



The Official Publication of the HackMaster Association



Those Held Responsible...

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From the Editor's Desk

[Note: Starting with this issue I am round-tabling the "From the Editor's Desk" intro to give greater voice and credit to the Assistant Editors who are of so much assistance in getting HackJournal out. -D. M. Zwerg]

HackJournal #10 is here! Prepare to be amazed!

This issue we have several excellent articles to fill your craving for meaty Hackmaster morsels. David S. Kenzer has given us new advanced Hackmaster rules on brawling. We have articles on hirelings and clothing by Eric Neumann to help you find a use for halflings and for high-priced clothing in your campaign. Jedediah Goforth has a spellbinding tale about A Day in the Life of a Thelia'regis. Benjamin Pierce continues his education of the player community by suggesting low-level spells that lead your magic-user to omnipotence. And that's just for highlights. We've got another six pages of material and some art for those prone to gluttony! Yum-yum.

To feed our Hackmaster hunger, we need submissions! That's right, you too can be published in the *HackJournal* and start earning Hackwriter class experience points. A wide range of submissions are suitable for *HackJournal*.

You can submit crunchy bits for rules or stories of humorous activities that happened in your Hackmaster game or even evocative imaginings of "A Day in the Life" of some interesting creature. If you are an artist, we need your artwork and will award you a six-month membership extension and your name in the credits (very important for aspiring artists) if your piece is used in *HackJournal*! Send your submissions to hackjournal@kenzerco.com

Since the publication of the *HackMaster GameMaster's Guide*, there has been a Game Preserve in the Garweeze World campaign setting known as the Waylands. This cluster of islands was reserved for the HMA membership to develop and is an OFFICIAL part of Garweeze Wurd. The prior version of the Waylands that appeared in *HackJournal* #2 is being revised. Articles that help us flesh out the nations, institutions, businesses, hamlets, and denizens of the Waylands are especially desired.

The *HackJournal* is our foundation for a world-wide Hackmaster movement. The *HackJournal* staff all heeds the motto, "Ask Not What the HMA Can Do For You, Ask What You Can Do For the HMA." The Foundry Dwarf as Editor-in-Chief has done that by letting us Assistant Editors also share our thoughts in the editorial page. I am the first, but hopefully I will not be the last of your dedicated fellow Hackers who puts their thoughts down for you to ponder.

On behalf of the *HackJournal* staff, I hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to seeing your comments. See you next month, gentle readers!

Andrew Wayne Franklin
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Honorary Knight of the Dinner Table

HackJournal Submission Guidelines

Submission guidelines can be found on the HMA Website <http://www.kenzerco.com/hma/main/index.php>

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Submissions sent by postal mail should be addressed to the address shown at left. Electronic and e-mail submissions are strongly preferred as we cannot assume responsibility for the care and feeding of any carrier pigeons, kobold messengers, etc.

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Organizations Exposed! The Center for Monster Studies

By Brad Todd HMPA TX-3-00291-01

For nearly 1500 years, the Center for Monster Studies (CMS) has been providing adventurers and explorers with detailed information on the hazardous flora and fauna that inhabit Aldrazar. Since 10,667 FD, over one hundred satellite offices have been established throughout Aldrazar to develop the famous *Hacklopedia of Beasts (HoB)*. These offices are located in bustling, metropolitan areas like Fangaerie where adventurers abound and in backwater villages where the members can conduct their research without interruption.

While they retain and collect a vast amount of essays and articles each year, the CMS is very selective with whom they share their information. For instance, no nonmember of the CMS is permitted into their libraries for any reason. Even the janitorial staff and librarians are required to be members of the organization. Additionally, the CMS only provides information to individuals that are part of an established party in good standing with their local adventuring guild. There are several reasons for this last requirement. For one thing, if everyone knew the strengths and weaknesses of the monsters in Aldrazar, there would be mass extinction of exotic and interesting creatures. Let's face it, can you imagine how boring the Wurld would be without Jelly Worms and Dragons? I didn't think so. Also, if the general public was aware of the lucrative monetary potential of the spell component business, many would leave their homes and begin searching for their personal fortunes. This would leave the local baronies and fiefdoms with no one to harvest their crops and mill their grain, not to mention the fact that simple peasants would not stand a chance in the wild environs. No, it's best that this information is only shared with trained professionals.

There is one very important matter to keep in mind if the CMS decides to share information with you that no one really discusses. Not all articles submitted by members of the CMS were 100% accurate. Indeed, some of the mistakes contained in these articles go beyond simple embellishments and exaggerations and are downright lies! There are many reasons for these unscrupulous members to resort to fabrication of their submittals. Perhaps they have an uncontrollable desire for access to the massive libraries and research centers, or maybe they are in desperate need for the official CMS lapel pin to impress the babes. Whatever the reason, these irresponsible tricksters can make some of the details found in the *Hacklopedias* very dangerous! This is why every dissertation and report provided by the CMS

includes a 15 page disclaimer that explicitly releases the organization from responsibility for any physical or monetary loss that the user may or may not incur during the application of the information contained in the aforementioned dissertation or report. After all, like any successful organization, they have to watch out for number one.



To fund their research, the CMS provides a variety of services to adventurers. Their bread and butter service for the past 1500 years has been the Monster Expositions. Recently, however, many CMS offices have been providing spell component information to interested spell casters. Any document produced by the CMS can include the same features used in spell books in Table 7K of *The Spellslinger's Guide to Wurld Domination* for the listed price.

It is important for the GM to remember that the following tables and procedures are just guidelines. Not all offices provide the same services and information for a variety of reasons. Smaller offices may not have the manpower to perform research for adventurers without a lengthy wait or a hefty rush-order fee! Some of the

remote offices might have out-of-date volumes of the *Hacklopedia* that have not incorporated the latest errata. Poorer offices might not even have all of the *Hacklopedias*, or have second-hand volumes from wealthier offices. Whatever the reason, remember that the purpose of this article is not to hand over the *HoBs* to the players, but to provide them a small peek at the vast tomes of knowledge in the GM's hands.

Monster Expositions:

"It is only through learning the ways of our enemies that we can hope to defeat them." – Stirgile, 10,670 FD.

While Stirgile was famous for stating the obvious, his vision for the CMS has provided the weaknesses and habits of thousands of monsters to adventurers throughout the years. From lowly guards to kings of men, many inhabitants of Aldrazar have found this information invaluable in repelling swarms and infestations of uninvited "pests." While the CMS will not allow any local yokel to walk in and pull *Hacklopedia* volumes from their shelves, they will provide reports on particular monsters. CMS members research the tomes of *HoBs* and first hand reports in their local library, then create a summary for a modest fee. They can provide a detailed **Academic Dissertation** or a simplified **Field Report** on various monsters, depending how much information is needed, how much time is available, and how much money the customer is willing to spend. In either case, the report will contain a summary and a few stories of encounters with the desired beast as described in first hand accounts. These reports are only available on specific monsters and not a family of monsters. For example, Trolls are not an allowable topic for research, but Gutter Trolls are. Both the **Dissertations** and **Reports** will at least provide the following three *HoB* facts: the Climate, Frequency, and Organization. Any and all rolls to determine the results of a CMS research project are made by the GM in secret, and the players only gets the final results. After all, the realm of the CMS falls plainly in the jurisdiction of the GM and can not determined by PCs!

Academic Dissertations: These manuscripts are highly detailed in content and can only be compiled by the more experienced members of the CMS. Due to the great demand and amount of time needed to create these documents, **Dissertations** are much more expensive than **Field Reports**. **Dissertations** provide 2 + 2d4 facts from Table 10A: Monster Fact Category. **Dissertations** are written on vellum pages and bound in a 12"x12"x6" book that weigh 5 lbs. but have an encumbrance of 15 lbs.

Field Reports: These "monster briefs" have a quicker turnaround and can be compiled by any member of the CMS. These reports will not include as many monster facts as the **Dissertations**, but are much cheaper.

Multiple **Field Reports** cannot be provided on the same monster from the same CMS office, so don't even try.

Field Reports will provide 1 + 1d4 facts from Table 10A. **Field Reports** will be written on parchment pages and bound in a 9"x9"x1" book that will weigh 1.25lbs, but have an encumbrance of 2.5lbs.

The report provided to the customer will contain a number of facts on a specific monster based on the type of report requested. After the number of facts is established, determine the type of information contained in the report by rolling 1d12 and consulting Table 10A. Note that this does not necessarily provide all of the facts from a given category. For example, if a particular monster may yield multiple spell components, only one of these will be listed. If the same fact category is rolled twice, the report will include an additional piece of information from that category. If there is no further information in that category, then that fact is wasted. Also, if there was no information in the fact category in the first place, then it is wasted. For example, if a monster only has one special attack and special attack is rolled twice, one will be listed and the other roll is wasted. The rationale being that the CMS has taken the time to research and find out that there are in fact no more special attacks. Consult Table 10B: Time to Compile Report to determine how long it takes to create the report. Consult Table 10C: Cost to Compile Report to determine the fixed cost to compile the report that must be paid before any research can begin. A variable cost of 25gp/day of research is added to the fixed cost and must be paid before the report is given to the customer.

For each Monster Dissertation or Field Report, there is a chance that some of the data might be less than accurate. After determining the frequency of the creature from the *Hacklopedia of Beasts*, roll 1d100 and consult Table 10D: Number of False Facts to establish how many of the facts contained in the report are false. The GM should keep secret how many, if any, of the facts are false and is free to apply this to any of the entries in the report.

Spell Component Research:

Many magic users and clerics come to the CMS for information on potential spell components that can boost the power of their existing spells or can be used to create scrolls. For these individuals, some of the satellite offices

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offer an additional resource. For a fee, a list of suggested monsters that yield the desired components can be compiled. Not all offices provide this service, as the primary goal of the CMS is to defend against dangerous monsters, not harvest them. Also, this does *not* provide a recipe to create a given scroll, but gives a list of components that have been used in the past.

A fixed cost (from Table 10E: Component Research Time and Cost) must be paid upfront for this service. This cost in time and money is based on the level of the spell that is to be researched. In addition, a fee of 25gp/day of research time is added to the fixed cost. This must be paid before report is given to the customer, regardless of whether any potential monsters are identified in the report. Typically, 1d4 monsters are identified by the researcher that may be useful for the particular spell (if any exist at all). Again, all rolls are to be made by the GM in secret. There is a 20% chance that one of these components is erroneous. Any erroneous component used to create a scroll or to cast a spell automatically causes a spell mishap when the spell is cast. Spell component reports are written on parchment pages and bound in a 9"x6"x1" book that weighs 1.25lbs, but have an encumbrance of 2.5lbs.

The GM should search the *HoBs*, Appendix B of the *Spellslinger's Guide to Wurld Domination*, and Appendix B of the *Zealot's Guide to Wurld Conversion* for appropriate monsters. It is up to the GM to determine which monster, if any, is provided to the CMS customer. A wise player would do well to bring the GM a refreshing beverage or favorite snack to ensure that at least one of the monsters is of the common or uncommon variety. Characters of low or too much honor may find few monsters that are not rare or very rare, or can even be found in their lifetimes.

Table 10A: Monster Fact Category
(Roll 1d12)

<u>Fact Category</u>	<u>Roll</u>
AKA	1
Activity Cycle	2
Diet	3
Number of Attacks	4
Special Attacks	5
Special Defenses	6
Yield: Medicinal	7
Yield: Spell Components	8
Yield: Hide/Trophy Items	9
Yield: Treasure	10
Yield: Other	11
No Fact with this roll	12

Table 10B: Time to Compile Report

<u>Type of Report</u>	<u>Common Monster</u>	<u>Uncommon Monster</u>	<u>Rare Monster</u>	<u>Very Rare Monster</u>
Field Report	(1+1d4) days	(2+1d6) days	(4+2d4) days	(8+2d8) days
Academic Dissertation	(2+2d4) days	(4+2d6) days	(1+1d4) weeks	(2+1d6) weeks

Table 10C: Cost to Compile Report

<u>Type of Report</u>	<u>Common Monster</u>	<u>Uncommon Monster</u>	<u>Rare Monster</u>	<u>Very Rare Monster</u>
Field Report	500 gp	1000 gp	2000 gp	4000 gp
Academic Dissertation	1000 gp	2000 gp	4000 gp	8000 gp

Table 10D: Number of False Facts
(Roll 1d100)

<u># of False Facts</u>	<u>Common Monster</u>	<u>Uncommon Monster</u>	<u>Rare Monster</u>	<u>Very Rare Monster</u>
0	1 – 90	1 – 80	1 – 65	1 – 40
1	91 – 96	81 – 95	66 – 90	41 – 70
2	97-100	96 – 100	91 – 100	71 – 90
3				91 - 100

Table 10E: Component Research Time and Cost

<u>Spell Level</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Fixed Cost</u>
1	(1 + 1d4) days	250 gp
2	(2 + 1d4) days	500 gp
3	(4 + 1d4) days	1,000 gp
4	(7 + 1d4) days	2,000 gp
5	(10 + 1d4) days	4,000 gp
6	(14 + 1d4) days	8,000 gp
7	(21 + 1d4) days	16,000 gp
8	(4 + 1d4) weeks	24,000 gp
9	(8 + 1d4) weeks	32,000 gp



SKRAAG FALLOW

RA: Half-Ogre SX: M AL: CG AGE: 25
 CL: HackFighter LV: 5 HP: 228 AC: -3
 STR: 24/78 DEX: 15/09 CON: 22/66
 INT: 10/28 WIS: 10/63 CHA: 18/82
 COM: 14/90 HON: 257 FAME: 128

+H: +6 +D: +12 DEX BONUS: -2 R/AT BONUS: +2

Weapon of Choice: +12 Hackmaster Sword (Margo)

Salad Dressing of Choice: Raspberry Vinaigrette

Occupation: Leader of the Everknights

Appearance: Mightily Handsome

AKA: That big guy in Everknights

Skraag Fallow: hacking his way through life each issue of Everknights! On sale every January, March, May, July, September and November! And don't miss our EK special this June, *the Everknights vs. King Arthur!*



PRIESTESS HOGLAH

RA: Human SX: F AL: LG AGE: 21
 CL: HackKleric LV: 2 HP: 135 AC: -4
 STR: 14/09 DEX: 16/53 CON: 15/35
 INT: 16/06 WIS: 20/61 CHA: 16/01
 COM: 17/50 HON: 199 FAME: 99

+H: +1 +D: +2 DEX BONUS: -3 R/AT BONUS: +3

SPELLS: 12 1st, 12 2nd, 11 3rd, 10 4th, 8 5th, 5 6th, 2 7th

Weapon of Choice: +5 Holy Symbols of Undead Beating

Salad Dressing of Choice: Catilina French

Occupation: Healer of the Everknights

Appearance: Viciously Sexy

AKA: That chick in Everknights



Priestess Hoglah: hacking her way through life each issue of Everknights! On sale every January, March, May, July, September and November! And don't miss our EK special this June, *the Everknights vs. King Arthur!*



Gnome Alliance of the Waylands: A History

By Chuck Boswell HMGMA IL-1-00766-02

Far from the Frandor Mountains and the lands of the Gnome Protectorates, within the Aludian Ocean, lies the island nation of *Ngoldorin calassë* or “The Gnome Alliance” as it is referred to in the common tongue. The gnomes of the alliance are very similar to their counterparts living on the main continent: they are friendly and fun-loving folk who delight in practical jokes and are interested in the workings of both the mechanical and magical.

Once known as “The Gnomish Highlands,” The Gnome Alliance was formed under its current structure of government nearly 200 years ago, after centuries of internecine war had almost completely depopulated the realm. The indigenous gnome population awoke to a shock some six centuries ago when a flotilla of ships, badly damaged by sailing through a particularly violent hurricane, came aground on the island’s rocky western shores. In the year -431 TR, a large contingent of fierce warrior gnomes from the west (gnome titans under the command of the Gnomish Doom Lord Bilork), became lost during the tumultuous storms, that lasted nearly two weeks, and found themselves stranded on the island.

The rocky hills and grasslands surrounding the gnome titans had almost no trees with which to produce enough lumber to repair their damaged ships. Most of the supplies they had brought with them had been lost, as many of the ships’ cargo holds had been torn apart by the large rocks which line the coast. The first scouts, sent to obtain food and other provisions, came into contact with the native gnomes and were greeted with warmth and friendship. The quiet, well-mannered native gnomes were taken aback by the violent, aggressive disposition of these militant newcomers. The gnome titans were equally surprised at how docile and meek the indigenous population was.

The impact of the gnome titans was felt almost immediately throughout the isle. It was the work of only fifty years to convert the relatively agnostic native gnomes to the worship of Pangrus. During this period, the gnome titans began constructing temple-fortresses and building large, walled cities around them for further fortification. They began to organize the gnome farmers and shepherds and transformed the small, self-supporting farms that epitomized the former way of life on the island into vast farms and plantations with crops sufficient to feed a much larger population. The greatest task in front of the gnome titans was building roads to lead to each of these new cities, which they deemed necessary both for trade and defense. It was in the year -379 TR that The Great Road, which runs from Bilork’s Landing (the site where the gnome titan fleet had been swept ashore) to the capital city Grunsch, was completed. About the same time the Pangrites successfully established the Church of Pangrus as the official faith of the Gnome Highlands.

In time, the gnome titans were able to craft the orderly society they had envisioned shortly after arriving on the island. The four appointed regional governors each decided to adopt the local native clans into their own family houses. Each of these new houses – House Topaz, House Garnet, the Jade Spears, and House Telgen – settled in different regions of the Highlands. The seat of each house was located in the four developing cities: Bilork’s Landing (House Topaz) in the southwest, Crandenbourg (House Garnet) in the northwest, Taren (the Jade Spears) in the northeast, and Grunsch (House Telgen) in the southeast. The area in the center of the Highlands, a range of rocky hills dominated by Mount Ngold known as the Midlands, was left relatively alone as it was mostly an area for sheep and goat herders to tend to their flocks. The regional governors were more concerned with building up their standing armies and



developing their cities' infrastructures. They never realized this much-overlooked region would be responsible for drenching the realm in blood.

Nearly four-and-a-half centuries ago, in the year -280 TR, a platoon of troops from Bilork's Landing was dispatched to the Midlands to investigate the disappearance of several bands of shepherds and their flocks in the vicinity of Mount Ngold. When they arrived in the Midlands they were warned by local villagers that the mountain was evil and all those who traveled within a league of the base were cursed to die. The gnome titan patrol scoffed at this and headed directly to the mountain. When they arrived, they found no sign of the shepherds or their flocks. They continued to search until nightfall, and set up camp. Late that evening, their camp was attacked by cave-dwelling gnomes from inside the mountain and everyone in the camp was slaughtered. Only the platoon's porter, a youth subject to fits of sleepwalking and who had walked out of the camp, survived. When he returned to Bilork's Landing, he gave his report to the governor. The governor's response was swift. He immediately dispatched nearly half his army to the region to eradicate this new threat; fully 3000 gnome titans of House Topaz marched into the Midlands bent on destroying these cave-dwellers.

The gnome titans found in the Deep Gnomes of Mount Ngold a persistent and tenacious enemy, and what they had hoped would be a quick, decisive strike ended up being a drawn-out, bloody conflict. The Deep Gnomes appeared insanely jealous and protective of their caverns underneath the mountain, and fought to the very last man attempting to stave off the gnome titan invaders. By the time the gnome titans had completely annihilated the Deep Gnomes, their own casualties had reached extreme levels: fully half of the gnome titan army from Bilork's Landing had been slain in combat. The soldiers that survived quickly learned why the Deep Gnomes had been so protective of these caverns – inside was a diamond mine so vast that nothing in any legend even compared to it. When word spread back to Bilork's Landing and House Topaz, the governor immediately conscripted miners from the indigenous gnome population and sent them out to begin working the mines. The governor, while dismayed at the shocking loss of troops in the engagement, was extremely excited at the prospects that the new mines presented. Once word spread to the other Houses, however, the order that had persisted throughout The Gnome Highlands since the arrival of the gnome titans shattered.

The governors and seats of House Garnet, House Telgen, and The Jade Spears immediately called on House

Topaz to surrender their claim on the mines beneath Mount Ngold and to agree to a compact whereby all four houses would share equally in the gems within the mines. House Topaz balked at this, as they were the ones that fought and died capturing the caves. The governor of House Topaz, Lord Blennheim (who was a descendant of the great Doom Lord Bilork), quietly dispatched materials and troops disguised as shepherds to the midlands while he sent diplomats to negotiate a treaty to settle the different houses' claims on the gems within the mines. The other houses, satisfied that Lord Blennheim finally seemed to be willing to act reasonably, began the negotiations in good faith with the House Topaz ambassadors. After months of fruitless negotiation at the bargaining table, spies from the other houses discovered that House Topaz had fortified their position in the midlands and did not appear to be preparing to depart at all. The other governors, outraged at this news, demanded to speak with Lord Blennheim in person to explain his actions. The House Topaz negotiation team drew their weapons and killed the governor of House Garnet before being slaughtered by the guards of the other delegations. The War of the Midlands had begun.

The armies of Houses Garnet, Telgen and the Jade Spears set out from their capitals and prepared to besiege the forces of House Topaz, which had fortified their position around Mount Ngold. The Pangrites desperately attempted to restore order and negotiate an armistice before any blood was shed, but greed had crept even into the souls of those Pangrites who owed fealty to House Topaz. Those Pangrites who hailed from House Topaz seceded from the rest of the Church of Pangrus and claimed their hierarchy "truly" served Pangrus' will, while the others were "heretics". The division of the Church of Pangrus truly doomed the Gnomish Highlands to centuries of war.

Intelligence reports from the covert operations branch of the Church of Pangrus (otherwise known as the *shadowblades*) showed the High Command (comprised of the military leaders of Houses Garnet, Telgen and the Jade Spears) what they had already believed: while House Topaz's armies were entrenched and their position fortified, they were vastly outnumbered by the forces led by the High Command. The High Command oversaw the construction of catapults, ballista and other siege engines, as well as the assembling of a great fleet to attack House Topaz at what the High Command perceived to be the weakest point in the Topaz defense – their capital. This two-pronged attack was designed to spread the defenses of the Topaz armies thin enough that they would be destroyed more quickly. While the other houses wanted the House Topaz armies crushed and Lord

Blennheim executed, they didn't want any more bloodshed than need be. The Church of Pangrus wanted the rogue Pangrites all executed of course, but wanted the rest of the gnome titans of House Topaz quickly brought back into the fold.

The High Command began what was then termed *The Great Campaign* on the 9th day of Yurn'Sa in the year -279 TR. That particular date is observed as a solemn day of remembrance of all the lives that were lost during The War of the Midlands. Three separate armies marched forth from Crandenbourg, Taren and Grunsch to the midlands. At the same time, a massive fleet was launched out of Grunsch's harbor that set sail for the coastal capital of House Topaz, Bilork's Landing. Both the High Command's armies as well as its navy were in for an awful surprise.

Lord Blennheim had amassed within the span of one year a tremendous amount of wealth in diamonds from the mines below Mount Ngold (including the treasures taken from the Deep Gnomes). He used some of this wealth to enlist the aid of the Ginge Pirates as well as mercenaries from the Yuttin Peninsula and Estarlinn. Utilizing massive illusions cast by the *shadowblades* under Blennheim's command, these mercenary forces were hidden from the High Command's spies and were secretly deployed to the Midlands. When the armies of the High Command met House Topaz on the field of battle, the illusions that concealed the mercenary armies were lifted and the High Command was completely unprepared for the numbers they were now facing.

The High Command's navy was completely annihilated by the Ginge Pirates (gnome titans are much better battlefield commanders than they are admirals). The battle of Algore (a small village just northwest of Mount Ngold), which was supposed to last only a few months, dragged on for several years. Eventually the High Command was able to cut off the supply lines from Bilork's Landing to Mount Ngold, and the steady flow of supplies that the House Topaz armies were receiving (as well as the flow of diamonds back to the capital) ceased. Lord Blennheim's coffers dwindled, and the lack of food spelled doom for the armies of House Topaz. Lord Blennheim used nearly all the rest of his massive wealth to purchase the aid of the Ginge Pirates once more. The pirates quickly descended on the capital of House Telgen, Grunsch, sacking and burning the city.

Once word of the capital's demise reached the House Telgen soldiers, they all abandoned the front and quickly returned to the seat of their House. With the size of the force they were facing now reduced, the armies of House

Topaz were able to push back the High Command and re-establish their supply lines.

And so it went for another fifty years. In the year -228 TR, Lord Blennheim was able to achieve a major victory for House Topaz when he secretly agreed to a compact with a Lord Mahdrein, the governor and head of House Garnet. This new alliance between the two houses changed the entire landscape of the struggle. With mercenary soldiers swelling the ranks of the new alliance's armies, they were able to push back the remnants of the High Command and cement control of the mines by then end of the year -227 TR. For the next 13 years, there was relative peace in the Midlands. House Topaz and House Garnet began building their forces for a counter-attack on the other two houses, but the attack never occurred.

In the year -215 TR, the great and terrible Lord Blennheim finally died, and his son Lord Blennheim II gained control of the seat of House Topaz. Blennheim II (commonly referred to as "Aggot") was immensely greedy and immediately insisted on a re-structuring of the compact with House Garnet whereby House Topaz would control a greater percentage of the assets of the mines. Since House Topaz had greater numbers and deeper coffers, Lord Mahdrein was forced to agree. Lord Mahdrein, however, was not about to let this rest. Realizing that he might be able to better control the situation if he changed sides, he sent emissaries to House Telgen and the Jade Spears, seeking a new alliance where House Garnet would be the senior partner. Lord Blennheim II, an untrustworthy fellow, intercepted the messenger and had him hanged. He then sent two spies disguised as messengers from Telgen and the Spears back to Garnet with the message that they would agree to the proposed arrangement. Lord Blennheim II then sent word to his troops to attack and slaughter the soldiers of House Garnet. The House Garnet soldiers were already wary of their Topaz counterparts, and the betrayal of their allies did not catch them unaware. The two forces began combating one another, and each sought the aid of the other two houses.

For the next 130 years, alliances were formed and then torn asunder in betrayal. Control of the mines shifted from house to house until finally the armies combating each other were comprised more of mercenaries than other gnome titans as the population of the isle had decreased by 70% due to two centuries of war. In the year -80 TR, a gnome (named Clorthoth was anointed Archpriest of the Church of Pangrus, and called upon all Pangrites to unite together and end the war. Clorthoth the Unifier (as he was called thereafter) was able to rally all the Pangrites of all four houses under his banner, and

from there was able to subvert the forces of the four houses by declaring himself de facto ruler of the Gnomish Highlands. The soldiers all swore fealty to Clorthoth, and the four houses, humbled, were forced to submit to his rule. Clorthoth began to draft a new form of government – by gnomes and for gnomes – whereby a president would be elected by regional representatives who were chosen by popular vote within the region. While each of the four houses continued to have economic power and the influence riches bring, they lost all political power to the common gnome.

In the year -73 TR, Clorthoth turned authority of the Gnomish Highlands over to the country's first president, a farmer named Gallan. Gallan wasn't terribly bright- he was an indigenous gnome pig-farmer that the common man could identify with and that Clorthoth endorsed. His first act was to rename the Gnomish Highlands "The Gnome Alliance of the Waylands" – to show to the world that the four houses which had once been enemies, had come together once more as allies. Very little else can be said of Gallan's presidency as he was basically a pawn for the Church of Pangrus, which used him to consolidate their control over the military and control over the defense of the alliance.

Today the Church of Pangrus is extremely powerful, despite the fact that the president is elected by the free populace and has absolute authority. There are enough restrictions regarding the rights of the church to assure that their position as the caretakers of the military is never relinquished. The families of the four traditional houses of the alliance are still very powerful, but it is an economic power they wield now. Often with their money the houses can influence who ascends to the position of president, but they don't have any official capacity in the government.

The militant instincts of the gnome titans have been redirected towards the field of entertainment. Each of the four major cities of the alliance has a gladiatorial arena, and the citizens of the alliance take delight in watching the often deadly matches. There are also other non-lethal sports which have become popular throughout the isle. gnome titans hailing from the traditional houses typically participate in the non-lethal sports, whereas those gnome titans hailing from smaller houses and a group of genetically inferior gnomes known as "degenerates" typically fill the gladiatorial ranks.

The future of the island nation appears very bright. Traders are attracted to the Alliance because it is a very wealthy nation that has vast purchasing power. Foreigners visit the Alliance because the citizens are both

friendly and fun-loving. They also delight in all the different activities that can be enjoyed in the Alliance, including watching the competitive sports and gladiatorial combat at the arenas throughout the island. Gnomes in the city of Grunsch have become excellent shipwrights, and many ship captains make the great city a port of call for the purposes of repairs and improvements. While the nation maintains a mighty military, it really has become a peace-loving land.



Dress for Success

By Eric Neumann HMGMA IL-3-00156-01

To most adventures the cheapest common garb is sufficient as they prefer to spend their hard won coin on weapons, armor, ale, women, and gambling. The more advanced, cultured, or just plain vain characters are more interested in the clothing they are wearing.

If a person wears clothing that is worth at least 75 gp, he has a 25% chance of gaining one point of temporal honor each day wearing it. If the clothing is worth at least 150 gp the person also gains a +1 to reaction rolls with humans and demi-humans.

Jewelry can also grant benefits. Jewelry worth more than 100gp grants a 25% chance of gaining one point of temporal honor each day for each piece of jewelry worth more than 100 gp. For every 500gp worth of jewelry worn and visible the wearer gains a +1 on reaction rolls with humans and demi-humans. It should be noted that anyone wearing more than 500gp worth of jewelry openly will attract the attention of thieves and is likely to be selected over his comrades as a target during battle due to his obvious wealth.

Clothing made from leather works as armor in the same manner as heavy robes.

Name	cost	weight	availability
Leather Jacket	25 gp	3 lb.	30/20/10
Gnomish Spectacles	500 gp	1/10 lb.	15/10/5
Gnomish Shades	1,000 gp	1/10 lb.	5/5/5
Smoked Glass Goggles	600 gp	1/10 lb.	5/5/5
Thieves' Gloves	15 gp	1/2 lb.	15/10/5
Snow Shoes*	1 gp	2 lb.	60/40/20
Winter Coat*	2 gp	10 lb.	60/40/20
Snow Pants*	2 gp	10 lb.	60/40/20
Bindings	1 sp	1/10 lb.	30/30/10

* Only in Arctic/Sub-arctic climates and Mountain/Glaciers. In Temperate climates availability is 15/10/5 and in all others they are unavailable.

Leather Jacket: A jacket made from heavy leather can provide slightly better protection than a heavy robe. It provides AC 9 but requires 2 hit points of damage to be destroyed.

Gnomish Spectacles: These normal glasses can eliminate the far-sighted flaw when worn and undamaged.

Gnomish Shades: These spectacles are made using mirrored glass and do not improve one's eyesight but they do look cool and provide a +1 to all saves vs. light related blinding attacks. The shades also work as mirrors.

Smoked Glass Goggles: This eye wear was invented by the Drow. It is a simple set of goggles with dark glass lenses. The only benefit to wearing these goggles is that races receiving penalties for acting in sunlight have their penalties reduced by 1 point when wearing these glasses.

Thieves' Gloves: Thieves' gloves are made from thin leather and lined with a layer of silk. The gloves give a -5 penalty to open locks and remove traps. However the gloves provide a certain amount of protection against needle traps. Any trap that the thief springs that would target his hands must do at least 3 points of damage to affect the thief. Thus a needle that does one point of damage and is coated with a deadly poison would be useless against a thief wearing these gloves. A thieves' glove has 3 hit points and is ruined once it has absorbed that amount of damage. The gloves act in the same manner as a shield but only protect against attacks to the hand and have exactly 3 hit points but provide no armor class bonus.

Snowshoes: Snowshoes allow the wearer to treat deep snow as rugged terrain.

Winter Coat: A winter coat is usually made from heavy furs and is very encumbering. The coat does however allow one to act in relative comfort in temperatures as low as freezing and is even helpful below freezing. Wearing such a heavy coat grants a +1 to all saving throws vs. cold. The coat does have a drawback, it is so heavy and cumbersome that it reduces the Dexterity of anyone wearing it by one.

Snowpants: Snow pants are simply breeches made from heavy furs. The effects of wearing snowpants are the same as those of wearing a winter coat and the effects are cumulative (benefits and drawbacks).

Bindings: Bindings are simple strips of cloth typically worn on the forehead as a bandana or on the hands or forearms. When these bindings are marked with the symbol of an honorable group such as a kobar, dojo, school, knightly order, or guild they grant one temporal honor. Period. This point is lost if the character ever goes out without it. If the group that the symbol represents is dishonorable then a -1 honor award should be given. If a person is caught wearing the symbol of an order he does not belong to he will immediately lose 20% of his honor and draw the enmity of the order.

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Advanced Brawling Rules

By Dave Kenzer HMGMA IL-10-00000-01

These brawling rules are for situations where the brawl itself is the center of the action. Examples include an honor duel or challenge to fisticuffs, a heated fistfight between two arguing characters (especially if onlookers are there and honor is at stake), wrestling matches, bare-knuckled boxing matches and the classic bar-room brawl. In these instances where the fight itself is the main encounter or epicenter of the action, these rules provide more detailed play and flexibility as well as a more protracted scenario. If your players enjoy a good bar room brawl complete with makeshift weaponry (e.g., chairs broken over the back or a whiskey bottle to the head), these rules will do nicely.

Set Up

Each character begins with a set number of tokens that represent that character's ability to deal and withstand damage and hit others. These tokens can be anything (coins, chits, poker chips, etc.) as long as they can be stacked and manipulated fairly easily and come in precisely three varieties (small chits, poker chips and pennies/nickels/dimes work well). Each player begins with a stack of tokens defined by their ability scores as follows:

Red Chips: 2 x Strength value

Blue Chips: Intelligence plus Dexterity

White Chips: Wisdom plus Constitution

For example, a character with the following stats STR 12, DEX 9, CON 14, INT 15, WIS 6, CHA 7, COM 9 and using red, blue and white poker chips as markers would have the following totals:

Red (Damage): 2 x Strength value = 24

Blue (Agility): Intelligence plus Dexterity = 24

White (Endurance): Wisdom plus Constitution = 20

The Red chips (Damage) determine the damage bonus of successful hits – each Red chip = a +1 point of damage.

The Blue chips (Agility) determine who swings first and give a +1 “to-hit” for each one bet.

The White Chips (Endurance) reduce any damage suffered from opponents by 2 points per white chip bet.

Rules in Play

At the beginning of each round, every player tosses in a white “Endurance” chip (based on CON + WIS). These “antes” are then swept (and counted to make sure

everyone that wants to take an action has paid a chip) by the GM and removed from the fight. Next, each player prepares, then simultaneously “bets” a number of red, blue and white chips by pushing them into the center of the table (or into the “pot”).

Players take their turns in order of the number of Blue (Agility) chips bet (highest goes first – ties are broken by Dexterity scores to the 100th place, then Intelligence scores to the 100th place then a showdown poker hand of 7 cards face-up). To hit another character, the player picks any adjacent target, rolls a d20 and adds a +1 bonus for each Agility (blue) chip bet (back at the start of the round). The defender rolls a d20 and adds his Dexterity defense modifier. If the attacker's roll exceeds the defender's roll, the attack succeeds (i.e., ties go to the defender).

The maximum chips that may be bet by any character in any given round of brawling is as follows:

Damage: 1/2 Strength score

Agility: 1/2 Dexterity score

Endurance: 1/2 Constitution score

Note, all are rounded DOWN. Thus, a character with an 11 Dexterity can bet a maximum of 5 Agility chips.

Damage is 1 point plus the number of Damage chips (red) bet by the attacking player minus TWO for each Endurance chip (white) bet by the injured player (note this CAN reduce damage to zero from a would-be damaging blow). The injured player must remove a number of his own chips (not already in the pot) from his stacks and place them aside (they are lost from the fight).

After any round of fighting, any character with zero Damage chips is too weak to injure anyone beyond one point, any character with zero Agility chips is too weak to throw a decent punch and can't get a bonus to-hit, and any character with zero Endurance (white) is winded and must spend one round resting (see below) or spend one each of Damage and Agility chips to gain an Endurance chip for ante. If at any time, a character's chips are down to zero in all three categories, he's knocked and/or passed out. Damage beyond the final chip is removed from the character's hit point total.

The highest NATURAL ATTACK roll (i.e., NOT modified roll) each round wins that round's pot, less the GM's rake (see below). These chips are then added to that

Players' Advantage

character's chips and he can use them in future brawling rounds.

A natural "1" on the attacker's roll indicates a very poor miss: the attacker suffers the effects of the fumbles chart AND the defender may make a free, immediate counter-attack that does not count as his attack for that turn but is otherwise the same as his standard attack for that turn in all respects. A natural "1" on the defender's roll gives the attacker an immediate free attack (identical to his first attack). A natural roll of "20" for the attacker does double Damage chips PLUS the extra Damage chips and ignore any Endurance chips played by the defender (but the first ones bet are not ignored). A natural roll of "20" by the defender doubles the value of the White (endurance) chips played.

The Rake

The GM rakes in a percentage of each type of chip from each pot as follows:

One of each type for every 10 chips bet or fraction thereof for every four brawlers that rolled dice or otherwise contributed to the pot (i.e., if the pot consisted of 16 Damage, 21 Agility and 9 Endurance chips and there were 3 brawlers, the GM would take TWO Damage chips, 3 Agility chips and one Endurance chip, but if there were 5-8 brawlers the GM would take DOUBLE, for 9-12 brawlers he would remove TRIPLE, etc.).

Time

Each round of brawling equals 6 seconds of duration.

Moving and Special Actions

During the "bet", any player may set aside additional chips to indicate a special action. Actions that do not directly affect other characters (e.g., moving, jumping behind the bar, swinging from the chandelier, etc.) cost one of each type of chip. Actions that do directly affect another character cost two of each type of chip. This includes using a weapon or a make-shift weapon such as a chair, bottle, pommel or knife. Damage delivered by a weapon, chair, bottle, etc. is rolled per the weapon and modified by both strength modifiers (like a normal hit) and Damage chips. The damage total sans Damage chips (i.e., the weapon damage plus strength bonus) are removed from the defendant's hit point total and the total damage is removed from the character's chips (modified by any Endurance chips bet, of course).

Each round of rest (inaction) earns back three chips of the resting character's choice.

Weapon damage:

Use standard HackMaster weapon damage.

Chairs do 1d4 for standard chairs, 1d6 for heavy. Bottles to 1d3 if empty, 1d4 if half or more full.

Stunning

Any time a character suffers damage equal to half his remaining Endurance chips, he is partially stunned for the next round. Partially stunned characters may bet a maximum of 1/2 their normal maximum (or 1/4 the relevant original ability score). If a character suffers damage equal to or greater than his remaining endurance chips, he's stunned for one action and cannot take his next action (this round of inaction does not count as "Rest"), falls prone and is then partially stunned for the following round. Note that a character's next action could be in the same round or in the next round depending on whether he already attacked that round.

Any character that is stunned (but not partially stunned) two rounds in a row is knocked unconscious for 1 round.

Shorter Brawls

For a shorter brawl, halve all starting chips.

Hirelings

By Eric Neumann HMGMA IL-3-00156-01

Greetings! Welcome to the Torchbearer's Union, Local 127. Now, we have many good strong workers looking for work and we even have some skilled professionals who have special talents. Of course, if you want someone to do more than carry a torch it will cost you more.

A Dwarven Food-taster is vital to anyone intending to live the life of an adventurer or politician. For a mere 300gp you can rest easy when you eat. The Dwarven Food-taster will check everything you eat or drink to be certain that it is not poisonous. If a poison does slip through, most Dwarven Food-tasters have knowledge of home remedies, although we make no guarantees.

Everyone knows that wizards are very expensive, but without paying them off you can never be sure if that nifty new treasure you found is cursed or valuable, or what in Garweeze Wurd it does. Well, look no further – there is a much more economical way to address the problem, the Elven Identifier. The Elven Identifier can identify the properties of magical items that he handles. For as little as 50gp per month you can have an Elven Identifier join you on your journey. He will handle any item you find and often he will be able to tell you at least some of the powers of that item. Of course, even for these able fellows the flow of magic is difficult to read – so they won't always be able to tell you specifics.

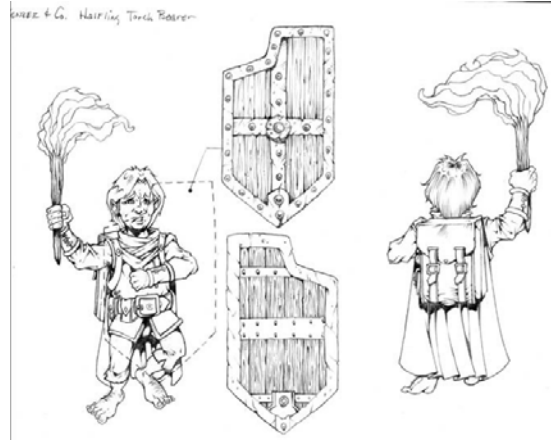
No underground venture can possibly be a success without the assistance of a Miner. A dwarven or gnomish miner will be happy to join your expedition for a mere 15 gp per month. In addition to their innate understanding of stone and earth, our miners are trained, many as engineers.

It is never wise to risk drinking an unknown potion-so you should hire a Gnome Potion-taster. These gnomes will join you for a mere 100 gp per month plus a 25 gp per potion fee, a substantial savings over the fees magic-

users charge! Many Potion-testers can recognize potions by sight and smell alone.

An adventuring party is only as good as the information it possesses. To assist you in this regard we can offer you the assistance of a Dwarven Stone-talker or an Elven Plant-speaker. For a mere 100 gp per month, one of these excellent hired hands will join your bold band. Do not underestimate the value of these information gatherers. It is always valuable to know what the plants and stones can tell you in and around the dungeons you are exploring. These elves and dwarves are highly revered by their kin and rarely travel abroad, but if you can convince one to join your party they will prove invaluable-and we've handled the negotiations for you!

Many adventuring parties try to hire a MICHARU to assist in surviving their bloody profession. Most true clerics will charge a fee of 10% of all treasure found just to join the party, and will then charge additional fees for each spell cast. Our orc shamans will join you for as little as 5gp per day and their healing is as efficacious as a cleric's.



Super Hiring Abilities, Costs, and Availability

Hireling	Talent/Skill	Cost *	Base Availability	
			Non-Homeland	Homeland
Dwarven Food-taster	Detect poison	300 gp	20/15/10	40/30/20
Elven Identifier	Magic ID[5-50%]	50-500 gp***	15/10/5	40/30/20
Miner (dwarf, gnome)	Mining sense, Mining skill	15 gp	30/20/10	75/50/25
	with Engineering skill	30 gp	15/10/5	45/30/15
Gnome Potion-taster	Potion ID (3-17%)	30-170 gp***	15/10/5	45/30/15
Elven Plant-speaker	Speak with plants	100 gp	5/5/5	30/15/10
Dwarven Stone-talker	Stone tell	100 gp	5/5/5	30/15/10
Orc Shaman	(per Zealot's Guide)	5gp x level**	30/20/10	60/45/30
Scroll Caddy	Spell components (1-30%)	10-300 gp	30/20/10	75/50/25
Veterinarian	Veterinary healing	30 gp	70/50/30	70/50/30
Doctor	Healer Suite	90 gp	70/50/30	70/50/30

* per month

** per day

*** +25 gp per item identified



HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, BUD! I SEE YA GETTIN' READY TA FLIP THAT PAGE!

YEAH, HANG ON A SECOND! WE GOT SOMETHIN' TO SAY!

YOU MEAN, "I" GOT SOMETHING TO SAY!

KNUCKLES

EL RAVAGER

THORINA

TEFLON BILLY

GUYS, PLEASE...

SEE, IT'S COME TO OUR ATTENTION THAT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE GIVE YOU AN EXTRA HELPING OF KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE EVERY MONTH--



--LOADED WITH ALL-NEW MATERIAL--

MANY OF YOU STILL AREN'T READING OUR BOOK.



(SUBLIMINAL MESSAGE)

READ
**KNIGHTS OF THE DINNER TABLE:
ILLUSTRATED!**

NEW ADVENTURES WITH A TOUCH OF THE CLASSIC KODT YOU KNOW AND LOVE!



EL RAVAGER IS THE GREATEST! YOU ALL LOVE EL RAVAGER!!

NOW WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT THIS IS BECAUSE YOU'RE SPENDING YOUR MONEY ON NONESSENTIALS LIKE FOOD, SHELTER AND CLOTHING. THORINA WILL NOW DEMONSTRATE HOW NONESSENTIAL THOSE ITEMS ARE -- STARTING WITH CLOTHING.



TEFLON! FOOD, SHELTER AND CLOTHING ARE ESSENTIALS. NONESSENTIALS ARE VIDEO GAMES, TOYS AND ROLE-PLAYING GAMES (EXCEPT THOSE PUBLISHED BY KENZER AND COMPANY, OF COURSE).



HUH? NO WAY, THORINA! MY GAMING NEEDS COME FIRST!



YEAH, AND WHAT ABOUT KNUCKLES' HUGE DOLL COLLECTION?

DOLLS?! THOSE ARE ACTION FIGURES!



OH, KNUCKLES WANTS HIS DOLLY!

SHUT UP! YOU JUST SHUT UP!

SIGH... SORRY ABOUT THIS, FOLKS. BUT CHECK OUT OUR BOOK ANYWAY, OKAY?

Knights of the Dinner Table:
ILLUSTRATED
MONTHLY FROM
KENZER & COMPANY.
BUY IT NOW -
BECAUSE SPARE CHANGE
WASTES LIVES!
WRITTEN BY: MARK PLEMMONS
ILLUSTRATED BY: BRENDON AND BRIAN FRAIM

Omnipotence on a Budget: Making the Most of Low-Level Spells

By Ben Pierce HMGMA #1-00197-01

“Company...at ease! And listen close, because I’m only going to say this once. I can see by the looks on your faces that a lot of you are pleased with yourselves. Think that now that you’ve finished Advanced Mobile Magical Offensive training, you’re something special...isn’t that right?”

You’re damn straight it’s right! The AMMO program produces the finest combat mages the world has ever seen. But let’s get one thing straight, boys and girls...it also produces a lot of corpses in a lot of shallow graves. If you want to come home carrying your spellbook instead of being splattered on it, you need to know the difference between the classroom and field conditions.

In an ideal world, we’d all be able to take our time and carefully choose the perfect spell for the task at hand. It’s not an ideal world, ladies and gentlemen. Most of the time, you’ll be trying to make do with the materials at hand. Maybe you’ll have your full spell arsenal handy; more likely, you’ll be trying to make do with a government issue travelling spellbook with Spider Climb, Grease, and Evaporate in it.

Therefore, you have to get used to being economical—getting more out of every single spell you cast. Now, here are a few tricks I’ve picked up out in the field. Pay attention, because these might just save your life one day...”

Every mage wants to be a world-shaker. Let’s be honest: very few spell-lobbers commit themselves to decades of intensive study because they want to be able to cast Mend someday. Visions of casually tossed Meteor Swarms keep them going through the all-night study sessions, and daydreams of summoning Dryads and Nymphs keep them awake in Professor Maximer’s Advanced Thaumaturgical Theory class the next day.

The fact of the matter, though, is that not every mage will make it to those lofty levels. Even the ones who do will have to climb up the ladder like everyone else. For the majority of a magic user’s career, he or she is going to have to rely on low-level spells.

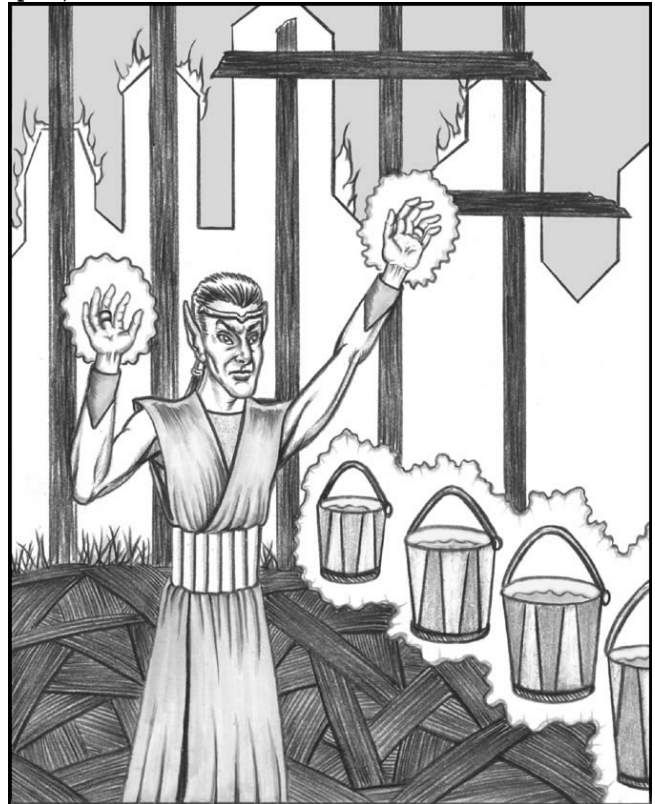
This isn’t an enviable situation to be in. Most of the low-level attack spells won’t do much more damage than a fighter with a good sword — and the fighter can do that damage over and over again. Indeed, the fledgling magic-user is a bit of a wuss in the damage-dealing department.

The question, then, becomes one of supply and demand. When it comes to butt-kicking potential, the fighters can out-supply the mage. Therefore, the mage has to find needs that the fighters cannot meet, and carve out a niche

there. Sure, Oggy the half-ogre can do 20 points of damage per shot with his sword. Oggy cannot, however, fly the party across a chasm, turn them invisible, or protect them from the arrows of the Kobold Kommando Korps. (Not much on spelling, those kobolds, but crack shots with a shortbow!)

Versatility is the watchword of the low-level magic-user. He or she won’t have a lot of spells memorized at any given time; therefore, each and every one of those spells has to be useful in as many situations as possible.

Compiled below is a list of extremely useful and versatile spells of first to third level. Each of these spells has multiple uses, and can therefore be adapted to a variety of situations (suggestions for how to do this follow each spell.)



Alarm: When you consider how many adventurers have had their throats cut in their sleep, the value of Alarm becomes obvious. It’s not just useful on night watch, though. Traps can be set using Alarm, or invisible intruders detected. The audible version can be used as the signal for a coordinated attack when the enemy reaches exactly the right spot. Alarm can also be used to catch the

party halfling red-handed when you just *know* he's been dipping into your elderberry turnovers late at night.

Befriend: Mages, in general, tend to be a bit short in the social graces department. Befriend goes a long way towards overcoming this. In one spell, you have an interrogation tool, an infiltration tool, and a way to get that annoying customs official to let you through without a detailed search of your belongings. Just bear in mind that the duration of the spell is short, and the target will realize that they've been influenced afterwards.

Burning Hands: In addition to being a fairly efficient damaging spell at higher levels, Burning Hands is also useful as a handy means of starting a fire in adverse weather conditions. It's also extremely useful when you need to immolate troll bodies before they start regenerating ... and the fan-shaped dispersal means you can burn more than one at a time, if they're piled next to one another.

Charm Person: As General Krell Jerrigson once observed, "An enemy converted is worth fifty defeated." Charm Person, in the hands of a clever mage, is one of the most useful spells of any level. Being able to make an enemy (or even someone neutral to you) consider you a trusted friend can open many doors that would otherwise be closed to you. Treat them well, these "friends." Be very sure that you reward their friendship amply, with gifts and demonstrations of your own loyalty. That way, even when the spell wears off, the target may well not realize it was there in the first place. Using Charm to bypass a guard is competent; using Charm to establish a long-term friend and contact in a position of power and authority is masterful.

Chromatic Orb: Chromatic Orb starts off fairly weak. Let's face it: 1d4 damage, with a to-hit roll required, isn't all that impressive. Even at first level, though, the spell has merit. The Light effect is, essentially, a cut-rate Blindness spell, and can also be used to light an area in dire emergencies. Better still, the spell gets drastically more powerful as the caster increases in level ... to the point where a successful hit will all but guarantee the doom of the target. (C'mon...a first level death spell that paralyzes the target even if he *makes* his saving throw? The sixth and seventh level death spells aren't that good!)

Color Spray: Color Spray is one of those spells that really only does one thing, but does it really, *really* well. All things considered, it's probably the best bang-for-your-buck first level offensive spell. Like Sleep, it will take out a large number of weak opponents without a saving throw. Unlike Sleep, it remains useful even after the mage

reaches higher levels. In addition to potentially affecting stronger creatures than Sleep can influence, Color Spray also has no limit on the *number* of creatures it can affect—assuming, of course, that they're all in the area of effect.

Comprehend Languages: Comprehend Languages is, simply, a must-have for any party that doesn't want the GM to crush them like bugs. With Comprehend Languages, dire warnings in old ruins may be deciphered, enemy codes may be broken with ease, and the Duchess' indecipherable scrawl may be properly interpreted so that the party knows exactly *which* bakery she wishes them to purchase her jam tarts from. Comprehend Languages also allows eavesdropping (say, on those two uppity Druids conversing in their "secret" tongue.) As an added bonus, the spell is reversible, and the reversed version can be just as useful. Consider the advantages of rendering the enemy commander unintelligible in the middle of a battle—five rounds per level where he can't give orders could well turn the tide of a close conflict!

Conjure Mount: A wonderful spell for basic transport, Conjure Mount can also be used in a lot of not-so-obvious ways. A conjured mount makes handy monster bait. A less than scrupulous mage can make quite a bit of money selling horses, although he'll have to get out of town before his customer realizes he's been duped!

Copy: This is another spell that can put a lot of money in a less-than-honest mage's pocket. The fact that the spell extends to artwork, and makes perfect copies, makes it wonderful for forgeries...and the mage will have 1-4 weeks to make his getaway with the original before anyone realizes his copy is a fake.

Disable Hand: Disable Hand is interesting in that the amount of damage it can do is, theoretically, unlimited—it deals out a flat percentage of the target's hit points. That's not all that impressive when the target is a stableboy with 22 hit points, but it's very impressive when the target is a 500 hit point dragon! In addition to doing damage, the spell can also disarm a target, or force him to drop an important item.

Enlarge/Reduce: Enlarge and Reduce have a thousand and one uses—quite possibly more, depending on the ingenuity of the caster. Reducing a door will cause it to fall off the hinges. Enlarging a cow can make it a much more tempting treat to a monster. With a duration of five rounds per level, you can even sneak a miniaturized ladder, battering ram, and anvil into your pack right before you need them—and smile as they grow at just the **WRONG** time for your foes!

Harpaang's Floating Cart: It's a cart, it's a stretcher or it's a makeshift raft for your friends. Now how much would you pay? Order before midnight tonight and we'll throw in a FREE set of steak knives!

Icy Sphere: Take the most efficient first level damage spell. Now add in the ability to use it to freeze large quantities of water. What do you get? A spell that can do most of what Harpaang's Magnificent Sphere of Freezing can do, and is five levels lower. I'll buy that for a gold piece.

Mend: Never overlook the value of being able to quickly and flawlessly repair small, delicate items. A map is a small, delicate item. So is a gem. The fact that the spell can also be used to "sew" items together makes it even more useful.

Merge Coin Pile: A mage really doesn't need anything more than this one spell to guarantee him a life of financial ease. Merge Coin Pile can be used to easily convert treasure to a more portable form, or to conduct large money-changing transactions quickly and painlessly. It can turn those nasty, incriminating platinum coins with the mark of the Emperor on them into something much more nondescript. It can also be used to turn a small sack of platinum coins into several tons of copper, burying opponents if timed properly.

Phantasmal Force: For sheer versatility, you can't beat illusion spells. Their power depends entirely on belief—namely, whether or not you can get the GM to believe that the spell will do what you suggest! For this reason Phantasmal Force is best used by eloquent players.

Protection from Evil: Never, ever underestimate the power of Protection from Evil. The combat bonuses are nice, but really secondary. The true power of the spell lies in its ability to provide near-total protection from two very dangerous hazards—mind control and conjured creatures. Any first level spell that can thwart a ninth-level summoning and keep the Vampire from taking control of your brain at the same time is well worth considering.

Unseen Servant: In their rush to rediscover the secrets of the Nuclear Winter Fireball, many spell-lobbers overlook humble utility spells like Unseen Servant. Don't make the same mistake! Unseen Servant is, in many ways, superior to the fifth level spell Telekinesis. Oh, sure, it lacks the brute strength of that spell, but it's capable of fine manipulation over a long period of time. A resourceful magic-user can use Unseen Servants to trigger traps, open doors, retrieve the keys to the jail cell in

which the magic-user is locked, or clean up after a not-particularly-housebroken familiar.

Alter Self: Take the basic function of a third level Fly spell. Combine it with the basic function of a third level Water Breathing spell. Add in the ability to disguise yourself, and you get ... a second level spell!? Alter Self is an excellent "just in case" spell—one useful for getting out of a wide variety of tight spots. If you need a few rounds of flight to escape pursuers, or a few rounds of breathing underwater, Alter Self can provide it. It's not a long-duration travel spell, but a wise mage will always consider having one in reserve ... just in case.

Continual Light: "Okay, it creates light," I hear you saying. "So?" Oh, ye of little faith! Continual Light has many, many uses. It's a quick source of magical trinkets when you need to raise a little cash or impress superstitious yokels. It's a way to sucker gullible rich folks with a false "magic sword." Cast Continual Light on the inside of an animated skeleton's skull, and then turn the thing Invisible—glowing eyes floating six feet off the ground will give all but the most foolhardy intruders pause. Of course, Continual Light can also be used as a plain old light source—cast it on the inside of a well-made locket to produce a light source that requires no hands and can be turned on and off at will. Just make sure the fighter is the one who wears it—enemies have a tendency to shoot at light sources, after all...

ESP: Good intelligence is worth its weight in Grevan stout. Used properly, ESP can remove the need for many skills. Need to know if that merchant is giving you an honest appraisal on the gems you're trying to sell? ESP can help. Want an edge in that high-stakes poker game? Again, ESP can help. A caveat: be *very* careful about using ESP around those who may be able to detect it. Professional gamblers in Garweeze Wurd have a standard punishment for those caught using ESP. This punishment, called "The Joker's Revenge," is seldom discussed—suffice to say that those who undergo it take weeks to recover, and require a rather embarrassing medical treatment for the rest of their lives...

Fascinate: Fascinate is a particularly powerful spell when used by a character with an extremely high Comeliness. In such cases, it becomes almost ridiculously effective, enabling the caster to make almost any request of his or her pawns and have it obeyed. Hey, love hurts!

Fustis' Mnemonic Enhancer: More versatility is always a good thing, and Fustis' Mnemonic Enhancer grants a great deal of versatility in exchange for one low-level spell slot. The only drawback is the material component—but

if you can get Intellect Devourer brains on a regular basis, by all means take advantage of it!

Glitterdust: Another dual-use spell, Glitterdust is handy both as an attack and as a means of detecting invisible opponents—a nice, versatile incantation to have memorized.

Knock: While Knock is a standard part of almost any mage's repertoire already, it's helpful to keep in mind that it will also open puzzle boxes and secret doors that you don't know how to open, or break open welds. (Many types of armor use welds, just for instance.)

Levitate: Levitate has a second, often-overlooked function as an offensive spell. The ability to levitate another creature can take a powerful opponent out of the fight. For instance, three adventurers confront two bugbears and an ogre. They're badly outmatched—until the magic-user casts Levitate on the ogre, lifting him ten feet into the air and leaving him dangling there while the two fighters make short work of the bugbears. That taken care of, they can now finish off the ogre with missile weapons at their leisure, as Levitate's lengthy duration all but insures that he'll be dead before the spell wears off. Or you could just send the ogre straight up and let falling damage take care of him.

Locate Object: Another staple intelligence and reconnaissance spell, Locate Object takes on new versatility in the hands of a clever player. It's not just a treasure detector—it can find the stairway leading out in a killer dungeon, the nearest source of water in a desert, or an assassin lurking amidst the guards. ("Find me the closest poisoned weapon!")

Rope Trick: In addition to being a nice, secure (if cramped) campsite, Rope Trick can also function as a bargain-basement Stone Passage. Cast it right next to a wall, so that the opening is bisected by said wall. Scoot up on one side, and back down again on the other. Just be sure to look before you leap! But you'll have to be a glib player to get this past some GMs.

A Day in the Life: If you can't find a way to make your GM cry with this spell, you're not trying very hard! The ability to gain all of the abilities of another race—and some of the races possible have quite nice abilities, indeed—while still retaining your own level and skills is far too juicy to pass up. Just bear in mind that what's good for the players is good for the GM. Don't be too surprised when Count Drakus, the Vampire Lord, uses this spell to turn into a human and come hunting for your party at high noon...

Clairvoyance: The spy's best friend. Clairvoyance allows you to be the "fly on the wall" that so many have wished they could be. Take a look at the enemy's battle plans without their knowledge. Study the positioning of the enemies in the next room before you attack. Forewarned is forearmed.

Item: "If only I could carry more stuff!" Every adventurer has uttered that wish, in one form or another. Item reduces those big, bulky, high-ticket items you usually, reluctantly leave back in town to a manageable bulk and size. Combined with a little preparation, this can make the difference between a shoddy, drafty encampment and a nigh-impregnable fortress. Shrink down some portable barricades for use in fortifying your camp or thwarting pursuit. Shrink down that portable forge...and, heck, why not that super-hot coal fire while you're at it? After all, the spell doesn't put a limit on what kind of fire can be Itemed. Again, a warning: do NOT do this if you expect to go up against opposition with Dispel Magic. Having a fire hot enough to melt iron suddenly grow to full size in your belt pouch can be...unpleasant.

Material: Material is especially useful in conjunction with Fabricate. Needed items can quickly be constructed using the two together.

Protection from Normal Missiles: Many a mage has been glad to have this spell while storming a strongpoint manned by archers. There's no reason, though, that you can't use the spell more offensively. Try casting it on your melee fighters, and then having the rest of the group cheerfully rain arrows into the brawl, confident that they'll only harm the enemy.

Tongues: GMs absolutely love to hose players with the language gap. Tongues ensures that they can't do so. It also allows the clever mage to snoop on otherwise secure conversations—conversations in Thieves' Cant, say, or the Druids' language.

Wall of Water: The name says it all. It's a wall, and therefore useful as an obstacle. It's water, and therefore useful for extinguishing fires or (potentially) drinking. More to the point, it's a *lot* of water, and thus a cost-effective way to flood an area quickly.

Wrathform: The ability to shrug off most normal attacks is nice. The ability to ooze under a locked door is dandy. The ability to walk through an army of Vampires, Ghosts, and Spectres totally unmolested and ignored? Now *that's* priceless.

A Day in the Life of a Thelia' regis

By Jedediah Gofourth HMGMA SC-01-00554-02

Borovere reined in his panting horse as he neared the crossroads. He had been riding hard for many days, and the poor beast foamed and wheezed beneath him. He read the map his employer had given to him to determine that he was still on course. The scroll case jostled in the pocket of his cloak where it was stashed to keep it safe. Borovere knew that loosing the precious document within would mean his head.

As he watched the afternoon sun glistening off the newly fallen snow that flanked the trail on either side, he noticed a lone figure sitting at an intersection of paths against a thickly branched oak. Being cautious, Borovere slowed his approach until he could identify the stranger. What he saw at the crossroads was the most ravishing elven maiden he had ever seen. Copper tresses fell to her waist and her tight corset was amply full. She sat near the tree clutching an ankle as if in pain. "Mi'lady, do you need assistance?" he called to the distressed lass as he pulled his horse nearer. The winded beast snorted in protest but obeyed nonetheless.

"I seem to have twisted my ankle kind sir. I would be ever so grateful if you would deliver me to my home." She replied, smiling coyly. "Certainly Mi'lady," he answered, feeling the blood rushing to his face as he spoke. He dismounted and carefully lifted her from the ground, marveling at her graceful physique as he did so. After some trouble with his protestant horse, he gently placed her in the saddle. The horse pawed at the ground in protest but was glad to be free of the knight's heavy armor. "I live just to the east of here kind sir. We should reach there by sundown." She winked as the knight grabbed the horse's reins to lead it. "Oh how rude of me, Mi'lady! I have forgotten to introduce myself. I am Sir Borovere of Farthingale, and I am on a mission of great importance." Borovere stated proudly. The young lady giggled before responding "My name is Thelia of Northfen, I thank you for your kindness sir knight." Another coy smile from the lady and a snort from the horse that did not like the situation at all and they were off.

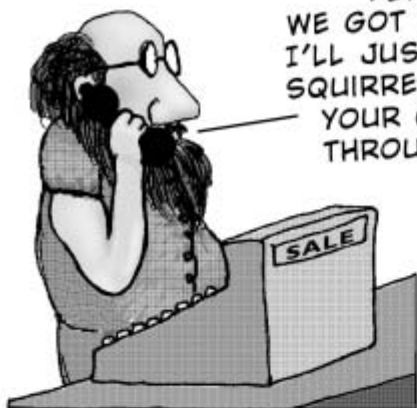
A few hours later the sun began its long descent and the first moon began to rise. A hideous snapping noise brought Borovere's attention back to his horse. The horse stood petrified with fear as a horrible transformation was taking place on its back. The snapping had been Thelia's bodice straps, but instead of the creamy flesh that had been there earlier, tense muscles and bristling fur could be seen swelling from her décolletage. She pursed her lips at him one final time before her jaw opened into an ear to ear smile that tore

the flesh from her cheeks. A bony growth emerged from above her nose as her face swelled into a tooth filled muzzle. Borovere fell back in stunned horror as the beauty continued to transform before his eyes. Her perfectly shaped legs snapped and twisted with the sound of broken bone as talons pierced through her silken slippers and into the horse's flank. A long spiny tail ripped free of the back of her gown, coiling about the helpless equine in a serpentine fashion as her back began to spasm with breaking bones and swelling muscle.

As the tattered remnants of the gown fell away the monster savagely ripped the throat from the horse and leapt to the ground as the poor creature died in a geyser of blood. Almost too shocked to draw his own weapon, Borovere barely managed to dodge the monster's initial attack. After missing its pounce, it skidded to a halt to size up its next meal. A mane of quills graced the wolf-like creature's head, and its barbed tail trailed the air like a cat's. In a daze he swung at the thing and struck a ringing blow against the side of its head. The beast that had been Thelia did not even wince as the sword bounced off of its face. The creature pounced, and the last things Borovere saw were its fangs.



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The Magics of Zarba Dweomer-Shaper

By Benjamin R. Pierce HMGMA NY-1-00197-01

Garweeze Wurld has, in the course of its long and colorful history, given birth to many powerful spellcasters. Workers of mighty magics, these archmages strode the worlds, leaving their mark indelibly on history. Drayton, Harpaang, Hyptor, Munari: the names are legend, and the smallest child knows tales of their exploits.

One of the most accomplished mages in the history of Garweeze Wurld, though, appears in few legends and tales. Indeed, his name is largely unknown to the populace at large, and even most adventurers know him only through a handful of magic items accredited to him. To magic-users of all types, though, the name of Zarba Dweomer-shaper is very well known, indeed; he is, simply put, the finest metamagical theoretician Garweeze Wurld has ever known.

History tells us that Zarba's career started modestly enough. Apprentice to a general practitioner of magic at the famed Oxchapel Academy, Zarba developed a reputation as a superb laboratory researcher early on. His one eccentricity was a strong distaste for physical contact of any sort, and while this seemed to rule out an adventuring career, it was excusable enough in such a fine scholar.

Indeed, the majority of Zarba's career was spent in the laboratory, and not crawling about in dungeons. From time to time, though, his research would require him to venture into the field; the various "Zarba's Hand" spells are a direct result of his efforts to keep the monsters found there (quite literally) at arm's length.

While Zarba's various protective spells are well known, his true specialty was metamagic, which is the study of techniques and spells designed to enhance the performance of other forms of magic. A notorious tightwad with both his research money and his magic, Zarba believed in squeezing every ounce of efficiency out of each spell, each material component, and each magic item. Consequently, he developed a wide variety of spells and items designed to maximize efficient use of these resources. The best known of these, "Zarba's Collar of Rings," gained notoriety primarily for a much-publicized defect. (Zarba himself has always maintained that accounts of this defect are sensationalized.) Other spells and items developed by Zarba, while less famous, are no less useful.

Magic Items:

Zarba's Ring of Precision

EPV: 10,000 GPV: 100,000

Forged of silver, this large, broad ring is set with a smooth, glassy black gem and appears to be of moderate worth. While the ring can be placed on a finger, and no ill effects will result from thus wearing it, this is not the intended purpose. Instead, the ring is designed to be placed around a rod, staff, or wand. When thus placed, the ring shrinks to fit snugly, and a ghostly number appears within the depths of the black gem. This number indicates the precise number of charges left in the rod/staff/wand, and changes as those charges are used. As such, it is highly valued by those mages who make frequent use of such items and don't wish to be caught "out of juice" at a crucial juncture.

Zarba's Iron Gauntlet

EPV: 1,500 GPV: 15,000

This heavy iron gauntlet bears five sockets, one over the knuckle of each finger and the thumb. These sockets seem to be meant for gems of some kind; indeed, any smallish gem placed within will be held snugly. The Gauntlet is primarily intended, though, as a safe repository for magical Ioun Stones. The staid and prosaic Zarba truly loathed having the things whizzing around his head and spoiling his concentration; the Gauntlet was his solution. The wearer of the Gauntlet can place up to five Ioun Stones in the sockets and make full use of their powers, without risking the stones being damaged by stray attacks or captured.

Zarba's Ivory Tooth of Containment

EPV: 350 GPV: 2,500

This false incisor is cunningly carved from ivory, and appears to be the sort of thing a wealthy merchant might use to cover up a gap in his "sales smile." In order to function, the wearer must have one of his own incisors removed and replaced with Zarba's Tooth. The Tooth will magically bond into place and be indistinguishable from the wearer's own teeth. The Tooth is actually a magical holding device, though, and can be commanded to absorb a magical potion held in the wearer's mouth. The Tooth will then hold the potion until a pre-stated condition occurs (the wearer falls below 0 hit points, for example, or the wearer is immersed in water.) At this time, the potion will be released into the wearer's mouth for easy swallowing. Zarba's Tooth may only hold one potion at a time.

Zarba's Prism of Refraction

EPV: 2,000 GPV: 25,000

A slender prism of clearest quartz, this item is mounted on a silver dragon's claw holder. If held to the end of a wand, it will bond snugly into place. The prism affects all beam-or bolt-like effects of the wand, splitting them into two distinct rays or bolts directed at the same target. The split beam or bolt may not be directed at different targets. The Prism will split a Lightning Bolt, for example, or a paralyzation ray, but not a Fireball or a conjuration effect. This split weakens each beam somewhat: all damaging effects suffer a -1 penalty per die, and all saving throws against effects divided by the Prism are made at +4. Note that the double effect does NOT drain double the normal number of charges from the wand.

Spells:

Zarba's Thrifty Apothecary (Alteration)

Level: 4

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 1

Area of Effect: One potion

Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, the enterprising magic-user splits one dose of a magical potion into two separate doses, each retaining magical potency (theoretically, at least.) Upon completion of casting, the material components are transformed into a second dose of potion, identical to the first. This dilution of the magic involved, however, is not without risk. There is a flat 20% chance that either dose will fail to function; this chance is checked when the potion is consumed. Potions thus created cannot be split again in this manner.

The material components of the spell are a crystal potion vial of Mimic's blood, mixed with 100 GP worth of rare powders and reagents.

Zarba's Puissant Analysis (Divination)

Level: 8

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Instantaneous

Casting Time: 8 hours

Area of Effect: One item

Saving Throw: None

A drastically more precise version of the Identify spell, Zarba's Puissant Analysis analyzes an item's magical aura with exacting detail. Tired of guesswork, the mighty mage created this spell to take the uncertainty out of his research.

In order to cast this spell, the caster must extensively handle the item in question, and suffers any effects of such handling. Upon completion of casting, this spell provides precise details on the magical capabilities and powers of a single item. The caster will know exactly how powerful an item is, how many charges it has, and what command

words (if any) activate the powers. If the item is intelligent, he will know this, and have a rough idea of what the item's personality is like. The history of the item is not revealed; Zarba's Puissant Identification deals solely with the magical aura of the item.

The material components of the spell are a tablet of ivory (worth 500 GP) and a diamond-tipped stylus (worth 1,000 GP.) The stylus may be reused, but the tablet may not; the casting of the spell inscribes the details of the item's powers on the tablet.



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