

Magic™

A MANUAL OF MYSTIC SECRETS



FASA CORPORATION



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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

