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This document contains the outline for the *Chronicles of War* project, the final campaign book in the **Earthdawn Third Edition** game line.

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## CHRONICLES OF WAR

*Those who remain oblivious of history are doomed to repeat it. Yet those scholars who study history are doomed to observe everyone else repeating it.*

— Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

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This file contains project information and an outline for the book *Chronicles of War*, an epic campaign for **Earthdawn Third Edition**. It only contains the general outline for the metaplot of the campaign, and no details on the adventure frameworks it will contain (as these will be developed in the next step).

### General Project Information

This campaign supplement will be structured as set down in this file. There's be the obligatory **Introduction** serving as an overview of the book, followed by a **Background** chapter containing information on the history, all the factions, organizations and items features in the campaign. This will be followed by four major **Event** chapters featuring a number of Adventure Frameworks, Important Characters, and all required information on each event.

*Chronicles of War* puts every setting book published for **Earthdawn Third Edition** to use in some way or another. They won't be needed to run the campaign, but add detail to those who have collected them.

The estimated size of the project is about 120,000 words (roughly 144 pages using our current layout).

### Project Vision

*Chronicles of War* is an epic, setting-changing campaign. As the last book of the **Earthdawn Third Edition** line, *Chronicles of War* is supposed to become a cliffhanger similar to what *Prelude to War* was involuntarily to the original **Earthdawn** game (which kept the community alive for a long time). There is no intention to weave the developments of the aftermath into canon and continue to publish books based on one "coherent-but-forced-upon-you" storyline. That said, the political landscape of Barsaive will look different after *Chronicles of War*, but the exact implications and changes will be left open.

While the campaign leads to a certain outcome on a broad level, the player's actions should have a heavy impact on the details. To enforce this in development, each Event will feature a section discussing how other events will be affected by the outcome of the different adventures contained. A preliminary **Loose Ends** section has already been included as a starting point for such thoughts. This might even be aided by a simple mechanic—such as a score board—if needed: this is something to discuss in a further round of brainstorming.

### What this Book is Not

**A Setup for New Books:** As mentioned above, *Chronicles of War* is not intended to spark any follow-up books or products. The next edition of **Earthdawn** will pick up somewhere where the war here is pretty much irrelevant. We would theoretically be able to do some more ED3 books, but we don't have any plans for such at this point.

**A Continuation of the *Prelude to War* Campaign:** While *Chronicles of War* is a continuation of the events first published in the *Prelude to War* book for ED1, we don't continue that book in terms of a product. We build upon setting information from the **Earthdawn Third Edition** line which includes similar information, but is different in regards to a couple of things (Aardelea and the drake storyline, for example, won't be featured at all).

**Barsaive at War "Done Right":** While we pick up on a couple of ideas mentioned **LRG's *Barsaive at War*** and Lou Prosperi's original outline, that is a natural process developing out of the existing story. We have no intention of using the original outline and write a book sticking to that vision. There is really no need to do this, as the overall situation today is much different from what it was back in 1999. Some people will compare this book to *Barsaive at War*, no doubt, but we have no intention to create a book on exactly the same premise and deliberately add oil to such a fire. Different times, different goals, different visions—all these factor into *Chronicles of War* being a different and stand-alone product. If it helps, think of it as a re-imagination of the topic.

### The Playing Pieces

The following section contains an overview of the **War Parties**, their **Allies**, involved **Organizations** and **Items** used throughout *Chronicles of War*. All of these will be explored in greater detail in the final book.

#### War Parties

**Throal:** The good guys. The Dwarf Kingdom strives for independence and freedom for all Barsaivians. Unfortunately, the young heir to the throne is inexperienced and foolish, and has already suffered a setback at the Battle of Praejjor's Field. In *Chronicles of War*, Neden will find his kingdom under attack—besieged by the Theran Empire in an attempt to re-take the province.

The Dwarf Kingdom is split within, however, and Nedens biggest enemy is Named Selenda. She is the head of a dwarf movement that might lead to a separation and re-founding of the Kingdom of Scythia under her rulership. To this end, Selenda has struck a deal with the Denairastas and the Grim Legion, which will be revealed during the course of this campaign (see below for more details).

**The Theran Empire:** The obvious bad guys. They want to take Barsaive back, and have spearheaded a possible invasion by setting up Triumph on top the Liferock Ayodhya. Their reasons for this weren't actually to wage war (they came for the girl Aardelea; featured in *Prelude to War*, but not at all in **Earthdawn Third Edition**), but that is another story not told in this book. It becomes irrelevant anyway when General Nikar Carinci is tricked into action by his own people and Iopos by proxy.

That said, Thera is also manipulated by the Denairastas. The Denairastas exploit the tension between General Nikar Carinci (who rules over Triumph and is in charge over Barsaive) and Overgovernor Kypros (who rules over Vivane from the Theran outpost at Sky Point). When the manipulation is revealed, it is too late—Iopos will have made the required moves to gain a stronger foothold in Barsaive, and Throal would never ally with the Therans against such a common enemy.

**Iopos:** The shady bad guys. Working behind the curtain, their plan is to bring Thera and Throal up to each other's throats while quietly expanding their own sphere of influence. They are enemies the dwarf kingdom ever since it was revealed that they were responsible for the assassination of King Varulus III. Their scheming has not come to an end yet, and the effects of their master plan are featured in this book.

Iopos is ruled by the Denairastas clan, a dynasty of dragon-kin magicians. We see them as innovators as well, and one of their secret tools (an Earthship, see further below), plays a prominent role in this campaign. The Earthship also serves as an indicator that

the Denairastas have a certain type of war machinery up their sleeves, even if they try to achieve their goals with minimum military effort.

### Allies

**T'skrang Aropagoi:** The t'skrang *aropagoi* are split between the three main forces waging war. V'strimon and Syrtis are allied with Throal, K'tenshin with Thera, and the Ishkarat with Iopos. The remaining *aropagoi* are neutral or work with what's most beneficial for them.

**Cara Fahd:** This newly-found Nation is allied to Throal, but close to the border of Theran lands. Their support in the War is torn between sending ground forces to help Throal and keeping enough to prevent invasion/eradication from the Therans at Sky Point.

**Crystal Raiders:** Quarreling between themselves, the troll moots hate the Therans. There are ties to the Dwarf Kingdom, but King Neden seems to be a weakling. Some of the clans could be swayed or manipulated to stay out of the War, which would benefit Iopos.

**Jerris:** Allied with Throal as they manufacture the kingdom's airships, Jerris lies close to Iopos. They keep good relations with the Denairastas, and yes, they are expected to ally with them because they are so much closer to Iopos than they are to Throal—unwillingly at first, but they are cowards.

**Kratas:** A neutral place officially (and unable to contribute nay forces anyway), but becomes the new headquarter for the Liferock Rebellion—and the player characters to stage their journeys across Barsaive throughout the campaign.

**The Elven Court (Blood Wood):** Neutral in this conflict, but a manipulation attempt by the Denairastas will cause them to take action—one way or another depends on the player character's actions.

### Organizations

**Liferock Rebellion:** The Liferock Rebellion will help the player characters in the first two parts of this campaign. The characters will have a chance to get close to Omasu, but at the risk of leading the Therans to him as well.

**Grim Legion:** The Grim Legion is running a "secret project", which is to liberate Scytha from Horror infestation. While this is not directly connected to the War, the reason why they do it is: Selenda plans to separate the Dwarf Kingdom and move out to found her own—with the backing of Iopos and turning the Grim Legion into a recognized and royally sponsored organization. The role of the Grim Legion is tangential in the first part, but they are drawn into the mess in the last chapter of the campaign—at Aras Nehem, they will face the biggest challenge in their existence.

**The Ristular:** The Ristular are an (at least) Barsaive-wide cult that is devoted to widen the astral rift over at Aras Nehem. Doing so would give them (or rather Ristul) more power, allowing him to spread into Barsaive and corrupt it forever. The Ristular are driven by a prophet of some kind, who leads the cult to move after the Dragon's Eye (see below). To him, the conflict in Barsaive is the fulfillment of a cryptic prophecy:

*When the forces of Vestrial build their fortress,  
the forces of Raggok seek their ancestral home,  
and the forces of Dis march into the motherland,  
the mouth of the eternal sea of madness  
will open through the dragon's eye*

The Ristular relate the three main factions in the conflict to the three Mad Passions: Iopos stands for the forces of Vestrial, Thera stands for the forces of Dis, and Throal for the forces of Raggok. The last part is what seems to fall out of that pattern, but that's only because it isn't obvious. In fact, Selenda and her followers represent that faction pretty well. They move in secret, however. Due to this, the power of the Mad Passions is at a high point during the time of the campaign.

The Ristular need the Dragon's Eye (see below) to make things happen. They know it powers the Earthship and are drawn to it like a moth to a flame. Their large network enables them to track the ship wherever it surfaces. As a result, they will face and challenge the characters every time the Earthship surfaces, with the goal of capturing it for their purposes. Their motivations are probably unclear until the player characters can piece together the elements of the Prophecy and relate them to the factions and the item.

**Council of Four:** The Council must play a role in this campaign, simply because one of their oldest Liferocks is involved and in epic danger (the Nehem Liferock plays a role in the last part of the book). Omasu calls upon them for help. The characters will have a connection to them via Omasu and the Nehem Liferock.

### Items

**The Earthship:** The Denairastas have ordered their brightest magicians and engineers to build a ship that uses the Law of Similarity and drives in earth as if it was water (as mentioned in the Airships section of the *Gamemaster's Companion*—it's one of the big feats no magician was able to do ever before). However, their ship does not swim on the surface—is able to drive underneath the Earth, much like a submarine. The only problem with such a ship is that it can drive only if the magic level is higher than it is now. The Denairastas solved this with the Dragon's Eye (see below). The Earthship has a far stronger hull than an airship. During the construction phase, the Iopans refined their steel-making technique. This led to the byproduct of having an industrial process they can use again and again to make other war machines too. (Many inventions in the modern-day-recent-past were byproducts from military projects). The Earthship is a device the characters and other factions can play with throughout the campaign; who uses it has an impact on the storyline. The ship itself also fulfills the need of presenting something new and unique, with a distinct Earthdawn feel attached.

**The Dragon's Eye:** A gift from Denairastas himself to his people, this orichalcum-lined crystal stores magical energy. It increases the magic level within a spherical area for a while, which makes the Earthship functional (as the ship needs a higher magic level to actually work). Unfortunately, the crystal must be recharged every once in a while. (For more information, see the Mini-Loci in the old *Barsaive at War* outline).

## Event I: The Siege

*Rain poured down the window of the old tower, but C'telan didn't care. She was lost in the map of the stars she had made during the last 28 nights. Her tail twitched nervously while she was studying the patterns of the stars and tried to figure out their meanings.*

*In fact, she didn't even notice the small man who sneaked into her room under the roof and studied her for several minutes before he raised his voice. "Greetings from our friend, dear C'telan." He grinned when the t'skrang, surprised by his words, shivered and looked to him. "Yes. Yes, thank you. But didn't I ask you, politely as I may add and several times, to not enter this room in the thievery way you prefer? My heart is likely going to stop the next time you'll do this." Fury burned in her eyes, her tail now snapped faster.*

*The man showed his yellow teeth when he grinned. "My excuse, dear lady. Do you have the charts? You said you'll have them finished tonight." To C'telans irritation he began to clean his fingernails with a long dagger after he finished his words.*

*"I told you so, yes—and I usually hold my word. Come closer and I can show you exactly what I have figured out from the maps and mountains, the old prophecies I found in the old books you brought me and the tales of my own people I heard when I was young. By the way, the old books, where did you find them?" Anger and fury disappeared from her face, when scholarly curiosity got the upper hand in her mind. Again, the man showed his yellow teeth, when he replied—without stopping to clean his nails. "Doesn't matter. A place far away from this lovely town and the mountains, that's all you have to know. Go, continue!"*

*"Well, as your master already said, a change will come. A change, bigger than you can imagine," Anger glittered in the eyes of the human, but C'telan didn't notice. "and it will change Barsaive. I wrote it all down here, in the language of the dwarfs, as you told me."*

*"When? When will the change begin?"*

*"The obvious answer is 'soon', even though I'm sure you want to hear a more specific date. I can't tell you exactly; all I know is that you have to look for certain signs. As I said—and I don't like to repeat simple things—it's all written down in this book." The t'skrang took a book from the table and handed it to her guest. "Now, what is with my payment?" Even before she finished the sentence, she felt a pain in her guts. The hilt of a dagger expanded from her chest. With a last, gurgling gasp, the t'skrang fell to the ground. "Didn't the stars tell you that, hm?"*

*A short laughter was the last thing C'telan heard before her mind left her body...*

▲▲▲

*Wrotan never felt comfortable in the presence of spellcasters. Even though he was an adept himself, the power that spellcasters unleash with their spells made him shiver, especially since his only friend had been struck by one to find a gruesome, painful end. Anyway, he just had to deliver the little book to the Wizard and would be away before any spells could be cast on him.*

*He approached the entrance to the cavern, where he looked for the hidden guards. When he spotted one, he holds up his hands, with only the book in one, the other empty. "I'm back, with the book you want." He heard the guard murmur and after a short time "Go in!" Wrotan took his hands down and walked into the cavern.*

*What he saw surprised him more than anything in the last years: a giant sort of ship had been constructed in the cavern—top closed and cylindrical. Dozens of people ran around, worked on the ship or stand together, heads bent over maps, plans and books. The Thief stood still to let the whole scenery get caught by his mind. After a while, he saw the Wizard he was looking for and made his way down to the construction site. The Wizard, a*

*young human man with a slightly arrogant look on his face, noticed him and waved Wrotan to him.*

*"Just in time, my friend. I assume you were successful and have the book?"*

*"What did you expect? Sure thing, easy job—the t'skrang was a fool, as you said." While he handed the book to the Wizard, Wrotan laughed, but the laughter revealed more nervousness than he wanted. "That's a strange thing you're building here. Never knew that airships could be constructed under the Earth."*

*The Wizard looked up from the book and fixed Wrotan with a wary gaze. "Many things exist that escape the knowledge of the common man. Too much knowledge brings fear—or worse. I suggest you take your coin, get back to your backwater town and forget everything you've seen, heard or done in the last two months." He grabbed a pouch and threw it to the Thief who opened it. Revealing his yellow teeth, Wrotan looked up and nodded. "For this, I'll even forget I'm an adept."*

*Without a word more he walked outside, into the fresh cool air of the night. He began to whistle a melody, when pain began to form in his head. Within seconds the pain grew so strong that he couldn't stand any longer and fell to the ground.*

*From the entrance of the cavern, a human Wizard nodded, grinned and gave a signal to the guard next to him. "Get his body over here, give me the pouch back and throw everything else into the dump."*

*He hurled back into the cavern to study the book. Not long and the time has come...*

## Background

General Nikar Carinci is played into laying siege on Throal. This "pact with the devil"-themed backstory will feature Overgovernor Kypros as main character and villain for Nikar. Iopos exploits Kypros' rivalry with Carinci, making him an offer to sending his rival to dust and put Kypros back in full power. Naturally, Kypros cannot refuse and cannot reverse without risking his life (and he is too much of a coward to do that). The Denairastas likely use a proxy for this, to ensure Kypros doesn't realize who he is dealing with right away.

There are two separate stories that have their beginning in this chapter. One is the escalation of the tension that has been building up in Barsaive—Carinci moving his troops to lay siege on Throal, in an ill-fated attempt to take over Barsaive. The other is the discovery of a major cult planning to re-open (or widen) the rift at Aras Nehem.

This is what starts the whole war. The Denairastas "convince" Kypros (Sky Point) to trick General Carinci (Triumph) into false action. Carinci moves his troops to lay siege on Throal, expecting backup from Thera to break the dwarf gates. Kypros secretly prevents that, hoping Carinci will slowly wear himself out—painting the image of the prideful Carinci acting on his own.

## Event Synopsis

The player characters are hired by Throal in the meantime. King Neden and his advisors want them to contact all the other nations for help against the siege. They also assume Thera will march in with reinforcements soon, so time is of the essence.

This Event contains two major discoveries: a) a jaw-dropping event of destruction and military might as Nikar drops into Bartertown and b) the discovery of a new type of ship, the Earthship.

### Important Characters

- King Neden
- General Nikar Carinci
- Ristular
- Pale Ones
- Earthroot

### Adventure Frameworks

The following capsules just feature the core ideas for the metaplot of the book. They are to be developed into full adventure frameworks fitting the general theme. As long as the main idea/goal is transported, the authors have any freedom they need to spin their tales.

#### Discovering the Cult

The characters stumble across a site with Ristular activity. The Earthship surfaced here for some reason (which is not known to anyone at this stage), but has escaped the cultists and only left strange earth deformations. The characters encounter the Ristular and learn of the Prophecy (see p.XX). They might also get hold of a common magic item that points to the Dragon's Eye, a magic device that leads the cultists to what they're after. This framework should either lead the player characters to Bartertown or take place there already.

#### Bartertown in Flames

General Nikar Carinci and his forces descend onto Bartertown, laying Siege to the Kingdom of Throal. The player characters observe this display of power, and must assist the masses retreating into the Grand Bazaar—in time before the dwarfs close their gates!

#### Sealing of Throal

King Neden has ordered to seal Throal again, which includes Westhrall's Passage (see the **Throal** sourcebook). The characters are tasked with this, and they discover the Earthship down there with the Pale Ones—some of which are actually Ristular! The characters have a chance to capture the Earthship at this point, possibly even with the help of Earthroot himself. The old Dragon can stop the boat dead if desired. He is seemingly not showing any interest in the ship or the Dragon's Eye powering it.

#### Loose Ends

Carryovers/Impacts:

- If the characters get the Earthship, they can use it for the journeys in Event II.
- If Iopos keeps the ship, they will have an edge during the journeys, interfering with the characters.
- If the cultists get the Earthship, they will be able to perform their deed at Aras Nehem earlier.



## Event II: The Journeys

*...fiction goes here...*

### Background

King Neden tasks the characters with escaping Throal to embark on a journey to contact the other Nations of Barsaive for help. They will be told a location in Kratas which they can use as headquarters.

### Event Synopsis

During each journey, they detect Cultist/Iopan/Theran activity everytime, which has an impact on the negotiations—and consequently, on each Nation's involvement in the effort.

### Important Characters

- Krathis Gron
- The Crystal Raiders
- Queen Alachia
- Omasu
- Shivalahala Syrtis
- Shivalahala V'strimon
- The Magistrate of Jerris
- ...

### Adventure Frameworks

The following capsules just feature the core reactions needed for the metaplot of the book. Each has to be developed into a full adventure framework fitting the general theme. As long as the reaction remains, and the framework includes some Cultist/Iopan/Theran activity, the authors have any freedom they need to spin their tales.

#### Cara Fahd

Throal will worry about the front towards Vivane and Sky Point. Krathis Gron's scouts and spies don't report any Theran activity in that area, which seems unusual.

#### Crystal Raiders

With no signs on Theran reinforcements, convincing the clans to work together for a vigil might be hard. Having them send ships to Bartertown will require some serious negotiation skills.

#### Vivane/Sky Point

The characters should be able to uncover Iopos' and Kypros' ploy here, gaining the essential information that General Carinci is, in fact, out on his own. If Iopos still has the Earthship, they might get away (and the characters have another chance of capturing it. Plus, there might be Ristular activity). They might route back to Cara Fahd and the

Crystal Raiders to inform them about this and getting them to send (more) forces to Bartertown.

**Note:** There is no Vivane/Sky Point supplement in the **Earthdawn Third Edition** line, so this one might be tricky.

### **Blood Wood**

The elves refuse to join the battle, officially taking a neutral stance. However, Iopos wants to pitch the elves against the Therans, and their actions lead to the Queen ordering the Slaughter of Willow's Grove in secret (just as in ***Barsaive at War***, although we need to discuss whether or not to use the Everliving Flower storyline).

### **T'skrang Aropagoi (Syrtis+V'strimon mainly)**

This adventure framework should take place in Kratas and involve the Liferock Rebellion, as it is networked deep into these. Their agents can do the jobs easily. The characters must find and speak to Omasu to get it all started, however. The Therans are looking for him, of course, as he is considered the Number One "Terrorist" in Barsaive. As a result, this framework will include a lot of fighting with Theran adepts, preferably the *Elite* (see ***Prelude to War***).

### **Jerris**

Iopos has already moved to protect Jerris from any Theran action, bolstering the cities' defenses with troops and Firescale ships in the distance. Things come to a head when Jerris' magistrate is ordered to refuse taking offensive action by his Iopan peers—this is when it is revealed that the Iopan troops don't intend to leave ever again. The characters must flee the city. If they have the Earthship, the Iopans have a chance to take it back. Also, cultists in Jerris might steal it!

### **Other Nations**

Other messengers will call upon Vorst, Marrek, Urupa, as well as all other clans and tribes—as the player characters have enough on their plate already.

### **Loose Ends**

Carryovers/Impacts:

- If the characters don't uncover the Theran/Iopan ploy, the southwestern forces will be out of the game, protecting a front that won't matter.
- If the characters successfully intervene in Blood Wood, the Iopan plan will fail, essentially destroying the relationships between Iopos and Blood Wood, creating a front there. The Queen might even send troops to aid Throal in lifting the Siege. Kaer Eidolon might also be considered here.
- If the characters fail dealing with the Liferock Rebellion, the Aproagoi will not be as coordinated later on, mainly reacting to the war events instead of actively pursuing a plan.
- If the characters loose the Earthship to the Cultists, they will have the Dragon's Eye for use in Aras Nehem, speeding up their foul plans.

## **Interlude: Timewarp**

*A slashing arc of lightning lit the night sky as it leapt across the dark, swollen clouds that rolled overhead, as turbulent as the sea below.*

*Crashing thunder followed Arenis across the deck as he carefully made his way toward the aft end of his rocking ship. Sailors scrambled around him, struggling to tie the riggings while the stinging rain, whipped by a ferocious wind, lashed them relentlessly.*

*These were good men, veterans of the open waters. Arenis never allowed slaves to do any work on his ship, unlike some Therans. Slaves were no good in a crisis. These men were professionals. These men were true citizens of the Empire.*

*And these men were frightened...*

*But not by the sea; Arenis glanced up at the source of their anxiety—a dark silhouette framed by lightning.*

*The ship lifted suddenly beneath his feet, and the sailors' yells of warning were drowned out by a large wave as it smashed down onto the deck. With the subtle aid of magic, Arenis managed to keep his feet. A quick sweep of the deck with his elven eyes told him that none of the crew was injured—this time.*

*He reached the aft end and managed to climb the steps, his head bowed to the wind. He approached the stoic figure that stood as poised as a statue, unmoved by the turbulent tilting of the vessel. The wind tugged at his long, purple cape, causing it to snap violently like some maddened beast lashed to a pole. The gold etchings which laced his dark plate mail flared brilliantly with every stroke of lightning. His arms were folded tightly across his chest. His face, concealed by a strange, silver mask etched with markings only his esoteric order—the Heavenherds—understood, faced west, from whence they fled.*

*Two somber giants flanked him—the twins. Ever silent, they stood facing the same direction as their master with a grim stillness. They wore black, sleeveless ring mail, their massive arms exposed to the elements. Their shadowy capes fluttered wildly behind them. Dark, iron helmets wrapped their faces, with no eye, ear, or breathing slits to be seen. Both twins had a unique decoration on his helmet to tell them apart: deer antlers adorned Blackholm's, and ram horns adorned Darkhan's. Aside from this, the two were identical, though no one—save the Heavenherd—ever saw their faces. It was believed by many within their order that twins were special, and held unique magical properties. Some said that the twins enhanced the Heavenherd's powers. Whether or not this was true, few would dare face him with these two fierce and imposing figures by his side.*

*'Fools', thought Arenis, attempting to drown his anxiety with anger, 'all of that armor will draw you to the bottom of the sea as sure as a kraken's grasp. Maybe a nice wave will you sweep you off my deck, relieving me of your—'*

*Suddenly, the three figures twisted their heads toward the captain, settling on the aged sailor. Icy fingers crawled down his spine, and Arenis had to fight the urge to flee from the deck. With an effort, he suppressed the unnatural fear, and approached.*

*"My lord," he had to fight the wind to be heard, "the ship cannot take much more of this; the storm is only going to get worse!"*

*The Heavenherd only stared at him, and for a moment Arenis wondered if he had been heard. Then abruptly he spoke; though just barely above a whisper, Arenis could hear him as clearly as his own thoughts, "Do not trouble yourself, dear captain. We will not be long in this weather."*

*The silver mask and his two bodyguards turned back as one to stare again into the distance. Arenis followed their gaze but saw only dark, purple clouds sliced occasionally by long fingers of lightning. What did they see? No one would be foolish enough to follow them in this—*

*"They are more resourceful than you would expect, captain," said the Heavenherd suddenly. Arenis could only look at him, struck mute. Surely he did not hear his thoughts? And what did he mean by that? Were they were being followed? So soon? The icy fingers were back, tickling his bowels. There was only one answer for treason in the Empire.*

*How did it come to this? What had he been thinking? He and his men had long been followers of the silver mask, and when he had told them that their time had finally come, they had at first been jubilant, but it was soon discovered that the Order had branded their leader—along with all of them—as heretics, and had called for their immediate arrests. Many, disillusioned by the ruling, turned themselves in, hoping for mercy.*

*But not Arenis. Forgiveness was not a dominant trait of the Empire, he understood. So he gathered his crew to his ship, The Windrider, stowed their enigmatic leader aboard, and, following his orders, fled to the East.*

*Now, in the middle of a punishing storm, with pursuit already underway, Arenis found himself questioning the wisdom of that decision.*

*"Worry not," the silver mask turned back toward him, "Our pursuers are having some troubles with the waves. It seems they are taking on too much water. They will not be able to take flight under those conditions." The figure spun, sweeping off the deck at a brisk, untroubled pace, his minions at his heels.*

*"You may leave the sea now, captain," he called, "I will be below deck."*

*Despite the storm, a dark shadow seemed to be lifted once the figures disappeared below. Arenis began barking urgent orders while signaling for immediate lift off.*

*Slowly, the ship began to rise from the choppy waves. The reinforced wood at first groaned in terrible protest; water poured off the hull in great sheets. The sea fell slowly away as the ship drifted lazily upwards.*

*He gave a great sigh of relief. The icy fingers melted away.*

*Once the clouds were cleared, they would make good time. With a little luck, their pursuers would lose track of them, and there would be no one to interfere with their plans.*

*Soon they would be in Barsaive...*

## Background

This interlude is based around Theran Heavenherds trying to use the coming magic peak to perform a ritual that will cast their souls into the Sixth World (the **Shadowrun** counterpart is a society called the "Atlantean Rebirth", a group of insane and largely mundane people claiming they have lived as Theran magicians in the past).

The Therans will perform their studies on Barsaivian soil, using slaves as guinea pigs. The characters' intervention should end in the ritual going wrong. It might be interesting to play with the idea that this ritual is performed by a Heavenherd splinter-group, which is hunted by its own people.

The magic activity surrounding the ritual will also draw in the Iopan Earthship, in case the player characters haven't captured it yet.

## Important Characters

- Arenis
- ...

## **Adventure Framework**

On their journeys, the characters investigate a bloody skirmish somewhere in the wilds of Barsaive. They come to find out that one side is the Therans! Then in trying to help the other side, find out ... they are also Therans! What's going on? The desperate renegade Heavenherds "hire" the player characters to help them do something to damage the Theran Empire in revenge for a wrong (which is all fabricated, as they really want to be safe to do their ritual).

This comes to a head one way or another, with the group interrupting/sabotaging the ritual, and seeing it partially succeed. They then have to deal with the aftermath, be it the actual Therans showing up to clean house and finding the group there and wanting to interrogate and/or kill them, or the remaining renegade Heavenherds recovering and seeking vengeance for depriving them of their goal.

## **Loose Ends**

Carryovers/Impacts:

- ...

## Event III: War Stories

*...fiction goes here...*

### Background

As Throal's allies make their move, the siege ends and resolves in battle. The war strengthens the cultists.

### Event Synopsis

The player characters discover Selenda's involvement.

### Important Characters

- Selenda
- A Grim Legion Commander
- General Nikar Carinci
- The Council of Elders
- Vestrivan
- ...

### Adventure Frameworks

The following capsules just feature the core ideas for the metaplot of the book. They are to be developed into full adventure frameworks fitting the general theme. As long as the main idea/goal is transported, the authors have any freedom they need to spin their tales.

#### Return to Bartertown

The characters uncover Selenda's involvement with Iopos, who feeds them false information as well (possibly with the goal of trying to start her own Dwarf Kingdom with Iopan support in Scythia). The Grim Legion struck a deal with Selenda, and get involved with the characters after her exposure (as a tie-in for later events). This framework could use some foreshadowing, preferably in the previous event.

#### Breaking the Siege

With the information that Carinci is out on his own, airship support from the Crystal Raiders, and Blood Elves marching in as well, Thera will be forced to withdraw. Carinci probably realized by now what trap he has gotten into and goes defensive until he gets a response directly from Thera. The player characters might be able to intercept his messages here though.

#### Liberation of Triumph

**Land:** Cara Fahd ground troops, dwarf soldiers, other allies.

**Riverfront:** V'strimon and allies vs K'tenshin, Syrtis is too busy warding off an advance by the Ishkarat.

**Air:** Crystal Raiders vs Vedettes. Firescales guard Iopan airspace, they don't attack!

**Dragon Involvement:** There is no need for involving the Great Dragons at this point. The Great Dragons trigger the next event, however: the Horror-tainted Vestrivan appears at the battle site to get hold of the Dragon's Eye, then moving on to harass Urupa. In any case, the player characters should get the mission to contact the Liferock beneath the city of Urupa. The Council of Elders should play a role in this, as it concerns one of their oldest Liferocks.

### Loose Ends

Carryovers/Impacts:

- If Selenda escapes, she might very well re-found Scythia as Iopan ally, further strengthening the Denairastas grip on Barsaive. The Grim Legion will become a royal organization. If Selenda is caught, she likely gets hanged. The Grim Legion might decide to keep working on Scythia and turn it into their own kingdom.
- If the characters fail to intercept Carinci's messages during the Break of the Siege, Thera might respond and force Kypros to take immediate action. That might have a devastating effect on the south western front, if the forces of Cara Fahd and the Crystal Raiders aren't guarding it—it might even lead to Thera annexing the Ork lands, sending them all back to Barsaive. Carinci's forces might hold somewhat longer due to this, or even manage to escape—giving up Triumph.
- Not succeeding in their mission to contact the Liferock might mean they lose their Earthship again, and will bolster the power the cultists have in the final installment of this book. There is likely no real carryover other than this. It might be a possibility Ayodhya gives the group something to aid them with the Nehem Liferock, so failing here will definitely make things harder for them later on.

## Event IV: Aras Nehem

*...fiction goes here...*

### Background

This event can take place at any time during the campaign, soon after as the Ristular manage to get hold of the Dragon's Eye. While the Ristular chase this item for a while with "regular" effort, they will increase their effort every time they fail. What starts with a bunch of Ristular might very well end with the Despoiler of the Land (Vestrivan) appearing and taking the Dragon's Eye at the last minute. We should suggest this will happen at the same time or after the Liberation of Triumph for maximum tension.

### Event Synopsis

Once the Ristular have the Dragon's Eye, they will take off to Aras Nehem to install it. However, the Prophecy doesn't work, or rather, an unexpected opposition forms blocking the rift from opening further. This force is a reanimated form of the original Nehem Liferock, summoned by the four Elders. They can't hold Ristul back forever, so immediate action is required—which involves the player characters and the Grim Legion.

**Note:** There is no background on Urupa in the **Earthdawn Third Edition** line yet, and parts of this event build on ideas we collected for that place. Plans are to either release it as a Shard or as part of a sourcebook before *Chronicles of War* is released.

### Important Characters

- Omasu
- The Grim Legion
- The Ristular
- Denairastas
- Vestrivan
- ...

### Adventure Frameworks

The following capsules just feature the core ideas for the metaplot of the book. They are to be developed into full adventure frameworks fitting the general theme. As long as the main idea/goal is transported, the authors have any freedom they need to spin their tales.

### Call for Help

Omasu acts as messenger for the Council of Four, contacting the characters about what happens at Aras Nehem. He wants them to rally up the Grim Legion, march towards the rift, and battle the Ristular. They need to recapture the Dragon's Eye to prevent the rift from opening. This framework deals with the characters contacting and briefing the Grim Legion, which should not be as straightforward or easy as it sounds. (This needs a good complication/twist to overcome, maybe even Ristular in disguise feeding the Grim Legion false information...).



### **Nehem**

The characters must go to Urupa first to bring the Dragon's Eye to the new Nehem Liferock. The Dragon's Eye enables the new Nehem spirit to aid the one the Council summoned and turn the tables around to close the rift. It might even enable them to re-take the old one should the Mad Passions be healed... (which might go too far, but a detour to Urupa s/be in here because it will give the players the opportunity to learn the history of the place—how Aras Nehem came into existence, why Urupa was founded, etc.)

### **Battle at the Rift**

The time has come to enter Aras Nehem, battle the cultists, take the Dragon's Eye back, and close the rift for Ristul for all times. This framework might include the appearance of the Great Dragon Denairastas to take back his eye—battling Vestrivan while the characters remove the item from its holding place.

### **Loose Ends**

Carryovers/Impacts:

- Well, if this one goes wrong, the War becomes irrelevant as Barsaive becomes Ristul's new habitat. The world will slowly come to an end, the effects on the other Events could be pretty interesting to explore...

## Aftermath

This section describes the various possibilities in Barsaive after the campaign. Throal and Thera will have taken heavy losses in the conflict no matter what, with the remaining Nations licking their wounds or being blown out of existence. Iopos will have expanded its sphere of influence and has grown to an influential Nation claiming rulership over Barsaive. The Therans will have retreated to Sky Point (with the possibility of having destroyed Cara Fahd in the process). Throal has a new city allied with them in Barsaive's heartland—Triumph. Not to mention Scytha.

Overall, these three forces will continue to hold their fronts across the land in some sort of cold war. Neither of them can really move as it would gather the other two as opponents, which might end up in an arms race or similar.

At this point, we leave things the gamemasters to work out the details. The future is uncertain, but remains very interesting. Will there be another war? Will the allies change their minds in this and move the fronts? Whatever happens next, is up to you...

## CREDITS

**Writing:** Carsten Damm, Hank Woon (Fiction)

**Brainstorming:** Eike-Christian Bertram, Carsten Damm, Lars Heitmann, Jeremiah L. Schwennen, Jason U. Wallace, Donovan Winch, Hank Woon, and others.

This document was a first draft outline for the *Chronicles of War* project, the proposed final book in the **Earthdawn Third Edition** line. The core ideas were brainstormed in a larger team, and many of the details of that brainstorming would have made it into the final book if it had made it into the development queue—which was only weeks away when certain people at *RedBrick LLC* decided it would be better to lock people out or dump them for no rational reasons, thus ending development on **Earthdawn Third Edition** altogether.

That said, this draft was not finished and I'm aware of its warts and all. I was asked to share it by a number of fans after I mentioned it in an interview with the *Tableau InfRACTus* fanzine, which is why you are reading it now. Enjoy! –Carsten

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