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WHAT IS THE HACKJOURNAL?

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GameMaster's Workshop: HackPregnancy, or... "I'm WHAT?"

By Keith McCormic (HMGMA# BR-2-1603-03)

Let's face it; PCs in HackMaster have a most amusing tendency to get into all sorts of predicaments. Luckily, when it comes to the actual sex, we can just "fade to black" and let imagination fill in the details.

The true role of the GM, however, is to tell the players what happens to their PCs AFTER they do something. Unfortunately, this means the GM is left without guidance.

SEX AND THE SINGLE GM

Hey, GM! Weren't you listening? FADE TO BLACK! The GM's job is to be the arbiter of life and death in a hack-worthy game of blood and steel, not to provide pansy-assed bodice-ripping story time!

Okay, fine. You WANT to bring a little more romance into your game. The important thing is to remember the maturity levels of your players. I still recommend that you fade to black during the actual deed, but you could probably go as far as most movies. If your players want to hear more than that, they need to get out and socialize. I recommend that they attend more HackMaster events at conventions.

CHANCE OF CONCEPTION

When a creature has sexual intercourse, there is the possibility of creating little creatures like itself. This needs to happen from time to time, or else a species goes extinct quickly. How likely intercourse is to produce offspring is dependent on the reproductive cycle (especially the female's) and a number of other modifiers.

FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE CYCLE

Every female creature has a reproductive cycle, which determines when she can reproduce. In some species, males also have a cycle that is more or less consecutive with that of the females of his species.

In the case of intelligent creatures, often only the females have cycles. These cycles are tied to the cycles of the moons by the will of the gawds, with each race linked to a different moon.

According to rumor, Dragons, Titans, and the Gawds are linked to Kryndinzar. With the moon's destruction, however, effects from the orbital periods of Kryndinzar's ruins (if any) are unknown.

Table 17A: Moons and Race

Moon	Race
Arlora	Humans, Halflings, Orcs, Half-Orcs, Goblinoids
Bardra'Kar	Dwarves, Half-Elves, Gnomes
Shadara	Elves (All Types)

Because each creature is unique, a female's cycle might deviate from the norm. Likewise, one male's sperm may linger for a longer or shorter time than that of another male. This means that timing intercourse to the phase of her moon is no guarantee of fertility, nor a reliable means of preventing pregnancy.

Therefore, whenever she engages in sex, a woman has a percentage chance of conceiving based on the phase of her moon on the day of intercourse. Unless of course, she or her partner is sterile, but you wouldn't be asking for rules if they were, would you? This chance should only be rolled once per day on which intercourse actually occurs:

Table 17B: Moon Phases and Conception

Moon Phase	Chance of Conception
New Moon	0% (Menses)
1st Quarter Waxing	0% (Late Menses)
Half Moon Waxing	1%
2nd Quarter Waxing	2%
Full Moon	25%* (Ovulation)
1st Quarter Waning	10%**
Half Moon Waning	5%**
2nd Quarter Waning	0% (Pre-Menstrual)

*Subtract 5% for each day after the second until the chance drops to the starting percentage of the next phase.

**Subtract 1% for each day after the second until the chance drops to the starting percentage of the next phase.

PLOTTING MOON CYCLES

There are eight different phases for each moon, as shown in Table 17B: Moon Phases and Conception. Each moon has a different revolutionary period as shown in the GMG.

Table 17C: Moon Phases and Periods shows the total period of each moon as well as the length in days of each phase.

Table 17C: Moon Phases and Periods

Phase	Arlora	Bardra'Kar	Shadara
Revolutionary	26	50	101
New Moon	4	7	14
1st Qtr Waxing	3	6	12
Half Moon Waxing	3	6	12
2nd Qtr Waxing	3	6	12
Full Moon	4	7	15
1st Qtr Waning	3	6	12
Half Moon Waning	3	6	12
2nd Qtr Waning	3	6	12

Use this information to plot the phases of each moon in your Campaign Record. Players should note the current phase and plan their intercourse accordingly.



MULTIPLIERS

Every chance of conception is affected by many different kinds of multipliers. These modifiers can raise or lower the odds of conception, so it's very important that they be taken into account. It does not matter in what order the multipliers are applied, as the results should be the same.

For example, if a woman (Con 11) using a Belt of Bounty and Seeking Parenthood has intercourse on the Full Moon with a man (Con 16) who took Cassil, her chance of conceiving would be 11% ($30\% \times 1.5 \times 1.25 \times 0.10 \times 2.0 = 11.25\%$).

Table 17D: Multipliers to Chance of Conception

Circumstance	Multiplier
Careless Female ¹	x 1.10
Cautious Female ²	x 0.75
Female CON <5	x 0.25
Female CON <10	x 0.75
Female CON >11	x 1.10
Female CON >15	x 1.50
Male CON <5	x 0.50
Male CON >15	x 1.25
Proconceptive ³	Varies; see Table 17F
Contraceptive ³	Varies; see Table 17H
Magical Love Effect ⁴	x 1.25
Seeking Parenthood ⁵	x 1.25

¹Female is unaware of her cycle or doesn't care if she gets pregnant or not. Male characters that become female are considered careless during their first ten cycles as a woman!

²Female is aware of her cycle and timing intercourse to avoid pregnancy. Does not apply during the Full Moon!

³Character is affected by a contraceptive or proconceptive appropriate to their sex. Multiplier is per effect per partner.

⁴Character is in love with their sex partner due to powerful love-related magic (e.g. Venus Elixir or Philter of Love). Multiplier is per partner affected.

⁵Character is trying to have children and following knowledgeable advice to improve chance of conception. Multiplier is per partner.

Note that the chance of conception cannot fall below 5% during the Full Moon, or 1% at other times if the chance is normally higher than 0%.

PROCONCEPTIVES

Proconceptives are magical devices, or herbal or alchemical concoctions, that increase the chance of conception. They are popular with faiths that follow motherhood, childbearing, or marriage gawds. As such, in areas where these religions are popular, such items usually have high availability.



Table 17E: Proconceptive Prices and Availability

Product	Sex	Cost (gp)	Base Availability		
			Hi	Med	Lo
Belt of Bounty	F	2000	10	5	3
Bless	any	5	75	60	50
Bridal Draught	F	400	20	10	5
Chandar Weed	F	5 sp	50	30	20
Codpiece of Virility	M	4000	5	3	1
Grooms Grog	M	400	15	10	5
Shepherd's Knot	M	1	60	40	30

Table 17F: Proconceptive Multipliers

Product	Multiplier**
Belt of Bounty*	x 2
Bless*	x 1.10
Bridal Draught*	x 3
Chandar Weed	x 1.10
Codpiece of Virility*	x 1.25
Grooms' Grog*	x 1.5
Shepherd's Knot	x 1.10

*Magical effect.

**Chance of conception cannot rise above 95% unless the proconceptive is magical.

Belt of Bounty: This magic item was developed to aid noblewomen in bearing and rearing heirs. It is useless to male characters and if worn by one it simply engenders a subtle longing to marry, gift his wife with the belt, and sire children. Likewise, crones feel only a vague desire to become a nanny or grandmother and view the belt as a suitable gift to any new bride or pregnant woman they consider a friend or relative.

Females of childbearing age, on the other hand, receive powerful magical effects. First, once it is bonded, the belt **DOUBLES** her chance of conceiving on any given day (the belt also increases her enjoyment of sex). If she is sterile because of a defect, disease, or injury (not age), she receives a normal chance of conception! Gnomelings and other sterile hybrids are genetically sterile, so the Belt of Bounty doesn't affect them.

Secondly, the belt increases her rate of healing by 1 HP per day, negates the negative physical effects of pregnancy, and minimizes the pain of childbirth (20% bonus to childbirth System Shock checks). Finally, it improves the absorption of nutrients, boosts her immune system, and generally increases her health and vitality. This improves her Constitution by 4d4 fractional points (roll once per character, dice penetrate), and betters her Fatigue factor by 1 while under the belt's effects.

The belt does not function until it is bonded to a character and it can only bond with one character at a time. Any female who wears an unbonded Belt of Bounty for eight hours or more in a single day bonds to the belt and becomes the recipient of its powerful procreative magicks. Thereafter, she need only wear it

for a total of eight hours a week to gain all its benefits, even when she is not wearing it. The belt always fits a character to which it is bonded. If she does not wear it for a month, the belt loses its bond with her.

Bless: The humble Bless spell can improve a couple's chances of conceiving. Blessing both partners further improves their chances. Likewise, a Ceremony spell used to seal a marriage provides this bonus for the first month after the wedding.

Bridal Draught: This magical, intoxicating liqueur drastically boosts a woman's chances of conceiving a child. It is usually given as a gift to a newly married couple along with Grooms' Grog, but it is sometimes used nefariously. Imbibing this draught immediately places the woman in the "sloshed" intoxication category. The potion drives the woman to seek intercourse with her chosen partner, but if she is rebuked for more than 1d10 minutes, she leaves and seeks intercourse with the next man she meets. Failing that, she continues to seek to mate with whatever man she finds until she finds one or 1d4+8 hours have passed. The woman also seeks to utilize any proconceptives she is aware of and to remove any contraceptives she knows about, if possible. Any man who consumes the draught becomes violently ill and intoxicated, but suffers no other effects.

Chandar Weed: If a woman takes a tea of Chandar Weed right before intercourse, it not only increases her enjoyment of the experience, but it improves the odds of conception.

Codpiece of Virility: This highly sought-after article of magical clothing is famous for its ability to boost a man's ego in bed. It also boosts his likelihood of siring a child. If he sires a child while under the codpiece's effects, there is a 75% chance the child is male. It is useless to female characters and if worn by one it simply engenders a subtle longing to marry, gift her husband with the codpiece, and to bear his children.

The codpiece does not function until it bonds to a character; it can only bond with one character at a time. Any male who wears an unbonded Codpiece of Virility for eight hours or more in a single day bonds to it and becomes the recipient of its powerful procreative magicks. Thereafter, he need only wear it for a total of eight hours a week to gain all its benefits, even when he is not wearing it. The codpiece always fits a character to which it is bonded. If he does not wear it for a month, the belt loses its bond with him.

Grooms' Grog: This magical, intoxicating liqueur improves a man's chances of siring a child. It is a popular gift for newly married couples, as is Bridal Draught, but it can also be used nefariously.

Imbibing this draught immediately places him in the "sloshed" intoxication category. The potion drives the man to seek intercourse with his chosen partner, but if he is rebuked for more than 1d10 minutes, the man leaves and seeks intercourse with the next woman he meets. Failing that, he continues to seek to mate with whatever woman he finds until he succeeds or 1d4+8 hours have passed. The man also seeks to utilize any proconceptives he is aware of and to remove any contraceptives he knows about, if possible. Any woman who consumes the grog becomes violently ill and intoxicated, but suffers no other effects.

Shepherd's Knot: This herb, famed as stud food by animal breeders, is brewed into a tea for men to drink. If a man drinks the tea daily, he improves his chances of becoming a father. Sadly, the tea tastes like fermented bull urine, so it is often mixed with brandy or beer. The price shown is for a month's supply (28 days) of the herb.

CONTRACEPTIVES

Contraceptives are magical, herbal, or alchemical means of reducing the chances of conception. However, in lands where certain deities hold sway, these items are often frowned upon or even illegal. For instance, in the City-States of Fangaerie, where Sumaar-Fareen is popular, these things can be as hard to find as many poisons! Magical modifiers should be applied after non-magical modifiers.

Table 17G: Contraceptive Prices and Availability

Product	Sex	Cost (gp)	Base Availability		
			Hi	Med	Lo
Asrigath	F	1+	60	40	20
Cassil	M	1+	60	40	20
Chastity Girdle	F	3000+	10	5	3
Codring of Carousing	M	2500+	5	3	1
Sausage Casings	M	1 sp+	80	70	50
Tharlis	F	2+	70	50	30

Table 17H: Contraceptive Multipliers

Product	Multiplier*
Asrigath	x 0.20
Cassil	x 0.10
Chastity Girdle*	x 0.10
Codring of Carousing*	x 0.10
Sausage Casings	x 0.25
Tharlis	x 0.15

*Chance of conception cannot fall below 5% during the Full Moon, or 1% at other times if the chance is normally higher than 0%.

**Magical effect.

Asrigath: Also known as Birthbane, this herb is actually a mild poison. When taken as a tea or extract, Asrigath can prevent pregnancy if taken within two days of intercourse. However, the woman must save vs. Poison or become ill for 1d4 days afterwards, suffering a temporary –2 to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution.

Cassil: Once eaten, this herb neutralizes a man's fecundity for a period of 3d4 days. It must be eaten and takes about an hour to take effect.

Originally taken from *Goods & Gear: the Ultimate Adventurer's Guide*, page 198.

Chastity Girdle: This magical device is a tight-fitting waist-cincher that often contains metal reinforcements. Many of these also have locks on them because the girdle is intended as a "humane" alternative to chastity belts. Chastity girdles allow intercourse with a reduced chance of pregnancy as long as the device is worn.

They also halve the woman's chance of contracting sexually transmitted diseases while worn. Finally, these girdles improve a woman's rate of healing by 1 HP per two days and actually restore physical virginity after one week of constant wear.

Codring of Carousing: This magical ring reduces a man's chances of getting women pregnant. It also halves the man's chances of contracting a sexually transmitted disease while worn. This ring does not use up a ring slot on either hand, but it can be uncomfortable to wear at all times.

Sausage Casings: A crude name for a crude form of condom made from animal intestines. They have a tendency to leak or split, but they're better than nothing. These devices can only be used once and they provide a one-quarter reduction to the chance of either partner contracting a sexually transmitted disease from the other.

Tharlis: This herb, if taken daily as a tea, reduces a woman's chance of conception. It has no other noteworthy game effects except a foul taste. It is often mixed with honey or wine to mask the taste. The price shown is for one month's (28 days) worth of the herb.

ABORTIVES

Abortives are magical, herbal, or alchemical means for a woman to terminate a pregnancy more than a few days after conception.

In lands where motherhood or child-rearing deities hold sway, these items are usually highly illegal. In lands where Sumaar-Fareen (or Benyar) is powerful, this option is only available through vile, evil temples that usually operate in secret!

Each abortive method has a chance of success as well as a system shock modifier. Whether or not the

abortion succeeds, the woman must succeed at the system shock check or suffer the consequences shown on Table 17J: Abortive Effects.

A final (and important) warning - because of the highly sensitive nature of this topic in the real world, GMs are cautioned to consider the players in their game before allowing the topic of abortives to be broached!

Table 17I: Abortive Prices and Availability

Method	Cost (gp)	Base Availability		
		Hi	Med	Lo
Asrigath Overdose	5+	40	25	10
Cause Disease	500+	20	40	20
Gentle Herbs*	300+	60	40	20
Potion of Virginity*	750+	25	10	5
Sex Change	2000+	25	10	5
Transmutation*	2000+	30	15	5

*Not available in areas where abortive methods are illegal.

Table 17J: Abortive Effects

Method	Chance of Success	System Shock Modifier	System Shock Failure
Asrigath Overdose	50%	-15%	Death
Cause Disease	60%	-20%	Death
Gentle Herbs	60%	0%	-1d4 CON
Potion of Virginity	95%	-15%	-1d4 COM
Sex Change	75%	+20%	Incomplete Change
Transmutation	90%	+10%	Sterility

Asrigath Overdose: If a female character takes a massive dose of Asrigath all at once, she suffers 2d4 points of damage. Ingesting this much Birthbane requires a Constitution check, or else she vomits it back up before the poison affects her.

Even if she survives, she will be horribly ill for 2d4 days, suffering temporary –2 penalties on Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity.

Cause Disease: This vile spell can be specifically tailored to create a disease that ends pregnancy. The method is effective, but it is quite dangerous. Even if the mother survives and is cured, she will be horribly ill for 3d6 days, suffering a –2 penalty on Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity. If she does not receive a Cure Disease spell afterwards, the GM may have to develop a sexually transmitted disease using the rules in this article and the GMG to track the progress of her illness.

Gentle Herbs: This is a catchall category for slowly applied herbal concoctions that gradually build up toxins in the womb that can cause abortion. These herbs must be given by a skilled herbalist, so this

technique is generally not available in lands where abortives are illegal. The loss of Constitution caused by a failed system shock check is permanent because the mild poisons in these herbs can still leave long-term damage.

Potion of Virginity: This magical potion reverses a portion of the woman's sexual development, restoring her womb to a state before any pregnancies occurred. Aside from restoring her physical maidenhood, it can also have the unwanted effect of reducing the femininity and sexual maturity of her appearance, causing a permanent loss of Comeliness. It does not actually reduce her age and is rarely, if ever, available in areas where abortives are illegal.

Any person who drinks this potion must make a system shock check as above or suffer the potion's ill effects. This potion causes sex changes in men 50% of the time, but not changing does not make them immune to the possible side effects.

Sex Change: Magical sex-changing magic can be used to end pregnancies, but even powerful magical items like an Ankle Bracelet of Gender-Bending are not without risk. If the magic fails to abort the child, the character retains her distinctly female parts, possibly escaping the change all together. If she fails her system shock check, however, her body becomes a mix of male and female parts, which parts being determined by the success or failure of the abortion.

Transmutation: A general category of magical spells that safely terminate pregnancies. These spells must be cast by a higher-level character and require lots of preparation, so this technique is generally not available in lands where abortives are illegal. The sterility caused by these spells is permanent unless reversed by a Regeneration spell, or other magic that grants a chance to conceive despite sterility.

GESTATION PERIODS

The gestation period of a given child is determined by the mother's race. Consult 17K: Gestational Period by Mother's Race to determine how many months each phase of the pregnancy takes.

Table 17K: Gestational Period by Mother's Race

Race	Total (months)	Early Phase	Mid Phase	Late Phase
Dwarves	10	4	3	3
Elves	9	3	3	3
Gnomes	11	4	4	3
Half-Elf	9	3	3	3
Halflings	11	4	4	3
Half-Ogre	10	4	3	3
Half-Orc	8	3	3	2
Human	9	3	3	3
Pixie-Fairy	4	1	2	1

Early Phase: During the early phase, the child is very tiny and no visible changes are present in the mother. However, each morning she needs to make a Constitution check to avoid vomiting. Eating a bit of bland food before rising grants a +4 to the check, and a Belt of Bounty eliminates the check all together. Elves do not suffer the ill effects of the early phase, nor do priestesses of motherhood-related gawds.

Mid Phase: This is the period when major organs and anatomy take shape in the baby. The mother likely needs to loosen her clothes, especially if they are of a snug-fitting variety (like armor). She may also suffer periodic ailments that temporarily lower an ability score. Each morning, she has a percentage chance (25 minus her Constitution) of suffering a loss of 1 point to a random attribute (roll 1d6 to decide - ignore Comeliness). This loss is temporary, and goes away after sunset. Elves and motherhood-related priestesses have half the normal chance of suffering this loss. During this phase, if the mother takes enough damage to render her unconscious, have her make a system shock check. Failure means that the child is lost.

Late Phase: This is the time when the final shape of the child is developing. The mother is quite obviously pregnant and her clothes need to be very loose. She frequently suffers random ailments that temporarily lower an ability score. Each morning, she has a percentage chance (35 minus her Constitution) of suffering a loss of 1 point to a random attribute (roll 1d6 to decide - ignore Comeliness). This loss is temporary, and goes away after sunset. During this phase, if the mother loses half her hit points or takes enough damage to render her unconscious, she must make a system shock check. Failure means that the child is lost and that the mother must make another system shock check to survive.

CHILDBIRTH

Childbirth is a natural, but somewhat traumatic event. When a mother goes into labor, roll 2d4 (penetration applies) to determine how many hours labor lasts before the child is born. When the birth occurs, roll two system shock checks, one for the mother and one for the child. Use the mother's Constitution score to determine the chance of success for both. Failure results in the death of that character (mother or child; or both if two failed rolls).

However, if a skilled midwife, or a spellcasting cleric with at least one healing spell, tends the mother during childbirth, roll two system shock checks for each character (mother and child). Only if that character fails both checks does a death occur.

If BOTH a spellcasting cleric and a skilled midwife attend the mother's birth, then THREE checks are made for each person and all three must fail for that character to die!

NEW SKILL: MIDWIFING

Sophisticated Task

BP Cost: 1

Relevant Ability: (Wis+Int)÷2

Mastery Die: 1d4

Course Prerequisite: First Aid Skill Suite

Course Cost: 250 gp

Course Difficulty: +10%

Midwifing is the skill of assisting pregnant women through childbirth. While most midwifing focuses on easing the pain and risk of childbirth, a midwife can also advise couples on ways to increase or decrease their odds of conception.

Any midwife with a skill of 51% automatically forces a re-roll of a failed system shock check during childbirth. She can do this once for the mother and once for the child. In effect, this requires two failed system shock checks in order for the person to die.

In addition, if either the mother or the child is about to die and the midwife succeeds at a difficult skill check, she can save them. If both are dying, she must choose which one she tries to save before she rolls. If she succeeds, the survivor has zero (0) hit points and is in critical condition, requiring magical healing or a difficult healing skill check to stabilize.

NUMBER OF OFFSPRING

Some species are more prone to multiple births than others are. Likewise, mothers who produced twins in the past are more likely to do so in the future. If a mother has twins, roll system shock checks for each birth as described above; in this case, roll one for each infant and two for the mother.

The *HackMaster Player's Handbook* defines rules for determining whether or not a character is a twin (Step 5 on the Status of Siblings roll, PHB p79). Use Table 17L: PHB Sibling Status (Step 5) Modifiers to add an additional modifier to that roll.

Table 17L: PHB Sibling Status (Step 5) Modifiers

Cause	Modifier
Belt of Bounty	+5
Bridal Draught	+10
Mother is a twin	+15
Previous multiple births	+25
Mother's mother was a twin	+5

WHAT ABOUT DISEASE?

I'm glad you asked. Since our goal as GMs is to force hapless PCs to suffer the consequences of their thoughtless actions, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs - not STPs!) are a powerful weapon in our arsenal.

Aside from the always-amusing "Burning Death," (GMG pg 22-27), a GM can find a complete toolkit to create illnesses, tormenting your players and their unfortunate characters! Here's a set of guidelines to make sure that your diseases never land you in front of an HMGMA review board.

1) Promiscuous Partners

First, you should always make a check to see if the PC's partner is infected with a disease. Obviously, with PCs you'll know, but for NPCs, you'll need to roll randomly. If the partner isn't infected, the PC can't get sick, can they? I recommend a base 1% chance for average NPCs and a base 5% chance for prostitutes and other promiscuous types.

Oh, by the way, your sex-related illnesses should ALWAYS be at least highly contagious (+5%). You can add other modifiers to your heart's content to up the odds, but if you skip this roll, our inquisitors might string you up by your dice bags!

2) Running the Course

Second, if the PC's partner is infected, you'll need to create an actual disease. Give it a snappy name like "Pustulent Runs" or "Fregandor's Scourge." The disease should always start in the generative organs before spreading to the urinary system in Stage Two. From there, you should roll on GMG Table 1Q: Disease or Disorder (page 23) 1d4-1 times to determine other parts of the body that are affected in Stage Three.

On a roll of 52-00, assume that the disease infects the whole body systemically after it spreads. From here on in, just follow the guidelines in the GMG to flesh out your disease with virulence factors and stages and the like. It is worth noting that diseases that do not spread past the generative and urinary organs only cause sterility (and bladder-related quirks & flaws) at Stage Four, not death.

3) Laboratory Testing

Third, once you have determined the nature of your plague-to-be, run the hapless NPC through a course of the disease, say 1d4 weeks, with the die penetrating. If the test NPC winds up dead, just back off a bit to a point when they are healthy enough to be intimate with the PC.

By the way, a Stage Three or Stage Four illness often terminates a pregnancy (see pregnancy phases above). Running the NPC through this process will help you determine the stage of the NPC's infection (for modifiers) and provide you with some practice for the illness that the poor PC is about to catch!

4) PLAY IT FAIR

Finally, make sure that any visible symptoms that the NPC has are presented to the PC. It is fair to require an Intelligence check to notice minor symptoms, though major ailments should be readily apparent. PCs won't necessarily know what disease their potential paramour is suffering from, but any moron can notice things like runny nose and swollen pustules.

If the PC does the deed anyway, roll a percentile die, adding all the modifiers from GMG Table 10: Chance of Contracting Ailment (page 22). If the result is less than the chance of infection, HUZDAH! You've just infected a PC with a horrible disease to mar his pathetic little life... until your Swack-Iron Dragon ends it for good!

MAGICAL STDs

It is perfectly all right for you to cook up some sexually transmitted diseases that involve magical components. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

Bimbonic Plague: Rather than causing death, this disease causes a conversion of mental faculties into physical and emotional attractiveness. For every day spent in Stage Four, a character permanently converts one point of Intelligence into Comeliness and one point of Wisdom into Charisma. His hair also lightens, with even raven-haired characters becoming blonde-haired within 4+1d4 days!

When either stat reaches zero, the character becomes a drone NPC and a carrier of the disease. He obeys the first person of the opposite sex he sees for the rest of his life. He eats, sleeps, and so forth without guidance, but otherwise has no free will or volition.

Emotionitis: Rather than causing death, this disease bestows mental and personality quirks. For every day spent at Stage Four, roll randomly for a new quirk, re-rolling physical flaws. The quirk is permanent, but the character gets no BPs for it. A variant called "Scar Fever" bestows only physical flaws.

Harlot Pox: This disease progresses very slowly from Stage Two through Stage Four, with the character making checks only once per month. Stage One only takes 1d3 days, however. During Stage Two, the afflicted suffers from nymphomania or satyriasis, with those in Stage Three acting like they are affected by a Geas to succumb to the insanity. Stage Four leads to death.

The Switch: Rather than causing death, Stage Four of this disease causes a sex change. After the change, the character becomes a carrier and suffers no further ill effects. Remember that male characters that become female get the "careless" modifier on Table 17D: Multipliers to Chance of Conception for their first 10 cycles after the change!



Charity Hack with Celebrity Guests:

Wryneck's Wheelhouse!

Rated Four Stars on *ENWorld*

Best-selling Product at *RPG Now* in October

This HackMaster adventure is not for the tame of heart! It's got lots of loot packed into one of the biggest and baddest magic items around - provided players can live long enough to take possession of it.



This mysterious wagon is the perfect traveling base of operations for a party of PCs - or (and rather more likely) it could substitute for a rolling tomb. Things just get weirder once you get inside. Why does that fountain look like someone filled it with monster slobber, and what are all these cracked firkin' statues anyway?

Produced by Second Rat Games with permission from Kenzer and Company, Wryneck's Wheelhouse is sure to help even a mediocre GM add to his score of PC kills! With numerous original spells, new swag and new monsters, Wryneck's Wheelhouse promises an entertaining challenge for HackMaster players that don't mind a fight (or ducks).

All proceeds go directly to a military unit to assist them in purchasing equipment and additional training. Everyone who worked on this adventure donated their efforts to bring you an

adventure that's everything you expect from HackMaster.

Written by David Reeder (HMGMA #OK-1-00620-02), author of the HackMaster adventure *White Doom Mountain*, as well as the Kingdoms of Kalamar supplement, *Secrets of the Alubelok Coast*. Also illustrated by a number of well-known industry artists (Doug Curtis, the Fraim Brothers, Erol Otus and others)!

You can see a few pages from the adventure [here](#), so check it out and help support our troops.

(ENWorld Review of Wryneck's Wheelhouse)



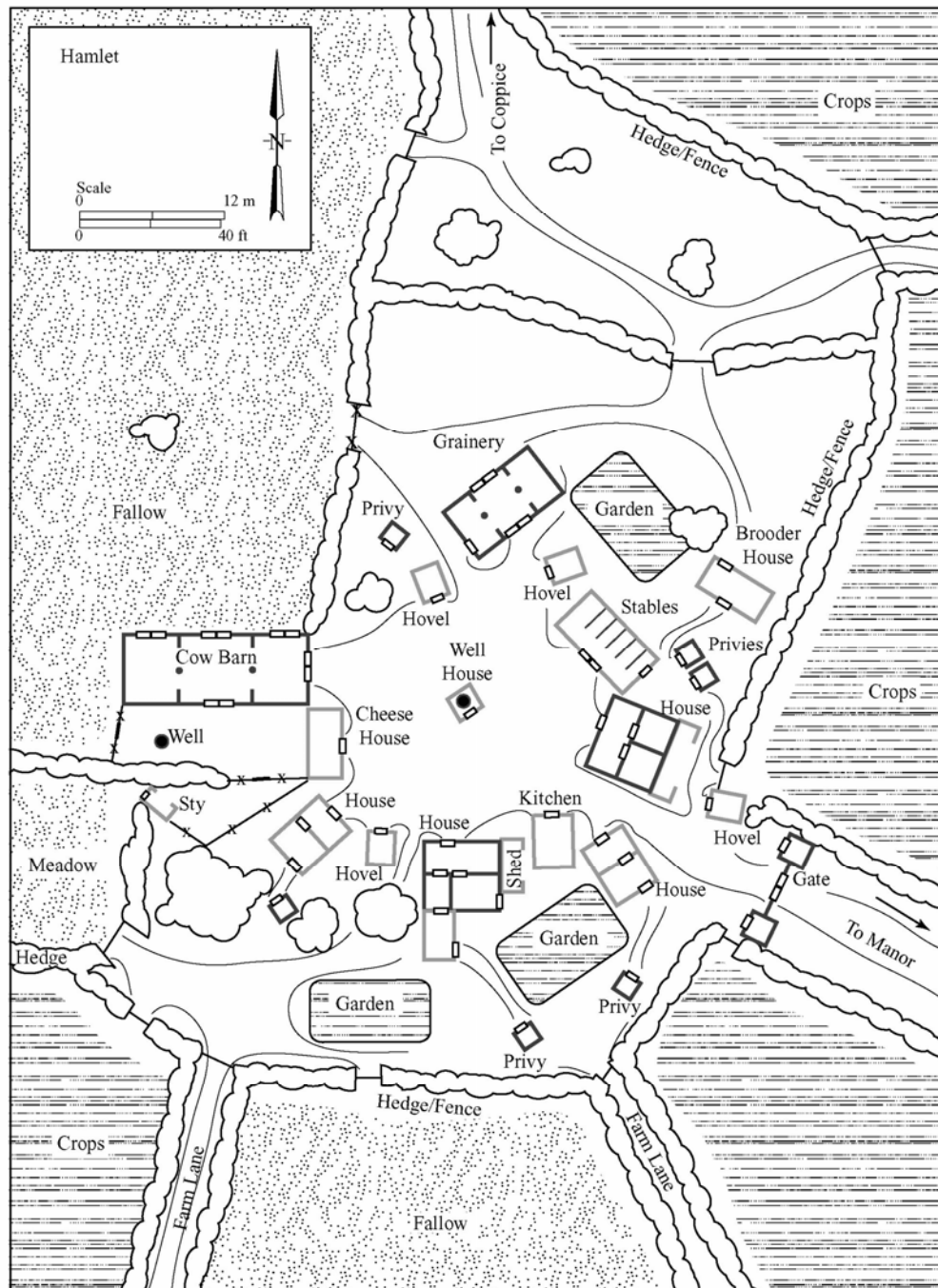
A Hacker's Guide to Garweeze World:

Rural Hamlet of Kal Dez

Art by James Montney (HMGMA# MI-01-01486-03)

Text by Jolly R. Blackburn (HMGMA# IL-10-00002-01)

Although this unsung hamlet could lie in almost any of Aldrazar's populated lands, it is particularly well suited for the small settlements of the Kingdom of Kal Dez. While one lord or another owns every stretch of land, some lands simply lie fallow (sometimes it has been so for decades) and some lands have actually returned to a state of wilderness. See the Garweeze World Gazetteer PDF (page 16) for more information about the Kingdom of Kal Dez.



From the Cubicle of the Chancellor: Player Character of the Year (Full membership)

By Mark Plemmons (HMGMA# IL-8-00005-01)

I'm pleased to announce the first HackMaster Association Character of the Year award! Aside from the prestige of having the HM Character of the Year, the winning Full member receives a special certificate and Serial Numbered Item named after their character.

And so, without further ado, the 2005 HMA Character of the Year award (Full member) goes to:

SILJONIC BLACKWIND

Race: Drow

Class and Level: Fighter 6/Magic-user 6

Player: Adam Keller (HMGMA# PA-4-00807-02)

Submitted by: John Klinge (HMGMA# PA-2-00769-02)

This drow fighter mage is not special merely because he is good and worships Eilistraee, nor that he has found a home on the topside. His start was small and insignificant - he was captured and interrogated as a spy assassin (as most drow are when found on the surface). He spent over a year in jail, until his skills of innate magic were key in revealing several assassins sent to kill Lord Nakamoto. He spent years honing his fighting skills and his meager magicks in defense of Lord Nakamoto, and when the Lord's empire was under attack from slavers from another land, the drow volunteered to scout out the threat and report what he found. His reports, and significant danger, brought the Lord's son to the area, and soon enough they both joined the Holy Terrors in order to stop the slave operation.

Even though he rarely gives out information about himself, his charismatic ways won over the Holy Terrors. He has always been a team player, knowing his role with accepting it with quiet dignity. He fearlessly charges mages to save the rest of his party from death, his quick thinking and massive complex geometric estimation skills have allowed him to blow away the enemy, and not harm his own party once. He gladly uses himself as a distraction, sure that the rest of his teammates will cover his back.

His greatest accomplishment is entering the Garweeze World prime arena, alone and unaided. Using his wits, magic, and swords, he watched and waited for his opportunities to thin the ranks of the other contestants, through guile and attrition. When the dust stood, only he and two combatants were left. Although their power was great, he alone came out the Grand Champion of the Kaldazor Te'Arana.

From the Cubicle of the Chancellor: Player Character of the Year (Sidekick)

By Mark Plemmons (HMGMA# IL-8-00005-01)

Since there was some confusion about exactly who is eligible for the award, we have added a 2005 award for Sidekick members (with a certificate but without the SNI). Take note, however – the 2006 award will be an HMA benefit for Full members only!

The 2005 HMA Character of the Year award (Sidekick member) goes to:

GAR STONEFIST

Race: Dwarf

Class and Level: Fighter 7

Player: Steven Bill (HMPA# MA-2-01927-04)

Submitted by: Keith MacDonald (HMGMA# MA-2-01814-04)

It is truly amazing that Gar is still alive. He was created shortly after the PHB was first released, long before players realized how to best maximize their HackMaster characters. He has poor Dex, can't use two weapons, and his Strength is average. Yet, he has managed to overcome his opponents.

He has taken no less than three critical hits to the groin. In one combat against a pack of Sturm Wolves, he was critically hit in the head (fall down, drop weapon) 3 times! Against blood golems, he had a blunt weapon critical sever his leg. When the combat was over, he grabbed his leg, hopped over to the bar, set it on the counter and ordered a drink. "I've had a tough day," he said to the bartender.

Using the Toe Ring of Dong Mao, he repeatedly leaped up to Hill and Frost Giant shoulders, where he proceeded to make called shots to their heads. If we could only see the giants expressions as a 3-foot tall dwarf leaped 16 feet in the air to bash them in the head! He has killed an Ettin with a single (non-critical) shot from a heavy crossbow, his max damage from a single blow from his battle axe is 104 points! He started in full plate, but it wasn't long before he was in combat with nothing but a loincloth and his battle axe. He's not all hack and slash either. He has solved many of the riddles or puzzles the party has encountered despite being distracted by his constant nosebleeds.

Is there a bone in his body that has not been broken? A limb that has not been severed? A crit location without a scar? Hardly! For he embodies the "Hack" in HackMaster.

Player's Advantage:

The Fighter Fractionals

Table by George J. Gerhold (HMGMA# NY-2-00118-01)

When fighter classes advance a level, they have their own version of PHB Table 11A: Stat Percentile Die Roll by Class. Roll the appropriate polyhedron based on your character's class for each of his fractional ability scores and add the result to the former number. Don't forget to roll his Honor Die and add that as well!

As always, if a fractional ability score is pushed above 100, you should raise that ability score by 1 and record the balance of the fractional score. Once you are finished rolling these fractional ability scores, check the ability score tables to see if any of your ability modifiers have changed, and make the necessary changes to your character sheet.

Table 17M: Stat Percentile Die Roll (Fighter Class)

Class	Strength	Dexterity	Constitution	Intelligence	Wisdom	Charisma	Comeliness
Fighter	d20	d10	d12	d4	d6	d8	d4
Barbarian	d20	d10	d12	d4	d8	d6	d4
Berserker	2d20	d12	d10	d2	d2	d6	d4
Bounty Hunter	d12	d10	d12	d20	d8	d6	d4
Cavalier	d20	d10	d12	d4	d6	d8	d5
Dark Knight	d20	d8	d12	d4	d6	d10	d5
Gladiator	d20	d10	d12	d4	d4	d8	d6
Holy Knight	d20	d8	d12	d4	d6	d10	d4
Knight Errant	d20	d8	d10	d4	d4	d12	d6
Monk	d20	d6	d12	d4	d10	d8	d4
Paladin	d20	d8	d12	d4	d6	d10	d5
Pirate	d20	d12	d10	d8	d6	d5	d4
Ranger	d20	d12	d6	d4	d8	d10	d4
Samurai	d20	d12	d10	d4	d6	d8	d4
Soldier	d20	d4	d6	d10	d8	d12	d4
Swashbuckler	d8	d20	d6	d4	d4	d12	d10



Ladies HackJournal:

Female Quirks and Flaws

By Natasha Neame (HMGMA# AU-1-02055-05)

with assistance from the Ladies of Hack

“You women are all crazy!” and “You women are all alike!” are two phrases that male players and characters often say at the gaming table. The truth is - they’re only half right. Yes, women are all crazy, but in unique ways. Every female in the world has their own combination of strange quirks and bizarre flaws, which mean no two women are alike. Sure, some of us are similar, but if women were all the same it would mean that men had a chance of understanding what we’re thinking - and we can’t have that!

To reflect upon the myriad complexities that make up the female form, the Ladies of Hack (a group of female scientists and warriors) recently locked themselves in a laboratory for over six months, developing the “Double X Chromosome Quirk and Flaw Tables.”

Whenever a female character rolls for quirks and flaws, she may roll on the **new PHB Table 6A [LH]** here instead of **Table 6A in the PHB**. In that case, **PHB Table 6A [LH]** supersedes **Table 6A** in the PHB for female characters. Note that new subtables that result from **PHB Table 6A [LH]** are not identified with the issue number and then a sequential letter as done elsewhere in this issue of the HackJournal. They are numbered 6J to 6M because they are extensions of the tables in Chapter 6 of the Player’s Handbook.

Before rolling on PHB Table 6A [LH], however, the player must first roll percentile die. Every female character has a base 50% chance of contracting the Chocolate Addiction quirk (a minor mental quirk for which she receives 8 BPs). *(If you think that percentile is too high, I’d like to point out that I spent 14 straight days handing out free chocolate to women in the street. 50% accepted the chocolate, while the other 50% said, “oh I’d LOVE to, but I’m watching my figure.”)*

If the character gains this quirk, she spends at least 1d20 gp per day on her habit whenever the opportunity presents itself. If she runs out of money, she may put up her equipment, borrow from comrades or even steal. She may even make deals that she’ll regret later, or battle fierce monsters if she believes they may hold delicious chocolates. Such characters have even been known to take *payment* in chocolate! However, the character gains 1d3 pounds per week in which she does not engage in physical exercise, and loses 1 point of Comeliness due to acne.

Once the player has rolled for Chocolate Addiction, and determined how many female quirks and flaws she wishes to roll for, she may then proceed to roll on PHB Table 6A [LH]. It should be noted that if the player has a result that requires them to roll on

Table 6M: Quirks (Mother) d100, those quirks & flaws relate to the character’s mother. Often this is far more dangerous, and the player is entitled to a re-roll as long as she has the BPs to spend.

A detailed description of each flaw and quirk follows the appropriate table, including some tips for GMs.

PHB Table 6A [PHs]: Flaws and Quirks d100

Roll	Table
01-10	Table 6B (PHB)
11-20	Table 6C (PHB)
21-30	Table 6D (PHB)
31-40	Table 6E (PHB)
41-46	Table 6J (below)
47-56	Table 6F (PHB)
57-66	Table 6G (PHB)
67-72	Table 6K (below)
73-82	Table 6H (PHB)
83-88	Table 6L (below)
89-94	Table 6I (PHB)
95-100	Table 6M (below)

Table 6J: Flaws (Physical) d100

Roll	Flaw	BP Bonus
01-40	Delicate Stomach	5
41-65	One of the Guys	3
66-100	Top-heavy	11

FLAWS

Delicate Stomach: If food doesn't smell right, she can't eat it; if food doesn't look right, she can't eat it; or if ingredients are suspect, she can't eat it. Furthermore, when faced with too much gore, too soon after a meal, a Constitution check is required.

On a failed check, she spends 1d4 rounds sickened and temporarily loses 1 point of Charisma until the gore is removed or she removes herself from the area for at least 3+1d6 minutes. (Minor, 5 points)

Suggested by Fair Dinkum Sheila.

One of the Guys: This female never had that special romantic spark with men. Maybe it's because she can iron a shirt while wearing it, maybe it's because her male relatives treated her like a boy, or maybe it's because she never liked frilly feminine activities.

Regardless, when it comes to charm, seduction or romance, she fails miserably because men can't ever seem to think of her "in that way." She suffers a -45% to seduce males. (Minor, 3 points)

Suggested by Katie White-Sonby.

Top-heavy: This character suffers from chronic back pain. Why? Because her breasts, be they natural or magically enhanced, are TOO BIG for her body. It also causes discomfort when running unless she has excellent support. On the other hand, she is in little danger of drowning. This equates to an increase to her encumbrance modifier by 0.25 when determining fatigue, and +15% to her swim skill due to increased buoyancy. Heaven help her if she needs to dive (-15% to swim checks)!

This character also pays 10% extra for any clothing that covers her chest, as regular stock does not fit. She must add 5% to the chance of spell mishap when casting a spell with somatic components, and suffers a -1 to-hit while using a long bow or short bow. (Major, 11 points)

Suggested by Katie White-Sonby.

Table 6K: Quirks (Mental) d100

Roll	Flaw	BP Bonus
01-10	Appearance Obsessive	5
11-26	Bug Dance	6
27-35	Can't Cook	5
36-40	Feline Affinity	3
41-49	Female Taboo	13
50-56	Mistress	8
57-64	Nymphomaniac	9
65-72	Princess' Disorder	5
73-79	Redecorator	8
80-94	Shopaholic	variable
95-100	Sister Solidarity	8

QUIRKS, MENTAL

Appearance Obsessive: This character spends 1d3 hours adjusting her makeup, hair, perfume, etc., before leaving the house (inn, tavern, etc.). She cannot go anywhere until her appearance is perfect in her eyes, and physically fights anyone trying to get her to leave earlier. NPCs selling items that may or may not increase a person's Comeliness can expect to make money from this character. This quirk may cause problems in a dungeon situation. (Minor, 5 points)

Suggested by Whitney Jo Currie.

Bug Dance: When confronted with a bug that appears on her person, or if she walks into a spider web, or so on, this character begins to "dance" in an uncontrollable way and shout something similar to "GET IT OFF!! GET IT OFF!"

As a result, she suffers a loss of 1 point of temporal Honor each time this occurs. She must succeed at a maintain self-discipline skill check if she wants to remain quiet and still. (Minor, 4 points)

Suggested by Fair Dinkum Sheila.

Can't Cook: Regardless of how many times her mother showed her, this character never really grasped the concept of cooking. She seems to burn every meal, from eggs to soup, and has even been known to destroy a cup of tea. The best she can manage (50% of the time) is to boil water. If her life depended on it, she would most likely starve. She cannot purchase the culinary arts or cooking skills, and survival skills (or any other skills related to food preparation) cost twice as much. (Minor, 5 points).

Suggested by Red.

Feline Affinity: Cats like this character, and she likes them back. This is often much to the annoyance of her companions, as she seems to be a magnet for the little fuzzy bastards. She and her group frequently have to make Dexterity checks (at the GM's discretion) to avoid tripping over the cat (or cats) that inevitably seem to follow her and stay underfoot. These cats flee to a safe distance when the female PC enters combat, quickly returning when the enemies are slain.

Fortunately, this character receives a Charisma-related +1 reaction adjustment when dealing with feline animals and monsters. In addition, if she adventures with a mage with a cat familiar, there is a 10% chance that the cat adopts her as its new owner (losing any abilities from being a familiar). (Minor, 3 points)

Suggested by Katie White-Sonby.

Female Taboo: This character was raised in a culture where topics relating to the female body (such as menstruation and pregnancy) are taboo subjects. In fact, the female in question is regarded as less than a second-class citizen when such events occur to her.

Even if she has left such a (boorishly pig-head) culture, the ties of tradition wormed their way into her thought patterns so much so that she still feels shamed and unworthy, when nature does what nature does.

Consequently, when these events occur, she isolates herself from the party. She refuses to travel and instead engages in various secret rituals to "purify" herself. The PC loses 2 points of temporal Honor each time such an event occurs. (Major, 13 points)

Suggested by Katie White-Sonby.

Mistress: If involved in a fight with a male, the female fights only until her opponent is nearly down (has less than 20% of his hit points remaining). At that point, she demands that the male beg for mercy, saying something like "Yes mistress, whatever you want, mistress!"

If the opponent complies, then the female must then save vs. apology or let her opponent go. (Minor, 8 points)

Suggested by Dungeonmom.

Nymphomaniac: A character with this quirk is compelled to sleep with as many other people as possible, whenever possible. She must have sex with someone, regardless of race or gender, at least once per day. If she fails to do so, on the third day without “it” she suffers a -1 point Intelligence penalty (because she's frustrated and losing concentration) and another -1 point penalty to Charisma (because she's irritable without sex). This is cumulative (i.e. after nine days of chastity, the character is at -3 Int, - 3 Cha). GMs should note that some societies frown on “loose women,” and could affect her Honor. Adultery is also a punishable offence in some areas. (Minor, 9 points)
Suggested by Shabby Belle.

Princess' Disorder: The bed is never soft enough, the food is never good enough, the horse is never pretty enough, and so on... This character refuses to sleep in anything but the best room in the best inn (although she still complains about it), and when it comes to “camping out,” she brings every creature comfort she possibly can. (Minor, 5 points)
Suggested by Fair Dinkum Sheila.

Redecorator: Nothing stays the same where this girl lives. There are always new drapes to buy, a change of tapestry to arrange, or just a quick relocation of the furniture. (“No really, Hrothgar, just a little to the left”.) She spends 25% of any earnings (before expenses such as training, etc.) to improve her living quarters each time she returns there. (Minor, 8 points)
Suggested by Dolliest.

Shopaholic: Characters with this flaw are compelled to shop at every stall, market, town, and run-down shack that they encounter. On rolling this quirk, the player must then roll an additional 1d6 to determine the specific shopping addiction.
Suggested by Dolliest and Whitney Jo Currie.

- Born to Shop (on a roll of 1-2)

If there's a market in town, she's there. Nothing is ever as important as money well spent. The character must spend 1d20 gp at every market she encounters, or she leaves depressed, and frustrated with life. (Minor, 6 points)

- Clothes Collector (on a roll of 3-4)

This character spends a minimum of 1d20 gp specifically on one type of clothing (roll 1d6: 1: accessories, 2: hat, 3: dress, 4: shirt, 5: pants, 6: shoes) at every market she encounters. She insists on bringing at least four of these items with her, regardless of encumbrance. After all, you never know which boots (or dress, hat, etc.) you'll need when trudging through a swamp. This character often has a pack animal (or two) specifically for clothes. (Minor, 7 points)

- Designer Labels (on a roll of 5-6)

It's not enough to buy good quality gear, if a famous artisan does not make it. This character always goes out of her way to buy from the best shops in town (enduring with a smile any resulting hit on her finances). In game terms, this translates as always paying for Superior quality items or better (see GMG p142), even a small item like a piece of parchment. (Minor, 7 points)

Sister Solidarity: In this character's mind, fellow women can never do wrong and always must be believed. (This PCs may save vs. apology at the GM's discretion if another female's claims are too outlandish). This character refuses to fight any other females unless they injure her first – even if they are attacking her companions (it's obviously the fault of a man somewhere...). Instead, she often raises one or both fists and cheers, often some phrase like “Right on, sister! Stick it to the man!” (Major, 8 points)
Suggested by Katie White-Sonby.

Table 6L: Quirks (Personality) d100

Roll	Quirk	BP Bonus
01-12	Bitch	6
13-22	Child at Heart	4
23-33	Ditzy	6
34-43	Floozy	5
44-53	Gabby	10
54-65	Motherly	6
66-75	Queen Bee	5
76-85	Roomie	4
86-100	Sentimental	5

QUIRKS, PERSONALITY

Bitch: This character is a strong, stubborn woman who knows what she wants. She is supremely confident in her knowledge of what's best, and bossy to the point of arrogance. She takes the chance to say, “*I told you so*” in the most annoying singsong voice whenever possible.

When proven wrong (yeah, right...), she denies it to the bitter end. She refuses to allow anyone to help her (whether the help is real or imagined) and often gives unsolicited advice to other people. She loses 1 point of temporal Honor whenever she allows a male to help her in any way. (Minor, 6 points)

Suggested by Jammeez and Shabby Belle.

Child at Heart: This character, although fully grown, acts like a child much of the time. She has a high-pitched voice, carries childhood dolls in her backpack and squeals with delight over things she adores. She avoids what she perceives as icky or disgusting things, such as dirt, mules, lizards, intestines, etc., and decorates her armor and weapons with frills and bows to make them “prettier.” (Minor, 4 points)

Suggested by Peace.

Ditzzy: A female character with this quirk has a tendency to giggle at nearly everything. She states the obvious to the point of being incredibly annoying (i.e. "oh that man's face is yucky") and often appears less intelligent than she actually is. The character has a tendency to ask odd questions such as "Why is it called a cross bow? Were the people who made it angry or something?" and generally annoy other PCs.

A character with this quirk loses -25% fractional points to her Intelligence and Charisma ability scores. (Minor, 6 points)

Suggested by Natasha Neame.

Floozy: There doesn't seem to be anything strange about this character – at least, until she drinks her first beer at the tavern... After that, she hangs on everyone in the room, regardless of how much she'd normally hate them. This character is known to start hugging people towards the end of the night, and there is a 50% chance she will take someone home with her.

When a half ogre is available, there is a 30% chance it will him. If the character herself is a half ogre, however, there is a 30% chance she will take home a dwarf or gnome titan (assuming such races are present). The character will deny any such actions in the morning. (Minor, 5 points)

Suggested by Dolliest.

Gabby: This woman can find anything to talk about - and does so constantly. This is great for striking up conversations at the local tavern and irritating the party, but monsters tend to get annoyed when you fill their quiet forest or dungeon with a lot of unnecessary noise.

When this character is with a party, the chance of a random encounter increases by four, and the chance for surprise increases by 5%. Thieves and similar characters with this flaw suffer a -45% penalty to move silently checks. The character may also talk to plants, and has been known to tell inanimate objects to "Stay here 'til I come back." (Minor, 10 points).

Suggested by Fair Dinkum Sheila and Klea.

Motherly: A female character with this quirk is insistent on everyone being properly equipped at all times for any possibility. As a result, she always attempts to cook and clean for the entire party, does all the laundry, and bothers everyone to ensure they are always wearing a warm coat and clean underwear "just in case." If caught short-handed when another player needs something (such as a sack, black dragon acid), she loses 1 point of temporal Honor – because a REAL Mom would have brought some! (Minor, 6 points)

Suggested by Shabby Belle.

Queen Bee: In modern times she would be the head cheerleader, the diva, or the soccer mom from hell. She must always have the last word, insists all other women must listen to her, and gawds help anyone who tries in any way to outshine her. A nasty temper, cutting wit and the odd forced head shavings await her foes.

(Minor, 5 points)

Suggested by Dolliest.

Roomie: Beware letting her into your keep, for this character automatically marks it as her territory. Subtlety is lost on her (as is bluntness) for she whines, flirts and/or bitches her way into staying "just a little bit longer, please?" There is a 5% chance that even if she dies, her spirit will still haunt what she considered her "territory." In this eventuality, all exorcism and turning attempts are made with a -5 penalty. This quirk is very common amongst ex-girlfriends and mother-in-law characters. (Minor, 4 points)

Suggested by Katie White-Sonby.

Sentimental: No matter what garbage the party picks up, this character never wants the group to sell anything they found while adventuring. She may hang on to that Staff of Swarming Insects (even though it has no remaining charges), or those five stained green towels, purely because of the sentimental value. ("Remember when we got these? It was our first trip together...") The character calls dibs on the most useless item found whenever treasure is divided and never sells it. (Minor, 5 points)

Suggested by Traci Thompson.



Table 6M: Quirks (Mother) d100

Roll	Flaw	BP Bonus
01-30	Guilt Trip Mom	7
31-80	Mommy's Little Angel	3
81-100	Vengeful Mother	6

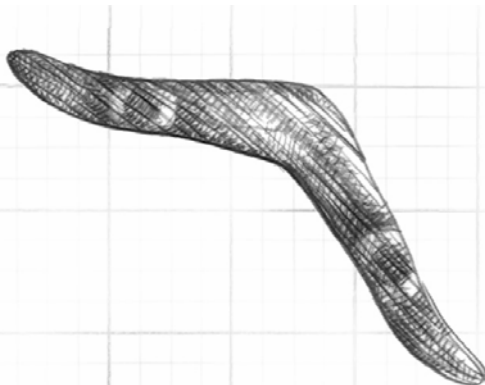
MOTHER QUIRKS (suggested by Dolliest)

Guilt Trip Mom: No matter how great an adventure this character returns from, no matter how much the bards sing of her deeds, there's always another letter (or telepathic, whispering wind, etc. message) from mom. These messages remind the character that she never calls, her chain mail makes her look like a tramp, her friends are bums, all the other girls from her kobar have husbands now, and so on.

For one week after receiving such a message, this character suffers a temporal -2 Honor loss from the backbiting and grumbling of her mother, and is at -10% on reaction checks due to her gloomy spirits. (Minor, 7 points)

Mommy's Little Angel: The character's mother is certain that her child is the best, smartest, most capable creature in the universe. She can't stop turning every conversation into another discussion of their child. When the character's party comes to visit, she embarrasses the female PC by showing off all paintings of that character as a nude baby, drawings she did when she was a child, and stories of youthful hijinks and indiscretions. (Minor, 3 points)

Vengeful Mother: This character's mother often arrives to cause trouble for anyone who harmed her daughter. Word of this has spread, and so the character loses 2 points of Honor for being a "momma's girl." However, it may cause intelligent foes to hold off on a killing blow if she can make a successful intimidation check and say "You'll be sorry when my mom finds out you killed me!" (Minor, 6 points).



Common Boomerang: 2 gp; 2 lb.; Size T; Crushing; Spd -2; Dmg vs Tiny 1d6, Small 1d5, Med 1d4, Large 1d4-2, H/G 1; Base Availability Hi 60, Med 40, Lo 30

All Things Magic:

Vorpal Boomerang +3

By Topher Kersting (HMGMA# TN-4-01344-03)

The Vorpal Boomerang (EP 3,500; GP 17,500) is a powerful weapon in the right hands. It acts as a common boomerang with a +3 bonus to-hit and damage, unless a critical hit or fumble is rolled. On a critical hit, the Vorpal Boomerang beheads the intended target, unless the thrower made a called shot to a part of the body other than the neck (in which case the critical severity is +16). The downside of the weapon is that on a fumble the boomerang damages the thrower (50%) or another target within 10' of the thrower (50%, with the specific target determined without regard to size considerations). If the thrower is indicated, there is a 25% chance he loses d5 fingers from his dominant hand, 25% chance to lose the entire hand, 25% chance to lose a limb (d4 1 = left arm, 2 = right arm, 3 = left leg, 4 = right leg), and 25% chance to be beheaded. If another target is indicated, treat it as a critical hit with +16 base severity.

The Vorpal Boomerang was first developed by an order of evil monks known for their fierce head-taking techniques. Based in a hidden temple somewhere in the Iron Sta Mountains, these monks perfected the art of decapitation and mutilation. Vorpal Boomerangs were highly prized badges of honor amongst the monks, second only to the infamous Flying Guillotine. The skill with which they employed these weapons was amazing to behold - though it was often the last thing their foes ever saw.

The Inscrutable Order of Decapitating Dragons first rose to prominence in the employ of an evil warlord in the Darkhaud Kingdom, who paid huge sums to retain these monks as executioners and enforcers of his dark will. Rebels and insurgents would flee in fear if they heard a Decapitating Dragon was moving through the area, for their cruelty was legendary. The Dragons claimed the heads of their intended targets as proof of their duties but never relinquished their prizes. Instead, they kept the heads on display in their temple and eventually added them to the great Cavern of Skulls deep beneath the monastery.

Eventually, the monks fell into disfavor with the Daurkk warlord after he sent them to return his runaway bride. He had intended them to return her whole, but such a practice was unheard of amongst the monks. The furious warlord sent a large, well-trained force to destroy the Order and their monastery. Those who returned assured their ruler that the job was finished. He nervously took them at their word, and it is true that the monks' presence in the Darkhaud Kingdom has not been felt for a very long time.

While Vorpal Boomerangs occasionally surface, along with rumors of new monasteries, no eyewitness accounts of a Decapitating Dragon have come from any reliable sources.

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GameMaster's Workshop

A Weighty Argument for Rebalancing HackMaster® Races

by Steve Johansson (HMGMA # IL-10-00002-01)

Garl Graystone drew his short sword confident in his ability to stand his ground against his huge human opponent. Sure, he was only a 40 inch high gnome but what did that matter? Though his opponent towered over him and probably weighed in at two and one-half times his weight, Garl knew they were evenly matched. Each of them were average specimens of their respective races and both had just completed their fighter training at Master Sing Hu'Check's academy.

As the two veterans traded blows, Garl's presumptions were proving correct. His size was no hindrance at all. His short sword proved just as capable of landing damaging blows as his opponent's long sword thanks (ironically) to his diminutive stature. As the duel wore on, each of the combatants began to weaken as they suffered under the impact of each other's blade. Neither could, however, gain a clear advantage. In frustration, the burly human cried out...



Anyone vaguely familiar with the races of HackMaster® knows that the battle depicted in the introduction to this article is absolutely consistent with the bonuses and penalties granted in Chapter Two of the Player's Handbook. Sure, pixie fairies are justifiably penalized -6 to their Strength. However, the only other diminutive race to be similarly penalized are halflings and then only a mere -1. This is an affront to humankind and seems to fly in the face of a basic equation of physics, namely $force = mass \times acceleration$.

One can reasonably assume that acceleration can be determined by a combination of strength and technique – the latter incorporating the character's level and other skills or talents that provide bonuses to hit or damage. However, the uncomfortable situation remains that an equally strong and skilled fighter, be he an elf or human, can deal and sustain equivalent damage.

Some basic research into the *Player's Handbook* and *Hacklopedia of Beasts* yields the following raw data:

Race	Strength Bonus	Mass (lbs)
Pixie Fairy	-6	27.5
Human	0	175
Half-Ogre	+2	370
Hill Giant	+9 ¹	3319 ²
Fire Giant	+12 ³	7500
Storm Giant	+14 ⁴	15000

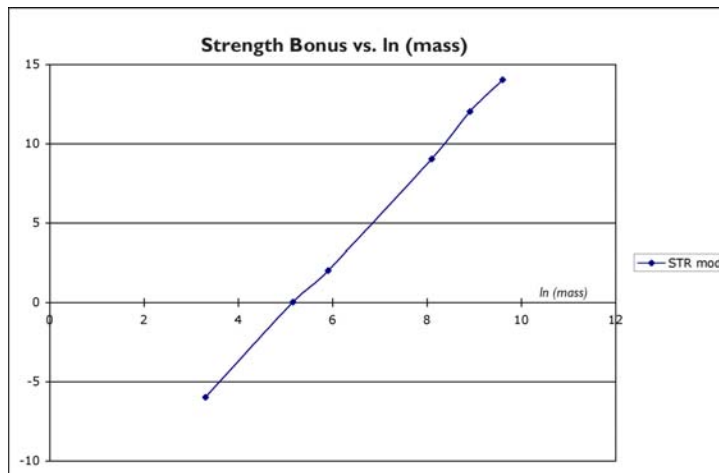
¹ Hill Giants have 19 Strength which equates to a +9 bonus vs. average humans

² Hill Giant weight calculated by assuming average human dimensions for this 16' tall creature and then cubing the height ratio ($175 \text{ lb} \times 2.67^3$)

³ Fire Giants have 22 Strength which equates to a +12 bonus vs. average humans

⁴ Storm Giants have 24 Strength which equates to a +14 bonus vs. average humans

While this demonstrates that more massive creatures tend to be stronger, no clear relationship is immediately obvious. However, as in the case with most biological data, we find that the relationship between the variables is logarithmic. Hence when the strength bonus is plotted versus the natural logarithm (ln) of mass, the relationship comes into focus.



A least squares regression can be derived from this line that yields the formula:
 $Strength\ Bonus = ((\ln(mass) - 5.1648)) \div 0.315$

For the Mathematically challenged (e.g. my editor the esteemed Mark Plemmons...)

Regression, in general, is the problem of estimating a conditional expected value. Linear regression is called "linear" because the relation of the dependent to the independent variables is a linear function of some parameters.

The earliest form of linear regression was the method of least squares, which was published by Legendre in 1805, and by Gauss in 1809. The term "least squares" is from Legendre's term, *moindres quarr'es*. However, Gauss claimed that he had known the method since 1795.

A least squares regression can be easily computed through the use of any statistical software including the ubiquitous Microsoft Excel.

The *natural logarithm* is the logarithm to the base e, where e is equal to 2.71828... (continuing forever). Initially, it seems that in a world using base 10 for nearly all calculations, this base would be more "natural" than base e. The reason we call $\ln(x)$ "natural" is twofold: first, the natural logarithm can be defined quite easily using a simple integral or Taylor series; this is not true of other logarithms. Second, expressions in which the unknown variable appears as the exponent of e occur much more often than exponents of 10 (because of the "natural" properties of the exponential function which allow it to describe growth and decay behaviors), and so the natural logarithm is more useful in practice.

Natural logarithms can be computed on scientific calculators or in Microsoft Excel using the formula $=\ln(x)$ where x is the cell containing the value.

Armed with this formula, we can then take a first pass at determining more realistic strength bonuses for HackMaster® races – ones that favor the oft neglected humans.

	Wt. (ave.)	STR Adjustment
Pixie Fairy	27.5	-5.87
Halfling M	64.5	-3.17
Halfling F	60.5	-3.37
Gnomeling M	51	-3.91
Gnomeling F	49	-4.04
Gnome M	88.5	-2.16
Gnome F	84.5	-2.31
Elf M	106.5	-1.58
Elf F	86.5	-2.24
Dwarf M	152	-0.45
Dwarf F	127	-1.02
Half-Elf M	129.5	-0.96
Half Elf F	104.5	-1.64
Human M	175	0.00
Human F	135	-0.82
Half-Orc M	172	-0.05
Half-Orc F	142	-0.66
Half-Ogre M	370	2.38
Half-Ogre F	365	2.33

Two special cases need to be mentioned. Gnome Titans have been bred for generations to become lean, mean hacking machines. It is reasonable therefore to award them a +2 bonus to the score computed above. Half-orcs, despite a slightly smaller body mass, have a superior musculature compared to humankind. As such, they receive an adjustment of +1 to the values determined above.

It has already been established that the smallest of the PC races, the pixie fairies, receive a mere 10 hit point kicker compared to the 20 hp bonus received by all other races. Again, this unfairly penalizes the race if not applied across the board and significantly detracts from one of humankind's assets - namely their size. Once again, we can use the scaling factor we derived for body mass and apply it to the kicker. Combining this with the modifications to the first iteration of the Strength table yields:

Mass-ively Rebalanced HackMaster® Races

	Wt. (ave)	STRADJ	Kicker
Pixie-Fairy (all)	27.5	-5.87	10
Gnomeling Male	51	-3.91	13
Gnomeling Female	49	-4.04	13
Halfling Male	64.5	-3.17	15
Halfling Female	60.5	-3.37	14
Gnome Male	88.5	-2.16	16
Gnome Female	84.5	-2.31	16
Gnome Titan Male	88.5	-0.16	16
Gnome Titan Female	84.5	-0.31	16
Elf Male	106.5	-1.58	17
Elf Female	86.5	-2.24	16
Dwarf Male	152	-0.45	19
Dwarf Female	127	-1.02	18
Half-Elf Male	129.5	-0.96	18
Half Elf Female	104.5	-1.64	17
Human Male	175	0.00	20
Human Female	135	-0.82	19
Half-Orc Male	172	+0.95	20
Half-Orc Female	142	+0.34	19
Half-Ogre Male	370	+2.38	24
Half-Ogre Female	365	+2.33	24

Now those of you playing one of the smaller races may cry foul. How dare you penalize me!

In point of fact, it is humans that have been penalized since first edition HackMaster® by being denied the basket of goodies heaped upon every other race. If you doubt my words, just cast an eye around to the composition of your own adventuring party. I'll wager a bet it's far from human-centric.

By returning one of humankind's neglected advantages over their diminutive kin, we make some gains in restoring the balance to arguably one of the most disadvantaged races in the game. And that's not a bad thing.

