

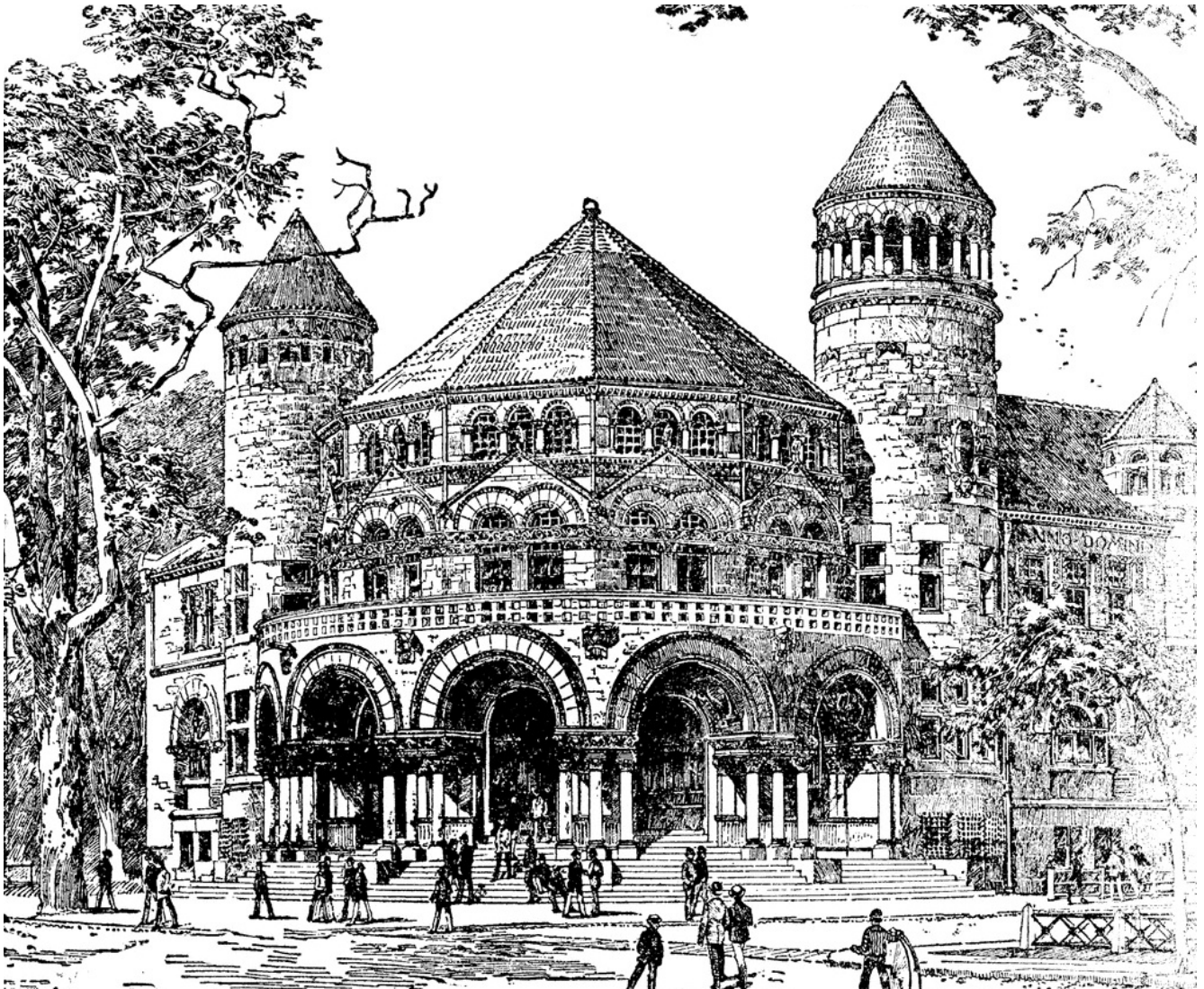


Board Enterprises proudly presents
Build Your Fantasy World in

Small Bites

Universities of Magic

aka All About Mages



INTRODUCTION

You know what? We're really happy you're here! Welcome to the latest edition of our **Small Bites** modules. This month our theme is Mages - Spell casters, wizards, magic users, whatever you call them - those guys! Since magic and spell casting is such an enormous subject, we thought we'd begin at the beginning - the magical universities. How do the universities work, and what do they turn out?

If you're new to **Small Bites**, then what is this? Most people are seeing it as an e-zine published monthly. In many ways, it is that, but it's not only that. This is a way for the folks at Board Enterprises to share everything we've put out this month with you, our supporting audience. We're going to pack it full, with stuff for players and for game masters, and for casual readers who are just looking to be entertained for a short while.

But far more importantly to us, **Small Bites** is about building a community - a virtual community of game masters, players, world builders and game designers. A group of people who will share ideas as we all seek to make our games better than they were. We really hope you enjoy this book, and join the community!



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FLETNERN WIKI

All of these posts are already out on the wiki and you can refer to them. We have gathered them here, because we think they are valuable in a group, and they all pertain to our theme for the month. All of them are also tagged as being in the categories of "Brinston" and "Universities" in case you are more comfortable using the wiki instead of this edition.

Aurora Fantastic

Site

Aurora Fantastic is a magical university in Brinston. Aurora originally specialized in illusionary magics, before it began catering to business students. Aurora still has extensive illusionary and spell singing classes, but they also hold business related classes. Aurora is a fine institution, but it has a reputation for having too much fun, which has lowered its reputation among the citizens of Brinston.

Aurora Fantastic will commonly be abbreviated as AF in this edition.

Brinston, City of

City

Brinston is located at the delta of the Elhebar River (Elhebenea in Elven) into the Barrier Ocean. As such, Brinston controls both the river trade and most of the sea trade along the entire coast. Brinston is an old city. Since its founding the river has been repeatedly dredged, allowing for the city to harbor its massive navy safely among the delta's islands. The merchant trade is handled out of "Port of Brinston" a small community 12 miles south of the actual city.

Brinston is ruled by a Prince-Governor chosen from one of the noble families. While the noble families practice a variety of elitist activities, these families remain in full control of the largest merchant houses and wineries in the region.

The majority of the people of Brinston are Marils, but as with any cosmopolitan community, foreigners of all types can be found in the city. Despite the strong alliance between Brinston and her northern elven neighbors, there are only small elven communities within the city walls.

Brinston Magical Universities

Schools

In Brinston there are three magical universities. While they compete for prestige, they are often seen as interchangeable. Most students pursue studies in magic just far enough to show that they can successfully cast a spell. Immediately after casting that spell, they switch to their chosen field. The business communities in Brinston

feel that anyone with the ability to master magic has the brain power to handle the business world. For this reason, they all hire these “mages”. Few of these people can actually cast a spell, but they have a certificate showing they are a mage.

The universities do in fact teach mages, but these are much smaller groups of students. Most university trained mages find themselves within the Brinston Navy either as offensive spell casters or as weather manipulators intended to enhance the speed and maneuverability of the ships.

Brinston Magical Universities utilize a star quality style of attracting certain professors. While overworked “scholars” teach everything, certain “famous” mages teach one or two classes a week and get huge salaries and wonderful libraries. Having these famous mages makes the university seem more prestigious, though the stars have little if any impact on the actual curriculum.

DesGyunate, Phul **Individual**

Phul DesGyunate is credited as being the most powerful sorcerer alive. This claim is likely to be false, but there can be no question that he is indeed a very powerful spell caster. Unlike others aspiring to claim “most powerful sorcerer”, Phul is skilled in battle magics. Most of the other claimants tend to be dedicated to research and would never stand a chance against Phul in a battle or duel.

Phul lives in Brinston and has lived in or near the city his entire life. He was trained as a battle mage for the navy, but preferred to work with the army after having made a name and a reputation for himself. As such, he met Prince Governor Jasper, and the two formed a strong bond. They refer to each other as “battle brothers”, but the details are not publicly known.

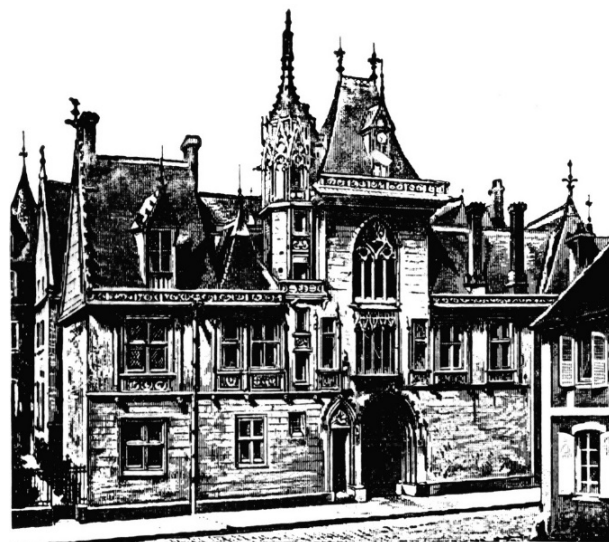
Phul DesGyunate is probably the most powerful combat sorcerer alive. He continues to live in Brinston and serves as an advisor to the Prince Governor, and occasional a teacher at the universities. Phul uses a flat wand talisman that he keeps hidden up his sleeve (made of oak, looks like a nine-inch ruler). Phul desires power for power’s sake. He does not feel it necessary to use his power, just possess it. Phul’s ambition to be the best is a compulsion for him. If he were to hear of another sorcerer who was “better” he would need to find a way to prove they were not.

Floer Phielend **Site**

The chief business school in Brinston is Floer Phielend. Named for its two founders, this school graduates the most business students and can be cheaper due to its large class sizes (though still very expensive). Despite these seeming drawbacks, it is one of the best for business, because it understands the contradiction of

mages as bookkeepers. Students at Floer Phielend are hurried through their magic classes and then encouraged to take more directly related business classes, such as bookkeeping, business management, selling, scholarship, and even leadership. Floer Phielend also stresses its ethics courses, though these are taught from an elitist, pro-Marilick racist standpoint. When Floer Phielend was originally founded, it was outside the walls of the city. This was done to prevent it from being “controlled” by the city government and allowing the mages to do as they pleased. Over the centuries, the expansion of the city has enveloped the school and the neighborhoods around it.

Floer Phielend will commonly be abbreviated as FP in this edition.



General Jasper **Individual**

The man known as General Jasper is actually Jasper Philippe Louredell, born a very minor nobleman in the wine country of Brinston. Attending military academies and eventually joining the army as a young officer, Jasper quickly made a name for himself as both a leader of men and someone who could be trusted to get the job done. Unlike some of the nobles within the military, Jasper was seen as someone who would do the right thing, even if it caused a problem for some other nobleman.

Just before the Battle of Brinston, Jasper was ordered to accompany Prince Governor Suiutel (SWEET el) Fontswain to “engage the enemy”. This was a not so clever ruse as Suiutel was taking his two best battalions and fleeing to save his own life. It was Jasper who executed Suiutel and turned the army around, racing back to the city, just in time to engage the fearsome monsters who were attacking the city. Hailed as a hero, he was quickly pushed into the role as Prince Governor.

Kainte Meurdenty

Site

Kainte Meurdenty is a magical university in Brinston, but it is more a school of magic than its competitors. It has extensive classes on conjuring and sorcery and many of its students go on to be battle mages. The libraries and research at Kainte Meurdenty are the best in the city, and scholars from Rimmim and around the world have been known to come to consult here.

Kainte Meurdenty is also named for its two founders. The school was established 1,200 years ago and is most likely the oldest, private institution in the city, possibly the world. Being centuries old, there are books and other treasures in the vaults beneath the school that aren't so much hidden as simply forgotten over the ages. Some researcher or another seems to forever be pulling pertinent and/or "lost" information out of the bowels of the school. Clearly, there is no catalog of everything the school owns.

Kainte Meurdenty will commonly be abbreviated as KM in this edition.

Marilick University

Site

Marilick University is the largest non-magical university in Brinston. Because it refuses to open magic classes, many people consider it to be a sub-standard institution. In fact, Marilick U is perhaps the best training school for those things it teaches. Marilick U has extensive training for traveling merchants. Courses in languages, navigation, diplomacy, sales and contract negotiations, law - including laws of differing regions, trade goods and markets, and various other specialized course applicable to trade. Oddly enough, Marilick U graduates often go on to become naval officers for the city-state because of their broad knowledge of the world and other cultures.

Marilick University is not sponsored by the government, but is a private institution. However, since they have made it a habit of using priests of Jassper to teach their law classes, many alumni find an easier time in legal courts, should they wind up there. After all, they may actually know the judge or have mutual friends. Even barring this, they have been taught how the law should work from the same vantage point as the person who will be deciding their case.

Marilick University will commonly be abbreviated as MU in this edition.

Order of St. Tuorgellesse

Group

The Order of St. Tuorgellesse is known by several names including the Order of Commodore Tuorgellesse and The Sea Wall. St. Tuorgellesse was a legendary naval captain who killed a kraken that was attacking ships in the Brinston trade lanes.

The Order is made up of mages and other spell casters who use their spells in the service of the Brinston Navy and as such is one of several "knightable" orders. This means that mages in the service of the Navy can be granted entry into the lowest ranks of the nobility.

Knighthood under the Order of St. Tuorgellesse is only conferred upon the recipient. His children have no claim to a noble title. Members are addressed as "Sir".

Membership into the order is typically extended to naval captains who have done incredibly heroic things or to mages who have served well upon their retirement. It certainly helps a retiring naval mage to find work in the universities if he has been admitted to the order.

The Order has a small "keep" in Port of Brinston. Members of the order will meet here quarterly to discuss any business of the order, but there rarely is any, other than admitting new members. While the Royal Charter of the order has no limits on the number of members, traditionally the order has held their members to 25-30, the number of chairs they can comfortably place around the table in their keep.

The keep does have guest rooms and some members will stay there for short periods. For example, a captain just coming into port may stay at the keep for a night or two while he gets his cargo in order and then travel to the city.

The emblem of the order is a set of three white ships on a royal blue background. The three ships overlap each other. This is said to represent the "Sea Wall", as the order sees itself as those who protect Brinston from the perils of the sea.



THE SOUNDING BOARD

Is Your Magic Balanced?

One of the most difficult “systems” to get to work in a FRPG is the balance between magic and melee. If a mage can attack multiple people while doing more damage than a warrior can and to each of them, then it seems obvious that magic is over powered. But magic can be restrained by allowing the warrior to attack every combat round, but the mage only has a certain number of “shots” in him. So when does it balance?

Well, let’s look at a couple of examples. In **LEGEND QUEST**, the least powerful fireball can be cast by a mage who is not an absolute beginner, but isn’t some super experienced guy either. That least fireball will do 2-15 points of damage to people who most commonly have 24-36 Life’s Blood. While this doesn’t seem like a lot, **LQ** does have bleeding damage too, so once you’re below half, you’re in ever increasing some serious trouble.

Far more importantly, a spear in the hands of someone with a Strength Attribute of 4-6 (humans are 1-10, with 4 or 5 being average) will also do 2-15 points of damage. So the mage does the same damage, but can hit multiple people with one spell. So right now, the mage is definitely more powerful because it is the same damage to multiple people.

But the warrior can attack every turn until he exhausts himself. Now in **LQ** the warrior (assuming a Strength of 6 and an Endurance of 6 - most warriors would have these or slightly better) would begin to exhaust himself after eight attacks. The ninth attack would cause 3 points of Fatigue damage, and so would every other attack after it. But he would probably have a Willpower of 4 or 5 (again, average), so assuming the lower 4 - he has 24 Fatigue points. That means 8 turns before getting tired and then 8 more turns ($3 \times 8 = 24$) of exhausting himself. 16 attacks seems to be quite a few.

The mage is going to take 2-15 points of Fatigue in casting the fireball. Now he’s probably got a Willpower of 6 for 36 Fatigue points. But with an average 8.5 Fatigue points, he’s only got four spells in him before he will pass out from exhaustion. Four spells vs. 15 attacks (the 16th one would have driven the warrior unconscious, so we’ll call it 15 attack attempts). The four hit multiple people. The fireball is 20’ in diameter. So is the mage hitting four people? Depends on the circumstances, but that seems pretty reasonable. So all in all, it sort of seems even. Granted, the mage can get all of his guys beat up in four turns, and the warrior gives them a lot more opportunities to attack back, but in the end, it does still sort of feel pretty fair.

Now, not every game allows you to make easy comparisons. A lot of games, especially those using

character classes, have lots of stuff mixed into experience and advancement. Having more points of damage you can take matters too, so if that is part of your advancement, then you have to understand the differences between glass cannons and tanks. But! We can make some comparisons by pitting them against each other.



As the level of experience increases, so do the factors of divergence. In other words, comparing higher “level” characters gets really complicated because of the variations in characters as well as the way different groups might apply optional or variant rules. Now I pretty much just play **LQ** now, so I sat down with players of the fifth edition of that other game to talk through how the characters shape up.

I remain skeptical because I saw the way that the more military classes progressed in this sort of straight line fashion and the mage classes progressed in what has normally been considered a geometric progression, so that by the time you got to the higher levels, the mages did everything and the warriors just tried to keep them from getting killed.

But we did some compares with ninth level characters, and it didn’t turn out that bad. We found pretty much the same type of thing we just described - The mages did about the same damage as the fighter types, but did it faster, but were done with their spell casting while the fighters were still going. Overall - not too far off each other. I have to admit - I was pleasantly surprised that it was even close.

Now, let’s not be silly. If a mage can “charm” an enemy and turn him against his friends (charm, dominate, possess, etc.) then that mage has shown a level of power that just might be over powered, but a lot of that comes down to role-playing situations or defenses, and not pure numbers.

So with both games seeming to be fairly balanced between magic and melee, there remains a point that really matters: magic items. The items given to the

various styles of play can have an enormous impact on the game, no matter how balanced they might be when the rules were written. Giving a PC a wand that removes his restriction of only so many spells per day changes the game. Giving a warrior a sword that increases his damage to mage levels without restricting his number of attacks changes the game.

So what's the right way to go? Well, the problem is that game balance rests in the hands of the GM. Tip the scales too far one way and you can ruin your game. Tip them the other, and ruin the game. We'll give you advice, but it is really going to come down to experience. You will (or already have) get to the place where you can sense the disturbance in the force. You know what is going to happen if you give that character that item. So don't. Or at least, after you do, learn from this mistake and don't do it in the next campaign.

Dangerous Jobs aka Who's Mad as a Hatter

So hopefully before we lose you, what are we talking about? You've heard the saying "Mad as a hatter" we hope. Maybe you know the Mad Hatter from Alice in Wonderland or from Batman. Anyway, the urban legend goes - hatters in Merry Ol' England used chemicals in the hat making process that probably drove them insane. (Something to do with the mercury fumes.) This happened and it happened so commonly that they pretty much expected it.

What about in your fantasy world? Chances are they aren't using mercury in hat making (that was more 1700-1800s). The same might be said for the dangers of match making (1800s). But are there dangerous professions that are going on in your fantasy cities? Of course there are! Even just thinking about acrobats and other entertainers who would commonly be injured in their performances and no one really cared. But what I am thinking about is the alchemists.

Just like the hatters, alchemists are typically encountering vapors and fumes that are probably dangerous to their health. I have set up a lot of alchemists in Fletnern that have gone insane or are going insane and how it affects their business. Sometimes it affects the neighborhood too. When a crazy alchemist is trying to put together some form of fire bomb, things can go wrong - really, really wrong. It would probably be less common for alchemists specializing in healing potions than those doing fire and other "bombs", but it's not like they would be thinking about proper ventilation or other safety tips.

Who else can we suggest might be crazy because of their job? Necromancers! Whether it's the embalming fluids, the bone dust or just the horror of creating undead creatures - these guys will likely be some pretty warped dudes! Maybe some of the research mages. I think we've all read some horror story about a guy who went nuts reading old books containing knowledge that was not

meant to be known. What about mediums? Those who contact the dead or other supernatural spirits. Maybe they aren't insane, but do they get possessed?

Back to the big question I always want to ask: Why does it matter? This is some great starter material for adventures, typically urban adventures. Did the crazy conjurer guy at the magic university read the wrong book and try the wrong spell and now the basement of the college is being overrun by demons (maybe little gremlin type demons - they sound fun). Did the alchemist mess up and start a magical fire that cannot be put out by mundane means, and it is starting to consume more of the city? Did the crazy necromancer give some powerful undead creation a command that doesn't make any sense, like bring me a new born baby every night (forever) and the duchess is about to go into labor? Crazy is sometimes easier to game master - it doesn't have to make sense. (But can be a whole lot of fun, at least for the GM)

The Power Behind Magic

How do your games handle magic and where magical power comes from? My world Fletnern, and I guess in the game **LEGEND QUEST** though probably more as an optional rule, has different magics coming from different sources. Honestly the rule book sort of glosses over it, and the Book of Wishes (the magic expansion) doesn't get into it too deeply. That's because LQ has always been focused on letting you run your game world how you want and tries not to force game world/setting issues into the rules.

Enough dancing around the issue - What do we mean? Necromancy is controlled by the magic involved in death. Healing is involved in the magic of life. Sorcery draws on the magic created from change or if you need to say it chaos. Druid = nature; illusion = light and darkness; spell singing = emotions; and conjuring draws magic from somewhere else, not natural to this world. But I like when things overlap. Druidic magic draws on nature, but that means that it is drawing some of its magic from the elemental magics that fuel the elementalists. Herbalists draw power from nature too, but pretty specifically only the plant side of nature. Spiritualism draws magic from death, but also from one of the "dimensions" that conjuring uses (the spirit realm). So necromancy and spiritualism may have some of the same spells and actually be able to use the same talismans to enhance their spells, but not always because they are not twins, but kissing cousins.

Nothing is more boring during a game session than a GM trying to explain the technical points of magic to the players. That's not why they came. They're looking to be challenged in some way (most often combat), but not lectured to. So by no means am I suggesting you spend game time having some scribe explain how magic works. You can have discussions with your players about it when

you're sitting around doing nothing, like when you're waiting for others to show up, even if it's waiting for the other guys to show up on your way to a "night out on the town" not necessarily a game. I strongly discourage you from discussing it at the bar! That never goes well.

But why do you care? First off, knowing more about how your world works makes missions and adventures pop into your mind. If you are thinking about using certain kinds of magic in combination, you will start thinking about how the bad guys are going to try and funnel sorcery through a conjured creature and try to take over the tri-state area. If you don't know how magic works, then you will never create your own spells and be stuck with the stuff in the books. Your own stuff is usually much cooler!

When is magic a lifestyle?

In **LEGEND QUEST**, the main spell casters are the mages. The mages/wizards have six schools of magic: conjuring, druid, healing, illusion, necromancy and sorcery. Now the way I see it, sorcery, conjuring and illusion are just tools to getting a job done. Sorcerers are out there casting fireballs and such and wiping out vast numbers of people. OK, that's not normal, but being a killer isn't based on sorcery. Similarly, the conjurers and illusionists are using magic as a tool, though more indirectly than the sorcerers.

That leaves the others. Most games see druidic magic as a religion. Well, most games see healing magic as religion as well. Although we don't see either of them necessarily as a religion (it can be, but doesn't have to be), I think either of these disciplines does inherently cause the user to think and live in a different manner. When you are actively controlling the magical forces of the world in order to heal injuries or assist nature, it changes you. For most, it would make them more reflective. Maybe this is a philosophy and less religion, but there has to be something there. Magic is no longer just a tool to get your job done. It is a force for good.

On the other hand, those who use necromancy or use druidic magic to cause harm ("despoilers") would also have it change them. You cannot alter the flow of magic in the world to tap into the power of death and divert death magic to create zombies or drain the life from a person without it changing who you are. Even the sorcerer is actually using the magic around his target to deliberately pull the life out of him. Compared to the necromancer, the sorcerer is using magic indirectly as well. He may know the fire will kill his target, but he's making fire, not making death. You get into the whole deliberate vs. intentional argument here.

What's the point? I think the point is that healers naturally have to be different from "normal" folk. They have to see the world differently. So do necromancers.

They aren't just creepy because they wear weird robes; they think in creepy ways and understand the universe in creepy ways. There will always be those whose lives are affected more by something else than by their magic, so not every necromancer is going to have the exact same personality, but there will be an underlying current of death running through the necromancer's life and personality.

Comment: Sorry, this post isn't what I had hoped it would be. There is so much more here that I would like to get into, but then the post is going to be book length. This is partially due to my work on *Lifestyles of the Magical and Mundane*. No, these are not about a period of time from Earth! A fantasy era.



The Evolution of Magic

OK - Since I don't know how I would ever get this into a book, I have to publish this here. Just stay with me for a little bit:

What if magic were new, like technology in the modern age? What if sorcery had only been invented 75-100 years ago? So, in your battle mage's grandfather's time, magic was wearing garlic to fend off the evil eye curses from witches - You know, just superstition. The enchanters and alchemists are a new phenomenon. The world and the world's cultures are just now starting to burst forth with magic.

Why does it matter? Well, I've always been a little antagonistic to the idea that some people have massive amounts of magic (think the adventurers not only decked out in magic armor with magic swords and wands, but also casting magic and fighting hugely magical creatures) compared with the peasant farmer who is no more advanced than Europe's peasant farmers just before the Black Death. Does that make sense? If magic has been around for thousands of years, why is it only in the hands of a few? Don't give me that stuff about secrets. Look at technology. How long did it take from the invention of the transistor to the proliferation of cell phones? Magic is easily as powerful as technology.

Think about it this way - About 90 years ago, some guy in some university figured out that you really could

make a philosopher's stone and change lead to gold. This began a surge in the ideas of magic and was quickly followed by illusionists creating magical lights and conjurers summoning odd beasts. (Skipping an enormous number of evolutionary steps here.) Fast forward to today in your fantasy campaign and magic works as indicated in your game rules, but has only been at this level of sophistication for 5-10 years.



Here's what this brings - good and bad: There shouldn't be a plethora of old/ancient magical items. Anything enchanted is relatively new. People and governments would just now be starting to consider the ramifications of magic in war and trade. Since relative few of us protect our campaign castles and cities against the common magics, it seems more reasonable that magic is new and the defenses are only being considered in the present campaign time. This also allows the player characters to be on the forefront of magical "science". Sort of like James Bond is always just that extra touch ahead of us on technology. Stealing magical secrets and using new enchantments (that may or may not work exactly as planned) seems great for any fantasy campaign. And it settles the peasant farmer issue. Magic is still being developed in the magical universities and has not yet filtered out to the poorer and/or more rural folks.

I'm still developing the next application of this concept in my head: I think it would work if one continent had been "mundane" until trade opened up 100 years ago, so there would be a fully magical continent and a newly magical continent. It might work for magical elves and newly magical humans, but then the elves would have truly needed to have been isolated until that recent point in history. I think it also works that some type(s) of magic were around but kept secret. Necromancy comes to mind. Maybe the necromancers have been around for centuries, but because they were so hated, they kept their magical secrets to themselves. The whole thing really screams for witch hunters too. There would have to be some cultural push back, where magic was all seen as necromancy or just plain evil, and needs to be eradicated.

FRPG Schools

In our modern era, most people would be able to tell you what every child learns in school: The 3 Rs (reading, 'riting and 'rthimatic), as well as possibly history or "social studies" (no brain washing here! right). They may break some of these subjects up, but these are the main ones. Some schools might still have art, music, gym, shop or even home ec., but not too many it seems.

But should you fold those same concepts into your fantasy cities? I don't think so! First, ask yourself why these people are being educated. This isn't our modern, Prussian-based, public schools intended to teach reading, maps, geometry, and civil patriotism so the next generation would be better suited to the artillery in case Napoleon rose again. (No, really, that is what the USA's public school system is based on.)

My fantasy schools depend on what city you're in, because they all have something different as a priority. In Brinston, they believe that anyone who can master magic must be among the smartest, so in order to become a business person, you need to attend (and graduate from) a magic university. No, they aren't all accomplished mages. The ability to squeak out one spell is enough to graduate, but they will all refer to themselves as "mages" because that proves they're smart. See? In Helatia, the first major university was intended for naval military officers, so now every school teaches navigation as a major subject. No, it has no benefit to most of the students, but they all study it! In Rhum, the best advanced school is run by (and largely for) spell singers or bards. There, nearly all of the students take some manner of singing class. It is not "required", but it is socially expected.

So what classes are normal in your world? Recitation (from memory) strikes me as one of the more important. Imagine all those epic sagas and how bad they would get without proper recitation skills. What about geography, rhetoric, philosophy, law, military strategy, or astronomy? What about basic bookkeeping? Is that required because the graduates are expected to become business folks or do the lesser educated folks handle the actual math? Are they taught negotiation? Are they expected to become deal makers and/or court lawyers? Whatever the expectation (real or imagined), that is what they will be taught in schools.

You don't have to be logical. Maybe they are all expected to memorize some epic poem about the history of their country, but the poem is pure propaganda. Maybe they are expected to learn all about other cultures and how inferior those other cultures are to their own. Maybe everyone is trained to enter religious service, so the theology is the most important course, but so many of them fall away to pursue other careers. (This last one seems very likely if the churches control the schools.) For Fletnern - It's all of the above!

THE GOOD LIFE

Fashion

One of the things we skipped over in the **Lifestyles** article was the question of what these students are wearing. It may seem unimportant, but whether it is due to what it costs to live as a student or what they would be wearing if a fight breaks out, clothing does matter.

In Brinston, clothing is made from linen or cotton, and these students may be wealthy, but they cannot afford cotton for everyday wear. The standard “business casual” worn to the universities is a linen shirt (similar to what we would know as a button down shirt), breeches and hose, and a jacket (depending on the weather). This only varies from the more professional business attire where the man would be expected to vest or waist coat to work and a great coat should the weather require something more.

Let’s focus on the shirts first. These are not tunics, but instead tailored dress shirts designed specifically for the person purchasing them. There are really only three styles of fabrics that the students can wear without having social standing issues. The first two are linens woven in a factory-like setting by expert weavers. These are described (in **Gold, Silver, and WHAT!?!)** as better workmanship and come as either light-linen or linen. The other type that they can often get away with is light linen manufactured in a sweat shop. The main difference is whether or not the weavers are craftsmen or slaves, and slave labor is cheaper, though the quality often shows it.



Despite describing these shirts as “button down” they do not have any buttons. Instead, a man would have at least one set of shirt studs that he would wear to hold the front of the shirt together. He would also have matching cuff links to hold the ends of the sleeves together. In Brinston, the cuffs we know as “French cuffs” are the standard. Last and not least, he would have collar stays, probably made of whale baleen, to hold his collar stiff. The acceptable form here is plain silver studs and cuff links for students, though the noble merchants can get far more extravagant.

Why not buttons? Well the shirts are typically starched, making buttons more difficult to use, plus, one set of silver studs may be costly, but when you can wear them with every shirt you own, they start to become more economical. Also, carving tiny buttons and sewing them on is a labor intensive job. These custom made shirts are expensive enough already; no point increasing the cost by adding buttons.

There are really only two colors expected in men’s shirts: linen and light blue. The natural linen color is similar to a beige, though some can come very light, enough to be considered off-white. Indigo dyes are relatively common in Brinston, and it does not materially increase the cost of the shirt to dye it to a light blue. To the rest of Brinston, this is how university students are identified - by their linen or light blue shirts. Other colors may be worn, but most students prefer not to take on the added expense of additional colors.

The men of Brinston wear breeches. Breeches are those short pants that come just below the knee. Unlike Shakespearian breeches, the men of Brinston do not wear “pillow-y” breeches, but breeches that form relatively snugly to the man’s legs. Breeches are also most commonly linen. They too can be left natural, but are far more commonly dyed to a darker color - indigo, black, brown or a dark tan being the most common.

Breeches are held up with a belt, and the bottoms are most commonly tightened with a very small belt that is sewn into the hem of the garment. The whole point of men’s fashion in Brinston is to hide what’s going on. By this we mean that the breeches cover the top of the hose and the garter that is holding them up. Then the vest covers the belt that is holding the breeches up. With the breeches legs held fast by internal belts, sometimes called trouser garters, only the buckle holding the legs closed can be seen.

Young ladies wear dresses, or skirts and blouses. Again, linen is the most common material. There is a much broader separation in the quality and workmanship that goes into the dresses, with some, even at the universities, being fairly elaborate. One difference is that women rarely wear naturally colored dresses. At the level of a university student, the dress or skirt would be expected to be dyed.



Books

Going to school requires books. This is certainly true for these universities. But before the invention of moveable type, books were extremely expensive. So how do these students afford going to school?

A group of businesses have arisen around the various schools catering to exactly this issue. Instead of buying the books outright, school books can be rented. The standard fee for renting books requires half the full cost of the book upfront, of which only one-third of the book's value is returned when the book is. This means that the cost of renting the book is one-sixth of its price per term.

These book sellers and renters are not powerful people, but crossing them is dangerous. They make a living off of people renting and returning books. Should their customers fail to return the books, they will pursue ever escalating attempts to recover their property. What might begin as some kid knocking on the door and asking politely, will soon turn into someone you know coming to talk to you about this, and will eventually reach full blown bounty hunters coming after you and the books. Of course any customer causing one of the book lenders trouble will have his name shared with the other book lenders. At that point, it will be full price only - no more renting.

Rented books are most commonly used books to begin with, so the book lenders are rarely risking more than they invested in the first place.

Many of the books required for class are used in more than one class, making purchasing the book the appropriate decision. This also means that there will be classes that do not require new books. All classes will likely require a book, but possibly one already owned.

Use of pen and ink in classrooms (and transporting them) is dangerous to the books and clothing of the students. For this reason, most of the students use charcoal "pens". Most of these are simply charcoal dowels that the students will sharpen to a point. Because of this, most students also have a writing glove they bring with them to class. This glove protects their hand

from the black charcoal, though certainly this is a luxury item.

Some students will use other means of note taking in class. Common are chalk boards and wax tablets. The students can then write on these during class and then transcribe their notes in the evening with pen and ink in order to clear the boards and make them ready again for tomorrow.



The Pearl Polishers

If all this going to school stuff sounds difficult, know that you are right. Asking teenagers to navigate everything from finding a hotel to wearing acceptable clothing, getting their books and arranging their classes seems like setting them up for failure. This is where the huitlisslons come from.

Huitlisslon generally translates as "pearl polisher", and it is the occupation of the people near Brinston who collect oyster shells and other mother of pearl and polish it into a useful substance. Here the word stands for the guides who take the students to be and guide them through the entire process. They are considered to be "polishing" these young people to make them acceptable for the universities and hotels, and for each other.

Long ago, most of the noble houses had a huitlisslon of their own, typically a spinster who could help guide her nieces and nephews through the process. Over the last century, these people have become paid coaches instead of simply family members, though clearly, about half the students are still guided through the various steps by relatives. A professional huitlisslon will arrange the recommendation letters necessary for admittance into the college, coach the student through the hotel acceptance process, make certain that they are set up with the clothing, books, materials, etc. that they will need for their classes, and even host get to know you parties amongst their various clients, so the students have some friends and start the term knowing someone.

While the cost of attending the university is great, many of the noble families feel that paying a huiltlisslon helps to insure that the student will succeed. The only thing worse than paying for school would be paying for school only to see the student unable to acclimate and eventually leave, forfeiting any money already spent for that term and any previous terms. This is what makes a huiltlisslon worth the money.



Though each huiltlisslon arranges fees differently, in general they collect about 10% of the cost of the classes and hotel. About half of the students use a huiltlisslon for their first term at the university, and the schools suggest them to parents. Less than a quarter of the students continue to use them after their first year. Some of these agencies are far more like concierges, and these may continue to be of use to the wealthier (and more spoiled) students throughout their time at the university.

While there are a small number of huiltlisslon agencies, most are run by an individual, possibly with assistants. These can only take on a limited number of clients, and if they are good, they will be able to turn away business due to being overloaded.

The most common huiltlisslon is an attractive woman, who attended one of the universities herself. This has given her experience and connections. They are easily spotted on the university campuses because they are often the best looking, best dressed woman walking around, commonly with a young and overwhelmed student in tow. They are rarely of noble birth, or they are noble but far removed from the money. Though they are expected to be pretty, many have managed to maintain their businesses long after they have aged simply on their reputation for getting things done.

The huiltlisslons have built such a solid reputation amongst the college crowd, that some graduates have

looked for them to continue. They want a huiltlisslon who will find them an apartment, a job, a social club, etc. This “life coach” mentality has not yet caught on, though some of the huiltlisslons are willing to give it a try, especially when the terms are in session and their young clients don’t need them as much. Only time will tell if this works out.

Huiltlisslons might be seen similarly to wedding planners. They know who to go to to get things done. They know what works and what doesn’t. And while they may cost, they will also work to get the student settled in the most efficient manner possible, which means the student isn’t getting gouged along the way. Many families who use them understand that they are often times cheaper than the hit or miss attempts of the students to accomplish the same.

In rarer cases, the family will pay the huiltlisslon (most common with the agency versions), and then the huiltlisslon will pay for everything the student needs. This is often done when the family doesn’t trust their student with money. But since they rarely trust the agency with their money, it is not a common practice.

Mission Ideas:

Just in case you weren’t reading this section with a mind set on crafting missions, here are some ideas to turn this article into missions and quests:

- A student has left the city in possession of various rented books. The book lenders want them back ASAP (possibly before the next term starts). The party must track him down and recover the books. But he has already promised to sell them to a group of renegade elves who want to use the magic books to learn magic themselves (something not allowed by their local lord).
- A huiltlisslon agency has accepted the money from a noble family to support their little darling in his first term at the university. But he isn’t showing up for classes. He’s “fallen in love” with a prostitute and has been spending his time at her place. He swears she loves him too, because she isn’t asking him for money, but she is demanding it from the agency. The party needs to kidnap this working girl’s meal ticket and get him back to his hotel before he effectively flunks out of school. The agency thinks they can sober him up and keep him where he needs to be, if they can retrieve him. While there will be some brawling involved (with her gang friends), the student must not be harmed in any way. This could be a fun side mission while the party is stuck in Brinston at some point.

NEWS OF FLETNERN

The Reindelphine Family

Lawrence Reindelphine Jr. is the current Head Dean of Aurora Fantastic. His father was the Head Dean before him, and his son Phillipre is currently working in the school's administration and is expected to succeed him. This is a new and unprecedented trend. The Head Dean position is not supposed to be inherited, but the Reindelphine family has locked their control over the school.

While this will no doubt end in serious problems, for right now, things are looking good. While Lawrence (the First) was a horrible administrator and worse as a person, Lars (Jr.) is a phenomenal administrator and has a natural charisma rarely seen. Similarly, Phillipre is a very intelligent young man and will lead the school with his shrewd strategy. {Fortune telling - Phillipre's son will be a petulant brat, and between his sister's and his raiding the school's coffers for their own luxuries, they will risk the solvency of this mighty university.}

Lawrence is still involved at the school, mainly for fun raising efforts. He knows every successful alumni and has had a gift for getting money out of them. Unfortunately, his gift involves belittling them in public and putting them in uncomfortable situations.

Lars was trained at the school and is a gifted illusionist. He is personable and charms (without spells) his fund raising targets. This makes him welcome at high society dinner parties and balls, unlike his father. Lars also managed to head off and reverse the actions his father was taking to move the school into a far more religious bend. Where Lawrence saw allying with the religions of Elightel as a benefit to the school, Lars saw that this would ostracize many of the better students and the public, who often see Elightel as the god of "evil" magic.

Phillipre would love to see his grandfather retire to some distant vineyard, but the family is not noble and does not come from wealth. Lawrence was an instructor at the school and rose to the level of Dean of Accounting and Business. When the school was having financial difficulty, they felt that putting the most business minded faculty member in charge of the school was a good idea, but he turned out to be a tyrant who reoriented everything to benefit himself and his family. Lars is seen by the professors (especially the magic professors) as "one of their own". He has won them over. Phillipre is probably what the faculty had hoped for when they elevated Lawrence.

Lars and Phillipre work well together. Lars is the face man, but he does understand what the school needs to stay strong and relevant. Phillipre is far more efficient and not as good with people. This doesn't mean he is

bad with people, just that he has a more cutthroat approach to convincing people to do things for him - almost a mix of both his father and grandfather.

Unquestionably, Lars' wife Lucieve Flourneckden has aided the family and the school as well. Being connected to one of the most powerful noble families in Brinston certainly has its advantages, but Lucieve is a beautiful and clever woman. Though she does not come off as genuine as her husband, she is clearly a bright lady capable of maneuvering the dangerous social swamp that is Brinston. She and Lars met while attending AF, and have been together ever since. She is currently managing her son's marriage to a noble woman, because he has been too involved in work to manage it for himself.



Mounfeae Shalltae Wonsaince

Mounfeae Shalltae Wonsaince (MSW) is a new school of magic started in Brinston about ten years ago. The three founders (Mounfeae, Shalltae, and Wonsaince) are still actively working at the school, both as professors and administrators. Shalltae is looking to retire soon and the three are negotiating his exit.

Like the larger schools, MSW teaches both magic and business, though they do focus more on magic than would be considered "normal" for Brinston. They claim to be the best of the best with each of the founders having taught at one of the three large magical universities. They have poached some of the better mages from the competition to build out their faculty.

MSW does not have any dedicated hotels, but many of their students live in smaller boarding houses or shared hotels.

WHAT'S MISSING

This is the “World Walker” version of this edition. Therefore, it is not the complete version, but instead the slimmed down version. So the question is - What's missing? Here is a summary of what you'd see if you got the Game Masters' version of the book:

Lifestyles of the Magical and Mundane: We rarely pull this section from the World Walker edition, but leaving it in felt like it was going to handicap any game masters trying to use these universities. It went into all sorts of details about life in the various “hotel” dormitories, as well as class work and the schools themselves. Not just details about the life, but details about the individual schools and hotels themselves.

Wet Behind the Ears: Are mages just a stereo-type or should they start out differently? Well, hopefully that isn't even a question. But how are they different? Should their universities make them different? Here are a couple of ideas on how to keep battle mages from becoming too basic of a character.

How to Play a ... Mage Merchant: The concept of all merchants being trained as mages, may seem silly, but it certainly is high fantasy. But how high? Here we show you how the concept really works, both in a role-playing sense and in a game rules sense.

How to GM a ... Magical University: To most game worlds, the addition of a magical university might feel like a huge game balancing risk, upsetting various aspects of the world. Honestly, one might, but multiple universities? Maybe you haven't seen how they can be used to restrict the amount of magic in your world, but still in a way that keeps your players interested. With a bunch of mage colleges, there is a clear path to new levels, new spells, new magical items, etc. But the path has hurdles. Here is where we lay out all of that, along with (as part of) how these universities are run like businesses.

Oh, and since the title of the book includes “All About Mages”, we wanted to get deeper into how GMs can work with their spell casting player characters to make things more realistic and/or more challenging.

Monsters & Other Menaces: In a book about magical universities, we couldn't resist putting in a couple of authors - text book authors. Here in our Characters with Character spot are these guys. Just enough setting to generate role-playing or create treasures to be looted.

Gold, Silver and WHAT!?!: Two main sections this month: One focuses on the fashions of the day and what it costs to have the clothing to attend school. Anyone who thinks fashion is useless has way too timid a game master. Those society folks tend to be the quest givers,

and they are more brutal than any gang of orcs. The second is all about the university - costs for classes, for books, and for the dorms.

Church Bells: We needed to address mages and religion, so there are those generic notes, but we always want to go one step farther. Here we went two: Two new religions: one pro-magic, one anti-magic. Even in a world with avatars and religious spells, not every religion is only about worshipping the gods.

Silver Sense: You cannot discuss modern universities without the question coming up of “Are they worth it?” Looking at these educational institutions from a strictly coin vs. coin aspect, this article will show why the students are studying to be mages and what it grants them after graduation. Not to get too deep into the role-playing aspects, but if you don't know the motives of your NPCs, the way you play them is going to come across as bland or inconsistent.

By the Numbers: These are not the days of Gutenberg and his fabulous moveable type press. These are the days of scribes painstakingly hand copying books by candle light. But you still need books to go to school, so how much do they cost and why?

Campaign Starter Kit: Not every campaign has to start at one place and end at another. How many times have we all watched “monster of the week” shows and enjoyed having the same characters get involved in a crazy number of adventures, all without leaving their homes. That's what this one is - the perfect set-up for a group of novice adventurers to go on all sorts of quests, while still trying to make it to class on time.

Small Towns and City Neighborhoods: We have covered so many small towns that we're relieved to be covering a neighborhood! The Astice Bise neighborhood in Brinston includes several magical universities including two of the big ones. How does that high fantasy flair affect the people and their lives? How does it affect local law enforcement? This is a great opportunity for us to share how one of the many high fantasy cultures of Fletnarn.

Tavern Talk: But, we couldn't leave Guido out of it! Come and listen to him tell you more about the entertainments in this high fantasy neighborhood, including how the entertainment illusionists fit into the taverns and night clubs.

Optional Rules: How does magic work? Do your rules get into some of the nitty gritty on why magical spells work? What about how they work? And is there only one answer? Well, there is never only one answer! This month, we looked at some of the ways magic might work and what impact that can have within the game rules.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Adventure: If you have the GMs' version of last month's All About Halfling and Golems, then you saw our Black Pill campaign starter kit. That story arc was



part of more than one Fletnern campaign. Here is a great way to make it work similarly for you or just extend the CSK.

And just for good measure, we also have a cult that is preying on the students at the universities. This is one of the bad ones. It could use a few adventurers giving them some trouble.

Pull Back the Curtain: The city of Brinston was initially designed over 35 years ago. No, really! While its map has been retconned a couple of times, the basics are still the same. We hope that by walking you through some of how Brinston has evolved over decades of gaming you can learn some ways to evolve your own world without scrapping it, or at least take comfort in the knowledge that you're not alone in the world building problems.

Y? Y? Y!: If we're discussing mages and high fantasy, how does that work? What do mages do for a living if they aren't out slaying monsters? (NO! Not all mages are battle mages that go out adventuring!) Not only are we able to show you some really good career opportunities for mages without leaving the city (or getting shot at), but it leads into how and why magical universities would be created in the first place. History makes the present make sense, and this is how to build some of the history.

The full Game Master version of this edition is 43 pages of content. Obviously, that is considerably more than what you're seeing here.

Do you know how to get the Game Masters' version instead of this World Walker edition? Use the links on the next page to head out to our Patreon site and become a patron. Check it out because there's a ton of stuff that we're doing, and we want you to be involved.

Not sure how much you trust us? Why not become a patron for only \$1 per month? As you see all the great content and begin to get more and more involved in the process, you may choose to increase your support level, which would be great, but the risk really is minimal.

IN CONCLUSION

We've mentioned some previous editions, but wanted to make them a little easier for you to find. We're linking the World Walker editions, because they are free on the internet.

[All About Golems](#)

[All About Organized Crime](#)

But we also want to mention some of the future editions that also pertain to magic and Brinston:

[All About Courtiers and Wealth:](#) Our last poll showed that you are far more interested in palaces and princes than we thought, so this one has been fast forwarded in the expected line up. We'll focus on Brinston for two reasons: the nobility is incredibly numerous and they take full advantage, and because if you wanted to know about the nobility of the Central Plains you can go pick up Royalty. Still - expect all manner of politics and plunder in this edition!

[All About City Guards and Police:](#) Where we will get in-depth into the Civilians Authorities of Brinston, because they serve as such a great opportunity to compare and contrast differing policing styles in a fantasy environment.

[All About the Battle of Brinston:](#) Honestly, this one is probably a bit off in the future, but it does serve a great set piece. A wizard with seemingly unlimited power decides that he needs to sack a major city, so he does, almost entirely through magic. He doesn't show up and cast spells, that would be an invitation to every archer or sniper in the land. No, he summons creatures, he opens gates, he lures dangerous monsters. So how do you fight that?

And on the more magical side of things:

[All About Siege Magic:](#) While we may have steered away from battle magic in this edition, it is a vital part of every FRPG. But what does it mean on the battle field? Can it be countered? How do you fight against magic, when you are the attacker or the defender? But most importantly, when magic is a part of most militaries, how do you build castles that can stand up to it? If your world has more than a hundred years of magical history, they would have started to react to the magic they face and come up with better solutions. As a player, this can be your guide to defeating your GM's castles. As a GM, this can be your guide to foiling your clever PCs.

[All About Magical Ingredients:](#) Whether they are for the PCs or serve as reasons to go out adventuring, ingredients are often incredibly valuable and incredibly hard to acquire. Not only that but as adventurers gain in skill and knowledge, they might also start thinking things through when they're out on missions. Just because you

killed a troll and he has no loot doesn't mean he is worthless. Do you know how much troll blood sells for? All About Specific Magic: This one is currently pending, and we'll weigh the interest as we get closer, but we are working through how to do an edition on the major types of magic: healing, necromancy, illusion, sorcery, etc. Each has its own quirks and diving into the strengths, weaknesses and tweaks of how to get it all to work - That would be fun!

All About Glitch Magic: Even if you have a chart for what goes wrong when you fumble a spell, are there long term consequences to that? Nearly every magic system discusses some of the drawbacks of magic, but what happens when you take those smaller issues and you determine what the long term consequences of magic can be on a world? There is so much more that could be happening with magic in your world if you just took the time to focus on the missteps instead of the success stories.



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We would love for you to join that community (if you haven't already). Just click the link:

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Why? Well, first, you'll get the full edition of this book; that's the GM's Edition, and not just the World Walker edition. But if you want to help us along and sponsor us at \$1, then you'll get the World Walker edition emailed to you at the end of every month, instead of having to go out and find it several weeks later when it becomes available to the general public. The GM's edition is usually double or triple the length of the World Walker edition if that is what you're looking for.

Far more important to us, you'll become part of this community we're so interested in: a community of role-players, game masters and world builders, sharing ideas, and sharing our hobby - for many of us, our passion.

You'll be able to participate in polls and other ways to let us know what you're thinking. Several times, we thought we had the best plans laid out, only to hear from our patrons that they had a different idea of what the priorities should be. So we changed the priorities and changed the order in which these editions have come out. Does it make sense? Of course it does, but without that communication, there is little we can do to properly address your priorities.

As any service or entertainment provider wants to do, we want to bring you what you want when you want it so you will continue to be a customer and participant. That should go without saying. But how many other entertainment providers are working so hard to get your opinions and desires? We know that in the end, we all want the same thing: great games. How we bring that content to you is what we're asking you to share with us, and then give us your honest feedback. It's a pretty good offer!

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