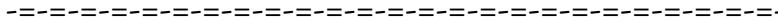




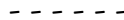
EarthdawnLegends
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J. Anne Mauck - Editor

Welcome, friends and travelers. . .



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Updates and Announcements

-All questions for Q&A (and spotlights) should go to:
earthdawn@subdimension.com

-Submissions for ALL SECTIONS are being taken right now! If you would like more detailed submission guidelines, email earthdawn@subdimension.com with the subject "Submissions"

-Earthdawn and Shadowrun winamp skins are up at
<http://saria.tripod.com/winamp> if you haven't seen them yet

House Rule or Talent Knack of the Month

A used recovery test always yields 1 recovered point.

Website of the Month

<http://www.hut.fi/~jalkanen/ed/simpleguide.html>

A short guide to Barsaive

I love this page. It was one of the first I remember printing out. The Passions are my favorite part.

The Spotlight is on: Thera

While it seems that there are two great evils threatening the world we exist in (the Horrors and Thera), I know that, in my games, There is a boogeyman hiding in the closet. It is the great Roman Empire, near its height ruling most of the known world. It should be more!

True, there have been books published about Thera and the war. But there is so much more potential for Thera. There is a world to the north that is full of the same problems Barsaive would have faced if Thera ruled. But perhaps it isn't all bad...

War is cliché, albeit fun, in fantasy games. Thera provides the perfect opportunity for covert ops, military service for Throal, and some fun for the GM. As long as the players remain unaware, the GM can convince the characters that Thera is better, playing on the character strengths, abilities, and flaws. See the adventure hook and fiction for more ideas.

Age of Legends

A Friendly View of Thera (Part 1 of 4)

Jail Time

By: J Anne Mauck

When I reported to Captain Bakar that morning, I had no idea that the slaves had been involved in an uprising. Well, I had heard things, but no one had mentioned any real trouble. The rumor mill had placed some of the new captives in some trouble, but that was nothing new. Regardless, every officer I saw looked quite grim.

Before I could even greet him properly, Bakar bellowed, "Why were you not on duty last night?"

My heart nearly stopped. "I was not scheduled to be on duty, sir."

In a calmer voice, he continued. "Is it not standard procedure for all officers to be on duty during transport?"

Damn. I tried to think quickly. Before I could speak, the captain said in a much louder tone, "It is standard procedure for all officers to be on duty during transport! Explain yourself!" As he yelled, he walked over to me, so close his nose almost touched mine. "Explain yourself or I will find someone else to explain in your place."

I tried not to flinch. Michiru! He knew. "Sir, I... I was with a young lady," I stammered.

Before I could steel myself, Bakar knocked me to the floor. "You are an officer first. Your obligations to Thera come first!" Lowering his voice again, he said, "We suffered a great loss last night and you are to blame."

He opened the door and motioned two officers to enter. "Take this civilian," he said as he pointed at me, "and the Lady Michiru to cells. They will be joining our other guests." To me he said, quite obviously enjoying the look on my face, "You will regret your dalliance with my niece." In my mind, I heard his voice finish with: and so will she...

Before I was thrown in the cell, the guards stripped me of everything but a tunic and light pants. They did so in front of all the captives, so they would know who I was. Once inside, the other prisoners did their best to avoid me. Everyone was silent and I began to wonder who would kill me first: these men or Bakar.

Just as I settled down on the dirty floor, I heard a woman screaming. I tried to block it out, having heard the screams from this deck before, but the fact that it was Michiru's voice killed me. I ran to the door and shouted her name through the grate.

Her screams stopped and I heard her sobs as she cried my name down the hall. I wanted to shout more, but a young ork boy pulled me away from the door. "It will be worse for her if you yell," he whispered. "Come, sit with me."

"My name is Vidoc," I said and extended my hand.

The boy shook in a warrior's greeting which surprised me, he couldn't be more than twelve years old. "I am called Marac. That was my father's name, but I have taken it since his death." He smiled at me. "You are a Theran soldier, aren't you?"

I nodded, feeling more defeated than after any battle.

"Is she your wife?" Marac gestured toward the door.

"Michiru?" I looked away from him for a moment. "She would have been in any other lifetime."

Marac put his hand on my arm. Smiling when I did not pull away, he said, "If you could be with her again, would you help us?"

"I haven't got much to lose either way, do I?"

"Sleep then, I will wake you later."

I must have slept for days because I had enough dreams for a lifetime. Some were sweet and of lovely Michiru. Some were dark and violent about the death

of Bakar. And some were frightening visions of my impending torture and slavery, my former comrades in arms watching me dance for their pleasure.

When Marac woke me, it was nearing dawn. The night had passed uneventfully. "There is much to say and not much time," he said. "Come with me."

He led me to the back of the room where a circle of men sat. No introductions were made, but an elf acknowledged my presence. "You should know," Marac whispered, "that Donovan, the elf, is somewhat clairvoyant. You would do well to listen hard to whatever he says."

"We will reach the end of our path soon and part ways. Follow the way and all will be well." As I looked at the elf, I saw that his eyes were a milky blue. He turned to me. "I would speak with the soldier alone."

The others around him scattered, except for Marac. "Soldier, you once enforced our fate, now you join us in it. The question is now where your loyalties lie. Are you still a subject of Thera or are you a victim of it?"

"I will never be a victim of Thera!" I saw Marac reach out to quiet me and ducked away. Right into Donovan's fist.

"Quiet! You hold no rank here. I ask you again: are you with or against us?"

Realizing the truth of the old elf's words, I said, "I'm with you."

The elf waved Marac away. "I said alone." Marac moved away, but stayed ready to protect Donovan. Donovan smiled at me and moved closer.

"Sir?"

"Your arrival here has been expected. And your survival is necessary. Before you ask, I cannot answer your questions, only give you information I already have. You will follow us into slavery, but Michiru will be with you. Your abilities as a musician will be tested, but you will see freedom one day."

"A musician? I have no talent as a musician." I frowned at Donovan.

"Then you must learn," he said with a wry smile. "They are coming for you."

He turned away as a guard came in. "Vidoc," the guard yelled. "Captain Bakar will speak with you."

Relieved, I went with the guards. Perhaps Bakar had seen that it wasn't my fault.

To spare gory details, Captain Bakar was nowhere. Instead, I was beaten with another group of slaves.

Upon my return to the group cell, Donovan sat by me. "The reason you are here is not because of a slave revolt. A group of adventurers attacked the ship, their mission mostly failed. Several new captives were freed but the guard don't want word of such an embarrassment to spread. Your captain cannot allow word of this to reach farther than this ship, least of all to his superiors. So, instead, he placed the blame on you, especially since I've heard he did not care for his niece's presence here either."

The last two days finally began to make sense. The new captives had been unusually quiet and accepting. All seemed well, too well of course. A revolt would have been much noisier and the commanders outside the captain's office would not have looked at me with such grim sympathy.

My career, my life -- all amounted to nothing. And all for the glory of Thera. My home, the motherland, abandoning me. It became clear that even before my birth, I was meant to fuel the Great Empire onward. My parents, my brothers - victims of propaganda. The thought hit me with such force that I hoped I was overreacting and not falling for some Theroalic party-line. The idea was a bit drastic, but there was a basic truth contained in it. I wouldn't be the human I believed I was unless I was an individual. I was never a citizen of Thera, I was simply "of Thera."

"So," I said to Donovan, "slavery is to be my catharsis."

Donovan smiled a fatherly smile. "If you realize that now, soldier, you are already past the worst."

Vidoc's "Friendly View of Thera" continues in January, with "Slave Ships"

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Adventure Hook

Several teams of adventurers can be sent into Thera, to bring it down from the inside. Show the players the good side of Thera and draw them into a sense of complacency. Other ideas once they are in Thera include: playing them against a group Barsavian NPCs, enticing a single member of the group to turn away from his friends in some way, or forcing them into slavery to lead their own revolt.

Famous Words

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