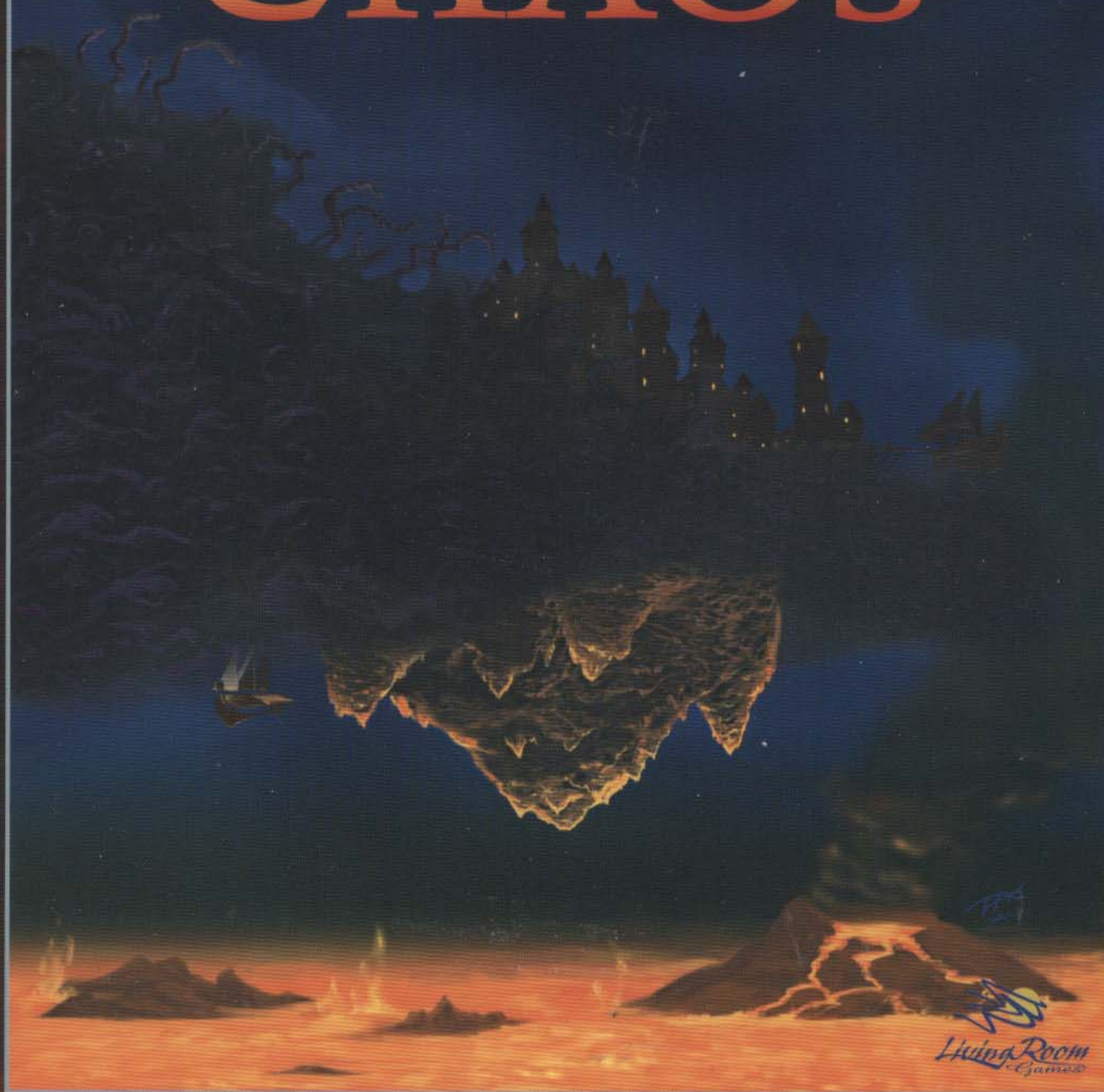


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BARSAIVE IN CHAOS: AN EARTHDAWN EPIC

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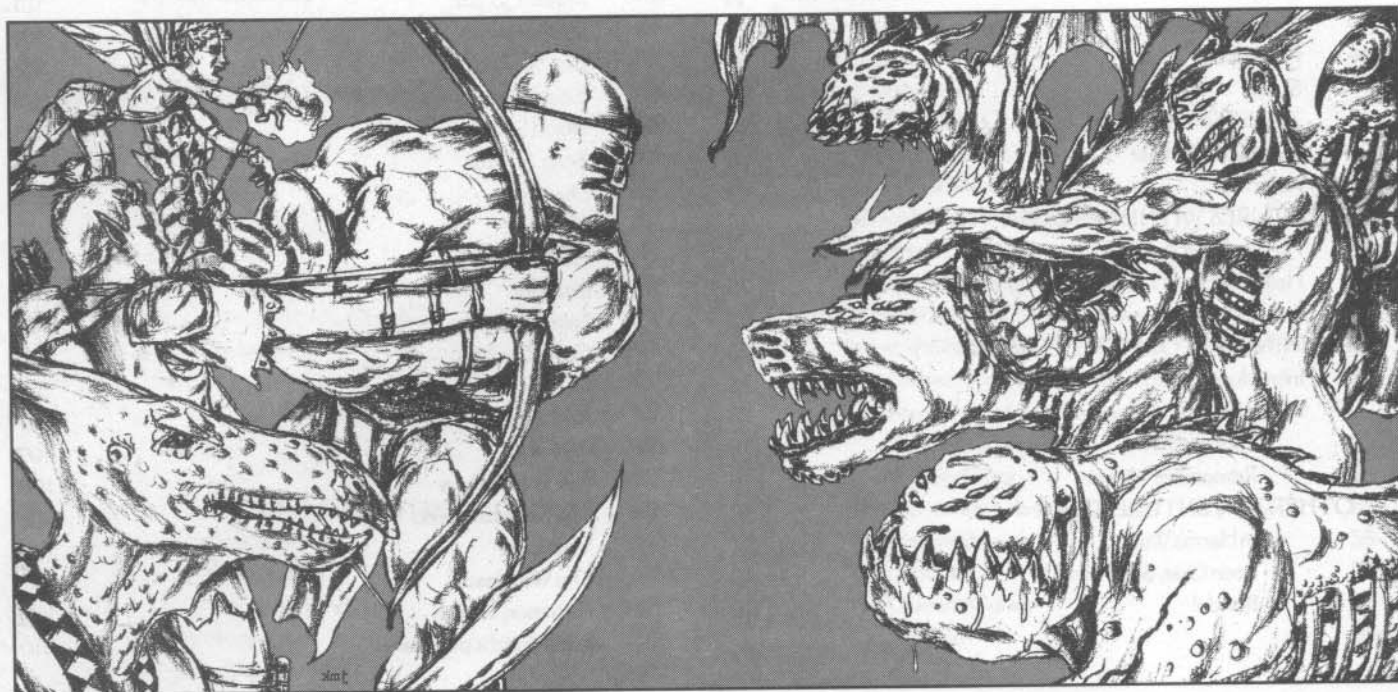
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Published under license by Living Room Games
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Arlington, TX 76014

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1st Printing March 2002



INTRODUCTION



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

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

GAMEMASTERING NOTES

As noted above, the events in **Barsaive in Chaos** are designed to take place in a particular order. The gamemaster should feel free to adjust this order to suit his or her individual campaign. Before incorporating any of these events in his campaign, the gamemaster should be thoroughly familiar with the contents of this book, and both the players and gamemaster should be familiar with the **Earthdawn Second Edition** rulebook (ED2) and the **Earthdawn Second Edition Companion**.

MAKING TESTS

Whenever player characters attempt to take actions such as casting a spell, swinging a sword at an opponent, tracking a Horror, or flirting with a barmaid, the Gamemaster or the player rolls dice against a Difficulty Number to determine the action's outcome. These dice rolls are called Tests. To make a Test, the player or Gamemaster rolls the appropriate Action Dice based on the Step Number of the ability being used (see the **Step/Action Dice Table**, p. 36, ED2). If the dice roll result is equal to or greater than the Difficulty Number, the Test succeeds and the character accomplishes his action. If the result is lower than the Difficulty Number, the Test fails and the character does not

accomplish his action. In Tests that deal with magic, the dice roll result often determines the duration of a magical effect as well.

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

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

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the **Earthdawn Second Edition** rulebook and **Earthdawn Second Edition Companion**, this book contains everything required to run **Barsaive in Chaos**. However, this product draws fairly heavily on many previously published **Earthdawn** products, and includes references and connections to many of those products. In addition, several loose ends left in previous products are tied up or explained, while new ones are created. There are specific references in this product to **Barsaive at War**, **Prelude to War**, the **Sky Point & Vivane Campaign Set**, **Cara Fahd**, and **Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom**. Gamemasters will find it especially useful to have those products available when reading and preparing to use **Barsaive in Chaos**. Gamemasters may also find the **Barsaive Campaign Set**, the **Parlathin: The Forgotten City Campaign Set**, and the **Creatures of Barsaive and Horrors** sourcebooks useful.

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

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

The next section, entitled **Important Characters**, provides descriptions and statistics for all of the major characters that play a part



in the event. In many cases, abbreviated statistics are used here. Following **Important Characters** is a section that describes to the gamemaster how he can introduce the event into his campaign. This includes ways to offer hints and clues about the event before it occurs, and how to arrange for the characters to learn of the event.

Following this are a number of **Adventure Frameworks**, a type of shorthand adventure (see below). The adventures presented here either relate to the event in some way, or, when used together, form a story arc based on the event. For instance, the **Adventure Frameworks** in **There Must Be Chaos** all fit together to form a story arc in which the player characters become involved in an attempt to overthrow King Neden as ruler of Throal.

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

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

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

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

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

The **Climax** is the conclusion or resolution of the adventure, and describes how the adventure is likely to end. Because the **Climax** is usually the likeliest resolution based on actions that the gamemaster expects the players to take, it may differ considerably from the way the adventure actually ends, because player groups often take unexpected actions. Therefore, planning for more than one possible climax is a

good idea. After the **Climax**, there is a section called **Sequels**. These are stories that might happen after the adventure or as a result of the adventure. Sequels may be adventures that feature the same non-player characters or include a magical item discovered in the first adventure. Sequels help create a sense of continuity in a campaign.

PREPARING ADVENTURES

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

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

THREAT LEVEL

The adventures in this book vary in difficulty and threat level greatly. As such, there are no hard and fast guidelines for appropriate Circles. The adventures in **Barsaive in Chaos** were designed based on an assumption that by the time they get involved in the events in this book, most of the characters are of at least Third Circle. Ideally, characters should have reached Fourth or Fifth Circle, or Legendary Status 1, by the time they become involved in the events of **The Storm of Horrors**. Characters who have participated in **Prelude to War** and **Barsaive at War** may be significantly higher Circle than this. The gamemaster should increase the threat of the enemies presented in **Barsaive in Chaos** accordingly. Beyond these general guidelines, the gamemaster should make adjustments according to the size and average Circle of the characters in his group.

AWARDING LEGEND POINTS

In addition to adjusting the threat level of the adventures in this book to best suit his characters, the gamemaster must also determine the Legend Point awards for the adventures he runs based on the events in **Barsaive in Chaos**. These awards should be based on the characters' average Circle, but also on the relative difficulty and scope of the adventures themselves. For instance, an adventure only



peripherally related to one of these events should not earn the characters as many Legend Points as one in which the characters save Travar from a Horror Cloud.

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

For example, a group of characters participate in the adventure entitled **Full Circle in The Death of a Denairastas**. The average Circle of the characters is Fifth, and the gamemaster has decided on a Legend Award of 550 Legend Points. At the conclusion of this adventure, in addition to the standard Legend Awards for Completing the Adventure Goal, Creative Roleplaying and Heroics, and Defeating Creatures and Opponents, each character would also receive a bonus Legend Award of 550 Legend Points.

RUNNING BARSATIVE IN CHAOS

Barsaive in Chaos is not a single adventure or even a collection of adventures. Instead, it presents gamemasters with a set of events and circumstances which he can incorporate into his campaign, allowing his characters to participate in shaping the future of Barsaive. There are a number of adventures based on each of the events described in this book, and each can serve as the basis and back story for a significant portion of a gamemaster's **Earthdawn** campaign. But where previous adventures represented single stories or events, the adventures based on the events in **Barsaive in Chaos** are meant to be run in between other stories, and represent on-going storylines rather than self-contained adventures. The following section offers advice to gamemasters for incorporating the events in **Barsaive in Chaos** into their campaign.

THE EVENTS OF PRELUDE TO WAR

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

THE EVENTS OF BARSATIVE AT WAR

There were eight major events in **Barsaive at War**. Neden commissioned Merrox, the Master of the Hall of Records, to write the Declaration of Separation and War, a declaration that was signed by nearly all of the major powers of Barsaive and delivered to Thera. Amidst the upheaval caused by the Declaration, a rescue mission finally

returned Aardelea to Barsaive. Soon, Barsaive began readying itself for war, preparations that included the capture of Theran vessels, the uniting of the trolls, and the blockading of Triumph. As tensions escalated, the dragons engineered the Theft of the Everliving Flower in such a manner as to implicate the Therans, and draw the blood elves into the war. The first large-scale battle of the war was the siege of Triumph, in which the Barsaivan victory was tainted by the massacre at Willow's Grove, where the blood elves killed hundreds of Theran troops who were attempting to surrender as well as civilians who were attempting to flee. Meanwhile, as all of Barsaive's attention was focused on Thera, the Denairastas took control of Jerris. The dragons planned to remove Vivane's influence on the war by entrapping it within a dome of air, and their ritual had disastrous consequences - the attraction of the Horror Cloud, the destruction of Vivane, and its ultimate rebirth as a city of undead. Finally, the forces of Barsaive engaged the last Theran stronghold in Barsaive, Sky Point. The weapons of Sky Point were able to destroy many Barsaivan airships, and kill thousands of soldiers, but in the end the forces of Barsaive were victorious.

THE EVENTS OF BARSATIVE IN CHAOS

Chronology of Events

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

Start	Krathis Gron defeats the Legion of the Damned
+1 month	The Village of Kimlan is destroyed by a Horror Cloud
+2 months	Horror Stalker Crusade Begins
+3 months	Crusader's Rest Established
+4 months	Zarass Icethought captured by slavers
+5 months	The March of the Undead
+6 months	Gellad Denairastas is killed
+7 months	Twiceborn sends emissaries to the leaders of Barsaive
+8 months	A Horror Cloud is immobilized at Mt. Bloodfire
+9 months	The Uprising in Throal

USING THE EVENTS IN CAMPAIGNS

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



Introducing the Events

The first step in incorporating the events of **Barsaive in Chaos** into an **Earthdawn** campaign is to introduce the events to the player characters. This can be done as simply as allowing the characters to learn first-hand of the event, or by providing hints and clues that relate to one or more of the events. Exactly how the characters learn of the events is up to the gamemaster. As described in **How to Use this Book** (p. 6), each of the events includes a section offering specific suggestions for how to introduce the event into your campaign. These sections also include a **Background**, which often has references to other **Earthdawn** products in which hints or clues pertaining to the event appear. These **Prequels** allow the gamemaster to link elements from previous **Earthdawn** products to those in **Barsaive in Chaos**, creating a campaign that is dynamic and changes and grows over time.

Mini-Campaigns

One of the ways gamemasters can use the events in this book in their campaigns is to use each as the basis for a mini-campaign, or series of linked adventures, all connected to the given event. For instance, the characters might take part in the **Horror Stalker Crusade**, and participate in all of the adventures based on that event before **Twiceborn** marches to Vivane. Then, they might participate in all of the adventures related to that event, and so on. In this case, the **Events** should most likely occur in the same order that they appear in this book; that is, **The Horror Stalker Crusade**, followed by **To Strain Against the Shackles**, followed by **The March of the Undead**, followed by **The Death of a Denairastas**, followed by **A Storm of Horrors**, and finally, ending with **There Must Be Chaos**. Though the gamemaster is, of course, free to alter this, the event sections in this book have been written based on the preceding order. If the gamemaster changes the order of **Events**, he will need to make alterations to text accordingly.

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

Epic-Style Campaign

The second way a gamemaster can use **Barsaive in Chaos** in his campaign is to integrate the events with other adventures, and with each other. For example, after the **Horror Stalker Crusade** begins, the characters may participate in one of the adventure frameworks in that section, or in an adventure based on one of the **Adventure Ideas** related to that event. The characters might next learn of the rumblings in Cara Fahd in **To Strain Against the Shackles**, and participate in one or more of the adventures that appear in that section. In between adventures based on **To Strain Against the Shackles**, the characters might get involved in **The March of the Undead** storyline, followed by one of the adventures based on **The Death of a Denairastas**. They might next participate in another adventure based on **The March of the Undead** or **There Must Be Chaos**, before returning to the **Horror Stalker Crusade** storyline. The idea here is that the characters move between the storylines, each of which is a small part of a truly epic-scale campaign, one with the characters at the center of the action.

Timeline of Barsaive in Chaos

The following is a possible timeline for the events of **Barsaive in Chaos**. Of course, a gamemaster may choose which of these events to

use in his campaign. Some of the entries in the timeline are events (such as the beginning of the **Horror Stalker Crusade**), while most are the names of adventure frameworks or adventure ideas in the sections of this book pertaining to each of the events.

- **War With the Legion:** The Legion of the Damned had been engaging in wholesale slaughter of outlying villages by the time Krathis Gron finally was forced to deal with them in a military campaign in which the characters could become heroes of Cara Fahd.
- **In Harm's Way:** In this adventure, the characters lead villagers fleeing a Horror Cloud to safety.
- **Until Proven Innocent:** The characters are accused of a murder in Jerris, and have only a short time to prove their innocence.
- **The Road to Scytha:** The characters escort an expert on the Horrors to the main camp of the Horror Stalker Crusade.
- **Joining the Crusade:** In this framework the characters uncover an agent of Thera working within the Horror Stalker Crusade.
- **Welcome to Cara Fahd:** This framework deals with the complications of instituting taxes and a broader rule of law in Cara Fahd, and some of the unforeseen results.
- **The Underground:** A band of orks plotting against Krathis Gron seek out the characters' aid for what appears to be a simple courier's job to and from Grimeye's Crossing.
- **To Zarass' Aid:** Zarass Icethought herself has been captured by slavers, and it is up to the characters to save her.
- **Scythan Crusade:** This adventure idea outlines the search for a lost item of Scythan legend: the Sword of Morra.
- **Artifact Escort:** The characters must safeguard a powerful magical artifact to Throal, overcoming Horror Stalkers who do not want to see it leave Crusader's Rest, Therans, agents of the Blood Wood, and even a Harbinger of Chorrolis himself!
- **The End is Near:** In this adventure a prophet of doom has managed to convert the daughter of a headsmen of a farming village into his cult in Haven. The headsmen wants her back, and Torgak wants peace and quiet.
- **Something is Rotten in Haven:** The characters investigate the rumors of increased activity in the Smalls of Parlainth, and observe the beginning of **The March of the Undead**.
- **How Bad Do You Want Him?:** The characters are trying to hunt a notorious criminal, but his path leads to the Undead City of Vivane.
- **Fools Rush In:** A merchant, fearful for his son adventuring in Vivane, asks the characters to go and get him out before the Horror Cloud and Twiceborn's undead arrive.
- **Agents of the Queen:** This framework details a journey to the Necropolis of Vivane, where the characters act as unwitting pawns of Twiceborn.
- **Hearts of Darkness:** Chardis Morningfall asks the characters to journey to the Poison Forest to discover what happened to a group of Engineers from Jerris sent to study the Ash that falls on both the city and the forest.
- **Full Circle:** In this framework the characters become involved in Chardis Morningfall's revenge against Gellad Denairastas for the deaths of the Engineers.
- **The Second March:** Can the characters discover the truth behind a second march of undead towards Vivane?
- **The Governor's Taxes:** A Thief acquires a map of the details of



the vaults of the former Theran Governor. Can the characters help him recover the wealth from the Undead City of Vivane?

- **The Other Side of the Coin:** While adventuring near Vivane, the characters meet a group of Theran Adepts. Are they potential allies, or a threat to Barsaive?
- **Strange Emissaries:** Torgak accepts the undead diplomat sent by Twiceborn, and the characters must keep the peace in Haven.
- **The Queen's Court:** Twiceborn's emissary in Haven is offering tokens that allow an audience with the Queen, and the characters are asked to receive one.
- **The Guided Tour:** In this adventure, the characters guide a wealthy Travaran through the ruins of Vivane.
- **Turn About:** The characters are hired to eliminate the undead emissary in Haven. After acting as peacekeepers, will the characters accept this proposition?
- **Meet the New Boss:** Charcoalgrin arrogantly commands the characters to assist her Unforgivables in clearing out the remaining knots of Horror activity in Twiceborn's former catacombs in Parlathin.
- **The Free Vivane Import-Export Trading Company:** Klausen Getz takes up Twiceborn on her offer of free trade, and he's going to need all of the help he can get.
- **Airship Down:** The characters rescue the crew of a downed airship in the path of a Horror Cloud.
- **Remember Vivane:** The characters discover a corrupted kila at the heart of a Horror Cloud, and confront its captain - who has now become one with the Horrors.
- **Trick or Treaties:** The characters work with the Jerris resistance, trying to find political allies against the oppressive Denairastas.
- **Seen One, Seen 'em All:** The characters are sought out by the powers that be of Barsaive as experts on defeating the Horror Clouds.
- **The New Bazaar:** The villages of the South Hold Tribe of Cara Fahd are establishing a new trading post - a burgeoning community in need of heroes.
- **The Cauldron:** Working with a crewmember of the *Earthdawn*, the characters uncover a plot against Throal by the Crownbreakers.
- **Preparations and Despair:** In this framework the characters clash against the Hive of Ashes and its patron Horror, Andokhas.
- **The Coup:** A conspiracy against King Neden comes to a head during a festival celebrating the end of the war with Thera.
- **The Hunt for the Whisperers:** A cult of Vestrial that played a key role in the Uprising in Throal has escaped, it's up to the characters to find them.
- **Bunda!** The characters are invited to join the Cara Fahd Navy in its quest to gain more ships - at the expense of slavers from Rugaria.
- **The Creation of the Hunters of Throal:** The characters are sent to help recruit Horror Stalkers for the defense of Throal, and bear witness to the growth of Crusader's Rest into a city.

BARSAIVE IN CHAOS AND YOUR CAMPAIGN

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

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

Keep in mind that while the *Adventure Frameworks* describe the overall plot for the adventures in this book, the gamemaster is responsible for fleshing those adventures out. This allows him to tailor the details of any of these adventures to best fit the needs of his own campaign. This is especially true for the various *Adventure Ideas* related to each event, as these provide only brief suggestions for adventures, leaving much of the plotting and many of the adventures' details up to the gamemaster. In addition, by inserting adventures of their own in between some of the adventures in the sample timeline, the gamemaster can take this example and make it his own.

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

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

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



THE HORROR STALKER CRUSADE



The crowd stirred, filled with Name-givers not used to standing outside in the hot sun. It was a largely dwarf crowd, interest piqued by the somewhat outlandish claims of the dwarf who would be speaking. The crowd was mostly jovial. Many seemed to already know each other. Greetings were exchanged, as were the occasional harsh words, but even the most heated speakers appeared to share in a friendly rivalry. It was the largest gathering of Horror Stalkers ever. There were, to be sure, some Adepts of other Disciplines there – Nethermancers, and some of the more combat-oriented Disciplines, with the occasional Troubadour ready to record this moment for posterity, should it ever amount to anything.

An old dwarf stepped on the podium. Scarred and still suffering the effects of multiple wounds, his progress was slow as he approached the steps that would raise him into the sight of all. He was not embarrassed by these wounds; rather, he wore them as a medal, a silent reminder that he was one of the very few who had fought for so long, and still survived. This was not lost on the crowd. A hush fell over the crowd as they turned, all intent upon the next words from the speaker.

"I am Grathus, Horror Stalker of the Eighth Circle. I have pledged my life to ending the Horrors' reign of evil. By my hand, there are forty-three Horrors that will never again threaten the land of Barsaive! I have journeyed deep into Scythia, and I still stand here before you!"

His voice boomed out over the crowd, much louder than it should have been. At this, those assembled gave a loud cheer, rising to their feet and showing their appreciation, clapping, shouting, cheering for this most respected of their Discipline. Waiting for the sound to die down, he continued.

"I have been to Scythia. Never before in my travels have I seen so much evil, or so much corruption. The stench of the Horrors hangs in the very air! Each step is treacherous, and around each corner you should expect to find a Horror unlike any you have ever seen before, for I have found many never heard of anywhere else in Barsaive. I believe that Scythia contains the heart of the Scourge."

The crowd was quiet, in rapt expectation.

"Scythia was the birthplace of the dwarfs. It was also the first place that the Name-givers were forced out of their homelands. Unfortunately, it was by no means the last. Name-givers working together have managed to clear most of Barsaive of many of these Horrors. To the north, Scythia still stands as a reminder of what we have lost. Not just the dwarfs – the people of Barsaive have lost as well. There is a place where no Name-giver may go without fearing for their lives. Together, we can reclaim this land for all Name-givers!"

"Of course, this will not be without personal gain. There is much treasure there. You who have heard the story of my return know the truth of that. Any Name-giver who goes there and lives will be wealthy for the rest of their life. But, I offer you something greater than personal wealth. Scythia is the land where the Horrors first appeared, more than a hundred years before the Scourge enveloped the rest of Barsaive. It is the source of the evil that has plagued our fair land. It is there where astral space is the most corrupt. It is there that they gain the most easy entrance to Barsaive. If we can retake Scythia, and find the source of the Horrors, we may be able to stop the Horrors. Let me repeat that: We may be able to finally put an end to the Horrors. No amount of physical danger can allow me to overlook that simple fact. I am a Horror Stalker. This is our fight."

"Scythia is the most dangerous place that you can go and still stand a chance of living. I'm going back there. I want you to come with me.

I offer you only one promise: If you join me, you will kill a Horror, or die trying."

At this, the crowd burst into cheers, echoing its excitement through the alleys of Throal. The Scythian Crusade was born.

BACKGROUND

The mountains of Scythia are the birthplace of the dwarf race. Located in the mountains north of Throal and southeast of what was then the Elven Wood (now the Blood Wood), Scythia enjoyed an immense supply of valuable natural resources such as iron and gold. In times long before the Scourge, the Kingdom of Scythia was paramount among the dwarf nations. In its time, it conquered several others with the large armies its wealth could provide. Its conquests eventually became too much to support, and soon it was beset by constant rebellion and border skirmishes. Eventually, Scythia was weakened to the point where it was itself conquered, by the then-new Theran Empire. The once-wealthy dwarf kingdom was now itself a vassal state, subservient to Theran wishes.

This was not the end of Scythia's problems. Roughly one hundred years before what the rest of Barsaive has come to call the Scourge, strange occurrences began to happen. Disappearances began, as did attacks by fantastical monstrosities upon unsuspecting residents of Scythia. Scholars would later mark Scythia as the location of the first appearance of the Horrors, and the precursor to our Scourge. As the intensity of the attacks quickly rose, the citizens of Scythia made a panicked pilgrimage to the gates of Throal, asking for and receiving safe haven. For a while, Scythia was a favored target of treasure-hunters wanting to bring back the valued possessions that had been left behind in the mad flight of its citizens. Fewer and fewer came back with each passing year, and those that did spoke of great riches and immense danger. As the Scourge approached, Scythia was abandoned by all, and remained that way for years even after the Scourge. As time passed, a few expeditions began to make small forays into Scythia, but few returned and even fewer still were profitable. Only the insane and the very determined now journey into Scythia, where the presence of the Horrors is said to be strongest in all of Barsaive.

It is this very concentration of the Horrors that has led Grathus, one of the most renowned Horror Stalkers of Barsaive, to Scythia. He sees Scythia as the heart of the Horror infestation and has for many years thought of leading an expedition into Scythia. Grathus has just returned from such an expedition, undertaken with the assistance of his adventuring group, the Loyal Few. They lost almost half of their number, but managed to kill several Horrors and perhaps more notably, returned with as much Orichalcum as they could carry. During their travels, they had managed to find a cache of enchanting supplies, including the rich enchanter's store. Dropping as much equipment as they could afford to, they loaded up, and returned to Throal as wealthy Name-givers.

Still, Grathus was not content with the results. What he had seen in Scythia both worried and challenged him. It was a collection of Horrors greater than any he had ever known and many of the Horrors were of a kind never before seen in Barsaive. Before, he had merely wanted to survive an expedition. Now, he had a dream: to travel into Scythia, find the source of the Horrors that had plagued his world, and kill the evil at its root. More importantly, Grathus had the things needed to make it a reality: knowledge of Scythia, enough cash to



support a large expedition, and the living proof that an expedition such as his can be survived. The Scythian Crusade was begun.

Over the course of nearly a month Grathus gathered many of the Horror Stalkers of Barsaive under his banner, as well as dozens more who had made hunting Horrors and repairing the damage that the Horrors had caused a central tenet of their lives. They came from the corners of the province, and gathered in Throal. Once Grathus had determined that he could begin his task in earnest, he led the Crusade to Scythia.

EVENT SYNOPSIS

A few weeks after the main body of the Crusade has left, the characters are approached by a person who wishes them to escort a Horror Lore specialist to the Crusade. The person to be escorted, a Traveled Scholar (and his retinue) has focused on studying Horrors and corruption, and it is thought that his assistance will be invaluable to Grathus. The trip to the body of the Crusade will be hazardous in the extreme, and the characters are hired for protection on the trip. Fighting several smaller battles along the way with the usual hazards of Barsaivan travel, they soon reach the Scythian mountains, some of the harshest terrain in Barsaive. Beset by a sudden snowstorm in the mountains, they take shelter in a cave. Unfortunately, a Horror has also chosen this cave for its lair, and the curious Traveled Scholar wanders a bit too far for his own good. The characters must rescue the Scholar from the clutches of the Horror, and then deliver him (hopefully unharmed) to the crusaders, avoiding or defeating even more creatures along the way. Wounded and exhausted, the final battle is turning against them, when they are saved by a roaming group of Horror Stalkers – they have found the Crusade and completed their job. Impressed by their competence, Grathus asks the characters to join the Crusade, offering a handsome reward and the promise of fighting the truest evil the and has seen. Helping to fight the Crusade, they soon realize that Grathus' right hand man, Lathan, is acting quite strangely. Investigating further, they begin to suspect that he is a Theran agent, with an agenda quite different than the Crusade's. In actuality, he is merely struggling with whether or not to reveal Alaina's (the true Theran agent) duplicity. As the characters uncover this information, they must decide how to use it, and whom they can tell.

THE SCYTHIAN CRUSADE

The Scythian Crusade, led by Grathus and his Loyal Few adventuring group, is made up of a surprising number of Horror Stalkers. There are also many Adepts of other Disciplines there, but uncharacteristically the Horror Stalker Discipline is the most represented. Numbering about 500 (with 128 Horror Stalkers) at the outset, their numbers have fluctuated a bit because of reinforcements and combat, and they are now 430 Name-givers strong. Also present are several Lightbearers and obsidian Purifiers, as well as multiple questors of both Garlen and Raggok. The feel of the Crusader camp should be that of a military camp close to the enemy lines. Everyone is constantly on guard, and quite often the still of the night is broken by the sounds of violence. Fresh raiding parties go out in the morning, and by night come back battered and bloody. If they're lucky, all of the party is still alive. The camp is made up mostly of tents of various sizes, with a rough perimeter manned by guards around the clock. Asking others to perform Artisan Tests is very common, and is almost never taken harshly.

Grathus often has a Lightbearer use his Radiant Circle on those who are unknown to him, this precaution was enacted after a Horror-marked Name-giver tried to kill him under a Horror's orders.

SCYTHA

Scythia's geography is very similar to that of its neighbor, Throal. The rocky, mountainous terrain is harsh and in many places impassable. The land beneath the snowline is covered with small brush and tiny trees, all scrambling for light and nutrients in the harsh ground. Above the snowline, small evergreens hold fast to the steep slopes of the mountains and the way is often treacherous due to snowdrifts and the occasional avalanche. The remnants of some roads still exist, but the effects of having not been maintained for hundreds of years make them little better than the mountainside. Villages appear here and there, barely recognizable as such other than by the piles of stone that appear in a regular pattern. Scythia: a dangerous land, not even considering the native creatures and Horrors.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

GRATHUS THE UNYIELDING LEADER OF THE SCYTHIAN CRUSADE

Grathus is an old dwarf, more gristle than meat, and his back is bowed by the weight of his endless struggle against the Horrors. The years have not been kind, and many scars show beneath his armor. An astral eye stands in place of his right eye, surely lost in the same blow that drew a horrible scar from his nose to his right temple. Never handsome, the now-scarred visage seems to suit the personality of its wearer – veteran of a hundred battles, beaten down but never willing to accept defeat. He is treated with obvious respect by all those who've adventured with him – many of whose lives he has saved at great personal danger to himself.

Grathus' ancestors grew up in Scythia, a noble family forced to flee when the Horrors finally expanded into the last few safe areas there. Born on the northern borders of Throal, Grathus was weaned on tales of how the Horrors had stolen the land that was to be his birthright. Due to their proximity to the Scythian border, Grathus' hometown was often beset by the attacks of Horrors or their constructs. These could mostly be handled by the retired Adepts, but one Horror in particular proved too canny in evading the townsfolk. Several deaths occurred, and some of the townspeople moved deeper into Throal proper. The remaining villagers decided to hire a Horror Stalker to take care of the Horror.

This Horror Stalker, Calad Longreach, made quite an impression on the young Grathus. Calad met Grathus and soon noticed in the young dwarf a reflection of himself – determined, and with a great resentment of the Horrors. After spending days hunting the Horror that was plaguing the village, Calad would spend long hours with Grathus, instructing him in the ways of Horrors and the means with which to kill them. After dispatching the Horror that was attacking the town, it was time for Calad to move on. Grathus asked to join him, and learn from him. Grathus was soon training to be a Horror Stalker.

After many successful adventures, Calad was infected by a dread iota. After trying for several days to drive the Horror from his body, he could feel himself slowly losing the battle. Telling Grathus to get to a



safe distance, he decided to use his Death Strike talent upon himself, killing the dread iota in the process. Grathus was forever scarred by this act. He thought that Calad was too quick to use his Death Strike talent, foolishly wasting his future in order to kill a single Horror. Grathus is extremely reluctant to use his Death Strike talent – to the point that some Horror Stalkers think that he is afraid to. Grathus justifies himself by saying that with not killing one Horror now, he remains capable of killing several in the future. In fact, he is afraid of it. He had idolized his mentor, Calad, and saw that the only thing that could bring Calad down was Calad himself. Actually, this fear is probably responsible for keeping Grathus alive as long as he has been.

Grathus has devoted his entire life to defeating the Horrors. Unlike many Barsaivans, he has no prejudice against Therans, even slavers. Any evil less than that of the Horrors is not even worth considering. It is this feeling that has let him accept one of the few Theran Horror Stalkers in Barsaive, Lathan Tremous, into the Loyal Few. Lathan has learned to stay quiet for the most part about his politics, but more than once has been pushed too far by a patriotic Barsaivan. Grathus could care less about political arguments, but will quickly rise to Lathan's defense if he is attacked. Lathan is much too useful against Horrors to allow some other Name-giver to kill him.

Grathus the Unyielding

Eighth Circle Dwarf Horror Stalker

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

Blood Magic items: Astral Sensitive Eye, Horror Fend

LATHAN TREMOUS

Lathan is foremost a proud Theran. He firmly believes in the righteousness of the Theran cause and will, if pressed, loudly debate the various merits of Theran civilization. He sees Barsaive as a misguided child, one that will eventually see the obvious virtue of the Theran

way, and so holds no grudge against the foolish Barsaivans. He does feel indebted to Grathus as one of the few Barsaivans who has truly accepted him for what he is – a Horror Stalker. Lathan is a handsome elf, strongly built with chiseled features and, when out of his imposing armor, he is quite popular with the ladies ... usually only until they find out that he is a Theran. He takes this in stride, though, and chalks it up as just another effect of the unfortunate Throalic propaganda. Lathan and Alaina share a tent, which has caused a few scurrilous rumors in the camp. They really tent together simply because they have adventured together for so long, and Alaina does not mind tenting with a Theran.

Lathan Tremous

Fifth Circle Elf Horror Stalker

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

Initiative: 8 Physical Defense: 11
Number of attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 11
Attack: 16 Social Defense: 8
Damage: 12 Armor: 8
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 6
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 9
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 64 Combat Movement: 65
Wound Threshold: 9 Full Movement: 130
Unconsciousness Rating: 51

Talents: Temper Self 4, Empathic Sense 3, Astral Sight, Durability (6/5), Melee Weapons, Steel Thought, Evidence Analysis (all at 6)
All other First through Fourth Circle Horror Stalker talents at Step 5.

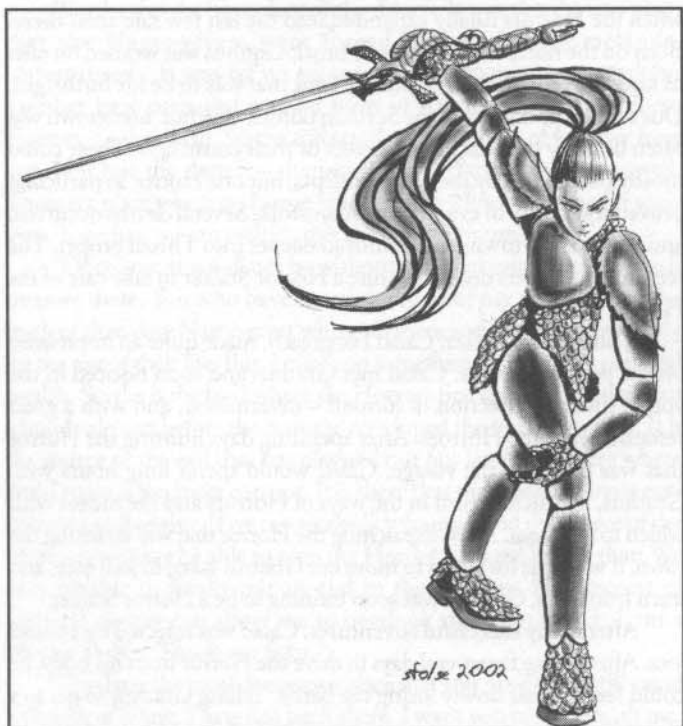
Skills: Carving 1, Lore(Horrors) 4, Conversation 4, Bribery 2, Climbing 3, First Impression 2, Flirting 4

Equipment: Armor of Tremous (made of Cave Crab shell) – Armor 8, Mystic Armor 2, Initiative Penalty 1 (3 Threads tied), Madark's Sword – Longsword (thread item), gives +2 steps to Attack and Damage Tests, and two extra Recovery Tests/day

Blood Magic: Horror Fend

ALAINA DARKSTRIDER

Alaina is one of the few female Horror Stalkers in the Crusade. Beautiful and outwardly idealistic, Alaina has grown tired of the Horror Stalker life and is currently experiencing a minor talent crisis. Due to this, she has been taking more of a command role in the Crusade, directing the fighters under her control, but rarely participating in the battles herself. Jaded and dissatisfied with the unending battle of the Horror Stalker, she started looking for other options. Her many long conversations with Lathan have had more effect than he ever expected – Alaina has become a Theran sympathizer. She turned to the Therans to see if a bargain could be struck. The Therans have agreed to hire her as a secret agent, asking that she join the crusade in order to retrieve a specific object for them, one that was left in Scythia when the Therans fled the attacking Horrors. If she returns the artifact, Marken's Torque,



they have promised her a small fortune, and most importantly, a comfortable life in the lap of Thera luxury. The idea of a peaceful life in retirement, being able to settle down and raise a family, appeals to her greatly. She has seen far too many of her comrades die, and knows that Grathus is unique in being a Horror Stalker who has lived to a ripe old age. Grathus represents everything that she fears – a life spent fighting the Horrors, and still his work is not done. To avoid ending up like Grathus, she will do everything she can to succeed in her mission for Thera.

Alaina Darkstrider

Sixth Circle Human Horror Stalker

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

Initiative: 5 (11) Physical Defense: 10
Number of attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 8
Attack: 15 Social Defense: 10
Damage: 14 Armor: 16 (with shield)
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 8 (with shield)
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 5
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 86 Combat Movement: 50
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 100
Unconsciousness Rating: 69

Talents: Versatility: Surprise Strike, Fireblood, Air Dance, Avoid Blow, Detect Trap, Durability (6/5), Item History, Spirit Hold, Tracking (All at 6)

First through Fifth Circle Horror Stalker talents at 8, Sixth Circle talents at 4

Skills: Dancing 2, Lore (Horrors) 4, Lore (Undead) 2, Streetwise 3, Trick Riding 3

Equipment: Crystal Ringlet, Broadsword (Forged to Rank 4), Silvered Footman's Shield (4 threads tied)

TARANUS THE SCRIBE

Taranus is a young dwarf, a scholar who has devoted his studies to the nature and behavior of the Horrors. Amazingly naïve at times, most of his experience has come as he gets himself in over his head. His curiosity often overrides the natural instincts that would keep most Name-givers from chasing headlong after reports of a new or unusual Horror. Because of this, the Library of Throal began assigning adventuring parties to him, charging them with keeping him out of danger. Luckily, with his extensive studies, Taranus usually knows enough to get himself and those with him out of danger. Unfortunately, this same scholarly nature will often lead him into a hazard as he's lecturing on the very ways to notice and avoid such hazards, talking into his Document Box as he walks to his doom. Taranus loves knowledge, but has gotten the reputation of a fool with the other Traveled Scholars due to his many mishaps. Taranus is hurt by this, and if he could ask for anything in his life, it would be to find something

truly unique, something that no one has ever reported to the Library before. Then, he would certainly be given the respect that he deserves. Taranus should sometimes be played for comic relief, never considering the results of his actions before he takes them and often dragging his companions after him to rescue him from his latest mishap. Of course, the knowledge he has of the Horrors can save the characters in turn.

Taranus the Scribe

Fourth Circle Dwarf Traveled Scholar

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

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 7
Number of attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 11
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 6
Damage: 10 Armor: 3
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 4
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 14
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 62 Combat Movement: 29
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 57
Unconsciousness Rating: 49

Talents: Karma Ritual, Melee Weapons, Read/Write Language, Read/Write Magic, Steel Thought, Item History, Durability, Speak Language, Astral Sight, Book Memory, Thread Weaving (All at rank 4)

Skills: Manuscript Illumination 3, Silent Walk 3, Lore(Horrors) 6, Lore(Scythan History) 6

Equipment: Fernweave, Buckler, Shortsword, Necklace of Recall (can record sound for up to 1 hour), Everfull Pen, Document Box (3 threads tied)

RUNNING THE SCYTHAN CRUSADE

The Scythan Crusade is the beginning of a long battle to be fought to the north of Throal. Grathus will lead an expedition to try to retake Scytha. This section provides two adventure frameworks that can involve the player characters in these events, a number of shorter adventure ideas based around the Scythan Crusade, and guidelines for tying up loose ends.

INTRODUCING THE EVENT

The word of Grathus' successful trip to Scytha has spread far and wide. Few people have been known to return alive from Scytha, especially not with half their companions still standing. Grathus has gained an amazing amount of renown, and most Horror Stalkers respect him greatly. Some even idolize him. It is no great secret that Grathus is considering a mission to Scytha. Soon after his return, rumors began to spread that Grathus was considering a trip, and possibly looking to fill out his adventuring group with a few new heroes. This rumor soon metamorphosed into the Scythan Crusade, and rather than fight this



idea, Grathus has been fully supporting it. If one of the characters is a Horror Stalker, then it should be easy to convince him to attend Grathus' gathering in Throal – even the Horror Stalkers who aren't planning on joining the Crusade are quite interested in hearing Grathus speak, as well as being present at what looks to be the largest gathering of Horror Stalkers in one place since the beginning of the Discipline.

Even if the group has no Horror Stalker, there are ways to draw the characters into the story. Any dwarf or Throalic contacts they have may provide their Names to possible employers, and the news of the Crusade is quite large. The Crusade is by no means limiting itself to Horror Stalkers, and so many adventurers are looking to make their Legend (and fortune) in the wastelands of Scythia. Any adventuring in Throal that the characters have done before could lead them to this adventure, especially if they managed to impress a dwarf noble house or any part of the Throalic government. Alternatively, agents of the Library could approach the characters, having heard reports of their legendary heroic exploits.

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 two adventures form a continuous story line that follows the plot described in **Event Synopsis**, p. 13. Shorter adventure ideas are also presented should the characters wish to continue participating in the Scythian Crusade.

THE ROAD TO SCYTHA

Premise

The players have to escort a Horror lore expert to the Crusade, where his knowledge can be put to best use. The trip is more dangerous than was advertised, and is not aided by the habit of the escorted gamemaster character of continually wander off without concern for his own safety. Eventually, while in the Scythian mountains, the gamemaster character wanders a little too far, right into the clutches of a Scythian Horror. The characters must then figure out how to defeat the Horror that is holding him captive without killing him, as well. After that, they merely have to make it through the Scythian mountains and find the Crusade. Easy, right?

Set-Up

The characters are in Throal and are approached by a messenger. His lord, he says, wishes to speak with them. Depending on the characters' history, they could be approached by the Library of Throal, the Army or Navy of Throal, or even a minor noble family. The employer has heard of the Crusade to retake Scythia and wishes to provide some assistance. A dwarf Traveled Scholar, Taranus, has spent many years studying the Horrors and his knowledge and expertise would be invaluable to the Crusaders. Having exchanged messages with Grathus, he has been told that such a person would be welcomed in support of the Crusade. Unfortunately, the route to Scythia is not an easy one and a single traveler would never make it to the borders of Scythia unharmed, much less penetrate the borders as deeply as the Crusade may have by now. An escort is needed and the characters seem like the perfect group for the job. (Should they press for information, they may find out that

they are actually the fourth or fifth group to be approached, but all of the prior groups turned down the mission as suicidal.) The employer should emphasize the ease of the job, merely escorting an experienced Adept. No combat may even be required, but the employer is concerned for the safety of his scholar and wishes to see him to the Crusades unharmed. Airship travel has been considered, but is not possible due to the high prices named by the airship captains for travel into Scythia.

Event 1

The first few days of the journey are uneventful. The characters, by taking the same route as the Crusade, will avoid many of the monsters that plague the Scythian mountains. Eventually the outlying villages and small towns of Throal give way to the barren wilderness and the small road becomes a bare trail heading north. The characters are soon slowed down by the rough terrain; hopefully they've thought to bring mountaineering gear. Not having such equipment will double the amount of time it takes to get to the Scythian Crusade, as much backtracking and circling around is required. At an appropriate time (that is, whenever the characters aren't watching him like a hawk), Taranus' attention will be caught by a rare creature that he has never seen or heard of before. Caught up in the thrill of finding some new creature to write about, Taranus will quietly wander off in its direction, moving quickly while trying not to startle it. Depending on what the characters are doing, it could be several minutes before Taranus' absence is noticed. Hopefully, a search by the characters will ensue. After moving away from the characters in a fruitless pursuit of the creature, Taranus will have come to his senses and noticed that not only does he not know where the creature went, but that he also has absolutely no idea where he is. If tracked, the characters will find that he has traveled through several muddy areas and other unpleasant terrain – which the characters have no choice but to follow him through. Eventually, the characters will find Taranus, tired and muddy, writing the events of his chase in his journal. Appreciative of the help, Taranus will nonetheless wonder why the characters went to such effort – he was just about to come back!

Event 2

Not too long after that, the characters have their first encounter with Scythian wildlife, when they are attacked by a pack of the same creatures Taranus had chased off. The first creature Taranus had seen was a scout for the vaguely intelligent pack. Now, with the knowledge that a group of Name-givers is passing through their area, the pack has come to feed.



Mountain Gakan

DEX: 8 STR: 8 TOU: 7
 PER: 6 WIL: 7 CHA: 4

Initiative: 9 Physical Defense: 11
 Number of attacks: 3 Spell Defense: 6
 Attack: 11 Social Defense: 7

Damage Armor: 5
 Claws (x2): 8 Mystic Armor: 1
 Bite: 10 Knockdown: 14
 Number of Spells: NA Recovery Tests: 3
 Spellcasting: NA
 Effect: NA

Death Rating: 40 Combat Movement: 50
 Wound Threshold: 7 Full Movement: 100
 Unconsciousness Rating: 35

Legend Points: 500

Equipment: None

The mountain gakan is a large (four feet from nose to tail) mammal, with short, brown fur mottled with splashes of green. Their elongated, rodent-like, brown bodies are surprisingly agile and able to make leaps of great distance from a crouched position. The coloration of their short fur blends in well with the scrub present below the snowline of the mountains, and a gakan can often be a good fight for the unwary traveler.

The group of gakan, twice as many as the characters, will attack from a higher position as the characters travel through a pass in the rocks below. Jumping on the characters from a height may cause the characters to be bowled over by the sudden weight. A Knockdown Test against a Difficulty Number of 6 should be made for every character who is actually hit by a gakan's leaping attack. The gakan will usually run away when they no longer outnumber their prey, but the gamemaster can control the lethality of the fight by choosing when the gakan decide to search for easier prey.

Event 3

As the characters travel deeper into the Scythian mountains, the terrain will become rougher and more treacherous. One night while the characters are encamped and sleeping, Taranus will sneak out of camp, wanting to explore the area. The gakan were amazingly interesting, and it's possible he could find something else previously unknown by looking around a bit without any of the less scholarly characters to get in the way. Sneaking through the mountains at night, he doesn't manage to find any new creatures. He does, however, find a deep crevasse which seems to lead into the side of the mountain. Could this be an entrance to the Dwarf Kingdom of Scythia? Venturing a little farther into the cave, he soon finds out that it is definitely not an entrance, as he falls to the bottom of a forty-foot drop, bouncing against the walls on the way down. Bruised and nursing a broken leg, Taranus will attempt to call for the characters' help. A Perception (11) Test may be allowed for any characters who are awake. Sleeping characters may also notice his cries, at a Difficulty Number of 20. After a while, Taranus will give up on awakening the characters and will try to conserve his strength until help arrives. The quicker the characters

finds him, the better – Taranus is at the bottom of a perilous natural tunnel which leads down into the earth at roughly a ten degree angle, and Taranus is losing strength with each passing hour. If the characters act quickly, they will find him with two Wounds and halfway to his Unconsciousness Rating. Waiting until the morning means that the characters will find him with the same number of Wounds, but only barely conscious. The manner in which the characters retrieve him is important as well – the tunnel is by no means smooth, and is at places not even large enough for an ork to pass. Sharp outcroppings of rock are common in the tunnel and attempting to rescue Taranus by simply pulling him up a lowered rope will result in additional injuries to the already wounded dwarf. Wounds such as these should be treated as causing Step 6 Damage. If a character goes down to assist Taranus, then the likelihood of damage is lowered considerably. If the characters ever take the time to investigate the tunnel further, they will find that Taranus was not the first Name-giver to become trapped there. In the debris at the bottom of the tunnel can be found the remains of his unfortunate predecessor, as well as the high-quality (+2 steps to Damage) broadsword that he carried.

Event 4

Soon, the characters must travel above the snowline of the mountains. Due to Barsaive's unchanging climate, this may be the first time the characters have seen snow, and the novelty of it should be played up. Every once in a while, a character will disappear, having fallen down into a snowdrift. After a while, however, the characters will learn to watch for these, and will be much more cautious. In the late afternoon of their second day traveling above the snowline, they will be caught in a sudden snowstorm. This storm arises quickly and has high winds, low visibility, and hail. Those familiar with mountaineering in general will know this to be a common enough occurrence in the mountains, and know that the best solution is to find a safe place to wait out the storm. As luck would have it, the characters soon find a rough-hewn cave in the cliff side, wide enough for all to enter abreast and about 50' deep, ending in a rough wall. The ceiling starts no higher than a troll's head, but soon rises higher as the tunnel continues down into the mountain. The storm looks like it will last well into the next day, but for now the characters are safe in their cave.

Event 5

As the boredom of waiting in the cave grows, Taranus will become restless. Not wanting to bother the other characters, he will begin examining the walls. He has heard of caves like this serving as hidden entrances to the Scythian mines, where relics of the ancient age could surely be found. Exploring the cave, he eventually finds a section of the wall that swings open when pressed in a specific manner. Cheered by this discovery, he grabs a torch and begins to head down into the darkness. Whether he is allowed to explore on his own or has a character escort forced upon him, his survey of the discovered area will show that the tunnel leads down to the remnants of a once-stocked Scythian supply room. A large room, roughly 50' by 100', this storehouse once kept supplies that might be needed by the Scythian army at a moment's notice. The high ceiling (some 40' above the floor) shows that the storeroom was merely a modification made to an existing underground cavern. Long shelves are arranged in parallel running the length of the room, holding rotted and decayed items lying covered in dust. There is not much left, however. Even the non-perishables have long since



perished, and most of the armor and weaponry have rusted to uselessness. A thorough search of the room will turn up the following items, however:

- 5 working light quartzes
- 1 set (when multiple sets are cobbled together) of mountaineering gear
- 2 each of daggers, short swords, broadswords, bucklers in passable condition
- 50' of rope, enchanted with Elemental Earth to be strong enough to lift an obsidian

It is also possible that the characters will see the outcropping where the Scythian cape (p 112) is, although this is highly unlikely. The cape is unmoving and blends in well with the dark cavern. A Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 28 will notice it, however.

The characters may wish to camp in the room, although as dusty as the room is (more so if the characters have been moving things around as they search it), they will likely do more coughing than sleeping.

Event 6

Unfortunately, the characters are not alone in the storeroom. The movement has awakened a Scythian cape, a monster of Scythian legend long since thought dead. This one has merely been hibernating and now the activity of the characters has alerted it to the presence of food in its lair.

This Scythian cape will wait until nightfall, hoping that the characters will go to sleep. When it seems like the characters are at their most defenseless, the Cape will swoop silently down on them, ready to grab a tasty morsel and retreat with it. The cape will prefer sleeping characters to those awake, especially if the sleepers are away from other wakeful creatures. If no better target presents itself, then the Cape will choose an elf, human, or dwarf (Taranus, perhaps) Name-giver at random. A grabbed character may choose to resist and make noise if she succeeds on her Willpower Test against the poison; otherwise, the Difficulty Number for waking characters to notice the abduction is a 10. If the abduction is successful, the cape will take the character back to its rocky nest high in the ceiling and will begin to feed.

Event 7

If the cape successfully captures a character without raising the notice of the other characters, it will attempt to feed on them long enough to turn them into a cape zombie. The character should continue to make Willpower Tests every ten minutes until her Willpower step is reduced to 1, as she may be able to break out of the poison's hold and act normally. If the character is turned into a cape zombie, then the cape will carefully fly that character down to the storeroom floor and force her to lure another character into its clutches. While a zombie forced to speak can often be detected by the lack of emotion in its voice, it is a common trick for a zombie to remain silent and communicate only by gestures. The cape will attempt to repeat this trick until the whole group has been consumed, but hopefully the characters will take some action before that happens. If the cape is attacked, it will fight until seriously wounded and then attempt to flee to its perch in the cavern ceiling. The characters can then either try to attack it with

missile weapons (receiving a penalty to their aim due to cover), magic, or by climbing up and attacking it in its nest. The last option is, of course, the most dangerous, as any non-flying Name-giver stands a chance of falling a dangerous distance if a Knockdown Test is failed.

Event 8

The storm clears at midday. Eager to leave the storeroom and its deadly occupant, the characters proceed farther into Scythia, once again below the snowline. The path of the Crusaders is obfuscated by the snow that has fallen and the characters have no choice but to press onward without a clear trail. Taranus can give general directions to the Scythian capital city, the main target of the Scythian Crusade. Following these directions, the characters should reach the capital in two days. Unfortunately, the path is by no means clear. As the characters traverse a path through a shaded valley, a low growl can be heard, faint at first but slowly growing louder. Then, black shapes start racing through the brush towards them!

The characters should be attacked by only one or two quickrazors (p. 106). They hunt in packs; see the climax for the location of the others. These two had been the last to arrive at the fight against the Crusaders and, seeing that there was little prey left for them, had been exploring in the area near the battle hoping to catch some stragglers. The characters look like just the thing for a midday snack. This fight should be challenging at first, but should soon turn in the characters' favor. Perhaps the most annoying thing about the quickrazors is their tendency to attack characters standing by themselves instead of those in a group. This tendency sometimes spells the death of a spellcaster who had merely wished to avoid the melee in the first place.

Climax

After the fight with the original two quickrazors, the characters will notice that the growling noise has not faded completely. A Perception Test (8) will reveal that the sound seems to be coming from just over the crest of the hill. Clearing the hill, the characters will see the battle underway on the other side.

A group of quickrazors is circling four Name-givers mounted on horseback, occasionally darting in to the horsemen for a slashing attack after which the quickrazor returns to circling. One of the horsemen is slumped in his saddle, perhaps dead. The remaining three are trying to keep him and his mount in the center of their protective circle, but it is obvious that the Crusaders don't have much longer to live. Just as the characters are taking this in, two of the quickrazors attack in concert, striking towards the wounded rider. One quickrazor races towards the wounded man on foot and is blocked by a rider. The other, taking advantage of this distraction, leaps high into the air over the rider and lands on the wounded Name-giver, knocking him from his mount and onto the ground. The characters barely have time to react to this sight before the pinned Horror Stalker glows with a bright light as he, sensing his imminent death, performs his Death Strike. The remaining quickrazors are briefly taken aback by the sudden death of their prey and then move to attack again. The remaining Crusaders pause for a moment as they notice their fellow's death and then group together tightly, waiting for the next attack.

A heroic group would charge to the rescue. This encounter should be very hard for the characters. A good challenge should be roughly as many quickrazors as the average Circle level of the characters, but the gamemaster should feel free to modify that, using the characters'



performance in the Event 8 fight as a guideline. If the fight seems to be going too well for the adventurers, feel free to throw another quickrazor or two at them. If the characters are struggling overmuch, have the remaining quickrazors run away because of the Damage they have received. If the characters begin to attack the quickrazors from a distance, they will soon be noticed and the quickrazors will race towards them, closing the distance in very little time. This, although bad for the characters, will make life much easier for the harried Crusaders.

Assuming the characters successfully saves the Crusaders, they will thankfully introduce themselves as Johann, an elf Cavalryman, Arianus the Grim, a human Warrior, and Rojak Strongblood, an ork Beastmaster. They should be one Circle lower than the characters. Their dead companion was only known as Darkslayer, an elf Horror Stalker and recent addition to their adventuring group, the Battlesong Riders. Because Horror Stalkers are so often loners, they have been paired up with a pre-existing group in the Crusade. The Battlesong Riders owe their lives to the characters and treat them accordingly. The first thing they say to them, however, is to request an Artisan Test, and offer to perform one in return. Assuming the tests go well, they thank the characters profusely.

They are more than happy to guide the characters towards the Crusader encampment, leading them around several spots known to harbor Horrors. These, they explain, are on the list to be cleared out by a capable group whenever possible, but there is a shortage of such adventuring groups. Their mission was to track down what appeared to be a wounded quickrazor. An easy enough task, they thought, until they realized that the wounded quickrazor was a decoy, designed to bring unsuspecting prey within easy reach. Soon, they were under attack and greatly outnumbered, and if it weren't for the characters, they would have died. When they arrive in the camp, word that the characters saved some of the Crusaders on their way in quickly spreads, and Grathus himself shows up to thank the characters for their efforts. Taranus is also welcomed by Grathus and is quickly showed to a separate work area where he can help the researchers who are already studying salvaged artifacts. They are close to identifying the location of the Scythan capital, explains Grathus, and it is this city that he expects to be the heart of the Horror infestation. Grathus invites the characters to

stay for a few days in his limited hospitality and will allow them to restock their supplies, within reason, from the Crusader storetents.

Should the characters decide to let the Crusaders die, they will likely be noticed by the pack of quickrazors anyway and will be attacked without the aid of the three Crusaders. If they survive that fight, then they will eventually come to the main camp of the Crusade, receiving a much cooler reception.

Sequels

The characters could continue to act as guards for Taranus, and be with him when he discovers even more dangerous creatures. If Taranus makes it safely to the Crusaders, then the characters may be called upon to escort other important people or items to and from Scythia.

The immediate sequel to this adventure is the framework **Joining the Crusade**.

JOINING THE CRUSADE

Premise

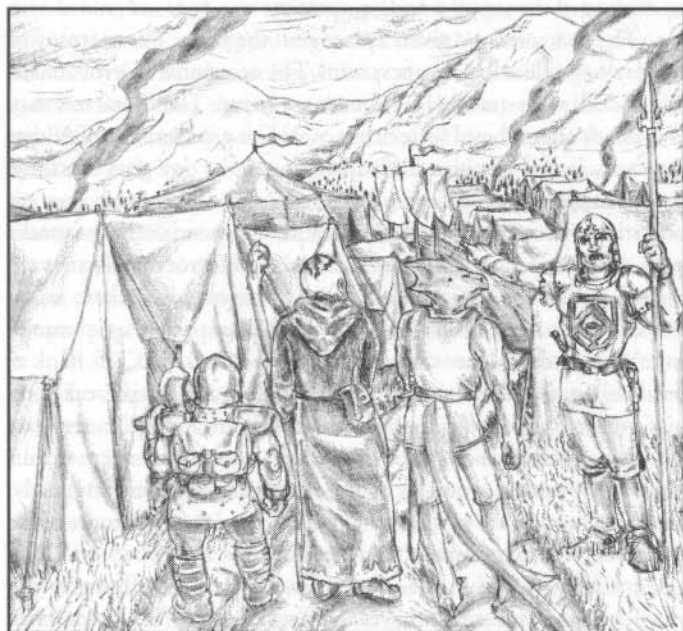
Having proved their worth in battle, the characters are asked by Grathus to join the crusade. Grathus is an excellent speaker, and is very persuasive when he makes his pitch. Assuming the characters decides to join up, they are soon sent out on missions for the Crusade. After a few missions, they happen across some suspicious evidence that seems to indicate a traitor in their midst. It seems that some Name-givers may have come here for reasons other than defeating Horrors.

Set-Up

After the characters have rested and recovered from their wounds, Grathus calls them in to see him. The characters have shown themselves to be capable against the Horrors; to Grathus that is better than gold. Talking to them as equals, Grathus asks them to join the Crusade. He is very interested in gaining new recruits and can be quite persuasive. If the characters are out for Legend, he points out that several Troubadours have come along just to record the Legends of those who fight for the Crusade. If they are out for money, Grathus can definitely make it worth their while. Grathus has lots of money thanks to his earlier expeditions and he doesn't really expect to live to see the end of his Crusade. Of course, the characters' response will color Grathus' opinion of them. For a large part, he values people by how much they wish to kill Horrors. The characters started off in his good graces because they saved (or tried to save) the Crusaders. His opinion of them will be greatly increased if they accept right away, but will drop lower and lower the more they resist, especially if the main point of their reluctance is the money involved. After it becomes obvious that the characters are simply haggling to get more money, Grathus will stand up, name a figure, and leave in disgust. It is the characters' choice whether or not to take the job, but Grathus will no longer see them as anything but mercenaries. Should they accept, they are told to report to the main tent the next day for their orders.

Event 1

The morning comes and the characters report. They enter a large tent, where a large collection of Adepts is waiting for Grathus' morning report. He enters and delivers a briefing on their current status while pointing to markings made on the large map located behind him. He briefly gives the status of the Crusade (good), how yesterday went



(well, however there were some deaths), and then there is a moment of silent respect for the dead. Then he continues, talking about the day's missions: clearing out the ancient Scythian villages, Scouting areas, and tracking down lone or weak Horrors. After the briefing, the characters will be led to Alaina, who will be their leader and advisor for the day. Today, the characters will be tasked with Scouting and possibly clearing one of the villages named earlier today: Denan's Rest. The village is not known to harbor any Horrors, but the characters will be the first to examine it closely. The group sets out, Alaina showing what she says is the easiest path. Actually, Alaina is attempting to take a confusing route so that the characters will not notice that they are not going to the original village on the map. Characters who have the Navigation skill may make a Contested roll against Alaina's Navigation skill to notice that they are being misled. If questioned, Alaina will say that the map was not up-to-date and not completely accurate. Alaina is actually leading them to Halspoint – a military outpost comprised of a few buildings gathered together. This place was on the route of those who fled from Scythia to Throal, and it was on this path that Marken's Torque (the artifact Alaina is seeking for the Therans) was thought to be lost. The outpost has long since crumbled into ruins, and it is this rubble that Alaina and the characters will explore. The main structures, in various states of decay, are the main hall (formerly used for dining and gathering), the offices, the barracks, and the armory. Other smaller buildings once existed, but are now merely rocky outlines of what they once were. Alaina will set the characters to exploring and searching. Play up the tension as the characters explore the rubble. Small creatures may spring out of the ruins they were about to explore, weak structures may collapse after the characters move about in them, and the characters should find several corpses, all killed in various nasty ways by the Horrors. The characters should find several items of note: a sword from Scythian times, a Scythian officer's rank badge left in the office area, a logbook from the outpost (in pitiful condition), and a pretty metal necklace with an inscription written on it in ancient Scythian. After the exploration is through, Alaina will ask what they discovered and will examine their spoils. She shows particular interest in the necklace, though she tries to hide it. She asks to take the logbook and the necklace, explaining that she will have the Crusade's research staff investigate them and see if anything can be learned. The items will be returned to the characters afterward, but the Crusade needs all the information they can get as soon as possible. Alaina will return the characters by the same circuitous path and she'll thank them for the efforts. As she bids them farewell, she invites them to come to the litany tomorrow morning near the center of camp.

Event 2

Tomorrow morning begins with a large gathering near the center of camp. Most of the crusaders have shown up, as have all of the Horror Stalkers. Then, the crowd speaks as one, reciting a list of names. Those familiar with the Horror Stalker's Karma Ritual will recognize this litany as that spoken by Horror Stalkers in memory of the Horror Stalkers who have come before them. This litany is slightly different. At the end of the litany, where a Horror Stalker would stop, the crowd instead pauses briefly. Then, the litany continues, but now the list is of those who have died in this Crusade, both Horror Stalkers and other Disciplines alike. The litany continues for some time (likely long enough to make the characters somewhat nervous about their choice to remain with the Crusade), and then the multitude of voices is replaced by a

single one, that of Grathus. He speaks loudly, naming the few Crusaders who have been killed in the past week. Next week, all will recite their names with him, and he will once again add a few more names. He ends it with, "All have fought the darkness. All shall be remembered."

Event 3

Exciting news is spreading throughout the camp: Scythia, the underground city of the dwarfs, has been found! Preparations are beginning in camp for the push that will surely take the Crusaders to the entrance of Scythia itself. The camp is bustling with activity as everyone begins packing, preparing, performing Karma Rituals, and generally getting ready to move out for a battle. The Crusade plans to move much closer to the city entrance, and when the entire Crusade is moving, the very number of Crusaders tends to draw many Horrors to attack. As the characters are moving through camp, they may overhear a snippet of conversation between Alaina and Lathan in the tent that they share:

Alaina: "So, what are you? What is it that you are going to be? Are you a Crusader? Or are you a Theran?"

Lathan, sighing: "A Theran. I am a Theran."

Lathan has noticed that Alaina is becoming increasingly erratic. She has searched more and more sites without being able to find the Theran's artifact, and things are only getting more dangerous as the Crusade goes farther into Scythia. Lathan has noticed this and questioned her about it repeatedly. Finally, she broke down and explained her deal with the Therans. Lathan felt betrayed and threatened enough to tell Grathus. What the players hear is the last part of the conversation between the two, Alaina finally playing on Lathan's Theran loyalties to convince him not to reveal her actions.

Event 4

In the morning, the main push toward the city of Scythia begins. Two thirds of the Crusade is going to move forward and secure an area before the gates to Scythia. The rest of the group, including all of the support personnel, will wait to hear that the area is secure, then move up the rest of the supplies and equipment.

The characters are given a place near the front. The morning of the daylong ride is largely uneventful. The occasional Horror attacks and is dealt with quickly by such a large group. The characters may help attack one of these Horrors, but considering the number of Adepts involved, it will not be a difficult fight. As the day goes on, these attacks happen more and more frequently until, at their peak, they are occurring approximately every five minutes. Then suddenly, the attacks stop. An hour passes with only a few minor Horror attacks that are easily handled by the Crusaders. Everyone is on edge. Then, as the Crusaders top a hill, all hell breaks loose. A large pack of quickrazors, numbering in the dozens, heads towards the Crusaders' left flank at breakneck speed. Grathus quickly starts shouting commands, realigning his forces so that the quickrazors can be dealt with, and spellcasters start launching spells at the Horror Constructs as soon as they get within range. They move too quickly to be dealt with at range, unfortunately, and the characters are soon caught up in battle with one or more of the constructs. The fight swirls around the characters, with groups attacking and spells flying and the occasional black-furred blur flying by the characters as a quickrazor moves to a new target. After a fierce, brief



battle, many of the quickrazors are dead and the rest are running away as the odds become insurmountable. Grathus calls for a short halt and begins to reorganize his people. The halt lasts no more than ten minutes when even more horrific opponents charge and attack!

The top of a nearby hill darkens as a large group of grinders attack Grathus' Crusaders. Flowing across the hillside, they move effortlessly towards the body of the Crusade. Spells are thrown, but not with the same rate as before. The army begins to adjust again and orders are shouted. Arrows and other missile weapons are fired, as before, but these seem to have little effect on the grinders and the rate of fire decreases as Archers take more time to make their shots count. Then, after no more than a few rounds, the grinders are upon the army. The battles are much more focused, and personal, than the fight against the quickrazors. Groups engage a grinder (or have it latch onto one of their members) and are then focused upon it until one of them is dead. The characters should face as many grinders as you think they can handle. Bring them to the point of exhaustion and when you think they can't take any more, they should notice, having killed the last one they were engaged with, that the battle is ending. A ragged cheer goes up from some of the men, but others are too busy looking around, noticing that many of their number have died in this fight, almost a sixth of the expedition.

Event 5

The battle is finished and Grathus has decided to send for the remainder of the Crusade. This will be the new camp, called Crusader's Rest. The gates to Scythia lie no more than a mile from here and this will prove a suitable point for the final push. The fight will not be easy, but none here believe that they will fail. When the rest of the force arrives the next day, the tents are quickly set up. The healing tents are full and most of the combatants are either healing or meditating. Night falls on a camp of exhausted Name-givers, some tired from combat, some from the daylong ride. The guard posted is weary that night. Because of this, a quickrazor attack is able to break through the perimeter and begin rampaging through camp. Numerous quickrazors charge in, slicing through several tents in their mad dash. The alarm is quickly raised and the characters may help defeat the quickrazors. The odds are lower than before, but the fights are much more confused, as the quickrazors will use the tents and supply wagons for cover, bouncing from point to point. Any Cavalrymen or Beastmaster characters will likely be called upon to help calm the horses after a quickrazor tears through the stabling area, slashing several horses and panicking most of the others. After the battle has ceased, some of the characters find themselves near the wreckage of Alaina and Lathan's tent. The two of them are off managing the remnants of the battle, but their tent (as well as most of the camp) is a total disaster, and their belongings are strewn about. One of the characters (preferably a nosy one) should notice a hand-sized scrap of paper lying at their feet. The letter reads as follows:

It has been several weeks, and we have still not heard from you. Have you found Marken's artifact? The deal will not be open forever. As soon as you get the object, you must return with all haste to Bukara. Whatever must be spent, whether gold or lives, we will make it up to you twice over.

The letter has no signature, as Alaina would know who the letter was from. Her Theran handler is growing restless as time passes without

any word of Marken's Torque. By their own knowledge, or by asking other Name-givers, the characters may find out many things. The city mentioned is the closest one with a strong Theran military presence. Marken, an elf, was one of the most famous overlords of Scythia, ruling during the Theran occupation. He was rumored to have a Pattern Item of great power, but exactly what it was capable of has been lost to history. The obsidian Troubadour Talespout, having seen it long after Marken's death, described it as "A pretty bauble, three bands of steel intertwined to make a simple but striking bracelet." If the characters hear this, they may not consider that what is a bracelet for an obsidian may well be a necklace for an elf.

Should the characters not read the letter, the contents can be related to them by a concerned Crusader who has found it but doesn't know quite what it means.

Event 6

The story from here depends quite a lot on the characters. They can talk to, or even accuse, Lathan, Alaina, or anyone else they think appropriate. They can try to talk to Grathus, but he has a lot to do with his camp in a shambles and may not speak to them for as long as you find convenient. If spoken with, his willingness to believe any suspicions the characters might have will depend greatly on his impression of them. He will always want to take the side of the members of the Loyal Few, though, and will resist believing that either of them is working for the Therans against the Crusade. Whoever is accused will of course deny it, and the characters will be hard-pressed to come up with evidence strong enough to convince Grathus. He will chastise the characters, and will tell them they are being silly, dismissing them.

Climax

During the night, Alaina will attempt to raid the tent where all of the artifacts are researched, thinking that perhaps the necklace has already been brought back without her notice. She is getting desperate. The characters are nosing around and she thinks that it won't be long before she is discovered. Leaving her horse behind the tent, she wanders inside, nodding at the guards on duty. (The characters will not be allowed into the tent, as there are far too many valuable items inside.) Alaina has decided that tonight is her last night in Crusader's Rest and that even if she can't find the necklace, surely she can steal enough valuables to live comfortably for the rest of her life. Due to the late hour, she doesn't think anybody will be inside. Unfortunately, Taranus (from the first framework) has been caught up in the excitement of centuries-old Scythian artifacts and stayed late tonight. Alaina, seeing no other choice, kills him quickly. Then, she calls the guards in one by one and deals with them as well. If the characters have been watching her, then it is quite possible that they can avert this and perhaps even capture her. If not, they will awaken in the morning to find a grisly sight in the research tent.

When Lathan hears that Alaina has killed other Crusaders, he will be crushed, never believing that she could be that callous. Feeling immense guilt for not revealing Alaina earlier and preventing her actions, he will ride towards Scythia to die fighting Horrors as atonement. The characters should see Lathan getting on his horse and riding off, especially if they still think of him as a suspect. Catching up to him will be easy, but convincing him not to kill himself (that is, if the characters aren't trying to kill him) should be difficult, although possible.



Grathus will be aghast at Alaina's actions and in great sorrow if he loses both Alaina and Lathan in one fell swoop. If the characters seem willing at all, he will ask them to track down Alaina and bring her back for justice. She has stolen many powerful artifacts, and now represents a great danger to Barsaive.

Alaina has started her frantic ride towards Bukara. If the characters decide to give chase, it could be over quickly. Or, it could be the beginning of a campaign as the characters track her across Barsaive and attempt to unravel the Theran plot. If the you are following the plot path of **Barsaive in Chaos**, she should nearly reach Cara Fahd before the characters catch up to her. When caught, she will be fatalistic and will request a swift execution rather than be brought back to Grathus, where she fears she will be forced to die at the hands of Horrors.

Sequels

Grathus will be grateful to the characters for any assistance they have provided and will likely give them high status in the Crusade if they state that they wish to stay and help fight.

If the characters give chase to Alaina, when they return they will find that Grathus has realized the importance of having people that can travel across Barsaive and he may have another mission for them (see the **Artifact Escort** adventure idea).

The immediate sequel to this adventure is the **Welcome to Cara Fahd** framework in **To Strain Against the Shackles**.

OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

SCYTHAN CRUSADERS

The characters, deciding to stay in Scythia and continue the crusades, find an ancient artifact: the Sword of Morra. A powerful thread item, the characters must do research if they wish to find out its Legend. The only suitable places for research are in the Horror-infested caverns of Scythia. While searching for information in the depths of the city, they catch a glimpse of what appears to be a Scythian dwarf, fully dressed in the clothing of ancient Scythia. Did some Name-givers survive all these years? Or is it merely an imposter, some Name-giver trying to run a scam? Or is this the work of a Horror, trying to lure the characters to him, unsuspecting? The next day, the characters see the same dwarf several times during the day, as if he's following them. Then, at night, a strange sound is heard and the next morning, the sword is gone!

The dwarf, Bennett, is real. Untainted now, this once-strong dwarf Thief's mind was irreversibly twisted by a Horror that had marked him. The Horror is long since dead, defeated by his adventuring group, but when they returned to Crusader's Rest, he ran back into the depths of Scythia. He has been wandering ever since – his insanity seeming to help protect him from the Horrors – and is intent on fulfilling his original mission: to rescue the Sword of Morra, a powerful Horror-fighting thread item from Scythia's past. He knows that to tie a thread to it, the wielder must kill a Horror with the sword, and that is now his only goal. Tracking him, the characters will meet up with him several times, often right as he is attacking a Horror. Of course, he has no chance alone, but when the characters shows up, he will flee, leaving the characters to face the Horrors. The sword is no use to him if the characters kill the Horror; he'd much rather fight one alone! Of course,

constantly leaving Horrors in the characters' way like this may give them the impression that he is in league with the Horrors.

If the characters ask around Crusader's Rest, they will soon find out who he is and may even meet up with members of his former adventuring group. If they catch him, they can examine his pattern and see that he is insane. High Circle abilities can determine that he is not Horror-marked. To cure his insanity completely, a questor of Garlen will have to accomplish his goal and kill a Horror with the sword. The knowledge that he has accomplished this act may just be enough to snap him back into our reality.

ARTIFACT ESCORT

Grathus's men have discovered a powerful and ancient artifact in the depths of Scythia. (This could be the Sword of Morra, described above, or some other artifact that fits better with your campaign.) This artifact must be returned to the city of Throal so that its power can be studied and harnessed. The characters are asked to take it back to Throal as quickly as possible, and with as little fanfare as they can manage. Unfortunately for the characters, news of the artifact's discovery has spread far and wide and everyone is interested in it. Some of the Horror Stalkers in the Crusade argue with it being sent back and would rather see it used to fight Horrors in the Crusade. Thera has sent their agents to obtain the item. The Blood Wood has heard about it and has asked their secret allies in Kratas to see if it can be obtained. A group of Scythian descendents believes that the artifact belongs to them by rights. The characters may meet up with a mysterious elf, wanting the item for his own nefarious purposes. Blandishments, threats, and bribes – all will be offered to the characters in exchange for the item. Finally, Chorrolis, seeing how much everybody wants this artifact, has decided that he wants it himself and does everything he can to obtain it! The characters should be ready for the busiest times in their lives.

LOOSE ENDS

With the number of deaths the Crusaders have suffered at the hands of the marauding quickrazors and grinders, Grathus is beginning to worry about the chances of success of his mission. Losses are starting to grow, and the fatalities will only increase when the group moves closer to the city and begins fighting the Horrors that have created all of those constructs. With little recourse, Grathus has decided to send a message to the Throalic government, reporting the impressive accomplishments of the Crusaders and requesting any assistance that the king can provide. While the king has so far been resistant to support the Crusade, perhaps the story of their success may change his mind? Handpicking a group to carry the message (perhaps even the characters), he sends them off with instructions to plead his case in person to the highest official they can speak to. If support is not sent soon, the Crusade may be lost to the Horrors.

That the characters have discovered Alaina is the Theran spy does not answer all questions. Who was the person that delivered the letter to her in the first place? There must be another Theran agent within the camp. This could be the basis for an interesting detective-story subplot, as the characters trace clues and then must put them together. There are still Theran agents in the camp, and they must be identified before their agenda causes even more deaths.



TO STRAIN AGAINST THE SHACKLES



Krathis Gron bolted upright in her bed. Looking out the window she could tell that it was nearing dawn, and knew she would not get back to sleep. Her companion stirred next to her.

"What troubles you, love?"

"Everything. In the time since the great battle at Sky Point things have gotten worse and worse in Cara Fahd. First the influx of *ujnort* freedmen from Bukara needing land and food while we're still trying to mourn our dead. Then Grimeye's Crossing declares itself a free city. Free my left *hez*, just Therans who can't get home anymore under a new flag. I hate the treaty I signed with them, but it is better to build up our own cities than tear down another. Now the Namdroth are acting even weirder than usual, the Legion of Damnation have all but declared war on us, and the treaty negotiations with Ilfehena and her forces are about to fall through. She claims we're pushing the Legion into attacking the *ujnort* in the south to save ourselves. To top it all off the tribes are restless. You don't easily make farmers out of Name-givers who are scorched at heart..."

Her companion rolled out of bed and walked toward the window. The powerfully built ork began slowly collecting and putting on what clothing had survived last night's events.

"All the things that I came here to escape," he spoke. "War, infighting, politics. Life always on the run. Yet you don't take the obvious solution. You've let this all fester and they're starting to resent you for it. You're a mythic figure to them, yet every one of them has something to resent - listen to what the people are saying. When justice is in their favor the magistrates are blessed by Mikbruug, but when a judgment goes against them they use his dwarf Name, Mynbruje, and curse the laws that won't let them settle things with their fists anymore."

"You have the luxury of walking amongst the people still, though once word of us gets out that may change. I can only keep the Armbreakers silent about your visits for so long..."

He turned to her and smiled. She thought with looks like that he should have been a Troubadour, although the faint scars covering his body spoke of a different path. One that seemed to cross hers more and more frequently these days.

"Frankly, I think all of the chiefs will be relieved you didn't take one of their rivals into your bed." He then spoke softly, "While I have given it up, a little campaigning might do you some good. No one supports the Legion, they are a blight upon us."

She walked over to the wall where the hidden exit to her chambers was concealed. Opening it she turned back to him. "Perhaps you're right. Too long have I tolerated termites in the house of Cara Fahd..."

BACKGROUND

Following the events in **Barsaive at War** Cara Fahd has had a difficult time finding common purpose amongst its people. A place designed as the homeland of the orks has had to come to terms with the *ujnort*, or non-orks, in its midst. This problem has been exacerbated by an influx of non-ork refugees following the slave revolts in Bukara and the destruction of Vivane (see **Barsaive at War**) as well as unrest from those who were already present when Krathis Gron reconstituted Cara Fahd (see **The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd**). A treaty signed with Grimeye's Crossing (see **The Underground**, below) while Cara Fahd was still recovering from the war effort has left vestiges of the Theran Empire on Cara Fahd's western doorstep. Add to this the simmering unrest

from scorched who feel hemmed in by the growing body of common law and trade rules and you have an explosive mix.

By the time players are introduced to **To Strain Against the Shackles**, Krathis Gron had led a large army of orks into the southernmost region of Cara Fahd and soundly defeated the forces of the Legion of Damnation, a barbarous and evil collection of the worst examples of ork heritage. Feeling pressure from the *ujnort* communities of Basstown and Kerup, which have brimmed to overflowing and beyond with citizens and refugees who feel unwelcome in the northern ork-majority lands, Krathis and the council gave the land formerly controlled by the Legion to Star Ilfehena and her "tribe". While this has greatly reduced the population pressures in the south, many orks feel that granting land to the South Hold Tribe (as the collection of non-orks is called) is somehow a betrayal of Cara Fahd. They have yet to learn the most important lesson Krathis is attempting to impart, that peace can only be achieved by learning to live with non-orks, both inside and outside of Cara Fahd. At the start of the adventure Ilfehena has stepped down as leader of South Hold and taken the title *Egrandu ah South Hold*, or Protector of South Hold. The fact that she has taken an ork title has endeared her to some of the moderates, such as the Two Fist Tribe to the north, who view it as a sign of respect. It has infuriated others, who feel she is mocking them and their ways.

EVENT SYNOPSIS

The characters can be brought to Cara Fahd in a number of different ways, but once they arrive they see first hand some of the ongoing tensions within Cara Fahd. After helping arbitrate a trade dispute and meeting some of the locals, the players draw the attention of a band of rebels and are drawn into a plot against Krathis Gron. While the players are hopefully heroic enough to not actively help assassinate Krathis, they may be tricked into helping the underground or recruited as agents of the *karvusta* as spies. During the course of their travels in Cara Fahd the characters discover a band of slavers posing as the remnants of the Legion of Damnation. Using the Legion's fierce reputation they have kept outsiders away from their camp, until the players discover that they hold Zarass Icethought as one of their prisoners. The framework closes with the players discovering a strange and troubling connection between the slavers and the political goings on in the capital, Wurchaz.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

CORELLA

Corella is a friendly ork woman in her early twenties. She wears civilian clothing when the characters meet her, but freely admits to being a member of Zarass' Chargers. She'll be open about her own life if asked by the characters. She says that she chose to come to Cara Fahd because she wanted to help the ork people. Corella has no family of her own and has been with the Chargers since she started her adult career. She feels that the High Chief is doing a good job, but thinks that someone really needs to talk to her about the land grants and allowances that have recently been granted to *ujnorts*. She has been ordered by Zarass to help the characters during their mission from Ralvestra, since she can be trusted to "follow orders". Corella will relate, if pressed, that



Zarass went through a long period of extremely erratic behavior before the War, searching ruins all over Cara Fahd for the old capital. Since then, she has been focused on meeting with various factions throughout Cara Fahd. She will describe her commander as a driven woman. Corella is a medium Circle Scout and goes armed with a Forge 2 broadsword. The gamemaster may wish to equip her with other equipment, such as a missile weapon or minor healing magics, otherwise she carries an adventurer's kit, a few days' food, and some coins.

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

PHEARGUS ONE-EYE

Pheargus is an agile, good looking, middle aged ork male who seems to want to be everyone's friend. While he will espouse the idea that Krathis has made some mistakes of late, he maintains a moderate position on most topics. Pheargus seems to be well known and liked by most of the people the players will encounter him around. He has a reputation as a gambler and a merchant in high risk items. He has been able to turn a good profit in trade of magic items, rare spices, liquors, and other such goods, but it is rumored he could be doing much better without interference from the new taxes. He is a medium Circle Thief.

In actuality Pheargus is a member of the *Karvusta*, spies working for Krathis Gron. He has used his gambling and acting skills to ingratiate himself into the ranks of the underground after a few high profile run-ins with various authorities. He has been able to identify many of the merchants involved with the underground, including Ralvestra who he has correctly identified as their leader. Pheargus has learned that most of the merchants of the underground are more interested in presenting Krathis with a surprise petition of their complaints and forcing the council to concede a few sweetheart trade deals to them. He has strong suspicions, however, that scorcher malcontents and a few others have more sinister plans and are using the merchants as cover.

Pheargus comes by his appellation "One-Eye" not because he's lost one of his eyes, but because of the amount of time he spends with a jeweler's loupe in one eye and the other eye tightly closed. One of his favorite tactics for meeting people is getting introduced and then showing this sight off.

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

RALVESTRA

LEADER OF THE UNDERGROUND

Ralvestra is an ork trader who pretends to be much more humble and bad off than he actually is. He maintains a cover of modest means in order to avoid social pressures of contributing to the *Yerz'rth*, the communal fund administered for the common good. Ralvestra is not Horror tainted, corrupted by Mad Passions, or in service to an enemy nation. He is simply greedy. He advocates many of his trade positions as "enlightened self interest", heavy on the self interest, light on the enlightenment. He became involved with Zarass Icethought when she began smuggling out items she had discovered at various ruins in the central forests of Cara Fahd. He has come to believe that with her in charge at Claw Ridge he will become one of the wealthiest ork merchants

in Cara Fahd. He is probably right. When she brought him into her confidences with her plan to stage a coup against Krathis, he assisted by stirring up unrest amongst the more influential orks in the area. By softening them up he correctly assumes that they will be more willing to accept the new regime when it comes. Ralvestra has no combat skills to speak of and intends to be away from the action when Zarass makes her move. Should he be exposed, he will attempt to flee the area with his stash of buried coins. Ralvestra keeps his money in gold to make transportation easier.

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

SHERIK, AND HIS GUARDS

Sherik claims no country and is not so much Theran as a general malcontent. The alchemist has come to the frontier to escape the unpleasantness of the rioting in Bukara. He was hoping to stay in Vivane, but the presence of the Horror Clouds and the City of the Dead have convinced him to seek his fortunes elsewhere. He lives on the western edge of the tent city, farthest away from the town and the bridge, and close to the neighboring jungle, where he gathers many of his ingredients.

A sallow-faced human with bad teeth and a perpetual stoop, Sherik will deal with anyone that has money. He is protected from the other scavengers outside of Grimeye's Crossing by the Vurkkisson brothers, a pair of twin trolls. Identical, save for the shape of their horns (which are mirrored), Targas and Häkon Vurkkisson are Vasgothians of the Warrior Discipline. Both serve him as guards and stevedores and, occasionally, as procurers of ingredients. They aren't paid very much, but they stay with Sherik for another reason. All three of them are members of the Twisted Hearts, a cult of Raggok. The chaos left behind after the war has inspired Sherik to come into Barsaive and the smoldering hatred between the Therans of Grimeye's Crossing and the orks of Cara Fahd has presented an excellent opportunity to bring down both Krathis Gron and the chiefs of the ork tribes. The Vurkkissons are both medium to high Circle Warriors and are equipped with chain mail, shields, broadswords, and a handful of poisoned darts. Sherik is a



non-Adept, but is a Fifth Circle questor of Raggok. In addition he is skilled in Surprise Strike with his poisoned dagger and he carries a number of foul alchemical potions for self defense as well.

Sherik

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

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 9
Attack: 7 Social Defense: 9
Damage: 6+poison Armor: 4
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 2
Spellcasting: 11 Knockdown: 5
Effect: See Below Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 36 Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: 28

Questor Abilities: Painful Memory, Cause Pain, Inspire Revenge
Equipment: Padded Leather Armor, Poison Darts

Targas and Häkon

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

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 10 Social Defense: 6
Damage: 22 Armor: 10
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 1
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 8
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 4

Death Rating: 106 Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 16 Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: 89

Equipment: Broadsword, Shield, Chain Mail, Poison Darts

STAR ILFEHENA

Star Ilfehena is a high Circle dwarf Beastmaster and former leader of the southern resistance against Cara Fahd. She has a number of strong beliefs regarding the sanctity of plants and animals and fought against the orkish clear cutting of the forests when they first came to Cara Fahd. What really brought her to the attention of the orks is her success in guerrilla attacks against them, especially in retaliation for the atrocities committed by the Legion of Damnation. Ilfehena never wanted a protracted fight with the orks, and with Krathis Gron moving against the Legion she has brought her forces into a tentative but well grounded peace. She was Named chief of the South Hold Tribe, as the collection of non-orks living in the slums outside of Bastown and Kerrup came to be known, and her first official act was to set up elections. Her second was to resign and go back to living as a hermit in the forest. She

has made it clear she will serve as she always has, as protector of the land and people of the South Hold.

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

THREASH

Thresh is a large, stunningly beautiful ork male in the prime of his adult life. He moves with a grace and assuredness that inspire confidence and it is oft commented that he speaks like a Troubadour. He is a questor of the Passion of Love, Art, and Music, and lives life with a zeal even most orks find amazing. For him, each day is a great joy, full of new opportunity and rebirth. If given the chance he will talk endlessly with the characters about how Cara Fahd represents a new chance for all orks to begin again, to forget the Horrors of the Scourge, of life as slaves and scorched, and sing new ork songs, write new ork poetry, perform grand plays about the glory of being an ork! Most around him find this attitude infectious and inspiring, as Thresh appears to be someone who is truly happy with his place in the world.

Lately Thresh has been leading groups of orks to Cara Fahd who were left behind when their family members journeyed to their new homeland. This began when a member of Zarass' Chargers begged him to go and bring back his lover from Throal. Thresh organized a band of adventurers, made the journey, and brought back his lover, her new mate, and their two children. True to his calling he also brought her cousin, who turned out to be a perfect match for the lonely Charger. Thresh has since found his calling, reuniting husbands who have been split from their wives and children from their parents in the chaos which followed the War with Thera.

Thresh has not always been a questor and, if asked, talks to the characters about his life before the formation of Cara Fahd. He relates to them that he was a bandit, a looter, a taker of towns and a sacker of cities. He will not dwell on this much, except to indicate that he was foolish in his youth and let foolish dreams guide him. He tends to give the impression that he is older than he looks when relating events. Thresh lets the characters know he was visited by the Passion one night after being hopelessly smitten with a traveler he met on the road and he has quested for Astendar ever since. Thresh will then transition to telling the characters how Cara Fahd has given him a home and a place where he hopes to raise a family soon. He plays both the lute and the flute well, but does not appear to have much of a singing voice. Thresh is a Fourth Circle questor of Astendar and a Ninth Circle Warrior.

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

WALIN

Walín is the youngest adult son of the merchant Ravestra. Walín moved to Cara Fahd from the city of Urupa, where he had grown up, seeking new opportunities in the ork homeland with his father. He has just completed his first round trip between Claw Ridge and Parlainth and brings with him a number of exotic magical goods and rare texts that his father had negotiated a trade for. In the months he has been gone from Cara Fahd many things have changed, but he remains



resolute in his promise to his father that the caravan will return safely with everything it left Parlainth with. Walin felt truly in over his head when he left Cara Fahd for the forgotten city, but has become more sure of himself as he successfully negotiated the perilous journey there and back. Confronted at the end of his journey by his own people, he feels his *gahad* rise whenever the thought that he will fail to complete his mission arises. Walin is a non-Adept.

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

ZARASS ICETHOUGHT

Headstrong daughter of Terath the Contemplative, leader of Throal's largest mercenary ork company, Zarass Icethought led half of Terath's Chargers to the new ork homeland: Cara Fahd. She changed the Name of her tribe to Zarass' Chargers and her command has grown to include the Elf Eaters and Righteous Vipers tribes.

In the months leading up to the Fall of Sky Point, Zarass Icethought became more and more obsessed with her hunt for relics of old Cara Fahd. Unfortunately for Zarass she found an abandoned shrine to Dis and has slowly been falling victim to the Mad Passion's influence. Zarass was seen to "snap out" of her bizarre behavior of collecting and cataloguing stones and other useless remnants of the shrine (see p. 92 *The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd*), although she and her Chargers were never able to enter the interior of the ruins due to their strange magical effects. Since the time she discovered the shrine she has become more and more dictatorial, often ordering her troops into pointless maneuvers for days on end. Zarass has also moved to enhance her control over the Elf Eaters, forming alliances with their chief and many of his high status officers. The Elf Eaters believe alliance with Zarass will eventually garner them the respect and power they feel they are entitled to, but are so undeserving of. Zarass in turn knows she needs to bolster her military position, and that given the huge loss of manpower the other tribes suffered at the Fall of Sky Point she has assembled a force of malcontents to be reckoned with.



Average member of Zarass' Chargers

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

Initiative: 3 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 7
Damage: 16 Armor: 9
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 1
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 11
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 57 Combat Movement: 35
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 70
Unconsciousness Rating: 46

Equipment: Horse, Ring Mail, Rider's Shield, Broadsword, Shortbow, 20 arrows

RUNNING TO STRAIN AGAINST THE SHACKLES

Throughout the adventure frameworks in *To Strain Against the Shackles* the players should constantly be confronted with how difficult it is to balance all of the competing interests amongst the different ork tribes and the non-orks living in, and trading with, Cara Fahd. Most citizens and merchants they meet will have mixed opinions of how things are being handled, happy with some areas, dissatisfied with others. For the most part the general citizenry will indicate things are getting better and that they trust and believe in their leadership. There is a vocal minority, however, whose message is one of intolerance and vengeance against any non-ork for the years of ill treatment they have suffered at the hands of others. There should also be an undercurrent of secrecy amongst the orks when it comes to interacting with *ujnort*. For many this is just distrust of outsiders, although for several groups this secrecy is to cover their machinations.

INTRODUCING THE EVENT

Much of what happens in *To Strain Against the Shackles* is foreshadowed in both *The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd* and *Barsaive at War*. A great deal of time has elapsed since Krathis commissioned the writings on the new ork nation and many of the internal stressors have been resolved (and new ones created) as described above.

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 three adventures form a continuous story line that follows the plot described in *Event Synopsis*, p. 24. Shorter adventure ideas are also presented should the characters wish to continue participating in the Scythian Crusade.

WELCOME TO CARA FAHD

Premise

During Cara Fahd's founding one of the many things Krathis Gron did was avoid the imposition of direct taxes. Instead she instituted the *Yerz'rth*, meaning nest money, a type of community chest where excess funds could be stored and redistributed as needed. While this has worked well internally, she has recently had to begin levying taxes on merchants coming into Cara Fahd in order to support the ever increasing number of border patrols. While some traders understand that their taxes go to providing protection not only for but from the orks of Cara Fahd, many resent anything that cuts into their profits. This framework deals with the complications of instituting taxes and a broader rule of law, and some of the unforeseen results.

Set-Up

If the party does not start the game in Cara Fahd they will be hired or otherwise recruited by Thresh to help guard a caravan of ork families traveling there. This is a very simple opening and the journey should be fairly uneventful. If the party begins the game in Cara Fahd, Thresh will recruit them to help with the same type of trip and take them a few days out of Cara Fahd and back. Other openings to this framework could include encountering Thresh and a caravan while the party is traveling to Cara Fahd for their own reasons, such as in pursuit of Alain (see *Joining the Crusade*, p 19), and joining up for mutual protection. Once Thresh explains what he is doing on the road to the party, no self respecting band of heroes is going to turn down an invitation to travel with him.

Event 1

In any case, the gamemaster should steer them to enter Cara Fahd through Vutta's Pick Gap, just to the east of Claw Ridge. The party should not encounter any bandits or other such trouble once they are within a day of the borders of Cara Fahd, a sign of the good job the expanded patrols have been doing. Characters who are knowledgeable of the area should note that this is a distinct change, as it used to be a favorite location to ambush unwary targets. During this time Thresh, if he has not been asked before, should talk to the party about some of the rules and customs in Cara Fahd. This can be especially helpful for characters who have not journeyed to Cara Fahd and can help update characters familiar with the setting to events of the last few months.

Event 2

About a 20 minute ride from the city itself the party encounters a young teamster and his crew engaged in a dispute with several riders. The riders are members of Asok's Armbreakers and are patrolling the pass to Claw Ridge to protect incoming travelers from bandits. They are also inspecting incoming merchant wagons and extracting a tax for this service. The young teamster driving the wagon, a city ork Named Walin, is speaking to the riders in Throalic, and it is clear he understands very little *Or'zet* (the modern orkish tongue), for which he receives abuse from the riders. The dispute centers around the Armbreakers trying to levy a tax on the goods in the wagons and Walin indicating he is merely a driver who has given his word that all of the goods will arrive at their destination intact. There are a handful of others in Walin's group who look to be a combination of guards and cart drivers, but

they all seem to defer to Walin. Very quickly it should become clear that there are about to be a number of *gahads* set off, not the least of which is Walin's apparent outrage at being pushed around by the riders. Hopefully one of the party members is nosy or concerned enough to attempt to intervene before the confrontation in front of them turns to violence. If the party is slow to act, Thresh will suggest they go forward and see if they can help defuse the situation. If the party is still dense, or disinterested in helping prevent violence, Thresh will intervene on his own and calm the situation down.

Event 3

Once things are calmed down, the problem of the tax still remains. Walin is incensed at the idea of paying a tax and does not have enough coin to pay what the Armbreakers are demanding. Under no circumstances will he surrender any of his cargo to the Armbreakers. He will tell the characters that his father, a merchant Named Ralvestra, lives in town on the eastern edge of Claw Ridge and can probably pay the tax, but he and his team will not leave the wagons unattended.

There are other options the party could explore besides retrieving Walin's father. They could attempt to argue the case that Walin should be allowed to pass without paying the tax. This would be a hard argument to sell to the leader of the patrol, but should be a possibility for sufficiently persuasive characters. The amount of tax Walin owes should be steep enough to keep the characters from simply paying it out of their own pockets. There are also a number of poor choices that the characters can make, including trying to bribe or injure the patrol, which may negatively affect the rest of the characters' stay in Cara Fahd.

Climax

If the characters head on to Claw Ridge to retrieve Ralvestra, then Thresh and his group will part company when they reach the city. Walin's father will tell the characters he will gladly pay the taxes if only the characters can take him back to where his son is. Once back in the pass he tells Walin that he is accepting delivery and chooses a number of small items out of the wagons to cover the taxes, sneering to the patrol leader "This should be more than sufficient." Characters with appropriate appraisal skills should be able to spot that this is close to the amount that the patrol had been demanding.

After the characters have extracted Walin from his troubles with the border patrol, the Armbreakers head farther east while the characters and Walin's group head west toward the city. Ralvestra will complain about the way the High Chief has been instituting taxes and other recent developments. With hardly any warning a drakkar will descend and half a dozen troll Sky Raiders will drop into the midst of the group. The Sky Raiders should be of sufficient Circle to stand up to the party and Walin's guards for a few rounds, which is all they will need to grab a chest or basket each and Great Leap back to their ship. If the party is able to keep the Sky Raiders at bay for more than a few rounds they will flee back to their ship rather than engage in a protracted battle. If Thresh is still with the party (the characters managed to resolve the situation without going to the city) add another 3 Sky Raiders to the attacking group. Thresh will attack to knock down and/or stun the Sky Raiders closest to him, but is more concerned with protecting the families he's escorting (which the trolls have no interest in) than protecting Walin's property.



Sky Raiders

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

Initiative: 5

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 9

Damage: 15

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 7

Spell Defense: 7

Social Defense: 7

Armor: 5

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 8

Recovery Tests: 4

Death Rating: 68

Wound Threshold: 13

Unconsciousness Rating: 54

Combat Movement: 70

Full Movement: 35

Notable Talents: Battle Shout 3, Fireblood 3, Great Leap 3

Equipment: Hardened Leather Armor, Great Sling, Great Axe

Sequels

If the characters manage to drive off the Sky Raiders without them capturing any loot, Walin and Ralvestra are extremely grateful. Even if the Raiders do get away with some loot as long as the characters attempted to help they are thanked. Ralvestra, again livid, demands to know where the guard managed to get off to in this supposedly safe zone. Some of Walin's guard are more pragmatic, recalling times where the raiders were more bold and would make multiple passes at a group, but seeing Ralvestra become even more upset cease this discussion fairly quickly.

The immediate sequel to this is the adventure framework **The Underground**.

If the characters have contacts inside Cara Fahd, or they ask around enough, they will learn that Walin's guard was right. Since the start of the patrols, raids just outside the borders of Cara Fahd have become less frequent and less severe. The characters just ran into a spot of bad luck.

If the characters attempted to harm or bribe the border patrol in any way there should be consequences once they reach the city. This could range from a visit from one of Asok's Armbreakers to let them know they're being watched to retaliation and/or arrest.

THE UNDERGROUND**Premise**

Following the events from the previous adventure framework the characters come to the attention of a band of orks plotting against Krathis Gron. The characters are sent on a seemingly simple errand to Grimeye's Crossing. Even if the characters are reluctant to get into what may be a black market exchange, they are approached by a member of the *Karvusta* who uses the players to get further inside the underground. In the end the characters discover that while most of the underground think Krathis will step down or acquiesce to their demands when confronted, some will settle for no less than her death.

Set-Up

When the orks of Cara Fahd rode forth as a unified cavalry force to attack Sky Point, Grimeye's Crossing was the logical place to cross the

Locust River. It was also the answer to many orks' wishes: a chance to ride down on the armed camp of Therans that lived at the bridge. However, an army of that size doesn't move quickly, or quietly, and when the orks crossed the river in a massive charge, they found the town all but abandoned. After the armies had passed, the Therans returned from their hiding places in the jungle. They retrieved what they could, avoided the token force that had been left to guard Cara Fahd's borders, and returned to hiding. They watched until they saw the armies return, battered and much smaller. They sent their spies among the tribes and heard the news; Vivane and Sky Point had fallen. Then they moved.

With frightening precision, the entire town moved back into the stockade over night. Huge sections of wall had been constructed while in hiding and moved all at once. Supplies were shipped back in great amounts. When the sun rose on the Locust River after the last armies had crossed the bridge, the orks of Cara Fahd saw that the town of Grimeye's Crossing had been resurrected and that the townsfolk were ready for a fight.

They didn't get it. Krathis Gron saw that her people were hurt and tired. She saw that her nation was vulnerable. She saw that she could not take Grimeye's Crossing without an ugly fight. Using the t'skrang of Kelpoya as negotiators, she arranged a cease-fire with the townsfolk. The agreement was simple: allow the orks to pass, and the superior numbers of Cara Fahd wouldn't flatten the town. Even at their reduced numbers, they still could destroy it with enough effort.

Since then, both sides have left each other alone. The occasional Name-calling happens between the guards of Grimeye's Crossing and any ork patrols that pass by. Since most trade comes from the north, Cara Fahd doesn't hurt much for having to occasionally pay tolls, but many of the orks feel that the stain on their pride and the only Theran settlement north of Rugaria should both be wiped away.

In the meantime, a collection of independent Theran Adepts and craftsmen have made their way to the town. It has expanded to lodge these new residents and they have used their skills to train the populace and reinforce the stockade. Slowly, the wooden walls are being replaced with clay and several guard towers have been erected on the riverbanks. In the meantime, Grimeye's Crossing has become a haven for the sort of folk that can't live in Cara Fahd. A small collection of bandits, scoundrels, and ork-haters has set up residence west of the town in a small tent city. While officially outside the walls, the town has made it clear that these people are under its protection.

Event 1

Ralvestra approaches the party and invites them to a neighborhood gathering later that day at his home as a way to thank them "for what they had done for Walin". The party is offered free food and drink, as well as hints that there may be some orks looking to employ adventurers and such at the gathering. Even if the party is not in need of work or food, it would be very bad manners to turn Ralvestra down.

When the group arrives, the crowd has already gathered in what appears to be the ork equivalent of a block party. Several large tables are set up with a spread of standard orkish fare slowly building. The centerpiece of the party is the large fire over which a gigantic thundra leg is turning on a spit. Several smaller fires are being used to fry various foods in various forms. A collection of orks from many backgrounds can be seen gathering and the heroes (even non-orks) are greeted with hearty smiles and embraces. The mood is congenial and the gamemaster



should point out that a number of rival groups can be seen in the gathering, but seem to be in a mood to let bygones be bygones. The whole scene should be full of ork attitudes and ork culture. More *Or'zet* is being spoken than Throalic and ork songs are being sung more often (and louder) than any others. Interspersed among the *hua* games and *shpita* matches should be a familiar game with Throalic dice (Cara Fahd rules, of course), but the whole scene should be much of what Krathis Gron has been striving for. Orks in an ork land, living ork lives, getting along with their non-ork neighbors.

Ralvestra is seen near the fire pit, but when the party arrives, he will hand off cooking duties to another ork and come forward to meet them. He bids them welcome and offers them mugs of horse-fat *hurlg* that he assures them is "the very best quality." If non-orks politely decline, he will, with a slightly condescending smile, point them to the ale casks that have been brought for those with weak stomachs. If an ork declines, he openly looks disappointed and the character may be the subject of jokes during the evening. Ork characters that have made a good impression may be introduced to unmarried friends and family and all will be invited to join in any of the festivities. "Tonight, we celebrate," he says. "Tomorrow we worry."

Players should be encouraged to interact with the people at the party. A number of possible groups are in attendance. Almost all of the orks present seem to share the view that Krathis Gron has, for one reason or another, failed her people. While some are upset with her trade policies, some don't like the new laws, and others dislike her treaties with non-ork groups, all agree a change is needed. Here are some possible encounters:

Pheargus One-Eye: Pheargus will be friendly enough with the party, but will be engaged in fleecing a pair of dwarfs of copious amounts of silver in a dice game. The dwarfs brought out the dice, but Pheargus has substituted a set of weighted ones for the originals. Every so often he switches them out for the dwarfs and intentionally loses a throw. This keeps the game going and keeps the other orks involved from getting angry. He will invite anyone who wants to in on the game.

A number of Zarass' Chargers are present. They are fairly aloof to non-orks, but one or two will pull a dwarf or other Name-giver aside and ask for news from Throal. Zarass prevents them from corresponding

with Terath's Chargers and many are curious as to the state of things with the end of the war and how their loved ones who remained behind are doing.

A Broken Fang tattooist is engaged in a heated discussion with two other skin artists concerning the trade. Name-givers who appear interested, adorned with body paints or tattoos, or even simply close enough to grab will be asked to contribute. The Broken Fang is covered with a dizzying array of tattoos in images both realistic and abstract. Provided that the character is congenial, either he or his cronies will be willing to work on him later on. If the character is suitably drunk and fair-skinned (like an elf not used to drinking *hurlg*), they'll seek to convince him or her to get a tattoo before sobering up.

A pair of Cavalrymen from the Elf Eaters Tribe will challenge any and all takers to feats of physical skill and bravery. As the night progresses and the *hurlg* flows, these feats become more and more dangerous (starting with games of mumblety peg and moving on from there). Their escapades culminate with both of them passing out and being hauled away to sleep it off outside.

Event 2

After several hours, Ralvestra comes up to the characters and invites them into his house, "to try a new brew." He lets them into his poor, but relatively neat, home, and sits them down at his table. He produces a number of cups from a cabinet and pours out helpings of a sour mash whiskey. He also produces a few pipes and offers a smoke for anyone who wishes one. After everyone is comfortable, he will begin.

"I told you this afternoon that some folk here feel that the High Chief isn't doing what's right. She's done us right, with re-founding our homeland and uniting the tribes. Blook, she even got the city orks and the tribes to cooperate, where some of those *skraacha* wouldn't even give a *turgan* six inches of steel before Claw Ridge. But she's been saying things lately. Doing things. Like this land deal. That's ork land; it belongs to us. We bled for it, died for it, and she's givin' it to *ujnorts*!" He pauses and spits, to the right. To non-orks, he will add, "No offense, but this is our home. It's the principle of the thing."

He continues, "We need some help. We're needin' some things picked up before we go to the High Chief with our concerns. Things that...well, let's just say that if a group of us went to get them, it might prove difficult. We need them sent to one of Krathis' people down south, with the Two-Hands...he's a loyal lieutenant, and he might sway the High Chief's mind on certain matters where we malcontents," he pauses and laughs, "have failed. You folks look like Name-givers of the right quality. Are you interested?"

He will, if pressed for more details, explain that if the information is received by Hadjma (Krathis' lieutenant), a city ork from the south and, Ralvestra suspects, a member of her secret police, it might alter his thinking about how the changes in the south are affecting the rest of Cara Fahd. In turn, he will hopefully convey this to Krathis with more credibility than they could manage. If the group continues to press, he will get them to promise, on their Names, to hold the rest of the plan in confidence: one of Zarass' riders will carry the information and they are sure Hadjma will steal it, or at least read it, believing it to be intended for Zarass herself. While this is what he wants to happen, he is sure Krathis would not believe one of the merchants or one of the Chargers if they just told Hadjma the information. Ralvestra should be roleplayed as someone who believes that he is right, but is frustrated that direct channels no longer work. If the players ask him why he would



hire any non-orks for the job he will explain about the problems of Grimeye's Crossing (see below).

He offers a small sum to the characters. If they press for more, he laughs. "It's courier duty and glorified grunt work and it's in Cara Fahd. I'm not asking you to go to Parlainth for it!" With a successful negotiation interaction he can be talked up to twice his original offer, but that is his limit. He pays half up front and promises the other half afterwards. He tells the party to enjoy the rest of the evening and to meet him at the bar tomorrow night.

Should the party refuse to assist Ralvestra, he will understand. "It's not your business to risk yourselves for us," he says, "even on such a small errand as this. Despite our losses and sacrifices at Sky Point, we are still orks. We are used to adversity." He will see them out. To orks he will be a little more accusatory, saying "I expected better from you. We fought here for a home and freedom. Does that mean so little to you?" If ork characters are derogatory towards the losses that Cara Fahd suffered, he will become angry and, calling them *turgma* and other unpleasant names, demand that they leave.

Event 3

After the party, the heroes will become aware that an apparently tipsy Pheargus One-Eye is waiting for them. He has won two bottles of peach wine off of a t'skrang and wishes to split it with them in the name of friendship. He offers to walk with the party back to wherever they are lodged.

Once they are all under way, he passes the bottles around. He'll crack a few jokes, inquire as to their travels and plans, and commend them on their fairness in resolving the situation with Walin. He talks in broad statements about how important it is for Cara Fahd to have heroes, both orks and *ujnort*, and that he knows that they understand that even if some of the residents of Cara Fahd are unhappy, most are better off now than before the war. He will talk about how they hope to petition Krathis in the next week or so with their concerns. He tells the party "I don't care what some of those sourpusses think, she'll be reasonable and meet us at least part way. We'll smooth things out."

He will eventually work Ralvestra's job into the conversation and thank the party for helping out. If they tell him they have not accepted the job, Pheargus attempts to convince them that they should reconsider. Pheargus will have any publicly known information that is available about the party by this point (through his *karvusta* contacts), and will use subtle manipulation to guilt the party into taking the job. If they have already taken the job, he wishes them more luck and offers to fix them dinner when they return. Pheargus should be roleplayed as a moderate amongst the underground, as he is attempting to set himself up as someone the party might confide in if they learn anything useful to the *karvusta*.

Event 4

The group meets Ralvestra the next day and he introduces them to Corella, who will be going along to pick up the items. Corella has brought horses for any group members who do not have them and will direct them toward Grimeye's Crossing. She tells them that they must pick up a package from an alchemist who lives there. She will have a pensive look on her face as they travel and will explain if asked that she is puzzled as to what the underground would need from such a place, but feels that it must be important to the cause. The players should sense something is amiss when she calls the group "the underground",

but Corella will explain that the various factions are only able to stay united through secrecy, and they would be split and played against each other by Krathis' forces if she knew about them. Corella informs them a united front is needed to face Krathis. She doesn't know much about the big picture, but it should be clear that she is acting under Zarass Icethought's orders in this matter. Corella will reveal, if pressed, that Zarass is only one of the groups in the underground. Ralvestra represents a collection of merchants and she is aware that most of the people at the party last night are somehow involved.

The journey itself should be a fairly uneventful few days. Gamemasters should throw in descriptions of the various groups of orks doing everyday things as the players ride through Cara Fahd. About three hours before they get to the bridge, the ork settlements taper out and they enter a lightly wooded area. The group emerges from the woods about an hour from the bridge and will be able to see it and the town easily. A pair of thirty foot tall adobe guard towers are set up near the river bank and ballistae can be seen pointing across the river at Cara Fahd. The walls of the town are a collection of sharpened logs and more adobe. The bridge itself is made of stone and guards can be seen on its span.

The guards watch them approach with mild interest. When it becomes apparent that they will be crossing, the four guards that stand outside the towers lower a bar across the far end and advance to the center of the bridge with crossbows ready. They hail the party and demand to know their business. Perceptive characters will notice that the ballistae tilt and point down to cover the largest or heaviest armored members of the group.

If no one answers, Corella states that they have business in the tent city. The guards glance at her, smirk, and demand to know their business again. Should an ork respond, their smirks grow into grins and they repeat the question, preceding it with, "Sorry. There was an animal jabbering. Didn't catch that." Should a non-ork answer, they'll nod and say, "Silver a person. Two for each beast. Five silver for wagons." This means, of course, that each ork and each steed is two silver and all other Name-givers are a single silver apiece. Corella stiffens at this and she will respond with an angry, "Vut!!" but she'll dig into a saddlebag and produce enough silver for the entire group. She dismounts and walks forward to pay the guards. They will, it seems, readily take money, even from an ork.

Once paid, the guards move back to the end of the bridge, raise the bar, and motion everyone through. Non-orks will be asked to "Keep their pets leashed" as they pass. Should anyone be foolish enough attack the guards, all of the forces on the tower will concentrate their fire into any orks in the group and then work their way through the more dangerous looking adventurers. The guards are all excellent shots and they are prepared for a cavalry assault of several hundred orks. There are sufficient numbers to drive any sensible group back over the bridge, resulting in failure for their mission. The adventurers might be able to escape into the woods to the far west of the crossing, but this will obviously pose a number of problems for them in getting back across.

Corella rides wide around the town, leading the party toward the tent city. A few taunts are directed at her and other orks, but no one will do anything else. The characters should see that, despite its size and relative poverty, the walls of Grimeye's Crossing are solid, and that the Name-givers that stand on the walls and at the gates stand with the discipline of trained soldiers.



In contrast to the orderly and well-defended looking town, the tent city is a random collection of tents, carts, wagons, and shanties. A few beggars accost the party as they pass by and they should see that there is a lack of security, sanitation, and shelter here. A large number of the Name-givers here are armed ruffians but, in addition to the beggars and castaways, a few other pitiful merchants and their children can be seen. It should make any questor of Garlen ache to help.

The wagon of Sherik is notable in that it is the farthest structure in the tent city from Grimeye's Crossing and that the Vurkkisson Brothers stand guard outside the tent that has been set up in front of it. As the group approaches, a foul smell overcomes the prevalent stink of the surroundings and a thin plume of greasy black smoke is seen rising from the smoke hole. It would seem that the alchemist is in.

Inquiring for Sherik results in one of the Vurkkissons opening the flap of the tent. "Only three," Targas (or is it Häkon?) says. Corella carries the money, so she will step forward. It's up to the players to decide who the other petitioners will be. Both trolls will remain outside. Sherik has his own ways of protecting himself.

The inside of the tent is clearly a temporary extension of whatever laboratory the alchemist has inside his wagon. In addition to the collection of glassware, a number of burners (powered by True Fire kernels much like a firestarter), several mortars and accompanying pestles, and any number of foul-smelling, oddly colored and caustic substances, the tent contains a huge glass tank and several large t'skrang baskets. In the tank are several very large, very venomous spiders from Araucania and the baskets contain Sherik's pet vipers, plus two new vipers and a witherfang. Sherik is in the process of dropping live mice into the spider tank when Corella and the other characters enter and the gruesome spectacle of the rodents being run down by arachnids the size of an ork's hand will play out over his shoulder as he talks to them.

He turns to face them as he finishes and says, "Well, here's a surprise. What does a noble follower of Krathis Gron wish of Sherik? Something to solve an unsolvable problem, perhaps? A matter of revenge?"

Corella responds, "We are looking for some fruit. Something out of season."

Sherik replies, "Ah? Well, bitter fruits are easier to come by out of season" and wanders over to a nearby cauldron. "Her letter told me to expect you, but I will need this evening to finish preparations." He then places a roll of parchment on his work bench and begins filling an ink vial from one of the glasses being heated. He will look back at the party and say "You may go now" and begin writing on the parchment.

Corella has brought a large tent in her pack and suggests the party pitch camp for the evening.

Climax

The party, at this point, should have strong suspicions that things are terribly amiss with the underground. This is exactly what Sherik would like them to think. He has planted in his tent several letters which reveal a chain of correspondence between the ork chiefs, merchants, and a handful of non-orks. These letters are kept in a chest hidden under a small wooden platform under the reed mat which makes up the floor of his tent. In actuality only 2 of these letters are authentic—one from Zarass Icethought telling him that Corella would be arriving to pick up "a small consignment", and one from Sandahg of the Elf Eaters which discusses "moving up the time table" because of

"the maneuvers against us by K.G." The letter from the Elf Eaters also discusses that once the orks of Claw Ridge trace events back to Grimeye's Crossing they should be able to attack it with impunity. Taken as a whole the letters implicate almost everyone of importance, save for Krathis, in thinly veiled plots to murder their rivals.

Sherik is hoping for some inquisitive adventurers to "discover" these letters and take news of them back to Claw Ridge. He has made arrangements with the underground that they should send a party of non-orks to collect the documents he is preparing, knowing most adventurers could not resist poking about his tent. He and the Vurkkisson brothers believe this will be the quickest way to set ork against ork in Cara Fahd and possibly bring them to armed conflict with the troops at Grimeye's Crossing.

The document he is preparing has been left on his work bench. It is, on the surface, a simple report on the political goings on in the village of Lelithala (an *ujnort* settlement in north west Cara Fahd, see **The Ork Nation of Cara Fahd** for details). The letter indicates that they are debating demanding the same recognition she has given to Ilfehen's group in the south and identifies some of the key leaders in the area who will have to be "dealt with". The report goes on to discuss the destabilizing effect that this is having in Cara Fahd and how ork governors must be installed in various areas to prevent the kingdom from fracturing further. The report is not addressed to anyone in particular, and is unsigned.

In addition, there are a collection of writing quills on the desk, as well as different inks, some of exotic origins. Careful examination of the quills will reveal that two of them are protected with an odd coating and clean up quite easily. Any of the characters experienced with poisons or alchemy who notice this should be able to deduce, on an Extraordinary success, that one of the inks is in fact a two part poison, activated by the addition of the compounds on the quills.

During the night Sherik sleeps in his wagon and the two trolls sleep outside of the tent. There are several ways for this situation to resolve itself. Since Sherik is hoping to have the letters stolen, any attempts to enter his tent by stealth should succeed. Other than potion making equipment, the animals, the fake letter from Lelithala, and the documents in the chest, there is nothing of value in the tent. A simple search should reveal the boards under the reed mat on the floor of the tent, and that will lead to the chest.

If the characters take a more direct approach and create any sort of diversion, the trolls will obligingly go to check it out, acting slow and dimwitted as they search farther and farther away from the tent. This should give less stealthy members of the party time to ransack the tent, with the same results as a stealthy search. Only if the party tries a direct assault on the trolls will they fight back, and even then they might take Sherik and flee if the opportunity presents itself.

Gamemasters should be very flexible in how the party resolves this event, as the players will probably come up with several innovative ways to search the tent and surrounding area. If the party is particularly dull or disinterested in investigating, Corella will pointedly say she does not want the party to bother Sherik's camp at all, and then go to sleep. She has, in fact, become alarmed at what she is a part of, and is hoping the party will go investigate.

The next morning Sherik will meet the party as arranged and deliver a sealed envelope of waxed paper and a small writing kit to Corella. If the party has managed to search his tent without leaving an



obvious trace he will act as if nothing happened. If they left the place a mess, or left obvious traces Sherik will comment about vandals and how worthless his guards are. If the party attacked Sherik he will obviously not meet with them again and will pack up and leave as soon as he is able.

Sequels

Whatever the outcome of the interaction with Sherik, the party will have to decide whether to continue with the job that they have contracted for, or return directly to Claw Ridge with the new information they have "discovered". They should be made to feel paranoid of dealing with any strangers that they encounter on the way back, partially from the information that they now have about the infighting in Cara Fahd, and partially from Raggok's lingering influence on them.

Corella will attempt to complete the mission, leading the group on a route that allows the next adventure framework **To Zarass' Aid** to unfold. If the players decide to beeline directly for Claw Ridge, the safest route, unless they have some other connections in Cara Fahd, is to contact Pheargus One-Eye, although again: reward the players for any innovative methods they use to contact Krathis Gron and warn her of danger. **To Zarass' Aid** can still be run, with minor continuity adjustments on the gamemaster's part, if the players choose this route.

Unfortunately for the characters, most of the letters are fake, and the authentic ones do not tell Krathis and the *karvusta* anything useful. While this scores the characters points for having their hearts in the right place, it does not make them look particularly competent if the letters are quickly discovered as fakes, and it sews further intra-tribe strife if they are not. The ramifications of this in the short term are increased tensions as information is leaked to the various chiefs regarding the alleged plots, is later debunked, and then turns into rumor and conspiracy theory.

TO ZARASS' AID

Premise

Zarass Icethought has been roaming all over southern Cara Fahd with her Chargers, searching for the legendary former capital of Cara Fahd and conducting bizarre military maneuvers. The Two-Hands Tribe, a mix of ork and *ujnort* communities, and the newly formed South Hold Tribe have tolerated these explorations and maneuvers through their territories in the name of keeping the peace in the area. Recently both tribes have been glad for the addition of some of Zarass' Chargers to the area, as there have been unconfirmed sightings of remnants of the Legion of Damnation and several attacks that have led to the disappearance of whole convoys. Prevailing opinion is that a small faction of the Legion survived Krathis' decimating campaign and are now seeking revenge. Star Ilfehena has begun to doubt this, however, as they have eluded her tracking attempts, as well as those of the Chargers.

Set-Up

The characters can either be introduced to this adventure framework while traveling to complete their mission from "the underground", or at any other time during which the characters are moving through the dense jungles in south eastern Cara Fahd. Most of

the adventure takes place under the thick growth of trees and underbrush that dominate the landscape. Almost everyone who strays from the small horse and wagon paths that have been carved through the area will have their movement slowed to no more than walking speed. This holds true even for windling characters, who must fly with care, lest they encounter a stray branch or snag their delicate wings on the undergrowth. Obsidimen prove the only exception to this rule - their usually plodding pace and dense, armored bulk make short work of the lesser undergrowth, and most do not move fast enough to consider the crowded trees a problem. All characters have their line of sight reduced significantly, as well, and some sounds seem to echo strangely among the trees.

Event 1

After several hours of traveling, the characters move into a clearing where there are obvious signs of a large battle. The muddy ground is riddled with hoof prints, and ork blood can be discovered at various points throughout the area. Small bits of armor and useless and destroyed supplies are strewn about, but anything that might be considered useful or of value has been removed from the area. Careful examination of the area with applicable talents or skills will reveal that a group of 8 or 9 horsemen were surrounded and attacked, probably from surprise. It is easy to track the group's departure from the area, but after a few hundred feet the tracks scatter into the brush and take separate directions. Extraordinary successes on Tracking or similar checks will reveal that each horse from the clearing was led away by an ork or human sized creature. Whoever has the highest success searching the area should also discover a small dart in the mud, obviously designed to carry some sort of poison.

As the group observes the area they notice a rustling in the underbrush. Eventually an old, female dwarf voice calls out, asking that they identify themselves. This request is in Throalic and is then repeated in *Or'zet*, the orkish language. The speaker is Star Ilfehena, the dwarf hermit, and if the characters respond civilly to her she will reveal her hiding place off the path. If Corella is still with the adventuring group, or if they are sufficiently Legendary, she launches into her request right away. If the group is a collection of unknowns (or worse, have a bad reputation in the area), she will engage them in discussion about why they are in Cara Fahd for awhile. Assuming she likes their responses she will then pose her request to them.

Ilfehena needs help in tracking down the group that conducted the ambush here. She reveals that Zarass Icethought and Kornat Hardblade, a member of the Two-Fist Tribe, had been out on a joint patrol along with an observer from the capital, an ork Named Hadjma. Ilfehena seems concerned with rescuing the patrol, most of whom she believes were alive when the fight ended. Based on the age of the tracks she feels that the attackers can't be more than a day or so ahead of them and that they will pitch a camp. She believes she can track them back to that camp. Difficulty Numbers for attempting to track the attackers should be somewhat challenging, but anyone attempting to track one of the captured horses will find this an easy task.

If the characters decline to help Star Ilfehena she will mutter something derogatory about "some heroes" and retreat back to the woods, otherwise she will whistle and a Huttawa (see ED2, p.301) will come bounding up to join her. She mounts it and says "follow me", heading the group south west.



Event 2

The group will actually travel for a little over two days if they stay with Ilfehena, passing a handful of small villages along the way. In at least one of the villages the group stops at for fresh water and news they will discover that there was a group of orks and a human leading horses with orks tied and bound thrown across their saddles. One of the residents, out searching for wood, saw them trying to skirt the village unnoticed. The villager mentions that they were arguing about what to do with the captives and where to sell them. If asked he will indicate that they addressed the leader of the group as Hadjma.

Ilfehena will stop the group on the second night at a decent sized village. The characters are met at the testing hut by an older ork who actually calls out to Ilfehena, addressing her as *Egrandu*. After Artisan Tests he goes up and talks to her and will speak with the rest of the group if they approach. He reports that one of his hunters shadowed a group of slavers who came through the area half a day earlier. He indicates that there were three orks and a human leading three horses, each with a captive bound on them. One of the captives was a female, dressed in the uniform of Zarass' Chargers. As with the previous report, the slavers were fighting amongst each other about what to do with the captives and their leader made it clear that "she" was going to be sold to work the mines "because death was too easy for her". The hunter reported that a city ork Named Hadjma was clearly in charge of the group. The headman also states that a group of four of Zarass' Chargers came through about an hour ago and kept riding to pursue the slavers.

Event 3

Whether the group decides to rest the night and begin fresh in the morning or heads out on a hard march to catch the slavers that night, they first encounter three members of one of Zarass' Chargers' patrols. The small band had been looking for signs of the Legion of Damnation when they received word that their leader had been captured and they have been seeking her since. Star Ilfehena will explain that she feels that they pursue a foe too focused to be the Legion and that the stories of the Legion may have only been cover for kidnapping Zarass and the others. She is also worried about the implications of one of Krathis' lieutenants being involved, but will not speculate further.



The fourth member of the patrol comes in on foot and indicates that he has found the slavers, who have stopped a little ways distant.

Climax

The characters must come up with a plan to rescue the slaves and defeat the band of slavers. The members of Zarass' Chargers will flat out refuse any plan that does not include them riding in, grabbing their leader, and riding off as quickly as possible. If the characters come up with another plan, the Chargers patrol will abandon it at first opportunity to rescue Zarass. They show an almost fanatical devotion to their leader, uttering such phrases as "we protect our own", and "we've never followed *ujnorr* before, ain't starting now". If the characters come up with a plan that uses the Chargers rescuing Zarass as a diversion to allow the characters to attack the slavers while they are distracted this may be the best use of the unruly orks, who will be more flexible in their assistance with such a plan.

The slavers, who consist of a human non-Adept questor of Dis wearing two Absorb Blow charms, chain armor, and shackles around his neck and wrists; two ork Warriors in hide armor; and an unarmored ork Scout, are a fairly straightforward fight, save for the questor of Dis' powers. The ork Warriors are relatively high Circle and are armed with broadswords and shields and thanks to the blessings of Dis they do not tire or suffer from injury. In game mechanics, they will fight until they reach their Death Rating (not passing out when they reach their Unconsciousness Rating) and can take two additional Wounds with no penalty. The two captured ork males are actually in thrall to Dis as well. Both are Cavalrymen of medium Circle (use the statistics for Zarass' Chargers (p. 27). They receive the same benefits as the slavers, but as they are unarmed and unarmored they pose little offensive threat. The questor of Dis will use them as suicide troops, having them grab the characters' swords, throw themselves in front of charges, and otherwise slow the characters down while he moves to the ork Scout. In the second round of combat he will plunge a dagger deep into the Scout's throat, then invoke Death Magic (see EDC2, p. 126) and the powers of Dis in an attempt to stun the attacking group. Treat this as per the Horror power Terror (see ED2, p. 316), with a Spellcasting Test at Step 22 and a Terror Test at Step 12. The questor will then attempt to flee while the four Dis possessed orks lay into the characters. If both of the remaining slavers are killed, the two slaves collapse, unconscious, no matter what their current Damage. If the questor is somehow killed before the Warriors, again the two slaves collapse, unconscious, no matter what their current Damage, but the ork Warriors will fight until they are killed. Last-chance Salves are ineffective on any of the slavers or slaves killed during the fight, should the players attempt this.

Questor of Dis

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

Initiative: 3	Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 8	Social Defense: 9
Damage: 10	Armor: 7
Number of Spells: 1	Mystic Armor: 3
Spellcasting: 11	Knockdown: 5
Effect: See Below	Recovery Tests: 2





Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 27

Combat Movement: 35
Full Movement: 70

Questor Abilities: Cause Pain, Painful Memory, Inspire Revenge
Equipment: Chainmail, Broadsword, 2 Absorb Blow Charms
Loot: None

Ork Warriors of Dis

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

TOU: 9
CHA: 5

Initiative: 6
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 10

Physical Defense: 12
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 10

Damage: 21
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 4

Death Rating: 106
Wound Threshold: 16
Unconsciousness Rating: 89

Combat Movement: 30
Full Movement: 60

Equipment: Broadsword, Shield, Chain Mail, Longbow, 20 arrows
Loot: None

Sequels

If the questor of Dis got away, the characters should, hopefully, hunt him down. He will also fight until dead and suffer no Wound penalties at all. As he is only a skilled non-Adept the fight should be short. If the players do not chose to pursue, Star Ilfehena will say goodbye to the party, seek him out, and dispatch him.

If Star Ilfehena remains with the party she will offer to guide them anywhere within Cara Fahd as a small display of thanks for the help they have provided. She is a powerful ally and may introduce the characters to several adventure opportunities if they choose to travel to the villages of the South Hold Tribe.

Should either of the unfortunate slaves survive the fight they will need a great deal of assistance to return to the Two-Hands Tribe. They are both low ranking Scouts and will report that they believe Kornat Hardblade, their leader, was captured following the fight, but indicate that they are fairly sure the slavers killed a few of the prisoners to speed travel. While the characters might choose to search for the other part of the slaver group, at best they might discover a cold trail headed south through Landis towards Thera.

OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

WAR WITH THE LEGION

The attack on the Legion of Damnation is a campaign arc in and of itself, and for groups based in Cara Fahd might provide an interesting opportunity to build their Legends. The Legion had been engaging in wholesale slaughter of outlying villages by the time Krathis Gron finally was forced to deal with them. Players would have to not only fight the Legion, but gain the trust of Star Ilfehena and her guerrilla fighters.

THE NEW BAZAAR

Now that they have stable villages and no longer fear the attacks of the Legion of Damnation, the people of the South Hold Tribe are expanding and prospering. Unopened and breached kaers in and around Landis are being investigated; brave (or foolhardy) Adepts are making the week's journey southwest to Vivane to fight the undead there, and plenty of commerce exists in the area that needs protection from the wilds of Barsaive. Even a large, open air market has developed which its vendors say will one day rival the Throalic Bazaar. For groups who may not feel comfortable in the heart of Cara Fahd, or who want to stay unentangled in its politics, this makes an excellent staging area to begin many different types of campaigns and offers the characters ample opportunities for adventures both in exploration and defending a burgeoning community.

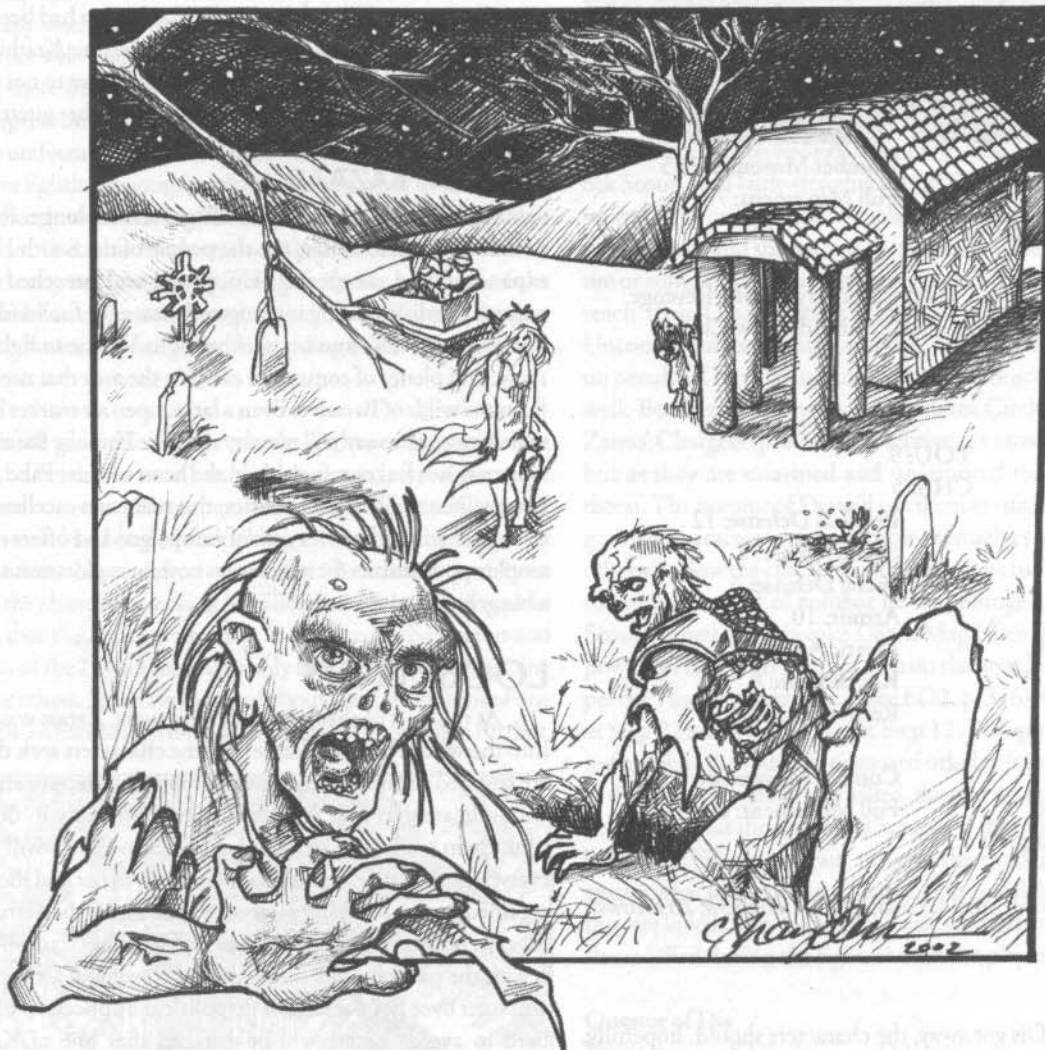
LOOSE ENDS

At the start of the fight with the slavers, Zarass was hauled away into the woods by her Chargers. If the characters seek them out they are stopped a short distance away, prepared to receive an attack. They will indicate that they were frozen in Terror early in the fight and it took them a while to shake off the effects. Zarass will indicate that everything since the ambush has been fuzzy to her and she only recently regained her senses as her men were shaking off the Terror. She will be eager to hear the party's explanation of what has transpired. If Corella is with the party she will fill Zarass in on events at Grimeye's Crossing and turn over her package. The political implication of this event is hard to avoid, Zarass will be enraged that one of Krathis Gron's lieutenants tried to take her as a slave as well as being somewhat irate that the underground has lost it's chance to pass doctored intelligence to Krathis. The characters can choose to respond to this or not, but Zarass is intent on rejoining her forces, and *ujnort* are not welcome. How Zarass intends to respond may change the course of the young kingdom's history.

The underground will continue to work against Krathis and undermine her authority. The characters may have a friend in Pheargus One-Eye if they treated him well, and he will remain interested in them any time he runs into them in the northern areas of Cara Fahd.



THE MARCH OF THE UNDEAD



THE EXODUS BEGINS

Young Turlo was ripped from sleep as the city of Haven filled with screams. "They're coming! By the thousands! They're coming!" someone screamed into the dark of night. The young Warrior Adept grabbed his sword and kissed it, whispering a short prayer to Thystonius. He whispered to himself, "I am the wall. I will not break."

Quickly donning his armor, the young troll joined his small unit of guards and scrambled towards the city's gates. Already Torgak was barking orders and shoving soldiers into position. The troll ruler of Haven grabbed everyone's attention with a loud, bellowing shout. "Alright, listen up. There is a bloody army of undead headed this way. Scouts put its numbers in the hundreds, not in the thousands. There's no time to run – they'll be here any moment. But if we can hold 'em for a while maybe they'll run back to their holes like they always do. So, we hold this gate or we all die and march with 'em. Got it?"

No one said a single word. Even the veteran troops of Torgak's Irregulars who had seen action in the Theran War said nothing. Perhaps, they were waiting for Torgak to burst out with his customary laugh and assure them that it was just a joke or a drill or something, anything else. But all Torgak said was "So, let's get to it."

The gates of Haven that separated the small community from the ruins of Parlainth were manned and reinforced. Turlo found himself pressed into service right behind the main door. He was on the front line and would bear the brunt of their attack. Soon, the dead things would be tearing at the steel reinforced gate, pushing through and scrambling over him. They would push forward, relentlessly unafraid to die one more time.

It was all Turlo could do not to shake in his large, iron-shod boots. He whispered to himself over and over again in his native troll tongue, "I am the wall. I will not break."

The guards stood tense and at rapt attention. Turlo was tall enough that he could actually see through a low break in the gate. He could see the quiet, torch-lit ruins near the gate of Haven. And it was he who first saw the ruins stir with movement as around every corner and behind every brick, the dead moved. They moved like a carpet of shambling undeath across the broken city of Parlainth. They came by the hundreds, closer and closer. And then at the edge of arrow range, they stopped, no

doubt marshalling their numbers to prepare for the charge. Turlo gripped his large trollsword tighter.

"I am the wall. I will not break," he muttered.

But the undead did not charge. Instead, two moved forward, waving an ancient white banner. Behind the two flag bearers was another, barely visible figure swathed in black, but even from this distance, from the cadaverous crest that rose from its head, clearly a t'skrang.

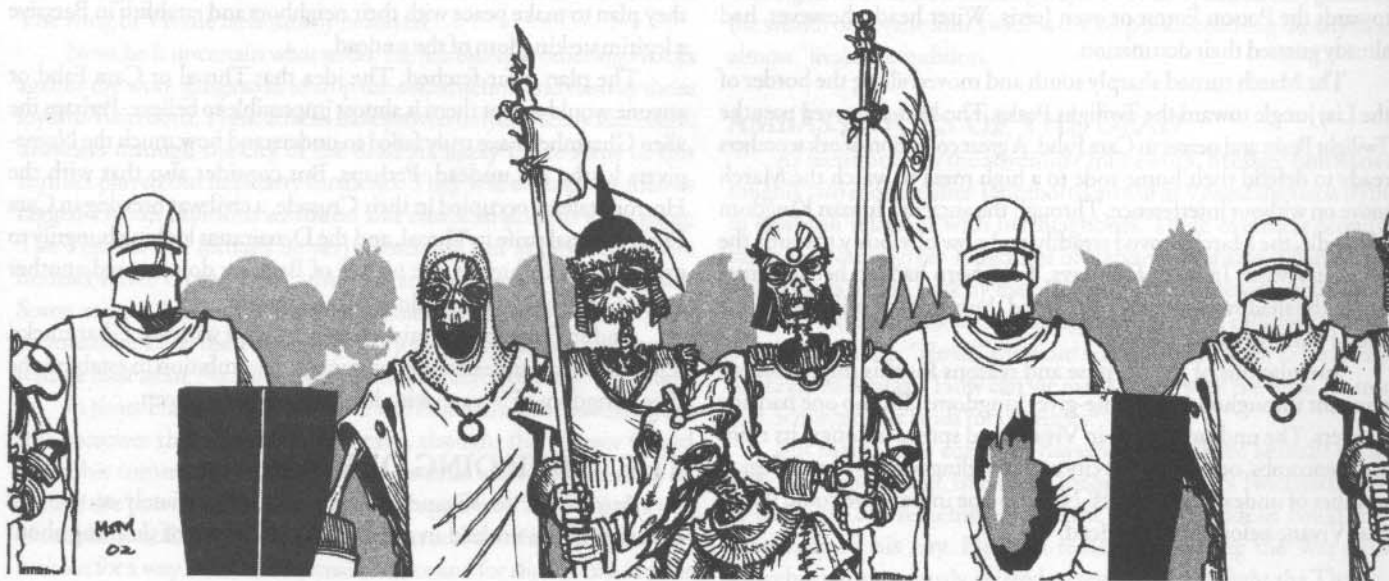
The dead lizard spoke loudly in a hollow and feminine rasp, "Greetings, citizens of Haven. I am Twiceborn. Since your founding, our realms have bordered each other. And while we have never been friends, we have also truly never been enemies. Tonight, my people and I leave Parlainth forever. Tonight, we begin our trek to another home. We will meet again, Name-givers, never doubt that. But the next time, it will not be as two armies poised for war... but as equals."

Turlo could make sense of none of it, but what he understood immediately is that the charge never came. The endless cadaver men and restless spirits retreated from Haven and Turlo, almost as if their unexpected retreat was his doing, banged his trollsword against his armor and boisterously proclaimed: "I am the wall! I did not break!"

BACKGROUND

One night, with very little warning, the undead of Parlainth rose from their crypts and catacombs, gathered into a vast horde, and left that ruined city. They marched tirelessly across the face of Barsaive towards the ruins of blasted Vivane. Amongst their number was every sort of undead that had ever been seen in Barsaive and several as yet unimagined. At their lead was Twiceborn, the undead t'skrang who fancied herself their queen.

The citizens of Haven, who believed the gathering of undead was nothing less than a full invasion, either fled the city or hastily prepared to repulse the attack. But the attack did not come. Twiceborn approached the gates of Haven and announced that she would be forever leaving the ruins of Parlainth. Furthermore, she proclaimed ominously and cryptically, that when next she met the people of Haven it would be as equals. And then, for no reason anyone could fathom, the undead of Parlainth went for a walk.



These events did not go unnoticed elsewhere. The Kingdom of Throal has always kept agents in Haven. Torgak's little empire was simply too interesting to merely ignore. When Twiceborn and her legion of subjects emerged in one unimaginable group and began their Exodus, the Kingdom of Throal was quick to respond. A strike force of airships was dispatched with the singular purpose of decimating the undead.

Admiral Khorden Reise, a Seventh Circle dwarf Air Sailor Adept and veteran of the Theran War, led the strike force. He viewed the undead's march not as an omen of some impending doom, but as a unique opportunity. The undead had exposed themselves to his waiting flame cannons. Reise was determined to purge the horde with fire and to burn a final funeral pyre so bright that the people could see it back in Bartertown.

Two days into the undead's march, the airships arrived. Just as the Throalic strike force was coming into firing range of the mass of undead, the crows nests of the airships all sounded alarm. On his flagship's port bow, Admiral Reise watched as a swirling Horror Cloud, greater in size than all his ships combined, seethed over the horizon. The Horror Cloud was nowhere near the size of the one that had fallen upon Vivane during the Theran War, but it was no less impressive to the fleet commander.

Reise knew from the accounts of the War that a single Horror Cloud had reportedly consumed Admiral Hartmallen of Thera's entire kila battlegroup and he was in no mood to become its next victim. The Throalic strike force fled the scene without a single flame cannon being fired. The Horror Cloud itself hovered slowly over the column of deathless immigrants and began to move in tandem with them, as if taking them under its wing.

The undead marched day and night, tirelessly, for a historic forty-four days across the face of Barsaive. They headed due west from Parlainth, skirting north of the Caucavic Mountains. They went south and west to avoid both Scythia and Throal. As they approached the Serpent River, in the distance sat Throalic drakkars attentively watching their every move, waiting anxiously for any sign this march was turning into an invasion. The March forded the Serpent River, making a great bridge of crawling undead that spanned from bank to bank. They passed south of Lake Vors and north of the Tylon Mountains. In Kratas and Throal, speculations began to grow that they were marching towards the Poison Forest or even Jerris. Wiser heads, however, had already guessed their destination.

The March turned sharply south and moved along the border of the Liaj Jungle toward the Twilight Peaks. The March moved past the Twilight Peaks and nearer to Cara Fahd. A great collection of ork scorchers ready to defend their home rode to a high mesa to watch the March move on without interference. Through the ancient Human Kingdom of Landis, the March moved steadily and now obviously towards the ruins of Vivane. In forty-four days, Twiceborn had led her children, under the shadow of the Horror Cloud, hundreds of miles from one end of Barsaive to the other.

Speculations of the purpose and reasons for this migration ran rampant throughout the Name-giver kingdoms. But no one had any answers. The undead arrived in Vivane and spread amongst its ruins and catacombs, occupying the city and mingling with its already legion number of undead inhabitants. Now no one in Barsaive could doubt that Vivane belonged to the dead.

No one could be certain just how many undead were in Vivane now. If the truth were known and if somehow an accurate census of Barsaive could be conducted, it could now be honestly said, however, that one sentient being in twenty in Barsaive was undead. While the citizens of Barsaive were in no position to gather such information, they did know that Vivane was literally crawling with the deathless.

But as strange as the actual March was, the events that followed somehow managed to be even more bizarre. Reports of construction inside the undead city began to trickle out of Vivane. A series of new, blue tile towers were spotted on the east side of the city by one expedition. These curious events were soon overshadowed by the arrival of small parties of undead emissaries at the capitals of every Barsaivan nation. It was soon clear to every Name-giver in Barsaive that something very strange was at work in the necropolis of Vivane.

VIVANE: CITY OF THE DEAD

THE MONSTER WHO WOULD BE QUEEN

Why did the undead leave Parlainth?

No one in Barsaive can say. The reason is, of course, almost unimaginable to anyone who does not understand Twiceborn's true nature. Twiceborn is a Horror Construct of the mysterious wraithforms known as the Gharmhek. The Gharmhek have grown afraid of the dragon Charcoalgrin and her Unforgivables in Parlainth. It seemed to these Horrors that it was only a matter of time before Charcoalgrin led her army against them. Defeat seemed certain.

Furthermore, the Gharmhek are afraid of the Barsaivans themselves. Though Name-givers could scarcely imagine it, these Horrors live in fear. With the defeat of Thera, and now the Horror Stalker Crusade against Scythia, it seems likely to the cowardly Gharmhek that again it is only a matter of time before they will be targeted by an insurmountable foe.

So, how can they survive? They have conceived a desperate plan. Twiceborn, their principle puppet, shall march to Vivane and become its ruler. There, they will live in safety, far from Charcoalgrin, amongst their children. Furthermore, when they hold uncontested rule over the City of the Dead, instead of destroying all the living they encounter, they plan to make peace with their neighbors and establish in Barsaive a legitimate kingdom of the undead.

The plan is far-fetched. The idea that Throal or Cara Fahd or anyone would accept them is almost impossible to believe. Perhaps the alien Gharmhek have truly failed to understand how much the Name-givers loathe the undead. Perhaps. But consider also that with the Horror Stalkers occupied in their Crusade, a civil war brewing in Cara Fahd, internal strife in Throal, and the Denairastas looking hungrily to expand their influence, the people of Barsaive do not need another enemy, even one as horrendous as the undead.

And so, Twiceborn's mind is now infused with the Gharmheks' scheme. This manifests as her unquenchable ambition to establish the Free Kingdom of Vivane with her as its undying queen.

THE REBUILDING OF VIVANE

Any visitor to Vivane will be struck immediately at the odd behavior of the undead in the lower city. Instead of skulking about



tombs and catacombs waiting to ambush the living, some of the undead are organizing in huge work gangs and clearing debris from the streets and structures of the ruined city. Even more unbelievable is that work to restore some of the buildings has begun.

This is not to say that Vivane is a safe place to wander around as a mortal. The undead hard at work are those under the control of Twiceborn and the Gharmheks. But many of the undead of Vivane are still independent and have adopted a much more traditional lifestyle. Each day, however, Twiceborn's influence grows and the Gharmheks bring more and more of the undead under their control.

The result of this toil is that Vivane is beginning to recapture a hint of its former glory, at least architecturally. Certainly much work remains, but it seems only a matter of time before the tireless and deathless work gangs have repaired a sizeable quarter of the city.

THE HIDDEN WAR

Hovering over Vivane is the kila once known as *Ascendancy*. That kila sits at the center of a swirling, thrashing Horror Cloud, the shattered remnant of Stormhead before the Theran weapon cut it into pieces. That kila is commanded by the shade of the Theran Admiral Raglund Hartmallen. Hartmallen and his men were killed when the Horror Cloud swallowed their vessels before it attacked Vivane. Now, those Therans live on, motivated by their desire for vengeance against both the living who ordered them to attack the Horror Cloud (the Therans) and those who created the ritual that drew it out in the first place (the great dragons and their Barsaivan allies).

These undead behave much more like Name-givers expect undead to behave. They aren't building anything except maybe traps. They are eternal embodiments of deathless hate against the living. Admiral Hartmallen expected that when the newcomers arrived and bolstered his numbers, he would possess an undead army of such great strength that he could lay waste to all surrounding, living settlements. This is why he escorted Twiceborn back to Vivane.

The reality of Twiceborn's second kingdom however has been quite different. Every day, more of his minions are dominated by some mysterious force into obeying Twiceborn rather than himself. The newly converted undead stops the embodiment-of-deathless-hate-against-the-living routine and immediately starts clearing rubble and renovating the city. This infuriates the shade of Admiral Hartmallen. The King of Vivane feels utterly betrayed.

Now, he is uncertain what to do. He has taken to ordering attacks against the work gangs so as to stop the construction and destroy those loyal to Twiceborn. These attacks have proven only modestly successful. Travelers through the city of the dead are likely to see some of this conflict played out in bizarre incidents. They will see cadaver men in ragged Theran uniforms surround and attack an undead work gang. The Therans will initially be very successful, but as more and more undead arrive on the scene, the Therans are simply overwhelmed. Some escape, but others seem to somehow "convert" as they are surrounded. Then the Theran captives join the work gang and they all resume their labor. Such bizarre vignettes are played out daily in Vivane.

In time, Hartmallen's influence will erode to almost nothing. He still possesses the ultimate trump card, though: the Horror Cloud under his command. There may come a time when he unleashes its destructive power against Twiceborn and again turn Vivane into a pile of rubble. Twiceborn is aware of this threat and therefore always on the lookout for a way to defeat Hartmallen once and for all. When a Horror

Cloud gets destroyed by the intervention of Name-givers in *A Storm of Horrors* (p. 69), Twiceborn certainly takes notice, and begins to contemplate a plan to end this hidden war.

THE WEALTH OF VIVANE

The ruins of Vivane, despite the abundance of the unliving, have in the year since the War become a popular destination for adventurers and treasure hunters of every stripe. The reason for this should be obvious: The dome of Elemental Air erected by the Dragon Ritual during the War ensured that almost no one escaped the destruction of the doomed city. This means that the wealth and resources of the Theran capital must still be in Vivane, waiting for those with the courage and cleverness to locate it.

Immediately after the magical catastrophe of the shattered Horror Cloud falling upon Vivane, the city of Vivane was forever changed. The astral space around Vivane became corrupt and polluted. Entire quarters of the city warped and shattered under the great influx of raw magic. Sections of the city burned with cold fire. And of course, shortly thereafter the dead began to rise. At first, the undead lacked even Hartmallen's primitive guidance. They roamed their blasted city wailing in agony at the disaster that had befallen them and their home. As a result, the very first group of treasure hunters reported an image of Vivane that still dominates the Barsaivan idea of the necropolis — a destroyed city haunted by packs of the walking dead.

Even before the arrival of Twiceborn, Admiral Hartmallen began to work to organize Vivane into an army of undead. The haunted ruin became a sort of fortress. The packs of undead were quickly replaced by patrols which regularly scoured the city looking for any Name-givers foolish enough to enter their realm.

Furthermore, the Horrors within the Horror Cloud began to make their own presence felt. The Artificer began to fill the city with deadly pitfalls and traps of every description, hoping to ensnare a Name-giver so they might feed off its fear. The wealth of Vivane was often used as bait for these elaborate implements of pain. In many ways, during the first year, Vivane was being transformed into a second Parlainth.

All of that changed with the arrival of Twiceborn. She had not fled from her first kingdom to establish its bastard twin halfway across Barsaive. She had come here with a plan. Her work gangs are not only clearing debris, but are disarming traps. They are systematically gathering the wealth of Vivane into Twiceborn's keep and returning the city to an almost "livable" condition.

AMBASSADORS OF THE DEAD

As mentioned in the adventure framework, *Strange Emissaries*, roughly two months after Twiceborn's arrival in Vivane she starts trying to establish relations with her neighbors. These overtures certainly catch the Name-giver kingdoms of Barsaive off guard. Most believe these efforts to be a trick by the Horrors to lure more victims into their clutches. The ambassadors are slaughtered and the calls for trade and peace are ignored. "How?" the word echoes from Throal to Cara Fahd to Travar to Kratas. "How can we make peace with the same Horrors that Scourged our lands for centuries?"

But there is one corner of Barsaive that is more hesitant to cast aside Twiceborn's offer. In Haven, Torgak remembers Twiceborn's offer at the gate. He remembers that the army of undead could have overwhelmed his city. He even remembers during the War when Twiceborn mysteriously offered to send troops to fight the Therans.



And so, with great trepidation, Torgak accepts the ambassador. A hooded, cadaverous figure takes up residence in one of the abandoned buildings on Haven's outskirts under constant observation. The first consulate of the Free Kingdom of Vivane is established. The ramifications of this for Haven, and Torgak in particular, are further explored in **Strange Emissaries**.

The ambassador, Goedon, is eager to talk to anyone interested in trading with Vivane. He offers luxury goods and hand-crafted weaponry at bargain prices to anyone willing to approach the city. The ambassador is even willing, for no additional cost, to have goods transported into and out of the city without the merchant or any of his agents having to actually enter Vivane. The terms are certainly generous, and begin to slowly tempt some of the more greedy citizens of Barsaive.

Goedon is also willing to grant audiences with Twiceborn herself for anyone bold enough to actually enter her palace. The visitors would have to be escorted, of course, but Twiceborn's emissary is willing to making extravagant promises about how safety will be their first concern. He is even willing to grant them a special, silver "Seal of Passage" stamped with Twiceborn's own crest that authorizes their entry into the city. Anyone bearing this seal does not have to worry about unprovoked attack by Twiceborn's undead.

TRAVEL IN VIVANE

Just because Twiceborn dreams of establishing her own legitimate kingdom does not mean that you would want to build a summer home there. The city is crawling with undead, many of whom still hate the living as much as they ever have. And if the undead weren't bad enough, the Horror Cloud is providing a constant point of entry through astral space for new menaces to enter the necropolis. Even with the obvious perils of the undead and Horrors, there are still other dangers ready to end the days of the unwary in Vivane.

One of the reasons that Twiceborn is furiously engaging in urban renewal is because Vivane is falling apart. Vivane makes Parlathin look well maintained. The city is one large mass of crumbling ruins. Thanks to the expansive sewer system beneath the city, a crumbling city street can mean a deadfall into a sewage channel that is as deadly as any Horror Construct. A careless axe swing by a troll Sky Raider can cause walls to give way and sunder. A dramatic spell can cause entire structures to collapse around the combatants.

Another danger of traveling to Vivane is the bandit gangs that have taken up operation in and around the city. Authorities of any kind are hesitant to approach the necropolis, so its nearby environs make a perfect haven for criminals and fugitives. There is even a greater draw for the bandits, though: wounded adventurers piled with Theran loot. Picking off lucky prospectors as they are leaving the ruins is definitely a growth industry in Vivane. Opportunists and scoundrels are always ready to prey upon those who cannot defend themselves.

A slightly less dramatic but nonetheless serious problem of exploring Vivane is the lack of potable water in or near the city. There are no villages close to the city to sell you food and supplies. Whatever settlements were nearby have been abandoned thanks to the War and the Horror Cloud. Even animal life has abandoned the area around the cursed city of Vivane, so the hunting is lousy. In fact, you have to travel almost a hundred miles to Landis to find even a small hamlet. That can be a very long walk indeed if you've just fought your way through the legions of the undead.

LANDMARKS OF THE NEW VIVANE

The geography of Theran Vivane, after the city has been subjected to a dragon ritual, a Horror Cloud, and now a simmering civil war between the undead, bears almost no resemblance to what it once was. It is incorrect, however, to suppose that amidst all this rubble and destruction there are not recognizable and distinct landmarks that the more seasoned treasure hunters have come to recognize.

This is certainly not intended to be a complete list of every remarkable structure in Vivane, but these landmarks do give a good idea of the goings on in the city of the dead.

Landmark 1: The Horror Cloud

The Horror Cloud is the first thing that everyone notices when they approach Vivane. It is a frightening landmark indeed and marks to everyone who dares approach the necropolis that dark forces are at work here. In the very center of the city sits what looks like a large, black tornado roaring with unholy might. Strange entities can be seen flying within the Horror Cloud and monstrous, insane laughter periodically issues from it. Bolts of lightning shoot infrequently from the dark cloud, striking the ruined city below. The astral space around the Horror Cloud is corrupt, polluted, and infested with Horror entities.

If the howling, relentless storm shroud could somehow be penetrated, at the center of the Horror Cloud is the warped remains of a Theran kila. The kila is still fully manned by its former crew, but now they have been transformed into cadaver men. The decks are infested with Horrors of every description and magic flows so freely that strange warpings of reality are commonplace. On the kila, a hatch might open to reveal a room on the other side of the vessel. Walls sometimes pulse and flow as if alive. Statuary screams and bleeds as if doomed souls are trapped within. Make no mistake, this ship of Horrors is not a place where the living are welcome.

Landmark 2: The Palace of Twiceborn

The Palace of Twiceborn is a walled compound on the edge of the city, built from a comparatively reclusive noble family's estate. It is now the center of ceaseless activity in the necropolis. No place in Vivane is more densely populated with undead.

This is the site of Twiceborn's audience chamber, where she will meet visitors bearing an emissary's seal. While she is a gracious host and polite to her guests, she also keeps very tight security. With so many of her guards surrounding the room, the audience chamber is probably the most dangerous place in Barsaive to pick a fight.

Within the walls of Twiceborn's palace, the most curious and inexplicable undead endeavor yet devised is hidden from all but the most prying of eyes. Within her keep, undead artisans labor tirelessly, copying statuary, objects of art, and even weapons and armor salvaged from the ruins. Many of the undead, after all, were artisans and craftsmen in a previous life. And while the touch of death has robbed them of the ability to creatively generate new works of art, they are perfectly capable of copying existing pieces. Twiceborn has gathered the most capable of her servants and has set them to work practicing their craft. She is amassing a vast collection of weapons, armor, statuary, pottery, fabric, and other goods. She is not content to merely rely upon wealth snatched from the rubble of dead Vivane. She wishes to establish a vital and efficient base of industry here in her kingdom. She intends to use this wealth to eventually trade with the rest of Barsaive.



Landmark 3: The Blue Towers of East Side

On the eastern edge of Vivane, roughly a half-dozen towers covered in broken, irregular blue tiles have risen seemingly overnight. Upon closer inspection, it is clear that undead work crews are building the towers. Their exact purpose is unclear, although some have conjectured that these seemingly separate towers are actually the spires of a much larger building that has yet to be erected. Whatever the truth of it, these towers are one of the new Vivane's most striking features. The blue tiles, salvaged from ruined homes, seem very much out of place beneath the shadow of the Horror Cloud.

Landmark 4: The Corrupted Fountain

The Corrupted Fountain is located towards the center of the city, just under the edge of the shadow of the Horror Cloud. The Fountain was once a beautiful example of Theran architecture, but is now only a dark parody of its former glory. This grand fountain once boasted a trio of marble griffins showering water into a crystal clear pool. Now the fountain is partially collapsed, with one of the griffins missing completely and the others broken and weathered, though still recognizable.

The clear, blue water is replaced by a black ichor that seems to bubble and ooze of its own volition. Some speculate that the ooze is actually a unique Horror that manifested from the raw stuff of Stormhead as it broke over the city. Another popular rumor is that the third stone griffin is not missing at all, but has become possessed by a Horror and stalks this part of the ruins. Whatever the truth, the fountain is famous for explorers disappearing nearby and for brutal murders performed in its shadow.

An equally popular rumor is that there was once a secret passage from a nearby Theran estate that a rich lord would use to sneak mistresses in and out under cover of darkness. The mansion, the rumors say, has collapsed and is now buried under tons of stone. If the passage still stands, it may be possible to access the lost treasures of this Theran lord.

Landmark 5: The Warped Statue of the Overgovernor

In one of the many squares of Vivane stands a reminder of the tribulations that have befallen this once proud city. A larger than life, exquisite marble statue of Overgovernor Kypros dressed in his ceremonial armor once commanded a view of the square. Now, the statue has broken, stained and weathered by the wash of raw magic that fell about the place when Stormhead broke. The statue has crumbled away until its original features are barely recognizable except for the Overgovernor's head, which sits strangely intact. Perhaps by some random, freakish event or some mischievous prank by a passing Horror, his expression is no longer one of triumph and command, but of shock and dismay, as if even the governor's own graven image realizes that mighty Vivane is fallen.

Landmark 6: The Half-Built Kila

In one of the old shipyards near the city center sits the broken remains of a half-built kila that was being commissioned to reinforce the Theran forces and to help subjugate Barsaive. It was unfinished when the Elemental Air dome was erected by the great dragons' ritual and that was when work immediately ceased on this massive enterprise. Today, this grounded sky-castle has become overrun by the undead remnants of the citizens of Vivane. It remains one of the few areas in the city that neither Twiceborn nor Hartmallen has managed to exert

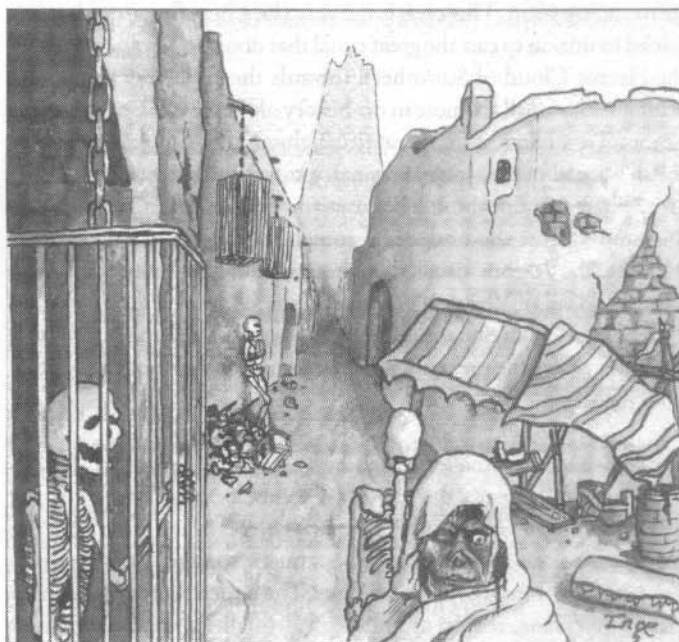
their influence over. Inside, Horrors not unlike the Artificer continue the work abandoned by the dead Therans. Now, however, they have no intention of making this symbol of Theran power fly. Instead they are laboring to turn this ruin into a castle of Horrors.

Still, the ruined kila remains a popular destination for treasure seekers in Vivane. There are persistent rumors that the large shipment of Elemental Air needed to make this vessel float was already delivered to the shipyards. That would mean that somewhere, either in the ship itself or in the surrounding ruins, a fortune in Elemental Air is just there for the taking.

Landmark 7: The Market of the Damned

The once busy slave pits of Vivane are now the front line of the undead civil war. The forces of Twiceborn and Hartmallen clash here more often than anywhere else. The ruined bazaar has become a labyrinth of broken buildings, smashed stalls, and rubble strewn alleys. Twiceborn's undead haunt its many passages and side streets, engaging in fierce guerilla warfare with undead in Hartmallen's service. If the player characters have one of Twiceborn's silver seals, this location can become the site of a strange game of figuring out which undead are actually friendly. Of course, the ultimate test comes when you actually show yourself to them. If they are loyal to Twiceborn, they won't attack. If they are loyal to Hartmallen, they will.

This landmark is also the site of another bizarre ritual of life in Barsaive. There are great metal cages full of captured undead. Twiceborn's servants often capture their enemies and imprison them in these cages. Here the new undead can, eventually, be dominated by the Gharmhek and added to Twiceborn's service. But to external observers it appears as if undead, often cadaver men who are berserk, are dragged into the market, kicking and screaming, and thrown into a cage. There they wait for perhaps several hours, clawing at the door, desperate to escape, until suddenly and without explanation they calm down and are released to begin aiding in the effort to capture others. This strange ritual is reenacted several times a day. Only those with astral sight have a chance of seeing the truth: the Gharmhek are taking control of the undead from a subterranean chamber beneath the cage.



Landmark 8: The Shattered Spires of the University

Vivane once boasted the finest magical college in the outlying Thera provinces, where many young Wizards and Elementalists could be trained for future service to the Thera Empire. The ruins of that college remain, but have now been utterly corrupted by the Horrors. The university grounds are covered by a thick cloud of hanging black fog that never disperses. The only things visible from this preternatural mire are seven broken spires that rise from the ruins of the Collegium of Wizardry building.

These ruins have proven to be particularly attractive to Horrors, and a very powerful wormskull known as Khyrackus stalks these grounds. Khyrackus has been merrily animating the dead faculty and students and has become a local warlord of sorts in the city. While having nowhere near Hartmallen or Twiceborn's level of influence on the city, Khyrackus is still quite powerful.

Khyrackus is not really interested in expanding his influence, however. His real passion is torturing Name-givers. He has built from the shattered remains of the laboratories a sort of magical torture chamber where he can slowly and painfully transform captured explorers foolish enough to venture into his realm. In order to encourage the unwary, Khyrackus loves to draw maps of his realm showing the location of great rewards and vast vaults of loot. He often draws these maps on the flayed skin of his previous victims as a sort of deranged and sadistic joke. He then dispatches his lesser servants to scatter these scrolls about the ruins of Vivane.

Twiceborn considers Khyrackus a menace to her schemes. Although unwilling to take direct action against this powerful Horror, Twiceborn is looking for someone powerful enough whom she could indirectly influence into either destroying or relocating this monster. This is an important thing to note: Twiceborn doesn't care that Khyrackus is torturing people. She only cares that he will frighten off the Name-givers she must woo to accomplish her plans. She would be perfectly happy if Khyrackus relocated his torture chamber to Scythia or Parlainth or downtown Kratas, for all she cares.

Landmark 9: The Dragon Rock

On the outskirts of Vivane sits a crest, rising up amidst the surrounding plain. This crest is the very site where five great dragons joined in unison to cast the great ritual that doomed Vivane and drew the Horror Cloud of Stormhead towards the city. Now the rock is abandoned, a small footnote in the history of Barsaive. There are still to be found remnants of that great ritual, though. A complex spell circle is still burned in the stone and small grains of a strange ash litter the area. There are also those who say that this site might be Barsaive's salvation against the undead. If somehow you could reactivate or duplicate the dragons' ritual, then the city would again be trapped and all the undead of Vivane would be contained behind a wall of pure Elemental Air. Of course, the only way anyone could imagine for this to happen is for the great dragons to again cooperate, and this seems unlikely at best.

Landmark 10: Hartmallen's Shadow

Directly beneath the Horror Cloud sits what was once the wealthiest quarter of Vivane. The noble palaces of the aristocracy are just as ruined and destroyed as the poor quarters of the city. This area is distinguished instead by its inhabitants. The undead here are the upper classes of Vivane, reborn as undead. Hartmallen wields his greatest

influence, save for the Horror Cloud itself, here. In the ruined halls of Thera's former grandeur, the undead still play out a parody of their former lives. They hold elaborate courts, celebrate Thera holidays, and host massive balls. Their slaves, now undead thralls, still serve these noble-born undead.

One expedition reported seeing a hundred cadaver men still dressed in their tattered gowns and noble finery dancing grimly to some silent and unheard music.

For all of its almost comical spectacle, this landmark is fraught with peril and is arguably the most dangerous portion of the city save for the Horror Cloud itself. Horrors prowl this section in great numbers and the barrier between this place and astral space is particularly thin. Some explorers have reported that several despairthoughts make their lairs here. But with greater dangers come proportionally greater rewards. The wealth of the Thera aristocracy still resides in these ruined halls.

Landmark 11: The Wraith Pit

A particularly despised and often avoided locale, there is a large, buried water cistern where the Wraiths of Vivane (see **Horror Constructs** p.109) are frequently found. This water cistern is now a deep pit filled with inky black, stagnant and polluted water. Rumors say that at the bottom of the cistern, through twenty feet of foul water, is some vast treasure that the Thera nobles tossed down there when the fall of Vivane looked imminent. As of yet no one has been bold enough to find out if this rumor is true.

What is certain is that you are more likely to meet a wraith here than anywhere else in the city. The reason for this may not be immediately obvious. During the day, the wraiths crave uninterrupted darkness. There is no place darker, more silent, and more isolated than the bottom of the cistern. Wraiths don't need to breathe, so the water poses no risk to them. Each day at least a dozen "sleeping" wraiths congregate in the watery pit. What they are doing down there is anyone's guess.

EVENT SYNOPSIS

The March of the Undead from Parlainth is the prime catalyst for all of the adventure frameworks and events in this chapter. However, the March itself is often not the primary focus of the adventures. After all, the exodus and the subsequent happenings in Vivane are beyond the control of any living person in Barsaive, not to mention the player characters. Instead, the adventure frameworks outline how the player characters get caught up in events preceding the March and its repercussions.

The March of the Undead and the movement of the Horror Cloud cause a great number of reactions throughout Barsaive. Many Name-givers see this as an omen of some future crisis – the beginning of something even worse than the War with Thera. There is a palpable aura of dread and misgivings about the event. Many whisper that this is a sign that the Scourge may return. Before the March, it was so much easier for the average Name-giver to ignore the undead skulking in Twiceborn's Kingdom. Now, the truth is out and everyone is afraid of what's coming next.

The upper crust of the Throalic nobility is not pleased about the undead horde that has made itself evident. Nor are they pleased about their strike force's ineffectiveness against the Horror Cloud. But King Neden does nothing. He keeps to himself, deep in self-contemplation,



consumed with self-doubt about the choices he made during the War. As a result, the strike force returns home, Vivane is left alone for now, and discontent in Throal with King Neden's regime grows.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

ADMIRAL KHORDEN REISE

Reise is an honored veteran of the War with Thera. He was at the battle of Prajor's Field and the Battle of Sky Point. Although a capable leader, no one would accuse Reise of being a dwarf of great vision. He typifies the traditional dwarf traits of pragmatism and loyalty and is fiercely devoted to serving his king.

The flight from the Horror Cloud was a blot on Reise's career. Even though no action was taken against the dwarf by Throal, nor was he even reprimanded, he had gained an undeserved reputation as a coward. And so, after the incident with the Horror Cloud, Admiral Reise is champing at the bit for another chance to take on Twiceborn and her undead.

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

ADMIRAL RAGLUND HARTMALLEN

Once the human commander of the Theran skyships of all of Rugaria province, Admiral Hartmallen died trying to defend Vivane from the onrush of the first Horror Cloud. He failed and led all of his troops to their death. Now he is a reanimated revenant of great power. He is eaten up with hatred and rage against the living and dreams of a day when he can marshal a new fleet of undead controlled skyships and storm the cities of the living. Hartmallen is beyond reason. He cannot be dissuaded from his schemes of death and hatred. He only has one demand for the Name-givers of Barsaive: die. The human soul of the courageous Theran patriot who gave his life in defense of his beloved nation is now entirely withered and replaced by the Horror monster that is Hartmallen.

DEX: 10 STR: 13 TOU: 12
PER: 6 WIL: 13 CHA: 6

DISHARA EYES-OF-STRAW

An ork Wizard, Dishara is one of Torgak's full time deputies in Haven. She is one of the few Name-givers to raise a family in Haven. Married to a potter Named Yough, her two sons are just entering their adolescence. Though level-headed and understanding, Dishara becomes an implacable foe when something threatens her family or her town.

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

GOEDON

Goedon is a cadaver man. Like any cadaver man he is a fully sentient and self-aware creature who happens to be dead. Unlike the usual cadaver man, the Gharmheks have permitted Goedon to experience other emotions than merely pain so that he can better deal

with the living. While some traces of his ancient hatred for the living still slip into his speech periodically, unless attacked he remains in complete control of his faculties. Goedon is an ancient resident of Parlainth who has long been in Twiceborn's service and resolutely supports the establishment of her second kingdom. He is an emissary of the Free Kingdom and as such, he will not attack any living being unless attacked himself.

Goedon always wears a full and voluminous cloak that hides most of his cadaverous nature. He is surprisingly eloquent and even, occasionally, genuinely charming. He is also willing and empowered to make bold promises to further his queen's wishes. He has a large collection of recently minted silver seals that bear the new crest of the Free Kingdom of Vivane. These seals grant their bearer one audience with Queen Twiceborn.

Goedon never calls Twiceborn by that Name. She is always, "Her Majesty, the Queen of Vivane" or simply "the Queen". As far as Goedon is concerned, Twiceborn is a vulgar nickname for his powerful, august, and nameless ruler.

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

Goedon otherwise has typical statistics for a cadaver man (see ED2, p. 294).

HAELoS AERDANE

Haelos Aerdane at first glance would seem to be a typical Adept wanderer drawn to Haven for all the usual reasons: gold and glory. He is a fop – often over-dressed in almost a t'skrang-like fashion. He is quick to laugh and is a regular at The Restless Troll, being on good terms with Tylia, the proprietor.

However, Haelos is only using this as a cover. In fact, he is an agent of the Eye of Throal and has been permanently stationed in Haven to keep his eyes open. He has done his job competently and without arousing any suspicion. He has been given a rune-covered magic staff that when he concentrates, allows him to make telepathic contact with another agent of the Eye with a similar thread item. They have scheduled times when they both hold their staves so that they can pass information back and forth.

Haelos Aerdane

Fifth Circle Human Troubadour

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

LORD GOERME

Lord Goerme is a cadaver man and, like Goedon, an ancient citizen of Parlainth. He has, over the years, proven himself loyal above all things to the Queen of the Undead and so he has been granted great power and a taste of other emotions than merely pain. With time, Lord Goerme's pre-death personality has slowly returned to him. He was once a soldier, a captain of Parlainth's ancient watch, and it has been easy for him to return to such a role. With Twiceborn's arrival in Vivane he has been given the title of Lord Protector and Chief Bailiff of the Free Kingdom of Vivane. It is a role he takes very seriously, with the sort of relentless focus that only the dead can know.



Lord Goerme has not lost his hatred for the living, but his loyalty to Twiceborn means that he will not attack them unless commanded to do so or attacked himself. The only exception to this is looters in Vivane. Any Name-giver that Lord Goerme catches with stolen treasures in Vivane will immediately be attacked.

Lord Goerme never travels alone. He is always with a group of twenty or so cadaver man "knights" in full armor and on skeletal steeds (see **Horror Constructs** on p. 108-109). Lord Goerme is a masterful rider and is often mounted, himself.

Lord Goerme

Servant of Queen Twiceborn

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

Initiative: 10 Physical Defense: 15
Number of Attacks: 2(5) Spell Defense: 15
Attack: 12 Social Defense: 15
Damage: 20 Armor: 10
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 10
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 11
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 40 Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 11 Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness: Immune
Creature Durability: 45/35

Legend Points: 500

Equipment: Sword, Breastplate, Helmet, Skeletal Steed

Loot: Jeweled Sash of Office (worth 1000 sp)

NOTE: Lord Goerme berserks when pain is caused to him just like a normal cadaver man. However, his attacks increase to 5, not 4.

LUCIAN NAEMONICUS

Lucian is the youngest son of Gherad Naemonicus, the chief advisor to Overgovernor Kypros, once the Theran governor of the province of Vivane. He is just old enough to have been thoroughly indoctrinated into believing in the superiority of the Theran Empire and aristocracy, but young enough to not really understand the repercussions of it. He simply does not understand why his beliefs make other so angry. He also complains occasionally about missing his favorite slave, an elf known only as "Telly".

His parents and most of his family were, of course, killed by the Horror Cloud and he has seen unspeakable horrors in the past year that he has spent in Vivane, eking out a living amongst the rubble. He is a valuable source of information and could make a capable guide if the player characters gain his trust. Of course, they must tolerate his occasional advocacy of slavery and Theran rulership. The Naemonicus family remains a moderately important family of Theran nobles and he has family on the Island of Thera who would pay handsomely for his safe return.

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

QUEEN TWICEBORN

Twiceborn, thanks to the March, is now the most famous undead in Barsaive. A long time resident of Parlainth, Twiceborn appears like a very intelligent, free-willed undead who was once a female t'skrang. She appears to be regal, arrogant, ambitious, clever, and cruel. This is simply false. Twiceborn is none of these things. Twiceborn is a puppet for a group of Horrors known as Gharmheks (see the **Parlaint Box Set**, p. 76). The Gharmheks control her every decision, action, and impulse. If a sentence says "Twiceborn does something" what that really means is that "The Gharmheks command Twiceborn to do something." But the Gharmheks want no one to realize Twiceborn's true nature. So, they have given her a sort of personality. That way, everyone assumes that Twiceborn is free-willed.

The result of this is that Twiceborn, as long as the Gharmheks persist, is immortal. If she were destroyed, she would reappear again shortly thereafter, reanimated as a new puppet. You could cut off her head, stuff her mouth with holy wafers, stake her through the heart, burn her corpse, and throw her ashes into the Death's Sea and still the Gharmheks would find a new t'skrang body and adapt it to be the new Twiceborn.

The only way to kill Twiceborn is to kill the Gharmheks, and they are the most cowardly pack of Horrors that Barsaive has ever seen. Not than anyone ever sees a Gharmhek. They are invisible, astral creatures who hide behind as many of their followers as they can muster. Even their existence as a class of Horrors is simply not known. So, it seems Twiceborn's immortality is assured.

The Gharmheks' cowardice is also what makes them so unique as Horrors. Twiceborn's actions will at times seem almost good-natured and forgiving to fulfill the Gharmheks' wishes to remain hidden and to secure their own safety. This doesn't mean that the Gharmheks are good. They feed off the fear that their creations, the undead, generate. Under their guidance, Vivane will always be a terrifying and sinister place. They don't want to turn Vivane into a paradise. They want to turn Vivane into a place that they completely control, and a place that



the Name-givers of Barsaive will not someday utterly destroy in a righteous crusade. This is why the Gharmheks left Parlainth – because it would never be that place.

DEX: 8 STR: 6 TOU: 10
PER: 6 WIL: 8 CHA: 8

SCALLOR BAEDROS

Although Scallor looks and acts very similar to a cadaver man, he is fact a zombie. These are the sort of subtleties that are usually lost on the living. He is not a free-willed creature at all but utterly a thrall to Hartmallen's will. He retains only a fragment of his human intelligence. He is capable enough that he can still plan defenses and formulate rudimentary strategy, but what Scallor is truly focused on during his undeath is destroying all living creatures he comes across.

The living, however, have not been Scallor's real problem of late. His fellow zombies keep getting ambushed by other undead and dragged off. When they disappear, they don't ever come back, and Scallor presumes them destroyed (they are in fact becoming part of Twiceborn's work gangs). Why undead should destroy other undead is lost on Scallor, but it hasn't stopped him from obeying Hartmallen's commands to fortify his estate and stop anyone (even undead) from entering.

All of the other zombies in the Baedros compound have stats exactly identical to Scallor.

DEX: 7 STR: 7 TOU: 8
PER: 7 WIL: 9 CHA: 3

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 8 Social Defense: 12
Damage: 12 Armor: 6
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 6
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 8
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 40 Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness: Immune
Creature Durability: 0/0

Legend Points: 120
Equipment: Broadsword, scraps of armor

TOLEMY FAER

A dwarf information broker, Tolemy is a former adventurer who lost his leg and was forced into retirement. Currently he has an agreement with Tylia, the owner of The Restless Troll, and quasi-permanently occupies a booth, his "office". Tylia sees a percentage of all his business. Tolemy is Haven's own rumor-monger extraordinaire.

He is also not entirely business oriented, and with a friendly group that he takes a liking to, may even drop small hints for free. Since the Theran War, Tolemy has become a fixture around Haven. Everyone in Haven knows about Tolemy's bar-side business.

Tolemy Faer is more fully described in *Path of Deception*, p. 32.

Tolemy Faer

Fourth Circle Dwarf Troubadour

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

TORGAK

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

Torgak's involvement in the Theran War, leading Torgak's Irregulars, has made him something of a celebrity throughout Barsaive. Almost everybody has heard of Torgak, but fame and the occasional (and usually unwelcome) involvement in politics have not made this old troll learn any new tricks.

Torgak is more fully details in the *Parlainth Box Set*, p. 24 and in *Path of Deception*, p. 26.

Torgak

Ninth Circle Troll Warrior

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

THE FLAME OF PURITY

Joeth Drawne, an elf Horror Stalker, organized this band of Adepts many years ago to purge every Horror from Barsaive. As impossible as that task may seem, Joeth has never stopped believing in it. The Flame of Purity has had many successes in their careers and their experience has made them formidable. But this time, they have taken their convictions too far.

In the adventure framework *Strange Emissaries*, Torgak allows an ambassador from Twiceborn's new kingdom to stay in Haven under house arrest. The Flame of Purity sees this as bowing down to the undead and their Horror masters. By targeting Torgak for the crime of association with the undead they have turned admirable devotion into crazed fanaticism. It is a slope that many Horror Stalkers and their companions often slip down.

It is important to realize that The Flame of Purity is not composed of evil individuals. Every member views himself or herself as a hero. But they also believe that their purpose is so important that it justifies almost any action. The Flame of Purity will employ trickery or treachery to defeat the Horror menace, certainly, but they would never harm the innocent or the guiltless.

There are seven core members of the Flame of Purity. Joeth may call upon additional assistance to reinforce this group if the player characters are simply too strong.

JOETH DRAWNE

Joeth Drawne is a fanatic. He tends to see the world in terms of right and wrong, black or white. For Joeth you are either on the side of good or you are a pawn of evil. His simplistic morality is uncharacteristic

of elves, and perhaps is the first hint that Joeth was raised by humans. Joeth's mother and father were killed in a bandit attack and he was found as a toddler by some human villagers. They took the elf in as their own and raised him as their son. They instilled in him an unshakable conviction that every problem in this world would be swept away if only the Horrors could be defeated. This panacea would usher in a new golden age where the Name-givers could at last live free. It was this conviction that caused him to found the Purity of Flame and begin his personal crusade.

Joeth believes that Torgak, perhaps unwittingly, is dooming Barsaive to permanent Horror infestation. To him, the reason for Twiceborn's overtures for peace are obvious – so that this inhuman monster can mark Name-givers from one end of Barsaive to the other. Someone must draw a line in the sand and stop this madness before it starts. Torgak (who is probably Horror-marked already) must be slain. Joeth believes this task to be even more important than the current Crusade against the Horrors of Scythia.

Joeth Drawne Elf Horror Stalker

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

HEROD WOLFKIND

Herod is Joeth's oldest friend and hails from the same small village where Joeth was raised. It is this close friendship that allows Joeth to overlook Herod's faults. Herod is a very competent Beastmaster, but almost completely inept at dealing with Name-givers. He always says the wrong thing, is frequently, unintentionally, insulting, and often talks without thinking. Many groups would consider him a liability. It is a credit to Joeth's leadership that he has managed to integrate Herod so tightly into this group.

Herod Wolfkind Human Beastmaster

DEX: 8 STR: 7 TOU: 6
PER: 4 WIL: 6 CHA: 3

BRAUTHIS ENNDER

Brauthis was a young ork fledgling Adept who might have ended up becoming a liberator if not for Joeth's influence. Joeth said to the young Brauthis something that changed his entire outlook: "Orks will never be free, as long as we are slaves to our fear of the Horrors."

Because of this single phrase, Brauthis has dedicated his life to becoming the greatest Warrior he can be so that he can liberate his people from that fear. He respects Joeth deeply and, truth be told, is an almost thoughtless follower of the Horror Stalker. If Joeth says jump, Brauthis' first impulse is to jump. Ironically, in some ways Brauthis is as much in Joeth's thrall as any slave has ever been to his master. Consequently, anyone who harms Joeth immediately becomes Brauthis' preferred target.

Brauthis Ennder Ork Warrior

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

REN ETTERTSON

Ren Etterson is the least fanatical member of this group and the individual with the most misgivings about their current mission. He has already questioned the wisdom of Joeth's crusade several times, but has always been rebuffed and ignored. While he believes passionately in destroying Horrors and respects Joeth's convictions and accomplishments, he is unsure about killing Torgak. The result of all this is that Ren will probably be the first member of the Purity to Flame to run when problems arise. Certainly if Joeth is killed, Ren will be anxious to be somewhere else.

Ren Etterson

Human Illusionist

DEX: 6 STR: 5 TOU: 4
PER: 7 WIL: 8 CHA: 5

KAELYN SWIFTBREEZE

Joeth saved Kaelyn from a Horror some years ago. Since then, Kaelyn has faithfully followed the Horror Stalker and gained a great deal of respect for him. However, Kaelyn agrees with Ren and is hesitant to kill Torgak. She believes that just as much could be accomplished by simply killing the undead emissary. Joeth argues that the emissary would only be replaced and the danger would remain. Kaelyn can see his point, but still isn't sure about murder.

Kaelyn's trademark is arrows coated with sleep poison and fired with precise accuracy. The poison does not affect Horrors, but usually incapacitates Name-givers before they are killed. Thus Kaelyn sees the use of poison as a merciful tactic rather than a treacherous or bloodthirsty one. Kaelyn can brew her own poison from herbs that grow on the banks of the Serpent River thanks to an ancient recipe in her family.

Kaelyn Swiftbreeze

T'Skrang Archer

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

THERROL BETROX

Therrol's family came from a kaer where a Horror managed to slip in during the Scourge. The stories of the atrocities that the creature committed before it was finally defeated deeply affected Therrol as a young child. Now he is so committed to the eradication of Horrors that he could often be mistaken for a Horror Stalker. His single-minded devotion to this task made Therrol a natural recruit for the Purity of Flame, and in fact his blazing pyrotechnic blasts are partially responsible for the group's Name.

Therrol trusts Joeth implicitly. Although he took a little convincing on why Torgak must be killed, once Joeth explained it, he was completely sold on the idea. It also helps that Therrol has never had any use for trolls.

Therrol Betrox

Dwarf Elementalist

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



KORBEN EZERMUNN

Korben is a simple man. He has never been accused of having an excess of vision. For Korben, following Joeth has always meant more adventure, more money, and a greater Legend. The idea that Joeth could be leading him astray is not an idea that he has any use for. He just makes sure that his side wins every fight.

However, Korben's simplicity ends when the fight begins. He is a calculated, cunning, and tactical Warrior. His trademark weapon is a two-handed sword.

Korben Ezermunn

Human Warrior

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

RUNNING THE MARCH OF THE UNDEAD

The movement of Twiceborn's Kingdom and the abandonment of Parlainth by her undead is a major event, one that can trigger any number of adventures that the characters might get involved in. This section suggests ways to introduce this critical event and its repercussions into an Earthdawn campaign.

INTRODUCING THE EVENT

The first information about the March, unsurprisingly, comes from Haven. Almost two weeks before the actual March, adventurers exploring the Smalls of Parlainth begin to report strange occurrences amongst the undead. The undead are moving upwards out of their crypts and subterranean burial chambers. They are gathering into large groups and even gathering together whatever treasure they may have once been guarding. The player characters can get involved in these investigations either because they are hired by Torgak or Throal, or simply for their own curiosity. The important thing in the early events is that the player characters are already in Haven. The events happen much too fast to allow for long range travel. By the time the undead are beginning to act strange, the player characters must be at hand if they are going to be convenient agents for hire.

So why are the player characters in Haven? Perhaps they are simply seeking their fortunes in the ruins of Parlainth. Perhaps they are working as agents of Throal on some unrelated task and are delivering intelligence or retrieving some artifact recovered from the ruins. The adventure, *Path of Deception*, and *The Parlainth Box Set* both are rich in potential hooks that bring our heroes to this city.

Another alternative is that characters may learn of the March through some oracle, visions, or other prophetic method. The Passions may send visions to their chosen questors of a sheet of death moving from "the elder to the younger", with Parlainth being the "elder" ruin, and Vivane being the newcomer to the ruin scene. The key with such a device is to keep the prediction cryptic so that the key events do not lose their dramatic power. Grathus, the leader of the Horror Stalker Crusade, has such a premonition, and if the characters are with him he will send them to investigate – an investigation that might be all the more urgent if the characters have a vision of their own.

Once the characters are in Haven, they are easily embroiled in the first adventure framework, "Something is Rotten In Haven". This

adventure framework covers player character involvement in the events from the weeks prior to the March until the climactic meeting with the Throalic Strike Force and the Horror Cloud.

Once the player characters have seen the Horror Cloud move across Barsaive and Twiceborn march to Vivane, it should be almost inevitable that any hero worth his Legend Points will want to know more. Also, thanks to airborne messengers and magical means of communication, word of these events is quick to spread to every corner of Barsaive.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following adventure frameworks are presented in the format described in the **Introduction**. These frameworks are not intended to be complete adventures, but rather "blueprints" that gamemasters may flesh out as desired. They represent only one possible path that adventurers may take. Following these three are a number of shorter adventurer ideas that can be used to create still more stories based on the undead's march.

SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN HAVEN

Premise

Haven is abuzz with rumors that something unusual is occurring in the Smalls of Parlainth. Several groups of veteran and reliable explorers have reported seeing huge numbers of cadaver men, perhaps hundreds or even thousands moving through the upper passages of Twiceborn's kingdom. If it were only cadaver men, that would be concerning enough, but they were not alone – every kind of undead, including some never seen before (see p. 100 for examples), were moving with them. Torgak is deeply concerned that the undead are preparing to mount a huge invasion and try to wipe Haven from the map. He is desperately hiring every sword and Adept he can find to defend his boomtown and to Scout the Smalls. The city is nearly on the edge of panic and many are packing up shop and fleeing in hopes of escaping the imminent slaughter.



Set-Up

The player characters are contacted by Haelos Aerdane, a traveling human Troubadour and noble dilettante. Although Haelos keeps his identity a secret, he is in fact an agent of the Eye of Throal more or less stationed in Haven. At first, he only has vague information and wants the characters to enter the Smalls and find out if the reports are true. If pressed as to why he is interested, he responds, "Haven is my home and I like this little oasis that Torgak has constructed. I wish to see it survive. If it's not going to, well, then I want to be one of those who escapes, not one who goes down with the ship..."

Event 1

The players venture into the Smalls of Parlainth and it doesn't take long at all to confirm that something strange is indeed at work. This event serves as a good opportunity to reacquaint (or even introduce) the players to the dangers of the Smalls. A number of creatures (both undead and Horror Construct, and even some Horrors) are frequent hunters in these ruins. Additionally, the players find evidence of even larger movements of undead, huge swaths of shambling footprints. They encounter a slaver camp that has been obliterated and all the corpses dragged off.

However, what soon becomes clear is that undead are literally everywhere in numbers even veteran explorers have never seen. It is becoming very difficult to move throughout the ruins and avoid them. And in fact, the player characters will inevitably fail to do so. They run head-on into a small camp of cadaver men (stats are in the ED2, p. 294). Doubtless, combat begins immediately. At first, the small band of undead is no match for the Adepts. But more and more begin to stream into the fight. Soon, the characters look like they are great danger of being swamped. Just when it looks like they're doomed to join the undead, a strangely dressed cadaver man wearing a jeweled sash arrives on the scene accompanied by still more undead.

He announces loudly that this fight is over and for both sides to stop fighting immediately. He introduces himself only as "a favored servant of Queen Twiceborn". He asks for the Adepts' forgiveness at the no doubt unprovoked attack, but advises them that leaving at once is probably their best course. If the characters foolishly do not accept his terms, he will give them only one more, far harsher, warning to leave or die. If this is still not enough for our heroes, then they are in real trouble.

Hopefully wisdom will prevail and the Name-givers will retreat. Regardless, after this incident, they have much to report back to Haelos.

Event 2

Back in Haven, Haelos is nothing less than shocked at the news. An organized army of undead in the Smalls led by Twiceborn and her "favored servants"? He is scarcely able to hide his shock and dismay. Haelos rewards the Adepts for the information and immediately goes to talk to Torgak, hoping to warn him. Haelos is even more taken aback by Torgak's reaction which is akin to, "Tell me something I don't know." Numerous reports similar to the player characters' are flooding into Haven. Some explorers have seen cadaver men addressing each other with ranks and titles. Whatever is causing these strange events, everyone is drawing the same conclusion: an army of undead is forming in the Smalls and is doubtless about to wipe Haven off the map.

Terror grips the small boomtown. Businesses close up and people flee the city. Looters take advantage of the chaos and several buildings

are ransacked. A heroic group of Adepts could take an active role in protecting the lives and fortunes of the innocents swept up in this unfolding tragedy. If the characters have any sort of reputation in Haven, they are quickly offered a job by Torgak or one of his lieutenants to reinforce the town guard.

Torgak stands in the center of Haven and makes a booming announcement the evening before the March begins. His ultimatum is: "I am not running." He has every confidence that his Irregulars can repulse the threat to the town. They will toss these monsters back into their holes like they have every other time they've gotten out. There is no need to panic, he assures an unbelieving citizenry, and there is no need to flee.

That night, the undead begin their march and Twiceborn delivers her message to the gates of Haven. The player characters, if they have entered Torgak's employ, should be on the wall to hear the word of Twiceborn. And then the March begins.

Event 3

Assuming the player characters have conducted themselves in a honorable manner during the panicky days before the March, Haelos contacts them a second time, one day after the March, this time revealing his true identity as an agent of Throal. He has, he claims, a means of quickly relaying messages back to Throal, but is unsure of what, exactly, to tell them. He needs the player characters to begin tracking the movement of the undead and see what they're up to and where they're headed. He again hires the player characters, this time to reconnoiter the March.

Following the undead is preposterously simple. Imagine following a million buffalo across the plains of North America and you have a clear picture of the task. The ground is packed down from their passing and all plant life has withered in their wake. Depending on how long the characters spend preparing, it may take them a day or so to catch up with the March. Getting close enough to actually see the March is another matter. Cadaver men on skeletal steeds patrol the area around the March, serving as outriders and Scouts. It will take a very stealthy group of Adepts to bypass these patrols. The strange thing about the patrols, however, is that the undead do not automatically attack. The riders instead issue a warning in gravelly voices to, "Stay away..." Only if the player characters ignore their warnings will they attack.

If the Name-givers do succeed in approaching close enough to the March to get a good view of it, what they see boggles the imagination. A column of fifty thousand undead move across the landscape in a huge parade of the unliving. They carry with them chests, bags, and rotting baskets of every description loaded with the wealth of Parlainth. Not only cadaver men, but every manner of undead, travels in this massive caravan. It is not stretched in a long line, but massed in a tight bunch, like wagons drawn in a circle for mutual protection.

If the player characters do venture this close, they watch as a massed group of undead cavalry rides out to meet them. At the lead of the cavalry is the same cadaver man they met in the Smalls, with his jeweled sash. This time he introduces himself as Goorme (pronounced GO-air-m), a captain of Queen Twiceborn's Watch. He addresses them very politely but firmly. "Did you not understand by our encounter in the Smalls that your lives are in great danger when approaching the court of Queen Twiceborn without invitation?" he asks.

He has little to say to the player characters at this point and will not let them approach any closer. If the characters are foolish enough



to attack him, he will give them one warning that they are outmatched and then will attack without mercy. He is correct. With the legions of Twiceborn nearby at his disposal, death and defeat are all the characters can hope for from this fight.

If the player characters ask him where the undead are going, he is not shy at all about answering the question: "We march towards Vivane to establish a new kingdom."

Just as the player characters are being told the destination, undead riders approach Goerme's band urgently. "Lord Goerme! Skyships! Flying Throalic colors!" they shout for all to hear. Lord Goerme only snarls at the Name-givers and rides off to rejoin his army.

It does not take long for the player characters to confirm the reports. Far on the horizon are skyships bearing Throalic colors.

Climax

A small drakkar swoops down near where the characters are standing. In the boat is Haelos, accompanied by Throalic Air Sailors. The characters are picked up and given a quick ride back to the slowly approaching Throalic strike force. The strike force is waiting for the characters to arrive rather than charging forward at full speed. Admiral Reise wishes to know what intelligence the player characters have gathered, hoping to use the information in the imminent attack. Whatever the player characters say will not convince the Admiral to change his course of action. He is eager to follow up on this opportunity to purge the land of so many Horror Constructs. After they've given their report, Admiral Reise orders the attack.

Just then, a Horror Cloud comes into sight. The Horror Cloud moves up quickly and is almost immediately upon the strike force. The deck of Admiral Reise's galleon, the *Windspire* becomes a swirling melee as winged Horrors known as blood gaunts swoop down upon the ship from the Horror Cloud. With the help of the characters the deck can be cleared of the creatures, but Admiral Reise realizes he is outmatched by whatever that thing is. He orders his fleet to disengage without a single flame cannon being fired.

As the strike force flies into the distance, the characters can watch as the Horror Cloud takes up a position over the March. Now, there is nothing to stop them from their destination in distant Vivane.

Sequels

The Adepts can either return to Throal with the strike force or be flown to a Haven that is only beginning to return to normal. This

mission can lead to continued employment by Throal or even by Torgak, who may have been impressed by their heroism during the looting and rioting in Haven. Furthermore, the relationship between the characters and Lord Goerme leaves open much room for future development. If they do return to Throal, the characters may find themselves questioned during the investigation of Admiral Reise's actions. Ultimately, Admiral Reise will retain his command, but their testimony could determine the level of his disgrace.

Additionally, the player characters could try to convince King Neden that further action is needed against the undead. They could join the ranks of those who agree with his plan to take a steady course and wait or see, or be shocked by his lack of action against this building menace.

AGENTS OF THE QUEEN

Premise

After the conclusion of the March and Twiceborn's arrival in Vivane, an envoy working for some unknown employer contacts the player characters. The employer claims that an artifact of great family importance was stolen by the Therans before the War and is still in Vivane. This employer is willing to pay a great deal of money if the characters would undertake the dangerous task of recovering it. This job, however, turns out to be nothing but a cover. The envoy has been unwittingly hired by an agent of Twiceborn herself. Twiceborn is sending adventurers on bogus quests like this one in the territory of her rival, the undead Admiral Hartmallen. These excursions have resulted in a great number of Hartmallen's still loyal servants being slain and thus are enabling Twiceborn to extend her influence over Vivane.

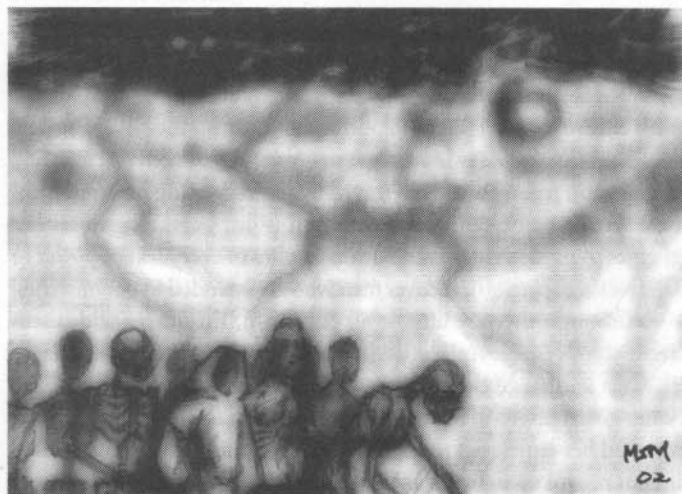
Set-Up

The exact identity of the envoy depends on where the characters are located. If they remain in Haven, the envoy will almost certainly be a local merchant or an out of luck adventurer. If the player characters have gone to Throal, then the envoy will likely be a poor Throalic noble of some lesser stature eager to line his own pockets. If they've traveled elsewhere, then it could be someone else. Regardless, the envoy is always someone of relatively low moral character with a healthy respect for gold and a willingness to ask no questions.

Only threats will make the envoy reveal any details about the employer, and even then there is precious little that they actually know. The employer was a mysterious individual who hid their identity behind a mask and a flowing robe: he isn't even sure of its race (although it obviously wasn't a windling, t'skrang, obsidiman, dwarf or troll). But what he is sure of is that the employer was wealthy. The envoy will, under duress, also reveal his own personal theory: the employer is lying about the item being stolen because the employer is actually a Theran eager to reclaim a family treasure.

The player characters are provided with half their money in advance, a sketchy description of the Theran estate owned by the Baedros family, and a detailed description of the artifact. It is a large, golden signet ring bearing the crest of a flying horse riding into a thunderstorm.

Research into the crest is a difficult proposition in Throal. In Haven or Cara Fahd, the task is simply impossible. No one seems familiar with such a crest, Theran or Barsaivan. The truth is that the ring depicts a crest of a Theran noble house long deceased. The ring



only has a modicum of historical value and, devoid of any gemstone or artistic adornment, is worth only slightly more than its weight in gold (less even than the cost of the characters' employment).

Event 1

The first challenge is actually getting into Vivane alive. The city is a maze of rubble, undead, and Horrors. See the following section, **Vivane: City of the Dead** for a more detailed description of the necropolis. Whole adventures could be devised simply about navigating the dangers of Vivane. In this particular incident, the player characters, during their initial exploration, see what looks like a ragged human child darting through the rubble. Following the child is not easy as he darts through small nooks and crannies, but it is not impossible.

When cornered, the small child is revealed to be a human boy of about seven years of age. The boy is extremely frightened of just about everyone and assumed at first that the characters were simply another Horror Construct or undead after his blood. If offered food, the child will actually befriend and talk to the characters. His Name is Lucian and he is perhaps the sole human survivor of Vivane. He has been living amongst the ruins of the city since the first Horror Cloud fell. He is small enough and fast enough that he has managed to survive (being an emerging Thief Adept has not hurt his chances either). Lucian is more fully detailed in the **Important Characters** section.

Event 2

As the characters are moving through Vivane, they encounter a work gang of Twiceborn's undead. The undead are clearing debris around a ruined tower and there is even work by some undead artisans at repairing the lower level. These undead seem completely uninterested in the characters. If Lucian is with them, he will say that this sort of thing didn't use to happen, but in the last few weeks (since the March), it's been springing up across the city. He's not sure what to make of it, but they leave him alone, so he really doesn't care.

These undead will only interact with the player characters if they are attacked, otherwise they simply continue their work.

Event 3

With Lucian as a guide, or following the crude directions provided to them by the envoy, the players can eventually locate the ruined estate of the Baedros family. Scallor Baedros, once the patriarch, was a prominent merchant in Vivane, trading in Barsaivan gold and crystal back to Thera. Lucian had, before the fall of Vivane, visited this estate when traveling with his mother on social affairs, so he is somewhat familiar with the place. Of course, that was more than a year ago and he still has the memory of a seven year-old child, so his descriptions are far from perfect.

Scallor and his clan have been revived as a group of zombies loyal to Hartmallen. This estate is a stronghold of Hartmallen's, which is why Twiceborn wanted it invaded in the first place. In fact, Scallor doesn't even know the ring is important. It was left for his guards to find by one of Twiceborn's minions. That is why the employer had such a detailed description of it.

Wary of attacks by Twiceborn's servants, the estate has been turned into a sort of undead fortress. There are pit traps in addition to the crumbling condition of the architecture itself. The characters have the option of engaging in a sneak attack or a frontal assault. Regardless,

they eventually arrive at the central treasure chamber where the ring is kept along with a selection of other treasures recovered from the ruins.

Climax

Right as the player characters are arriving in the treasure chamber, a large group of Twiceborn's undead storm the compound. The plan was that the Adepts would have hopefully taken out the guards and traps and left the estate an easy conquest. Of course, if the characters were stealthy enough, this may not have happened. Regardless, a large group of Twiceborn's cavalry attacks the place. They are not interested in harming the characters, only in killing whatever remains of Hartmallen's loyalists. If the Adepts have completely wiped out the undead, this battle may be short indeed. It is likely, however, that there are still plenty of undead in the surrounding area and the Adepts will get caught up in a huge battle.

When the dust finally clears, the forces of Twiceborn are victorious and the player characters have the ring. If they actually stop and talk to the undead, they are not hostile, though the undead are far from friendly. Lord Goerme oversaw the battle but did not actually take part in the fighting. If the characters do not immediately run, he will speak with them and even escort them out of the city, as long as they promise to leave.

Lord Goerme, if treated civilly, will even reveal the true nature of their employer. It turns out that spying wraithforms have been watching them almost since the moment they arrived in Vivane. It should become clear that while they were not used for an evil purpose (after all they likely saved a child and killed a number of undead), they were definitely used. Lord Goerme will let the characters leave the city with whatever treasures they have collected, but if they ask about the value of the ring, he only laughs and says, "Keep it. Twiceborn has many rings far finer than that one."

Sequels

There is no reason why this should be the player characters' only excursion into Vivane. Now that they have some appreciation for what they're up against, they should be better able to maneuver through the city of the dead. As long as they stay away from Twiceborn's minions and construction, they will incur little enmity from the self-proclaimed Queen of the undead.

STRANGE EMISSARIES

Premise

Several months after arriving in Vivane, Twiceborn has taken control of the majority of the city. Hartmallen retains power only because of his control of the Horror Cloud squatting atop the city. From the command chair of the twisted kila at its center, Hartmallen sits, scowling in anger and feeling utterly betrayed by the very being he saved from the Throalic flame cannons. Twiceborn is just beginning to set her schemes in motion, however. She dispatches to every seat of power in Barsaive small parties of cadaver men who are intended to be emissaries.

Although they are almost all cut down, they carry with them ornate scrolls that reveal the desire of Twiceborn to establish peaceful relations and trade between the Free Kingdom of Vivane and the Name-giver nations of Barsaive. Twiceborn also acknowledges that she expected her emissaries to be attacked, even though they themselves did not provoke a fight. "It is to be expected after centuries of distrust



between the Name-givers and my people," the scrolls note. The scrolls further declare Twiceborn's condemnation of the practice of slavery of Name-givers and include a formal notice that ownership of slaves will also be prohibited within the Free Kingdom of Vivane. Finally, each emissary carries a small box of gems and precious metals intended as gifts to the rulers of each nation. The scrolls describe this as "necessary first step in the establishment of trade".

Needless to say, these overtures are generally frowned upon. Cara Fahd condemns this so-called "Free Kingdom" as a Horror-spawned mockery of true freedom and declares that it is the duty of the Name-givers of Barsaive to eradicate it from the face of the Earth. King Neden of Throal says nothing, but other, more vocal portions of his government declare that Throal wants nothing to do with this new Horror-tainted "kingdom". Only in one place across the face of Barsaive is the undead emissary not slain. In Haven, Torgak, still remembering the event at the gates of his city, actually listens to what the emissary has to say. He accepts the gift, although he has it thoroughly checked for Horror taint before touching it. He also allows the emissary to stay in the outskirts of Haven under twenty-four hour watch (under house arrest, really).

Even this guarded act of acceptance is too much for some Name-givers. A band of them, calling themselves the Flame of Purity, hear about Torgak's "betrayal" of the living by allowing the emissary to remain in his city and come to Haven to kill this "enemy of life". It's up to our heroes to save Torgak's life.

Set-Up

Wherever the characters are in Barsaive, they are not far from an emissary's arrival. If they are in Throal, they can be part of the group that hacks it to pieces (even if they won't attack without provocation, others will). If they are in Cara Fahd, they can see Krathis Gron throw the head of the slain cadaver man to a crowd of cheering orks as she condemns Twiceborn's kingdom. And if they are in Haven, they can see the emissary surrounded by the Irregulars and escorted with many weapons pointed at his back into a private audience with Torgak.

At this point, the characters need to end up in Haven. Why are they going back to Haven? Perhaps one of Torgak's lieutenants hears rumors about threats against the troll's life and wants to hire them. Maybe they were headed there anyway to meet up again with Haelos (see **Something Is Rotten In Haven**) to report about what is going on in Vivane. Perhaps, they want to explore the Smalls to see what Twiceborn left behind. Regardless, once again the player characters must return to Haven.

There they are contacted by Dishara Eyes-of-Straw, one of Torgak's lieutenants. Dishara is concerned by Torgak's acceptance of the undead emissary. "It has nothing to do with the danger the emissary actually poses," she explains, "It's just that...well, many nasty rumors have started. Some are even claiming that Torgak might be Horror-marked. There is no way that Torgak is going to accept actual bodyguards. It would be a matter of pride with him."

Instead, what she wants is some more proactive protection. She wants the characters to pretend to be fellow haters of that "undead-loving" Torgak and try to get in good with anyone who might be planning him ill. Since they are outsiders, it will be much easier for even locals to accept them as newly made enemies of Torgak. In short, Dishara Eyes-of-Straw wants to pay the characters handsomely to badmouth her boss.

Event 1

The player characters try to infiltrate the conspiracy forming against Torgak. This is not an easy task. The Purity of Flame has worked together for several years and they have a great deal of mutual trust. They are on the lookout for moles and will be very untrustworthy of new and overly convenient friends. But, that said, they need help. Torgak has a lot of loyal followers and Haven is definitely his home court. The leader of The Purity of Flame is an elf Horror Stalker Named Joeth Drawne. Joeth has become obsessed with the March and the activities in Vivane and he sees taking out the emissary and Torgak as a first step in purging the evil of undeath from Barsaive.

Through their investigations, the player characters are likely to meet Joeth and learn of his hatred for the undead. What they will not hear him say is that he is after Torgak or the emissary. He is clever enough to keep such opinions to himself.

However, a companion of Joeth, the Beastmaster Herod Wolfkind is more loose-lipped. He brags of the Purity of Flame's plan to attack the emissary to a bar patron where it could be heard by a local gatherer of information, Tolemy Faer. Tolemy is a one-legged, retired dwarf adventurer turned entrepreneur and rumor-monger who makes Haven his base of operations. Tolemy immediately realizes he's got something and starts looking for someone willing to pay for the information.

The problem is that the attack is happening this very evening, so the characters get just enough warning to rush there to intervene, but not enough to summon much help. Dishara Eyes-of-Straw, if the information is passed on to her, tells the characters to proceed immediately to the "consulate" where the cadaver man emissary is under guard and help protect him. She will gather reinforcements and be there shortly.

This event culminates with the characters getting first to the "consulate" to see the two guards Torgak stationed there being attacked by the Purity of Flame. They join in the fray and find themselves fighting to save a dead man's life. This event ends with Torgak and his guards showing up. As soon as the reinforcements arrive, the Purity of Flame realizes they are outnumbered and they flee into the Smalls.

Event 2

The Purity of Flame regroups and licks its wounds. They have access to magical healing, Booster Potions and even Last-chance Salves so it is likely that they will be able to recover back to full strength quickly. But even if they have taken many casualties, they gain additional help. Joeth contacts other associates and rebuilds the Purity into a credible threat to the player characters. This time, Joeth knows what he's up against. He now believes that going after the emissary first was a mistake. The Purity must attack the root of the problem. They must kill Torgak. But the Purity of Flame are now the known culprits of the plot. They can no longer operate from Haven. Instead, they will work in secret in the Smalls and plot their next move.

Event 3

Torgak is not so willing to wait for them to come back. He increases the guard on both the emissary and at the gates of Haven. He increases the patrols inside Haven. He even grudgingly organizes a personal group of bodyguards for himself. The result of all of this is that suddenly Torgak's forces are very spread out. Unfortunately, with all this activity, he has very few troops to dedicate to actually hunting down the Purity of Flame. This is where the characters come in. They are sent into the



Smalls to track down Joeth's band before they have a chance to completely recover.

What the player characters find is evidence of an old campsite and proof that the Smalls remain dangerous. They are attacked by several jehuthras who have extended their hunting grounds into the Smalls now that the undead are gone. Although able to deal with this foe, the encounter should hurt our heroes enough to force them to retreat back to Haven to rest and recover. This enables the Purity of Flame to escape their immediate retribution.

Event 4

Now that both the characters and the Purity of Flame have had a chance to recover, the battle is rejoined. The Illusionist Adept ally of Joeth, Ren Etterson, uses his magic to change his appearance to that of Torgak's lieutenant, Dishara Eyes-of-Straw. The "lieutenant" appears to Torgak and says that Joeth, leader of the Purity of Flame, has been found murdered. Torgak goes immediately with his bodyguard to check out the murder site, hoping to locate the rest of the Purity of Flame. The real lieutenant shows up shortly thereafter and hears a very disturbing report from one of Torgak's Irregulars about herself just leaving. She realizes trickery is afoot and rushes off to find the characters and bring them to Torgak's aid.

The Adepts arrive at the scene of the murder just in time to see a battle that Torgak is losing. Torgak himself is knocked out by a lucky shot from a sleep arrow fired by Joeth's Archer Adept, Kaelyn Swiftbreeze. The bodyguards are fighting a desperate but losing fight to protect the fallen troll. The heroes arrive just in time to change the course of the battle.

Climax

This time Joeth will not flee. He knows he will never have a better chance to slay Torgak than now. The dedicated Horror Stalker will fight to the death to rid Barsaive of this perceived evil. And so, this fight will be very difficult and likely very messy. Ultimately, the player characters should prevail over the Purity of Flame. Joeth will die rather than submit to capture, but many of his companions are not so suicidal. Once it becomes clear that they are doomed, they will flee or surrender. The tragedy of this conflict is that both sides are good and noble individuals who likely ultimately share the same goal. Only fate and foolish zealotry have made them enemies.

The climax of this adventure framework comes with the defeat of Joeth and the revival of the incapacitated leader of Haven. Torgak will be very grateful to the adventurers for saving his life. He will hold a large banquet to celebrate their victory. He also makes a public announcement in the center square of Haven. He says that he will not be swayed by threats or treachery. The consulate will remain. This does not mean that he is sympathetic to the Horrors or wishes to see Barsaive ruled by the undead. "All it means," he explains, "is that I am tired of endless war."

Sequels

The player characters will have gone up much in Torgak's estimation after they were instrumental in saving his life. This is a prime opportunity for them to seek further employment with the ruler of Haven. Perhaps, now that Twiceborn has left, Torgak wants the Smalls further explored. Perhaps Torgak is concerned about other plots against his life. Or perhaps he is considering sending an emissary from

Haven back to Vivane to hold an audience with Twiceborn herself. Whatever the mission, the player characters are now prime candidates to carry it out.

OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

This section contains adventure ideas based on the *March of the Undead* and the establishment of Twiceborn's Kingdom. Gamemasters can flesh out these adventure ideas and use them to fill out the adventure frameworks, run them between their own adventures, or even run them as one-shots. This section is not so much about giving the gamemaster completed adventures, as providing him with a toolbox of ideas that he can build on at his own discretion.

MEET THE NEW BOSS

When Twiceborn abandoned her kingdom in Parlainth this did not go unnoticed by her neighbor to the north, the dragon Charcoalgrin. The dragon was all too eager to dispatch her agents, the Unforgivables, to fill the vacancy left in Parlainth. Unfortunately, it quickly became obvious to Charcoalgrin that there were still plenty of ways for her valuable servants to die in the Smalls. Some undead were still there, many of the traps remained, and there were still plenty of minor Horrors skulking in the ruins. It became clear to Charcoalgrin that although victory in the area was now achievable, it would be a costly one.

So, Charcoalgrin has decided to hire some freelance help. The characters could easily be some of that help. There are a number of troublesome "knots" in the Smalls, areas too dangerous to waste her own resources on that Charcoalgrin would be willing to pay to get rid of. Perhaps a mid-range Horror still occupies an underground warren. Maybe there is an area where the traps are simply too dangerous. Or it could be that undead still stalk a certain area. Regardless, all of these possibilities should begin with an audience with the dragon Charcoalgrin (who is detailed in the *Parlainth Box Set* and the *Dragons* sourcebook).

Charcoalgrin is not a gracious employer. She sometimes just expects "lesser" Name-givers to obey her commands, consequences be damned. She rarely takes no for an answer, considers haggling with her offers insulting, and often makes idle threats if only to show how powerful she is. In fact, if the player characters have completed *Agents of the Queen*, they may be able to honestly say they liked working for Twiceborn more than working for Charcoalgrin.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

If the players are traveling in Vivane, they may meet a group of Adepts who are not of Barsaivan origin. A number of bold, independent groups of Theran adventurers have taken contracts to retrieve valuable items from the ruins of Vivane. These individuals are always Adepts and while Theran by nationality, are not necessarily that loyal to the First Governor. They could be useful allies assuming the characters can tolerate their politics.

Unfortunately, they could also easily be concealing hidden agendas. They might claim their mission is to recover the Lecto family seal when in reality they are here to scout the state of Barsaivan affairs. That, and even if they are forced to cooperate with Barsaivan heroes for a short time, they can't let witnesses get away who could point them out to the local authorities.



THE FREE VIVANE IMPORT-EXPORT TRADING COMPANY

One visionary, crazy, greedy dwarf merchant by the Name of Klausen Getz actually takes the emissary at the Free Kingdom of Vivane consulate up on his offer. He figures that with the ludicrous markup he has heard about, it's worth the risk. Of course, he needs protection, and he has heard that the characters have actually been inside Vivane, so they would be ideal. It turns out however, that the undead are the least of Getz' problems. What Getz really needs protection from is not the undead, but the orks. When word gets out of Getz "consorting" with the Horror-created undead, a warband of ork scorcherers dedicate themselves to destroying his caravans. It is going to take some expert protection to keep the orks from destroying this fledgling business before it reaches the "safety" of Vivane.

THE GUIDED TOUR

The wealthy Kyre Dresden has more money than sense. Hailing from Travar, his fortune has survived the war perfectly intact. Now the grey-haired noble wants to see the wondrous and terrible glory of dread Vivane, City of the Dead. In short, he wants to accompany a group of adventurers into the city and see its unique wonders. He is willing to pay them handsomely for the privilege. Although this adventure would probably be of little interest to the more heroic of Adepts, maybe Kyre could make a secret deal with the group's Thief or Troubadour. The character in question, eager for his promised reward, brings him along, playing impromptu tour guide, all the while claiming to the rest of our heroes that Kyre is some sort of needed expert in, perhaps, Theran culture or undead physiognomy or something equally unlikely.

THE GOVERNOR'S TAXES

An opportunistic young Thief by the Name of Rogan Two-Knives has come across a pre-war map that details the vault beneath the old Overgovernor's palace where the treasury was kept. Rogan knows that if he could meet up with the right group, he could find that vault and escape with a fortune. So, Rogan is on the prowl for some partners.

What Rogan has failed to take into account is that the Overgovernor's palace is now directly underneath Hartmallen's Horror Cloud. In short, it is crawling with undead and Horrors. What Rogan has right is that the treasury is indeed still there, as the vault has collapsed, sealing in its precious contents. A powerful group of heroes could overcome the creatures skulking in the ruins of the palace, survive all the Artificer's traps, and have a powerful Elementalist move the stone that blocks their entrance into the vault. But it would take a very powerful group of "partners" for Rogan indeed.

THE SECOND MARCH

After the appearance of the March, there is a good deal of paranoia in the citizenry of Barsaive that undead could be anywhere. This event is the result of that paranoia being taken to far.

A long forgotten, hidden kaer is buried deep in the side of a hill in old Vivane province. This kaer has somehow managed to avoid detection by innumerable treasure seekers, Theran patrols, and raiders of all sorts. What the kaer didn't do is manage to keep the Horrors out. Every inhabitant of the kaer is now an undead thrall to a bloatform Horror not dissimilar to the Gharmheks. This Horror, through astral space, has

heard of the gathering of Horrors and undead at Vivane and has decided that this is far more productive than being buried in this hill for another few hundred years. So, the undead inhabitants of the Ruuthasa kaer have burrowed a hole to the surface and begun a small, miniature second March towards Vivane.

As luck would have it, a merchant drakkar headed to Throal sees this second March and quickly leaps to the conclusion: there is another horde of undead heading towards Vivane. The drakkar speeds towards Bartertown, telling everyone they meet about their encounter. Unfortunately, the story keeps getting better and better with each retelling and by the time it reaches the Throalic Navy, there is reported to be a second March complete with Horror Cloud heading straight for Vivane.

King Neden continues to maintain his wait-and-see stance. But Admiral Reise, still fuming from his past disgrace, does something very rash. He reassembles his troops, forges some orders, pulls some strings, and soon the Throalic strike force is gathered and off to defeat the second March or die trying. The player characters, perhaps familiar to Throalic agents by now, are hired to find out the truth about this second March.

To them falls the task of tracing the rumor back to its source and locating the merchant drakkar. This is where Thieves and Troubadours can really shine. Also, it turns out that the original drakkar's owners are running a smuggling ring, so they are not anxious to be found. But at last, when the underworld of Bartertown is sorted through it becomes clear that Reise has gone to war against no one.

If not turned from his course, Reise will locate this small group of undead and assume they are some sort of scouting party for the real March. So, not wanting to give away his position, he will avoid them. Thus Reise allows even this small group of undead to safely enter Vivane without the cover of the Horror Cloud. Upon learning the truth about this, Admiral Reise resigns from the Throalic Navy, a laughingstock. He leaves Throal, never to return, and retires to Kratas.

TURN ABOUT

As an alternative to the adventure framework **Strange Emissaries**, the characters could be contacted by a concerned citizen of Haven who wants them to kill the undead emissary. This would be especially likely if the player characters are outspoken critics of Torgak's actions or are particularly known for their hatred of the undead. Although it would be a simple matter to overcome Torgak's guards and kill the undead, the repercussions can make this mission quite complex, especially if they had formerly fought to defend the cadaver man during the **Strange Emissaries** framework.

If Torgak finds out who killed the emissary, he will be very displeased. Not because he values the "life" of an undead, but because he is afraid that Twiceborn will blame him for the assassination. If any of Torgak's guards were wounded or killed, Torgak will be even more active in pursuing the culprits, putting out substantial bounties on the heads of the villains. The characters could easily find themselves hunted in Haven. The irony of this is that regardless of the players' action, Twiceborn will replace the emissary as soon as possible.

THE QUEEN'S COURT

Throal comes to learn about the emissary in Haven handing out silver seals that allow an audience with Twiceborn. It is the considered



opinion of many Throalic citizens that this is clearly a trap to give Twiceborn a steady diet of fresh and foolish souls to feed upon. Some members of the Eye of Throal see it instead as an opportunity to gain some valuable intelligence on what is really going on in Vivane.

So, secretly, the Eye hires our heroes to go to Haven, pretend to be representatives of a Throalic noble eager to trade for Theran treasures plucked from the ruins of Vivane, and acquire a seal. Then, they must travel to Vivane and attend this audience and try to acquire as much information as possible. The task is, in its own right, dangerous enough. It is further complicated by Hartmallen's efforts to destroy anyone trying to get into Twiceborn's realm.

FOOLS RUSH IN

Before even the March begins, there were many groups of adventurers exploring Vivane. One of them includes the son of a wealthy merchant from Travar. Now that the Horror Cloud is on its way, the merchant is fearful (and rightly so) for the safety of his son. He is desperate for a group of Adepts to go to the ruined city and warn his son about the approaching March. The merchant doesn't know where his son is, but he does know who he was traveling with: a circle of adventurers known as the Silver Eye Band.

Unfortunately, finding the Silver Eye will not be easy. They are traveling underground in the undercity of Vivane. The group did, however, talk and trade with another group of explorers now camped on the city's edge. Perhaps those explorers could provide a clue about the son's current whereabouts. And remember that if the player characters take too long, they could actually be in Vivane when the March arrives.

THE END IS NEAR

A prophet arrives in Haven preaching that the March of the Undead is a sign of a coming apocalypse and the return of a renewed Thousand Year Scourge. He is not entirely without some actual abilities (he is an Adept) but his prophecies are the result of his own insane delusions, not any actual powers of divination. However, in the dark days after the March, his message manages to take hold of many. He has gathered a band of devotees and flagellants who are loudly proclaiming their message on every street corner and making quite a nuisance of themselves. Even worse, in this prophet's travels, he has managed to convert the daughter of the headsman of a farming community.

That headsman and a few of his more burly friends have tracked the prophet to Haven and are here to rescue his daughter, even though she doesn't want to be rescued. Torgak, who thinks little of this prophet and his cult of wackos, wants to keep the peace and doesn't want a bloody feud to break out between the fanatics and the headsman's men. Unfortunately, this protection has backfired. The prophet is afraid to leave town but has continued to ring his bell and shout his message to the winds. This is starting to frequently interrupt Torgak's naps.

Torgak is looking for anyone who can solve his problem and restore peace and tranquility to Haven. A good solution to this problem would be to expose the prophet as a fraud. That would disperse his cult, return the daughter to her father, and then the prophet could shut up and leave. A slightly less subtle solution would involve the prophet falling down a deep well.

HOW BAD DO YOU WANT HIM?

The characters are hired to hunt down a notorious criminal, perhaps a murderer or bandit. The criminal's trail, however, takes them towards the ruined city of Vivane. It seems that this villain has figured that the chances of any of his pursuers actually following him into Vivane are small. The player characters now face a dilemma, which is especially difficult if they have already being warned by Lord Goorme not to enter Twiceborn's domain uninvited in *Something Is Rotten In Haven*. Do they follow their target into Vivane or let a known criminal escape their pursuit?

Perhaps their target has not actually entered Vivane, but has in fact hooked up with a bandit gang that is using the nasty reputation of the city to escape the law themselves. The most infamous bandit lord around Vivane, Fergis Mornen, a treacherous human Beastmaster who is barely not an animal himself, is always looking for fresh meat for his ad hoc army of rogues. The player characters could easily discover that their task has become much more difficult than it first seemed.

Or, as an alternative, perhaps the foolish criminal did actually enter Vivane. There, he likely met a swift end at the hands of some undead or Horror. Now he marches in the ranks of Twiceborn's work gangs, or helps defend Hartmallen's holdings. How do the adventurers recover their charge to prove his demise and claim their reward without interfering with the goals of the self-proclaimed Queen of the Undead? Twiceborn herself might be willing to trade one worker zombie in exchange for some favor from them. For example, she might ask our heroes to eradicate a particularly troublesome agent of Hartmallen.

LOOSE ENDS

Vivane quickly becomes accepted as a fixture of the landscape in Barsaive. For all of Cara Fahd's talk and Throal's military posturing, no one in Barsaive seems interested in engaging this stronghold of the undead. That doesn't mean that there aren't factions that disagree with this position, though. There are Throalic nobles hungry for intelligence about the city to see what can be done to rid Barsaive of this blight. There are orkish commanders ready to declare a war against this city of the dead. But such extremists remain minorities. The practicalities of the War and the internal conflicts facing Throal and Cara Fahd have made Vivane a secondary priority. So, in a way, Vivane itself is one massive loose end as far as the Name-givers of Barsaive are concerned. It is a tolerated evil for now.

Twiceborn works every day to change that. She does not want to be a tolerated evil. She wants to be an accepted and legitimate ruler. She is probably doomed to failure. But already small inroads that might have seemed unimaginable before the March have already been made. Would it be wise to completely discount someone who has already done the impossible by moving her kingdom to Vivane in the first place?

The secret war between Twiceborn and Hartmallen has reached an impasse. Hartmallen can't stop the Gharmheks from controlling any undead he sends into the lower city. Twiceborn can't take over his Horror Cloud. So, the two are stalemated. Twiceborn has a critical advantage, however, Hartmallen has been an undead for a single year. Twiceborn has lived for lifetimes, growing more cunning with each passing decade. If there is a way to defeat Hartmallen, Twiceborn will find it. She will not be denied her kingdom.



THE DEATH OF A DENAIRASTAS



The following is an excerpt from the journal of Kelien Hroth, a member of the Silver Branch of the Holders of Trust. It's a small, leather-bound tome, with well over three-quarters of its pages blank. In the first quarter, some of the entries are stained with water and ash, others with what looks to be blood, rendering certain sections and entries impossible to read. The first readable section begins on page two of the journal. Kelien's Name appears inside the front cover of the book in silver trim.

...

This small merchant's kaer has been cleansed and the wards reestablished. All we found were perpetually rotting, ashen cadaver men that were easily dispatched. However, we have found no Horror within the walls of the kaer, even after several careful searches. It is my belief that these weaker constructs are some form of unnatural by-product of the Poisonous Forest. It might be worth investigating into Jerri's history and seeing if they have ever had problems with the dead rising from their graves, perhaps before the arrival of the Purifier, Draneth? Regardless, whatever treasure these merchants took with them into their final resting place has either been stolen long ago, or somehow rotted along with the rest of them.

After careful examination, it does not look as if any Horrors actually breached this place. Indeed, it looks more like the taint that infects all of the forest above seeped into this kaer and slowly destroyed its original inhabitants, leaving the shambling husks we found. Their method for supplying water to the kaer was poorly thought-out: a warded filter on a fresh water stream. Most likely, it gave no protection against the creeping disease that has claimed all other life in this area. Mikael has established an Elemental tap, so we have fresh water without relying on the stream. He and the engineer Elementals that Morningfall sent to 'aid' us in this task have also seared away the corrupt remnants of furniture and former occupants from the kaer, and scrubbed most of the ash from the entrance. It is almost a shame that the experiments need be conducted, they would serve us well as soldiers and Holders, with the proper education. No matter. For the next few nights, we will furnish this small kaer from the equipment aboard the Sky Drake, and prepare for the investigation into the nature of the ash, and its effects on Adepts.

...

Day 5

... some attempts to breach the seal, but are best described as pathetic – the rotted beasts are easily dealt ... though Vorin had contracted something from ... put him out of his misery, before he infects us all.

In the past day, we have managed to Distill something quite unusual from a large enough sample of ash – roughly ten gallons. When the spell is complete, what remains are trace amounts of Elemental Water, Earth, Air, and Fire, as well as Orichalcum. The amount produced is hardly worth mentioning – it is only visible in astral space, and undetectable in the physical plane. It does prove that this ash came from some kind of magic, however. There is also something I can only describe as taint. It is an astral sore, a small bit of corrupt space, just as minute as the Elements.

The Lord may be correct in his assumption that this may be a trace of some form of powerful Theran weaponry – perhaps something they used against a powerful Horror during the Scourge?

All five of the Engineers have been prepared. We will begin the experiments in the morning.

...

The first Engineer had an interesting reaction to ingesting the unaltered, distilled essence of the ash. I have no better description for it other than to say he unraveled. What we saw in astral ...

...

... removed the taint. She convulsed for a time, but due to Mikael's poor binding, had enough leeway to crack her own skull. If the remaining three Engineers are not enough to determine its effects sufficiently, we will prepare him in addition for his failure. Tomorrow we will try infusing just the taint into the Engineer Named Lorith Paliver.

From this point forward, the journal is blank.

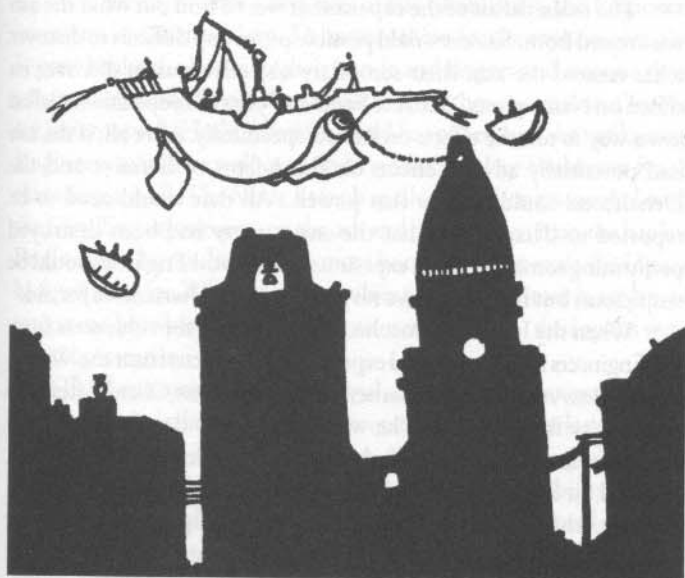
BACKGROUND

It has been nearly a year since the fall of Sky Point and Vivane, when the last of the stationary Theran presence was ousted from Barsaive. On the surface, Jerri has become a well-ordered city. The last year has seen it more prosperous, even with the losses to its native police force, the Falcons (see *Barsaive at War*, p. 105, for more information on the Falcons). There have been no Theran raids on Elemental mining since the beginning of the war. There have been very few successful raids by the troll crystal raiders since Iopos bolstered the Jerrian air force with some of its own vessels, as well as the backing of the Firescale moot and its ships. The shipyards are constantly in use under contract, almost solely with Iopos now, and are filled with the hulls of new ships nearing completion. Trade is brisk as always, and despite the Iopos occupation, visitors are still allowed to come and go from the city so long as they sign in with the Iopan guards at the gates. This precaution is for the purposes of peacekeeping, naturally. The caravans run on time, and there is order in the streets.

The truth of the matter, however, is that Iopos has a tenuous hold, at best, on the heart of the city and the majority of its people. At present time, this is a matter of minor importance to Uhl Denairastas. As long as Jerri produces ships for Iopos and only requires a small garrison, he is content. However, Gellad Denairastas, one of Uhl's scions, and the one in charge of bringing Jerri under the Iopan heel, has enjoyed his uncle's favor for several months. While it is better than the alternative, there is something that Uhl's favor brings that Gellad is all too aware of: the attention and envy of the others in the Gold Branch of the Holders of Trust (see *Secret Societies of Barsaive*, p. 32). Here in Jerri, Gellad is in a precarious position outside of the political waters of Iopos. If his competitive brethren are moving against him, he will only know if his network of loyal Holders can find it out first. Relying on others, however, is the quickest way to get yourself killed within the ranks of the Gold Branch, a lesson that Gellad never had to learn the hard way since he was the one who taught it to someone else. Gellad now knows that what he needs to free himself of the yoke of Jerri is one of two things: to brainwash the city to the Iopan cause, or to become their savior, by stopping the ash-fall on the city.

In reviewing the first of his options, Gellad found that The Holders of Trust have had limited success in infiltrating the population. Once the network of the Holders was in place, sowing the ideals of Iopos, Gellad hoped the city would be swayed to the Iopan cause with no military force necessary. The Jerri Militia and Navy would be in the





service of Iopos, and there would be no need for garrisoned Iopan troops at all. Fear, subterfuge, and the fanatical devotion it inspired in those who embraced it would keep the city loyal to the Denairastas. When Gellad first arrived in Jerris, Mara Coravan, the Iopan ambassador to Jerris and a member of the Gold Branch, informed him of her attempts to spread the Holders and of her limited success. What she had found was a city of taciturn and distrustful people, prone to quick temper and melancholy views on the glory of anything. Anything, that is, except money. Loyalty and information are easy to purchase in many parts of Jerris. It was keeping these ties and alliances from being bought out that was the trick. In Mara, Gellad has found a good second; her blood is too thin to be able to make a claim for the Malachite Seat, so her only hope for further ascension is to attach herself to a blooded member, like himself. Now, he has made sure her fate has been tied to his by making her his second in Jerris, to share the success or blame. He has tasked her with the continuation of spreading the Holders in Jerris and backs her with money to try and quicken it. The Holders are making their way into the heart of the populace, but it is a painful and slow process (more pain for the people than the Holders), even with the fear that Mara has inspired through assassination and what she calls "informative business exchanges." Even as he is landlocked in Jerris, Gellad's ambition has not been idle, and he has started to align his star with another Iopan project, one perhaps even more ambitious than the taking of Jerris.

The Jerris Resistance has been forced to remain underground for the past year. Between the active Iopan soldiers and the constantly fluctuating tides of the Jerris politicians, it has been hard for the Resistance to know where it stands, even in their own city. Pihgram Tor has remained the *de facto* leader of the Resistance due to her vast network of contacts and friends, as well as her great dislike of the Iopans. Publicly, she is still forced to deal with them in the shipyards and has most likely been spared due to the good reputation she enjoys with the people – that, and the fact that Mara knows she would not escape the blame if the windling woman were to wind up dead, now. To openly defy the Iopan forces on this matter would only end up with Pihgram's exile or death; neither of which would save her shipyards, or help Jerris. She has been just as active as the Iopans over the past year, trying to consolidate the members of the Resistance into something that will be

able to oust Iopos from their home. While she has managed to gather some unlikely allies, the process is a slow and nerve-wracking one. With the Holders of Trust infiltrating the native populace, it is becoming harder and harder to find who to trust, a task that was never easy to begin with in Jerris.

The heads of the Falcons appear divided on the issue of the Resistance. Byth Vesten, technically the head of the Falcons, has been seemingly unwilling to aid the Resistance. So far, the Magistrate of Jerris toes the Iopan line that the Falcons who went to Throal and fought in her war have become agents of Throal, forbidden from returning to Jerris. He keeps those Falcons loyal to him in the ranking positions of their group and has replaced his friend Kos Steelgaze as Marshal of the Falcons with Hurin Durimar, a dwarf Air Sailor. The truth of the matter, however, is that Hurin is a member of the Eye of Throal, and Byth keeps in contact with Pihgram and Kos through him. The Iopans, Mara in particular, have kept a careful eye on Byth and he has done his best to not endanger his allies and their hopes.

Kos Steelgaze has attempted to get aid from Throal, but the dwarf kingdom has as many, or more, problems with its own nation and cannot afford to commit much aid to the Jerris cause. Indeed, so far, Hurin has been all they can spare, since he was already active in Jerris. Missives from the Jerris Resistance have been able to arrive through the Eye, and Throal has been able to keep up on some of what has transpired in the city since the war. Briana Wind-rider, a member of the Silver Cloud Shipwrights, was forced to leave Jerris with a group of Adepts to see that a hold full of ash was taken to Vivane for the ritual that unfortunately led to the city's destruction. After the war, she joined her drakkar (the *Thrush*) to the remaining Falcon drakkar that survived, back in the city of Throal (the *Cyclops*). Leaving one of his Lieutenants behind in Throal to make sure that the Jerris ambassador, Ilio Shipwright (see *Throal, the Dwarf Kingdom*, p. 72), is doing his best to see their case heard in the Throalic courts, Kos turned the two ships west and headed back towards Jerris.

Kos knew that the Resistance would need a staging area outside of the watchful eye of Iopos. The only place he could see capable of providing that kind of protection had to be well within the Wastes. A large, breached kaer was found in the lee of a mountain that looked ideally suited for their purpose. Kos had the hope that it would be able to house the Resistance, as well as provide a place outside of the constant, blowing ash that could be used for simple ship repairs. The surviving Falcons, bolstered by a group of able Adepts and Briana's crew, were able to cleanse the kaer, and establish a base of operations.

Of the original three powerful merchant heads in Jerris, Pihgram was surprised to find that Ferrin Avric of the North Star Company was willing to join the Resistance. After the last six months of Iopan occupation, Ferrin had come to realize that he would have no power within the Iopan merchants unless he swears a ludicrously binding oath (see *Secret Societies of Barsaive*, p. 31, for specifics) to Uhl Denairastas. It is an oath the fiercely independent dwarf is unwilling to make. In addition, the terror-tactics of the Iopans have started taking hold on the people and the Iopans have finally become a true threat in the dwarf's eyes. Ferrin has been unwilling to show any kind of public discontent with the Iopans, but has been willing to use his network of informants and money to support the Resistance in its reconnaissance against the Denairastas. Pihgram and Ferrin were both surprised to find that Chardis Morningfall, the leader of the Engineers, was unwilling to join the Resistance.

Chardis still holds neutrality towards Iopos. The elf Elementalist hopes that Iopos has the resources and the inclination to back their already frustrating research into the nature of the ash and how to rid the city of it. If nothing else, Iopos has the resources to provide Jerris with a dome of Elemental Air that has some hope of keeping part of the city clean (ironically, Chardis is not aware of the role the ash and an air dome had to play in the destruction of Vivane). At every opportunity, Chardis has offered aid to the Iopans studying the effects of the ash and provided them with all of his research in the area. Indeed, it seems that Gellad has been most willing to hear Chardis and use his information and his assistance to study the ash and its effects. Chardis' usual accomplice in purging Jerris of its ash has been the obsidiman Purifier, Orin Draneth. However, while the Purifier has been willing to speak with the Iopans and educate them with what he has learned in his many years of combating the ash, he is unwilling to go into any form of joint effort with them.

EVENT SYNOPSIS

The Iopans are just as interested in discovering what the ash is, and what it is doing to the lands of the Poison Forest, as Jerris. However, where Chardis wishes to know so he can free his city from it, the Denairastas wish to know what created it. Gellad's theory is that it is the remnants left behind by a large Theran experiment, possibly a doomsday weapon tested against the Horrors during the Scourge. After the events of *Barsaive at War*, when the Therans called down previously unseen destructive power, Gellad's theory is stronger than ever. Gellad also is looking for a better way to neutralize the ash than Chardis' notion of establishing the dome of air. While possibly an effective theory, the cost of establishing one while keeping the air untainted from the ash as it was erected is a commitment of resources that Gellad will not make. Besides, such a thing would also allow Jerris to maintain an iron-fisted control over what ships came in and out of the city, something Gellad is not willing to give them until the city is undeniably in the hold of Iopos.

Many excursions have been made into the Poison Forest and the Wastes, both by the Engineers and now by the Silver Branch of the Holders of Trust in an effort to find some tangible clues as to what could cause the waste, or how the ash-fall could be stopped. The Denairastas have in their arsenal a history of alchemical and experimental magics not known among the more morally bound spellcasters of Barsaive. The magics, in general, have terrible side effects, and usually require some form of sacrificial Blood Magic. The experiments conducted with this form of magic are well outside of where any spies or the Denairastas' enemies could learn of them. The spell Jada Denairastas used to kill King Varulus was an example of this kind of twisted sorcery.

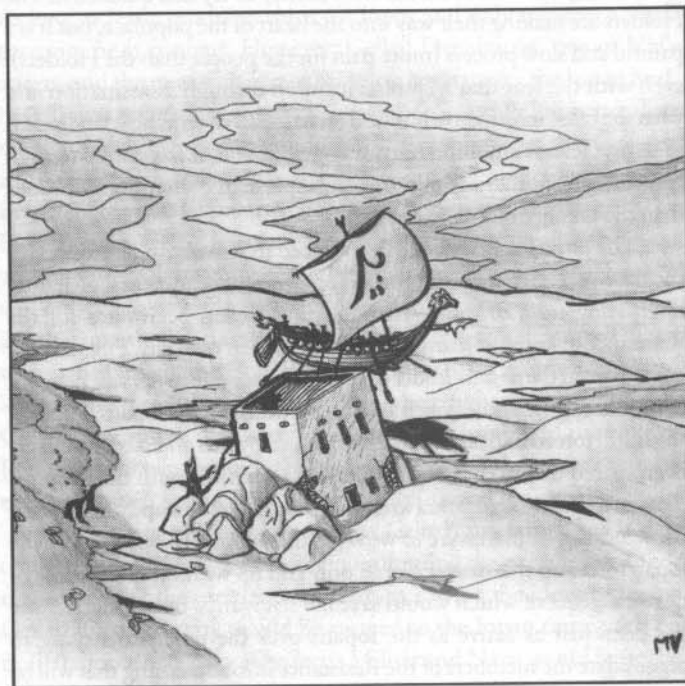
The excursions, so far, have turned up no new information, and Gellad does not believe further traipsing about the Wastes will reveal anything that countless other adventurers haven't already discovered. A small outpost needed to be established, preferably on the edge of the Wastes and the Poison Forest, where data could be gathered. In addition, the Silver Branch experiments could be performed relatively undisturbed. One of the excursions had revealed a small kaer that would meet their needs perfectly. Before the Scourge, it had been a retreat for powerful merchants, and would probably boast substantial wealth in addition to its ideal location.

The main thrust of the experiment was to find out what the ash was created from. Since it would possibly prove very difficult to discover what created the ash, their secondary objective was to discover its effects on Name-givers. With the Engineers' offer of cooperation, Gellad saw a way to test the effects on Adepts specifically. After all, if the ash had potentially adverse effects on the Adepts of Barsaive and the Denairastas could harness that power... All that would need to be reported to Chardis was that the entire party had been destroyed performing some unknown experiment. The head Engineer would be suspicious, but he would have no proof, and no alternatives for aid.

When the Iopans approached Chardis to ask for volunteers from the Engineers to aid in magical experiments conducted near the Wastes, Chardis was very hopeful, if somewhat leery. Despite Chardis' desire to see his city free of the ash, he was aware of the danger the Iopans represented, and does not entirely trust them. Going to the Engineers, he asked for five volunteers to join the Iopans on their expedition, with warnings that they would be separated from help, should anything happen. Five volunteered: Urikar N'van, t'skrang Elementalist; Shae Eriss, human Wizard; Lorith Paliver, human Elementalist; Jen Red-Feather, ork Nethermancer; and Zeris Flamewielder, ork Elementalist.

The Engineers were to secretly report back to Chardis, independent of the Iopans. For this purpose, Jen was to summon a Spirit Servant, who would then carry their report back through the Poison Forest to meet Orin. The obsidiman often spent time on the outskirts of the forest, keeping the one area he has managed to purify whole, and was willing to wait for the report.

Taking a drakkar, the Iopans and the Engineers traveled to the merchants' kaer. Fortunately, there was enough room outside of the kaer to bring the airship down so that the group could disembark, battle, and retreat if needed. The cleansing of the kaer proved unexpectedly easy; there was nothing to combat except for ashen corpses, and a few afflicted creatures common to the Poison Forest that had attempted to take up residence in the kaer. After several thorough sweeps, the group found no signs of Horrors. They cleansed the last of the corrupted remnants from the kaer and established their base camp.



On the night after camp was firmly established, the Engineers were attacked in their sleep. To prepare them for the experiments, the Iopans broke the bones in their hands and fingers and cut out their tongues before shackling them to the walls. If there came a need for the subjects to speak, Healing Potions could be applied, and the spellcasting Engineers would be well outnumbered before they could ever finish threading a spell. The Silver Branch spellcasters then proceeded with the Distilling experiments on the ash and began to test it on the hapless Engineers. The results were far more horrifying than even the Iopans had prepared for. When the third subject dissolved into ash, reformed into some horrible construct, and unraveled Kelien, the Iopans were taken by surprise.

The first report from Jen arrived. A camp had been established, with rough directions on how to navigate to it, and details were given for how they had cleansed the kaer. After that, nothing else came. Chardis let a few days pass. After all, there was the possibility that the Spirit Servant simply did not make it through the corrupted forest on the second attempt. However, after the fifth day, the elf could wait no more. The Engineer asked a group willing to discover what happened to his people to journey forth, armed with what he could spare, and discover the fate of his Engineers.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

This section describes the major characters that play roles in the Death of a Denairastas. For characters or creatures that may be hostile or assist in combat, combat statistics have been given.

BYTH VESTEN

Retired from a career as an accomplished Captain with the Falcons, Byth Vesten is a tall, gangly human who once stood proud. In recent years, events have forced the man to walk with a perpetual stoop. His long, thin face wears a look of constant worry, all the more so recently. Faced with the Herculean task of administrating and running a city that is always shrouded in despair, Vesten does a commendable job as Magistrate, even after the Iopan occupation. Byth blames himself for the occupation and is very aware that the options he has for keeping his city together while defying the Iopans are almost non-existent.

Byth wants the best for his city and its people. On one hand, that means defying the Iopans. With Jerris' current military strength, it would be a losing battle. The Jerrisians could oust Iopos, sure enough, but only as long as it took the Iopans to mount a major assault on the city and reclaim it. That path would end the lives of countless Jerrisians. Even if the specter of the War hadn't been felt as far out as Jerris, it is a price the old man is unwilling to pay.

Instead, Byth keeps his activities very public and listens very carefully to the Assembly, which currently still supports the 'assistance' that Iopos has given. Even though Byth knows in his heart that most simply keep their vote the same due to fear, until they step forward, he cannot. According to the wishes of the Iopans, he banished the Falcons that had gone to help Throal in the war as spies. As his act of revenge for this, he has knowingly given the title of Marshal of the Falcons to a member of the Eye of Throal, Hurin Durimar. Hurin stays in contact with the Resistance and Byth's banished friend and former Marshal, Kos Steelgaze, allowing Byth to misdirect the attention of the Iopans away from them and their activities.

Byth, Magistrate of Jerris

Sixth Circle Air Sailor.

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

PIHGRAM TOR

The owner of the Silver Clouds shipwrights association, Pihgram Tor is one of the wealthiest and most influential shipbuilders in Jerris, as well as a skilled Air Sailor of Seventh Circle. She is well known for two things, aside from the fact that she is a windling female thriving in the oppressive atmosphere of Jerris. The first is her beautiful silver and blue wings, maintained through the employment of a room dedicated to the Dewdrop flower (a small, five petaled blue flower that has a silver tear shape at the base of each petal. It's also the symbol adopted by her shipwrights). The second thing is her sharp business acumen, proven by her rise to power in the shark-infested merchant waters of Jerris. Pihgram was the first shipwright in Jerris to begin selling her ships directly to the highest bidders, cutting out the middlemen. She has ably avoided all attempts to pressure her into giving up her business and even managed to dodge the assassins her competitors hired to stop her. With the Iopan occupation, the capable windling has managed not only to stay alive, but remain active in the Assembly and on the streets of Jerris.

Pihgram knows that her relationship with the Resistance must almost be transparent and she has developed quite a healthy respect for Mara Coravan and her many attempts at luring the windling to her downfall and death. Still, Pihgram is able to slip pursuit and meet with the Resistance, working to garner enough political support to get Iopos out of Jerris and keep them out.

Through Hurin, Pihgram has kept in contact with the banished Kos and her own Briana, trying to get the aid of Throal. The establishment of a base camp for the Resistance has been a great boon, but is a far cry from freeing their city. Even with the Falcons within range to aid the city, Pihgram knows it would not be enough to win it back. With the dwarf nation still reeling, the small woman has just started to send out feelers to other nations that might be willing to aid Jerris in its plight.

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

BRIANA WIND-RIDER

A native Jerrisian, Briana Wind-Rider has always wanted to be a part of the blue sky that she could only see when her mother took her on the caravans out of the city. No one was particularly surprised when she turned out to be an Adept, and less so when she was an Air Sailor. Barely two decades old, Briana is a Fourth Circle Air Sailor and captain of the *Thrush*, one of the drakkars in the Silver Cloud fleet. Despite her lofty childhood goal of keeping herself in the ash-free clouds above Jerris, she's an amazingly levelheaded ork and one of Pihgram's most trusted friends.

With her banishment, Briana has found that she still loves the city of her birth, despite never being able to see the blue sky from its streets. For the purposes of the Resistance, she's joined the *Thrush* and her small crew with the surviving Falcons to hold the base camp within the Wastes. Living in the Wastes is miserable, but from here, the ork captain is able to do something for her friend and her city.

Briana Wind-Rider
Fourth Circle Air Sailor

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

CHARDIS MORNINGFALL

Chardis Morningfall is a tall, willowy, and handsome elf, whose movements and manner are very methodical and graceful. He is very good at setting people at ease and making people he has just met feel comfortable in his presence. As head of the Engineers guild, he is also a powerful Elementalist, a learned scholar, and very much interested in what is best for the city and its people. While he does hold the ears of a portion of the merchant houses, his decisions are based on what he believes to be best for Jerris, as opposed to what he believes will further the power of the Engineers.

In the Iopans, Chardis still hopes for a chance to find a way to rid the city of the oppressive ash that he has watched sap the vitality and joy from his people. One of the oldest citizens in the city and one of the few that can remember what life in the kaer was like before returning to the surface, Chardis feels that allowing Iopos to take control of Jerris for a time is an acceptable sacrifice to rid it of the ash. In the Iopans, he sees a threat that he knows how to deal with, as opposed to the ash, which has defied him ever since he first began to study it.

With the current loss of communication with his Engineers, Chardis has begun to rethink his position on this matter. In the time that the Iopans have had to fortify their position, they have made more progress than the elf Elementalist expected they would. No new Engineers have been allowed to join the guild since their arrival, for fear that the Holders of Trust would be able to infiltrate them as they have started to do the rest of the city. The Firescale trolls are a variable that Chardis is entirely uncomfortable with. Harming his Engineers is a crime the elf will not let go unpunished.

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

FERRIN AVRIC

Ferrin Avric is a charismatic leader and an able merchant. A Troubadour by calling, he has used the powers of his Discipline to his advantage, spreading the influence and power of his family's North Star Company until it was the most powerful in Jerris, rivaled only by the Engineers and the upstart Silver Cloud. Ferris is a pragmatic but aggressive merchant and is more than willing to bend the rules or break bones to insure that his family's legacy is secure.

With the end of the war, Ferrin lost powerful trading ties in Vivane and Sky Point, ties he hoped he would be able to re-establish with the Iopans. It took some time for the dwarf to investigate all of the possibilities of trade with the Denairastas and their people, as his company established new trade routes with Cara Fahd and Landis to make up for the lost Theran contracts. However, it soon became apparent that he would never be able to establish a place in the Iopan merchant fleet unless he swore a binding oath to Uhl Denairastas. Once he discovered this, the dwarf threw in his support with the Jerris Resistance secretly, keeping his public support with the Iopans.

Ferrin knows that Pihgram is well meaning; she's earned the respect and trust of even the taciturn people of Jerris with good reason. Every Troubadour knows that not all the tales are as straightforward as they

sound. Using his own spies, Ferrin has begun a slow, bloody, and unseen war against the Holders of Trust in the city. It's a dangerous game, as Ferrin is well aware, but one he also knows Pihgram would never undertake, and one that he sees as vital.

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

KOS STEELGAZE

Kos Steelgaze is a tall, imposing human whose once flame red hair is now liberally salted with grey. His eyes are also steel grey in color and earned him his Name long ago. While in his early fifties, Kos is still a formidable Air Sailor of the Seventh Circle, and an excellent tactician.

Born and raised in the new city of Jerris, Kos still remains a Jerris loyalist. He was in the Falcons for a time as a lieutenant before he left the city to seek a life as an adventurer. When he returned several years later, older, wiser, and scarred, he was welcomed back into the fold and quickly rose through the ranks to become Marshal of the Falcons. He has held the position for nearly twenty years now and has the respect of not only his troops, but also most of the citizenry of Jerris. When the Iopans declared that all Falcons who went to aid in the war were Throalic spies, popular opinion was confused, at best. If the Falcons weren't spies, why had they not returned?

Kos accepted Byth's decision to denounce him and understood the importance of establishing a base of operations for the Resistance outside the watch of the Iopans. If Jerris were ever to build up a strike force to aid in the reclamation of their city, they would require a place to house them. Kos has now become the military commander of the Resistance and maintains the base camp he and his Falcons, along with Briana's crew, discovered within the Wastes.

Kos Steelgaze
Seventh Circle Air Sailor

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

MARA CORAVAN

Mara Coravan is a cousin of the Denairastas and it is obvious that the blood flows through her veins. Though she is common in appearance, she is an Illusionist of no minor powers, and her abilities continue to grow. On the surface, she is friendly, charming, soothing, and suspected of being too genteel to keep within the walls of Iopos. Beneath that veneer, however, is a woman who belongs to the Gold Branch of the Holders of Trust (see *Secret Societies of Barsaive*, p. 36) and is a calculating diplomat. Her assignment as Ambassador to Jerris was no punishment, but instead a direct appointment from Uhl Denairastas.

Mara was assigned to feel out Jerris and find a way to bring the city under Iopos' heel without having to commit a full military force to capturing it. She also holds the network of the Holders of Trust within the city together and coordinates their efforts to subvert the city and gather information. Expanding the network has been a slow process, even with Gellad and an influx of men and gold. A few of her Holders have been killed and Mara has begun to suspect another power has joined forces with the Resistance; it's not a tactic the upstart windling, Pihgram, would commit to.



Mara is aware that the current Marshal of the Falcons is a spy for Throal. She is aware that a base camp has been established for the Resistance somewhere in the Wastes, but as of yet has been unable to get the location. She continues to bide her time, only rushing something when Gellad's demands force her hand.

Mara Coravan

Seventh Circle Illusionist

DEX: 6 STR: 5 TOU: 5

PER: 7 WIL: 8 CHA: 6

GELLAD DENAIRASTAS

A scion of the ruling family of Iopos, Gellad is a nephew of Uhl Denairastas and as an Iopan Magistrate he's in charge of overseeing the new "alliance" with Jerris by using his ties with the Firescale trollmoot (Crystal Raiders, p. 113). Gellad, like most of his family, is a man with ambitions and this operation provided him with an opportunity to impress his uncle, or to fail and fall from grace. Gellad was successful. Jerris was taken, the network of Holders has grown, the shipyards are producing Iopan ships, and the noose is firmly around the city. However, Gellad is growing discontented with simply keeping his hand at Jerris' throat, while the members of the Holders of Trust continue their slow infiltration of the city. He still knows that such a thing would mean Iopos would be able to claim power with a smooth transition and claim the shipyards without losing a single soldier. Jerris was a valuable target, but with the weakness and confusion left by the war, there are more tempting targets that could help his star rise much quicker. The ash of Jerris has begun to get to him; its constant presence is all that is necessary to darken his mood and test his patience. In Mara, he has a loyal member of the Gold Branch who would not dare to plot against him; he could leave her in charge of Jerris, in his Name, and still be able to claim credit for Jerris when the power transition occurred.

On the surface, Gellad Denairastas is what one would expect from a noble scion of a noble family. He is charming, witty, and urbane. He delights in intellectual conversation and is a skilled diplomat. Beneath the surface, Gellad is calculating and cunning, carefully

weighing his every word and deed to bring him the maximum advantage. He is a member of the Gold Branch of the Holders of Trust, like most members of the Denairastas family. He is an Eighth Circle Illusionist and a Sixth Circle Wizard.

Gellad Denairastas

Eighth Circle Illusionist, Sixth Circle Wizard

DEX: 5 STR: 5 TOU: 6

PER: 8 WIL: 7 CHA: 7

Initiative: 5

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 13

Damage:

Broadsword: 11

Number of Spells: See Talents

Spellcasting: 16

Effect: Special

Physical Defense: 8

Spell Defense: 12

Social Defense: 11

Armor: 5

Mystic Armor: 2

Knockdown: 5

Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 67

Wound Threshold: 9

Unconsciousness Rating: 51

Combat Movement: 57

Full Movement: 29

Talents: Astral Sight* 6/14, Dead Fall* 8/15, Enhanced Matrix 6 (Wizardry), Enhanced Matrix 8 (2 Illusion), False Sight* 8/16, Fire Blood 4/10, Melee Weapon 5/13, Resist Taunt 3/10, Spellcasting* 8/16, Spell Matrix 6 (4 Wizardry), Spell Matrix 8 (4 Illusion), Thread Weaving* (Illusionism) 8/16, Thread Weaving* (Wizardry) 6/14, True Sight* 8/16, Willforce 8

Spells in Matrices:

Enhanced Matrix 8 (Illusion: Form Exchange)

Enhanced Matrix 8 (Illusion: Vertigo)

Enhanced Matrix 6 (Wizardry: Sleep)

Spell Matrix 8 (Illusion: Illusionary missiles)

Spell Matrix 8 (Illusion: Mind Fog)

Spell Matrix 8 (Illusion: Stop Right There)

Spell Matrix 8 (Illusion: True Ephemeral Bolt)

Spell Matrix 6 (Wizardry: Levitate)

Spell Matrix 6 (Wizardry: Mage Armor)

Spell Matrix 6 (Wizardry: Razor Orb)

Spell Matrix 6 (Wizardry: Slow)

Karma Action Die: d8

Karma Points: 10

Legend Points: 800

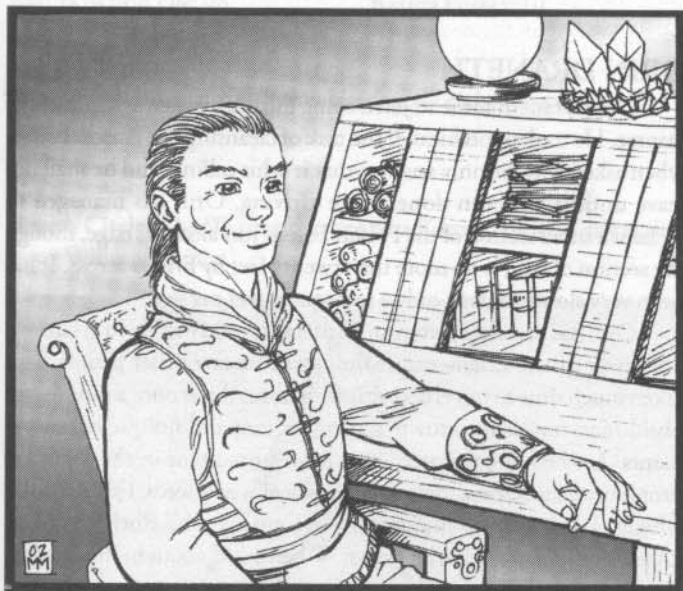
Equipment: Broadsword, Leather

Notes:

Fourth Circle: The Illusionist may spend a Karma Point on any action using Perception only. The Wizard may spend a Karma Point on any action using Charisma only.

Seventh Circle: The Illusionist may spend a Karma Point on any action using Dexterity only.

Gellad can speak, read, and write all of the basic racial languages of Barsaive.



T'KOTH SKULLCLEAVER

T'koth Skullcleaver is one of the Firescale's finest and has been left to maintain the Firescale trollmoot's (*Crystal Raiders*, p. 111) presence in Jerris when Mar'tok Man-Slayer and N'rela Hardeyes returned to oversee matters at home. T'koth is as ruthless as his family Name would indicate and one of Mar'tok's favored seconds. Where T'koth lacks finesse and diplomacy, he tends to make up for it with his imposing physical presence and willingness to kill.

T'koth was left with orders to make sure that the Iopans kept the Firescale's best interests at heart while Mar'tok was not there to watch over their drakkars. So far, the long season of idleness has worn on the usually active raiders and keeping the trolls content with their duties as border patrols for the Iopans would be difficult if they didn't fear Mar'tok's retribution. T'koth himself has started to become bored with his position and its lack of bloodshed and is spoiling for a good fight. As things stand, he does not allow Gellad to get far without his company.



TKoth Skullcleaver
Fifth Circle Sky Raider

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

Initiative: 6
Number of Attacks: 1 (2 Unarmed)
Attack: 12
Damage:
Trollsword: 13
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 10
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 7
Armor: 6
Mystic Armor: 1
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 84
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 66

Combat Movement: 85
Full Movement: 42

Talents: Avoid Blow 5/12, Battle Bellow* 3/8, Battle Shout* 5/10, Fire Blood* 5/13, Great Leap* 5/13, Melee Weapon* 5/12, Shield Charge* 5/13, Swift Kick 3/10, Throwing Weapons 5/12, Unarmed Combat 5/12

Karma Action Die: d4

Karma Points: 8

Legend Points: 300

Equipment: Trollsword/Battle-axe, Hardened Leather, Buckler

Notes:

Fourth Circle: The Sky Raider may spend a Karma Point on any action using Strength only.

HURIN DURIMAR

Hurin spent the first thirty years of his life as a citizen, and then a spy, for his home nation of Throal. When Obakavim was assigned to Jerris, Hurin later entered the city and joined the Falcons. He has served there for the past ten years and become one of their more respected members. When he was approached by Byth to aid Jerris against the Iopans, Hurin was willing to assist even before sending back the official request to the Eyes in Throal; while he has no proof, he knows that the Iopans were responsible for Obakavim's death and intends to see them pay for it.

Hurin walks a careful line, keeping up his duties as both Marshal of the Falcons and a member of the Eye of Throal. If, through his aid, Jerris can be freed from Iopan rule, he will have managed to cement a tight relationship between Throal and Jerris, as well as gotten himself into a very influential position within the city proper. Because of this, and his ties of friendship, he is willing to offer what aid he can to Byth and the Resistance, while at the same time keeping Throal abreast of the situation.

Hurin

Third Circle Scout, Fourth Circle Air Sailor.

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

ORIN DRANETH

Orin Draneth came to Jerris some thirty years ago as a questor of Jaspre. He took upon himself the task of cleansing the Poison Forest; when asked why, he only answers that it is his calling, and he shall not leave until it has been done. Since arriving, Orin has managed to reclaim a small section of the Poison Forest, just along its edge, though the section of land is no more than twenty feet by fifteen across. It has been very slow progress; only a few square feet per year.

Orin has become a fixture in Jerris. He is good friends with Chardis and most of the Engineers, mainly because few other people have taken much time to travel and visit with him. About once a month, the obsidian travels into town and trades rare and unique herbs and plants that he has cultivated from his restored plot in the forest for simple necessities, some tools, and occasionally, new seeds. Even Chardis, who has known the obsidian longest (outside of his Rock Brothers), knows nothing of the Purifier's past. When asked about his time before



the Poison Forest, the questor will only reply that it is a story left for another time.

Orin is a questor of Jasprey that believes life and death are an endless cycle and he cares for the Name-givers and animals he knows, as well as his plot of land. He does not care at all for the Iopans, with their twisted views of loyalty, their cruelty, and their violence. He believes nothing good will come from helping them learn about the ash, but pragmatically admits there is the possibility they could discover something no one else has.

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

IOPAN SOLDIERS/FALCON GUARDS

Fourth Circle Warriors

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

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 11 Social Defense: 7
Damage: Armor: 6
Broadsword: 11 Mystic Armor: 2
Spear: 10 Knockdown: 6
Number of Spells: NA Recovery Tests: 2
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Death Rating: 71 Combat Movement: 85
Wound Threshold: 9 Full Movement: 42
Unconsciousness Rating: 55

Talents: Acrobatic Strike 4/11, Air Dance 4/11, Melee Weapon 4/11, Unarmed Combat* 4/11, Wood Skin* 4/10, Anticipate Blow* 4/10, Throwing Weapons 4/11, Avoid Blow* 4/11, Tiger Spring 4, Down Strike* 4/13

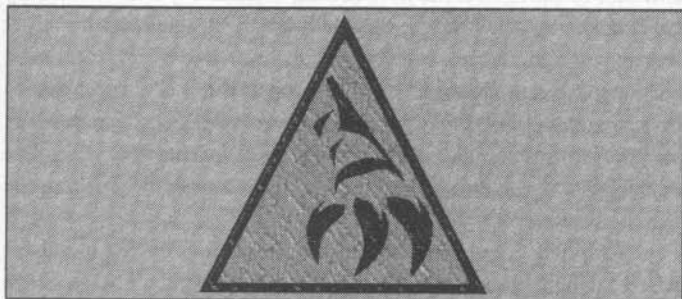
Karma Action Die: d8 Karma Points: 10

Legend Points: 200

Equipment: Broadsword/Spear, Hardened Leather, Buckler
Loot: 10 silver

Notes:

Fourth Circle: The Warrior may spend a Karma Point on any action using Willpower only.



FIRESCALE RAIDERS

Fourth Circle Sky Raiders

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

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 9
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 10 Social Defense: 7
Damage: Armor: 6
Trollsword: 12 Mystic Armor: 2
Battle-axe: 12 Knockdown: 7
Number of Spells: NA Recovery Tests: 3
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Death Rating: 75 Combat Movement: 70
Wound Threshold: 12 Full Movement: 35
Unconsciousness Rating: 59

Talents: Avoid Blow 4/10, Battle Shout* 4/9, Fire Blood* 4/11, Great Leap* 4/10, Melee Weapon* 4/10, Shield Charge* 4/11, Throwing Weapons 4/10, Unarmed Combat 4/10

Karma Action Die: d4 Karma Points: 8

Legend Points: 200

Equipment: Trollsword/Battle-axe, Hardened Leather, Buckler
Loot: 10 silver

Notes:

Fourth Circle: The Sky Raider may spend a Karma Point on any action using Strength only.

RUNNING THE DEATH OF A DENAIRASTAS

The investigation of what happened to Chardis' Engineers is outlined in this section, as well as the event that it leads to: the attack upon Gellad Denairastas. This section outlines what the characters will learn from their search for the lost Engineers and what will happen when they return with that information. It also provides some future adventure ideas and some prologue adventures for running during the year that passed since the War, allowing the characters to familiarize themselves with the city of Jeris, its people, and the power struggles within it.

INTRODUCING THE EVENT

Jeris has been a simmering cauldron of intrigue since the Iopans helped in the 'raid' that occurred during the War. News of the activities that occur in and around Jeris isn't rare, but it's rarely informative. The Iopans keep a pretty firm grasp on the people that come in and out of the city, and those that have learned something they shouldn't rarely slip back out again.

Jeris needs help, preferably help that the Iopans aren't aware of. The Resistance understands that assisting them is a dangerous undertaking; just being aligned with them makes the characters a target

for the Iopans, should they be discovered. For this help, the Jerrisians have been willing to offer groups they find to be trustworthy payment with elemental coins from the Engineers' coffers, rare and unique herbs from Orin's garden, ship repairs from the Silver Cloud members in exile, or any number of tasks that could aid the characters in other quests, should they aid Jerris in its struggle.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following two adventure frameworks are presented in the format described in the **Introduction**. This framework serves as an adventure "blueprint" that gamemasters can flesh out as desired. The adventure ideas describe some events that could precede **Barsaive in Chaos**, or offer follow-up adventures in Jerris after its conclusion.

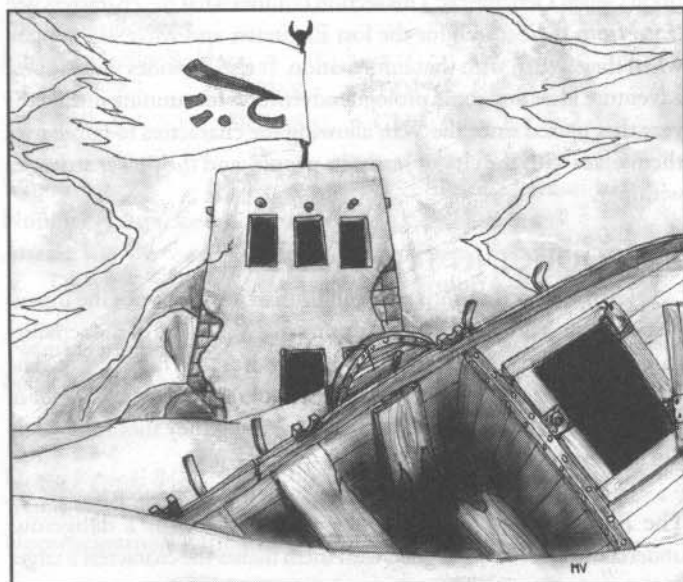
HEARTS OF DARKNESS

Premise

A group of five Engineers that went with the Iopans to study the ash are missing and Chardis wants to know why. He has asked/hired the characters to go into the Poison Forest and discover what has happened to his Engineers. The reason that Chardis has lost contact is that the Engineers were used as experiments by the Iopan forces at a small kaer close to the edge of the Wastes. However, an experiment turned one of the Engineers into some horrible Construct, which then managed to destroy the small outpost. This is what the characters are making their way towards, with Jen Red-Feather's directions.

Set-Up

If the characters were in Throal at any time after the war, they may have been approached by Kos or Ilio and asked to assist Jerris, especially if they have made a name for themselves helping the Horror Stalker Crusade. If the characters are members of the Eye of Throal, they may have been tasked to go and aid Hurin in his efforts to help the Jerris Resistance and learn more about what the Iopans are planning. If the characters met any of the **Important Characters** from Jerris in previous games, they would be approached again and offered payment or favors for their aid.



Chardis will approach this group of Adepts, asking them to locate five of his missing Engineers. He doesn't spare any of the gory details on what the mission would entail; going into the Poison Forest, up to the point of the Wastes, having to locate a kaer that is possibly still occupied by Iopan forces, finding out what happened to the Engineers, and then getting out undetected, if possible, with definitive proof of what occurred. However, in exchange, he is willing to pay them handsomely for the expedition, in addition to providing any necessary equipment: a promise for poultices and salves against the rotting disease of the Poison Forest that they can acquire from Orin, a Booster Potion per character, and seven Last-chance Salves. Five of those are detailed for the Engineers, should the characters find them still alive. He also gives them Jen Red-Feather's directions of the location of the kaer.

At the time of the request, the characters will have a one-week head start on the Iopans. After that week has elapsed, the *Sky Drake* will have missed one of its scheduled check-ins and a group of Silver Branch members will be dispatched on a similar mission towards the kaer.

Event 1

Chardis and the Engineers will smuggle the characters out of the city through the sewer system they built, though for most of the journey they will ask that the characters be blindfolded. If the characters do not agree to this request, then Chardis will agree to provide a diversion, should the characters ask, to aid them in escaping undetected from the Iopan Watch. If the characters do not succeed in leaving the city undetected, they will most likely be pursued by a group of Copper Branch Adepts. They are to meet Orin at his grove, where the obsidiman will instruct them in the dangers of the Poison Forest and provide the poultices that Chardis promised. He will also be able to teach a character with Herbalism or another appropriate skill or talent how to create them, provided they have the proper ingredients.

A direct path from Orin's grove to the kaer takes about two days of travel if the characters stop to camp for the evening. The Poison Forest is perpetually rotting, but most of the plants and creatures that still live there are kept alive somehow. Most of the rotted creatures bear some kind of malice towards those that are not infected and the characters will likely have to fight off many of them (use weaker versions of the Mundane Animals from the *Earthdawn 2nd. Ed. Rulebook*, p. 313, equipped with the same poisoning attack as the ashen corpses) or have their first encounter with ashen corpses (p 101). Navigating the forest is also a difficult task unless the group has someone with an appropriate skill or talent, such as Direction Arrow, Tracking, or Navigation, to follow Jen's directions.

Event 2

The first thing the characters will discover, before finding the entrance to the kaer, is the now-rotting drakkar *Sky Drake*. The ship has listed to one side and it looks like the main entrance to below-deck was once sealed, but has been breached. The rot of the Poison Forest has started to claim the timbers of the ship. If the characters choose to investigate, they will find several ashen corpses wearing Iopan colors, still attempting to make their way into a well-barricaded room. The characters will have to dispatch them if they wish to continue the search of the ship.

Within the room are two of the *Sky Drake's* original crew members: Kiana Lenneth, and Lucien Cendrick, both are human Fourth Circle



Air Sailors (use the statistics for Iopan Soldiers on p 63). Lucien is barely conscious, very wounded, and infected with the rot of the Poison Forest. Kiana isn't in much better shape, though she is at least uninfected. Both have the marks of Oathbreakers on their foreheads, though this detail may be missed since both will try to attack the party when they enter the room. If the characters fight back, the pair are easily dispatched. If the characters attempt to take them without killing them, or convince the pair that they aren't undead or Iopan, then the pair will listen. However, if either of them is killed, the survivor will not cooperate, and will try to attack until killed: they broke their oaths to Uhl and the Copper Branch to try and stay alive together, rather than obey the orders of their Silver Branch Captain and die keeping the Weaver out of the ship.

Aboard the ship, most of the crucial materials have already been taken into the kaer, as either of the survivors will tell the party, should they let them live. However, still aboard the ship is the captain's journal, which clearly identifies Kelien Hroth as a member of the Silver Branch, that the party will need to satisfy Chardis' requirements of proof. If the characters save Kiana and Lucien, they will also be able to provide that proof, as well as describe what little devastation they witnessed when the Weaver emerged from the kaer to attack the ship. They did not witness the full fight, however, before Kiana drug Lucien back to the ship Elementalist's quarters and they barricaded themselves in. They have not been able to leave since.

With a group of five skilled or talented Air Sailors and an able Elementalist, a party of eight could keep this drakkar running and mostly intact long enough to get it back to the Resistance outpost in the Wastes. Kiana and Lucien would aid in this and throw their lot with the characters or the Resistance, since only death would await them back in Iopos for breaking their Oath.

Event 3

Now the characters must enter the kaer proper. If the party saved Kiana and Lucien, they will most likely be too wounded to agree to go back into the kaer. If given no other choice, however, they will concede. The interior of the kaer has once again been covered with ash and the remains of the original Silver Branch members have been reanimated as ashen corpses, ten in all, that now roam the halls. Kiana and Lucien always stayed with the ship, so they will be of no help in navigating the oddly designed kaer. The first floor is like most kaers – the warded main entrance, a defendable tunnel leading to the main gathering hall, and a semi-circle main corridor leading to many dwellings and several bath houses. The second floor looks to have once been the garden and crop production of the kaer, being a large open area where the river passes through warded gates. Marks of enchantments that one acted like a day and night cycle on the ceiling have long since rotted. The third floor looks to have been the administrative ward and one of the chambers has been set up by the Iopans as the experiment room. In this room, the PCs will make several horrific discoveries. First, they will find the unraveled remains of several members of the Iopan force, Kelien included. Second, they will find Kelien's journal, as appears at the beginning of this section (the grimoires of the Iopans are absent, if someone looks for them). Third, they will be able to see the shackled bodies of the Engineers and the state they were in after the experiments and their "preparation". Lastly, the Weaver will attack them.

WEAVER

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

Initiative: 7 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 2(1) Spell Defense: 9
Attack: 10 Social Defense: 7
Damage: 8 Armor: 3
Number of Spells: (2) Mystic Armor: 2
Spellcasting: 9 Knockdown: 5
Effect: See below Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 38 Combat Movement: 42
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 85
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Legend Points: 350

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary:

This is what poor Lorith Paliver became through the Denairastas' experiments, though it bares no recognizable resemblance to the Name-giver it once was. Now, the Weaver looks like the dusky image of a Name-giver, made from constantly swirling ash, with two pinpoints for eyes where there is an utter absence of light. The creature seems to have retained a cruel cunning, as well as a keen grasp of what to do to creatures that are attempting to destroy it.

In any round, the Weaver can strike twice at any creatures within fifteen feet of it by extending one of its ashen arms across the gap. It can also choose to perform one of its abilities, listed below, instead of making melee attacks.

Ashen Form: Any time the Weaver wishes, it may choose to inflict a Wound upon itself (with no Damage) to shift its form into a sparsely scattered cloud of ash, about seven feet by seven feet in area. In this form, it can move itself like intelligent smoke and it can no longer be struck by, or strike with, melee attacks, unless the weapon is a thread item. When it uses this form to cover a Name-giver, they suffer the same coughing fit as they would against the ashen corpses: roll the Spellcasting step for the Weaver against the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the Name-giver is stunned for 1d4 - 1 rounds, coughing. When the Weaver is knocked down, it usually defaults to this form. Returning to the more corporeal form also requires a self-inflicted Wound; however, the Weaver cannot heal in its cloud state.

Corrupt Threads: This attack only works on Adepts using talents. To make the attack, the Weaver rolls its Spellcasting step versus the talent step of the talent the Name-giver is using that round + the Name-giver's Willpower step (Willforce can be substituted for spellcasters). If the Weaver is successful, then the action for the Name-giver is cancelled, as they take the same step (talent + Willpower) in Damage from magical backlash. If the Weaver makes a Heroic success versus a spellcaster weaving a thread, then the Spell Matrix that thread was going to has been blanked by the backlash.

Unraveling: This attack is incredibly difficult for the Weaver in its current state. It must make a successful Spellcasting Test against the target's Death Rating. If it succeeds, then the target falls apart, like a tapestry unraveling to the floor. For attempts at bringing the unraveled



character back, such as with a Last-chance Salve, the character is one point below their Death Rating, with ten Wounds. When a thread is tied to the Weaver, as in the case of Kelien Hroth and several other of the Iopan spellcasters, the creature only needs to beat the Adept's Wound Threshold. In its current state, the Weaver will not attempt this attack against any but the weakest of opponents.

Climax

If the characters defeat the Weaver, then with both the journals or the surviving Iopans and what they've seen, they will have enough evidence for Chardis, and more than enough for the rest of the Resistance. Unfortunately, there is no saving the Engineers, though a Legend Point bonus should be given if the characters take the time to give proper burials to them.

The characters can then choose to take the *Sky Drake* back to the outpost in the Wastes, if they know of its location and are in good standing with the Resistance. However, it will take a week to drop the drakkar off and then be flown back to Orin's grove so they can complete their mission. By this time, the Iopans will have become aware of the destruction of their outpost and the fact that their drakkar is missing. Otherwise, the characters can simply return to Orin's grove and be escorted back into the city via the sewers (blind-folded) or snuck back into the city-proper to meet with Chardis and present the gruesome evidence of their findings.

Sequels

Once the characters are back inside Jerris, they will be led to a private meeting with Chardis by one of the Engineers. The elven Elementalist will listen in stone-faced, white-knuckled silence to their report and will carefully examine all the evidence they provide, taking several minutes to read each journal in silence. If the characters bring the Iopan Air Sailors back with them, as well, he will question them for completeness; however, as long as they are with the party, he will extend the same trust to them that he does the characters. At the end of the meeting, the Engineer's voice will be polite, but with a perceptible undercurrent of restrained emotion. He will ask if the group would mind waiting for him to contact the Resistance for deliberation on what course should be taken from here. For the duration of their wait, the party would be offered a private bathhouse to clean up in, have their wounds tended by one of the Engineers that is also a questor of Garlen (an ork female non-Adept Named Gwynneth Aziel). After a few hours, the party will be asked back into the chamber to meet with Chardis and the Resistance and to offer their insight and experience on this matter.

FULL CIRCLE

Premise

This Framework has two paths, depending on the course of action chosen during the meeting (see below). The first is Chardis' stand (Event 1), where the characters have chosen to aid Chardis in a direct assault against Gellad Denairastas after publicly accusing him of his crimes and presenting proof. The second is retrieving Gellad's dagger (Event 2), where the characters have chosen to aid Ferrin's spies in retrieving the malachite dagger from Gellad's room so that Chardis can cast a ritual through it. If the characters do not chose to aid Chardis in attacking, then skip Event 1.

Set-Up

When the characters are asked to rejoin Chardis, they will also find themselves in the company of Pihgram Tor and Ferrin Avric. What ensues after that is an argument, with three sides:

Chardis wants Gellad to be singled out for his crimes and publicly destroyed. By ordering the Engineers tortured and killed, Gellad has proven himself no better than the Horrors in the eyes of the Elementalist. There is no co-existing with Horrors and their ilk; Gellad must die. The other Iopans with him share some of the guilt, but may have been unaware of the project, or too afraid to stop it, and therefore can be allowed a second chance, unless they try to defend their corrupted leader. Chardis will not be dissuaded by any dangers the characters present to him, or the fact that Gellad has several Circles of experience over him. Before performing this act, he will pass the mantle of leadership for the Engineers to Orin Draneth, so that the Engineers will not be blamed for his actions.

Pihgram thinks that nothing should be done as of yet, except that Chardis should approach Gellad and ask to speak with his five Engineers. When Gellad delivers whatever lie he has concocted to keep Chardis from discovering their fate, Chardis should then withdraw direct Engineer aid in the Iopan research, but continue to provide private research. Pihgram doesn't want to force a fight with the Denairastas until the Resistance is in a stronger position. While the Engineer deaths were the most horrific yet, they were far from the first. The windling woman asks for patience for that reason, and because she believes Chardis will be slaughtered if he goes through with his plan.

Ferrin agrees with Chardis; Gellad should die. However, Ferrin doesn't believe a frontal assault, like Chardis seems to have in mind, will work. Instead, there is a better way, requiring a bit of cloak and dagger. Gellad has an ornamental malachite dagger that, as far as Ferrin's spies can gather, was given to him by Uhl Denairastas himself in his adolescence. Now, it has become a Pattern Item, one powerful enough to cast through. It usually remains in Gellad's room in the Iopan Embassy, under lock and ward, and he only carries it during ceremonial times. If they were to steal that dagger, and Chardis cast a ritual through it, Gellad would have no defense.



During this argument, the characters can directly intervene and take any side, or propose another. It should take some cajoling, but whatever plan the characters are willing to aid in executing will be the path taken (though it should be noted that the other two sides will hold their right to disagree, even as they assist). If the characters ride the argument out, Ferrin will win through cunning use of his natural Troubadour talents and flair, and the characters will be asked to assist in the theft. If the characters side with Pihgram, after the meeting ends and they retire for the evening, Ferrin will convince Chardis to cast the ritual, and will approach the characters if he thinks there is any hope in getting their aid. If not, he will use his spies to steal the dagger.

Event 1

Chardis outlines his plan to make his stand in the square, before the Assembly Hall. There, he can present his accusations before all the merchant houses before beginning his attack on Gellad. On the day of the attack, a fierce wind blows, making the city seem like a small version of the Wastes. The characters are provided with head-wraps that the Resistance employs for their extended stays out in the Wastes. Chardis asks the characters to aid him in confronting Gellad; they need not help him fight the Denairastas unless they wish to, but he asks that they distract the man's escort. Chardis will establish his ground in the square and treat the area in front of it (about 10 yards) with a Tossing Earth spell (see *Earthdawn 2nd Ed. Rulebook*, p. 163) to take care of the 'lesser distractions.'

Gellad arrives at the square with T'koth at his side, as well as a group of six Iopan soldiers and four Firescale trolls. Gellad listens with unflustered calm as Chardis, using an air spell to keep his voice audible to everyone in the square, presents his accusations and his proof. As Chardis presents his case, four more Iopans arrive, unless the characters attempt to quietly stop them (as soon as the Iopans, T'koth, or Gellad see violence, the attack begins). When Chardis finishes his accusation, he points at Gellad, and challenges him to a duel. At that point, Gellad will attempt to Mind Fog Chardis, and the duel is on. Unless the characters stop them, T'koth and the soldiers will also start attacking the Elemental. In the ashen storm, all of the Iopans (including Gellad) suffer a -1 step penalty, as does any character not protected by the head-wraps.

Every other minute (about 6 combat turns), another 1d6 Iopan soldiers will arrive at the square. Chardis will not leave of his own accord until either he or Gellad are dead. When Chardis is knocked unconscious, if the characters do not move to prevent his death, a pair of Falcons will pick him up and get him out of the area, signaling the party to follow.

Once Gellad or Chardis has fallen, the group will need to retreat, or be overwhelmed by Iopan reinforcements. When they make it into the ash-choked alleys of Jerris, the Resistance will lead them through the Iopan guards to the edge of the city, where the *Thrush* will again be willing to rescue a group of Adepts and ferry them out of Jerris into the Wastes. Once they get into the Wastes, Briana is able to lose the pursuit and bring the group to the Resistance base.

If Chardis goes without the party, then it's a short fight with one to eight odds, and the Falcons barely rescue Chardis from being killed.

If the characters and Chardis kill Gellad, then skip Event 2.

Event 2

If the characters went through Event 1 and Gellad is not dead, then Chardis will consent to Ferrin's plan. The characters will again be asked for their assistance, but regardless of their decision, the theft of the dagger will occur.

For Ferrin's plan to work, there are essentially three parts: the distraction, the extraction, and the ritual itself.

The distraction needs to be large enough to attract the Iopan forces, and possibly even the Firescales. For this purpose, Ferrin has arranged a strike against one of the Iopan vessels in the shipyards using three very expensive canisters of Elemental Fire. If the characters choose to take this assignment, then their task is to plant the three canisters on two Iopan vessels being repaired and one Firescale ship. If the canisters are struck, or the command word ("Surprise" in dwarf) is spoken, they will rupture, unleashing about a quart of Elemental Fire, which, if properly placed, will easily start a conflagration. The characters will then have to fight or sneak their way through the Iopans and enraged Firescales to get back out of the shipyards and into the sewers, where they can be escorted to safety.

The extraction will rely on stealth. Once the distraction is well underway, a group will need to make their way to Gellad's room on the second floor. It is one of the inner rooms and thus lacks any windows. There, they will need to disable the magical wards on the door and desk that, if triggered, will set off a magical alarm (Detection Difficulty Number: 10, disarm Difficulty Number: 12 to disarm, 15 to avoid). There is an additional trap on the dagger sheath (Detection Difficulty Number: 10, disarm Difficulty Number: 12) that will trigger, when picked up, the Illusionist spell Stop Right There (see *Earthdawn 2nd Ed. Rulebook*, p. 170) that will alert the guard, as well as possibly immobilizing the intruders. Once they have the dagger, the group is to make their way back into the city, losing or stopping any Iopan guards that may discover their presence. Once in the city, they are to deliver the dagger to the ritual site.

The ritual will be prepared ahead of time, as much as possible, before the dagger is delivered. Chardis will only perform the ritual from the home of Lorith Paliver, despite the risk of discovery, and Ferrin will send an escort with him to make sure no-one disrupts his Thread Weaving before the spell is ready. When the dagger arrives, it is possible that Iopans have followed the thieves from the extraction, and they will need to be drawn away so the site isn't discovered before Chardis can finish the spell and destroy Gellad.

Once the dagger is in Chardis' hand, the ritual will only take five more minutes to complete.

Climax

If the dagger has arrived and the Iopan pursuit shaken, then within the confines of the small house, Chardis draws the dagger down his arm, spilling his blood on the blade, and sets it a small bowl of Elemental Earth. He then takes out a small, circular bronze disk covered in flowing Sperethiel; it is a page from his own spell grimoire for the ritual. He drops the disk and an Elemental Fire coin into the bowl with the dagger before weaving the final thread. The dagger, the disk, and the coin merge and flare with a white-hot light, slowly melting in the bowl. When nothing is left but a lumpy pool, the light fades. The elf then slowly looks up, his expression betraying his weariness. His voice further betrays his emptiness when he states, "We have now

come full circle. Just as King Varulus was destroyed, now one of the architects of his death shares a similar fate."

Elsewhere in the city, Gellad Denairastas is consumed in a pyre of Elemental Fire.

The characters are offered the chance to come with the Resistance as they escort Chardis back to the base in the Wastes, so that they do not have to fight their own way out of the city.

The next day (after the successful attack, or the successful ritual), Mara Coravan calls the town to the square, where she presents an elf that looks exactly like Chardis Morningfall. In front of the citizenry of Jerris, she tells them that what happens now is the fate of those that strike against Iopos. With a wave of her hand, the elf screams and melts into a pool of sludge that then ignites. The doppelganger's ashes disappear into the ash-covered streets of Jerris, as Mara warns the city that further acts of terrorism will bring the iron fist of Iopos down on its neighbor in war.

OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

Below are two additional adventure ideas based on the *Death of a Denairastas*. The first takes place before the events of *Barsaive in Chaos*, and would allow the characters to become familiar with the city. The second is an adventure seed for some adventures after the death of Gellad.

UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT

As an introduction to the city, its major players, and the tension caused by the occupation, the characters could arrive in Jerris by fairly common means: escorting a merchant caravan, stopping in the city during their travels, or called to come aid a friend with a delivery of goods. On the morning after they've entered the city, a fairly influential member of the Jerris merchant houses is found murdered, and the Falcons (under the strong recommendation of Gellad) shut down passage in and out of the city for the investigation, with the recently arrived party considered among the suspects. The truth of the matter is that the merchant was recently converted to the Holders of Trust, only to wind up dead the next day. It may have been some of Ferrin's men that silenced him, or something more sinister that has started stalking

the streets of Jerris at night. Either way, the characters only have a short time to prove their own innocence, or find a way out of the city.

TRICK OR TREATIES

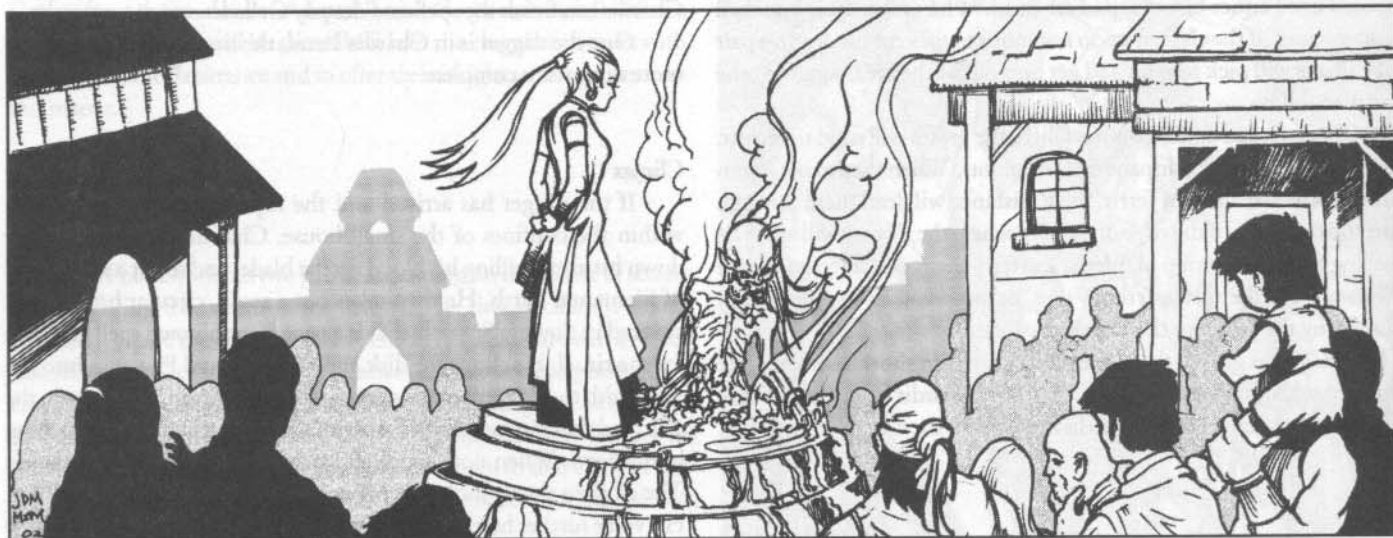
After the death of Gellad, the Resistance needs political ties more than ever with the other powers of Barsaive: places like Travar, Urupa, Kratas, the t'skrang merchant houses, Cara Fahd, and possibly even distant Parlainth and the dragon, Charcoalgrin. Anyone willing to take their request for aid and act as diplomats on their behalf will be well rewarded for their efforts—a small counterbalance to the amount of danger they will be undertaking. In each of those places of power there are already Iopan agents active, agents willing to protect the Iopan interest in Jerris by making sure the Resistance's voice isn't heard, or that its advocates are demonstrated to be disreputable.

LOOSE ENDS

Mara Coravan sends back reports of the events in Jerris to Uhl Denairastas and maintains control over the city through intimidation and fear in the aftermath of Chardis' attack and Gellad's death. In return, Uhl puts Mara fully in charge of Jerris and sends a small group of Iopan soldiers to bolster her under strength force, as well as a member of the Orichalcum Branch of Holders as her personal bodyguard, so there is no repeat of this incident. Mara also requests some additional inquisitors, to begin the process of brainwashing new Holders, regardless of their previous ties. Orin Draneth publicly takes control of the Engineers with Chardis' "death" and comes out in support of Mara's declaration of anti-terrorism.

Chardis Morningfall takes refuge at the Resistance camp in the Wastes and continues his research on the ash. While the Resistance can show that Iopos didn't kill Chardis by the simple fact that he is still alive, they know that to bring him back into Jerris would surely be his death if done before the Iopans are de-fanged. Ironically, the journal written by Kelien Hroth provides Chardis with new insight into the nature of the ash and inspires a new series of questions and spells for him to test in his exile.

The Resistance continues to try and gain aid from the other nations of Barsaive by pointing out the danger that Iopos represents and the power that owning the Jerris shipyards gives them.



A STORM OF HORRORS



"We, fair gentlemen, are a shadow that is in decline, and our lives are withered like grass. The age for personal secrecy is a long absent memory. Too long have we lived in fear of the opportunity to destroy our Order. Too long have we sought shelter in silence, granting ourselves absolution for the crime of inaction by stating that it was for the good of the Order. I now announce to the common man with pronounced affection that we few are a band of brothers sent here by higher inspiration to offer him hope in the current storm. For today, he who sheds blood with me is my brother; be he an abomination to the Skies themselves. For the record of this day shall temper his Legend, and women will weep at the mention of his passing. And Warriors throughout the world who are now sleeping in comfortable beds and sharpening bloodless swords will curse their own breath and think themselves cowards that they were not standing at our sides, and will hold their lives cheap whilst in the presence of our graves. We are the Lightbearers of this world, my brothers, and may the world tremble at the shattering of our footsteps."

— These are the last recorded words of an obsidian Lightbearer who wore no markings and carried no standard, but rallied the small force of Adepts and announced the Lightbearer presence at the defense of the village of Kimlan, a village in the path of a Horror Cloud. The Lightbearers and other Adepts perished fighting the abominations within the cloud, but their lives bought the time necessary for the villagers to evacuate. That day, less than thirty Name-givers saved the lives of more than ten times their number.

BACKGROUND

The Horror Clouds are on the move across Barsaive after the destruction of Vivane, and one has weakly settled in the Death's Sea to recharge, much like a hurricane over warm waters. The Horror Cloud is drawing in power in preparation for an assault on the city of Travar. The cloud's resting place is over a section of the Death's Sea near Mount Bloodfire, a favorite mining location of a group of True Fire harvesters led by Domek, who has recently entered into contract with Throal to provide True Fire to the military.

This newest development in the cloud's activity has been observed by three notable groups. First is the True Fire harvester Domek and his

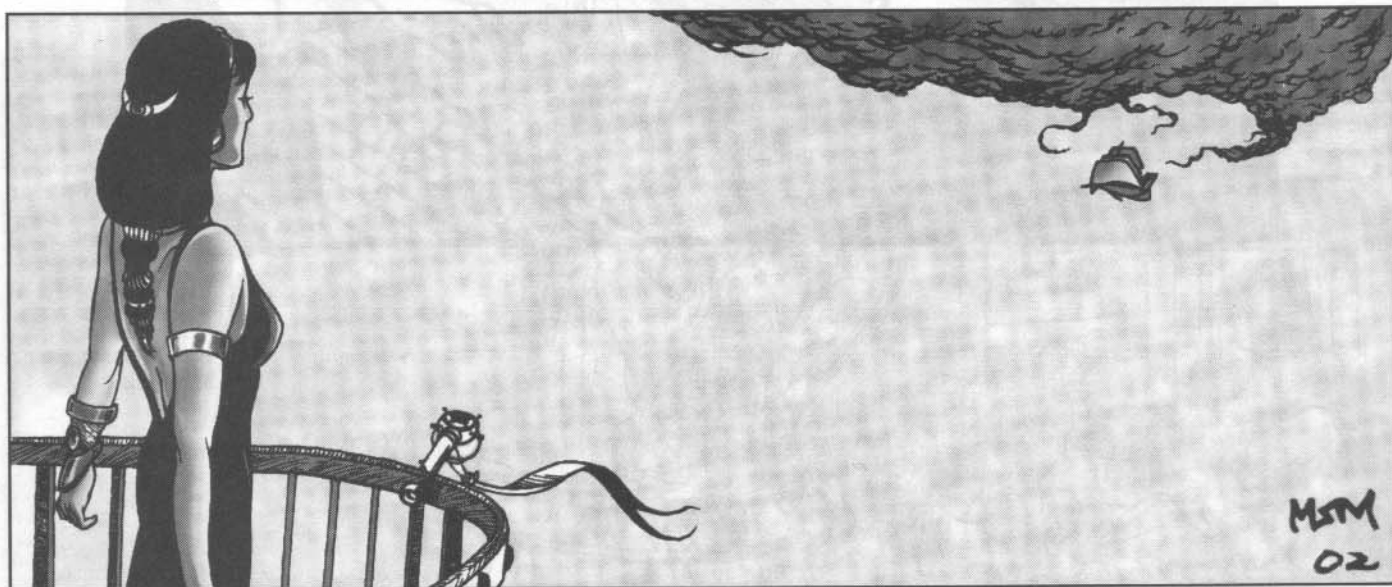
crew. The second is the dragon Dvilgaynon who has been trailing it for some time aboard one of the handful of ships in the Cara Fahd Navy, the *Bunda*, and is attempting to study it and find a weakness. The third is the hapless crew of the mining galley *Portina*, who have managed to maneuver their crippled airship to the volcano Mount Bloodfire between the Death's and Scarlet Seas.

The crew of the *Portina* are currently taking refuge in a nearly unknown kaer Named Fenaria. This huge labyrinth of tunnels fortified with True Earth and True Fire kept a good deal of the local True Fire harvesters and miners safe from Horrors during the Scourge, as well as many of the Beast Masters from the area now known as The Badlands. The ancient elemental animal guardians of the kaer have now gone feral and live in the tunnels that were once Fenaria, making it completely unsuitable for life by normal Name-giver races. It is for this reason that there are preparations being made by one of the smaller ships of Domek's outpost to rescue the hapless survivors.

EVENT SYNOPSIS

The characters, after being sent to escort a cargo of Elemental Fire back to Throal, become involved with the rescue of the crew of one of the mining ships, the *Portina*, that was downed in a storm. The storm is actually one of the dreaded Horror Clouds, its eye the reanimated remains of a Theran kila with a Horror Construct for a captain, the crew now a pack of ravenous cadaver men. The cloud is looming well within striking distance of Mount Bloodfire.

In fact, the *Portina* barely escaped capture by the Horror Cloud, which intended to turn the *Portina's* crew into cadaver men to bolster its own numbers. The drama of the ship's near destruction was played out before Dvilgaynon, who was observing from the deck of her nearby airship over the shores of the Blood Sea. The biggest threat is the fact that the Horror Cloud is more than capable of destroying a full flotilla of airships now. At full power it will surely have enough power to destroy a city ... and that is just what its captain intends to do. The city of Travar offers a tasty victory and plenty of opportunity for the Horror Cloud. Will the characters be able to rescue the crew of the *Portina*, and more importantly, keep the Horror Clouds from claiming another city?



IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

BOHAUS

Bohaus is the de facto captain of the stranded Air Sailors of the *Portina*. Bohaus has always been a follower since the day he signed on. Bohaus once served in the Theran Navy as a simple sailor, but during one of his tours he found himself in the mountains and separated from his crew. It was during this time he met his wife, a weaver Named Delidia and they married and raised their son Mochan. One of the greatest joys in Bohaus' life is his family, and for his family he has given up any aspirations of being anything but a good crewmember and collecting his pay to provide for his family. He is slightly nervous about all things Theran as he is, by definition, a deserter. Of course since it was his ship that abandoned him he sees himself more as a deserter.

The fact that he is the ranking and most experienced of the sailors run aground on the volcanic kaer makes him the commander, but Bohaus has been praying fervently to the Passions since being thrust into command to have the burden lifted from him. His devotion to his shipmates keeps him steady for the time being, but if someone should prove himself to be a better leader, Bohaus he will gladly and enthusiastically give them his support in taking the captaincy.

Bohaus is currently quite moody and the strain of command has made his thoughts somewhat scattered. This lack of focus makes him snap at those around him, but his competence is making up (barely) for his lack of leadership and he knows it. He expresses a sincere desire to make it back home to see his wife and son and will even occasionally say their names under his breath like a mantra while he works, to remind him of his goal and allow him to focus. Bohaus is a fourth Circle human Air Sailor of advanced years.

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

CAPTAIN CHURGARG LLOUD BELLOW

Churgarg has been fighting since he was at his grandfather's knee upon a thundra beast on the plains of what is now Cara Fahd. The ways of the ork scorcher are known to him as though he had written all of them on his saddle between campaigns. His Name Loud Bellow comes from his years of imposing himself on his fellows. With his loud, booming voice and massive frame he came to power on the plains. Churgarg had been an adventurer in his youth and was a rebel, bucking tradition as he tried new things, and his curious nature led him to many misadventures. He even spent time amongst the Sky Raiders of the mountains in his youth and knows more troll curses than most lowlander trolls.

It was this experience that would pull him from the plains in his older years. In his aging years he became very hidebound, in a fashion that younger members of his clan found amusing. The age of Loud Bellow turned from an age where the Bellow was for change and ambition to the age where the Bellow was for status and tradition. His fellow clan leaders who had seen him in his younger days were distressed when they saw the turn that their dear friend had taken. The young braggart and blow hard had become a swaggering old windbag.

During the War, between the Siege of Triumph and the Battle of Sky Point, the Therans sent an expedition to Cara Fahd to test the resolve of the new ork homeland and they stumbled into the domain

of one Churgarg Loud Bellow. In characteristic ork fashion, the old ork lined up his cavalry and would have been destroyed had it not been for the timely intervention of the ork drakkar *Missing Finger*.

The ork cavalry was falling under the heavy fire cannon of the vedette *Demonstratus* when the drakkar swept over the landscape and took up a position over the flag of Churgarg. The old man was in a fury watching the cannon of the Therans destroy his mighty clan and was heard to utter his loudest bellow ever, leaping from his galloping thundra beast onto the deck of the speeding drakkar. The orks on board cheered as he ran to the bow and, screaming troll obscenities, leapt onto the Theran vedette ahead of the boarding party.

The fight was short and ugly. The vedette was overcome quickly by the orks who, immersed in battle fury, brought it down into a mass of cavalry. The cavalry charged their thundra beasts over the furrowed earth to the sides of the grounded ship and brought terror to the Therans left aboard.

After the battle, the clans gathered and found a laughing Churgarg seemingly renewed with vigor, shouting about the fact that he had given the invading Therans the *bunda* from the ground, but they couldn't see him, so he had to catch a ride to give them the infamous ork gesture up close. The remaining members of Churgarg's clan laughed as he slammed his spear into the deck and shouted, "I am Churgarg! And this ship is my *Bunda* to all Therans!" The clan dispersed and the celebration began.

Churgarg was as surprised as anyone when, the following week, a band of ork Air Sailors recruited from Throal approached him on the battlefield and asked him if he was captain of the *Bunda*. Laughter peeled from him as he said he was the ultimate master of the *Bunda*!

His laughter turned to a shocked silence as the high chieftain of Cara Fahd, Krathis Gron herself, moved through the crowd and offered him the second captaincy of the newly formed Cara Fahd Navy.

Churgarg had no choice but to accept the honor as his own words had sealed his fate, but he was heard laughing as the *Bunda* took flight for the first time after its refit as a cavalry carrier. He felt young again enough to take on the entire Theran Navy with his new tactical ideas.

Churgarg

Sixth Circle Cavalryman, First Circle Sky Raider.

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

DOMEK

This dealer in Elemental Fire ekes out a living and is a genuine man of character. He cares deeply for his crew but understands that they have a deadly occupation. Domek has been harvesting fire since his family came from kaer Fenaria into the new world. His father and his father's father in the past have always crafted Elemental Fire. Domek is the first son in decades to be born a non-Adept. He has worked without Adept magic to become one of the best harvesters and he uses his common sense and skills to lead his harvesters. Adepts and non-Adepts in the Death's Sea area respect his skills and leadership aboard his ship *Father's Son*. He will not, however, risk his crew without good reason, and will do all in his power to protect them and their families. The crew has a small outpost just west of the Scarlet Sea and north of the Death's Sea. It is near the volcano, but not close enough to put it in peril from the raging mountain or the fire seas. It is often said of Domek



that his compassion makes him a poor miner, but a fine leader of men. His work ethic, to mine only when it is safest, does have its advantages however. His harvests are usually very consistent and of high quality, and his miners are some of the best in the region, due mainly to their longevity. Domek's care and patience have saved many a miner's life and for these qualities he is much respected. Domek has worked so long with the weight of responsibility on his shoulders that he seems to think of little else. It is because of this that although he has an understanding with Mesthia, he has never settled down and made a family, although he would gladly do it should things go his way, which is why he has put such care into crafting a solid contract with Throal. He is nearing a very mature age for an operating fire miner and has been spending more and more time off of the ship and in the offices at his outpost. Due to his meeting with the characters, he was not onboard the *Portina* and although it is in no way his fault that it crashed, he still feels very responsible.

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

FODOBARGUS

Fodobargus is an Eighth Circle obsidiman Elementalist who watches silently over the Keystone of Fenaria. In the times before the Scourge he and Moorkindre built and installed the keystone system. A long time into the Scourge, Fodobargus succumbed to sleep due to his extensive term underground and he stands vigilant as a statue in the control chamber. If revived he will be able to fire the lava cannon system using the keystones. In his youth, Fodobargus was an Elementalist of minimal talents only, but his true skills lay in working elemental tools for his fellows. He found himself in the Death's Sea to harvest the True Fire that he would use to craft his elemental tools as well as crafting Elemental Earth. He would also trade these elements for Elemental Air with the trollmoots, but never gained skill in their crafting. Elemental Water was impossible for him to grasp. Perhaps the fluid nature of air and water were just too alien to him, given his fondness for Elemental Earth. It was said that Fodobargus was the most good-natured of Name-givers and that his creation of a weapon to be used against the Horrors bothered him. Not because of any liking for the Horrors, but rather the mere concept of using his skills for the creation of a weapon. A long life and great skill combined with having become accustomed to being thought of as an expert in his field lead him to be quite soft spoken.

After being revived he will take some small time to adjust to the sensation, but will be able to immediately answer questions regarding the kaer and its guardians. He will see the kaer's weaponry as a final solution almost immediately if the situation is fully revealed to him, as the capability for long range fire was originally one of the drawbacks he saw in its design (In the possibility of damaging friendly ships in the wash of flushing a Horror). He will, however, need to be convinced of the evil nature of the Horror Cloud before he will use the keystone in any operation against it.

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

MESTHIA

Mesthia is Domek's second in command of the mining galley *Father's Son*. Born in the outlying villages of The Badlands near the Kava moot, she has a unique view of the world. Life is hard. That is her philosophy and her creed.

Given to hard work and the harsh life of a miner of True Fire, she has given up any concept of the easy life. She therefore seems very cold and distant. Her most obvious trait is her complete lack of compassion or understanding for those who complain about their hardships. Her life has been one of constant suffering and very little release from the pains of living in the most ruined area of Barsaive. She cannot comprehend a life without suffering and when someone complains, she compares it to the hardships she has faced and usually their complaints don't measure up. She does her job, she works hard, she earns her pay and it keeps her from slipping back into the streets. She hopes to save enough money to buy her own ship someday. She is cold to say the least, but may warm to people who prove their worth without complaint. This means, however, that she doesn't warm up to people very fast. She currently has no use for romance, but has formed an agreement of sorts with her captain, Domek. Her skills as an Air Sailor and his skills as a leader complement one another and they have managed to keep that separate from their personal lives thus far. In all instances she is cold to the point of ice with the major exception of Domek's safety. Should she find him in danger her attitude will turn to fire that burns as bright as the Death's Sea itself.

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

SUVAR

Suvar is a outcast troll whose drakkar does freelance guard duty for Domek. His expulsion from the trollmoots is a very sore subject and he would rather not be reminded of it. Should anyone investigate (by not asking Suvar, which will probably result in a beating if he is pressed) they will discover that Suvar was expelled for lusting after his captain's daughter... and was caught in a compromising position. Unfortunately, the trysting daughter, though interested in his passion, found it much easier to surrender her amorous beau to the tender mercies of her father, and his popular status made the expulsion proceedings go horribly against Suvar. The troll wandered the ashen wastes collecting unfortunate outcasts and enough materials to construct his drakkar the *Neverleep*. The drakkar is understandably a roughshod vessel though that should not be said in front of Suvar, or any of his crew for that matter. The ship is surprisingly sound and the crew laughingly tell tales of its earlier days when it was not so. The ship was so Named due to Suvar's worried nights at the tiller, unable to sleep lest the ship fall apart while he wasn't watching. His years with Domek have given him the means to refit the *Neverleep* several times and his vessel serves Domek as a guardian from pirates and other raiders when the time comes to ship the fire out to customers. Unfortunately, the fact that his horns have been shorn off make it very obvious he has been expelled from his trollmoot, the bloodlore and the scars over most of his exposed flesh serve as a warning that he has survived far more than most. Most crystal raiders will openly despise Suvar and he returns most of their disdain. As a follower of Thystonius, Suvar has a firm belief that he holds his Passion's favor through his ordeals and unwillingness to submit to adversity. Suvar,



though quick to anger, is also quick to cool once his anger is addressed and honor satisfied. Unlike many die hard crystal raiders, often a mere apology will cool him off, but it must be sincere, and the trick is to deliver it before one of his crushing blows lands. Suvar is most often jovial around his shipmates and friends, but very cold to outsiders until they have proven their friendship or worth to the ship as crew. Suvar's mixed band of crewmates know all too well about their captain's hot button and will work hard to prevent any characters from pushing it. Should the characters disregard the warnings, however, they will be considered fair game by the crew in the ensuing brawl. Suvar is a Seventh Circle Sky Raider.

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

THYSTRA SILVERMANE

The last surviving Beast Master born in kaer Fenaria is quite short and could almost be mistaken for a human rather than an elf. His hair is sparse and white with age. His exposed skin is a mass of scars and healed over burns. His youth in the kaer serving with fire beasts has left him with enough experience that he travels The Badlands and the shores of the Death's Sea with near fearlessness.

His wandering nature has smoothed over with age, and his newest companion, Gobraak the thundra beast, helps him get around. He is loathe to admit to his own weaknesses and loves the thrills of adventuring, but the time is approaching when he will no longer be able to contribute his sword arm to adventure. Although he is nearing the end of his career, it would be difficult to convince him that he should slow down. In fact, his search for a return to his glory days will lead him to overextend himself and take on tasks he may not be able to complete.

His complete devotion to the beasts in his care makes him one of the most trusted in the area for the care of beasts and in many ways he has been serving as a healer for the outpost's load beasts and other animals. Thystra is unusual amongst Beast Masters in that he loves people and works well in a group, a trait rare in the Beast Master ranks but a holdover from his days as a kaer's Beast Master. As part of the defensive force of kaer Fenaria he is fully versed in the capabilities of the Keystone and still remembers Fodobargus fondly, however like most of the kaer's inhabitants he does not know what the keystone system is capable of from outside the kaer. He will know of the obsidian Fodobargus' role as the keeper of the Keystone as well as his role in the creation of the keystone, though it happened long before his birth.

He will, if asked, suggest that the most knowledgeable person where the kaer machinery is concerned is Fodobargus, which will come into play if the players decide to find the missing members of the *Portina*. As for the layout of the kaer and the surrounding tunnels, he knows as well as anyone that it is Fodobargus who knows the most about the floorplans and the guardians.

Luckily for the players, Thystra is good natured and eager to help if there is an expedition to Mount Bloodfire to rescue the *Portina*. In fact, he will begin to mumble to himself the names of the guardians if asked. He is not as skilled in combat as he once was, but his animal empathy skills make up for it. Gobraak, due to Thystra's influence, is surprisingly docile if the decision is made to move by air. Should Thystra

be slain, however, the players will have a panicky and angry thundra beast on their hands.

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

CAPTAIN VALESTHAR

Valesthar is typical of Theraan royalty. Born of wealth, his family has gotten him everything he ever wanted, even buying him a commission in the Theraan Navy. His commanders recognized his potential immediately, as he used dark means to eliminate his rivals and work his way up through the ranks. After several years in the service, leaving foes behind in disgrace, he was made commander of the Dreveaon. He served in the fleet sent to Throal to help put down the impudent rebels under Admiral Hartmallen. His complete fervor for victory verged on psychosis and the Horror Cloud was drawn to him like a moth to a flame. A single minded devotion to inflicting terror has twisted this young captain and led to his downfall. Upon its creation, the Horror Cloud made Valesthar its cruel heart. The infusion of the Horror and the captain has made a truly frightening creation. The raw power and destruction of the Horror Cloud takes its lead from the classical naval savvy of the captain, who retains all his knowledge and command abilities. His crew's loyalty to him in life has followed into the awful twilight of death and his troops will follow his command and they continue to maintain the Dreveaon as the core of the cloud as any Theraan Navy crew would. Some of the cadaverous crew have yet to realize their deaths and are under the illusion that they still serve the Empire of Thera under Valesthar. Such crewmembers would be quite unpredictable if convinced of their current status as crewmen on a Horror ship.

The kila itself thrums with life and, as the extension of Valesthar and his Horror Cloud, breathes and beats in time to his heartbeat. The kila's construction is the same as any other, however its transformation into a Horror has given it a far different astral form. It is this huge astral form which makes the kila portion of the Horror that is Valesthar



almost impossible to harm from the outside. Besides the horrifying cloud, the kila's batteries of fire cannon and other weaponry serve to protect the core. (Statistics for the kila are found in the *Earthdawn Companion 2nd ed*, p. 198). Of course, the real power still lies in the lightning and thunder churning around the kila: the Horror Cloud. The intensity of one of its lightning bolts will easily turn a small airship to cinders. The continual bombardment of such bolts would surely be insurmountable. Perhaps a full formation of heavy airships could combat the Horror Cloud, were it not for the winds that spin across the axis of the ship, making the proper control of any assaulting airships virtually impossible. Only the most capable of captains could keep a ship's guns steady in such a gale, but none could combat both wind and lightning assault.

DEX: 8 STR: 10 TOU: 18
PER: 20 WIL: 20 CHA: 25

Initiative: 9	Physical Defense: 9
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 12
Attack: 15	Social Defense: 25
Damage: 15	Armor: 20
Number of Spells: 2	Mystic Armor: 9
Spellcasting: 15	Knockdown: 10
Effect: See Powers	Recovery Tests: 6

Death Rating: 170	Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 25	Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune	
Horror Durability: 10 (figured in)	

Karma Points: 30 Karma Step: 12

Legend Points: 25,000
Equipment: Theran Military Uniform, Broadsword
Loot: None

Horror Powers: Lightning 15 (see the Climax of Remember Vivane, p. 80), Horror Mark 18, Damage Shift 14, Animate Dead 14, Unnatural Life 14, Corrupt Karma 14, Cursed Luck 12, Immunity to Fear

XELERTIOS

Xelertios is a freelance elf Adept working as a guard for the *Portina*. The voyage was supposed to be a "milk run" and he is most excited by the fact he has been fighting off elemental animals and guardians almost non-stop since the crash. Xelertios is a youthful firebrand and has been looking for trouble since he was still at his mother's knee. As a student, his skills were only just above acceptable, due mainly to his general impatience and fondness for shortcuts. Since becoming a journeyman, however, he has become more skilled than even his teachers would have suspected possible. This skill comes from constantly honing his skills through adversity. He often throws himself at the most difficult of tasks he can find, surviving them and picking up skills and nuances to his art that a classroom could never provide. He has been working to harden what defenses the *Portina* can muster but hasn't got much to work with. He is a very proud man, though, and given to temper tantrums should anyone attempt to usurp his claimed authority. His

defenses are sound enough, but should anyone suggest changes (even for the better) he will oppose them in any way possible short of violence. His nasal voice is made worse by the smoky air and the harsh, dry atmosphere. He is prone to fits of coughing, and a clever healer might notice him flinch when he coughs. Xelertios has sustained several broken ribs since the crash but his pride will not allow him to ask for assistance. When first encountered, Xelertios is at two thirds of his Death Rating and is suffering from at least 2 Wounds. Xelertios is a Sixth Circle Elementalist.

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

CREATURES WITHIN FENARIA



FIRE EAGLES OF FENARIA

DEX: 11 STR: 5 TOU: 4
PER: 5 WIL: 5 CHA: 6

Initiative: 11	Physical Defense: 6
Number of attacks: 3	Spell Defense: 12
Attack: 8	Social Defense: 8
Damage:	Armor: NA
Claws (x2): 6	Mystic Armor: 2
Beak: 5	Knockdown: 7
Number of spells: 1	Recovery Tests: 2
Spellcasting: 6	
Effect: 8 (for fire trail)	

Death Rating: 30	Combat Movement: 50/110*
Wound Threshold: 7	Full Movement: 100/220*
Unconsciousness Rating: 21	*Flying

Legend points: 85
Equipment: None
Loot: Fire eagle eggs, Fire eagle feathers



Commentary

These fire eagles are the descendents of the noble flights that defended kaer Fenaria in the days of the Scourge. These fire eagles, with their 12-13 foot wingspans, are slightly larger than most encountered in the Twilight Peaks. Their larger size is due to the care and breeding given them by the ancient Beastmasters of Fenaria. Other than being slightly larger, the only difference between them and standard fire eagles is that they are much more likely to work with a Beastmaster than the truly feral ones. The vision of these birds is still a wonder to behold, as their bodies are adorned with flaming feathers fueled by the Elemental Fire in their very blood, but the beauty of the fire is as dangerous as its heat when combined with the huge black claws they also possess. The combination of beak and claws is used to make swooping attacks that do not force the standard penalties to their Physical Defense. Usually the claws are used for attack, but a downed bird or one found in a confined space will use its beak as well.

The fire of the eagle is not just for looks; it makes a potent defense in combat as well. After its normal attacks are made, the fire eagle makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the target will take Step 8 Damage from the fire that trails in the bird's wake. Mystic Armor and various fire protections will prevent or reduce this Damage.

The eggs and feathers of fire eagles are valuable, but the local fire miners and Elementalists, not to mention the Beastmasters, will react poorly to those who would claim them from these noble beasts who once defended them from danger.

HELLHOUNDS OF FENARIA

DEX: 7 STR: 8 TOU: 6
PER: 3 WIL: 4 CHA: 4

Initiative: 7
Number of Attacks: 2
Attack: 9
Damage:
Bite: 10
Claws: 8
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 8
Effect: 10
Physical Defense: 7
Spell Defense: 7
Social Defense: 6
Armor: 5
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 8
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 8
Unconsciousness Rating: 53
Combat Movement: 40
Full Movement: 80

Legend Points: 130
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

Hellhounds were initially brought into kaer Fenaria to spot astral Horrors traveling in the lava tubes around the heart of the kaer. Their speed and agility also enabled them to escape through those same tubes to avoid the blasts of the keystone lava system.

Their ability to breathe fire was also useful and their howls lent credence to the stories that Mt. Bloodfire was a passageway to death's domain beneath the Death's Sea. Their fire breathing can be done



three times per day, but diminishes with each use. The hound will make a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. A character hit by the fire will take Step 10 Damage which will burn for the next three rounds doing Step 6 Damage each round unless put out. The second time it is used in a day, reduce the Spellcasting step by one, and the third time it is used reduce the Spellcasting step by 2. These reductions also apply to the Damage caused by the fire. The hellhound sees astrally with its Spellcasting rather than Perception. The claws and teeth are used for attack if the hound's fire runs out.

The hellhounds of Fenaria are very territorial and generally travel in packs of five. Unlike most packs of hounds, they will evaluate their prey before attacking. This behavior is a carry over from their guardian upbringing, where they would have to locate and evaluate a creature before bolting to report it to their Beastmaster. These days, the alpha male of the pack will accept the report and lead the attack. Due to their territorial nature any intrusion will be attacked, but most of the packs will be satisfied with keeping intruders out of the kaer and its immediate environs.

STONE LIONS OF FENARIA

DEX: 10 STR: 9 TOU: 12
PER: 6 WIL: 8 CHA: 5

Initiative: 10
Number of attacks: 2
Attack: 12
Damage:
Bite: 16
Claw (x2): 12
Number of spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA
Physical defense: 13
Spell Defense: 10
Social Defense: 8
Armor: 15
Mystic Armor: 4
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 60
Wound Threshold: 15
Unconsciousness Rating: 54
Combat movement: 75
Full movement: 50



Legend Points: 400

Equipment: None

Loot: Elemental Earth worth 3d6 x 20 silver. This counts as treasure worth Legend Points.

Commentary

The stone lions of Fenaria are, much like their ordinary cousins, part Elemental. Their strong Elemental Earth nature and strength made them excellent scouts, while their patient nature would allow them to stand guard for days, waiting for Horrors to appear within the tunnels. Unlike most cats, however, the stone lions of Fenaria are pack style creatures and associate freely with both the fire eagles and the hellhounds within the remains of kaer Fenaria. Their patient nature and strong hunting instincts are still very much active in that they will still hunt alone, but will call for aid should they find themselves in danger. The stone lions are small, grey mountain lions with fur that is as hard as stone and razor sharp claws and hardened teeth that can tear through armor.

RUNNING A STORM OF HORRORS

A *Storm of Horrors* reveals to the characters the truth that lies at the core of the Horror Clouds. They are controlled by a malevolent intelligence, and have at their heart the corrupted remains of a kila. This section provides two adventure frameworks that can involve the player characters, a number of shorter adventure ideas based around the events of A Storm of Horrors, and guidelines for tying up loose ends.

INTRODUCING THE EVENT

The Horror Clouds have been causing destruction and turmoil across Barsaive since the end of the War. The easiest way to introduce the threat of the Horror Clouds is to have the characters be responsible for evacuating a village because of a cloud's impending arrival, and let them observe first hand the its violent and obviously magical fury. Domek's fire harvesters can be introduced at any time when the characters are around Death's Sea, or, conversely, they could easily be a group that the characters are unfamiliar with.

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 two adventures form a continuous story line that follows the plot described in *Event Synopsis*, p. 70. Shorter adventure ideas are also presented should the characters wish to continue participating in A Storm of Horrors.

AIRSHIP DOWN

Premise

It begins as a simple job from one of the Throalic noble houses with which the characters already have some contacts. If they are not allied with one of the houses, then they may have been contacted by

House Mikul and now have the opportunity to build connections that will be valuable to them for some time to come. The characters are tasked to represent the noble house and escort a shipment of Elemental Fire to Throal. Unfortunately, one of the mining ships has crashed and the characters join in the rescue!

Set-Up

To rebuild its navy after the War, the Kingdom of Throal is in need of a goodly quantity of True Fire and has sent the characters to escort a convoy of the precious substance back to the capital. The characters are instructed to deal with Domek and prepare the convoy as quickly as possible to return to Throal. It is important you stress that the kingdom is in no immediate need, but there is some small haste involved. A week's delay is acceptable, a month is not. The characters are traveling by ground, but will be returning with the fire harvesters in their mining galleys, escorted by a drakkar.

Event 1

The characters arrive at the outpost of Domek's fire harvesters to find the entire area in chaos. There are people running around and everyone seems busy either carting things to the docks or coordinating some sort of fortification effort. The characters may at this point attempt to interrupt a passerby, who will inform them that there is an airship stranded on the mountain volcano between the seas and there is a rescue party preparing to depart to save them. If the characters volunteer to help they will be told to carry some heavy metallic cable to the drakkar *Never Sleep*, which is at the docks and preparing to depart. The cable is heavy enough and bulky enough to require manhandling by the entire group, even if there are some strong characters. The bulk will require teamwork for balancing.

If they do not volunteer, they will be directed to Domek, who is supervising the loading of the drakkar as well as instructing his people to prepare for some type of storm. If the characters arrive with the cable, they will gain a lot more respect in the eyes of both Domek and Suvar. The group's obvious good intentions will gain more of the two men's most precious commodity at the moment, time.

Event 2

Domek will be somewhat harried, but very focused on what he sees as the two tasks at hand. First is to rescue the *Portina* and its crew to save them from most certain death on Mount Bloodfire. The second is to investigate the storm that downed the *Portina*, which was headed toward the village. The village has been working since the *Father's Son* arrived and dropped off Domek. He has sent the mining galley ahead to outlying friendly villages of the Kava moot to warn them of the coming storm, and if possible to continue the warnings as far as possible but to return in a day's time. Domek is notably worried about his ship but knows that his second in command, Mesthia will bring the ship home safely as she is the most capable of his team and a Fifth Circle Air Sailor to boot.

Domek and his crew will be prepared for the arrival of the characters, but will hurriedly explain that there will be no shipment to Throal for the next three weeks due to the events unfolding on the Death's Sea. When asked, Domek will advise the characters that unless something is done immediately to rescue the *Portina*, a third of the current harvest will be lost. If the characters respond that the True Fire is their primary goal, or offer to take the remainder, Domek will be incensed and will announce that there will be no Elemental Fire shipped



until his people are safely home. Should the characters offer to help in the rescue, or even mention that the people on the vedette are more precious than the fire, then Domek will insure that a crew loads the True Fire into traveling containers for the pending return of the *Portina* and *Father's Son*, as well as the *Neversleep*, to convoy through the mountains to reach Throal faster. Further he will let slip that with the storm coming he needs to remove the airships from the area anyway.

Event 3

The crew of the *Neversleep* will be agitated as they arrive over the *Portina*. There are several crewmembers visible under cover who will begin to wildly motion to the approaching drakkar. This may be mistaken for elation, however it will soon become apparent that the *Portina's* crew is trying to warn the rescue party about the fire eagles.

The assault of the fire eagles will be difficult to repel, as Domek brought along primarily medical supplies and healers with few combatants besides the player characters. If the heroes did not accompany Domek on this part of the adventure then the answer is simple, the eagles will drive off the drakkar and it will return to the settlement, take on more combatants, and return to the *Portina*. The characters will be approached about joining the second attempt. There is a chance that if the characters accompany Domek on the first attempt, they will succeed in driving off the fire eagles. This is fine, but once the drakkar lands, they will have to deal with the stone lions and the hellhounds that have been harassing the crew of the *Portina*. It is possible for the characters to make a dash to join the defenders to hold off the animals, but the *Neversleep* cannot stay. The captain will inform the characters that without additional help, it will be impossible to defend both the *Neversleep* and the *Portina* and assist the *Portina's* wounded crew. He has to go back for more manpower. If the characters wish to join in the defense of the *Portina*, they will find a warm welcome by Bohaus, Xelertios, and the many wounded miners and Air Sailors. After the stone lions and hellhounds have been driven off, Bohaus will inform the characters that there is a Horror Cloud over the Death's Sea and it was that cloud which damaged the *Portina* and killed many of its crew.

Event 4

The *Portina* has two fire cannons still operational and they have been set up to guard the bow from assault, but the stern of the wrecked ship is wedged against the stone doors of kaer Fenaria. One of the doors has been shattered in the crash, since it was only a shell of the once hefty stone slabs which are now the floor of the entryway upon which the ship sits. Xelertios will alert the players once things have settled down again that some of the crew went to explore the ruins, looking for aid, but have yet to return. These unfortunate souls have found their way into the Keystone room and are currently trapped within it by some hungry young stone lions. The Air Sailors are not in immediate danger inside the kaer, but will need someone to come and get them. Once the chamber of the Keystone is found, they will also find the great obsidian Fodobargus in slumber beside it. Bringing him out into the light will revive him... in time.

Event 5

The *Neversleep* will return after rounding up more help, help that includes Domek's other ship, the *Father's Son*. When the airships approach, the fire eagles that have been swooping and wheeling

overhead part and do not attack. Upon the landing of the *Neversleep*, the characters will see a young thundra beast at the edge of the crowd on the deck, with an aged, short elf on its back. This is the legendary Thystra Silvermane. Sky Raiders from the *Neversleep*, along with several new mercenaries, will begin to load the wounded into the two air-worthy ships. If the players approach Thystra he will be most willing to answer any questions and will even volunteer that he is one of the last surviving citizens of kaer Fenaria.

Climax

As the rescue operations progress, an airship approaches on the horizon and with a Perception (8) Test it is obvious that the vessel is a Theran vedette. An Excellent success will yield additional information: the vessel is flying the flag of Cara Fahd.

Any premature (and potentially deadly) action will be halted when Captain Suvar of the *Neversleep* (or any player rolling an Excellent success on the above Perception Test) notices that the "Theran" ship is flying the colors of Cara Fahd. A few moments later, the vedette's Name can be made out: *Bunda*. Someone claiming to be its captain is at the bow of the ship, shouting that he'd like to meet on the small plateau near the *Portina*.

The most ork aspect of the *Bunda* is that it has been converted from a standard military vedette into a flying cavalry transport and delivery vehicle. The sides of the stone ship look like high fences. In fact, the sides are not fences, but huge ramps. When the *Bunda* lands, it is an event of epic proportions, as the Air Sailors of the Cara Fahd Navy are less than well-skilled. They compensate for their lack of skill by using creative tactics. The *Bunda* will do a controlled crash to the ground. Upon impact, the fence ramps on either side are dropped, to serve as a combination of brakes and stabilizing landing gear. Once stopped, the onboard cavalry charges over the sides. Within moments the cavalry will deploy a defensive perimeter around the ship six thundra beasts to a side. The thunder and shaking combined with the roars of angry thundra beasts creates an effect similar to an entire drakkar full of Sky Raiders bellowing before battle. The *Bunda's* captain is quite proud and, as he is a Cavalryman by trade rather than a Sky Raider or Air Sailor, he is versed in ground tactics and, in true ork fashion, has adapted his equipment and crew to fight his way, rather than adapting to the new equipment. This has its advantages, in that the deployment of the cavalry from the vedette is faster than anyone has ever seen before. Unfortunately, it is also fraught with danger. Even the most well-trained and elite cavalry have problems maintaining control of their mounts during such a rapid and unsettling descent. Further, the pilot of the ship is worried that the vedette may eventually suffer serious damage from the violence of repeated landings. As yet, the ship has sustained no major damage, but the crew can be seen to visibly wince each time this new type of landing is performed.

The Air Sailor crew will quickly follow the Warriors and Cavalrymen by securing the ramps and moving to place guards on the deck of the ship, thus preparing for battle. Once the perimeter is secured, the captain will stride down with Dvilgaynon at his side. The captain does not walk so much as he swaggers in the gait of an ork more accustomed to riding than walking. He will introduce himself as Churgarl, captain of the *Bunda*, and his companion as Dvilgaynon, advisor to Krathis Gron, and inform the characters that they have come to stop the Horror Cloud from destroying Travar.



Sequels

The crew of the *Portina* has been rescued, but the Elemental Fire still needs to be delivered to Throal. This delivery could be an adventure unto itself, however, the immediate sequel to *Airship Down* is the adventure framework, **Remember Vivane**.

REMEMBER VIVANE

Premise

The Horror Cloud threatening Travar is a huge storm of Horror energy with a haunted kila at its center and an evil captain at its core. Within the kila the captain sits, having been completely absorbed by the Horror energy, but at the same time having absorbed its pattern into his own. The Horror and the man are now one being and therein lies its only apparent weakness. Dvilgaynon knows that the captain of the kila must be destroyed to destroy the Horror Cloud.

Set-Up

Just as the *Bunda* arrives, the Horror Cloud becomes visible on the horizon. As Dvilgaynon speaks with the characters, Domek, Thystra, and the slowly reviving Fodobargus, the crew of the *Portina* continues to hurry aboard the *Neversleep*. The healers will get to work on the injured while the able-bodied crew will work hurriedly to get the *Portina* air-worthy again.

Thystra and Fodobargus will reveal some very important information about the area, including the fact that there is a powerful anti-Horror weapon in the abandoned kaer that can be used to envelop the entire Horror Cloud in fire. In ancient days, the entire kaer was defended by using lava vents to shunt liquid stone through them like a huge fire cannon. The kaer used it to eliminate Horrors that had climbed down the vents in attempts to reach the kaer. The kaer's inhabitants would be warned by the fire creature guardians of any Horror incursion and set off a huge Elemental Fire reaction from the control center of the kaer.

In the beginning of kaer Fenaria, the miners who created it needed a staunch defense against the Horrors but could not allocate the kind of resources that many kaers of the day could. The Elemental Fire and True Earth were plentiful in the area, but only small amounts could be mined before the Scourge. The thick walls that other kaers could build were beyond the capabilities of this small group. The Theran rites of protection and passage were readily available, but without thick walls, they would not be enough. The great engineer Moorkindre, the original designer of the kaer, solved this problem. Using their entire supply of Elemental Earth the miners created the Keystone.

A simple name for a simple device, the Keystone is a sphere with a tunnel within. The tunnel links into the heart of Mount Bloodfire and serves as a plug. As any simple student of physics knows, keeping a volcano contained in such a manner is a recipe for disaster. However it could also serve as a recipe for destruction, namely the destruction of Horrors. The plug's housing was reinforced with Elemental Earth and a small amount of Orichalcum that was purchased with the proceeds of sales of Elemental Fire to the Therans. The housing holds the Keystone and seals off the primary vent from the heart. Most times the housing keeps the primary vent open now. But in the days of the Scourge the Keystone would be swiveled in the housing to redirect blasts of lava to blow detritus, in this case the Horrors, from the secondary vents which surrounded the entire kaer. Further keystones

were developed throughout the Scourge to create a network of very powerful jets of liquid stone that kept the kaer safe from the Horrors.

The most difficult way to eliminate the Horror Cloud is to use the kaer's weapon, as it would take the Horror Cloud actually coming within landing distance of the volcano before it would be in range of the cannon-like vents.

The Keystone and lava vents made a formidable defense, though alone they would never have been sufficient protection. The Beastmasters of The Badlands who joined the miners within their kaer provided the eyes and ears of Fenaria during the Scourge. The fire eagles and hellhounds, along with stone lions, patrolled the lava vents, bolting for the safety of a keystone when challenged. Once past the keystone, the vent would be flooded with a burst of lava. It was rare, but not unheard of, for a guardian to become Horror-marked, but the kaer escaped contamination because the other guardians would rapidly dispatch a marked companion if a vent wasn't first flooded prematurely to take care of the poor beast.

The eternal vigilance of the defenders was finally rewarded when the magic level became steady and the constant flow of Horrors diminished to mere hungry elementals which, although not so easy to dispatch, were a usual danger that the miners had learned to deal with. Upon opening the kaer, the faithful guardians were released and allowed to lair in the now empty kaer. The guardian beast population has boomed since then but the majority of the guardians are now parents and grandparents with fond memories of the Beastmasters who used to be their companions.

Of these ancient Beastmasters, Thystra Silvermane is the only one still alive and possessing his full faculties. Having been a trainer of all types of guardians in his youth, he still remembers their ways, though recently he has been traversing The Badlands with a young thundra beast he has Named Gobra, spending his time telling stories.

Event 1

Within two hours the ships will be ready to depart, but the question will be... to where?

The Horror Cloud has been slowly descending and is now closer to the sea than before as it absorbs True Fire into the kila. It runs the True Fire charged essence of its vapors through the corridors of the kila like a giant heart, resuscitating itself.

Suvar suggests an all out air assault using the *Portina*, the *Bunda*, and the *Neversleep*. This plan will, hopefully, be quickly dismissed as folly.

Churgarlg is a proponent of a combination air and ground assault, waiting to ambush the Horror Cloud as it leaves the sea and heads towards Travar. It's not a bad idea, and the cavalry of the Cara Fahd Navy is enthused about using their new tactics.

Dvilgaynon is intrigued by Thystra's plan to lure the Horror Cloud in close to Fenaria and then blast it with the lava cannons. While she does not agree that the cannon will destroy it, she thinks that it will drop the kila at its heart either into the sea, or ground it so that troops can board and destroy the kila's captain. Bohaus will be able to guide the characters to the bridge of the kila, though characters who have been on one before may not need this.

Whichever solution is chosen, one very solid idea is to send warning to Travar. If the characters do not think of this, Domek will suggest sending the *Father's Son*. This will give the city a chance to mount some sort of defense should the heroes fail.



Event 2

No matter which attack plan is followed, the cloud will react the same: it sits quietly until attacking ships close in, then it will spin on its axis to produce gale force winds and fire bolts of lightning at its attackers. Ships of drakkar class or larger, or any unarmed ship, will be allowed through the winds and lightning only to be hammered by the kila's fire cannon until weakened, then it will be pulled in and boarded by cadaver men who will begin to kill the crew.

Any crew killed in such a manner are destined to join the crew of the kila as undead. There are huge numbers of cadaver men and undead involved in any boarding actions and dozens more patrolling the interior of the kila. Strategic points within the kila will be guarded continuously, with a dozen powerful undead officers guarding the bridge. Should the capture attempts fail, the Horror Cloud will use its winds to plunge the enemy ship into the Death's Sea, killing all aboard, including any of its own cadaver men crew unlucky enough to still be aboard.

Event 3

Should the players and the gamemaster character leaders decide to attempt to lure the Horror Cloud closer to Mount Bloodfire to use the Fenarian keystone, Suvar, the captain of the *Neverleep*, will undoubtedly volunteer his ship, as it is the fastest and his troll blood runs hot. However, Churgarlg will also wish to participate in this part of the mission. Domek, Mesthia, and Bohaus will not want to participate with lightly armed mining galleys, but will do it if there is no other choice. As Suvar and Churgarlg argue about who will be the bait, Dvilgaynon takes Churgarlg out of the running. She will be aboard the *Bunda* and she has no intention of acting as a lure. Any other type of participation will be fine with her, though.

Whichever ship does the luring, it will move in towards the Horror Cloud and fire cannon or ballista into it. The Horror Cloud is quite eager to enlarge its undead crew and will certainly follow any ship that fires upon it, so long as it doesn't leave the Death's Sea area. This makes any attempt to lure it around the Death's Sea almost certain to succeed. The only problem will be in keeping ahead of it and avoiding capture.

The Horror Cloud will respond slowly at first but will begin to drag itself after the bait ship and towards Mount Bloodfire.

Event 4

Deep within kaer Fenaria, Thystra and Fodobargus have prepared the Keystone. They are ready for the arrival of the bait ship and the Horror Cloud. The normal rumblings of Mount Bloodfire cease as the flow of gas and lava is capped by the Keystone. The silence is followed by howling, roaring, and screeching as the guardians perform the ritual to activate the Keystone. The True Fire is shunted into the heart of Mount Bloodfire and the Keystone's activation is heard: a huge, booming clang. The rush of heat and fire is immense, as the gout of lava rockets out of one of the vents beneath the kaer's entrance, slicing through the clouds and slamming into the kila. The Horror ship plummets to the ground on the lower slope of Mount Bloodfire. The clouds part in steam as the liquid stone hardens on the outside of the exposed kila. Cadaverous undead begin to emerge from the ship's heart and they start to climb the mountain. With a roar, the ork cavalry charges and the *Neverleep* turns to bear on the grounded kila, while the *Bunda* wheels around and closes for a boarding action.

The characters should be at the heart of this fray and should be able to fight through the cadaver men – a number equal to the number

of characters multiplied by their average Circle – as they board the kila. The apparent victory will be short lived, though, as the crew of the kila begin to clear away the rubble and even jettison parts of their ship to get it airborne again as the Cloud begins to reform around it. Once the Horror Cloud has reformed, the kila will float into the air again and move away from Mount Bloodfire before the Keystone can be fired again. The Horror Cloud will then begin its march on Travar, circumventing Mount Bloodfire, as the captain's anger reaches its limit and he decides to get on with the business of destruction. By this time, the heroes should be aboard the kila and fighting their way to the bridge.

Event 5

Although the Horror Cloud's pattern has been badly damaged by the attack from the Keystone, it is still a fearsome opponent. The interior of the kila is a horrifying place to be. The hallways flex and ripple with the pulse of the evil power flowing through the vessel. The first horrible realization that the characters may have upon entering the vessel is that they are now within the Horror itself. Astral sight within the Horror will show a mixed pattern of dark shapes constricting the players, with additional patterns rushing all around them in the hallways.

The light in the kila is a dull red and purple, almost as if the entire vessel were lit by a bloody fog charged with electricity. The interior is full of the same fog that makes up the Cloud outside, but it is not as windy inside. The fog is so thick as to almost be liquid. Gusts of air rush through the halls, timed to the pulsing of the walls and bulkheads. The winds inside make torches unreliable and candles useless, but most corridors are lit by the eerie red glow of the fog.

The undead crew will not speak unless spoken to and even then they only howl a battle cry. Many of the Name-givers who make up the kila's crew were brought aboard as prisoners and driven insane by torture before they died. These poor wretches make up most of the aware crew. These crewmembers, cadaver men now, will actively pursue the heroes should they be encountered. Crewmembers come in two major types, the aware and the unaware. The aware crew compose approximately 75% of the total and will fight the invaders as they are found. These aware crew should be considered to be much like standard cadaver men, although they have a howl that sounds like a gale force wind that serves to call other members of the crew. The unaware crew will simply go about their tasks as they would if there was no crisis at all unless they are interfered with. In the event of interference these unaware crewmen will howl to alert others and then enter combat. However, no unaware crewmen will answer a howl if it is given unless they are directly confronted or attacked. The crewmen in the unaware category are the dead in denial and as such see only their tasks and nothing more. In addition to cadaver men, the officers of the ship have become more powerful undead. Characters may have to fight dozens of undead, or sneak past them to get to the bridge. If the characters choose to fight, and draw the attention of the Horror, Valesthar may attempt to use his Horror Mark power on them, and if successful, affect their combats with his Cursed Luck and Corrupt Karma powers.

Climax

Once the characters have made their way to the bridge, they must confront Valesthar. If Bohaus isn't with them, the heroes can find the bridge by following the air currents; they all will lead to Valesthar.



Valesthar is a lean and finely muscled man with pale and narrow features. He is surrounded in the bridge by the mist of the Horror Cloud and it conceals his movements to some degree. The pounding noise of the pulsating fog could well deafen the characters, and the bridge seems to beat around them with the mighty rushing of the cloud matter.

The dark captain laughs as they enter, but will make no grandiose speeches; rather, he will immediately order the undead officers present to attack.

The Horror Cloud will serve to protect Valesthar, but within the confines of the bridge his lightning will be less effective. As well, the constant flow of mist is necessary to sustain the Horror, so using its gale force winds within the confines of the bridge could prove to be suicide. The undead officers will work to kill the characters as quickly as possible and the Horror will quickly reanimate any fallen characters to join its legions. Valesthar himself is an accomplished military man and in addition, he has the Horror backing him up. Further, Valesthar knows the bridge like the back of his hand, while it will be unknown territory for the heroes. They will find themselves in a dark and misty environment like fighting in a heavy fog (ED2, p. 240). Valesthar and his minions will use this to their advantage, as their connection to the Horror gives them no reduction in visibility, and they will attempt to isolate and kill characters away from their companions.

The discharges of 10 foot diameter ball lightning causing Step 15 Damage may be less than discriminatory in the confines of the bridge, and although they won't damage Valesthar himself, they may damage the undead officers that surround him. This will not happen often and the cloud will, if very unlucky in the first attempts at striking the characters, stop using the lightning unless called for as a desperation move by Valesthar.

The players may attempt to parlay or talk to Valesthar, but their efforts will be for naught. The simple matter is that Valesthar will consider them beneath him and worthy only of destruction. He will have to be dispatched not only on the physical realm but on in astral space as well. The Horror will use all its powers to defend Valesthar, so killing him will be very difficult.

As the fight progresses he will attempt to use characters' weaknesses and bad tactics against them. Captain Valesthar did not get to the position of captain because he had no talent; far from it, he is a fighter and commander of the Theran Navy and he will use every tactical and military trick known to him. He is also Theran royalty and a conniver as well, so he will not limit himself to "fair" tactics. He will slip in and out of the mists using his sword to deadly effect in support of his minions. He will attempt to use Horror Mark on the characters, which will allow Valesthar to use Damage Shift and the Horror Cloud itself will use its power to raise any fallen heroes to fight their companions. Defeating Valesthar should be no easy feat; the battle should be truly legendary!

Sequels

Once the players manage to defeat Valesthar, the Horror Cloud will move no more, remaining fixed to the dead kila as it once was at Stormhead. The undead crew, however, will pose a worse problem. They will not fall down upon the destruction of the Horror, but rather they will begin to howl and rampage throughout the ship. All unaware crew members will become complete berserkers and will begin to tear the ship apart from the inside. Players will have to make their way out

before one of the rampaging bands destroys them. The kila itself will begin to sink to the ground.

The characters will be able to escape readily through any number of hatches or holes in the hull, to be picked up by the waiting *Never Sleep*.

The kila will remain tainted and is unusable as an airship, while the Horror Cloud becomes an area of even greater corruption on the western edge of The Badlands. The characters may decide to try and destroy it in some fashion. The Death's or Scarlet Seas might work admirably for this and attempting to drag the undead infested kila back to the seas of fire, or finding other means to neutralize it, could be an adventure unto itself.

OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

IN HARM'S WAY

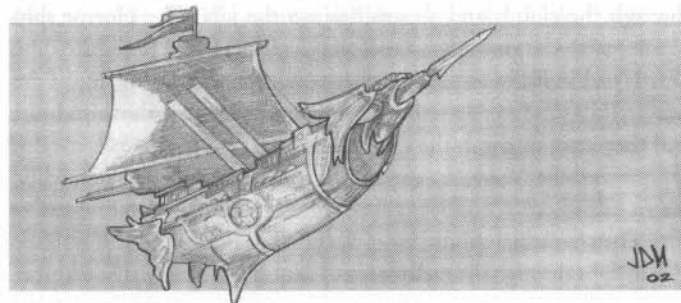
The city of Travar is not alone in being in the path of a Horror Cloud. Across Barsaive, the coming of a Horror Cloud uproots entire communities as they flee from its path. In the wake of a Horror Cloud, the land is left corrupted and hosts of undead and other Horror Constructs remain. Barsaive is a dangerous place for those who have lost their village. Predatory creatures, slavers, scorchers, bandits, Horrors, and their constructs all prey upon the weak. Across Barsaive, Name-givers who have lost their homes are in need of heroes to bring them to a safety – a city or some other place where they can start over.

SEEN ONE, SEEN 'EM ALL

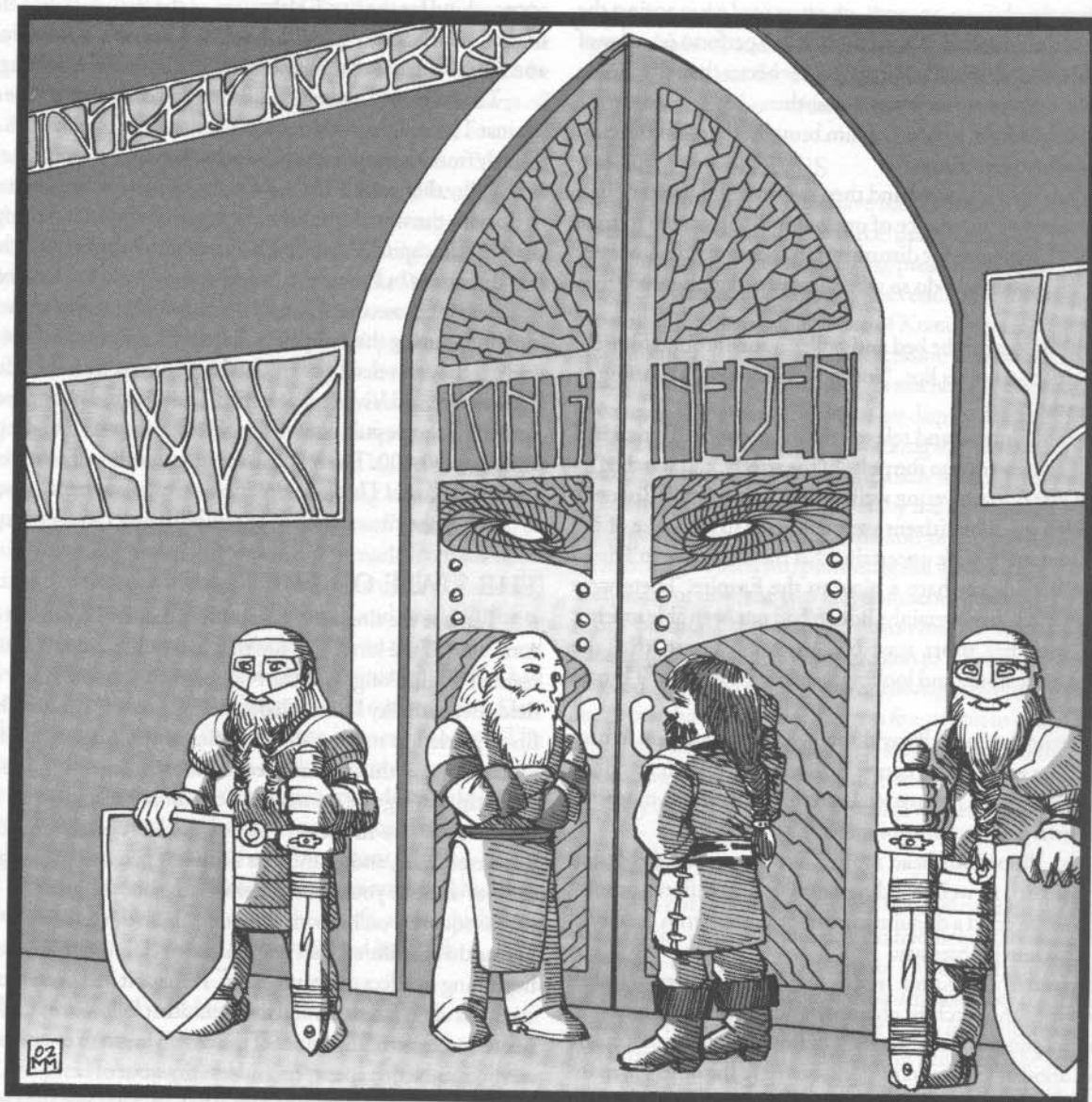
After the defeat of the Horror Cloud, the powers that be in Barsaive will be very interested in hearing about the legend of the Keystone from Thystra and Fodobargus. Those powers who cannot speak with Thystra and Fodobargus themselves will undoubtedly seek out the next best experts on kaer Fenaria... the characters. Indeed, the characters may realize that exploring kaer Fenaria would give them amazing insights into kaers that did not have all of the advantages, but still survived the Scourge. These kaers perhaps suggest methods of defeating the other Horror Clouds.

BUNDA!

Churgarl Loud Bellow will consider the characters heroes of the highest order after their victory over the Horror Cloud. He will gladly invite them to join the adventures of the Cara Fahd Navy as the *Missing Finger* and the *Bunda* seek to add ships to their ranks and expand their strange influence for as long as the characters wish to travel with him. The ships that they have their sights on are the slaver ships that still make their way into Barsaive from the Theran province of Rugaria. Churgarl believes that even if he cannot capture a ship, it's his duty to stop the slavers.



THERE MUST BE CHAOS



Before the beginning of great legends, there must be chaos.

— proverb from Cathay, brought back by the crew of the *Earthdawn*

The darkness was total, but the elf still could not sleep. The faint, clinging smells of the incense still lingered in the air, almost like gentle fingers attempting to smooth away his headache, but the relaxation was not enough to allow his mind to cross over into dream. The vision from the night before still burned in his mind and he knew it was a vision from his Passion. He didn't fully understand the implications of it, more than just the obvious, anyway... an attempted coup against the throne of Throal would certainly be a great trick to perform on a day of celebration. However, Ruanen knew his master better than that; there was always more to the story, one way or another.

A soft rasping in from in front of him brought the elf's attention back to his dark chamber. "Enter."

A slit of torch light appeared and then the door slid back enough to reveal the cloaked countenance of one of his disciples, the human Named Krasik. "I apologize for disturbing your dream quest, Master Ruanen, but you requested I do so when I returned with word from Throal."

The elf slid his legs off the bed and pulled a robe around himself, a smile of anticipation on his lips. "Indeed I did. There is nothing to forgive. Tell me the news."

Krasik dipped his head and relayed the information. Borian had slipped into the city, listened to the pulse of the streets, and watched its leaders. Neden was not recovering well from the war, just as Ruanen's dreams had indicated. The citizens were confused in the wake of the fast-paced war and many were uncertain what the final price to Throal would be after striking so sharp a blow to the Empire. There were factions moving in the city, certainly. Borian had not been able to ferret them all out with her short stay, but she was certain that the Crownbreakers were home and looking to take advantage of Throal's weakened state.

Ruanen listened, rising halfway through Krasik's narration to pace in thought. At the end of the report, he nodded. "Borian has done well. She is asleep already? No matter. I can thank her in the morning. How are your own preparations going, Krasik?"

The human dipped his head again. "We are prepared, Master. Supplies for the trip, as well as riding animals and different routes planned. Each has selected a disguise to mimic a citizen from the city of Kratas, with a backup if necessary."

Ruanen gestured and Krasik rose to move out of his way. The elf stepped down into the torch lit chamber and moved to look at the mural for Vestrial painted along the walls of this hidden kaer, long ago. "Allow Borian another few hours of sleep, but have the others prepare. We leave with the dawn for Throal. Vestrial has shown me the way. I think this will be a celebration Throal won't soon to forget..."

BACKGROUND

The War was over. Sky Point had fallen. Vivane had suffered a fate that many didn't wish to dwell on. The loss of Name-giver life on both sides had been high. Throal's army began the long trek back home, having to care for the wounded and protect their rear columns from the undead that had begun to emerge from the ruins of Vivane. While the navy made it home and resumed duty after a couple of weeks, it

took a couple of months for the last units of the Throalic army to make it home. On the day that the last unit returned home, a still haggard King Neden declared that day to be a memoriam to all those that had fallen for Barsaive's freedom. Every year from that day forward, Throal would throw a festival to celebrate life, the freedom that had been protected at such a high cost, and to remember those that had paid the highest price to secure it. It was a good beginning towards mending the frayed threads of Throalic life that had been unraveled in the fast-paced campaign of the war. Unfortunately, this was not the end of the story, and certainly not the end of Throal's troubles. The time is approaching for the first Celebration of the Return, a year after the last of the Throalic army crossed the threshold into the kingdom proper, and the turbulence that followed the war looks to be coming to a head.

Throal's army had taken substantial losses during the campaign against Thera. In addition, many of the army's volunteers had come directly from the populace of Throal, wanting to support the campaign in any way they could. There were also those that had wanted nothing to do with the war, or the revenge they feared it would bring down on the Throalic capital. After all, Thera had proven again with the *Triumph* (see the events in *Prelude to War*) just how vulnerable Barsaive could be. Many of those that feared Throal would not win the war fled the kingdom during the campaign. Even with the recruits that joined the army as they traveled back to Throal, and even with the refugees from the areas around Vivane that hoped Throal could provide safety and a new start, the population of Throal after the war had dropped to an estimated 90,000. The loss of people and influx of refugees created a chaotic mess that Throal's Diplomatic Corps was hard-pressed to keep in check as they attempted to re-establish order in their city.

THE STATE OF THE KING

Perhaps the single largest problem that lay before Throal was the condition of the king. The fire that had pushed him through the war seemed to die along with the Name-givers that met their end on the fields beneath Sky Point. Neden became morose and withdrawn. At first, he tried to resume all the duties of the king, trying to catch up with the many things that needed his attention, both those that had piled up during the campaign and those created in its aftermath. However, as the months wore on, Neden became more and more distracted, pale, and gaunt. His sleep was plagued with nightmares of the war and the young king seemed to place the guilt for all of those deaths squarely on his own shoulders. His friends and advisors began to fear that the illness that had started to claim Varulus was somehow beginning to affect the young king. Perhaps it had been brought on by the stress of his ascension and the events that followed it, they whispered. More and more of the duties of the crown began to once again fall to its advisors as Neden spent less and less time out of his room. This began to make the people very ill at ease. After all, what was the king if not the symbol of the kingdom in name and duty?

Neden's advisors did not have to hear the whispers on the streets to know that the king's current condition would only encourage the many factions that either wanted the throne for themselves or simply sought the death of the dwarf kingdom. It was while dwelling on these dark thoughts that Ajmar the Admirable began to suspect that someone might have acquired one of Neden's Pattern Items and worked some sorcery upon him (as the Denairastas had already proven capable of). The problem was that he could find no signs of sorcerous tampering with Neden's pattern. It wasn't long into Ajmar's frustration that Isam



Derr approached the king and his advisors and suggested something much more sinister and even more difficult to believe: the king was Horror-marked.

The king's circle was outraged and did not want to hear any more. When could it have happened? How? Why hadn't Ajmar been able to find any trace of it if there was a mark? Before they could ask for Isam Durr's ejection, Neden interceded, for this had been a fear that had been lurking in the recesses of his own mind. He asked Isam Derr if he could prove it, one way or another. The obsidiman said that he would try. During the time of his illness, Neden had composed several poems to see if he could find any such influence. He presented these to the Light Bearer and the advisors and they had to agree that, though some of the poems were melancholy, the dark touch of a Horror couldn't be found in his writing. With the majority of Barsaive's Horror Stalkers off on a crusade to Scythia, Isam could not quickly gain access to any of their particular insights or talents. Instead, drawing from his own experience as a Light Bearer, he asked Neden if he would be allowed to stay with the king for several nights, to observe. Neden agreed.

During one of these nights, when Neden's nightmares were particularly fierce, Isam observed Neden through the Wings of Niana (a thread item that had been given to him for his service in the Light Bearers). He found what he was looking for. Neden's pattern was stained a dark red and striated with black, similar to exposed, rotting muscle. It was the mark of a Horror that Isam Derr did not recognize, and it was upon the king. When Isam confirmed Neden's fears, many things began to fall into place; the visions before the war, his desire to press it so quickly, and the constant dreams since, feeding his already heavy sense of guilt. Neden feared that the Horror's influence could be affecting his judgment and slowly removed himself from all court functions until the Horror could be found and destroyed. His advisors continued the public front that the king was ill and needed time to recover from the stress of the war. Letting it be known that the king was marked would only serve to create panic and galvanize those who had the worst intentions at heart for the king or the kingdom. Isam Derr began his hunt, praying to the Passions that it wasn't too late. The Horror somehow kept all trace of the mark hidden during any time Neden was awake. Indeed, the mark was only truly discernable when the king slept. It was a power that Isam had encountered before, and it was generally the sign of a powerful and intelligent Horror. As the celebration approaches, despite his long hours of research and hunting, the grim obsidiman has only a few meager leads left, all of which have only the most tentative connection to the king and his mark.

THE SHADOW OF THERA

While Neden was slowly fading from the Throalic courts, the arguments and problems that the kingdom faced continued to grow and gain voice. One of the more disputed matters in Throalic life was the empire of Thera. Was Barsaive truly free? In the times it was brought up while Neden still attended court, the king would declare it finished. His military advisors disagreed, however. While many considered this to be the final battle between Throal and Thera, Supreme General Foellerian continued to point out their stupidity in her wrath. While Throal had faced a large Theran Navy, including the two grounded behemoths of Sky Point and Triumph, the fiery dwarf argued that they had simply been a garrison force, something to hold "One, ONE!" of the Empire's provinces, and nothing compared to the might that Thera could muster. Quavami Rockbreaker, general of the infantry, would

add her deep voice in support of that argument, as would Vazilia, Grand Commander of His Majesty's Royal Guard, and Chardthom Mole-Splattered, a senior diplomat and intelligence interpreter. The navy, however, under General Ilmorian, continued to believe that they had delivered a decisive blow to the Theran presence in Barsaive. He argues that without the staging point of Sky Point and with undead Vivane to cross, any force that Thera could send would be spread too thin and easily dealt with. Popular opinion, as always, rests with Throal's navy and the charming elf general, causing a greater schism between the navy and the infantry. Despite an unpopular view, the other two generals continue to try and talk sense into their king (when they can speak with him) and country. Frankly, the debate over Thera is a minor political problem for Throal at the moment, compared to its more immediate neighbors within Barsaive.

DEN OF THIEVES

Relations with Kratas have started to sour in the wake of the war. For the longest time, the force that galvanized the Throal/Kratas relationship was the overbearing presence of their common enemy, Thera. In the months since the war's end, the raids on Throalic caravans passing within striking distance of Kratas have increased three-fold. It has only been with Neden's intercession that Diona the Swift, Kratas' current ambassador to Throal, has not been cast out of the kingdom by the outraged merchant houses. This display of loyalty towards a friend, instead of toward Throal, from the king started to cause friction between the crown and the houses, particularly with Neden's waning presence in court. It was slightly mitigated by the fact that Diona seemed just as outraged by the increased raids and offered a public apology to all those who had been hit, promising she would try and see the situation rectified. For now, the two kingdoms continue to dance politic: Throal sends petitions through their ambassador, Liltom, about the lost merchandise and a request for Kratas to investigate the bandit activity in good faith, and Kratas returns messages that they will look into the incidents, though they are short on free people to perform such activities with the number of undead that seem to be roaming free these days. Diona's own inquiries into the matter seem to have either never reached the City of Thieves, or they've fallen on deaf ears.

JERRIS

Let's not forget the problem with Jerris and Iopos. At the end of the war, the Jerrisian Falcons who had helped in the second battle of Sky Point were granted asylum in Throal and allowed to plead their case before the court through their ambassador, Trademaster General Ilio Shipwright. A month after the war, a messenger from Jerris arrived in Throal and delivered his missive in private to the Jerris ambassador. The next time the court met, Ilio arrived with a new group of bodyguards and informed the court that the official Jerrisian government did not recognize the Falcons that were being harbored in Throal as Falcons or patriots. Furthermore, they should not be allowed asylum in Throal to spread their duplicitous speeches about the occurrences in Jerris, since they were designed to harm the current peaceful agreement between Iopos and the small city-state.

By this time, word had been received from Jerris through the Eye of Throal, backing up everything the banished Falcons had reported about the Iopan occupation, the loss of Obakavim (though the body was never found), and the fear and terror that the Iopans used to

control the merchants of the Jerris council. However, Throal could not start deciding for itself who or who was not the rightful government of Jerris; it would start a precedent that would most likely hurt any other political relationship they had. Beside that fact, there was the simple truth that Throal had more than enough problems in its own home that needed to be tended to first, before they could throw any kind of meaningful backing to the Jerris Resistance. Instead, in one of his rare appearances in court, Neden ruled that the group calling themselves Falcons had already been granted asylum and had earned enough respect by their duties in the war to allow them to stay in Throal if they so chose. To be fair, he also informed the Jerris Resistance that they would have to find a voice in court before they could continue to plead their case, or a voice would have to find them. As of yet, the Resistance still has no voice in the courts, though it has many sympathetic ears. Throal has yet to assign a new ambassador to go to Jerris in the wake of Obakavim's death.

THE CARA FAHD EMBASSY

In addition to these events, the reports of the Horror Clouds moving steadily across Barsaive, and the disheartening reports of the Peace Patrols about the state of the roads and villages around Throal, Ambassador General Tramon, the head of the Diplomatic Corps, has also been trying to get an ambassador to Cara Fahd. Having spoken extensively with Cara Fahd's ambassador to Throal, Crosi Halftusk, Tramon knows that an ork would have the easiest time slipping into the political waters of the still-new ork nation. Unfortunately, the ork nation was in as much, if not more, turmoil than the dwarf kingdom, and attempts to send handpicked diplomats ran into several unfortunate accidents. The first diplomat, Lithis Ironfist, and his entourage had set out overland towards Cara Fahd and were slain by undead. This fact was only discovered some months after the fact by a band of Throalic adventurers who found Lithis' documents on a cadaver man ork. The second diplomat, Portha Starfinder, and the airship she rode ran afoul of a Horror Cloud and neither she nor the ship ever re-emerged. Tramon has turned to the Circle Path Company, a company run by the elf Lord Remiel, who had proven their mettle for Throal by providing supplies, airships, and soldiers to both the siege of the Triumph and the second attack on Sky Point. In addition to these assets, the Circle Path already had a pair of trustworthy members over in Cara Fahd – the ork Thief, Toeth, and Lord Remiel's sister, Yuriel. Tramon has sent a message, asking Toeth to obtain permission from the ork nation to establish the Throalic diplomatic embassy. Once the ork nation has shown an interest, the Ambassador General will make sure that a new diplomat arrives safely, unless Toeth finds that he wishes to keep the job.

THE EARTHDAWN

One of the too few bright points during the time after the War was the return of the *Earthdawn* to the kingdom. With a safe return to their home port, Vaare Hardfist had her command crew, along with a few particular members, remain to speak with the king's advisors, generals, and the Throalic library about what she and her crew had seen. The rest were dismissed for six months of shore leave, with oaths not to spread word of what they had seen until their knowledge could be catalogued for the kingdom. After those six months, the crew began to wander back to the ship they had called home for so long, and added its Name back to the Throalic Navy, wanting to return to the same duty that the other ships served.



Most of the crew returned to their ancestral homes and were proudly welcomed back into their newfound families. Those who had no family left, or did not welcome a return to their family, stayed near the *Earthdawn* and joined the command crew in spending week after week with Throalic officials and librarians, detailing all they had seen in their travels. One of the most noted of those members returning to their family was Aldevalen Ueraven, a middle-aged, charismatic dwarf Warrior and a second generation crewman on the *Earthdawn*. His father, Lucian Ueraven, had, sadly, met his end before the *Earthdawn* was in Barsaivan skies again. Lucian had been part of the original crew and had not so much been assigned to the *Earthdawn* as banished to it. He had been a traveled scholar, and in studying the history of House Ueraven, unearthed certain documents that proved all the official Throalic histories true. The documents were finally debunked (read: destroyed and replaced with forgeries), but Lucian continued to hold to their veracity and search for more proof. In recognition of his effort on the House's behalf, Lucian was "volunteered" for the second flight of the *Earthdawn*, to help chronicle its journey. When Aldevalen was invited back to his family, he happily agreed. Lucian's greatest regret was that he could not prove the truth of his claims and he lamented it until the day he passed away in his sleep. Aldevalen had created a mental list from his father's stories of all his family who deserved a bit of retribution for their part in keeping the old dwarf from his discovery. Foremost on that list was Selenda. Aldevalen understands that, as a member of the crew of the *Earthdawn*, he is a potent political force for winning support with the people and the courtiers that she wishes to keep under her thumb. It's with great pleasure that he does his best to publicly follow up his father's research.

UNDERCURRENTS

Within the very heart of Throal, the factions that the king's advisors feared were indeed watching. Worse, with the weakness caused by the war and the king's fading presence, these factions began to move in the shadows, orchestrating dark plots against the king. The vast majority of the tangled web that was being woven was created under the direction of a group known as the Whisperers, a cult that follows the questor of Vestrial, creating deceit and deception wherever they go (see *Secret Societies of Barsaive*, p. 100, for more information on the Whisperers). The spider sitting in the center of that web was the Whisperer known amongst their number as Ruanen. With his small cell of acolytes, he has possibly wrought the end of the rule of House Avalus.



In the month after the return of the army, the first signs of the Whisperers' handiwork could be heard in the streets and on the lips of the citizens of Barsaive. Had war been the best course of action for the kingdom? Had King Neden pushed too hard, gone too far? Was Thera truly gone from Barsaive? Was it time to reach a new level of freedom, following the spirit of the Compact, and create a government for the people? Or perhaps was it time for a new kingdom to be born? Maybe it was time for the resurrection of an old kingdom – Scythia. To the delight of Ruanen, he and his were not the only ones spreading some of this sentiment. Many of the people of Throal had begun to ask the same questions and the debates around them spilled forth from the *Olzims* of Lochost into the streets. However, under his careful and diligent tending, what were originally bitter thoughts and whispers grew into full-fledged debates within the taverns, homes, and hearts of the city.

Ruanen's masterpiece, however, is a convoluted tangle of lies and duplicity that has drawn most of Neden's enemies into one, unified force. The small cell of Whisperers gained the confidence of several members of the Banned Houses (see *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*, p. 39 for more information), House Endour and House Heovrat, in particular. Ruanen himself wormed his way into the local chapter of the Crownbreakers, a group bent on the downfall of Throal's king (see *Secret Societies of Barsaive*, p. 100, for more information), and helped orchestrate the original meeting between the two groups, who both wanted the same thing, for the last ruling member of House Avalus to be destroyed. The tension between the generals and the arguments in the streets were starting to reflect in the soldiers that defended Throal. It was becoming easier to move in the streets freely, just part of the chaotic churn, and allowed for the Banned Houses to secretly approach many different members of the Huari Faction and gain aid for their cause. Several Houses in the Huari Faction were willing to lend clandestine aid, but nothing blatant enough to link them with the coup attempt, should it fail. However, Ruanen's mad visions demanded more from the Huari Faction than the pitiful handful of soldiers and equipment they were giving to bolster the Banned Houses. The visions demanded a figurehead, one who would be able to muster an army to its call. Ruanen chose Selenda of House Ueraven.

Selenda would never be a part of open rebellion under ordinary circumstances, a fact that Ruanen learned when his Whisperer that approached her in the beginning was turned over to the Royal Guard (a dried bloodstain was all that was found of that Whisperer in his cell the next morning). Ruanen found his chance to get in good with her by being hired as an informant to spy on her wayward descendent, Aldevalen, under the Name of Horanth Moram. She was at first impressed with the thoroughness of his reports (Ruanen did spy on Aldevalen some, but most of his information comes from his other Whisperers, one of which always watches Aldevalen), and unknowingly more impressed by careful and surreptitious use of his questor abilities to befuddle her and make her believe certain of his claims. He slowly worked his way into her trust. As Selenda heard the anger and disruption that Neden's absence from court began to cause, she became willing to secretly throw the support of some of Ueraven's resources to the Banned Houses, just as the rest of the Huari faction was. However, that was not enough for Ruanen. He knew the signal that the Crownbreakers planned to use during the celebration to start the coup was particularly sinister and he wove it into a fabrication for Selenda. The signal for the coup is two arrows, specially crafted with kernels of Elemental Fire and

Elemental Water (each of these arrows costs about 10,000 silver worth of materials and takes months to create), placed in the capable hands of two Crownbreaker assassins. The resulting explosion caused by the two arrows will be of such magnitude to kill many within the blast, and the rumble of the detonation will be heard or felt throughout a large portion of the mountain kaer, signaling the waiting rebels to begin their advance on the palace. What Ruanen told Selenda was that there were rumors (started by the Whisperers) that Neden had become a puppet of the Horrors (ironically, Ruanen knew nothing of the Horror Mark). The proof, he claimed, would be on the day of the celebration: Neden would need to perform a ritual sacrifice with fire, some great conflagration that would claim the lives of many, to fulfill his part of the pact with the Horrors. It required much manipulation on Ruanen's part, but finally, Selenda began to assemble her force, willing to fight to keep a puppet of the Horrors from keeping the throne of Throal. She waited for the day of the ceremony, determined to see if House Avalus had truly fallen to the Horrors.

THE HIVE

During all this time, the Horror that had marked Neden continued to maintain its low profile in Throal, just as it had always done. It was shortly before the Denairastas destroyed Varulus that The Hive of Ashes (see *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*, p. 107, for more information) gained its fifteenth willing host, a process that required imbibing the essence of a dormant Horror in Raggok's name. That Horror's Name was Andokhas, and it had finally fed enough from the cultists to reawaken. For the time being, it was perfectly willing to continue to do Raggok's bidding and bring about the downfall of Throal. It was a simple matter for the creature to get one of its members close enough to the king to mark him. With the Hive as large as it was, it was also an easy task for the Horror to keep its mark on the King hidden, so that it would only haunt his dreams at night, enhancing Neden's own desire for the war and feeding itself on his guilt. Because of the Strain that Andokhas has used to both torment the king and keep its presence hidden, the Hive has slowly dwindled to less than half of what it was. However, Andokhas is well on its way to being self-sufficient and though the magic level is not currently powerful enough that it can manifest fully in its true physical form, Raggok has provided it with a way to strike the physical realm by possessing the bodies and patterns of its Name-giver cultists. The Hive of Ashes has provided the Crownbreakers a safe haven in the abandoned area of Throal where they

EVENT SYNOPSIS

The day for the Celebration of the Return approaches and the city is preparing for it. The streets are festooned with bright ribbons and other colorful decorations. The *Olzims* of Astendar have done their best to make the city itself a work of art, in honor of the celebration. Two weeks before the day, the vendors begin to prepare for the many street stalls that will be in place, offering refreshments and food throughout the day. Even bright environs and the more cheerful of the citizenry can't dispel the tension that seems to radiate from the streets like summer heat.

The many plots and tribulations that have been plaguing Throal are coming to a head. Outlying bandit raids have increased dramatically in the last couple of weeks, leaving many to wonder if Kratas is preparing



to take advantage of Throal's weakened state (if it wasn't already). According to the whispers, these raids, so close to the heart of the dwarf kingdom, could be a test of its defenses and its soldiers. The truth of the matter, however, is that Endaren Oakhaft and his Crownbreakers are keeping their end of the bargain with the Banned Houses of Throal by keeping much of Throal's military away from the capital. The more villages they harass, the thinner Throal is required to spread its army as more villages request aid from the fear that they will be next. The tensions within the city continue to rise as conflicting rumors and opinions start to turn ugly, causing many different kinds of disruption, even violence, on the streets of the capital. Aldevalen has been keeping an eye on this Horanth Moram that has become a confidante to the Matriarch of his House, particularly since the human seems to be spying on him. Moram is slippery, but Aldevalen has managed to see several instances of unusual activity around the man; sudden disappearances, clandestine meetings with rugged looking mercenaries, and the simple fact that Selenda so quickly took him into her inner circle have troubled Aldevalen. Even though Throal is only his home by blood, Aldevalen is determined to find out the source of this turbulence and confront it. The black sheep of Ueraven looks for allies to aid him in getting to the bottom of this human's activities. The noble scion and his compatriots begin to find unnerving signs that perhaps things are not as chaotic as they seem, nor originating from so many different hands. Indeed, after one particularly harrowing encounter with something that could only be created by the Horrors, the group attempts to bring their information before the king and his council.

The council finally listens with grim faces to what the small group has to report. The Eye of Throal has known that the Banned Houses have been very active over the last months and expected trouble from them at any time, but had missed the connections with the Crownbreakers. Isam Derr steps forward, getting as much information from the group as he can, before he asks them to help him hunt down and destroy the source of that Horror Construct. The obsidiman leads a new hunt that starts from the raided village, back to some of the oldest sections of housing within the dwarf kingdom. There, he and his group come face to face with the leader of the Hive of Ashes and Andokhas' physical anchor: Uilmaz. Even as the Light Bearer and the adventurers that aid him fight for Neden's soul, the king's advisors and closest friends began to covertly bolster the defenses of the palace. The task of trying to discern the truth and the lies from the rumors on the streets falls to only those most trusted by the king's circle. As quiet whispers in dark streets hint at the coup approaching as rapidly as the coming festival, Throal loyalists begin a frantic search for the mastermind of the plot, far too late. After the destruction of Uilmaz and the dissipation of the mark, Neden slips into the first honest sleep he's had in over a year. The day of the celebration arrives while the king still rests and his closest and most loyal followers gather to stop any coup and handle any violence within the city.

The defense of the city is bolstered and the festival begins. Those loyal to the throne keep a careful lookout for any signs of dissention and trouble, while the rest of the city seems to enjoy the grand celebration. Small groups linked to the conspiracy are captured during the day, but none know enough to reveal the full plan, and none are willing to aid the throne. Agents of House Sarafica, sent by the House leader Zendes, also capture a few conspirators and report directly to the palace about it, warning of a possible assassination or rabble-rousing

attempts by other troublemakers. As day stretches to dusk, the procession continues uninterrupted, growing in number, and the festival continues.

The signal for the coup is a pair of Crownbreaker assassins each armed with an arrow specially crafted with kernels of Elemental Fire and Elemental Water that they have affectionately Named the Arrows of Vengeance. One of the arrows is to be used when the procession reaches the city of Wishon and the other is to be used at the Gates in the Grand Bazaar. The resulting explosions kill most within the blast instantly and the rumble of the detonation can be heard or felt throughout the mountain kaer. The forces of the conspirators and most of the mob both charge towards the palace in the confusion caused by the explosions, and the coup is underway.

The battle in the heart of Throal begins, as the forces of the king do their best to deflect the flood of people, striking down the conspirators while trying to divert the innocent towards safety. The fight carries all the way to the Royal Auditorium, where the final battle between the restored and awakened Neden, his defenders, and the main circle of the conspirators occurs on-stage, before the swirling masses. Once the assassins are stopped, Neden's voice, amplified by the acoustics of the auditorium, brings silence to the whirling confusing with a loud demand for a cessation of hostilities. The remaining leaders of the chaos are brought before the stage as Neden begins to take an accounting of all that has occurred.

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

This section describes a few of the major characters and antagonists involved in this event. Because of the scope of these events, the people involved in it are too numerous to fit in this book with full descriptions, so a table has been provided with a brief summary of who is who and what side of the conflict they will take. Most of the characters found in the factions section are more fully described in *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*. The characters described below are either introduced for the first time, or given combat statistics for their part in the events of *There Must Be Chaos*.

ALDEVALEN UERAVERN

Like a majority of the members aboard the *Earthdawn* who were born and raised on the ship, Throal is the second home that Aldevalen has heard of all his life. The reality of it is still something the dwarf is getting use to. While the command crew of the *Earthdawn* kept the stories and traditions of the kingdom alive in the minds of the crew, many things have changed since the *Earthdawn* left. Saying that Aldevalen is having trouble adjusting from a life of constant danger and adventure to the relatively mundane lifestyle of a dwarf noble is a bit of an understatement. His quest to prove his father's work accurate and a great love of books (also gotten from his father) keeps him well occupied; however, it doesn't prevent him from getting bored.

Mixing back into the general populous is proving a bit of a problem, too. It's not the issue of privacy. Life aboard an airship made privacy an almost non-existent concept, so he's used to that. It's the sense of humor that the crew has picked up through mingling with so many different societies. Top it off with being an Adept who can't Wind Catch constantly battling in an airship for survival, and you get a dwarf with a very cynical, wry sense of humor that's usually lost on most of the Throal populace. Life aboard the *Earthdawn* has made



Aldevalen slow to give his full trust, though he'll try to give the benefit of the doubt. However, once you've earned the dwarf's trust, you have an unwavering ally.

Aldevalen should be a Sixth Circle Warrior, though for balance he shouldn't be more than a Circle or two higher than the party.

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

ISAM DERR

Isam Derr is a senior member of the Sword of Light, a group of heroes who lead the Light Bearers. However, the obsidian Warrior has long since ended his adventuring days. Now, he tries to keep a watchful eye over Throal and protect the kingdom against Horror activity. When the Horror Stalker crusade began, Isam Derr became doubly watchful for any signs of Horror infestation within the kingdom. At one time, the obsidian had been among King Varulus' circle of advisors; however, with what Throal perceived as the waning of the Horror presence in Barsaive, his place as an advisor become more and more distant. Because of this, it was some time before the old obsidian placed more significance on Neden's departure from court, since the old king had done the same before the Denairastas assassins had claimed his life. For a short time, the Light Bearer watched the new king from afar, to confirm his suspicions as best he could, before he approached the crown.

Isam Derr is a high Circle Warrior and a Light Bearer with all the abilities described on pp. 116-117. For the purposes of this plot, Isam Derr should be powerful enough to support the party, but not so powerful as to steal the heroes' thunder. For more information on Isam Derr, see p. 55 of *Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom*.

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

RUANEN

The Name Ruanen belonged to a pre-Scourge legend, a questor of Vestrial that was known far and wide for his pranks and antics. The legends claimed that Ruanen was even the avatar of Vestrial himself, for there could be no other way that a Name-giver could get away with so many tricks. Why, it was said that Ruanen even played tricks on the great dragons. Most don't remember this legend anymore and there is little to no documentation about the actual Ruanen, if there even was one. Not long after the Scourge, one of Vestrial's Whisperers began to use the Name for himself. Perhaps, by adopting that Name, Vestrial himself took interest in the elf, for this new Ruanen has become one of the Passion's most active and capable creators of chaos.

This Ruanen lives in the service of Vestrial and is arguably as insane as the Passion he serves. While Ruanen may be insane, and is often plagued with headaches and visions alike, he is very intelligent and cunning. These visions are usually construed as visions from Vestrial and for the period following a particular vision, the elf will see to it that the vision comes to fruition. Born an elf, as a high Circle Thief and questor of the Passion of deception, Ruanen never maintains his native race in any city that he infiltrates, always impersonating another race of Name-givers. He uses a different Name in every city and rarely stays long enough to see his efforts come to fruition. Ruanen is the leader of

the Whisperers in Throal, but this title is in itself a deception since his operations do not center in Throal.

Ruanen is no fool. Once the preparations have been set in place and conspirators have reached a point where they can't back down, he and his followers will leave the city. Ruanen will not stay for a stand-up fight, ever. Deception and trickery are his bread and butter and using his Thief talents, he has slipped away from many such confrontations and attempts on his life.

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

ENDAREN OAKHAFT

Endaren Oakhaft is an aging dwarf, well over 100 years old. His parents were questors of Rashamon, the Name of Raggok before the Scourge, and went insane when their Passion did. While his parents were brought down by the people of his kaer, Endaren continued to follow the Passion of his parents and grew in the service of the Passion of vengeance. Since that time, Endaren built his cult of Crownbreakers and dedicated them to unseating leaders and rulers in the Name of Raggok. His prize, however, has always been the Kingdom of Throal. Indeed, Ruanen's lures were not necessary to start the Crownbreakers in action against the kingdom, once Endaren saw Neden's weakened condition. Though leery of the power of high Circle Adepts within his ranks (lest they pull him down as he has done to so many other leaders), Endaren knew that he would need some eventually. The assassins he chose for this campaign have proven themselves time and again to be loyal to him.

For more information on Endaren, see pp. 89-90 of *Secret Societies of Barsaive*. Endaren is a Rank 12 questor of Raggok, but is not an actual Adept. If you do not have access to a copy of the *Earthdawn Companion* or *Secret Societies of Barsaive*, where the questor powers Endaren has access to are listed, then play him like a high Circle Nethermancer. While he breaks relatively easy when damaged, that does not prevent him from giving better than he gets, and his Crownbreakers will do their best to intercede between their leader and his attackers. Normally, Endaren would not include himself in so dangerous a gambit as attacking the king and his defenders



personally, but with his own grail finally in sight, Endaren wishes to personally lead the attack. After all, the Whisperers are the only ones more skilled at disappearing into the crowd once the battle is over, before the dust has settled, than the Crownbreakers.

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

Initiative: 5 Physical Defense: 9
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 12 Social Defense: 11

Damage: Armor: 5
Forged Broadsword: 15 Mystic Armor: 3
Number of Spells: See above Knockdown: 5
Spellcasting: See above Recovery Tests: 3
Effect: See above

Combat Movement: 40 Full Movement: 80

Legend Points: 600

Equipment: Forged Broadsword (Damage Step 10), Hardened Leather, Absorb Blow Charm

THE WHISPERERS

The Whisperers that serve Ruanen are all Thief Adepts that he has trained. They all usually come from similar backgrounds, as well. All six were either orphans or slaves with no familial or political ties and all of them owe their life to Ruanen in one way or another. Krasik, Ruanen's second in command and a Fifth Circle Thief, was originally from Iopos and about to meet the same fate his heretical parents had when Ruanen somehow smuggled him out from under the watchful eyes of the Holders of Trust. Borian, a human female and Fourth Circle Thief, originally hailed from Urupa where Ruanen aided her in escaping the local authorities. Bridgette is a dwarf and Third Circle Thief who originally learned her Discipline when Ruanen saved her from starvation on the streets of Kratas. Tovrom, an elf, Serian, an ork, and Wezrik, a dwarf, are all Fourth Circle Thieves that Ruanen saved from slavery and transport to Thera. Each of Ruanen's followers are good at what they do, sowing deception, and are very loyal to their benefactor. While all consider themselves followers of Vestrial and Ruanen, none of the Whisperers are actually questors yet.

The Whisperers are usually very discreet in their dealings and very conscious of hiding their tracks. Their occupation and their devotion call for nothing less. Successfully hunting down this group of Thieves is a heroic and potentially frustrating task all by itself, particularly since they all have the Disguise talent and use it frequently. The statistics given below are a generic template that can be used for all of the cultists, should combat ever ensue. Their talent levels should be around the same as their Circle.

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

Initiative: 8 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 12 Social Defense: 9

Damage: Armor: 4
Forged Shortsword: 12 Mystic Armor: 2
Surprise Strike: 19 Knockdown: 6
Number of Spells: NA Recovery Tests: 2
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Death Rating: 38 Combat Movement: 50
Wound Threshold: 10 Full Movement: 100
Unconsciousness Rating: 29

Legend Points: 300

Equipment: Forged shortsword (Damage Step 6), padded leather, 1d12 throwing knives

Loot: 2d10 silver pieces, 1d12 copper pieces

CROWNBREAKER ASSASSINS

The Crownbreaker assassins represent Oakhaft's most trusted and competent Adepts, and his strong-arms. The human Thief, Rhalen, is the assassin the characters will encounter in Event 3 of *The Cauldron*. The assassins responsible for the signal of the coup are both Archers: Nedrin, a male ork, and Gyllan, a female human. The remaining five assassins are with Endaren in the final assault against King Neden: a male troll Warrior, Grathor, a t'skrang Swordmaster, T'rishtall, a twin pair of dwarf Archers, Verix and Romi, and a dwarf Elementalist Named Zadrick. Ironically, for a group dedicated to the destruction of rulers and leaders of Barsaive, they still fanatically follow Endaren and the organization he's established. Each of the assassins will give his or her own life for the mission given to them.

Each of the assassins should be Sixth Circle, or around one to two Circles above the party. The number in parenthesis represents alternative stats for the Thief or the Elementalist.

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

Initiative: 5 (8) Physical Defense: 11
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 9
Attack: 14 Social Defense: 8
Damage: Armor: 9 (4)
Forged Broadsword: 17 Mystic Armor: 2 (3)
Longbow: 11 Knockdown: 7
Number of Spells: NA (5) Recovery Tests: 3
Spellcasting: NA (13)
Effect: See below

Combat Movement: 45 Full Movement: 90

Legend Points: 500

Equipment: Forged Broadsword (Damage Step 10), Ring Mail, Longbow, Footman's Shield

Loot: 1d6 silver pieces, 1d12 copper pieces

Warrior

Notable Skills/Talents: Acrobatic Strike 6/14, Avoid Blow 6/14 (D), Durability 6 (DR 96/UR 76), Life Check 6/13 (D), Swift Kick 6/14, Wood Skin 6/13



Swordmaster

Notable Skills/Talents: Avoid Blow 6/14 (D), Disarm 6/14 (D), Durability 6 (DR 87/UR 70), Parry 6/14 (D), Riposte 6/14 (D), Second Weapon 6/14 (D), Taunt 6/12

Archer

Notable Skills/Talents: Bank Shot 6/14 (D), Durability 6 (DR 78/UR 64), Flame Arrow 6/16 (D), Mystic Aim 6/13 (D), Sprint 6, True Shot 6/14,

Thief

Notable Skills/Talents: Avoid Blow 6/14 (D), Durability 6 (DR 72/UR 58), Silent Walk 6/14, Throwing Weapons 6/14 (D), Wound Balance 6/13

Elementalist

Notable Skills/Talents: Durability 6 (DR 66/UR 52), Elemental Hold 6/18, Fire Heal 6/18 (D), Willforce 6, Unshakable Earth 6/16
The Elementalist has 3 Spell Matrices at Step 6, one at Step 5, and has access to Elementalist spells of up to Sixth Circle.

ROYAL GUARD/CROWNBREAKER FANATICS

Use these statistics interchangeably for the average members of the Royal Guard and the Crownbreaker Fanatics encountered in the raid on Mountain Lily (see **Event 3 of The Cauldron**). There are also Crownbreaker Fanatics interspersed throughout the **Climax of The Coup**.

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

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 10
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 7
Attack: 13 Social Defense: 7
Damage: Armor: 9
Forged Broadsword: 17 Mystic Armor: 1
Light Crossbow: 11 Knockdown: 7
Number of Spells: NA Recovery Tests: 3
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Death Rating: 42 Combat Movement: 33
Wound Threshold: 12 Full Movement: 65
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Legend Points: 100
Equipment: Forged Broadsword (Damage Step 10), Ring Mail, Light Crossbow, Footman's Shield
Loot: 1d6 silver pieces, 1d12 copper pieces

THROALIC SOLDIERS/CONSPIRATORS

Use these statistics interchangeably for the Throalic soldiers defending the palace and the armed groups of Conspirators that the characters encounter in battling their way to the Royal Auditorium (see the **Climax of The Coup**).

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 Combat Movement: 38
Wound Threshold: 12 Full Movement: 75
Unconsciousness Rating: 34

Legend Points: 150
Equipment: Forged Broadsword (Damage Step 10), Hardened Leather, Sling, Footman's Shield
Loot: 1d12 silver pieces, 3d12 copper pieces

THE HIVE OF ASHES

The Hive of Ashes is actually another group in the service of Raggok, much like the Crownbreakers are. Many years ago, Uilmaz was a dwarf dying of a horrible wasting disease. Raggok approached her and offered her a cure in exchange for a pledge of eternal loyalty. The elixir that the Mad Passion gave her had been extracted from the astral essence of a dormant Horror, Andokhas, and while she maintains a disguise as an old woman through Andokhas' power, she is, in fact, the equivalent of a minor Horror, as is each of the eight members that are left. Because Andokhas cannot manifest itself in this level of magic, Uilmaz has become its primary anchor to the physical world and is the one holding the mark to Neden.

DEX: 8 STR: 8 TOU: 10
PER: 10 WIL: 10 CHA: 8

Initiative: 12 Physical Defense: 12
Number of Attacks: 2 Spell Defense: 13
Attack: 12 Social Defense: 13
Damage: 11 Armor: 12
Number of Spells: 2 (3) Mystic Armor: 11
Spellcasting: 12 Knockdown: 8
Effect: See below Recovery Tests: 5

Death Rating: 80 (110) Combat Movement: 45
Wound Threshold: 15 Full Movement: 90
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Legend Points: 1,000 (1,500)
Equipment: Whatever their Name-giver form carries
Loot: Usually none

Each of the members of the Hive of Ashes may select up to Fifth Circle Wizard spells for their spell repertoire, though Uilmaz may select up to Seventh Circle spells. Uilmaz also has at least 5 levels of Horror



THROAL CHARACTER TABLE

THE KING'S CIRCLE

Name	Description	Location
Ajmar the Admirable	Court Wizard and close advisor	p. 53, T:TDK
Dollas	Neden's mother and former Queen	p. 51, T:TDK
Foellerian	Supreme General of the Army of Throal; Archer	p. 80, T:TDK
J'Role	The Honorable Thief and Senior Gatherer of the Eye	p. 78, T:TDK
Merrox	Master of the Hall of Records and advisor to Neden	pp. 89-90, T:TDK
Rokzo the Unruly	Friend of Neden's and naval commander	p. 47, PTW
Tramon	Ambassador General of His Majesty's Diplomatic Corps and advisor	p. 76-77, T:TDK
Wishten	Member of House Elcomi, current Chancellor, and a strong supporter of Neden	p. 59, T:TDK
Veroxa	Neden's grandmother, has a close relationship with Neden	p. 52, T:TDK

THE DEFENDERS

Name	Description	Location
Briana Wind-Rider	Captain of the <i>Thrush</i> and part of the Jerris Resistance	p. 59 (this book)
Degaas	Bodyguard for the Circle Path Company, assigned to help in the Royal Auditorium by Remiel	p. xx, POD
Diona the Swift	Ambassador from Kratas, friend of Neden; Thief/Warrior	p. 73, T:TDK
Grindo	Leader of House Neumani, used to adventure with Neden; Swordmaster	p. 37, T:TDK
Ilmorian	General of the Throalic Navy; Air Sailor	p. 83, T:TDK
Nalus Freefall	First mate of the <i>Earthdawn</i> and excellent strategist; Air Sailor/Archer	pp. 136-137, BAW
Quaavami Rockbreaker	General of the Throalic infantry; Scout/Warrior	p. 81, T:TDK
Vaare Hardfist	Captain of the <i>Earthdawn</i> ; Sky Raider	p. 136, BAW
Vazilia	Grand Commander of His Majesty's Royal Guard; Bodyguard	p. 66, T:TDK

THE MISHWAL FACTION

Name	Description	Location
Beracia	Leader of House Byril'ah; close ties with House Avalus	p. 36, T:TDK
Curticia	Leader of House Mikul; supported Varulus and supports Neden	p. 36, T:TDK
Dequaria Alandos	Representative of Urupa and friend of Dollas and Neden	p. 75, T:TDK
Geverian Half-smile	Emissary from Bloodwood and friend of Neden	pp. 71-72, T:TDK
K'senkt Aberius V'strimon	Representative from the Floating City	p. 76, T:TDK
Kelassa	Childhood friend of Varulus and supporter of Neden	p. 56, T:TDK
Pepara	Brother of Umo, co-leader of House Yilwaz, and a staunch supporter of Neden because of the war	p. 38, T:TDK
Remiel	Head of the Circle Path Company and staunch supporter of Neden	p. 14, POD
Tholon	Leader of House Elcomi; supports the throne without question	p. 37, T:TDK
Umo	Brother of Pepara, co-leader of House Yilwaz, and a staunch supporter of Neden because of the war	p. 38, T:TDK
Zendes	Leader of House Sarafica; enigmatic but staunch supporter of House Avalus	pp. 37-38, T:TDK

THE HUARI FACTION

Name	Description	Location
Bazana Gems-Dripping	Ambassador from Travar; not entangled in current strife	p. 75, T:TDK
The Five Sisters	Leaders of House Chaozun; conservatives with no malice to the throne	p. 35, T:TDK
Ilio Shipwright	Official ambassador from Jerris	pp. 72-73, T:TDK
Lomron	Leader of House Garsun; well-liked conservative	p. 35, T:TDK
Oberh	Leader of the Dream Spire company; recouping losses from the war	pp. 38-39, T:TDK
Selenda	Leader of House Ueraven; led into the conspiracy by Ruanen	p. 56 T:TDK
Vamban	Public face of House Ludi	p. 35, T:TDK

[Legend: BAW - Barsaive at War | POD - Path of Deception | PTW - Prelude to War | T:TDK - Throal: The Dwarf Kingdom]



Durability, making her Death Rating the one in parenthesis. In addition, for the cost of 5 Strain to the Hive member, Andokhas can boost any attribute for any Hive member by 5 steps for a single attack.

See the last paragraph in **Event 1 of The Cauldron** for the effects of Andokhas' Astral Deception Horror power on the members of the Hive. This power also serves to cloak the astral pollution that surrounds their chosen section of housing in Throal and has allowed the Horror and his minions to go undetected for so long. In their true form, the members of the Hive of Ashes retain a vaguely humanoid shape, covered with shifting tentacles and pieces of rotting flesh, and they sport insect like claws and wings.

THROAL CHARACTER TABLE

Throal is a big place and is often the center stage for Barsaive's new legends. Because of this, there are many legendary Names within its halls and many will show where their loyalties lie during this period of strife. Having all the Names listed in this section involved in the story would be more trouble than it's worth, but each one could potentially be involved. Sticking with Names that have already been used in your other stories or that the characters are already familiar with would keep things simple for yourself and the players.

The characters have been divided into four factions, listed below. The main conspirators responsible for the coup have not been included here, since they are addressed in the **Adventure Frameworks** and the **Important Characters** sections.

The King's Circle: Those closest to the king and those who know of his mark and the information that the Eye of Throal has provided on the activities of Throal's enemies. This group is unwaveringly loyal to King Neden, though not all will be present for the final conflict in the Royal Auditorium.

The Defenders: Those willing to fight for King Neden and who would most likely be present at the final conflict, if they are able to make it to the Auditorium in time.

The Mishwal Faction: Those who agree with House Avalus' policies and support the throne politically.

The Huari Faction: Those who disagree with House Avalus' policies and most of whom would rather see a return to the old ways of Throal. While they are not all working to dethrone Neden, they are most likely not helping, either.

RUNNING THERE MUST BE CHAOS

The chaos and tension caused by the most recent war with Thera and the unstable state that Throal has found itself in afterwards has given Throal's enemies their chance to strike. This section provides adventure ideas and frameworks that describe the chaos that ensues within the heart of Throal, a number of shorter adventure ideas based on the events, and guidelines for tying up loose ends.

Note that this section is written assuming that the characters are loyal to Throal and House Avalus. There is plenty of room within the events listed below for characters that have placed their loyalties with another nation to participate without too much alteration. If they are

allies of Throal, then simply have their own agencies initially contact them and establish their aid with the dwarf kingdom. If they are against Throal, then they could easily join the Crownbreakers and the Banned Houses in their attempted coup.

Also note that though the event synopsis is written by reference of the characters in the **Important Characters** section, this is not supposed to be their story. It's supposed to be the story of the characters and the part they play in keeping the king of Throal alive and well and keeping one of the greater bastions of peace and order in Barsaive from toppling into chaos. While the mid-Circle dwarf Warrior and the high Circle obsidian Light Bearer shouldn't play second-fiddle in every dealing with the characters, they should at best be peers and never overpower the characters with their presence. They are intended to be the impetus that gets the characters involved and keeps them on the path, but not the force that leads them. More to the point, keep it fun. Don't bow to the heavy-handed and fast-paced plot flow if it would work better in your game with alterations, more choices, and more time.

INTRODUCING THE EVENT

If the characters use Throal as any kind of staging base, or return to it at any point while going through the other sections of **Barsaive in Chaos**, they will start to notice the undercurrents of unrest in the streets. The rumors and arguments about Throal's king, government, and state of well-being are pretty hard to avoid hearing, since they become some of the hottest topics in the debates in the taverns and *Olzims*. The characters will most likely be asked their opinion by friends, drinking companions, and complete strangers every time they return to Throal for any extended period of time. The speculation on Kratas' activities, the troubles with Jerris and Iopos, the concern over the king's long absence from court, and the new black sheep scion of Ueraven are all common knowledge on the streets.

If the characters are very influential in the Kingdom of Throal, they may already have learned about the activity of the Banned Houses and been asked to aid in keeping an eye on them, or asked to assist with discovering the source of the outlying banditry on Throal's villages. If the characters already have the king's trust, they may also be included in the discussion of his health when they are in the city and they may be present for Isam Durr's suspicions and then confirmation of the king's mark. In either case, the confidence that Throal places in this group of Adepts would be what prompts Aldevalen to approach them for aid with his problem, Horanth Moram, a few short weeks before the celebration.

A note on combat with the Hive of Ashes: each member of the Hive of the Ashes is similar to a powered-down Bloatform, but still very dangerous, even for high Circle characters (particularly when they attack in multiples). To balance this out with lower Circle or wounded groups of heroes, keep in mind that while each member is a lesser Bloatform with the statistics shown in **Important Characters** above, they all come from Andokhas. When Andokhas uses Strain, he takes it from the health of his Hive members and he has been using Strain quite a bit to keep their identities hidden and torment Neden. Because of this, feel free to adjust their current Damage as much as needed to make it a winnable fight for lower Circle characters. In addition, though combat with members of the Hive usually takes place in ambush situations in the more secluded parts of Throal, there is always the possibility of roving Peace Patrols (keeping a look-out for bandits outside of the city) or Royal Guard (inside the city) showing up. If the characters



are starting to fall to bad luck, have a squad show up and supply Booster or a few precious Healing Potions, as well as extra attacks against the Horrors.

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 three adventures form a continuous story line that follows the plot described in **Event Synopsis**, p. 85. Shorter adventure ideas are also presented should the characters wish to continue participating in the Scythian Crusade.

THE CAULDRON

The Premise

It's two weeks before the Celebration of the Return and Aldevalen has found a group of trustworthy Adepts to aid him in watching the activities of Horanth Moram. What they find, however, is an undertow leading them into the deep, turbulent waters that are threatening the dwarf kingdom, as they begin to find that Horanth's people associate not only with the Banned Houses, but with the Crownbreakers. Following these leads, the group learns of a planned raid on village not a day's ride from Barter Town and have a chance to stop it before it's too late.

Set-Up

Aldevalen has suspicions that Horanth is tied to the seedier sides of Throal and was somewhat concerned that the man slipped so quickly into Selenda's good graces, an unnatural deed, at best. However, the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back was that on more than one occasion, Aldevalen has spotted the man spying on him. Not knowing any of his family enough to trust their sword at his back and because the few of his crewmates who aren't new to this city have been gone too long to know what's going on, the Ueraven scion seeks trustworthy outside help. If the characters are relatively unknown in Throal, or new to it, then Aldevalen will approach them for the simple fact that he's in a similar boat. The dwarf is still new to Barsaive and Throal in particular, and is more accustomed to the company of adventurers than he is the gossip-loving people of Throal or their politicians. A good place for low Circle characters to meet him is in a dispute turned violent on the streets that washes over the party, or in a similar bar brawl. Aldevalen would be working to pacify the troublemakers and trying to bring some order to the situation. If any of the characters help out, it would score enough points in his mind to further test their mettle, then, finally, ask them to assist with his private investigation. If the characters are well known in Throal as trustworthy allies of the crown, then Aldevalen wouldn't hesitate to approach them for aid.

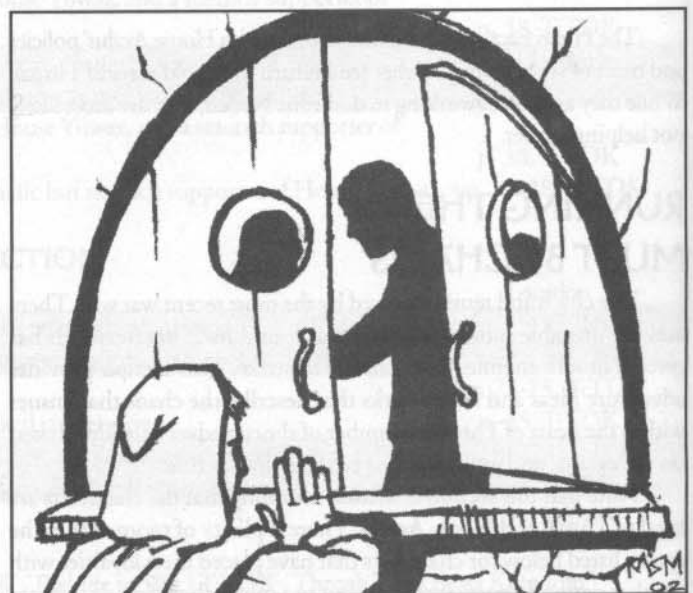
The Warrior would fill the group in on the events leading up to his decision to investigate: his father's work, his pursuit of it, Horanth's addition to Selenda's informants, and the times he believes he's seen Horanth keeping an eye on him. His own cursory investigation about Horanth Moram has turned up nothing other than his Name and that he's been in Throal for about a year. The hall of records can't find a listed residence for the man, however, and the few resources that Aldevalen has on the streets also haven't been able to locate it. With the

aid of the characters, Aldevalen hopes to be able to catch the man spying on him, or at least be able to find out what he's up to. After all, turnabout is fair play.

Event 1

Though Aldevalen knows it's a dull task for adventuring souls, he asks that the group keep an eye out in and around the Library while he does his research, to see if he is indeed being spied on by Horanth. It may take a day or two for the characters to notice the recurring face in the crowd everywhere that Aldevalen goes, but it's there. The one they see, however, is a different human, Krasik, a Whisperer that Ruanen has tasked with watching over Aldevalen while he makes sure the final preparations for the celebration are going according to Vestrial's mad designs.

It will require a bit of espionage, but if the characters follow this Whisperer, as Aldevalen will suggest they do, they'll get a chance to see him visit several taverns and *Olzims*, where he will join in the more volatile debates going on about the state of the king and kingdom, always somehow managing to make them worse. If they continue to follow him, he'll lead the heroes to a quiet meeting with a few grim looking dwarfs deep in the older section of the housing. The four dwarfs are each speakers from the four Banned Houses and they hold a hushed conversation with Krasik about places where the "streamers" (weapons) will be cached and questions on the aid that the Whisperers' "engineers" (the assassins) will provide. Krasik informs them that "the benefactors" (the Huari Houses offering aid) will be stockpiling "streamers" in various houses, denoted by a previously agreed upon sign (an open window, with a certain pattern of multi-colored streamers used like a curtain). Unless the characters are very stealthy, or use sorcerous means, they will miss the conversation. If the characters storm the building to find answers, the five conspirators will act like outraged citizens and the characters better have very good proof (or be very well known) not to have the Royal Guard hold the entire group for a day, while it listens to every side of the story. Without definitive proof, even if the characters are well known, the Royal Guard will have to let the five conspirators loose, with apologies. In this circumstance, Krasik will become much more watchful for further shadows and may go to ground if he keeps noticing the characters following him.



If the characters return to the scene to look for clues (which Aldevalen will recommend if anyone has Evidence Analysis or Tracking, or other similar talents), they will find the house empty, but they won't find any particularly helpful clues beyond what they already know. There is, however, a cantankerous dwarf watching their search of the area. This is Ogeth, one of the members of the Hive of Ashes, and though the characters don't know it, they are snooping around only a level above Uilmaz's quarters and the Hive has now marked them as potential trouble. If a character attempts Astral Sight on the dwarf, on 15 and below it looks just like a plain, non-Adept dwarf. From 16 to 25, the Astral Sight bounces off the dwarf. Anything higher reveals the Bloatform-like pattern infused with the dwarf. This Astral Deception is part of Andokhas' power and it keeps his Hive hidden. If the characters discover the identity of the creature and attack, skip the note and ambush outlined in the Climax.

Event 2

After the meeting with the Banned Houses, Krasik will discretely disappear for a day, where he gives his report to Ruanen. If the characters manage to track him back to Ruanen's den without being discovered or given the slip (which should be a feat of Heroic proportions; after all, not even the Eye have found the Whisperers yet), they will be able to confirm that this man is working with the human who calls himself Horanth Moram. The next day, the newly built residence that they met in is empty, with no sign of Ruanen. Krasik reappears to resume his watch over Aldevalen.

Again, if the characters track Krasik after his day of spying on their companion, he will end up in another clandestine meeting late in the evening. This meeting occurs along the fringes of Bartertown, in a warehouse that has been mostly gutted by a fire, long ago. The reason it hasn't become a haven for the gangs or derelicts of Bartertown is because the Crownbreakers keep an eye over it and they do have sentries posted. While Krasik passes without contest, the characters will have to find some way to sneak past or quietly subdue them if they want to find out what is being said at the meeting.

Krasik informs the Crownbreakers that their message has been delivered to the conspirators and that Ruanen sends word that the arrows will be ready within the week. The Crownbreakers will all get a grim smile out of that and will inform him that the raids continue and that the reaction has been as good as hoped. He hopes that the dawn raid on a nearby village, Mountain Lily, will serve to draw out more of the Eye's agents to investigate the empty mountains for signs of their bandits. The Crownbreakers are never mentioned by name, but the leader has a pendent of Raggok that he fingers speculatively during the conversation.

If the characters are ever discovered, or interrupt the scene in any way, the Crownbreakers will immediately draw weapons and attack. Krasik will melt into the shadows and do his best to escape and report back to Ruanen once he's certain he is not being followed. The Crownbreakers will fight until half of their original number, which should be around ten, or twice the number of characters (whichever is greater), are killed. At that point, they will also begin to scatter into the city of Bartertown like cockroaches in a rock garden. A simple map is the most valuable thing that can be found from the bodies of the Crownbreakers, showing a roughly drawn, but detailed layout of the village of Mountain Lily. Aldevalen and any of the characters familiar with the area will know that Mountain Lily is roughly a day's ride away

from Throal. If the raid is going to be at dawn, then they have roughly ten hours to get there and stop it.

Event 3

The Village of Mountain Lily is a day's ride from Bartertown, which means if the characters leave immediately on mounts, they will have about two hours of leeway. Aldevalen will instead recommend airship travel (roughly three hours to get to the village), and he happens to know an airship that would be willing to take them if the characters do not have immediate access to an airship of their own. It takes an hour or two to make it to the airship docks from their position in Bartertown and during that time, Aldevalen will also say that someone should stay behind to explain to the Throal authorities about the dead Crownbreakers and try to inform them about the raid so they can get troops out there. He'll volunteer, unless more charismatic members step up. When they reach the shipyard, Aldevalen will approach the *Earthdawn*, which, out of habit, keeps a skeleton crew aboard at all times, and request permission to board with his companions. On this night, Vaare Hardfist happens to be one of the on-duty crew and she immediately calls the characters aboard and sends a runner to the harbor-master (along with the volunteer who agrees to tell the Throalic authorities about what has been transpiring) that the *Earthdawn* is making haste to Mountain Lily. If one of the characters chooses to remain behind, then they will have the opportunity to be passed all the way up to the Grand Commander of the Royal Guard, Vazilia. She will listen to the story, wish to see the evidence they have to present, and then, after dispatching a message to General Ilmorian that an airship should fly to Mountain Lily to aid and secure the town along with the *Earthdawn*, she will begin to arrange a meeting between the characters and the king's advisors.

The village of Mountain Lily isn't very defensible, it doesn't even have a presentable fence. The *Earthdawn* will drop them off a discreet distance away, so as not to frighten away the unsuspecting raiders. The crew of the *Earthdawn* must remain with the ship, since there is no decent place to land the craft nearby, and they only have a skeleton crew. They will, however, provide air support with Archery when they become aware that combat has begun. The characters know from the map they've obtained where the mayor's house is and will be hailed by the sentries as they approach the town, unless they go in stealthily. The village can muster their full militia (about twenty men, including the mayor) to aid in the defense of the village, and they have a central cave that they can withdraw their citizenry to in the event of a major attack. It takes three hours for the village to listen to the characters, muster their militia, and quietly move their populous into the cave. An hour before dawn, a group of twenty-four bandits streams into the village, armed with flaming arrows, broadswords, and axes. Use the stats for the Average Soldier for the raiders, led by the first Crownbreaker assassin: Rhalen. The militia for Mountain Lily should use the stats of the Average Royal Guard. This time, it's a group of mostly mercenaries not expecting heavy resistance, with some Crownbreakers in the mix. If the battle seems to be going poorly at all, or their leader falls in combat, they begin to scatter back into the mountains. This group has no identifying marks or items upon themselves to give away their identities, but the evidence from the previous encounter, along with the fact the raid actually occurred, is enough for Throalic law. The small village thanks the characters profusely for their aid, offering a handful of spare Booster Potions and gold in gratitude. Shortly

thereafter, the Arm's airship arrives, delivering a small defensive force for the village in case of further attack.

The Climax

Upon returning to the docks, the characters will be greeted by the comrade they left behind, informing them that a meeting is being arranged for them with the king's advisors, and an anonymous message written in very sharp looking calligraphy, saying:

I have information on what you seek. Bring your companions, but none of Throal's guard, or I will not speak. Meet me outside Bartertown, at a cave not a mile east along the mountains, betwixt the basalt stone and the mountain stream. It must be today, or not at all.

The sailor who delivers the message doesn't remember anything distinguishing about the one who originally gave it to him, except that it was a dwarf. There is a fairly large cavern, just as the note describes, a mile east of Bartertown. If the characters go, they will be met by Ogeth from Event 1.

Uilmaz has decided that the characters' investigations of the Crownbreakers might lead them to discovering the Hive of Ashes, and has instructed Ogeth to deal with them. Once the characters have entered the cavern and its proven they have no Throalic officials with them (aside from Aldevalen, who will want to go with them if allowed), Ogeth will reveal his true form and attack relentlessly until destroyed.

When the characters manage to make their way back to the Throalic city, Vazilia will personally inform them that their meeting with the king's advisors will take place the next day, at noon. If the characters inform her about the attack from the Hive, or their condition after the battle is readily apparent, she will get the meeting moved up as quickly as possible and ask the characters to join her in the palace, where they will be allowed to rest and heal in the care of a questor of Garlen until the meeting occurs.

PREPARATIONS AND DESPAIR

The Premise

The day of the celebration is rapidly approaching, not more than a week away now. With the evidence the characters have unearthed, there is now substantial proof that not only is there a conspiracy going on, but there also has been Horror activity within the heart of the kingdom. The hunt for Neden's tormentor is given new direction and finds its way to the heart of the Hive of Ashes. While the hunt continues, those closest to the Throalic throne begin trying to covertly bolster the defenses of the kingdom and begin their own hunt for the source of the conspiracy hatched against King Neden.

Set-Up

Vazilia brings the characters and Aldevalen into the notable company of J'role, General Foellerian, Wishten, Ajmar the Admirable, Veroxa, and Isam Derr to give their report. King Neden sends a written letter with his apologies for not attending, but expressing his gratefulness for the deeds they have performed in support of Throal. Those gathered listen to the report, plumbing the characters for as much detail as they can: descriptions of Krasik, Horanth Moram, Ogeth (before turning

into his true form), and the leader of the suspected Crownbreakers they saw, both in the village and in Bartertown, times, places, and the suspicions that led the characters to discover these events, as well as any suspicions the characters still harbor. The evidence, consisting of at least the map and the note (plus any other bits the characters found important or were able to procure, such as the pendant of Raggok from the Crownbreaker), is shown to each of the seven (including Vazilia) in turn. At the description of the leader of the raid against the village, Rhaleen, J'role frowns, and identifies the man as a Crownbreaker that the Eye had been aware of, but who hadn't been seen in Throal for sometime. J'role also identifies each of the four engaged with Krasik in the first meeting as being from one of the Banned Houses. General Foellerian assumes that the Crownbreakers were hoping Throal would send troops out of the city to fortify the villages until the raids cease, making for a smaller presence of the Arm and Eye within Throal proper. Isam Derr and Ajmar the Admirable study each of the items presented in astral space for further hints.

When the report turns to the evidence of Ogeth being at least a minor Horror, Isam Derr asks the characters to relate every detail, no matter how trivial they believe it to be. After they have divulged their information, Isam Derr tells the others he believes that, with the help of the characters, he might be able to take care of one of Neden's problems. That will, however, require taking the characters into their confidence. Unless the characters have somehow expressed that their loyalty isn't with the king despite their actions, the other six will readily agree to Isam's request if the characters swear a blood oath of secrecy about what they are to learn in this chamber. If the characters agree (Aldevalen will), then they will be given the full story of King Neden's mark (the mark being the reason that Neden did not want to be present for this meeting).

Isam Derr asks them to accompany him in hunting down the leads linked with Ogeth, to see if it leads to the Horror that marked King Neden. At the same time, there is much to be done in the city. The defenses for the celebration need to be discreetly bolstered, and whatever the Banned Houses, Crownbreakers, and Horanth's goons are planning needs to be discovered as quickly as possible. There are only a few precious days left before there could be an attempted coup. However, J'role believes it might tip their hand if Krasik or Horanth



suspect the characters of spying on them and so feels that those tasks are best suited for the anonymous Eye agents already active in the city. While all agree that having the characters perform any more spying is dangerous to the cause, they believe that the characters resourcefulness will undoubtedly help in the defense of the city and ask if they would be a willing part when they return from the hunt.

If the characters did not encounter any of the members of the Hive of Ashes (aside from the sighting of Ogeth during *The Cauldron*), when Isam Derr looks at the anonymous letter, he notices the tell-tale signs of a Horror-marked individual, evidenced by the serrated, jagged style of the calligraphy. He then questions where the characters received this and if they pursued it. If he finds that they didn't, he will gather together a small group and head to the cave while the characters are invited to aid in bolstering the defense of the city and hunt for more information on the conspirators. There, he'll battle with Ogeth, and from the description that should have been garnered from the report, learn of his link with the older housing section. Isam Derr will then hunt down the Hive, asking the characters if they wish to aid in its destruction. Again, at this point, they will be offered to make the blood oath and learn of Neden's mark before the battle with the Hive. During this time, the characters may very well change their mind, since waiting in the palace is an exercise in anxiety, as reports are slow to arrive with any useful or even pertinent information, and the tension level there is high.

Event 1

If there is no Wizard in the character party, Ajmar the Admirable will offer to use his Evidence Analysis talent to see what information could be gleaned from the letter for the investigation. The paper and ink that were used were nothing special and could be picked up at several places throughout Throal and Bartertown. The letter was written, however, about the same time the characters left from Throal to go aid the village, and it was written in one of the many, indistinguishable homes in the older sections of Throal's living quarters. This should lead the party back to the first place they spied Ogeth, where Krasik met with the dwarf conspirators, in one of the oldest sections of *wedshel* (middle-class housing). Once the characters are there, they can delve deeper into the tunnels or they can attempt to use the Tracking talent to follow Ogeth's tracks back to the Hive (difficulty of 18). The halls closest to the entrance are still populated with Throalic citizens, but the dwindling of the Throalic populous is very apparent in this mostly abandoned section of housing. The few citizens still there don't know any useful information, though they will confirm that Ogeth was someone they saw often, and that he lived much further in. If the characters go back to investigate the cave that they may have fought Ogeth in, they will find nothing new, except perhaps a scrap of his clothing. If Direction Arrow is used with this piece of clothing, it will point towards Uilmaz and the old housing tract, since the essence of Andokhas is what the talent detects.

A methodical search of the halls will take several hours (longer if the searches are thorough), and reveal that while most were abandoned relatively recently, probably during the time of the War, those deeper in look like they've never been lived in, even though they're furnished. Ogeth's tracks and the empty rooms all lead to the same place: the last room, whose door stands open in sinister invitation. Inside, they find Uilmaz and two companions who both look like they bear the marks of

a disease that almost claimed their lives. Uilmaz will offer the group a thick, dark beer, and ask what she can do to help. If anyone is fooled by the ruse, Isam Derr ruins it by drawing his blade and creating a Radiant Circle (see the *Light Bearer* chapter, p. 116) over the reception room. The Hive reveals their true forms at that point and combat ensues. From the reception room, there is about a 30' x 15' Dining Room/Family Hall, and beyond that, a kitchen and sleeping area for ten. If the Radiant Circle is good enough to keep the Hive out, the obsidiman has trapped them inside the building and the characters have a place to fall back to and keep the wounded semi-protected. Isam Derr will use Edge of Light (see the *Light Bearer* chapter, p. 117) to enhance the attacks of the group that engage the creatures in melee, as well as Ease Wounds on any who needs it.

This group of the Hive is at full strength and will fight to the death, targeting Isam Derr primarily unless a new target presents itself as most dangerous. If Isam Derr falls unconscious, the Radiant Circle dissipates, but the Hive will not run from this encounter. They will, however, pursue.

If a group of Royal Guard hasn't arrived before the characters are victorious, they will after, summoned by the citizens who heard the combat. After the bodies of the Hive are destroyed, the characters will be escorted back to the Palace to heal and recuperate.

During the hunt for Andokhas, the Eye hunts the Whisperers. However, by this time, Ruanen and his followers have gone to ground, only moving around enough to keep the Crownbreakers and conspirators believing that they are still involved with the coup. By the day before the celebration, Vestrial's cultists are no longer in Throal.

The Climax

Just before Uilmaz is destroyed, Andokhas spitefully hits Neden with a Razor Orb spell (Step 35 Damage), dropping the king into unconsciousness. In a brief dream, the Horror informs the king that neither he nor his companions who are ousting him from Throal will ever be safe. Ajmar rushes to his fallen king, studying him in astral space for a link to the attack just in time to watch the mark dissipate. As healers tend to the king, he slips into the first real, peaceful sleep he has had in over a year.

When the battle-weary destroyers of the Hive return, Ajmar tells them that, though the king was wounded, he is safe, and recuperating. The heroes are provided a place to rest and relax and are thanked in turn by each of the king's circle.

THE COUP

The Premise

The day of the festival arrives and the heads of the conspiracy have not been found. The defenses of Throal have been bolstered and now the palace waits to find out if their last-minute preparations are enough to keep the city safe. The kingdom and the crown must be preserved when treachery brings a coup down upon the palace.

Set-Up

The festival is planned to officially start at noon, beginning at the gates of Throal. A group of volunteers from the last Throalic unit to arrive home is to begin a procession that will wind its way throughout the city at a slow and comfortable pace, giving the participants plenty



of time to partake of the food and refreshment, go inside for a time, and enjoy the sights. Parties and gatherings are planned to be going on everywhere in the streets and taverns, even homes, throughout the city. These groups are supposed to join the procession as it passes them, though anyone is welcome to branch off and move further into the city to partake of the merriment elsewhere until the procession passes. Members of the Diplomatic Corps and other volunteers will rotate through the winding parade at various points, making sure that the procession at least keeps moving towards the palace. Ideally, the whole procession is to finally make its way to the gates of the palace just after nightfall, where the final party will be held within the Royal Auditorium and all the way back to the courtyard if necessary.

Much of the Arm of Throal is out patrolling and trying to put an end to the recent rash of raids. Less than half of those left in Throal are to be on duty during the festivities to help maintain order, and portions of those troops have been replaced by volunteer militia so that the soldiers can have the day to celebrate their own return. Initially, this would have easily been able to keep the merry-making dwarf kingdom in line, as well as any rabble-rousers; however, that was before a well-organized coup seemed imminent. With the warning, hand-picked soldiers and agents are approached to help stand watch, secretly bolstering the numbers of the Arm and Eye on duty for this day. J'Role the Honorable Thief sends out a network of key agents from the Eye, tasked with spreading throughout the city to keep watch for any suspicious activities and quickly report back to the palace through the use of the Far-Seeing Eye and message runners. Grindo and General Rockbreaker are given charge of watching the gates of Throal to make sure the festival starts on time and to secure the gates from sabotage or infiltration. General Ilmorian and Vaare Hardfist, along with the rest of the crew of the *Earthdawn*, are responsible for securing the shipyards and docks from any potential harm. The rest of Neden's defenders stay in the palace, watching and waiting.

The characters are offered their choice of positions, but J'Role informs them that he would be most comfortable if they would join the Eye in the duty of patrolling the city and keeping a lookout for suspicious activity or leads to the conspiracy. Since they were the first to stumble across the conspiracy, the Thief is hoping that the characters will be lucky again and somehow stop the coup before it starts. If the

characters have no spellcasters, then J'Role will provide them with an agent who could make use of the Far-Seeing Eye to report back to the palace. If they do have a spellcaster, then they would be provided with a small plaque containing the ritual to use the Far-Seeing Eye, as well as a silver star.

Event 1

The day goes on, and the celebration seems to be a slow-acting balm; the tensions from months of bickering and suspicion slowly seem to be ebbing as the revelers start to let themselves enjoy the festival. However, even as the procession winds its way through the caverns, the Eye and the Arm are kept busy tracking potential troublemakers, trying to find where the main body of conspirators is gathering. The conspirators never travel in large groups and mix freely with the crowd, drinking little, and mostly sitting to conserve their energy for the night ahead. Wherever the characters choose to go, be it the gates, the shipyards, or with the agents of the Eye in the streets, they will eventually see signs of this. If they are at the gates or the shipyards, they will see a small, suspicious group passing, and the officer with them will ask if they would be willing to follow the group and investigate, to make sure there will be no trouble. If the characters are with the agents in the streets, then they see a similar scene and have the freedom to pursue of their own choosing as the small knot of tense revelers make their way into a particular home. The procedure set out for the characters on this matter was simple: just check on the groups and ask them if they are having a good time. Since these could easily be a group of dwarf citizens who have just been thrown out of a party for being too rowdy, the Diplomatic Corp has asked that they not man-handle or threaten any group of potential trouble-makers. This group, however, is a group of conspirators, and even an innocent question such as this by armed adventurers will be enough to make them act even more suspicious, trying to lure the group into the house so they can attack, or attack outright if the characters look like they could overpower the dwarfs and keep them in the room.

Subduing this lot from the Banned Houses shouldn't be too difficult for the characters. If their leader is taken out, the rest will surrender. If the leader lives and is conscious, or regains consciousness after the fight, he will begin to gloat that they are too late to save their usurper, and that the sign will be coming for the downfall of House Avalus anytime soon. If the characters can manage to get more information out of the leader, either by cajoling, flattery, intimidation, or simple bored disdain, he will reveal that the sign is a terrible explosion delivered by messengers into the crowd. The leader also knows that an open window festooned with ribbons in the pattern of red, orange, gold, silver, and blue represent houses that have weapons stashed in them for the coup, and that at the sign, they are to converge on the palace and meet up with their commanders. The Eye agent with the group will then remain in the house, keeping the prisoners under lock and key, after closing the window.

If the characters wisely go back to report this to one of the section leaders (J'Role, Ilmorian, or Rockbreaker), they will learn that several similar groups have bolted when approached by guards looking to question them, and were quickly and quietly subdued and removed to holding areas. Those captured that know what the plan is are too zealous to divulge it or properly identify themselves, but members of the Eye recognize some as members of the Banned Houses. Agents of House Sarafica also captured a few conspirators and reported directly



to the palace about it. Since their House now knows, Dollas requests aid from Zendes (since Neden still rests), and members of House Sarafica further bolster the defenses of the palace. However, the information the characters provide is by far the most the Eye has received yet. They will be assigned a new agent for quicker communications, and a group is dispatched to relieve the agent with the trapped conspirators. If the characters are at the shipyards, Ilmorian will ask the characters to join the Eye in their search, since they seem most adept at it. If the characters are at the gate, they will be allowed to go if they ask, but Rockbreaker won't suggest it.

Day gives way to dusk and the festival continues, the procession growing in number and making its way towards the Royal Auditorium. Even as the information of the sign is spread to the defenders of Throal, the assassins emerge and begin to move into position.

Event 2

The time that the Crownbreakers and the Banned Houses determined to be perfect for the coup was nightfall; not because of the lighting difference, since there isn't one in the caverns, but because they are hoping to have more soldiers drunk or weary from the revelry. The Crownbreakers were responsible for harrying outlying villages for the weeks preceding the festival to thin out the Throalic guard. The Banned Houses, along with the clandestine aid of several of the Huari faction, are responsible for executing the main attack on the palace once the Crownbreakers give the signal. In addition, one more squad of Crownbreaker assassins, led by Endaren himself, was to slip into the palace in the confusion to kill the king, though this was unknown to the conspirators.

As soon as the hour candles mark the time to be the nineteenth hour, on opposite sides of town, two assassins emerge and begin to make their way towards their destinations, Nedrin heading for the city of Wishen, and Gyllan heading for the gates.

All the Eye and the characters have to go by is that the sign will be delivered into the crowd. If they remember the conversation between Krasik and the Crownbreakers in **Event 2 of The Cauldron**, then they may rightly suspect that the sign will be two magically explosive arrows. If the characters continue their scan for suspicious people that look like they are hiding weapons, it will require a Hard Perception Test to notice the bow-wielding assassins in the crowd. If the characters are looking specifically for Archers, they gain a secret +5 to their roll.

If the characters are at the gate, then naturally they'll be able to spot Gyllan. If the characters are now wandering with the Eye, they'll have a chance to spot either of the assassins. Both assassins follow the same routine, their bows are shortbows, kept hidden on their backs under cloaks. The arrow is hidden in a simple map-case, kept at the side or across the back. They will mingle freely with the crowds, taking refreshments and making their way towards the more secluded sections near the gate or Wishen. Once there, they will begin to try to stealth their way to sniper positions. In Wishen, it's a three-story merchant's home with a good view of the avenue. At the gates, Gyllan will attempt to find a good sniper point from a carriage yard. Nedrin is aiming to hit into the middle of the festival procession, where Gyllan is just seeking to hit the main body of guards at the gate.

Both assassins have thirty minutes to get into position. If the characters notice the assassins, give chase, and are unable to subdue them by that time, the assassins will release their arrows at whatever presents the best opportunity. One way or another, however, the signal

will go off. Both assassins know the streets of Throal well and will be willing to lead the characters on a merry chase if they get room to maneuver to a place where they feel the damage will serve the plan best.

It is unfortunately impossible for the characters to capture both assassins unless the party is split. If this is the case, then the damage from both arrows can be minimized, but the assassins will see to it that the explosions still happen, and the coup begins. Both assassins will fight to the death.

The Climax

When the signal from the assassins goes off, there is a mass rush towards the palace. Some think that Neden has fallen to the Horrors. Others think that Thera or Kratas have somehow made a surprise strike within the kingdom itself. There are also those who simply wish to find a place of safety from the unknown forces causing the hysteria in the streets, and the palace of Throal still serves as a bastion to these people, even after the kaer has been open. Those who are part of the coup press the attack on the palace, picking up confused members who aren't certain what's going on and can't sort between the many lies that are being screamed. Navigating this vortex of chaos is no easy task and the characters are going to have to follow it all the way back to the palace. If the characters are in Wishen, the palace is a short, but hard-fought, distance away. If the characters are at the gates, Rockbreaker calls up six Illusionists with flying carpets to load up veteran troops and dedicates however many are needed to get the party back to the palace, along with Grindo.

Neden is at the Royal Auditorium, where the pandemonium seems to be heading. When the characters arrive on the palace grounds, they will find it besieged by the forces of the Banned Houses all around, with a concerted thrust by House Ueraven towards the west end of the Auditorium, around the Library. Getting inside the palace will require making a way through the press of the crowd and the areas where the conspirators and their confused allies are engaged in melee with the defending Royal Guard. The four lieutenants of the Banned Houses as well as the captain of the Ueraven guard battle their way towards the Auditorium with their guard, all trying to reach the stage and the inner sanctum beyond, where the king should be. Neden is upon the stage with his defenders, trying to put an end to the coup as quickly and as non-lethally as possible, subduing his attackers while trying to make his voice heard above the cacophony of the combat.

The main danger to the king comes from Endaren Oakhaft and his band of assassins. The two Archers, Endaren, and his Wizard will begin to target King Neden with spells and arrows, while the Warrior and Swordmaster keep the mob at bay. They fight from the higher tiers of the auditorium and it becomes readily apparent that something needs to be done about them, since most of the defenders from the stage can't even reach them through the masses. From the party's entry point, they can easily get to the group of assassins and engage them. Each of the assassins will fight to the death and each will take shots at Neden whenever they have the room to do so.

Once the assassins are stopped, the tide is in Throal's favor, as what's going on is clearer in the minds of the citizenry with the apparent attack on the king. The masses part, so that only the conspirators are left, hard-pressed by the Royal Guard. Neden's voice, amplified by the acoustics of the auditorium, finally brings a stop to the whirling confusion with an echoing demand for the conspirators to stop fighting.

As medical attention begins to spread throughout the crowd, the surrendered and subdued leaders of the chaos are brought before the stage. An escort of Royal Guard also brings in Selenda of House Ueraven shortly thereafter, as Neden begins to take stock of all that has occurred and what, exactly, was going on.

The role that the Banned Houses played was easy to determine, as well as that of the Crownbreakers. It also soon becomes apparent by the hatred of the defeated commanders that there was not much manipulation required on the parts of the Crownbreakers to get this coup underway. Selenda, however, is another matter entirely. When Neden asks her what brought her House into this, she angrily accuses him of being in league with the Horrors. With the web of lies that Ruanen wove about her, she does not wish to believe that the explosions were caused by the Crownbreakers and demands that Neden prove himself clean of the taint of Horrors.

Therefore, before almost half the city of Throal, Neden performs a flawless Artisan Test. He composes a poem in dwarf style of a dream of Throal, as his father had seen it. When that is finished, he then tells the citizens that he had been, indeed, marked by a Horror, a Horror which had only just been banished. Knowing from his own experience that his story and Artisan Test may not be enough to demonstrate his freedom from the Horror taint, and to demonstrate his good will to Throal, King Neden then makes a Blood Oath to the people of Throal. In it, he promises to do his best in the defense and rebuilding of the kingdom.

The King brings those responsible for the defeat of Andokhas upon the stage, as well as those responsible for killing Endaren to thank them (if they aren't the same people). Tired of the needless slaughter from both the war and this night, Neden declares that those who were key in the coup will all be banished from Throal. Selendra, angry at the deception that led her to this, declares that she would no longer live in a Throal governed by one such as Neden and declares that Scythia will rise again and House Ueraven will sit upon its throne. She then turns and storms out of the palace, Neden signaling for the guard to let her pass. The remainder of the night is spent cleaning up the wounded and dead from the streets, which despite the distribution of all the

healing magics available in the palace, and the aid of questors of the Garlen and helpful Nethermancers, still number in the hundreds. The Eye also rounds up the key figures and keeps watch on them while they prepare their departure from Throal. Neden gives them a week to leave, during which they are all kept under constant surveillance.

With Selenda's announcement, there are soon others ready to go and try to forge a new kingdom. All of the members of the Banned Houses that had any knowledge of the coup decide to go with her, with the hope of establishing themselves in the new kingdom. House Ueraven itself splits during this time, with almost half of them deciding to go with Selenda to Scythia. Those that remain behind appoint Aldevalen their new House leader. Several factions from the Huari send groups with the departing conspirators, as well: a detachment from House Chaozun goes, to establish a weapon trade in the potentially new dwarf kingdom, as does a detachment from House Garsun and a merchant caravan from the Dream Spire Company. There are some citizens still dissatisfied with Neden and more sympathetic towards the Huari faction that also decide to go. Neden even sends a detachment from House Neumani to establish an embassy in the new kingdom, if it succeeds, in an attempt to heal the bad blood that will most likely be caused by the exile. In total, about 9,300 dwarfs follow Selenda in the exodus, reducing the total population of Throal to around 80,000.

OTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

The following adventure ideas follow in the aftermath of the events above and do not require the party to have gone through or even be familiar with the events outlined above.

THE HUNT FOR THE WHISPERERS

Ruanen and his disciples escaped Throal, despite the best effort of the Eye to capture him. Both the government of Throal and the self-proclaimed Queen of Scythia, Selenda, wish to see these Name-givers brought to justice and are willing to pay handsomely for information leading to the architects of the chaos in Throal. The Whisperers, however, are not easy prey, and a trail of false leads and rumors follows in their wake. Rumors of rebellion similar to those that were flowing through the heart of Throal might lead characters to where the Whisperers have gone to ground. Finding the masters of deception amidst those that have espoused their ideas, such as the questors of Lochost, will be a challenge all to itself.

THE CREATION OF THE HUNTERS OF THROAL

With the most recent events inside Throal, King Neden wishes to establish a small squad within the Arm of Throal, under the command of Quaavami Rockbreaker, consisting entirely of Horror Stalkers that are willing to serve and protect Throal. To recruit this group, the king sends a diplomatic party in the wake of the exodus towards Scythia. The group will have to not only arrive to the fallen Dwarf Kingdom of Scythia safely, but find and recruit a competent band of Horror Stalkers, the majority of whom spend all the time they can deeper in the Horror-infested ruins of Scythia. The group will get to watch the growth of the small, make-shift city the outside of the kaer, housing those from the exodus, and may have to deal with the political machinations of the suspicious Selenda.



THE CLEANSING OF THE HIVE

With the destruction of Uilmaz and the scattering of the Hive of Ashes, the Astral Deception that was in place in the lower sections of Throal has disappeared, and the astral corruption caused by the Horror living there for years has become apparent. That section of living quarters has had to be abandoned and kept under constant watch for fear of the creatures that might be drawn to or emerge from the spot of astral taint. To fix this, the king has requested that a group go forth into the land to find an obsidiman Purifier willing to return to Throal and cleanse the area.

SONS OF AIR

Kwai-ru, the great Air elemental they follow, was said to be saved by the *Earthdawn* (they're an unwitting cult of Vestrial). Would be a cool adventure hook to have Aldevalen try to convince them that Kwai-ru is unknown to the crew of the *Earthdawn*, either for a con or for a different book.

LOOSE ENDS

The political landscape of Throal has changed dramatically following the events of the failed coup. The balance of power between the Mishwal and the Huari factions has noticeably shifted in favor of the Mishwal faction with so many following Selenda to Scythia, but only by a little, as new names quietly move among the clans to make their mark within the Huari.

Several of the unfortunate victims lost during the failed coup were Names known to the general populace of Throal. Some were not missed: Apulian Coriatus, the not-so-secret ambassador of Thera in Throal, and Chuhk Alabamarian, the self-proclaimed rightful ruler of Iopos, were both found dead on the morning after the coup. Both had the looks of people that had been lynched, but the Eye has secret suspicions about the true instigators of Alabamarian's death. One of the more unfortunate deaths in the stampede to the palace was the Lady Snorutia of House Pa'vas. Osbaldo finally gets the reign of House Pa'vas and begins to seek a higher place amongst the Huari faction. With the loss of Selenda as their main distraction to the throne, the Huari faction give Osbaldo the attention he seeks by allowing him to

become the obvious vocal force that Selenda used to represent in the courts, even though he lacks the experience and ability of Selenda.

With the schism in House Ueraven, Aldevalen has made the head of the family, and an official apology for its part in the ascendancy of the new king after the House Korelsed died with no heir, as per his father's research. While House Ueraven has now joined the ranks of the Mishwal, they have their own slew of problems. Most of the leaders of the House went with Selenda, as well as all the trade ties to Iopos. The new House has to struggle to create a source of income for itself, but Aldevalen surprisingly finds no shortage of his House willing to join him in his efforts. The Circle Path Company also becomes very prosperous in the aftermath. With their efforts of aid both during the war and after, the people of Throal have become much more comfortable with the elf-run trading company.

Isam Derr brings in a small group of Light Bearers to help him defend the section of hall that Andokhas had claimed for its Hive. He suggests to the king the idea of forming a group of Horror hunters for the crown, to help keep the kingdom safe. He also recommends getting an obsidiman Purifier to come and cleanse the taint of the Hive. While the search is on, Andokhas sends the few remaining members of the Hive of Ashes from Throal to travel with the Scythian exodus.

With the death of Endaren Oakhaft, the Crownbreakers are only momentarily leaderless. Endaren's main lieutenant and one of his oldest Adept followers, a human Archer Named Korlun Bloodguard, takes command with Endaren's death and keeps the Crownbreakers from becoming scattered and disorganized in the fallout of the failed coup. He keeps the activities of the Crownbreakers far from Throal for a time, so that they can reinsert themselves safely once again in the main areas of the city, as well as worm their way into the Scythian migration.

Ruanen and his Whisperers fade from Throal, the demands of Vestrial leading them to new places to spread their deception and trickery.

Ironically, after the darkness that descended on a day that was supposed to be bright festival, Throal's spirits have risen. Despite the further loss of life, those that are left in the kingdom firmly believe in the revitalized Neden and the hope that he holds for the future of Throal and for Barsaive. In the days following the tragic festival, the chaos that had consumed Throal gives way to order and the kingdom slowly regains the footing it lost in the last year and a half.



APPENDIX ONE: HORROR CONSTRUCTS



CORTERREAL

This chapter is divided into three sections that deal with the deadly creatures related to the Horrors and the devastation that they leave in their wake. The first, and the main focus of this chapter is Horror Constructs. The second section deals with ghosts, which are constructs that reside specifically in Astral Space. The final section deals with Horrors, specifically.

Each section uses the layout described in ED2 (p. 293) and the final section includes Powers as described in the Horrors chapter of ED2 (p. 315).

ASHEN CORPSE

Attributes

DEX: 4 STR: 5 TOU: 6
PER: 3 WIL: 5 CHA: 4

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 5
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 11
Damage: 9 Armor: NA
Number of Spells: (2) Mystic Armor: NA
Spellcasting: 4 Knockdown: 6
Effect: See below Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 30 Combat Movement: 25
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Movement: 50
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-5

Legend Points: 110
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

The ashen corpses share some things in common with most of the residents of the place where they can most often be found, the Poison Forest. They look perpetually caught between life and death, eternally rotting, but still moving, with the scars of unimaginable pain etched in their rotted features. However, in addition to this, the ashen corpses'

skin flakes and falls, just like the ash that surrounds the forest they roam. Ashen corpses do not seem to possess more than rudimentary intelligence; just enough to know what a living creature is, and to attack it.

While not difficult to slay in combat, there are two things that make these slow-moving cadavers dangerous. The first is that, when a Wound is inflicted, it causes a large puff of ash to become airborne from the rotted corpse for a few feet in all directions around it. If it was struck by a melee weapon, then the unfortunate Name-giver who struck the blow is likely to get a lung-full of ash. When this happens, roll the Spellcasting step for the corpse against the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the Name-giver will be unable to do anything but cough for Step 2 rounds. Each cloud given off by the ashen corpses stays airborne for nearly a minute.

In addition to this, if the ashen corpse delivers a successful strike against a Name-giver and manages to wound them, then the Name-giver must make a Toughness Test versus the Spellcasting step of the corpse. If the Name-giver fails the roll, the Name-giver is now poisoned with a Debilitating Poison (see *Earthdawn 2nd. Ed. Rulebook*, p. 233) that will cause the wound to turn ashen in color. If the Name-giver succeeds, there is no effect.

BLACK BOOKS

Attributes

DEX: 4 STR: 11 TOU: 9
PER: 4 WIL: 3 CHA: 5

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 7
Number of Attacks: NA Spell Defense: 12
Attack: NA Social Defense: 16
Damage: NA Armor: 7
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 7
Spellcasting: 11 Knockdown: 12
Effect: See below Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 50 Combat Movement: 5
Wound Threshold: 12 Full Movement: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-7

Legend Points: 100
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

These were originally thought to be Horror-marked items, but this has been disproved by several Horror Stalkers. Therefore, they have been reclassified as pattern vampires. Cover designs vary but these "books" are always a shade of black. They are found along side other, mundane or magic books.

When a Name-giver touches a black book, he must make a Willpower Test with a Difficulty Number of 11. If he makes a Poor failure, he obtains +2 DR. If a Failure is rolled, the character only receives +1 DR. An Average success gives no DR, however on both failures and an Average success, the book will "hang on" to the character so that SOME part of the character must be touching the book (the character will be able to pass the book from hand to hand, open it, flip



through pages, etc. but some part of his body must keep touching the book). This may not be evident to the character right away unless they have taken Damage or have tried to let go of the book.

If the character makes an Excellent success, they take no Damage and are able to drop the book if they wish, however, they are still unaware that the book is any different from a normal book. If the character makes an Extraordinary success, they will become aware that "something is wrong with this book."

If the character, for whatever reason, does not drop the book immediately, this process starts all over again at the beginning of the next round.

If a black book is opened, the pages will be covered with writing about the life events of the Name-givers that it has pulled essence from. If the book has caused the character's Depatterning Rating to rise, the last pages will be about the character.

The only way for characters to recover from the DR that they have gained is to destroy the book. However, when the book is destroyed, each character will receive an equal amount of Damage as the DR that they recover.

If a character suffers depatterning as a result of the black book, they will appear to be sucked into the book, doomed forever to be trapped within its pages.

BLOATED ONES

Attributes

DEX: 2 STR: 11 TOU: 13
PER: 3 WIL: 6 CHA: 3

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 5
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 6
Attack: 13 Social Defense: 11
Damage: 15 Armor: 5
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 12
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 72 Combat Movement: 25 (50)
Wound Threshold: 9 Full Movement: 50 (100)
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-6

Legend Points: 220
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

The bloated ones are cadaver men that rose from the drowned. They are generally slower than normal cadaver men because of the bloated condition of their flesh, but they are more resilient to damage. Bloated ones lack the fine control necessary to wield a weapon due to swollen fingers, but the Horrors have gifted them with immense strength. Their soggy condition grants them a +5 to Physical Defense, Spell Defense, Physical Armor, and Mystic Armor against fire-based attacks. Bloated ones are most dangerous within water, where they move far more quickly than most swimmers. The number in parenthesis represents the bloated ones' movement in water.

BLOOD SHARDS

Attributes

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

Initiative: 9 Physical Defense: 13
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 9
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 14
Damage: 3 Armor: 2
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 7
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 32 Combat Movement: 50
Wound Threshold: 8 Full Movement: 100
Unconsciousness Rating: 28
Creature Durability: 0-5 (durability dependant on length of shard)

Legend Points: 125

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

An insidious form of vampire, blood shards are shards of bone from dead Name-givers. These shards range from approximately 1 inch up to about 6 inches in length and are usually found in groups of 20-30. When a Name-giver gets within 5 feet of any of the shards, all of the shards in that group attack.

They swarm the victim and try to impale themselves on him. If they do Damage in their attacks, they have contacted the character's flesh and start to dig in, doing Step 3 Damage initially. Then, they slowly start siphoning off the victim's blood at 1 point of Damage per day. These damages are per shard. It is very possible for the strongest of characters to be killed in only a couple of days.

The shards will keep siphoning blood until they have taken enough blood to equal the victim's Death Rating (to determine this amount, only calculate the Damage that the shards do in siphoning, not the Damage done in attaching). If the shards are removed (causing another



Step 3 Damage each) before they have consumed enough blood to equal the victim's Death Rating, they will try to attack again.

Once the shards have siphoned off enough blood, they will remove themselves and will lie dormant for a number of hours equal to the points of blood they have absorbed. Then they will once again be hungry.

It is possible for a character to make Recovery Tests while the blood shards are in him, but the Recovery Tests will only be half effective. The Damage a character gets back from a Recovery Test can not be siphoned by blood shards until they have removed themselves and waited the required dormancy time.

If a single shard of greater than 1 inch is destroyed, it will break into a number of 1 inch shards equal to its length that are dormant for one hour. If a 1 inch shard is damaged, it will shatter and become inert.

Inert blood shards have been requested in the city of Kratas, though it is not known who is buying them or for what purpose they intend them.

BONE SPRITE

Attributes

DEX: 9 STR: 4 TOU: 5
PER: 6 WIL: 6 CHA: 3

Initiative: 9 Physical Defense: 14
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 9
Attack: 9 Social Defense: 14
Damage: 5 Armor: 0
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 0
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 5
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 36 Combat Movement: 40
Wound Threshold: 9 Full Movement: 80
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-4

Legend Points: 200

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Bone sprites are simply skeletal or cadaverous windlings. It is very rare for undead to arise amongst the windlings (some might even claim impossible) but when Vivane fell, it happened. As a result, both major factions of undead in Vivane have bone sprites working as scouts and spies. Bone Sprites are not particularly evil undead. They would rather flee than fight the living. Unfortunately, these tiny undead are often the thralls of some greater creature using them to spy out the location of their next vision.

Bone sprites are especially horrifying to living windlings. Their joyless and endless existence, often as the slaves of Horrors, horrifies the usually cheerful windlings. Most windlings believe that destroying a bone sprite is granting the poor creature release, so they are usually particularly dedicated to this goal.

Even though their wings are often tattered and rotten, bone sprites remain capable fliers, as agile as any windling. However all bone sprites lose the windling racial ability of Astral Sight.

DUST MEN

Attributes

DEX: 7 STR: 11 TOU: 9
PER: 7 WIL: 7 CHA: 5

Initiative: 4 Physical Defense: 15
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 11 Social Defense: 16
Damage: 16 Armor: 7
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 4
Spellcasting: 9 Knockdown: 11
Effect: See below Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 60 Combat Movement: 35
Wound Threshold: 15 Full Movement: 70
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 4-8

Legend Points: 800

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These devilish creatures are the undead remains of obsidimen whose bodies were pulverized during their death. Dust men appear vaguely humanoid but do not closely resemble any Name-giver race. They are made up of swirling True Earth dust. They can form themselves into any shape of the same mass and they can even spread themselves flat on the ground.

Dust men have two forms of attack. The first is an outright assault where they manipulate their dust into compact areas in order to hit their foes. It is near impossible to physically attack a dust man unless he has compacted himself to attack, due to their lack of cohesion at all other times.

The second form of attack that dust men employ is to coat a character in their dust and manipulate him against his companions. The character being covered can make a Strength Test at -3 steps against a Difficulty Number equal to the dust man's Strength step to



try and break free of the dust. If a dust man is physically attacked while it has a character covered, it can make a Spellcasting Test to uncover the location being attacked. If the test is successful, the dust man takes no Damage. The character it is covering isn't so lucky and takes full Damage inflicted if the attack hits. If the test is unsuccessful, the dust man takes half the Damage and the character it is covering takes the other half.

THE FOJ

Attributes

DEX: 9 STR: 5 TOU: 5
PER: 6 WIL: 12 CHA: 4

Initiative: 10

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 12

Damage: 6

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 60

Wound Threshold: 15

Unconsciousness Rating: 55

Creature Durability: 0-5

Legend Points: 400

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

The word *foj* is troll for burnt. At first sight, the *foj* appear as Name-givers who have been burnt to the point of having black, flaking skin. In fact, parts of their skin continue to flake off and are replaced by more decaying flesh. The reason that it appears black and charred is because the *foj* can cause themselves to burst into flames whenever they wish. They mainly use this for attack or defense, but they can also ignite in order to set things on fire.

While the *foj* can use conventional weapons, they are unable to keep them in good, fighting condition due to the immense heat they usually give off. Therefore, their main form of combat is unarmed.

If a *foj* is using a melee weapon made of metal (such as a sword or mace) while they are ignited, add 3 steps to the weapon's Damage Rating because of the heat it is conducting.

If a *foj* is fighting unarmed (and it will be aflame at this time) it will attempt to set its opponent on fire by striking at any flammable items that it can reach. They are more interested in setting their opponents on fire than doing direct damage with their attacks. If they make an Excellent success on an Attack Test, their opponent is set on fire.

If a character is set on fire, they will suffer Step 4 burning Damage that ignores armor every round until they are able to extinguish themselves. Water will not extinguish these flames, but other means of smothering the flames will be as successful as they normally would be.

Similarly, the flames on the *foj* itself do not seem affected by high winds, rain, or other things that would normally extinguish ordinary fire. If a *foj* is astrally sensed, its flames will appear elemental in nature (however, they are not True Fire in the classic sense of the term).

GHOST GUARDS

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 10 TOU: 20
PER: 7 WIL: 7 CHA: 4

Initiative: 10

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 12

Damage: 14-17

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 75

Wound Threshold: 15

Unconsciousness Rating: 50

Creature Durability: 0-8

Legend Points: 800

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 9

Social Defense: 15

Armor: 6-10

Mystic Armor: 5

Knockdown: 20

Recovery Tests: 3

Combat Movement: 20

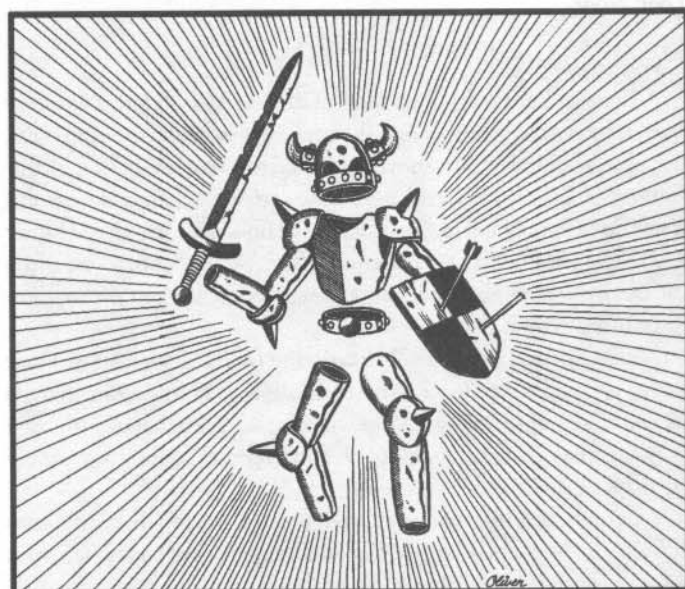
Full Movement: 40

Commentary

Unlike what the name implies, ghost guards are not true ghosts. They are, instead, the animated weapons and armor of the former guards of Vivane. When the Horror Cloud descended, the guards' patterns were imprinted on their armor and weapons. Each is an individual creature, but they are usually found in pairs (one weapon and one suit of armor) and appear to be worn and wielded by an invisible foe.

While ghost guards can be attacked physically, they will not be killed unless they are subdued astrally. If the weapon is destroyed or subdued, the armor will continue to attack unarmed by either striking with its appendages or by ramming opponents. Each piece of armor uses its normal Physical and Mystic Armor ratings and each weapon uses its normal Damage.

Weapons can vary but are usually short swords, broadswords, and maces. Armors are either ring mail or plate mail.



GRINDER

Attributes

DEX: 12 STR: 13 TOU: 10
PER: 10 WIL: 8 CHA: 5

Initiative: 11 Physical Defense: 10
Number of attacks: 3 Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 13 Social Defense: 12
 Damage: Armor: 13
 Bite 14 Mystic Armor: 5
 Flame(x2) 10 Knockdown: 15
Number of Spells: NA Recovery Tests: 2
Spellcasting: NA
 Effect: NA

Death Rating: 70 Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 12 Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: 60
Creature Durability: 5-9

Legend Points: 800

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Drawn by the intense pain and emotion that characterize a battle, these Horror Constructs are often found attacking the victorious side of a pitched battle. Looking much like an extended cone, the front end of a grinder consists entirely of its open maw, a foot and a half of teeth circling a tentacle-like tongue. The three foot long body tapers back towards the tail, with four small clawed limbs that barely reach the ground, yet serve to move it at an amazing rate of speed. Along with the legs for movement, the grinders also have two foot-long arm-like appendages ending in tubes from which smoke appears. It is from these tubes that the grinder's favorite ranged attack shoots: jets of fire that can reach roughly 15 feet. The grinder will often attack with its flame arms as it comes into range and will then attempt to latch onto a character with its frog-like tentacle tongue. The tongue has a range of only about 5 feet, so it really must be in melee range to use it. If the tongue successfully hits, the grinder wraps it around the target, pulling itself towards the unlucky victim with mouth wide open. Now latched onto its victim, the grinder begins gnawing, grinding its teeth against the victim's armor and eventually through his flesh. The easiest way to get one of these off is to cut the tongue where it is wrapped around the victim, but this can be dangerous, often causing Damage to the victim as well as the tongue. Luckily for its victims, the grinder tends not to use its flame jets when attached to a character, as it is vulnerable to the flame itself. The grinder is also resistant to normal weapons. Any character attacking one with a weapon they do not have a thread tied to must achieve an Extraordinary success to achieve an Armor-defeating hit.

NAME-TAKERS

Attributes

DEX: 9 STR: 11 TOU: 10
PER: 9 WIL: 9 CHA: 6

Initiative: 10
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 11
 Damage: 13
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 10
 Effect: See below

Death Rating: 47
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 40
Creature Durability: 4-9

Legend Points: 1200

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These undead look amazingly like normal Name-givers except for a slight scent of decay (Perception Test against a Difficulty Number of 30 to detect). They infiltrate groups that are traveling across Barsaive, usually requesting assistance from the heroes in order to get out of the area for one reason or another. They will remain cordial even if the characters refuse and will set about finding another group to infiltrate.

If the characters agree, the name-taker will travel with the characters until they have gone 3 days' travel away from the location where they were picked up. At the end of the third day, they will attack the character who has interacted with them the most.

This attack will start with the name-taker grappling the character (which will probably come as a surprise to the character in question). Once they have taken hold of the character, they attempt to take over the character's identity by almost perfectly mimicking his True Pattern. This requires a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the character they are trying to mimic. This part of the attack is not an illusion and their physical form will change to reflect the change in their True Pattern.

After the initial attack, the name-taker will attempt to either kill their counterpart, or get the rest of the characters to do it for them. At this point, the name-taker has all the abilities and stats of the Name-giver it has mimicked, as well as copies of any Pattern Items that the character has threads currently tied to.

If the other characters are tricked by the name-taker and the victim is killed, the name-taker will announce that he knows who did this to him and will attempt to lead the characters to Scythia. It is unknown what happens to name-takers who have escaped detection, or to the groups that they may have led to Scythia.

OGRE ZOMBIES

Attributes

DEX: 6 STR: 11 TOU: 10
PER: 3 WIL: 5 CHA: 3

Initiative: 3 Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 2 Spell Defense: 8
Attack: 13 Social Defense: 14
 Damage: 15 Armor: 7



Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 50

Wound Threshold: 12

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Creature Durability: 0-8

Legend Points: 400

Equipment: Ogre Club, Chainmail

Loot: 1d6x10 silver pieces per ogre

Mystic Armor: 1

Knockdown: 9

Recovery Tests: 3

Combat Movement: 30

Full Movement: 60

Commentary

With the March of the Undead from Parlainth to Vivane, several very rare and long-forgotten undead types were rediscovered. One of these is the ogre zombie. It is very rare for Horrors to use powerful magics to animate dead ogres. They usually much prefer to reserve that privilege for the races recognized as Name-givers. But sometimes the sheer size and strength of the ogre proves simply too tempting and they too will be drafted into the ranks of the undead. Thanks to a large ogre warband that many years ago got too close to Parlainth, Twiceborn has a sizeable retinue of ogre zombies at her command.

Although ogre zombies still carry their large wooden clubs in unlife, they lose their peculiar magical effect of strengthening the wood after they die. Additionally, undead ogres can no longer sense precious metals.

QUICKRAZOR

Attributes

DEX: 13 STR: 7 TOU: 8

PER: 5 WIL: 4 CHA: 3

Initiative: 15

Number of attacks: 3

Attack: 12

Damage:

Claws: 5

Bite: 7

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 13

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 6

Armor: 7

Mystic Armor: 3

Knockdown: 10

Recovery Tests: 3

Death Rating: 65

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: 45

Combat Movement: 70

Full Movement: 140

Legend Points: 1000

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

This Horror Construct is massive: eight hundred pounds of muscle and claw standing on four agile legs. The thick skin that hangs loosely around it is covered with thick dark fur, matted here and there with old blood. Catlike, these Horror Constructs often measure 12 feet from nose to tail, with heads far too large for their bodies. Most dangerous

when fighting these Horror Constructs are their agility and sharp claws. They have an impressive vertical leap, often managing to reach 25 feet or more in the air, an unfortunate and fatal surprise for many a windling. Attacking in a blur of motion, they could quite easily kill a Name-giver before he even had time to react to their presence. The loud, low-pitched snarling that accompanies their attack is often unnerving, but is many times the only brief warning of their attack. Luckily, these Horror Constructs are simple attackers, feeding from the pain caused as they rend their target to pieces. They do not wish to kill, merely to cause as much pain as possible. Because of this, they will often make called shots, attempting to strike the unarmored parts of their victims. In fact, quickrazors have been known to hold back on blows that should have been lethal.

RAIN RIDERS

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 18 TOU: 12

PER: 4 WIL: 5 CHA: 4

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 2

Attack: 11

Damage: 22

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Physical Defense: 9

Spell Defense: 12

Social Defense: 18

Armor: 12

Mystic Armor: 13

Knockdown: 18

Recovery Tests: 4

Death Rating: 55

Wound Threshold: 13

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Creature Durability: 0-8

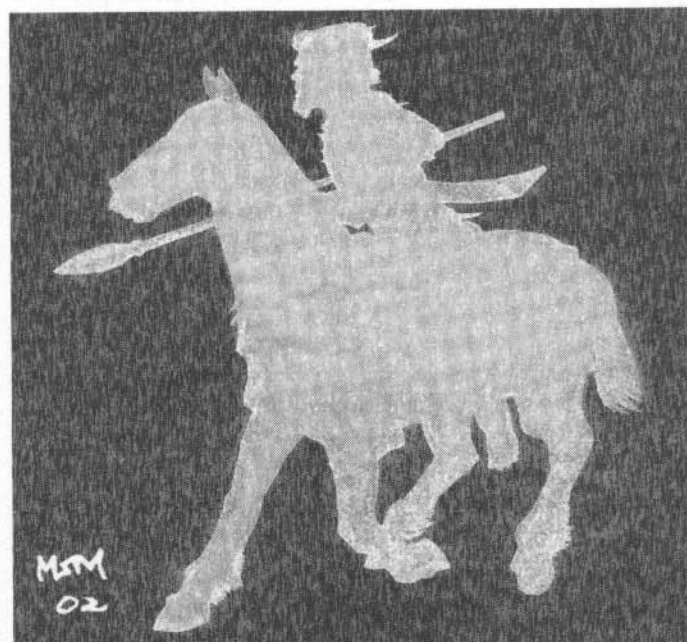
Combat Movement: 25

Full Movement: 50

Legend Points: 1000

Equipment: None

Loot: None



Commentary

These undead usually travel in packs of 6 to 11 and are always accompanied by a rain storm. They appear to be orks riding gramlans, however the rain increases as you get closer to them and it is hard to make out specific features.

Rain riders are Horror Constructs crafted from dead Cavalrymen and their mounts; the magic reanimating them turns the pair into a single undead creature. Coupled with this creature is a minor Horror Cloud, which will cause it to rain until the rain riders have been defeated, at which time it stops suddenly, leaving the battlefield soaked in blood (the rain does not appear to be blood until the rain riders are defeated, at which time it changes).

Once the rain stops, the characters find that the rain riders are composed of mud and crystal shards. They also wear clothes that can later be identified as ork Cavalrymen that were at the battle of Sky Point.

REDMUD

Attributes

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

Initiative: 5

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 9

Damage: 10

Number of Spells: 1

Spellcasting: 9

Effect: See Below

Death Rating: 24

Wound Threshold: 11

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Creature Durability: 0-4

Legend Points: 150

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These muddy creatures are made from the blood spilled by Name-givers on the fields near Sky Point. They are a sickly red and brown color and have what appear to be small stones for eyes. Other than having two legs and two arms, these monstrosities do not resemble any specific Name-giver, however they are about average height for an ork.

Their main attack is to envelope their prey (treat as a grappling attack) and smother them to death in their bloody mass. If the initial attack is successful, the victim is enveloped and suffocation rules go into effect. Each round thereafter, the victim can make a Strength Test at -3 steps to break free of the redmud, with a Difficulty Number equal to the redmud's own Strength Test result. During this time, the redmud falls back to its secondary attack of unarmed combat. If the redmud scores a Good success on its Attack Test, then it may attempt to cause fear in the victim. If its Spellcasting Test succeeds against the character's Social Defense, then the character must flee for 10 rounds, or until they succeed at a Fear Test.

While a redmud has someone inside it, any physical attack made against it delivers half Damage to the person enveloped, unless the blow is armor defeating, in which case the full Damage is dealt to the redmud. Physical attacks made to a redmud when there is no one inside do normal Damage.

SHADOW WALKERS

Attributes

DEX: 4 STR: 1 TOU: 5
PER: 8 WIL: 7 CHA: 5

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 8

Damage: 5

Number of Spells: 1

Spellcasting: 12

Effect: 13

Death Rating: 40

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Creature Durability: 0-4

Legend Points: 800

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

During the destruction of Vivane, some hapless Name-givers were vaporized in the opening onslaught. Shadow walkers were created when the ashes of these Name-givers were embedded in the nearby structures. Shadow walkers are bound to these structures until someone makes physical contact with them. Then, they can attack by attempting to forcefully bind with the pattern of the Name-giver in question. The Shadow walker makes a Spellcasting Test which, if successful, begins the binding process. This process causes Step 13 Damage per round. Shadow walkers can only safely be attacked astrally; attacks in the physical realm cause the same amount of Damage to be inflicted on the person they're attempting to bind with. If a shadow walker is attacked physically, they have the opportunity to transfer from the Name-giver (or structure) that they're on, to the attacker.

If the Name-giver that the shadow walker is binding with dies, they remain on the clothes or armor of their victim until someone else touches them. Shadow walkers have been known to kill entire bands of adventurers, as well as Name-givers who try to loot the body of the last Name-giver that they have killed.

Shadow walkers appear, in their relaxed form, to be shadows of the Name-giver that they were spawned from. However, they can change their shape to hide in the shadows on the buildings they inhabit, requiring a Perception (14) Test to be noticed.

THE SKELETAL STEED

Attributes

DEX: 7 STR: 9 TOU: 9
PER: 5 WIL: 7 CHA: 4



Initiative: 7
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 8
 Damage: 14
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
 Effect: NA

Death Rating: 48
Wound Threshold: 14
Unconscious Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-8

Legend Points: 140
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

Name-givers are not the only creatures than can be returned to unlife. With the destruction of the city of Vivane, with its great stables full of war-horses, the skeletal steed has become much more common throughout Barsaive. Most of these steeds have been pressed into service to be used as mounts. As a result, Twiceborn now can field substantial numbers of mounted troops.

A skeletal steed can appear either as an animated horse skeleton completely devoid of flesh, or a rotting, decaying equine zombie.

VAMPIRES

Attributes

DEX: 9 **STR:** 10 **TOU:** 9
PER: 9 **WIL:** 11 **CHA:** 3 (15)

Initiative: 10
Number of Attacks: 3
Attack: 11
 Damage: 12
Number of Spells: 1
Spellcasting: 18
 Effect: see below

Death Rating: 47
Wound Threshold: 13
Unconsciousness Rating: 40
Creature Durability: 5-9

Legend Points: 1250
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

Vampires are among the most dangerous Horror Constructs in Barsaive. Though their true form is a terrifying visage (a hairless, hunched humanoid with leathery skin and an elongated muzzle full of razor sharp teeth) they cloak themselves in illusions of beauty and can easily manipulate those who are not of strong will. Their Charisma step is normally 15, however, if a Disbelief Test is made against a target number of 18, the character will have seen through the illusion of

Physical Defense: 9
Spell Defense: 6
Social Defense: 13
Armor: Usually none
Mystic Armor: 3
Knockdown: 9
Recovery Test: 3

Combat Movement: 80
Full Movement: 100

charm and discovered the foul creature that the vampire truly is, which reduces the vampire's Charisma step to 3 for that character. In addition to the illusion of beauty, vampires are able to cast Nethermancer spells up to Seventh Circle.

THE WINGLESS

Attributes

DEX: 8 **STR:** 15 **TOU:** 11
PER: 4 **WIL:** 7 **CHA:** 4

Initiative: 9
Number of Attacks: 1
Attack: 12
 Damage: 16
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
 Effect: NA

Death Rating: 35
Wound Threshold: 9
Unconsciousness Rating: 30
Creature Durability: 0-6

Legend Points: 500
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

The wingless are windlings that have been violated in the most unthinkable way. Each wingless is missing its wings and have gaping, bleeding wounds where their wings used to be. The wingless are insane with vengeful rage and will attack without mercy anyone that comes within their range of senses, striking with their terrible, Horror amplified strength.

The wingless are not alive. The damage that has been done to them was done after they were enveloped by the Horror Clouds and



therefore they can not be revived. The wingless do not suffer the effects of fear and will not stop an attack, ever.

The wingless have been known travel in packs of 10 to 20.

COMMON WRAITH

Attributes

DEX: 6 STR: 10 TOU: 12
PER: 4 WIL: 10 CHA: 4

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 12
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 13
Attack: 11 Social Defense: 18
Damage: 22 Armor: 13
Number of Spells: NA Mystic Armor: 5
Spellcasting: NA Knockdown: 18
Effect: NA Recovery Tests: 5

Death Rating: 55 Combat Movement: 25
Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 50
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-8

Legend Points: 600

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Stories of wraiths have existed since just before the Scourge, however, their appearances have increased in recent times due to the war. Wraiths are pattern eaters. They're made up of the True Patterns of the people they have consumed and if viewed astrally, they will appear as a jumble of patterns all trying to occupy the same space.

Their physical appearance is difficult to describe because wraiths have the ability to make themselves look exactly like the Name-givers that they have consumed. They have even been known to show themselves as their intended victims. However, when not in these disguises, they appear to be a shadow filled with moving, unclear images.

While wraiths do not have to be responsible for someone's death to take their True Pattern, they will kill to get True Patterns. If a person is killed by a wraith or if a person dies with a wraith in the area, they must make a Willpower Test against the wraith's Willpower step. If they have a Poor failure, the wraith has consumed their True Pattern and the victim can not be recovered. If they suffer any other failure, their True Pattern is being consumed and unless the wraith is killed, they will suffer pattern Damage (equal to a Depatterning Rating of 2). They will also have to roll again the next round, possibly continuing to gain Depatterning Rating if they fail. If they make an Average success, they have staved off the wraith.

Until the wraith is destroyed, it will continue to try to consume the True Patterns of any Name-givers in the area. If any of these people suffer pattern Damage, destroying the wraith will not fix the Damage and the depatterning rules will come into play once they have been restored.

THE WRAITHS OF VIVANE

Attributes

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

Initiative: 10 Physical Defense: 16
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 13
Attack: 18 Social Defense: 17
Damage: 19 Armor: 10
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 10
Spellcasting: 15 Knockdown: 7
Effect: Life Drain Recovery Tests: 2

Death Rating: 70 Combat Movement: 60
Wound Threshold: 14 Full Movement: 120
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 5-12

Legend Points: 2850

Equipment: None

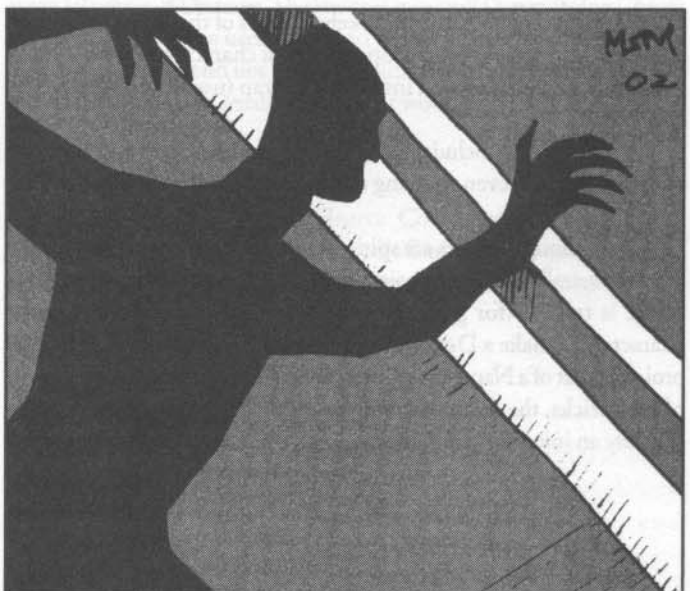
Loot: None

Commentary

The fall of the Horror Cloud upon Vivane saw the birth of many new forms of undead, but few are as feared as the Wraiths of Vivane. These are thought to be the spirits of the dead Therans that were overwhelmed by the massive influx of Horror taint when the city was destroyed. It changed the ghosts of the Therans into angry, vengeful spirits with no impulse but to slay the living. The Wraiths of Vivane have proved to be deadly killers in their brief stint upon the Earth, slaying many that have dared enter their home.

The Wraiths of Vivane appear as black patches of moving shadow in the vague outlines of humanoid forms. In darkness or very low light, they are almost invisible, affording a -3 step penalty to anyone trying to see them or target them. It is very rare to see these creatures active during the day.

The Wraiths of Vivane also use a magical effect known as Life Drain. To use this effect, the Wraith must touch the target and make a



successful Spellcasting Test against the Target's Spell Defense. If the test is successful, the victim immediately falls unconscious and takes 1 point of Damage every combat round until the effect is dispelled or the character makes a successful Willpower Test. The victim is completely helpless while under the influence of this power and can take no actions. To dispel the Life Drain the character must make a 9 or better on his Willpower Test or have the effect dispelled as a Circle 3 spell. Individuals killed by the Life Drain become Wraiths of Vivane themselves the very next day.

GHOSTS

The next four forms of undead can be better classified as ghosts. They are all non-corporeal entities and must be attacked astrally. All of their attacks ignore Physical Armor but Mystic Armor will help.

LEADERS

Attributes

DEX: 9 STR: 5 TOU: 11
PER: 9 WIL: 4 CHA: 9

Initiative: 10 Physical Defense: 8
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 8
Attack: 10 Social Defense: 13
Damage: 8 Armor: 6
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 10
Spellcasting: 9 Knockdown: 8
Effect: 11 Recovery Tests: 4

Death Rating: 47 Combat Movement: 30
Wound Threshold: 13 Full Movement: 60
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-7

Legend Points: 350
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

These ghosts are more than likely servants of the Horror known as Artificer. They do not usually openly attack characters; they use tricks to lure the hero in question into a deadly trap (usually one created by Artificer).

Such tricks can include calling for help, darting along the character's peripheral vision, even showing themselves openly and then running from the characters.

Even though leaders are spiritual entities (and must, therefore be attacked astrally) they can project their image into the real world. This image is treated (for game purposes) like an illusion allowing the characters to make a Disbelief Test against it. The image that leaders project is that of a Name-giver, often the same race as the viewer. As part of their tricks, the image can appear as that of a young girl or boy, or possibly an injured Name-giver, or even a taunting foe.

MADDENING CROWD

Attributes

DEX: 8 STR: 20 TOU: 18
PER: 4 WIL: 14 CHA: 4

Initiative: 6 Physical Defense: 11
Number of Attacks: 1 Spell Defense: 11
Attack: 8 Social Defense: 19
Damage: 20 Armor: 16
Number of Spells: 1 Mystic Armor: 16
Spellcasting: 15 Knockdown: 20
Effect: See below Recovery Tests: 6

Death Rating: 70 Combat Movement: 25
Wound Threshold: 15 Full Movement: 50
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-9

Legend Points: 750
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

A maddening crowd is not a single being, but an area affected by the death of a mass of Name-givers by a Horror Cloud or other destructive means. Areas such as market squares, auction houses, taverns, and Olzims are all possible locations that a maddening crowd would manifest.

The only outward signs of an area affected by a maddening crowd is the unusual number of bodies littering the ground. However, when the characters enter the area, they will begin to hear sounds like that of a crowd of people, talking amongst themselves. What the crowd is saying is never clear. Words here and there may be heard, but with the amount of conversations going on, it is impossible to make out a single voice. The sounds start out soft and unless the characters are listening for them, they might not hear them at first.



If the characters stay in the area, however, the noise will become louder and louder. Every round that the characters remains within the maddening crowd, it may attempt to cause the character to become lost within its madness. The maddening crowd makes a Spellcasting Test against the character's Social Defense. If the test succeeds, the affected character will begin to talk about random things that would be common to the area, taking no other actions besides engaging in this conversation. They will continue to do this until they are taken from the area and make a Average success on a Charisma Test or Extraordinary success on a Willpower Test against the maddening crowd's Willpower step. If the characters succeed in their Charisma Test, but remain in the area for another round, the cycle can begin all over again.

The only way to "defeat" a maddening crowd without engaging it in astral combat is to cremate the bodies of those Name-givers who were killed in the area. This must be done at least 50 yards from the affected area. If the cremation occurs within the 50 yards, the voices in the area will turn to screaming and any character failing their Charisma Test will take Step 4 illusionary Damage per round until they are taken from the area and make an Extraordinary success on their Charisma Test.

POLTERGEISTS

Attributes

DEX: 7 STR: 9 TOU: 8
PER: 7 WIL: 6 CHA: 4

Initiative: 7

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 8

Damage: 14

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

Death Rating: 48

Wound Threshold: 14

Unconsciousness Rating: 40

Creature Durability: 0-7

Legend Points: 450

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

These are the normal form of ghosts that hurl small objects at their opponents. Poltergeists usually inhabit buildings but they can be found in any area that has semi-specific boundaries (a forest clearing, a town square, etc). They can not travel beyond the boundaries of their habitat, but inside those boundaries, they are formidable. Poltergeists can use any object that their strength will allow them to lift. This includes objects on Name-givers within the boundaries of their domain. Poltergeists can also fight for control of objects held by Name-givers (use a normal strength vs. strength check for this). If they win, the object flies from the hands of their opponent and is now a weapon of the poltergeist.

Poltergeists have no physical form and must be attacked astrally. In the astral world, they look similar to the effects of astral clouding, however they have a white glow emanating from their actual location (the astral clouding effect encompasses all of their domain).

THREAD CUTTERS

Attributes

DEX: 5 STR: 3 TOU: 6
PER: 4 WIL: 3 CHA: 5

Initiative: 5

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 11

Damage: 11

Number of Spells: 1

Spellcasting: 11

Effect: See below

Death Rating: 36

Wound Threshold: 10

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Creature Durability: 0-5

Legend Points: 300

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

Thread cutters are mischievous little ghosts (possibly those of children) who delight in cutting magical threads. Unless attacked, they usually will cut threads of spells. As the spellcaster weaves threads into his Spell Matrix, he will notice that something is not right. If the thread cutters roll higher on their attack than the spellcaster rolls on his Thread Weaving talent, the thread does not get tied.

However, these innocent little pranksters turn into a most insidious monster if they are attacked. Once attacked, the thread cutters start to cut threads in the attacker's True Pattern! These attacks cause Step 11 Damage as well as Depatterning Damage at the rate of 1 DR point for every 10 points of Damage. The attacker must roll Depatterning Checks as normally would be used for Blood Magic.

Thread cutters do not have a physical form, but astrally, they have the appearance that a small Name-giver would.

HORRORS

Even more deadly than Horror Constructs are the Horrors themselves. Horrors delight and feed off of the pain and misery of Name-givers. Below, you will find two examples of Horrors.

BLOOD GAUNTS

Attributes

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

Initiative: 6

Number of Attacks: 1

Attack: 5

Physical Defense: 8

Spell Defense: 8

Social Defense: 8



Damage: 8
Number of Spells: NA
Spellcasting: NA
Effect: NA

Armor: 2
Mystic Armor: 2
Knockdown: 5
Recovery Tests: 1

Death Rating: 40
Wound Threshold: 10
Unconsciousness Rating: Immune
Creature Durability: 0-4

Combat Movement: 75
Full Movement: 150

Legend Points: 150
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Commentary

Blood gaunts look similar to large bats at first glance, but upon closer inspection it is apparent that they are not natural creatures. Its central body is a mass of rubbery red flesh that is decorated with seemingly random tentacles sprouting all over it. At the center of the body is a sharp mouth full of razor teeth designed to slice flesh.

Blood gaunts are actually a very minor form of Horror and seem to spontaneously form in the tumultuous winds of the Horror Clouds. They are completely without reason or intelligence and seem only interested in killing all Name-givers they encounter and gorging themselves on bloody flesh. Blood gaunts are unusual among Horrors because they do eat. If they consume enough gore and fresh blood to gorge themselves, a few minutes later a Blood gaunt erupts into two identical beasts, both of which are now hungry to feed again.

SCYTHAN CAPE

Attributes

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

Initiative: 9

Number of attacks: 3

Attack: 16

Damage:

Bite: 12

Claw: 6*

Number of Spells: NA

Spellcasting: NA

Effect: NA

*plus poison once per every 6 rounds

Physical Defense: 12

Spell Defense: 10

Social Defense: 14

Armor: 9

Mystic Armor: 10

Knockdown: 8

Recovery Tests: 3 (10)

Death Rating: 120

Wound Threshold: 21

Unconsciousness Rating: 105

Combat Movement: 20

Full Movement: 40

Flight: 60/120

Powers: Create Cape Zombie, Horror Durability 6-10, Horror Mark 24, Karma Tap 15, Corrupt Karma 10

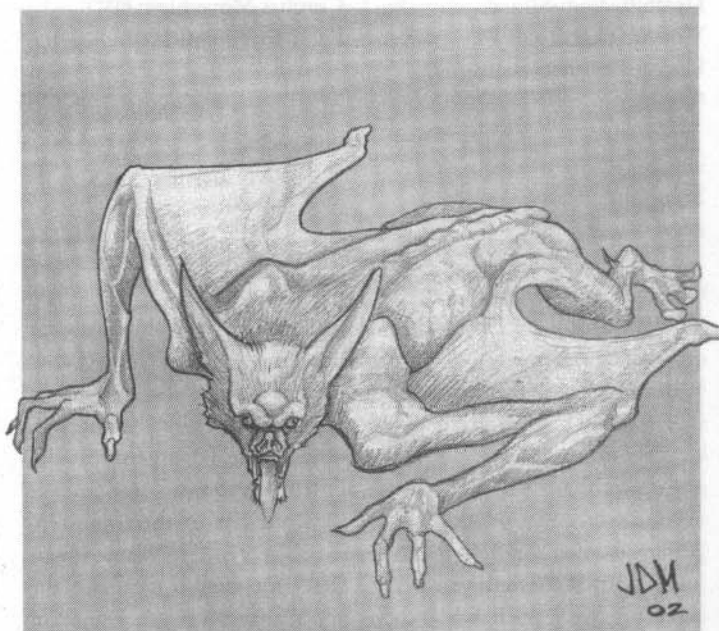
Legend Points: 4,000

Equipment: None

Loot: None

Commentary

This nocturnal Horror stands about 5 feet high and is bipedal. Its thin fur covers a parody of the human form, limbs unnaturally elongated and with a head much like a bat's. The space between the arms and the body is webbed, giving the creature large, bat-like wings which can be used for occasional flight as well as long periods of gliding. When hunting, this creature prefers to swoop down on its prey, gliding towards them silently before wrapping its clawed legs around the unfortunate victim. It then swoops away, wings flapping like a flowing cloak behind it. Poison contained in the claws is sufficient to put most Name-givers to sleep with a single scratch, keeping its victims from struggling. A Willpower Test against a Difficulty Number of 8 can be attempted every 10 minutes to break out of this trance. This Horror is not satisfied with merely consuming the physical body of its victims, however. Instead, it enshrouds the victim with its wings and slowly invades their mind. It is this manner of feeding, seen by so many horrified adventurers, which has given the creature its Name. For every ten minutes that a character is fed upon by a Scythan cape, his Willpower step is reduced by one (temporarily). If a character's Willpower step is ever reduced to zero by a Scythan cape, then that character's body becomes a mindless husk. The character's body will slowly start to decay (losing one step from STR, DEX, and CON per month), but the character will now follow the wishes of the Scythan cape. In this state, talents and abilities (as well as the personality) of the character are no longer present, but the cape zombie can use any skills that the character had in his former life. Many times, the cape will use such a zombie to lure other characters to its lair, giving it a never-ending cycle of nourishment. If the cape is killed, then the character returns to sentience, but the drain on their physical statistics is permanent and requires a high-level questor of Garlen to reverse. Lost Willpower returns at the rate of one point per day, often leaving characters in a dazed, suggestible state. If attacked, the Scythan cape will attempt to fight, and if the battle seems like it is going poorly, will try to flee.



APPENDIX TWO: LIGHTBEARERS



Throughout most of Barsaive, heroes willingly battle the Horrors still infesting the world wherever they find them. One special group of heroes dedicates all their efforts to freeing this world of the Horrors forever. These heroes, known as Lightbearers, pledge their lives to fighting the Horrors and other effects of the Scourge.

At Kimlan, 30 Name-givers, representing all of the races of Barsaive, joined the battle under the Name of Lightbearer. In the broad perspective of warfare and Name-giver loss to conflicts involving the Horrors, this battle could never be counted a major battle. Only a relatively small number of heroes defended the rundown and war torn area against the besieging Horror. And the battle killed almost every recognized Lightbearer in barely 90 minutes. But for sheer fury and bloodshed, for desperate bravery and withering hatred, this battle ranks among the most profound battles of all time. In the end, after all the blood had been spilled, Diagazhe, an ork Horror Stalker, and brother to Mathaprin (who he had never before known was a Lightbearer) ordered the bodies of the Lightbearers who were present to be burned. They were also to remain graveless, in order to preserve their cult's secrets, and to protect their families from reprisals of the Horrors' followers.

To Name-givers all over Barsaive, as the grim news reached them, the lesson was clear. This is still a war where loss means a fate worse than death. Many alliances were forged at that battle and, united, they have forged a battle cry that echoes around the world: "Bear the Torch. Fight the Fight. Die with steel in your hand."

ORIGINS

According to legend, a dwarf merchant Named Nicolez Trund founded the Lightbearers nearly 300 years before the full fury of the Scourge struck Barsaive. A native of Throal, his activities as a merchant gave Trund access to news from every corner of the world with which Throal traded.

Having learned of and seen the unmistakable signs of the Horrors' coming, Trund became determined to lessen the effects of the approaching calamity in any way he could. He knew that powerful magic was available to protect the Kingdom of Throal, but feared how less well-protected parts of the world might fare during the Scourge.

Though Trund knew that nothing could stop the disaster from coming, he hoped to find a way to fight the Horrors and to teach others to fight as well. He enlisted the aid of several trusted friends and together they set out to build an institution that could survive for centuries, beyond the lifetimes of its founders. They wanted to give their world's peoples a weapon against not only the Scourge they feared, but also the Scourges of future millennia.

In order to better know their enemy, Trund and his group studied stories of the Horrors and learned the full extent of the darkness that lay at the heart of the Scourge. To symbolize their struggle against this darkness, Trund Named himself and his fellows Lightbearers.

Trund and his allies chose the first Lightbearers from among heroes and adventurers who had proven both their prowess and their resilience. They trained the Lightbearers to recognize the taint of the Horrors and taught them strategies and techniques with which to combat the Horrors and their kind. By battling the Horrors and aiding others who struggled against that same evil, the Lightbearers would learn all they could about the Horrors, in the process recording the tales of others and giving rise to legends themselves. The Lightbearers' ultimate goal was

to help reclaim the world from the Scourge and leave a legacy to aid the world thousands of years in the future; the next time the Horrors came.

ORGANIZATION

Because the Lightbearers are a secret society, their organization remains largely unknown. They maintain no formal charter or official headquarters, and their leaders number anywhere from six to perhaps a dozen. These leaders, called the Swords of Light, meet in Throal three times a year, once in each season except for summer. Needless to say, the exact times and locations of these meetings remain closely guarded secrets. At each meeting, the Swords of Light decide on the Lightbearers' current priorities, which determine these heroes' activities until the next meeting. A Sword of Light may call an emergency meeting at any time. For example, he or she might call such a meeting in response to Horror activity that demands an immediate response greater than local resources allow. Recently, such an emergency meeting was called at the beginning of the Horror Stalker Crusade.

The Swords of Light also decide what information the Lightbearers have gathered over time to preserve magically in preparation for the next Scourge. They must often make difficult choices, because creating magic to last thousands of years is an expensive and difficult task, not to be undertaken lightly.

Within their organization, the Lightbearers maintain a loose network that balances their needs for secrecy and communication among members. Sadly, the Lightbearers have good reason to conceal their activities. Nicolez Trund began the tradition of secrecy because he believed, rightly, that the Horrors and those corrupted by them would go to any lengths to destroy the Lightbearers or any others who actively opposed them. In an aphorism often quoted by Trund's latter-day adherents, he is said to have declared, "Our enemy cannot kill what they cannot find." The Lightbearers also often face political difficulties that make secrecy necessary. The goals of the Lightbearers sometimes conflict with those of local rulers, many of whom would rather pretend that the forces of evil do not exist than risk the Lightbearers' provoking such forces to battle.

To allow for clandestine communication, all Lightbearers choose a Name to use in their dealings with other Lightbearers. Note that unlike



a given Name, the Name a Lightbearer chooses for this purpose does not represent his or her True Pattern. Though group members sometimes use conventional means of communication, most Lightbearers use some form of magic when speaking with one another. For example, they often conduct face-to-face meetings behind shimmers, masks of light that Lightbearers use to conceal their identities. Another saying ascribed to Trund is, "You cannot reveal what you do not know."

THE GREAT PATTERN

The Lightbearers draw their power from a magical source known as the Great Pattern, about which magical scholars and theorists know little. Among scholars and even among the Lightbearers, the exact nature of the Great Pattern is a topic of much debate.

According to the theory most widely accepted across Barsaive, the Great Pattern is actually the True Pattern of the world. Proponents of this theory believe that because the Lightbearers strive to reclaim the world from the Scourge, the world itself grants them power through its True Pattern. Other theories contradict this notion. For example, some believe that the Great Pattern actually represents a combination of the True Patterns of all the Passions. Though this concept challenges most known magical theory, its supporters argue that the mysterious ways of the universe make anything possible. A small minority believe that the Great Pattern does not exist, and that the Lightbearers derive their powers from beings native to astral space. Some proponents of this final theory insist that the Lightbearers actually serve the Horrors and that their entire organization is a farce.

Whatever the truth of the source of their power, no one denies that the Lightbearers are a powerful organization, capable of performing significant actions to attain their goals.

BECOMING A LIGHTBEARER

Once a character earns a reputation as a hero able to confront Horrors and win, the Lightbearers take an interest in him. After observing the hero's activities for a time and satisfying themselves about his suitability, they issue him an invitation to join the Lightbearers. A character usually receives such an invitation only after he has reached the Fifth Circle of his Discipline, but may receive it at any time the gamemaster deems appropriate.

The invitation is usually delivered by a light sprite, a tiny spirit that Lightbearers commonly use for communications. After confirming that it is addressing the correct person, the light sprite issues the invitation, informing the character that the Lightbearers have chosen him or her to join their number by virtue of a certain deed that the character performed. Note that this deed is the last deed that the Lightbearers know about, not necessarily the most recent deed that the character performed. The invitation also includes the following information:

- The character must go to a stated place at a stated time to be confirmed by the Lightbearers and he may bring up to seven trustworthy witnesses.
- The character must bring an item to be used as his or her emblem, which will be emblazoned with the symbol of the Lightbearers during the ceremony.
- The character must choose a Name by which the Lightbearers will know him.

The character may choose whether or not to accept the Lightbearers' invitation. If he declines to join the Lightbearers, the character suffers no unfortunate consequences from that decision, though the Lightbearers may continue to watch the hero's deeds for a time in hopes of persuading him to change his mind.

INITIATION

Most Lightbearer initiation ceremonies are held at night. When the character arrives at the ceremony site, two Lightbearers wearing shimmers come to greet the hero and any witnesses he or she has brought. The Lightbearers conjure a circle of light around themselves and the hero, then ask the witnesses to stand just outside the circle, spacing themselves evenly around the perimeter. The initiate then walks slowly around the inside of the circle, stopping before each witness and proclaiming his or her intention of becoming a Lightbearer. The initiate must proclaim this intent at least three times, even if he has brought fewer than three witnesses.

Having proclaimed his intent, the initiate kneels before the Lightbearers as they speak their oath, section by section. The initiate repeats the oath after them, using his or her True Name rather than his chosen Lightbearer Name throughout the ritual. The text of the Lightbearer oath appears below.

"Now is the time of dawn, yet deep shadows fall across the earth. I, [character name], swear to bring light into the shadows that remain."

"Dawn always precedes the next time of darkness. I, [character name], swear to dedicate my life to passing the light forward to future generations bound by darkness."

"My blood contains the light of my soul. I, [character name], swear to use Blood Magic only for Lightbearer Magic or to seal the oaths I take, never to enhance my own power or to empower a magical item. So shall I never dim the light of my soul."

"The Lightbearers are my kin and my purpose. I, [character name], swear to aid my fellow Lightbearers and to advance our cause. I shall never dim our light through negligence or lack of will."

Once the initiate has taken the oath, he or she stands. The Lightbearers stand close to the initiate and ask for the Name their new comrade has chosen, quietly enough that the witnesses cannot hear his or her response. Then one of the Lightbearers takes the initiate's chosen emblem and emblazons it with the magical, luminous symbol of the Lightbearers.

As the Lightbearer holds the emblazoned item, the symbol glows and light rolls like a luminous fog from the symbol to the initiate. The second Lightbearer weaves this fog into a shimmer around the initiate. Once the shimmer is complete, the symbol's light dies.

The Lightbearers then walk around the circle, stopping before each witness and asking him or her to swear the following oath:

"I, [character name], shall contest darkness at the Lightbearer's side. I shall never, through action or inaction, harm the Lightbearer or give aid to darkness."

Those witnesses who take the oath are invited into the light circle.



The Lightbearers politely ask those who refuse the oath to step away from the circle. Called Oathbreakers, these witnesses can be affected by the Lightbearer abilities described below.

LIGHTBEARER TALENT

An initiate who completes the Lightbearer ceremony immediately gains the Lightbearer talent at Rank 1. With most talents, the character simply gets better at that particular talent as he or she progresses in rank.

The Lightbearer talent grants the character new abilities at each new rank. Player characters purchase ranks in the Lightbearer talent in the same manner as other Fifth Circle talents (see **Increasing Talent Ranks**, pp. 244-245, ED2).

LIGHTBEARER ABILITIES

Lightbearer abilities allow Lightbearers to better perform their chosen task of ridding the world of Horrors. These unique abilities flow from the Great Pattern. As a Lightbearer becomes more experienced, he meets tougher opposition, and so relies on ever greater abilities to defeat his opponents. No other talents, skills, or spells offer exactly the same powers with exactly the same effects as Lightbearer abilities.

USING LIGHTBEARER ABILITIES

Lightbearer abilities are similar to talents, except that some do not require tests. When used in combat, some of these abilities require actions (see **Action**, p. 86, ED2).

The word "Yes" or "No" on the Action line for each of the abilities indicates whether use of that ability is considered an action. Players may augment all Lightbearer abilities with Karma, though no Lightbearer abilities require the use of Karma.

Step numbers, Effects, Duration and other game statistics appear below the name of the ability as appropriate. See the introductions to the talents and Spell Magic sections of the *Earthdawn* rules for an explanation of these terms.

The abilities available to Lightbearers are listed by the rank at which they become available.

RANK ABILITIES

The abilities presented here are a condensed version of some of the previously existing abilities available to Lightbearers, as well as new

ones that have come into existence in recent history. It has been implied that the increased abilities of Lightbearers is not necessarily a good thing, and is merely a harbinger of increasing Horror activity or an indicator of some horrible storm brewing on the horizon.

RANK 1

Light Symbol

Action: Yes

Allows the Lightbearer's emblem to glow like a bright torch.

Shimmer

Action: Yes

Allows the Lightbearer to weave a disguise from light. This will mask features and even create the impression of a different gender. It will not, however, change the appearance of race. Perception Difficulty is Charisma step plus talent rank.

RANK 2

Light Sprite

Action: Yes

Conjures a small, intelligent sprite that can carry a message to another Lightbearer that the conjurer knows or to anyone he has met in the last week, providing he knows their Name.

The message can be up to 50 words. Upon delivery, the sprite will wait for a reply.

A light sprite exists for rank days. Its Death Rating is equal to its conjurer's Wound Threshold.

Steel Believer

Step: Rank + Charisma Step

Action: Yes

Requires the sacrifice of one of the Lightbearer's Recovery Tests for this day. The Lightbearer kneels down and vocally attempts to focus a group on the task at hand. This ability only benefits those who are within the sound of the Lightbearer's voice and who can hear it unaided. The Lightbearer then makes a Steel Believer Test against the highest Spell Defense (which may not be voluntarily lowered) of those he wishes to impact, the maximum number of those affected being his Charisma step. For each success level, he may add a number of steps to any talent used against Horrors or Horror Constructs equal to his talent rank.

One use of the talent lasts for rank hours and an individual can only benefit from a single use of Steel Believer per day (Although multiple attempts may be made upon failure).

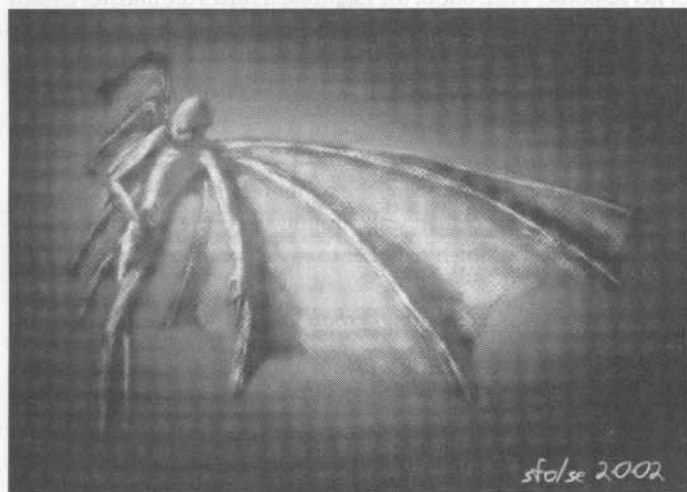
RANK 3

Radiant Circle

Action: No

Allows the Lightbearer to create a glowing white circle 10 feet in diameter. This circle acts as a protective field against Horrors, Horror Constructs and Horror-marked individuals. The Circle's Physical and Spell Defense are equal to the Lightbearer's rank + Spell Defense. This field is spherical and covers all those within it completely.

Strain for creating and maintaining the Radiant Circle is 1 Damage Point per hour.



Lightbearers may perform other Actions while maintaining the Radiant Circle, but leaving the circle dispels it.

RANK 4

Heal Believer

Action: Yes

Allows the Lightbearer to heal Oathtakers, other Lightbearers and himself.

The Lightbearer must touch the injured character. After 1 minute of contact, the character gets a free Recovery Test, which must be used immediately. The Lightbearer may use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Lightbearer talent rank.

RANK 5

Karma Transfer

Action: No

Allows a character who follows in the Lightbearer's footsteps to take possession of their fallen hero's Karma Points. Additionally, when the Karma is transferred, up to a dozen of the most important images and/or events in the late Lightbearer's life enter the character's dreams. This transfer happens automatically and no test is required.

RANK 6

Ease Wounds

Step: Rank + Toughness Step

Action: Yes

The Ease Wounds ability allows the Lightbearer to ease the pain and effect of Wounds for any character, including himself. Wounds affected in this manner no longer reduce Recovery Tests or other actions. To use this ability, the Lightbearer makes an Ease Wounds Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the total number of Wounds a character has plus five. On an Average success, the Lightbearer can negate the effects of up to two Wounds. On a Good success, the Lightbearer can negate the effects of up to four Wounds, and on an Excellent success the Lightbearer can negate the effects of all the Wounds on the target character. If the Ease Wounds Test fails, the Lightbearer may not use the Ease Wounds ability again for 24 hours.

RANK 7

Edge of Light

Action: No

Augments the Damage done by melee and missile weapons to Horrors and Horror Constructs by the Lightbearer's rank. Damage done to non-Horror characters and/or creatures is increased by 3 points. Edge of Light must be cast before the actual attack, must be used in the same round it's cast, and costs 1 Strain.

RANK 8

Refuse Horror

Step: Rank + Charisma Step

Action: No

Allows a Lightbearer to avoid the effects of the Horror powers Terror and Thought Worm. If the result of a Refuse Horror Test exceeds the Horror's Attack Test, the Horror's power has no effect as the Lightbearer shrugs off the assault.

RANK 9

Lesser Incarnation

Action: No

Allows a Lightbearer, upon his death, to grant a number of Rank Points equal to his Lightbearer talent rank to a Lightbearer candidate. This allows the recipient to raise any talent rank he chooses, 1 Rank Point per, up to the number of Points received. The candidate receiving these Points must become a Lightbearer within 3 months, or they lose these Points.

The recipient must be of a lesser Circle than the deceased Lightbearer and cannot raise a talent to a rank higher than the late Lightbearer.

Breath of Life

Step: Rank + Willpower Step

Action: Yes

With the use of this ability, the Lightbearer may keep his supporters from falling unconscious. If an Oathtaker within line of sight of the Lightbearer reaches his Unconsciousness Rating, he may use this talent to offer one of his remaining daily Recovery Tests to the Oathtaker (using the Lightbearer's Recovery step).

In the event of an Oathtaker death, an extremely high test result may even prevent the character from dying (Extraordinary success against the Oathtaker's Spell Defense). This ability has been less than reliable in the wake of the war against Thera, however, and requires that the Lightbearer perform this feat within 1 minute of the Oathtaker receiving the fatal blow, and only one attempt may be made to perform such a feat.

No matter what means are employed the character can only spend 1 Karma Point on this test.

RANK 10

Avoid Horror Magic

Step: Rank + Willpower Step

Action: No

Allows a Lightbearer to avoid the effects of Horror attacks against their Spell Defense. If the result of a Avoid Horror Magic Test exceeds the Horror's Spellcasting Test, the Lightbearer avoids the attack.

RANK 11

Armor of Light

Action: No

Allows the Lightbearer to increase his Physical and Mystic Armor Rating by Rank Points. This ability costs 1 Strain per round.

RANK 12

Heal Other

Step: Rank + Charisma Step

Action: Yes

Allows the Lightbearer to heal any character. If the Lightbearer succeeds in a Heal Other Test against the target's Spell Defense, reduce the target's Damage by the test result and heal 1 Wound. This ability may be used 3 times per day, but no more than once per day on any one character.



APPENDIX THREE: PURIFIERS



No one should deceive themselves. The very future of our world is at risk and always has been. Heads of nations provide endless lip service about it and no leader can deny it. Stories are written about it. Our greatest asset, which is our young, is growing up, living with it. And "it" is the appalling dangers we all face on a day to day basis. From around the known world, Troubadours paint in our mind's eye stark images of dancing jigsaw puzzles of dead infants and broken dogs, of cancerous forests and eroded landscapes, of waterways poisoned by the mere presence of a Horror, of blackened and charred air, and of an ever-changing climate of destruction just beyond our borders. In increasing numbers people are saying, "We have had enough. You wage your petty wars, and have our children fight your conflicts while the true enemy cripples us from within?" They want to see our precious ecology cleaned up. They want their voice heard.

We are that voice.

They believe that this world has the power and the reason to restore the land, restore the air, and cleanse the realm of the presence of the Horrors. They are no longer afraid. Exhaustion has made them bold. In the coming years the planet will be facing unprecedented challenges. Unless something is done, decimated population levels accompanied by increased Horror activity and the consumption of resources and goods due to war will place new burdens on the land, oceans, rivers, and atmosphere. They demand action.

We are that action.

In the face of all challenges, we must have priorities. We focus on what we believe to be most urgent. And that is the potentially irreversible environmental problems caused by the Horrors and the waging of war. Those that threaten the capacity of our homes to maintain clean air, land, and water will no longer go unchallenged. They demand purification.

We are the Purifiers.

Purifiers are obsidimen who dedicate themselves to healing the scars left on the world by continuing activity of the Horrors, the Scourge and most recently, the War. Willing to go to extremes to express the obsidimen race's love of nature and the Earth, the world view of Purifiers has changed at large from being that of kindly monks seeking to preserve nature to that of zealot extremists content to let Name-givers suffer under oppressive rulership rather than endanger their fragile ecosystems.

Though they act with extreme aggression against any who they believe to have defiled the earth, in all other aspects most Purifiers very closely resemble other obsidimen. Only when they see the earth harmed in some way do they give in to their righteous rage, showing an even more intense anger than a typical obsidimen at a slur against his Liferock.

In the eyes of many Purifiers, the War against Thera was seen as short-sighted. They were the first to warn about the dangers that would come to pass because of the War, and in its wake they have begun to take more aggressive action. Many Purifiers eagerly became part of the organized crusade against the Horrors.

Important Attributes: Strength, Dexterity and Toughness

Racial Restrictions: Obsidimen only

Karma Ritual: For some, the old method of destroying a boulder or cave wall remains the proper Karma Ritual for this class. For others, the Purifier sits, cross-legged in a place of isolation, with only nature as

his companion. Slowly he begins to recite the names of those from his Liferock, starting with the oldest member and conjuring mental images of all the crimes against nature that that member had witnessed during his time above ground. Slowly, in increasingly lower tones, the Purifier works his way through the known crimes until he builds to the present moment in his own life. Snapping to attention with speed that would surprise any casual observer, the Purifier recites his Name and his oath in a voice that echoes off of every natural surface present. He then bows to nature, renewed in his quest to preserve nature.

Artisan Skills: Sandpainting, Sculpting, Architecture (although, for the purposes of Artisan tests, they merely sketch a building design)

FIRST CIRCLE

Talents

Astral Sight
Battle Shout
Body Control (D)
Karma Ritual
Unarmed Combat (D)

Memory of Innocence (D)

Step: Rank + Toughness Step

Action: Yes

Requires Karma: No

Strain: 0

The Memory of Innocence talent allows a Purifier to transfer Damage done to nature to himself. First, the Purifier touches the area and then forms an image in his mind of what the item or area looked like in its untouched form for one minute. After a minute of concentration, the Purifier may make a Memory of Innocence Test against the Spell Defense of the item. If the result is successful, the result is also the number of Damage Points the Purifier may take upon himself. The Purifier may elect to heal all or a portion of the Damage to a particular area. Purifiers cannot heal an area that's pattern has been completely destroyed, or where the astral space is corrupted.

SECOND CIRCLE

Talents

Creature Analysis
Durability (6/5)
Fire Blood

THIRD CIRCLE

Talents

Abate Curse
Mother's Aid (D)

Step: Rank + Charisma Step

Action: Yes

Requires Karma: No

Strain: 2

A Purifier may use this talent to call on the forces of nature to aid him. The character makes a test vs. a Difficulty Number based upon the region of astral space he is located in:

Safe	12
Open	15
Tainted	20
Corrupt	25



The extent of the aid given the character by nature varies with the success level of the test and which element is the most present to provide aid. Success level indicates the changes which nature lends to make it possible for the character to perform his heroic feats. For example, a drowning Purifier might suddenly discover small pockets of air, the ground or a mountain range might shift in the wind revealing previously unseen footholds, or the flames of an enemy encampment might blaze out of control for no apparent reason just long enough to spook their horses, etc. The element must be present to offer aid (i.e., a path might clear in a roaring fire to allow the Purifier to not be burned, but if he was dying of thirst amidst this inferno, there would be no water present to help.)

FOURTH CIRCLE

Karma: The Lightbearer can use a Karma Point on any Damage Test.

Talents

Clay Skin

Thread Weaving (D)

FIFTH CIRCLE

Focused Strike: At a cost of 2 points of Strain, the Purifier may focus all his energy into a powerful strike. When the Purifier makes a successful attack using his Unarmed Combat talent, he may add his Willpower step to his Damage step for the Damage Test. The Purifier may not use this ability when attacking with a weapon or in consecutive Combat Rounds.

Talents

Elemental Tongues

Purify (D)

Step: Rank + Willpower Step

Action: Sustained

Requires Karma: No

Strain: 0

This very powerful and very slow working talent allows a Purifier to permanently purify corrupted regions of astral space. The character must remain in the corrupted area at least one week, studying it carefully

for one hour each night. The corrupting presence must also no longer be presently infecting the area as well. As soon as he completes seven nights of meditation and study, the Purifier makes a Purify Test against the Spell Defense of the area. The success level determines the amount of Purification done, and each level of Purification requires one of the Purifier's Recovery Tests for that day. The area of effect is Willpower + rank number of yards square per level of success and is a permanent effect. Any corrupting influence attempting to corrupt the area again while the Purifier is present in that region must make a Spellcasting Test against the Purifier's Spell Defense combined with his Purify talent step. If the Purify Test fails to Purify an area, the Purifier may attempt to make another test after 8 days of preparation. The time required increases by one day for each failed attempt with a maximum of a year and one day of required study.

The Difficulty Number for purifying land that is rated Open is 10. The Difficulty Number for purifying Tainted land is 20, and the Difficulty Number for purifying Corrupt land is 30.

SIXTH CIRCLE

Physical Defense: Increase the Purifier's Physical Defense by 1.

Talents

Life Check (D)

Unshakable Earth (D)

SEVENTH CIRCLE

Recovery Test: The Purifier gains an additional Recovery Test per day.

Talents

Earth Skin

Second Attack

EIGHT CIRCLE

Spell Defense: Increase the Purifiers Spell Defense by 1.

Talents

Crushing Blow (D)

Lion Heart



APPENDIX FOUR: HORROR STALKERS



From the darkest of netherworlds, they came to our world.

From far across the land, we have risen to meet this ancient foe. Their coming had been foretold by ancient scholars, who bade that we all hide. And so the people hid, but many were not to be delivered from the monsters that scoured the land. The time for hiding is over. The time for fighting is upon us.

Leaving terror and destruction in their wake, they fed upon the land.

Leaving all ties behind us, we carry with us naught more than clarity of thought and courage of heart. No matter what tools may be at our disposal, they are useless to us without a clear mind to guide us and a strong heart to move us. We welcome death as our traveling companion. We shun fear as our nemesis.

Now, unfeeling, unrivaled, and unopposed, their rampage continues.

Now is our time for glory, my friends. Now is our time to take up the fight with this foe. Now is our time to take up the battle that was passed to us by those who fought before us. There is no turning back, for to take up this mantle is to see it to its very end; to walk straight into the maw of the Horrors and kill as many as possible to clear the way for those who will rise in our place. We can never give up. We can never surrender.

Now is the time of our reckoning.

It is a rare and dangerous life path that is the Horror Stalker Discipline. While other Adepts may come in contact with and fight Horrors in their own ways, the Horror Stalkers actively hunt Horrors in order to destroy these entities. These are driven men and women answering a deadly calling, accepting that their death could come at any time. What matters most is the destruction of as many Horrors as possible.

To aid them in their battle, the Horror Stalkers have developed talents geared specifically towards the peril that they face. Their talents allow them to see and interact with astral space and boost their defenses against the Horrors' vicious magical abilities.

Horror Stalkers hunt Horrors in a manner that many find to be disturbing, if not insane. Using their ability to bear Horror Marks, Horror Stalkers allow themselves to be marked, then use that connection to track down their enemy and engage it in combat, whether it be physical or astral. Time and again, this has proven to be the most effective (if suicidal) means to dispatching Horrors. In addition to their goals, it is these methods that have caused Horror Stalkers to be both respected and feared.

Talents and special abilities for the various Circles of this Discipline are listed below. Those talents marked with the notation (D) are Discipline talents of the Horror Stalker (see p. 53, ED2, for more information on Discipline talents). Descriptions of the Horror Stalker talents Bear Mark, Deathstrike, and Astral Warrior are provided at the end of this section. Descriptions of the following talents appear in the **Earthdawn Companion**: Bardic Voice, Confront Horror, Critical Hit, and Lion Spirit (though Confront Horror is generally unavailable until Fifteenth Circle, Horror Stalker Adepts may learn it at Tenth Circle.) Descriptions of all the remaining talents appear in the **Earthdawn 2nd Edition rulebook**.

Important Attributes: Willpower and Perception

Racial Restrictions: None

Karma Ritual: To begin her Karma Ritual, the Horror Stalker paces out a small circle and outlines it in salt. The stalker then begins the Litany, Naming every Horror Stalker who has fallen in battle, then Naming all the Horrors known to have been struck down by followers of this Discipline. After finishing this recitation, the stalker spends several minutes contemplating any Horror Marks she possesses. Once satisfied that everything is in place, the stalker offers up a short praise to fallen Horror Stalkers. Finally, the stalker rubs out the salt circle, draws her weapon, aims it in the direction where she believes the nearest Horror lurks and makes a vow to find and destroy it.

Artisan Skills: Scarification, Tattooing

FIRST CIRCLE

Talents

Astral Sight (D)
Karma Ritual
Melee Weapons
Silent Walk
Steel Thought (D)
Tracking

SECOND CIRCLE

Talents

Durability
Evidence Analysis
Deathstrike (D)

Step: Rank + Perception Step

Action: No

Requires Karma: See text Strain: See text

The Deathstrike talent ensures that a Horror Stalker will not fall under the sway of a Horror's influence. If at any time the character fails to resist the Horror's magical or other influence, such as a Horror-ark or Thought Worm, and performs an act in the entity's service, the character



must make a Deathstrike Test against the step number of the ability the Horror is using such as the Horror's Horror Mark step or Thought Worm step. The Adept must use all of her available Karma on this roll, virtually guaranteeing the success of the roll. If the test succeeds, the character dies but does an amount of Damage equal to her Willpower + Toughness step to the Horror. The Adept may use Willforce in place of Willpower if she has it. This Damage is applied to the Horror immediately and may not be countered or reduced in any way. If the Deathstrike Test fails, the character dies, free of the Horror's influence, but does no Damage to it.

Note that the Deathstrike talent only triggers if the Horror Stalker is made to perform an act in the Horror's service against her will. A character already connected to a Horror by a Horror Mark or Thought Worm may choose to willingly set off Deathstrike, thereby sacrificing herself in return for one last shot at the Horror.

THIRD CIRCLE

Talents

Missile Weapons

Bear Mark (D)

Step Number: Rank + Perception Step

Action: No

Requires Karma: No **Strain:** 1

The Bear Mark talent enables Horror Stalkers to remain sane while accumulating Horror Marks. Using Bear Mark, a Horror Stalker can bear a number of Horror Marks up to her rank in the talent. The Adept cannot resist additional Horror Marks until she increases the talent rank. As soon as a character is Horror-marked, she makes a Bear Mark Test against the Horror Mark step of the Horror affecting her. If the test succeeds, the stalker need not worry about being influenced by the Horror through this Horror Mark, because the character has effectively isolated the mark from the rest of her pattern permanently.

If the test fails, the Adept suffers the usual effects of a Horror Mark. However, the Adept may repeat the Bear Mark Test any time the Horror attempts to use its powers on the character through the Horror Mark. A successful test allows the character to resist the Horror's attempts to use its powers on her. If the character achieves an Extraordinary success on any of these tests, she has effectively isolated the Horror Mark from her pattern permanently.

Horror Stalkers may also use the Bear Mark talent to determine the location of the nearest Horror that has marked them. To do so, the character must make a successful Bear Mark Test against the Spell Defense of the Horror being sought.

FOURTH CIRCLE

Spell Defense: Increase the Horror Stalker's Spell Defense by 1.

Talents

Thread Weaving (Horror Weaving)

Willforce (D)

FIFTH CIRCLE

Astral Flare: Horror Stalkers use the Astral Flare ability to draw Horrors to them. This ability enables the Adept to fire a burst of raw magical energy into astral space, similar to that caused by the casting of raw magic. The character does not suffer warping Damage, but probably

will become Horror-marked. Treat this as if the character had just cast a Circle Eight spell and make the appropriate tests using the Raw Magic Table (p. 151, ED2).

Talents

Empathic Sense

Temper Self

SIXTH CIRCLE

Horror Defense: The character may spend Karma on any test to resist the powers or spells of a Horror.

Talents

Life Check (D)

Heartening Laugh

SEVENTH CIRCLE

Spell Defense: Increase the Horror Stalker's Spell Defense by 1.

Talents

Second Attack

Spirit Dodge (D)

EIGHTH CIRCLE

Social Defense: Increase the Horror Stalker's Social Defense by 1.

Talents

Lion Heart (D)

Astral Warrior (D)

Step Number: Rank + Willpower Step

Action: No

Requires Karma: See text **Strain:** 2

The Astral Warrior talent boosts the Adept's ability to fight in astral space. Using the Astral Warrior talent, the Adept can form astral armor and an astral weapon to aid her in astral combat. The Adept adds her rank in Astral Warrior to her Mystic Armor and uses her Astral Warrior step for attacks made in astral combat. When viewed astrally, the armor and weapon formed by Astral Warrior appear as a shimmering set of armor and a weapon visualized by the Adept.

NINTH CIRCLE

Horror Hatred: The Adept may spend Karma on any attack against a Horror.

Talents

Critical Hit

Detect Influence

Steely Stare

TENTH CIRCLE

Astral Rend: At Tenth Circle, Horror Stalkers gain the ability to open a hole in astral space in order to physically enter and confront Horrors directly. Once there, all of the Adept's physical attributes are used as protection from astral attacks instead of Mystical and Spell Defense. (i.e. Physical Armor is used instead of Mystic Armor, Physical Defense instead of Spell Defense, etc.)

Social Defense: Increase the Horror Stalker's Social Defense by +1.

Talents

Confront Horror (D)

Lion Spirit



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• FINI •

This small merchant's kaer has been cleansed and the wards reestablished. All we found were perpetually rotting, when cadaver men that were easily dispatched. However, we have found no Horror within the walls of the kaer, even after several careful searches. It is my belief that these weaker constructs are some form of unnatural by-product of the Poisonous Forest. It might be worth investigating into Jerris' history and seeing if they have ever had problems with the dead rising from their graves, perhaps before the arrival of the Purifier, Draneth? Regardless, whatever treasure these merchants took with them into their final resting place has either been stolen long ago, or somehow rotted along with the rest of them.

After careful examination, it does not look as if any Horrors actually breached this place. Indeed, it looks more like the taint that infects all of the forest above seeped into this kaer and slowly destroyed its original inhabitants, leaving the shambling husks we found. Their method for supplying water to the kaer was poorly thought-out: a warded filter on a fresh water stream. Most likely, it gave no protection against the creeping disease that has claimed all other life in this area. Mikael has established an Elemental tap, so we have fresh water without relying on the stream. He and the engineer Elementals that Morningfall sent to 'aid' us in this task have also seared away the corrupt remnants of furniture and former occupants from the kaer, and scrubbed most of the ash from the entrance. It is almost a shame that the experiments need be conducted, they would serve us well as soldiers and Holders, with the proper education. No matter. For the next few nights, we will furnish this small kaer from the equipment aboard the Sky Drake, and prepare for the investigation into the nature of the ash, and its effects on Adepts. All his inside the kaer and the ash around them is the same, but the ash is not the same as the ash in the kaer.

Day 3

some attempts to breach the seal, but are best described as pathetic – the rotted beasts are easily dealt with. Although Vorin had contracted something from the ash, we put him out of his misery, before he infects us all.

In the past day, we have managed to Distill something quite unusual from a large enough sample of ash – roughly ten gallons. When the spell is complete, what remains are trace amounts of Elemental Water, Earth, Air, and Fire, as well as Orichalcum. The amount produced is hardly worth mentioning – it is only visible in astral space, and undetectable in the physical plane. It does prove that this ash came from some kind of magic, however. There is also something I can only describe as taint. It is an astral sore, a small bit of corrupt space, just as minute as the Elements.

The Lord may be correct in his assumption that this may be a trace of some form of powerful Theran weaponry – perhaps something they used against a powerful Horror during the Scourge?

All five of the Engineers have been prepared. We will begin the experiments in the morning.

...

The first Engineer had an interesting reaction to ingesting the unaltered, distilled essence of the ash. I have no better description for it other than to say he unraveled. What we saw in astral space,

...

removed the taint. She convulsed for a time, but due to Mikael's poor binding, had enough leeway to crack her own skull. If the remaining three Engineers are not enough to determine its effects sufficiently, we will prepare him in addition for his failure. Tomorrow we will try infusing just the taint into the Engineer Named Lorith Paliver.

THE WAR IS OVER



The forces of Thera have been pushed from Barsaive's borders. But what of the aftermath? The Denairastas family holds Jerris in its iron grip. The orks of Cara Fahd continue to struggle as its tribes strive to become a nation in more than just name. Vivane has become a city of the living dead. King Neden of Throal has locked himself away in his chambers. The Horror Clouds are rampaging across Barsaive, leaving devastation in their wake. And where have the Horror Stalkers gone? First there was the darkness of the Scourge, and then there was the darkness of War, and the dark days seem far from over.

Barsaive in Chaos is a campaign supplement for *Earthdawn Second Edition*. It details six significant events that span the year after the fall of Vivane, outlining an epic-style campaign. Each event can also stand alone to form a mini-campaign, and they can be used in any combination. When these events are linked, the characters are placed in the center of a battle for Barsaive's social and political stability. *Barsaive in Chaos* is intended for characters of Second Circle and above, of any Discipline.



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ISBN 0-9704191-3-9 \$20.00



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