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❧ GETTING ❧

STARTED

The Age of Legend is an era of magic that existed thousands of years ago in our world's dim past. Magic touched every aspect of the lives of men and women of the Namegiver races: humans, elves, dwarves, orks, trolls, windlings, t'skrang, and obsidimen. However, as the levels of magic rose, so did the dangers in the world. The rise of magic brought Horrors to Earth, creatures from the depths of astral space that devoured all life in their path. For four centuries, the people of Barsaive hid underground as the Horrors devastated their lands during the dark time that came to be called the Scourge.

Now, the people of Barsaive have emerged from their sealed kaers and citadels, ready to fight for life and freedom against the remaining Horrors and the oppressive Theran Empire. From all across Barsaive, bold heroes step forward to champion their land, arming themselves for their daunting task with powerful magical spells and treasures. Through magic, skill, and daring, Barsaive's heroes strive to heal the world of the scars left by the Scourge. In so doing, they become Barsaive's living legends.



The Age of Legend is a roleplaying game of action, adventure, and fun—a game of grand proportions and elegant simplicity. This storygame is based on the FU game engine by Nathan Russell. The rules in this book let you create exciting stories in the world of **Earthdawn**, with a minimum of fuss and preparation.

What you will find in **The Age of Legend** is first and foremost an easy game. It is intended as a lightweight alternative to **Earthdawn's** own **Step System** (which has been around in various editions since 1992). Setting and character creation in **The Age of Legend** is fairly quick and intuitive, allowing you to play powerful adepts in this ancient era of heroes, and the game system itself is easy to learn and very simple to use.

We've tried to capture the essentials of the **Earthdawn** experience, and re-configured, adapted, and expanded the FU ruleset to provide you with a simple, story-oriented game system. This book contains everything you need to play, including an introduction to the world of **Earthdawn**. However, this book was designed with the rich setting material published for **Earthdawn** in mind, so knowing more about the world is bound to add more depth to your games. You can use any of the published **Earthdawn** books, regardless of edition and year of release, with these rules. Check out the **Appendix** on p.333 for an overview of all major releases for **Earthdawn** to date.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK



This book comes in three parts. The first part discusses the setting background and core mechanics used to run the game—the information that tells you how to play. Starting off with **An Earthdawn Primer** (p.12), you get a basic overview of the game world. **Traits** (p.27) discusses the basic building blocks player characters are made of, **Beating the Odds** (p.41) describes how to roll and interpret the dice, and **Running the Game** (p.53) discusses how you set a scene as well as providing advice and guidelines for the gamemaster.

The second part of the book contains everything you need to create your own characters, the places they will frequently visit, and the people they will meet.

The **Setting the Stage** chapter (p.67) gets everyone started building the main environment you will be playing in, while **Character Creation** (p.87) shows you how to build the actual heroes of the game. The **Disciplines** (p.99), **Talents** (p.132), **Spells** (p.199), and **Equipment** (p.252) chapters contain additional information you need to reference when building your characters and settings for them. Finally, **Experience & Advancement** (p.268) provides a simple framework to improve your characters over the course of several adventures.

The last part of the book provides rules and game statistics for vehicles and the opposition, mainly in the **Airships & Riverboats** (p.274) and **Creatures & Adversaries** (p.287) chapters. **Passions & Questors** (p.313) details the twelve Passions worshipped by the people of Barsaive, and adds options for player characters wanting to become questors. The **Appendix** (p.328) holds information on **Earthdawn** background material you can use with this game. You can find the various sheets for your games (including the **Setting the Stage** and **Character Sheets**) online at earthdawn.com.

HOW THE GAME WORKS

The **Age of Legend** uses your collective imaginations to power the game—you and your friends are going to work together to tell a dramatic, exciting story. You will establish parts of the setting, and everyone will have a chance to influence that world. Play is a kind of conversation, where everyone works together to put the characters in cool and entertaining situations. Then you will use the dice to help work out what happens next. Sometimes you will all be working together, throwing ideas around, suggesting things, and brainstorming. It may be chaotic, but hopefully productive and fun. At other times you are going to take turns to describe what your characters are doing and see how that works out.

If everyone gets it right, no TV show, gaming console, or computer game can top the experience of a roleplaying game.

Most **Earthdawn** games aren't supposed to be over when everyone stops playing for the night and heads home: the game is played in **sessions**, and it can take

EARTHDAWN VETERANS

The **Earthdawn** setting and its proprietary Step System are very closely intertwined, so providing an alternative system is bound to raise some questions among those who have played **Earthdawn** before. We're glad you're willing to give these rules a try, but keep in mind that they simplify a lot of things.

The Age of Legend was designed for those who want a simple and story-oriented game system. The Step System is quite sophisticated and requires much preparation and knowledge to run. Many people shy away from kind of effort, and desire to run a game of Earthdawn with little or no preparation.

The Age of Legend is ideal for one-shots and very short campaigns, suitable for conventions and even for introducing kids to the hobby. **Earthdawn: The Age of Legend** features a Discipline Advancement system, allowing you to play campaigns at different power levels.

several of them to complete a single story. Unless the last session was really lame, people will want to come back and continue to play. There's no winner or loser either. The point of this game is that it's not about winning; it's about telling a story and having fun along the way. With most people, it works.

You should already be aware of the two types of participants in **The Age of Legend** the players and the gamemaster. Here are some more details:

The Players

That's you and your friends. You control fictionalized characters that exist in the game world described by the gamemaster. A character may just seem to consist of a lot of numbers and buzzwords when seen on paper, but you are supposed to bring him to life by verbally acting out his role and making him take action over

the course of the game. Together in the group, you resolve the situations that arise during the game. In a sense, your characters are much like those in a computer game—except that you have absolute control over their actions and infinite options in the game world created in your imagination.

Ultimately, the game is about your characters—they are supposed to be the heroes of the story developing in the game. If the game was a modern-day TV series, they would be the main cast of the show, and the story would be about them, their motivations, goals, faults, and successes. Because of this, both the gamemaster and the players must work together to make those characters shine.

Sometimes, it will seem like your sole purpose is to completely wreck the game by foiling the gamemaster's plans. Don't worry; it's your job to keep him on his toes. The tension that arises between the "main cast" of the story taking action and the limited ability of the gamemaster to foresee what choices will be made is where the real excitement of **Earthdawn** lives!

THE GAMING GROUP

The game works by everyone trying to be civil and to interact with one another. Many decisions are usually the result of a group consensus, but the gamemaster gets to make judgment calls when necessary. What this means is that he is the final authority when the group cannot agree easily, to make sure the game doesn't get bogged down. While this might lead to discussions in your gaming group, it ultimately allows customizing the game to the group and should help everyone enjoy the gaming experience even more.

The rules assume your group can come to a consensus fast and easy—if that is not the case, then more power to the gamemaster! The trick is to find the right balance where everyone is comfortable with the play speed and the decisions made.

The Gamemaster

The world of **Earthdawn** is packed with opportunities to create new and interesting stories. The person creating the situations, story elements, and characters the players face is the gamemaster. He's a moderator, serving as a referee and final judge on what can and can't be done within the scope of the game mechanics. It's the gamemaster's job to control everything in the game world except the player characters and how the story is resolved. That said, the story is created by the actions of the player characters, not by the gamemaster. There's a fine line between plot and the story resulting from it.

The rules in this book leave a lot of room for interpretation; hard rules are only found where they are absolutely needed. This is the big advantage a game like **The Age of Legend** has over a hard-coded computer game: humans can bend the rules and interpret them one way or another to suit their personal tastes. The gamemaster is in charge of doing that, which often puts him at the center of attention. It takes a lot of effort and planning to be a good gamemaster, but the prestige that comes from doing it well can be awesome.

In other words: As gamemaster, you'll get to create situations and story elements the player characters face. The one thing you're not allowed to control is how the story is resolved. This lies entirely in the hands of the player characters.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

This game doesn't require hand-eye coordination, the latest hardware, or anything like that. What it does require are those archaic devices called **pencil and paper**. You'll also need a bunch of standard **six-sided dice** to throw around (preferably in different colors). A set of **Fudge Dice** (special six-sided dice featuring + and ☐ symbols) is recommended, but not required to play this game. Copies of the **Setting Worksheet** and **Character Sheets** will also be useful.

You can also download form-fillable and printable copies at earthdawn.com.

It is a good idea to read through this book before starting to play☐ to get familiar with the game mechanics. Only the gamemaster is actually required to do this, but the game works better if the players know their way around the rules, too. **The Age of Legend** was written with the assumption that at least the gamemaster is