

## *What is Earthdawn you say?*

*The heroes of today are the legends of tomorrow.*

—King Varulus III of Throal

### **We live in an Age of Legend.**



After centuries of hiding beneath the earth, humanity has ventured out into the sunlight to reclaim the world. Trolls, dwarfs, elves, orks, and humans live side by side with exotic races: the lizard-like t'skrang, the small, winged windlings, and the earthen obsidimen. Creatures both magical and mundane dwell once more in the forests and jungles. Arcane energies offer power to those willing to learn the ways of magic.

Once, long ago, the land grew lush and green. Thriving forests sheltered plants and animals, and people grew and prospered off the land's bounty.

Then the Horrors came and drowned the world in darkness.

The world's flow of magic rose, and at its height, dread creatures from the darkest depths of astral space crossed into our world, leaving suffering and destruction in their wake. The world's inhabitants Named these fell creatures the Horrors. They laid our world to waste in a terrible time now known as the Scourge. The lush forests died. Bustling towns vanished. Beautiful grasslands and majestic mountains became blasted, barren terrain, home to the Horrors' twisted mockery of life.

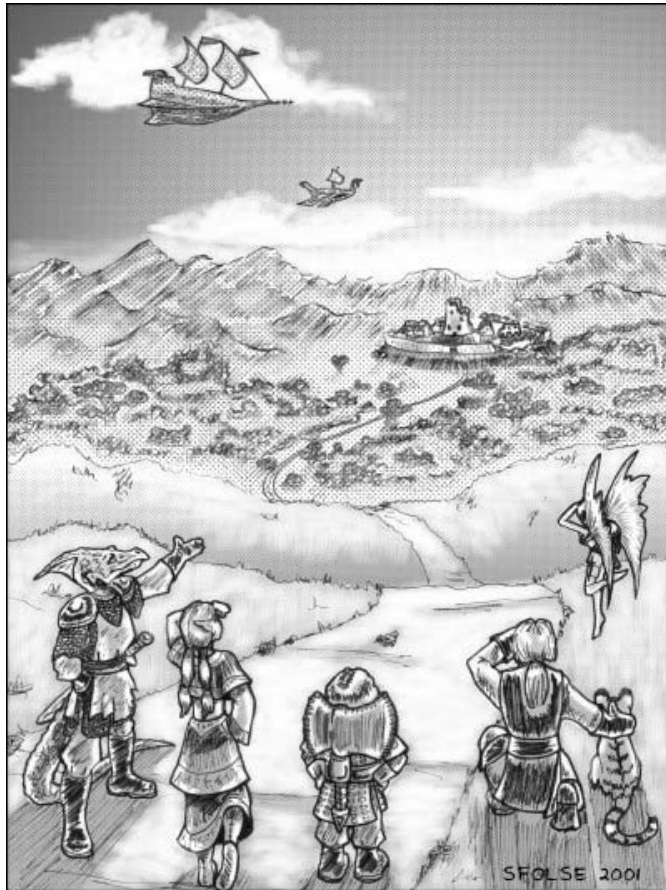
The Horrors lusted to destroy all life, but they did not succeed. Before their coming, the magicians of the Theran Empire warned the world, and the people of the Earth took shelter under it. They built fantastic underground cities called kaers and citadels; their children and their children's children grew up within these earthen enclaves, never seeing the light of the sun. For four hundred years the Horrors roamed the land, devouring all they touched while the people hid in terror, until the slow ebb of the world's magic forced these loathsome

creatures to retreat to the astral pit that spawned them. The Horrors departed before the magicians and wise men had believed they would; the wary people emerged slowly from their kaers, facing the world half in hope that the Scourge had truly ended and half in fear that the Horrors lingered.

Though most of the Horrors had left this world, many remained, inflicting cruel anguish and suffering on other living creatures. As humanity struggles to remake the shattered world, they must combat these remaining Horrors who seek to prolong the destruction and despair of the Scourge.

Now, heroes travel the land, rediscovering its lost legends and exploring its changed face. For the world has changed, almost beyond recognition. Many died during the Scourge; the Horrors breached some kaers and citadels and destroyed their inhabitants. Other kaers remain sealed, from unknowable disaster or simple fear; their contents await discovery by bold explorers. Should they find any folk still living within, these brave adventurers may lead such fear-darkened souls out to live again in the light.

The dwarf kingdom of Throal lies at the center of the province of Barsaive. The dwarfs seek to unite Barsaive's far-flung cities and people under one crown and one banner, the better to repel the advances of the Theran Empire that ruled Barsaive before the Scourge. The Therans returned to the province shortly after the Scourge ended, seeking to bend it again to their yoke, but the people of Barsaive rejected the Therans' iron rule and rallied behind the dwarfs of Throal. Even though they were beaten back, the Therans remain the most powerful empire in the world, and may yet strike again. As Barsaive's heroes search for lost treasures and battle fantastic creatures, they must also fight those who plot to rob Barsaive of its newfound freedom and make its people pawns of a new empire.



In the Age of Legend, heroes band together to fight the Horrors and reclaim the wounded world for those born in it. As they explore the altered land, searching for legendary cities and treasures, they become the legends that will light the coming days. As with those who went before them, tales of their deeds will live forever in men's hearts. From many paths, the heroes come to join in common cause. Those who seek honor and glory come from many Disciplines, and battle evil to redeem the world with a multitude of gifts.

A band of heroes may include an Illusionist, a spellcaster who combines deception and reality to confuse those around him; a Swordmaster, one trained in the art of fighting with bladed weapons; or a Beastmaster, able to train and command the beasts of the earth and sky. The world holds countless heroes, but all share one trait: a willingness to fight to reclaim the world from that which threatens it. Through noble deeds and sacrifice, the heroes of the world will forge its future.

## The World of Earthdawn



Earthdawn is a roleplaying game designed for two to eight players. Like many other roleplaying games, Earthdawn has an open-ended style of play. That is, the game has no definitive ending, no preset time limit or number of turns of play, and no single goal that, when achieved, marks the end of the game. Unlike other types of games, however, there is no winner or loser. The object of the game is to have fun while exercising your imagination. When this happens, everybody wins.

The world of Earthdawn is one of legend. Its people and places are larger than life, the stuff of song and saga. Heroes fight the monsters of this and other worlds; their bold exploits light a beacon of hope for the future, as word of their deeds spreads across the troubled, fearful land. Earthdawn is a world of high adventure, high magic, and terrible danger. Those dangers lurk not only

within long-forgotten kaers, but also within the minds of people forever corrupted by the Horrors. To rebuild its heart and soul as well as its outward aspect after the devastation of the Scourge, the world needs heroes. The players of Earthdawn, by creating their characters and playing the game, provide these heroes.

In contrast to many other roleplaying games, characters in Earthdawn do not simply survive each adventure and become a little smarter or a little richer. Earthdawn adds another dimension to roleplaying; its characters become heroic figures, accomplishing deeds so impressive that generation after generation will honor their memory in song and story. The world of Earthdawn brims over with legends, heart-stirring tales of famous adventurers told by the fireside to while away the night. Earthdawn player characters can become the figures in those legends. As they build their characters' legends through play, they create the fireside tales that their descendants will tell about them. Gaining this heroic stature through daring deeds is as important a part of playing Earthdawn as any lesser gain in riches or experience.