

The World of Aclia

A book of lore by Fredrick the Chronicler

Introduction

Greetings, I am Fredrick the Chronicler, the chief scholar of the Tarian Library. In light of what is about to happen at the human kingdom of Crixaria's Capitol, Sternz, I felt it necessary to go back and read all that I could in hopes of finding out the true cause of the current war, and how it might end. It is time I share with you the knowledge that I believe could shed some light on the state of Aclia. To make things easier for all of us I will use the calendar era system BSS or Before the Siege of Sternz. The reason I am choosing the Siege of Sternz is because that siege will be one of the most important historical and political events in all times. Without further ado let us begin.

Chapter one

Nezdra

15,000 BSS was the time when the Hero of Aclia led the combined force of Elves, Humans, Orcs, and Dwarves against the fearsome Nezdra. For those who may have forgotten about the Nezdra, they were immortal beings who once reigned over the entirety of Aclia and subjugated all men and women of all races to worship them as gods. From the surviving texts of that era, the reign of the Nezdra was not one of peace and prosperity, but rather one of constant fear, hunger, and strife. One can assume that before they were defeated by the Hero of Aclia, there were many rebellions against the Nezdra, probably too many to count, but each time, the Nezdra totally annihilated the attackers.

Unfortunately, we are not sure what the Nezdra looked like. No records that have survived shed any knowledge on that.

There are two beings that will almost always be found within a book or text regarding the Nezdra. The leader of the Nezdra was known only as The First. I assume that means that he or she was the first Nezdra to come into existence but that raises many more questions, such as how did the Nezdras start, and what was life like before their reign? The other being was named Ucidere. His name was always muttered in fear. The immortal warlord Ucidere led the armies of the Nezdra against any and all opposition, slaughtering anyone who stood in their way. In my opinion I am quite surprised that the Nezdra were defeated. Their dark magic was quite different than the magic found in Aclia today. The magic we have is simple compared to theirs. While the Nezdra were said to reanimate the dead to fight for them, all our mages can do are spells involving lightening, fire, and ice. I have always found magic to be a strange thing. First, only elves are born with magic (not anymore apparently but I will discuss that later). Second, one cannot learn magic, those who have it are born with it, which is extremely rare. I personally wish that there were more surviving texts or records from that time, but 15,000 years is a long time for

such things to get lost or destroyed. I hope one day to be able to learn more about the Nezdra. Perhaps soon one of their ruins will be discovered somewhere, but one can only hope. All we know for certain is that everyone alive feared the Nezdra, but that all changed with the Hero of Aclia.

Chapter Two

Hero of Aclia

Few records exist about the Hero of Aclia but what she did changed the course of Aclia forever. There are statues of her erected all throughout Aclia, some of which probably haven't even been discovered, but even though her name and her race has been lost to the memories of time, her legacy will never die. We don't know how old she was when her rebellion began or even where it started but what we do know is that it was undoubtedly the bloodiest, most ferocious war this world has ever seen. The Hero's rebellion was different than any that had come before, for all the others had failed miserably but hers succeeded. The Nezdra, those immortal fiends, never had a weakness until one day when the Hero of Aclia, wielding a holy flame, became the first person ever to kill a Nezdra. From this I assume, as do most scholars, that the Hero was an elf, but since the statues do not show her ears, some argue that it could have been a human, but not very many believe this. Wielding the holy flame, she united the four races and began The Hero's Rebellion. We don't know exactly how long her rebellion lasted. All of the surviving sources claim different lengths of time, but the general consensus is somewhere between 75 to 100 years. No matter how long it lasted, those had to have been most trying times in her life. The Nezdra somehow were able to blend in among the Hero's forces, I do not know how and no one I have talked to can understand that either. Perhaps it was some other form of dark magic or maybe even some sort of disguise. No matter how they did it, to live not knowing if the person next to you was a Nezdra or not must have been utterly terrifying. That is why I think the Hero was said to be extremely cruel and that at any sign of deceit, she would execute them on the spot. No trial or words of self-defense, just a swift and unsuspected death. After years of war and countless friends' deaths, the Hero and her army were at the final battle against the Nezdra. Both sides gathered all their forces, Ucidere and the Nezdra on one side with the Hero of Aclia and the army of the living on the other. Some of the texts state that the battle was one sided and that the Hero and her army annihilated the Nezdra but others indicated that neither side had the advantage and that the battle could have ended with a victory for the Nezdra just as easily as the Hero. I believe the latter was the more likely due to the sheer severity of the rebellion. There is no telling how many died that day. After the rebellion was over, for unknown reasons the different races went their own ways. The humans to far off forests of the west, the orcs settled in the harsh deserts of the Eacru Wastes of the north, the dwarves hid away in the unforgiving mountains in the south, and finally the elves to the lush land of the east. We assume differences happened that caused all the races to settle in different lands but we are not sure.

Back to the racial identity of the Hero, I believe that she was indeed an elf. Not just because of her magic but because when the four races separated she went with the elves. For a time, it is said that the Hero was the ruler over the elves, helping to lay the foundations of the great Elven Empire of today, but then she disappeared. Regarding her death there are several different

theories as to what exactly happened to her. There are no records of her death or even a funeral in her memory. Around 14,500 BSS she ceased appearing in the records as a present figure. After that point all the surviving records speak of her in the past tense. Some of the many theories about her end are that maybe she couldn't let go of the past and continued to be the harsh leader she was and after years of suffering under the Nezdra some of her followers secretly assassinated her. Other theorists suggest that she simply died of old age in her sleep one night. I personally believe that she must have been haunted by the rebellion and simply left one day to live out the rest of her days in peace, which would explain why she just disappeared. Regardless, her influence remains strong today especially among the Elves.

Chapter Three

The Elves of Arium

The Elves are without a doubt the most powerful on the continent of Arium. Many here in Tarium would say that we are but this is untrue, and call me a blasphemer, but the truth is the truth. They live the longest out of all the races; their resources are more plentiful and exotic, and their civilization is the oldest and most powerful. Granted, it was not always so. At 14,500 BSS right after the Hero of Aclia disappeared, it was total chaos. Without the leadership of the Hero, her Elven generals began to fight amongst themselves to gain power. It wasn't until 10,378 BSS that the elves were reunited by the first Elven Empress, Quenette Ophidian. Finally reunited, the elves under her rule and the Elven Empire has since been ruled by the eldest female Ophidian child, currently Juliana Ophidian. Quenette's rise to power was a quick and very successful one. One summer's evening her mother took her for a peaceful stroll in woods. At this time in Quenette's life she was said to still be an infant and unable to walk or talk. During the walk Quenette and her mother were set upon by rabid wolves and the wolves killed her mother and were about to pounce, until a single albino cobra came to the young baby's aide. For the rest of the night the cobra fended off the wolves until a group of Elven hunters came upon the scene. As the hunters tried to reach for the infant, the albino cobra refused to let them take the baby without taking it as well. So they took the albino cobra and named it Colubra. You might be wondering why they wouldn't just kill the cobra and take the baby, but infant Quenette and the Hero of Aclia now shared something in common. Though we do not know exactly how but at some point before the Hero's Rebellion she was surround by a white serpent. We don't know if that was literal or figurative but when the hunters found baby Quenette and saw the similar scene, they believed that the cobra was the reincarnation of the Hero and that she was choosing her new successor. So when the word spread that Quenette was guided by the reincarnated Hero in the form of an albino cobra many of the waring elves quickly joined her and before you knew it, the Elves were reunited and ever since have been the dominant race on all of Aclia. And why wouldn't they be? They can live to be over 1,000 years old. The country of Arium is the most beautiful. Countless waterfalls, lush vibrant jungles, soft rolling hills scattered with enumerable cherry blossom trees. They are also master engineers and architects who can build stronger structures at a faster rate than any other race. Their military is the envy of all the races. In our empire's existence we have never lost a single war. But to be honest their forces have been

stretched thin lately and even if no one says it, I bet they can all feel the anxiety as the news coming from the battlefield against the dwarves has been negative for them for quite some time.

Chapter Four

The Dwarves of Schelmar

The Dwarves, where to start with them. Despite their short stature, the Dwarves are a hardy and resilient people that have been a constant thorn in the elves' sides. They have always been a cautious and hot headed people. While elves, orcs, and humans are relatively the same height, the dwarves themselves struggle to even reach five feet tall. The mighty Dwarven Kingdom is the second oldest kingdom, followed by the elves. Currently they are ruled by The Crowned King, Gothvar Mortaim, a savage man who hates all elves with a passion. 154 BSS the Dwarves massacred a group of Elven missionaries trying to spread the Elven religion to them. That event started the war that continues to this day between them. The Elven Empress, Juliana Ophidian, sent an emissary to seek reparations for the massacre. When the only reply received was the emissary's head in a basket, everyone knew what kind of war would be fought, a war with no mercy until only one side was left. During the past 154 years, we have learned much more about the Dwarves than we could have ever imagined. In the past, gaining information about them has been quite difficult due to the fact that their cities are either in a mountain or on top of a mountain, they do like their mountains. Each Elven victory has allowed us to delve a little deeper into their inner workings, which has proven both as much beneficial as well as intriguing. We know that the average Dwarven citizen is against this war and that there may be a civil war very soon to try and overthrow The Crowned King, a war that would harm the Dwarven Kingdom far worse than the current war with the Elves. The terrain of Schelmar is very unforgiving, few outsiders can navigate their cramped mountain passes, making it hard for them to get food to many of their people, leaving many Dwarven families starving and clamoring for change. Out of all the races, the Dwarves have the smallest population with around 30 million of them. If the dwarven civil war never happens, the war could last for another 100 years or more. Since the Dwarven Kingdom covers the southern half of Aclia, and since they have the smallest population, a war in which The Elves have to dig deeper and deeper into their territory would be an extremely costly and long war. This I believe is why they have never been invaded by anyone. Since the dwarves united in 8826 BSS they have been slowly expanding themselves. Not territorial wise but militarily as well as financially. However since their shift in politics, it has slightly declined. From 8826 BSS to 2002 BSS the dwarves were a republic, electing what they call the Crowned King for a single term of 20 years. But after centuries of scandals and poor choices by the Dwarven people, a state of martial law was enacted by the Crowned King, Balgain Hrund, who was then succeeded by his favorite general, Nalzim Woller, then to his son Vardoc Woller, and now finally to Gothvar Mortaim. Due to the dwarves living an average of 750 years, that gives both the Dwarven and Elven races plenty of time to hold grudges against each other. The Dwarves however are not the only threat the Elves of Arium have to deal with. On their western border lies a savage and brutal race, the orcs.

Chapter Five

The Orcish Tribes of the Eacru Wastes

The countless orcs of the Eacru Wastes, what they lack in structure they more than make up for with brute strength. Never have the Orcs unified or had any kind of structured government. We are not even certain of the size of their population. The orcs are scattered all over the harsh deserts and due to their migratory nature, as well as the orc blood mongers to the north, our best guess is that they number somewhere between 35 and 40 million but no one really knows for sure. The northern half of the Eacru Wastes have never, and I doubt will ever, be explored and detailed. The entire border between the Eacru Wastes and the North lies a stretch of severed skulls and heads. The blood Monger orcs are more beast than anything else. They raid their fellow orcs as well as any travelers they see. No one who has ever entered their lands has returned. I don't think anyone has ever even been able to speak to a blood monger. The blood mongers, who definitely number in the millions, are an unknown sect of orcs who worship the orc god of death Raz ma-dal. We assume that the majority of the orcs are indeed living and feuding with themselves in the Eacru Wastes but once again that fact is hard to be sure of when dealing with the orcs. If only they would stay in one place at a time, they would be easier to study, but they keep moving all around the Wastes. The orc tribes scour the desert until they find a water source and when that dries up, they move on to the next one. Occasionally two rival tribes will encounter each other and a devastating skirmish happens that leaves only one tribe left alive.

I said that the orcs have never unified but that is only partially true. At 483 BSS an orc by the name of Xarul Sev united several million orcs under his command and threatened to destroy all elves, which to me is the only reason he was able to gather that many, and promised that within ten years all elves would be exterminated. Just a side note while we are here. by this point in time you must be recognizing a pattern, everyone hates the Elves.

Xarul Sev gathered his horde and he could have done quite a bit of damage, possibly even beaten the elves, but he was assassinated before any fighting broke out and as soon as he died, his horde scattered back to the desert. Since orcs usually only live to be around 150 years old, most of them probably don't even remember who Xarul Sez was. Quite honestly, I don't think the orcs will ever again get close to Xarul Sez's horde. They bicker amongst themselves too much and don't have the resources to ever mount a full scale war.

Chapter Six

The Human Kingdoms

We humans still haven't figured out how to unify as one. At least the orcs are unified in their tribal ways, we humans don't even have a common identity and are just as likely to fight each other as much as another race. With around 35 million people we have four unique countries, none of which are even ruled the same. I live here on the Isle of Tarium, home to the Church of The One and keepers of the faith. It has always been our responsibility to keep the faith and make sure the rest of the kingdoms do so as well even when it has meant war. The Isle of Tarium

is probably the most powerful of the human kingdoms with our rich hills and isolated nature. Tarium is ruled by the Vicar, an elected high priest who is the head of the church and the country. Despite being human, Tarium has one of the most respected militaries in Aclia.

Tarium has a reputation for taking religion to the utmost extreme, depending on how fanatical our current Vicar is. There are records about them killing people for just threatening to leave the faith. At the human southern border is the small country of Vetin. Vetin has a short history compared to everyone else. At 307 BSS a small war broke out between some of the humans and the dwarves that lasted for only five months and after a quick land grab, a peace treaty was signed. Since then tensions between the country of Vetin and the Dwarves have always been high with both factions constantly trying to provoke the other. The country of Vetin is not known for their strong military, they rely more on smaller, more nimble units to scout and cause chaos behind enemy lines. I have also heard that Vetin has the best light cavalry, surprising because of their mountainous terrain. Vetin is a human republic that elects a new ruler every five years from the heads of three different political parties. It is a confusing and corrupt process so we will just move right along to Xanica.

On the east side of the human kingdoms lies Xanica, a small heavily forested country that was once a bright and beautiful land with countless stories about their knights performing heroic and impossible acts. But now Xanica is totally under Elven control. A small resistance movement was started but it hasn't been very successful. In the winter of 15 BSS the Elves surprised the human kingdoms at the start of what has become to be known as The Elven Crusade. Not much is really left to explain about Xanica besides that the royal family and all Knight of Xanica have been completely eradicated. The Elves now use it as their own staging ground for the present war against Crixaria, but I will go into further detail on the war later.

Finally we come to the last of the human kingdoms and without a doubt the most stubborn group of human people alive, stubborn but loyal. Crixaria is the largest of the human kingdoms and is ruled by King Dylenn Allister. The Allister family has ruled Crixaria for centuries and have developed a reputation for being quite loyal to their own. Littered with untold numbers of farms and quarries, Crixaria has had the luck to be located with enough resources to continue the war with the elves, but they are losing. The siege of Sternz will either be the turning point for Crixaria, or the end of them. To think all this started because one girl was born with magic, a human girl, Princess Kaia Allister.

Chapter Seven

Magic

I used to somewhat understand how magic worked but that understanding has disappeared as of late. Since the beginning of recorded time, elves were the only race with the ability to use it, but as I stated earlier, not anymore. The magic here on Aclia is simple to explain. Magic is not something that any elf can learn, you have to be born with it. Those who are born with it can trace their heritage back to an ancestor that could also use magic, so our scholars and historians say that the first of the elves must have had magic and over the centuries their blood has been deluded and spread amongst their people. The three kinds of magic that I mentioned earlier;

lightening, ice, and fire, are the only ones that any elf can cast. To my knowledge the way that magic works for them is somewhat the same as exercise would be to most people. I have heard about a mage that tried try to cast magic that was too powerful for her and she died of exhaustion. The top seven mages are awarded a seat on the high council and are the Elven Empress's chief advisors on almost everything, since mages double as their priestesses and priests. The Elven Royalty has always put a heavy emphasis on religion and that is without a doubt why the current conflict between humans and elves is occurring. There wasn't even a diplomatic course of action considered when Princess Kaia Allister was revealed to have magic. At 23 BSS, Queen Alezzia gave birth to a baby girl, Kaia. Kaia was the first non-elf to be born with the ability to use magic. At first the humans tried to hide Kaia's abilities but at 16 BSS a traveling Elven merchant witnessed her accidentally demonstrate her abilities and since then, there has been war. Those in Crixaria claim her magic as a gift from The One, while the Elves call her an abomination. It's humorous, baffling, and terrifying how religion works.

Chapter Eight

Religions of Aclia

Some people would say that love and fear are the strongest driving forces in the world. I would say religion takes that title. What a person chooses to believe in defines their entire life, it defines what happens to them when they pass from this world. The Elves worship Colubra, the cobra deity that saved the first Elven Empress Quenette Ophidian. As Quenette grew older it is said that Colubra spoke to her and gave her the five commandments that must be kept at all costs. First, as long as Elves are the dominant race on Aclia the world will not succumb to darkness. Second, quell any and all threats to Elven dominance both domestic and foreign. Third, those who are from a magic wielding bloodline must never taint the memory of their ancestors by laying with a non elf. Fourth, as long as an Ophidian holds the throne they must have a descendant of Colubra, an albino cobra, alongside them for both protection as well as divine guidance. Lastly, keep the name and commandments of Colubra sacred and when you die your soul will ascend to be with Colubra for eternity in the never ending plains filled with more happiness than imaginable. That might provide a better understanding of why The Elves are at war with the humans of Crixaria.

Explaining the Dwarven religion is an easy task. Why? Because they do not have one. They do not believe in a god of any sort or of an afterlife. All they care about is having large and healthy families, a goal they think cannot be done by trading or even talking to the other races, they think that would make their offspring weak.

The Orcs worship five gods; Zulga the god of fire and love, Bugak the god of earth and harvest, Sodar the god of air and wealth, Ragas the god of water and peace, and Raz Ma-dal the god of war and death. It's hard to explain the Orc beliefs because they change depending on the tribe. Each orc tribe has a shaman that preaches whatever they want to spur on their tribe in the direction they deem appropriate. For example, if they worship Zulga the god of fire and love that tribe will generally be quite passionate and have many offspring, while a tribe that worships Bugak the god of earth and harvest will preach about finding fertile land and trying to grow

crops. From what we know of the orc tribes, the two most popular gods are Raz Ma-dal and Zulga. I believe this is because they are the easiest to follow. The blood mongers on the northern half of the Eacru Wastes are the main followers of Raz Ma-dal and that would explain why they raid and kill anyone they meet to appease their god. Zulga is followed because it is much easier to find fire and love in a desert than it is to find harvest, wealth, and water. To my knowledge no tribe worships more than one god and this is because when an orc dies they believe they will go to a realm that is similar to their god. Such as a followers of Raz Ma-dal will fight and kill for eternity and a follower of Bugak will eat at an undying feast and so on and so forth.

The humans worship a god we call The One. The One is a loving god that wants to take care of and love the humans. The main symbol of The One is the sun and that influence shows up all around Tarium. The most religious of the human kingdoms, Tarium is where all religious matters get discussed and finalized. Tarians hate any non-human and will generally try to kill anyone who does not follow The One. Crixaria, Vetin, and Xanica are known to be more welcoming to different ways of life and outsiders. In the human religion one of two things happens when you die, your soul either goes to Idyll or Stypor. Idyll is said to be a realm of eternal happiness for the true believers where you are reunited with your family while Stypor is the punishment for all those who do not truly believe. It is said that those whose soul goes to Stypor face an eternity of conscience nothingness. It's very difficult to discern what actually dictates a true believer in The One. This is because The Church of The One has deluded our teachings and ways so much that it seems as if a human has to worship the church more than their god to be saved.

Chapter Nine

The Elven Crusade

Now that you have a bit of context on the world of Aclia I shall sum up the vents that have led us to this point in time. The last report we received was that Imperator Leontina, the most famous Elven general, was about to cross the Sterling River in Crixaria, only a few day's march from their capitol at Sternz. The Siege of Sternz will finally put an end to the war once and for all. As mentioned before, Princess Kaia Allister is a human princess that was born 23 BSS and is the first non-elf to ever be born with the ability to use magic. Her family tried to keep it a secret but in 16 BSS, the elves found out. It didn't take long for Empress Juliana to begin preparations for war, but in total secrecy. Within a month they had already sent the first army into the Eacru wastes and they were expected to reach Xanica in six months. The elves knew that Xanica would not allow a large army of elves to pass through their borders to just attack a fellow human kingdom. So Elven strategists came up with a solution to that problem. Since Xanica was the most peaceful out of the human kingdoms, their army would completely take over Xanica in a matter of weeks before then moving on to Crixaria to kill Kaia Allister. So in the winter of 15 BSS, an army of 50,000 completely took the small Xanican army by surprise, eliminated the Xanican royal family, killed all their Knights, and began to quell any remnants of their military. In only three weeks Xanica was completely under Elven control. The war against Crixaria itself has not gone as quickly as the elves had hoped. What they thought to only take four months at the most has turned into 15 years. The Elves have sent a total of seven armies into Crixaria, each gaining more and more ground against the humans, but not enough to break through to their

capitol until now. The first seven armies numbered around 100,000 each and were led by new, fresh Imperators. But this time is different. The elves greatest Imperator, Leontina, leads the largest non-defensive Elven army ever created, numbering over 220,000 strong. Even the Elven Prince, Domatin Ophidian, marches with them, which is unusual since the last time he went to human lands was at the beginning of the Xanica campaign, which raises curiosity as to why he travels with them now.

Over the past 15 years the Elven Imperators have struggled to counter Crixaria's heavy cavalry but now, if reports are correct, the last Crixarian general, General Izak, wants to take a more cautious approach and use Sternz's walls to protect them. At the start of the Elven Crusade, Crixaria had four generals, now they only have one, and we know that General Izak was the most cautious of them all, which explains why he is the last one left. We guess that there will be less than 100,000 soldiers at Sternz and that includes the volunteers they will have from the other human factions. For the most part Crixaria has been on its own these past 15 years. They have received the most help from the remnants of Xanica's army while the other two human countries have practically done nothing. The former Vicar of Tarium didn't want to lose his precious trade agreement with the elves, which filled his pockets with unimaginable wealth, but since his death one year ago, the new Vicar has been making preparations for a full scale war with the elves that could last as long as a decade before an end is met. Vetin has given Crixaria the least amount of help due to their political system being utterly useless and so complicated that a singular decision can never be made. No matter what happens, this siege will never be forgotten.