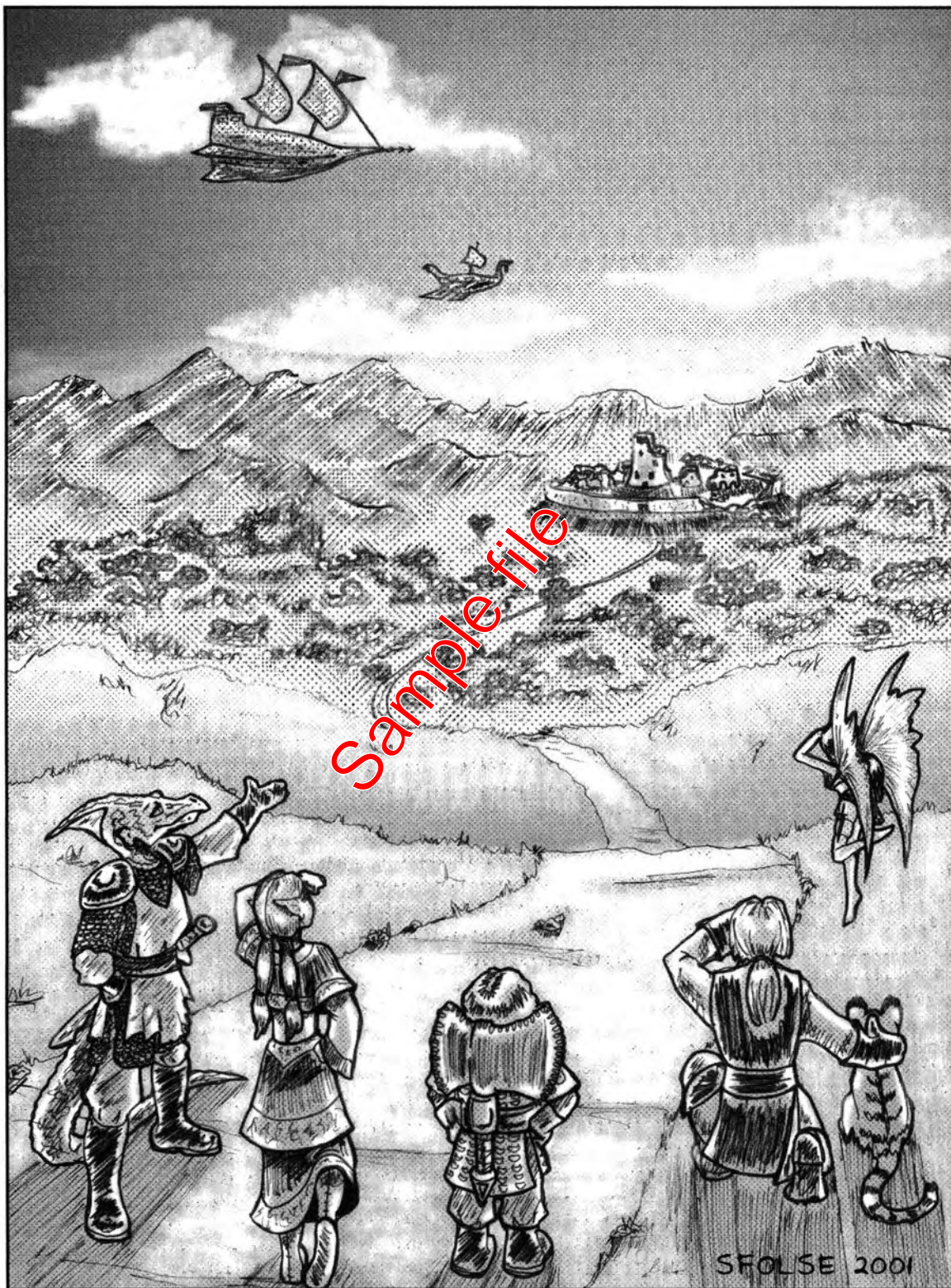


EARTHDAWN COMPANION



SECOND EDITION

LIVING ROOM GAMES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5	Ritual Magic	78
Character Power	6	Ritual Magic Basics	78
Gamemaster Responsibility	6	Ritual Spell Magic	78
DISCIPLINES	7	Ritual Thread Magic	79
New Characteristics	8	Optional Half-Magic Rules	79
Bonuses	8	Making Half-Magic Tests	79
Discipline Abilities	8	Special Uses of Half-Magic	79
Karma Bonus	8	Optional Talent Crisis Rules	79
Discipline Descriptions	8	Deeds of Atonement	80
Air Sailor	9	Optional Raw Magic Rules	80
Archer	10	Optional Effects of Warping	80
Beastmaster	11	Raw Magic and Horror-Marks	80
Cavalryman	12	Magicians and Grimoires	80
Elementalist	13	Divination	81
Illusionist	14	Bibliomancy	81
Nethermancer	15	Bone Casting	81
Scout	16	Element Reading	81
Sky Raider	17	Metal Reading	81
Swordmaster	18	Visions	81
Thief	19	Fate and Destiny in Earthdawn	82
Troubadour	20	The Passions and Magic	82
Warrior	21	ASTRAL SPACE	83
Weaponsmith	22	Defining Astral Space	84
Wizard	23	Astral and Physical Forms	84
TALENTS	24	Geography of Astral Space	86
Conflicting Talent Effects	25	Astral Sensing	86
Earthdawn Talents	26	Using Astral Sensing	86
Special Talents	24	Astral Sensing Methods	87
Attribute Pattern	24	Exploring Astral Space	90
Leadership	44	Entering Astral Space	90
Talent Pattern	44	Travel in Astral Space	91
TALENT KNACKS	45	Astral Regions	91
Learning Talent Knacks	46	Name-Givers in Astral Space	92
Using Talent Knacks	46	Spells in Astral Space	93
Creating Talent Knacks (Optional Rule)	46	Astral Denizens	93
Talent Knack Descriptions	47	Spirits	93
MAGIC ITEMS	60	Horrors	94
Thread Items	61	Other Astral Denizens	95
Learning Key Knowledge	61	An Astral Space Gazetteer	95
Creating Magical Treasure	61	Named Astral Locations	95
Thread Weapons	62	The Netherwolds	95
Thread Armor and Shields	65	Elemental Planes	97
Thread Objects	67	Plane of Air	98
Common Magic Items	72	Plane of Earth	98
Price List	73	Plane of Fire	98
ADVANCED MAGIC USE	74	Plane of Water	98
Multi-Discipline Spells	75	Plane of Wood	98
Spell Matrices and Multi-Discipline Magicians	75	SUMMONING	99
Humans, Versatility and Spellcasting	75	Summoning Spirits	100
Named Spells	75	Summoning by Spell	101
Casting Permanent Named Spells	76	Summoning by Talent	101
High-Circle Spells	76	Summoning by Willforce	102
Spell Matrix Objects	77	Summoning by Half-Magic	102
Using Spell Matrix Objects	77	Blood Magic and Summoning	102



Ritual Summoning	102	Key Knowledges of Group Pattern Items	125
Summoning Tests	103	Weaving Threads to Group True Patterns	125
Spirits	104	Spending Legend Points	125
The Spirit's Form	104	Weaving Threads	125
Spirit Services	104	Death Magic	126
Contest of Wills	104	Raw Magic Filter	126
A Friendlier Approach	104	Karma Boost	126
Repeat Summoning	105	Damage Shift	126
Dangers of Summoning	105	SPELL MAGIC	127
Defining Spirits	105	New Spells	128
Motivations, Attitudes and Personality	105	Spells Above 10th Circle	128
Spirit Strength Ratings	106	Format	128
Spirit Powers	106	Elementalist Spells	128
Tasked Spirits	109	Illusionist Spells	139
Elemental Spirits and Elementals	110	Nethermancer Spells	148
Summoning Elemental Spirits	110	Wizard Spells	161
Elemental Spirits and Names	110	QUESTORS	171
Air Elemental Spirit	110	Becoming a Questor	172
Earth Elemental Spirit	111	The Mad Passions and Outsiders	172
Fire Elemental Spirit	111	Questor Rules	173
Water Elemental Spirit	112	The Questor Talent	173
Wood Elemental Spirit	112	Acts of Devotion	173
Great Form Spirits	113	Failing to Act	174
Ally Spirits	113	Falling Out of Favor	174
Summoning Ally Spirits	113	Questor Powers	174
Ally Spirits and Names	113	Passion Descriptions	175
Strength 1 Ally Spirit	113	Astendar	175
Assigning Ally Spirit Powers	114	Chorrolis	176
Named Spirits	114	Dis (Mad Passion)	178
Types of Named Spirits	114	Floranuus	179
Summoning Named Spirits	114	Garlen	180
Controlling a Named Spirit	115	Jaspree	181
Familiars	115	Lochost	182
Acquiring Familiars	115	Mynbruje	183
Familiar Experience	115	Raggok (Mad Passion)	184
Familiar Benefits	116	Thystonius	185
BLOOD MAGIC	117	Upandal	186
History	118	Vestrial (Mad Passion)	187
The Dissemination	118	LARGE SCALE COMBAT	188
Research	118	Ship Attributes	189
Protection	118	Speed	189
Types of Blood Magic	119	Maneuverability	189
Nature and Uses of Blood Magic	119	Firepower	189
Gamemaster Considerations	119	Hull	189
Powering Talents, Spells, and Knacks	120	Damage	189
Powering Blood Charms and Living Armor	120	Crew	190
Ritual Blood Magic	120	Ship Travel, Speed, and Hazards	190
Pushing Talents and Abilities	120	Riverboats	190
Blood Oaths	120	Airships	191
Blood Oath Wounds	121	Ship-to-Ship Combat	192
Blood Peace	121	Scale	192
Blood Promise	122	Pursuit and Engagement	192
Blood Sworn	122	Combat	193
Group True Patterns and Thread Magic	123	Declaration	193
Creating a Group True Pattern	123	Initiative	193
Character Death or Separation	125	Resolve Actions	193
Adding New Members	125	Ship Maneuvers	193

Sample file

Using Talents in Ship-to-Ship Combat	195
Grounded Ships	195
Ship Damage	195
Effects of Damage	195
Repairing Damaged Ships	196
Ship Maintenance	197
Ship Descriptions	197
Airships	197
Water Ships	199
Mass Combat	199
Scale	199
Pursuit and Engagement	199
Combat Procedure	199
Maneuvers	200
Unit Types	201
OPTIONAL RULES	202
Optional Rules	203
Combat	203
Movement	203
Damage	204
Damage for Crossbows	204
Special Effects of Damage	204
Damage to Weapons and Armor	205
Character Abilities	206
Skills	206
Obsidian Skin Armor	207
Karma	207
Supporters	207
RITUALS OF ADVANCEMENT	210
STEP / ACTION DICE TABLE	216
CREATURE / CHARACTER LOG SHEET	217
INDEX	219

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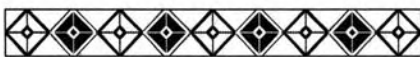
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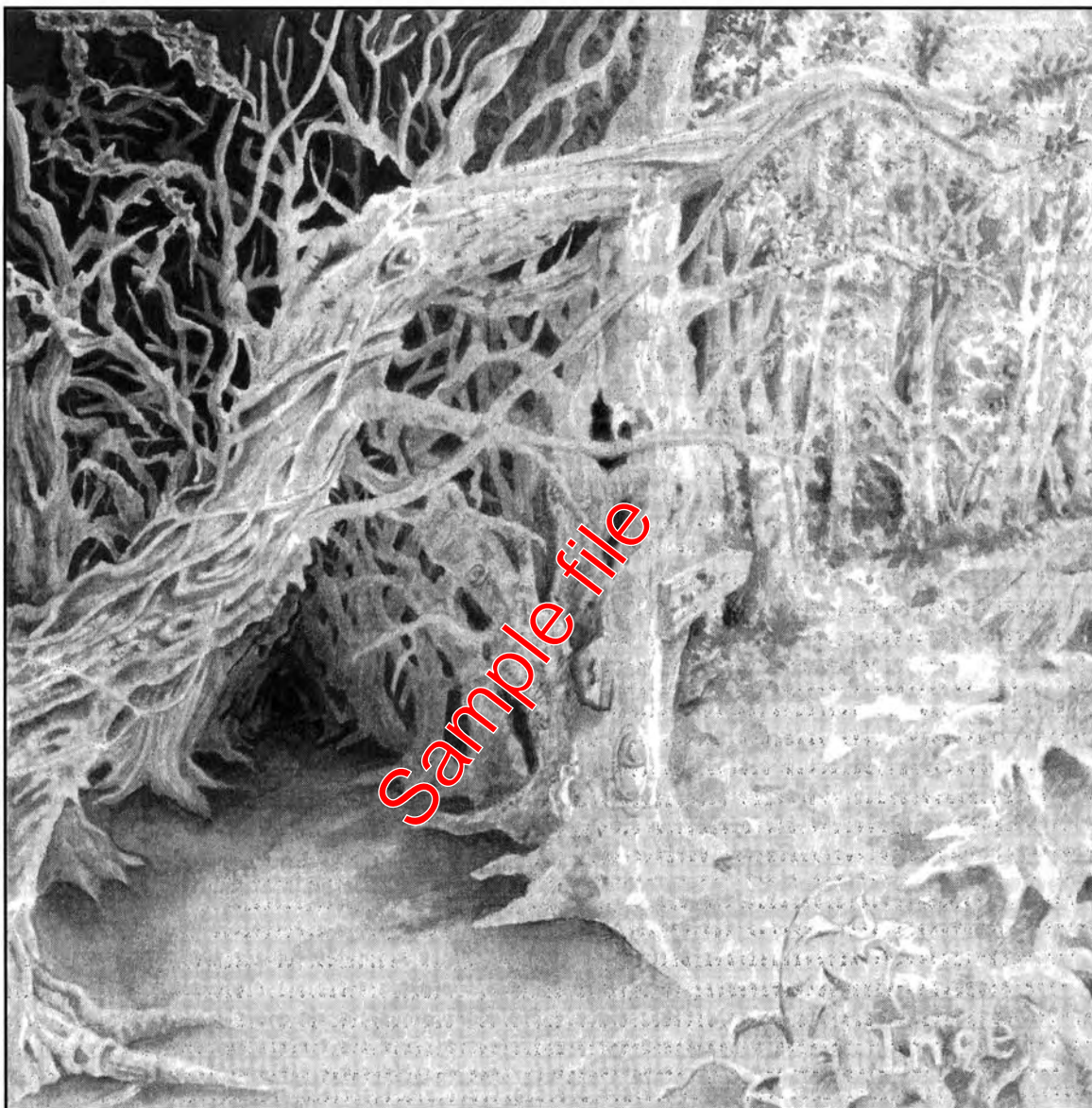
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INTRODUCTION



*Never think that your learning ends.
There is no limit to how far your knowledge can expand and grow.*
— Master wizard Relaan

The **Earthdawn Companion** is a rules expansion for the **Earthdawn** game system. The information in this book allows players and gamemasters to make their characters more powerful. Gamemasters and players will need the **Earthdawn Second Edition (ED2)** rulebook in order to use this book. This book was not, however, designed to be a second edition of the **Earthdawn Companion**. Instead, it is the companion to **Earthdawn Second Edition**. While these two ideas are very similar, it is the differences between them that have shaped the finished product of this book.

This book picks up where the **Earthdawn Second Edition** rulebook ended. The **Companion** expands the 15 Disciplines presented in the ED2 rulebook to 15th Circle and provides talents and spells for those Circles. The **Companion** also provides rules for additional uses of magic in your **Earthdawn** game and describes many new types of magical items. Also included in this book are rules for playing questors, people who have devoted their lives to a single Passion. **Large Scale Combat** gives rules for resolving combat between ships and large groups. Also, **Optional Rules**, offers ways for players and gamemasters to tailor **Earthdawn** to better suit their style of play.

CHARACTER POWER

The world of **Earthdawn** is a dangerous and wondrous place where powerful magic abounds. The information in the **Earthdawn Companion** allows **Earthdawn** characters to reach levels of power unattainable in most fantasy role-playing games. The talents and spells that appear in this book show that as characters advance beyond Tenth Circle, they acquire truly staggering powers and abilities. For example, Illusionists can learn to engulf a specific area in darkness for days at a time, Archers can summon the forces of nature to create a bow composed of wind, and Sky Raiders can call storms to their aid. Questors of the Passions can construct buildings from nothing and cause plants to grow at tremendous rates. Characters of all Disciplines learn to use significant knowledge of people and places to enhance their magical abilities, and to form groups capable of extending individuals' magic beyond known limits. These fabulous powers make it possible for player characters to become, and live up to the name of, Barsaive's next legendary heroes.

GAMEMASTER RESPONSIBILITY

As characters become more powerful, gamemasters face the task of creating adventures difficult enough to challenge the adventurers. The most minor part of this task is creating tough combat situations. The **Earthdawn** rules make it easy for the gamemaster to create or group together sufficient opposing creatures to defeat even the most powerful characters. Some of the creatures in the ED2 rulebook, particularly the dragons and Horrors, are so powerful that it is unlikely that characters of any Circle could defeat them. Verjigorm offers a prime example of a nearly unbeatable monster.

The real challenge in creating adventures for high-Circle characters lies in inventing situations that will challenge the players to use all their characters' abilities in a responsible, creative fashion. That is, the players should feel challenged to use their powers when necessary, but not to abuse them. For example, if the leaders of a small village insult the players' characters, it would be inappropriate for the characters to retaliate by destroying the village, even though they may possess the power to do so.

The responsibility inherent in possessing great power is avoiding the temptation to solve every problem by using that power. If they do not control their powers, the adventurers may become little more than a band of thugs that takes whatever it wants and kills whoever stands in its way. This should not become the characters' standard operating procedure; the world of **Earthdawn** needs heroes to solve its problems and help reclaim its lands, and a group of characters motivated only by expedient self-interest has no place in the grand scheme of things. The gamemaster should encourage the players to solve problems and meet challenges with the minimum force necessary.

This does not mean that the characters should avoid combat. After all, what better way for a hero to earn fame and adulation than to defeat a worthy foe? But if the residents of a small village refuse to cooperate with the adventurers, killing the villagers one by one until they cave in to the adventurers' greater might does not qualify as heroic behavior.

Though powerful characters may feel capable of defeating virtually any opponent they face, other people and groups wielding equivalent power also live in Barsaive. For example, a group of Thirteenth to Fifteenth Circle characters may decide to journey to a Theran-controlled city and rid the area of its oppressors. This may be a completely altruistic action, a sincere effort to help rid Barsaive of the evils of Theran rule. The adventurers may even accomplish their goal. But they would not be able to prevent the Therans from retaliating, and on a grand scale. The Theran Empire could wipe out a group of even the most powerful characters with little effort. A few kilas and vedettes armed with fire cannons, accompanied by a mere thousand troops would reduce the characters to Thirteenth- to Fifteenth-Circle corpses in short order. The Therans may decide simply to ignore the characters and instead decimate a number of small towns, villages, or cities, killing entire populations in payment for the slaughter of their troops. The characters have used their power to create a no-win situation.

Again, if a group of high-Circle characters decided to act against the Elven Court in Blood Wood, they could not predict how Queen Alachia and her Blood Warders would retaliate. Because high-Circle characters possess extraordinary power, the gamemaster must challenge the players to use that power wisely. Gamemasters may find the following suggestions helpful for running campaigns featuring high-Circle characters.

The GM may decide to involve the characters in high-level politics. If they become the leaders of a small city or town in Barsaive, or of one of the cities within Throal, the situation itself would encourage the characters to use their skills to negotiate treaties or trade agreements, rather than for combat. Another type of political adventure could involve the characters being hired by the Kingdom of Throal to travel to Blood Wood to establish trade relations between the elves and Throal.

The gamemaster may manipulate events so that the characters decide to form an organization dedicated to some noble goal, such as ridding the world of the effects of the Scourge. The player characters may also decide voluntarily to devote their efforts to traveling Barsaive in search of Horrors to slay. Again, high-Circle characters may end an adventure or campaign so successfully that their exploits bring them to the attention of the great dragon Icewing, or a council of dragons, who may commission the characters to seek out and destroy Verjigorm, the Hunter of Great Dragons. A pitched battle between Verjigorm and a group of Thirteenth- to Fifteenth-Circle characters and a few great dragons would fuel stories and legends for years to come.