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The Book of Mystic Wisdom

as told by Philpop the Weary, magician to the court of his most sovereign Lord British.

Know ye, O seeker of the mystic wisdoms, that the ways of magic are diverse and strange. There exists the need for utmost concentration and the harvesting of things magical in order that ye may harness the powers of the universe. Many are the aeons of wisdom contained in these pages which I write for the benefit of my pupils, yet still there is much to learn.

All magic is accomplished by the use of means both human and of nature, for true magic is but the melding of human will and natural force. Without the human voice to utter the chant, no spell may be cast. Yet without the proper natural catalyst, no spell may be effective. Thus magic is twofold, a balance struck between nature and humanity. Let us examine both aspects here, beginning with those natural substances, known as **Reagents**, *that lend power to the words of the spellcaster.*

Sulphurous Ash — *Sulphur is the substance found in nature that is most useful in the generation of fire. It is the color of saffron and, when burned, gives off an odour indicative of its great mystic strength. Yet its true power is to be found in the second burning — that is, in the use of the ashen residue of sulphur that has been burned in a crucible fashioned from the skull of a Balron. Sulphurous Ash is not an uncommon substance, having been a staple of the Wizard's profession through the ages. It may be purchased from any reputable purveyor of magical goods and is useful in the casting of Energy Fields and Magic Missiles, as well as in spells requiring a quick burst of light or a sustained glow.*

Ginseng — *Long praised for its strength-giving and medicinal properties, the root of the Ginseng plant is immediately recognizable for its forked shape, and to those initiated in the mystic ways, by its overpowering rose-coloured aura. It has been used for centuries by peasants who chew it or brew tea from a*

powdered preparation of the root in order to gain strength and stamina as they toil in the fields. While commonly found throughout Britannia, the Ginseng used as a component in the casting of spells is generally black in colour and found only on the slopes of the northern mountains. It may be purchased in virtually any shop that sells magical goods, and is most useful in spells of a healing or narcotic nature, such as Cure or Sleep enchantments.

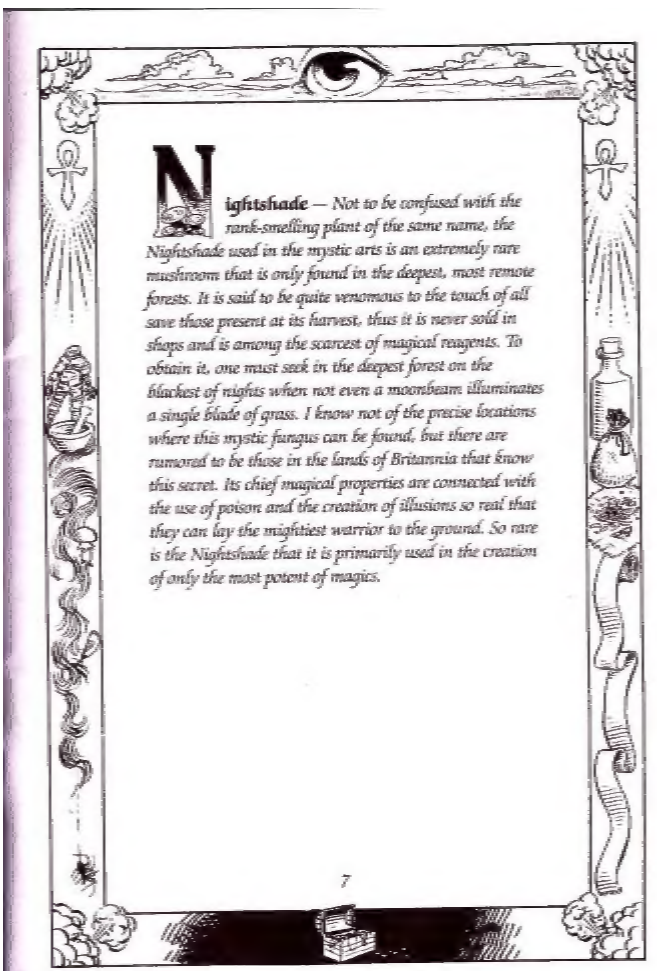
Garlic — *Even the most common of nature's gifts to our people have magical properties as can be witnessed by the power of Garlic. This pungent bulb is found in every garden in the lands of Britannia, and no stew or roast would be complete without its sharp flavor. Its aromatic nature makes Garlic a powerful reagent in the casting of magical spells, and it is used in all spells of the warding variety — be they the warding off of common and magical sickness or the repelling of beings once dead.*

Spider Silk — *The miracle of Spider Silk lies in its tensile strength. Imagine, if you will, a grown man relying on a strand of catgut to hold his weight all the days of his life. A spider relies on the finest of threads to do just that, and its silk never fails it. We should praise the first wizardling who realized the mystic secret of Spider Silk, for it is to him or her that we owe the knowledge of binding and restraining spells. The silk of the deadly Albino Ghoul spider — both the miniature and giant varieties -- has been used by adepts through the years in rites of magic. The spider farms of the south produce perhaps a hundred pounds of the substance each year and sell it to the merchants of magic, where it is made available to all who ply our trade. It is said that each year one worker dies the horrible death incurred by the bite of the Albino Ghoul spider to ensure the potency of the silk, although never has this deliberately been made to happen.*

Blood Moss — *is the bane of farmers and the boon of magicians. It is a deep red fungus that attacks the crops of those who raise grain, yet it is a vital component in the casting of spells. An oddity to those who spend their lives observing the growth of that which is not animal in nature — for it behaves like no other plant or mushroom — Blood Moss grows only in the dryest of times, when all around it is perishing from drought. It cannot survive the absence of direct sunlight, and thus passes from the earth each night, only to return when the sun blazes mercilessly upon the land.*

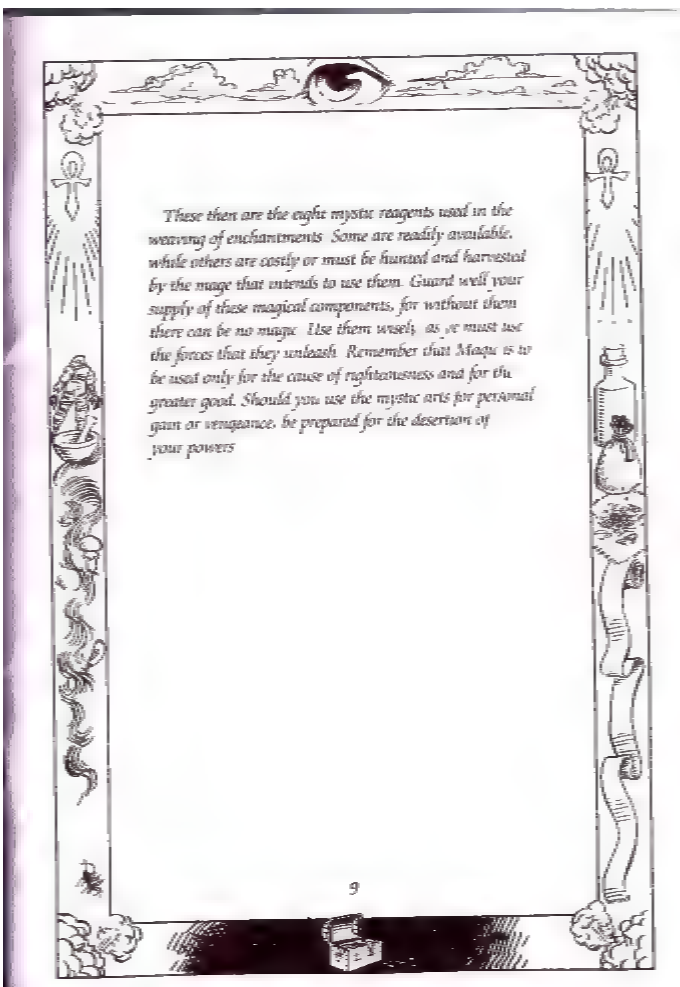
Blood Moss seems to feed only in ripening grain — it can lay waste to an acre of corn in a single day and vanish without a trace as night falls, leaving naught but fruitless stalks swaying in the cool, night breeze. The magic of Blood Moss is thought to reside in its fleeting nature, for it is used in the spells of movement — from the simplest levitation to making the very earth tremble. As harvest time comes each year, the merchants send runners to wait by the fields and gather the Blood Moss. Farmers consider these runners unlucky and try to chase them from their fields, but enough show persistence to ensure their masters a plentiful supply of Blood Moss to sell.

Black Pearl — *The Black Pearl is the most highly prized of all the pearls: Well-formed ones command a price from jewellers that would bankrupt a score of wizards. Yet Black Pearls are vital in the casting of spells that are hurled from the mage's person and must travel to a final destination. Fortunately for our profession, even rarer than a normal Black Pearl is one that is perfectly shaped. Most are lopsided and lack symmetry — the very quality that makes the jeweller desire them so highly. This ensures a ready supply for the thaumaturge — the weaver of magic. It is said that, unlike the ordinary pearl which is formed inside an oyster when it seeks to protect itself from a piece of sand or grit, the Black Pearl only forms when the seed of the great pearl is yet another pearl of much smaller size cast adrift by the death of another oyster.*

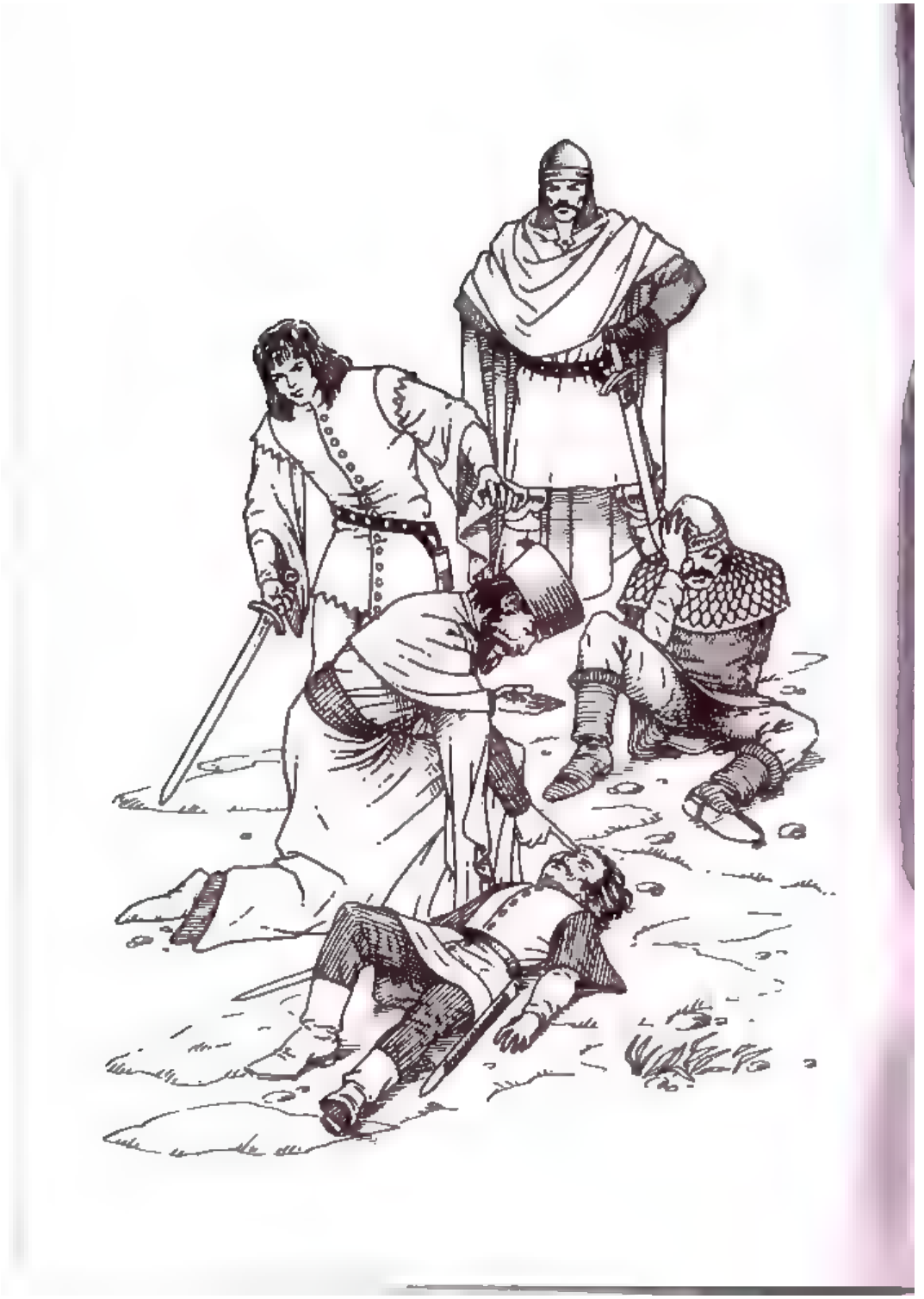


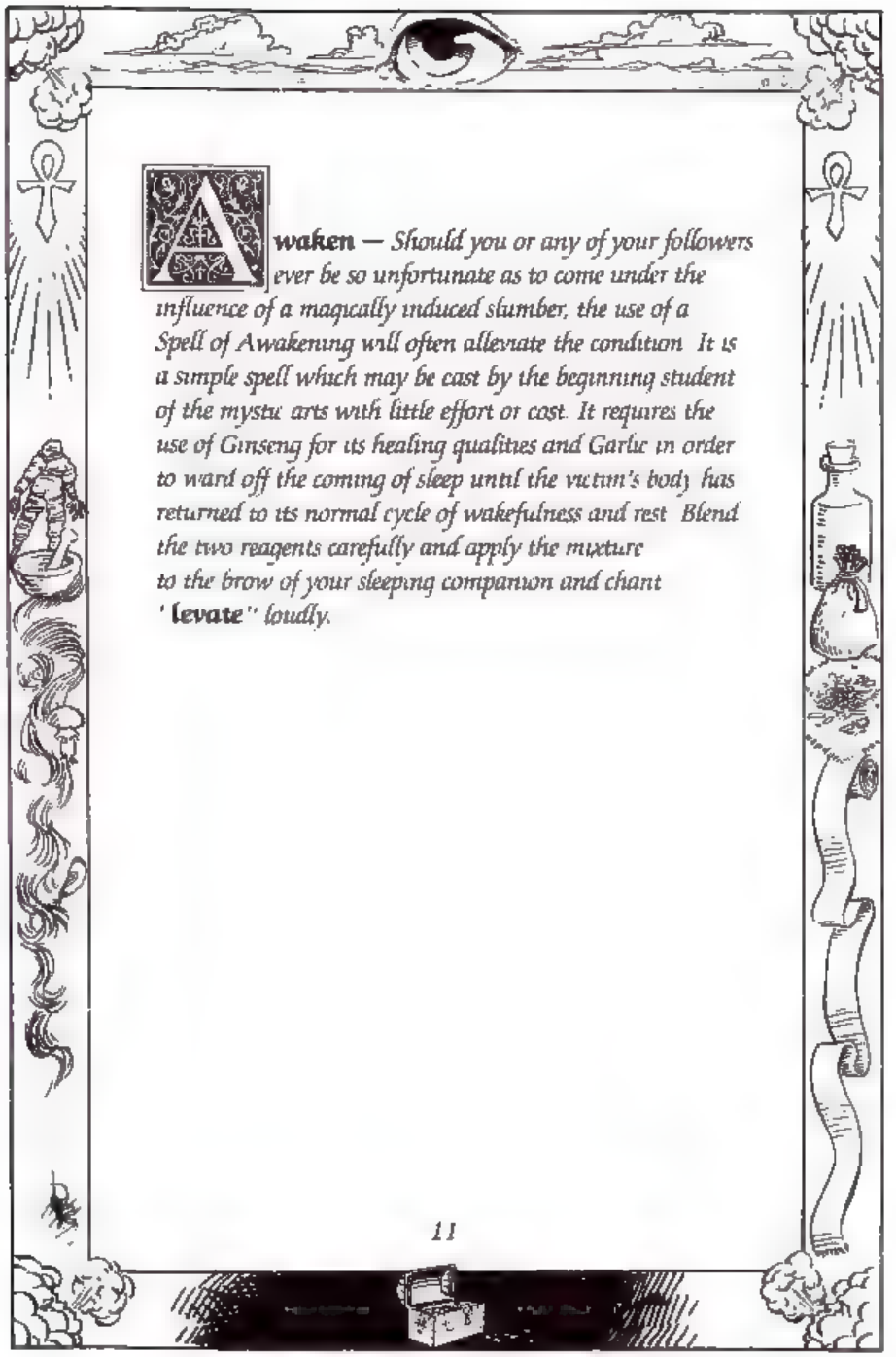
Nightshade — *Not to be confused with the rank-smelling plant of the same name, the Nightshade used in the mystic arts is an extremely rare mushroom that is only found in the deepest, most remote forests. It is said to be quite venomous to the touch of all save those present at its harvest, thus it is never sold in shops and is among the scarcest of magical reagents. To obtain it, one must seek in the deepest forest on the blackest of nights when not even a moonbeam illuminates a single blade of grass. I know not of the precise locations where this mystic fungus can be found, but there are rumored to be those in the lands of Britannia that know this secret. Its chief magical properties are connected with the use of poison and the creation of illusions so real that they can lay the mightiest warrior to the ground. So rare is the Nightshade that it is primarily used in the creation of only the most potent of magics.*

Mandrake Root — *The root of the poisonous Mandrake plant is instantly recognizable by its human shape and its crimson colour. It is said that the sap runs blood-red when the plant is cut down in order to harvest the root. Long prized for its narcotic and purging effects when consumed in minute portions, the Mandrake Root is the most powerful known substance in the weaving of magical spells that give new shape to the very world around us. The variety of Mandrake Root used in the mystic arts is found only in marshy terrain, where the root can thrust deeply into the earth. The more earth that must be moved to retrieve the Mandrake Root, the more potent its effect in the magic of the finder. Many years ago, when our people were but scattered tribes of nomads, the Mandrake was plentiful. As our people have tamed the land, however, and the practice of the mystic arts has become refined, the Mandrake has all but vanished from the face of the land we now call Britannia. It is never seen in the shops of the towns and castles, and hardly even sold privately if found. Many of our profession have devoted lifetimes to the search for Mandrake Root without ever coming into possession of a single piece of it.*



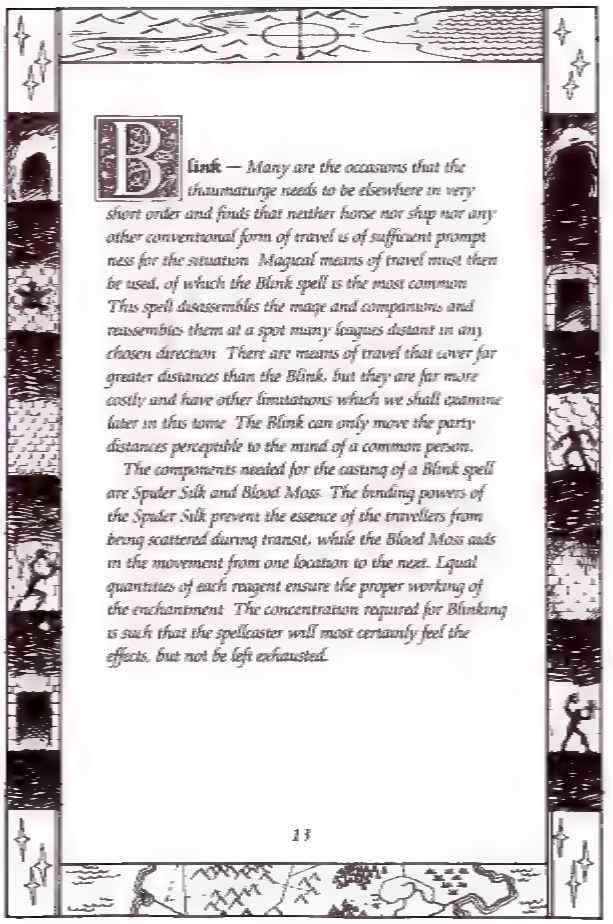
These then are the eight mystic reagents used in the weaving of enchantments. Some are readily available, while others are costly or must be hunted and harvested by the mage that intends to use them. Guard well your supply of these magical components, for without them there can be no magic. Use them wisely, as ye must use the forces that they unleash. Remember that Magic is to be used only for the cause of righteousness and for the greater good. Should you use the mystic arts for personal gain or vengeance, be prepared for the desertion of your powers.





Awaken — *Should you or any of your followers ever be so unfortunate as to come under the influence of a magically induced slumber, the use of a Spell of Awakening will often alleviate the condition. It is a simple spell which may be cast by the beginning student of the mystic arts with little effort or cost. It requires the use of Ginseng for its healing qualities and Garlic in order to ward off the coming of sleep until the victim's body has returned to its normal cycle of wakefulness and rest. Blend the two reagents carefully and apply the mixture to the brow of your sleeping companion and chant "***levate***" loudly.*





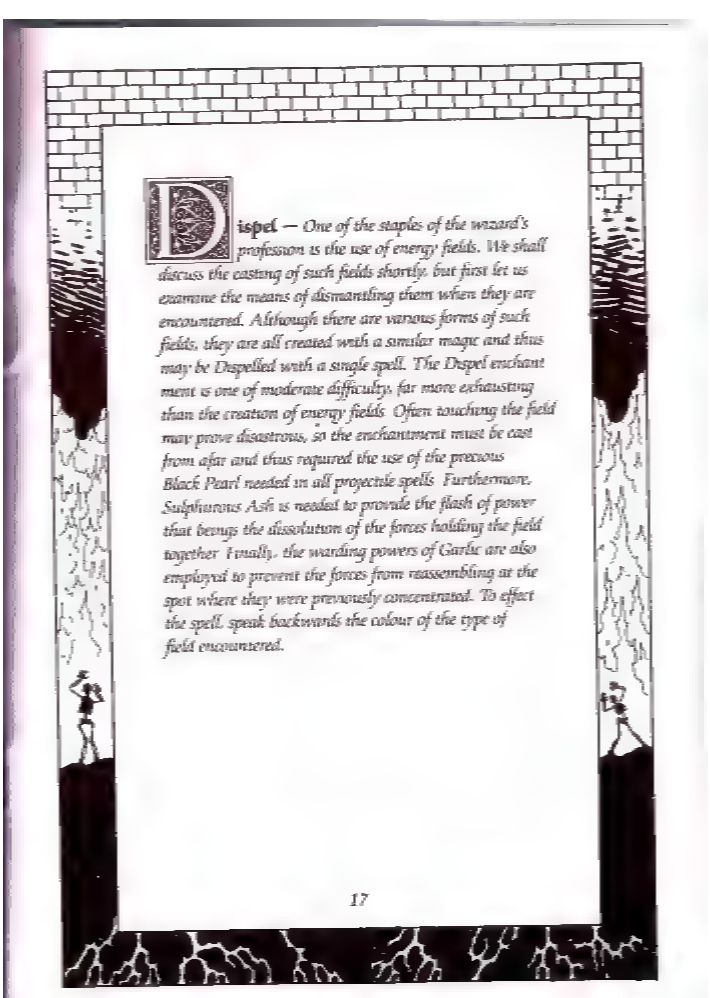
Blink — *Many are the occasions that the thaumaturge needs to be elsewhere in very short order and finds that neither horse nor ship nor any other conventional form of travel is of sufficient promptness for the situation. Magical means of travel must then be used, of which the Blink spell is the most common. This spell disassembles the mage and companions and reassembles them at a spot many leagues distant in any chosen direction. There are means of travel that cover far greater distances than the Blink, but they are far more costly and have other limitations which we shall examine later in this tome. The Blink can only move the party distances perceptible to the mind of a common person.*

The components needed for the casting of a Blink spell are Spider Silk and Blood Moss. The binding powers of the Spider Silk prevent the essence of the travellers from being scattered during transit, while the Blood Moss aids in the movement from one location to the next. Equal quantities of each reagent ensure the proper working of the enchantment. The concentration required for Blinking is such that the spellcaster will most certainly feel the effects, but not be left exhausted.



Cure — *Venomous creatures abound throughout the lands of Britannia. Rarely are they evil, nature having provided them with their sting as a means of defense against larger predators, but without proper attention wounds can fester and lead to the death of a victim. Furthermore, evil mages may cast noxious poisonous energy fields during battle or erect such barriers to prevent the virtuous from reaching their caches or sanctuaries. Fortunately, the great wizard Jaanth Nor devised a countering magic for the effects of all venom and recorded his findings for future generations to use. The Cure spell is effected by the use of a mixture of Garlic and Ginseng and the calling of the victim's name to soothe the envenomed soul. The curative powers of the Ginseng nullify the effects of the poison in the victim's system, while the use of Garlic wards off the return of any virulent residues that may lie dormant in the blood.*





Dispel — *One of the staples of the wizard's profession is the use of energy fields. We shall discuss the casting of such fields shortly, but first let us examine the means of dismantling them when they are encountered. Although there are various forms of such fields, they are all created with a similar magic and thus may be Dispelled with a single spell. The Dispel enchantment is one of moderate difficulty, far more exhausting than the creation of energy fields. Often touching the field may prove disastrous, so the enchantment must be cast from afar and thus required the use of the precious Black Pearl needed in all projectile spells. Furthermore, Sulphurous Ash is needed to provide the flash of power that brings the dissolution of the forces holding the field together. Finally, the warding powers of Garlic are also employed to prevent the forces from reassembling at the spot where they were previously concentrated. To effect the spell, speak backwards the colour of the type of field encountered.*