads.

## SHIVALAHALA K'TENSHIN

The Shivalahala K'tenshin respects General Nikar as a military man and a warrior, and she welcomes the presence of the Therans as an opportunity to improve her aropagoi's fortunes. The shivalahala knows that House K'tenshin is risking ostracism among its Barsaivian neighbors by allying itself with the Therans again, but she believes the opportunities presented by the alliance far outweigh this risk. In fact, she believes that Theran military support will enable the aropagoi to not only consolidate its control over the Serpent River's South Reach but extend its influence beyond the region as well.

So far, the shivalahala's gamble has been paying off. Emboldened by its new alliance, House K'tenshin has ruthlessly begun to exert its newfound power (see **House K'tenshin's Response**, p. 16). As the shivalahala had hoped, no Barsaivian power—not even Throal—has proved willing to confront the Theran forces supporting House K'tenshin.

Despite this success, the shivalahala recognizes that the Therans have re-formed the ancient alliance only because it serves their own purposes. She realizes that the Therans would not hesitate to turn against House K'tenshin if they deemed such an action strategically advantageous, and so she has K'tenshin Naxos spies watching the Therans as closely as they watch House K'tenshin's avowed enemies.

The shivalahala is a Ninth Circle warrior. For statistics and a full description of Shivalahala K'tenshin, see page 20 of the **Serpent River** sourcebook.

## SHIVALAHALA V'STRIMON

Greatly concerned about the arrival of the Theran behemoth on the shores of Lake Ban, the Shivalahala V'strimon has emerged as a leader of the opposition to the Therans. By working to create and sustain an alliance of





Name-giver communities against the Theran incursion, the Shivalahala V'strimon hopes to protect House V'strimon and its holdings from Theran control and spare the region the worst depredations of Theran power.

Currently, she is particularly concerned with protecting House V'strimon's control of the Coil River, which provides the aropagoi with access to Urupa and the Aras Sea and enables House V'strimon to control the flow of trade from that city to Lake Ban and elsewhere along the Serpent. Theran military escorts have already enabled a few K'tenshin vessels to trade directly with Urupan merchants, and the shivalahala fears that House K'tenshin ultimately intends to wrest control of the valuable trade route from House V'strimon altogether.

Understandably, the opposing goals of the Therans and House V'strimon have destroyed any hope for diplomatic relations between the two powers. Additionally, General Nikar holds a personal grudge against the Shivalahala V'strimon and her house and would like nothing more than to see House K'tenshin's fortunes rise at House V'strimon's expense.

In response to Theran and K'tenshin hostility, the shivalahala is strengthening V'strimon's ties with Throal as well as the other aropagoi of the Serpent by painting Thera and House K'tenshin as the common enemy to Barsaivian independence and free river trade. House Syrtis is largely behind V'strimon, while House Ishkarat continues to waver in hopes of playing both sides against the middle and coming out on top.

House V'strimon also works behind the scenes to aid rebel groups opposed to the Therans and House K'tenshin. V'strimon blockade runners take shipments of supplies to

House T'kambras and allied communities in the South Reach, while the aropagoi's Floating City often provides refuge for agents of the Liferock Rebellion and the Eye of Throal. Recently, House V'strimon has even taken to hiring overland caravans to provide aid to their allies.

The Shivalahala V'strimon is a Twelfth Circle elemental. For statistics and a full description of the shivalahala, see page 49 of the *Serpent River* sourcebook.

## OMASU, LEADER OF THE LIFEROCK REBELLION

The head of the Overland Trading Company, Omasu is a wealthy and influential obsidiman merchant, one of the most powerful in Barsaive (see p. 30, *Barsaive Gamemaster Book*). He is also a member of the Brotherhood of the Ayodhya Liferock, on which the Therans landed the behemoth *Triumph*. In response to this assault on his Liferock and Brotherhood, Omasu has formed an underground movement to fight the Therans, known as the Liferock Rebellion (see p. 41 for further information).

As ruthless in his secret rebel activities as he is in his business dealings, Omasu makes a useful ally or patron for a group of player characters. His skills as a troubadour adept make him a charismatic and likable leader, and he generously rewards any adepts willing to smuggle information and supplies into and out of Vivane. Additionally, Omasu pays high prices for any information about the strengths and weaknesses of the Theran fortress and the fate of the obsidimen trapped within the Ayodhya Liferock.





# RUNNING THE THERAN BEHEMOTH



The establishment of the new Theran stronghold in Barsaive is a major event, one that can trigger a number of adventures in which the characters might get involved. This section offers ways to introduce the arrival of the *Triumph* into an **Earthdawn** campaign, suggested adventure frameworks, and guidelines for tying up loose ends.

## INTRODUCING THE EVENT

The first hints of something happening on the Theran front come from Vivane, when Theran forces stationed there prepare for the arrival of General Nikar's flotilla. Spies and rebel agents get word out to Throal and other areas of Barsaive that something major is brewing in the Theran outpost, something that many different factions will wish to investigate. The player characters can get involved in these investigations, which may lead to the revelation that the Therans are sending a behemoth to Barsaive. Because these massive ships have not been seen in Barsaive since before the Scourge, news of a behemoth's imminent arrival is significant.

When the news reaches members of the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane, they immediately attempt to notify their contacts in Throal. One such contact is Akarrin Nebarrak (see **A Message to Vivane** in *Sky Point Adventures*). If the characters participated in **A Message to Vivane**, Nebarrak can attempt to hire them as messengers.

The arrival of the behemoth at Sky Point sends rumors flying to the far corners of Barsaive. The characters might even be in Vivane investigating rumors they have heard or on unrelated business of their own when the shadow of the massive airship first darkens the city.

Increased Theran activity at the Sixteen Towers of House K'tenshin also offers hints that the Therans are up to something. Characters sympathetic to any of the t'skrang aropagoi that oppose House K'tenshin might attempt to find out why so many Theran airships seem to be coming and going from the Sixteen Towers.

Alternatively, characters may learn of the impending arrival of the Therans via various visions, prophecies, or other types of divination. For example, the Shivalahala Syrtis (p. 70, *Serpent River* sourcebook) has recently experienced a vision of the Serpent River cut in half by a sword and running red with blood. As word of her vision spreads

up and down the river, the aropagoi become tense and guarded, attempting to prepare for the unknown danger to come. The Passions may also send visions, omens and messages hinting at the approach of the Theran forces and where they will arrive. Unusual happenings along the Pilgrimage Route in the Mid Reach of the Serpent River are likely as well, and might even hint at the coming doom of Ayodhya (p. 74, *Serpent River* sourcebook). Additionally, the different divination methods described in **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets** might provide some useful ideas for omens and portents that foretell the Therans' arrival.

If the characters happen to be visiting the Floating City of House V'strimon when the behemoth arrives, they receive a fantastic view of the gigantic vessel's landing. After witnessing the behemoth engulfing the Liferock at Ayodhya, the characters might get caught up in preparations to defend Lake Ban from Theran incursions. The Shivalahala V'strimon might even summon these visitors to her city for help in scouting the fortress and discovering the Therans' intentions.

Alternatively, the characters might be traveling the Pilgrimage Route along the river, which starts at the doomed Liferock of Ayodhya. The adepts might have just begun their journey when the Theran behemoth lands, forcing them to flee or be crushed by the citadel. (In fact, some unlucky pilgrims may be killed when the *Triumph* lands, creating martyrs for the t'skrang.)

A t'skrang companion or fellow pilgrim might point out that the capture of Ayodhya may make the player characters and any other pilgrims with them the last to walk the entire Pilgrimage Route for some time. This gives them a sacred obligation to complete the Route and adds a sense of urgency to their journey. In this case, the characters might be detained or captured by Theran agents from the fortress who believe the characters are spies or agents of Throal or the t'skrang aropagoi.

## PREQUELS

The arrival of the behemoth has been hinted at in a number of previous **Earthdawn** products. Entries in **Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration** discuss sightings of Theran airships along the southern stretch of the Serpent River and near House K'tenshin's headquarters. Also, the *Serpent River* sourcebook describes the alliance between House K'tenshin and the Theran Empire and hints that the Therans have recently







increased their presence in the portion of the Serpent under K'tenshin's influence. The **Serpent River** sourcebook also describes the Liferock at Ayodhya, and its importance to both obsidimen and the t'skrang of the Serpent. The significance of the Liferock to these two groups is what leads to the forming of the Liferock Rebellion.

## ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following adventure frameworks are presented in the format described in the **Introduction**. These frameworks serve as adventure "blueprints" that gamemasters can flesh out as desired. These frameworks represent only three possible adventures based on the arrival of the behemoth. Following these three are a number of adventure ideas gamemasters can use to create additional stories based on the behemoth landing.

### THE AIR GALLEONS OF THROAL

#### Premise

In response to the Therans' arrival, the Kingdom of Throal decides to enhance its own airship fleet to check the power of the Theran airship forces stationed at the fortress and to keep the air-lanes of Barsaive open to non-Theran shipping and trade. While new ships are being built, the king orders His Majesty's Exploratory Force to search for the long-lost airships of the Throalic fleet, which are rumored to lie hidden somewhere in the Throal Mountains.

As rumored, the four galleons of the pre-Scourge Throalic fleet were stranded in the peaks of the Throal Mountains when the Scourge descended on Barsaive; the dwarfs of Throal closed their kaer before the ships could return. Two of the galleons were destroyed when they crashed in the mountains, but the other two survived. Their crews hid the ships in caverns in a mining community atop one of the Throal Mountains. Unfortunately, the Horror known as Marlek attacked the community, killing most of the people and attempting to corrupt the galleons' crews. However, one of the crews performed a powerful act of sacrifice magic that collapsed the caverns and sealed the Horror in with its victims and the ships. Marlek remained there throughout the Scourge until a tribe of ogres discovered the ruins of the valley. Using its weakened powers, Marlek corrupted the ogres and persuaded them to dig out the caves and free it.

In recent years, the ogres have been traveling through the mountains' lowlands, selling materials salvaged from the ships. Their actions have caught the attention of the Eye of Throal, which has recognized many of the valuables as belonging to the long-lost galleons.

#### Setup

The characters are contacted by an emissary from the Kingdom of Throal, who tells them that Throalic agents have obtained information suggesting that the kingdom's lost air galleons may still exist. The emissary asks the characters to investigate and determine if any of the galleons can be returned to Throal. (If the characters work for the Eye of Throal, the Arm of Throal or His Majesty's Exploratory Force, they are assigned to this mission as part of their duties.)

The emissary gives the characters a map of a remote region high in the Throal Mountains. Getting there by airship is discouraged, because airship travel through the high mountains is exceedingly dangerous. The characters will have to travel on foot to reach their destination.

#### Event 1

The trip through the Throal mountains is a long and difficult one. The characters' last sight of civilization on their journey is the small mining town of Cobal, high in the mountains. They can briefly rest and resupply in Cobal before trekking into the highest peaks.

The ancient mountain trails are covered in snow and ice, something many of the adepts may never have seen before. A bitterly cold wind cuts through even layers of clothes, and characters will need to dress warmly to avoid the dangers of frostbite and exposure. Gamemasters may require characters who are not properly protected against the cold to sacrifice one or more Recovery Tests or take small amounts of Strain damage (1–2 points per hour) to reflect the effects of exposure.

The characters also face the danger of slipping off the steep, icy trail and suffering falling damage. To minimize this risk, characters may rope themselves together and support one another along some of the narrow parts of the climb.

The tons of snow and ice high in the mountains can also cause an avalanche. To avoid being knocked over and carried away by waves of falling ice and snow, a character must make a successful Strength (12) Test. Alternatively, characters may be able to find shelter under overhangs or natural caves. (Of course, any cave may already be inhabited.)

The frozen peaks are also home to various creatures such as ice flyers (pp. 304–5, ED), which may attack if they are hunting or disturbed by the characters' passage through their territory. Combat along a high ice-covered ledge against such flying creatures is a hazardous proposition at best and adds +3 to the Difficulty Number of all movement-related tests, including Knockdown Tests.





## Event 2

Following the map's directions, the adepts discover a high mountain valley filled with a perpetual mist generated by natural geothermal heat channeled with elemental magic. Behind the mist the characters discover the ruins of an ancient dwarf-designed city, whose collapsed buildings bear strange slash marks and gouges.

The valley is inhabited by a large ogre tribe led by a pair of ogre twins (p. 307, ED). The tribe discovered the valley several years ago and is in the process of looting any and all valuable materials they can find among the city's ruins. The ogres are also slowly falling under the influence of the Horror that was trapped in the valley by the dwarfs who dwelled there during the Scourge.

As the characters explore the valley, they may encounter small patrols of ogres watching the outer rim of the valley for intruders. Because the area is so desolate and travelers are so few, the ogre patrols are not overly vigilant. The characters may also attract the attention of the entrapped Horror, which can still use some of its powers from within its prison, particularly on characters who expose themselves through the use of raw magic and magical talents.

## Event 3

On one side of the valley the ogres have discovered a large complex of natural caverns, which they are attempting to mine. Part of their compulsion to do so is caused by the Horror Marlek, which wishes to free itself from imprisonment. The ogres are having difficulties and progress is maddeningly slow. If the characters show more promise than the ogres for getting the Horror out of its makeshift prison, Marlek will use its Thought Worm power on them; it will claim to be a Throalic ghost speaking to them and guiding them to the long-lost galleons concealed in the caves. If the Horror cannot contact the characters, it continues to persuade the ogres to carry on with their digging.

## Event 4

To reach the airships inside the cavern, the characters must get past a large group of ogre workers and warriors, including the ogre twins, that will attempt to capture them. Additionally, the characters must deal with the wards created by the galleon crews to protect their ships. As the characters approach the buried galleons, the wards cause the caverns' walls to shake and tremble and trigger rock-falls. Fortunately, along one side of the caverns' entrance lies a small opening through which the characters may enter the caverns.

## Climax

The Horror Marlek has used its powers to animate the dead galleon crews as cadaver men in its service. Consequently, dozens of the undead confront the player characters when they begin to explore the airships. Marlek itself remains hidden in the hold of one of the ships, directing its minions to dispatch the player characters. If the characters need an additional challenge, some of the airship adepts may have been re-animated with the Unnatural Life spell and thus may retain their adept abilities.

Marlek does not show itself until most of its undead servants are destroyed. First, the Horror tries to turn the characters against each other with its Thought Worm power and promises of wealth, power and magical knowledge. If this tactic fails, Marlek physically and magically attacks.

For Marlek, use the bloatform statistics (p. 301, ED) along with the Animate Dead, Corrupt Karma 12, Horror Mark 16, Spells: Circle 6 Nethermancer, Thought Worm 12 and Unnatural Life powers. Marlek's Death Rating is initially reduced by 1 for each cadaver man it has animated, but the Horror regains a point for each cadaver man the characters kill.

After defeating or driving off Marlek, the characters can return to Throal with news of the existence of the airships. In this case, the characters must also devise a way to protect the cavern if the ogres should return.

## Sequels

If the adepts return to Throal with news of the airships, the authorities ask them to guide a full expedition into the mountains to retrieve the ships. This mission can lead to another conflict with the ogre tribe, as well as other creatures that dwell in the mountains, such as cave trolls or ice flyers. If Marlek escaped and/or Horror-marked any of the characters, the Horror might follow them back to Throal or linger around the airships and await the return of the Throalic expedition, re-animating its undead servitors and adding any of the ogres or adepts that died to their ranks.

## THE HEART OF TRIUMPH

### Premise

The characters disguise themselves as slaves and infiltrate the heart of the Theran fortress in an attempt to contact the obsidimen trapped within the Ayodhya Liferock. The characters hope the obsidimen can provide valuable information about the fortress and its defenses.





## Setup

The adepts are contacted by agents of the Liferock Rebellion and meet with Omasu. The obsidian merchant wants the adepts to act as his agents for a particularly dangerous mission. Under the plan, the characters will pose as slaves and be taken to the fortress of Triumph. Once inside the fortress, they will infiltrate the slave pits and contact the obsidimen within the Ayodhya Liferock that lies buried under the citadel.

Omasu teaches the characters a song that will allow them to awaken the obsidimen and call them to the surface. The characters are to gain any information the trapped obsidimen can provide about the state of the Liferock and the Theran fortress, then escape the fortress city.

In exchange for this service, Omasu will pay the characters a total of 5,000 silver pieces and let them select one of the thread items he owns. Omasu isn't likely to budge from his terms, but if the characters insist on haggling he may increase his offer to 5,500 silver pieces.

## Event 1

An agent loyal to the Liferock Rebellion arranges to slip the characters into a K'tenshin slave shipment from the towns alongside Lake Pyros. The characters receive cover identities and stories but are told to rely on them as little as possible to avoid being caught. The characters are taken upriver to the shores of Lake Ban and then to Triumph, where they are sent into the slave pits of the massive fortress.

## Event 2

The characters are assigned to the mines under the watchful eye of the Theran slavemaster, Mabon Ardos. The adepts work in the mines ceaselessly during their shift, then are brought to the slave quarters to rest and eat before the next shift begins. The work is grueling and puts considerable strain even on the healthiest characters.

The overseers cannot watch all of the slaves constantly, which provides the characters with brief unsupervised periods. Additionally, the characters might be able to slip away from the slave quarters during sleeping hours.

During their time in the mines, the characters witness some of their fellow slaves being worked to death or simply killed outright by overseers as examples to the other slaves. Adepts who try to interfere may attract undue attention, especially if they use any of their magical talents. Therefore, they must decide if they will act in the short term or patiently carry out their mission.

## Event 3

Once the characters figure out a way past the guards and overseers to reach the Liferock, they can attempt to use Omasu's song to call forth the sleeping obsidimen and communicate with them. When the characters do so, the faces of two obsidimen emerge slowly from the Liferock.

The rockmen are weary and worn from the torture their Liferock is undergoing, and their dreaming has been disturbed and painful. However, the obsidimen are able to tell the adepts that Theran magicians are tapping into the elemental power of the Liferock to power the fortress city's magical defenses and traps. They also tell the characters that the invaders have removed the true air from the behemoth and replaced it with true earth in an effort to root the citadel to the hill and increase its size and fortifications.

## Climax

Once the characters have learned what they can from the obsidimen, they still have to engineer their escape. Nearly any escape plan will be dangerous and virtually impossible to accomplish without attracting the

attention of the Theran slavers. The characters might be able to foment a slave uprising to serve as a distraction, but many of the slaves will die in the process and the characters will still have to slip past the Theran guards and soldiers.

Efforts to stir up a rebellion in the slave pits may also draw the attention of the Passion Lochost, who may choose







to aid the adepts in the effort (granting them the Inspire Rebellion ability or adding steps to their Charisma Tests, for example). Lochost may even appear as a child wearing broken chains to aid and encourage the characters. Lochost's intervention, in turn, may draw the attention of Dis, who may act through the Theran slave master Mabon Ardos. The interventions of the two Passions may result in a conflict between the two that will be talked about for some time to come.

Additionally, the characters might be able to seize one of the Theran vedettes and escape from Triumph by air, resulting in a chase and aerial battle as they flee from the fortress. In any case, an open rebellion and escape should touch off major battles within Triumph and possibly provide the opportunity for the player characters to confront one or more of the major Theran characters in the fortress.

### Sequels

Successfully completing their mission can earn the adepts Omasu's gratitude and further work for the Liferock Rebellion. Characters might become involved in helping guide rescued slaves to safe havens around Barsaive where they can further aid the Rebellion. The capture of an intact Theran stone airship will undoubtedly interest Throalic leaders, who would want the ship so their elementalists could examine its construction and design. Other potential sequel developments include avenging or rescuing befriended slaves who remain in Theran bondage or fulfilling the last requests of characters who die during the breakout attempt.

The characters' actions may earn them favor from Lochost (leading a slave rebellion constitutes a Zealous Act of Devotion to Lochost—see p. 90, *Earthdawn Companion*). Of course, their actions may anger Dis, who might attempt to thwart the characters at some future date.

## GONE FISHING

### Premise

Throal and House V'strimon learn that Theran forces at Triumph are attempting to salvage the vedettes that crashed in Lake Ban when the shivalahala and her elementalists disabled them during the Theran War (p. 41, *Serpent River* sourcebook). The player characters are asked to locate the ships before the Theran forces do so, thus allowing House V'strimon to salvage the airships for the Kingdom of Throal.

### Setup

A t'skrang fisherman comes to the Shivalahala V'strimon after witnessing a late-night foray by Theran forces on Lake Ban. He says that the Therans appeared to

be dredging the lake bottom. Realizing that the Therans are attempting to locate the vedettes, the shivalahala asks the characters to accompany the fisherman out on his boat the next night to examine the spot where the fisherman saw the Therans. She also provides the characters with their choice of magical potions or swimming charms (pp. 125–26, *Serpent River* sourcebook), which will enable them to breathe underwater for several hours.

### Event 1

A sliver of moon illuminates the calm and quiet surface of the lake as a humble t'skrang fisherman appears at the dock. The characters climb aboard his boat, the *Net of Reeds*, and the group makes its way to the spot where the Therans were seen. As they float across the surface of the lake, the fisherman gives one of the adepts a reed bracelet of the style worn by the t'skrang of House V'strimon and tells them it can bring them luck if tossed into the lake. The characters down their potions or activate their charms and dive into the dark waters.

Deep beneath the surface of the lake they see the dark hulk of one of the Theran airships, entangled in a mass of reeds. Light crystals carried by the characters cast a watery glow over the hull of the ship and illuminate the bones of the Theran sailors and slaves trapped aboard.

Unfortunately for the characters, the hull of the ship is lying in a large bed of tentacular kelp (p. 114, *Serpent River* sourcebook). The kelp resembles normal kelp, but it is covered with tiny suction cups on one side. When touched, the suction cups seize a target and inject a paralyzing venom. The kelp functions as a trap with the following statistics:

### TENTACULAR KELP

Detection Difficulty: 8

Trigger Condition: Touch

Trap Initiative: 10

Trap Effect: Poison, Effect Step 10, Spell Defense 8.

### Event 2

After examining the ship, the characters make their way back to the surface. There, they discover a Theran vedette hovering overhead. The fishing boat is nowhere in sight. The Therans lower ropes to the characters and demand they climb aboard. If the characters attempt to escape, the Therans send a Strength 2 water elemental (p. 87, *Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets*) to capture the characters and bring them aboard the ship.





Once aboard the vedette, the characters are interrogated by Drak Windsearcher, who is personally commanding the expedition. He asks them what they saw on the lake bottom. With or without the player characters' aid, the Therans quickly locate the downed ship. The elementalists aboard Windsearcher's vedette uses magic to raise the ship to the surface of the lake, though it remains unable to fly.

### Climax

From out of nowhere, the *Net of Reeds* appears and collides with the low-flying Theran vedette. The crash sends crew members falling to the deck and gives the characters an opportunity to escape. The t'skrang fishing boat looks too badly damaged to outrun Windsearcher's ship, but the characters can try to get away on the newly raised vedette. They can use the Air Sailing or Pilot Boat talents (or Willpower in the absence of either talent) to pilot the salvaged vedette along the lake's surface. Meanwhile, the Therans quickly regroup and pursue the characters, attempting to capture them before they can reach safety behind the refs of the Floating City. (This pursuit can lead to a running battle between the two ships. Though the vedette has no functional weapons, the characters can use their own spells and talents to repel the Therans.)

If the character carrying the fisherman's lucky reed bracelet casts it into the lake, a stand of strong, tough reeds bursts from the surface of the water and entangles the pursuing Theran vedette, buying extra time for the characters to reach the Floating City. (Only upon their return to House V'strimon do the characters discover that the real captain of the *Net of Reeds* is still in the city and missed the rendezvous. The characters have, in fact, encountered the spirit of the Old Man of the Nets, who seeks to help his people against the Therans.)

### Sequels

If the adepts manage to get the Theran ship to the Floating City, the t'skrang elementalists are unable to restore its flight capabilities, but they can stabilize it enough to traverse the river safely. The characters are then charged with the task of conveying the ship to the Kingdom of Throal and preventing any Theran attempts to recapture it from them. House V'strimon arranges an escort of two warships for the journey. Because of the vedette's poor condition, the trip takes two days, during which the characters face a number of challenges from the Therans as they attempt to prevent the ship from falling into Throalic hands. (General Nikar sends the Elite, p. 31, to lead the Theran effort.)

The characters may also encounter the Old Man of the Nets in a different guise when the wily spirit requires their help again.

## OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

The following entries describe adventure ideas based on the Theran presence on Lake Ban. Gamemasters can flesh out these adventure ideas and intersperse them between adventures based on the preceding frameworks, run them between adventures of their own design, or use them in any other way they desire.

When fleshing out these adventures, however, the gamemaster should take advantage of the groups described earlier in this section, such as the Liferock Rebellion and the Theran adept team known as the Elite.

### SCOUTING THE FORTRESS

When the behemoth lands, the Kingdom of Throal immediately sends teams of adepts to scout the fortress and learn all they can about the forces stationed at Triumph. The Eye of Throal (or one of the other factions opposing the Therans, such as the Liferock Rebellion) asks the characters to scout the fortress and its surroundings and report back. To accomplish this task, the characters will have to get past Theran patrol ships and griffin riders and avoid the notice of Triumph's guard patrols and towers (see p. 18). The characters may pose as merchants or pilgrim travelers to get closer to the fortress city and gather information. If the Therans capture the adepts, they will likely enslave them and send them down into the mines beneath Triumph or ship them off to Sky Point or Vivane.

The characters' scouting expedition can reveal a number of interesting facts that might help Throal and other anti-Theran forces. For example, the characters may learn that Theran forces from Vivane and Sky Point have been re-assigned to the new installation (see **Theran Forces at Triumph**, p. 18). This intelligence suggests that the Theran forces back at Vivane and Sky Point may be somewhat depleted, a condition that would enhance the chances of successful attacks at either of those Theran strongholds.

### THE PILGRIMAGE ROUTE

King Varulus sends a team of envoys to travel the Pilgrimage Route (p. 74, **Serpent River** sourcebook) to House Syrtis. Once there, they are to meet with Shivalahala Syrtis and determine if House Syrtis will fully support Throal and House V'strimon against the Therans. Additionally, the king wants the characters to ask the shivalahala how the Therans can be defeated (the shivalahala is renowned throughout Barsaive for her gift of prophecy.)

Because the traditional starting point of the Pilgrimage Route—the summit of Ayodhya—now lies beneath the behemoth, the characters will undoubtedly have to tangle with Theran guards. Additionally, the characters may have





to contend with Thera thieves or spies looking to learn more about the Pilgrimage Route or Shivalahala Syrtis.

Once the characters finally arrive at the Cliff City of House Syrtis, the shivalahala responds to their questions with cryptic answers that can easily lead to further adventures and explorations. If desired, the gamemaster can foreshadow the events in **The King is Dead!** by having the shivalahala inform the characters that Throal will play a role in the coming conflict with Thera but King Varulus himself will not.

## DRAKE HUNTING

After Hefera (p. 31) captures one of Icewing's drakes (p. 70 of this book or pp. 63–65, **Shattered Pattern**), Icewing or one of his other drakes approaches the characters and requests their help to free the captive from the Therans' clutches. Hefera holds the drake in the fortress while he waits for his men to locate and capture Aardelea. Once that goal is achieved, Hefera plans to take both the drake and Aardelea to Sky Point and eventually to Thera. This adventure allows gamemasters to introduce Hefera before the events of **The Dragons' Daughter** story begin.

## THE MIST SWAMPS

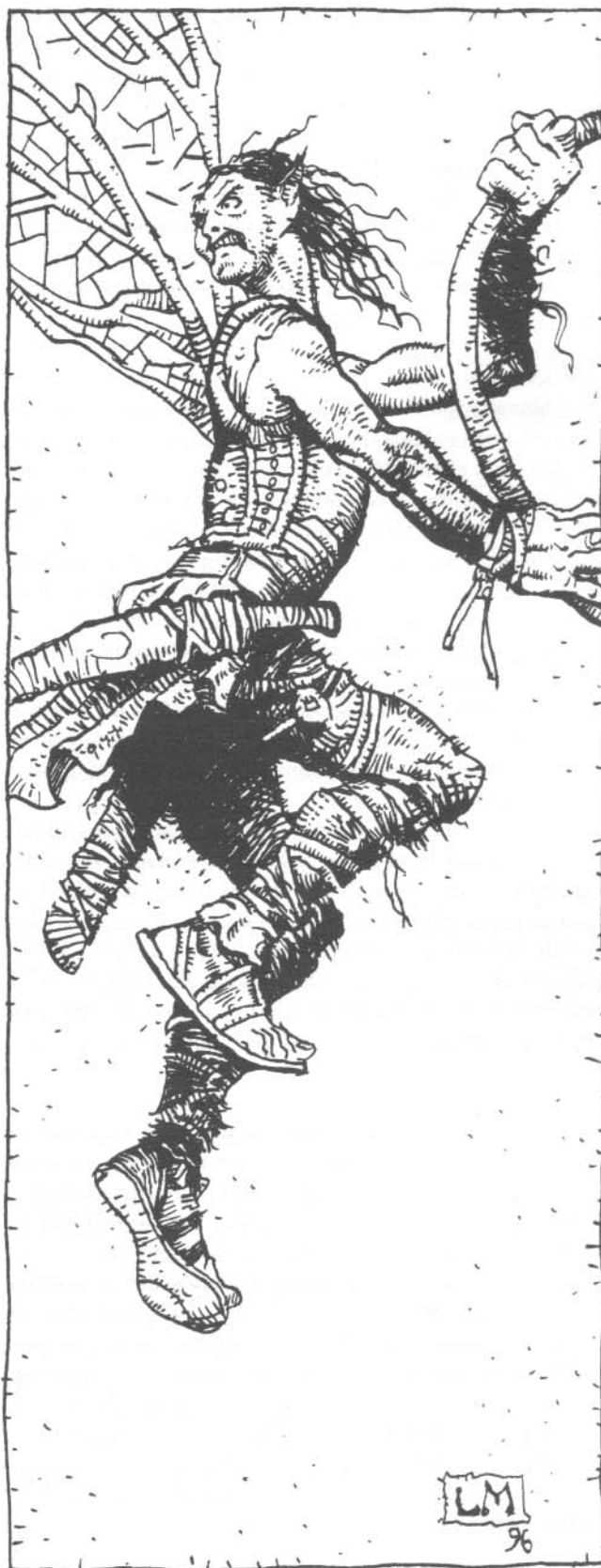
Theran activity in the Mist Swamps has aroused the concern and curiosity of the Shivalahala V'strimon, who calls on the characters to mount an expedition into the swamps and learn the goal of the Therans' search. The characters will have to deal with the oppressive heat and humidity of the swamps, as well as strange and dangerous flora and fauna while they spy on the Therans. In the depths of the swamp the characters might even stumble across some ancient ruins, which the great dragon Aban reportedly protects.

As described in **Theran Activity** (p. 23), one Thera goal is locating the ruins of an ancient pre-Scourge magical laboratory in the swamps. This site is also the subject of **An Ancient Mystery**, in **Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration**.

## PATTERN OF THEFT

When one of the Shivalahala V'strimon's pattern items—a reed bracelet—is stolen from the Floating City, the shivalahala calls on the adepts to locate the thief and retrieve the item.

The bracelet was taken by an adept Named Leeton, an Almarran windling from the Floating City's Long Grove community (pp. 47–48, **Serpent River** sourcebook). Leeton is the brother of one of the windlings from the Shiralaki, the shivalahala's personal honor guard. Leeton's own greed and his desire to curry favor with the Therans led him to commit the theft.







To retrieve the bracelet, the characters must follow Leeton to one of the towns on the shores of Lake Pyros, where he plans to turn the bracelet over to agents of the Naxos Foundation. These agents are in turn supposed to pass it on to the Therans. However, Shivalahala K'tenshin has no intention of letting such a valuable item fall into the hands of the Therans until she has had ample opportunity to study it herself and perhaps gain some power over her arch-rival, the Shivalahala V'strimon. The characters will have to deal with Leeton, the Naxos t'skrang and Theran agents sent by Nikar to obtain the pattern item.

## THE CONTEST

Shivalahala V'strimon calls on skilled warrior adepts (particularly t'skrang) to compete in the Contest of the Water Coin at the War College of House K'tenshin. The winner of the contest is admitted into the War College and may be able to provide valuable intelligence on House K'tenshin's activities, combat training and dealings with the Therans. The mission requires the agent to pass through the grueling training regimes required by the War College, while avoiding detection by suspicious agents of the Naxos Foundation.

Alternatively, the adepts might be called on to escort and assist a V'strimon champion and ensure that no treachery is used to prevent the champion from competing fairly in the contest.

An adventure based on this idea might require one of the characters to effectively leave the player character group to follow through on the shivalahala's mission. In this case, the player might create a new character to play while the other character goes "deep under cover." Alternatively, the gamemaster may play out the events of the character's infiltration over a few one-on-one sessions, leading to the character's exposure and forced escape.

## TRADE DELEGATION

The leaders of Throal and House V'strimon ask the characters to escort a trade delegation to the city of Urupa, where the delegation will attempt to negotiate a formal trade alliance with the city. Spies and infiltrators from the Naxos Foundation, Thera and Iopos plague the mission from the very start. Then, shortly after the characters arrive in Urupa, the Theran legate to the city turns up murdered, with a member of the Throalic/V'strimon delegation the most likely suspect. The characters' mission is almost certainly doomed to fail unless the characters can discover the identity of the real killer. (In fact, the Theran legate was murdered by an agent of the Holders of Trust from Iopos, sent to disrupt the negotiations and prevent Urupa from siding with Throal.)

By running this adventure prior to the events in **The King is Dead!**, gamemasters can use it to foreshadow Iopos' involvement in the murder of King Varulus. If this adventure is run after the king has been killed, gamemasters can portray the agents of the Holders of Trust as accomplices of Jada Denairastas (p. 48).

## FREEDOM OF TRADE

A merchant house from Travar is looking for adepts to help guard its airships. Since the Therans' arrival, the ships have been taking a more dangerous route over the Servos Jungle to avoid some of the Theran activity around Lake Ban. The jungle route, however, exposes the Travarian airships to attacks from griffins and other dangerous jungle beasts, as well as confrontations with Theran patrols and slavers operating in the jungle. The characters are expected to help ensure that the shipments reach Bartertown.

## THE LOST ELEMENTAL MINE

House V'strimon recruits the characters to mislead Theran elemental miners into dredging the wrong areas of the Serpent River and Lake Ban for true water, so that V'strimon ships can mine the real pockets of the true element unmolested.

The scam involves a set of fake documents describing a pre-Scourge source of true water in Lake Ban that has been lost, along with a sample of true water supposedly collected from the site. The adepts are to approach M'reesh, a known Naxos spy operating in the Floating City, and offer to sell her the documents. M'reesh will arrange a meeting to buy the documents but will also have the adepts followed to find out more about them. Therefore, the characters must maintain their "cover" throughout the assignment to successfully pull off the deception. Additionally, M'reesh arranges for a number of other Naxos agents to ambush the adepts and take the documents rather than paying for them. Of course, the characters will blow their cover if they slaughter the spies, so they must devise a way to get the false documents into the hands of the spies or M'reesh without dying or being captured in the process.

## THE REBEL CAUSE

The characters are called on to help a House V'strimon blockade-runner get past Theran and K'tenshin patrols at the confluence of the Serpent and Tylon Rivers and deliver supplies to House T'kambras agents farther down the Tylon. To accomplish the task, the blockade-runner's ship must slip past the Theran patrols and K'tenshin ships, and the characters must also deal with spies or traitors among the crew.





If desired, gamemasters can throw a curve at the characters by having them encounter a K'tenshin warship (p. 101, **Serpent River** sourcebook) after they have passed the patrols. This vessel is manned by a Theran patrol led by a team of adepts (the Elite) and is moving along the Tylon River to locate and destroy T'kambran vessels.

An adventure based on **The Rebel Cause** can provide a convenient prelude to other adventures in which the characters must to make their way along the Tylon River and into the Serpent's South Reach undetected.

## LOOSE ENDS

The behemoth quickly becomes a well-established military installation and a permanent Theran presence in the heartland of Barsaive. The inhabitants of the province soon learn they cannot ignore these Therans, as they do those at Vivane and Sky Point, and the fortress city becomes a strategic factor that anyone traveling along the Serpent River or in the region of Lake Ban must take into account.

The primary recipients of Thera's attention will be the Kingdom of Throal and its ally, House V'strimon. Throal will face trying times as the possibility of a new and sustained war with Thera looms in the future, coupled with unrest and internal strife in the kingdom itself, as detailed in **The King is Dead!**

However, Throal may receive a boost by studying the sunken Theran vedette salvaged in **Gone Fishing**, p. 37. The vedette may give Throalic magicians valuable insight into the construction of Theran stone airships and kilas, and may even enable Throal to construct similar airships to counter Theran power. This development, combined with the reclamation of a pair of Throalic galleons (see **The Air Galleons of Throal**, p. 34) strengthens Throal's air defenses.

Thera's presence at Lake Ban might also inspire different Barsaivian factions to unite against their common enemy. Though the inhabitants of Barsaive's different regions, cities and towns may not agree on much, they are steadfast in their desire to remain free of Theran rule. The landing of a Theran behemoth on the shores of Lake Ban may provide them with a common threat serious enough to persuade them to overcome their petty bickering.

Other factions, such as Iopos, try to play the Therans and the Throalic dwarfs against one another for its own gain. Still other Barsaivian powers, such as Urupa and Travar, desperately attempt to stay neutral in the whole conflict. And other Barsaivians, such as the t'skrang of House K'tenshin, ally themselves with the Therans to further their own fortunes.

In short, the behemoth landing turns Barsaive into a hotbed of political intrigue that provides ample employment opportunities for an enterprising group of adventuring adepts.

## THE LIFEROCK REBELLION

As the Therans consolidate their power at Ayodhya, the Liferock Rebellion grows in influence and capability and takes an increasingly active role in harassing the new Theran presence.

Omasu uses his own influence and resources to aid House V'strimon, House T'kambras, the Kingdom of Throal, the anti-Theran arpagoi of the Serpent River and other anti-Theran factions by pressuring ship-building companies to speed production on galleys and galleons for Throal's navy, arranging for overland shipments of supplies and goods to anti-Theran forces and even hiring ork raiders to disrupt Theran caravans and slaving operations. In return, these factions provide the Liferock rebels with safe haven, transportation, and other support.

The characters can easily become involved with the Liferock Rebellion and its continuing fight against the Therans in a number of ways. First, they may be hired for missions such as those described in the preceding **Adventure Frameworks** and **Other Adventure Ideas** sections. Depending on their ideals and beliefs, the characters may join the Rebellion on their own initiative. Lastly, depending on their relationship with the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane, the characters may become involved in joint operations conducted by the Liferock Rebellion and the Vivane Resistance or any of Omasu's other allies.

## THE THERANS AND THE REBELS

The Therans quickly learn that they cannot afford to ignore the threat posed by the Liferock Rebellion. Consequently, General Nikar, along with Spymaster Gendel and agents of the Naxos Foundation, begins efforts to infiltrate the Rebellion. Though most of these efforts fail, the Therans successfully infiltrate at least one double agent into the Rebellion. Initially, the spy uncovers little useful information, but as the plans of the Liferock Rebellion grow increasingly ambitious, this agent will undoubtedly cause great damage to the anti-Theran resistance.

In addition to these covert tactics, the Therans begin sending large patrols, each consisting of more than twenty-five adept soldiers, into the area near the fortress city to search for Rebellion activity. General Nikar personally directs the Elite (p. 31) to rout members of Omasu's group in the vicinity of Triumph.





# THE KING IS DEAD!







# A GRIM DISCOVERY



Prince Neden of Throal sits uneasily in his favorite chair, a large and unyielding piece of stone, and rubs his tired eyes. For many hours he has pored over a sheaf of financial documents provided by Wishten, the kingdom's chancellor. In minute detail, the records trace fluctuations in Throal's tax revenues over the past decade, and

Neden's head is swimming with numbers. He feels as if he knows less about Throalic taxation than when he started reading this morning. Nonetheless, he struggles valiantly through the documents; to do anything else would be a betrayal of his beloved father, King Varulus III. Grippled by a lingering illness and resigned to his impending death, Varulus has been teaching Neden everything he can about governance, from lofty principles to deciphering mind-numbing details such as those in Wishten's reports.

Neden wishes he was on the deck of an airship, the wind pulling at his hair. He closes his eyes and dreams himself in command of the airship *Intrepid*, in hot pursuit of a sky raider drakkar. The sky raiders are mercenaries in the pay of Thera, seeking to test Throal's resolve. And Throal will pass the test! A gale is brewing, and the hunt is a dangerous one. If his helmsman makes even the smallest error, the wind could seize the sails of the *Intrepid* and dash it against a mountain's face. But the helmsman is Rokzo the Unruly, whom Neden trusts with his life. Together, Rokzo and Neden will—

A gentle knock sounds at Neden's door. Neden knows the knock well; it is his mother, Queen Dollas.

She opens the door and steps inside, smiling warmly at her son. Behind the smile, Neden sees the weariness his mother tries to hide. "Your father wishes to speak to you before he sleeps," she says.

Neden goes to Dollas and takes her hands. "The king should sleep more and worry about me less," he says. "He is growing weaker, and I fear that I tax his strength."

Dollas says nothing. She wishes she could somehow relieve the great burden that weighs upon the two men she loves most in the world, but she can only lay a reassuring hand on her son's shoulder.

Another familiar voice rings through the corridor. It is Merrox, Master of the Library of Throal, one of the few Name-givers allowed to pass through the tight security of the Royal Chambers without question. Merrox is the king's foremost confederate in Prince Neden's training.

"Greetings, Your Royal Highnesses," Merrox says. "The king has sent for me. He wishes me to brief you, my prince, on the costs and possible benefits of an improved ventilation system for the kingdom."

Merrox watches Neden try to conceal a heavy sigh, and he looks at the young king-to-be with sympathy. Even Merrox, who is fascinated by nearly everything, would rather spend the evening discussing any topic other than ventilation policy.

Neden forces a small smile. "I shall bid my father good night, Merrox, and join you in my room presently."

Neden and Dollas walk together down the corridor to the king's room. Dollas opens the door, then screams. Her knees buckle beneath her and she falls to the cold stone floor. With a curse, Neden rushes to his father's bedside.

Drawn by the queen's cry, Merrox dashes through the open doorway. He stops abruptly, gasping in horror at what he sees. Varulus's bed is soaked in blood, which drips from the sheets and pools on the floor. The king's limbs are splayed out, as if he was a specimen in a researcher's lab. His head is thrown back, his features frozen in a rictus of agony. His muscles have been flensed from his bones, his internal organs torn from his open torso and arranged atop the bedding in a perversely neat pattern.

"I left him just moments ago," the queen cries.

Merrox staggers to his old friend's bedside. He stretches a trembling hand toward the dead king, but cannot bring himself to touch the body. "Could this be some final effect of his illness? We never truly diagnosed it ..."

Gently, Neden touches his father's ruined flesh. He lifts his hand and stares at the fresh blood on his fingers. "No disease did this. Those are scalpel cuts."

Merrox shakes his head. "This is impossible! His Majesty's security is impeccable. The guards would have—"

"Magic," snaps Neden, his expression changing from shock to hate.

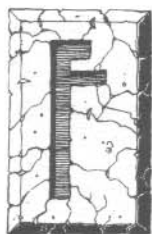
"My prince, what ...?" Merrox says, trailing off as Neden spins away from the bed with his fists clenched.

"Do you recall the Death Rebellion?" Neden says. "I was split open—dissected—in a similar fashion. Only the immediate attentions of the king's healers saved my life. I recognize Theran magic here. Mark my words, Merrox—they shall pay. For every drop of my father's blood cruelly spilled here today, the Theran dogs will shed torrents!"





# BACKGROUND



aint rumors of King Varulus III's failing health have been making the rounds of Throal for the past few months, and his family and closest confidants have expected his death for some time. But the shocking manner of his demise—murder most foul—rocks Barsaive to its foundations.

For many months, King Varulus has suffered from a debilitating malady of unknown origin. (The duration of the king's suffering is left open so that gamemasters can easily integrate this plot development into their own campaigns.) Concerned that external and domestic enemies might capitalize on his weakened condition, the king decided to keep his illness secret from his own people. To explain his withdrawal from public life and official business, he invented a cover story: he claimed to be working on a scholarly tome in concert with the librarian Merrox. During this period, he delegated as much authority as he could to Prince Neden. Though the king's withdrawal became a point of political contention among Throalic nobles and Throal's allies, none suspected that Varulus was dying. (Even though Varulus was nearly two hundred years old at the time of his death, the people of Throal have become accustomed to strangely long-lived kings and seemed to expect Varulus to live forever.) Unknown to Throal's citizens, the lives of Varulus I, II, and III were all dramatically extended by a potion provided to them by Icewing the dragon before the Scourge (p. 26, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**). Varulus III's "illness" merely reflected the slow expiration of the potion's effects. The existence of Icewing's potions is a closely guarded secret, though it sometimes surfaces in rumors and legends in the kingdom.

The king's brutal murder, however, surprises even those closest to him. The distinctive pattern of Varulus's wounds leads Neden to conclude that the assassination is the work of the Therans. He believes this because the Theran nethermancer Mordom once vivisected Neden in a virtually identical manner. In 1484 TH, when Neden was

ten years old, Mordom abducted him during the Death Rebellion (a revolt staged by power-hungry Throalic nobles in league with the Therans). Mordom then used magic to keep Neden alive as he dissected the young prince in one of a terrible series of rituals designed to transform Neden into a Theran thrall. Eventually the Death Rebellion was thwarted; Varulus III survived his assassins' attack, and J'Role the Honorable Thief rescued Neden. (J'Role, much changed from those troubled days, now serves as the secret head of the Eye of Throal, the kingdom's intelligence organization; see p. 78, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**.) Varulus III slew Mordom, and the dragon Mountainshadow cleansed Neden of the nethermancer's magical taint.

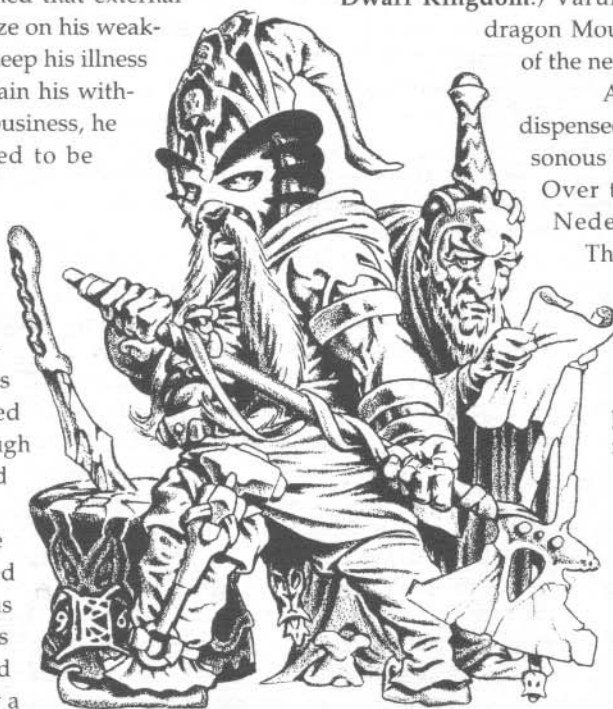
After the rebellion, King Varulus dispensed swift justice against the treasonous dwarf noble houses behind it.

Over the years, however, word of Neden's ordeal spread through Throalic high society, and some dwarfs grew suspicious of Mountainshadow's "cure."

How could anyone know if Neden had, in fact, been completely cleansed of the nethermancer's taint, they asked. And who could trust a dragon, anyway? And even if the dragon's mysterious cure countered the magical effects of Mordom's ritual, what about the emotional impact of being dissected alive? Rivals of the royal family, particularly members of the ambitious House Ueraven

(who may have conspired with the Therans in the Death Rebellion) quietly fanned such concerns. Over the years, the whispered rumors created a dark cloud of uncertainty over the prince's head, leading many loyal citizens of Throal to entertain nagging doubts about the sanity and good judgment of the heir to the throne.

The slaying of Varulus seems to point to the Therans, but was actually the work of another sinister force in Barsaivian politics: the Denairastas clan of Iopos. Powerful magicians, the Denairastas rule the city-state of Iopos through magical coercion. Determined to one day





rule all of Barsaive, they have never made a secret of their loathing for Throal and Thera. The assassination of Throal's king represents the first step of a plan they have patiently crafted for years. By carefully setting Throal and Thera against each other in a mutually destructive war, the Denairastas believe the two powers will severely weaken one another. At that point, the Denairastas will move in and pick up the pieces.

The agents of the Denairastas clan are the Holders of Trust, a secretive society of spies and operatives that stretches throughout Barsaive. In fact, the Denairastas first learned of Neden's ordeal during the Death Rebellion through the Holders. In time, the Denairastas recognized Neden's grim memories as the ideal vehicle for their plot. By killing his father in a manner reminiscent of Mordom's rituals, they believed they could provoke Neden, a military man known for his brashness, to declare war on the Therans in Barsaive. To this end, one Holders cell researched details of the nethermantic rituals employed by Mordom so that the Denairastas could accurately duplicate the rituals' effects, while another cell managed to steal one of Varulus's pattern items (see p. 49 in **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**). Then the Denairastas drew on their vast knowledge of magic to create a unique Named ritual spell that would mimic Mordom's magic and slay King Varulus (for rules governing Named ritual spells, see pp. 37–38, **High-Circle Spells**, in **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**).

The ritual required that one of the Denairastas be within the spell's range of effect when it was finally triggered; this individual would also have to touch Varulus at some point prior to the casting. The clan leaders selected Jada Denairastas, a junior member of the clan, for this dangerous honor. Jada assumed the name Jada of Urupa and posed as a wizard and questor of Garlen to gain entry to Throal (in fact, Jada is an illusionist and nethermancer). Jada quickly became a fixture at the Library of Throal, where she befriended nobles and archivists alike. The dwarf noble Drazon Elcomi, a long-time initiate of the Holders of Trust, aided her entrance into Throalic high society by making key introductions.

By posing as a healer, Jada managed to infiltrate the highest circles of Throalic society. (The "healer ruse" is commonly used by the Holders, who know that the intimate bond formed between healer and patient often leads patients to reveal useful private information.) Using her knowledge of non-magical medicines, Jada cured several important Throalic nobles of minor but vexing maladies. Her reputation spread, and eventually she caught Merrox's attention. Throughout Varulus's illness, Merrox had carefully approached several trustworthy healers and magicians to enlist their aid in treating the king, vowing all to

secrecy. Eventually, Merrox enlisted Jada of Urupa to attend the king—an assignment that allowed her to touch the king and fulfill the final requirements for the Denairastas' ritual. Jada made a great show of attempting to cure Varulus and even managed to supply him with remedies that temporarily renewed his energy. But she could not—and would not—cure him.

## EVENT SYNOPSIS

After King Varulus dies, Jada Denairastas leaves Throal without arousing suspicion. She joins a caravan bound for Lake Vors, a stronghold of House Ishkarat—a pernicious t'skrang trading house with strong ties to the Denairastas and Iopos (see pp. 86–88 of the **Serpent River** sourcebook for a complete description of House Ishkarat).

Meanwhile, agents of the Holders of Trust use trickery and subterfuge to implicate a family of Theran exiles in the crime. Anxious to avenge his father's death and silence rumors of his own complicity in Varulus's assassination (rumors propagated by House Ueraven and other dwarfs opposed to Varulus and his family), Neden publicly executes the innocent Theran expatriates.

Convinced that his father was killed by agents of Thera, the newly crowned King Neden readies his armies to attack the new Theran fortress at Ayodhya (see **The Theran Behemoth**, p. 14). He disregards the warnings of his military advisors, who fear that Throal lacks the power to directly confront Thera. General Nikar does not wish a war, either—yet. His troops at Triumph represent a formidable force, but they remain isolated from the bulk of Thera's military strength. Furthermore, Nikar has no intention of letting the upstart Throalic king force Thera's hand. General Nikar attempts to convince Neden that Thera is not responsible for the king's assassination, but he fails and the Throalic forces march on Triumph.

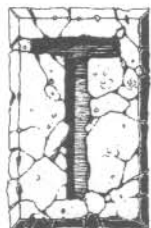
The battle at the fortress city ends with massive losses for Throal. During the fighting, however, King Neden learns that the Denairastas of Iopos engineered his father's death. Neden must delay his revenge when he learns that a Denairastas agent has stolen a sword that has become one of his pattern items. Fearing that the sword may enable Denairastas magicians to kill him, Neden enlists the aid of the player characters to retrieve the item before it reaches Iopos. After identifying the agents responsible for the theft, the characters learn that they have sent the sword to House Ishkarat's stronghold at Lake Vors, where Jada Denairasta is to retrieve it. The characters then travel to Lake Vors, where they confront Jada and soldiers of House Ishkarat and attempt to retrieve the sword before King Neden meets the same fate as his father.







# IMPORTANT CHARACTERS



his section describes the major characters and factions involved in this event. Many of these characters are more fully described in **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**; statistics for them are supplied in abbreviated form in the following pages.

Some of the following characters possess talent knacks. Rules for Talent Knacks can be found on pp. 18–24, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**.

## KING NEDEN

Whereas Varulus III spent decades at his father's side before assuming the throne, Neden has been thrust into the position with relatively little time to prepare for his responsibilities. Enamored with adventure and the military life, the hot-tempered king remains contemptuous of the subtle maneuverings required of a successful politician—as illustrated by his rash attack on the Theran fortress city at Ayodhya. These characteristics, along with his inexperience and the enormous pressure he has faced ever since his father first fell ill, lead many people—including Neden himself—to doubt his ability to govern effectively.

These doubts have emboldened certain rival dwarf noble houses that wish to supplant Varulus's line as the ruling dynasty of Throal. Neden's failure thus far to produce any heirs has further fueled the ambitions of these political opponents. These rivals are the source of the persistent rumors of Neden's latent madness, rumors whispered in taverns and dining rooms throughout the dwarf kingdom.

Despite these obstacles, Neden has several important supporters among Throal's nobility. Some of these individuals realize that the death or impeachment of Neden could lead to a dynastic struggle in Throal—which would likely be a disastrous and bloody affair, judging by the dwarf kingdom's history. Still others recognize that Neden is intelligent, brave and responsible, even though the new king may be less cool-headed than his father. Even though Neden is inexperienced at kingship, many people voiced similar doubts about Varulus III when he was first crowned. If the new king can survive the machinations of his rivals and learn to control his own impulsive nature, his supporters say, Neden will one day become a good king—perhaps even a great king.

For a more complete description of Neden, see pp. 50–51 in **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**.

### Attributes

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

## MERROX

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

If your group has already played adventures based on the suggestions in **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**, Merrox may already be a patron of your characters. In this case, Merrox may provide a convenient means of involving the player characters in the adventure frameworks of this event.

For a more complete description of Merrox, see pp. 89–90 in **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**.

### Attributes

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

## NEDEN'S OTHER ADVISERS

Like any ruler, Neden has a number of close advisers—too many to include in a single story line without confusing players. To avoid this problem, pick a couple of the advisers described below to play featured roles and keep the rest in the background. If the player characters are already deeply enmeshed in a campaign based in Throal, they may have a pre-existing relationship with an adviser. In this case, that adviser should take center stage in your version of these events.





**Rokzo the Unruly** and **Neden** served as naval commanders together, and **Rozko** joins the king's inner circle of advisers with **Neden's** ascension to the throne. Raised by ork scorchers, this impetuous dwarf believes fully in the ork way of "seizing life and shaking it." Unsurprisingly, **Rokzo** encourages **Neden** to go to war with **Thera**. He believes that to be a great king, one must also be a great general.

The courtier **Tholon** is a revered elder figure in **Throal's** political and financial circles. He heads the respected **House Elcomi**, which takes a background role in financing the ventures of more aggressive trading houses. A calm and stable old fellow, **Tholon** believes in unswerving loyalty to the rightful king. As far as he is concerned, whatever **Neden** wishes to do is right simply because **Neden** sits on the throne. **Tholon's** support of **Neden** keeps many of the other conservative houses behind the reform policies of the **House of Avalus**, at least in public. For more information on **Tholon**, see pp. 58–59 in **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**.

As Chancellor of **Throal**, **Wishten** is the kingdom's highest-ranking administrator and officially the king's closest aide. An affable former athlete, **Wishten** has common sense and a personal touch that make him indispensable to the royal family. He has made it his personal project to instill confidence in **Neden**. Like **Tholon**, **Wishten** is a member of **House Elcomi**. Normally **Wishten** would oppose war with **Thera**, but his fury over **Varulus's** murder has blinded him to war's possible consequences. **Wishten** is described in greater detail on p. 59 of **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**.

Player characters may also have close relationships with the court magician **Ajmar the Admirable** (p. 53, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**) or the poet/politician **Kelassa** (p. 56, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**).

## SELEND

**Selenda** is the figurehead of domestic opposition to the reforms of **Varulus II** and **III**. Head of the conservative (and sometimes underhanded) **House Ueraven**, **Selenda** nurses a nine-hundred-year-old grudge against the current royal family (**House Ueraven** believes that it is the rightful royal house, and views **Neden's House Avalus** as a dynasty of usurpers). **Selenda** has secured support among old-guard nobles, who feel that **Varulus's Council Compact** deprives them of the natural benefits of high birth. With this support, **Selenda** might well succeed in a bid for the throne if something happens to **Neden**.

If the adventurers are familiar with **Throalic** politics, the idea of **Queen Selenda** should fill them with dread. She



would no doubt repudiate the **Council Compact** and reach some kind of arrangement with **Thera**, similar to the alliance the two nations had before the **Scourge**. She harbors no special love for the **Therans** and would never knowingly harm **Throal** by aiding their cause, but "business is business," as she says. For the moment, she opposes direct conflict with **Thera** on the grounds that it is bad for trade.

No one is ambivalent about this forceful and uncompromising courtier; people either revere **Selenda** or loathe her. She is strikingly ugly and overly fond of perfume and cosmetics. For more information about **Selenda**, see pp. 56–58 of **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**.

### Attributes

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

\*Add 3 steps to **Selenda's Charisma** when she is dealing with characters of Step 4 **Charisma** or less.





## JADA DENAIRASTAS

The young and attractive Jada Denairastas is a polite, amiable, cold-blooded killer. Raised in the sheltered atmosphere of the Grand Palace of Iopos, she has been trained in manipulation and villainy from the cradle. Uhl Denairastas, patriarch of the notorious magician clan, is her uncle. Ever since she was a little girl, she has competed with his other nephews and nieces—and even his own children—for the old man's favor. By playing the children against one another, Uhl created a circle of operatives who are unquestioningly loyal to him alone.

Jada does not view the things she does for Uhl as evil. If Uncle Uhl wants her to help murder a king, she believes it must be a good thing to do. Never exposed to such concepts as morality or virtue, she sees nothing wrong in ruthlessly destroying anyone whom Uhl decrees a Denairastas enemy. Truly amoral, Jada would rather charm or trick an opponent than kill him simply because such methods are less risky than overt violence. She finds people interesting, including her adversaries, and she typically engages a victim in friendly, sincerely empathetic conversation before casually slaying him.

Jada has risen in her primary Discipline at an astonishing rate, and she is clearly the shining star among the younger generation of Denairastas—though Uhl would never dampen her desire to please him by telling her so. In Iopos, and in the lands of the t'skrang House of Ishkarat, Jada's legend is celebrated in song and story. When her missions take her elsewhere, she adopts one of several false identities.

### JADA DENAIRASTAS

Eleventh Circle Nethermancer/Sixth Circle Illusionist

#### Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10  
Strength (16): 7/D12  
Toughness (16): 7/D12  
Perception (19): 8/2D6  
Willpower (21): 8/2D6  
Charisma (15): 6/D10

#### Talents

Anticipate Blow (7): 15/D20 + D6  
Arcane Mutterings (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
Astral Sight (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
2 x Armored Matrix (12)  
Dead Fall (7): 15/D20 + D6  
Disguise Self (7): 15/D20 + D6  
Durability (Nethermancer) (14)  
2 x Enhanced Matrix (12)







False Sight (7): 15/D20 + D6  
Fast Hand (7): 15/D20 + D6  
Frighten (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
Karma Ritual/Illusionist (6)  
Karma Ritual/Nethermancer (12)  
Orbiting Spy (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
Read and Write Language (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
Read and Write Magic (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
4 × Spell Matrix (12)  
Spellcasting (14): 22/D20 + D10 + D8  
Spirit Dodge (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
Spirit Hold (12): 25/D20 + D10 + D8 + D4  
Summon (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
Summoning Circle (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
Taunt (12): 18/D20 + D12  
Thread Weaving (Illusionist) (9): 17/D20 + D10  
Thread Weaving (Nethermancer) (14): 22/D20 + D10 + D8  
Willforce (14): 22/D20 + D10 + D8

#### Talent Knacks

Anchored Spell (Spellcasting)  
Forced Spellcasting (Spellcasting)  
Gaping Wound (Spellcasting)  
Increased Dispel Difficulty (Spellcasting)  
Maintain Spell Threads (Spellcasting)  
Spell Design (Spellcasting)  
Spell Stacking (Spellcasting)  
Spell Design (Thread Weaving)  
Unraveling (Thread Weaving)

#### Skills

Artisan/Miniature Sculpture (2): 8/2D6  
Knowledge/Politics (2): 10/D10 + D6  
Knowledge/Magical Theory (4): 12/2D10

#### Initiative

Dice: D10

#### Karma

Dice: D8  
Points: 40

#### Movement

Full: 70  
Combat: 35

#### Damage

Death Rating: 95  
Wound Threshold: 11  
Unconsciousness Rating: 83  
Recovery Tests per Day: 3  
Recovery Dice: D12

#### Combat

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

#### Equipment

Hide armor  
Gems and jewels worth  
532 silver pieces  
20 silver pieces

#### Discipline Notes

Jada can create simple illusions at the cost of 1 Strain Point (p. 74, **ED**). She sometimes uses such illusions to create the appearance of cures in her patients when she assumes her healer guise.

Jada also has the ability of Otherworldly Control (p. 14, **ED Companion**). At a cost of 1 Strain Point, she can make additional tests to resist any effects that cause her to lose control of her emotions.

#### Karma Notes

Jada can spend Karma on any action that uses Dexterity, Perception, or Willforce/Willpower alone.

#### Thread Weaving Notes

Jada knows all the Circle 1–11 nethermancer spells, including those described in the **ED** rulebook and **ED Companion**. She also knows the Circle 1–6 illusionist spells, and the 10 and 11 Circle nethermancer spells in **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**. Jada usually has the following spells in her matrices.

Bone Shatter (Armored Matrix)  
Constrict Heart (Spell Matrix)  
Damage Transfer (Enhanced Matrix)  
Mind Fog (Spell Matrix)  
Monstrous Mantle (Spell Matrix)  
Shield Mist (Spell Matrix)  
Shift Skin (Armored Matrix)  
Talent Shredder (Enhanced Matrix)

## DRAZON

Drazon, a junior member of the loyalist House Elcomi, is one of the Denairastas' most valuable agents in Throal. Drazon's family ties—he is Tholon's grandnephew and a second cousin of Chancellor Wishten—effectively place him above suspicion of any wrongdoing, and virtually no one suspects that he is a member of the Holders of Trust.

In his official capacity in House Elcomi, Drazon analyzes loan applications made to the House by other traders. He performs this task with a quiet self-sufficiency that masks an all-consuming sense of bitterness and spite. His bitterness goes back to his early childhood, when his mother embarked on an affair with a merchant of Travar while out on a trading expedition. She eventually left Throal to be with her new love, abandoning Drazon and his father.

As children often do, Drazon blamed himself; he thought that his mother left because he had somehow offended her. Drazon's father, formerly indulgent with him, became stern and withdrawn. Even worse, the other members of House Elcomi avoided Drazon and his father, as if they were painful reminders of an embarrassment best





forgotten. Though Drazon's business acumen ultimately won him a place of responsibility in the Elcomi organization, he preserved each and every slight in his unforgiving memory and vowed vengeance against House Elcomi.

Because the House considers unswerving loyalty to the throne as its defining virtue, Drazon decided that aiding the downfall of King Varulus would be the ultimate blow he could strike against House Elcomi. To that end, he sought out the Holders of Trust cell in Bartertown, won their acceptance and proposed to help them kill Varulus and weaken Neden. Iopan agents sent word of Drazon's proposal back to Uhl Denairastas, who immediately recognized an unprecedented opportunity in the offer. Eventually, Drazon helped the Holders of Trust steal Varulus's pattern item (see **Meeting the King**, p. 49 of **Throat: The Dwarf Kingdom**).

Drazon is not an adept.

#### **DRAZON**

##### **Attributes**

Dexterity (12): 5/D8

Strength (12): 5/D8

Toughness (14): 6/D10

Perception (14): 6/D10

Willpower (12): 5/D8

Charisma (12): 5/D8

##### **Skills**

Artisan/Wood Carving (2): 7/D12

Bribery (3): 8/2D6

Etiquette (4): 9/D8 + D6

Melee Weapons (4): 9/D8 + D6

Surprise Strike (5): 10/D10 + D6

Taunt (5): 10/D10 + D6

Trading (5): 10/D10 + D6

##### **Initiative**

Dice: D8 (D4 - 2)

##### **Movement**

Full: 50

Combat: 25

##### **Damage**

Death Rating: 36

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Recovery Dice: D10

##### **Combat**

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 0 (9)

Mystic Armor: 1

##### **Equipment**

Plate Mail

Dagger (Damage 7/D12)

Spear (Damage 9/D8 + D6)

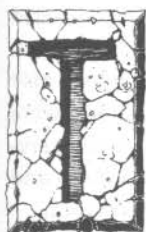
D6 x 5 silver pieces

**Note:** Numbers in parentheses apply when Drazon is dressed for battle, as in **Death to Thera**, p. 54.





# RUNNING THE KING IS DEAD!



he assassination of King Varulus can trigger a number of adventures. This section offers guidelines on introducing the killing and its aftermath into an **Earthdawn** campaign, three suggested adventure frameworks that follow one possible story line (as described in the **Event Synopsis**, p. 45), and guidelines for tying up loose ends.

## INTRODUCING THE EVENT

As described in **Heir or Usurper?**, the characters can learn of Varulus's death in a number of ways. If they work for any of the various branches of the dwarf kingdom's government (see the **Threads of Unity** section, pp. 76–85 of **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**), they learn the news shortly after the king's body is discovered (well before the general public of Throal hears about the murder). If the characters are in Throal but do not work for the kingdom, they learn about the kings' death at the same time that the rest of Throal does, when Neden addresses the kingdom (see **Heir or Usurper?**, below). If the characters are away from Throal at the time of the king's death, they learn of it within a week or two, as word of the murder quickly spreads across Barsaive. The story outlined in the adventure frameworks assumes that the characters are in Throal at the time of the king's murder, so the gamemaster must either ensure the characters' presence in the right place at the right time or adjust the story to fit different circumstances.

The adventure frameworks also assume that the player characters are loyal to Throal. If they are not, the gamemaster may need to fabricate some other compelling reason for the characters to aid the dwarfs during the critical events that follow Varulus's death.

Beyond the story line described in the frameworks, player characters can become involved in a number of other adventures based on the aftermath of King Varulus's assassination. Several suggestions for such adventures are provided in **Other Adventure Ideas**, p. 61.

The **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom** sourcebook provides extensive background information on Throal that gamemasters can use when incorporating Varulus's assassination into campaigns. Additionally, incorporating the assassination is much easier if characters have already established connections and made friends in the dwarf kingdom.

## PREQUELS

The death of King Varulus and much of its aftermath is foreshadowed in a number of previous **Earthdawn** products. For example, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom** makes it clear that Varulus is growing weaker and weaker due to his illness, and that his death is inevitable.

The Denairastas's desire to defeat Throal and control Barsaive is foreshadowed in **An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive (Barsaive Campaign Set)** and **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**. Additionally, the **Serpent River** sourcebook describes the alliance between House Ishkarat and the Denairastas of Iopos. This alliance gives the Denairastas and the Holders of Trust virtual free reign up and down the Serpent River, an asset they have used to advance their goals.

## ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following adventure frameworks are presented in the format described in the **Introduction**. These frameworks serve as adventure "blueprints" that gamemasters can flesh out as desired. These frameworks represent only three possible adventures based on one possible story line. Following these three frameworks are a number of additional adventure ideas gamemasters can use to create adventures based on King Varulus's assassination.

### HEIR OR USURPER?

#### Premise

The announcement of King Varulus's murder leads to scandal and political instability in Throal. Neden's political enemies accuse him of slaying his father, and Neden turns to the player characters for help in finding his father's killers.

#### Setup

Make every effort to ensure that the characters are in Throal when the king dies. If necessary, create some pretext to get them there—suitable pretexts can be anything from a clue to a key knowledge they have been looking for to an offer of employment. If the pretext doesn't work and the characters are not in Throal when the king dies, see **Introducing the Event**.

If the adventurers are already regarded as trustworthy agents by one of Neden's advisers, that adviser quietly approaches them before the public announcement of the king's death. The adviser says that King Varulus has been







slain, and that the manner of death points blatantly to Thera magic—but that no conclusive evidence of Thera involvement exists. The adviser says that Neden's political enemies have already begun spreading ugly rumors of Neden's involvement in his father's death; the secrecy shrouding Varulus's illness has left many otherwise reasonable dwarfs suspicious of Neden and all too ready to believe such propaganda. To counter these rumors, consolidate the new king's position and spare Throal civil unrest, someone must find conclusive proof to convince the Throalic citizenry of Thera responsibility for the assassination. The adviser says he can think of no one better qualified to aid Throal in this critical time than the player characters.

Alternatively, the player characters may hear rumors of King Varulus's death the evening before it is officially announced. (Neden's advisers have been contacting other groups of adepts, and the characters happen to be in a tavern when an adventurer from one of these groups begins dropping hints about the business.) By the time the Throalic chancellery announces Varulus's death, the adventurers' grapevine is already buzzing with wild tales of Varulus meeting with terrible misfortune. Some rumors contend that the king is dead; others say he survived an assassination attempt. The rumors point to all manner of suspects, including Living Legend cults, unhappy ork immigrants, members of the dwarf trading houses that participated in the Death Rebellion, elf blood warders, Horrors, Therans, even Prince Neden himself.

The morning after Varulus's death, chancellery officials roam the Halls of Throal and the streets of the Inner Cities and shout: "The king is dead! Long live the king!" They also declare that Neden will make an evening address to the public in the Royal Auditorium. The announcement shocks Throal's citizens, who have long viewed Varulus III as the nation's greatest king. People weep openly in the hallways. Corner speakers, eulogizing Varulus, compete to outshine one another in sorrowful eloquence. Knots of debaters spring up to rank and categorize Varulus's greatest achievements. This is deep mourning, dwarf-style.

#### Event 1

The Royal Auditorium is packed beyond safe capacity. If the player characters don't make a point of arriving early, they find themselves jammed like sardines in the back of the hall. If they arrived early, they are jammed like sardines in the front rows. Either way, the din is deafening and the smell of sweat and perfume and fear is overwhelming. Entire sections of the crowd are periodically seized by mass hysteria, alternately weeping and singing patriotic ballads. This is a big moment in Throalic history—play it up!

Finally Neden appears and announces that his father is dead, murdered by magical means. There are no clear suspects, he says, but important clues point to "the greatest of Throal's enemies—Thera!" The prince reveals that Varulus had been seriously ill for some time, but that Varulus himself insisted that his condition be concealed from the people. Neden hints that the illness may have been the early symptoms of the magical curse, which may explain why the various healers secretly consulted were unable to cure him. Neden assures the people that everything possible is being done to identify the killers and bring them to justice. He urges everyone to remain calm.

Then Chancellor Wishten steps up to the podium. He announces that Neden's coronation ceremony will be held in eight days, after the traditional period of royal mourning.

Before Wishten can conclude his address, Selenda stands up in the front row of the arena and demands more details of the killing. She points out that the security surrounding the royal chambers is airtight, with highly trained guards, servants who are never allowed to leave and magical traps of legendary power. To the gasps of a shocked crowd, she asks Wishten how Neden can be ruled out as a suspect. As an admitted party to deception, she says, Neden's credibility is surely in doubt. Perhaps the Therans succeeded in planting a seed of evil within him after all.

At these remarks, pandemonium ensues in the auditorium. Reformers shout Selenda down, hurling food and stones at her and her entourage. Members of the conservative houses throw things back. Make it obvious to the players that the packed-in audience is poised to erupt in a deadly riot.

At this point, the characters notice a bunch of armed hotheads several rows away from them. They are pulling crossbows from their packs and preparing to fire them at Selenda. The player characters can save the day by crawling, leaping, or flying over the heads of the crowd to intercept and restrain the crossbow-packing fools. If a panic starts, hundreds of Name-givers will be trampled to death. In that event, non-windling player characters must make successful Strength (10) Tests to avoid being trampled. Those who fail suffer Step 18 damage.

If Neden's advisers have not yet approached the characters for help, they do so at this point.

#### Event 2

The Halls of Throal are buzzing with the news of King Varulus's death. As the player characters wander around looking for a place to start their investigation, they come upon a street debate. One side, led by a philosopher loyal to the king, angrily insists that Selenda is a traitor for even





suggesting that Neden is a suspect. The other, led by an apprentice archivist at the Great Library, retells the story of Neden's ritual evisceration and implies that it might have driven the prince insane. The apprentice reveals that Merrox has just requested documents relating to this sort of ritual magic, and claims that the Master of Records must also suspect the prince. Within moments the debate turns into a brawl. If the adventurers want to question any of the participants, they have to break up the fight first.

#### Event 3

If the characters ask Merrox about his document request, he admits to studying the matter. He says he is looking for clues, and he tells the characters that he knows Neden too well to suspect the new king. Merrox then asks for the name of the apprentice archivist who accused the prince, clearly intending to sack the fellow.

#### Event 4

The adventurers are approached by Drazon, who introduces himself as Tholon's grandnephew and says he has a possible clue for them. (If the adventurers are working for the prince, Tholon has already told Drazon about them. If not, Drazon seeks them out after hearing that they are asking questions about the murder.)

Drazon tells the characters that he had an odd encounter with a group of Theran exiles a while back. (If your group has played an adventure based on **Meeting the King**, p. 49 of *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*, place Drazon's meeting with the Theran exiles before that adventure.) The exiles, called the Durvigius family, own a spice-import firm in Bartertown. According to Drazon, the family spokesman, Pado Durvigius, offered him a massive bribe to approach Chancellor Wishten and arrange an audience with the king in the royal chambers. Durvigius also asked many questions about the layout and security measures of the royal chambers, which prompted Drazon to dismiss Durvigius immediately and report the odd incident to the Eye of Throal (the kingdom's intelligence organization). Drazon says he thought no more of the Durvigiuses until the king's death. He ends his tale by bemoaning his complete ignorance of magic, which prevented him from identifying them as the magicians they undoubtedly are.

Drazon's tale is a fabrication. The Durvigiuses are innocent traders forced to flee Vivane for their anti-imperialist political views. If the adventurers try to confirm Drazon's story with a member of the Eye of Throal, they discover that the intelligence organization has no record of Drazon's alleged report. Of course, the agent says, that doesn't mean the meeting did not take place. The Eyes

receive countless accusations against the many Theran exiles in Throal but lack the manpower to investigate all of them. In the wake of the king's death, the Eye of Throal has been swamped with such accusations. The agent ends by stating that the Eyes are too busy investigating more promising leads at the moment, and it becomes clear that the adepts will have to investigate the Durvigius clan.

#### Event 5

Characters familiar with Throal know that the dwarf noble houses maintain staffs of personal guards, which are virtually small private armies. Before the characters leave the Halls of Throal for Bartertown, they find themselves in the midst of a near-clash between the guards of House Elcomi and the guards of Houses Ludi and Ueraven. Elcomi accuses Ludi and Ueraven of stirring unrest with their accusations against the prince, while Houses Ludi and Ueraven charge Elcomi with blind loyalty to a possible usurper. The adventurers can take sides, try to calm tempers or simply keep moving. This episode shows that Throal is on the verge of civil war.

#### Event 6

The Holders of Trust cell in Bartertown has long been planting rumors about the Durvigius family. When the characters go to Bartertown and ask around, they hear a number of these stories, most of which are false. Some Bartertown residents swear that Pado Durvigius is a powerful nethermancer with a summoning circle in the basement of his spice warehouse (this rumor is false). Bartertown gang members claim that they have not charged Durvigius the usual protection fees ever since a group of Shadowswift's men confronted Pado Durvigius and within hours were attacked by several cadaver men (this tale is true, but the cadaver men were sent by the Holders of Trust). The characters also hear that Pado Durvigius once paid an assassin to kill a customer after the client saw something he shouldn't have in Pado's office strongbox (like the first story, this tale is false).

Holders of Trust members are alert to anyone asking questions about the Durvigius clan, and a cell member has also infiltrated a genuine group of low-level Theran spies in town. This cell member convinces the Theran spies that the adventurers are investigating them, and the spies ambush the characters. The spies are non-adepts, so the player characters should make short work of them. Use the game statistics for the Guard Veteran (p. 297, ED) for the spies, omitting the lucky charms. If you want a tougher fight, add two or three Second Circle adepts to the Theran spy group (use the Thief or Scout adept statistics on pp. 114–115). If captured, the spies deny that they work for





Thera, but they have obvious Theran accents. If asked about the Durvigius family, the spies describe them as traitors to the Empire.

### Climax

Fearful of Theran harassment for its anti-imperialist views, the Durvigius family has long outfitted its spice house with numerous traps. Additionally, the younger members of the clan are well-trained in melee combat. However, these precautions did not prevent an experienced thief in the Holders of Trust cell from sneaking into the warehouse, picking the lock on Pado's strongbox and planting a small bundle inside. The bundle contains Varulus's stolen pattern item and documents that describe the ritual magic Mordom used on Prince Neden during the Death Rebellion. The documents are written in a magical script; to decipher them, a character must make a successful Read and Write Magic (7) Test. The notes do not contain the complete spell used by Mordom or the actual spell used by the Denairastas to kill Varulus.

Durvigius family members react to the adventurers' inquiries with suspicion and fear; play them so that they seem to be hiding something. (They believe the adventurers are in the employ of Theran authorities, and so are terrified of saying anything.) If the characters end up fighting younger members of the Durvigius clan, use the Guard Veteran game statistics (p. 297, ED) with an Attack Step of 14 and without the lucky charm. The player characters can "succeed" in this adventure by getting the contents of the strongbox back to Neden.

If and when the characters take the strongbox to Neden, he becomes convinced that the Durvigius clan is responsible for his father's murder. He sends a raiding party to capture the Durvigius family and then tries them in front of the rest of the royal court (including Selenda and other old-guard courtier). In gratitude for the adventurers' efforts, Neden permits them to attend the trial as well. Pado Durvigius frantically denies the charges, but the documents from the strongbox convince all present of the family's guilt.

Neden, employing his traditional right as *de facto* king, executes them on the spot. He kills them with his sword, just as he saw his father kill Mordom when he was a child. Though this act may seem harsh to modern sensibilities, Neden's unflinching handling of the matter impresses Selenda, who praises him and begs forgiveness for having wrongfully accused him. Displaying a new severity, Neden accepts the apology and asserts his authority over her. He concludes the trial by noting that the Durvigiuses were obviously acting on behalf of the Therans and says he has only begun to punish his father's slayers.

## DEATH TO THERA!

**Death to Thera!** assumes the characters have participated in **Heir or Usurper?** and succeeded in that adventure. If this is not the case, the gamemaster may have to modify **Death to Thera!** to accommodate the current situation.

### Premise

In this adventure, Neden prepares to launch a massive attack against the Theran fortress city of Triumph and presses the player characters into service as royal bodyguards. Meanwhile, General Nikar learns of Varulus's death and the execution of the Durvigiuses. Nikar realizes that someone is trying to trigger hostilities between Throal and Thera, and he instructs Theran spies to uncover the real killers and relay this information to Neden. The Theran spies successfully uncover the plot and contact the player characters—who must then convince Neden of the truth.

### Setup

Chancellery officials announce that the magicians who murdered Varulus have been caught, tried and executed. Selenda meets informally with the heads of other old-guard forces and announces her satisfaction with the verdict and sentence. "It remains to be seen whether Neden is a wise king or a foolish king," she says. "But for the moment, he is our king." The private armies of the old-guard houses step down, and the tension in Throal eases somewhat. In the days that follow, Throal's people mourn the loss of Varulus even as they celebrate the coming coronation of a determined new king and swear vengeance upon Thera.

Neden is crowned in a spectacular ceremony in the Royal Auditorium. During the ceremony, King Neden formally thanks the adventurers for their help in bringing the murderers to justice.

Immediately afterward, the Throalic army and navy, as well as the ork mercenary cavalries employed by Throal, are placed on alert. Leaves are canceled and inspections for battle readiness are stepped up. Anyone in Throal who is at all observant realizes what's coming: Neden is going to war.

### Event 1

The player characters receive word from their contact among the king's advisers that Neden has granted them an audience to inform them of the reward due them for the great service they have done for Throal. An army honor guard escorts the characters to the Inner Chambers of Throal, where they are granted the unparalleled honor of entering the king's audience chamber. Emphasize the







importance of the occasion, especially if the adventurers were never granted this honor by King Varulus.

When they enter the audience chamber, King Neden is sitting on his throne. Chancellor Wishten, Rokzo, Tholon, and Dollas, now the Queen Mother, are in attendance, as are three others with whom the player characters may be familiar: Ambassador General Tramon, J'Role the Honorable Thief and Supreme General Foellerian. Wishten introduces the adventurers to these officials. Tramon, a cool-headed dwarf, heads His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps (p. 76, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*). J'Role, a serene, elderly human, is introduced by Name only as J'Role the Honorable Thief; in fact, J'Role is the senior gatherer of the Eye of Throal (p. 78, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*). Foellerian, a determined female dwarf, commands the Arm of Throal, the kingdom's navy and infantry (p. 80, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*).

Throughout the audience, Wishten speaks on Neden's behalf. If the player characters knew Neden well before his coronation, they see a change in him. He has adopted a distant, stern demeanor. Wishten begins by announcing that each adventurer is entitled to a reward of 3,000 silver pieces. Additionally, the player characters are given the honor of accompanying the royal party aboard the newly commissioned galley *Justice*, in its sally against the Theran behemoth recently landed at Lake Ban (see *The Theran Behemoth*, p. 14). Make it clear that this royal "reward" is not to be refused.

Roughly half of Throal's infantry, as well as its most reliable ork mercenary units, are preparing to lay siege to the behemoth. (Among the leaders of the ground forces is Captain Stetgarth, who plays a significant role in *Rise of The Ork Nation*, p. 88). Additionally, four of Throal's galleys will accompany the infantry to defend them from assault by Theran airships. Neden doesn't know that the behemoth is now a permanent fixture atop the Ayodhya Liferock, and is hoping his siege will force the Therans to fly the ship away. If the player characters inform him that the behemoth has become permanently affixed to the hill, he looks displeased; he realizes that if this is true, the Throalic forces will have to uproot and drive out the entire Theran force stationed at the fortress city. Even though he knows that his siege is unlikely to drive away the Therans permanently, Neden intends to carry on with the plan.

In general, the player characters are encouraged to remain silent during the audience. They are there to



receive orders, pure and simple. Neden's advisers also clearly inform the characters that they are to keep quiet about the coming battle. If the players ask about the attitudes of the advisers (or if an appropriate player character makes a successful Perception (9) Test), they learn that only Neden and Rokzo seem to be free of misgivings about the upcoming military campaign.

## Event 2

The next time a player character is in a public square, he or she bumps into an acquaintance.

"I was just speaking to your old friend Challaden," the acquaintance says. "He's just in from Travar and he's looking for you. I told him all about your recent exploits, and he was delighted to hear of your success."

Explain to the player that his or her character has no old friend named Challaden. All attempts by the player charac-





ters to locate "Challaden" are fruitless, though they encounter other acquaintances who innocently told him a great deal about their role in finding Varulus's assassins.

"Challaden" is actually Ladacheln, a Theran dwarf spy sent by General Nikar to investigate the recent events in Throal. Word of Varulus's murder and the execution of the Durvigius clan as Theran operatives has reached Lake Ban, and Nikar knows that his people didn't kill Varulus. By checking with local spies and his Spymaster Gendel, Nikar has learned that the Durvigiuses were anything but Theran agents. Nikar believes that taking the blame for Varulus's brutal, underhanded assassination would be a serious propaganda defeat for Thera. Enemy kings should be slain on the field of battle by Theran champions, not assassinated at a distance by spellcasters.

Nikar wants to know who is trying to push Thera and Throal into war. Nikar has his own objectives and orders, and starting a war with Throal is not currently among them. The First Governor and the Conclave have no interest in starting another expensive colonial conflict at the moment, and Nikar's head will roll if all-out hostilities break out in Barsaive. Therefore, Nikar orders Gendel to send a spy into Throal to find out what is going on.

### Event 3

The next morning, the player character with the lowest Perception attribute awakens to find a sheaf of documents by his or her bedside. These were left by Ladacheln, who skillfully crept into the character's living quarters without being noticed. The documents are written in Theran, by a number of different hands. They are reports filed by low-level Theran spies in Bartertown. All of them deal with the activities of the Durvigius family, and make it clear that the Therans considered the Durvigiuses enemies.

Later entries report that an unknown group is spreading the rumor that the family is involved in magic. The writer of these entries seems genuinely puzzled by the source of these groundless tales. If the characters take the documents to J'Role or someone else knowledgeable in the ways of Theran intelligence, the contact judges them the genuine work of Theran agents—though he cannot speak for the accuracy of the contents.

### Event 4

With mobilization complete, Throal's march on the behemoth begins. The adventurers report to their stations on the *Justice*, where they form part of an honor guard for King Neden; their job is to protect Neden if the galley is boarded.

Rokzo the Unruly commands the ship, and court magician Ajmar the Admirable attends the king. None of

the king's other advisers are on board. The supreme general and other top officials of the Arm of Throal are deployed elsewhere.

Drazon, looking awkward in cumbersome plate mail, is among the many dwarf nobles assigned to the *Justice*. (Young dwarf nobles usually belong to the Throalic equivalent of the naval reserves, and a wartime assignment is considered extremely prestigious. Especially well-connected dwarfs such as Drazon have inveigled their way aboard Neden's command ship.) Include other Throalic gamemaster characters from previous story lines aboard the ship and have them interact with the player characters; otherwise, Drazon may be too conspicuous as the only identifiable character aboard the ship in a minor role. Drazon congratulates the party on capturing the Durvigius clan. If the players don't remember his comment about being ignorant of magic from **Heir or Usurper?**, have Drazon make a similar statement during this brief conversation.

### Event 5

After an uneventful week-long march, the Throalic infantry reaches the behemoth, accompanied by the cavalry and airships. (The cavalry units and airships could have covered the distance much more quickly, but Neden wants his forces to stick together.) During the journey, the characters may have conversations with some of the *Justice's* other passengers. Ajmar and others engage in debates about the recent events, ranging from the assassination of the king to the Theran behemoth's landing. This is an ideal time to drop hints about the other events in this book, if desired. For example, the characters can hear rumors about ork tribes joining forces (see **Rise of the Ork Nation**, p. 88) or about the Therans razing villages northwest of Lake Ban (see **The Dragons' Daughter**, p. 66). In any case, set some other character interaction scenes in motion so that the scene described in the following paragraph does not seem to pop out of nowhere waving a big "this is a clue" sign.

At one point, the adventurers come upon Ajmar and Drazon arguing about Varulus's death. Though Ajmar is proudly unacquainted with the ways of nethermancy, he figures it would have been necessary for at least one of the spellcasters who killed Varulus to have touched the king at some point. Drazon argues that anything is possible if the spell was researched and designed specifically to kill the king. Drazon's remark contradicts his earlier statement that he knows nothing of magic, and should tip off the characters that he has not been totally honest with them.

### Event 6

After six days of travel, Throalic scout ships report that a sizable force of Theran infantry is massing in a field





a day's march north of the behemoth, apparently ready to intercept and engage the Throalic forces. Dense forest prevents any attempt to outflank this Theran army. Confrontation is only hours away, on the Therans' chosen terrain.

A Theran combat vedette, the *Determined*, pulls alongside the *Justice* under a flag of truce, prompting Throal's nobles and warriors to form a protective ring around Neden. The Theran vessel has been commandeered by Ladacheln, who hangs from the rigging of the vedette and scans the *Justice's* deck for the adventurers. When he sees them, he shouts, "Greetings from your old friend Challaden of Travar! Please step aboard a moment and let me clear up the misunderstanding between us. I assure you on my word of honor that no—"

At this point, grab a pair of dice, roll them, and look surprised. Then re-roll one of them, look even more surprised, and re-roll the other. Flip anxiously through this book for a moment: give the impression that a freak die roll has just thrown the printed adventure off track. Then tell the players that Drazon has fired a crossbow bolt that pierced Ladacheln's throat and sent him plummeting to the ground far below. Thus dies another Theran agent.

"He was reaching for a knife!" screams Drazon. This is not true, of course, but Drazon has just spotted someone aboard the *Determined* with whom he does not want the adventurers talking.

The dwarfs react to Drazon's shout by firing on the crew of the *Determined*, which immediately wheels away from the *Justice*. At this moment, let the players make Perception (6) Tests. If any are successful, the character or characters notice a roughly garbed man in chains aboard the vedette. The prisoner throws back his head and laughs hysterically.

If the adventurers leap across the swiftly growing gap between the ships and board the *Determined*, they can crack the mystery. But they must first fight off the vedette's crew, who interpret their action as an attack. The adventurers face a group of Sixth Circle air sailors, the same size as the group of adventurers. (Many other air sailors are aboard the *Determined*, but they realize almost immediately that the player characters outclass them and do not join the battle.)

The player characters can carry this fight to its conclusion or try to make their peaceful intentions known. The captain of the *Determined* is an ork air sailor named Alchiton; she has the same game statistics as the elite air sailors, but does not join the fight because she sees nothing to be gained by losing her crew members to a bunch of crazy Throalic adepts. If offered the chance, she is only too happy to call off the battle.



#### THERAN AIR SAILORS

Sixth Circle

##### Attributes

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

Initiative: 5

Number of Attacks: 2 (see Notes)

Attack: 14/12

##### Damage:

Broadsword: 11

Short Sword: 10

Number of Spells: NA

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 9

Social Defense: 8

Armor: 5

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 6

Recovery Tests: 3







**Spellcasting:** NA

**Effect:** NA

**Death Rating:** 76

**Wound Threshold:** 10

**Unconsciousness Rating:** 63

**Combat Movement:** 33

**Full Movement:** 65

**Talents:** Acrobatic Strike\* 6/12, Air Dance\* 6/12, Air Sailing\* 6/12, Avoid Blow\* 6/12, Durability 7, Great Leap\* 6/12, Karma Ritual 6, Melee Weapons 8/14, Riposte 6/15, Second Weapon\* 6/12, Taunt\* 6/12, Thread Weaving\* 6/12, Unarmed Combat 6/12, Wind Catcher\* 6/12

**Karma Dice:** D8

**Karma Points:** 12

**Legend Points:** 345

**Notes:** The air sailors' second attacks cost 1 Strain Point. Air sailors can spend a Karma Point on any Dexterity Test. Talent values indicate Talent Rank/total Step Number; a single number means the talent uses only the rank. An asterisk indicates a Discipline talent.

**Equipment:** Broadsword, hide armor, short sword

**Loot:** None

#### Event 7

Alchiton knows that the Throalic attack is retaliation for the murder of King Varulus, for which the Therans have been falsely blamed. Ladacheln told her that her prisoner is somehow implicated in the killing, and that he belongs to a mysterious group known as the Holders of Trust. A recent arrival in Barsaive, Alchiton has never heard of Iopos or the Denairastas clan. Once convinced that the adventurers are not a threat to her ship or crew, she wants them to speak to the prisoner.

The prisoner is Ovad Wuculcian (Oh-VAHD Woo-COOL-see-an), the head of the Holders of Trust cell in Bartertown. After sneaking the reports on the Durvigius family into the adventurer's sleeping quarters, Ladacheln headed to Bartertown in search of people who had bad things to say about the spice traders. This led him to Wuculcian, whom he waylaid and tortured until Wuculcian confessed the Denairastas plot. Then Ladacheln dragged Wuculcian aboard the *Determined* in a last-minute effort to stave off war with Throal.

Now that Ladacheln is gone, Wuculcian is not anxious to confess again. He snarls and spits at the adventurers but confesses to nothing. Characters making a Speak Languages (11) Test note that he speaks Throalic with a slight Iopan accent.

If the adventurers notice the bruises and cuts on Wuculcian's exposed flesh, they may realize that

Ladacheln tortured him. If the adventurers have the stomach for the task, they can likewise beat a confession out of Wuculcian, though he will not name Drazon or admit his own connection to Iopos or the Holders of Trust.

After learning the truth, the adventurers must convince Alchiton to risk the *Determined* in another approach to the vastly superior *Justice* so that they can board the Throalic ship and set the record straight.

Meanwhile, on the ground below, the battle has begun.

#### Climax

To convince Neden that the Iopans and not the Therans killed his father, the player characters first must prevent the *Justice* from fighting the Theran vedette as it approaches. Then they must get Wuculcian safely aboard the *Justice*. If the characters manage that, Wuculcian may realize that his time is up, prompting him to admit his part in the Denairastas plot and implicate Drazon as well—he will be determined not to be the only one who dies.

If more roleplaying is desired, play Wuculcian as a less cooperative prisoner. In this case, the characters have to play Drazon against Wuculcian. Each Iopan agent wants to blame the other for the failure of the plot. Additionally, Drazon thinks of himself as extremely clever and loses control when anyone suggests otherwise. If the characters goad him in a sufficiently entertaining manner, he blurts out the details of the plan and implicates himself, Wuculcian and Iopos. He then curls up into a ball and starts crying for his long-lost mother.

Alternatively, the characters may be able to convince Neden of the truth without ever boarding the *Determined* and questioning Wuculcian. If Drazon's suspicious behavior tips them off and they are very skillful in interrogating him, they have a chance of learning the truth from Drazon. Having Wuculcian on hand just makes their task that much easier.

In any case, Neden becomes furious when he learns of the Iopan plot. Despite the revelation, he wants to continue the battle to avoid looking like an incompetent and weak ruler. Neden, Rokzo, and Ajmar debate a course of action. Rokzo is for war, Ajmar for peace. By listening to the debate, the adventurers learn that the battle below is not going well. The Theran forces are less numerous than the Throalic forces, but almost every Theran soldier is either an adept or has been magically augmented. In the battle's early stages, the Throalic army suffers heavy losses. Nonetheless, they fight furiously, anxious to avenge their murdered king.

The adventurers may attempt to convince Neden to withdraw, but he refuses. The next day's fighting produces further heavy casualties among the Throalic infantry units.





The ork cavalries do better; their ability to move quickly and unpredictably on the battlefield puts the regimented Theran troops on the defensive. No full-scale naval battles occur, because neither side is willing to risk its expensive airships. Finally Neden calls a retreat, using his airships to prevent the Theran soldiers from engaging in a wholesale slaughter of his routed troops.

No rhetoric can disguise the ugly truth—this sally against the Therans has cost the lives of hundreds of Throalic soldiers. Neden's first major initiative is a resounding failure.

## A MATTER OF TRUST

This adventure concludes the story line begun in **Heir or Usurper?** and **Death to Thera!** It assumes the characters have succeeded in both of those adventures. If this is not the case, the gamemaster may have to modify **A Matter of Trust** accordingly.

### Premise

King Neden learns that the Holders of Trust have stolen a sword that may well be one of his pattern items. The adventurers learn that the sword has been sent to the headquarters of the Iopan-allied t'skrang House Ishkarat at Lake Vors. They set out for Lake Vors to retrieve the item and end up confronting Jada Denairastas, the magician who killed the king. This straightforward chase-and-fight adventure provides a break from the more complex plots of the first two adventure frameworks.

### Setup

After Neden's forces return to Throal, Isam Derr, Foellerian, J'Role and any player characters who wish to participate continue to question Drazon and Wuculcian (if Wuculcian survived). The process is not pretty. The interrogators learn about Jada Denairastas' role in Varulus's assassination, her use of the dead king's pattern item, and the complicity of a Bartertown cell of the Holders of Trust in the murder plot.

They also learn that the Holders of Trust have stolen King Neden's sword. Ovad Wuculcian's wife, Lemora—also a member of the Bartertown cell—theorized that Neden's sword became a Major pattern item for him when he used it to execute the members of the Durvigius family. (The execution was the first physical confirmation of his authority as king, and he used the sword to commit the dramatic and bloody act.) Lemora knows that the spell used to kill Varulus requires a pattern item from its victim, and so she hired a thief to switch Neden's simple army-issue sword with a duplicate while he inspected the airship fleet before the march on Triumph. Lemora sent the sword

to Jada Denairastas, who is staying at House Ishkarat's headquarters at Lake Vors.

When Neden hears that his sword has been stolen, he asks the adventurers to track it down and retrieve it. Neden was present in his father's chambers when Jada Denairastas pretended to treat Varulus, and he does not remember whether she ever touched him. If she did—and if she gets the sword—the Denairastas may be able to kill Neden with the same type of spell they used against Varulus.

### Event 1

When Ladacheln kidnapped Ovad Wuculcian, Lemora decided to flee Bartertown. With the remaining members of the Holders of Trust cell, Lemora joined a caravan bound for Jerris. Once in Jerris, Lemora sent the stolen sword to Lake Vors via another caravan, then joined a separate caravan traveling to Iopos in the hope of throwing off any pursuers.

Before Ovad Wuculcian's capture, Lemora and Ovad operated a food stall near one of the gateways to Throal. If the adventurers ask around for Lemora, they learn that she packed up and left town during the mobilization of Throalic forces for the march on the Theran behemoth. They find one food seller—an old dwarf Named Fezulon—who can't stop talking about Lemora's charms. Fezulon developed quite a crush on Lemora, and the adventurers can get him to admit this if they are astute enough to realize it. Fezulon will also admit that he followed Lemora on her way out of town to wave good-bye to her, but never got up the nerve to approach her. He knows that she joined a caravan run by the troll trader Yamin Wheelmaker.

### Event 2

Yamin Wheelmaker is mourning the death of two of his sons, both infantrymen in the service of Throal. Before the adventurers can state their business, he shares his grief with them and bitterly blames his sons' deaths on King Neden. If the adepts tell him that they serve the new king, he refuses to help them. If they tell him they serve Neden's rivals, criticize the new king, or tell Yamin they plan to humiliate Neden somehow, the troll shares the following information.

Yamin says that Lemora booked passage for herself and four other Bartertowners on a caravan bound for Jerris. He offered her passage on an airship but she refused, even though an airship would be faster. (It is harder to locate a single caravan in the trackless Barsaivian hinterland than to find one of a few airships in the skies over the province.) Lemora also left a package with a caravan headed for Lake Vors. The package was a long, thin,





wooden box—yes, it could have been a sword, Yamin says if asked. The package was addressed to one V'sigar F'szaffinal Ch'othobi of House Ishkarat. Yamin also has detailed maps that show the routes of both caravans.

If the adventurers antagonize Yamin, they must sneak into his establishment and steal his records to get this information.

### Event 3

The adventurers should understand that the sword is a more important quarry than Lemora Wuculcian. If they head off in search of her, you can either give them a blatant hint or create a series of tough challenges for them as they attempt to accomplish this less worthwhile goal. Either way, the players should get the message that their characters are on the wrong track.

### Event 4

In Bartertown, or soon after they start their journey to Lake Vors, the adventurers notice that they are being shadowed. Selenda has hired a group of adepts to follow them and obtain the sword for her (use the Adept statistics, p. 110). These adepts flee if the adventurers confront them; they have nothing to gain by fighting the adventurers unless combat will let them get the sword somehow. These adepts can stay in the background and trail the player characters or harry them throughout the adventure, as the gamemaster sees fit.

### Event 5

The villages around Lake Vors are controlled by House Ishkarat, a group of bellicose t'skrang intent on expanding their sphere of influence in the region. (For more information on House Ishkarat, see p. 84 of the *Serpent River* sourcebook.) These villages and the surrounding areas are patrolled by Ishkarat soldiers, who keep an eye out for strangers and confront any apparent threat to House Ishkarat's security. Local villagers are reluctant to talk to strangers because they fear Ishkarat retaliation for unknowingly aiding enemies of the powerful t'skrang trading house.

The player characters must be subtle to avoid a confrontation with the Ishkaratans as they try to find the Ishkarat administrator V'sigar F'szaffinal Ch'othobi (Vuh-SIGH-gar Fuh-SAFF-eye-nall Chuh-O-thoh-bee). This plain-spoken, bullying t'skrang commands the force that maintains authority over the villages. When the player characters encounter V'sigar, he has already turned the sword over to Jada Denairastas. Only the use of force induces V'sigar to reveal Jada Denairastas' whereabouts.

When the encounter begins, V'sigar has four body-

guards on hand (if the adventurers are having too easy a time with them, have more bodyguards show up in mid-fight). V'sigar and his bodyguards are all Sixth Circle t'skrang swordmasters.

### V'SIGAR AND HIS BODYGUARDS

#### Attributes

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

Initiative: 7

Number of Attacks: 2\*\*

Attack: 14

Damage:

Broadsword: 11

Short Sword: 10

Sling: 8

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 78

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 64

Physical Defense: 10

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 8

Armor: 5

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 12

Recovery Tests: 3

Combat Movement: 45

Full Movement: 90

**Talents:** Avoid Blow 6/14, Disarm\* 4/12, Durability 6, Karma Ritual 6, Maneuver\* 6/12, Melee Weapons\* 8/14, Missile Weapons 8/14, Riposte\* 8/17, Second Weapon\* 8/14, Taunt 6/12, Thread Weaving\* 4/9, Throwing Weapons 8/14, Trap Initiative 6/12, Wound Balance 6/12

Karma Dice: D6

Karma Points: 10

Legend Points: 485

**Equipment:** Broadsword, hardened leather armor, short sword, sling

**Loot:** None

**Notes:** \*\*The swordmasters receive 2 attacks only when using their Melee Weapons or Second Weapon talents. If they use the Missile Weapons talent, they receive only 1 attack per round. The second attack costs 1 Strain Point per round. Also, the swordmasters may spend a Karma Point on any Dexterity Test or the Damage Test of any attack made with a sword. The listed talent values indicate Talent Rank/total Step Number; a single number means the talent uses only the rank. An asterisk indicates a Discipline talent.

#### Climax

The adventurers learn that Jada is aboard the *River Pearl*, a luxurious riverboat used by the leaders of House







Ishkarat to impress visiting dignitaries—chiefly the Denairastas. The boat is decorated with lavish fixtures of gold, silver and mother-of-pearl; it is also heavily equipped with mechanical traps devised by House Ishkarat's artificers and magical wards woven by Jada Denairastas herself. Jada has used her Anchored Spell Spellcasting talent knack (pp. 32–34, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**) to place all of the magical traps.

Neden's sword is in Jada's quarters. To retrieve it, the adventurers must first board the *River Pearl* unnoticed; the ship is anchored in deep waters far from the lake shore. Then they must penetrate the traps, fight off Jada's Ishkaratan guards stationed aboard the vessel, and survive an encounter with Jada.

Jada orders her t'skrang guards to capture the adventurers if at all possible. Jada is a curious young woman, and is content to chat amiably with the adventurers until they make a move on her. Though she seems quite pleasant and is not prone to gloating or making wild threats, she follows the grand villainous tradition of telling her enemies all about her master plan before she kills them. She confirms that her family killed Varulus to trigger hostilities between Throal and Thera so that the two powers might weaken each other and open the way for an expansion of Denairastas power and influence. She claims that Varulus's assassination was the first move in an elegant divide-and-conquer strategy.

When the inevitable fight begins, Jada pulls out all the stops against the characters. This is the magician who killed the King of Throal; she should be no pushover! The characters succeed in this adventure if they defeat Jada and take the sword. If they kill her, so be it—there are more Denairastas where she came from.

### Sequels

If Jada escapes in the end and leaves the sword behind, she can return to bedevil the adepts in later adventures. Jada has constructed a Bone Circle (p. 176, **ED**) in her quarters on the *River Pearl*, and can use it to escape via astral space. If you want her to live, have her flee to her room at the first opportunity and cast the Spirit Portal spell (p. 182, **ED**).

## OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

The following adventure ideas can be used either with player characters loyal to Throal or those less directly involved with Throalic affairs. Gamemasters can flesh out these adventure ideas and intersperse them between adventures based on the preceding frameworks, run them between adventures of their own design, or use them in any other way they desire.

### THE BLOOD OF THYSTONIUS

Several months after the Battle of Prajor's Field (as the fight between Throalic and Theran forces comes to be known), Barsaive begins to buzz with a rumor that the Passion Thystonius took part in the battle. In Throalic areas, the rumor says he fought for Throal. In Theran-dominated areas, he is said to have fought for the Imperial forces. All of these rumors state that Thystonius was cut in the fight and bled on the ground. Supposedly, the spot where he bled will not dry up. A questor of Thystonius learns that questors of Raggok are trying to find this spot and steal Thystonius's blood so that they can work terrible binding magic on the Passion. The questor convinces the adventurers to help him stop the evil plot.

### THE DWARF KING'S GOLD

Shortly after the Battle of Prajor's Field, a friend of one of the player characters contacts him. The friend has business in Kratas and needs bodyguards willing to face down a city full of thieves. Actually, the friend is a member of the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane and has been sent to Kratas to meet with an agent of the Eye of Throal, who has information and gold to pass along to the Resistance. (Depending on the characters' opinions of Throal and the Therans, the friend may initially conceal this fact.) The Eye of Throal agent is waylaid by bandits before he reaches the city, however, and it's up to the adventurers to recover the goods.

### THE HEIRLOOM

After the ork mercenary Elem Jak was slain in the Battle of Prajor's Field, mercenaries in the pay of Thera presumably looted his corpse. His bereaved mother, Stotha, wants Elem's lucky amulet back. The amulet is a magical treasure, but only Elem Jak's blood relatives can weave threads to it. Stotha, who has made much silver running her own small cavalry, hires the player characters to retrieve the amulet. She declines to go after it herself because she doesn't want to alert Elem's father, who also wants the amulet. Needless to say, Elem's father already has figured out that the item was lost in Prajor's Field, and he is leading his own ork mercenaries in search of the family heirloom.

## LOOSE ENDS

The death of King Varulus and the events that follow it have far-reaching consequences for Throal and Barsaive—consequences that suggest any number of **Earthdawn** adventures and campaigns. The following sections describe some of these developments.





## NEDEN AND HIS KINGDOM

The Throalic defeat at the Battle of Prajor's Field is a serious blow to the dwarfs of Throal—almost everyone knows someone who was killed or injured in that conflict. The defeat leaves Throal demoralized, weakened in the eyes of the Empire and of other Barsaivians.

The defeat also begins to erode public confidence in King Neden. Neden's resolve in dealing with Varulus's alleged assassins, his efforts to avenge his father's death, and his aggressive posture toward Throal's enemies initially earned him respect among Throal's nobility and commoners, but his failure at the Battle of Prajor's Field costs him much of this support. Subjects who doubted Neden's capabilities before are now emboldened to say so openly, and even ordinary citizens begin to argue that Neden should be allowed to act only with the consent of the nobles who attend him at court. The growing doubts about Neden's capabilities are further fueled when word spreads that the Durvigius family was falsely accused, tried and executed.

Perhaps most important, public discontent with Neden emboldens the king's rivals among the Throalic nobility—most notably Selenda, whose influence grows as

Neden's wanes. Houses whose support for Varulus's reforms was tentative or opportunistic shift toward the old-guard, conservative line, forcing Neden to govern cautiously. He cannot afford to offend Selenda or the other old-guard courtiers. Selenda begins a campaign to whittle away at the edges of the Council Compact; as a first step, Selenda and her allies pressure the new king to decrease the share of taxes paid by the Throalic nobility.

At the same time, a shaken Arm of Throal campaigns for greater spending on mercenaries and airships. The citizenry is divided on the question. A slim majority wants to strike back at Thera and erase Throal's shame. Others advocate some type of accommodation with Thera that will enable them to resume business in a peaceful province. The old guard allies itself with the accommodationist forces. In reaction, the pro-Council Compact nobles support a military build-up. In a compromise that pleases neither side, Neden shifts the tax burden to ordinary Throalic citizens and devotes more of the treasury to strengthening the Arm of Throal. (Depending on how and when the gamemaster uses the adventures presented in **The Theran Behemoth**, the characters might become involved in **The Air Galleons of Throal**, p. 34, as a direct result of Throal's





military build-up after the Battle of Prajor's Field.)

To further restore Throal's prestige and assuage his own wounded pride, Neden also authorizes a program to covertly destabilize Theran forces and allies in Barsaive. Neden instructs his diplomats to make contact with the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane, as described in *The Dwarf King's Gold*, p. 61. His officials quietly circulate the word among adventurer and mercenary circles that rewards are available to groups that significantly damage Theran interests.

Unfortunately, Neden's preoccupation with the Therans clouds his judgment and results in other priorities going by the wayside. Displeased at the number of foreign agents turned up by the investigations into his father's death, he authorizes a ruthless assassination campaign against suspected Theran and Iopan spies in Bartertown. The campaign contributes to the growing lawlessness in Bartertown and violates the town's independent status, enraging its citizens and spawning virulent anti-Throal sentiments. Known agents of Throal begin to face open hostility in Bartertown's markets and pubs.

## THROAL AND BARSATIVE

Though King Neden has many concerns at home, he soon realizes that he cannot ignore the rest of Barsaive. The arrival of the Theran behemoth and death of King Varulus III have caused concern across much of the province about Throal's ability to lead effective resistance to Theran encroachments. To help stave off this growing anxiety, Neden begins to stretch the Arm and Eye of Throal across more of Barsaive than ever before.

Increasingly, Neden relies on the Eye of Throal for information on Iopos, and he offers rewards to adventurers who provide intelligence on the doings of the Denairastas or who smash Holders of Trust cells.

To reassure Barsaive's inhabitants that Throal remains strong, Neden begins to send troops around Barsaive to "show the flag." The characters may get involved in this effort in *Rise of the Ork Nation* (p. 88), when they are hired to accompany Throalic forces in western Barsaive.

## THERA AND THROAL

The uneasy truce that existed between Thera and Throal is gone, most likely forever. Though neither side has made a formal declaration of war, the Battle of Prajor's Field has greatly increased the tension between these two powers. In the weeks and months following the battle, Throalic and Theran forces in Barsaive face off in numerous encounters. Some of these end peacefully and others end in vicious skirmishes, though none match the scope of the Battle of Prajor's Field.

Ironically, the Therans at Triumph also feel humiliated by the battle's outcome. They reason that if Barsaive is truly a Theran province, Throal should face massive retaliation for attacking a Theran target. The battle prompts General Nikar to send word to Thera requesting a force capable of such retaliation.

In reply, Nikar receives a sharp rebuke. First Governor Kanidris reminds Nikar that waging war is not part of his assignment. The bulk of the Theran navy is busy turning cities to slag in the province of Marac and can spare no forces on a backwater like Barsaive. Kanidris makes it clear that Nikar will have to fulfill his assignment with the troops he has on hand. Kanidris orders Nikar to put economic pressure on Throal by attacking its trade caravans and suggests that the general create a network of informers and agitators within Throal—a network he can use to nudge the dwarf kingdom toward capitulation. Finally, Kanidris orders Nikar to gather intelligence on Iopos and the Denairastas clan, about whom Thera knows next to nothing. Nikar is none too happy with the First Governor's instructions, especially since he does not dare disregard them. Like all Theran generals, he is accustomed to destroying his foes with overwhelming military might, and does not take kindly to being deprived of his due.

Throalic-Theran tensions are further aggravated by events soon to come in Barsaive. The conflict between the Therans and Barsaive's great dragons (see *The Dragons' Daughter*, p. 66) as well as *Incident at Claw Ridge* (see *Rise of the Ork Nation*, p. 105) increase the pressure on both sides, resulting in more tension and conflicts between Throal and Thera.

## THE DENAIRASTAS

Throal had long considered the Denairastas a minor power, but the exposure of the real culprits behind King Varulus's assassination transforms the Denairastas and Iopos into the dwarf kingdom's most immediate and dangerous enemy virtually overnight. In fact, Uhl Denairastas and his Holders of Trust are the only ones who emerge from the events of *The King Is Dead!* as clear victors. They have increased their strength in Barsaive by slaying the great king of Throal and set Throal and Thera at one another's throats. As word of the successful Denairastas plot spreads, Name-givers throughout Barsaive view the Holders of Trust and the Denairastas clan with increasing terror. Despite the exposure of the plot, Uhl's Throalic and Theran enemies remain locked in a deadly dance that will inevitably lead to widespread war and chaos—which Uhl and his clan will undoubtedly exploit.





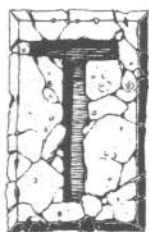


# THE DRAGONS' DAUGHTER





# A VERY POLITE DISCUSSION



he great dragon Mountainshadow stirs from his sleep. He opens one massive eye, then the other. Then he emits a terrible tearing sound—he is clearing his enormous throat.

Mountainshadow's servant, Rosper, attends him. Rosper appears to be human.

"Your sleep is disturbed, Great Lord,"

Rosper says. He knows that his master can be ... unpleasant when awakened prematurely. "If you are hungry, I can—"

"It is not hunger that awakens me, Rosper," Mountainshadow growls. "Leave me."

Rosper sheds his human form, becoming a drake—a small, Name-giver-sized dragon. He flaps his wings, rises into the air and glides out of the lair's inner chamber.

Mountainshadow watches Rosper go. When the drake is out of sight, the great dragon undulates over to a circular silver frame mounted in the wall of his lair. In the center of the frame is a small ball of desiccated flesh—the eye of All-Wings, the slain dragon matriarch of the Age of Dragons. The eye is vibrating, but so slowly that only the eyes of another dragon can perceive it. Mountainshadow knows what this means. He is being called. He weaves a thread to the eye. The silver frame shimmers as the face of another great dragon, Icewing, appears reflected on its bright surface.

"Pardon my intrusion, Far Scholar," says Icewing, with the elaborate politeness that dragons have evolved to ward off conflict between one another. He is careful to use only Mountainshadow's Ceremonial Name. The use of his True Name could be considered a challenge.

"You would not use the Eye of All-Wings without due cause, Doll-Maker. I waive the Right of the Fifteen Venerations. I humbly urge you to come to the point."

Unease flickers in Icewing's eyes. "I have received troubling intelligence. The Impertinent Ones seek to strengthen their hand in Barsaive. They have landed one of their so-called behemoths near Lake Ban."

"I am aware of this effrontery."

"By itself, this development would matter little to us—it is the move of a game piece, no more. But they have begun razing villages in the region."

A wisp of smoke escapes Mountainshadow's snout, the mark of a dragon sigh. "Tell me why this should interest me."

"They seek the girl, Aardelea."

Mountainshadow draws in his breath, pulling loose soil and dead leaves toward him.

Icewing continues. "Clearly our earlier gambit succeeded; they are searching for her far from the village of Hanto. I hear they are led by an ambitious magician, protégé to the First Governor. He may even be acting at the

behest of our True Foes. It would be unwise to assume that he will remain misled forever."

"One wonders just how much they know of our interest in the child. If she were to fall into their hands, my fury might well be great, Doll-Maker. Great enough to inspire ... direct intervention."

Icewing blinks, the only sign of startlement he will permit himself. "I know you speak theoretically. Formality alone requires me to remind you that we would need to convene a Council before embarking on such a course."

"As soon as we learned of the girl's importance, I opposed leaving her in Hanto. Your plan to study her transformation at a remove seems merely to have exposed our position."

"With great respect, my dear Far Scholar, I would be remiss if I did not point out that your ill-conceived move to involve the Library of Throal in our affairs is largely responsible for the unpleasant situation we now face."

A long pause ensues, pregnant with tension. Finally Mountainshadow adopts the time-honored Posture of Concession and snorts: "None knows better than you how much we need what only she can provide to us. Our kind does not need often. If we fail, there will be more than enough infamy for both of us."

Icewing inclines his huge head, a sign of acceptance. "We must move quickly—but circumspectly—to secure her safety. Do you have any suitable pawns available for the task, Mountainshadow, or shall I ..."

Mountainshadow rumbles deep in his throat. This aimless humming helps him think. "I would offer Dark Tooth ... but I am reluctant to involve the drakes, lest we unwittingly tell the Impertinent Ones more than they already know. What of your dwarf playthings?"

"Preoccupied, at present. I would not trust the stripling Neden with intelligence so vital. But perhaps I may find independent retainers—"

"I shall leave the matter to you, then. Someone versed in our affairs would spot my surrogates too quickly. I trust you will also send messengers to inform Root Protector, Vast Green, Elfbane, and the others?"

"Consider the task accomplished."

"Then I shall leave it to you." Mountainshadow pauses briefly, then continues, "I trust you will not take it ill if I independently seek additional information?"

With another nod, Icewing replies. "Not at all."

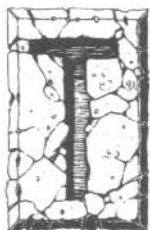
"Then I bid you farewell, for we have much to do." As Mountainshadow turns away from the Eye of All-Wings, the silver frame shimmers and goes blank.

Mountainshadow rocks the cavern with a bellow: "Rosper, you misbegotten spawn of worms! To my side, immediately! Or shall I feed you to the crows?!"





# BACKGR?UND



he events of **The Dragons' Daughter** concern a young human girl Named Aardelea, who becomes an unwitting pawn in a struggle with implications that go far beyond Barsaive. On one side of this struggle are the Therans, represented by an influential magician Named Hefera. On the other side are the great dragons of

Barsaive, primarily Icewing and Mountainshadow. The repercussions of this conflict may lead to open warfare between Thera and the dragons.

Player characters may already be involved in this story line without realizing it. Aardelea appears as a central character in the **Earthdawn** adventure **Infected**, and the dragon-Theran intrigue surrounding her is introduced in **The Vanishing Scholar**, an adventure framework that appears on p. 167 of **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**.

In **Infected**, an honest Bartertown merchant Named Charboyya hires the characters to travel to his distant home village of Hanto, located south of Lake Vors in Barsaive's hinterland. When the characters arrive, they discover that the village is suffering at the hands of a band of fanatical Horror-fighters known as the Grim Legion. The Legion has quarantined the village in reaction to the peculiar magical powers exhibited by a young human girl Named Aardelea. Though the Horror-fighters believe that the girl's powers are symptoms of Horror taint, Aardelea's strange talents are actually the result of her encounter with an artifact called the *Book of Blue Spirits*. While exploring a cave outside Hanto, she found the book and a dragon statue that happens to be a pattern item of the great dragon Icewing. If the characters completed **Infected** successfully, they liberated Hanto from the Grim Legion and enabled Aardelea and Charboyya's kinfolk to resume their lives in peace.

Unfortunately, interest in Aardelea and her strange powers makes this peace short-lived, a fact foreshadowed in **The Vanishing Scholar**. In this adventure, Par Darkwood, a treacherous archivist of the Great Library of Throal, steals documents from a sensitive research project which (unknown to the characters) was commissioned by Mountainshadow himself. Through contacts with low-level Theran agitators, Darkwood arranges to sell the stolen documents to Theran intelligence operatives. The characters, accompanied by a stranger named Rosper, must intercept Darkwood and substitute phony documents for the real

ones. If they make the swap, they watch Darkwood pass on the disinformation to the Therans. Then they see Rosper transform himself into a drake and tear Darkwood to pieces. In the meantime, they may have looked at the phony or real documents and discovered that they concern Aardelea of Hanto. The real documents list Aardelea's current location as Hanto, near Lake Vors; the false documents place her in the Lake Ban area. Unless the characters also played **Infected**, this fact will make little sense to them—the adventure introduces more questions than answers.

The answers appear in this adventure.

## THE STORY SO FAR

The roots of this tale go back all the way to the Age of Dragons, the ancient era during which dragons ruled all other Name-givers. Dragons weren't much more numerous then than they are in present-day Barsaive, however, and so they needed servitors to administer their rule. They chose particular Name-givers for this task. These exalted administrators were to carry out the dragons' decrees and instructions even when the inevitable waning of the magic cycle forced the dragons—as highly magical creatures—into hibernation.

During the prehistoric beginnings of the current Age of Legend, however, the dragons awoke to an infuriating discovery. Their trusted administrators had taken advantage of the dragons' long dormancy to usurp the dragons' rightful power. Even worse, the dragons could not destroy the upstarts outright because the rebellious servants had become too powerful—even a dragon thinks twice about fighting an entire army by itself.

But great dragons think in the long term. Though defeated for the present, they knew one day they would regain their ancient dominion over the world. To reclaim their rightful place, they needed new servitors. They decided to create a new race of beings that they could trust implicitly. Using dragon magic, they created drakes—humanoids with dragon blood and characteristics. The drakes could not repeat the treachery of the dragons' first servants, because their dragon blood would force them into hibernation along with their masters when the magical energies of the world once again waned.

Despite the great dragons' magical knowledge, they were unable to create intelligent beings capable of reproduction. Each new drake had to be magically formed from







expensive materials and subjected to elaborate, time-consuming rituals (collectively known as the Dance of Blue Spirits) to imbue it with a true Name and pattern so that it might lead an independent, sentient life. The drakes made excellent attendants and spies, but the dragons could not create enough of them to restore dragon rule. For their part, the drakes felt incomplete, saddened that they could not have children. (The ability to give a Name to one's child is, after all, the mark of the true Name-giver.)

Early in the process of creating the first drakes, a dragon Named Yuichotol sought to preserve the methods of drake creation for posterity by performing a variation on the Dance of Blue Spirits. Instead of binding a drake spirit into a drake body, she placed it within a book. The book was called, appropriately enough, the *Book of Blue Spirits*. If some disaster befell the dragons of Barsaive, dragons elsewhere could draw on the knowledge of the spirit-book and recover the techniques of drake manufacture.

During the abortive war waged by the Therans against the dragons in the years immediately preceding the Scourge (*Thera and the Dragons*, p. 27, ED), Yuichotol was slain and her lair looted by Theran adepts. Icewing's drakes—Rathann, Arondry and Tellanion—intercepted one of the victorious Theran war parties, however, and recovered the *Book of Blue Spirits*. The drakes took the book to Icewing's lair mere days before Icewing learned that he was next on the list of Theran targets. He quickly relocated his lair, but one of his drakes failed to retrieve the book and a pattern item of Icewing's—a small dragon statue carved from obsidian. Theran agents recovered the book and statue and placed the items on a caravan for eventual shipment to Thera. The caravan was raided by ork scorchers, however, and one of them hid the two items in a cave outside what is now the village of Hanto. The ork was killed before he could retrieve his booty, and the items languished in the cave until Aardelea found them.



By the time Aardelea found the book, it was rapidly deteriorating. Its captive drake spirit, anxious to preserve itself and its knowledge, wove a thread to the young girl's true pattern. Since then, Aardelea's spirit and that of the drake have begun to merge.

Icewing learned of Hanto and Aardelea when his pattern item was returned to him, and he promptly sent agents to Hanto to investigate the situation. From their reports, Icewing realized that Aardelea was turning into a human/drake hybrid. Immediately Icewing realized that the girl might be the key to a new, self-sustaining breed of drakes.

Through messengers, Icewing told the other dragons of Barsaive—Mountainshadow, Alamaise, Earthroot, Aban, Vasdenjas and Usun—of his dramatic discovery. However, the dragons could not agree on a course of action. Icewing wanted to study Aardelea from afar, without telling her what was happening to her. Mountainshadow wished to immediately recruit her and install her in his lair. Over Mountainshadow's objections, the other dragons deferred to Icewing, who had the closest relationship to these events.





Unsatisfied by this decision, Mountainshadow decided to act on his own. He contacted high officials in the Great Library of Throal, notably Merrox, the Master of the Hall of Records. Under commission from Mountainshadow, Merrox sent an undercover research team to Hanto to study Aardelea. Mountainshadow hoped that the team would quickly learn whatever it was that Icewing wanted to know so that the girl could then be taken to safety. As it turned out, Mountainshadow's actions had the opposite effect when the corrupt archivist Par Darkwood insinuated himself onto the team, stole the reports and sold them to the Therans.

Merrox contacted Mountainshadow as soon as he discovered the theft. Through intermediaries, the two of them cooked up a plan to use a team of adepts, aided by Mountainshadow's drake Rosper, to track down Darkwood and replace the reports with false ones. The plan succeeded, and the false plans found their way to Hefera, a sinister protégé of the Thera First Governor. Hefera heads a secretive branch of Thera's magical research organization, devoted to studying the weaknesses of the great dragons. (Centuries after their ill-fated war against the dragons, the Therans still consider them a serious threat to the Empire.) The false documents have partially fooled Hefera; he doesn't know why Aardelea is important to the dragons of Barsaive, but the fact that she is important to them is enough to make him want to capture her. Additionally, the Heavenherds—the master magicians of the Thera Empire—are understandably curious about the stories they've heard of a young girl with unexplained magical abilities. Hefera's own interest, along with that of the Heavenherds, ensured that Hefera would be given the resources to mount a mission to Barsaive and capture Aardelea. When Hefera discovered through his political connections that the Thera navy was planning to land a behemoth in southern Barsaive, he argued for the Lake Ban location, believing he could use the behemoth as a base for his kidnapping operation.

For several months after the landing of the behemoth, Hefera led teams to raze local villages, hoping to find the girl. He enriched himself by selling innocent villagers into slavery, charging them with sedition for allegedly refusing to answer his questions. His quest remained fruitless, however, and gained him the attention of Icewing's informers. Finally, Thera spies in Bartertown told him that he'd been looking for Hanto leagues away from its actual location. The spies had been keeping an eye on Bartertown politics, in which the merchant Charboyya has become increasingly active, and they learned about Hanto from a seemingly innocent conversation with the trusting Charboyya himself.

Hefera immediately gathered together a crack team of adepts and headed to Hanto to capture Aardelea.

## CONTINUITY PROBLEMS?

Experienced gamemasters know that virtually no story line survives contact with player characters. This is not necessarily a bad thing, because characters should shape campaigns—it keeps things fresh and surprising for both players and gamemasters. However, it also means that gamemasters may need to modify this adventure's background before using it, depending on the choices their players made while playing *Infected* or *The Vanishing Scholar*.

For example, if Aardelea survived but did not remain in Hanto in your campaign, you'll need to devise a new scenario for her capture by Hefera. Perhaps Aardelea returns to visit her family just in time for Hefera's arrival. Maybe the magician kidnaps her somewhere else—possibly under the very noses of the player characters.

If Aardelea is dead in your campaign, you'll have to create a new little girl who discovered an item with a drake spirit embedded in it and is slowly becoming a drake/human hybrid. In this case, you'll also need to change the background to explain how the dragons and Hefera learn about the girl.

If your players' characters failed to make the document swap in *The Vanishing Scholar*, assume that Icewing and Mountainshadow arranged for the swap to happen later on. Through surrogates, the dragons recruited sky raiders to board the airship carrying the documents back to Thera. In the confusion of the raid, the dragons' operatives made the switch.

## EVENT SYNOPSIS

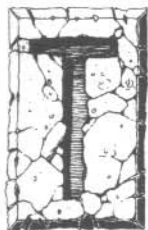
*The Dragons' Daughter* picks up the story as Thera agents finally locate and kidnap Aardelea. Barsaive's dragons learn of the Therans' success and determine to rescue the girl before her captors can transport her back to Thera for study. (The dragons also decide to use the opportunity to remind the Therans of what happens when they defy the dragons of Barsaive.)

The player characters get involved by traveling to Hanto. Once there, they learn that the Therans have sold many of Hanto's residents into slavery and kidnapped Aardelea. The adventurers may then rescue the enslaved villagers and track down Hefera. Though they fail to recover Aardelea, they capture Hefera and deliver him to Icewing, who eats him. Icewing then charges them with another task: delivering Hefera's gnawed and broken bones to the Thera forces at the behemoth, as a none-too-subtle signal of his wrath. As this story line ends, Aardelea remains in Thera custody.





# IMPORTANT CHARACTERS



This section describes the major characters and factions that play roles in *The Dragons' Daughter*. Complete game statistics are supplied only for gamemaster characters whom the player characters are likely to face in combat during this adventure.

Some of the character descriptions include talent knacks. Rules for talent

knacks appear on pp. 18–24 of *Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets*.

## AARDELEA

Aardelea was a normal human girl until the *Book of Blue Spirits* changed her pattern forever. Since then, she has had a difficult time of it. She has had to cope with magical powers she doesn't understand, and been kept prisoner and tortured by the Grim Legion as some kind of Horror construct.

After the Grim Legion was driven from Hanto, the changes in Aardelea's pattern accelerated. Though she still appears human, she regularly has disturbing dreams in which she grows scales and wings and then flies through the hinterlands in search of prey. Her appetite has increased, and she finds herself secretly hunting birds, small mammals and reptiles. Once she catches them, she devours them alive. These compulsions revolt and terrify her, and she has become moody and withdrawn. The fact that the villagers of Hanto are concerned for her welfare just makes her more unhappy. She is terribly afraid that one of them will learn of her inexplicable behavior. She wishes she had never found the book in that cave. And she is certainly not emotionally prepared for an encounter with Theran magicians or dragons. If confronted with either, she might break down completely.

Aardelea remains in the background of the adventure frameworks presented below, but will continue to play a role in the ongoing epic of Barsaive.

### Attributes

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

**Note:** Aardelea's Spell Defense increases to 10 when she consciously resists magical attempts to probe her mind for information. She also possesses unusual talents that allow her to sense things from a distance, move objects through

force of will and heal other characters by using one of her own Recovery Tests. These talents are described below.

### ELSEWHERE SENSE

**Step Number:** Rank + Willpower Step +2

**Action:** Yes

**Skill Use:** No

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** None

**Discipline Talent Use:** None

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

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

### MIND OVER MATTER

**Step Number:** Rank + Willpower Step +2

**Action:** Yes

**Skill Use:** No

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** None

**Discipline Talent Use:** None

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

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







## MYSTIC HEALING

**Step Number:** Rank + Willpower Step +2

**Action:** Yes

**Skill Use:** No

**Requires Karma:** No

**Strain:** None

**Discipline Talent Use:** None

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

## CHARBOYYA

Raised in Hanto, Charboyya of Bartertown is a prominent dwarf merchant and political reformer as well as a friend of Aardelea's family. Charboyya hired the player characters in *Infected*, and he can serve as the player characters' entry into the events of *The Dragons' Daughter* as well. An honest and warm-hearted fellow, Charboyya is currently preoccupied with a campaign to bring law and order back to Bartertown, which now suffers under a tyrannical magistrate, several vicious smuggling gangs and a heavy-handed Throalic effort to root out suspected spies. Though Charboyya has no particular knowledge of dragon affairs, he is appalled by the Therans' recent actions and would feel obliged to aid reasonable efforts to thwart their aims.

Charboyya is described at greater length in *Infected* (p. 59) and *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom* (p. 151).

### Attributes

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

## ICEWING

Icewing is known as the only great dragon of Barsaive willing to meet with other Name-givers on a regular basis, though normally he demands tribute worth at least 1,000 silver pieces for such meetings. The dragon's lair lies at the top of Mount Vapor, in the Throal Mountains about a day's travel from Bartertown. From time to time Icewing has aided the Kingdom of Throal, most recently when he provided Varulus I, Varulus II and Varulus III with life-prolonging potions to help stabilize the dwarf nation during the Scourge. The other dragons of Barsaive, few of whom are interested in Name-giver affairs, tend to defer to

Icewing in political matters. Nicknamed "Doll-Maker" by his fellow dragons, Icewing is the most aggressively anti-Theran of Barsaive's dragons; considering the Theran attempt to kill Icewing, the dragon's sentiments seem understandable. He is more than willing to go to war with the Therans if they harm Aardelea; in fact, Mountainshadow suspects that Icewing would welcome such a provocation.

### Attributes

DEX: 21	STR: 34	TOU: 29
PER: 27	WIL: 27	CHA: 27

## MOUNTAINSHADOW

The great dragon Mountainshadow also maintains an interest in the affairs of Name-givers, though he is more removed from their politics than Icewing. In contrast to Icewing, who sees Name-givers as either useful pawns or annoying adversaries, Mountainshadow finds Name-givers interesting as individuals. He lives in a hidden lair in the Dragon Mountains, along with a small community of orks and humans he has raised to serve him. Though he too bears an ancient grudge against the Therans, he is more cautious about the prospects of war than Icewing. Nicknamed Far Scholar by his fellow dragons, he exemplifies the draconic tendency to take an extremely long view of history. Though he would prefer to forestall an all-out conflict between the dragons and the Therans, he is in a weakened position with the other dragons because his contact with the Great Library of Throal led to Hefera's discovery of Aardelea. Like most great dragons, Mountainshadow is secure in his superiority over others, extremely articulate and utterly ruthless when his self-interest is threatened. He is also known for his obscure sense of humor and musical laugh.

### Attributes

DEX: 19	STR: 34	TOU: 28
PER: 29	WIL: 29	CHA: 26

## THE DRAKES

The drakes of Barsaive have their own reasons for wanting Aardelea safely delivered from her Theran captors. They want to be Name-givers in every way, capable of having children and experiencing the joy of family relationships. Icewing and Mountainshadow have told the drakes about Aardelea, and they are extremely anxious to get her back. They will not hesitate to kill or be killed in their efforts to accomplish this task.





The drakes who serve Icewing—**Rathann**, **Arondry** and **Tellanion**—all have extensive experience living unnoticed among Name-givers. Rathann adopts the form of a slight, elderly male elf; he is also a Seventh Circle beast-master. Arondry, a Sixth Circle wizard, appears as a younger, stockier elf. Tellanion looks like a male Dinganni human and has the abilities of a Sixth Circle thief. Their complete game statistics appear on pages 63–65 of **Shattered Pattern**; these statistics are not required to run the adventure frameworks of **The Dragons' Daughter**, but they may prove useful in adventures and campaigns that extend this story line.

**Rosper** is a young, inexperienced drake who serves Mountainshadow. He manifests as human but has not yet grasped the subtle nuances of Barsaivian social mores and behavior. He may therefore give himself away through strange mannerisms or a lack of general cultural knowledge. Rosper has become entranced with the story of Aardelea; in fact, he is infatuated with the girl even though he has never met her.

Mountainshadow is usually served by a trio of more experienced drakes, but a couple of years ago he sent them on a mission to the distant Theran province of Indrisa (from which they have yet to return). Mountainshadow also claims to possess a drake servant named **Dark Tooth**, but this figure is so shadowy that even Mountainshadow's fellow dragons suspect there is something about the drake that Mountainshadow isn't telling.

All of Barsaive's remaining great dragons are also attended by drakes. Earthroot, the great dragon who dwells among the Pale Ones in the underground regions of the Serpent River, maintains a trio of aquatic drakes who resemble leviathans (pp. 54–55, **Creatures of Barsaive**). The drake servants of the other dragons may become involved in expanded versions of this story line. Drakes are described on pp. 58–59 of **An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive**, in the **Barsaive Campaign Set**. Drake game statistics are reprinted below for convenience. Most drakes have learned an adept Discipline and, on average, have advanced to the Sixth Circle.

## DRAKES

### Attributes

DEX: 12      STR: 15      TOU: 12  
PER: 15      WIL: 17      CHA: 16

Initiative: 15      Physical Defense: 16  
Number of Attacks: 3 [1]\*      Spell Defense: 18  
Attack: 15      Social Defense: 17

### Damage:

Bite: 18  
2 x Claw: 19  
Broadsword: 20  
Medium Crossbow: 20

Armor: 15/[Rating  
of Armor]\*

Mystic Armor: 9  
Knockdown: 20 [15]\*  
Recovery Tests: 6

Number of Spells: 2

Spellcasting: 16

Effect: see Powers

Death Rating: 62

Wound Threshold: 18

Unconsciousness Rating: 54

Combat Movement: 120

Full Movement: 240

Karma Points: 18

Karma Steps: 10

**Powers:** Astral Sight 10, Dispel Magic 12, Disrupt Fate 5, Dragon Breath 12, Fear 15, Regeneration 5, Spells (per Discipline), Suppress Magic 3

**Legend Points:** 3,400

**Equipment:** As appropriate for Name-giver form

**Loot:** Scales and blood are worth D6 x 5 silver pieces and count as treasure worth Legend Points. Of course, anyone who sells such items earns the enmity of dragons and drakes alike. Such items usually end up in the hands of knaves such as Hefera.

\* Figures in brackets refer to the drake's Name-giver form.

## HEFERA

Hefera (HEFF-air-ah) is an influential figure in the Theran Empire. A human protégé of the First Governor, Hefera heads one of the most prestigious and secretive branches of the Theran magical research establishment, a branch that answers only to the First Governor and the Heavenherds. Officially, Hefera belongs to the Fraternity of Thaumaturgical Investigation. In truth, the cell of researchers he heads is so secret that it has no name. Hefera's cell spearheads all Theran research into dragons, a task that encompasses both scholarly activity (such as the study of legends and artifacts from the Age of Dragons) and intelligence work (supervising espionage against the great dragons and their minions). Only an opportunity of the highest order would bring Hefera to personally supervise a provincial field operation. Though he is acting as much on instinct as solid evidence, he senses that the girl Aardelea somehow lies at the heart of the dragon's plans, and he believes the solution to this mystery could bring him untold wealth and status within the Empire.

Hefera is driven by his desire for money and position. As far as he is concerned, the pursuit of knowledge is a





means to that end. He has no particular grudge against dragons. To Hefera, enemies and friends alike are pieces on the game board of life, and winning is measured in wealth and respect—nothing else matters. Hefera believes that he is superior to most other Name-givers because he recognizes this fundamental fact and is therefore better than they are at playing the game. He is always on the lookout for a way to enrich himself while pursuing his organization's objectives, and he has risen to his present exalted post through drive, intelligence and a willingness to use anyone as a rung on his ladder. Hefera fully expects to succeed his mentor, Kanidris, as First Governor, and he views securing a permanent advantage over the dragons as the key to this goal.

Hefera speaks in short, clipped sentences. He is quick to ridicule anyone foolish enough to disagree with him. Though he sees himself as a master manipulator, he is not self-aware enough to realize how arrogant he appears, nor is he half as charismatic as he believes. His staff loathes him, as do many important members of the Theran court. First Governor Kanidris is either blind to his protégé's faults or finds them useful enough to tolerate.

According to Hefera's personal vision of his Disciplines, knowledge is a treasure to be seized and hoarded; the elements are mindless forces on which Hefera imposes his will. Magic is a mathematical means to an end, and mysteries exist only to be stamped out and exploited by superior men such as himself.

## HEFERA

Tenth Circle Wizard/Eighth Circle Elementalist

### Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12  
Strength (17): 7/D12  
Toughness (18): 7/D12  
Perception: (19): 8/2D6  
Willpower (20): 8/2D6  
Charisma (9): 4/D6

### Talents

Arcane Mutterings (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Armored Matrix (10)  
Book Memory (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Book Recall (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Cold Purify (8): 16/D20 + D8  
Durability (Wizard) (13)  
Elemental Hold (8): 16/D20 + D8  
Elemental Tongues (8): 16/D20 + D8  
2 x Enhanced Matrix (10)  
Evidence Analysis (10): 18/D20 + D12

Fireblood (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Fire Heal (8): 16/D20 + D8  
Hold Thread (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Karma Ritual (Elementalist) (9)  
Karma Ritual (Wizard) (11)  
Lasting Impression (6) 10/ D10 + D6  
Life Check (10): 17/D20 + D10  
Matrix Strike (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Read and Write Language (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Read and Write Magic (10): 18/D20 + D12  
Reshape Object (8): 16/D20 + D8  
Resist Taunt (11): 19/D20 + 2D6  
3 x Spell Matrix (10)  
Spellcasting (11): 19/D20 + 2D6  
Taunt (6): 10/D10 + D6  
Thread Weaving (Elementalist) (9): 17/D20 + D10  
Thread Weaving (Wizard) (11): 19/D20 + 2D6  
Unshakable Earth (8): 20/D20 + D8 + D6  
Versatility (3)  
Willforce (12): 20/D20 + D8 + D6

### Talent Knacks

Anchored Spell (Spellcasting)  
Forced Spellcasting (Spellcasting)  
Increased Dispel Difficulty (Spellcasting)  
Maintain Spell Threads (Spellcasting)  
Spell Design (Spellcasting)  
Spell Design (Thread Weaving/Wizardry)  
Thread Sight (Thread Weaving)

### Skills

Artisan/Embroidery (2): 6/D10  
Knowledge/Dragons (4): 12/2D10  
Knowledge/Magical Theory (4): 12/2D10

### Karma

Dice: D8  
Points: 40

### Initiative

Dice: D6

### Movement

Full: 75  
Combat: 38

### Damage

Death Rating: 90  
Wound Threshold: 12  
Unconsciousness Rating: 69  
Recovery Tests per Day: 4  
Recovery Dice: D12

### Combat

Physical Defense: 9 [13]  
Spell Defense: 13  
Social Defense: 7 [11]  
Armor: 5 [9]  
Mystic Armor: 7 [9]

### Equipment

Blood pebble armor (with Rank 4 thread)  
Amulet (with Rank 4 thread)  
Ring (with Rank 4 thread)  
Gems and jewels worth 985 silver pieces  
25 silver pieces







#### Karma Notes

Hefera can spend Karma on any action using only Charisma (up to 2 Karma Points per test), Willforce/Willpower or Perception. He also has the Split Matrix ability; each use of this ability costs him 2 Strain Points (p. 21, *Earthdawn Companion*).

#### Thread Weaving Notes

Hefera possesses several thread magic items, which he uses to augment a few of his defensive abilities. His blood pebble armor and its Rank 4 thread provide him with an Armor Rating 9 and a Mystic Armor bonus of 6. Without the thread, this armor offers the same protection as normal blood pebble armor (p. 255, ED). Hefera also maintains Rank 4 threads to his amulet and ring. These items provide

a +4 bonus to Hefera's Physical and Social Defense Ratings, respectively. These augmented ratings appear in brackets in the preceding statistics.

#### Spell Notes

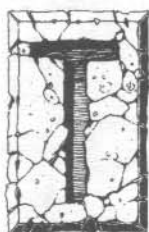
Hefera knows all the wizard spells for the First through Tenth Circles, as well as all elemental spells for the First through Sixth Circles. Most often, Hefera keeps the following spells in his matrices:

- Blade Fury (Spell Matrix)
- Blood Boil (Enhanced Matrix)
- Combat Fury (Spell Matrix)
- Counterspell (Spell Matrix)
- Death Rain (Enhanced Matrix)
- Draining Eye (Armored Matrix)





# RUNNING THE DRAGONS' DAUGHTER



he Theran attempt to capture Aardelea and the Barsaivian dragons' attempts to protect her represent a major, potentially ongoing conflict in the world of **Earthdawn**. This section provides three adventure frameworks that trace these events, a number of shorter adventure ideas based on the events, and guidelines for tying up loose ends.

## INTRODUCING THE EVENT

As described in **Return to Hanto**, the characters become involved in the events of **The Dragons' Daughter** when they are hired to travel to Hanto. Upon their arrival, the characters learn that Hefera has already captured Aardelea, a development that draws them further into the story line. The **Setup** section of that adventure framework offers a number of ways to involve the characters in the story.

The following adventure frameworks assume that player characters are willing to act on behalf of Barsaive's dragons. If they are not, gamemasters may have to create some way to coerce them into acting.

## PREQUELS

Previous **Earthdawn** products have hinted at Aardelea's special nature and the interest it elicits among the Therans and Barsaive's dragons. The **Earthdawn** adventure **Infected** introduces Aardelea and the *Book of Blue Spirits*. The adventure **Shattered Pattern** includes the first appearance of the drakes who serve Icewing. The **Vanishing Scholar**, an adventure framework in **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**, sets the stage for the events of **The Dragons' Daughter**. Lastly, **The Theran Behemoth** (p. 23 of this book) describes Hefera's search for Aardelea as one of the many activities in which the newly arrived Theran force at Triumph is involved.

Player characters who have played any of the above adventures will have been involved in this adventure's story line since its beginning. Playing the story line that follows enables them to learn more about Aardelea and her special role in the future of Barsaive.

## ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following adventure frameworks are presented in the format described in the **Introduction**. These frameworks serve as adventure "blueprints" that gamemasters can flesh out as desired.

The three adventures form a continuous story line that follows the plot described in **Event Synopsis** (p. 68).

**Return to Hanto** leads naturally to **Fatal Learning**, which sets up **A Message in Bone**.

### RETURN TO HANTO

#### Premise

The adventurers travel to the village of Hanto to find Aardelea. After a dangerous trek, they arrive to find the village in ruins, its people gone. To successfully complete the adventure, the player characters must seek out the slave camp where the captured residents of Hanto are being held and discover the identity of the Theran official who has kidnapped Aardelea.

#### Setup

The player characters can enter this adventure in a number of ways. If any of the characters participated in **Infected**, Charboyya may contact them. Once again, a message to the merchant's home village has gone unanswered. Fearing the worst, he hires the group to find out what's going on and rescue his friends and family one more time, if necessary.

Alternatively, adventurers who completed **Infected** may be approached by mysterious strangers who wish to learn of legendary deeds that the adventurers performed in





Hanto. These strangers are Theran spies, assigned by Hefera to gather eyewitness accounts of Aardelea's activities. The spies heard third-party accounts of the player characters' exploits while gathering scuttlebutt in Bartertown; Charboyya has made no secret of his gratitude to the player characters and recounts their deeds to anyone who cares to listen. Play the strangers so that they arouse the suspicion of the player characters; perhaps the encounter escalates into a fight or begins with an ambush. Once the player characters find out that Theran spies have an interest in Hanto and Aardelea, the adventurers might seek out Charboyya themselves. In this case, the merchant happily finances another expedition to get to the bottom of things. Or perhaps the adventurers head out to Hanto on their own initiative.

Player characters who successfully completed **The Vanishing Scholar** may be approached by Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records and confidant to the late King Varulus and the new King Neden. Mountainshadow has asked Merrox to locate the adepts who performed so skillfully on his behalf in the Darkwood affair and hire them to take care of the present situation. Alternatively, the adventurers may be approached by Rosper, whom they last saw tearing Darkwood to pieces.

Characters who participated in **Shattered Pattern** may have earned the notice and gratitude of Icewing, who recommends them to Mountainshadow. Mountainshadow then approaches the adventurers either directly or through an intermediary such as Rosper or Merrox, as described above.

Player characters not involved in any of the preceding adventures may be approached by a previous employer who happens to be connected to Icewing's network of political operatives. Alternatively, adventurers who have distinguished themselves in Throal may attract Merrox's notice. Merrox then passes their names to Rosper, who has come to Throal in search of reliable adepts. Or perhaps the adventurers have previously ingratiated themselves with one of Barsaive's great dragons. In this case, they are summoned to an audience with Icewing or Mountainshadow, as appropriate.

Adventurers can also enter **The Dragons' Daughter** in less direct ways. For example, any member of an adventuring group may have a relative, friend or patron who is sold into slavery during Hefera's early attempts to find Aardelea in the Lake Ban area. Freeing the captive can comprise a scene or two, or even an adventure in itself. The rescued captive then convinces the adventurers to track Hefera into the hinterland; along the way Rosper or another dragon operative shows up to fill them in on the true implications of the situation.

However the adventurers enter the story, they should begin this adventure knowing that they are working on behalf of Barsaive's dragons, that Aardelea is important to the dragons for some reason, and that their adversaries are highly placed Theran agents. The player characters' task is twofold. First, they must rescue Aardelea and bring her to Icewing. Second, they are to find the leader of the Theran operation and bring him to Icewing as well.

#### Event 1

Hefera's spies are more familiar with Icewing's and Mountainshadow's network of contacts than the dragons realize, and the Theran lackeys soon suspect that the characters are performing some type of mission for the dragons. Hefera sends a team of windling thief adepts to shadow the adventurers as they begin their journey to Hanto (use the adept statistics on p. 115 for these spies). All the windlings are Third Circle and quite accomplished at tailing people unnoticed. For every day of game time, make a secret Perception (11) Test for each of the player characters. The characters do not spot the windlings until one of these tests succeeds or until they make other active, successful attempts to search for spies.

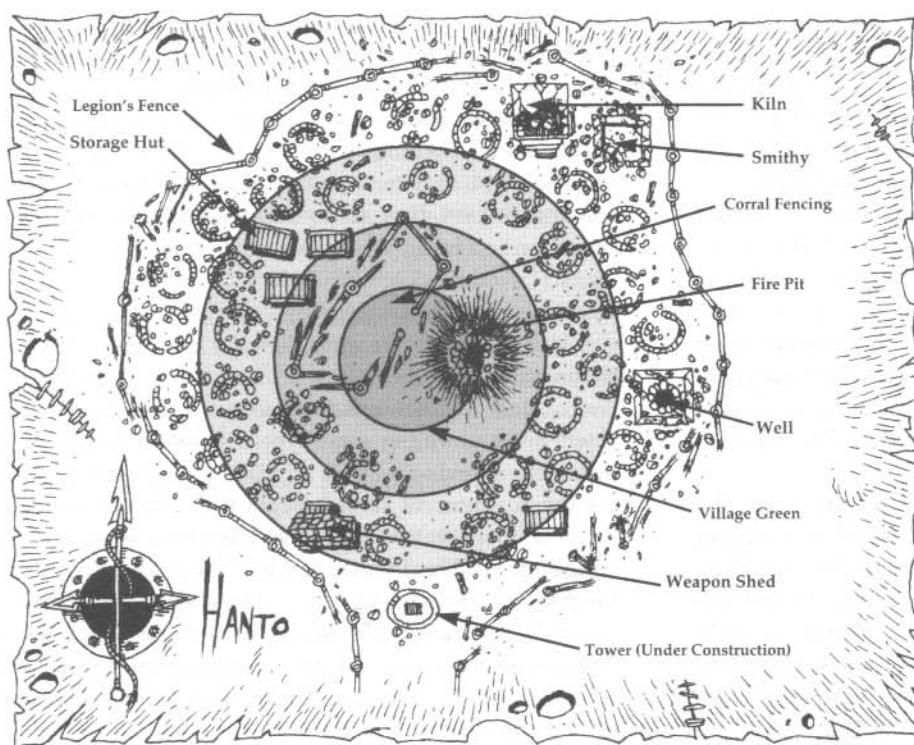
If the windling thieves realize they've been spotted, they attempt to flee at top speed. They want to get back to the behemoth to report to Spymaster Gendel and Hefera's lieutenants. If the adventurers capture one or more of the windlings, the adepts discover that the spies are well-trained at resisting interrogation. Characters must make any test intended to make them talk against a Difficulty Number of 12.

If the adventurers manage to force information from the windlings, they learn the following:

- The Therans have identified the characters as agents of Icewing or Mountainshadow, whichever is appropriate.
- The Therans have investigated the adventurers and know the details of their most legendary deeds. (The Therans may also know some embarrassing or damaging facts that the adventurers have attempted to keep secret.)
- The windlings are spies normally assigned to Spymaster Gendel of Triumph. They have been temporarily assigned to the Fraternity of Thaumaturgical Investigation, an intelligence and research organization that reports directly to the First Governor of Thera. Their temporary commander is a wizard and elemental called Hefera.
- Though the windlings try to conceal this from their enemies, they don't much like Hefera because he is high-handed and abrasive. However, they do fear him.







#### Event 2

No journey into the heart of untamed Barsaive is complete without an encounter involving its random dangers. This event, as well as the next two, describe several possible encounters in Barsaive's hinterlands.

As the adventurers travel to Hanto, they pass several villages. Few of these hamlets welcome travelers, and some are inhabited by suspicious, insular Name-givers who loathe and fear outsiders—especially adepts. Those villages that do welcome travelers may present hidden dangers. One group of seemingly hospitable villagers tries to slay the adventurers while they sleep, intending to rob them.

#### Event 3

A spell of collective madness holds sway over another village along the way to Hanto. The residents of this settlement mummify their dead and interact with the corpses as if they were still alive. When the adepts try to leave, the villagers offer them eternal life—in other words, an opportunity to be mummified alive.

#### Event 4

A third village along the way is under quarantine by a band of Grim Legion members (just as Hanto was in **Infected**). If any of the Grim Legion gamemaster characters survived **Infected**, they reappear in this event. Statistics for those characters appear on pp. 60–69 of that adventure.

This time, however, the Horror-hunters are right. Like several other isolated villages in Barsaive, this town has been tainted by an astral Horror, and the Grim Legion members are trying to figure out how to erase the taint and destroy the Horror. The Legion members fear that their astral adversary will spread to other villages if they cannot contain it here. The adventurers must choose whether to leave the Legionnaires on their own (increasing the chances that the Horror will escape their clutches), or stop to help them (thereby delaying their own important mission).

#### Event 5

The adepts discover a small number of freshly dug graves just outside the village of Hanto. As

the characters enter the hamlet, they find its modest huts leveled and its livestock slaughtered. They also discover that Hefera has placed three ward traps in concentric circles throughout Hanto's ruins. These traps have the following statistics (see **Traps**, pp. 209–210, **ED**, for further information).

#### Ward Trap

**Detection Difficulty:** 19

**Spell Defense:** 13

**Disarm Difficulty:** 15

**Trigger Condition:** Gamemasters make a Step 19 Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of any adept or questor crossing the boundary. If the test succeeds, the trap is triggered. Non-adepts do not trigger the trap.

**Trap Initiative:** 29

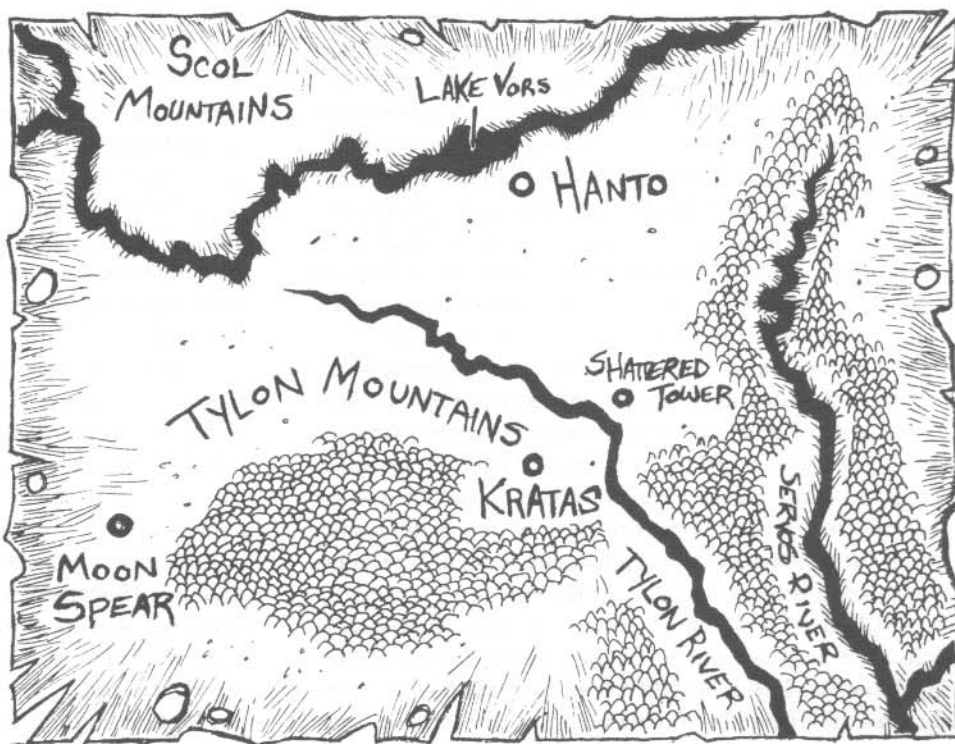
**Trap Effect:** Blood Boil, Spellcasting Step 19, Damage Step 29, Duration: 4 rounds

If the player characters travel to a neighboring village, they find a survivor who tells them what happened. A band of armed and mounted Therans, at least one of whom was a magician of some kind, charged into town and demanded the location of Hanto. When the villager told the Therans that they were in Hanto, the Theran leader—an arrogant, sneering foreigner—demanded the girl Aardelea. Sensing that something was wrong, people





began to flee. With the aid of their leader's terrible magic spells, however, the Therans cruelly slew all who tried to escape. They destroyed the village hut by hut, and found Aardelea hiding in one of them. The leader of the group seized her and hauled her atop his horse. Then he told the surviving villagers that they were all charged with treason against the Theran Empire for giving asylum to "an agent of the dragons." The Therans then clapped irons on the villagers, and the survivor says he saw the slaver captain pay off the magician with a bag of silver. The villager then tells the characters how he escaped on the way to a slave market in a town called Moon Spear to the southwest.



#### Event 6

The adventurers continue their trek through the hinterlands, trying to find someone who knows the location of Moon Spear. If they head north, they may find themselves in unrelated danger; they are going toward Lake Vors, stronghold of the sinister t'skrang trading house of Ishkarat. The Ishkaratans are openly hostile to outsiders at the best of times, and at the moment the t'skrang are in a state of heightened alert. (For more information about House Ishkarat's role in Barsaive's recent political turmoil, see *The King is Dead!*, p. 45)

If the characters travel southwest, they eventually find a number of villages whose populations have been depleted by increasingly bold Theran slaver raids—raids that are illegal even according to the notoriously porous standards of Theran law. The characters can get a map to Moon Spear from one of the survivors of the slave raids. They also learn that Moon Spear is so called because it lies in the northern Tylon foothills, near a big needle of rock that seems to pierce the moon on certain nights.

#### Climax

The player characters travel to the well-defended slaver camp at Moon Spear to rescue the villagers of Hanto. The slaver chieftain is a venal Theran ex-general, a Fifth Circle troll warrior named Gustibius (Gus-TEE-bee-uss). He has grown fat and lazy preying on the defenseless

villagers of the hinterlands, and his officers are just as slack as he. Nevertheless, his troops are well trained and well equipped, and they are dangerous in a head-on fight. (For the slavers, use the statistics for the Theran non-adept soldiers on p. 22.) If the adventurers employ stealth and strategy, they can take advantage of the slavers' poor morale and rout them before they can organize a defense.

Make sure that the adepts capture at least one high-ranking slaver, preferably Gustibius. Under pressure the slaver cracks easily, and reveals that Hefera is on his way to Sky Point with Aardelea. Adventurers may ransom their captive back to his men in exchange for the people of Hanto if necessary.

The adepts' next step is to hunt for Hefera, the crux of the next adventure framework.

### FATAL LEARNING

#### Premise

In this adventure, the player characters must track down Hefera, who has gone to great lengths to conceal his trail. After locating the magician, the adventurers must capture Hefera and take him to Icewing, who makes an example of him.

#### Setup

Hefera knows that he is dealing with dragons, fantastically intelligent opponents who also have extensive con-





tacts in a province he doesn't know well. He assumes that he is being followed, and sends a small group of followers away with Aardelea while he goes elsewhere in an attempt to decoy pursuers. The group with Aardelea heads south-east, where it holes up in an encampment on the outskirts of the Servos Jungle. Meanwhile, Hefera heads south to Sky Point and makes himself memorable as he passes settlements on the way. To make his ruse even more plausible, he takes a slave with him from Gustibius's camp, a young elf girl named Suveriel (SOO-veer-ee-el) who vaguely resembles Aardelea.

As Hefera travels, he makes whatever arrangements he can to trip up enemy adepts on his trail. Once at Sky Point, he plans to use informers with Throalic contacts to spread word that a girl of great interest to the dragons is being held at the Theran stronghold. After a suitable pause to allow this information to reach Icewing, Hefera will send a party to the Servos Jungle to tell Aardelea's captors that the coast is clear. Then that group will quietly smuggle the girl to the Theran behemoth at Lake Ban. Meanwhile, Hefera will journey from Sky Point to the behemoth, via an airship escorted by a heavily armed fleet of airships from the island of Thera. The flotilla will pick up Aardelea and take her to a remote outpost in the Theran province of Creana (pp. 6-7 of **Barsaivian Vivane in the Sky Point and Vivane Campaign Set**). There, Hefera will crack the secrets of Aardelea's powers and her link to the dragons, and bask in the admiration of the First Governor ... unless the adventurers stop him.

#### Event 1

The captured Theran slaver (see **Climax in Return to Hanto**) told the characters that Hefera is headed to Sky Point, and they know that the magician is several days' journey ahead of them.

The magician's trail is easy to pick up, because Hefera is deliberately being as conspicuous as he dares without revealing his plan. When he passed through New Landis, for example, he hurled deadly Doom Missiles at the villagers' cattle. He then charged into the village square with Suveriel tied to the back of his horse, gloated that Thera would soon crush all of its Barsaivian opponents in its steely grasp, and kicked over their cooking pots. When the adventurers arrive at New Landis (or any other village through which Hefera has showily passed), several villagers will be only too happy to describe the obstreperous magician in detail.

#### Event 2

The next day, the adventurers come to the village of Hanhelm, where Hefera played another of his little charades. Suveriel has become attracted to Hefera's spectacu-

lar evil and will do anything to please him. She ran into the village as if escaping a terrible foe, told the villagers she was named Aardelea, and said that the great dragons would reward the people of Hanhelm if only they would shelter her from her enemies—particularly a Theran wizard named Hefera. Shortly afterward, Hefera and a few henchmen rode into town, burned several huts to the ground and slaughtered any who resisted them. Hefera then stood in the village square and wove a number of ward spells before he retrieved "Aardelea" and rode off to the south.

The ward spells strike anyone who speaks the words "Aardelea," "Hefera," or "dragon." Except for this trigger condition, the wards are identical to the traps described in **Return to Hanto**, p. 76.

#### Event 3

After leaving Hanhelm, Hefera splits his party up once again. He, Suveriel and six of his lackeys continue toward Sky Point. A team of guards, led by an ork named Refunis (Reff-YOO-niss), stay behind to find out if anyone is pursuing Hefera and, if necessary, deal with them. About mid-day, Refunis and his group are riding along the main road looking for likely suspects when they come across the characters. Refunis hails the adventurers and asks if they have seen or heard of a magician named Hefera. Speaking with a thick Theran accent, Refunis says that he and his comrades are in Barsaive earning an honest living as traders and feel that Thera and Barsaive should coexist peacefully. If the adventurers profess an interest in Hefera or his captive, Refunis tells the following tale.

Refunis claims that he and his band fell in with Hefera's party on the road, because it is always safest to travel in large groups. But Hefera fell to arguing with Refunis's father, the leader of their merchant band, about Thera's future in Barsaive. Refunis's father argued that Thera should make peace with Throal and other powers in the area and should prosper through trade ties rather than military conquest. Hefera then slew Refunis' father by boiling his blood. A fight ensued, and Hefera's men escaped—along with a frightened-looking girl he had in tow.

"I hate to think what that madman would want with that poor girl," Refunis says.

Refunis tells the characters that he and his comrades have sworn an oath of vengeance against Hefera and want to find the magician and slay him. To make his deception more credible, Refunis acts suspicious of the player characters and voices a fear that they are a group of comrades Hefera mentioned before he escaped.

This is all nonsense, of course; Refunis is simply trying to figure out if the adventurers are chasing his master. He







tries to subtly draw them out, hoping to discover exactly who has sent them and what they know. Finally, when the player characters let their guards down, Refunis and his cronies attack them. If the adventurers don't let Refunis get close to them, he and his group ride off to set up an ambush down the road.

Refunis's group contains half again as many members as there are player characters. (For example, a group of six player characters will have to contend with nine members of Refunis's band.) Each is a highly trained non-adept fighter, and some of these warriors' attributes and skills have been magically augmented by Theran potions and alchemical treatments. (These processes usually shorten an individual's life span and dull his capacity for critical thinking, however.)

In the event of capture by an enemy, Hefera told Refunis to say that Hefera and Aardelea were en route to Sky Point. Even knowing Hefera's destination, the characters are unlikely to catch up with him because the magician is three days ahead of them. Refunis says no more, no matter how harshly the characters treat him. His lackeys are just as loyal and determined as Refunis, and also refuse to talk.

#### AUGMENTED THERAN LACKEYS

##### Attributes

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

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 14

##### Damage:

Two-Handed Sword: 15

Medium Crossbow: 13

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 66

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 54

Legend Points: 240

Equipment: Horse, medium crossbow, ring mail, two-handed sword

Loot: 2D10 silver pieces

#### Event 4

The adepts head south in hopes of somehow overtaking Hefera. When they come up on an aerial battle between

a troll drakkar and a flock of chimeras, they should realize that they have found their opportunity. The ship is hovering about thirty feet above the road, listing dangerously in high winds as the chimeras attack the crewmen and dash them to the ground below. If the adepts can get up to the ship, they can join the battle in the sky. If not, the ship crashes. The chimeras continue to attack the sky raiders, carrying them away to eat. About two dozen of the vicious predators are attacking the drakkar's crew, but if each of the characters kills one, the rest of the things fly off. (For a complete description of chimeras, see pp. 14–15, **Creatures of Barsaive**.)

If the player characters drive off the chimeras, they can help the surviving sky raiders repair the ship. In gratitude for their aid, the drakkar's captain will fly them south to catch up with Hefera. Unfortunately, the only high-Circle adepts on board were all severely injured during the chimera fight and cannot help the player characters fight Hefera.

#### CHIMERA

##### Attributes

DEX: 10      STR: 12      TOU: 11  
PER: 4      WIL: 9      CHA: 7

Initiative: 10

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 12

##### Damage:

Bite: 14

Claws: 12

Number of Spells: (1)

Spellcasting: 9

Effect: Lightning Blast 22

Death Rating: 100

Wound Threshold: 15

Unconsciousness Rating: 90

Legend Points: 725

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Physical Defense: 13

Spell Defense: 10

Social Defense: 11

Armor: 6

Mystic Armor: 3

Knockdown: 15

Recovery Tests: 5

Combat Movement: 50

Full Movement: 100

Flight: 35/70

#### Event 5

The drakkar crew flies the adventurers south, covering three days' worth of overland travel in an afternoon. The adventurers then take up the search for Hefera and eventually find him. The characters face considerable trouble if they simply wade into combat with the arrogant wizard as soon as they cross his path. Hefera does not hesitate to use Suveriel as a shield, and he has another six augmented lackeys with him who can engage the characters as he rains





spells down on them. Hefera aims his spells first at other spellcasters, then at fighting adepts (archer, cavalryman, swordmaster and warrior). He targets troubadours, thieves and others only after he has taken care of his preferred targets. If possible, he casts enhancement spells such as Blade Fury and Combat Fury on the lackeys.

Subterfuge represents the adventurers' best chance of rescuing "Aardelea" and capturing Hefera alive. For example, the adventurers might make a night-time intrusion into a village where Hefera and company are staying and attempt to seize the wizard before he realizes he is under attack.

If the adventurers go for the direct combat approach, feel free to fudge the final blow that brings Hefera down so that he is unconscious rather than dead. Icewing prefers that the magician be brought to him alive.

#### Event 6

Once the adventurers capture Hefera, they must get him all the way from southwestern Barsaive to Icewing's lair near Bartertown. This task can easily include a number of different events, such as defeating Hefera's attempts to use his spells to escape, avoiding Theran army patrols, and battling any of the myriad hostile creatures that inhabit Barsaive's wilderness. Play Hefera with as much arrogance and sneering superiority as you can muster; the player characters should be desperately fighting the urge to slay him throughout the whole trip back.

By this point, Suveriel is completely infatuated with Hefera and does anything to stay by his side. She figures the best way to accomplish this is to pretend to be Aardelea so that the player characters will keep her around. Of course, if the adventurers take a close look at her they will realize that she is an elf, not a human, and is therefore an impostor. If the characters participated in **Infected**, they are likely to notice much more quickly that Suveriel is not Aardelea. If the characters recognize the deception, they may try to make Hefera reveal Aardelea's whereabouts; however, the magician resists all their attempts to drag the information from him.

#### Climax

When the adventurers finally bring Hefera face-to-face with Icewing, all the wizard's arrogance and notions of superiority collapse. His knees buckle and he prostrates himself before the mighty dragon, begging for his life. He babbles wildly, trying to flatter the dragon. He tells Icewing that Aardelea is being held in a camp in the Servos Jungle. Then he begs for his life some more. Have fun with this scene; it should make an enjoyable contrast with Hefera's previous haughtiness. Make it as dramatic as pos-

sible, because the player characters are essentially bystanders in this final encounter.

Finally, Icewing beckons the magician to approach. "You have impressed me ..." says the dragon.

Hefera tentatively steps forward, relieved to have found favor with his foe.

"... as a snack," Icewing continues. The dragon then grabs Hefera in his huge claws, crushes the magician and downs him in one gulp.

"You may stay here for a few days," Icewing tells the adventurers, daintily licking Hefera's blood off of his talons. "I require you to take Hefera to yet another destination—what is left of him after he has passed through me, that is."

### A MESSAGE IN BONE

#### Premise

In this adventure framework, the player characters deliver Hefera's bones to General Nikar at the Theran behemoth. **A Message In Bone** concludes the story line of **The Dragons' Daughter**.

#### Setup

A day or two after the player characters' arrival in his lair, Icewing tells them that it is time to remind the Therans of the price of interfering in dragon affairs. He then gives the characters a jeweled box about two feet wide and one foot deep—the box contains Hefera's bones. Icewing instructs the adventurers to take the bones to General Nikar at Triumph and personally ensure that the general receives them. They are not to tell him who sent the box. Icewing wants Nikar to be surprised. Icewing explains that Hefera was a favorite of the First Governor, and that Kanidris himself is sure to receive word of this particular communication.

Because the behemoth is well defended (see **Theran Forces at Triumph**, p. 18), Icewing suggests that the characters enter it by posing as mercenaries in Theran pay. In fact, one of Icewing's informants has already singled out a gang of mercenaries particularly deserving of such an honor. The informant, a member of the Barsaivian Resistance in Vivane, has traveled to Bartertown to rendezvous with the adventurers. She is waiting for them in one of the town's pubs, the Juggling Shadowmant. Icewing describes her as an old, rough-looking elf woman with an eye patch. They are to address her as Piroliel (PEER-oh-LEE-ell), though this is not her real name.

#### Event 1

Before Hefera left for Hanto, the magician assembled a team of spies to keep an eye on comings and goings in the





area near Icewing's lair. Led by a magically augmented lackey named Krovat, the team has set up camp near the trail that leads from Icewing's lair to Bartertown. On Hefera's orders, the team members have parked several wagons next to the trail—they pretend to be peddlers, selling food and offering minor repair services to anyone who passes.

Unfortunately, the magical augmentation process has pickled Krovat's brain. He has become increasingly restless and paranoid, and during the past few days he has convinced himself that his group must adopt more aggressive tactics. He feels certain that his men have already been fooled by several travelers, and he becomes determined to capture the next group of adventurers returning from an audience with Icewing (at this point, Krovat believes that anyone who comes along has been dealing with the dragon).

With this in mind, Krovat and company prepare an ambush, stationing themselves atop a rock cut twenty feet above the path a short distance from Icewing's lair. Anyone passing along the trail will be vulnerable to arrow fire, and Krovat hopes to finish off his quarry without ever engaging in melee combat.

Naturally, the player characters are the first travelers to pass along the trail since Krovat and company set their ambush. As soon as the adventurers appear, the Theran lackeys attack. For Krovat and his men, use the statistics for augmented Theran lackeys supplied in *Fatal Learning* (p. 79). If the player characters easily handled the last group of lackeys, make these opponents tougher by bumping up their Attack steps and Defense numbers or adding a few Third to Fifth Circle adepts to the group.

## Event 2

When the adventurers reach the Juggling Shadow-mant in Bartertown, they find the troll barkeep Brainbiter attending Piroliel, who is lying in a puddle of blood. He tells the adventurers that an ork unfamiliar to him walked up and stabbed Piroliel as she sat at a table nursing an ale. Brainbiter has already sent for medical help, but any experienced adventurer can tell that Piroliel isn't likely to survive. She is still conscious, however, and when the adventurers identify themselves, she whispers the names "Water Lane Gang" and "Burning Caves." She thrusts a bloodied map into their hands and dies. If the characters try to save Piroliel using a Last Chance Salve, she fails her Recovery



Test and remains dead. The characters cannot save her despite their best efforts.

If the adventurers stay in Bartertown to investigate Piroliel's murder, Brainbiter provides a reliable description of the assailant—the barkeep has a good memory for faces. After some looking around, the characters learn that Piroliel's murderer is named Puug. Puug is a recently arrived *buundavim*, or street hoodlum, employed by the town's much-feared chief smuggler, Shadowswift. If the adventurers arrange a meeting with Shadowswift, the smuggler is enraged to learn that one of his men killed a member of the anti-Theran resistance. Shadowswift does not want to get mixed up in politics, it's bad for business. He then tells the adventurers where Puug is holed up.

After locating Puug and defeating his heavily armed friends, the characters can induce him to talk. If they do, they learn that he was paid to attack Piroliel by a passing trader from Vivane who has since left town. It doesn't take a master detective to realize that the trader was an undercover Theran agent attempting to prevent the Resistance from gaining new contacts in Barsaive. If the adventurers pursue the agent's caravan, they can capture her and force her to confess. However, she knows nothing of Theran spying efforts against the dragons and had no idea that Piroliel was about to meet with agents of Icewing. Her target is the Barsaivian Resistance. If the adventurers return her to Bartertown for trial, she is convicted of murder and hanged.







### Event 3

Piroliel's map shows the Burning Caves, a complex of natural, Scourge-damaged caves west of the Throal Mountains. From Piroliel's notes on the back of the map, the player characters realize that Piroliel has lured the Water Lane Gang to the Burning Caves so that the adventurers can defeat the mercenaries, take their well-known heralds and trophies and impersonate them at the Theran fortress city of Triumph, where the gang is known only by reputation.

The Water Lane Gang is a group of brutish mercenaries who have enriched themselves by working for the Therans. In fact, Piroliel used the mercenaries' own greed to trap them. In recent weeks, the Therans have informed their adept hirelings that great rewards await those who recover dragon-related artifacts, an announcement that inspired Piroliel to supply the Water Lane Gang with fake antique documents suggesting that one of Mountainshadow's pattern items could be found in the Burning Caves. Sure enough, the mercenaries headed out to the caves. Piroliel then went to Bartertown to make contact with Icewing's agents. Piroliel selected the gang not only because it deserved a cruel fate, but also because the gang's racial makeup and various Disciplines closely resemble those of the adventurers' group as described by Icewing (dragons are well known for their forethought).

The Burning Caves are so named because the temperature inside them is unnaturally high all year long. The heat inside the caves is so great that Initiative penalties for all non-magical armor are doubled. This means that the player characters must decide whether to remove their armor, as the Water Lane Gang has done, or fight impaired by the oppressive heat.

Ask for copies of your players' character sheets a session or two before this encounter. Create game statistics for the Water Lane Gang by adding two Circles to each of the player characters' game statistics. This should make for a reasonably fair fight because you, as gamemaster, will have to keep track of a large number of adepts' talents and spells, while the players will be responsible for one adept apiece and will be more familiar with his or her abilities. One adventurer should be the odd adept out, without an exact counterpart in the Water Lane Gang. If you prefer to create new characters to fight the player characters, use the Adept statistics, p. 110.

Feel free to complicate the battle with other odd features of the Burning Caves. The caves are a legendary bad place, so just about anything is possible.

Once the adventurers have defeated the Water Lane Gang and appropriated the mercenaries' distinctive gear, they can head to the behemoth.

### Event 4

As described in **The Theran Behemoth**, security is tight at the fortress city. Fortunately for the characters, the Therans at Triumph maintain a network of local quislings and mercenaries, and from time to time these hirelings must enter the fortress to meet with their Theran contacts. By asking questions in the communities that surround it, the player characters can learn enough about operations at the behemoth to pose as mercenaries and fake their way in. In fact, the adventurers may already know enough to bluff their way past the guards if they have been involved in previous adventures related to the behemoth (see **The Theran Behemoth**, p. 14). Regardless of how the characters approach the behemoth, make it a tough roleplaying challenge! Have fun playing the various guards who interrogate them, each more skeptical than the last.

### Event 5

Once inside the behemoth's outer walls, the characters must get the chest containing Hefera's bones into the private chamber of General Nikar. Though Nikar is not an especially fearful person, Theran military procedure demands a high level of security for senior officers; the threat of assassination by Resistance forces is a constant in operations like this one. Whether the characters use magical talents or guile, make sure they face many suspense-generating obstacles as they try to get the bones into Nikar's chamber. Give them plenty of close calls and make them sweat.

### Climax

Once the adventurers penetrate the Theran base, the outcome is inevitable. The Therans eventually discover the characters, and the adventurers must make a climactic, breakneck escape from the hundreds of Theran soldiers in the behemoth. The adventurers might be discovered when someone fails a crucial test during the attempt to plant the chest in Nikar's chambers. If not, they are spotted by a local collaborator who has dealt with the Water Lane Gang first-hand and identifies the adventurers as impostors.

If the characters participated in the adventure titled **The Heart of Triumph** (p. 35 in **The Theran Behemoth**), they may already have been inside the fortress and may know an ideal way out. Of course, previous dealings in Triumph also increase the chances that Theran soldiers or slavers will recognize the characters as they make their way through the fortress city.





## OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

Below are some additional adventure ideas based on the capture of Aardelea and the dragons' efforts to rescue her. These adventure ideas concern events more peripheral to the main story line, which makes them ideal for player character groups unsuited for alliance with dragons.

Of course, characters who participate in adventures described in the preceding frameworks can also play these. The shorter adventure ideas, however, should be used either before or after the framework adventures, which are designed to take place consecutively.

### NIGHT OF THE HUNTERS

Two junior archivists of the Great Library of Throal go missing, and the adventurers seek the reward posted by Merrox and the Great Library for information leading to their safe return. The two archivists, Lawost and Jalubian, were working on innocuous, unconnected projects when they vanished from their respective homes in the Halls of Throal and the city of Yistane. Merrox is concealing one vital fact from the public, however—namely, that he and King Neden suspect Theran treachery of some sort because both archivists were members of the group sent to Hanto to study Aardelea on Mountainshadow's behalf. In fact, Merrox and Neden believe the archivists' disappearance points to a covert struggle between the Therans and Barsaive's dragons.

Unfortunately, this "clue" is misleading. Lawost has a drinking problem, and one night he began to confide in the wrong drinking partners about his mission to Hanto and the fact that the library does favors for Mountainshadow. Those "wrong people" were not Theran agents; they were members of the Cult of the Great Hunter, a Living Legend cult that worships the dread dragon-slaying Horror known as Verjigorm. The cult members kidnapped Lawost and Jalubian expecting to learn things they could use against the dragons to show their devotion to Verjigorm.

If the servants of Verjigorm learn of Aardelea's existence, her life is in even graver danger. The adventurers can save the day by tracking down and breaking up this ring of Horror thralls in the very bosom of Throal. If Tyrllaan (from the adventure **Shattered Pattern**) survived, he might be in charge of this cell of cult members. (For information on Tyrllaan, see p. 56, **Shattered Pattern**.)

For more information about Verjigorm and the Cult of the Great Hunter, see **Shattered Pattern** (p. 70) and in the Verjigorm entry in the **Horrors** sourcebook (p. 66).

### JUNGLE VENGEANCE

This adventure occurs after the events of the three framework adventures. It begins as the player characters

are pursuing a piece of information related to one of their personal agendas—for example, one of the adventurers may be seeking the key knowledge of a magical treasure. During their investigations, they learn that a shaman (pp. 103–107, **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets**) of the Cathan tribe of the Servos Jungle might be able to tell them what they need to know.

They travel to the jungle, facing a number of dangerous creatures along the way. Once there, they must undergo various ordeals to win the confidence of the tribesmen before the shaman agrees to tell them what they need to know—in exchange for a service. Apparently, an unidentified intruder killed the shaman's son a few months ago, and the shaman wants the adventurers to avenge his death. She consulted the spirits to learn the identity of the killer, but the spirits provided only a leaf with the man's face imprinted on it. The shaman gives the characters the broad leaf, which contains a lifelike rendering of a face. The face displays the strange mixture of elfin and human features common to many Therans.

The adventurers can find the person pictured on the leaf by asking around in Theran-controlled territory. He is Chavenius, the Theran military officer who headed the team that kept Aardelea in the Servos Jungle while Icewing's agents hunted for her in Vivane. Chavenius killed the shaman's son when a number of Cathan tribesmen surprised the Therans on a jungle trail. Before the player characters exact the shaman's vengeance against Chavenius, however, they can learn Aardelea's ultimate fate—she has been taken to an unknown location in the Theran Empire for further study.

### THE MESSAGE

Icewing and Mountainshadow can communicate more-or-less directly with one another because each has one of the legendary Eyes of All-Wing. However, when the other dragons of Barsaive must be consulted on matters concerning all of dragonkind, the lines of communication are more labored. Because of this situation, a mysterious patron (actually Tellanion, one of Icewing's drakes) hires the adventurers to take a message to Earthroot. Tellanion's message is an update on Aardelea's status (whatever that might be when you insert this adventure into your campaign).

Some readers may recognize Earthroot as the dragon who dwells in the underground section of the Serpent River beneath the Throal Mountains; Earthroot is the patron of the t'skrang Pale Ones who dwell there. Previous knowledge of Earthroot is not required for this adventure, however. In fact, the adventure may prove especially entertaining for players whose characters who do not know Earthroot's true identity. (For more information





about Earthroot, see the t'skrang section of **Denizens of Earthdawn, Volume I**.)

To find Earthroot, the player characters must make it past bandits, members of a t'skrang-hating Living Legend cult, jealous dwarf miners who assume the adventurers have discovered a new source of elemental water, and the xenophobic Pale Ones themselves. If the adventurers make it to Earthroot, the strange dragon thanks them for their work, offers them a reward—and then reminds them that it is his custom to demand an interesting story from each visitor who does not wish to be eaten.

## LOOSE ENDS

Despite their best efforts, the player characters cannot rescue Aardelea from the Therans' clutches. Instead, they can only watch as the tensions between Thera and the great dragons of Barsaive inevitably grow. The following sections describe this aftermath.

### AARDELEA'S FATE

The magical order that Hefera once led has taken Aardelea to a remote facility in the Theran province of Creana. Though Hefera is dead, his colleagues will carry on the research he intended, with substantial support from the First Governor. In time, the Therans' research reveals that Aardelea's true pattern is no longer that of a young human girl, but represents a unique cross between drake and Name-giver. This discovery attracts the attention of magicians from all across the Theran Empire, including the Heavenherds.

Given Aardelea's unique nature, the Therans do not wish to harm her. Instead, they want to use her for further research in hopes of re-creating the circumstances that led to her current condition. Unfortunately for the Therans, Aardelea does not really understand what happened to her. She remembers finding the *Book of Blue Spirits*, which gave her unusual powers, but beyond that she doesn't really know anything.

As the months pass, Aardelea's pattern continues to evolve, slowly taking on more and more drake characteristics. Her powers strengthen, and she may even develop additional powers and abilities.

### THE DRAGONS AND THE THERANS

Though the dragons desperately want to reclaim Aardelea from the Therans, they are powerless to do so at present. They do not know where the Therans have taken her, and they fear that any overtly antagonistic acts may prompt the Therans to kill her. Icewing and Mountainshadow therefore launch a campaign of coercion

and political pressure designed to force the Therans to return her.

The dragons begin to make life in Barsaive unbearable for the Therans. Though they announce no official alliance with Throal, they direct their operatives to seek damaging information about Thera, which the dragons then pass along to the dwarf kingdom. They aid the Barsaivian Resistance with information on the locations of great magical treasures the guerrillas can employ against the Therans. Now and then, a great dragon lazily glides over Barsaive in search of a tasty-looking Theran trade or military caravan. Theran officials face increased assassination threats, as the drakes are assigned to slay as many prominent Theran bureaucrats as possible. Icewing and Mountainshadow even send drakes to other areas of Barsaive to rouse more great dragons against the Therans.

The characters may become involved in the dragons' anti-Theran efforts in a number of ways. For example, the adventurers may act as contacts between the dragons and the Barsaivian Resistance or may be hired to attack Theran caravans. The characters may even be hired to help locate Aardelea—an adventure that might take the characters far beyond Barsaive's borders and into other regions of the Theran Empire.

As for the Therans in Barsaive, they are ordered to treat dragons and their agents as the greatest threat facing the Empire. This may seem odd considering the greater political influence and military strength of Throal, but the First Governor is adamant. Anyone in Vivane or the Lake Ban area with suspected ties to the dragons is in danger of arrest, interrogation and even execution. Anti-dragon hysteria sweeps both regions. Name-givers loyal to the Therans fear that anyone—neighbors, friends, even relatives—could be serving the terrible dragons. Meanwhile, Name-givers who loathe the Therans call on the dragons to declare open war against Thera and liberate them from their oppressors.

In short, a potentially massive war looms. Within months Barsaive may very well become a battlefield once again, the site of a major conflict pitting the forces of Thera against Barsaive's great dragons, their allies and Throal.

In the meantime, however, characters who participated in the framework adventures face more direct concerns. The Therans identify such characters as enemies of the Empire, and the First Governor places bounties on the heads of the "unknown miscreants" who captured Hefera for Icewing. Such a bounty enhances a character's legendary status by giving a character a one-time bonus of 1,300 Legend Points. However, a character saddled with such a bounty can never again let down his guard, because assassination attempts will plague him for the rest of his life.





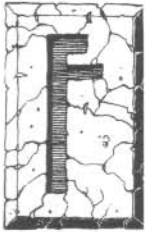


# RISE OF THE ORK NATION





# THE PROMISED ONE



For as long as Krathis Gron could remember, she had lived in a world of darkness and pain. Like her mother, her mother's mother, and countless orks before her, Krathis emerged from the womb into a bleak world of servitude and oppression. The daughter of an indentured miner, she became the property of another as soon as she was born.

Krathis spent the first few years of her life strapped to her mother's back, staring at the dank walls of earth that formed her world. Within a few years, she too would pick at the hard rock; her back would slowly begin to curve under the weight of the loads of stone, and her lungs would blacken with the dust of endless days and nights in the mine.

But unlike her mother, Krathis would not die in the mine. Unlike the hundreds of other orks toiling away under the Caucavic Mountains, Krathis would one day see the sun—and she would lead other orks into the light of freedom as well. Krathis knew this because her mother had told her of it. Krathis's mother could not explain how *she* knew this, but she knew it all the same. Even before Krathis could crawl, the old woman began to tell her daughter of the Dream, describing the vision of freedom to the child as if she were reciting a daily prayer. At first, the other miners ridiculed Krathis's mother. But as time passed, they too began to notice something different about the girl. A few even began to speak in hushed tones of the Promised One.

The other orks were not the only ones to notice Krathis, however. At first, the masters of the mine observed Krathis's defiance and the deference her fellow orks showed her with amusement. As the years passed, however, that amusement turned to caution and then fear, and Gron spent increasing periods in the dark isolation shaft where the mine masters confined troublemakers.

Despite her trials, Krathis never forgot the Dream, never abandoned her quest for freedom. In the middle of her third decade of indenture, Krathis's years of effort in the isolation shaft paid off—she completed a side tunnel and escaped. Drunk with her newfound freedom, Krathis vowed to see and experience as much of this new life as she could before old age finally claimed her.

Over the years, Krathis made good on her vow. She traveled throughout the land, first as a member of an adventuring band, then with an airship crew before set-

ting into a comfortable life as a caravan trader. In time, her memory of the Dream and her life in the mines faded until she was not sure they had ever happened.

Then one day, as she led her caravan across the deserts of Cathay, disaster struck. A roving band of raiders attacked. Like a cloud of flies they swarmed over the merchant and her caravan, and Krathis fell as a club smashed into her head. When she awoke, she found her wagons sacked, her animals stolen, and her companions lying dead around her. Driven by an irresistible force, she rose and began to walk toward a mountain on the horizon. The desert sand scorched her bloody feet, packs of wild dogs ripped at her flesh, but she continued on. Day turned to night, bringing forth poisonous spiders and other nocturnal creatures of the wilderness, but Krathis did not stop. Even when the sun climbed high in the sky once more and dry winds stretched and cracked her skin, she kept walking.

After five days, Krathis stood at the foot of the steep, stark mountain—a mass of bleached rock that shimmered in the noonday sun. Without hesitating, she began the torturous climb, her hands and skin burning whenever they touched the stone. Less than halfway up, Krathis's strength failed her. She curled up in the scant shade of a large boulder, her face pressed against the rough, hot stone.

Then the Passion Astendar, in the form of a jeweled lizard, scampered toward her. The lizard paused to cock its head as it regarded her with a large black eye.

"Orks have forgotten the beauty of their ways," the lizard said.

Krathis blinked and looked at it. "I will return the orks to their old ways, ways undiluted by elf or dwarf," she said.

"Not enough," said the lizard, "not enough passion for love or art." Then the lizard retreated a few paces, and Krathis felt a darkness seep into the lizard's heart.

Next the Passion Thystonius, in the form of a sakr, dove from the sky with a hunting cry, furiously beating its wings as it landed a few feet from Krathis. Raptor claws dug into rock as it regarded her with fierce eyes. "Orks fight for others, fight for coin rather than courage," the sakr said.

"I will carry the banner of the orks across all Barsaive," Krathis replied. "We shall fight only for ourselves."

"Not enough—not enough passion for the fight and





the telling blow," said the sakr as it flapped a few paces away, and Krathis felt a darkness seep into the bird's heart.

Then the Passion Lochost, in the form of a wild dog, padded next to her. Its hot breath panted in her face as its shiny eyes met hers. "Orks shackle themselves as much as they are shackled by others," the dog said.

"I will shatter the shackles of the orks wherever I find them," Krathis answered. "I will not rest until all orks are free."

The dog whined and turned away. "Not enough—not enough passion for change and freedom," it said. Krathis' spirit sank as she felt darkness claim the heart of the dog.

Suddenly, Krathis noticed a spider that had wedged itself into a crack in the rock near her. The spider, who was in truth the Passion Upandal, lowered itself slowly on a strand until it hung a finger's distance from her face. "The orks have forgotten how to build for themselves," the spider said gently.

"I will gather the orks to build according to their ideals, not the plans of another master," Krathis said.

The spider swayed in the hot breeze, began to climb back up its strand, then descended again to ask, "To what end, O daughter of Hrak Gron?"

Krathis pondered the spider's words. The spider waited. The dog panted. The lizard scuttled beneath a rock. The sakr hopped impatiently.

"I will gather the orks to build a nation," Krathis said.

Suddenly the spider grew huge. It regarded her with

glittery, multi-faceted eyes. "Can you build a nation to banish the darkness?" it asked.

Krathis looked from one animal to the other. She saw the mark of the Scourge in the darkness, the scars on the hearts of the Passions. She knew what she must do.

"I will raise a *gahad* so hot that it will burn in the heart of every ork," she replied. "I will raise a *gahad* so bright that it will banish the darkness in your hearts. I will raise a *gahad* so beautiful that it will restore your faith in our mortal hearts."

"When you most need it, the love of orks shall be yours," said the lizard. Then it scampered away.

"When you most need it, the battle shall be yours," said the sakr. Then it screamed and flew away.

"When you most need it, freedom shall be yours," said the dog. It howled long in the sun, then ran away.

"Whenever you need it, as long as you need it, this *gahad* of nation shall be yours," said the spider.

Then the spider crawled to her ear and whispered, "Sleep now, Krathis. When you wake, travel to the east and learn all you can. From your first step of this journey to your last, I shall be with you. You and I must build a heart big enough to hold a *gahad* for all orks and all time."

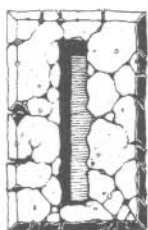
At that, Krathis fell asleep. When she awoke, the pale light of dawn revealed a bedroll, fresh clothes, a pack full of food and four waterskins stacked neatly at her side. Krathis took them and set back down the mountain, striking out for Cathay and all she could learn there.







# BACKGROUND



In ancient times, southwest Barsaive was home to the ork nation of Cara Fahd. A kingdom of warriors, Cara Fahd was known and feared throughout the land. But even its proud, strong armies could not stem the dark tide of greed and bloodletting that beset Barsaive during the Theran-inspired Orichalcum Wars. By the time that terrible conflict ended, Cara Fahd lay in ruins and the orks were scattered across Barsaive.

In the years following the fall of Cara Fahd, several influential orks attempted to reunite their brethren and restore the ork kingdom. Though those orks failed, they managed to instill in their fellow orks the faith that one day a leader would appear to inspire them. Then Cara Fahd and the ork nation would rise again, and the orks would retake their rightful place among the Name-givers of Barsaive.

As time passed, however, most of Barsaive's orks attempted to integrate themselves into larger Barsaivian society. Many other Name-givers viewed orks as uncultured brutes, and many orks began to abandon the old ork ways to better fit in with their newly adopted neighbors. Forced to eke out a living along the margins of Name-giver society, many orks suppressed their inherent love of freedom and gave little, if any, thought to Cara Fahd.

A small number of Barsaive's orks refused to assimilate. These orks lived in nomadic bands that wandered the hinterlands of Barsaive, raiding settlements and occasionally hiring themselves out as mercenary cavalry. These tribes embraced the old ork ways with fierce determination, and all of them held onto the belief that one day Cara Fahd would rise again. Unfortunately, ancient feuds divided the tribes, and no leader proved wise and strong enough to unite the tribes long enough to begin rebuilding the ork kingdom—until Krathis Gron appeared on the scene.

## THE SEEDS OF NATION

Krathis Gron spent many years in Cathay after receiving her vision in the desert (see **The Promised One**, p. 86), preparing herself for her task. With the aid of scholars, magicians and adepts, Krathis mastered many new talents. Throughout her training, the Passions rejuvenated her body and restored the vigor of her youth.

As her training drew to a close, Krathis wrote a series of letters. These letters, known as the Seeds of Nation, formed a manifesto that called for the birth of a new ork nation built on the traditions of the ancient land of Cara Fahd.

With the help of the Passions, the manifesto reached orks all across Barsaive, from the scorcher tribes to the city-dwellers. The letters re-ignited the dream of Cara Fahd among urban orks who had almost forgotten it, and convinced the scorcher tribes that the orks' time was at hand.

As excitement and hope reached a fever pitch among Barsaive's orks, Krathis Gron returned to Barsaive and began to travel the province, preaching her vision of a new ork nation. From the smallest villages to the huge cities of Kratas, Urupa and Travar, orks greeted Krathis with a hero's welcome. She received much the same treatment from the scorcher tribes. Though most of the tribal leaders initially resented her challenge to their authority, they soon realized that they were powerless to check her popularity among their subjects and grudgingly lent her their support.

Intoxicated with their impending freedom, the orks of Barsaive started to migrate to the lands of ancient Cara Fahd along the southern edge of the Delaris Mountains. Finally, it seemed the time had come to reclaim their birthright. A new, weak king sat on the throne of Throal, preoccupied with the renewed Theran threat in Barsaive (see **The Theran Behemoth**, p. 14, and **The King is Dead!**, p. 44, respectively). Nothing seemed to stand in the way of the new ork nation.

However, others in Barsaive noticed the activity among the province's orks, and determined to use it for their own ends.

## THE THERAN RESPONSE

Soon after Krathis Gron's homecoming, Theran agents in Barsaive noticed the excitement among Barsaive's orks. They obtained a copy of the Seeds of Nation, which they forwarded to General Ilfaralek, Overgovernor Kypros's spy-master in Vivane. Ilfaralek was well aware of the historical bad blood between Barsaive's orks and Thera and harbored no illusions about treaties or alliances with any ork tribe or nation. Sensing an opportunity to harass Throal, sabotage the ork independence movement and keep Barsaive's orks and dwarfs from uniting against Thera, Ilfaralek assigned Palinque, a Theran ork wizard stationed at Sky Point, to subvert the growing ork nationalist movement and sow discord between the orks and Throal.





Palinque, who had moved his operation to the Theran base at Triumph, used Spymaster Gendel's intelligence network to study the situation and devised a two-part plan.

First, Palinque took steps to conceal the ork situation from Throal. He directed a Theran agent at the Great Library of Throal to intercept and destroy any copies of the *Seeds of Nation* that reached the library. In place of these documents, the agent substituted false letters, full of the mad ramblings of a desert nomad, with no scholarly or practical value. To complete the deception, Ilfaralek ordered Theran agents to feed misinformation about the ork situation to their Throalic counterparts.

Next, Palinque set about subverting the ork movement's leadership. His agents among the orks identified Moschtug, the self-proclaimed "King of Cara Fahd" (see the *Earthdawn* adventure collection *Blades* for more information about Moschtug), as the most promising target for this effort. Though Moschtug had long proclaimed himself "King of Cara Fahd," he had no more claim to the title than any other of the many ork raider chieftains; he called himself king because his band—the Fists of Fahd—ranged the foothills of the Delaris Mountains near the ruins of ancient Cara Fahd. Palinque's operatives identified Moschtug as a vain, unintelligent braggart, more easily manipulated than any other ork leader.





Moschtug's claims to the throne elicited little support among his fellow orks, and he remained a minor figure in ork politics—until the extraordinary discovery of a set of ancient stone tablets. The tablets purportedly traced Moschtug's lineage to the last kings of ancient Cara Fahd and firmly established his right to rule. The tablets were forgeries, created by Palinque. As the Theran had hoped, they lent Moschtug an air of legitimacy which, along with the machinations of Theran agents among the orks and Moschtug's own considerable charisma, enabled Moschtug to unite his band with other ork tribes in the area and win the support of individual orks within a few weeks. After helping establish Moschtug as a major ork leader, Palinque's operatives began operations designed to foment hostilities between the emerging ork nation and Throal; they intended these operations to destroy the nascent nation before it could fully form.

Palinque's precautions, along with the relatively low number of orks migrating from Throal, initially kept Throal in the dark about the ork nation-in-the-making. As a result, Throal failed to recognize the growing strength of the orks and their potential value as allies against Thera, and made no effort to establish relations with Krathis or other ork leaders.

## EVENT SYNOPSIS

The events of **Rise of the Ork Nation** begin slowly and steadily build to a climax. Over the course of several months, they lead to Krathis Gron's formal proclamation of a new ork nation and the rebirth of Cara Fahd. The **Adventure Ideas and Frameworks** beginning on p. 99 enable player characters to become involved in the events of the story line as they occur.

The characters can first become involved in the story by playing the encounter described in the adventure idea **The Theran Kiss** (p. 99). In this encounter, the Theran operative Palinque has determined by magical means that the adventurers will be involved in the birth of the new ork nation, so he uses the Theran Kiss spell to contact them. The spell enables Palinque to keep tabs on the characters and the new ork nation.

In **Kidnapped!** (p. 100), the adventurers become entangled in Moschtug's political maneuverings, by which they may learn of the ork nationhood movement. The adventure also provides an opportunity to introduce Captain Stetgarth of the Throalic army into the campaign (Stetgarth and his men come into play at the end of the story). In **Imprisoned by the Passions** (p. 100), the players find themselves in a village where Krathis Gron is awaiting execution on the charge of inciting a riot. This encounter

enables the adventurers to meet Krathis and witness the excitement she is generating among Barsaive's orks.

The adventure frameworks pick up the story from there. In **Night Maneuvers** (p. 101), the adventurers help Krathis guide the Metal Fist tribe unnoticed past the Theran forces assembled at Lake Ban, as the orks make their way to ancient Cara Fahd. This encounter acquaints the adventurers with the mass ork migration to the Delaris Mountains. In **Betrayal** (p. 101), Palinque makes his move against the orks. First, his operatives in Moschtug's tribe convince Moschtug's warriors to attack dwarfs in the area, thereby generating hostility between the orks and local dwarfs. Then Palinque tricks Moschtug into magically weakening his warriors just as the ork leader is about to lead them in a misguided offensive against local Theran troops.

**Incident at Claw Ridge** (p. 105) is the final event of the story line. In this adventure framework, the characters join with the dwarfs of Captain Stetgarth's patrol in a military action against Theran forces near Cara Fahd. Just as the Throalic and Theran forces clash, thousands of ork warriors led by Krathis Gron appear and surround the combatants. During the ensuing pause in the fighting, Krathis informs the Throalic and Theran troops that they are standing in the sovereign territory of the new ork nation of Cara Fahd. She orders them to drop their weapons and leave—or die.

## ORK MIGRATION AND ALLEGIANCES

As described in the preceding **Background** and **Event Synopsis** sections, Krathis Gron inspires the allegiance of orks from all across Barsaive and prompts an ork migration, which begins slowly and grows as the events of the story unfold.

The vast majority of migrating orks are "civilians"—orks from Barsaive's various towns, villages and cities. At the beginning of **Rise of the Ork Nation**, roughly 5 percent of Barsaive's ork population is devoted to Krathis's cause. As the story progresses, this number increases. By the climax of **Incident At Claw Ridge**, nearly 20 percent of Barsaive's orks have relocated to southwest Barsaive or intend to make the journey soon. This mass migration of orks is not uniform across Barsaive. In some regions, such as the Kingdom of Throal, few orks choose to join Krathis. In other areas, such as the region near the Tylon Mountains and Barsaive's hinterlands, a vast majority of orks choose to join the new nation.

Many of Barsaive's ork scorcher tribes also join Krathis during the events of this story. The smaller ork tribes, such as the Fists of Fahd, the Righteous Vipers and others from the Tylon Mountain region, are the first to throw in their







lot with Krathis. Over the course of weeks and months, some of the larger ork tribes also join the nation-building movement. The first to join is the Broken Fang Tribe, led by Charok Redhand and his son Tarjak Stormcloud (p. 70, *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*). They are soon followed by the Metal Fist Tribe, led by Bronze Eyes (pp. 70–71, *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*). The last of the major tribes to join Krathis's new nation are the Thunderers, led by Titanstroke Greybeard. None of the leaders of these tribes are too happy about joining the emerging nation because it means giving up some of their own authority; however, *they are willing to make that sacrifice in the cause of ork unity*. Also, all of them realize that their subjects might simply stop following them if they ignore Krathis's call. All the tribal leaders attempt to retain as much power as they can, and some—such as Moschtug—plan to usurp Krathis's throne at the first opportunity.

The other major ork tribes, with the exception of Terath's Chargers (pp. 67–68, *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*), remain silent on the matter or flatly refuse to join the new nation. Tensions among the Chargers' leaders have splintered the tribe into two factions, each led by one of Terath the Contemplative's children (Earal Bloodstroke and Zarass Icthought). After an aborted attempt on her brother's life (see p. 85, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*), Icthought and her loyal warriors declare themselves separate from the rest of Terath's Chargers and reportedly head to southwest Barsaive to join the emerging ork nation. The remaining Chargers opt to renew their contract with the Arm of Throal (see p. 83, *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*).

## THE ORK NATION AND THE BLADES OF CARA FAHD

The Blades of Cara Fahd represent another connection between *Rise of the Ork Nation* and the *Earthdawn* adventure collection *Blades*.

Readers familiar with *Blades* may remember that the Blades of Cara Fahd are a set of matched daggers once wielded by the Seven Spokes, an ancient adventuring group loyal to Cara Fahd. Despite its loyalty, the group unwittingly betrayed Cara Fahd, thus tying the daggers to the fall of the original ork kingdom.

As described in *Blades*, the Blades of Cara Fahd have since fallen into the hands of a group of adepts—the player characters. Since the events described in *Blades*, word has spread throughout southwestern Barsaive that the cursed Blades of Cara Fahd still exist and now belong to an adventuring band that has sworn to free the Blades from their curse.

Despite the curse, the Blades still hold a special place in the history of Cara Fahd, and so they represent one of the few links between the ancient kingdom and the orks' present-day aspirations. If Krathis Gron learns that the

characters have the Blades of Cara Fahd, she insists that the daggers are a sign from the Passions that the characters are destined to aid her in her struggle to rebuild the ancient ork kingdom. In fact, she may even ask that the player characters return the Blades to their rightful owner—the ruler of Cara Fahd. If the characters have invested any threads or Legend Points in the daggers, they will likely refuse to hand them over. In this case, Krathis accepts their decision but asks that they deed the Blades to the new nation of Cara Fahd at their deaths.

If the characters agree to immediately hand over the Blades, Krathis recognizes them as heroes dedicated to the cause of a new Cara Fahd, and their Names will be celebrated in song and story throughout the ork nation. This Deed is worth 5,000 Legend Points per character, which will help offset the loss of any Legend Points the characters have invested in threads woven to the daggers.

Of course, if the characters have not completed the adventures in *Blades* and have not exorcised the Horror Betrayer that dwells in the daggers' pattern, Krathis will not be so eager to obtain the Blades. In fact, both Moschtug and Krathis will spurn the characters because they carry the cursed daggers responsible for the fall of ancient Cara Fahd.

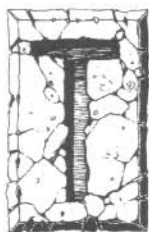
Ambitious gamemasters may run the adventures in *Blades* concurrently with the adventures of *Rise of the Ork Nation*. Keep in mind that the Horror Betrayer remains in the Blades' pattern as long as the characters maintain threads to the daggers but do not complete all the adventures in *Blades*. During this time, Betrayer can use its influence to affect the outcome of several of the adventures in this story. Of course, Moschtug will certainly recognize the characters and spurn them—in fact, he may order his warriors to attack the characters. Moschtug has experienced Betrayer's power and knows that the curse of the daggers is powerful enough to destroy the new ork nation before it is fully born.

Gamemasters running concurrent adventures in this manner will need to adjust the ork-nation adventures to reflect the specific effects of Betrayer's influence and the reactions of the orks who meet the characters. The amount of modification needed depends on the prominence of the Blades and Betrayer in the ork-nation campaign. For more information about Betrayer's powers and influence, see *Betrayer's Powers*, pp. 12–13 of *Blades*.





# IMPORTANT CHARACTERS



his section describes the major gamemaster characters of **Rise of the Ork Nation**. Complete game statistics are supplied only for gamemaster characters whom the player characters are likely to fight during the story.

Some of the character descriptions include talent knacks. Rules for talent knacks appear on pp. 18–24 of **Magic: A**

**Manual of Mystic Secrets**.

## KRATHIS GRON

Chosen by the Passions to create the greatest ork nation in the history of the world, Krathis struggles to be worthy of such a destiny. Her abilities are great, but forging a nation from disparate tribes is an extremely difficult feat that prompts even the most confident and talented leader to doubt herself.

Krathis Gron is a descendant of the legendary Hrak Gron, the ork who led the Great Uprising. Hrak Gron became the traditional embodiment of the orks' love of freedom, in the process also becoming the first practitioner of the Liberator Discipline (p. 106, **Denizens of Earthdawn Volume II**). Krathis did not recognize her connection to Hrak Gron, however, until the Passions visited her in the desert outside Cathay and bestowed on her the *gahad* to rebuild Cara Fahd.

Krathis has sworn special service to the Passion Upandal (or *grikgrikgrik*, as the orks call him) and is a Rank 5 questor of that Passion. Ironically, many of her followers are convinced she is a questor of either Lochost or Thystonius, the Passions of freedom and conflict. Krathis does nothing to dispel such mistaken beliefs; she knows that many orks dislike Upandal because they associate the builder Passion with the time when enslaved orks built kaers for other Name-givers.

Krathis responds warmly to any characters willing to help her build a new ork nation, and any characters who significantly aid the ork nation's cause win her friendship. Otherwise Krathis will seem cool and even a bit hostile to all non-ork adventurers, especially when discussing the ork homeland.

Though Krathis is devoted to her cause, she also recognizes that many other worthwhile causes exist in Barsaive. She knows the emerging ork nation is a fragile union that must carefully choose its battles. Therefore, she is diplomatic whenever possible. Initially, she is cool but

deferential to local authorities not engaged in obvious outrages against orks under their jurisdictions.

By the time of **Night Maneuvers**, however, Krathis's growing political power enables her to drop any pretense of deference to non-ork authorities. Her toughness and drive come to the fore, and her actions make it clear that she expects people to either help her in her time of need or get out of her way.

By the time of **Incident at Claw Ridge**, Krathis is exhausted, edgy and driven almost mad with the need to fulfill her destiny. Characters who have been friendly with her in the past may manage to break through her preoccupation and really talk to her, but others will get nothing more out of her than a pastiche of speeches regarding her *gahad* to build a new ork nation.

Krathis is well over sixty years of age, but she appears to be barely past twenty thanks to the magical rejuvenation that the Passions bestowed on her.

### KRATHIS GRON

Sixth Circle Ork Warrior/Ninth Circle Troubadour

#### Attributes

Dexterity (16): 7/D12  
Strength (19): 8/2D6  
Toughness (17): 7/D12  
Perception (19): 8/2D6  
Willpower (14): 6/D10  
Charisma (22): 9/D8 + D6

#### Talents

Acrobatic Strike (5): 12/2D10  
Air Dance (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Anticipate Blow (6): 14/D20 + D4  
Avoid Blow (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Bardic Voice (4): 13/D12 + D10  
Blade Juggle (2): 9/D8 + D6  
Disguise (7): 15/D20 + D6  
Down Strike (6): 17/D20 + D10  
Durability (Warrior) (8)  
Emotion Song (9): 18/D20 + D12  
Empathic Sense (7): 16/D20 + D8  
Engaging Banter (9): 18/D20 + D12  
First Impression (9): 18/D20 + D12  
Graceful Exit (9): 18/D20 + D12  
Haggle (7): 16/D20 + D8





Incite Mob (9): 15/D20 + D4  
 Item History (9): 17/D20 + D10  
 Karma Ritual (Troubadour) (9)  
 Karma Ritual (Warrior) (5)  
 Mimic Voice (6): 14/D20 + D4  
 Melee Weapons (9): 16/D20 + D8  
 Questor (Upandal) (6)  
 Read and Write Language (9): 17/D20 + D10  
 Resist Taunt (6): 12/2D10  
 Speak Language (9): 17/D20 + D10  
 Swift Kick (7): 14/D20 + D4  
 Taunt (9): 18/D20 + D12  
 Thread Weaving (Troubadour) (9): 17/D20 + D10  
 Thread Weaving (Warrior) (6): 14/D20 + D4  
 Throwing Weapons (6): 13/D12 + D10  
 True Sight (4): 12/2D10  
 Unarmed Combat (6): 13/D12 + D10  
 Wood Skin (6): 13/D12 + D10

#### Talent Knacks

Songs of Inspiration (Emotion Song)

#### Skills

Artisan/Leatherworking (1): 9/D8 + D6  
 Knowledge/Ancient Government (1): 6/D10  
 Knowledge/Myths and Legends (2): 8/2D6

#### Questor Powers (Upandal)

Create Bridge or Tower (6): 12/2D10  
 Create Weapon (6): 12/2D10  
 Fortify Structure (6): 12/2D10  
 Devotion Point Total: 1,800

#### Karma

Dice: D8  
 Points: 40

#### Initiative

Dice: D10

#### Movement

Full Movement: 85  
 Combat Movement: 42

#### Damage

Death Rating: 112  
 Wound Threshold: 11  
 Unconsciousness Rating: 88  
 Recovery Tests per Day: 4  
 Recovery Dice: D12

#### Combat

Physical Defense : 10  
 Spell Defense: 11  
 Social Defense: 12  
 Armor: 8  
 Mystic Armor: 5



#### Equipment

Chain Mail of Upandal with Rank 4 thread (Armor Value 8, Mystic Armor bonus of +3, no Initiative penalty)  
 Fist of Thystonius (two-handed sword) [Damage 18/D20 + D12]

#### Karma Notes

Krathis can spend Karma on Willpower and Dexterity Tests. She can also spend Karma to support another character's social action (Fifth Circle, p. 84, ED).

#### Discipline Notes

Krathis has the troubadour abilities The Kiss (Seventh Circle, p. 84, ED), and The Tale (Ninth Circle, p. 18, ED Companion).

#### Thread Weaving Notes

Krathis maintains a Rank 4 thread to her Chain Mail of Upandal.







### Special Notes

In addition to investing Krathis with the adept and questor abilities described in the preceding statistics, the Passions have given her a special Karma ability, called Honorable Armor, at Step 14. Krathis must spend 1 Karma Point whenever she uses this ability; add her Karma die when making her Honorable Armor Tests. The Difficulty Number for each test is the highest Social Defense of any opponent she is facing at the time. If the test succeeds, Krathis takes no damage from her opponent; if the test yields an Excellent or better success, Krathis's opponents suffer any damage their attacks would otherwise have caused her. Krathis cannot use this ability to attack her opponents.

## MOSCHTUG

The self-proclaimed "King of Cara Fahd," Moschtug is an ork's ork, committed to grabbing the good things in life: food, drink and battle. Moschtug is also committed to grabbing power for himself, and when he learns of the Seeds of Nation and the growing sentiment among orks for their own homeland, he does not hesitate to proclaim himself the rightful leader of the new nation. Unfortunately, his attempts to expand his political power meet with little success until the discovery of the lineage tablets (see **The Theran Response**, p. 88).

After the tablets surface, Moschtug begins to attract followers from neighboring scorchers tribes. This success bolsters Moschtug's confidence; he convinces himself that the other ork tribal leaders will recognize his claim to Cara Fahd's throne, and that he will eventually rule all the orks in Barsaive. At this stage of the story, Moschtug responds generously to any visiting characters, as befits a royal host.

As orks from outside the Delaris Mountain region began to arrive in larger numbers, however, Moschtug begins to realize that he cannot compete with Krathis Gron's popularity. He dares not oppose her directly for fear of losing the loyalty of his own followers, and so he grudgingly acknowledges her authority. Tensions between Krathis and Moschtug fester, until Moschtug openly defies Krathis's standing orders during his bid for power (see **Betrayal**, p. 103).

If the characters participated in the adventure **Bond Breaker** in **Blades**, Moschtug will remember them. If they succeeded in that adventure, Moschtug will welcome their return, though he will remain leery of the betraying influence of the **Blades**. If the characters failed or made an enemy of Moschtug during that adventure, Moschtug will treat them accordingly. (See **The Ork Nation and the Blades of Cara Fahd**, p. 91, for further information.)



By the time the events of **Imprisoned by the Passions** occur, Moschtug is concerned about the influx of orks who do not view him as their rightful ruler. He might confide his concerns to player characters who have aided him in the past.

When the events of **Night Maneuvers** occur, Moschtug feels threatened and is desperately searching for ways to secure his claim to the throne. He will not trust player characters who are friendly with Krathis Gron or have served her in the past.

In **Betrayal**, Moschtug trusts only individuals who are firmly in his confidence. He treats those in league with Krathis coolly at best, and may be openly hostile toward such individuals.

For additional biographical information about Moschtug, see the **Earthdawn** adventure collection **Blades**.

### MOSCHTUG

Sixth Circle Ork Cavalryman/Fifth Circle Warrior

#### Attributes

Dexterity (17): 7/D12  
Strength (19): 8/2D6  
Toughness (17): 7/D12  
Perception (10): 5/D8  
Willpower (10): 5/D8  
Charisma (20): 8/2D6





### Talents

Acrobatic Strike (5): 12/2D10  
Avoid Blow (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Charge (6): 14/D20 + D4  
Down Strike (5): 16/D20 + D8  
Durability (Cavalryman) (6)  
Karma Ritual (Cavalryman) (6)  
Karma Ritual (Warrior) (5)  
Melee Weapons (8): 15/D20 + D6  
Resist Taunt (6): 11/D10 + D8  
Swift Kick (3): 10/D10 + D8  
Throwing Weapons (5): 12/2D10  
Trick Riding (6): 11/D10 + D8  
Unarmed Combat (5): 12/2D10  
Wheeling Attack (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Wheeling Defense (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Wood Skin (5): 12/2D10

### Karma

Dice: D8  
Points: 40

### Skills

Artisan/Leatherworking (1): 9/D8 + D6  
Knowledge/Ancient Tactics (1): 6/D10  
Knowledge/Local Geography (3): 8/2D6

### Initiative

Dice: D6

### Movement

Full Movement: 90  
Combat Movement: 45

### Damage

Death Rating: 96  
Wound Threshold: 11  
Unconsciousness Rating: 80  
Recovery Tests per Day: 3  
Recovery Dice: D12

### Equipment

Chain mail  
Lance [Damage 13/D12 + D10; when charging 30/D20 + D10 + D8 + 2D6]  
Thundra beast  
Two-handed sword [Damage 15/D20 + D6]

### Karma Notes

Moschtug can spend Karma on Willpower and Recovery Tests and tests made by his mount (except for Damage Tests).

## PALINQUE

Palinque has almost forgotten his ork heritage. He has immersed himself in all things Theran, and has long indulged his taste for political intrigue by working as a Theran agent. He enjoys nothing more than the brutal assassination, the well-orchestrated scandal at the expense of a rival, or the successful completion of a complex scheme.

Early in his life, Palinque began to internalize the anti-ork prejudices of larger Barsaivian society. Unable to articulate his rage at the society that so despised orks, he denied his own heritage and turned his hate toward all things ork. For these reasons, he particularly relishes anti-ork operations and is quite excited about helping to abort the emerging ork nation.

Palinque views the player characters as simple pawns in his game to stop the ork nation from developing. He might admire their gamesmanship, but he does not consider them equals or worthy of consideration—unless, of course, he can use them to help achieve his goal. After **The Theran Kiss**, Palinque occasionally taunts the characters but primarily concerns himself with maneuvering them to the proper spot on his game board.

If the players thwart Palinque's plans in **Betrayal**, they earn his grudging respect. In turn, he lets the characters know they have earned an enemy for life as he plots his revenge against them.

### PALINQUE

Sixth Circle Ork Wizard/Sixth Circle Illusionist

### Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10  
Strength (11): 5/D8  
Toughness (14): 6/D12  
Perception (22): 9/D8 + D6  
Willpower (19): 8/2D6  
Charisma (13): 6/D10

### Talents

Anticipate Blow (5): 14/D20 + D4  
Arcane Mutterings (6): 14/D20 + D4  
Astral Sight (7): 16/D20 + D8  
Book Memory (6): 14/D20 + D4  
Book Recall (5): 14/D20 + D4  
Dead Fall (4): 12/2D10  
Disguise Self (6): 15/D20 + D6  
Durability (Illusionist) (6)  
Enhanced Matrix (6)  
Enhanced Matrix (5)  
Evidence Analysis (7): 16/D20 + D8  
False Sight (5): 14/D20 + D4





#### Talents (cont.)

Fast Hand (3): 12/2D10  
 Karma Ritual (Illusionist) (6)  
 Karma Ritual (Wizard) (4)  
 Lip Reading (6): 12/2D10  
 Read and Write Language (6): 15/D20 + D6  
 Read and Write Magic (7): 16/D20 + D8  
 Speak Language (6): 15/D20 + D6  
 Spellcasting (7): 16/D20 + D8  
 2 x Spell Matrix (6)  
 2 x Spell Matrix (5)  
 Thread Weaving (Illusion) (7): 16/D20 + D8  
 Thread Weaving (Wizardry) (6): 15/D20 + D6  
 Willforce (6): 14/D20 + D4

#### Talent Knacks

Forced Spellcasting (Spellcasting)  
 Increased Dispel Difficulty (Spellcasting)  
 Maintain Spell Threads (Spellcasting)  
 Spell Design (Spellcasting)  
 Spell Design (Thread Weaving/Wizard)  
 Thread Sight (Thread Weaving/Wizard)

#### Karma

Dice: D8  
 Points: 35

#### Skills

Artisan/Embroidery (2): 9/D8 + D6  
 Knowledge/Pre-Scourge History (4): 6/D10  
 Knowledge/Theran Politics (3): 8/2D6

#### Initiative

Dice: D10

#### Movement

Full Movement: 70  
 Combat Movement: 35

#### Combat

Physical Defense: 7  
 Spell Defense: 13  
 Social Defense: 9  
 Armor: 5  
 Mystic Armor: 8

#### Damage

Death Rating: 60  
 Wound Threshold: 10  
 Unconsciousness Rating: 46  
 Recovery Tests per Day: 2  
 Recovery Dice: D10

#### Equipment

Double-elemental silk robe with Rank 5 thread (Armor 5,  
 Mystic Armor bonus +5, no Initiative penalty)  
 Quarterstaff with Rank 4 thread [Damage: 12/2D10]

#### Karma Notes

Palinque can spend Karma on Charisma Tests.

#### Discipline Notes

Palinque has the troubadour ability Glamour at Fourth Circle (p. 74, ED).

#### Thread Weaving Notes

Palinque has a Rank 5 thread woven to his double-elemental robe, and a Rank 4 thread woven to his quarterstaff.

#### Spell Notes

Palinque knows all the Circle 1–6 wizard and illusionist spells.







## CAPTAIN STETGARTH

The Arm of Throal called Captain Stetgarth out of retirement shortly after King Neden announced his intention to attack the Theran behemoth at Lake Ban. Following that unsuccessful offensive, Stetgarth received orders to lead a Throalic cavalry unit on a roving mission through southwest Barsaive and engage Theran troops and any other enemies of Throal the unit might encounter.

Stetgarth knows Throalic politics well enough to realize that his unit's true mission is to "show the flag"—to demonstrate to Throal's enemies and all inhabitants of Barsaive that the Throalic army is still a force to be reckoned with, despite its humiliating loss at Prajor's Field. Furthermore, Stetgarth suspects that the mission also reflects King Neden's efforts to assuage his own personal humiliation from the defeat.

Stetgarth knows that he received command of the unit because he is expendable. Though his unit is adequately trained and equipped to handle bandits, he realizes that the small company of pony soldiers is doomed if it encounters a Theran force of any considerable size. After receiving his orders, he asked his family to remember him fondly and pray each night that his death be an honorable one. Then he told his sons to divide his possessions, hold a wake for him and look after his wife if they did not hear from him in a year's time.

Despite these actions, Stetgarth is not resigned to dying during the mission. He is angry that the leaders of Throal's army hold him at such little value, and he is determined that his troops will take as many of their opponents with them as they can when the time comes.

Stetgarth is calm and collected when preparing for battle, on the march or when drilling his troops. He is a firebrand in a fight, however, despite his age. His troops think him old-fashioned, which he is. They also think him a bit cowardly, which he is not. The mistaken notion of Stetgarth's cowardice stems from the eagerness of the youngbeards under him to prove themselves in battle, contrasted against his own well-learned caution.

In **Kidnapped!**, Stetgarth tries to get a feel for the lay of the land and glean some useful intelligence about Theran forces in the area. He will appreciate any help the player characters give him, especially useful intelligence on the movements of orks or Therans, and he will remember their help. Stetgarth is blunt when questioning civilians, and he may question the player characters' loyalties at any time during discussions.

In **Imprisoned by the Passions**, Stetgarth grows convinced that the rumors of an emerging ork nation are more than mere rumors. His superiors in Throal, however, remain unconvinced by his reports. In an attempt to reme-

dy this situation, Stetgarth may request that the characters act as "special couriers" to relay his concerns to the royal court at Throal.

Over the next two adventures, Stetgarth comes to view the nascent ork nation as a potential Throalic ally against Thera. However, he never loses sight of the fact that any organized Barsaivian group represents a potential threat to Throal, and he dismisses the gathering ork nation as a potential Throalic ally after the slaughter of dwarfs in **Betrayal**. In fact, the slaughter changes his mind. It convinces him that the new ork nation will be a grave enemy of Throal—unless, of course, the player characters can present him with evidence of Theran treachery behind the anti-dwarf hostilities.

Though Stetgarth is an intelligent, cautious commander, he and his troops will fight down to the last man in **Incident at Claw Ridge** if Stetgarth deems it necessary. If the characters are on good terms with him from prior events, however, he allows them to search for an alternative solution to an all-out battle.

### CAPTAIN STETGARTH

Sixth Circle Cavalryman

#### Attributes

Dexterity (14): 6/D10  
Strength (15): 6/D10  
Toughness (16): 7/D12  
Perception (17): 7/D12  
Willpower (14): 6/D8  
Charisma (16): 7/D12

#### Talents

Animal Bond (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Avoid Blow (6): 12/2D10  
Blood Share (5): 12/2D10  
Charge (6): 12/2D10  
Dominate Beast (4): 11/D10 + D8  
Durability (Cavalryman) (6)  
Durability (Mount) (5)  
Empathic Command (5): 11/D10 + D8  
Karma Ritual (6)  
Melee Weapons (7): 13/D12 + D10  
Resist Taunt (6): 11/D10 + D8  
Spirit Mount (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Sure Mount (6): 12/2D10  
Thread Weaving (Calvaryman) (6): 13/D12 + D10  
Trick Riding (6): 12/2D10  
Wheeling Attack (6): 12/2D10  
Wheeling Defense (6): 12/2D10





### Skills

Artisan/Woodcarving (1): 8/2D6

Knowledge/Military History (3): 11/D10 + D8

Knowledge/Tactics (6): 13/D12 + D10

### Initiative

Dice: D6

### Movement

Full Movement: 57

Combat Movement: 29

### Combat

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 9

Social Defense: 9

Armor: 4

Mystic Armor: 6

### Karma

Dice: D6

Points: 20

### Damage

Death Rating: 81

Wound Threshold: 11

Unconsciousness Rating: 67

Recovery Tests per Day: 3

Recovery Dice: 12

### Equipment

Crystal ringlet armor

Battle axe [15/D20 + D6; 30/D20 + D10 + D8 + 2D6 when charging]

War pony (Same as war horse, p. 304, **ED**, except that Combat Movement is 60 and Full Movement is 80. Stetgarth has Durability (Mount) so his pony has a Death Rating 73 and an Unconsciousness Rating 60)

Thread gauntlets with Rank 3 thread (+3 to Damage Tests; see p. 66-67, **ED Companion**)

Thread vial with Rank 4 thread (+7 steps to Recovery Tests or heals 1 Wound per day; see p. 69, **ED Companion**)

### Karma Notes

Captain Stetgarth can spend Karma on Recovery Tests, as well as on tests made by his mount (except for Damage Tests).

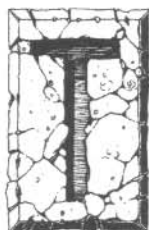
### Thread Weaving Notes

Captain Stetgarth has a Rank 3 thread woven to his gauntlets and a Rank 4 thread woven to a magical vial.





# RUNNING RISE OF THE ORK NATION



The emergence of a new ork nation is a major development that alters the balance of military and political power in Barsaive. This section provides adventure ideas and frameworks that trace the formation of the new nation, as well as guidelines for tying up loose ends and playing future adventures based on the events of the story.

## INTRODUCING THE EVENT

Player characters can hear rumors about the emerging ork nation virtually anywhere in Barsaive, because accounts of the nascent nation have flooded ork communities for weeks. Ork player characters might catch hints in any bar, market, or other location frequented by orks.

Additionally, Throal is not entirely unaware of what is going on. Though Palinque has been largely successful in his efforts to conceal ork activities from Throal, and even though most of Throal's arrogant dwarfs don't believe orks are capable of the organization needed to form a nation, some members of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps and the Eye of Throal have learned of the growing ork migration and heard rumors of mercenary ork tribes canceling their contracts.

Player characters can become involved in the events of **Rise of the Ork Nation** by hearing rumors of the new nation and investigating on their own, accepting a Throalic contract to investigate the matter, or becoming involved in the events of **The Theran Kiss**.

## PREQUELS

Three previously published **Earthdawn** products—**Blades**, **Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration**, and **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**—contain hints that allude to the events of **Rise of the Ork Nation**. In the **Blades** adventure **Bond Breaker**, Moschtug's Fists of Fahd and the Righteous Vipers attempt to form an alliance. **Legends of Earthdawn Volume II: The Book of Exploration** contains a story titled **The Growing Bones**. In this story, two ork scorcher tribes in the Tylon Mountain region have recently joined under a single leader. Finally, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom** includes several references to the rise of an ork nation, including comments about the friction between the three leaders of Terath's Chargers: Terath the Contemplative, Earyl Bloodstroke and Zarass Icethought.

Player characters who have participated in adventures based on these products may have been involved in events that precede the emergence of the ork nation.

## ADVENTURE IDEAS AND FRAMEWORKS

The following adventure ideas and frameworks form a continuous story line that follows the events described in the **Event Synopsis** (p. 90). Unlike other events in this epic, in which the adventurers become involved in the aftermath of an incident, the action of the ork nation story line ends with the event—the orks re-establishing the kingdom of Cara Fahd. The player characters are instrumental in bringing about this event, and so the adventure ideas and frameworks appear together in the order in which they most logically would occur.

The adventure frameworks are presented in the format described in the **Introduction**. These frameworks and adventure ideas serve as adventure "blueprints" that gamemasters can flesh out as desired. The adventure ideas describe possible events and encounters that precede the events in the adventure frameworks.

### THE THERAN KISS

In **The Theran Kiss**, the characters encounter a Theran patrol sent by Palinque.

With the help of Spymaster Gendel, Palinque has learned of the characters and their role in previous events, such as those recounted in **Death to Thera** (see **The King is Dead!**) or **Bond Breaker** in **Blades**. Palinque calculates that such prominent characters will somehow end up involved in the birth of the new ork nation, and he has ordered the Theran patrol members to use their spellbows to mark the characters with the Theran Kiss spell. (The Theran soldiers use the same statistics as the non-adept Theran soldiers described on p. 22 in **The Theran Behemoth**.)

Once one or more of the characters has been marked with the Theran Kiss spell, Palinque will use the mark to contact the characters at the gamemaster's discretion. The spell enables him to monitor the characters' activities, offer them unsolicited and unwanted advice, and hint at his plans to disrupt the ork nation.







### Theran Kiss Circle 6 Wizard

**Threads:** 3                      **Weaving Difficulty:** 12/21  
**Range:** 500 miles              **Duration:** 3 + Rank weeks  
**Effects:** Remote speech and hearing  
**Casting Difficulty:** Target's Spell Defense

The Theran Kiss spell enables the spellcaster to mark a target with a magical imprint that allows him to communicate with the target. Usually, the caster blows a kiss at the target to cast the spell. If the Spellcasting Test succeeds, the spell leaves a faint, wrinkly imprint of a pair of lips (a kiss) on the target, which glows in moonlight. The spell allows the magician to speak through the imprint and hear anything the target hears. When the wizard speaks, the lips mouth his words—which can be quite disconcerting for the target character.

A magician must be within 40 yards of a target to cast the spell. Once the spell is cast, the spellcaster can monitor and speak to a target up to 500 miles away.

### Spellbow

**Maximum Threads:** 2  
**Spell Defense:** 14

The spellbow is a form of magical crossbow used to fire spells at targets. Non-adept characters can wield spellbows, but the spell effect of a spellbow must be created by an adept, who must also weave threads to the bow. The maximum rank for threads woven to spellbows is Rank 8. Each thread rank adds 1 step to a firer's attack step. The thread rank also denotes the maximum Circle of spells that can be loaded into a spellbow. For example, a Rank 5 spellbow increases the firer's Missile Weapons step by 5 and enables the bow to hold spells of Circles 1–5.

When a spellbow is fired, the firer takes 1 Strain Point to power the bow's magic. If the Attack Test yields an Average success, the target takes normal damage, and the bow's spell is not cast. If the test yields an Armor-Defeating Hit (an Excellent success or better in most cases; see p. 194, ED) the attack does no damage. Instead, the bolt vanishes in a silver flash less than a finger-width from the target, and the spell is cast with the Spellcasting and Willforce steps of the character who created it. The spell's creator need not be present or take an action to cast the spell.

Palinque creates a Rank 6 spellbow for every member of the Theran patrol he sends after the player characters. Palinque has loaded each bow with the Theran Kiss spell.

### KIDNAPPED!

In **Kidnapped!**, the characters investigate the kidnappings of three prominent orks from a small town.

The three victims are all kidnapped within a single

week. The first victim is Lobrak, an ork elemental in the employ of a local guild. The second is Crosi Halftusk, a troubadour who regularly performed at the Twice Grown Beard, a local tavern and gambling hall. The third is Ulkrath the Reliable, an independent trader and moneychanger.

In reality, Lobrak's and Crosi's kidnappings are staged—only Ulkrath's disappearance is genuine foul play. All three kidnappings are the work of Moschtug's Fists of Fahd, who are attempting to prevent word of the growing ork nation from spreading too quickly. With Crosi's and Lobrak's assistance, the tribe grabs Ulkrath because he has stolen a design for a new coin intended for use in the ork nation.

After finding a few witnesses who say Ulkrath was grabbed by some strangers whose mounts bore the brand of the Fists, the characters eventually discover the encampment where the Fists are holding Ulkrath. No matter how strong the characters are, don't let them use brute force to free Ulkrath. Instead, they must negotiate Ulkrath's freedom.

The Fists know that Ulkrath has hidden the coin design, and the ork is willing to return it in exchange for his life. However, he fears that the Fists will kill him as soon as he reveals its location. Therefore, the characters will have to convince Ulkrath that they can guarantee his survival if he turns the design over to the Fists.

Regardless of how they resolve the problem, the characters learn of the new ork nation growing in Barsaive. The adventure also provides an opportunity to introduce Captain Stetgarth into the story line (see **Important Characters**, p. 97, and **Incident at Claw Ridge**, p. 105). If desired, Stetgarth and his soldiers can arrive in town shortly after the characters to investigate the disappearances and determine if the renegade members of Terath's Chargers are involved. (As noted in **Ork Migration and Allegiances**, p. 90, Zarass Icethought has formally broken relations with her brother and father, and is reportedly leading a faction of the Chargers toward southwest Barsaive.)

### IMPRISONED BY THE PASSIONS

In this adventure, the characters arrive at the small town of Red Pot, a Throalic protectorate embroiled in turmoil that has been touched off by a visit from Krathis Gron. Krathis's appearance has inspired the town's orks—nearly a third of Red Pot's total population—to migrate to the site of the new ork nation. The orks' preparations have caused a mild panic among Red Pot's merchants. These merchants, along with the town's leaders, insisted that the orks pay their yearly taxes before leaving. When the orks refused, the town's leaders arrested Krathis Gron on the





charge of inciting a rebellion against Throal. Then they sent a request to Throal for soldiers. By the time the characters arrive, forty Throalic infantrymen are in town (p. 81, **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**).

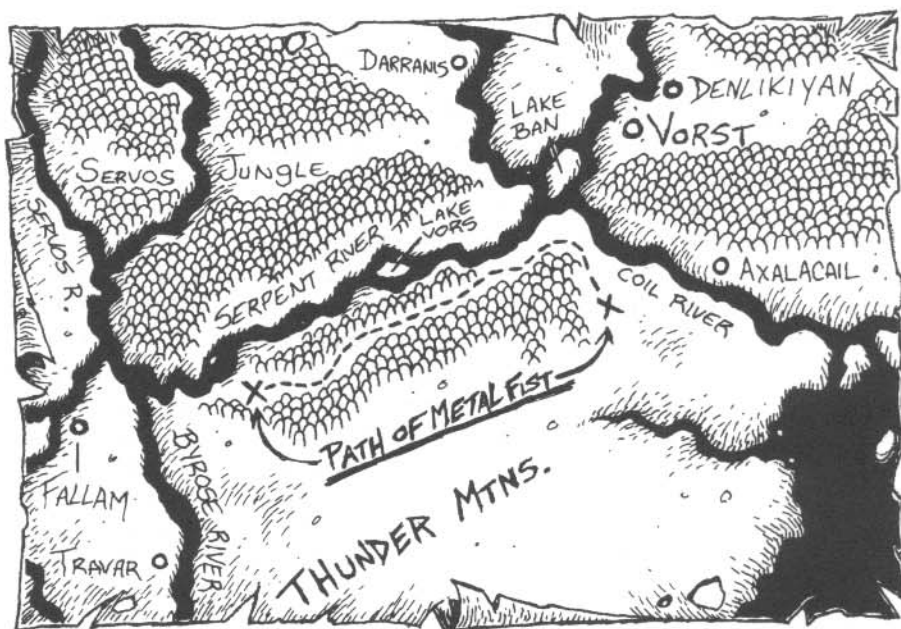
Shortly before the characters arrived, the town leaders, led by a merchant Named Zalep, tried to execute Krathis secretly. Krathis's Honorable Armor ability (see Krathis's description, p. 94) saved her, however, and killed her would-be executioner. Understandably, this turn of events spooked Zalep and the town leaders, who are unsure how to deal with Krathis at this point. Hoping to quell a revolt of the town's orks, they decide to hold a trial on the day after the characters arrive in town.

A few hours before the trial is scheduled to begin, ork raiders from the Broken Fang tribe arrive, surround the town and demand the release of Krathis Gron. Though the blockade infuriates the town leaders and the Throalic soldiers, they are vastly outnumbered by the ork forces and dare not instigate a fight. The town's orks are still within the village walls as well, and they are furious at the treatment of Krathis Gron. The Broken Fang chieftain tells the town leaders to release Krathis in three hours or his raiders will raze Red Pot.

The town leaders realize they have to back down, but they also know they cannot simply drop the charges. Doing so would implicitly acknowledge that the charges were groundless in the first place, which will further anger the town's orks and the Broken Fang raiders. After some hurried deliberations, the town leaders announce that the trial will begin immediately and will be presided over by the only impartial judges left in town—the player characters. If the player characters find Krathis innocent, the town leaders believe that the orks will be appeased. And if the characters find her guilty, the orks will direct their anger toward them—or so the town leaders hope.

The town magistrate begins the trial by stating the charges against Krathis. Krathis, in turn, stands and announces, "The Passions have told me I must remain here until justice is served." She looks at the characters and says "The Passions have told me to have faith in their instruments of justice."

During the trial, the characters hear both sides of the story, and Krathis's innocence quickly becomes evident. Eventually, Krathis reveals the execution attempt, which angers ork and non-ork spectators alike. At this point, the



town leaders ask the characters to deliver a verdict on the charge against Krathis and to determine appropriate fines and taxes for the town's departing orks.

The characters' decisions are entirely up to them. If they decree Krathis innocent, she rides off with the Broken Fang tribe toward the southwest of Barsaive. Before she leaves, however, Krathis thanks the characters and asks if they would be willing to help her again. If they agree, she asks them to meet with her in a few weeks' time at a point along the Coil River southeast of Lake Ban (see **Night Maneuvers**, below).

## NIGHT MANEUVERS

### Premise

As increasingly large numbers of orks migrate to the site of ancient Cara Fahd, the orks must take more precautions to avoid attracting the attention of the Theran forces in Barsaive. The orks' ingenuity is put to the test when the powerful Metal Fist tribe announces its intention to join with the assembled orks in southwest Barsaive. To reach its destination, the tribe will have to pass unnoticed under the shadow of the Theran fortress at Lake Ban. The orks have enlisted the help of the player characters to accomplish this dangerous feat.

### Setup

The Metal Fist tribe has set up camp in the thick forests along the south banks of the Coil River, east of Lake Ban. Under a plan devised by Krathis Gron and the tribe's leader, Bronze Eyes (p. 71, **An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive**), the tribe will travel north along the Coil River, then cross the plains south of Lake Ban. Then the group will follow the





Serpent River south and enter the Servos Jungle. The tribe will then travel through the jungle toward Cara Fahd.

The Therans' new fortress is located at Ayodhya, and the surrounding areas are filled with Theran patrols. Small groups of Metal Fist scorchers are raiding and harassing Theran-controlled villages and forces north of Lake Ban to attract Theran attention away from the main Metal Fist group. Additionally, Krathis hires the player characters to accompany the tribe from its encampment along the Coil River and through the Servos.

If the characters have participated in **Imprisoned by the Passions**, Krathis already knows them and sends an emissary to request their help. If the adventurers did not become involved in that scenario, Krathis contacts them at the suggestion of one of her trusted lieutenants. The emissary directs the adventurers to meet Krathis at a rendezvous point southeast of Lake Ban.

If Krathis is imprisoned or otherwise unable to hire the characters herself, Crosi Halftusk (see **Kidnapped!**, p. 100) contacts the characters on her behalf.

#### Event 1

When the characters arrive at the rendezvous point, they find nothing but misty, drizzly forest. As they wait for Krathis to arrive, Palinque contacts them through the Theran Kiss (see **The Theran Kiss**, p. 99). Palinque has learned of the characters' involvement in Red Pot (see **Imprisoned by the Passions**) and hopes to learn what the characters know about the growing ork nation. During this communication, a group of ork raiders shimmers into view within a few feet of the characters. If the adventurers can't keep the raiders quiet, Palinque will have solid evidence that the characters are dealing with orks.

The raiders give the adventurers coins stamped with the symbol of the Metal Fist tribe; each is strung on a thin leather cord. Then the orks place their own similar coins back around their necks and disappear from view. If the players don their coins, they find themselves on the edge of a huge ork camp that contains hundreds of makeshift tents. After a few moments, Krathis Gron meets them, thanks them and explains the plan. The characters are to act as advance scouts for the tribe, checking the terrain ahead of the tribe as it moves along the Coil River and then travels through the Servos Jungle.

By now, the players may well be wondering how the tribe has concealed itself. If they ask, Krathis explains that the concealment is effected by a powerful magical artifact known as the Tower Effigy.

#### The Tower Effigy

The Tower Effigy resembles a hexagonal pagoda resting on a platform, and is so massive that twenty orks are

required to move it. The tower is a replica of the Tower of Secrets, a place of mystery in Cathay where Krathis Gron studied. The tower casts a powerful illusion spell, similar to a massive Nobody Here spell. The spell conceals all individuals wearing the Metal Fist coin-medallions, along with everything they are wearing (including weapons), within a two-mile radius of the tower. Additionally, the spell hides any objects and possessions (such as tents, horses, and so on) marked with sigils like those displayed on the tower. (The Metal Fists have marked all their possessions.)

The tower spell lasts for about a week after it has been cast, but degrades with time. On the day of its casting, the spell can be dispelled as if it were a Circle 10 illusion spell. With each passing day the effectiveness decreases by one Circle; for example, on the fourth day the effect can be dispelled as a Circle 6 illusion spell. Generally, Krathis Gron orders the orks to re-cast the spell once every four days.

Re-casting the tower spell requires six adepts capable of thread weaving. To power the spell, each adept must stand along one side of the tower and weave a thread to it. Each Thread Weaving attempt is made against a Difficulty Number of 14 and costs the character 2 Strain Points. Six threads must be woven to complete the spell. The tower itself, not the adepts, casts the spell. If five adepts attempt to weave the required number of threads, increase the Thread Weaving Difficulty Number by 2; if four adepts make the attempt, increase the base Difficulty by 4; for three adepts, increase the Difficulty by 6; and so on.

Magicians or other characters with high Thread Weaving step numbers can help maintain the tower spell. However, characters who do so cannot perform scouting missions.

Adventurers who study the tower discover that the glyphs on its surface are actually crude versions of spells. Only one set of glyphs is legible, however. Characters with the Read and Write Magic talent can learn the Circle 3 illusionist spell Scryshift from that set of glyphs.

#### Scryshift

<b>Threads:</b> 2	<b>Weaving Difficulty:</b> 8/17
<b>Range:</b> 15 yards	<b>Duration:</b> 10 + Rank minutes
<b>Effect:</b> Willforce + 6	
<b>Casting Difficulty:</b> Target's Spell Defense	

Scryshift alters the sensory information obtained through scrying or spells that gather information remotely. The spell target is the magician or character observing through the spell or scrying ability. The spellcaster may alter any sensory information gathered by the spell—images, smells, sounds, or any other type of information the target's spell or ability normally gathers.

If the Spellcasting Test succeeds, the spellcaster makes an Effect Test against the target's Spell Defense to deter-







mine how much he may alter the information. An Average success enables the caster to make tiny changes in the information, such as changing the color of clothing or the presence of jewelry in a visual image, changing a few words in a conversation or the volume of a few sounds. A Good success allows continuous small changes. An Excellent success allows continuous large-scale changes; sounds can be deleted altogether, the number of people observed increased or decreased, dialogue substituted freely. An Extraordinary success allows the illusionist to create a fictitious scene with any sensory detail he wishes.

## Event 2

As the tribe begins its journey, the characters begin scouting ahead. Generally, the orks move at night to minimize the chance of detection. They also make a concerted effort to conceal their trail. The characters remove their coin-medallions and head out in front of the group, traveling approximately half a day ahead of the tribe. The characters usually leave the main group in the late afternoon (at the 16th hour by Throalic time).

If the characters encounter no problems, they simply wait for the tribe to catch up and then travel another four hours along with them. If they encounter trouble, the characters attempt to return to the tribe to warn Krathis and Bronze Eyes so that they can make any necessary preparations.

During the first few nights, the group encounters no Theran patrols, but a number of other problems soon become apparent. The elderly and young begin falling prey to illness, which slows the progress of the entire tribe, and a few powerful predators begin following the group and picking off stragglers. The rough terrain slows progress and food supplies grow spotty—foraging and raiding Theran stores become the best bets for replenishment.

Create several minor encounters with some of the creatures of the Servos Jungle for the characters. (See **Flora and Fauna**, p. 111 in the **Serpent River** sourcebook for descriptions of creatures native to the Servos Jungle.)

## Event 3

Palinque's suspicions lead to stepped up Theran patrols in the region near Lake Ban and the Serpent River. One day, while the tribe is crossing the plains to the south of Lake Ban, the characters discover a Theran detachment along the path the ork tribe is following. The detachment includes the adepts known as the Elite (see p. 31), who are scouring the plains for signs of an ork group reportedly in the area.

Krathis prefers to handle the threat without violence, because a missing detachment of adepts is sure to attract additional Theran interest. Krathis turns to the characters to come up with a plan of action that will enable the tribe to move undetected past the Theran troops.

## Climax

As the tribe moves through the Servos Jungle near Lake Pyros, Servos fever strikes the encampment. The disease acts like a Debilitating Poison (p. 208, **ED**). Infected characters receive a –1 step penalty to all actions for the first three days, a –3 step penalty for the next three days, and a –1 step penalty for the final three days. Additionally, the highly contagious disease may kill individuals who are severely injured or weakened by hunger or prior illness.

The only known treatment for Servos fever is a curative potion brewed from the pippa flower and lita root, two common herbs of the Servos Jungle. The leaders of the ork tribe ask the player characters to help find specimens of the plants.

As the search for herbs gets underway in earnest, a fierce storm hits. The rain, wind and electrical activity is frightening in its intensity: felling trees, severely reducing visibility and slowing travel even further. The storm has been called up by Theran elementalists using the Weather Change spell (p. 78, **Earthdawn Companion**), from a trio of vedettes scouring the area for the ork tribe. The Therans hope the storm will flush out the orks. If the orks panic and flee in different directions, the Therans drop troops from the vedettes to attack any orks who leave the radius of the Tower Effigy's illusion. The ork leaders call on the characters to help maintain order and fight off the Therans if necessary.

## Sequels

If the Metal Fist tribe completes the trek with minimal losses, the characters earn the gratitude of Bronze Eyes and Krathis Gron. The Metal Fist tribe may even aid the characters in future battles against common foes. This gratitude can also help the adventurers later in **Betrayal** and **Incident at Claw Ridge**.

If the characters badly mishandle this adventure, the orks panic in the storm and the Therans attack. Only about 1,500 (roughly one-quarter of the original tribe) make it through to Cara Fahd. In this case, the orks will not consider themselves indebted to the adventurers, though Bronze Eyes and Krathis may still be grateful to the characters for their efforts.

## BETRAYAL

### Premise

Using operatives planted among the Fists of Fahd, Palinque persuades Moschtug to begin attacking local dwarfs. The adventurers are sent to investigate the trouble, and find Moschtug preparing his followers for an ill-advised offensive against a local Theran force in an attempt to boost his sagging popularity among the orks (the attack was suggested by a few of Moschtug's advisers, who also happen to be Theran agents). Unknown to Moschtug,





happen to be Theran agents). Unknown to Moschtug, Palinque has used trickery to severely weaken Moschtug's warriors, and the orks are certain to die in the offensive—unless the player characters can stop it.

### Setup

The adventurers are sent to southwest Barsaive to investigate reports of orks "face-scalping" local dwarfs—cutting the beards and skin off of their victims' faces, disfiguring and sometimes killing them. The characters can be sent to the area by Throal or Krathis Gron. If Throal sends them, they are to stop the scalplings. If Krathis sends them, they must find out which orks are actually committing these senseless atrocities and why they are acting against Krathis's standing orders. They must also stop the violence.

### Event 1

The characters encounter a scalping victim whom they know from a previous encounter (select a gamemaster character from any previous adventure in the story or any other appropriate adventure). The victim's face is horribly scarred, and he may not survive. The disfigured dwarf identifies his attackers as members of the Fists of Fahd.

### Event 2

The adventurers catch a small group of ork raiders loyal to Moschtug in the process of attacking a number of dwarfs. After confronting the orks and stopping their mutilation of the dwarfs, the characters may interrogate the orks about their activities. If they do, the orks heap scorn on the adventurers, claiming, "Those who follow Moschtug will soon be invincible. Anything you do to us will be avenged tenfold."

### Event 3

By tracking raider parties, the characters eventually find their way to Moschtug's camp. The ork leader is openly hostile to them, but he makes no overt move against them if they arrive at Krathis Gron's direction. If they arrive at Throal's behest, he throws them into a large cage with other "malcontents" and suspected spies.

Fortunately, not all of the orks gathered under Moschtug are so hostile. Moschtug's camp includes some orks from the Broken Fang and Metal Fist tribes, who may know the adventurers from previous encounters. Additionally, some orks under Moschtug's command may think it unwise to antagonize the dwarfs of Barsaive. Others may simply dislike Moschtug's heavy-handed command style, and still others may disapprove of his callous disregard for Krathis's standing order not to antagonize potential allies of the emerging ork nation—such as Barsaive's dwarfs—unnecessarily.

In any case, the adventurers locate individuals willing to speak with them, and they learn the following information:

- Moschtug has based his claim to the throne of Cara Fahd largely on a pair of stone tablets that reportedly trace his lineage to the kings of that ancient realm. (Talents such as Evidence Analysis can be used to determine that the tablets are fakes, unloaded from a Theran airship and planted in appropriate ruins.)

- Moschtug has alchemists concocting a "battle powder" from the scalped dwarf beards and other sordid ingredients. The recipe for the powder was supplied by an ork magician who rode into camp a few weeks ago. Allegedly, anyone covered with the powder becomes invincible in battle.

The powder does no such thing, however—instead, it causes a -3 penalty to an individual's Defense Ratings and a -2 penalty to his Initiative. The effect lasts for four hours. The Therans often use airships to "dust" opposing armies with the powder before critical battles. Fortunately for Barsaive, the difficulty of creating the powder and gathering the required ingredients have prevented its widespread use.

- Moschtug is planning to launch an offensive against local Theran forces. Though no orks in the camp are willing to say so out loud, more than a few suspect the planned attack is primarily designed to bolster Moschtug's sagging popularity.

From this information, the player characters may well deduce that someone is setting up Moschtug and his ork followers. The ork magician who supplied the "battle powder" recipe was a Theran operative in Palinque's employ, as are the advisors counseling Moschtug to attack the local Theran force.

### Climax

Unless the characters can stop him, Moschtug leads his followers in an attack against the Therans. A victory would substantially boost to his claims of leadership, but the "battle powder" virtually ensures that the Therans will soundly defeat Moschtug's force and inflict heavy casualties on the orks, even though the orks outnumber the Therans two to one.

The adventurers can try a number of things to prevent this debacle. They can expose the Theran plot and use their ork allies to force Moschtug to abandon his scheme. They can try to blackmail Moschtug if they know the tablets are fakes. They can join the battle on the side of the orks and hope they make a better showing, or they can destroy or steal the battle powder and attempt to use it against the Therans.

Additionally, the adventurers can help avert friction between Throal and the new ork nation if they uncover the Theran hand behind the face-scalping. If they do not, tensions grow between the two nations.





## Sequels

An ork defeat effectively ends the reign of "King Moschtug." Though Krathis Gron remains the most popular choice to lead the emerging ork nation, plenty of other royal wannabes aspire to the throne, and Moschtug's fall will trigger small skirmishes between their followers.

If the orks manage to defeat the Therans, Palinque suffers a serious loss of prestige and makes plans to exact personal vengeance against the player characters.

If the ork disaster is averted, Titanstroke Greybeard (see p. 69, *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*) believes that the ork nation has leaders wise enough to ensure its survival, and he pledges the Thunderers to its cause.

## INCIDENT AT CLAW RIDGE

### Premise

Captain Stetgarth of the Throalic army enlists the characters to help him chase Theran raiders across southwest Barsaive. At Claw Ridge in the Delaris Mountains, Stetgarth's company finally catches up with the Therans. Before the battle can be joined, however, thousands of ork warriors led by Krathis Gron emerge along the hills surrounding the two opponents. Krathis informs the Throalic and Theran forces that they are in the territory of the sovereign ork kingdom of Cara Fahd. She orders them to drop their weapons and leave—or die.

What happens next may well alter the course of Barsaivian history for centuries to come.

### Setup

Captain Stetgarth runs across the characters while pursuing a group of Theran raiders who are terrorizing villages and towns loyal to Throal. Attrition has shrunk his company down to fifty able-bodied dwarfs, including a dozen or so he has recruited along the way. His troops are worn-out and he is a little desperate—his company represents the only military force in the area with a chance of stopping the Theran raiders, and the closest reinforcements are three weeks' march away.

Unless the adepts help him, the Therans may very well destroy Stetgarth's company. If that happens, the Theran raiders will be able to ravage the local villages unchecked.

For further information about Captain Stetgarth, see his description in **Important Characters** (p. 97). Stetgarth's troops include several Second and Third Circle cavalryman adepts; the gamemaster determines the exact number, depending on the number and Circles of the player characters. For these characters, use the adept statistics on p. 112, adjusting for race. However, most of Captain Stetgarth's dwarf soldiers use the Throal Pony Cavalrymen statistics below.



### THROAL PONY CAVALRYMEN

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

Initiative: 5	Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 5
Attack: 15	Social Defense: 5
Damage:	Armor: 8
Forged Broadsword: 17	Mystic Armor: 0
Sling: 9	Knockdown: 7
Number of Spells: NA	Recovery Tests: 3
Spellcasting: NA	
Effect: NA	

Death Rating: 42
Wound Threshold: 12
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Combat Movement: 38
Full Movement: 75

**Legend Points:** 1,500

**Equipment:** Broadsword (+5, Damage Step 10), hardened leather armor, footman's shield, sling, war pony

**Loot:** 1D12 silver pieces, 3D12 copper pieces







#### Event 1

Rather than strike the full Theran force head on, Stetgarth tries to use his force's slightly superior mobility to his best advantage. The dwarfs harass the Theran flanks with hit-and-run raids, destroy their tents, steal their provisions and healing supplies, terrorize their support personnel and ambush lone Theran patrols that venture away from the main Theran force. These tactics are designed to wear down the Therans and erode their morale until they decide to leave the area or grow weak enough for the dwarfs to stage a successful large-scale attack. At the very least, Stetgarth hopes to attract the attention of the Therans toward his company and away from the local villages.

Obviously, the talents and skills of adepts such as the adventurers are handy in this type of warfare. The player characters immediately begin accompanying Stetgarth's raiding parties.

#### Event 2

Local intelligence contacts report that the Therans are clearing a landing area to accommodate an airship scheduled to retrieve the Theran raiders and drop off replacements. Stetgarth creates a two-part plan to disrupt the Theran operation. First, he directs his company to create a similar landing area several miles from the real pickup zone. He hopes the false landing area will draw the airship away from the real site. Second, his troops plan to destroy several Theran signal fires on the night of the landing to conceal the real landing zone.

Whether the ploy works or not, Stetgarth hopes it will prompt the Therans to pursue his force.

#### Climax

Stetgarth's ploy works, and the Theran raiding force begins to pursue his company. The ground-based Theran troops are slightly slower than the dwarf cavalry company,





but the Therans' iron discipline and endurance keeps them marching relentlessly, forcing the weary dwarfs to move for longer periods than they and their ponies can take. Eventually, the Therans trap the dwarfs in a box canyon near the Delaris Mountains, in the shadow of a rocky stretch of uneven ground known as Claw Ridge.

As the Therans ready their assault, however, a chorus of wailing war cries fills the air and thousands of ork warriors appear along the surrounding hills. Ten dozen more scorchers appear in the sole pass leading into and out of the canyon, trapping the Throalic and Theran forces.

Then Krathis Gron appears at the head of the ork army on the ridge and announces, "You have trespassed onto the lands of the sovereign ork nation of Cara Fahd. We have no wish to spill blood, but we cannot and will not permit foreign armies to wage their battles on our soil. You have one hour to surrender your weapons and leave—or face the wrath of Krathis Gron and the warriors of Cara Fahd."

At this point, the player characters can stand and fight—a decision that virtually ensures their deaths—or they can seek some other way out of the situation. Stetgarth is prepared to die in the service of Throal, but he is not so eager to lead his young troops to their deaths and will consider any alternatives the characters can devise. Possible alternatives include the following:

- The adventurers abandon Stetgarth's company and the Therans and save their own lives. The scorchers blocking the canyon pass primarily comprise members of the Metal Fist tribe. If the adventurers did well in the **Night Maneuvers** adventure, the scorchers may owe them a debt of gratitude and let them pass through the blockade with their gear intact. The scorchers will not let anyone else pass, however.

- The adventurers persuade Stetgarth to accept the Theran commander's proposal of a joint attack against the orks. The Theran, an urbane, evil elf called Pazuzu, harbors no love for dwarfs but he realizes that a joint attack may be his only chance to survive. His troops cannot hope to stand against the ork horde, and it seems unlikely that the orks will actually let the Therans retreat (and given the unforgiving nature of Theran society, death might be preferable to the stigma Pazuzu would earn by surrendering to an army of orks).

Stetgarth, on the other hand, harbors no love for Therans, and he will refuse the offer outright unless the adventurers can convince him otherwise.

In any case, the attack has virtually no chance of success. A handful of Throalic and Theran soldiers might survive, but they would be taken prisoner by the orks. Still, the attack is better than simply waiting to die.

- The adventurers can negotiate the safe passage of some or all of the Throalic and Theran troops. This may not prove as difficult as it appears. Krathis does not wish to slaughter the troops (though many of the orks under her command may wish to). Her ultimatum merely reflects the need to take a firm stand against the Throalic and Theran forces to establish the sovereignty of Cara Fahd and silence her critics among the lesser ork leaders. Bloodshed is the last thing she wants. Though Barsaive's dwarfs and orks have never enjoyed friendly relations, she realizes that her fledgling nation needs allies—and Throal seems a natural one, given the anti-Theran sentiments shared by most orks and dwarfs. The slaughter of Stetgarth's company could create a serious obstacle to any ork/dwarf alliance.

Krathis has no wish to see the Therans die, either. Though she hates Thera as much as most orks do, she realizes that the new ork nation is not yet strong enough to withstand a major Theran assault, and she does not want to invite one by destroying Pazuzu and his troops.

For these reasons, Krathis would prefer a negotiated solution to the impasse. The player characters are the obvious choice to devise a solution, because Krathis will likely know them from previous encounters. If the adventurers can find some way to persuade the Throalic forces and/or the Therans to acknowledge the legitimacy of Cara Fahd, Krathis may allow the forces to retreat returning their weapons an hour's ride beyond Cara Fahd's borders.

If no agreement has been reached at the end of the hour, Krathis gives the trapped forces one more chance to drop their weapons and leave. If they do not immediately do so, the orks attack. Krathis has given her orks strict orders to capture the Throalic and Theran troops alive, if possible, to minimize the diplomatic repercussions of the battle, but most of the orks will be overcome by their own *gahad* and forget those orders.

### Sequels

If the adventurers manage to negotiate a peaceful ending to the impasse, they earn the undying gratitude of Krathis Gron. In fact, she may ask the player characters to escort her chosen ambassador, Crosi Halftusk (from **Kidnapped!**, p. 100), to Throal and help open diplomatic channels between the reborn ork kingdom of Cara Fahd and Throal.

When the adventurers arrive in Throal, officials of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps and the Eye of Throal assume that the adventurers' primary loyalties lie with Throal, and so they debrief the characters on the current status of the ork nation. The characters are the nearest thing to experts that the Throalic authorities have, and the authorities inform them that they may be pressed into service to deal with future troubles.





In the unlikely event that the Throalic and Theran forces manage to cut their way out of the encirclement, Pazuzu is promoted for his clever thinking. In turn, he recognizes the adventurers' abilities and the danger they present. He overtly courts them and treats them with respect, while covertly supporting efforts to undermine, discredit or remove them from Barsaivian politics by any means possible.

No matter how the impasse ends, any surviving player characters become Barsaivian celebrities, as well as the focus of endless intrigue. Many dwarfs and orks may view them as peacemakers who have spared Barsaive a terrible new war; equal numbers of dwarfs and orks will view them as traitors.

## LOOSE ENDS

Within a few months of the incident at Claw Ridge, Krathis Gron's new ork nation has consolidated its power and begun to construct several permanent settlements, including a fortress city at Claw Ridge to commemorate the founding of the new Cara Fahd. Scattered around the fortress are a number of farming settlements, which develop into towns in their own right as time passes.

The territory of the ork nation expands from Claw Ridge to the south and west, into the site of ancient Cara Fahd. Where possible, the orks plan to build towns and even cities on the scattered ruins of the ancient kingdom. As the nation's borders spread, the nation absorbs several of the region's existing towns and villages, including a few Theran-dominated settlements. The absorption of the latter towns leads to battles and skirmishes between Theran and ork forces.

## THE RULE OF KRATHIS GRON

After Claw Ridge, Krathis Gron consolidates her authority over the new ork nation. Initially, power-hungry ork leaders of some of the lesser scorcher tribes oppose her rule, but Krathis's support among the leaders of the larger tribes and her instrumental role in the birth of the nation virtually ensure her ascension to the Fahdian throne.

After his near-disaster in **Betrayal**, Moschtug accepts a role as one of Gron's advisors and military leaders, joining the company of Charok Redhand of the Broken Fang tribe, Bronze Eyes of the Metal Fist tribe and Titanstroke Greybeard of the Thunderers. Unlike these leaders, however, Moschtug continues to believe that he is the rightful heir to the throne of Cara Fahd and deeply resents Krathis's rule. He keeps such thoughts to himself, but they make him a potential threat to Krathis and to the ork nation.

The assorted ork scorcher tribes that joined Krathis remain loyal to the new ork nation. Minor dissent occasionally bubbles up among small groups within a few of

the tribes, but most tribal orks devote themselves to the new nation and its queen. The soldiers and warriors of the tribes form the bulk of the nation's military, under the control of the tribal leaders. Life as members of the reborn kingdom of Cara Fahd seems much like the old days for most ork warriors—they follow the same leaders and battle the same primary enemy, Thera. Now, however, they fight for their own nation rather than for an employer such as Throal, the general cause of Barsaivian independence, or their own profit.

## CARA FAHD'S TRUE PATTERN

When Krathis Gron declares the formation of the new ork nation and the rebirth of Cara Fahd, she Names the region Cara Fahd. This Naming creates a new true pattern of Cara Fahd that subsumes the old true pattern. Over time, the old pattern fades and pattern items of ancient Cara Fahd lose their power.

As the new true pattern slowly develops, a number of new pattern items develop as well. The specific form of these pattern items is uncertain, but like all pattern items, they are representative of the new nation's development and its true pattern. This means that most of the pattern items will have some connection to orks. Depending on how significant a role the player characters play in the events of this story, some of the items they wield may even become pattern items of Cara Fahd.

If the characters were instrumental in establishing the new Cara Fahd and used the Blades of Cara Fahd to augment their group true pattern, a link forms between the group true pattern and the new true pattern of Cara Fahd. That link transforms the Blades into minor pattern items of the new Cara Fahd. The Blades retain their original true pattern and their previous powers as well.

As pattern items of the new ork kingdom manifest, the Therans and other Barsaivian powers, such as the Holders of Trust and the Denairastas of Iopos, execute elaborate plans to obtain them. The new ork nation poses a significant threat to the plans of both Thera and the Denairastas clan, and the pattern items can be used to undermine it. For example, Uhl Denairastas may send Jada Denairastas (see **The King is Dead!**, p. 48) to obtain a pattern item of either the ork nation or Krathis Gron. Such a development provides an excellent opportunity for the player characters to face Jada once again, provided they didn't kill her in earlier adventures.

For more information about pattern items, see **Thread Magic**, p. 46 in the **Earthdawn Companion**.







## RELATIONS WITH THROAL

Krathis and the leaders of Throal both recognize that their respective nations are natural allies in the fight against Theraan expansion in Barsaive. Throal has long presented itself as the champion of Barsaivian independence against Thera, and the Therans' embrace of slavery has revolted and infuriated generations of orks. Furthermore, the proximity of Theraan-controlled bases at Vivane and Sky Point make Thera an immediate threat to the ork nation. Both Krathis and Throal's leaders realize that a war between their weak kingdoms would leave Barsaive virtually defenseless against a renewed Theraan invasion. For these reasons, the leaders of Throal and Cara Fahd establish official diplomatic contacts and attempt to forge a cooperative relationship.

Powerful individuals and factions within both kingdoms oppose the nascent alliance, however. Some dwarfs view the orks as unreliable allies who must prove their trustworthiness, especially in light of the history of scorcher raids against dwarf caravans and settlements. On the other hand, some orks view the dwarfs with suspicion for their past practice of slavery, their historical pre-Scourge role as provincial administrators for the Therans, and their considerable political power and influence in Barsaive. Yet other individuals and groups on both sides oppose the alliance simply because doing so furthers their own political careers.

If the orks spilled dwarf blood at Claw Ridge, resistance to the alliance is stronger and more widespread among both dwarfs and orks. Despite the events at Claw Ridge, however, the alliance moves forward. Krathis's ambassador to Throal, Crosi Halftusk (see **Kidnapped!** and **Incident at Claw Ridge**), makes especially notable efforts to secure an alliance between the two powers and may enlist the player characters' help in his task.

## RELATIONS WITH THERA

A few ork leaders advise Krathis to consider cultivating Thera as an ally against the potential power of Throal, but Krathis never seriously considers such plans. Similarly,

certain Theraan leaders see a potential advantage in cultivating Cara Fahd as an ally against Throal and even send emissaries to make overtures to Krathis. These overtures are half-hearted at best. Though Thera initially refrains from engaging Cara Fahd's forces in combat, Theraan intelligence agents never cease their attempts to destabilize the new ork nation.

Tensions between Thera and Cara Fahd grow as the ork nation expands and assumes control of several formerly

Theraan-controlled towns and cities in southwest

Barsaive. Eventually, the Therans drop

any pretense of a desire to co-exist

peacefully with the ork nation

and Theraan troops begin to

clash with warriors of Cara

Fahd. These conflicts escalate

in frequency and size, forcing

the Therans to devote increas-

ing resources from Vivane

and Sky Point to contain the

orks. This development gives

the Barsaivian Resistance in

Vivane a minor reprieve from

the Therans and creates even

more difficulties for the Therans

in Barsaive, who must contend

with Omasu and the Liferock

Rebellion as well (see **The**

**Theraan Behemoth**, p. 41).

These events set the stage

for an ongoing conflict between

Cara Fahd and the Therans that

will last for years to come.



## OTHER RELATIONS IN BARSAIVE

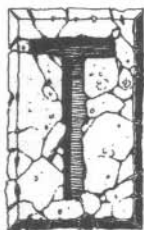
The new ork nation also develops relations with other cities and powers in Barsaive. Kratas and Jerris are among the first cities to open relations with Cara Fahd. Both Garlthik One-Eye (p. 26, **Barsaive Gamemaster Book**) and Byth Vesten (p. 23, **Barsaive Gamemaster Book**) quickly recognize Cara Fahd as a sovereign power and treat it accordingly. As the new ork nation expands its territory and influence in southwest Barsaive, several trading companies in Travar and Urupa, as well as those in Throal, become eager to establish friendly relations with the orks.

The ork nation also finds allies in the Vivane-based Barsaivian Resistance and Omasu's Liferock Rebellion. Both groups see the value of a powerful ally such as Cara Fahd, and the orks recognize the help that the two groups can provide in the continuing battle against Thera.





# ADEPT STATISTICS



The following profiles provide statistics for adepts of Circles 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 for each of the main Disciplines practiced in Barsaive. (Gamemasters should extrapolate statistics for other Circles and races, using the provided statistics as a guide.) Each talent listing includes two values separated by a slash mark; the first value is the average talent rank for the Circle, and the second value is the average talent step. Discipline talents are listed in **boldface** type, and talents that require Karma are listed in *italics*.

Damage Ratings and Karma Points are listed according to Circle as well. Characteristic Bonuses for each Discipline, such as bonuses to Defense Ratings and Karma, are listed in the **Notes** at the end of each profile.

## HUMAN AIR SAILOR

(pp. 148–49, *Earthdawn Companion*)

### Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12

Strength (15): 6/D10

Toughness (13): 6/D10

Perception (13): 6/D10

Willpower (12): 5/D8

Charisma (11): 5/D8

	Circle				
Talents	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
<b>Acrobatic Strike</b>	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
<b>Air Sailing</b>	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	7/12
<b>Avoid Blow</b>	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
<b>Karma Ritual</b>	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
<b>Melee Weapons</b>	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14
<b>Unarmed Combat</b>	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
<b>Durability (6/5)</b>	–	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
<b>Great Leap</b>	–	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
<b>Maneuver</b>	–	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
<i>Riposte</i>	–	–	3/13	5/15	7/17
<b>Wind Catcher</b>	–	–	3/8	5/10	7/12
<b>Thread Weaving</b>	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
<b>Throwing Weapons</b>	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
<b>Air Dance</b>	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
<b>Second Weapon</b>	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
<b>Momentum Attack</b>	–	–	–	–	7/14
<b>Taunt</b>	–	–	–	–	7/12
<b>Missile Weapons</b>	–	–	–	–	7/14
<i>Speak Language</i>	–	–	–	–	7/13

	Circle				
Damage	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	35	41	53	65	77
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	27	32	42	52	62
Recovery Tests: 3					
Recovery Dice: 6/D10					



	Circle				
Karma	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	10	12	15	20	27
Karma Dice: D8					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D10	Full: 85
	Combat: 42

Combat	Armor: 6
Physical Defense: 10	Mystic Armor: 1
Spell Defense: 7	
Social Defense: 7	

**Weapons/Armor**  
 Hardened Leather Armor  
 Dagger [Damage: 8/2D6]  
 Broadsword [Damage: 11/D10 + D8]  
 Buckler  
 Short Sword [Damage: 10/D10 + D6]

**Notes**  
**Fourth Circle:** The air sailor can spend Karma on Dexterity Tests.  
**Fifth Circle:** Physical Defense + 1  
**Sixth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1  
**Seventh Circle:** The air sailor can spend Karma on Damage Tests made with a weapon.





## ELVEN ARCHER

(p. 66, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (20): 8/2D6  
Strength (13): 6/D10  
Toughness (11): 5/D8

Perception (16): 7/D12  
Willpower (13): 6/D10  
Charisma (12): 5/D8

	Circle				
Talents	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Avoid Blow	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Direction Arrow	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Missile Weapons	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13	7/15
Mystic Aim	2/9	3/10/	4/11	5/12	7/14
True Shot	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Durability (6/5)	-	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Sprint	-	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Throwing Weapons	-	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Flame Arrow	-	-	3/12	5/14	7/16
Wound Balance	-	-	3/9	5/11	7/13
Melee Weapons	-	-	-	5/11	7/15
Thread Weaving	-	-	-	5/12	7/14
First Impression	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Stopping Aim	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Bank Shot	-	-	-	-	7/15
Speak Language	-	-	-	-	7/14
Anticipate Blow	-	-	-	-	7/14
Call Arrow	-	-	-	-	7/14

	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Damage					
Death Rating:	32	38	50	62	74
Wound Threshold:	8	8	8	8	8
Unconsciousness Rating:	24	29	39	49	59
Recovery Tests: 2					
Recovery Dice: 5/D8					

	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma					
Karma Points:	5	7	10	15	22
Karma Dice: D6					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: 2D6	Full: 110
	Combat: 55

Combat	Armor: 3
Physical Defense: 10	Mystic Armor: 1
Spell Defense: 9	
Social Defense: 7	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Dagger [Damage: 8/2D6]  
Leather Armor  
Longbow [Damage: 10/D10 + D6]  
Quiver w/20 Arrows

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** The archer can spend Karma on Dexterity Tests.

**Fifth Circle:** Physical Defense + 1

**Sixth Circle:** The archer can spend Karma on any Damage Test made with a missile weapon.

**Seventh Circle:** Initiative Dice + 1 step

## ORK BEASTMASTER

(p. 68, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8  
Strength (15): 6/D10  
Toughness (14): 6/D10

Perception (11): 5/D8  
Willpower (13): 6/D10  
Charisma (17): 7/D12

	Circle				
Damage	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Animal Bond	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Claw Shape	1/10	2/11	3/12	5/14	7/16
Dominate Beast	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Tracking	1/6	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Unarmed Combat	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	7/12
Animal Training	-	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Creature Analysis	-	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Durability (7/6)	-	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Borrow Sense	-	-	3/9	5/11	7/13
Cat's Paw	-	-	3/8	5/10	7/12
Frighten Animal					
Servants	-	-	-	5/12	7/14
Thread Weaving	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Heal Animal Servant	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Incite Stampede	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Endure Cold	-	-	-	-	7/13
Lizard Leap	-	-	-	-	7/13
Claw Frenzy	-	-	-	-	7/12
Sense Poison	-	-	-	-	7/12

	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Damage					
Death Rating:	36	43	57	71	85
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	28	34	46	58	70
Recovery Tests: 3					
Recovery Dice: 6/D10					

	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma					
Karma Points:	10	12	15	20	27
Karma Dice: D8					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D6	Full: 65
	Combat: 33

Combat	Armor: 6
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 2
Spell Defense: 7	
Social Defense: 9	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Buckler  
2 Daggers [Damage: 8/2D6]  
Hand-axe [Damage: 10/D10 + D6]  
Hide Armor  
Whip [Damage: 9/D8 + D6]

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** The beastmaster can spend 1 Karma Point on a Recovery Test or a talent which substitutes for a Recovery Test.

**Fifth Circle:** Physical Defense + 1

**Sixth Circle:** The beastmaster can spend Karma on Strength Tests.

**Seventh Circle:** +1 Recovery Test per day







## ORK CAVALRYMAN

(p. 70, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8  
Strength (18): 7/D12  
Toughness (19): 8/2D6

Perception (11): 5/D8  
Willpower (10): 5/D8  
Charisma (12): 5/D8

Talents	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Animal Bond	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	7/12
Avoid Blow	1/6	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Charge	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	1/6	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Trick Riding	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	7/12
Blood Share	-	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Durability (7/6)	-	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Empathic Command	-	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Spirit Mount	-	-	3/8	5/10	7/12
Wheeling Attack	-	-	3/8	5/10	7/12
Resist Taunt	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Thread Weaving	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Sure Mount	-	-	-	5/12	7/13
Wheeling Defense	-	-	-	5/10	7/12
Dominate Beast	-	-	-	-	7/12
Durability (Mount)	-	-	-	-	7/7
Lasting Impression	-	-	-	-	7/12
Missile Weapons	-	-	-	-	7/12

Damage	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	36	43	57	71	85
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	28	34	46	58	70
Recovery Tests: 3					
Recovery Dice: 8/2D6					

Karma	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	10	12	15	20	27
Karma Dice: D8					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D6	Full: 65
	Combat: 33

Combat	Armor: 7
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 0
Spell Defense: 7	
Social Defense: 7	

**Weapons/Armor**  
2 Daggers [Damage: 9/D8 + D6]  
Padded Leather Armor  
Rider's Shield  
Spiked Mace [Damage: 13/D12 + D10]

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** The cavalryman can spend a Karma Point on any test made by his mount, except Damage Tests.

**Fifth Circle:** Physical Defense + 1

**Sixth Circle:** The cavalryman can spend a Karma Point on a Recovery Test.

**Seventh Circle:** Spell Defense + 1

## DWARF ELEMENTALIST

(p. 72, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10  
Strength (15): 6/D10  
Toughness (15): 6/D10

Perception (18): 7/D12  
Willpower (15): 6/D10  
Charisma (9): 4/D6

Talents	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Read and Write Language	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Read and Write Magic	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Spellcasting	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14
2 x Spell Matrix	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Thread Weaving	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Durability (4/3)	-	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Fire Heal	-	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Spell Matrix	-	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Air Speaking	-	-	3/10	5/12	7/14
Elemental Tongues	-	-	3/10	5/12	7/14
Elemental Hold	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Spell Matrix	-	-	-	5/5	7/7
Cold Purify	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Willforce	-	-	-	5/11	7/13
Temperature	-	-	-	-	7/13
Unshakable Earth	-	-	-	-	7/18
Enhanced Matrix	-	-	-	-	7/7
Reshape Object	-	-	-	-	7/13

Damage	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	38	42	50	58	66
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	29	32	38	44	50
Recovery Tests: 3					
Recovery Dice: 6/D10					

Karma	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	6	8	11	16	23
Karma Dice: D6					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D10	Full: 54
	Combat: 27

Combat	Armor: 3
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 2
Spell Defense: 10	
Social Defense: 6	

**Weapons/Armor**  
2 Daggers [Damage: 8/2D6]  
Leather Armor

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1

**Fifth Circle:** The Elementalist can spend a Karma Point on Perception Tests.

**Sixth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1

**Seventh Circle:** The Elementalist can spend a Karma Point on Charisma Tests.





## HUMAN ILLUSIONIST

(p. 74, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8  
Strength (12): 5/D8  
Toughness (13): 6/D10

Perception (18): 7/D12  
Willpower (15): 6/D10  
Charisma (13): 5/D8

Talents	1st	2nd	Circle			5th	7th
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7		
Read and Write Language	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14		
Read and Write Magic	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14		
Spellcasting	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14		
2 x Spell Matrix	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7		
Thread Weaving	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14		
Disguise Self	–	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14		
Durability (4/3)	–	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7		
Spell Matrix	–	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7		
Dead Fall	–	–	3/9	5/11	7/13		
Speak Language	–	–	3/10	5/12	7/14		
False Sight	–	–	–	5/12	7/14		
Spell Matrix	–	–	–	5/5	7/7		
Anticipate Blow	–	–	–	5/12	7/14		
Willforce	–	–	–	5/11	7/13		
2 x Enhanced Matrix	–	–	–	–	7/7		
Fast Hand	–	–	–	–	7/14		
Engaging Banter	–	–	–	–	7/12		

Talents	1st	2nd	Circle			5th	7th
Death Rating:	35	39	47	55	63		
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9		
Unconsciousness Rating:	27	30	36	42	48		
Recovery Tests: 2							
Recovery Dice: 6/D10							

Karma	1st	2nd	Circle			5th	7th
Karma Points:	10	12	15	20	27		
Karma Dice: D6							

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8	Full: 54 Combat: 27

Combat	Armor: 3
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 2
Spell Defense: 10	
Social Defense: 7	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Leather Armor  
Quarterstaff [Damage: 7/D12]  
Throwing Dagger [Damage: 7/D12]

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** Glamour (p. 74, ED)  
**Fifth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1  
**Sixth Circle:** Social Defense + 1  
**Seventh Circle:** The illusionist can spend a Karma Point on Dexterity Tests.

## HUMAN NETHERMANCER

(p. 76, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (12): 5/D8  
Strength (11): 5/D8  
Toughness (13): 6/D10

Perception (18): 7/D12  
Willpower (15): 6/D10  
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Talents	1st	2nd	Circle			5th	7th
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4	7/7		
Read and Write Language	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14		
Read and Write Magic	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14		
Spellcasting	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14		
2 x Spell Matrix	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7		
Thread Weaving	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14		
Astral Sight	–	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14		
Durability (4/3)	–	1/1	3/3	5/5	5/5		
Frighten	–	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13		
Spell Matrix	–	–	3/3	5/5	7/7		
Taunt	–	–	3/9	5/11	7/13		
Spell Matrix	–	–	–	5/5	7/7		
Willforce	–	–	–	5/11	7/13		
Animal Possession	–	–	–	5/11	7/13		
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	4/4	7/7		
Spirit Hold	–	–	–	5/16	7/18		
Enhanced Matrix	–	–	–	–	7/7		
Spirit Talk	–	–	–	–	7/14		
Lifesight	–	–	–	–	7/14		
Spirit Dodge	–	–	–	–	7/14		

Damage	1st	2nd	Circle			5th	7th
Death Rating:	35	39	47	55	63		
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9		
Unconsciousness Rating:	27	30	36	42	48		
Recovery Tests: 2							
Recovery Dice: 6/D10							

Karma	1st	2nd	Circle			5th	7th
Karma Points:	10	12	15	20	27		
Karma Dice: D6							

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8	Full: 57 Combat: 29

Combat	Armor: 3
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 2
Spell Defense: 10	
Social Defense: 7	

**Weapons/Armor**  
2 Daggers [Damage: 7/D12]  
Leather Armor  
Quarterstaff [Damage: 7/D12]  
Sling [Damage: 7/D12]

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** The nethermancer can spend a Karma Point on Perception Tests.  
**Fifth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1  
**Sixth Circle:** Social Defense + 1  
**Seventh Circle:** Initiative Dice + 1 step





## HUMAN SCOUT

(p. 150–51, *Earthdawn Companion*)

### Attributes

Dexterity (18): 7/D12  
Strength (13): 6/D10  
Toughness (13): 6/D10

Perception (15): 6/D10  
Willpower (11): 5/D8  
Charisma (12): 5/D8

Talents	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Avoid Blow	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Climbing	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Silent Walk	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Tracking	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	7/13
Durability (6/5)	–	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Maneuver	–	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Read and Write Language	–	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Astral Sight	–	–	3/9	5/11	7/13
Sprint	–	–	3/3	5/5	7/7
Riposte	–	–	–	5/15	7/17
Thread Weaving	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Lock Sense	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Trap Initiative	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
Borrow Sense	–	–	–	–	7/12
Great Leap	–	–	–	–	7/14
Detect Trap	–	–	–	–	7/13
Endure Cold	–	–	–	–	7/13

Damage	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	35	41	53	65	77
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	27	32	42	52	62
Recovery Tests: 2					
Recovery Dice: 6/D10					

Karma	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	10	12	15	20	27
Karma Dice: D8					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D10	Full: 85
	Combat: 42

Combat	Armor: 5
Physical Defense: 10	Mystic Armor: 1
Spell Defense: 8	
Social Defense: 7	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Broadsword [Damage: 11/D10 + D8]  
Dagger [Damage: 8/2D6]  
Hardened Leather Armor

**Notes**  
**Fourth Circle:** Enhanced Senses (p. 150, *Earthdawn Companion*)  
**Fifth Circle:** The scout can spend Karma on Dexterity and Perception Tests (including Enhanced Senses).  
**Sixth Circle:** Physical Defense + 1  
**Seventh Circle:** Spell Defense + 1

## TROLL SKY RAIDER

(p. 78, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (13): 6/D10  
Strength (19): 8/2D6  
Toughness (20): 8/2D6

Perception (11): 5/D8  
Willpower (12): 5/D8  
Charisma (13): 6/D10

Talents	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Air Sailing	1/6	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Avoid Blow	1/7	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Battle Shout	2/8	3/9	4/10	5/11	7/13
Fireblood	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	2/8	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Durability (8/6)	–	1/1	3/3	5/5	7/7
Great Leap	–	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Shield Charge	–	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Swift Kick	–	–	3/9	5/11	7/13
Wind Catcher	–	–	3/8	5/10	7/12
Thread Weaving	–	–	–	5/10	7/12
Throwing Weapon	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Battle Bellow	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Fence	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Momentum Attack	–	–	–	–	7/13
Steely Stare	–	–	–	–	7/13
Missile Weapons	–	–	–	–	7/13
Speak Language	–	–	–	–	7/12

Damage	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	44	52	68	84	100
Wound Threshold:	13	13	13	13	13
Unconsciousness Rating:	36	42	54	66	78
Recovery Tests: 4					
Recovery Dice: 8/2D6					

Karma	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	6	8	11	16	23
Karma Dice: D4					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8	Full: 60
	Combat: 30

Combat	Armor: 5
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 1
Spell Defense: 7	
Social Defense: 7	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Broadsword [Damage: 13/D12 + D10]  
Hardened Leather Armor  
Troll Sling [Damage: 10/D10 + D6]

**Notes**  
**Fourth Circle:** The sky raider can spend a Karma Point on Strength Tests.  
**Fifth Circle:** Social Defense + 1  
**Sixth Circle:** Physical Defense + 1  
**Seventh Circle:** The sky raider can spend a Karma Point on Damage Tests made with a melee weapon.







## T'SKRANG SWORDMASTER

(p. 80, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6  
Strength (15): 6/D10  
Toughness (14): 6/D10

Perception (12): 5/D8  
Willpower (11): 5/D8  
Charisma (14): 6/D10

Talents	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Avoid Blow	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Maneuver	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Melee Weapons	3/11	4/12	4/12	6/14	7/15
Taunt	1/7	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Wound Balance	1/7	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Durability (7/6)	–	1/1	2/2	5/5	7/7
Riposte	–	2/13	3/14	5/16	7/18
Throwing Weapons	–	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Heartening Laugh	–	–	3/9	5/11	7/13
Missile Weapons	–	–	3/11	5/13	7/15
Thread Weaving	–	–	–	5/10	7/12
Trap Initiative	–	–	–	5/13	7/15
Second Weapon	–	–	–	5/13	7/15
Winning Smile	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Disarm	–	–	–	–	7/15
Speak Language	–	–	–	–	7/12
Resist Taunt	–	–	–	–	7/12
Second Attack	–	–	–	–	7/15

Damage	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	36	43	57	71	85
Wound Threshold:	10	10	10	10	10
Unconsciousness Rating:	28	34	46	58	70
Recovery Tests: 3					
Recovery Dice: 6/D10					

Karma	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	5	7	10	15	22
Karma Dice: D6					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D10	Full: 90
	Combat: 45

Combat	Armor: 8
Physical Defense: 10	Mystic Armor: 1
Spell Defense: 7	
Social Defense: 8	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Broadsword [Damage: 11/D10 + D8]  
Dagger [Damage: 8/2D6]  
Footman's Shield  
Hardened Leather Armor

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** The swordmaster can spend a Karma Point on Dexterity Tests.

**Fifth Circle:** The swordmaster can spend a Karma Point on Damage Tests made with a sword.

**Sixth Circle:** Social Defense + 1

**Seventh Circle:** Physical Defense + 1

## WINDLING THIEF

(p. 82, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (19): 8/2D6  
Strength (7): 4/D6  
Toughness (12): 5/D8

Perception (14): 6/D10  
Willpower (12): 5/D8  
Charisma (15): 6/D10

Talents	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Climbing	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Lock Pick	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Melee Weapons	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Picking Pockets	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Silent Walk	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13	7/15
Surprise Strike	1/9	2/10	3/11	5/13	7/15
Durability (5/4)	–	1/1	2/2	5/5	7/7
Lock Sense	–	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Avoid Blow	–	–	3/11	5/13	7/15
Fence	–	–	3/9	5/11	7/13
Thread Weaving	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Trap Initiative	–	–	–	5/13	7/15
Disarm Mechanical Trap	–	–	–	5/13	7/15
Detect Trap	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Disguise	–	–	–	–	7/13
Missile Weapon	–	–	–	–	7/15
Detect Weapon	–	–	–	–	7/13
Throwing Weapons	–	–	–	–	7/15

Damage	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	34	39	49	59	69
Wound Threshold:	9	9	9	9	9
Unconsciousness Rating:	26	30	38	46	54
Recovery Tests: 2					
Recovery Dice: 5/D8					

Karma	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	15	17	20	25	32
Karma Dice: D10					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: 2D6	Full: 54/110 (flying)
	Combat: 27/55 (flying)

Combat	Armor: 3
Physical Defense: 12	Mystic Armor: 1
Spell Defense: 8	
Social Defense: 8	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Dagger [Damage: 6/D10]  
Leather Armor  
Sap [Damage: 5/D8]  
Short Sword [Damage: 8/2D6]

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** The thief can spend a Karma Point on Perception Tests.

**Fifth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1

**Sixth Circle:** Social Defense + 1

**Seventh Circle:** Evaluate Metal (p. 82, ED)





## ELVEN TROUBADOUR

(p. 84, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (15): 6/D10  
Strength (12): 5/D8  
Toughness (11): 5/D8

Perception (16): 6/D10  
Willpower (12): 5/D8  
Charisma (19): 8/2D6

Talents	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Disguise	1/7	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Emotion Song	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13	7/15
First Impression	2/10	3/11	4/12	5/13	7/15
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	2/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Mimic Voice	1/7	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Durability (6/5)	–	1/1	2/2	5/5	7/7
Item History	–	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Speak Language	–	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Empathic Sense	–	–	3/11	5/13	7/15
Read and					
Write Language	–	–	3/9	5/11	7/13
Taunt	–	–	–	5/13	7/15
Thread Weaving	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Engaging Banter	–	–	–	5/13	7/15
Throwing Weapons	–	–	–	4/10	7/13
Haggle	–	–	–	–	7/15
Resist Taunt	–	–	–	–	7/12
Incite Mob	–	–	–	–	7/12
Missile Weapons	–	–	–	–	7/13

Damage	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	32	38	50	62	74
Wound Threshold:	8	8	8	8	8
Unconsciousness Rating:	24	29	39	49	59
Recovery Tests: 2					
Recovery Dice: 5/D8					

Karma	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	5	7	10	15	22
Karma Dice: D6					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8	Full: 75
	Combat: 38

Combat	Armor: 5
Physical Defense: 8	Mystic Armor: 3
Spell Defense: 9	
Social Defense: 10	

Weapons/Armor	
Bola [Damage: 8/2D6]	Ferndask Shield
2 Daggers [Damage: 7/D12]	Knife [Damage: 6/D10]
Dwarf Sword [Damage: 8/2D6]	Leather Armor

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** The troubadour can spend a Karma Point on Dexterity Tests.  
**Fifth Circle:** The troubadour can spend a Karma Point to support another character's social action (p. 84, ED).  
**Sixth Circle:** Social Defense + 1  
**Seventh Circle:** The Kiss (p. 84, ED)

## OBSIDIMAN WARRIOR

(p. 86, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8  
Strength (21): 8/2D6  
Toughness (22): 9/D8 + D6

Perception (11): 5/D8  
Willpower (13): 6/D10  
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Talents	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Acrobatic Strike	1/6	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Air Dance	1/6	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	7/12
Unarmed Combat	2/7	3/8	4/9	5/10	7/12
Wood Skin	1/10	2/11	3/12	5/14	7/16
Anticipate Blow	–	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Durability (9/7)	–	1/1	2/2	5/5	7/7
Throwing Weapons	–	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Avoid Blow	–	–	3/8	5/10	7/12
Tiger Spring	–	–	3/3	5/5	7/7
Down Strike	–	–	–	5/16	7/18
Thread Weaving	–	–	–	5/10	7/12
Gliding Stride	–	–	–	5/10	7/12
Swift Kick	–	–	–	5/10	7/12
Life Check	–	–	–	–	7/16
Missile Weapons	–	–	–	–	7/12
Earth Skin	–	–	–	–	7/7
Second Attack	–	–	–	–	7/12

Damage	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	47	56	74	92	110
Wound Threshold:	16	16	16	16	16
Unconsciousness Rating:	40	47	61	75	89
Recovery Tests: 4					
Recovery Dice: 9/D8 + D6					

Karma	Circle				
	1st	2nd	3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	5	7	10	15	22
Karma Dice: D4					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D4	Full: 43
	Combat: 22

Combat	Armor: 8
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 1
Spell Defense: 7	
Social Defense: 6	

Weapons/Armor	
Battle-axe [Damage: 14/D20 + D4]	
Body Shield	

### Notes

**Fourth Circle:** The warrior can spend a Karma Point on Willpower Tests.  
**Fifth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1  
**Sixth Circle:** +1 Recovery Test per day  
**Seventh Circle:** Physical Defense + 1





## DWARF WEAPONSMITH

(p. 88, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8  
Strength (15): 6/D10  
Toughness (16): 7/D12

Perception (18): 7/D12  
Willpower (15): 6/D10  
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Talents	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Avoid Blow	1/6	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Forge Blade	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Melee Weapons	2/7	2/8	3/9	4/10	7/13
Steel Thought	1/7	2/8	3/9	5/11	7/13
Weapon History	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14
Durability (6/5)	–	1/1	2/2	5/5	7/7
Haggle	–	2/7	3/8	5/10	7/12
Read and Write Language	–	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Abate Curse	–	–	3/10	5/12	7/14
Detect Weapon	–	–	3/10	5/12	7/14
Speak Language	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
Thread Weaving	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
Temper Self	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Warp Missile	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
Conceal Weapon	–	–	–	–	7/14
Spot Armor Flaw	–	–	–	–	7/14
Disarm	–	–	–	–	7/12
Temper Other	–	–	–	–	7/13

Damage	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	39	45	57	69	81
Wound Threshold:	11	11	11	11	11
Unconsciousness Rating:	31	36	46	56	66
Recovery Tests: 3					
Recovery Dice: 6/D10					

Karma	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points	6	8	11	16	23
Karma Dice: D6					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8	Full: 40
	Combat: 20

Combat	Armor: 4
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 2
Spell Defense: 10	
Social Defense: 7	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Broadsword [Damage: 11/D10 + D8]  
2 Daggers [Damage: 8/2D6]  
Hand-Axe [Damage: 10/D10 + D6]  
Knife [Damage: 7/D12]  
Padded Leather

**Notes**  
**Fourth Circle:** Evaluate Weapon (p. 88, ED)  
**Fifth Circle:** Social Defense + 1  
**Sixth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1  
**Seventh Circle:** The weaponsmith can spend a Karma Point on Dexterity Tests.

## OBSIDIMAN WIZARD

(p. 90, ED)

### Attributes

Dexterity (11): 5/D8  
Strength (21): 8/2D6  
Toughness (16): 7/D12

Perception (17): 7/D12  
Willpower (13): 6/D10  
Charisma (10): 5/D8

Talents	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Karma Ritual	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Read and Write Language	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Read and Write Magic	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Spellcasting	2/9	3/10	4/11	5/12	7/14
2 x Spell Matrix	1/1	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Thread Weaving	1/8	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Durability (4/3)	–	1/1	2/2	5/5	7/7
Evidence Analysis	–	2/9	3/10	5/12	7/14
Spell Matrix	–	2/2	3/3	5/5	7/7
Book Memory	–	–	3/9	5/11	7/13
Book Recall	–	–	3/10	5/12	7/14
Arcane Mutterings	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Astral Sight	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
Lip Reading	–	–	–	5/12	7/14
Willforce	–	–	–	5/11	7/13
Enhanced Matrix	–	–	–	–	7/7
Speak Language	–	–	–	–	7/14
Hold Thread	–	–	–	–	7/13
Melee Weapons	–	–	–	–	7/12

Damage	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Death Rating:	39	43	51	59	67
Wound Threshold:	14	14	14	14	14
Unconsciousness Rating:					
Rating:	31	34	40	46	52
Recovery Tests: 3					
Recovery Dice: 7/D12					

Karma	1st	2nd	Circle 3rd	5th	7th
Karma Points:	5	7	10	15	22
Karma Dice: D4					

Initiative	Movement
Dice: D8	Full: 43
	Combat: 22

Combat	Armor: 3
Physical Defense: 7	Mystic Armor: 1
Spell Defense: 9	
Social Defense: 6	

**Weapons/Armor**  
Mace [Damage: 12/2D10]  
Troll Sling 1 [Damage: 12/2D10]

**Notes**  
**Fourth Circle:** The wizard can spend a Karma Point on Charisma Tests.  
**Fifth Circle:** Spell Defense + 1  
**Sixth Circle:** Social Defense + 1  
**Seventh Circle:** The wizard can spend a Karma Point on Willforce and Willpower Tests.







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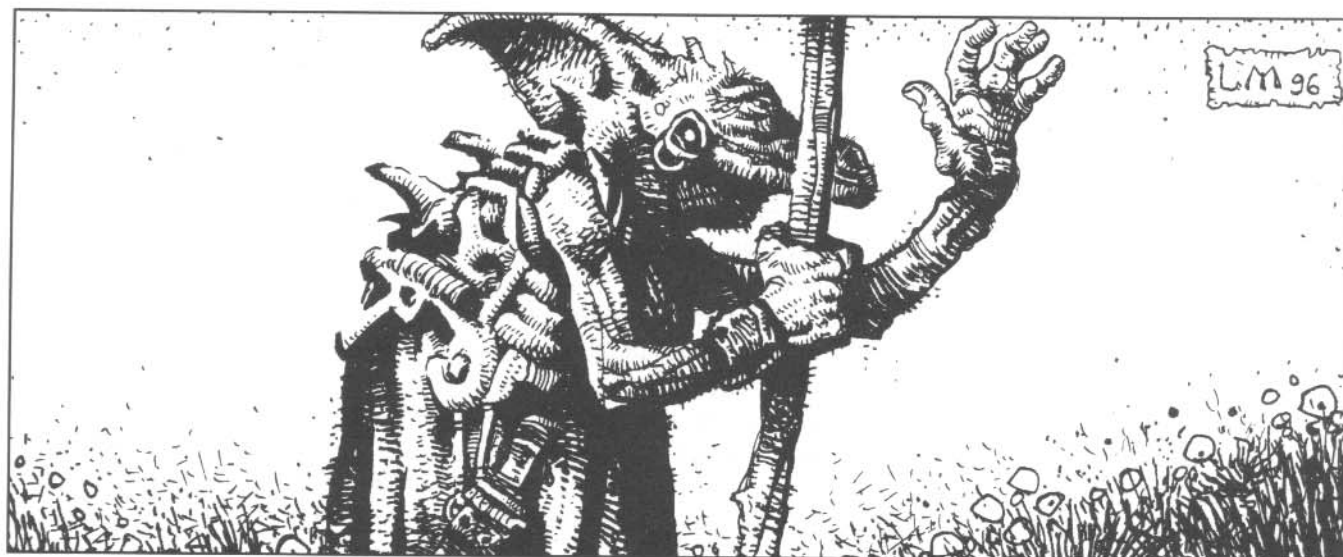
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ISBN: 1-55560-312-2 \$15.00