

FOURTH EDITION

HACKMASTER®



HackJournal Issue #29 Spring - 2009

Welcome to the newest edition of HackJournal, the HackMaster fanzine written by players and GameMasters around the world! Whether you profess to be the greatest fighter, magic-user, cleric or thief, you can't afford to pass up a single issue! Here's just a sampling of the inventory of secrets revealed herein:

- A special preview of the Mage class for HackMaster Basic
- A dragon rider foe inspired by the historical Red Baron
- Three maps of the Splendorous Deeps cave complex
- More answers to your questions about HackMaster Basic
- Special HackJournal coupons found only in this issue!

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ABOUT THE HACKJOURNAL

The HackJournal is a PDF supplement written specifically for (and by) the members of the HackMaster Association - an organization of HackMaster players and GameMasters who meet online and in person to discuss and play the HackMaster 4th edition roleplaying game. Each issue's game content contains GM's option material for the HackMaster 4th edition game system.

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Contents

All Things Magical: Newly Discovered Magicks Parts II & III	.2
Player's Advantage: Items of Remembrance	.3
Behind the Shield: The Red Baron Rides Again	.4
The Red Baron	.4
Fokker	.5
Gunners	.5
Background	.7
Battlesheets	.8
Special Preview: HackMaster Basic	.9
The Mage	.9
Sample Mage Spells	.10
A Hacker's Guide to Aldrazar:	.12
Splendorous Deep Outside Environs Map	.12
Splendorous Deep Vertical Connections Guide	.13
Splendorous Deep Upper Commons Map	.14
From the Cubicle of the Chancellor: HM Basic Spoilers	.15
HackJournal Coupon Sheet	.24

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ALL THINGS MAGICAL:

Newly Discovered Magicks From Treasure Chests Throughout Garweeze World (Parts II and III combined)

by James Butler (HMA# UK-1-01469-03) *via submission*

Bag of Holding, Spectral Variety

GPV = 43,500, EPV = 3800

This rather nasty variant consists of a simple additional enchantment to a standard Bag of Holding, providing extra protection for any paranoid owner. If the bag is opened without the correct pass phrase uttered first, 1-4 spectral bodies will rise instantly out of the bag, wailing, screeching and moaning - alerting all those within ear-shot, clawing out at anything they can reach, within 5 feet of the bag. Treat the entity as having 1-4 attacks per round, each successful strike inflicting 1-8 hitpoints worth of damage. This attack feels icy-cold, and PC's should fear that they might lose levels - as a GM it is your duty to encourage this fear, but the attacks are safe (in that respect). Each body counts as AC 1, and can sustain 60 hitpoints worth of damage before disintegrating with an even louder scream. The ethereal defenders will be sucked back into the bag if the correct command word is spoken or after 20 combat rounds, whichever comes first. The spectral hosts regenerate and return upon closure of the bag. If the guardians are defeated, the Bag of Holding may be used normally until it is closed once again.

Bag of Holding, Squid Variety

GPV = 47,000, EPV = 4000

This rather nasty variant consists of a simple additional enchantment to a standard Bag of Holding, providing extra protection for any paranoid owner. When opened without the right pass phrase, 3-8 large green and slimy tentacles will erupt from within the bag, attempting to get a grip all living creatures within 10 feet of the bag. A successful Dex check, at -1 due to the speed of the whipping tentacles, will allow a character to dodge the appendages, but only inflicting damage equal to 20+1d12 hitpoints to sever a tentacle will free a captured victim. Up to 3 tentacles can grab a victim at any one time.

Any creatures caught will be dragged, slowly towards and eventually into the protected Bag of Holding. The only way to release those captured is by opening the bag with the correct phrase and extracting them manually. Whatever else is within the bag depends on a) the owner, and b) anything else that has been dragged in. If the guardians are defeated, the Bag of Holding may be used normally until it is closed once again.

Book of All-Flesh

GPV = 27,000, EPV = 2200

The arcane magicks released upon citing this tome's runes will imbue any undead, within a 100 feet diameter with a unique dweomer, granting all of the affected two specific bonuses:

- Masks any undead with an illusion of appearing to be an ugly, hairy and smelly (body odour, not rotting) humanoid. Standard illusion rules apply, but attempts to see-through the illusion, with spells or natural abilities, suffer a -2 penalty.

- Clouds their dead-status, confusing any Detect Undead or similar spells.

The creatures affected still remain undead, with all the advantages and disadvantages that they would normally have in and out of combat. Needless to say, these powerful works are highly sought after by both evil

necromancers for use, and good magical societies for safekeeping, both of whom would be willing to go to extremes to recover one of these volumes. After use, this book will dissolve into ash, rendering it completely destroyed.

Chain-Mail Bikini of Strangulation

GPV = 135, EPV = 0

These cursed eye-candy pieces of armor can be both deadly and humiliating for their wearers. For not only do they increase their wearers AC to 10, despite any other magical protection, but the 2 pieces cannot be removed without a Remove Curse spell being cast upon them, as per the standard rules for cursed items. This nasty piece of armor makes a wearer even more vulnerable within periods of great stress, such as combat, or mid-dangerous stunt, by loosening itself and rising to throttle the wearer, thus distracting them. The strangulation is not serious, and will not really harm a wearer in itself, but the thought of choking is enough to automatically distract the strangled unless a successful Con check is made to resist gagging.

Dagger +3, Whittling

GPV = 1400, EPV = 500



As well as acting as a standard Dagger +3 for combat purposes, this weapon's other power lies in its ability to allow the user to whittle extremely quickly and masterfully. This can be used to create 2-16 delightful little figurines, worth up to 4 sp each, per evening; but more usefully, can whittle crude, but usable arrows and bolts at the rate of two per round, in stress-inducing combat situations, assuming a suitable supply of wood is on hand. Any carving or etching by this blade is clear and easy to read, taking twice as long to fade through natural wear-and-tear than other such carvings might. Alternatively, these daggers can be used to bore through standard wooden doors lock and handle in 4+1d3 rounds, but a significant amount of noise is made doing so.

Ensnarement Drum

EP Value = 850, GP Value = 7000

Any character can use these magical instruments, perhaps contributing to making them some of the most dangerous ones out there. After maintaining a steady beat for at least 3 combat rounds, each extra-hard pounding of the drums skin, will shoot off a strand of magical energy to encircle and bind a creature, or attach itself to a solid structure, which the drummer is focusing on and nods his head towards. Each strand of energy remains attached to the drum, any creatures or PCs crossing one of the beams also becoming affected, albeit in a lesser manner. Unless successful skill checks are made with each strand cast, there is a 30% chance each strand will not go where the caster intended, shooting off in a randomly determined direction instead.

The main target must make a save vs. magic, if failing becoming entangled within the mystic energies, requiring a successful save, once per round, to break free. Characters with magically enhanced strength scores may add their Strength bonus to their save vs. Magic. Otherwise, the line of energy carries on as far as its limit (20 feet) or until it strikes something solid, swaying with the beat on the drum.

Creatures running into the strands must make a saving throw with a +3 bonus, or become slightly ensnared, suffering -2 to all attack rolls and be unable to move until they can break free. Each strand lasts up to 30 combat rounds, or when the drummer wishes them to return into the drum. A maximum of seven strands can be emitted at any one time.

Characters skilled with drums, or bards with natural rhythm, can fire off 1-2 strands per round (one strand for up to and including 8th level bards/40% skill mastery, any higher allows for two strands), all other non-skilled characters a maximum of one every two rounds. Each

Ensnarement Drum is created with 90+1d10 charges, each strand using one charge. These items can be recharged in the standard way.

Hammer, Hand-Homing, -2 (Cursed)

GPV = 265, EPV = 0

This cursed item at first appears to be a magnificent heavy war hammer, beset with wondrous jewels and arcane runes, the magic almost crackling off of it. When first used, however, the weapon changes to its true form, a large, but single-handed and very plain-looking standard hammer, whose cursed magical dweomer causes it to back towards its own wielder whenever it is swung. The -2 penalty is applied only to the To-Hit roll, each successful strike causing the standard 1d4 points of damage (to a medium sized creature) for a hammer of this type.

If the wielder's To-Hit roll is less than 4 after all modifications, a Hammer of Hand-Homing will indeed target the wielder's other hand, causing standard damage. As is standard with cursed items, it takes a Remove Curse spell to rid the wielder of this hammer. Once cast, it causes the hammer to look majestic once again, waiting for its next victim.

Jug of Endless Dyes

GPV = 4200, EPV = 500 (for a single-color)

GPV = 18,000, EPV = 1200 (for a multi-color)

Great care must be taken by whoever handles this magical item, as a never-ending low of dye flows from within. When viewed, the container always seems to be filled with an oily liquid, shimmering in various colors. Each jug is filled with a potent dye, which is one color: green, purple or blue. The liquid permanently dyes anything it comes into contact with, either by placing it within the jug, or pouring the liquid over the material to be stained. Some 5% of these items can contain multiple hues, interchangeable with a command word, but only one color can be used at a time. A popular folk song implies that the famed barbarian Hrothgar got a rather unusual nickname for not securing a Jug of Endless Dye's lid properly, and running into battle with it on his belt...

Nymphic Pendant

GPV = 14,000, EPV = 1350,

A small golden 'N' of interwoven ladies with extremely little-or-no attire on a fine golden chain does not look like anything too magical, yet these extremely rare and powerful items can be lethal, especially when around the neck of females with a high Comeliness score. Whenever worn by a female character, their Comeliness value increases by 4 points, and enchants the wearer with some reduced Nymphic abilities. For instance, if the adventuress is willing to disrobe, any creature looking upon her body must save vs. Spell or be blinded as per the 2nd level magic-user spell, Blindness. In addition to these abilities, a wearer's tears and hair can also be used for magical item creation, as per the harvesting table for a standard Nymph. These pendants will not operate on any male wearing them, and they should be damn grateful something bad didn't happen to them...

Sling of Boulder-Flinging, +1

GPV = 11,000, EPV = 900

The magic of this sling enchants any stone fired from it to grow multiple times its own size as soon as it is released from this weapon. Any normal pebble flung thus will deliver damage as a 10 lb 'boulder' at 5 feet (1d3), 20 lb at 10 feet (2d6), and the 30 lb maximum after 15 feet (4d6) in the air. Any other rule regarding knock-back and changes in AC regarding being struck by these weapons also come into effect, as outlined on p 99 of the GMG.

PLAYER'S ADVANTAGE:

Items of Remembrance

by Charles Slaton (HMA# NY-I-10055-06) via online forum

I was playing in a game recently as a dirty NG elven ranger. The character was based on the idea that rangers are, well, creepy mountain men/women who like their personal space. Think Grizzly Adams or that kid from *My Side of the Mountain*.

Anyway, he had managed to nurse an owlbear back to health and train it to follow him (since he wasn't high enough level to attract his own followers). Well, the owlbear was a deadly and good companion (kept well fed at all times), right up until a group of trolls took him down. Well, I wanted to take a claw from the fallen beast to remember him by (perhaps on a necklace or bound to the hilt of his sword to honor its strength). The GM made a call about that being an evil act with alignment issues (he compared it to those soldiers who came home with ear necklaces) and I didn't try to push it. Not with that GM anyway.

But it got me thinking. Shouldn't *HackMaster* have rules regarding non-enemy trophies or as I call them, Items of Remembrance?

Most cultures allowed the taking of trophies from enemies and, in a way, loved ones. What is a lock of hair from one's beloved given to him to remember her by but a type of trophy? What about a prized necklace given to a maiden's beloved before he goes off to battle, or a duke's signet ring, given to his lady before he leaves on a journey? So, I suggest this rule:

Item of Remembrance

If you take an item from a fallen friend (such as a necklace or lock of hair for sentients, or a collar or similar item from a pet) it grants you 2 points of Honor as long as you carry it on your person in remembrance. It's important to note that this is a memento, not a trophy, and so it doesn't give any of the game bonuses or penalties that might apply from a trophy.

This Honor bonus only applies if the subject is dead and was a close friend or loved one of the character. In addition, the item must be characteristic of the fallen individual (sorry, no, an item like a HackMaster +12 doesn't count, but an engraved belt or favorite earring might).

If the item is intentionally mistreated or sold, the PC loses 4 points of Honor (the Honor bonus plus an additional two points). If he accidentally loses it (or it is stolen from him), he loses only the +2 Honor bonus, but should embark on a quest to retrieve the item.

If, like in the movie *Willow*, a person willingly gives an Item of Remembrance to a loved one, then the first person is also giving up, along with the item, the Honor points. The receiver of the item doesn't gain the +2 Honor bonus (or suffer the -4 penalty) from it unless he too was a close friend or loved one of the deceased.

BEHIND THE SHIELD:

The Red Baron Rides Again

by Hendrik Härterich (HMA# D-2-01386-03) via submission

I imagine that all or most of you, once or twice, have adapted a hero or “awe and fear”-inspiring villain who was not originally from the medieval fantasy genre (such as the most excellent Darth Vader). One of the craziest, most amazing and coolest ideas I’ve seen was the Red Baron.

This is my rendition and expansion of the idea for HackMaster, and equally it is a playful exercise in what is possible with the divine Art of Hack. Admittedly, the result presented here is a wee bit “Monty Haul-ish”, but bear with me still.

I imagine a first encounter with the Red Baron might go something like this...

GM: You see something in the distance. It is approaching fast. REALLY fast.

Player 1: I have got Eyes of the Eagle, cough it up, screen monkey.

GM: It is a red dragon. Quite big.

Player 2: I unsheathe my Hackmaster +12. The beastie has it coming.

Player 3: Yeah. Just had my breakfast and now that freak disturbs us. I’m hopping mad.

GM: Something... someone seems to be sitting on the back of the dragon.

Player 1: Good. *rubs his hand* That could be a dragonlord. Great XP-value. Just what I need.

Player 4: Wait. A red dragon? With a rider? That could be hard.

Player 1: Pah. No, those dragonlords are really just puffed up sissies. It just takes the right attack mode.

GM: The thing is sooo fast. *GM gleefully makes a whooshing sound and spreads his arms*

Player 1: Lightning Bolt coming online.

Player 3: Bolt of Dragon Slaying +3 on the fly as soon as the fat-red-dragonrat is close enough for medium range.

Player 4: I run and duck. It’s all go low, stay low.

Player 3: He just has to get close enough, I want to kill the rider, GM.

GM: *both of the GM’s hands are curled into fists and he makes sounds of TACK-A-TACK-A-TACK, emulating a machine gun*

THE RED BARON

The Red Baron is a lean man of above average height (6’2”). His every movement and the confidence in his stride speak of a lifetime of physical training and his noble upbringing. His hay-blond hair is cut short in a Norman style; he is – as always – clean shaven, his general appearance immaculate. Unless fully armed with his red and gold plate mail armor, the Baron usually wears

dark brown leather knee-high boots polished to a shine, matching deerskin gloves and a finely made silver trimmed black long doublet with matching tights. He is never seen without his signet ring and at least a long dagger. He is quite aware of his social status, which is apparent in his every action and word.

The motto of another famous baron (Enguerrand III. de Coucy) captures The Red Baron’s haughty self-conception best. “*Je ne suis roy, ne prince, ne comte aussi. Je suis le sire de Coucy.*” He never belittles other people, but everyone around him has the instinctive feeling that Red Baron feels to be at least as good as anyone around him, likely better, and will bow to none.

He is almost constantly surrounded by his eight (clingy) Pixie Fairy henchmen who tend to praise the Red Baron at even the oddest moments or sing a hymn for (on) him, which the Red Baron has become used to and ignores completely. It’s up to the GM to make the Pixie-Fairies male or female - both are fanatical in their following.

Personally, I find it nice to give the Red Baron a (James Bond-ish evil villain’s squad) batch of jealous female PFs dotting on the Red Baron, filling his glass when empty, giving a shine to his helmet, etc., when all is peaceful and terribly dynamic and furious when manning their stations on the dragon. Think Pussy Galore’s Flying Circus (from the *Goldfinger* Bond movie) going mediaeval and they should work out fine in your campaign.



THE BARON'S ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES

The Red Baron is a very powerful and evil villain. It will be a daunting task to even try to vanquish him, especially if he chooses the where and when of the battle. Yet, for all his evilness, the Red Baron may also be redeemed if you use the background given.

The Red Baron is an evil 12th level Cavalier riding a mature red dragon of 118 feet length, called Fokker. The dragon alone is a beautifully deadly sight to behold; his wingspan is glorious.

The Red Baron has a fully charged Ring of Spell Storing (the Red Baron family signet ring) with two spells, Protection from Normal Missiles and Globe of Invulnerability. He casts both spells – treat the ring as a 12th level caster – routinely before an attack. It takes the Baron one full turn to get both spells up and running (2x 5 rounds to cast a spell from the ring (see *GameMaster's Guide* page 231). Fokker, the trusted "steed", gets the same protection.

FOKKER

The dragon Fokker can be best described as a mean-spirited intelligent warhorse, although, naturally, he is much more than a mere steed – as most dragons he is exceptionally intelligent. Fokker is also quite large for his age and blessed with a heavy physique full of bulging muscles, with scales hard as granite and each at least as large as a grown man's head. Where the Red Baron is self-controlled and sophisticated warrior-noble, Fokker is a brute in every aspect and, generally, foul tempered. You hear him laugh only when things are destroyed and everything around him burns.

When seeing him unleashing his fury or destroying things wantonly for no or little reason, you would not expect that Fokker is a very intelligent specimen of his race. However, he is. He also really enjoys reading a book and smoking a pipe ("one of the nicest things that can be done with fire", he might say) in the rare moments when Fokker is actually content and even sort-of-friendly disposed. Fokker also really loves the Red Baron (in a manly way), although he would not admit it.

FOKKER'S MOUNTED WEAPONS

Eight Crossbows of Rapid Fire are mounted to the red dragon in a simple contraption that allows for easy swivelling of the weapon. Attached to each of the Crossbows is a tiny seat for the crossbow operators. The Crossbows of Rapid Fire count as light crossbows as they weigh little, but have the range of heavy crossbows. That they also do damage as a heavy crossbow is not so important here because the main armament will be Bolts of Multiple Wounds.

For better protection the swivel seats and mounting can each be covered in a small turret (AC +7, 75% cover; not yet calculated into the PF AC in the stat blocks and battlesheet below). The turret extension to the construction will not reduce the to-hit chances of the PFs as long as the Red Baron gives target information and instruction via telepathy. Only when that should not work or be done for any reason I would give a -2 to-hit while detect noise modifier would be at -10, any Observation skill check equally at -10 and vision would be reduced to the front to a 60 degree arc (like a great helmet, cf. GMG p 200).

GUNNERS (THE CROSSBOW OPERATORS)

The Pixie Fairy gunners are bound to the Red Baron by Rings of Friendship. As they have been teamed together, thus, for quite some time, it is a pretty safe assumption that each of them has meanwhile acquired the "Clingy" quirk.

Clingy subtracts 10 from the temporal Honor (full Honor given below) of the Red Baron whenever his crew is with him (which would be almost always). The crew also have started to compose poems, songs and even hymns for the Baron and Fokker.

Now, if that's not a sound explanation for an in-game soundtrack of an arch-villain, I don't know what would be. Nice pieces of music to introduce the Red Baron could be: "The Immigrant Song" by Led Zeppelin or "The Ride of the Valkyries" by Wagner.

GUNNER ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES

Each Crossbow is operated by a specially trained Pixie Fairy, each a pure fighter specialized in the crossbow. Each is a 7th level Fighter, a Light Crossbow High Master, and has a Dex of 16 and has the Talents Keen Sight and 3x the Attack Bonus talent.

Table HJ29-A: Crossbow Range and To-Hit/Damage Modifiers

Point Blank: 6-80 yards; +12 to hit / +3 to damage (+3/+3 high mastery; +2 PF for flying/mounted combat; +3 Dex; +1 for Keen Sight talent; +3 for Attack Bonus talent)

Short: 80 yards; +10 to hit (+1 to hit for high mastery; +2 PF for flying/ mounted combat; +3 Dex; +1 for Keen Sight talent; +3 for Attack Bonus talent)

Medium: 160 yards; +8 to hit (-2 for medium range; +1 to hit for high mastery; +2 PF for flying or mounted combat; +3 Dex; +1 for Keen Sight talent; +3 for Attack Bonus talent)

Long: 240 yards; +5 to hit (-5 for long range; +1 to hit for high mastery; +2 PF for flying/mounted combat; +3 Dex; +1 for Keen Sight talent; +3 for Attack Bonus talent)

Extreme: 320 yards; +/-0 to hit (-10 for long range; +1 to hit for high mastery; +2 PF for flying or mounted combat; +3 Dex; +1 for Keen Sight talent; +3 for Attack Bonus talent)

Note that the crew are in the Great Honor window and thus gain a further +1 To-Hit. Also, they have the Flying Combat skill at 90% and may roll once for every 3 combat rounds to gain a further +1 To-Hit!

Table HJ29-B: Range Reduction In-Flight

- Treat Point Blank* as Short Range
- Treat Short Range as Medium Range
- Treat Medium Range as Long Range
- Treat Long Range as Extreme Range
- Treat Extreme Range as automatic miss (per normal Long Range; see GMG p 163)

Range is penalized in-flight as effective ranges are reduced when firing missile weapons from a flying mount (see the sections on aerial missile combat in the *GameMaster's Guide* p163, and *Combatant's Guide* p12.)

*Even in-flight, Point Blank range still causes +3 damage. A hit by a master is just as effective in-flight, only the hit itself will be more difficult – essentially, range reduction just penalizes To-Hit and maximum reach.

The Red Baron communicates his thoughts (i.e., who is to attack whom and when, which manoeuvre he plans, etc.) telepathically to the crew via his Helmet of Telepathy. This makes communication from the Baron to the crew easy and quick, so the crew get their commands and know every move instantaneously before the move/flight-maneuver is made.

That telepathic link does not bestow a special magical sight on the crew, so they cannot see through the Baron's eyes or vice versa. The PFs seek their targets normally. However, the telepathic link allows the Red Baron to convey to his Pixie Fairy Gunner Team exactly and without delay whom he wants to have targeted.

This avoids unnecessary communication problems and delays due to in-flight noises, such as wind or the distracting sounds of combat and is a prerequisite for the crew to be able to seek the same target at the same time. Further, the telepathic link is highly useful for the crew themselves as they know by telepathic "feel" that, when, and how the Red Baron will maneuver.

Because of their superior sense of movement in-flight, the Pixie Fairies get their bonus for flying/mounted combat for shooting from their "gun turrets". Where others might be distracted by an in-flight manoeuvre, a Pixie Fairy is not. Air is their element.

The *Player's Handbook* allows the use of weapons of more sizes than Pixie Fairies fit, provided that they can be operated. Further, each Pixie Fairy has two rings – one is a Ring of Telekinesis, and the other is a Ring of Friendship (the friend, of course, is the Red Baron). The crew are telepathically linked to the Red Baron because of the close association with him that has lasted over two weeks (see Pixie Fairy racial abilities), and via the Baron's Helmet of Telepathy. The Ring of Telekinesis allows the triggering of the weapon, and sighting and swivelling requires almost no strength, so that is easy.

GUNNER ATTACKS

Each of the PFs normally receive 3/2 missile attacks. Because of the "shooting while riding" reduction by one step that becomes 1/1 (see *Combatants' Guide* p 121). As, however, the Rapid Fire Crossbow magically increases that 1 attack to 2, our number of attacks per round becomes 2/1.

Armament and Damage Potential

Each Crossbow is armed with Bolts of Multiple Wounds in 10 bolt magazines. That adds up to 16 ($8 \times 2/1 = 16$) shots per round, translating to 16 x 1d6 (Bolts of Multiple Wounds cluster) shots, each single bolt doing 1d4+2 damage. Up to 16 targets with cluster hits of 1-6 bolts each may be thus attacked.

The maximum result on one target would be 96d4+192 absolutely staggering points of damage. The most unlikely absolute minimum result on one target would be 48 (16d4+32) points of damage. Point Blank damage is 1d4+5 per missile. So Point Blank changes the damage range to 16d4 +80, to 96d4 +480

And that's before penetration kicks in. Before the Dragon gives his first breath attack. Before the Cavalier attacks mano-o-mano, even if there is the question what kind of mano will be left after even only the first barrage.

Note: Bolts of Multiple Wounds require only one To-Hit roll per cluster.

Average Damage

By my calculation, the average damage potential of The Baron is as follows, when one target is being attacked:

16×3.5 (average of 6) = 56 bolts of wounding = $\times 2.5$ per D4 (2.5 is average damage) = 140 damage

$56 \cdot .2$ (50% of penetration) = 28 more due to penetration (0000000,1111111,2222222,3333333) = +42 damage for penetration

$14 \cdot .2$ (50% of penetration) = 7 more due to penetration (00,11,22,3) = +9 damage for further penetration

56×5 (5 is the damage modifier per damage die for point blank range) = +280 basic damage for point blank

56×2 (2 is the damage modifier per damage die for any other range) = 112 basic damage for any other range

Point Blank Really Average Damage = 471

Any Other Range Average Damage = 303

Theoretical Maximum Damage

As unlikely as it is (because that would mean that each of the 16 Bolts of Wounding would unfold into the maximum cluster of 6 bolts each, and each of those in turn would also have to hit and then do maximum damage, **and** the target would have to be in Point Blank range), the truly awesome maximum damage potential is 864 ($96d4 + 480 = 864$) points of damage plus penetration.

Average penetration would add another roughly 70 points (the first penetration would statistically be 24 bolts for an additional 36 HP (000000, 111111, 222222, 333333), then a second penetration with 12 bolts for an additional 18 HP (000,111,222,333), and then a third penetration with 6 bolts for +9 damage (0, 11, 22, 3), etc.) for a total missile damage of about 930 points on one target in one round maximum. Add in the 14d6+7 fire breath weapon and it could rise to over 1,000 points of damage.

Don't cry now, fellow screen monkey.

Even though you'll probably never see that kind of damage happen, the Red Baron will still give a real new depth of meaning to the time-honored words "I waste him with my crossbow!"

ADDITIONAL TACTICS AND RESOURCES

Obviously, the red baron would hate to be subjected to spells, which is why he uses the spells stored in his ring. The crew can make themselves invisible, albeit only whilst flying freely; but as long as the Dragon and his Rider is turned invisible, they would

Table HJ29-C: Expenses

8 Rings of Friendship = 24,000 GP
8 Rings of Telekinesis = 80,000 GP
1 Ring of Spell Storing = 22,500 GP
1 Helmet of Telepathy = 25,000 GP
8 crossbows of rapid fire = 80,000 GP
80 Bolts of Multiple Wounds* = 48,000 GP
Seeing the look on your players' faces = Priceless
Total = 279,500 GP

*While I wouldn't call 48,000 GP for one 10-pack of ammunition a bargain, for five rounds of sheer fun it is not really expensive. Still, you may want to have the Baron pack twice this amount or more, as you like.

be cloaked under the spell as well, which makes them hard to hit at any time. Imagine further, that the Dragon - who does have spell abilities - could do the same. The Dragon would cast "Flutter Wings" as well as Invisibility on himself and the Red Baron. That would be a nice way to swoop on a target, have the dragon hover and then, out of thin air: TACK-A-TACK-A-TACK... A classic.

As GM, you may further detail or even alter the Baron (imagine what he could do to a castle with Bolts of Stone Shattering or Bolts of Battering...). As presented here, the Baron has no quirks and flaws, but also no special talents. You could assign those to customise the Baron for your game. You might also want to choose a package for the Baron, the Myrmidon could be a good choice (the Baron being a military man), especially because it gives access to military skills such as Small Unit Tactics and Organization.

You could also equip the Red Baron further. It is more than just conceivable that Fokker will be clad in barding, and that the Baron will have a magical suit of plate armor as well as a magical sword. Personally, I find a flame tongue or even a vorpal sword strongly suggest themselves, while a magical lance almost seems a must-have, considering the Baron's "job description" and fame. He could further throw Javelins of Lightning and could really use some healing magic such as a Ring of Hefty Healing.

At the same time, the Pixie-Fairy crew could be clad in magical armor; I suggest Studded Leather +3 for each. Feel free to customise the Baron with items of your choice. Potions can be a nice boost before an attack run ...

Henchmen

You may have noted that I have not yet given the Baron the usual retainers, followers, or henchmen beyond the Fokker-team, of which none count against the Baron's henchmen maximum. Per his level alone (see *PHB* p 49), between 48-192 men-at-arms followers will likely serve the Baron, including one 6th level commander, three 5th level captains and one 3rd level lieutenant per every 60 men-at-arms. From his Charisma (assume Charisma 18 for the Baron, since he really is the dashing charismatic type) with the evil cavalier bonus of 1 (see *PHB* p20 and p50), he may have up to 16 followers, which may be assassins, magic-users, clerics, etc. With followers you may also get the healing abilities needed after battle. There also you will find further supporting magic (Bless, Aid, Sanctuary, protection spells, etc.).

Also, the Baron is a commander of men. He knows what he is doing. A party that angers the Baron has a very competent enemy who is as capable to charge them heads on or send assassins after them. For example, a counter party consisting of one or two fighters, a magic-user, a cleric and one or two assassins often works like a charm. However, not only does the Baron play to win, but he would never throw men under his command away. He may be evil but he is a cavalier and honorable to a fault.

BACKGROUND

The Red Baron was not always an evil killing machine. Scion of a noble family (in a realm of your choice), he had to see all he loved and held dear come to ruin. However, before all was laid to waste the Red Baron already had become a formidable cavalier of great fame. He was counted amongst the best lances in the king-

dom, and his skill with the broadsword combined with his widely renowned honor and impeccable ethics had made him the best loved young Baron of the realm.

When the realm went to battle, he shied away from no opportunity to gain honor for himself and glory for the kingdom. Beyond glory, the dashing young cavalier also won the love of a most noble and highly ranked lady. For the first time in his life, the Red Baron was totally smitten - and so was she with him.

Alas, that lady was the wife of one of the most powerful nobles in the realm. Her husband found out about the unfaithfulness of his wife and the betrayal of the young lord. He craved revenge. He devised a cunning plan that in the end led to the utter ruin of the Red Baron and inadvertently to the death of the lovely lady.

In utter dismay - having lost his barony, his family, his fortune, the entirety of the esteem of the realm, but worst of all his one true love - the young cavalier shouted at the heavens, cursing all the good gawds that they had not helped him.

It was a stormy and windy night - weather seemingly coming from the wrath of the gawds, uprooting trees and rushing over the land like the furies themselves. That night, the anguish of the Red Baron was answered... and an evil war gawd (of your choice) sent a messenger, whose single purpose was to seduce the Red Baron. The messenger came, but all his efforts were in vain. Even in his boundless anger, the Red Baron would not fall short of his code of honor and lawful good alignment.

Still, the evil gawd was most devious, and so devised a simpler plan to bind the cavalier unwittingly to the cause of evil. He sent the messenger again, this time with a present - a Helmet of Alignment Change. The Helmet was disguised as a lavish gift from an old friend of the Baron's family, though few were left of these. The messenger was changed to look like a servant of that family who - so the god knew - was well-known, loved and trusted by the Red Baron. The Baron accepted the present, donned the helmet... and henceforth became chaotic evil.

At last, his fury was unleashed, no longer held back by the strict ethics of noble morality. He searched and found the Red Dragon, he bound the Pixie Faeries to his will, and then struck back. Since then the Red Baron has regained his family holdings (high up in the darkness of some backwater mountains), from which he unleashes his fury at the neighbouring lands to cause death and destruction for their own sake. It goes without saying that the high ranking noble who had been the husband to the Baron's sole love was the first victim of the Baron's wrath. The Red Baron now sets about the task to assemble an army to take over the kingdom.

If you put some Lady of Shalott by Alfred Lord Tennyson, some Lancelot and Guenevere by Mallory (Vulgate, Tennyson or whatever source you prefer) and some Dracula-Carpathian flair into that story, twist and stew a little, it could be dripping with tragedy and provide a nice arch-nemesis for your campaign.

Have fun!

Author's Note: This rendition of the Red Baron is purely fictional and definitely not meant as a slight to the real "Red Baron", Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen, his memory or family.

BATTLESHEETS

THE RED BARON

HF 60, EP 5,624, Int Exceptional, AL CE, AC -4 (wears a plate armor and uses a medium shield; DEX 16/51), MV 12", HD 12 cavalier, HP 139 (CON 15), SZ M, #AT 5/2 (weapon of choice: broadsword), D [broadsword 2D4+8], SA none, SD none, Hon: 125, Honor level: Great, ML Fearless (19), TOP 7, FF 7, CW N, Crit BSL: Def AC +16), Flying Combat skill at 90%

Hit Points:

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THE STEED: RED DRAGON "FOKKER"

(HF 140, mature adult, EP 16,000, Int Exceptional, AL CE, AC -6, MV 9"/30" (flight; class C)/3" (jump), HD 15, HP 495, SZ G (body 118 feet, tail 106 feet), #AT 3+, D 1d10+7/1d10+7/3d10+7, SA Spells, dragon fear (75 feet, save at +1 (+5)), SD Spells, Magic Resistance 40%, breath weapon 14D6+7 (cone of fire 90 feet long, 5 feet wide at the mouth, 30 feet wide at the base), Hon: Great, ML: Resolved (18), TOP saves on 4 (at 247 HP), FF 9, CW S, Crit BSL: DefAC+13. Draconic Abilities: Affect normal fires (3/day), Pyrotechnics (3/day), Heat Metal (1/day). Spells known (each 1/day): 4 GMs choice. - For further details please cf. HoB Volume II, pp. 70 ss. and pp. 94 s.)

Hit Points:

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PIXIE-FAIRY CREW (8)

HF 4, EP 1630 – 1790 EP depending on HPs, Int very to exceptional, AL CE, AC 4 (studded leather plus DEX ; do not forget invisibility [1/day] minus to-hit as well!), MV 18" (flight; class B)/ 4", HD 7 fighter, HP 28, 35, 35, 36, 37, 37, 39, 44, SZ T, #AT 3/2 (with Rapid Fire Crossbow: 2/1 while riding), D [crossbow quarrel 1D4+2], SA see PHB (p. 37), SD see PHB (p. 37), Hon: 125, Honor level: Great, ML Fanatic (20), TOP 10, FF 5, CW I, Crit BSL (given for crossbow use): Def AC +12/10/8/5/0 (depending on range!); "Flying Combat" at 90%

1) HP:

□□□□	□□□□	□□□□	□□□□
□□□□	□□		

 EP: 1630

2) HP:

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 EP: 1700

3) HP:

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 EP: 1700

4) HP:

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 EP: 1710

5) HP:

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 EP: 1720

6) HP:

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 EP: 1720

7) HP:

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 EP: 1740

8) HP:

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 EP: 1790

All statistics given assume no use of magic items aside from those outlined in the article. Consequently, no yield is given beyond the yields stated in the body of the article. Thus, inter alia, no hoard has been pre-determined for Fokker.

EXPERIENCE POINT BREAKDOWN

- Each Ring of Friendship is worth = 1,200 EP
- Each Ring of Telekinesis is worth = 2,000 EP
- The Ring of Spell Storing is worth = 2,500 EP
- Each Bolt of Multiple Wounds is worth = 100 EP
- Each Crossbow of Rapid Fire is worth = 2,000 EP
- Helmet of Telepathy = 2,000 EP
- The Red Dragon is a Mature Adult (age category 7) and worth = 16,000 EP
- The Red Baron is a 12th level cavalier. Base EP are 1,300. With 139 HP, the HP yield another 2,224 EP (16 x 139). Additionally the SAEPB is to be allotted 3 times (AC below 0, exceptional Int affecting combat, has weapon of choice and cavalier abilities), each increment is worth 700 EP). Total Red Baron = 5,624 EP

The Pixie Faeries each are 7th level fighters. Base EP are 375. With 28-44 HPs, the HP will yield an additional 280 – 440 EP (10 x HP), SAEPB x4 equals another 700 EP for Keen Sight and the Attack Bonus talents and the EAEPB of 275 EP for the being PFs. Total EP = 1630 to 1790 EP each



SPECIAL PREVIEW:**HackMaster Basic**

Presented here for your reading pleasure, a preview of the mage class for HackMaster Basic! Note that this information may change between now and the final published product.

THE MAGE

Sometimes referred to as wizards, witches, warlocks, magi, magicians, magic users, sorcerers and so on, all characters that primarily pursue non-divine magic as their profession are generically referred to as “mages.” The primary ability of the mage class is to cast magic spells. Spells include a potent arsenal of destructive spells designed to blast your opponents into bits, protective and defensive spells that thwart your foes, and even spells that change the environment to suit your fancy or conjure up outsiders and bend them to your will.

Unlocking the secrets of all this awesome arcane knowledge requires determination, patience and, most importantly, intellect. Accordingly, Intelligence is the primary attribute of the mage. It's needed for learning new spells, partially regulates the quantity and power of the mage's spells, determines how many spells he can learn, the base chance for spell mishaps and so on. In short, if you want to live by the way of arcane magic, you should make sure your character has at least an above-average, if not an outstanding Intelligence score.

To augment their spell casting power, mages can fully employ a greater variety of magic items than other classes, including the most powerful types such as wands, crystal balls, staves, potent rings and so on. Given the requisite skills and level, mages can even enchant their own magic items.

Mages are especially resistant to spells cast against them; they receive superior modifiers to their saving throw compared to other character classes.

Unfortunately, mages tend to be rather weak when it comes to combat of a physical nature. Their attack bonus, initiative modifier and hit dice are weaker than those of the other classes. Further, mages are limited in their choice of weaponry, have a more difficult time specializing in weapons, and cannot use shields or armor without purchasing the requisite proficiencies. To further complicate matters, wearing armor and bearing shields can make the necessary magical gestures of spell casting difficult or even impossible.

These drawbacks make survival difficult for low-level mages. Survival is a skill and if you use your wits and are clever, you should be able to guide your spellslinger to mid level when he'll be able to hold his own and by high level, he certainly could be outstripping the other classes in terms of raw power.

CASTING SPELLS

A mage powers his spells by drawing on energy from his inner self, the world around him and even the outer planes and other worlds. His capacity to draw from these power sources increases as the magic-user improves (as measured by gaining levels). HackMaster quantifies this power in Spell Points (SPs).

Table HJ29-D: Mage Advancement

Level	Hit Dice (d4)	Total Spell Points	Saving Throw bonus vs. Spells	Attack Bonus	Initiative
1	1	140	+1	0	2
2	1.5	190	+3	0	2
3	2	260	+4	0	2
4	2.5	340	+6	0	2
5	3	430	+7	1	1

Table HJ29-D: Mage Advancement shows how many Spell Points a mage can command per day.

Memorized spells cost (spell level x 10 + 40) Spell Points to cast, e.g., 1st level spells cost 50 SPs to cast. A mage can cast spells he doesn't have memorized, but these cost twice as much as memorized spells: (spell level x 20 + 80) Spell Points, e.g., non-memorized 1st level spells cost 100 SPs. Once used, Spell Points are gone until the mage can rest; he regains his used Spell Points after roughly 8 hours of sleep. He cannot take a quick 'cat nap' to regain only a few SPs, smart guy.

A spellslinger can memorize one spell from each level he has in the mage class, plus one each from the Journeyman and Apprentice spell levels. Thus, a novice spellslinger enters play with a total of three memorized spells; one 1st level in addition to an Apprentice and Journeyman spell (see more details on these below). Likewise, a 5th level mage can memorize a total of seven spells - one from each of levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, plus one spell each from his Apprentice and Journeyman levels.

A mage can also use Spell Points to power up his spells and achieve effects beyond his ordinary casting ability. Each spell includes a listing of additional SP costs to achieve these heightened effects (such as additional power, duration, range, area of effect, and so on).

Additionally, Spell Points can be used to power magic items and improve their spell-like effects. Spell Points are required for magic item creation and certain skills, such as discovering the powers of magic items.

APPRENTICE AND JOURNEYMAN SPELLS

The process of becoming a mage does not involve a “Eureka!” moment where the novice suddenly grasps the concept of magic use and thereafter can cast spells. Rather, a long period of intense study prefaces the attainment of 1st level, during which the student mastered lesser magical incantations and formed the necessary groundwork for his eventual attainment of 1st level sorcery.

These lesser incantations are colloquially known as Apprentice and Journeyman level spells. While of lesser power than leveled spells, they are useful nonetheless. These lesser spells are less demanding to memorize, with Apprentice spells requiring only 30 SPs and Journeyman spells 40 SPs. In other respects, they act like regular spells requiring double spell point expenditure to cast if not memorized, and containing an internal Spell Point listing for enhancing their effects.

SPELL BOOKS

A mage begins play with three spells in his spell book, one each of Apprentice, Journeyman and 1st level. He received these spells

from his mentor, instructor or otherwise discovered them during training (prior to 1st level). Thereafter, a mage can learn spells taught by others, or attempt to learn spells found on scrolls, in musty libraries, captured spell books, and so on.

Spells recorded in spell books and scrolls are more recipes than formulae, with each mage casting a spell in a slightly different way. Just like when you try to make your great-aunt Dottie's potato pancakes from her handed-down recipe and they never seem to taste quite like hers, it takes some experimentation to learn new spells from another caster's scrolls and books. In fact, in some (or even many) cases, a mage is never able to unlock the secrets of a new spell. The chance to learn new spells is a function of Intelligence as shown on *Table HJ29-E: Learning Mage Spells*.

Further, there's a limit to how many spells a mage can learn. Simply put, the cognitive abilities of most sentient beings can only handle a certain amount of information. Spells are so complex that mages are limited to a maximum number known and recordable in their spell books. This maximum number known is a function of Intelligence, as well as level, since with experience a mage can expand his capacity for learning. A mage's maximum spells known are shown on *Table HJ29-E: Learning Mage Spells*.

For example, a 1st level mage with 16 Intelligence knows a maximum of 12 spells: 4 each of Apprentice, Journeyman and 1st level. Upon reaching 2nd level, his capacity for spell knowledge increases to 16 spells: 4 each of Apprentice, Journeyman, 1st and 2nd level. He cannot 'mix and match' by allocating additional spells from one particular level and lowering the number of spells from another (although this is possible in the Advanced HackMaster game).

When a mage gains a level and spends at least one week searching libraries or seeking out an instructor, he gains a new spell equal to his new level (the Chance to Learn check is automatically successful). The GM determines the new spell randomly.

Table HJ29-E: Learning Mage Spells

INT	Max. Spells Known/Level	Chance to Learn Spells
3	0	0%
4	0	0%
5	1	1%
6	1	5%
7	1	10%
8	2	15%
9	2	20%
10	2	25%
11	2	30%
12	3	40%
13	3	50%
14	3	60%
15	3	65%
16	4	70%
17	4	75%
18	4	80%
19	4	85%
20	5	90%

BONUS SKILLS AND PROFICIENCIES

Mages receive the Magical Transcription proficiency for free. They also receive +3 skill points in the Arcane Lore skill each time they advance in level.

SAMPLE MAGE SPELLS

Aura of Innocence

Base SP Cost: 40

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 second

Range: One individual

Volume of Effect: One individual

Duration: 5 minutes

Saving Throw: Negates

An Aura of Innocence spell allows the recipient to remain free from suspicion of being associated with any act or crime for the duration of the spell, no matter how convincing the evidence is. Those viewing the recipient may attempt to make a saving throw in order to negate the effect, though only if they were an eyewitness to the act. Otherwise, even a man who blatantly stabs a person and flaunts the bloody knife to onlookers would not be immediately suspected of the crime. After the duration expires, people who witnessed the act will begin to recall the truth and wonder why their judgment was so clouded.

The material component is a bloody glove.

Additional Spell Point schedule:

Increase Duration: 5 SP/minute

Wall Walk

Base SP Cost: 50

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 second

Range: Touch

Volume of Effect: One creature

Duration: 5 minutes

Saving Throw: None

This spell gives the target the ability to ascend or decent sheer surfaces at a movement rate of 2 feet per second. The wall cannot exceed perpendicularity (90 degrees) or the recipient of a Wall Walk falls to the ground.

The spell component for this spell is any sticky substance, which the target must spread on the soles of his footwear for the spell to work.

Additional Spell Point schedule:

Extend Duration: 10 SP/minute

Aura of Innocence is a Journeyman level spell. Wall Walk is a 1st level spell.

HackMaster

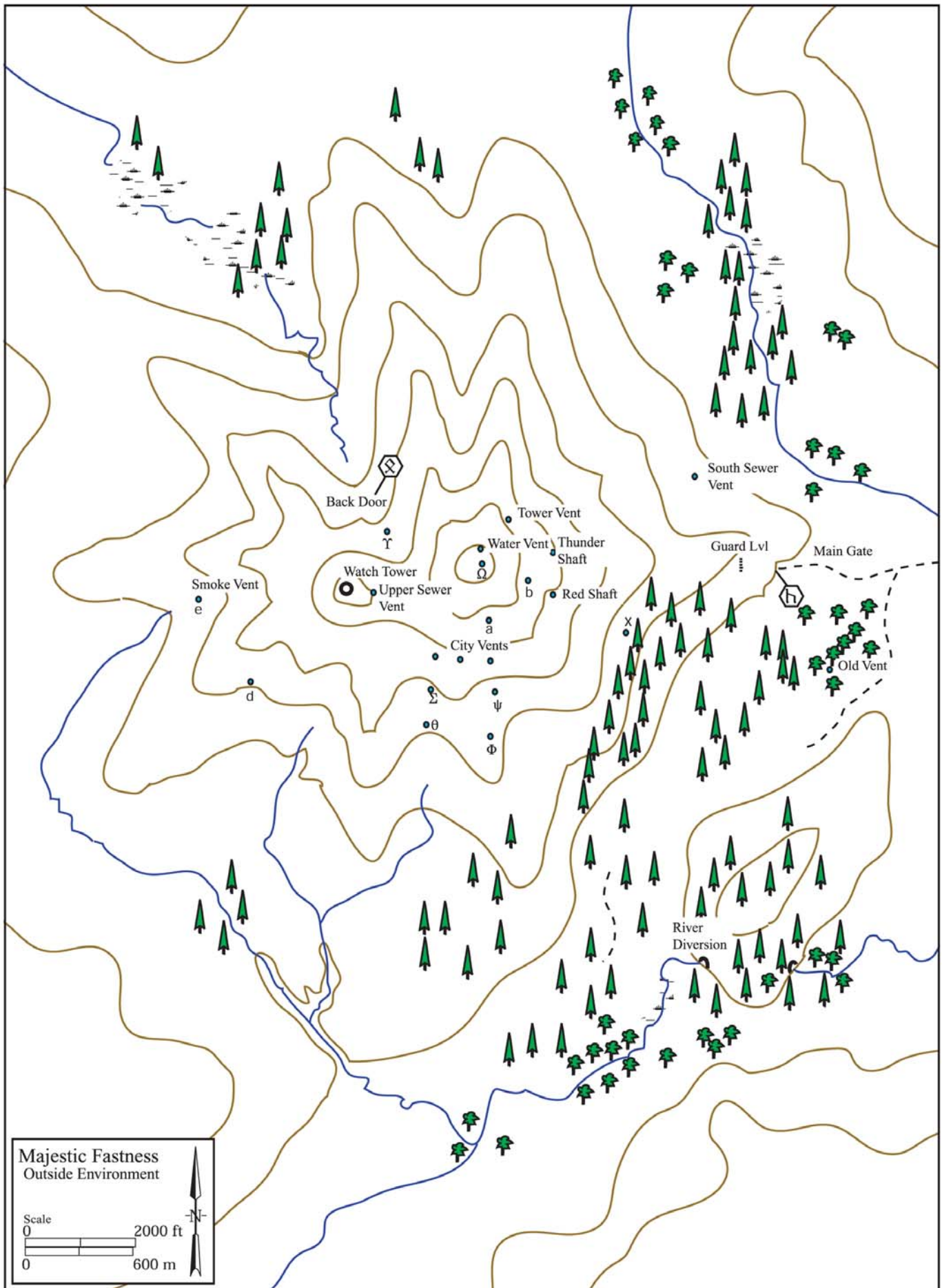
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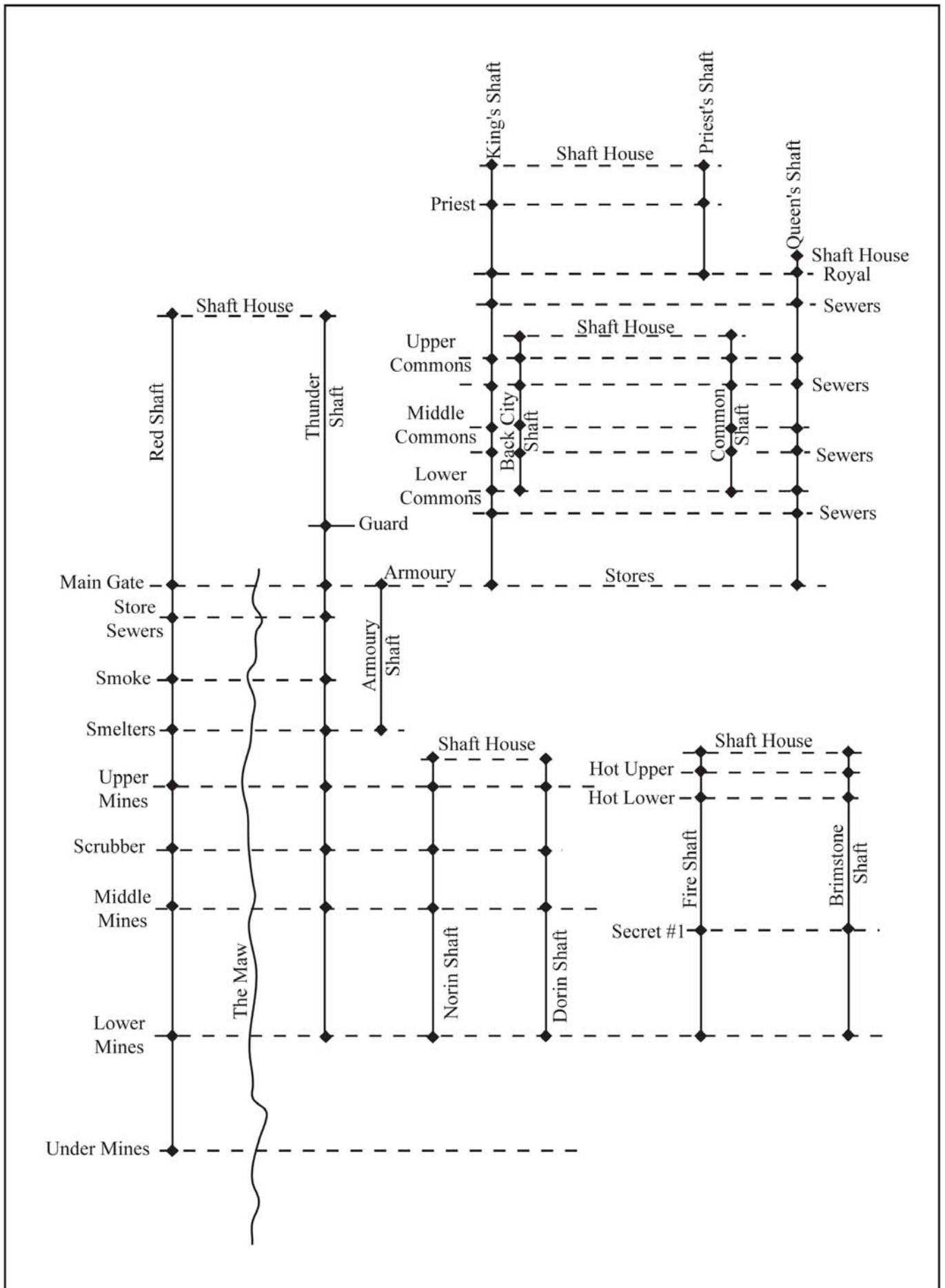
Coming Summer 2009

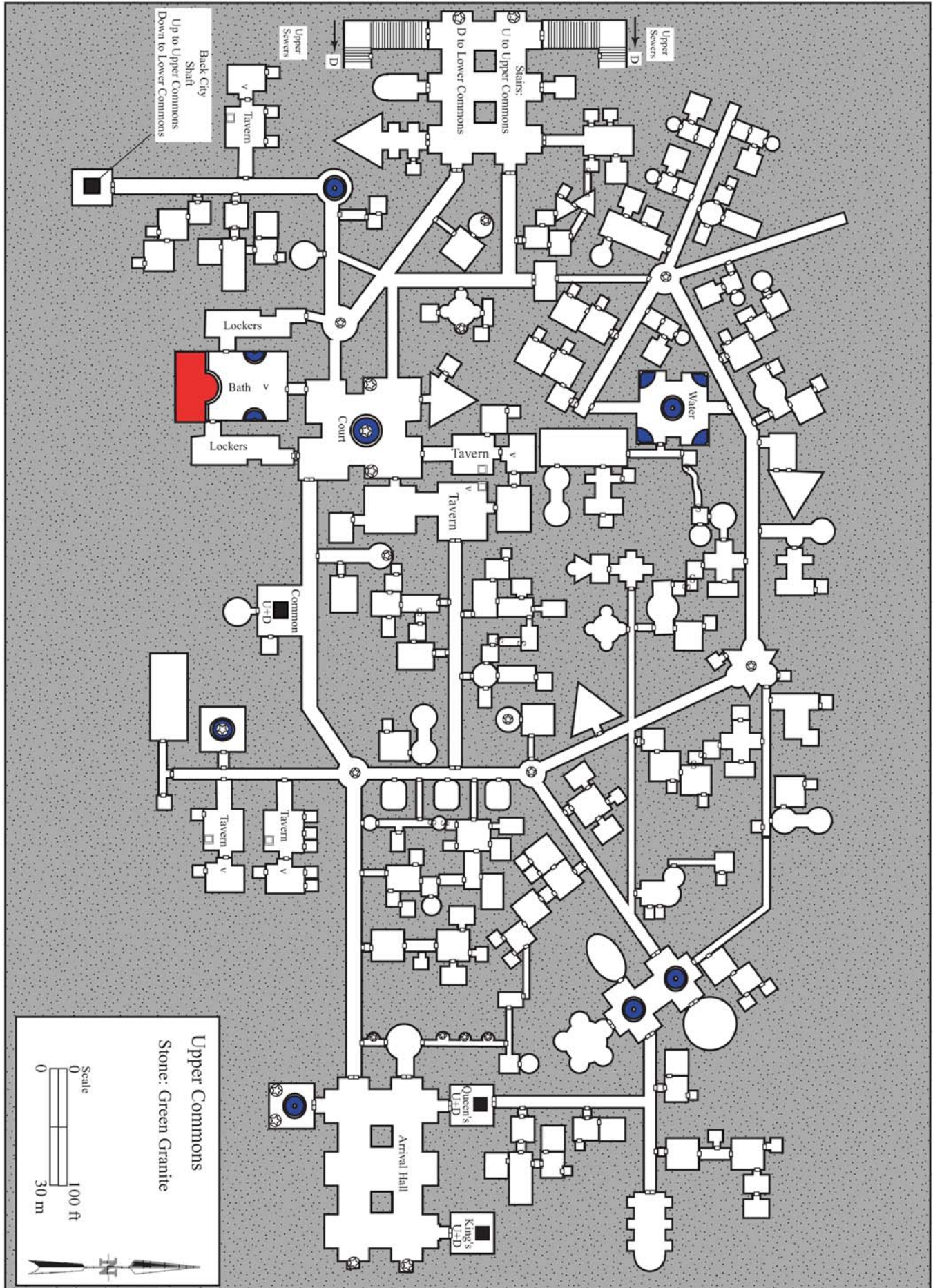


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FROM THE CUBICLE OF THE CHANCELLOR:

More HackMaster Basic Spoilers

edited by Mark Plemmons (HMA# IL-8-00005-01)

As you all probably know, we're working hard on the next edition of *HackMaster*. However, if you don't visit our online discussion forums, you may have missed David Kenzer's recent HackMaster Basic spoiler answers to fan questions. This article compiles the spoilers so far (March 27, 2009) for easy reference.

The following article contains mostly new (or revised) spoilers revealed between Dec 08 2008 and March 27, 2009. For earlier spoilers, see the previous issue of HackJournal (#28).

Keep in mind that any of this information may change between now and the final publication date.

RELEASE INFORMATION

HackMaster Basic will be paperback, roughly 192-224 pages long, with a cover price of \$19.99. The scheduled release date is Summer 2009. HMB will cover levels 1-5. HMB includes some sample monsters/magic items and otherwise gives you everything you need to roll the bones and go. It's PHB, GMG and HOB all wrapped into one.

Planned within 12 months of HMB will be three *Advanced HackMaster* hardcovers (*Hacklopedia*, *Player's Handbook*, and *GameMaster's Guide*). AHM will cover levels 1-30. You won't have to buy HMB to play AHM, but you'll want to.

After the hardcovers, we plan to release more supplements such as the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting, class books and a *GameMaster's Shield*.

ABILITIES

Q: You mention seven stats. Are they still the same stats?

A: Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, Looks, and Charisma.

Q: Will a STR 25 fighter still be able to carry roughly 8000 suits of hide armor on his back?

A: 18 is the maximum Strength in HMB.

Q: How does the Charisma/Looks relationship work? While the two traits are definitely clearly distinct from each other in theory, they do seem to be relatively interchangeable when put to use.

For example: When a character tries to persuade a serving wench to be generous with the potato pie, he could either use his Looks or his Charisma to get what he wants. Different approaches, but both make sense. This applies to nearly all social skills (one of the most notable exceptions being Intimidate).

A: You use Charisma to raise armies and command respect and lead. You can't directly use Looks for anything...they modify your Charisma and affect how others react to you before opening your yap. So they set the stage so to speak.

Now to your specific example, unlike other inferior games, HM recognizes that many skills are a combination of multiple abilities. So the

player in question would use "Seduction, Art of" as the skill to get more pie...that's a combination of Looks and Charisma. So is acting. In contrast, Singing is all Charisma (see Amy Winehouse, e.g.), while acting is LKS and CHA.

Q: I guess my question can be generalized by asking how the primary ability scores affect skill checks. Unfortunately I have never had the chance to read or play Aces & Eights.

A: The primary ability scores are the major factor in determining starting skill level. After that, they only have bearing on improving skills, but not using them in play.

Q: What will the 'average' stats for a PC be? i.e. is 12 still considered 'really good' and 15 'unbelievable'?

A: Well, $3d6$ plus a $d\%$ gives an 11 average from pure rolling. BP buy-ups might push the higher stats up toward 15 in some case, but not too often past that since the buy up cost increases after 16 (3%/BP instead of 5%/BP). That said, the Darwinistic nature of HM culls the weaker from the herd, so you're likely to see PCs getting into the 12/13 average before too long.

Q: So if BP are used at character creation to do a fixed boost to stats (i.e. no dice rolling), and presumably they are used the same way when you level, then does that mean the die to increase your Ability % has been done away with? I always thought it was a keen way to represent how Fighters train in strength and Thieves in dexterity (and so on).

A: In Basic, there are no die bumps to the % when leveling. In Advanced, yes. But not fixed based on class...a PC can work on any stat he wants to concentrate on.

Q: Are stat fractionals 00-99 or 01-100 (with the first digit usually ignored; i.e. 01-00, like they "always were")?

A: 18/01 to 18/00. They're not decimals, but fractions of an integer. Decimals might have been easier, I know, but 18/00 is just too kewl.

ALIGNMENT

Q: Is evil the result of nurture, nature or both in HMB/ HMA? More specifically, are some creatures (play character races in particular) born evil - or is their morality the result of the environment in which each individual was raised?

A: Both. The game's not about introducing moral dilemmas and 'humanoids' aren't humans. The orcish replenishment of their armies consists of breeding. With humans, orcs, goblins, any female they can get their hands. Orcish females are held captive along with all the others. They're simply breeders, not even permitted to cook or serve. just breed and raise the young. A half orc resulting from a coupling outside the lair (such as the unlikely case of a rape and the human escapes or she was left behind for other reasons) can be raised human and taught human morals. Only 10% pass for brutish humans, the other 90% appear like orcish purebloods.

PS this behavior is uniquely orcish. Hobgoblins, for example, have trouble even getting their females to agree to breed. And bugbear females can only ovulate when they've eaten an infant (of any race - that's why the boogeyman steals babies from cribs).

Q: If some (player) creatures are born evil, then it would be perfectly understandable that other (non-evil) races would kill them on sight...

A: Yep. One of our stated goals is to eliminate moral dilemmas through skilled authorship. In other words, after you finish reading a monster description, you should be angry, repulsed, etc. enough to want

to pick up a sword and go on a wild genocidal frenzy amongst the colony in question. Any moral question related to slaying should be answered by a refresher from the monster entry.

Most monsters view humans as food and a source of slaves. keep that in mind when they beg for mercy.

Q: Can I use a Detect Evil spell on a thief or assassin to reveal his true nature?

A: Only outer-planar creatures and truly evil folks over 20th level detect as evil.

Q: I think the explanation of LG in the 4e PHB makes it pretty clear that the ends justify the means. Is that right?

A: People have been getting LG wrong for years. It's simple - the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. If you slaughter a few innocent orc runts to ensure that the other 90% don't grow up to destroy the local humans or kidnap their women to turn into breeders (like the dozen pitiful ones you just rescued), you're good. I'll add that there will certainly be no local laws against butchering helpless members of another species that historically and repeatedly preys on mankind.

It's the CG characters that have escaped scrutiny. They're the wimps that are all for all or die trying. they'd be far more likely to try to figure out each soul that should be saved. been that way since OD&D, but people get confused that the "C" somehow means "partially E".

Q: Which is More Evil. Chaotic Evil, Lawful Evil, or Neutral Evil?

A: They're all the same evil. LE has the potential to cause the most harm on a large-scale level; they're organized and can even seem deceptively not-evil at a first glance.

Q: Will some classes still have alignment restrictions? I've always felt like Chaotic Good and Lawful Evil need some more love, since LG and CE get the Paladin and Dark Knight.

A: Yes, and the new game has a separate cleric class/priesthood for each alignment (actually, Basic only covers 5 – LG NG CG LE CE, the advanced PHB covers 12 and the Zealots guide brings it to about 5 per alignment).

CHARACTER GENERATION

Q: Point buy based generation system or random dice roll?

A: Random, but BPs are still there for you. In basic, players receive 50 BPs to start. Players may re-arrange their stats amongst the 7 abilities however they wish. However, characters receive a whopping 50 BP bonus if they choose to keep their stats in the order in which they rolled them. A lesser 25 BP bonus is awarded for swapping 2 abilities (and leaving the rest as rolled).

CLASSES

Q: Generic cleric class or priest for each god?

A: One for each god. There are 5 gods in HM HMB – 44 in AHM. Since the Kalamar Gods cover almost every conceivable sphere of influence (at least all the ones from Gawds & Demi-Gawds), there is no need to look farther than the templates provided in AHM. HMB has 5 Clerics. AHM may have as many as 18. The Zealot's Guide (tentatively titled "Hammer of the Gawds" has 44.

Q: Do Clerics get Honor and/or Experience for Converting other PCs to their Gawd/Religion?

A: Yes.

Q: Will some demihumans (due to special adjustments and powers) be more proficient than a human at a given class? How restrictive is the class selection for the average demihuman?

A: As part of character generation, players must choose and pay for their character class with building points. Humans pay a straight 25 BPs for every class. Demi-humans vary by class depending on what they're good at. So halflings buy thief for less, Dwarves pay, IIRC, 50 BP for mage, elves pay only 15 for mage, but 50 for cleric and so on. (my numbers might be off here, but you get the idea). So there are no restrictions, it's just less cost-effective for demi-humans to take classes outside of their sweet spot so you see less dwarven mages than elven ones. (in fact, most players would never choose a dwarven mage because it's so expensive....but some might).

Q: What do thieves have going for them? Are they basically a trap monkey that can get one good attack off under stringent limits or are they more like the other dice-based game and get to stack huge amounts of damage and tumble around all willy-nilly?

A: We've taken thieves and emphasized the scumbag part and de-emphasized the superhero part that lesser games have gone with recently. they're great at (meaning better than all other classes at) killing helpless foes, stabbing people in the back, attacking fleeing characters and so on. They also have an uncanny ability to avoid mishaps (the game mechanic here is Luck Points, which a thief can spend to, for example, save against the poison gas trap they just set off and is the reason the other characters are perishing presently, avoid crits and so on). they also have a suite of skills that they are far superior than most at (hiding, sneaking, IDing traps, opening locks, disguise and so on). Pretty useful to have around, even in an all-out brawl (as long as they have some fighters to keep foes off of them so they can move about and perform their nastiness).

COMBAT

Q: So the sword count is equal to the speed of the weapon right, plus your skill level?

A: Basically, yes. But unlike Aces & Eights, there's no need to keep track of both moving and attacking...just attacking. Moving is done immediately on any init number you want to move (after your init comes up, that is).

Q: If I understand it correctly, a Natural 20 on an attack is a "perfect offense" and a natural 20 on a defense roll is a "perfect defense," giving an immediate counterstrike, correct? And high total "wins" with ties going to the Defender... What if an attacker with a +8 to hit rolls a natural 20 against a defender with a "mere" +6 to their roll?

A: In order to gain a perfect defense or a crit, you have to exceed your opponent's total. So in your example, it'd be a crit. But there's one final complication...the d20s penetrate with a d6p...so tyhere'd be one last roll off.

Q: Are you working out a Shield Bash option for your counter-attack with Near Perfect Defense (19)?

A: Actually, no. Think of the near perfect defense (which cannot be done with a reach weapon) as the defender locks in the attacker and hits him with the hilt, elbows him in the face, knees him in the groin, batters him with his shield edge...etc. it's a very low damage in-fighting bonus. The punch in the face. Adds a lot of flavor...and every HP helps, no?

Q: Will the attack roll be a natural roll? While pretty kewl and fast paced, it seems to me that even the luckiest could strike a skilled defender/attacker (in the case of a counter attack).

A: Yes, on rare occasion, a poorly skilled attacker will land a blow on a far superior defender, but statistically less probable than in earlier editions.

Q: Is combat ability still intrinsically tied to a character's class level? Furthermore, is combat one general skill or is it broken down into specific areas independent from each other (e.g. melee, unarmed, ranged weapons; or maybe even swords, spears, bows etc.)?

A: It's tied to stats, class/level, and BPs spent on improving it (proficiencies, talents, specializations). Characters can improve specific weapons through talents, proficiencies and specializing. Ranged is handled differently than melee.

Ranged Combat Spoiler: I'm sure if you stop and think about it long enough, you'll come to the conclusion that it's faster and safer to shoot your opponents at range than to stand within their weapons' reach and go at it toe-to-toe. So, of course, you're probably wondering how to execute such a smart move so you can start cutting down your would-be foes with arrows, axes, bolts and other projectiles long before they see the end of your sword.

Ranged attacks work as follows. The attacker rolls a d20p and adds any applicable bonuses such as his Attack adjustment for the weapon, any Attack Bonus based on level, and any other accrued bonuses. The result is checked against the weapon's range chart for the target's range and a hit or miss is determined.

A cursory glance will reveal that scoring a hit is by no means assured even at presumably undemanding ranges. Those with some perfunctory exposure to archery may balk at the seeming difficulty at hitting a target. Let it be said that these naysayers might do well to remember that the bow that they might have used bears as much resemblance to period bows as my iPod does to a Victrola and they should go back to relaxing in the blind comfort a millennium of scientific achievement has provided them.

Delivering a hit in combat entails landing a solid blow that does meaningful damage to an active opponent while in fear for your mortal life. Any sod with a full belly and adequate rest can peacefully travel via motorized comfort to a well lit range and utilize a bow benefiting from space-age polymers to score a hit on an immobile and unthreatening paper target in excess of those presented in the official combat charts. That he can does not invalidate the legitimacy of these charts, it only proves that the individual in question is an argumentative fool unaware of the care taken to derate the superfluous complexity of glancing or superficial shots, the difficulty of judging distances on the fly and the stress of combat. Indeed, one might venture a guess as to said individual's capability for rational action back when he was receiving yet another atomic wedgie in the locker room of his junior high school.

Q: So this means, in short, that Missile Weapons do have a "target number" then, instead of the opposed rolls of melee combat?

A: Yes. Essentially, you're shooting at a target. each weapon has a chart that shows chance to-hit based on range as well as damage. Modifiers for target movement (or lack of), target size and so on.

After a certain range, the defender can add his defense bonus to the attack if he knows/sees it coming. (I can't recall if that's in Basic or Advanced, though. Advanced, I think.)

Q: Do shields defend something other than the front facing? Or as in 4e, the shield arm's flank only?

A: Yes. Flank for shield arm...defender's option.

Q: Or does the 'frontal' facings also include the flanks?

A: Um, no. Front is front and flank is flank. Left is left and right is right. Also north is not south nor is it east.

Q: How does the amount of attackers influence defense rolls?

A: Jiminy Cricket! The more attackers the worse the defense rolls.

Q: Is there a lowest possible number to defend with?

A: Yes, d8p. Essentially, that's the chance a guy next to you just plain whiffs while you don't even know he's swinging at you.

Q: Also, how many attackers can gang up to attack a character's front facing?

A: Depends on their size and weapons wielded. Assuming swords and same size, two. But it also depends on character positioning. Is he in a hallway? Corner? Doorway? Open field?

Q: Unless the enemies are very small, wouldn't the norm be that at most one attacker can position himself to attack the front facing?

A: No. 6 like-sized opponents can surround one guy. 2 front, 2 flank, 2 rear. Depending on placement, they cajn shift to front/rear flanks. This will all be explained in AHM.

Q: Two or three enemies seem like they're bound to attack the flanks rather than the front, and would thus bypass the shield?

A: Depends on shield size and positioning. Also, a shield is effective against flank attacks on the shield side (left for right-wielding characters).

Q: How flexible are defenders to specify facing? It seems like it could be easy to walk up to an unprotected flank or rear flank and attack that, even though the defender has a shield.

A: Really? Grab a tire iron and a garbage can lid and try it with your friend. See how often he lets you walk over and hit him in the hip bone.

Also, I suspect you mean 'attacks'. As in that a shield defends from three frontal attacks, since you mentioned a shield's max of attacks later. Large and body shields defend against 3 frontal attacks. Medium 2 and small/bucklers 1.

Q: Does the amount by which an attack roll exceeds the respective defense roll matter? Or is hitting an orc with an attack roll of 7 vs. a defense roll of 5 equivalent to hitting the same orc with an attack roll of 26 vs. a defense roll of 5?

A: For standard attacks, no. But it's very important for crits and fumbles.

Q: I houseruled the hp kicker away in Hackmaster 4th edition, and intend to do the same thing in Basic if it's there. I don't understand the need for inflated numbers. What's the difference in a 25 hp character or monster dying from one 25 point blow and an 8 hp character dying from an 8 point blow?

A: The bigger the range of numbers, the greater the range of possible modifiers for different conditions (such as crits and penetration) and weapons. Ogres wielding huge clubs do 15 on a really solid blow, while kobolds with a pointy stick do 5 and a house cat might do 1. In 1st edition D&D, there wasn't a good scale... the house cat did the same as the kobold, which did the same as an ogre 15% of the time. There's just greater variation as-written than in previous editions. Leaves more room for monster/character differentiation.

Also, armor reduces damage, so the 25 point example above would be devastating to a poor schmuck in leather armor (Wes' character), while a dwarf in chainmail (Jolly's character) might shrug it off.

Q: Question about jabbing and polearms: are there different lengths of polearms, and can they be layered?

A: The spear is the only polearm in Basic. Others will follow in Advanced HackMaster.

Q: Can i have a fighter with long sword and shield, then a fighter behind him with a 10' spear, then a fighter behind HIM with a 15' foot pike, allowing me to have THREE fighters attacking on a single front? If I have three fighters lined up, each with a 15' foot pike, does that mean that the enemy would have overcome jabbing 15' feet away from the first rank, then overcome jabbing 10' feet away from the second rank, then overcome jabbing 5' away from the third rank, and then FINALLY be able to actually attack the first rank of fighters?

A: Yes, and yes again.

Q: Will it be possible to use spear and shield together, like a greek phalanx? in HM4, that wasn't possible for a medium-sized creature.

A: That just happened in our last session. Brian's elven fighter (archer) was pressed into melee service... He opted for spear and shield to fight from the second rank behind the real fighter.

GAMEPLAY MISC.

Q: What plans will there be to convert existing Basic characters to Advanced (if any)? Can we easily make our guys Advanced when those rules come out or will there be stuff that will want to make us re-make our guys? If so will there be a conversion guide of some sort or will it just be easier to make new characters?

A: Advanced will have everything that Basic had in it. Existing Basic characters can immediately move into Advanced play. You'll need to add a few features, such as Fatigue Factor, and you may be unhappy with your character based on some of the more detailed Advanced rules additions (like minimum Str requirements to wield each weapon, else suffer fatigue faster) or wish you could have tweaked your character with some of the Advanced Skills/Talents/Proficiencies, or gained a few more BPs from taking on additional Qs/Fs, but otherwise, it's the same game.

Basic characters get less stuff when they advance, but don't have to pay or train. Advanced rules include training (1 week), plus expenses associated with leveling up, but the characters gain points to their ability percent scores, training event tables, and so on.

Basic was designed as a gateway into Advanced. You'll be able to continue your campaign with the very same 5th level characters. In fact, that's just what I recommend...you keep playing basic and add in some advanced rules every week until you've gained mastery of them, then add some more. As PCs die, they can roll up new ones straight out of Advanced (the Advanced character rules have more flexibility and options).

Q: Will the relationship be closer between AHM and HMB than between Aces & Eights and Showdown, or will it be roughly the same (i.e., are there replacement rules like the wound tables, or just ... additive ones)?

A: Closer. Additional rules and more details. HMB is about half-way between Showdown and Aces and Eights – a very full game in its own right.

Q: Will you include rules for the 30 sided dice?

A: It'll be used on some charts.

Q: Aces & Eights uses the hex mechanic for battle mats and miniatures, which works well with facing. Will HMB use hexes or

squares or will it not matter because it is less of a miniature games than other inferior newly released products?

A: HMB is not designed to be mini-specific, although, like its Gygaxian predecessors, minis help battles along. The choice of hex or square is entirely up to you.

Since the game uses real-life measurements and time, any grid/map can be used. I prefer 1" = 5 feet because that's close to the scale of true 25mm minis and i have about 500 minis from the 1970s in my basement. Believe it or not, the game itself needn't define a particular scale for you to enjoy mini use. Only if a game is designed as a mini game first, will you see rules discussing 'squares' and other nonsense. HM is being designed as an RPG first. Like all traditional FRPGs, minis enhance the combat experience but are not essential.

We use a grid, either hex (outdoors) or square (dungeon) with minis, primarily because that's what we have handy and have used since the early 80s. An occasional tape measure (every few sessions) might be required for odd ranges and so on. These things are really few and far between. 95% of all situations don't come down to an exact measurement – in any game, really. HM puts the power in the GM's hands to 'make the irrefutable call' referee-style. Speeds game play since the GM is always right. You can always go for instant replay if you want a reversal – we recommend you keep this to two tries per game (with a 5 HP penalty for being wrong if game play has to stop to look up the rule), with automatic rule checking in life or death situations (no HP penalty in this case). This stuff will be in the GameMaster's Guide (Advanced) - no room in Basic. Of course, we don't need 22 pages explaining how to use squares. In fact, as far as I remember, we don't use any words covering how/when/where to measure distances. Keep it simple, dontcha know.

If you find squares to be useful, use them in HMB. The rules do not disallow such an approach. Nor do they require/prohibit measuring devices. Whatever your table is best with is how you do it at your table. The rules don't force a change, they just provide movement rates and spell ranges and that sort of thing.

Q: Also, will poison cause direct damage to hps or to statistics or other?

A: Yes, yes and yes. We're avoiding actual ability score loss because it's a book keeping nightmare. That said, poisons are measured against ability scores and also apply straight penalties (so as to avoid the refiguring of what happens when your Dex drops by 6 points or whatever).

Q: BPs are still only available during character generation right?

A: Wrong. BPs are handed out at a rate of 15 per level.

Q: Is damage reduction always a fixed number or can it also be a die?

A: Damage Absorption is a fixed number.

Q: Will armor still absorb spell damage?

A: Some spells yes, some spells no. Depends on the nature of the spell: physical manifestations that then hit the character armor protects against. Also, some spells specifically mention they ignore armor (magic projectile being one of them).

Q: Why did you choose real life measurements and time?

A: Good question. We did this because we can. We're able to start there and apply real world data to come up with attacks per round and speed of running and all those sorts of things. A stopwatch is a lovely thing! In the early days of gaming, I don't think our forefathers tried that sort of thing...they may have also been stuck in the paradigm of 'turns'

from the wargaming days (FRPGing was an evolution as well as revolution).

In designing HMB we were forced to start from scratch so as to not infringe anyone else's IP. This actually freed us to think outside the box. And the most natural way to figure measurements seemed to be by real world units of measurement. Same with time units. In practice, players really catch on quick to how long 10 seconds is.

Q: How does the new edition handle Falling Damage - just a flat d6 per 10' or something more ... unusual?

A: Falling characters suffer damage as indicated on the table below:

Distance fallen (in feet)	Damage suffered
5	d6p -3
10	d6p -1
15	2d6p
20	3d6p
25	2d12p
30	3d12p
35	4d12p
40	5d12p
45	6d12p
50	7d12p
55	8d12p
60	9d12p

Note that these are unexpected falls onto hard stone. Any goof can safely lower himself into a 10 foot deep pit. Well, a human goof anyway...

Q: Is there a "flat" door-opening mechanic (as in all previous editions that I've seen, either a "fixed" roll as D&D Basic had or a STR based "target number" roll as AD&D introduced), or will doors have a "Strength" or "Resistance" score for opposed rolls... or did you come up with a different mechanic for this?

A: The open doors mechanic has been changed to 'Feat of Strength'. All doors (not easily opened, that is, have a value that you roll opposed against. This allows GMs to have doors of differing types and also includes locked, barred and so on.

Q: How noticeable is the difference between character levels during play in HMB (and AHM?) compared with HM 4th edition? For example, how much would an 8th level party need to babysit a new 1st level replacement PC?

A: Depends on class. A first level mage to an eighth level party is almost useless (much like a 1st level magic-user to a 1st level party in D&D 1e.) A cleric or fighter can hold their own. A thief...hard to say. If they can get some ranged strikes in or a backstab or have a skill or two of use, they will find a use.

Q: Is there flaming oil?

A: Flaming oil is far less useful in HMB and AHM than previous editions, mostly due to the cost. Most lamp (olive) oil is unsuitable for use as a molotov. The right type of oil is quite expensive making it far less attractive.

MAGIC

Q: How do you define magical effects?

A: We won't be striving to define everything. If anything, we want to move closer to the days of yore, where GMs made up kewl stuff, called it a magical effect and moved on.

My current favorite excuse is that they were created by eldrich spells from days of yore, long since forgotten. So 'newer' created dungeons by current, living foes will require more diligence on the part of the GM while ancient dungeons deep can have odder/fantastic effects.

Q: It was mentioned that Spell Points will be used in conjunction to enhance a Magic-user's spells. How will it be used to enhance it? Will it enhance damage, effectiveness (apply penalties to saves vs. Spells), range etc at a per point cost or will there be a specific spell cost per effect?

A: Each spell lists out variables you can increase at a further SP cost.

Q: Will there be material components for at least some spells? Will they be specific named items for each spell? Will players need to keep track of them and be screwed if they run out?

A: Yes, almost all; Yes...but not unique (e.g., the hope diamond), but rather specific things (e.g., lint); and Yes.

Q: Do clerics get access to Spell Points?

A: No.

Q: How will Cleric spell memorization work? Will they be able to spontaneously change or trade out their spells? Kinda like the Chosen One class could? That was always useful if yea needed to get a Cure spell on the fly.

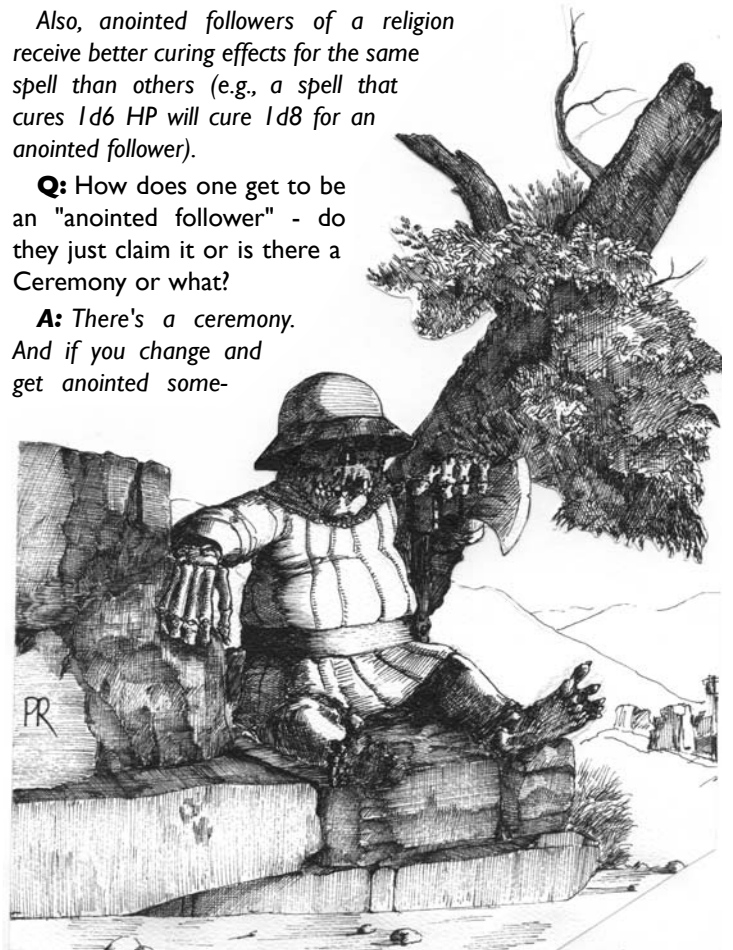
A: Spells are not memorized, they are granted by their deity (usually through an intermediary) based on the cleric's level and Wisdom. They can trade or change spells only within their god's spheres of influence.

In Basic all clerics have some access to healing spells, although the cleric of the god of healing has better spells in that category. Only clerics that worship the god of healing can get swap for cure spells. If you worship the god of truth, you cannot.

Also, anointed followers of a religion receive better curing effects for the same spell than others (e.g., a spell that cures 1d6 HP will cure 1d8 for an anointed follower).

Q: How does one get to be an "anointed follower" - do they just claim it or is there a Ceremony or what?

A: There's a ceremony. And if you change and get anointed some-



where else too quickly, you get screwed over. Gives clerics another tool for conversion of followers.

Q: If regular clerics heal and clerics that are anointed followers heal BETTER, why would anyone play anything other than a cleric that is an anointed follower? What's the incentive for being a regular cleric?

A: Anointed followers are non-clerics that follow the same religion as the cleric (and after a ceremony and some show of devotion). In other words, if your fighter truly follows the same god as the party cleric, she receives bennies (in the form of spells working better on her) that the scumbag thief played by the guy on your left doesn't receive. A nice tool in the cleric's conversion toolbox. Also fun when there's multiple clerics serving different gods in the same party.

Q: Will there be penalties for being outside the cleric's pantheon, of opposite alignment, or follower of their gawds mortal enemy?

A: There is only one pantheon. Yes to penalties for alingment and being an anointed follower of an enemy.

Q: I want to know if casting in melee results in a free attack by the attacker - outside his initiative - as an attack of opportunity.

A: Casting in melee is genrally not a good idea because the caster suffers a grievous penalty to his defense die both during casting as well as after (because of spell fatigue). it's certainly possible, but you'll want to stick with spells with very short casting times and no spell components (or ones laready in-hand). Even then, spell fatigue is casting time plus 5 seconds, so your opponent is likely to get in an easy swing.

Q: A simple combat spell like Magic Missile (or something comparable): how many seconds does a wizard need to cast it?

A: Generally 1 second per spell level. Also d4 to find components.

Q: How does interrupting spell casters work?

A: If they get interrupted, the spell fails and the Spell Points are gone.

Q: So if a spell has a 4 count, you get interrupted if you are hit anytime during that count, essentially?

A: Yes.

Q: Do magic weapons increase the speed of your attacks? Such as lowering the count of a weapon by the amount of the bonus?

A: No, unless a special magic item. Only very special items increase the number of attacks per round.

Q: Can we expect any major changes in how magic items work?

A: They're redefined somewhat where certain items (like many potions) are actually not magical, but alchemical in nature. Most 'magic' weapons and armor are not actually enchanted, but rather are of superior metals and workmanship (note there **are** actual magical weapons, just not the +1 swords and so on...the 'common' ones are just awesomely balanced/nicely made items).

Q: What about miscellaneous things like cloaks, rings, boots, etc. Are all of those still in the game in some capacity and do they work like they used too? Or do most of them just grant a bonus to a skill check (for example, does something like Boots of Spider Climbing just grant a bonus to Climb checks or do they allow you to just climb stuff without a check)?

A: Other miscellaneous items are in the game and they vary – some add to skill success rate, others are automatic. Depends on the power of the item, naturally.

Q: Can we get some hints about being a mage in combat?

A: The mage is really weak in combat, although a determined player might sink some BPs into learning how to use armor, shield and a better weapon (sword, etc.). but then those BPs can't be used to bolster skills and talents that involve spellcasting (and, of course, in Advanced there's still the wonderful Spell Mishap Table for armored spellcasting...).

Q: How does the new spell progression work?

A: Mages gain spell points as they advance and increase their capacity to memorize/bone up on spells (done in the morning). A mage can cast any spell known (in their spellbook), but spells not memorized cost more (double) the points. higher level you get, the more spells you can memorize and the more SPs ya get.

Q: I hear terms like 1st level spell, Journeyman and Apprentice. I like the idea of Spell Points used to cast and modify your spells.

A: Journeyman and Apprentice level spells are essentially cantrips or zero level spells. Spell Points can be used to up the effectiveness of most spells up to a certain limit (most spells have a maximum that they can be pumped up with raw power before the spell itself simply fizzles... generally you have to move to a higher level spell to gain power beyond such limits).

MISCELLANEOUS (NOT RULES RELATED)

Q: What modules do you expect to release with the rules?

A: Funny you should ask because are plans recently changed in this area. We may no longer have space in the main book for a sample adventure, so that may become a free download. I'd been working on 'Frاندor's Keep' (Little Keep 10 years later, set in the Krond Heights, just north of P'Bapar). But it got to the point where it outstripped the HMB rules (i.e., characters could go past level 5 if they survived that long), so we'll be breaking it into two products.

Frاندor's Keep is targeted for concurrent release. There will also be a couple of PDF adventures released around that time as well. Mines of Chaos will come a bit later. The first two adventures are Frاندor's Keep (1-5th level) and the Mines of Chaos (6th-10th level).

Q: Have you considered spiral binding? **A:** No. Every spiral bound book sold in the industry has met with financial disaster.

Q: Do you have any (honest) concerns about Basic not really being basic enough for self-described RPG dummies like me?

A: No. Almost by definition, HM players/GMs are smarter than others. I'm imagining Moldvay at 60-odd pages side-by-side with your planned 200+ pages. Not really getting a real sense of basicness from the bigger book. The Moldvay book would be 120 pages nowadays just from better descriptions, examples and so on. Extra spells, monsters and Skills/Talents/Proficiencies make up most of the remainder.

Q: Will there be a Hackmaster Liscense for 3rd parties to produce adventures, supplments, etc.?

A: Maybe.

Q: Will you release Hackmaster in PDF format?

A: Yes.

Q: Will any organizations from GW make it into Kalamar?

A: Yes, many if not most of them.

MONSTERS

Q: Will there be energy-draining attacks?

A: Yes, even in HMB. but it works differently. Drains ability point (Str, Int, etc., depending on undead type). Permanent loss... just as feared by players and makes more sense than losing your experience.

Frankly, I've always had a problem with level draining. I liked the fact that it terrorizes players, but always thought it was a dumb mechanic - how does the mage lose his abilities to cast and the thief lose skill knowledge...gee, I took botany last level and now I've forgotten it because I got hit by a wight. Also, it didn't fit with tradition. Finally, it's almost impossible for a character to die of such an attack - monsters need attacks that incapacitate and kill their foes, not weaken them while the monster itself bites the dust!

So we forged a new path. What's more frightening to players than losing levels (that they can get back)? Losing ability scores.

Now most undead drain Con (some may drain Dex or Str or a combination) on a one-for-one with HP lost from an attack. If your stat gets to zero, you die and come back as the appropriate undead. The points can be gained back over time (with rest and successful saves - failed saves indicate permanent loss, a terrifying proposition).

Q: How many monsters will we be getting for basic? like 12 or 100 or more?

A: About 75+.

Q: Can you tell us a little more about the philosophy behind basing monsters on literature and legend?

A: Sure. It doesn't inringe anyone's IP and the classic ones are always best anyway. I've been pondering that, and I'm curious about how you think that turned out. I'll let you know after the AHM HOB comes out.

Q: What monsters are way different than what players might expect?

A: Not too many, actually.

Q: What did that process look like? What were your major sources?

A: Greek mythology, Tolkien, Poul Anderson, the usual.

Q: What does this mean for dragons? Are they going to be the epic creatures that can usurp an entire dwarven kingdom taking an army to defeat or the kind that are kidnapping virgin princess until a single Knight comes along to slay it?

A: Depends on the type and age. Also level of knight and/or archer with arrow of slaying.

Q: My favorite of the "standard evil humanoid" monster pack has always been the Gnolls. Are they in? What have you done to make them awful?

A: Yes, they are in. They're the senior relatives of the kobolds. The laziest of the humanoids, they have pretty much no redeeming qualities. They like to keep people for food and slaves, but gnolls are very close to animals still, so they are very driven by the emotional part of their brain, leading them to do things like kill their slaves for the slightest (or imagined) provocation or disappointment. Thus, gnoll-kept slaves are a bit more on the rare side...often ending in the pot, killed and eaten raw for some misstep or simply smashed and left to bleed out.

Q: Are orcs piggy/tusky? Greenish-black skinned goblinny? Peter Jackson dreadlocked WWF/Uruk Hai?

A: Standard orcs are pig-snouted if that's what you mean...kinda like Return of the Jedi. Greenish-black skinned goblinny would be the goblins. Uruk Hai would be closest to black orcs (see our Kingdoms of Kalamar "Fury in the Wastelands" supplement).

Q: If we overrun an orcish camp, are we likely to find human females who were being held as breeders?

A: Absolutely

Q: If we spare some orcish infants, could they theoretically be raised as LG, assuming we find anyone willing to take them?

A: Possibly. They're not infants, though, they're runts. Also, they're orcs and not half orcs 90% of the time. Something about their genetic make-up causes them to behave NE, so raising them as LG is unlikely at best, again, 90% of the time. The 90% and the 10% can't be identified at birth, or detected as evil, since only outer-planar creatures and truly evil folks over 20th level detect as evil. To be clear, the 10%-ers are all half-orcs. They just pass enough for human to count as only half-orcish.

Q: What's the nastiest monster in HMB?

A: Hydras. Or maybe the very biggest spiders (think Shelob).

Q: Are monsters rated by Hit Dice, Level, or other means?

A: Level.

Q: What monsters have been the hardest for the playtesters to defeat?

A: Trolls.

MOVEMENT

Q: It sounds like you've merged the movement and action rules (unlike A&8).

A: That's because of the lack of firearms. Guns allow multiple attacks per second, necessitating a detailed track of time in tenths of seconds. Hackmaster only needs to take seconds into account. Since no movement actions require under a second to perform (or can easily be handled by allowing it as a 'free' action or increasing rate of movement per second), there is no need to manage movement separately - it happens immediately (or faster than we need to keep track of in the game). In other words, since attacks occur per X seconds, movement naturally occurs per second (or X seconds for slow pokes).

A nice little simplification that the genre allowed.

Q: How does turning and facing affect movement distances?

A: Turning and facing changes: they are free when moving.

Q: Are there rules as to what is a character's walking speed vs jogging and/or running?

A: It's handled like in A&8s, moves based on feet/second. Four basic speeds: sprint, run, jog, walk.

Q: How much distance can a human character move in one second during combat? What about a dwarf or a hobbit?

A: 5 feet per second at a walk. 10 at a jog. Little folk half that.

QUIRKS AND FLAWS

Q: Can quirks and flaws be chosen freely?

A: In Advanced only (and they are optional in Advanced as well).

Q: Is there an option to buy one's way out of quirks and flaws with BP?

A: Only in Advanced. Basic is supposed to give HM newbs a flavor for the game. Quirks and flaws are part of it. A few of the playtesters had never played HM before - they're loving the quirks and flaws. All of the quirks and flaws in Basic are very mild. They're there for role-playing, not for trapping greedy players into making unplayable/worthless characters.

SKILLS, TALENTS, PROFICIENCIES

Q: Are you going for a large number of highly specialized skills or a smaller number of more generic skills?

A: *It's like A&8s in this respect. A large number of skills, but I wouldn't call them highly specialized. HM4 had some ridiculously specialized skills. We've combined those.*

Q: Can we drop 'religion (general)' as a prerequisite for 'religion (your god)'? It just doesn't make all that much sense to me, and 4e is full of clerics who don't know two bits about their own religion (see recent thread).

A: *The religion skills have been vastly improved and reworked. All clerics get bonuses here when advancing.*

Q: Do classes have "class" skills like in 4th or 3.5 or is it more like HM4e?

A: *More like HM 4th edition.*

Q: If it's more like HM4e, will other classes (besides cleric with Religion) have an advantage at taking some skills (for example, getting them cheaper)?

A: *Yes, fighters start with a few skills like weapon/armor appraisal, mages have a couple of class-specific goodies like arcane lore, thieves are mostly skill-based and increase with every level.*

Q: Is this [characters getting some limited skills for free] true in HMB as well as AHM?

A: Yes.

Q: Are there still going to be weird skills like Tracking where certain classes (ie non-ranger) get penalties for some reason?

A: *No. Those classes are just better at their class skills for less cost.*

Q: Are extra languages and literacy automatic, or be skills that need to have points spent?

A: *Skills that need to have points spent.*

TRAINING, LEVELING, AND EXPERIENCE

Q: How does the power curve track?

A: *Characters start as pissant losers and work their way up to great heroes that bitch-slap local rulers.*

Q: I saw earlier that HMA is going have levels ranging from 1-30. I was wondering if that meant what you gain for leveling up is more spread out, is there just more of it, or both?

A: *More spread out.*

Q: Experience Points abbreviation: "EP", "XP" or other?

A: *EP.*

Q: How does EP work? Do you get a set amount per monster, or some other method?

A: *50% of EPs come from defeating things. The other 50% come from 'story awards'. Story Awards are EPs gained by characters as they accomplish goals. For example, I ran a goblin lair some months back and the PCs receives 700 EP from goblins and other victims and 100 for finding some hidden treasure (not for the treasure itself, mind you, treasure is its own reward), 200 for ending the goblin threat (could be earned without killing them, theoretically), 250 for finding an important clue, 50 each for safely rescuing some prisoners.*

Q: So for HMB there's a unified EP table?

A: *Yes... so far.*

Q: Will you still gain EPs for getting treasure or drinking your potions?

A: *No. We've done away with those concepts.*

Q: What does the pace of leveling feel like? That is, given reasonably productive game sessions of an average length, how long does it take to crawl up the ladder from first to whatever?

A: *About one level every 15 hours of play (or 4 average game sessions). Your mileage may vary, obviously.*

Q: In the Honor discussion, you mentioned that there is an Honor hit for not paying a certain amount of funds per level (i.e., being a cheapskate with your choice of inns, food, buying rounds, etc.). Will the Funds per Level apply to Social Class, or just level?

A: *Just per level. it replaces the cost for training. You now never have to pay to train, but it means your Honor and Fame will never be great and may possibly be low all the time. Essentially, are you a cheapskate dirtbag or a real hero?*

Q: So, is the old cost of Level Training pretty much just spread out over time, i.e. over the long run players spend the same amount just in bits instead of one lump sum?

A: *One, it's a LOT less. Two, no. Leveling is just a convenient time to spend the money and keep track (it replaces paying at inns and buying rounds and all the minor cash-spending on services bits for those that don't want to sweat the details). It also covers the standard training weapons, upkeep, flasks and equipment, church/guild dues, etc, etc, spent in the old 'training funds'. Of course, this can still be done on an accounting level if your group likes it, but the spend should come out the same over a level. Basically, it's offered as a way to cut back on book-keeping but keep the spending happening. It also allows miserly players/characters (depending on if it's the player or the quirk dictating...) to hoard their cash, but at the expense of honor. It's a game problem with an in-game trade off.*

You can, in fact, choose to run it so that it's a gradual spend over time. Or, if players happen to role-play paying for drinks, interacting with bar-keep, renting rooms, etc., they can deduct that from later "training" costs. In short, the GM/table has control over how they do it, but the spend per level needs to be consistent for inter-campaign/tournament play/comparing notes when both playing Mines of Chaos, etc.

QUESTIONS WHERE MISSING ANSWERS MEAN: "FOR AHM OR OTHER FUTURE PRODUCT."

Q: Specialization in shields?

Q: Hacklust and/or Hackfrenzy?

Q: Will aging effects still require something akin to a System Shock roll? And if so, will Haste be altered in some way to not make it suicidal?

Q: Will MVP votes still apply as well as big hit?

Q: Are we likely to see some rules ideas from KoDT, such as the overbearing rules in 4e, appear in the new game?

Q: Are there still going to be spells that are save or die in the game?

Q: Are there quirks and flaws specific to certain races?

Q: Will there be a GM Shield for AHM?

Q: If your character gains levels, does he inadvertently become a better brawler?

Q: Will there be spelljacking?

Q: Will we see more Hackmaster-class blades?

Q: Are there critters that require magic weapons to be hit or damaged?

Q: Is it still possible to "Dispel" undead?

A: *Yes, in Advanced. Eliminating completely an undead from an encounter is a very powerful ability.*

It's a competing roll. Cleric rolls d20, adds level. Undead rolls d20 and adds Will Factor. Tie is a standoff, with the undead kept at bay...try again next round. If the undead wins, unaffected, try again next level. If the cleric wins, the undead flees in terror.

Large groups of undead are easily handled. Each undead makes a Will check (d20p plus Will Factor). If some monsters are turned, but others are not, the cleric may continue turning any monsters that have not yet made a Will Check (if, for example, they were otherwise disposed during the turn attempt like maybe feasting on the remains of your Halfling torchbearer that you sent up ahead as an inexpensive trap sweeper), but the priest cannot turn any that resisted his earlier turn attempts.

Once certain priests attain 5th level (depending on deity worshipped), they can do more than merely turn away the undead, they can also destroy them. If such a cleric exceeds the monster's total by triple, the monster is blasted into dust, forever destroyed.

Not all clerics in AHM can turn or affect undead.

Q: Since shields will take a greater (and historical) role in HMB will you guys be dropping in a specialization to improve the die rolls of a shield? Right now, the only die roll a shield gets is to avoid being smashed (i.e., a saving throw).

A: *I could see an AHM specialization that allowed for improved shield use and even shield attacks, but I doubt you'll see that sort of action until the Combatant's Guide.*

Q: Are the recommended treasure hoards a lot less? Because without all the expenses thrown at standard HM characters they would quickly get rich off of the "Standard" given out...

A: *The 'standard' is designed to be in-line with the recommended expenditures (note, this is all for Advanced, Basic has no rules for training costs, it's auto-level on the spot). Also, GMs should still be trying to nickel and dime PCs when possible. Esp. ones too foolish to invest in Appraisal and Salesmanship skills.*

Q: So if there is a penalty for living below your means, is there one for living above? Or is that a means of class advancement?

A: *It's a great way to gain Honor and Fame and also unwanted hangers-on.*

Q: Will there be new races?

A: *Hobgoblins will appear in advanced. As will Pixie-Fairies, Grel, Gnomes, probably some half breeds as well (Half-Elves, Gnome Titans, Sil-karg). Grevans will probably not be available as a character race. There will be half ogres in the game. just not sure if they'll make the cut for the PHB. In HM, we only believe in crossbreeding within the same genus. Generally cases of rape (half-elves being the sole exception). Orcs can and will attempt to breed with anything. Unless someone can prove otherwise, I stand by my assertion that Dragons cannot breed with humans or any other race in the homo genus.*

Q: While I can accept the fact that offspring of human/elf, human/dwarf or gnome/hobbit relationships exists somewhere (and if it's absolutely necessary that the violent encounter of a goblinoid or ogre with a human woman produces offspring, maybe even human/orc), I don't think those halfbreeds have to be made a "race". I think the best way to handle such individuals as player characters would be to give a few general guidelines about these rare halfbreeds in general instead of elevating them to a "base player race", because the latter results in a far bigger racial bastard population among players than the common racial animosities make likely.

A: *I agree, but we leave this up to each individual table. At the design-er table, odd races and breeds receive serious social stigma. Fine in the dungeon, not so good in town.*

Q: Will some creatures in AHM have inherent damage reduction capabilities?

A: *Most will, either due to armor (goblins) or actual hides (bugbears).*

Q: Are schools of magic (Charm/Illusion or something similar) gone? Or will they be part of the game, but simply do not get introduced before AHM?

A: *Correct. Part of AHM...and a little different.*

Q: Dual- and multiclass options for PCs?

A: *The new HM has far greater multiclassing flexibility or even single class blurring (wizards learning swordplay, for example). Everything with a price, though, so multiclass characters are not inherently more powerful than single class characters. This is a BP cost upon creating the character.*

Q: It's been posted that characters don't need to go through training when they go up a level, but is it an option to go study with a master to get a rare skill or just get an extra benefit?

A: *Not in Basic. In Advanced some skills and talents must be learned from others, so yeah.*

Q: Demons, Devils, Angels, etc...?

A: *For Advanced, though we're mostly interested in the lower planes creatures.*

Q: With the armor as damage reduction rules, will there be rules for armor (and weapons) to be damaged over time?

A: *In advanced, of course. Armor and weapons get destroyed without care and due to certain hits (and fumbles). Shields and armor last a lot longer in advanced than in HM4, though.*

Q: Will the mentor protege system be used in either HMB or AHM? and will it work like it does in HM4e?

A: *A tweaked version of the HM4e system will be in the Advanced game.*

Q: How is monster treasure considered? Letter codes like in AD&D? Bundles like in D&D4E? Minor/Major tables like in D&D3E? Will things like "jewelry" and "art objects" be detailed in the book or up to GM imagination again?

Q: Can you achieve higher rates of fire during siege use? (I.E. : if you're standing with 100 other archers, and you're only aiming in the general direction of the castle, no one is returning fire, and friendly infantry controls your perimeter?)

A: *Covered in Advanced, but generally large groups fire more slowly than individuals and unaimed faster than aimed.*

Q: Will there be more guidelines on the legal rights and responsibilities of knights, paladins, minor nobles, ship captains, etc? i.e. common law trials, field expedient executions, etc. universal right of execution for pirates and brigands?

A: *Covered in advanced, but players are free to slay outlaws, by the way. That's what the term means.*

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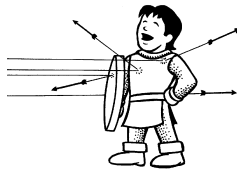
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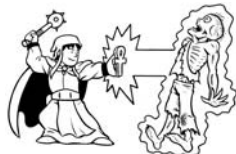
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Play this coupon to increase the number of undead turned or commanded by +1d4 (no penetration)



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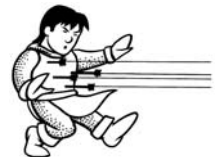
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Random Monster Encounter! (or GM's choice)



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Reroll that last successful saving throw



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