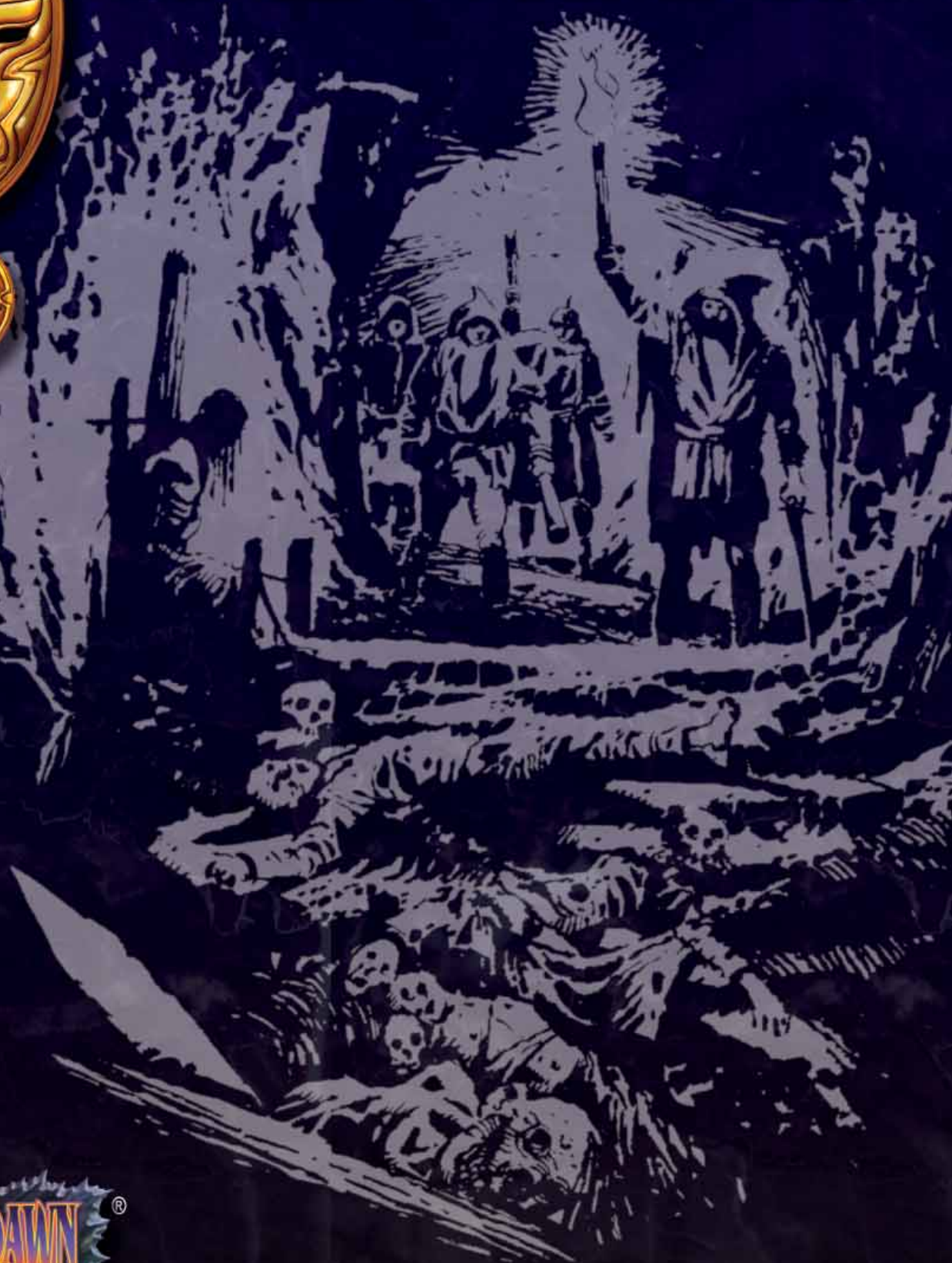


RBL-500

KAER TARDIM



AN INTRODUCTION TO EARTHDAWN

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INTRODUCTION

For hundreds of years we hid deep in the earth like frightened animals, cowering from the storm of evil that raged across the mountains and valleys, across the cities and plains of Barsaive. The storm is over, but the forces of darkness still linger, watching and waiting with an envy and jealousy honed by the passage of eons...

• Jallo Redbeard, Troubadour of Throal •

These pages hold the key to a new world, a world of magic, danger and legend. Welcome to the world of **Earthdawn**. Welcome to the Age of Legend!

Everything you need to play your first adventure in **Earthdawn** is provided in this document: a description of the world of **Earthdawn**, a brief explanation of the rules of the game, descriptions of the characters who take part in the adventure, and a short adventure called **Kaer Tardim**. In this story, a group of four adventurers volunteer to enter the kaer of the village of Tardim to learn how Strathem, the village wizard, was killed, and to rid the kaer of whatever danger lurks within it.

All this allows you to play your first adventure in **Earthdawn** before you decide to purchase the game. This sneak preview offers you a taste of the fantastic **Earthdawn** adventures that await you and your friends.

WHAT IS EARTHDAWN?

Earthdawn is a roleplaying game. Like many other roleplaying games of this type, it was designed to be open-ended. That is, there is no definitive ending to the game, no preset time limit or number of turns of play, and no single goal to reach that indicates the end of the game. The object of the game is to have fun while exercising your imagination. When this happens, everybody wins.

THE AGE OF LEGEND

In an ancient age of magic, heroes re-explore their world, hoping to reclaim it from the devastation wrought by the centuries-long Scourge. At long last emerging from self-imposed imprisonment in underground shelters, humanity must also fight remnants of the Scourge known as the Horrors, creatures from astral space that have ravaged the earth.

At the center of the province of Barsaive lies the dwarven Kingdom of Throal, which has united the peoples of Barsaive since the days of the Scourge. At one time the communities of Barsaive each huddled alone in fear; the dwarves of Throal brought them together by re-establishing trade and commerce throughout the land. Now elves, trolls, orks, and dwarves work together to rebuild the land that is their home.

Far to the southwest of Throal is the great Theran Empire. Before the Scourge, Barsaive was a province

of the Theran Empire, self-governed, but still under its domain. Barsaive declared its independence from Thera at the end of the Scourge, setting a new order against the Empire's rule of slavery and oppression.

This is the setting of **Earthdawn**. The people of Barsaive must fight to reclaim their world from the last vestiges of the Scourge and protect themselves from the flying armada of the Theran Empire, which waits to reconquer the land that it once ruled.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

If you've never roleplayed before, this is the place to start. In addition to this document, each player will need a separate sheet of paper, a pencil or pen, and six different types of dice. These are 4-sided, 6-sided, 8-sided, 10-sided, 12-sided, and 20-sided dice, available at



most game or hobby stores. The game runs faster when each player has his own set of dice, but the players can easily share one set.

THE GAMEMASTER

The first decision your gaming group has to make is who will be the gamemaster. Because you are the one reading this, you will probably be the gamemaster. If you haven't already, you'll need to gather together up to four friends in order to play this adventure. Let them all read this document, so that they learn the rules and understand a little about the world of **Earthdawn**. Don't let the players read the **Kaer Tardim** section though; that would spoil the game for them.

THE PLAYERS

Once you've decided on the gamemaster, the other players choose from the introductory characters included in this document.

It doesn't matter which character each player chooses, because they each play an important role. Each player also needs the character's game statistics, so that he or she can refer to them during the game.

The players can copy the character's statistics onto a separate piece of paper; if they have extra copies of the page describing their character, they can simply use that as their character sheet.

Alternatively, the relevant pages of this document can be printed out and used as Character Record Sheets.

OVERVIEW

We've designed this document to make it easier for you to read on a computer. But if you want to print out multiple copies then please go ahead; it's okay by us, just don't go selling it anywhere!

RULES

This chapter gives you a simplified introductory version of the **Earthdawn** rules.

Character Statistics: Describes the basic building blocks of an **Earthdawn** character.

Step Numbers and Action Dice: Explains how a character's Attributes, talents, and skills are measured and how actions are resolved in the game by dice rolls.

Talent and Skill Descriptions: Describes the specific talents and skills used.

Spellcasting: Explains how spellcasting works in **Earthdawn** and describes the specific spells known to the wizard character.

Karma Points: Explains the building blocks for character growth and improvement.

Combat Rules: How actions and dice rolls are resolved.

CHARACTERS

This section introduces you to the four introductory characters who you can use to play, each player chooses one character to play:

- **Thom Hammerblade**, a dwarf Weaponsmith
- **Ardis Foarr**, a human Wizard
- **Me'gana**, an elven Swordmaster
- **Targ Boneslicer**, a troll Sky Raider

PRODUCTS

Once you've taken the rules in this document for a test drive, we hope you'll want to try out the full **Earthdawn** system. **RedBrick Limited** has an exciting program in place to produce and support the **Earthdawn** game line. Details of this can be found on the **Earthdawn** web site:

<http://www.earthdawn.com>



RULES

Hear now, the legend of Tyroc's Sword, a weapon of powerful magic, and ancient history. Tyroc's Sword is that which slew the Horror Kestrai in the earliest days of the Scourge. He who learns the truth behind the legend can unleash all its magics.

• Liandra, Elven Troubadour •

We've streamlined the rules of the game to make it easy for you to get into the world of **Earthdawn**. In order to do so, we had to leave out some of the really neat and unique features of the game. As a result, some elements of game play in this adventure work differently in the full **Earthdawn** rules. We're sure you'll like these quickplay rules enough to want to experience the real thing.

CHARACTER STATISTICS

So what do all those character statistics mean? Most roleplaying games rate characters by their natural physical and mental attributes and any skills or other abilities they have learned. **Earthdawn** rates characters according to three basic types of abilities. These are **Attributes**, **Talents** and **Skills**, and **Characteristics**.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are a character's natural abilities. These represent how strong, smart, willful, charismatic and coordinated he or she is. **Earthdawn** uses six Attribute Values to define a character's natural abilities.

Dexterity

This measures a character's quickness and agility. Dexterity determines how well a character can make and avoid physical attacks in combat.

Strength

This measures a character's physical strength. Strength determines how much a character can lift and carry, as well as how much damage he inflicts in combat.

Toughness

This measures the character's endurance and health. Toughness determines how much damage a character can suffer in combat before falling unconscious or dying.

Perception

This measures a character's mental quickness, alert-

ness, and ability to notice things. Perception determines how well a character can avoid the effects of magical spells.

Willpower

This measures a character's mental strength and force of will. Willpower helps characters to resist damage from magical spells.

Charisma

This measures a character's persuasiveness and ability to create a positive impression on others.

Attributes are rated by two numbers. These are the Attribute Value and the Attribute Step. Attribute Values are measured on a scale from 1 (the lowest possible) to 30 (the highest possible). Most characters have Attribute Values ranging from 9 or 10 to 17 or 18. A character's Attribute Values appear in parentheses next to each Attribute.

Thom Hammerblade has a Dexterity Value of 14, shown on the Character Record Sheet as "Dexterity (14)."

Attribute Steps, determined by the Attribute Value, are also measured on a linear scale. The Step Number/Action Dice Table (see the Step Numbers and Action Dice section) shows the Attribute Values for each Step Number.

On the Character Record Sheet, the Attribute Step is the number to the left of the slash on the line next to each Attribute. The Action Dice corresponding to that Step Number is to the right of the slash in smaller type.

Thom Hammerblade has a Dexterity Step of 6. This is shown on the Character Record Sheet as "Dexterity (14): 6/D10. The D10 shown is the Action Dice rolled for this Step Number.

TALENTS AND SKILLS

Talents and skills are abilities that a character can learn. Talents are magical abilities. These include the ability to cast spells as well as using melee weapons or dodging a blow in combat. Skills are ordinary, mundane



abilities, like artistic or survival skills.

Talents and skills are rated in two ways, much like Attributes: first by Rank and second by Step Number. The Rank of a talent or skill is a measure of how well-trained a character is in that specific area.

Ranks can range from 1 (the lowest possible) to 15 (the highest possible). Most beginning characters will have Ranks ranging from 1 to 3 only. In time, as the character becomes more experienced, he can increase the Ranks of his talents and skills. The Rank of a talent or skill is located in parentheses after each.

Thom Hammerblade has Rank 2 in the Forge Blade talent. This is shown on the Character Record Sheet as "Forge Blade (2)."

The Step Number for talents and skills is the same as for Attributes, except it is usually calculated by adding the Rank of the talent or skill to an Attribute Step. The number to the left of the slash following each talent or skill is the Step Number. The Action Dice to be rolled for this Step Number is shown to the right of the slash in smaller type.

Thom Hammerblade has a Forge Blade Step of 9, based on his Forge Blade Rank of 2 added to his Perception Step of 7 (2+7=9). This is shown on the Character Record Sheet as "Forge Blade (2): 9/D8+D6."

As noted previously, each talent and skill has an Attribute on which it bases its Step Number. These are listed with each talent and skill in the Talent and Skill Descriptions section below.

CHARACTERISTICS

Each character also has a set of Characteristics. These are sets of numbers which describe the character in game terms. That is, they represent exactly how much damage a character can take before dying, how fast he can move, and so on. Characteristics are almost always rated as a single value rather than a Step Number.

Earthdawn uses four groups of characteristics: **Initiative**, **Movement**, **Combat**, and **Damage**.

Initiative

This is the type of dice a player rolls for his character's Initiative Test. Initiative in combat determines which character or creature acts first. See the **Combat Rules** section for more details.

Movement

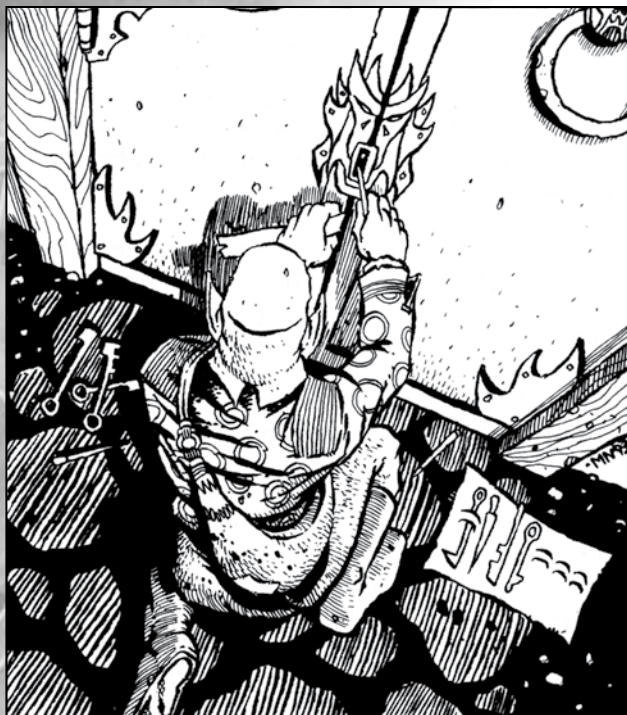
This is how many yards a character can run in one Combat Round.

Combat

Physical Defense: This is a measure of how well your character can avoid getting hit by physical attacks in combat. A character's Dexterity Value determines this number.

Spell Defense: This is a measure of how well your character can avoid being affected by magical attacks. A character's Perception Value determines this number.

Social Defense: This is a measure of how well your



character holds out against social interactions, such as lies or charms. A character's Charisma Value determines this number.

Physical Armor: This is a measure of the amount of armor your character is wearing. Armor protects your character from physical damage in combat. This number is based on the type of armor and shield your character wears.

Mystic Armor: This is a measure of how resistant your character is to magical attacks. Mystic Armor protects your character from magical damage in combat. A character's Willpower Value determines this number. Some special armor and shields may also improve it.

Damage

Death Rating: This is the number of Damage Points it takes to kill a character. If a character takes this amount of damage, he dies.

Wound Threshold: If a character takes a number of Damage Points from a single attack that is equal to or greater than this number, he takes a Wound. Unless otherwise noted, a character can only receive one Wound from a single attack.

Unconsciousness Rating: This is the number of Damage Points it takes to knock a character unconscious.

Recovery Tests: This is the number of times per day that a character can make a Recovery Test. See the Combat Rules section for information on how to use these tests.

Recovery Dice: This is the type of Action Dice the player rolls when a character makes a Recovery Test.

EQUIPMENT

In addition to Attributes, talents and skills, and Characteristics, characters also have a list of equipment on

their Character Record Sheet. Most of the equipment listed is self-explanatory. The weapons listed also have the Damage Step and Action Dice that a character uses when attacking with the weapon.

STEP NUMBERS AND ACTION DICE

As described above, Attributes, talents and skills are measured by Step Numbers. Step Numbers determine the type of dice you roll when your character attempts an action. The type of dice associated with each Step Number are called Action Dice.

Action Dice are ordered in a scale, from lowest to highest. Part of the scale of Step Numbers and Action Dice is given below. The table also includes a column showing the Attribute Values that correspond to each Step Number.

ROLLING DICE

So how does your character use all these neat abilities? By rolling dice. Whenever a character wants to perform an action that might not automatically succeed (attacking someone, casting a spell, and so on), the player rolls dice. This is called making a test. All actions in **Earthdawn** are resolved by making tests. To make a test, a player rolls the Action Dice indicated for the ability he is using to perform the action.

When using Melee Weapons, a player would roll the dice indicated for his Melee Weapons

STEP/ACTION DICE TABLE

Step Number	Action Dice	Attribute Value
1	D4-2	—
2	D4-1	1-3
3	D4	4-6
4	D6	7-9
5	D8	10-12
6	D10	13-15
7	D12	16-18
8	2D6	19-21
9	D8+D6	22-24
10	D10+D6	25-27
11	D10+D8	28-30
12	2D10	31-33
13	D12+D10	34-36
14	D20+D4	37-39
15	D20+D6	40-42
16	D20+D8	43-45
17	D20+D10	46-48
18	D20+D12	49-51
19	D20+2D6	52-54
20	D20+D8+D6	55-57

talent. If your character is trying to cast a spell, he would roll the dice indicated for his Spell-casting talent.

The result of the dice roll is compared to the Difficulty Number listed in the talent or skill description. If the test result is equal to or higher than the Difficulty Number, the action is successful.

Bonus Dice

When making tests, if the result on any one of your dice is the maximum number possible (for example, a “4” on a four-sided die), you may re-roll the die, adding the new result to the old, to get the final total.

A player is rolling D10+D8 for a test. He rolls the dice, getting a “5” on the D10, and an “8” on the D8. He may pick up the D8 and re-roll, adding the new result to the result of 13. This time he gets a “6” on the D8. His total result for his test is 19 (5+8+6=19).

As long as the result of a die is the maximum possible, you can keep re-rolling.

KARMA POINTS

Characters in **Earthdawn** can use a special type of magical energy to temporarily increase their abilities. This magical energy is called Karma. Each character has 5 Karma Points. A player can spend 1 Karma Point on any action his character takes. Every time a character uses a Karma Point, the player may roll an additional D6 (the Karma Die) along with whatever other Action Dice he rolls for an action. The result of the D6 is added to the dice total of the test. This D6 can be re-rolled on a result of 6 like any other Bonus Dice.

Me'gana is attacking a cadaver man. Me'gana's player decides to spend a Karma Point on her Melee Weapons Test. When she rolls her dice for the attack, she rolls D10+D6+D6 (the Karma Die).

Because characters have only 5 Karma Points, players should spend them carefully, to make sure they have points left when they need them most.

TALENT AND SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

This section provides descriptions of the specific talents and skills needed for this adventure. In the talent descriptions that follow, the Attribute on which they are based appears in parentheses.

USING TALENTS AND SKILLS

To use a talent or skill, a player makes a test. The result of the dice roll is compared to the Difficulty Number



listed in the talent or skill description. If the result is equal to or higher than the Difficulty Number, the action is successful.

TALENTS

Air Sailing (Willpower)

Allows a character to serve on the crew of an airship.
Difficulty Number: 4.

Avoid Blow (Dexterity)

Allows a character to dodge an attack at the last second. Can be used in the same Combat Round as an Attack Test, but can only be used once per Combat Round.
Difficulty Number: the Attack Test result of the character's opponent.

Battle Shout (Charisma)

Allows a character to intimidate opponents by shouting at them. Can be used in the same Combat Round as an Attack Test. The Difficulty Number is the target's Social Defense. If the attacker successfully uses Battle Shout against an opponent, the target must subtract 2 from all his die roll results for the next 2 Combat Rounds.

Fireblood (Toughness)

Allows a character to heal damage during combat. The character uses one of his Recovery Tests to use this talent. The test result is the number of points of damage the character heals.

Forge Blade (Perception)

Allows a character to improve the Damage Rating of a weapon. **Difficulty Number:** the Damage Step Number of the weapon.

Great Leap (Dexterity)

Allows a character to jump great distances. The test result is the number of yards a character can jump in a single round.

Maneuver (Dexterity)

Allows a character to outmaneuver an opponent. This talent is used in place of an attack. The result of the Maneuver Test becomes the Physical Defense of the character for one Combat Round.

Melee Weapons (Dexterity)

Allows a character to attack an opponent with a melee weapon. **Difficulty Number:** the target's Physical Defense.

Read and Write Language (Perception)

Allows a character to learn to read and write new languages. The Difficulty Number is determined by the language being studied.

Read and Write Magic (Perception)

Allows a character to learn new spells and enter them into his grimoire. The Difficulty Number is based on the circle of the spell.

Spellcasting (Perception)

Used when a magician casts a spell. **Difficulty Number:** the Spell Defense of the target.

Spell Matrix

Astral constructs which store spell patterns. Once a magician has placed a spell pattern in a Spell Matrix, he can cast the spell. Each Spell Matrix can hold one spell.

Steel Thought (Willpower)

Allows a character to temporarily improve his Mystic Armor. The result is the character's Mystic Armor for one Combat Round.

Taunt (Charisma)

Allows a character to distract an opponent by taunting him. The Difficulty Number is the target's Social Defense. If successful, the target subtracts 2 from all his dice roll results for one Combat Round.

Weapon History (Perception)

Allows a character to learn the history and abilities of magical weapons. **Difficulty Number:** the Spell Defense of the weapon.

Wizardry (Perception)

Allows a character to weave magical energy into a spell. Magical energy is separated into strands called Threads. Threads woven into a spell give the spell its power and effect. The Difficulty Number for weaving threads to a spell is determined by the spell (see **Spell Descriptions**).

Wound Balance (Strength)

Allows a character to resist being knocked down in combat. A character uses the Wound Balance Talent instead of his Strength step to resist Knockdown.

SKILLS

The characters in this adventure use two types of skills, Artisan skills and Knowledge skills.

Artisan skills are skills that represent a character's ability to create works of artistic endeavor. These can range from embroidery to carving wood or crystal. All Artisan skills are based on the Charisma Attribute.

Knowledge skills represent certain areas of knowledge that a character possesses. All Knowledge skills are based on the Perception Attribute.

SPELLCASTING

Certain characters in **Earthdawn** are able to cast magical spells. These characters are called magicians. There are three steps in casting a spell. The spell must first be put into a Spell Matrix. A spell matrix holds the form of the spell, and allows the magician to cast it. Once a spell is in a spell matrix, the magician must then add extra magical energy to the spell's pattern. This magical energy is called a thread, and is added to the spell matrix using a process called thread weaving. Each spell description below tells you how many threads each spell requires. Once all the necessary threads are added to the spell, the magician can then make a Spellcasting Test to cast the spell. Each of these steps is explained more thoroughly below.

Put Spell into Spell Matrix

Before a spell can be cast, it must first be put into a spell matrix. Each spell matrix can hold only one spell. Spells can be put into spell matrices in one of two ways. The first is through meditation. This takes 10 minutes, and allows the magician to place spells into two or more spell matrices at the same time. The second method is used when a magician needs to place a spell into a matrix quickly. This is called Reattuning, and can only place one

spell in one matrix at a time. To reattune a spell, the magician makes a Wizardry Test. The Reattuning Difficulty for all spells used in this adventure is 9. If the magician fails this test, he can keep trying until he succeeds.

Thread Weaving

When a magician wants to cast a spell, he must add “threads” of magical energy to the spell in the spell matrix. This is called Thread Weaving. A magician uses the Wizardry Talent to weave threads to a spell. Each spell description below indicates how many threads the spell requires. When a magician wants to weave a thread to a spell, he makes a Wizardry Test. The Difficulty Number for weaving threads to all the spells used in this adventure is 6. If the test fails, the magician may try again to weave the thread. A magician can weave one thread per Combat Round. Once all the required threads are woven to the spell, the magician can cast the spell in the next round.

Spellcasting

After all the necessary threads have been woven to the spell, the magician can then cast the spell. To cast a spell, a magician makes a Spellcasting Test. The Difficulty Number for casting a spell is listed in each spell description. Each of the spell descriptions below describe the effect that occurs if the Spellcasting Test is successful. If the test fails, nothing happens.



SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

In this adventure, there is only one magician, the wizard Ardis Foarr. While there are more than 150 spells available in **Earthdawn**, only those known by Ardis Foarr are described below.

Astral Sense

Allows a magician to detect a presence in astral space. The Difficulty Number is the Spell Defense of the presence being sought. If successful, the magician detects the target. **Threads: 2**

Dispel Magic

Allows a magician to disrupt other spells and magical effects. The Difficulty Number is determined by the rank of the spell or magical effect. If successful, the spell (or magical effect) is permanently disrupted. **Threads: 1**

Flame Flash

Allows a magician to attack an opponent with flames. The Difficulty Number is the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the target takes damage. **Threads: 1** (Damage: $11/D10+D8$)

Iron Hand

Increases the damage of a melee weapon by 3 steps. The magician must touch the weapon to use this spell. The Difficulty Number is the Spell Defense of the weapon. If successful, the Damage inflicted by attacks made with the weapon is increased by +3 steps. This effect lasts for 12 Combat Rounds. **Threads: 1**

Mind Dagger

Allows a magician to attack an opponent's mind. The Difficulty Number is the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target takes damage. The target's Mystic Armor reduces the damage of this spell. **Threads: None** (Damage: $9/D8+D6$)

Wall Walker

Allows a magician to improve a person's climbing ability. The Difficulty Number is the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target character adds 5 to the result of any Climbing Test. This effect lasts for 10 rounds. **Threads: 1**

COMBAT RULES

The final rules you need to learn before you play the adventure describe how to resolve combat situations.

COMBAT SEQUENCE

Combat is conducted in a series of turns called Combat Rounds. Each Combat Round roughly equals ten seconds of game time. During a Combat Round, each character can do three things. He can move (up to his full Movement), he can perform a simple action (draw a weapon, speak, and so on) and he can use a talent or skill.

There are two exceptions to this rule. The Avoid Blow and Battle Shout talents can be used in addition to another talent or skill in a Combat Round. These are the only exceptions to the above rule.

During each Combat Round, all the participants make Initiative Tests to determine the order in which each character acts. In descending order of Initiative, each character takes his action, usually requiring an Attack Test. If the Attack Test is successful, a character then makes a Damage Test. These tests are described in more detail below.

INITIATIVE TESTS

At the start of each Combat Round, all players make an Initiative Test for their characters using the dice indicated under Initiative on the Character Record Sheet. Moving from highest to lowest dice roll result, the characters perform their actions in order of Initiative results. If two characters roll the same Initiative, they perform their actions in descending order of their Dexterity Values. If a creature (or character run by the gamemaster) ties Initiative with a character, the character always goes first.

ATTACK TESTS

Each character performs his action at his Initiative. This action is most often an Attack Test, but can also be a Spellcasting or Wizardry Test. The player rolls the indicated dice for the talent or skill his character is using to make this test.

If Me'gana wants to attack a creature, her player rolls her Melee Weapons dice. If Ardis Foarr wants to cast a spell, his player rolls his Spellcasting dice.

The Difficulty Number for using a talent or skill is listed in the descriptions above. The Difficulty Number for casting a spell is listed in each spell description. If the test is successful, the effect listed in the talent or spell description takes place. For Attack Tests, or spells that damage a target, the character makes a Damage Test.

DAMAGE TESTS

If an Attack Test (or a Spellcasting Test, for a spell whose result damages a target) is successful, the character makes a Damage Test. The dice used for a Damage Test are listed in parentheses next to the character's weapons and spells (Ardis only). The result of the Damage Test is the amount of damage the target takes.

When the total amount of damage a character has taken equals his Unconsciousness Rating, he falls unconscious. When the total amount of damage a character has taken equals his Death Rating, the character dies.

If the damage from a single attack is equal to or higher than a character's Wound Threshold, he takes a Wound. Players should keep track of damage and Wounds separately.

KNOCKDOWN TESTS

When a character is Wounded, he might also be knocked down. When a character takes a Wound, he must make a Knockdown Test in order to determine if he remains standing. A character uses his Strength Dice (or the Wound Balance Talent) to resist being knocked down. The Difficulty Number of a Knockdown Test is the Damage Step Number used by the opponent to make the Damage Test. This number appears to the left of the slash following weapons and spells on each character sheet.

RECOVERY TESTS

Now you know your character will get hurt. How does he or she heal? Each character has a number of "Recovery Tests" listed on the character sheet. This is the number of times per day that a character can recover from damage, or heal. Each time a character wants to heal damage, he makes a Recovery Test, using the dice listed under "Recovery Dice" on his character sheet.

A character who has been rendered unconscious can make a Recovery Test one minute after combat ends. Once conscious, he can make further Recovery Tests once per hour after that, until he is either fully recovered, or has no Recovery Tests remaining for the day. Recovery Tests only heal points of damage, not Wounds. Wounds can only be healed by sleeping and resting for eight hours.

THOM HAMMERBLADE

Thom Hammerblade is a dwarven weaponsmith from the Kingdom of Throal. He stands 4'2" tall and weighs 165 pounds. Thom learned the Discipline of the Weaponsmith to honor his father, who was killed in the Theran War. Thom soon grew bored with life within the Kingdom of Throal, and at the age of 26 set out to seek adventure, determined to help the people of Barsaive reclaim their world from the aftermath of the Scourge.

Thom distrusts all humans, and particularly distrusts Therans. The face he shows the world is somewhat harsh and bitter, but he is a fair and just man. His adventures since leaving Throal have taught him much about the other races of Barsaive, and he has learned that what a man can see is often only an illusion hiding the truth.

ATTRIBUTES

Dexterity (14): 6/D10 **Strength (14):** 6/D10
Toughness (16): 7/D12 **Perception (16):** 7/D12
Willpower (13): 6/D10 **Charisma (9):** 4/D6

TALENTS

Weapon History (2): 9/D8+D6
Steel Thought (1): 7/D12
Melee Weapons (1): 7/D12
Forge Blade (2): 9/D8+D6
Avoid Blow (1): 7/D12

MOVEMENT

Running: 56 **Combat:** 28

SKILLS

Artisan (1): 5/D8
Dwarven History (1): 8/2D6
Weapon Lore (1): 8/2D6

INITIATIVE

Dice: D10

COMBAT

Physical Defense: 8 **Physical Armor:** 5
Spell Defense: 9 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Social Defense: 6

DAMAGE

Death Rating: 39 **Recovery Tests per Day:** 3
Wound Threshold: 11 **Recovery Dice:** D12
Unconsciousness Rating: 31

EQUIPMENT

Broadsword (Damage: 11/D10+D8)
2×Daggers (Damage: 8/2D6)
Padded leather (armor) Buckler (shield)
Backpack 50 feet of rope
Forging tools (hammer, small anvil)
Steel spikes Hammer
2×Waterskins Trail rations (2 weeks)
Traveling clothes 10 silver pieces

RACIAL ABILITIES

Heat Sight



RULES

To use a talent, a player rolls the dice indicated for each talent. For example, when using Thom's Melee Weapons talent, a player would roll D12.

The result of the roll is compared to the Difficulty Number listed in the talent description. If the result is greater than the Difficulty Number, the action is successful.

TALENTS

Avoid Blow: Allows a character to dodge an attack at the last second. Can be used in the same combat round as an Attack Test. The Difficulty Number is the result of the Attack Test made by the character's opponent.

Forge Blade: Allows a character to improve the Damage Rating of a weapon. The Difficulty Number is the Damage Step Number of the weapon.

Melee Weapons: Allows a character to attack an opponent with a melee weapon. The Difficulty Number is the target's Defense.

Steel Thought: Allows a character to temporarily improve his Mystic Armor Rating. The result becomes the character's Mystic Armor Rating for 1 Combat Round.

Weapon History: Allows a character to learn the history and abilities of magical weapons. The Difficulty Number is the Spell Defense of the weapon.

RACIAL ABILITIES

Heat Sight: This allows Thom to detect differences in temperature, seeing them as changes in color.

THOM'S STORY

The room grew silent as the man stood to face the assembly. His voice rang with authority, and the respect the villagers accorded him marked his position as village leader. "We have among us several visitors from far lands. We welcome you to the village of Tardim, and invite you to enjoy our hospitality. Unfortunately, we must also ask your help. Who among you will enter our kaer and free it from the terror that has taken Strathem, our magician, from us?"

A dwarf bearing colorful tattoos and sigils on his face and arms spoke first. The crowd turned toward him eagerly.

"I am named Thom Hammerblade, weaponsmith from the Kingdom of Throal. I chose the Discipline of the Weaponsmith to honor my father, killed years ago during the Theran War. I shall

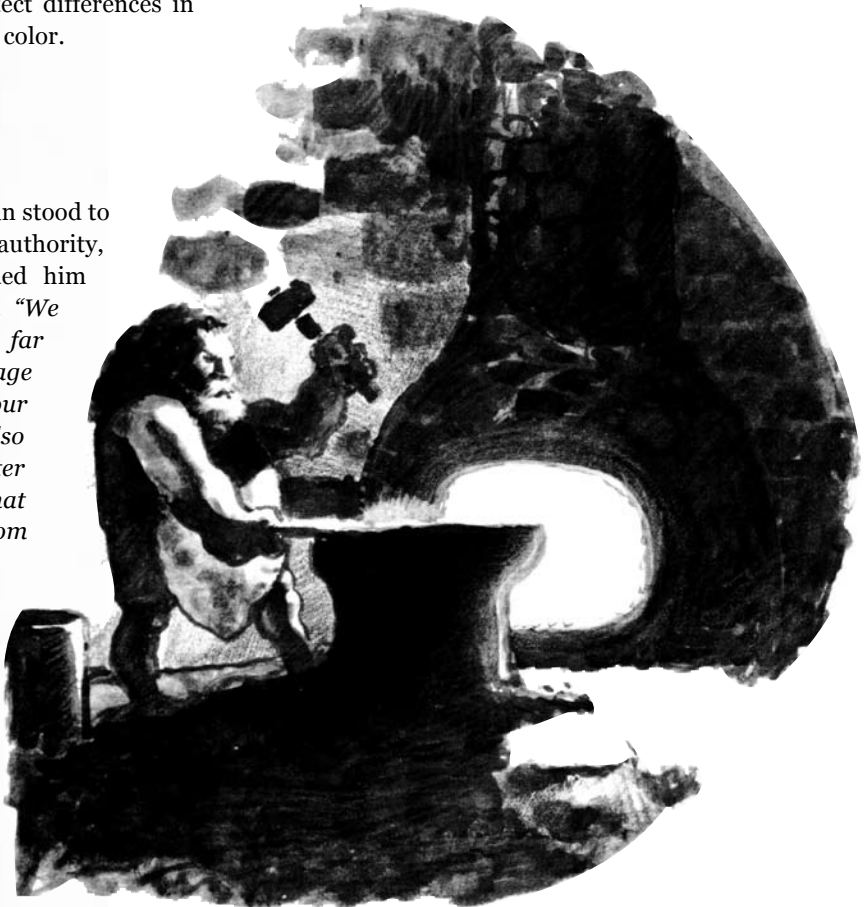
enter your kaer. But first, hear my story.

Not long after my initiation I left the dwarven kingdom, bored with the comfortable life within the mountains of Throal. I sought adventure, and to help reclaim the lands of Barsaive, both from the aftermath of the Scourge, and from the power-hungry Therans, who seek to enslave us.

Following a map given to me by my mentor, I found the Coil River a few days' journey from Throal. As the Coil is but a tributary of the mighty Serpent River, I knew that if I could find passage on a riverboat it would take me to lands far away. I joined the crew of a t'skrang riverboat soon afterward, heading down the Serpent toward Lake Pyros and the Servos Jungle.

I left ship at Lake Pyros, and traveled many days encountering no one. A band of ork scorchers discovered me one evening as I slept, and took me captive. Death was to be my fate at their hands, but a party of crystal raiders from the Twilight Peaks attacked the scorcher camp, and during the troll raiders' assault, I managed to escape. My travels eventually led to your village.

I have said I will enter your kaer and confront whatever terror awaits within. Who owns the courage to join me?"



ARDIS FOARR

Ardis Foarr was born beneath the Theran outpost known as Sky Point. Now 21 years of age, he is 5'11" tall and weighs 170 pounds. Enslaved by the Therans as a child, Ardis learned of the atrocities of the Therans firsthand. He escaped from his slave barge near the Death's Sea, and fled to a small human village. It was in this village that Ardis learned the Discipline of the wizard.

Ardis appears to be an adventurous type, always eager to risk life and limb to help those in need. Actually, he is a scared young man, still struggling to understand and control his newly acquired magical abilities. He is still unsure of his magic, though none but his closest associates know this.

ATTRIBUTES

Dexterity (13): 6/D10 **Strength (9):** 4/D6
Toughness (12): 5/D8 **Perception (15):** 6/D10
Willpower (16): 7/D12 **Charisma (12):** 5/D8

TALENTS

Read and Write Language(1): 7/D12
Read and Write Magic(1): 7/D12
Spellcasting (2): 8/2D6
Spell Matrix (1)
Spell Matrix (1)
Wizardry (2): 8/2D6

MOVEMENT

Running: 52 **Combat:** 26

SKILLS

Alchemy (1): 7/D12
Read Runic Carvings (1): 7/D12
Robe Embroidery (1): 6/D10

INITIATIVE

Dice: D10

COMBAT

Physical Defense: 7 **Physical Armor:** 3
Spell Defense: 9 **Mystic Armor:** 2
Social Defense: 7

DAMAGE

Death Rating: 34 **Recovery Tests per Day:** 2
Wound Threshold: 9 **Recovery Dice:** D8
Unconsciousness Rating: 26

EQUIPMENT

3×Daggers (Damage 6/D10)
Quarterstaff (Damage 8/2D6)
Leather (armor)
Backpack Flint and steel
Grimoire 2×Torches
Trail rations (1 week) 2×Waterskins
Traveling clothes 50 silver pieces



RULES

To use a talent, a player rolls the dice indicated for each talent. For example, when using Ardis's Spellcasting talent, the player would roll 2D6.

The result of the roll is compared to the Difficulty Number listed in the talent description. If the result is greater than the difficulty, the action is successful.

TALENTS

Read and Write Language: Allows a character to learn to read and write new languages. The Difficulty Number is determined by the language being studied.

Read and Write Magic: Allows a character to learn new spells and write them into his grimoire. The Difficulty Number is based on the rank of the spell.

Spellcasting: Used when a magician casts a spell. The Difficulty Number is the Spell Defense of the target.

Spell Matrix: Astral constructs that store spell patterns. Once a magician places a spell pattern in a spell matrix, he can cast the spell. Each spell matrix can hold one spell.

Wizardry: Allows a character to weave magical energy into a spell. Magical energy is parcelled into strands called Threads. Threads woven into a spell give it its power and effect.

SPELLS

Astral Sense: Allows a wizard to detect a presence in astral space. The Difficulty Number is the Spell Defense of the presence being sought.

Dispel Magic: Allows a wizard to disrupt other spells and magical effects. The Difficulty Number is determined by the rank of the spell or magical effect.

Flame Flash: Allows a wizard to attack an opponent with flames. The Difficulty Number is the target's Spell Defense. If successful, the target takes D10+D8 damage.

Iron Hand: Increases the damage of a melee weapon by three steps. The magician must touch the weapon to use this spell. The Difficulty Number is the Spell Defense of the weapon. The effect lasts for 12 Combat Rounds.

Mind Dagger: Allows a wizard to attack an opponent's mind. The Difficulty Number is the target's Spell Defense. The target's Mystic Armor Rating reduces the damage of this spell.

Wall Walker: Allows a magician to improve a person's climbing ability. The Difficulty Number is the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target character adds 5 to the result of any Climbing Test. This effect lasts for 10 rounds.

ARDIS'S STORY

Excitement rose in the crowd as Thom Hammerblade told his tale. When the dwarf sat down, a young human stood, and the audience turned to listen to his story.

"I will help purge your kaer of the horror that dwells within it. I am named Ardis Foarr, wizard."

I come from the village of Farenn, which lies beneath the Theran outpost called Sky Point. At the age of nine I was enslaved on a Theran mining barge, and escaped from the Therans only five years ago. The barge was damaged during a gathering ritual on a mining expedition near the Death's Sea. I was able to escape in the confusion that ensued when the barge crashed to the ground.

I fled to a human village, where I learned the Discipline of wizardry. Just as I began to settle into my new home, Therans sacked the village, killing nearly everyone. Once again I escaped the Therans, but this time I found myself in a vast jungle.

The jungle crawled with creatures of this world and others. Though my magic skills helped me fight off the jungle monsters, nothing prepared me for what next awaited me.

One day, as I stopped to drink from a stream, I heard a sound behind me. I turned and saw a monstrosity that defied description. So loathsome and evil was it that I felt fear at the mere sight of it. I made a feeble attempt to fight it off, but its power was great, and it effortlessly tossed me aside as it strode past through the jungle. I tried to crawl out of the jungle, but I was weak and too badly injured. I faded into unconsciousness, believing I would die.

I awoke to see what appeared to be a group of small, winged elves gathered around me. When I inquired who they were, and where I was, they informed me I was in the windling community of Flythia. The windlings had found me in the jungle and brought me to their community to heal me. I remained in Flythia for nearly a year. As I regained my strength, I sought to continue my training in wizardry, and the community's wizard, a female windling named Geena, agreed to instruct me.

When the time came for me to leave Flythia, I traveled back toward Sky Point, for it was the only place I knew as home. I was on my way there when I came to your village.

I shall join Thom Hammerblade and enter your kaer. We do this to free your village from the danger that threatens it. Who else will join us?"

ME'GANA

Me'gana is an elven swordmaster from the village of Lowilla in the Caucavik Mountains. She stands 5'8" inches tall and weighs 135 pounds. Me'gana learned the Discipline of the swordmaster from her father, finishing her training only days before he was killed by a Horror that had gotten into their kaer. Me'gana spent several years helping to rebuild the village of Lowilla before she decided to join a group of adventurers, hoping to help rebuild the world after the Scourge.

Me'gana holds all Therans in deep contempt. Because her father was killed by a Horror that broke through the kaer's defenses, defenses which the village learned from the Therans, Me'gana blames the Therans for her father's death. Me'gana keeps her emotions to herself, but her experiences traveling across Barsaive have taught her the value of friendship. She now actively seeks to make friends with those who earn her trust. Me'gana has learned the true evil of the Horrors since meeting one face to face in the Blood Wood.

ATTRIBUTES

Dexterity (17): 7/D12

Strength (15): 6/D10

Toughness (12): 5/D8

Perception (14): 6/D10

Willpower (11): 5/D8

Charisma (10): 5/D8

TALENTS

Avoid Blow (1): 8/2D6

Maneuver (1): 8/2D6

Melee Weapons (3): 10/D10+D6

Taunt (2): 7/D12

Wound Balance (1): 6/D10

MOVEMENT

Running: 68

Combat: 34

SKILLS

Alchemy (1): 7/D12

Creature Lore (1): 7/D12

Runic Carving (Weapons) (1): 7/D12

INITIATIVE

Dice: D10

DAMAGE

Death Rating: 34

Recovery Tests per Day: 2

Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Dice: D8

Unconsciousness Rating: 26

COMBAT

Physical Defense: 9

Physical Armor: 5

Spell Defense: 8

Mystic Armor: 1

Social Defense: 6

EQUIPMENT

Broadsword (Damage: 11/D10+D8)

Falchion (Damage: 9/D8+D6)

3×Daggers (Damage: 8/2D6)

Hardened leather (armor)

2×Sword scabbards

Waterskin

Trail rations (1 week)

Traveling clothes

Racial Abilities

Low-Light Vision



RULES

To use a talent, a player rolls the dice indicated for each talent. For example, when using Me'gana's Melee Weapons talent, a player would roll a D10+D6.

The result of the roll is compared to the Difficulty Number listed in the talent description. If the result is higher than the Difficulty Number, the action succeeds.

TALENTS

Avoid Blow: Allows a character to dodge an attack at the last second. Can be used in the same Combat Round as an Attack Test. The Difficulty Number is the Attack Test result of the character's opponent.

Maneuver: Allows a character to out-maneuver an opponent. This talent is used in place of an attack. The result of a Maneuver Test becomes the Physical Defense number of the character for one Combat Round.

Melee Weapons: Allows a character to attack an opponent with a melee weapon. The Difficulty Number for the attack is the target's Physical Defense.

Taunt: Allows a character to distract an opponent by taunting him. The Difficulty Number is the target's Social Defense number. If the Taunt Test is successful, the target suffers a -2 penalty to all his dice roll results.

Wound Balance: Allows a character to resist being knocked down in combat. A character uses her Wound Balance Step instead of her Strength Step to resist Knockdown.

RACIAL ABILITIES

Low-Light Vision: Me'gana can see at much lower levels of light than other races.

ME'GANA'S STORY

Ardis Foarr sat after sharing his story with the village. The village leader stood once more and spoke to the assembly. *"These two will aid us against the creature that dwells within our kaer. Will others offer their services?"*

A handful of heartbeats passed, then a young elven woman stood to face the crowd. She wore battered leather armor, and two scabbards hung at her sides.

"I am named Me'gana, swordmaster from the village Lowilla. Our kaer, which lies in the Caucavic Mountains to the far northwest, only recently opened its doors. I learned the Discipline of the swordmaster from my father before his death at the hands of a Horror. He and his forefathers had served Lowilla as swordmasters since long before the Scourge. I, too, was to serve the village, but others took my place so that I could travel the lands and help others rebuild their homes and lives. I join Ardis Foarr and Thom Hammerblade in their pledge to enter your kaer. And as they have done, I share with you my story."

Soon after the village of Lowilla was rebuilt, a trio of adventurers came seeking shelter for the night. They stayed for a few days, sharing legends of creatures and treasures they had encountered and heard of all across Barsaive. When they prepared to leave, I offered to join them, that I might aid those in need in other towns and villages.

Our first adventure together found us in the Blood Wood, far to the north. I tell you that the corruption of that place is beyond description. The once-beautiful forest is twisted and gnarled, as are the creatures that dwell within the Wood. Yet all this is nothing set against the personal corruption that the elves of the Blood Wood have endured. As I stood before a scouting party of Blood Elves, I wondered how those of my own race could have corrupted themselves in such a terrible way. Thorns, glistening with fresh blood, grew from within their bodies. The thorns cause the pain and suffering that legend says made the Blood Elves immune to the Horrors' rampage during the Scourge.

We gladly left those elves behind, but almost immediately encountered a Horror laired within the Blood Wood. It mocked my attempts to kill it, instead slaying the others before my eyes, holding me helpless and forcing on me the torment of watching them die. Only after I summoned the strength to flee did it unleash its power on me, reaching within my mind and replaying the deaths of my friends, over and over. Only after I left the Blood Wood did the nightmares end.

My quest is to aid those who need my help. But I also seek one who can help me escape the torments of my past, for the nightmares still return, haunting me even to this day.

I will gladly give my life to free your village and kaer from whatever evils threatens it. For I have seen the corruption of the Horrors, and cannot rest until they, and all their kind, no longer inhabit our world."

TARG BONESLICER

Targ Boneslicer is a troll sky raider from the Twilight Peaks. Targ stands 8'7" tall and weighs 550 pounds. Targ learned the Discipline of the sky raider from his troll clan. After his clan joined other clans through the Ritual of the Trollmoot, he joined the crew of a crystal raider airship, battling with his crewmates against Theran airships in the southeastern area of Barsaive.

Targ finds it difficult to trust anyone who is not a troll. Despite deep reservations, he has begun to accept others as potential allies on his adventures. Targ has learned a great deal about the other races of Barsaive since his airship crashed and he began his travels back to the Twilight Peaks. Recently, Targ has begun to question his peoples' history of raiding and pillaging other races.

ATTRIBUTES

Dexterity (16): 7/D12 **Strength (21):** 8/2D6
Toughness (21): 8/2D6 **Perception (14):** 6/D10
Willpower (11): 5/D8 **Charisma (5):** 3/D4

TALENTS

Air Sailing (1): 6/D10
BattleShout (2): 5/D8
Fireblood (1): 9/D8+D6
Great Leap (1): 8/2D6
Melee Weapons (3): 10/D10+D6

MOVEMENT

Running: 64 **Combat:** 32

SKILLS

Ancient Weapons (1): 7/D12
Troll History (1): 7/D12
Crystal Carving (1): 7/D12

INITIATIVE

Dice: D10

DAMAGE

Death Rating: 46 **Recovery Tests per Day:** 4
Wound Threshold: 13 **Recovery Dice:** 2D6
Unconsciousness Rating: 39

COMBAT

Physical Defense: 9 **Physical Armor:** 6
Spell Defense: 8 **Mystic Armor:** 1
Social Defense: 4

EQUIPMENT

Battle-Axe (Damage: 14/D20+D4)
Broadsword (Damage: 13/D12+D10)
Troll sling (Damage: 12/2D10)
Hardened leather (armor) Buckler (shield)
Backpack Bedroll
2×Torches Waterskin
Trail rations (1 week) Traveling clothes

RACIAL ABILITIES

Heat Sight



RULES

To use a talent, a player rolls the dice indicated for each talent. For example, when using Targ's Melee Weapons talent, a player would roll a D12.

Compare the result of the roll to the Difficulty Number listed in the talent description. If the test result is higher than the Difficulty Number, the action succeeds.

TALENTS

Air Sailing: Enables a character to serve on the crew of an airship. The Difficulty Number for using this talent is 4.

Battle Shout: Allows a character to intimidate opponents by shouting at them. The Difficulty Number equals the target's Social Defense number. If the test result is successful, the target subtracts 2 from all his dice roll results for the next two Combat Rounds.

Fireblood: Allows a character to heal damage during combat. The character spends one of his available Recovery Tests to use this talent. The test result is the number of points of damage the character heals.

Great Leap: Allows a character to jump great distances. The test result is the number of yards a character can jump in a single round.

Melee Weapons: Allows a character to attack an opponent with a melee weapon. Use the target's Physical Defense number as the Difficulty Number to attack.

RACIAL ABILITIES

Heat Sight: This allows Targ to detect differences in temperature, seeing them as changes in color.

TARG'S STORY

The crowd murmured among themselves as Me'gana sat down again, but the noise quickly quieted when a large troll stood, his head rising a full four feet above those seated around him.

"I am Targ Boneslicer, renowned sky raider from the Twilight Peaks. I feel sure that your other heroes will welcome my capable help.

I was born to a crystal raider clan. Like many of my brothers, I trained as a sky raider. Just after my initiation as a raider, one of the most impressive displays of skill seen in many years, my clan joined with others to form a new trollmoot. Our moot actively raided the lands to the southwest occupied by the Therans.

Our drakkar battled many Theran vedettes, freed many slaves, and claimed many Theran lives. But our last battle damaged our ship. We crashed in a mountain range near the Servos jungle, and only fifteen member of our brave crew survived.

After giving our dead brethren every honor they richly deserved, we began our travels back toward our home in the Twilight Peaks. After battling a fierce storm

for several days, we were finally forced to seek shelter. Discovering a cave in a nearby ravine, we soon learned that it concealed the entrance to a still closed, forgotten kaer.

While we waited out the storm, we decided to attempt to open the kaer, and bring its inhabitants the good news that the Scourge was over. The magicks guarding the entrance to the kaer had weakened over time; of course, we would have cracked it open regardless. Only after we moved deep into the kaer did we learn the true reason the kaer opened so easily.

The air stank of decay and rotted flesh. The first person we encountered was as dead as the rest of the kaer's original inhabitants. Realizing that this kaer was dead, we turned to leave, but the kaer's only living resident stopped us. The beast stood 11 feet tall. The four tentacles that passed for its arms waved around a scaly reptilian torso, which was supported by four stocky legs. The head of the creature was that of a lizard, but it spoke to us in dwarven.

Welcome to my prison, you puny weaklings. Now join the residents of this place in death."

And saying that it attacked us, killing four of my crewmates before I could react. It was like fighting a creature of stone--our blows barely affected it, while each of its attacks claimed one or more of my mates. As it turned to attack me, I prepared to die. Its tentacle lashed out, smashing me into the kaer wall and knocking me senseless. It must have left me for dead, because when I woke, it was gone. All that remained were the shattered bodies of my crewmates.

After resting only long enough to travel, I set out to track the beast in order to avenge the deaths of my fellow raiders. I also vowed to capture the beast I set free upon this world.

I offer my skills to your aid."

KAER TARDIM

Gather your strength, for tomorrow you shall face whatever lies within our kaer.

• Maleron, Village Leader of Tardim •

Welcome to the adventure! This story is called **Kaer Tardim**, and takes the characters inside the kaer of a small village. The characters have traveled to the village of Tardim, and are asked by the village leader to enter Tardim's kaer to discover what killed the village's magician. This brief adventure is designed to give you and your friends a sneak preview of the world of **Earthdawn**.

WARNING!

No one except the gamemaster should read the material that follows. If you are going to play a character in this adventure, we suggest you stop reading now!

This material is meant specifically for the gamemaster. Reading it will spoil the adventure for players, because you will know what can happen during the adventure. The fun of roleplaying is discovering the story as you play it.

GAMEMASTER INFORMATION

The following information provides the gamemaster with the overall story of the adventure in the form of the Adventure Background and Plot Synopsis.

The **Adventure Background** for this story explains how and why Strathem (the magician for the village of Tardim) was killed. This is the setup for the adventure, designed to help the gamemaster understand the hows and whys of the adventure. This information allows the gamemaster to explain, if necessary, why the kaer is the way it is, and why Strathem died in this particularly horrible way.

The **Plot Synopsis** describes the most likely series of events in the adventure. It sets up the order in which the encounters of the adventure were written to take place, and what happens in each. This summary helps the gamemaster remember the order of events in the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

During the time known as the Scourge, the Horrors roamed the physical world, leaving behind a path of destruction and corruption. Many Horrors penetrated the defenses of kaers and citadels, destroying their inhabit-

ants. While many of the Horrors breached the physical barriers of the kaer, others entered the minds of the residents of a kaer, controlling their victim's actions and thoughts. Still other Horrors found entry into kaers along passages through astral space opened unwittingly by careless magicians, allowing the Horror to penetrate the kaer and destroy its captive victims. Such was the case in the kaer of Tardim.

One of the people who settled in the kaer of Tardim was a hero named Farliss. Farliss fought the Horrors for several years before the kaers of Barsaive finally closed themselves off from the rest of the world. In the process he became a legend in the province of Barsaive, and particularly in the region that included Tardim.

During the years he fought the Horrors, Farliss engaged in a running battle against a Horror named R'Ishann. Every time they met, each of them became more determined to destroy the other. After one of his final encounters with R'Ishann, Farliss acquired a magical dagger created to slay Horrors. But before Farliss could use the dagger to slay R'Ishann, the Scourge began in earnest, forcing Farliss to enter the kaer of the village of Tardim.

During the Scourge, the Horror R'Ishann devoted nearly all its energy to penetrating the kaer of Tardim in order to destroy his nemesis Farliss. But the magical protections laid on the kaer remained strong, thwarting R'Ishann's every attempt. Many years after the kaer was closed, Farliss died and was laid to rest in a small tomb within the kaer. The townspeople immortalized him as a hero of Barsaive, continuing to tell tales of his bravery to keep his memory alive until they could emerge from the kaer.

While most of the kaers in Barsaive opened over a century ago, Tardim remained closed until only 35 years ago. Following the advice of their wizard Strathem, the residents of the kaer agreed to remain inside until Strathem was sure that it was safe to venture outside. This caution nearly caused the kaer's destruction.

Five years before the people of Tardim opened their kaer, the Horror named R'Ishann finally found a way to enter the home of its old enemy. It managed to enter the kaer during an experiment in which Strathem opened a passageway between the physical world and astral space. R'Ishann seized this chance to travel through the passageway from its home plane and attack Farliss. When it discovered that Farliss was long dead, the Horror attacked Strathem, planning to make the wizard the

first victim of a campaign of terrible, endless pain and suffering. R'Ishann believed, as a result of some twisted logic, that if it sufficiently terrorized the people of Tardim, the spirit of Farliss would feel the agony of the Horror's attacks across hundreds of years. The wizard fought off the Horror, and using a powerful spell, imprisoned it in one of the many secret rooms he had built in the kaer. Because Strathem's secret rooms also served as his wizard laboratory and study chambers, the rooms carried strong magical protection. Strathem had created this area of the kaer as a shelter of last resort should the Horrors ever break in. Using powerful blood magic, Strathem strengthened the spell to keep the Horror imprisoned for 40 years.

Strathem kept the secret of the Horror from the villagers, and spent the next forty years searching for a way to destroy the Horror forever.

Even after the kaer opened and Tardim rejoined the world, Strathem continued his work, still keeping the presence of the Horror a secret from the villagers. As he neared the completion of his work, the spell that imprisoned the Horror grew weak. R'Ishann was able to enter Strathem's mind and periodically take control of the wizard. Using this ability, the Horror planned.

Each time the Horror took control of Strathem, it would force the wizard to lead a villager into the kaer's secret rooms, then force Strathem to kill the villager, releasing its hold on the wizard just as the victim died. When Strathem realized what he was being forced to do, the knowledge strengthened his resolve to destroy the Horror once and for all. Over a period of five weeks, the Horror continued to take control of Strathem and use him to kill the people of Tardim, one per week. During this horrible time, Strathem discovered that it was his secret experiments that had led to this disaster. But he still could not bring himself to reveal what he had done. He would destroy the Horror himself and be done with it.

At long last, Strathem's research led him to a method of destroying R'Ishann. Unfortunately, this method required Strathem to possess a magical weapon that had drawn the Horror's blood. On the brink of despair, and panicking because the spell holding the Horror captive was becoming weaker every day, Strathem suddenly remembered that the tomb of Farliss held the hero's legendary magical dagger. Strathem broke into the tomb and ransacked it until he found the dagger, laid within the coffin of the great hero.

The dagger in hand, Strathem prepared to use it to destroy the Horror. But even as Strathem prepared to destroy R'Ishann, the Horror once again entered the wizard's mind and learned of his plan. The Horror used its power to kill Strathem before the wizard could destroy him. Desperate to warn his villagers of the danger lurking within their former refuge, Strathem struggled to leave the kaer as his life ebbed away. He made it only as far as the main gathering-chamber of the kaer before he died.

The villagers learned of Strathem's death when a young man named Fornan entered the kaer in search of the wizard. Fornan discovered the wizard dead, and in that moment of shock, R'Ishann entered Fornan's mind and took control of him. Fornan struggled against the Horror, but the Horror won out. Now under the Horror's influence, Fornan left the kaer and immediately began to kill his fellow villagers. He killed four before being killed himself, and since that time, no one from the village has dared enter the kaer.



PLOT SYNOPSIS

Strathem and Fornan died two weeks prior to the characters' arrival at the village of Tardim. When the characters arrived in the village, the leader invited them to stay and join in the evening gathering. During the gathering, the village leader asked the characters to enter the kaer and free it from whatever killed Strathem. Each of the characters agreed to help.

The next morning, the characters learn what little information the villagers have about what lives within the kaer. The villagers tell the characters about the five people who entered the kaer and have not been seen since. They also describe Fornan going to search for Strathem in the kaer, and his subsequent attack on the villagers. The characters receive a map of the kaer and a healing potion.

The villagers lead the characters to the entrance of the kaer, but will venture no farther, and quickly retreat to the relative safety of the village.

Once inside the kaer, the characters can explore it using the villagers' map. When they reach the kaer's central chamber, the group will discover the tomb of Farliss. They will also come across the Strathem's dead body. Clutched in the wizard's decomposing hand is a rolled piece of parchment. This is a map of the kaer that shows all of Strathem's secret rooms. Strathem's body also yields Farliss' dagger, which closely resembles the dagger etched on the outer wall of the tomb.

Using Strathem's map as a guide, the characters discover a secret door which leads to the hidden rooms within the kaer, where the characters find the bodies of four of the victims. As soon as the characters discover the bodies, the Horror animates them and uses them to attack the player characters. As they pass through the first secret room, the characters find Strathem's study and his journal, which reveals the story of how he allowed the Horror to enter the kaer, and how it has since forced him to kill members of the village. The journal also describes Strathem's moment of inspiration, when he realizes that

he must take Farliss' dagger from the tomb. The characters realize that the dagger they found on Strathem's body is this dagger. By studying the dagger and the journal, the characters learn the weapon's name, and that it can be used to destroy the Horror. It must first be powered by a magical thread, and then plunged into the Horror. Now the characters must find the Horror, power the dagger, and destroy R'Ishann forever.

When the characters find the Horror, they also face the last victim and the horribly re-animated body of Strathem.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

How do you go about being a gamemaster and running this adventure? To begin with, the gamemaster must perform the following tasks.

SERVE AS THE REFEREE

First, as the gamemaster, you are the one who determines if the characters succeed at their actions. In general, the rules describe how actions are performed, and how to determine whether or not they are successful. But players will often ask if their characters can do something not covered in the rules. For example, if a player wants his character to attempt to climb the wall of the kaer, how does he do it? There are no rules for climbing in this Quick Play. (Unfortunately, we couldn't fit all the rules of **Earthdawn** into these few pages. We're hoping that after playing this adventure, you'll want to play more **Earthdawn**, and will go out and buy the game.) Until then, how does a character climb a wall, or take any other action not covered by the rules?

When this very likely event happens, follow these steps:

- 1 Decide which Attribute the character would use to perform the action. This tells you which dice the player rolls to make the test.
- 2 Determine the Difficulty Number of the test. To do this, you must decide if the action the player wants to perform is Easy, Average, Hard, or Heroic. Then consult the table below to find the Difficulty Number.
- 3 Have the player roll the dice. If the result of the test is equal to or higher than the Difficulty Number, the character successfully performs the action. If not, he fails.

For example, after entering the kaer, the player running Me'gana's character wants her to try to climb the wall of the kaer. (We don't know why, she just does). You decide that Dexterity is the Attribute that a character would use to climb a wall. You also decide that climbing the wall is



a Hard action. Looking at the Difficulty Number Table, you see that the Difficulty Number listed for a Hard task is a 12. This means that Me'gana's player has to roll a 12 or higher with her Dexterity dice in order to successfully climb the wall.

We told you it was easy! Even though the above process is a simplified version of the actual rules, for purposes of this adventure it will work fine. Trust us.

DESCRIBE THE WORLD TO THE PLAYERS

Next, keep in mind that you, as the gamemaster, describe the world of **Earthdawn** to the players. That means that you need to try to answer all their questions about what the characters see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. If the players ask questions about these things, you should try to provide them with answers. In the adventure, we provide many descriptions of the interior of the kaer, what it looks like, what it smells like, and so on. If needed, simply use these descriptions. But you can also elaborate by describing the scenes in greater detail. For example, instead of saying "*The room is empty.*" you might say, "*Dust lies thick and undisturbed on the floor, muffling your footsteps. Cobwebs hang from the ceiling, and even for an underground room the air smells close and musty.*"

FIND OUT WHAT THE CHARACTERS ARE DOING

After you describe a new scene to the players, ask, "*What do you do?*" This puts the action into their hands. By telling you what they want their characters to do, the

players are helping to tell the story. As the players take actions based on what they see, hear, and learn, the story of the adventure unfolds.

When the characters enter the kaer, they may want to try to find Strathem's body as quickly as they can. Once they find the body, they discover Strathem's map, and learn that the kaer contains secret rooms. They will probably decide to investigate the secret rooms. As they investigate these rooms, describe what they see and find there, and so on, until they find the room with the Horror in it, and fight it.

This adventure has been designed so that the players can easily figure out the next step they should take and follow the given sequence of events. Of course, not all adventures are this easy. We designed this one to be easy enough for roleplayers of all levels of experience to use.

KEEP THE STORY GOING

The last guideline is to keep the story going. This means nudging the players in the right direction if they start to wander away from the story. For example, if the characters want to go back to the village after each encounter, you should probably suggest that they continue searching the kaer until they find the creature that killed Strathem and the others. That is, after all, why they are in the kaer.

Sometimes the players may not pick up on the clues given in the adventure. For example, they may not think of using their talents and skills to study the dagger when they find it. Or they might decide not to investigate the secret rooms in the kaer. If the players make these choices, drop hints to encourage them to do what the adventure expects, but be subtle! Your suggestions should simply get the players back on track—your function is not to tell them what to do.

ENCOUNTERS

The following encounters below make up the adventure. Each encounter begins with a section that briefly describes what happens in the encounter, followed by a section of boxed text for the gamemaster to read out loud to the players. This is the information the characters discover as they progress through the adventure. The next section contains all the information needed for the gamemaster to run the encounter. The final section of each encounter includes advice for the gamemaster to follow in case the players do something unexpected.

Are you ready? Of course you are! Let's move on to the adventure.

FARLISS THE HERO

This encounter begins the adventure. In this encounter, the characters hear the legend of Farliss the Troubadour, one of Barsaive's legendary heroes and defender of Tardim. By the time the village storyteller ends the story of Farliss' courage, night has fallen. The villagers offer the characters shelter for the night, and urge them to rest before entering the kaer the next day.

Begin the adventure by having each player read aloud the story for his or her character. This will help the players get into the roles of their characters, and serve as a refresher on the other members of their character's team. After each of the players has done this, continue by reading the following.

Read this aloud to the players:

It is evening in the small village of Tardim. You sit with the villagers in their gathering area, listening to the village leader, who has requested your help. The village wizard, Strathem, has been discovered dead inside the village's kaer. The village leader believes that Strathem was killed by a Horror that now dwells within the kaer, and has asked you to find the Horror and destroy it.

You have each stood and introduced yourselves to the village, telling them of your travels and how you came to this village. After the last of you finishes telling his story, the village leader stands.

"Please accept the heartfelt thanks of every member of our village. As you have each shared your stories, hear now the tale of a legend of our village, The Legend of Farliss."

The village storyteller begins the legend of the village's greatest hero, Farliss the Troubadour.

"Farliss was a renowned hero of the years before the Scourge. Originally from the human kingdom of Landis, Farliss spent many years studying at the Eternal Library on the island of Thera. Though he despised the Theran way of life, Farliss knew that the Eternal Library at Thera was the best in all of Barsaive, and believed that it held the knowledge that could save the world from the coming of the Horrors.

"It was at the Eternal Library that Farliss learned of the teachings of the Martyr Scholar, and of Jaron the Everliving, legends of our land's past. Farliss became determined to ensure that these names be remembered for all time. It was the Martyr Scholar who first learned of the Horrors, and Jaron who followed in his steps to unlock the key to the Rites of Protection and Passage, which allowed the people of Barsaive to survive the Scourge. Thus Farliss traveled the lands, telling stories and sharing the teachings of these two learned, wise men.

"In the years just prior to the closing of the kaers, Farliss fought bravely against the increasing numbers of Horrors appearing on the physical plane. His battles against the Horrors earned him ever greater legendary status in the minds and hearts of the people. Among his greatest battles was a series of confrontations with a Horror known as R'Ishann. Many times did the two clash, and each time they parted, each was more determined than ever to destroy the other. Following

one of these confrontations, Farliss discovered a magical dagger, specially empowered to slay Horrors. Our legends say that this dagger can reveal much of the history of Farliss and his battles with the Horrors.

“And so it went. Farliss helped many villages fight off the Horrors before coming to our village, arriving during the last days before our ancestors sealed themselves within the kaer. Farliss joined our village within the kaer, and helped fight off one or two minor Horrors that threatened to enter the kaer from outside.

“Farliss died years later, and was buried within the kaer in a place of great honor. His magical dagger rests with him. His tomb is a sacred place to the people of the village. Though he is many years dead, the legend of Farliss lives within the people of this village. It is our hope that our village will one day spawn a new hero, one whose deeds shall rival that of Farliss the Troubadour.”

At the end of the tale, the village leader turns to you again.

“Again, allow me to express our deepest thanks for coming to our aid. But it is late. Please sleep and awake refreshed. Gather your strength, for tomorrow you shall face whatever lies within our kaer.”

When the village leader finishes speaking, the villagers disperse, heading for their homes for the night. The village leader escorts the characters to the place where they will sleep – and you find that he has allocated you to the families that have lost someone in the threatened Kaer.

DREAMS

When the characters go to sleep, they have dreams that somehow hint at what lies ahead in the adventure.

Read this aloud to the players:

You soon find yourselves preparing for a night's sleep – your hosts speak of their loved ones who have vanished with much fondness and you feel that you have made the right choice in helping these poor people. As you drift off toward slumber, images of the legend of Farliss fill your thoughts. These thoughts of courage and heroic deeds almost overcome your concerns about your upcoming journey into the kaer of this village, to confront whatever lies within.

While the characters sleep, they each have dreams about their upcoming adventure. You can simply tell each player the information in his dream. For a more dramatic effect, photocopy the following information, cut the page along the dotted lines, and hand each

player his or her character's dream. In this case, the players must decide whether or not to share their characters' dreams with each other.

THOM HAMMERBLADE'S DREAM

“You are at work in your smith shop, tempering the steel of a new weapon. The comfortable, familiar ringing sounds of your work echo through the low-ceilinged room. As you work, you suddenly feel a “presence” in the room with you. You turn toward the entrance to your shop. Though you didn't hear him approach, standing there is a human male, dressed in bright clothes. He speaks to you in Dwarven, with the slight accent of the human tongue.

Thom Hammerblade, I ask you to help keep my legend alive in the hearts of all peoples of Barsaive. Within Kaer Tardim you will find the dagger I wielded before the Scourge. Take this dagger, and with your companions, use it to purge the Horrors from this world forever. Do not fail me, Thom Hammerblade. I plead with you to rekindle my legend.”

ARDIS FOARR'S DREAM

“You are sitting in a large study, surrounded by walls of books and scrolls. You are researching the legends of the heroes of Barsaive. Your tutor has impressed on you the importance of knowledge, but you would rather practice your spellcasting.

As you page through tomes of ancient history, you come across a reference to the tiny village of Tardim, and the legendary hero Farliss who died there. Just as you read the reference to Farliss, your tutor enters the room.

Ah, the legend of Farliss. Yes, 'tis an old one indeed. That legend is one that has nearly faded from the memory of Barsaive. 'Tis a shame. Our world still needs heroes like Farliss. You should endeavor to tell the legend of Farliss, that it may inspire others to become heroes.”

ME'GANA'S DREAM

“You are reliving your nightmare yet again. You and your companions are inside the Blood Wood. The Horror lashes out at your friends, slaughtering them one by one, while forcing you to stand motionless and watch them die.

As the last of your friends dies before your eyes, the Horror begins to change, transforming its shape. It grows to a length of seven

feet, and now stands on four reptilian legs. Its body grows a torso that sports human arms and facial features.

As the Horror completes its transformation, it looks at you, laughs, and promises new tortures, saying, 'My games with you are nearly at an end. Soon you will live the terror that your friends suffered so long ago...'

TARG BONESLICER'S DREAM

"You stand in the corridor of the kaer you and your friends discovered while seeking shelter from a fierce storm. A monstrous Horror towers over you, standing eleven feet tall with four massive tentacles in place of arms growing from a reptilian torso. This ugly body moves on four stocky legs, and begins to walk toward your party. You and your friends try desperately to fight off the creature, but your blows have no effect. For each blow you land on the Horror, one of your friends meets his death. As you launch an enraged, desperate attack against the Horror, it knocks you aside, sending you reeling into unconsciousness.

As your vision clouds, the Horror begins to change. Its once-reptilian torso becomes human-like, and its tentacles merge into two human arms. The Horror shrinks to only seven feet tall, and its face becomes that of a human male.

As you struggle to remain awake, the Horror turns towards you and booms out a mocking laugh. 'Soon, troll, very soon, you too shall die at my hands...'

THE NEXT MORNING

In this encounter, the characters awake and prepare to enter the kaer. The villagers tell the characters everything they know about how Strathem was killed. They also give the characters a map of the kaer and a healing potion.

Read this aloud to the players:

It is morning in the village of Tardim. You awake from a refreshing sleep and eat a nourishing breakfast. As you finish your meal, the village leader joins you.

"Before you enter the kaer, I will tell you all I know of what has happened there. It all began seven weeks ago, when a young village woman named Dolia entered the kaer and was never seen again. When we told Strathem about this, he was very disturbed. He explained his suspicion that a Horror had entered the kaer, and

said it was most likely the reason for Dolia's disappearance.

For five weeks this event was repeated: once each week, one of our village entered the kaer and disappeared. We urged Strathem to act against the Horror, but then he also disappeared into the kaer. We learned of his death when Fornan, a young man from the village, entered the kaer to look for Strathem, re-emerging shortly thereafter and obviously nearly insane. He described Strathem's body, and railed about how the creature within him would kill us

This encounter gives the players and their characters the basic background information they need to begin the adventure.

THE MAP

Strathem's Map and the **Player's Map** are sketches of the interior of the kaer. The Player's Map does not include the secret rooms which Strathem used for his studying and experiments. Both maps are provided in the back of this book.

THE VIAL

The healing potion the characters receive is a magic potion that can help a character recover from damage. When a character drinks the potion, he gets a free Recovery Test. The character rolls 2D10 for this test, instead of his normal Recovery dice. The potion can only be used once.

PREPARATIONS

As the characters prepare to go into the kaer, ask the players what equipment their characters will bring. They should probably bring all of their equipment, but especially torches, rope, and weapons.

At this time, ask Ardis Foarr's player to choose which two spells he is going to put into his spell matrices. The player doesn't need to roll dice to do this, he can simply tell you which spells he wants to use. If the player can't decide, suggest that he place Astral Sense and Mind Dagger into his matrices. This gives him a spell that detects magic and an attack spell. After all, he cannot predict what he might encounter!

If the players have any questions about what they have heard, go over the information again, and try to make sure they understand it. Also remind them that they now know as much as the villagers. If they want more information, they need to enter the kaer.

See, we told you this gamemastering stuff was easy!

ENTERING THE KAER

In this encounter, the villagers take the characters to the kaer, and the characters enter the abandoned

structure. This encounter also provides the gamemaster with a brief description of the kaer's rooms and layout.

Read the following aloud to the players:

As soon as you announce that you are ready to enter the kaer, the villagers lead you to the entrance. The opening is round, roughly twelve feet in diameter. Sigils and runic carvings decorate the upper curves of the doorway, carved there by the kaer's builders to ward away the Horrors during the Scourge.

As you approach the kaer entrance, the village leader turns and says to you, "*May Floranuus watch over you.*" He and the other villagers then quickly walk away.

As you walk into the kaer, you notice working light quartz, most likely left there by the villagers who reentered the kaer.

You look at the map again and try to plot the best way to find the Horror that lives within the kaer.

Let the characters wander through the kaer, searching for Strathem's body and the Horror. Describe each area as they enter. Most rooms in the kaer are completely empty, because the villagers relocated all their belongings and the community's property into the village. The only rooms with anything of particular interest in them are Strathem's secret rooms, described in **Strathem's Secret**.

The light sources are all old lanterns lit by light quartz, magical crystals imbued with permanent light spells. These lanterns light the main rooms of the kaer, though some of the peripheral rooms are in total darkness.

THE KAER

The section below briefly describes the rooms of the kaer. When you describe these rooms to the players, embellish on these descriptions. Try to use words that create a feeling of being abandoned and alone. The halls should echo every sound the characters make. The kaer should look and feel very deserted. The clues for the adventure that will point the characters in the right direction can all be found in the rooms of the kaer, and are described below.

The characters may enter the central chamber and discover Strathem's body soon after they enter the kaer. When they find the body, go the section titled **Discovering the Wizard**.

Setting the Mood

While the characters explore the kaer, try to capture the mood of a deserted underground city. Mention unexplained noises that might spook the characters. The kaer should be a gloomy, uninviting place with an atmosphere that makes the characters wish they were somewhere else.

When the characters enter the kaer, read the following description aloud:

The corridor leading into the kaer is roughly carved out of rock and has a dirt floor. Many footprints show in the dirt floor, some leading into the kaer, some leading

out.

As you walk along, you see the disarmed remains of several traps, probably created by the residents of the kaer to help protect against invading Horrors.

Approximately 150 feet along the corridor are two openings, one to the left and one to the right. The corridor continues for another 100 feet and then twists to the right and out of your line of sight.

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR

This long corridor is roughly 8 feet wide and 12 feet high. The dirt floor is covered with many different footprints. Most belong to Strathem and Fornan, made on their trips in and out of the kaer. A number of traps left over from the time of the Scourge line the walls. The traps have been disarmed, but are still there.

The openings to either side lead to two living areas. If the group follows the main corridor, it leads to the central chamber, where the group will find Strathem's body.

When the characters enter one of these rooms, read the following description:

You are in a huge area divided into seven smaller rooms. All the rooms are completely empty. The dirt floors show that tiny burrowing creatures are the only remaining occupants of these living quarters. The room farthest from the corridor is a smaller area divided by what appears to be a dried-up stream. Several low shelves line the walls.

LIVING QUARTERS

These large chambers (150 by 300 feet) are where the people of the kaer lived. Each of these areas consists of seven smaller rooms, each roughly 30 by 40 feet. The only furniture remaining in any of these rooms is the occasional broken bedframe or chair. Each of the large living quarters also contains a washroom area with toilet facilities.

Nearly all the rooms in all the living areas are the same except for the ones used by Strathem and the village leaders. Strathem's room contains furniture. If the characters ask why only this area still has furniture, ask them to roll their Perception dice. Any character with a result of 5 or more remembers that the villagers said that Strathem often entered the kaer, and realizes that this is most likely his room. **Note:** The secret door to the chamber imprisoning the Horror is in this room, but until the characters find Strathem and his map, they cannot find this door.

FOOD GROWTH AREAS

These rooms form the outer perimeter of the kaer. This is where the kaer's food was grown during the Scourge. While these areas once produced many types of vegetables and roots, now only moss grows in these rooms.

When the characters enter one of the food growth rooms, read the following description aloud:

You feel compelled to look up as you enter this room. The ceiling is some 40 feet above your heads. The room smells of the forest, its walls covered with thick layers of moss. The room is twenty feet long, and the rock of the far wall is carved into five ledges, one every eight feet from the ground up. Rotting, rickety ladders still lean against the wall, providing access to each of the platforms. The map refers to these areas as the food growth areas, and you realize that this is where the residents of the kaer grew their food. The light quartz that used to light the upper area of the room has long since gone inert, leaving that portion shrouded in darkness.

All the food growth rooms are connected by corridors. The two corridors in one of the growth rooms lead to the kitchen and the central chamber, while another has a corridor which leads only to the central chamber. Nothing of interest remains in these rooms. If the characters try to climb the ladders, they discover that they were abandoned because they will no longer hold a person's weight—the first rung a character steps on breaks immediately. If a character tries to climb the wall, use a Difficulty Number of 9. If the characters search the ledges, they may dig up some old farming tools, but that's all.

If you want to give the characters a nasty shock, these rooms could house a number of bats on the upper ledges. If the characters climb up to the ledges, the bats will screech and fly out. The bats will not attack the characters, just startle them a bit.

KITCHEN

This room is the kitchen that served the kaer. Like good cooks everywhere, the villagers of Tardim took all their tools when they left.

When the characters enter this room, read the following description aloud:

This room is much smaller than the other chambers in the kaer. As you enter, you notice a slightly musty odor and hear the sound of slowly trickling water. This sound comes from a small opening in the far wall, where water drops from an opening into a basin with a small hole in its bottom. The water is murky and dirty. You discover it is also the source of the musty smell.

This room also contains several large stone tables and benches.

Again, not much is left here. The water was the source used by the kitchen workers when the kaer was populated. The water has since nearly dried up, but a little sludge still trickles out from time to time. This water is not suitable for drinking. It tastes awful, and any character who drinks it will likely retch.

CENTRAL CHAMBER

This 400 by 750 foot area is the central area of the kaer. During the Scourge, this area housed many shops; the village hall, from which the village leaders administered village affairs from day to day; and the village's meeting area.

When the characters enter this area, read the following description aloud:

This room is massive, more than twice the size of the other large chambers you have seen in the kaer. The chamber is dimly lit by several lanterns mounted at strategic points along the walls.

Three-fourths of this chamber looks like it once housed a marketplace or bazaar, and you realize that this area was probably where the village shops were located when the kaer was populated. The buildings of the marketplace are all small huts and shacks, most dilapidated and falling apart. These buildings form a maze of alleys and streets which wind their way through one side of the chamber.

Set off to one side of the marketplace is a large building, with a symbol prominently carved into its face. The symbol is the same as one you saw on a large building in the village, and you assume that this building served as the village hall during the Scourge. The remaining area of the chamber looks like a large amphitheatre, most likely where village gatherings were held.

This chamber's almost-overwhelming size creates echoes with every sound you make. The area has an eerie, haunted atmosphere.

If the characters explore this area, they will find Strathem's body in a side street near the village gathering-area. Strathem was attempting to escape from the kaer, and this is as far as he got before the Horror killed him. When the characters find his body, go to the next encounter, **Discovering the Wizard**.

THE TOMB OF FARLISS

The Tomb of Farliss is located in the "corner" of the central chamber opposite the village gathering area. The tomb is in an isolated niche, set off by itself and protected by a stone door. The simple stone room is barely large enough for the coffin, and measures approximately 10 x 8 x 6 feet. When the characters find the tomb, they notice that the door has been forced open. At the far end of the tomb sits the coffin.

When the characters approach the tomb, read the following description:

As you turn down a small alley in the market area of the kaer's central chamber, you spy what looks like a small stone room, its door half-way open. Carved into the stone above the door is the legend,

"Here lies Farliss the Great, Slayer of Horrors, and Hero to Tardim."

Underneath the words is a carving of an ornate dagger with runes inscribed along its blade.

This is Farliss' tomb. The door is open because Strathem broke into the tomb to get the dagger that belonged to Farliss. If the characters attempt to read the runes, have them make a test using a Difficulty Number

of 10. If they succeed at the test, they learn that the runes say, *"This dagger has drawn the blood of R'Ishann. It shall one day kill him."*

If the characters enter the tomb, read the following description aloud:

Farliss' tomb is a small, dank room. Barely 10 feet from the doorway lies an open coffin. Jumbled skeletal remains are all that is left of the once-proud hero. Scattered among the bones are small bits of decayed clothing and antique jewelry.

As you look upon the desecrated remains of Farliss, you ponder what manner of being could have done this.

Of course, it was Strathem who entered the tomb to find the dagger. In his desperation to find a means to kill R'Ishann, he ransacked the tomb, believing in his heart that the end result would justify his disrespectful means.

WHAT NEXT?

When the characters enter the the central chamber and find Strathem's body, go to the next encounter. If the characters decide they have finished exploring the main rooms of the kaer and did not find Strathem's body, go to the next encounter and read the appropriate information to the players as though they had discovered it on their own. This is one of those situations where you have to nudge the players. In this case, you're pushing them, but it's okay.

DISCOVERING THE WIZARD

In this encounter, the characters find Strathem's body. On Strathem's body they find a map of the kaer which shows the secret entrance to Strathem's secret rooms, and the dagger that the wizard planned to use to destroy the Horror.

When the characters discover Strathem's body, read the following description:

You find yourselves in the kaer's central chamber, where you discover the body of what must have been the wizard Strathem. The body has begun to decay, but all the parts are still there and in the right place. Strathem wears a robe colorfully decorated with many intricately embroidered designs. His face is contorted in what looks like a grimace of pain and terror.

Strathem's left hand still clutches a rolled piece of weathered parchment.

The body the characters find in the central chamber is indeed Strathem's. The rolled parchment is his map of the kaer, which shows the secret entrance to his hidden chambers. When the characters find the body, give them a copy of **Strathem's Map**. When the players compare this map to the one given to them by the village leader, they will notice that it shows several additional small rooms. This should tell them that there is more to the kaer than either they or the villagers realized.

If the players don't notice the differences between the



maps, have the players roll their characters' Perception dice. A result of 5 or more means a character notices the differences.

Other than the pain-filled, terror-stricken expression on Strathem's face, there is nothing to indicate how he died. He appears to have simply died.

THE DAGGER

If the characters move the body, they find Farliss' dagger lying beneath it. The dagger has an ebony handle and a deep blue gem in its pommel. The blade is made of shining steel, with blackened runes etched on either side. **Note:** It is very important that the characters find the dagger. Without it, they have little chance of defeating R'Ishann and freeing the kaer and the village from the Horror. And because the spell that Strathem used to capture and hold the Horror is due to end any day now, this is another good place to nudge the players.

For example, if they squeamishly decide not to move the body, ask the players to roll their Perception dice. Any character with a result of 6 or more notices a glint from under Strathem's body. This glint comes from the dagger. This should suggest that they need to look more closely. If not, try again, perhaps prompting the players by asking, *"Do you want to search the body for clues?"*

If Ardis Foarr uses his Astral Sense spell on the dagger, he learns that it has an astral aura. The Spell Defense of the dagger is 8.

Once the characters find the dagger, they should study it to find out what it is and how it works. The characters can use any number of methods to study the dagger. Thom Hammerblade and Ardis Foarr both possess talents and skills that will allow them to discover the nature of the dagger. Any of the following abilities will prove useful: Weapon History, Read and Write Magic, and Read Runic Carvings.

The Difficulty Number for using any of these talents or skills is 8. Using any of these abilities requires at least 10 minutes of study. If the test is successful, the character receives the following information:

The runes on the blade line both sides. One side reads: *"This dagger has drawn the blood of R'Ishann. It shall one day kill him."* The other side reads: *"Only after this blade is infused with magic can it destroy R'Ishann."*

The characters do not need to study the dagger immediately after they find it, as long as they study it before

they find the Horror. If they seem reluctant to study the dagger or simply don't think to do it, ask the players to roll their characters' Willpower dice. Any character with a result of 5 or more resolves to study the dagger at the first opportunity, the sooner the better.

When the characters finish studying the dagger, ask Ardis Foarr's player to make a Perception Test. If the result is 7 or more, Ardis realizes that he can infuse the blade with magic through use of his Wizardry Talent.

By using the map they found on Strathem's body, the characters can now explore the kaer's secret rooms. They also have a weapon which they can use to fight the Horror.

SECRET ROOMS AND VICTIMS

In this encounter, the characters search the secret rooms Strathem built in the kaer. During their search they encounter the dead bodies of the villagers the Horror forced Strathem to kill. Now the Horror animates these bodies and uses them to attack the characters. The characters also discover the truth behind some of the story, as well as information about the dagger. This encounter ends when the characters enter the room where R'Ishann is being held. The characters fight the Horror and destroy it forever (hopefully). When the characters are ready to enter Strathem's secret rooms, read the following:

Using the map you found on Strathem's body, you find and open the secret doorway that leads to the secret chambers of the kaer. The tunnel behind the secret door is much smaller than those in the rest of the kaer, roughly eight feet wide and nine feet high. Unlike the rest of the kaer, the tunnel is completely dark, showing no signs of any existing source of light.

There are no sources of light in the tunnel or any of the hidden rooms. The characters must use torches in order to see in this section of the kaer. The tunnel runs roughly 50 feet from the secret door to the first room.

SECRET ROOM 1: THE MEDITATION CHAMBER

When the characters enter this room, read the following:

Fifty feet from the entrance to this tunnel is an open doorway that leads into a small room, which is completely dark. As you enter, the light from your torches reveals a triangular-shaped room containing a meditation area and three braziers. As you look around the room, the dim torchlight reveals two decaying bodies, which suddenly lurch to their feet and attack you!

Here is the first combat scene in the adventure. Are you ready?

The bodies are two of Strathem's victims, killed while he was under control of the Horror. The Horror turned them into cadaver men and commanded them to attack anyone who enters the room. The creatures continue to attack until either they or the characters are dead. The statistics for the cadaver men follow.

Begin the combat by asking the players to make Initiative Tests. You make the Initiative Tests for the cadaver men. Use the procedure outlined in the rules above to resolve the combat.

Cadaver Men (2)

Initiative

Initiative Dice: D8

Combat

Attack Dice: 7/D12

Damage Dice: 9/D8+D6

Physical Defense: 5

Physical Armor: 0

Spell Defense: 6

Mystic Armor: 0

Social Defense: 11

Movement

Movement: 20 yards per round

Damage

Death Rating: 36

Recovery Tests per Day: 2

Wound Threshold: 9

Recovery Dice: D6

Unconsciousness Rating: 30

When the fight is over (and the characters have defeated the cadaver men), the characters might want to look around the room. This is Strathem's meditation chamber, decorated very sparsely with a plain rug in the center and the three braziers, one in each corner of the room. This room contains nothing else. A doorway on the far side of the room leads to the next room.

If the characters ask for information about the



cadaver men, describe the bodies of the cadaver men to roughly match the descriptions of two of the villagers who entered the kaer and never emerged. One is a male, the other is female and turns out to be Dolia (from **The Next Morning**).

If any of the characters took a lot of damage, they can use the healing potion that the villagers gave them. If their injuries are actually less serious than they might think, suggest that they might want to save the potion, in case they encounter more hostile creatures.

SECRET ROOM 2: THE STUDY

This room is where Strathem kept his journal and spell books. The door the characters enter through is open, though the door opposite is closed. Two more cadaver men await them here, with orders to attack anyone who enters the room.

When the characters enter this room, read the following:

A 60-foot tunnel connects the room you just left with another room of similar size. The door to this room is open. As you enter, you see a large desk straight ahead and an old bookshelf filled with tattered volumes standing to its left. Next to the bookshelf is a large wooden door. As you move further into the room, you discover that you are not alone. Two more obviously dead bodies stagger toward you, preparing to attack!

Here we go—another combat scene! Use the procedure outlined in the **Combat Rules**. These two bodies have the same game statistics as those from the previous fight. Use the stats provided above.

After the fight, the characters might want to look around this room. The only item of particular interest in this room is Strathem's journal. The journal reveals much of Strathem's activities recently and during his time in the kaer, and the circumstances leading up to his death. The following excerpts from the journal will prove useful to the characters. If the characters read the journal, read the following aloud. The dates are provided to give the players the approximate dates on which these events occurred. The current year is 1509 TH.

Dated 1469 TH: *"An unfortunate accident committed by myself has allowed one of the Horrors to cross into our world. I have since used magic to imprison the creature, but must now work to find a method by which it can be destroyed..."*

Dated 1478 TH: *"I have learned the name of the beast. It is called R'Ishann. According to the history texts of the village, this is the same Horror that Farliss the Great battled repeatedly before the Scourge. Now, Farliss' task falls to me. I must find a way to destroy the Horror."*

Dated 1498 TH: *"I continue to meet with failure in my attempts to discover a way to destroy the Horror. I cannot attack the beast*

while the spell of imprisonment holds it, and I begin to fear that I must wait to kill the Horror until after it is freed, in the year 1509 TH."

Dated 1509 TH: *"Today I have learned the true power of the Horror. During my studies, I blanked out, and when I awoke I was standing above the body of Dolia, daughter of Flannan. The diabolical Horror I have imprisoned then informed me that I was responsible for her death, and that I would continue to kill. I pray to Mynbruje that I might finish my task and at last destroy the beast..."*

Note: Four similar entries follow this one, each dated one week after the previous one.

Dated 1509 TH: *"I have at last discovered how I may destroy the Horror—I must use the dagger of the great hero Farliss. It once blooded the Horror, now it shall slay it. I fear that the legendary dagger will not survive the attack on the Horror, but will be destroyed beyond repair. Surely, this is a small price to pay to rid the world of the beast I have allowed in."*

The last entry in the journal reads as follows:

Dated 1509 TH: *"I have unearthed R'Ishann's Bane, the dagger once wielded by Farliss the Great. With R'Ishann's Bane I will finally be able to destroy the Horror which has terrorized our people. I have only to wait for the spell of imprisonment to end and I may slay the Horror. The time is soon, less than 20 days from now. When the time comes I shall..."*

The entry abruptly ends at the word "shall..." This marks the point at which R'Ishann took control of Strathem for the last time, and killed the wizard.

If the characters have not yet studied the dagger, now would be a good time to do so. Once they have completed their study, the next step is to go the last secret room and face the Horror.

The characters might want to use their Recovery Tests or the healing potion at this time. They will need to be as healthy as possible before they face the Horror in the next room.

Leaving the Room

When the characters try to go through the door to the last room, they find it locked. Strathem magically sealed the door as a last line of defense against R'Ishann, in case the Horror broke free of the Imprisonment spell too soon.

If Ardis Foarr uses his Astral Sense spell, he can detect a magical aura on the door. The door has a Spell Defense of 7. In order to open the door, Ardis Foarr must successfully cast Dispel Magic on it. The Difficulty Number for dispelling the magic on the door is a 9. Once the door is dispelled, the characters can open the door and continue on to the next room, described below.

SECRET ROOM 3: THE EXPERIMENT CHAMBER

When the characters exit the study and travel toward the last secret room, read the following:

You leave Strathem's study and continue toward the last of the secret rooms in the kaer. The corridor stretches roughly 100 feet before ending at a large, closed, wooden door. There are numerous runes on the door, etched into its wooden surface. The runes are similar to those you saw on the entranceway of the kaer.

This door is also locked, and magically sealed. If Ardis Foarr uses his Astral Sense spell, he can detect a magical aura on this door. The door has a Spell Defense of 7. In order to open the door, Ardis Foarr must successfully cast Dispel Magic on it. The Difficulty Number for Dispelling the door is a 9. Unfortunately, dispelling the enchantment on the door will also dispel the Imprisonment spell holding R'Ishann. While under normal circumstances a wizard of Ardis Foarr's Circle and skill could not dispel the magic of a wizard as powerful as Strathem, in this case he can: the Imprisonment spell has been weakened both by the passage of time and by the efforts of R'Ishann to escape. The Imprisonment spell is so weak that dispelling the magic on the door is enough to completely dissolve it.

CONFRONTING R'ISHANN

When the characters open the door to the last room, read the following:

With the aid of Ardis's Dispel Magic spell, you open the door to the last unexplored room of the kaer. You walk into the room and meet the horrendous sight of R'Ishann the Horror. It is 7 feet long and has six short, thick tentacles and looks like an impossibly bloated, bubbling corpse. When it moves, bulky masses shift and rotate beneath its scabby hide. A shimmering haze rises from it, and it emits a cool, sterile smell like rubbing alcohol.

The creature is surrounded by a dim green aura, which begins to fade as you enter the room. You see the creature's mouth move when it speaks, but its voice sounds like it's coming from inside your heads.

"Ah, freedom at last!! For too long I have suffered within the spell set upon me by that incompetent wizard, unable to feed for so long. Now which of you shall be my first meal?"

As you try desperately to adjust to the bizarre appearance and voice of the creature, you notice that another animated corpse, like the others you already fought, is moving from behind the Horror to attack you. You turn at a sound behind you and discover the reanimated body of Strathem the wizard, also intent on your deaths.

This is it—the last combat of the adventure, and the showdown with the Horror. Strathem's body and the other humaniod creature are now cadaver men. Use the same statistics as shown above for them, except that Strathem can still cast spells. He can only use Mind Dagger, however, and when he successfully hits a target with the spell, the gamemaster rolls D12 to determine how much damage the target takes.

The spell holding R'Ishann in place is fading, but will continue to hold the Horror until the end of the second round of combat. This means that you should run two Combat Rounds before the Horror will attack the characters. After it is free, the Horror immediately attacks the characters, starting with Targ Boneslicer and switching to Thom Hammerblade when the troll is dead. To survive this situation, the characters must kill the cadaver men and the Horror before any of the intrepid adventurers die.

R'Ishann

Initiative

Initiative Dice: D12

Combat

Attack Dice: 8/D8+D6 (2 per round)

Damage Dice: 13/D12+D10

Magic

Spellcasting: 13/D12+D10 (Mind Dagger Spell)

Effect: 11/D10+D8

Spells: Mind Dagger (Damage: 11/D10+D8)

Movement

Movement: 40 yards per round

Physical Defense: 9

Physical Armor: 5

Spell Defense: 10

Mystic Armor: 4

Social Defense: 11

Damage

Death Rating: 80

Recovery Tests: 5

Wound Threshold: 10

Recovery Dice: D8+D6

Unconsciousness Rating: Immune

Destroying R'Ishann

If the characters have studied the dagger, they know that it has the power to destroy the Horror. They should also know that in order for it to be used for this purpose, the dagger must be "infused with magical energy." This means that Ardis Foarr must weave a thread into the dagger, then someone must strike the Horror with the dagger. The Difficulty Number for weaving the thread to the spell is a 10. To weave his thread, Ardis must make a Wizardry Test and get a result of 10. If he succeeds, the thread lasts for 3 Combat Rounds before it fades and must be woven again.

After the thread is woven to the dagger, it must be used against the Horror in an attack. The Horror can only be attacked successfully after the Imprisonment spell

has faded. That means the characters cannot damage the Horror with their attacks until the third round of combat. Of course, in the third round, the Horror can attack back. Isn't life swell for the characters?

This scene is a good place for the players to use teamwork. During the first two rounds of combat, for example, while Ardis attempts to weave the thread, the other characters can fight off the cadaver men. Once the thread is woven, Me'gana can use the dagger to attack the Horror, while Targ and Thom attack either the cadaver men or the Horror. Successfully weaving the thread frees Ardis to help in the fight as well. If R'Ishann is struck by the dagger while the weapon is powered by a magical thread, the Horror is instantly destroyed in a blinding flash of light. As soon as this happens, the cadaver men fall to the ground, dead bodies once again--the magic that animated them is gone.

What If The Characters Fail?

It is possible that the characters will be unable to destroy the Horror before it destroys all of them. This would be an unfortunate way to end the adventure, but it is possible. The adventure has been structured to give the characters an above-average chance of winning,

but one can never predict how the dice are going to roll.

Because we assume you don't want to kill the characters, we offer the following suggestions. When making attacks against the characters, roll the dice in such a way that none of the players can see the results. If necessary, the Horror or the cadaver men can miss attacks, even if the dice results are good enough to hit the characters. This is called "fudging the dice," and allows the characters a better chance of killing the Horror before dying themselves. Don't fudge every roll, but allow the characters time and opportunity to weave the thread and attack and destroy the Horror.

Also, remember that if a character is knocked unconscious, he or she can make a Recovery Test and wake up. While this means you are deviating slightly from the rules (which in itself is okay), it will help even the odds if the characters are getting beaten up badly.

If neither of these suggestions seems likely to resolve the problems of your adventurers, then let the dice fall where they may--let the characters die if the dice say they die. While they may go away disappointed, they will have learned the sad lesson that the world of **Earthdawn** is indeed a dangerous one, and in dire need of a continuing supply of brave heroes.

After the Horror is destroyed (if the Horror is



destroyed), the characters will find the dagger used to dispatch the despicable creature lying on the ground. Even though the dagger is no longer magical, it still represents the legend of Farliss. The legend of this adventure is now part of the dagger's legend, too.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the Horror is destroyed, the adventure is over. The characters have freed the kaer of the village of Tardim from the menace of R'Ishann.

When they return to the village, the characters are welcomed as heroes. That evening, the village has a celebration in honor of the characters. During the celebration, the characters are asked to recount their adventure, so that it may be added to the history of the village of Tardim.

When the characters return to the village, read the following:

"The village thanks you most wholeheartedly. You have freed our kaer and village from certain death and destruction, and your deeds will always be remembered.

Since your arrival, we have shared tales with each other; you of your exploits, and we the legend of Farliss. Now, help us add a new tale to our history. Share with us the tale of your adventure within our kaer..."

Your return to the village is met with great joy and happiness. The villagers plan a celebration that evening in your honor.

During the celebration, the village leader stands to address the assembled villagers.

In this final part of the adventure, you should ask the players to roleplay telling their version of their adventure within the kaer. Each should take a turn in recounting the tale of their confrontation with R'Ishann the Horror.

When retelling the story, the characters may choose not to disclose the entire truth behind Strathem's death, keeping the wizard's faults and errors a secret. The characters may also try to keep secret the fact that they still have Farliss' dagger. If so, that's fine. If they choose to tell the villagers about it, the village leader will insist that the characters keep it, to help them spread the tales of the legend of Farliss the Great. They may also use the dagger to help them build their own legends.

After the players have finished their tale, read the following:

As you finish telling the village about your adventure in their kaer, the village leader stands once again.

"The history of this village contains many tales of heroes, those of Farliss and others of his time, those of the years within the kaer, and now, those of these four heroes. Know that we shall share your stories with all others who

come here, and that your tales of adventure shall always be a part of the history of Tardim. May the legends you build of your exploits and adventures one day rival those of Farliss, and all other heroes of Barsaive."

CONGRATULATIONS!

Your first adventure in **Earthdawn** may be over, but there are many more in store for you and your friends. Help us continue to explore the land of Barsaive and battle the Horrors. For now is the Time of Legends! Now is the Time of Courage! Now is the Time of Heroes! The world of **Earthdawn** awaits you!

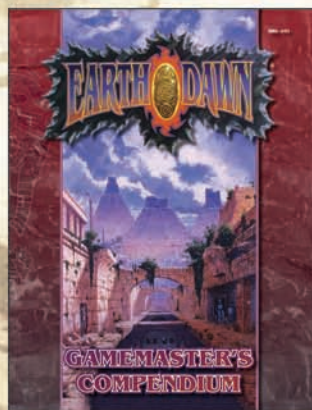
STRATHEN'S MAP



PLAYER'S MAP



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