

## POTIONS, LOTIONS, AND OTHER COMMOTIONS

*Minor magical items for your village wizards and hedge witches to brew and craft*

Hedge wizards and village witches (introduced in the article *Hedge Wizardry and Village Wisdom* in this issue) are abundant in the world of ACKS, with every hamlet and village having its wise woman or cunning-man. While most of these casters will never exceed 2<sup>nd</sup> level, some will reach 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or even 9<sup>th</sup> level and become capable of creating potions, scrolls, and permanent magic items. Since hedge wizards and village witches have access to the minor magical effects known as **cantrips**, some of their magic items will almost certainly make use of these minor magics. In this article we present rules for enchanting cantrips into items, as well as offer 15 new cantrip items inspired by folk magic and faerie tales.

### ENCHANTING CANTRIPS INTO ITEMS

Cantrips can be enchanted into potions, scrolls, and permanent magic items following the rules for magical research in ACKS. For purposes of magical research, cantrips count as 1/5 level spells (e.g. they require 20% as much time and money as 1<sup>st</sup> level spells). The costs in time and gold for various types of cantrip items are summarized on the Cantrip Item Creation table, below.

Cantrip Item Creation			
	Item Type	Base Cost	Time
	One Use Effect	100gp	1.5 days
	Charged Effect	100gp x charges	0.4 days x charges
	Permanent Effect, Unlimited Use	5,000gp	20 days
	Permanent Effect, Use 1/turn	3,300gp	16 days
	Permanent Effect, Use 1/3 turns	2,500gp	14 days
	Permanent Effect, Use 1/hour	1,600gp	12 days
	Permanent Effect, Use 3/day	1,200gp	10 days
	Permanent Effect, Use 1/day	1,000gp	8 days
	Permanent Effect, Use 1/week	600gp	6 days

### CANTRIP SPECIAL COMPONENTS

When a spellcaster creates potions, scrolls, and permanent magic items, the enchantment process always requires special components. Items enchanted with spells of 1<sup>st</sup> level or higher typically require special components extracted from slain monsters; items enchanted with cantrips require more readily-available special components, such as animal byproducts, herbs, oils, spices, powdered rocks, and cut woods.

Special components for cantrip items can be purchased at a market or gathered from the wilderness by a naturalist. A character with Naturalism proficiency can gather 15gp worth of special components each week with a proficiency throw of 11+.

### CANTRIP QUACKSALVES

Quacksalves are a type of one-use magic item similar to potions but of much lower cost and far more dubious efficacy. They are typically brewed by mountebanks (introduced in the article *Of Mischief and Mountebanks* in this issue), who specialize in them. However, any character with either Hedge Wizardry or Village Witchcraft proficiency and at least one rank Alchemy proficiency can brew cantrip quacksalves based on the following items: **herbal tonics**, **moon teas**, **mother's teas**, and **oils of relaxing respite**.

Brewing a cantrip quacksalve costs 10gp and requires 1 hour. After the money and time is invested, the Judge makes a magical research throw on behalf of the brewer against the target value for their class. The brewer gains a +2 bonus on the throw per rank of Alchemy. Regardless of the target value, a natural roll of 1-3 always fails. All the usual rules for magic research and quacksalves (INT bonus, brewing equipment, etc.) apply.

If the proficiency throw is successful, a quacksalve potion of the desired type has been successfully created. It functions exactly like the normal item of the same type. If the proficiency throw fails with a natural 1, a **counter-potion** has been created. The counter-potion somehow does the opposite of the potion's intended effect. (A **counter-potion herbal tonic** might cause the character to develop a minor disease; a **counter-potion moon tea** might make the drinker more fertile.) If the proficiency throw fails with a natural 2-3, or by missing the target value by at least 4, then a **potion of delusion** is created. On any other result, the quacksalve is completely ineffectual.

EXAMPLE: Hanna fears she may have gotten pregnant by a rogue who will not support her. She visits Helga, the village witch, to ask for **moon tea**, with old family jewelry worth 10gp to pay. Actual **moon tea** costs 100gp to brew, but **quacksalve moon tea** can be brewed for just 10gp, so that's what Helga brews. Helga is a 3<sup>rd</sup> level antiquarian witch with one rank of Alchemy. Based on her level, the target value for her magic research throw is 14+, reduced to 12+ because she has one rank of Alchemy. The Judge secretly rolls 1d20 and the result is a 7.

Helga has unknowingly brewed a **potion of delusion**. Later, when Hanna drinks what she think is **moon tea**, she is deluded into thinking she has taken care of her problem. Only when she begins to show does she realizes her mistake...

### CANTRIP ITEMS

**Candle of Comfort:** The **candle of comfort** appears as a foul-scented taper of waxy white fat. If lit, the **candle** burns swiftly, lasting only 6 rounds (60 seconds) if not snuffed out. Each round that the **candle** burns, it deals 1d8 points of damage to the lowest-HD swarm of creatures within 30'. Swarms may be made of ordinary bats, ordinary rats, and ordinary insects, but not any kind of giant animals or giant vermin. The affected swarm does not receive a saving throw. **Candles of comfort** gained their name from their use in eliminating bedbug infestations in the chambers of the nobility. (effect: **exterminate pest** cantrip; base cost: 600gp; base time: 9 days)

**Charcoal of Phantasms:** This magical briquette smells of peat and exotic woods. If burned in a brazier, the **charcoal of phantasms** creates a visual illusion of an object, creature, or area to appear in the flickering flames. The image is 1' x 1' x 1' in size and not accompanied by any sound, smell, texture, or temperature. If the character who set the **charcoal** alight is aware of its properties, he can control the image that appears in the fire through concentration. If the character is not aware of its properties, or does not concentrate on the illusion, the illusion will be random (Judge's discretion). The illusion persists so long as its is concentrated upon, or up to 1 turn (10 minutes) if no one concentrates on it. (effect: **phantasm of fire** cantrip; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

**Cursed Doll:** The **cursed doll** resembles an ordinary children's toy, albeit with a slightly sinister mien. Over time, a **cursed doll** brings misery and misfortune to any household it resides in. A **cursed doll** could be given as gift to an unsuspecting child in the household, or placed within a household by means of stealth. In any case, once it has taken up residence in the household, its magic begins to take hold. Each day, whoever spent the most time near the **cursed doll** must make a saving throw versus Spells. If the save succeeds, the character resists the effect. If the save fails, the character suffers an **affliction**. The Judge should select one of the following effects:

Bad body odor, unsightly skin condition, or similar blemish causing a -1 penalty on reaction rolls

Chronic body aches and pains causing a -1 penalty to initiative rolls

Misfortune at work causing a 5% decrease in the character's daily construction rate with one proficiency

The **affliction** thus bestowed lasts indefinitely and cannot be **dispelled**, and there is no limit to the number of different **afflictions** a character may receive from the **cursed doll**. Any given **affliction** can be removed with a **remove affliction** or **remove curse** spell but the only way to remove them all at once and restore good fortune to the household is to destroy the **doll**. (effect: **affliction** cantrip; base cost: 1,000gp; base time: 8 days)

**Dowsing rod (A):** A **dowsing rod** is constructed from a forked branch cut from a witch hazel tree. An arcane caster in possession of a **dowsing rod** can, by concentrating for one turn, determine the direction and distance of the most valuable treasure within 120'. The **dowsing rod** will magically rotate to point in the appropriate direction and will shake to indicate proximity, with a more violent tremor indicating a more proximate treasure. After 9 rounds (90 seconds) the **rod** will cease its movement. In order to be detected, the total value of the treasure must meet or exceed a value of 50gp. No physical barrier will impede detection, with the exception of magical wards or lead. A **dowsing rod** will only function in the hands of an arcane caster, and only once per week, typically being limited to a day associated with the god of fortune or wealth. (effect: **find wealth** cantrip; base cost: 600gp; base time: 6 days)

**Explorer's Mess Kit:** The **explorer's mess kit** resembles an ordinary collection of portable eating and cooking utensils designed for troops on extended military campaigns, including a mess tin, cooking pot, skewer, and cutting knife. Close inspection of the utensils shows that the mess tin bears the embossed symbol of Naurivus, god of travelers, and that the utensils have no tarnish or wear. When used to consume a meal, the **explorer's mess kit** will render the food pure and suitable for eating, regardless of how spoiled, rotten, poisonous, or otherwise contaminated it might have been. The magic of the **explorer's mess kit** can be used on three meals per day. (effect: **purify meal** cantrip; base cost: 1,200gp; base time: 10 days)

**Healing Salve:** The **healing salve** is an enchanted liniment based on camphor, wormwood, and oil. If rubbed on a wound, it heals the creature of 1 point of damage. Any given creature can only benefit from the **healing salve** once per day. (effect: **cure minor wounds** cantrip; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

**Herbal Tonic:** The **herbal tonic** resembles an amber-hued tea or infusion and smells of garlic, ginger, honey, and vinegar. If drunk an **herbal tonic** aids the drinker in recovering from minor acute illnesses such as the common cold. The drinker immediately makes a saving throw versus Death. If the save succeeds, the drinker will recover in half the usual time. If the save fails, the drinker receives no benefit. A character can only drink one **herbal tonic** per day; additional **tonics** cause stomach distress and cannot aid recovery. (effect: **remedy** cantrip; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

**Lyre of the Lullaby:** The **lyre of the lullaby** appears as a well-made music instrument with a tortoise shell chest painted with scenes of hearth and home. Each **lyre** has a particular lullaby that triggers its magical effects, analogous to the manner in which a command word triggers the effects of a wand. By strumming the **lyre** while singing the controlling lullaby, a character can cause a nearby living creature of less than 1 HD to fall into a peaceful, dreamless slumber. The target must be close enough to touch, although neither actual physical contact nor an attack throw is required. An unwilling target may make a saving throw v. Paralysis to resist the effect. The lyrist must remain stationary and concentrate on singing the lullaby and strumming the **lyre**. The effect ends when the lyrist stops singing and strumming or otherwise loses concentration. However, a willing subject of the effect will not necessarily wake up if he was otherwise tired or in need of rest. It is commonly used to help agitated, ill, or sleepless children get some rest, and wealthy patricians will almost certainly maintain one in their home for use by their child-tenders.

Sleeping creatures are helpless and can be killed in one round by unengaged opponents. Slapping or wounding awakens an affected creature, but normal noise does not. The **lyre** does not affect creatures that are already unconscious or undead, constructs, oozes, and other creatures that do not rest. The magical effects of the **lyre** can be used once ever 8 hours. It can be safely used as an ordinary music instrument at all other times. Using the **lyre** does not require Performance proficiency, but if the lyrist has one or more ranks in that proficiency, the target will suffer a -1 penalty per rank. (effect: **lullaby** cantrip; base cost: 1,200gp; base time: 10 days)

**Moon Tea:** This herbal tincture causes the creature that drinks it to immediately enter menses unless it succeeds on a saving throw versus Poison. The tea is used by women to end unwanted pregnancies. If the pregnancy had advanced to more than 50% of its term, the subject will have to suffer through a stillbirth in 2d6+7 days; otherwise, the pregnancy ends with the menstruation. If **moon tea** is drunk by a creature incapable of entering menses, the drinker begins bleeding from his nose and suffers 1 point of damage. (effect: **moon's call**; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

**Mother's Tea:** When drunk by a woman in labor, this herbal tincture eases the pain of childbirth. The drinker enjoys a mild analgesic-like effect until she either gives birth or dies. When drunk by anyone that is not giving birth, **mother's tee** causes the drinker to begin bleeding from his nose and suffer 1 point of damage. (effect:

**Nondescript Cloak:** The **nondescript cloak** is so ordinary-looking, so *overlookable*, that it should not even be mentioned by the Judge when he is first describing a room's furnishings, creature's inventory, or chest's contents. A successful search for secret doors, or a **detect magic** spell, will reveal the **cloak**, although even then it will appear unremarkable.

Should a character don the **nondescript cloak**, he becomes as easily overlooked as the **cloak** itself. Provided the wearer remains stationary, and does not speak, move, attack, or cast a spell, he is detected as if he were a secret door. The **overlookability** effect if the caster speaks, moves, attacks, or casts a spell, or if the caster is successfully attacked, but can be renewed again after one round if the wearer returns to stationary silence. (effect: **overlookability** cantrip; base cost: 5,000gp; base time: 20 days)

**Oil of Relaxing Respite:** The **oil of relaxing respite** has the pleasant aroma of the lavender herbs which form its primary reagent. A character who massages the **oil** onto his temples, his forehead, and the back of his neck will enjoy soothing and peaceful sleep that night, free of any pain and sorrow, and will heal an extra hit point in the coming day if he rests completely. The effect of the **oil** ends when the subject stops completely resting or takes any damage, or after one full day of rest. (effect: **relaxing respite** cantrip; base cost: 100gp; base time: 1 ½ days)

**Shillelagh of Stunning [A/D]:** The **shillelagh of stunning** appears as a blackthorn walking stick with a stout knot at its top. With the expenditure of one charge and a successful attack throw, the **shillelagh** can momentarily daze a target humanoid creature of up to 4+1 HD. The target may make a saving throw versus Paralysis to resist the effect. If the save fails, the creature spends its next action in a stupor, unable to take any action. It is not helpless, however, and can still defend itself if attacked. When found, a **shillelagh of stunning** will have 3d10 charges. Like other staves, its use is limited to arcane and divine casters. (effect: **daze** cantrip; base cost 100gp per charge; base time 0.4 days per charge)

**Warning Skull:** The **warning skull** resembles an ordinary human skull, but is in fact a magical device used by spellcasters to protect their demesnes. Each **warning skull** is enchanted with a trigger and an alarm. When the trigger occurs, the **skull** will issue its alarm.

A **warning skull**'s trigger can be any audible or visible event specified by its owner. Triggers can be as general or as detailed as desired. Triggers react to what appears to be the case. Disguises and illusions can fool them. Normal darkness does not defeat a visual trigger, but magical **darkness** or **invisibility** does. Silent movement or magical **silence** defeats audible triggers. Audible triggers can be keyed to general types of noises or to a specific noise or spoken word. Actions can serve as triggers if they are visible or audible. However, the **warning skull** cannot distinguish level, Hit Dice, or class except by external garb. The range limit of the trigger is 90', and regardless of range, the **skull** can respond only to visible or audible triggers and actions in line of sight or within hearing distance.

When the trigger occurs, the **warning skull** will issue its alarm. The alarm may consist of one sentence of up to three words long ("Warning! Intruder Alert!"), spoken any volume from a whisper to a yell, in any language known by the **skull**'s owner. The voice created by the **skull** resembles, but is not identical, to the owner's, and cannot be mistaken for an actual voice. The voice cannot use command words or activate magical effects. Once it begins, the alarm will be repeated each round, up to a maximum number of rounds equal to the caster's level. However, the alarm immediately ends if the **skull** is touched by an intelligent creature or attacked.

Once the **warning skull** has issued its alarm, it will fall dormant and not react again to its trigger until the following day. The **skull**'s trigger and alarm can be changed if desired by touching the **skull** and speaking its command phrase, once per day. (effect: **alarm** cantrip; base cost: 1,000gp; base time: 8 days)

**Woodwind of the Woodlands:** The **woodwind of the woodlands** appears as a reed pipe carved with pastoral images. If a character plays the **woodwind** while an animal of 1 HD or less is nearby (10'), the animal must make a saving throw versus Spells. If more than one animal is nearby, the closest one must save. If the animal's save succeeds, it resists the **woodwind**'s magic. If the animal's save fails, the animal falls under the pipe-player's sway and thereafter does whatever he commands. The pipe-player's commands are magically conveyed to the animal by the music of the pipe.

The effect of the **woodwind of the woodlands** lasts for as long as the pipe-player continues to play it. Every turn (10 minutes), however, the animal receives another saving throw. When freed of the woodwind's enchantment, the animal will immediately seek to return to its original location; its disposition towards the pipe-player will depend on how it was treated when ensorcelled. Once the pipe-player stops playing the **woodwind** or the animal succeeds on a saving throw, the **woodwind** cannot be used for another turn (10 minutes).

Using the **woodwind** does not require Performance proficiency, but if the pipe-player has one or more ranks in that proficiency, the target will suffer a -1 penalty per rank. (effect: **call woodland creature** cantrip; base cost: 3,300gp; base time: 16 days)