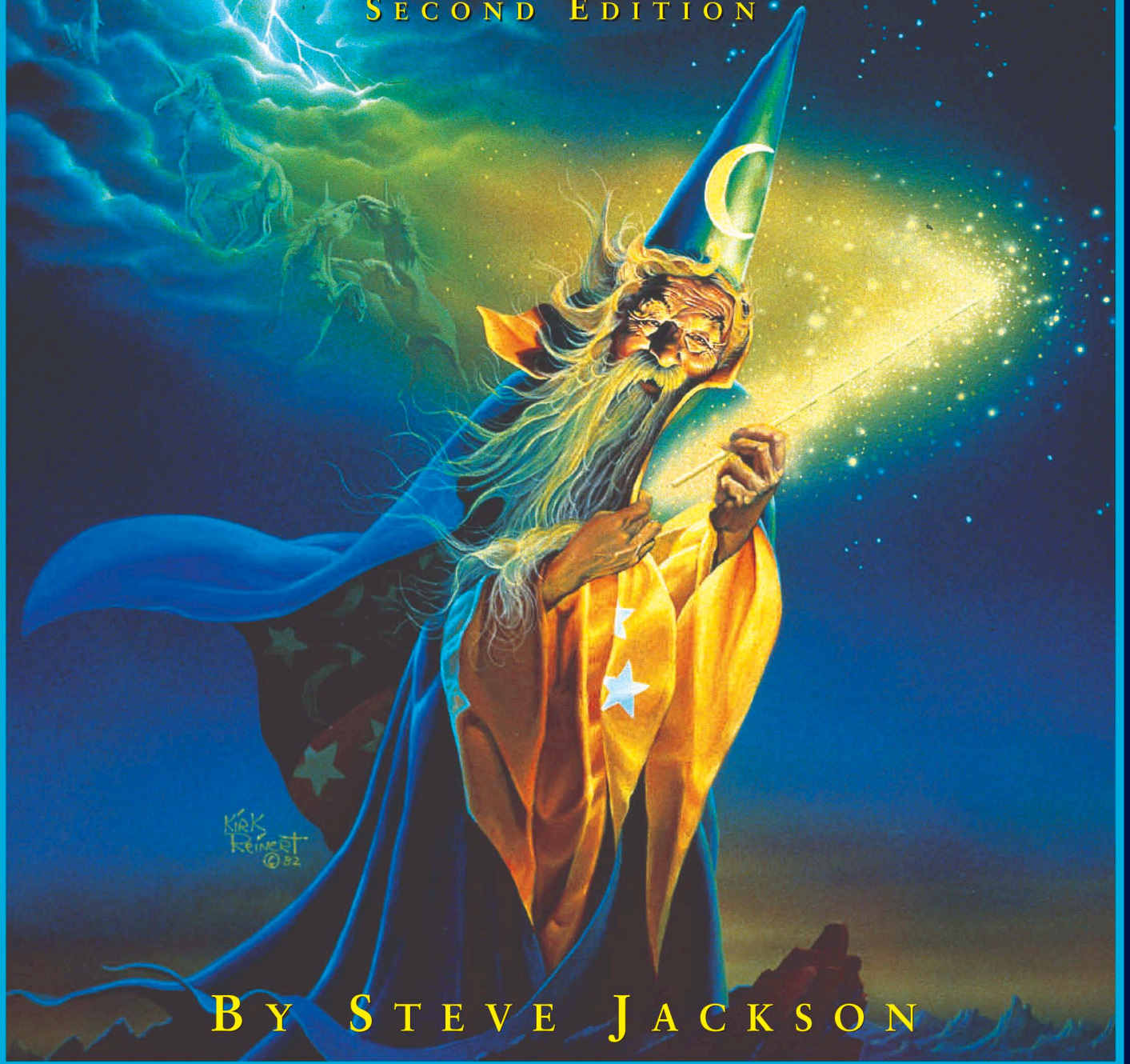


G U R P S[®]

MAGIC

A Tome of Mystic Secrets for Fantasy Roleplaying

SECOND EDITION



BY STEVE JACKSON

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

THE WORLD OF MAGIC

Sorcery, Thaumaturgy, The Black Art, Necromancy, Alchemy, or the Great Art. By any name, arcane knowledge brings great power to its possessor . . . for good or for evil. This book is the complete guide to magic for the *Generic Universal RolePlaying System*.

GURPS Magic presents a colorful, detailed magic system. But it's much more. It is designed for easy modification . . . for the GM who wants to create his own background, or set adventures in the world of his favorite fantasy author. And it's flexible. Players can create any sort of wizard character they choose, from eager apprentice to mad hermit, from saintly healer to sinister necromancer.

This book is completely compatible with the magic rules in the *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Grimoire*. It amplifies the material there, as well as adding more than 300 new spells! Also included are a complete system for improvisational magic, optional rules for "inherent" magic abilities, special advantages, and disadvantages for mages, and a system to let the GM create his own unique types of clerical magic.

If you're ready for a world of magic, it's in your hands . . .



STEVE JACKSON GAMES
www.sjgames.com



The *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*, is required to use this book in a *GURPS* campaign. The hundreds of magic spells and two new magic systems can be adapted by Game Masters to enrich any fantasy game.

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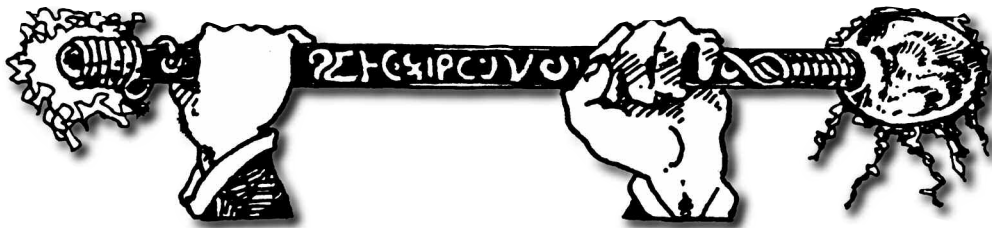
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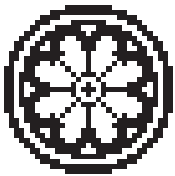
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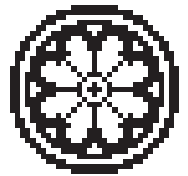
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STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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INTRODUCTION

THE very first roleplaying was fantasy roleplaying. No game system is complete without a good treatment of magic. That's why *GURPS Fantasy* was our very first *GURPS* worldbook. That book presented both the magic system and a brief look at the world of Yrth, a magical game background.

However, feedback from *GURPS* players indicated that they wanted an entire book devoted to magic, with the Yrth material moved and expanded to a book of its own. There were also a lot of requests that the *Basic Set* cover magic.

Your wish is our command. The third edition of the *GURPS Basic Set* includes a chapter on magic, and over 100 spells . . . but there's room for much more. And here it is. This is the book for GMs and players who are ready for a campaign with high-powered magic.

GURPS Magic contains nothing but magical source material; all the world-specific background has been removed. (The world of Yrth has its own book: the second edition of *GURPS Fantasy*.)

This book repeats the magic rules from the *Basic Set*, for two reasons. First, some buyers of this book will be using earlier *GURPS* editions, which did not include magic. And second, it seemed worthwhile to keep all the material together, to minimize page-flipping and make reference easier for both GMs and players. So this book includes all the rules and spells already presented . . . and many, many more.

That extra space has allowed us to add more than 100 new spells to the list from *Fantasy*, for a total of about 420. It's also given room for several additions, all leading to a more creative and "generic" approach to magic. These include:

More detail on alchemy, and over twice as many alchemical elixirs.

A new college of spells: Plant Magic.

Some optional elaborations, such as mana "type," clerical magic, and one-spell mages.

Advice for the creative GM of a magical campaign — and a Campaign Record to make it easy to start a new campaign or game-world. All too often, fantasy campaigns seem trite and predictable, trapped by their sources in Tolkien and Arthurian England. But magic and magical worlds can have infinite variety.

And, best of all, we have a whole new *system* of spellcasting, designed by Steffan O'Sullivan and Brett Slocum. This "improvisational" magic allows mages to improvise any spell . . . if they know the right Words! It can be used to augment the *Spell List*. The 25 magical Runes can be used to create magical items, or to replace the spell list entirely, making *all* magic and enchantment improvisational.

Finally, if this book isn't enough, we've got a brand new book of completely new spells. The book is called *GURPS Grimoire*, and it's available now. It includes new spells for every college in this book, and also introduces two new colleges: Tech Magic and Gate Magic.

The real purpose of *GURPS Magic* is to let the GM create exactly the type of magical campaign he prefers, within the framework of a detailed spell list and other rules.

Enjoy the book; may your triumphs be many and your backfires few.

— Steve Jackson

About *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Pyramid. Our bimonthly magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS*, as well as information on our other lines: *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures* and more. It also covers top releases from other companies — *Traveller*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us — but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

Illuminati Online. For those who have home computers, SJ Games has an online service with discussion areas for many games, including *GURPS*. Here's where we do a lot of our playtesting! It's up 24 hours per day at 512-448-8950, at up to 14.4K baud — or telnet to io.com. Give us a call! We also have conferences on CompuServe, GEnie, and America Online.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set* (Third Edition). Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. A "BY" page reference means a page in the *GURPS Bestiary, Second Edition*.

Because some of the material in this book repeats rules in the *Basic Set*, some page references are given to *both* books (for instance, p. 92/B12). This is to make it easier to reference between the two books.

Since this book was released after the *Third Edition*, it corrects a few errata, and makes a few changes (in particular, stats for missile spells are slightly different, since this book adds the Spell Throwing skill). Where the two books differ, follow this one.

1

PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC

Magical Terms

- abort:** To stop the casting of a spell before its completion.
- backfire:** A critical miss when a spell is cast. Same as “fumble.”
- base skill:** The level of spell skill given by spending one point (the minimum) for an ordinary (Mental/Hard) spell, or two points for a M/VH spell.
- basic spell:** A spell with no other spells as prerequisites.
- blocking spell:** A spell which can be cast as an instant defense — i.e., a block — to some sort of attack.
- cancel:** To end your own spell before it would normally be over.
- caster:** The person casting a spell.
- effective skill:** Your true skill, plus or minus any bonuses or penalties (usually penalties) you have for range, circumstances, etc. A caster rolls against effective skill.
- energy:** The “cost” to cast a spell. Energy cost may be paid in either ST points (fatigue) or HT points (hits). Lost energy of either kind is recovered as usual: resting for fatigue, healing for hits.
- grimoire:** A book of spells. Specifically, the list of spells available to a particular character, and their cost.
- mage:** Anyone with the advantage of Magical Aptitude.
- magery or magical aptitude:** Two words for the same thing. Magery is the advantage of being “in tune” with the powers of magic; see p. 103/B21.
- maintain:** To continue a spell after it would normally end. Costs more energy, unless the caster has high skill.
- mana:** The energy of magic. Different areas (or worlds) have different levels of mana. See sidebar, p. 6/B147. Different types of mana are possible as well — see p. 94.
- mastered spell:** A spell that is known at a high enough skill to eliminate the need to concentrate to cast it.
- missile spell:** A spell which is first cast, and then “thrown” at the subject. Requires two rolls: a skill roll to cast, a DX or Spell Throwing roll to hit.
- prerequisite:** A requirement for learning a spell.
- resisted:** Any spell that must overcome the “power” of its subject before it works.
- subject:** The person, place, or thing on which a spell is cast.
- wizard:** Any user of magic, whether he is a mage or not.

MAGIC is a powerful and fickle force, controlled through procedures called *spells*. Magic draws upon an energy called *mana* — but, though we have a name for it, we do not know what it is. Even the most powerful wizards do not fully understand magic . . . or, if they do, they haven’t told *us* about it.

There are hundreds of different magic spells, each with a different purpose. Skilled wizards can modify old spells or even invent new ones . . . but experimental magic is dangerous, and not for the beginner.

Certain people have an inborn ability to learn and use magic. This advantage is called Magical Aptitude (see p. 103/B21). Anyone with any degree of Magical Aptitude is called a *mage*. In many game worlds, only mages can use magic. In all game worlds, they are *better* with magic than are non-mages.

Some religions teach that magic is inherently evil, and that any magic-user is endangering his immortal soul. Certainly, badly-cast spells seem to attract the attention of *something* powerful and malicious — and occasionally a clumsy spellcaster is devoured by a genuine demon!

But it is also true that many good men know and use magic — and the saintliest of these seem to be immune to the worst magical “fumbles.”

No one really knows. The consensus is that magic, of itself, is neither good nor evil. It is the way a spell is used — the intent behind it — that determines whether magic is “white” or “black.” But there is no doubt that certain forms of magic — human sacrifices, for example — are inherently evil and are despised by all honest mages.

Learning Magic

Most spells can be learned by anyone (though remember: in some worlds they can only be *used* by mages). Some spells can only be learned by mages — being a mage is a *prerequisite* for the spell.

Each magic spell is considered a *skill*, and is learned the same way that any other skill is learned. But, as the saying goes, “one spell doth not a wizard make.” Many rogues and adventurers can command a few useful spells, but a true wizard will be the master of dozens.

Spells have no default level; you *must* be trained in a spell to use it. Spells are Mental/Hard or Mental/Very Hard skills. However, your level of Magical Aptitude *adds to your IQ* for the purpose of learning spells. Thus, if you have an IQ of 12 and 3 levels of Magical Aptitude, you learn spells as though you had an IQ of 15. No one may have a Magical Aptitude of more than 3.

Important note: To learn a spell, you must put a *minimum* of one point in it — even if you are brilliant and blessed with magical aptitude. Any less study, and the spell simply doesn’t “take.” Also, note that Eidetic Memory is not too useful for spells; it gives you rote memory, but not true understanding. First-level Eidetic Memory gives a +1 to IQ for learning spells; second-level gives a +2. It gives no other bonuses.

Finding a Teacher

In a world in which magic is common, it will probably be taught just like any other trade. You may apprentice yourself to a wizard to learn his whole craft . . . or hire a magic instructor to teach you a few spells. Of course, there is always the possibility that magic will be a closely-guarded secret in your world. This can lead to interesting complications!

In a world where magic is rare (or in which few believe in it), finding an instructor will be much harder. Most wizards will shroud themselves in secrecy — or belong to mysterious, far-off cults — or prove to be fakes!

Like any other intellectual skill, magic can be learned without a teacher. You must be Literate and have access to good textbooks. Even with the *best* textbooks, an unsupervised student learns at half speed (each spell costs twice as many character points). And most spell-books — *especially* those found in non-magical worlds — are complex and deliberately obscure!

In campaigns set in “normal” fantasy worlds, where magic is common, it is suggested that the GM ignore the question of supervision *unless and until* players create characters with skill levels which seem unreasonably high for the campaign. At that point, the GM can require that characters either pay double points for further improvement, or find someone of superior skill to teach them. Such skilled teachers may be hard to find and costly to hire!

Prerequisites

All spells except the most basic have *prerequisites* — requirements that must be met before the spell can be learned.

If the prerequisite is another spell, it must be known at skill level 12 or better before the higher spell may be studied. Thus, a magic-user must learn simple spells first, and proceed to advanced ones as his knowledge increases.

“Magery” is a prerequisite for most of the stronger spells. This means that no one but a mage — a person with Magical Aptitude — can learn them. “Magery 2” means that *two* levels of Magical Aptitude are required to learn the spell, and so on. Some spells also require a minimum basic DX or IQ, or a particular advantage.

Grimoires

When you play a character who knows a number of spells, you may wish to make a “grimoire” for that character. A grimoire is a book of spells. Your character’s grimoire is a list of the spells he knows, his skill with each, the energy each costs to cast, and other important details about them. This will save a lot of reference time in play — because, with over 420 spells, not even the most dedicated player will know the details for every one!

A “grimoire form” is located on p. 128. You may wish to copy it onto the back of each mage’s Character Sheet. This is for the *players’* convenience. A *character* has his spells memorized, and can leave his spellbooks at home.

Casting Spells

In order to cast a spell, you must *know* that spell, or possess an item that lets you use the spell (see p. 19/B153). Then you must spend one or more turns in *concentration*. At the beginning of the turn *after* your last turn of concentration, you must make your skill roll for that spell. You may then do something else on that turn (use a weapon, start concentrating again, etc.).

Casting a spell works just like any other use of a skill. The caster rolls three dice and compares the result with his “skill level” in that spell. If his roll is less than or equal to his skill level, the spell works. If his roll is greater than his skill, the spell fails.



Hiring a Wizard

PCs may want to hire a wizard for a teacher. Or a group of adventurers may need a mercenary magician! Use the same procedure and pay rules as for any other hiring (see p. B194). The more common magic is in your world, the easier it will be to find any sort of wizard and the less you will have to pay him. See p. 106 for some basic job information.

However, it will be harder to find a wizard hiring if you want to specify the exact spells he must know, especially if you choose complex ones. To find a wizard with Create Fire, for instance, you would need to roll at only a -1, since this is a common spell. But to find a wizard who knew both Lesser Geas and Summon Spirit (two complex, unrelated spells) you would have to roll at a -8!

Specifying a high level of skill will also make a hiring harder to find: in general, -1 to the search roll for each skill level above 15 which you require.

Setting these penalties is up to the GM. Any mage gets a +1 when searching for another mage as hiring; connections with the local wizardly guilds or power structure could be good for a further +1 to +3 bonus.



6 ALCHEMY

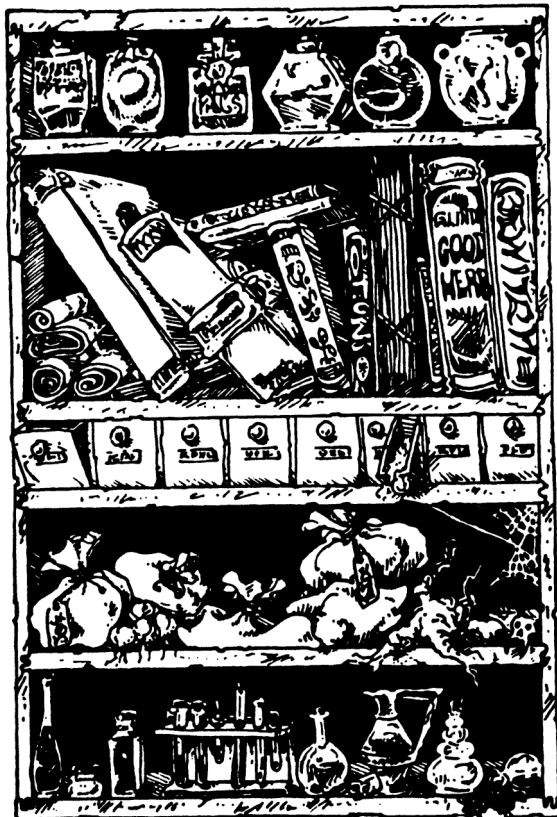
ALCHEMY is the science of magical transformations and transmutations. It is a mechanical process, using the mana inherent in certain things. Therefore, it can be studied and used by those without Magical Aptitude! Indeed, magical aptitude confers no benefit on those studying alchemy. It is treated like any other science — it just happens that its subject is magical.

The chief effort of most alchemists is the manufacture of substances having magical effects. The general name for such substances is “elixirs.”

Alchemy works normally in areas of normal and high mana. In low-mana areas, elixirs take twice as long to make, and work for only half as long, though those with permanent effect work normally. In areas of very high mana, elixirs take only half as long to make, but any failure is critical. And in no-mana areas, elixirs cannot be made or used.

The Alchemy Skill

Alchemy is a Mental/Very Hard skill; there is no default. Like magical spells, alchemy can be learned at only half-speed without a teacher. It cannot be learned in a no-mana area! Much of the skill has to do with experience in watching, hearing, and *feeling* the magical reactions proceed. A lone student can do this by experimentation — but only in an area where alchemy works!



Making Alchemical Items

An alchemist can make any elixir from the list on pp. 100-102. Each alchemist is *expert* in the creation of a number of elixirs equal to his Alchemy skill; any other elixir requires use of reference books and is created at a -2 to skill. The player of a PC alchemist should make a list of the elixirs his character is expert with; none of the elixirs have prerequisites other than Alchemy skill itself. When an alchemist increases his skill level, he may select one more elixir to “know,” choosing from those for which he has access to the formula.

Creation of each elixir requires expenditure of a certain amount of money for materials (see sidebar, p. 9), and a certain amount of time. The elixir must “cook” 24 hours a day during this time, with an alchemist in attendance for at least 8 hours daily. It does not have to be the *same* alchemist every day — but if more than one share the tasks, the roll is made by the one of *lowest* skill. The attending alchemist must pay full attention to his task; he cannot monitor two different batches at once!

Success and Failure: At the end of the required time, the alchemist tries one Alchemy skill roll. There is a skill penalty for some elixirs!

There is no particular “critical success” when making alchemical items; the process works, or it doesn’t. Likewise, critical failures are less dangerous. An ordinary failure means the materials must be thrown out. On a critical failure, roll again at -1 for each dose of elixir in the batch (so the second roll is at a minimum -1 penalty)! If the alchemist makes this second skill roll, he has averted disaster. If he fails, make a third roll to see what happens:

3-5: Everyone within one hundred yards suffers the effect of the elixir, or its reverse effect; 50% chance of each.

6-9: Everyone within ten yards suffers the effect of the elixir, or its reverse, as above.

10-12: Explosion destroys lab; alchemist has time to flee.

13-15: Explosion destroys lab; alchemist takes 3d damage.

16-18: Explosion destroys lab; alchemist takes 6d damage!

Quantity Made: The costs given are for one dose of the elixir. An alchemist can make a “batch” of several doses at once, just by using more materials. but his final skill roll is at -1 for every dose after the first, because large batches are harder to control.

Alchemical Laboratories

An alchemist’s effective skill depends on the equipment he has to work with, as follows:

Improvised equipment, which must include, at a minimum, some way of making fire, and a supply of clean containers: -1 to Alchemy skill (worse at GM’s discretion).

Home workshop: A table, \$1,000 worth of equipment. No modifier to skill.

8 CREATURES OF ENCHANTMENT

Demons

DEMONS are malign magical creatures, summoned from another plane by spells. Some people cite their existence as proof that magic is inherently evil.

Demons may be intentionally summoned by a mage (see p. 74). Such summoning is fundamentally evil; a demon will never do good (except that, since demons are hostile to their summoners, they sometimes do good by confounding evil mages). They can also appear as a result of magical backfires.

When a demon appears, it will take about five seconds to fully materialize. It starts with a foul smell, which becomes visible as a vapor and then coalesces into a solid body. The demon will then attack the caster of the spell (or anyone else it can reach) unless confined by a pentagram. Backfire demons don't appear in pentagrams unless the *caster* is in the pentagram. Accidentally summoned demons remain until destroyed.

Demons speak all tongues, and know many things. However, this does little good, because they lie whenever it suits them. They *automatically* resist any spell normally resisted by IQ.

Wounded demons heal normally. Demons dissolve into disgusting goo which then vaporizes when they reach -1 HT. Treat as Unliving (p. C1100).

Demons vary widely in abilities. Use the tables below (rolling once for each column), or pick stats at will. As for their appearance . . . anything goes! Most are vaguely manlike: 1-hex creatures with Speed of 5 to 7. Some are *different*. When creating demons, the GM should not be bound by believability or common sense.

| Roll | ST | DX | IQ | HT | PD/DR | Attacks |
|------|----|----|----|-------|-------|-----------------|
| 3 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 0/0 | ST crush |
| 4 | 5 | 10 | 7 | 12 | 0/0 | ST crush |
| 5 | 6 | 10 | 8 | 14 | 0/1 | ST crush |
| 6 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 15/16 | 1/2 | ST+1 crush |
| 7 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 15/18 | 1/2 | ST cut |
| 8 | 12 | 11 | 9 | 15/20 | 1/3 | ST cut |
| 9 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 15/22 | 1/3 | ST+1 cut |
| 10 | 16 | 12 | 10 | 15/24 | 2/4 | ST+1 cut |
| 11 | 18 | 13 | 10 | 15/26 | 2/5 | ST+2 cut |
| 12 | 20 | 13 | 11 | 15/28 | 3/6 | ST crush/weapon |
| 13 | 22 | 13 | 12 | 15/30 | 3/6 | ST crush/weapon |
| 14 | 24 | 13 | 12 | 15/35 | 3/7 | ST cut/weapon |
| 15 | 26 | 14 | 13 | 15/40 | 4/8 | ST cut/weapons |
| 16 | 30 | 14 | 13 | 15/45 | 4/9 | ST cut/weapons |
| 17 | 35 | 15 | 14 | 15/50 | 5/10 | ST cut/weapons |
| 18 | 40 | 15 | 15 | 15/50 | 6/12 | ST cut/weapons |

For attack damage, *ST* indicates basic thrusting damage for that *ST*; *weapon* indicates the demon has (and knows how to use) a weapon at skill equal to *DX*; *weapons* indicates several different types — usually including some sort of ranged weapon.

| Roll | Special Ability |
|------|---|
| 3 | Beautiful, unearthly human shape. |
| 4 | Regenerates 1 HT per turn. |
| 5 | Blob; Speed 3, unaffected by weapons. |
| 6 | Skill 21 with all Fire spells. |
| 7 | 1d-3 added arms (at least 1); each has a weapon — and all can attack each turn at skill 16. |
| 8 | Invisible (see sidebar, p. 12). |
| 9 | Wings (flight Speed 16); roll again. |
| 10 | Wings (flight Speed 8); roll again. |
| 11 | Roll twice more. |
| 12 | Magic Resistance 4; roll again. |
| 13 | Madness spell, skill 25. |
| 14 | Anyone who sees it must make a Fright Check at -5! |
| 15 | Teleports (as spell, skill 21). |
| 16 | Magic Resistance 10. |
| 17 | Deathtouch spell, skill 21. |
| 18 | Invulnerable to physical attacks. |

Demons cannot harm a truly good or innocent person. Embarrass him, slaughter his friends, destroy his property . . . but not harm him. It is entirely up to the GM what constitutes “good,” but it is suggested that the definition be *strict*, and allow for no hypocrisy.

At the GM's option, truly holy folk (see pp. 94 and 103) may dispel a demon simply by a command, or by making an IQ roll.





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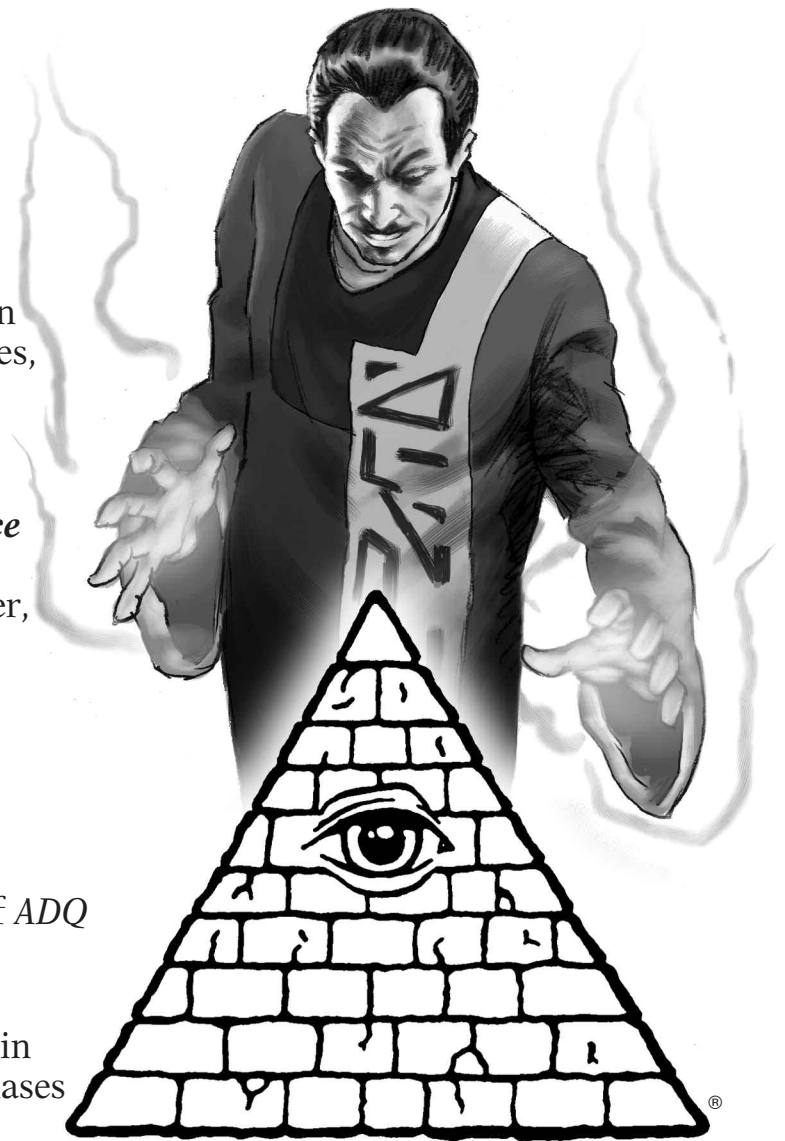
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