**HJ30** 

# HACKMASTER



# HackJournal Issue #30 Summer - 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 primer on spicing up clerical magic
- New quirks, magic items and spells for HackMaster Basic
- Information on mounts, movement and riding gear
- Clerics of Mangrus
- A new map of the Splendorous Deep complex
- 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 role-playing game. Each issue's game content contains GM's option material for the HackMaster game system.

HackJournal is published quarterly. HMA members may submit articles for publication in future issues of HackJournal by posting on the official Submission and Editing forum of the Kenzer and Company website. Electronic and e-mail submissions are required as we cannot take responsibility for the care and feeding of any postal workers or transcriptionists.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

#### HackMaster Basic - and you!

Welcome! As you probably know, this is the first edition of the *HackJournal* published since the release of our new *HackMaster Basic* rulebook. We hope to have many future articles that utilize the new edition to its fullest, but the HackMaster Association is still a volunteer-driven organization, and we need your submissions to fill these pages!

You can find full details on submitting an article to *HackJournal* simply by going to our discussion forums at *http://www.kenzerco.com*, scrolling down to the *HackJournal* forum and opening the thread entitled "*HackJournal submission FAQ and release form.*" You can read the Frequently Asked Questions there and download the release form all at the same time.

New articles submitted should be written for the current *HackMaster Basic* rules. Sample ideas could include new spells, new monsters, short adventures or lists of adventure hooks, new equipment, new magic items, playing a certain class, how to be a better GameMaster (or player) and just about anything you can think of.

As well as the warm, fuzzy feeling of seeing your name in print, contributors receive points to their HMA account and a membership bonus, as follows:

Authors: minimum of 5 points and +1 month of HMA membership per article published in HackJournal. (Remember, we must have your signed release form to publish!)

**Editors:** minimum of 2 points and +1 week of HMA membership per article that is published in *HackJournal*. You must have contributed significantly to the editing process, of course, helping to make the article better. (Brief comments like "Looks good" are not typically worthy of a the bonus, unless you back those up with reasons why it's a good article and what fits well with the existing rules, etc.)

Articles approved by Kenzer and Company as official material will be labeled as such. Otherwise, consider the *HackJournal* articles to be unofficial homebrewed rules (*i.e.*, not for use in tournament play) to use as you see fit.

Your fellow fans and I are excited to see what you'll come up with!

- Mark Plemmons HMA Manager

This issue is planned to be the last one to include material for the previous HackMaster 4th edition rules. As noted above, future articles submitted should use the HackMaster Basic rules only.

# **BEHIND THE SHIELD:**

#### **Spicing Up Clerical Magic**

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

Clerical magic is, by definition, divine. In games, however, it often turns out to be rather mundane. Clerics are misused as magical Band-Aids, reduced to walking-talking vending machines for Hit Point reimbursement.

While it's true that clerics must stand up against such misuse, clerical magic could, indeed, have more flair. In fact, clerical magic can quite easily be spiced up "audio-visually." After all, a cleric's spell is never a trifle. It comes from a divine source – from a deity. If you think about it, clerics actually work miracles!

As the servants of the gods, the clerics' spell use should be correspondingly meaningful. After all, every time a cleric casts a spell the divine power of his god manifests. This article works towards underscoring the divine nature of a cleric's spellcasting.

It follows that each casting is special and shows its source. For example, a cleric of a foul weather god (such as The Creator of Strife) may cast spells accompanied by a chaotic drumbeat and/or the distant rumble of thunder - stronger spells with the ear-splitting crash of nearby thunder. Likewise, a god of freedom (like The Guardian) may have clerical spells accompanied by the sound of snapping chains or the cry of an eagle (its favored animal).

In essence, every deity should be coupled with certain effects, called "manifestations." I suggest one to three manifestations distinct from other gods will suffice. The manifestations should be louder, more visible or otherwise more obvious as the spell level increases. Essentially, manifestations are like a jingle for the deity and his cleric. You just know you are in the presence of divine magic!

#### **Guidelines for Manifestations**

**1. Strength.** A manifestation is never as strong as an actual spell (not even something as minor as a mage's Apprentice level spell).

**2. Effect.** A manifestation should audibly or visually enhance the flair, but not make a spell more effective or emulate a spell effect. For instance, a crack of thunder is okay, but causing a character to go permanently deaf because of it is not.

**3. Duration.** Manifestations are usually brief and certainly don't alter anything permanently. A manifestation shouldn't last any longer than the spell duration.

**4. Hiding.** Manifestations can't be 'tuned out'! They are always there any time the clerical works a miracle of his deity, even if the cleric would prefer a little more discretion. Clerics work for their god; they are the god's standard bearers on Tellene and they don't sail under false colors. (Well, okay, this may not be valid for **all** the gods and clerics...)

#### **Lying Low and Other Deceptions**

Some gods, like those of imposters (like the Confuser of Ways forthcoming in *Advanced HackMaster*), might not manifest in an overt way. Instead, someone near the clerical spell effect might see an illusion; they observe some manifestation common to the cleric that the imposter is masquerading as.

Other gods, like those of thieves (such as the deity called Risk, also coming in *Advanced HackMaster*) may allow their clerics the tactical option to suppress the manifestation by a corresponding prayer taking a few seconds (1d4, for instance) to utter.

A GM might also allow a cleric to consciously suppress the manifestation of a spell even without spending the possibly precious seconds to utter his prayer. Such effort should come at a cost and risk, of course. This maneuver increases the casting time by +1 second per spell level and, no matter how high the cleric's Wisdom score is, give a chance of spell failure of 1% per spell level. Please note that the god might dislike such sneaky behaviour, and the cleric quite possibly risks the wrath of his god for not showing true colors.

#### **Lingering Effects**

Clerical manifestations are there to yield more flair to clerical casting, not to make the cleric's life much more difficult. Yet, within reason and the dictates of logic, clerical manifestations may in all fairness have further after effects.

For example, manifestations of a god of justice (like The True, closely tied to the color gold) might leave his clerics with a faint golden glow for a short time after casting a spell (say 10 to 20 seconds), causing a slight increase in wandering monsters. Creatures with acute eyesight may in fact get a bonus to detecting the cleric during that time. Of course, if the party is being smart, it's likely that they take some time to rest and recuperate after combat, so the cleric's manifestations aren't so dangerous. Sometimes, however, they might not have that luxury.

A cleric of a healing god (like Caregiver) surrounded by a blazing, rainbow-colored halo for a few seconds may actually ruin the night vision of a sniper having trained a crossbow bolt on him and consequently confound his aim, but the cleric may also be seen for dozens of yards at night. In addition, creatures attracted to bright lights and colorful displays (like zombies) may head in the cleric's direction.

The resounding crashing of thunder heard when a storm god's cleric casts a powerful spell may prove not to be too wonderful when the cleric is casting a spell before battle and in consequence ruins the ambush for the party. Conversely, the same sound alone may extend surprise for a sapient creature (say, +d3 seconds to his Starting Initiative) because he may look at the sky, expecting to see lightning or gathering storm clouds. Monsters with excellent hearing may also hear the sound from further away and make their way towards it...

The *Sample Manifestations* chart includes a few optional manifestations for the gods available in the *HackMaster Basic* rulebook as well as a few others. SPICING UP CLERICAL MAGIC

#### Sample Manifestations

Sample Mannestations		
The True	the resounding fall of a gavel	
	cleric bathed in a golden glow	
Caregiver	cleric bathed in a rainbow-colored aura	
	the smell of herbs	
	a brief feeling of well-being	
The Guardian	the opening of a metal door	
	the cry of an eagle	
	the breaking of chains	
The Overlord	rhythmic sounds of a chain gang marching	
The Current of Chuife	the crack of a whip the sound of thunder	
The Creator of Strife	a brief feeling of cold (or heat or dampness or	
	hunger, etc; whatever would make the person	
	most uncomfortable)	
	a chaotic, disturbing tune on a bagpipe,	
	cymbal, horn or drum	
Light, Sun	a sunburst flashes from the cleric	
5	cleric bathed in light for the spell duration	
Travel	the sound of footsteps	
	the flapping of sails	
	the creaking of wagon wheels	
Hunting	the sound of a hunting horn	
	the baying of hounds	
	an arrow thudding into wood	
War	the smell of blood and iron	
	sounds of a battle	
	a rallying trumpet fanfare	
Nature	the growling of a bear	
	the rustle of leaves in the wind	
Thievery, Gambling	the clatter of dice on a table	
	rogueish laughter	
Darkness	a shadow spied in the corner of the eye	
	the cry of a raven	
Death	the smell of dead, unburied flesh	
Disease Disease	the clanging of funeral bells	
Disease, Plague	the squeaking of rats the smell of rotten fruit	
Harvest, Fertility	the smell of freshly turned earth	
narvest, Fertility	the lowing of cattle or chirruping birds	
Fire	the cleric smells distinctly of brimstone	
i iic	smoke rises from the cleric in small plumes	
	fires break out near the cleric and die away	
	immediately, leaving no damage	
Money, Business	the jingling of coins is heard	
Love	sound of a blown kiss	
	girlish giggling	
	a feeling of light-heartedness	
Murder, Revenge	sudden goosebumps	
	a sensation of cold hands around the neck	
Frost	the air feels crisp and cold	
	metal feels cold to the touch	
	breath exhalations become visible briefly	
Lies, Deceit	the hiss of a snake	
	a brief feeling of distrust	
Vice, Sloth	a passing feeling of laziness	
	a momentary lustful urge	

Note that a manifestation's volume, brightness, and so forth should increase with the power (level) of the spell.

Enjoy!

# **BEYOND THE BOOK:**

#### New Quirks and Magic Weapons

During character creation, players may choose one of these quirks instead of rolling on the random quirks table in the HackMaster Basic rulebook (p29). However, since these quirks are significantly more debilitating, the player also receives the BPs (Building Points) listed herein.

#### **New Quirks**



HackFrenzy (35 BP): Characters afflicted with the HackFrenzy quirk (also known as berserk rage or simply berzerking) are susceptible to fits of violent rage. Such a character has a short fuse and can be pushed over the edge to violence with little provocation. This quirk manifests itself when (within any 10 second interval) the character suffers an amount of damage equal to greater than 20% percent of his current Hit Point total.

Whenever this happens, the character must immediately make a saving throw against HackFrenzy (roll d20p + level vs. d20p + damage sustained). Failure means he immediately slips into a HackFrenzy, an overwhelming desire to maim, destroy and slaughter. The character, who becomes red faced, frothing and foaming at the mouth, remains in a frenzied state until inflicting damage on others equivalent to 1d4p per level of experience.



For example, Hulka, a 5th level fighter, has 20 Hit Points left. While exploring a dungeon, a lowly goblin hits him for 6 points of damage, dropping his HP total to 14. Since 6 points is equal to 30% of his remaining HP, he must save vs. HackFrenzy (in this case a d20p+5 vs. a d20p+6).

He fails, and thus becomes HackFrenzied. Hulka's player now immediately rolls 5d4p (Hulka is 5th level, thus 1d4p per level becomes 5d4p) with a total result of 17. He must now inflict 17 points of damage before his rage subsides (this is a pure number rolled, so a heavily armored foe may not actually suffer the full 17).

If there are enemy targets within 50 feet (25 feet for races that move half as fast as humans, such as dwarves or halflings) he can choose to attack them. If, however, there are **no** enemy targets within 50 feet and the berzerking character still hasn't met his HackFrenzy quota, he must attack friendly targets.

A frenzied character can perform no other action except attacking in melee (and moving to engage the nearest target), as long as he has an unfulfilled quota. If he can find no creatures with potential Hit Points that he can hack, he immediately runs in a random direction in search of targets. (Note that choosing to attack a squirrel or some such other meta-game nonsense will result in appropriate cowardly Honor loss.)

A frenzied character is extremely difficult to kill or drop while running amok. He suffers only half damage from any damage suffered while frenzied. Once he's met his quota and the frenzy ends, however, he immediately suffers the full effect of any damage he sustained while in such a state (the other 50%, that is).

Thus, it is possible for a frenzied character to fight on even after death has claimed him, but not literally 'drop dead' until his Hackfrenzy subsides. If the character is unable to fulfill his damage quota and satiate his HackFrenzy, he eventually calms down (1d4p x 10 minutes) and collapses from exhaustion.

While under HackFrenzy, a character may not use any special combat moves (such as jab, fighting withdrawal, etc.), employ a shield, cast spells, use ranged weapons, execute a coup de grace or think rationally in any way.

Frenzied characters spend an additional d4p+1 seconds getting in another hack (or three) on a fallen foe (whether it's dead or not) unless there is another threatening foe engaged. A frenzied character continues attacking until the fallen opponent is dead and then spends d4p+1 additional seconds continuing to attack the corpse (damage rolled here does not count toward the quota).

Opponents can avail themselves of a near-perfect defense twice as often (*i.e.*, 18 or 19 on the die) against the frenzied character.

**HackLust (15 BP):** This quirk is similar to HackFrenzy except it is triggered not by suffering damage but by dealing it out. If a player rolls a critical hit, he must immediately roll a save vs. HackLust (roll d20p + level vs. d20p + damage delivered). Failure means he must press on the attack to inflict damage equal to the amount of damage he dealt with the critical hit. Like HackFrenzy, characters with HackLust will attack even friendly targets if their quota has not been met.

#### **New Magic Weapons**

**Berserking Sword:** This enchanted blade exhibits incredible workmanship, being both finely balanced and possessing a razor's edge. It imparts a +6 bonus to Attack and Defense and may damage creatures normally wounded only by silver weaponry. However, the Berserking Sword bears a curse... Whomever wields it gains both the HackFrenzy and HackLust quirks (but not the associated BPs).

These quirks only manifest themselves while the blade is used in melee combat. Its possessor is under no compulsion to use the sword and may sell, barter or otherwise rid himself of it should he wish. Even in battle, the user may freely sheath the weapon until such time as he falls victim to either HackFrenzy or HackLust.

While under the influence of these conditions, he is compelled to use the sword to its utmost potential until he slakes his battle rage. Only then (once capable of rational thought) may he reconsider the wisdom of utilizing the sword.

If a character already possesses one of these quirks, and wields this sword, he finds that his malady is doubled in effect (*i.e.*, he is compelled to inflict twice the amount of damage before his condition subsides).

**Javelin of Shield Piercing:** This unusual javelin is constructed of an ironwood shaft topped by a very compact head of facehardened steel. Such is the quality of the weapon and the enchantment laid upon it that it carries a bonus of +6 to Attack and Damage.

Unlike other missiles, these javelins may pierce shields and injure the defender. If a target successfully utilizes a shield to block a Javelin of Shield Piercing, full damage should nonetheless be computed. Subtract the normal damage reduction of the shield from the damage total and apply the remainder to the victim (subject to additional Damage Reduction from body armor).

For example, Joe Kalamar jogs towards a bugbear and looses a Javelin of Shield Piercing at it. He scores a hit, but the bugbear blocks it with its shield. Joe still computes damage by rolling the d12p damage die (getting a result of 8) and adding +6 for the weapon's bonus plus any specialization and Strength bonuses (here +1 and +2 respectively).

This total of 17 points of damage is reduced by the bugbear's large shield DR (6) and its body armor DR (also 6) meaning that it still suffers a 5 point wound (17-12=5).

The enchantment of a Javelin of Shield Piercing is good for one throw only. Once it impales a target, or even should it miss, it is irrevocably damaged and useless.

# **ADVANCED HACKMASTER:**

#### **Cleric Spells Preview**

Never before seen anywhere - two new cleric spells for *Advanced HackMaster*! (This information may change between now and the final publication date.)

# Sixth Level Spell

#### Laryngitis

Components:	V, S
Casting Time:	4 seconds
Range:	60 feet
Area of Effect:	One living creature
Duration:	30 minutes
Saving Throw:	Negates

This spell causes acute inflammation of the target's vocal cords, rendering speech (or growls, roars or similar vocalizations) impossible for 30 minutes. This lack of speech makes the victim incapable of casting spells with a verbal component, speaking command words, shouting for help or even retorting with a snappy comeback, for instance.

# Seventh Level Spell

#### Hush

Components:	V, S
Casting Time:	5 seconds
Range:	100 feet
Area of Effect:	30 foot radius
Duration:	5 minutes
Saving Throw:	See text

By pressing his index finger to his lips and uttering "Shhhh", the cleric invokes a sound-dampening sphere. It may be centered on a fixed point (no saving throw for those who enter or are already inside it) or on a sentient creature (in which case a saving throw is applicable, though it may be voluntarily forgone).

Within the sphere, all noise is muted to be whisper-quiet. Vocalizations required to invoke magic are permissible, as is communication (albeit requiring the subjects to shout in order for their whispers to be understood). Loud noises originating from within the sphere (such as the din of battle, alarm claxons or the barking of guard animals) do not alert anyone that something is amiss. All creatures within the effective radius of this spell roll an Initiative die one higher than normal, whether they are friendly or hostile.

# **GAMEMASTER'S WORKSHOP:**

#### **Player Character Death Certificate**

by Christopher Stogdill (HMA# ID-4-01339-03)

After a tournament, our HMA chapter would all gather around and the GM would tell the tale of his table. I gave out "death certificates" to the players and let them tell the story of their PC's death (all in good fun, of course). I've rarely had a player lose a character and not be a good sport about it.

The death certificate is suitable for framing and sized to be easily printed on standard printer paper or cardstock, though it looks especially nice on vellum-like resume paper. *(See page 17 for a copy of the certificate.)* 

#### **ALL THINGS MAGICAL:**

# Newly Discovered Magicks (Part IV) for HackMaster 4th edition

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

**Bow of Lightning, +1:** This bow does not require any arrows or other material objects to function. Whenever a Bow of Lightning is fired 'dry' as it were, a small bolt of lightning flashes out towards the target. If successfully struck, the target is dealt 1d6+1 points worth of electrical damage. If the target has an AC lower than 5 due to metallic armor, shields or helmet, then the damage dealt is 1d6+4 as the electricity arcs throughout the metal. (GPV = 17,200, EPV = 1400)

**Bow of Lightning, Arc-edition, +3:** A much bigger and heavier Bow of Lightning variant, this bow is accordingly much more powerful and dangerous. Operating in much the same way, fired 'dry', these bows generate a large build-up of electricity and fire it off, but in the general direction fired rather than at a specific target, making these bows much more random and destructive in nature. The 'shot' directs itself towards either the most metallic or the most magical field, 50% of either, determined upon each firing, within a 20 feet of the intended recipient, dealing 3d6+3 points of damage to the primary target.

Any creature or metallic object within 5 feet of the struck target has a chance (10% per point of AC) of having the powerful electric charge arc over to them, loosing some potency, but still dealing 2d6+1 points of damage. There can be up to three arcs from the initial strike before the electricity discharges itself. (GPV = 41,850, EPV = 3820)

**Cloak of Clouding:** These cloaks appear to constantly shimmer with a variety of darkened hues and shades, with the overall appearance of a nighttime sky riddled with clouds. The cloak is also lined with silver thread embedded with dark runes of dwarven origin. There are legends of these cloaks bearing the lighter blue image of a daytime sky, with a mixture of white and dark clouds passing across the surface of the material, but no confirmed sightings have been made. The dweomer of these

cloaks allows the wearer to pull forth dark clouds from the material and cast them around his person. Upon the utterance of the command phrase, up to 25 cubic squares of cloud may be dragged from the surface of the cloak and sent by the wearer in the direction of their choosing. This cloud obscures all targets within its area providing a to-hit modifier of -1 per round in which the wearer pulls forth substance from the cloak up to a maximum of -4 (complete obscurity). This penalty affects all targets within the area of effect.

The magic of the cloak can be utilised up to twice a day, and the cloud cover dissipates one hour after being created, if not dispelled before. It is rumoured that daytime versions of these cloaks exist, with the cloud cover imbued with a brightness from the sun to wreak havoc on night-dwelling creatures, but as of yet, no positive proof of the existence of these variants has come to light. (GPV = 8,000, EPV = 620)

**Ryndell's Portable Furniture Cubes:** Ryndell was a wellknown Itemist Magic-User many decades ago; and part of this fame was his love of both comfort and the odd relaxing game or two, no matter where he was. These 1-inch-diameter cubes are usually found in sets of 2-4, each metamorphosing into a different piece of furniture once the item is thrown onto the ground and the command word is spoken.

- 1 Chaise-Lounge with small buffet table and recliner
- 2 Wine rack (can store up to 22 bottles placed within)
- 3 Table of green felt, with sets of ivory dice and cards
- 4 Gazebo with hanging, cushioned seats for up to 6 people.
- 5 10' x 10' paved patio with a brick fireplace and metal spit
- 6 Ultra-comfy king-sized bed with pillows and lace curtains
- 7 Dart board with wooden stand and distance measurer
- 8 Wardrobe (found with d10 articles 2d20 years out of fashion)
- 9 Three-man tent w/sleeping bags, mosquito nets and spare blankets
- 10 Hammock with two supporting pillars

Each of Ryndell's Portable Furniture Cubes can be used up to 3 times per day, lasting as long as the owner desires and repeats the command word. None of these items count as MSD's, despite some being able to hold additional non-magical items. (GPV = 3200 each, EPV = 450 each)

Sniping Bow of Distance, +4: With the ends tipped with gold, an unbreakable bowstring of silver-thread rumoured to have been a whisker plucked from the beard of a venerable Silver Dragon, and fitted with an almost flat emerald at one side of the handle, this bow looks special from first glance. Using it allows the wielder to target foes at great distances with almost pinpoint accuracy. The user can target creatures or objects up to twice as far as a standard longbow's usual distance whilst still retaining its powerful bonus, but able to accurately target as far away as four times the standard range when the target is viewed through the emerald, which also magnifies the area viewed through it. The weapon's bonus does diminish at range though, with up to three times the distance reducing it to +3, and up to the maximum distance at a mere +2. Bonuses from other archer-related magic items are cumulative, making these rare bows very formidable weapons. (GPV = 42,000, EPV = 2700)

# THE KINGDOMS OF KALAMAR:

#### Introduction, Ancient History and Brandobia

As *HackMaster* players, many of you may not be too familiar with the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* setting - the background world of the *HackMaster Basic* RPG. As for *Garweeze Wurld/Aldrazar* (thesetting of the previous *HackMaster 4th edition*), well... it's gone. Destroyed. No more. The Hacknarok tournament event at GenCon 2009 took care of that. Without the resources to support two campaign worlds, the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* setting (with its detailed history and plethora of established material) is the logical choice.

Of course, not all things remain the same. Fans of *Garweeze Wurld* will still recognize many the things they loved brought into the forthcoming *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting sourcebooks. Grel, grevans, pixie-fairies, orc leagues, Frandor's Keep and more, they'll be there waiting for you... Even the Rotlord's new name (Mangrus; see p11 in this issue) came from the *Garweeze Wurld* setting...

In the meantime, with this article and those in the coming months, we hope to give you a taste of the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* setting. (Can't wait? You can also check out previous editions in our online store, many as easily downloadable PDFs.)

#### What are the Kingdoms of Kalamar?

The *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting is named after the great Kalamaran Empire, which once covered much of Tellene. Yet, time weighs heavily upon it; the empire's reach is not what it once was. Its provinces declare independence, hobgoblin kingdoms thrive and foreign empires expand, while the monsters of the land grow stronger than ever. Still, its influence is felt almost everywhere in Tellene.

The lands of Tellene are often referred to as the Sovereign Lands, and include the kingdoms of Brandobia, the Kalamaran Empire, the cities and city-states of Reanaaria Bay, the Isle of Svimohzia, the Wild Lands and the Young Kingdoms.

Whether you prefer to join raiding parties in the cold barbaric north, step on board a pirate ship in a cosmopolitan bay area, explore ancient cities and dark jungles on a tropical southern isle, wage front-line combat in a matriarchal society battling Imperial legions, journey deep into the harsh desert homes of savage creatures, slip through the shadowed streets of cities ruled by ancient (and modern) evils, or any locale you desire, you'll find it here.

#### **Ancient History**

Legends say that in distant days, the demi-humans inhabited the main continent of Tellene, and many of their great civilizations rose and fell over the millennia. However, most humans of that time were simple hunters and gatherers, living off the resources of the great Svimohzish Isle to the south. Then, over time, certain tribes occasionally migrated away from the Isle, crossing to the main continent by means of a land bridge that periodically rose from the waves.

For the demi-humans, the arrival of these new creatures mattered little, for the bounty of Tellene was such that it could support many races, and they often helped the new humans to prosper, teaching them the arts of agriculture, magic and such. Little did they know what the future would hold, and that the humans would thrive, establishing great kingdoms throughout the unsettled lands.

#### Brandobia

With few enemies to challenge them, save small groups of unorganized gnoles, a tribe of humans quickly settled the entire western coast of the mainland – to become known as Brandobia. Demi-humans were welcomed at first, for the elves taught the Brandobians the basics of magic, seamanship, shipbuilding, and age-old fighting tactics, while halflings taught them advanced farming techniques. Yet, eventually, human arrogance took over and those with 'true' Brandobian blood began to take power.

In time, the Brandobians began to persecute their demihuman neighbors and all foreigners, even non-Brandobian humans. The elves withdrew into the Lendelwood, but the Brandobians were not content with this and soon mounted an attack, though the elves easily defeated them. Humiliated, the Brandobian king insulted the elven ruler, but the elven king merely laughed, blessing the human with fruitful loins.

His queen soon gave birth to triplet boys who, as they matured, fought amongst themselves and eventually divided Brandobia into three separate kingdoms – Cosdol, Eldor and Mendarn. A fourth realm to the south, which outsiders often consider part of Brandobia, is known as Pel Brolenon.

**Cosdol:** When Brandobia divided, those skilled in magic (many of them elves) fled to this northern land. Today, Cosdol's population is a mostly peaceful collection of magicians and merchants. PCs traveling to Cosdol often seek out the powerful magic schools and guilds based in the capital city, Cosolen.

**Eldor:** Fiercely proud of its ancestry and racial heritage, Eldor is quite dangerous for foreigners. The country barely tolerates the mere presence of demi-humans, and even non-Eldoran humans must register at the gate of any Eldoran city or be hunted down and expelled. The Royal Marines are the heroes of the seaside city of Dalen, and player characters may occasionally need access to their extensive maps, records and charts.

PCs might pass through the city of Inolen in hopes of obtaining the Duke's most recent commission or covert mission against Pel Brolenon, or to explore a series of monster-ridden caves along the Edros Bay. The city of Unvolen offers adventure in the form of smuggling (or catching smugglers), battling (or helping) an elven attack, or making strides in the government.

Lathlanian, City of the Wood: This city of elves lies deep within Lendelwood, bordering the eastern edge of Eldor and a bit of Cosdol. Visitors are not usually welcome, and unexpected intruders are often killed as they enter the forest. Elven PCs

#### BRANDOBIA

may have family or friends here, or seek to help in the war with Eldor.

**Mendarn:** Though not as fanatical as Eldoran humans, in regards to racial purity, Mendarns frown upon interracial marriages and most races keep to their own kind. Large numbers of halflings farm, fish or pan for gold in the rivers, and dwarves mine the local hills and downs, trading the precious stones for food and textiles. A few elves are also in evidence.

PCs in hopes of learning their future may seek out Desgen the Timelord, in Ospolen, or find jobs protecting merchant caravans, ferrying messages between the city and the elves, or working to protect the elf sanctuary.

**Pel Brolenon:** Pel Brolenon (also known as "the Pel") was founded by a group of demihumans and sympathetic humans who fled Brandobia in fear for their 'racially impure' lives, just before Brandobia's civil war. Then, only a decade afterwards, a scouting party unwittingly broke a magical seal and released the Overlord, an evil deity imprisoned there by other gods millennia before.

The Overlord immediately made followers of the valley people, and the new Theocracy of Pel Brolenon has since become the single largest source of slaves (of every race and culture) on Tellene.

PCs may join with the slavers, or fight against them alongside the Brotherhood of the Broken Chain. They might also visit Vrendolen to seek out the Golden Alliance, search for a missing person taken captive, or pursue a stolen artifact taken by Bringers of the New Order.



# **BEYOND THE BOOK:**

#### Mounts and Movement

Horses (or ponies for dwarves and halflings) are desirable purchases in that they permit much speedier overland movement par-



ticularly in open country or along roads.

#### **Riding Horses**

Riding horses are typified by the hobby breed, a lightweight horse of about 13 to 14 hands (i.e., 52 to 56 inches). They are quick and agile beasts capable of traversing long distances. Like all horses, they exhibit a wide array of coat colors and distinctive markings. Horses must be trained to accept a saddle and rider by a trainer (*i.e.*, an individual with the Animal Training: Equine skill possessing at least Average mastery).

Horses may only be ridden by human or elven player characters although a halfling may accompany such a rider.

#### **Ponies**

Compared to horses, ponies have thicker manes, tails and overall coat, as well as proportionally shorter legs, wider barrels, heavier bone, thicker necks, and shorter heads with broader foreheads. Their temperaments are typically calmer than horses. Dwarves and halflings with the Riding: Equine skill may use ponies as mounts.

#### **Mounted Combat & Tactics**

The horses and ponies presented here possess neither the temperament nor training to serve as war steeds. Thus while outfitting these animals with barding and charging down opponents with a lance is beyond the capability of these mounts, the possibility of engaging in mounted combat is nonetheless real.

Riding horses and ponies are nervous animals and their natural reaction to danger is to flee. As such, whenever they

	Light Riding Horse	Pony
Initiative:	-2	0
Speed:	10	10
Reach:	Short	Short
Attack:	+2	0
Damage:	1d6p -2 (biting)	1d6p -4 (biting)
Special Attack:	none	none
Defense:	+3	+1
Damage Reduction:	2	2
Hit Points:	20+4d8	18+3d8
ToP Save:	5	6
Size:	Large	Large
Move:	30 feet/second	15 feet/second
EPV:	30	15

encounter a hostile creature they will attempt to run in the opposite direction - regardless of the wishes of their rider. An Average Riding skill check is required to rein in the mount.

Fighting from horseback requires a minimum of average mastery in riding (see the riding skill for full details). Note that melee penalties apply to both attacks and defense.

Intelligent opponents will usually target the rider with their attacks as he is the greater threat. Predatory animals or unintelligent monsters are, however, equally likely to attack the mount or the rider. A riding horse or pony stuck for damage will make a determined effort to flee - necessitating a Riding check (Very Difficult) to prevent this. A check must be made every time the animal is wounded.

Thrown From the Saddle. A character fighting on horseback is thrown from the saddle if he suffers a knockback or if his mount succumbs to a Threshold of Pain check. Should this occur, the rider suffers 1d3p damage and is delayed 10 seconds while he regains his bearings.

#### **Overland Movement**

Determining travel time is important when the players gain some experience and feel confident enough to explore the untamed wilderness. Below are some general movement rates applicable to various modes of travel.

#### Movement Rates (miles/day)

Movement Type	Open	<b>Terrain</b> Impeded	Restricted
Walking	20 m/day	10 m/day	5 m/day
Mounted (riding horse)	60 m/day	20 m/day	5 m/day
Mounted (pony)	30 m/day	15 m/day	5 m/day

*Open terrain* is any area with few impediments to travel. A flat prairie is the optimal example but rolling hills and old growth forests offer nearly equivalent ease of movement. Any terrain through which a road has been built offers similar speed of travel provided one remains roadbound.

Impeded terrain presents challenges that serve to slow travel. These may be the result of topography (steep hills, sandy deserts or frequent water crossings), flora (dense undergrowth typical of second growth forest) or weather (snow cover).

Restricted terrain is characterized by features that necessitate frequent backtracking or lengthy detours. Marshes, bogland and mountains are examples of this type of terrain.

Impassible terrain is left to the discretion of the GameMaster to determine. High mountain ranges or broad rivers are two such candidates for explorers without special skills to surmount these challenges.

# Costs for Mounts & Sundry Riding Gear

If your players wish to acquire mounts, they must contact a horse trader or seek out an animal trainer specializing in horses. The price listed assumes the animal is broken and saddle trained. Riding equipment is generally available from specialized leatherworkers catering to the equestrian market.

Mounts	Cost
Pony	30 sp
Riding Horse	75 sp
Tack & Harness	
Bit and Bridle	15 ср
Halter	1 ср
Horseshoes & shoeing*	1 sp
Saddle, riding	10 sp
Saddle bags, large	4 sp
Saddle bags, small	3 sp
Saddle blanket	2 cp

\* monthly expense - must be performed by a proficient farrier

#### **New Proficiency**

Farrier (3 BP): A farrier is a specialist in equine hoof care, including the trimming and balancing of a horse's hoof and the placing of shoes to the horse's foot.

*Prerequisite:* Character must have at least Average Mastery in the Blacksmithing/Metalworking skilll.



This article, along with the cleric and disease articles following, can also be found in the Knights of the Dinner Table magazine issue #153 (July 2009). It is reprinted here for any HackMaster Basic players who don't already receive Knights of the Dinner Table on a regular basis. Not all future HMb material from KoDT may be reprinted in HackJournal, though – so go get yer KoDT subscription, already!

# **BEYOND THE BOOK:**

#### **Clerics of Mangrus**

The *HackMaster Basic* design team is proud to present a new priesthood – clerics of Mangrus the Rotlord, god of disease.



#### Mangrus (aka The Rotlord)

#### Alignment: Chaotic Evil

#### Spheres of Influence: Disease, plague and vermin

Tenets of the Faith: The vile, revolting physical appearance of a Pestilent One is but a small glimpse of the evil that festers in his heart and mind. All clerics of Mangrus (also known as The Rodlord, Bringer of the Plague, Lord of the Putrid, Malignant One, King of Affliction, Prince of Carrion and Prince of Pestilence) are infected with a contagious, terminal disease.

Those not already afflicted with such a malady are secretly contaminated during initiation. Aside from the obvious intent of spreading pestilence in The Rotlord's name, this ceremony insures obedience and loyalty throughout the ranks of the church (the Conventicle of Affliction). Lower level clerics must show proper devotion to the Bringer of the Plague and do the bidding of their superiors or they will not be cured of their affliction when it becomes life-threatening.

Lycanthropy (wererat) is very common within higher ranks of the Conventicle of Affliction. It is rumored that the Malignant One grants lycanthropy only to loyal followers who have done some outstanding deed or service. To be so inflicted is considered a great honor among the Pestilent Ones, thus, a cleric of The Rotlord never willingly spreads this disease.

The Pestilent Ones travel the lands inflicting disease on others, typically in large cities where they inhabit the sewers. There, they set up foul altars and spread their maladies among rats and other sewer vermin. Ultimately, the Pestilent Ones strive to contaminate the city's water sources.

Clerics of the Lord of the Putrid avoid open confrontations, preferring to weaken their enemies by contaminating food and water supplies or spreading disease in the camp of their foes. When they do enter personal combat, they vastly favor attacks of a more cowardly nature, attacking from a distance or from ambush, with greatly superior numbers.

Clerics of the Bringer of the Plague are often people who have been shunned by society because of an already present malady. They seek out the priesthood for various reasons: in hopes of being cured, to find companionship among others with similar disorders or, most often, to exact some measure of revenge on those who have rejected them.

#### Preferred Weapon: none

Other Weapons Permitted: Any size Small or Medium hacking or piercing melee weapons; all ranged weapons are permitted

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**Armor Permitted:** Any (high-level priests, upon receiving the gift of lycanthropy, may only wear light armor)

**Holy Icon:** Piece of rotting flesh. (This is by its very nature impermanent and must be periodically replaced with new consecrated flesh stripped from a sacrifice.)

Bonus Skills: Botany, Literacy, Sneaking

Bonus Talent: Blind-Fighting

**Restrictions:** The Pestilent Ones, in part owing to their perpetual afflictions, utilize a d6 for hit points instead of a d8. Use of silver weapons and knowledge of the First Aid skill are anathema to their religious practices. Additionally, Mangrus strongly discourages use of healing spells. While not absolutely forbidden, their employment should be limited to critical situations such as the need to revitalize the cleric and his followers' fighting strength when facing an imminent threat.

**Powers:** Command Undead; Once per day, a cleric of the Rotlord may injure an individual with his merest touch. This causes damage equivalent to the cleric's level and is not ameliorated by natural or body armor; Pestilent Ones may cast Contagion (see hereafter) as a 4th level spell.

At greater levels of experience these clerics gain the ability to summon swarms of rats and eventually wererat lycanthropy.

#### About the Conventicle of Affliction

**Priesthood:** The Pestilent Ones

Symbol: A rotting, worm-eaten head

Colors: Drab yellow and sickly green

Place of Worship: Sewers, dunghills, dumps and refuse piles

Holy Days: Varies regionally

**Sacrifice:** Healthy individuals or animals every waning quarter moon (all moons). The sacrifice is typically tortured, then horribly disfigured and finally inflicted with a rotting disease and left to decompose in a cell.

**Raiment:** Clerics may wear any garb they like, but it must be dirty, rotting and covered with offal. Higher level clerics prefer drab yellow or sickly green colored robes.

**Deity's Appearance:** The Rotlord takes many forms, but he is always covered with festering sores, oozing boils and the like.

Advancement: Varies from cult to cult. The Pestilent Ones' main ceremony of advancement requires them to be cured of all diseases and then infected with at least one new one. Pestilent Ones have no rank designations among themselves, and their name varies from region to region and race to race. In all cults, however, a Pestilent One must possess, have survived or been cured of a number of different diseases equal to the rank he wishes to attain.

When Pestilent Ones advance within the Conventicle, their superiors cure them of their maladies and inflict them with new diseases. If a cleric does not advance fast enough or please his superiors, he will eventually die of his disease. Because of this situation, novice Pestilent Ones are among the most fanatical clerics found on Tellene.

Many of these ailments are outwardly visible, often causing large boils and open, oozing sores. The mere sight of some of the higher level Pestilent Ones inspires fear and revulsion.

**Sayings:** A plague on your household. – Feel my disease. – A pox on you and your kindred. – When the King of Affliction has smothered Tellene in pestilence, he will remember his flock and he will grant the Pestilent Ones the power to control all who would choose to live.

#### New Clerical Spell: Contagion

#### Contagion

Level	4 (exclusively for Clerics of Mangrus)
Components:	V, S, M
Casting Time:	5 seconds
Range:	Touch
Area of Effect:	Creature touched
Duration:	Instantaneous
Saving Throw:	Negates

This spell infects the victim with a magical disease, instantly causing pus-ridden boils to erupt all over his body. They are disfiguring, painful and irritating resulting in the temporary loss of 2 points of Strength, Dexterity and Looks. In addition, the target suffers a -2 Attack penalty (which may compound with a lessened Attack Bonus from reduced Dexterity). Because the disease is magical in origin, it is not communicable and affects only the target (though anyone viewing the character is not aware of this and will likely shun him for fear of catching this contagion). Recovery requires 1d3p continuous weeks of complete bed rest.

Note: This 4th level spell is available only for priests of The Rotlord.





# **BEYOND THE BOOK:**

#### DISEASES AND PLAGUE

Diseases and plagues are common in medieval realms, including the *Kingdoms of Kalamar* campaign setting. Poor sanitation, lack of



knowledge of the methods of disease transmission and simple ignorance all add up to very deadly factors.

Clerics of Mangrus exist for one purpose: to spread disease and the horrors that it causes as far and wide as possible. In so doing they have created and unleashed diseases that have extirpated whole tribes and cities. The diseases they create are usually remarkably resistant to natural and magical cures. Fortunately, the worst diseases tend to be rare, as they kill off the entire afflicted population and then die off when they have nowhere else to go. However, some more advanced diseases can lie dormant for decades (or even centuries) while waiting for a living victim. Thus, disease can strike anywhere at any time on Tellene.

#### Use of Diseases in Play

Perhaps because disease is something everyone can relate to (certainly more so than sorcery or dragons), there has always been a trend to mimic real-world pathology when incorporating contagions into an RPG. The results have usually been unworkably complex, with the net result being underutilization except in the case of those specific to a monster.

While such efforts have been admirable, they fall prey to a couple of key conceptual flaws. First is the fact that any RPG is by its very nature an abstraction. Player characters are never so detailed as would be required to perform a proper immunological study. The simple Constitution score does not reflect all the nuances (endocrinology, genetic susceptibility or resistance, etc) required to 'realistically' determine the progression of a disease. Attempting to do is comparable to precisely cutting a beam to a sixteenth of an inch tolerance with a woodsman's axe. The tools available don't support the job.

The second flaw is that the very concept of pathology is an anachronism. Disease agents, vectors of transmission and inoculations are completely unknown concepts. Cities did not have proper sanitation methods and even the use of soap for personal hygiene is centuries off. Much as with guns, the building blocks to implement these modern concepts are present but neither the knowledge nor the methodology (*i.e.*, Francis Bacon's concept of scientific inquiry that today we take for granted) is present.

Disease should therefore take on more folksy nomenclature ('the shakes' versus acute nervous system disorder). Their method of transmission cannot be systematically determined (and is undoubtedly wrongly ascribed by the afflicted population).

#### **Infection: Catching Diseases**

As a GameMaster, you should view disease as another tool in your kit with which to challenge your players. As such, it should be knowingly placed into a scenario with the same care you would position a monster or a poison needle trap. For example, a village the players may travel to could be noted as having the plague. If they enter the village they are exposed. It simply isn't necessary to denote that the plague is transmitted by flea bites, contaminated drinking water or an airborne retro-virus. It's an area effect and if they enter the area – they're affected.

Similarly, a specific well, offal pit or even an entire monster lair can be listed as containing 'disease X'. The presence of the disease becomes another challenge.

#### **Disease Statistics**

Diseases have two baseline characteristics: *communicability* and *severity*.

Communicability represents the ease with which a person exposed to the disease may become infected. Severity is a measure of how difficult it is for the victim to withstand the disease.

Upon exposure, a character (or the GM secretly on his behalf) rolls d20p and adds his CON score while the GM rolls a competing d20p adding the disease's communicability rating. If the GM's roll exceeds the player's, the PC contracts the disease.

If a disease is contracted, the PC must repeat this process with the GM rolling d20p + the disease's severity score. If the GM exceeds the PC's roll, that character suffers the full effect of the disease [denoted as Major Effect in the disease listing]. If the PC matches or exceeds the GM's roll, he still contracts the illness but only suffers the Minor Effect of the disease. These effects are listed under the specific disease listings.

Note that while the diseases mention stages in their effect, this is for illustrative purposes only.

#### **Death from Disease**

While some diseases are explicitly terminal, others may prove fatal only to the weak and elderly. If a disease causes a penalty to an ability score that lowers said score to zero, the victim dies from the illness.

#### **Treating Disease**

A PC with Advanced mastery in the First Aid skill can attend to a sick victim and permit a +1 bonus to his d20p roll versus severity. A master receives a +2 bonus instead.

Advanced HackMaster will introduce clerical magic that allows for supernatural treatment of diseases.

#### **Specific Diseases**

**Brain Fever** 

Communicability: 5

Severity: 6

*Where is the disease found?* Brain fever is a waterborne disease. Communicability should be checked if one drinks from a water source contaminated with the disease.

Minor Effect: A day after contracting the disease, the character develops a severe migraine. This causes the temporary loss of 1 point of Intelligence and Charisma, a -1 penalty to Attack and Defense rolls and a 10% handicap on all skill checks.

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The disease persists for 1d3p months during which time the symptoms become worse affecting mood, sleep patterns and concentration. The patient incurs an additional -1 penalty to Intelligence, Charisma, Attack and Defense (and 10% handicap to skill checks) per month.

Once the disease has run its course, ability scores and combat effectiveness are restored at a rate of 1 per week. Skill check penalties lessen at 10%/week.

**Major Effect:** As above, however the disease progresses until either Intelligence or Charisma reaches 0 and the victim dies. Victims of brain fever are often completely unable to work (because of skill check penalties) long before they die.

#### **Flesh Rot**

Communicability: 10

Severity: 8

*Where is the disease found?* Flesh rot is typically found in conditions of filth – particularly excrement. Communicability

should be checked if anyone searches filth or excrement containing the disease or physically handles items so coated.

**Minor Effect:** Beginning 3d4p hours after contracting flesh rot, the victims may notice a brownish discoloration where the contagion contacted the skin. This discoloration spreads over the next 24 hours until its effects become somewhat debilitating. The victim initially suffers -1 to both Dexterity and Looks.

The disease persists 1d3p weeks during which time an additional -1 penalty to Dexterity and Looks is applied per week. Once the disease has run its course, ability scores are regained at a rate of 1 point of Dexterity and Looks per week.

Full Effect: As above, however the disease persists 2d4p weeks.

# Plague (a.k.a. the Kiss of Mangrus) Communicability: 15

Severity: 9

Where is the disease found? Plague is found throughout Tellene.



#### DISEASES AND PLAGUE

It is one of the most potent diseases due to its high communicability and severity. It is most common in urban areas, especially large cities and towns. Communicability should be checked if entering a village or town in which the disease is present.

**Minor Effect:** Beginning 1d6p days after infection the victim manifests symptoms including fever and itching and blackened skin around the lymph nodes. This persists for 2d4p days after which the patient begins feeling tired and dizzy with heightened fever and swollen lymph nodes. (Characters suffer -1 to Strength and Intelligence and -5% to all skill rolls for the next 1d6p days). The fever then breaks and all penalties are removed.

Full Effect: As above, however the fever does not break. For the next d3p days, the victim is bedridden with symptoms including continued high fever and chills; severe, bloody cough; large, painful pus-filled buboes; blackened, infected lymph nodes and swollen glands. (Character disability increases to -3 Strength, Constitution and Intelligence. Spell casters cannot cast spells).

Following this stage, the symptoms become far more painful and ugly. (Character disability increases to -6 Strength, Constitution and Intelligence and -3 to Dexterity, Wisdom and Charisma. Spell casting is impossible.) Within 4d6p hours the patient expires.

#### **Rat Bite Fever**

Communicability: -2

Severity: 7

*Where is the disease found?* Certain rats are carriers of this disease. Check for communicability if bitten by a diseased rat.

Minor Effect: Within d3p hours, a rash appears around the wound. Within another hour, it spreads over the entire body. For the next 24+3d12p hours, the victim suffers -1 to Attack, Defense and damage rolls. The rash then begins to dissipate.

Major Effect: As above, however the rash grows more severe and irritating. For 3d3p days, the victim suffers -3 to Attack, Defense and damage rolls. The rash then begins to dissipate.



#### The Shakes

#### Communicability: 6

#### Severity: 7

Where is the disease found? The shakes is found on wild edible plants. Humans and other intelligent beings (dwarves, elves, halflings and the 'monster' races such as kobolds, goblins, orcs, hobgoblins, gnoles and bugbears) infected with the disease may also be carriers.

Check for communicability if one physically touches an infected victim or eats contaminated plants. Incidentally, affected plants appear no different from unaffected varieties though a Botany skill check (Difficult) reveals the disease's presence.

Minor Effect: Two days after contracting the disease, the character develops a twitch in a part of his body. This increases in severity for the next three days until muscle spasms are frequent.

The character is then assessed a -1 penalty to Dexterity. Symptoms persist for an additional1d4p weeks during which time the character is beset by muscular tremors (leading to this disease being called 'the shakes'). An additional -1 Dexterity penalty is added for each week the disease rages. Once it dissipates, lost Dexterity is restored at 1 point/day.

Major Effect: As above, but the disease persists for 2d4p weeks.

#### Wasting

#### Communicability: 0

Severity: 7

Where is the disease found? Wasting is a disease carried by humans and other intelligent beings (dwarves, elves, halflings and the 'monster' races such as kobolds, goblins, orcs, hobgoblins, gnoles and bugbears). Communicability should be checked if one has close contact with an infected victim (*e.g.*, normal speaking distance).

Minor Effect: A week after contracting the disease, the victim begins to feel tired and run down (and is penalized -1 to Strength and Constitution). The disease persists for 1d4p months during which time the patient gets progressively more lethargic, loses weight and his hair begins to fall out. Each month the victim loses 2.5% of his initial body weight and an additional point of Strength and Constitution.

Once the disease has run its course, ability scores are restored at a rate of 1 per week. Body mass also returns to normal at a rate of 1% per week, assuming the character receives an adequate diet and nutrition.

**Major Effect:** As above, however the disease progresses until either Strength or Constitution reaches 0 and the victim dies.

Note: Clerics of Mangrus are often afflicted with wasting.

# **DUNGEONS READY TO OCCUPY: Middle Commons Map**

by James Montney (HMA# MI-2-01486-03)



# **HackJournal Coupon Sheet**

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Automatically fail one skill check of any difficulty	
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