EARTHDAWN

MAGIC
A MANUAL OF MYSTIC SECRETS

Magic ™

A MANUAL OF MYSTIC SECRETS

FASA CORPORATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MAGIC: A MANUAL OF MYSTIC SECRETS

INTRODUCTION

Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets is a rules expansion for the **Earthdawn** game.

The heart of the **Earthdawn** game, magic pervades every aspect of a character's life. It brought the Horrors to the world, saved the denizens of Barsaive from the Scourge and serves as the wellspring of power for the talents and abilities of adepts. This book expands on the use of magic in the **Earthdawn** game and provides rules for using magic in previously unexplored ways. **Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets** explains new uses of blood magic, thread magic and spell magic, offers rules for summoning and enchanting, describes ways adepts can enter and explore astral space, describes what they will find there and provides a system for players to design new spells.

This book picks up where previous discussions of magic and its uses in the **Earthdawn** game leave off. The **Blood Magic** section provides an overview of blood magic, including how it is used in Barsaive and the Theran Empire, and guidelines for new ways for characters to use blood magic. **Adept Magic** introduces a new aspect of adept magic called talent knacks that expands the use of adept talents. The **Thread Magic** section offers new uses for thread magic and the Thread Weaving talent, plus additional information about the nature of magical threads and thread magic. **Spell Magic** provides a number of spellcasting knacks, two new types of spells, rules for the use of spell matrix objects, optional rules for using raw magic, and a number of clarifications regarding the role of spellcasting in the game. **Enchanting** explains how the many different types of magical items in the world of **Earthdawn** are produced and offers rules for making everything from the simplest firestarter to the most earth-shaking legendary items. The **Astral Space** section describes the vast and mysterious realm of astral space and the Netherworlds. The **Summoning** section describes the process by which characters may summon spirits in **Earthdawn. Other Types of Magic** begins with a discussion of group ritual magic, offers guidelines for allowing adepts to acquire familiars, describes several forms of divination magic used in Barsaive and discusses the relationship between magic and the Passions. This section concludes by explaining a new magician discipline, the shaman. The **Spell Design** section describes a system for creating new **Earthdawn** spells and includes several new spells.

Gamemasters and players will need the **Earthdawn (ED)** rulebook and the **Earthdawn Companion** in order to use this book. Before incorporating the new rules presented in this book into their game, players and gamemasters should review the information presented in the **Workings of Magic** and **Spell Magic** sections of the **Earthdawn** rulebook.

BLOOD MAGIC

The **Earthdawn** rulebook describes blood magic as one of several forms of magic used in the world of **Earthdawn**. To gain access to the power offered by the use of blood magic, a magician must sacrifice his own blood. This sacrifice usually requires only a drop or two of blood, but the fact remains that the magician is drawing on his own life energy to power his magic.

Because blood magic offers a vivid reminder of the torments people inflicted on themselves in the days before and during the Scourge, ordinary citizens often feel deeply suspicious of magicians who use blood magic. Most Barsaivians work hard at putting the devastation of the Horrors behind them or out of their minds completely, and choose to reject everything that blood magic represents—even its potential for helping those still battling the remnants of the Horrors. As a result, those who do accept blood magic as a necessary means to achieve the greater good of destroying the Horrors now refer to this practice as "life magic" in an attempt to stress the positive aspect of this magic and cultivate tolerance among the mainstream for those magicians who use it.

This section discusses the history and spread of blood magic throughout the world, the nature of blood magic, and its uses in Barsaive and the Theran Empire. Lastly, this section provides guidelines for different ways players and gamemasters can use blood magic in their **Earthdawn** games. This information includes new uses of blood magic as well as blood magic material that originally appeared in the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**.

HISTORY

Blood magic originated in the magical laboratories and experiment chambers of those men and women who would one day found the Theran Empire.

When the population of Nehr'esham (the "center of the mind," which would become the Eternal Library at Thera) threatened to grow beyond its leaders' control, they chose to impose rites of initiation upon those who wished to join the Great Project. One of these rites evolved as a blood oath sworn between the initiate and the leaders of Nehr'esham. With this oath, initiates dedicated their lives to the Great Project and to the completion of the Eternal Library.

This oath made with blood quickly became a tradition among the scholars at Nehr'esham, and they soon began to use it to swear oaths for other purposes as well. Former enemies used blood oaths to swear everlasting peace, and marriages were often sealed with blood oaths. The magical energies of the world began to pattern themselves after the practices of the people and eventually imbued blood oaths with magic power. Where once a man who violated a blood oath was only shunned by those around him, now the magic inherent in the blood oath physically marked the violator. Runic scars would appear on the oath-breaker's body where the blood for the oath was drawn. These scars resisted all healing, including magical healing.

THE DISSEMINATION

The leaders of Nehr'esham sent adventurers out into the world to collect works for the Eternal Library, and those adventurers spread the ideas and practices of blood oaths as they traveled. Adventurers for the Library used blood oaths to seal trade agreements, pledges of loyalty and friendship, and for other important events and promises. The use of blood magic spread throughout the known world, and as the frequency of its use increased, so did the strength of its bond to the world's magic. And as the bond of power between magical energy and blood magic rituals increased, so did the use of blood magic.

RESEARCH

Other uses of blood magic evolved from this prosaic beginning. Wizards and nethermancers witnessed the power of blood magic and sought to better understand it. They reasoned that if blood magic could so powerfully seal oaths and promises, then it might have other magical uses. They began to experiment with blood sacrifices to power magical items. They met with limited success using blood magic to power existing items, but also discovered methods of creating magical items powered solely by blood magic. This research resulted in what are now known as blood charms and living armor—magical charms and armor that offer their users powerful benefits or protection when imbued with blood magic.

During the years when research was producing blood charms, adventurers also found (some say formed) another type of blood magic. Heroes found that sacrificing their

own blood allowed them to improve their talents and magical abilities beyond their races' physical and mental limits. Magicians used blood magic to increase the duration of spells, while the followers of other Disciplines used it to enhance the effects of their magical talents. In a familiar cycle, the widespread use of blood magic strengthened its power and caused it to manifest in still other forms. Unfortunately, this increased access to blood magic came at a time when the people of Barsaive were becoming desperate, aware that the Scourge would soon overtake them.

PROTECTION

Before the Therans refined the Rites of Protection and Passage and offered them to the people of Barsaive during the days of the Orichalcum Wars, people sought to create individual methods of protection against the coming Scourge. Many people experimented with blood magic, but often obtained results that proved as horrible as or worse than the effects of the Scourge itself. These experiments continued even as people shut themselves into the kaers and citadels. Having heard of and seen the Horrors' terrible power, Barsaivians feared that even the Theran methods of protection would fail, and so they embraced blood magic rituals to provide additional safeguards. The proven powers of blood magic led people to believe that if used properly, blood magic would protect them even from those Horrors strong enough to break through the Therans' defenses.

The most horrifying legends describe communities sacrificing peoples' lives to power their blood magic rituals, thereby hoping to protect their descendants against the centuries-long Scourge. Some communities even used lotteries to select the victims of the blood magic. These victims were forced to accept their fate or be banished to the outside.

These are extreme examples, however. Most Barsaivians refused to embrace the power of blood magic so profoundly. A majority continued to use the power of blood magic only as it was taught through the centuries—to swear oaths and promises, and occasionally to create blood charms and provide magical enhancement.

The end of the Scourge and the opening of the kaers and citadels marked a decline in the use of blood magic in Barsaive. Though this decline may be a result of many things, it is most likely a reaction to the effects of blood magic as used by the elves of the Elven Court at Wyrm Wood. Too proud to accept Theran protection against the Horrors, the elves turned to blood magic when their own methods of magical protection failed. The most extreme form of blood magic lives on in the elves of what is now called Blood Wood. Barsavians have seen the effects of blood magic used in desperation, and they recoil in fear and disgust from those who accepted these methods.

TYPES OF BLOOD MAGIC

The use of blood magic has evolved into two distinct practices. Most adepts and magicians practice a type of blood magic whose power comes from small personal sacrifices of one's own life energy. This type of blood magic has come to be known as life magic. Though all uses of blood magic permanently mark the user both physically and mentally, the practice of life magic is considered relatively safe.

The term blood magic now refers almost exclusively to magic that draws its power not from the self-sacrifice of personal life energy, but from the sacrifice of unwilling victims. Though it is no longer practiced in Barsaive, rumors say the Therans still use this type of blood magic. Indeed, many attribute the Therans' ages-long pre-eminence in the magical arts to their continued practice of sacrificial blood magic.

One faction of magical scholars believes that blood magic poses no hazard to its users when employed in its original form—for oaths, charms and so on. These scholars propose that blood magic serves simply as an extension of the basic tenets of magic, and that its use poses no more danger to adepts than the use of patterns and threads.

Other scholars claim that blood magic originated with the Horrors. These scholars insist that any use of blood magic draws the user closer to the Horrors and that those who practice blood magic must themselves be corrupted.

The scholarly world does not fall strictly into these two camps, however. A third faction has seen blood magic used for both good and evil. Though the Blood Wood offers an ever-present example of blood magic gone horribly wrong, others have benefited from life magic and suffered no ill effects. These individuals agree that blood magic offers great power, but also stress that such power demands great responsibility of those who would use it.

NATURE AND USES OF BLOOD MAGIC

Earthdawn characters may use blood magic in a variety of ways. Most commonly, characters may use blood magic to power certain talents, spells, talent knacks (see **Talent Knacks**, p. 18), blood charms and living armor. Characters may also use blood magic to enhance their talents or abilities, to swear blood oaths and perform blood magic rituals. Characters may even use a special form of blood magic, known as death magic, to perform heroic feats, curse enemies or places, or create true

patterns and powerful oaths. Every use of blood magic requires a character to make a sacrifice, which may take the form of Strain, permanent damage, Wounds, or even his life. Unless otherwise noted, a character taking a Wound as required by certain uses of blood magic need not make a Knockdown Test for that Wound. These sacrifices appear in the descriptions of specific blood magic uses in this section.

Before introducing blood magic in a game, however, gamemasters should carefully consider the following points.

GAMEMASTER CONSIDERATIONS

As the gamemaster, you determine what part blood magic will play in your **Earthdawn** game. Will it be a positive source of magic or will it be used only by evil beings and people? Will blood oaths be a way of life or cause for shunning? Are blood charms available in most cities and towns in Barsaive, or are they only available on the black market? Perhaps your campaign will not include blood magic at all. Perhaps in your world of **Earthdawn**, all uses of blood magic were forbidden at the end of the Scourge. If this is the game you choose to play, simply ignore all references to blood magic in **Earthdawn** products.

The material FASA publishes for **Earthdawn** will view blood magic as it was described in the history section. That is, blood magic exists in two forms: positive blood magic or life magic, and evil blood magic. **Life magic is the only type of blood magic player characters can use.** This practice allows the character to power his magic using his own blood. The *sole exception* to this is ritual blood magic, in which a donor voluntarily provides blood for the magic (see **Ritual Blood Magic**, below). Gamemaster characters corrupted by the Horrors and other evil gamemaster characters may perform evil blood magic (see **Death Magic**, p. 17). We chose this view because we believe this dichotomy will inspire interesting characters and stories. But again, you must decide how you will run your **Earthdawn** game.

We offer the following considerations to help you determine the role of blood magic in your game.

1. Blood magic is a powerful force and can serve as an important element in the mood or atmosphere of an adventure. At the same time, life magic can allow player characters to become very powerful.

2. If you use blood magic in your campaign, your players should track any life magic damage their characters take in the appropriate space on the Character Record Sheet. This will help them distinguish between temporary damage received in combat and "permanent" damage from using blood magic.

The damage caused by using life magic varies in duration. Most damage from blood magic is permanent, but some lasts only until the specific use of blood magic expires. For example, if a magician uses life magic to increase the duration of a spell, the damage can be healed after the spell expires.

The damage from using blood charms lasts until the charm is used or until a year and a day pass.

3. If you decide to use blood magic in your game, make it one of the more disturbing elements of **Earthdawn**. Blood magic should serve as a reminder of the atrocities the people of Barsaive inflicted on themselves in attempts to protect themselves from the Scourge. Blood magic is one of the scars the Scourge left on this world, one created not by the Horrors, but by man.

Whenever player characters use life magic, they should feel uneasy about doing so. Even their choice to use life magic and what that choice requires them to do to themselves should disturb the player characters. Though the world of **Earthdawn** is trying to recover from a great physical disaster, its people are also trying to redeem themselves for the actions they took to fend off the Scourge and the Horrors. Even in pursuit of this noble goal, the ends may not justify the means, and the player characters should recognize that possibility.

POWERING TALENTS, SPELLS AND KNACKS

Many **Earthdawn** talents and spells require blood magic in their use. Specific requirements are noted in the description of such talents and spells. Many Discipline abilities, such as Glamour (Illusionist, Fourth Circle) or Resurrect Mount (Cavalryman, Thirteenth Circle), and talent knacks require blood magic as well.

Generally, a character uses the form of life magic known as Strain—damage caused by a slight loss of life energy—to power talents, spells and knacks. Strain may be healed in the same fashion as damage taken in combat.

POWERING BLOOD CHARMS AND LIVING ARMOR

Blood magic is also used to power blood charms and certain types of living armor. Usually, these applications of blood magic cause the user permanent damage that cannot be healed until the item is either used or removed. (See pp. 255–59, **ED**, for rules.)

A character may gain a +1 step bonus to any talent or ability by taking a number of Strain Points equal to his Wound Threshold. The character does not need to make a Knockdown Test for taking the Strain, and the bonus applies for only a single test. The character may heal the Strain damage and the resulting Wound normally.

A character may gain a +3 step bonus to any talent or ability by inflicting a physical wound on himself and drawing blood (for example, slicing his hand with a knife). The bonus applies for only a single test. Any damage resulting from a self-inflicted Wound may be healed normally, but the Wound cannot be healed for a year and a day and leaves a noticeable scar. For example, a sky raider chooses to use this form of blood magic and cuts himself with a large knife. The sky raider has a Wound Threshold of 12, so he takes 12 points of damage and a Wound. The sky raider can heal the 12 points of damage normally, but the Wound cannot be healed for a year and a day. Such Wounds do not prevent characters from increasing their talent ranks or advancing to new Circles. These Wounds can be healed in the same manner as blood oath Wounds (see p. 11).

When using this form of blood magic, a character takes damage immediately *after* performing the test for which he temporarily enhanced a talent or ability. Apply any damage resulting from the test at the same time. This rule makes it possible for a character to suffer several Wounds or even die from pushing himself too hard.

Once a character has pushed a talent or ability, he cannot push that talent or ability again until he heals all damage resulting from that blood magic push (but not the Wound caused by the push).

Characters may combine a blood magic push with a dying act (see **Sacrifice Magic,** p. 14).

BLOOD OATHS

Blood oaths represent one of the most significant uses of blood magic in **Earthdawn.** When swearing a blood oath, characters use blood magic to seal a promise. A character may swear a blood oath with any gamemaster character who holds an attitude of Unfriendly or better toward the character. With the gamemaster's permission, two player characters may swear a blood oath between themselves.

RITUAL BLOOD MAGIC

In ritual blood magic, a character draws magical power from a donor's blood. In this rarely used form of blood magic, the power derived from the donor's blood is used to create specific effects, rather than enhancing other uses of magic. Examples of ritual blood magic include the nethermancer spells Create Life and Alter Life.

PUSHING TALENTS AND ABILITIES

Adepts in Barsaive are often called on to perform acts of heroism beyond even their extraordinary abilities. In such instances, an adept may use blood magic to tap into the power of his own life force and temporarily enhance, or "push," one of his talents or abilities.

Blood oaths can only be sworn between two characters at a time. If two characters wish to swear a blood oath with three dwarfs, for example, each character would have to complete the oath three times, once with each dwarf. In the only exception to this rule, a group of adepts can swear an oath of blood peace to their group as a whole as part of the ceremony to create a group pattern. (See p. 53, **ED Companion,** for more information about group patterns.)

Blood oaths must be sworn voluntarily. A character who swears a blood oath while under the influence of magical charms, spells or drugs (including strong drink) is considered to have done so voluntarily. Blood oaths possess great power—regardless of intent or circumstance, magic binds those who swear such pledges.

Characters who swear a blood oath generally promise to perform an even exchange of abilities or deeds, agree to abide by equally binding vows, or offer unceasing and active loyalty to one another, though blood oaths may also be used to strike other important bargains. Legends speak of scoundrels who somehow deceived others into swearing unevenly advantageous blood oaths, but these bounders always fared badly as a result. Blood magic always punishes the unjust user.

Blood oaths last for a year and a day. At the end of that time, a blood oath can be renewed for another year and a day.

Blood Oath Wounds

All types of blood oaths—blood peace oaths, blood promise oaths, and blood sworn oaths—cause Wounds that a character may heal only after a year and a day, with the number of Wounds depending on the type of blood oath. In addition to this damage, a character who knowingly or unknowingly breaks his oath takes a Wound that can be healed only by use of a magical healing potion.

Healing potions do not automatically repair blood Wounds, however. In addition to drinking the potion, the player must make a Recovery Test against a Spell Defense of 24. Add 8 to the player's Toughness step for the test. If the test succeeds, the Wound heals but leaves a runic scar. Any magician with the Read and Write Magic talent recognizes the scar as the name of the character whom the player character betrayed. A successful Recovery Test also does not heal damage caused by the player's failure to keep his oath (described for each type of oath). If the player's Recovery Test fails, the Wound remains, but the player heals a number of Damage Points equal to the result of the Recovery Test.

A character can only heal a Wound caused by violating a blood oath after he has healed all other Wounds (for example, those inflicted in combat). A single dose of healing potion heals only one Wound.

Legends say that questors can heal Wounds caused by violating blood oaths, but no recent evidence substantiates these tales.

Blood Peace

A blood peace oath seals a truce between two characters. Any two living characters of Name-giver races may swear a blood peace oath.

To swear blood peace, the characters each draw blood from their own dominant weapon arm (t'skrang draw blood from their tails). Each character suffers 2 points of damage, which the players record on their character record sheets under Blood Magic. This damage cannot be healed as long as the blood peace remains in effect and becomes permanent if a character violates the blood peace oath.

Each character then presses his weapon into the other character's blood. As the blood dries on the weapon, the characters swear the oath. The oath varies across Barsaive and among races, but all versions include the elements contained in the following example.

> "As the sun shines upon the earth, so shall light illuminate my deeds. All people shall see that I mean no harm to [other character's name]. I shall take no action to bring harm to him or those of his blood, or by inaction allow harm to befall [other character's name] or those of his blood.
> "As the moon shines upon the earth, so shall light illuminate my intent. All people shall see that I honor my promise."

By swearing a blood peace oath, two characters promise that they will never harm one another or allow harm to come to the other through inaction. A character who knowingly or unknowingly violates a blood peace oath releases the other from the vow. In addition, the character receives a magical Wound in the place from which he drew blood for the oath. This Wound lasts for a year and a day from the time it appears. A Wound created by violating a blood peace oath does not heal naturally during this time, but the character may attempt to heal the Wound by using a healing potion (see **Blood Oath Wounds,** above). Any Wound healed in this manner leaves a runic scar that permanently marks the character as a blood peace betrayer, though

characters may hide such scars with costumes, make-up or illusions.

If both characters keep their vow for a year and a day, the place on each character's body from which he drew blood becomes the color of gold, silver, rubies or emeralds. The Damage Points taken for swearing the blood peace can now be healed as normal damage. Each character's Death Rating increases by 1 if both characters maintain their vow of peace after this time. The characters lose this Death Rating bonus if either breaks the vow, but neither suffers any damage for breaking the blood peace.

Alternatively, characters may swear a new blood peace oath after a year and a day. Renewing a blood peace oath in this manner does not cause additional points of damage, but the characters do not receive any Death Rating bonuses. Though simply maintaining the blood peace may seem more advantageous than re-swearing the oath, re-swearing the oath represents a stronger commitment between the characters and therefore offers stronger magic. Characters may continue to renew blood peace oaths indefinitely.

A player's character may swear separate blood peace oaths with as many characters as the player wishes, limited only by the number of points of damage the character must take for each oath.

Blood Promise

Characters who swear a blood promise oath pledge to perform certain dangerous or heroic deeds. Any two living Name-giver characters whose attitudes are Unfriendly or better toward each other may swear a blood promise oath.

To swear a blood promise, characters first cut their chests over their hearts and their foreheads, drawing blood. Each character takes 4 points of damage, which cannot be healed for a year and a day or until both parties fulfill their promises. The damage becomes permanent for characters who do not fulfill their sworn promise.

Each character then wipes the blood from his forehead with his left hand and the blood from his chest with his right hand. The characters face each other and press their hands together, making sure the blood mixes. As the blood dries on their hands, the characters state their names and recite their promises to each other. The characters should state their promises as similarly as possible and describe the pledged deeds precisely. The characters must also state the time period within which they must perform their deeds. The time period may not exceed a year and a day. Each character also must describe a talent or skill he

JANET AULISIO 1996.

will use while accomplishing the deed, and both characters must agree to meet after fulfilling their promises and within a year and a day of the blood promise.

Delthrien, the elven archer, finds himself negotiating with Filtch, a windling thief of poor reputation. Delthrien needs Winter Fury, a magical arrow hidden somewhere in the caverns belonging to the dragon Icewing. Filtch needs bits of three magical plants—olis eye, moonreed and floating palm, all rumored to grow in the Mist Swamps. Filtch knows the secrets of Icewing's caverns, but he refuses to sell his knowledge or lead a team. He also does not want to go mucking about in a marsh, so Filtch and Delthrien strike a deal. They agree to swear a blood promise and make the following oaths:

"I, Delthrien, elven archer, promise to travel to the Mist Swamps. There I shall obtain leaves from three magical plants: olis eye, moonreed and floating palm. I shall be diligent in my efforts in the swamps. I shall slay the dangerous beasts that dwell there with my True Shot. I shall not tarry nor accept any other deed until I have secured the leaves. I shall find these before the start of winter season. I shall then return to this tavern and deliver the leaves to Filtch the thief. With Filtch I mix my blood in promise."

"I, Filtch, windling thief, promise to travel to the caverns of the dragon Icewing. I shall use my Silent Walk to tread

through his caverns more softly than snow falling on a quiet night, and there I shall obtain the arrow Winter Fury. I shall be diligent in my efforts. I shall not tarry nor accept any other deed until I have secured Winter Fury. I shall find the arrow before the start of winter season. I shall then return to this tavern and deliver Winter Fury to Delthrien the archer. With Delthrien I mix my blood in promise."

Blood magic increases the talent or skill named in the blood promise by 1 step. In the example above, Delthrien would add 1 step to his True Shot talent, while Filtch would add 1 step to his Silent Walk talent. The step increase lasts until the promise is broken or for a year and a day. The character applies this increase whenever he uses the talent for the duration of the oath, whether the character is using the talent to fulfill the promise or for some other purpose. The characters must fulfill the promise within the agreed time or the oath is violated.

A character who violates a blood promise oath manifests two magical Wounds, one on the forehead, the other on the chest. These Wounds last for a year and a day from the time the blood promise is broken, and will not heal naturally during this time.

A character may attempt to heal the Wound using a healing potion for each Wound (see **Blood Oath Wounds**, p. 11). Scars left by such Wounds permanently mark the character as a blood promise betrayer, though they can be hidden with costumes, make-up or illusions.

If both characters keep their promise, a small patch of skin (or scales or rock, as appropriate for the race) on each character becomes the color of topaz, rubies, sapphires or emeralds. When they meet after fulfilling the promise, the characters may immediately heal the 4 Damage Points that making the promise cost them. If they choose to heal this damage, they lose the step increases to the talents used to fulfill the blood promise. The characters may also agree to heal only 2 Damage Points each and make permanent the step increases to those talents used in their blood promise. As the price of the blood magic, the remaining 2 Damage Points can never be healed. Because the characters can never regain those Damage Points, reduce their respective Death and Unconsciousness Ratings by 2 points each.

Characters may only swear one blood promise at a time.

Blood Sworn

The most potent blood magic oath is the blood sworn oath. Only characters who hold Loyal attitudes toward each other may take the oath of the blood sworn. Each character must have previously demonstrated the depth of his loyalty to the other at least three times, usually accomplished by taking considerable risks for the benefit of the other character or otherwise behaving in a manner generally recognized as loyal. (See also the discussion on attitudes in **Gamemastering Earthdawn**, p. 228 in **ED**.) At least three years of loyal behavior must pass between the first loyal action and when the characters become blood sworn. Characters may be blood sworn to only one other character.

The characters begin the blood sworn ritual by cutting their chests over their hearts and their foreheads, drawing blood. This causes 4 points of permanent damage that can never be healed. Each character lowers his Death and Unconsciousness Ratings by 4 points each.

One character then wipes the blood from his forehead with his left hand and presses his blood-smeared hand onto the forehead cut of the other character, reciting the first part of the oath as he does so. The other character then repeats this gesture and the oath. The first character then wipes the blood from his chest with his right hand and gently presses that hand against the cut in the other character's chest, reciting the second part of the oath as he does so. The second character repeats the gesture and the oath.

The blood sworn oath varies according to area and race, but all include the same elements as the following example.

First Oath
"As the sun rises each day, I shall think of you. As the stars shine each night, so shall you be constantly in my thoughts. As night follows day, so closely shall we share our separate lives. I shall know you as completely as you shall know me. This I swear to you."

Second Oath
"As the blood of my heart touches yours, so shall I touch your feelings. As your heart beats against my hand, so shall your feelings touch mine. My loyalty shall be yours. My courage shall be yours. The strength of my heart shall flow through your veins. When there is need, I shall be strong for both of us. This I swear to you. We are blood sworn."

Blood magic sustains the oath of the blood sworn for a lifetime. Blood sworn characters must be loyal to each other, protect each other and serve each other for the rest of their lives. The gamemaster determines whether the characters fulfill their oath. A blood sworn character who violates his oath receives seven Wounds, struck by blood magic, that last for three years and three days from the

day the oath is broken. After three years and three days, six of the Wounds can be healed normally. One Wound, usually over the heart, remains unhealed. No known magic can heal this final Wound.

The character may attempt to heal the other six Wounds using healing potions (see **Blood Oath Wounds,** p. 11). Scars from such Wounds permanently mark the character as a blood sworn betrayer, though they can be hidden with costumes, make-up or illusions.

Blood sworn characters who remain loyal friends gain several advantages for the duration of their friendship.

First, each character increases one Attribute value by 2 points and a second Attribute value by 1 point. This increase cannot be applied to Toughness. Second, each character gains one rank in the Blood Share talent (p. 9, **ED**), even if the character is not an adept. Blood sworn characters use the Blood Share talent to transfer damage between themselves, rather than between a character and a mount. If a character already possesses the Blood Share talent, she gains it again as a separate talent. Characters can purchase ranks for this version of the Blood Share talent, but these ranks do not count toward the requirements for Circle advancement (see **Building Your Legend,** p. 218, **ED**).

Blood Share between two blood sworn characters provides more power than the ordinary talent by enabling a blood sworn character to raise his friend from the dead. In order to raise a blood sworn character from the dead, a character's rank in the blood sworn version of the Blood Share talent must equal or exceed the number of days his friend has been dead. One use of Blood Share must reduce the damage to the deceased to less than his Death Rating. The character cannot try again. Using this talent to raise a dead friend permanently reduces both characters' Death Ratings by 1 point.

Blood sworn characters also add 1 rank to their Thought Link talent (p. 40, **Earthdawn Companion**) when using the talent to communicate with each other. For blood sworn characters, the range of Thought Link is 100 meters.

Each blood sworn character also adds 1 rank to his Empathic Sense talent. To calculate the range in miles of the Empathic Sense talent when used between two blood sworn characters, add 3 to the talent rank.

If the characters do not possess the Thought Link and Empathic Sense talents, they gain them at Rank 1, but cannot increase the rank of these talents and may only use them to communicate with the person to whom they are blood sworn.

SACRIFICE MAGIC

Sacrifice magic is the most extreme form of blood magic practiced by player characters. When using sacrifice magic, a character sacrifices his own life, channeling his entire life force into a single magical act. There is no known means to restore life to someone who dies through the use of sacrifice magic. Even magical life-restoring methods such as Last Chance salves and Death Cheat charms have no effect.

The following text describes some of the possible uses of sacrifice magic. As always, the gamemaster has the final say on the effects of any specific act of self-sacrifice and may modify or expand on the effects described here.

Dying Act

A dying act is a final, heroic feat aided by sacrifice magic. To perform a dying act, a character must be conscious and capable of action. The character must declare his intention to perform a dying act and describe the act before performing it. The dying act occurs on the character's next action. During the dying act, the character may spend all his remaining Karma Points on a single test. The character rolls his step dice for the test and then rolls 1 Karma die for each Karma Point remaining. When the character completes the action, he dies.

Once a character makes the Dying Act Test, he cannot turn back. He dies, regardless of whether or not the test succeeds. If a character declares his intention to perform a dying act but changes his mind before making the Dying Act Test, the character immediately suffers 3 Wounds, which will not heal for a year and a day. The character may also experience a Talent Crisis (see p. 108, **The Adept's Way**).

Characters also may push talents or abilities (see **Pushing Talents and Abilities,** p. 10) while performing dying acts.

Dying Curse

Characters may also use sacrifice magic to pronounce a dying curse on an enemy, place or item. Treat all dying curses as major curses (see p. 211, **ED**). The step number of a dying curse equals the cursing character's Thread Weaving or Perception step number, whichever is higher.

Possible curse effects include reducing the target's attributes, skills or talents, scarring or transforming the target or blighting areas of land, or diminishing the usefulness of a weapon or other magical item. A dying curse may also seal off a specific location (usually where the character died) in the same way as a magical trap or

ward. In these cases, the curse's Detection Difficulty, Disarming Difficulty or other appropriate characteristic equals the cursing character's Thread Weaving step (see pp. 209–10, **ED**). Curses need not take effect immediately; the effects may not occur for years or even generations after their pronouncement. The cursing player and the gamemaster should work together to come up with a suitable curse effect (use the curse descriptions on pp. 211–12, **ED**, as guidelines).

After the curse is pronounced, the character using the dying curse dies.

Dying Legacy

When creating a dying legacy, a character uses sacrifice magic to create a true pattern. The true pattern may belong to an item or a place (usually the place where the character dies). Typically, characters perform dying legacies to imbue some item with the true pattern needed to make it a Legendary item (see **Legendary Items,** p. 53 in **Enchanting**). During the early days of the Scourge, when numerous adepts died fighting Horrors, many Legendary items were created through dying legacies.

To create a dying legacy, a character simply declares his intention to do so and describes the legacy. When the character dies, the true pattern forms. The Key Knowledges and Deeds associated with a true pattern created by a dying legacy will always be associated with the character who created the pattern and the manner of that character's death. For example, a character who is mortally wounded by a Horror may use a dying legacy to create a true pattern for his sword before he dies. The Key Knowledges for the sword will include the Name of the Horror that slew the character; one of the sword's Deeds will be defeating the Horror.

A character may also use a dying legacy to impart a true pattern to a particular place. The place must be intimately associated with the character, such as his birthplace, home or the site of his death. This true pattern means that the place will develop pattern items, and characters who learn the appropriate Key Knowledges may weave threads to the place. (For more information on weaving threads to places, see pp. 51–52, **ED Companion.**)

JANET AULISIO 1996
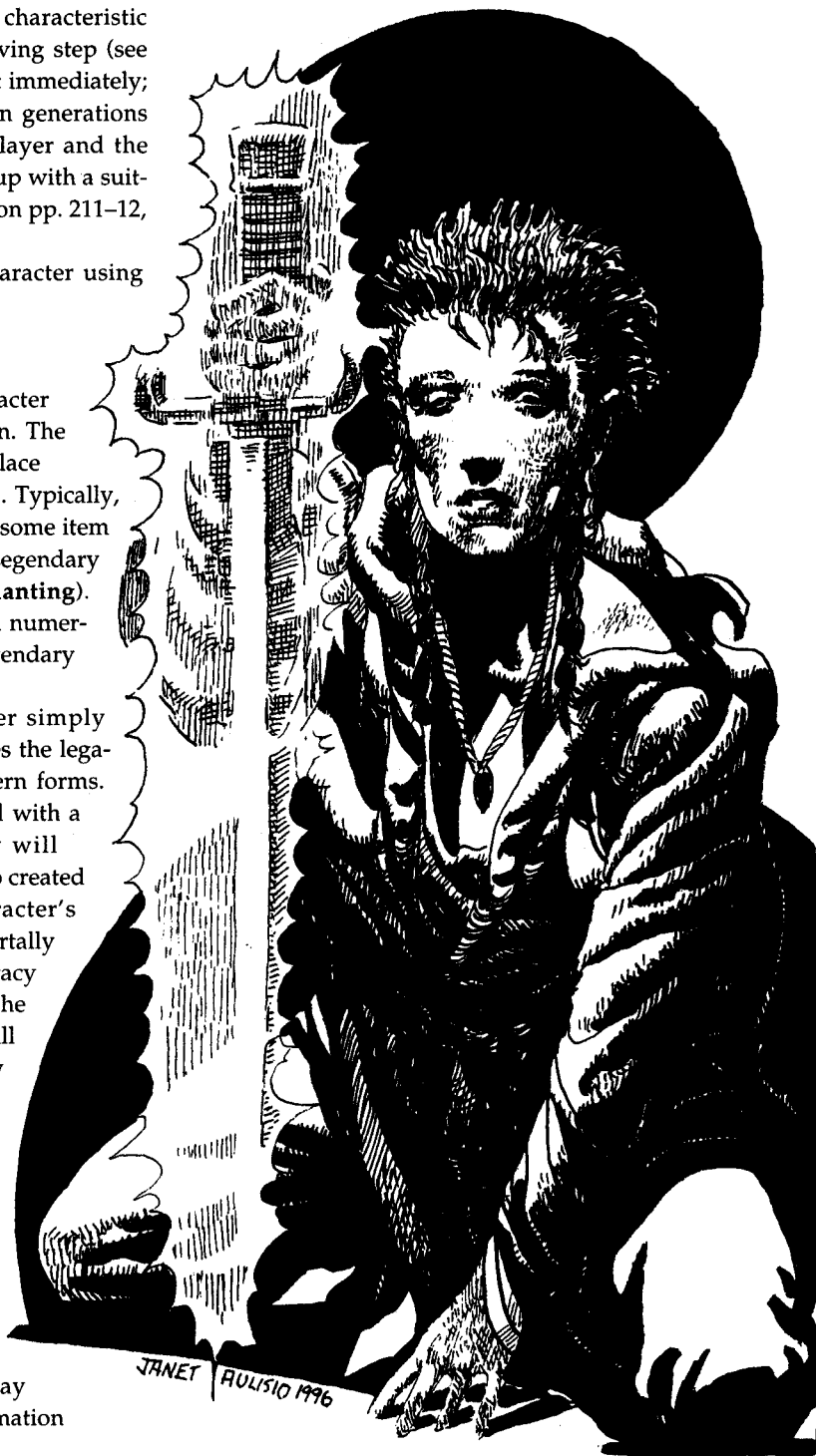
JANET AULISIO 1996.

Dying Oath

A dying character can also use sacrifice magic to extract a dying oath from another character, usually to perform a specific deed such as avenging the dying character or finishing a task or quest that the dying character is forced to leave undone. The dying oath binds the character to perform the deed and provides that character with additional ability to do so.

Both characters must willingly and knowingly enter into the dying oath. Once the surviving character has sworn the oath, the character calling for the oath dies. The surviving character must fulfill the oath within a year and a day.

The surviving character receives the dying character's remaining Karma Points. The player marks these points in a separate place on the surviving character's record sheet, as these Karma Points may only be used for tests related specifically to the task that the character has sworn to perform. This Karma may be used for *any* test

that the surviving character performs to fulfill the oath, even if the character cannot normally spend Karma Points on those tests. These Karma Points cannot be replenished after they have been spent.

A character who fails to fulfill a dying oath loses the Karma Points he received from the oath. In addition, the character loses the ability to regain any Karma Points for a year and a day.

BLOOD MAGIC AND LIGHTBEARERS

Lightbearers must swear an oath to never use blood magic once they accept initiation as a Lightbearer. However, Lightbearers may still use talents and spells which require Strain without violating the tenets of the Lightbearer organization, and may use sacrifice magic. Lightbearers may not use any other forms of blood magic, including blood charms, certain types of living armor (blood pebbles or living crystal), and ritual blood magic.

DEATH MAGIC

Only gamemaster characters can use the form of blood magic known as death magic. Gamemaster characters who use death magic draw on the life force of other Name-givers to power acts of magic. Because of its strong association with the painful, horrifying memories of the Scourge, Throal and nearly every city in Barsaive forbid the use of death magic and exact extremely serious penalties for its practice. Death magic often attracts the attentions of the Horrors, and so most Barsaivian practitioners of death magic take care to conceal their activities from others.

The magicians of Thera still practice death magic, usually using slaves as sacrificial victims, and this practice serves as another reason for Throal's opposition to Theran rule of Barsaive. The Therans continue to use death magic solely to gain the power it provides, but even Theran magicians work very hard to avoid attracting the attention of Horrors when performing death magic.

RAW MAGIC FILTER

Theran magicians commonly use death magic to create raw magic filters. The magician uses a victim's living pattern to filter the astral energies tapped for raw magic in much the same way that a spell matrix filters polluted astral energies. The energy is "purified" by passing through the victim's pattern and can be used by the magician without any risk of harm.

To make use of a victim in this way, the magician must first establish and maintain physical contact with the victim. The victim must not be able to physically resist or struggle against the magician, so magicians performing death magic usually drug or bind their victims with restraints or spells. Next, the magician must "attune" the victim's pattern by making a Thread Weaving Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the magician may use the victim as a raw magic filter. The victim's pattern remains attuned for a number of minutes equal to the magician's Thread Weaving rank, provided the magician maintains physical contact with the victim.

The magician then casts his raw magic spell per standard rules, but the results of the Warping Test (p. 155, ED) apply to the victim rather than the magician. As with all forms of death magic, Horrors find this technique particularly noticeable, and so using it adds 3 steps to the Horror Mark Test. Use the victim's Spell Defense as the difficulty number. If the Horror Mark Test is successful, the Horror marks the victim, and may choose to manipulate its new pawn against the magician who used the unfortunate Name-giver's pattern as a raw magic filter.

KARMA BOOST

Gamemaster magicians may also use death magic to drain a character's life force and boost their own Karma. This use of death magic mimics the Horror power of Energy Drain (pp. 103–5, **Horrors**), and many scholars believe that the first magicians to use the technique learned it from Horrors or developed it in an effort to imitate their abilities.

To use death magic as a way to boost his own Karma, the magician must be no farther than an arm's length away from the victim. The magician must first attune the victim's pattern by making a successful Thread Weaving Test against the victim's Spell Defense. The victim's pattern remains attuned for a number of minutes equal to the magician's Thread Weaving rank. Next, the magician inflicts damage on the victim using a weapon or spell, gaining 1 Karma Point for each attack. (The magician character need not make any type of test to successfully damage his victim. Because only gamemaster characters can perform this type of magic, and for dramatic effect, this rule assumes that the magician will automatically inflict a Wound on his victim for each attack made to perform Karma boost magic.) The magician may damage the victim multiple times, until the magician reaches his Maximum Karma Points.

The magician may use this Karma per standard rules.

DAMAGE SHIFT

Gamemaster character magicians may use death magic to supply the necessary life force to perform substantial acts of blood magic, such as powerful ritual magic. To accomplish damage shift magic, the gamemaster magician must first attune the victim's pattern by making a successful Thread Weaving Test against the victim's Spell Defense. The victim's pattern remains attuned for a number of minutes equal to the magician's Thread Weaving rank. As long as the victim's pattern remains attuned, the magician may draw Damage Points from the victim to fulfill any damage requirements (i.e., Strain or Wounds) of the blood magic rituals or other acts of magic that he is performing. The magician takes no damage himself. If the gamemaster character magician is using blood magic to bind an enchantment or magical item to a character, the character receiving the enchantment or item must take at least 1 point of Strain in order for the binding to occur.

ADEPT MAGIC

All player characters in **Earthdawn** are adepts. To be an adept is to follow a Discipline, to live life and look at the world from a specific point of view. This section focuses on two types of magic used by adepts of all Disciplines: a new technique called talent knacks, and half-magic (also described in **The Adept's Way**).

For more information on being an adept and following a Discipline, see the **Earthdawn** rulebook and **The Adept's Way**.

TALENT KNACKS

Talent knacks are specializations that enable adepts to use their Discipline talents to create specific effects. By widening the scope of what talents allow characters to do, knacks flesh out the types of actions adepts can perform when using their talents, and create greater opportunity to make each character unique. The most common talent knacks originate from the Thread Weaving and Spellcasting talents, but adepts can learn knacks for any of their Discipline talents. For example, both archers and warriors learn the Missile Weapons talent as part of their Disciplines, but only archers can learn talent knacks based on Missile Weapons because only archers gain that talent as a Discipline talent.

Most talent knacks are Discipline-specific; in other words, most talents provide different types of knacks for different Disciplines. For example, swordmasters can learn the Melee Weapons knack Swordcrash, a natural extension of their intimidating swordplay; sky raiders would learn the Melee Weapons knack Weapon Scream, a logical follow-up to the Battle Bellow and Battle Shout talents.

The following sections provide guidelines for creating, learning and using talent knacks, and a sampling of knacks for the core Disciplines. Note that human characters cannot learn talent knacks for talents purchased using Versatility.

CREATING TALENT KNACKS

Talent knacks represent specific and individual uses of a character's talents. Therefore, no definitive list of talent knacks exists, and gamemasters and players should feel free to create unique talent knacks for their characters. As always, the gamemaster makes the final decision about allowing a talent knack in his game and about the specifics of that knack. The following guidelines will help ensure that any talent knacks you create will not unbalance your game, as well as help you to understand how we developed the sample talent knacks.

Keep in mind two general rules for creating talent knacks. First, talent knacks can be learned only for Discipline talents. This requirement effectively limits the number of talents for which a character can develop knacks. Second, talent knacks should provide an additional or specialized use of a talent; they should not duplicate other talents or eliminate the need to learn other talents.

To create a talent knack, the player needs to decide what effect he wants to create with the knack, at what talent rank the knack becomes available to the character, and if using the knack will cost Strain or simply have a success level requirement.

Suppose that a player wants to create a knack for his warrior character's Wood Skin talent. He decides that once per day during any 24 hours in which the Wood Skin talent is active, his character should be able to add his rank in Wood Skin to his Wound Threshold. The gamemaster agrees, but limits the knack by adding that it lasts only a number of minutes equal to the character's rank in Wood Skin. The gamemaster and player must now agree on the rank at which the character can gain this knack. As a general rule, talent knacks should never be available below Rank 3, and only a few should be available below Rank 5. These parameters encourage an adept to master the basics of a talent before learning knacks based on the talent. The gamemaster and player decide that the knack for Wood Skin should be available at Rank 5.

Only the Strain cost or success level requirement of the knack remains to be determined. If a talent knack is based on a talent that does not require a test, the character may take Strain in order to use it. For talent knacks based on talents that require tests, the gamemaster may assign either a Strain cost or a specific success level (usually Good or better), or both. Base the Strain costs and success level requirements on the relative usefulness and power of the talent knack. Use the talent knack descriptions provided in this section (and in the **Spell Magic** and **Thread Magic** sections) for examples of appropriate Strain costs and success level requirements. Because the Wood Skin talent does not require a test, the gamemaster assigns a Strain Point cost of 2 for each use of the talent knack.
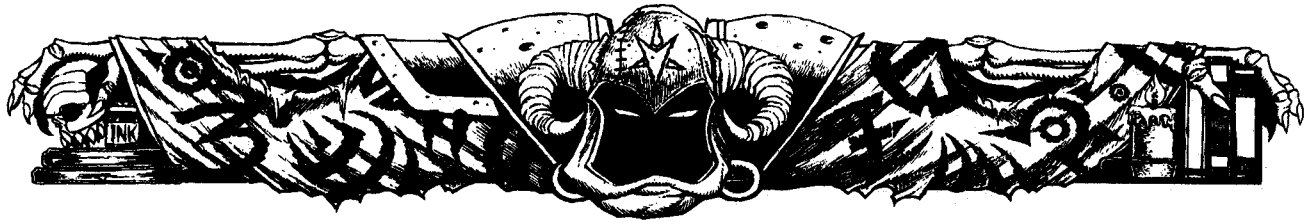
LEARNING TALENT KNACKS

Characters may only learn talent knacks from their instructor when training to advance to a new Circle. Adepts cannot learn talent knacks on their own. Because talent knacks have no ranks—a character either has a knack or he doesn't—a character pays Legend Points to learn the knack only once, according to the Talent Knack Cost Table. From that point on the character can use the knack whenever he uses the talent.

Knacks become available to an adept when he has reached a specific rank in the talent determined by the gamemaster. For example, a Spellcasting knack that allows a magician to hold spell threads might be available at Rank 5. This means that when the magician reaches Rank 5 in his Spellcasting talent, he may learn that knack during his training to advance to the next Circle of his Discipline.

Talent Knack Cost

Talent knacks must be paid for with Legend Points. The cost is based on the Circle in which adepts of the Discipline learn the talent on which the knack is based. The cost of a talent knack is the same as the cost of Rank 1 in the talent, as shown in the Talent Knack Cost Table. For example, magicians learn the Spellcasting talent at First Circle. This means that it costs a magician 100 Legend Points to learn a Spellcasting knack. Warriors learn the Cobra Strike talent at Eighth Circle. Thus, a warrior would have to spend 200 Legend Points to learn a Cobra Strike knack.

USING TALENT KNACKS

Once a player has purchased a talent knack for a character, the character may use the knack whenever he uses the talent or makes a test using the talent. The player simply declares that his character is using the talent knack. For example, a nethermancer who has learned the Spellcasting knack of Maintain Spell Threads may use the knack whenever he casts a spell that requires threads (see **Maintain Spell Threads**, p. 35 in **Spell Magic** for a full description of the knack).

In some cases, using a talent and a knack based on that talent both cost the adept Strain. Usually, the character adds the Strain of the knack to the Strain of the talent. Where noted in the knack descriptions, however, for some knacks the talent knack Strain replaces the Strain normally required to use the talent.

TALENT KNACK DESCRIPTIONS

The talent knacks in this book are described according to Discipline, talent, rank and cost. The Discipline

TALENT KNACK COST

Talent Circle	Legend Points
1–4	100
5–8	200
9–12	300
13–15	500

notes the Discipline for which the knack is available. The talent notes the talent on which the knack is based. The rank indicates the minimum rank a character must possess in that talent to learn the knack. The cost indicates the number of Legend Points an adept must spend to learn the knack.

Some descriptions list more than one Discipline and rank. In these cases, adepts of either listed Discipline can learn the knack. The first rank number applies to adepts of the first Discipline listed; the second rank number applies to adepts of the second Discipline. The talent knacks are arranged in alphabetical order according to Discipline.

For definitions of and rules for talents mentioned in the knack descriptions, see pages 96–121 in the **Earthdawn** rulebook.

Many Disciplines can learn the Spellcasting and Thread Weaving talents. As a result, these talents suggest numerous knacks that can be learned by adepts of nearly all Disciplines. Descriptions of Spellcasting knacks appear in the **Spell Magic** section of this book, pages 32-43. Descriptions of Thread Weaving knacks appear in the **Thread Magic** section, pages 25-31.

ARROW STOP

Discipline: Archer	**Talent:** Missile Weapons
Rank: 5	**Cost:** 100

The Arrow Stop knack allows an archer to stop an arrow he has fired just as it hits the target, so as to impress the target with the archer's skill. To use this knack, the archer makes a Missile Weapons Test. If the archer achieves an Armor-Defeating Hit, the archer takes 2 points of Strain damage and stops the arrow just as it nicks the target, who takes 1 point of damage. If the archer uses Arrow Stop successfully, he or she may attempt to Make An Impression on the target by making an Interaction Test (pp. 238–39, **ED**) against the target.

test succeeds, the flame arrow bursts on impact and produces a blast radius of a number of yards equal to the adept's Flame Arrow rank. The archer then makes an Effect Test. All targets within the blast radius take damage equal to the result of the Effect Test.

FIRE ARROW

Discipline: Archer **Talent:** Flame Arrow
Rank: 3 **Cost:** 100

The Fire Arrow knack allows an archer to engulf the head of the arrow in flame, which adds +2 steps of damage to the arrow attack. Using this knack costs the user only 1 point of Strain, which he takes in place of the usual Strain for using the Flame Arrow talent.

INVISIBLE MARK

Discipline: Archer **Talent:** Mystic Aim
Rank: 5 **Cost:** 100

The Invisible Mark knack allows an archer to create a mark that can only be seen by an adept using astral-detection abilities. Using this knack costs the adept 2 additional points of Strain.

SPIRIT FLAME

Discipline: Archer **Talent:** Flame Arrow
Rank: 5 **Cost:** 100

The Spirit Flame knack allows an archer's Flame Arrow attack to defeat physical armor. If the archer achieves a Good success or better on his Attack Test, the target must resist the damage caused by the attack using his mystic armor rather than his physical armor. If the attack hits the target but the Attack Test does not yield a Good or better success, the target's physical armor protects him as normal. Using this knack costs an archer an additional 2 points of Strain.

CLAW TOOL

Discipline: Beastmaster **Talent:** Claw Shape
Rank: 4 **Cost:** 100

The Claw Tool knack allows a beastmaster to use his Claw Shape talent to cut ropes, carve wood, climb and perform other noncombat tasks. The knack adds 2 steps to the adept's Strength step number for noncombat tasks requiring Strength, and adds 2 steps to his Climbing Test when the knack is used for climbing. The adept can revert his hands back to normal at any time when using this knack. An adept takes 2 points of Strain damage for each minute he uses the Claw Tool knack.

BACKBITER

Discipline: Archer **Talent:** Bank Shot
Rank: 5 **Cost:** 200

The Backbiter knack allows an archer to ricochet an arrow so that it hits a target from behind, bypassing any shield held by the target. To use this knack, an archer makes a Bank Shot Test with a +2 step bonus. If the test succeeds, the arrow strikes the target in the back (the target does not receive any armor bonus from shields). Using the Backbiter knack costs an archer 2 points of Strain in addition to the Strain cost of using the Bank Shot talent.

EXPLOSIVE FLAME ARROW

Discipline: Archer **Talent:** Flame Arrow
Rank: 7 **Cost:** 100

The Explosive Flame Arrow knack allows an archer to create an explosive ball of flame when using the Flame Arrow talent. To use this knack, an archer takes 4 additional points of Strain and makes his Attack Test. If the

targeted disease in order for this knack to work. Using the Halt Disease knack costs the elementalist 2 points of Strain.

HEAL OTHERS

Discipline: Elementalist **Talent:** Fire Heal
Rank: 5 **Cost:** 100

The Heal Others knack enables an elementalist to use the Fire Heal talent to gain additional Recovery Tests for another character. The same rules that govern the talent apply to the knack, but the adept must achieve a Good or better success on the Fire Heal Test. Using the Heal Others knack costs an elementalist a number of Strain Points equal to the number of additional Recovery Tests desired.

GAPING WOUND

Discipline: Illusionist/Nethermancer
Talent: Spellcasting
Rank: 6/7 **Cost:** 100

The Gaping Wound knack enables illusionists and nethermancers to create the illusion that a Wound is far worse than it truly is. The knack can only be used with spells that damage the target based on the caster's Willforce. To use the Gaping Wound knack, an adept takes 2 points of Strain damage and makes the Spellcasting Test per standard rules. If the spell's target receives a Wound from the spell, the Wound appears to be severe and looks very grotesque. The adept may make an immediate Intimidation Test (p. 238, **ED**) against the target. If the spell's target takes damage from the spell but does not suffer a Wound, the spellcaster takes the Strain for using the knack, but the knack has no effect.

SHADOW HIDE

Discipline: Scout/Thief **Talent:** Silent Walk
Rank: 5/3 **Cost:** 100

The Shadow Hide knack allows a scout or thief to conceal himself in shadows or other visual obstructions. To use the knack, the scout or thief takes 2 points of Strain and makes a Silent Walk Test. The test result is the difficulty number for other characters attempting to spot the scout or thief.

WEAPON SCREAM

Discipline: Sky Raider **Talent:** Melee Weapons
Rank: 6 **Cost:** 100

When a sky raider uses this knack, his weapon makes a loud screaming sound when he lands an Armor-Defeating Hit in combat. To use the knack, the sky raider takes 2 points of Strain and makes his Attack Test as normal. If he achieves an Excellent success or better, he scores

AIR MOUNT

Discipline: Cavalryman **Talent:** Spirit Mount
Rank: 11 **Cost:** 100

The Air Mount knack grants a cavalryman's spirit mount the ability to fly through the air while carrying the cavalryman. The mount travels at the same Movement Rate it uses on land. Using the Air Mount knack causes an adept 2 points of Strain per round.

WATER MOUNT

Discipline: Cavalryman **Talent:** Spirit Mount
Rank: 9 **Cost:** 100

The Water Mount knack enables a cavalryman's spirit mount to move across a surface of water at the same Movement Rate it uses on land. Using the Water Mount knack causes an adept 1 point of Strain per round.

HALT DISEASE

Discipline: Elementalist **Talent:** Cold Purify
Rank: 5 **Cost:** 200

The Halt Disease knack allows an elementalist to use the Cold Purify talent to affect the progress of diseases and poisons. The elementalist must achieve a Good or better success on a Cold Purify Test against the step number of the

an Armor-Defeating Hit and his weapon emits a howling scream. Upon successfully using the Weapon Scream knack, the sky raider may immediately make a Battle Shout Test against the target, even if he previously made a Battle Shout or Battle Bellow test in the round.

ARROW CUTTING

Discipline: Swordmaster   **Talent:** Riposte
Rank: 9   **Cost:** 100

The Arrow Cutting knack allows a swordmaster to use his Riposte talent to deflect missiles such as arrows and thrown knives. Using the knack costs a swordmaster an additional 3 points of Strain. Note that the Arrow Cutting knack only deflects missile attacks—it does NOT direct the missile back at the attacker.

SPELL RIPOSTE

Discipline: Swordmaster   **Talent:** Riposte
Rank: 11   **Cost:** 100

The Spell Riposte knack enables a swordmaster to use his Riposte talent to send an enemy magician's spell back at the caster. This knack only allows swordmasters to reflect attack-type spells aimed at him. Using the knack costs a swordmaster an additional 4 points of Strain.

SWORDCRASH

Discipline: Swordmaster   **Talent:** Melee Weapons
Rank: 6   **Cost:** 100

When a swordmaster successfully uses the Swordcrash knack, his weapon makes a loud crashing sound, which allows the swordmaster to make an Interaction Test against his opponent. To use the Swordcrash knack, a swordmaster takes 2 points of Strain and makes an Attack Test as normal. If the test yields a Good success or better, the swordmaster's sword crashes as it hits the target, and the swordmaster may immediately make an Interaction Test against the target without spending an action to do so.

COVET ITEM

Discipline: Thief   **Talent:** Fence
Rank: 5   **Cost:** 100

The Covet Item knack allows a thief to convince a target that he (the target) desires an item strongly. The thief uses the knack during his first Fence Test against his target's Social Defense. If the test yields a Good or better success, the target feels a strong desire for the item and each subsequent Fence Test success against the target increases the price he is willing to pay by 10 percent. Using the Covet Item knack costs a thief 2 points of Strain.

SONGS OF INSPIRATION

Discipline: Troubadour   **Talent:** Emotion Song
Rank: 5   **Cost:** 100

The Songs of Inspiration knack allows a troubadour to use his Emotion Song talent to boost his companions' abilities. The knack can be used at any time, including during combat, and the troubadour's companions gain its benefits immediately.

To use the knack, the troubadour must write a number of inspiring songs that he can sing when appropriate. The troubadour must create a separate song for each type of activity he wishes to enhance. For example, a troubadour can write songs that boost his companions' abilities for Initiative, Attack, and Damage tests during combat or even their abilities for Recovery Tests.

To use the knack, a troubadour makes an Emotion Song Test against the highest Social Defense of the companions he wishes to inspire. He cannot choose to inspire only some of his companions—he must inspire all or none. If the test fails, the knack has no effect. If the test succeeds, all the troubadour's companions receive a step bonus for the relevant test, based on how much Strain the troubadour is willing to take. For each point of Strain the troubadour takes per round, each inspired companion adds 1 step to the relevant test. Thus, if a troubadour makes a successful Emotion Song Test and takes 3 points of Strain, each inspired companion receives +3 step bonus for the relevant test for that round.

REMOVE CURSE

Discipline: Weaponsmith   **Talent:** Abate Curse
Rank: 11   **Cost:** 100

The Remove Curse knack provides a weaponsmith with one chance to permanently remove a curse from weapons and armor. To use this knack, a weaponsmith makes an Abate Curse Test against the item's Spell Defense or the curse's step number, whichever is higher. If the test yields an Excellent or better success, the curse is permanently removed from the item. Otherwise, the Abate Curse talent affects the curse per standard rules. This knack can be used to remove curses only from weapons and armor, and it causes the weaponsmith 4 points of Strain in addition to the Strain cost of using Abate Curse.

SENSE CURSE

Discipline: Weaponsmith   **Talent:** Abate Curse
Rank: 7   **Cost:** 100

The Sense Curse knack allows a weaponsmith to determine if an item or weapon is cursed without touching

it. To use the knack, the weaponsmith must stand within 3 yards of the item and make an Abate Curse Test as normal. If the test yields a Good or better success, the weaponsmith detects any curses on the item. If the test fails, the character cannot attempt to use the knack again on that item. Using the Sense Curse knack costs a weaponsmith 2 additional points of Strain.

DIAGNOSE

Discipline: Wizard
Rank: 5
Talent: Astral Sight
Cost: 100

The Diagnose knack allows a wizard to determine if a subject is afflicted with any diseases or internal injuries, and to check the general state of the subject's health. To use this knack, a wizard makes an Astral Sight Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test yields a Good or better success, the wizard detects any injuries, diseases, poisons, illnesses, or other afflictions affecting the subject. Using the Diagnose knack costs a wizard 1 additional point of Strain.

HALF-MAGIC

The **Earthdawn** rulebook provides the skill system to account for knowledge a character might possess that would not require the full power of an adept's magic. But the skill system fails to accommodate the different levels of knowledge two characters of the same Discipline but different Circles might possess. The optional half-magic rule addresses that shortcoming. The half-magic rule covers areas of knowledge such as the principles of weapon making, wilderness survival, and the legends and lore of a Discipline. (For example, adepts of all Disciplines learn of the lives and deeds of other adepts who have followed their Disciplines, such as the heroes Nioku the archer, Venna the warrior and any other heroes the gamemaster chooses to add to his **Earthdawn** world.)

The half-magic system also offers a yardstick for determining an adept's success or failure in performing tasks requiring more practical skills. For example, an elementalist character may possess the knowledge skills of Horror Lore and Pre-Scourge History, but a follower of that Discipline would also know a great deal about plants, weather, rock formations, tides and other subjects related to the five elements. Further, his knowledge of these topics would increase with time and experience. Because this knowledge is closely related to the elementalist's Discipline but not specifically covered by the Discipline talents, it falls into the realm of half-magic. For example, if the elementalist attempts to identify a plant, the gamemaster may ask the player to make a Half-Magic Test.

MAKING HALF-MAGIC TESTS

When a player makes a Half-Magic Test, the gamemaster first determines the Half-Magic step, which is equal to the character's Circle divided by 2, rounded up. For example, First and Second Circle characters have a Half-Magic step of 1, Third and Fourth Circle characters have a Half-Magic step of 2, and so on. Then the gamemaster determines the Attribute most appropriate for the action the character wishes to accomplish. The player may suggest what he considers to be an appropriate Attribute, but the gamemaster has the final say. The sum of the Half-Magic step and the Attribute step is the step number for the Half-Magic Test.

Half-Magic Tests should fill the gaps between the talents and abilities an adept learns as part of his or her Discipline and the realm of common knowledge; they should **not** replace any previously learned talents or abilities. Therefore, a character can **never** use a Half-Magic Test in place of a Talent Test. Also, characters may spend only 1 Karma Point when making Half-Magic Tests. Because an adept character's half-magic knowledge is based on his Discipline Circle, as the adept advances in Circles, his range and proficiency at half-magic increases.

SPECIAL USES OF HALF-MAGIC

Adepts of certain Disciplines may learn abilities that are not covered by specific talents or game skills, but which are also considered uses of half-magic. The most common of these special skills are the abilities to enchant magical items and summon spirits. Magician adepts learn this type of half-magic when they reach a specific Circle in their Discipline, which is different for each Discipline. The **Summoning** and **Enchanting** chapters describe these special uses of half-magic in detail.

THREAD MAGIC

Thread magic involves weaving threads that connect the patterns of two or more people, places or things. This section provides new uses for the Thread Weaving talent, a discussion of the nature of magical threads, guidelines for detecting threads in astral space and a number of talent knacks based on the Thread Weaving talent.

For detailed descriptions of thread magic and thread magic rules, consult the **Earthdawn** rulebook and **Earthdawn Companion.** Players and gamemasters may find it useful to reread the thread magic information in those books before using the new rules provided in this section.

NATURE OF THREADS

Thread magic enables adepts to manipulate magic using strands of magical energy called threads. Two types of magical threads exist: spell threads and pattern threads. Adepts create both types of threads using the Thread Weaving talent, and both share certain traits. Spell threads represent finite strands of magical energy that are used to power certain spells. As described in the **Spell Magic** section of the **Earthdawn** rulebook, most spell patterns are too complex to fit entirely in a spell matrix. In such cases, a magician must complete a spell's pattern before he can cast the spell. Completing a spell's pattern is accomplished by weaving spell threads into the pattern of the spell. Unlike pattern threads, all spell threads offer the exact same quantity and quality of magical energy, regardless of the Circle of the magician or his Thread Weaving rank. In other words, a spell thread is a spell thread is a spell thread.

Adepts use pattern threads to connect the magical patterns of two or more people, places or things. Two types of pattern threads exist: temporary threads and permanent threads. To this point, the **Earthdawn** rules have discussed only permanent threads, the type created when weaving threads to magical treasure or pattern items. Weaving permanent threads requires an adept to spend a number of Legend Points, based on the type of item the thread is being woven to and the rank of the thread being woven. This expenditure of Legend Points creates the permanent thread.

To weave temporary pattern threads, an adept performs an act of willpower to create the thread and usually suffers a number of Strain Points in order to use the thread. Primarily, temporary threads are used with Thread Weaving talent knacks. Descriptions of several such knacks appear in **Thread Weaving Knacks,** page 26.

THREADS AND LEGEND POINTS

Adepts should take the Legend Point cost required to weave permanent pattern threads into careful consideration for two reasons. First, any Legend Points spent to weave permanent pattern threads reduce the number of Legend Points available for adepts to increase their talent ranks and advance in Circle. Second, Legend Points spent on a permanent pattern thread can never be recovered— even if the thread is unwoven, displaced or otherwise destroyed. As a general rule, unless otherwise noted, Legend Points spent for magic use cannot be recovered. Though weaving permanent pattern threads does offer significant advantages, the adept must consider that he may spend the Legend Points and ultimately have nothing to show for it.

DETECTING THREADS

Like all magical things, threads woven to the patterns of people, places or items can be seen in astral space. Detecting the presence of threads in astral space requires the use of some form of astral sensing, such as the Astral Sense spell or the Astral Sight talent or ability.

Threads may be detected accidentally or intentionally. For example, an adept may accidentally detect a thread if he achieves an Excellent or better success on any test made to examine a subject's pattern. However, the adept would only know a thread is present in the pattern. He would need to make further Astral Sensing Tests to learn more about the thread.

> Lynthis, a windling wizard, is using her astral-sensitive sight to study an adept in astral space. She makes a Perception Test against the adept's Spell Defense of 9 and achieves a result of 19—an Excellent success. Though she was not looking for threads, she notices that the adept's pattern has a thread woven to it. Intrigued by the unexpected presence of this thread, Lynthis decides to examine her subject a little more closely by making additional Perception Tests with her astral-sensitive sight.

Note that the rules for detecting permanent pattern threads attached to a pattern apply to "inactive" threads, threads not currently in use. For example, if a character who wove a thread to a magical sword is using the sword's magic, the thread is active; if the sword is sheathed, the thread is inactive. Magical energy flowing through an active thread causes it to glow in astral space, making it much easier to detect. When an adept astrally examines a subject pattern connected to an active thread, a Good or better success reveals the presence of the thread.

Intentionally detecting threads is slightly more difficult. To deliberately look for a thread that he knows or suspects is connected to a pattern, an adept must first see the pattern to which the thread is woven. This requires a successful Astral Sensing Test made against the Spell Defense of the person, place or thing to which the thread is woven. The descriptions of each astral sensing talent or ability provide details of these tests. If the Astral Sensing Test yields an Excellent or better success against the subject's Spell Defense, the adept detects the thread without the need for further tests.

If the Astral Sensing Test succeeds but does not yield an Excellent or better success, the adept must then make an Astral Sensing Test against the Spell Defense of the entity (adept, dragon, Horror, and so on) who wove the thread to the pattern. If this second test succeeds, the adept detects the thread in the subject's pattern. Identifying the nature of the thread requires at least a Good success on this test and most often requires an Excellent or better success. See **Viewing Threads in Astral Space**, following, for more information about identifying threads.

Viewing Threads in Astral Space

What threads look like depends on who (or what) wove the thread. Most threads resemble small bits of astral string tied around a portion of the subject's pattern. The characteristics of the thread, such as color, texture and shape, vary widely according to the nature of the thread weaver. For example, when examined carefully, threads woven by a dragon may appear in the shape of a small dragon holding on to the pattern in some way—though threads rarely identify their weaver so obviously. Players may determine the unique characteristics of the permanent pattern threads their characters weave.

We offer the concept that characters can be identified by the unique characteristics of the permanent pattern threads they weave mainly as a device for the gamemaster. Such individuality allows the gamemaster to incorporate pattern threads into his campaigns and adventures as clues to send the player characters in the desired direction—either on or off the right track—or as hints to further the plot. A character's ability to gain information from a permanent pattern thread about the weaver should not be used to identify other adepts, unless the gamemaster considers such a development appropriate to advancing the story.

Keep in mind that threads do not establish astral "lines" between the weaver and the target of the thread. When a thread is woven, the weaver attaches a bit of his own astral energy to the target's pattern, but the connection between an adept's pattern and his threads cannot be seen in astral space. The astral appearance of the adept's pattern and the appearance of his threads in astral space, however, often share characteristics, especially when the threads are active.

Gamemasters determine the appearance of threads woven by gamemaster characters, and can use the visual characteristics of threads as clues to the nature of the thread weaver. For example, a deep green thread with a rough, scaly texture may indicate that the thread was woven by a beastmaster, a dragon, or even a reptilian Horror. This type of clue works particularly well if the characters recognize characteristics of the thread as being reminiscent of someone or something they already know. Finding a strange thread or threads also might be the warning sign of some important person or group that the characters will soon meet.

Characters make Astral Sensing Tests to study threads, and the success level of these tests determines how much detail an adept sees in a thread. For example, an Average success might reveal a thread's color but not its texture. An Extraordinary success might reveal color, texture, size and shape. The gamemaster decides how much information each success level of the Astral Sensing Test reveals, based on the needs of his campaign and story.

THREAD WEAVING KNACKS

Thread Weaving knacks are talent knacks based on the Thread Weaving talent. Unlike most talent knacks, adepts of all Disciplines can use Thread Weaving knacks (except for the Spell Design knack, which is limited to magicians). Most Thread Weaving knacks are used when weaving threads to magical items, pattern items and group patterns. However, a few can be used for other purposes, such as studying magical patterns or linking the talents of two or more adepts of the same Discipline. Essentially, Thread Weaving knacks allow adepts to use their Thread Weaving talent in additional and more effective ways.

Because the following knacks are all based on the Thread Weaving talent and can be used by all Disciplines, each entry provides only the rank at which the character can learn the knack and the Legend Point cost.

BRAIDING THREADS
Rank: 5   **Cost:** 100

All items that can have magical threads attached to them (for example, thread items such as weapons, armor and jewelry, and magical treasure) may only have a limited number of threads attached at any given time. If a new thread being attached to the item exceeds the limit, the lowest-ranked thread attached to that item is displaced and no longer functions (p. 273, **ED**).

The Braiding Threads knack allows adepts to bypass these limits by "braiding" together several threads that can be attached to an object in the same way as a single thread. If an adventuring group containing two warriors and a swordmaster found a single-thread magical sword, for example, all three adepts could use the magic of the sword by using the Braiding Threads knack and attaching the resulting thread to the weapon.

To weave a braided thread with the Braiding Thread knack, all of the characters making the attempt must possess the Braiding Threads knack and the appropriate pattern knowledge of the item (p. 270, **ED**). The characters need not learn the pattern knowledge as a group; a single character may pass on the pattern knowledge to the other characters.

To use the Braiding Threads knack, each character makes a Thread Weaving Test against the item's Weaving Difficulty Number (see p. 146, **ED**). Each character must add 1 to the Difficulty Number for each additional character attempting to braid a thread. For example, 3 adepts attempting to braid a thread would each add 2 to their Difficulty Numbers. All of the threads must be of the same rank, and each participating character must pay the appropriate cost in Legend Points. Each character also suffers 2 points of Strain.

Once a braided thread has been woven successfully, it functions as a single thread for all practical purposes. It represents only one of the item's maximum number of threads but grants its benefits equally to all of the characters who wove the braided thread. If another thread woven to the item displaces the braided thread, all the characters who wove the braided thread are disconnected from the item.

To attach a higher-rank braided thread to an item, the same characters who wove the initial thread must weave a new braided thread of the higher rank accord-ing to the process described above. If the desired thread rank requires a Deed, all of the characters must complete the Deed (either individually or as a group). If the Deed is accomplished as a group, divide the Legend Point award for the Deed among all participating characters.

Braided threads cannot be "untangled" once they have been woven. No additional character can add his own thread to a braided thread that has already been woven, and no character can withdraw his thread from a braided thread. If one of the weavers of a braided thread dies, his thread fades without affecting the other weavers.

SPELL DESIGN
Rank: 5   **Cost:** 100

The Spell Design knack allows magicians to weave spell patterns as described in **Spell Design**, p. 108. A different version of this knack exists for each of the four magician Disciplines: Elementalism Spell Design, Illusion Spell Design, Nethermancy Spell Design and Wizardry Spell Design. Unlike most other talent knacks, the Spell Design knack does not cause Strain or require a specific test success level.

Only magicians may learn and use the Spell Design knack.

TALENT LINKING
Rank: 5   **Cost:** 100

The Talent Linking knack allows up to three adepts of the same Discipline to "link" their talents and so enhance the step number of another adept of the same Discipline. When using this knack, an adept weaves a temporary thread to the pattern of another adept, enhancing one of the target's talent ranks.

To use the Talent Linking knack, the donor adept makes a Thread Weaving Test against a difficulty number equal to the step number of the target's talent. If the test succeeds, the donor adept has woven a temporary thread to the target's pattern. Establishing this connection costs the donor adept 2 Strain Points.

The success level yielded by the test determines the step bonus the target receives. If more than one adept is using the Talent Linking knack to enhance another adept's talent, add together the step bonus for each test result. An Average success provides a +1 step bonus to the chosen talent. A Good success provides +2 step bonus, and so on. The donor adept may maintain the thread for as long as he wishes, but doing so costs him an additional 1 Strain Point per round.

Using the Talent Linking knack requires a Thread Weaving Test, and so each use of the knack requires an action. A donor adept must also spend an action for each round he sustains such a thread. No more than three donor adepts at a time may enhance the abilities of a single target. If more than three attempt to do so, use the three highest results from their Thread Weaving Tests. In addition, all participants must have line of sight to each other.

> *While in the Liaj Jungle, a group of three beastmaster adepts comes across a very hungry skeorx. Knowing the creature's natural resistance to the Dominate Beast talent, they choose to link their talents and boost the Dominate Beast talent of Loak, the most experienced of the group, in the hope he will then be able to control the creature.*
>
> *The other two beastmasters make Thread Weaving Tests against Loak's Dominate Beast step number of 12. The first beastmaster achieves a Good success, while the second achieves an Average success. As a result, Loak adds 3 steps to his Dominate Beast talent step number. Each donor beastmaster takes 2 Strain Points.*
>
> *If the donor beastmasters wish to sustain the threads they have woven to Loak's Dominate Beast talent for another round, they will each have to take 1 additional point of Strain. Maintaining the thread also requires an action, so the beastmasters will be unable to use any talents that require an action during that round.*

The most common use of the Talent Linking knack is by members of adept guilds (such as weaponsmith forges) made up of many adepts of a single Discipline. Adept groups performing ritual magic (see **Other Types of Magic**, p. 97) may also use the Talent Linking knack, but using the knack for this purpose requires blood magic. Each donor adept must take 5 points of Strain damage to create the thread link, and the thread remains connected to the target adept's pattern for a year and day, during which time this initial damage cannot be healed. Each adept must also take an additional 2 points of Strain damage each time the link is used. This damage can be healed normally.

The use of the Talent Linking knack in ritual magic is generally confined to the Theran Empire, though rumors speak of its use among certain nethermancer guilds and Horror cults in Barsaive.

THREAD MASKING
Rank: 6   **Cost:** 100

The Thread Masking knack allows an adept to conceal threads he has woven, increasing the difficulty of detecting and identifying those threads. When using this knack, an adept carefully weaves his thread into the natural warp and weft of astral space, using the surrounding astral energies to conceal the thread's presence from characters with astral sight abilities.

To use the Thread Masking knack, an adept makes a Thread Weaving Test against the thread's Weaving Difficulty Number (p. 146, **ED**) and takes 2 points of Strain damage. If the test yields a Good or better result, the adept has successfully woven a masked thread.

Masking a thread increases the success level needed to detect or identify the thread by 1 level. For example, a character normally detects a thread connected to an item if he achieves an Excellent or better success on an Astral Sensing Test made to examine the item's pattern. To detect a masked thread, the adept would need an Extraordinary or better success. Identifying the nature of a previously detected thread usually requires a Good or Excellent success. Identifying the nature of a previously detected masked thread requires an Excellent or Extraordinary success. (See **Detecting Threads**, p. 25, for more information.)

> *Mordrinn the nethermancer has acquired a pattern item belonging to the scout Daralux, and he wishes to use it to weave a Rank 1 thread to the scout's true pattern. He does not want this thread to be easily detected, so decides to mask it. Mordrinn makes his Thread Weaving Test against the appropriate Weaving Difficulty Number of 8 and achieves a result of 14, a Good success. Anyone deliberately attempting to detect this thread must achieve a Good success or better against Mordrinn's Spell Defense. Only an Extraordinary success would reveal the presence of the thread to someone studying the pattern item.*

THREAD SIGHT
Rank: 3   **Cost:** 100

The Thread Sight knack allows adepts to use their Thread Weaving talent to study the True Pattern of a magical item in order to learn its Key Knowledges. This knack makes use of the limited form of astral sight made possible by the Thread Weaving talent but offers greater potential for detail and precision. However, the Thread

Sight knack can be used only to view true patterns of items. It is not a form of astral sensing or a substitute for astral sensing abilities such as the Astral Sight talent or the Astral Sense spell.

To use the Thread Sight knack, an adept must be holding or touching the target item. The adept makes a Thread Weaving Test against the Spell Defense of the item being studied. If the test succeeds, the adept has connected a temporary thread to the pattern of the item. Connecting this thread causes the adept 3 points of Strain.

Now the adept can study the item's true pattern by making a test against the item's Spell Defense. Magicians make Perception-based Half-Magic Tests, while adepts of other Disciplines make Perception Tests. Each test to study the item costs the adept 1 additional point of Strain. If the test succeeds, the adept learns one of the item's Key Knowledges. Only one Key Knowledge can be obtained each time the Thread Sight knack is used, regardless of the success level achieved on the test.

Because the Thread Sight knack establishes a thread connection between the adept and the item's pattern, using this knack makes the adept vulnerable to any sort of magical traps or wards contained in the item's pattern. Traps and wards found in magical items use the standard trap rules (pp. 209–10, **ED**), except use the adept's Perception (or Perception-based half-magic for magicians) step for all tests made to detect or avoid the effects of a trap. Characters with the Detect Trap and/or Disarm Magical Trap talents can
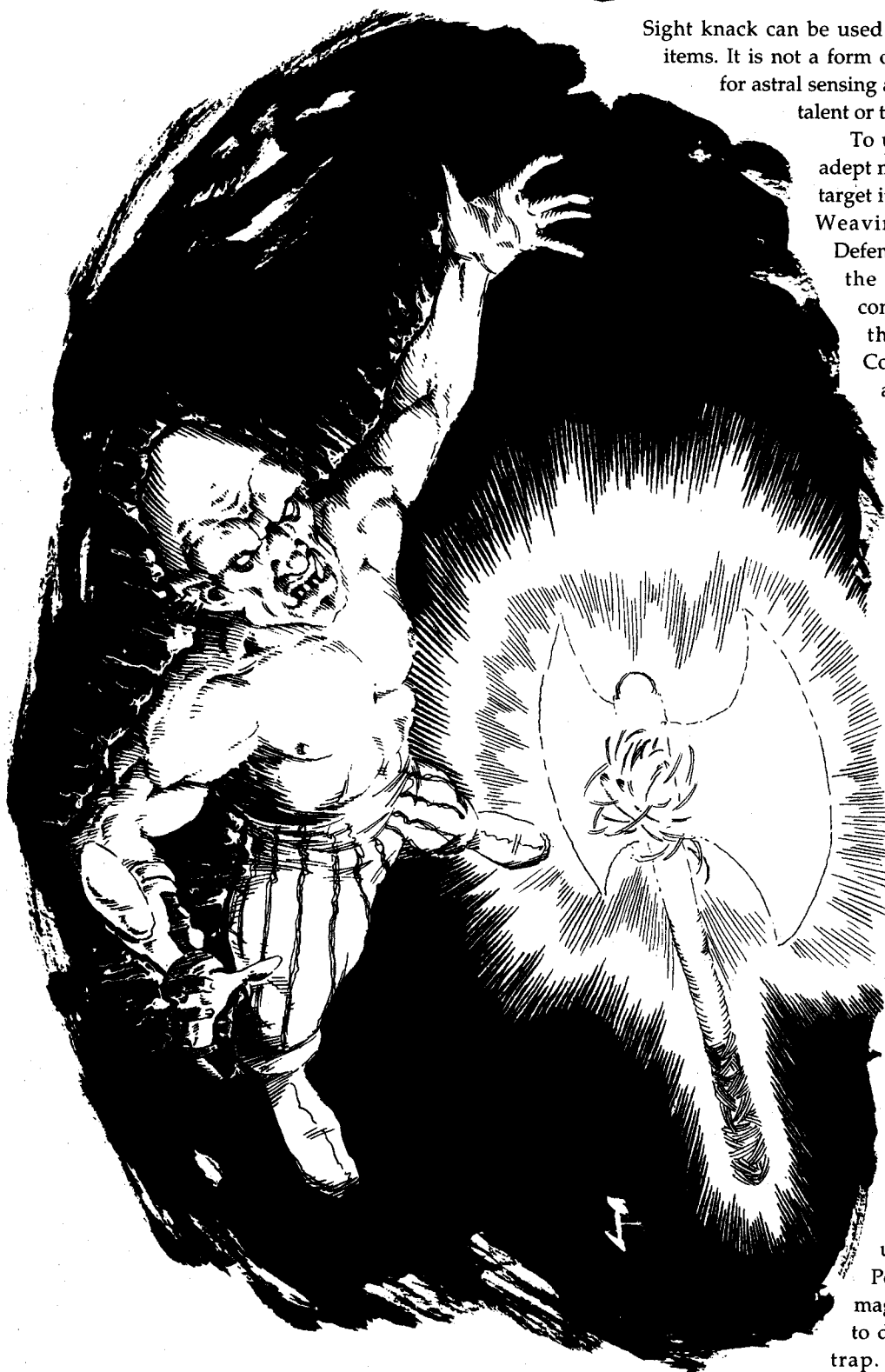
use them in place of their Perception step when making appropriate tests against a trap. Any test made to detect or avoid a trap causes the adept 1 point of Strain.

UNRAVELING

Rank: 7   **Cost:** 100

The Unraveling knack allows an adept to "unweave" the threads of a spell pattern, pulling apart the pattern and canceling the spell. Spell threads can be unraveled in this way because they are fragile and fairly delicate. The more robust and stable threads of true patterns can only be unraveled through the use of powerful talents and spells such as Soul Shatter and Shatter Pattern.

The Unraveling knack is commonly used by non-wizard spellcasting adepts who do not have access to the Dispel Magic spell, as well as by non-magician adepts who often deal with hostile spells and magic (such as thieves and weaponsmiths).

To unravel a spell pattern, a character must be able to see the pattern clearly with either Thread Sight or some other form of astral sight ability. The character makes a Thread Weaving Test against the spell's Thread Weaving Difficulty (see p. 157, **ED**) for each thread required to cast the spell. (If the spell does not require any threads, ignore this step.) Each Thread Weaving Test costs the character 2 points of Strain and requires an action, whether or not the test succeeds.

Once the character has unraveled the spell's threads (if any), he must make a final Thread Weaving Test against the spell's Dispel Difficulty and take another 2 points of Strain. If the test succeeds, the spell is broken and dispelled. If the test fails, the core of the spell remains and the spell continues. A character who fails to completely unravel a spell cannot attempt to unravel that spell again until he has increased his Thread Weaving rank.

The Unraveling knack can be used only on complete spell patterns, not on patterns in the process of forming. Thus, an adept cannot unravel the threads woven by a magician in the process of casting a spell. The Unraveling knack can effect Named spells only if the adept has studied the spell's true pattern (see **Dispelling Named Spells**, p. 37).

OPTIONAL THREAD RULES

The following thread rules suggest a significant change to the established way things work in the **Earthdawn** magic system. In order to decide whether or not these rules will fit their group's style of play,

gamemasters should carefully consider how these rules change the game before incorporating them into their campaign.

UNWEAVING THREADS

Adepts may wish to remove, or "unweave," threads they have previously woven for a variety of reasons. An adept who has unwittingly woven a thread to a cursed or Horror-marked item may want to unweave the thread to escape the effects of the curse or Horror mark. An adept may simply have reached his thread limit but still feel the need to weave a thread to a different pattern. Because, during the course of his adventuring career, an adept will likely weave threads to many different items and patterns, an adept reaching his personal limit is a real possibility. Rather than increasing his Thread Weaving rank or allowing one of his threads to be displaced, he may simply want to unweave a thread.

The optional unweaving threads rule provides adepts with a means to do so. To unweave a thread under this rule, an adept must take 5 points of Strain and achieve an Excellent or better success on a Thread Weaving Test against a Difficulty Number equal to his own Spell Defense plus the thread rank. For example, if a wizard with a Spell Defense 11 wants to remove a Rank 5 thread he has attached to a thread item, the Difficulty Number to unweave the thread would be 16.

Adepts cannot lower their Spell Defense ratings for these tests, and adepts cannot unweave threads woven by others. By unweaving a thread, however, an adept does not recover the Legend Points he spent originally to weave the thread. Legend Points spent on threads are gone forever and cannot be regained.

RESTRICTING MAGICIANS' THREAD WEAVING

Some players and gamemasters may feel that magicians have an unfair advantage over other adepts because magicians can weave threads to magical items at the First Circles of their Disciplines.

If desired, gamemasters may restrict magicians in the following manner. When magicians learn Thread Weaving at First Circle, they gain the ability to weave spell threads only, not pattern threads. Magicians then learn to weave pattern threads at no additional cost only when they reach Fourth Circle—the same Circle at which adepts of other Disciplines may gain the ability.

SPELL MAGIC

Spell magic is the form of magic used by elemental-ists, illusionists, nethermancers and wizards—followers of the magician Disciplines. Spell magic enables these adepts to mold pure magical energy into a near limitless array of patterns and produce a variety of effects that cannot be matched through the use of talents and magical abilities alone.

This section provides methods for magician adepts to expand their use of spell magic with Spellcasting knacks, multi-Discipline spells and Named spells. In addition, the section provides information on the operation of spells in astral space, the use of spell matrix objects, optional raw magic rules, and clarifications of previously published magic rules.

The **Spell Magic** chapter in the **Earthdawn** rulebook provides detailed rules for learning and casting spells. Players and gamemasters may wish to review those rules before adding the material provided in this section to their game.

SPELLCASTING KNACKS

Spellcasting knacks are talent knacks based on the Spellcasting talent (see **Talent Knacks,** pp. 18–20 in **Adept Magic,** for basic knack rules). Spellcasting knacks allow magicians to expand their use of the Spellcasting talent in ways such as increasing the Dispel Difficulty of spells or "stacking" spells to create unexpected results. Adepts of all magician Disciplines can learn and use Spellcasting knacks. (Note that because adepts only can learn knacks based on their Discipline talents, non-magician adepts cannot learn Spellcasting knacks, even though they may learn the Spellcasting talent.)

The cost listing in each knack description notes the Legend Points that an adept must spend to learn the knack. The rank listing notes the talent rank at which an adept may learn the knack. Because adepts of different magician Disciplines learn these knacks at different ranks, the rank for each knack appears as a letter-number code, with the letter identifying the Discipline and the number identifying the talent rank at which adepts of that Discipline may learn the knack. For example, E3 represents elementalist, Spellcasting talent Rank 3.

Note that in many instances, illusionists and wizards may learn Spellcasting knacks at lower ranks than elemen-

talists and nethermancers. This reflects the fact that elementalists and nethermancers also learn the magic of summoning, which means they advance more slowly than illusionists and wizards in the finer arts of spellcasting.

Many of the following knacks require a specific success level on the adept's Spellcasting Test. The Success Level Table (p. 246, **ED**) begins with Difficulty Number 3; use the following success levels for spells with a Casting Difficulty of 2:

Poor	Average	Good	Excellent	Extraordinary
1	2	5	7	9

ANCHORED SPELL

Rank: E9, I9, N5, W5   **Cost:** 100

The Anchored Spell knack enables a magician to anchor spells to walls and other structures to create temporary wards.

To anchor a spell, the magician attaches the pattern of the spell to a wall, door or some other fixed object. When a character passes within 10 feet of the anchored spell, the temporary ward created by the spell may detect that character, triggering the spell. Once the spell has been triggered, it disperses and cannot be triggered again.

The magician must first weave any required threads for the spell and make a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of the object to which the spell will be anchored. The magician must achieve an Excellent success or better on the test or the anchoring does not take and the spell is wasted. The magician must power the anchored spell pattern by taking a number of Strain Points equal to his Wound Threshold (thereby taking a Wound). This damage cannot be healed for a year and a day or until the spell is triggered or dispelled.

Once in place, the anchored spell remains for a year and a day or until it is triggered. Any character passing within 10 feet of the anchoring object may trigger the spell. A magician can dispel an anchored spell he has cast by making a Spellcasting Test against a Difficulty Number of 2.

Anchored spells created with this knack function as wards (pp. 209–10, **ED**). Base the ward's game mechanics on the magician's abilities and the anchored spell, as shown following.

Anchored Spell Ward

> **Detection Difficulty:** Magician's Spellcasting step number
>
> **Spell Defense:** Magician's Spell Defense
>
> **Disarm Difficulty:** Anchored spell's Dispel Difficulty
>
> **Trigger Condition:** The gamemaster makes a Spellcasting Test for the ward against the Spell Defense of any character or creature passing within 10 feet of it The step number for this test is equal to the Spellcasting step of the magician who created the ward. If the test succeeds, the anchored spell is triggered. Magicians may anchor spells with a password or other type of signal that allows individuals to pass the ward without triggering it.
>
> **Trap Initiative:** 10 + the magician's Spellcasting step number
>
> **Trap Effect:** Anchored spell's effect. Use the Spellcasting step of the magician who anchored the spell. The ward's Effect step equals the spell's Effect step.

FORCED SPELLCASTING

Rank: E7, I6, N7, W6   **Cost:** 100

The Forced Spellcasting knack allows a magician to cast spells more quickly than normal. The knack can be used only when casting spells with spell matrices and raw magic. The knack cannot be used when casting from a grimoire or when casting ritual spells such as Create Life.

Once a magician has begun to cast a spell using the Forced Spellcasting knack, he must finish casting the spell in this manner or abandon it. He cannot revert to normal spellcasting once he has started to force a spell. A magician who has begun casting per standard rules, however, may complete the spell with the Forced Spellcasting knack.

When using the knack, a magician essentially compresses all the threads needed to cast a spell into a matrix or pattern during a single round. As a result, a magician may easily take Strain damage that exceeds his Wound Threshold. In this case, the Strain causes the magician to take a Wound.

The Forced Spellcasting knack may be used in conjunction with the Spell Stacking knack.

Forced Matrix Casting

When using the Forced Spellcasting knack for matrix casting, a magician may compress any or all of the required spell threads into the spell matrix.

If he chooses to compress all the threads, he simply takes 3 points of Strain for each thread needed for the spell. As long as he remains conscious (and alive) after taking this damage, he can then cast the spell as normal.

If the magician wishes to compress only some of the required threads into the matrix and weave the remaining threads, he first makes a Thread Weaving Test per standard rules for the threads he chooses to weave. (The magician may attempt to weave multiple threads in a single Thread Weaving Test [p. 152, **ED**], or may weave an extra thread by achieving an Excellent or better success in the Thread Weaving Test.) Next, the magician compresses the spell's remaining threads by taking 3 points of Strain per compressed thread, then casts the spell normally, provided he is conscious and alive.

Forced Raw Magic Casting

When casting a spell with raw magic, a magician may use the Forced Spellcasting knack to compress the spell's threads into the spell pattern. The magician takes 2 points of Strain damage for each spell thread, then makes the Spellcasting Test as normal. If the test succeeds, the gamemaster makes the Warping and Horror Mark tests as usual (pp. 155–56, **ED**), but adds 3 to the step number for both tests. (Use the Horror Mark step number increase even if using the optional Horror Mark rules described in **Raw Magic and Horror Marks**, p. 40.)

INCREASED DISPEL DIFFICULTY

Rank: E7, I5, N7, W5   **Cost:** 100

The Increased Dispel Difficulty knack allows a magician to increase the Dispel Difficulty of spells he casts, basing the Dispel Difficulty on his own Circle rather than the spell Circle.

To use the knack, a magician must achieve a Good or better success on his Spellcasting Test. In addition, he must take a number of Strain Points equal to the difference between the spell's Circle and his own. For example, a Fifth Circle wizard uses the Increased Dispel Difficulty knack on the Circle 1 spell Iron Hand. The normal Dispel Difficulty for a Circle 1 spell is 7, while the Dispel Difficulty for a Circle 5 spell is 13. (See p. 184, **ED**, for a list of Dispel Difficulties.) The wizard takes 4 points of Strain, but the spell he casts has a Dispel Difficulty of 13.

In addition, each success level beyond Good reduces the Strain cost by 2, to a minimum of 2. If the wizard from the above example achieved an Excellent success on his Spellcasting Test, he would take only 2 points of Strain.

MAINTAIN SPELL THREADS

Rank: E7, I5, N7, W5   **Cost:** 100

Normally, a magician must weave all the threads of a spell and then cast the spell in the next round or lose the threads (p. 151, **ED**). The Maintain Spell Threads knack enables a magician to hold spell threads in a spell matrix until he is ready to cast the spell.

For each round a magician holds spell threads using this knack, he takes a number of Strain Points equal to the number of threads he is holding. For example, an elementalist weaves the 3 required threads for a Suffocation spell and decides to cast the spell 2 rounds later. Because he holds the spell threads for 2 rounds, he must take 6 points of Strain.

The Maintain Spell Threads knack is most often used when a magician wants to hold off casting a low thread-number spell for only one or two rounds. Wizards generally use this knack only until they learn the Hold Thread talent.

SPELL DESIGN

Rank: E5, I5, N5, W5   **Cost:** 100

The Spell Design knack enables magicians to design new spells. Unlike most other talent knacks, Spell Design does not cause Strain or require a specific success level on the adept's Spellcasting Test. The Spell Design knack simply allows magicians to use the Spellcasting talent to design spell patterns as described in **Spell Design,** p. 108.

SPELL STACKING

Rank: E9, I8, N9, W7   **Cost:** 100

The Spell Stacking knack allows a magician to "stack" multiple spells and cast them as a single spell against a single target.

If the patterns for all the spells to be stacked are stored in spell matrices, the magician first weaves the required threads for each spell and then makes a single Spellcasting Test for the entire stack, using the highest Casting Difficulty of all the spells. The magician must take 2 points of Strain for each additional spell beyond the first. For example, a magician casting 4 spells in a stack would take 6 points of Strain.

The magician must achieve a Good or better success on the Spellcasting Test. If he succeeds, the spells have their normal effects. The magician makes a separate Effect Test for each spell. If the Spellcasting Test fails, none of the spells have any effect, and the magician still takes the Strain from using the knack.

If a magician wishes to stack spells that are not stored in matrices, he must cast them using the standard raw magic spellcasting rules (pp. 155–56, **ED**), with the following modifications. The gamemaster makes a single Warping Test and a single Horror Mark Test, but he *combines* the Circles of the stacked spells to determine the effective Circle for the tests.

The Spell Stacking knack may be used in conjunction with the Forced Spellcasting knack.

MULTI-DISCIPLINE SPELLS

The vast majority of spells in **Earthdawn** are created by single-Discipline magicians using the spell-design process of their Discipline only. As a natural outgrowth of this practice, spells are generally grouped by type: wizard spells, nethermancer spells, illusionist spells and elementalist spells. The different magician Disciplines might draw inspiration and ideas from the others' work, but the types of spells they create remain distinct.

The traditional way, however, is not the only way available. Adepts who follow more than one magician Discipline and human magicians (who naturally possess the Versatility talent) may learn the Thread Weaving talents of more than one magician Discipline. This knowledge enables these magicians to use spells from multiple Disciplines, and to create multi-Discipline spells.

Multi-Discipline spells combine effects common to two or more magician Disciplines in a single spell. For example, a magician who follows both the nethermancer and illusionist Disciplines may create a spell of illusory summoning by integrating the effects common to illusionist spells and the summoning effects common to nethermancer spells. While single-Discipline magicians can design spells using effects most commonly used by other Disciplines, doing so makes these spells very complex and unusually difficult to create. A multi-Disciplined magician can design a multi-Discipline spell with an identical effect more easily and with a better chance of success.

To cast a multi-Discipline spell, a magician must weave a thread using the Thread Weaving talent of each of the Disciplines combined in the spell. He may then use his Spellcasting talent to cast the spell per standard rules. Multi-Discipline spells always require at least one thread of each Discipline, so the spellcaster must make at least two Thread Weaving Tests.

The complexity of multi-Discipline spells makes them tricky to create and quite rare, but the nearly limitless possibilities for unique effects encourages many multi-Disciplined magicians to spend the time and effort

verse inevitably reverts to its natural state. Blood magic can often prolong the duration of magical effects, but even a few years represent no more than a fleeting moment in the life span of the universe.

By Naming a spell, however, a magician can give the spell a true pattern and make its effects permanent and self-sustaining. Chiefly, Naming a spell allows a magician to cast lasting curses and blessings, create magical items (described in **Enchanting,** p. 49) and design unique, high-powered spells.

Only spells with a duration of greater than 1 round can be Named. Such spells that destroy or consume their targets, such as Razor Orb or Pain, cannot be Named because their effects are temporary by definition—these spells end after they have destroyed their targets. Magicians may, however, Name warding or defensive spells such as Lightning Shield or Pass Ward because destroying a target is not the primary function of these spells. Using these guidelines, each gamemaster should determine which spells can be Named in his game.

CASTING NAMED SPELLS

To make a spell's effects permanent, the spellcaster must first give the spell a Name. A spell's Name is usually something associated with the circumstances under which the caster wishes to make the spell permanent. If the magician uses a spell to enchant an item, the spell's Name may include the name of the item. If the spell is targeted against a person, the Name may indicate the caster, the target and the circumstances of the casting. For example, Enitharmon the illusionist casts an Eyes Have It spell on an opponent and decides to make the spell permanent. He chooses to Name the spell Enitharmon's Curse of Blindness. Every permanent spell's Name must be unique; the spellcaster cannot use the same Name more than once.

To cast a Named spell, a magician makes a Spellcasting Test per standard rules. If that test succeeds, the magician must make a second Spellcasting Test against the original Casting Difficulty of the spell and take a number of Strain Points equal to the spell's Circle.

needed to design them. Several multi-Discipline spells appear on pp. 133-35 in the **Spell Design** section.

NAMED SPELLS

One of the first truths that an apprentice magician learns from his master is that the power of spell magic is transient. Spells enable a magician to draw energy from astral space and shape it to suit his will, but the effects of even the most powerful spells rarely last more than a short time. Generally, spells create no more than a tiny, brief change in the fabric of the universe before the uni-

This damage is taken all at once and can cause a Wound if the damage exceeds the spellcaster's Wound Threshold. As long as the Strain does not kill the magician, the spellcasting attempt may succeed, even if the Strain renders the magician unconscious. The magician takes this Strain whether the test succeeds or not. If the test fails, the spell is cast but cannot be made permanent.

If the second Spellcasting Test produces a Good or better level of success (and the magician survives the Strain), the magician can make the spell permanent by spending a number of Legend Points equal to 100 times the spell's Circle. If the caster does not have sufficient Legend Points, which provide the magical energy needed to create a true pattern for the spell, he cannot make the spell permanent.

Before attempting to cast a permanent spell, a magician must declare his intention to do so and must accept whatever results the Spellcasting and Effect tests produce. The magician may decide not to make the spell permanent after the first Spellcasting Test. In this case, he still takes the Strain described above but need not spend Legend Points.

Once a magician makes a spell permanent, the spell becomes an independent astral entity outside the spellcaster's control. Thus, even the magician who created a Named spell must dispel or destroy the Named spell he wants to cancel—he cannot simply cancel it at will.

The effects of certain spells, such as Monstrous Mantle and Shield Mist, may prove inconvenient if made permanent, but if characters insist on Naming such spells anyway, gamemasters should enforce any potential problems they cause.

DISPELLING NAMED SPELLS

The Thread Weaving talent knack Unraveling and the Dispel Magic spell are the only effective means to destroy a Named spell. To use either of these tools, a magician must learn all the Key Knowledges of the Named spell. The number of Key Knowledges a Named spell contains is based on the spell's Circle, as shown on the Named Spell Key Knowledges Table. The Key Knowledges may vary but generally include the spell's Name, the Name of the magician who cast the spell, the reason for the spell, the spell's history and similar information. The gamemaster may create Key Knowledges if the need arises, and may include a Deed if so desired—always a useful adventure hook.

Characters learn the Key Knowledges of a spell in the same way they learn the knowledges of a legendary item.

NAMED SPELL KEY KNOWLEDGES TABLE

Spell Circle	Number of Key Knowledges
1–4	1
5–8	2
9–12	3
13+	4

Once a magician has learned the Key Knowledges of a Named spell, he can break it by using the Thread Weaving talent knack Unraveling or the Dispel Magic spell per standard rules.

HIGH-CIRCLE SPELLS

Unlike the formulaic lower-Circle spells, spells of Circle 13 and greater are unique and special enchantments. These extremely powerful rituals are designed to create specific effects of great scope and importance, and they often provide the basis of Barsaivian legends.

Though all spells of Circle 13 and greater are different, they all possess three characteristics. All are unique, Named, ritual spells, are difficult to learn and difficult to cast.

Each of these spells has a specific purpose and intent and may only be used for that purpose. For example, there is no such thing as a Circle 13 attack spell that can be used to destroy any target the spellcaster chooses. However, a magician may create a Circle 13 spell intended to visit a terrible plague on an entire city. Because every high-Circle spell has a unique effect and a unique target, gamemasters and players should view their use as events—significant events that can easily alter the course of a campaign.

All high-Circle spells have Names, which give them true patterns. The spell's Name defines its purpose and limits its use to that purpose. For example, the Ritual of the Thorns is the enchantment that created the Blood Elves. Its creation and use was a specific event in the history of the Wyrm Wood. The Ritual probably will never be used again, but if it is, that use will be an equally significant event in the history of Barsaive.

Magicians need to consider two important factors when designing spells of Circle 13 and higher (see **Spell Design**, p. 118). First, the design must reflect the spell's unique purpose. The magician must define the spell's effect more specifically than he would define the effect of

a lower-Circle spell. The effect of a Circle 13+ spell must be defined as causing a specific effect against a specific target. For example, such spells might include a ritual that causes all the adult males in the city of Travar to fall ill and die, or a spell that would transform Lake Ban into ice. Though the effects of higher-Circle spells are not as flexible as those of lower-Circle spells, they can and should produce far-reaching effects. High-Circle spells may produce more than one effect, reach long distances and cover large areas of effect.

Second, high-Circle spells must be designed as ritual spells (see **Other Types of Magic**, p. 97). Generally, rituals require the abilities of several magicians uniting their powers through the use of the Talent Linking knack (p. 28) to cast the spell. The Ritual of the Thorns, which required all the magicians of the Blood Wood, is one example of such cooperative effort.

Because high-Circle spells are so powerful, they should be difficult to learn and cast. This implies a complexity that would give only the most highly skilled and talented magicians even a hope of designing and executing such spells. High-Circle spells represent magical secrets of the highest order, and only years of devoted work enable magicians to successfully create them. These spells are as carefully guarded as the most valuable of magical treasures, and they are not shared or used lightly. Circle 13 and greater spells contain enough power to alter the course of an **Earthdawn** campaign with only one use, and so every gamemaster should carefully consider the implications of these spells before allowing their use in campaigns.

SPELLS IN ASTRAL SPACE

Once cast, spells travel through a medium known as astral space. The magical energy gathered by the magician leaps like a spark of electricity through astral space to the spell's target. It could also be said that when a magician casts a spell, he uses his strength of will and awareness of astral space to gather the subtle energies found there and weave them into a predetermined form—a pattern—for a particular spell. The spell takes the form of a delicate complex of energy on the astral plane, held by the force of the magician's will like an arrow knocked and drawn back, full of potential. It is then released and it rushes toward its predetermined target, flying through astral space like an arrow loosed through the air. Unlike an arrow, however, few physical concerns will impede the flight of a spell toward its target.

An observer in the material world simply sees a spellcasting magician concentrate, speak a few words and make some simple gestures to cast a spell. An observer in astral space, however, sees the spell pattern form around the magician as he gathers threads of magical energy from astral space and weaves them into the spell's pattern. The patterns of some simple spells form and execute their effects almost instantly. Other spells require many threads, and astral observers can see the magical energy building up around the spell pattern as they are woven.

A character with astral-sensitive sight or the Astral Sight talent who is observing a spellcasting magician can see this build-up of magical energy around the magician. If the character is familiar with the spell being cast (knowing it himself or having seen it cast before), he may recognize it by making a successful Perception or Astral Sight Test against the spell's Learning Difficulty (p. 151, **ED**). Such observations may provide some warning of a magician's intentions, but generally they do not give an observer enough time to prevent a magician from casting a spell.

When a spell leaps through astral space toward its target, it moves very rapidly—too rapidly for characters to interfere with it. However, Horrors can use abilities such as Disrupt Magic to counter the spell. Material objects between the spellcaster and the target will not prevent a spell from reaching its target, provided the objects do not block the spellcaster's line of sight.

ASTRAL TARGETING

Most spells can only be directed at targets that the spellcasting magician can see (p. 153, **ED**). This means that magicians must possess an astral sight ability or be present in astral space themselves to cast spells at astral targets.

If a magician possesses some form of astral sight ability (excluding the astral sense spell), he may target such beings with any spell that affects astral beings. For example, a wizard using Astral Sight could cast a Mind Dagger spell at a spirit hovering nearby in astral space. But he could not cast a Flame Flash spell on the same spirit, because the effect of the Flame Flash spell is purely physical—it would not affect the immaterial astral spirit.

Magicians in astral space can cast spells against astral targets as if both the spellcaster and the target existed in the physical world. For example, if a wizard passed through a Spirit Portal and entered astral space, he would be able to cast a Flame Flash spell against an astral target. However, magicians in astral space cannot cast spells at targets in the physical world. (See **Astral Space**, pp. 60–77, for more information.)

SPELL MATRIX OBJECTS

Originally, magicians worked their spells with raw magic, channeling astral energy directly through their own patterns and shaping that energy into spells. In the years immediately preceding the Scourge, however, magicians discovered that these traditional techniques of spellcasting created flares in astral space, flares that often attracted the attentions of nearby Horrors. As a result, the very spells that magicians used to defend themselves and others often brought about their destruction. Many magicians died terrible deaths before the phenomenon was understood and some kind of countermeasure devised.

Magicians needed a means to conceal the flares caused by forming spells from raw magic. They also required a means to filter the increasingly corrupted astral energy to protect themselves from exposure to polluted astral space and ensure that their spells would function properly. Magicians reasoned that this filter would need to be a magical pattern that came between the magician and astral space, providing concealment and protection.

Eventually, several magicians discovered they could produce such filters by using their Thread Weaving talents to alter the patterns of material objects. Magicians most commonly used items that they normally carried at all times, such as staves, rings, wands and their ever-present robes. By "reweaving" these items with magical spell patterns, these items could be used to hold the essential "matrix" of one or more spells. The magician could then use the item to cast the spell without fearing the attention of the

Horrors or risking harm from polluted astral energies. This system worked well enough, but if such spell matrix objects were lost or destroyed, a magician could be left with no safe means of casting spells.

Not long after the end of the Scourge, however, nethermancer adepts discovered a way to create a filter purely from magical threads woven to the magician's true pattern. The magician could then use his Thread Weaving talent to "align" the filter to mimic the pattern of any spell he wished to store. This technique eventually developed into the Spell Matrix talent now used by magicians all over Barsaive and the Theran Empire. With these ultimately portable, personal, and flexible matrices, the use of "magician's robes" and other matrix items began to fall into disuse.

Magicians in Barsaive and elsewhere still make occasional use of spell matrix objects. Despite their limits, these items still allow magicians to maintain a greater variety of spells "on hand." In fact, many traditional wizards continue the practice of wearing robes that contain spell matrices, represented by various colorful and intricately embroidered designs.

USING SPELL MATRIX OBJECTS

To use any spell matrix object, a magician must first attach a thread to the item. Matrix objects can only have one thread attached at any one time. If a character attaches a thread to a matrix object belonging to someone else, the original thread is displaced and any matrices contained in the item are wiped clean. Unlike most thread

items, matrix objects require no Key Knowledges. However, magicians can weave threads of various ranks to a spell matrix object.

The rank of the thread woven to the spell matrix object determines the Circle of spells it can hold. For example, a matrix object with a Rank 3 thread attached can hold spells of Circle 3 or less. If desired, the owner of a spell matrix object can "split" the rating of the attached thread, giving the item several matrices of lesser rank. Using the same example, the matrix object could hold 3 Circle 1 spells. Any splits are permanent, however, and the object's owner must choose which matrix will be affected by any increases in the thread rank.

> *Edaro the elementalist has a Rank 6 thread woven to his matrix object staff. He chooses to split the thread into a Rank 3, a Rank 2 and a Rank 1 matrix. From that point on, the staff will always have at least three matrices. If Edaro increases his thread to Rank 7, he must choose which matrix's rating increases or create a new Rank 1 matrix.*

To attach threads to a matrix object, a magician must make a successful Thread Weaving Test against the appropriate Weaving Difficulty Number (see p. 146, **ED**). The magician must also pay a Legend Point cost for each thread he weaves. Attaching a Rank 1 thread costs 100 Legend Points. Additional thread ranks cost the same as increasing First Circle talent ranks (p. 221, **ED**). Note that possessing a spell matrix object is not considered a talent for the purposes of Circle advancement, and the thread woven to the item counts against the maximum number of active threads the character can maintain.

Spell matrices contained in matrix objects are used like standard spell matrices (see p. 116, **ED**). Spell matrix objects cannot contain Armored, Enhanced or Share matrices, because these talents developed after the widespread use of matrix items was abandoned.

To cast a spell stored in a matrix object, a magician must be touching or wearing the object. If the magician loses physical contact with the matrix object while in the process of spellcasting (if it is snatched away or dropped, for example), the spellcasting is disrupted and the spell fails. A magician who loses contact with a matrix item still has the option of finishing the spell using raw magic.

Matrices contained in spell matrix objects may be attacked and damaged in astral space like other matrices

(p. 153, **ED**). If a spell matrix object is "killed" in astral combat, it is physically destroyed as well and the item's enchantment is ruined. Likewise, if a matrix object is physically destroyed, the matrix stored within it is lost. Minor physical damage to spell matrix objects can be repaired, however, and matrices merely damaged in astral combat can be healed through application of the magician's Willpower (p. 154, **ED**).

OPTIONAL RAW MAGIC RULES

Raw magic is the most dangerous and least used method of casting spells. The rules in the **Earthdawn** rulebook describe the most common effects of raw magic on a magician, specifically damage from astral warping and Horror marks. The following optional rules expand the effects of these phenomena. These rules may have considerable impact on a group's game, so gamemasters should carefully consider the full implications of these rules before introducing them into their campaigns.

OPTIONAL EFFECTS OF WARPING

Whenever a magician uses raw magic, the gamemaster makes a Warping Test against the magician's Spell Defense to determine if he suffers damage from the pollution of astral space (p. 155, **ED**). If desired, a successful Warping Test may produce other effects as well, such as corrupting the spell itself and producing unexpected results. For example, a spell that heals a target may do harm instead, or a spell that improves some aspect of an object or target character, such as Combat Fury, may damage the object or character. Alternatively, a spell may simply affect the wrong target. For example, a Bone Shatter spell aimed at an enemy may strike a companion instead. For more examples of potential results of Warping, see the effects of the Corrupt Magic power of the Horror Taint (p. 56, **Horrors**).

RAW MAGIC AND HORROR MARKS

In addition to taking Warping damage, a magician who casts raw magic may find himself Horror marked (p. 156, **ED**).

If the character gained the Horror mark without premeditation (and the gamemaster did not manipulate the character into accepting the mark), the gamemaster may take advantage of the occasion to create a Horror that subsequently can be introduced into the campaign to torment the unfortunate magician. The gamemaster

can also link the marking to an upcoming adventure that features a specific Horror. Alternatively, the gamemaster can attribute the mark to a Horror already involved in the game or use the occasion to introduce a Horror he had planned to use.

In any case, the adventure may culminate with the death of the Horror, which frees the victim from its dreadful intentions. Or the Horror may survive the adventure and present no end of challenges in subsequent adventures.

Gamemasters who wish to introduce a Horror into a campaign through the use of a Horror mark may use the following optional Horror mark rule. This option greatly increases the likelihood that a magician casting raw magic will be Horror marked because it assumes that a Horror is lurking nearby in astral space, has already targeted the magician and is simply waiting for the best opportunity to mark him.

The standard rules base the step number for a raw magic Horror Mark Test on the Circle of the spell cast and

Region Type	Bonus to Horror Mark Step
Safe	None
Open	Circle
Tainted	Circle + 3
Corrupt	Circle + 5

the type of region in which the magician cast it. Under the optional rule, the Circle of the spell and the type of region determine a bonus that is added to the step number of the Horror's Horror Mark power. For the appropriate bonus, consult the Raw Magic Horror Mark Table.

SPELLCASTING CLARIFICATIONS

Player feedback clearly indicates that some of the rules regarding spellcasting seem a bit ambiguous. The following explanations clarify the most frequently misunderstood aspects of spellcasting in **Earthdawn.**

ENHANCED MATRICES

The Enhanced Matrix talent enables a magician to create an Enhanced spell matrix, which can hold a single spell thread in addition to a spell (pp. 105, 153, **ED**). When a magician attunes a spell to an Enhanced Matrix, the magician may weave one of the spell's threads into the matrix. This thread remains woven in the spell pattern and reduces by one the number of threads the magician must weave to cast the spell. Armored matrices may also hold threads, but Share matrices cannot.

SPELL MATRICES AND MULTI-DISCIPLINE MAGICIANS

In **Earthdawn,** magician characters may learn additional magician Disciplines (pp. 106–7). However, a magician learning additional Disciplines cannot learn the Spell Matrix talents of the new Disciplines. The magician must use the Spell Matrix talents from his original magician Discipline when storing spells from all of his magician Disciplines. This restriction applies to the Spell Matrix talent only.

The magician may learn the Enhanced Matrix, Armored Matrix and Share Matrix talents in any one of his magician Disciplines. The rules of each Discipline determine the Circle at which he can learn these matrix talents, as well as the number of each specific matrix type he may possess. For example, an elementalist/illusionist character can learn the Enhanced Matrix talent when he reaches either Seventh Circle as an elementalist or Sixth Circle as an illusionist. Both Disciplines grant only two Enhanced Matrices, so the character may only ever possess two such matrices, regardless of the Discipline in which he learns the talent.

HUMANS, VERSATILITY AND SPELLCASTING

The human racial talent of Versatility enables human magicians to learn the Thread Weaving talents of magician Disciplines other than their own (p. 107, **The Adept's Way**). This allows human magicians to cast spells of several Disciplines, though the range of spells a magician may cast in this manner is limited.

When casting spells using a spell matrix, a magician generally can only cast spells of his current Circle or less. A human magician using a matrix to cast spells of Disciplines other than his own, however, may only cast spells of Circles equal to his current Circle or his rank in the appropriate Thread Weaving talent, whichever is lower. For example, a Fifth Circle human nethermancer uses his Versatility to purchase Rank 4 in Elementalism (the elementalist form of the Thread Weaving talent). This magician may cast nethermancer spells of Circle 5 and lower, but his elementalist spells are restricted to Circle 4 and lower. This restriction does not apply to magicians casting from a grimoire or casting raw magic.

Human magicians attempting to learn spells of other magician Disciplines may also have problems finding willing teachers, because most Barsaivian magicians are reluctant to teach the spells of their Discipline to an adept of a different Discipline. Indeed, many magicians would feel it a betrayal of the traditions and customs of their Discipline to do so. Therefore, such teachers may demand a payment in silver (perhaps equal to the equivalent training cost, based on the Circle of the spells desired), or may require the potential pupil to perform some sort of task or deed for the teacher, perhaps even swearing a blood oath of some sort. This restriction enables gamemasters to prevent human magicians from becoming overly powerful.

THE SPELLCASTING SKILL

The Spellcasting talent can also be learned as a skill, which enables non-magicians to cast spells under certain conditions. Most often, the Spellcasting skill is used by non-magician adepts with spell matrix objects or magical

items that contain matrices, such as a Spell Sword (pp. 42–43, **Earthdawn Gamemaster Pack**) or a Spell Matrix staff (p. 68, **Earthdawn Companion**). The Spellcasting skill functions in the same manner as the Spellcasting talent; the character makes a Spellcasting Test against the Casting Difficulty of a spell to cast it.

The Spellcasting skill also enables an adept to use raw magic to cast spells he has learned with the Read and Write Magic talent. Any adept doing so faces all the standard risks of casting raw magic (pp. 155–56, **ED**).

The Spellcasting skill does not enable characters to weave threads for spells. Characters must possess the appropriate Thread Weaving talent to weave spell threads. This restriction means that non-magicians using the Spellcasting skill can only cast spells that do not require threads.

The Spellcasting skill also does not enable a character to attune matrices or learn new spells. For these tasks, a character needs the appropriate Thread Weaving talent as well as the Read and Write Magic talent. Even those adepts using the Spellcasting skill with matrix objects must first have the matrices attuned for the spells they wish to cast.

MAGICIANS AND GRIMOIRES

When a magician learns a spell with the Read and Write Magic talent, he writes the spell formula in his grimoire and locks the spell in his memory (p. 154, **ED**). From that point on, the magician cannot cast that spell from his grimoire. Instead, he can only cast the spell using a spell matrix or raw magic.

So why should magicians keep grimoires? There are several reasons for doing so, most of which relate to training and teaching. A grimoire is more than simply a collection of the spells a magician has learned. It is a record of a magician's growth in his Discipline, from novice (First through Fourth Circle) to journeyman (Fifth through Ninth Circle) to warden (Twelfth Circle plus). Often, magicians use their grimoires to record other information as well, such as spell research and runic carvings for later study. As magicians advance to higher Circles, they learn methods for incorporating various effects into new spells they design. This information must be written into their grimoire in order for them to learn it.

When considering new students, many magicians want to review a candidate's grimoire. This enables the potential teacher to examine the student's past experiences and gauge his knowledge of his Discipline's spells. In fact, some magicians refuse to instruct adepts who do not maintain grimoires, because they believe such students lack respect for the traditions of their Discipline and the craft of spellcasting. Grimoires also enable magicians to share spells with other adepts of their Discipline. An adept learning a spell must be able to copy the spell from a written document, so any magician who wishes to share or sell spells or take on students must keep a grimoire.

Additionally, a magician's grimoire almost always becomes one of his pattern items. Though grimoires begin as Minor pattern items, many eventually become Major or even Core pattern items. By keeping his grimoire in his possession at all times, a magician can ensure that at least one of his pattern items cannot be used against him.

DISPEL MAGIC

Originally, the Dispel Magic spell was only available to wizards (p. 183, **ED**). However, this book introduces new versions of Dispel Magic that are available to other magician Disciplines. These versions appear in **New Spells**, page 131.

The Dispel Magic spell may only be used to dispel the magical effects of spells, talents and creature abilities that have sustained durations, whether those durations are measured in combat rounds, minutes, hours or other units. For example, the Woodskin talent grants an increase to a character's Death and Unconsciousness ratings that lasts for 24 hours. At any point during this time, the effects of Woodskin may be dispelled with the Dispel Magic spell. The same holds true for other magical effects of given durations, including effects of certain creature powers or Discipline abilities such as Matrix Split or Casting Triangle.

The Dispel Difficulty for creature and Horror powers and abilities is based on the step number of the power or ability. The Dispel Difficulty for talents is based on the talent rank. To determine the Dispel Difficulty, consult the Spell Dispel Difficulty Table (p. 184, **ED**). For this purpose, the rank or step number equals the spell Circle values listed in the table. If a creature or Horror power or ability step number is higher than 15, add 1 to the Dispel Difficulty for each step above 15. For example, the Horror power Corrupt Reality at Step 17 would have a Dispel Difficulty of 28 (26 + 2).

The Dispel Magic spell can never be used to prevent a target from using one of its abilities. For instance, Dispel Magic cannot be used to dispel another magician's Spellcasting talent.

ENCHANTING

Enchanting is the art of transforming mundane objects into magical items. Magicians have fine-tuned several methods of enchanting over the centuries, producing a wide variety of magical items, from humble cook pots to the most legendary enchanted blades. It is important to note that the creation of magical items is an art. Each item, no matter how simple, must be handmade by individual artisans ranging from enchanters and minor adepts to magicians and adventuring adepts. Neither Throal nor Bartertown nor any other city in Barsaive contains an "assembly line" grinding out magical wares on demand.

Because creating magical items is an art, no single set of rules and numbers for enchanting applies in every case. The process of creating such items contains numerous junctures that require input from both the player and the gamemaster to ensure that the item will be suitable for an individual **Earthdawn** game. Gamemasters in particular should take great care to ensure that the powers of new magical items fit into their campaign and will not ruin the balance of their games.

This section describes the most common methods of enchanting, the different types of magical items that the enchanting process can produce, information about True elements and orichalcum and their uses in enchanting, and the alchemical methods for creating magical potions and other elixirs.

THE ENCHANTING PROCESS

Creating a magical item involves three main steps: creating or obtaining the item, imbuing the item with magical power, and making an Enchantment Test to bind the magic to the item. Creating or obtaining the item is perhaps the simplest task of the three. Depending on the item, this task may be as simple as purchasing the item or as involved as forging a blade from raw materials. In many cases, fashioning an item to be enchanted involves the use of one or more Craftsman skills (p. 130, **ED**) and an artisan skill. Often, characters use orichalcum as a construction material because the metal holds magical power more effectively than any other material. For more information on orichalcum, see **Orichalcum**, page 56.

Once a character has created or obtained the item, he infuses it with magical power. Items may be enchanted by weaving True elements into them, Naming or re-Naming them, attaching permanent spells to them, or trapping spirits within them. All of these methods are explained in **Methods of Enchanting,** below.

The final step in the enchantment process is the Enchantment Test. This test completes the item and makes it usable. The Difficulty Number for an Enchantment Test depends on the type of magical item being enchanted (see the descriptions of magical item types in **Creating Magical Items,** p. 49).

METHODS OF ENCHANTING

Most enchanting is performed by adepts using half-magic (see **Half-Magic,** p. 24 in **Adept Magic**), but under the right circumstances, minor enchanter adepts and even mundanes may enchant items as well. With their affinity for the True elements and orichalcum, elementalists make the best enchanters of all magician adepts, and many of them choose to specialize in enchanting (p. 43, **The Adept's Way**). Weaponsmiths are also skilled at enchanting, especially weapons and armor.

Adepts of other magician Disciplines may also enchant items, but their enchanting abilities are relatively limited. Wizards represent the next most common set of adepts who practice enchanting, and they often experiment with the creation of various magical items simply to deepen their understanding of magical forces. Nethermancers rarely practice enchanting; when they do, they create magical items using bound spirits and blood magic, two methods generally frowned upon by other magicians and by other Name-givers. Illusionists perform little permanent enchanting, save for items especially related to their Discipline; the permanence of enchanting is of little interest to these masters of the ephemeral.

Enchanters use four major techniques to create magical items in **Earthdawn**. Infusing an item with the essence of one or more of the five True elements (earth, air, fire, water and wood) is the most basic means of enchanting an item, though gathering these rare elements is difficult and weaving them into items requires considerable skill. This method is used almost exclusively by elementalists, though weaponsmiths make use of the technique as well.

Naming an item gives it a true pattern and great potential for magical power. All thread items that are powered through a magical connection to their wielder must be Named. The Naming method of enchantment is used in all of the Disciplines capable of enchanting.

A magician may also enchant an item by placing a Named, or permanent, spell pattern into the item's pattern (see **Named Spells**, p. 36). Generally, magicians use Named spells to create minor magical items that can be used by any character, but they

ELEMENT WEAVING DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

True Element	Material Cloth/Leather	Water	Wood	Stone	Metal
Air	6	8	9	11	13
Earth	6	NA	8	6	7
Fire	9	NA	10	13	15
Water	8	6	9	11	NA
Wood	6	NA	6	NA	NA

which makes weaving together such combinations difficult. For example, True fire generally burns and consumes any material it contacts. Therefore, weaving True fire into most materials is extremely difficult. Other elements and materials are completely incompatible and cannot be woven together under any circumstances. Any attempt to do so fails and consumes the material. These combinations are listed as "NA" on the table.

may also be used to enhance the abilities of thread items. Adepts of any of the magician Disciplines can create permanent spell patterns.

Finally, a magician may enchant an item by magically placing a spirit in the item's pattern. The spirit may cooperate with the magician, but more commonly the magician traps the spirit against its will. Nethermancers and elementalists sometimes use this technique, though elementalists greatly prefer to enchant items by infusing them with True elements.

WEAVING TRUE ELEMENTS INTO PATTERNS

True elements are often melded or woven into other objects to provide those items with some of the qualities of the element or elements. This weaving process delicately combines the elements together and "grounds" them as part of the material into which they are woven. This makes the elements considerably more stable and permits adepts to combine normally incompatible elements, such as True air and True fire or True air and True water, within an item. (For information on the properties of True elements and rules for gathering them, see **True Elements**, p. 53).

At Third Circle, elementalists learn a Perception-based half-magic ability that allows them to weave True elements into items. Weaponsmiths learn this half-magic ability at Eighth Circle. Adepts must make an Element-Weaving Test for each True element kernel they want to weave into an item. Weaving each kernel takes one hour. If an Element-Weaving Test fails, the enchanter has wasted a hour and accomplished nothing, though neither the kernel nor the item are damaged by the attempt. A result of all 1s on an Element-Weaving Test means that the item is ruined and the True element is wasted. The enchanter must start over.

The Difficulty Number for an Element-Weaving Test is based on the True element and the item's material, as listed on the Element Weaving Difficulty Number Table. Certain True elements and materials are less compatible,

If weaving more than one True element into an item, increase the Difficulty Number for each additional element by 1. If any of the elements being combined by their nature cancel each other's effects, increase the Difficulty Numbers of each opposing element by 2. (See **The Litany of the Elements**, p. 54.) An enchanter may lower the element-weaving Difficulty Number if he used an artisan skill to create or modify the item being enchanted (p. 135, **Earthdawn**). In this case, to lower the Difficulty Number, the enchanter simply makes an Artisan Skill Test. For each success level above Average, lower the element-weaving Difficulty Number by 1.

The amount of a True element required to construct an item varies greatly. A single kernel may be enough to create a relatively simple item like a firestarter, while hundreds or even thousands of kernels may be needed to make an airship. As a guideline, base the number of kernels of True element required to enchant any item described in the **Earthdawn** rulebook or other **Earthdawn** products on the item's cost. For every 100 silver pieces of cost (round up), the enchanter must weave in 1 kernel of True element.

Ardalon Brightsky is a Fourth Circle elementalist attempting to weave a warm cloak for a customer who is planning a trip into the mountains. A warm cloak costs 300 silver pieces, so Ardalon must weave into the cloak 3 kernels of True elements—1 kernel of elemental fire and 2 kernels of elemental air.

Ardalon has used an artisan skill to embroider the edge of the cloak with magical symbols and runes, so he makes an Artisan Skill Test to reduce the Difficulty Numbers of the Element-Weaving Tests.

He generates a Good success on his Artisan Skill Test, reducing the Difficulty Numbers of his Element-Weaving Tests by 1. In the first hour he makes a successful Element-Weaving Test against a Difficulty Number of 8 (the base Difficulty Number of weaving True fire to cloth – 1). During the second hour Ardalon makes a successful Element-Weaving Test against a Difficulty Number of 6 (base Difficulty Number for combining True air and cloth, plus 1 for the additional True element, and minus 1 for the Artisan Skill Test success). He makes a third Element-Weaving Test an hour later to weave the final kernel into the material and complete the cloak.

NAMING

In the world of **Earthdawn**, Naming an object or place gives it a true pattern to which others can magically connect their own patterns. Naming a place or thing may also tie it to the true pattern of the Name-giver who Named it, so that the Named thing becomes a pattern item of the individual (p. 142, **ED**). In addition, Naming a thing may change its nature in unpredictable ways. For these reasons, Naming is a significant act that characters should never undertake lightly.

Naming is required to create any magical item with a true pattern. All thread items are Named, which allows a wielder to draw on the item's magical energy by connecting threads from his own pattern to the item's pattern. All Legendary items are Named (or re-Named) when they are created, which forms the item's unique pattern.

Naming is the most powerful and flexible method of enchanting items. All adepts are able to use this method to some degree when creating Legendary items (see **Creating Magical Items**, p. 49).

Re-Naming Items

On some occasions, creating a magical item (especially a Legendary item) involves re-Naming an existing item. Giving a magical item a new Name changes that item's true pattern irrevocably. Any threads attached to the item are lost, because the pattern they were attached to no longer exists. The item's powers and Key Knowledges change as well. Generally, the item's new true pattern offers little initial power, but gains strength over time as the item is used to perform legendary deeds.

Re-Naming an item requires considerable magical power, and so gamemasters should carefully consider the full implications of any attempt at re-Naming by player characters.

PERMANENT SPELL PATTERN

Magicians can also enchant items by placing Named spells, such as Flying Carpet, Lightning Shield and Weapon Back, on items. This method of enchanting is particularly quick and simple. The magician simply follows the procedure for creating a permanent spell pattern (p. 36) and pays the appropriate Legend Points to bind the spell to the item.

Other magicians may tamper with the results of this technique. Because a magician may discover the Key Knowledges of the item's spell (see **Named Spells**, p. 36), the powers of permanent spell items may be destroyed through the use of Dispel Magic (p. 43) or Unraveling (p. 31) in the same manner used to destroy other Named spells.

SPIRIT TRAPPING

Magicians may also enchant an item by placing a spirit within the item's pattern. This technique, known as spirit trapping, is a Willpower-based half-magic ability that elementalists and nethermancers learn at Fifth Circle.

Generally, magicians summon minor, or tasked, spirits when using this technique to create minor magical items or prepare more powerful items for enchantment. More powerful spirits may be bound to an item to give it correspondingly greater magical powers. By binding an elemental spirit or ally to a magical item, a magician gains constant access to the spirit's powers and conceals the spirit's presence.

To bind a tasked, elemental or ally spirit to an item, a magician must first obtain an item made with orichalcum and other magical materials (see **Orichalcum**, p. 56) or craft one himself. Only an item fashioned with such materials will successfully hold a spirit. The item may be virtually anything, but physically strong items are more likely to prevent a trapped spirit from escaping. Once the magician has the finished item in his possession and has summoned the spirit, the adept must perform a special half-magic ritual to bind the spirit to the item. This ritual takes half an hour. If the spirit is not cooperative, the magician must restrain it for the duration of the ritual using a talent such as Elemental Hold, Spirit Hold, or Summoning Circle or a spell such as Restrain Entity.

At the end of the ritual, the magician makes a Willpower-based Half-Magic Test against the Spell Defense of the spirit. Modify the Difficulty Number by the enchanting modifiers used in preparing the item (see **Enchanting Modifiers**, p. 49). If the test succeeds, the spirit is bound to the item: the spirit's physical manifestation

a sword could use the spirit's Spear ability (p. 83) by grasping the weapon and using the spirit's step numbers to make any tests required for the use of that power. The magician must also take any Strain or other damage required by the use of the spirit power. Any other character who comes in contact with an item containing a bound spirit can attempt to communicate with the spirit if he or she possesses an appropriate talent. Characters other than the enchanter who trapped the spirit must defeat the trapped spirit in a Contest of Wills (see **Contest of Wills,** p. 94 in **Summoning**) in order to use the spirit's powers.

Magicians may also trap Named spirits in the same manner if the enchanter knows the spirit's Name and has woven a thread to the spirit's true pattern. The magician uses the Summon talent to call the spirit into a Summoning Circle, then attempts to bind the spirit to the item using the procedure described above.

Spirits of all sorts greatly resent being trapped and will do all in their power to escape from being imprisoned in an item. If a bound spirit wins a Contest of Wills against a would-be master, the spirit may attempt to escape from the item by making a Spellcasting Test against the Half-Magic step of the magician who trapped it. If the test succeeds, the spirit is free. The spirit also becomes free if the item in which it is trapped is destroyed or broken beyond repair.

(if any) vanishes and its astral form (and consciousness) is trapped within the item's pattern.

The magician who trapped the spirit may communicate with it by touching the item and using a talent such as Spirit Talk. The magician may also use any of the spirit's powers or abilities by touching the item. For example, a magician who has trapped a fire elemental spirit in

THE ENCHANTMENT TEST

Even if a magician successfully performs all other steps of the enchanting process, the enchantment attempt fails if the Enchantment Test fails. The Enchantment Test is a Perception-based Half-Magic Test that adepts of different Disciplines learn at different Circles in their Disciplines. Adepts also learn how to enchant different items at different Discipline Circles, as noted in **Creating Magical Items,** pp. 49-53. Characters may spend 1 Karma Point on Enchantment Tests.

Many feats of enchantment can be very complex and demanding. In game terms, that complexity may result in Enchantment Test Difficulty Numbers greater than 20. Characters may take a variety of steps during the enchanting process, however, to reduce the Difficulty Numbers of Enchantment Tests.

Enchanting Modifiers

All of the following enchanting modifiers are cumulative, though enchanting modifiers may never reduce the base Enchantment Test Difficulty Number by more than half.

Material of Item: The type of material from which the item to be enchanted is made may make the item easier to enchant. For each kernel of a True element woven into the item (see **True Elements**, p. 53), reduce the enchantment Difficulty Number by 1. If the item is made from living crystal, reduce the enchantment Difficulty Number by 1. If the item contains orichalcum, reduce the enchantment Difficulty Number by 1 for every 1,000 silver pieces' worth of orichalcum used in its construction.

Hand-Crafted Item: The enchanter may also reduce the enchantment Difficulty Number by creating the item himself. If the enchanter personally gathers or makes the material for the item, reduce the enchantment Difficulty Number by 1. If the enchanter uses an artisan skill to make or modify the item, he may make an Artisan Skill Test against a Difficulty Number of 9 or half the enchanting Difficulty Number of the item, whichever is greater. For every level of success above Average, reduce the enchantment Difficulty Number by 1. For a weaponsmith enchanting a weapon or piece of armor he made, reduce the enchantment Difficulty Number by 1 for every level of success above Average the weaponsmith achieved on the Forge Blade or Forge Armor tests used to make the item (see pp. 138-39, **The Adept's Way**). Because these construction/preparation modifiers are cumulative, a weaponsmith can use the Forge Blade talent to make a sword and then use his Runic Carving skill to improve the sword's suitability for enchantment.

Symbolic Elements: A character may also reduce the enchantment Difficulty Number by incorporating symbolic elements such as Deeds or material components in the creation of a magical item. For example, a character creating a magical weapon might decorate it by imbedding the

ENCHANTING DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS TABLE

Technique	Difficulty Modifier
True element incorporated	–1 per kernel
Living crystal	–1
Orichalcum incorporated	–1 per 1,000 sp worth of orichalcum
Gathered item material	–1
Artisan skill use	–1 per success level on Artisan Test
Forge Armor/Blade skill use	–1 per success level
Symbolic element incorporated	–1 or more
Tasked spirit	–1
Extra time	–1 per week

claws or teeth of certain ferocious creatures in the hilt or forge the weapon on a high mountaintop during a fierce thunderstorm. In general, a symbolic element should involve some rare and valuable material or a difficult quest or adventure. Each such element reduces the item's enchantment Difficulty Number by 1, but the gamemaster may increase the modifier to reward a character who incorporates especially suitable or spectacular symbolic elements (for example, by slaying a powerful monster or embarking on a very difficult quest).

Spirit Trapping: Trapping a minor spirit in the pattern of an item provides similar advantages to incorporating True elements into an item, and so reduces the item's enchantment Difficulty Number by 1.

Additional Preparation: A character may lower the enchantment Difficulty Number by spending additional time to prepare the item and performing minor rituals to strengthen his magic. Each additional week of preparation reduces the enchantment Difficulty Number by 1.

CREATING MAGICAL ITEMS

Magical items in **Earthdawn** fall into two broad categories: common items and thread items. Common items are those magical objects that can be used by anyone who knows how they work. Readily available throughout Barsaive, these items include day-to-day tools like magical cook pots, firestarters, light quartz and warm cloaks, as well as less common items such as crystal armor, fire cannons and airships.

Thread items are considerably more rare than common items, though a certain number of less powerful thread items can be found for sale in many major cities across Barsaive. All thread items have Names, and therefore true patterns. These patterns enable adepts with the Thread Weaving talent to attach threads to the items and tap into

the items' magical powers. Thread items have much greater potential power than common items, but only characters who can attach threads to them may use them.

COMMON ITEMS

While many magical items become the stuff of legend in Barsaive, the vast majority of such items fulfill rather mundane functions in the everyday lives of Barsaive's people. Warm cloaks, firestarters and waterproof boots are just a few of the common magical items that Barsaive's smiths, weavers and other craftsmen infuse with minor magical qualities in order to increase their usefulness or beauty. These minor items may offer little more than convenience to adventuring adepts, but they make up the largest part of an enchanter's or magical crafter's work.

Typically, craftsmen give these items their magical properties by weaving True elements into the items' patterns as they design and create the items. Each True element gives an item unique characteristics. See **True Elements**, page 53, for descriptions of the True elements and see the rules for weaving them into items.

Occasionally, magicians create minor magical items by casting a permanent, Named spell on an object. Non-thread items created in this way are usually known as talismans, and most are owned by adventuring adepts and the wealthy.

Nethermancers can create only minor magical items by trapping a spirit in the pattern of an object.

All Enchantment Tests for common items use a Difficulty Number of 13. All appropriate enchanting modifiers apply. Generally, the cost of materials to create common magical items, including True element kernels, is one-quarter to one-half of the purchase price of the finished item.

BLOOD CHARMS

No blood magic is used to create blood magic charms; these charms are minor magical items that require a small amount of the wearer's blood (life force) in order to bond to the wearer and to activate the charm's magical power. Some charms, like the Death Cheat and Desperate Blow charms, temporarily provide the wearer with some additional ability. Others, such as Targeting Eye or Astral Sensitive Eye charms, are fairly permanent additions to the user's body that provide a constant advantage. The blood magic ritual that bonds the charm to the wearer takes only a moment and requires no test, only the expenditure of the appropriate number of Damage Points (see pp. 258–59, **ED**).

BLOOD CHARM DIFFICULTY NUMBERS TABLE

Charm Type	Enchantment Difficulty Number
Absorb Blow	11
Astral Sensitive Eye	13
Death Cheat	15
Desperate Blow	14
Desperate Spell	14
Horror Fend	12
Targeting Eye	15

Nethermancers learn to produce blood charms through the use of half-magic at Fourth Circle. All other magicians use the Alchemy skill to produce blood charms (see **Alchemy**, p. 58). The magician creates the charm by treating an item of living crystal in a special alchemical solution for one week. (The materials for a single-charm supply of solution generally cost about 10 silver pieces.) The solution alters the living matrix of the crystal so that it may receive the life force of its wearer and channel the magical energy of his life force back to him.

The Enchantment Test to create blood charms is an Alchemy or Perception-based Half-Magic Test, made against a Difficulty Number based on the advantage or ability of the charm, as shown on the Blood Charm Difficulty Numbers Table. All appropriate enchanting modifiers apply (because the charm must be made of living crystal, the Difficulty Number already accounts for that modifier). If the test succeeds, the charm is enchanted. If it fails, the character has wasted his time and materials and must start over. A result of all 1s means that something has gone wrong with the process. In this case, the attempt to create a blood charm may instead produce a dangerous or cursed charm—the gamemaster determines the effects of the unpredictable process.

An alchemist may produce more than one blood charm at a time by adding 3 to the enchantment Difficulty Number for each additional charm.

Gamemasters may allow player characters with the Alchemy skill to create new charms with unique effects. Base the enchantment Difficulty Numbers for such charms on the Difficulty Numbers for similar, existing charms, but increase the new charm's enchantment Difficulty Number by 3 to reflect the inherent difficulty of creating new charms.

LIVING ARMOR

Living armor can be crafted from fernweave and living crystal. Only elementalists and enchanters who specialize in the field of armor possess the skill required to shape the delicate patterns of living material into living armor. Their strong rapport with elemental earth and all living things gives obsidimen elementalists a significant advantage in crafting living armor. Crafting living armor is a Perception-based Half-Magic ability that elementalists learn at Fifth Circle. The Enchantment Test Difficulty Number for each type of living armor appears in the Living Armor Difficulty Number Table.

Fernweave armor and ferndask shields are crafted from specially cultivated plants that are magically coaxed to grow into the proper form. The enchanter uses additional magic to tailor the armor to the wearer's exact measurements. Seedling plants require 3 months to mature, but many merchants sell mature plants for 1 silver piece per pound. Producing finished fernweave armor from a sufficient amount of the proper plants requires only a single day of work and a successful Enchantment Test.

Blood pebbles are specially enchanted stones of living crystal. The enchanter shapes the small stones of living crystal, treats the pebbles in an alchemical solution for 1 week, then at the end of that time makes an Enchantment Test. Only weaponsmiths may implant or remove blood-pebble armor, a process that requires a full 8 hours of work. No test is required to implant blood-pebble armor, and some weaponsmiths possess artisan skills that allow them to implant colored blood pebbles in various designs and patterns. The blood-pebble armor produced by these adepts often fetches as much as two or three times the price of standard blood-pebble armor. In order to bind the armor to him and receive the magical advantage of blood-pebble armor, the wearer must take 4 points of damage, which cannot be healed as long as the character wears the blood pebbles. The cost of materials for creating blood-pebble armor is 150 silver pieces, half the cost of the finished item.

To create living-crystal armor, an enchanter must give the raw crystal a rough shape, then immerse it in an alchemical solution and work the crystal as it grows to achieve the desired form. A successful Enchantment Test completes the armor. This process requires 1 month of work. (Other types of armor made of living crystal, such as crystal ringlet and crystal plate armor, are not considered living armor. Weaponsmiths craft these types of armor using standard methods such as those described in **Creating Weapons, Armor, and Shields**, pp. 138–39, **The**

LIVING ARMOR DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Armor Type	Enchantment Difficulty Number
Fernweave	10
Ferndask	5
Blood Pebbles	15
Living Crystal Armor	16

Adept's Way.) Only weaponsmiths and elementalists may implant or remove living-crystal armor, which takes 3 days of work. The armor's wearer takes 5 points of damage that cannot be healed as long as he wears the armor. This damage represents the blood magic needed to bond the armor to the wearer and to sustain the armor's growth and self-regenerating properties. Materials for constructing living crystal armor cost 550 silver pieces, half the cost of the finished item.

SPELL MATRIX OBJECTS

Spell matrix objects provide magicians with additional matrices for storing spell patterns. The Enchantment Test for making spell matrix objects requires a Perception-based half-magic taught in all the magician Disciplines.

All spell matrix objects must be constructed from material woven with either one or more True elements, orichalcum, or both (see **Weaving True Elements into Items**, p. 46). To enchant a spell matrix object, a magician must make a successful Enchantment Test against a Base Difficulty Number of 12. All appropriate enchanting modifiers apply. The enchanting process requires a week of uninterrupted work.

Only rarely do spell matrix objects appear for sale in Barsaive, as magicians usually create their own spell matrix objects in order to tailor the particular item to their specific needs and desires.

For information on using spell matrix objects, see **Spell Matrix Objects**, p. 39 in **Spell Magic**.

THREAD ITEMS

Thread items are magical items that possess true patterns. By weaving threads to a thread item, a character may connect his own true pattern to the item's true pattern and use his own command of the force of magic to enhance the item's power. Thread items have relatively simple patterns and possess only one Key Knowledge,

learn the half-magic ability to create thread weapons and armor at Fifth Circle as well, but they cannot create other thread items.

The magical ritual used to create a thread item requires 1 month of work. During this time, the adept can perform only their ordinary daily tasks, such as eating, sleeping, light reading and karma rituals, and must be in good health (free of any Wounds). At the end of the ritual period, the adept makes a single Enchantment Test. The Difficulty Number of the test is the thread item's Spell Defense plus the maximum number of threads the item may hold. Base these numbers on the Spell Defenses and maximum thread limits of standard thread items, pp. 57–69, **ED Companion.** All appropriate enchantment modifiers apply.

If the Enchantment Test succeeds, the item is enchanted and can be used normally. If the test fails, the item does not retain the magical qualities the enchanter intended, but the enchanter may reuse the materials in another attempt to create a thread item. If the test yields a result of all 1s, the gamemaster may decide that the materials used in the ritual are ruined, or that the failed enchantment produced a cursed item or created some other magical effect. The cost of most thread item materials equals one-quarter to one-half the purchase price of the finished item. The material cost covers all enchanting materials, including True elements and orichalcum.

usually their Name. For more information on thread items and their uses, see **Thread Items,** p. 56, **ED Companion**.

Elementalists use a Perception-based Half-Magic Test for the Enchantment Test when creating thread items. Elementalists learn the required half-magic ability at Third Circle. Nethermancers and wizards learn the required half-magic ability at Fifth Circle. Weaponsmiths

LEGENDARY ITEMS

Legendary items represent the rarest and most valuable magical treasures in **Earthdawn.** Unlike other magical items, Legendary items cannot be manufactured. An item acquires Legendary status when a character or hero uses the item to perform a legendary deed. The deed transforms the item into a treasure of heroic proportions. The deed alters the item's true pattern so that the item shares in the power of the legend that created it and provides the item with the potential to grow increasingly powerful.

Any object, including a common magical item or even a non-magical object, may become a Legendary item, though most Legendary items begin as thread items because thread objects possess the greatest magical potential. Any character may transform an item into a Legendary item by using it to perform an Empowering Deed. The Empowering Deed is the heroic feat that provides the spark of magic needed to transform the item's true pattern and mold it to the character's legend.

The gamemaster determines appropriate Empowering Deeds, but all deeds should be events of epic proportions. The character must perform a significant portion of the deed alone, and the item that takes on Legendary status must be the primary item the character uses to perform the deed. For example, a character who wants to empower a spiked mace by using it to slay a fierce, apparently unbeatable creature cannot kill the creature with spells or other weapons.

By adjusting the difficulty of these deeds, the gamemaster may control the number of Legendary items that appear in his game. As a general guideline, perhaps only one in fifty adepts ever create a Legendary item, and fewer still create more than one during their lifetimes. Gamemasters should consider making the deeds that transform common or non-magical items into Legendary items even more difficult than usual.

In addition to performing the Empowering Deed, the character must re-Name the item either during or immediately after the deed. The new Name should reflect the altered nature of the item, because the Name and the Empowering Deed form the basis of the item's new true pattern. Characters who have achieved at least Level 1 Legendary Status (p. 226, **ED**) may re-Name items for themselves; for example, if Megana uses her favorite sword to kill a particularly nasty Horror in a climactic battle, she may choose to re-Name her weapon Megana's Sword of Horror-Slaying. Their heroic deaths give characters using the dying legacy option of sacrifice magic (see **Sacrifice Magic,** p. 15 in **Blood Magic**) the minimum of Level 1 Legendary Status.

Re-Naming a Legendary item alters the item's pattern, so the character loses any threads currently woven to the item and must weave a new thread at Rank 1. This usually requires no special effort from the adept, however, as the Rank 1 Pattern Knowledge of the re-Named item is most often its new Name. The gamemaster determines the new abilities, thread ranks and Key Knowledges of the item. Because the Empowering Deed essentially equals the item's Key Knowledge, the gamemaster may require that characters perform additional Empowering Deeds in order to increase the item's thread rank beyond one or two. Rather than simply assigning 5 ranks to a single deed, which gives the item certain limits, requiring multiple Empowering Deeds allows a character to create a very powerful Legendary item by using it to perform multiple heroic acts.

For examples of Legendary items, see the descriptions of unique treasure items in the **Earthdawn** rulebook. When creating new items or allowing the player characters to do so, match the item's powers and abilities to the item's specific purpose and keep the item's powers at a level that will not disrupt the balance of your campaign.

TRUE ELEMENTS

The True elements are the magical essences of the five elemental planes—air, earth, fire, water and wood—concentrated into physical form on the material plane. These highly magical substances form the basis of many of the magical arts in the world of **Earthdawn.** Magicians make extensive use of a rare form of True earth known as orichalcum in magical work. Orichalcum and its uses are described in **Orichalcum,** page 56.

A single unit of a True element is known as a kernel, so called because it is similar in size to a kernel of corn. The exact size of an elemental kernel may vary, depending on the purity and strength of the sample. Very pure kernels of True elements are usually quite small but offer great magical power.

True elements occur in places where the barriers between the physical world and the elemental planes are thinnest. In such places, small portions of the magical essences of the elements collect in a material form that can be gathered using specific techniques. True air is found high in the sky and in high places of powerful winds, such as lofty mountaintops. It usually appears as small swirls of pure, cold air that almost scintillates. True earth is found deep in the ground or sometimes on the sides of mountains where it has been exposed by natural geologic activity.

It usually appears as semitranslucent crystal of varying gemlike colors. True fire is found in places of great heat or burning, such as the Death's Sea and volcanoes. On rare occasions it forms in large forest fires or other conflagrations. True fire appears as a flame or point of near-blinding red-white light. True water is found deep in the sea, at the surface of storm-tossed seas (lifted from the depths), at the bottom of rushing rivers (or in their rapids) or in waterfalls. It appears as pure, cold water that sparkles more brightly than natural water. True wood is found only in the deepest primeval forests. It is the rarest of the True elements because of the devastation wrought by the Horrors and the resulting corruption of places such as the Poison Forest. Despite the corruption of its inhabitants, the Blood Wood remains an excellent source of True wood.

The True elements combine with each other in various ways based on their natures. Each element can be neutralized by one of the other elements as described in *The Litany of the Elements*, an ancient oral tradition taught to elementalists throughout Barsaive:

> Wood destroys Earth, by covering it.
> Fire destroys Wood, by burning it.
> Water destroys Fire, by quenching it.
> Air destroys Water, by drying it.
> Earth destroys Air, by smothering it.

Any time a portion of a True element is combined with an equal part of its opposing element, the first True element is destroyed. When combined, some of the True elements, such as True fire and True air, can produce spectacular and explosive results. Because of this potential, kernels of True elements are always stored separately from one another.

Except for True wood, True elements must be stored in containers made of orichalcum. True water can be stored briefly in non-orichalcum containers, but after two or three days the True water will begin seeping through the container. A small orichalcum container sufficient to hold up to 20 kernels of a True element costs 5,000 silver pieces. These containers usually are fashioned in the form of small boxes with hinged lids and engraved with protective runes and symbols.

PROPERTIES OF THE TRUE ELEMENTS

Each True element contains unique magical properties. By weaving a True element into an item, a craftsman can give that item the True element's properties. True air, for example, allows items such as small flight daggers, flying carpets and even the massive stone airships of the Theran Armada to float or fly. True air also has cooling properties and can provide the air needed to survive harsh conditions. These properties are incorporated in items such as cooling stones, message stones designed to recall sounds, and effervescent liquids that enable a user to breathe underwater for short periods.

True earth has properties of solidity and strength. This element endows items with great durability and resistance to magic, and is used to strengthen stone, metal and other earth-based materials in construction and forging. Craftsmen also use True earth as a grounding medium when combining other True elements.

Living crystal is a form of elemental earth that grows in deep subterranean pockets or along exposed mountain slopes. In Barsaive, living crystal is found and mined almost exclusively in the Twilight Peaks, though it has been found in the Scytha and Caucavic mountains as well. Living crystal occurs in a rainbow of different colors and opacities, from clear and colorless to dark and almost opaque. Normally, living crystal grows quite slowly. Individual crystals may grow for years or even decades before reaching any significant size. However, certain magic and alchemical processes speed the growth process.

Living crystal is used for many magical items, especially items that employ blood magic to tap into the user's own life energies. Typically, the crystal is used in blood charms, types of living armor, and some of the thread items found among the sky raiders of the Twilight Peaks.

True fire provides heat, light and energy. Kernels of True fire and water woven together with living crystal create the light quartzes used in kaers and cave exploration. Craftsmen also use True fire for household items such as firestarters and cooking pots, and in the fire engines that drive t'skrang riverboats and fuel fire cannons. Adepts often temper True fire with another element, such as True water, to keep its power in check.

True water is a cooling, refreshing and resilient medium. Craftsmen use it to create items of great suppleness and flexibility, to waterproof objects, and to craft moisture barriers. True water is also used to soften True earth and make it more pliable, and woven with True air to take advantage of the combined cooling and soothing properties of the two elements.

Generally, craftsmen use True wood to make items that are strongly tied to life, such as shepherd staves, scarecrows and other farm implements. Often associated with items of knowledge and beauty, magicians use this element for items such as runic sticks, magical tablets and writing instruments. Though magicians rarely combine True wood and other True elements, certain craftsmen

create exceptional musical instruments by weaving together a combination of True air and True wood.

GATHERING AND MINING TRUE ELEMENTS

True elements can be collected in two ways: gathering and mining. Gathering involves collecting kernels of the True element by hand using half-magic, a painstaking technique used only by elementalists. Mining requires the use of special equipment made from orichalcum, and also involves considerable effort and potential danger. The Therans use slaves for their large-scale element-mining operations because of the many hazards involved.

True air miners use fine-mesh orichalcum nets to catch and hold kernels of True air. They deploy such nets from airships sailing through a storm or an area of very high winds. As kernels of True air land in the nets, the miners transfer the True element to orichalcum containers. Because True air must be mined in stormy and windy conditions, skilled air sailors are in great demand to guide mining ships. Despite this precaution, fierce storms often destroy the wooden ships used by Barsaivian miners. The stone airships favored by Theran air miners generally fare better, but even these vessels occasionally go down in a storm or come under attack from elemental creatures that slip through the space between the physical and elemental worlds.

Barsaivians used True earth to magically reinforce the protective walls of kaers and citadels during the Scourge, but the True element is also a common component of a wide variety of ordinary magical items. True earth is the least hazardous True element to mine and can be collected using various traditional mining techniques. True earth also tends to be the least powerful True element per kernel, however, and bulk mining only yields large numbers of low-potency kernels. Careful direct gathering yields smaller, more potent kernels, which usually appear as valuable gemstones.

Mining True fire requires special tools crafted from orichalcum, which True fire miners use to scoop up fire kernels. True fire kernels must be immediately transferred to containers of solid orichalcum, as they burn through any other material. In one method of mining True fire, fire miners use airships to skim the surface of the Death's Sea and cast kernels of True air onto its molten surface. The True air causes explosions in the fiery sea that often stir up new pockets of True fire. This technique produces quite lucrative results, but the hazards of the sea itself and its deadly creatures claim many mining ships and crews—a possible drawback to offset the advantages. Other crews mine True fire in active volcanoes, where they face dangerous creatures as well as overwhelming heat and toxic fumes.

True water miners cast orichalcum-laced nets into deep waters to dredge kernels of True water from the depths. The miners then transfer the kernels to decanters of orichalcum, or to ordinary jars or bottles for short periods of time. As do all miners of True elements, True water miners must brave hazardous conditions in unknown waters, dangerous aquatic creatures, and pirates eager to capture a valuable cargo.

The limited availability of True wood prevents entrepreneurs from mining this element. Instead, it must be collected according to a special gathering ritual, usually from virgin forests and jungles protected by dangerous predators or fierce tribes.

Gathering Tests

To gather a True element, an elementalist must first locate a deposit of the element. Finding a deposit of a True element requires careful research, a little prospecting and some luck. Because most known deposits of True elements have been claimed long ago by miners and magicians, many Name-givers roam Barsaive for years, vainly searching for a mother lode of True elements that will make them rich. Adepts attempting to acquire material from established elemental deposits must first deal with any existing claimants to the area.

Elementalist adepts can determine if a given area is likely to yield a True element by making a Perception-based Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number based on the elementalist's familiarity with the region. The Difficulty Number for this test ranges from 6 (if the elementalist knows the area well) to 15 or more (if he is looking at the locale on a map for the first time). If the test succeeds the elementalist knows whether or not the area will produce True elements.

Once an elementalist has located a source of True ele-

ELEMENT GATHERING DIFFICULTY NUMBERS TABLE

Element	Difficulty Number
Air	10
Earth	6
Fire	12
Water	10
Wood	8

ments, he can make a second Perception-based Half-Magic Test, against the appropriate Difficulty Number shown in the Element Gathering Difficulty Numbers Table, to gather the elements. A Gathering Test requires 1 full day. The adept gathers one kernel of the True element for each success level he achieves on the Gathering Test, i.e., an Average success yields one kernel, a Good success yields two kernels, and so on.

ORICHALCUM

Orichalcum is a rare, unique form of True earth that contains the essences of all of the True Elements. It has a rich, natural orange-gold color and can be worked and polished to a bright finish much like silver or gold. Orichalcum is a fairly soft metal, but weaponsmiths often alloy it with harder materials such as bronze or iron to produce enchanted weapons of great strength.

Orichalcum occurs naturally in those rare areas where deposits of the five True elements interact, such as volcanic mountain peaks and the regions near the Death's Sea. Orichalcum can also be created magically by combining the True elements according to secret rituals and formulas that are carefully and jealously guarded by the adepts who know them.

Because it contains all of the True elements, orichalcum is a highly magical material that, combined with other materials, produces magical items more powerful than those created using only one or two of the True elements. Adepts in Barsaive also favor orichalcum as a component for enchanting, because items fashioned with this elemental metal easily hold even the most powerful enchantments. The metal can also be treated to make it highly resistant to magic. When prepared in this manner, orichalcum makes an ideal material for anti-magical armor and for containers designed to hold volatile magical elements. Coins of orichalcum may be used for various spells and enchantments, such as the Ghost Master ritual of the various Disciplines (p. 225, **ED**).

Mining Orichalcum

Orichalcum occurs naturally in areas of volcanic activity or near deep veins of True earth. Skilled prospectors and miners typically look for formations of True earth when searching for orichalcum. The Orichalcum Wars that took place prior to the Scourge prompted a massive search for the metal, and many of Barsaive's largest orichalcum deposits were claimed during this resource rush. Given the value of the metal, discovery of any new orichalcum deposits undoubtedly will attract the attention of powerful groups and individuals intent on claiming the ore. For this reason, gamemasters may want to strictly control the appearance of new orichalcum deposits in their games.

If the gamemaster chooses to allow the player characters to find an unclaimed orichalcum source or mine an existing deposit, the adepts may use standard mining techniques to recover the raw orichalcum. Once recovered, the raw metal must be carefully purified for magical use by an elementalist using a Half-Magic Test. The Base Difficulty Number for the test is 6. Increase the Difficulty Number by 1 for each 1,000 silver pieces the orichalcum is worth. For example, refining an amount of raw orichalcum worth 10,000 silver pieces would require a Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number of 16. The Half-Magic Test requires 1 week of uninterrupted time. If the test fails, the raw orichalcum is rendered useless for all magical purposes, including the creation of magical items and containers to hold True elements.

Creating Orichalcum

Adepts may use two methods to magically combine True elements and create orichalcum. In both methods, the adept melts ore samples of True earth in a forge heated by True fire burning True wood, fired by bellows that drive in puffs of True air. The adept works the molten material with special rituals and then cools it in True water to form orichalcum.

The first method is a blood magic ritual that weaponsmiths learn at Twelfth Circle. To begin, the weaponsmith must obtain equal amounts of the True elements for the process. The combined value of these elements equals the value of the orichalcum produced in the ritual. After gathering his materials, the weaponsmith makes a Forge Blade Test and takes 1 point of

permanent damage. The test's Base Difficulty Number is 15. Increase the Difficulty Number by 1 for every 1,000 silver pieces the finished orichalcum will be worth. For example, a weaponsmith who wants to create 5,000 silver pieces' worth of orichalcum (about half an ounce of the metal) must make a Forge Blade Test against a Difficulty Number of 20. If the test succeeds, the ritual produces the desired amount of orichalcum in 1 week of uninterrupted time. If the test fails, the True elements are not combined harmoniously and are wasted. If the test yields a result of all 1s, the elements explode when combined, with a Damage step equal to half the test's Difficulty Number.

The second method for creating orichalcum is a half-magic ritual that elementalists learn at Seventh Circle and weaponsmiths at Ninth Circle. This method takes considerably longer than the first but is safer. To begin, the character must obtain equal amounts of the True elements. The combined value of the elements equals the value of the orichalcum produced. Next, the adept makes a Half-Magic Test. The test's Base Difficulty Number is 6. Increase the Difficulty Number by 1 for every 1,000 silver pieces the finished orichalcum will be worth. If the test succeeds, the ritual produces the desired orichalcum in 4 weeks of uninterrupted time. During this period, the adept cannot adventure or undertake any other activities other than eating, sleeping and light reading. The adept may also meditate to improve talents, perform karma rituals and learn spells during this time, but he cannot train for a higher Circle.

Uses of Orichalcum

Most commonly, orichalcum is used for a broad variety of magical enchantments, especially the manufacture of magical items. Magic items made with orichalcum are easier to enchant than items made of other materials, because the magical metal more readily captures and holds magical energy. Though orichalcum coins are minted in much the same way as other money, they are rarely used for currency. The symbol of the coin allows characters to use the orichalcum in various magical rituals such as training pledges, and the orichalcum tithing performed by elementalists.

Orichalcum is also used for containers designed to hold magical materials such as True elements, as well as in the containment vessels of fire cannons. Therans also use orichalcum to produce magic-resistant chains for imprisoning adepts and magicians.

ALCHEMY

Alchemy is the art of producing the various potions, salves and other magical concoctions described in published **Earthdawn** products. The process involves three steps: gathering the required ingredients, combining the ingredients and performing the final Alchemy Test.

The Alchemy skill is a Perception-based skill that characters may learn like any other skill (p. 122, **ED**). The Alchemy skill includes an understanding of the magical principles used to create different formulas, the knowledge needed to gather ingredients, and the ability to test and analyze different potions a character might discover in the course of adventuring. The Alchemy skill is also used to produce blood charms from living crystal (see **Blood Charms**, p. 50). Because alchemy is a skill, characters cannot spend Karma Points on Alchemy Tests or enchantments based on the Alchemy skill.

Elementalists may use half-magic to perform all of the functions of the Alchemy skill described in this section. Elementalists' half-magic steps are generally low compared to other characters' Alchemy skill steps, but elementalists may spend Karma Points on half-magic Alchemy Tests. An elementalist who has the Alchemy skill can use the skill or half-magic for any given Alchemy Test, but may not spend Karma on Alchemy Skill Tests.

Most alchemical concoctions require natural herbs, roots, leaves, minerals and animal parts. Gathering the materials for a potion usually requires a full day of work. To find and successfully gather rare ingredients, gamemasters may require the gatherer to make a successful Alchemy Test. Characters may also purchase ingredients from herbalists or other alchemists at approximately one-tenth the finished potion's standard price. At the gamemaster's discretion, some potions may require exotic ingredients that characters must travel far and wide to find.

Once a character has gathered the ingredients necessary for a potion, he may begin combining them. This task requires an additional full day's work in a suitably equipped shop. Supplying and setting up a proper alchemist's shop costs about 2,000 silver pieces for glassware, mortars, jars, elemental burners, crucibles and the like. An alchemist's shop is not portable because of all of the bulky and delicate apparatus involved. A smaller kit used by traveling alchemists costs 500 silver pieces and fits into a case the size of a backpack. It contains the bare minimum of equipment required to perform most alchemical tasks, but any character using a kit must take a 3-step penalty to his Alchemy skill or half-magic ability on his final Alchemy Test. Kits cannot be used to prepare blood charms.

POTION DIFFICULTY NUMBERS TABLE

Potion	Alchemy Test Difficulty Number
Booster Potion	9
Healing Potion	11
Last Chance Salve	15
Resist Disease Potion	6
Cure Disease Potion	12
Kelix's Poultice	6
Kelix's Antidote	10

At the end of a potion's preparation time, the character makes an Alchemy Test against the appropriate Difficulty Number as shown on the Potion Difficulty Numbers Table. A character can create larger batches of potion by increasing the test's Difficulty Number. For each extra dose of potion desired, add 5 to the Difficulty Number. If the test succeeds, the potion is finished and immediately usable. If the test fails, the potion is inert and useless. At the gamemaster's discretion, a result of all 1s may produce a critical mishap such as an explosion or a poisonous potion.

Gamemasters may allow player characters with the Alchemy skill to create new potions with unique effects. Base the Difficulty Numbers for such potions on similar existing potions. Increase the new potion's Difficulty Number by 3 to reflect the inherent difficulty of creating new potions.

Alchemists can also use natural ingredients to brew various poisons (p. 207, **ED**). The Base Difficulty Number for brewing a poison equals the poison's Spell Defense or step number, whichever is higher. The amount of time required to gather ingredients and brew the poison is the same as for potions. Most alchemists working in cities will not sell poisons openly, because most local authorities frown on poison peddlers. Many alchemists, however, will sell them under the counter to favored or known customers. This is especially true in places such as Kratas, where the skills of a capable poisoner remain constantly in demand.

A character who possesses an elixir of unknown properties may attempt to analyze it. This analysis requires only a few drops of the substance and about an hour's time. At the end of that time, the gamemaster should make a secret Alchemy Test for the character against the Difficulty Number used to create the potion or the substance's Spell Defense, if it is a poison. A failed test

JANET AULISIO 1996.

provides no information. An Average success reveals the potion's general purpose, such as healing or antidote. An Excellent or better success reveals the exact effects of the potion or poison.

ASTRAL SPACE

Beyond the physical world lies another world, a realm just beyond the perceptions of most adepts. A source of endless speculation, conjecture and wonder, the font from which all magic springs, home to countless spirits and the birthplace of the Horrors—this is the world of astral space.

This section is devoted to this little-understood realm. It describes the nature of astral space, its interaction with the physical world, methods that enable Name-givers to enter and explore astral space and the impact of the Horrors' presence on activities in astral space. The section also provides a survey of the inhabitants of astral space and describes a number of different Named locations in astral space and several of the netherworlds. Lastly, the section presents a discussion of astral sensing, a practice that enables adepts in the physical world to view astral space and study magical patterns.

DEFINING ASTRAL SPACE

Astral space is a limitless region that coexists with the physical world. Though both realms exist on different planes, the astral and physical worlds are intricately connected and interdependent; neither could exist without the other. At the same time that the dimension of astral space mirrors the physical world, the astral realm functions as a world unto itself, subject to its own laws of reality. As a result of its paradoxical nature, astral space remains the source of much conjecture and speculation among even the most knowledgeable scholars and magicians across Barsaive and the Theran Empire.

Astral space also serves as a gateway between the physical world, the netherworlds and the elemental planes. It is a cosmic fabric that binds together all worlds, the medium through which astral entities and magical energies travel. In fact, astral space is the means through which adepts draw on the magical energy that powers their abilities. Whether astral space is the actual source of that power or simply a conduit for magical energy is only one of the countless mysteries that the astral realm continues to hold for Name-givers.

GEOGRAPHY OF ASTRAL SPACE

Astral space has no native landscape of its own. It has no ground or sky, and no source of illumination such as the sun. Without its ties to Barsaive and the rest of the physical world, astral space would appear as a limitless void of inky black. It would contain nothing to see, nothing to hear, nothing to feel. Any being appearing within this void would be lost in an ocean of darkness.

However, the interdependence of the astral and physical worlds provides the astral realm with features that mirror the features of the physical realm. Every location in astral space directly corresponds with some physical location, because everything in the physical world possesses an astral imprint that reflects the physical object's pattern. In other words, astral space is like a giant mirror held up to the physical world. And just as patterns define the existence and properties of anything within known reality, they also define astral impressions. Though astral space does contain some apparently featureless areas where the void—known as the deep astral or high astral—seems to exist, these areas are simply the astral imprints of extremely bleak physical locations.

Still other areas—specifically the various realms known collectively as the netherworlds—seem to exist outside the "standard" astral/physical continuum and contain features that have no counterparts in the physical world. For further information on the netherworlds, see page 70.

Every living thing and inanimate object that exists within physical reality possesses an astral counterpart. In addition, astral space contains objects and living things that exist only within astral space itself, with no physical representations.

ASTRAL AND PHYSICAL FORMS

All Name-givers, creatures, living things and inanimate objects exist in either astral or physical form. The only exception to this rule is dual-natured Horrors, which simultaneously exist in both physical and astral forms. In fact, the physical and astral bodies of a dual-natured Horror can actually work independently of one another, though most are connected in some way. This dual nature makes such entities extremely powerful and especially difficult to kill, because it enables most of them to forge new physical bodies to replace destroyed ones and create new astral forms by simply entering astral space (for more information on dual-natured Horrors, see the **Horrors** sourcebook).

A specific subject's place of origin (physical world or astral plane) most often determines whether it possesses a

physical or astral form, but spells and other magical abilities also may determine a subject's form. In fact, most abilities used by Name-givers to enter astral space actually change the subject's form from astral to physical or from physical to astral.

Because Name-givers rarely enter astral space, most everything and everyone characters are likely to encounter in **Earthdawn** possess physical forms. This means that most everything and everyone can be affected by other physical beings. Normally, physical beings cannot directly affect or interact with objects or beings in astral space, though some spells and certain Horror powers allow physical beings to do so (see **Spells in Astral Space**, p. 38). Likewise, astral beings exist in astral space and can be affected by other astral beings. However, astral beings cannot normally interact with objects or beings in the physical world, though certain spells and powers may enable them to do so.

In addition, the forms of creatures and objects can be changed from astral to physical or from physical to astral. When a character from the physical world enters astral space, for example, his physical form merges with his astral imprint to create an astral form. When the character returns to the physical world, he reverts to his physical form, which is mirrored by his astral imprint. This means that physical objects can be taken into astral space, just as creatures from astral space can enter the physical world. This also means that physical objects and beings can be left in astral space (perhaps the perfect hiding place), and astral objects or beings can be trapped in the physical world.

In the following discussion, subjects are identified by their current forms. For example, the term *physical beings* may be used to denote both naturally physical beings such as Name-givers as well as astral creatures that have assumed physical forms, such as manifested spirits or Horrors. Likewise, the term *astral beings* may be used to denote denizens of astral space as well as Name-givers that have assumed astral forms. In some instances, distinguishing between a subject's natural form and its current form may be necessary. Such instances may contain references to "physical beings in astral space" and "astral beings in the physical world."

The Astral Landscape

On entering or viewing astral space, an adept sees the astral imprints of all the people, physical objects and creatures that lie within his sight. In addition, the adept sees astral creatures, such as spirits and Horrors, and any astral patterns within his line of sight. These astral imprints, creatures and patterns comprise the astral landscape.

Living beings and magical items and inanimate objects produce two distinct types of astral imprints. The life energies of living beings and the magic energies of magical items provide their astral imprints with considerably more substance than inanimate imprints.

Typically, inanimate astral imprints possess form but no true substance. For example, the astral imprints of walls or dead trees or any non-magical objects created by Name-givers appear nearly identical to their physical counterparts. The astral imprint of a book can be seen, but the pages of the imprint cannot be turned. An adept may look through the astral imprint of a window, but not the imprints of opaque physical objects. Though the astral imprints resemble the physical objects that produce them, many astral imprints appear nearly colorless and tend to blend into a dull mass when viewed by a casual observer.

Because the astral imprints of inanimate physical objects are insubstantial, astral beings (including Name-givers in astral space) can pass through most of them. However, the sensation of passing through the astral imprint of solid matter (or at least what a character recognizes as solid matter) is very disconcerting and confusing to most Name-givers. To reflect this disorientation, any Name-giver who passes through an astral imprint of solid matter suffers a –2 step penalty to all tests he makes within two minutes of passing through the imprint. For this reason, most Name-givers in astral space prefer to walk around imprints of solid obstacles rather than through them. Note that spirits, Horrors and other astral entities do not suffer this penalty.

The nature of the astral landscape also precludes physical beings (including Name-givers) from using their senses of smell, taste and touch.

Other features of the astral landscape include the ever-present tufts and swirls of astral energy and the areas of magical corruption left by the Horrors. Astral energy only rarely impedes a character's movement or perception. Usually, it appears as lightly shimmering wisps eddying in and around everything. Occasionally, a bit of energy swirls together, forms a spell pattern and is unleashed moments later. This phenomenon is created when magicians cast spells (for more information, see **Spells in Astral Space**, p. 38).

In contrast, the magical corruption present in astral space, one of the more devastating aftereffects of the Scourge, may seriously affect astral explorers. This pollution may obscure a Name-giver's vision and perception,

cause him damage and impede his magical abilities. For rules on these effects, see **Astral Regions,** page 68.

Living Astral Imprints

The astral imprints of living things, such as plants, animals and Name-givers, exhibit two distinguishing characteristics. The most apparent characteristic is the aura that a living imprint displays. These auras glow with an ethereal nature and give living imprints vivid appearances. The imprints of Name-givers display particularly strong auras becaus of the intricate details of their true patterns. The imprint of the earth produces an aura as well, because the entire world is a living entity. It produces a fairly constant glow that resembles twilight. This aura provides light in almost all areas of astral space, except in areas enclosed by the astral imprints of inanimate matter.

Second, the imprints of living things possess substance. They are "solid," which means that astral beings cannot pass through, manipulate or directly affect them. This characteristic prevents astral beings from penetrating through the level of the ground in astral space. They may pass through the imprints of freestanding rocks or cobblestone roads, but not through the imprint of the earth beneath them. This characteristic was one of the main reasons that so many Name-givers built their kaers below ground, where the surrounding earth could create a solid imprint that served as a barrier in astral space. This earth, further protected by wards and elemental earth, created astral barriers that saved hundreds of thousands of Name-givers from the Horrors during even the worst of the Scourge. The obsidimen protected themselves from the Scourge in their liferocks, living stones that also reflect a living astral imprint.

All magical items and spells produce living astral imprints as well. All magical items are created by directly investing them with magical energy, and so they create astral imprints with substances and auras. For the same reason, spells possess astral imprints with auras and substance. Most spell imprints take on shapes that reflect their functions. Pattern items possess living imprints as well, because they contain parts of true patterns and are invested with magical energy.

True to Form

Because a living thing's astral imprint reflects its pattern, the astral imprint naturally resembles the thing's truest form. Most illusion spells mask the physical form of a living being and have no affect on the being's pattern,

and so only specialized illusion spells will mask an astral imprint. Generally, only two situations produce discrepancies between the true physical appearance and the astral imprint of a living being. The first is a radical change in the being's physical form, such as the loss of a limb. In such cases, the astral imprint will simultaneously reflect the change and the being's original appearance. In this example, the being's imprint might retain a ethereal, ghostlike vestige of the amputated limb.

The second situation occurs when a thing or being's pattern is directly altered. In this case, the subject's astral imprint and its physical appearance would reflect the change in its pattern. In such a scenario, the being's astral imprint would become a blurred combination of the altered and original imprint, forcing any viewer to focus on one or the other. Altering the pattern of a living thing requires extremely powerful magic.

The complexity of the astral imprint of a living being's pattern offers clues to the nature of the person. For example, the astral imprint of the pattern of a farmer who uses half-magic to increase his yields and care for his land will be more complex than the pattern of a merchant who uses no magic at all. The pattern of a multiple-Discipline adept will show greater interweaving and denser latticework effects than the astral imprint of a single-Discipline adept's pattern. The more magic a person uses, the more complex his pattern.

EXPLORING ASTRAL SPACE

Perhaps because it is so mysterious and dangerous, the vast, uncharted frontier of astral space appeals to countless adepts intent on exploring its reaches. This section provides rules on entering, acting in and moving around astral space, descriptions of beings that astral explorers are likely to encounter, and descriptions of the potential hazards of astral exploration.

Once an adept takes on an astral form, he becomes subject to the laws of all astral beings. For example, the adept may be summoned as if he were a Named spirit, provided the summoner knows the adept is in astral space and can meet the requirements of the Summon talent (p. 39, **ED Companion**).

ENTERING ASTRAL SPACE

Beings may enter astral space using natural abilities, magical means or astral projection, though traveling between the physical world and astral space is not an easy or safe task. More often than not, cataclysmic events brought about by Horrors or perverted uses of powerful magic create the rare natural gateways that connect the two realms. Those gates that the Horrors generate, they often guard, and most gateways lie in the bleakest, most inhospitable areas of Barsaive.

Entering Via Natural Ability

Certain Horrors and spirits seem to exhibit a natural ability to enter and leave astral space. Some single-natured Horrors show an aptitude for entering and exiting astral space, but these entities do not appear to display any common characteristic that might explain this ability.

The capability of certain Horrors to move between the astral and physical worlds seems to come from their natures, rather than from magical spells or powers.

Entering Via Magical Means

Name-givers may enter astral space using magical means such as the Spirit Portal spell, the Astral Portal spirit power, and the Astral Shift Lightbearer ability.

The Spirit Portal spell (p. 182, **ED**) is probably the safest method of entering astral space, though what constitutes safety in astral space is open to much interpretation. The spell enables a Name-giver to create a portal between the physical and astral worlds. When a subject passes through the portal, the gateway alters the subject's form from physical to astral or vice versa. When an adept uses a portal to pass from the physical to the astral plane, for example, the portal melds the adept's body with its astral imprint to create an astral form. The effects of the spell are not permanent, but they do last long enough for a Name-giver to enter and exit the portal multiple times.

The innate spirit power called Astral Portal (see p. 80) functions in the same manner as the Spirit Portal spell. Using this power, a spirit can create a portal that enables Name-givers to enter and exit astral space. In fact, many Name-giver magicians summon spirits for the sole purpose of having the spirit create such portals.

Astral Shift is an ability unique to Lightbearers (p. 113, **ED Companion**). The ability enables Lightbearers or Oathtakers to enter astral space and assume astral forms for short periods of time.

Astral Projection

Astral projection is a limited form of astral travel that enables a Name-giver to send his spirit into astral space while his body remains in the physical world. The primary form of astral projection is the nethermancer talent Netherwalk (p. 34, **ED Companion**). This talent provides an adept with near-perfect control of his astral imprint, though the duration of the talent effect is limited.

Like other methods of entering astral space, astral projection entails certain risks, including damage based on the types of region of astral space the adept travels through. See the Netherwalk talent description and **Astral Regions** (p. 68) for more information about the hazards of astral travel.

NAME-GIVERS IN ASTRAL SPACE

To enter astral space, an adept must transform from a physical being into an astral being. Most often, adepts accomplish this transformation by using the Spirit Portal spell or Astral Portal spirit power, but certain legendary artifacts are said to create similar effects. During the transformation, an adept actually refocuses his pattern, removing his body from the physical world and converting it to astral energy. Then he joins this astral energy with his astral imprint to create an astral form for himself.

The adept's life essence provides his astral form with definition, and because the adept's mind and consciousness enter the astral form during the transformation as well, the adept can control the form as he would control his physical body. Like astral imprints, an astral form resembles its subject's true nature. Only the most powerful disguises or illusions can alter the appearance of an adept's true form. Radical alterations to an adept's

pattern will produce a blurred, double-image astral form, but other characters will be able to discern the two images in the form.

Note that an adept's astral form is NOT the same as his true pattern. A true pattern represents its subject, while the astral form IS the subject—when in astral form, the subject is alive, "solid" and can interact with other astral forms.

Name-givers may also transport inanimate objects or matter into astral space. In such cases, the object or matter ceases to exist in the physical world and takes on an astral form. Any astral being can pick up the astral form by making a conscious effort and may then carry the item with no further thought.

Astral Attributes, Abilities and Possessions

The values and functions of an adept's Attributes, talents, and most other characteristics remain unchanged when the adept assumes astral form. The character's general skills (all skills except knowledge skills) have no effect in astral space, however, because general skills are in no way magical.

Aside from general skills, all characteristics work the same way in astral space as they do in the physical world. A character's Physical Defense is the Difficulty Number for resolving physical attacks in astral space, his Spell Defense is used for attacks made with spells and magical abilities, and so on. Characters suffer damage from attacks in astral space the same as they do in the physical world, and their Damage Ratings are used in the same manner. Likewise, characters in astral form use their standard Movement Rates and abilities.

Physical objects worn or carried by an adept when he assumes astral form are transformed as well. However, non-magical objects do not take on substance in astral form and remain much like their astral imprints. Such objects can be carried, dropped, picked up, and the like, but they have no substance and therefore no effect on astral beings. (Items dropped in astral space remain there unless the character retrieves them before returning to the physical world.) For example, a non-magical sword transported into astral space can be swung and thrust, but it cannot do damage to an astral being. Magical items, in contrast, take on solid astral forms and may be used normally. Such items include magical weapons and armor, blood charms, and even potions.

Combat in Astral Space

Combat in astral space is resolved in the same manner as combat in the physical world. Initiative is deter-

mined as normal, except that non-magical armor does not impose Initiative penalties. Initiative penalties from magical armor still apply. Physical attacks are resolved as normal, using the target's Physical Defense as the Difficulty Number. Likewise, attacks made with spells or other magical abilities are made against the target's Spell Defense, and Social Talent Tests are made against a target's Social Defense.

Generally, attacks made with non-magical weapons in astral space cannot cause damage to a target. Such weapons may cause damage if an adept makes his attack using a talent, because the talent's magical nature energizes even common weapons. In these cases, add the talent rank, instead of the weapon's Damage step, to the character's Strength when resolving Damage Tests. Magical weapons, however, possess substance in astral space, so use standard rules when determining damage from magical weapons.

Though Attack Tests are resolved as normal, armor works a bit differently in astral space. Non-magical armor offers no protection against physical attacks in astral space. Magical armor, such as living crystal and blood-pebble armor, provides its normal protection against physical attacks and imposes its standard Initiative penalty. Mystic Armor protects against physical and magical attacks. Combine the adept's Mystic Armor and magical armor ratings to determine the adept's total Armor Rating against physical attacks in astral space. Include the Mystic Armor bonus of magical armor in this calculation. For example, a warrior with a Mystic Armor Rating 4 and crystal ringlet armor would have an Armor Rating of 12 (4 for his natural Mystic Armor, 4 for the Armor Rating of the magical armor, and 4 for the magical armor's Mystic Armor bonus).

Damage in astral combat is resolved as normal and may render a character unconscious or dead. Additionally, characters suffer Wounds as normal and combatants must make Knockdown Tests as normal. Damage is healed per standard rules.

Like most other activities, spellcasting in astral space follows standard rules. The risks of casting raw magic are greater for astral beings, however, so add 3 steps to the Warping, Damage, and Horror Mark Tests for any character casting with raw magic. (For more information on casting raw magic, see p. 155–56, **ED**, or p. 40 of this book.)

Blood Magic in Astral Space

Because adepts become astral beings when in astral space, their use of blood magic becomes more effective.

This benefit applies in two ways. First, it reduces by 1 the Strain damage an adept suffers when using a talent or ability such as a talent knack. This bonus may not reduce the Strain below 1 point, however. For example, using the Flame Arrow talent normally causes an adept 2 points of Strain damage. In astral space, using the talent causes only 1 point of Strain damage.

The second benefit applies when characters push their talents or abilities (see **Blood Magic,** p. 10). In these cases, increase by 1 the step bonus to the adept's talent or ability. For example, an archer normally may add a +1 step bonus to his Missile Weapons talent by taking a number of Strain Points equal to his Wound Threshold. In astral space, the archer would receive a +2 step bonus. The same bonus applies to adepts who push a talent or ability by physically wounding themselves. Instead of the normal +3 step bonus, such adepts receive a +4 step bonus.

Travel in Astral Space

Generally, travel in astral space differs little from travel in the physical world. Character and creature Movement Rates remain unchanged in astral space. Few adepts other than cavalrymen bring mounts into astral space because the bizarre appearance of astral space spooks most animals. Because travel on foot is fairly slow, adepts usually enter astral space as close to their destination as possible—assuming, of course, that the adept knows the location of his destination.

Other methods of travel are possible in astral space, but these usually require special conditions of some sort. For example, flying is possible, but only through means of spells, magical items or flying mounts.

The key difference of travel in astral space, however, is the ability of astral beings to move through the astral imprints of non-magical objects. Theoretically, this ability enables astral travelers to simply walk through many obstacles, but doing so significantly disorients most astral travelers (see p. 62).

Spirits, Horrors and other astral denizens are not bound by the same restraints as Name-givers while in astral space and can fly about and move through non-magical objects without penalty.

ASTRAL DENIZENS

Various forms of astral beings reside in astral space, ranging from spirits to Horrors to other more unusual denizens. Most reside in the netherworlds of astral space, but many of them venture into areas of astral space where astral travelers are likely to encounter these unpredictable entities.

Spirits

Astral space is home to all manner of spirits, including spirits of the elemental planes, the spirits of deceased Name-givers, and strange spirits that inhabit the more unusual netherworlds. With the exception of those who are summoned, elemental spirits are rarely encountered outside their native planes. On very rare occasions, elemental spirits roam other areas of astral space, most often near sites that resemble or evoke their native planes. For example, fire spirits are likely to roam astral space near the Death's Sea, while water spirits might be encountered in astral space along the Serpent River. Wood spirits might be found in one or more of Barsaive's jungles or perhaps even in astral space near the Blood Wood. Elemental spirits usually avoid Name-givers and will flee back to their home planes upon meeting such an astral presence.

Ally spirits from the netherworlds possess a natural curiosity, which sometimes inspires them to travel through astral space to observe the physical world or to seek out Name-givers in astral space. These spirits exhibit a mischievous streak as well, which can prove dangerous to astral travelers. In fact, numerous legends tell of ally spirits that lead adepts into dangerous or precarious predicaments so that the spirits can observe the adepts' attempts to save themselves. Their unpredictable nature makes ally spirits in their own way nearly as dangerous as Horrors.

Name-giver spirits are by far the most easily identifiable spirits that astral travelers are likely to encounter. Most Name-giver spirits retain forms that are very similar to the physical forms they possessed in life, but this is not always the case. Because characters sometimes hide their true natures, a Name-giver spirit might possess a form that is larger, smaller, more grotesque or more beautiful than its physical body. The spirits of questors commonly show such radical differences because of the narrow mental and emotional focus they achieve, as do the spirits of adepts who stressed a single side of their natures to the exclusion of all else. The behavior and attitudes of a Name-giver spirit may also vary greatly from the behavior and attitudes the Name-giver exhibited in life. Such changes may result from the traumatic transition from a physical to an astral existence, or from the spirit's interaction with the powerful magical energies of astral space. Interacting with the purer energies of the astral realm may foster purity of thought in the spirit, along with a desire to battle the astral corruption brought forth by the Horrors. On the other hand, interacting with corrupted energies may twist a spirit into a monstrous apparition bent on inflicting as much pain and suffering as the Horrors themselves. Such spirits may attack astral travelers without provocation. Most spirits, however, fall somewhere between these extremes.

For more information about spirits, including their abilities and powers, see **Summoning**, page 78.

Horrors

The most sinister and abhorrent creatures known to exist, Horrors prove especially dangerous in astral space, where they may take on a wide variety of forms. The more powerful Horrors can alter their astral forms at will, making it extremely difficult for astral travelers to recognize the true nature of these foul entities, or to recognize the same Horror twice.

Countless minor Horrors roam astral space and, in some instances, the netherworlds, searching for ways to defile the physical world. Fortunately for astral beings, this search consumes most Horrors beyond their ability to pursue any other goal, and so they devote little time or attention to seeking out astral explorers.

Most of the powerful Horrors that remain in or near Barsaive, especially Named Horrors (see p. 10, **Horrors** sourcebook), appear to follow private agendas consisting largely of devious, corrupt plans. These Horrors rarely roam astral space without purpose, and so the likelihood of astral travelers encountering such a Horror by chance remains slim. However, these Horrors frequent certain places in astral space that eventually take on their own taint. Nethermancers call these locations astral lairs.

An astral lair is an area of astral space that a Horror has corrupted by its own deeds and presence, creating for itself a sort of astral haven. Horrors may create astral lairs by committing their foul deeds in astral space or in the physical world. These areas of astral space then become Tainted or Corrupt (see **Astral Regions,** p. 68), much like the Well of Souls (see p. 69), an astral formation surrounding the fallen kaer of Mesa'loc that ranks among the best known and most widely feared astral lairs. Though Named Horrors such as Verjigorm and Taint surely must maintain lairs of far more terrifying intensity, no Name-giver has ever reported encountering these astral lairs.

Other Astral Denizens

In addition to spirits and Horrors, adepts in astral space may encounter creatures that defy easy classification. Usually, such creatures frequent the netherworlds, but some have been known to venture into other areas of astral space as well. These creatures include highly magical beings restricted to the astral plane, and a seemingly endless variety of astral forms that appear to reflect phys-

cal creatures belonging to the infinite number of unidentified worlds and realities also connected to astral space.

ASTRAL REGIONS

The corruption of astral space significantly handicaps magicians and astral travelers. Magicians who cast raw magic in corrupted regions of astral space risk injury or even death, fates that also threaten astral travelers and beings who move through such areas.

The mere sight of these corrupted areas proves blood-curdling to most astral beings because looking at these Horror-tainted regions is tantamount to gazing into madness. The astral landscape of these regions appears physically warped—stretched and smeared as if reality were no more than a delicate painting that a Horror could transform with the wipe of a bloody hand.

In game terms, astral regions fall into four classifications: Safe, Open, Tainted and Corrupt.

Safe

Safe regions are areas of astral space untouched by Horrors. Only areas surrounding unbreached kaers are considered Safe. Astral beings who pass through Safe areas suffer no ill effects. Additionally, Horrors tend to avoid Safe regions, a phenomenon that suggests the powers of Horrors may be weaker in these areas.

Open

Open regions correspond to areas in the physical world where Horrors simply passed through or performed only minor magic. The scant attention these Horrors paid to the area or the small amount of torment they caused only slightly warped the astral landscape in these regions. Typically, the astral landscapes of Open regions appear creased and wrinkled, like a sketch crumpled and only partially smoothed out. Most of astral space is comprised of Open regions.

Add 2 to the Difficulty Numbers of any Perception Tests made in Open regions of astral space. This penalty also applies to Astral Sensing Tests made in corresponding areas of the physical world (see **Astral Sensing**, p. 74). In addition, any adept who travels through an Open region of astral space suffers Step 4 damage for each minute he remains in the region. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Tainted

Tainted regions correspond to places where the Horrors caused great suffering and torment. As a result, large clouds of poisoned astral energies pollute these regions, and the landscapes are twisted and warped almost beyond recognition.

Add 5 to the Difficulty Numbers of any Perception Tests made in Tainted regions of astral space. This penalty also applies to Astral Sensing Tests made while in corresponding areas of the physical world (see **Astral Sensing**, p. 74). In addition, any adept who travels through a Tainted region suffers Step 8 damage each minute he remains in the region. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

Corrupt

Corrupt regions are the most dangerous regions of astral space. These areas correspond to the places where Horrors committed terrible atrocities, possibly scarring the astral landscape forever. Dark and violent emotions emanate from these areas in overwhelming surges.

Add 12 to the Difficulty Numbers of any Perception Tests made in Corrupt regions of astral space. This penalty also applies to Astral Sensing Tests made in corresponding areas of the physical world (see **Astral Sensing**, p. 74). In addition, any adept traveling through a Corrupt region suffers Step 12 damage for each minute he remains in the region. Mystic Armor protects against this damage.

The foul energies in Corrupt regions may also corrupt any use of magic by an adept. Spells may affect characters other than their targets, the spellcaster may suffer Warping damage, and so on. The gamemaster determines the exact effect of magical corruption, which occurs whenever an adept achieves an Average or lower success on a Magic Test in a Corrupt region.

> The warrior Jefro is walking through the astral space corresponding to Parlainth (most definitely a Corrupt region) when he encounters a Horror, which he decides to smite using his Melee Weapons talent. Jefro makes his Melee Weapons Test against the Horror's Physical Defense Rating of 12 and achieves a result of 14—an Average success. The attack hits the Horror, but Jefro suffers Warping damage. If Jefro's Melee Weapons Test had yielded a Good or better success, he would have avoided any negative effects of using his magically powered talent in the Corrupt region.

For more information about the risks of casting raw magic in Corrupt regions, see **Optional Raw Magic Rules**, p. 40.

Finally, a Corrupt region almost invariably indicates the presence of a Horror lurking nearby that is likely to

ASTRAL SPACE REGION TABLE

Region Type	Perception Test Modifier	Damage per Minute
Safe	NA	NA
Open	+2	Step 4
Tainted	+5	Step 8
Corrupt	+12	Step 12

notice any use of magic in the area. If the gamemaster chooses, whenever an adept uses a talent or magical ability (including spending Karma Points) in a Corrupt region of astral space, the gamemaster may make a Perception Test for any nearby Horrors against the adept's Spell Defense + 12 (to reflect the corruption). If the test succeeds, the Horror notices the use of magic and investigates.

AN ASTRAL SPACE GAZETTEER

Traveling through astral space offers adepts a chance to visit dark and dismal locations, places of breathtaking beauty and dark reaches where only Horrors stalk. This section describes a number of different astral locations, including specific sites in Barsaive as well as some of the mysterious realms of astral space known as the netherworlds.

NAMED ASTRAL LOCATIONS

Just as sites in the physical world can be Named, sites in astral space may become Named by a significant event or overwhelming emotion. Naming imparts true patterns to these places, which allows magic to interact with them via pattern items and threads. Just as adepts can travel to Named places in Barsaive, they can also journey to Named areas in astral space. The Well of Souls and the Idyllic Gardens represent two of the best-known Named astral sites corresponding to sites in Barsaive.

Well of Souls

Of all the Corrupt regions of astral space, the site known as the Well of Souls is probably the darkest. The Well of Souls corresponds with the physical location of Mesa'loc Kaer, in the present-day Poisoned Forest. During the early years of the Scourge, the kaer was breached by a powerful Horror that fed off the pain and anguish of the kaer's residents, then bound their spirits to the ruined kaer's pattern so that it could feed on their tortured souls even after death.

The severe corruption of the Well of Souls manifests as swirling patterns of black and violent reds that cascade in a turbulent wash of pain and anguish. This intense flood of feelings has been known to strike uncontrollable terror into the soul of adepts, and the warped nature of the landscape threatens the sanity of any who behold it. Indeed, only the bravest and most powerful adepts dare penetrate very far into the Well of Souls, as the entire surrounding area is a Corrupt region as well.

On rare occasions, magicians successfully summon Name-giver spirits from the Well. Invariably, such spirits prove eager to serve their summoners in return for a few hours of freedom from torment. Unfortunately, none of these spirits has ever been permanently freed. They must always return to their astral hell, a pattern indicating that the legendary Horror still resides in its astral lair, hidden deep within the center of the Well of Souls or perhaps in the ruins of Mesa'loc Kaer.

Idyllic Gardens

Memories of the Scourge do not haunt all Named astral locations. As the power of the Horrors has diminished in recent years, some magicians have successfully employed protection wards similar to those used during the Scourge to create sites that remain entirely free of the taint of these beings. Generally, magicians use these locations as magical laboratories, where they may study and work free from the threat of Horrors. Still other magicians, such as the windling elementalist Named Llythia Silkenwings, have used protection wards to create inspiring enclaves that celebrate and encourage the restoration of life in the Horror-ravaged lands of Barsaive.

It was during her earliest travels across the devastated lands of Barsaive that Llythia discovered a pristine forest glade along the northern edge of the Delaris Mountains. Intrigued by the small patch of land that had escaped the destruction of the surrounding areas, Llythia examined the glade's counterpart in astral space and discovered a Safe region. Immediately she began work to expand the Safe region and find ways to protect it. She eventually chose blood magic as the most efficient and effective method of protection and used her own life force to power a complex set of wards to safeguard the physical and astral locations of the glade. In later years, several other windlings joined Llythia and founded a community dedicated to nurturing the land.

Today, the Idyllic Gardens draw pilgrims from all across Barsaive. A beautiful sight to behold, the refreshing glade is rumored to possess special powers that heal and restore the health of any who tread its shaded paths.

When entered from astral space, the Gardens offer a wondrous, truly overwhelming experience of peace and tranquillity that many visitors contemplate for days or even weeks. The questors of several Passions, most notably those of Jaspree and Garlen, routinely visit the Idyllic Gardens, and many adepts use the Gardens as an oasis for rest and relaxation. All visitors are welcome, provided they treat the Gardens with the care and respect they deserve.

According to legend, Llythia still resides in the glade—she cannot leave or the wards will fail. It is said that several Horrors have discovered her work, but none have successfully challenged the wards she constructed to protect the glade.

THE NETHERWORLDS

The netherworlds are alternate physical realities connected to astral space in the same way that the world of **Earthdawn** is connected to astral space. They coexist with the physical world of **Earthdawn** and serve as the source of spirits, True elements and the Horrors. At present, Name-givers have explored only a handful of these countless worlds.

Each netherworld is unique, with its own natural laws. Some netherworlds support complete realities, much like the physical world known to Barsaivians, while others are little more than single chains of limited events that continually repeat themselves. Most netherworlds combine these two models, giving the appearance of complete worlds but existing only as chains of events and important locations. Scholars do not know whether these fragmented realities are the natural states of the netherworlds, the result of Horror intervention, or simply a false impression created by Name-givers' limited astral travel abilities.

The landscape of a netherworld can be chaotic or stable. At least one netherworld, known as Sylvar, seems completely stable though it comprises little more than wide expanses of barren, Horror-ravaged ground. Other charted netherworlds possess geographic features that rival or exceed the conflagration that is the Death's Sea, the most tranquil of forests, or landscapes roiling with tainted magical energy.

The age-old quest for knowledge and power draws many Name-givers to the netherworlds, for a journey to these places may yield invaluable experience and insight into astral space and magic. Fortune draws others, who seek more direct access to True elements or hope to find unusual artifacts. And a few brave souls roam the netherworlds in search of Horrors to destroy.

The following sections describe gateways to the netherworlds and four netherworlds known to astral travelers. These netherworld descriptions illustrate only a few of the possible types of netherworlds characters can explore. Use them as models when creating your own netherworlds.

Gateways to the Netherworlds

Like the physical world of **Earthdawn,** each of the netherworlds creates an imprint in astral space. To travel to a netherworld, an adept must first locate the astral imprint of the netherworld. To locate a netherworld's astral imprint, an adept must locate the gateway that connects the netherworld's imprint with that of the physical world.

Most often, gateways to the netherworlds appear as portals much like those established by the Spirit Portal spell. Like much of astral space and its inhabitants, the appearances, locations and workings of these gateways follow no rhyme or reason. One gateway might appear as a doorway, while another might take the form of the mouth of a Horror or other hideous creature—in which case an adept must be swallowed by the Horror or creature to pass through the gateway.

Most gateways can be opened only with the use of specific types of spells or with the help of spirits, or under unusual or extreme conditions. For example, a gateway to the netherworld known as Cadence (p. 71) might be accessible only when the moon is full and after an adept performs a ritual of some sort. The gamemaster should feel free to invent any type of requirements for accessing the netherworlds.

As an adept passes through a gateway, he enters the astral imprint of the netherworld. The adept may then pass from the netherworld's astral imprint to the netherworld itself using an appropriate ability or spell, such as a spirit's Astral Portal power. The adept may return to the physical world by simply reversing the process. Because the first step of that process is to locate the portal back into astral space, and because astral travelers may forget the location of a netherworld gateway or become lost in the netherworld itself, returning rarely proves easy. For these reasons, adepts often employ spirits as guides when journeying to the netherworlds, because a spirit can always locate a gateway that it has passed through without any test and without error. (Nethermancers and other astral explorers rely heavily on this little-known spirit ability.)

In some instances, the locations of netherworld gateways correspond to the astral locations of corrupted sites in the physical world, such as specific spots in the Badlands, deep within the Blood Wood, or other areas the

Horrors overran. For example, in Haven, rumors abound of a gateway whose location corresponds to the exact astral location of the Map Wall. This gateway supposedly leads to one of the most dangerous and corrupt nether-worlds—one that few Name-givers have seen and survived. Adepts seeking this gate in astral space would see the astral imprint of the Map Wall and the surrounding area, as well as the gateway directly in front of the wall.

Some scholars believe that other netherworld gateways exist in deep or high astral zones that correspond to physical areas beyond the reach of all but the most intrepid Name-givers. In fact, some believe the legendary airship Earthdawn, which disappeared just at the end of the Scourge, passed through such a gateway and became trapped in one of the netherworlds, where it remains today.

Sylvar

The netherworld known as Sylvar tends to draw only the most daring of astral explorers. Sylvar might once have been a beautiful place, but the depredations of the Horrors have left it a world of wind-blasted rock formations, scorched earth and poisoned waters. Though choked with the scent of ash, Sylvar's air remains breathable. The astral space adjacent to Sylvar is a Tainted region, and most of the gateways to Sylvar also lie in Tainted regions.

Only a few minor Horrors remain in Sylvar, apparently glorying in its devastation or guarding it for reasons unknown. Though these entities are dangerous, those adepts experienced enough to travel astrally can defeat them with relative ease.

Numerous deposits of rare minerals lie close to Sylvar's razed surface, a powerful incentive that attracts adepts searching for precious metals and True elements. Others visit Sylvar in search of clues to the nature of the Horrors. During the Scourge, Sylvar suffered from the depredations of the Horrors in much the same way as Barsaive, which has led many magicians to speculate that valuable knowledge in the struggle against the remaining Horrors might be gained by studying that netherworld. Some adepts also believe that pattern items for one or more Named Horrors may remain on Sylvar—items that would be of great value to adventurers battling the Horrors in Barsaive.

Cadence

Cadence is perhaps the most chaotic of the netherworlds known to Barsaivians. This world consists of a string of pocket realities, each vastly different from the one before. As a result, an astral traveler in the Cadencian landscape can move from an area resembling the elemental plane of fire to a mountaintop retreat in a single step.

Because the landscape of Cadence offers such a variety of realities, many nethermancers believe that Cadence may hold the key to better understanding the secrets of the netherworlds. As a result, Cadence is a common destination for experienced astral explorers, especially nethermancers seeking information on cosmology and other dimensions (see p. 54, **The Adept's Way**). Learning this information, however, requires significant effort on the part of the adept.

To find a specific piece of information in Cadence, an adept enters the gateway to the netherworld. He will immediately find himself in a location that presents one or more challenges he must defeat. Once he defeats the required challenges, the adept will find himself transported back to the astral gateway to Cadence. Again he must enter the gateway, but this time he will find himself in another location with new challenges he must defeat. If he succeeds, he will again find himself at the netherworld's astral gateway. The adept must continue to repeat this process until he arrives in the location that contains the information he seeks. The order in which the adept defeats each location's challenges, and the manner in which he does so, partially determines the next location into which he passes. If the adept leaves the netherworld and travels back to astral space before defeating a location's challenges, he loses all progress toward his final destination and must begin the process again. As a result of Cadence's strange geography, locating the answer to a quest may take days, even weeks.

Throne

Throne consists of nothing more than a palace and the grounds on which it sits. From atop the high wall surrounding the grounds, an adept can view an entire kingdom. However, any adept who ventures past the walls is simply thrown back into astral space with a violent shock. The palace and estates are filled with nobles, common officials, supplicants, assassins, advisors and military people of all types.

Throne can provide any knowledge an adept might seek—providing the adept is up to the task. Knowledge that cannot be found elsewhere can always be found in Throne. To pass through the gateway to Throne, however, an adept must know the nature of the knowledge he seeks—a nethermancer who travels to Throne to learn a Key Knowledge for an item must know the specific information he seeks: the item's Name, the Name of the person

who created the item, the target of the item's Empowering Deed and so on.

Once in Throne, the visitor must accept a role in a "game." For example, an adept might find himself in a grand ballroom at a royal masquerade ball, in the middle of a series of battles on the palace grounds, or even thrust into a bizarre game of court intrigue in which he must use his charisma and leadership skills to win the palace throne by popular acclamation. By winning this game, he receives the knowledge he seeks. As suggested by the example, succeeding will be no easy task, and the adept will probably have to unseat several other astral travelers attempting the same feat to gain the information they seek.

An adept may visit Throne repeatedly, though the specifics of the game he must play during each visit will change and always demand a new solution. As part of this netherworld's challenge, locating the gateway to Throne becomes more difficult each time an adept attempts to do so, as does winning the game.

Tekk'sint

Very few adepts who set out to find Tekk'sint return, for the high magic levels make this a veritable Horror haven. In this netherworld, various types of Horrors exist as the dominant life form and live according to the laws of survival of the fittest. The strongest mark large areas as their own; those who fail to submit to their dominance are simply devoured.

The astral space that corresponds to this netherworld is a Corrupt region, and all gateways to Tekk'sint lie in Corrupt regions. These conditions make Tekk'sint one of the most inaccessible of the charted netherworlds, though particularly skilled adepts travel here to hone those talents most suited for killing Horrors.

ELEMENTAL PLANES

Each of the elemental planes embodies a single element in its purest form: fire, water, air, earth and wood. Despite the obvious hazards of going to a place consisting of nothing but a single element, adepts can and do travel to the elemental planes, usually in an attempt to harvest True elements or contact elemental spirits. Though conditions in the elemental planes make it extremely dangerous for adepts to linger there more than a few minutes, attempts to gather True elements by traveling to the elemental planes generally yield more, and more potent kernels than any other method of gathering True elements.

Areas of the physical world that possess features similar to the elemental plane often offer access of a sort to the elemental planes. Though too small for an astrally traveling adept to pass through, these fissures between the physical world and the elemental plane allow the most potent kernels of True elements to escape into the physical world. One such crack connecting the physical world to the elemental Plane of Fire exists near the center of the Death's Sea.

Adepts can reach the elemental planes through astral space. Unlike the netherworlds, however, the elemental planes have no astral imprint: an adept who enters a portal in order to reach one of the elemental planes leaves the physical world, takes on astral form, and steps directly into the elemental plane. Generally speaking, the nature of magic should make it possible for adepts to protect their astral forms in the elemental planes through the use of magical items, spells and talents. Players and gamemasters should work together to determine how such protection can be fashioned in their game.

Though the elemental planes show no physical signs of damage from the Horrors, the fact that most astral gateways to the elemental planes lie in Tainted or Corrupt astral space strongly implies that those entities affected the elemental planes during the Scourge. Exactly why this is so remains a mystery to most magicians, but some elementalists believe the close link between the physical world and the elemental planes, and the wide variety of the powers and natures of the Horrors, may explain how this was possible.

PLANE OF AIR

The elemental plane of True air is devoid of any trace of other True elements. Generally, astral gateways to the Plane of Air are located within Safe regions, as the Horrors apparently found little they could corrupt in this plane.

The buoyancy of True air supports any traveler to the Plane of Air. All travelers to this plane may also breathe True air regardless of their physical nature. Adepts often become giddy when breathing the pure element, however, and doing so for more than a few minutes without taking suitable precautions can render the adept's lungs incapable of breathing normal air again.

PLANE OF EARTH

Of all the elemental planes, the plane of True earth draws more adepts than any other. Numerous pockets of True air and True water also exist in this plane, but passing between them is impossible for any being unable to move through solid earth. Adepts who make the journey in order to contact elemental spirits and who survive the plane's harsh conditions will find the spirits that inhabit the Plane of Earth to be quite cooperative.

The Plane of Earth suffered the most of all the elemental planes during the Scourge, and all its gateways appear in Tainted or Corrupt regions of astral space.

PLANE OF FIRE

The Plane of Fire is the most hostile of the elemental planes. Most everything that enters this plane—be it Name-givers, spirits (save for fire spirits), even small amounts of True water—is immediately consumed by the True fire of the plane. Any character foolish enough to enter the Plane of Fire would be incinerated almost instantly, though nethermancers using the Netherwalk talent to astrally project may safely enter the Plane of Fire and contact its elemental spirits.

The plane is home to several Horrors that apparently relish the painful burning sensation of its True fire. Other Horrors find pleasure in transporting hapless adepts to the Plane of Fire and feeding off the brief moment of terrible anguish and pain these Name-givers suffer before dying.

Astral space surrounding gateways to the Plane of Fire is generally an Open region that is occasionally polluted by Tainted astral space.

PLANE OF WATER

As with any underwater travel, moving through the Plane of Water offers many challenges, not the least of which is breathing. Elementalists can use the Gills spell to stay alive in this elemental plane, but only for two or three minutes—True water does not offer a great deal of oxygen to extract. Bubbles of True air large enough to sustain a single Name-giver, probably created by kernels of

True fire colliding with the True water, occasionally drift through the Plane of Water, and while adepts fortunate enough to find one of these bubbles may stay in the elemental plane for several minutes, they risk the same dangers of staying too long on the Plane of Air.

The Horrors apparently found no easy way to corrupt the Plane of Water, for gateways to this plane are located in a Safe region of astral space.

PLANE OF WOOD

Because no adept has ever traveled to the Plane of Wood and returned, only the existence of True wood and wood and plant spirits supports the theory that this elemental plane exists.

ASTRAL SENSING

Astral sensing enables characters to observe astral space directly. Most adepts in **Earthdawn**—especially adepts who follow one of the magician Disciplines—use astral sensing, and it often provides an adept with his first glance into astral space.

Astral sensing can be performed using one of four distinct methods: windling astral-sensitive sight; the Astral Sight talent; the Astral Sense spell; and thread sight, a limited form of astral sight granted by the Thread Weaving talent. These methods provide varying degrees of detail when viewing astral space, and require various degrees of difficulty as well. Rules for using each method are provided in **Astral Sensing Methods**, page 75.

USING ASTRAL SENSING

Adepts primarily use astral sensing to detect the magical patterns of spell effects, wards, astral creatures and magical items. Additionally, astral sensing enables an adept to determine if a given object is magical, and may enable an adept to discover information about the nature of a subject by studying its magical pattern.

To detect a magical pattern in astral space, an adept makes an Astral Sensing Test. The specific astral sensing ability the adept is using determines the type of test. Each astral sensing ability has a specific effective range. To detect the pattern of a subject within that range, the test result must equal or exceed the Spell Defense Rating of the subject. Note that even subjects outside of the adept's field of vision may be detected as long as they are within range. This means that a successful Astral Sensing Test enables an adept to detect even the patterns of subjects hidden behind doors or inside chests.

However, astral sensing abilities do not normally enable an adept to detect the patterns of subjects hidden behind other magical objects, such as enchanted chests. To detect a subject hidden in this manner, an adept must achieve an Excellent or better success on an Astral Sensing Test against the Spell Defense Rating of the subject. Lower successes may enable adepts to detect the size and shape of the hidden subject's astral imprint, but they do not enable him to identity the subject.

> While searching the ruins of a kaer, the elven nethermancer Mestoph finds a small secret door. Mestoph has already encountered numerous traps while exploring this kaer, so he decides to use astral sensing to check for any magical traps protecting the door. He makes an Astral Sight Test with a result of 13. He sees no traps in the astral space at the door, but he does detect the pattern of a small magical presence behind the door.
>
> After opening the secret door, Mestoph discovers a cubbyhole that contains a small chest, which Mestoph concludes is the source of the magical presence. He picks up the chest and hears something small shift about inside, suggesting that the chest holds some valuable and perhaps even magical item. Unfortunately, the chest is magically sealed, so Mestoph decides to make a second Astral Sensing Test to see what is inside. The test yields a 12, an Average success against the chest's Spell Defense Rating of 10. As a result, Mestoph can see the pattern of the magical seal on the chest. He also sees the astral imprint of a small, amulet-shaped object inside the chest. If he had achieved an Excellent or better success on his Astral Sensing Test, he could have seen the pattern of the magical amulet in the chest.

After an adept detects a pattern, he can make additional Astral Sensing Tests to examine it more closely. The specific astral sensing ability the adept is using determines the type of test. See the appropriate section in **Astral Sensing Methods**, page 75, for rules for these tests. The gamemaster determines the exact information an adept may obtain by studying a pattern in this manner.

Patterns in Astral Space

When viewed astrally, the pattern of any subject—adept, creature, magical item or non-adept Name-giver—appears in the same form as the subject's astral imprint (see **Livimg Astral Imprints**, p. 63). The imprint is roughly the same size and shape as the subject. A subject's pattern, however is much more complex and provides much more information about the subject.

For example, an adept's astral imprint is the same size and shape as the adept, and has a glowing presence that swirls around the imprint. It provides no other information about the adept, however. On the other hand, the adept's pattern might show the adept's Discipline, any threads woven to the adept's pattern, and signs of injury or blood magic use. The gamemaster determines the specific details of a subject's pattern, based on the subject's nature.

Note that studying a pattern with astral sensing is different from studying it to learn Key Knowledges. Adepts must use the Item History and Weapon History talents, and the Thread Sight Thread Weaving knack to learn a pattern's Key Knowledges.

While patterns of most Name-givers and creatures (with the exception of Horrors) occupy the entire astral imprints of their subjects, the pattern of a magical item may occupy only a small portion of the item's imprint. For example, the astral imprint of a magical sword is shaped like a sword, but its pattern may occupy only the hilt of the imprint. Usually, this phenomenon results from the method used to enchant the item (see **Enchanting**, p. 44).

Types of Magical Patterns

Adepts may encounter several types of magical patterns during their adventures. Living creatures such as Name-givers and Horrors, magical items, and spells and other magical abilities (including dragon or Horror powers) all possess different types of patterns. Each type of pattern appears slightly different from the others, just as each individual pattern differs from others of the same type.

Spells and other magical abilities produce the most unusual type of patterns. (As it is used here, the term "magical abilities" includes talents, dragon and Horror powers, and unusual magical effects in nature, such as the corruption of the Blood Wood and the existence of life within the Poison Forest.) Patterns produced by these magical abilities most often resemble clouds of magical energy that encompass the spell/ability's area of effect and represent its effect. For example, the pattern of a

Chilling Circle spell would appear as a cloud of astral energy that radiates out 5 yards from the nethermancer who cast the spell. The pattern of a Mind Dagger spell might appear as a dagger of astral energy that flies from the caster to the target.

Astral sensing enables adepts to view the patterns of spells during combat, but most adepts use it to detect and study the patterns of extended-duration spell effects, such as those produced by magical traps or wards. Usually, the patterns of these magical effects appear as small pockets of astral energy. Close examination of such a pattern may reveal its effects, such the type of spell, its Circle, or even clues about the magician who cast the spell.
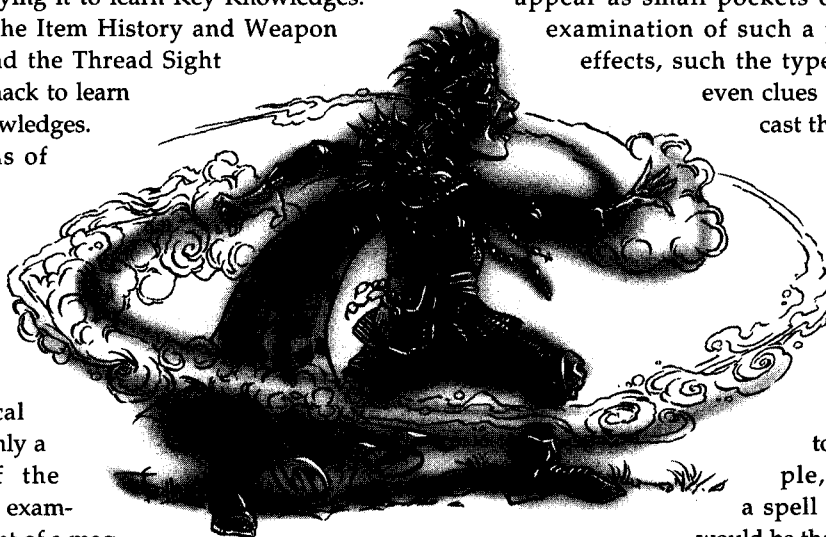
When using an astral sensing ability to study the pattern of a spell, an adept makes his Astral Sensing Test against the spell's Spell Defense. The spell's Spell Defense is the result of the test used to cast the spell. For example, the Spell Defense of a spell cast as an Named spell would be the result of the Spellcasting Test made to cast the spell.

ASTRAL SENSING METHODS

To illustrate the differences between each of the four astral sensing methods—windling astral-sensitive sight, the Astral Sight talent, the Astral Sense spell, and thread sight—each of the following sections includes an example of an adept using one of the methods to examine the same magical item, an enchanted dagger that contains a small shard of orichalcum in its pommel. The orichalcum shard is from the ruins of Kaer Jalendale, where Lorm the troll (the wielder of Lorm's Axe) died. This orichalcum shard, now used to power the dagger, possesses great magical power and also traces of the corruptive powers of the Horror that claimed Kaer Jalendale.

Astral-Sensitive Sight (p. 54, ED)

Astral-sensitive sight allows windlings (as well as dragons and Horrors) to look into astral space from the physical world and view the astral imprints of any nearby subjects. The ability also enables windlings to view astral patterns with great precision, which gives these Name-

givers a significant advantage over non-windling magicians and scholars, who must resort to more traditional techniques for studying astral space.

Astral-sensitive sight is limited by an adept's Perception step number. If the adept's Discipline allows it, the adept may use Karma to enhance his Perception Test when using the astral-sensitive sight ability. Adepts cannot augment their use of astral-sensitive sight by any other means. As a result, detecting subjects with especially high Spell Defense Ratings (including many spirits) may be impossible with astral-sensitive sight. Astral-sensitive sight has a maximum range of 10 yards.

The precision and clarity of astral-sensitive sight offers ample compensation for its limited range and power. Other astral sensing abilities may enable an adept to detect and observe subjects with higher Spell Defense Ratings, but astral-sensitive sight is more sensitive and will most always reveal more of the pattern. For example, a pattern whose detection might require an Excellent or better success for an adept using the Astral Sight talent might be visible to a windling with only an Average or Good success. The gamemaster determines the exact manner in which the superior precision of astral-sensitive sight comes into play, based on the needs of his game.

To detect astral presences with astral-sensitive sight, a windling adept makes a Perception Test and compares the result to the Spell Defense Ratings of any living creatures or magical patterns that lie within the windling's line of vision, up to 10 yards away. The windling detects the patterns of any objects, creatures or magical effects whose Spell Defense is equal to or less than the Perception Test result.

Once a character has detected a magical pattern, he can make subsequent Perception Tests to see more detail in the pattern. Each test must yield a higher result than the previous test to provide more detail. If a test yields an equal or lower success level than the previous test, the character learns nothing new from the pattern. If any such test fails to equal or exceed the subject's Spell Defense, the character loses all sight of the pattern and must redetect the pattern before he can study it.

Bryn decides to use his astral-sensitive sight to study the enchanted dagger, so he makes a Perception Test. The test yields a result of 18, a Good success against the dagger's Spell Defense. Bryn first sees the dagger's astral imprint, which follows the exact same proportions as the dagger itself. At the far end of the dagger's hilt lies the blade's pattern, a glowing diamond-shaped aura of astral energy trapped within

the orichalcum shard. The diamond's border seem to be formed of teeth that shift in their places as if loose in a creature's mouth. Within the diamond's border, storm clouds twist and bend, breathing out red streamers reminiscent of winds. Four lightning bolts snake inward from each point on the diamond to form a cross at its center. Each quadrant of the diamond contains different features. Bryn is drawn to one of the quadrants, where the cloud streamers meld into a writhing mass of thorny vines. In the center of the diamond lies a small point of blackness, roiling with a raw power that bleeds out into each quadrant.

Astral Sight Talent (p. 98, ED)

Like astral-sensitive sight, the Astral Sight talent enables characters to look into astral space and directly view astral imprints and patterns. Though not as precise as astral-sensitive sight, the Astral Sight talent is perhaps the best overall method of astral sensing available in **Earthdawn.** The talent enables adepts to view the patterns of subjects with high Spell Defense Ratings and detect considerable detail in a pattern. And because Astral Sight is a talent, a character may improve his Astral Sight rank over time, which allows him to detect more obscure magical patterns.

Of course, the Astral Sight talent is not without its drawbacks. First, an adept must take 1 point of Strain damage each time he uses the talent. Additionally, the effect of the talent lasts only for a number of combat rounds equal to the character's Astral Sight rank. As a result, using the talent for extended examinations of magical patterns can be quite taxing.

To detect astral patterns with the Astral Sight talent, an adept makes an Astral Sight Test. To see into astral space, the adept must achieve a result of at least 6, the Spell Defense of astral space. In addition, the adept detects the pattern of any creature, object or magical effect whose Spell Defense is less than or equal to the test result.

After detecting a pattern, an adept can make subsequent Astral Sight Tests to see more details in the pattern. These tests do not cause the character additional Strain. Each test must yield a higher result than the previous test to provide more detail. If a test yields an equal or lower success level than the previous test, the character learns nothing new from the pattern. If any of these tests fails to equal or exceed the subject's Spell Defense, the character loses all sight of the pattern and must make an Astral Sight Test to redetect the pattern before he can study it. (The adept must take 1 point of Strain when attempting to redetect the pattern.)

During his initial astral examination of the dagger, Mestoph sees the orichalcum shard in the dagger's astral imprint and realizes that it contains the dagger's pattern. Mestoph then makes another Astral Sight Test to study the pattern. The test yields a result of 19, a Good success.

Mestoph sees the form of a diamond, which contains storm clouds seemingly made up of faces, all twisted in pain. The diamond's border is lined with teeth that seem to bleed a dark, evil-looking green substance that pools into a disk shape at the lower end of the diamond. At the diamond's opposite end, several teeth enlarge and extend outward in a row of spikes. Small human forms, writhing in agony, are trapped between each pair of teeth.

Astral Sense Spell (p. 183, ED)

The Astral Sense spell enables an adept to detect and study magical presences in astral space. The spell has an adequate range of 60 yards and a duration of 10+ minutes, but the view of the subject's pattern the spell provides is not as effective for studying patterns as either astral-sensitive sight or the Astral Sight talent. While adepts using astral-sensitive sight and the Astral Sight talent actually see the item's astral imprint and pattern, adepts using the Astral Sense spell simply receive an image of the imprint and pattern in their minds. Because the information is essentially secondhand, like seeing a photograph rather than the object itself, certain details simply cannot be discerned.

To detect astral patterns with the Astral Sense spell, an adept makes a Spellcasting Test. To see into astral space, the adept must achieve a result of at least 6, the Spell Defense of astral space. If the test succeeds, the adept then makes an Effect Test. The adept detects the pattern of one creature, object or magical effect whose Spell Defense is less than or equal to the test result. Only one pattern may be detected per Effect Test, which means that adept may have to make several Effect Tests to detect all the patterns within the range of the spell.

Once a character has detected a pattern, he can make subsequent Effect Tests to see more detail in the pattern. Each test must yield a higher result than the previous test to provide more detail. If a test yields an equal or lower success level than the previous test, the character learns nothing new from the pattern. If any of these tests fails to equal or exceed the subject's Spell Defense, the character loses all sight of the pattern and must recast the Astral Sense Spell to redetect the pattern before he can study it.

In previous **Earthdawn** products, the Astral Sense spell was available only to wizards. See **New Spells**, p. 131 for several new versions of this spell available to elementalists, illusionists and nethermancers.

Ardiss Foarr uses the Astral Sense spell to study the dagger. After he successfully casts the spell, he makes an Effect Test that yields a result of 13, an Average success. He sees the dagger's pattern, emanating from the orichalcum shard in the blade's pommel, as a simple diamond shape, long and slender, with a cross set into its interior. The boundaries of the diamond are made up of jagged teeth of various shapes and sizes, shiny ebony daggers tinged with green. He sees four eerie, green lightning bolts snaking inward from each point on the diamond and forming a cross and a dark point in the diamond's center. The diamond's quadrants are filled with dark storm clouds, as well as lines that Ardiss believes might represent high winds.

Thread Sight (p. 29)

Adepts receive thread sight along with the Thread Weaving talent. Generally, characters use thread sight to see the patterns of items in order to weave threads to them. Like the Astral Sense spell, thread sight gives the user a mental picture of the pattern, but with even less precision.

Thread sight does not allow an adept to see detail in or glean information from a pattern. It simply allows an adept to sense enough of the pattern to weave threads to it. Using thread sight in this manner does not require a separate test. Thread sight cannot be used to sense the magical patterns of creatures or Name-givers.

Though thread sight may seem the least useful astral sensing method, it enables adepts to do something the other methods do not—namely, it enables an adept to learn the Key Knowledges of a magical item by studying its true pattern. An adept must gain the Thread Sight Thread Weaving talent knack before he can use thread sight for this purpose, however. See **Thread Magic**, page 29, for more information.

Confident that it is safe to use the dagger, Ardiss Foarr decides to weave a Rank 1 thread to its pattern. Ardiss has already learned the Key Knowledge required, so he simply makes a Thread Weaving Test against the dagger's Weaving Difficulty. As he does so, an image of the dagger's pattern forms in his mind. Ardiss sees the pattern's simple diamond shape, long and slender, with the cross in its center.

SUMMONING

Summoning is the art of attracting spirits to perform some sort of service. Though the **Earthdawn** rulebook and **Earthdawn Companion** include talents and spells used to summon specific types of spirits, this section provides rules for all uses of summoning in **Earthdawn**.

Because adepts should know what they might summon before doing so, this section begins with a discussion of the different types of spirits and their powers. Rules for summoning using spells, talents and half-magic are followed by explanations of the summoning process, the use of blood magic in summoning, banishing, and a description of the dangers of summoning.

This section contains occasional references to astral space and specific regions of astral space. More information about these regions appears in **Astral Space,** beginning on page 60.

DEFINING SPIRITS

Spirits are entities that exist solely in the various realms of astral space. Scholars and magicians agree that these varied and unique entities inhabit the netherworlds, elemental planes and other various astral regions. Beyond that, little is known about the true nature of spirits, though years of study have yielded some useful information on these beings.

Most spirits prefer to remain in astral space and only manifest in the physical world when forced to do so by their summoner. Once a spirit has manifested physically, it can affect physical objects and characters in the same way as any other physical being.

More often than not, spirits possess thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes and memories, and adepts should regard all spirits with caution and respect—spirits usually find a way to punish those who treat them with insufficient respect. But perhaps more important, spirits exhibit an impressive capacity to learn. As a result, some of them possess great wisdom, while others have become quite cunning and treacherous. Still others have learned to cast spells, and some carry the knowledge of all those who have summoned them, making them a valuable asset to any magician.

Magicians recognize four major categories of spirits: tasked spirits, elemental spirits, ally spirits and Named spirits. Named spirits are created by the melding of a deceased Name-giver's astral form with a minor spirit of the netherworlds. The origins of tasked, elemental and ally spirits remain a mystery. (Full descriptions of the four spirit types appear later in this chapter.)

MOTIVATIONS, ATTITUDES AND PERSONALITY

Like Name-givers, spirits have unique motivations and attitudes. Like the motivations and attitudes of Horrors, however, those of spirits seem bizarre and alien to Name-givers. The very nature of spirits precludes Name-givers from truly understanding the workings of the spirit mind.

Despite their mysterious behavior, spirits do seem to possess personalities as distinct as any Name-giver. Each individual spirit is a unique creature with a unique outlook. A rare few spirits enjoy being summoned and put to use, while the great majority strongly resent being disturbed by Name-givers too ineffectual to solve their own problems. Many spirits consider themselves so superior to Name-givers that they feel insulted when a Name-giver summons them; a few others relish the idea of exploring a bit of the physical world every now and again. Any spirit may be summoned—even those with the most abrasive personalities—but adepts usually choose to summon spirits with reasonable personalities. Of course, until an adept has summoned one such spirit, he must take what he gets.

SPIRIT STRENGTH RATINGS

Not all spirits are equally powerful. A spirit's Strength rating is a rough measure of its power level in relation to other spirits. The higher a spirit's Strength rating, the more powerful the spirit, both in its base statistics and in the powers at its disposal. Note that a spirit's Strength rating is different from its Strength attribute.

Each increase of a spirit's Strength rating enhances the spirit's attributes and characteristics and grants it additional powers and abilities. Each point of Strength rating grants a spirit the following:

+1 to Spell Defense and Social Defense

+1 to Perception OR Willpower step number

+1 to Strength OR Toughness step number

1 additional spirit power, if allowed (see **Spirit Powers,** below)

+1 to Karma step OR + 10 Karma Points

Note that any time a spirit's Attribute step numbers increase, any corresponding characteristics also increase. For example, if a spirit's Strength step increases, his
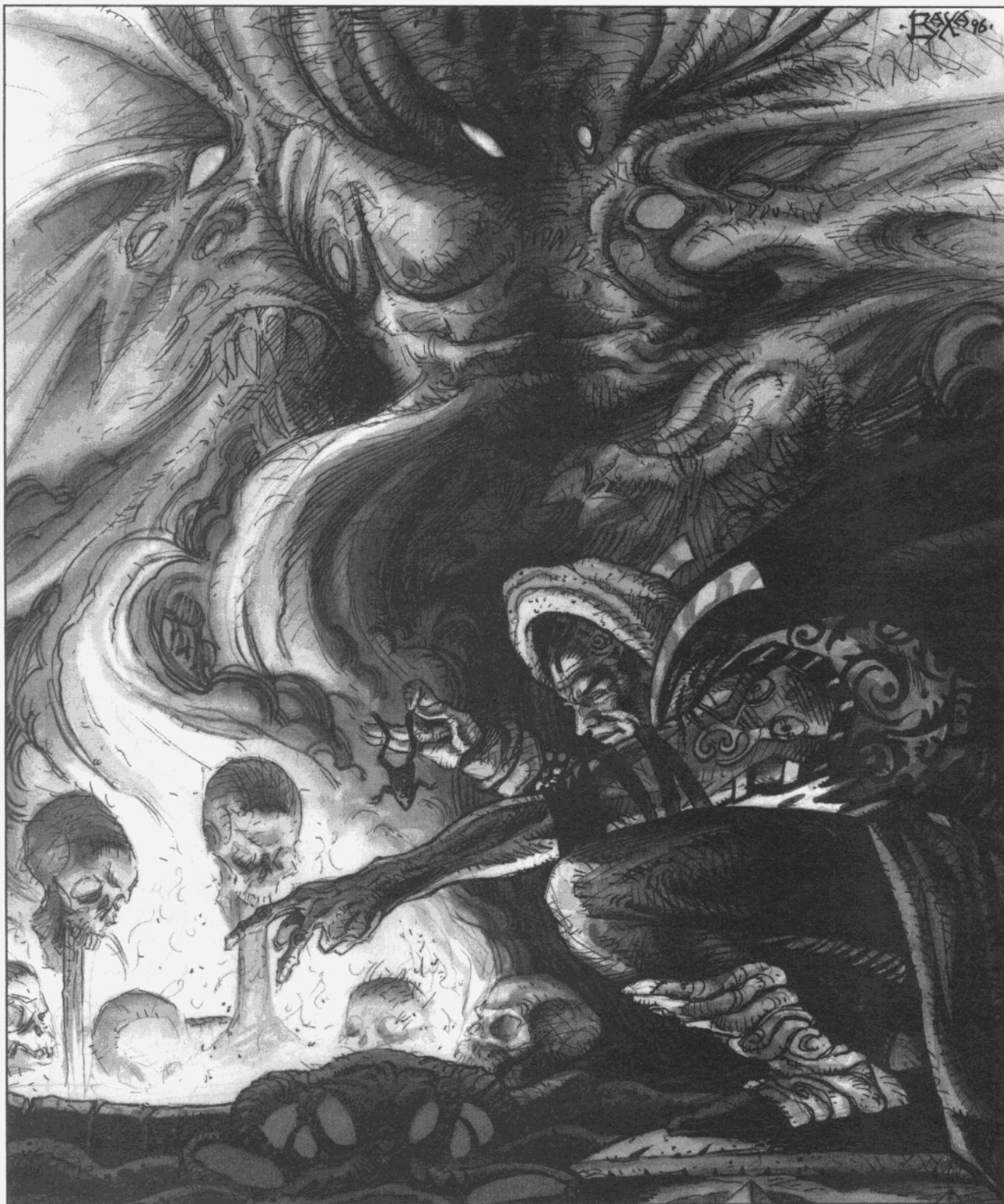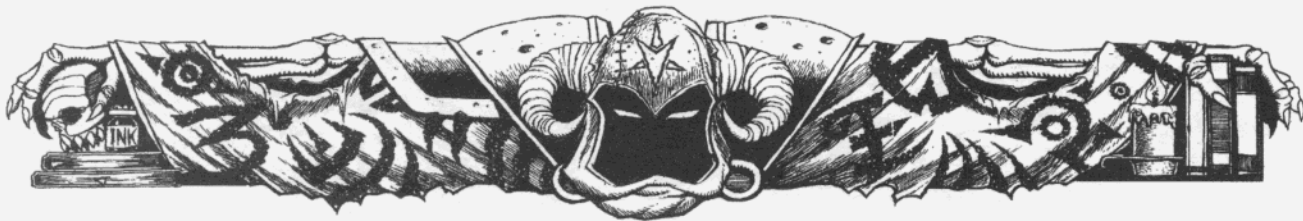
Damage step and Knockdown step increase accordingly. Likewise, each increase in a spirit's Perception also increases the spirit's Spellcasting step. Defense Ratings (Physical, Spell and Social) are an exception to this rule, because they gain direct increases for each increase in Strength.

In addition, specific types of spirits gain additional powers as their Strength rating increases. These additional powers are listed in each spirit type description in this section. Because a spirit's Strength rating directly affects its Spell Defense, summoning spirits of significant Strength ratings can be extremely difficult.

Increasing Spirit Strength Ratings

A spirit's Strength rating can increase in two ways. First, the rating grows as the spirit ages. Second, repeated summonings can increase the rating.

Increases due to age accumulate slowly and account for very little growth in a spirit's Strength rating. Generally, a spirit's Strength rating is related to its age—the older the spirit, the higher its Strength rating. However, the two factors are not always so directly proportional. A 100-year-old spirit may have a Strength rating of only 4 or 5, while a 500-year-old spirit may have a Strength rating higher than 10.

The primary way a spirit's Strength rating increases is through repeated summonings. Whenever a spirit is summoned, the summoner uses magical energy to reach out to the spirit's pattern and draw it toward the summoner. As is the case with most magic use, under ordinary circumstances the magical energy dissipates once the spirit has been summoned. When a specific spirit is summoned repeatedly, however, the spirit learns to recognize that it is being summoned and to absorb a little of the magical energy used in the summoning before the energy dissipates. The vast majority do this to increase their Strength rating in an attempt to eventually become too powerful to be summoned.

Summoners recognize that this phenomenon increases a spirit's Strength and have found a way to avoid it, because a spirit becomes harder to control as its Strength rating increases. **Repeat Summonings**, page 94, provides a special procedure summoners may use to repeatedly summon a spirit without adding to its Strength rating.

SPIRIT POWERS

Ally, elemental and Named spirits may possess a number of special powers, much like the powers of dragons and Horrors. The spirit type descriptions list some of the spirit powers common to these different spirits. As they increase in Strength, spirits may gain new powers as well, as noted in **Spirit Strength Ratings**. Unless a spirit power description states otherwise, ally, elemental and Named spirits may possess that power.

As with dragon and Horror powers, spirits must use a step number to make tests with their powers. Most of these step numbers are based on one of the spirit's Attributes, usually Willpower, and the spirit's Strength rating, so any increase in a spirit's Strength rating also increases the step number it uses to make tests. If the power description does not provide a step number formula, the power has a specific effect that does not require a test.

The following list of spirit powers is not meant to be comprehensive. Gamemasters should feel free to create additional powers for their games.

Aid Summoner

The Aid Summoner power allows a spirit to enhance its summoner's magical abilities. To use this power, the spirit's summoner takes a number of Strain Points equal to the spirit's Strength rating. He takes this Strain all at once, even if it causes a Wound.

After taking this Strain, the summoner can add a number of steps equal to the spirit's Strength rating to any of his magical ability steps for making tests. Eligible magical abilities include talents such as Spellcasting and Willforce. For the duration of this bonus, it may be applied to different abilities. For example, in one round the summoner may boost his Spellcasting talent and in the next he may boost his Willforce talent. However, each time the summoner uses the step bonus he must take 2 additional Strain Points.

Each use of the Aid Summoner power lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength rating.

Astral Portal

The Astral Portal power is available only to ally spirits with a Strength rating of 5 or higher. This power enables a spirit to create a portal through which Namegivers can enter astral space. The spirit must spend a simple action to use the power, and the portal lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength rating multiplied by 10.

Astral Sight
Step Number: Perception step + Strength rating

The Astral Sight power works the same as the talent of the same name (p. 98, **ED**).

Confusion

Step Number: Willpower + Strength rating

The Confusion power is only available to ally spirits. This power enables a spirit to temporarily confuse a target by passing some of its own energy through the target. To use the Confusion power, a spirit makes a Confusion Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, reduce the target's Perception and Willpower step numbers according to the following formula: –1 for an Average success, –2 for a Good success, –3 for an Excellent success, –4 for an Extraordinary success. These reductions also affect all talents based on the reduced attributes.

The effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength rating.

Detect True Element

The Detect True Element power is available to elemental spirits only. This power enables an elemental spirit to detect the presence of its own True element. For example, an air spirit can detect only True air with this power.

Because elemental spirits represent a manifestation of the elemental planes, and because elementalists generally use this power to locate True elements for their own use, these spirits do not like to use the Detect True Element power for their summoners. Coercing an elemental spirit to do so requires a Contest of Wills (p. 94). If the summoner wins the Contest of Wills, the spirit leads the summoner to any source of its True element within a number of miles equal to the spirit's Strength rating. A spirit cannot detect the presence of its True element beyond this range.

Elemental spirits will never aid a summoner in making a Gathering Test. Even losing a Contest of Wills cannot coerce a spirit to violate this principle.

Detect Trap

Step Number: Perception step + Strength rating

The Detect Trap power is available to ally spirits only. This power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name (pp. 101–2, **ED**).

Detect Weapon

Step Number: Perception step + Strength rating

The Detect Weapon power is only available to ally spirits and earth spirits. This power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name (p. 102, **ED**). The Detect Weapon power also enables a spirit to describe the general size, shape and location of the weapon.

Disguise Self

Step Number: Perception step + Strength rating

The Disguise Self power is only available to ally spirits. This power works in the same manner as the talent of the same name (p. 102, **ED**) and allows the spirit to physically manifest in the form of any Name-giver the spirit has seen.

Empathic Sense

Step Number: Charisma step + Strength rating

The Empathic Sense power is only available to ally spirits. The power enables a spirit to retain an empathic connection with its summoner, in much the same manner as the Empathic Sense talent (pp. 104–5, **ED**).

Engulf

Step Number: Willpower step + Strength rating

The Engulf power is available to physically manifested elemental spirits. This power enables an elemental spirit to engulf a victim in its element, causing the victim damage each round. To use the power, an elemental must make a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target is completely engulfed by the appropriate element and takes damage for a number of rounds equal to the spirit's Strength rating.

Each round the victim is engulfed, he takes damage determined by a Damage Test made using the spirit's Engulf step number.

Enrage Element

Step Number: Willpower step + Strength rating

The Enrage Element power is only available to elemental spirits. This power enables an elemental to create a tumultuous whirlwind of its element. For example, earth elementals may create small storms of flying rocks; air elementals may create whirling winds; wood elementals, storms of spinning twigs; fire elementals, showering sparks; and water elementals, hurricane-like waves. The power affects all targets within a radius of a number of yards equal to the spirit's Strength rating. The power's effects last for a number of rounds equal to the spirit's Strength rating.

Make a Damage Test with the spirit's Enrage Element step number to determine the damage the target(s) takes. In addition, any target within the area of effect is considered Harried.

Evil Eye
Step Number: Willpower step + Strength rating

The curselike Evil Eye power is available to ally spirits only. To use the power, a spirit makes an Evil Eye Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, reduce one of the target's Attribute step numbers by 2 steps for a number of hours equal to the spirit's Strength rating. The spirit or its summoner chooses the affected Attribute. A single target can be subjected to only one use of this power at a time.

Find
Step Number: Perception step + Strength rating

The Find power enables a spirit to trace an item to its origin. For example, if a spirit has a lock of hair, it can locate the hair's owner. If it has a piece of a wall, it can locate the building from which the piece came. To use this power, the spirit makes a Find Test against the subject's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit has located the subject.

Haggle
Step Number: Charisma step + Strength rating

The Haggle power works in the same way as the Haggle talent (p. 108, **ED**), except spirits may use the power only when bargaining with a summoner.

Karma

Like dragons and Horrors, spirits can spend 1 Karma Point on any test. Most spirits have a relatively low Karma step number, but the step number increases as the spirit's Strength rating increases.

Lifesense
Step Number: Perception step + Strength rating

Similar to the Lifesight talent (p. 110, **ED**), this power allows a spirit to sense the strength and composition of a character's life force.

Manifest

The Manifest power enables a spirit to manifest in the physical plane. The duration of the manifestation is limited to a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength rating.

Physically manifested ally spirits appear as ghosts or apparitions and remain insubstantial enough to pass through solid objects, including walls, doors and rock. If the object is thicker than 1 yard, however, the spirit becomes lost in the object and requires an extra round per yard to find its way back out.

Physically manifested elemental spirits are called elementals. Rules for these spirit forms are provided in **Elemental Spirits and Elementals**, p. 84.

Manipulate Element

The Manipulate Element power is only available to elemental spirits. This power enables a spirit to change the basic structure of any object composed of the spirit's native element. The area of effect cannot exceed 1 yard in diameter.

For example, an earth elemental can use the Manipulate Element power to turn an area of solid earth into mud or quicksand. An air elemental could make the air in a certain area toxic. A water elemental could turn a pool into solid ice, and a wood elemental could twist a tree into a cage. A fire elemental could make a dying ember burn white-hot or even explode. The gamemaster determines the specific effects of each use of the Manipulate Element power.

The effects of this power last for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength rating.

Possession

Step Number: Willpower + Strength rating

The Possession power is available only to ally spirits with a Strength Rating 5 or higher. This power allows a spirit to temporarily possess and take control of a target's physical body. To use the power, a spirit makes a Possession Test against the victim's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the victim is possessed by the spirit for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength rating. During this time, the target is aware of his body's actions but cannot control them.

Possessed targets may force the spirit out by making a successful Willpower Test against the spirit's Spell Defense.

Remove Element

Step Number: Willpower + Strength rating

The Remove Element power is only available to elemental spirits. This power enables a spirit to remove any trace of its native element from an area no larger than 1 yard in diameter. An earth spirit could use the power to damage a building by removing the dirt around one or more of the building's supporting walls, for example, or a water spirit could remove all the water from a character's body.

To use the power, a spirit makes a Remove Element Test against the target's Spell Defense. When using the power against a Name-giver, a spirit must achieve an Excellent success or better on the test. Any time a spirit successfully uses this power to remove the water or air from a Name-giver's body, the character dies immediately.

Share Knowledge

The Share Knowledge power is only available to elemental spirits. This power allows a spirit to learn general information about any recent activity in, on, or near its native element. For example, an earth spirit may learn that two horses recently passed along a dirt road, a breeze may carry snippets of conversation to an air spirit, or a water spirit may learn that a boat recently passed along a river. The power enables spirits to learn only of events that occurred within a number of hours equal to the spirit's Strength rating.

The gamemaster determines exactly how much information the elemental learns.

Soothe

Step Number: Charisma + Strength rating

The Soothe power is only available to elemental spirits. This power enables a spirit to produce soothing sounds or smells that cause its target to relax. Sounds and smells might include a cool breeze, the sound of a softly gurgling brook, the smell of fresh dirt, the sound of leaves rustling in the wind, or the sound of a crackling fire. To use this power, a spirit makes a Soothe Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the character rests more comfortably. Add 1 step to the target's next Recovery Test.

Spear

Step Number: Strength + Strength rating

The Spear power is only available to elemental spirits. This power allows a physically manifested spirit to form a spear from its elemental essence and throw it at a target. In the case of a water elemental, the spear might take the form of an icicle. For a fire elemental, it might be a flame bolt. An air elemental's spear might appear as a barely visible shimmering that cuts through the air on its way to the target.

To use the power, a spirit makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. Make a Damage Test using the spirit's Spear step number to determine any damage a target takes.

Spells

The Spell power enables spirits to cast spells using raw magic. The spirit's Strength rating determines the Circle of spells it may cast. For example, a Strength 6 ally spirit may cast up to Circle 6 spells. Elemental spirits may only cast spells that deal with their native elements. Generally, ally spirits can cast spells of only one Discipline, though some powerful ally spirits can cast spells of several Disciplines. In the latter case, the sprit must possess a different Spell power for each different Discipline spell type.

When casting spells with this power, spirits are vulnerable to the same Warping and Damage effects as Name-giver magicians, and they run the same risk of becoming Horror-marked. For these reasons, spirits rarely use this power unless a summoner forces to them do so (see **Contest of Wills**, p. 94).

Talents

The Talents power is actually a range of possible powers based on adept talents as described in the **Earthdawn** rulebook and **Earthdawn Companion**. The gamemaster determines whether a talent makes a logical spirit power, based on the type of spirit involved and its Strength rating. Use the talent-based spirit powers described in this section, such as Taunt, as guidelines when creating Talents powers.

Taunt

Step Number: Charisma step + Strength rating

The Taunt power works in the same way as the Taunt talent (p. 118, **ED**), except spirits use it only when bargaining with a summoner.

Temperature

The Temperature power is only available to ally spirits. This power enables spirits to alter the temperature of an area up to 5 yards in diameter. The spirit raises or lowers the temperature enough to disconcert or discomfit characters within the area of effect, but not enough to endanger the characters. Characters or creatures within the area of effect experience difficulty concentrating and suffer a 1-step penalty to any Perception and Willpower tests. The effects of the Temperature power last for a number of minutes equal to the spirit's Strength rating.

TASKED SPIRITS

Tasked spirits are the most common and least dangerous type of spirit encountered in **Earthdawn**. These spirits exist solely to provide specific services for their summoners. They may perform any number of duties, such as dusting, guarding a valuable item, scouting for danger or annoying a specified target. Unlike other types of spirits, tasked spirits commonly manifest in physical form. Most of the time, a tasked spirit's physical appearance is related to the task it performs. For example, tasked spirits may manifest as brooms, mice, shadows or any other form that suits the gamemaster's imagination.

These spirits are summoned by specific spells and/or talents for specific tasks. Examples of tasked spirits include the spirits summoned by the Pocket Guardian spell, the Orbiting Spy talent, and the Spirit Dodge talent. Any adept with the appropriate spell or talent may summon a tasked spirit.

Of all the types of spirits, tasked spirits are the least powerful and easiest to summon. All tasked spirits have a Strength Rating of 1, and their Strength ratings increase only under very unusual occasions. Tasked spirits cannot refuse to obey a summoner and may only provide the services described by the spell or talent used to summon them. Tasked spirits can be banished like any other spirit. However, anyone other than a tasked spirit's summoner must achieve a Good or better success to banish the tasked spirit (see **Banishing**, p. 96).

SUMMONING TASKED SPIRITS

Tasked spirits can be summoned using an appropriate spell or talent. Tasked spirits cannot be summoned with half-magic. Repeat summonings of a specific tasked spirit require a Good or better success and suffer the same penalties incurred when making a repeat summoning of any other type of spirit. Tasked spirits' Strength ratings do not increase when the spirits are summoned in this manner (see **Repeat Summoning**, p. 94).

ELEMENTAL SPIRITS AND ELEMENTALS

Elemental spirits are the astral form of spirits from the elemental planes in astral space. Five types of elemental spirits exist, one for each True element: air, earth, fire, water and wood. Elemental spirits may switch between their astral and physical forms at will, though these spirits are very reluctant to assume physical form and usually must be coerced to do so. Physically manifested elemental spirits are called *elementals*. For example, an elemental air spirit in astral form would be called an air spirit; in its physical form, the same spirit would be called an air elemental. Elementals appear in a multitude of guises, based on the elements they embody. For example, a water elemental may appear as a soft mist, a whirlwind of water, or a quiet pool.

Most elementalists summon elemental spirits to make use of these spirits' powers. Summoned elementals, however, also serve well as champions for magicians who prefer not to fight an opponent themselves. Most elementalists summon these spirits with extreme care and the utmost respect, because these magicians believe the elemental spirits have lived in the elemental planes since before Name-givers walked on the earth. In the view of an elementalist, summoning an elemental spirit is like summoning the sacred elemental planes themselves. Only elementalists may summon elemental spirits.

The following text describes each of the five types of elemental spirits. For explanations of the terms used in each entry, see page 286 of the **Earthdawn** rulebook.

AIR SPIRITS

Air spirits embody the nature of air. Air spirits tend to be extremely perceptive and possess better social skills than any other type of elemental spirit. Most are good-natured as well, but can quickly turn from happy-go-lucky breezes to killer tornadoes when displeased. Most air spirits accept being summoned without complaint or

struggle, and a few occasionally bargain with the summoner to stay longer or to be summoned again. Air spirits prefer to be near the flow of air at all times and become uncomfortable in enclosed spaces.

DEX: 9	STR: 8	TOU: 8
PER: 7	WIL: 8	CHA: 7

Initiative: 12	Physical Defense: 15 (20)*
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 12	Social Defense: 12
Damage: 10	Armor: 7
Number of Spells: 2	Mystic Armor: 8
Spellcasting: 9	Knockdown: 8
Effect: See below	Recovery Tests per Day: 4

Death Rating: 46	Combat Movement: 150
Wound Threshold: 13	Full Movement: 300
Unconsciousness Rating: 39	

Karma Points: 10	Karma Step: 4

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 8, Detect True Element, Engulf 9, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 9

Legend Points: 300
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Notes: *The number in parentheses refers to the spirit's Physical Defense when physically manifested.

All statistics are for a Strength 1 air spirit. Each 1-point increase in an air spirit's Strength rating increases its Dexterity step number and Physical Defense by 1. All standard Strength rating-related increases apply as well. Air spirits also gain 1 additional attack and 1 additional spell for every 2-point increase in their Strength ratings, up to a maximum of 10 attacks and 5 spells.

Air Elementals

Air spirits may take many physical forms. Air elementals have been known to manifest as whirlwinds, soft breezes, or the sound of breathing. Air elementals often assume humanoid faces that appear as wispy, changing visages floating in the midst of their bodies.

Because air can rarely be seen, air elementals may become invisible at will. To use this ability, the air spirit makes a Spellcasting Test. The test result is the Difficulty Number for any character to see the elemental.

EARTH SPIRITS

Earth spirits embody the nature of True earth, the element from which all physical objects arise and to which they return. An earth spirit's nature makes it more attuned to the physical world than any other type of elemental spirit.

Earth spirits tend to be patient and calm. They speak slowly, take their time when thinking through an idea or making a decision, and they perform tasks with diligence and patience. An earth elemental can be unpredictable when angered, but even when in the grip of rage the spirit remains outwardly unemotional, a characteristic that often frustrates a summoner attempting to gauge a spirit's emotional state.

DEX: 8	STR: 10	TOU: 10
PER: 5	WIL: 7	CHA: 5

Initiative: 9	Physical Defense: 15
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 10	Social Defense: 10
Damage: 14	Armor: 10
Number of Spells: 2	Mystic Armor: 5
Spellcasting: 8	Knockdown: 10
Effect: See below	Recovery Tests per Day: 4

Death Rating: 51	Combat Movement: 120
Wound Threshold: 15	Full Movement: 240
Unconsciousness Rating: 44	

Karma Points: 15	Karma Step: 4

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 6, Detect True Element, Engulf 8, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 11

Legend Points: 300
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Notes: All statistics are for a Strength 1 earth spirit. Earth spirits gain 1 additional attack and 1 additional spell for every 2-point increase in their Strength ratings, up to a maximum of 10 attacks and 5 spells. All standard Strength rating-related increases apply as well.

Earth Elementals

Earth elementals require the presence of earth to manifest. This requirement only presents a problem when the elemental attempts to manifest aboard an airship, on

the upper floor of a wooden building, or under other special circumstances. Earth elementals may manifest as pools of mud, large rocks, clods of dirt or in many other forms. Often, these elementals shape themselves into humanoid forms.

While the living manifestation of their element fascinates earth elementals, most of these spirits prefer to remain in the Plane of Earth, surrounded by their True earth. They especially dislike being summoned in water or in the air. They will first attempt to manifest in an outcropping of rock or in dirt, or in a clay pot if no other earthen material is available.

FIRE SPIRITS

Fire is the great destroyer, an element that clears away the old to make room for new growth. While fire is a vital part of the world's natural order, it remains hazardous, unpredictable and often uncontrollable. All of these traits characterize fire spirits and elementals.

Fire spirits have vivid imaginations and are quick to anger. They experience extreme, rapidly changing emotions. Whether a fire spirit is expressing anger, fear, love, hate, disgust, or friendship it does so loudly and forcefully.

DEX: 9	STR: 9	TOU: 9
PER: 7	WIL: 7	CHA: 8

Initiative: 10	Physical Defense: 12 (15)*
Number of Attacks: 2	Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 11	Social Defense: 10
Damage: 12	Armor: 8
Number of Spells: 2	Mystic Armor: 5
Spellcasting: 8	Knockdown: 9
Effect: See below	Recovery Tests per Day: 4

Death Rating: 50	Combat Movement: 130
Wound Threshold: 14	Full Movement: 260
Unconsciousness Rating: 43	

Karma Points: 15	Karma Step: 4

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 8, Detect True Element, Engulf 8, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 10

Legend Points: 300

Equipment: None
Loot: None

Notes: *The number in parentheses is the spirit's Physical Defense when physically manifested. All statistics are for a Strength 1 fire spirit. Each 1-point increase to the fire spirit's Strength rating increases its Dexterity step number and Physical Defense by 1. All standard Strength rating-related increases apply as well. Fire spirits also gain 1 additional attack and 1 additional spell for every 2-point Strength rating increase, up to a maximum of 10 attacks and 5 spells.

Fire Elementals

Fire elementals can only manifest from a source of fire. The size of the source determines the Strength rating of the elemental that manifests. Torches and other small flames may spawn fire elementals of Strength Ratings 1–3. Only campfires and larger sources can produce a fire elemental of Strength Rating 5 or higher.

When they manifest, fire elementals arise from the fire source and assume a roughly humanoid form. An elemental's appearance changes to match its current

emotions. Cozy, crackling flames may form the body of a calm elemental, while an angry elemental may become a blazing inferno. Unlike other elementals, fire elementals do not generally care where they manifest, as long as a source of fire is present.

WATER SPIRITS

Water is ever-changing, fluid, perpetually moving. Water spirits exhibit these characteristics as well, quickly moving from experience to experience with a curiosity and excitement shown by no other type of elemental spirit. Many magicians attribute this curiosity to the broad range of incarnations experienced by water spirits, from the slow, waiting time of ice to the fast-flowing movement of water to the floating airiness of mist.

DEX: 9	**STR:** 8	**TOU:** 8
PER: 8	**WIL:** 8	**CHA:** 7

Initiative: 12	**Physical Defense:** 13
Number of Attacks: 2	**Spell Defense:** 10
Attack: 11	**Social Defense:** 10
Damage: 12	**Armor:** 8
Number of Spells: 2	**Mystic Armor:** 6
Spellcasting: 10	**Knockdown:** 8
Effect: See below	**Recovery Tests per Day:** 4

Death Rating: 46	**Combat Movement:** 125
Wound Threshold: 13	**Full Movement:** 250
Unconsciousness Rating: 39	

Karma Points: 15	**Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 9, Detect True Element, Engulf 9, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 9

Legend Points: 300
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Notes: All statistics are for a Strength 1 water spirit. Each 1-point increase in the spirit's Strength rating increase its Dexterity step number and Physical Defense by 1. Water spirits also gain 1 additional attack and 1 additional spell for every 2-point increase in their Strength ratings, up to a maximum of 10 attacks and 5 spells. All standard Strength rating-related increases apply as well.

Water Elementals

Water elementals can only manifest from a source of water. The size of the water source has no bearing on the Strength rating of the water elemental that may manifest from it. Even a drop of water is sufficient to spawn the mightiest of water spirits.

Often, water elementals change their appearance several times while physically manifest. An elemental may first appear as a large bubble of water floating in midair, then disperse into a fog and finally coalesce into a block of ice. Generally, water elementals do not mind being summoned to the physical plane; they are generally curious beings, as their shifting nature implies.

WOOD SPIRITS

Wood spirits serve a special purpose in the grand scheme of things, because the element of wood holds all the other elements together. Wood sends its roots deep into earth. It draws water through itself. It pulls air in through its pores. It provides fuel for fire, which clears the way for new wood to grow and continue the cycle. Without wood, the harmonious balance of the elements could not exist.

Many magicians find that wood spirits show a high level of self-confidence and wisdom. They attribute these characteristics to wood's ability to store knowledge. They point out that trees collect information through their roots and pores, channel it through their veins and store it in their rings. The wise sayings of wood spirits, though often vague, verge on prophecy.

DEX: 7	**STR:** 8	**TOU:** 8
PER: 8	**WIL:** 8	**CHA:** 7

Initiative: 8	**Physical Defense:** 12
Number of Attacks: 2	**Spell Defense:** 10
Attack: 9	**Social Defense:** 10
Damage: 10	**Armor:** 10
Number of Spells: 2	**Mystic Armor:** 5
Spellcasting: 10	**Knockdown:** 8
Effect: See below	**Recovery Tests per Day:** 4

Death Rating: 46	**Combat Movement:** 120
Wound Threshold: 13	**Full Movement:** 240
Unconsciousness Rating: 39	

Karma Points: 10	**Karma Step:** 4

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 9, Detect True Element, Engulf 9, Manifest, Manipulate Element, Share Knowledge, Spear 9

Legend Points: 300
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Notes: All statistics are for a Strength 1 wood spirit in astral form. Wood spirits gain 1 additional attack and 1 additional spell for every 2-point increase in their Strength ratings, up to a maximum of 10 attacks and 5 spells. All standard Strength rating-related increases apply as well. Statistics for wood elementals vary, as noted in the following description.

Wood Elementals

Wood spirits do not appreciate being forced to manifest. The weakest of the elemental spirits, they prefer to stay in their elemental plane among their own kind, sorting and considering the information they receive from the outside world. They object to being summoned under water or in any other environment where another element shuts them off from the flow of information, and so wood spirits must be coerced to appear by the summoner making a successful Contest of Wills (p. 94).

Wood elementals manifest within trees and plants, usually altering the shape of the tree or plant into a humanoid form with bark skin and leafy appendages. Once an elemental manifests, the tree or plant begins to crumble to dust. For this reason, most elementalists choose relatively young plants into which to summon wood elementals.

The statistics and abilities of a wood elemental are directly based on the plant they inhabit when they manifest. The total of its Attribute values equal the host plant's age (note that the Attribute *values*, not step numbers are used for this calculation). For example, an elemental that manifests in a 90-year-old tree might have the following Attribute values: Dexterity 15, Strength 30, Toughness 25, Perception 5, Willpower 10, and Charisma 5. The gamemaster determines the distribution of values, but the elemental should resemble its host plant. A wood elemental manifested in a tree, for example, should have high Strength and Toughness attributes. An elemental that manifests in a rose should have a higher Charisma attribute.

After determining a wood elemental's Attribute values, use the Attribute Table on page 52 of the **Earthdawn Rulebook** or the Step Conversion Table on the **Earthdawn Gamemaster Screen** to determine the elemen-

tal's Attribute step numbers and other abilities. A wood spirit's Spell and Social Defense ratings remain the same in both astral and physical forms.

The statistics used in the example above represent a Strength 1 wood elemental. Wood elementals receive the same Strength rating-related increases as wood spirits.

GREAT FORM ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

Elemental spirits with Strength ratings of 15 and higher are considered great form elemental spirits, and are usually Named. The difficulties of summoning and controlling such powerful spirits prevent most adepts from ever attempting the feat. When magicians do try to summon such spirits, they usually use ritual magic, because few adepts possess enough power to summon a great form spirit by themselves. Typically, summoners employ the Summon and Summoning Circle talents (see **Summoning by Talent,** p. 92) when calling up great form spirits. These spirits may also be summoned with the use of half-magic.

Any great form elemental spirit that breaks free from its summoner by winning a Contest of Wills is likely to wreak havoc in order to express its displeasure at being summoned before returning to its native astral habitat.

SUMMONING ELEMENTAL SPIRITS

Except for great form elemental spirits, all elemental spirits can be summoned only by elementalists using half-magic. When summoning an elemental spirit, the adept must first decide the type and Strength rating of the spirit he wishes to summon. Then, the adept must make a half-magic Summoning Test against the spirit's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit is summoned and arrives a moment later in astral space. The adept must use either the Elemental Tongues talent or Plant Talk spell to communicate with the summoned spirit.

If the adept wants the spirit to possess any specific powers besides the standard powers of the spirit type, increase the test Difficulty Number by 2 for each additional power.

Elemental Spirits and Names

Most elemental spirits have Names. Elemental spirits need not be summoned as Named spirits, however, and cannot be forced to reveal their Names.

Summoning an elemental spirit as a Named spirit provides the summoner with greater control and power over the spirit, a benefit most elementalists feel is worth the extra difficulties the method presents. See **Summoning by Talent,** page 92, for more information.

ALLY SPIRITS

Nethermancers summon ally spirits when they need an astral ally or servant. In this respect, ally spirits resemble tasked spirits, but allies are much more powerful and versatile because their existence is not tied to the completion of a specific task. Ally spirits may assume astral or physical forms, but generally prefer to remain in their astral incarnations. When they do physically manifest, ally spirits appear as ghosts or apparitions. They never take on truly solid physical forms, but they can attack and be attacked by physical beings.

Individual ally spirits may vary widely. Some are astral denizens of the netherworlds, while others are the spirits of deceased Name-givers. A nethermancer never knows which type of ally spirit will arrive when he summons one, and most ally spirits prefer to reveal as little about themselves as possible.

The gamemaster determines the exact powers and abilities that a summoned ally spirit possesses, though nethermancers may specify services they want an ally to perform. In these cases, the spirit's powers and abilities generally reflect the type of service. For example, a spirit that is summoned to meld with a Name-giver will have the Possession power. An ally spirit summoned to aid a nethermancer in combat will have relatively high physical statistics, or perhaps specific combat-related abilities. A spirit summoned to aid a nethermancer in ritual magic or spellcasting will likely have relatively high Perception and Willpower step numbers.

Alternatively, nethermancers may summon allies with specific powers and abilities, as noted in the following section.

SUMMONING ALLY SPIRITS

When summoning an ally spirit, a nethermancer first decides the spirit's Strength rating and the type of service he wants it to perform. Then he makes a half-magic Summoning Test against the Spell Defense of the spirit. If the test succeeds, the spirit arrives a moment later in astral space. The nethermancer must use the Spirit Talk talent to communicate with the spirit.

If the nethermancer decides to request specific powers or abilities for the ally spirit, increase the test Difficulty Number by the number of requested powers or abilities. For example, if a nethermancer wants to summon a Strength 4 ally spirit with a Spellcasting step of at least 13, the Difficulty Number is 14 (1 for the specific power, plus 13 for the spirit's Spell Defense).

Ally Spirits and Names

Most ally spirits have Names, but they cannot be forced to reveal them.

Summoning an ally spirit as a Named spirit provides the summoner with greater control and power over the spirit. See **Summoning by Talent**, page 92 for more information.

Strength 1 Ally Spirit

These statistics represent a Strength 1 ally spirit summoned to provide a variety of services. The spirit possesses powers common to all ally spirits. Note that this is only one possible configuration of a Strength 1 ally spirit. Gamemasters should feel free to determine the powers of ally spirits to suit their games and campaign.

DEX: 8	STR: 7	TOU: 8
PER: 8	WIL: 8	CHA: 7

Initiative: 9	Physical Defense: 12 (15)*
Number of Attacks: 1	Spell Defense: 10
Attack: 9	Social Defense: 10
Damage: 10	Armor: 10
Number of Spells: 2	Mystic Armor: 5
Spellcasting: 10	Knockdown: 8
Effect: See below	Recovery Tests per Day: 4

Death Rating: 46	Combat Movement: 120
Wound Threshold: 13	Full Movement: 240
Unconsciousness Rating: 39	

Karma Points: 10	Karma Step: 4

Powers: Aid Summoner, Astral Sight 9, Empathic Sense 8, Lifesense 9, Manifest

Legend Points: 300
Equipment: None
Loot: None

Notes: *The number in parentheses refers to the spirit's Physical Defense when physically manifested. Ally spirits gain 1 additional spell and 1 additional attack for every 2-point increase in their Strength ratings, up to a maximum of 5 attacks and 5 spells. All standard Strength rating-related increases apply as well.

Assigning Ally Spirit Powers

Ally spirits do not gain powers in any specific order or priority. Gamemasters may, however, use the

Strength Rating	Powers
2–4	Confusion, Detect Trap, Detect Weapon, Disguise Self, Spells
5–6	Astral Portal, Find, Possession, Taunt, Temperature
7+	Evil Eye

suggested guidelines in the Ally Spirit Powers Table when assigning powers to allies as their Strength ratings increase. Note that these suggestions apply to ally spirits only.

NAMED SPIRITS

Often the target of nethermantic summoning, Named spirits can be important sources of knowledge of past myths, tales and legends. Though not the most powerful of spirits, Named spirits can only be summoned by use of the Summon talent (p. 39, **ED Companion**).

Like Name-givers, Named spirits have true patterns, and an adept must acquire and weave a thread to one of a spirit's pattern items to summon a Named spirit. Obtaining a Named spirit's pattern items is a difficult and involved process that may require journeys into astral space and the netherworlds. Because of these potential difficulties, adepts usually only summon a Named spirit when no other spirit will fit their needs. For example, a powerful Named spell (see **Spell Magic,** p. 36) might require the presence of a specific Named spirit. Adepts also may summon Named spirits in order to use the spirit's powers or abilities. For example, a nethermancer studying an ancient ork weapon may summon the spirit of the legendary ork weaponsmith Rugaah Glok to aid his research.

TYPES OF NAMED SPIRITS

Both ally and elemental spirits may be Named, though tasked spirits are never Named. Named ally spirits are almost always the spirits of deceased Name-giver adepts, sometimes referred to as Name-giver spirits. On very rare occasions, a nethermancer may learn the Name of and obtain a pattern item belonging to a spirit native to the netherworlds.

Nethermancers most often summon Name-giver spirits. Usually, these spirits are adepts with knowledge and experience that can greatly help their summoners. If summoned for a sufficient amount of time, Name-giver spirits can serve as instructors for their summoners and help

them advance in their Disciplines. This use of Name-giver spirits is similar to the use of ghost masters (pp. 225–26, **ED**). Training in a Discipline requires at least 40 hours of time, so Named spirits used in this way must remain in service for at least that long. Ideally, the spirit would remain in service for at least 3 days, however, because Discipline training is most effective when the student rests at least 8 hours a day. It is possible to summon a Named spirit for such extended periods of time, but doing so requires the use of blood magic (see **Blood Magic and Summoning,** p. 96).

Summoning Named elemental spirits remains an extremely difficult proposition for most elementalists, chiefly because obtaining a pattern item of such a spirit is nearly impossible. According to legends, Barsaivians frequently encountered Named elementals before the Scourge, and some tales even speak of small cities summoning such elemental spirits to help build their kaers and citadels. If such tales are true, recovering pattern items of these elemental spirits and then summoning them seems possible.

Named Spirit Powers and Strength

The powers of specific Named spirits are determined by the spirit's type (ally or elemental) and Strength rating. Most Named spirits have several of the powers available to spirits of their type and possess Strength ratings of 8 or higher. The Strength rating of a Name-giver spirit always equals or exceeds the Circle of the Name-giver from whom the spirit descends. Most Named elemental spirits are great form elemental spirits—they have Strength ratings of 15 or higher.

Ghost Masters

While most adepts train with living tutors, some adepts—usually nethermancers—seek Discipline training from a unique form of Named spirits known as ghost masters. Ghost masters are the spirits of deceased Name-givers who achieved mastery of their Discipline before dying. When summoned via the Ritual of the Ghost Master (p. 226, **ED**), these spirits can help adepts advance in their Disciplines by providing training and instruction in the same way as living instructors.

Adepts may also summon ghost masters as Named ally spirits per standard rules. When summoned as a
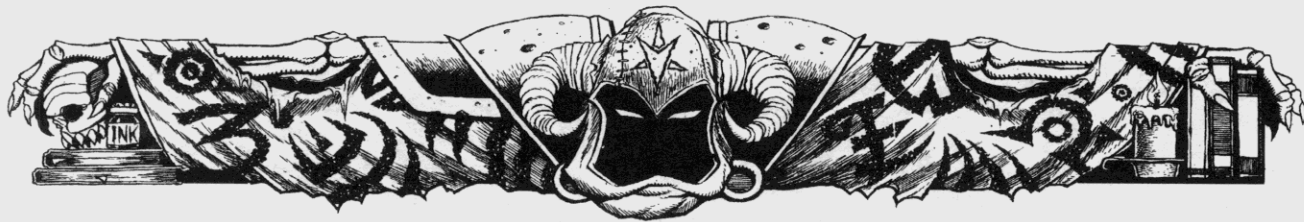
Named spirit, a ghost master can use any of its powers and abilities.

CONTROLLING A NAMED SPIRIT

Though difficult to summon, Named spirits are sometimes easier to control than other powerful spirits because the summoner possesses at least one of the spirit's pattern items and has woven a thread to the item. Add the rank of this thread to the summoner's Willpower (or Willforce) step number for any Contest of Wills he makes against the spirit. Apply the same bonus to the step number of the summoner's Charisma, Bargain with Summoned Creature talent or other talent he uses when bargaining with the spirit (see **A More Friendly Approach**, p. 94).

A nethermancer has obtained a pattern item of a Strength 8 Named ally spirit, and the adept has woven a Rank 4 thread to the pattern item. The nethermancer summons the spirit and orders it to open a portal into astral space. The spirit, a native to astral space and the netherworlds, refuses to comply with its summoner's orders. The nethermancer decides to challenge the spirit to a Contest of Wills to force it to do as he wishes. The Rank 4 thread he has woven to the spirit's pattern item gives the nethermancer a +4 step bonus to his Willforce when making the test for the contest.

Name-givers as Named Spirits

When Name-givers enter astral space, they become subject to the same laws as other residents of astral space. This means that a Name-giver traveling in astral space may be summoned. To do so, an adept must use the Summon talent to summon the Name-giver's spirit as though it were a Named spirit. A summoned Name-giver appears in astral space near

the summoner and is bound to serve the summoner as any other summoned spirit. For more information about Name-givers in astral space, see **Astral Space**, p. 64.

SUMMONING NAMED SPIRITS

Named spirits can only be summoned using the Summon talent (p. 39, **ED Companion**). Elementalists can summon only Named elemental spirits with this talent, while nethermancers can summon only Named ally spirits. Repeated summonings of a particular Named spirit may increase the spirit's Strength rating (see **Increasing Spirit Strength Ratings**, p. 80).

SUMMONING IN EARTHDAWN

This section describes the **Earthdawn** talents, spells and abilities used for summoning spirits, as well as related talents and spells. The section also provides new rules that enable elementalists and nethermancers to use half-magic to summon spirits, and information on banishing and controlling spirits and related topics.

Adepts may summon spirits in three ways—with spells, talents or half-magic. Regardless of the method used, the actual test made to summon a spirit is called the Summoning Test. When summoning with a spell, the Spellcasting Test is the Summoning Test. When using a talent, the Talent Test becomes the Summoning Test. When using half-magic, the Half-Magic Test is the Summoning Test.

The types of spirits an adept may summon with each method are described in the following sections, as well as in the descriptions of each spirit type.

SUMMONING BY SPELL

Earthdawn contains a number of spells used to summon tasked spirits, such as Pocket Guardian, Porter, Pack Bags and others. Any adept may summon spirits with these spells, provided the appropriate spell is available in his Discipline.

When summoning using spells, the Spellcasting Test is considered the Summoning Test. If the spell requires a Willforce Test as well, both tests are considered Summoning Tests. A failure on either test may trigger the effects described in **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 95.

Related Spells

In addition to spells used to summon tasked spirits, **Earthdawn** contains a number of related spells used to control, communicate with and manipulate spirits, other astral entities, and astral space.

Astral Materialization (p. 80, **ED Companion**) is an illusionist spell that enables the user to force a spirit or entity to physically manifest for a duration of 1 hour. During this hour, the entity is under the illusionist's control, unless it can make a successful Willpower Test against the illusionist's Willforce step number. The Astral Materialization spell can be used on spirits summoned by other magicians, as well as Horrors and other astral creatures. The spell is so strong that it even works on spirits that cannot normally manifest physically.

Horror Call (p. 182, **ED**) is a nethermancer summoning spell that only works on Horrors. To use the spell, a nethermancer must know the Horror's Name. The spell summons the Horror into a protective circle.

Plant Talk (p. 159, **ED**) enables elementalists to communicate with plant and wood spirits. The Plant Talk spell does not work with other types of elementals or spirits.

Restrain Entity (p. 182, **ED**) enables nethermancers to restrain undead beings, Horrors and Horror constructs. The spell also works against physically manifested spirits. The Restrain Entity spell makes a good backup for nethermancers summoning Named spirits with the Summon and Summoning Circle talents (pp. 39–40, **ED Companion**).

Restrain Horror (p. 181, **ED**) enables nethermancers to restrain Horrors.

Spirit Portal (p. 182, **ED**) is a nethermancer spell that creates a gateway to astral space, enabling Name-givers and other physical creatures to enter the astral realm. Astral creatures and spirits also can use the gateway to enter the physical world. Passing through the portal created by this spell alters the form (astral or physical) of a character or creature.

SUMMONING BY TALENT

In addition to spells, **Earthdawn** contains a number of talents used to summon tasked spirits. These talents include the Orbiting Spy, Spirit Dodge and Spirit Mount talents, all of which are described in the **Earthdawn** rulebook.

Two other talents—Summon and Summoning Circle—may be used by nethermancers and elementalists to summon Named ally and elemental spirits.

When summoning with talents, the Talent Test is the Summoning Test, and so failed Talent Tests may trigger the effects described in **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 95.

Summon and Summoning Circle Talents

The Summon talent enables nethermancers and elementalists to summon Named ally and elemental spirits. To use this talent, the adept must first acquire a pattern item of the spirit and weave a thread to the item. These tasks alone may be extremely difficult, as many Named spirits exist only in astral space and have few or no pattern items.

The Summoning Circle talent enables an adept to create a protective circle to contain a summoned spirit. To use this talent, the adept must first acquire a pattern item of the spirit and weave a thread to the item.

For complete rules on using the Summon and Summoning Circle talents, see pp. 39–40, **ED Companion.**

Related Talents

Earthdawn also contains a number of related talents that enable adepts to bargain and communicate with, contain and strike at spirits.

The **Bargain with Summoned Creature** talent (pp. 24–25, **ED Companion**) enables nethermancers and elementalists to persuade or convince spirits or other astral entities they have summoned to carry out the summoner's wishes. If an adept does not possess this high-Circle talent, he must use his Charisma attribute when bargaining with summoned spirits.

Spirit Talk (p. 117, **ED**) is a nethermancer talent that allows an adept to talk with spirits. The talent works on spirits that are summoned or detected using other means.

The **Elemental Tongues** talent (p. 104, **ED**) enables elementalists to speak with any air, earth, fire or water elemental spirit. To speak with wood or plant spirits, however, an elementalist must use the Plant Talk spell (p. 159, **ED**).

The **Spirit Hold** talent (p. 116, **ED**) allows a nethermancer to restrain any spirit, astral entity, undead creature or Horror construct. When restrained with this talent, a target cannot take any action other than to communicate. This talent works equally well against astral or physically manifested spirits and may be used to hold spirits before they are trapped into the patterns of magical items (see **Spirit Trapping,** p. 47 in **Enchanting**). Most spirits resent being restrained by this spell, however, and they will initiate a Contest of Wills (p. 94) against adepts who attempt to use it.

The **Elemental Hold** talent (p. 104, **ED**) enables elementalists to restrain elemental spirits and elementals and works in the same way as Spirit Hold.

The **Spirit Strike** talent (p. 117, **ED**) allows an adept on the physical plane to strike at opponents in astral space, including spirits. This talent is especially effective when combined with talents such as Spirit Hold or Elemental Hold. Spirits that are unable to attack physical targets generally retreat when confronted by an adept using this talent, but such spirits often seek revenge in other ways.

The **Netherwalk** talent (p. 34, **ED Companion**) enables a nethermancer to send his own spirit into astral space. The nethermancer's spirit takes on the properties of a typical spirit in astral space, but retains all of the nethermancer's talents and spells. While in astral space, the nethermancer's spirit may interact with spirits and other entities.

SUMMONING BY HALF-MAGIC

Though **Earthdawn** contains many different summoning-related spells and talents, these spells and talents summon only specific types of spirits. The Half-Magic Summoning ability, however, enables nethermancers and elementalists to summon a much broader range of spirits. When using this ability, nethermancers may summon any ally spirit. Elementalists may use it to summon any elemental spirit.

Unlike most uses of half-magic, the Half-Magic Summoning ability is learned as a specific ability. Both nethermancers and elementalists learn the ability at Fifth Circle. The step number for the Summoning Test equals the magician's Willpower step plus his Half-Magic step (divide the character's Circle by 2 and round up). The test's Difficulty Number is the spirit's Spell Defense.

To determine how long the spirit remains, the summoner makes a Willforce Test. The result equals the number of minutes the spirit remains. The summoner may increase this duration by using blood magic. By taking a number of Strain Points equal to his Wound Threshold, the summoner can increase the duration to a number of hours equal to the Willforce result. If the summoner physically inflicts a Wound on himself, the duration is increased to a number of days equal to the Willforce result., though the Wound cannot be healed for a year and a day.

Half-magic may not be used to summon Named spirits, but nethermancers and elementalists may use it when banishing spirits (see **Banishing,** p. 96).

HOW SUMMONING WORKS

The preceding sections provide specific rules for the three different methods of summoning used in Earthdawn—by spell, talent or half-magic. This section provides information on the forms of summoned spirits and the services they may perform, and a new means of controlling spirits called the Contest of Wills.

The Spirit's Form

When summoned, spirits usually arrive in their astral forms. They remain in astral space near the summoner, who may call on them for services for the duration of the summoning. Some tasked spirits manifest automatically when summoned, but generally most summoned spirits must be coerced before they will assume physical form.

Spirit Services

Once an adept has summoned a spirit, he can call on it to perform services. When the summoned spirit is an ally, elemental or Named spirit, the success level of the Summoning Test determines the number of services the spirit will perform for the summoner. On an Average success the spirit performs 1 service; on a Good success the spirit performs 2 services; an Excellent success yields 3 services; and an Extraordinary success, 4 services. The specific spell or talent used to summon a tasked spirit determines the service the spirit performs.

Spirit services may include anything from helping the summoner perform a task to enhancing the summoner's abilities. **Spirit Powers** (p. 80) lists a number of typical abilities that spirits may use when providing services.

A summoned spirit will perform services only for the duration of the summoning. If the summoner does not use all the spirit's services before the summoning duration expires, those services are lost. However, a summoner may use a Contest of Wills to coerce a spirit to perform more services than those granted by the Summoning Test.

Spirits normally perform the services demanded by their summoners with little or no resistance. Some spirits may argue or debate the merits of some services, but rarely do they outright refuse. In some instances, however, spirits may refuse to perform services that pose a threat to them. For example, a fire elemental may refuse to manifest inside a boat on a lake. In these instances, the summoner may use a Contest of Wills to try to force the spirit to perform the service.

Contest of Wills

Occasionally summoners need to coerce summoned spirits to perform services. Such instances include coercing additional services from a summoned spirit or forcing a spirit to perform services against its will. In these cases, the summoner may impose his will on the spirit by defeating the spirit in a Contest of Wills.

In a Contest of Wills, the summoner and the spirit both make Willpower Tests (summoners can use Willforce for this test). Whoever achieves the highest result wins the contest. Both spirits and summoners can use Karma on this test. If the summoner prevails, the spirit must comply with his wishes. If the spirit wins, it may refuse the summoner's request.

Any spirit that defeats a summoner in a Contest of Wills may attempt to break free of the summoner's control by winning another Contest of Wills. If the spirit wins the second contest, it breaks free of the summoner. It may simply return to its astral home, or it may exact revenge from (or perhaps just cause mischief for) the summoner. The gamemaster determines the response of a freed spirit, based on the spirit's personality, the summoner's treatment of it and any past dealings it has had with the summoner.

A More Friendly Approach

Summoners may also attempt to persuade reluctant spirits to perform services. In general, persuading a spirit to do the summoner's bidding is more difficult than defeating a spirit in a Contest of Wills, but a successful attempt at persuasion is less likely to anger the spirit in question.

An adept who wishes to persuade a spirit makes a Charisma-based Half-Magic Test against the spirit's Social Defense. If the test succeeds, the spirit grants the adept's request.

Adepts can also use other social talents against spirits, but because these talents are intended for use against Name-givers, their effectiveness against spirits is somewhat limited. For this reason, any Haggle or other social talent test made to persuade a spirit requires a Good or better success against the spirit's Social Defense.

In addition, high-Circle elementalists and nethermancers may use the Bargain with Summoned Creature talent to persuade spirits (pp. 24–25, **ED Companion**). This talent is designed especially for use against spirits, so its effective use does not require a Good or better success.

REPEAT SUMMONING

Normally, standard summoning methods do not allow an adept to choose the individual spirit a summoning will produce (except in the case of Named spirits). But an adept can summon a spirit he has summoned previously. To do so, the adept must make the appropriate Summoning Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the spirit's Spell Defense plus 1. This Difficulty Number increase is cumulative, so an adept summoning a specific spirit for a third time would make the test against the spirit's Spell Defense plus 2. A fourth summoning attempt would be made against the spirit's Spell Defense plus 3, and so on. (For this purpose, players and
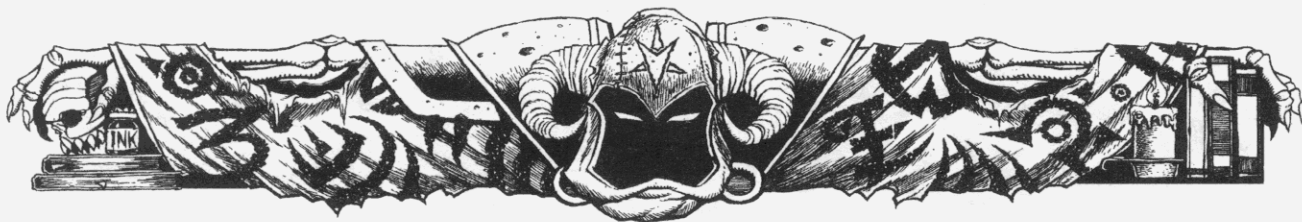
gamemasters should keep track of the number of times each player summons a specific spirit.)

If the Summoning Test is successful, the desired spirit appears. On a Good or better success, the spirit's Strength rating does not increase. However, on an Average success, the spirit's Strength rating increases by 1. This means the spirit will be more powerful and also harder to summon in the future.

The elementalist Karel Longstride wishes to summon a Strength 3 earth spirit. Previously, Karel had received great help from a specific earth spirit, so he decides to summon that spirit again. The spirit's Spell Defense is 12, so Karel must make his Summoning Test against a Difficulty Number 13 (spirit's Spell Defense plus 1 for a second summoning). He achieves a Good success on the test, so the spirit is summoned and its Strength rating remains the same.

DANGERS OF SUMMONING

Any time an adept attempts to summon or banish a spirit, he exposes himself to the hazards of astral space. Generally, the spells, talents and half-magic process used for summoning protect the adept from these hazards, but only when they work as designed. Any failed Summoning Test or banishing attempt may cause an adept damage or worse.

Summoning and Banishing Test failures fall into two groups: normal failures and catastrophic failures. A normal failure occurs when an adept's Summoning or Banishing Test yields a Poor result or lower. A catastrophic failure occurs when a Summoning or Banishing Test dice roll yields all 1s.

Common effects of both types of failures are described in the following sections. However, gamemasters should feel free to create new and nasty effects, based on the specific summoning failure.

Normal Failure

Most commonly, normal failures cause an astral backlash that injures the adept in a way similar to effects of casting raw magic. The type of astral region in which the failed summoning attempt took place can affect the amount of damage the adept suffers. To determine the damage caused by the backlash, use the **Warping and Damage** rules, pp. 155–56, **ED**. Calculate the damage step number by consulting the Raw Magic Table (p. 156, **ED**); substitute the spirit's Strength rating for the spell Circle on the Damage Step column of the table. Mystic armor protects against this type of damage.

Alternatively, a normal failure may cause the adept to receive a minor curse (see **Curses**, p. 211–12, **ED**). The adept automatically receives the curse (no test is needed), and the gamemaster determines the curse's effects. Possible curse effects include increased difficulty when summoning spirits or casting spells associated with the type of spirit and increased difficulty when using a specific type of magic.

Catastrophic Failure

Catastrophic failures commonly result in the adept receiving a major curse or even a Horror curse. The gamemaster determines the effects of the curse, based on the type of spirit the adept attempted to summon. Alternatively, the summoning attempt may produce a spirit the adept was not trying to summon. Such spirits are not bound to perform services or obey the summoner, and they may even attack the summoner and any nearby companions.

The catastrophic failure may also summon a Horror, which may launch a direct attack against the adept and his companions or use one or more of its powers, such as Horror Mark. The gamemaster determines the nature and power of the Horror, based on the Strength rating of the spirit the adept intended to summon. For example, a failed attempt to summon a Strength 1 air spirit might summon a kreescra or crystal entity. A failed attempt to summon a Strength 7 ally spirit, on the other hand, might arouse the attention of a Named Horror such as Taint or Ysrthgrathe.

BANISHING

Tasked spirits can be banished with the Dispel Magic spell (p. 183, **ED**) or half-magic. For tasked spirits summoned by spells, the Dispel Difficulty is based on the spell's Circle; for spirits summoned by talents, the Dispel Difficulty is based on the talent rank (see **Dispel Magic**, p. 43 in **Spell Magic**).

Elemental, ally and Named spirits can be banished only by using half-magic. When using this method, an adept makes a Willpower-based Half-Magic Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the spirit's Spell Defense. If the adept is banishing a spirit he has summoned, add a 3-step bonus for the test. Elementalist magicians attempting to banish elemental spirits and nethermancers attempting to banish ally spirits need only achieve Average or better successes to banish a spirit to its normal astral habitat. However, elementalists must achieve Excellent or better successes to banish ally spirits, and nethermancers must achieve Excellent or better successes to banish elemental spirits. Failed Banishing Tests trigger the same effects as failed Summoning Tests.

Named spirits are banished in the same manner as elemental and ally spirits without Names.

In some cases, a banished spirit may take offense and retaliate against the banisher.

Note that these banishing methods do not work on Horrors or Horror constructs.

BLOOD MAGIC AND SUMMONING

Like other uses of magic, summoning can be augmented by the use of blood magic. In the case of summoning by spells or talents, blood magic can be used to augment Spellcasting and Talent tests (see **Pushing Talents and Abilities**, p. 10 in **Blood Magic**). An adept may also use blood magic to increase his Half-Magic Summoning step number in the same way as for a talent.

Using blood magic during summoning does entail additional risks, however. If a blood magic-assisted Summoning Test yields a result of all 1s, the summoning adept suffers more severe consequences than normal (see **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 95).

Adepts may also use blood magic to extend the duration of half-magic summonings of elemental spirits and ally spirits (see **Summoning by Half-Magic**, p. 93).

OTHER TYPES OF MAGIC

In **Other Types of Magic,** the discussion moves away from the most prominent forms of magic in **Earthdawn** to describe less common types of magic. These include ritual magic, divination magic, rules for acquiring familiars and a new magician Discipline, the shaman.

RITUAL MAGIC

Whenever two or more adepts work together to perform magic, they are performing ritual magic. They may be performing spell or thread magic, enchanting an object, summoning a spirit—the specific form of magic they use does not matter. As long as two or more are working together to perform a single act of magic, they are using ritual magic.

Most acts of ritual magic are more powerful and significant than standard uses of magic. Often, they are elaborate, complex spells that require the combined efforts of a number of magicians. This section describes the basic rules that govern ritual magic, as well as a number of ways to use ritual magic in **Earthdawn.**

Gamemasters should exercise caution when allowing characters to use ritual magic in their **Earthdawn** games. Ritual magic enables characters to perform acts of magic well beyond their normal capabilities, and it can easily destroy the balance of a game. Ritual magic should be rare in most **Earthdawn** campaigns and most often employed by gamemaster characters rather than player characters, as it makes an excellent dramatic device.

RITUAL MAGIC BASICS

The basic characteristic shared by all forms of ritual magic is that it is a time-consuming, complex process. Most magic rituals involve a number of steps that must be performed in a certain order. In the case of ritual spells, for example, these steps might include weaving each thread, making a Spellcasting Test, and making an Effect Test. Each step of a magic ritual requires a specific amount of time that cannot be reduced in any way and that may range from an hour to a year and a day. Most of the time involved in ritual magic must be devoted to preparation: the last step of any ritual is the talent or ability test that the adept makes to perform the magic, such as the Spellcasting Test, the Summoning Test or the Enchantment Test.

Beyond the single common factor of time, ritual magic can be defined differently according to each type of magic. In general, however, most uses of ritual magic require two or more participants, a ritual leader, and some method of pooling the abilities of the participants to increase the power of the magic being performed.

Nearly all uses of ritual magic involve a group of two or more adepts working together to perform an act of magic. Though the exact number is not important, practical considerations may limit the number of adepts who can participate in a single ritual.

One member of the group must act as the ritual leader. This character makes the appropriate tests for the ritual. Usually, the ritual leader is the most experienced adept participating in the ritual, but in some cases a less-experienced or lower-Circle character may lead a ritual, especially if the ritual holds special significance for him. The remainder of the participants are considered ritual supporters. These supporters aid the leader when he makes the necessary tests for the ritual.

To offer any boost to the ritual leader's magical abilities, the supporters must first establish a magical link to him. They may do this in two ways. First, they may use the Talent Linking knack (see **Thread Weaving Knacks,** p. 26 in **Thread Magic**), though this method has some limits. All the supporters must be followers of the same Discipline as the ritual leader, all the supporters must possess the talent they want to enhance, and only three supporters may link themselves to the leader at any one time. Supporters can use a form of "pyramid" support to get around this second limit, though. To form a pyramid, three supporters use the Talent Linking knack to boost another supporter, who in turn joins with two other supporters to boost another, and so on up to the ritual leader. The maximum number of adepts that may join a pyramid is limited only by the number of adepts available and the amount of Strain they can sustain. The Talent Linking knack cannot be used to enhance an adept's use of half-magic.

Supporters may also use blood magic to magically link themselves with a ritual leader. In this method, each supporter inflicts a Wound on himself by cutting himself and taking a number of Damage Points equal to his Wound Threshold (such Wounds cannot be healed for a year and a day). Then, each supporter makes a Willpower

Test against the ritual leader's Spell Defense (ritual leaders may voluntarily lower their Spell Defense for these tests). If the test succeeds, a link is established between the supporter and the leader. Each link grants the ritual leader a +1 step bonus to the ability he is using for the ritual.

When using blood magic for ritual spellcasting, the supporter may choose to enhance either the leader's Thread Weaving, Spellcasting or Willforce talent. Any number of supporters may link themselves in this way, and they need not be of the same Discipline as the ritual leader or even adepts.

Blood magic links can also be used to enhance Half-Magic Tests used for enchanting, summoning and other such activities. However, the Talent Linking knack and blood magic cannot be used during the same magical ritual.

The blood magic method is not without drawbacks. Maintaining the link costs a supporter 1 point of Strain damage per round. Additionally, the ritual leader suffers Strain based on the number of supporters who aid him. For every 5 supporters, the ritual leader takes 1 point of Strain. The leader takes this damage all at once, immediately before he makes the necessary tests for the ritual.

RITUAL SPELL MAGIC

The most common use of ritual magic is for spell magic. In fact, all Circle 13 through 15 spells are cast as ritual spells because these Named spells can create significant and permanent changes in the world (see **High-Circle Spells**, p. 37 in **Spell Magic**). Examples of Named spells include the Ritual of the Thorns that corrupted the Elven Court and the spell that transported Parlainth into astral space before the Scourge. Ritual spell magic can also be used to cast spells of Circles 1 through 12, which allows the casting adept to produce dramatically powerful effects for even the most low-key spells.

Spells Cast as Rituals

Certain spells described as ritual magic in previous **Earthdawn** products do not require the use of ritual magic as described here. Though spells such as Create Life or Alter Life may be cast by a single magician (rather than a group), these spells require significantly more casting time than standard spells. For this reason, these spells are known as ritual spells.

Though a single magician may cast such spells, groups of magicians may join together and cast them as ritual magic. To do so, supporters simply use the Talent Linking knack or blood magic to enhance any Spellcasting and Thread Weaving tests the spellcaster makes to cast the spell.

RITUAL SUMMONING AND BANISHING

Both elementalist and nethermancer guilds frequently use ritual magic to summon and banish great form elemental and Named ally spirits.

When a group uses ritual magic to summon and banish spirits, the ritual leader makes all Summoning Tests, Banishing Tests, and Contests of Wills. Supporters can enhance the ritual leader's abilities during any of these tests.

When the ritual leader is summoning or banishing using a talent, supporters can use the Talent Linking knack if they possess the talent the ritual leader is using. Otherwise, they must use blood magic in order to enhance the ritual leader's abilities.

When a ritual leader is using half-magic for summoning and banishing, supporters must use blood magic to enhance his tests.

If the ritual leader uses the Willforce talent when making a Contest of Wills, supporters with the Willforce talent can use the Talent Linking knack to enhance the leader's test. If the leader performs these contests without Willforce, supporters must use blood magic to aid him.

Supporters also can use the Talent Linking knack to enhance a ritual leader's use of Bargain with Summoned Creature and other social talents, provided the supporters possess the talent as well. However, supporters must use blood magic to enhance a ritual leader's Charisma Tests.

Any use of ritual magic establishes a magical link between a ritual leader and his supporters. Therefore, any adverse effects caused by a failed ritual magic summoning (see **Dangers of Summoning**, p. 95 in **Summoning**) affect both the ritual leader and all supporters participating in the ritual.

RITUAL ENCHANTING

Ritual magic may also be used for enchanting. Most often, ritual magic is employed for enchanting tasks that require significant magical power and expertise, such as the construction of airships. When using ritual magic for enchanting, the ritual leader makes the Enchantment Test. Because most tests used in the enchanting process are Half-Magic Tests, supporters must generally use blood magic to link themselves to the ritual leader.

RITUAL THREAD MAGIC

Ritual magic may also be used with thread magic. Most commonly, it is used during the ritual formation of group true patterns, a use of ritual magic that does not

require a designated ritual leader. Additionally, groups of magicians may use the Braiding Thread talent knack (p. 28) to combine their abilities, and supporters may use the Talent Linking knack to boost the Thread Weaving Test of a ritual leader.

FAMILIARS

Many legends describe various creatures and spirits that serve adepts. Known as familiars, these companions most commonly serve magician adepts, but adepts of any Discipline may acquire a familiar. For example, beastmasters often acquire animal familiars from among the creatures loyal to them, and many cavalrymen perform a familiar ritual with their mounts that strengthens the bond between mount and rider.

Almost any non-Name-giver creature or spirit can become a familiar, provided that the creature or spirit is well-disposed toward the character. Note that Named spirits and sapient creatures such as dragons cannot become familiars. Some rumors claim that mad and corrupt magicians have chosen unintelligent Horrors as familiars, but no evidence supports such claims.

ACQUIRING FAMILIARS

To acquire a familiar, an adept first must choose a creature or spirit that will become the familiar. The creature/spirit must be well-disposed toward the adept and willing to undergo the familiar ritual. In game terms, the creature or spirit must have the equivalent of a Loyal attitude toward the character. Adepts can use the Animal Bond talent (p. 96, **ED**) to train an appropriate animal. A spirit may only become a familiar if the magician who chose it has established a working relationship with the spirit through repeated summoning, and has treated the spirit with respect in all instances. A magician cannot choose as a familiar any spirit with whom he has engaged in a Contest of Wills.

After choosing the creature or spirit, the adept swears a blood oath to declare his intent to take the creature/spirit as a familiar. The adept formally Names the familiar or simply states the creature/spirit's Name if it already has one. The adept inflicts a shallow cut on himself and takes 4 points of permanent damage that cannot be healed as long as the familiar bond continues. The adept then swears an oath to protect and care for the familiar in exchange for the familiar's aid and service. Oaths vary according to the adept's Discipline and training, but most include the following elements:

> I (adept's name), take you (familiar's Name), to be my companion.
> As I now offer my blood, so do I swear to give my aid and protection.
> My loyalty and patronage shall be yours.
> Our strength and our thoughts will be as one.
> This I do swear, now and forever.

An adept may bond to only one familiar at any time. The magic of the familiar bond lasts until the adept or familiar breaks the blood oath or dies. An adept may break the blood oath by allowing the familiar to come to harm or by failing to take proper care of the familiar (in the gamemaster's opinion). Any adept who breaks a familiar blood oath suffers 3 Wounds that cannot be healed for a year and a day. If the adept makes sufficient reparation for his mistake, he may re-establish the familiar bond with a new blood oath at the gamemaster's discretion. However, a familiar will never return to a master who deliberately abused or mistreated it. An adept cannot bond with a new familiar until he has healed any Wounds caused by breaking a previous familiar blood oath.

FAMILIAR BENEFITS

The familiar bond grants the character and the familiar several benefits. First, it enables the familiar and its master to use a version of the Blood Share talent (p. 99, **ED**). The master gains this ability as a talent at Rank 1, which does not count for Discipline advancement. If an adept uses this ability to transfer an amount of damage that exceeds the familiar's Death Rating, he automatically breaks the familiar blood oath and suffers the standard consequences when the familiar dies. Magicians with spirit familiars can also use this ability, but the spirit must be in manifest form and touching the adept. Spirit familiars unable to assume a manifest form cannot offer this ability to their masters. The Blood Share talent functions between the familiar and its master only, not with any other character, creature or spirit.

The familiar bond also creates a thought link between master and familiar. This ability uses the same rules as the Thought Link talent (p. 40, **ED Companion**). The adept acquires the ability at Rank 1 and can increases it in the same way as a First Circle talent, but this ability does not count for Circle advancement. The ability enables both master and familiar to sense the general feelings and location of the other. Each knows instantly if the other is in danger. More detailed information can be gained with a

successful Thought Link Test. Like Blood Share, the Thought Link ability works between the familiar and its master only.

In addition to the Blood Share and Thought Link abilities, characters with familiars may purchase other "bonus" talents for use with their familiars. These talents are purchased like normal talents but do not count toward Circle advancement.

Masters can purchase the Animal Possession talent for use with the familiar *only* as an additional First Circle talent. The talent allows the master's spirit to possess the familiar and use its senses (see p. 99, **ED**, for more information). The Animal Possession talent has no effect on spirits.

A magician may use his familiar as an additional matrix for storing spells by purchasing an additional Spell Matrix talent at the normal cost for a First Circle talent. To use the spell stored in the familiar's matrix, the familiar must be within 6 feet of the magician. The familiar's spell matrix possesses all of the usual spell matrix powers and limitations. (For more information on the Spell Matrix talent, see p. 153, **ED**.)

Additionally, the familiar blood oath forms a link between the patterns of the familiar and master and makes each a Minor pattern item for the other. This link enables the master to weave threads to his familiar to improve the familiar's abilities and his own. (See p. 46, **ED Companion**, for thread magic rules.) The master is considered a Minor pattern item for his familiar, which limits these threads to Rank 5.

Any improvements in talents or abilities the master gains in this manner apply only when he is dealing with the familiar. For example, a magician who weaves a thread to his familiar and attaches it to his own Spellcasting talent gains the rank increase only when casting spells on his familiar, which makes using certain beneficial spells on the familiar easier.

The pattern link between masters and familiars may also be a drawback, however. Anyone who gains access to a character's familiar can use it to weave threads to that character's pattern (for more information see the **ED Companion**). The familiar is a pattern item only while it lives, but familiars remain pattern items for their masters even after the blood oath uniting the two has expired.

DIVINATION

There once lived in the kingdom of Throal a dwarf Named Eddrynn the Wise, a great seer whom the Passions had gifted with the ability to know the future. A human nobleman, Henrik Ardis, doubted Eddrynn's foresight and wanted to see proof of his ability. On three nights he visited the seer, each time wearing a different disguise and asking Eddrynn how he would die. On the first night, the seer told his visitor that he would die in a fall from a horse. On the second night, the dwarf said that his visitor would be hanged. On the third night, he told the noble that he would drown.

And so on that final night, Henrik left Eddrynn's humble hut with a grin of satisfaction, knowing that he could ride home and tell everyone that he had proved the old dwarf a fake. While crossing the bridge over the Iron River, however, an owl spooked Henrik's horse. The nobleman fell from the saddle, became entangled in the reins and hung upside down in the water until he drowned.
—From A History of Divination in Barsaive, *by the wizard Ylar Kellin of Travar*

For hundreds of years, magicians and scholars throughout the world of **Earthdawn** have developed and investigated numerous magical techniques in a quest to foretell the future. Though this search has failed to produce a truly reliable and effective method of predicting future events, it has created a legacy of divination methods as varied as the Name-givers of **Earthdawn** themselves. Gamemasters can use the divination techniques described in this section to add flavor to their games.

BIBLIOMANCY

Bibliomancy is a divination technique favored by wizards. To use the technique, the seeker simply meditates on the question he would like answered and randomly selects pages or passages from various books. He then interprets the various passages, which together provide an answer to his question.

BONE CASTING

Some nethermancers claim they can predict the future by bone casting. In this method, the nethermancer holds several small bone sticks inscribed with magical symbols and ponders the situation or subject whose future he wants to predict. He casts the bone sticks on the ground, then interprets the positions of the bones and their symbols to form a prediction. Some ork magicians cast the bones of their slain enemies in a similar technique.

and merges with the spirits within it (for more information on obsidiman Dreaming, see **Denizens of Earthdawn, Volume II**). During the Dreaming, an obsidiman may experience visions about the future and problems facing him, his Brotherhood or his friends. Many obsidimen believe these visions are the voice of the Spirit-That-Moves-Within-All revealing to them the nature of the world.

METAL READING

Weaponsmiths and some elementalists claim to divine the future by reading the shapes that molten metal takes when it is poured into cold water. Some adepts believe that True earth and water should be used for the best results, but others select different types of metal depending on the subject they want to divine.

VISIONS

All of the Name-givers of Barsaive honor the power of the Passions, and many people have experienced visions or waking dreams while in the grip of an especially powerful Passion. Many believe that the Passions use such visions to show their followers the future. However, some scholars suggest that these visions reveal the futures that the individual Passions favor.

FATE AND DESTINY IN EARTHDAWN

Many tales in the Age of Legend reveal a belief in the inescapable power of fate. Such tales tell of legendary heroes who are fated to carry out some great deed or fulfill some ancient prophecy, or they may tell of vile villains who shudder in fear at curses or prophecies that preordain their defeats or destruction. In all of these tales, the complex weavings of destiny play an important role in creating a story of legendary proportions.

In their **Earthdawn** campaigns, however, gamemasters should exercise a certain amount of caution in the way they use the concept of fate or destiny. Players usually prefer to control the destinies of their characters rather **than be constrained by specific prophecies that dictate**

ELEMENT READING

Elementalists use this common divinatory technique, which involves interpreting portents contained in cloud formations, fire, crystal, still pools and the pattern of rings and whorls in wood. Some elementalists combine the various elements in different ways to achieve more complex and detailed readings.

ELVEN PATH CARDS

Elven Path cards are thin plates of wood or parchment painted with detailed pictures and symbols. The cards (called *orotas ti mes* in Sperethiel) represent the virtues, symbols and challenges of the Five Paths of the Journey and the Wheel in elven culture (for more information on elven Path mythology, see **Denizens of Earthdawn, Volume I**). The diviner shuffles the cards and selects from them, laying the cards out in a variety of patterns ranging from simple five-card arrangements to complex patterns involving a dozen or more cards. The diviner then interprets the symbols on the various cards and their relations to each other.

OBSIDIMAN DREAM ORACLE

Obsidimen place great value on the state they call the Dreaming, when an obsidiman rejoins his liferock

future events. For this reason, gamemasters should give players freedom to control the actions and determine the futures of their characters; otherwise, they risk their players losing interest in the game.

In general, gamemasters should consider any divination, prophecy or foretelling of the future in **Earthdawn** as a *possible* future that can be influenced or changed by the actions of player characters. As a rule, most major events will be heralded by many conflicting omens created or interpreted by different individuals and factions attempting to ensure that their version of the future comes to pass. Gamemasters may also want to ensure that prophecies and divinations remain vague by couching such messages in cryptic, mysterious riddles and metaphors. This flexibility allows player characters to fulfill prophecies in unexpected ways.

THE PASSIONS AND MAGIC

According to legend, the Passions bestowed the gift of magic on Name-givers. They taught the first masters of the Disciplines how to call on the magic of the universe, and they opened the eyes of Name-givers to the power of magic all around them. Additionally, the Passions themselves are believed to possess magical power unbound by the limitations of mortality and virtually limitless within the Passions' own purview.

While the truth of such legends may be questionable, no one can dispute the power of the Passions to inspire intense feelings among Name-givers. And when a Name-giver feels something most strongly, whether it be joy, freedom, hatred or despair, his feeling calls out to the universe and invokes its magic. In this sense, the Passions play an important role in Name-givers' use of magic.

For most practitioners of magic, however, the Passions serve only a minor, background role. Most adepts devote such thought, time and energy to the practice of their Disciplines that they have little opportunity to devote much attention to the Passions. Most adepts also believe that the practice of their Discipline demonstrates their respect for the Passions, and so very few of them take the time to become questors of the Passions.

More cerebral adepts such as wizards and other magicians often view the Passions in a more abstract light. These adepts often apply the wizardly concept of Ideas (p. 99, **The Adept's Way**) to the Passions. To these individuals, the Passions embody the great Ideas. As a result, a magician might use the symbols of a particular Passion to enhance a ritual magic associated with the Idea embodied by the Passion.

In game terms, Passions grant magical abilities to their loyal questors (p. 91, **ED Companion**). Thus, a questor's devotion to his chosen Passion provides him with magical abilities in the same way that an adept's devotion to his chosen Discipline provides him with magical abilities. Questor abilities interact with other magic much like talents and their effects. The Dispel Magic spell (p. 183, **ED**) can be used to dispel the effects of various questor abilities. To do so, use the questor's Questor talent rank as the effective spell Circle to determine the Dispel Difficulty (see **Spell Magic**, p. 43).

SHAMANISM

Shamanism is a unique magician Discipline practiced chiefly by members of Barsaive's primitive tribes such as the Cathan of the Servos Jungle and the Tamer tribes of the Liaj Jungle. Shaman adepts learn their spells by studying nature, not from dusty tomes or scrolls. They gain their magical abilities by observing how the elements of nature and the forces of magic interact. As a result, many shaman spells and abilities are closely related to the natural world. Shaman adepts also can use spells traditionally taught in other magician Disciplines, most notably the nethermancer and wizard Disciplines.

Shamans make frequent use of blood magic when using their abilities, but cannot learn talent knacks of any kind. Perception and Willpower are the most important attributes for shamans.

SPECIAL RULES

Shamanism differs from other magician Disciplines in many distinct ways. The following rules reflect these unique characteristics.

Fetish Talents

Shamans keep their spell patterns in fetishes, small items representative of the spells they contain. A shaman creates a different fetish for each spell, and so a shaman's collected fetishes represent his grimoire. Shamans cannot cast spells safely without the appropriate fetishes, which they produce using the Create Fetish talent.

A shaman's Spell Fetish talents enable him to attune a fetish in the same manner as other magicians attune spell matrices and to cast the spell stored in the attuned fetish. Fetishes attuned with the Enhanced Fetish talent function in the same way as Enhanced matrices, by allowing shamans to store a thread in the fetish (see **Enhanced Matrices**, p. 42 in **Spell Magic**).

Shaman Spellcasting

Shamans cast spells in the same manner as other magicians, except that they must hold the fetish of the spell they are casting in their hand. If a spell requires the magician to concentrate in order to maintain the spell after casting, the shaman must continue to hold the fetish as he concentrates. If he drops the fetish, the spell effect is broken.

If a shaman loses a spell's fetish or it is destroyed, he must use raw magic to cast the spell until he finds the opportunity to create a new fetish for that spell. Shamans cannot cast spells from other magician's grimoires.

Learning Shaman Spells

To learn spells, shamans must first learn a special knowledge skill called Nature. This skill enables a shaman to understand how the magic of the world interacts with nature, and that understanding enables a shaman to create spell patterns in his fetishes.

To learn a spell, a shaman must make a Learn Spell Pattern Test against the Learning Difficulty of the spell he wishes to learn. If the shaman learns the spell from a higher-Circle shaman, he first makes a Spellcasting Test against the spell's Learning Difficulty. If that test succeeds, the shaman adds his teacher's Thread Weaving rank to the result of his Learn Spell Pattern Test. Shamans may make only one Learn Spell Pattern Test per day.

If the shaman's Learn Spell Pattern Test succeeds, he then makes a Create Fetish Test against the same Difficulty Number. If the Create Fetish Test succeeds, the shaman has created a fetish that will store the spell's pattern. Once a shaman has learned a spell and created a fetish for it, he can cast the spell per standard rules.

Shamans cannot learn spells from magicians of other Disciplines or teach spells to magicians of other Disciplines. The methods by which shamans learn spells is too unique to allow for any sort of successful crossover. Additionally, shamans cannot learn spells of Circles higher than their own Circles.

Descriptions of the Create Fetish and Learn Spell Pattern talents follow. Spells available to shamans are listed in **Shaman Discipline**, page 105.

Learn Spell Pattern

Step Number: Perception + Rank

Action: Yes	**Skill Use:** No
Requires Karma: No	**Strain:** None

Discipline Talent Use: Shaman

The Learn Spell Pattern talent enables shamans to learn spells by observing nature. To use the talent, a shaman makes a Learn Spell Pattern Test against the Learning Difficulty of the spell he wishes to learn. If the test succeeds, the shaman has learned the spell. A shaman can make only one Learn Spell Pattern Test per day.

The Learn Spell Pattern talent may be used only to learn new spells. It does not enable shamans to read magical runes or writings. Human characters can use Versatility to learn this talent.

Create Fetish

Step Number: Perception + Rank

Action: Yes	**Skill Use:** No
Requires Karma: No	**Strain:** None

Discipline Talent Use: Shaman

The Create Fetish talent enables a shaman to create spell fetishes for spells he has learned. To create a fetish, a shaman must first spend 1 hour constructing the fetish's physical form. Next, the shaman embeds the spell pattern into the fetish by making a Create Fetish Test against the spell's Learning Difficulty. If the test succeeds, the fetish holds the spell pattern, and the shaman can then attune one of his Spell Fetish talents to the spell in order to cast it. If the test fails, the shaman can try again in 24 hours.

The physical forms of fetishes are usually fashioned to represent the spell they will contain. For example, a fetish for the Bone Shatter spell might be made from a broken bone of some sort. The gamemaster must approve the physical forms for fetishes.

Shamans usually fashion fetishes from wood, bone, leather, and occasionally tree bark, grass and leaves. Physically, fetishes are quite fragile and have a Damage Rating (see **Barriers and Structures,** p. 209, **ED**) equal to their spell Circle plus 5. For example, a Circle 1 spell fetish has a Damage Rating of 6, while a Circle 10 fetish has a Damage Rating of 15. Fetishes have a Physical Armor Rating of 0.

If a fetish is destroyed, the shaman cannot cast the spell contained in that fetish (except using raw magic) until he has created a new fetish for that spell. To strike a fetish in a shaman's hand, the attacker must achieve a Good or better success on a Called Shot (p. 200, **ED**).

The astral characteristics of a spell pattern held within a fetish are the same as those of a spell matrix of the same type (see **Spell Matrix Types,** pp. 153–54, **ED**). For example, an enhanced fetish has a Death Rating of 15. The spell patterns of fetishes can only be attacked on the astral plane when they are attuned to one of the shaman's Spell Fetish talents.

Human characters can use Versatility to learn the Create Fetish talent.

SHAMAN DISCIPLINE

Discipline talents are marked with asterisks.

Important Attributes: Perception and Willpower
Racial Restrictions: None
Karma Ritual: To begin his Karma ritual, the shaman must be out of doors and at least 100 yards from the nearest building or Name-giver-made structure. If possible, a shaman performs his ritual in the forest or jungle. Before beginning the ritual, the shaman picks up a nearby leaf, twig or live insect to serve as a symbol of nature for the ritual. The shaman then sits quietly and centers his thoughts. He focuses his introspection on the symbol of nature he holds in his hands and dwells on the relationship between magic and nature. At the end of a half hour, the shaman eats the symbol, thereby symbolically binding himself to nature.
Artisan Skills: Wood Carving, Stone Carving

First Circle
Talents
    Create Fetish*
    Karma Ritual
    Learn Spell Pattern*
    Shamanism (Thread Weaving)*
    Spell Fetish
    Spell Fetish
    Spellcasting*

Second Circle
Talents
    Astral Sight*
    Durability (4/3)
    Spell Fetish

Third Circle
Talents
    Avoid Blow
    Melee Weapons

Fourth Circle
Spell Defense: Increase the shaman's Spell Defense by 1.
Talents
    Arcane Mutterings
    Spell Fetish

JANET AULISIO 1996.

Fifth Circle
Physical Defense: Increase the shaman's Physical Defense by 1.
Talents
    Empathic Sense*
    Willforce

Sixth Circle
Karma: The shaman may spend a Karma Point on any action using Charisma only.
Talents
    Endure Cold
    Spell Fetish

Seventh Circle
Social Defense: Increase the shaman's Social Defense by 1.
Talents
    Lifesight*
    Sense Poison*

Eighth Circle
Recovery Test: The shaman gains an additional Recovery Test per day.
Talents
    Enhanced Fetish
    Safe Path

Ninth Circle
Karma: The shaman may spend a Karma Point on any action using Perception only.
Spell Defense: Increase the shaman's Spell Defense by 1.
Talents
    Cat's Paw*
    Enhanced Fetish
    Frighten

Tenth Circle
Special
Recovery Test: The shaman gains an additional Recovery Test per day.
Spell Defense: Increase the shaman's Spell Defense by 1.
    Enhanced Fetish
    Matrix Strike

SHAMAN SPELLS
Shamans learn spells according to the rules described in **Learning Shaman Spells**, p. 104. Spell-use restrictions for shamans appear in parentheses after spells.

First Circle
- Astral Sense
- Bone Dance
- Detect Undead
- Dispel Magic
- Divine Aura
- Earth Blend
- Earth Darts
- Flame Flash
- Flame Weapon
- Insect Repellent
- Light
- Mind Dagger
- Resist Cold
- Resist Fire
- Rope Guide (hemp rope only)
- Spirit Grip

Second Circle
- Astral Shield
- Boil Water
- Bone Circle
- Ethereal Darkness
- Life Circle of One
- Monstrous Mantle
- Path Home
- Shield Mist
- Vines
- Weather Cloak

Third Circle
- Combat Fury
- Death's Head
- Fog of Fear
- Pain
- Plant Feast
- Puddle Deep
- Quicken Pace
- Sky Lattice

Fourth Circle
- Animate Skeleton
- Ball of String
- Dust Devil
- Evil Eye
- Fatal Food
- Lightning Shield
- Relax
- Thorny Retreat

- Uneven Ground
- Viewpoint

Fifth Circle
- Circle of Astral Protection
- Counterspell
- Earth Staff
- Fireball
- Flying Carpet (mats made of wicker or straw only)
- Invigorate
- Pleasant Visions
- Slow
- Solo Flight
- Stone Cage
- Wither Limb

Sixth Circle
- Blessed Light
- Bone Shatter
- Drastic Temperature
- Ease Passage
- Foul Vapors
- Friendly Darkness
- Karma Cancel
- Makeshift Weapon
- Razor Orb
- Recovery
- Sleep
- Tossing Earth

Seventh Circle
- Blood Boil
- Calm Water
- Cloud Summon
- Confusing Weave
- Constrict Heart
- Death Rain
- Lightning Cloud
- Restrain Entity
- Reverse Withering
- Spell Cage
- Vertigo
- Whirlwind

Eighth Circle
- Astral Nightmare
- Cat's Cradle
- Compression Bubble

- Control Being
- Earth Wall
- Horror Call
- Leaping Lizards
- Perimeter Alarm
- Restrain Horror
- Shadow Tether
- Silver Shadow

Ninth Circle
- Absorbing Sphere
- Cloud Banish
- Dark Sword
- Dragon's Breath
- Draining Eye
- Fire Wall
- Moon Shadow
- Observe Event
- Shift Skin
- Tell Tale

Tenth Circle
- Damage Transfer
- Death Vow
- Earth and Air
- Eclipse
- Eternal Day
- Fire and Water
- Fragile Pattern
- Journey to Life
- Onion Blood
- Strong Pattern
- Tap Horror Karma
- Warp Astral Space
- Weather Change

SPELL DESIGN

Though the **Earthdawn** rulebook and **Earthdawn Companion** provide numerous spells for each of the four magician Disciplines, some players and gamemasters may want to create their own spells. The spell design system offers a way for them to do so. The spell design system is based on the basic concepts described in the **Spell Magic** chapter of the **Earthdawn** rulebook and the **Spell Magic** section of this book, and so gamemasters and players may want to reread those sections before using the spell design system. Because the multitude of elements that comprise the spell design system make it quite complex, gamemasters and players should read through the entire process at least once before attempting to use it.

This system makes it very difficult for magician characters to create new spells, and that level of difficulty is deliberate—the spells provided in the **Earthdawn** rulebook and other products represent centuries of spell research by Barsaive's best magical minds, and so characters should not expect to whip out new spells without a little effort.

The spells in the **Earthdawn** rulebook and **Earthdawn Companion** were used as the basis for the spell design system, which means that players may create their own versions of any of those spells simply by following the steps provided here. Previously published spells were created in such a way to maintain game balance, however, and so gamemasters should strongly discourage players from simply designing "improved" or more powerful versions of those spells.

SPELL DESIGN OVERVIEW

To design a spell, a magician simply determines the effect he wants the spell to create, then uses his Thread Weaving and Spellcasting talents to weave a spell pattern that achieves that effect. The procedure requires five steps:

1. Choose the spell effect and target
2. Determine the spell Circle
3. Weave the spell characteristics
4. Make the Spellcasting Test
5. Empower the spell pattern

The following summary outlines the spell design process. Each step in this process is fully described in the section titled **Spell Design in Detail**, which begins on page 115.

STEP 1: CHOOSE THE SPELL EFFECT AND TARGET

A magician begins the spell design process by deciding the effect he wants his spell to create and the spell's target; for example, damaging a living being. In turn, the spell's effect and target determine the spell's Base Complexity, a value that represents the difficulty of creating the spell. The spell's target also determines the Casting Difficulty.

STEP 2: DETERMINE THE SPELL CIRCLE

Once the spell designer has determined his spell's effect, he must next decide the spell's Circle. A spell's Circle determines the limits of the spell's effect, range, duration and Casting Difficulty; the Base Difficulty Numbers for the tests made to weave the spell's characteristics; and the spell's Base Thread Number, Base Thread Weaving Difficulty, and Base Reattuning Difficulty. The spell designer may be able to alter the latter three figures during the final step of the process, depending on how well he weaves the spell's characteristics.

A spell's Circle equals its Base Complexity, but the spell designer can raise or lower the Base Complexity to change the spell's Circle. Every 1-point increase to the Base Complexity reduces the spell's Circle by 1 level, and every 1-point decrease to the Base Complexity raises the spell Circle by 1 level.

STEP 3: WEAVE THE SPELL CHARACTERISTICS

After determining the spell's Circle, the spell designer must weave the spell's pattern. Weaving the pattern involves weaving the portions of the spell's pattern that represent the primary characteristics of all **Earthdawn** spells, namely the spell's effect, range, duration and Casting Difficulty.

The spell designer makes a Thread Weaving Test for each of these characteristics. The Base Difficulty for these tests is based on the spell's Circle, modified by the specific characteristic. Weaving each portion of a spell pattern requires a base time of 1 week (minimum of 10 hours per day).

The magician's player must keep track of the success levels yielded by each of these tests, because the success levels achieved in this step affect a later step of the spell design process.
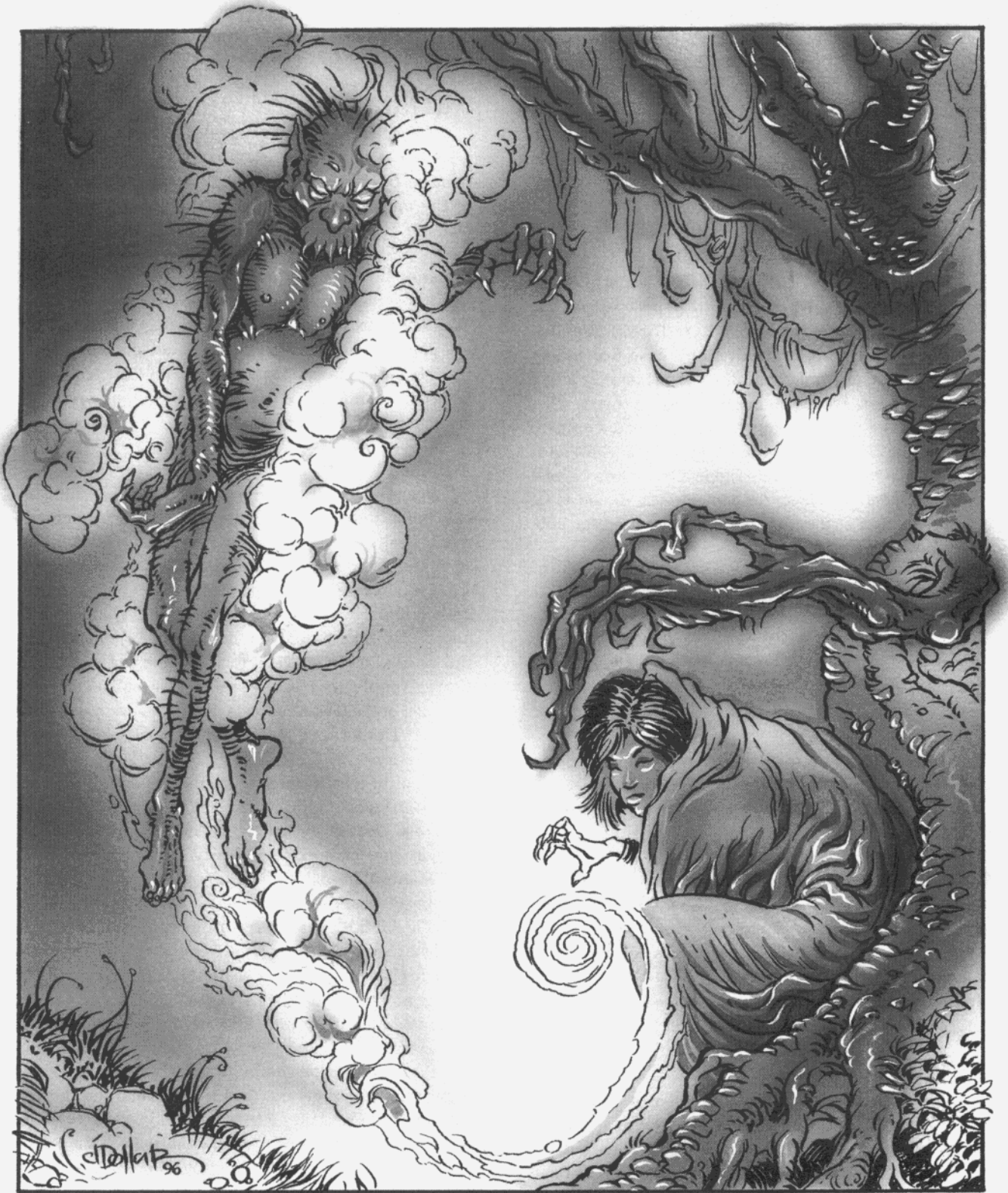
STEP 4: MAKE THE SPELLCASTING TEST

After weaving the spell pattern's characteristics, the spell designer must complete the pattern by making a Spellcasting Test. The Difficulty Number for this test is based on the spell's Circle.

Again, the magician's player must record the success level yielded by the test, because the success level achieved in this step affects a later step of the spell design process.

STEP 5: EMPOWER THE SPELL PATTERN

Empowering the spell pattern is the last step in the spell design process. To empower the spell pattern, the spell designer adjusts the spell's Base Thread Number, Base Thread Weaving Difficulty, and Base Reattuning Difficulty by an amount determined by the success levels achieved in Steps 3 and 4 of the spell design process.

Lastly, the magician must spend Legend Points to empower the spell pattern. The number of Legend Points needed is based on the spell's Circle. Once these Legend Points are spent, the player (or gamemaster) should write up a description of the spell in the format used for published **Earthdawn** spells.

BASIC SPELL DESIGN CONCEPTS

The spell design system describes the process of creating a spell using the following concepts. The glossary defines unique game terms used in the spell design rules.

SPELL DESIGN GLOSSARY

Characteristics: The four primary properties of an **Earthdawn** spell: effect, range, duration and Casting Difficulty. See page 157 of the **Earthdawn** rulebook for more information.
Circle: The spell's Circle.
Complexity: A measure of the relative difficulty of creating a spell with a given effect. High Complexity spells are harder to create than low Complexity spells.
Effect: The result of the spell; what the spell does to its target.
Mechanism: How a spell achieves its effects.
Target: The subject of the spell's effect.

COMPLEXITY

Every spell effect and target type has a Complexity rating. A spell's Base Complexity is determined by combining the Complexity ratings of the spell's effect and target. Other factors that determine a spell's Base

Complexity, such as the duration and area of the effect, are described in **Step 1: Choose the Spell Effect and Target**, p. 115 in **Spell Design in Detail.**

SPELL EFFECTS

The spell effect is what happens when an adept casts a spell at a target. For example, the target might take damage, be changed in some way, come under the control of the magician, or, in the case of inanimate objects, become capable of movement. The following entries describe the basic types of spell effects and their corresponding Complexity ratings.

If a player designs a spell that creates an effect that does not fit exactly into one of the effect categories, simply place it in the category that its effects most closely resemble. Players must spend the extra time required to incorporate multiple effects when designing spells that create multiple and varied results.

Alteration

Spells may alter the target in some way. All alteration effects fall into one of five general categories: enhancement, health, manipulation, protection or weaken. The spell designer determines the specific alteration effect.

Enhancement: Enhancement effects increase a target's talents, attributes, movement rate, characteristics and so on. Like protection effects, enhancement effects can be used on living creatures or inanimate objects. The listed Complexity modifier reflects an enhancement to only one of the target's ratings. For each additional ability or rating enhanced, increase the Complexity by 1. **Complexity: 2**

Health: Health effects promote healing. Common health effects include granting a target additional Recovery Tests or enhancing the target's usual Recovery Tests in some manner. **Complexity: 1**

Manipulation: Manipulation effects change the target in ways that do not involve increasing or reducing the target's abilities or ratings. For example, a manipulation spell may cause its target to grow an additional limb or to entirely change the target's shape. Note that manipulation effects alone do not alter a target's abilities or ratings. Manipulation effects may be used on living targets and inanimate objects. **Complexity: 2**

Protection: Protection effects change a target's pattern so that the target may better resist injury or damage. Examples of protection effects include increased Defense Ratings, increased Death/Unconsciousness Ratings, and increased Wound Thresholds. Protection spells are most often used on living targets, but they can also be used on

inanimate objects. For example, a protection spell could be designed to preserve perishable food. **Complexity: 1**

Weaken: Weaken effects reduce the ratings of a target's talents, attributes, movement rate, characteristics and so on. Like enhancement effects, weaken effects can be used on living creatures or inanimate objects. The listed Complexity reflects a reduction in only one of the target's ratings. For each additional ability or rating reduced, increase the Complexity by 1. **Complexity: 2**

Banishing

Banishing effects are used to repel spirits and other entities. This effect forms the basis of such spells as Life Circle of One. The target of a banishing spell is the spirit or entity it banishes. Banishing and summoning effects cannot be combined in a single spell pattern. **Complexity: 2**

Conjuring

Conjuring effects enable a magician to draw on magical energy and shape it to create a specific result. The Light, Friendly Darkness, and Ethereal Darkness spells are all examples of conjuring spells. The effect can also be used to draw energy from any of the four True elements. The target of a conjuring spell is the magical energy it requires. **Complexity: 1**

Control/Dominate

Control/dominate effects enable a magician to control or dominate a living target. This effect forms the basis of spells that cause fear or other emotions in their targets, as well as spells such as Bone Dance. The Casting Difficulty of a control/dominate spell always equals the target's Spell Defense. **Complexity: 2**

Creation

Creation spells enable a magician to use magical energy to create living creatures, beings and inanimate objects. The target of a creation spell is the creature, being or object created by the spell. The Ninth Circle nethermancer spell Create Life is one example of a creation spell.

The creation effect requires an enormous amount of magical energy, and so creation spells often have no preset number of threads. When casting a creation spell, the spellcaster selects the number of threads he uses in the spell, which in turn determines his creation's abilities and ratings (see **Variable-Thread Spells,** p. 129). Creation effects are extremely powerful, and most magicians must reach the Ninth to Thirteenth Circles of their Disciplines before they can use or design such spells. **Complexity: 4**

Damage

Damage is one of the most common spell effects. The specific damage a spell causes a target may be measured in Damage Points or number of Wounds. A single spell may incorporate both types of damage. The Casting Difficulty of a damage spell always equals the target's Spell Defense. **Complexity: 1**

Dispelling

Dispelling effects are used to disrupt or dispel magical energy and negate its effects. The target of a dispelling spell is the magical energy it disrupts. The Dispel Magic spell is a common dispel-effect spell. **Complexity: 2**

Divination

Divination effects allow a magician to detect or divine the presence of the spell's target. The Astral Sense and Detect Undead spells serve as examples of divination spells. The Casting Difficulty of a divination spell always equals the target's Spell Defense. **Complexity: 1**

Summoning

Summoning effects are used to summon spirits and other entities, and this effect is the basis for nearly all spells that deal with tasked spirits (see **Summoning,** p. 84). The minimum Complexity for summoning effects is 1, but it can be much higher, depending on the nature of the target to be summoned. The Complexity of a summoning effect used to summon a spirit is equal to the spirit's Legend Point Award divided by 100 and rounded down. The target of a summoning spell is the spirit or entity the spell summons. Summoning effects and banishing effects cannot be combined in a single spell pattern. **Complexity: 1+**

Transportation

Transportation effects enable a magician to magically transport a target in some manner. The Rope Guide and Flying Carpet spells use transportation effects. This effect cannot be used to enhance a target's natural movement ability. **Complexity: 1**

SPELL TARGETS

Spells are directed at four primary types of targets: living beings, inanimate objects, energy and elements. In turn, each of these four categories include a number of subcategories. For example, the category of living beings includes physical bodies, astral patterns and thoughts/emotions. Because each type of target offers so many options, a magician designing a spell must designate

the target of the spell as specifically as possible. For example, a magician may designate the target of a spell as the "physical body of a living target."

Living Beings

Living beings make common spell targets. Damage spells, healing spells, and emotion-inducing spells may all be directed against living targets. Spells can affect living targets in three primary ways: the target's physical body, its astral form, or its emotions or thoughts.

All spells that target a living being use a Casting Difficulty equal to the target's Spell Defense.

Physical Body: Spells that affect a target's physical body are perhaps the most common in **Earthdawn.** These include damaging spells and most alteration spells. Physical body is the default target type for all spells that target living beings. **Complexity: 3**

Astral Form: Certain spells affect a target's astral form. Some of these spells can be cast in astral space, while others, such as Talent Shredder and Fragile Pattern (p. 82, **ED Companion**), can affect the target's astral form directly from the physical world. In addition, this category includes any spell that damages an astral target. Most magicians cannot learn these powerful spells until they reach the Ninth Circle of their Discipline. **Complexity: 4**

Emotions/Thoughts: Spells that affect a target's thoughts or emotions are difficult to create, though fairly common in **Earthdawn.** Spells of this type include Fog of Fear, Crafty Thought and Assuring Touch. Many illusionist spells also target emotions and thoughts. **Complexity: 4**

Most spells that affect living targets affect any and all types of living beings equally, provided the spell's target type applies to them. For example, a spell that affects physical bodies would only affect spirits if they are manifested in physical form.

Alternatively, a magician may design a spell that affects only a certain group of living beings, such as Name-givers, Horrors, entities (which include spirits, Horror constructs and undead creatures) and creatures. Restricting a spell's effects to a single group of living beings reduces the spell's Complexity by 1. Restricting a spell to two or three groups does not provide any further reduction in the spell's Complexity.

Inanimate Objects

Inanimate objects are non-living things such as buildings, weapons and armor. Spells may affect an object physically or astrally. Most spells that target inanimate objects use a Casting Difficulty equal to the object's Spell Defense, though some use predetermined Casting Difficulties.

Physical Pattern: Spells that target an object's physical pattern may damage, enhance, weaken or transport an object. The Flying Carpet spell (p. 171, **ED**) is an example of this type of spell. **Complexity: 2**

Astral Pattern: Only objects with True or magical patterns are affected by spells that target the astral patterns of inanimate objects. This type of spell is more difficult to create than spells that target the physical patterns of objects. The nethermancer spells Strong Pattern and Fragile Pattern (pp. 82–83, **ED Companion**) are examples of spells that target the astral patterns of objects. **Complexity: 3**

Energy

Spells may target three types of energy: magic, light and darkness. The most common spell effects used with energy are conjuring and dispelling. However, the alteration effects of enhancement and weaken and the effect of divination can be used with energy as well. In most cases, spells that target energy use a Casting Difficulty of 2.

Magic: Magic is the most difficult form of energy to manipulate using spells. Common magic-targeting spells include Dispel Magic, Astral Sense and Karma Cancel. Most magic-targeting spells affect all types of magic equally, but a spell designer may restrict the type of magic that his spell affects. For example, a magician may create a Dispel Nethermantic Magic spell that only targets spells cast by nethermancers. Restricting a spell in this way reduces its Complexity by 1. **Complexity: 3**

Light: Spells that target light include the Light, Astral Flare and Eternal Day spells. Often, light-targeting spells combine multiple effects to give the light some sort of power or special effect. The Blessed Light spell offers an example of such a spell. **Complexity: 2**

Darkness: Most often, darkness spells involve conjuring darkness from astral space. Darkness spells such as Friendly Darkness and Eclipse represent a straightforward conjuring, though spells such as Ethereal Darkness incorporate additional effects as well. **Complexity: 2**

Elements

Element-targeting spells are fairly unusual. Most often, elementalists use the elements as a mechanism for their spells (see **Spell Effect and Mechanism,** p. 114). However, any magician may design and use element-targeting spells.

In general, element-targeting spells use a Casting Difficulty of 2. The Complexity rating (listed in the following descriptions) of an element-targeting spell depends on the element it affects. Any time a spell targets a True form of an element (True air, True earth, True fire,

DISCIPLINE/COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS TABLE

Effect	Elementalist	Illusionist	Nethermancer	Wizard
Alteration	0	+1	0	0
Banishing	0	+2	0	+1
Conjuring	0	0	0	0
Control/Dominate	+1	0	0	0
Creation	+3	NA	+3	+2
Damage	0	0	0	0
Dispelling	+1	+1	+1	0
Divination	+1	+2	0	0
Summoning	0	+2	0	+1
Transportation	0	+1	+1	0

True water, True wood), increase its Complexity by 1. For example, a spell that targets True fire would have a Complexity of 3.

Though only five True elements exist in **Earthdawn**, element-targeting spells can affect three additional types of elements: metal, a variant of earth; plants, related to wood; and weather, a combination of elemental air and water.

Air: Air spells affect a volume of air. Examples of air spells include Air Blast and Sky Lattice. **Complexity: 2**

Earth: The element of earth includes stone, sand, rocks and so on. Earth spells include spells such as Stone Cage and Earth Wall. **Complexity: 2**

Fire: Fire spells cover those spells that involve heat. Examples of fire spells include Flameshaw and Fire and Water. **Complexity: 2**

Metal: Metal spells affect objects made of metal and include such spells as Slow Metal Weapon, Silence Metal and Silver Shadow. Because metal represents a refined type of earth, the Complexity rating of metal spells is slightly higher than that of earth spells. **Complexity: 3**

Plant: Plant spells target live plants, including flowers, grass and shrubs—but not woody plants. Common plant spells include Plant Talk and Plant Feast. Because plants represent a specialized form of wood, the Complexity rating of plant spells is slightly higher than that of wood spells. **Complexity: 3**

Water: Water spells affect bodies of water and include spells such as Boil Water, Puddle Deep and Calm Water. **Complexity: 2**

Wood: Because their effects are least flashy, magicians rarely create element-targeting spells that affect wood. Wood-targeting spells commonly ignite wood or cause wooden objects to become ethereal. **Complexity: 2**

Weather: While not strictly an element, weather is considered a combination of the elements of air and water for the purposes of spell design. Weather spells include spells such as Drastic Temperature, Cloud Summon and Weather Change. Because weather is a combination of the elements of air and water, the Complexity rating of weather spells is slightly higher than those of either air or water spells. **Complexity: 4**

SPELL EFFECTS AND MAGICIAN DISCIPLINES

Not all magician Disciplines are equally suited to use all types of spell effects. Magicians of each Discipline learn to use different effects at different Circles, and some Disciplines are able to use certain effects more easily than others. Ultimately, however, magicians of all the Disciplines are capable of producing spells that use nearly any effect. The Discipline/Complexity Modifiers Table shows the Complexity modifiers that magicians of each Discipline must apply when choosing specific effects for their spells (see **Step 1: Choose the Spell Effect and Target** for more information on calculating spell Complexity).

As a magician advances in the Circles of his Discipline, he learns to incorporate new effects into his spell designs. For example, a Fifth Circle illusionist cannot design spells that use the summoning effect, but the same illusionist may design such spells at Ninth Circle. The Circle Availability/Discipline Table lists the Circles at which characters of each magician Discipline may use various spell effects.

CIRCLE AVAILABILITY/DISCIPLINE TABLE

Effect	Elementalist	Illusionist	Nethermancer	Wizard
Alteration	5	6	5	5
Banishing	6	10	6	7
Conjuring	5	5	5	5
Control/Dominate	7	5	5	5
Creation	11	NA	11	9
Damage	5	5	5	5
Dispelling	5	5	5	5
Divination	6	7	5	5
Summoning	5	9	5	6
Transportation	5	5	5	5

SPELL EFFECT AND MECHANISM

In the same way that a magician's Discipline determines the types of effects he can use in his spell designs, a magician's Discipline also determines the mechanism he uses in his spell designs to create an effect. Put simply, a spell's mechanism is how the spell achieves its effect. For example, the Earth Darts spell transforms dirt into crystalline darts and propels them at the target. Thus, the effect of the spell is damage to the target. The mechanism of the spell is elementalism, because the spell uses the element of earth to create its effect. Keep in mind that different spells may use different mechanisms to create the same effect. For example, the Earth Darts, Spirit Grip and Mind Dagger spells all essentially create the same effect—they cause damage. However, each spell uses a different mechanism to achieve its effect.

The four basic spell mechanisms are elementalism, illusion, nethermancy and wizardry. A magician designing a spell using the mechanism of his own Discipline need not apply a Complexity modifier for the spell mechanism. If a magician designs a spell that uses the mechanism of a Discipline other than his own, he must add 2 to the spell's Complexity.

Elementalism

Elementalism is the spell mechanism used by elementalists. Any spell that uses one of the five elements—air, earth, fire, water or wood—or their magical natures to produce its effect uses this mechanism. For example, the effect of the Fireball spell is to cause damage to a living target, and the element of fire is the mechanism used to achieve this effect.

Illusion

Illusion is the spell mechanism used by illusionists. Any spell that uses magic to fool the senses of a target uses this mechanism. Generally, illusion spells control or dominate the thoughts or emotions of living beings and use lights and sounds to create their effects. These represent the mechanism of illusion, not the effect. For example, the Astral Nightmare spell causes a living being to believe he is in astral space. The spell's effect is to control the thoughts of the target. The illusion of astral space is the mechanism the spell uses to achieve this effect.

The mechanism of illusion can also be used to create real magical effects. A spell's designer chooses whether a spell's effect is an illusion or a real magical effect when he designs the spell.

Nethermancy

Nethermancy is the spell mechanism used by nethermancers. Any spell that uses the power of spirits, astral space or raw magic energy to create its effect uses this mechanism. For example, the Spirit Grip spell enables a nethermancer to draw on the malevolent energy of the spirits of the dead to harm others. Therefore, the spell's effect is to cause damage to a living target. Drawing on the malevolent magical energy is the mechanism the spell uses to achieve this effect.

Wizardry

Wizardry is the spell mechanism used by wizards. Any spell that draws on and directly manipulates the magical energy of the universe to create its effects uses this mechanism. Though all spellcasters manipulate magic, the wizardry spell mechanism uses no intermediary
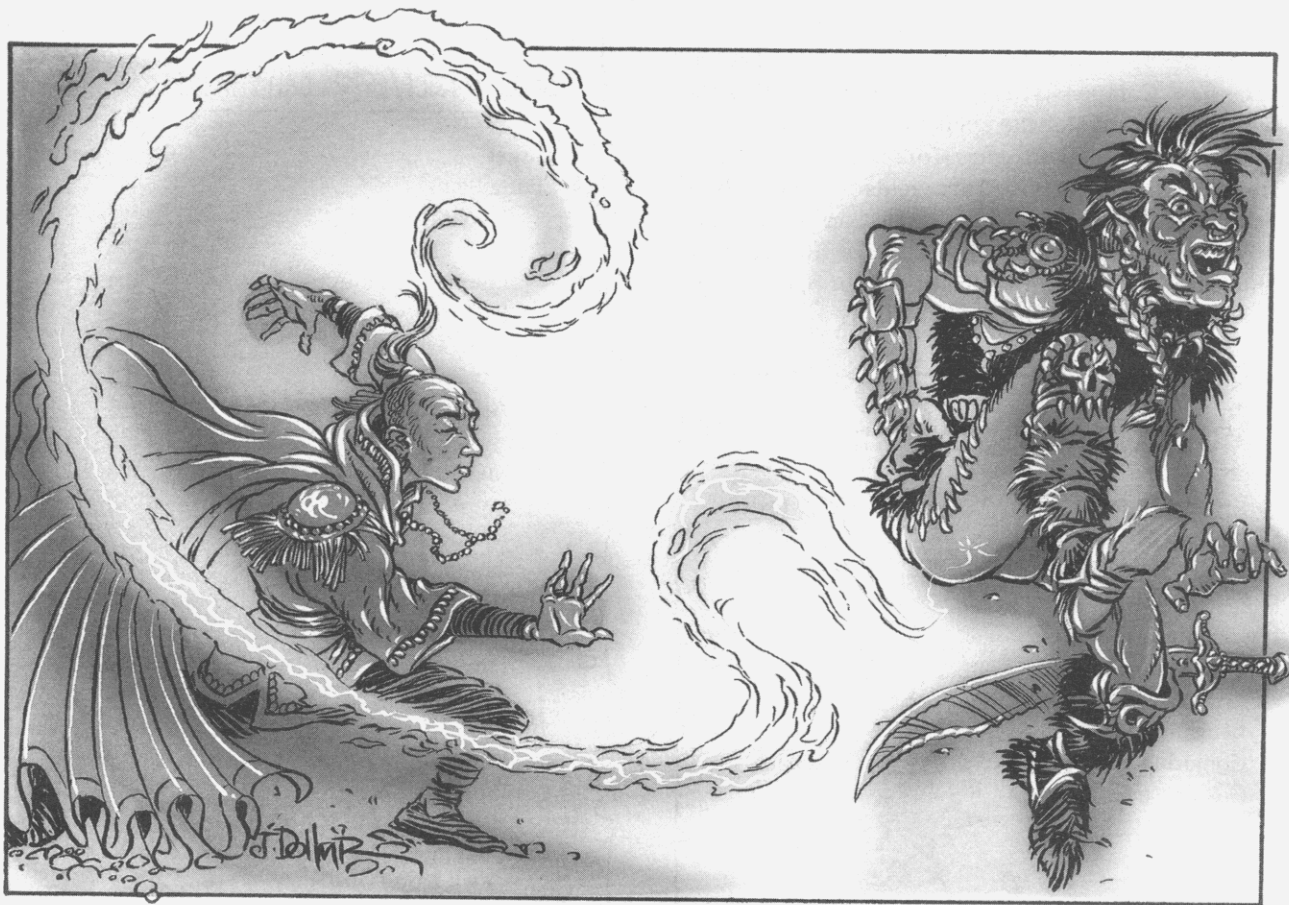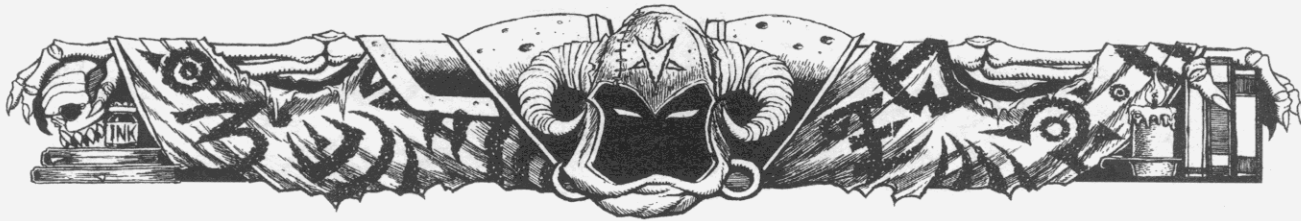
device. For example, while the Earth Darts spell requires a physical component to damage the target, the Mind Dagger spell simply hurls a dagger-like bolt of energy against a target. The spell's effect is to cause damage to the target. Magical energy is the mechanism the spell uses to achieve this effect.

LIMITS ON SPELL DESIGN

As the **Spell Effects and Magician Disciplines** section shows, magicians of each Discipline learn to create different spell effects at different Circles. Spell designers must also work under the following limitations:

•The spell designer must be Fifth Circle or higher.

•The designer must have the Spell Design Spellcasting talent knack (see **Spellcasting Knacks**, p. 32 in **Spell Magic**).

•The magician must have the appropriate Spell Design Thread Weaving talent knack (see **Thread Weaving Knacks**, p. 26 in **Thread Magic**).

•The magician may only create spells of his Circle or lower.

SPELL DESIGN IN DETAIL

The following sections describe the spell design process in detail. The blank **Spell Design Worksheet** provided at the back of this book is designed to help players keep track of each step in the process so that they do not inadvertently neglect any steps.

Both gamemasters and players of magician characters may use the spell design system. However, gamemasters are the final judge on whether or not a new spell follows both the spirit and letter of the rules in this chapter. Gamemasters also must approve a spell's effect, characteristics and the final description of the spell's use before a spell may be introduced into their game.

STEP 1: CHOOSE THE SPELL EFFECT AND TARGET

The first step in designing a spell is choosing its effect and target. (For descriptions of spell effects and targets, see **Complexity, Spell Effects** and **Spell Targets** sections, pp. 110-13.)

After determining the spell's effect and target, note them on the Spell Design Worksheet. Next, calculate the spell's Base Complexity. Begin by adding together the Complexity ratings of the spell's effect and target, as shown on the Spell Effects/Complexity and Spell Target/Complexity tables. This yields the spell's Base Complexity. Then apply all appropriate Complexity modifiers to the Base Complexity. Be sure to record all Complexity values and modifiers on your Spell Design Worksheet.

SPELL EFFECTS/COMPLEXITY TABLE

Effect of Spell	Complexity
Alteration	
Enhancement	2
Health	1
Manipulation	2
Protection	1
Weaken	2
Banishing	2
Conjuring	1
Control/Dominate	2
Creation	4
Damage	1
Dispelling	2
Divination	1
Summoning	1+
Transportation	1

SPELL TARGET/COMPLEXITY TABLE

Target	Complexity
Living Being	
Physical Body	3
Astral Form	4
Emotions/Thoughts	4
Exclusivity	–1
Inanimate Object	
Physical Pattern	2
Astral Pattern	3
Energy	
Magic	3
Light	2
Darkness	2
Elements	
Air	2
Earth	2
Fire	2
Metal	3
Plant	3
Water	2
Wood	2
Weather	4
True Elements	+1

DURATION COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS TABLE

Duration of Effect	Complexity Modifier
One (1) round	0
Sustained	
Rounds	+1
Minutes	+2
Hours	+3
Days	+4
Weeks	+5
Months	+6
Years	+7
Permanent	+8

Duration Modifiers

Any effect with a sustained duration adds a modifier to the spell's Base Complexity according to the Duration Complexity Modifiers Table. For example, a spell with a duration measured in minutes adds 2 to the spell's Complexity. Note that spells with a duration of 1 round (such as most combat spells) do not have Complexity modifiers.

Area of Effect Modifiers

If a spell affects a single target, add 1 to the Complexity. For spells that affect multiple targets, add 2 to the Complexity. For spells that affect specific areas, consult the Area of Effect Complexity Modifiers Table for suggested Complexity modifiers. These modifiers are cumulative.

Multiple/Special Effect Modifiers

For a spell that uses multiple effects, add a +2 Complexity modifier plus the appropriate Complexity modifier for each specific effect.

AREA OF EFFECT/COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS TABLE

Area of Effect	Complexity Modifier
10 square feet	+2
10 X 10 feet	+4
10 X 10 yards	+6
10 X 100 yards	+8
1 x 1 mile	+9
10 X 10 miles	+10
10 X 100 miles	+12
Single target	+1
Multiple targets	+2

The Base Complexity of a spell that transforms a living target into another form and damages the target would be 12.

Effects	
Manipulation	2
Damage	1
Target	
Physical body of a living being	3
Duration	
Sustained/hours	+3
Area of Effect	
Single target	+1
Multiple/Special Effects	
Multiple effects	+2
FINAL BASE COMPLEXITY	**12**

Certain special effects, such as fear and immobilization, also increase a spell's Complexity. For each of these special effects, add 2 to the Complexity; if the target can resist the special effect with a Willpower Test, increase the Complexity by 1 rather than 2. The specific Complexity modifier of the effect (i.e., damage, control, manipulation and so on) applies as well.

If a spell is designed to cause additional Wounds beyond those that may result from the spell's damage, add 1 to the spell Complexity for each additional Wound.

If mystic armor reduces the spell's damage, add 2 to the Complexity. If no type of armor reduces the damage, add 3 to the Complexity. No Complexity modifier applies if physical armor reduces a spell's damage.

Many spells are illusory—they create the illusion of an effect, rather than a real effect. These illusory effects can be dispelled by Sensing and Disbelief tests (p. 166, **ED**). Whenever an illusionist designs such a spell, subtract 1 from the Complexity. Non-illusionist magicians (elementalists, nethermancers and wizards) find such spells more difficult to create. Whenever one of these magicians designs a spell with an illusory effect, add 2 to the Complexity.

MULTIPLE/SPECIAL EFFECTS COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS TABLE

Effect	Complexity Modifier
Multiple Effects	+2
Special Effects	+2
If resisted by Willpower	+1
Special Damage	
Per additional Wound	+1
Armor Protection	
Physical armor reduces damage	0
Mystic armor reduces damage	+2
No armor reduces damage	+3
Illusory Effect	
Spell designed by illusionist	–1
Spell designed by non-illusionist	+2

Example: Flame Strike Spell

Sharon, playing a Seventh Circle dwarf elementalist, decides to create a new spell that hurls a bolt of flame at a target. She calls the spell Flame Strike.

First, Sharon must choose the spell's effect. That's easy—damage. Next, she must determine the spell's target. Again, that's simple—the physical body of a living being. She decides the spell will strike at only 1 target at a time, and that physical armor will protect against its damage. The duration of the spell is only 1 round, because the spell is designed to simply strike its target and cause damage. The spell has no special or multiple effects, so its Base Complexity is 5.

Effect: Damage	1
Target: Physical body of a living being	3
Duration: 1 round	0
Area of Effect: Single target	+1
Armor Protection	
Physical armor reduces damage	0
FINAL BASE COMPLEXITY	**5**

STEP 2: DETERMINE THE SPELL CIRCLE

After determining the spell's effect, target and Base Complexity, determine the spell's Circle. The Circle determines the maximum values of the spell's effect, range, duration and Casting Difficulty, and determines the Base Difficulty Numbers for the tests required to weave the spell's characteristics. The Circle also determines the spell's Base Thread Number, Base Thread Weaving Difficulty, and Base Reattuning Difficulty.

A spell's initial Circle is equal to its Base Complexity. If the initial spell Circle does not exceed the designer's own Circle, the designer may use the Base Complexity as the spell's final Complexity and proceed to determine the spell's Base Thread Number, Thread Weaving Difficulty and Reattuning Difficulty. If the spell Circle exceeds his own, he must lower it so that it is equal to or lower than his own Circle.

The designer also may choose to lower the spell's Circle before proceeding, because a lower spell Circle makes the spell easier to cast. In general, however, the methods by which a spell's Circle may be decreased restrict the spell in some way (see **Adjusting the Spell Circle,** below).

After determining the spell's Circle and final Complexity, note those values on the Spell Design Worksheet. These two values are used throughout the rest of the spell design process.

Adjusting the Spell Circle

The designer may adjust a spell's Circle five ways: by increasing the spell's Base Complexity; decreasing the spell's Base Complexity; choosing to make the spell a ritual spell; adding specific, required components to the spell; or by imposing restrictions on the spell. The spell designer may use one or more of these methods to adjust the Circle of a single spell. Note any adjustments to the spell Circle on the Spell Design Sheet.

Increase Spell Complexity: For every 1-point increase to the spell's Complexity, reduce the spell Circle by 1. Note that increasing the spell's Complexity makes the spell more difficult to create, while increasing the spell's Circle makes it harder to cast.

Decrease Spell Complexity: For every 1-point decrease to the spell's Complexity, increase its Circle by 1.

Ritual Spells: A spell's Circle may also be reduced by making the spell a ritual spell (see **Ritual Magic,** p. 98 in **Other Types of Magic**), as shown on the Circle Adjustment Table. This option offers two primary disadvantages: weaving each thread required to cast a ritual spell may take several hours, days, weeks or longer, depending on the time requirements the magician sets when designing the spell; and all ritual spells require a minimum of 3 threads. The magician must determine the thread-weaving time requirements when designing the spell, and cannot change the time required to weave each thread without redesigning the entire spell.

Spell Components: Adding a required component to a spell may reduce a spell's Circle by 1. In order to qualify as a legitimate way to reduce the spell Circle, however, the component should make casting the spell more difficult in some way. For example, a spell might require that the spellcaster perform a sequence of intricate hand gestures or movements or that he wield a physical object. The Earth Dart spell, for example, requires the magician to gather a handful of dirt before casting the spell. Verbal commands or spoken formulas do not satisfy the spirit of this rule because they do not appreciably hinder the spellcaster.

Restrictions: A spell's Circle may also be reduced by restricting the effect or conditions under which the spell may be cast. Any restriction reduces the spell's Circle by 1. The Spirit Grip spell, for example, cannot be cast on sacred ground or ground that has been proofed against spirits, and the Pass Ward spell must be cast within 7 or fewer rounds.
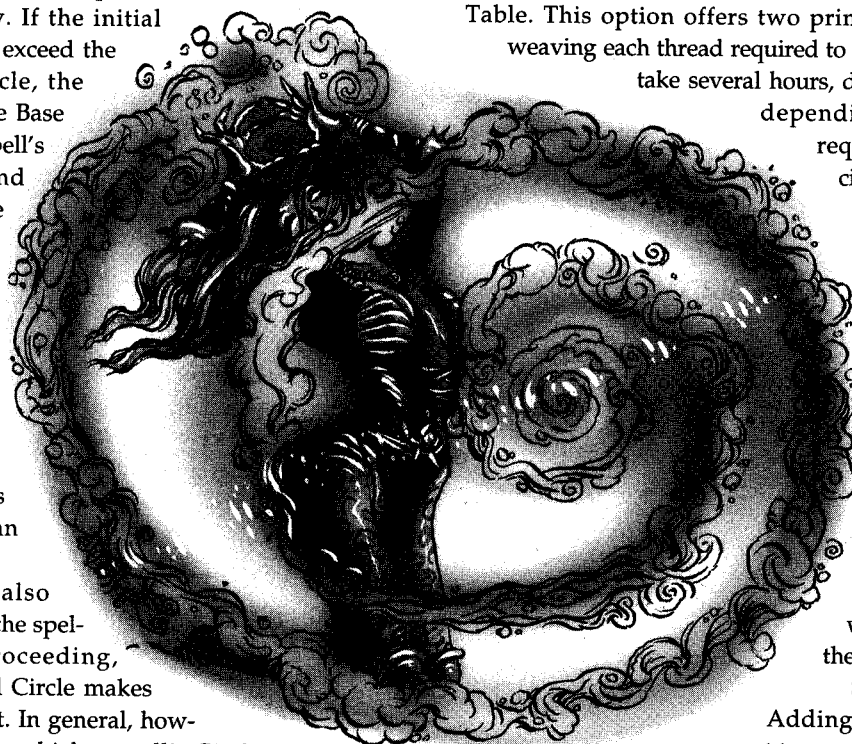
CIRCLE ADJUSTMENT TABLE

Factor	Adjustment
Increase spell Complexity	Reduce Circle by equal number
Decrease spell Complexity	Increase Circle by equal number
Ritual Spell	
1 thread per hour	Reduce Circle by 1
1 thread per day	Reduce Circle by 2
1 thread per week	Reduce Circle by 3
1 thread per month	Reduce Circle by 4
1 thread per year	Reduce Circle by 5
Required component	Reduce Circle by 1
Restriction	Reduce Circle by 1

Base Thread Number

The Base Thread Number is the minimum number of threads needed to cast the spell. A spell's Circle determines its Base Thread Number, as shown on the Base Thread Number Table, though this number may be reduced when the adept empowers the spell pattern, depending on how well the magician weaves the pattern. In addition, any spell with a duration expressed in days, weeks, months or years requires additional threads, as shown on the Additional Threads for Duration Table. Record the Base Thread Number on the Spell Design Worksheet.

ADDITIONAL THREADS FOR DURATION TABLE

Unit of Duration	Additional Threads Required
Days	1
Weeks	2
Months	3
Years	4

BASE THREAD NUMBER TABLE

Spell Circle	Base Thread Number
1–5	Circle
6–8	Circle – 1
9–10	Circle – 2
11–12	Circle – 3
13–15	Circle – 4

BASE THREAD WEAVING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Spell Circle	Base Thread Weaving Difficulty
1–3	Circle + 7
4–10	Circle + 9
11–12	Circle + 11
13–15	Circle + 13

Base Thread Weaving Difficulty

The Base Thread Weaving Difficulty is the Base Difficulty Number for weaving threads to the spell when casting. A spell's Circle determines its Base Thread Weaving Difficulty, as shown on the Base Thread Weaving Difficulty Table, though this number may be reduced when the adept empowers the spell pattern, depending on how well the magician weaves the pattern. Record the Base Thread Weaving Difficulty on the Spell Design Worksheet.

Base Reattuning Difficulty

The Base Reattuning Difficulty is the Base Difficulty Number for reattuning the spell to a matrix when using Reattuning on the Fly (p. 154, **ED**). A spell's Circle determines its Base Reattuning Difficulty, as shown on the Base Reattuning Difficulty Table, though this number may be reduced when the adept empowers the spell pattern, depending on how well the magician weaves the pattern. Record the Base Reattuning Difficulty on the Spell Design Worksheet.

BASE REATTUNING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Spell Circle	Base Reattuning Difficulty
1–3	Circle + 15
4–10	Circle + 16
11–12	Circle + 17
13–15	Circle + 18

Example: Flame Strike Spell

Sharon's Flame Strike spell has a Base Complexity of 5, so its initial Circle is 5 as well. However, she wants the spell to have as low a Circle as possible—no higher than Circle 3, and if possible, Circle 2 or 1. She begins to reduce the spell Circle by adding a required component to the spell. She decides that an existing source of fire is needed to cast the spell. That component reduces the spell's Circle to 4. She doesn't want to make the spell a ritual spell or put restrictions on it, so she decides to raise its Complexity by 2 points, which lowers the spell's Circle by 2 levels—now Flame Strike is a Circle 2 spell with a Complexity rating of 7. She notes these figures on her Spell Design Worksheet. Then she consults the appropriate tables and determines that Flame Strike has a Base Thread Number of 2, a Base Thread Weaving Difficulty of 9, and a Base Reattuning Difficulty of 17. Before moving on to the next step, Sharon notes these numbers on her Spell Design Worksheet.

STEP 3: WEAVE THE SPELL CHARACTERISTICS

The spell's primary characteristics—effect, range, duration and Casting Difficulty—are determined by making a Thread Weaving Test for each characteristic. In addition, the designer must spend a base time of 1 week, working 10 hours per day, to weave each characteristic.

Record the success levels achieved on each test on the Spell Design Worksheet, because these levels affect steps later in the spell design process. If any test fails, the spell designer may repeat that test, but for each additional attempt he must add 1 to the Difficulty Number. These penalties are cumulative; if a magician fails a test 3 times, he would have to add 4 to the Difficulty Number to make a fourth attempt. The spell designer must spend the standard base time for each repeated test as well.

Base Difficulty Numbers for Spell Characteristics

Consult the Spell Characteristics/Base Difficulty Number Table for the Base Difficulty Number of the Thread Weaving Tests. For a spell with a Complexity Rating higher than 15, the Base Difficulty Number equals the Complexity rating + 11. For example, a spell with a Complexity of 17 would have a Base Difficulty Number of 28. Record the Base Difficulty Number on the Spell Design Worksheet.

SPELL CHARACTERISTICS/BASE DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Spell Complexity	Base Difficulty Number
1	5
2	7
3	8
4	10
5	11
6	13
7	14
8	16
9	17
10	19
11	20
12	22
13	23
14	25
15	26
16+	Complexity + 11

Example: Flame Strike Spell

Sharon consults the Spell Characteristics/Base Difficulty Number Table and learns that her Flame Strike spell, which has a Complexity of 7, uses a Base Difficulty Number of 14. She notes the figure on her Spell Design Worksheet.

Thread Weaving Test Step Bonuses

Spell designers may add a bonus to their Thread Weaving step for any test made to weave the spell characteristics by taking extra time to perform the test or by doing spell research.

Taking Extra Time: The step bonuses provided by

EXTRA TIME TABLE

Total Time	Step Bonus
2 weeks	+1
4 weeks	+2
6 weeks	+3
2 months	+4
3 months	+5
5 months	+6
8 months	+7
1 year	+8
2 years	+9
3 years	+10
5 years	+12
+2 years	+2

taking extra time to make Thread Weaving Tests are shown on the Extra Time Table. (The times listed on the Extra Time Table represent the total time spent on each test.) The magician need not devote the same amount of extra time to each of the spell's characteristics. For example, a magician may spend 1 week weaving a spell's effect, 1 month on its duration, 1 month on its range, and 2 weeks on its Casting Difficulty. In this case, the magician would gain a different step bonus for each test.

Spell Research: Spell designers may also gain step bonuses for their Thread Weaving Tests by boosting their spell research with Perception-based Half-Magic Tests. To gain this bonus, the designer makes a Half-Magic Test against the spell's Base Difficulty Number for each characteristic.

Each success level achieved on a Half-Magic Test adds 1 step to the magician's Thread Weaving Test for the characteristic. For example, an Average success grants a +1 step bonus, a Good success grants a +2 bonus, and so on. The spell designer may make only one Half-Magic Test for each spell characteristic.

Bonuses from spell research can be even more effective when a group of magicians works together. See **Group Spell Research**, page 131, for rules on working in groups.

Effect

A spell's effect is the game mechanic used to quantify what the spell does to its target. Basically, effects may be divided into two types. The first type provides a formula used to calculate the Effect step used for the spell's Effect Test or the talent/ability bonus the spell provides the spellcaster or target (see **Determine Spell Effect,** p. 153, **ED**). For effects of this type, the Thread Weaving Difficulty Number to weave this characteristic equals the spell's Base Difficulty Number plus the step bonus listed under Effect. For example, a spell with a Base Difficulty Number of 16 and an Effect of "Willforce + 6" would have an Effect Thread Weaving Difficulty Number of 22.

The maximum possible bonus the spell's effect may grant equals the spell's Circle plus 5.

The second type of effect is simply a specified result. For example, the effect of the Putrefy spell (p. 175, **ED**) is simply "putrefies food." For effects of this type, the gamemaster chooses the Difficulty Number. Use the spell's Base Difficulty Number plus 3 as the average. If the effect is fairly innocuous, use the Base Difficulty Number plus 1 or 2. For spells that produce more dramatic effects, use the Base Difficulty Number plus 4 or 5.

Example: Flame Strike Spell

Sharon wants her Circle 2 Flame Strike spell to do as much damage to its target as possible, so she assigns it an Effect of Willforce + 7 steps (maximum spell effect equals spell's Circle + 5). That means the Effect Thread Weaving Difficulty Number for the spell is 21 (Base Difficulty Number 14 + 7).

Sharon uses Karma when she makes the Thread Weaving Test for the spell's effect, and the test yields a result of 22. That's an Average success, which counts as 1 success level. She records the spell's effect and the test success level on her Spell Design Worksheet.

EFFECT THREAD WEAVING DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Effect	Difficulty Number
Bonus to Willforce	Base Difficulty Number + bonus
Bonus to talent/ability	Base Difficulty Number + bonus
Specified result	Base Difficulty Number + 1–5, at gamemaster's discretion

RANGE DIFFICULTY NUMBERS TABLE

Range	Difficulty Number
Self	Base Difficulty Number + 0
Touch	Base Difficulty Number + 2
1 yard	Base Difficulty Number + 5
5–10 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 6
15–25 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 8
30–40 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 10
50–60 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 12
70–80 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 14
100–120 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 16
150–200 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 18
250–500 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 20
1,000 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 21
2,000 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 22
5,000 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 23
Miles	See text

Range

A spell's range describes the distance from the spellcaster within which the spell affects targets. For example, a spell with a Range of 100 yards affects targets up to 100 yards away from the spellcaster.

Spell ranges include Self (the spell affects only the spellcaster), Touch (the spellcaster must touch the target), or a specific distance.

A spell's Circle determines its maximum range. Spells with ranges of up to 1,000 units of measurement (yards, miles) must be at least Circle 5, and spells with ranges of 5,000 units of measurement or more must be at least Circle 10. Spells with ranges measured in miles must be at least Circle 7.

The Difficulty Number for a spell's Range Thread Weaving Test varies according to the spell's range, as shown on the Range Difficulty Numbers Table. For spells with ranges measured in miles, use the Difficulty Number for the same number of yards plus 17. For example, the Difficulty Number for a spell with a Range of 5 yards is the spell's Base Difficulty Number plus 6, while the Thread Weaving Difficulty Number of a spell with a Range of 5 miles would be the spell's Base Difficulty Number plus 22.

Example: Flame Strike Spell

Sharon wants her magician to be able to use the Flame Strike spell to hit targets before they can get close enough to engage in melee combat. She decides a Range

of 30 yards is adequate. Her spell has a Base Difficulty Number 14, so that gives her a Difficulty Number of 24 for the Range Thread Weaving Test. She decides to spend 2 months on the test, which provides her a +4 step bonus for the test. She uses Karma for the test, and achieves a result of 35—a Good success. That counts as 2 success levels, which she records on her Spell Design Worksheet along with the spell's range.

Duration

A spell's duration is the length of time the spell's effect lasts. All durations are expressed in units of time, such as rounds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months or years. The spell's Circle limits the unit of time that can be used in the spell's duration, as shown in the Duration Units/Minimum Circles Table.

DURATION UNITS/MINIMUM CIRCLES TABLE

Duration Unit	Minimum Circle
Minutes	1
Hours	2
Days	3
Weeks	5
Months	7
Years	9

The Difficulty Number of the Thread Weaving Test used to weave the duration characteristic of a spell varies according to the units used to express the duration and the number of units, as shown on the Duration Difficulty Number Table. If the formula for a spell's duration includes the spellcaster's rank—"Spellcaster's Rank + 5 minutes," for example—add 3 to the Difficulty Number.

For example, a spell with a Complexity of 8 and a Duration of "Rank + 7 minutes" would require a Difficulty Number of 32 for the Duration Thread Weaving Test:

Base Difficulty Number	16
Unit: minutes	6
Number of units	7
Based on rank	3
DURATION DIFFICULTY NUMBER	**32**

DURATION DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Unit of Duration	Difficulty Number*
Rounds	Base Difficulty Number + 1 + number of units
Minutes	Base Difficulty Number + 6 + number of units
Hours	Base Difficulty Number + 18 + number of units
Days	Base Difficulty Number + 24 + number of units
Weeks	Base Difficulty Number + 32 + number of units
Months	Base Difficulty Number + 35 + number of units
Years	Base Difficulty Number + 42 + number of units

*For durations based on spellcaster's rank, add 3 to Difficulty Number.

CASTING DIFFICULTY/DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Casting Difficulty	Difficulty Number
Target's Spell Defense	Base Difficulty Number + 8
2–4	Base Difficulty Number + 10
5–6	Base Difficulty Number + 9
7–8	Base Difficulty Number + 8
9–10	Base Difficulty Number + 7
11+	Base Difficulty Number + 6

Example: Flame Strike Spell

Sharon wants her Flame Strike spell to simply damage her character's opponent when it hits its target, a Duration of 1 round. Her spell has a Base Difficulty Number of 14, and so the duration of 1 round adds up to a Duration Difficulty Number of 16. She uses Karma on the Thread Weaving Test and gets a result of 23. That's an Average success and counts as 1 success level, which she records on her Spell Design Worksheet along with the spell's duration.

Casting Difficulty

A spell's Casting Difficulty is the Difficulty Number used for the test made to cast the spell. For most spells, the Casting Difficulty equals the Spell Defense of the target. Other spells have predetermined Difficulty Numbers, usually based on the spell's target. The minimum Casting Difficulty is 2.

The Difficulty Number used in the Thread Weaving Test for a spell's Casting Difficulty varies according to the spell's Casting Difficulty, as shown on the Casting Difficulty/Difficulty Number Table.

Example: Flame Strike Spell

The target's Spell Defense is the Casting Difficulty of Sharon's character's Flame Strike spell. The spell has a Base Difficulty Number of 14, so that means the Difficulty Number for the Casting Difficulty Thread Weaving Test is 22. She uses Karma on the test and achieves a result of 22. This Average success counts as 1 success level, which Sharon notes on the Spell Design Worksheet along with the spell's Casting Difficulty.

STEP 4: MAKE THE SPELLCASTING TEST

After weaving the spell's characteristics, the spell designer must join these four spell elements together and complete the spell pattern by making a Spellcasting Test. The Difficulty Number for the test varies according to the spell's Complexity, as shown on the Spell Pattern/Difficulty Number Table. Making the Spellcasting Test to complete the spell pattern requires 1 week of 10-hour days.

The Difficulty Number for the Spellcasting Test can be reduced in two ways. First, the designer can spend any or all of the success levels achieved on the tests made for the spell's characteristics, reducing the Difficulty Number by 3 for each success level spent. Alternatively, the Difficulty Number can be reduced by 5 for each thread added to the spell's Base Thread Number.

To improve his chances of succeeding at the Spellcasting Test, the spell designer can spend additional time for this test, just as for the characteristic Thread Weaving Tests. The designer gains the same step bonus according to the Extra Time Table, p. 121.

On the Spell Design Worksheet, record the number of success levels earned on this test. Like the success levels from the characteristic tests, these will be used later in the spell design process. If the Spellcasting Test fails, the spell pattern is ruined. The spell's characteristics must be woven again, and any success levels from previous characteristic tests are lost.

SPELL PATTERN/DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Spell Complexity	Difficulty Number
1	13
2	14
3	16
4	17
5	19
6	20
7	22
8	23
9	25
10	26
11	28
12	29
13	31
14	32
15	34
16+	Spell Complexity + 19

Example: Flame Strike Spell

At this point, Sharon's character has completed weaving the four characteristics of the Flame Strike spell pattern and is ready to complete the pattern. The spell has a Complexity of 7, which means the Difficulty Number for the Spellcasting Test is 22.

Sharon decides to use 1 of the success levels she achieved during the characteristic Thread Weaving Tests, which lowers the Difficulty Number to 19. Before making her Spellcasting Test, she notes that only 4 total success levels remain from her characteristic tests.

Sharon wants to be sure the Spellcasting Test succeeds, so she spends 2 months on this step. That gives her a +4 step bonus for the test. She uses Karma on the test and achieves a result of 31, an Excellent success. That leaves her with a total of 7 success levels, which she notes on the Spell Design Worksheet.

STEP 5: EMPOWER THE SPELL PATTERN

Once the spell pattern is successfully woven together, the last step is to empower the spell pattern. At this point, the designer may adjust the spell's Base Thread Number, Base Thread Weaving Difficulty and Base Reattuning Difficulty ratings so the spell can be cast more easily; he also must spend Legend Points to empower the spell's pattern and write the spell's description. To adjust the Base

Thread Number, Base Thread Weaving Difficulty, and Base Reattuning Difficulty ratings, the spell designer must spend the success levels he achieved on the Spellcasting Test made to complete the spell pattern and the Thread Weaving Tests made to weave the spell's characteristics.

Adjusting the Thread Number

The spell's Base Thread Number may be reduced by 1 for every 2 success levels spent. However, reducing the number of threads from 1 to 0 requires 3 success levels. If a spell's thread number is reduced to 0, the spell no longer has a Thread Weaving Difficulty Number.

Adjusting the Thread Weaving Difficulty Number

The Thread Weaving Difficulty Number may be reduced by 3 for each success level spent. This number cannot be reduced below 2 unless the number of threads has been reduced to 0. In this case, the spell no longer has a Thread Weaving Difficulty Number.

Adjusting the Reattuning Difficulty Number

The Reattuning Difficulty Number may be reduced by 3 for each success level spent, to a minimum of 2.

Spending Legend Points

To empower the spell pattern, the magician must spend a number of Legend Points based on the spell's

SPELL LEGEND POINT TABLE

Spell Circle	Legend Point Cost
1	100
2	200
3	300
4	500
5	800
6	1,300
7	2,100
8	3,400
9	5,500
10	8,900
11	14,400
12	23,300
13	37,700
14	61,000
15	98,700

Circle, as shown on the Spell Legend Point Table.

Writing the Spell Description

After empowering the spell by spending the appropriate Legend Points, the spell designer must write a description of the spell according to the spell description format used in the **Earthdawn** rulebook. The gamemaster should review the description to ensure the spell's effects have been properly described. At this point, assume that the character who designed the spell has inscribed the spell into his grimoire, which allows him to teach the spell to other magicians of his Discipline.

Example: Flame Strike Spell

Sharon can now adjust the Flame Strike spell using the 7 success levels from the Thread Weaving and Spellcasting tests made to create the spell. First, she uses 5 success levels to reduce the spell's Thread Number from 2 to 0 (2 levels to reduce it from 2 to 1, 3 more levels to reduce it to 0). The spell now has a Thread Number of 0, so its Weaving Difficulty Number no longer applies. That leaves her 2 success levels, which she uses to reduce the spell's Reattuning Difficulty Number from 17 to 11.

Finally, Sharon's character spends the required 200 Legend Points to empower the spell, then writes a spell description for the gamemaster's approval.

Flame Strike, Second Circle Elementalist Spell
> *Weaving Difficulty: NA/11*
> *Threads: 0*
> *Range: 30 yards   Duration: 1 round*
> *Effect: Willforce + 6*
> *Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense*
> *The Flame Strike spell enables an elementalist to strike a target with a bolt of flame. To use the spell, the elementalist must first possess a source of flames such as a torch or a campfire. The elementalist makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the Spellcasting Test succeeds, the elementalist makes an Effect Test to determine the damage caused to the target.*

The following example shows how to use the spell design system to create a slightly more complex spell. For ease of reference, consult the spell design tables at the end of the book as you read through the example.

Spell Design Worksheet

Spell Name *Preserve Food, Nethermancer*

choose spell effect/target

1

Effect _Alteration/Protection_
Target _Physical Pattern of an Inanimate Object._

Complexity rating _1_
Complexity rating _2_
Discipline/Effect Complexity modifier _0_
Discipline/Mechanism Complexity modifier _0_

Duration _Rank Days_
Area of Effect _10 sq. feet_
Multiple/Special Effects _—_

Complexity modifier _4_
Complexity modifier _2_
Complexity modifier _0_

Base Complexity _9_

Determine spell circle

2

Circle (same as Base Complexity) _9_
Circle adjustments _-6_
Adjusted Circle _3_   Adjusted Base Complexity _15_

Base Thread Number _4_
Base Thread Weaving Difficulty _10_
Base Reattuning Difficulty _18_

weave spell characteristics

3

Base Difficulty Number _26_
Effect _Preserve Food from Spoiling._

Modified Difficulty Number _29_
Step bonuses _+5_
Number of success levels _2_

Range _Touch_
Modified Difficulty Number _28_
Step bonuses _+5_
Number of success levels _2_

Duration _Spellcaster's Rank/Days_
Modified Difficulty Number _63_
Step bonuses _+5_
Number of success levels _1_

Casting Difficulty _2_
Modified Difficulty Number _34_
Step bonuses _+5_
Number of success levels _2_

Example: Preserve Food Spell

Bryan, playing an Eighth Circle troll nethermancer named Morvon, wishes to create a spell that preserves food for an extended period of time. Morvon has Rank 8 in both Thread Weaving (Nethermancy) and Spellcasting, giving him Step 15 in each. As a troll, he uses a D4 for Karma.

The effect of the spell is alteration/protection. Alteration effects are available to nethermancers at Circle 5, so Bryan can use this effect without difficulty. The effect itself has a Complexity Rating of 1. The target of the spell is the physical pattern of an inanimate object, in this case food, which has a Complexity Rating of 2.

Now Bryan must apply all the appropriate Complexity modifiers. His character is a nethermancer, so the effect receives no Discipline Complexity modifier. Bryan wants the spell's duration to be a number of days equal to the spellcaster's rank. That mean the duration unit is days, which adds a +4 modifier. He designates the spell's Area of Effect as 10 square feet, which provides a +2 Complexity modifier. The spell has no multiple or special effects, and it is not a damaging spell, so it receives no additional Complexity modifiers based on these factors. That leaves the spell with a Base Complexity 9.

Now Bryan moves on to the second step of the design process—determining the spell's Circle. As it stands, the spell has a Circle of 9, the same as its Base Complexity. Bryan's character has only reached Eighth Circle, so he has to reduce the spell's Circle by at least 1. He doesn't want to add any required components to the spell, place any restrictions on it, or cast it as a ritual spell, so he increases the spell's Complexity to 15. That 6-point increase reduces the Circle by 6 levels, to Circle 3. Consulting the appropriate tables, Bryan notes that the spell has a Base Thread Number of 3, Base Thread Weaving Difficulty of 10, and Base Reattuning Difficulty of 18, which he records on his Spell Design Worksheet.

Bryan begins the third step of the design process—weaving the spell's characteristics—by consulting the Spell Characteristics/Base Difficulty Number Table. His spell has a Complexity of 15, which gives it a Base Difficulty Number of 26. Bryan decides to take extra time and spend 3 months on each characteristic, which gives him a +5 step bonus on each test.

The gamemaster decides that the spell's effect—to preserve food—is fairly simple, so he gives it a Thread Weaving Difficulty Number modifier of +3. That means Bryan must make a Thread Weaving Test against a Difficulty Number 29 to weave the effect portion of the spell. He spends Karma on the test and achieves a result of 31, an Average success. That gives him 1 success level, which he records on his record sheet.

Bryan decides a Range of touch is adequate for the spell, which adds a +2 modifier. That produces a Difficulty Number of 28 for the Range Thread Weaving Test. Bryan spends Karma

on this test as well and obtains a result of 32, another Average success. He notes another 1 success level on his worksheet.

Bryan has already decided that the duration of his spell is going to be a number of days equal to the spellcaster's rank. That yields a Difficulty Number of 53 for the Duration Thread Weaving Test. Bryan obtains a result of 55, for an Average success. He records 1 success level on his worksheet.

The Casting Difficulty is the last characteristic Bryan must weave. He wants to cast the spell easily, so he chooses a Casting Difficulty of 2. That choice provides a Difficulty Number of 36 for the Thread Weaving Test. Bryan's a little nervous about his luck running out, so he spends an 6 extra weeks weaving this characteristic. That provides him with an additional +3 step bonus for the test, as shown on the Extra Time Table, for a total step bonus of +8. The test yields a result of 36, an Average success. That gives him 1 more success level, which he records on the Spell Design Worksheet. Together with the successes he scored on the Thread Weaving Tests for the previous characteristics, that gives him 4 success levels.

Now Bryan's ready for the fourth step of the design process—completing the spell pattern by making a Spellcasting Test. His spell has a Complexity of 15, which means the Difficulty Number for the test is 34. If this test fails, he loses all the work he's put into the spell—an outcome he really wants to avoid, so he decides to lower the test Difficulty Number. He can't afford to spend extra time on the test, so he spends 2 of his success levels to lower the number by 6. Then he adds 1 more thread to the spell's Base Thread Number, which lowers the test's Difficulty Number by 5, for a final Difficulty Number of 23. Bryan gets a 25 on his Spellcasting Test, an Average success. That counts for 1 success level, which he notes on his worksheet.

All that remains is the fifth and final step of the process—empowering the pattern. Bryan has a total of 3 success levels remaining from the tests he made to complete the spell and weave its characteristics, so he uses 2 of those success levels to reduce the spell's Thread Number to 3. With the remaining success, he lowers the spell's Thread Weaving Difficulty to 7. Then he spends 300 Legend Points to empower the spell pattern and writes a spell description for his gamemaster's approval. The description would appear as follows.

Preserve Food, Third Circle Nethermancer Spell
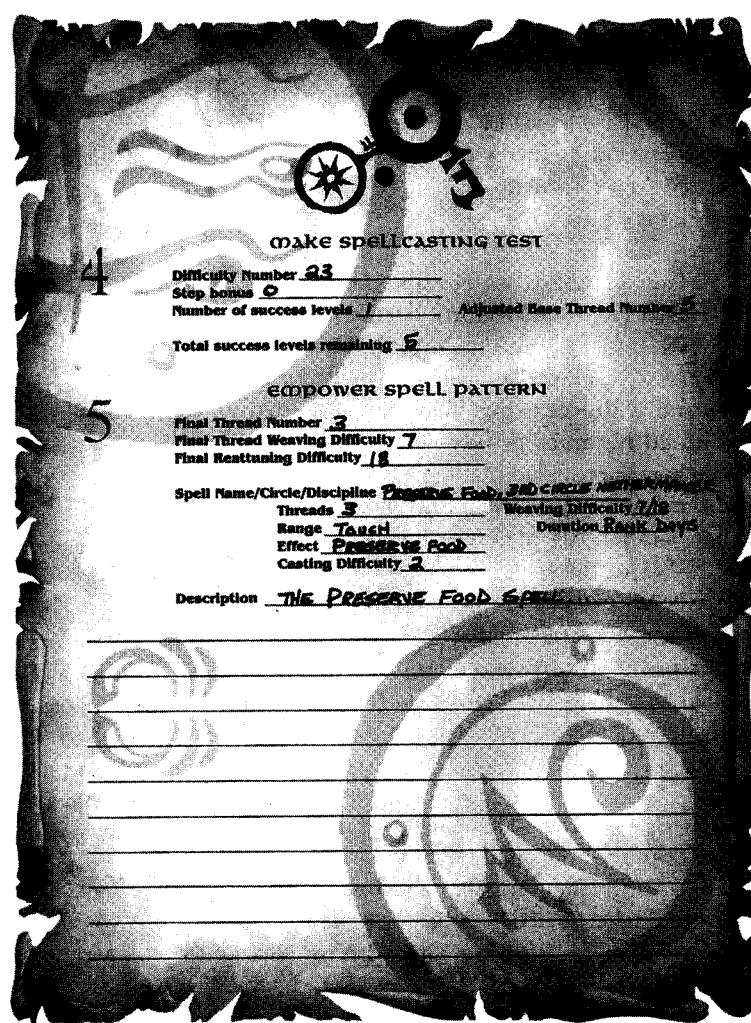
Threads: 3	**Weaving Difficulty:** 7/18
Range: Touch	**Duration:** Rank days

Effect: Prevents food from spoiling
Casting Difficulty: 2

The Preserve Food spell allows a nethermancer to preserve food for several days. The nethermancer must touch the food while weaving the threads for the spell, which can preserve as much food as can fit on a 2 foot by 5 foot table (10 square feet). If the Spellcasting Test succeeds, the spell maintains the food in the same condition as it was when the spell was cast. Each use of the spell lasts for a number of days equal to the nethermancer's Spellcasting rank. When the spell expires, the nethermancer may cast it again to continue preserving the food.

MAKE SPELLCASTING TEST

Difficulty Number 23
Step bonus 0
Number of success levels 1   Adjusted Base Thread Number 5
Total success levels remaining 5

EMPOWER SPELL PATTERN

Final Thread Number 3
Final Thread Weaving Difficulty 7
Final Reattuning Difficulty 18

Spell Name/Circle/Discipline Preserve Food, 3rd Circle Nethermancer
Threads 3   Weaving Difficulty 7/18
Range Touch   Duration Rank Days
Effect Preserve Food
Casting Difficulty 2

Description The Preserve Food Spell

ADVANCED SPELL DESIGN RULES

The advanced spell design rules offer players and gamemasters additional flexibility when designing spells. These rules add considerable complexity to the spell design system, and so gamemasters and players should be thoroughly familiar with the standard spell design system before incorporating these rules into their game.

EXCEEDING CIRCLE LIMITS

As noted in the basic spell design rules, a spell's Circle limits the spell's effect, range, duration and Casting Difficulty. By adjusting the spell's Base Thread Number during Step 3 of the spell design process (see p. 120), the designer may circumvent these restrictions, though every thread added will make the spell more difficult and time-consuming to cast.

Note that each additional thread benefits only one characteristic. For example, the designer must add 2 threads to the Base Thread Number in order to improve the spell's range by 1 increment and improve the spell's duration by 1 level.

Effect

Increasing a spell's Base Thread Number enables the designer to increase the Willforce bonus provided by the Effect without increasing the Difficulty Number of the Effect Thread Weaving Test, or to exceed the standard limit on the Willforce bonus. Each thread added to the Base Thread Number provides a +2 increase to the Willforce bonus, provided that the bonus does not exceed the standard limit (see **Effect**, p. 121 in **Step 2: Determine the Spell Circle**). Alternatively, the spell designer may add a thread to the Base Thread Number so that the Willforce bonus exceeds the standard limit by 1; this alteration increases the Effect Thread Weaving Test Difficulty Number per standard rules (see the Effect Thread Weaving Difficulty Number Table, p. 121). A designer can use only one of these options on a single spell.

Range

Each thread added to the spell's Base Thread Number improves the spell's range by 1 increment per the Range Difficulty Numbers Table (p. 122) with no increase to the Difficulty Number. For example, adding an extra thread to the Base Thread Number would increase the range of a spell from 15–25 yards to 30–40 yards, and the Difficulty Number for the Range Thread Weaving Test would remain the Base Difficulty Number + 8.

Duration

Each thread added to the spell's Base Thread Number improves the spell's duration unit by 1 level (from minutes to hours, for example) with no increase to the Difficulty Number (see the Duration Difficulty Number Table, p. 123). Alternatively, each additional thread allows the designer to increase the length of the duration (the number of units) by 2 with no increase to the Difficulty Number. In a third option, each additional thread lowers by 1 the minimum Circle required for the spell's desired duration (see Duration Units/Minimum Circles Table, p. 122). For example, a spell with a duration measured in weeks must be at least a Circle 5 spell under standard rules. Adding a thread to the spell's Base Thread Number enables the designer to create a Circle 4 spell with a duration measured in weeks. Only one of these three options may be used on a single spell.

Casting Difficulty

Each thread added to the spell's Base Thread Number lowers the spell's Casting Difficulty by 2 without increasing the Difficulty Number for the Casting Difficulty Thread Weaving Test (see the Casting Difficulty/Difficulty Number Table, p. 123).

MULTIPLE DISCIPLINE SPELL DESIGN

The standard spell design rules provided in this section describe the design of single-Discipline spells by single-Discipline magicians. Multi-Discipline magicians, however, may design single-Discipline and multi-Discipline spells. Rules for designing multi-Discipline spells appear below. When designing single-Discipline spells, multi-Discipline magicians should consider the following factors.

First, all Discipline-based limits on spell design still apply. A magician must be at Fifth Circle or higher in a Discipline to create spells of that Discipline. For example, a magician who is a Fifth Circle nethermancer and a Second Circle elementalist can create nethermancy spells, but not elementalist spells. In addition, the magician must have the Thread Weaving Spell Design talent knack in a Discipline before he can create spells of that Discipline (see **Thread Weaving Knacks**, p. 26 in **Thread Magic**). He also must have the Spell Design Spellcasting talent knack in a Discipline to cast spells of that Discipline (see **Spellcasting Knacks**, p. 32 in **Spell Magic**).

Second, a multi-Discipline magician must declare the Discipline of any single-Discipline spell he designs and the Discipline he is using to design the spell (referred to as his

design Discipline). Most often, the effect and mechanism of the spell will determine these choices. The magician may choose any spell effect available to him in any of his Disciplines (see Circle Availability/Discipline Table, p. 114), but if he uses an effect belonging to a Discipline other than his design Discipline, he may be forced to add a Complexity modifier to the spell's Base Complexity (see the Discipline/Complexity Modifiers Table, p. 113). Similarly, if the magician uses a spell mechanism of a Discipline other than his design Discipline, he must add a +2 Complexity modifier (see **Spell Effect and Mechanism,** p. 114).

Finally, the Discipline of the spell determines the Thread Weaving talent the magician must use to make the Thread Weaving Tests needed to weave the spell's characteristics (effect, range, duration and Casting Difficulty). For example, an illusionist/wizard designing an illusionist spell would have to use his Illusionist Thread Weaving talent (Illusion) for these tests.

Designing Multiple-Discipline Spells

Multi-Discipline magicians may also design multi-Discipline spells that incorporate effects from two of their Disciplines (see **Multi-Discipline Spells,** p. 35 in **Spell Magic** for more information on multi-Discipline spells).

When designing a multi-Discipline spell, a magician may incorporate several effects in a spell without incurring the standard +2 Complexity modifier for using multiple effects (see **Multiple/Special Effect Modifiers,** p. 117). However, the designer must still add the appropriate Complexity modifier for each individual effect.

When a magician designs a multi-Discipline spell, the spell's two Disciplines constitute his design Disciplines as well. He may use both design Disciplines when determining Complexity modifiers based on the spell's effect (see the Discipline/Complexity Modifiers Table, p. 113). For example, an illusionist/wizard designing an illusionist/wizard spell that incorporates the summoning effect can use the +1 Complexity modifier incurred by wizards using that effect. Additionally, the magician may use the mechanism of either of his design Disciplines without incurring a Complexity modifier. The magician may also use both his design Disciplines when determining which effects are available to him (see the Circle Availability/Discipline Table, p. 114).

Designing multi-Discipline spells entails special requirements as well. When creating each spell characteristic (effect, duration, range and Casting Difficulty), the designer must make two Thread Weaving Tests, one with the Thread Weaving talent of each of his design Disciplines. Both tests must succeed, but the designer may only add the success levels from one of the tests to the Spell Design Worksheet. In addition, two of the characteristics must be woven with the Thread Weaving talent of one design Discipline, and the other two characteristics must be woven using the Thread Weaving talent of the other design Discipline.

> Lauretta, an illusionist/nethermancer, is designing a spell that combines the control/dominate effects common to illusionist spells and the summoning effects common to nethermancer spells. As required, she makes two Thread Weaving Tests for each of the spell's characteristics, one with her illusionist Thread Weaving talent, and the other with her nethermancer Thread Weaving talent. She achieves two Average and two Good successes on her illusionist Thread Weaving Tests. Her nethermancer Thread Weaving Tests yield one Average success, two Good successes, and one Excellent success. She decides to use the two Good successes from her illusionist Thread Weaving Tests for the spell's effect and range portions of the spell. From the results of the spell's duration and Casting Difficulty tests, she uses a Good success and the Excellent success from her nethermancer Thread Weaving Tests.

As noted in the **Spell Magic** section of this book, multiple-Discipline spells must have Thread Numbers of at least 2, and the magician must weave 1 thread using the Thread Weaving talent of each of the spell's Disciplines.

When designing multi-Discipline spells with Thread Numbers higher than 2, a magician must divide the number of threads as evenly as possible between the spell's two Disciplines. For example, a nethermancer/wizard spell might have a Thread Number of 3/2. Casting such a spell would require 3 threads woven with Nethermancy (Thread Weaving), and 2 threads woven with Wizardry (Thread Weaving).

VARIABLE-THREAD SPELLS

Most spells in **Earthdawn** have a fixed thread number that represents the number of threads to be woven to the spell pattern before the spell can be cast. Variable-thread spells, however, do not have a fixed thread number. With most variable-thread spells the spellcaster varies the spell's effect by varying the number of threads he weaves to the spell pattern.

Variable-thread spells fall into three types: variable-effect spells, variable-duration spells, and ritual spells. All three types are rare and difficult to design. Any magician

designing a variable-thread spell must declare his intention to do so when choosing the effect of the spell. Variable-thread spells require special Complexity modifiers, as described in the following passages.

Variable-Effect Spells

Variable-effect spells may create a number of different effects, depending on the number of threads woven to the spell pattern. Examples of variable-thread spells include the Circle 10 elementalist spell Air Fortress (p. 77, **ED Companion**) and the Circle 6 elementalist spell Ricochet Attack (p. 164, **ED**). Ricochet Attack enables a magician to create a ball of astral energy that ricochets among several targets, striking each in turn. By varying the number of threads he weaves to the spell pattern, the spellcaster controls how many targets the spell strikes. At least 1 thread must be woven to a variable-effect spell before the spell can be cast.

During the spell design process, the magician must add a +2 Complexity modifier to the Base Complexity for the variable effect. The Base Thread Number of a variable-effect spell is based on the spell's Circle per standard design rules. For the spell to function as intended, however, the spell designer must reduce the Base Thread Number to 1, using standard design rules. If the designer cannot reduce the spell's Thread Number to 1, the spell cannot function as a variable-effect spell.

Variable-Duration Spells

Variable-duration spells produce effects whose durations may be controlled by varying the number of threads woven to the spell. The Circle 5 nethermancer spell Pass Ward (p. 180, **ED**) provides an example of a variable-duration spell. The duration of this spell is expressed as "Rank weeks (up to Rank years)." When the magician weaves 5 threads to the spell, it has a duration of Rank weeks. When the caster weaves 6 threads to the spell, its duration becomes Rank months. If the spellcaster weaves 7 threads to the spell, the spell's duration becomes Rank years.

When designing a variable-duration spell, a magician must designate the spell's minimum and maximum duration units—hours, days, weeks, months or years. The durations of all variable-duration spells must be based on the spellcaster's spellcasting Rank. For example, the minimum duration of the Pass Ward spell is "Rank weeks," while its maximum duration is "Rank years."

During the spell design process, the magician must add a +4 Complexity modifier to the Base Complexity for the variable durations.

Use the spell's *maximum* duration unit when determining the spell's duration Complexity modifier according to the Duration/Complexity Modifiers Table, page 116.

When determining the Difficulty Number for the spell's Duration Thread Weaving Test, use the spell's *minimum* duration unit (see the Duration Difficulty Number Table, p. 123).

The spell's Base Thread Number is based on the spell's Circle, per standard rules. Use the spell's maximum duration unit when consulting the Additional Threads for Duration Table, page 119, to determine any additional threads required. The spell's final thread number (see **Step 5: Empower the Spell Pattern**, p. 124) denotes the number of threads needed to cast the spell for its minimum duration. At this time, the designer should also set the spell's maximum thread number, which denotes the largest duration unit possible. For each unit of duration beyond the minimum, add 1 to the thread number. For example, the Pass Ward spell has a listed Thread Number of "5 (6, 7)."

The spell's maximum Thread Number is 7, so the spell's duration may never exceed Rank years.

Note that variable-duration spells may have minimum Thread Numbers of 0.

Ritual Spells

Ritual spells are complex spells that require long casting periods (see **Ritual Magic,** p. 98, for descriptions of ritual spells). Most ritual spells are also variable-effect spells.

During the spell design process, the designer must add a +2 Complexity modifier to the Base Complexity for the variable effects. In addition, all variable-effect ritual spells must have a minimum Thread Number of 3. The gamemaster determines the thread numbers required to produce the different effects of a variable-effect ritual spell.

GROUP SPELL RESEARCH

The standard spell design rules are designed for a single magician creating a spell. However, groups of magicians may aid a spell designer who chooses to perform spell research while creating a spell (see **Spell Research,** p. 121).

Magicians who aid a spell designer in this manner are called supporters. To participate in group spell research, all supporters must be of the same Discipline as the designer, and all must be capable of designing the spell themselves—each must be of at least Fifth Circle in the Discipline, and each must possess the required Spell Design talent knacks (see **Thread Weaving Knacks,** p. 26 and **Spellcasting Knacks,** p. 32).

Under the standard rules, a spell designer may perform spell research to boost his step numbers for the Thread Weaving Tests made to create the spell's characteristics. The designer does so by performing a Perception-based Half-Magic Test against the spell's Base Difficulty Number and using any successes as a step bonus for these tests.

During group spell research, each supporter provides a +1 step bonus to the designer for his Half-Magic Tests. The designer suffers a penalty, however, when the number of supporters exceeds a number equal to half his or her Perception-based Half-Magic step. Every supporter beyond this limit still provides a +1 step bonus but also adds 2 to the Difficulty Number of the designer's Half-Magic Test. This penalty reflects the difficulty of coordinating large numbers of magicians to perform simultaneous research on a single spell.

For example, a Circle 7 wizard with a Perception Step of 8 uses Step 12 for his Perception-based Half-Magic Test.

Six supporters, each providing a +1 step bonus, may help him without increasing the test's Difficulty Number. Each supporter more than 6, however, adds 2 to the Difficulty Number in addition to a +1 step bonus to the test.

NEW SPELLS

The following selection of new spells includes Discipline-specific versions of the Astral Sense, Detect Magic and Dispel Magic spells; several multi-Discipline spells; and three spells that originally appeared in the **Earthdawn** adventure **Shattered Pattern.**

The Discipline-specific versions of the Astral Sense, Detect Magic and Dispel Magic spells contain the designation [Discipline] in their titles. This designation indicates the type of magic the spell works against or the Discipline required to learn the spell. For example, an elementalist may use the Detect [Discipline] Magic spell to detect elementalist magic only.

ALTER LIFE

Circle 11 Nethermancer

Threads: Variable   **Weaving Difficulty:** 21/26
Range: Touch   **Duration:** Rank + 7 years
Effect: Alters a life form's pattern
Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

Alter Life is a variation of the Circle 9 spell Create Life. This spell can only be used to add to or increase the target's abilities or change the target's appearance. To use the spell, the spellcaster must submerge the target in a blood broth for the duration of the spell's casting.

The number of threads required by this spell depends on how the spellcaster wants to alter the target. For every ability added or enhanced, or aspect of appearance changed, the spellcaster must weave 1 thread. Each thread takes 1 hour to weave, and the spellcaster may attempt to weave only 1 thread for the spell each day. To increase a target's abilities, the blood broth must contain blood from a character or creature with the desired higher ability rating.

Once the nethermancer has woven all the required threads for the alterations to the target, he weaves 1 final thread to secure all the others. The spellcaster then makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the target rises from the blood broth, its true pattern altered by the magic of the spell.

Unlike the Create Life spell, Alter Life can be used on Name-givers and on either live or dead targets. However, corpses can have been dead for only three days or fewer before the spellcaster begins casting the spell. This spell reanimates dead targets, creating a form of cadaver man.

ANIMATE DEAD

Circle 10 Nethermancer

Threads: 3   **Weaving Difficulty:** 10/15
Range: Touch   **Duration:** Rank + 5 days
Effect: Creates cadaver men
Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

The Animate Dead spell is a variation of the Horror power of the same name. If the spellcaster makes a successful Spellcasting Test, the Animate Dead spell creates a cadaver man that remains under the spellcaster's control for the duration of the spell. The spellcaster can control the cadaver man from a distance of up to 500 yards. If the spellcaster wishes, he can extend the spell's duration with blood magic by taking 1 point of permanent damage. This keeps the cadaver man animated for a year and a day.

ASTRAL SENSE [DISCIPLINE]

Circle 3 Elementalist/Illusionist/Nethermancer

Threads: 2   **Weaving Difficulty:** 5/15
Range: 60 yards   **Duration:** 10 + Rank minutes
Effect: Willforce + 6
Casting Difficulty: 6 (see Astral Sense spell, p. 183, **ED**)

The Astral Sense [Discipline] spell enables elementalists, illusionists and nethermancers to sense presences in astral space. The spell works in the same manner as the Astral Sense spell (p. 183, **ED**).

DETECT [DISCIPLINE] MAGIC

Circle 2 Elementalist/Nethermancer
Circle 3 Illusionist

Threads: 2   **Weaving Difficulty:** 5/15
Range: 60 yards   **Duration:** 10 + Rank minutes
Effect: Willforce + 6
Casting Difficulty: 6 (see Astral Sense spell, p. 183, **ED**)

The Detect [Discipline] Magic spell enables elementalists, illusionists and nethermancers to detect magic performed by other adepts of their Discipline. For example, an elementalist can use the spell to detect elemental magic, such as the effects of elementalist spells or the presence of True elements. Elementalists may find the spell useful when trying to determine if an item is magical, because many magical items are enchanted with True elements. Illusionists may use the spell to detect illusion magic, such as the effects of illusionist spells or the presence of magical illusory effects. Nethermancers can use the spell to detect the effects of nethermancer spells, spirit powers and other nethermantic magic. Nethermancers can also use the spell to detect items enchanted with trapped spirits.

The spell works in the same manner as the Astral Sense spell (p. 183, **ED**).

DISPEL [DISCIPLINE] MAGIC

Circle 3 Elementalist/Illusionist/Nethermancer

Threads: 1   **Weaving Difficulty:** 6/13
Range: 60 yards   **Duration:** 1 round
Effect: Willforce
Casting Difficulty: 2

The Dispel [Discipline] Magic spell enables elementalists, illusionists and nethermancers to dispel only spells cast by other adepts of their Discipline. In all other ways, the spell works in the same manner as the Dispel Magic spell (p. 183, **ED**).

DISPEL MAGIC [DISCIPLINE]

Circle 5 Elementalist/Illusionist/Nethermancer

Threads: 1	**Weaving Difficulty:** 6/13
Range: 60 yards	**Duration:** 1 round
Effect: Willforce	

Casting Difficulty: 2

The Dispel Magic [Discipline] spell enables elementalists, illusionists and nethermancers to dispel any type of spell. The spell works in the same manner as the Dispel Magic spell (p. 183, **ED**).

DREAM REALM

Multi-Discipline: Circle 9 Illusionist/Nethermancer

Threads: 3/2	**Weaving Difficulty:** 17/25
Range: 1 mile	**Duration:** 5 + Rank minutes
Effect: Willforce + 2	

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

Created by the legendary human illusionist known as the Dreamwalker, the Dream Realm spell enables a magician to enter the dreams of a target.

The spell can be used against sleeping targets only. (The target may be sleeping naturally or under the influence of potions or magic.) If the target wakes during any part of the spellcasting, the spell fails. Dream Realm is a ritual spell, and weaving each required thread takes 1 hour. If the Spellcasting Test succeeds, the target automatically loses 1 Recovery Test, and the spellcaster makes an Effect Test. The test's result is the Difficulty Number for Willpower Tests the target may make to resist the spell and waken. The target may make 1 Willpower Test during each minute of the spell's duration.

The gamemaster creates the setting of the target's dream realm, based on the target's personality (see **Hidden Traits,** pp. 58–59, **ED**). The spellcaster may use other illusion spells to alter the dream setting or disguise himself. For example, a spellcaster could use the Monstrous Mantle spell to assume the form of some nightmare creature before entering a target's dream.

The target's dream becomes real to the spellcaster for all intents and purposes, and the spellcaster can be injured or even killed during the dream. The spell target can be injured during his dream as well, but any damage he takes is illusory. If the target dies in his dream, he loses 1 Recovery Test for that day and wakens automatically.

The actions of Name-givers in a dream are resolved using the same rules governing actions in astral space (see **Astral Space**, p. 60). In all other aspects, the spellcaster and the target may interact normally within the dream, and may use any of their talents, spells and even magical items against one another.

EPHEMERAL MAGIC

Multi-Discipline: Circle 8 Illusionist/Wizard

Threads: 2/2	**Weaving Difficulty:** 16/24
Range: 30 yards	**Duration:** Rank rounds
Effect: Willforce + 3	

Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

The Ephemeral Magic spell enables a spellcaster to dilute the spells of a target magician. Once the spell has been cast on a target, any spell cast by the target creates a mere illusion of its effect.

To cast the Ephemeral Magic spell, a magician makes a Spellcasting Test against the Spell Defense of his target. If the test succeeds, the spellcaster makes an Effect Test against the Dispel Difficulty of any spell the target casts. If the Effect Test succeeds, the target's spell creates only an illusion of its effect. The illusory effect receives the standard penalties and benefits of all illusion spells and can be disbelieved like any other illusion (see p. 166, **ED**).

HAUNTED FOREST

Multi-Discipline: Circle 8 Elementalist/Nethermancer

> **Threads:** 2/2   **Weaving Difficulty:** 15/24
> **Range:** 1 mile   **Duration:** Rank hours
> **Effect:** Transforms a woodland
> **Casting Difficulty:** 12

The Haunted Forest spell enables a magician to populate a targeted woodland with dark and hostile spirits from the netherworlds, creating a place dangerous to Name-givers and creatures alike. The spell affects a circular area of woodland or forest up to 1 mile in radius. If the

Spellcasting Test succeeds, the area becomes dark and foreboding. Visibility within the area is reduced to the range of sight possible at twilight. Trees and other plant life become twisted and gnarled and act as a Thorny Retreat spell (p.187, **ED**). All animals in the affected area become vicious and hostile. They will attack anyone who enters the area other than the spellcaster and a number of designated characters equal to the magician's Spellcasting rank.

ILLUSION

Circle 5 Illusionist

> **Threads:** 2   **Weaving Difficulty:** 11/21
> **Range:** 30 yards   **Duration:** 5 + Rank minutes
> **Effect:** Creates illusion
> **Casting Difficulty:** 2

The Illusion spell enables an illusionist to create illusions that fill an area up to 100 square feet. Illusions created with this spell must be simple, and so cannot include Name-givers or other complex images. For example, an illusory door could swing a few inches but not open or close entirely; an illusory banner might wave in the breeze but could not be removed.

After creating an illusion by successfully casting the spell, an illusionist can maintain the illusion beyond the spell's initial duration by making a second successful Spellcasting Test. This is considered a second casting of the spell, and the illusion remains in effect for another full duration.

Any character who interacts with an illusion created by this spell must immediately make a Sensing Test (p. 166, **ED**) using an appropriate ability. For example, if a character makes a Dexterity Test to open an illusory door, the Dexterity Test would serve as a Sensing Test.

MULTI-MIND DAGGER

Circle 6 Wizard

> **Threads:** Variable   **Weaving Difficulty:** 9/22
> **Range:** 30 yards   **Duration:** 1 round
> **Effect:** Willforce + 2
> **Casting Difficulty:** Target's Spell Defense (see text)

A variant of the Mind Dagger spell, the Multi-Mind Dagger spell enables a wizard to attack multiple targets at once. The wizard must declare the number of targets he intends to attack using the spell before he begins to weave threads for the spell, then he must weave a thread for each target. The wizard makes a single Spellcasting Test and compares the result to the Spell Defense of each target. If the test result equals or exceeds the target's Spell Defense, the target takes damage. The wizard makes a
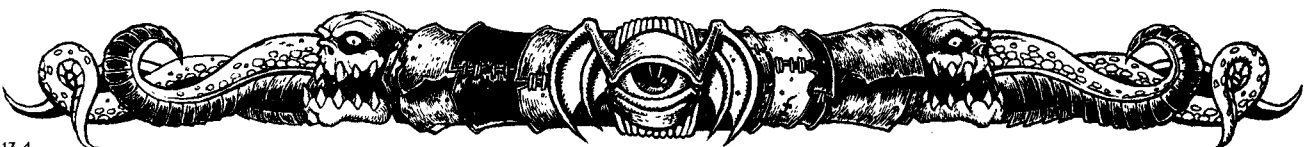
single Effect Test and applies the same damage to each affected target. Mystic armor protects against this damage. All targets must be within the spell's range and the spellcaster's field of vision.

SHATTER PATTERN
Circle 11 Nethermancer

Threads: 7	**Weaving Difficulty:** Target's Spell Defense/23
Range: Touch	**Duration:** See below

Effect: Willforce + 15
Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

The Shatter Pattern spell enables a nethermancer to disrupt and damage a target's pattern, thereby inflicting damage on the target or reducing the target's Defense ratings or attributes. The spellcaster weaves the threads for the spell *through* the target's pattern, but must achieve an Excellent success or better on each Thread Weaving Test. If any test achieves an Average or Good success, those threads are not fully integrated with the target's pattern and so the target does not suffer the spell's full effect.

Once the spellcaster has woven all the necessary threads, he makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the Spellcasting Test succeeds, the spellcaster makes an Effect Test and compares the result to the target's Spell Defense. The success level determines the potency of the spell's effect. On an Average success, the effect lasts a number of days equal to the spellcaster's rank. On a Good success, the effect lasts for a number of months equal to the spellcaster's rank. An Excellent success means the effect lasts for a number of years equal to the spellcaster's rank, and an Extraordinary success means the effect is permanent. If the spellcaster did not achieve an Excellent success or better on any of his Thread Weaving Tests, the Effect Test's success level drops by 1 level to a minimum of an Average success.

The result of the Effect Test also represents the number of points the spellcaster can use to weaken the target. The spellcaster can use each point to inflict 1 point of damage to the target or reduce the target's Physical Defense, Spell Defense, Social Defense or attribute steps by 1 point. The target also suffers total or near-total amnesia for the duration of the spell because his pattern has been weakened to the point of collapse. If the result of the Effect Test lowers all the target's Attribute steps to 0 and inflicts enough damage to the target to exceed the Death Rating, the target dies.

When examined astrally, the victim of this spell appears to have a shattered pattern. Only a Dispel Magic spell or the spellcaster's death can reverse the spell's effects (unless the spell's target has already died). Dispelling the Shatter Pattern spell requires a success level on a Dispel Magic Test equal to the success level earned by the spellcaster when he cast the spell against the target. Though a lower success level on a Dispel Magic Test will not heal the target's pattern, such a result helps the target by reversing some of the spell's effects. The result of the Dispel Magic Test becomes the number of points restored to the target, distributed evenly among all the abilities or ratings reduced by the spell.

Unless the magician makes the spell permanent, its effects wear off soon after its duration expires. Damage caused by the spell heals at a rate of 10 points per minute until all such damage is healed; Attribute steps and Defense Rating Points return at a rate of 1 per minute.

The Shatter Pattern spell can be used to lower the target's Spell Defense to make it easier to cast Alter Life on the same target. The weakening of the target's pattern also allows the spellcaster to add 2 steps to his Spellcasting Tests for the Alter Life spell.

TALENT REAVER
Multi-Discipline: Circle 12 Nethermancer/Wizard

Threads: 2/1	**Weaving Difficulty:** 23/35
Range: 30 yards	**Duration:** Varies (see below)

Effect: Willforce
Casting Difficulty: Target's Spell Defense

The Talent Reaver spell enables a magician to temporarily alter the pattern of the target so that the target cannot use one of his magical talents.

To use the spell, a spellcaster makes a Spellcasting Test against the target's Spell Defense. If the test succeeds, the spellcaster makes an Effect Test against a Difficulty Number equal to the Dispel Difficulty of the target's talent that he wishes to incapacitate (see **Dispel Magic,** p. 43). The Effect Test result determines the duration of the spell's effect. An Average success yields a duration of Rank hours; a Good success, a duration of Rank days; an Excellent success, a duration of Rank months; and an Extraordinary success, a duration of Rank years. The target cannot use the talent affected by the Talent Reaver spell during the spell's duration. However, the target immediately regains full use of the talent if the spell is dispelled or unraveled (see **Unraveling,** p. 31 in **Thread Magic**) or when the spell effect expires.

If the spellcaster's Effect Test yields a Poor success, the spellcaster loses his Spellcasting talent for a number of days equal to the rank of the target's talent that he sought to incapacitate.

SPELL DESIGN TABLES

CIRCLE AVAILABILITY/DISCIPLINE TABLE

Effect	Elementalist	Illusionist	Nethermancer	Wizard
Alteration	5	6	5	5
Banishing	6	10	6	7
Conjuring	5	5	5	5
Control/Dominate	7	5	5	5
Creation	11	NA	11	9
Damage	5	5	5	5
Dispelling	5	5	5	5
Divination	6	7	5	5
Summoning	5	9	5	6
Transportation	5	5	5	5

SPELL EFFECTS/COMPLEXITY TABLE

Effect of Spell	Complexity
Alteration	
Enhancement	2
Health	1
Manipulation	2
Protection	1
Weaken	2
Banishing	2
Conjuring	1
Control/Dominate	2
Creation	4
Damage	1
Dispelling	2
Divination	1
Summoning	1+
Transportation	1

DURATION/COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS TABLE

Duration of Effect	Complexity Modifier
One (1) round	0
Sustained	
Rounds	+1
Minutes	+2
Hours	+3
Days	+4
Weeks	+5
Months	+6
Years	+7
Permanent	+8

SPELL TARGET/COMPLEXITY TABLE

Target	Complexity
Living Being	
Physical Body	3
Astral Form	4
Emotions/Thoughts	4
Exclusivity	–1
Inanimate Object	
Physical Pattern	2
Astral Pattern	3
Energy	
Magic	3
Light	2
Darkness	2
Elements	
Air	2
Earth	2
Fire	2
Metal	3
Plant	3
Water	2
Wood	2
Weather	4
True Elements	+1

BASE THREAD NUMBER TABLE

Spell Circle	Base Thread Number
1–5	Circle
6–8	Circle – 1
9–10	Circle – 2
11–12	Circle – 3
13–15	Circle – 4

DISCIPLINE/COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS TABLE

Effect	Elementalist	Illusionist	Nethermancer	Wizard
Alteration	0	+1	0	0
Banishing	0	+2	0	+1
Conjuring	0	0	0	0
Control/Dominate	+1	0	0	0
Creation	+3	NA	+3	+2
Damage	0	0	0	0
Dispelling	+1	+1	+1	0
Divination	+1	+2	0	0
Summoning	0	+2	0	+1
Transportation	0	+1	+1	0

AREA OF EFFECT/COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS TABLE

Area of Effect	Complexity Modifier
10 square feet	+2
10 X 10 feet	+4
10 X 10 yards	+6
10 X 100 yards	+8
1 x 1 mile	+9
10 X 10 miles	+10
10 X 100 miles	+12
Single target	+1
Multiple targets	+2

MULTIPLE/SPECIAL EFFECTS
COMPLEXITY MODIFIERS TABLE

Effect	Complexity Modifier
Multiple Effects	+2
Special Effects	+2
If resisted by Willpower	+1
Special Damage	
Per additional Wound	+1
Armor Protection	
Physical armor reduces damage	0
Mystic Armor reduces damage	+2
No armor reduces damage	+3
Illusory Effect	
Spell designed by illusionist	–1
Spell designed by non-illusionist	+2

CIRCLE ADJUSTMENT TABLE

Factor	Adjustment
Increase spell Complexity	Reduce Circle by equal number
Decrease spell Complexity	Increase Circle by equal number
Ritual Spell	
1 thread per hour	Reduce Circle by 1
1 thread per day	Reduce Circle by 2
1 thread per week	Reduce Circle by 3
1 thread per month	Reduce Circle by 4
1 thread per year	Reduce Circle by 5
Required component	Reduce Circle by 1
Restriction	Reduce Circle by 1

ADDITIONAL THREADS FOR DURATION TABLE

Unit of Duration	Additional Threads Required
Days	1
Weeks	2
Months	3
Years	4

BASE THREAD WEAVING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Spell Circle	Base Thread Weaving Difficulty
1–3	Circle + 7
4–10	Circle + 9
11–12	Circle + 11
13–15	Circle + 13

BASE REATTUNING DIFFICULTY TABLE

Spell Circle	Base Reattuning Difficulty
1–3	Circle + 15
4–10	Circle + 16
11–12	Circle + 17
13–15	Circle + 18

EXTRA TIME TABLE

Total Time	Step Bonus
2 weeks	+1
4 weeks	+2
6 weeks	+3
2 months	+4
3 months	+5
5 months	+6
8 months	+7
1 year	+8
2 years	+9
3 years	+10
5 years	+12
+2 years	+2

SPELL CHARACTERISTICS/BASE DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Spell Complexity	Base Difficulty Number
1	5
2	7
3	8
4	10
5	11
6	13
7	14
8	16
9	17
10	19
11	20
12	22
13	23
14	25
15	26
16+	Complexity + 11

EFFECT THREAD WEAVING DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Effect	Difficulty Number
Bonus to Willforce	Base Difficulty Number + bonus
Bonus to talent/ability	Base Difficulty Number + bonus
Specified result	Base Difficulty Number + 1–5, at gamemaster's discretion

RANGE DIFFICULTY NUMBERS TABLE

Range	Difficulty Number
Self	Base Difficulty Number + 0
Touch	Base Difficulty Number + 2
1 yard	Base Difficulty Number + 5
5–10 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 6
15–25 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 8
30–40 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 10
50–60 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 12
70–80 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 14
100–120 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 16
150–200 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 18
250–500 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 20
1,000 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 21
2,000 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 22
5,000 yards	Base Difficulty Number + 23
Miles	See text

DURATION UNITS/MINIMUM CIRCLES TABLE

Duration Unit	Minimum Circle
Minute	1
Hours	2
Days	3
Weeks	5
Months	7
Years	9

DURATION DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Unit of Duration	Difficulty Number*
Rounds	Base Difficulty Number + 1 + number of units
Minutes	Base Difficulty Number + 6 + number of units
Hours	Base Difficulty Number + 18 + number of units
Days	Base Difficulty Number + 24 + number of units
Weeks	Base Difficulty Number + 32 + number of units
Months	Base Difficulty Number + 35 + number of units
Years	Base Difficulty Number + 42 + number of units

*For durations based on spellcaster's rank, add 3 to Difficulty Number.

CASTING DIFFICULTY/DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Casting Difficulty	Difficulty Number
Target's Spell Defense	Base Difficulty Number + 8
2–4	Base Difficulty Number + 10
5–6	Base Difficulty Number + 9
7–8	Base Difficulty Number + 8
9–10	Base Difficulty Number + 7
11+	Base Difficulty Number + 6

SPELL PATTERN/DIFFICULTY NUMBER TABLE

Spell Complexity	Difficulty Number
1	13
2	14
3	16
4	17
5	19
6	20
7	22
8	23
9	25
10	26
11	28
12	29
13	31
14	32
15	34
16+	Spell Complexity + 19

SPELL LEGEND POINT TABLE

Spell Circle	Legend Point Cost
1	100
2	200
3	300
4	500
5	800
6	1,300
7	2,100
8	3,400
9	5,500
10	8,900
11	14,400
12	23,300
13	37,700
14	61,000
15	98,700

Spell Design Worksheet

Spell Name _____

Choose Spell Effect/Target

1

Effect_____ Complexity rating_____
Target _____ Complexity rating_____
_____ Discipline/Effect Complexity modifier_____
                                          Discipline/Mechanism Complexity modifier_____

Duration _____ Complexity modifier_____
Area of Effect_____ Complexity modifier_____
Multiple/Special Effects _____ Complexity modifier_____

Base Complexity _____

Determine Spell Circle

2

Circle (same as Base Complexity)_____
     Circle adjustments _____
     Adjusted Circle _____ Adjusted Base Complexity_____

Base Thread Number _____
Base Thread Weaving Difficulty _____
Base Reattuning Difficulty _____

Weave Spell Characteristics

3

Base Difficulty Number_____   **Range** _____
                                              Modified Difficulty Number_____
Effect _____   Step bonuses_____
_____   Number of success levels_____
_____
_____   **Duration**_____
_____   Modified Difficulty Number_____
_____   Step bonuses_____
_____   Number of success levels_____
_____
_____   **Casting Difficulty** _____
Modified Difficulty Number _____   Modified Difficulty Number_____
Step bonuses_____   Step bonuses _____
Number of success levels _____   Number of success levels_____
                                               Total success levels_____

make spellcasting test

4

Difficulty Number _____

Step bonus _____

Number of success levels _____   **Adjusted Base Thread Number** _____

Total success levels remaining _____

empower spell pattern

5

Final Thread Number _____

Final Thread Weaving Difficulty _____

Final Reattuning Difficulty _____

Spell Name/Circle/Discipline _____

    Threads _____   **Weaving Difficulty** _____

    Range _____   **Duration** _____

    Effect _____

    Casting Difficulty _____

Description _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

"...Before you run off after that horror you ought to summon a fire spirit and trap it in your sword. That'll give ol' pus-face something to think about..."

"Of course it can be done. Enchanting your own magic item takes almost as much time and effort as rescuing one from an old kaer and finding out what makes it hum, but making it yourself is a bit less dangerous than adventuring. I suppose you didn't know you could design your own spells, either, or travel to the netherworlds? Are you sure you didn't exaggerate about how long you've been studying your Discipline? Well, sit down, son, because there's a lot I can teach you about how to use magic. Just try to be worthy of the lessons, because you'll pay the cost one way or another..."

Magic: A Manual of Mystic Secrets expands the use of magic in the Earthdawn game and provides rules for using magic in previously unexplored ways. In addition to offering a spell design system, this book describes new uses for thread magic and blood magic, and contains rules for enchanting and creating new magical items, summoning spirits and exploring the reaches of astral space. This sourcebook also includes rules for playing a shaman, a new magician Discipline.

FASA
CORPORATION

EARTHDAWN

5 1800

9 781555 602826

ISBN# 1-55560-282-7 $18.00