



Firmament: Stone Dawn

Vast sacred continents float erratically above the surface world, blotting out the sun. Tradition calls them the realms of the gods, but an age of sail and of reason is dawning.

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Complexity Rating: ●●●●

THE PITCH

Read this section to your players to introduce them to the Campaign.

The surface world's continents are carved up by human cultures competing for space in the sun in the shadow of Firmaments, massive floating land masses that drift over the landscape, occasionally blotting out the sun. For eons they were considered the places of the gods. Stories of beings from one of the floating islands descending to the surface to offer wisdom or power found religions and kingdoms. Stories of lands where the sun was hidden for years at a time by Firmaments as divine punishment.

This is an age of sail and reason. Advancements in mining, geology,

chemistry and engineering have led the world of mortals for the first time to the lands of the gods.

TONE & FEEL

Adventurous, Serious, Epic, Dangerous, Political

THEMES

Discovery and Exploration, Science Vs Magic, Freedom vs State Power and Exploitation, The Frontier

TOUCHSTONES

Master and Commander, Black Flag, Princess Mononoke, Treasure Planet, 7th Sea

OVERVIEW

If your group decides to play this campaign, give your players the following information before character creation.

The Firmaments are floating landmasses that move over the surface world of **Erda**, ranging in size from large boulders, to small continents. For most of human history they were a source of mysticism and mystery. Their complex movements are used in divination, and calendar making and feature in the stories of dozens of religions. They are considered by many surface cultures to be the home of the gods.

The most prominent of these religions is the **Nephement Church**. In the skies above Erda and beyond the Firmament are the **Nephements**, great glittering arches of light in the night sky wrapping around the whole of Erda's celestial sphere. It is from these that the Nephement Church takes its name. Doctrine teaches that these are the battlelines of the Nephesh, first born of The Maker. Billions of powerful celestial beings fight a constant battle to defend the realms of men from the nameless horrors in the void beyond their light. The Firmaments are considered their home, refuge and rightful kingdoms. The Faithful, they teach, will be born anew in the firmaments to serve the Nephesh. Very similar ancient temples exist on all the continents of Erda. The specific cultural practices and mythology surrounding these temples varies wildly from culture to culture.

Firmaments cast shadows that can blot out the sun for weeks or even months at a time. When one of the larger of them moves over a place, it is called a **stone dawn**. Even though culture and even life itself has adapted, longer events can still devastate local areas and are seen as bad omens even in the best of times.

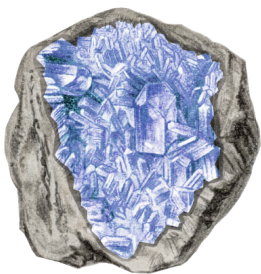


Fig. 1.

Natural philosophers who study Firmaments have begun to postulate a relationship to **Etherodes**. (fig 1. a broken Etherode, revealing its crystalline interior structure) Since ancient times the small, very rare, nearly spherical strangely hollow stones have been found as occlusions in igneous rock formations. For most of human history, the stones have been nothing but a curiosity. They have an interesting property. When

one is placed near another they repel each other as the poles of a magnet, at the same time they resist the pull of gravity. The closer they are forced together and the larger the stones, the more resistance they produce in both directions. The recent discovery of a deposit of much larger stones in Louernia has changed the world by making flight possible. Etherodes are also called skystones or

more recently **Keelstones** when they are installed into **Etherode Keels**. A ship equipped with an etherode keel gains lift by means of carefully calibrated systems of ropes and pulleys which move very large stones into position. A daunting and dangerous task.

This has created a Schism in the Nephement Church who have banned all attempts by those without royal blood from reaching the firmament by means of the etherode ships. A recent revolutionary treatise on faith, moral philosophy, metaphysics, and the naturalistic nature of the firmaments called "**The Maker's Testament**" has added fuel to this debate across the surface world. The book makes a philosophical argument that the Presence is the right of all men and that exploring the Firmaments will connect men to that sacred right.

The Surface world of Erda consists of 6 small, somewhat isolated continents and millions of islands of various sizes. The political entities relevant to the geo politics of Erda are as follows.

Louernia, a small volcanic island nation, has been a dominant force at sea for the last two centuries. Wielding the world's largest and most powerful navy had the almost inevitable side effect of acquiring vast wealth through trade. They have recently invested deeply into building an equally massive etherode fleet.

Eisenveld, was once considered cursed because of the frequency and duration of stone dawns it experiences. The land is mountainous, cold and harsh but full of people who have invented many practical solutions to this problem.

Varangia, from the perspective of the "civilized" peoples of Erda, is stuck in barbarism and superstition. They have yet to adopt many of the technological trappings of modernity offered to them by traders preferring their old, deeply mystical ways. It is said that there is a peak in Varangia from which one can step onto the firmaments

Chatterrir is a client state of Louernia, blessed by verdant farmland. It is the seat of power for the Nephement Church and is said to be the first place the presence of a Nephesh was known to men.

Eretz, is an isolated theocratic kingdom said to be ruled personally by a Nephesh a combination of extremely treacherous reefs and powerful and frequent storms keep regular travel to and from the rest of Erda rare.

Darat, has a rich history of nomadic tribal peoples in their vast rolling plains. Recently attempts at colonization by other world powers have caused both unity among the tribes, and rapid modernization. In their effort to preserve their traditions they also

became one of the most radical nations by adopting a form of tribal democracy.

COMMUNITIES

All communities are available, but some have unique aspects within a Firmament: Stone Dawn Campaign.

Highborne

Highborne in Erda are members of the hereditary ruling classes from any of the nations. In theory, each one obtains their power by the fact that they are admitted into **The Presence**, the sacred space within the Temples of the Nephement in which it is said that the Nephesh speak to humanity through augury, or in very rare cases, physical presences. In practice, nothing of any unfalsifiably mystical significance takes place within this space and hasn't for at least 300 years. Highborn have a sacred duty to transmit the law of the Nephesh to the people they rule. Few take this duty seriously.

- The Coinborne are becoming more prominent as the merchant classes amass more resources. What is your response to this? What is the attitude of your family?
- How seriously do you take your duty to the Nephement? Are you faithful, or cynical about the return of the presence?

Coinborne

A new, powerful merchant class has developed over the last 100 years in Erda and is amassing more power as the years go on. In Louernia and a few other places, advisory councils have formed from Coinborne families to advise the nobility. This is taken as a threat, or an opportunity by most of the

Community feature

Deep Pockets: You have advantage on rolls when dealing with merchants and negotiating prices. In addition, once per campaign when you require a large sum of money to accomplish a goal, you can tap your family fortune to help.

- Have you read the Makers Testament? What was your takeaway?
- What industry is your family involved in?

ANCESTRIES

Player characters in Firmament: Stone Dawn are from the surface of Erda by default. However, the fantastical denizens of the Firmaments have left a mark on the surface world. Humans on the surface sometimes show the marks of the divine. Or that is the story anyway.

All Ancestries

Player characters must be human, dwarf, Giant, or halfling. All of these are thought of by the surface people as being more or less the same thing. Players may choose hybrid features of any other ancestry but the result is more subtle than in other settings and it

represents the echoes of a mythic past. The only exception to this is the fairie's "wings" feature which is not included in this setting for player characters by default.

CLASSES

Magic is new to the surface dwellers of Erda and has always been associated with the Firmaments or the Void Beyond. Claims of divine association or worse yet, tapping into powers from the Void make common humans deeply suspicious.

All Classes

Witches, Warlocks, Sorcerers, and Druids are extremely uncommon in Firmament: Stone Dawn. Bards seem to get away with existing in a liminal space between the divine and the void and therefore hold an oddly safe place in many cultures of the surface world.

Seraph

Seraph's Winged Sentinel subclass is not available in this setting.

PLAYER PRINCIPLES

Embrace Discovery

Players are of a class of people that by and large wish to explore a forbidden new land. The Discovery is worth doing in and of itself.

Ship and Crew are Your Lifeline

Players are reliant on the ship and its crew to survive in the Firmaments. It is home, and fortress and your greatest weapon.

The Firmaments are Hallowed Ground

You have been raised in a culture that believes at its core that the Firmaments are Sacred spaces. The faith in the truth is dying. Embrace the wonder of seeing them up close discovering what they truly are.

GM PRINCIPLES

The Firmaments are Deeply Alien

The Firmaments have all manner of strange creatures, plants and land forms. Nothing here is familiar to the players. Avoid too many fantasy tropes and make sure your players are uncomfortable. When you use monsters, try to describe them in an unearthly, uncanny way.

The Nephesh Rule is Absolute

No matter what you populate a firmament with, all bow to the Nephesh, who take many forms. The creatures of the Firmaments speak with awe and fear about their rulers. Their motives are distant, alien and not necessarily good...

The Void Beyond Looms

The exact nature of the Nephesh and the firmaments are not what the players were taught. Some is true, some is not but the Void Beyond is real and it makes itself known on the firmaments. Dark beings and events plague the floating islands.

Campaign Mechanics

The following mechanics are unique to this campaign.

Sky Sailing

The Crew

Moving a sailing ship is a complex group task that involves scores or even hundreds of people depending on the size of the ship. This is always a group action roll referred to as a “**Ship Action.**” To make a Ship action, the ship must be crewed. Someone must be in command of the ship, typically at its helm or barking orders to another character at the helm. Ships are huge complicated collections of ropes, sails, and the carefully calibrated mechanisms in the Etherode keel. It takes both knowledge and influence to command.

In general the players are assumed to have outsized influence in the command of a ship. They are likely to be the captain and his immediate officers. Even if they are not, being abnormally skilled often lets them affect the fate of the ship each turn.

Any player character may start a group action, the type of which will depend on their location on the ship.

Regardless of the type of roll being made, a ship action involves influencing the crew. A player rolls against the crew's difficulty rating which is always 20 - the crew's current **Morale Rating.**

The Crew has a Morale value of between 1 and 5 Morale is affected by the narrative. At the GM's discretion, points of morale will be gained or lost. Things like having insufficient resources, losing a battle or poor pay are all things that will lower morale. Morale can be gained by resting the crew, achieving a notable goal, or victory in battle.

A ship that spends too much time at low morale will start to gain Conditions. (see below)

All Hands

Once per scene, a player may call an all hands roll. This allows a player to focus the crew on a specific critical task.

When you make an all hands roll, spend a hope, then add the current morale to your roll.

- On a critical success, reduce the ship stress by 1 and gain 1 morale
- On a success, with hope reduce ship stress by 1
- On a Success with fear, no changes are made
- On a failure with hope no changes are made
- On a failure with fear, the ship gains loses 1 morale

Parts of a Ship

Player Characters can start and lead a crew action from anywhere in the ship and their location/expertise determines what type of action they are leading.

Rigging: These are the sails and masts that allow it to move. A player stationed in the rigging can lead an effort to close with a ship, or ram another ship.

Hull: This is the main bulk and body of the ship. This is where the Etherode Keel is housed. A player stationed in the hull of the ship can lead efforts to perform climbing and diving maneuvers, as well as ship repairs.

Battery: These are the various weapon systems of the ship. A character stationed in a ship's battery can lead efforts to target and attack other targets that threaten the ship.

Helm: This is the ship's command center, and allows the ship to be steered. A player stationed at the helm can lead an effort of any type on the ship, In addition the player can lead efforts to make horizontal maneuvers.

Movement and Wind

Experienced sailors can use the prevailing winds to move any direction, but sailing into the wind will be more difficult than sailing with the wind. At the beginning of a scene the GM sets the direction.

Movement rolls made to travel in the direction of the wind gain advantage. Moving against the wind causes disadvantage.

Altitude

An Etherode Keel is used to adjust the altitude of a ship in flight. This is a carefully calibrated series of movements of ropes and pulleys that bring various vectored Etheroids into the right position to create the right lift and balance to achieve various maneuvers. Higher altitudes and faster rates of climb require a greater amount of tension. In extreme cases this can cause a breakage or failure. That can have catastrophic consequences.

Altitude is expressed the same way as distances (Melee, Very Close, Close, Far, Very Far) but always relative to another point. Typically this is either another target, or the closest land mass.

To determine ranges when firing shipboard weapons the steps between the targets together. Shots fired with the shooter between 1 and 3 steps higher than the target gain advantage.

Changing altitude by 1 step relative to the land mass or target during a movement action is free. Changing the altitude by 2 steps is an unmodified crew roll. Each additional level you wish to travel in a single action adds +5 to the difficulty.

On a failed roll with hope, the distance is still climbed but the ship becomes unstable potentially having consequences for actions aboard the ship. A failed roll with fear might cause damage to the Hull and potentially loss of altitude/control over the Etherode Keel till it is repaired.

Ship Damage

Damage dealt to and by ships is referred to as **Ship Damage**. Generally speaking, unless noted in an abilities description, damage done by individual characters does not rise to the level of ship damage. Ship Damage is also very difficult to target smaller targets with and for that reason, generally speaking a ship damage weapon cannot be used to target individual non-ship sized targets.

Maneuvers and Conditions

Tacked: once a ship's movement roll has been made the crew can maintain that heading with much less action. The effects of the most recent movement roll automatically take effect the next round unless a new movement roll is made.

Derelict: A ship that has no ability to make movement rolls, either because the rigging is too damaged, or the Helm has been destroyed, will become derelict. A derelict ship cannot make move rolls and is not considered tacked. It will start to move with the wind (regardless of facing) at a rate equal to the roll of a d6.

Evasive Maneuvers: A ship can go into evasive maneuvers by making a successful Helm, Rigging, or Hull Action. Achieving this action adds +3 to the difficulty of hitting all parts of the ship until the next time the ship is hit.

Boarding Action: A ship may attempt a boarding action against another ship. This is an opposed crew roll. If the attacker wins the crew has successfully landed sailors on their opponents ship. A successful defender repels the boarding action.

Ram: A ram maneuver requires an active action. Collisions may happen by accident when mistakes happen in maneuvers, but a ram is intentional by definition. Rams damage is listed in the example ship descriptions.

Panicked: When the crew of a ship is panicked, they are much more difficult to organize. Add +5 to the difficulty to order a panicked crew.

Discontented: A crew that is at zero morale gains the condition "discontented" A discontented crew reacts more harshly to failed ship action, and those rolled with fear. The GM may spend fear to cause further narrative issues with the crew.

Mutiny: A crew with the mutiny condition is in open revolt.

Supply

Supply is an abstracted measurement of the resources associated with running a ship. There are 3 types of supplies. The size of the ship determines its storage capacity for these supplies.

Provisions: Provisions are used to feed and keep the crew happy and healthy.

Armaments: Armaments are used to track resources for fighting, either cannon shot or crew weapons.

Materiel: is a catch all for everything else a ship might need. This includes supplies to repair the ship, fight fires and keep to its general maintenance.

Ship Downtime actions.

In addition to player downtime actions, the crew can also take downtime actions.

- At each short rest, the crew must spend one Provision to represent feeding and caring for the crew.
- At each long rest, the crew must spend one Materiel and one Provision
- On a long rest, wounded crew become active.

Shore Leave: When in an appropriate place under relatively safe conditions a ship might allow shore leave. When you do, spend 2 provisions and make a crew check. You gain the difference in difficulty to morale. Failures can have narrative consequences as the men get into trouble and have to be bailed out of it.

Repair and Refit: When you repair and refit Spend 1 Materiel and heal 1 hp on any section of the ship.

Rest and Relaxation: on a long rest, you may spend one additional provision and gain one morale.

Foraging: Portions of the crew are sent out to find and take what they can from the environment. When you forage, take a Ship Action roll and gain a number of supplies equal the amount to which you beat the roll. The type and amount of supply available is determined by the GM. Failures can cause narrative complications as appropriate to the environment.

Discipline: Crews can be brought in line with good management, or with the lash. When you discipline the crew, take a ship action. If it is successful, the ship loses the Panicked, Discontented or mutiny conditions. Failure on these rolls can be narratively catastrophic.

Ship Sheet: Corvette

A swift, lightly armed ship.

Corvette

Thresholds: 11/22

Sections: Helm, Hull, Battery (Port and Starboard), Rigging

Experience:

FEATURES:

Agile: A Corvette has advantage on movement actions made to gain the evasive maneuvers condition.

Rigging

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 13 HP: 3 Armor: 1

ATK: +2 | Ram: Melee | 1d8 + Distance moved

FEATURES:

Gliding wings: As a crew action, the crew may set up the glider wings that will cause the ship's downward movement to be transferred to forwards movement on a 3 for 1 basis.

Ramming Speed: Ramming speed Whenever you make a successful ramming attack, the hull marks 1 hp. Raming can only be done by making contact with the prow after a movement.

Battery

Difficulty: 13 HP: 3 Armor: 1

ATK: +4 | Cannons: | 1d8+6 Physical

FEATURES:

BroadSide - Action: when firing directly at another ship within very close range you may spend a resource to double the damage of a single attack.

Helm

This is the Command center of the ship

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 12 HP: 3 Armor: 1

FEATURES:

Corps à corps - Passive: The bridge of a ship can only be attacked within very close or closer range.

Command deck - Passive: When the bridge is destroyed or unmanned, the vessel can no longer take ship actions and is derelict.

Hull

This is the body of the ship and contains the Etherode Keel

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 14 HP: 8 Armor: 1

FEATURES:

Crippled - Passive: when the hull is destroyed the vessel is defeated and falls out of the sky as its etherodes become unbound.

Morale

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Provisions

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Armaments

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Materiel

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Ship Sheet: Ship of the Line

A large ship with a large complement of Marines. .

Ship Of the Line

Thresholds: 13/24

Sections: Helm, Hull, Battery (Port and Starboard), Rigging

Experience:

FEATURES:

Flying Fortress: A Ship of the line has advantage on boarding actions.

Rigging

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 13 HP: 3 Armor: 1

ATK: +2 | Ram: Melee | 2d10 + Distance moved

FEATURES:

Gliding wings: As a crew action, the crew may set up the glider wings that will cause the ship's downward movement to be transferred to forwards movement on a 3 for 1 basis.

Ramming Speed: Ramming speed Whenever you make a successful ramming attack, the hull marks 1 hp. Ramming can only be done by making contact with the prow after a movement.

Battery

Difficulty: 13 HP: 3 Armor: 2

ATK: +4 | Cannons: | 2d6+6 Physical

FEATURES:

BroadSide - Action: when firing directly at another ship within very close range you may spend a resource to double the damage of a single attack.

Helm

This is the Command center of the ship

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 12 HP: 3 Armor: 1

FEATURES:

Corps à corps - Passive: The bridge of a ship can only be attacked within very close or closer range.

Command deck - Passive: When the bridge is destroyed or unmanned, the vessel can no longer take ship actions and is derelict.

Hull

This is the body of the ship and contains the Etherode Keel

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 14 HP: 8 Armor: 2

FEATURES:

Bulwark of Iron and Oak - Passive: when this section marks HP from an attack, it marks 1 fewer HP

Crippled - Passive: when the hull is destroyed the vessel is defeated and falls out of the sky as its etherodes become unbound.

Morale

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Provisions

[illegible]

Armaments

[illegible]

Materiel

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Ship Sheet: Dreadnaught

A massive, heavily armored ship.

Dreadnaught

Thresholds: 15/24

Sections: Helm, Hull, Battery (Port and Starboard), Rigging

Experience:

FEATURES:

Flying Fortress: A Ship of the line has advantage on boarding actions.

Festoon with Cannons: A Dreadnaught has advantage on ranged attacks.

Helm

This is the Command center of the ship

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 12 **HP:** 3 **Armor:** 2

FEATURES:

Corps à corps - Passive: The bridge of a ship can only be attacked within very close or closer range.

Command deck - Passive: When the bridge is destroyed or unmanned, the vessel can no longer take ship actions and is derelict.

Rigging

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 13 **HP:** 3 **Armor:** 2

ATK: +2 | **Ram:** Melee | 3d10 + Distance moved

FEATURES:

Gliding wings: As a crew action, the crew may set up the glider wings that will cause the ship's downward movement to be transferred to forwards movement on a 3 for 1 basis.

Ramming Speed: Ramming speed Whenever you make a successful ramming attack, the hull marks 1 hp. Raming can only be done by making contact with the prow after a movement.

Hull

This is the body of the ship and contains the Etherode Keel

Motives & Tactics: Text

Difficulty: 14 **HP:** 8 **Armor:** 3

FEATURES:

Bulwark of Iron and Oak - Passive: when this section marks HP from an attack, it marks 1 fewer HP

Crippled - Passive: when the hull is destroyed the vessel is defeated and falls out of the sky as its etherodes become unbound.

Battery

Difficulty: 13 **HP:** 3 **Armor:** 3

ATK: +4 | **Cannons:** | 2d6+6 Physical

FEATURES:

BroadSide - Action: when firing directly at another ship within very close range you may spend a resource to double the damage of a single attack.

Morale

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Provisions

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Armaments

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Materiel

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